



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

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Black Oystercatchers ♦ Anna Weinstein

The Black Oystercatcher is the charismatic, signature bird of the rocky intertidal zone, one of California's and the west coast's iconic habitats. Commonly seen yet globally rare, there is no mistaking its bright orange beak or distinctive call.

There are thought to be no more than 12,000 of these birds ranging from the Aleutian Islands through Baja. The species is utterly dependent on rocky intertidal habitats, plying limpets, snails, mussels and other invertebrates from marine terraces and rocky shorelines.

Despite the popularity of Oystercatchers, until recently little was known of its demography (status and distribution) in California. It is a Special Status Species of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service due to its rarity and vulnerability to a number of threats. The rangewide conservation action plan developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and partners calls for more baseline understanding of the species in California.

In response to this need, and to capitalize on the robust citizen science capacity in our coastal chapters, in 2011 Audubon California conducted the first-ever survey of Black Oystercatcher in California. Protocols were adapted from the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Service monitoring program, which includes the results of five years of citizen science monitoring in Oregon. Over 150 dedicated participants drawn from coastal chapters and from agencies found more Oystercatchers in just a part of our state's suitable habitat, than were previously estimated for the state as a whole. Over 1300 birds and over 170 nests were detected. This result combined with high densities of breeding Oystercatchers in certain areas has shone light on the importance of California to the species.



Black Oystercatchers, Audubon California photo.

In 2012 and 2013 an additional >60 surveyors tracked Oystercatcher reproductive success at over 100 nests from Mendocino to Morro Bay. This information will create a more complete baseline assessment, and help to understand the conservation status and trajectory of the species in California.

There may be more Oystercatchers here than had been thought, but the threats are real and growing: sea level rise, ocean acidification, and increased recreational and commercial use of coastal areas. Audubon will use the science generated by survey participants to create an informed list of conservation best practices to disseminate to a broad audience of coastal managers and users.

Continued on Page 3»

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, December 4**, 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: **Anna Weinstein**

* Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, January 8:

TBA

TBA

BIRDING INFORMATION

Mike Lynes, Policy Director for Audubon California, will discuss Audubon's Climate Change Initiative and how local chapters can become involved. Shifting ranges could imperil 314 species, including many birds in our area. Mr. Lynes will explain the science behind the new report and actions our members can take to help local species.

President's Corner

By Jimm Edgar

I received a phone call a while back from a reporter from KGO radio. She wanted to interview me for a story she was doing on Wild Turkeys, particularly turkeys at the Lafayette reservoir. As it turned out we could never get together so I am not sure what she ever did about the turkeys. I did have a few things to say to her but not a lot of hard scientific information. As far as I know we are not really sure why turkeys have become so common. I was going to mention to her the fact that American Crows have also become far more common than they used to be. Not sure why that has happened either. I saw a special recently on the TV show "Nature" about crows. I hope all of you watch this series. It has some really wonderful shows and is on KQED on Wednesdays at 8 PM. This show on crows was amazing. I think you all know a flock of crows is called a murder of crows. The origin of that term is obscure, but if you've ever heard dozens of agitated crows in full cry, it really does sound as if they're yelling bloody murder. The show was about a couple of studies being done on crows. One

that was featured mainly was at the University of Washington. They had tagged some young birds and followed them through a couple of years. They learned that crows can learn to use tools. Very fascinating. The study concluded that crows were smarter than primates. Crows had over 250 different calls that all had some meaning. They did things like remember when garbage day was since they would pick through the garbage for food. I don't know if I am more thrilled about all the crows or not but it sure was a great special. This episode "A Murder of Crows" can be seen on your computer at <http://video.pbs.org/video/1621910826/>.

Our MDAS Christmas Bird Counts are coming up in December. These are always fun and part of a long tradition for the chapter. The central count is Saturday, December 20, and the east county count is Tuesday, December 17. Let me or co-compiler Maury Stern know if you have interest in participating.

One of the main reasons our MDAS chapter is able to survive financially is that our former newsletter editor, Jean Rich-

Good News for Whooping Cranes

Four Whooping Crane chicks raised in captivity began their integration into the wild in early fall as part of the continuing effort to increase the wild population of this endangered species.

The cranes, hatched and raised by their parents at the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, were released on the Fish and Wildlife Service's Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.

The chicks, about six-months old, are part of an experimental rearing and release method referred to as "parent-rearing." The parent-reared Whooping Crane chicks were hatched and raised by captive adult Whooping Cranes. This method relies entirely on the expertise of captive parents who care for, exercise, and feed the chicks.

Over the past 13 years, USGS biologists—dressed in costumes to avoid having the birds "imprint" on people—have raised between five and 20 Whooping Crane chicks annually that have been released into the Eastern Migratory Flock. This new method of allowing captive adult cranes to rear the chicks prior to release into the wild is intended to evaluate the effects of rearing by



Whooping Crane and two Sandhill Cranes, Necedah NWR, Wisconsin. Photo by Ellis Myers.

humans in costume, which is obviously an odd condition. Parent-rearing may result in the chicks learning behavior important to their survival and reproduction.

In the 1940s, there were only 15 of these large, white birds left in the world. Today the population is estimated to be approximately 425 in the wild, with another 125 in captivity.

Welcome New Members

Isaac Aronow	Martinez
Celeste Graham	Concord
Ruthie Griffith	Benicia
Richard Lennig	Pleasant Hill
Julie Ross	Pleasant Hill
Brian Sorrig	Danville
Jerry & Maren Smith	Walnut Creek
Dave and Bev Tucker	Concord
BriAnna Weldon	Concord

mond, wrote the book *Birding Northern California*. It sold thousands of copies, beginning in 1985, and though out of print now the complete book is available in PDF format on our MDAS website. [Go to www.diabloaudubon.com; click on "Birding", then on "Northern California Birding", and on "Download Here: Birding Northern California by Jean Richmond."] I was recently reading one of my favorite birding magazines, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and the author of one of the articles mentioned Jean's book. The author, Rick Gjervold, is a professor at North Dakota State University and was visiting California with his family and they went up to the Sacramento NWR. They used Jean's book to guide them. Pretty cool, I thought.

We continue to have great programs and lots of field trips so please take advantage of them.



Q The scientific name for this species is *S. decaocto*. The specific name *decaocto* (pronounced "deca-octo") is Latin for "18".

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 8 to learn more.

AAACDDEEEILLNOORSUV

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 February issue is January 13.**

January ✦ A Murder of Crows

Crows do not have the best of reputations. They are generally dismissed as spooky—Hitchcock used them quite successfully to frighten moviegoers—or as a general nuisance. Crows are a part of myths and legends in many cultures. Their reputation in stories varies from comical to frightening, godlike or wise, bringers of light and bringers of death, though a “murder” of crows refers to a flock of crows, and not to anything murderous, at all.

But their image is about to take a real turn. New research has shown that crows are among the most intelligent animals in the world, able to use tools as only elephants and chimpanzees do, able to recognize each other's voices and 250 distinct calls. The distress call brings other crows to their aid, as crows will defend unrelated crows.

One particular talent they have been discovered to possess is the ability to recognize individual human faces and pick them out of a crowd up to two



American Crow. Photo © Eric Rosenberg, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center

years later—a trick that might make even Hitchcock shiver with fright.

A Murder of Crows, a PBS Nature documentary, highlights these new research findings and includes stories of how crows have used their great intelligence to adapt again and again to a constantly changing world. Some memorize garbage truck routes, and follow the feast from day to day. Others drop nuts in the road

and wait for passing cars to crack them open. And some build their nests from items we throw away—like wire clothes hangers.

These are social birds that mate for life and raise their young for up to five years. And they learn from each other's misfortunes. When one is killed in a farmer's field, it's not uncommon for them to change entire migratory patterns so that no crows fly over that field for as long as two years.

These birds might have a scary reputation, but what may prove to be the scariest thing about them is how

much they know about us, and how little we know about them! Crow experts from around the world sing their praises, and present us with captivating new footage of crows as we have never seen them before.

BIRDING INFORMATION

In January, compilers Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern will present our annual update of the Central Contra Costa County and the East County Christmas Bird Counts.

Meeting Schedule

The January meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, January 8**, 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 **A Murder of Crows**

*Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, February 5: Bob Lewis
Birds of Colombia

Black Oystercatchers

» *Continued from Page 1*

You can help Oystercatchers by watching and listening for their alarm calls in the spring and summer when they nest on rocks, islets, and sometimes in mainland areas. Leave the immediate area where they are likely defending their nest and brood. Tell others about oystercatchers and how to protect them. And just enjoy this handsome, territorial marine shorebird!

Coffee for Holiday Giving

Your family and friends most likely would welcome a flavorful gift for the festive season: shade-grown coffee. Until recently that's how all coffee grew: in the shade on small family farms. Canopy trees above provided shade along with a natural leaf mulch that kept soil moist, prevented soil erosion, and decomposed to provide nutrients. The canopy typically included fruit and nut trees that provided food for the farm family.

Twenty years ago, researchers from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center recognized that shade-grown coffee farms also provide habitat for birds second only to undisturbed tropical forests. Those forests are being cleared to create large, single-crop coffee plantations. Pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizers and irrigation are all required when coffee production works against nature, not with. No Baltimore Orioles sing from the treetops in sun-grown coffee plantations. There are no treetops!

To support traditional family-run coffee farms, the Smithsonian developed a Bird-Friendly® certification process. Certified Organic and Fair Trade coffees are easily found. As for price, shade-grown fits in the middle of the specialty coffees: not the cheapest, not the most expensive. And the coffee tastes better because shade-coffee beans ripen more slowly, resulting in a richer flavor.

Two Smithsonian Bird-Friendly certified coffees are now available at Whole Foods Markets nationwide, offered by their wholly-owned subsidiary Allegro Coffee Roasters. They are Early Bird Blend and Nicaragua Selva Negra. Other sources of certified blends include Birds and Beans (www.birdsandbeans.com). Their Holiday special includes 12 20-oz. bags of five different roasts for \$115, shipping included. "Audubon" brand shade-grown coffee is available at Amazon.com and at Rogers Family Coffee.

Observations

By Maury Stern

Ring-necked Ducks and **Buffleheads** returned to Heather Farm Pond 11/2. FS, HH, DS, BE. Ring-necked Ducks were at the Moraga Country Club ponds, as were six **Hooded Mergansers** on 11/9 by JuCo.

Sixty **Common Goldeneyes** were seen in the Briones Reservoir from the Bear Valley Overlook 10/28. WH.

AL saw or heard **Black Rail** and **Sora** at the Martinez RS 10/28.

PY saw 10 **Elegant Terns** on the mudflats of Point Isabel 10/17. DW saw one at Miller-Knox Park 11/1.

LL discovered 15 **Lewis's Woodpeckers** on the Oursan Trail off the Briones Reservoir Staging area off Bear Valley Road on 10/15. Since then variously 4-12 have been seen. TH, JH, JB, ER, JC, MS,GT.

Individual **Yellow-shafted Northern Flickers** were at Valle Vista Staging Area 10/18, ST, and at the start of the Oursan Trail, AL. 10/24. A number of intergrade Red- and Yellow-shafted Flickers have been reported.

A **Peregrine Falcon** was at the Briones Reservoir 11/2. ER, JC.

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was observed by AL at Briones RP 11/2-3.

Late-leaving **Western Wood-Pewees** were at Ellis Lake Park in Concord 10/16, AL, and Valle Vista Staging Area 10/18. BL, MK.

The **Tropical Kingbird** continues at Heather Farm and has been seen by many. HH, FS, JH, JB, TE, BP, BM, B&CH, CS, JR, DS, MKr, NW, DK, GZ.

A late **Western Kingbird** was at Inspiration Point, Tilden RP, 10/31. MO.

A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at Heather Farm pond 10/26. BD, LW; 11/7. FS; and 11/9. PB.

The return of the **Varied Thrush** to help in the autumn harvest of toyon and other berries has been noted by RH at Tilden RP, 11/4; by NB at Wildcat Canyon RP, 11/5; by GT in Briones RP on the Oursan Trail 11/8; and by JuCo at Jewel Lake on 11/10. .

A **Black-and-White Warbler** was first seen 10/23 at the Heather Farm Pond and has continued through 11/11. TE, HH, AL, LW, BP, B&CH, CS, BE, DK, GZ, RC, TR.

A **Hermit Warbler** was at Jewel Lake in Tilden RP on 11/3, NJ.

MJ saw two late **Western Tanagers** in Larkey Park 10/25.

A **Chipping Sparrow** in non-breeding plumage was at Point Pinole RS 10/30. LL.

KF saw a first of season **White-throated Sparrow** 10/21 at Ferry Point in Point Richmond. Another White-throated Sparrow was seen by KS.

BD saw three **Pine Siskins** at Heather Farm 10/26, and AK saw one at his home near Wildcat Canyon Park. Siskins, an eruptive species, may flock to your thistle feeder one winter and be absent the next. This year they are being reported from many locations.

A flock of nine **Evening Grosbeaks** flew over Sequoia Bowl of Joaquin Miller Park 10/29. MR; KS saw one in Moraga 11/6.

The **Pin-tailed Whydah** near Concord High School was last reported 10/16. BF, LGL.

PB Pat Bacchetti, NB Ned Benningshof, JB John Blakelock, RC Roy Carlson, JC John Colbert, JuCo Judi Cooper, BD Bob Dunn, TF Tracy Farrington, BF Becky Flanigan, KF Kathy Francone, LGL Lita Gloor-Little, RH Roz Hardy, HH Hugh Harvey, JH Joel Herr, B&CH Brian and Cindy Hitchens, TH Tim Howe, WH Wen Hsu, NJ Nancy Johnson, MJ Megan Jankowski, DK, Dave Kent, MK Megan Kierstead, MKr, Mary Krentz, AK Alan Krakauer, BL Bob Lewis, AL Albert Linkowski, LL Laura Look, BM Bruce Mast, MO Madelyn Ore, BP Bernt Pettersson, MR Mark Rauzon, TR Ted Robertson, JR Jim Rowoth, ER Erica Rutherford, FS Fred Safier, DS Dan Sandri, CS Cathy Spaulding, KS Kathryn Spence, MS Maury Stern, GT Glen Tepke, ST Sarah Tsalbins, NW Nat Weber, LW Liz West, DW Denise Wight, PY Pam Young, GZ Gena Zolotar.

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.



Brian Murphy offers advice to Scouts from Troop 36, Walnut Creek, as they install three Barn Owl nesting boxes at Lar Rieu Park for one of the Scouts' Eagle Project to control the gopher population that has taken over the area..

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

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

February

- 7 Saturday Thornton Area/Cosumnes Preserve
- 12 Thursday Grizzly Island
- 14-15 Saturday/Sunday Los Banos/Panoche Valley
- 25 Wednesday Sunol Regional Park

Come Birding With Us!

② Saturday/Sunday, December 6/7 Sacramento Refuges

Leader: Terry Colborn,
TLCBirding@gmail.com or (530) 312-9947.

This trip is especially designed to see large numbers of wintering waterfowl in Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, Colusa National Wildlife Refuge and Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area, as well as in with other areas. Raptors are also seen during their winter stay in Northern California. This is one of the few trips which Mt. Diablo Audubon offers which has a limit on participants. Unfortunately, this year's trip is full and already has a waiting list. Please try and join us on this trip next year.

② Thursday, December 11 Niles Area

Leader: Jimm Edgar, (510) 658-2330.

Carpool leaves Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride at 8:15 AM. Meet at the Vallejo Mill Park in Fremont at 9 AM. Take I-680 south to Niles Canyon exit, turn right (west), follow SR 84 about 7 miles towards the Niles District. The park is at SR 84 and Mission Blvd. We follow Alameda Creek and visit some of the old gravel pits, which have been re-landscaped as parkland.

*Birds are flying over the garden.
What are you doing inside the house?
Join them! If you can't join them, at
least open the window and greet them!*

Mehmet Murat Ildan

Wednesday, December 17 East County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 20 Central County Christmas Bird Count

Leader: Jimm Edgar, (510) 658-2330.

It's time to mark your calendar and sign up for Mount Diablo Audubon's 2014 Christmas Bird Counts: East County on Wednesday, December 17, and Central County on Saturday, December 20. The species counts are high: Central County usually reports 150, and East County 140. And if you're new to the count, you can e-mail ag70@value.net to request sign-up forms. All birders, no matter what their experience level, are welcome. You do not need to be a member of Mount Diablo Audubon, and participation is free.

If you live within one of the count circles, you can still help by spending a few hours looking for birds at your backyard feeders. You can search for birds from dawn to dusk—or longer if you look for owls. Perhaps you know of a Barn Owl that roosts in a palm tree in your neighborhood, or maybe a White-throated Sparrow frequents your yard. You can find maps of the count circles at http://www.diabloaudubon.com/newsletter/Quail_DecJan_1011.pdf. Part of the fun is the camaraderie of dinner at day's end. Find out which group found the bird of the day, learn what species were missed, check out where rare birds were seen, relish the day's field experiences.

Co-compilers Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern invite you to join them and 70,000 other observers across the nation who will participate in this, the 115th annual Audubon CBC.

① Saturday, December 27 Southeast Solano County Raptors and More

Leader: Gary Fregien, (916) 708-0636.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:15 AM. Meet the leader at 8 AM at Suisun City McDonald's, Hwy. 12 and Sunset Avenue. Take I-680 north, cross bridge to Benicia (toll) and merge to I-80 east at Cordelia. Then take Hwy. 12 east toward Rio Vista for approximately 4 miles to Sunset Avenue, where you will make a left turn at the signal light into the shopping center. The McDonald's is on the right. We will bird east on Hwy. 12 and Creed Rd. to the vicinity of Hwy. 113 and Robinson Road, possibly including Jepson Prairie. We will make several stops, looking for migrating waterfowl, passerines and winter raptors, especially Flannery and McCormack Roads in search of the elusive Mountain Plover. From there, given time, we may travel to the Bird's Landing area, where we should see Tricolored Blackbirds among other passerines and possibly to Montezuma Slough for waterfowl. Plan to spend 3-4 hours birding, plus driving time getting there and back. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for seasonal conditions. Bring along hand held radios, food and water. Car pooling is strongly advised, due to limited access at stops and the distance traveled. Please call the leader if you plan to carpool from Sun Valley, he is driving from Sacramento to meet us in Suisun City.

January Field Trips

① Saturday, January 3 Putah Creek

Leader: Fred Safer, (925) 937-2906.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 8:00 AM. Meet at 8:45 AM at the intersection of Cherry Glen and Pleasants Valley Roads, approximately 1 mile north from I-80, west of Vacaville. Park on Cherry Glen. Dress warmly; this is a cold, windy area. Bring lunch. Possible Osprey, Phainopepla, Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser.

① Saturday, January 10 Panoche Valley

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

Carpool leaves Sycamore Valley Road at 7:00 AM. After a stop at the Larry Combs Rest Area near Westley, we will continue toward Mercey Hot Springs and the Panoche Valley. Target birds include Mountain Bluebird, Mountain Plover, Long-eared Owl and a variety of possible raptors. We will include a trip up the BLM Road. An entry fee is charged for our lunch stop and owl viewing at the Hot Springs.

① Tuesday, January 20 Lake Merritt /Arrowhead Marsh—High Tide

Leader: Sandy Ritchie, (925) 685-8048.

Carpool leaves at 8 AM from El Nido Ranch Road. Meet at 8:30 AM in parking lot by Lake Merritt. Take SR 24 to Oakland and I-980, take Grand Avenue exit and turn left on Grand. Enter park at Children's Fairyland (entry fee), and follow road around to parking lot entrance on right between boathouse and aviary. Birding through the many ducks and gulls, we may find a Tufted Duck, a bird seen almost annually. We will then drive to Arrowhead Marsh for the high tide around 11:15 AM; the rising tide should flush out rails. The area is also good for shorebirds; and often loons are on the estuary. A visit to Garretson Point will finish our trip. Bring lunch and drinks.



Black Turnstone at Arrowhead Marsh. Photo by Ellis Myers.

② Saturday, January 31

Las Gallinas/Rush Creek/Shollenberger Park

Leader: Eugenia Larson, (925) 806-0644.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley parking lot at 7:30 AM. Meet at Las Gallinas at 8:30 AM. Take I-680 across the Benicia Bridge (toll). Go west on I-780 to I-80 towards Sacramento, exit to SR 37. Follow SR 37 22 miles to US 101 south, exit at Lucas Valley Road/Smith Ranch Road. Cross under the freeway to the east on Smith Ranch Road for 0.6 miles, cross the railroad tracks and turn left. Follow the road around the hill 0.7 miles until arriving at the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District parking lot. Rush Creek Marsh is just north and east of the Atherton Avenue exit from US 101 in Novato. Immediately past the Park and Ride lot on Atherton, turn left onto Binford Road and go north to the marsh. Shollenberger Park is in Petaluma, east of US 101. Exit at Lakeville Highway, go east to S. McDowell and turn right. Look for a half-right onto Cypress Drive, then enter the PRBO parking lot at 3820 Cypress. Go to the back and park near the picnic tables. Ellis Creek is just south of the PRBO offices. All four sites are good for wintering waders, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. Bring lunch and a beverage.



Shollenberger Park. Photo by Ellis Myers.

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.

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. **Sun Valley**—Southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord. **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.

Trip Reports

Monterey Pelagic and Land Birds, October 11/12. As we boarded the Point Sur Clipper, overcast skies on a crisp fall morning greeted 25 birders from three Northern California Audubon chapters for this annual fall trip. Our Captain once again was Richard Ternullo, who has nearly 30 years of experience on Monterey Bay. Four Surfbirds, a Black Turnstone, and over one-hundred Brant's Cormorants shared the Coast Guard jetty with dozens of California Sea Lions, while several California Sea Otters provided some good photo ops. A Peregrine Falcon was high on the Monterey Bay Aquarium's radio tower. Just outside the harbor we encountered a fair number of Black-vented Shearwaters. Through the course of day we were fortunate to see two species of jaegers; Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers. At one point nine Black-footed Albatrosses landed on the water next to our boat. We also added several marine mammals including Northern Fur Seals and many Harbor Seals.

Farther out to sea, the shearwaters were plentiful, with repeated looks of Pink-footed Shearwaters, a few Sooty and several Buller's Shearwaters. We were also treated to alcid sightings including numerous Rhinoceros Auklets and well over 650

Cassin's Auklets. An unusual sighting was a single Yellow-rumped Warbler seen some five miles off shore! The pelagic birds didn't disappoint as we had a South Polar Skua and about ten Red-necked Phalaropes cruise by. A pair of Tufted Puffins sat on the water next to the boat, affording everyone great views of this uncommon species. One of our best birds of the day, however, was a fly-by Brown Booby, seen by many!

Day Two began on the rocky shoreline of Point Pinos, where a nice assortment of birds included Black-bellied Plover, Black Turnstone and several Black Oystercatchers. A Whimbrel strolled along the beach in its beautiful plumage. We spotted a lone Wandering Tattler, a regular, but uncommon, winter visitor. The near-shore rocks hosted both Brant's and Pelagic Cormorants, which nest here. Brown Pelicans cruised by, their wing tips barely above the water's surface. Across the road near the golf course, we found several Townsend's Warblers. We found a Tropical Kingbird; however, it soon disappeared. We moved on to Laguna Grande Park in Seaside, where we observed a number of new birds for the weekend, including, Warbling Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a nice male Common Yellowthroat.

Next up was a visit to Elkhorn Slough. We observed Pied-billed, Eared, Clark's

and Western Grebes and several waders including Great Egret and Great Blue Heron, while several flights of Long-billed Curlew circled overhead. A single Lesser Yellowlegs was spotted as we departed.

Our last stop for the day at Jetty Road produced hundreds of shorebirds including Killdeer, Western and Least Sandpipers. We watched scores of Marbled Godwits, Long-billed Dowitchers and Willets packed in tightly together on the pickleweed. On the nearby jetty, over one-hundred Elegant Terns loafed peacefully. From a vantage point on a bluff overlooking the ocean, we picked out several distant Snowy Plovers on the beach. Out in the ocean, we watched as five or six Humpback Whales put on a show about 300 yards offshore. A fitting end to a wonderful weekend.

We tallied 92 bird species for the weekend, and eight species of mammals.

Terry Colborn

Berkeley-Emeryville Shoreline, October 22. Ten birders arrived for a bright, sunny, calm day on the bay. Starting at the Emeryville Marina we had great views of Black Oystercatchers sunning themselves on one of the breakwaters. Nearby Pelagic Cormorants were standing next to Double-Cresteds giving us opportunities for comparison. Out in the water Horned and Eared Grebes were busy diving when an Osprey came flying by and dove in the water right in front of us. Unfortunately he came up empty. As we scanned the trees we found a pair of Townsend's Warblers.

MDAS Annual Treasurer's Report-2014

By Steve Buffi

Mount Diablo Audubon Society remains in an excellent position to serve our community. We had another successful year. The annual year-end fundraising drive continues to be strong and our total chapter membership is strong, too.

The financial health of MDAS, due to the generosity of our members, allows us to actively pursue our mission. During the year, we funded important habitat preservation projects and continued our community education outreach efforts for young people such as the "No Child Left Inside Program" and the Young Birders Club. Your generosity supports our monthly presentation program, this newsletter, the annual Christmas Count, our web site, and much more. You have read about these important community efforts in this and prior issues of the *Quail*. Each dollar you give is put to good use for the benefit of our community.

The General Fund balance covers operations and reserves, the Conservation and Education balance is used towards these efforts, and the Breeding Bird Atlas reflects the books held for sale and the results of book sales.

Funds	July 2013 – June 2014			
	Revenue	Expenses	Net	Fund Balance 7/1/2014
General	\$28,382.59	\$29,932.37	-\$1549.78	\$109,203.56
Conservation & Education	\$41.57	\$0	\$41.57	\$16,591.32
Breeding Bird Atlas	\$86.44	\$75.46	\$10.98	\$19,682.07
Total All Funds	\$28,510.60	\$30,007.83	-\$1497.23	\$145,476.95



Eurasian Wigeon. Photo by Beth Branthaver.

Behind the Sea Breeze Market & Deli we saw several duck species including a Eurasian Wigeon curled up sleeping. At Cesar Chavez we looked for the Burrowing Owl with no luck. Out on the bay we found a Clark's Grebe. For the day we had a total of 47 species.

Beth Branthaver

Abbott's Lagoon, October 25. This trip was cancelled because of rain.

Robert Ridgway

→ Continued from Page 12

sides ornithology and remains a standard among scientists. He also wrote nine volumes of *Birds of North and Middle America*. At his death on March 25, 1929, he was deeply engaged in writing the tenth volume of this work. The series was completed by the Smithsonian's Herbert Friedmann in two additional volumes.

In 1883, Robert Ridgway was a founding member of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) and he became an associate editor of the organization's journal *The Auk*. He was prevailed upon to serve as an officer of the organization, but on the condition that he not be required to preside at public meetings. He served as a vice president of the AOU from 1883 through 1891 and as its president from 1898 through 1900.

In 1915 Ridgway retired to Olney (about 30 miles northeast of his original home in Mt. Carmel) to continue his research. He developed an eighteen-acre tract nearby called Bird Haven as a bird sanctuary and experimental area for the cultivation of trees and plants native to the region. Bird

Haven and its variety of trees and birds, remains a city park of Olney and as a memorial to this much honored ornithologist.



Bald Eagle, by Robert Ridgway. *The Hawks and Owls of the United States in Their Relation to Agriculture*. A.K. Fisher, U.S.G.P.O. (1893).

Many species recognize Ridgway's esteem in their scientific names, and Ridgway's Hawk, a critically endangered bird of the Dominican Republic estimated to be reduced to fewer than 300 individuals, respects Ridgway's special interest in Middle America. In July of this year Ridgway was further honored by the naming of Ridgway's Rail. As described in the September *Quail*, *Rallus obsoletus* Ridgway includes the populations formerly called Clapper Rail that occur along the Pacific Coast of North America, the Salton Sea, and along the Colorado River. This group is characterized by their relatively small body size, by a bright rufous breast, and by their occurrence primarily in saltmarshes. Robert Ridgway contributed a significant amount of work on the Rail complex. A rail of the highland freshwater marshes of Mexico was given the name Aztec Rail, also honoring Ridgway with the scientific name *R. tenuirostris* Ridgway.



Eurasian Collared-Dove

◆ *Streptopelia decaocto*

a

The handsome Eurasian Collared-Dove was originally from India.

It gradually moved westward and had colonized Europe by 1932, Germany by 1945, and England by 1953. It was not known in the United States until 1982, when a nesting pair was reported in Florida. Birds had been imported from England by a pet shop in the Bahamas, and several birds escaped during a mid-1970s burglary. The shop owner then released the rest of the flock of approximately 50 doves. Others were set free on the island of Guadeloupe when a volcano threatened eruption. From these two sites the birds spread to Florida, and their advance over most of North America has been rapid. The first California record given in eBird was in 1976 in Sherman Oaks; the first Contra Costa sighting was by Steve Glover in 2008, near Byron.



ELLIS MYERS PHOTO

Eurasian Collared-Dove photographed along Cache Creek at Anderson Marsh SHP, April 2010.

The name of the Collared Dove is *Streptopelia decaocto*, the first part of which (the generic name) was given by Charles-Lucien Bonaparte and comes from the Greek 'streptos', which means 'collar' and 'peleia', which means 'dove.' While the generic name has an obvious association with the bird (it

is a dove and it has a collar!), the species name, given to the bird by the Hungarian naturalist Imre Frivaldszky, seems a little odd—why use a number? The number '18' actually refers to an ancient myth.

The myth relates to a servant girl who had a hard-hearted mistress. The mistress gave the maid a very hard time and only paid her eighteen pieces a year, a lowly sum and poor wages for such a hard-working girl. The maid prayed to the gods, asking them to make it known to the world how cruel her mistress was. Zeus answered the prayer, creating a dove who would fly about the land proclaiming with its song the lowly sum paid, 'deca-octo'. This, too, seems odd, as the bird's call sounds more like 'koo-koooooo-koo.'

In California, hunting season for Eurasian Collared-Dove is year-round with no limit.

Look for them soon at your backyard bird feeders.



Be a Citizen Scientist!

By Mike Eliot

Cornell Ornithology Lab needs you!

Every winter they hold a nationwide survey of backyard bird populations and movements called Project FeederWatch. They do this by collecting data from thousands of "feederwatchers" like you all over the US and Canada.

Participation takes little effort, mainly just counting birds that come to your backyard feeders. It can be a fun family project and everyone can feel proud that they are helping the birds. To join, start at the FeederWatch website: <http://feederwatch.org/>

The cost is \$15, which is the major source of funding for the project for a year. You will receive a research kit with complete instructions. In the fall, you will receive their report "Winter Bird Highlights" and the Cornell Lab newsletter.

The project has a history dating to the mid 1970s in Ontario, Canada, but was taken over after 10 years by Long Point Bird Observatory and the Cornell Lab to go nationwide. The first year there were 4,000 participants. There are now over 20,000 in every state and in Canada.



The data collected provide a picture of the winter bird populations throughout North America. They indicate how many individuals of

each species are seen and measure changes in the winter ranges of species over time. This enables scientists to create population maps that detect gradual changes in wintering ranges and which species are at risk. FeederWatch is the only available method to produce such information.

Scientists make predictions of irruptions of finches and other species, as well as long-term trends of distribution and abundance. Kinds of foods and environmental factors, such as weather also help them determine what attracts birds. In addition, they can understand how disease is spread among backyard birds. The data is published in *Audubon Magazine* as well as major birding journals and magazines and distributed to news groups nationwide.

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

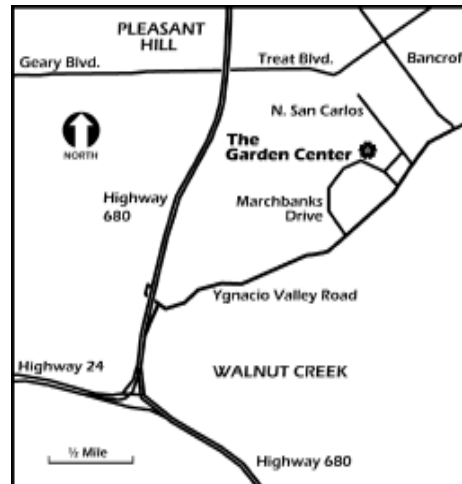
Mount Diablo Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon, is committed to the sustainable balance of our community's people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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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.]

Please Consider

Mount Diablo Audubon needs to find an Editor for the Quail. Only basic computer skills are needed, along with a willingness to learn. Call the present editor for information, (925) 284-4103.

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

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.

Please send *The Quail* by: US mail E-mail _____

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Ridgway's Hawk. Punta Cana Ecological Foundation photo.

Robert Ridgway Ornithologist ♦ Taxonomist ♦ Botanist

From childhood, Robert Ridgway had a memory and a sense of proportion well above that of the norm. As a youth he became interested in birds and sketched many specimens around his home in Mount Carmel, in southern Illinois, where he was born on July 2, 1850. At age 14 he wrote to Spencer F. Baird, Secretary (Director) of the Smithsonian, asking Baird to identify a bird that Ridgway had seen. Ridgway and Baird began corresponding, and, in effect, Baird became Ridgway's mentor. In 1867 Baird secured an appointment for Ridgway as naturalist on Clarence King's Geological Survey of the Fortieth Parallel, one of the four great surveys of the American West. Ridgway collected 1,522 bird-related specimens (753 nests and eggs and 769 skins). He observed 262 species, most of these on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada and in the Uinta Mountains in Utah.

Upon his return to Washington in 1869, Ridgway was put to work by Baird

to furnish the technical descriptions and some of the drawings for a book on North American birds being prepared by Baird and Thomas Mayo Brewer. In 1874 Ridgway



Scarlet Tanager, by Robert Ridgway

was appointed as ornithologist on the staff of the United States National Museum at the Smithsonian. In 1880 he was appointed Curator of the Department of Ornithology. Ridgway retained that title until his death in 1929, although after 1915 he resided in Olney, Illinois



*Robert Ridgway
Utah State University photo.*

Ridgway published extensively in his field from 1869 to 1929. His experience with problems of color and color description in bird portraits resulted in a work entitled *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, which proved valuable in many fields be-

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