



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

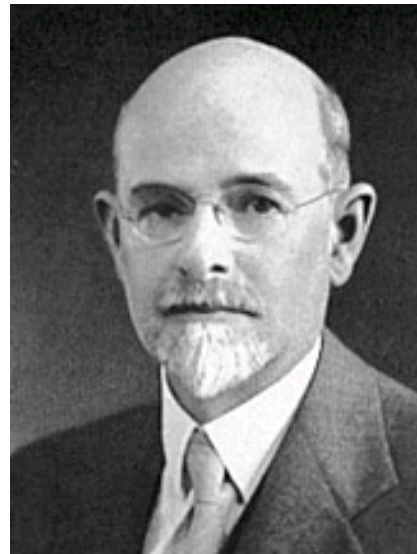
Volume 52, Number 7

April 2007

Changes in Breeding Birds in San Francisco Bay Since Grinnell and Wythe, 1927 • Bill Bousman

Bill Bousman is a retired aeronautical engineer and a long-time member of the Santa Clara County Audubon Society. His popular column in *The Avocet* titled "Field Notes" is a compilation of rare bird sightings in Santa Clara County. He has compiled the Santa Clara County bird records since 1979 and is highly respected for the meticulous quality of his record keeping and for the accuracy of his reports. He is currently the sub-regional editor for Santa Clara County for American Birds. Bill started the Santa Clara County Breeding Bird Atlas in 1987 and he has written an extensive history of local ornithology in the 19th and 20th centuries that will be included as an appendix when the atlas is published.

The earliest local ornithologists were the Indians that lived in the Santa Clara Valley and later, the Spanish settlers. Local Indians hunted bird species, and birds, such as the Acorn Woodpecker, were important in ceremonies. Few of the Spanish settlers kept diaries so there is no record of their observations. The Mission Fathers kept practical diaries but few of their journals mention birds. In the late 1700s and 1800s ship's captains and early naturalists provided some natural history accounts but few of these early observers came inland as far as the southern San Francisco Bay. These visits of exploration were followed by overland expeditions in the early 1800s of collectors such as Thomas Nuttall and William Gambel. Then, with the settlement of California, came other naturalists, such as James Cooper and Thomas Bridges. Interest in California's bird populations began to increase in the 1870s and Joseph Grinnell's bibliogra-



JOSEPH GRINNELL was the first Director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, serving from 1908 until his death in 1939. He was one of the great naturalists of his time. Margaret Wythe became his assistant in 1912, and she was promoted to Curator of Birds in 1925.

phies, completed in the early 20th century, contributed the most comprehensive collection of California ornithological references.

In 1927, Joseph Grinnell and Margaret Wythe published a "Directory of the birds in the nine counties that border the San Francisco Bay." They were deeply pessimistic as to the effects of urbanization on our local birds, but their predicted declines did not come to pass. What did happen is the subject of Bill Bousman's presentation. Join us to learn about birds that have been lost, such as the Willow Flycatcher, and about the many birds that we have gained.

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, April 5**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. (Map on page 7).

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Social time, refreshments,* door prize

8:05 PM Speaker: Bill Bousman

* Please remember to bring a cup.

May 3: To be announced

Birding Information

Island of Dreams: Build It and They Will Come. We know him as Doc Quack, wildlife biologist with the East Bay Regional Park District. Dave Riensche will discuss the Least Tern Habitat Restoration Project at the Hayward Shoreline. The historic breeding range of the California Least Tern extended along the southern California coast between Santa Barbara and San Diego with some nesting sites as far north as San Francisco Bay and as far south as southern Baja, California. Today, the breeding range of these terns is limited to San Francisco Bay and a few areas along the coast from San Luis Obispo County to San Diego County.

President's Corner

Our monthly meeting on March 1 had two excellent presentations. I hope many of you were there. The main speaker was Peter Pyle who is a wildlife biologist specializing in long range migration. He spoke about Albatross and Great White Sharks. The use of monitoring radio telemetry has allowed scientists to discover amazing patterns of migration spanning thousands of miles. It was really amazing. Our birding information time speaker was John Kopchik who heads up the East Contra Costa Habitat Conservation Plan project. He shared where that project is to date after about six years of hard work. It will help preserve thousands of acres in the East County that is seeing open lands disappearing at alarming rates. Having completed our fifth Christmas Bird Count this year in East County I am more and more impressed with the bird species found out there. Steve Glover, an MDAS member, who headed up the breeding bird survey for our county is without a doubt the most knowledgeable person on East County birds, but others are discovering the richness there. (If you Google "Contra Costa Bird Records" you can get to Steve's list of birds seen in Contra Costa County.) In January, Kathy Robertson from Ohlone Audubon discovered between 4 to 6 Short-eared Owls near the Byron airport and reported them on the East Bay Birders e-mail service our chapter sponsors. The Owls have remained now for weeks with scores and scores of people getting out to see them. While looking for the Owls another birder discovered a female *Lark Bunting!* in the same general area.



© Steve Messick

This is only the second record of this species in Contra Costa County and it has remained present for weeks with many more birders seeing the bunting. It has highlighted our county to the birding community that was unaware of it before. We live in a wonderful place. I hope all of you get out and enjoy Contra Costa County.

Welcome New Members

Bob Chaistensen	Oakley
Roy Detwiler	Concord
Anne Ingalls	Pleasant Hill
Cheryl Larricq	Pleasant Hill

Q In breeding season these beautiful waterfowl eat aquatic invertebrates such as small snails and various insects, rich in protein. In winter they change their diet and eat mostly plant seeds, rich in carbohydrates for quick energy. In breeding plumage, males have a distinctive facial pattern.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to page 6 for this bird's identity.

ABDEEEGILLNTUW

Longtime Bluebird Caretaker Turns Over Reins

By Nancy Kaye

Reprinted with permission of Rossmoor News

Each Saturday in early 1971, Don Yoder and his wife trekked from San Francisco to Rossmoor to check on the construction of their new home. As he watched the bulldozer clear the trees from the property, Yoder noticed some bluebirds in a state of frenzy. Their nests had been wiped out.

"Here we were, going to enjoy our new home while their homes had been taken away," recalled Yoder.

The couple moved in the following November but Yoder was unable to erase from his mind the inequity of the bluebird situation. He decided to make a difference. Reaching back to his Illinois farm upbringing, he recalled that bluebirds need cavities to survive, so he built some boxes and placed them in nearby trees.

"I didn't have time to monitor them nor did I know how," Yoder said, "but by the fall of '72, five out of the six boxes had nests."

Now, 35 years later, after running a giant one-man bluebird recovery program at Rossmoor and becoming nationally renowned as a bluebird expert, Yoder, because of family reasons, is retiring from his bluebird work.

That doesn't mean, however, that the birds' survival will be jeopardized. Yoder has arranged for the Santa Clara County Bluebird Recovery program to take on the general management of the program with the day-to-day work to be done by the Rossmoor Nature Association.

That's no easy job. In 1984 when Yoder retired from work, he built about a dozen boxes and placed them on the Rossmoor golf course. When asked if he

got permission, he simply smiled and said, "I've been asked that question before."

At present, 19 boxes hang on trees on the north (Creekside) course and 39 on the south (Dollar Ranch). Last year, Yoder counted 79 bluebird fledglings as well as 43 other types of birds.

All these years, Yoder has run a one-person operation. During early spring into late fall, he has serviced the boxes every Monday, the day the golf courses are closed. Servicing includes cleaning, repairing, and when necessary, replacing the boxes. Yoder also has carefully monitored the boxes and kept meticulous records as to how many occupants the boxes have had and the resulting fledgling count.

With his dedication to the bluebirds, how does Yoder feel about turning over the job to others? His feelings are mixed. "I'm going to miss the chance to be in contact with many people by phone and correspondence," he said.

As director of the California Bluebird Recovery Program and his association with the North American Bluebird Society, he gets calls from people all over the country who have found his name on the Web. "Not long ago," he said, laughing, "I got a call at 6:45 a.m. from a woman in Florida. She must have been nervous and didn't think about the time difference. She wanted to know if she should take two eggs out of a nest."

On the other hand, Yoder feels that his retirement is only fair to others. "All these years it's been a one-man program. I think the program will improve by having more people involved."

Mount Diablo Gateway Preserved

By Nancy Wenninger

The “Gateway Property” sits on a prominent knoll adjacent to the North Gate Road kiosk entrance to Mount Diablo State Park. Every year hundreds of thousands of park visitors pass this site, which is also visible from many locations in central Contra Costa County. Once under threat of development, the Gateway Property’s open space and habitat values have now been permanently preserved, thanks to a unique public/private partnership.

Owned by the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the property was acquired in 1982 as a spoils site for the nearby Pine Creek Detention Basin project. After completion of the project, CCCFCD declared the property surplus and began to seek ways to increase its value for resale to recover some of the project’s costs. A 1991 city/county specific plan designated the site for residential zoning, and in 1996 CCCFCD applied for a 34-lot subdivision on the property. Members of the community opposed to the development formed the Gateway Alliance who, along with Save Mount Diablo, began to negotiate with CCCFCD to preserve the land as open space.

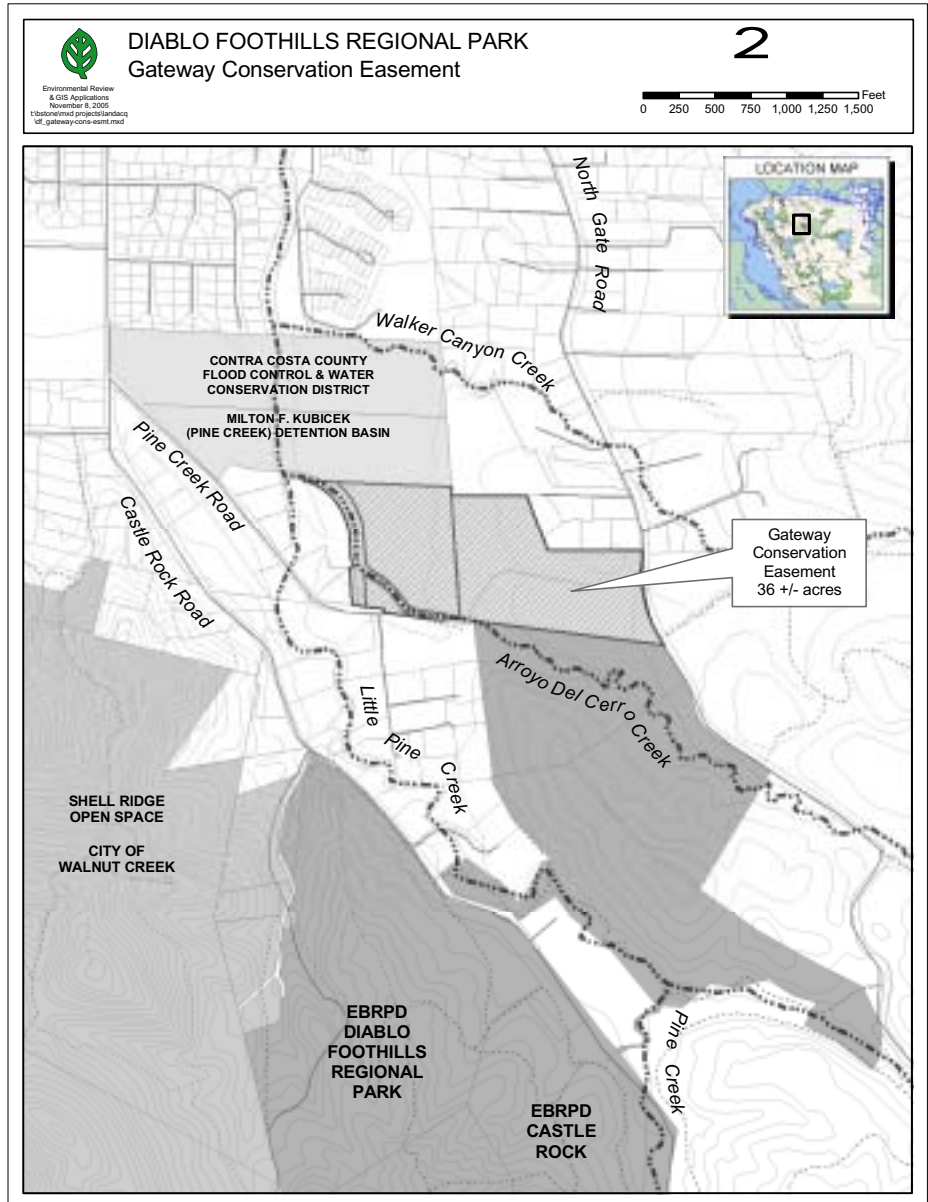
Together they negotiated a purchase price of \$1,559,000 for a conservation easement and obtained a grant for \$246,250 from the State of California through a legislative appropriation. The East Bay Regional Park District agreed to be the easement holder, as well as the recipient of the grant in order to meet state requirements. For more than two years, EBRPD staff worked to broker an agreement acceptable

to all parties. Additional funding for the purchase of the easement came from the City of Walnut Creek (\$250,000), Davidon Homes (\$612,750), Mount Diablo Gateway Alliance/Save Mount Diablo (\$200,000) and EBRPD (\$250,000).

According to the terms of the conservation easement, CCCFCD must retain the property in a scenic open space condition and protect its natural resource values; it may not be subdivided or developed. CCCFCD may, however, deposit a maximum of 80,000 cubic yards of clean fill material from local public projects within a defined area on the property and in a manner which creates natural-appearing contours. EBRPD, as the easement holder, has the right to enforce the terms of the easement. Pending the development of a “Public Access and Recreation Plan,” EBRPD or other specified entity (such as the City of Walnut Creek) by separate agreement may construct, operate and/or maintain an equestrian facility and/or staging area and recreational trails for hiking, bicycling, and equestrian uses on the property.

Permanent protection of the Gateway Property is important for a number of reasons. Located on the flanks of Mount Diablo, the property is visible throughout central Contra Costa County and from as far away as Solano County. The property lies in close proximity to Walnut Creek’s Lime and Shell Ridge open spaces and to trails that connect these parks with Diablo Foothills and Mount Diablo State Park. The property is also part of a significant riparian wildlife corridor; Arroyo del Cerro Creek crosses the property and joins Pine Creek and Walker Creek downstream in the adjacent detention basin and wetlands, providing habitat for the federally-listed California red-legged frog.

See next month’s *Quail* for the story of EBRPD’s Arroyo del Cerro Resource Enhancement Project and how you can help.



Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

April

7 Saturday	Garin Regional Park
14 Saturday	Pine Canyon
26 Thursday	Del Puerto Canyon
28 Saturday	Mines Road

May

2 Wednesday	Mount Diablo State Park
10* Thursday	Mitchell Canyon
19 Saturday	East Contra Costa County
24 Thursday	West Briones Regional Park

June

6 Wednesday	Sycamore Grove/Shadow Cliffs
16-17 Saturday/Sunday	Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

* Note change of date from May 9.

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and advanced birders. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaoudubon.com/index/php.

Because most trips do not return until late afternoon, bring a lunch and join us during our midday break.

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 Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord.

Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride Lot—Just south of Danville, exit I-680 at Sycamore Valley Road to the east; the Park and Ride lot is on the left.

El Nido Ranch Road—Take the Acalanes Road/Upper Happy Valley Road exit of SR 24, west of Lafayette. El Nido Ranch Road is parallel to and north of the freeway. Park just east of the intersection with Acalanes Road and on the north side of El Nido Ranch Road.

Customary carpool expense is \$3-5 for short trips, \$5-10 for longer trips, plus tolls and entry fees shared among driver and riders.

③ Saturday, April 7 Garin Regional Park

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906.

Carpool leaves 7:15 AM from Sycamore Valley Road. 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 SR 238 (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. Spring migrants will be our goal.

③ Saturday, April 14 Pine Canyon

Leader: Nancy Wenninger, 938-7987.

Meet in parking lot at end of Castle Rock Road at 8 AM. Turn south on Oak Grove Road from the intersection with Ygnacio Valley Road in Walnut Creek. After the traffic circle, continue on Castle Rock Road past the high school until it ends, which is the parking lot for Castle Rock Recreation Area and Diablo Foothills Regional Park. We will hike into Pine Canyon at least as far as the Castle Rocks. The trail crosses Pine Creek several times. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Spring migrants and Peregrine Falcons.

① Thursday, April 26 Del Puerto Canyon

Leader: Jean Richmond, 837-2843.

Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from Sycamore Valley Road. Meet on Del Puerto Canyon Road west of I-5 at 9 AM at Patterson Exit off I-5 (56 miles from Sycamore Valley Road). Take I-580 east to I-5 south. We will stop at the Westley Rest Area, as there are no facilities until our lunch stop. Canyon Wren, Costa's Hummingbird, Greater Roadrunner and other goodies.

Great-tailed Grackles in the fast food parking lots at Hwy. 12 and Grizzly Island Road. We also saw a few Tule Elk. We were able to have lunch in the rain under a covered picnic area at Rush Ranch before coming home.

Maury Stern

Walnut Creek Parks, February 21. Five birders visited four Walnut Creek city parks, including Heather Farm, Howe-Homestead, Sugarloaf Open Space and part of the Sugarloaf-Shell Ridge Trail. While it didn't seem to be a particularly birdy day, the total of 47 species seen or heard is fairly good for a suburban area. The male Redhead was seen and has been present in Heather Farm for over five weeks. Also present there were two Ring-necked Ducks and eight Buffle-

① Saturday, April 28 Mines Road

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 935-2979.

Because of limited parking along Mines Road, carpooling is essential. This is an all-day trip and often hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Wild Turkey, Lewis' Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch and many spring migrants are possible, plus great spring wild flowers. Entry fee required for Del Valle Regional Park. Call the leader for meeting time and location.

Trip Reports

Grizzly Island, February 8. Seven members and guests managed a morning of birding before the rains started. There was even some sun, but it was mostly overcast, but not windy. We saw 61 species. Highlights included: Tundra Swan, Common Merganser, American White Pelican, American Bittern, many Northern Harriers (most common raptor), Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Virginia Rail, Sora, Wilson's Snipe, Great Horned Owl on a nest, several Short-eared Owls soaring near us, hundreds of Tree Swallows, and at the very end of the trip many

Continued on page 5

February Observations _____ By Steve Glover

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to Steve Glover at countylinen@sbcglobal.net or (925) 997-1112.

The single male Redhead continued at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek through at least 2/21 (HH).

Sixteen American White Pelicans were at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 2/18 (JR).

A lone Cattle Egret was noted along Holey Road near Byron on 1/28 (DD).

A congregation of 100+ Sandhill Cranes was at Holland Tract east of Knightsen on 2/18 (JR).

A flock of 30+ Mew Gulls at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek on 2/8 was a nice inland tally for central county (HH).

A pair of Eurasian Collared-Doves at the Lafayette Bart Station on 1/18 may have provided just the second county record for this species, which is rapidly colonizing North America (DL). A flock of 30+ Band-tailed Pigeons in suburban Alamo on 2/24 included several begging juveniles (SH).

One of the Burrowing Owls wintering at Meeker Slough near Pt. Isabel, Richmond was noted on 2/4 (KJ). The wintering flock of Short-eared Owls at Byron Hot Springs continued through at least 2/20, when as many as five birds were present (SH).

A Winter Wren at Lafayette Reservoir on 1/22 was a surprise find for that location (M&SS). Though fairly common in the canyon bottoms further west, this species is rarely found so far east in the county.

The most exciting of the recent finds came in the form of a Lark Bunting, first found on 2/11 near Byron Hot Springs (MM). This second county record was enjoyed by dozens of birders through at least 2/26 (SK).

A White-throated Sparrow continuing at a Martinez feeder through at least 2/17 was the only one reported (CA).

Cheryl Abel, David Diller, Hugh Harvey, Steve Hutchcraft, Kathy Jarrett, Sandy Koonce, Darrell Lee, Mark Miller, Jennifer Rycenga, Maury and Susan Stern.

Trip Reports _____ Continued from page 4

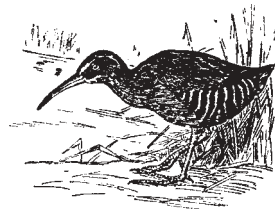
heads, at least six Black-Crowned Night-Herons and a Great Blue Heron. Four Northern Flickers were seen in Howe-Homestead, a Varied Thrush and a Purple Finch were along the Sugarloaf-Shell Ridge Trail near Stewart Avenue, and Western Bluebirds and many Dark-eyed Juncos were at Sugar Loaf Open Space.

Hugh Harvey

Concord Parks, February 28. Four members enjoyed a cool, sunny day with wonderful views of a snow-covered Mount Diablo. We had excellent views of a Green Heron in the creek at Newhall Community Park. Among the occasional California Gulls and the two dozen Ring-billed Gulls, we found a single, feisty Mew Gull defending his right to a space on the green and calling loudly. At all three parks, the Bushtits were in pairs and we were treated to watching one pair collecting spider webs for their nest! The new birds for the season were the four Northern Rough-winged Swallows found at Ellis Lake. 43 species seen.

Lynn Lakso

Capay Valley, March 3. The Capay Valley and Cache Creek vicinity were beau-



Virginia Rail
Rallus virginianus
Birds of Golden Gate Park
Joseph Mailliard
1930

tiful, as the ten chapter members who visited them the first Saturday in March will attest. It must have been so beautiful a weekend day, that most of the birds decided to go somewhere, also. The occasional Oak Titmouse or American Robin were seen, and a beautiful Red-shouldered Hawk circled overhead at the top of the canyon. After birding those areas, we visited the Dunnigan Hills before returning home. There we found a Rock Wren, a flock of Tricolored Blackbirds and a beautiful Merlin alongside I-505. Despite the day seeming to be mostly birdless, after completing our checklist we had counted 53 species seen or heard.

Hugh Harvey

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



In the Backyard:

This was the most interesting and fun winter for backyard birdfeeding that we have had in many years. We experienced sizeable populations of our normal wintering birds and some very unusual happenings, too.

Large numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows have been present all



Golden-crowned Sparrow

winter. The numbers of Lesser and American Goldfinches are larger than in the previous few years. American Robins and Cedar Waxwings reports were noteworthy.

We had many reports of Varied Thrushes from all over Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa Times even had a major article on the irruption of Varied Thrushes. We also had numerous reports of Townsend's Warblers eating suet and sunflower chips from backyard feeders, which is the first time this has been reported.

Spring nesting and courtship comes early in California. Titmice are singing everywhere. Have you heard them? 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, 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 more than 2 inches long) for birds to use when building their abodes.

Stop by and pick up your
FREE copy
of our Housing Guide.

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Wild Birds Unlimited
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Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

Native Plants for Native Birds

By Pat Bacchetti

A Salve for Our Gardens

Salvia clevelandii and *Salvia spathacea*

What more could a habitat gardener ask for—plants that thrive in dry places with little care, produce lovely fragrant leaves and flowers, attract hummingbirds and bees from far and wide, and are easy to obtain? Our native California sages fit all of those criteria, so why not have them in your garden?

The two most commonly grown are *S. clevelandii*, or Cleveland sage, and *S. spathacea*, or Hummingbird sage. I grow both easily in my northern-facing hill garden, even though my exposure is not ideal for them. That gives you an idea of how forgiving they can be.

Our most fragrant sage also has one of the best floral displays throughout the year. Cleveland sage is a native of the coastal mountains of southern California into the northwestern Baja peninsula. It needs fast-draining soil, good exposure to sun, and little water after it is established. What I love most about this plant is the sweetly fragrant leaves. Brush against them in the garden and they will scent your clothes (before they have to go into the wash!).

The violet-blue flowers grow in a whorl around erect stems, and will bloom repeatedly if the plant is dead headed regularly. Hummers love this 3–5 foot rounded shrub, as do native bees. It can take pruning in late summer or fall to keep it in shape. If the dried flowers are left uncut in the fall, goldfinches will eat the numerous seeds produced. It looks lovely in groups of three plants, or surrounded by buckwheats, manzanitas, or grasses.

The most common cultivars are 'Winifred Gilman' and 'Betsy Clebsch'. The first is easiest grown, and the flowers are deeply violet-colored. 'Betsy Clebsch' has blue, white, and bicolored flowers, all on the same whorl, but is much more temperamental in the garden. It does better in containers where it can be more closely watched.



Cleveland sage, *Salvia clevelandii*

© 2005 Charles E. Jones

Hummingbird sage is a local native. Its habitat is open grassy slopes in the Coast Ranges from Solano County to Southern California. The leaves and stems are softer than the woodier sages, and it spreads readily by rhizomes. You can use it as a 2–3 foot groundcover, and divide it and make more colonies in the fall. The leaves are large and chartreuse-colored, covered in fine hairs. This is the only truly red native sage, and the flower whorls grow atop spikes that are 3 feet tall. To keep the plant from getting rangy, cut the flowering stalk off at ground level. Again, the hummingbirds truly love this plant, and finches dine on the seeds in the fall. Combining this plant with grasses, coffeeberry, and native iris makes a beautiful combination. I have given divisions from my garden

the garden, as well.

• Pink-flowering currant should be at the end of its bloom, which started in February. This is one of the earliest hummingbird plants for Anna's early nesting.

• Allen's hummingbirds should be back, as well as many of our returning summer migrants—Wilson's Warblers, Orange-Crowned Warblers, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, and Warbling Vireos.

• Wildflowers should be at their best, and the grasses are sending up their new growth for summer.

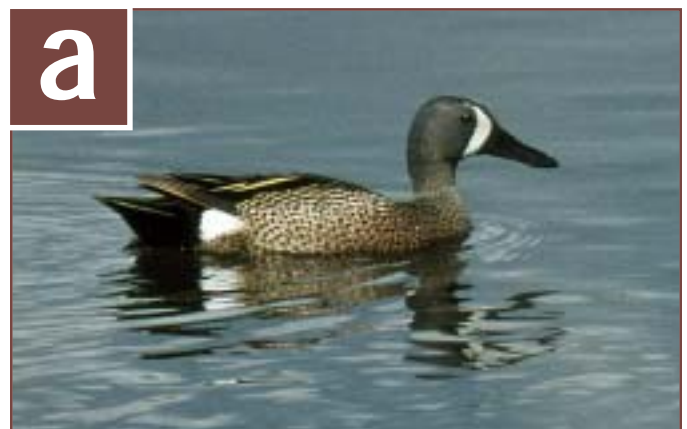
• Visit your local native botanic garden for the best displays of the year.

The Editor would like to express his appreciation to Charles E. Jones of San Diego for permission to use the photo of Cleveland Sage.

Blue-winged Teal

Anas discors

Although Blue-winged Teal are almost as abundant as Mallards in North America, these beautiful waterfowl are a welcome find in Northern California. They breed in prairies and parkland of much of Canada and the United States, but they're inclined to head directly south to winter in Mexico and Central America, only a few deigning to visit the Golden State along their journey.



These are small ducks, about half the size of Mallards. The large powder-blue patches on the front of the wing, which give this species its name, are visible in flight. Their flight is quick and agile. Audubon wrote, "When flying in flocks in clear sunny weather, the blue of their wings glistens like polished steel, so as to give them the most lively appearance." These are, indeed, handsome birds.

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Mount Diablo Audubon Society

• a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation and environmental education •

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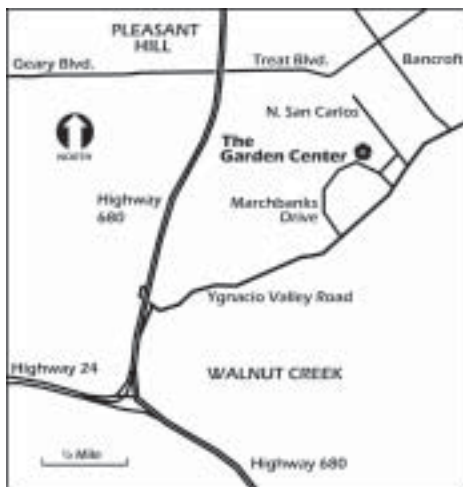
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The Garden Center

Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farms, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Everyone is invited.



Ornithological Opportunities

The Aleutian Goose Festival, March 30–April 2, Crescent City. Choose from 80 guided birding, nature and heritage excursions featuring coastal lagoon, river and ocean trips; more than 170 bird species during the weekend, and a coastal fly-off spectacle of 30,000 once-endangered Aleutian Canada Geese. www.aleutiangoosefestival.org/.

Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival, April 20–22, Arcata. 450 bird species visit annually among ancient redwood forests, marshes and the Pacific Ocean. One can watch Marbled Murrelets, have face-to-face encounters with Spotted Owls, and take small boat tours of Humboldt Bay to view migrant shorebirds at their peak. Over 100 birding field trips and workshops are offered, plus social events.

Heron Festival and Wildflower Brunch, April 27–29, Kelseyville. This annual wildlife festival on Clear Lake features pontoon boat tours to view bird life close-up, birding and nature walks, an omelet brunch, children's activities, nature booth exhibits, environmental speakers, and more. It is presented by the Redbud Audubon Society and the Clear Lake State Park Interpretive Association. www.heronfestival.org.

Kern Valley Bioregions Festival, April 27–30, Weldon. Audubon-California's Kern River Preserve will host numerous free events including bird walks led by Kerncrest Audubon Society volunteers, bird banding with the Southern Sierra Research Station, and information booths and exhibits located in the large, shaded front yard of Preserve headquarters. All day, with a fee, birding and other natural history field trips with expert leaders will be offered. www.kern.audubon.org/bioregion.htm.

The Oakland Museum of California exhibit **Bringing the Condors Home**, a compelling look at *Gymnogyps californianus*, has been extended through August 26, 2007. The traveling exhibition was organized by the Ventana Wildlife Society, whose 20-year effort to restore the endangered species, with the help of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has the California condor flying wild again.

Cheers for Our Volunteers

By Hugh Harvey

For many years our chapter has had a strong program of field trips. It is not just the number of trips we have, nor is it just where we go on these trips, but we have been blessed with a number of very good and faithful trip leaders. We have members who are no longer able to lead trips, but did so for many years. We have some who continue to lead trips, and we have some members who have not led trips in the past, but are doing so this year for the first time. Our leaders come from a variety of backgrounds, but they all share the passion of birding and a love of the outdoors.

Fred Safier, Jean Richmond, Jimm Edgar, Maury Stern and Hugh Harvey have led trips for many years. Don Lewis, Eugenia Larson, Nancy Wenninger, Lynn Lakso and Terry Colborn have led occasional trips in the past and continue to do so. Leading chapter trips for the first time this year are Cheryl Abel, Ethan (Chick) Chickering, Judi Cooper, Bingham Gibbs and Paul Schorr.

Though they might be out looking for birds anyway, these members volunteer their time to lead the chapter field trips to the many special places we visit throughout the year. In most cases, because of their familiarity with a particular area, our leaders are able to give us something just a little bit extra. Thanks to these leaders, we maintain our reputation of having such a strong field trip program.

Birds of Napa County

Join Hermann Heinzl, author and illustrator of the new book *Birds of Napa County*, for a lecture at Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary. Herman Heinzl, who is visiting from the south of France, has been involved with birds and bird illustration for many years. He illustrated the highly successful *Birds of Britain and Europe*. In his new book, *Birds of Napa County*, Heinzl takes a birds-eye view of wine country and his playfulness, sophistication, and emotion add depth to our understanding of Napa. Free. Thursday, April 26, 7 pm, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon. www.tiburonaudubon.org.

Mount Diablo Audubon Society
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*White-faced Ibis, Northern Shovelers and Avocets
at San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.*

Quickies

Weekend Birding in California

San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

If you should find yourself at the John Wayne Airport in Orange County or at the University of California's Irvine Campus, and you should want to drive across Los Angeles, don't bother—it'll seemingly take days! Instead, head to the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, just five minutes away, and spend some quality time checking out the ponds and trails for as many as 117 species of birds, or more. That's the number recorded during the first three months of this year by the Sea and Sage Audubon Society, whose headquarters are here at this unique preserve. On a quick visit in January, we saw 28 species in less than an hour, including White-faced Ibis and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

The historical San Joaquin Marsh was where San Diego Creek emptied into Upper Newport Bay. As the years



Sea and Sage Audubon Society's Audubon House at San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.

passed from the 19th to the 20th century, the saltwater and freshwater marshes of this spot became duck clubs, then golf courses. Fortunately, at least some habitat has been returned to the ducks, as the Irvine Ranch Water District has set aside more than 300 acres for waterfowl and other wildlife. Adjacent, but open to the public only by permit, is the University's San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Reserve, used for research and instructional purposes.

Check in at Audubon House, where docents can answer your questions and provide maps of the trail system. Scan

the posted list of recently seen birds, pick up a checklist. They're open from 8 AM until 4 PM every day. You can walk up to the elevated trails around the ponds which provide excellent water views and wide vistas of the entire area. More than ten miles of trails wend through willow stands, past newly planted pond banks, along sycamore and alder planted shorelines, and coastal sage scrub, which provide habitat and fodder for birds. The farther into the sanctuary's interior one walks, the more mature the vegetation gets, increasing the odds of finding birds such as Yellow-breasted Chat, orioles, and migratory warblers in season.

San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary offers a birdwatching venue that will satisfy birders of all skill levels or degrees of physical mobility. Gulls and shorebirds, passerines, waterfowl, waders, migrants, raptors, and southern California specialties are along the planted banks, in trees, sheltered in the thickets, flying overhead, feeding on mud flats, floating in ponds, or taking refuge on islands.