



# the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

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

[www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php](http://www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php)

Volume 57, Number 2

October 2011

## Behind the Barbed Wire: The Concord Weapons Station

### ◆ John Keibel

In the late 1990s John Keibel, pursuing a lifelong interest in photography, and with a letter of introduction from Al McNabney, focused his camera on the plant and animal life at the 12,920-acre Concord Naval Weapons Station. The result was a photographic essay 'Environmental Treasure' and an intense interest in the history of the Naval Weapons Station.

Early in 2007 John approached the City of Concord with a proposal to write a history of Naval Weapons Station Concord. Working with the city, he photographically documented the Station's facilities, interviewed those whose lives were connected to the Station's history and researched Station archives. He published *Behind the Barbed Wire: History of Naval Weapons Station Concord* in May 2009.

Established as U. S. Naval Magazine Port Chicago in June 1942, Naval Weapons Station Concord (NWSC) was for many years the United States' "largest West Coast ammunition transshipment port". It was more. John will take you behind the Naval Weapons Station fence for incredible views of the wildlife and will share accounts of the

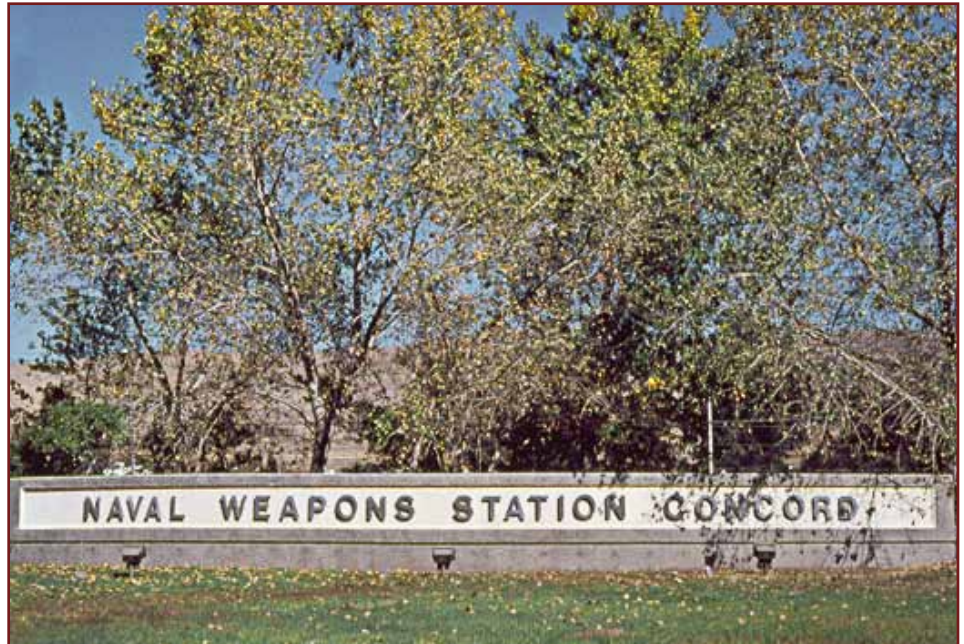


Photo by John Keibel

people who lived there prior to the Navy's presence as well as those who were stationed and employed at the station. The Station has been a significant part of life in Concord from its beginning in World War II, through the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War. It closed in 2005.

John was born in Southern California and has spent much of his adult life in Concord, his current residence. He teaches mathematics and works as a corporate historian. He is a councilman and teacher at Eternal Life Lutheran Church in Concord and a director for the Concord Historical Society.

### BIRDING INFORMATION

Just when you thought that there was nothing new to discover in your backyard, Brian Murphy has a new adventure for you. Brian will talk about recovering 'urban creek' Wood Duck populations in, of all places, downtown Walnut Creek.

Wood ducks are cavity-nesting birds using old trees with natural cavities. The absence of natural cavities is the only reason why our creeks are not filled with very shy Wood Ducks. Help from the California Waterfowl Association's Wood Duck Project has allowed Brian to become successful in managing Wood Duck nesting boxes. The challenge has been dealing with urban creek creatures that also use boxes for nesting. Squirrels are the main users of boxes, but bumblebees use them as well. Since both nest before Wood Ducks start to nest, keeping boxes available for Wood Duck nesting requires monitoring prior to the nesting season.

This year five boxes produced a total of 55 ducklings on Tice and San Ramon Creeks. It is really hard to believe that Wood Ducks breed in downtown Walnut Creek,

*Continued on Page 2 »*

### 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, Walnut Creek.

7:00 PM Birding Information

7:25 PM Announcements

7:40 PM Refreshments,\* raffle

8:05 PM Speaker: **John Keibel**

\* Please remember to bring a cup.

Thursday, November 3: Jack Barclay

# President's Corner

By Jimm Edgar

So we begin a new year with Mount Diablo Audubon Society. Our first fall meeting on September 1 was a great start. Member Nancy Wenninger, recently appointed EBRPD assistant manager/land division, gave us a wonderful look at the most recent acquisitions of the EBPRD. Because of measure WW and many matching grants that measure WW has made possible, the park district has acquired many new areas of land and now manages over 100,000 acres of land in the East Bay. Nancy showed us beautiful pictures of some of these recent acquisitions. We are very lucky to live within the boundaries of the East Bay Regional Parks. We also got a glimpse of the field trip schedule from Hugh Harvey, field trip chair. We have over 40 field trips on the schedule this year. Lots of great meetings ahead.

As you know, MDAS has been involved from the very beginning of the Concord Naval Weapons Station reuse plan. The Navy will turn over about 5000 acres to the city of Concord. This reuse plan has a lot of complexities and we have been involved in all of them. One of the items to be addressed has been the cleanup of what is left from 60 years of military weapons transfer. The Army is now in control of the tidal area of the Weapons Station and that area will remain in their control and it will remain an active military base. But cleanup will be ongoing. The Army from the outset formed a citizen's board to keep abreast of the cleanup process. It is the Restoration Advisory Board or RAB. I serve on that board as well as MDAS member, Kent Fickett. We meet every month. The board has about 10 citizens and about 10 Federal and State agency representatives: EPA, Fish and Game, etc. I must say I am impressed with the Government's efforts to preserve, protect and enhance the land, particularly the wetlands. Because the Weapons Station has been almost totally inaccessible for all these years it is a virtual sanctuary. We have been fortunate to have had access for our annual Christmas Bird Count and this has been an amazing area for birds. But back to the RAB. Our monthly meetings give all of us an update on what is currently happening as far as cleanup of radioactive waste, arsenic, pesticides, ground water; all are being looked at and determined what needs to be done. It is very impressive. We will stay involved and try and keep you up to date.



Lastly, a rare bird sighting for Contra Costa County. Member Paul Schorr and wife Nancy discovered a Northern Waterthrush the last week of August near their home in Antioch at Contra Loma Regional Park. They immediately got the sighting posted on the East Bay Birders hotline (which our chapter sponsors). Within a few hours others came to see the bird and Paul got a good photo (see above). This is only the fifth sighting of the species in Contra Costa County and all other sightings were from near Tilden Park, so East County makes the sighting even more unusual. Many people got out to see the Northern Waterthrush. Way to go Paul and Nancy.



Sketch:  
Megan Sandri



A symbol depicting this bird represented the sound of "m" in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. These birds are found on all continents except Antarctica, but are listed as endangered in much of Canada and in a dozen states from Montana to Maine.

Unscramble these letters, or turn to Page 6 to learn more.

ABLNRW

## Welcome New Members

Annie and Mike Eliot Pleasant Hill  
Bruce and Valerie Haak Walnut Creek  
Anne Mahler Concord

## Birding Information

» *Continued from Page 1*

but all that they need is a cavity to nest in and the Wood Duck box is a perfectly designed artificial cavity. The photo is Katy Cashion with a duckling at Creekside Drive and Main Street in Walnut Creek. Katy and Brian missed the hatching in three boxes where she lives on Tice Creek but they were happy to see ducklings in the box on San Ramon Creek.



Photo by Brian Murphy

The Wood Duck Program celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. The Program has been responsible for the hatching of 500,000 ducklings during that time. The Wood Duck Program has allowed Eagle Scouts to develop projects and build Wood Duck boxes. Their high quality woodwork has provided boxes that are very easy to manage and maintain. Brian may not admit it but his knowledge and encouragement have been invaluable to the Eagle Scout Wood Duck Projects.

**The Quail** is published monthly except January and August by Mount Diablo Audubon Society, P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. *The Quail* is printed on 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper. **The deadline for the November issue is October 11.**

# Tule Elk in Concord?

That's right! Beginning in 1977 the Naval Weapons Station was an elk preserve. But in February 2006 all the animals were moved to other preserves at Grizzly Island, San Luis National Wildlife Refuge in Merced County, and Cache Creek Natural Area. In 2000, the elk herd was composed of 19 mature bulls, 5 young bulls, 16 yearlings and cows, and 4 calves, for a total of 44 elk.



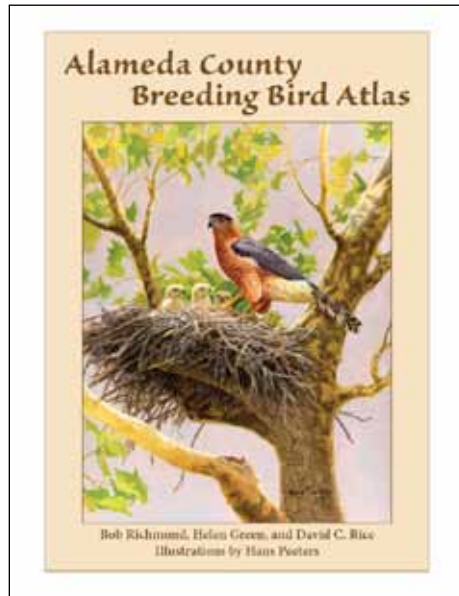
Tule Elk at Naval Weapons Station Concord  
John Keibel photo.

## Coming Soon: The Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas

At long last, the long-awaited Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas is ready for publication: 172 carefully written species accounts, 30 wonderful illustrations by Hans Peeters, and a detailed vegetation map of the county using the latest data available.

The book's authors are Bob Richmond, Helen Green and David C. Rice with maps by Rusty Scalf and book design by Ellis Myers. The project is sponsored jointly by Ohlone Audubon Society and Golden Gate Audubon Society. Over one hundred birders participated in gathering the data, including at least a dozen members of Mount Diablo Audubon.

All that's needed is a little more money, and you can help! Sponsor a bird! It's fun, the

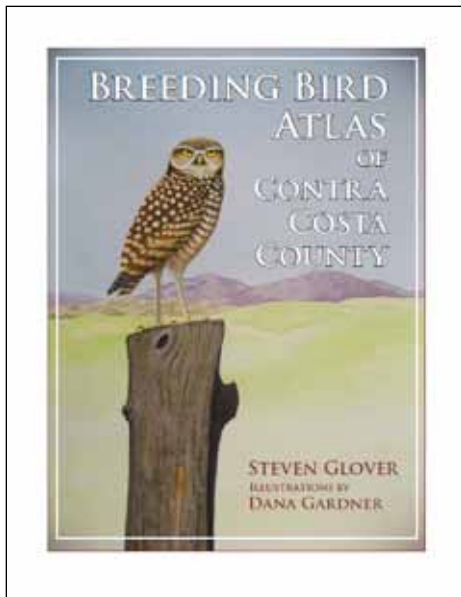


cost is only \$35, and it would help the publication process arrive at the end of its journey.

For a closer look at a sample species account and two examples of Peeters' art, go to [www.goldengateaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/ACBBA\\_sample.pdf](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/ACBBA_sample.pdf).

Contact Rusty Scalf at [rscalf@sonic.net](mailto:rscalf@sonic.net) to select and sponsor a species, then send your payment to Golden Gate Audubon at 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, California 94702.

This Atlas makes a great companion to our own *Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County*. You can buy this useful reference work for \$22 at our meetings, or order it from [www.diabloaudubon.com](http://www.diabloaudubon.com) for \$26.80 including tax, shipping and handling.



## NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED



### Supporting Our Troops

★ One of our fine staff at Wild Birds Unlimited, Lynn Turner, has a son in the Army, stationed in Iraq. Through his family's efforts to support him, we learned how we can support more of those young men and women who risk their lives daily to help protect our way of life. What they often need is just some assurance that we care about and remember them. What they often miss are some of the little things that make them feel more at home over there.

★ We contacted their leadership and discovered that there was one platoon that had not been receiving any organized form of support. We decided to adopt this platoon of about 37 soldiers. They are the 3rd platoon of the 82nd Airborne (see photo below).



★ Through our store, we will be making, collecting, and sending care packages of goodies and small necessities to help make their lives a little more pleasurable. The staff and owners have pledged our efforts to establish contact and let these troops know that people back home care about them.

★ In addition to the staff and owners' own support, we are accepting donations in our store. We have posted a list of some items that they can use on our website at [www.pleasanthill.wbu.com](http://www.pleasanthill.wbu.com), and will be adding to that list as we hear more from them. Monetary donations will also be accepted to help defray shipping costs and provide them with items that can only be purchased in military establishments. We are also accepting cards, letters, pictures, and any other personal items that may show them that we care and remember them back home. These may be dropped off at our store or mailed to us.



Mike and Anne Eliot  
Wild Birds Unlimited  
692 Contra Costa Blvd.

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, 925-798-0303  
Visit us at [www.wbupleasanthill.com](http://www.wbupleasanthill.com)

# Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

## October

- 1 Saturday..... Outer Point Reyes
- 8 Saturday..... Hawk Hill
- 19 Wednesday..... Berkeley–Emeryville Shoreline
- 29 Saturday..... Abbott’s Lagoon

## November

- 12 Saturday..... Charleston Slough/South Bay
- 15 Tuesday..... Mountain View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh
- 19 Saturday..... Limantour

## December

- 3–4 Saturday/Sunday..... Sacramento Refuges
- 8 Thursday..... Niles Area
- 17 Saturday..... Christmas Count/Central County
- 20 Tuesday..... Christmas Count/East County

### ② Saturday, October 1 Outer Point Reyes

Leader: David Hutton, 938–4485.

Carpool leaves southwest corner Sun Valley parking lot at 7:00 AM. Meet 8:30 AM at Bear Valley Visitor Center in Olema. 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 about 3 miles. Turn right on Novato Blvd for 6 miles to stop sign, then turn left on Point Reyes–Petaluma Road for 7 miles to another stop sign. Turn right across the bridge, go 3 miles to SR 1. Turn left into Point Reyes Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town towards Olema, then turn right onto Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. We are hoping for migrants and vagrants. Weather is unpredictable. Bring lunch and liquids.

### ② Saturday, October 8 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 US 101 take last Sausalito exit, Alexander Avenue, just before the Golden Gate Bridge. From San Francisco, pass the Vista Point and take the Alexander Avenue exit. 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, liquids and sunscreen. The walk up the hill is only a few hundred yards, but it is steep. As has happened in the past, our trip coincides with Fleet Week, but we should not be bothered by that.

### ① Wednesday, October 19 Berkeley–Emeryville Shoreline

Leader: Kent Fickett, 254–5156.

Carpool leaves at 7:30 AM from El Nido Ranch Road. Meet at 8:00 AM in the south parking lot next to Shore Bird Park at the Berkeley Marina. Take SR 24 to I-580 west, turn north onto I-80. Take Powell Street exit, turn left on Powell, go under Freeway and turn right on West Frontage Road, continue north along SF Bay about 2.2 miles to University Avenue, turn left (west) and drive to the end of University to where it intersects Seawall Dr, turn left (south) and enter Shore Bird Park parking area. We will bird Shore Bird Park/Cesar Chavez area, the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza Area and then Aquatic Park where we will have lunch. May be cold and windy, dress in layers. Loons, grebes, bay ducks and shorebirds.



Point Reyes National Seashore.  
NPS photo.

### ③ Saturday, October 29 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. for 6 miles to stop sign, then turn left on Point Reyes–Petaluma Road for 7 miles to another stop sign. Turn right across the bridge, go 3 miles to SR 1. Turn left into Point Reyes Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town towards Olema, then turn right onto Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Lots of walking in sand.

## Trip Reports

**Bodega Bay, August 20.** A small but enthusiastic group of 8 birders came for the yearly outing to Bodega Bay and found 54 species, somewhat fewer than we sometimes tally. This included several Brant across from the Rail Pond, which lived up to its name this year—everybody had good views of a Virginia Rail that responded excitingly to a brief iPod recording. Also well seen were Osprey, Black Oystercatcher and hundreds of Red-necked Phalaropes from the Head. There were Common Loons and Ruddy Turnstones, the latter still in (slightly scruffy) breeding plumage. And at the very end, as we were watching a large flock of shorebirds, they rose in the air, and we, following Jean Richmond's instructions, looked up—and a Peregrine Falcon came by at high speed, just over our heads.

*Fred Safier*

**Jewel Lake, September 1.** Six members and guests walked the Wildcat Canyon Trail to Jewel Lake and then the upper Pack Rat Trail at the Tilden RP Nature Center area. The day started with overcast skies, but in an hour it was clear and fair with pleasant temperatures. The birding was slow but we did find several songbird flocks made up of chickadees, titmice, wrens, and warblers. Highlight birds included: Western Tanager, Yellow Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, and Hairy Woodpecker.

*Maury Stern*

## Observations

*By Maury Stern*

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to [mbstern2@yahoo.com](mailto:mbstern2@yahoo.com) or (925) 284-5980 or send to [EBB Sightings@yahoogroups.com](mailto:EBB Sightings@yahoogroups.com).

The highlight of the current period is the Northern Waterthrush discovered by P&NS at Contra Loma RP on 8/30, then seen by many. JH, BD, GC, JS, CL, HH.

The period just past marked the end of the local breeding season and the start of the fall migration with birds coming for the winter and passing through for southern climes.

As recently as 8/17, HH saw baby Pied-billed Grebes at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek.

There were up to 165 Swainson's Hawks in the East County—Alameda County areas near Byron. They especially like newly



plowed fields with many exposed items to feed on. AM, JR, MP, HN, PB, DW.

Three Golden Eagles were over Hwy. 680 and Rudgear Road in Walnut Creek on 8/22. ST.

There was a Willet at the Lafayette Reservoir 9/3. M&SS. This was a very rare visitor to the reservoir.

BF saw an Olive-sided Flycatcher at Wildcat View Camp on 8/8.

Two Willow Flycatchers were in Briones RP on 8/31. LL.

D&VH had a Brown Creeper for a new yard bird in Walnut Creek on 9/3.

A number of Hermit Warblers migrated through starting on 8/9. DW; BF on 8/12 and 8/17 and 9/3 by WH. They were all in parts of Tilden RP.

On 8/9 DW saw a MacGillivray's Warbler at Inspiration Point, Tilden RP and on 8/31 PC saw one in the Tilden Botanical Garden.

HH had 3 baby Brown-headed Cowbirds being raised by his resident Dark-eyed Juncos on 8/9.

IW had a pair of probable breeding Western Tanagers in her back yard near El Sobrante. 8/9. There were 4 migrant tanagers at Point Pinole on 8/30. AF.

Late-to-leave Hooded Orioles were seen until 8/26 by GW in her yard in Crockett, and P&NS had them in their yard in Antioch until 8/27. D&VH were visited by one on 9/3 for 2 days.

BH had a Black-headed Grosbeak in his Concord yard on 8/27; GW until 8/26; W&KT had 2 Black-headed Grosbeaks at their Martinez home on 9/1.

PB Peter Boffey, GC Gloria Cannon, PC Phil Capitolo, BD Bob Dunn, AF Anthony Fisher, BF Brian Fitch, HH Hugh Harvey, BH Bob Hislop, JH Jeff Hoppes, WH Wen Hzu, D&VH David and Valerie Hutton, LL Laura Look, CL Calvin Lou, AM Amy McDonald, HN Harold Newman, MP Michael Park, JR Jim Ross, P&NS Paul and Nancy Schorr, M&SS Maury and Susan Stern, JS Joel Summerhill, W&KT Will and Kate Taylor, ST Susan Teefy, DW David Weber, IW Idell Weydemeyer, GW Gina Wheat, DW Denise Wight.

## Come birding with us. You are welcome!

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

Our Mount Diablo Audubon Chapter is a conservation organization. As such, we encourage members to consider meeting at the carpool point to pick up or ride with others. It is important that given the cost of gasoline, those who ride with others offer to pay some of this cost. Don't forget about any bridge tolls or park entry fees on some of our longer trips.

## Choose the Quail Online **Brushy Peak**

» Continued from Page 8

Join other Mount Diablo Audubon members who are downloading our newsletter from our website or are receiving it by e-mail rather than waiting a few extra days for it to come in the mail. You will help save paper and reduce our expenses for printing and mailing.

Best of all, the photographs in the online version of the Quail are in color. As each issue is published, we will send you an e-mail notice that the issue has been posted. Or we will attach a PDF file of the Quail to the e-mail if you prefer; just let us know which way works best for you. To choose the Quail online, simply e-mail the editor at [ellis.myers@earthlink.net](mailto:ellis.myers@earthlink.net).

Harry Adamson, one of the founders of Mount Diablo Audubon Society, is now at ManorCare Health Services, 1226 Rossmoor Parkway, Walnut Creek 94595. Your messages of cheer would be appreciated.



### **a** Barn Owl ♦ *Tyto alba*

The exceptionally keen eyesight and hearing of the Barn Owl makes it a very effective hunter. It can see during the day, but its relatively small eyes (for an owl) are better adapted for night vision. You will seldom see one before twilight, as it forages for the creatures that are active at night.

The ears are asymmetrical; one is level with the nostril and the other is higher, nearer the forehead. They are covered with feathered flaps that close for loud noises and open for soft sounds. The Barn Owl's hearing is so sharp that it can easily hunt for voles and shrews, which are often concealed from view as they travel in runways beneath the grass. Barn Owls can capture prey in total darkness.

Both parents feed their young during a 3-month nesting period; during this time they may capture as many as a thousand rodents including gophers and ground squirrels.

Barn Owls do not hoot. Although they make a wide variety of sounds—hisses, shrieks, bill clacking—they're more known for their silence. The edges of their flight

The portion of Brushy Peak Preserve operated by the East Bay Regional Park District is located on the south slope of the peak and is open daily. Access is from a staging area at the end of Laughlin Road. From there, several loop trails lead out and back. The Brushy Peak Loop Trail is new, and it gives park visitors a nice challenging route, climbing up to an elevation of

1400 feet, close to the Brushy Peak summit. From the peak you can look out across the Central Valley toward the Sierra Nevada. The site has a number of sensitive features—the rocks have a soft surface and are easily impacted by people climbing on them; lichens are easily dislodged and grow back very slowly; birds that nest on the ground and on the rocks can be disturbed by people in the area during nesting season. To protect this special place



*Brushy Peak Regional Preserve. Scott Hein photo.*

so that all can continue to experience its full beauty, the special protection area surrounding the 1702-foot summit is managed by Livermore Parks and Recreation and is open by guided tour only.

This area is very hot and dry in the summer; be sure to bring water, as none is available on the preserve. However, winter and spring promise interesting birding and a challenging and scenic hike.



*This beautiful Barn Owl is under the care of Native Bird Connections*

feathers are fringed (fimbriate), and the feathers are remarkably soft. In flight, air rushes over the surface of a bird's wing, creating turbulence, which makes a gushing noise. The comb-like feather edge of the Barn Owl breaks down the turbulence into little groups called micro-turbulences. This effectively muffles the sound and allows the Owl to fly silently. Silent flight gives these owls the ability to capture prey by stealth, and also allows the Owl to use its hearing to locate potential prey.

While perched, the barn owl has a habit of lowering its head and swaying from side to side. The bird sleeps so soundly during the day that it is difficult to wake it up until darkness arrives.

The rasping, food-begging call of the young can be heard almost continuously from soon after sunset until just before sunrise.

A number of organizations offer live Barn Owl nesting-box cameras available on the Internet. Audubon California's Starr Ranch Sanctuary in Orange County has a camera that looks into a natural cav-

ity high in a eucalyptus tree that has been used by Barn Owls for several years. [www.StarrRanch.org](http://www.StarrRanch.org). The Cornell Lab of Ornithology shows a nest-box in Italy. <http://watch.birds.cornell.edu>. The Hungry Owl Project manages several nest-box cameras in Marin County. [www.hungryowl.org/bar-nowlcam.html](http://www.hungryowl.org/bar-nowlcam.html).

# Ornithology Opportunities

**Birds of the Bay and Beyond**, October 3-31, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way. An exhibit of paintings of birds of the San Francisco Bay Area, by award-winning local artist Rita Sklar highlights the vanishing birds of the Bay Area. Reception: Saturday, October 16, 3 pm to 5 pm. Meet the Artist and hear from the Golden Gate Audubon Society and the Mount Diablo Audubon Society. Rita Sklar was a finalist for BBC Wildlife Artist of 2011. She is a Signature Member of the California Watercolor Association. Her paintings have won many awards from CWA, and the San Francisco Women Artists. Rita Sklar's wildlife paintings have been featured at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, the Oakland Zoo, and Tilden Park Education Center.

**Intermediate Birding Class with Denise Wight**. Begins October 26 and continues for six consecutive evenings, from 7-9 PM at the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Pleasant Hill. Also included are three field trips on three Saturday mornings, from 8:30 to 11:30 AM. Cost is \$100 per person. Advance reservations required by phone (798-0303) or at the Wild Birds Unlimited store. Denise is one of the premier birders of the Bay Area and is renowned for her knowledge of bird song.

15th annual **Sandhill Crane Festival**, November 4-6. Lodi. Sandhill Cranes descend into the rich delta wetlands at the end of a long migratory journey, some from

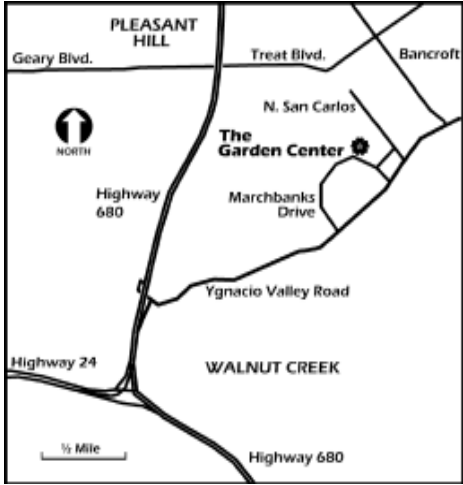
nesting grounds as far away as Siberia. An intriguing list of field trips includes a boat tour on Pardee Lake for Golden and Bald Eagles, a Delta birding cruise, and kayaking on the Mokelumne River. Tour spaces are limited and reservations by October 25th are strongly encouraged. For information [www.cranefestival.com](http://www.cranefestival.com).

The Central Valley Bird Club will host the Fifteenth Annual **Central Valley Birding Symposium** November 17-20 in Stockton. Thursday night Keynote speakers are: Ed Harper and John Sterling presenting a program on "Appreciating the Birds of the Central Valley". Come sit back and watch as Ed and John take us on a photographic journey to catch a glimpse of the avian world of the Central Valley. Friday night's keynote program is presented by Ron LeValley on "The Writings of William Leon Dawson—a California Bird Pioneer". Saturday night's keynote program is by Jeff Gordon on "10 Birds that Changed Birding".

Other events include workshops on swallow identification by Joe Morlan and warbler identification by Jon Dunn. Field trips always turn up exciting birds. Add in the always entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful display of art and gifts for yourself or others at the Birder's Market and the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time! There's something for everyone interested in birds. Come and join us to bird, learn, and just have fun! The schedule, brochure, and registration form are on the website at <http://cvbs.org>.

To a person uninstructed in natural history, his country or seaside stroll is a walk through a gallery filled with wonderful works of art, nine tenths of which have their faces turned to the wall. *Thomas Henry Huxley*

**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 Board of Directors**

- President: Jimm Edgar, 510-658-2330
- Vice President: Paul Schorr, 757-5107  
pkschorr@comcast.net
- Treasurer: Steve Buffi, 938-0929
- Board Secretary: Diana Granados  
theothrwl@aol.com
- Corresponding Secretary: Barbara Vaughn  
376-8732
- Sales Manager: Diane Malucelli, 674-0920
- Programs: Alice Holmes, 938-1581  
greenheron@sbcglobal.net
- Field Trips: Hugh Harvey, 935-2979
- Membership: Beverley Walker, 952-9925
- Volunteer Coordinator: Moses de los Reyes, 755-3734
- Hospitality: Gerry Argenal, 768-6325
- Education: Cecil Williams, 376-1631  
tzudiw@yahoo.com
- Webmaster: Betts Sanderson  
bettss@pacbell.net
- Christmas Count: Jimm Edgar, 510-658-2330
- Breeding Bird Atlas Marketing: Ann McGregor, 968-1677
- Member-at-Large: Brian Murphy, 937-8835  
Jean Richmond, 837-2843  
Mike Williams, 798-0303  
wbuphca@sbcglobal.net
- Quail Editor: Ellis Myers, 284-4103  
ellis.myers@earthlink.net  
215 Calle La Mesa  
Moraga, CA 94556-1603

**MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION**

- Please enroll my family and me as a member of Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year. Your membership dues are tax deductible.
- I'm enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- For an additional \$20 (new NAS members only), please enroll me in the National Audubon Society.

Please send The Quail by:  US mail  E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:  
 MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail with this application to:  
 Membership Chair 1932 Golden Rain Road #4 Walnut Creek, CA 94595

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

*Return Service Requested*



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 66  
Concord, CA



*Brushy Peak Regional Preserve. Scott Hein photo.*

## Brushy Peak Regional Preserve

Brushy Peak is a prominent landmark north of the City of the Livermore. Considered a sacred place by Native American tribes, Brushy Peak has drawn people to its slopes for hundreds of years.

Live oak and California buckeye trees—not brush—cover the mountain, but the name is appropriate, as the windswept trees hug the terrain and do give the appearance of brush. There are also stands of valley oak, bay laurel and sagebrush. Sandstone rock formations dot the area and come in fascinating shapes. Colorful lichens cover their surfaces, birds nest on and among them and a variety of creatures live in the rainwater that collects in the depressions in the rock.

Brushy Peak Regional Preserve, established in 2005 by East Bay Regional Parks, comprises over 2000 acres of open space, trails and ponds [see *The Quail*, February 2006]. California annual grassland is the dominant plant community composed of native grasses, such as purple needlegrass and creeping wildrye, and an abundance of wildflowers.

Non-native grasses remain from the area's history of ranching. The preserve is home to many California ground squirrels whose burrows create the structure for a complex ecosystem. Other species which inhabit the burrow chambers include the California tiger salamander, the California red-legged frog, badger, the San Joaquin kit fox and the Western Burrowing Owl. In large part

because of the squirrels, Brushy Peak is rich in both numbers and diversity of raptors, including the Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon.

Other birds commonly seen include Western Meadowlark and numerous sparrow species in the grasslands; woodpeckers, orioles and other birds in the oak woodlands; and perhaps various shorebirds may be at Frick Lake, a vernal lake located outside the preserve near the entrance.

*Continued on Page 6 »*

*Bufflehead on pond at Brushy Peak. Regional Preserve*

