



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 54, Number 3

November 2008

Marbled Murrelet • Amy Fesnock

In 1974, a chance discovery solved the mystery of the nesting habits of the Marbled Murrelet. A tree climber in Big Basin Redwoods State Park found a nest high in an old growth Redwood, well inland from their known marine habitat.

Amy Fesnock, Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will share the fascinating story of the biology and ecology of the Marbled Murrelet. This small Puffin-like seabird spends most of its long life in the marine environment. They are fast fliers with rapid wing beats and short wings. Courtship of Marbled Murrelets, foraging, loafing, molting and preening occur in near-shore marine waters whereas they come further inland to nest.

The nesting location of this breed was discovered to be old-growth forests, characterized by large trees and multiple canopy layers. Their nest, a cup built of moss, lichens, and needles, is built on large limbs and may be up to 150 feet above the ground. Their breeding range extends from Alaska south to Monterey Bay. In California, nests are found in coastal redwood and Douglas fir forests. In non-forested por-

tions of Alaska, Murrelets can nest on the ground or in rock cavities. In Washington state, nests have been found inland from the coast up to a distance of 50 miles.

The Endangered Species Act lists the Marbled Murrelet as a threatened species in Washington, Oregon, and California. California lists it as endangered.

Audubon Important Bird Areas in California and sites throughout their range help protect critical habitat for Marbled Murrelets. Even so, it has been estimated the species is experiencing an annual population decline throughout their range as great as 4–7% per year.

Our speaker, Amy Fesnock, is living her childhood dream of working to minimize the impact of humans on other species. As a Girl Scout, she was bewildered to find that the summer camp lake had been allowed to go dry and that no one had attempted to save it. She earned a BS in Wildlife Biology from UC Davis and an MS in Natural Resources from Humboldt State University. Fourteen years with the National Park service allowed her to work with woodrats, mice, Prairie Falcons, California red-legged frogs, Condors, migrating hawks, tule elk, bats, bighorn sheep, California tree frogs, and the desert tortoise.

In 2005, Amy moved to Sacramento and joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service endangered species program where she works specifically with species found in the forest and foothills ecosystems. She is pleased that she has been able to influence projects involving species such as the Shasta crayfish, valley elderberry, longhorn beetle, Carson wandering skipper, Kern primrose sphinx moth, Northern Spotted



Owl, Bald Eagle, and Marbled Murrelet. For the last four years she has enjoyed teaching general ecology and wildlife management courses at Sacramento State University. She also enjoys time with her husband, two-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter.

BIRDING INFORMATION

The Peyton Slough watershed wetlands, which include McNabney Marsh, have been called the Crown Jewel of Contra Costa County. Learn about the long and colorful history of the wetland region and about the amazing restoration success story of the past 20 years. The environmental improvements now in place at Peyton Slough are the result of cooperation and shared priorities among industrial interests, government agencies, environmental groups, and interested private citizens. It has been a model ecological restoration success story.

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, November 6**, 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,* door prize

8:05 PM Speaker:

Amy Fesnock

* Please remember to bring a cup.

**December 4: Mike Marchiano
Stingers, Fangs, and Venom
of Contra Costa County**

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

President's Corner

Mark your calendar for Mount Diablo Audubon's two 2008 Christmas Bird counts. The Eastern Contra Costa County count will be Wednesday, December 17 and the Central count will be Saturday, December 20. There will be more information in next month's *Quail*. These are really fun events. Contact our co-compiler Maury Stern or me to sign up. We are going to try to get some corporate sponsors this year to cover the costs. If you know a company in the county we could contact, let me know.

One of our board members, Brian Murphy, sent me a note recently about a US House of Representative bill (H.R. 3036) called the "No child left inside" bill that passed the house. It has a lot of features, but it basically is saying there is a serious issue in our country about children not being exposed to environmental

Did you know?

Mount Diablo Audubon Society is primarily supported by your annual twenty-five dollar membership dues and generous donations. Membership in National Audubon does not automatically include membership in our local MDAS chapter.

literacy. It will provide funds to integrate environmental education into K-12 curriculums. This is really exciting in that it is exactly what our chapter began last year and plans to do again in at least two more classrooms in the county. We are ahead of the curve!

We had a couple of great opportunities last month to put Mount Diablo Audubon in front of the public. Walnut Creek Library Association sponsored a big event at Civic Park and we had a booth right next to Native Bird Connections which always gets tons of attention because of the live birds of prey they have on display. They estimated 2000-4000 people came through the park that Sunday afternoon. I was invited to speak to the Orinda Rotary club last month about Audubon. The luncheon was held at the Wagner Ranch Nature Center which they sponsor. It was a fun time and I got lots of questions and we hope a new member or two.

I hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or maybe on a field trip soon.

Jim Edgar

Welcome New Members

Linda Carpenter
Wally Olson

Pleasant Hill
Martinez

Observations

By Steve Glover

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

Photos obtained at Point Isabel, Richmond on 10/11 are sufficient for documentation of the first Contra Costa County record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (AK).

A Red Phalarope, found in the company of 10 Red-necked Phalaropes, was a nice find at Meeker Slough near Point Isabel, Richmond on 9/15 (JH).

A Short-eared Owl was a rare find for the Richmond Shoreline 10/12 at Point Isabel near Richmond (LL).

A young Lewis's Woodpecker was a spectacular yard bird in Lafayette on 9/23 (DL).

A Tropical Kingbird at Point Isabel on 10/11 was small consolation for birders in search of the "mega-rarity" reported two days earlier but it nonetheless represents just the second or third record for the county (JH).

One of the most spectacular finds in the annals of Contra Costa County birding came in the form of a phylloscopus warbler at Point Isabel, Richmond on 10/9 (ES). The bird is thought to have been a Dusky Warbler, an Asian species which has been recorded in California on but a handful of occasions. The bird was seen by several observers that day, and also photographed (BL), but a throng of birders was unable to relocate the bird over the following few days.

A Blackpoll Warbler was at Point Isabel, Richmond on 10/11 (BR). Although one of the most common of the eastern "vagrants" along the coast, there are few records for the county.

Absolutely stunning was an injured young Connecticut Warbler brought to the Lindsay Museum after crashing into the window of a Peet's Coffee in Brentwood on 10/3! Not only does this represent a first Contra Costa County record, it is a first for the entire Central Valley. Of nearly 100

California records this is just the seventh to be found away from the coast with the other six coming from the deserts of Kern and Inyo counties. The bird was released on Mount Diablo on 10/9 (BG)

A male Summer Tanager made a rare appearance in the county on 8/8 at Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga (TH). It was reported through at least 9/9 (MS).

The first White-throated Sparrow report for the winter was from a Richmond yard on 10/12 (AK).

Bingham Gibbs, Jeff Hoppes, Tim Howe, Alan Krakauer, Bob Lewis, Don Lewis, Laura Look, Bob Richmond, Maury Stern, Emilie Strauss

If You Like Birds

If you like to watch birds, purchasing the Federal and State Duck Stamps each year is an easy and smart way to ensure there will be habitat for them to thrive. Here are some reasons:

10. The Duck Stamp Program is one of the most successful conservation programs ever. Since 1934, more than half a billion dollars has been raised by the stamps to purchase 5 million acres of habitat!

9. Habitat purchased is providing wildlife with homes nationwide. Duck Stamp funds have been used to purchase habitat at hundreds of refuges located in nearly every state in the nation.

8. Wetlands play an important role in our environment. The protected wetlands help purify water supplies, store flood water, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and provide spawning areas for fish.

7. Duck stamps benefit more than just ducks. Wetland-dependent species also include shorebirds, marsh birds, songbirds, raptors, and hundreds of other species of wildlife.

6. People, too, benefit greatly from the Federal Duck Stamp Program. Birders and other outdoor enthusiasts have places to hike, watch birds, and visit.

5. The stamps are highly prized as collectible. Duck Stamps and the products that bear duck stamp images have become popular collector items.

4. The stamp serves as your entrance pass for wildlife areas nationwide. Besides serving as a hunting license and a conservation tool, a current year's Federal Duck Stamp also serves as an entrance pass for

Continued on Page 7 »

Trip Reports

Hayward Regional Shoreline, September 18. Sixteen birders had wonderful weather—too good probably—to search for all our migrating shorebirds. The main draw of the trip, the Red Knot, was not! But we did have Semi-palmated Plover, Wimbrel, Ruddy Turnstones, and all the expected species. We enjoyed watching an adult White-tailed Kite probably trying to drive away a young one who wanted to stay too long in his parents' territory. Most of us continued on to try to find the Solitary Sandpiper who had been found at Cull Canyon. He was with the Knots! We did see some inland species and a very cooperative Spotted Sandpiper that we kept hoping would change his spots, but it never did.

Bingham Gibbs

Outer Point Reyes, September 27. Fifteen members and guests had a good day on a clear, cool day with light wind but cold, foggy and windy at the lighthouse. Among the 75 species seen or heard were many gulls and two Elegant Terns on Drake's Beach, and a Virginia Rail and a Sora at the pond. Very few birds were at Mendoza or Nunes Ranch. The water off the Fish Docks had few birds, but the row of pines beyond the garage provided several warblers, including a Black-throated Gray, and long good views of a Clay-colored Sparrow moving slowly, 20 feet up in a tree; a Peregrin Falcon flew low over our heads near the parking lot. At the lighthouse were a Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrushes, Hutton's and Warbling Vireos, and a few "western" warblers. On the way back, four of us saw a Ferruginous Hawk flying near the RCA communication towers.

Jean Richmond

Hawk Hill, October 4. It was thought that following the overnight rain the birds at Rodeo Lagoon would be especially active

Q

These birds have been observed passing a berry or a flower petal from beak to beak along a line of birds on a branch until finally one bird gives up the play and devours it. The genus name derives from Greek or Latin meaning "silken-tailed."

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

AACDEGINRWWX

the Quail

MHLT to Preserve Franklin Canyon

By Nancy Wenninger

After a long and contentious battle by local activists, 423 acres of open space will be permanently preserved, thanks to an agreement negotiated by the Muir Heritage Land Trust (MHLT).

For more than 20 years, developers have tried to gain approval to build on the site, which is located adjacent to the Franklin Canyon Golf Course. Various proposals have been made, from 1,300 housing units with a 300-room resort and golf course in 1986, to a more recent development package including more than 500 housing units and a 100-room hotel and commercial space which would have required massive grading, the removal of more than 3,000 oak trees and the destruction of 271 acres of habitat.

Over the years, concerned residents of Hercules have advocated protection of the site's ecologically sensitive areas. In 2004, Measure M, the "Protect Franklin Canyon Area Initiative," was passed with 63% voter approval. It established a 40-acre minimum parcel size with one single-family residence per parcel, and placed restrictions on wetland and riparian corridors, critical wildlife habitat, steep slopes, ridgelines and hilltops.

Even with these constraints, the property remained vulnerable to development. The persistent efforts of Linus Eukel, MHLT's executive director, have resulted in a two-year option to buy and permanently protect this important parcel for \$1,780,000. Together with the adjacent

after the sun appeared. That was not the case, though an American Redstart was in the willows south of the lagoon. Four out of six participants saw this bird fan its tail and we all saw several Wrentits in the adjacent brush. Hawk Hill was still in the clouds when we arrived around noon, but some of the group listened to lectures and saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk banded and released. Others went directly to the counting area. Accipiters and the usual Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks were found, but ultimately many were treated to a spectacular dark-phase Broad-winged Hawk circling overhead. We totaled 39 species for the trip and four river otters in the main lagoon.

Hugh B. Harvey

Berkeley-Albany Shoreline and Middle Harbor, October 8. Thirteen members

Fernandez Ranch, purchased by the Land Trust in 2005, the land preserved will total 1,125 acres of open space and contiguous wildlife habitat. The properties will also provide significant linkages for the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

The Franklin Canyon property is home to several special-status species, including the Mount Diablo sunflower, California red-legged frog, western pond turtle and the Alameda whipsnake. The grassland provides foraging for Golden Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, White-tailed Kite and Northern Harrier. The property also includes dense stands of coast live oak and California bay in the ravines, along with valley oak, buckeye, black oak and elderberry. Other plant communities on site include northern coyote bush scrub, central coast riparian scrub and freshwater marsh. The acquisition will also help to protect two watersheds: Rodeo Creek and Refugio Creek.

MHLT is now embarking on a five-year "Keep It Wild" campaign with a goal of raising \$8.5 million to purchase key open space in central Contra Costa County, restore and maintain the acquired lands and provide environmental education. Donations to support the Franklin Canyon purchase and the "Keep It Wild" campaign can be made online at www.muirheritagelandtrust.org, or can be sent to Muir Heritage Land Trust, P.O. Box 2452, Martinez, CA 94553.

and guest enjoyed a beautiful, sunny and warm day birding the shoreline. Fall birds are showing up and most ducks look like the plates in the field guides again. At Emeryville Marina, we sighted two Hermit Thrushes in the cypress trees. Two Golden-crowned Sparrows were foraging with the White-crowned Sparrows at Middle Harbor Shoreline Park. We had great views of Elegant Terns and Dunlin among the many shorebirds and scoped an early season Greater Scaup farther out with the Clark's and Western Grebes. A male Eurasian Wigeon in eclipse plumage was found at Albany Crescent and then a second was sighted behind the Sea Breeze on University Avenue. Spotted Sandpipers were seen at three locations. 66 species were seen. *Lynn Lakso*

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

November

- 8 Saturday.....Davis Area/Vic Fazio
- 15 Saturday..... Limantour
- 22 Saturday.....Charleston Slough/South Bay
- 24 Monday.....Mt. View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh

December

- 11 Thursday..... Niles Area
- 12 Friday.....Arrowhead Marsh-High Tide
- 17 Wednesday..... Christmas Count/East Contra Costa
- 20 Saturday..... Christmas Count/Central Contra Costa

January

- 3 Saturday..... Christmas Count/Rarity Chase
- 10 Saturday..... Putah Creek
- 17-18 Saturday/Sunday..... Bodega Bay
- 24 Saturday..... Las Gallinas/Rush Creek/Shollenberger Park
- 31 Saturday..... Thornton Area/Cosumnes Preserve

① Saturday, November 8

Davis Area/Vic Fazio

Leader: Terry Colborn. 530-758-0689, tlcgdc@aol.com

The open agricultural lands of Solano County provide excellent foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area are the winter home for 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; Long-billed Curlew as well as the elusive and threatened Mountain Plover. We also expect to see a representative sampling of waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area, aka the Vic Fazio refuge. Participants meet the leader at 8:00 AM in Dixon in 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.

② Saturday, November 15

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.

Come birding with us in November!

② Saturday, November 22

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 and a beverage.

② Monday, November 24

Mountain View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh

Leader: Cheryl Abel, 335-0176

Meet at 9 AM at the Mountain 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 0.4 miles turn sharp left onto Mountain 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.

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and advanced birders. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php.

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

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

Category ②: Moderate, one mile or more, possibly rough terrain

Category ③: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

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

Point Isabel Shoreline



Baxter Creek; Mount Tamalpais in the far distance.

waste from former chemical factories is being removed and the marshland restored. It's an exciting process to watch and a precious resource. That shoreline was also one of the areas hardest hit by the Cosco Busan oil spill in November, 2007.

Cyclists and joggers enjoy the level, paved trail; dogs are permitted on leash. A few benches are provided at points where you can relax and take in the views of the bay from Treasure Island to Angel Island and Brooks Island. The trail takes advantage of a Santa Fe railroad right-of-way proposed in the 1930s in anticipation of industrial growth, but never used.

In addition to access at Point Isabel, where parking is available, though crowded on weekends, you can go to the end of South 51st Street in Richmond (take Bayview Ave. from I-580). From there, a short connector trail crosses Baxter Creek and

» *Continued from Page 8*

joins the main trail about midway of its one-and-an-eighth mile length from Point Isabel to the Meeker Slough bridge. There is parking at Shimada Friendship Park off Marina Bay Parkway. This small city park is named for Shimada, Japan, Richmond's sister city. From the park, the trail winds along the bay-

shore adjacent to the homes of the gated residential area of Marina Bay for about a mile to Meeker Slough.

Cut off this urban but nicely landscaped section by driving to the end of Bayside Drive and park in the circle. Take the path through the trees and condos and you will come to Meeker Slough itself. Turn right and walk about 100 yards and you will come to the Meeker Slough bridge. This is where fresh water meets the salty Bay, and this is where American Coots and Mallards like to hang out. American Wigeons and Green-winged Teal are possible, too, and a Clapper Rail was observed at this location in September.

Walk east along the trail for a quarter mile to what used to be a pier. Check the shore across the water from the end of the pilings for Double-crested Cormorants, gulls, and shorebirds.

Audubon California Needs Volunteers for SF Bay Shorebird Count!

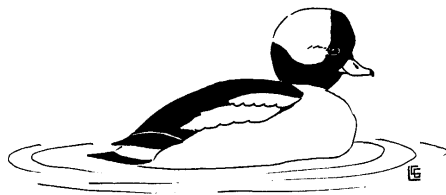
What: A comprehensive count of the shorebirds of San Francisco Bay.

When: November 13-15, or in case of heavy storms November 23-25.

Where: Along all San Francisco Bay tidal wetland habitats and high-tide roosts.

Who: YOU! Birders of all skill levels are needed. Highly experienced birders can lead area counts and beginning birders will have the opportunity to learn from the experts.

Why: Millions of shorebirds use the San Francisco Bay marshes, salt ponds, tidal flats, and other wetlands during the migratory and winter months. The San Francisco Bay is one of the most important wintering sites for North America's shorebirds, holding higher proportions



of the total wintering and migrating shorebirds than any other wetland on the Pacific Coast.

Salt pond restoration, sea level rise, global climate change, invasive species, and acute events such as the Cosco Busan oil spill of 2007 can have dramatic effects on shorebirds of the Bay. The 2008 survey will tell us 1) how many shorebirds are using the Bay, and 2) how are they distributed. Tracking shorebird population and distribution changes in relation to

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habitat change and other impacts allows for adaptive management geared towards protection and enhancement of the Bay's sensitive wildlife resources.

Logistics and details for the 2008 count:

- The surveys will be in the morning (probably 8 AM-ish) and last 3-6 hours, depending on the survey location and number of shorebirds to be counted.
- South Bay (the area south of the San Mateo Bridge) will be counted Thursday, November 13; North Bay from San Rafael and Richmond north (San Pablo Bay) will be counted Friday, November 14, and Central Bay will be counted Saturday, November 15. In case of heavy rain, alternative dates are Central Bay, Sunday, November 23, South Bay, Monday, November 24, and North Bay, Tuesday, November 25.
- You may count on all three days or as few as one day.
- All skill levels are welcome, as we will be going out in pairs/teams. Site leaders must be able to readily identify species on the attached list and feel confident in their ability to count roosting shorebirds. Leaders should be equipped with a spotting scope as well as binoculars. Less experienced shorebird censusers will play an important role in assisting site leaders with counting, identification, and data collection.
- Shorebird identification training sessions are being planned, details to follow.

Get involved! Contact: Mike Perlmutter, Bay Area Conservation Coordinator, Audubon California, perlmutter@audubon.org, 510-601-1866 x231.

Cedar Waxwing · *Bombycilla cedrorum*



If you have *Pyracantha* shrubs in your garden, or Toyon, or if there is mistletoe in your trees, you are undoubtedly familiar with the Cedar Waxwings. Flocks in the hundreds will suddenly arrive when the berries are ripe, and in a matter of hours the berries will have been stripped from the branches, and the birds will all have vanished to another neighborhood. No other bird family in the United States depends so much on fruit as do the Waxwings. They are particularly fond of the berries of Eastern Red Cedar. Their diet also includes insects, especially in summer, and flower petals.

The accompanying photo was given to *The Quail* by Cynthia Huener, wife of the Ranger at Thief Lake Wildlife Management Area in Minnesota. She had seen these birds in her crabapple trees passing blossom petals in a apparent courtship ritual. She tells of watching a pair do its dance, when one bird offers a petal, then hops one step to the side. The second bird responds with a repeat hopping dance step, and this goes on back and forth for some time.

Since the young are fed to some extent on small fruits, waxwings tend to nest late in the summer when there is a good supply of berries. Adults store berries for the young in the crop, a pouch located in the throat, and may regurgitate as many as 30, one at a time, into the eager, wide-open mouths of the nestlings.

The name "waxwing" comes from the waxy red appendages found on the tips of the secondaries. Not all birds show this charac-

teristic. This may have a role in mate selection, but its function remains unclear. Alexander Wilson, writing of this attractive decoration says: "Six or seven, and sometimes the whole nine, secondary feathers of the wings are ornamented at the tips with small red oblong appendages, resembling red sealing-wax; these appear to be a prolongation of the shafts, and to be intended for preserving the ends, and consequently the vanes, of the quills, from being broken and worn away by the almost continual flut-

tering of the bird among thick branches of the cedar. The feathers of those birds which are without these appendages are uniformly found ragged on the edges, but smooth and perfect in those on whom the marks are full and numerous."

In the Northeast, an introduced variety of honeysuckle has a large amount of the red pigment rhodoxanthin. Cedar Waxwings who eat these berries while molting acquire orange instead of yellow tail tips. Orange variants of Yellow-breasted Chat and Kentucky Warbler have also been attributed to the bright-red berries of this honeysuckle.

Waxwings are unusual among passerines, or "songbirds," in that they do not sing. If you are close enough, you might hear a soft "zee" call, especially if a flock of birds flies off at one time.

Of "Cedar-birds," John J. Audubon wrote, "The holly, the vines, the persimon, the pride-of-china, and various other trees, supply them with plenty of berries and fruits, on which they fatten, and become so tender and juicy as to be sought by every epicure for the table. I have known an instance of a basketful of these little birds having been forwarded to New Orleans as a Christmas present. The donor, however, was disappointed in his desire to please his friend in that city, for it was afterwards discovered that the steward of the steamer, in which they were shipped, made pies of them for the benefit of the passengers."

The beautiful, delightful Cedar-bird, a truly delectable species!

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



In the Backyard

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



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 will also 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.

Suet feeding is also entertaining at this time of year. In addition to the regular cast of visitors (Chickadees, Oak Titmice, jays, woodpeckers, etc.), Bewick's Wrens and Ruby-crowned Kinglets also love suet.



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

Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

Ornithological Opportunities

Festival of the Cranes. November 18–23, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, south of Socorro, NM. The Festival of the Cranes celebrates the return of the Sandhill Cranes and the Snow Geese to the Refuge for the winter. Educational workshops, field-trip experiences and the beauty of the northern Chihuahuan desert make this a great destination for birders from all over the world. Information: (575) 835-1828; festival@sdco.org.

The 12th Annual **Central Valley Birding Symposium** will be held November 20–23 at the Stockton Grand Hotel. Evening programs include Hans Peeters “Owls of California and the West” and John Muir Laws “Exploring the Sierra Nevada as a Naturalist and Artist”. Workshops include “Raptor ID” by Joe Morlan, “Bird ID” by Jon Dunn, “Bird and Nature Digiscoping” by Clay Taylor, drawing workshops with John Muir Laws, and more. There will be programs for beginning birders and for people who want to make their gardens bird-friendly. Field trips frequently turn up chasable goodies. The Birder’s Market has so many wonderful bird and nature related items that you’ll be tempted to max out your credit cards! Check the website at www.cvbs.org, or contact Frances Oliver at hummer52@sbcglobal.net or (209) 369-2010.

Put a **California Quail ringtone** on your phone. Or would you prefer the call of the Bald Eagle or the Wild Turkey. What about the bugle of an elk, or the mating call of the American Alligator? These and other sounds of nature are available—all free—from eNature. Listen to samples as you browse and learn intriguing facts about the species whose calls and songs are available for download. When you find one you can’t resist, just click and follow the instructions. <http://wild.enature.com/ringtones>

Duck Stamps

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National Wildlife Refuges where admission is normally charged.

3. The Duck Stamp Program is a highly effective way to conserve America’s natural resources. Approximately 98% of every duck stamp dollar goes directly to the purchase of wetlands and wildlife habitat, adding to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

2. Duck stamp funds are making a difference in California. 16 National Wildlife Refuges in California receive funding from the Federal Duck Stamp Program. State Duck Stamps support waterfowl conservation activities at California Fish and Game preserves.

1. Because YOU care! These mini works of art will remind you of your contributions to conservation for years to come!

the Quail

is published 10 times a year by the

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

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Quail Editor: Ellis Myers, 284-4103
215 Calle La Mesa
Moraga, CA 94556-1603
ellis.myers@earthlink.net

The Quail is printed on 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper. **The deadline for the December-January issue is November 11.**



MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

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

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

For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only) or \$35 (returning members), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society to receive four quarterly issues of Audubon Magazine.

Please send The Quail by: E-mail US mail

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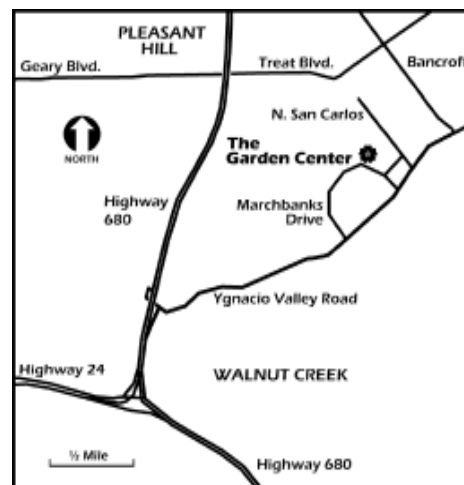
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Please make your check payable to:
MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:
Membership Chair, 1932 Golden Rain Road #4, Walnut Creek, CA 94595

The Garden Center

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



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Return Service Requested



TIME VALUE MAIL



Great Blue Heron along the Point Isabel Regional Shoreline Trail.

Point Isabel Regional Shoreline

Point Isabel, on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay, is many things to many people. It's Costco; it's the United States Postal Service bulk-mail facility; it's Eastshore State Park; it's an off-leash dog park; it's East Bay Regional Park District's Point Isabel Regional Shoreline. But for birders, it's one of four entry points to the Point Isabel to Miller-Knox Regional Trail, which is also part of the Bay Trail. The portion from Point Isabel to the bridge at Meeker Slough is usually alive with waterfowl in the ponds alongside, and with numerous land birds flitting here and there or soaring overhead.

One birder recently commented: "I regularly see between 25 and 30 species in that section of trail. In the past we have had Black Skimmers. Currently there are Oystercatchers, lots of peeps, Forster's Terns, a Caspian Tern feeding juvenile, and one Elegant Tern the other day. A pair of

Western Gulls raised a family on the end of the dilapidated pier and one of the juveniles is still around begging for food—there were three chicks originally. Also there's a fair number of land birds to be seen, including a resident female American Kestrel, which is lovely as the species is in decline. Anyway it is very birdy there and I encourage people to check it out. In addition, it is quite beautiful as well!"



American Avocet

This is a multi-use trail and was the first portion of Eastshore State Park to be opened to the public. Eastshore State Park is the result of decades of citizen efforts

to protect San Francisco Bay as a public open space resource. An array of discrete units, Eastshore State Park extends 8.5 miles along the East Bay shoreline from the Bay Bridge to Richmond. It includes 1,854 acres of uplands and tidelands along the waterfronts of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany, and Richmond. The East Bay Regional Park District, acting as agent for the State, used funds from the Park District's 1988 Measure AA and state park bonds to acquire the property and clean up contaminated areas at a cost of more than \$33 million. Funds for the Shoreline Trail came largely from the United States Postal Service as mitigation for their use of land at Point Isabel for their huge facility. Eastshore State Park is a good example of Measure AA accomplishments—let's look forward to more successes with Measure WW.

The Point Isabel Regional Shoreline Trail is a great example of the success of the citizen-supported movement to reclaim our Bay shoreline. On the north side of the trail east of Meeker Slough are East and West Stege Marshes, where industrial

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