



# the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php

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October 2009

## Harry Curieux Adamson, "Birds in Art", 1939–2009

Harry Adamson and his wife, Betty, were among the first 13 members of Mount Diablo Audubon Society and were instrumental in establishing our chapter back in 1951. Since that time Harry has become a master waterfowl and wildlife artist, recognized around the world for his expansive paintings of Pintails, Blue-wing Teals, Mallards and other waterfowl on the wing and landing in marshes and grasslands. His career spans 70 years and his artwork has been displayed around the world, principally as part of "Birds in Art" traveling exhibitions. His extensive support of conservation



efforts, through donations to organizations like Ducks Unlimited, California Waterfowl Association, and the World Wildlife fund has earned him many awards. It was due to Harry's dream of having bird-watching "hides" at the Gray Lodge Refuge in Northern California that supporters made them a reality in 2007. He has recently been inducted into the State of California Hall of Fame.

Diane K. Inman is the author of *From Marsh to Mountain*, the only definitive biography and retrospective on the artwork of Harry Curieux Adamson. She is also a former neighbor of Harry and Betty. She graduated from UC Berkeley in 1963 and taught for almost 30 years in the Acalanes High School

District—at Campolindo and Las Lomas. She is presently living at Incline Village, Nevada, with her husband Les. It is here that she wrote her second book, *The Fine Art of Angling: Ten Modern Masters*.

Diane will speak on Adamson's career and his connections with the Mount Diablo Chapter of the Audubon Society. Her talk will be accompanied by images of Harry's paintings representing a wide variety of bird species from all over the world.

« Harry and Betty Adamson unveil his 2008 California Duck Stamp painting



Harry's hide at Gray Lodge »

### Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, October 1**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Refreshments,\* door prize

8:05 PM Speaker: Diane Inman

\* Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, November 5:

Paul Bannick

### BIRDING INFORMATION

Brian Murphy works with Life Scouts as they complete their Leadership Service Project to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. The requirement is that Life Scouts plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, school or community. On October 1, several Eagle Scout candidates will share their environmental science projects providing habitat for Barn Owls and Bats. One of these young men, Philip Nelson, had the pleasure of finding that one of his housing units gained a tenant within days of being erected.

Philip Nelson photo



DEDICATED TO HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

# President's Corner Observations

By Jimm Edgar

By Maury Stern

This coming December a meeting will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark under the leadership of the United Nations to try to come up with a strategy to address climate change in our world. Copenhagen15 will have leaders and heads of state from most all countries in the world. It may be one of the most important and crucial decision making conferences in our lifetime. A movement all over the world is going to focus on October 24, 2009 to bring attention to the sense of urgency to this meeting in Copenhagen. Over 100 countries and over 1200 events are planned for that day. Here in the East Bay the event being organized by a Golden Gate Audubon member, Cindy Spring, will take place on Mount Diablo. The international event is being called Copenhagen350 with the focus on the number 350. This 350 number is the parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub> considered as the upper limit at which our planet can be sustained. The event on Mount Diablo will have 350 people form a "necklace" with colored fabric on the summit trail of the mountain. Aerial photos will be taken by one of our members, Scott Hein. There are a number of other groups participating in this event from throughout the East Bay. We are going to charter a bus for the event. The timing is from 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Saturday, October 24. If you would like to be a part of this significant event, call me at 510-658-2330. We will leave from Heather Farm Garden Center where our monthly meetings are held.

Our first fall meeting was a great time. Sales were brisk for our newly published *Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County*. I hope all of you will buy one. Details are in the *Quail*.

# Q

A child's toy was named for this genus. These birds often fly with a dihedral (V-shaped) pattern to their wings. Their range is restricted to California and parts of Oregon, Texas and Florida, with a scattering in Arizona. Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 6 to learn more.

ADEEEHIIKLTWW

The end of breeding season coincided with early migration to produce some interesting sightings for August and early September.

A **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's Hawk** family each nested on the hillside of the Pack Rat Trail at Tilden RP and each had a begging youngster into early September. JD, PR, MS

On 8/10 DW saw 21 **Swainson's Hawks** following a discing tractor in a field just north of Clifton Court Forebay in East County. There was also a **Lesser Yellow-legs** near Byron.

**Spotted Sandpipers** were at Heather Farm and Lafayette Reservoir 8/26, 8/29. HH, MS

43 **Long-billed Curlews** were seen in East Contra Costa County by DW on 8/10.

Two different juvenile **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** were in Lafayette and Moraga on 9/2. MS, BA

On 9/6 a **Pileated Woodpecker** was at the Jewel Lake area in Tilden RP.

**Willow Flycatchers** were at Tilden and Heather Farm 8/21 and 8/22. BF, HH

Many **Warbling** and Hutton's Vireos made up parts of small flocks of songbirds at local parks. JD, PR, MS

A **Winter Wren** was along the boardwalk at Tilden as well as an early **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** on 9/3. MS

End of the summer **Swainson's Thrushes** coincided with early returning **Hermit Thrushes** 9/3 and 9/4. MS, PR

## Welcome New Members

Lin Ashlock	Walnut Creek
Frank & Nancy Beck	San Rafael
Ping Hale	Moraga
Toril Jelter	Walnut Creek

DW saw a **Yellow Warbler** in East County 8/10, while others were seen at Heather Farm 8/22 and 8/26. HH

**Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, and Hermit Warblers** were seen in Tilden RP from 8/14 and beyond. JD, BF, HH

Six **Western Tanagers** were on the Seaview Trail at Tilden RP on 8/14 and 8/21. BF

Late **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were at Wildcat Canyon RP and Tilden in late August and early September. AK, MS

JB had 4 **Hooded Orioles** in her yard in Concord for two months preceding 8/23.

On 9/2 EM had a female **Bullock's Oriole** in his Moraga yard.

BA Blaine Anderson, JB Jane Barnes, PC Phil Capitolo, JD Judith Dunham, BF Brian Fitch, HH Hugh Harvey, AK Alan Krakauer, EM Ellis Myers, PR Phila Rogers, MS Maury Stern, DW Denise Wight. *Submit Contra Costa County sightings to Maury Stern at mbstern2@yahoo.com or (925) 284-5980 or send sightings to EBB Sightings.*

## Trip Reports

**Bodega Bay, August 15.** Fourteen birders enjoyed an unusually sunny and warm day at Bodega Bay, so warm that we ate lunch at Bodega Head and saw no fog all day. The list of highlight birds is very long and includes Osprey, Virginia Rail, Clark's Grebe, Marbled Murrelet, Wandering Tattler, and Black Oystercatcher. A particular highlight was the three Pacific Loons in alternate (summer) plumage well seen in the channel. 72 species was the final count.

Fred Safier

**Jewel Lake, Tilden Nature Center, September 3.** Ten birders had a very birdy morning at Tilden Regional Park

in pleasant, sunny weather. We saw multiple flocks of small birds along the Pack Rat Trail as well as around Jewel Lake. Highlights: begging Cooper's Hawk young with both parents, one of whom later got buzzed by a Sharp-shinned Hawk; Pacific-slope Flycatcher with one of the small flocks; one group with Hutton's and Warbling Vireos, Hermit, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, Wilson's Warblers, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees; Brown Creeper and Red-breasted Nuthatches at the North end of Jewel Lake; and a female Black-headed Grosbeak at the end of the walk. The birding was so good that a 2½ hour trip turned into 4 hours. *Maury Stern*

# Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

## October

- 3 Saturday..... San Francisco Presidio
- 8 Thursday ..... Berkeley Shoreline
- 10 Saturday..... Hawk Hill
- 17 Saturday..... Abbott's Lagoon

## November

- 7 Saturday..... Charleston Slough/South Bay
- 14 Saturday..... Davis Area/Vic Fazio
- 21 Saturday..... Limantour
- 23 Monday ..... Mt. View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh

## December

- 5-6 Saturday/Sunday ..... Sacramento Refuges
- 10 Thursday ..... Niles Area
- 15 Tuesday ..... Christmas Count/East Contra Costa
- 19 Saturday..... Christmas Count/Central Contra Costa

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).

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

Category ❶: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category ❷: Moderate, one mile or more, possibly rough terrain

Category ❸: 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**—Exit SR 24 at St. Stephens Drive east of Orinda. El Nido Ranch Road is parallel to and north of the freeway. Park just east of the intersection with St. Stephens Drive.

*In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.*

John Muir

## Come birding with us in October!

### ❷ Saturday, October 3

#### San Francisco Presidio/Tennessee Hollow

Leader: Ethan Chickering, 686-9231.

This is a new trip offered to us by the Presidio Trust, which will provide a naturalist. Carpool leaves at 9:00 AM from El Nido Ranch Road. Meet at 10:00 AM at the flagpole at the upper Main Post parking lot. The flagpole is across the street from the GGNRA Visitor Center, also known as the Presidio Officer's Club. Enter the Presidio through the Lombard gate, proceed along Lincoln Blvd. and turn left at either Graham or Montgomery Streets. The walk will be approximately 3 hours. For reservations, call the Presidio Trust at 415-561-4446. The walk is limited to between 20 and 25 people.

### ❶ Thursday, October 8

#### Berkeley-Richmond Shoreline

Leader: Bingham Gibbs, 838-9257.

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.

### ❷ Saturday, October 10

#### Hawk Hill

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906.

Carpool leaves El Nido Ranch Road at 8:00 AM. Meet in parking lot upper Rodeo Lagoon at 9:15 AM. From southbound Hwy. 101 take last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. On west side of freeway, turn left toward the Marin Headlands and go up the hill (Conzelman Road); at the intersection go right and down hill (McCullough Road). Turn left at the stop sign onto Bunker Road and continue to the parking lot on the right just before the bridge. 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.

### ❸ Saturday, October 17

#### Abbott's Lagoon

Leader: David Hutton, 938-4485.

Carpool leaves Sun Valley at 7:00 AM. Meet at 8:30 AM at 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.

# White-tailed Kite · *Elanus leucurus*



The earliest name for this bird was the White-tailed Kite, and it was given the systematic name *Elanus leucurus*. However, it was argued that it was a subspecies of a European and African species, *Elanus caeruleus*, at the time known as the Black-shouldered Kite, and the common name was changed.

About 1992 it was declared that the White-tailed Kite differed from the Old World species in size, shape, plumage and behavior, and that these differences were sufficient to warrant specific status. This argument was accepted by the American Ornithologists' Union, so the White-tailed Kite has its original name back. Meanwhile *E. caeruleus* has been renamed as the Black-winged Kite, and the name Black-shouldered Kite is now reserved for an Australian species, *Elanus axillaris*, which

had also been merged into *E. caeruleus* but is also now regarded as separate.

The White-tailed Kite became almost extinct in the 1930s and 1940s by shooting and egg-collecting, but they are now again common in California. They can be seen throughout Contra Costa County, in the Central Valley and southern coastal areas. One place where they are very common is at Coyote Hills Regional Park.

White-tailed Kites feed principally on rodents, and they are readily seen patrolling or hovering over grassland, hunting with a hovering maneuver like an American Kestrel. Their coloration is gull-like, but their shape and flight falcon-like, with a rounded tail. Mainly white underneath, they have black wingtips and shoulders. Outside the breeding season they roost communally in groups of up to 100.

Although some populations fluctuate regularly in size, it is unknown whether the White-tailed Kite is migratory, nomadic, or both. The word kite comes from the Old English word *cyta*. *Cyta* is derived from *skut* meaning to shoot or go swiftly, and refers to the way these birds swoop onto their prey. The name also refers to this bird's light buoyant flight. The child's toy made of wood and paper was named for these birds.

## Art by Dana Gardner

The original scratchboard drawings that the internationally recognized illustrator Dana Gardner prepared for the *Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County* are now offered for sale at prices ranging from \$40 to \$75, including sales tax. These have been signed and matted by the artist, and are ready for framing.

The Breeding Bird Atlas is also on sale, and can be purchased on our website at <http://diablaudubon.com/index.php>. The price is \$26.80, including shipping. The books will be available at MDAS meetings for \$22. They are also available at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill.



White-tailed Kite, \$65

All proceeds from these sales will benefit the conservation activities of Mount Diablo Audubon Society.

## NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



### Seed and Suet Sale September 29–October 18

☛ Stock up and get ready for fall and winter birdfeeding! Check out the STACKABLES – the newest way to combine seed and suet into one type of birdfood. And they are not messy, either!

### Birding Classes with Diana Granados The Bird Dialogues

☛ Join us in exploring topics ranging from bird biology to bird philosophy. Experience the wild through accumulated knowledge of Diana, who has worked with wildlife and wildlife issues since 1974. Bring your wonder, curiosity, experiences and questions. Live birds from Native Bird Connections will be present at each session.

☛ Diana operates Native Bird Connections, an organization that provides educational outreach to schools. She is a longtime member of Mt. Diablo Audubon Society and is on the MDAS Board.

☛ These classes are designed for advanced-beginner (knowing your backyard birds) to intermediate birders. Adults only, please.

☛ When: Four consecutive Wednesday nights starting October 14. 7–9 PM  
Where: Wild Birds Unlimited  
Cost: \$50. Pre-registration required.  
Call (925) 798-0303

### 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. Be sure and try our exclusive Bark Butter. It is composed of peanut butter and other highly nutritious ingredients. It can be applied to special feeders or just spread on a tree trunk! We have been using it in our yard and have found all the suet-eating birds like it often better than suet. Warblers, wrens, sparrow, kinglets and other birds are also readily attracted to it.



Mike and 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)

# Birders Work for Climate Action

*The following essay was written by William B. Monahan, Senior GIS Scientist with Audubon California.*

They traipse through forest, grass and wetland, through mud, rain and even snow. They carry binoculars and take careful notes of everything they see.

These are the folks—thousands of dedicated bird watchers—that for more than 100 years have been taking part in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, documenting fluctuations in bird populations the old-fashioned way: counting birds one by one, year after year.

Old fashioned as it is, this data has proven invaluable for researchers through several generations. Now, we at Audubon California have found a way to use the work of these volunteers to shed new light on climate change, one of the most challenging issues for bird conservation today.

For years, people have made substantial investments in conservation—billions and billions of dollars—with their fingers crossed that their work won't simply be erased by climate change in the coming decades. If we're going to ensure a future for birds and habitats, then we need to understand the changes that are coming.

Modern science provides a number of tools that enable us to create viable models of the potential future impacts of climate change on the environment. However, sophisticated GIS mapping and climate data are even more useful when we have historical information to both generate and test complex models.

Enter all those birders standing in the rain diligently counting Sandhill Cranes, Wilson's Warblers and hundreds of other bird species in California and across the United States.

The history of scientific discovery is generally one of newer technology and methods replacing old ones: the telescope replacing the naked eye, the transistor replacing the vacuum tube, *etc.*

But this new work in the area of climate change is different. Once we combine these two technologies—the decidedly low-tech counting of birds and the high-tech computer modeling and mapping—we make some surprising discoveries that wouldn't have been possible with either on their own.

Perhaps the most notable of these is the fact that while the consequences of

inaction are still great, we have a startling amount of power to lessen the impacts of global warming on our wildlife and natural landscapes. While climate change could cause significant range declines in up to a third of California's birds, these impacts can be greatly lessened for many species if we take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Take, for instance, the Yellow-billed Magpie, a highly social bird that lives only in California's Central Valley and Coast Ranges. This species could lose as much as 75 percent of its range under the worst emissions scenarios (a loss that in combination with other pressures such as habitat loss due to development would likely result in the bird's extinction). However, the magpie could lose as little as 9 percent of its range if we take extra strong measures to reduce greenhouse gasses in our atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the California Gnatcatcher, long a barometer for conservation in California, could lose as much as 56 percent of its range, or as little as 7 percent, depending on how well we address climate change.

These findings are quite different from the apocalyptic predictions that often prompt people to ask what possible difference can it make if they drive a hybrid car or use compact fluorescent light bulbs on their porch. What this is telling us is that, with regard to the future impacts of climate change on birds and other wildlife, the die is not cast. Research is increasingly showing us how we can beat climate change to the punch, and protect much of what makes California and the United States special.

Thankfully, California lawmakers have already put this state ahead of the rest of the country when it comes to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, and there will be a move in the coming year to provide even further support to help birds and wildlife adapt to changes in the climate that are already underway. The rest of the country is following closely behind with legislation on the national level.

There are two ways you can help in this effort: The first is by taking part this December in the Annual Christmas Bird Count, or in one of Audubon California's volunteer science projects year-round.

You can also let your representatives in Washington know that you support >>



*Yellow-billed Magpie, \$75*

Prints of Dana Gardner's art (Story, Page 4) are also offered as note cards printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Your choice from 53 drawings. Each card is \$2.75, or a boxed set of six cards and envelopes for \$13.75.

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## International Day of Climate Action

Mount Diablo Audubon Society will support the International Day of Climate Action by circling the Mary Bowerman Trail atop Mount Diablo on Saturday, October 24. 350 people from co-sponsors Close to Home: Exploring Nature in the East Bay; Save Mount Diablo; EarthTeam; and Sierra Club—Mount Diablo Group will join to form a "necklace" on the top of Mount Diablo. Each person will be a "bead" connected with colored fabric to form a 3600-foot necklace on the summit trail. Join us as a bead and be part of an international grassroots movement. Aerial pictures of our necklace will join those of over 1400 international events at the 350.org website.

For more information: [www.350.org](http://www.350.org). To register: [www.close-to-home.org/350ppm.htm](http://www.close-to-home.org/350ppm.htm). All participants must register and ride the bus which leaves from Heather Farm Garden parking lot at 1540 Marchbanks Road in Walnut Creek at 11:00 AM.

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>> the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (HR 2454, often called the Waxman-Markey bill), which represents this country's first real effort to reduce global greenhouse gases. The Audubon Action Center has resources to help you contact your lawmakers.

## Oyster Bay

» Continued from Page 8

surrounding shallows. Hawks soar over the hills. Shorebirds scurry over the mudflats at low tide, poking below the surface for lunch.

Currently, the only entrance to the park is at the end of Neptune Drive. Take Highway 880 to Marina Blvd. in San Leandro. Take Marina Blvd. west to Neptune Drive and turn right. The park entrance is at the end of this road. Parking spaces are available along the street.



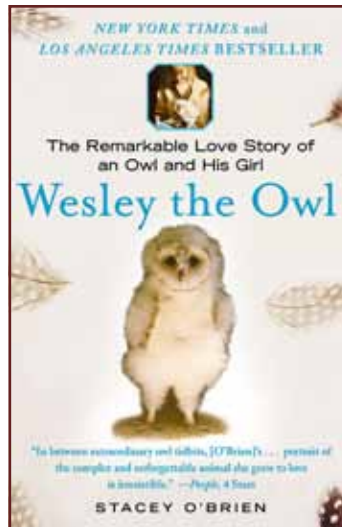
Pick up a trail guide at the kiosk and follow the paved interpretive path as it climbs alongside a salt marsh. On top of a hill the sculpture by Roger Berry called "Rising Wave" dominates. It consists of a series of 17 stainless steel tubes each at a different angle; the effect is of an undulating wave. As you walk around the piece, the tubes appear to cross. These crossed lines intersect with all the points on the horizon where the sun rises and sets throughout the year. Another of Roger Berry's astronomical sculptures is "Duplex Cone" at Arrowhead Marsh; on the summer solstice the sun follows the edge of a large cone embedded in the earth, while on the winter solstice the sun follows the edge of a smaller cone.

A section of the Bay Trail traces a semicircle along the Bay around the edge of the park. Future plans call for it to connect to trails at the San Leandro Marina to the south and to Oakland Airport and the Martin Luther King Junior Regional Shoreline (Arrowhead Marsh) to the north. This summer the City began construction on a pedestrian bridge over San Leandro Slough to complete the connection to the north.

Get acquainted with this peaceful bayside park. Listen to the birdsong and the lapping waters, watch the butterflies among the wildflowers, and appreciate the management by the East Bay Regional Park District that is recycling a garbage dump into an urban oasis.

*Ellis Myers and Nancy Wenninger*

## Two Books for Birders



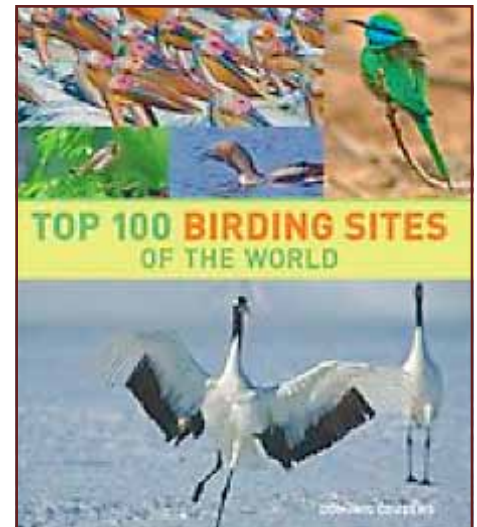
### Wesley the Owl

Stacey O'Brien

Despite a title that sounds like a story for children, *Wesley the Owl* is every bit an astonishing true adventure about an adult who adopted a Barn Owl. The facts that the adult was a young female biologist and that the owl couldn't be released to the wild were the initial factors which brought the two together at Caltech. In 224 pages and numerous photos, the reader witnesses the absolute bonding experience between human and owl from its beginning when Stacey receives the helpless four-day-old with eyes still closed. With the true spirit of her own scientific knowledge, she applies specialized skills to the nurturing and training of her owl.

From the very beginning of their odyssey, Stacey and Wesley represent important and irreplaceable forces in each other's lives; if you ever wondered whether or not animals can be sentient, then the numerous accounts of Wesley's activities recorded by Stacey should dispel your doubts. Her meticulous attention to technical detail in record keeping gives this chronicle credibility, yet her sense of humor is always present and made me laugh aloud numerous times while reading the book. The fact that Barn Owls eat only mice could have been subject enough for the frequent and sometimes hilarious escapades in which Stacey got caught up throughout her role as bread . . . er, mice-winner for Wesley.

This story is especially moving and compelling because Ms. O'Brien tells us first hand how she and Wesley interacted



### Top 100 Birding Sites of the World

Dominic Couzens

This book discusses sites that you might like one day to visit. Each site has its own mini-chapter describing the place, the habitats, the birds occurring there, and why it rates to be on the list.

California's only listing is Monterey Bay, which ranks #76 of the one hundred listed sites.

I'll bet the life-list of birds you have seen is up-to-date and impressive. But what about your life-list of birding sites you have visited? Are you keeping that list current too?

If world travel is beyond your bank account, you might want to use this book as a pattern for developing your own guide to best birding sites that are within your range of travel. This would supplement your bird-watching and would stimulate your nature study activities to include more than just birds. What about the vegetation and the geology? Don't overlook the historical background of the site.

Oh! Don't forget the 400 color photographs in the book. Good luck! And, good birding!

*Dan Cheatham*

on a day-to-day basis in a poignant relationship that endured for nineteen years. She shares wonderful moments of communication discovery along with her intimate understanding of Wesley's psychological needs. Her abilities to describe his sounds and actions—and to interpret and document their meanings are important accomplishments.

*Bev Walker*

# Ornithology Opportunities

**Sandhill Crane Festival**, Lodi, November 7–8. General admission to the Sandhill Crane Festival is free. There is no charge for most of the events, including the Reception, Art Show, workshops and presentations, and Exhibit Hall. Nature tours costs vary. For information, cost, and times, please visit [www.cranefestival.com](http://www.cranefestival.com). Photographer Paul Bannick, our MDAS November meeting speaker, will be the Festival's Featured Speaker on Saturday, and he will lead a Sunday field trip as part of a Bird Photography Workshop. Paul will work with a small group to improve bird photography skills. You must register for the field trip to participate in the classroom portion of the workshop. Limited to 15 participants.

The 13th Annual **Central Valley Birding Symposium** will be held November 19–22 in Stockton. Attend workshops with raptor expert Bill Clark, birding pros Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan, as well as other informative folks. Evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The Magic of Birding". There will be drawing and digiscoping workshops, the always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, programs for beginning birders, and more. The many field trips frequently turn up chasable goodies. The Birder's Market is full of artists and vendors with a wonderful selection of bird and nature related items. For more info, check the website at [www.cvbs.org](http://www.cvbs.org), or contact Frances Oliver at [hummer52@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hummer52@sbcglobal.net) or (209) 369-2010.

**San Diego Bird Festival, March 4–7.** San Diego Audubon Society's 14th Bird Festival will include some activities not to be found elsewhere. Among the 56 field trips and workshops are three trips into Baja California (passports required); an 8-hour pelagic trip to the Islas Coronados and a 6½-hour pelagic trip for whales as well as birds; two trips for birds of the Anza-Borrego Desert. Other special venues are Marine Corps Camp Pendleton, and behind-the-scenes tours at San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park and the avian collection at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Plan your trip now as reservations for activities fill quickly. A brochure and registration form can be ordered at 619-682-7200 or contact [sandiegoaudubon.org](http://sandiegoaudubon.org).

## Your Quail by E-mail

Did you know that you can receive your copy of the Quail several days sooner—and in color—by asking that it be sent by e-mail?

Just send a request to the *Quail* Editor at [ellis.myers@earthlink.net](mailto:ellis.myers@earthlink.net) with a copy to the Membership Chair at [beewalk@comcast.net](mailto:beewalk@comcast.net). This will assure that we have a valid e-mail address for you. You must also be sure that incoming mail from the Editor is not blocked by your spam filter.

Printing and mailing the *Quail* costs money that otherwise could be used by our "No Child Left Inside" program with local schools, for example.

## the Quail

is published by the

### Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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### The Garden Center

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



### MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

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## Oyster Bay

Once the Oakland Scavenger landfill, Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline is an open-space area of 194 acres dedicated as a park in 1980 but still being developed by the East Bay Regional Park District. It is located on San Francisco Bay between San Leandro's Marina Park and the Oakland Airport. Gentle hills provide panoramic views of the Bay and the San Francisco skyline. It is an excellent vantage point to watch planes coming over the Bay and landing at Oakland Airport. It is becoming more popular as a place to watch raptors soaring in search of prey, and for Burrowing Owls, shorebirds and other avian goodies.

The park's name reflects the early history of the site which was inhabited by the Saklan Indians. Their primary food staple was the native oyster, gathered from the shallow bay waters which still support a large community of shellfish. Later, as early explorers settled the area, shell remains were used to pave the first walkways and roads. In 1849 Cap-

tain Thomas Mulford came to San Leandro from San Francisco in a whaleboat and built a cookshack on the shoreline. Mulford subsequently made his fortune selling shellfish and produce to the markets in San Francisco. The San Leandro beds became the center of major oystering operations in California.

Beginning in the 1940s, the site was used as a sanitary landfill. The mixture of perishable garbage and solid waste (paper and wood products) has resulted in uneven settling and the production of methane gas, a natural by-product of decomposition. Initially a barren site, the land has been sculpted to create form and a clean earth cover has been placed to support trees and other landscaping. The methane gas is monitored, vented and gas piped

to a facility where it is burned to generate steam, used by nearby industries.

The park has a wildland feel. Part of the park has been developed into landscaped picnic areas, with benches and walkways, but most of the land is undeveloped and covered with native plants. Springtime is a propitious time to visit, when the wildflowers bloom and attract butterflies. Jackrabbits and ground squirrels scamper through the bushes. Waterfowl feed in the

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