



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

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April 2013

Endangered Species of Antioch Dunes ♦ Brent Plater

What Nitrogen Deposition Can Teach Us About Birds, Butterflies, Native Plants, and the Future of Conservation



Liam O'Brien



Wild Equity Institute



Lange's Metalmark Butterfly ♦ Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose ♦ Contra Costa Wallflower

During an inter-glacial period approximately 140,000 years ago, a network of sand dunes and desert environments stretched from the location of the modern-day Mojave Desert across the Central Valley to the San Joaquin River. As California's climate changed the dunes retreated, but a stretch of desert-like habitat was left behind along the San Joaquin near Antioch, California.

The isolation of this area in Antioch allowed the species found there to evolve

into unique life forms found nowhere else on Earth. Today the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge protects the remnants of these habitats, upon which three federally protected species depend: the Contra Costa Wallflower, the Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose, and the Lange's Metalmark Butterfly.

The Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge remains the only wildlife refuge specifically created for invertebrate conservation. But today it is threatened by an unforeseen problem: nitrogen deposition, driven by an explosion of fossil-fuel fired power plants that ring the dunes. If the rate of nitrogen deposition isn't arrested or mitigated, we may witness the extinction of the Lange's Metalmark Butterfly, whose numbers are now in the dozens. Brent Plater, Executive Director of the Wild Equity Institute, will tell us about this largely-unknown landscape, how to observe wildlife there, and how his organization is experimenting with new ways to build a stronger conservation and environmental movement to protect the Dunes and

hopefully make conservation movements stronger and more resilient in the process.

Brent Plater is a Lecturer within San Francisco State University's Environmental Studies program and the Executive Director of the Wild Equity Institute, a non-profit organization uniting the grassroots conservation and environmental justice movements. Brent

Plater is the recipient of numerous honors and awards for his work, including the Environmental Education Conservation Award from the John Muir Association; the Unsung Hero Award from San Francisco Tomorrow; and a 2009 SF Weekly "Best of San Francisco" designation. In 2010, Mr. Plater was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago, and in 2011 he was awarded a TogetherGreen Fellowship by the National Audubon Society and Toyota for his conservation work.

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, April 4**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Refreshments,* raffle

8:05 PM Speaker: **Brent Plater**

* Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, May 2: Steve Glover
An American in Texas

BIRDING INFORMATION

Nancy Wenninger will present current information about second generation rodenticides. Her talk will focus on how these potent rat poisons endanger birds, children and pets. She will discuss alternatives to rat poison, such as exclusion and traps. She is considering this a trial run for feedback from members before using this presentation at home owners' associations, Rotary Club, service clubs, etc.

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

President's Corner

I mentioned in my column last month that I and three others were going to try to set a new record for the number of birds seen in one day on the island of Hawaii. MDAS members Bill Chilson and Kent Fickett and I joined Maui resident Sonny Gambonia on February 27 to try to do that and we did! We had 48 species. Highlights of the day were a Brown Booby seen at South Point which is the southernmost point in the United States. A Barn Owl flew over the road just at sunrise. We had a number of waterfowl that were unexpected including Lesser and Greater Scaup, Northern Pintail and American Widgeon. In a short stretch of about half a mile on the saddle road from Hilo to Kona we had Wild Turkey, Ring-necked Pheasant, Gambel's Quail, Erckel's Francolin and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. We missed some species that should be easy to find. We thought 55 species was possible, but next year maybe. It was a fun day.

I don't think I reported on my birding day in Korea last November. My guide, Lian Moore, who is with Birds Korea, was maybe one of the best birders I have ever been with. We saw 55 species during the day with a number of birds that he said are seldom seen. The two crane species we saw in the DMZ were of special interest. Red-crowned Crane number only a few thousand in the world.

As you know I now serve on the California Audubon board. It has been a great experience for me. I have been to three

Q

In a courtship dive, the male of this species will reach a speed over 60 miles per hour, then as it pulls out at the bottom of the dive it will experience a force of 10 g—more than twice what astronauts endure during ascent.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 6 to learn more.

AABDGHIIIMNNRSU

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By Jimm Edgar



Nene, State bird of Hawaii

board meetings now. I can't tell you how impressed I am with California Audubon. The staff is doing some remarkable things in our state. Our next meeting is in northern California near Klamath Falls. The issue of water in the state is a huge concern and we will take a look at some of the water issues up there.

I again want to applaud our new Conservation Chair, Nancy Wenninger, and the three other MDAS members that have stepped forward to serve on the committee. They are taking on some really important environmental issues that concern all of us.

Some great programs are coming up so I hope to see you at a meeting.

Earth Day

Celebrate John Muir's birthday and Earth Day on Saturday, April 20, at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez.

John Muir inspired people all over the world to "keep close to nature's heart." Mount Diablo Audubon will be an exhibitor at John Muir's former home on Earth Day. Tour the 1882



John Muir NHS

historic home and visit the California Native Plant Garden. Bring the family for fun-filled activities and entertainment. Gary Bogue will be the keynote speaker at this event. For more information, go to www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/bday-earthday/bday-earthday.php.

Welcome New Members

Marjorie Fletcher	Berkeley
Melanie Hunt	Pleasant Hill
Rosalinde Westil	Hercules

Good News for Terns, Plovers

The Navy has begun a nine-acre dune restoration and enhancement project that will benefit the nesting habitat for the federally endangered California Least Tern and federally threatened Western Snowy Plover.

In 2012 the areas targeted for replanting supported 669 California Least Tern nests and 53 nests of Western Snowy Plover. The dune restoration will include removing invasive ice plant and planting native dune flora, including sand verbena, beach bur, beach evening primrose and beach morning glory.

Removing ice plant and restoring native flowers will open up space where terns and plovers can place their camouflaged eggs in small nest scrapes in the sand. Those actions are also expected to stabilize the dunes.

The area is part of Coronado Naval Base and lies along the Silver Strand between Coronado and Imperial Beach.



Restoration work will be completed over a span of three years. The removal of non-native vegetation and the planting of native plants with supporting drip irrigation, protective cones and cages is complete. The drip irrigation, cones and wire cages will remain in place for the next 12 to 18 months to ensure plants become established and are not eaten by hungry herbivores. Restoration work is being carried out under a cooperative agreement between the Navy and San Diego State's Soil Ecology and Restoration Group.

Observations

By Maury Stern

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to mbstern2@yahoo.com or (925) 284-5980 or send to EBB Sightings@yahoogroups.com. If you report sightings to eBird, please also send to Maury Stern.

Spring has arrived with newly arriving hummingbirds, singing juncos, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, mating calls from Pied-billed Grebes, nesting owls, and trees putting out the most beautiful flowers.



The big herring run at Ferry Point in Point Richmond continued to about February 21 when the amazing numbers of gulls declined. In addition to the **Mew** and **Glaucous-winged Gulls** in the thousands most of the common local gulls were there. The highlight was a **Slaty-backed Gull** seen by many and well-photographed. NA, TB, BD, AK, BL, BM, DM, MP, JT, BTo, ST.

A single **Brant** continued at Miller-Knox Park in Point Richmond and was seen by many. AA, EA, NB, JB, SD, BR, CS, KT.

Also at Miller-Knox on 3/18, a **Cackling Goose** was part of the **Canada Goose** flock. NB, JS.

Up to 11 **Wood Ducks** were seen in the creek leading into Upper San Leandro Reservoir near the Valle Vista Staging Area in Moraga. RE, ES, TS. They were also at Las Trampas Creek next to the staging area of the Lafayette-Moraga bike trail. RW.

The **Eurasian Wigeons** continued through the month at Miller-Knox Park. JA, AA, AM, NW. They were seen at Point Pinole 2/18 by NB, JM, JS.

The single **Black Scoter** also continued at Miller-Knox. TB, FD, JHo, WH, BT, NW.

Hooded Mergansers were widespread. NB and LKi saw them on the Landfill Loop in Richmond. JB at Tilden's Jewel

Lake. AL in Ellis Lake in Concord. RW in Las Trampas Creek; and LG in Alhambra Creek near Main Street in Martinez.

Bald Eagles were seen over Tilden Botanical Garden on 3/5, DV, and 3/11 at Lafayette Reservoir. M&SS.

Three distinct **Black Rails** were heard at the Martinez Shoreline 3/1. DW.

A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Richmond Landfill Loop 2/27. AL.

AL saw a **Ruddy Turnstone** 2/18 at Ferry Point.

A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was at Tilden RP 3/4. TP, KT.

There was a **Common Poorwill** at Black Diamond Mines 2/21. AL.

Rufous Hummingbirds were seen 3/1 in Moraga, CS, and Lafayette yard 3/7. MS.

MS had two **Allen's Hummingbirds** in his yard 2/16. JC saw her first 2/19 in Moraga. GS saw one on a nest at Tilden RP 2/27.

The **Lewis's Woodpecker** on the Walnut Trail at Los Vaqueros Reservoir was seen 2/16, DS, and 2/23, C&TW.

Violet-green Swallows were seen 3/5 by BD on the Point Edith Trail in Martinez and Waterfront Road on 3/6 by CS. AL saw one at Mallard Reservoir 3/6 also.

KH saw early **Rough-winged Swallows** at Heather Farm pond on 2/16. JH saw them 3/3.

Cliff Swallows were near the Big Break trail on 3/2 SS, C&TW.

Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival, Arcata, April 18-24. Celebrate the Marbled Godwit and explore the lush Redwood Coast. Observe many bird species and wildlife through the selection of field trips, lectures, workshops, and boat excursions led by experienced local guides. During Godwit Days, Marbled Godwits are in Humboldt Bay by the thousands, before they head off to their nesting grounds in the central U.S. and Canadian prairies. Information and registration at www.godwitdays.org.

18th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature & Earth Day Festival, April 21. Spring bird migration creates an exciting time for birders visiting the Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival. The last five festivals have averaged 233 bird species! The region centered on the Kern River Valley hosts 350 species of birds—over 200 nesting; 138 species of butterflies, highest in California; 2000+ species of plants, highest in California; 105 species of mammals, highest in U.S. & Canada. KernAudubon.org.

Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival, April 26-28. Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. For more information, visit: www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. To help save important bird habitat as well as to offset the energy used by people driving to the festival, a donation will be made to the reforestation program of the nonprofit Monteverde Conservation League in Costa Rica.

Golden-crowned Kinglets were at the Martinez home of LK 2/16.

Mountain Bluebirds continued at Los Vaqueros north side on the Walnut Trail. 2/16 DS, 2/18 CS, 2/23 AL.

AL saw a **Townsend's Solitaire** on Mount Diablo Deer Flat area 2/28.

Red Crossbills were at Inspiration Point at Tilden RP 2/26, AL, and Heather Farm Pond on 3/3. JH.

JR had continuing **White-throated Sparrows** and a **Slate-colored Junco** in her Alamo yard for the month.

Pine Siskins continued their invasion with many continuing reports of large numbers at feeders.

JA Jeff Acuff, AA Anne Ardillo, EA Eric Arnon, NA Noah Arthur, NB Nel Benningshof, JB John Blakelock, TB Tony Brake, JC Judi Cooper, SD Sheila Dickie, BD Bob Dunn, FD Frances Dupont, RF Robert Furrow, LG Lisa Gorrell, JH Joel Herr, KH Kevin Hintsa, JHo Jeff Hoppes, WH Wen Hsu, AK Alan Kaplan, LK Leslie Kashishian, LKi Lucy Kihlstrom, BL Bob Lewis, AL Albert Linkowski, BM Bruce Mast, JM Jean Matsuno, AM Alex Merritt, DM David Moore, MP Michael Park, TP Trent Pearce, BR Bob Richmond, JR Jean Richmond, DS Dan Sandri, ES Ed Schoenberger, JS Joanne Sidwell, CS Catherine Spaulding, SS Sandy Steinman, MS Maury Stern, M&SS Maury and Susan Stern, GS George Suennen, TS Tracy Swartz, KT Kyoko Takayama, BT Bob Thordarson, JS Jerry Ting, BTo Bob Toleno, ST Steve Tucker, DV Debbie Viess, NW Nat Weber, DW Denise Wight, C&TW Chris and Teri Wills, RW Ray Witbeck.

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

April

- 6 Saturday Garin Regional Park
- 10 Wednesday Orinda Connector Trail
- 13 Saturday Pine Canyon
- 20 Saturday Mines Road
- 24 Wednesday Del Puerto Canyon
- 26 Friday North Briones Regional Park
- 30 Tuesday Black Diamond Mines

May

- 2 Thursday Mitchell Canyon
- 9 Thursday Mount Diablo State Park
- 16 Thursday West Briones Regional Park
- 18 Saturday East Contra Costa County

June

- 1 Saturday Outer Point Reyes
- 22-23 Saturday-Sunday Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

③ Saturday, April 6 Garin Regional Park

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906.

Carpool leaves 7:15 AM from Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride. Meet in parking lot at the end of Garin Road at 8:00 AM. Take I-680 south and I-580 west. Take Castro Valley exit 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 up the hill to its end. Spring migrants will be our goal. Lunch in the park after.

② Wednesday, April 10 Orinda Connector Trail

Leader: Don Lewis, 284-5480.

Meet at 8 AM at the northeast corner of Camino Pablo and Bear Creek Road, Orinda. Exit at Orinda from SR 24, turn north on Camino Pablo and drive just over 2 miles to the intersection. We will walk towards the base of Briones Dam looking for spring birds. We will be finished by noon.

③ Saturday, April 13 Pine Canyon

Leader: Nancy Wenninger, 938-7987.

Meet in parking lot at end of Castle Rock Road at 8 AM. Turn south on Walnut Avenue from the intersection with Ygnacio Valley Road in Walnut Creek. At the traffic circle, turn right and continue on Castle Rock Road past the high school to the end, 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 Saturday, April 20 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.



Lake Del Valle

① Wednesday, April 24 Del Puerto Canyon

Leader: David Hutton, 938-4485

Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride. Meet on Del Puerto Canyon Road west of I-5 at 9 AM at Patterson Exit (Diablo Grande Parkway and Sperry Road) 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 on trip until our lunch stop. Canyon Wren, Costa's Hummingbird, Greater Roadrunner and other goodies. Usually very warm! Bring lunch and drinks.

③ Friday, April 26 North Briones Regional Park

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980..

Meet 8 AM in the parking area at the north entrance of Briones Regional Park. Take Briones Road off Alhambra Valley Road and drive up this narrow winding road, park at the end. Wildflowers, spring birds and poison oak are along shaded trails. A continuation through grasslands to Sincich Lagoons makes this walk about 3 miles round trip. Bring liquids.

③ Tuesday, April 30 Black Diamond Mines

Leader: Paul Schorr, 757-5107.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:30 AM. Or meet the leader at 8 AM at the parking lot at the end of Somersville Road. Go east on Ygnacio Valley/Kirker Pass Roads, in Pittsburg turn right on Buchanan Road. Go east on Buchanan to Somersville Road (Antioch) and turn right. Alternate route, exit Highway 4 at Somersville Road (south). Follow Somersville to the entry gate, entry fee required, proceed to the last parking lot. Woodland, chaparral and some grassland birds. Bring lunch and a beverage.

Trip Reports

Grizzly Island, February 14. Seventeen members and guests saw 76 species of birds, a herd of 30 tule elk, and 7 river otters. The weather was fair, with early morning temperatures in the high 50s and afternoon temps near 70. Highlights were Tundra Swan, Blue-winged Teal, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl and Loggerhead Shrike.

Maury Stern



Beth Branthaver photos

Sunol Regional Park, February 20. Seven members spent a delightfully cool, clear day walking the trails of Sunol Regional Wilderness Park after a night of rain. Highlights included several pairs of Wood Ducks below the bridge on Geary Road, a tan-striped White-throated Sparrow just off the parking lot, views of at least three male Varied Thrushes along Indian Joe Creek, close-up looks at several cooperative Hermit Thrushes, and a low-flying sub-adult Golden Eagle overhead. A total of 41 species were seen.

Eugenia Larson

Come birding with us!

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and advanced birders, but not dogs. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php. Phone area codes are 925 unless specified otherwise. Because most trips do not return until late afternoon, bring a lunch and drink and join us during our midday break.

Category ❶: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category ❷: Moderate, one mile +, possibly rough terrain

Category ❸: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Our Mount Diablo Audubon Chapter is a conservation organization. As such, we encourage members to consider meeting at the carpool point to pick up or ride with others. It is important that given the cost of gasoline, those who ride with others offer to pay some of this cost. Don't forget about any bridge tolls or park entry fees on some of our longer trips. 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.

Los Banos/Panoche Valley, February 16th-17th. A total of 21 members participated in the annual MDAS field trip to Los Banos and Panoche Valley. Bright sunny weather greeted us on both days. Santa Fe Grade Road was birded first on the Saturday morning. Notable observations included juvenile Bald Eagle, American Bittern, Great Horned Owl, together with many ducks (including Blue-winged Teal), waders and raptors. Searches for a previously reported Vermilion Flycatcher and Ruff proved unsuccessful. Lunch was enjoyed at the picnic tables at Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area. The afternoon was spent at Merced National Wildlife Refuge where we found massive gatherings of Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Sandhill Cranes. We were fortunate to meet with Phil and Pat Gordon who gave us precise directions to find Mountain Plovers on Sandy Mush Road, which we did. Thanks to other birders we were able also to find Burrowing Owls. A communal dinner was enjoyed by all at the Wool Growers Basque restaurant in Los Banos. Sunday, we travelled down to Panoche Valley. On the way we stopped at the Panoche Hills BLM Lands site and found Mountain Bluebirds and Rock Wren. Mercey Hot Springs delivered again on providing us great views of their Long-eared Owls. No Chukars showed as we passed through Shot Gun Pass into Panoche Valley. Birding in the Valley itself proved rather slow this year. At Panoche Inn where we ate lunch, other birders pointed out a Merlin to us. A flock of Tricolored Blackbirds was found at Silver Creek Ranch, but no sightings of Mountain Plovers or Cassin's Kingbirds as found in earlier years. A short diversion up New Idria Road into the Griswold Hills area yielded a solitary Rock Wren. After compiling our list for the two days we tallied a total of 101 species.

David Hutton

Tomales Bay State Park, February 23. Ten members went to Tomales Bay SP on a beautiful day but with heavy wind gusts. Temperatures ranged from 45 to 65. 49 species were seen, well below usual because of the wind. We saw rafts of Greater Scaup mixed with Surf Scoter and Bufflehead. A few Common Loons were present

as well as the typical grebes. There were 4 Ospreys seen, as well as an active Osprey nest with one on the nest. Allen's Hummingbirds were seen. Rosita



Harvey spotted the Golden-crowned Kinglets for us and many Varied Thrushes were in the undergrowth.

Maury Stern

Walnut Creek City Parks, March 6. Ten birders visited four different park areas of Walnut Creek and saw a total of 46 species. We visited Heather Farm, Howe-Homestead, the Sugarloaf-Shell Ridge Trail and Sugarloaf Open Space. A male Greater Scaup was with the over-wintering Ring-necked Ducks at Heather Farm and a number of Northern Rough-winged Swallows flew over the same pond. A Hermit Thrush joined an American Robin, a Dark-eyed Junco and some other birds bathing in the little creek at Sugarloaf Open Space.

Hugh B. Harvey

Theodore Roosevelt

Continued from Page 10

stop the decimation of birds on Florida's Pelican Island by plume hunters, Roosevelt asked if the law prevented him from declaring the island "a Federal Bird Reservation." Told that no such law existed, the President responded, "Very well, then I so declare it." Additionally, Roosevelt created 50 more wildlife refuges during his presidency. He established five National Parks: Crater Lake, Wind Cave, Mesa Verde, Sully's Hill (now a national game preserve in North Dakota), and Platte (now part of Chickasaw National Recreation Area in Oklahoma). He designated Grand Canyon as a National Monument in 1908 (Grand Canyon became a national park in 1919). He is also to be credited for Devil's Tower, Muir Woods, and Mount Olympus National Monuments, and for Wichita Forest (Oklahoma) and Fire Island (Alaska) Game Reserves, and the National Bison Range in Montana.

In 1909 Roosevelt led a year-long safari in Africa, sending back thousands of specimens of birds and animals for the Smithsonian;



Roosevelt collected and mounted this Snowy Owl for his Roosevelt Museum of Natural History, ca 1861.

My dear Mr. Chapman:—

I need hardly say how heartily I sympathize with the purposes of the Audubon Society. I would like to see all harmless wild things, but especially all birds, protected in every way. I do not understand how any man or woman who really loves nature can fail to try to exert all influence in support of such objects as those of the Audubon Society.

Spring would not be spring without bird songs, any more than it would be spring without buds and flowers, and I only wish that besides protecting the songsters, the birds of the grove, the orchard, the garden and the meadow, we could also protect the birds of the sea shore and of the wilderness...

The Loon ought to be, and, under wise legislation, could be a feature of every Adirondack lake; Ospreys, as every one knows, can be made the tamest of the tame, and Terns should be as plentiful along our shores as Swallows around our barns.

A Tanager or a Cardinal makes a point of glowing beauty in the green woods, and the Cardinal among the white snows.

Very truly yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

and in 1914 he explored the unknown wilds of South America, collecting for the American Museum of Natural History.

So much more might be said about Theodore Roosevelt's use of his "bully pulpit" to arouse public interest in conservation issues, but it is perhaps best summed up with his statement: "There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country. Just as we must conserve our men, women and children, so we must conserve the resources of the land on which they live."

Wildlife Conservation Stamps?

Among birders and wildlife watchers, there's little disagreement about supporting our 560 National Wildlife Refuges, along with the habitat and wildlife they sustain. Most wildlife watchers are anxious to contribute their resources toward that end. Duck Stamps serve this purpose to an extent; however, Duck Stamp purchases by non-hunters are not accurately accounted for—which means that when critical decisions are made about Refuge priorities, non-extractive users are forgotten in favor of hunters and anglers. Because of this accounting, hunters have disproportionate influence and use of Refuge lands during the height of fall and winter migratory bird season. In some cases, large portions of, or entire Wildlife Refuges are closed to the non-hunting public during this time.

WildlifeConservationStamp.org is a newly-formed grassroots effort to promote a new federal wildlife stamp and funding stream for our National Wildlife Refuges. Birders, photographers, conservationists, wildlife rehabilitators, scientists, teachers and artists are joined by a common passion and concern for our nation's wildlife and wild habitats.

Mount Diablo Audubon joins Palomar, Plumas, Wintu and Fresno Chapters to endorse the Wildlife Conservation Stamp program to provide a consistent source of income for our Refuges, separate but parallel to the current Federal Duck Stamp program. The Wildlife Conservation Stamp would raise funds from the millions of wildlife viewers and conservationists to help ensure a thriving future for our National Wildlife Refuge System and all of its inhabitants.

Antioch Dunes NWR is dedicated to conservation of three endangered species—Contra Costa Wallflower, Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose, and Lange's Metalmark Butterfly.



Anna's Hummingbird ♦ *Calypte anna*

a

François Victor Masséna, Duke of Rivoli, was an amateur ornithologist who accumulated a large bird collection in the early nineteenth century. These 12,500 specimens were sold in 1846 and later given to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. In 1828, John J. Audubon described Masséna's wife, Anna, whom he had met in Paris, as a "beautiful young woman ... extremely graceful and polite." Later, French naturalist René Lesson named one of the birds of Masséna's collection for Anna—Anna's Hummingbird.

Found only along the California coast until about the 1930s, Anna's Hummingbirds have broadened their range north-

ing the season, which may last into June. A male performs an incredible courtship display, flying as high as 130 feet in the air, then plummeting toward the ground, where a unique high-pitched noise is made by air whipping through his tail feathers. Males and females do not form pairs; only the females care for the young.

Nesting birds are fun to watch, but we must remember our responsibility not to harm or stress the birds. Parents may abandon nests with eggs if they are disturbed by people. State and federal laws prohibit taking eggs or nests—even abandoned ones—from the wild. If you take photographs, do not break or remove branches or foliage, as the birds have chosen the site specifically for its concealment.



Anna's Hummingbird and nest in Walnut Creek on February 11. Brian Murphy Photo



ward to British Columbia and eastward to southwest Texas. They are not migratory, however, but may move about occupying different elevations with changing bloom times of nectar flowers.

While most birds nest in spring, governed by warmth and available food, Anna's nesting season begins as early as December. The nest pictured here was photographed on February 11. Anna's nests are commonly found throughout Contra Costa County, except in the most eastern section.

Females choose the nest site, usually a horizontal tree branch or shrub 6–20 feet off the ground near a source of nectar. The female builds the nest out of plant down and spider webs, sitting in the nest and building the walnut-sized cup up around her. She may decorate the outside with lichens, as this one has done. Anna's Hummingbirds may have two or even three broods dur-

Help Needed!

Moses de los Reyes, our Volunteer Coordinator, recently resigned because of health issues. We will miss him, but it is important to fill his position soon because there are local environmental fairs taking place this spring in which we usually participate.

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for finding volunteer workers from our membership, providing training, preparing instructions and scheduling of their work shifts at events. For each event, the Coordinator prepares appropriate materials for display and arranges for setup. If you are interested in applying for this volunteer position, please contact Bev Walker at 925-952-9925 or beewalk@comcast.net.

Feeding Hummingbirds

Keep your feeders *clean*.

There is a myth that you must take down hummingbird feeders before Halloween, or the birds will delay their normal migration and freeze to death in the cold winter. The truth is that migration is governed by the biological photoperiod—the length of the day; and in the eastern states fewer than one in a thousand Ruby-throated Hummingbirds remain after mid-October. In California, Anna's Hummingbirds are present throughout the year, and they will benefit from supplemental feeding.

Hummingbirds use nectar to fuel their search for insects to obtain the proteins and other nutrients they need. You might want to supply some banana skins to attract fruit flies for them. Refrain from using insecticides in your garden.

The best recipe for food is simply one part sugar to four parts water. Boil for a minute or two to kill bacteria.

Do not use anything other than white sugar; honey and other sweeteners cause various problems for hummingbirds. Adding red food-dye is unnecessary. Red on a feeder is enough to attract hummingbirds.

Choose feeders that are easy to clean. It is essential that the feeder comes apart so that you can clean all surfaces thoroughly each time you refill it. Feeders designed with inverted bottles are hard to clean; and they usually drip, hence they feed ants, not birds.

Use only vinegar and water to clean feeders. Soap or bleach traces left in feeders, even after thorough rinsing, can harm the birds. If you use bleach as a last resort, follow-up by cleaning the bleach out with a vinegar and water solution.

In warm weather, put only enough fresh sugar solution in your feeders to last one to two days. If it looks cloudy or develops mold, change it. Keeping feeders in the shade slows down fermentation and mold growth. But, feeders placed in the sun are more easily seen and seem to attract more individual hummingbirds.

Keep your feeders *clean*. And if you can, plant a hummingbird garden with California native plants, such as salvias, penstemons, currants, arctostaphylos and epilobium.

Good News for Birds at Altamont Wind Farm

By Mike Lynes, Golden Gate Audubon Society

Our years of advocacy on behalf of raptors at the Altamont Pass wind farm are paying off—with a dramatic reduction in bird mortality there.

Deaths of four key raptor species from Altamont wind turbines dropped by an estimated 50 percent between 2005 and 2010, according to the independent scientific review committee charged with monitoring bird mortality there.

The estimated number of Golden Eagles killed by turbines each year fell from 58 to 33, Burrowing Owls from 543 to 233, American Kestrels from 415 to 268, and Red-tailed Hawks from 196 to 85, according to a report accepted last month by the Scientific Review Committee of the Alameda County Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA).

These figures are rough estimates: It's exceedingly difficult to track exact numbers of bird deaths on the sprawling Altamont Pass. And while the data indicate a decline in risks to birds, we know bird injuries and deaths are likely to always result from wind turbine operations.

But the findings are still very good news. They show that with careful siting and design, it's possible to significantly reduce the risk to birds from wind turbines.

The results also show the positive impact that Audubon activists can have in speaking up and pressuring wind companies to protect birds.

The roots of this good-news story go back more than a decade, to when we at Golden Gate Audubon joined other Bay Area chapters including Santa Clara Valley, Ohlone, Marin and Mt. Diablo Audubon to advocate for birds and other wildlife at the Altamont Pass. (Other conservation groups such as the Center for Biological Diversity have also stood up for birds at Altamont.)

The oldest wind farm in the country, Altamont had about 5,000 turbines in the area bordering Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Researchers estimated that thousands of birds—some migrants, some year-round residents—were dying from collisions with wind towers and blades.

In 2004, we and our partners sued Alameda County for reissuing wind turbine permits in the APWRA without conducting any environmental review. The settlement

of our suit required a 50 percent reduction in bird mortality by 2009, removal of certain high-risk turbines, and development of a comprehensive conservation plan.

In 2010, when it became clear that the 50 percent reduction had not been reached, we pursued further negotiations with NextEra Inc., the largest wind operator at APWRA. NextEra agreed to replace its old turbine fleet with new turbines that we believe are safer for birds, and to provide \$2.5 million for habitat conservation and research to reduce bird mortality in the Altamont Pass.

Since then, NextEra has replaced about 1/3 of its old turbines and is moving ahead with plans to replace the rest of its fleet. The newer turbines are much larger but fewer in number, leading to a net decrease of 338 turbines in just the first phase alone.

Before any of the new turbines go in the ground, biologists and engineers work to site them in areas that will decrease collision risks for birds. For example, new turbines are not placed in low saddles or at the edge of ridges, where raptors often prefer to fly. The new turbines also have solid tube bodies rather than the latticed towers that served as attractive but perilous perches for some raptors.

These changes are just a starting point. NextEra still needs to switch over the remaining two-thirds of its turbines. The other wind operators at Altamont have not yet started to switch over to new turbines.

And even with the changeover (or “re-powering,” as it is called), wildlife remains at risk. We need to continue monitoring Altamont's bird and bat populations, and pressing for better ways to safeguard them.

We at Golden Gate Audubon are encouraged by the Scientific Review Committee's findings that bird deaths have decreased. At the same time, we plan to keep dogging this issue—monitoring, negotiating, testifying and (if necessary) litigating to make sure that this progress continues.

We couldn't do this without your support! If you've been a member or donor to Golden Gate Audubon over the years, take a moment to pat yourself on the back. Your commitment and generosity has made a genuine difference for eagles, owls and other birds at Altamont Pass.

And if this success becomes a model for the wind industry, you will have made a difference for birds in wind power areas around the world.

Audubon Convention

Reservations are now open for this gathering, which will take place July 12–16, at Skamania Lodge, 45 minutes east of Portland, Oregon, in the spectacular Columbia River Gorge. Join MDAS President Jimm Edgar and come celebrate the Audubon network and share your energy and passion for conserving birds throughout the flyways with leaders from across the country!

You can find essential details at www.audubon.org/2013convention.

All chapter leaders are strongly encouraged to consider attending the convention. The registration fee of \$300/person includes entry to weekend program sessions along with lunches, dinners and snacks from lunch on Friday through lunch on Monday, except for dinner on Sunday.

Table 3-12. Three-year Rolling Average Estimated Total Focal Species Fatalities (95% CI) in the APWRA Based on Modified Smallwood (2007) Detection Probabilities, Bird Years 2005–2010

Species/Category	3-Year Period and Fatalities (95% CI)			
	2005–2007	2006–2008	2007–2009	2008–2010
American kestrel	415 (359–472)	383 (339–427)	320 (286–355)	268 (235–301)
Burrowing owl	543 (483–604)	421 (374–467)	267 (237–297)	233 (202–263)
Golden eagle	58 (54–62)	45 (42–48)	34 (32–37)	33 (30–36)
Red-tailed hawk	196 (186–206)	138 (130–145)	85 (80–90)	85 (79–91)
Total focal species	1,245 (1,158–1,332)	1,020 (953–1,087)	711 (665–758)	625 (580–671)

This chart from the monitoring report shows the decline in deaths for four key raptor species. Because bird populations can vary dramatically from year to year, the monitors tracked deaths by three-year rolling averages rather than by single years. The first number is the average for that three-year period, while the numbers in parenthesis show the range of annual deaths in that period.

Birds Need the Right Nesting Box

By Mike Eliot

When providing places for backyard birds to nest, consider what's best for both you and the birds. There are lots of crafty boxes out there that are mainly designed for decoration and are not appropriate for cavity nesters.

If you want particular birds to accept a box, obviously size is important. Depending on the size before fledging and average number of chicks in a brood, this can vary substantially.

The front opening needs to be high enough to protect young birds, but low enough to allow them to leave when ready to fledge. Some boxes need ladders inside for the chicks to climb. The size of the front openings must be suited to the breed as well. Birds will choose nesting boxes with the smallest opening appropriate for their size. The opening should be protected either by thick strong walls or added metal rings to prevent predators from chewing and enlarging the opening. There should not be a perch near the opening on which predators can land or cling.

Insulation and ventilation are important. Good nesting boxes are thick enough, at least 3/4", to keep heat and cold from penetrating. And they provide openings for cross ventilation under the roof. There should be roof overhangs and roofs should be slanted to help keep out the elements. Drainage holes should be in the bottom corners and smaller than 1/4".

Nesting boxes should be easily cleaned. They should be cleaned thoroughly after every nesting season to remove bird waste, insects, and mites that may inhabit the old nest, and then dried before rehangng.

Boxes should be firmly mounted or hung to prevent eggs from rolling around and should be durable enough to last through years of sun and rain. They should not be painted, stained, or pressure treated with anything that may be toxic to birds. Dark paint or stain can cause a box to retain heat, which could kill eggs or nestlings.

If you need help with deciding on a nesting box, drop in to Wild Birds Unlimited for expert free advice and a Housing Guide. We can show you the features of boxes that have been scientifically designed to meet the needs of particular breeds.

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

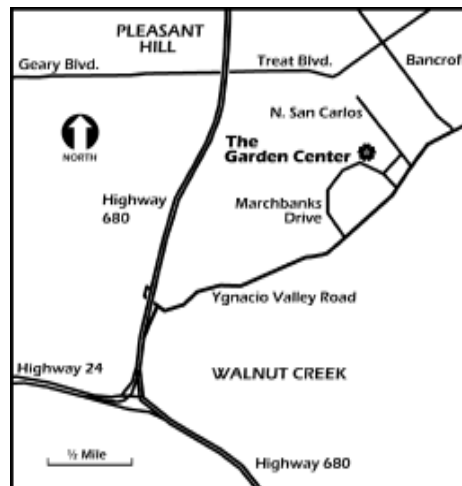
Mount Diablo Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon, is committed to the sustainable balance of our community's people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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Quail Editor



Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets at 7:00 PM on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Everyone is invited.

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Please enroll my family and me as a member of Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year. Membership dues are tax deductible.

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Brown Pelican at Pelican Island. USF&WS Photo..

Theodore Roosevelt Boy Ornithologist ♦ Conservationist

Although Theodore Roosevelt is esteemed for his contributions to conservation of public lands, it is perhaps little appreciated that he was a life-long bird watcher and collector. However, he is not universally admired, as some denounce Roosevelt's penchant for big game hunting. His pride in shooting an African lion, a South American jaguar, or a bison in the American West was mitigated and rationalized in his mind by the attainment of a magnificent specimen for the museum, or by the need of food for his safari comrades.

Roosevelt was born in 1858 in New York City. He was home-schooled, since he was rather sickly. His routine to strengthen his body included walks in the countryside, and young "Teedie" took a strong interest in the natural sciences, which lasted his entire life. He collected small birds and animals and established his own Roosevelt Museum of Natural History. He learned taxidermy from a colleague of John J. Audubon. Among the books he acquired when he

was 13 were the publications of Spencer F. Baird. In 1872, at age 14, he traveled with his family up the Nile. Teedie spent much of his time ashore, collecting specimens and practicing his skills at taxidermy. He wrote papers entitled "Ornithology of Egypt between Cairo and Assuan" and "*Ardea russata*". Buff fronted cow heron." When he entered Harvard University in the Autumn of 1876 his intention was to become a natural scientist. By 1882 Roosevelt had been elected to the New York State Legislature, and at that time he donated most of his Museum of Natural History to the Smithsonian Institution.

Following his celebrated service in Cuba with his "Rough Riders" during the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt was governor of New York (1898-1900). He worked closely with Gifford Pinchot, helping formulate measures for forest management. Elected Vice President in 1900, he became President after William McKinley's assassination on September 14, 1901.



President Theodore Roosevelt

The story of Pelican Island demonstrates Roosevelt's steadfast determination with respect to conservation issues. Through his association with the American Museum of Natural History he was a friend of Frank Chapman, and when Chapman and William Dutcher visited him at his home in New York to plead for governmental action to

Continued on Page 6 »