



# 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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## Pelican Dreams ✦ Judy Irving

One August afternoon, a young, confused, hungry, and very tired brown pelican created a spectacular traffic jam on the Golden Gate Bridge by landing on the roadway. Later named "Gigi" (for Golden Gate), she was "arrested," put in a police car, and taken to a seabird rescue center. *Pelican Dreams* follows Gigi's time in human hands and her release back to the wild, using her story to paint a broader picture of these ancient, mysterious birds.

with pelicans, they become more motivated to protect the fragile coastal marine environment that they—and we—depend on.

Pelicans illustrate metaphorically the checkered history of our relationship with the natural world. Flourishing for 30 million years, they've barely sur-



JUDY IRVING PHOTOS.

Fishermen often compete with pelicans, wildlife rehabilitators care for them one by one, and field biologists study their overall populations. These are the human characters in *Pelican Dreams*, and the various ways in which they know these birds help us understand their personalities, habitat, population, and continuing survival challenges. While centered in the San Francisco Bay Area, the film ranges from Baja Mexico and southern California's Channel Islands, up the Pacific Coast to the Columbia River between Washington and Oregon, creating a full migratory portrait of these elegant yet comical birds. As viewers fall in love

oil-spills such as in the Gulf of Mexico, habitat loss, overfishing, and climate change. Pelicans are charismatic avian ambassadors: they mirror our stewardship of the coast and help audiences relate to it in a direct, personal way.

The presentation will engage viewers by focusing not only on population issues but also on individual pelicans and the people who help them: Gigi (and her itinerant artist rehabbers, Monte and Laura) and Morro (an adaptable, curious bird who injured his wing and now lives with chickens, geese, and a rural couple near Morro Bay). The film is produced and directed by Judy Irving,

vived the last 100, when DDT nearly drove them to extinction. Despite being removed from the Endangered Species List in 2009, Brown Pelicans face daunting 21st century challenges:

a Sundance-and-Emmy-Award-winning filmmaker who produced and directed Pelican Media's classic film *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*.

### BIRDING INFORMATION

For November birding information, MDAS Conservation Chair Nancy Weninger will discuss how outdoor cats affect birds and other wildlife populations.

For the main program at our December meeting, Suzi Eszterhas, a wildlife photographer, will share some incredible stories from the field and discuss how photographers—professional and amateur alike—can help to raise awareness of the problems facing wildlife today.

### Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, November 7**, 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: **Judy Irving**

*Please remember to bring a cup.*

Thursday, December 5:

Suzi Eszterhas, Wildlife Photography

DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

# President's Corner

By Jimm Edgar

I have written a lot of bad news regarding birds in this column, but I read some good news last week. The October 2 edition of the Oakland Tribune and the CC Times had an article about a nesting of Swainson's Hawks near San Jose. The first nest seen since the 1800s. Pretty amazing I think. Swainson's Hawks winter in Argentina so they have a huge 6000-mile migration. A few years ago our east CC County Christmas Bird Count had the nation's high count of Swainson's Hawk—we had 2! But usually there are none seen on any bird count in the country. They head to Argentina.



Swainson's Hawk. Glen Tepke photo.

Speaking of Christmas Bird Counts, let get our dates in front of all of you. Our Central Contra Costa County is Saturday, December 21, and the East County count is Tuesday, December 17. Maury Stern, who does the sightings for the *Quail*, and I are the co-compilers of the two counts. Contact either of us if you would like to participate.

I hope you have been able to watch the series *Earthflight* on PBS. The six-part special series of *Nature* has concluded, but all segments are available streaming at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature>. The BBC production shows how the birds were filmed using remote-controlled drones, floating spy-cams, paragliders and a fake vulture

with a movable tail. They were able to mount small cameras on hawks and vultures and you see what the birds see as they fly. It has some of the most amazing footage of birds I have ever seen—it was just great.

Our Young Birders Club headed up by Tracy Farrington continues to grow. We have had a number of field trips as well as evening meetings at Wild Birds Unlimited. If you know any young people who might have interest let them know. Our MDAS website has information on meetings and field trips. We have a few young people from San Francisco who become involved so it certainly does not have to be folks from Contra Costa only.

Lastly, I would like to let you know we are going to try and redo/update Jean Richmond's book, *Birding Northern California*. When Jean was editor of our newsletter, the *Quail*, she, in almost ever issue, would have an article about some area to go birding in Northern California. It had 72 locations. It would have directions, when to go, what you would see, a map, etc. It was first published in 1985 and was the only book like it for Northern California. It sold like hotcakes and we did a number of reprints. You can download a copy from our website for free, at <http://www.diabloaudubon.org/birdingnocal.php> But as time passed things changed. Directions became outdated. Maybe an area became developed and the birding was not the same, etc. Well anyway one of MDAS members, Bill Chilson, approached me said he would like to try and update the book and get it republished. We first contacted Jean to make sure she was ok with the idea, which she was. This will require a lot of work and a lot of help from you our members. We will need to revisit each place to revise or update the information. We think some areas will be left out and maybe some new areas will be added. But we think a revised edition will be well received. If you would like to help, please let us know.

Hope to see you at a meeting or field trip.

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## Welcome New Members

Bethi Carver

Bethel Island

Edward Donnelly

Pinole

## Eurasian Collared-Doves



Over the past 30 years, the non-native Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) has spread across North America. Since it was first discovered nesting near Miami, Florida in 1982, it has rapidly spread northwestward and can now be found as far away as Alaska. In Contra Costa County, the birds have been reported at sites such as Waterbird Regional Preserve, Heather Farm, Valle Vista and Mount Diablo. Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch has been a crucial source of information on the spread of this species. Now your help can lead to more data about their nesting biology. NestWatch is a citizen science project in which volunteers find and monitor bird nests so that scientists can study status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive.

Eurasian Collared-Doves live in urban and suburban areas throughout much of the United States and southern Canada except for the northeast. They also can be found in rural areas, such as farms, where grain is readily available. They are a bit larger than Mourning Doves but slimmer than Rock

*Continued on Page 5 »*



Sometimes called Sprig, the swift flight of these birds has given them the nickname Greyhound of the Sky.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 8 to learn more.

A E H I L N N N O P R R T T

# 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.

Fall migration is still underway and returning winter residents have begun to come in .

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at the Ferry Point lawn in Point Richmond 10/4. AA.

AL saw a single **Snow Goose** at Clifton Court Forebay 10/2.

Eight **Brant** were at Sandpiper Spit in Richmond 9/9, AL; and LK saw seven on 9/18 from the Canal Blvd. viewing platform.

One **Wood Duck** was seen at the Contra Costa Canal Trail in Walnut Creek by PS; EL found 4 at Valle Vista in Moraga; and TF saw 15, also at Valle Vista.



Western Grebes with young at Clifton Court Forebay. The *Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County* reports that nesting behavior among Western Grebes had been noted on two previous occasions (Clifton Court Forebay in 2000 and Antioch Municipal Reservoir in 2002). It was not known if there was any successful breeding. Albert Linkowski photo.

AL may have seen the first successful breeding **Western Grebes** with 2 young in Contra Costa County 10/2 at Clifton Court Forebay.

An **American Bittern** made a visit to Heather Farm pond reeds on 9/30, JR; 10/1, TF, BS; and HH 10/5. One previous record is known from the mid-90s.

A very unusual **Broad-winged Hawk** flew over Richmond Brickyard Landing 9/27, KF, and Lafayette on 9/28, JA.

A **Parasitic Jaeger** was at Point Isabel 9/17. AL.

LK and TF saw 51 **Vaux's Swifts** at Inspiration Point in Tilden RP 9/30.

An immature **Lewis's Woodpecker** was at Hidden Lakes Park in Martinez 9/20. JB. On 9/22, AL saw a slightly late **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Fernandez Ranch.

PS had a **Willow Flycatcher** in his Antioch yard 9/11.

On 10/1, AL saw a **Tropical Kingbird** at Miller-Knox Park in Point Richmond.

DH had a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in his Walnut Creek backyard 9/19. Last year was an invasion year for these birds as the cone crop failed in the North. This year's cone crop is supposed to be good so they may return north.

HS saw a **Pacific Wren** at Vollmer Peak 9/13.

TF and LK saw a **Golden-crowned Kinglet** at the Tilden Nature Center 9/30.

The first returning **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was found at the Bear Creek Trail near Briones Reservoir on 9/14. JR.

HN and JB saw a **Hermit Thrush** 9/13 at Vollmer Peak. JBo saw one a week later in her Martinez yard.

LL saw an out of normal habitat **California Thrasher** at Pinole Shores 9/22.

About one hundred **Cedar Waxwings** were at Heather Farm 10/5. HH.

A **Nashville Warbler** was at Vollmer Peak 10/1. JB.

AL photographed a **Yellow Warbler** at Clifton Court Forebay on 10/2. The only other Yellow Warbler seen at this location and reported to *eBird* was by Steve Glover in August 1996.



Yellow Warbler. Albert Linkowski photo.

JR saw a **Black-and-White Warbler** at Jewel Lake in Tilden 10/1.

A **Northern Waterthrush** was at Jewel Lake 9/22.

Two **MacGillivray's Warblers** were at Vollmer Peak 9/13. HN; KF saw one at Miller-Knox Shoreline 9/29.

HN saw six **Western Tanagers** at Vollmer Peak 9/13.

An early **Fox Sparrow** was seen by HN at Vollmer Peak 9/13.

The first returning **White-crowned Sparrows** were noted by ST in Briones 9/14, and JC and TF on 9/16 in Moraga and Heather Farm respectively.

AL saw an early **Golden-crowned Sparrow** 9/16 at Miller-Knox.

A Pink-sided **Dark-eyed Junco** was at Black Diamond Mines RP 9/20. This is a form of the Dark-eyed Junco which is usually in the Rocky Mountains.

On 10/5 Greg saw a **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Richmond.

**Hooded Orioles** departed Hercules early September. JC had a female and two young until 9/16 in her Moraga yard.

JA Jeff Acuff, JB John Blakelock, JBo Jackie Bobrosky, JC Judi Cooper, TF Tracy Farrington, KF Kathy Francone, HH Hugh Harvey, DH David Hutton, LK Logan Kahle, EL Elizabeth Leite, AL Albert Linkowski, MM Mary Lou Mull, HN Harold Newman, JR Jim Roethe, BS Bobbi Schmidt, PSc Pat Schneider, PS Paul Schorr, ST Steve Taylor.

## ② Tuesday, November 12

### McNabney Marsh, Mountain View Sanitary District

Leader: Steve Taylor, (925) 828-8810.

Meet at 9:00 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. After walking around the ponds we will drive back through the tunnel to the viewing platform on



Common Yellowthroat. MVSD photo.

the left to observe more birds and also complete a check list of the birds we saw at the ponds. If you wish, bring a lunch and explore Martinez shoreline in the afternoon on your own.

## ② Saturday, November 16 Charleston Slough/South Bay

Leader: Eugenia Larson, (925) 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, exit Mission Boulevard west. Continue through two traffic lights and take I-880 ramp south. Exit to SR 237, 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, Alviso and Redwood Shores. Shorebirds and waterfowl should be plentiful. Bring lunch and a beverage.

## ① Saturday, November 30 Limantour

Leader: Maury Stern, (925) 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 (toll). 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. Bring lunch and a beverage.

## November

12	Tuesday	McNabney Marsh/Mountain View Sanitary
16	Saturday	Charleston Slough/South Bay
30	Saturday	Limantour

## December

7-8	Saturday/Sunday	Sacramento Refuges
12	Thursday	Niles Area
14	Saturday	Solano County Raptors
17	Tuesday	Christmas Count/East Contra Costa
21	Saturday	Christmas Count/Central Contra Costa

## January

11	Saturday	Putah Creek
25	Saturday	Las Gallinas/Rush Creek/Shollenberger Park
30	Thursday	Lake Merritt/Arrowhead Marsh—High Tide



Townsend's Warbler: Beth Branthaver photo.

## Come birding with us!

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and advanced birders, but please do leave your dogs at home. 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: **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**—Exit SR 24 at St. Stephens Drive east of Orinda. El Nido Ranch Road is parallel to and north of the freeway. Park just east of the intersection with St. Stephens Drive.

## Trip Reports

**Rio Lindo Academy, Healdsburg, September 21.** Two MDAS birders joined about 40 others waiting for the Vaux's Swifts to fly into a chimney after sundown. Despite the rains earlier in the day, at least 3,000 swifts flew into the chimney before 7:30 PM, possibly as many as 3,500. Immediately upon our arrival and while removing our dinner from the back of the car, a Merlin flew over the parking lot. We also had a Common Raven fly past while we waited for the swifts. Despite the distance we travel for this event, it is a spectacle to behold—one worthy of the round of applause given by the awed crowd. *Hugh B. Harvey*

**Outer Point Reyes, September 28.** The day for the MDAS annual fall trip to Outer Point Reyes dawned clear and calm; temperatures were in the mid to upper 60s. After gathering at the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Drakes Beach was our first stop. Here we encountered several Yellow Warblers in the willows close by the Drake memorial. At the pond we added Sora, Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, Common Yellowthroat among other notables. From the beach, worthy of mention was a lone Red-throated Loon. Great Horned Owls were sighted at both Mendoza and Nunes Ranches. At the Lighthouse Monterey cypresses, a Western-type Flycatcher was observed, but no Blue-footed Boobies were seen offshore; several reports had been posted over the previous two weeks of these birds from Stinson Beach as far north as Bodega Bay. On the rocks below the observation platform, two Black Oystercatchers were picking their way through the seaweed. Above the Fish Docks we had excellent views of Blackburnian and Townsend's Warblers, as well as a Warbling Vireo; unfortunately we did not find the Prairie Warbler which had also been reported. Clearly migrants and vagrants were passing through; other Audubon chapters were aware of this and shared in the day's action—Madrone and Santa Clara were well represented. At the RCA Station, after tallying our list for the day, our species count was 65. Eight birding enthusiasts participated. *David Hutton*



Blackburnian Warbler.  
Beth Branthaver photo.

**Young Birders Club, September 29.** The third field trip with the Mount Diablo Audubon Young Birders Club was enjoyable, productive and instructive. We began our morning at Inspiration Point on the Orinda side of Tilden Park at about 8 AM, although Logan Kahle, who guided the trip, and I, arrived at 7 AM to scout and do a dawn sky watch. Shortly after all attendees were signed in, we walked the Nimitz Trail for a mile and got some well-earned looks at a couple of mixed migrant flocks well up in the conifers and elsewhere. Wilson's, Hermit, Yellow-rumped, Yellow and Townsend's Warblers were noted along with the expected Chestnut-sided Chickadees and other resident species. Jewell Lake was then visited after about an hour and a half on the Nimitz. We didn't find the Northern Waterthrush that had been reported but the kids did enjoy an opportunity to experience birding in both closed canopy conditions along the boardwalk, and above canopy as we hiked the

Pack Rat Trail on our return to the parking lot. The riparian and forested surroundings put several novices to the test, as locating and identifying required both persistence and patience. I'm quite happy to say that we had a total of 13 participants: six young members and seven adults, parents and a couple of grandparents—all birding, by the way. As always, I'm seeking new and interested members. Those among you with suggestions or recommendations, please contact me at 925-788-6223, or via e-mail at [tracy\\_farrington@yahoo.com](mailto:tracy_farrington@yahoo.com) *Tracy Farrington*

**Hayward Regional Shoreline, October 1.** It was a beautiful day for two members to join Bob Richmond for a leisurely walk around the north end of the Shoreline. Starting from the Winton Avenue parking area, we walked around the bushy/wooded areas first, then slowly walked toward the bay. We walked north to view the birds at Franks Dump, then circled and returned to the parking lot via the entry road. We met local birder and sometimes MDAS participant, Bob Dunn, before we returned to the parking lot. Teri Wills needed to leave, but the two Bobs and I then walked around the top of Mt. Trashmore before calling it a day. We had 62 species total, including 6 raptors, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel. We also had Turkey Vultures and a Barn Owl. No unusual shorebirds were found, but we did find Yellow, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, American Pipits, a Horned Lark, several Western-type Flycatchers, the usual California Towhee and 6 other sparrow species—Savannah, Fox, Lincoln's, Song, Golden-crowned and White-crowned. *Hugh B. Harvey*

**Hawk Hill, October 5.** It would have been a perfect day for hawk viewing; however, due to the US Government shutdown and the consequent closure of national parks, including the Marin Headlands, the MDAS trip was cancelled. *Fred Safier.*

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## Eurasian Collared-Doves

» *Continued from Page 2*

Pigeons, and have a characteristic narrow black crescent around the nape of their necks. Eurasian Collared-Doves build a simple platform nest consisting of twigs, grasses, roots, and sometimes feathers, wool, string, and other materials. Pairs of doves often use the same nest for multiple broods during the year. In warmer regions, Eurasian Collared-Doves can nest year-round. Nests are usually located in trees or on buildings at a height of at least 8-10 feet above the ground. They lay 1-2 white eggs per nesting attempt, which hatch after 14-19 days of incubation. Young doves are ready to leave the nest approximately 17 days after hatching.

If you know the location of a Eurasian Collared-Dove nest, please report it to [NestWatch.org](http://NestWatch.org). NestWatch and FeederWatch are citizen-science projects of Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and it's fun and rewarding to participate. The 2013-2014 season for FeederWatch begins November 7. NestWatch is any time. Go to <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citsci/projects> to learn more.

Don't know where any Eurasian Collared-Dove nests are? Not a problem! NestWatch is seeking observations of all species of nesting birds, so you can also help by monitoring American Robins, Western Bluebirds, Northern Mockingbird, or whatever other species may be nesting near your home.

# McNabney Marsh Update

By Nancy Wenninger, Conservation Chair

McNabney Marsh, named to honor long-time MDAS conservation advocate Al McNabney, is a 130-acre wetland complex located east of I-680 between Highway 4 and the Benicia Bridge. Part of Waterbird Regional Preserve, the marsh is owned jointly by Mountain View Sanitary District (which manages the inundated area) and the East Bay Regional Park District (which manages the uplands).

Originally a tidal wetland, the marsh was converted to a seasonal marsh when development in the 20th century cut off its connection with the Carquinez Strait. In 1988 the Shell Oil Spill mobilized the community to restore and enhance the marsh.

Since the early 1990s, treated effluent from MVSD was the primary water source. However, in June 2009, tide gates on Peyton Slough to the north were opened, allowing water from the Strait to flow into the marsh for the first time in more than a century. Marsh managers were hopeful that reintroduced tidal action would resolve several habitat quality issues: low oxygen and pH levels in the water, the relentless spread of cattails and a plethora of non-native fish.

However, MVSD has discovered that keeping the tide gates open year-round will not work. The marsh fills up during high tides but does not drain during low tides. This effect aggravates water quality issues through stagnation, and increases the risk of flooding to roads and other infrastructure.

The main culprit in the “pumping up” effect is a pinch point on Peyton Slough at the Union Pacific Railroad bridge located north

of Waterfront Road. A \$1.5 million bridge replacement project is planned to increase flows and decrease the amount of time water is retained in the marsh. Water quality should improve, cattail spread will be curtailed and brackish water will help to re-establish native fish populations.

MVSD has secured about \$1.1 million towards the project and is currently seeking grants for the balance. They hope to begin construction on the new bridge in summer 2014.

In the interim, the pumping up effect creates unusual challenges for ground-nesting birds which have depended upon McNabney Marsh for decades. In an effort to increase benefits to breeding birds, MVSD has constructed and deployed a total of 20 floating nesting rafts to attract nesting waterfowl and shorebirds. In addition, biologists used cut vegetation to create nesting mounds on several existing islands to increase nest elevation and prevent potential flooding.

MVSD has also commissioned multi-year nesting bird surveys to try to determine the most beneficial range for marsh water levels between March and July. In 2013, species observed nesting at McNabney included Canada Goose, Mallard, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Marsh Wren, Black Phoebe, San Francisco Common Yellowthroat, Savannah Sparrow, Suisun Song Sparrow, Great-tailed Grackle and Red-winged Blackbird.

Perhaps most exciting were observations of California Black Rail and California Clapper Rail in the marsh during the nesting season. Hopefully, the bridge replacement and tide gate operation to control water levels will result in optimal breeding success for both common and special-status species in McNabney Marsh.

## Good News for Raptors



NATIVE BIRD CONNECTIONS

On October 11, Governor Jerry Brown signed a historic bill that will save some of California's most majestic birds from senseless lead poisoning deaths. Assembly Bill 711 will disallow lead ammunition for all hunting in California. By removing the single greatest source of unregulated lead from our environment, this law will benefit not only California Condors, eagles and other raptors, but people as well.

Fragments of lead bullets left behind in hunted carcasses, as well as lead shot left behind on the ground, have been a constant obstacle to bird conservation in California for decades. California Condors simply cannot recover with lead in the environment, as scientific studies have clearly shown. But the condor is just part of the story. Iconic birds such as the Golden Eagle and Bald Eagle also suffer the threat of lead poisoning, along with more than 130 other wildlife species. Moreover, research also shows that people who eat meat hunted with lead ammunition have higher levels of lead in their blood. Even minute traces of lead leads to lower IQs in children.

In signing the bill, Governor Brown said, in part:

"Lead poses a danger to wildlife. This danger has been known for a long time—in 1894 one of the founders of the wildlife conservation movement in America, George Bird Grinnell, wrote about lead poisoning in *Forest and Stream*, a precursor to today's *Field and Stream* magazine, and there is much published scientific literature from the 1950s on regarding this danger. In 1991, the US Fish and Wildlife Service banned lead in waterfowl hunting across the nation. Since 2007, California has prohibited it in the eight counties within the condor range. In fact, at least thirty other states regulate lead ammunition in some manner.

"I am concerned, however, the impression left from this bill is that hunters and sportsmen and women in California are not conservationists. I know that is not the case. Hunters and anglers are the original conservationists. Since the 1930s, hunters have done more than any other community to conserve species and their habitats, and that is a lasting conservation legacy."

Mount Diablo Audubon was one of more than 37 Audubon chapters who advocated on behalf of this legislation.

Brigid McCormack, Executive Director, Audubon California said "Ridding our environment of lead ammunition is quite possibly one of the greatest conservation victories in the last 20 years. I hope you are as proud as I am to have been a part of it. This was an incredibly difficult fight for Audubon California and its partners. You were there with us. Thank you."

# Thank You to Our Donors

The Board of Directors of Mount Diablo Audubon Society wishes to thank all those who have contributed during the 2012-2013 fiscal year. These donations permit the on-going programs dedicated to preservation of habitat for birds and other wildlife, and promote an awareness of our natural wonders among young people.

## California Condor (\$1000+)

Hugh B. and Rosita O. Harvey, Wild Birds Unlimited–Pleasant Hill.

## California Gnatcatcher (\$250–\$999)

Kristen Beckus-Baker, Larkin Breed, Jerry Britten, Steve Buffi and Anne Waters, William D. and Linda L. Chilson, Galaxy Printing, Bruce and Judy Kronmiller, Lynn Lakso, Tom and Pam Lee, Donald W. and Susan E. Lewis, Deborah Payson, Paul and Nancy Schorr, Martin and Sandra Stuart, Joel Summerhill and Gloria Cannon, Nancy Wenninger.

## California Thrasher (\$100–\$249)

Cheryl Abel, Gus and Gerry Argenal, Constance Diernisse, Kent Fickett and Rebecca Beemer, Don and Melinda Groom, Marilyn Halberg, Jean Halford, Claudia and Scott Hein, Claudia and Scott Hein, David Hutton and Valerie Ventre-Hutton, Mark Janlois, Linda and Lew Jenkins, Donna and Scott Kramer, Herb and Randi Long, Norman and Christy Lundberg, Nancy and Paul Meyerhofer, Mimi and Ellis Myers, Margaret L. O'Connell, Carol Pacht, Bernt Pettersson, Sharon and Dennis Randall, Elizabeth Sanderson, Kathy Simons, Donald and Beverly Steffen, Maury and Susan Stern, Willard Taylor, Dianne and Robert Tecco, Michael and Rita Tischler, Nina and Leary Wong.

## California Quail (\$25–\$99)

Lin and Dennis Ashlock, Althea Bates, Nancy Beckus, Ruth Beeve, Thomas Bishop, John and Diane Blackman, Jackie Bobrosky, Beverly G Bortin, Theresa Cabral, Daniel Campos, Britta E. Cascio, Ethan and Ruth Chickering, Margaret Clark, Arthur Clarke III, Carolyn E. Cogan, Don and Susan Couch, Patricia and Michael Cousins, Nancy Damaschino, Doris C. and Peter J. Daniels, Joy Dardin, William E. Davis, Jr., Analice J. Decker, Carol Evans, William Galvin, George Gero, Bingham and C. L. Gibbs, Betsy and David Gifford, Valerie Glass, Thomas Goedewaagen, Janet M. Goodman, Bill and Diana Granados, Karin Grillo, Carol and John Harkin, Sherri Hedman, Dora Henel, Cheryl Hines and Charles W. Deutschman, Ann and Donald Hughes, Daniel Jacobs, Toril H. Jelter, Diane Lynn Karkiewicz, Susan Dee and Edwin F. Katibah, Kathryn and Thomas Kellogg, Jane and James Kieran, Matty Kilpatrick, Michael Krieg, Richard Kurovsky, Mona Lange, Steve and Sue Loftin, Mike Loper, Pamela Lorenz, Diane and Bob Malucelli, Jan Manns, John and Margaret Elgin Masek, Susan and Mark McGowan, Laurie C. Morrison, Mary Muerle, William O'Neil, Darryl Ott, Margaret and Christopher

Panton, Mary Pelkey, Nadine Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. J. Douglas Philips, Roger A. Prince and Noelle B. Schoellkopf, Donald and Daisy Ray, Marge Reed, William Rocha, Gerry and Nancy Salsig, Fay and Edwin Schoenberger, Judy Secor, Julia M. Starr, Ann-Charlott Stenberg, F. and B. Strehlitz, Patricia Sullivan, Fred W. Sullivan, Bill Surges, Janet Thomas, Claire and William J. Toaspern, Catherine R. Tzur, Kathleen Usher, Paul Veilleux, Thomas Verrill, Richard Vrmeer, Beverley Walker, Mashuri and Rahima Warren, Carter S. Wells, Peter L. and Dolores White, Ronald White, Roger Wilcox, Dr. R. Claude Williamson, Marilyn and Ed Wojcik, Bevelyn Wolf.

## California Towhee (To \$24)

Lorraine J. Adams, Bridget Albosta, Janet Battislini, Carole Beeton, Marilyn Chaplin, Richard Comiskey, Jan Rae Cook, Susan Ferro, Sarah Gallagher, Alfred S. Harvey, Dolores L. Mauritz, Sharon K. and Patrick F. McKee, Edith A. Mitchell, Moreland and Jean Richmond, Patricia A. and William G. Schneider, Walter L. and Suzanne L. Schnyder, Karen Stella, Dr. and Ms. Howard Sturtz, Betty Ann Williams, Patricia Willy.



# Annual Treasurer's Report, 2012–2013

By Steve Buffi, Treasurer

The financial health of MDAS, due to the generosity of our members, allows us to actively pursue our mission. During the year, we funded important habitat preservation projects and continued our community education outreach efforts for young people such as the “No Child Left Inside Program” and the Young Birders Club. Your generosity supports our monthly presentation program, this newsletter, the annual Christmas Count, our web site, and much more. You have read about these important community efforts in this and prior issues of the Quail. Each dollar you give is put to good use for the benefit of our community.

The General Fund balance covers operations and reserves, the Conservation and Education balance is used towards these efforts, and the Breeding Bird Atlas reflects the books held for sale and the results of book sales.

Funds	July 2012 – June 2013			Fund Balance 7/1/2012
	Revenue	Expenses	Net	
General	\$29,182.99	\$21,442.62	\$7740.37	\$110,753.34
Conservation & Education	\$56.65	\$0.00	\$56.65	\$16,549.75
Breeding Bird Atlas	–\$362.57	\$61.64	–\$424.11	\$19,671.09
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>\$28,877.07</b>	<b>\$21,504.16</b>	<b>\$7,372.91</b>	<b>\$146,974.18y</b>



# Cheers! ...

## For Our Volunteers

MDAS helped Wild Birds Unlimited celebrate its 22nd anniversary October 4 with the following members hosting the table: Kathy Kellogg (above at right), David and Lita Little, Cevina Targum, Mike Robertson, Julie Padilla and Cassie Tzur.

# Joseph Grinnell

paleontology. She insisted, too, that Grinnell come to Berkeley as the first Director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Most of his field work was in California and western North America, where he led many extensive expeditions. He recognized that the rich and often unique birds and animals of California were threatened from increasing impacts of human population growth and unsustainable land use practices. His response was a dedication to gather an extraordinarily detailed record of the distribution and natural history of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, backed by specimens, photographs, and field notes. He assumed that much of the value of this work lay in the fact that "after the lapse of many years, possibly a century, the student of the future will have access to the original record of faunal conditions in California." And this has come true: you will find, in nearly every species account in *Contra Costa Breeding Bird Atlas*, for example, a reference to the observations of Grinnell and his colleagues. Further, Grinnell's data serve as a baseline for current studies of niche shifts in Yosemite owing to climate change.

In 1917, Grinnell published a paper titled "The niche-relationships of the California thrasher," in which he defined the concept of the "ecological niche." This has proved to be one of the organizing principles of nature. Grinnell defined the



California Quail, Male. Louis Agassiz Fuertes, in *Game Birds of California*, by Grinnell, Bryant and Storer, 1918.

niche as all of the habitat conditions that are required for a species to exist. He concluded that in nature there is competitive exclusion i.e. no two species can occupy the same niche for a period of time without one excluding the other. He developed this idea around the relationship between the

» Continued from Page 10

California Thrasher and its chaparral habitat, and refined it in future years with his studies of the environmental associations of mammals in Yosemite National Park.

Like his distant cousin, George Bird Grinnell, Joseph was instrumental in shaping the philosophy of the National Park System and in securing the long-term protection of Yosemite. When he became founding director of Berkeley's museum in 1908, Grinnell started a letter campaign to government and park officials arguing for conservationist policies. Many of his ideas, from placing trained naturalists in national parks to prohibiting hunting and trapping park animals, are in place today.

Although much occupied in many other activities, he edited for thirty-six years the *Condor*, a journal devoted mainly to the ornithology of the western states. Professor Grinnell was president of the American Ornithologists Union from 1929 to 1932.

A number of birds carry the Grinnell name: a fossil raptor from the La Brea Tar Pits is *Geranoaetus grinnelli*, similar to the living Chilean Blue Eagle. Subspecies of Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Pygmy Owl, Red-winged Blackbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Mountain Chickadee, Red Crossbill, House Finch, and Guadalupe Caracara also honor Grinnell in the tri-part scientific name.

All who care about the environment and about our national parks should consider Joseph Grinnell a hero.

## Northern Pintail ♦ *Anas acuta*

**a** With its long black pointed tail, brown head with white neck stripes and gray slender body, the Northern Pintail drake is one of North America's most beautiful ducks. Their long neck and tail makes them appear larger than a Mallard but in body size and weight they are smaller. The Northern Pintail hen is mottled brown and also has a pointed tail. In flight drakes have iridescent steel-green wing patches bordered with light bands. Hens have a duller wing patch bordered with light bands.

In flight the birds are extremely graceful and fast, fond of zig-zagging from great heights before leveling off to land. They are agile on land and often feed in grain fields.

These ducks use all four flyways, but are most plentiful in the west. Pintails in North America breed throughout much of Canada, Alaska, the northern plains states and parts of California, including Contra Costa County. In *Birds of the Pacific States*, Hoffmann said, in 1927, "In the reedy edges of sloughs or on ponds and estuaries from August to April, the Pintail is generally the commonest duck." But this species has been badly affected by loss of habitat and by avian diseases, falling from a population of more than 10 million in 1957 to 3.5 million by 1964; then after a short-lived rebound, to a new low of about two million about 1990. Although the species has recovered somewhat from that low



Northern Pintail drake, Cosumnes River Preserve.

point, the breeding population is still below the long-term average, despite years of major efforts focused on restoring the species. Among those efforts are the projects funded by your purchase of Federal Duck Stamps: for example, the Grasslands Wildlife Management Area is high on the priority list for 2013-2014 distribution of those funds.

ELLIS MYERS PHOTO



# Art Donations Needed

By Mike Eliot

The first ever Native Bird Connections White Owl Art Auction and Sale is scheduled for Saturday, November 9, at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill.



We will accept donations of nature-related artwork, paintings, photographs, sculptures, carvings, etc., especially birds, that are in good, saleable condition. You may drop them off at the store anytime during business hours until November 7. You may put a reserve price on them if you wish. Also, if you want to be recognized as a donor, please put your name on the back of each item.

We support Native Bird Connections as an educational organization that works regularly in public schools to educate children about nature, wild birds, and the environment. They also rescue injured birds and house those that are too injured to be released back into the wild. [Snowy Owl pictured above.] They are in dire need of extra funding due to increased regulation and costs. 100% of the proceeds will go to their efforts

SAVE THE DATE! Remind your friends and family about the White Owl Art Auction. It will take place from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday, November 9 at:

Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill, (925) 798-0303



Silent auction bidding will begin at 10 AM and end at 5 PM. You may bid more than once. You must register to bid when you arrive so please bring a credit or debit card.

Call us at the store if you have any questions or need artwork picked up. If you cannot attend but wish to bid, please give us your email address. We will email you photos of the artwork the day before the auction and you can bid by phone.

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

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California Thrasher. Denise Wight photo..

## Joseph Grinnell Ornithologist • Zoologist • Ecologist

### Joseph Grinnell, the Most Influential Environmentalist You Never Heard Of!

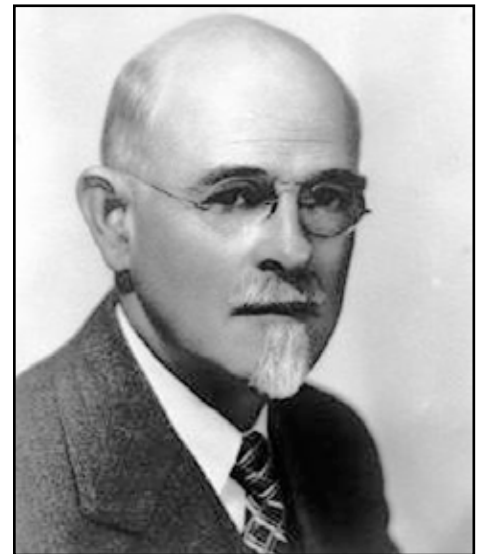
Joseph Grinnell had a childhood unlike that of other youth of his time. He was born in 1877 on the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita Indian Agency in Indian Territory near Fort Sill (Oklahoma). His father was the agency doctor. In 1880 the family moved to the Dakotas, where the father was treating the great Sioux Chief Red Cloud. The boy grew up with the Sioux children, and he was a favorite of Red Cloud. His Sioux background surely helped form his attitudes of living with nature.

In 1885 the family moved to Pasadena, then a largely undeveloped area where Joseph became a budding naturalist and ornithologist. He developed a detailed protocol for recording field observations. A journal was kept, detailed accounts of individual species' behaviors were recorded, topographic maps were annotated to show specific localities, and photographs were

often taken of animals captured. His careful cataloguing began with a specimen of the Red-shafted Flicker. By the time he entered Stanford University for graduate study, his collection contained nearly 4500 bird skins.

In 1893, he entered Throop University in Pasadena (later Throop Polytechnic Institute, and, in 1920, Caltech) Also in that year, at the age of sixteen, Grinnell's first scientific papers were published. Four separate papers were titled *Audubon's Warbler*, *Virginia Rail in California*, *Nesting of the Road-Runner*, and *The Wren-tit*. In all, Grinnell published 554 articles, most on ornithology, during his lengthy career.

In 1898, at age 21, Grinnell took a schooner into the Bering Sea during the Alaskan gold rush. This was the first expedition of his career. The specimens he collected are still in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at UC Berkeley, all meticulously labeled by his hand. About 1905, Grinnell, then a Professor of Biology at Throop, met



Joseph Grinnell

Annie M. Alexander, who had also collected in Alaska. Miss Alexander was daughter of Samuel Alexander, founding partner of Alexander & Baldwin, the giant Hawaiian sugar, real estate and navigation firm. Grinnell pointed out the need for a natural history museum for the West Coast, to be housed at Stanford. Alexander, though, in agreeing to fund the project, insisted that it be built at Cal, where she had been studying

*Continued on Page 8 »*