



# the Quail

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

Volume 62, Number 1

September 2016

## September Program: Wildlife Photography ♦ Brent Paull

Born in Redwood City in 1959, Brent was raised in Gilroy, the Garlic Capital of the World. His family camped each summer in Yosemite National Park or at Lake Tahoe, and also owned a cabin in the redwood forests of Felton near Santa Cruz. He spent countless hours exploring the California coast and the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

In September 1985, during his senior year at BYU, he and a friend made a trip to Yellowstone National Park. That trip led to his first published article and published photos and a re-awakening of his adventures as a youth in California.



From that point on, Brent was determined to create a life for himself shooting nature photography in the western United States and by writing about all he saw and discovered.

After more than a decade of shooting freelance for magazines, he ventured into portrait photography. Brent's strengths as a portrait

photographer come from understanding light, composition, and balance—skills he learned as a nature photographer.

Brent has spent more than 700 days shooting in Yellowstone NP, and today, spends nearly 100 days a year leading photo safaris in the field around the West, including California, where he is best known for his bobcat photography. His photo safaris draw photographers from around the world.



He also teaches photography in 22 cities, does some commercial photography, and actively sells his images as stock and fine art. Currently, his stock library exceeds 250,000 images.

His images have been published throughout the United States and in many foreign countries. Brent has had approximately 1100 publication credits and over 700 commercial image sales as well as 28 published articles and 10 magazine covers. Besides magazines (including *Bird Watcher's Digest* and *Birder's World*) and newspapers, his images have appeared in books, online magazines, business brochures, professional reports, nature guides, government reports and brochures,



Far L: Grizzly cubs and mom, Yellowstone NP; Center: Bobcat; Above: Great Horned Owl, Brent Paull photos

magazine advertising, calendars, and on product packaging, roadside billboards, and credit cards.

The Wildlife Photography program will feature wildlife images from the American West with a discussion of locations, photography tactics, and image processing techniques.

To learn more about Brent Paull's photography: [amwestphoto.com](http://amwestphoto.com)

### Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, September 1** in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek.

630 PM Doors open  
700 PM Birding Information  
725 PM Announcements  
740 PM Refreshments\* and raffle  
805 PM Program: Brent Paull  
\*Bring your own cup for tea or coffee.

**NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM:**

**Thursday, October 6, 2016**  
A New Vision for the Salton Sea ♦  
Andrea Jones, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California

### Birding Information

Marcia Grefsrud will talk about the American Bushtits nesting in her backyard, the life history of this species, and her observations of a breeding pair over a 5-year period.

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Well, we are off to another year with MDAS and, once again, it looks like a wonderful year with more great programs, field trips (see page 10 for the 2016-2017 Field Trip Schedule by Hugh Harvey) and much more. I sure hope you will take advantage of all that is being offered.

I wanted to mention, even though it was some time ago, an article by Tom Stienstra, Outdoor Editor for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. On June 12, 2016, Tom had a nice mention of Brian Murphy, MDAS Volunteer Coordinator. The article had a photo Brian had taken of two baby foxes in a storm drain in front of his house. The article is really quite touching and the photo is great too. (see July/August *Quail*, page 3 article and photos) Brian is one of our chapter's best photographers and we use lots of his pictures in the *Quail*. I hope you can go back and archive this article. (<http://www.sfgate.com/outdoors/article/Spring-gives-birth-to-new-wildlife-8051430.php>)

I have a new interest that I am going to pursue this month: what I think about the collective names for groups of birds. We all know about a "murder of crows" to describe a group of crows and, of course, a "gaggle of geese." I have also read about a "parliament of owls." And, as near as I can tell, most birds species have a similar naming. Anyway, I am going to try and track this down. If any of you know about these collective bird names and their history, let me know. It will be interesting to find out more about this topic.

We have sold our house in the Oakland hills and are now living in the Walnut Creek Manor, a senior living spot in Walnut Creek, so I am much closer to all of our MDAS activities and events. We are going to have a second home in southern Alabama and I recently came across a brochure on an upcoming birding festival there the weekend of October 5-8. I hope I can get in on some of it—should be fun.

I hope to see you at an MDAS event this year!

### Good News For California Wildlife

Thanks to the support from advocates like you, Audubon California energized our network to advocate and fight for nontoxic, nonlead ammunition for all hunting in California, helping to ensure the continued survival of scavenger species like the iconic California Condor.

Lead ammunition has also poisoned eagles, owls, and dabbling ducks as well as mammals like bobcats and coyotes.

But because of your support, we got the lead out! In October 2013, Assembly Bill 711 was signed into law requiring the use of nonlead ammunition by hunters in California. Sponsored by Audubon California, Defenders of Wildlife, and The Humane Society of the United States, the law took effect in phases. Phase 1, implemented last year, required the use of nonleaded ammunition on Nelson Bighorn Sheep and all wildlife on CDFW lands.

Effective July 1, 2016, Phase 2 took effect. California hunters are required to use nonlead shot with a few exceptions for certain birds on the land of licensed game bird clubs. This is a major milestone YOU helped us accomplish.

In Phase 3, coming in 2019, all lead shot will be prohibited completely for all species. ~**Brigid McCormack, Exec. Director, Audubon California**

And, *that's* good news for California wildlife

### Volunteer Thanks

The MDAS booth at the Martinez Beaver Festival was a huge success thanks to the efforts of Brian Murphy and Nina and Leary Wong. Initially, most attendees came by the MDAS table with their children to collect charms for their bracelets, a festival activity, but many returned because Leary simply asked, "Do you like going on bird walks?"



*Pierre and Dimitry Bull had a dam good time at the Beaver Festival in Martinez, Ariana Rickard photo*

Leary Wong said, "Nina and I had a lot of fun meeting possible birders at the Festival. When we asked the people stopping by if they were interested in the Audubon walks, their eyes lit up. The idea of walking with knowledgeable birders in a safe group was a key element. The description of field trips in the *Quail* nicely explained the details of our trips." ~**Maren Smith**

### Welcome New Members

Bernard Della Santa	Walnut Creek
Bryan McElderry	Lafayette
Juan Rodriquez-Paris	Walnut Creek
Steven Thornburgh	Berkeley

### MDAS on the Web

[www.diabloaudubon.org](http://www.diabloaudubon.org)  
[www.diabloaudubon.org/mobile](http://www.diabloaudubon.org/mobile)  
 (mobile only)  
[www.facebook.com/mtdiabloaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/mtdiabloaudubon)  
[www.meetup.com/Mount-Diablo-Audubon-Society/](https://www.meetup.com/Mount-Diablo-Audubon-Society/)

Q

This bird sings a distinctive "Dawn Song" before sunrise stopping when the sun appears. Although not a local species, this bird has been observed in Contra Costa County each winter since 2012. A group of these birds is called a coronation.

Unscramble these letters or turn to page 7 to learn more.

**ABCDGIIKLNOPRRT**

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 the October *Quail* is September 16.**

The big event of the summer was the discovery of a Hooded Warbler in Redwood Regional Park by Logan Kahle, on June 29 on the Stream Trail just up from the Eucalyptus Trail. At least 60 people reported seeing the warbler. The last report was on 7/19. Soon thereafter, another Hooded Warbler was reported from San Mateo County staying for less than a week. The last Hooded Warbler in the Bay Area had been reported 15 years ago.

Additionally, while looking for the Hooded Warbler, several observers also noticed a Northern Pygmy Owl visible just off the trail about a half mile away. The owl was viewed for five days in early July. And, many Western and Clark's Grebe were pair-bonding at Clinton Court Forebay on August 4 which seems like a very unusual time for this activity. (Note: the American Ornithological Union changed the sequence of orders in its July 1 bird list revision. Barring *Quail* formatting issues, I'll use the new arrangement.)

On 8/1, JR saw a **Vaux's Swift** at Briones Regional Park and DY saw them in his Danville neighborhood.

Two **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** were at Holland Tract 6/13. LK, JL

ER reported a **White-headed Woodpecker** at Live Oak campground at Mt. Diablo State Park 6/11. This is a bird of the Sierras. (see photo page 4)

A calling **Black Rail** was at San Pablo bayside of the Pt. Pinole RP 8/3. LK, NA

KB saw two adult and two **Ridgway's Rail** chicks at Meeker Slough 7/10.

Several **Spotted Sandpipers** were seen by AL at Pt. Pinole, Sandpiper Spit, Carquinez Regional Shoreline, and Lone Tree Point 7/19 and 7/21.

AL saw five **Wandering Tattlers** at Pt. San Pablo and LK saw one at Pt. Molate, both on 7/29.

LK and DM had a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Waterbird Regional Preserve 7/29.

Two **Semi-palmated Sandpipers** were with a large flock of **Western**

**Sandpipers** at Meeker Slough 7/31. LK, EM

A **Pigeon Guillemot** was off shore of Ferry Point in Pt. Richmond from 6/6 to 6/24. MP, HB, DQ, AL, ESo, SD

Two hundred **Caspian Tern** were off Canal Blvd in Richmond 6/13. LK, JL

A **Common Tern** was seen 8/1 by AL at Pt. Pinole RP, and 8/3 by LK and NA at the same location.

On 7/17, 30 **Elegant Tern** were off Canal Blvd. in Richmond. LK, MP

A lone **Cattle Egret** was at the Ironhouse Sanitary District in Brentwood 6/13. LK, JL

SD saw three **Osprey** and one new nest at Pt. Pinole 6/9.

An adult **Bald Eagle** flew over the Valle Vista staging area 6/13. LK, JL

LK and ES saw an astonishing kettle of 120 **Swainson's Hawks** from the Clifton Court Forebay 8/3.

HH saw the **Western Screech Owl** close to the entrance of the Lafayette Moraga Trail on 6/10, 6/24, and 8/5.

Sightings of **Pileated Woodpecker** at the Skyline gate of Redwood Regional Park were on 6/14, CM, and 6/30, DA.

Two **Peregrine Falcons** were at the Castle Rocks area of Pine Canyon 7/18. H&RH

AB reported a **Willow Flycatcher** at Shell Ridge Open Space 6/26.

Thirty **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were on Pinehurst in Canyon 6/13. LK, JL

**Bank Swallows** were at Piper Slough, Bethel Island, and Ironhouse Sanitary District 7/1, AL; 7/2, LK; 7/5, EK, BM.

An unusually located **Pygmy Nuthatch** was at Miller-Knox RP 7/31. LK, EM

H&RH saw two **Rock Wrens** near the maintenance area of Castle Rock Park 7/18.

P&NS had a male **Purple Finch** visiting their Antioch home 6/15.

A **Hermit Thrush** was near the Stream Trail at Redwood Regional Park from 6/29 to 7/2. AM, LK, CD, KS

A **Canyon Wren** was seen and heard by JH 7/12 about ¾ mile below the Mt. Diablo South Gate Ranger Station.

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was at Bethel Island 6/13 and 7/2. LK, JL

TH saw a **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** at Sibley Preserve 6/16.

A very early **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was at Pt. Pinole 7/30. MS

LK saw two **Blue Grosbeaks** 7/2 at Ironhouse and six on 7/2 at Holland Tract.

Single **Tricolored Blackbirds** were at Pt. Edith Trail 6/12, AL; Miller-Knox 7/17, LK, MP; and 8/3 at West County Wastewater Treatment Plant, LK, ES.

Numerous **Western Tanagers** were seen around the county.

~ ~ ~

NA Noah Arthur, DA David Assman, AB Alan Barbour, HB Holly Bern, KB Ken Berniker, KD Kalen Davison, SD Sheila Dickie, CD Cedric Duhalde, HH Hugh Harvey, H&RH Hugh and Rosita Harvey, JH Joel Herr, TH Tim Howe, SJ Sharon J., LK Logan Kahle, EK Elizabeth Kroll, JL Jason Liu, AL Albert Linkowski, AM Aaron Maizlich, BM Bonnie Mende, CM Colin Meusel, EM Emily Milano, KM Kai Mills, DM Dominik Mosur, MP Michael Park, DQ Dave Quady, JR John Riveroso, ER Emily Routman, KS Ken Schneider, P&NS Paul and Nancy Schorr, ESo Elizabeth Sojourner, MS Mike Stake, ES Emilie Strauss, CS Curtis Stuteville, DY David Yeaman

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

## World Shorebirds Day, 9/6

Citizen scientists, mark your calendars for September 6, 2016. Shorebirds, those extreme migrants, as well as people who do the most for them, are celebrated each year on the 6th of September. Join the celebration!

For more information: [worldshorebirdsday.wordpress.com](http://worldshorebirdsday.wordpress.com)

## Trip Reports

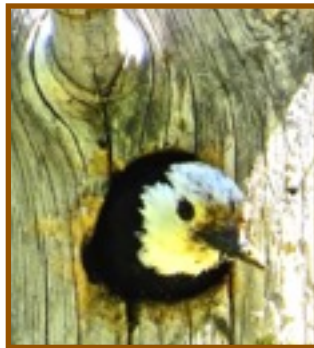
### Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley, June 18-19:

Everyone should know that the weather can change at a moment's notice in the mountains, and indeed, for our Yuba Pass trip it did. From an almost full moon, starry Friday night, by 7 AM

Saturday morning it had been raining for a good four hours. Still, 17 smiling faces, some under umbrellas, greeted the leaders at the parking lot located at 6,701 feet above sea level. The plan of the day was to head downhill to the Sierra Valley at just under 5,000 feet of elevation. We wanted to start at Mountain Quail Road on Hwy. 89 south of Calpine, but the road was being flagged for a paving project. Instead, we turned around and started around the valley a different way. We stopped at the Sparrow Corner, Marble Hot Springs Road, Maddalena Ranch and both Harriet and Heriot Lanes, all before lunch in Loyalton. The birds were exceptionally cooperative, as the rain gave way to wonderful rainbows and sunny skies. Well-seen or heard were both Vesper's and Brewer's Sparrows, Sage Thrashers, White-faced Ibis, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds (see photo page 12), Swainson's Hawks, and American White Pelicans.

After lunch, we had another big stop: the Rotary picnic area on Smithneck Road. It did not disappoint us, as we had Red-breasted Sapsuckers and Hairy Woodpeckers nesting in the same tree, Lewis's Woodpeckers in the power pole beyond the driveway, and Olive-sided Flycatcher, Lazuli bunting, and Green-tailed Towhee across the creek. The discovery of a Bullock's Oriole nest high in a Jeffery Pine finished our birding for the afternoon.

The Sunday birding started again at the top of Yuba Pass. We observed the Cassin's Finches, Pine Siskins, Juncos and Evening Grosbeaks along the side of the highway; then watched Hairy Woodpecker parents coming to a nest hole and Mountain Chickadees doing the same. A walk through the campground produced both Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers on a nest, one high in a tree, the other in willows mid-meadow. A short drive downhill followed by car shuffling and we arrived at the Sand Pond Interpretive Trail near Sardine Lake. We walked a boardwalk,



White-headed Woodpecker,  
Isaac Aronow photo

found an Orange-crowned Warbler, a Western Wood-Pewee nest, had a Northern Goshawk fly past and into the trees, viewed blooming Western Azaleas, and saw a White-headed Woodpecker nest. At our last stop at a burned area from the 2006 Bassetts fire, we had an Osprey fly from a snag across the highway, yet another Olive-sided Flycatcher, a House Wren, and finally, a Black-backed Woodpecker. While lunching at Bassetts Station, we watched Calliope and Anna's Hummingbirds before tallying our checklist. Our

group of 20 birders identified 104 species over the weekend, a very satisfactory number considering the weather conditions under which we started the previous morning. ~Hugh and Rosita Harvey

**Lassen Volcanic National Park, July 9-10:** Seven participants enjoyed a nice weekend with great weather at Lassen Volcanic NP July 9 and 10. The trail around Manzanita Lake produced the usual American Dippers, Spotted Sandpipers, a perched Bald Eagle being bombarded by a Steller's Jay, and Western Tanagers. Among the warblers seen in the large willow bushes were one Hermit, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Nashville, and Wilson's. The hike around Summit Lake gave

us great views of a drumming male Black-backed Woodpecker and a female Williamson's Sapsucker, as well as several Gray Jays. Lake Helen in the south of the park was still over 80% covered by ice and snow with piles of snow all



Cassin's Finch, Isaac Aronow photo

Clark's Nutcrackers and Cassin's Finches were easily seen, but we did not find any Gray Rosy-Finches that are sometimes here. It was a treat to hear the Common Nighthawks nightly over the campground. Seven species of Woodpeckers and six Warbler species were included in the trip total of 52 bird species observed. ~Eugenia K. Larson

**San Mateo Coast, August 6:** Though overcast and cool in the morning, the San Mateo Coast was very pleasant for ten MDAS birders and one guest. We visited Princeton Harbor near Pillar Point, Pescadero Beach, Water Lane near the town of Pescadero, and Pigeon Point. We viewed the harbor from three different locations and saw hundreds of Brown Pelicans and Heermann's Gulls on the harbor breakwaters along with quite a few Elegant Terns, one Surf Scoter, and a Common Murre. Pescadero Beach, 18 miles south, also had many birds on the rocks including all three cormorant species, Black Oystercatchers, some Black Turnstones, and four Surfbirds; more Turnstones on the beach included one very colorful Ruddy Turnstone with its bright legs. Our lunch stop at Water Lane brought us a Hairy Woodpecker, some Pygmy Nuthatches, at least two Wilson's Warblers and a female Common Yellowthroat. We drove inland where the birds were quiet, then returned to the coast near Pigeon Point, named after the clipper ship, *Carrier Pigeon*, which wrecked here in 1853 while on its maiden voyage from Boston to San Francisco. The birding for us was successful as we had at least seven Pigeon Guillemots and three Wandering Tattlers. The whale which entertained many observers just south of the point was a great bonus to the 63 species of birds we identified. ~Hugh Harvey

# Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

## September 2016 (Call Leader for ?s or rain cancellations)

01	Thursday	Jewel Lake, Tilden Park
10	Saturday	Antioch Dunes NWR
17	Saturday	Vaux's Swifts at Rio Lindo Academy
28	Wednesday	Hayward Regional Shoreline
TBD		Outer Point Reyes Rarity Chase

## October 2016

01	Saturday	Hawk Hill
15	Saturday	Abbott's Lagoon
19	Wednesday	Berkeley-Emergyville Shoreline
29	Saturday	Outer Point Reyes

### 2 Thursday, September 1

#### Jewel Lake, Tilden Park

Leader: Maury Stern (925) 284-5980

Meet at 730 AM in the Nature Center Parking lot at the north end of Tilden Park. From Hwy 24 in Orinda, go north on Camino Pablo. Turn left on Wildcat Canyon Road. Stay right at the Brazil Building. At the next main intersection, turn right and pass Lake Anza and the Carousel. OR, take Fish Ranch Road from the Caldecott Tunnel, turn right at the top onto Grizzly Peak Road, turn right and downhill on to South Park Drive, and turn left at the bottom onto Wildcat Canyon Road. Short morning walk to look for migrants. Bring a snack and water.

### 2 Saturday, September 10

#### Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Hugh Harvey (925) 935-2979

Carpool leaves from the southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at 9 AM. OR, from Hwy 4 in Antioch, exit north on A Street. After about one mile, veer right onto Wilbur Avenue. Turn left onto Fulton Shipyard Road and cross the railroad tracks to the parking lot. Meet the refuge volunteer guide at the entry gate. This is your chance to visit the only National Wildlife Refuge in Contra Costa County. A one-hour, docent-led tour will introduce us to the history of the only place on Earth where one can see Lang's Metalmark Butterfly, a butterfly that requires Naked-stem Buckwheat for its entire life-cycle. Don't be disappointed if you don't see the butterfly or flowing sand dunes—after learning the history, you will understand. It may be hot and dusty so bring sun screen and water.

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners to advanced birders, but no dogs. **Contact Leader for ?s or rain cancellations.** MDAS is a conservation organization; as such, we encourage carpooling (riders should help with gas, tolls, or entry fees).

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

**Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride carpool location:** Exit I-680 at Sycamore Valley Road (East) in Danville. Park and Ride lot is on the left, one block east of the freeway.

**Sun Valley Mall parking lot carpool location:** southwest corner of mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Blvd. in Concord.

### 1 Saturday, September 17

#### Vaux's Swifts at Rio Lindo Academy, Healdsburg

Leader: Hugh Harvey (925) 935-2979

We hope to see thousands of Vaux's Swifts enter a chimney on the grounds of the Rio Lindo Academy, an annual occurrence since 1989, when human use of the chimney ceased. Be advised—we will return home after dark. Carpool leaves from the southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at 4 PM. **Please call the leader in advance if you want to carpool (one stop in Healdsburg for bathroom/food).** OR, take I-680 N across the Benicia Bridge (toll). Go west on I-780 to I-80 towards Sacramento. Exit at SR 37 and follow SR 37 to Lakeville Road and turn right. In Petaluma, take US 101 N to Healdsburg, and exit at Old Redwood Hwy/Healdsburg Avenue (exit 502). Go north to Bailhache Avenue and turn right. The road becomes Rio Lindo Avenue. Follow this road about three miles into the Academy's main entrance, then turn left at the first stop sign, another left just before the dormitory, and go a half block and turn right toward the rear of the campus to park on the right, past the chimney. Dress in layers and bring folding chairs, a picnic (**NO alcohol is allowed on the school campus**), and join the crowd as we enjoy the evening show.

### 2 Wednesday, September 28

#### Hayward Regional Shoreline, Winton Ave. Entrance

Leader: Bob Richmond (510) 427-9843

Carpool leaves from the Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride in Danville at 745 AM. OR, meet at 830 AM at the Winton Avenue entrance. From I-880, exit Winton Avenue, drive west 4.5 miles, and park near the trailhead just before the parking lot gate. Because Bay Area traffic is so unpredictable, if no one is there, just wait. We will look for passerines, shorebirds, and possibly, early ducks. Time permitting, we will finish at the San Leandro Marina. Bring water, a lunch and beverage.

### 2 TBD

#### Outer Point Reyes Rarity Chase

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

Dave Hutton (925) 451-2962

This is an experimental trip that will require flexibility! Because conditions are so variable, it is not always possible to know when it's the best time to see migrant rarities at the Outer Point. The leaders will watch the weather and postings and will decide when to go, possibly the day before the trip. If you think you might like to join the Rarity Chase, notify the leaders immediately with your name and phone contact, and we will then contact you with the specific date and starting time. If you can't attend at a moment's notice, don't worry—there is a scheduled field trip to the same location in late October.

## The MBTA Turns 100

This year marks a milestone in the protection of migratory birds. This year, 2016, is the centennial anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). One hundred years ago the United States and Great Britain (acting for Canada) adopted a uniform system of protection to "assure the preservation of species either harmless or beneficial to man." Two years later Congress and President Wilson signed it into law. This landmark treaty protects birds from people. It establishes which species are protected and what actions directed towards them are illegal. Since that time the act has been expanded both in geographic area via treaties with Mexico, Japan, and Russia, and in the scope of its coverage. While initially protecting primarily shorebirds and songbirds, over the years protection has come to include eagles, corvids, and other birds.

Today the MBTA is part of extensive legislation to protect birds and other wildlife. It was executed in a time when principles of conservation were in their infancy. Feathers decorated women's hats and relentless and senseless shooting of birds for sport was decimating species. In 1896 a few women who hoped to change ideas of fashion and, by so doing, eliminate bird kills, founded the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The Lacey Act, the first law protecting wildlife from interstate transport and thus limiting market hunting, passed in Congress four years later. In 1900 as well, the Christmas Bird Census came to replace the annual Christmas Bird "Side Hunt", a holiday ritual. The National Association of Audubon Societies was founded in 1902.

Over the years there have been many additions to the protection of migratory birds as a national consciousness of conservation has continued to expand. The Federal Duck Stamp program (see page 8) was established in 1934 to purchase and conserve habitat. In 1941 the first Western Hemisphere Convention was ratified, and subsequent treaties and conventions have recognized the movement of birds across North and South America. Some of our MDAS members participate in a seasonal water bird count which is part of legislation regarding migratory shore birds. There are monies for grants to support habitat throughout the Americas and for innovative projects in our nation.

This centennial has been an occasion to mark the MBTA's passage with new conservation funding. In April of this year, Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, announced the approval of \$48.8 million in grants (to be tripled through partner matching grants) for "purchasing, leasing, or otherwise conserving" more than 275,000 acres of primarily wetland habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds across the continent. In addition \$10.8 million Duck Stamp monies were allotted to purchase waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Two of the six projects funded are

here in California and will support Pacific flyway birds. In May the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced \$4 million in funding to support neotropical songbird and shorebird projects across the Americas through the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. These funds will be matched threefold by partners in the U.S., the Caribbean, Latin America and Canada. And that is good news!

But all is not well for the MBTA. In the past few years National Audubon and other conservation organizations were hopeful that the act would be strengthened to address the carnage that is occurring with both traditional and green energy development. But this has not happened. And, of course, there are other human-induced sources of mortality for migratory birds. According to the USFWS, wind turbines probably kill about 500,000 birds annually. Oil waste ponds account for about a million fatalities. The huge offenders are power lines which kill up to 175 million birds annually and communications towers with 50 million kills. When the Minnesota Vikings' stadium and other poorly designed buildings are considered, the statistics jump another number of unknown millions, some say possibly one billion. So it appears, despite the MBTA, that birds are getting a raw deal.

Attacks on the law are occurring in the courts and in Congress, where a few particularly rabid legislators have attached riders and amendments to gut the law. On the face of it, opponents appear to be acting on behalf of green energy but there are, as mentioned above, far larger and more powerful sources of fatalities. At present a "best practices" policy has been adopted as the measurement for determining whether or not an infringement has occurred, and some oil and power-line companies have worked to minimize their bird kills. USFWS has created "best practice protocols" to help wind farmers limit the killing of birds. If companies follow these guidelines they will not face prosecution under the MBTA. While this is a softer interpretation of the MTBA than any of us would like, perhaps, in the present political climate, it is better than the alternative. This is a concern that our chapter may need to address as wind energy continues to expand in our county and neighboring counties as well. ~Elizabeth Leite



✓ **TAKE ACTION!** Ask President Obama to Strengthen the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. When it was enacted 100 years ago, the MBTA helped end the wanton destruction of birds for the plume trade and unregulated commercial hunting. Now, we need to update and strengthen the law to address 21st Century threats (oil pits, power lines, communications towers) to save the lives of millions of birds. Please go to the MDAS website for a sample letter and information at: [diabloaudubon.org](http://diabloaudubon.org)



## Tropical Kingbird ♦ *Tyrannus melancholicus*

This bird sings a distinctive “Dawn Song” before sunrise and stops when the sun appears.

Although not a local species, this is a bird that has been observed in Contra Costa County each winter since 2012. Kingbirds are tyrant flycatchers (Genus *tyrannus*), named for their aggressive dominance over other species in defending their territory.

Kingbirds include Tropical Kingbird, Couch’s Kingbird, Cassin’s Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Thick-billed Kingbird, and Eastern Kingbird, and the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Fork-tailed Flycatcher. Gray Kingbird, Giant Kingbird and Loggerhead Kingbird are birds of the Caribbean and sometimes Florida. Only the Western



Tropical Kingbirds tend to perch in open view from where they launch out after flying insects. They forage almost exclusively in this manner by chasing large insects. During winter or in migration, they will also hover-glean berries or other fruit.

In Contra Costa County, according to species maps published by **eBird.org**, Tropical Kingbirds are drawn to places such as Heather Farm, Hidden Lakes, Meeker Slough, and Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline, while the Western Kingbird can be found throughout the county from Lime Ridge and Mount Diablo, to Clifton Court Forebay and Marsh Creek Trail, and to Piper Slough and Big Break Regional Shoreline. Cassin’s Kingbird has only been reported at Piper

Slough (1996), and in Alameda County at Brushy Peak (2011). Tropical Kingbird and Couch’s Kingbird are extremely hard to distinguish from each other, but Couch’s is found only in southern Texas. ~Ellis Myers

Above R: Tropical Kingbird, Kai Mills, MDAS Young Birder, photo

Kingbird may be expected in California, although the Tropical Kingbird wanders even as far north as British Columbia.

## Conservation/Legislative Outreach Committee News

► **Bird Advocacy Day**—On Wednesday, June 8, six members of our Conservation/Legislative Outreach Committee attended Audubon California’s second annual Bird Advocacy Day in Sacramento. Ariana Rickard, Rosalie Howarth, Mike Eliot, Christine Steck, Mike Mecham, and Rosemary Nishikawa represented MDAS—the largest number of any chapter participating.

We met in person with State Senator Steve Glazer (photo below L) and Assemblywoman Catharine B. Baker (photo below R), and with the legislative directors, fellows, and aides of six other representatives. Everywhere we went we were greeted with courtesy, respect, and interest.

Our mission was to acquaint elected officials with pending legislation of high importance to Audubon, including: drone regulation in parks and public land, a parks maintenance bond which includes a provision for the Salton Sea, greater transparency in Coastal Commission proceedings, a support policy for eelgrass conservation, and three greenhouse gas bills.

Awareness of the Audubon Society’s purpose ranged from only the vaguest idea in the case of one staffer, to the enthusiasm of another whose grandfather had been very active in his chapter. So, as well as discussing specific issues, our goal was to familiarize staff and members with the conservation focus of Audubon. Audubon California provided breakfast, lunch, and a happy hour gathering afterwards. It was an inspiring and productive day and we look forward to next year! ~Rosalie Howarth



## Wildlife Refuges Are For the Birds

The new 2016-2017 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (popularly called the "Duck Stamp") is now available. The proceeds from this year's stamp sales (estimated to be \$40 million) will go directly to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund for acquisition of breeding, stopover, and wintering habitats for waterfowl and other bird species, and other wildlife. There are 252 National Wildlife Refuges (accounting for more than 2.37 million acres) and over 200 Waterfowl Production Areas (with over 3.0 million acres). Every time you buy a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp you are helping to secure valuable habitat for birds, wildlife, and for future generations of Americans enjoying the Refuge System.



Showing a pair of flying Trumpeter Swans by Joseph Hautman, of Plymouth, Minnesota, the 2016-2017 stamp. This is the fifth time that Joe Hautman's artwork has been selected for the Federal Duck Stamp. His four previous stamps included Spectacled Eider (1992-3), Black Scoter (2002-3), Northern Pintail (2008-9), and Wood Duck (2012-13). Joe is one of a trio of brothers, all of whom are previous winners of the Federal Duck Stamp Art contest.

While duck hunters are required to purchase one of these stamps, and while the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund

benefits from import duties collected on arms and ammunition, Trumpeter Swans are not hunted, emphasizing the fact that the stamp is not simply "for hunting," but its purpose is essentially to secure valuable habitat to conserve waterfowl and other species through the NWR system.

Trumpeter Swans represent a significant conservation success story. This swan historically suffered huge population declines. In the 1930s, fewer than 70 wild Trumpeter Swans were known to exist, and their extinction seemed likely. Then, a population of several thousand of the birds was found in Alaska. Increased conservation efforts helped in the recovery of native western populations. In addition, multiple reintroductions to the area around the Great Lakes have also proven to be highly successful. Trumpeter Swans are still quite rare and need your help to continue their comeback. With its grace and beauty, the Trumpeter Swan has been called the crown jewel of healthy wetlands.



*Trumpeter Swans seen in Crex Meadows, WI, Ellis Myers photo*

Mount Diablo Audubon Society (MDAS) encourages support of the "Duck Stamp" program by selling the stamps at face value—\$25—available for purchase at our September meeting. See Diane Malucelli at the sales table to purchase your stamp. (abridged from the *Stamp Friends Wingtips* article) ~Ellis Myers and Don Lewis

### ► **Plumas Audubon first ever Grebe Festival at Lake Almanor, Chester, August 19-21**

Celebrate the extraordinary "dancing" grebes at the inaugural Grebe Festival in Chester, CA. Western and Clark's Grebes breed and nest on Lake Almanor, considered an Important Bird Area by National Audubon. Due to ongoing drought and habitat loss, the lake has grown in its importance as a breeding site. Late August is a great time to view the nesting colonies of grebes as they race across the water in their incredible "rushing" displays and allow babies to climb aboard their parents' backs. Enjoy birding, boating, art, research, a beer stroll, and documentary films. **For information: [www.plumasaudubon.org/grebe-festival](http://www.plumasaudubon.org/grebe-festival)**

### ► **Calling All Wildlife Lovers—Lindsay Wildlife Experience Needs Your Help!**

Animals in our care need gently-loved pillowcases, finger towels, hand towels, beach towels and, for those in foster care, pet food to feed the large number of orphaned raccoons and opossum. Remove tags and bring your linens or food donations in a bag or box to the Lindsay WE, 1931 First Avenue, Walnut Creek. **For information: [lindsaywildlife.org](http://lindsaywildlife.org) or call (925) 935-1978**

### ► **"Walk and Talk", Assemblywoman Baker, Lafayette, Sat., September 10, 9-1030 AM**

In partnership with the John Muir Land Trust and Mount Diablo Audubon, join Assemblywoman Catharine B. Baker for a casual "walk and talk" on the Gary Bogue Trail (off Peaceful Lane in Lafayette, CA 94549). This gathering is an opportunity to ask questions about legislation impacting parks, the environment, and other issues while enjoying the natural beauty of the Acalanes Ridge Trail. **For information: [asmrc.org/AF](http://asmrc.org/AF) or call (925) 328-1515**

### ► **Coastal Clean Up Day, Martinez, Sat., September 17**

Join the Alhambra Watershed Council volunteers for the third annual Peyton Slough-McNabney Marsh clean-up. Volunteers aged 13-18 are also welcome with a parent/guardian. Dress in layers, wear sturdy closed-toe shoes and long pants, and bring a hat, gloves, sunblock, sunglasses, and a refillable water bottle. **For information: [erobinson@ccrcd.org](mailto:erobinson@ccrcd.org) or call (925) 672-6522**

### ► **Audubon California Assembly, Tenaya Lodge, Yosemite, November 4-6**

Meet with state Audubon members to enjoy presentations and breakout sessions on topics from climate, energy, and conservation to diversity and inclusion while birding in the iconic Sierra. Early registration (\$75) ends August 31. General registration starting September 1 is \$100 (excluding lodging \$169.29). **For information: [chapternetworkca@audubon.org](mailto:chapternetworkca@audubon.org)**



## First Year Reflections

I moved to Ithaca with a vast appetite for new information, a curiosity for the radically different ecology and birdlife of the region, and preparedness to experience violently changing seasons. After my first year of living in, experiencing, and exploring Ithaca, I believe all of these yearnings were satisfied in the most fulfilling of ways.

Before my first day of class, a few kindred young birders had contacted me asking if I wanted to go birding at a woodlot north of Campus. After a productive

hour or so p o k i n g around and s e e i n g m o r e w a r b l e r species than you see in an average year

in California, just as we were ready to go our different ways one of them, one of hottest guns in the East Coast young birder scene, Alex Wiebe, asked, "So, you want to meet back here at 11 PM to pick up some NFCs?"

I had no idea what he meant, but since, have gone headfirst into this exciting new type of birding: in the East Coast so many birds pass overhead at night that if you go out in the middle of the night you can hear dozens or even hundreds or thousands of nocturnal migrant songbirds streaming by overhead giving Nocturnal Flight Calls, or NFCs. And you can recognize these birds...by species. So, the way many East Coast birders find sparrows, thrushes, or cuckoos at out-of-place locations is by hearing them at night! I was fascinated by this amazing form of birding, and immediately caught on and spent dozens of nights looking up and listening for nocturnal migrating birds.

As the fall faded into winter, and snow started to become an everyday sight, I started to appreciate birding back in California in a whole different way. (Indeed, they even gave us a six-week break to go home to accentuate



Logan Kahle in the field,  
Maren Smith photo

the contrast!) Still, in the midst of a snowy day, in early April I biked over to the Lab of Ornithology to go to Ornithology class. In the morning, some birders working at the Lab had noticed the arrival of a migrant Virginia Rail in the marsh in front of the Lab. Lab workers have noted in the past few years that early Virginia Rails have stopped by this same small marsh, and had wondered if this was the same bird. Upon hearing this hypothesis, our professor, David Winkler, immediately perked up, and exclaimed, "Well, let's find out!"

I was somewhat taken aback and confused by this statement, but once we started unloading mist nets I realized we were taking the class into the field! We proceeded to catch and band the rail, and will likely do the same next year to have another piece in the puzzle of return rates to fragmented habitats in Virginia Rails. This kind of proactive approach to science and research at the Lab really struck me as part of the way they're able to integrate a student body in rigorous scientific research.

The breadth of the classes and subjects I've been able to study at Cornell has really opened my eyes to a wide variety of topics, from uncovering parts of ornithological taxonomy and life history I'd never thought of, to delving into computer science, to learning about philosophy. The learning environment and camaraderie fostered here has helped me to see horizons in all directions and will hopefully give aim to my bird studies in the future.

As I look forward, in the years to come, I'm hoping to see the scientific world from Cornell's vantage and discover where my passion in bird research truly lies, whether in furthering NFCs on the West Coast or exploring breeding ecology and uncovering cryptic species in the Amazonian jungles. My experience at Cornell, in every angle I look at it, has expanded and broadened my understanding of birds and science, and so much more. ~Logan Kahle

## A New California Bird

*The Checklist of North American Birds* published by The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) is the official authority on classification and names of all bird species on this continent. Each spring the AOU meets to consider any changes dictated by new scientific data or by the whim of the Checklist Committee. Such changes are included in the July issue of the *Auk*. And each year birders await word as to whether a split will give them a new species for their life list or whether a lump will set them back.

This year, however, the main differences of importance to California



California Scrub-Jay, Ellis  
Myers photo

birders are a split of the Western Scrub-Jay. So if you have, in the past, recorded a Western Scrub-Jay from your travels to the Four-Corners area of the Southwest or to Texas, you may add Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) to your collection. Your backyard bird now answers to the name California Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*).

Also, there has been a major resequencing of orders, families, and species. If you look at an older field guide, such as the wonderful *Birds of the Pacific States*, by Ralph Hoffmann, published in 1927, you will find that at the top of the list are the loons. [Incidentally, you will also find, among the Family *Corvidae*, both Woodhouse Jay and California Jay, with the statement "... the eastern slope of the Sierras roughly separates the California Jay on the west and the Woodhouse Jay on the east."]

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# Mount Diablo Audubon Society

## 2016-2017 Field Trip Schedule By Hugh Harvey

### September 2016

01 Thursday	Jewel Lake	MS
10 Saturday	Antioch Dunes	HH
17 Saturday	Vaux Swifts at Rio Lindo Academy	HH
28 Wednesday	Hayward Shoreline/Winton Ave.	BR
TBD	Rarity Chase, Outer Point Reyes	HH/DH

### October 2016

01 Saturday	Hawk Hill	FS
15 Saturday	Abbott's Lagoon	DH
19 Wednesday	Berkeley-Emeryville Shoreline	EL
29 Saturday	Outer Point Reyes	J-CS

### November 2016

05 Saturday	Charleston Slough/South Bay	EL
15 Tuesday	McNabney Marsh /Mt. View SD	ST
19 Saturday	Limantour	MS
26 Saturday	Solano County Raptors	GF

### December 2016

03 Saturday	Sacramento/Colusa NWRs	BB
08 Thursday	Niles Area	JE
14 Wednesday	Christmas Bird Count/East CCC	EL2*
17 Saturday	Christmas Bird Count/Cent. CCC	EL2*

### January 2017

07 Saturday	Putah Creek	FS
12 Thursday	Lake Merritt/Arrowhead Marsh	SR
18 Wednesday	East Contra Costa County	PS
28 Saturday	Las Gallinas/Rush Ck./S'berger Pk.	EL

### February 2017

04 Saturday	Thornton/Cosumnes Preserve	CC
09 Thursday	Grizzly Island	MS
18-19 Sat./Sun.	Los Banos/Panoche Valley	BB/HH
22 Wednesday	Sunol Regional Park	EL
25 Saturday	Bodega Bay	HH

### March 2017

01 Wednesday	Walnut Creek Parks	HH
08 Wednesday	Contra Loma Reservoir	PS
14 Tuesday	McNabney Marsh/Mt. View SD	ST 23
Thursday	Valle Vista	DL
25 Saturday	Tomales Bay State Park	MS
29 Wednesday	Lake Lagunitas	HH

### April 2017

01 Saturday	Garin Regional Park	FS
04 Tuesday	Orinda Connector Trail	CC
13 Thursday	North Briones	MS
15 Saturday	Pine Canyon	NW
20 Thursday	Black Diamond Mines	PS
22 Saturday	Mines Road	HH
25 Tuesday	Del Puerto Canyon	BB
27 Thursday	Mitchell Canyon	MS

### May 2017

03 Wednesday	Mt. Diablo State Park	JE
06 Saturday	East Contra Costa County	GF
11 Thursday	West Briones Regional Park	MS
23 Tuesday	No Child Left Inside	PS
25 Thursday	No Child Left Inside	PS

### June 2017

03 Saturday	Outer Point Reyes	J-CS
TBD Sat./Sun.	Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley	HH

### July 2017

TBD Sat./Sun.	Lassen Volcanic NP	EL
27 Thursday	Frank's Dump-High Tide	HH

### August 2017

05 Saturday	San Mateo Coast	BB
19 Saturday	Bodega Bay	FS

## Field Trip Information

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners to advanced birders, but no dogs. Call the Leader for any questions or rain cancellations. Dress in layers and bring sunscreen, a hat, snacks, lunch, and a beverage/water.

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

Category **2**: Moderate, 1 mile+, possibly rough terrain

Category **3**: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Our MDAS chapter is a conservation organization. As such, we encourage carpooling. Those who share a ride should offer to help with gas, bridge tolls, or park entry fees.

**Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride carpool location:** Exit I-680 @ Sycamore Valley Road in Danville. Park and Ride lot is on the left, one block east of freeway.

**Sun Valley Mall parking lot carpool location:** southwest corner of mall parking lot @ Willow Pass Rd and Contra Costa Blvd. in Concord.

## MDAS Field Trip Leaders

Hugh B. Harvey, Chair (HH)	(925) 935-2979
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Paul Schorr (PS)	(925) 757-5107
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Maury Stern (MS)	(925) 284-5980
Steve Taylor (ST)	(925) 828-8810
Nancy Wenninger (NW)	(925) 938-7987

## Why Feed the Birds?

Most of us enjoy watching birds in our backyards. We know they become used to eating at feeders and tend to raise their young nearby. Some people feel that we should let birds eat from natural sources only. But a recent study has shown that there are good reasons to feed wild birds.

In research from Millikin University that ran from 2011-2014, data was collected on over 1000 wild birds. They were caught, banded, and studied while foraging on their own, then again after being provided with bird feeders for several months, and again after feeders were removed.

A variety of typical backyard bird species were studied (finches, chickadee, titmouse, nuthatch, etc.) and feed included sunflower, millet, safflower, and peanuts. Blood tests, body weight, feather growth patterns, and other factors were studied.

Results were significant and consistent, showing better physiological condition, higher quality feathers (*Photo below: stress marks due to inconsistent eating*), more antioxidants, stronger immune systems, more body fat, and



less stress in birds that came to the feeders. The study also demonstrated that feeding

birds is only supplemental in their diets.

The same birds, studied again several months after feeding stopped, were found to have returned to the lower levels of health found prior to adding feeders. The study also showed that birds do not disappear from an area if feeding is stopped.

Since many birds do migrate in fall, the increase in body fat (*Photo R: fat deposit on bird's neck*) due to feeders suggests that these birds might have a better



chance of withstanding the rigors of long flight and cold temperatures.

~Mike Eliot, Wild Birds Unlimited

For full study write-up: <http://m.conphys.oxfordjournals.org/content/3/1/cov058.full.pdf>

## 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 MDAS Board meets at 645 PM the second Thursday of each month except for July and August at Wild Birds Unlimited, Pleasant Hill.



Mount Diablo Audubon Society thanks our Business Partners:  
**AlphaGraphics, Walnut Creek**  
**Galaxy Press, Concord**  
**Native Bird Connections**  
**Rakestraw Books, Danville**  
**Stephen Joseph Photography**

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 Mt. 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  "Go Green" email  US Mail

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send check payable to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society with this application to:  
 Membership Chair, 282 Firestone Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

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

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A male, Yellow-headed Blackbird seen during the June MDAS Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley weekend field trip (see field trip report page 4), Isaac Aronow photo

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By 2009, the loons had been moved to a position between the quails and the grebes. And, swans and geese had been placed in the first position. (See our *Checklist of the Birds of Contra Costa County*, published in 2010. Later, other changes made that checklist outdated, when falcons were shifted away from the hawks to after the woodpeckers.)

The new checklist begins with Greater White-fronted Goose and other geese and ducks; then quail, grebes, pigeons and doves. Of the species likely to be found in the county, grackles, cowbirds and orioles take over last place, allowing House Sparrow to move up a couple of notches to just above American Pipit.

If you have seen a Sky Lark, perhaps on San Juan Island, Washington, you need to call it Eurasian Skylark. And the rarely seen Orange Bishop will be known as the Northern Red Bishop from now on.

Of the species whose scientific names, but not their common names, have been changed, Sandhill Crane becomes *Antigone canadensis* instead of *Grus canadensis*.

Finally, that bit about the whim of the Checklist Committee was merely the whim of the writer. The AOU Checklist Committee considers formal proposals, which they then approve only if the evidence is based on peer-reviewed published research and is compelling enough. ~Ellis Myers

For more AOU information: <http://blog.aba.org/2016/07/2016-aou-supplement.html>



Members of MDAS and Golden Gate Audubon join together for Bird Advocacy Day (see page 7 for more details), Rosalie Howarth photo

*"The truth of the matter is, the birds could very well live without us, but many -- perhaps all -- of us would find life incomplete, indeed almost intolerable without the birds."* ~Roger Tory Peterson

