

# The QUAIL

Mt Diablo Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA  
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April 2003

Vol. 49, No. 7

Next Deadline: April 5

## President's Notes

by Mike Williams

We have had some very outstanding MDAS general meetings this year and wish all of our members could have been there. At our last meeting, Diana Granados' Native Bird Connection came with a Red-tailed, Harlan's, and Swainson's Hawks. They are magnificent creatures, and it was great to be able to compare them up close. In February, Scott and Claudia Hein presented a fantastic slide show on their trip to the Antarctic. I wanted to go right then and see those great birds and beautifully desolate country. But can anyone guarantee me calm seas?

Maury Stern has been Program Chairman for four years and has done an excellent job. He is relinquishing his position next fall to Alice Holmes. Maury has held many positions at MDAS over the years. He will continue to work on the Christmas Bird Count. Alice has been a terrific MDAS volunteer, primarily as our hospitality chair extraordinaire. She is looking forward to continuing Maury's success in bringing interesting speakers to the general meetings.

At the last meeting, Cecil Williams and Alice Holmes unveiled our new MDAS banner. It is absolutely spectacular! It features Stephen Joseph's "Golden Mountain" panoramic picture of Mt. Diablo. It will be on display at our general meetings, and we will be using it at the many environmental events where MDAS volunteers do community outreach. Please thank Cecil and Alice for their good work!

I have been reading with interest the comments in Gary Bogue's column in the (continued on p. 7)

## April Meeting Features Favorite Bug Munchies of Birds

Author and insect expert Bob Stewart will make a return visit to MDAS as our guest speaker at the April 3 general meeting. There are an overwhelming 28,000 species of insects in California alone. But many are very common species seen every day by birders and botanists. Bob will use close-up photographs to identify species, organized into groups according to their role in the world, i.e., plant eaters, nectar/pollen feeders, predators, and scavengers.

Awareness of insects and spiders makes the food-chain connections among plants and animals more evident and will enhance our observational powers. Bob recalls seeing Red-breasted Sapsuckers eating cottony scale insects on willows in the Sierra; Black-capped Chickadees foraging on willow lichens in Arcata; and a fall vagrant Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher that spent a week near Bolinas Lagoon eating black-and-yellow garden spiders. Watching insects in southeast Arizona (many of which occur in the deserts of California) stimulated Bob's concentration on watching the insect world.

Bob spent almost 30 years as a biologist with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory,

### Officer Elections

Shirley Ellis has been selected as the chairwoman of the Nominations Committee to seek candidates for four officer positions of MDAS: Chapter president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. If you have interest in any of these positions, please call her. The current officers are willing to continue in their present positions.

and later he was a naturalist for Marin County. He now leads birding and natural history tours to Mexico, Costa Rica, Trinidad & Tobago. He is author of *Common Butterflies of California* and *Butterflies of Arizona*.

### Birding Information

Alan Gould will be showing some of his excellent slides of his recent trips to the Klamath Wildlife Refuge near Klamath Falls, Oregon, and to Bosque del Apache, New Mexico.

### Book Sale

Books from the collection of Florence Bennett are still available. If you missed the first sale, you will have another chance at the April general meeting. Also included will be five signed copies of Jean Richmond's book, *Birding Northern California*. More than \$300 was raised for MDAS from the sale of Florence's books at the last meeting.

### Meeting Schedule

The next MDAS general meeting will be

**Thursday, April 3**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek (see map on p. 8).

6:30 p.m.—Doors open

7 p.m.—Birding Information

7:25 p.m.—Business meeting

7:40 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing

8:05 p.m.—Program

**Remember your cup! We're serving Natural Origins Tea too!**

# Connections

## Protect Lamorinda Wildlife Habitat with Letters and Art

Wildlife in Moraga and Lafayette need your help. The proposed Palos Colorados development—123 luxury homes and an 18-hole golf course—is seeking approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Fish and Game, Regional Water Board, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The 30-day comment period required by the Army Corps permit will most likely have already begun by the time you read this.

If approved, this project would be built on 560 acres, bounded by St. Mary's Road on the east and Moraga Road on the west. It would fill or permanently degrade 5 acres of wetlands, including breeding pond habitat for the threatened red-legged frog. It would impact hundreds of acres of heavily used songbird and raptor habitat as well as Critical Habitat for the threatened Alameda whipsnake. The project would also isolate the 800-acre Lafayette Reservoir open space area by blocking its only remaining connection to Las Trampas Regional Wilderness, an active wildlife corridor.

Please call the Army Corps at 415-977-8448 and ask to be mailed the Public Notice for Palos Colorados when it is issued. Then write the Army Corps asking it to deny the filling of wetlands and destruction of red-legged frog breeding habitat. Also request that a public hearing be held in the community. Visit Preserve Lamorinda Open Space's website ([lamorindaopenspace.org](http://lamorindaopenspace.org)) for detailed talking points, addresses, and information on the Army Corps public notice.

### Protest Art Show

Come to an art show and support this cause. On Sunday, April 13, from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. at Campolindo High School in Moraga, the Sierra Club and the Preserve Lamorinda Open Space are sponsoring an art show benefit. This event will feature works by dozens of Northern California's finest artists. All artists have agreed to

donate half the proceeds to the anti-Palos Colorados campaign.

There will also be great raffle prizes, live music, refreshments, and activities for children. For more information and directions, call Suzanne at 925-878-9682 or email [plos@robelia.com](mailto:plos@robelia.com).

Please help limit the impacts to this critically important open space.

## Expansion Plans for Reservoir

The Contra Costa Water District is pushing forward with plans to expand Los Vaqueros Reservoir. This expansion planning flies in the face of promises made in 1994 to make this a regional reservoir. In order to gain voter and regulatory approval, the Water District was required to purchase almost 20,000 acres of watershed/open space, build another route for Vasco Road, protect the Vasco Caves, and limit the size of the reservoir to 1600 acres.

Now, only six years after completion of construction, the Water District wants to expand the reservoir in order to provide water to other, probably southern California, water districts. Three times the amount of land would be flooded to fill this much larger reservoir, and its surface area would be doubled. Not only would we lose more wildlife habitat in East County, but wildlife corridors would be adversely impacted. The Water District will probably revive improved water quality to justify its actions. The MDAS Board is watching developments closely.

## PRBO Asks for Funding Help

The Pt Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Conservation Science project needs funding to finish the *California Bird Species of Special Concern* book to be published in collaboration with Western Field Ornithologists, California Dept. of Fish and Game, and many of the state's leading bird biologists. This book identifies California's at-risk birds most in need of help and makes specific recommendations for research, monitoring, and

conservation actions that will keep them off lists of threatened and endangered species.

As a regulatory tool, the special concern list will guide state, federal, and local governments in defining "sensitive" species under the California Environmental Quality Act and will help reduce negative impacts on these birds.

Contributions of any amount are welcome. Donors of \$100 or more will receive a copy of the book. Please send contributions to Sarah Huard, Manager of Individual Giving, PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Hwy, Stinson Beach, CA 94970. Indicate on the check that your donation is for *Bird Species of Special Concern*.

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### The Quail

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# Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Threatened

National Audubon is alerting its members to a need for immediate action if the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is to be protected from oil drilling.

Succumbing to pressure by pro-drilling special interests and their powerful allies in the Congress, both the House and the Senate Budget Committees have approved provisions that pave the way for opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas drilling.

A provision in the Budget bill instructs the House Resources Committee to generate at least \$1.1 billion in "savings" over the next ten years. This can be accomplished by reducing existing budgets and programs, or by identifying new revenue sources. The House Resources Committee Chairman, **Richard Pombo (R-CA)** from Tracy, is expected to make sure that the \$1.1 billion comes from drilling the ANWR.

The U.S. Senate Budget Committee passed a measure that blatantly offers up revenues generated from drilling in the ANWR to increase government spending for FY04.

The pro-drillers need only 50 votes to win, and the Senate budget bill could be voted on by the full Senate as soon as the week of March 17.

If there is a 50-50 split on this issue, Vice President Cheney will cast the determining vote, and we know he supports opening the Refuge to drilling. Right now, the pro-drillers claim to have 49 supporters in the Senate. Here are those Senators the pro-drilling interests are targeting in order to secure that critical 50th vote; all of whom have either voted to protect the Arctic from drilling last year, or have voiced their support for protecting the Arctic this year:

- Arkansas: Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor
- Minnesota: Senator Norm Coleman
- Oregon: Senator Gordon Smith

Audubon needs our help to ensure lawmakers—particularly those members of the Senate who are targeted by the pro-drilling special interests—oppose

efforts to drill in America's last great frontier!

Please make a point—even if you have done so already—to contact your lawmakers and urge them to protect the Arctic Refuge from oil drilling. Also, please ask your friends and family to make contact as well. If you know someone represented by these senators, make sure they see this alert. Appeal to the Senators to continue to protect America's last great frontier and allow a National Wildlife Refuge to do what it was created to do: be a haven for birds and wildlife.

It makes no sense to ruin a national treasure for only six months of oil that wouldn't be available until ten long years

down the road! Send your message to your lawmakers today. Audubon has made very easy; just go to this website and follow the instructions to send an email to your Senator: <[http://www.protectthearctic.com/take\\_action.asp](http://www.protectthearctic.com/take_action.asp)>.

And double the impact of your letter by calling your lawmakers and urging them to protect the Arctic Refuge! You can reach your lawmakers by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and asking for your specific lawmaker. And be sure to visit the Audubon special website for the latest information, and find out what more you can do to help at <<http://www.protectthearctic.com>>.

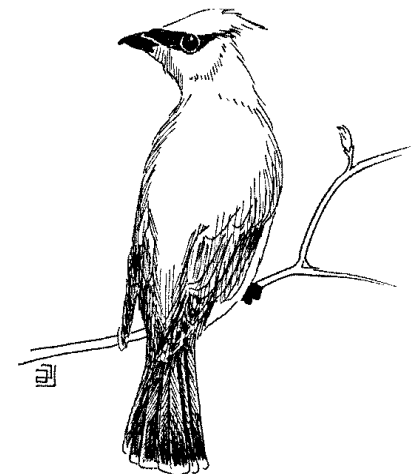
—Audubon Advisory

## Field Trip Reports

**Saturday, March 8, Tomales Bay State Park**—Twelve birders spent a congenial morning and early afternoon at Heart's Desire Beach, Indian Beach, and the trails connecting and around them. Weather was beautiful with blue skies and temperatures in the 60's. We saw 51 species. The most unusual was a female or young male Cassin's Finch far away from the mountains. There is now an active Osprey nest visible from the Heart's Desire parking lot which had two adult Ospreys. We saw at least a thousand Double-crested Cormorants going north to south along Tomales Bay, and a long strung out flock of Brandt's Cormorants flying low over the water in single file. Other highlights included Peregrine Falcon, beautiful male Allen's Hummingbirds, the first Pacific-slope Flycatcher of the year, and a Varied Thrush.—*Maury Stern*

**Wednesday, March 12, Upper San Leandro Reservoir**—Thirteen birders went to the Upper San Leandro Reservoir on the edge of Moraga, on a day that started off misty and foggy, but soon changed to another of our glorious 60-degree days with bright sunshine. Among the 63 species we saw were

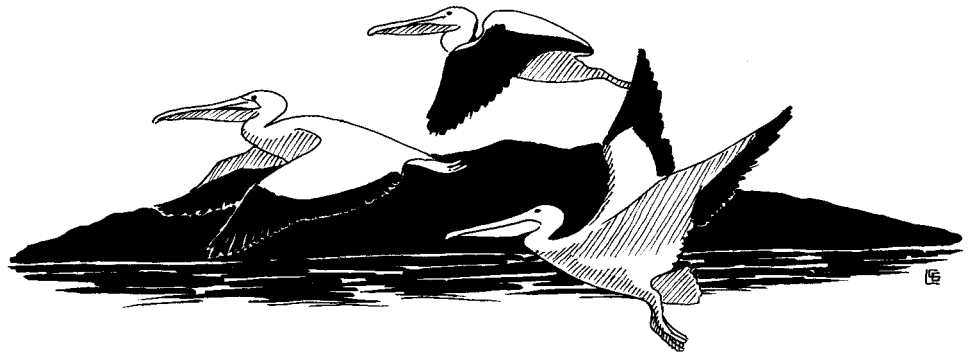
Wood Duck, a handsome male Ruddy Duck, Brown Creeper, Western Bluebird, and Townsend's Warbler; and we heard two Great Horned Owls.—*Maury Stern*





## Heron Days April 12 & 13

Heron Days at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park near Clear will be held Saturday and Sunday, April 12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event includes viewing two major heron rookeries from pontoon boats, kayaking, slide shows and lectures, nature walks, children's activities, and food booths. Reservations are required for the kayaking at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. and cost \$35. Reservations are also required for pontoon rides. Call the Lake County Marketing Department at 800-525-3743.



## Wyoming Audubon Offers Two Summer Camps

Audubon Wyoming is sponsoring two natural history sessions at its camp near the diverse Tensleep Nature Preserve habitats ranging from high mountain meadows and Ponderosa pine stands to lush canyon forests and wetlands to dry sagebrush steppes.

### Session I, Field Ornithology, June 29–July 5

This field camp experience is intended for beginning and intermediate birders, educators and resource managers and stresses avian identification outdoors. The AVES method of bird identification, as it is called, was developed by Gene Wilhelm, former Vice President of Education, National Audubon Society, over decades of active birding. The AVES method uses six keys in field identification: eye, ear, behavior, habitats, field marks and ecology during a period of intense but fun and exciting birding with experts.

The method works and the end result is a raising of consciousness of how birds interrelate and interconnect with the rest of nature in Experience daily field identification sessions watching birds with experts, and these hands-on activities are linked to presentations and discussions, giving participants a richer awareness, understanding and appreciation of birds and ecology in the beautiful Big Horn Basin ecosystem. Led by nationally known ornithologists, this program has been developed for both novice and intermediate birders, educators and resource managers alike.

### Session II, Earth Literacy, July 6–12

Natural history and the local environment once provided the basic foundation from which the education discipline emerged. Restoring those connections is what environmental education today is about and what makes it so compelling for cross-curricula teaching in an outdoors setting. This week-long experiential session is primarily intended for science and non-science educators who are either already incorporating environmental education into their lesson plans or would like to. Curious parents and guardians of elementary through high school age children also are welcome. Daily field trips in the beautiful and biodiverse Tensleep Nature Preserve, discussions, special presentation and projects, and many ideas and materials to take back home will guarantee a very special week.

Prices: Early Bird registration (payment must be received by April 30) = \$875

Late registration (payment must be received by June 15) = \$975

Space is limited so early registration is encouraged. For more information or registration forms, contact Audubon Wyoming at 307-235-3485.

## Spix's Macaw: will it be saved?

One of the rarest birds in the world is the Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*). This delicate blue macaw, native to northeastern Brazil, suffered from habitat loss and trapping to such an extent that by 1990, the species had dwindled to one last free-living male.

This single male lived alone for ten years, carefully guarded by Brazilian officials who were unable to provide him with a mate. With his loss in 2000, the Spix's macaw became extinct in the wild.

Last year, two more individuals were discovered in captivity. A female was returned to Brazil by the Loro Parque Foundation based in Tenerife, Spain; the other, a male, was found in the United States and returned to Brazil last December.

Both birds will be integrated into the recovery program for the species that is coordinated by the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA).

Crucial to the survival of the species are 54 individuals in captivity. The owners of these Spix's Macaws are some of the wealthiest people in the world, including a Qatari sheik who specializes in owning the rarest of the rare; a Filipino industrialist who owns a commercial bird breeding farm and half of the known Spix's Macaws; and a Swiss millionaire. If this bird is saved from extinction, it will be thanks to those who consider it their private property. This website offers extensive information on rare birds: <http://worldtwitch.virtualave.net>

# Bush Record on Environment Called Dismal

According to reports published by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the OMB Watch, the Bush administration repeatedly and systematically undermined America's landmark environmental laws in 2002. The two reports document more than 100 anti-environmental actions by the Administration last year and point to ongoing efforts to undermine existing protections and delay proposed new rules that could help the environment.

The NRDC report, "Rewriting the Rules: The Bush Administration's Assault on the Environment—2002," shows that the White House has enlisted every federal agency that oversees environmental programs in a coordinated effort to relax regulations for oil, coal, logging, mining, chemical, automakers and other industries.

These conclusions are echoed by the Congressional budget watchdog group, OMB Watch, which reports that the Bush administration has advanced very few health, safety and environmental protections over the last two years—much fewer than the two previous administrations—and is quietly scuttling work on a host of protective standards in the regulatory pipeline.

Some of the most glaring examples documented in the reports include:

- Changes to the Clean Air Act by the EPA that exempt the nation's oldest and dirtiest power plants and refineries from installing modern pollution controls when they upgrade or expand their facilities.
- New EPA and Army Corps of Engineers policies to relax and sometimes end Clean Water Act protection for millions of acres of wetlands and other waterways; eliminate corporate liability for "factory farm" pollution; and exempt mining waste from regulation as a pollutant under federal law.
- A series of proposals by the Forest Service and other federal agencies to eliminate requirements for environmental review and public participation when considering logging, mining, drilling, development and other projects in all 155 national forests and on millions of acres of public lands.

According to a National Audubon Society Advisory, the Bush Administration is trying harder than ever to convince Congress to grant the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) exemptions from important environmental laws, including air pollution regulations, toxic waste dumping, endangered species and marine mammal protection. Congress denied DoD such exemption from these environmental laws last year, but many lawmakers who supported such denial did not win re-election. So the Administration and DoD heavyweights are trying again with the new Congress.

The Administration uses environmentally friendly euphemisms to mask the true intent and impact of its policy proposals. The White House plan to allow timber companies increased access to old-growth forests has been called the "Healthy Forests" initiative, and refers to logging as "thinning."

OMB Watch examined the regulatory agendas of three agencies—the EPA, the FDA, and the OSHA—and found that the EPA has halted work on 48 environmental standards, the FDA has stopped work on 56 standards, and OSHA has halted 21 new standards.

"Rewriting the Rules" is available on NRDC's Web site at <http://www.nrdc.org/legislation/rollbacks/rollbacksinx.asp>. The OMB Watch report, "Administration Advances Few Health, Safety and Environmental Protections," is available at <http://www.ombwatch.org/excreport/>.

## News from

### *Wild Birds Unlimited*

692 Contra Costa Blvd.  
Pleasant Hill, CA  
798-0303

#### Visit Our Website at

<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>

Spring nesting time comes early in California. Some "cavity" nesters have already begun nesting. Others will start soon. As natural habitats continue to disappear, nesting boxes not only provide cavity-nesting birds with needed nest sites but also give you an opportunity to learn more about their fascinating courtship and family life. Chickadees, wrens, titmice, nuthatches, bluebirds, woodpeckers, flycatchers, swallows, kestrels, and others will all readily use birdhouses. You can play a part in nest building by providing colorful string, yarn, hair and fibers (no longer than 3 inches long) for birds to use when building their abodes. We have been having great success with the "Woolie," which is untreated lamb's wool. It's very soft, and the birds love it. (Stop by and pick up your FREE copy of our Housing Guide.)

### Birding Class

Learn Denise's secrets at her birding class! Great information and tips about Northern California birds. The series includes six Wednesday evening classes (7-9 p.m.) and two weekend birdwalks, starting April 9. Cost is \$60. The instructor, Denise Wight, is a longtime member and trip leader for MDAS. She has taught birding classes at WBU for many years. Come join the fun!

### Birdscaping Workshop

Learn how to make your yard more attractive to the birds at this free workshop at WBU on Sat., April 19. Starts at 10:30 am.

- It's time to put out your oriole feeders. We have already received early sighting reports. Both Hooded and Bullock's Orioles arrive by April, and they readily come to a nectar feeder. Early sightings have already been reported.
- Black-headed Grosbeaks will be arriving soon. Their favorite food is sunflower seeds.

# April Field Trips Focus on Spring Migrants

*Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair*

Field trips are open to MDAS members and nonmembers alike. You do not have to be a birding expert; only one who enjoys nature. Bring binoculars, field guides, and lunch. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader **at least 7 days** in advance. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Trips go in light rain or drizzle. If in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure. Carpool time is the departure time. Carpool expense: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

**April 3, Thursday**—Lake Lagunitas and Bon Tempe Lake, Marin. This very popular birding trip passes through varied terrain (meadows, marshes, forests, ridges as well as along two lake shores) in the beautiful area of the northern slopes of Mount Tamalpais. Carpool leaves Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24 at 8 a.m. From first San Rafael exit, go left on 3rd St, and continue to Sir Francis Drake Blvd and turn right. In Fairfax, go left on Fairfax Rd. Turn left on Sky Oaks Rd.; take left fork to parking lot near foot of Lagunitas Dam. Approximate meeting time is 9:00 a.m. We will hike around Lagunitas in the morning and walk over to Bon Tempe in the afternoon. We have often found Piliated Woodpeckers here, and sometimes Common Loon in breeding plumage. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 3

**April 5, Saturday**—**Garin Regional Park, Hayward.** Garin Park is located in the hills just east of Hayward with great views of the Bay Area. The park has plenty of parking and picnic tables, and water is available. No services. From the parking lot, we'll take one of the many trails leading up into the hills. Carpool leaves 7:15 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Meet in parking lot at end of Garin Rd. at 8 a.m. Take I-680 south and I-580 west. Exit on East Castro Valley Blvd. and continue west. Turn left onto Crow Canyon Rd. and go under freeway. Crow Canyon Rd becomes Grove Way and then A St. At A St and SR238 (Foothill Blvd.), turn left. Foothill Blvd./SR 238 becomes Mission Blvd. Go south about 3 mi to Garin Rd., turn left, and follow to end. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906 Category 3

**Difficulty of field trip:**  
**Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths.**  
**Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough terrain.**  
**Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.**

**April 17, Thursday**—**Redwood Regional Park.** The 1,800-acre Redwood Park is just a few miles over the ridge from downtown Oakland but is a hidden redwood forest with peaceful redwood groves and other evergreens, chaparral, and grasslands. Wildlife within the park includes rare species, such as the golden eagle and Alameda striped racer snake. Deer, raccoons, rabbits, and squirrels are often seen. Great place to enjoy birding for spring migrants. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24. Meet at the park at 8:15 a.m. From intersection of Moraga Way and Moraga Rd., go west on Canyon Rd., turn left on Pinehurst, and continue to park entrance. Park at last parking area. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

**April 19, Saturday**—**Pine Canyon.** Although a bit strenuous with some steep hiking, Pine Canyon in Mt. Diablo St. Park is beautiful, and we're sure to see many spring migrants. Kevin Hints has described birding here at his website: <http://www.mdia.org/Introtobirding.htm>. **Carry liquids and lunch.** Meet in parking lot at end of Castle Rock Rd at 8 a.m. Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041 Category 3

**April 23, Wednesday**—**Ida Clayton Road, Sonoma County.** One of the best places for springtime bird watching in Sonoma County is Ida Clayton Road

where a large number of our returning spring migrants can be seen. April and May are the best months. Ida Clayton Road intersects Highway 128 as it enters southern Knight's Valley in eastern Sonoma County. It climbs into the mountains on the northwest shoulder of Mt. St. Helena. The terrain is steep and offers many nice vistas, including wonderful views of the north side of Mt. St. Helena. Madrone Audubon summarizes target birds at <http://audubon.sonoma.net/birding/RR0S.html#anchor118754>. Carpool leaves at 7 a.m. from the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. This area is north of Calistoga in the Napa County mountains. This is a car birding trip with no meeting place in Sonoma County. The carpooling is needed due to limited parking on some roads. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

## Nature Photography Show & Benefit Sale

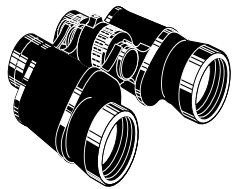
"Parkland Birds"  
 Coyote Hills Visitors Center  
 Saturday April 12  
 1-3 p.m.

Photographer Don Jedlovec and Naturalist Jan Southworth collaborate in a talk covering the lives and behavior of birds at Coyote Hills Regional Park.

Tour the Nectar Garden at Coyote Hills with Jan and Don. See Don's stunning photographic images which will be available for sale—proceeds will support the Nectar Garden.

*Editor's note: I am familiar with Don's photographs—they are incredibly beautiful.*





# Observations

by Steve Glover

An **American White Pelican** soaring high over Orinda and to the west on 2/21 was certainly a high-quality yard bird (RW)!

At least six active **Great Blue Heron** nests were counted on 2/20 at the traditional rookery at San Pablo Reservoir (KO).

Belated reports of interesting waterfowl included a male **Eurasian Wigeon** at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline on 12/26 and

a high count of six **Redheads** at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 12/25 (CD).

Two male and three female **Hooded Mergansers** were along Las Trampas Creek near the Olympic Blvd. staging area on 2/26 (MB). At least one female was still present at the Moraga Country Club through at least 3/3 (KO).

The wintering adult **Bald Eagle** was noted sporadically at Lafayette Reservoir through at least 2/15 (TD), and another or the same was at San Pablo Reservoir through at least 2/20 (KO). Second-hand reports say that up to two adults have been present this winter at San Pablo with the Lafayette bird likely being one of those two. These two reservoirs have traditionally been the best place in the county for this species. Several nice pictures of the Lafayette bird can be viewed on the internet at <<http://www.strandnet.com/birds/baldy.html>>.

Two **Ferruginous Hawks** were found roosting on the western fringes of suburban San Ramon on 2/12 (D&PB). At least one has been in the area throughout the winter.

A male **Allen's Hummingbird** arrived on schedule in a Lafayette backyard on 2/19 (DL). Allen's Hummingbirds are always one of the harbingers of the coming spring.

The wintering **Townsend's Solitaire** in suburban Moraga was still present through at least 2/10 (NW).

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** near the bridge at the Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga was a winter rarity for Contra Costa County (NW, RW).

A **White-throated Sparrow** made an appearance in a Lafayette backyard on 2/19 (DL).

Surely, the bird of the winter was a molting male **Indigo Bunting** at a seed feeder in residential Lafayette. The bird was first noted on 2/28 (though it almost surely wintered somewhere in the vicinity) and

was present through at least 3/2 (MS). This would appear to be the first winter record for Contra Costa County.

**Lawrence's Goldfinches** are recorded only on very rare occasions in Contra Costa in the winter, so a flock of 17 along the Black Point Trail near Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park, on 12/24 was a very nice find (CD).

Observers: Dennis and Patricia Braddy, Martha Breed, Tim Daly, Colin Dillingham, Don Lewis, Kitty O'Neill, Maury Stern, Nat Weber, Ray Witbeck

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin 94568, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.  
Northern CA Bird Box:  
(415) 681-7422

## How to Purchase Natural Origins' Tea and Help MDAS

Natural Origins' provides 20% of its sales to MDAS when customers designate MDAS as their donation recipient. How do you find the tea and make the designation?

- Direct from Natural Origins'. Call toll free 1-877-448-3832 and request that MDAS receive donation benefits when you order.
- Order online at <[www.naturalorigins.com](http://www.naturalorigins.com)>. At checkout, indicate MDAS as the donation recipient.
- Purchase Natural Origins' tea at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill (925-798-0303). MDAS receives an automatic credit of 20% of all tea sales. Note: WBU is the only retail outlet whose sales benefit MDAS!
- At MDAS general meetings, The Gardens at Heather Farm. Purchase at the meeting or pick up an order form.

## President's Notes

(continued from p. 1)

*Contra Costa Times* about coyotes on Lime Ridge. Many people seem to think that it's okay to trap and remove the offending coyotes that are going into yards and eating cats and dogs. If it's ethical and moral to trap them for eating pets, isn't it just as ethical and moral to trap and remove feral and domestic cats that are going into backyards or into the "wild" and eating birds and other wildlife?

Spring is in the air. It's time to go birding. MDAS has some great birding trips coming up. It's after New Year's, but make it your resolution to go on at least one trip each month. Going birding is much more fun and easier to do than losing weight or saving money. Check our website or the *Quail*, pick out your next trip, and put it on your calendar.

Happy birding!

# CALENDAR

MDAS holds its general meetings on the first Thursday of every month. Our next meeting is Thursday, April 3. Meetings for the rest of the 2002-03 year are May 1 and June 5. There are no meetings in July or August.

If you are a new member or new to the area, let us know. We want to welcome you and tell you about our activities. All new members and visitors receive a free door prize ticket.

The MDAS Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of the month at the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.

**Visit our website for the latest birding information:**  
<[www.diabloaudubon.com](http://www.diabloaudubon.com)>



*Driving directions: Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to signal light at N. San Carlos Dr. (Heather Farm entrance). Go 1 block and turn left on Heather. At Marchbanks Dr. turn right. The Garden Center is located about 200 ft. on the right.*

*Questions about membership or mailing addresses? Call Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, at (925) 968-1677. MDAS membership includes 10 issues of the Quail. A 1-year family membership in MDAS is \$25/year or \$500 for lifetime membership (payable in two \$250 annual payments). National Audubon Society membership includes the Audubon magazine. Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years; membership renewal is \$35/year. To join MDAS or NAS, send a check payable to MDAS to Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Ct., Danville, 94526. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please end exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor, 4801 Shavano Peak Ct., Antioch, CA 94531.*

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