



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 51, Number 8

May 2006

The History of Birding Field Guides

- Alan Kaplan



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLAN BROOKS, from *Birds of the Pacific States*, by Ralph Hoffmann, published in 1927. Major Allan Brooks (1869-1946) was a naturalist and bird painter living in British Columbia, where he developed a small bird sanctuary and made detailed field notes. He gathered a collection of 9000 skins, which are now at UC Berkeley. Brooks was cited by the Canadian government as a "Person of National Historic Significance." Gambel's Quail, lower left; Mountain Quail, upper right; Valley Quail pair, lower right..

On May 4 join naturalist Alan Kaplan as he discusses the evolution of the birding field guide and what it has meant to be a birder. Scholars have identified three aspects of birdwatching: the aesthetic, the scientific, and the sporting. Over the past 150 years, the attention paid to each aspect has varied. The aesthetic aspect once included collection of specimens and taxidermy for display. Today aesthetics centers on species conservation and habitat preservation.

The scientific aspect has evolved from advanced but amateur activity in the

mid- to late 19th century, to the rise of professional ornithology in the 20th century. The founding of the American Ornithological Union in 1883 began the separation of scientific ornithology from amateur birdwatching and the development of today's collaborative efforts between the two. The rigorous methodology of Breeding Bird census, and the recent recovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker are two examples of this valuable collaboration.

The sporting aspect has evolved from egg collecting and the gunning of birds

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, May 4**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek.

(See map on page 7).

- 6:30 PM Doors open
- 7:00 PM Birding Information
- 7:25 PM Announcements
- 7:40 PM Social time, refreshments*, door prize
- 8:05 PM Program

* Please remember to bring a cup.

Birding Information

What breeding bird common in Arizona has never been found in any other State?

Mike Williams will host his second annual Birding Trivia Contest. You'll be amused as you watch our so-called expert panelists fumble in this friendly and humorous competition. We need everyone to share their vast knowledge of birding. This year, Mike will be on his own. Vanna will not be present.

Rufous-winged Sparrow

in order to mount and display a complete collection to the modern "Big Day," or "Big Week," or "Big Year" birding competitions. Prizes and bragging rights have always played a part.

Field guides have played a central role in the changes in each of these aspects of birdwatching. How did our field guides come to look the way they do? What have the tensions between scientific ornithology and amateur birdwatching brought to the basic tool of the hobbyist birder? What has spurred the revival of "the vex-

Continued on page 5

Welcome New Members

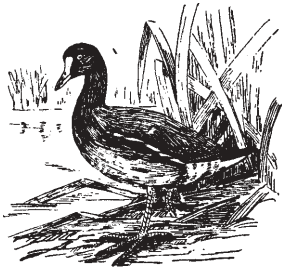
Karen Born	San Ramon
Paul Bremner	Walnut Creek
Brenda De La Ossa	Walnut Creek
June Flowers	Walnut Creek
Homer Keesler	Pleasant Hill
Rodney Lancaster	San Ramon
Ken Olson	Brentwood
Wayne and Nancy Snyder	Alamo
Irene Wilkinson	Orinda

New MDAS Officers

At each May meeting of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society, in accordance with the bylaws, we elect officers for the following fiscal year. If you would be willing to be of service to our group and wish to run for any of the positions, please call any of the present Board members, whose contact numbers are given on page 7.

Currently on the ballot are:

President:	Jimm Edgar
Vice President:	Mike Williams
Treasurer:	Steve Buffi
Secretary:	Claudia Hein



Florida Gallinule
Gallinula chloropus cachinnas
Birds of Golden Gate Park
Joseph Mailliard
1930

Q Ants are the favorite food of this Scrub-jay-sized bird. It might be found in Northern California and most of the United States at any time of the year. In Southern California and Southern Texas it is seen only in winter.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to page 4 for the answer.

CEEFHILKONNRRRT

Native Plants for Native Birds

Young or old, most people rejoice when they observe hummingbirds in their garden. They're amazed by their small size, their brilliant iridescence, their ability to hover and to flit rapidly from flower to flower. When people get to know them a little more, they're amazed a whole lot more.

Some statistics: Hummingbirds may weigh as little as 3.2 grams; the largest of our familiar Anna's Hummingbirds weigh not quite so much as a nickel; they need to consume up to twice their weight each day, equivalent to visiting more than a thousand flowers.

While hummingbirds readily come to feeders, you can encourage these little rascals by planting a garden designed for their particular needs. The key elements would be nectar-rich flowers, insects, and water. Natural nectar provides a balanced source of micro-nutrients. Native plants can have more nectar than cultivated hybrids; they also need less maintenance, less fertilizer, and less water. There are many California natives that are suitable.

The relationship between hummingbirds and the flowers they prefer is a classic example of coevolution of both organisms. The plants have adapted by producing flowers with no fragrance to attract insects, and with bright reds and oranges that do not give ultraviolet color clues. Also, these flowers have structure so that transfer of pollen from one flower to the next is facilitated by the hummingbird.

Most hummingbird plants have pendant flowers, which do not have landing platforms insects use but the hovering birds do not need. In flowers of this shape, gravity may allow a faster release of nectar. Thus, such flowers guard their nectar from insects, but release it to the birds who are adapted to the vital pollination process. Hummingbirds have adapted by having wings proportionately larger relative to body weight than other birds, key both to their ability to hover and to flight speed that allows them to visit as many as 20 flowers per minute.



Allen's Hummingbird

Among the best choices of California natives are Western Columbine, Epilobium (California Fuchsia), Huckleberry, Flowering Currant, Honeysuckle, and many salvias. Select plants with various bloom periods. An extensive list of natives for hummingbirds that includes this information can be found at www.elkhornnursery.com.

Hummingbirds need protein from pollen, spiders and insects to maintain their bodies. Hummingbird mothers feed their nestlings almost exclusively with insects such as gnats and mosquitoes. Your hummingbird garden will profit by including a variety of insect-pollinated flowers. Don't use pesticides.

Use as many flowering plants, vines and trees as you can, and encourage your neighbors to do so as well, because a broad avenue of habitat will lead the birds to your garden better than isolated patches.

California Bluebird Recovery Program

The Annual Reports from 148 monitors who reported in 25 counties have been recorded for CBRP and have been compiled for the statewide summary. These caretakers managed 5139 nestboxes and counted 22,879 eggs laid by all 19 species encountered. The number we look for most anxiously is the number of youngsters fledged: 18,414 for all species, of which 8046 were bluebirds. You can read other figures for the Program in *Bluebirds Fly*, which will appear soon.

Don Yoder

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

Trip Reports

May

4 Thursday Mitchell Canyon
17 Wednesday South side of
Mount Diablo
20 Saturday East Contra Costa County
25 Thursday West Briones

June

5 Saturday Outer Point Reyes
8 Thursday Annadel State Park
17-18 Saturday/Sunday Yuba Pass

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and masters. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, read the *Quail*, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php, or call the Audubon taped recording at (925) 283-8266. Customary carpool expense is 37½ cents per mile, plus tolls and entry fees, shared among driver and riders. 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 parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord. La Gonda—From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about ¼ mile north to El Pintado. Acalanes—Pleasant Hill Road, just north of SR 24, at the corner of Acalanes Road.

May Field Trips

A special field trip to **Sierra Foothills** has been arranged for Mount Diablo Audubon Society members and their guests for April 29-30.

Bird Saturday morning at the Miller Preserve of the Sierra Foothills Conservancy with a leader from Fresno Audubon. Sunday morning in the vicinity of Shaver Lake. Call Ellis Myers at 284-4103 for details.

Meet 8 AM Miller Preserve, map at www.sierrafoothill.org.

Thursday, May 4, Mitchell Canyon. Meet at 9 AM in Mitchell Canyon parking lot. There is a \$3.00 parking fee. From I-680 in Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road to Clayton Road. Turn right on Clayton and right on Mitchell Canyon Road to the end. Gnatcatchers, summer sparrows, etc.; lots of wildflowers. Usually hot! Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980. Category 3

Wednesday, May 17, South Side of Mount Diablo Park. 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. Carpool leaves at 8 AM from LaGonda. Meet at 8:30 AM in first parking lot on left after entering South Gate. Usually hot! \$6.00 entrance

fee. Sage, Rufous-crowned, and maybe Black-chinned Sparrows. Leader: Jimm Edgar, (510) 658-2330 Category 2.

Saturday, May 20, East Contra Costa County. Carpool leaves at 6:30 AM from Sun Valley. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, left onto Cypress Road. Carpoolers should meet the leaders on Cypress Road just before crossing the railroad tracks. Usually hot! Burrowing Owl, Swainson's Hawk, Yellow-billed Magpie possible. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Joel Summerhill and Gloria Cannon, 753-0862. Category 2.

Thursday, May 25, West Briones. Meet at 8 AM in parking lot on the right hand side of the west entrance road, off Bear Creek Road. Wildflowers, spring birds; Lazuli Buntings are usually abundant. Poison oak along shaded trails. Leader: Jean Richmond, 837-2843. Category 2.

Saturday and Sunday, June 17-18. Yuba Pass. This always productive and well-favored weekend trip to the northern Sierra will again be led by Hugh Harvey, (925) 935-2979. Last year the group saw 130 species, including Black-backed Woodpecker and Williamson's Sapsucker. 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 the pass at 7 AM Saturday morning. Make motel reservations now. Closest motels are in Sierra City 18 miles down High-

March 15, San Leandro Reservoir. Ten birders spent a pleasant morning at the reservoir. The water in the creek and reservoir was as high and wide as ever seen because of the recent rains. 53 species were seen, with highlights being: good looks at a Great Horned Owl, Wood Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, 6 Wilson's Snipe, Varied Thrush, and Purple Finch.

Maury Stern

March 18, Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. Four birders (three members and a guest) hiked part of the Chaparral Trail on a clear, brisk, sunny day at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on March 18. Mostly resident birds were seen including a Cooper's Hawk circling over the main parking lot, courting Red-tailed Hawks and four White-throated Swifts, the latter toward the top of a steep climb above one of the mines. Western Bluebirds, Bewick's Wrens, Oak Titmice and Spotted Towhees were all singing and establishing territories. A total of 30 species was seen. Spring flowers were just beginning to bloom, including the white variety of the Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon clevelandii* var. *patulum*) on the hillsides, Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja* spp.), yellow Lomatium ssp. and a blue Lupine (*Lupinus* spp.).

Eugenia Larson

March 23, San Pablo Creek. A wet trail did not deter six members and three

Continued on page 4

way 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 in Loyalton (530-993-4467). 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 beyond 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.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



Orioles will soon be appearing at our feeders!

- Watch for both Hooded Orioles and Bullock's Orioles.
- These are nectar feeding birds, but they are too large to sip from most hummingbird feeders. They will appreciate a feeder just for themselves. (But hummers will use them too.)
- Orioles are the most colorful and spectacular birds we can attract to our back yards during the summer.
- Orioles sometimes eat oranges and grape jelly. Like hummingbirds, orioles love nectar (sugar water) and there are special feeders designed for them.
- Please report all oriole sightings to WBU. We maintain a map at the store to show the distribution about the area.



We maintain a map at the store to show the distribution about the area.

Something New!

- Adorn your yard or patio with a splash of color and beauty from Seedballz™. These are a mix of clay, sand, and soil, loaded with seeds that bloom into wonderful flowers. They are available in different varieties of nectar plants to attract flying jewels like hummingbirds and butterflies, as well as seed plants to attract songbirds. Simply place them on the ground or in a pot, keep them watered and watch them bloom!



Mike & Cecil Williams
Wild Birds Unlimited
692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
925-798-0303

Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

Sierra Foothills *Continued from page 8*

keckii)—a rare plant known in only two locations in the world—from the brink of extinction.

Sierra Foothills Conservancy is a Land Trust worthy of your support. Find out more about hikes, classes, and their mission of preserving wildlife and native flora at www.sierrafoothill.org. The McKenzie Preserve is on Auberry Road, Highway 168, between Friant and Prather. The Miller Preserve, and the Conservancy office, is beyond Prather, three miles up Black Mountain Lane. For specific information about the Open House, call (559) 855-3473.

Highway 168, north of Prather, leads to Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek, montane habitats where you might hope to find Mountain Quail, White-headed and Pileated Woodpeckers, and nesting warblers. Swanson Meadow, just past Boy Scout Camp Chawanakee on Dinkey Creek Road reports Cassin's and Purple Finch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Green-tailed Towhee, Mountain Quail, and an occasional Great Gray Owl. There are a number of campgrounds in this pine forest area.

At the base of the foothills is Friant Dam with Millerton Lake State Recreation



House Wren, Miller Preserve

Area. This area recently posted sightings of such birds as Lewis's Woodpecker, Sage Thrasher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Tricolored Blackbirds. Golden Eagles and other raptors are at home here, and in winter there are special boat trips on the lake to watch Bald Eagles.

Southwest of Friant Dam is Lost Lake Park, a popular birding site with Fresno Audubon birders. Lost Lake was created when rock was quarried for building Friant Dam in the early 1940s. Access is from Friant Road; there is an entrance fee to the park; campsites are available. A willow thicket beyond the campground is often good for sparrows and, in the spring, migrating warblers. At the other end of the park, near the picnic area, there is a nature trail, about a half

mile in length, which often contains good birds. About a quarter mile along the trail is a large outcropping of granite. Here are several Native American grinding holes, or metates, for grinding acorns to make flour. This is a welcome spot to rest and simply look for teal or mergansers on the river. A bald eagle might be perched in a nearby tree.

The foothills of the southern Sierra can be a special destination for birders and botanists. Discover a diversity of birds amid a diversity of wildflowers.

Trip Reports *Continued from page 3*

guests from enjoying an early spring walk along San Pablo Creek. Though we saw or heard 45 species, the day seemed to belong to the small birds, most notably Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Oak Titmouse, Bushtits, both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, many Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Orange-crowned Warblers and a preening Hutton's Vireo. We also avoided stepping on three giant Banana Slugs and found a small stand of Giant Trillium and numerous white Milkmaids.

Hugh Harvey

March 29, Lagunitas-Bon Tempe. Five optimistic birders left in light rain, had rain on the way, then occasional morning sprinkles or light rain along the trail.

Among 54 species seen or heard were a stunning breeding-plumaged Common Loon, 14 Common Mergansers, a pair of White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkeys, 14 Band-tailed Pigeons, a bright male Allen's Hummingbird, 3 Hairy Woodpeckers, 2 well seen Varied Thrushes; but the highlight of the day was a pair of calling Pileated Woodpeckers seen at length through binoculars and a scope. A wonderful day in spite of threatening skies.

Jean Richmond

April 1, Garin Regional Park. Five birders trod the muddy trails at Garin Park in search of early spring birds. We found 44 species, including the rather expected Bullock's Oriole and Wilson's Warbler, and an unexpected Red-Naped Sapsucker as a really pleasant surprise.

Fred Safier and Eugenia Larson

April Observations

By Steve Glover

An unidentified swan flying west over Tilden Park on 3/11 was extremely noteworthy for the location (JP). Unfortunately, the increasing presence of Mute Swans in the county casts doubt on all reports of Tundra Swans that aren't seen well, except at expected areas in east county.

A pair of Hooded Mergansers was at Lafayette Reservoir on 3/20 (MB).

An Acorn Woodpecker was a surprise find near Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 3/11 (JP). Though resident just a couple of miles to the east, Acorn Woodpeckers are generally rare at Tilden and usually detected in fall.

The male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Newhall Community Park in Concord, first found 3/4, was noted through at least 3/26 (S&CH) and was enjoyed by dozens of birders.

A Yellow-billed Magpie was near the administration building at the north end of Los Vaqueros Reservoir on 3/8 (BC). Despite an abundance of suitable habitat in the hills just west of the Central Valley, this is one of a very few ever found there.

Two more White-throated Sparrows to add to this winter's total were found 3/16 and still present 3/19 (ES) at Newhall Park in Concord (SR) and in suburban Pleasant Hill on 3/28 (PK).

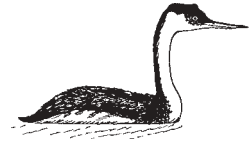
At least 12 of the resident Great-tailed Grackles were present at McNabney Marsh near Martinez on 3/25 (LO). Though they apparently wander more widely in winter, and are thus harder to find, they are present throughout the year.

Martha Breed, Bill Chilson, Scott and Claudia Hein, Patrick King, Linda Ott, John Poole, Scott Restivo, Emily Serkin

Alan Kaplan *Continued from page 1*

ing trinomial"? What is "the vexing trinomial"?

Using unpublished dissertation material, books, and magazine resources, Alan will discuss the evolution of the modern bird field guide, the biographies of "birding world" personalities, and the contributions of 20th century amateurs to the science of ornithology.



Please bring your favorite field guide, and your oldest and most cherished guides to be admired and discussed. Alan will have copies of Charles Keeler's *Bird Notes Afield*, Leon Dawson's *Birds of California* (with Major Allan Brooks' marvelous illustrations) and Neltze Blanchan's *Bird Neighbors*.

Alan Kaplan has recently retired from a 33-year career with the Interpretive Services division of the East Bay Regional Park District. He was a naturalist at Sunol Regional Wilderness and Tilden Nature Area. During his career Alan led over 500 bird walks in the Regional Parks. His article on the history of entomological societies and the role of the amateur in entomology appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Insects* in 2003. Alan looks forward to new adventures with birds, bugs and people.

Meet Me at the Faire

Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be among the many exhibitors who will interact with more than 1,000 visitors at the annual Community Environmental Faire at the Dow Wetlands Preserve, this year on Saturday, May 6, from 10 AM to 5 PM. Pontoon boat rides, horse-drawn wagons, live wild animals, tours and other activities will provide family entertainment at this free event.

The Dow Wetland Preserve, home to three endangered species, 120 species of birds, is an ecologically diverse 475-acre educational tool. Students from all over the East Bay utilize the wetland, spurring interest in earth science education. To reach the Faire, take Highway 4 to Loveridge in Pittsburg; go left (North) to Pittsburg-Antioch Highway, then right to parking west of Hazel's Drive-in. Call the hotline at 925-432-5575.



Northern Flicker • *Colaptes auratus*

Flickers are woodpeckers, with two toes in front and two toes behind. While it can forage, as most woodpeckers do, on tree trunks gleaning insects from the crevices of the bark, it prefers to eat on the ground, hopping around to collect beetles and small insects. It also likes fruits and berries, and will come to feeders for suet. These are good-guy birds, as they destroy both ants and the plant-injuring aphids on which the ants rely for the sweet honeydew they secrete. In one study, where the stomachs of flickers were examined, one stomach was found to contain over 5000 ants.

Flickers are cavity nesters, and their nests are sometimes later used by other species of birds, or by squirrels.

There are three subspecies of the Northern Flicker in the United States. Our western bird is the Red-shafted; the Yellow-shafted Flicker is east of the Rocky Mountains; and in Southern Arizona there is the Gilded Flicker.

The Yellow-shafted Flicker is the state bird of Alabama, where it is called the Yellowhammer for its noisy pounding on tin roofs and the sides of barns. During the Civil War a cavalry troop from Huntsville, Alabama wore uniforms adorned with bits of brilliant yellow cloth. These became affectionately known as Yellowhammers, and the troops added Flicker feathers to their caps. Since then, Alabama has been dubbed the Yellowhammer State.

Saving the Endangered Species Act By Nancy Wenninger

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 is one of the most popular and effective environmental laws ever enacted. Its protection currently provides a safety net for over 1250 species of plants, animals, fish and insects. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Endangered Species Act has saved 99.3% of its listed species from extinction. And in the process, millions of acres of forests, beaches and wetlands have been protected from degradation and development.

Because the Endangered Species Act has been so successful, some industries and their friends in Congress are constantly trying to weaken the strong protections for species and eliminate the checks and balances in the law. The most serious attempts to weaken the Act are currently underway. Our local Representative Richard Pombo, Chair of the House Resources Committee, is currently advancing a series of bills that would gut key provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Despite overwhelming support by a majority of Americans for the Endangered Species Act, Mr. Pombo continues his attacks. Under the guise of “improving” the law, Mr. Pombo has proposed

legislation to exempt all military lands, federal agencies and private property from provisions of the act. He proposes to pay property owners to follow the law, although no court has ever found its provisions to violate private property rights. Other attacks masquerade as “sound science” and propose putting political appointees in charge of reviewing scientific information from agency biologists, and permitting developers and other economic interests to substitute their opinions for those of legitimate scientists.

Each of these proposals has the potential to greatly weaken species protection. Taken together, their effect could be devastating to our ability to protect wildlife and habitat across the United States.

The Bush administration has initiated no endangered species listing or added a single species to the endangered list without pressure from citizens in the form of a lawsuit, a court order or citizen petition. Only a third of all listed species have critical habitat designated, and all critical habitat designations during the Bush administration have come via citizen pressure. Delaying the decision to protection and recovery will

bring many vulnerable species closer to the brink of extinction.

The Endangered Species Act is one of our nation’s most important environmental laws; yet endangered species programs have never received sufficient funding to achieve their goals. In 2005, Congress gave the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a mere \$143 million to implement the Endangered Species Act—the same cost as approximately 18 miles of a four-lane federal highway.

We owe it to our children and grandchildren to be good stewards of the environment and to leave behind a legacy of protecting endangered species and the special places they call home. Write to Senators Feinstein and Boxer and urge them to support the Endangered Species Act and to work to maintain its ability to protect endangered species and the habitats they need for survival. We have a responsibility to prevent the extinction of fish, plants and wildlife. Once they are gone, we cannot bring them back.

Excerpts from “Citizens’ Guide to the Endangered Species Act,” Sarah Matsumoto/The Endangered Species Coalition (Earthjustice, 2003)

Ornithological Opportunities

MDAS will participate in a statewide survey of **Burrowing Owls** being conducted by the Institute for Bird Populations. This owl species is quickly disappearing from its historic habitat. We will be responsible for fourteen 5 km × 5 km blocks for two years—seven the first year and seven the second. If you would like to help, please call Jimm Edgar (510) 658-2330. This survey provides a rare opportunity for individuals to make an important contribution to science and conservation. There will be training manuals available.



Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek is seeking volunteers in many of their departments, in opportunities that bring the world of wildlife closer to

museum visitor and volunteer alike. They are particularly seeking docents, who help school groups understand, among other wildlife topics, the magnificent predators of the sky—hawks, falcons, and owls. They also share the stories of our local woodpeckers, jays, and quail, as well as a mountain lion, bobcat, turkey vulture, gray fox, desert tortoise, and 50 other live (but nonreleasable) native animals. Other volunteers help in the rehabilitation hospital, or with the husbandry of animal residents. If you would like to learn more, several presentations have been scheduled to introduce you to the museum’s many opportunities: Wednesday evening, May 17, and Saturday afternoon, June 10. To sign up for one of these free classes, go to www.wildlifemuseum.org.

May 13 Oak Woodland Hike

Join other MDAS members for a hike on the “morning side” of Mount Diablo at spectacular Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. Our cool wet spring should produce an extravagant display of beautiful wildflowers. Popular East Bay Regional Parks naturalist Mike Moran will lead us on a moderate two-hour hike through this wilderness area where we will see six of the seven local species of oak, plus numerous species of native plants, birds and other wildlife.

Plan to meet at the parking lot on Morgan Territory Road at 10 AM on Saturday, May 13. Bring a picnic lunch to dine *al fresco* afterwards. A great family outing and an excellent way to start Mother’s Day weekend! For more information, call Nancy Wenninger at 938-7987.

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

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

____ Please enroll me as a lifetime member for \$500. Payment can be made in two annual payments of \$250 each.

____ Please enroll the individual/family listed below as a gift membership 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 donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Card Number: _____

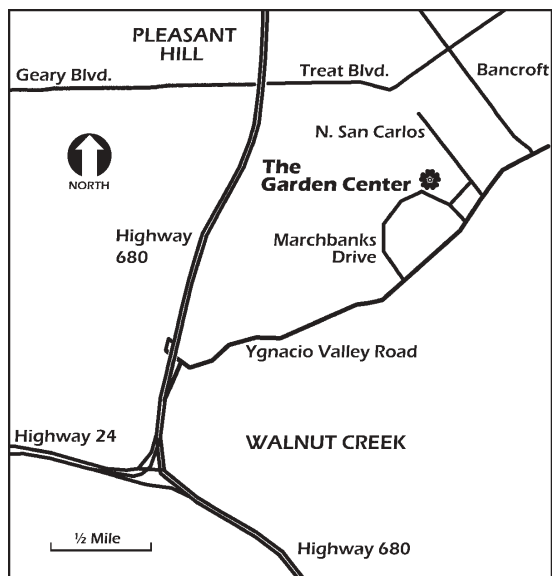
____ Visa ____ MasterCard _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to:

MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:

Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Court, Danville, CA 94526



Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August. Everyone is invited.

Driving directions:

From Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road to the signal at Marchbanks Drive. Go left and follow Marchbanks to the Garden Center, opposite the Greenery Restaurant. Turn left into the parking lot.

From Highway 680 south, take Treat Blvd. to Bancroft. Go right to Ygnacio Valley Road, turn right and go one block past signal at N. San Carlos Dr. (Heather Farm entrance). At Marchbanks Drive turn right. The Garden Center is located on the right in the second block.

the Quail

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Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

P.O. Box 53 • Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
(925) AUD-UBON • (925) 283-8266

Mount Diablo Audubon Society general meetings are on the first Thursday of every month except July and August in the Camellia Room of the Garden Center at Heather Farms, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Board of Directors meets at 7 PM on the second Thursday of every month in the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Boulevard, Pleasant Hill. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Questions about membership or mailing addresses? Call Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, at (925) 968-1677. MDAS membership includes 10 issues of the Quail. A 1-year family membership in MDAS is \$25/year or \$500 for lifetime membership (payable in two \$250 annual payments). National Audubon Society membership includes the Audubon magazine. Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years; membership renewal is \$35/year. To join MDAS or NAS, send a check payable to MDAS to Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Ct., Danville, 94526. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor, 215 Calle La Mesa, Moraga, CA 94556.

MDAS Board of Directors

President: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Vice President: Joe Frank, 674-1219
Treasurer: Patrick King, 510-642-6522
Board Secretary: Pam Leggett, 685-1959
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Alice Holmes, 938-1581
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Ann McGregor, 968-1677
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Carpenteria californica • Tree anemone
Mary Elizabeth Miller Preserve

Quickies

Weekend Birding in California

Sierra Foothills

In Spring, the foothills of the Sierra are superb. A weekend ramble into the eastern portions of the Central Valley is sure to reward you with vistas to delight, as well as bird sightings that may not easily be found closer to home.

One location, not very well known, is the Sierra Foothill Conservancy's three preserves: the McKenzie Table Mountain Preserve, the Mary Elizabeth Miller Preserve at Black Mountain, and the Tivy Mountain Preserve. In the Sierra Nevada foothills of Fresno County, they are remarkably diverse in their history, their topography, and their plant and animal life. They are not open to the public except by arrangement, but you can join one of their guided hikes, or attend one of their special activities. You are indeed invited to an Open House at Black Mountain on Sunday, May 14.

The Mary Elizabeth Miller Preserve protects what is the best stand—anywhere—of the native *Carpenteria*, a stunning flowering shrub that is at its peak during early May, covering the hillsides in glorious profusion. Other wildflowers abound, including the seldom found Wind Poppy. And birds on the preserve include Western Tanagers and Hermit Warblers. Bobcats are often seen.

Hiking on the Miller Preserve is easy, with much of it taking place on a dirt road. The distance from the preserve headquarters to the top of the mountain is about a mile and a half. During the Open House, signs will identify the wildflowers along the way. An optional extension of the walk is a mile-long trail from near the summit to the eastern end of the ridge, making a round trip of about six miles.

The McKenzie Preserve consists of grassland and oak woodland sloping upward toward the basalt lava tablelands which give the preserve its name. In the spring, rain water collects in the

table's low spots, forming vernal pools. Since the basalt is impermeable, these pools hold water for several weeks or months until it eventually evaporates. The pools provide habitat for rare plants and rare crustaceans which come to life in the presence of the water. When the pools dry up in late spring, these interesting organisms take on new forms (such as seeds or cysts) in order to survive the rest of the year.

While somewhat arduous, a hike to view the vernal pools on the table top also reveals an expansive vista on the far side as the land slopes steeply down to the San Joaquin River. There is a variety of bird species along the way, as the oaks blend into an excellent mix of pine forest and chaparral. The McKenzie Preserve also includes a parcel along the creek on the south side of Highway 168 that is being developed as a nature center to host classes and school field trips.

The Tivy Mountain Preserve was established for the specific purpose of rescuing Keck's checkerbloom (*Sidalcea*

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