



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 55, Number 9

June 2010

Brazil's Atlantic Forest • Bob Lewis



Bob Lewis will take us on a photographic tour of Brazil's threatened Atlantic forest in which he will chronicle his August 2008 trip guided by Brazilian birder and photographer Edson Endrigo. This forested, mountainous area west of Rio and Sao Paulo, originally 1.2 million square kilometers, is now only about 100,000 square kilometers, or 7% of its original size. Nevertheless, the area harbors over 900 bird species, including 144 endemics; 20,000 plant species, including 8,000 endemics; and numerous mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish. Visiting the unique habitats in the area, you will see a variety of South American birds, including colorful humming-

birds, toucans, and tanagers; multitudinous flycatchers; cryptically colored ant birds, tapaculos and ovenbirds.

Bob, a retired chemist, recently retired from the Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors but remains involved with the GGA as a member of the Education Committee. He is the co-compiler, with Dave Quady, of the Oakland Christmas Bird Count and, as President of the Farallon Islands Foundation, Bob's interests include bird conservation, distribution and taxonomy. Together, with his wife Hanno, he is a perpetual traveler in search of new birds to watch and photograph. He has a life list of more than 3,700 birds out of almost 10,000 birds worldwide.

From the left:

- Blue-naped Chlorophonia
- Saffron Toucanet
- Bare-faced Currawong

All photos by Bob Lewis



Bob has taught birding classes at Albany Adult School since 1993, teaming with his friend, Rusty Scalf. He has also taught at the Oakland Museum of California and enjoys featuring his photographic efforts in his classes and lectures. See www.wingbeats.org for details of upcoming classes and www.flickr.com/photos/boblewis for more of Bob's photos.

Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be our annual potluck dinner on **Thursday, June 3**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

6:00 PM Doors open

6:30 PM Dinner is served*

* Please remember to bring your own utensils and a cup.

8:00 PM Announcements and Election of Officers

8:15 PM Speaker: **Bob Lewis**

The next meeting will be Thursday, September 2. There will be no meeting in July or August.

Annual Potluck Dinner and Elections

The potluck dinner meeting on June 3 will be at our regular meeting place at The Gardens at Heather Farm. Doors open at 6:00 PM. Members bring a main dish, salad, or dessert and their own utensils and coffee cup. Please mark your serving plates. Coffee, tea and punch will be provided. Bring your own wine if you wish.



Accolades and thanks are owed to our Hospitality Chair, Gerry Argenal, and her volunteer helpers for setting the ambience for this occasion.

Following dinner and before the presentation by Bob Lewis, there will be a brief meeting at which time the officers of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be elected to serve for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The current officers have agreed to continue their duties if reelected, but nominations will be also accepted from the floor.

President: Jimm Edgar

Vice-president: Mike Williams

Secretary: Diana Granados

Treasurer: Steve Buffi

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

President's Corner Observations

By Jimm Edgar

By Maury Stern

Summer is upon us and that means our monthly meeting schedule goes on hold until September. We continue to have a few field trips, so maybe we'll see you on one of them.

The Bay Area Audubon Council, known as BAAC, meets on a quarterly basis. There are representatives from each of the eight Bay Area Audubon chapters. It was our turn to host the meeting last month, which means bring the food. Audubon California sets the agenda usually. We meet from 9 until 3 on a Saturday. We have a few of our members who usually go to represent our chapter, but since we were hosting I decided to go. Most of the morning is spent with chapter reports. If you would like to read the notes from these meetings go to Audubon California's website then go to "chapter" and then "council meetings". I was so impressed with what all of the chapters are doing in their communities. Here are a few of the highlights.

Golden Gate, which is Berkeley and San Francisco, is deeply involved in the whole Altamont Pass wind farm mess and the continued loss of raptors to the turbines. They have spent over \$100,000 fighting to save these birds. They also are working hard to save the nesting areas on the Alameda Naval station for Least Terns. The other thing that was sad to hear was the Fisher family (think GAP) has donated money to put artificial turf on all the soccer fields in Golden Gate Park as well as 60-ft. light towers—no more grass and lots of light at night. Not good for birds.

Santa Clara told us about plans in the Panoche Valley, east of I-5, to put a 4,800-acre solar project right in the middle of the valley. The environmental impact would be huge.

In fact, every chapter had some great things to share. Dan Taylor, who is Audubon California's policy director and works with the state legislature very closely, said the State Park initiative, which would create enough funds to make all State Parks be free to the public *and* put \$500 million into state park maintenance every year has qualified with enough signatures to be on the November ballot. This is great news for our state parks and for the people of California. Audubon is working hard in Sacramento to keep the environment healthy for birds and people.

Have a good summer

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to Maury Stern at mbstern2@yahoo.com or (925) 284-5980 or send to EBB Sightings@yahoo.com.



The highlight of the past month has been the return of the migrants throughout the county. Some will stay to breed and others are passing through to the north or the mountains. Mount Diablo has been especially busy.

Golden Eagles were seen at Heather Farm Pond on 4/16 (MS), Round Valley RP 4/18 (KR), and Mitchell Canyon (MDSP) on 5/1 (MD).

Merlins were seen at Mitchell Canyon by DS on 4/26 and JoD 4/29.

A **Western Screech Owl** was heard at Fernandez Ranch in Franklin Canyon by SH on 5/4. Fernandez Ranch will open to the public on June 5 under the auspices of the Muir Heritage Land Trust.

Vaux's Swifts were seen over Heather Farm on 4/29 by FS.

A **Black-chinned Hummingbird** visited P&NS's Antioch yard on 4/20.

A **Costa's Hummingbird** was at Mitchell Canyon on 5/1. MD.

Calliope Hummingbirds were numerous in Mitchell Canyon, MOS, and DW saw one at her Moraga feeder on 4/15 for yard bird number 100.

Rufous Hummingbirds were widespread. MOS

Olive-sided Flycatchers were heard and seen at Tilden RP by JoD on 4/13 and 4/18. MOS saw them at Mitchell Canyon by 4/29.

Western Wood-Peepees were at Mitchell Canyon on 4/23 (JS, MK), and Las Trampas RP on 4/25. KR.

Western Kingbirds were seen at Wildcat Canyon by DH and JCh and Castle Rock RP on 4/30 by BH.

Hammond's Flycatchers were in Mitchell Canyon the last week of April and beginning of May with four seen on 4/26 by DS.

Pacific-slope and Ash-throated Flycatchers returned in large numbers to the area.

Cassin's and Warbling Vireos were also common. MOS.

Welcome New Members

AAA Northern CA	Walnut Creek
John Bodle	Pittsburg
Louise Dibble	Walnut Creek
Jean Halford	Martinez
Ross Kennedy	Fremont
Jesse Krider	Alamo
Rahima Warren	Lafayette

Four **Phainopeplas** were at the Archery Range area in Briones RP on 5/6. LW.

Warblers—Migrant warblers were in substantial numbers especially in Mitchell Canyon. Many people were seeing groups of 7 to 9 species working the Interior Live Oak trees. There were **Nashville, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, Hermit, MacGillivray's** as well as **Wilson's, Orange-crowned** and **Yellow-rumped**.

Western Tanagers also moved through in large numbers. MOS.

Rufous-crowned Sparrows were at Sibley RP on 4/24 (RS), and 4/29 JD.

Chipping and Grasshopper Sparrows were seen at Wildcat Canyon by DH and JCh on 4/18.

Black-headed Grosbeaks were common. MOS.

A **Blue Grosbeak** was at Black Diamond Mines RP on 5/3. P&NS.

Lazuli Buntings returned to the county and one came to M&EM's yard in Moraga.

Hooded and Bullock's Orioles were seen throughout the area. MOS.

PB Pat Bacchetti, PC Phil Capitolo, JCh Jim Chiropolis, MD Matthew Dodder and class, JoD Joseph Dodge, JD Judith Dunham, AG Anna Griffith, HH Hugh Harvey, DH Derek Heins, BH Bob Hislop, SH Steve Hutchcraft, MK Mary Krenz, MLM Mary Lou Mull, M&EM Mimi and Ellis Myers, MR Mark Rauzon, SuR Suzanne Rauzon, KR Kathy Robertson, TR Ted Robertson, JiR Jim Roethe, FS Fred Safier, RS Rusty Scalf, P&NS Paul and Nancy Schorr, JS Judy Sierra, DS Dan Singer, MS Maury Stern, LW Lisa Wahl, DW Denise Wight. RP Regional Park, MOS Many Observers.

Volunteers at Audubon Events



A Birthday–Earth Day celebration marked the 40th anniversary of Earth Day and the 172nd birthday of John Muir at John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez on April 17. Abigail Madden and Donna Kramer were two members of Mount Diablo Audubon Society who volunteered to host an information display.

With habitat conservation and environmental education as touchstones for our actions, members of Mount Diablo Audubon connect with our community and invite others to adopt similar goals. Thanks and compliments are due the following volunteers for their participation recently: DuBose Forrest, Norm Kirshen, Donna Kramer, Abigail Madden, Diane Malucelli, Michelle de los Reyes, Moses de los Reyes, Sandy Ritchie, and Bev Walker. Our next outreach event will be at Borges Ranch's Heritage Day festivities on June 12. At press time, there was need for one or two more members to volunteer. Please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Moses de los Reyes at (925)755-3734 if you can help.



International Migratory Bird Day and Mothers' Day celebrations were the occasions for a membership drive and information event hosted by Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill on May 8. MDAS volunteer DuBose Forrest (right) talks with Ken Fisher from Muir Heritage Land Trust.

A Free Bird for Your Life List?

Have you observed a Winter Wren in California and also one on your travels to the East Coast? You may soon have one more species than you thought on your life list of North American birds!

The American Ornithological Union's Checklist Committee has agreed upon a split that separates the Old World form of Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) from the New World. Then the North American species would be divided into eastern and western entities. These would be named *T. hiemalis* and *T. pacificus*. This will become official only on publication in the July issue of *The Auk*. But what would they be called in everyday English?

When you look at a range map for Winter Wren, you will see that there is a population from mid-Texas to the east and another of just the Pacific Coast states. The choice has not yet been made. Among



Western Winter Wren
Nannus hiemalis pacificus
Birds of the Pacific States
Ralph Hoffmann • 1927

the possibilities are Eastern Winter Wren and Western Winter Wren (which may be hyphenated as Winter-Wren). Pacific Wren or Redwood Wren is a possibility for the western species. There is a lively dialogue (argument?) going on about this issue that is fun to read. See www.aou.org/committees/nacc/proposals/2009_E_1_supplemental.pdf and also <http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=167618>.

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Tern Watch

If you love birds and want to help protect a local endangered species from predators at Alameda Point National Wildlife Refuge, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants you. This Navy-owned land is closed to the public and this is a rare opportunity to view Least Terns up close and personal.

The Least Tern is vulnerable to a long list of predators, such as feral and wild mammals (cat, dog, fox, skunk) and birds (hawks, falcons, owls, crows, gulls). To protect Least Tern nest sites from disturbance, terrestrial predators are controlled by fences and trapping. However, avian predators are a big problem and your help is needed to curb and report the predators. Volunteer presence appears to deter many daytime predators from visiting the tern colony!

Each volunteer must attend one 2½-hour training session. Then each volunteer, using his/her personal vehicle, binoculars and scope, observes the tern colony for 3-hour periods from a safe distance. You are close enough to see and enjoy the tern behaviors seen by few people anywhere: courtship, aerial displays, mating, nesting, raising chicks to fledglings, feeding chicks and mates, and so much more. Each volunteer is asked to record predator and least tern activities. It's fun, easy, and you'll learn a lot about the Least Terns.

Volunteer information and training sessions: Registration and refreshments start at 5:30 PM. Each session will start promptly at 6:00 PM and go to 8:30 PM. .

Thursday, May 27 or Thursday, June 24 at Alameda USFWS office, 2275 Monarch Street, Alameda. Only *one* training session is required per volunteer. RSVP required: call Susan Euing @ 510 521-9624.

Q

This bird's genus name was derived from the Greek words for "spear" and for "bearer", because of the long, sharp bill. This bird's species name honors a nineteenth-century American naturalist, whose given names were "John Henry," not to be confused with a more well-known naturalist, "William", after whom a nutcracker was named.

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

ABCEEGKLRRS

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

June

5 Saturday Outer Point Reyes
19–20 Saturday/Sunday Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

July

24 Saturday San Mateo Coast

August

21 Saturday Bodega Bay

② Saturday, June 5 Outer Point Reyes

Leader: David Hutton, 938-4485

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:00 AM. Meet 9:00 AM at Drake's Beach parking lot. From I-80 in Vallejo, follow SR 37 19.1 miles to Atherton Avenue, exit and turn left, cross US 101 to San Marin Drive and continue for 3 miles. Turn right on Novato Blvd, turn left on Point Reyes-Petaluma Road for 7 miles to the stop sign. Turn right and drive to SR 1, turn left and pass through Point Reyes Station. At the green bridge turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Continue for about 14 miles to Drake's Beach Road on left. We are hoping for migrants. Weather is unpredictable. .

③ Saturday/Sunday, June 19–20 Sierra Valley and Yuba Pass

Leaders: Rosita and Hugh Harvey, (925) 935-2979.

Saturday we will bird in the Sierra Valley for basin birds. Sunday we will be birding in the Yuba Pass area for mountain birds. Meet at the parking lot at the top of the pass at 7:00 AM Saturday morning. Make motel reservations now! In Sierra City, Herrington's Sierra Pines (530-862-1151 or 800-682-9848) is one of the most popular; or try Yuba River Inn (530-862-1122) with cabins and kitchenettes (cash or check only). Bassett's Station (530-862-1297) at Highway 49 and Gold Lake Road has accommodations and meals. Sierra Valley Lodge is in Calpine (530-994-3367 or 800-858-0322). More listings are at www.sierracity.com/Stay/LodgingCamp.html. Campground sites at Yuba Pass and Chapman Creek downhill to the west are available first-come/first-served for only three days at a time. Longer term reservations can be made at 877-444-6777, for an additional \$10 charge.

For information about this trip after June 13 call Wild Birds Unlimited (925-798-0303).



Yuba Pass trip, 2008. Watching a Williamson's Sapsucker nest. Hugh Harvey photo.

Come birding with us in June!



Wildflowers frame the view looking across Drakes Bay from Chimney Rock at Point Reyes National Seashore.

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 drink 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.

Trip Reports

North Briones, April 19. A sunny, but cool day was enjoyed by eight birders. We had an interesting start with busy House Wrens in the shrubs next to the parking area. A female was begging while a male was darting around, including between the birders a few times. The grasslands held Horned Lark, American Pipit, and Lark Sparrow with very close-up views of the latter. We had a great look at a male Orange-crowned Warbler alternately singing and preening. We even saw the orange crown! Summer arrivals included Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Ash-throated Flycatcher.

We watched for a while as a Golden Eagle flew back and forth over the nearby ridge tops, constantly harassed by American Crows and a Red-tailed Hawk. A Lazuli Bunting was possibly the highlight bird, plus we had a final treat of two American White Pelicans flying overhead. The final count was 52 species seen or heard. In addition, the expected spring wildflowers were enjoyed along the walk.

Cheryl Abel

Continued on Page 5 »

Trip Reports

» *Continued from Page 4*

Del Puerto Canyon, April 22. The Del Puerto Canyon field trip in past years has proven a very popular event—this year was no exception, 18 avid birders turned out. With a brief stop at the Westley rest area on Interstate 5, where Western Kingbird and Loggerhead Shrike were found, we were off to a good start. At the lower easterly end of Del Puerto Canyon road Grasshopper Sparrow, Ash-throated Flycatcher and a gathering of Tricolored Blackbirds were seen. Moving up the canyon and before Frank Raines Park, we found Rock Wren, Costa's Hummingbird, Golden Eagle, Western Bluebird, Bullock's Oriole, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow; some of us also were treated to good views of two Greater Roadrunners, Phainopepla and Western Wood-Pewee. Lunch was a welcome break at the campground just west of Fred Raines Park. Here Lawrence's Goldfinches and a House Wren were found. At the junction of Del Puerto Canyon Road and Mines Road we turned south on San Antonio Valley Road for approximately a mile and found Lewis's Woodpecker and a pair of Ring-necked Ducks on the pond east of the road. Completing the bird checklist, a total of 71 species were observed. On the return trip north via Mines Road, some of us stopped just south of MP 13.83 and birded a clump of willows beside the creek; two additional birds were observed but not included in the final tally, Wilson's Warbler and to everyone's delight two Nashville Warblers.

David Hutton

Mines Road, April 24. It has been two or three years since our Chapter field trip participants have been able to see Mines Road when it was green and still carpeted with flowers. This year proved to be an exceptional trip with only one of our target birds missed, the Lawrence's Goldfinch. This is a species which can be elusive, not always being seen where one might expect it or where it has been in the past. The many other wonderful sights experienced by the 14 members and guests more than made up for that miss.

It was a coin collecting kind of day, we found a rare double eagle. Though we did not actually find a \$20 gold coin, we did see a soaring Golden Eagle and our last bird of the day was a perched adult Bald Eagle.

Other highlights among the 73 species identified were: Eurasian Collared-Dove, Bullock's Oriole and White-tailed Kite at Murietta's Well; the three Grebe species at Del Valle Regional Park; California Thrasher, Phainopepla, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow along the wonderful hillside at MP 5.75; a nesting Say's Phoebe; a male Wood Duck and Chipping Sparrows at our lunch stop; nesting Violet-crowned Swallows and an Ash-throated Flycatcher at The Junction; two Lewis's Woodpeckers, a pair of Ring-necked Ducks and the Bald Eagle, all in the north end of the San Antonio Valley.

In addition to the birds, we had many carpets of Goldfields, Fiddlenecks, Birds-eye Gilia, dark purple Larkspurs, Lupines, Owl's Clover and many others.

Hugh B. Harvey

Mitchell Canyon, April 29. Twenty-two members and guests spent a beautiful morning at Mitchell Canyon with fair weather and blue skies. Wildflowers were in good numbers and birds totaled 56 for the day. The bird of the day was a male Calliope Hummingbird, sitting on an open branch, that everyone was able to see. We also had an 8-warbler tree with Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, Hermit, and Wilson's seen over about a half-hour period. Other highlights were a well-seen Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, California



Maddalena Ranch, Feather River Land Trust in Sierra Valley, is the site of a wildlife observation platform to be inaugurated this summer, funded, in part, by Mount Diablo Audubon Society.

Thrasher singing, a calling Hammond's Flycatcher, and Western Tanagers.

Maury Stern

Carquinez Straits Regional Park, May 4. Five birders spent a spring morning hiking the Franklin Ridge Loop Trail at the Carquinez Straits Regional Park. Birding started at the parking lot as we watched a Red-shouldered Hawk catch a vole and eventually fly off with it. Due to the dense vegetation and swarms of mosquitos, the climb to the ridge left some birds in the "heard only" category. Once on top we enjoyed great views of the Straits and mothball fleet. We could also look down at Red-tailed Hawks soaring below us. Cliff Swallows were abundant overhead. Lark and Savannah Sparrows offered good looks. 41 species were seen or heard. Wildflowers were also enjoyed, particularly large numbers of narrow-leaved mules ears.

Cheryl Abel

East Contra Costa County, May 8. Eleven members and guests participated in the chapter's annual spring outing to East Contra Costa County where our birding took us to Marsh Creek Trail in Oakley, Jersey Island, Bethel Island and the Knightsen area along Delta Road. The group enjoyed a cool morning along Marsh Creek Trail where the highlights were a singing male Blue Grosbeak, a singing male Western Tanager and a very cooperative Green Heron. The next leg of the trip took us to Jersey Island; at that time the temperature had warmed but the breeze had become considerably stronger. There we had good views of another male Blue Grosbeak, Bonaparte's Gulls, Forster's Terns, Swainson's Hawk and Cinnamon Teal. Near the end of Bethel Island Road the group enjoyed great views of a male Black-chinned Hummingbird that continued to return to a very accommodating perch. During lunch at the picnic area at Knightsen School, we watched a Yellow-billed Magpie feed and tend a fledgling that had gotten into the adjacent kindergarten playground. At one point the fledgling hopped its way up the stairs of the slide, but then apparently decided not to make the trip down the slide. After lunch the group enjoyed excellent views of a Burrowing Owl along Delta Road. In all, a total of sixty species were seen or heard, including the following other noteworthy species: Western Kingbird, Barn Owl, Cedar Waxwing and American White Pelican.

Paul Schorr

Anderson Marsh

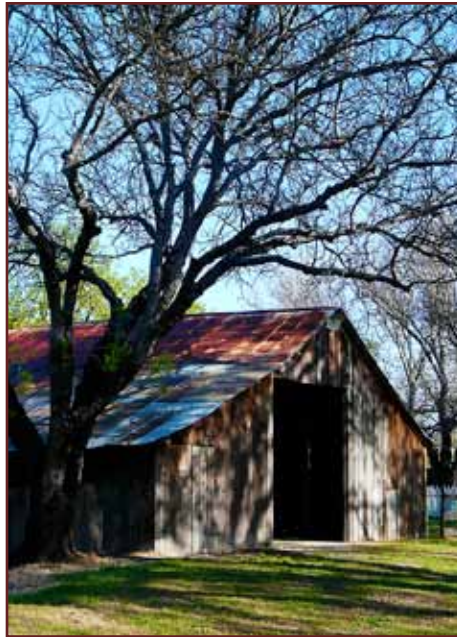
» *Continued from Page 8*

and State Parks. Redbud Audubon Society also received a portion of these funds, which they have dedicated to projects related to Anderson Marsh Historic State Park and Clear Lake State Park.

Ferruginous Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and Short-eared Owl have been seen from the trails, and you may also likely see flights of American White Pelican, almost certainly an Osprey. Sensitive bird species known to nest in the area include: Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Purple Martin, Yellow-breasted Chat and Tricolored Blackbird. Other animals you might see are northwestern pond turtle, muskrat, mink, river otter, deer, skunks and raccoons: also watch—carefully—for rattlesnakes.

Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association offers periodic guided nature walks and ranch house tours; see www.anderson-marsh.org for details. This group also hosts a Bluegrass Festival each September.

You will enjoy a birding excursion to Lake County and Anderson Marsh.



Barn at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is a remembrance of a nineteenth-century cattle-ranching family; nearby archaeological sites are remnants from ancient Pomo villages.



Clark's Grebe • *Aechmophorus clarkii*

Spencer Baird was a remarkable man. At the age of 14, he began a collection of game birds; at age 17 he graduated from Dickinson College, and at age 22 he became Professor of Natural History at that college. In 1850 he was named Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and his bird collection became the nucleus of the museum's holdings. He was a friend of John J. Audubon.

While at Dickinson, Baird encouraged protégés to become collectors. One of these students was John Henry Clark, and Baird made it possible for Clark to join the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican war, this campaign, like that of Lewis and Clark five decades earlier, was to record and collect the botanical, geological, zoological and ethnographic finds the scientists and surveyors encountered along the way. Clark was Assistant Astronomer for the expedition as well as a collector. Clark's Grebe was a new species found just south of the Rio Grande in Chihuahua, Mexico. It was Baird who wrote the final report of the birds and other zoological specimens.



Photo captured at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge by Scott Hein.

Clark's Grebe was later judged to be a phase of the Western Grebe. Then, in 1985, based on a number of characteristics, the AOU restored the bird's status as a distinct species. To distinguish Clark's from Western Grebes, look for the color of the bill (Clark's is orange-yellow, Western has a greenish-yellow hue), and for the white around the eye—the eye of the Western is surrounded by black.

Yellow-billed Magpie Survey

The Yellow-billed Magpie was named the 2009 Audubon California Bird of the Year with nearly 26 percent of votes cast during an online poll last fall. The Yellow-billed Magpie lives only in California's Central Valley, Salinas Valley and coastal ranges. It may be enjoying a comeback after experiencing major declines due to habitat loss, West Nile Virus and pesticide use. It is now an Audubon Watchlist species.

The Yellow-billed Magpie inhabits open country with tall trees. It nests high in trees, predominantly in valley oaks and coast live oaks. The birds forage mostly on the ground in grassland, agricultural fields, pastures, and barnyards, taking a variety of insects and even small mammals.

To help the Yellow-billed Magpie survive, we need to know where it is living and in what numbers. And that's where you can help. Audubon California is sponsoring a four-day statewide survey of Yellow-billed Magpies, enlisting the help of volunteer birders.

Taking part is simple: All you need to do is log into eBird at <http://ebird.org/content/ca> and record your observations. Email your data if that is easier, or if you are unfamiliar with eBird. Email to: ajones@audubon.org. Shortly after the survey, the results will be tallied and every participant will receive a report of the findings. Audubon California will use these findings to guide conservation efforts for this species.

Go birding anytime between June 4–7. You can do one hour, two days—whatever you choose! Pick a place where you might find magpies. Record what you see (tell how many magpies you saw and where you were; you can tell about other species too!). Please submit your data by June 22 to be included in survey results!

Although Yellow-billed Magpies are not prominent in Contra Costa County, they nest in a band in East County from Bethel Island south to Byron. They have been observed in June in the following nearby locations:

- Lake Del Valle
- Mines Road
- Arroyo Mocho Trail, Livermore
- Brannan Island
- Callippe Golf Course, Pleasanton
- Ohlone College, Fremont



This Yellow-billed Magpie is one of Dana Gardner's original scratchboard drawings that illustrate the pages of "Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County." The drawing, signed by the artist and matted for framing, is available for \$75. Other original art is also available for purchase.

Ornithology Opportunities

Fernandez Ranch Public Opening, Saturday, June 5, 10 AM–2 PM. Please join in celebrating the official opening of this magnificent property with welcoming ceremony, refreshments, carriage rides, hikes & more! Purchased in 2005, 702-acre Fernandez Ranch has undergone a major restoration project. Highlights include a new staging area, picnic areas, 156 ft. clear span bridge, large-scale creek restoration,

more than 10,000 native plants and trees, 3.5 miles of multi-use trails including sections accessible to people with disabilities and an important new segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The property has only been available for docent-led tours, but will now be open to the public from dawn to dusk. Gate opens at 10:00 AM on June 5.

Please RSVP to ellen@muirheritage-landtrust.org or call 925-228-7152.

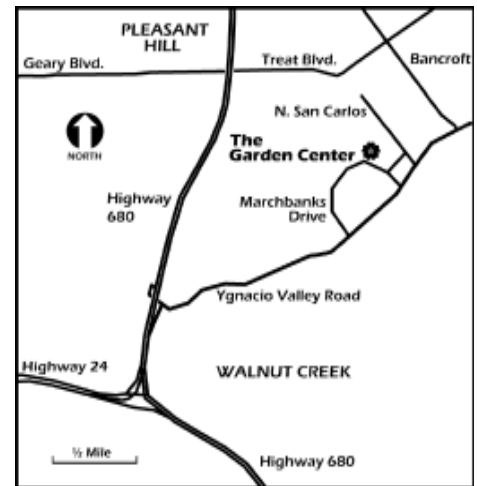
Heritage Day, Borges Ranch, June 12. Mount Diablo Audubon will be present at this living history celebration. Old Borges Ranch is part of Walnut Creek's Open Space Division and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A shuttle bus is the only way to Borges that day, but just park at Northgate High School, 425 Castle Rock Road, for a quick ride up to the ranch. Admission is free; shuttle is \$5 per family. Many local community organizations will be on hand to share information on a variety of outdoor activities such as gardening and beekeeping. Once at the ranch, choose from many activities and share in the fun. Be sure to say hello to our volunteers at the MDAS table.

Ninth Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, June 18–20, Lee Vining. A weekend festival of workshops, field trips, auditorium presentations, art, music, food, and great birding. Not your ordinary bird festival! www.birdchautauqua.org. Presenters and leaders include Jack Laws, Stephen Shunk, Rich Stallcup, and David Wimpfheimer among many others. www.

"How rich will we be when we have converted all our forests, our soil, our water resources, and our minerals into cash?"

*J. N. "Ding" Darling
(1876–1962)*

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 Board of Directors

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MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

- Please enroll my family and me as a member of Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year.
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Cache Creek Nature Trail, Anderson Marsh SHP

Anderson Marsh State Historic Park

Clear Lake is the largest fresh-water lake wholly in California and it is also greater in terms of diversity of birds and wildlife than any other California lake. The nursery for many of these species is at Anderson Marsh at the southern end of the lake. The marsh and adjacent uplands are combined with the farmstead of a nineteenth-century family at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, a marvelous place for birders. The park has a strong appeal for botanists and for those interested in California history back as far as the Pomo people of 10,000 years ago.

The State Park is accessed from Highway 53 between Lower Lake and the City of Clearlake. Turn onto Anderson Ranch Parkway and then right to the parking lot. The buildings are not likely to be staffed because of State Parks cutbacks, but this is the staging area for several trails that will lead you to the birds. First, though, check out the trees around the barns for Western Bluebird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Acorn Woodpecker and Lewis's Woodpeckers.



Anderson Marsh is an important nesting area for Western Grebes as well as for Clark's Grebes. They make their nests on floating platforms among the tules.

Walk past the farmhouse and begin the Cache Creek Nature Trail, crossing fields and heading to the riparian area along Cache Creek. You may be greeted by the drumming of a Nuttall's Woodpecker as you come to a bridge and a boardwalk across an island looped by an oxbow of the stream. The trail continues along the cottonwood-lined waterway and eventually comes to Ridge Point. From here you can choose to return by the Ridge Trail and the Anderson Flats Trail, or by the Marsh Trail.

An alternative would be to start out on the Anderson Flats Trail across pastureland. Go left at a junction and the trail soon enters a blue oak woodland. Proceed

beyond where the Ridge Trail goes to the right and you will come to a split with the McVicar Trail to the left and the Marsh Trail to the right.

The Marsh Trail commands an overview of the marsh as it descends from the oak woodland. Climb a low ridge and, about a mile from the start, join Cache Creek Trail. The McVicar Trail leads to what had been McVicar Audubon Sanctuary, 238 acres of the freshwater marsh and adjacent terrestrial habitats. California State Parks purchased the sanctuary in 2007, adding this valuable preserve to the adjoining Anderson Marsh Historic State Park. In 1978 the McVicar family donated the property to the National Audubon Society, and Redbud Audubon Society provided stewardship of the sanctuary. Chapter members created and maintained nature trails through the sanctuary and offered field trips to enjoy the beauty of this important wildlife and bird habitat.

Audubon California will use the proceeds of the sale to establish an Audubon Endowment for California State Parks. The endowment fund will advance conservation and education programs of Audubon

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