



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 59, Number 9

June 2014

Birding (and Slothing) in Costa Rica ♦ Ian Austin

The Corcovado National Park on the Osa Peninsula is a spectacular lowland primary rainforest, considered one of the finest parks in Costa Rica and a world-class biodiversity hotspot. Southwest Costa Rica, combined with adjacent western Panama, provide habitat for numerous endemic and endangered species, including over 60 endemic birds.

Ian Austin will present photographs of birds and animals taken in February 2014 during a 12-day trip to the Osa Peninsula and the nearby Las Cruces Biological Station on the Pacific slope close to Panama. These areas are territory for two of Costa Rica's three remaining country-specific endemics; the Mangrove Hummingbird and Black-cheeked Ant-tanager.

The six-person group saw over 270 bird species. Birds captured digitally include, in approximate taxonomic order, tinamou; Curassow; a great Black Hawk being attacked by a Pearl Kite; Scarlet Macaws, hummers including White-crested Coquette, Sickle-billed and Violet-crowned Wood-nymph; Baird's, Gartered, and Black-faced Trogans; Jacamars; Chestnut-mandibled Toucans and Emerald Toucanet; Pale-billed and Lineated Woodpeckers (same genus as Ivory-billed and Pileated respectively); Black-striped Woodcreeper; the gorgeous Orange-collared Manakin and a Red-capped showing off his yellow leggings doing the moon-dance, and many tanagers including Red-legged and Green Honeycreepers. The Fiery-billed Aracari literally flew in at the last moment.

The group happened upon a young female 3-toed sloth making her once-weekly—and highly risky—trip to the ground. She provided an up-close encounter with the highly specialized, albeit very slow, sloth-moth-algae-fungi micro-ecosystem



Fiery-billed Aracari. *Pteroglossus frantzii*. Photo courtesy Ian Austin.

(recently described in *Proceedings of the Royal Society*). Other animals: 2-toed sloth, tapir, four species of monkey, coati, agouti, tayra weasel, and bats. And, of course, poison-dart frogs.

Researchers at Las Cruces are studying the effects of forest fragmentation (partially funded by Stanford University) and bird utilization of coffee plantations. The group spent a morning in the forest at Las Cruces watching bird-banding, an ideal way to see secretive birds "in-hand" including the very elusive crested Pygmy-tyrannulet and Orange-billed Nightingale-thrush.

The trip was not without challenges and offers lessons learned regarding choice of eco-lodges, and the hazard of neglecting chiggers while mesmerized by twenty Three-wattled Bellbirds and half a dozen Resplendent Quetzals—both species in the same tree.

Our September program will be a presentation on the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex by Anne Morkill.

Meeting Schedule

The annual pot-luck dinner and elections meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, June 5**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

6:00 PM Doors open

6:30 PM Dinner is served

Please remember to bring your own utensils and cup.

8:00 PM Announcements, Election

8:15 PM Speaker: **Ian Austin**
Birding in Costa Rica

There will be no meeting in July or August. The next meeting will be Thursday, September 4.

President's Corner

By Jimm Edgar

You all, I am sure, are aware of the tragic accident that happened on Mt. Everest when an avalanche killed 16 Sherpas who were preparing for an upcoming climb. Shortly after that happened I was listening to the National Geographic Hour on the radio and they had Aaron Huey on. Huey is a long time photographer for the National Geographic. He happened to be in Nepal working on a documentary when the accident happened. Huey decided to do something and contacted 9 other NG photographers, asking if they would donate some of their work to be made into prints and sold to raise money for the Sherpa's families. To date they have raised over \$300,000 for the families! Huey explained that not all of the money will go to the 16 families but a good portion will be used to set up better medical care, educational opportunities for families, job creation etc. What a wonderful thing for someone to do. You can read about this if you Google Aaron Huey helps Sherpa families. You can even listen to the radio broadcast I first heard.

Also, as you know, we had an event we co-sponsored with Rakestraw books to have David Sibley speak about his new second edition of the Sibley field guide. The event was at Heather Farm on April 22 and we had about 100 people attend. Sibley spoke about how he became interested in birds and how he developed as an artist. He actually had photos of his early drawings as a 6 year old. It was a very insightful look at his life and very entertaining. I think nearly everyone there either bought a book or had him sign one they already had. The accompanying picture is of Sibley and our membership chair Pat Schneider at the event.

I participated in the Wild Birds Unlimited event on May 10 along with Volunteer Coordinator Brian Murphy and a number

of others from the chapter who volunteered to man our table. We also were at a Walnut Creek cleanup event the same day. Brian Murphy (see photo) is our volunteer coordinator and has done a great job getting folks to help out. Thanks to all of you who volunteer.

Speaking of volunteers, Chick Chickering, who monitors our East Bay Birders hotline, is stepping down and we will need someone to take over that role. There is more in this Quail about that position. This is a valuable service our chapter provides for the birding community.

This a great time of year with migration in full swing; and our local birds are nesting. I hope you will join a field trip or get out on your own to do some birding.



Above: David Sibley talks with Pat Schneider.
Below: Brian Murphy and Jimm Edgar.



Welcome New Members

Thomas Flaherty	Clayton
Bob Hislop	Concord
The Reese Family	Pleasanton
Grace Mannell	Danville
Joe Schellenberg	Concord

I will be relinquishing the ownership of the EBB_Sightings Yahoo group and the maintenance of the MDAS calendar effective August 30, 2014.

If you are interested in taking over either or both you can contact me at elchick447@comcast.net or see me at the next meeting. I can also be reached at 925-686-9231.

Since we have no July or August meetings, I would like to get this resolved ASAP.

Ethan (Chick) Chickering

Q These birds prey chiefly on small birds. They have been known to hunt in pairs, with one attacking a tree full of waxwings from above, for example, while its mate swoops in from below, taking advantage of the confusion above.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 6 to learn more.

EILMNR

Annual Election & Potluck Dinner

The potluck dinner meeting on June 5 will be at our regular meeting place at The Gardens at Heather Farm. Doors open at 6:00 PM. Members bring a main dish, salad, or dessert and their own utensils and coffee cup. Please mark your serving plates. Coffee, tea and punch will be provided. Bring your own wine if you wish. Accolades and thanks are owed to our Hospitality Chair, Nina Wong, and her volunteers for setting the ambience.

Standing for re-election are the current officers: President Jimm Edgar, Vice President Paul Schorr, Treasurer Steve Buffi, and Secretary Diana Granados.

The Quail is published monthly except January and August by Mount Diablo Audubon Society, P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. *The Quail* is printed on 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper. **The deadline for the July-August issue is June 17.**

Observations By Maury Stern

The Spring migration continues with departing Yellow-rumped Warblers, thrushes, ducks, and shorebirds. The transitory migrants are still passing through and breeding has begun for local breeders.



Bewick's Wren by Meg Sandri

Wood Ducks and **Common Mergansers** were seen at San Pablo creek near San Pablo Reservoir on 4/7 by DH and JC.

KB had **California Quail** in her Lafayette back yard the first time in 25 years on 4/24.

An **Osprey** was at Valle Vista staging area in Moraga 5/9. WP.

Bald Eagles were seen 4/17 near San Pablo Reservoir by JC and DH; and 5/9 at Valle Vista staging area by WP.

Two baby **Killdeer** and a parent were along a gravel road edge near the Valle Vista staging area 4/10. SM.

LL saw three **Red Knots** along the Bay Trail near Meeker Slough in Richmond 5/12.

Ten **Vaux's Swifts** were at Mallard Reservoir 4/26. NA, AL. On the same day some were seen at Heather Farm pond, FS, and Lafayette Reservoir, KM.

Calliope Hummingbirds were active in the sage near Mitchell and White Canyons at Mount Diablo State Park, CL on 4/12; LK and MP on 4/17; JCS on 4/18; EL PM 4/26. DH and JC saw 15 on 4/26.

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to mbstern2@yahoo.com or (925) 284-5980 or send to EBB Sightings@yahoogroups.com. If you report sightings to eBird, please also send to Maury Stern.

Rufous Hummingbirds were at Mitchell Canyon 4/17, LK, MP; ten were there 4/26, DH, JC.

Olive-sided Flycatcher was seen at Redwood Regional Park 4/16 by BPo. DH and JC saw one at Rock City in MDSP 5/3. FS saw one from 5/9-5/12 in eucalyptus trees near N. Homestead and Seven Hills Road, Walnut Creek.

Western Wood-Pewee was at Inspiration Point Trail 4/11, AK. Another was at the Seaview Trail in Tilden RP 4/16. LL.

DW saw four **Hammond's Flycatchers** 4/11 at Mitchell Canyon. CL saw one on 4/17. LK and MP saw five there.

AL saw a **Dusky Flycatcher** near Mount Olympia at MDSP 5/12.

A **Say's Phoebe** was near Boundary Oaks Country Club in Walnut Creek 4/23.

Ash-throated Flycatchers were at Valle Vista 4/12, DH; and Mitchell Canyon the same date. CL.

The **Tropical Kingbird** at Heather Farm Pond was last seen 4/17. It had been there since 1/16.

Horned Larks were in the grass near Briones Crest Trail in Briones RP 4/9, ST.

MP saw a **Purple Martin** on 5/7 while doing a botanical assessment of the recent Mount Diablo burn area.

Two **Townsend's Solitaires** were below North Peak of MDSP 4/17, DW.

Swainson's Thrushes arrived 4/29 at Mitchell Canyon, MR. On 5/3, they were seen at Rock City by DH and JC. FS saw one at the south side of Heather Farm Pond 5/12.

JB saw at least 30 **Cedar Waxwings** around her Martinez home 4/24.

P&NS saw a **Yellow Warbler** in their yard 5/1.

CW reported the last **Yellow-rumped Warbler** 4/26 near Shell Ridge and Borges Ranch in Walnut Creek.

BH saw a **Hermit Warbler** 4/17 at Blue Oaks picnic area on Mount Diablo. DH and JC saw 16 near the North Gate/Burma Road area 5/3.

MacGillivray's Warbler was about ¼ mile along Nimitz Way at Tilden RP 4/8.

I consider myself to have been the bridge between the shotgun and the binoculars in birdwatching.

Before I came along, the primary way to observe birds was to shoot them and stuff them.

Roger Tory Peterson

MK. AK saw one there 4/16. LK and MP saw two at Mitchell Canyon 4/17.

DW had a **Yellow-breasted Chat** 5/3 about 300 feet along the EBMUD trail near the Inspiration Point parking lot.

Western Tanagers arrived in large numbers. JS had one in Pine Canyon 4/12. On 4/24, KB had one at her bird bath in Lafayette, and JB had 8 at her backyard pool waterfall. MA and AL saw multiple tanagers at Ellis Lake in the eucalyptus trees, 4/26. FS saw greater than 20 in the trees of N. Homestead on the same date.

Rufous-crowned Sparrows were near the Burma Road/Stage Road Junction in MDSP on 4/16, BB. LL saw some on the Seaview Trail in Tilden RP 4/16.

BH saw **Chipping Sparrows** along North Gate Road while biking on 4/8.

LK and MP saw three **Bell's Sparrows** (nee Sage) 4/17 along White Canyon in MDSP.

The first-of-season **Lazuli Bunting** was seen by DW at Mitchell Canyon 4/12. WB saw one in her El Cerrito yard 4/28.

An **Indigo Bunting** was at the Sugarloaf/Shell Ridge area on 4/19 not far from where one was seen two years ago, BP. CC saw one at Lafayette Reservoir on the screen in front of a bluebird box, 5/12.

NA Noah Arthur, KB Kristen Baker, WB Wendy Beers, CC Coleen Cole, JB Jackie Bobrosky, BB Beth Branthaver, JC Jim Chiropolos, LF Lee Friedman, DH Derek Heins, BH Bob Hislop, LK Logan Kahle, AK Alan Kaplan, MK MRKinch, SL Stan Lee, EL Elizabeth Leite, AL Albert Linkowski, LL Laura Look, SM Sally Matthews, KM Kai Mills, WP Wendy Parfrey, MP Michael Park, BP Brent Pettersson, BPo Bob Power, MR Mark Rauzon, FS Fred Safier, P&NS Paul and Nancy Schorr, JS Judi Sierra, JCS Juan-Carlos Solis, ST Steve Taylor, CW Cal Waters, DW Denise Wight.

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

June

7 Saturday..... Outer Point Reyes
14-15 Saturday-Sunday..... Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

July

12-13 Sat/Sun..... Mount Lassen
19 Saturday..... San Mateo Coast

August

16 Saturday..... Bodega Bay

Come Birding With Us!

② Saturday, June 7 Outer Point Reyes

Leader: David Hutton, (925) 938-4485.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:00 AM. Meet 8:30 AM at Bear Valley Visitor Center in Olema. From I-80 in Vallejo, follow SR 37 19.1 miles to Atherton Avenue, exit and turn left, cross US 101 to San Marin Drive and continue for 3 miles. Turn right on Novato Blvd for 6 miles to stop sign, then turn left on Point Reyes-Petaluma Road for 7 miles to another stop sign. Turn right across the bridge, go 3 miles to SR 1. Turn left into Point Reyes Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town towards Olema, then turn right onto Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. We are hoping for migrants. Bring lunch and liquids. Weather is unpredictable.

② Saturday-Sunday, June 14-15 Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley

Leaders: Rosita and Hugh Harvey, (925) 935-2979..

This is always a productive and well-favored weekend trip to the northern Sierra which requires driving and walking, some of it over rough terrain. Saturday we will bird in the Sierra Valley for basin birds. Sunday we will be birding in the Yuba Pass area for mountain birds. Meet at the parking lot at the top of the pass at 7:00 AM Saturday morning. Make motel reservations now! Closest motels are in Sierra City, 11 miles down Highway 49 to the west. Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151 or (800) 682-9848) is one of the most popular; or try Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122 with cabins and kitchenettes (cash or check only). Bassett's Station (530) 862-1297) at Highway 49 and Gold Lake Road has some accommodations and meals, High Country Inn (530) 862-1530 or (800) 862-1530) is across Hwy. 49 from Bassett's. Also, in Calpine is Sierra Valley Lodge (530) 994-3367 or (800) 858-0322). More listings are at www.sierracity.com/Stay/LodgingCamp.html. Campgrounds are located at Yuba Pass and Chapman Creek downhill to the west. Sites are available first come/first serve for only three days at a time. Longer term reservations can be made at (877) 444-6777, but there is an additional \$10 charge for this service. After June 17 call Wild Birds Unlimited (925) 798-0303 for information.

Come birding with us!

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and advanced birders, but not dogs. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php. Phone area codes are 925 unless specified otherwise. Because most trips do not return until late afternoon, bring a lunch and drink and join us during our midday break.

Category ①: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category ②: Moderate, one mile +, possibly rough terrain

Category ③: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Our Mount Diablo Audubon Chapter is a conservation organization. As such, we encourage members to consider meeting at the carpool point to pick up or ride with others. It is important that given the cost of gasoline, those who ride with others offer to pay some of this cost. Don't forget about any bridge tolls or park entry fees on some of our longer trips. Carpool locations: **La Gonda**—From I-680 southbound, exit at El Pintado, turn right and right again; park along open space on left. From I-680 northbound, exit El Cerro, turn left, then right at second light onto La Gonda; carpool point is about one-half mile north. **Sun Valley**—Southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord.



American Dipper. Beth Branthaver photo.

Mount Lassen ✦ July 12-13

If you are planning on participating in the MDAS birding trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park the weekend of July 12 and 13, please let the leader know ahead of time that you are coming. Gary and I will be camping in Loop B of the Butte Lake Campground which allows reservations ahead of time. If you prefer not to camp, I can give you names and phone numbers of several small motels and B & B's outside the park, but you should make your reservations soon as they fill up quickly. There are also a few sleep-only cabins at Manzanita Lake, with a nearby communal bathhouse and a private lodge in the south central part of the park, which serves meals and has a pool. Please contact me for details and more information at 925-806-0644 or e-mail me at: eklarson@comcast.net. *Eugenia Larson*

Trip Reports

Young Birders Club, Mitchell Canyon, April 13. The Mount Diablo Audubon Young Birders Club was started in the summer of 2013 and, following every field trip we've had since then, the membership has grown. On April 13th, a record number of participants (15) went into the migration-rich Mitchell Canyon. It might seem a little early but with many of the migrating birds coming in numbers, it sure felt like spring has finally fully arrived. Tracy Farrington, Niki (a friend of mine) and I were also very happy to see that people who had birded there recently found many fine birds.

We quickly spotted a nice flock of warblers at the start which included many Wilson's, Yellow-rumped, and a couple Black-throated Gray Warblers. Moving up the main trail towards White Canyon we heard and saw a couple Ash-throated Flycatchers, which were, for most of us, first-of-season birds. At the overlook a little farther on, I spotted a nice Cassin's Vireo along with more of the regular Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Grays. At the first main intersection, Black Point Trail up into the chaparral, we briefly saw a Hammond's Flycatcher, and, further up, a nice Blue-gray Gnatcatcher singing. A moment later, this bird was seen by most in the group. There was a nice male California Quail running and calling further along the trail as well. I think that it is always fun to see this species, whose numbers are declining in some regions owing to feral cats. Back on the main trail again, we found a nest which has a good chance of belonging to the two Cassin's Vireos that were feeding on bugs nearby. Orange-crowned Warblers were singing, the usually quiet Townsend's were also singing, and a House Wren made a nice appearance next to the trail. We finally got to the turnoff to get to Red Road/White Canyon, but it was already 11:45 and Niki and I needed to be back by 12:30 so that Niki's mom could pick us up. Many young birders have this conflict—they want to go somewhere but don't have the transportation to get them there. Nevertheless, Niki and I hiked up White Canyon while some of the group headed back. Up there I saw the gray head and yellow body of a Nashville Warbler in a tree. Feeding on the nectar in the small red flowers next to the trail was a hummingbird that Niki spotted, which we soon found out was a juvenile

or female Calliope Hummingbird because of the rufous on the sides of the chest.

After seeing that target bird, we would like to see a beautiful male next time. We then ran all the way back to the parking lot where Niki's mom was waiting. We were a little late, but the nice day made up for it. I would love to go there again this spring, when maybe the late arrivals get here. But school and sports make fun bird watching trips very hard to arrange.

Kai Hayden Mills

Orinda Connector Trail, April 15. On a beautiful spring morning, 7 birders had a lovely four-hour walk from the riparian area along San Pablo Creek into the pine forest, and to the base of Briones dam. A significantly lower than usual selection of birds totaled just 44 species including two heard-only. We saw many of the expected land birds, including several just-arrived migrants, with great looks at Black-headed Grosbeak and Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and enjoyed brief Wood Duck views along the creek. Big misses included all wrens, Mallard, woodpeckers except Acorn, and the Virginia Rails which we had seen on the trip for the previous four years. *Don Lewis*



Cassin's Vireo.. Photo by Beth Branthaver.

Pine Canyon, April 12. Sixteen birders enjoyed ideal weather while exploring this prime location in the foothills of Mount Diablo. This year's lack of rainfall also meant dry creek crossings, which was good news for us but will be bad news for the wildlife. Also enjoying the beautiful spring day were the birds, which were vocal and amorous; we observed multiple species copulating and/or carrying nesting material. A total of 51 species were seen or heard. One of the target species was Peregrine Falcon and the group was not to be disappointed. One falcon was observed perched in the same rock cavity where a pair had nested in previous years, and each member of the

group enjoyed excellent scope views. Other highlights included numerous sightings of Bullock's Orioles, Western Kingbird, singing House Wrens, Warbling Vireos, Cassin's Vireo, Black-headed Grosbeak and Western Tanager. One particular tree was exceptionally productive and provided views of a male Bullock's Oriole, a male Western Tanager and a pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks. On the return trip, the remaining six members had excellent views of a pair of Cassin's Vireos.

Nancy Wenninger and Paul Schorr

North Briones, April 17. Seventeen birders came on the trip to the North side of Briones Regional Park on a fair day with temperatures in the 60s. Highlights included several Grasshopper Sparrows along the Briones Crest Trail near the Sindicich Lagoon Trail; Golden Eagle in the distance; House Wren; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; and Nashville Warbler.

Wildflowers which are usually part of this trip were in very small numbers.

Maury Stern

Mines Road, Saturday, April 19. Nine birders from throughout the Bay Area and Sacramento Valley enjoyed a pleasant outing with seasonably mild temperatures and the usual array of birds at most locations where we stopped and walked. At Lake Del Valle, we were able to scope and view an adult Bald Eagle tending a nest with at least 3 eaglets. Along Mines Road we had several sightings and relatively close flyovers of Golden Eagles. At "The Junction", thanks to the help of one member of the group who knew the location, we were able to view a female Lawrence's Goldfinch on a nest—with some difficulty as the nest was well concealed in thick foliage. With patience, we finally located the Lewis's Woodpeckers on San Antonio Valley Road. Also along this road, the pond where we usually find Wood Ducks was nearly dry, and only a couple of Canada Geese were present. The group stopped to tally the day's bird species, and at this point we had recorded 68. Not willing to stop at that number, we proceeded to a pond on Del Puerto Canyon Road where Tricolored Blackbirds nest and were rewarded with close looks at a small colony of them along with Red-winged Blackbirds. Now up to 69 species, the leader requested one more for a nice, round 70. Within short order, a couple of members called our attention to a Hairy Woodpecker, a welcomed sight for the day's finale. *Gary Fregien*

Trip Reports

» *Continued from Page 5*

Black Diamond Mines Regional Park, April 24. Fifteen intrepid MDAS members and guests endured a morning of gusty winds, cool temperatures and the unexpected, very loud, distracting noises of heavy earth-moving equipment in one of the targeted birding areas. But persistence, patience and flexibility resulted in a rewarding day of birding, with 51 species seen and/or heard. Although we heard the Canyon Wren at its expected location, we regrettably did not get any views. We did have three other wren species: House, Bewick's and Rock Wren, making it a 4-wren species day. Probably the best sighting was of two singing male Lazuli Buntings in breeding plumage, a FOS for most of the group and a life bird for some others. In addition, we enjoyed very nice views of a Rufous-crowned Sparrow in the same location. Other highlights included a Golden Eagle; Prairie Falcon; White-throated Swift; Ash-throated Flycatcher; 4 swallow species—Violet-green, Barn, Tree and Cliff Swallow; Hermit Thrush; Wilson's Warbler; Chipping Sparrow; and Bullock's Oriole. After the formal trip had concluded, members were invited to stop at a location where a Phainopepla and Rock Wren had been recently sighted. Five members were able to add this stop and had very good views of the Phainopepla and distant views of the Rock Wren. In addition to the productive day of birding, the group also enjoyed continuing displays of spring wildflowers. *Paul Schorr*

Del Puerto Canyon, April 29. The annual MDAS Del Puerto Canyon field trip again proved a popular event; 15 participants took part on a cloudless day with temperatures forecast to be in the low 90's inland. Our first stop at the Larry Combs (earlier known as Westley) rest area on Interstate 5 yielded the usual species; of special note were Western Kingbird, and Eurasian Collared-Dove. A Swainson's Hawk was observed on Interstate 5 between the rest area and Diablo Grande exit for Del Puerto Canyon. Noteworthy birds found in the lowest section of Del Puerto Canyon included Blue Grosbeak, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk. At Graffiti Rock we had great views of Canyon Wren while at Owl Rock a Red-tailed Hawk was sitting on its nest tending its young. Bullock's Orioles, Western Kingbirds and Phainopeplas



Photos from Del Puerto trip, April 29, by Beth Branthaver. Top: Prairie Falcon. Center: Bullock's Oriole. Lower: Lawrence's Goldfinch.

were plentiful in lower and mid sections of the Canyon. The upper reaches of the Canyon did not disappoint us—a Prairie Falcon wheeling overhead; Rock Wren, Yellow-billed Magpie and Rufous-crowned Sparrow were welcome additions to our list. Over lunch at the Off-Road Vehicle Park, we found Lawrence's Goldfinch, House Wren, Yellow and Wilson's Warblers. While observing Tricolored Blackbirds at the pond just before the summit, a birding enthusiast pulled up and showed us a recently dead Common Poorwill that he had retrieved from the roadway—all marveled at the remarkable coloration and camouflage. San Antonio Road delivered again on schedule with observations of several Lewis's Woodpeckers. Tallying our list for the day's activities at the Junction Café revealed we had found 70 species. *David Hutton*

Mitchell Canyon, May 1. Thirteen participants arrived at Mitchell Canyon staging area for a blistering hot day without their usual leader, Maury Stern. Kent Fickett and Beth Branthaver took over for the traveling Maury to look for returning spring migrants. On our way up Mitchell Canyon Road we saw many of the resident species—Acorn Woodpeckers, Oak Titmouse, etc.

and heard Wild Turkeys calling. Not far up the road we heard and saw an Ash-throated Flycatcher. Further up there was a male Rufous Hummingbird in full view. We turned and headed uphill at Black Point Trail hoping to see the recently reported Calliope Hummingbirds. Just after we started, we saw a Cooper's Hawk attack a Scrub Jay. He came away empty handed. Perched at the top of a nearby tree a Lazuli Bunting was out in full view singing loudly. We also got a nice fly over by a Golden Eagle. There were numerous hummingbirds on Black Point Trail, but all were Anna's. Going back down the trail, we headed over on the Globe Lily Trail. There we saw Cassin's and Hutton's Vireos. We also found a few hummingbirds that we could not positively identify. A pair of Ash-throated Flycatchers were flying around in full view. From the end of Globe Lily trail we headed down Red Road and back to Mitchell Canyon Road. We saw a Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow and Wilson's Warbler, more Cassin's and Hutton's Vireos, and heard a Bullock's Oriole. The vireos gave quite a show as they grabbed caterpillars and dragged them around. We also ran into a tree full of Orange-crowned Warblers. On the way back to the cars we heard a California Thrasher loudly calling and saw a nesting pair of Western Bluebirds. Our trip total was 40 species.

Beth Branthaver and Kent Fickett

Mount Diablo State Park, May 8.

Ten guests and members met at the south gate entrance of Mount Diablo State Park at 8:45 AM. It was a rather chilly and windy day and many of us were not wearing warm enough clothes. By the time we had worked our way up the mountain to the junction campground the weather had turned worse, with fog and wind too much for birding, so we headed back down the mountain to bird some areas we had not gotten in the morning. We ended back at Rock City, had lunch there and did our checklist for birds seen. We had a total of 36 species for the day which is rather low for this field trip. Many common birds were missed because we just gave up on going to the areas they are normally seen. However, we did have some good sightings. An unusually high number of Hermit Warblers were seen; perhaps as many as 15-20 at 5 or 6 different locations. It has been many years since we have even had one Hermit Warbler. Also, good numbers of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher were seen at many locations.

Jimm Edgar

Good News for Sinaloa Wrens



Sinaloa Wren. Photo by Glen Tepke.

This is the species, also called Bar-vented Wren (*Thryothorus sinaloa*), that was first seen north of Mexico in 2008. In August of that year, a single individual was found at The Nature Conservancy's Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve in Patagonia, Arizona. It was thoroughly photographed and sound-recorded, and the bird remained in the area for over a year. There was also an unverified report, going back to June 1989.

This wren is native to western Mexico, but it has been found nesting multiple times as close as 35-60 miles from the Arizona/Mexico border.

Since that first documented occurrence, there have been a few more reports from southeastern Arizona, including in April 2009 when a Sinaloa Wren spent a few days in lower Huachuca Canyon, Fort Huachuca, in the Huachuca Mountains. Maintaining this pattern, a Sinaloa Wren, perhaps the original individual, appeared again at the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve in August 2010.

Last September, Sinaloa Wrens were again reported in Arizona: one at the 2009 site in the Huachucas, and one along the de Anza Trail south of Tubac near the Santa Cruz River.

These two birds have been observed – off and on – since then, including multiple reports earlier this year. A couple of these optimistic wanderers in the past (including the current Tubac wren) have actually built nests and maintained territory, thus making it easier for visiting birders to locate them.

But this all begs the question: How come?

We know that this species has been

Just for Ducks

By Brian Murphy



Above: Wood Duck on Walnut Creek at Civic Park. Below: Wood Duck on San Ramon Creek at Main Street and Creekside Drive. Photos by Brian Murphy.

The great news is after eight years of trying, we finally got a hen to nest in a box on Walnut Creek and hatch 14 ducklings.

The hope now is since it is an early hatch the hen will return for a second nesting.

Ducklings surviving will have imprinted on that reach of the creek and return next year looking for nesting opportunities as there are existing Wood Duck boxes waiting for them to show up and occupy them.

Then for the sixth year we have had a Wood Duck nesting in a box at the corner of Main Street and Creekside Drive producing ducklings on San Ramon Creek.

moving north in Sonora; we might postulate post-breeding dispersal from the south, with individuals arriving in the fall; we know that there is plenty of woodland and thorn-forest habitat available in southeast Arizona; and we know there are more observers in the field than ever before.

All of these factors could contribute to finding more Sinaloa Wrens in the future. As more observers learn to recognize this species' field marks and its loud vocalizations, more Sinaloa Wrens are likely to be found in Arizona.

National Wildlife Refuge Association

Who Doesn't Love a Good Mystery?

By Joanie Smith

Every year I rehab birds for the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. I've lost track of how many years it's been, but I think this year might be the 26th. I usually rehab swallows, swifts and bushtits. The past several years, however, I've been lucky enough to rehab many insectivores and some seed eaters. To watch birds through my binoculars is enjoyable. To work with these birds as their caretaker from the time they are admitted to the wildlife hospital until release is a completely different experience. It's time consuming, stressful, worrisome and an emotional roller coaster. I love it.

I received a call a month or so ago from the wildlife hospital regarding a nest of six... somethings. They were about two days old, clearly insectivores (small, pointy beaks), but beyond that we didn't know what they were. Sometimes knowing what the nest looked like will give me a clue. In this case, the entire nest was brought into the house by a dog. Not much help. So, would I be interested in taking them? Yes!

They didn't quite look like swallows, not small enough to be bushtits... warblers, maybe? Brown Creepers? Their begging calls were unlike any I had heard before. I continued to feed them an insectivore diet and, after several days, pin feathers started to appear. As they grew, the feathers became varying shades of brown and light-colored on the breast. The little guys had VERY pointy beaks and a white "eyebrow" began to take shape. Their tails were getting long and starting to raise above the back. Aha! Mystery solved... Bewick's Wrens!!!

Bewick's are primarily insectivores although they will come to suet feeders. Like Marsh Wrens and Carolina Wrens, they have that distinct white eyebrow. Unlike the other wrens their tails have white corners when fanned. Their song is complex with buzzes and trills, but the dry harsh scold note is particularly interesting. To me, it sounds more like an insect than a bird.

They've since graduated to my outdoor aviary for a week or so and then it will be time for release. My favorite part of rehabbing.



Charles Bendire

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Bendire reviewed the collection, which had been in serious need of reorganization, and incorporated with it his private collection of about 8,000 specimens. Under Bendire's supervision, the total collection grew to about 52,000 specimens, acquired largely by his personal efforts and by the gifts of his friends and colleagues.

Having improved the collection of eggs to his satisfaction, Bendire began a project which had been on his mind for some time: writing the *Life Histories of North American Birds*. He was able to publish two volumes of a planned much larger work before his death in 1897 at the early age of 60. These reference works provided ornithologists with a wealth of information on the geographical distribution of each species along with the extent of their breeding range.

Bendire is honored with the name of Bendire's Thrasher and in the scientific names of subspecies of Red Crossbill and Western Screech Owl. Bendire's Falcon is no longer recognized as a subspecies of Merlin, as it is now considered to be simply a color variant of *Falco columbarius*. Charles Bendire perhaps deserves more renown as one of our pioneer American ornithologists.



Merlin, *Falco columbarius*. Photo by Beth Branthaver

Early oölogists were the first birders in North America. Our early information on the breeding season, habitat use, and physical descriptions of the breeding adults and their nests and eggs of hundreds of North American birds came from oölogists. By collecting the eggs and other collateral data, they were not only collecting beautiful objects to put in a cabinet drawer, they were also documenting the natural history and breeding history of the birds, which can be used by scientists today and in the future. For example, a research project at South Dakota State University's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences involves logging current measurements of duck eggs that cooperating research-

ers are gathering in the field, as well as recent measurements of duck eggs from museums collected by naturalists up to 150 years ago to build a database of how the dimensions of eggs may have changed over past decades. One reason that they might change in size is owing to changes in the nutrient levels from foods such as invertebrates that are available during breeding.

The data could add new knowledge about how waterfowl respond to climate cycles and long-term climate change.

Merlin ♦ *Falco columbarius*

a

Previously known as the Pigeon Hawk, the Merlin looks and flies like a pigeon. The species name of the Merlin refers to the genus of the pigeon, *Columba*. There are nine subspecies of this small falcon around the world, with three (or four) to be found in North America: dark-plumaged "black" Merlins of the Pacific Northwest, pale "prairie" Merlins of northern prairies and aspen parklands, and "boreal" or "taiga" Merlins of northern forests, which have intermediate plumage. A number of references cite three American subspecies; but *Animal Diversity Web*, published by the Department of Zoology at the University of Michigan gives:

Falco columbarius: Breeds throughout northern Europe, Asia and North America.

Falco columbarius bendirei: Breeds in northwestern Alaska to northern Saskatchewan and into northern California.

Falco columbarius columbarius: Breeds in eastern Canada to the eastern border of the Great Plains and southwards into Nova Scotia and northern Michigan.



Black Merlin, *Falco columbarius suckleyi*. Photo by Beth Branthaver.

Falco columbarius richardsoni: Breeding range is located in the Great Plains from southern Alberta and Saskatchewan to northern Montana and North Dakota.

Falco columbarius suckleyi: Breeding occurs only in western British Columbia and perhaps on Vancouver Island.

American Kestrels are smaller, more slender, and paler than Merlins. They have a strong face pattern with two bold "mustache" stripes that Merlins lack. Kestrels are much less heavily marked below and are warmer reddish-brown on the back than Merlins. Larger species such as Prairie Falcons and Peregrine Falcons are less compact than Merlins, with longer wings and slower wingbeats. They tend to have less heavily streaked underparts than Merlins, and their tails

are not as prominently banded. Prairie Falcons have distinct dark "armpit" patches underneath the wings. Peregrine Falcons usually show a much bolder black "mustache" stripe that contrasts with its white throat. Sharp-shinned Hawks have similar coloration to Merlins but very different shape. They are accipiters: they have short, rounded wings and very long tails. In flight Sharp-shinned Hawks usually glide after every few strokes; Merlins flap almost continuously.

Summer Hummers

By Mike Eliot

Local hummingbirds, particularly Anna's, often stick around all summer. This year, with the drought, their natural food supplies will probably dry up this month, making the use of feeders and misters critical for their survival. Here are some tips for helping them.

Clean and change the nectar in hummingbird feeders every 3-5 days to prevent mold. Make 2-3 quarts of nectar at one time. Boil and cool the water first before adding sugar. Keep the rest of the nectar in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. You will then have minimal problems with mold. A ratio of 4 parts water to one part sugar is suitable, but avoid food colorings.



Hummer feeders will also stay cooler and fresh longer if in the shade. Just make sure that they are hung where hummers can see them from several angles.

Use water misters to help hummers stay cool and hydrated. These attach to your hose and provide a very fine spray that actually uses very little water. You may also have some fun using a hose with a fine spray nozzle. Hummers will often fly into the spray as you hold it in the air.

The best hummer viewing is in the morning before 10 AM and in the late afternoon until dusk, when they are less likely to be territorial.

Interesting hummingbird statistics:

- They can consume up to half their weight each day, feeding 8-10 times per hour.
- Some migrate up to 2000 miles, twice each year and can fly over 500 miles without stopping.
- They weigh less than a penny.
- They can also fly upside down and are the only bird that can fly backwards.
- They do not generally walk, but prefer to flutter between perches using their wings.
- Their heart is larger in proportion to body size than any other warm-blooded animal.
- If an average-sized man had the rapid metabolism of a hummer, he would have to eat over 250 pounds of ground beef each day.

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

Mount Diablo Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon, is committed to the sustainable balance of our community's people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets at 7:00 PM on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Everyone is invited.

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Bendire's Thrasher. Glen Tepke photo..

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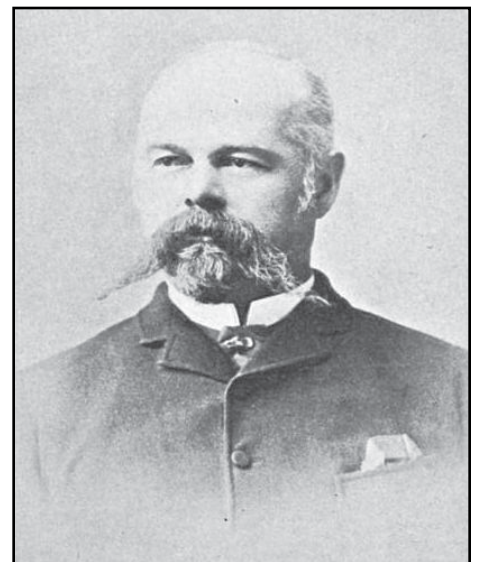
Oölogy is the branch of ornithology—the study of birds—that focuses on studying bird eggs, nests and breeding behavior. The word comes from the Greek word for egg, αυγό. Although collecting wild birds' eggs is now illegal in the United States (except for specially authorized scientific research), during the late 19th and early 20th century bird egg collecting was fashionable and popular. This was the era of amateur naturalists studying nature in order to understand it better. Both Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt were ardent oölogists.

Karl Emil Bender was born in the Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt at Koenig im Odenwald, on April 27, 1836. He was home schooled until the age of twelve and afterward spent five years at the theological school at Passy, near Paris. He left school abruptly, returned home for a short time, then left with his younger brother, Wilhelm, on a ship bound for New York in 1853. The younger youth was disillusioned with the

new land and soon sailed for home, but sadly he was lost at sea.

Karl, at the age of eighteen, enlisted in the U.S. Army and changed his name to Charles Bendire. He served for five years as a private and corporal in the First Dragoons. He then left the service for a year, but again enlisted in June 1860, in the 4th Cavalry, serving as Private, Corporal, Sergeant, and Hospital Steward until November 1864, when he was promoted to First Lieutenant. He was honored for "gallant and meritorious services" in the Civil War battle of Trevilian Station, Virginia, June, 1864, and for "gallant services in action against Indians" at Canyon Creek, Montana, September, 1877.

His military career took him to many places across the United States. These travels gave him the opportunity to develop a growing interest in nature and particularly in birds and their eggs. As he climbed the ranks in the army, this interest led him to collect an extensive number of eggs at the different locations in which he was stationed, including Oregon and Washing-



Charles Emil Bendire.

ton. Among his many achievements were obtaining eggs of the newly found species Rough-winged Swallow and Bendire's Thrasher.

While on leave of absence, in September 1883, Major Bendire, at Spencer Baird's request, assumed charge as Honorary Curator of the Department of Oölogy in the U.S. National Museum (The Smithsonian).

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