

# CALENDAR

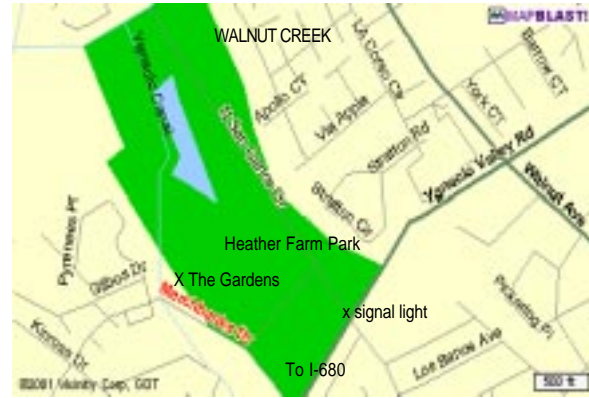
MDAS holds its general meetings on the first Thursday of every month. Our next meeting is Thursday, October 3. Meetings for the rest of the 2002-03 year are Nov. 6, Dec. 5, Jan. 2, Feb. 6, March 6, Apr 3, May 1, and June 5. No meetings in July or August.

If you are a new member or new to the area, let us know. We want to welcome you and tell you about our activities. All new members and visitors receive a free door prize ticket.

The MDAS Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of the month at the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.

## MDAS will celebrate its 50th Anniversary at the October 3 meeting!

Questions about membership or mailing addresses? Call Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, at (925) 968-1677. MDAS membership includes 10 issues of the *Quail*. A one-year family membership in MDAS is \$25/year or \$500 for lifetime membership (payable in two \$250 annual payments). National Audubon Society membership includes the Audubon magazine. Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years; membership renewal is \$35/year. To join MDAS or NAS, send a check payable to MDAS to Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Ct., Danville, 95626. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please end exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor, 4801 Shavano Peak Ct., Antioch, CA 94531.



Driving directions: Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to signal light at N. San Carlos Dr. (Heather Farm entrance). Go 1 block and turn left on Heather. At Marchbanks Dr. turn right. The Garden Center is located about 200 ft. on the right.

## 50th Anniversary Edition

# The QUAIL

a publication of the  
Mt Diablo Audubon Society  
Walnut Creek, CA  
94597-0053



In 1955 Harry Adamson drew this California Quail for the MDAS newsletter.

October 2002

Vol. 49, No. 2

Next Deadline: October 5

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES by Mike Williams

Fifty years of friends and birds! What a wonderful combination—what more could you ask? Congratulations to MDAS and all its members. Your appreciation and love for the birds has helped raise the overall awareness of the general public to their plight. You have helped preserve habitats and introduce birds and the hobby of birding to tens of thousands of people over the last 50 years. We hope to see you at our fantastic 50th Anniversary Celebration!

You are part of the second most popular hobby in the U.S. (after gardening). More money is spent on bird watching and birdfeeding than most other hobbies in the U.S. At the September general meeting, I asked how many people had been birding outside northern California during the summer. About 20 people raised their hands. Additionally, four others went birding outside the U.S. With 70+ people at the meeting, that is a high percentage of people who spent their summer peering through binoculars.

It's Fall, and time for us to join the migration. It's time to go to Point Reyes and catch that migrant warbler. It's time to go to Hawk Hill to see all those raptors. It will soon be time to go to Sacramento Wildlife Refuge to see the Snow Geese. Now is the time to be planning your next trip to Yuba Pass, the Texas coast, or the sky islands of southeast Arizona. Face this fact—it's always time to go birding and planning your next trip!

—Mike Williams



## MDAS Celebrates 50th Anniversary



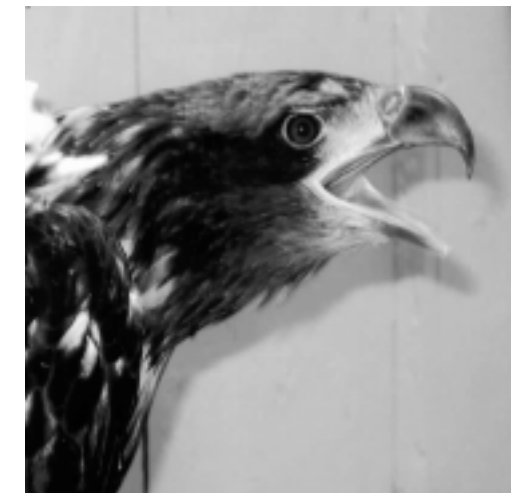
On October 3 at 7 p.m., the Mount Diablo Audubon Society will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Members and guests are invited to this special evening for presentations, dessert, champagne, and punch in the Camellia Room of the Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8).

Jimm Edgar, past MDAS president, will be master of ceremonies as we recall 50 years of birding adventure, innovative conservation projects, and education outreach. Harry and Betty Adamson will relate the story of how MDAS began. Shirley Ellis will provide her own witty commentary on the history of MDAS, and Nancy Wenninger will talk about Al McNabney and his legacy. Jean Richmond and Gloria Cannon will tell us what it takes to produce the *Quail*. We will remember 50 years of birding and field trips through pictures, slides, and tales. There will be special exhibits, including "Tools of the Trade," and special prizes for the raffle. Bob Wisecarver and Don Yoder will tell us about bats and bluebirds. Diana Granados of Native Bird Connections will bring a Bald Eagle as a special visitor. Special guests and dignitaries include Gary Bogue, naturalist and columnist with the *Contra Costa Times*; Robin Deleong of the Napa-Solano chapter; and E. Carmen Torres from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Project.

The evening guarantees laughter, tears, nostalgic visits with old friends, and wonderful food. Come celebrate with us as we remember special people who have contributed so much to our organization and as we look back at our past and forward to our future.

MDAS's 50th anniversary will be the subject of a County resolution introduced by Supervisor Gayle Uilkema as well as a state resolution introduced by Assemblyman Joe Canciamilla of Pittsburg. Representative George Miller will have notice of our anniversary read into the Congressional Record.

RSVP—To help us plan appropriately, let us know if you will join us for the October 3 celebration. Please phone or email Alice Holmes at (925) 938-1581 or email <greenheron1@msn.com>.



Pictured is the immature female Bald Eagle that Native Bird Connections will be bringing to our 50th anniversary celebration.

## TIME VALUE MAIL



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 53  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053

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## Connections

## Conservation Notes Retrospective

One of the foremost environmentalists in Contra Costa's history was MDAS's own Al McNabney, a gentleman who had the soul of a warrior. In addition to being Conservation Vice President for MDAS for 15 years, he served on the Urban Creek Task Force, the Committee for Water Policy Consensus, and was deeply involved with regional transportation and water issues. For many years, he had a column in the *Quail* called "Conservation Notes." Here are a few memorable excerpts.

## by Al McNabney

After Mt. Diablo Audubon teamed up with the Bay Area Chapter of the Sierra Club to fight new development in Oakley, Al wrote:

"It is not the intent to halt ALL development. However, planners HAVE to be interested in finding solutions for the major problems (roads, traffic, police and fire protection, for example) already evident. If one has a cup that's full, it would make no sense to keep pouring more and more liquid into the cup. So it is with development. Infrastructure problems must have solutions before more and more building permits are issued." —*The Quail*, September 1987. [editor: MDAS and the Sierra Club won the lawsuit.]

## WHAT'S HAPPENING TO SHELL MARSH?

About three years ago a disastrous oil spill sent thousands of gallons of crude oil from a Shell Oil refinery onto Shell Marsh, into the bay, and elsewhere. Shell, unlike EXXON, dived in and paid for the clean-up and made serious attempts to return the area to normal. Legal actions by various agencies and communities produced a court-approved settlement of the many issues. The settlement provided \$9 million to purchase, enhance, and restore wetlands in the area affected by the oil spill. Shell Marsh being a primary recipient of the "mess" was specifically mentioned in the settlement. Today, there still has been NO resolution of the issues. Shell Marsh is still in private hands, subject to possible

sale for development. MDAS and the California State Coastal Conservancy presented a joint proposal to the Shell Oil Litigation Settlement Trustee Committee. To date that proposal has NOT been acted on. It is imperative that something be done to ensure that this, the MOST IMPORTANT wetlands in Contra Costa County, will be there forever.—*The Quail*, May 1992

## SHELL MARSH IS SAFE!!!!

After over eight years of attention, debate, argument letter writing, a major oil spill, and a lot of sweat and tears (no blood, though), Shell Marsh has been SAVED. The Shell Oil Spill Litigation Settlement Trustee Committee (SOSLSTC) has purchased the entire property, including the uplands, from the developer. The title is in the hands of the East Bay Park Service. A major commitment is being made to restoring and enhancing the wetland. SOSLSTC established a committee (MDAS is represented) to work out details for an extensive study of the hydrology, land elevations, and tidal action, so the marsh can be properly managed. Acquisition of this wetland, said by many to THE most important in Contra Costa County, constitutes a major environmental win. When the studies and restoration have been completed, Shell Marsh will be the jewel of all California wetlands.—*The Quail*, September 1992

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

In one of his last columns, Al McNabney looked to the future of the Contra Costa environment and had these thoughts:

Will Contra Costa County continue its drift towards Los Angelization? Major development proposals are on the books awaiting approvals. Thousands of dwellings have already been approved; and when the "right" time comes, construction will start. . . . The thing that slowed or halted the destruction of key laws was public outcry, public pressure. 1998 may well be another year in which "we the people" have to exert ourselves to save habitat, forests, streams, and yes, even the air we breathe.

I'm far from certain there's enough recognition of the hundreds of avian species that are in an endangered status. Or the hundreds more that are threatened. If you don't know, "endangered" means the species is sliding toward extinction. As has been said by those with more wisdom than I have, "extinction is forever." As I'm wont to say, birds don't vote, they don't lobby, they don't make campaign contributions. It's OUR job to speak and work FOR them. We humans have the ability to FIX ALL of our environmental problems. . . . May it be a year of health, happiness for YOU, and many environmental successes for all of us.—*The Quail*, January 1998.

## The Quail

is published 10 times a year by the Mt Diablo Audubon Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation and environmental education

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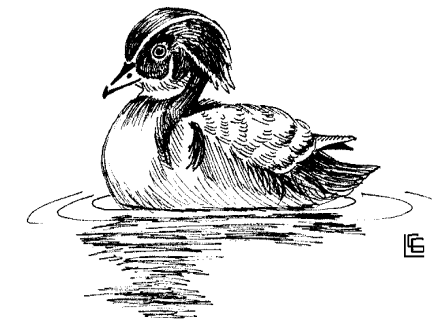
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## Sixth CV Birding Symposium Scheduled for Nov. 21–24

The Central Valley Bird Club is hosting its sixth annual Central Valley Birding Symposium November 21-24 at the Radisson Hotel in Stockton. This Symposium is for BIRDERS and offers excellent programs, speakers and field trips. Speakers include Kevin Karlson, Shawnee Finnegan, Ed Harper, Jon Dunn, Kimball Garrett, and Joe Morlan. There will be field trips, workshops, and a "Birder's Market" with vendors and artists selling birding-related items. The Symposium will have activities and classes for beginners as well as more advanced birders. Register early; the Radisson fills up quickly. More info is at <<http://cvbs.org>>.



Sketch by Carol Lutz

## Flicker Fricasee

Into an 8" x 8" cake pan, put 1 cup Grape Nuts, 1 cup raisins, 1 cup peanuts, 1/4 tsp sand; set aside. Put 1-1/3 cup suet through a meat grinder. Melt suet down in double boiler, set aside to cool and harden slightly. Reheat the suet and pour over dry

ingredients. Refrigerate until firm, and cut in pieces. Serve in plastic-coated wire basket on tree trunk. —Wanda Wolf, Redbud Audubon Society (from the *Quail*, March 1979).

## Adamsons' Seed Cake

Cook 2 cups cornmeal, 3 cups water until thick; stir constantly as it burns easily. Grease the bottom of the pot so it does not stick. Remove; add 1-1/2 cups melted grease (1 cup in summer). Do NOT use any grease containing tomato sauce as birds do not like it. Do in a mixer or let grease congeal first if done by hand. Add 1-1/2 cups flour; then 1-1/2 cups sugar. Anything can be added: nuts, seed, etc. Refrigerate. —Betty and Harry Adamson

## Pay Your Dues—Keep the Quail Coming

## MDAS Membership Drive Continues

Annual membership in MDAS provides:

- Subscription to ten issues of the *Quail*, the newsletter of MDAS, which contains information and announcements on field trips, programs, local issues, and bird sightings.
- Ten monthly membership meetings with guest speakers on a variety of topics from Avocets to Zonotrichia and an opportunity to share your interest in birds with others.
- Birding field trips for beginners, intermediate, and advanced levels.
- Opportunities to volunteer for a variety of community-based projects.
- A voice that is heard by decisionmakers on local environmental and conservation issues.
- Most of all, the satisfaction of supporting YOUR MDAS Chapter.

Remember all MDAS membership dues fund our local projects and events.

The cost of membership is \$25 a year per household (one person, a couple, or an entire family pays only \$25 annually.) All memberships and donations are tax deductible.

Join now to ensure that you will continue to receive the *Quail* without an interruption in delivery.

VIST US ONLINE:  
<http://www.diabloaudubon.com>

## MDAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- \_\_\_\_ Please enroll my family and me as a member of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 annually.  
 \_\_\_\_ Please enroll me as a lifetime member for \$500. Payment can be made in two annual payments of \$250 each.  
 \_\_\_\_ Please enroll the individual/family listed below as a gift membership for \$25 annually.  
 \_\_\_\_ For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only) or \$35 (returning members), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society to receive the *Audubon Magazine* (4 quarterly issues).  
 \_\_\_\_ I'm enclosing a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone with area code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to: MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:  
Ann McGregor, Membership Chair  
400 Oneida Ct.  
Danville, CA 94526-6264

## News from

**Wild Birds Unlimited**

692 Contra Costa Blvd.  
Pleasant Hill, CA  
798-0303

Visit Our Website at  
<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>

**Seed & Suet Sale (Oct. 8- 27, 2002)**  
**Stock up at 15% savings and get ready**  
**for fall and winter birdfeeding!**

On **Saturday, October 12**, we are celebrating our 11th anniversary! Please come and help us celebrate!

- Receive a FREE cake of suet.
- See a Bald Eagle.
- See Takai, a 6-year-old gray wolf.
- Discounts on every transaction.
- Plants for attracting birds and butterflies to your garden.
- FREE prize drawings.

While you are in the store, sample our Shade Grown Coffee. This coffee preserves the migratory bird habitats by maintaining the native tree canopy and helps protect endangered species. (Wild Birds Unlimited donates Shade Grown Coffee to the MDAS meetings.)

Or try Natural Origins Tea, which is also grown in an environmentally safe manner.

We are in a lull now in backyard birdfeeding. The orioles, grosbeaks, warblers, Allen's Hummingbirds, and others have migrated south or dispersed. White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and other sparrows will start arriving soon. Their favorite foods are millet seeds and suet. Juncos are not far behind.

The numbers of American and Lesser Goldfinches should begin to increase in October. Their favorite food is thistle seeds.

**Feeding Tips**

As fall gets into full swing, we should see feeder activity increase. There will be less natural food available. Some species will be eating more seeds, suet, or peanuts, and fewer insects. These include woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees and titmice. Try feeding peanut butter. Either use a special feeder or spread it on a tree trunk. Mash birdseed into the peanut butter. Titmice, woodpeckers, and chickadees love it.

**The Great Yuba Pass Field Trip, June 22-23**

by **Hugh and Rosita Harvey**

One really knows summer has arrived when it is time to go to Yuba Pass for the annual MDAS field trip. At 6700 feet of elevation, the days are warm to hot, and the nights are cool to cold.

The best experience of the weekend may be sitting around a campfire while drinking hot chocolate and telling stories. The trip this year was no exception.

Saturday morning 16 members and guests met early right at the top of the pass. Many of the flowers had already bloomed, the winter ending a little earlier than in previous years. We started without wasting time and very quickly saw the Williamson's Sapsucker nesting in an aspen just off the parking lot. We watched Cassin's Finches, Evening Grosbeaks, and Pine Siskins along the side of the highway as we crossed to the logging road. The majority of the morning was spent walking along the meadow filled with snags and beyond into the forest. Many passerines were seen along the way, including woodpeckers flycatchers, vireos, warblers, sparrows and finches. Favorites were Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Chickadee, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. Heard but not seen were Mountain Quail and Northern Goshawk.

Following lunch, we walked above the campground to two nests found by Denise Wight—a Western Tanager and a Brown Creeper. All participants were able to see the locations through scopes. The group then proceeded to the San Francisco State field station. Here we watched a White-headed Woodpecker going to a nest hole and a Dipper just downstream from the bridge. We continued to Gold Lake Road to several of the high lakes where we found three duck species, an Osprey, and a high-flying flock of White Pelicans.

After dinner and just before dark, about half the group drove downhill to Chapman Saddle Road. Here we had one of the best viewings of Common Poorwill that we have ever had. One landed on the road, a snag, a rock, and a car as we all watched with amazement. We stopped at the scenic overlook as we returned uphill. Here we had a Common Nighthawk flying as it called and boomed after diving right over our heads. Though we never saw this bird as it was already night. This too, was one of the most spectacular nighttime displays we had ever experienced.

Sunday morning as we gathered at the pass before heading for the Sierra Valley, a number of the group were thrilled to see four Clark's Nutcrackers north of the highway. We joined the rest of the group at Mountain Quail Road where we hoped to find Green-tailed Towhees and Gray Flycatchers. We were not disappointed and also found Brewer's and Chipping Sparrows.

We continued on to the sparrow corner at the intersection of Highway A23 and Westside Road. We found a singing Cassin's Sparrow and Horned Larks. A CHP officer declined to join us in viewing a distant Red-tailed Hawk being chased by a blackbird. Because the winter did end early, the Sierra Valley was extremely dry, and it showed along our drive out to the old iron bridge on Dyson Lane/Marble Hot Springs Road. We found an assortment of ducks and rails. We had distant views of Sandhill Cranes and also very good views of White-faced Ibis and Wilson's Phalaropes.

The last leg of the Sunday portion of our trip was along Antelope Valley Road. This road starts southeast of Loyalton and passes through areas of the big fire of 1994. We had good views of Lewis' Woodpecker, both Mountain and Western Bluebirds, and more Clark's Nutcrackers. These and other sightings brought our trip total to 115 species seen or heard. The leaders would like to extend a big thank you for their help on the trip to Jean Richmond, Eugenia Larson, and Pat and Phil Gordon. The participation of many makes the entire trip much easier and more enjoyable for all. Rosita and I hope to lead this trip for many years to come.

Sketch by  
Carol Lutz

**Through the Years with MDAS**

**1953**—A group of Contra Costa birdwatchers found the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society.

**1955**—Harry Adamson was elected president in 1955, and Betty Adamson edited the *Quail*. Harry also designed the masthead for *The Quail* newsletter, featuring a California Quail. That *Quail* editor wrote, "His design and drawing of our very lifelike Quail will give pleasure to every member with each new issue for years to come."

**1968**—According to the April 1968 *Quail*, "because woodpeckers have made telephone poles near Clayton look like Swiss Cheese, five poles were put out of commission in a recent gusty wind and caused a power failure that upset several hundred homes." Day-use fees at state parks rose to 75 cents per car.

**1970**—The Bay Area Council of Audubon was created to discuss rising concern about deteriorating environmental conditions in the Bay Area. President Christian Nelson realized that Mt Diablo Audubon was the only affiliate group present—all the others were Audubon chapters. He urged members to vote to join as a chapter: "Let's face it, our generation allowed the environmental crisis to happen. . . . A \$10.00 membership cost is a small enough debt to pay in hopes that the money will be used to correct the situation for those who follow us." The members voted 51 to 10 to becoming an Audubon chapter and paid \$12 a year in dues.

**1983**—Al McNabney begins writing Conservation Notes. MDAS awarded its first annual Audubon Conservation Award to County Supervisor Nancy Fahden.

1988—Carol Lutz donates the use of her original bird sketches to brighten the pages of the *Quail*.

**1989**—Jean Richmond's book, *Birding Northern California*, is offered for sale. The handbook describes 72 local birding sites and sells for \$10.70. She donates the copyright to MDAS, which opens a Conservation and Education fund with the profits from book sales.

**1991**—Steve Glover begins writing the Observations column—a role which he still continues even now after 11 years. Cecil and Mike Williams announce the grand opening of their Wild Birds Unlimited store in Pleasant Hill.

**1992**—Shell Marsh is purchased and turned over to the East Bay Regional Park District. Al McNabney declares victory (see Conservation Notes story, p.2 ).

**1994**—Action taken by MDAS's Don Yoder leads to the establishment of the California Bluebird Recovery Program. This nonprofit project seeks to encourage and preserve cavity nesters, especially bluebirds, anywhere in the West. Don continues to serve as the CBRP Program Director.

**1997**—MDAS honors 17 of its longtime volunteers at its special dinner event, "An Evening with John James Audubon." Honorees included Al McNabney, Norah Bain, Elizabeth Dickey, Jimm Edgar, Shirley Ellis, Steve Glover, Jill Hedgecock, Jean Richmond, Maury Stern, Barbara Vaughn, Denise Wight, Mike Williams, Bob Wisecarver, Gifford and Winifred Young, Dan Van Zile, and Barbara Burek.

MDAS initiates its Breeding Bird Atlas Survey under the direction of Steve Glover. During the 5-year effort volunteers will collect information by observation to identify all the bird species that breed in Contra Costa County. Thanks to many dedicated volunteers, the project was completed 2002. Steve is now working to organize and publish the Contra Costa Breeding Bird Atlas.

**2000**—National Audubon Society began the Baylands Campaign. a 20-year effort to restore 100,000 acres—150 square miles—of Bay Area wetlands and associated upland habitat.

MDAS partners with Natural Origins' Tea to support good works in Contra Costa County and in India by co-marketing pure premium teas from India.

**2002**—Because of policy changes by National Audubon regarding sharing dues with chapters, the MDAS initiates a new membership tier, "Chapter-Only." By having a chapter membership fee, MDAS will be able to continue publication of the *Quail*, to hold its general meetings and field trips, and expand its conservation activism. *Editor's Note: copies of a more detailed timeline of important events in the history of MDAS will be available at the October 3 celebration.*

**The Founding of MDAS**

In April 1953, a small group interested in the formation of a local Audubon Society met in the community room of the Coast Counties Gas Company in Walnut Creek. Bill Hassler was secretary for the evening. Chief speaker was Vaughn MacCaughy, West Coast representative of National Audubon. Other National representatives present were Ferd Ruth and Alexander Sprunt III.

On June 11, the group held its first "official" meeting and selected Albert Cooperrider as president. Local dues were \$1.50 and national dues were \$5. Harry and Betty Adamson were among the 22 original members.

By November 1954, the new Mt. Diablo Audubon group was meeting at Los Lomas High School. Curator in Herpetology, Dr. Robert Stebbins, spoke on reptiles and illustrated his talk with "live specimens of lizards, snakes, turtles, etc. (all caged)."

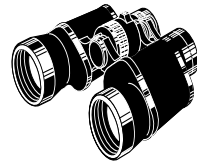
The field trips that year took members to Bay Farm Island [now in Alameda], the Sewer Farm, Joice Island [Grizzly Island], Pacific Grove in Monterey, Tomales Bay, Mulfontes Ranch [which belonged to members Mrs. McGeehon and Mrs. O'Meara], Tilden Park, Mt. Diablo, Mt. Hamilton, Golden Gate Park, and an overnight trip to the Pinnacles.

Twenty-two cold but eager birders were in the field for the first MDAS Christmas Bird Count, held on January 3, 1954. The observers spotted 89 species and counted 6,222 individuals. The species with the highest count was Brewer's Blackbirds with 1,500 counted.

In August 1954, 15 members of the group participated a camping/field trip to Mt. Diablo. Camping at the Juniper Camp cost \$1 per car, and picnickers were charged 35 cents. During the group's moonlit walk to the summit, Harry Adamson spotted a Poorwill.

# Observations

by Steve Glover



Small flocks of American White Pelicans included six on 8/29 at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline (AK, EBRPD) groups of two and 17 at Inspiration Pt., Tilden Park, on 9/8 (SG).

A late brood of Ruddy Ducks was found at Heather Farms Park, Walnut Creek, on 8/20 (RS, RH). Ruddies are very scarce breeders in the county.

Two Ospreys flying south over Vollmer Peak, Tilden Park, on 8/27 may have been migrants or resident birds commuting from reservoir to reservoir (BF). A light-phase Swainson's Hawk circling over Inspiration Pt. in Tilden Park on 9/1 was one of a very few ever recorded in Contra Costa away from East County (SG).

Five Black Oystercatchers at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline, Richmond, on 8/29 was a nice count this deep into the bay (AK, EBRPD). Most unusual were two juvenile Red-necked Phalaropes at the unlikely location of Jewel Lake, Tilden Park, on 9/7 (BB). The only other record for the Coast Ranges of Contra Costa County was a single bird at Pine Pond, Mt. Diablo, on 8/24/1990 (GF). A Common Murre was at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Richmond, on 9/7 (SG). They are regular at this locale in fall.

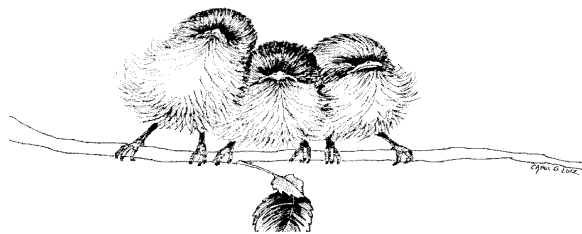
The Black Skimmer first found at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 7/12 (RT) was re-found on 8/17 (S&CH, L&CL). Of added interest was the fact that the bird was banded. Reading of the bands on 8/17 resulted in confirmation that the bird was banded as a baby in 1998 at the Bolsa Chica Tern Colony in Orange County. A great picture of the bird can be seen at Scot's website at [http://www.heinphoto.com/birds/DSC\\_4569-black\\_skimmer.htm](http://www.heinphoto.com/birds/DSC_4569-black_skimmer.htm).

Migrant swifts at Inspiration Point, Tilden Park, included one White-throated and three Vaux's on 9/1, six White-throated and one Vaux's on 9/8, and one of each on 9/9 (SG).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Inspiration Pt., Tilden Park 9/8-9 (SG). Unlike in spring, Olive-sided Flycatchers are only occasionally found in fall. Though Willow Flycatchers are common migrants in East County, they are uncommon elsewhere in the county. Records this fall all come from Tilden Park, with one on 8/31 at Jewel Lake (BL and GGAS), one on 9/8 at Inspiration Pt. (SG) and two on 9/9 at Jewel Lake (SG). A Hammond's Flycatcher at Vollmer Peak, Tilden Park, on 8/27 was a nice find (BF). Though Hammond's are fairly common migrants locally in the spring, they are rare in fall.

A Red-breasted Nuthatch at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Richmond, was at a location where few have been found but where they are probably regular (SG). Nine Swainson's Thrushes at Jewel Lake, Tilden Park, on 9/9 was a nice tally for fall (SG). Eight Cedar Waxwings at Inspiration Pt., Tilden Park, were a little on the early side on 8/30 (SG).

Observers: Bob Brandriff, East Bay Regional Parks District, George Finger, Brian Fitch, Steve Glover, Golden Gate Audubon Society, Rosita Harvey, Scott and Claudia Hein, Alan Kaplan, Les and Cindy Leurance, Bob Lewis, Roberta Stacy, Rob Thomas



Sketch courtesy of Carol Lutz

## Field Trip Reports

**August 2, San Mateo Coast**—Five birders enjoyed a cool, foggy day along the coast. Most shorebirds were in low numbers, but we saw all the rocky shore species. In the afternoon at Ano Nuevo, we had excellent views of Bank Swallows in a mixed flock. A total of 59 species were seen or heard.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

**August 17, Bodega Bay**—Eight members saw 54 species on a cool day at Bodega Bay. The highlight bird was actually the 55th; we saw a Golden Plover but were not able to identify it as to species: Pacific or American. Other birds included the expected Black Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, and Elegant Tern, and the less expected Red Knot.—*Fred Safier*

## Audubon-CA Endorses Prop 51

Audubon-California has endorsed the Traffic Congestion Relief & Safe School Bus Act, or Proposition 51, which will appear on the California statewide ballot on November 5.

Prop 51 would allocate 30% of the state share of the sales tax on new and used motor vehicles to a new trust fund for transportation improvements around the state, a fund that would generate approximately \$910 million a year. Prop 51 includes a significant, permanent, annual investment for programs that mitigate the impact that transportation systems have on our air, water, and land resources.

Prop 51 also promotes habitat, open space, and environmental protection by doubling the existing Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP), originally created by the Legislature at the level of \$10 million dollars, to reduce the devastating impact that transportation development has on natural lands, parkland, and wildlife habitat. Additionally, it creates the Transportation Impacts Mitigation Trust Fund of more than \$90 million a year, which may be used for the acquisition or enhancement of resource lands, wildlife corridors and habitat linkages.

Vote YES on Prop 51 this November!

# October Field Trips

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

*Field trips are open to MDAS members and nonmembers alike. You do not have to be a birding expert; only one who enjoys nature. Bring binoculars, field guides, and lunch. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Trips go in light rain or drizzle. If in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure. Carpool time is the departure time. Carpool expense: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.*

**Thursday, October 3, Point Isabel and adjacent shoreline.** Carpool leaves Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Highway 24 at 8 a.m. Or meet in parking lot at end of Rydin Road at 8:45. From Highway 580 in Contra Costa County, exit Central Avenue west (this is the first 580 exit north of the I-80 split). Drive west one block, then turn right onto Rydin Road. The parking lot is at the end of the road. For more information about Point Isabel, see the East Bay Regional Park District site at <http://www.ebparks.org/parks/ptisable.htm>. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

**Saturday, October 12, Point Diablo (Hawk Hill).** Carpool leaves at 8 a.m., from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Or meet at 9:15 a.m. in parking lot at upper Rodeo lagoon. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight through stoplight. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. Take US 101 south to second Sausalito exit (Alexander Ave). At stop sign, go right up the hill. At the intersection, go right downhill. At stop sign, turn left and continue to upper lagoon. Migrating hawks and swifts. At noon, there is a talk and demonstration by the Raptor Watch people. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906 Category 1

**Difficulty of field trip:**  
**Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths.**  
**Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough terrain.**  
**Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.**

**Wednesday, October 16, Lafayette Reservoir.** Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at the top of the dam. Parking costs \$4 and is prohibited at the bottom of the hill. A good place to learn local birds. Morning trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

**Thursday, October 24, Wildcat Gorge/Tilden Regional Park.** Meet at 8 a.m. in parking lot across from the Botanical Gardens. We will be taking a 3-mile walk up Wild Cat Creek. Bring lunch and liquids. Good beginner's trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

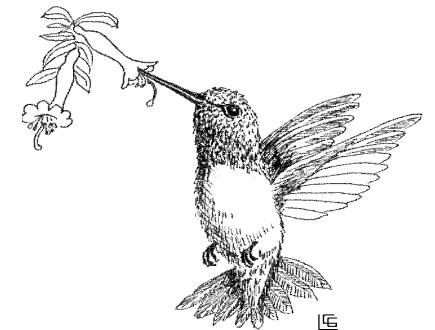
**Saturday, October 26, Abbott's Lagoon.** Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at 9 a.m. at Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Point Reyes. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1-1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight through stoplight. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From I-101 north, take San Rafael exit. Go 2 blocks, turn left and continue west to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 mile, then left onto Bear Valley Rd. Visitors' Center is off Bear Valley. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and hawks. Carry lunch and liquids. Leader: Joel Summerhill, (925) 753-0862 Category 3

**Thursday, February 17, Big Break.** Meet on Jordon Lane in Oakley at 8 a.m. Hike along Big Break Trail between the river and Iron House Sanitary property. Take SR 4 east to Vintage Parkway in Oakley. Turn left, then right onto Walnut Meadows, and left onto Jordon Lane. Parking is on a residential cul-de-sac so carpooling is important! Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

## 2003 Entertainment Books Are Here! Still Only \$30!

Entertainment 2003 books are as big as ever and cost only \$30! Support your chapter and save up to 50% on restaurants, travel, entertainment, merchandise, services, and much more for the next 13 months. Pick up your great savings book at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill; or at MDAS monthly meetings.

Shop on the web at [entertainment.com](http://entertainment.com) for additional savings by way of printable coupons, the Frequent Values Program, and an easy way to order out-of-town editions—a marvelous Christmas gift. Be sure to include the MDAS code of 175587 when ordering.



Artist Carol Lutz drew several sketches, including this beautiful hummingbird, for the Quail.

## How to Purchase Natural Origins' Tea

Our good friends at Natural Origins' Tea have extended their generous offer to share 20% of their sales to MDAS when their customers designate MDAS as their donation recipient. Support MDAS through your purchase of their excellent India teas. Here's how:

- Order direct from Natural Origins'. Call toll free 1-877-448-3832 and request that MDAS receive donation benefits when you order.
- Order online at [www.naturalorigins.com](http://www.naturalorigins.com). At checkout, indicate MDAS as the donation recipient.
- Purchase Natural Origins' tea at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill (925-798-0303). MDAS receives an automatic credit of 20% of all tea sales.
- At MDAS general meetings.