



# the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

Volume 52, Number 2

October 2006

## The Birds and Natural History of South Africa

John C. Robinson, local author and professional ornithologist, will give a presentation about the birds and natural history of South Africa. In March 2006, John toured South Africa with a group that included our new president, Jimm Edgar. John is excited to be returning in late October of this year. Join us as he shares his visits to several botanical gardens, Kruger National Park and other Game Reserves, a penguin breeding colony in Cape Town, and Sterkfontein—a World Heritage paleoanthropological site where the origins of humankind are being explored in thought-provoking detail. As we tour with John, we will learn about the local cultures, politics, economy and history of South Africa. And, we will learn about the birds and other wildlife that are unique to South Africa, including the cisticolas, prinias, sunbirds, bustards, babblers, and sugarbirds.

John is an excellent birder, well known in Northern California and throughout North America. He recently retired from a 26-year career in wildlife management that included banding ducks for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, some 8 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service and 17 years with the U.S. Forest Service. He has worked in many states including Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Wisconsin, and California and has spent two summers in Vermilion, Alberta.

His time is now devoted to his passion, the study of birds. His website (www.OnMyMountain.com) reflects his years of work and his contributions toward the study of birds and bird watching. He is president of On My Mountain, Inc. a birding tour company spe-



*Yellow-billed Stork and Malachite Sunbird*

cializing in birding and natural history tours of South Africa and Argentina. He will share information about his other tours that include Costa Rica.

Join us for what will be a fascinating evening. Anyone who has birded with John knows of his excellence as a naturalist and his devotion to birding.

### Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, October 5**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek.

(See map on page 7).

- 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 Speaker: John C. Robinson

\* Please remember to bring a cup.

### Birding Information

The Board of Directors of Mount Diablo Audubon is initiating a program to honor private citizens who have enriched the natural environment of our community by their own quiet efforts. Gary Bogue joins Bob Wisecarver to



honor Elfi Koch and her secret garden, and Russ Fletcher who has provided her with Wood Duck boxes. Their efforts have served to increase the success of Wood Duck nesting in our suburban community and Elfi's carefully landscaped yard is providing natural homes for many other wild creatures. Join us to learn about Elfi and her unique secret garden.

## President's Corner

We had our first meeting of the New Year on Thursday, September 7. There was a very big crowd to hear our speaker, Gary Kramer, show slides and talk about "Wetland Flyways" from Barrow to Baja. His slides were breathtaking to say the least. It was a wonderful kickoff to the New Year.

I took a few moments during the birding information time to review with folks the outcome of a "planning day" the board had this summer. We met and spent just over half of a Saturday to discuss a number of things concerning the direction of our chapter. Perhaps the highlight was our discussion concerning our education programs. Cecil Williams, education chair, brought a copy of a book entitled *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv and published by Algonquin Books. I hope all of you will read this book. The book paints a picture of how today's youth are more and more separated from nature and how that fact contributes to many disturbing trends among young people including obesity, attention disorders, and even depression.

We formed a sub-committee to determine how we might engage young people this coming year and beyond. That committee has met a couple of times and we are going to try a pilot program in one school with four fourth-grade classes. We are going to put together a series of speakers led by Diana Granados of Native Bird Connections. Diana has spoken to our chapter and has about 20 captive raptors unable to be released in the wild because of injury. She takes them to classrooms, scout meetings, retirement homes, you name it. Kids particularly love to be up close to these magnificent animals. It brings Nature into the classroom. There is much more to this project, but I will report more later. This will cost us some money so we will have to see about grants from foundations and even approach local business as well as our members. This will be an exciting adventure as it unfolds.

Our planning day had a few other important conversations; among them was an attempt to bring into focus what we should prioritize in the way of con-

servation projects. Many of these are yet to be decided on. The other area we talked about as critical was the need for **additional volunteers**. I hope that if you are reading this and have not volunteered you would call Shirley Ellis who coordinates our volunteers. Her number is (925) 938-3703.

I look forward to seeing you at a meeting or field trip.

*Jimm Edgar, President*

## What You Can Do

✓ Help reduce the cost of printing and mailing the *Quail*. Each copy in your mailbox means about one dollar that Mount Diablo Audubon could otherwise assign to our conservation efforts such as helping make children aware of nature. Just send an e-mail to [annmcg@pacbell.net](mailto:annmcg@pacbell.net) and write "e-mail Quail." Also include your correct e-mail address, as some systems do not display it automatically. We will notify you by e-mail when each new issue has been posted to the MDAS web site. Read the issue on the Internet, or print it from your computer.

✓ Keep informed on policy issues that are important to the preservation of our environment, and vote.

✓ Sign up for eScrip. Register at [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com) using Mount Diablo Audubon Society Group Number 500003063. Then, when you shop normally at participating local merchants, they will donate as much as 4 percent of your purchase value to Mount Diablo Audubon. Call John Leggett at 685-1959 if you have questions.

✓ Call Shirley Ellis at (925) 938-3703 and volunteer to help with an activity that meets your interests, skills and schedule. In particular, there is a need for someone to oversee the display materials that are vital to our educational efforts.

✓ Keep informed on policy issues that are important to the preservation of our environment, and vote.

✓ Support other conservation groups, such as Save Mount Diablo, Lindsay Wildlife Museum, or Muir Heritage Trust. Donate old towels and linens to Native Bird Connections for their work with nonreleasable wild birds. Call Diana Granados, (925) 947-7044.

## Welcome New Members

Jonathan Becker	Walnut Creek
Cheryl Blare	Walnut Creek
Sarah DeJesus	Danville
Betty Razak	Walnut Creek
Latha Rajagopalan	Concord
Claire Redden	Walnut Creek
Roberta Stacy	Walnut Creek

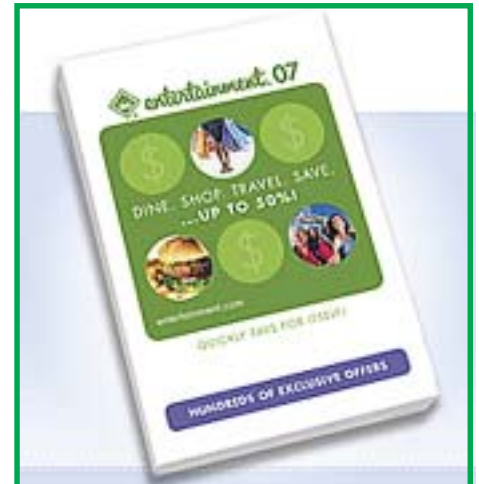


A bird that spends much of its time at sea, sometimes found with whales. They will pick parasites from the whale's back.

They will also forage by picking food from the water's surface or by straining plankton through their bills. In non-breeding plumage they don't live up to their name.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to page 6 for the answer to this bird's identity.

AADEEHLOPPRR



### 2007 Entertainment Books

Save almost twice the \$25 price of the book by using the Safeway and Long's Drugs coupons.

- Buy at MDAS general meetings.
- Pick up at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill.
- Order on line at [www.entertainment.com](http://www.entertainment.com) and enter the MDAS ID #: 175587.

## Trip Reports

### San Mateo Coast, July 29

Fourteen members and guests spent a pleasant day at the San Mateo Coast and saw 58 species of birds. The weather was ideal, with most people in shirtsleeves by 10 AM. We spent time at Pescadero Beach and Marsh, with a visit to Phipps Ranch, Cloverdale Road, and Gazos Creek Road. Highlights included both Yellowlegs, Whimbrel, Ruddy and Black Turnstones, Surfbird, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover in breeding plumage, and Semi-palmated Plover. Large flocks of Heermann's gulls were present and one Elegant Tern.

*Maury Stern*

**September 7, Jewel Lake.** Eight members and guests visited the Tilden Park Nature Area and Jewel Lake. The morning started with mild overcast quickly replaced with sun and warming temperatures. Highlights of the 31 species seen were: a flock of Wild Turkeys at the Little Farm; Great Blue Heron on the lawn of the picnic area; an adult Cooper's Hawk on the Pack Rat Trail; Western Wood-Pewee along the boardwalk; Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow Warbler and Wilson's Warbler in the willows around Jewel Lake; Western Tanager well heard on the Pat Rack Trail; and two different Swainson's Thrushes in the open allowing excellent looks at the diagnostic features.

*Maury Stern*

### Hayward Shoreline, September 13

Twelve eager birders arrived at 9 AM at Winton Ave. with clear skies, little wind, 60 degrees, and high hopes. We were not disappointed and recorded 64 species. Fred Safier correctly ID'd the best bird, a Red Phalarope. A Peregrine Falcon was spotted scaring up all the usual shorebirds including several Red Knots. A Common Tern was spotted among some Forster's Terns. We were glad to see the ducks are returning, albeit not in beautiful plumage. Both Yellowlegs species as well as Red-necked Phalaropes were at the Hayward Shoreline Interpretative Center.

*Bingham Gibbs, Judi Cooper, Lynn Lakso*



*Anna's Hummingbird  
along the trail*  
*By John McMillen*

## August Observations By Steve Glover

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to:  
*Steve Glover at countylines@sbcglobal.net or 925 997 1112.*

A single American White Pelican was at Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga on 7/29 (MT). This bird was previously noted there on 6/8 and 7/2 (MS). Two more pelicans were at McNabney Marsh on 8/7 (JE).

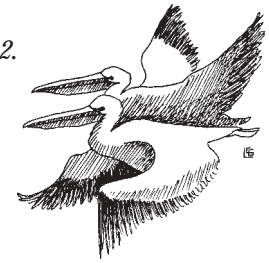
A Peregrine Falcon put in a brief appearance at McNabney Marsh on 8/7 (JE).

Three Red-necked Phalaropes were at McNabney Marsh on 7/31 (HH) and 8/7 (JE). A single phalarope was near Point Isabel, Richmond on 9/7 (BL); this species is found only sporadically in the county.

A single Black Skimmer was north of Point Isabel, Richmond on 8/13 (KD) and three were there on 8/19 (RS).

A single Common Murre was at Point Isabel, Richmond on 8/19 (RS); another was there on 9/3 (SS) and 9/7 (BL).

A single Willow Flycatcher made an unusual suburban appearance at Hap Magee Ranch Park, Danville/Alamo on 9/7 (PG).



At least 10 Hermit Warblers, both adults and juveniles, were at Vollmer Peak in Tilden Regional Park on 7/28, further fueling suspicion that they may breed in the area (BF). A Yellow-rumped Warbler at Martinez on 9/6 was on the early side (SG).

Two Brewer's Sparrows were along the shore north of Point Isabel on 9/7 (ES, BL). One was still there on 9/8 (JL). This species was recorded nearly annually in the 1990s when there was more intense coverage of the county.

As many as 20 Great-tailed Grackles were at McNabney Marsh on 8/7 (JE).

Kathy Durkin, Jimm Edgar, Brian Fitch, Sharyn Galloway, Phil Gordon, Hugh Harvey, Bob Lewis, John Luther, Rusty Scalf, Steve Scholl, Maury Stern, Emilie Strauss, Marilyn Trabert

## Eastshore State Park To Be Dedicated

On Wednesday, October 4, East Bay Regional Park District and the California Department of Parks and Recreation will formally dedicate the Eastshore State Park. This event culminates nearly 30 years of citizen efforts to reclaim and preserve the unique open space resources of the eastern shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

Eastshore State Park extends 8.5 miles along the shoreline from the Bay Bridge to Richmond. EBRPD used funds from the Park District's 1988 Measure AA and State Park bonds to acquire the property. More than 5,000 stakeholders participated in the lengthy planning process to determine the future uses and im-



provements to the park. EBRPD is the operator of the park.

Eastshore State Park is a remarkable achievement which provides for the conservation of unique natural resources, while providing outstanding recreational opportunities and protecting spectacular

*Continued on page 5*

# Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

## October

7 Saturday	Hawk Hill
11 Wednesday	Berkeley Shoreline
21 Saturday	Abbott's Lagoon
28 Saturday	Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area

## November

4 Saturday	Limantour
18 Saturday	Charleston Slough/South Bay
20 Monday	Mountain View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners and advanced birders. Weather or other contingencies may require changes. For updates, visit the MDAS website at [www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php](http://www.diabloaudubon.com/index/php). Customary carpool expense is \$3-5 for short trips, \$5-10 for longer trips, 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.

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

**Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride Lot**—Just south of Danville, exit I-680 at Sycamore Valley Road to the east; the Park and Ride lot is on the left.

**El Nido Ranch Road**—Take the Acalanes Road/Upper Happy Valley Road exit of SR 24, west of Lafayette. El Nido Ranch Road is parallel to and north of the freeway. Park just east of the intersection with Acalanes Road and on the north side of El Nido Ranch Road.

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

### ② Saturday, October 7 Hawk Hill

Leader: **Fred Safier**, 937-2906.

Carpool leaves El Nido Ranch Road at 8:00 AM. Meet in parking lot at upper Rodeo Lagoon at 9:15 AM. From Hwy 101 exit Alexander Ave. On west side of freeway turn right and go up the hill, at the intersection go right and down hill. Turn left at the stop sign and continue to the parking lot. We will bird the lagoons before going up to the hawk-watch site. At noon the staff gives a talk on their work and usually demonstrates the actual banding.

Carry lunch and liquids. The walk up the hill is only a few hundred yards, but it is steep.

### ① Wednesday, October 11 Berkeley-Richmond Shoreline

Leader: **Lynn Lakso**, 932-6367.

Carpool leaves at 8 AM. from El Nido Ranch Road. Meet at 8:30 AM. in the parking lot at the north end of the Emeryville Marina. Take SR 24 to I-880 west, turn north onto I-80. Take Powell Street exit, turn left on Powell, go out to Emeryville Marina, park in last lot near pier. May be cold and windy. Loons, grebes, bay ducks and shorebirds.

### ③ Saturday, October 21 Abbott's Lagoon

Leader: **Fred Safier**, 937-2906.

Carpool leaves from Sun Valley at 7:30 AM. Meet at 9:00 AM at the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Point Reyes National Seashore. From I-80 in Vallejo, follow SR 37 19.1 miles to Atherton Avenue, exit and turn left, cross US 101 to San Marin Drive and continue for 3 miles. Turn right on Novato Blvd, turn left on Point Reyes-Petaluma Road for 7 miles to the stop sign. Go straight on Platform Bridge Road to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Turn right to Olema. Turn right at stop sign and take SR 1 north for 0.25 miles, then turn left on Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Lots of walking in sand.

Last year's trip garnered 56 species, including Ferruginous Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker and Snowy Plover.

### ① Saturday, October 28

#### Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl of Solano and Yolo Counties

Leader: **Terry Colborn**, 530-758-0689.

The open agricultural lands of Solano and Yolo Counties provide perfect foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area are the winter home to thousands of waterfowl including ducks, geese, swans and many shorebirds. Join us for an all-day tour of some of the local "hot spots" in search of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Merlin and Prairie Falcon, Burrowing, Barn and Great-horned Owls, as well as Mountain Plovers. We also expect to see a representative sampling of the waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Vic Fazio Refuge. Participants can meet at 7:00 AM for carpooling from Sun Valley; or meet at 8:00 AM in Dixon in the southwest corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot located on East Dorset Drive at the Hwy. 113 exit off I-80. Bring a lunch and liquids.

Pacific Coast Bush-Tit  
*Psaltriparus minimus minimus*

Birds of Golden Gate Park  
Joseph Mailliard  
1930



## NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



### Seed & Suet Sale

October 4–29, 2006

Stock up and get ready for fall and winter birdfeeding!

On **Saturday, October 7** we are celebrating our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Please come and help us celebrate!

- Many FREE gifts.
- 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 10/21–Sunday 10/22

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.

#### Feeding Tips:

We are in a lull now in backyard birdfeeding. Orioles, grosbeaks, warblers, Allen's Hummingbirds, and others have migrated south or dispersed. White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and other sparrows have started to arrive. Their favorite foods are millet seeds and suet. Juncos are not far behind. Numbers of American and Lesser Goldfinches should begin to increase in October. Their favorite food is thistle seeds.

As fall gets into full swing, we'll 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. Something else that you can provide is Woodpecker Treat. The same size as other suet cakes, it readily fits into your suet feeder. It is composed of pecans, peanuts, and sunflower seeds. Chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, and jays will love it, too.

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

Visit us at [www.wbupleasanthill.com](http://www.wbupleasanthill.com)

## SEABIRDING *Continued from page 8*

rocking boat. At first I just sat down and watched my own little slice of ocean and sky, but gradually I learned how to hold on to the railing with one hand and look at birds through binoculars with the other. Everyone except me seemed to be able to “get on the bird” the moment a leader called it out. Looking at birds at sea takes patience and repeated practice, especially under rough conditions.

As we picked up speed and moved away from shore Sooty Shearwaters were the first “tubenose” we encountered. Thousands cruised by, providing many opportunities to study their flight style and all-black pattern. Next Pink-footed Shearwaters, one of the most common of the white-bellied shearwaters, were seen.

Leaders on pelagic trips often need to focus their efforts on trying to find the birds, but on my first trip, one co-leader named Rod noticed how lost I was and took me under his wing. Our boat flushed a huge flock of all dark storm-petrels, robin-sized seabirds that feed while pattering across the waves with their tiny webbed feet. This flock included a rarer Least Storm-Petrel. Rod repeatedly pointed it out to me, telling me to look below the horizon, and stressing to take note of the smaller size among the slightly larger Ashy Storm-Petrels. Later, when the Laysan Albatross flew in, he made sure I had the best spot at the railing. Because of him I saw these two incredible seabirds on my first pelagic trip. He was my role model when Debi asked me to co-lead two years later. By helping the



*Buller's Shearwater*

*Photo courtesy Mike Danzenbaker*

novice seabirder identify and locate the birds that are called out, I know I can be of service.

After 13 years and 73 boat trips being a co-leader, never getting seasick, regardless of how rough the water is, has made seabirding a joy for me while others are green and miserable. My boss once asked my why take these ocean boat trips to look at the same black-and-white birds that I have seen so many times before. I answered that there is always the chance I will see a black-and-white, or brown-and-gray, seabird that I have never seen before. But the real reason is because seabirding has its own magical charm. On September 9, this year, I got to see a flock of 45 Buller's Shearwaters. They were not following one another in a line, but wing-to-wing in a tight group. I had never seen that before. It was beautiful. I always return from a pelagic trip feeling I have experienced nature in an awesome and unique setting, coming in contact with birds that lead very different lives than the ones we see daily.

## Eastshore State Park *Cont'd from page 3*

views of San Francisco Bay. It includes more than 2,250 acres of uplands and tidelands along the waterfronts of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany and Richmond. The shoreline reflects the influences of both natural systems and human intervention, with natural features such as tidal marshes and beaches intermingled with man-made elements such as municipal landfills. The park parallels the most heavily traveled corridor in the East Bay, making it a highly visible, highly accessible area of parkland. Pedestrian and bicycle trails run almost the entire length of the park and provide a panoramic view of the Bay.

ESSP is a work-in-progress. The 72-acre Berkeley Meadow is the first portion to be opened. Adjacent to University Avenue west of I-80, it was operated by Berkeley as a landfill until the 1960s. In 2004 East Bay Regional Park District implemented habitat restoration on 17 acres of the Meadow, removing nonnative vegetation and recontouring the site with clean imported soil. Clusters of willows and coyote brush were retained and supplemented with native oaks, shrubs, grasses and herbs. The results have been dramatic: highly productive habitat for a surprisingly diverse variety of bird species. Next year, the Dis-

*Continued on page 6*

# Native Plants for Native Birds

By Pat Bacchetti

## Fall is the Time for Planting Natives

The plants were bought, the paths were in, and the mulch was delivered. I could hardly contain my enthusiasm, but my native plant consultant would not give the go for planting. It was October and it should be time to get those plants in the ground and watch them grow! But as she so patiently explained, the conditions had to be right for the best result: warm soil, cool weather, and moistened ground after the first couple of rains. The rains finally came, and the plants went in. Four years later, I can attest to the wisdom of her advice as I gaze out the window at my beautiful maturing native hillside and the birds that enjoy it. As we approach the optimal planting season for native plants, I will review the conditions necessary to give you the best results.

Our Mediterranean climate is unique—there are only five places in the world where the major rain falls in the winter and the summers are dry. That means that the plants adapted to such a climate shut down most of their growth during the hot summer months. Plant-

ing during the summer months means stress for the plant in a time that it should be resting, and a lot of water to keep it alive. Wet winter soils compact too easily and don't provide the plants with enough warmth to let the roots get a good start.

Fall is also the time that most Native Plant Societies and Botanical Gardens will have their annual sales. You can more easily buy healthy plants that are ready to spread their roots in your garden.

An understanding of your soil type is helpful, as well. Most of our soils in the Bay Area are clay-like, and are adequate for most natives without much preparation. The practice of using amendments prior to planting is not necessary with natives, as they are already adapted to our soil. If the soil has been heavily compacted, as is the case around new homes and construction sites, loosening it and adding organic matter is necessary.

So, you've chosen your site, bought your plants, and have patiently waited for the first rain. It's time to plant! Most rules about planting apply to natives, as well. Just don't add fertilizer or amended soil to the planting hole. Chemical fertilizers will encourage weed growth and vegetative growth over root development. They can also disrupt the native microorganisms in the soil that help the roots absorb nutrients and water. Mycorrhizal fungi

are beneficial organisms that colonize the root systems of plants to help them thrive. Most undisturbed soils contain them naturally, and some nurseries are adding them to their container plants. Another trick is to take some soil from a natural site near you and add it into the garden to inoculate the ground. Oak leaf litter also makes natural and healthy mulch. I collect bags of oak leaves in the fall and use them in my garden year-round.

Now, let the winter rains make your plants grow. And for the first two years, water will have to be provided during the dry months to keep the plants alive. There is much debate about drip versus spray-type irrigation. Whatever method you choose, don't overwater. An interval of every two weeks for a deep soaking in a normal year (whatever that means anymore), with hand-watering during hot times, is usually adequate.

An excellent presentation on planting natives is given in *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-dry Climates of the San Francisco Bay Area*; East Bay Municipal Water District, 2004, and *California Native Plants for the Garden*; Bornstein, et al., 2005.

Now you can watch the birds call your garden home year after year. In my garden of four years, I have added new yard birds in every season as they find my garden—a Warbling Vireo stopped by in the second week of September on its long trip south.

## Red Phalarope • *Phalaropus fulicarius*

In breeding plumage, the three species of swimming sandpipers—the phalaropes—are rather easy to distinguish by their contrasting color patterns. Not so in fall or winter when they are look-alikes. Red Phalaropes and Red-necked Phalaropes (formerly called Northern Phalarope) have dark ear patches, unlike Wilson's Phalarope. The Red Phalarope is the most pelagic of the three,

and the only one to be found around the world. It is seldom found on fresh water, although one bird visited Lafayette Reservoir last January. This photo was taken at Hayward Regional Shoreline during the MDAS field trip on September 13. Phalaropes are known for their



habit of whirling around and around in one spot to create a vortex of water from which they grasp the small prey. Red Phalaropes are less inclined to show this behavior than are the Red-necked Phalaropes, which congregate in vast flocks at Mono Lake.

## Eastshore State Park *Cont'd from page 5*

tract will begin Phase II on another 15 acres to further improve seasonal wetlands, coastal scrub and upland habitats.

ESSP provides excellent birding opportunities, from the Albany Mudflats in the north to the Emeryville Crescent. Future improvements to the park will restore ecosystems and habitat types and enhance accessibility with new trails and observation areas along the shoreline. These ongoing efforts will help to achieve the conversion of the former landfills into a world-class recreational, natural and scenic resource for all Californians.

The dedication ceremony will be at the Virginia Street entrance to the Berkeley Meadow at 11:30 AM, followed by a picnic lunch and interpretive walks through the restored meadow.

By Nancy Wenninger

## Look Before You Vote

The MDAS Board of Directors, at their meeting on September 14, voted to support the guidelines of the Audubon California State Board with reference to three propositions on the November ballot. The following is excerpted from those guidelines.

“Prop 84, the Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection Bond, is critical to renew funding for the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Coastal Conservancy, numerous regional conservancies, and other important restoration and acquisition programs. Without Prop 84, many of the State’s conservation dollars will dry up within the next one to two years, a risk we cannot afford to take.

“Prop 90 is an assault on environmental protection in California. Hidden behind language to stop abuses of eminent domain, Prop 90 includes several very dangerous provisions that would drastically cut back on the State’s, local governments’ and even voters’ ability to protect the environment, local communities, and farmland. Prop 90 aims to choke off governments’ ability to pass land-use regulations by requiring the government to make huge payments to landowners unless the regulations are to protect narrowly-defined public health or safety. Prop 90 would make it prohibitively expensive for public agencies to acquire property for wildlife, public works projects, new schools, fire protection measures, and utilities.”

Audubon California also endorses Proposition 87, “The CA Clean Energy Initiative.”

## MDAS Helps Coastal Cleanup



California Coastal Cleanup on September 16 at the Martinez Regional Shoreline attracted 342 volunteers who worked with East Bay Regional Parks Ranger Carol Alderdice to rid the shores and wildlife areas of trash.

Pictured above, Bob Rust, of Martinez, had worked through the week to remove tires from the mudflats to water’s edge, and helpers Valentina Benavides and Ayla Hayes, both of Antioch, were among those who brought the tires in and loaded them onto trucks for disposal.

For each of the last three years, Mount Diablo Audubon has picked up the tab for transporting the tires to a recycling facility. Recycled products include playground mulch and athletic track surfaces.

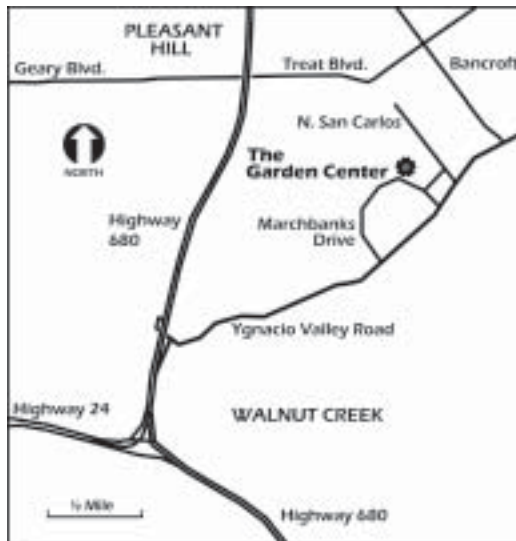


*Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August in the Camellia Room of the Garden Center at Heather Farms, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Everyone is invited.*

*Driving directions:*

*From Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road to the signal at Marchbanks Drive. Go left and follow Marchbanks to the Garden Center, opposite the Greenery Restaurant. Turn left into the 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.*



## Ornithological Opportunities

**Preserve Lamorinda Open Space** will present an art show to benefit open space and wildlife. Sunday, October 1, 9 AM – 5 PM, at St. Mary’s College, 1928 St. Mary’s Road, Moraga—outdoors next to the Hearst Gallery; for directions call (925) 878-9682. Admission is free. Support the arts, protect endangered species, and have fun, all in one day!

### the Quail

is published 10 times a year by the

#### **Mount Diablo Audubon Society**

• a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation and environmental education •

P.O. Box 53 • Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053  
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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. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Call for location.

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*Black-footed Albatross*  
Photo courtesy Mike Danzenbaker

# Quickies

## Weekend Birding in California

### Seabirding on Monterey Bay

*By Denise Wight*

We are incredibly fortunate to live on the edge of a continent, with a world of exciting ocean birds so close to home. Monterey Bay is a fantastic location from which to start a pelagic boat trip, (pelagic meaning relating to the open sea). The submerged Monterey Canyon, which bisects the bay, creates cold water upwelling that brings up nutrients which support a wide variety of sealife, including birds. Birding tour boats are over this area viewing birds not long after departure from Fisherman's Wharf, making Monterey Bay a world-wide destination for birders.

My first trip on Monterey Bay with Shearwater Journeys in October 1991 was amazing. Prior to the trip, I studied my birding field guide and one of the best books on seabirds of our area, Rich Stallcup's *Ocean Birds of the Nearshore*

*Pacific*. Like most birders beginning seabirding I dreamed of seeing albatross, and strange-looking species like Rhinoceros Auklet. I was also excited about adding new species of birds to my "life list".

Unfortunately, just studying the images and descriptions of the birds didn't prepare me for the actual experience. After we had boarded the small fishing boat and settled in at the bow, Debi Shearwater called us to the stern for our pre-trip instructions. In her no-nonsense voice, she gave us the necessary information and filled us in on just how one was to behave while on her trip. "Feet on the deck at all times; don't hog the bow; if you feel like you're going to get seasick, don't use the bath-



*Denise Wight chumming*

room; do it over the rail at the stern. Use the boat like a clock to point out the location of a bird, with the bow being twelve o'clock." While she was talking, I looked around to notice the boat was filled to capacity. I noted few women—mostly tall men.

We left the dock and slowly made our way through the harbor, around the breakwater densely covered with California Sea Lions and Brant's Cormorants, then proceeded to the kelp beds near Cannery Row. Here, when a Pigeon Guillemot was spotted on water at "nine o'clock", everyone rushed to the portside rail to get a look. I never saw the bird, because I could not see beyond the tall men tightly gathered along the rail. After that, I learned to aggressively butt my way between other participants in order to have a chance to see the desired bird. As we picked up speed and headed out to the open ocean I was overwhelmed by how difficult it was to watch birds through my binoculars while trying to keep my balance on a

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