

Fall



Bushtit at nest (cropped) © Walter Siegmund
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Psaltriparus_minimus_03647.JPG

Bushtits are tiny birds who make big hanging nests like socks. Lodi Lake Nature Preserve often offers good viewing, but these unusual nests can be found almost anywhere - even in Stockton neighborhoods. Listen for the gentle Bushtit calls.



Cliff Swallows at their nests © Breck Breckenridge

Cliff Swallows construct their mud nests in colonies, frequently underneath bridges and overpasses right in urban areas. Watch them gracefully pursuing insects in spring and summer. By late summer, they'll have migrated south.



Migrating Chinook Salmon, Public Domain photo

While diminished from historical levels, the county still hosts some **salmon runs**. The Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery at the base of Camanche Dam offers excellent viewing. The fall run is often good.



Cedar Waxwing © Kasey Foley

Dapper **Cedar Waxwings** arrive, flocking across the county all winter, making attractive high-pitched trilling sounds. Often heard before they're seen, they're worth a look. They love berries, and can be found enjoying the Chinese Pistache and other berry trees common in our cities.

And before you know it, the cranes arrive again as the cycle begins anew!



Sandhill Cranes © Lon Yarbrough

Highlights of the Natural Year in San Joaquin County

San Joaquin Audubon Society
www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Sandhill Cranes – One of the glories of our county, they arrive in the thousands by late September and stay until February. Pairs mate for life, and you can watch them dance. The Isenberg Crane Reserve on Woodbridge Road is a good place to start. November's Lodi Crane Festival offers bus tours with docents, and California Fish & Wildlife has guided visits throughout the winter. Thousands of wintering geese, swans, ducks, and shorebirds add to the spectacle, particularly their dusk fly-in.

Winter



Golden Eagle © Ken R. Schneider

Wintering raptors - Our own Flood & Waverly region on the east side of the county is one of the best spots in the Central Valley for hawks and other birds of prey. Highlights often include Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, and Prairie Falcons, and some are usually easy to find and admire. San Joaquin Audubon runs field trips here.

National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count - the longest-running citizen science project in the world. San Joaquin Audubon has sponsored two count circles since the 1960s. Over 140 species of birds are found each year at both locations - in just one day. Come join us! Watch our website for the dates.



Anna's Hummingbird © Ken R. Schneider

Throughout the county, **Anna's Hummingbirds** nest in winter and do a dive display year-round. Males climb over 100 feet and swoop down, producing a chirping sound at the bottom with their tail feathers. They may repeat the show over ten times in a row.

Spring



California Buckeye © James Rexroth

Our native **California Buckeye** is one of many flowering plants that make our springtime special. Oak Grove Regional Park's native plant garden is a good place to enjoy them.



Western Tiger Swallowtail on Buckeye © Kasey Foley

Swallowtail Butterflies are a graceful and colorful sign of spring. Western Tiger Swallowtails are common even in Stockton, and Pipevine Swallowtails aren't too much harder to find.



Swainson's Hawk (light form) © Kasey Foley

Swainson's Hawks migrate north in early spring each year, and you can often view them soaring overhead throughout the county. If you're lucky, you'll see a "kettle," a loose concentration of just a few to over 100 riding a rising thermal wind pattern together to gain height. Some breed locally; then the large flocks return south in late summer.

Summer



Bats at Cosumnes Preserve © Daniel Lee Brown

View **Mexican Free-tailed Bats** at the Cosumnes River Preserve bridge south of the Nature Center just over the county line. About 30,000 breed there, a spectacular sight emerging at dusk. While it's still light, you might see hawks in pursuit. August is best.