



# the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

[www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php](http://www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php)

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## An American in Texas ♦ Steven Glover

### The Birds (and People) of North Central Texas

Steven Glover is the author of *The Contra Costa County Breeding Bird Atlas*. He was the Observations Editor of *The Quail* from 1991-2009, a Sub-regional Editor for *North American Birds* from 1992 to the present, and a Regional Editor for *North American Birds* from 2000-2008. Steven is now an E-bird reviewer for 25 counties in North-Central Texas and has begun work, along with Greg Cook, on a *Bird-finding Guide to North-Central Texas*.

Steven Glover moved to Texas four years ago and immediately immersed himself in not only the exploration of the local avifauna but also the study of its human inhabitants who, as it turns out, are endlessly fascinating. North-Central Texas stretches several hundred miles across, encompassing deserts in the west and piney woods in the east. In between is the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, the largest metropolitan area in the south and the fourth largest in the United States.



Prothonotary Warbler, Swallow-tailed Kite. Darlene Moore photos.



state. You will be amazed how many birds you can see in the Lone Star State. The Texas Bird Records Committee has recognized 636 species as Texas Birds. Without chasing vagrants or rarities, you could realistically rack up 450 Texas birds within a reasonable amount of time and effort. The list gets even larger as you bird the entire state at different times of year.

Join Steve as he presents "An American in Texas," a humorous attempt to make sense of fearsome weather, bumbling politicians, bible-thumpers, secessionists, teetotalers, and, of course, the birds.

### BIRDING INFORMATION

For our May birding info, we will hear from Patrice Hanlon, the Garden Manager for the Gardens at Heather Farm. She will give an overview of how they maintain the garden organically so that it not just good for the plants but also for the birds! She will also talk briefly about their youth programs and discuss how we might be able to collaborate on getting kids involved with birding through activities at Heather Farm.

### Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, May 2**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Refreshments,\* raffle

8:05 PM Speaker: **Steve Glover**

*Please remember to bring a cup.*

Thursday, June 6: Annual Dinner  
Hugh Harvey, Chile Field Trip

This area is where east truly meets west and this confluence results in a rather large number of species recorded annually, particularly for a region that is landlocked. Texas's large variety of bird species is due to the convergence of four vegetation zones in the north central region of the state. In effect, species predominating in the moister eastern portions of the region mingle with species inhabiting the mesquite and cacti of the dry western reaches of the area.

A Texas birder needs a guide that covers bird species occurring throughout the United States. East meets west and north meets south in the great centrally located

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Many of you knew Harry Adamson. Harry was one of the foremost wildlife artists in the world. He was also one of the founding members of Mount Diablo Audubon Society back in 1953. Harry passed away about a year ago at age 94 I believe. He and his wife Betty had lived in their house in Lafayette for over 60 years. They lived on Carol Lane and their house backed up to Las Trampas Creek and was as good a backyard birding spot as you could hope for right in a suburban neighborhood. I think I am correct that their yard bird list was over 165 species. Pretty amazing! I could always count on Harry's yard to have a Townsend's Warbler for our annual Christmas bird count and often other great birds as well. The only American Dipper our count ever had was in Harry's back yard. About a month ago I got a phone call from a man who was handling Harry's estate. Harry had wanted a number of his possessions to be distributed to certain people and certain organizations. Mount Diablo Audubon was on the list and Harry had left a number of his lithographs to our chapter. The man brought them to my office and I am not sure what I was expecting, but I was amazed at the beauty of these prints. We are planning

to auction many of them at our meeting and use the funds for many of our projects. Thank you Harry.

Our conservation committee is now up to eleven members, I think, under Nancy Wenninger's leadership. At our last meeting their committee unveiled a Power Point presentation that very succinctly tells the story of the effects of using second generation rodenticides; how they are damaging all sorts of wildlife, birds particularly, pets and even children that unknowingly are exposed to the poison. Our goal with this Power Point is to get it in front of as many people and groups as we can. Service groups, home owners associations, school groups—you name it, we want them to see it. Our belief is that most people do not realize how much damage is being done and, if they knew, they would perhaps use alternative methods to get rid of mice and rats; there are alternatives. The committee also produced an excellent brochure that



Autumn Crescendo. Harry Curieux Adamson lithograph.

tells the story. It is very professional. We had 1000 printed so they are to be used. If you would like one of the committee members to make a presentation to a group let us know.

The Yahoo group, East Bay Birders, which our chapter sponsors, had e-mails this week of multiple sightings of Roadrunner in east Contra Costa County; it was near a golf course in Brentwood at the corner of Pacific Grove Court and St. Andrews Drive. I would surely like to see it and will give it a try this week. I would also really like to have it seen on our Christmas bird count.

Our general meetings continue to have large numbers—104 last week—and also great programs. Hope to see you at a meeting or field trip.

## EBRPD Makes the Greens "Greener"

East Bay Regional Park District's Tilden Park Golf Course has been designated as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" and certified in Chemical Use Reduction and Safety and Water Quality Management. It is the 67th golf course in California and the 1009th in the world to be designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf is an award-winning education and certification program that helps golf courses protect the environment and preserve the natural heritage of the game of golf. By helping people enhance the valuable natural areas and wildlife habitats that golf courses provide and minimizing potentially harmful impacts of golf course operations, the program serves as a vital resource for golf courses.

EBRPD's Tilden Park Golf Course is being managed to meet or exceed standards set by Audubon International for reduction and safety of chemical use, water quality management and conservation, wildlife

and habitat management, and outreach and education. Work completed that contributed to achieving this certification includes the restoration of Wildcat Creek, establishment of California native plants around the golf course, and documentation of ongoing Integrated Pest Management strategies and practices.

"American Golf, who are the course operators, and Regional Parks staff have set up projects at Tilden to enhance wildlife habitat, achieve sensitive maintenance practices, and inform people of our commitment to environmental quality," said Park District General Manager Robert E. Doyle. "This certification demonstrates the Park District's leadership, commitment, and high standards of environmental management. This achievement is possible because of the dedication and commitment of our Park District staff and American Golf."

Every two years, the course operator will recertify with Audubon International to ensure that certification standards are being maintained.



The eye color of this bird changes from bluish-gray in nestlings, to pale yellow in young adults and then to red in older adults. Those birds of the western states have longer wings and shorter bodies than do those in the east.

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

ACEHKOOPRSW

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# Observations

By Maury Stern

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

The past month has been a time of newly arriving migrants and winter migrants readying to leave. The winter migrants are singing, molting, and departing for the mountains and points north. Some migrants will stay to breed and others will just pass through. In any event, it's an exciting time.

At least 20 **Brant** were seen at Brooks Island by Mike Carnall who kayaked to the site. 9 were seen by LK from land on 4/1.

A **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Bethel Island, Piper Slough, on 4/2. Michelle Townsley.

**Hooded Mergansers** continued with a pair at Jewel Lake, Tilden, 3/17. JE. DM saw a pair at Newhall Park in Concord 3/25, and two more were at Waterbird Preserve in Martinez 3/30. JH, where LK saw them on 4/7.

A **Common Loon** was at Mallard Reservoir in Concord, 4/7. LK. (This caused Steve Glover to comment from Fort Worth that he had never seen them there in 20 years.)

Thirty-three **Cattle Egrets** were at Bethel Island, 3/30. AL.

**White-faced Ibis** were in or near Jersey Island, 3/23. CS; 3/24; AM 38: 164 3/24 AL; JH 3/30 6.

A **Bald Eagle** was over M?'s El So-brante home, 3/13.

AM saw a **Ferruginous Hawk** at Jersey Island, 3/24.

There was a **Golden Eagle** at Sibley Volcanic RP, 3/28. SL. There have been nesting **Golden Eagles** there many years.

EM had a **White-tailed Kite** perched in a treetop 4/8 and 4/9.

A **Merlin** was near Mallard Reservoir, 4/7. LK.

**Caspian Terns** returned. On 3/29, they were at Brooks Island. MC. On 3/31 in Discovery Bay, PF. LK saw one at Miller-Knox RP, 4/1; and MS saw one at Heather Farm Pond, 4/2.

A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen in Brentwood 4/3. JCh, and 4/5. JH.

A **Pygmy Owl** was heard on Pinehurst Road near Canyon, 3/27. AL.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** was at Tilden Nature Area, 3/25. TP; and near Canyon, 3/27. AL.

**Rufous Hummingbirds** were seen 3/20 in Moraga, EM; 3/22 Mitchell Canyon, BC; 4/2 DH in Walnut Creek; and PS in Antioch, 4/3.

A nesting **Allen's Hummingbird** was on the Upper Pack Rat Trail in the Tilden Nature Area, 3/22. JR.

DW saw a **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Mitchell Canyon, 4/7.

Many **Western Kingbirds** arrived in the week after 3/26 at Black Diamond Mines, PS; 3/27 at Castle Rock Park in Walnut Creek, CS; 3/29 Holland Tract, AL; 3/30 Discovery Bay, PF, JE, JH, LK.

A **Cassin's Vireo** was much earlier than usual but well seen on 3/26 at Briones RP, MS; and three were at Mitchell Canyon 4/7, DW.

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued their irruption with one seen in Walnut Creek 4/4 by FS.

PS saw a **Canyon Wren** 3/13 at Black Diamond Mines, and TF saw one there 4/3. This is one of the few spots to see them in Contra Costa County.

**Golden-crowned Kinglets** were at Mitchell Canyon 3/22, BC; and Pack Rat Trail in Tilden 4/1. LK.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were at Mitchell Canyon 3/22, BC; and Briones Crest Trail 3/24, LA.

LK saw 325 **Cedar Waxwings** at Mallard Reservoir 4/7.

**Phainopepla** were at Black Diamond Mines 3/24, JB, and 3/26. PS.

**Orange-crowned Warblers** started to be seen at Tilden Nature Area 3/11. JD, JR, JE. DHe.

A male **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was at Black Diamond Mines 3/30. JE.

HN discovered the **MacGillivray's Warbler** at the ¼ mile-post at the Inspiration Point Trail in Tilden, 4/2. It was seen again 4/5 by TF and 4/8 by JE. This is presumably the same bird seen for five or more years in this spot.

**Wilson's Warblers** were first spotted 3/23 by DHe at Tilden. By 5/1 there were



Hermit Thrush  
Meg Sandri

15 between the Nature Center and Jewel Lake. AK.

FS saw the first of the season **Western Tanager** in Walnut Creek 4/4.

**Rufous-crowned Sparrows** were at Black Diamond Mines 3/13, PS; and near Vollmer Peak in Tilden 3/22. MK, JRo.

**Chipping Sparrows** were at Black Diamond Mines 3/26. PS.

AF saw three **Grasshopper Sparrows** in the fields at Point Isabel Park 3/24.

**White-throated Sparrows** continued to be present. 3/17 near Heather Farm, FS. JE at the Upper Pack Rat Trail in Tilden 3/17. JR has had two all winter in her Alamo yard through at least 4/4.

JR's **Slate-colored Junco** has remained through 4/4 also.

BP had the first local **Black-headed Grosbeak** of the season in his Lafayette yard 3/28. The first for many people was on a Tilden walk with AK, 4/1.

**Hooded Orioles** returned to JC's Moraga neighborhood 3/17.

**Bullock's Orioles** were first seen by MS at Briones Regional Park 3/26; EL in San Ramon 3/27; PF at Orwood Resort in East county 3/29; AL at Diablo Foothills Park 3/31.

**Pine Siskins** were wide spread through the area as before.

A **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was at Black Diamond Mines 4/6. PS and group.

LA Lou Argyres, JB John Blakelock, MC Michael Carnall, BC Bill Chilson, JCh Jane Chinn, JC Judi Cooper, JD Jay Dodge, JE Janet Ellis, TF Tracy Farrington, PF Paul Femwick, AF Allen Fish, HH Hugh Harvey, DHe Doug Henderson, JH Jeff Hoppes, DH David Hutton, LK Logan Kahle, AK Alan Kaplan, MK Marilyn Kinch, EL Eugenia Larson, AL Albert Linkowski, SL Steve Lombardi, AM Amy McDonald, DM David Morris, EM Ellis Myers, BP Bernt Pettersson, JR Jean Richmond, JRo Jim Roethe, FS Fred Safier, PS Paul Schorr, CS Catherine Spaulding, MS Maury Stern, MT Michelle Townsley, DW Denise Wight, M? Mike ?.

# Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

## May

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

## June

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

## July

- 20 Saturday ..... San Mateo Coast

## August

- 17 Saturday ..... Bodega Bay

### ③ Thursday, May 2 Mitchell Canyon

Leader: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644.

Meet at 8 AM in Mitchell Canyon parking lot. There is a \$6.00 parking fee. From I-680 in Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road to Clayton Road. Turn right on Clayton Road and right on Mitchell Canyon Road to the end. Gnatcatchers, spring migrants and residents, lots of wildflowers. Usually hot! Bring liquids and lunch.

### ③ Saturday, May 4 Donner Canyon

Leader: Steve Glover.

Not done by MDAS since 1994, join Steve Glover for this unique hike through some of the hidden canyons of Mt. Diablo. Meet at 7 AM at trailhead at the end of Regency Drive in Clayton. From I-680, go east on Ygnacio Valley Road, turn right onto Clayton Road, which becomes Marsh Creek Road in Clayton. After passing Diablo View Middle School on the left, look for Regency Drive on the right. This is a difficult hike, climbing to over 1400 feet up Donner Canyon and Meridian Ridge Road, before returning through Back Canyon. May be hot. Bring lunch and liquids.

### ② Thursday, May 9 Mount Diablo State Park

Leader: Jimm Edgar, 510-658-2330.

Mount Diablo State Park is a treasure trove for birders. Although every season in the park has its special qualities, early May on the mountain has its own beauty; wildflowers add color to the vistas. NOTE: Carpool leaves at 8 AM from La Gonda. Meet at 8:45 AM at the South Gate entrance after birding South Gate Road. Usually hot! Bring lunch and drinks. Entry fee required. Many migrant and nesting species are possible including Sage Sparrows, California Thrashers, woodpeckers, raptors and warblers.

### ② Thursday, May 16

#### West Briones Regional Park

Leader: Ethan Chickering, 686-9231.

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. Bring lunch and liquids.

### ② Saturday, May 18

#### East Contra Costa County

Leader: Gary Fregien, 916-708-0636.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 6:30 AM. Or meet the leader at 7 AM on Cypress Road at the trailhead parking lot just east of O'Reilly's Auto Parts in Oakley. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, left onto Cypress Road. May be hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Target birds include: Blue Grosbeak, Great-tailed Grackle, Burrowing Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Swainson's Hawk, Yellow-billed Magpie and Yellow-breasted Chat.

## Come birding with us!

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

Category ①: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category ②: Moderate, one mile +, possibly rough terrain

Category ③: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Our Mount Diablo Audubon Chapter is a conservation organization. As such, we encourage members to consider meeting at the carpool point to pick up or ride with others. It is important that given the cost of gasoline, those who ride with others offer to pay some of this cost. Don't forget about any bridge tolls or park entry fees on some of our longer trips. Carpool locations: **La Gonda**. 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. **Sun Valley**—Southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord.

# Trip Reports

**Valle Vista/Upper San Leandro Reservoir, March 21.** Twenty birders spent a pleasant spring morning enjoying the open fields, woods, and lakeshore of this easy birdwalk. The parking lot always produces a fair number of birds and we heard, then spotted, a posing California Thrasher on the hillside shortly after starting down the trail. This was one of the day's best birds but we went on to find lots more species. The only migrants which had arrived were four kinds of swallows and a couple presumably Allen's Hummingbirds at the flowering bush at the end of the bridge. We saw two gorgeous male Wood Ducks sitting high up in pine trees plus several on the water among the 8 kinds of ducks. Some female Purple Finches near



the corral allowed pointing out the differences between them and House Finches to several birders and a nearby Red-breasted Sapsucker was a new bird for some. Returning to the parking lot at noon, we did a checklist count, coming up with 74 species, totally obliterating our previous record of 65 species for this annual trip.

*Don Lewis*

Poison Oak.  
Valle Vista.

**Lake Lagunitas, March 27.** Only 4 members attended this field trip, but we were treated to a wonderful day of birds and flowers. Neither cold nor warm, and with overcast and even a slight mist on occasion, we saw Douglas iris (in both purple and white), hounds tongue, shooting stars, coast sun cup and numerous others. The birds were equally as special with highlights being the singing Purple Finches, Wilson's Warblers, Orange-crowned Warblers and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, a nest-building Bewick's Wren, both Hooded and Common Mergansers, a hunting Osprey and woodpeckers galore. Though the majority were Acorn Woodpeckers, we also saw Red-shafted Flickers, a Red-breasted Sapsucker and heard a Nuttall's



Bewick's Wren. Beth Branthaver photo.

Woodpecker. As we ate our lunch near the parking lot, we heard quite close the loud *keekkeekkeekkeek* of a Pileated Woodpecker. A large shadowish bird flew away from us and beyond, but eventually a second bird called in the opposite direction. Immediately, the first bird responded with another close-by call, then it flew right over us in the direction of the second bird. High fives were shared around. Altogether we saw or heard 43 species. *Hugh B. Harvey*

**Garin Regional Park, April 6.** Garin Park in early April: A cool spring day, very green, with just an occasional touch of drizzle. Calling Pacific-slope Flycatchers, singing Song Sparrows, House Wrens, Bullock's Orioles, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers. Nesting Western Bluebirds and Tree and Barn Swallows. Winter birds still around included Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. As we munched our lunches we watched a Great Blue Heron on the lawn as it captured a good-sized rodent, arranged it in its beak just so, and swallowed it whole. Best bird: first we heard it, then we glimpsed it, then it flew down onto the path and posed for everybody—a Grasshopper Sparrow. The numbers: 8 birders, 53 species. *Fred Saifer*



Grasshopper Sparrow. Beth Branthaver photo.

## Thanks, MDAS

The birds on Santa Fe Grade were so plentiful and beautiful during our February 16 field trip! Rosita and I are always happy to see and hear the ibis and other waders, the ducks and the raptors as we drive towards Los Banos. This trip was different for us, though, as we were called home with the news that my Dad, Al, was hospitalized in grave condition. We were very blessed to be with him during his last hours, painful as it was for us.

As many of you know, he struggled mightily these last years. Until his health no longer allowed it, my Dad enjoyed attending our meetings, sitting in the back row, buying his raffle tickets and watching the programs. My sisters, brother and I thank everyone in Mount Diablo Audubon who have helped and supported us during this difficult time.

It was my Mom who liked birds originally; we have had a seed feeder in our yard starting in the late 1950s when we lived in Cincinnati. The hummingbird feeder idea came from my paternal grandmother after we lived here in Walnut Creek. It was my Mom from whom I inherited an interest in birds; I can thank my Dad for my interest in trains and my humor. So it is really his fault you all have to suffer my jokes about "hearing the rails calling," when we are birding near some train tracks.

Every time I see Cedar Waxwings, the first bird I remember, I say, "Thanks, Mom." Now, every time I hear Amtrak or the Union Pacific whistle out of a station, I'll have to say, "Thanks, Dad."

*Hugh B. Harvey*

## Cats ♦ Where We Stand ♦ Birds

It is not about birds versus cats; it is about protecting birds and cats.

The domestic cat (*Felis catus*), is an exotic species in the United States. It originated from an ancestral wild species, the European and African wild cat (*Felis silvestris*), and is now recognized as a separate species. The number of pet cats in the continental United States has grown to about 84 million. Approximately 30 percent of all households have cats; in rural areas the estimate is around 60 percent. About half of these cats have outside access. In addition, there are 30 to 80 million "un-owned" or feral cats.

Current studies indicate that domestic cats are a significant factor in the mortality of native small birds, reptiles, mammals, and amphibians. According to *The Impact of Free-Ranging Domestic Cats on Wildlife of the United States*, published in January 2013 by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, scientists estimate that domestic cats kill from 1.4 to 3.7 billion birds each year—that's from **four to ten million** birds each day! Pet owners' attitudes about their cats, wildlife and wildlife management are essential factors in dealing with this threat.

Feral cats are recognized as one of the most widespread and serious threats to the health and integrity of native wildlife populations and natural ecosystems. Their negative impacts are poorly understood by the public. Advocacy groups promote the continued presence of feral cats, and few policies and laws deal directly with their control.

When feral cats receive food from humans, they can reach population levels that create areas of abnormally high predation on wildlife. Feeding cats does not stop them from killing or injur-



Western Bluebird  
Meg Sandri

ing wildlife; even well-fed cats have been documented to prey on wildlife regularly, and they frequently do not eat what they kill.

Effects of cat predation are most significant in isolated habitats, such as natural areas where cat colonies are maintained and where populations of native birds are already low or stressed by other factors. When the prey is a threatened or endangered species, the result could lead to extirpation or extinction. For example, feral cats were integral in the extinction in the wild of the Hawaiian Crow (*Dauphiné and Cooper, The 4th International Partners in Flight Conference, 2008*).

The possibility for disease transmission among feral cats, wildlife, humans and other pets should also be a serious concern where feral cats are abundant. Feral cats are now the primary vector of rabies in some parts of the United States.

MDAS urges cat owners to protect their pets by keeping them indoors. Cats allowed to roam are more likely to catch a disease, be hit by a car or become a victim of a larger predator.

MDAS also endorses National Audubon's resolution, which reads in part:

### REGARDING CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF FERAL AND FREE-RANGING DOMESTIC CATS:

WHEREAS feral and free-ranging domestic cats (*Felis catus*) are non-native predators in all habitats in which they occur; and ... [a whole bunch of other "WHEREAS"s]

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society recognizes the science-based conclusions of the adverse impact of feral and free-ranging domestic cats on birds and other wildlife; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Audubon Society will convey such science-based conclusions to its chapters so that they, if they so wish, will be in a position to advocate that local and state wildlife agencies, public health organizations and legislative bodies restrict and regulate the maintenance and movement of feral and free-ranging domestic cats out-of-doors and to support programs to vaccinate cats and to neuter or spay cats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Audubon Society and such chapters as shall so wish, will work with the scientific, conservation, and animal welfare communities to educate the public about the dangers that feral and free-ranging domestic cats pose to birds and other native wildlife; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Audubon Society will work on this issue with such federal wildlife agencies, public health organizations and legislative as the Society shall deem appropriate.

## Volunteer Coordinator Needed

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

The MDAS Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for finding volunteer workers from our MDAS membership, providing training, preparing instructions and scheduling work shifts at environmental fairs and other events. For each event, the Coordinator inventories and prepares appropriate materials for display. He or she also arranges for transportation and setup of the items selected for each event. There is lifting and carrying of plastic bins plus occasionally a bulky overhead canopy which requires assembly and breakdown at the volunteer worksite. Ideally, this position best lends itself to a partnership situation in which two people jointly share the title---since past coordinators needed assistance with some of the tasks required.

Perks of this position include experiencing some of Contra Costa County's most meaningful and worthwhile environmental events in addition to meeting and interacting with some fascinating people involved in today's conservation conscious world.

If you are interested in applying for this volunteer position which includes MDAS Board of Directors status, please contact Bev Walker at 925-952-9925 or [beewalk@comcast.net](mailto:beewalk@comcast.net).

By Bev Walker

# William and James G. Cooper

» Continued from Page 10

With few job opportunities in the natural sciences in those days, James Cooper pursued and received a medical degree. He graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City in 1851. The medical training gave him a general background in science and would enable him to earn a living as a physician while pursuing his nature studies on the side.

In 1852 Cooper learned of plans for a series of government surveys and explorations of the West. He wrote to Spencer Fullerton Baird, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian, who helped find scientists for the expeditions. Baird was pleased by Cooper's enthusiasm and wrote back, "It would indeed be strange if the son of one so intimately connected with the progress of American science as your father should not have some of his tendencies."

Cooper was assigned the job of surgeon and naturalist on the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers' Stevens Pacific Railroad Survey in search of a transcontinental route through the Northwest. Setting off on a steamer for the Washington Territory, they traveled by way of the Isthmus of Panama and arrived at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River. The party was divided into two sections, Cooper going under the leadership of Captain George B. McClellan (later to gain fame during the Civil War). The government wanted to know not only about topography, but



Specimen of beach silvertop, *Glehnia leiocarpa*, collected by James Cooper during the Stevens Pacific Railroad Survey in 1854 and sent to the Smithsonian.

also about fauna, flora, and geological resources. Over the next ten months, Cooper took notes and collected birds, plants, and other specimens for shipment back to the Smithsonian. Over the next few years Cooper participated in several other government explorations and also traveled through New England and Florida in search of specimens for museums.

In 1860, Cooper took a job with the Geological Survey of California, led by Professor Josiah D. Whitney, State Geologist, whose task was to furnish "a full and scientific description of [the state's] rocks, fossils, soils, and minerals, and of its botanical and zoological productions, together with specimens of the same." On completion of this work Cooper explored much of California, including the Farallons and Channel Islands, and the Sierra.

In early 1866 he married Rosa Wells and set up a medical practice in Santa Cruz. He wrote to Baird, "I am not making expenses yet at practice, but hope to make a living at it after a while. It however prevents my collecting much, as I have to be on hand in case of accident and not let them go to one of the six other doctors in town." Only a year later Cooper, his wife, and newborn son left Santa Cruz and settled in Hayward where he was finally able to balance a medical practice with the study of natural history.

Cooper published on an incredible variety of topics: medicinal plants, forest trees, birds, mammals, reptiles, land snails, freshwater clams, coal distribution, marine mollusks, fishes, and fossils. In all, he wrote over 150 papers. His greatest contribution in paleontology was assembling a catalog of fossils collected by the California Geological Survey, published in 1888. In his 1874 paper "California in the Miocene Epoch," he correctly concluded that much of the Coast Ranges south of San Francisco were under water during that time period.

Several species of marine mollusks, as well as the Cooper Ornithological Club, were named in his honor. James Graham Cooper died in Hayward in 1902. He is buried in the family plot of Rev. Samuel Taggart Wells, a founder of Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland.

## Cooper's Hawk ♦ *Accipiter cooperi*

**a** Just about anyone who has a birdfeeder in Contra Costa County will be familiar with Cooper's Hawks as these raptors prey almost exclusively on other birds. The Cooper's Hawk is the most widely distributed accipiter in North America and has adapted quite well to suburban living. The term *accipiter* comes from the Latin word for grasping and refers to the birds' method of attack on other birds. The only other accipiter in our area is the Sharpshinned Hawk, which is an equally feared enemy of our backyard avian friends. If you have trouble with accipiters at your feeders, take the feeders down for a few days, and the hawks will move on.

The field identification of these two species presents a challenge to many birders, beginners and old hands alike. There is great variation in plumage and in size for the two; a female sharpie may be the size of a male Cooper's—the size of a dove. The female Cooper's is the size of an American Crow. No single field mark is likely to distinguish one species from the other. No field guide will substitute for plenty of practice in the field.



Cooper's Hawk. Ethan Winning photo.

## First Aid for Birds

Spring is the time of year for baby birds and you may chance to find one that has fallen from its nest, or one which you suspect to have been abandoned or injured.

Here is some basic guidance to assist with the rescue and to make the bird comfortable until it can be delivered to a professional rehab center or wildlife hospital. It is very important that an injured bird receive professional care as soon as possible. Leaving the animal is the best treatment possible until it can be transported to a care facility. Additional handling causes stress, and improper treatment can cause further injury. With fractures and breaks, the longer the injury remains untreated, the more difficult it is to fix. With young birds dehydration and starvation are quick to set in. Any bird that has been caught or attacked by a cat must be brought to a wildlife rehabilitator. Cats have bacteria in their mouths that will cause a bird to die, usually within three days, if left untreated.

If you find a featherless baby bird on the ground, try to locate the nest. If the bird does not appear injured, gently pick up the baby and place it in the nest. Don't worry about your scent on the bird; the mother will not reject the baby—that is a myth. Make sure the other babies in the nest look like the one you are replacing. Watch the nest from a distance to confirm that the parent bird returns to the nest. This could take several hours. If you cannot find the nest or cannot reach it, or if a nestling bird is injured, keep the baby warm and take it to a wildlife hospital as quickly as possible. Do not attempt to feed it anything.

Place the bird in a small container such as a paper grocery bag or small box lined with an absorbent towel. Heat can be provided by a hot water bottle or any plastic bottle filled with warm water. This type of heat helps to prevent pneumonia and dehydration by applying the heat to the body but not to the environment. Do not feed it or give it water. Do not attempt to treat its wounds.

If you find a nest on the ground, tie it back into a nearby tree. The nest can be placed in a little box (with drainage holes) to make it easier to secure it. Don't use a berry basket because bird legs may get caught in the mesh.

A baby bird with feathers but who does not fly well, if at all, is a fledgling. It probably

doesn't need your help. Fledglings haven't fully developed their flight feathers, but they can flutter from branch to branch. A fledgling on the ground could be taking a rest from its first flight or it could be waiting for one of its parents to feed it. Parents coach their fledglings to find suitable cover and feed them even after they are able to fly. Being on the ground is a normal and necessary part of a bird's developing the ability to fly.

People often believe the parents are not feeding a baby when it is simply a matter of not seeing the parent coming in to feed. Parent birds do not want to attract the attention of a predator to the location of the nest. They will quickly fly in, poke the food down the baby's throat and fly back out in a matter of seconds.

Ducks, quail and killdeer are examples of precocial birds that nest on the ground. These babies are supposed to be on the

ground and the chances of survival are low if they are taken away. If the bird's peep is weak and it can't stand, it needs attention.

If you are having trouble catching the bird, drop a towel lightly over the bird. The darkness will calm and immobilize the bird so that it is easier to pick up. Baby birds, especially those who are featherless, need to be kept warm. Birds have a higher body temperature than humans, and babies should be warm to the touch. The heat helps to prevent pneumonia and dehydration by applying the heat to the body but not to the environment.

In Contra Costa County, call Animal Services at (925) 335-8300 for advice about wildlife that you think might be injured. Also, Lindsay Wildlife Museum operates a wildlife hospital in Walnut Creek. Call (925) 935-1978 for more information or visit their website at <http://wildlife-museum.org/hospital>.

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## Election of Officers

At each May meeting of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society, in accordance with the by-laws, we elect officers for the following fiscal year. All members are eligible to stand for election, and if you would like to run for any of the positions, please call President Jimm Edgar to be considered at the meeting.

All current officers have announced their willingness to serve for another term. Elected offices and the incumbents are:

President	Jimm Edgar	Secretary	Diana Granados
Vice-President	Paul Schorr	Treasurer	Steve Buffi

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## International Migratory Bird Day

International Migratory Bird Day, celebrating one of the most important and spectacular natural events—bird migration—officially takes place on the second Saturday in May in the U.S. and Canada and in October in Mexico, Central and South America. Two events where you can celebrate International Migratory Bird Day are at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge in Alviso, and at Stone Lakes NWR near Sacramento.

The wetlands at Don Edwards are an important stop on the Pacific Flyway, a major bird migration route. The South Bay Bird Fest will be a day of exploration to celebrate our feathered friends with guided walks, games, crafts, and various other activities. Explore avian antics in a live bird show showcasing bird behavior. Get up close and personal with real refuge birds and their habitats on the Flying Frenzy Expedition and learn how you can help

birds. Don't miss the annual bird-brained bash! Everything is free! Fun for the whole family. No reservations necessary. All ages and abilities welcome. Noon until 3:00 PM, May 11 at the Environmental Education Center, 1751 Grand Blvd., Alviso. For information and directions, call 408-262-5513 ext. 102 or 104.

If you'd enjoy a fun, family-oriented day in the country with lively entertainment and up-close personal views of many wildlife species, mark your calendar and plan to attend Walk on the Wild Side. Join Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in celebrating International Migratory Bird Day and local conservation successes on the Bufferlands Beach Lake Preserve. The free event is from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on May 18 near the town of Freeport, California, at the Beach Lake Picnic Area. See [www.fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=2147509413](http://www.fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=2147509413) for directions and more information.



# Albatross

## Viewing By Mike Eliot

On a recent trip to Kauai, Annie and I were treated to a unique spectacle. We met an ornithologist who works to preserve the habitat of the amazing Laysan Albatross. She took us on a tour of the Na Aina Kai Gardens, part of which is Albatross nesting grounds.

We were lucky to approach a 37-year-old bird that was nesting on a single egg. She had nested in the same pine grove for at least 15 years. The nest is made from a pile of pine needles.



We learned that her mate had flown off to the Aleutians to feed, nearly 2400 miles away. They do not eat in Kauai and when the mate returns in two weeks, she will leave the nest and fly to the Aleutians to eat as well.

We also learned that they can fly for over a week without landing, sleeping with eyes open in flight. They are capable of riding air currents to save energy and can fly hundreds of miles without flapping their wings even once.



She told us about another Albatross, named Wisdom, nesting on Midway Island. She is the oldest known living bird, of any species, at 62.

Here is the chick she hatched in March.



# Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

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Quail Editor



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

**Mount Diablo Audubon Society** thanks our Business Partners for their generous support:

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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. Membership dues are tax deductible.
- I'm enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society.

Please send *The Quail* by:  US mail  E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make your check payable to:

MOUNT DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:

Membership Chair, 282 Firestone Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Mount Diablo Audubon Society,  
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*Cooper's Hawk. Ethan Winning photo..*

## William and James G. Cooper Father and Son Naturalists

William Cooper was born about the year 1798, the son of James Cooper, an English merchant who came to New York shortly after the Revolutionary War. In 1817 William joined with other young men to establish the "Lyceum of Natural History," which was later to become the New York Academy of Sciences. Cooper's tastes led him to collect natural history material, both plants and animals, chiefly for the Museum of the Lyceum. His interest in botany led him to a life-long friendship with Dr. John Torrey, the first curator of the Lyceum and then president. Cooper also became good friends with Prince Charles Lucian Bonaparte, who was at the time in the United States continuing the work of Alexander Wilson on his *American Ornithology*. Bonaparte used Cooper's collections and observations; Cooper edited Bonaparte's English text. It was Bonaparte who named *Falco cooperi* (now *Accipiter cooperi*), Cooper's Hawk, for his friend.

The specimen had been shot by Cooper in Hudson County, New Jersey, in 1828. William Cooper described and named only one new bird—the Evening Grosbeak. Cooper made his collections and notes available to both James Audubon and Thomas Nuttall. Nuttall named the Olive-sided Flycatcher for Cooper. Then called *Muscicapa cooperi*, it has since been renamed *Contopus cooperi*. Spencer F. Baird also named a bird for Cooper—Cooper's Sandpiper—but this was based on a single specimen that is now considered to be a hybrid.

Cooper did other scientific work and made significant advances in conchology, geology and mammals. His collection of shells, carefully described and cataloged, was purchased by the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Cooper died in 1864.

James G. Cooper was born June 19, 1830, in New York City and was no doubt influenced early in life by his father, William



*James Graham Cooper*

Cooper. Unfortunately, James's mother, Mary Wilson Cooper, died when he was about five. In 1837 the family moved to a farm in New Jersey where young James grew up hunting, fishing, and collecting shells, birds' nests, reptiles, and other natural history specimens. He kept squirrels, a raccoon, and an opossum as pets.

*Continued on Page 7 »*