



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

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Living with Mountain Lions ✦ Zara McDonald



San Francisco-based and globally-working wild cat conservationist and naturalist Zara McDonald will discuss mountain lions and the work currently underway to study and protect them. Felidae Conservation Fund is a non-profit that aims to advance the conservation of wild cats and their habitats planetwide through a combination of groundbreaking research, compelling education and cutting-edge technology. Felidae works in both North and South America on different mountain lion research and conservation projects. The flagship project is the Bay Area Puma Project—www.bapp.org. The Bay Area Puma Project is an innovative merging of scientific research and public education enabling the project to leverage its scientific insights to change public attitudes, and to produce maximum conservation benefits for the local environment.

These keystone predators (also called pumas and cougars) play a critical role in maintaining the health and biodiversity of our ecosystems. However, expansion of human populations is causing increasing encounters and conflicts between humans and pumas, and growing tensions in our local communities. Please join us to learn



about mountain lion ecology and history, the challenges of sharing the habitat with mountain lions, and essential tips for living and recreating without fear in puma habitat.

Zara McDonald is the Founder and President of Felidae Conservation Fund. She is an entrepreneur, conservationist, and vet technician, and has journeyed through

out four continents working on behalf of wild felid research and conservation since 2002. Zara has worked extensively in all areas of felid research, tracking and monitoring. A certified capture specialist, she has worked on four mountain lion research projects since 2003. During her tenure as an ultra marathoner Zara came into contact with mountain lions on two occasions in Marin County.

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, November 6**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Refreshments,* raffle

8:05 PM Speaker: **Zara McDonald**

* Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, Dec. 4: Anna Weinstein
Black Oystercatchers

BIRDING INFORMATION

Local Author Sondra Perry will share her story of how a Great Blue Heron landed in her yard ten years ago and their friendship that has lasted to this day. This encounter has resulted in two children's books: A funny and heartwarming story that also happens to be true, *The Most Unusual Pet Ever: Henry Our Great Blue Heron and His Adventures*; and *Baby Carrots, Carrots of Wisdom for Little Ones*. The presentation will include a slide show of the real Henry the Heron.

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

President's Corner

By Jimm Edgar

I read an article in the *New York Times* on September 18 entitled "362 Birds, and Unruffled." It was a place in the Santa Cruz mountains call Pandemonium Aviaries and the woman who started the aviary. Her name is Michele Raffin. If you go to your computer and put in pandemoniumaviaries.org you find the website of the amazing place so close to us. It all began 15 years ago when Ms. Raffin saw a bird alongside the highway and stopped to help it. It was a small white dove. To make a fascinating story short, now 15 years later the aviary has 362 birds of 34 species. Most of the birds are somewhat exotic: parrots, macaws, storks etc. The aviary has full-time staff, 63 volunteers, a board of directors and a low six-figures budget. It is really a touching story that I think all of us can relate to in some way. Our program chair, Ariana Rickard, is working on trying to get her to do a program for us. I hope it works out. Who would know this is right in our back yard. I sure hope this works out.

Speaking of programs, our October program was another outstanding evening. Marie Read spoke on the *Birds of Mono Lake*, which is also the title of her book. Her photography was off the charts. Absolutely beautiful pictures. When asked about the



time it took to get some of the photos, her answers were mind boggling. Hours and hours of sitting and waiting, but what a payoff.

I wrote some time ago about a trip my wife Bettie and I took to Mexico in a late February time to see the wintering Monarch butterflies. As I think you all know the Monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains migrate all the way from as far as SE Canada to the 10,000-foot mountains SE of Mexico

Good News for Burrowing Owls

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, on September 9, announced a grant of \$2,000,000 under the Endangered Species Act to East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP). These funds will purchase approximately 700 acres of important habitat



Burrowing Owls. Scott Hein photo.

land for many of the species covered in the HCP/NCCP, including federally listed species such as the San Joaquin kit fox, California red-legged frog, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. Also among the 28 species targeted for protection are Burrowing Owl, Tricolored Blackbird, Swainson's Hawk and Golden Eagle. The acquisition of these properties adds to the reserve system and provides protection for lands that have rich on-site resources and support a diverse mosaic of habitat types.

Grants were also awarded in Santa Clara County for land acquisition in the Mount Hamilton region; in San Diego County to benefit Least Bell's Vireo, Western Snowy Plover, and Least Tern; in Riverside County for protection of the California Gnatcatcher; and in Los Angeles County to conserve habitat for California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren.

City. It takes about four generations for this to happen. It is one of great mysteries of science as to how they know where to go. I would say again that if you ever have a chance to take this trip, do it. It is without a doubt one the most amazing things I have ever seen. Over the last few years there has been much concern about the area where the butterflies go. Illegal logging has taken a huge toll on the population of Monarchs. I read some good news recently however. The Contra Costa Times ran an article on September 24 entitled "Recovery for the Monarchs?" Last year was the lowest count of Monarchs ever, but Mexican scientists say this year looks like there may be a rebound. The efforts of both Mexico and the United States may be paying off. There is also a plan to create a path of milkweed-friendly areas along the migration path. Milkweed is essential for the reproduction process of the butterflies. We all hope this trend may see an increase in these beautiful insects.

Welcome New Members

Carlene Abbors	Walnut Creek
John Colbert	Oakland
Daniel Guerra	Walnut Creek
Betty Lobos	Concord
Bill Oakley	Walnut Creek
Alan Bade & Wendy Gollop	Pleasant Hill

Q This species has the greatest number of genetically distinct populations of any bird in North America. There are at least 17 subspecies in California, three of them endemic to the Bay Area

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 9 to learn more.

AGNOOPRRSSW

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 December/January issue is November 11.**

Young Birders/Point Blue Bird-a-Thon

By Logan Kahle

Point Blue Conservation Science, invited the Mount Diablo Young Birders to participate in the 37th annual Rich Stallcup Bird-a-Thon fund-raiser. We set the 24 hours of October 4 for this event.

We started in the Diablo Range for owl-ing, picking up several Great Horned Owls, an abundance of Western Screech Owls, and one uncooperative distant Long-eared Owl. We also had a great showing of Common Poorwills with at least five calling up one canyon including two circling around us at dawn. Quite a treat.

We started at Mitchell Canyon at dawn where we easily found birds like California Thrasher as well as Band-tailed Pigeon and our only California Quail of the day!

Somersville Road produced, as normally, and we added Rufous-crowned, Savannah, Lincoln's and Lark Sparrows. Also as usual, Black Diamond mines proper was relatively slow.

We next hit Iron House Sanitary District. Duck diversity was good with Cinnamon Teal and American Wigeon among other, more common ducks. Virginia Rails, Common Gallinule, Wilson's Snipe, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Green Heron were nice finds, and a Yellow Warbler was near the entrance.

Bethel Island produced well, with Horned Lark, Loggerhead Shrike, many Tree Swallows and several Barn Swallows, and a Black-throated Gray Warbler.

We decided to skip Southeast county, and headed directly to Waterbird Regional Preserve, where we found Black-bellied Plover and Great-tailed Grackle.

On a brief and unplanned stop at Heather Farm Park we added Belted Kingfisher, Black-crowned Night-Heron and of course Tropical Kingbird.

We headed towards the bayside, but got distracted looking for Wood Ducks on the way there. Then, I made a last minute decision to stop at Inspiration Point. We picked up our only Cooper's Hawk of the day, as well as Pygmy and Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers.

On to the bayside, we stopped at Point Isabel, picking up most of the common shorebirds. By the small pier to the north, there was a young Common Murre, just my third in the county. Offshore, we found

our only Ruddy Ducks, Surf Scoters, and Greater Scaup of the day as well as a returning Horned Grebe.

The Bay Trail was slow, though an American Pipit and a flock of Black Turnstones were nice.

Miller/Knox was dead, but Sandpiper Spit added Black Oystercatcher, Spotted Sandpiper, an out-of-place Common Merganser, and a Glaucous-winged Gull. From Canal Boulevard we could also see the continuing Brant as well as a Whimbrel.

In the fading daylight hours we hit Jewel Lake, adding Wild Turkey and Swainson's Thrush. An owl effort down Pinehurst

Continued on Page 4 »

Cheers for Volunteers



Brian Murphy, Volunteer Coordinator, at the Mount Diablo Audubon Society's information table

Volunteers who donated their time and enthusiasm at Wild Birds Unlimited's Nature Day Fall Festival on October 4 were Nina and Leary Wong and Carol Matthews. I encouraged volunteers to take a birding break at Grayson Creek just a block away from the store.

Carol saw a juvenile American Bittern that had landed on the creek bank and got to hear its *squark*.

A Red-shouldered Hawk dropped out of a tree to catch a rodent on the bank, then fly off to a tree to enjoy eating what it caught.

Also at the creek were two Great Egrets and a Snowy. Volunteering can be fun!

Brian Murphy

USFWS Blue Goose 80th Birthday!



Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling was the conservationist and cartoonist/artist who helped create the Duck Stamp through his role in the Presidential "Committee on Wild-Life Restoration," a role he shared with two other perceptive conservationists, Thomas H. Beck and Aldo Leopold. The committee's report included support for the stamp idea, a concept that had been circulating, unsuccessfully, for over a decade.

On March 10, 1934, Ding Darling was appointed by FDR as head of the Biological Survey, an agency then in the US Department of Agriculture. Just six days later, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Duck Stamp Act. One of Darling's associated tasks on the job in 1934 was to prepare a design for the new stamp, a pair of Mallards landing in a pond.

Darling is also designed the famous "Blue Goose" logo used on the signs on refuges. The logo was an outline of a stylized Canada Goose, not the "Blue Goose" morph of the Snow Goose, as some people assert. The sign had the wording: "US Department of Agriculture Biological Survey." That's because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had yet to be created inside the Department of the Interior.

In the intervening eighty years, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp has now raised over \$900 million, helping to secure over 5.5 million acres of habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife on the 561 National Wildlife Refuges.

Volunteer Opportunity

The Contra Costa County Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Advisory Committee is seeking applicants to fill one seat which represents environmental organizations. You may apply if you have knowledge of IPM, are interested in improving IPM practices in Contra Costa County, live or work in Contra Costa and can commit to regular meeting attendance. Applications must be postmarked by November 7. For more information, please contact Nancy Wenninger at (925) 938-7987.

Observations

By Maury Stern

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

The past month has seen the return of many of our wintering birds. White-crowned, **Golden-crowned**, **Fox** and **Lincoln Sparrows**; **Hermit** and **Varied Thrushes**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Wintering ducks and geese are slow to return. A big surprise is the return of the **Tropical Kingbird** (maybe the same one) to Heather Farm Pond Area.



Pin-tailed Whydah. Photo by Albert Linkowski

Another unusual bird, a **Pin-tailed Whydah** was seen in Concord near Concord High School and Dave Brubeck Park by DS and AL. 10/11, 10/12, along with KM, GW and NW. 10/13. This is a small finchy African songbird with an elaborate tail in the male. It occurs south of the Sahara and has been introduced in Puerto Rico and Southern California. There has also been a **Brown Thrasher** seen 10/12 in Point Richmond. AB.

A **Brant** was off the Richmond shoreline 10/4. LK.

JC and AG saw an adult **Bald Eagle** at San Pablo Reservoir 9/29.

Five **American Avocets** were at Heather Farm 9/22. HH, FS.

A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at Bayfront Park 10/5. RH.

AL saw six **Surfbirds** in Hercules 10/5.

A **Baird's Sandpiper** was at the Landfill Loop Trail in Richmond 9/12. LL.

Sixteen **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at Bay Point 10/5. AL.

Elegant Terns have been at Meeker Slough for several months. 9/17, AL; 10/7, LF.

A **Parasitic Jaeger** was harassing Elegant Terns at the Point Isabel mudflats 9/17. AL.

LK heard a **Long-eared Owl** in Mitchell Canyon 10/4.

Many **Lewis's Woodpeckers** have appeared in central Contra Costa County. Heather Farm had two seen by HH, FS, TE, EW, SL. Two were at Mullholland Hill Reserve in Moraga 9/25. KS. PS found two in Antioch.

Acorn Woodpeckers have also become numerous in West County and the Oakland-Berkeley Hills. BF saw ten at Vollmer Peak in Tilden RP 9/11. A "gang" were in Tilden 9/22. JH and JHM. 30 were at Point Pinole 9/22. MH.

A single **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was near the Tilden Nature Canter 10/12. HN.

An adult male **Chipping Sparrow** was at Miller/Knox Park 10/1. KF.

AL saw two varieties of Fox Sparrow 10/12: a Red at Dave Brubeck Park in Concord and a Slate-colored at Newhall Community Park.

A **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was with a flock of **Lesser Goldfinches** near the volleyball court at Castle Rock Regional Park 9/20.

AB Abigail Bok, JC Jim Chirobolos, TF Tracy Farrington, BF Brian Fitch, KF Kathy Francone, LF Lee Friedman, AG Ann Griffith, HH Hugh Harvey, RH Ray Hasey, MH Michael Helm, JH John Henry, LK Logan Kahle, MK Melani King, AL Albert Linkowski, SL Stephen Long, LL Laura Look, KM Kai Mills, JM John H Maurer, HN Harold Newman, FS Fred Safier, DS Dan Sandri, PS Paul Schorr, KS Kathryn Spence, GW Gail West, EW Ethan Winning, NW Niki Wixson.

Rich Stallcup Bird-a-Thon

» *Continued from Page 3*

Road revealed more Great Horned and Screech-Owls.

In all, seven Young Birders and four adults spent 88 participant-hours in the field and recorded 139 species to make this venture a successful one. Mount Diablo Audubon has pledged \$10 for each species recorded. If you wish to donate additionally, please go to www.pointblue.org/helptheenvironment/support-us/irdathon, then click on "Support a Team or Counter."

Bluebird Trails

By Georgette Howington

It often seems that there is more bad news than good news where the environment is concerned. This is why we are so pleased to report that more Western Bluebirds are now being spotted in Contra Costa County than in past years. Good weather, ample food, fewer pesticides and more available cavities such as nest boxes have made a difference for the once waning population. We are fortunate to have excellent bluebird habitat and a group of dedicated nest box monitors that devote their time and expertise every nesting season. Monitoring successfully requires skill and does make a difference. As a nest box monitor with 17 years of experience I can say that I don't know it all and I do learn something new and valuable every season. I have never met a monitor who isn't thrilled to witness fledglings leaving their nest. It is one of the most touching miracles of life that we, as birders, can witness.

Adopting a nest box trail is a commitment because nest boxes that are not monitored are at risk for many reasons. The nesting season is between early February through late July. While the California Bluebird Recovery Program acknowledges the Western Bluebird as our signature bird, we encourage conservation of all the cavity nesters and fortunately the nest boxes attract a variety of them.

Currently we have bluebird trails available for adoption in beautiful settings. All the nest boxes are in excellent shape and many are new. We have several in Moraga, one close to St. Mary's and two in Orinda. Please, email or call if you are interested in knowing their exact locations.

On November 30, at Wild Birds Unlimited, in Pleasant Hill, at 1:00-2:30 pm, there will be a CBRP workshop called, "Nest Box Monitoring 101". While we are primarily interested in having the existing trails adopted, we can also discuss your setting up a new trail or installing a few nest boxes in your backyard habitat. RSVP requested to (925) 798-0303. Bring questions!

California Bluebird Recovery Program
Georgette@birdscape.net
(925) 768-9428
www.cbrp.org
www.facebook.com/bluebirdrecovery



Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

November

- 18 Tuesday McNabney Marsh/Mountain View Sanitary
- 22 Saturday Charleston Slough/South Bay
- 29 Saturday Limantour

December

- 6-7 Saturday/Sunday Sacramento Refuges
- 11 Thursday Niles Area
- 17 Wednesday Christmas Count/East Contra Costa
- 20 Saturday Christmas Count/Central Contra Costa
- 27 Saturday Solano County Raptors

January

- 3 Saturday Putah Creek
- 10 Saturday Panoche Valley
- 20 Tuesday Lake Merritt/Arrowhead Marsh
- 31 Saturday Las Gallinas/Rush Creek/Shollenberger Park

② Tuesday, November 18

McNabney Marsh/Mountain View Sanitary

Leader: Steve Taylor, (925) 828-8810.

Meet at 9 AM at the Mt. View Sanitary Visitor Center. Exit from I-680 southbound at Arthur Road, turn left and go under the freeway. Exit I-680 northbound at Pacheco Blvd., turn right onto Arthur Road and go under the freeway. Arthur Road will turn left. At 0.4 miles turn sharp left onto Mt. View Sanitary's private road. Follow the road through the entry gate, alongside the freeway and through the tunnel under I-680. Park and sign-in at the Visitor Center. Trails may be muddy. Close-up looks at dabbling ducks; possibly bitterns and herons. After walking around the ponds we will drive back through the tunnel to the viewing platform on the left to observe more birds and also complete a check list of the birds we saw at the ponds. If you wish, bring a lunch and explore Martinez shoreline in the afternoon on your own.

② Saturday, November 22

Charleston Slough/South Bay

Leader: Eugenia Larson, (925) 806-0644

Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride. Meet at Terminal Road in Mountain View at 8:30 AM. Take I-680, exit Mission Boulevard west. Continue through two traffic lights and take I-880 ramp south. Exit to SR 237, connect to US 101 north at Moffett Field. Exit at San Antonio Road, turn right (north) to Terminal Road, turn right and park. Entrance is on left. Other areas of interest in the South Bay are Palo Alto Baylands, Alviso and Redwood Shores. Shorebirds and waterfowl should be plentiful. Bring lunch and a beverage.

BLACK-NECKED STILT, BETH BRANTHAVER



① Saturday, November 29

Limantour

Leader: Maury Stern, (925) 284-5980.

Carpool leaves at 7:00 AM from El Nido Ranch Road. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Point Reyes National Seashore. Take SR 24 to Oakland, then I-580W to Richmond and the San Rafael Bridge (toll). From US 101N, take Central San Rafael exit. Go 2 blocks, turn left on 3rd Street and continue west to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake. At SR 1 at Olema, turn right for 0.25 miles, then turn left on Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. This trip includes forest birds on the ridge and ducks, shorebirds and often loons and grebes on the bay. Bring lunch and a beverage.



Osprey over Limantour. Photo by Beth Branthaever.

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: **El Nido Ranch Road**—Exit SR 24 at St. Stephens Drive east of Orinda. El Nido Ranch Road is parallel to and north of the freeway. Park just east of the intersection with St. Stephens Drive. **Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride Lot**—Just south of Danville, exit I-680 at Sycamore Valley Road to the east; the Park and Ride lot is on the left.

Trip Reports

Rio Lindo Academy, September 20. Late September is the best time to see giant flocks of Vaux's Swifts congregating and then entering unused chimneys for a night's rest. They are in the midst of their southward fall migration, a journey which will end in southern Mexico and Central America. A chimney they like to use in our area is located at Rio Lindo Academy, just outside Healdsburg; this is a chimney which has been out of use since 1989. This year nine chapter members and guests made the nearly two-hour trip to view the evening spectacle. We were not disappointed, as the Swifts were circling overhead even as we gathered to eat our dinners while sitting on lawn chairs. Just as they seemed to be peaking, filling the skies above, 40–50 Turkey Vultures joined them, eventually circling higher and higher before disappearing. Checking the time when the swifts first entered the chimney and then watching until it was almost too dark to see the last one enter, we realized the swifts had been flying into the chimney for 40 minutes. They do not always enter at a maximum rate of 360 birds per minute, but probably did so for 30–35 minutes. The official count for the evening was 11–12,000 Vaux's Swifts. We also had three American Crows fly by, heard a Killdeer, and a single falcon was seen flying too high to identify.

Hugh Harvey



Philadelphia Vireo. Photo by Beth Branthaver.

Outer Point Reyes, September 27. MDAS annual fall trip to Outer Point Reyes dawned with blue skies and temperatures forecast for the 60s. After the obligatory fortification stop at the Point Reyes Station Bovine Bakery, participants gathered at the Point Reyes Visitor Center before heading out to the Mendoza Ranch (Historic Ranch B) to begin the day's activities. Earlier in the week on a scouting visit, a Philadelphia Vireo had been found and it was hoped it would be encountered again—however this was not to be. Several Great Horned Owls and Barn Owls together with Western Bluebirds nevertheless were observed in the trees overlooking the pond. Again following postings of others earlier in the week as well as results of our own scouting trip, we next headed to the Fish Docks to see what migrants/vagrants might still be around. The pine trees past the park residence on the way to the lifeboat station proved quite birdy—notable finds were Nashville,

Yellow, Palm, and Myrtle's Warblers, Brown Creeper and Hermit Thrush. In trees opposite the park residence we found a Warbling Vireo. The day was ended at Drake's Beach searching the willows and beach areas for additional migrants—here a Black-throated Gray Warbler was found. A Common Loon, together with several Western Grebes, was sighted off the beach. After compiling our list for the day, we ended up observing and/or hearing 65 species. A total of 14 participants enjoyed a great day's birding.

David Hutton

What's the Difference?

Philadelphia Vireos have the most northerly summer range of all vireos. They breed across much of Canada, from eastern British Columbia to the St. Lawrence River basin. They winter in Central America. During spring and fall migration, they occur widely throughout the United States. They migrate at night, and so are only rarely seen in Philadelphia. John Cassin, who described and named this bird in 1851 noted, "I shot the bird now described in Bingham's Woods near Philadelphia in September, 1842, but have never seen another specimen."



Warbling Vireo. Photo by Beth Branthaver.

MDAS member Eugenia Larson says "An immature Warbling Vireo can show light wing bars, but my research shows that Philadelphias never do. Also, the black line through the eye on Philadelphias is very obvious in all the photographs that I found, but not on Warbling Vireos, though it can be a faint one and usually much thinner and shorter. Also, the amount of yellow is greater on Philadelphias and brighter than it ever is in immature Warblings."

Philadelphia Vireos are slightly smaller, with a rounder head and shorter tail than Warbling Vireos. Philadelphia Vireos typically are much brighter yellow on the throat and breast, whereas Warbling Vireos tend to be brighter on the flanks or vent.

Trip Reports



Barn Owl, Point Reyes, September 27. Photo by Lori Stoneman

Antioch Dunes, September 13. No report was submitted for this trip, but participants would have had the opportunity to view a new 18-foot wide kiosk at the entrance to the refuge that explains the restorations under way for the benefit of the federally endangered Lange's metalmark butterfly, Contra Costa wallflower and Antioch Dunes evening primrose that Antioch Dunes NWR was created to protect. The project is a cooperative inter-agency effort to reuse sand dredged from the nearby San Joaquin River for restoration of depleted sand dunes at the site. Now, thanks to coordination among the Port of Stockton—which donated the kiosk—the Army Corp of Engineers and the Fish & Wildlife Service, critical refuge habitat will be revived.

The banks of the San Joaquin River, in the northeastern reaches of the San Francisco Bay estuary, were once lined with sand dunes twelve stories high. But decades of sand mining and encroaching development from heavy industries like shipbuilding have reduced the dunes to a few patches of land along the river, squeezing out much of the endemic wildlife that once called the dunes home.



Wildlife Specialist Louis Terrazas, San Francisco Bay Refuge Complex Manager Anne Morkill, Cay Goude, Asst. Field Supervisor for the FWS's Sacramento FWO, and Antioch Dunes NWR manager Don Brubaker at the newly unveiled kiosk Photo Credit: USFWS

Hawk Hill, October 4. It was a day typical of a Bay Area October heat wave. Because there was no fog whatsoever and it got warm quickly, birding was rather slow at Rodeo Lagoon. The eight of us

did see Ruddy Ducks, Eared and Pied-billed Grebes, both egrets and a Great Blue Heron in the water. There were Common Yellowthroats and Marsh Wrens around the edges, at least 30 Violet-green Swallows in the air, and on the trail the best sightings were Ruby-crowned Kinglets and at least three cooperative Wrentits. Three birders then dropped out and five of us were left to go up to Hawk Hill. There, though we had glorious views of bay, ocean, and hills from Mount Diablo to the Farallones, again the birding was rather slow. We did have five White-throated and 30 Vaux's Swifts, plus another 50 or so Violet-green Swallows. The expected raptors passed by in low numbers, but at least one Broad-winged Hawk, one American Kestrel, and one Northern Harrier put in an appearance. We ended by counting 38 species for the day.

Fred Safier



Dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk. Photo by Beth Branthaver.

Hayward Regional Shoreline, October 7. A beautiful, windless day greeted four members as they birded the north section of the shoreline. We started walking back along Winton Avenue, then turned through the dump entrance, and approached Frank's Dump from the back northeast corner. We started that direction because we were trying to see a raptor on a far high-voltage tower. That bird was a dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk, one of seven raptor species we spotted. The others included Northern Harrier, Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel and Turkey Vulture (if this bird may still be considered a raptor). In the flats of Frank's Dump were thousands of shorebirds of 13 species; predominately Marbled Godwits, Dunlin, Willets, Long-billed Curlews, Western and Least Sandpipers. We also saw Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, a Greater Yellowlegs, Black-bellied Plovers, some Ruddy Turnstones, a heard Killdeer and Dowitchers. We returned to Winton Avenue by crisscrossing Mt. Trashmore, hoping to find Horned Larks or Longspurs. We did not, but had plenty of American Pipits and some Western Meadowlarks. The last bird we saw before reaching our cars was a Say's Phoebe. When we did our checklist, we found we had seen or heard 59 species.

Hugh Harvey



American Crow.
Sketch by Meg Sandri

Half of North America's Birds at Risk from Global Warming



Five birds of 314 species at risk from global warming: American Kestrel, Western Gull, Brown Pelican, Short-eared Owl, American Avocet.

Half of the bird species in the continental U.S. and Canada are threatened by global warming. Many of these species could go extinct without decisive action to protect their habitats and reduce the severity of global warming. That's the startling conclusion reached by Audubon scientists in a new study.

Here in California, birds threatened by global warming include Allen's Hummingbird, Burrowing Owl, American White Pelican and Golden Eagle. Of 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050; a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today.

"The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming," said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. "That's our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful

and thorough research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds—and the rest of us—depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively to avoid catastrophe for them and us."

Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed more than 40 years of historical North American climate data and millions of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey's North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count to understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them. Understanding those links allows scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive—and not survive—in the future.

The study offers an invaluable new way for Audubon to discuss and address global warming by bringing the issue into backyards and neighborhoods across America. It also reveals areas that are likely to remain stable for birds even as climate changes, enabling Audubon to identify "stronghold"

areas that birds will need to survive in the future. The result is a road map for bird conservation in coming decades under a warming climate.

The study provides a key entry point for Audubon's greater engagement on the urgent issue of global warming. Responding to the magnitude of the threat to our birds, Audubon is greatly expanding its climate initiative, aiming to engage a larger and more diverse set of voices in support of protecting birds.

Solutions will include personal choices to conserve energy and create backyard bird habitat, local action to create community climate action plans, state-based work to increase rooftop solar and energy efficiency, and our work in Important Bird Areas and other efforts to protect and expand bird habitats.

For more information, visit Audubon.org/Climate.



Five more birds of 314 species at risk from global warming: Allen's Hummingbird, Willet, Western Screech Owl, Wood Duck, Greater White-fronted Goose. All photos by Ellis Myers.

Adolphus Heermann

» Continued from Page 12

to membership despite a lack of scientific training but having provided excellent means for obtaining specimens.

The years following the Bear Flag Rebellion and the Columbia gold discovery opened California and the southwest generally to what has been described as the Golden Age of western ornithology. In the years 1849 through 1852, notable avian explorers such as William Gambel and Audubon's taxidermist John G. Bell travelled and collected widely. Heermann was among them, first arriving in 1849 and remaining in the west for nearly three years. He and his brother Theodore are listed in the 1850 census data from Sacramento, and he travelled and collected specimens from locations as far away as San Diego and Guaymas, Mexico.

It was on this trip that he discovered the Heerman's Gull, *Larus heermanni*, later named after him by his collaborator John Cassin. On his return to Philadelphia, his western collections, including 1200 bird skins, were said in the *Smithsonian Report* for 1853 to "far exceed in number and value all others previously made in that region." His journals detail the location and conditions of his explorations, but do not include the method of preparation of the skins, which was essentially a liberal application

of arsenic powder. John Townsend, an earlier collector, had died of probable arsenic poisoning in 1851, and Heermann's later physical difficulties were equally likely a result of this method of preserving scientific specimens. Cassin described his own illnesses as a result of "mortgaging myself by perpetual lease to Arsenic."

After completing an exhaustive catalogue of the Philadelphia Academy's egg collection, complete with colored drawings, Heermann returned to California in 1853 and 1854 as naturalist and surgeon for two successive Pacific Railway surveys with the Army Corps of Engineers, for which he wrote the ornithological reports. His journey took him through Texas, where he and brother Theodore purchased large tracts of ranchland near San Antonio, in the "German Belt" of the state. It was here, by then part of the Confederacy, that he would finally settle while the Civil War raged, and it was here that he would later meet his untimely death.

Heermann's second trip to California and the west coincided with the founding of the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, but his collecting remained dedicated to Philadelphia. Back in that city following the expeditions, he was active with Cassin in reviewing papers for publica-

tion, and his regularly donated specimens included reptiles, insects, mammals, birds, and more human skulls, provenance unspecified. He contributed several articles to Cassin's uncompleted *Illustrations of Birds of California, Texas, Oregon, British and Russian America*.

By 1862, his progressive "locomotor ataxia" was noted by observers, and when he was visited in Texas by H. E. Dresser, a British ornithologist, the crippling it caused him was nearly disabling. "To avoid a fall, we used, when he rode with me, to strap his legs to the saddle," Dresser later recounted. Finally, Dresser reported a letter from Theodore Heermann in 1865, "The doctor would go out alone, taking his gun to obtain some specimens of birds, and was found one day, dead, having evidently stumbled and fallen, and his gun going off had killed him."

The breadth of his exploration, discoveries, and collecting are revealed in the common names of Heermann's Gull, Heermann's Kangaroo Rat, Heerman's Tortoise, Heermann's Tarweed, and Heermann's Song Sparrow. Professionals and amateurs alike who study the scientific names of western flora and fauna will find species named "*heermannii*" repeatedly from California to Texas, in honor of his contributions.

Song Sparrow ♦ *Melospiza melodia*

a

Ralph Hoffmann, in his singular 1927 book *Birds of the Pacific States* says: "Song Sparrows are birds of the brushy borders of streams or stream beds, or the tall weedy growths of irrigated land. When a Song Sparrow faces an observer, the blotch on the middle of the breast and the brown lines at the sides of the throat offer characteristic field marks. The brown of these markings and the brown of the back varies from light reddish brown to almost black in the different subspecies. Where the Vesper Sparrow is absent, as in most of California, there is no song with which the Song Sparrow's could be confused, except that of the Bewick Wren. There are two birds with which the Song Sparrow might be confused in appearance, the Lincoln Sparrow and the Savannah Sparrow."

In the science of ecology, Gloger's Rule asserts that birds in warm or humid areas

tend to be darker than birds in cool or dry habitats. This is especially true of Song Sparrows. Southern California birds such as the *M. m. heermanni* group are brighter than the birds of northern California and Oregon. The range of Heermann's Song Sparrow ranges from eastern Contra Costa County and the San Joaquin Valley south to San Diego and Baja California.

The Bay Area species are the Alameda Song Sparrow (*M. m. pusillula*), in the South Bay, Samuel's Song Sparrow (*M. m. samuelis*) in the North Bay, and Suisun Song Sparrow (*M. m. maxillaris*) in Suisun Bay from the Carquinez Strait east



Heermann's Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia heermanni*)
Mission Trails Park, San Diego, California.

Photo courtesy Greg Gillson. <http://sandiegogreg.blogspot.com/>.

to Antioch. All are on the California list of birds of special concern.

Hawk Hill Revisited

By Mike Eliot



In September we drove out to Hawk Hill, a beautiful spot at the top of the Marin Headlands portion of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

This area is known for the thousands of raptors that cross over it as they migrate inland from the north and south coasts. The prevailing westerly winds and updrafts help keep them aloft as they cruise effortlessly over the headlands.

On this day, we were treated to large numbers of Cooper's, Sharp shinned, and Red-tailed Hawks, Turkey Vultures, and Peregrine Falcons, among others.

The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) groups count the appearance of these birds throughout the fall. Their daily count averages upwards of 400 sighted per four-hour period from mid-August until the end of October each year. Counts can range from about 70 to 150 raptors sighted per hour with an average of 10 to 15 species seen each day. You can find these counts online.

The placement of this hill, between the entrance to the bay and a deep valley that runs out to the surf, make it a perfect spot to view the migration and antics of these beautiful animals as they interact with the environment and each other.

Often you will see a Peregrine Falcon or American Kestrel dive deeply toward the earth only to recover a few feet from the ground. They often playfully attack Turkey Vultures or Red-tails. The pairs will tumble and twist trying to out-manuever one another. No one appears to get hurt, but the activity makes everyone watching go "OOOOOH!!"

Some of the other birds seen include Northern Harrier, Broad-winged Hawk, Merlin, Golden Eagle, Swainson's Hawks, Ferruginous Hawk, Osprey, and White-tailed Kite.

Mid-fall is the best time to visit. Bring binocs or a scope and a warm drink. Dress in layers, as the fog can roll in and change the temperature by 20 degrees in just minutes.

You can easily reach the area from San Francisco or from the North on Hwy. 101. The GGNRA exit is between the Golden Gate Bridge and the Waldo tunnel. Entry and parking are free. There is a somewhat steep walk about ½ mile up from the parking area, but it is a well-used trail, with some steps. Maps are available on the GGNRA website

Bioenergy is for the Birds. Really!

In a study published recently by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources scientists examined whether corn and perennial grassland fields in southern Wisconsin could provide both biomass for bioenergy production and bountiful bird habitat.

They found that where there are grasslands, there are birds. Grass-and-wildflower-dominated fields supported more than three times as many bird species as cornfields, including ten imperiled species found only in the grasslands. These grassland fields can also produce ample biomass for renewable fuels.

The researchers hope the findings help drive decisions that benefit both birds and biofuels, too, by providing information for land managers, farmers, conservationists and policy makers as the bioenergy industry ramps up, particularly in Wisconsin and the central U.S.

As bioenergy production demand increases, we should pay attention to the ecological consequences. This is especially true for grassland birds, as populations of species like the Eastern Meadowlark, Dickcissel and the Bobolink have declined in recent decades.

The research team carefully selected 30 different grassland sites—three of which are already used for small-scale bioenergy production—and 11 cornfields in southern Wisconsin. Over the course of two years, the team characterized the vegetation growing in each field, calculated and estimated the biomass yields possible, and counted the total numbers of birds and bird species observed in them.

The study is one of the first to examine grassland fields already producing biomass for biofuels and is one of only a few analyses to examine the impact of bioenergy production on birds.



Bobolink. Photo by Beth Branthver

While previous studies suggest corn is a more profitable biofuel crop than grasses and other types of vegetation, the new findings indicate grassland fields may represent an acceptable tradeoff between creating biomass for bioenergy and providing habitat for grassland birds. The landscape could benefit other species, too.

Because they are perennial, the grassland fields can also be used year after year, following best management practices that preserve the health of the soil and provide reliable habitat for migratory birds.

Plant diversity is good for wildlife diversity. The study suggests diverse bioenergy crop fields could benefit birds more so than less diverse fields. Among the grasslands studied, the team found monoculture grasses supported fewer birds and fewer bird species than grasslands with a mix of grass types and other kinds of vegetation, like wildflowers.

The team found that the presence of grasslands within one kilometer of the study sites also helped boost bird species diversity and bird density in the area.

This is an opportunity, say the scientists, to inform large-scale land use planning. By locating biomass-producing fields near existing grasslands, both birds and the biofuels industry can win.

Incentives for a conservation-minded approach could be used to help offset potential differences in profit, the researchers suggest. They also add that the biomass yields calculated in the study may represent the low end of what is possible, given that one of the two study years, 2012, occurred during a significant drought period in the state.

Hopefully, this study points to a future where we can produce renewable energy and provide habitat for rare birds in harmony with each other.

Excerpted from Science Daily

Gentle Fall Reminders

By Joanie Smith

1. Please keep your feeders clean.

Dirty feeders can spread disease. Clean your tube feeders easily with long bottle brushes and warm, soapy water. Birds will eat wet seed, but not moldy seed.

2. Keep bird baths clean and full.

Birds do bathe in winter to keep their feathers clean. They preen to distribute oil from the oil gland at the base of their tail for water-proofing. If you refill your baths daily or every other day you don't need to worry about mosquitoes (mosquitoes are still present in late fall). If you can't refill it often enough use a mosquito treatment in the water. It is safe for everyone. Or, use the Water Wiggler. It is battery operated and causes the water to ripple enough to keep mosquitoes from landing on the surface. There are solar water wigglers, too. You can use Fountec or an enzyme cleaner to keep algae from growing.

3. Clean out your birdhouses.

Birds are done with the nesting season. They do use nest boxes as a refuge in winter, but don't need a nest in the box. Just open up the box and remove the old nest. They'll rebuild in the spring. If you feel the nest box needs cleaning you can use mild soap and warm water, let dry and re-hang. The birds will appreciate their winter cabin.

4. Late fall is really the best time to trim your trees and shrubs.

It's better for the plants as they prepare for the dormant season and the breeding season is done, even for the squirrels (if that's even possible). November and December are safe months for trimming.

5. Late fall when the weather gets hot and dry the moth eggs in domestic seeds and grains will hatch.

Freezing the seed greatly reduces the moth problem, but it's not always easy to find room in the freezer for seed. It doesn't matter whether you store your seed in metal or plastic—the moth eggs are already present and will hatch if the weather conditions are right (especially if you're not going through the seed fast enough). Buying smaller amounts of seed at a time is a good idea until the weather cools. If you do get moths Pantry Pest moth traps work great.

6. Although the baby bird season is over it's always a good idea to keep cats indoors

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

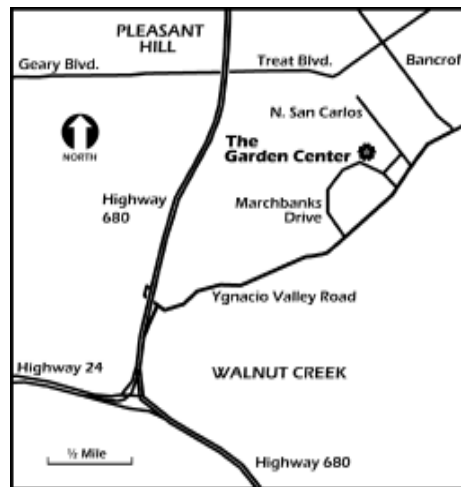
Mount Diablo Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon, is committed to the sustainable balance of our community's people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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Quail Editor



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. [Note: Second Thursday, January 8, 2015.]

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Please enroll my family and me as a member of Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year. Membership dues are tax deductible.

I'm enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society. NAS dues are separate from Mount Diablo Audubon dues.

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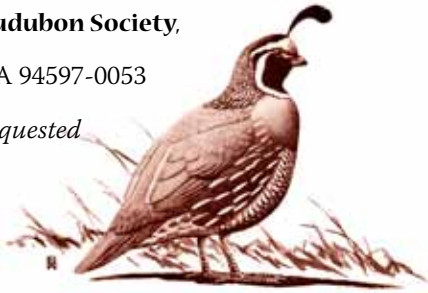
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Heermann's Gull...Ellis Myers photo.

Adolphus Heermann Ornithologist ♦ Oölogist ♦ Botanist

How someone with the indisputable wilderness and survival savvy of Adolphus Lewis Heermann could have come to be called "Big Dolly" by his compatriots on a hunting trip to the Rocky Mountains is lost to the mists of history, but his surname remains as the common name of a distinctive western gull and as part of the scientific species names for several other birds, plants, and mammals. His collections formed an integral part of more than one natural history museum's avian holdings, and he is credited with coining the term "Oölogy" for the scientific study of bird eggs.

He was born in New Orleans in 1821, the oldest of five sons of an eminent naval surgeon who served under Stephen Decatur, and for whom the USS Heermann was named. When their father died in 1833, the five boys were given a Navy pension of \$35 a month, equivalent to \$700 today, which no doubt supplemented an estate worth

over \$5 million. Adolphus and his younger brother Theodore were first sent to a boarding school in Connecticut and later joined their mother and other siblings in Europe. In 1842 Adolphus and Theodore returned to the US, and by 1845 were studying medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, along with a third brother, Valentine.

In 1845 Adolphus was elected a member of the Philadelphia Academy, to which he had donated two bird eggs from Switzerland. This was just the first of what would be a lifelong pattern of presentation, description, and discussion of a wide variety of his preserved specimens ranging from reptiles to rodents and birds, which were all added to the Academy's collections. The early donations even included a human skull from his medical training.

He received his M.D. in Baltimore at the University of Maryland in 1846, with a dissertation on fevers. In 1848 he went on an extended hunting and collecting



Adolphus Heermann

trip overland to Florida with John Krider, a celebrated Philadelphia gunsmith. Writing about their experiences, Krider described killing 60–100 birds per day, most of which were prepared as specimens and given to the Academy. Krider was also later elected

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