



THE QUAIL

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society | [www.mt Diablobaudubon.org](http://www.mt Diablo Audubon Society | www.mt Diablobaudubon.org)

8 pm: Albatrosses on Midway Atoll

Home to the world's largest albatross nesting colony, Midway Atoll also hosts a team of volunteer "bird counters" each winter who determine just how many birds are nesting. This past winter, JD Bergeron joined the census team.

Bergeron, the executive director of International Bird Rescue, will share his experiences on the remote site, more than 1,300 miles northwest of Honolulu. He will explain how he spent his holidays helping to methodically cover the island, which is also known for its population of endangered Hawaiian monk seals, Laysan ducks and Wisdom, the oldest known wild bird in the Bird Banding Lab's database.

Scientists and volunteers have been conducting the annual albatross census on Midway since 1991, providing an unusually thorough record of this distinctive seabird colony. (Photos, courtesy of JD Bergeron).



Final Print Edition of *THE QUAIL*

This is the last printed copy of *The Quail* you will receive. We will transition to an eQuail newsletter and use our new website and email alerts to communicate with members. Please be sure we have your current email address. Use the "Email Sign-Up" button at the top of the website, or write to Membership Chair Bill Chilson at membership@mtdiablobaudubon.org. For more information, see the Co-Presidents' Corner, page 2.



7 pm: Live Birds

Join Jenny Papka to meet a mystery pair of Native Bird Connections' new birds. You do not want to miss this!

Next Meeting: SEPTEMBER 5

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will meet **Thursday, September 5**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek.

6:30 pm Doors Open

7:00 pm Birding Info

7:25 pm News

7:40 pm Snacks & Raffle

8:00 pm Main Program

"Albatrosses"

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2019-20 Field Trip Schedule

With September Field Trips

Big Changes at MDAS

Though we are already 9 months into the calendar year, traditionally September is the start of Mt. Diablo Audubon's year. Maybe this is the year you will add new birds to your Life List, join the Outreach Committee at a tabling event, or sign up for a field trip, class, or bird survey. You know, change it up a little.

Probably the biggest change for our chapter is the brand new website. This upgrade will help our chapter communicate more



CO-PRESIDENTS' CORNER

effectively in a timely fashion. It features field trip listings that link to the calendar, the MDAS Facebook feed, EBB Sightings, and a modern space for all of our chapter activities and events. Check it out: www.mt Diablo Audubon.org.

This year's MDAS Board is a mix of seasoned and newer members, with some assuming new roles of responsibility. Bill Chilson has moved to Membership Chair (with huge thanks to Virginia Hamrick for her meticulous record-keeping), while Past-President Paul Schorr will move into Bill's previous role as a Member-at-Large.

MDAS has one big position to fill, that of *Quail* Newsletter Editor. Lori Patel is leaving this position to pursue a Masters program and return to work. We thank her for her vision, time, and creativity, and wish her well. Without an editor, we are unable to continue providing the newsletter in its current print format. This opportunity may just be the change you are looking for: a chance to share your editorial skills in a modified eQuail format while communicating important chapter news, a position that might be less daunting if shared by a team. Interested? Let's talk.

In the interim, Mailchimp will be used to send out email reminders about the monthly programs. If you are already receiving the eQuail or email reminders, you are set. If not, sign up to receive the newsletter/notices on the website using the "Email Sign-Up" button at the top of the homepage.

Lastly, you elected co-presidents, another big change—two people sharing the responsibilities of one job, making the workload more manageable (and more fun!). We come to you, not as expert birders—in fact, Advanced Beginner may be padding our resumes a tad—but with other collective Audubon experience, including the newsletter, monthly programs, educational offerings, and legislative action committee.

We will continue the strong tradition of MDAS activities while sharing new ideas. Our chapter is chock full of talented individuals with varying birding skills, talents, and interests; we look forward to getting better acquainted and getting more members involved. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." *Maren and Ariana*

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MDAS general meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month except July and August in the Camellia Room of the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek.



STAMPS ON SALE

Don Lewis has graciously stepped forward to supply duck stamps at our September meeting. This year's stamp features a Wood Duck and decoy painted by Minnesota's Scot Storm, who also designed the 2004-2005 stamp. The price remains \$25, with nearly all proceeds going to protect wetland habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service raises up to \$40 million each year through sales of the duck stamp, which also works as a free pass into any national wildlife refuge. To purchase, see Sales Manager Cathy Castillo.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Grayson Creek

Birders, whose Oak Park survey site just nabbed a

hotspot designation from eBird. Leader Alan Bade says the

group is hoping for similar recognition for its second survey site. The Grayson Creek community science team, a partnership with Friends of Pleasant Hill Creeks, usually goes out the third or fourth Sunday of the month from the Pleasant Hill Library parking lot. Contact alanbade@jps.net to join the group and confirm the date.



Bird Friendly Products

The "feel good" terms *earth friendly* and *bird friendly* have become used somewhat loosely for commercial purposes. However, there are truly bird friendly products, and they are not limited to feeders, nest boxes, or observation blinds. Many of these products are most easily found or researched online.

The Smithsonian Institution has created a certification program for coffee grown in a way that not only protects but enhances habitat for tropical birds. [Birds and Beans](#), co-founded by Scott Weidensaul, the author of *Living on the Wind*, offers only shade-grown, fair trade, organic coffee on its website. This coffee is as bird-and-earth-friendly as it gets, and it's hard to find in stores.



Part of habitat protection for birds can involve reducing predator pressure, and [BirdsBeSafe](#) (a [Bird Wide Web Favorite](#)) has developed a patented solution for one such problem that might make you laugh. This innovative, scientifically informed approach to making outdoor cats less effective hunters simply has to be seen to be appreciated. The online store offers a broader selection than is possible in retail outlets.

Another way to protect birds is to avoid the usually fatal result of collisions with window glass. There are many approaches to this issue, all admirably described on the [FLAP Canada](#) website. Originally designed to reduce bird "strikes" caused by light pollution from tall buildings, the site now covers reflection reduction for ordinary windows, as well. Which solution to choose depends on many factors, but this comprehensive site is the place to start.

For example, a home might benefit from films or decals, strategically applied. A traditional decal approach might involve images of predators such as owls or hawks, to scare birds away. Of course, this plan has obvious drawbacks: It requires the homeowner to look past intrusive decals, and the designs might scare birds away entirely from a home garden.

The more modern method is a film with a subtle pattern that breaks up the window reflections of plants, so birds will not think they are flying through open air into trees or shrubbery. One supplier, [DecorativeFilms](#), provides a variety of window treatment styles, including "*Trellis*," and "*Frost*," with patterns carefully designed to appear too narrow for birds to consider trying to fly through them.

The most ingenious solution, best considered for new construction, is the patterned glass from [Ornilux](#) by ArnoldGlas, a German firm specializing in using biomimicry to keep birds safe. Its designs are executed in coatings that only reflect in the UV spectrum and resemble large, dense spider webs. Invisible to human eyes, they present birds with the impression of an impenetrable barrier, potentially eliminating the danger of a fatal collision. The Ornilux website is a treasure trove of analysis and applications for builders and homeowners alike. *Dal Leite, Former MDAS Webmaster*

For live links and past columns, see www.birdwideweb.com.

Trip Reports

Curry Canyon, May 9. Nineteen participants enjoyed a leisurely stroll up and back on Curry Canyon Rd under overcast skies and mild temperatures in this joint hike with Save Mount Diablo. (Photo, Maren Smith). Birders hiked 2 miles



out and back, beginning on SMD property and continuing on into Mt. Diablo State Park. Bird activity was quiet, but observers saw 43 species. Highlights included Warbling Vireo, Bushtit, House Wren and White-Breasted Nuthatch on occupied nests, as well as 3 Swainson's Thrush. *Jerry Britten*

East Contra Costa County, May 11. With a breezy, chilly start, the day progressed to seasonably warm and pleasant, and 13 birders covered several of the rural areas of eastern Contra Costa County, including a portion of the Marsh Creek Trail in Oakley, Piper Slough on Bethel Island, areas around the community of Knightsen, the Holland Tract (briefly) and Big Break Regional Shoreline. Again this year, nearly all of the target species were either seen or heard, including Swainson's Hawk, White-tailed



Kite, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, Western Tanager (photo, Beth Branthaver), Blue Grosbeak, and Hooded Oriole. The Blue Grosbeaks were seen both on the Marsh Creek Trail and at Bethel Island. The first grosbeak seen was thought to be a female, but as one astute observer pointed out, the

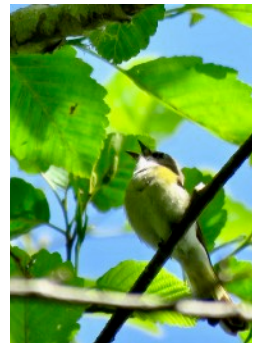
blue on the head meant it could only be a male, so we quickly changed our recording to first spring male. The next two grosbeaks were indeed females. The one adult male we observed was along Bethel Island Road. Again this year, too, the only target



species not observed were Burrowing Owl and Yellow-billed Magpie; they have been increasingly hard to find in the vicinity where we looked. Other notable species included Green Heron, Caspian Tern (photo, Beth Branthaver), Loggerhead Shrike, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Common Yellowthroat, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwing, Bullock's Oriole, Western Kingbird, Black Phoebe, House, Marsh and Bewick's Wren, Bushtit and, presumably, Red-tailed Hawk. Only a single chick was seen in the nest, and no adults could be detected in the area. Northern Mockingbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds and Rock Pigeons were in abundance along the Marsh Creek Trail, with a few California Quail and American Kestrels. As a matter of note, the marina at the end of the Holland Tract Road is under new management, and the new owners made it abundantly clear that birders are no longer welcome. The group tallied 63 bird species for the day. *Gary Fregien*

Mt. Wanda, May 11. MDAS participated in World Migratory Bird Day by joining the National Park Service for a bird count on the Mt. Wanda portion of the John Muir National Historic Site. Six MDAS members, one NPS ranger, and two guests from Belmont participated. House Wrens were singing everywhere! Numerous Oak Titmouse fledglings were seen following adults. A California Quail posed nicely for the photographers. A few members had a brief sighting of Lazuli Bunting. Other sightings included a pair of Northern Harriers and a Townsend's Warbler. A total of 45 species were seen or heard. *Cheryl Abel*

Point Reyes, June 8. We were not disappointed during this trip. A singing American Redstart (photo, Isaac Aronow) appeared within the first 30 minutes of the program at the Earthquake Trail, followed by a Black Vulture flying overhead at Inverness, and an endangered Snowy Plover (male) on an active nest at South Beach. The program concluded with a final count of 78 bird species and 14 very happy birders. *Juan-Carlos Solis*



Castle Rock, June 9. MDAS teamed up with Save Mount Diablo for a natural history hike in Diablo Foothills Regional Park, also known as Castle Rock Park. Led by Judy Abrams of Save Mount Diablo, assisted by Steve Balling (SMD), and Staci Hobbet of MDAS, the group of 15 took a slow stroll—stopping to look at native plants—up Pine Canyon to the sandstone cliffs, where a pair of Peregrine Falcons nest annually. The group included hikers from age 4 to almost 80. The hike will be repeated next year. *Staci Hobbet*

Yuba Pass, June 22-23. The Chapter's annual visit to Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley drew 31 members and visitors. More than 100 species were observed. Highlights included: Sandhill Crane, an Eared Grebe in breeding plumage, and Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows. A productive evening walk in Sierraville along W. Willow St yielded a Hammond's Flycatcher and White-Crowned Sparrow (Oriantha Sub-species). In the evening, we looked for Short-eared Owl without success. Some of the group saw Common Nighthawk and Wilson's Snipe on the return to Sierra City. On Sunday, the group birded Yuba Pass and Sardine Lake. The trip ended at the Bassett's Resort hummingbird feeders. Highlights included: Evening Grosbeak, Dusky Flycatcher, an Olive-sided Flycatcher and five species of warbler, including an unusual sighting of a Townsend's Warbler at Sand Pond. A Bald Eagle was seen at Sardine Lake. The Bassett's feeders yielded Black-chinned, Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds. *Bill Chilson and Nancy Wenninger*

Lassen Volcanic National Park, July 20-21. Eleven birders enjoyed two days with perfect weather in the park. At Summit Lake, the highlights included Cassin's Finch, Western Tanagers, Mountain Chickadees, Western Wood-Pewees, Olive-sided Flycatchers, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a Hairy Woodpecker and (wait for it) a male Black-backed Woodpecker! That day, only one lone Ruddy Duck was on the lake. On the trail beside Hat Lake, a Clark's Nutcracker was spotted. We stopped at Lassen Peak Trail Parking Lot and Lake Helen. No birds, but gorgeous views of a snow-covered landscape and iced-over lake. From the Bumpass Hell Parking lot, we could see many small birds flitting around among the trees too quickly and too far away to identify. One White-breasted Nuthatch cooperated and landed on a snag at the edge of the parking lot. At Manzanita Lake, the American Dipper failed to make an appearance. We were, however, treated to a bird-banding demonstration (*photo, Cassie Tzur*). Many young birds were caught in the mist nets, weighed and banded: Golden-crowned



Kinglets, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Warblers, Yellow Warblers, Wilson's Warblers, MacGillivray's Warblers, Orange-crowned Warbler and Nashville Warblers. In the Willows, we found some of the parents: Hermit Warblers, Nashville Warblers, Orange-

crowned Warblers and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Of course, we do not want to forget the many Steller's Jays, American Robins (with juveniles), Dark-eyed Juncos and Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds. Interestingly, we had Western Bluebird, but no Mountain Bluebirds. On the lake we saw Pied-billed Grebes and Canada Geese. We spotted Buffleheads, Mallards and American Coots, all with babies. At both lakes, we found a Spotted Sandpiper. Finally, we had a nice look at a White-headed Woodpecker. One lucky birder saw an Osprey interacting with a Bald Eagle. Our trip was "official," as we had a Black Phoebe! What a wonderful two days in one of our nation's spectacular parks. Our final count was 45 species. *Mike Robertson, Karol Prinz, Linda Shinn*

San Mateo Coast, July 27.

Nineteen bird watchers enjoyed an early day with cool fog along the San Mateo coast, clearing to sun and 70 degrees by lunch time in Pescadero



(*photo, Cassie Tzur*). We saw 53 species, including Wandering Tattler, Pigeon Guillemot, and all three cormorant species (Brandt's, Pelagic and Double-crested). Highlights of the day were seeing three Black

Oystercatcher chicks being fed mollusks on the rocks below Pigeon Point Light Gull chicks. (*Photo, Beth Branthaver*). *Bill Chilson, Kent Fickett*



Frank's Dump, Aug. 6.

For a glorious end to another day in paradise, 18 participants made a late walk to Frank's

Dump at Hayward Regional Shoreline and were not disappointed. Shorebirds were thick, concentrated by the high tide, which pushed them off the edge of the bay. Willets, Marbled Godwits Western Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers predominated, but we also had lots of Red Knots, plenty of California Gulls, a few Short-billed Dowitchers and three Red-necked Phalaropes. A single Ruddy Turnstone was seen by some, 2 Caspian Terns and single Western and Ring-billed Gulls were also present. A big surprise was 4 Black Skimmers flying north over the bay as we were walking back to the cars. With other birds seen while walking, our list finished at 38 species for the evening. *Hugh Harvey*

Q: Which American bird has been called a Tarweed Canary? *Answer on page 8.*

IMMEDIATE OPENING

Do you have a talent for organizing or communication? Would you enjoy working with gifted and generous contributors? Mt. Diablo Audubon needs your help. MDAS seeks a new editor for *The Quail*. No experience necessary. Training provided. Come blaze a new trail with an email newsletter. Interested? Contact Maren at co-president_2@mtdiabloaudubon.org.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Alamo: Georgia A. Callahan; *Concord:* Diana Ponedel and Ford Tivakul; *Martinez:* Marilyn Scovell; *Oakland:* Maureen Lahiff; *Pleasant Hill:* Cherie Cotisfas; *Walnut Creek:* Ellen Danchik

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Looking for information on this month's trips? Please see the end of this document (enclosed insert in the print edition), or visit www.mtdiabloaudubon.org.

NEW SITE, NEW NAME

The name has changed a little. The look has changed a lot. Visit www.mtdiabloaudubon.org

Mt Diablo Audubon on Facebook

Do you "do" Facebook? If so, please help support our chapter with a few clicks of the mouse.

1. "Like" our Page.

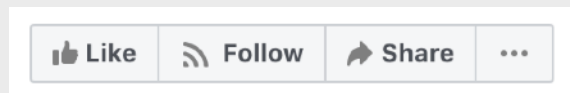
Next time you are on Facebook, type our name into search field at the very top.



Click on our logo when it pops up.



Click the "Like" button. Or click the logo to reach our Page, and click "Like" under the big cover photo. "Follow" will change to "Following" and you will see our posts in your News Feed.

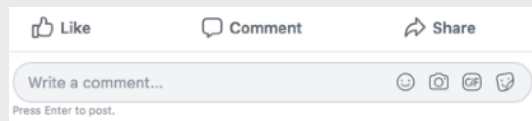


2. "Share" our posts.

Click the "Share" button under a post you like. It will then appear on your Page and your Friends will see it. You can write something in the "Say Something About This Post," or simply Share.

3. "Comment" on and "Like" our posts.

A "Write a Comment" field appears under everything we post. If an item makes you want to say something, type it and hit Enter on your keyboard. This stimulates others to join the conversation! If you don't feel chatty, you can just hit "Like."



4. "Recommend" Us.

Click "Home" at the top, next to your name. Click "Reviews" on the vertical list on the left-hand side. Choose "Yes" when it asks "Do You Recommend Mt Diablo Audubon?" and write a short review of our chapter.

Community

Reviews

Posts

Every time you Like, Comment, Share or Recommend Mt. Diablo Audubon, you spread the word about our organization and increase our visibility. You invite people to Follow us and learn about our activities, and those of other environmental groups like us. It's a real community-building experience!

Questions? Email Rosalie at publicity@mtdiabloaudubon.org.



MDAS Mourns Jean Richmond

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society lost a true friend May 26 with the passing of legendary birder and benefactor Jean Richmond.

A member of MDAS for nearly 50 years, Jean spent 11 of them editing *The Quail*, for which she created a feature describing birding hotspots she knew from joining and leading countless field trips. These columns became the basis for her 1985 book, *Birding Northern California*, a major resource for our region. In donating the proceeds of the book to MDAS, Jean provided an income stream that funded years of local conservation

efforts, including a 2018 Eagle Scout project to install bat boxes at Big Break Regional Shoreline—the focus of February’s Birding Info presentation.

In recent years, Jean served as Honorary Advisor to Mt. Diablo Audubon, and she came to meetings up until a couple of months before her passing. Her boundless energy, humor and passion for birds inspired many, especially Field Trip Chair Hugh Harvey and his wife Rosita, who together helped honor Jean at a July 6 memorial in Danville and at the June meeting of MDAS. Jean will be greatly missed. (Photo, Rosita Harvey).

Migration is Coming

As the seasons change, some birds remain in our yards, others disappear, while new birds arrive to spend the summer or winter. Much is due to weather patterns and climate, which affect food sources and habitats.



WILD BIRDS

Success in breeding requires the best of all these factors. In our area, mild climate and year-round sources of insects, seeds, nuts, and places to nest make migration less important. However, we’re still visited by birds on their way to or from seasonal habitats. Some end up here to spend the summer or winter.

Some migrators take a loop route, traveling north through the Bay Area in early spring, then returning through the Central Valley in fall. Rufous hummers and several sea and shore birds loop inland in fall, seeking mountain wildflowers or rest in our many Central Valley wildlife refuges. Other birds, such as Pine Siskins, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Snowy Owls, and Rough-legged Hawks, have irruptive migrations. Their movements are sporadic and unpredictable, usually due to poor weather or low natural food supplies in their regular wintering grounds.

Food, weather, and breeding are not the only instigators. Some birds, especially ducks, move to safer ranges while molting, when they are less able to fly. Young birds may migrate as they fledge and look for their own territories. Woodpeckers with established territories will defend them against youngsters, forcing them to move on. Young birds may also do a reverse migration, usually in fall when they become confused or disoriented and head north. Nomadic birds take unpredictable courses, mainly to find food or safety as their regular sources are depleted. We often see flocks of Cedar Waxwings showing up to strip a tree of berries in late fall, only to move on in a few days. Birds that breed in high mountains will exhibit altitudinal migration to lower elevations in winter, which may only be short distances due to large fluctuations in altitude, snowfall, and climate. Also, high concentrations of birds may lead to disease epidemics, which can cause birds to disperse to reduce chances of spreading the disease.



Occasionally we are surprised to see unexpected birds that end up here for various reasons. Migration routes can be disrupted by high winds, storms, or fires, which cause birds to be blown off course or lose landmarks. Usual resting places may become overcrowded or disappear due to drought. Young birds may lose their way. Any of these may lead to rare or unusual bird sightings. *Michael Eliot, Member-at-Large*



**Young Birders
Club @ Elsie
Roemer
Sanctuary
August 24 @ 9 - 11 AM**

Our first MDAS Young Birder's Club field trip of Fall 2019 will be to Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary in Alameda, where we'll catch the start of the annual southbound shorebird migration. Thousands of shorebirds come to the Bay Area to rest and refuel as they make their way further south on their migration. You'll also see what has become a rare habitat in California: mudflats and salt marsh, which have been more than 90% destroyed due to people building on wetlands. The Sanctuary has a great wooden walkway and pier from which we can see the birds. Bring water, comfortable shoes, and layered clothing. If you have a pair of binoculars—and even better, a spotting scope—bring them. But if you don't, no worries; we have extra. Parking and access is at Shoreline Dr & Broadway, and at the Bayview Dr intersection with Broadway. Hope to see you there! For more info, see Facebook for Mount Diablo Audubon Society Young Birders Club, or write Juan Pablo Galván at youngbirders@mtdiabloaudubon.org. For birders age 9-17, with accompanying adult.

Q: Which American bird has been called a Tarweed Canary?

A: Lesser Goldfinch

If you have a seed feeder in your yard, you have almost assuredly seen a Lesser Goldfinch, or more likely a pair or more coming to your feeders. They especially like nyjer thistle seed and black oil sunflower seed.

These cute little finches, called Lesser due to their petite size, have found a niche between the moisture-loving American Goldfinch, and the drier-habitat-loving Lawrence's Goldfinch. Thus they can be found most often in oak woodlands, chaparral and weedy areas, and of course in suburban settings as well. They have adapted well to living close to people and have benefited

from people who put out seed, so their conservation status is of little concern. In fact from 1966 to 2015, their population increased about 1 percent a year, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey.

Lesser Goldfinches, also known as *Spinus psaltria*, make their home in the western United States, from Oregon east into Colorado and Texas, and can be found all the way south to the Peruvian Andes. They can be nomadic and sporadic in occurrence. In the last decade, the main growth of their population has occurred on the northern edges of their range, where bird feeding in the winter has helped them to overwinter in these areas. They are also becoming more common in areas of desert habitat, where residential housing and agriculture with irrigation and plantings have had a favorable impact on this species.

Lesser Goldfinches nest in a variety of trees and bushes, but they prefer cottonwoods and willows. The female selects the nest site, usually 4 to 8 feet off the ground, toward the end of a branch in a fork of slender branches. The female builds a nest using plant material such as leaves, bark, catkins, and even spiderwebs woven together to form a cup about 3 inches wide and an inch deep. The nest is lined with hair, feathers, or fur. The female lays 3 to 6 eggs and incubates them for 12-13 days, while the male feeds her. The young are 2 weeks old when they are ready to leave the nest, but their parents continue to feed them for at least another week.

Through the years, these finches have been dubbed a number of names. A century ago, the Lesser Goldfinch was called Arkansas Goldfinch, named for the headwaters of the Arkansas River in Colorado, not the state of Arkansas, where it would be a rare find. It was also known as the Tarweed Canary and Arkansas Greenback.

Their calls include a high, clear, plaintive, "tee-ye." Their songs consist of a rapid melody of twittering notes, and they are known for mimicking short parts of other birds' songs. During its undulating flight, the Lesser Goldfinch will often make a chit note.

In the most eastern part of its territory, the male sports a black back, while further west, the back of the male turns green. In between, the amount of black varies, with many birds having partly green backs. South of Central Mexico, all of the males are black-backed.

The oldest known Lesser Goldfinch was a male who was at least 7 years old when he was recaptured during banding operations in California in 2015. *Jean Halford*



New Fall Classes

2019 Fall Avian Treasure Hunt by Juan-Carlos Solis

Two 2-hour classes and two 4-hour field trips
Classes: Thursday, Sept. 19 and 26, 7-9 PM
Trips: Saturday, Sept. 21 and 28 (location TBD) 8 AM-noon
Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Oak Room (max 15)
Cost: \$50 MDAS members/\$55 non-members

Prepare for the migrant treasure hunt and sharpen your birding skills by better understanding local bird distribution patterns in time and space during the fall. We'll review how seasonal changes in various Bay Area habitats influence the birds you'll expect to find in the field, with a strong emphasis on birdsong and behavior. You'll get practical birding tips on what to look for throughout the seasons when "hunting" for migratory birds. At the end of this course you'll be better prepared to find local migrant and vagrant birds with confidence. Moreover, the principles you'll learn regarding bird distribution in relation to seasonal changes and habitats apply to any place you may explore.

Juan-Carlos Solis, founder of Quetzal Adventures, is passionate about connecting people to nature and designing programs to experience our planet first-hand. He's a seasoned expedition leader and naturalist with 20 years of experience managing and leading local trips in California and in all of the world's seven continents.

www.quetzaladventures.com

Raptor Identification by Pamela Llewellyn

Two 2-hour classes and two 4-hour field trips
Classes: Tuesday, Sept. 24 and Oct. 8, 7-9 PM
Trips: Sunday, Sept. 29 and Oct. 13, 8 AM-noon
Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Oak Room (max 15)
Cost: \$50 MDAS member/\$55 non-member

Join raptor specialist Pamela Llewellyn for this two-week workshop while she guides you through basic identification and natural history of the diurnal birds of prey seen in the San Francisco Bay Area and the surrounding area. Two classroom presentations will provide a straightforward introduction to the identification of our local hawks, eagles, and falcons, and help you to sharpen your raptor ID skills. During the field trips we will venture out looking for raptors and practice what we have learned in class. Recommended for beginning and intermediate birders.

Pamela Llewellyn is a Bay Area native who has been leading local birding trips for the Golden Gate Audubon Society for the past 15 years, and more recently, taught Raptor Identification classes at the Klamath Falls Winter Wings Festival. Prior to that, she spent five years as a bird-bander and docent for the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. Pamela studied Integrative Biology at UC Berkeley, is a nature photographer and artist, and leads private birding trips in the Bay Area.

iNaturalist, a Tutorial for Citizen Scientists by Kendall Oei

One 2-hour classes and one 4-hour field trip
Class: Tuesday, Nov. 12, 7-9 PM
Trip: Sunday, Nov. 17, 8 AM-noon
Save Mount Diablo office in Walnut Creek (max 15)
Cost: \$25 MDAS members and \$30 non-members

Naturalist and nature videographer Kendall Oei will convert you into an active--and interactive--citizen scientist in 90 minutes. An early adaptor to the revolutionary digital app, iNaturalist, Kendall will walk us through the iNaturalist website and the phone app, showing us how we can each become a resource to science. Developed by Bay Area naturalists and now used globally, iNaturalist is all these things: a place to record nature observations, an in-depth nature guide—it's great for local sightings—and a source of deep enjoyment. Kendall's presentation will move into a workshop, so bring your phone or laptop if you want to participate, along with some recent photos you've taken. He'll show you how to post and annotate them. It's easy, it's fun, and it adds your observations to the joint record for all to access. Before the date, create an iNaturalist account by going to <http://www.inaturalist.org/> and downloading the app in your phone's app store. It's free.

Kendall Oei moved to the Bay Area in 1994 from Southern California, where he grew up. He fell in love immediately with the open spaces here, and took up photography and videography to show his family and friends the things he saw on weekend hikes. To see Kendall's Mount Diablo films, search under his name on YouTube.

To register for any of these classes, See "Birding Classes" under Education at <http://www.mtdiabloudubon.org>

Back to Nature Event

Wild Birds Unlimited, Pleasant Hill Saturday, Oct. 5, 2019, 10 AM-4 PM

This is Wild Birds Unlimited's 28th year sponsoring a Nature Event, giving you the chance to meet and learn about organizations working to protect our local wildlife and environment. This will be a family event even the kids will love, with a live bald eagle, birds, bugs, snakes, and spiders. Nature artists and authors will show their creations. Mt. Diablo Audubon will have a table, along with many area conservation groups. To volunteer, contact Susana de Trapaga at outreach@mtdiabloudubon.org.

The last 3 months have seen the migration away of wintering birds and recently the return of shorebirds. *Maury Stern*

Observations

(May 1-July 30, 2019)

Gadwall. CA saw a pair with 7 or 8 ducklings 5/31 at the first Sindicich Lagoon at Briones RP.

On 5/24, a **Long-tailed Duck** was at Brooks Island. DLu

Late-leaving **Common Goldeneyes** were at Meeker Slough 5/21, JHo, and Clifton Court Forebay 6/2. JG

A surprise: 2 **Common Mergansers** were at Cherry Lane and Homestead in Walnut Creek 7/21. FS

An unusual **Red-breasted Grebe** brought 15 observers to Sandpiper Spit at Pt. Richmond.

GC saw 5 **Lesser Nighthawks** at Clifton Court Forebay 7/28.

A **Common Poorwill** was in the Lime Ridge area 5/13 in the evening. AB

Black-chinned Hummingbirds were seen by EM 5/2 near Happy Valley Rd and 6/1 at Bradford Island. SdT saw one along Grayson Creek in Pleasant Hill 6/14.

A **Virginia Rail** was heard along Waterfront Rd wetlands 7/17 by EM.

SL saw a **Sora** at the Ironhouse Sanitary District 6/6.

A **Red Knot** was at Ironhouse Sanitary District 5/8. RB, DT

A **Common Murre** was at Pt. Isabel 7/18. KB

A **Least Tern** was at Pt. Isabel 5/19. PB

A **Caspian Tern** has been at Heather Farm Pond on and off since 6/5. HH

PB saw a **Pacific Loon** 5/11 near Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, and GC saw one from Vincent Park 7/21 in Richmond.

A **Common Loon** was at Pt. Molate 7/20. DL

LS saw a **Brandt's Cormorant** from the Vallejo-San Francisco Ferry 6/4.

A **Least Bittern** at Dow Wetlands Preserve was seen first 5/14 by AL.

An **Osprey** was at Heather Farm Pond 7/25. TF, HH

A **Bald Eagle** was at San Pablo Reservoir 7/13. SdT

A family of 3 **Cooper's Hawks** was at Miller/Knox Park 7/17. AH

BR saw a **Ferruginous Hawk** over Pt. Pinole RP 7/21.

A **Golden Eagle** was in Hercules 7/29, SdT, and at the Valle Vista Staging Area in Moraga 7/30. WP

A **Western Screech Owl** was near Lime Ridge early evening 5/13. AB

AK saw a **Northern Pygmy Owl** 5/21 at Wildcat RP.

BR saw a **Short-eared Owl** over the Dotson Family Marsh near Pt. Pinole 7/21.

DM saw a **Pileated Woodpecker** 5/3 at Redwood RP not far from the Skyline Gate.

Five **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were at Tilden Nature area and Jewel Lake 6/7. AK

Eleven people saw a **Dusky Flycatcher** at Mitchell Canyon 5/4.

An unusual **Western Kingbird** nest was at Castle Rock Park 5/12. TF

A **Bell's Vireo** was on Bradford Island. 6/1, EM and LSt. 6/6 RR. 7/19, OM and JGo

Bank Swallows were in several locations, but most often Bethel Island. 5/4-7/20

Brown Creeper at Castle Rock 5/12. TF

Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher at Tilden Park, Meadow Canyon Trail. PY

JMy saw a **Townsend's Solitaire** on the Juniper Trail at Mt. Diablo State Park 5/9.

PS had a **Swainson's Thrush** in his Antioch home bird bath 5/15. Five were at Tilden 6/7. AK

A **Hermit Thrush** made a surprise appearance at Tilden Meadow 7/20. BW

Two **Phainopepla** were at Lime Ridge 5/11. JH and 5/13 AB.

JCo and ER saw a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** on the Orinda Connector Trail 6/8, and JC saw one at his Orinda home 6/14.

EM saw 18 **Yellow-breasted Chats** on Bradford Island 6/1.

NW had a **White-throated Sparrow** at his Moraga home 5/22.

RR saw a **Summer Tanager** on Green Ranch Rd near Mt. Diablo SP 6/23.

Several **Western Tanagers** were seen in early June. KH, RR, and HW at Diablo Foothills 6/1. LF, 6/1 at Wildcat Canyon Park. EM, 6/2 in Walnut Creek.

EM saw **Blue Grosbeaks** on Bethel Island 5/2, and 6 on Bradford Island 6/1.

EC found 30 **Tricolored Blackbirds** at the Deer Ridge Golf Course 5/10.

Hooded Orioles were in several places. FS found some breeding in the palms at Cherry Lane and Kings Oak in Walnut Creek 5/20. SdT had 3 pair at her bird bath in Hercules.

To submit sightings, write Maury Stern at mbstern2@yahoo.com or call 925-284-5980.

CA Cheryl Abel, AB Alan Bade, PB Phred Benham, KB Ken Berniker, RB Russ Bright, JC Jim Chiropoulos, GC Graham Chisholm, EC Eric Christensen, JCo John Colbert, TF Tracy Farrington, JGo Joachim Gonzalea, JG Jeffrey Gray, JH John Harris, HH Hugh Harvey, KH Kevin Hints, JHo Jeff Hoppes, AH Alan Howe, DL Dawn Lemoine, AL Albert Linkowski, SL Steve Lombardi, DLu David Lumpkin, DM David Mantuani, EM Ethan Monk, OM Oscar Moss, JMy John Myles, WP Wendy Parfrey, RR Robert Raffel, BR Ben Rosenberg, ER Erica Rutherford, FS Fred Safier, PS Paul Schorr, LS Larry Siemins, LSt Lucas Stephenson, DT David Tomb, SdT Susana de Trapaga, BW Brandon Weiss, NW Nancy Wenninger, HW Huang Winoto, PY Pam Young

MDAS Teaches Students Outdoors

The 2019 “No Child Left Inside Program” marked the 12th year that MDAS has provided outdoor education for East County students. This year’s program concluded on May 21 and 23 by taking the fifth grade students from Jack London Elementary School in Antioch to nearby Contra Loma Regional Park and Reservoir. Teachers and parent volunteers were joined by 13 MDAS volunteers to enjoy two mornings of good, introductory birding.

The MDAS volunteers were Claudia Hein, Cathy Castillo, Linda Shinn, Dave Shinn, Rosita Harvey, Hugh Harvey, Carol Pachl, Kent Fickett, Steve Imialek, Herb Long, Bruce Kronmiller, Nancy Schorr and Paul Schorr.

Although Tuesday’s outing was shortened by rain, the Thursday group enjoyed pleasant spring weather. On each day, the students were divided into groups and rotated among six birding stations on or near Loma Island, with each station monitored by a MDAS volunteer(s) with a spotting scope. Each student used a pair of binoculars that had been purchased by MDAS for education outreach.

Following this activity, the Thursday group walked from the reservoir to an open area with views of the oak and buckeye-dotted hills, an introduction to the California savanna. There, they learned about the Bluebird Recovery Project as they watched Western Bluebirds utilizing nest boxes along a nearby fence line. After lunch, as on MDAS field trips, the groups



tallied the number of species seen and/or heard, and the total number of species for both days was 42. Highlights included the following: Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk, American Kestrel, Osprey, Caspian Tern, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Western Kingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bullock’s Oriole, Great Blue Heron, Common Gallinule and Green Heron. Most of these were Life Birds for the students.

The field activities at Contra Loma Regional Park had been preceded earlier in the spring by classroom activities. On March 16, Jenny Papka from Native Bird Connections initiated this year’s program by doing a live-bird presentation to discuss bird anatomy and behavior with the students. Jenny’s presentation, which featured a Peregrine Falcon, an American Kestrel and an Eurasian Eagle-Owl was sponsored and funded by MDAS. On May 6, Kent Fickett collaborated with his wife Beckee and Nancy Schorr to make a classroom presentation that introduced and instructed the students on the proper use of binoculars, which had been supplied by MDAS. In addition, each student received a checklist of birds for Contra Loma Regional Park. Concluding this lesson, the students were introduced to the Cornell book, Bird Songs, so they could learn and appreciate bird vocalizations, as well as study the illustrations and information about the target birds to be seen or heard during the field trips. These books were left with the teachers to use in the classrooms until the days of the field trips.

Through the No Child Left Inside Program, MDAS has made a strong commitment to fulfilling its mission of dedication to environmental education. MDAS can be very proud of this highly

Claudia Hein and Paul Schorr share the pleasure of birding with Antioch students. (Photo, Nancy Schorr).



Kent Fickett shares bird specimens with students at one station, while Carol Pachl guides a group learning to use binoculars in the field. (Photos, Paul Schorr).



successful program, which has served over 1,000 children. NCLI’s success would not be possible without the continuing support and involvement of MDAS volunteers. Their participation is greatly appreciated, and on behalf of all of the children, thanks to each of the volunteers. My heartfelt thanks to Kent Fickett, who stepped up to conduct many of the activities in my absence.

MDAS is grateful to the East Bay Regional Park District and the staff at Contra Loma Regional Park for their continuing support of the No Child Left Inside Program.

All of the volunteers had many teachable moments, and they were often rewarded with the excitement and enthusiasm of the students. At the conclusion of the days’ programs, each student received a copy of the book entitled Backyard Birds of California, which had been purchased by MDAS. Throughout the activities, the students appeared to retain much of what they had learned, and I am confident that they will recall their experiences for a long, long time. Hopefully, some of them someday will even become birders, and when asked where it all began, they just might say, “Contra Loma Regional Park, with volunteers from MDAS.” *Paul Schorr*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

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Supersizing: A heron at Pt. Isabel accepts the challenge of one seriously big fish. (Photo, Isaac Aronow).



From Left: The June potluck was a heartfelt gathering, as Rosita Harvey shared a tribute to the great birder, MDAS benefactor and friend Jean Richmond, whose life and legacy was honored at a memorial table. Outgoing officers Kent Fickett and Paul Schorr, as well as outgoing board member Brian Murphy, accepted thanks and gifts from Publicity Chair Rosalie Howarth. Program Chair Ariana Rickard hosted the chapter's first birding costume contest, which drew many participants, including first-time visitor and grand prize winner Irene Player. (Photos, Lori Patel).

Upcoming Trips

Thursday, Sept. 5, Jewel Lake, Tilden Park. Short morning walk to look for migrants. Meet 7:30 AM in Nature Center parking lot at north end of park. From Hwy 24 in Orinda, go north on Camino Pablo. Turn left on Wildcat Canyon Rd. Stay right at the Brazil Building. At the next main intersection, turn right and pass Lake Anza and the Carousel. Or take Fish Ranch Rd from the Caldecott Tunnel. Turn right at the top onto Grizzly Peak Rd. Turn right and downhill onto South Park Dr and turn left at the bottom onto Wildcat Canyon Rd. Leader: Maury Stern, 925-284-5980. Category 2.

Saturday, Sept. 14, Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. This is your chance to visit the only unit of the National Wildlife Refuge system in Contra Costa County. A 1-hour docent-led tour, 10-11 AM, will introduce us to the history of the only place on earth where one can see Lang's Metalmark Butterfly. The butterfly requires Naked-stem Buckwheat for its entire life-cycle. Don't be disappointed if we don't see this butterfly. Don't expect to see flowing sand dunes, though sand has been

brought in from river dredging the last several years. After hearing the history, you will understand. May be hot; there is no shade; may be dusty walking along graded fire trails. Bring sun protection and

water. Carpool from Sunvalley at 9 AM. From Hwy 4 in Antioch, exit north on A St. After about 1 mile, bend right onto Wilbur Ave. Turn left onto Fulton Shipyard Rd, and cross the railroad tracks. The entry gate is on the right. We will be guided by a refuge volunteer. Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979. Category 2.

Saturday, Sept. 14, Healdsburg, Vaux's Swifts at Rio Lindo Academy. We hope to see 1000s of swifts enter a chimney on the grounds of the Rio Lindo Academy. This has been an annual occurrence since 1989, when human use of the chimney ceased. Be advised that we will be returning home after dark. Carpool leaves Sunvalley at 4 PM. Take I-680 across the Benicia Bridge. Go west on I-780 to I-80 towards Sacramento, exit to SR 37. Follow SR 37 to Lakeville Rd; turn right. In Petaluma, take US 101 N to Healdsburg, exit at Old Redwood Hwy/Healdsburg Ave (Exit 502).

GRAYSON CREEK BIRDERS

Community science survey of the creek, in partnership with Friends of Pleasant Hill Creeks. Typically departs the third or fourth Sunday of every month from Pleasant Hill Library parking lot. Confirm date with Leader Alan Bade at alanbade@jps.net or 925-330-1780.

Go north to Bailhache Ave, turn right on Bailhache, which becomes Rio Lindo Ave. Follow it about 3 miles into the Academy's main entrance. Turn left at the first stop sign, and another left just before the dormitory. In half a block, turn right toward the rear of the campus, park on the right past the chimney. Bring folding chairs, a picnic supper and join many others as we enjoy the evening show. Alcohol, including wine, is not permitted on any school property in the state. The carpool will first stop in downtown Healdsburg for a bathroom/coffee/food stop. Please call leader if you want to carpool. Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979. Category 1.

Wednesday, Sept. 25, Hayward Regional

Shoreline, Winton Ave entrance. Passerines, shorebirds and possible early ducks. Carpool leaves Sycamore Valley Rd Park and Ride lot in Danville at 7:45 AM. Meet at 8:30 AM at Winton Ave entrance. From I-880, exit Winton Ave, drive west 4.5 miles. Park near the trail head just before the parking lot gate. Because traffic is so unpredictable, if no one is there, wait a while. Time permitting, we will finish at the San Leandro Marina. Bring drinks and lunch. Leader: Bob Richmond, 510-427-9843. Category 2.

Saturday, Sept. 28, Outer Point Reyes. We are hoping for migrants and vagrants. Carpool leaves Sunvalley parking lot at 7 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 Rd 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 Rd. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley. Weather is unpredictable. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979. Category 2.

Trips open to members and non-members, beginners to advanced birders. No dogs. Contact leader with questions. MDAS encourages carpooling (Riders help with gas, tolls or entry fees). Drivers who carpool should carry proof of liability insurance in their vehicles.

- 1 Easy. Little walking, smooth paths
- 2 Moderate, more than one mile, possibly rougher terrain

Carpool Meeting Spots

•**Sunvalley Mall:** SW corner of mall lot at Willow Pass Rd and Contra Costa Blvd in Concord

•**Sycamore Valley Rd Park and Ride:** One block east of I-680, off the Sycamore Valley Rd exit in Danville.

Trip Coordinator Hugh Harvey 925-935-2979.

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Field Trip Schedule 2019-20

September

5 Thursday	Jewel Lake
14 Saturday	Antioch Dunes
14 Saturday	Vaux's Swifts/Rio Lindo Academy
25 Wednesday	Hayward Reg. Shoreline/Winton Avenue
28 Saturday	Outer Point Reyes

October

5 Saturday	Hawk Hill
11 Friday	Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary
26 Saturday	Abbotts Lagoon

November

2 Saturday	Charleston Slough/South Bay
9 Saturday	Irish Canyon
12 Tuesday	Shadow Cliffs Regional Park
16 Saturday	Limantour

December

7 Saturday	Sacramento/Colusa NWR
12 Thursday	American Canyon Wetlands
14 Saturday	Christmas Count, Central County
18 Wednesday	Christmas Count, East County
28 Saturday	Solano County Raptors

January

4 Saturday	Putah Creek
8 Wednesday	East Contra Costa County
10 Friday	Lake Merritt/Arrowhead Marsh
18 Saturday	Rush Creek/Shollenberger Park
29 Wednesday	Martinez Waterfront

February

1 Saturday	Thornton Area/Cosumnes
8 Saturday	Bodega Bay
13 Thursday	Grizzly Island
19 Wednesday	Sunol Regional Park
22-23 Sat/Sun	Los Banos/Panoche Valley
26 Wednesday	Walnut Creek Parks

March

4 Wednesday	Contra Loma Reservoir
17 Tuesday	Mt. View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh
20 Friday	Valle Vista
25 Wednesday	Lake Lagunitas
28 Saturday	Tomales Bay State Park

April

1 Wednesday	Orinda Connector Trail
4 Saturday	Garin Regional Park
7 Tuesday	North Briones
14 Tuesday	Pine Canyon
16 Thursday	Black Diamond Mines
18 Saturday	Mines Road
23 Thursday	Mitchell Canyon
27 Monday	Del Puerto Canyon

May

5 Tuesday	Mt. Diablo State Park
9 Saturday	East Contra Costa County
9 Saturday	Mt. Wanda, John Muir Historical Site
14 Thursday	West Briones Regional Park
19 Tuesday	No Child Left Inside
21 Thursday	No Child Left Inside

June

TBD Saturday	Outer Point Reyes
12 Friday	Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve
TBD Sat/Sun	Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

July

TBD Sat/Sun	Mt. Lassen
25 Saturday	San Mateo Coast
26 Sunday	Frank's Dump-High Tide

August

15 Saturday	Bodega Bay
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Details online [www.mt Diabloudubon.org](http://www.mt Diablo Audubon.org)