



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 51, Number 2

October 2005

Prairie Falcons and Conservation Planning

Dr. Douglas Bell

Dr. Douglas Bell, Wildlife Program Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District, will speak on "Using Prairie Falcons to Promote Habitat Conservation Planning" at our October 6 general meeting. Dr. Bell was raised in the East Bay where at an early age he became concerned for our loss of open space. He has recently taken the position of Wildlife Program Manager with EBRPD and is happy to be working for an organization that is dedicated to preserving and managing Bay Area habitats and wildlife while providing recreational opportunities for its citizens.

Dr. Bell has done field research and/or enjoyed natural history on all continents except Australia. He received his PhD in Zoology from UC Berkeley in 1992 where he studied hybridization between Western and Glaucous-winged Gulls and worked with the late Dr. Ned Johnson in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. He was a Postdoctoral Associate at the California Academy of Sciences from 1992-1998 where he worked with the late Luis Baptista on song evolution in White-crowned Sparrows. From 1999-2000 he was the Waterbird Biologist at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. From there, he went to California State University Sacramento where, as an Associate Professor of Biology, he taught Zoology, Wildlife Biology, Conservation Biology and Ornithology. Mentoring graduate students, he contributed to studies of Wood Duck breeding ecology, Swainson's Hawk foraging ecology, Prairie Falcon foraging ecology, Yellow-billed Magpie roosting behavior, and diseases of ducks of Socorro Island, Mexico.

Research interests for Douglas Bell include raptor ecology and population genetics, island avifauna and bird behavior. As a Research Associate of the Department of Birds and Mammals of the California Academy of Sciences and the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, he watched his first Peregrine eyrie in 1975. He has been following the Peregrine's recovery ever since.

Because of his long-time interest in Bay Area conservation issues and because of the diversity of his research experiences, we look forward to a fascinating evening with Douglas Bell. Please join us.

Birding Information

Denise Wight will talk about birding on the ocean. She will share some tips about birds and other animals you might encounter at sea, and how one might prepare for a "pelagic boat trip". Even if you don't plan to "ride the bounding waves", join us for this enlightening presentation. Denise has been a co-leader for Shearwater Journeys for the past 13 years, tallying over 70 boat trips off the California coast. She has also taken boat trips in the Caribbean, and out of Wollongong, Australia.



Prairie Falcon.

Photo courtesy of Stuart Healy

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, October 6**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek (see map on page 9).

6:30 PM Doors open

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

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

8:05 PM Program

* Please remember to bring a cup.

Welcome New Members

David Luczynski

Danville

Money for MDAS the Easy Way!

2006 Entertainment Books are here, as big as ever and now only \$25! And they can be used immediately!

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. These books pay for themselves in two or three purchases. They would be wonderful gifts for your friends.

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.



Don't forget that when you recycle your used HP and Lexmark printer cartridges by bringing them to the general meetings or dropping them off at Wild Birds Limited, MDAS will earn \$2.50 for each.

We will also accept cell phones, pagers & PDAs. Bring them in a sealed plastic bag. No refilled cartridges, please.

Q The scientific name for this bird is derived from Greek words meaning "red bill," but in fact its bill is orange. In breeding season both male and female birds develop a "nuptial tubercle."

Unscramble these letters, or turn to page 4 for the answer.

IHENCTCREAWMPAAIEILN

Field Trip Schedule

By Elizabeth Dickey

October

1 Saturday	Outer Point Reyes
5 Wednesday	Oakley
13 Thursday	Richmond Bay Trail
19 Wednesday	Arrowhead Marsh
22 Saturday	Abbott's Lagoon
27 Thursday	Vic Fazio Refuge

November

2 Wednesday	S. F. Bay Refuge
5 Saturday	Palo Alto
10 Thursday	Heather Farms
16 Wednesday	Mt. View Sanitary
19 Saturday	Limintour
30 Wednesday	Lake Merritt

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. Customary carpool expense is 37½ 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.

October Field Trips

Saturday, October 1. **Outer Point Reyes.**

Note: The destination for this trip was incorrectly shown in the September *Quail* as Bodega Bay.

Carpool leaves at 7 AM from the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at Drake's Bay parking lot at 9:00 AM. This is a trip in search of fall vagrants. Leader: Terry Colburn of Napa-Solano Audubon. Call Elizabeth Dickey for information 254-0486. Category 2.

Wednesday, October 5. **Oakley.** Carpool leaves from the southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot at 8 AM. Meet at end of Jordan Lane in Oakley at 8:30. From SR 4 eastbound, turn left onto Vintage Parkway in Oakley; go over the tracks and turn right onto Walnut Meadows Drive, drive about a mile and turn left onto Jordan Lane. Parking here is limited and carpools are encouraged. Paved trail follows boundary of Oakley water treatment plant with river marshes on the other side. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

Thursday, October 13. **Richmond Bay Trail.** Carpool leaves at 8 AM from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Road, just north of SR 24. Meet in the parking lot on Rydin Road in Richmond (El Cerrito) at 8:45 AM. From SR 24 west, take Orinda exit north and continue on San Pablo Dam Road to the very end and turn left onto San Pablo Avenue. Turn right at Central Avenue (about 4 miles); go over both freeways and turn right into

Rydin Road and park. This is also the entrance to an off-leash dog area. Paved trail passes area of fennel and marsh grass and reaches the bay edge. Waders, early ducks, and gulls. We have had Clapper Rail on two trips. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey 254-0486. Category 2.

Wednesday, October 19. **Arrowhead Marsh.** Carpool leaves at 8 AM from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Road just north of SR 24. Meet in the last parking lot at Arrowhead Marsh at 8:40. From Doolittle Drive north from Hagenberger, turn right on Swan Way. Turn left into Arrowhead Marsh and follow the road to the end. This is a high-tide day and rails are the target birds; Clapper Rails are common here. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 1.

Saturday, October 22, **Abbott's Lagoon.** Carpool leaves the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 7:30 AM. Meet at 9:00 AM at Point Reyes Seashore Headquarters on Bear Valley Road. This trip involves considerable walking through sand. Hawks, waders, ducks, and possibly Snowy Plovers. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906. Category 3.

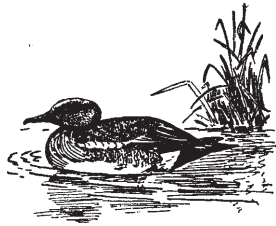
Thursday, October 27. **Vic Fazio Refuge.** Carpool leaves southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8 AM. Meet in parking lot at Refuge headquarters at 9 AM. From I-80 eastbound, exit at Mace Blvd. and turn right. At the stoplight, turn left onto Chiles Road. Headquarters are on the right just as you come into the grasslands. Hawks, waders and ducks. Some walking. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 1.

Through the Years with MDAS

Reprinted from *The Quail*, October 2002

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.



Baldpate
Mareca americana
Birds of Golden Gate Park
Joseph Mailliard
1930

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 Pinacles.

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



Harry and Betty Adamson Honored

This Spring, Ken Hofmann, respected wildlife benefactor, organized a tribute to Harry and Betty Adamson with a banquet to recognize their efforts in support of conservation of wetlands and wildlife. Harry is known as "The undisputed master painter of wildfowl on the wing." Harry is also the artist of our Quail logo. The Adamsons are Founding Members of Mount Diablo Audubon Society, and Harry served as the third president. Betty was editor of the *Quail*; and together they organized and led field trips. For more than half a century, the couple's contributions to wildlife and conservation have been immeasurable.

You would enjoy reading "From Marsh to Mountain: The Art of Harry Curieux Adamson," by Diane K. Inman, available in the Contra Costa County Library.

Proceeds from the gala festivities have enabled the construction of two wildfowl observation hides at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area near the Sutter Buttes. These units will be dedicated on October 8, and Mount Diablo Audubon Society members are invited. The hides are unique in their construction, perhaps the only such in the nation, and they will be a valuable adjunct to the refuge. They are sited and landscaped so that birds will not be aware of approaching visitors.

The dedication will be held at 11 AM, with a light lunch and refreshments following at noon. You must make reservations by October 3, by calling Beth Stagner at (925) 682-4830 or by e-mail to bstagner@khhtrust.com. It would be nice to have a sizable delegation from Mount Diablo Audubon to honor two very special people, Betty and Harry Adamson.



"Lone Pintail" is an example of the work of Harry Adamson. Other scenes can be found at www.harryadamson.com.

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.

Dead Trees Alive

By Don Yoder

There is a lot of life in dead trees, and their value is considerable. The bark alone shelters hosts of insects that can be a real food source for many hunters during all kinds of weather. When the tree finally falls due to decay it will further enrich the soil on which it lies.

Others share these thoughts and we quote from The Hole Story of the Oklahoma Bluebird Society. According to their writer "Over 550 species of birds, and 300 species of mammals and reptiles benefit from snags for food, nesting and shelter. Only 30 bird species are able to make their own nest holes in trees. Another 80 animal species depend on previously excavated and natural tree holes for their nests.

"Primary cavity nesters frequenting my yard include Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and Yellow-shafted Flickers. Some of these birds use my nestboxes, but the variety and abun-

dance is truly due to the many natural cavities in the trees—living and dead—in and around my yard."

Favorite food sources for Western Bluebirds are insects in good supply. When cold weather closes down the major insect supplies, birds are forced to either seek other food material or move to new areas. At such times seeds and berries become food staples and enable some birds to remain in their summertime territories throughout the winter. Nestboxes may provide winter shelter and often may be used as motels for a number of overnight guests, conserving and sharing body heat. The droppings that accumulate in these boxes can provide raw material from which we can learn what kinds of seeds the birds have eaten. Scraping the material from the roosts and planting it can reveal the favored plants from which they came and indicate birds' favorite food sources. Planting them can produce new crops of wintertime food favorites and enable the blues to remain in your area through the next winter.

mobile home parked at a campground at Doran Park.

- A huge flock of Surfbirds covering the sheltered side of one of the huge rocks in the ocean at the overlook.



My three favorite birds seen at Bodega Bay are Pelicans, Marbled Godwits and Brants.

Wildflowers are numerous and easily accessible. My favorite is the numerous, fragrant yellow bush lupine. I have a fondness for easily identified birds and flowers.

With enthusiasm, I recommend a trip to Beautiful Bodega Bay. Enjoy!



Chet Reynolds photo

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

With a wingspan about equal to that of a California Condor, American White Pelicans are majestic birds, whether seen in snow-white groups foraging on the water, or flying in V-formation with black wing tips accenting their elegance.

Unlike the Brown Pelican, American White Pelicans do not plunge dive for fish. They often cooperate by surrounding fish and herding them to shallow water, where they duck their bills beneath the surface in unison and scoop up the prey into their pouches. Their diet also may include crawfish and salamanders.

During the breeding season, adult American White Pelicans exhibit some unusual physical changes. Their bills and feet take on a bright orange, somewhat reddish tone. A crest of feathers appears on the back of the head, and a horn-like protuberance—the nuptial tubercle—grows on the top of the bill.

The largest breeding colony of American White Pelicans in North America is at Chase Lake National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota, which was set aside by Teddy Roosevelt in 1908 to protect this species. The refuge hosted more than 35,000 birds in 2000.

In May of 2004 a mysterious event happened. Within a week's time, two of the three breeding colonies disappeared, vanished. They left fledglings to starve, eggs unhatched. Scientists were bewildered. They could find no evidence of predators, disease or pollution to explain the mass exodus. They could not determine if lack of food was a factor. They just hoped the birds would return.

In May of this year, almost 18,000 birds did return to the wildlife refuge to breed. But the vast majority of the new chicks mysteriously died. The adults left early, ahead of migration schedule, leaving only about 100 young birds and fewer than 300 adults on the refuge. Many of the departing pelicans spread out into Manitoba. The mystery continues.

What a phenomenal avian specimen is the pelican; his distensible gular pouch more voluminous than his abdomen!

Concord Naval Weapons Station By Nancy Weninger

With city officials' enthusiastic support, the Department of Defense has included the Inland Area of the Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) on its list of bases recommended for closure. Later this year Congress will approve the final list of closures. If CNWS remains on the list, Concord hopes to become the local redevelopment agency which will oversee the planning and implementation of its reuse.

The 5,190-acre Inland Area lies within Concord's city limits, mostly south of Highway 4. It consists of scenic hillsides

WANTED:
Volunteers to help with this important challenge. **Concord residency a plus.** If you are interested in helping to shape the future of the CNWS, please call me at (925) 938-7987 or e-mail me at nweninger@aol.com.

and ridgelines, and a rich grassland community which supports a variety of wildlife, including California tiger salamander, tule elk and Golden Eagles. Mount Diablo Creek flows off the north

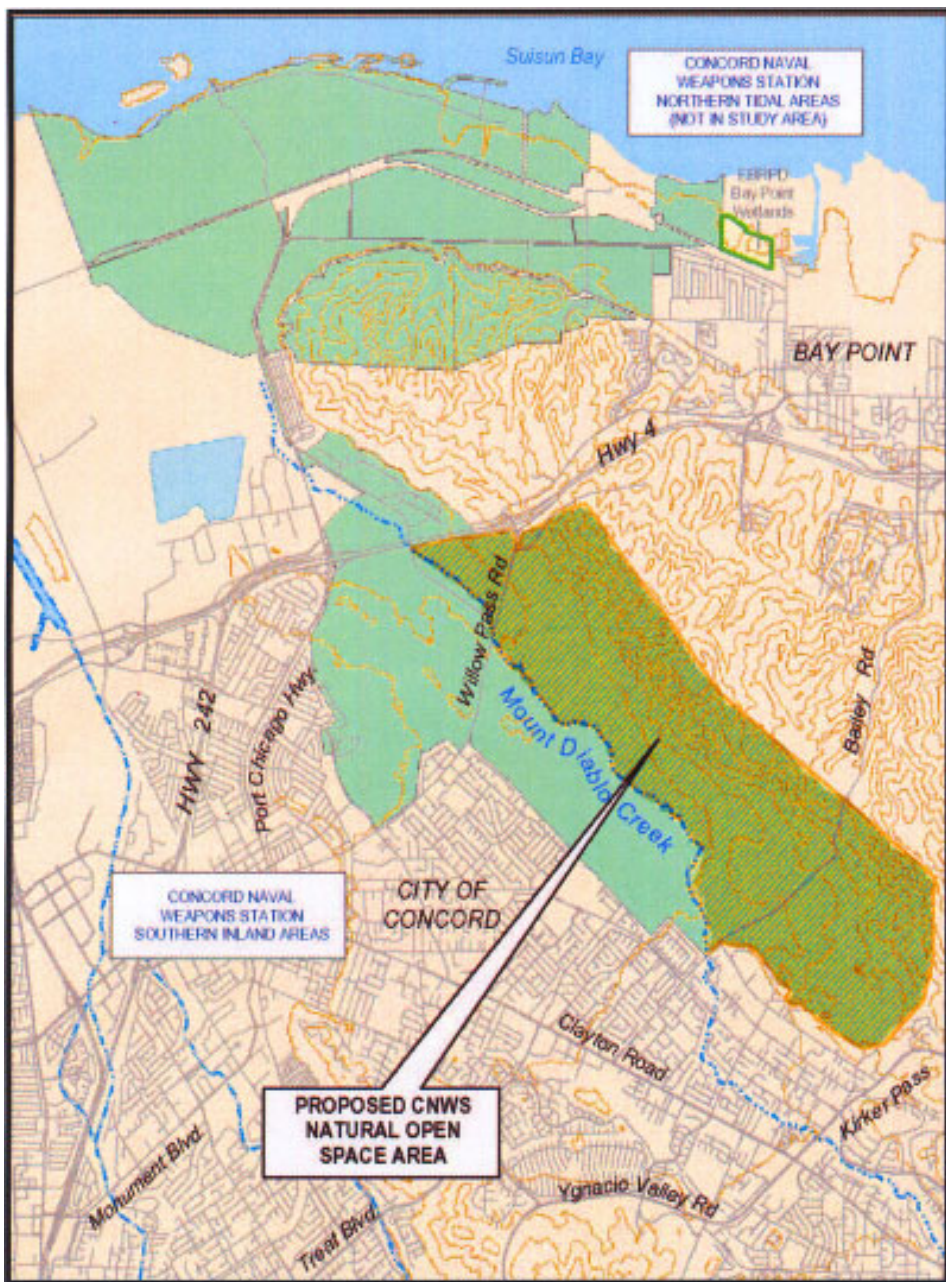
slopes of Mount Diablo before traveling through the Inland Area on its way to Suisun Bay. Historically the Inland Area was used by the Navy as a weapons storage and maintenance facility, but was mothballed in 1999 and no longer stores munitions.

City officials now see CNWS as a "significant opportunity for Concord's community and economic development." Their draft general plan calls for the Inland Area to be developed as a new mixed-use community, with up to 13,000 new housing units and 13,000 jobs. Mount Diablo Audubon is concerned that such intensive development be balanced with a concern for the protection of the natural values of the site.

Each December, CNWS is included in our Central County Christmas Bird Count. More than 188 species have been confirmed on the 12,800-acre CNWS, which also includes the separate and ecologically rich Tidal Area on the shoreline. Because of its critical habitat for such species as the Black Rail, our chapter nominated CNWS as an Important Bird Area. MDAS participated in reuse discussions in 1999 when Congressman George Miller facilitated a study of possible joint uses for the mothballed Inland Area. At public hearings, chapter members requested that the committee consider and protect the site's natural resource values.

The MDAS Board of Directors recently urged the Concord City Council to include in any reuse plan natural resource protection and preservation of open space for habitat. The Board has also requested that a representative of Mount Diablo Audubon be appointed to serve on the Citizens' Advisory Committee for the reuse plan.

The 5000-acre inland portion of the Concord Naval Weapons Station is the largest undeveloped federal property remaining in the Contra Costa County region. The eastern one-half of the site has significant open space and public park opportunities, including scenic hillsides and ridgelines, habitat for tiger salamander and Golden Eagle, freshwater wetlands and riparian corridors.

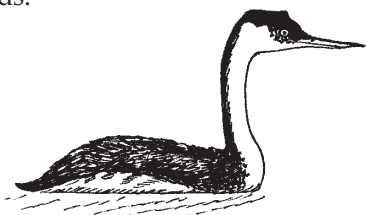


September Observations By Steve Glover

Forty American White Pelicans flew south over the Richmond/Albany waterfront on 8/16 (BF).

A young Great Egret was observed leaving the nest at the EBMUD headquarters at San Pablo Reservoir on 9/1, apparently marking the first occasion that young birds have been noted there through August (RH).

A tremendous tally of 12 Osprey was noted from Amtrak between Martinez and Richmond on 8/26 (KS). Three White-tailed Kites flew south over Vollmer Peak in Tilden Regional Park on 8/17 (BF). These could have been either early migrants or wide-ranging breeding birds.



A Lesser Yellowlegs at the Valle Vista portion of Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga on 9/5 was a nice find for the "hilly" portions of the county (DW). Red-necked Phalaropes are scarce and sporadic in the county so 10 north of Point Isabel near Richmond on 8/27 was noteworthy (BL). A single Wilson's

Phalarope, along with a Willet, were unusual finds at McNabney Marsh near Martinez on 8/15 (SG).

A juvenile Caspian Tern photographed at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, Stanislaus County on 7/15 had been banded on Brooks Island near Richmond on 6/28 (JG). The colony on Brooks Island generally contains several hundred pairs which disperse widely in search of food.

A Red-breasted Sapsucker along the West Ridge Trail in Redwood Regional Park, Alameda and Contra Costa, on 9/5 was on the early side for the East Bay (SS).

Single Olive-sided and Ash-throated Flycatchers at Vollmer Peak, Tilden Regional Park on 7/15 were likely early post-breeding wanderers (BF). A Willow Flycatcher was at Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga on 9/5 (DW).

A first year male Hermit Warbler at Vollmer Peak in Tilden Regional Park on 7/15 was an early migrant as they are unknown as breeders in the East Bay (BF). Four Hermits were there on 7/22 (BF).

Brian Fitch, Jim Gain, Steve Glover, Roger Hartwell, Bob Lewis, Kirk Swenson, Sylvia Sykora, Denise Wight

Ornithology Opportunities

Bird-banding Demonstration at San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, Coyote Creek Field Station, Alviso. October 1. Reservations must be made by 3 PM, Friday, September 30. www.sfbbo.org.

Golden Gate Audubon Pelagic Trip: Monterey Bay, Saturday, October 8. This Shearwater Journeys trip departs from Monterey Harbor at Fisherman's Wharf at 7 AM. Cost of trip is \$120. For details see www.goldengateaudubon.org or www.shearwaterjourneys.com, or call trip leader, Alan Hopkins, (415) 664.0983, ash@sfo.com.

New Jersey Audubon Society's 59th Annual Cape May Autumn Weekend. October 28-30. Cape May, New Jersey. Enjoy friendly field trips to Cape May's birding hotspots, boat trips, programs and workshops given by expert natural-

ists, live hawk and owl demonstrations. www.njaudubon.org.

The 2005-2006 Project FeederWatch Season begins November 12. Sign up now at www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/. This is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the highest numbers of each species they see at their feeders from November through early April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies Canada, and Canadian Nature Federation

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



Seed and Suet Sale

October 5-23, 2005

Stock up and get ready for fall and winter birdfeeding!

Please come and help us celebrate

Our 14th anniversary

on Saturday, October 8!

- Receive a FREE thistle feeder.
- See a Bald Eagle.
- See Takai, a gray wolf.
- Discounts on every transaction.
- Plants for attracting birds and butterflies to your garden.
- FREE prize drawings.

Optics Weekend

Saturday-Sunday, October 22-23

Sales Tax FREE

Eagle Optics will be here to present their entire line of birding optics. We will also have other high-end optics for you to compare: Leica, Zeiss, Swarovski, and Stokes.

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. Northern Flickers will soon begin to arrive for their fall and winter stay.

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.

Mike & Cecil Williams
Wild Birds Unlimited

692 Contra Costa Blvd.

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

925-798-0303

Visit us at www.wbupleasanthill.com

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

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

____ 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 one year.

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

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Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Card Number: _____

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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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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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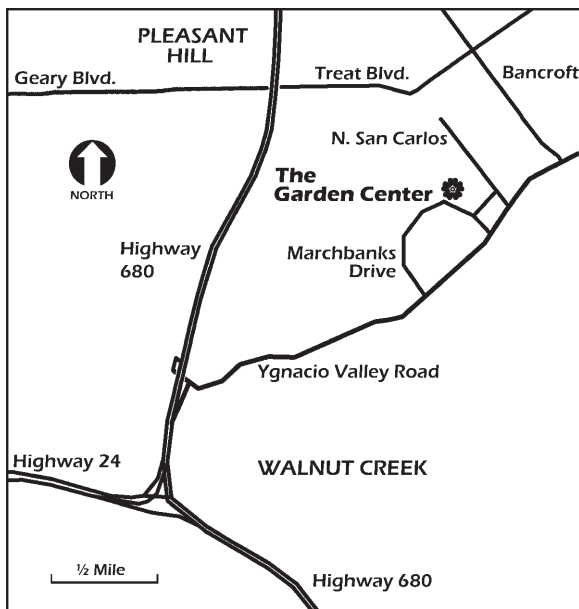
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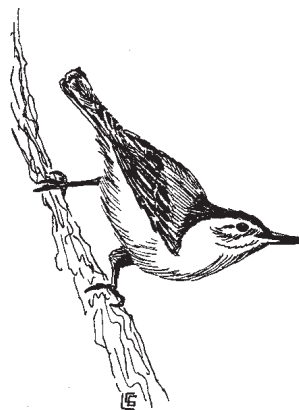
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215 Calle La Mesa
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ellis.myers@earthlink.net

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 south, 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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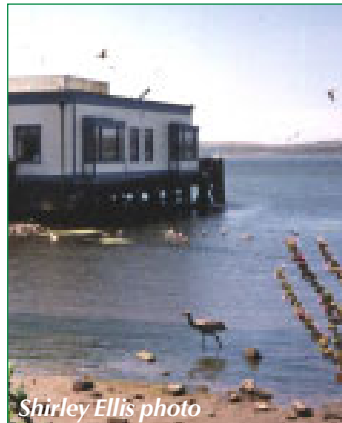
Weekend Birding in California

Reflections of Bodega Bay

By Shirley Ellis

When I am in need of an ocean fix along with always interesting and easy birding in a beautiful place, I take a trip to Bodega Bay. The journey from Walnut Creek takes about two hours, including a latte stop. En route I enjoy seeing the variety of birds along Highway 37 west of Vallejo. My thoughts turn to anticipation about the coming day, as I enjoy seeing the open countryside beyond Petaluma where sightings of Red-shouldered Hawks are numerous in the winter. While passing through Valley Ford, I reminisce about Christo's Running Fence, which crossed the road at this point. Seeing that was a unique and joyful experience.

Bodega Bay offers a variety of habitats, thus a variety of birds. Level places to walk are plentiful all around Bodega harbor. My favorite is walking on the



Shirley Ellis photo

Sandhill Crane at the Tides



Looking North from Bodega Head

curved, sandy beach at Doran Park. On the Westside Road, interesting walks include near the Rail pond, near the entrance to the Bodega Marine Lab, near Campbell Cove, and near the bluff overlooking the ocean at Bodega Head, where the view is spectacular and birding always interesting. Car birding is possible in many places.

As I reviewed my 137 check lists for Bodega Bay, I chose some unusual sightings to mention:

- A whale in the harbor.
- River otters near Campbell Cove.
- Emperor Goose, on two occasions.
- Sandhill Crane at the Tides Restaurant in June 1995.
- Albino Scoter, on two occasions.
- 200 harbor seals on the sand bar at the mouth of the Russian River above Jenner.
- One Merlin.
- Two fogbows (rainbows in the fog).
- A woman playing a harp outside her

Continued on page 4