



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 54, Number 8

May-June 2009

Doug Bell • Wind Turbines and Avian Mortality



Wind turbines, scavengers and remote cameras: estimating new avian mortality rates in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area, California.

Douglas Bell, Wildlife Program Manager for the East Bay Regional Park District will discuss his work estimating new avian mortality rates in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area.

Dr. Bell states: "Improving estimates of avian mortality caused by wind turbines is necessary for assessing environmental im-

pacts of wind farms, yet mortality estimates vary widely due in part to biases inherent in fatality search methods. To measure scavenger bias, e.g. the removal of carcasses deposited by wind turbines before they can be tallied by fatality searchers, past studies have relied on placing many avian carcasses in the landscape simultaneously and measuring their rate of removal at intervals. However, this method is prone to yet another bias, scavenger swamping, e.g. the overwhelming of scavengers with too many carcasses such that carcasses are removed at a slower rate. We took a novel approach to estimate scavenger bias by: 1. placing carcasses individually to avoid scavenger swamping, and 2. using remote cameras to photograph carcass removal by scavengers. In addition to measuring time to carcass removal, the use of cameras allowed us to identify the species composition of the scavenger guild. We estimated annual avian mortality for the wind farms located at our study site using both conventional and new scavenger removal data. Correcting for scavenger swamping using our method increased mortality estimates by a factor of 1.77 for raptors and 1.61 for birds."

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Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area.

Photo by Nancy Wenninger

BIRDING INFORMATION

2009 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the East Bay Regional Park District. At nearly 100,000 acres, it is the largest regional park district in the world, and has the dual mission of providing recreational opportunities and protecting natural resources. Nancy Wenninger, long-time MDAS member, serves as the District's Land Acquisition Manager. She will share some of the goals and strategies for "growing" the Park District, as well as details of exciting recent acquisitions which will preserve and enhance important habitat in eastern Contra Costa County.

Officers of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be elected at the general meeting on May 7 to serve for the following fiscal year. Nominations for these positions are as follows:

President:	Jimm Edgar
Vice President:	Mike Williams
Treasurer:	Steve Buffi
Secretary:	Diana Granados

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, May 7**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements and Election of Officers

7:40 PM Refreshments,* door prize

8:05 PM Speaker: **Doug Bell**

* Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, June 4:

Annual Potluck Dinner
Larry Arbanas

President's Corner

By Jimm Edgar

This issue of the *Quail* will combine our May and June issues, so a lot will be covered. Be sure and join us for the June potluck which is our final meeting for the year. It is always a fun event and Alice Holmes, our program chair has lined up a great speaker with great photos to watch and relax after a wonderful dinner provided by all of you.

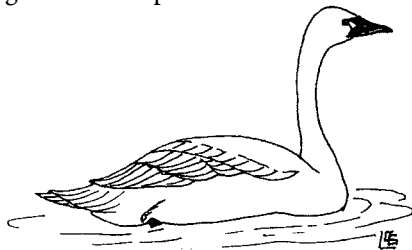
We lost a good friend and a great birder last week when we heard that Ed Hase had passed away. His death was not totally unexpected. He had been diagnosed with a brain tumor over 25 years ago and, at that time been given not long to live, but he did! More will be said about Ed's life in this *Quail* by a couple of our members who knew him the best and the longest.

At our April meeting I noted with pride (not mine, but the chapter's) the success of the East Bay Birders sightings e-mail service we provide. MDAS member Patrick King has been instrumental in making this service such a success. There are 863 members which Patrick told me ranks us among the top three regional bird lists in California and is a 500% growth in three years since we took over the day-to-day operation. If you do not belong you can go to our website and get signed up. You'll get e-mail most every day talking about East Bay birds. A tip of the hat for Patrick!

By the time you get this we will have had volunteers out for another event. This time an Earth Day celebration at the John Muir Historic site in Martinez. More opportunities are coming up, so please contact Moses de los Reyes, volunteer coordinator, if you can help out.

We hope no news is good news on the ongoing Rossmoor Acorn Woodpecker situation. Audubon California is staying in touch with U. S. Fish & Wildlife and we think the permit to kill 50 woodpeckers will expire soon and not be renewed. We will keep you posted.

As always, I hope to see you at a meeting or a field trip soon.



Welcome New Members

Robert Dailey	Orinda
James Draper	Orinda
William Elliott	Oakland
Bruce Phelps	Clayton
Patricia Sullivan	Walnut Creek
Paul Veilleux	Danville

Annual Potluck

The June potluck, June 4, will be at our regular meeting place at The Gardens at Heather Farm. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Members bring a main dish, salad, or dessert and their own utensils and coffee cup. Please mark your serving plates. Tea, coffee and punch will be provided; bring your own wine if you wish.



Larry Arbanas returns to share his most recent footage for the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Looking at a map of the continental United States, what is the longest straight line that can be drawn from one state to another? That is right, Alaska to Florida. Recent filming expeditions to these two states have yielded wonderful footage of many unique species. Sit back, relax and enjoy close-up views of Bristle-thighed Curlew, Northern Wheat-ear, Bluethroat, Limpkin, Tri-colored Heron, Wood Stork, Peregrine Falcon and many more. It might be a good idea to bring a guide to the birds of North America. We can expect a surprise or two. A moose or two may appear in the lineup and there are many other non-avian possibilities.

You can see some of Larry's recent footage at www.stateofthebirds.org. This website takes you to the 2009 *State of the Birds Report*, a joint effort of thirteen different agencies including Audubon. Watch the 6½-minute video which uses some of Larry's films.

Larry currently lives in central California where he continues his wildlife film career.

Observations

By Steve Glover

An "Aleutian" **Cackling Goose** was at Oak Hill Park in Danville on 3/17 (SH) and 3/18 (SL).

Three **Wild Turkeys** at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline on 3/20 indicate that the species may be well on the way to conquering the west county area (LL).

A flock of 39 **American White Pelicans** drifted south over Redwood Regional Park on 4/5 (SG).

A northbound **Osprey** soared over Sibley Regional Park on 3/27 (BB). A **Prairie Falcon** soaring over Tilden Park on 3/24 was a Berkeley Hills rarity (BB).

A **Glaucous Gull** provided a rare county record at the end of North Broadway in Pittsburg 2/4-11 (ST).

A singing **Canyon Wren** was in the Stewartville portion of Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on 3/28 (HH).

One female and at least 3 male **Western Bluebirds** were at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline on 3/20 (LL). Are there any other places on the west county plain where this species occurs?

Singing **Grasshopper Sparrows** on 3/28 were along the Carbondale Trail in Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on 3/28 (HH) and at the top of White Canyon in Mt. Diablo State Park (DW).

A **Swamp Sparrow** was a nice find at the end of North Broadway in Pittsburg on 2/4 (ST).

A **White-throated Sparrow** was at Castle Rock Park on 4/1 (HH).

Bob Battagin, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Steve Hutchcraft, Steve Lombardi, Laura Look, Scott Terrill, Denise Wight

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

Q

This is a common bird often heard around the house. It sometimes gives a "wing flash" display, where it partially opens its wings in jerky steps to show off its white patches—no one knows why.

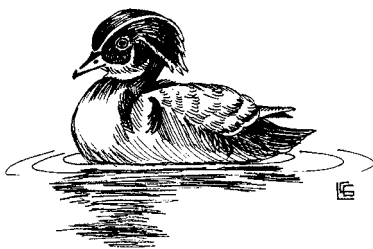
Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 6 to learn more.

BCDEGHIKMNNNOORRT

Doug Bell

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Douglas A. Bell holds a Bachelor's degree in zoology from Humboldt State University, the equivalent of a Master's degree in biology from the Univ. of Muenster, Germany, and a Ph.D. in zoology from UC Berkeley. He has performed field research in numerous countries on several continents and has over 30 years experience monitoring and studying raptors. He is currently leading a radio-telemetry study of Prairie Falcon foraging and habitat use in the East San Francisco Bay Area. He has published in peer-reviewed ornithological journals (e.g. *Auk*, *Condor*, *Journal of Raptor Research*) and specialty scientific journals (e.g. *Behaviour*, *Evolution*, *Ecological Applications*). Dr. Bell is currently on the Contra Costa County TAC for the Buena Vista Wind Farm. He is a Research Associate in the Department of Mammalogy and Ornithology at the California Academy of Sciences and an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Biology at California State University, Sacramento. He is a member of the EBRPD's Stewardship Department that includes a team of botanists, range managers, wildlife biologists and resource ecologists. The EBRPD encompasses nearly 100,000 acres of lands in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The Stewardship Department's responsibilities include the management of rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals, protected natural communities, and hundreds of native and invasive species. It is also responsible for oversight of its extensive grazing program. The Stewardship Department works closely with its GIS Section to map data and natural resource values of its parklands. The EBRPD has been monitoring raptors for over 20 years. Since 2005 it has devoted resources and personnel to intensively monitor nesting falcons and eagles on its lands as well as those of neighboring agencies. The EBRPD is compiling a data base on raptors that will aid in managing raptor populations at the local, regional and state level.



No Child Left Inside

By Paul Schorr



Diana Granados captures the attention of fifth-graders at Jack London School in Antioch with a beautiful Great Horned Owl.

Paul Schorr photo.

MDAS has made a strong commitment to continue the "No Child Left Inside" program which was very successfully initiated in 2008. This program promotes and provides direct hands-on outdoor activities for elementary school students, and this year has been expanded to include two fifth grade classes from Jack London Elementary School in Antioch. The primary objectives of this program are to generate an interest and understanding of local natural environments, which hopefully will lead the children to a deeper appreciation of those natural systems, and a subsequent lifelong concern for the protection and conservation of the plants and animals living there.

Planning for this year's program began in January at a meeting that included Paul Schorr, and Mrs. Evelyn Jones and Mrs. Marnie Hassig, the two Jack London teachers. A calendar of activities was established and on March 11, Diana Granados and Native Bird Connections did a wonderful introductory lesson as she demonstrated a Great Horned Owl and a Red-tailed Hawk to the students. The students were genuinely excited about the birds and Diana's presentation and they responded with much enthusiasm.

The program continued on the morning of April 22, from 9:00–10:00 AM. At that time the focus of the lesson was to introduce the students to the MDAS Field Check-list and to identify the "target" birds most likely to be seen at Contra Loma Regional Park during the field trips in May. In addition, the students were introduced to the book *Bird Songs*, and they received

a comprehensive lesson on the use of binoculars. Diana Granados brought a stuffed Great Horned Owl on which the students could "field test the binoculars." It should be noted that MDAS purchased the binoculars as well as the *Bird Song* books for this program and for other club-sponsored educational-outreach activities.

On May 26 and 28, between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM the students will be involved in a variety of field activities at Contra Loma Regional Park in Antioch, and these field trips will culminate this year's program. As the chapter did last year, it will subsidize the school bus transportation cost.

As in all of our chapter's outreach programs, volunteers are always needed to ensure the success of the event. Although we have some members who have already graciously volunteered to work with the children on May 26 and 28, we do need more help. Last year's volunteers spoke openly about how rewarding the experience was to work with the children during this event, so if you can plan to join us please contact Paul Schorr at (925) 757-5107 or by e-mail at pkschorr@comcast.net. Your valuable support is most appreciated.

Your Quail by E-mail

Just send an e-mail to the *Quail* Editor at ellis.myers@earthlink.net with a copy to the Membership Chair at beewalk@comcast.net. This will assure that we have a valid e-mail address for you. You must also be sure that incoming mail from the Editor is not blocked by your spam filter.

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

May

- 6 Wednesday Mount Diablo State Park
- 9 Saturday East Contra Costa County
- 14 Thursday West Briones Regional Park
- 27 Wednesday Sycamore Grove/Shadow Cliffs

June

- 6 Saturday Outer Point Reyes
- 13-14 Saturday/Sunday Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

July

- 25 Saturday San Mateo Coast

August

- 15 Saturday Bodega Bay

② Wednesday, May 6 Mount Diablo State Park

Leader: Jimm Edgar, 510-658-2330

MDSP is a treasure trove for birders. Although every season in the park has its special qualities, May on the mountain is especially beautiful because wildflowers add brilliant color to the vistas. NOTE: Carpool leaves at 8 AM from LaGonda. From I-680 southbound, exit at El Pintado, turn right and right again; park along open space on left. From I-680 northbound, exit El Cerro, turn left, then right at second light onto La Gonda; carpool point is about one-half mile north. Meet at 8:45 AM at the South Gate entrance after birding South Gate Road. Usually hot! Entry fee required. Sage, Rufous-crowned, Black-chinned Sparrows and migrant warblers are all possible.

② Saturday, May 9 East Contra Costa County

Leader: Paul Schorr, 757-5107

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 6:30 AM. Or meet the leader at 7 AM on Cypress Road at the trailhead parking lot just past Kragen's Auto Parts in Oakley. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, left onto Cypress Road. Usually hot! Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Swainson's Hawk and Yellow-breasted Chat possible. Bring lunch and liquids. .

② Thursday, May 14 West Briones Regional Park

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980

Meet at 8 AM in parking lot on the right hand side of the west entrance road, off Bear Creek Road. From SR 24 in Orinda, drive north on Camino Pablo about 2.25 miles, turn right on Bear Creek Road, continue for 4.5 miles to park entrance. Wildflowers, spring birds. Lazuli Buntings are usually abundant. Poison oak along shaded trails.

② Wednesday, May 27 Sycamore Grove/Shadow Cliffs

Leader: Bingham Gibbs, 838-9257

Carpool leaves Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride at 7:30 AM. Meet at Sycamore Grove at 8:00 AM. From I-680 south, take I-580 east toward Livermore. Exit at N Livermore Avenue toward Central Livermore. Turn right on 1st Street, then left onto S L Street, which becomes Arroyo Road. Continue 3.8 miles to Veterans Park, just beyond Sycamore Grove. The two are adjacent and this end usually has more birds. After birding one of the largest Sycamore groves in the state, we will drive to Shadow Cliffs for lunch. Entry fee required.

② Saturday, June 6 Outer Point Reyes

Leader: David Hutton, 938-4485

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:30 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 13-14 Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

Leaders: Rosita and Hugh Harvey, 935-2979

This is always a productive and well-favored weekend trip to the northern Sierra which requires driving and walking, some of it over rough terrain. 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 top of

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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. 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: **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.

Sun Valley—Southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord.

Trip Reports

San Leandro Reservoir, March 19.

Eighteen birders had a beautiful spring day at Valley Vista seeing or hearing 60 species of birds. What's not to love? We got some very good looks at Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western Bluebirds, Wood Ducks, more Ring-necked Ducks than you could shake a stick at, a terrific pair of Kestrels going in and out of a Wood Duck box, a lovely Red-shouldered couple who have nested there for years, a Wrentit, and two species of hummers. The only bird who would not cooperate was the California Thrasher, at least three, who sang their hearts out, but would not show themselves. The reservoir had quite a bit of water this year, down from most years, but much more than last year, which was nice to see.

Bingham Gibbs

Lake Lagunitas, March 25. What a beautiful day on the north slope watershed of Mount Tamalpais! It was a 5-woodpecker, 4-thrush day for 10 members of the chapter. We observed Acorn, Nuttall's and Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers and a male Pileated Woodpecker excavating a nesthole on the south side of the lake. The thrushes included Robin, a Western Bluebird, several Hermit Thrushes and several Varied Thrushes. We also had wildly excited Ruby-crowned Kinglets with their crests raised, and our first of spring Orange-crowned Warblers and Pacific-slope Flycatchers. In addition to the many flowers we saw, we had a total of 47 birds seen or heard.

Hugh Harvey

Black Diamond Mines, March 28.

Fifteen birders enjoyed a fabulous spring day looking at birds and flowers at Black Diamond Mines. Painted lady butterflies were migrating through all day long. We had a great view of a coyote. Paul Schorr shared his knowledge of chaparral plants. The bird highlight of the day was a singing Grasshopper Sparrow (a life bird for several people) which cooperated long enough for the entire group to get excellent views. A singing Canyon Wren and singing Orange-crowned Warbler were also exceptionally cooperative for all to see. Western Bluebirds, House Wrens, and Violet-green Swallows were visiting nest cavities. Other sightings included Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Overall, 46 species were seen or heard.

Cheryl Abel

Garin Regional Park, April 3. It was a perfect spring day at Garin Park, cool at first, then pleasantly warm. Green hills, flowers, you know how it is. Six birders enjoyed 57 species. Among the expected pleasures that were found: Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers, Warbling Vireo and House Wren. Unexpected pleasures: bird-of-the-day number 2 would be the Grasshopper Sparrow perched on a dead fennel stalk and well seen. But bird-of-the-day number 1 was the stunning male Calliope Hummingbird that we watched for quite a while, at waist level, going from flower to flower, spotted by the guest for whom it was a life bird. Perfect.

Fred Safier

Orinda Connector Trail, April 8. A rainy night and a showery forecast kept all but two birders at home. The drippy weather also kept the birds quiet until mid-morning but we saw and heard 41 species, on the low side of average for this varied and pretty walk. San Pablo Creek rose noticeably in the two hours between crossings on the Oursan Trail bridge. Both riparian and open-space birds were seen with a close Wrentit being very nice and perhaps the biggest miss being the normally slam-dunk swallows at the Briones dam face.

Don Lewis

Pine Canyon, April 11. Eleven birders walked their little feet off, but it was so worth it! The storms must have deposited large numbers of birds in our area. We had 60 species with many being FOS (first of the season for those who don't know); Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Western Wood-pewee, Bullock's Oriole, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and two Peregrine Falcons together on Castle Rock—I presume the same pair we saw there with young last year. We were very fortunate to run into Ted Robertson (who co-led the Bodega trip for MDAS with Terry Colborn) who happened to have a scope set up on the falcons so that everyone got wonderful views. A Cooper's Hawk flew close over our heads carrying what I think must have been the Western Kingbird that we missed.

Bingham and Larry Gibbs

North Briones, April 14. Six members braved a cold, very windy day in the hills of Briones Regional Park. A non-member birder happened to show up the same time we did and happily joined us when

we invited him. The strong winds kept the numbers of birds down considerably and we missed several "usuals". We did see four species of sparrow, had great looks at Horned Lark, many Western Bluebirds, and White-tailed Kite. Two Great Blue Herons wandering around the grasslands were interesting to watch. 31 species were seen or heard. The many wildflowers to be found along the trail at this time of year did not disappoint. The highlight among these was the Dutchman's pipe. Over 20 species were identified by the group. *Cheryl Abel*



California Horned Lark
Otocoris alpestris alia
Birds of the Pacific States
Ralph Hoffmann • 1927

Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

» *Continued from Page 4*

the pass at 7 am Saturday morning. Make motel reservations now. Closest motels are in Sierra City 18 miles down Highway 49. Herrington's Sierra Pines, (530-862-1151) is one of the best; Buckhorn Lodge (800-991-1170) has new cabins; Golden West Saloon Restaurant and Motel is in Loyalton (530-993-4467). Also in Sierra City is 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 some accommodation and meals. There are campgrounds at Chapman Creek and Yuba Pass. Other accommodations, including some campgrounds, are listed at www.sierracity.com/Stay/LodgingCamp.html. San Francisco State University maintains its Sierra Nevada campus six miles above Sierra City on Highway 49. They have a useful web link to accommodations in the area at www.sfsu.edu/~sierra/accom.htm. In the middle of the Sierra Valley near Loyalton, the T Lazy R Ranch is a working cattle ranch with a guest house for rent. Owner Tim Rees can be reached for reservations at 530-993-1560. After June 10, call Wild Birds Unlimited (925-798-0303) for confirmation of trip information.

Northern Mockingbird • *Mimus polyglottos*



The Northern Mockingbird is the state bird of Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas. The Texas Legislature chose it because it is a "... fighter for the protection of his home, falling if need be, in its defense, like any true

Texan." Mockingbirds aggressively guard their territories, which are sharply defined. Their territories differ in spring and in fall. In spring Mockingbirds will attack any intruder, whether snake, cat, bird or human, that poses a threat to the nest. In fall it is their food source that commands their vigil. They do not warmly welcome Robins, Jays, Starlings—or, of course, other Mockingbirds—to the berries and fruits they claim for their own.

Songs of the Mockingbird vary with the season, too, with one repertoire for spring and a totally different one for fall. Well-known for their interminable nighttime song, especially on moonlit nights, most nocturnal singers are unmated males.

Connecting People to Nature

By Brian Murphy



bees tend to move fast so pay attention to things moving fast.

As you relax and your eyes are more comfortable looking for small things flying around, you'll start to notice other small creatures on the plants. Don't get caught up with bumblebees as they are too easy to watch and may distract you from looking for smaller native bees.

Remember looking at life in the 'small world' of insects is not frustrating, as some bees just tend to zoom by while others seem shy. You can cheat on this exercise by remembering if you are calm and relaxed, the world around you becomes calm and relaxed, with the reward of opportunity to see more things.

Here's your spring exercise: sit down in your yard by flowering native plants and look for native bees feeding on pollen.

These guys are smaller than flies so you really have to pay attention and look for little things flying around. You focus your eyes on anything that moves around the plants, especially the small things, and the native bees aren't out in the numbers that European honey bees are. The native

After you've done this exercise several times training your eyes to see small native bees, you will start to see so many more 'big things' like a Black Crowned Night-Heron roosting in a street tree and see the hummingbird fly to its tiny nest in the same tree. By working on seeing what lives in the 'small world' your eyes will see many more things in 'the big world' making life that much more enjoyable!

Have fun!

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



Activities at Wild Birds Unlimited

❖ Birding Optics Seminar Saturday, May 2

Trying to select the right optics for local birdwatching or that next birding trip? Join us at 10:00 AM for a 45-minute workshop on "How to buy Birding Optics". There will be many brands of binoculars and scopes on display. Bring your optics to compare.

❖ Celebrate Migratory Bird Day Saturday, May 9

- International Bird Rescue
- Mr. B's Birds (caged birds)
- Mount Diablo Audubon Society
- Native Bird Connection (live birds)
- Native Beehive and honey
- Plants to attract

Hummers & Butterflies

- Wild Bryde Jewelry
- Neqaa glass ornaments
- Kingport Industries - fine leather

PRIZES AND GIFTS!

It's time to put out your oriole feeders. Both Hooded and Bullock's Orioles are now arriving. Please report all sightings of Hooded and Bullocks Orioles to WBU. We are keeping track and mapping all sightings.



Broad-billed Hummingbird

Jewels of Nature

Hummingbirds differ from other birds in a variety of ways. They have weak feet and legs that are used more for perching than walking. They are most comfortable in the air, and they are capable of hovering as well as flying up, down, forward and backward. They burn one to three times their body weight in food every day.



Mike and Cecil Williams
Wild Birds Unlimited
692 Contra Costa Blvd.

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, 925-798-0303
Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

Remembering Ed Hase

About 15 years ago we received a phone call from MDAS member Jean Richmond. She had an employee referral for us. She said Ed was a fantastic birder and a great guy. We hired him and he made a great contribution to our success and, more importantly, a great contribution to the education of many birding novices about the joys and fun of birding.

Ed worked for WBU for about five years and retired a number of years ago. Some of our long-time friends and patrons will remember Ed as the “Birdscaper”. (He and Cecil actually developed the term and concept of birdscaping. Unfortunately we didn’t copyright it). He would go out and visit homes, assessing their ability to attract wildlife. He would make recommendations of what could be done to make it more attractive. It’s hard to believe but one year he went to well over 100 homes!

Ed was a great birder and traveled all over the US looking for birds. His greatest contribution of life was his love of birds and his great, great love of teaching people about birds and their importance. In his waning days he took great pleasure in still wearing his “WBU Name Badge” and thinking he was going to work.

Ed, we are proud we were able to know you and to share your joy of the birds. Thank you for enriching our lives and hundreds of others.

Cecil and Mike Williams



Ed Hase was the most generous person I ever met and probably the smartest too. It was my privilege to be his friend and to bird with him for 30 years. I first met Ed in 1975 while working at PG&E. Ed was already an excellent birder and, when he learned of my fledgling interest in birds, he took me under his wing and patiently taught me the skills that would give me a lifetime of enjoyment.

Ed’s enthusiasm was infectious, and soon after we began birding, Ed collected a group of passionate birders whose mission was to see all the birds in North America. There was Charlie Hines, Ed’s boyhood friend, Kevin Hintsa, Joy Hall, Rich Sinchek and many others along the way. There are some great memories like the Texas winter bird trip. I believe Ed talked 12 of us into that trip. We took the red-eye to

Houston. For five days we birded hundreds of miles from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge. We saw Whooping Cranes, Crimson-colored Grosbeaks, Clay-colored Robins and many other exotics. Like most of Ed’s trips, we didn’t have much time to sleep. There was a return trip with George Finger to see a Crane Hawk and a Golden-crown Warbler. Once we drove all-night to the Salton Sea, arriving at the crack of dawn, to see a Neotropical Cormorant. There were many spring vagrant hunts to Death Valley as well as trips to see Southeast Arizona specialties. Remembering back, it was an unforgettable time.

Ed overcame many hardships during his lifetime. He never complained. Twenty years ago, he began having seizures and was diagnosed with brain cancer. He had surgery and chemotherapy. He was soon back birding, and with a new flair for life. He met his wife, Jenny, and they settled down to a quieter existence. Ed retired from PG&E. We didn’t go birding very often in recent years. Life moves on. In time, the cancer treatments that gave him 20 more years of life began to take their toll. I’ll miss Ed. I think I’ll go birding and remember the good times. *Bill Chilson*

Ornithological Opportunities

Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival, April 27-May 8. See the April *Quail* or go to <http://kern.audubon.org>. Within a 15-mile radius the highest diversity of flora and fauna found anywhere in California. 350 species of birds—over 200 nesting.

Join the **Lindsay Wildlife Museum** and the **Danville Library** as they celebrate Contra Costa County Library’s 2009 Reading Festival. Stacey O’Brien, biologist and author of the popular book, *Wesley the Owl: The Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and his Girl*, will discuss the heartwarming true story of a unique friendship that began with an injured owl and a young biologist. *Wesley the Owl* has been featured on NPR and has received a Starred Review. A must-see event for all animal lovers! Sponsored by the Danville Library Foundation. Danville Village Theatre, 233 Front Street in Danville, Wednesday, May 6 at 7 PM.

International Migratory Bird Day

While every day is a bird day for most of us, IMBD was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird—its journey between its summer and winter homes. Today, IMBD is celebrated in Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Central America through bird festivals and bird walks, education programs, and Bird Day!

Here are three nearby events where you can join others to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day in 2009.

Muir Woods National Monument. Come and celebrate International Migratory Bird Day on May 9, from 8 AM until 2 PM. The National Park Service will be joined by Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, WildCare, and Audubon Canyon Ranch. At Muir Woods and Muir Beach on Hwy 1 in Marin County there will be bird watching, beach cleanup at Muir Beach, bird banding demonstrations, samples of shade-grown coffee and chocolate, family activities, and informational booths. Visitors can help with habitat restoration work with the GGNPC Native Plant Nursery from 9:00 AM–12:00 PM. After the event, migrate north on Hwy 1 to Audubon Canyon Ranch near Bolinas to see nesting rookeries of Herons. This is a great chance to dive in and learn what you can do to help migrating birds. Admission is free and shuttle service will be provided between the Muir Woods and Muir Beach activities. Bring the family! For more information, call (415) 388-2596 or visit www.nps.gov/muwo.

South Bay Bird Fest at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR, 1751 Grand Blvd., Alviso. Have fun with a day of exploration celebrating our feathered friends with guided walks, games, crafts, and various other hands-on activities. Explore avian antics in a live bird presentation showcasing bird behavior!! Get up close and personal with real Refuge birds and their habitats on the Flying Frenzy Expedition! Learn about how you can help birds! Don’t miss this an-

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The Future of Conservation

Audubon California Assembly 2009

By Bev Walker

Five MDAS members attended the Audubon California Assembly 2009 at Asilomar in Pacific Grove during March 15–17. Present were Beverly Hawley, Judith and Bruce Moorad, Brian Murphy and Bev Walker. There are 48 chapters in the Audubon California network and MDAS was among twenty chapters who set up a display table for the 3-day event. Participants were welcomed by Glenn Olson, Executive Director, followed by presentation of volunteer awards.

The Assembly banquet followed with keynote speakers and an introduction to the group of forty young participants who would make presentations during the Assembly. Steve Blank, Audubon CA Board Chair, received energetic applause with the good news that hunters are complying 99% in their use of nonleaded ammunition at California Condor areas. Ruth Coleman, Director, California Department of Parks & Recreation, the second speaker, asked for support from individual Audubon chapters to assist as partners in updating park bird lists. Good news is that of all the State budget issues combined, our State parks issue was the one receiving the most letters of support from the public. As a result there will be no cuts for the parks!

Monday morning brought an impressive series of presentations by students from 8th grade level to first year college, representing six Audubon programs, showing what they are learning about nature and how it affects their lives. These titles support their theme, *The Future of Conservation: The Next Generation*.

- Reversing the Effects of Marine Debris on Pacific Wildlife (Eco-Oakland program with Golden Gate Audubon)
- Student and Landowner Education and Watershed (SLEWS and Audubon CA)
- Teens Teaching about the Environment (Arroyo Seco Museum and Audubon Center at Debs Park)
- Youth Directed Science, Restoration and Education (Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Audubon Youth Corp)
- Life on the Edge: Effects of Urban Development on Large Mammals (Starr Ranch Junior Biologists and Audubon CA)



Bev Walker with the MDAS educational display table. Audubon California Assembly 2009, Asilomar.

Photo by Brian Murphy

- Surviving High School through Restoration (Dorsey High School and Los Angeles Audubon)

It is reassuring to realize that children, teens and college students are being made aware of and participating in conservation needs at neighborhood and community levels. One of the more memorable groups was from Arroyo Seco whose program was a slide show depicting eighth graders teaching third graders and narrated by the students present. Respect for nature is being instilled early to the younger students while the aspect of mentoring by older peers *vs.* adults will contribute greatly to the success of this modest program.

Climate Change, Science and Policy was the first of two afternoon topics. Addressed by Gary Langham, Audubon CA, the questions were: How will species respond? How do we know when to act? How do we minimize investment risk? After a discussion of these major concern areas, he attributed these responsibilities to Audubon: advocating for nature in the face of massive social challenges; protecting special places and ecosystems while encouraging use of renewable facilities; and being the voice for wildlife.

The second presentation was *The Future of Conservation: Working with Private Landowners to Protect California's Great Landscapes*. Approximately one-third of California is private land—most of which consists of farm/ranch lands. There has been, however, an unexpected and welcome partnership between the California Cattlemen's Association and many environmentalists. Grasslands support wildlife diversity but habitat loss has resulted recently with increased vineyards and more intense agriculture. The key to preserving grasslands is private ownership

partnering with conservation practices. Several ranch and vineyard owners described their cooperative partnering efforts to maintain and encourage wildlife habitats on their lands with specific emphasis on birds. One wine grower has partnered with Napa-Sonoma Audubon and they have created 150 bird boxes, a resource CD and fundraiser workshops.

An evening program of bluegrass music was hosted by John Muir Laws, author and illustrator of a recent pocket-size field guide covering more than 1700 species of wildlife in the Sierra Nevada. Titled *The Laws Guide to the Sierra Nevada*, the book includes 2,710 original watercolor illustrations and its small size is generating great appeal for birdwatchers and hikers!

The final workshop was *Future of Conservation: Working Together*—an open dialogue and brainstorming between chapters and Audubon staff, to answer the question “What would strengthen the Chapter Network to adapt to the future of conservation?” Topics and recommendations discussed were:

- Educating our youth: Put educational programs on chapter websites.
- Raising funds for Chapter programs and operation: Talk to as many people as possible and keep them informed about local Audubon activity. Apply for grant funding.
- Communicating our message and chapter activities to our members and the public: Chapter activities should be featured regularly in websites and also local newspapers, blogs, *etc.*
- Revitalizing our chapters with vision and strategic plans; build public relations.
- Conserving our favorite birds and places.



Tuesday afternoon Beverly Hawley and Bev Walker were delighted to add wild-bred and wild-raised California Condor #444 to their life lists during a field trip with Ventana Wildlife Society on Highway 1.

Sweetwater NWR

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programs and exhibits. In 1989, the Sweetwater Marsh and a portion of its uplands became the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, and in 1994 the Gunpowder Point Interpretive Trails opened on the old farm roads.

The salt marsh is characterized by salt-tolerant plants that have developed strategies for dealing with the daily inundation by tides and the salinity of the water. Fiddler crabs, clams and other burrowing creatures live here. Shorebirds like Willets and Marbled Godwits take advantage of the rising and falling tides to feed on these invertebrates. The endangered Light-footed Clapper Rail—slightly smaller than the California Clapper Rail of the San Francisco Bay—constructs its floating nests in the cordgrass. The endangered Savannah Sparrow needs to nest in the pickleweed. Tidal channels meander through the salt marsh providing habitat for the mudsuckers and gobies that are favored by the Great Blue Heron and Snowy and Great Egrets. Terns, Black Skimmers and Osprey can be seen hovering over the channels in search of fish.

The Nature Center and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are now working to restore the Coastal Sage Scrub habitat of the uplands of Gunpowder Point, which had been degraded over the past century by human activities. Plants such as lemonadeberry, toyon, sagebrush, black, white and Cleveland sages and bush sunflower are being planted by volunteers. In time it is hoped the plants will mature enough to provide shelter and food for



Light-footed Clapper Rails at the Chula Vista Nature Center.

displaced native birds and animals such as the San Diego Coast Horned Lizard and California Gnatcatcher.

Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Reserve is well worth your visit when you are in the San Diego area. Visitors must park in the lot at the foot of E Street at Interstate 5, then take the trolley across the marsh to the Nature Center.

All photos courtesy of Chula Vista Nature Center.

IMBD

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nual feather-filled fiesta! Everything is free! Fun for the whole family! No reservations necessary. Visit www.fws.gov/desfbay for directions. Contact Lindy at 408-262-5513 ext 102 or Eric at ext 104.

IMBD at Alcatraz Island. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day on June 7th from 9:30 AM until 4:30 PM with PRBO Conservation Science, National Park Service, and Golden Gate Parks Conservancy. Come during the middle of seabird nesting season on Alcatraz Island for bird walks, a self-guided bird trail, scavenger hunt, slide show and photo exhibit, and information booths. Binoculars will be available for use to get close-up looks at eight different species of breeding waterbirds. If you have avoided visiting "The Rock" in the past because of its penitentiary past, you will be surprised at its "wild side". Bring the family! www.prbo.org/cms/397.

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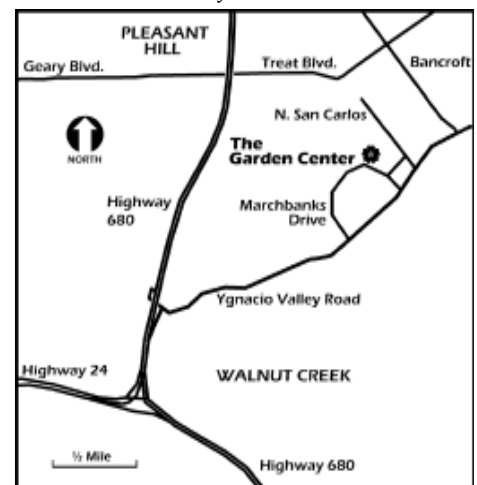
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The Garden Center

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



MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

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

I'm enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only) or \$35 (returning members), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society.

Please send The Quail by: E-mail US mail

Name _____

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School kids enjoy watching the birds at the aviary at the Chula Vista Nature Center on South San Diego Bay.

Sweetwater Marsh NWR

Sweetwater Marsh is a unit of the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex. It is a refuge that provides habitat for two federally endangered species of birds, one federally endangered plant, a State of California endangered bird species and one threatened bird species. Sweetwater Marsh is the only place in the United States where yerba reuma (*Frankenia palimeri*), a member of the heath family, grows naturally. The 316-acre marsh provides habitat for a variety of migrating shorebirds and wintering waterfowl. Together with other portions of South San Diego Bay, it is part of the Audubon-designated Important Bird Areas along the Pacific Flyway. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded at Sweetwater Marsh. Among those species that might be viewed at the marsh or in the adjacent waters of San Diego Bay are the Light-footed Clapper Rail, California Least Tern, Black Skimmer, Western Snowy Plover, Belding's Savannah Sparrow, Pacific Black Brant, and Little Blue Heron.

Here also is an endangered species of a different kind—the Chula Vista Nature Center. The Nature Center provides visitors with interactive exhibits explaining the marsh habitat, guided nature and bird walks, a shark and ray petting-pool exhibit, and the opportunity to view native birds in outdoor aviaries that support burrowing owls, shorebirds, egrets and herons. Aviary dwellers are all birds that cannot be released back into their native habitats. The Nature Center, as a living museum focusing on wetlands in particular, and coastal resources in general, is a valuable adjunct to the area's schools. Their Clapper Rail captive breeding program is exemplary.

Unfortunately, proposed Chula Vista City budget reductions include the likely elimination of funding for the Nature Center, effective July 1. The elimination of funding would result in the facility being closed, and the potential for displacement of over 100 injured and/or non-releasable animals and the cancellation of critical environmental education programs. Why don't you check out www.chulavistanaturecenter.org to see how you can help?



Jellies always intrigue visitors, young and old.

During World War I, the Hercules Powder Company built a factory on bayfront land at Chula Vista, on the east side of South San Diego Bay, to extract the chemicals acetone and potash from kelp. These were used to make cordite, an explosive used for fuses by the British. Later, from the 1930s through the 1970s, the uplands at Gunpowder Point were planted to vegetables, strawberries and marigolds. In the 1980s, the City of Chula Vista had the foresight to create the Nature Center which has become a recognized international leader in wetland-related

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