



# 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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## Common Murre Breeding Ground Restoration

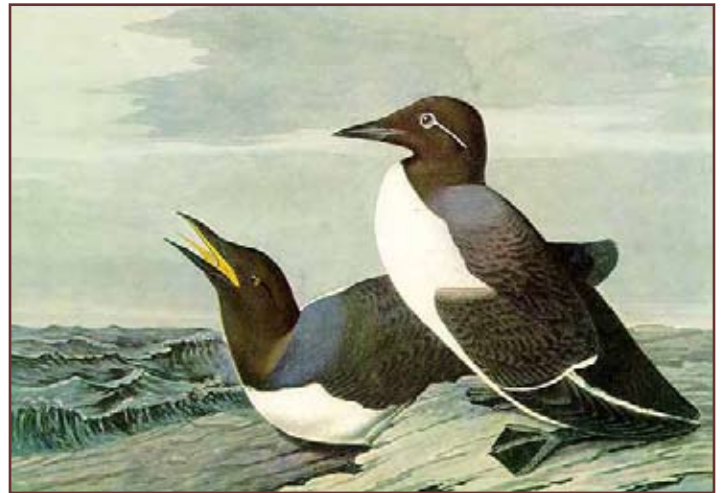
### Peter Kappes

Peter Kappes of U. C. Santa Cruz will present his work with the Common Murre Restoration Project on the Central California coast. The project has been designed to reestablish a colony of Common Murres on a small sea stack called Devil's Slide Rock, located along the San Mateo coast near Pacifica. The breeding colony held close to 3000 murres as recently as the early 1980s but was wiped out as a result of two quite separate occurrences. Tens of thousands of murres in central California were drowned in gill nets between the late 1970s and mid-1980s. In the winter of 1986, 26,000 gallons of oil were spilled along the California coast causing the death of 6,300 murres. The breeding colony on Devil's Slide Rock disappeared.

The restoration project began in 1995 under the direction of USFWS's San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in cooperation with Humboldt State University and the National Audubon Society. In addition to the work at Devil's Slide Rock, The Common Murre Restoration Project includes colony monitoring at the Point Reyes Headlands in Point Reyes National Seashore and the Castle and Hurricane Point Rocks in the California Coastal National Monument along the Big Sur coast.

Peter will discuss the social attraction techniques used to enhance and restore the murre colonies as well as the results of the project's efforts. In addition he will discuss the remote techniques used to monitor the colonies and the education outreach aspects of the project.

With a Bachelors Degree in Environmental Science at the University of Virginia, Peter conducted fish research in the Pacific Northwest and Antarctica. He moved to the Monomoy



*On one occasion, whilst at anchor at Great Macatina, one of our boats was sent for eggs. The sailors had eight miles to pull before reaching the Murre Islands, and yet ere many hours had elapsed, the boat was again alongside, loaded to a few inches of the gunwale, with 2500 eggs! Many of them, however, being addle, were thrown overboard. The order given to the tars had been to bring only a few dozens; but, as they said, they had forgotten!*

*John J. Audubon, Birds of America*

NWR on Cape Cod where he studied the influence of Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls on Piping Plovers. This was followed by two years studying seabirds in the Galapagos and in Alaska. He took his Masters at York University on the influence of ornamental plumage coloration on the reproductive success of the American Redstart male. He is currently monitoring anthropogenic disturbances at important seabird nesting and roosting sites. These data will be used to designate marine protected areas along the central California coast.

### Birding Information

June is springtime in the natural lands of North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska. Scott and Claudia Hein will show photographic highlights of the flora and fauna of this area from a trip taken this last June. Scott and Claudia are very active members of MDAS. Each December they lead a Christmas Bird Count group and Claudia is our MDAS Board Secretary. Scott is a well known Contra Costa County nature photographer devoting much time to Save Mount Diablo. Be sure to check his website, [www.heinphoto.com](http://www.heinphoto.com).

### Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, November 1**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Social time, refreshments,\* door prize

8:05 PM Speaker: Peter Kappes

\*Please remember to bring a cup.

**December 6: Claudia Eyzaguirre — The Salton Sea**

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

## President's Corner

In August of this year we were contacted by Audubon California and asked to consider submitting a person who was an outstanding volunteer for our chapter. Audubon California wanted to honor six individuals from the Audubon chapters of California at the 2007 State convention in October. We submitted the name of Bob Wisecarver from our chapter and he was selected as one the six honoraries for Audubon California Chapter Award. I have yielded my space this month to include the one page letter we submitted on Bob's behalf for you to read. All of us could learn so much from Bob's example.

Jimm Edgar

Nomination of Bob Wisecarver For Audubon California Chapter Volunteer Award

Bob Wisecarver has been a Mt. Diablo Audubon member for over 30 years. At 86 years of age, Bob continues to be an active volunteer, creating California Quail habitat, installing Barn Owl houses, bat houses and bee houses, and creating lizard habitat all over Contra Costa County.

Quail populations have plummeted all over the state due in part to loss of habitat and feral cats. Bob's quail habitat restoration in the Walnut Creek Open

Space has been extremely successful. Bob converted areas with no visible cover by planting willows and Coyote brush and adding piles of brush to create cover for quail. He also dreamed up a drip water system built from old barrels which, to the surprise of everyone, created habitat for other birds and wildlife. His efforts have reduced the pressure on quail as prey for raptors and coyote. His creative ideas have also been used by many others also trying to create habitat.

Bob started putting up Barn Owl houses in the early 1990s. He has now reached 76 owl houses and counting, with an annual fledging success rate of over 70%. His bat houses are a work of art and the result of personal research. Bob observed that bats like morning sun and afternoon shade, and that mother bats look for warm

areas to set up their nurseries. Over 60 bat houses have been put up with a 90% success rate! This success rate is unheard of in bat houses. Bob was also the catalyst in getting PG&E to donate a 50-foot-high platform in San Pablo Reservoir that has been used successfully every year by nesting Osprey.

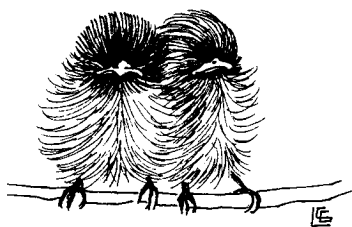
Bob has been the section leader of our Central Contra Costa Christmas Count for over 25 years, covering the Concord Naval Weapons Station. The data he has compiled on these counts are now becoming quite valuable, as the Naval Weapons Station is going through the base-closure and reuse planning process and will become part of the City of Concord. Bob serves on the Walnut Creek Open Space board and has been a part of grassland restoration projects at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek for years. He has also



Bob Wisecarver (center) and Brian Murphy (left) make final preparations before raising this Barn Owl nesting box at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek last January.

represented MDAS for a number of years on the management advisory committee for McNabney Marsh which is part of a California Important Bird Area. Bob has also done countless Nature Fair booths as well as many classroom presentations.

Bob is a tireless, hands-on worker who just gets it done. He typifies what the Audubon Volunteer should be. We are proud to nominate him for recognition by Audubon California for his years of work for wildlife conservation.



## Welcome New Members

Madelaine Burgess	Concord
Sandra Dodson	Richmond
Nancy Erickson	Brentwood
Sharon and Dick Frendberg	Danville
Marjorie Guinasso	Concord
Joy Hall	Pleasant Hill
Glenn Hori	Pleasant Hill
Donna Kramer	Walnut Creek
Barbara Mackey	Walnut Creek
Marcia Marcellini	Lafayette
Gina Tarbill	Concord
Virginia Walker	Lafayette
Leary and Nina Wong	Walnut Creek

## Trip Reports

**Outer Point Reyes, September 29.** Seventeen members and guests had a lovely day at the Point, but birds are fewer in nice weather. Among the 66 species were an Aleutian Canada Goose on the parking lot at Drake's Beach and a Merlin flew over, two American Pipits were on the beach, several Red-necked Phalaropes were on the pond and a pair of Common Yellowthroats on the slope above. A Great Horned Owl, two Say's Phoebes, a bright Cassin's Vireo and a Blackpoll Warbler were on Mendoza Ranch; a White-tailed Kite, a Peregrine Falcon and a Black-throated Gray Warbler were at the lighthouse; and a Western Wood-Pewee was at the Fish Docks. We saw a flock of Wild Turkeys beside the road in Novato on the way out that morning. *Jean Richmond*

**Rodeo Lagoon/Hawk Hill, October 6.** Eight birders enjoyed sparkling autumn weather and many birds, a total of 46 species. At Rodeo Lagoon the highlight birds were two Wilson's Snipe and two Palm Warblers who let us come very close for quite a while as they wagged their tails and foraged on the ground. At Hawk Hill there were few raptors at first, so people peeled away, but the three who stayed eventually saw a good quantity of accipiters (as well as the spectacular views and the ship and plane show) plus a Peregrine Falcon and three Golden Eagles. *Fred Safier*

## November

3 Saturday	Davis Area/Vic Fazio
10 Saturday	Limantour
17 Saturday	Charleston Slough/South Bay
19 Monday	Mt. View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh

## December

8-9 Saturday-Sunday	Gray Lodge
12 Wednesday	Niles Area
15 Saturday	Christmas Count/Central
19 Wednesday	Christmas Count/East County

## January

5 Saturday	Putah Creek
21 Monday	Arrowhead Marsh/Lake Merritt
26 Saturday	Las Gallinas/Rush Creek/Shollenberger
30 Wednesday	Sunol Regional Park

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

Because most trips do not return until late afternoon, bring a lunch and join us during our midday break.

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

Category ❷: Moderate, one mile or more, possibly rough terrain

Category ❸: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Carpool locations: **Sun Valley**—Southwest corner of the Sun Valley Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Boulevard in Concord. **El Nido Ranch Road**—Take the Acalanes Road/Upper Happy Valley Road exit off SR 24, west of Lafayette. El Nido Ranch Road is parallel to and north of the freeway. Park just east of the intersection with Acalanes Road and on the north side of El Nido Ranch Road. **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.

**Come birding  
with us in  
November!**

### ❶ Saturday, November 3

#### Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl of the Central Valley.

Leader: Terry Colborn, 530-758-0689.

The open agricultural lands of the Central Valley provide great foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area are the winter home to thousands of waterfowl including ducks, geese, swans and many shorebirds. This all-day field trip will visit several local winter habitats in search of Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks; Merlin; Prairie Falcon; Burrowing, Barn and Great-horned Owls; as well as the elusive Mountain Plovers. We also expect to see a representative sampling of the waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Vic Fazio Refuge. Participants may meet at 7:00 AM for carpooling from Sun Valley Mall, or meet the leader and others at 8:00 AM in Dixon at the southwest corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot located on East Dorset Drive at the Hwy. 113 exit off I-80. Bring a lunch and liquids; dress in layers.

### ❷ Saturday, November 10 Limantour

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980.

Carpool leaves at 7:00 AM from El Nido Ranch Road. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Point Reyes National Seashore. Take SR 24 to Oakland, then I-580 west to Richmond and the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101 north, take Central San Rafael exit. Go 2 blocks, turn left on 3rd Street and continue west to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake. At SR 1 at Olema, turn right for 0.25 miles, then turn left on Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. This trip includes forest birds on the ridge and ducks, shorebirds and often loons and grebes on the bay.

### ❷ Saturday, November 17 Charleston Slough/South Bay

Leader: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644.

Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride. Meet at Terminal Road in Mountain View at 8:30 AM. Take I-680 south to SR 237, exit Calaveras Boulevard to west. Pass Alviso, connect to US-101 north at Moffett Field. Exit at San Antonio Road, turn right (north) to Terminal Road, turn right and park. Entrance is on left. Other areas of interest in the South Bay are Palo Alto Baylands and Alviso. Shorebirds and waterfowl should be plentiful. Bring lunch.

### ❷ Monday, November 19 McNabney Marsh Mountain View Sanitary Plant

Leader: Cheryl Abel, 335-0176.

Meet at 9 AM at the Mt. View Sanitary Visitor Center. Exit from I-680 southbound at Arthur Road, turn left and go under the freeway. Exit I-680 northbound at Pacheco Blvd, turn right onto Arthur Road and go under the freeway. Arthur Road will turn left. At .4 miles turn sharp left onto Mt. View Sanitary's private road. Follow the road through the entry gate, alongside the freeway and through the tunnel under I-680. Park and sign-in at the Visitor Center. Trails may be muddy. Close-up looks at dabbling ducks; possibly bitterns and herons. If you wish, bring a lunch and explore Martinez shoreline in the afternoon.

**Q**

John Audubon wrote:

"The [bird] affords good eating, especially the young, and the sportsman may occasionally kill six or seven at a shot, provided he fires the moment the flock has alighted, for immediately after the birds spread abroad in search of food."

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

ADEGILNNRS

## Birding Arizona *Continued from Page 8*

SE Arizona. The brilliant blue sky over the rolling golden grasslands, with the Huachuca Mountains, is absolutely awesome. Many different sparrows (including Baird's), Peregrine Falcons, Short-eared Owls, and American and Sprague's Pipet may be found. Much of this area is private. Only bird along roads and respect private property and warning signs. DO NOT bird within a quarter-mile of the corral. Our "life" birds in the valley include Short-eared Owl, Sprague's Pipit, McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspur, and Baird's Sparrows. It's also a great place for raptors and sparrows. Return to Patagonia and if you have time bird the Patagonia-Sonoita Preserve. It is a beautiful place. Best winter birding is either around parking lot and open areas, or along road on west side of preserve. Woodpeckers, wrens, phoebes, Hermit Thrush and others can be found.

Day 4: Drive to Sierra Vista on AZ-82. At junction of AZ-82 and AZ-83, take a brief side trip on AZ-83 to Gardner Canyon Road. It is 3 miles north of Sonoita on left side. It is a pretty, open valley. You can see wintering hawks, quail (Gambel's, Scaled, and if lucky Montezuma), and lots of different sparrows. If you have time side trips to Empire Cienega or Elgin can be worthwhile for sparrows and longspurs. At Sierra Vista, stay at a B&B or the Best Western.

Day 5: Plan on spending most of the day at San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area. Drive out of SV on Fry Blvd. which become AZ-90. A few miles east of town, turn right to San Pedro House. Check out the feeders at the house for goldfinch, Cowbirds, other blackbirds, and whatever else might be there. Walk the trails to the river. (Note: if it has been raining don't walk to the river. Each of your feet



*In fall and winter, you will likely see large coveys of Gambel's Quail as you drive the back roads of Southeast Arizona.*

will have 10 pounds of mud attached.) Check out Kingfisher Pond, walk along the river and through the fields. Birds you can see include towhees (Canyon, Abert's, Green-tailed, and Spotted), various raptors, doves (Common-ground, Morning, White-winged, and maybe Eurasian-collared which can now be seen anywhere in SE Arizona), thrashers (Curve-billed and Crissal), titmice, nuthatches, and various grassland species.

Day 6: Spend most of day at Fort Huachuca. Drive in main gate on Fry Blvd. (Car insurance or rental contract required for admittance.) There are many parts of this historic fort that are interesting. The high country will not have many birds at this time of year, but many wintering birds can be found in the grasslands. After entering the fort drive about 0.5 mile and turn left toward Garden Canyon. Turn right at the sign for fishing holes. Look around ponds for the many varieties of sparrows, towhees, goldfinch, *etc.* There is no telling what you might find here or on any of the other roads in the area. Continue on main road and turn left at Antelope Way. The Lower Garden Pond will be on your left—check for sparrows, longspur, *etc.* Return to main road up the canyon to the three picnic grounds. There may not be much there at this time of year but it always worth checking. Be sure and listen for Eastern and Western Meadowlarks and watch overhead for raptors as you are driving around. *Watch*

*the dips* in the road—they are deep! Do not go anywhere that is posted or is being used by the military. If you have time after visiting the fort you might go to the Sierra Vista Environmental Park (sewage ponds) which is three miles east on Fry Blvd. from center of town. Look for Yellow-headed Blackbirds, ducks, phoebes, Marsh Wren, lots of different raptors including eagles. Note: facility closes at 3 PM.

Day 7: The Whitewater Draw Wildlife Refuge and surrounding area are absolute "musts" birding spots. This is one of our favorite birding spots in all of Arizona. It is located in Sulphur Springs Valley, less than one hour east of Sierra Vista on AZ-90. The entire valley is great birding. Raptors are everywhere. Check all fence lines for thrashers and sparrows. Check the fields for longspur and Mountain Plover. (You will want a scope.) Follow the map

*Sandhill Cranes....How awesome as they land or take off together!*

on page 144 of Taylor's book to White Water Wildlife Refuge. Park and walk to the ponds. There are a number of ponds with loop trails, boardwalks, and benches. The highlight is 10,000–15,000 Sandhill Cranes. How awesome as they land or take off together! Wonderfully loud, too! They fly out early in the morning to feed. We always bird around the valley and get to the refuge by 11 AM. The cranes return from their feeding to drink and rest. It is incredible to watch one "V-shaped" wave after another come in. These waves are stacked one on top of another as high up as you can focus. You will also find hundreds of waterfowl, shorebirds, and eagles. Raptors are plentiful, including the spectacular Ferruginous Hawks. Check the willows to the south of the ponds for Long-eared owls. You will find that you have enjoyed hours here. What is amazing is that there might not be 15 other people there with you. Can you hear those cranes calling?

Day 8: If you have time before catching a plane, you could drive to Wilcox and go to the ponds and Lake Cochise (see page 146). Look for Lark Bunting, falcons, hawks, snipe, longspur, along with lots of water and shore birds.

We hope you enjoy our favorite place to bird – Southeast Arizona.

*Mike & Cecil Williams*

### 2008 Entertainment Books

Save almost twice the \$25 price of the book by using the Safeway and Long's Drugs coupons.

- ♦ Buy at MDAS general meetings.
- ♦ Pick up at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill, or
- ♦ Order on line at [www.entertainment.com](http://www.entertainment.com) and enter the MDAS ID #: 175587.

# The End of the "Fifth Season"

By Patricia Bacchetti

My heartbeat quickens as we begin to sense the end of the "Fifth Season," as Judith Larner Lowry so poetically calls August through October in *Gardening with a Wild Heart*. She writes, "That long luxurious warm spell with no rain, when a hammock, a book, and a glass of lemonade" are the gardener's tools. Lowry continues, "With no moisture, the weeds will be at rest as well, so the gardener can make his leisurely way through the garden, watching pollinators at work, watching flowers turn slowly to seed." November is the ideal time to plant natives, after the first rains have moistened the dry soil that is still warm from the summer sun. So prepare yourselves, it is almost time to plant. Once you plant, roots will be invisibly established over the first winter, and you may not see much change in the growth visible above ground until the second year. But a deep, developed root system allows for a healthier plant. Patience is difficult in the first years of native gardening, but the reward is worth

the wait. Water in the dry season is necessary every 3-4 weeks the first year of the native garden, but then you can let these plants adapted to our Mediterranean climate bloom and set seed without much fuss. Map out your planting plan: dig the hole, plant, and let the rains take over. If we have a long dry winter, you will have to mimic the rains with hand watering. You may have to protect the young plants with deer-proofing materials, as there is no true deer-proof plant. Don't fertilize since natives are adapted to our clay soil. Pesticides are likewise unnecessary. Watch the bees, beetles, butterflies, and spiders come to your garden as it grows! They won't harm the plants; rather they provide food for the birds that will find your native neighborhood oasis. The time has come to prepare for the rains, so get ready to abandon your hammock! Quotes from *Gardening with a Wild Heart*, by Judith Larner Lowry, U.C. Press 1999, a truly inspiring and thoughtful book about restoring California's native landscapes in the garden.

## Ornithological Opportunities

The eleventh annual **Sandhill Crane Festival** will be November 2-4 in Lodi. Long before Lodi existed, Sandhill cranes descended into the rich delta wetlands at the end of a long migratory journey. As they greeted California's earliest explorers, these magnificent birds darkened the skies over winter marshes. In awe-inspiring numbers, and with a prehistoric call, stately gait and elegant choreography, the Sandhill crane continues to attract and inspire visitors. Each year thousands of visitors make their way to the Lodi area refuges and farmlands to experience first-hand one of nature's spectacles. Festival information at [www.lodichamber.com/scfestival/](http://www.lodichamber.com/scfestival/)

**Central Valley Birding Symposium, November 15-18, Stockton.** Evening programs will include Joe Morlan—"Digiscoping for Fun and Science", and Laura Erickson's "Owls—the Inside Story". Workshops include "Birding By Ear—Visually" by Arch McCallum, an e-Bird primer with Brian Sullivan, and one of Jon Dunn's famous birding ID tutorials.

Clay Taylor and Jon Dunn will both lead post-Symposium field trips on Monday the 19th. For more info, see [www.cvbs.org](http://www.cvbs.org), or contact Frances Oliver at [hummer52@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hummer52@sbcglobal.net) or (209) 369-2010.

### Hayward Regional Shoreline Parking Advisory

While on the recent field trip to the Winton Avenue end of Hayward Regional Shoreline, one of the participants had the catalytic converter stolen off the bottom of his Jeep Cherokee. The group had parked inside the gate and in the area of the chemical toilet. The theft was discovered upon starting the engine. After speaking with Bob Richmond, the local park ranger, and two East Bay Regional Park District police, the driver was advised always to park outside the gate and across or in the neighborhood of the park maintenance building. While they have not heard of this type of theft previously, they pointed out that the inside parking lot is not readily visible. By parking outside the gate, even though it might be open, all parked cars are under camera surveillance. *Hugh Harvey*

## Concord Naval Weapons Station Update

On September 11, the Concord City Council appointed City Planning Commissioner, Guy Bjerke, to replace Michael Chavez on the council.

On October 2, the Community Advisory Committee voted to send seven conceptual alternatives to the City Council on October 9. The alternatives include ranges of 47 to 81% open space (which includes both active and passive recreation), 6250 to 13,000 residential units, and 17,700 to 29,000 jobs. The City Council approved (vote 3-1: Allen absent) the recommendation that all seven of these alternatives be studied for the Environmental Impact Study and Environmental Impact Report. All of these alternatives can be viewed at [www.concordreuseproject.org](http://www.concordreuseproject.org).



**Yakutat Fox Sparrow**

*Passerella iliaca annectens*

**Birds of Golden Gate Park  
Joseph Mailliard  
1930**

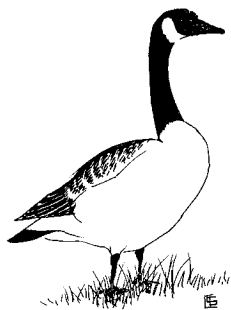
## Trip Reports

**Berkeley Shoreline, October 11.** Eleven birders were greeted by your typical beautiful fall California day at Berkeley Shoreline. 70 species were seen by most, good walks were invigorating for all, and we were able to overcome a late 12:30 high tide at the Albany Flats to see lots of shorebirds and many duck species, some in nice plumage. The best bird of the day was a Parasitic Jaeger harassing terns. A Spotted Sandpiper stayed in view cooperatively, sparrows were back in abundance, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a bright Orange-crowned Warbler, and a late Warbling Vireo rounded out the day.

*Bingham Gibbs*

# Observations

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



A **Cackling Goose** was at Iron House Sanitary District on 10/7 (DW, LH). A **Brant** was feeding on the lawn at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline in Richmond on 10/4 (BB). This species is found around Richmond when birded regularly.

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was at the Albany Crescent on 9/28 (PB) and 9/29 (BB). A male **Redhead**, never an easy bird to find in the county, was at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 10/7 (DW, LH). A male **Harlequin Duck** was around Brooks Island, Richmond, on 10/4 (JL). In the 1990s, when the Richmond area was birded more intensively, a pair of this species was apparently resident, but there have been few records in recent years.

A flock of 13 **White-faced Ibis** flying north over the Albany Bulb and into Contra Costa County airspace on 10/2 may have provided a first modern record for the Richmond area (CP, RS).

An **Osprey** was at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 10/7 (DW, LH). This species has proven to be surprisingly uncommon at the forebay over the years.

A calling **Clapper Rail** was near the mouth of Wildcat Creek, Richmond on

## Sanderling *Calidris alba*



As a wave splashes onto the sandy ocean shore, these small birds run just ahead of the breaker, then follow the receding water and probe into the wet sand to feed on tiny crustaceans or marine worms. Sanderlings nest in the far north Arctic, and the downy young birds may leave the nest a day after hatching to search for insects. The birds migrate along both

the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines as far south as the tip of South America. They are welcome sights on nearly every beach in the world.

Steve Glover

9/20. This species is known from just a handful of sites in the county (PR, BL).

Two flocks of approximately 30 **Sandhill Cranes** were at Holland Tract east of Knightsen on 10/7 (DW, LH).

A **Parasitic Jaeger** was found chasing Forster's Terns over the Albany Crescent on 9/29 (BB). What was quite possibly the same bird was noted there on 10/2 (CP, RS) and 10/4 (JL). Though this species probably occurs annually in the area in fall, years may pass between sightings.

A single **Black Skimmer** was at Brooks Island, Richmond, on 10/4 (JL).

A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was an unusual find at the Richmond Sewage Treatment Plant on 9/20 (PR, BL).

A flock of at least 30 **Vaux's Swifts** was noted heading south over the west side of Redwood Regional Park on 9/26 (SS).

Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline in Richmond on 10/6 (SG).

Two **Nashville Warblers**, a species rarely recorded near the shore in western Contra Costa County, were along Meeker Slough north of Point Isabel on 9/29 (BB).

A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 10/7 was one of few ever found in the county and likely just the 2nd for east county (DW, LH).

Pat Bacchetti, Bob Battagin, Steve Glover, Lisa Hug, Bob Lewis, John Luther, Corrine Louise Paff, Phila Rogers, Rusty Scalf, Sylvia Sykora, Denise Wight.

## NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



### In the Backyard:

The Dark-eyed Juncos are arriving. Mainly we see the "Oregon" sub-species with their dark hood. Sometimes it's possible to find a "Slate-colored" Junco with their dark bodies and white bellies. Look for the white outer tail feathers on both of these when in flight.

The Golden-crowned Sparrows have arrived. Their plaintive, whistled three-note song ("oh-dear-me") can be heard all day long, but especially early in the morning. White-crowned Sparrows have also migrated in for the winter. They often flock with the Golden-crowned Sparrows. Both are ground or tray feeding birds and love white millet seed. They also will eat suet.

American Goldfinches should begin appearing in larger numbers, often accompanied by Lesser Goldfinches. Their numbers will continue increasing all through the winter. By January or February many people see flocks of up to 50. They can also be seen eating wild thistle seeds and on liquidambar and birch trees. Both will readily come to thistle seed feeders. Last winter we saw a large influx of Pine Siskins and they seem to drive off many goldfinches. It will be interesting to see if they come back this winter.

Suet feeding is also entertaining at this time of year. In addition to the regular cast of visitors (chickadees, titmice, jays, woodpeckers, etc.), Bewick's Wrens and Ruby-crowned Kinglets also love suet. Last fall and winter we had an invasion of Townsend's Warblers and they were eating lots of suet!

### Birding Classes with Diana Granados of Native Bird Connections.

- Great fun and very educational! Learn more than just how to ID a bird. Their habitat, behavior, courtship, and more will be discussed. Diana brings live birds to the classes.
- Starts November 7, 7-9 PM for 4 Wednesday nights. There is also a weekend bird-walk. Class meets at Wild Birds Unlimited. Cost \$45.00. Call for more information.

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

Visit us at [www.wbupleasanthill.com](http://www.wbupleasanthill.com)

## Have You Seen This Bird?

Nearly 1800 Tricolored Blackbirds were color-banded during the 2007 breeding season; your assistance in reporting observations of these color-banded birds is essential to help us to learn more about tricolors. Please report observations to: [tricolored.blackbird@gmail.com](mailto:tricolored.blackbird@gmail.com).

All birds were fitted with a USGS aluminum band, a white color band (denoting the year) and an additional color band denoting county (Yolo County = green, Yuba County = blue, Colusa County = orange).

Please report the following:

1. observer name(s)
2. observer(s) email, mailing address, and phone number
3. observation date and time
4. county and approximate map location (USGS quad or DeLorme)
5. latitude (decimal degrees)
6. longitude (decimal degrees)
7. number of color-banded birds and color combinations observed
8. dominant land cover type(s) where foraging or roosting flocks were observed
9. approximate number of birds in flock
10. land ownership (public/private), if known
11. were birds roosting or foraging?



12. were birds on or near a dairy or other source of stored grains? (Y/N)
13. approximate distance to stored grains
14. additional information (any additional information that you deem relevant)

You may obtain latitude/longitude coordinates from either Google Earth (free download from [Google.com](http://Google.com); requires high-speed internet connection) or by free utility on [topozone.com](http://topozone.com).

Many thanks for your assistance!

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## the Quail

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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.*



### MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

- Please enroll my family and me as a member of Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year.
- For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only) or \$35 (returning members), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society to receive four quarterly issues of the Audubon Magazine.
- I'm enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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## TIME VALUE MAIL



*Northern Cardinal, a year-round resident of Southern Arizona, is also a year-round singer with 28 songs in his repertoire. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology photo.*

## A Week of Winter Birding in Arizona

*By Mike Williams*

After the holiday madness and the cold wet weather, it's rejuvenating to rediscover the spaciousness and the big, bright sky of Southeast Arizona. Most birders think about birding SE Arizona for spring courtship or for the masses of hummingbirds in August. January can provide great birds—from longspurs to lots of different sparrows to thousands of Sandhill Cranes. You will need a copy of Rick Taylor's book *A Birders Guide to Southeastern Arizona*. I have only given some preliminary information of the area. This book will help you plan your trip. For more information check out Stuart Healy's excellent website [www.aztrogon.com](http://www.aztrogon.com) He is a local guide if you are interested.

Weather can be anything from clear and 80 degrees to snow flurries. Most of the times we have been there the mornings

are clear and crisp, but afternoon can be T-shirts time. As opposed to the warmer spring and summer, winter birding by far is more productive and comfortable in the lower elevations.

The following is an 8-day trip. Your timing should be such that you are NOT at Patagonia Lake on a weekend—too many campers and too much noise.

Day 1: Take a 6 AM flight to Tucson. You are then in your car by 11 AM. Head south on I-19 for a few miles. Take exit 92 to San Xavier Mission. Not much birding, but the Mission is very interesting and the fry bread is delicious! Continue south on I-19 to Nogales, then NE on AZ-82. After a few miles turn right at Kino Springs exit. This is a golf club and development. You can bird the ponds on the left which can have many different duck species. Around the ponds and the clubhouse lawn, there will be flickers, Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Verdin, phoebes, very possibly a Vermilion Flycatcher, and lots more. Continue on to Patagonia and stay at a B&B. (Great food at the Home Plate and the small Mexican place on the west side of AZ-82.)

Day 2: Drive south to Lake Patagonia (entrance fee). Check the fence lines after turning off the highway. Look for the following sparrows: Lincoln's, Brewer's, Chipping, Song, Grasshopper, Black-throated, Black-chinned, and more. Past the fee station, turn right and drive 0.4 mile to trailhead. (bathroom facilities). This is an excellent birding trail. Plan on spending hours. You start overlooking the lake (scope useful) where you can see Neotropical Cormorants, many ducks, and grebes. Walk along the lake/marsh looking for rails, moorhens, and more. The trail peters out. Just wander around checking the tops of trees for flycatchers (Hammond's, Gray, Dusky, *etc.*). Check the brushy areas upslope for Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and, if you are lucky, Rufous-backed Robin. Return to Patagonia and go to Mrs. Patton's house. It will be quieter at this time of year than the busy spring and summer. It is always worth a look.

Day 3: Drive from Patagonia on Hershaw Road to San Rafael Valley. When the road crests above the valley, pull over and enjoy one of the most beautiful scenes in

*Continued on Page 4 »*

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