



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
www.diabloaudubon.org

Volume 61, Number 9

June 2016

June Program: Birds and Rhino Poaching — The Best and Worst of South Africa and Botswana ♦ Jill Hedgecock

Jill Hedgecock will share some of the best bird and animal sightings from her trip to South Africa and Botswana last October. South Africa and Botswana are home to 829 and 550 bird species, respectively. In addition to photos of three of the “Big Six” birds, she will share photos of some of Africa’s most colorful birds including the Shimmering Blue Starling (right), Multi-colored Lilac Roller, and Vibrant Bee Eater, and, not to be missed, the c o m e d i c expressions of a startled Goliath Heron and Clown-faced African Penguins.



As a bonus, there will be photos of the legendary “Big Five,” not the largest animals, rather, the most dangerous: rhinoceros, elephant, cape buffalo, lion, and leopard. You’ll also meet the “Ugly Five.” (apologies—bird species made this list)

As amazing as Africa’s living zoo is, there is also a dark side to this country. Last year, a new record was

set for the largest number of rhinos poached. This travesty is being fueled by demand in Asian markets for the keratinous material in the horn, based upon the misguided belief that the horn has curative powers for everything from hangovers to impotency to cancer. Driven largely by China and Vietnam, the heaviest consumers, an ounce of rhino horn (essentially the same material as our fingernails) is considered more valuable than gold. A single horn can sell for \$500,000. Worldwide, there are only three Northern White Rhinoceros (upper R) left on the planet and just 5,055 Black rhinos.

Jill will present the myriad of solutions that are being considered to address this problem. If the current rate of poaching is not curtailed, wild rhinos could become extinct within the next few decades.

Jill Hedgecock has long-standing roots with the Mount Diablo Audubon Society, serving as the International Conservation Coordinator in the early 1990s and as a long-term leader of the Black Diamond Mines Christmas Bird Count circle. She has a Master’s



Degree in Environmental Management from the University of San Francisco and is currently writing a novel about a 17 year-old girl on safari who becomes lost in the bush and finds herself at odds with rhino poachers.



To learn more: www.facebook.com/InternationalRhinoFoundation/

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, June 2** in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek.

600 PM Doors open
630 PM Potluck Dinner is served
Please remember to bring your own plate, silverware, and cup.
800 PM Announcements
815 PM Program: **Jill Hedgecock**

There will be no meeting in July or August. The next meeting will be Thursday, September 1.
Program: **Wildlife Photography ♦ Brent Paull**

Annual Potluck Dinner

The much anticipated annual potluck dinner will precede our regular meeting at The Gardens on Thursday, June 2. Doors will open at 6 PM with dinner served at 630 PM. Members should bring a main dish, salad, or dessert to share, and their own plate, silverware, and cup. Please mark serving dishes with your name so that we can be sure they are returned to you. Coffee, tea, or punch will be provided. Bring your own wine and glasses if you wish. Many thanks to Kathy Kellogg and her incredible Hospitality team for creating the ambience for a fun evening.

In May, I led the MDAS field trip from the south gate up Mt. Diablo. We always have a couple of target species for this trip and hoped to see migrating warblers and other migrants. We had a good day which you can read about in this issue under Trip Reports (see page 9). What was also very noticeable was that we had 17 people on the trip! Pretty amazing. I might also add that we had three women from Ontario, Canada on the trip that were on a West Coast birding tour. They had a great time. I have lead this field trip for many years and do not remember ever having that many people on the trip.

Our Field Trip chair, Hugh Harvey, was with us and as we got ready to head back to the meeting spot Hugh told me that already this year we have had over 500 people on our MDAS field trips, way more than ever before in our history. I think it speaks to the fact that people are becoming interested in the outdoors and nature in general. That, along with large numbers at our general meetings, point to how healthy the Mount Diablo Audubon chapter is.

I have spoken often about our Young Birders Club and how proud we are of its health. Our chapter also has a program called "No Child Left Inside" led by Vice President Paul Schorr that is in its 9th year. Paul is a retired Antioch school principal who knows the teachers in that school district. Every year we meet with students in the 5th and 6th grades in one of the Antioch schools two times and then take them on a half-day field trip. It has been a great way to introduce kids to nature and the benefits it holds for them.

These efforts of MDAS were underscored by a recent article by Tom Stienstra in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on April 25, 2016. The title of his article was "Outdoor education can be a lifesaver" and Tom noted that 87% of Californians live in cities with schools that provide little or no outdoor education, so few young people have any experience with the outdoors, illustrating again how important our MDAS programs with young people are. Thank you for all of your support for our programs, particularly with young people.

I hope to see you at the June Potluck Dinner!

Good News For Black-crowned Night-Herons

Volunteers with the Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS) have partnered with the Oakland Zoo and International Bird Rescue to help save the lives of baby Black-crowned Night-Herons who fall out of their nests in busy downtown Oakland.

There is a large established rookery in the ficus trees near the Post Office with over 75 Black-crowned Night-Heron nests and dozens of Snowy Egret nests as well. The rookery is located near Lake Merritt and the Oakland estuary that provide abundant food, but the cement sidewalks below and busy roads nearby often prove deadly for the inexperienced, immature birds.

In a less urban setting, juvenile birds test their wings in the canopy and might fall onto bushes below without subsequent injury. However, concrete, traffic, and a well-publicized tree-trimming incident at the Oakland Post Office two years ago have resulted in ongoing problems for the rookery herons.

According to the GGAS blog, 25 volunteer docents were trained recently to help monitor the rookery nests, to educate the inquisitive public walking by, and to be on the lookout for young



Immature Black-crowned Night-Heron, Beth Branthaver photo

herons in distress.

If a volunteer finds a fallen or injured bird, the Oakland Zoo is called. In turn, the zoo sends trained personnel to retrieve

the bird and provide necessary care and treatment for it. When stable, the birds are taken to International Bird Rescue in Fairfield where they are fed, nurtured, and cared for until they are ready to be released into a more suitable habitat.

Working together, this trio of conservation groups is a partnership that has really taken flight.

And, *that's* good news for Black-crowned Night-Herons! ~Maren Smith

Election Results

Officers for 2016-2017 were elected at the May meeting. Congratulations and a big thanks to: President Jimm Edgar, Vice President Paul Schorr, Recording Secretary Carol Pahl, and Treasurer Steve Buffi.

Welcome New Members

Holly Bern	Oakland
Christina Lopez	Martinez
Carol Moll	Orinda
Marion Smith	Livermore
Carol Weldin	Alamo
Kathryn White	Martinez
David Williams	Castro Valley

MDAS on the Web

www.diabloaudubon.org
www.diabloaudubon.org/mobile (mobile only)
www.facebook.com/mtdiabloaudubon
www.meetup.com/Mount-Diablo-Audubon-Society/

Q

This yellow-headed bird living in the tops of some of the tallest coniferous trees on Earth, is

often heard before it is ever seen. To learn more, see page 7.

BRIETHEAMWRRL

The *Quail* is published monthly except in January and August by the Mount Diablo Audubon Society, P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. **The deadline for July/August is June 6.**

April saw departing winter migrants, waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and passerines, arriving spring and summer breeding visitors, migrants heading north and into the Sierras, and newly fledged young birds.

A **Cackling Goose** was at Heather Farm 4/12, HH, and Ellis Lake Park 4/28. AL

Five gosling **Canada Geese** were at Heather Farm 4/12, HH, and eight were at Lafayette Reservoir 4/30. SS

Two **Wood Ducks** were at the bridge at the Upper San Leandro Reservoir 4/9. BL and 23 others

A late-departing **Canvasback** was at Ironhouse Sanitary District 5/8. AL, JA

AL saw a **Tufted Duck** at Lone Tree Point near Rodeo 4/11 and 4/21.

Three **Common Mergansers** were on the Briones Reservoir 5/8. IA

BYW saw the first **California Quail** at her WC home in 20 years.

A **Golden Eagle** was at Sibley Preserve 4/16, GT, and another at Black Diamond Mines 4/18. HB

A **Surfbird** was at Hercules Point 4/12 and Sandpiper Spit near the Richmond Marina 4/14. AL

A **Caspian Tern** was at Heather Farm Pond 4/12, HH, and San Pablo Reservoir 4/16. TF

The **Western Screech Owl** near the beginning of the Lafayette-Moraga Trail continued 4/15. HH

A **Northern Pygmy Owl** was at Redwood Regional Park Stream Trail 4/11. RS, JW

Two **Black Swifts** were at Bethel Island 5/7 and photographed. C&TW, FS, BD

AM saw two **Vaux's Swifts** at Vollmer Peak in Tilden Park 5/3.

The **Peregrine Falcon** at Castle Rock in Pine Canyon was seen 4/14 by JS and 5/1 by H&RH. One was at Pt. Pinole RP 4/26. SF

Prairie Falcons were seen at Black Diamond Mines 4/18, HB, and Big Break Regional Shoreline 4/11. RB

The first of season (FOS) sighting for Contra Costa County of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was 5/1 by JR near

San Pablo Reservoir. Others were seen at Vollmer Peak 5/3, AM, Mitchell Canyon 5/5, H&RH, and at Tilden Nature Area 5/6. AK

Western Wood-Pewee was seen at Briones RP, the Springhill Road entrance, 4/14, CS, and Mitchell Canyon 5/5. H&RH

Hammond's Flycatchers were seen 4/18 at Mitchell Canyon by JC and DH, and at Black Diamond Mines by HB on the same date.

HB saw a well-described **Dusky Flycatcher** at Black Diamond Mines 4/18, and FG saw one at Mitchell Canyon 4/30.

At least 16 **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were at Mitchell Canyon 4/18. JC, DH

P&NS saw **Ash-throated Flycatchers** at Contra Loma RP 4/24.

Western Kingbirds were at Black Diamond Mines 4/18, HB, and Contra Loma 4/24. P&NS

Three **Cassin's Vireos** were at Vollmer Peak 5/3. AM

A **Canyon Wren** was at Castle Rock along Pine Canyon 4/14. JS

House Wrens were at Black Diamond Mines 4/25, P&NS, Pine Canyon, 5/1, H&RH, and Tilden Park Nature Area, 5/6. AK

A **Pacific Wren** was at the Tilden Park Nature Area 5/6. AK

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher was along Inspiration Point Trail 4/16. TF

Swainson's Thrush was first reported 5/3 by AM at Vollmer Peak and by AK 5/6 at Tilden Nature Area.

Flocks of **Cedar Waxwings** were seen: 4/12 at Heather Farm, HH; 4/16 at Inspiration Point Trail in Tilden, TF; and 5/6 at Tilden Nature Area. AK

Nashville Warblers were at Pine Canyon 4/14, JS, and Black Diamond Mines, 4/18. HB

A few breeding-plumaged **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were seen 4/16 and 4/24. TF, P&NS (a sure sign they're ready to go to the Sierras)

Black-throated Grey Warblers were around as well in Pine Canyon 4/14, JS, in Briones RP 4/14, CS, and at Vollmer Peak 5/3. AM

Townsend's and Hermit Warblers were at Mitchell Canyon 4/18. DH, JC.

On 5/3, AM saw 16 **Hermit Warblers** in two warbler flocks at Vollmer Peak.

MacGillivray's Warbler was along the Inspiration Point Trail 4/16, TF, and JaW found one in the Diablo Foothills RP via Borges Ranch 5/3.

Rufous-crowned Sparrows were seen at Black Diamond Mines 4/18, HB, 4/25, P&NS, and PL at Sycamore Valley Open Space Preserve off Camino Tassajara 5/3.

HB saw four **Chipping Sparrows** at Black Diamond Mines 4/18.

PM also saw a **Grasshopper Sparrow** at the Sycamore Valley Open Space Preserve 5/3.

Lincoln's Sparrows were at Briones 4/16, CS, Black Diamond 4/18, HB, and Tilden Quarry Trail, 5/1. SJ

RS and CB saw a **White-throated Sparrow** at Mitchell Canyon 5/1.

A **White-throated Sparrow of the Gambel's sub-species** was a late stayer at the Ironhouse Sanitary District 5/8. AL

A **Western Tanager** was bathing at JB's Martinez home 5/5.

Many **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were reported after last month's arrivals. GS

RB saw **Blue Grosbeaks** 4/22 at Holland Tract in East County and 4/23 on Orwood Road south of there.

Lazuli Bunting was reported 4/16 at Sibley Preserve, GT, and at Black Diamond Mines 5/2 by P&NS. DB saw one with the Tuesday for the Birds Group at Las Trampas RP 5/3.

Flocks of 11-35 **Tricolored Blackbirds** were on Charbourne Road off Deer Valley Road 4/27 and 5/6. RB

On 4/12 HH saw two **Great-tailed Grackles** at Heather Farm.

One **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was in Pine Canyon 5/1. RH

>>>see abbreviations/names list on page 5

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

Trip Reports

North Briones Regional Park, April

14: Fourteen members and guests enjoyed a lovely spring morning in Briones looking at birds and flowers.

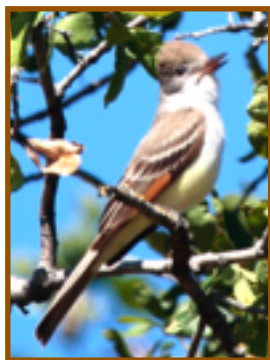
Many wildflowers were seen including Chinese Houses, Fiddlenecks, Miner's Lettuce, Bush Lupine, California Poppies, Indian Paintbrush, and Sticky Monkey Flower. The birds were plentiful with singing House Wrens, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers, Oregon Juncoes, Song and Lark Sparrows, and at the very beginning and end of the trip, Blue-grey Gnatcatchers were in the bushes close enough to enjoy without binoculars. The lagoons had Gadwalls, American Wigeons, Mallards, and Buffleheads. The bird of the day was a quick view of a Merlin streaking across the open field. Four species of swallows were present, the Western Meadowlarks were singing mightily, and the Red-winged Blackbirds had their reddest epaulets on display.



*Wilson's Warbler,
Isaac Aronow photo*

~Maury Stern

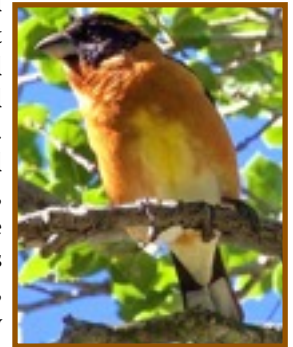
Mines Road, April 16: The 31 miles of Mines Road south of Livermore must be one of the prettiest and most popular rural drives in the East Bay, especially on weekends. Doing the bird thing while dodging cars, motorcycles, and bicycles can sometimes be challenging, but the rewards are worth it. Our trip had some of the best wildflower displays in recent memory, though the birds were a bit harder to find—either we were too early or there are just fewer birds. For the second year in a row we failed to find White-throated Swifts at the bridge in Del Valle Regional Park and no Lawrence's Goldfinches were found. We also missed seeing any Phainopeplas, tanagers, grosbeaks, or buntings, but we did have some great birds, nonetheless. Yellow-billed Magpies put on a good display at the very beginning of our trip. The Western Grebes did a brief run across the water at Del Valle, and south of the lake we saw the Bald Eagle on its nest. Some of the group found a beautiful singing Ash-throated Flycatcher. Our lunch site, normally filled with Violet-green or Tree Swallows, had none; but a pair of Wood Ducks was found nearby, seen by many in the group before they disappeared. We also had trouble finding any Lewis's Woodpeckers, but after an extensive search, we finally found one and a second individual was seen a mile to the south. Tricolored Blackbirds were at a pond south of the Junction where two female Buffleheads swam. The 18 birders on the trip tallied a total of 67 species on this gorgeous day. ~Hugh Harvey



*Ash-throated Flycatcher,
Beth Branthaver photo*

Black Diamond Mines Regional Park, April 21: Eighteen members

and guests enjoyed a pleasant spring day and wildflowers as we hiked up trails to the ridge and back down. We got our exercise! A Black-headed Grosbeak and a Rufous-crowned Sparrow were seen early in the morning. Many singing House Wrens and Ash-throated Flycatchers were heard throughout the day. Everyone enjoyed good looks at a couple of Black-throated Gray Warblers in the oak trees. Barn Swallows and Red-tailed Hawks flew overhead. Many birds, such as the Black Phoebe, were busy with nest duty. Other birds seen were Western Flycatcher, Western Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (including one on a nest), the usual crowned Sparrows, Lark Sparrow, and Prairie Falcon.



*Black-headed Grosbeak
(M), Joy Shonfeld photo*

At lunch, a Golden Eagle soared over the picnic area. At the end of the trip most of us chose to bird the first parking lot where we were able to add five more species including American Kestrel and a Sharp-shinned Hawk as a jackrabbit ran by! Although we missed some of our target birds, including the Canyon Wren, we totaled 55 species for the morning. ~Donna Kramer.

Del Puerto Canyon, April 26: We had a beautiful, bright, sunny day and 28 members who participated hoped that El Niño had brought a greater number of birds—we were not disappointed. The early part of the canyon was fairly dry, but once we got up past the three-mile mark, the impact of the rain was evident. Here we found Bullock's Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Kingbirds, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and Ash-throated Flycatchers. Many of the birds were nesting. There were an abundance of tobacco plants, but, alas, no Costa's Hummingbird. We also found Vaux's and White-throated Swifts. At Owl Rock we found an immature Great Horned Owl, two nesting Barn Owls, and across the creek, some Rock Wrens. Along the road to Deer Creek Campground we had a Kingfisher, Green Heron, Killdeer, Yellow-billed Magpies, and a Greater Roadrunner in the road. At Deer Creek we had a brief view at a pair of Lawrence's Goldfinches, numerous Phainopeplas, Bullock's Orioles, Western Tanagers, and Western Kingbirds.



*Greater Roadrunner,
Joy Shonfeld photo*

Next, we headed to San Antonio Valley Road where we found a few Lewis's Woodpeckers, but certainly not the numbers seen in past years. At the pond we spotted some Tricolored Blackbirds, and at the junction we found more Lawrence's Goldfinches. Heading home down Mines Road we saw three Golden Eagles, several California Thrashers, a Wood Duck pair, and heard Wrentits. For the day we had 74 species. ~Beth Branthaver

>>> Trip Reports continued on page 9

May 2016 (Call Leader for questions or rain cancellations)

21 Saturday NEW: Special Measure AA FT

June 2016

18-19 Saturday-Sunday Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley

July 2016

9-10 Saturday-Sunday Lassen Volcanic NP

2 Saturday, May 21

McNabney Marsh/Martinez Regional Shoreline

Leader: Ariana Rickard (347) 754-0143

Join Nathan Stalnaker, Measure AA Contra Costa County Regional Coordinator, and MDAS for a tour of some of the local wetlands that could receive funding for restoration if Measure AA passes on June 7. We will discuss the specific restoration projects that might occur with additional funding, the bird species and other wildlife that would benefit, and have Measure AA materials available. Nathan will answer questions and discuss get-out-the-vote strategies.

Meet at 9 AM at the Mt. View Sanitary observation platform. Exit from I-680 southbound at Arthur Road, turn left and go under the freeway. Exit I-680 northbound at Pacheco Blvd., turn right on Arthur Road, go under the freeway, and Arthur Road will turn left. At 0.4 miles turn left onto Mt. View Sanitary's private road. Follow the road through the entry gate, alongside the freeway, and park near the observation platform. Trails may be muddy. Next, we'll drive to the Waterbird Park and may finish at the Martinez Regional Shoreline. If you wish, bring lunch and explore more on your own.

2 Saturday/Sunday, June 18-19

Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley

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

Always a fun weekend, this trip requires driving and walking, some of it over rough terrain. Arrive by Friday night and meet at the top of the pass parking lot 7 AM Saturday. In the Sierra Valley Saturday we'll look for basin birds and will bird in the Yuba Pass area Sunday looking for mountain birds.

The closest motels are in Sierra City, 11 miles west on Highway 49: Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151/(800) 682-9848; Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122 cabins and kitchenettes (cash/check only); Bassett's Station (530) 862-1297 at Highway 49 and Gold Lake Road rooms/meals; High Country Inn (530) 862-1530/(800) 862-1530 across from Bassett's; or Sierra Valley Lodge (530) 994-3367/(800) 858-0322. www.sierracity.com/Stay/LodgingCamp.html. Campgrounds at Yuba Pass and Chapman Creek are first-come, first-served sites for three days.



Mountain Bluebird,
Jean Halford photo

After June 13, please call Wild Birds Unlimited for information at (925) 798-0303.

the Quail

2 Saturday/Sunday, July 9-10

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Leader: Eugenia Larson (925) 806-0644

If you plan to join this July trip, please contact the leader.

To avoid disappointment, make motel or camping reservations now.



Gray Jay, Jean Halford photo

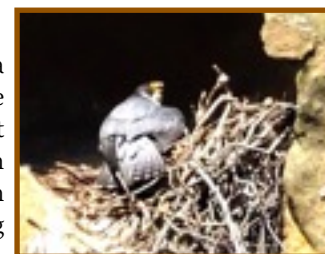
Participants should arrive by the night of Friday, July 8. Gary and I will be arriving earlier in the week and are camping in Section D of the Manzanita Lake Campground, which is tents-only and non-reservable; Sections A and C at Manzanita Lake are reservable, but B and D are not. We will start birding at 730 AM from Manzanita Lake each day.

I can also suggest small motels and B&Bs outside the park, or you can google "motels in the Lassen area," but please make your reservations soon as most are small motels with just 5-10 rooms each and fill up quickly. There are also a few sleep-only cabins at Manzanita Lake with a nearby communal bathhouse, and a private lodge in the south-central part of the Park that serves meals and has a pool.

Birds we hope to see include Gray Jay, American Dipper, Osprey, Evening Grosbeak, Townsend's Solitaire, Red Crossbill, Clark's Nutcracker, and Common Nighthawk.

Peregrine Patrol

If you'd like to be an extra set of eyes and ears to educate the public and prevent trespassing rock climbers from disturbing the Peregrine Falcon nesting efforts while birding Pine Canyon at the same time, volunteering for the Peregrine Patrol might be just for you.



Peregrine Falcon in Pine Canyon, Dirk Muehlner photo

For information: marensmithbkk@yahoo.com

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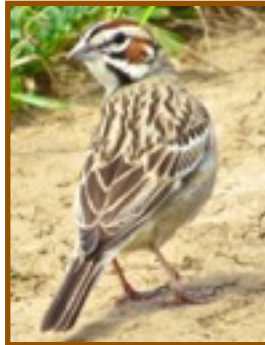
>>>Observations continued from page 3

JA Jeff Acuff, IA Isaac Aronow, DB Diane Bennett, CB Cynthia Berg, HB Holly Bern, JB Jackie Bobrosky, RB Russ Bright, JC Jim Chiropoulos, BD Bob Dunn, TF Tracy Farrington, SF Stefanie Flax, FG Felipe Guerrero, HH Hugh Harvey, H&RH Hugh and Rosita Harvey, RH Rosita Harvey, DH Derek Heins, SJ Sharon J (no more), AK Alan Kaplan, BL Bob Lewis, AL Albert Linkowski, PL Pam Lorenz, AM Aaron Maizlish, JR Jim Roethe, FS Fred Safier, RS Rusty Scalf, P&NS Paul and Nancy Schorr, GS George Shelby, JS Judi Sierra, CS Cuyler Stapelmann, SS Susan Stern, GT Glen Tepke, JW Joanne Wallin, JaW James Watts, BYW Betty Young Weber, and C&JW Chris and Teri Wills

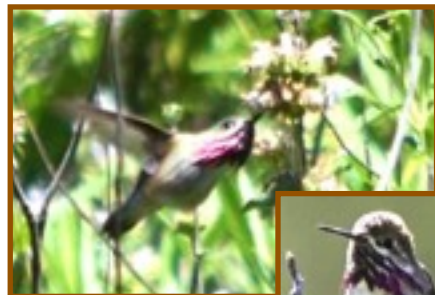
The Young Birders Club: Fascinating Field Trips X 4

The Young Birders Club has been especially busy this past month, taking advantage of visiting spring migrants and the great weather. Four Saturdays in a row, the Young Birders, led by YBC Liaison Tracy Farrington, along with MDAS members and friends have been out in the field enjoying the colorful wildflowers and some spectacular birds. Two Young Birders shared their reports.

Our first trip was on April 16. Seven of us explored the Nimitz Trail from Inspiration Point. Some of the highlights included seeing MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers, Wrentit, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Lark Sparrow, and Pygmy Nuthatch.



Lark Sparrow, Isaac Aronow photo



Two views of a Calliope Hummingbird in Mitchell Canyon, Michael Pang (above), and Max Pang (right) photos



field trip. On Red Road Trail we saw a beautiful Calliope Hummingbird who posed for photographs. We also viewed a California Thrasher, White-throated Swifts, Cassin's Vireo, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, and Black-headed Grosbeak. ~**Michael Pang**

It was a beautiful day in Pine Canyon/Castle Rock Regional Park, perfect for our third consecutive Young Birders Club field trip on April 30. The crowd was a little light, at seven birders, but with our core group, we found some great birds. Near the parking lot things were already birdy with great numbers of common species, especially bluebirds, seen



Tracy Farrington points out a bird to Michael Pang, Chick Chickering photo

along the trail before getting into the canyon. Everyone got great views of both the bright orange male and paler female Bullock's Orioles near the basketball court. Tracy tried to show us a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher nest that had been occupied about a week prior, but the nest seemed to have been abandoned. We suspect that a jay got a hold of it.



Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Isaac Aronow photo

In the canyon we had a couple of Orange-crowned Warblers, singing Wilson's Warblers, one Black-headed Grosbeak singing in the distance, a Warbling Vireo, and two Cassin's Vireos. One of



Great Horned Owl (back L), Maren Smith photo

the Cassin's Vireos was low to the ground and some of us got great looks at the bird singing. At the Peregrine Falcon nest no falcons were seen. But, we did see another raptor with two tufts on its head waving in the wind—a Great Horned Owl had taken over an old Raven's nest. A large group of hikers were happy when we pointed out the nest to them

and let them take a look through our scopes. Lots of White-throated Swifts and some Violet-green Swallows also flew around the Castle Rock area.



(from L to R): Michael Pang, Tracy Farrington, Kai Mills, Erica Kawata, and Dave Kent enjoyed a morning birding along Pine Canyon in Castle Rock Regional Park, Chick Chickering photo

On the way back to the cars, we had some Blue-grey Gnatcatchers near the abandoned nest site and a Lark Sparrow that posed beautifully for us, but the group was mostly focused on Chick's international birding

stories. The interesting stories gave us insight into where we Young Birders may want to go birding in the near future. ~**Kai Mills**

Putah Creek was the final field trip on May 7. Due to a swim meet and other obligations, my dad, Max, and I were the only ones able to make the trip. We hiked to the warbler bathing spot and saw Western Wood-Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and a House Wren. Afterwards, we decided to extend the day and went to the Sacramento Bypass where I saw another lifer, a Blue Grosbeak. ~**Michael Pang**



Hermit Warbler ♦ *Setophaga occidentalis*

A New World warbler, the Hermit Warbler is a member of the Wood-Warbler family—small, active, brightly colored birds with yellow coloring, and a thin, needle-pointed bill.

The male Hermit Warbler has a distinct canary yellow face with no black cheek patches (like the Townsend's), a plain black eye, and black throat, feet, and beak. From below, the adult body is white without streaks, the only western warbler with this distinction. The bird has a gray back and wings, two distinct white diagonal wingbars, and white outer tail feathers. They move quickly. Unless they pause to devour an insect, the flash of its yellow head may be all you see.

While the female also has a yellow face, she has a yellow eye ring and is a duller olive-green color overall, usually lacking the black throat. The females and immature birds are difficult to distinguish from closely related species.

Hermit Warblers are distinguished from Townsend's and Black-throated Green Warblers by their plain eye and face pattern and unstreaked flanks. They have been known, however, to hybridize with Townsend's where their ranges overlap in Washington and Oregon, complicating IDs.

The summer breeding range includes the mountains of California, Oregon, and Washington. From April to August they are generally found in the Sierras from Mt. Shasta to Mt. Whitney. They winter from southern California to Panama, although small numbers have also been observed in Oregon.

Hermit Warblers are found in dense, well-shaded forests, preferring tall pines and fir trees, flitting about looking for

food in the canopies of the trees. The Hermit Warbler mainly eats insects, but they have been observed eating caterpillars, small beetles, and spiders, or fruit in the fall and winter months.

They prefer cool, moist, mountain areas and require a specialized habitat of mature coniferous forests. Logging severely affects their habitat. Formerly, they bred in Alaska and British Columbia, but as Townsend's Warblers have expanded their range, the Hermit Warblers have been slowly extirpated.

When migrating, they can be found with mixed flocks of chickadees and other foraging birds in oaks and conifers often hanging from twigs like a chickadee or systematically moving from the trunk to branch tip and back in search of insects.

The male bird arrives in the breeding grounds in early May and sings to establish and defend a territory. Three to five eggs are laid in early June in a deep, open-cup nest usually near the end of a tree branch high in the tree.

They are common birds, but are hard to see in the treetops. Because of this, they are often heard before they are seen. If you're lucky, you might spy these elusive warblers in our area on their way to the Sierras. ~Maren Smith



Hermit Warbler on Red Road Trail in Mitchell Canyon, Beth Branthaver photo

Legislative Committee News

♦ Field Trip: Measure AA for a Clean and Healthy Bay, Saturday, May 21 at 9 AM, McNabney Marsh and Martinez Regional Shoreline with special guest, Nathan Stalnaker, Contra Costa County Measure AA Regional Coordinator (**details page 5**)

♦ Legislative Committee Meeting: Wednesday, May 25, 3-5 PM, Wild Birds Unlimited, Pleasant Hill, 692 Contra Costa Boulevard, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

♦ Please vote YES for Measure AA for a Clean and Healthy Bay, Tuesday, June 7

♦ California's Birds Need You! Join us for Audubon California's Annual Advocacy Day 2016 in Sacramento, Wednesday, June 8 from 8 AM to 6 PM. This year, our focus will be on improving accountability at the California Coastal Commission, creating new regulations to protect birds and other wildlife from drones, protecting California's precious and endangered eelgrass resources, and ensuring that California remains at the forefront in fighting and adapting to climate change. Attendees will also have a chance to speak with legislative representatives about priorities in their own Districts.

♦ For information contact Ariana Rickard, Legislative Chair, at: rickard@post.harvard.edu or call (347) 754-0143



(L) Hugh Harvey (2nd L) and Mike Eliot (far R), MDAS Board members, joined forces with Golden Gate and Ohlone Audubon to meet with legislators and staff at the Audubon California Advocacy Day 2015, Golden Gate Audubon

(Above L) Assembly Member Marc Levine, in Audubon California hat, spoke to MDAS Board member Rosalie Howarth and Audubon California staff at the 2015 Audubon California Advocacy Day, Garrison Frost photo

Speaking of Conservation: Battle to Ban Rat Poison Continues

In 2013, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation acted to reduce harm to children, pets, and wildlife being caused by second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides (SGARs). These regulations removed poisons such as d-Con from retail shelves, but still permitted their use by licensed pest-control applicators under new standards and requirements.

Unfortunately, the 2013 regulations have proven ineffective. Necropsy data performed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and other scientists demonstrate that unnecessary poisonings continue and may even be increasing. The use of SGARs by commercial pest controllers still allows rodents to consume the rodenticides, in turn poisoning upper-level predators that consume the rodents.

- Between 1999 and 2009, the American Association of Poison Control Centers received reports of an average of 17,000 human exposures to rodenticides each year, with 85% occurring in children less than 6 years of age. Just one 5-gram portion greatly exceeds possible safe levels for children.

- More than 100 pets die needlessly each year due to rodenticide exposure.

- Poisonings and deaths in California have been documented in wildlife species such as eagles, hawks, falcons, owls, bobcats, mountain lion—and the endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox and Northern Spotted Owl.



Northern Spotted Owl,
Megan Sandri sketch

- Data shows that over 70% of wildlife tested in California have been exposed to rodenticides.

New legislation has been introduced into the California legislature by Assembly Member Richard Bloom (50th Assembly District). As proposed, AB 2596 would ban all use of both first- and second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides, with an exemption for the agricultural industry. This legislation is being sponsored by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Humane Society of the United States, Raptors Are the Solution (RATS), and Poison Free Malibu. Seventy-two environmental and civic organizations—including Mt. Diablo Audubon—have signed on in support.

As one might expect, this legislation is being vigorously opposed by the manufacturers of these poisons. Originally, AB 2596 was to be introduced to the Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee on April 12. However, due to the intense lobbying efforts of the pesticide industry, introduction of the bill has been postponed until the spring of 2017.

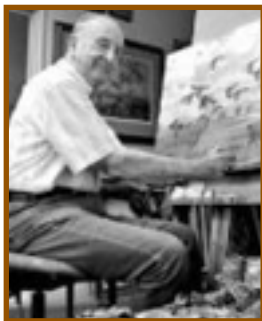
In the meantime, WildCare, a San Rafael-based non-profit that provides wildlife rehabilitation and nature education in the Bay Area, will continue to collect data to provide up-to-date results on wildlife exposure to rodenticides. Their work over the past ten years has helped to galvanize efforts to ban these poisons and promote safer methods of rodent control.

Assemblyman Bloom will rely upon their data as compelling evidence of the urgency for action on this important issue.

At their April Board meeting, your MDAS Board of Directors voted to contribute \$1,000 to WildCare in support of its Rodenticide Diagnostics & Advocacy Program.

~Nancy Weninger, Conservation Chair

June 2 Potluck Dinner Silent Auction



(Above) Harry Adamson, Contra Costa Times obituary photo; (R) Diane Malucelli with Emperor Geese print, Maren Smith photo

We will have a silent auction at the June 2 potluck dinner that will feature Harry Adamson prints for sale: a signed Peregrine Falcon print, a signed print of Mallards, and one unsigned print of Emperor Geese. (see the Harry Adamson article on page 10) There will also be several large books in the silent auction including *Rails of the World*.

I hope you'll stop by and bid on these special items. Proceeds will benefit Audubon chapter programs and conservation efforts.

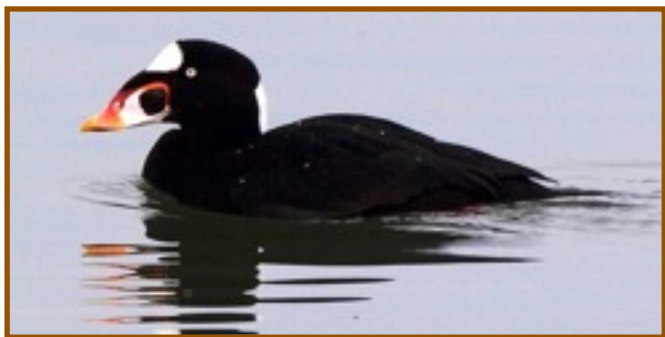
We can only accept cash or checks for the auction, so please plan accordingly. You won't want to miss out on these unique items! ~Diane Malucelli



"Clean and Healthy Bay" Measure AA

PLEASE VOTE "YES" FOR MEASURE AA IN THE UPCOMING JUNE ELECTION

Audubon California and MDAS are supporting Measure AA in the June 7th election in the nine local Bay Area counties and are asking for your vote. As many of you know, we have lost over 80% of San Francisco Bay's wetlands since the Gold Rush days due to excessive development, and agricultural and human contamination. These tidal wetlands are crucial for providing needed habitat for the myriad of birds and animals that live in and around the Bay. Being strategically located on the Pacific Flyway, San Francisco Bay is home to millions of over-wintering ducks, geese, and shorebirds, as well as several unique endemic plants, birds, and animals.



A Surf Scoter on San Francisco Bay, Beth Branthaver, photo

Various local organizations, led by Save San Francisco Bay Association, have been instrumental in promoting a cleaner bay by replacing non-native vegetation with native

plants and working to increase wetland habitat all around the bay. Scientists have recently concluded that if we don't work immediately to restore more wetland acreage, the on-going climate change and resulting rise in water levels will be catastrophic for Bay Area species of plants and animals alike.

Since no one organization or city has the funds to alleviate this coming devastation, Measure AA will create a \$12 per parcel tax for the next twenty years for the nine Bay Area counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma as well as the city and county of San Francisco. This tax is expected to raise approximately \$500 million dollars for tidal marsh restoration for San Francisco Bay. It is felt that this tax will also encourage more federal and state funding as well.

This tax revenue will not only restore wetlands and provide cleaner water for all of the Bay's inhabitants, but it will also increase public access to the Bay, improve the Bay's ability to adapt to future anticipated sea-level rise, and provide better flood protection.

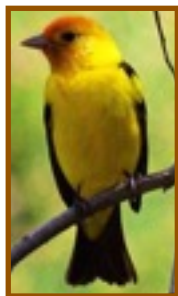
Scientists and conservationists have developed a list of goals to improve our Bay over the years, but complete funding of these projects has been inadequate. Measure AA will provide the needed money to ensure a clean and healthy Bay for its inhabitants and citizens into the future. Please vote "YES" for Measure AA on June 7th. ~Eugenia K. Larson, former Save The Bay staff member



In March, the MDAS Board voted to endorse Measure AA, the "Clean And Healthy Bay" ballot measure. The resolution is on the MDAS website: diabloaudubon.org. **For more information: www.yesonaaforthethebay.com**

>>> Trip reports continued from page 4

Mitchell Canyon, April 28: Nineteen members and guests enjoyed abundant flowers (Ithuriel's Spear, Mt. Diablo Fairy Lanterns, two species of Broomrape), butterflies (two species of Swallowtail, Lorquin's Admiral, Mylitta Crescent, Variable Checkerspot), and some special birds. A Western Tanager was perched at the top of a tree almost as soon as we left the parking lot. Ash-throated Flycatchers and Black-headed Grosbeaks were singing and visible. Only a couple of Empids were heard or seen. A Hutton's Vireo was viewed, while the Warbling Vireo was less cooperative. One participant had a non-singing Lazuli Bunting, most of us saw a singing California Thrasher, and many of us had killer views of two separate Hermit Warblers. In all, 40 species were identified. ~Hugh Harvey



Western Tanager, Joy Shonfeld photo

Mt. Diablo State Park, May 4: With little wind and cool temperatures, 17 birders (including three Canadian visitors) had 43 species during the day including a Calliope Hummingbird near the Blue Oak picnic area. Warblers included Townsends, Orange-crowned, Hermit, Black-throated Gray, and Yellow Warbler, some of them life birds.

Raptors were sparse with just one Red-tailed Hawk and a few TVs, but many Ash-throated Flycatchers were seen, and we had some of the best views (and photos) I've ever seen of Western Tanager. ~Jimm Edgar

East Contra Costa County, May 7: On a day threatening rain most of the time, and producing rain some of the time, thirteen birders, including a guest from Connecticut, went afield in rural Contra Costa County, including portions of the Marsh Creek Trail, Piper Slough on Bethel Island, Jersey Island Road, areas around the community of Knightsen, and the Holland Tract, in that order.

Marsh Creek produced Green Heron, Say's Phoebe, Cinnamon Teal, Swainson's Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Ringed-necked Pheasant, and a couple of coyotes as highlights, but no Blue Grosbeak this year. At Piper Slough, superb birds were a small mixed group of both Black and Vaux's Swift. Our Connecticut birder captured some images of the Black Swift for identification purposes. Both Hooded and Bullock's Oriole were also seen. Along Jersey Island Road we found a pair of Blue Grosbeak in a canal along the road. The Knightsen area was relatively quiet, but we did see more Swainson's Hawks. The Holland Tract produced Caspian Tern, American Goldfinch, and a pair of nesting Downy Woodpeckers. The group tallied 67 bird species for the day. ~Gary Fregien

Harry Adamson: Wildlife Artist and Conservationist

Harry Curieux Adamson, one of the founding members of our chapter and it's second president, was a highly regarded and successful wildlife artist. His donations of paintings and prints to Ducks Unlimited and other conservation organizations over the years contributed to land purchases and the establishment of two Interpretive Centers in our state, at Elkhorn Slough and Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. His sketches of various species grace the covers of many Northern California Audubon chapter newsletters including our *Quail*. While Harry passed away in 2012, his legacy lives on. Three of his prints will be available for purchase at our June silent auction. (see page 8)

Harry loved the out-of-doors and had the good fortune growing up in Alameda County to spend much time roaming the hills with friends. He began to sketch and far preferred it to the hunting that most young men of his generation enjoyed. He was self-taught but found himself in ideal settings to hone his artist's eye and hand. After high school, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps where he could observe and sketch on his off hours, and thereafter was hired at the Forest Service Exhibit Shop in Berkeley where he helped assemble dioramas. He developed a relationship with a mentor at the agency who encouraged him to practice his sketching ability on specimens in the shop. From there, his ability much improved, he was hired by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at UC Berkeley as an illustrator. Zoological illustration requires a commitment to accuracy which came to be a hallmark of Harry's work in later life.

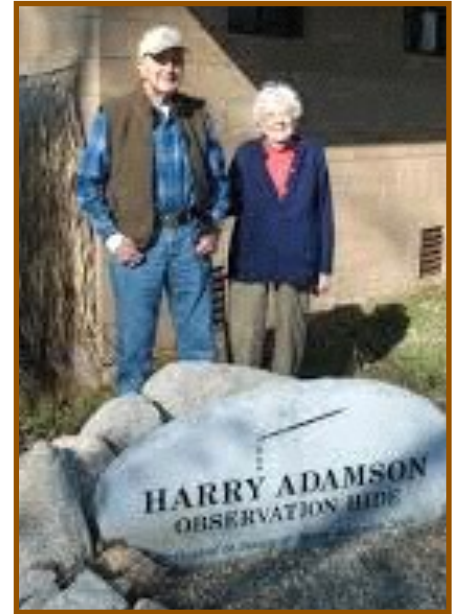
After serving in World War II, he came home to polish his craft. He experimented with pen and ink, tempera, and eventually oils. Harry's career began to take off when he was

featured in exclusive Eastern sporting goods stores that had exhibition rooms or that circulated a catalog of their exhibition-quality paintings. By that time, Harry had begun to paint landscapes as a hunter in the field might see them, with a flock of Mallards, Pintails, or Red Heads rising into flight out of a marsh or dropping in to rest. These works conveyed the qualities of nature that bought men into the field to hunt – the beauty and solitude and the beavies of birds. Accordingly, Harry quickly began to have an established reputation and his paintings became something worthy of owning. He also began to show in national wildlife art exhibitions.

By the 1960's, Harry was a well-established artist producing commissioned works. He firmly believed in using his art to add dollars to conservation projects, so he continued his donations, first as a yearly painting to Ducks Unlimited, and later, in the donation of a run of (usually) 900 numbered prints. With a donation to Audubon during that era, his art contributed to the purchase of Audubon Canyon Ranch.

In the 1970's he was included in exhibits at the Smithsonian and deYoung Museums and in 1979 a donated painting and prints raised \$550,000 for Ducks Unlimited's land purchases. In 1980, one individual print sold in that context for \$1750, a sizeable sum at that time. It was "remarqued", a process by which the artist draws a small pencil sketch into the existing print which raises its value significantly. By this time Harry had received awards for his dedication to conservation which was a theme he maintained throughout his career. As late as 1992, he donated prints to Nature Conservancy to help fund a "hide" at Cosumnes River Preserve.

In 1987 the CA Department of Fish and Game asked Harry to produce the first CA Native Species Stamp as an adjunct to a newly created CA Wildlife Pass. It was a new era and many people other than birders were enjoying the outdoors. Because the



Harry and Betty Adamson,
Google Images photo

Peregrine Falcon was in such decline at that time, Harry chose to paint his 1988 Peregrine. A major restoration project involving surrogate Prairie Falcon females and Peregrine eggs was in progress and Harry was interested and supportive. Funds from this stamp ultimately contributed to the Elkhorn Slough and Gray Lodge Interpretive Centers. As an interesting note, by that time, Harry no longer needed to depend on ducks in their environment for his commissions. He branched out to depicting individual birds and even wild sheep, from here and abroad.

Harry continued to hike and bird, travel, paint, and donate well into his final years. Due to his generosity, MDAS is offering the following prints this year at our silent auction: a signed print of the 1988 Peregrine mentioned above; a signed artist proof edition (67 of 150) from the 1994 Arizona Waterfowl Stamp, Mallard Pair; and a large unsigned print from 1984, entitled Aleutian Throne Room—Emperor Geese. ~Elizabeth Leite



For more information read
*From Marsh to Mountain: The Art of
Harry Curieux Adamson* by Diane
K. Inman

Fledgling Follies

Babies make birdwatching one of the most enjoyable pastimes I know. Their lack of skills and coordination make us root for them as they try to master the tricks of feeding and bathing at our backyard stations.

The view at our feeders becomes hectic and confusing as parents make their best efforts at coaxing their fledglings to try feeding on their own. House Finch young (below) seem to



appear first, followed by chickadee and goldfinch families. Ground feeding doves and towhees are soon to follow.

When they first appear, the babies often appear larger than their parents, with ragged tufts of down pushing through their chest and back feathers. They lack the colors of their parents, but attract attention with lots of noise and rapidly vibrating wings.

They usually make their first attempts at perching on the branches of pole system feeders or deck rails. Landing is hilarious as they circle a perch site, touching down and lifting off incessantly, as if they can't quite get the grasp needed to set down securely.

Fledglings of perch feeding birds don't begin to use feeders immediately. Instead, once the fledglings are perched nearby, the parents begin making repeated trips to the feeders, picking up seeds for the young, and dropping them down their wide open mouths. The parents patiently work at demonstrating the techniques needed to land at a feeder perch and pick up seed, this process repeating itself until adults taper off hoping to see the youngsters try it on their own.

Eventually, these fledglings get the hint and learn to sate their own voracious appetites. The fledglings keep practicing, acquiring the skills and confidence to feed on their own. Soon, all birds find their niche and a pecking order sets in. ~Mike Eliot, WBU

Mount Diablo Audubon Society (MDAS)

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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The Board meets at 645 PM the second Thursday of each month except July and August at Wild Birds Unlimited, PH.



Mount Diablo Audubon Society thanks our Business Partners:
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Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets at 7 PM 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, CA 94598.

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

- Please enroll me/my family in the Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year. (MDAS dues are tax-deductible)
- For an additional \$20 please enroll me as a first-time member in the National Audubon Society (NAS). (includes 6 bi-monthly issues of Audubon Magazine)
- Please enroll me as a lifetime member for \$500. (or 2 annual \$250 payments)
- I am enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

Please send the Quail by US Mail, or "Go Green" email

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____ email: _____

Send check payable to Mount Diablo Audubon Society with this application to:
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Edith's Checker Butterfly on a colorful pink Mariposa Lily in Mitchell Canyon, Joy Shonfeld photo



Volunteer Thanks

April was an especially busy month for our volunteers with many Earth Day celebrations.

Brian Murphy, MDAS Volunteer Coordinator, would like to thank volunteers who helped staff the MDAS table. Mike Robertson met some of the 850 people who showed up for Rossmoor's first Earth Day event. At the John Muir Earth Day/Birthday celebration, Jean Halford and her grandsons helped. Tracy Farrington and Brian were at the very windy, but fun, Wild Birds Unlimited "We Love Mother Nature" event.

Looking ahead, volunteers will be needed on Saturday, August 6 from 10 AM-4 PM at the Martinez Beaver Festival, always a large and exciting event. It's a great way to get involved!

In May, for Birding Information, Celeste Garamendi (above L) of Save Tesla Park presented a powerful argument for saving Tesla, a 3400-acre cultural, historical, and natural resource adjacent to the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area. She encouraged everyone to support efforts to preserve this scenic treasure as a non-motorized, historic, natural resource park and preserve for hiking, birding, and as a natural wildlife corridor for generations to come. A map (above middle) of the proposed Tesla Park shows its location in Alameda County. **For information: www.teslapark.org or email FriendsofTeslaPark@gmail.com**

Our May Program speaker, Gordon Beebe (above R), took us through the Ecuadorian Andes from east to west on a thrilling visual and auditory tour. The vibrant colors, shapes, and sounds of the exotic birds, butterflies, and insects made for a breathtaking presentation.

We hope to see you in June for our annual potluck dinner at 630 PM. (details page 1)