



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php

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Audubon California Acclaims Salton Sea Restoration Plan



Audubon California has commended the California Resources Agency for submitting a Salton Sea restoration plan to the Legislature, and urged immediate action to implement key elements of the plan.

The "Preferred Alternative" plan restores more than 50,000 acres of shallow saline habitat for the hundreds of bird species that rely on the Salton Sea, restores habitat for the endangered Desert Pupfish and provides mitigation for hazardous dust pollution from exposed seabed. However,

it also includes an enormous recreational lake that more than quadruples the cost of the plan from \$2 billion to \$9 billion, raises numerous engineering and feasibility issues and requires substantial water and electricity to maintain. For that reason, Audubon and other conservation and recreation groups are urging the Legislature to approve habitat restoration and air quality mitigation—legally required elements of the plan—but to defer a decision on a recreational lake until it is determined to be feasible structurally and financially.

The Salton Sea is located in a closed desert basin in Riverside and Imperial Counties with no natural outlet. Its surface is 228 feet below sea level (only 54 feet higher than Death Valley's low. Although lakes have existed here in the past, the current body of water formed in 1905 when a levee break along the Colorado River caused its flows to enter the basin for about 18 months. Since 1905, the Sea has fluctuated in size with varying inflow, and it today covers about 365 square miles.

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President's Corner

Our chapter takes a bit of a break from normal activities during the summer. There are a few field trips on the schedule and we start our general meetings again in September. Our MDAS Board will meet twice during the summer. We still have a couple of positions we really need volunteers for. Our membership chair, Ann McGregor, is stepping down after serving and doing a wonderful job for many years. This is a critical position that we hope to break into two positions to lighten the responsibilities. Please call me or email me if you could help. (cell is 510-290-8006.)

I just returned from a short 6-day trip to Marrakech, Morocco. I had purchased "A Birdwatcher Guide to Morocco," but did not have time to really get out and look around. We had taken two friends with us and we had to pretty much be with them most of the time. We did drive about three hours west to the small town of Essaouira on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. The guide book said there was a rare falcon, called Eleonora's Falcon that breeds on the small islands just off the coast of Essaouira. I sat on the jetty for about an hour and scanned the island with no results of a falcon. About 10% of the world population breeds in these islands. It would have been a treat to see, but I feel privileged just to have tried to see them. Who knows if I ever will return to Morocco. In some ways it is always the hunt that is exciting. (I did see a Moroccan Cormorant as a consolation prize.)

Have a great summer and we will look forward to seeing you in September.

Jimm Edgar



After breeding in the Gulf of California, Yellow-footed Gulls regularly travel north to the Salton Sea where they are sought after by avid birders.

Meeting Schedule

There will be no meetings during July or August. The next general meeting will be **Thursday, September 6**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek.

September 6: **Steve Glover**, Contra Costa County Breeding Bird Atlas.

October 4: **José Calvo**, Birds of Costa Rica.



Welcome New Members

Chuck Deutschman	Walnut Creek
Gary Eubanks	Dublin
Kathleen Gonzalez	Martinez
Karen Hammonds	Antioch
Kathleen Hosman	Concord
Henriette Klein	Berkeley
Daxa Makwana	San Ramon
Mark O'Neill	Martinez
Jon and Debby Scott	San Ramon
Karen Seeno	Walnut Creek
Glen Tepke	Oakland
Richard Thorne	Concord
Gail West	Castro Valley
Stephanie Woods	Oakland

Kern Valley Hummingbird Celebration, August 11. Visit the Kern River Preserve to witness the Hummingbird Capital of California. Hundreds of hummingbirds zooming about your head is what you can expect at the Kern River Valley hummingbird celebration. Workshops, field trips, and demonstrations. For more information about this event, go to kern.audubon.org/hummer_fest.htm.

Six hummingbird species are possible at the Kern River Preserve feeders in July, August, and early September with over one thousand hummingbirds present per day: Black-chinned (numbers decrease from July through early September), Anna's, Costa's (low numbers), Calliope (rarely), Rufous (peak numbers in late August and early September), and Allen's (virtually impossible to separate from Rufous, even adult males, except during banding sessions). Costa's and Calliope are more numerous at feeders in the desert (Costa's) and montane (Calliope) regions of the Kern River Valley watershed. Allen's pass through in small numbers the latter third of June through the middle of August. The Kern River Valley has less than five records each of Broad-billed and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds.

The Kern River Preserve is managed by Audubon-California for the preservation of one of California's finest remaining riparian forests and the wildlife it supports. Located on Highway 178 near Isabella Lake, 50 miles east of Bakersfield, it's a great place to visit, any time of year.

May/June Observations

By Steve Glover

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

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at McNabney Marsh near Martinez on 4/5 (BB). A late **Ring-necked Duck** was at Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek on 5/25 (HH).

A **Little Blue Heron** at the Dow Wetlands near Antioch on 4/26 was just the fourth ever found in Contra Costa County (GS).

An immature **Bald Eagle** was once again sighted at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline on 4/21 (BL).

The pair of **Common Moorhens** at Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek had five very tiny precocial young in tow on 5/17 (HH). This is the first nest record for the park.

A **Solitary Sandpiper** put in brief appearance on a stock pond in Irish Canyon, private property between Clayton and Black Diamond Mines, on 4/22 (SH). It is typical of this species to stop briefly at small ponds in late April. A flock of eight **Ruddy Turnstones** at San Pablo Bay Regional Shoreline near Pinole on 4/29 may have been the largest flock ever found in Contra Costa County, at least until a flock of 11 was found there on 5/5 (LL).

Three **Caspian Terns** were noted flying over Wildcat Canyon Regional Park near Richmond on 4/6 (AK). A trio of **Black Skimmers** was found at Marina Bay, Richmond on 5/6 (ND, NB).

Most out-of-place was a flock of 10 **Band-tailed Pigeons** at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline on 4/21 (BL).

A female **Calliope Hummingbird** was at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 4/16 (AD); a male Calliope was at nearby Wildcat Canyon Regional Park from 4/19-21 (BBa, AH). Another male was along South Gate Road in Mount Diablo State Park on 5/5 (AE).

A **Gray Flycatcher** at the Valle Vista staging area near Moraga on 4/29 was a nice find (DW). Six **Western Kingbirds** were noted at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline on 4/21 (BL); Western Kingbirds have rarely been recorded in west county. A **Western Kingbird** at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 5/21 was similarly unusual (JP).

A **Winter Wren** continued to sing along Grayson Creek in Pleasant Hill through at least 4/3 (PK).

Phainopeplas were noted near the parking lot at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on 4/2 (JS)

A **Palm Warbler** at Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline, Point Richmond on 4/10 was one of few ever found in Contra Costa County and could conceivably have wintered at this location (BF, MS).

Grasshopper Sparrows were noted at several locations, including an impressive tally of 14 along the Briones Crest Trail in Briones Regional Park on 5/22 (BBr).

Three males and a female **Great-tailed Grackle** made a noisy appearance at Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek 5/24 (HH).

A male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** made a surprise appearance at Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek on 4/8 (FS); another male was at Briones Regional Park on 5/22 (BBr).

Bob Battagin, Nel Benningshof, Bill Bousman, Bob Brandriff, Al Demartini, Nick Despota, Art Edwards, Bethany Facendini, Hugh Harvey, Scott Hein, Alan Howe, Alan Kaplan, Patrick King, Bob Lewis, Laura Look, John Poole, Fred Safier, Greg Scyphers, Judi Sierra, Maury Stern, Denise Wight.

The Salton Sea *Continued from Page 1*

A balance between inflowing water and evaporation sustains the Sea. With no outlet, any salts dissolved in the inflow are trapped. Salt concentrations in the Sea are now about 48,000 milligrams per liter, 30 percent higher than ocean water. Salinity will continue to rise under current conditions, and under a recently approved agreement inflow to the Sea will be significantly reduced. This reduction will cause the Sea to shrink and salinity to rise even faster.

Learn more about this restoration plan at www.audubon-ca.org/salton_sea.html, and make your voice heard. State Senate bill SB187 spells out creation of abundant wildlife habitat and air quality protection but also includes the construction of two expensive lakes in the desert. Write your legislator to urge a phased restoration plan. Phase one should include restoration of bird, fish and wildlife habitat and manage air quality to protect human health and agriculture—the elements required by state law. Lakes can come later —birds and fish need restoration to start now.

Native Plants for Native Birds

By Pat Bacchetti

Gardening for Birds: Two New Native Plant Resources

As one learns more about birds, recognition of their habitat becomes a part of your consciousness. Just as you would not go to the Stream Trail in Redwood Regional Park (redwood forest) to look for a Blue Grosbeak, you would not expect to see a Winter Wren in Sibley Regional Reserve (mixed woodland and chaparral). Birds and plant communities are intimately interrelated. Plant communities are defined as “repeatable assemblages of plants that grow together because of similar adaptation to microclimates, soils and slopes, and biotic factors.” Recognizing the plant community that your garden falls into helps you to plant more successfully and attract the maximum number of birds that live in that community.

The University of California Press has recently published two new books for those of us that love to watch and understand the interaction of birds and plants. Both are edited by Phyllis Farber, a long-time advocate of explaining the special place that California is. The first, *Introduction to California Chaparral*, by Ronald Quinn and Sterling Keeley, is a book about a plant community that surrounds us and the animals and birds that it supports. The second, *Designing California Native Gardens*, by Glenn Keator and Alrie Middlebrook, is a brand-new gardening book arranged around an understanding of your plant community to create a space of beauty and meaning.

Introduction to California Chaparral is an exploration of that scene that we are all familiar with from 60s Westerns—the scrub environment of the dry summer hills of California. There are chapters on climate, kinds of chaparral, the fire cycle and response to fire, and the plants that make up the different kinds of chaparral. Though this may sound dry, the authors are able to convey their thoughts in a lively and interesting way. They are also able to make it relevant to our lives, with a chapter on Living with the Chaparral. There, they

discuss fuel reduction and fuel breaks, prescribed fires, flooding after fire, and other relevant information for homeowners living surrounded by chaparral.

But best of all, there is a chapter on the birds that inhabit the place. Because of the availability of food year-round, over 50 species of birds are permanent residents. Other species, such as the Olive-sided Flycatcher and Violet-Green Swallow, are tropical migrants that come north to breed. The characteristics of chaparral birds are short wings, long tails, and moderately long legs and toes to cling to the vegetation. Many of the truly chaparral-adapted birds prefer not to fly much at all. Think of the Wrentit, hopping through the shrubs, usually heard but not seen. It can hop as fast as it can fly, so the life-mated pairs generally stay concealed in the brushy territory that they stake out. The same rules apply to the California Thrasher, a rather weak flyer that prefers moving through the leaf litter that it stirs up with its powerful beak. Because it can move rocks and stems to look for food, the beak grows throughout its life. A young Thrasher will have a shorter beak that a fully mature bird. Interestingly enough, both the male and the female of both the Wrentit and the California Thrasher sing. California Towhee and Spotted Towhee, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, California Quail, Scrub Jay, Steller's Jay, and Anna's Hummingbird are all familiar species associated with chaparral. There is a discussion of the adaptations to the environment for each species.

There is a chapter devoted to the plants of the chaparral plant community, many of which have been written about in these gardening articles. This is not a book about cultivation. Rather, it gives more information about how the particular plant fits into the year-round production of food and cover. Shrubs, trees, and common herb families are discussed. Any gardener interested in the characteristics of plants chosen for their garden will find this interesting reading.

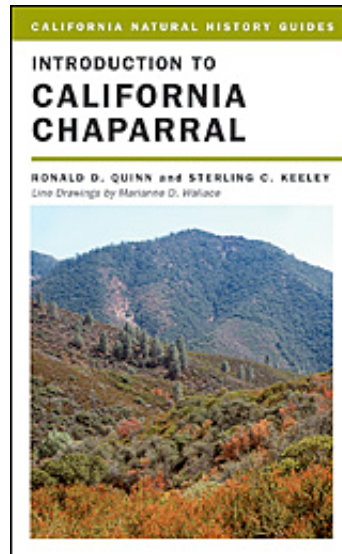
After reading *Introduction to California Chaparral*, you will be ready to dig

into the ideas for planting and cultivation presented in the second book. *Designing*

California Native Gardens is truly a book about design and plant selection to create an artful ecological garden. There are passing references to wildlife use, but this is a book about gardens that adhere to the concept of using the plants of your particular community. Botanist Glenn Keator of Berkeley has been teaching about native plants for many years. On one of his field trips to the White Mountains of Southern California, garden designer Alrie

Middlebrook was inspired to learn more about natives and their use in gardens. The two authors' collaboration over the last 10 years has led to this book. They discuss plant communities from the coastal bluffs to the deserts of southern California. The two chapters that pertain to our gardening needs, the mixed-evergreen forest and the oak woodland, are of particular interest. And of course, there is a chapter on chaparral gardens. At the end of each chapter, there is a section on where in California to go to see the particular community discussed—another wonderful excuse for a road trip.

As birders, we become close observers of the interactions between the birds that we see and their environment. Planting native gardens for birds allows us to create environments that are artful, supportive of the birds that we love, and respectful of the place that we live. These two new books help us learn how we can create those environments with more understanding and care.



Q

The female of this species, a bit drab herself in comparison, is attracted by the bright color of the male.

His beauty, though, is not enough; he must also present her with a nesting cavity to gain her favor.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 7 to learn more.

BBDEEEILNRRSTUW

July

28 Saturday San Mateo Coast

August

18 Saturday Bodega Bay

③ Saturday, July 28

San Mateo Coast

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980.

Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride. Meet at 9 AM at overlook at Pescadero Beach on Highway 1 across from Pescadero Road. Take Crow Canyon Road to I-580, go west to I-238, follow to I-880, then south to SR 92. Cross the San Mateo Bridge (toll) and continue to Half Moon Bay. Turn south on SR 1, go 15 miles to Pescadero Road, turn right into parking lot. Bring lunch and sunscreen—one can get badly burned on a foggy day at the seashore. Early returning shorebirds, gulls, possibly Bank Swallows. Category 1 or 2, with optional Category 3 extension to Año Nuevo Beach.

① Saturday, August 18

Bodega Bay

Leader: Fred Safer, 937-2906.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:30 AM. Meet in parking lot of Tides Restaurant on Bay side of Highway 1 in Bodega at 9:15 AM. Take I-680 across the Benicia Bridge (toll). Go west on I-780 to I-80 towards Sacramento, exit to SR 37. Follow SR 37 to Lakeville Road, turn right. In Petaluma turn left on E Washington Street and continue on Bodega Road, Valley Ford Road and SR 1 to Bodega Bay. Possibilities at Bodega Bay include flocks of shorebirds including Black Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, Marbled Godwit, as well as terns, gulls, cormorants and much more. Bring lunch, liquids and sunscreen.

A field trip planning meeting will be held on Thursday, July 12, at Jean Richmond's home in Alamo, to plan the field trip calendar for the year 2007-2008. The relatively short meeting will start at 7 PM and last not much more than an hour or so. All field trip leaders are invited to participate, as well as any member who would like to be a trip leader. Fifteen leaders or co-leaders led our members on our 38 field trips since last September. Should any members have any ideas for new trips or desire to lead such a trip, please contact Jean Richmond, 837-2843, or Hugh Harvey, 935-2979. Light refreshments will be provided.

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.diabloaudubon.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.

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

Trip Reports

Garin Regional Park, April 7. Not for the first time, the leader had no followers. But he was not lacking in birds, for the cool green hills and bushes of Garin Park had Bullock's Orioles aplenty, Black-headed Grosbeak, House Wren, Wilson's Warbler, all singing prominently. A Warbling Vireo was gathering large pieces of bark for her nest. Two very common birds were also worth noting; far more Steller's Jays than I've ever seen at Garin, and a flock of Cedar Waxwings, which we haven't seen on our chapter trips there previously. In all there were 46 species, counting the impressive large falcon that sailed overhead, for which the light (and my skill) was too poor to decide whether Prairie or Peregrine. *Fred Safer*

Pine Canyon/Diablo Foothills, April 14. Despite threatening skies and a light drizzle, four birders braved the elements and were rewarded with brief sunbreaks before the skies opened and the rain began in earnest. During our abbreviated hike, we saw a total of 32 species. Highlights were several Bullock's Orioles, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, both Audubon's and Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Unfortunately the weather literally dampened the bird activity, as they sought shelter before we did. However, the canyon was beautiful in the much-needed rain. *Nancy Wenninger*

Del Puerto Canyon, April 26. Twelve members made the trip on a beautiful, warm day with light wind except in the San Joaquin Valley and lower Del Puerto Canyon where it was quite windy. Below the canyon we came upon a beautiful four-foot-long gopher snake which was moved off to the shoulder from where it disappeared into a hole on the bank. Among the 63 bird species seen or heard were a Green Heron, two Golden Eagles, Wild Turkeys, a Greater Roadrunner along the creek at MP 6.37, an adult and a young Great Horned Owl in a nest hole on the rock face (MP 3.8), a male Costa's Hummingbird (5.3), Ash-throated Flycatchers, many Western Kingbirds, five swallow species, Magpies, Phainopeplas, one Orange-crowned and one Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeaks and many orioles. Lawrence's Goldfinches were in the campground at Frank Raines Park and at the CDF fire station at San Antonio Junction. Three Lewis's Woodpeckers were along San Antonio Valley Road a quarter mile south of the junction and another half a mile beyond. On the way home a calling Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen at Murietta's Well near the north end of Mines Road. *Jean Richmond*

Mines Road, April 28. Seventeen birders gathered at Murietta's Well on Mines Road to begin the trip. The first arrivals watched a nearby Eurasian Collared-Dove for a considerable time, allowing an in-depth study of the identifying markings and a comparison with the native Mourning Dove, also seen here

Trip Reports

Continued from Page 4
this morning. By the time everyone had arrived, three Eurasian Collared-Doves were observed. This species was a record bird for some of the group. An immature Red-tailed Hawk, a dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk, a Western Tanager and three Bullock's Orioles were also seen. With the unseasonably warm weather, added to the already dry year, many species seen at this stop in the past were not present. Lake Del Valle was also slower than usual, especially on the lake. But the several species of swallows and the White-throated Swifts at the bridge are always a treat. The MP 5.75 stop on Mines Road produced Phainopepla, California Thrasher, Bewick's Wren (it seems to be a very good year for this species, seen and/or heard in numerous locations), and Western Bluebird, as expected, but no Lazuli Buntings here. The drive between the MP 5.75 stop and the junction included a sighting of a Golden Eagle high over the road and a stop at the fire station where we saw five Lawrence's Goldfinches. This bird was also a life-list species for some of our birders. Bullock's Oriole and Western Kingbird were also present here. San Antonio Road south of the junction was dependable for Lewis's Woodpeckers; four were seen at the usual stop. However, the pond farther along the road was practically dry, and only a pair of Mallards was observed there. On the return drive toward the junction, a flock of about a hundred blackbirds crossed the road in front of our caravan. Fortunately, they were identified as Tri-colored Blackbird. This species was the third "lifer" for the day for at least one member. The group tallied over 60 species for the day.

Gary Fregien

Mitchell Canyon, May 10. Nineteen members and guest spent the morning at Mitchell Canyon. We didn't hike very far because of a large variety of bird songs and sightings with many stops along the way. 47 species were seen in the four hours we spent in cool morning to very warm noontime temperatures. Highlights included a probable nesting pair of Cooper's Hawks, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-peewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, many singing Cassin's Vireos, singing Bewick's Wren and House Wren,

very good looks at Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, a late Golden-crowned Sparrow, many singing Lazuli Buntings, and Bullock's Orioles.

Maury Stern

East Contra Costa County, May 19. Six members enjoyed a clear and warm, yet breezy day visiting numerous locations throughout East Contra Costa County. Stops included Marsh Creek Trail, Jersey Island, Bethel Island, Delta Road in Knightsen and Holland Tract, with special views of Dutch Slough, Piper Slough and Rock Slough. Throughout the day, the prominent view of Mount Diablo provided a beautiful background to the Delta surroundings. Highlights of the trip included exceptional views of Blue Grosbeaks, Swainson's Hawks, Yellow-billed Magpies and Burrowing Owls. At one point along Jersey Island Road a pair of Swainson's Hawks was perched in a nearby tree. As the pair interacted while perched and during subsequent flight, it was assumed that they were nesting in the immediate area. At the same location an entertaining pair of House Wrens was observed entering and leaving their nest site which was located down inside a hollow steel pole supporting a metal gate. Another pleasant surprise were three pairs of Cinnamon Teal near the end of Jersey Island Road. After locating Yellow-billed Magpies near Knightsen Elementary School, further east along Delta Road, the group observed six Burrowing Owls perched on fence posts within a radius of one hundred yards. The Burrowing Owls were a life bird for one of the members. Near an old abandoned wooden building along Holland Tract Road we had good views of Bullock's Orioles and their nest which was located in an adjacent pepper tree. In all there was a total of 54 species observed or heard.

Paul Schorr

West Briones Regional Park, May 24. 19 members and guests spent a lovely morning at Briones Regional Park. We saw 33 species typical of the Spring. A pair of Lawrence's Goldfinches and many singing Lazuli Buntings were the highlights.

Maury Stern

Livermore, June 6. Ten birders roamed the Livermore Valley in search of land birds and adventure, both of which we had in abundance. After meeting at Veteran's Park, we birded the Del Valle Staging Area

off Arroyo Road in Livermore, then back to Veteran's and Sycamore Parks, on to the South end of Del Valle to look for the Chat, finishing up at Murrietta Wells for the Eurasian Collared Dove and a quick pass along Dublin Blvd. for the Burrowing Owl. With perfect weather, a congenial group of birders and a total of 67 species (probably the 68th being a Bald Eagle seen so briefly it wasn't 100%) the final weekly outing of the season was a smashing success.

Bingham Gibbs

Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline (Franklin Ridge Loop Trail), June 9. This trip was a joint outing with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. One MDAS member, four SFBBO members, and three nonmembers participated. Typical oak woodland species were seen with good looks at Ash-throated and Pacific Slope Flycatchers. The large numbers of Spotted Towhees seemed noteworthy. A Bewick's Wren, obviously upset with two Acorn Woodpeckers invading "his" brush pile, provided a bit of humor. A Caspian Tern flying overhead was a nice addition to our sightings. 36 species were seen or heard.

Cheryl Abel

Birding Tennessee *Cont'd from Page 8*

us while we were listening and watching for the Whip-poor-will. We found the Whip-poor-will a bit later, and delighted in watching it chase and consume fireflies. It was another great day of birding and we added yet another warbler species, the Cape May Warbler.

In addition to more outstanding birding, the fourth day included some historical exploration as we toured The Homeplace. This is a 19th century living history farm located in the Land-Between-the-Lakes NRA, an extensive wooded peninsula that covers over 170,000 acres between Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley.

On the final day before we returned to Nashville, we visited Fort Donelson National Battlefield, a Civil War historical park, and Tennessee NWR. Both of those locations provided us with additional birding opportunities and culminated a most rewarding trip during which we saw 132 species, including 29 species of warblers. Of the 46 new life birds for us, 17 were warbler species. Throughout the trip John was an excellent guide and it was clearly evident that the study of birds is his passion.

Cheers for Our Volunteers

Our Chapter participates in several environmental happenings each year. The main goal of the Audubon Society is conservation. We concentrate on this in our table display at these events, with an emphasis on reaching young people. Each event is an opportunity for our members to play an important role as a volunteer. We have a list of faithful and reliable members who generously come forth to help. We thank them and urge others to join the group. It can be rewarding and fun.

We thank these volunteers for their assistance at recent events:

Earth Day and John Muir Birthday celebration at John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez. Saturday, April 21. Ron Kline, Kathy Kellogg, Pam and John Leggett, Diane Malucelli, and Ben Walker..

Mount Diablo Audubon membership drive and Mothers' Day festivities at Wild Birds Unlimited. Saturday, May 12. Fred Graser,



A family visits the Mount Diablo Audubon Society table at Borges Ranch on June 9. Under an unrelenting sun, Alice Holmes offers a prize to the youngster for correctly identifying a hummingbird nest.

Hugh Harvey, Kathy Kellogg, Ron Kline, Ann McGregor, Mona and Ed Skoog.

Heritage Day at Old Borges Ranch, Saturday, June 9. Carol and John Harkin, Alice Holmes, Diane Malucelli, and Rita Tischler. *Shirley Ellis*

Birding Kentucky

Continued from Page 8

property, which included both riparian and grassland areas. The first morning might have been enough to satisfy many of the 17 participants, for with glorious weather there were warblers aplenty, as well as Indigo Buntings, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and many others. Another birdwalk after lunch revealed even more species.

On the second day, after exploring other habitats, both morning and afternoon, we had an hour-long excursion aboard the paddlewheel riverboat *Dixie Belle* on the Kentucky River, which borders the Village. On the following day, we had a free afternoon, and my wife and I drove to the Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary, where we saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, which we had not seen at the Village.

We were treated to a performance of Shaker music in the Meeting House, which demonstrated the dance and gestures that gave the sect its familiar name. The room itself is phenomenal, with separate entrances for men and for women, with separated seating also, and with benches around the perimeter for visitors from "The World."

At week's end, with 99 species recorded by the group, we resumed our trip by recognizing International Migratory Bird

Day at a festival at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge in Indiana. Do we count the Wood Thrush a Ranger had captured in a mist net? We'll surely count the Mourning Warbler, a life bird for us, which appeared at their viewing window. We were privileged to tour an area generally closed to the public, where we were surprised to find many shorebirds in this area, and we were thrilled to see two Bald Eagles, side by side on a nest.

We continued our drive with other stops at nature centers in Indiana and Ohio, then reboarded Amtrak towards home.



Wood Thrush at Muscatatuck NWR

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



SUMMER BIRDFEEDING

This spring and summer may turn out to be one of the most successful nesting and fledgling cycles in many years. We have received many reports of young backyard birds being seen around the feeders. Highlights included numerous Nuttall's and Downy Woodpeckers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, House Finches and both Jays.

Both Hooded and Bullocks Orioles are being reported throughout our area, but in much smaller numbers than previous years. Have you seen any of the spectacularly beautiful nectar-feeding birds? Please call in your reports so we can map the sightings. You might also try feeding grape jelly to the orioles. We are receiving reports of them really enjoying it.

Troubled with Band-tailed or city pigeons? Put a wire cage around your tube feeder or over ground feeder stations. It really works to deter them!

Try safflower seed if squirrels or black birds are a nuisance. They do not like safflower, which is a high-energy food source. Doves and Titmice really appreciate it. For other birds such as finches, chickadees, and jays, it is an "acquired" taste. Introduce safflower by combining it with black oil sunflower in a feeder.

Establishing a squirrel feeding station 15-20 feet away from bird feeders will help keep squirrels occupied and full. They will then tend to avoid bird feeders. The key to having a successful squirrel feeding station is to offer a variety of foods: squirrel mix (sunflower, peanuts, and corn), corn on the cob, and squirrel suet.

We are receiving many reports of Black-headed Grosbeaks. The males have an orange breast and collar and black head. Females have a buffy, lightly streaked breast and eyebrows. They certainly live up to their name with a very large bill, which is ideal for eating their favorite food—sunflower seeds. They will readily come to bird feeders. These grosbeaks nest in our backyard and seem to return year after year.

Mike and Cecil Williams

Wild Birds Unlimited

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Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

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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.



MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

Please enroll my family and me as a member of Mount Diablo Audubon Society 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 tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

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MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:
Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Court, Danville, CA 94526

Western Bluebird • *Sialia mexicana*



Brian Murphy photo

Most Western Bluebirds prefer open fields with one or two large oak trees, pastures, vineyards, old orchards or large mowed yards with selected medium-sized trees for nest guarding. Nest boxes should be placed out in the open on fence posts or metal poles not nestled into groves of trees.

Bluebirds are primarily insect eaters. They are seldom attracted to the typical bird feeding stations that offer a variety of seeds, although they do like berries. You may be able to attract Western Bluebirds to your yard if you provide mealworms. You may also have luck if you have native berry-producing plants. Bluebirds

feed primarily on the ground—like the American Robin and other thrushes, to whom they are related. Or they will drop down from a fencepost and capture a flying insect. They like spiders, crickets, ants, grubs and small worms.

Bluebird males establish and defend feeding territories to which they bring their mate. A successful pair will return year after year to the same area, often the same nest box. When a male dies over the winter, one of his male offspring may take over the feeding territory. Once you have bluebirds nesting on your property, you are likely to have bluebirds forever!

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Duck River Bottoms at Tennessee NWR
Photo courtesy © Bryan J. Ramsey

Parallel Trips for Eastern Warblers

Spring Migration in Tennessee, May 6-11, 2007

By Paul Schorr

On May 6 we flew to Nashville and were met at the Doubletree Hotel that evening by John Robinson, President of *On My Mountain Nature Tours*. At that time we were introduced to the other three participants and John provided us with additional information about the tour and specifically the itinerary for the following day. John was the speaker for MDAS at the October 2006 meeting, and at that meeting we became very interested in this trip.

The next morning we visited nearby Radnor Lake which is considered to be the best birding location in Nashville. There we were rewarded with fifteen species of warblers, of which seven were new life birds. From Radnor Lake we proceeded to Cross Creeks NWR, and then continued on to Paris Landing State Park which was our headquarters for the remainder of the

tour. This is a beautiful location that overlooks the Tennessee River as it flows into Kentucky Lake. In all, we totaled twenty-five life birds for the day.

We spent the next full day at Cross Creeks NWR where John was employed as a refuge manager from 1985 through 1988. This 8,862-acre refuge stretches for eleven miles on either side of Lake Barkley on the Cumberland River, and provides excellent habitats for various species of birds. We added an additional nine birds to our life lists, including six warbler species.

On the third day we left early and traveled to Reelfoot Lake near the Mississippi River. Along the way we were treated to a pair of Mississippi Kites perched (and making love) in a very nearby tree. We had great views! Another target bird for the day was the Fish Crow which we saw and heard at our lunch stop. That evening we birded in Land-Between-the-Lakes National Recreation Area, hoping to see an American Woodcock and a Whip-poor-will. We were very fortunate to have the American Woodcock fly directly over

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Spring Migration in Kentucky, May 6-11, 2007

By Ellis Myers

With the opportunity to observe warblers that don't choose to come to the West Coast, we enrolled in an Elderhostel program *Birding in the Bluegrass*, to be held at the Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill, near Frankfort, Kentucky. From Martinez, we took Amtrak's *California Zephyr* and *Cardinal* to Charleston, West Virginia, where we rented a car for a grand circle drive.

We made a short visit to Cumberland Gap National Historic Park on the way to Kentucky. We observed few birds, however, for the weather prevented us from even seeing the view from the ridge.

Our lodging at the Shaker Village was remarkable. We stayed in the West Family Sisters Shop, restored with reproduction Shaker furniture (but with Tempurpedic mattresses). Meals, served in the Trustees' Office Dining Room, featured many Shaker recipes, such as chess pie, and were the best of 35 Elderhostels we've attended.

Each day began with a birdwalk somewhere on the outstanding 3000-acre

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