



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 51, Number 7

April 2006

Birds and Butterflies of South Texas and Northeastern Mexico with Bob Stewart



Join **Bob Stewart** on a late fall journey from the Rio Grand River in Texas deep into Tamaulipas, the northeastern state of Mexico. Begin the trip at Lana and Charlie Vieh's Bed and Breakfast, 10 minutes from the border. Enjoy the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge with its extensive butterfly gardens and excellent examples of native Mexican vegetation. See the Chachalaca, Green Jay, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Green Kingfisher, Kiskadee, and Couch's Kingbird.

As we make our way into Tamaulipas we will see late flying White-tailed, Swainson's and Harris's Hawks with migrating Turkey and Black Vultures. South of Ciudad Victoria is the small village of Gomez Farias nestled among native trees where Audubon's and Altamira Orioles forage with Boat-billed and Social Flycatchers as well as Lineated and Pale-billed Woodpeckers. Here within the boundaries of the El Cielo Natural Reserve is a vast tract of habitat typical of

the Tropic of Cancer. People are rare, but friendly. Gomez Farias is built on a ridge in the foothills of the Sierra Occidental, a massive limestone mountain range extending far south along eastern Mexico. The ridge is so steep that human development is literally one or two properties deep on either side of the main road. Near the center of town Wedge-tailed Saberwings, Camivets Emerald Hummingbirds and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds frolic with Yellow-throated and Scrub Euphonias and Summer and Yellow-winged Tanagers. A boat trip on a nearby clear, slow-moving river can yield Ringed, Amazon, and Green Kingfishers, Tiger and Boat-billed Herons and Sun Grebes. Blue-crowned Motmots fly overhead.

Two thousand feet higher in the Sierra Occidental, a six-mile-long cobbled road leads to Alta Cima (population 200). In the oak and pine forests we hear the wa-

Continued on page 2

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, April 6**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek.

(See map on page 7).

- 6:30 PM Doors open
- 7:00 PM Birding Information
- 7:25 PM Announcements
- 7:40 PM Social time, refreshments*, door prize
- 8:05 PM Program

* Please remember to bring a cup.

◀ The male **ZEBRA LONGWING** will wait on a chrysalis and mate with a female as she emerges. He then deposits a pheromone on her abdomen that repels other males. These butterflies range throughout Central America and Mexico and into South Texas. It is the state butterfly of Florida.



Joel Summerhill

Birding Information

Joel Summerhill, a long-time MDAS member, will share the visit that he and Gloria made to the North and South Islands of New Zealand. Joel's photographs of birds have always been unique and a pleasure to see. On April 6 Joel will focus on pelagic birds such as the Albatross, the Giant Petrel, and the Fairy Prion.

Welcome New Members

Kathie Cheatham	Alamo
Carol Cantor	Oakland
David Eaglesham	Livermore
Pamela Heaton	Lafayette
Gene and Tomi Izuno	Orinda
Jean Matuska	Concord
Patricia McEveney	Walnut Creek
Wendy Murphy	Concord
Gary Pilecki	San Ramon
Betty Spencer	Brentwood
Catherine Spiro	Walnut Creek
Penny Walker	Concord

Election of Officers

In accordance with the Bylaws of Mount Diablo Audubon Society, officers for the year 2006–2007 are elected at the May general meeting. The following members have been nominated, and any member is welcome to have their name added to the slate. If you are interested in running for office, please contact Shirley Ellis at 938-3703.

President	Jimm Edgar
Vice President	Mike Williams
Treasurer	Steve Buffi
Secretary	Open

The position of Secretary needs a volunteer. Here is a place where you will find a grateful Board of Directors. The primary duties are to take minutes at the bimonthly Board meetings. Call the current Secretary, Pam Leggett, for a more complete description, 685-1959.

Q The provincial bird of Quebec is known by the Inuit as the Ookpik. These raptors hunt by day as they sit and wait for their favorite food, rabbits and other small mammals. While some birds stay clear, lest they become prey, Snow Geese and some other birds nest nearby because the Ookpik will drive away foxes and other predators.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to page 5 for the answer.

LNOOSWWY

Bob Stewart

Continued from page 1

vering whistles of Singing Quail and spot Crimson-collared Grosbeak, and Fan-tailed, Rufous-capped, Golden-crowned and Crescent-chested Warblers.

Having been trained for a number of years by North American birders, some residents know the sounds and English names of resident birds and can uncannily imitate local species. Favorites are Blue Mockingbird, Azure-crowned Hummingbird, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Brown-headed Solitaire, and Tamaulipas Least Pygmy Owl.

Butterflies are hard to ignore here. Jim Brock, author of the Kaufman *Guide to North American Butterflies* has seen 180 species in one day traveling from Gomez Farias to Alta Cima. The beautiful photographs in a new field guide by Kim Garwood and Richard Lehman, *Butterflies of Northeastern Mexico*, allow easy identification.

We complete our trip two hours east of the El Cielo Reserve with a visit to Los Ebanos Ranch, a 7000-acre private cattle ranch located at the southern end of the Laguna Madre. Retired as head of transportation in Mexico, the owner of Los Ebanos Ranch has maintained the native habitat. His son, Arturo, is studying Ocelots at Texas A and M and will shortly receive his PhD. Arturo and the ranching staff transport visitors to the varied habitats, esteros, and beaches on the Gulf of Mexico.

A trip with Bob Stewart is always a special treat. Join us for a fascinating evening.

Earth Day

Celebrate John Muir's Birthday and Earth Day on April 22, 2006, 10 AM to 4 PM at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez.

The house and grounds will be alive with music and exhibits about earth-friendly technologies and programs that sustain the environment. Learn about solar power, green building, wildlife conservation, hybrid vehicles, organic gardening, recycling, and much more. Admission to the park is free; food and beverages will be available. Rain or shine, come and follow in the footsteps of John Muir.

Birds in the Garden

Spring is a propitious time to plan ahead for fall and winter. Your garden likely has additional places where berrying shrubs like the Toyon or Holly-leaved Cherry can provide food, evergreen shrubs such as Ceanothus can provide cover, and a bird bath or flowing pond can provide water for birds.

Plants native to the soils and climate of California provide the best overall food sources for wildlife; and they generally require less fertilizer, less water, and less effort in controlling pests. Native plants may support 10 or more times as many species of native wildlife as non-native plants. Since native plantings can reduce the need for water and chemical additives and can enhance biological diversity, gardeners concerned about conservation should turn toward using natives as much as possible in their plantings.

Concerning pesticides in the garden, it would be good to remember that the insects many birds feed on become poisoned and poisonous to the birds. Do you want to invite birds to a spot that may be hazardous to them? Let them instead help you to be an organic gardener.

Oaks are among the finest of bird trees; they provide nest sites, insects, acorns. Without them, Oak Titmice would surely have a different name! Pines and Redwood attract forest birds such as Oregon Juncos and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. Alders, California Bays, Buckeyes and Maples provide quality habitat and shelter. Fruits of the Madrone attract Song Sparrows, Flickers, Grosbeaks, Cedar Waxwings and Robins.

Native shrubs include several varieties of Manzanita, which offer fruits enjoyed by Mockingbirds, as well as low cover for Quail and Wrentits. Ceanothus, California Lilac, is beautiful in your garden, and Bushtits, Quail, and Finches love the seeds. Huckleberries and Gooseberries give nectar for Hummingbirds.

It is a delight to watch birds as they find native plants laden with ripe fruits of the kinds they love to eat. Plant an Elderberry or an Oregon Grape now as springtime provides a full growing season leading to a fall harvest.

Field Trip Schedule

By Elizabeth Dickey

MDAS Year of the Oak

April

1 Saturday Garin Regional Park
15 Saturday Pine Canyon
26 Wednesday Del Puerto Canyon
29 Saturday Mines Road

May

3 Wednesday Mitchell Canyon
17 Wednesday South side of
Mount Diablo
20 Saturday East Contra Costa County
25 Thursday West Briones

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and masters. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, read the *Quail*, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php, or call the Audubon taped recording at (925) 283-8266. Customary carpool expense is 37½ cents per mile, plus tolls and entry fees, shared among driver and riders. Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths; Category 2: Moderate, one mile or more, possibly rough terrain; Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

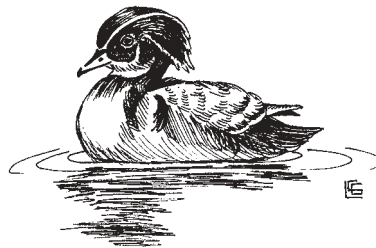
Carpool locations: Sun Valley—Southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord. La Gonda—From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about ¼ mile north to El Pintado. Acalanes—Pleasant Hill Road, just north of SR 24, at the corner of Acalanes Road.

April Field Trips

Saturday, April 1. **Garin Regional Park.** Carpool leaves 7:15 AM from LaGonda. Meet in parking lot at the end of Garin Road at 8:00 AM. Take I-680 south and I-580 west. Exit on East Castro Valley Blvd. and continue west. Turn left onto Crow Canyon Road and go under the freeway. Crow Canyon Road becomes Grove Way and then A Street. At A Street and SR238 (Foothill Blvd.), turn left. Foothill Blvd./SR 238 becomes Mission Blvd. Go south about 3 miles to Garin Road, turn left, and follow to its end. Grasshopper Sparrow is one possibility. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906. Category 3.

Saturday, April 15. **Pine Canyon.** Meet in parking lot at end of Castle Rock Road at 8 AM. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Spring migrants. Call Hugh Harvey, 935-2979, to confirm and for more information. Category 3.

Wednesday, April 26. **Del Puerto Canyon.** Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from LaGonda Way. Meet on Del Puerto Road west of I-5 at 9 AM at Patterson Exit off I-5 (59 miles from La Gonda). Take 580 east to I-5 south. (Recommend stop at Westley Rest Area. There are no facilities on trip until noon.) Yellow-breasted Chat, Costa's Hummingbird, and other goodies. Leader: Jean Richmond, 837-2843. Category 1.



Saturday, April 29. **Mines Road.** Because of limited parking along Mines Road, carpooling is essential. This is an all-day trip and usually hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, Costa's Hummingbird, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Lawrence's Goldfinch all possible. Call the leader for meeting time and location. Leader: Hugh Harvey, 935-2979. Category 1.

Field Trip Reports

March 4, Bodega Bay. Nine members enjoyed an abundance of birds on a cool and windy day at Bodega Bay. We saw 70 species including Black Oystercatcher, many Brant, many Common Loons, and the spectacle of a flock of small shorebirds wheeling in the air at the appearance of a dark Peregrine Falcon. *Fred Safier*



Nancy Wenninger

Oak Woodland Hike, May 13

Morgan Territory Regional Preserve contains six of the seven species of oak found in the Bay Area. Plan to join East Bay Regional Parks' naturalist Mike Moran on Saturday, May 13 for an easy two-hour hike through various habitats. Besides oaks, Mike will identify wildflowers and any "critters" we might find.

We will meet in the staging area on Morgan Territory Road at 10 AM. This is an activity for hikers of all ages. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy a meal *al fresco* in this special place. Call Nancy Wenninger at (925) 938-7987 for more information about this event.

You're the One!

You're the one we need to supplement our dedicated crew of field-trip leaders. You're the one who would find a great deal of fun and satisfaction in telling kids about birds' eggs and birds' nests at our many outreach events. You're the one who can join and bolster the volunteers who get the job done behind the scenes. You're the one who will go to the phone and call Shirley Ellis and tell her you'll help at Dow Wetlands on May 6, at the membership drive at Wild Birds Unlimited on May 13, or on June 10 at Borges Ranch.

Really, really needed are people to lead an occasional field trip. This can be a learn-as-you-go job as far as birding is concerned. Please don't hesitate to volunteer.

Shirley Ellis is our Volunteer Coordinator. Call her at 938-3703. It's certain that by taking a more active role, you'll make new friends, learn something new, join the fun, and make a difference.

CEQA: A Citizens Tool for Conservation

By Nancy Wenninger

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provides a powerful tool to influence land use decisions in our communities. By actively participating in the CEQA process, we can have a meaningful voice in growth management and help to protect the overall quality of our environment.

Adopted in 1970, CEQA provides a legal framework for a full examination of the potential significant effects of proposed projects—public or private—which may cause either a direct physical change or a “reasonably foreseeable” indirect change in the environment. Most proposals for physical development in California are subject to the provisions of CEQA, as are many governmental decisions which do not immediately result in physical developments (such as a city’s adoption of a general plan).

Compliance with CEQA means full disclosure of all potential significant effects, as well as identification of ways that environmental damage can be avoided or minimized. A project may not be approved as submitted if feasible alternatives or mitigation measures are able to substantially reduce the significant environmental effects of the project. Early public input can result in improved projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures.

Concerned citizens have several opportunities during the CEQA process to express their concerns. When the lead agency publishes a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the agency lists the various types of environmental impacts it anticipates will be addressed in the EIR. During the subsequent 30-day review period,

the public can inform the lead agency of impacts it may have overlooked.

During public review of the Draft EIR, interested parties have another opportunity to comment on environmental impacts, discrepancies in the report and the adequacy of proposed mitigation measures or alternatives. Comments may be submitted either in writing or orally at public hearings, which also occur prior to the lead agency’s final certification of the EIR.

To view the chapter’s recent comment letters concerning Contra Costa Water District’s proposed expansion of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir and Antioch’s proposed annexation of Roddy Ranch, go to MDAS’ website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php.



MDAS conservation icon Al McNabney understood and used the power of CEQA effectively. He was a tireless environmental warrior, attending hundreds of meetings and writing hundreds of comment letters. Following Al’s lead, Mount Diablo Audubon has submitted comment letters on a number of important local projects, including the Franklin Canyon development in Hercules, wind turbine repowering in the Altamont, and the proposal to allow high-density housing north of the railroad tracks in downtown Martinez. Together with comments from others, these letters have had positive results by either stopping bad projects or forcing inclusion of alternatives and mitigation measures to reduce adverse impacts.

In the future, our chapter will advocate for open-space protection in the planning process for the reuse of the Concord Naval Weapon Station, and we will continue to monitor and comment upon other projects which affect our community, its values and its resources. We urge MDAS members to add their voices and provide input for the environmental planning process. In CEQA, every comment counts.

Concord Naval Weapons Station reuse map shows Park and Open Space allocation proposed by East Bay Regional Parks District.

February–March Observations

By Steve Glover

Always a great find for the county, a single Brant was at Vincent Park, Richmond on 2/20 (JH). Though this species likely occurs regularly in the county, they are seldom reported, probably because most of them are at a distance on Brooks Island.

A male Wood Duck was a noteworthy find at Lake Anza in Tilden Park on 2/19 (JP). Though they may be regular here when all is quiet, we rarely receive reports. Eight more “Woodies” were at San Pablo Reservoir, a more typical location, on 2/26 (TR).

A male Eurasian was at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline at Point Richmond 2/19 (LL, DQ). This species has been found in the area only sporadically.

Unusual for the location were four female and two male Common Mergansers on Jewel Lake, Tilden Park 2/11-2/19 (LP, AK, DQ).

Most exciting was the discovery of a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Newhall Park in Concord on 3/4 (TR); it was seen again on 3/6 (HH) and 3/7 (PS).

With enough searching it might be predicted that Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers occur annually in the county but as things stand they are found every few years or so.

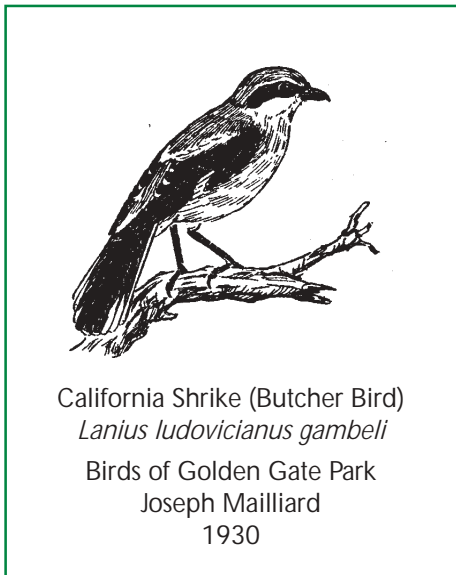
Edging out the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker for the bird of the reporting period was a Clay-colored Sparrow at a feeder in northeast Richmond (PKL), first documented on 2/20 but probably present a week or two earlier. It was last seen 3/4. This is just the second winter

record for Contra Costa County, following one at Alice Holmes’ house in Lafayette a few years ago.

The wave of White-throated Sparrows continued with single birds in Moraga in mid-February (GD), another yard in Moraga 2/18 (EM), and Alamo the week of 3/4 (SH),

Gail DeLalla, John Harris, Hugh Harvey, Steve

Hutchcraft, Alan Kaplan, Paula and Kevin Landdeck, Laura Look, Ellis Myers, John Poole, Lory Poulson, Dave Quady, Ted Robertson, Paul Schorr.



Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

A recent sighting of a Snowy Owl near Davis was the first such observation this far south in more than 30 years. Several MDAS members were lucky enough to view the bird in mid-January. Bob Wisecarver’s daughter Sharon was among those, and a little later she was privileged to find and photograph another “Ookpik” while on a birding trip to Oregon with Sacramento Audubon Society. Our thanks to Sharon for this fine picture.

Snowy Owls are birds of the Arctic tundra, and when they venture south, of open grasslands and agricultural fields. Their habitat includes Arctic regions of both the old and new worlds. In fact, the scientific species name, *scandiacus*, comes from scandinavia, where the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus first classified this bird in 1758.

An important part of the birds’ diet are the small, mouse-like lemmings, who in turn rely on plants that grow on the tundra. Lemming populations swell or shrink depending on whether those plants and berries are plentiful or not. Further, in colder winters, the creatures hide in burrows in the snow. In years when Snowy Owls find food to be scanty, they do not nest, and they move to warmer and more productive climes.

Because each Owl must eat the equivalent of from seven to twelve mice each day, they should be quite welcome when they appear in farmers’ pastures. But at one time, hunters shot them; now only photographers do!

Birding Checklists

You can purchase a list of Birds of Northern California at any of our monthly meetings, or by contacting Barbara Vaughn at 376-8732. They’re just a quarter each. This list, authenticated by Steve Glover, is one of the few such checklists we’ve seen that adhere to the new taxonomy, with Fulvous Whistling Duck promoted to the number 1 position, and demoting the Loons into fourth place, after Geese, Swans and Ducks, Pheasants and Grouse, and Quail. This MDAS list includes all 461 species with ten or more records in Northern California.

But say you’d like to have a checklist of the birds at Pu’uhonua o Honaunau

National Historic Park, Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge, or for Shasta County, there’s a web site where you can download one. It’s maintained by the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, a branch of the U.S. Geological Survey. The address is www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/chekbird/chekbird.htm.

Be sure to “chek” your spelling!

Among the many locations covered are National Wildlife Refuges, military installations, and a few counties. Many of these lists are old, but still may prove useful to you when you are planning a birding trip.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



◆ 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 they also give you an opportunity to learn more about their fascinating courtship and family life.

Chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, wrens, bluebirds, flycatchers, woodpeckers, 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 2 inches) 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.

◆ American Goldfinches are increasing rapidly in number. The males are molting into their breeding plumage of bright yellow and black. They can be seen at your birdbaths or at feeders eating sunflower or thistle seeds.

◆ 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.

◆ Black-headed Grosbeaks will be arriving soon. Their favorite food is sunflower seeds.

Mike & Cecil Williams
Wild Birds Unlimited
692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
925-798-0303

Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

Mendocino Coast *Continued from page 8*

welling currents bring rich nutrients toward the surface, and forage fish are plentiful. Consequently, this is also a spot to scope for alcids and tubenoses.

Driving south from Fort Bragg along fabulous Highway One, you may spot Peregrine Falcons, who seem to like to birdwatch from atop the sea stacks just offshore. Check especially the one opposite the Post Office at Little River. At Little River is Van Damme State Park where there is a small population of Gray Jays that frequent the State Park campground. Hermit Warblers are reported here in the summer.

Before you reach the town of Point Arena, be alert for the Tundra Swans who winter along the flats of the Garcia River. The Swans may be seen from Miner Hole Road, a narrow lane which begins just south of the Garcia River bridge. Along the road, watch also for such other birds as Wrentit, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Hutton’s Vireo. There is a newly opened Stornetta Public Lands, a BLM property that links Manchester State Beach and Point Arena. Several public access points are along Lighthouse Road, just south of Miner Hole Road.

In the town of Point Arena, turn toward the ocean and stop at the Point Arena Cove, the only place in the continental United States where you can see a Laysan Albatross with any assurance. For the past ten years, Al the Albatross has arrived around December 1 and stayed until mid-March. While others of his (her?) species are breeding in the Hawaiian Islands, Al comes to California. No one knows why, but the Chamber of Commerce is pleased, for birders from across the country come to see him. If Al is not close to the marina, check the cove for Red-necked Grebes and other species.



The broad, sandy beach at MacKerricher State Park contrasts markedly with the more common rocky headlands. From this point, a trail takes you to one of those headlands and a viewing platform at Laguna Point.

At various places along the Mendocino Coast, from late March through June, you can use your scope or binoculars to watch the nest-building and chick-rearing of iridescent Pelagic Cormorants.

The mouth of the Gualala River is a good location for birds. On the south side of the river is Gualala Point County Park, where you can hike down to see seals and sea lions hauled out on the sand bar. Gulls of several species congregate here, and Red-breasted Mergansers forage on the river, too.

Other promising locales include the Jug Handle State Reserve and Pygmy Forest, Mendocino Headlands, Navarro Beach, and Russian Gulch State Park, where an enchanting walk up Fern Canyon trail reveals a waterfall a bit over two miles upstream. Here, in spring and summer, are Wilson’s Warblers, and in summer you may hear the song of Swainson’s Thrush.

Mendocino Coast is a prime example of California’s scenic treasures, and also a prime example of the diversity of California’s birdlife. Dorothy (Toby) Tobkin, whom we thank for helping with this story, says to come anytime, but September and October are glorious.

Ornithology Opportunities

April 21-23: Heron Festival and Wildflower Brunch. Clear Lake State Park Interpretive Association and Redbud Audubon Society are sponsoring pontoon boat tours to observe heron, grebe, and cormorant nests/rookeries on Clear Lake. Keynote speaker is heron researcher Dr. John Kelly of Audubon

Canyon Ranch. Kayak trips will leave morning and afternoon to bird the quiet waters of Kelsey Creek. Children’s activities, hikes, bird walks, exhibit booths. Except for boat rides and brunch, all festival events are free, including park admission. Call 800-525-3743 or see www.redbudaudubon.org.

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

____ Please enroll my family and me as a member of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year.

____ Please enroll me as a lifetime member for \$500. Payment can be made in two annual payments of \$250 each.

____ Please enroll the individual/family listed below as a gift membership for \$25 for one year.

____ For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only) or \$35 (returning members), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society to receive four quarterly issues of the *Audubon Magazine*.

____ I'm enclosing an additional donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Card Number: _____

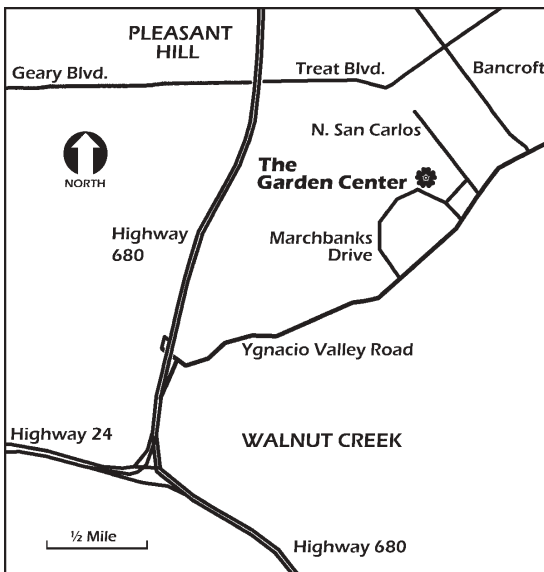
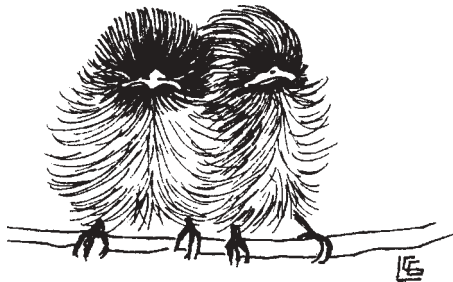
____ Visa ____ MasterCard _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to:

MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:

Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Court, Danville, CA 94526



Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August. Everyone is invited.

Driving directions:

From Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road to the signal at Marchbanks Drive. Go left and follow Marchbanks to the Garden Center, opposite the Greenery Restaurant. Turn left into the parking lot.

From Highway 680 south, take Treat Blvd. to Bancroft. Go right to Ygnacio Valley Road, turn right and go one block past signal at N. San Carlos Dr. (Heather Farm entrance). At Marchbanks Drive turn right. The Garden Center is located on the right in the second block.

the Quail

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(925) AUD-UBON • (925) 283-8266

Mount Diablo Audubon Society general meetings are on the first Thursday of every month except July and August in the Camellia Room of the Garden Center at Heather Farms, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Board of Directors meets at 7 PM on the second Thursday of every month in the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Boulevard, Pleasant Hill. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

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 send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor, 215 Calle La Mesa, Moraga, CA 94556.

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View from Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens

Quickies

Weekend Birding in California

Mendocino Coast

One of the most picturesque areas of our State, the coastline north of the Gualala River is a popular getaway destination for a number of reasons. Photographers flock to its rocky shores and its New England-like setting. Artists love both the plein-air studio its scenes afford as well as the galleries of Mendocino, Fort Bragg and Gualala. Sportsmen go for abalone diving, and for deep-sea salmon fishing trips out of Noyo Harbor. Nautical historians visit the light stations at Point Cabrillo and Point Arena. Valentine's Day fills the Bed-and-Breakfasts with romantic couples. Birders have an abundance of opportunities to satisfy their avocation.

A great way to start is to join one of the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society's monthly bird walks at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, two miles south of Fort Bragg. On the first Satur-

day and the third Wednesday of every month, light rain or shine, you can enjoy this 47-acre preserve to observe the Pygmy Nuthatches, Acorn Woodpeckers and other birds that are here. You will also enjoy the giant rhododendrons, lush ferns, heathers and other native coastal plants, as well as the ocean views. Perhaps you might see a Gray Whale, as these leviathans cruise back to the Bering Sea during March or April, or as they head south during the first few weeks of the year to the warm lagoons of Baja California.

The Mendocino Coast Audubon Society also sponsors pelagic birding trips each May and September. Last year's May trip included sightings of 19 species, including Black-footed Albatross and Pink-footed Shearwaters. Dall's Porpoise and Northern Fur Seals were also seen.

Drive to the end of Elm Street in Fort Bragg, then walk about a quarter-mile to Glass Beach, one of the world's unique beaches. Pounded by the sea, residue from an old dump site has fashioned a glittering shore. Nearby are tide

pools where you may explore for starfish and purple sea urchins. Walk a short distance south on the trail along the bluff and scan the cove and the rocks off-shore for wintering Harlequin Ducks.

Frequently given as one of the best birding spots on the Mendocino Coast is Lake Cleone at MacKerricher State Park, a few miles north of Fort Bragg. This body of water, a habitat for migrating waterfowl, became a fresh-water lake when a lumbering haul road cut off a tidal lagoon from its ocean access. Osprey and Great Blue Herons are common, and Lake Cleone is often the focus of rare-bird reports, including Stilt Sandpiper, Long-tailed Duck and Emperor Goose. A trail circling the lake is often productive for passerines. Also, check out the Ward Avenue approach to MacKerricher State Park for Black Scoters. Another birding venue at MacKerricher State Park is Laguna Point, for Black Oystercatchers and wintering Rock Sandpipers. The continental shelf is just a few miles offshore, where up-

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