



THE QUAIL

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society | www.diabloaudubon.org

8 pm: Biking for Birds

On Jan. 1, 2014, Dorian Anderson boarded his bicycle for an eco-friendly twist on the classic birdwatching Big Year. Where his predecessors used cars, planes, boats, and even helicopters, Anderson rode only a bike, and in the 12 months of his journey, he pedaled 18,000 miles through 28 states in search of birds. He saw the country like no birder before him, overcame physical and mental challenges, and found an incredible 618 species.

A graduate of Stanford University, with a PhD in developmental genetics and molecular cell biology from NYU, Anderson was deep into a post-doctoral fellowship in molecular neuroscience at Harvard and



Massachusetts General Hospital when he decided academic science was no longer his calling. In the middle of 2013, he resigned his position to reconnect with his childhood passion for birding and begin preparing for his Big Year.



In this talk, Anderson will speak about why he decided to pursue the project. He will spin tales of birds, bicycles, extreme weather and challenging terrain--everything he encountered on America's roads.



7 pm: Photo Journal of Heather Farm Park by Brian Murphy

A surprise layover of Trumpeter Swans is just one stop in the journey as we look at photos taken by MDAS stalwart Brian Murphy over about 50 years at Heather Farm. Presented by Georgette Howington.

Next Meeting: MAY 2

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will meet **Thursday, May 2**, 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

"Biking for Birds"

Inside

President's Corner	2
Bird Wide Web	3
Help Wanted	3
Get Involved	4
Wild Birds	5
Beginning Birding Class	5
Trip Reports	6
Photo Album	7
Q and A Puzzler	8
Upcoming Trips	10
Global Big Day	11

Plus: A dash of color!

Annual Report Highlights

In January, I collaborated with the board of directors and advisory committee members to complete the 2017-18 Audubon Chapter Annual Report. This report is required for MDAS to receive Audubon Baseline Funding from the National Audubon Society, which totaled \$3,989.00 for 2017-18. Following are some highlights of this report that I would like to share with you.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

- At least 350 MDAS volunteers, including board and advisory members, helped with at least one chapter activity.
- Volunteers provided an estimated 3,100 hours of service.
- Approximately 2,300 people were engaged in MDAS outreach activities, which included field trips, membership meetings, Earth Day, bird and beaver festivals, education outreach activities, etc.
- Bird-Friendly Communities accomplishments included: Just For Ducks; Barn-less Owls; Peregrine Patrol; Keeping Up With the Kestrels; and Wildlife Habitat Improvement.

- The chapter was active in the following Important Bird Areas (IBAs): Concord Marshes, which include McNabney Marsh and Waterbird Regional Preserve. MDAS continues to work closely with other agencies, including Mountain View Sanitary District, East Bay Regional Parks District, and Ducks Unlimited to restore historic water levels at McNabney Marsh and Waterbird Regional Preserve to provide suitable annual habitats for waterfowl and shorebirds.
- MDAS also partnered with Sierra Valley/Feather River Land Trust, John Muir Historical Site, and Mount Diablo State Park regarding conservation work.
- MDAS worked collaboratively with the City of Walnut Creek and the Walnut Creek Rotary Club regarding the placement of information kiosks at the Gardens at Heather Farm. Over 1,000 brochures regarding the birds of Heather Farm have been distributed. Other science activities that MDAS partnered with included: Peregrine Patrol in Pine Canyon, Diablo Foothills Regional Park, Cornell Feeder Watch, Global Big Day at John Muir High School, and Grayson Creek Bird Inventory with the Friends of Grayson Creek.
- In an ongoing advocacy role, MDAS has worked closely with a coalition of other agencies regarding the Concord Community Reuse Project related to the redevelopment of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station.
- Educational activities and/or accomplishments that MDAS is very proud of include: "No Child Left Inside," "Just For Ducks," and educational outreach programs, including "Birding By Ear," "Avian Treasures," and "Raptors."
- The MDAS Young Birders Club remained active with regular field outings, a Christmas Bird Count and vigorous promotion and recruitment.
- In addition to the MDAS website and the newsletter, *The Quail*, increased social media outreach through Facebook and Meetup promoted MDAS activities.
- Numerous volunteers participated in two Christmas Bird Counts, Migratory Bird Day, the Great Backyard Bird Count, Bioblitz and other citizen-science activities.
- MDAS representatives actively participated in policy advocacy activities that included articles in the Quail, email networking, letters to the editor, telephone conferences, action alerts, and personal meetings with elected officials on policy and legislative issues.
- The MDAS website and calendar were regularly updated and expanded to assure that current chapter information was available.

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the members who contributed so much in 2017-18 to make MDAS such a vital organization. —Paul Schorr

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MDAS general meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month except July and August in the Camellia Room of the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek.

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.

For Young Birders Club, search Facebook for Mount Diablo Audubon Society Young Birders Club.

www.diabloaudubon.org

www.facebook.com/mtdiabloaudubon

www.meetup.com/Mount-Diablo-Audubon-Society



Vote: Come to our May 2 meeting to take part in the election of officers for 2019-2020. All members are eligible to stand for election and may submit nominations from the floor. In

accordance with the MDAS bylaws, Nominating Committee Chair Rosalie Howarth presented the names of nominees at the April 4 meeting. Here is the proposed roster:

Co-presidents: Ariana Rickard and Maren Smith

Vice President: Jerry Britten

Treasurer: Steve Buffi

Secretary: Carol Pacht

HELP WANTED

Do you have a talent for organization and enjoy meeting new people? Mt. Diablo Audubon could use your help as our new membership chair. Current chair Virginia Hamrick will be stepping down June 30. Please contact vhamrick8@gmail.com to hear more about this key role.

We are also seeking a volunteer with online experience to manage the MDAS website, which is undergoing a redesign to a WordPress format. If you have experience working with WordPress or similar programs, we'd love to hear from you. Webmaster Dal Leite is retiring May 31. To learn more about the job, contact him at support@birdwideweb.com.



Transition ... Brian Murphy is stepping down as volunteer coordinator. Thank you, Brian, for your many years of service in this role. And welcome, Susana de Trapaga, who has agreed to take on this important responsibility. Now, let's give her some volunteers to coordinate. Please contact her at trapaga@sbcglobal.net to claim a shift representing our group Saturday, May 11, at the "We Love Mother Nature" celebration at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill or Saturday, June 29, at the Martinez Beaver Festival.

Printable Bird ID Guides

Bird ID guides come in several forms, from books and laminated cards for field use to online searchable databases. In between are printable, often single-page, illustrations of particular groups of birds to aid in discriminating between species. Some are quite basic, others more sophisticated, many designed originally as posters. Most described in this article are free.

The Warbler Guide, by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle, published by Princeton University Press in 2014, presented a "ground-breaking" system for identifying the vast numbers of New World warblers that can be found in the United States. A particularly engaging and useful part of that book is the set of illustrated guides to many features of these often hard-to-distinguish species. Amazingly, those have now been released as **free downloads** from the publisher, and can be viewed on any device and even printed for field use.



BIRD WIDE WEB

Less specific, but equally comprehensive, is the Cornell FeederWatch "**mini poster**" with excellent drawings of common backyard birds. Intended for printing, it is a useful aid to beginning birders; in two colorful pages, it covers a lot of avian territory. Even if your backyard has Chestnut-backed rather than Black-capped Chickadees, you'd quickly learn to tell them from the Finches or the Cardinals.

An astonishingly innovative and inventive series of "BirdFaces", created by Richard Edden, presents simple, icon-style, images of the distinctive markings on the heads of many bird species. Originally intended to be part of an iPhone app, the entire enormous collection of ID pages is now available, free, on Edden's **BirdFace Facebook account**. Several of these surprisingly endearing images can also be purchased as decorations on coffee mugs and T-shirts from **Zazzle**.

Similar in style to the FeederWatch poster, the full-sized (24"x36"), art-paper offerings from **Windsor Nature Discovery** with collections of Birds of the Garden, Raptors, State Birds, etc., appear accurate and likely worth the purchase price, perhaps as a present. For the true hard-core birder on your gift list, however, nothing can beat the definitive **Empidonax Flycatcher chart**, done in the BirdFaces style of Richard Edden, but without attribution. Its provenance unknown, it is hosted on this website as a free public service. —MDAS Webmaster Dal Leite

For live links and past columns, see www.birdwideweb.com.

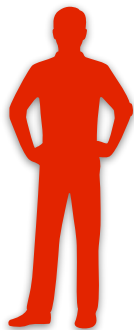
You Are Invited

To Deepen Your Involvement with Audubon



Are you ready to turn your passion for birds into action? Join Audubon California for Advocacy Day, May 7, in Sacramento! Every year, Mt. Diablo Audubon has one of the largest groups in the Capitol. We spend the day visiting with our legislators and talking about birds, as well as funding for our priorities, and other conservation issues. Advocacy

Day allows you to have your voice heard in the Capitol. It is a truly energizing and fun day, and a great opportunity to see democracy in action. We usually carpool and meet up in advance of the day to figure out talking points and roles. Everyone gets a chance to speak in the meetings. You also get a chance to meet other Audubon members from across the state and hear about their chapters and programs. The day begins with a training, then time to strategize with your smaller group before heading into the Capitol to meet with your legislators. Lunch is provided, and then more meetings in the afternoon. The day ends with a happy hour, a chance to connect with other Auduboners and share stories from the day. If you are interested in joining this year, please contact Ariana Rickard at arickard@audubon.org. For more information, visit [2019 Audubon California Advocacy Day](#) online.



National Audubon hosts a convention every other year in an exciting location with great birding. This year's convention will take place in Milwaukee, WI, from July 26-29. The [2019 Audubon Convention](#) will feature an array of inspiring speakers, in-depth workshops and discussions, exciting field trips, and the camaraderie and networking opportunities that only the Audubon Convention can provide. Situated on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee is a beautiful and historic place to gather, learn, and network. The convention program is set, and in-depth information about speakers and outings is available online.

MDAS Legislative Chair Ariana Rickard attended the Convention in Park City in 2017 and was impressed by the excellent speakers and the high quality of the programs. She enjoyed networking with chapters and Audubon members from all over the country. Another participant said, "It was inspiring, eye-opening, and frankly the most professional convention I have ever attended. Every detail was planned beautifully and flawlessly." If you are interested in attending, scholarships are available. Contact Ariana at arickard@audubon.org.

SUPPORT MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY: Register at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill, and owner Michael Eliot will donate 5 percent of your purchases to MDAS. You may also go to smile.amazon.com and designate "MT Diablo Audubon Society" as your charity of choice to direct .05 percent of your eligible Amazon purchases to our group. Many thanks!

Q: Which is the most common North American woodpecker? *Answer on page 8.*

New Birds, Spring Colors

This year's mating and nesting season has been off to an early start. Birds are showing new colors, and new birds are arriving early. Goldfinches and warblers are in full mating yellow and have become more territorial. Males will often squabble at feeders and fight over females.

Birds are finding new places to nest as favorite spots are being taken early. Don't be surprised to find them in knotholes on fences, in pots and wreaths on your front porch, or under eaves on drain pipes. Goldfinches nest in shrubs or trees, preferring open branches, where females build small, cupped nests. At 3 weeks, fledglings make their first



Wild Birds

uncoordinated attempts at feeding, or at least crying for a bite at feeders, which should be clean and full of fresh niger (thistle). Last fall's supply has dried up and should be discarded. Goldfinches will also feed on sunflower seed, and will be seen feeding among the House Finches, which are also showing lots of color.

We recently received several reports of Bullock's and Hooded Orioles feeding at hummingbird feeders in the area. It's time to put out oriole feeders, which are much more effective and use more diluted nectar. Orioles are also fans of grape jelly and fresh fruit, such as apples and oranges. Their preferred protein comes from crawling insects in trees.

Orioles remain throughout the summer and may nest in your yard. They prefer larger, taller trees, such as oaks, cottonwood, and large pines, building nests on outer, smaller branches from 10 to 25 feet above the ground.

Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds have begun to show up early on their journeys north. They are easily discerned from our Anna's hummers by their bright orange coloring. A few remain throughout the summer,



but most travel north to Alaska. Their spring trips stretch as long as 3,000 miles one way from Mexico and Central America, returning from August to September. When feeding at local hummingbird feeders, *(photos Mike Eliot)* they are

somewhat aggressive, being very hungry and ready to continue their journeys. If they nest in your yard, they will build tiny, cylindrical nests high in pine or other close-branched trees. Inside the 1-inch opening, they lay 2 eggs, and may do so twice during the summer. Enjoy them while you can, and keep your feeders clean with fresh nectar every 3-4 days.—*Member at Large Mike Eliot*



BIRDING CLASS

Beginning Birding Basics

Two 2-hour classes,
Two 4-hour
trips

Classes:

Thurs., May 9 & 16,
7-9pm

Lafayette Library & Learning Ctr,
Oak Room

Trips: Sat., May 11 & 18, 8am-noon

Cost: \$45 MDAS member

\$50 non-member **7 spots left**



Pamela Llewellyn, who recently taught a popular Raptor ID class for MDAS, returns to teach beginners how to identify typical Bay Area birds. Classroom presentations will introduce our local avifauna. We will cover the basics of identification, field guides and optics. During field trips, we will practice what we learned in class. Binoculars required. Learn from a Bay Area native and Berkeley integrative biology grad who has been leading local birding trips for the Golden Gate Audubon Society for 15 years.

PURE MUIR GALA



Celebrate 30 years of land conservation in the East Bay. Music. Wine. Gourmet dinner. Live auction.

WHEN: Sat., May 4, 4-9pm
(VIP Tour 3pm)

WHERE: John Muir Historic Site,
4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez

Tickets: jmlt.org/gala2019

Trip Reports

Mt. View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh, March 12: Five birders joined this trip on a windy and cold day. This was the first trip for us to this location since the District upgraded the area. There are now many improvements, and given more time, this area should once again become a great bird watching spot. We saw a total of 33 different species, which included a Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallows, Great-tailed Grackle, American White Pelicans, Cinnamon Teal, Great Egret, Northern Mockingbird, and Song Sparrow, to name a few. We were also treated to a visit by the District Biologist, who provided lots of good information on the improvements and information on some of the creatures which make their home in the two marshes. —*Steve Taylor*

Valle Vista, March 22:

Seven intrepid birders started out on a rainy but calm morning and four finished almost four hours later, none the worse for the light rain (*photo Cassie Tzur*). The weather, however, kept some of the birds hidden away and we saw only 44 species. That included, however, good views of Wood Ducks, a couple Brown Creepers, a nice Red-breasted Sapsucker (*photo Isaac Aronow*), a singing California



Thrasher, and a very close first-of-season Wilson's Warbler (*photo Cassie Tzur*),

allowing us to see his handsome black cap.—*Don Lewis*

Lake Lagunitas, March 27: This trip had a very rainy start. The prediction was that the storm cells would eventually pass over, and—fortunately—that's exactly what happened. Our group of six walked through the field next to the entry, then circled the lake. We saw a total of 33 species, including two types of Mergansers and four types of Woodpeckers. We had nice views of several Hermit Thrushes, Belted Kingfishers and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet while being serenaded by a Warbling Vireo. By far the best sighting of the day was a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers (*photo Susana de Trapaga*).

The male was right in front of us for over 20 minutes, pecking on a fallen tree. The female was further back at the top of a tall snag. In addition, we had two mammals—Muskrat and River Otter—as well as one amphibian: a mating pair of California Newts.—*Beth Branthaver*

Tomales Bay State Park, March 30: What a gorgeous day for 14 MDAS birders! Our treat on arriving and all through the day was watching pairs of Osprey gathering nesting materials and working on building their nests (*photo Beth Branthaver*).



The Common Loons and Pacific Loons were also quite a treat. Then we had a delightful walk to Indian Beach—beautiful woods filled with the smell of Bay trees and the serenades of Warbling Vireos, Wilson's Warblers and Purple Finches (all heard but not seen). We had some really special sightings: several Wrentits, a

Townsend's Warbler, an elusive Pacific Wren, Hutton's Vireos, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Brown Creeper and Pacific Slope Flycatchers. We ended our lunch period with a Pygmy Nuthatch. All together, 40 species seen or heard. Lots of good friends, birds and scenery.—*Linda Shine and Hugh Harvey*

Orinda Connector Trail, April 3: Eight birders enjoyed a pleasant but a bit muddy springtime walk, even though the overcast day kept some of the usual birds scarce. Newly arrived Pacific-slope Flycatchers were calling but weren't sallying forth, so we missed seeing any, but we did see a couple Warbling Vireos and several handsome Wilson's Warblers. We heard a Virginia Rail only a few feet from us on the spillway bridge, but it just wouldn't come out. For the third year in the last four, we saw or heard exactly 48 species.—*Don Lewis*

Garin Regional Park, April 6: Seven birders enjoyed 53 species on a beautiful morning at Garin Park—green hills, gray skies with some blue, no rain, mild temperatures. The number one target bird (Grasshopper Sparrow) did not appear, but we saw and heard just about every other expected species, including surprises such as the Ring-necked Duck and Brown Creeper. As expected: White-tailed Kite, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Barn, Tree, and Violet-green Swallows, House Wren, Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Wilson's Warbler. The most exciting of all was an Orange-crowned Warbler (*photo Beth Branthaver*) singing and singing and posing in the sun for everybody to enjoy.—*Fred Safier*

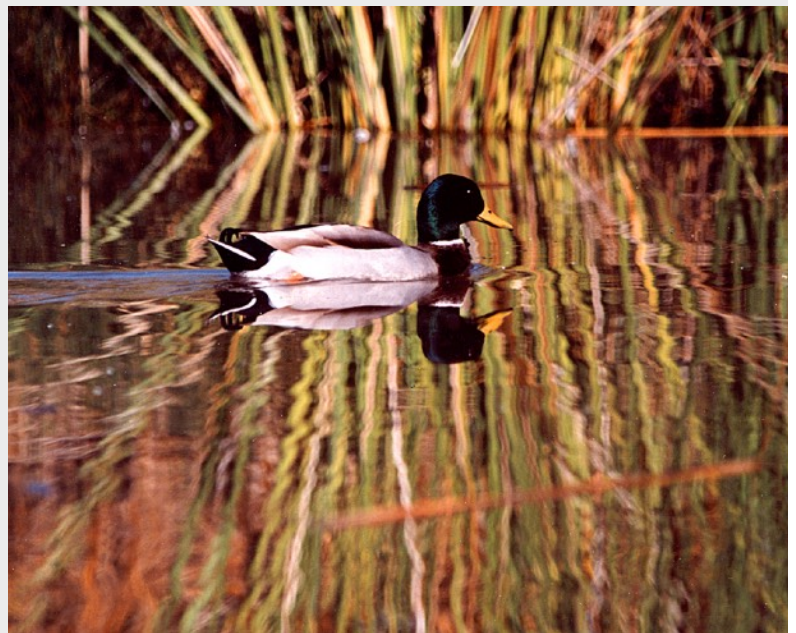
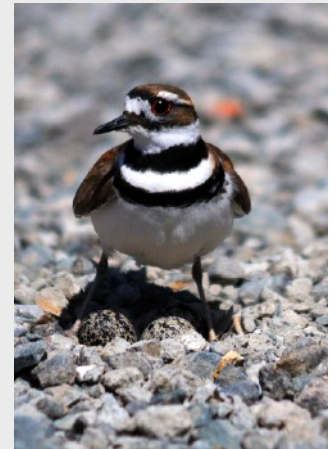


Left side: This season's wildflowers have captured our photographers' attention. At top, Isaac Aronow found a Trillium on the Orinda Connector Trail, where Cassie Tzur noticed Fremont Star Lilies. The poppies were spotted by Beth Branthaver in Hayward's Garin Regional Park.

If your walks take you past a flower you would like to identify, snap a photo to compare to those on the wildflower ID guide of the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association website, which also posts what's currently in bloom.



Right side: With color ink quite costly, we are splurging on just one 4-page section. Happily, that's room enough to share more birds of Heather Farm, as captured by former professional photographer Brian Murphy, whose photo journal will be featured in this month's 7pm program. Check out the lush coloration of this Great Blue Heron, Killdeer and mirrored Mallard.



If you enjoy *The Quail* in color, consider switching your subscription from paper to electronic. Every issue of the *eQuail* arrives in full color, so the birds look true to life. Contact Virginia Hamrick at vhamrick8@gmail.com.



IT TAKES A RAPTOR: Native Bird Connections' Jenny Papka kicks off this year's No Child Left Inside program with a presentation to students at Jack London Elementary in Antioch. If you would like to help out with this year's NCLI events Tuesday, May 21, or Thursday, May 23, contact Paul Schorr at pkschorr@comcast.net. (Photo Paul Schorr).



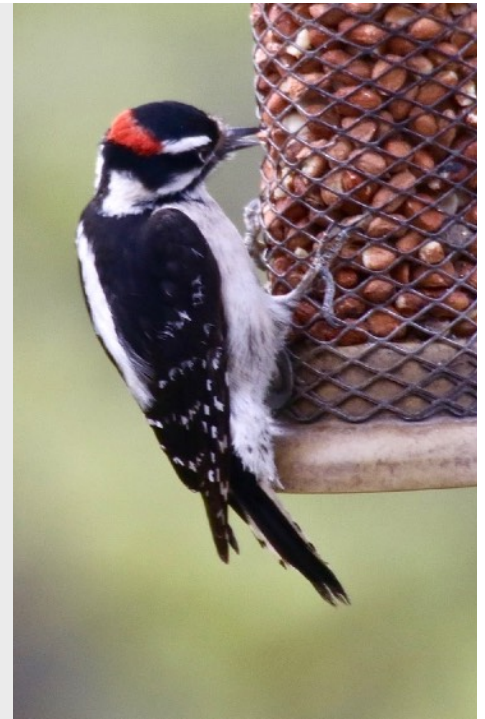
BIRD FASHION CONTEST: Please wear your favorite bird attire for the first-ever Mt. Diablo Audubon bird fashion contest at our June 6 membership meeting. This is your chance to show off your favorite bird T-shirt, vest, pin, or other birding attire or body art. We will award fantastic prizes to the best fashion, by popular vote. (Photos courtesy Audubon California).



Q: Which is the most common North American woodpecker?

A: Downy Woodpecker

The Downy Woodpecker is the most common and smallest of the North American woodpeckers. It will come to backyards to eat suet or peanuts as the male is doing in this photo, taken in my backyard. These birds are small enough to be able to forage on very small branches and twigs, as well as on weed stalks and shrubs, climbing and even hanging upside down. In winter, males will feed more often on smaller branches and weed stems than females. Males dominate over females, selecting the best feeding sites for their own use and defending them against females.



Female Downy's have slightly longer tails than males. This is most likely due to the fact that females forage on vertical surfaces like tree trunks and thus use their tail as a brace more often than males, which spend more time foraging on smaller horizontal branches.

Woodpeckers hammer for several reasons: one is to announce their territory, another is to attract a mate, also to excavate a nest cavity and drum in search of food. Like many woodpeckers, the Downy, also known as *Picoides pubescens*, has feathered nostrils to filter out the sawdust it produces while hammering.

Downy's make their own nesting cavities, which can be 8-12 inches deep. These chambers are usually 10-20 feet above the ground. The pair work together at excavating the cavity, and may take over 2 weeks to finish excavating the nest. A few days after the chamber is finished, the female will lay one egg a day until 3-8 eggs are laid. The male and female take turns incubating the eggs, with the male always taking the night shift.

The chicks hatch in about 12 days, within 12-24 hours of each other. Blind and naked (altricial) when they hatch, they are fully feathered in 16-18 days. They fledge 20-25 days after hatching, and are independent within about 3 weeks after that.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are very similar to one another, with both having a white back and underparts, their black wings spotted with white. But the Downy is much smaller, and its bill is very small, about 1/2 the width of its head, where as the Hairy's bill is longer, about as long as the bird's head is wide.

The Downy's small beak is amazingly effective at poking into tiny crevices to find grubs and invertebrates. They have a super sense of sound and smell so they can easily find their prey, like wood-boring grubs that make an audible sound when feeding, and ants, termites and bark beetles that excrete formic acid, which has a strong odor. The Downy's tongue is coated with a sticky mucous to help catch small insects.

The oldest known Downy Woodpecker was a male that lived at least 11 years, 11 months. He was banded and found again in California.—*Jean Halford*

If You Like Free...

Take note of these gifts to local nature lovers.

To celebrate its 85th Anniversary, the East Bay Regional Parks District is offering **Free Park Fridays**. From April to December, the district will waive fees for entry, parking, and all sorts of other things, such as boat launches and fishing permits. Some exceptions apply, such as camping fees and state fishing licenses. For details, see the ebparks.org website.



Meanwhile, our local solid waste authority is offering a giveaway of special interest to local gardeners. Sunday, May 5, 10am-1pm, each household in the RecycleSmart service area can claim up to **3 yards of free compost**. That's enough to spread over 300 square feet. Residents must bring ID with proof of residency, as well as rigid containers for hauling (no bags, no trucks). Registration required: <https://compostgiveaway2019.eventbrite.com>.

Mt. Diablo Audubon thanks

ALPHAGRAPHICS

Walnut Creek

NATIVE BIRD
CONNECTIONS

Martinez

WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Pleasant Hill

WELCOME, NEW

MEMBERS: *Concord:* Karen and Oscar Goodwin; *Danville:* Jutta Elz Herrick; *Martinez:* Jackie Peterson; *Pleasanton:* Nancy Lojacono; *San Ramon:* Diane Offutt; *Walnut Creek:* Adam Peters, Lois Silverstein, Mike Taylor.

MDAS table a big hit at local science fair

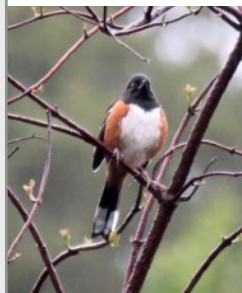


The Mt. Diablo Audubon table proved popular at Lafayette's Happy Valley Elementary School Science Fair, March 21. Students, siblings and parents enjoyed playing the "Whose Nest?" game, squeezing a California Quail plush toy to hear its Chi-ca-go call, and perusing colorful posters of birds and owls. In the top photo, an eager student points out an Audubon poster, while in the bottom photo, Volunteer Coordinator Susana de Trapaga smiles with Brenda Cho, whose family is active in Young Birders Club (photos Maren Smith). If you would like to help with similar activities, reach out to Education Chair Maren Smith at marensmithbkk@yahoo.com.

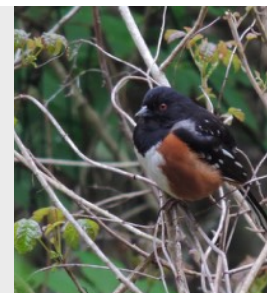


"We Love Mother Nature"

While Sunday, May 12, is for honoring mothers, we also need a day to honor Mother Nature. At least that's how Michael Eliot sees it. This year, the MDAS board member will host a "We Love Mother Nature" festival at his store, Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill, May 11, 10am-4pm. This annual event brings in a good crowd interested in learning more about local nature, environmental and animal rescue groups. Of course, some come for the live birds, snakes and spiders, too. Mt. Diablo Audubon will have a table at the event, which means that our new volunteer coordinator, Susana de Trapaga, would be very grateful to hear from you. Contact her at trapaga@sbcglobal.net and help spread the word about our group.



On recent trips to Orinda Connector Trail and Valle Vista, photographers Isaac Aronow and Cassie Tzur trained their lenses on these Towhees. The birds remained unfazed by the attention. Apparently, they are used to being Spotted.



Field Trips

Thursday, May 2, West Briones Regional Park. Meet at 8am in parking lot on the right hand side of the west entrance road, off Bear Creek Rd. From SR 24 in Orinda, drive north on Camino Pablo about 2.25 miles, turn right on Bear Creek Rd, continue for 4.5 miles to park entrance. Wildflowers, spring birds; Lazuli Buntings are usually abundant. Poison oak along shaded trails. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Maury Stern, (925) 284-5980. Category 2.

Saturday, May 4, Mines Road. Because of limited parking along Mines Rd, carpooling is essential. This is an all-day trip and often hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Phainopepla, Lewis' Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch and many spring migrants are possible, plus great spring wildflowers. Entry fee required for Del Valle Regional Park. Call the leader for meeting time and location. Leader: Hugh Harvey, (925) 935-2979. Category 1.

PARTNER HIKE: CURRY CANYON RANCH

Thursday, May 9. Enjoy a chance to see Mt. Diablo's east side, not normally open to the public. Meet at the Park & Ride at 1000 Peacock Creek in Clayton at 7am to the private property. On this 3-mile easy/moderate hike, pass a beautiful valley with rolling hills and valley oak as you walk along the creek, then transition to shady, riparian habitat. Expect warblers, maybe a Golden Eagle or two. Leaders Jerry Britten (925) 321-5332 and Maren Smith (925) 322-9477. Registration required for this partnership hike with Save Mount Diablo. See savemountdiablo.org.

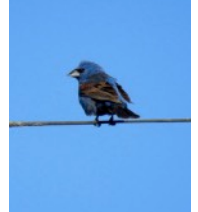
Saturday, May 11, International Migratory Bird Day, Mt. Wanda, John Muir National Historic Site. Meet at 8am at the Mt. Wanda parking lot on the southwest corner of Alhambra Ave. and Franklin Canyon Rd, about 1/8 mile south of the visitor center, which is at 4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez. Take I-680 northbound to Hwy 4 westbound. Exit at Alhambra Ave. Turn left at bottom of ramp and go under the freeway. Turn right onto Franklin Canyon and immediately left to get into the parking lot. Wildflowers, spring birds. Lark Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, House Wren seen in 2017. A steep climb at the start. We will be participating in World Migratory Bird Day! Leader: Cheryl Abel, (925) 957-6229. Category 3 (only at the uphill start), then 2.

PARTNER HIKE: ALMOND RANCH

Saturday, May 21: (Rescheduled from March 9 rainout). Join MDAS, John Muir NHS, and John Muir Land Trust in a joint hike on Mt. Wanda to spot birds and learn about JMLT's Campaign to Save Almond Ranch (adjacent to Mt. Wanda). Begins at the Mt. Wanda Trailhead in Martinez at 9am and runs till noon. The moderate 3.5 mile hike starts steeply and levels out with vistas of the Carquinez Straits. Surrounded by grasslands and oak woodlands, this area attracts various species of woodpeckers, hummingbirds, raptors and flycatchers. Free and fun for the first 25 guests. RSVP required to hannah@jmlt.org. www.jmlt.org

Saturday, May 11, East Contra Costa County. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 6:15am. Or meet the

leader at 7am on Cypress Rd. at the Marsh Creek Trailhead parking lot just east of O'Reilly's Auto Parts in Oakley. Go north on I-680, exit Hwy 4 toward Stockton/Pittsburg, take right Exit 30 toward CA-160/Sacramento/Rio Vista (just past Hillcrest Avenue Exit; do NOT continue straight on Hwy 4). Take exit 1-A East 18th/Main Street, turn right at the bottom of the exit onto Main Street and drive through Oakley for about 4 miles, turn left onto Cypress Rd. Make a U-turn at Picasso Drive, the stoplight after the railroad tracks. May be hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Target birds include: Blue Grosbeak (*photo Isaac Aronow*), Hooded Oriole, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Swainson's Hawk, Yellow-billed Magpie and Yellow-breasted Chat. Leader: Gary Fregien. (916) 708-0636. Category 2.



YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB

Saturday, May 18, Pine Canyon: YBC Coordinator Juan Pablo Galván will lead this outing for birders age 10-20 and accompanying adults. For details, search Facebook for Mount Diablo Audubon Society Young Birders Club, or write jpgalvan9@gmail.com.

GRAYSON CREEK BIRDERS

Sunday, May 19: Citizen science survey of the creek, in partnership with Friends of Pleasant Hill Creeks. Typically departs every third Sunday of the month, 8 am from the parking lot of the Pleasant Hill Library. Confirm date with Leader Alan Bade at alanbade@jps.net or (925) 330-1780.

Tuesday, May 21, and Thursday, May 23, No Child Left Inside.

Paul Schorr, (925) 998-0070.

**PARTNER HIKE:
CASTLE ROCK**

Sunday, June 9: Join us for a leisurely stroll along Pine Creek in the Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area adjacent to Mount Diablo State Park. The area is dominated by oak woodlands and prominent sandstone formations. Peregrine falcons nest in rock formations. Bring plenty of water and a snack. Dress in layers. Sturdy shoes or hiking boots. Distance: 3 miles, Elevation change: 75' (easy hike). Leaders: Judy Abrams and Staci Hobbet.

RVSP: To allow equal access, registration will open two months prior to the hike.

www.eventbrite.com/e/castle-rock-audubon-hike-tickets-54554844007

Saturday, June 1, Outer Point

Reyes. Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7am. Meet 8:30am at Bear Valley Visitor Center in Olema. From I-80 in Vallejo, follow SR 37 19.1 miles to Atherton Ave, exit and turn left, cross US 101 to San Marin Dr and continue for 3 miles. Turn right on Novato Blvd for 6 miles to stop sign, then turn left on Point Reyes-Petaluma Rd for 7 miles to another stop sign. Turn right across the bridge, go 3 miles to SR 1. Turn left into Point Reyes

Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town towards Olema, then turn right onto Bear Valley Rd. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. We are hoping for migrants. Bring lunch and liquids. Weather is unpredictable. Leader: Juan-Carlos Solis. (925) 222-8573. Category 2.

June 22-23, Yuba Pass. Make motel reservations now! Closest motels are in Sierra City, 11 miles down Hwy 49 to the west. Herrington's Sierra Pines (530-862-1151 or 800-682-9848) is one of the most popular; or try Yuba River Inn (530-862-1122) with cabins and kitchenettes (cash or check only). Bassett's Station (530-862-1297) at Highway 49 and Gold Lake Road has some accommodations and meals. High Country Inn (530-862-1530 or 800-862-1530) is across Hwy 49 from Bassett's. Also, in Calpine is Sierra Valley Lodge (530-994-3367 or 800-858-0322). More listings at

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

Carpool Meeting Spot

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

Trip Coordinator Hugh Harvey (925) 935-2979.

www.sierracity.com/Stay/LodgingCamp.html. Campgrounds at Yuba Pass and Chapman Creek downhill to the west. Sites available first come/first serve for three days at a time. Longer term reservations can be made at 877-444-6777, but there is an added \$10 charge for this service. Co-leaders: Nancy Wenninger, (925) 938-7987, Bill Chilson (510) 619-6692.

July 20-21, Mt. Lassen National Park. If you are planning to participate in this MDAS birding trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park, let the leader know ahead of time that you are coming. On Saturday morning, we will meet in the Loomis Museum parking lot in the Manzanita Lake area at 7:30am. Camping is available at the Manzanita Lake Campground, where Sections A and C are reservable, while Sections B and D are not. (Section D is a tents-only area). There are also a few sleep-only cabins at Manzanita Lake with nearby bathroom facilities. Outside the park, there are several small motels and B&Bs; in the past, some birders have stayed in Anderson and even Redding. Make reservations soon, as they fill up quickly. Due to extraordinary snowfall this winter, we do not know how many roads through the park will be open. Contact Leader Mike Robertson for details at: LandMRobertson@outlook.com. (925) 685-4690

May 4: Birding on Global Big Day

As many of you know, eBird is a website/app that the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology maintains for the benefit of all birders, both professional and hobbyist. Any of us can use its functions to locate species and hotspots, and to keep our own personal birding records. Additionally, it is used by ornithologists all over the world to track the numbers and movements of birds. Since eBird's inception and growth, researchers at the lab have considered ways to get broader snapshots of the migratory movements of birds. Much like the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, which occurs during the same time frame each year, Cornell has come up with Backyard Bird Count in February and Global Big Days in May and October.

This year, Spring Global Big Day will be May 4. Last year, more than 30,000 people entered data in eBird, spotting or hearing more than 7,000 species in a single day. All you need to do to help in this effort is to look for birds and record what you see on eBird. If you don't have an account, it's easy to establish one. MDAS will be hosting the Mines Road field trip on May 4, so our group's experience will become part of Spring Global Big Day, 2019, since several members routinely record their sightings.—*Citizen Science Chair Elizabeth Leite*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

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

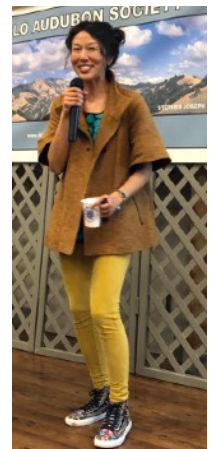
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The appearance of a rare Harris's Sparrow has prompted a migration of birders to Castle Rock Park. (Photo Paul Schorr)



From Left: Nominating Chair Rosalie Howarth announces the slate of next year's officers. Michael Eliot, who donated five bags of Birds and Beans coffee, draws raffle tickets to find the winners. Michele Sheehan shares a poster she created to enhance educational materials at the Heather Farm, kiosk, while Heather Rosmarin explains the Grayson Creek Birding Survey, and artist Jane Kim tells the story of how she came to create Cornell Lab's colorful Wall of Birds. (Photos Lori Patel)