



# THE QUAIL

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society | [www.diabloaudubon.org](http://www.diabloaudubon.org)

## 8 pm: Animal Encounters

As humans encroach on wild places, encounters with animals—from bears, bison, mountain lions, and mice to turkeys, ticks, rats, and raccoons—have become more common.



But what are the rules for facing a moose up close? Do you run from a coyote, or stand your ground? How deadly, really, are black widow spiders, rattlesnakes, and sharks?

Bay Area author Rachel Levin will share advice from her book, *Look Big: And Other Tips for Surviving Animal Encounters of All Kinds*. A humorous and helpful

illustrated field guide, *Look Big* explains what to do in the face of 50 of our most feared—or frustrating—animals. Levin will share expert tips, fascinating facts, and not-so-harrowing true tales from her survival guide.

**Rachel Levin** is a San Francisco-based journalist who covers food, travel, trends, and the occasional rock star; rabbi; or crack addict/ex-con/ultramarathoner. Her work has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Sunset*, and *eater.com*. She is at work on a second book, titled *Eat Something*, a pop culture look at Jews and food, to be published in Spring 2020 by Chronicle Books.



## 7 pm: Conservation

Program Chair Ariana Rickard will discuss Audubon California's state conservation priorities, including the Salton Sea, and give a preview of the 2019 Audubon National Convention.

## Next Meeting: DECEMBER 6

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will meet **Thursday, Dec. 6**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek.

**6:30 pm** Doors open

**7:00 pm** Birding Info

**7:25 pm** News

**7:40 pm** Snacks & Raffle

**8:00 pm** Main Program

**"Look Big: Surviving Animal Encounters"**

## Inside

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**Plus:** A Big Thank You to Donors

*NOTE: Next month, The Quail will roost. See page 7 for January info.*

# Thanks to Donors

The 2018 MDAS Annual Donation Letter has been completed, and you should be receiving yours in late November. A huge thank-you to Nancy Wenninger, Rosalie Howarth and Maren Smith for completing a very comprehensive summary of MDAS accomplishments in 2018. Also, a special thanks to Galaxy Press, to Mike Eliot and his staff at Wild Birds Unlimited and to the MDAS Board members for their work in getting the letter to you.



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The letter includes year-end updates and highlights regarding the following:

- \* MDAS Educational Outreach Programs, which support No Child Left Inside, birding classes and 50+ annual field trips;
- \* Legislative and Advocacy involvement and actions such as Audubon California's Advocacy Day in Sacramento;
- \* Conservation programs, including MDAS Citizen Science activities such as two annual Christmas Bird Counts;
- \* Partnerships with East Bay Regional Park District, Save Mount Diablo and the John Muir Land Trust in cooperative efforts to acquire and preserve important wildlife habitat;
- \* Donations contributed to Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, Audubon California, International Bird Rescue, Native Bird Connections and The Gardens at Heather Farm to further the cause for birds;
- \* Communications to MDAS members through sponsorship of [EBB\\_Sightings@yahoo.com](mailto:EBB_Sightings@yahoo.com);
- \* a website that provides comprehensive and timely updates and information;
- \* 10 General meetings that often attract 100+ members and guests who enjoy wonderful programs;
- \* and the beautiful, informational newsletter, *The Quail*, for our 400+ MDAS members.

Please continue to help us fund these and many other important programs in 2019. As always, we are deeply grateful for your generous support.

Best regards and good birding,

*Paul Schorr*

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The MDAS Board meets at 6:45 pm at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill on the second Thursday of every month except July and August.

*The Quail* is published monthly except in January, July and August by the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, PO Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053.

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**The MDAS board** proudly welcomes Mike Mecham (above) and Juan Pablo Galvan (at left). Mike, who was confirmed in October as a member at large, has birded on six continents. He joined Mt. Diablo Audubon six years ago and serves as a member of its legislative committee as

well as a leader in the Christmas Bird Count. Juan Pablo will head the Young Birders Club. A land use manager for Save Mount Diablo, he has researched birds in San Diego as well as Sonora, Mexico. He holds a BS in



Ecology, Behavior and Evolution from UCSD and an MS in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology from the University of Maryland, College Park. He steps in for Tracy Farrington, who founded Young Birders.

**MORE GOOD NEWS:** Thanks to letters of protest by Member at Large Mike Eliot and MDAS Conservation Chair Nancy Wenninger, the Mt. View Sanitary District has decided to use traps rather than anticoagulant rodenticides to kill ground squirrels. ... Fans of the Peregrine Falcons nesting atop UC Berkeley's campanile will soon be able to watch the pair on webcam, due to a successful crowdfunding campaign. ... An appellate court ruled that PG&E must conduct an environmental review of its plan to remove hundreds of trees along pipelines in Lafayette.

# Of Lists and Listers

Email lists for reporting bird sightings actually predate the World Wide Web. A natural evolution of phone messages and telegrams, they provided avid birders a means of rapidly communicating the arrival of interesting species in interesting places. They still serve that purpose today.

Most modern sightings lists have gained a broader following, welcoming beginning birders, providing regular reports from someone's favorite "patch," and supplying an opportunity for out-of-towners to learn what they're likely to see in a region—not just what's new or noteworthy. Your columnist did the latter before visiting Alaska and developed an even deeper respect for ravens.



The Bird Wide Web

The earliest lists were simple, homespun affairs, managed with off-the-shelf programs that ran on whatever server was available. The MDAS East Bay Birding list (**EBB\_Sightings**) started in 1998 as the *East Bay Birders Circle* discussion group, merged with our chapter's website-based group in 2004, and then moved to **Yahoo** in 2010. Archives for both earlier groups remain on the MDAS website.

Many lists like ours are "private," meaning non-members can neither post sightings nor see what members have posted. Others, such as **South Bay Birds**, have open archives. Sightings lists for the Bay Area and beyond are available through **Sialia**, a digest of nationwide lists, customizable by regions. Through Sialia, incidentally, non-members can see posts on EBB\_Sightings!

To avoid cluttered inboxes, many list members choose to receive daily digests containing all the day's posts preceded by a summary. To make sure the list isn't contaminated with off-topic material, new members must be approved by a moderator, who also has the power to limit postings or to cancel memberships. Birdwatchers being a fairly cooperative bunch, about the worst that slips through is an occasional promo for out-of-area tours.

Avid birders may wish to cut to the chase of rarities. The non-web solution for these folks, whom some call *listers*, relies on text message alerts through cell phones. Need an Eastern Yellow Wagtail unexpectedly found in Marin for your lifelist? The Bay Area email groups were running slow just before this column was written, but the **eBird Alert** system got the word out.—MDAS Webmaster Dal Leite

# Upcoming Field Trips

**Saturday, Dec. 1, Sacramento Refuges.** This trip will include visits to several wonderful wildlife refuges in the Sacramento Valley. Collectively these sanctuaries are home to tens of thousands of wintering ducks, geese and swans. Expect visits to Sacramento and Colusa National Wildlife Refuges. The exact itinerary will be announced the day of the trip. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7 am, or meet at 8:15 am at the I-5 N Dunnigan rest area. Leader: Beth Branthaver (510) 502-4869. Category 2.

**Wednesday, Dec. 5, American Canyon Wetlands Edge Park.** Wintering ducks, shorebirds and raptors possible along the wetlands and the Napa River; some passerines in the fields and eucalyptus. We will walk 3-4 miles on level paths along ponds and reach the Napa River before returning to the park. High tide is at noon. Bring walking shoes, trail snacks and water; lunch in the park when we return. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:15, meet at park at 8 am. Leaders: Chris & Teri Wills (925) 408-5364. Category 3.

**Saturday, Dec. 8, Southeast Solano County Raptors and More.** We will bird east on Hwy 12 and Creed Rd to the vicinity of Hwy 113 and Robinson Rd, possibly including Jepson Prairie. We will make several stops, looking for migrating waterfowl, passerines and winter raptors, especially Flannery and McCormack Rds in search of the elusive Mountain Plover. From there, given time, we may travel to the Bird's Landing area, where we should see Tri-colored Blackbirds among other passerines and possibly to Montezuma Slough for waterfowl. Plan to spend 4-5 hours birding, plus driving time. There will be minimal

hiking, but dress for seasonal conditions. Bring handheld radios, food and water. Carpooling is strongly advised. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:15 am. Meet the leader at 8 am at Suisun City McDonald's, Hwy 12 and Sunset Ave. Leader: Gary Fregien (916) 708-0636. Category 1.

**Saturday, Dec. 15, Central County Christmas Count.** Elizabeth Leite, [eleite@diabloaudubon.org](mailto:eleite@diabloaudubon.org)

**Wednesday, Dec. 19, East County Christmas Count.** Elizabeth Leite, [eleite@diabloaudubon.org](mailto:eleite@diabloaudubon.org)

**Saturday, Jan. 5, Putah Creek.** Possible Osprey, Phainopepla, Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 8 am. Meet at 8:45 am at the intersection of Cherry Glen and Pleasant Valley Rds, approximately 1 mile north from I-80, west of Vacaville. Dress warmly; this is a cold, windy area. Bring lunch. Leader: Fred Safier (925) 937-2906. Category 1.

**Thursday, Jan. 17, East Contra Costa County.** We will see wintering birds at Big Break, Ironhouse Sanitary, and several other spots in the eastern portion of our county. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 8:15 am. Meet at Big Break Regional Shoreline/Delta Science Center at 9 am. Leader: Paul Schorr (925) 998-0070. Category 1.

**Monday, Jan. 21, Lake Merritt/Arrowhead Marsh—High Tide.** We should find a good variety of wintering ducks and gulls. Carpool leaves at 8 am from El Nido Ranch Rd. Meet at 8:30 am in parking lot by Lake Merritt. Enter Children's Fairyland (entry fee), and follow road around to parking lot entrance on right between boathouse and aviary. We will then drive to Arrowhead Marsh for the high tide around 11:30 am; the rising tide should flush out rails. The area is also good for

shorebirds and more wintering ducks on the estuary. A visit to Garretson Point will finish our trip. Bring lunch and drinks. Leader: Sandy Ritchie (925) 685-8048. Category 1.

**Saturday, Jan. 26, Las Gallinas/Rush Creek/Shollenberger Park/Ellis Creek.** All four sites are good for wintering waders, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. Carpool leaves Sun Valley parking lot at 7:30 am. Meet at Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District parking lot at 8:30 am. Later, we will head to Rush Creek Marsh, Schollenberger Park and Ellis Creek. Bring lunch and a beverage. Leader: Sandy Ritchie (925) 685-8048. Category 2.



*For full details and directions, see [www.diabloaudubon.org](http://www.diabloaudubon.org)*

- 1 Easy. Little walking, smooth paths
- 2 Moderate, more than one mile, possibly rougher terrain
- 3 Difficult. Many miles, rough terrain

## Carpool Meeting Spots

• **El Nido Ranch Rd:** Exit Hwy 24 at St. Stephens Dr. east of Orinda. El Nido Ranch Rd runs parallel and north of 24. Park just east of St. Stephens.

• **Sun Valley Mall:** SW corner of mall lot at Willow Pass Rd and Contra Costa Blvd in Concord



Want to save trees? Get your Quail by email. Contact Virginia Hamrick vhamrick8@gmail.com.

**Q** Which bird is known as “Weary Willy”?

**CPDGROOESRWNOARLEWDN**

Unscramble the letters or see page 10 for the answer.

### WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Donna Arbuckle    | Walnut Creek  |
| Marni Berendsen   | Walnut Creek  |
| Karen Dragen      | Walnut Creek  |
| Megan Jankowski   | Oakland       |
| Martha Joseph     | Martinez      |
| Catherine Lanzara | Moraga        |
| Kris Peerand      | Pleasant Hill |
| John Toldi        | Lafayette     |

### Mt. Diablo Audubon thanks

ALPHAGRAPHICS

Walnut Creek

GALAXY PRESS

Concord

NATIVE BIRD CONNECTIONS

Martinez

RAKESTRAW BOOKS

Danville

WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Pleasant Hill

### Berkeley/Emeryville and Richmond Shoreline, Oct. 24:

A calm, warm day by the bay was had by 13 birders. Many ducks, gulls, shorebirds and a few terrestrial birds were seen in our visit to the Berkeley Marina and Emeryville Marina before lunch. Most of the group continued after lunch to Albany Bulb, Meeker Slough and the Richmond Marina. The birds of the day were Eurasian Wigeon (*photo Beth Branthaver*) at the Berkeley shore and a possible hybrid at Albany Bulb. We saw or heard 69 species.—*Chris and Teri Wills*



### Abbott’s Lagoon, Oct. 27:

Twelve members of Mt. Diablo Audubon visited Abbott's Lagoon in the Point Reyes National Seashore. A total of 43 species were observed. Highlights of the day included a colony of Snowy Plovers on the dunes separating Abbott's Lagoon from McClure Beach. The 1.2-mile hike from the parking lot to the lagoon began in the fog, but the day warmed up. We ate lunch on the dune overlooking McClure Beach, adjacent to a large flock of resting Semipalmated Plovers and sandpipers. On our return to the parking lot, the group encountered a Peregrine Falcon and a White-tailed Kite.—*Bill Chilson*



**Charleston Slough/South Bay, Nov. 3:** Sixteen MDAS members headed off in the early morning for a day of birding in the South Bay. We stopped first at Charleston Slough, where we found quite a few gulls, shorebirds and waterfowl.

It was a good opportunity to practice our gull identification skills as we had four different species. We also had both Western and Clark’s Grebes. As we made our way back to our cars, a Green Heron flew out of the reeds and over our heads.



Next, we visited Palo Alto Baylands, where we found a nice raft of Bonaparte’s Gulls and a Peregrine Falcon. After lunch, we drove to Beach Park Blvd in Foster City. We got there as the tide was receding and had great looks at Black Skimmers (*photo Beth Branthaver*) and a large variety of shorebirds. Included in the shorebird mass were Red Knots (*photo Beth Branthaver*) in winter plumage and another gull—Glaucous-winged. For the day we had a total of 74 species.—*Beth Branthaver*

# MDAS Mourns Member

Longtime Mt. Diablo Audubon member Norah Bain passed recently at the age of 96. Her death is a great loss.

Norah taught birding classes for many years at the Orinda Community Center. She was also a key contributor to the original MDAS Checklist of the Birds of Contra Costa County.



Born and raised in England, Norah came to California thanks to George Bain, a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps, whom she met when he was stationed overseas during WWII. After George completed his service and returned to the U.S., his heart stayed back with Norah. On the advice of a fraternity brother (the husband of our Jean Richmond), George returned to England to marry Norah and bring her to California. The couple had two children, Don and Kathleen. After George was killed during the Korean War, Norah later married his brother, Hugh, who adopted the children as his own. They remained married until Hugh's death in 2007.

Norah had a great love of birds, and also enjoyed painting. Her collection of bird books will be available for Audubon members at the December meeting. —*Hugh Harvey*

## Winter Class

**Gull Identification** by Lisa Hug  
One-Day Classroom and Field Study  
Sat., Jan. 12, 9am–4pm  
Bodega Bay Grange

Many birders find gull identification intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Simple strategies can take reduce the frustration. Join birder Lisa Hug for a day of fun, exciting, and challenging gull watching. We'll spend the morning in the classroom and the afternoon in the field.

**Lisa Hug** has been an Interpretive Ranger for Point Reyes National Seashore and a research assistant with Point Reyes Bird Observatory and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. She served as president of the Redwood Regional Ornithological Society for two years.

**Cost: \$40 MDAS member/\$45 non-member**

**To Register: [diabloaudubon.org/education.php](http://diabloaudubon.org/education.php)**

# Winter Watch

The seasons are changing, and so are the birds we see. Dark-eyed Juncos, mainly the “Oregon” subspecies with dark hoods, are beginning to be seen in pairs foraging on the ground. The Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows (*photo Beth Branthaver*) have also migrated in for the winter. These ground feeders love millet.



**Wild Birds**

During winter, suet and other high energy foods become more important. In addition to the regular cast of visitors—including chickadees, titmice, jays, and woodpeckers—Bewick's Wrens and Ruby-crowned Kinglets also love suet. Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers have been back for a few weeks, eating bugs, Bark Butter, and suet. Since most of these birds need extra energy to get through cold nights, we need to keep feeders clean and full.



American and Lesser Goldfinches have begun appearing in larger numbers, which will increase throughout winter. By January or February, many people see flocks of up to 50. Both will readily come to feeders with nyjer (thistle) or sunflower chips and blends.

Soon we will see large flocks of Cedar Waxwings and robins, searching for holly and other berries that ripen in winter. They will not come to feeders, but will readily make use of your bird baths. —*Member at Large Michael Eliot*

# Education Committee Fires on All Cylinders

The Education Committee has been busy setting up birding classes for members, creating in-school programs for kids, and putting the finishing touches on the kiosk display and brochures at Heather Farm Park for public outreach.

This fall, we offered two classes to sharpen birding skills. Both the Raptor Identification class with Pamela Llewellyn and Birding By Ear with Denise Wight were popular classes with waiting lists. We hope to provide similar courses in the spring.

On Jan. 12, we will offer a special one-day Gull ID workshop in Bodega Bay with experienced naturalist Lisa Hug. (See page 6 or [www.diabloaudubon.org](http://www.diabloaudubon.org) for details). Back by popular demand, Avian Treasures, taught by Juan-Carlos Solis, will return in April with an expanded three-class, three-field trip course. In addition, we will supply birding expertise on three Save Mount Diablo public hikes in 2019 as part of our goal to form partnerships to collaborate with local conservation organizations.

In October, we presented the inaugural in-school Beginning Birding program to Sequoia Middle School

Earth Club students. (Photos Susana de Trapaga and Maren Smith) The program featured a short presentation, videos, and hands-on activities. The



students were attentive, enthusiastic, and engaged. In late November, we will



return for Part Two, a bird walk on school grounds. Looking ahead, we

hope to expand our Beginning Birding program to reach youth of all ages via school, home-school, and Scouting programs.

Many thanks to Carol Pacht, David Hutton, Susana de Trapaga, Winnie Lin, and Karen Case for their participation, organization, and input on the Education Committee. If you are interested in helping provide birding classes, public outreach, or youth education, please consider joining us! We could really use your energy, ideas, and help.—*Education Chair Maren Smith, [marensmithbkk@yahoo.com](mailto:marensmithbkk@yahoo.com)*

## Jan. 3 Meeting Programs: Dive into Local CBC Data

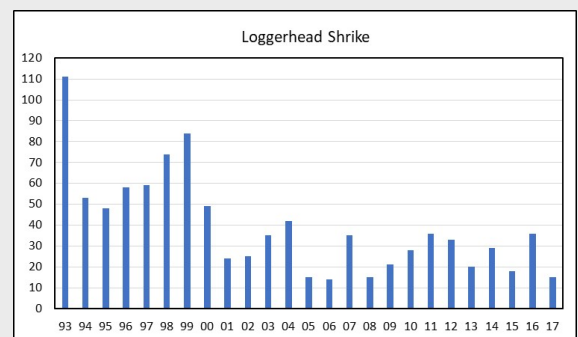
Have you ever thought, “Seems like I see fewer (or more) of that bird these days?” Well, census data from the annual Christmas Bird Counts can help to provide quantitative answers to such questions.

In this photo-filled program at 8 pm, presenter Jerry Britten will share data compiled for the last 25 years for Central Contra Costa County and 18 years for the Eastern County. He will use bar graphs to show the number of birds seen per year, like the Loggerhead Shrike numbers below.

After some noteworthy species have been discussed, the program will switch into interactive mode, in which audience members can ask about a particular species of interest.



Longtime MDAS member **Jerry Britten** has been involved with the annual MDAS CBC’s for more than two decades, originally as a participant, and more recently as a leader and co-compiler.



Abundance record of Loggerhead Shrike for Central CCC CBC, 1993-2017.

**7pm Birding Info:** Citizen Science Chair Elizabeth Leite will report highlights of the 2018 Christmas Bird Counts.

The last two months have been a time of heavy migration, with the return of the fall and winter birds of the Bay Area. Twelve species of warbler were reported, of which 10 are mentioned in the report. Ducks have started to return, as well as some raptors. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and **Hermit Thrushes** have come down from the mountains, as well as the typical winter sparrows. Large numbers of **Townsend's Solitaires** have been in the area the past few weeks, and some rare **Williamson's** and **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** have been seen.—*Maury Stern*

## Observations

(Sept.1-Nov. 4, 2018)

A **Wood Duck** was at Heather Farm Natural Pond 9/22 and 9/25. FS, HH, DK

On 9/28, an **American Wigeon**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Northern Shoveler**, and **Ring-necked Duck** were at Heather Farm pond. HH

A **Canvasback** appeared at the Valle Vista-Upper San Leandro Reservoir area 10/22. JL

EM saw a **Rufous Hummingbird** 9/21-9/26 off Livorna Rd in Walnut Creek.

HH and DK heard a **Virginia Rail** at Heather Farm pond 9/25.

Two **Soras** were at upper Sindich Pond at Briones Regional Park 10/14. AB

On 9/24, AL saw a **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Richmond West County Wastewater Treatment Plant (hereafter WCWT), and many saw **Pectoral Sandpipers** there from 9/18 to 10/1. JH, AM, AL, EM, ES, HH, C&TW, AK, GC, RL

HH and CA saw a **Spotted Sandpiper** on the riprap at Pt. Isabel 10/14.

A **Greater Yellowlegs** was at Heather Farm pond 9/28. TF, HH

**Caspian Terns** were in the Bethel Island area 9/24 to 10/23, WW, JMM, DKo, and on 10/18, PR saw one at Breuner Marsh in Richmond.

SD had 2 **Osprey** at Pt. Pinole Seashore 9/30.

SD also saw 2 **White-tailed Kites** at Pt. Pinole 9/30, and later 12 more in her Richmond neighborhood 10/30.

A very rare for this area **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen in Richmond by TB 9/26. (Broad-wings are seen more frequently at Hawk Hill in Marin in late September.)

A **Ferruginous Hawk** was in the Oakley/Brentwood area 10/23, DM, MP, and another was seen in Hercules near Fernandez Ranch 10/30 by an anonymous viewer.

Two **Golden Eagles** were in Sibley Park 10/23, DM, MP, and another 2 were seen at Redwood Regional Park 10/28. BM

The **Western Screech Owl** returned to its tree along the first part of the Lafayette-Moraga bike trail. HH, 10/22

A **Burrowing Owl** was at Pt. Isabel 10/26. KB

A **Williamson's Sapsucker** was at the Skyline Gate of Redwood Regional Park 10/23. DM, ML The next day, EM and ML saw the bird, along with a juvenile **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**.

A **Merlin** was in Richmond 10/29. SD

**Willow Flycatchers** were at Briones Reservoir 9/17, unknown observer, as well as Heather Farm 9/17, HH, TF, FS, BD, WD, and later at Pinole Park 9/30, SD. CC saw one at Las Trampas Regional Park 10/6.

The **Tropical Kingbird** returned to Heather Farm for the fifth straight year 9/29. FS Other observers included HH, TF, MR, JH, MSt, DL and many more.

BD had a **Western Kingbird** at Holland Tract in East County 10/19.

An unusual **Northern Shrike** was at Cruiser Haven Marina on Orwood Rd



near Discovery Bay 11/1. (DKo, JMM) JLu saw the bird 11/2, and GC and BR 11/4. (Photo Paul Schorr)

**Cassin's Vireo** was in Wildcat Canyon 9/14, AKr, while another was seen in Walnut Creek 11/1. KK, TR

JE in Pinole and JB at Clayton Community Park saw **Warbling Vireos** 10/12 and 10/25.

**Brown Creepers** were reported from various areas, including one in Lafayette 9/25, MS and another near the Walnut Creek/Lafayette border 9/29, EL. On 10/4, AK saw 4 on a walk at Tilden Nature Area, and on 10/13, JBo saw one at her Martinez home.

AKr saw a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Wildcat Canyon 9/21, and the next day, KS saw one at Valle Vista Staging Area.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglets** returned. MS had one at his Lafayette home in late September and 2 in late October. HH had one at Heather Farm 9/26, while JBr saw one in Martinez 10/13.



MR and OJ reported a **Townsend's Solitaire** at Sequoia Bowl 10/7. Others were at Tilden Botanic Garden 10/15, MC, WH; in Kensington 10/17, AH; at SL's San Ramon home 10/20; and at Redwood Regional Park-Skyline Gate 10/25-10/27, BB, HN, and RL. Many Bay Area counties reported Townsend's Solitaires this month.

**Hermit Thrushes** have returned. MS 9/11; SD 9/30; JBo 10/12; and PS 11/1

JC had a **Varied Thrush** at his Orinda home 9/28.

**Lapland Longspurs** were at Pt. San Pablo/Molate 10/10. LK, DW The next day, DW, AL and JHo saw them at the WCWT plant, where EM saw them 10/14. JLu on 10/12, and PB 10/14 That same day, GC and TM saw one at Meeker Slough.

**Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers** were commonly seen.

A **Black-and-white Warbler** was at Redwood Regional Park 10/1. EO

**Nashville Warblers** were at Vollmer Peak 9/24, DLem, and Pt. Isabel 9/25. ES

DW saw a **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Vollmer Peak 10/5.

There was a **Common Yellowthroat** at Heather Farm 9/14. AB

**Yellow Warblers** were abundant at Heather Farm 9/14, AB, and 9/17, TF, BD, HH, WD, FS.

An unusual **Blackpoll Warbler** was at Ellis Park Lake in Concord 9/16, AL, and seen again 9/18 by JLu.

**Palm Warblers** were widespread: at Valle Vista 9/22 KS, and 9/24 DW, JL; Tilden 10/7, AH; at Pt. Isabel 10/13, ES; and at Orwood Road near Discovery Bay 11/2. JL

**Yellow-rumped Warblers** were widespread. AL, AB, HH, TF, BD, WD, FS

**Black-throated Gray Warblers** were in good numbers. On 9/14, AB saw 6 at Heather Farm. Three days later, TF, BD, HH, WD and FS reported them from Heather Farm. DH and JC saw them at Redwood Regional Park 10/27.

**Townsend's Warblers** were at Heather Farm 9/17, TF, BD, HH, WD. AKr saw 2 at Wildcat Canyon 9/21, and EL had one on 9/29 in Walnut Creek.

**Hermit Warblers** were at Wildcat Canyon 9/21. AKr, DM and MP saw one at Jewel Lake 10/23. PG saw one at Redwood Regional Park's-Skyline Gate 10/29. At Tilden Park, one was by Jewel Lake, MK, and another at Lake Anza, JD, 11/1.

A rare **Canada Warbler** was at Tilden Inspiration Point 9/26. DW, CB

AKr saw a **Chipping Sparrow** 9/14 at Wildcat Canyon.

At the WCWT plant, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was seen by AL on 9/26, and by DW and LK on 10/10.

JC had a **Brewer's Sparrow** 10/6 at the WCWT, and BD at Holland Tract 10/19.

EM saw a **Grasshopper Sparrow** at the WCWT 10/6.

**Fox Sparrows** arrived 9/20 at Briones, LF; at a Richmond home, 9/21, AKr; at the Antioch home of PS 10/12. A "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** was at Ellis Lake Park 10/18. AL

AKr had a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at his Richmond home 9/28, as did PL at her Danville home, 10/12.

The first **White-throated Sparrows** were reported by LF at Valle Vista 10/13, JR in Alamo 10/18 and AKr in Richmond 10/24.

**White-crowned Sparrows** arrived 9/14. AKr, MM, TF, BD, FS, HH, WD

**Golden-Crowned Sparrows** arrived a week later on 9/21. AKr, HH, JBo

AKr saw 3 **Western Tanagers** in Wildcat Canyon 9/21.

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at the Orinda home of JC 10/21.

There was a **Hooded Oriole** at the Big Break Regional Shoreline 10/8. DW

*To submit sightings, write Maury at mbstern2@yahoo.com or call (925) 284-5980.*

AB Alan Bade, BB Bob Bandriff, CB Chris Bard, PB Phred Benham, KB Ken Berniker, JBo Jackie Bobrowsky, TB Tony Brake, JB Jerry Britten, CC Christina Carr, MC Minder Cheng, JC Jim Chirobolos, GC Graham Chisholm, SD Sheila Dickie, JD Judith Dunham, BD Bob Dunn, WD Walt Duncan, JE Jack Edick, TF Tracy Farrington, LF Lee Friedman, PG Philip Georgakakos, HH Hugh Harvey, DH Derek Heins, JH Joel Herr, AH Adrian Hinkle, JHo Jeff Hoppes, WH Wen Hsu, OJ Oliver James, LK Logan Kahle, AK Alan Kaplan, DK Dave Kent, KK Karen Kluge, DKo Dan Kopp, AKr Alan Krakauer, MK Mary Krentz, RL Roger Lambert, JL Johan Langeweis, ML Max Laubstein, EL Elizabeth Leite, DLem Dawn Lemoine, DL Don Lewis, AL Albert Linkowski, SL Steve Lombardi, PL Pam Lorenz, JLu John Luther, AM Aaron Maizlich, TM Tom Maloney, MM Mike Marchiano, JMM Jose M. Martinez, BM Bruce Mast, EM Ethan Monk, DM Dominik Mosur, HN Harold Newman, EO Elizabeth Olin, MP Michael Park, MR Mark Rauzon, PR Patricia Reese, BR Bob Richmond, JR Jean Richmond, TR Terry Rosemeier, FS Fred Safier, PS Paul Schorr, KS Kathryn Spence, MSt Mark Stephenson, MS Maury Stern, ES Emilie Strauss, WW Wayne Weber, DW Denise Wight, C&TW Chris and Teri Wills

*Art by Megan Sandri*



# THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO



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Hugh B. and  
Rosita O. Harvey

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Joanne Depuy  
Sherry Derda  
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Tina Fletcher  
(Cont'd on page 11)



**Q: Which bird is known as “Weary Willie”?**

**A: Golden-crowned Sparrow**

When I hear the song of the Golden-crowned Sparrow, I know that fall is nearly here, and I can look forward to cooler weather. The sparrows generally arrive in California in September, and the males start voicing their three-note, descending whistle. To me, the song seems to say “oh dear me,” but it has been understood many ways. At the turn of the century, miners in the Yukon thought it sounded like “no gold here.” The song was also interpreted as “I’m so tired,” prompting the miners to dub the bird “Weary Willie.” (Photo Jean Halford)

Golden-crowned Sparrows, also known as *Zonotrichia atricapilla*, are found only in western North America, spending winters in California, Oregon, Washington and western Nevada. They breed in the very far north of Alaska and western Canada. These sparrows nest on the ground or close to it, hidden under thickets and shrubs, with the rim of the nest almost level with the ground. Females lay 3-5 white to palish green eggs, which they incubate for 11-12 days. Both parents feed the nestlings, who leave the nest in about 9 days. (Cont'd on page 11)



# GAVE SO GENEROUSLY IN 2017-18

(Cont'd from page 10)

Nancy J. Flood  
Richard Garcia  
Valerie Glass  
Janet M. Goodman  
Bill and Diana Granados  
Erik Granberg  
Carol Haglund  
Jean Halford  
Susan M Halverson  
David Hutton  
Steven & Linda Jacobs  
Mark Janlois  
Renate Johnson  
Susan Dee and Edwin F. Katibah  
Sandra King  
Kramer Klabau  
Ronald Kline  
Gerald and Rosette Koch  
Fred Kovar  
Donna Kramer  
Manoj Kumar  
Mona Lange  
Mr & Mrs Arthur Larson  
Elizabeth and George Leite  
Charlotte Liniger  
David Little  
Mike Loper  
Mrs Suzanne Lutz  
Rennette MacIntyre  
Richard/Hermine Makman  
Susan and Mark McGowan  
Philip Mertz

Barbara Minneman  
Andrew Naegeli  
Philip Neff  
Nancy Norris  
Margaret and Christopher Panton  
Jeanine Perasso-Kaczmarczyk  
Clinton Phalen  
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Austin & Marjorie Prindle  
Donald and Daisy Ray  
Dorothea Ray  
Carmen and Sergio Raya  
Jean Richmond  
Ariana Rickard  
Marion Rood  
John C. Ross  
Fay and Edwin Schoenberger  
Alice E. Schofield  
Lois L. Shaffer  
David and Linda Shinn  
Deanna Simmons  
Julia M. Starr  
Ann-Charlott Stenberg  
Caroline Stephens  
Barbara M. Stevens  
Del Stipe  
Fred W. Sullivan  
Patricia Sullivan  
Suzan Requa  
Marianne Tanner  
Gary Thompson  
Barbara Vaughn

Bev Walker  
Molly Weden  
Idell Weydemeyer  
Betty Ann Williams  
Elsie Witt  
Gail and Michael Wolfson



Blake Wu

**California Towhee  
(to \$24)**

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Joseph Beck  
Bennett Berke

Floy and Jerry Blair  
Peter Boffey  
Marilyn Chaplin  
Dr. Guy & Mrs. Elizabeth Corynen  
Karen Creuseve  
Denise Desalernos  
Carol Evans  
Mary C. Fairman  
Don Fallon  
Susan Ferro  
Mimi Foord  
Louise Francis  
Elizabeth Hoople  
Christina Madlener  
Joyce Mason  
Helen Pereira  
Rosalie Rhodes  
Lucy Ober Silvey  
Marleen Stratton  
Dave and Bev Tucker

(Cont'd from page 10) The Golden-crowned Sparrow is 6-7 inches in length, rather large for a sparrow. It has a dusky upper bill, paler lower bill, brown-streaked upper parts with a grayish breast, and 2 white wing bars. The golden crown is bordered by a wide black line, but this is not usually seen in the winter when the bird is in California. Shortly before the sparrows leave for their breeding grounds, the bright golden crown and black eyebrow begin to appear.

In the winter, Golden-crowned Sparrows are found in loose flocks, commonly accompanied by White-crowned Sparrows. They feed on the ground, where they scratch and peck among dead leaves looking for insects, seeds and other plant material. When flushed, they do not fly far, but move from bush to bush.

In 2012, scientists at Point Reyes Bird Observatory tagged some Golden-crowned sparrows before their northern migration, and recaptured 4 birds in the fall. The scientists found that the birds migrated 1,600-2,400 miles one way to their breeding grounds, which spanned a distance of about 750 miles along the Alaskan coast. The northern migration took an average of 29 days, while the southbound migrants averaged 53 days to return.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists the Golden-crowned Sparrow as a species of least concern because of its large population and range. Data from Christmas Bird Counts have shown that its numbers are stable and even increasing!—*Jean Halford*

**Mt. Diablo Audubon Society**

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*A Cooper's Hawk goes birdwatching in the backyard of MDAS President Paul Schorr. (Photo Paul Schorr)*



*Clockwise from Left: Paul Tebbel shares a lifetime of knowledge about Sandhill Cranes. Elizabeth Leite finalizes plans for the Christmas Bird Count. Jill Hedgecock shares a bit of good news in a report on the often somber conditions for rhinos, and Carol Pachl describes a new offering from the Education Committee: a one-day gull identification class. (Photos Lori Patel)*