

the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php

Volume 50, Number 2

October 2004

Falconry with Charlie Kaiser and Pam Hessey, and Environmental Protection Legislation

October 7 we will meet two people dedicated to conserving and protecting birds of prey. They will share their expertise in the handling of raptors, the rehabilitation of injured raptors, and the practice of the ancient art of Falconry.

Charlie Kaiser and Pam Hessey are directors of the California Hawking Club, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting birds of prey; and they are directors of California Foundation for Birds of Prey where they work to man and tame non-releasable Golden Eagles for use in education programs. They are currently serving as outside advisors to the San Francisco Zoo's Koret Education Center to improve and evolve raptor handling and management.

Pam Hessey is a Master Falconer, having flown birds for over 10 years. She has flown Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Goshawks, and Harris's Hawks. Charlie Kaiser is a general falconer, having flown birds for 7 years. He has flown Red-tailed Hawks and Harris's Hawks. Pam and Charlie have both been volunteers at raptor rehab facilities for many years and Pam helped to develop the raptor-handling program at The Lindsay Museum in Walnut Creek.

Pam and Charlie currently hunt with a pair of male Harris's Hawks, hunting jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, pheasants, quail, and ducks. They live in Concord with their two hawks, various eagles, an



Ferruginous Hawks are faster flyers than Red-tailed Hawks but are not so even tempered, and so they may be more challenging to control for all but experienced falconers.

Photo by Charlie Kaiser

English Sparrow, a canary, two cats, and a dog. As far as gainful employment goes, Charlie is a network administrator and Pam restores antique carousel animals.

The California Hawking Club was formed in 1971 by a small group of dedicated falconers to preserve and promote the public image of the art of Falconry, to assist in the conservation of birds of prey. The preservation of all birds of prey through the active education of the public is an appropriate and effective conservation measure.

The California Foundation for Birds of Prey was started in the early nineties. This organization is dedicated to the rehabilitation of injured birds of prey, otherwise known as raptors. CFBP specializes in the care and management of eagles, both our national symbol, the Bald Eagle, and our more frequently seen Golden Eagle.



Although the Red-footed Falcon is seldom used in falconry—because it prefers only small prey such as frogs, birds, and insects—it is recorded that Emperor Frederick II, who wrote a treatise on falconry, trained these falcons in the thirteenth century.

Photo by Jonathan Klizas

No Habitat—No Birds!

Shirley Ellis and Gloria Cannon will present a review of Federal legislation that has affected the environment over the last four years.

Meeting Schedule

The next MDAS general meeting will be **Thursday, October 7**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek (see map on page 9).

6:30 PM—Doors open

7:00 PM—Birding Information

7:25 PM—Announcements and business

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

8:05 PM—Program

* Please remember to bring a cup.

President's Letter

By Mike Williams

Conservation in Action

California Coastal Cleanup Day is acknowledged as the nation's premier volunteer event focused on the marine environment. In 1993 it was hailed by the Guinness Book of Records as "the largest garbage collection." Since the program started in 1985, over 552,000 Californians have removed almost 8.5 million pounds of debris from our state's shorelines and coast.

Trash is a never-ending problem around the edges of the Bay. Marine animals can be injured in two ways by debris: through entanglement or by ingestion. Many types of sea critters have been ensnared in plastic debris such as fishing lines, bags and beverage container rings. Many animals will eat plastic, thinking it is food. When one does, the animal's intestinal passage may become blocked and the doomed animal will starve to death.

This year, as part of this statewide effort on September 18, the East Bay Regional Park District emphasized the clearing of the Martinez Regional Shoreline, among other sites. Their staff did much of the work, since hazards precluded assigning untrained volunteers to some tasks. In order to participate in the volunteer program, Mount Diablo Audubon Society's Board of Directors authorized a contribution of up to \$2000 specifically for the disposal of old tires recovered from the mud.

The Martinez Shoreline is a great place to look for birds. Now you'll find it to be an even nicer, cleaner place for birds and for your family as well.

In another action by the MDAS Board, a grant of \$500 was voted to the Feather River Land Trust for conservation work in the Sierra Valley, a wonderful area where we lead field trips each year. See Hugh Harvey's fine trip report in last month's Quail.

Mount Diablo Audubon members can be proud of their stewardship of our natural heritage. If you would like to become more personally involved, our Conservation Fund will be happy to receive your donation.

Bring Nature into Local Classrooms with Audubon Adventures

By Cecil Williams

For years MDAS has been proud to offer *Audubon Adventures* Kits to our local classrooms.



Just what is this award-winning program, and how does it work? Today, *Audubon Adventures* reaches approximately 186,000 students throughout the United States.

Audubon Adventures materials increase awareness and appreciation in children about birds, wildlife, and the natural systems of the earth. The goal is to give children a sense of stewardship for the natural world.

Each *Audubon Adventures* Classroom Resource Kit contains supplies for 32 students, and is targeted for grades 3-6. The contents of one kit includes:

- 4 separate, different editions of *Audubon Adventures*, a glossy nature publication for students. (32 copies per edition).
- *Audubon Adventures* Classroom Resource Manual complete with lesson plans, duplicating masters, research materials, hands-on activities, etc.
- Audubon's guide to Healthy Habitats
- Healthy Habitat poster
- Classroom certificate, and more.

Audubon Adventures is aligned to national standards for science and language. Each kit is a true bargain at \$40.00! You can help the chapter bring this wonderful program to schools throughout our community by funding a classroom. If you can participate, contact Cecil Williams at (925) 798-0303. We are aware of many classes that wish to receive *Audubon Adventures*, but you can also designate which classroom you would like to sponsor. Your participation is deeply appreciated!

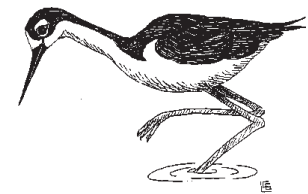
Note: Make checks payable to MDAS. Thank you.

October Field Trips

Thursday, October 7, **Lafayette Reservoir**. Meet at the top of the dam at 8:00 AM. Parking is \$5.00. 2½-3 mile morning walk around the lake. Although the area is busy, the birds are used to it; this is a good place to study the local species. Category 2.

Wednesday, October 13, **Vic Fazio Refuge**. Carpool leaves southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8 AM. Meet at Refuge headquarters on Chiles Road in Davis at 9 AM. Exit I-80 at Mace Blvd. and turn right. At light, turn left onto Chiles Road. Watch for refuge sign as you enter grassland area. All day trip. Category 1.

Saturday, October 16, **Elkhorn Slough**. Carpool leaves La Gonda Way in Danville at 7:00 AM. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right and right again onto La Gonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., turn left, then right on La Gonda and proceed about ¼ mile north to El Pintado. Meet 9:00 AM on the west side of SR1 opposite Dolan Road in Moss Landing. Category 1.



Thursday, October 21, **Big Break Trail**. Carpool leaves the Southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8:00 AM. Meet at 8:45 AM at end of Jordan Lane in Oakley. From SR4 turn left onto Vintage Parkway; turn right onto Walnut Meadows and left onto Jordan Lane. Jordan is a small cul-de-sac and carpooling is important. Morning trip. Category 2.

Wednesday, October 27, **SF Bay Refuge**. Carpool leaves La Gonda Way in Danville at 8:00 AM. Meet in parking lot at Refuge headquarters 9:00 AM. Traffic on 580-880 is horrible, of course. Relax and go with the flow; everybody gets there eventually. To bypass the worst of the bridge traffic, do not take the Dumbarton exit; but continue on 880 to Thornton exit and turn right. This takes you through moderate residential traffic. As you reach the shore line traffic thins

Continued on page 3

Field Trip Schedule

October

7 Thursday Lafayette Reservoir
 13 Wednesday Vic Fazio Refuge
 16 Saturday Elkhorn Slough
 21 Thursday Big Break Trail
 27 Wednesday SF Bay Wildlife Refuge (high tide)
 30 Saturday Abbott's Lagoon

November

4 Thursday Lower Wildcat Creek
 10 Wednesday Arrowhead Marsh (high tide)
 13 Saturday Limantour
 18 Thursday Mountain View Sanitary

December

1 Wednesday Hidden Lakes
 4-5 Saturday-Sunday Sacramento Refuges
 8 Wednesday Niles Canyon
 11 Saturday Palo Alto (high tide)



January

6 Thursday Tilden Regional Park
 8 Saturday Putah Creek
 12 Wednesday Lake Merritt
 20 Thursday Thornton
 22 Saturday Santa Cruz
 26 Wednesday East Contra Costa

February

3 Thursday Grizzly Island
 5 Saturday Bodega Bay
 9 Wednesday Concord city parks
 17 Thursday Sunol
 19 Saturday Morgan Territory
 23 Wednesday Point Pinole

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and masters. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, read the *Quail*, visit the MDAS website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php, or call the Audubon taped recording at (925) 283-8266. Trip directions and meeting times will be published in the *Quail*. Customary carpool expense is 20 cents per mile, plus tolls and entry fees, shared among driver and riders. 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.

Continued from page 2

and speeds up. Be careful; you must make a left turn into the Refuge. There is a nice large sign but it is right at the entrance. The tide is high today and rails are possible. Bring lunch. Category 2. Saturday, October 30, **Abbott's Lagoon**. Carpool leaves the southwest corner of

By Elizabeth Dickey

March

3 Thursday Walnut Creek city parks
 5 Saturday Bolinas-Five Brooks
 10 Thursday Berkeley Shoreline
 16 Wednesday San Leandro Reservoir
 19 Saturday Black Diamond Regional Park
 24 Thursday Huckleberry Preserve
 30 Wednesday Lagunitas-Bon Tempe

April

2 Saturday Garin Regional Park
 7 Thursday Tilden
 13 Wednesday East Briones
 16 Saturday Pine Canyon
 21 Thursday Ida Clayton Road
 27 Wednesday Del Puerto Canyon

May

5 Thursday Mitchell Canyon
 7 Saturday Mines Road
 11 Wednesday South Side Mount Diablo
 19 Thursday Napa River
 21 Saturday East Contra Costa Co.
 25 Wednesday West Briones

June

1 Wednesday Annadel State Park
 4 Saturday Outer Point Reyes
 18-19 or 25-26 Saturday-Sunday Yuba Pass

Dates tentative until we have some idea of the kind of winter and the depth of snow pack

Summer Trips

Saturday, July 30 San Mateo Coast
 Saturday, August 13 or 20, depending on tides Bodega Bay
 There will also be a week-day trip to the Berkeley shoreline, which was very good for Baird's Sandpiper this year.

Sun Valley parking lot at 7:30 AM. Meet at 9:15 AM at Point Reyes Headquarters on Bear Valley Road. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Lots of walking in sand. Category 3.

For additional information, call Elizabeth Dickey at 925-254-0486.



During the Gold Rush in California, this bird was hunted for its delicacy at the gourmet table to the extent that it became an endangered species. Having made a comeback, it is now consistently found during the Mount Diablo Audubon Society's Christmas Counts.

Answer on Page 6

Rare Birds Needed

A volunteer is needed to manage the Alameda and Contra Costa Rare Bird Alert page on the MDAS Website. This position would require monitoring the BirdWest Rare Bird Alert postings for the sightings in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, editing the sightings into a standard format and posting these alerts on the MDAS Website.

If you have website posting skills and are willing to spend one half hour a week, please contact Patrick King at patrick@cal-history.org.

There's also an opportunity for someone to help as an assistant to Elizabeth Dickey in managing our periodic birding field trips. Duties can be assumed according to your schedule. Please call Elizabeth at 925-254-0486.

We need your help — you're the rare bird we're looking for!

Field Trip Report

August 21, Saturday, Bodega Bay — Seven birders enjoyed a rather gray day on the coast. First—Rails at the Rail Pond. For the second year, after a long break, we saw these elusive birds again. One Virginia Rail walked in and out among the cattails and another rail called from deep in the reeds. Then at the Head, a Wandering Tattler was feeding with Black Oystercatchers and Black Turnstones on the rocks. Pelagic Cormorants still had fledglings on rock ledges and Pigeon Guillemots were off shore. At Duran we had a good look at a Common Murre in the channel. On the mud flats one Ruddy Turnstone, still in breeding plumage, was among the resting shorebirds, and a Brant was at the far side of the marsh. A total of 55 species was seen or heard. *Elizabeth Dickey*

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Birdfeeding Thoughts:

Seed & Suet Sale (October 6–24, 2004)

Stock up and get ready for fall and winter birdfeeding!

Anniversary Party

Saturday, October 9th

- Live birds from Native Bird Connections
- Takai, a gray wolf
- Wild Bryde Nature Jewelry
- Prizes and free gifts
- Membership Drive for MDAS

Sample our Shade Grown Coffee which benefits the birds. 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.)

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 foods are thistle and sunflower seeds.

Feeding Tips:

As fall gets into full swing, we should see activity increase at the feeders as there will be less natural food available. Many species will be eating more seeds, suet, or peanuts, and fewer insects. These include, among others, woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees and titmice. Something else that you can provide is Woodpecker Treat. It is the same size as other suet cakes and readily fits into your suet feeder. It is composed of pecans, peanuts, and sunflower seeds. In addition to being very attractive to woodpeckers, other birds that will love it include chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and jays.

Mike & Cecil Williams
Wild Birds Unlimited

692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
925-798-0303

Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

August Observations

By Steve Glover

Hot on the heels of Contra Costa's first confirmed nesting of Clark's Grebes (see the September *Quail*), at least 50 and possibly as many as 80 Clark's Grebes were present at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 8/27. Many were on nests and a few were still in the process of nest building! No Western Grebes were detected, a species that still hasn't been confirmed nesting in the county (SL).

Two American White Pelicans were at Clifton Court Forebay on 8/27 (SL).

The albino Black-crowned Night-Heron continued at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek through at least 8/24 (FS, HH).

Three Mute Swans at Clifton Court Forebay on 8/27 was an unwelcome sight, as these non-natives are known to be extremely aggressive with native nesters. A small but increasing population has been breeding in the marshes near Waterfront Road in Martinez for nearly a decade but this is apparently the first report for east county.

A female Wild Turkey with seven large chicks near the Nature Center in Tilden Park on 8/24 was further evidence of their triumphant colonization of Contra Costa's woodlands (BF).

A Black Oystercatcher at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline near Richmond on 8/7 was as deep into the bay/delta system as this species is known to occur (MB). A Red-necked Phalarope made a surprise appearance at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 8/15 (CS).

An adult Caspian Tern with a begging juvenile over Orinda on 8/15 might not seem too impressive except that they were detected giving their distinctive calls at midnight! Caspian Terns are known to commute long distances from nest sites to favored foraging area. In fact, birds in east county in summer are believed to nest at Brooks Island near Richmond (DW).

A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at an Orinda feeder 8/4–7 was a great yard bird but no longer much of a surprise as each summer now seems to bring 1–2 males to Central Contra Costa feeders (DC). Every such record has been an easily recognizable male but presumably a few of the more cryptic females are escaping detection.

Michelle Brodie, Don Couch, Brian Fitch, Hugh Harvey, Stephen Long, Fred Safier, Charlie Sellers, Denise Wight

CONSERVATION UPDATE Conservancy Formed

California's Governor is expected to sign legislation to establish a Sierra Nevada Conservancy, perhaps by the time you read this. The new Conservancy will cover the Sierra from its western foothills to the Owens Valley, north to the the Cascades and south to Kern County. It will coordinate state investment in the region's natural, historic and cultural resources, emphasizing resource protection, such as watershed restoration, forest thinning, and rangeland improvements.

Goals of the conservancy include reducing the risk of natural disaster; preserving the region's resources; and providing increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy will join the Coastal Conservancy, the Tahoe Conservancy, and the San Joaquin River Conservancy in promoting and funding California's privileged landscape.

2005 Entertainment Books



are here, as big as ever and now only \$20! And they can be used immediately!

A wonderful gift — and one that pays for itself in two or three purchases.

Save 50% on travel, restaurants, entertainment, retail and much more at the same time you support your chapter. One example is two-for-one admission to the Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek.

Pick up your great savings book at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill, or at MDAS monthly meetings.

Not only will your budget benefit from your purchase of this coupon book, but Mount Diablo Audubon will also profit.

The Falcon Effect

By Douglas Chickering

[On Sunday, August 8, Vern Laux spotted a bird at the Nature Conservancy's Katama Airport in Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, that has been identified as a Red-footed Falcon, the first sighting of this species in the Western Hemisphere. The falcon stayed until August 24. These birds breed in Eastern Europe and Russia, migrating to South Africa in the summer. East Coast birders have been understandably ecstatic.]

Katama on Martha's Vineyard is not the island's primary airport. It is, instead, a small overgrown field with a single mowed landing strip, a few modest, weathered buildings and a couple of small planes parked at the edge of the high grasses. Beyond the field is a line of low sand dunes, then a beach, then the endless expanse of the Atlantic ocean.

Modest and scruffy, the airport was the perfect landfall for a wind blown falcon desperate to finish his unintended journey from Africa. Here, sometime in early August or late July, the Red-footed Falcon found the grasshoppers, dragonflies and meadow voles to sustain it. And here it was found by a very good, very lucky, and very surprised birder.

For this interval the Red-footed Falcon perched at the center of our lives. Not more than fifty yards away, this small, gray falcon sat on a gray sign in the gray morning. With a demeanor that can be best described as regal, it alternated between carefully grooming and occasionally regarding the gathering of its acolytes along the dirt road with a mixture of haughty disinterest and vague curiosity. Beautiful and disdainful, he was in perfect harmony with the glitterati of Martha's Vineyard.

I suppose that all life birds are striking, but this one seemed particularly so. The bright yellow of the bill shone in stark contrast with its black tip and the gray head, as did the yellow orbital ring against the black around the eye. Also contrasting against the predominantly pale and dark gray were the red-orange legs and feet. These contrasts made all the more striking by the occluded gloom of the morning. The falcon also possessed more subtle elements of beauty. The red pantaloons that it occasionally exposed when it moved around on the



Photo courtesy Jonathan Klizas, Chatham, NJ

perch and the light salmon wash across very pale gray that stretched from the neck up unto part of the nape.

Due mostly to its status as the first of its kind to be seen visiting our continent this Red-footed Falcon had an effect that radiated from its small hunting grounds, out over the island and beyond. Lois Cooper and I don't always chase birds, not even good ones, and for some obscure reason it took a while for us to realize that this falcon was a bird not to be missed. So it wasn't until Tuesday, August 17, that we started out after it. We began in the darkness of pre dawn, and as the day arrived, it did so filled with clouds, drizzle and sometimes actual rain.

We drove through Boston and our spirits sagged a bit beneath the weather channel's betrayal—they predicted a delightful shiny day—but the effect of the falcon was upon us now and there was no consideration of turning back. We could see the falcon's effect where we caught the ferry at Falmouth. The parking lot attendant, spotting our scope, asked if we were going after "the bird." On the ferry we fell into conversation with a birder from Pennsylvania who had just driven through the night and like us was both excited about seeing the bird and a little fearful that it would be missed.

There was more evidence of the Falcon effect when we arrived at Oak Bluffs. At dockside were van-taxi's awaiting the ferry's arrival, as is usual. But what seemed unusual was that the majority of the cabbies stood by their vans calling to the arriving passengers; "Katama Airport here! Ride here for Katama Airport." The birders congregated around them while others looked on slightly perplexed. No doubt they wondered why people with no bags wanted to go from the ferry to the airport. Some of us

inquired about the price of the taxi, but these inquiries were short and not serious; we were going and when we found that the taxi's rates were reasonable we all piled in. On the trip over to the airport there was some chatting among strangers but not much. We were approaching our goal and were all lost in our own thoughts of success and anxiety over arriving at an empty field. Had we come too late? Had the dismal weather kept the falcon away?

We finally turned off Herring Creek Road and started to bounce down the dirt road that led by the airport building and down alongside the field itself. There were several birders at the edge of the road and immediately their collective body language looked promising. "I think that the bird is here," I told Lois. "How can you tell? Lois asked. "I don't know, but everything just looks up. Some people are looking out into the field and the others look happy."

The moment we got out of the van I picked out the faces of friends. Familiar and happy faces. Tom Wetmore, Steve Haydock and Tim Spahr laughed, waved, gave the thumbs up gesture and pointed out into the field. The falcon was here. In a matter of seconds I was peering through Tom's scope at the gray aristocratic looking falcon sitting on the sign. We spent the next hour or so studying the bird, commenting on the particulars of its field marks, appreciating its beauty, congratulating ourselves on our great good luck and basking in the warmth of being on a special bird in the company of people who shared our excitement. It was a memorable event. Tom and Steve and Tim will now have shared a special field moment with Lois and me and will always be a part of this unique experience. We got to see the falcon perched and preening. We got to see it fly and hover and drop to the hunt. We got to feel the warmth of a special moment shared with friends and like-minded strangers. The falcon's effect of course was that standing on the edge of that field these people were no longer really strangers. We had all shared this moment, seen the Falcon, had all had this moment to cherish forever.

Doug Chickering, brother of MDAS member Ethan Chickering, wrote about birding at Calaveras State Park in October 2003.

Birding Classes and Festivals

Raptors Workshop, Institute for Field Ornithology, American Birding Association. October 17-22, Cape May, New Jersey. This workshop will emphasize identification techniques for eagles, hawks, falcons, and vultures, while also covering some basics of raptor biology, migration, and behavior. Classroom sessions with slides will be mixed with extensive outdoor sessions. In addition, the presence of the Cape May Raptor Banding Project will afford the chance to examine certain species of hawks and owls in hand; and guest lectures are planned as well. Field trips to Forsythe (formerly Brigantine) National Wildlife Refuge and to the Delaware Bay shore for Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Black Vultures, waterfowl and shorebirds. Instructor Clay Sutton is a co-author of *Hawks in Flight: The Field Identification of North American Raptors* and of *How to Spot an Owl, How to Spot Hawks & Eagles*, and *How to Spot Butterflies*. ifo@aba.org

Southern California Birding Optics Field Days. October 22-24, Irvine, CA. This event allows birding and birding photography enthusiasts to field trial first hand, and at the same location, the wide range of birding optics available on the market today. All the major manufacturers of sporting optics will be on hand. The setting will be the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Orange County California. There will be digiscoping demonstrations, workshops and programs.

Contact: Sea and Sage Audubon Society, 12079 Samoline Avenue, Downey, CA 90242, 562-869-6718

Natural History of Sierra Foothill Birds. October 30. Jeff Davis, ecologist and writer, teaches about the relationships of birds and oaks at the McKenzie Table Mountain Preserve, Fresno County. Sierra Foothills Conservancy. www.sierrafoothill.org.

58th Annual Cape May Autumn Weekend, October 29–31, 2004, New Jersey Audubon Society. Registration deadline is October 15, 2004. Meet the Authors and Artists: Pete Dunne, Mark Garland, Charley Harper, Peter Matthiessen,



California Clapper Rail at Palo Alto Baylands

Three subspecies of **Clapper Rail** (*Rallus longirostis*) may be found in California. The California Clapper Rail (*R. l. obsoletus*) calls the wetlands bordering San Francisco Bay and the Carquinez Strait its home. They like the brackish inlets of Monterey and Morro Bays, as well. The habitat of the Light-footed Clapper Rail (*R. l. levipes*) is from Santa Barbara south to the Mexican border. And mostly around the Salton Sea and the freshwater and brackish wetlands of the Colorado River downstream from Needles is the Yuma Clapper Rail (*R. i. yumanensis*). These variants are indistinguishable in the field.

The birds require shallow water and mudflats with adjacent higher vegetation for cover during high water. They forage for crabs, mussels, clams, snails, insects, spiders, and worms. They may also take mice during high tides, and may scavenge dead fish.

Thane Maynard, Kevin Shelly, Dale Rosselet, Clay & Pat Sutton, and more. Find out everything you ever wanted to know about beginning and intermediate birding, identification, hawk watching, seabird watching, nature drawing, choosing binoculars and scopes, and more. Join veteran watchers as they conduct counts at prime locations to watch migratory passerines, raptors, and seabirds. Enjoy a 4-hour trip off Cape May in search of pelagic birds such as gannets, loons, scoters, and jaegers. Field trips to Cape May's birding hotspots. www.njaudubon.org/Centers/CMBO/FallWeekend.html

vegetation, but these are made in such a way that they will float should there be an extraordinary tide.

Clapper rails were listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1970. Since at least 1984, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service drafted a California Clapper Rail recovery plan, efforts are under way to restore habitat and reduce predation in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to work at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, other tidal wetlands are being restored in the Napa River area and Alviso. The East Bay Regional Park District is working at the Oro Loma Marsh in Hayward. The work currently being done to convert McNabney Marsh to a tidal wetland could provide California Clapper Rails with habitat to their choosing. With continued vigilance, maybe *Rallus longirostis obsoletus* may not become obsolete.

Eighth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium. November 18-21, Stockton, CA. The Central Valley Bird Club will offer 28 field trips as well as speakers, including Graham Chisholm, Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan, among others. Subjects will cover digiscoping, bird sketching, wildlife gardening, and bird identification. There will be multiple workshops, as well as more than 25 artists and vendors. There are programs designed for beginning birders as well as those for the serious birder. Contact: Central Valley Birding Symposium, 2351 E. Anita St, Stockton, CA 95205, 209-462-5490. www.cvbs.org

Since the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1918, people no longer dine on Clapper Rail, but red foxes do. Skunks, raccoons, and Norway rats make unwelcome neighbors, and the birds need to keep an eye open for patrolling raptors. Clapper rails build rudimentary nests that are merely piles of

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

____ Please enroll my family and me as a member of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for the year 2004-2005.

____ 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 for the year 2004-2005.

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

____ I'm enclosing an additional donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Card Number: _____

____ Visa ____ MasterCard ____ Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to:

MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:

Membership Chair, 400 Oneida Court, Danville, CA 94526

the Quail

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

Mount Diablo Audubon Society general meetings are on the first Thursday of every month except July and August in the Camellia Room of the Garden Center at Heather Farms, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Board of Directors meets at 7 PM on the second Thursday of every month in the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Boulevard, Pleasant Hill. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

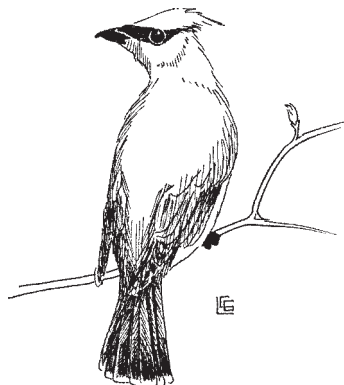
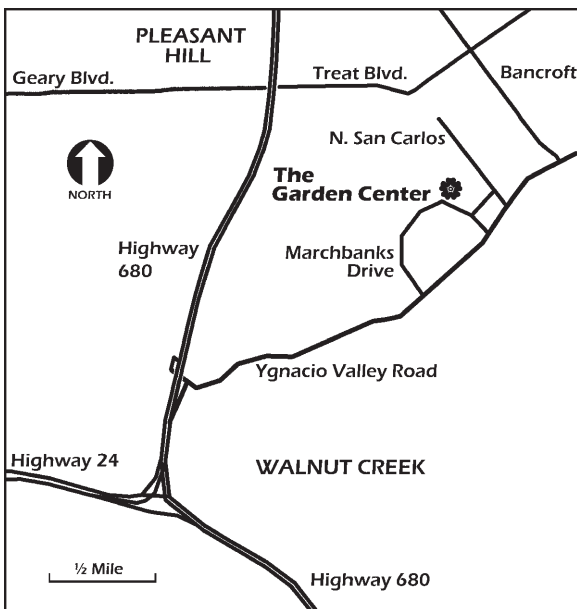
Questions about membership or mailing addresses? Call Ann McGregor, Membership Chair, at (925) 968-1677. MDAS membership includes 10 issues of the Quail. A 1-year family membership in MDAS is \$25/year or \$500 for lifetime membership (payable in two \$250 annual payments). National Audubon Society membership 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, 94526. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor, 215 Calle La Mesa, Moraga, CA 94556.

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Deadline for the November issue is October 12.



Driving directions: From Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road to signal at Marchbanks Drive. Go left and follow Marchbanks to the Garden Center opposite the Greenery Restaurant. Turn left into parking lot. From Highway 680 north, take Treat Blvd. to Bancroft. Go right to Ygnacio Valley Road, turn right and go one block past signal at N. San Carlos Dr. (Heather Farm entrance). At Marchbanks Drive turn right. The Garden Center is located on the right in the second block.

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Barn Owl on cliffs at Lava Beds National Monument

Quickies

Weekend birding in California

Lava Beds National Monument

Just south of the Oregon border is the hidden world of the Modoc, a place now called Lava Beds. It's a place of interest not only to geologists for its volcanic activity, or to historians for its native American heritage and petroglyphs, or to naturalists for its wildflowers; but also it is a place for birds. It is one of the stops on the Klamath Basin Birding Trail.

This land is volcanic in origin and the many lava tubes are worth exploring. Sagebrush and grassland provide shelter, food, and refuge for small animals who in turn are a source of food for predatory animals and birds of prey.

Raptors dwell in the park in unusually large numbers. Several factors make this environment favorable. Food is plentiful—squirrels, rats and mice, rattlesnakes, too. The cliffs at the northern

edge of the park provide the kinds of nesting that these birds require. Nests are inaccessible to nearly all predators and strategically located so the birds can scan the countryside and take quick notice of any activity. Chief among the raptors is the Bald Eagle that winters here in numbers greater than any place outside Alaska. Twenty-four species of hawks, falcons, owls, and other birds of prey can be seen in the park.

For some, the most spectacular aspect of the wildlife in the area surrounding the park is the semiannual migration of birdlife along the Pacific Flyway. Many waterfowl nest on the lakes of the Klamath Basin, and in late spring the waters are covered with thousands of ducklings, goslings, and the offspring of other waterfowl.

Despite the magnificence of the springtime numbers, however, the fall gathering is even more spectacular, for approximately 2 million ducks and 1 million geese stop here to rest and feed on their way south, some birds coming from as far away as Siberia. There are

times when the sky is literally darkened by the arrival of a very large flock of birds, an increasingly rare event in North America.

Two wildlife overlooks offer opportunities to view the southern end of Tule Lake. Tule Lake NWR adjoins the northern boundary of Lava Beds, and Lower Klamath and Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuges are not far away. Open vistas and habitats ranging from sagebrush grasslands to Ponderosa pine stands provide for some great birding opportunities!

Birds to look for include Golden Eagle, American Kestrel, Prairie Falcon, Barn Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Common Nighthawk, Calliope Hummingbird, Say's Phoebe, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Pinyon Jay, Violet-green Swallow, Oak and Juniper Titmice, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Rock, Bewick's and Canyon Wrens, Townsend's Solitaire, Loggerhead and Northern Shrikes, Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee, and Bullock's Oriole.