



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

The Quail

Volume 67, Number 1

SEPTEMBER 2021

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, September 2

Please mark your calendar for our next virtual monthly program meeting.
See **BELOW** for webinar access info.

- 7:00 PM** Welcome and Introductions
- 7:05 PM** Birding Info: *MDAS Field Trip Reservations* with Marc Desin
- 7:25 PM** Board Announcements
- 7:35 PM** Main Program: *Birds (and Other Wildlife) of Zambia* with Jerry Britten
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

Main Program: *Birds (and Other Wildlife) of Zambia*

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Zambia may not be one of the first countries in Africa one thinks of as a safari destination, but perhaps this lends to its appeal. Zambia in fact is a politically stable country about the size of Texas, with many parks and safari areas teeming with diverse wildlife in a variety of subtropical habitats, offering a true wilderness experience far from crowds. Jerry Britten, currently *MDAS President* and Christmas Bird Count Compiler, has traveled to Zambia twice, in 2014 and again in September 2019, the latter being his last overseas travel prior to the current pandemic. He will present highlights of the many birds and animals he was able to photograph, and offer his perspective on the sights and sounds of this part of Africa.

When not birding or engaged with MDAS goings-on, Jerry is an independent contractor/consultant in the fields of optical coatings and diffractive optic design and manufacture. He retired from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2016 after a 30+ year career as a chemical engineer.



Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike

Photo: Jerry Britten

Birding Info: ***MDAS Field Trip Reservations***

Marc Desin, *MDAS Newsletter and Website Editor*

MDAS Field Trips are back! Our new field trip RSVP system will enable you to reserve your spot on one of our field trips. Marc will provide an overview of how to use the new field trip reservation system on the MDAS website.

Webinar Access Info:

Date: Thursday, September 2, 2021

Time: 7:00 PM–8:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
Location: Zoom online meeting
Access: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84920816769?
pwd=bXgyVUsreUhdZUFaV3hmSW9SdDZndz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84920816769?pwd=bXgyVUsreUhdZUFaV3hmSW9SdDZndz09)
Meeting ID: 849 2081 6769
Passcode: 771268
Phone access: **One tap mobile**
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+14086380968,,84920816769#,,,,*771268# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 849 2081 6769
Passcode: 771268

Find your local number: [https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kkB5UKBII](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84920816769?pwd=bXgyVUsreUhdZUFaV3hmSW9SdDZndz09)

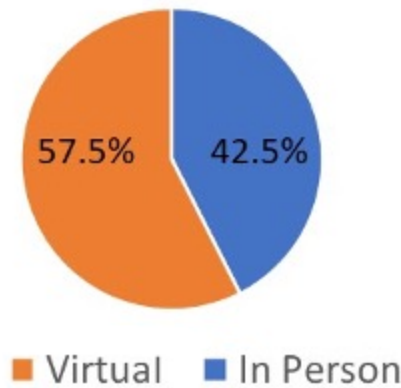
President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

We asked, and you answered! Below are the results of the poll we sent out regarding our September monthly program meeting—we needed your help to decide how to go: in-person or virtual. Here are the results of the poll:



What is your preference for the September General MDAS Meeting (113 Responses)



A significant majority opted for virtual meetings. This, and other considerations related to the ongoing pandemic, resulted in our decision to continue with virtual monthly program meetings through the end of 2021. We will revisit this issue in 2022. Thank you to all who responded! I look forward to "seeing" you all on September 2, when I will give a presentation on the birds (and other wildlife) of Zambia.

We are, however, resuming our field trips starting in September! Please see more information on MDAS Field Trips in this issue [HERE](#).

The board has been busily engaged over the summer, providing input on a variety of fronts: feral cats in East Bay Regional Parks, the proposed Seven Hills development in Walnut Creek, Heather Farm Park improvements planning, and the ongoing effort to transform Tesla Park south of Livermore from an off-highway vehicle (OHV) park to a nature area, are but some of these. Also in MDAS Board news, Paul Schorr has retired from his at-large board membership position. We thank him for his many years of service on the board, as organizer for the No-Child-Left-Indoors Program, and for his service as MDAS Chapter President from 2017 to 2019. There are a number of vacant board positions we are looking to fill—please see details in this issue [HERE](#).

Stay safe, and get out there for the birds!

Welcome, New Members!

Emmanuel Caluya, Pleasanton

Betsey Hecht, Orinda

Susan O'Grady, Walnut Creek

Michael Sullivan, Dublin

Rosemary Nishikawa, Walnut Creek

Srikant Char, Discovery Bay

Remembering Jimm Edgar—A Tribute



Jimm Edgar (right) and Paul Schorr at 2017 MDAS Monthly Program Meeting

Jimm Edgar, longtime MDAS leader, passed away peacefully on July 14th in Alabama with his wife, Bettie, by his side.

Jimm served as MDAS president multiple times during his long tenure with the chapter. Most recently, he was president from 2005 to 2016. At monthly program meetings, his easy manner, engaging smile, and humorous style made audience members feel welcomed and appreciated. He loved to tell stories about birds, often repeating his favorites. One of his most beloved birds was the Harlequin Duck and he seemed to thrill at explaining the meaning of *Histrionicus histrionicus*. Personally, I believe I heard the story at least three times during our travels together. At the meetings, if someone shared a very notable bird sighting, Jimm would often respond, “Oh, is that right?” lending even more significance to the report.

Jimm annually led field trips for MDAS. His favorite outing was to his beloved Mount Diablo, where he emphasized the beauty of the wildflowers as well the variety of birds.

Clearly, Jimm loved birds and birding, and he was especially devoted to organizing and coordinating the MDAS Christmas Bird Counts. After the CBCs, it was always a fun event to compile all of the groups' sightings over dinner. Jimm obviously took much satisfaction and pride in hosting these events. Beyond MDAS, he volunteered to do counts for several other chapters as well.

At the MDAS Monthly Program Meeting in June 2017, Jimm was presented with the National Audubon Society's Great Egret Award for his significant long-term contributions to Audubon. Shortly thereafter, Jimm moved to Alabama. Jimm will be long-remembered and dearly missed.

-Paul Schorr

There will be a celebration of Jimm's life at his home church, the First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, on his actual birthday, August 30, 2021, at 1:00 PM. Reception to follow. The celebration of Jimm's life will also be live-streamed. As a teenager, Jimm met Christ through Young Life Ministries and his Young Life leader, Spokane resident Dick Silk, who was his mentor and lifelong friend. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to Young Life Jimm Edgar Memorial Fund, 420 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

RSVP for Jimm's Celebration [HERE](#). In-person attendance is limited to 150 people.

Vacant MDAS Positions

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Mt. Diablo Audubon currently has a number of vacant or soon-to-be vacant board and advisory positions that we would like to fill. Below are descriptions of these. Serving MDAS in any of these capacities is a great way to give back to the birding community and keep our chapter strong. If anyone is interested in helping out, please contact one of the current board members by clicking on their name on the MDAS website [HERE](#).

Outreach Coordinator

Responsible for coordinating volunteers to staff MDAS booths and tables, etc. at local festivals and other public events at which MDAS has a presence. *This can be a Board or an Advisory position.*

Sales Manager

Responsible for handling sales and inventory of publications and merchandise,

conducting raffles and silent auctions at membership meetings, and maintaining financial records of sales. *This is a Board position.*

The Quail Editor

Responsible for the publication of the monthly chapter email newsletter. Duties include setting up publication and submission schedules, reaching out to persons inside and outside of the chapter for content, and working with the MDAS *Membership Chair* to maintain the list of subscribers. MDAS publishes eight issues of *The Quail* newsletter each year. Familiarity with Mailchimp or other online newsletter platforms, and familiarity with basic HTML is desired. Training on Mailchimp will be provided. *This is a Board position.*

Web Editor

Responsible for creating and updating MDAS website content as needed. Duties include updating MDAS website content as requested by content authors, adding bird and nature-related events in the event calendar, and updating MDAS field trip information. Experience with WordPress is helpful. *This is an Advisory position.*

Wishful Thinking Won't Help Climate

Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, *MDAS Conservation Chair*

**We Have Only 10 Years to Make Massive Change Happen.
This is a Choice. Make it Now.**



U.N. REPORT:

Humans have pushed climate into 'unprecedented' territory

Without rapid greenhouse gas reductions,
scientists warn of more catastrophes

(Angelos Tzortzinis/AFP/Getty)

Even if you don't really follow the news, this summer it's been next to impossible to not be aware of the many extreme weather events causing death and destruction around the world. Floods in Europe, fires around the Mediterranean, and heat waves that have killed hundreds in the Pacific Northwest. And yes, climate change is making these extremes more widespread, more frequent, and more intense. It doesn't have to be this way. But without massive, immediate action at all levels of human society, this is just a taste of what's to come. This is the world's choice. This is YOUR choice to make. Want to REALLY do something to show how much you love your kids, grandkids, and great grandkids? Don't let this happen.

1. **Practice REAL Climate Solutions.** Visit the new climate change page of the Mt. Diablo Audubon website [HERE](#) and check out the green box on the right side for a top to bottom overview of what will allow us to avoid catastrophe and how you can make it happen.
2. **Know the Facts.** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently released a major climate change report, the first of its kind in eight years. Between then and now, scientists no longer believe the best-case

scenarios of eight years ago are possible. Far more aggressive action is needed to limit the worst of climate change. Time is running out, but there IS time to avoid utter catastrophe. Very little time. Read a great summary of the report [HERE](#), or find the report itself [HERE](#).

3. **Make Your House Climate Friendly.** Want to stop burning methane (natural gas) in your house? Want to breath cleaner air indoors, save money on your water bill, and make your yard a haven for birds and other wildlife? Want to get paid to modernize your home? Watch this year's East Bay Green Home Tour [HERE](#) to learn how.
4. **Think It's Hot This Summer?** If so, you're right. Fun fact: July was the hottest month in recorded human history. Read about it [HERE](#).
5. **Your Cool AC Is HEATING UP the Planet.** Besides the energy your appliances consume, refrigerant chemicals in your AC and refrigerator are contributing to global warming if they're not up-to-date or disposed of properly. Reduce your impact by not running your AC during peak hours, only using electricity made from renewable energy ([HERE](#)), buying energy-efficient appliances, properly recycling your refrigerator and AC when the time comes ([HERE](#) and [HERE](#)), and waiting to buy the most climate-friendly AC systems ever produced when they're available ([HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#)).

Pacheco Marsh/Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Update

Alan Bade, *MDAS Community Science Advisory & Board Member-at-Large*

The Lower Walnut Creek restoration project is now well underway! This project will restore approximately 230 acres of tidal marsh where the 150-square mile Walnut Creek watershed drains into Suisun Bay. Decades of floodplain and industrial development, dredging fill, and well-meant efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers and others channelized the creek and degraded the original marsh. At the same time, the new impervious coverage of a growing urban area decreased filtration and increased the channel's flow volume during flood events. The Army Corps miscalculated how much sediment would collect at the base of Walnut Creek, leading to the necessity for a modern makeover.

Fortunately, a fresh approach was taken after many years of planning by the Contra Costa County Flood Control District and the Army Corps. The new design met local needs as well as Corps standards but required deauthorization from the 1960s-era federal project. Local control through an act of Congress enabled faster implementation and financing.

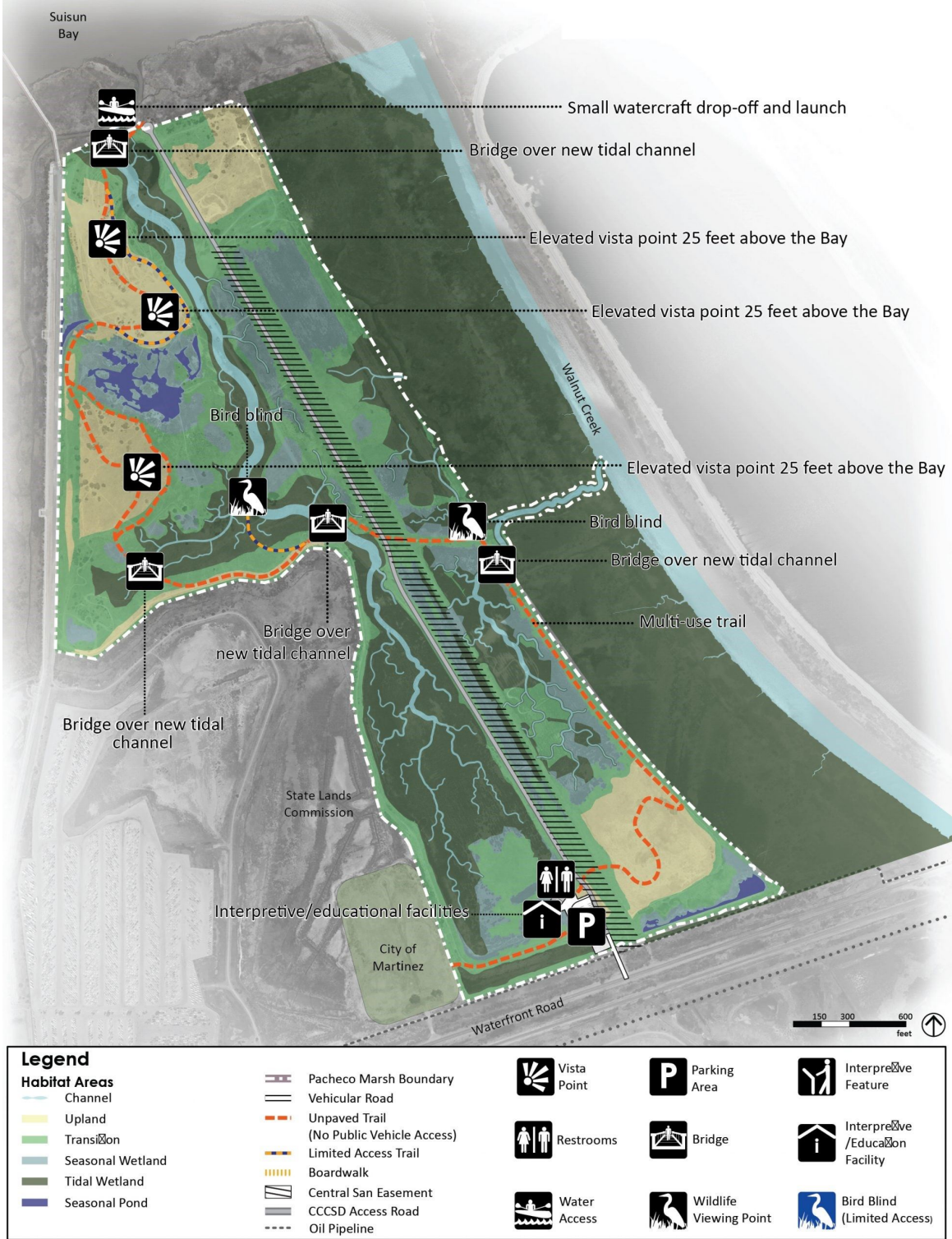


Artist's rendition of what a restored Lower Walnut Creek could look like.

It's important to remember the restoration accomplishes twin goals of improving habitat and enhancing flood conveyance. The new system will reduce or eliminate the need for destructive dredging and re-open a clogged flood control channel. But it will also be a fantastic wildlife habitat! Birds will quickly find the new marsh once native plants and tides are re-established. The new marshlands will be excellent habitat for the seldom-seen Black Rail, along with many other birds. We can expect that birders will quickly add to the 80 species recorded at the **Pacheco Marsh ebird hotspot**.

You can view a history of this project and its ecological conditions on the CC County Flood Control District's website along with webcams showing daily progress **HERE**. I also recommend following the District's **Facebook page**, as they are posting many in-progress photos with explanations. Photos are added once a week, so by scrolling, you get a good sense of how a new tidal marsh is being constructed.

The District has partnered with the **John Muir Land Trust** (JMLT) and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to build **recreational opportunities** at the restored marsh. JMLT will build 2.4 miles of trails, elevated vistas, bird blinds, a kayak launch, and an educational facility while the EBRPD hopes to extend the Iron Horse Trail along lower Walnut Creek to the **Waterbird Regional Preserve**. MDAS has proudly contributed to JMLT's fundraising for their improvements.



The latest recreation concept for Pacheco Marsh.

I encourage birders and park enthusiasts to follow the project's progress. A **recent article in the East Bay Times** is well worth reading. Contra Costa residents should be proud of the collaborative partnership our Flood Control District has taken with the John Muir Land Trust and the East Bay Regional Park District. Soon, we will be celebrating a new fantastic birding area! Completion is expected in 2023.

Field Trip Resumption
 Jerry Britten, MDAS President



Great news! Mt. Diablo Audubon Society is restarting field trips this fall, after a year-and-a-half hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are some changes from the way we used to do things, however. First, there will be a sign-up process for each field trip, accessible on our website [HERE](#). By signing up, you will be acknowledging the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#). Second, some of the trips may require limited participation due to traffic/parking limitations. The sign-up process will allow us to manage this.

The biggest change to previous years is that, due to safety concerns brought about by the ongoing COVID-19 situation, MDAS will no longer organize or meet up at staging areas for carpooling. Participants are encouraged to arrange their own carpools with people they are comfortable traveling with, but must expect to provide their own transportation to meet at the trip destination. This is the main reason why participation may be limited on some excursions. Some historical destinations will be abandoned for now, as well, due to traffic/parking considerations.

As usual, the field trips will be ranked according to difficulty:

Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths.

Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough terrain.

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

MDAS Field Trips

You can always view the latest MDAS field trip dates and descriptions on the MDAS website [HERE](#). Upcoming field trips include:

Jewel Lake, Tilden Regional Park

Thursday, September 2, 7:30 AM–11:00 AM

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979

A short walk along Wildcat Creek and around Jewel Lake in Tilden Park. Possible highlights include fall warblers, Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatch, Pacific Wren, and maybe an early Varied Thrush.

This hike is limited to 20 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). All field trips require registration and may have a limit on the total number of participants. Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary

Monday, October 4, 7:30 AM–11:00 AM

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979

A visit to the Alameda shoreline as the tide rises should produce good views of shorebirds. A viewing platform and trails will give us excellent opportunities to study these birds at close range. We may drive to other nearby locations for additional birding.

This hike is limited to 20 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). All field trips require registration and may have a limit on the total number of participants. Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

More Field Trip Destinations

In addition to the scheduled MDAS Field Trips, you may want to consider birding on your own at the following birding destinations.

Hayward Regional Shoreline, Hayward

This is a very popular location for walkers, anglers, and birders. Parking at the Winton Avenue parking lot is best at the first area before entering through the open gate. One can walk to the low, elevated mound known as "Mt. Trashmore." Can you guess what is below the dirt and short grass vegetation? It is about a half-mile out to the edge of San Francisco Bay along the flood control channel. Going north past another landfill area brings one to a large, mostly dry mudflat known as "Frank's Dump." This can be shorebird heaven in late summer and fall, as they either gather for the winter or use the area as a stopping point during their southerly migration. One can see Willets, Marbled Godwits, Red Knots, Short-billed Dowitchers, Ruddy Turnstones, Black-bellied Plovers, and the occasional Pacific Golden-Plover. Migrant passerines may be seen in the trees and weedy areas near the parking lot; raptors can be anywhere.

Outer Point Reyes, Point Reyes

The Outer Point Reyes area is a wonderful place to find fall migrants, many of them Eastern passerine vagrants. The best places to check are the trees around the visitor center and monument at Drake's Beach, the trees at the Mendoza Ranch, the trees at the Nunes Ranch, the trees around the residence at the Fish Docks, and the trees near the residence above the lighthouse. Some of the specialty migrants have included Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Chestnut-sided, Connecticut, Black-and-white, Magnolia, Prothonotary, Yellow-throated, and Black-throated Blue Warblers. We have seen Yellow-green, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos, Orchard Orioles, Ovenbirds, American Redstarts, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Peregrine Falcons, and Broad-winged Hawks. Look on the water for Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, Cormorants, and Loons. The chance to see migrants is very much dependent on the weather; the absence of winds from the northwest and an overcast night sky will help trap these land birds at the Outer Point. Be sure to check the [National Park Service Point Reyes website](#) for road closure information.

Hawk Hill, Marin Headlands

The fall southward migration of raptors can be quite spectacular if one is in a particularly good location. As birds fly south along the California coast, they eventually arrive at the Golden Gate, the one-mile wide opening to our bay. They don't quite know what to do, as birds don't like flying over the water. As a consequence, raptors congregate at what is now known as Hawk Hill above the Golden Gate Bridge, before finally making the jump across the gap. The [Golden Gate Raptor Observatory](#) conducts a count every fall of all the raptors. This year, the area where the counters stand is closed to the public, but anyone can stand nearby at Battery 129, where in normal times public demonstrations occur on Saturdays. Parking should be easier on a weekday. Before going, check the [GGRO website](#).

Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary, Alameda

***Editor's Note:** There is currently no entry into the Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary due to ongoing restoration work. Be sure to check the link above for the most up-to-date information.*

This Alameda site is really good for shorebirds, as well as gulls, waders, and others. Our field trip would go one-and-a-half hours before a high tide. Check a tide table before going to learn the best time to arrive. Parking is usually available along Shore Line Drive.

Abbotts Lagoon, Point Reyes National Seashore

We generally visit this location later in the month of October, but any time would be good. It requires driving to Point Reyes and turning onto Pierce Point Road. A one-and-a-half mile walk through the coastal habitat brings one to a bridge over the upper lagoon. Another 1/2 mile walk across sand and along the edge of the outer lagoon will bring one to the beach. A more rigorous 5,100 mile swim will take one to Japan. Birds we often see on this trip include sparrows, shorebirds, and raptors. The outer lagoon

frequently has a good selection of shorebirds that will stay most of the winter. Snowy Plovers nest along the beach and south of the outer lagoon—they are often easy to find. American Pipit flocks need to be checked for possible Red-throated Pipits. Later in October, we often have a good selection of raptors including Red-tailed and Ferruginous Hawks, Northern Harriers, and White-tailed Kites. Check the [Point Reyes National Seashore website](#) for access updates. While some Point Reyes sites are closed as of this writing, Abbotts Lagoon is open.

Bodega Bay

Not only is Bodega Bay famous for its role in the Hitchcock movie *The Birds*, but it is also famous for the many birds that can be found there. Starting in early fall and continuing through the winter, many shorebirds and waterfowl make Bodega Harbor their winter home. Any number of locations around the harbor can be visited for birding opportunities: The Tides Restaurant, Porto Bodega, the Rail Pond, Gaffney Point, Owl Canyon, Campbell Cove, and Bodega Head, among others. Currently, Lucas Wharf and Terrapin Creek restaurants are closed, but food is available at The Tides, the crab shack at the Spud Point Marina, and some items at Diekmann's Store. A detailed description of bird-watching spots may be seen at [this website](#).

Other bayside locations to try are:

- [Coyote Hills Regional Park](#)
- [San Leandro Marina](#)
- [Oakland Middle Harbor Shoreline](#)
- [Emeryville Marina](#)

Within Contra Costa County, you might try:

- [McNabney Marsh](#)
- [Martinez Regional Shoreline](#)
- [Valle Vista south of Moraga](#) (EBMUD pass required)
- [Contra Loma Reservoir](#)

East Contra Costa County Birding Spots

Clifton Court Forebay

This is one of the most productive birding hotspots in the entire county, with over 200 species recorded on eBird. This can easily be an all-day birding expedition. During the fall, winter, and spring, thousands of gulls, scaup, and coots, along with myriad other waterfowl are present here. During the summer months uncommon birds and rarities such as Western Sandpiper, White-faced Ibis, and Bank Swallow can be found. Good numbers of raptors are always present, including resident Bald Eagles. Great Horned Owls are often seen. Otters and even sea lions can frequently be observed. The parking area is at the end of Clifton Court Road off of Highway J4 a few miles southeast

of Byron. It's an out-and-back trip, as the paved levee road goes 90% of the way around the reservoir, leaving an open stretch of water between you and your car. Going to the end of this road and back is an approximately 16-mile roundtrip, so it is best explored with a bicycle, electric scooter, or other mode of transportation. A 5–6-mile roundtrip takes you to out to Eucalyptus Island, where there are large rookeries of Double-crested Cormorants, egrets, and herons in-season. Out here are also good-quality dirt levee roads, connected to the paved road, that overlook very productive marshland, slough, and brush habitat along Italian Slough and Old River. The entire route is exposed with no shade, and can be windy at times.

Round Valley Regional Park

This 2,191-acre preserve contains non-native grassland, oak woodland/savannah, shrubland, and riparian woodland plant communities. The park entrance is off of Marsh Creek Road between Deer Valley Road and Camino Diablo intersections. The park has become very popular with local residents, so the large parking lot often fills up on weekends. According to eBird, 145 species have been recorded here. Typical woodland birds can be found, as well as grassland birds in the open valley that makes up a large fraction of the park. Sometimes, large flocks of Long-billed Curlews forage in the valley during the fall and winter. The best birding is at the back of the park, along its southwestern edge that abuts Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and Los Vaqueros Watershed land. This is about 3 miles from the trailhead, so a mountain bike trip is a good way to explore it along the mostly gently sloping Miwok Trail. Back in this area Lewis's Woodpeckers have been reliable for several years. As many as a dozen at one time have been recorded. There are a couple of stock tanks in this area, which are good for loitering near to watch several species of birds come to take a drink. The steep ridgeline at the park's southwestern border was scorched, and, in some areas, burned to bare dirt by the August 2020 wildfires. It will be interesting to see how this impacts local birdlife during the next several years.

Creekside Park (including Creek Road), Brentwood

This is the birding hotspot for fall, winter, and spring rarities in East County. Several species are regularly seen here that are uncommon though findable farther west, but very scarce in East County. Such birds include Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. Often, scarce winter warblers such as Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, and Orange-crowned are recorded. Over-wintering Western Tanagers as well as vagrant Hammond's Flycatchers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, and Scaly-breasted Munias have also been seen. The southern terminus of the Marsh Creek Regional Trail begins at the trailhead at the intersection of Concord Ave. and Creek Road in south Brentwood. A walk north from the trailhead up Creek Road along the riparian corridor of Marsh Creek is quite productive. Less than ½ mile north of the trailhead, looking through a fence onto a golf-course pond can provide views of several waterfowl species. A few yards north from here, there is usually water in the creek that many birds come to for bathing and drinking. Continue along Creek Road, looking over the field to the left for raptors and other fly-bys. Following this is a section of the road

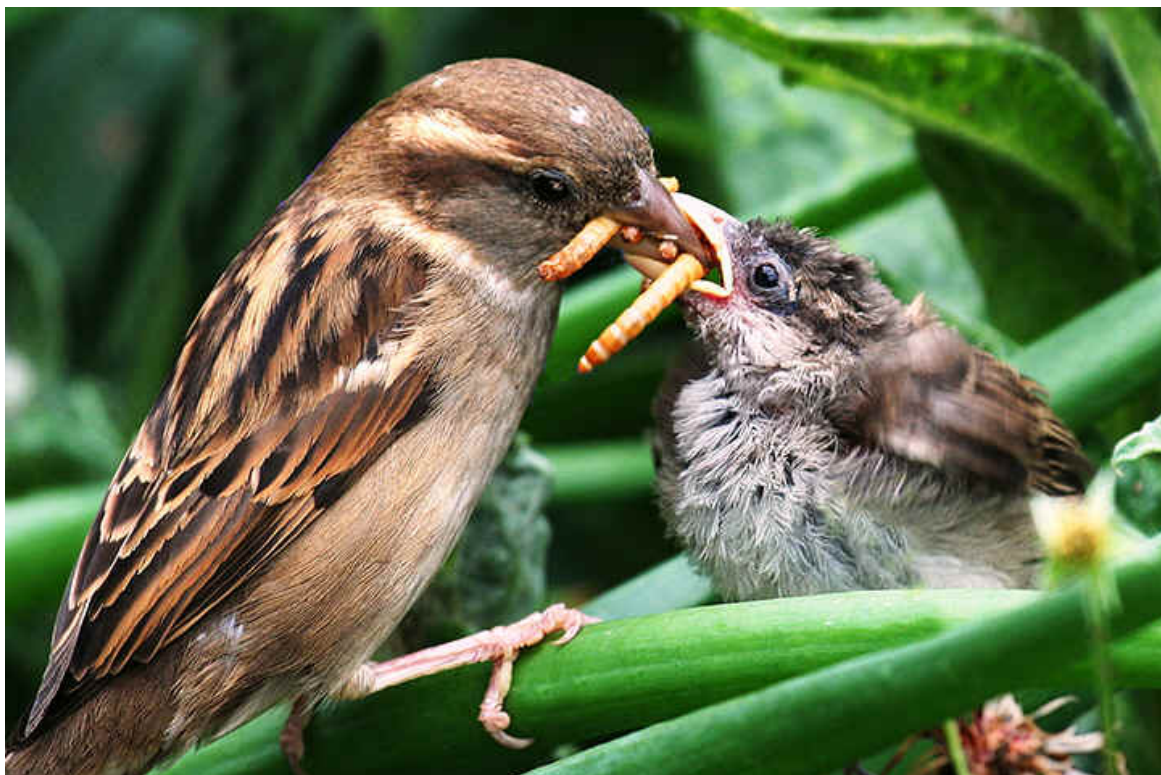
with a lot of toyon and other berry-bearing shrubs where Purple Finches, Cedar Waxwings, Hermit Thrushes, and other frugivorous birds can be found. Past this, continue along Marsh Creek Trail over the pedestrian bridge spanning the canal, and enter Creekside Park. This park, especially the riparian habitat along the eastern edge, continues to be productive. Continue along this edge of the park to its end at Crescent Drive. In the fall and winter of 2020–2021, many observers saw the vagrant Plumbeous Vireo along this section. This is about a 3-mile, flat, out-and-back roundtrip, and is the southern end of the Marsh Creek Regional Trail System that extends another 8–10 miles all the way to Big Break Regional Shoreline in Oakley.

To Rescue or Not to Rescue

Mike Eliot, *MDAS Board Member-at-Large*



This year seems to have brought on an increasing problem for birds because more people are staying home and having contact with their backyard wildlife. Many more baby birds are being found on the ground and people are trying to rescue or feed them. This can be the most detrimental thing one can do. To know what to do, one starts with determining whether the baby is a nestling or a fledgling. Fledglings are mostly covered with feathers, while nestlings may be bare or nearly so. Fledglings also hop around, while nestlings may not move or may drag themselves around by their wings.



Female House Sparrow feeding mealworms to fledgling

Photo: Mike Eliot

Many of those who have “rescued” fledglings think they can keep them and feed them until they are ready to fly away. But most of these birds are near ready to fly and are usually being surveilled by their parents. This is an important step in their development and may be stunted by them being “rescued”. In addition, appropriate foods are not usually available to novice rescuers, so they cannot provide these birds their necessary diets. The best one can do is to leave a fledgling alone. Only if the bird is in danger from predators is it helpful to put it in a bush or tree. Handling it gently is not a problem. If a bird can flee from a person easily, it should be left alone.

If the bird is a nestling, the first thing to do is try to locate the nest. If it is found and is accessible, it does no harm to put the nestling back into the nest. The parents will continue to care for it, even if it has been touched. If the nest cannot be found, one can make a temporary nest using a small basket and shredded paper. Trying to feed or keep it will most likely end with negative results. The nest and nestling should then be placed securely as high as possible in a tree or bush near where the baby was found. One should keep an eye on it and, if the parents do not locate the nestling within a few hours, it may be necessary to take it to a wildlife hospital (see the **MDAS Injured Bird Guidance** section for a list of resources that can help).



Nestling sparrow

Photo: Mike Eliot

If a fledgling or nestling is injured, shows signs of illness or inability to move, a rescue may be necessary. If it is very hot out, the bird may be dehydrated. In any case, the bird should be put into a box with small holes, kept warm or cool depending on the weather,

and taken to a wildlife hospital or rehabilitation center as soon as possible. Again, it should not be fed.

Living and interacting with backyard birds is a rewarding experience for all and a great learning tool for children. We may have parenting instincts, but parenting wild birds should be left to their own parents whenever possible.

Mike Eliot

Wild Birds Unlimited, Pleasant Hill

Events

Be sure to check the **MDAS website** for the most up-to-date listing of events.

Sleuthing Into the Secret Lives of Wood Ducks

August 26, 2021

Sleuthing into the secret lives of wood ducks—new research reveals a complex underworld of a unique California bird.

Please join Dr. John Eadie, *Dennis G. Raveling Professor in Waterfowl Biology* at UC Davis to hear about the natural history, ecology, and conservation of this interesting and beautiful local bird!



TULEYOME

Date:	August 26, 2021
Time:	7:00 PM–9:00 PM
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Presenter:	Dr. John Eadie
Sponsor:	Tuleyome
Cost:	Free
Registration:	Click here to register online

Salesforce Park Bird Walk

September 1, 2021

Sitting above the new Transbay Terminal in downtown San Francisco, Salesforce Park is an oasis for humans and urban birds alike. Join this meditative and educational walk, which will focus on observing resident and migrant birds. This walk recurs on the first Wednesday of each month. Observant kids of all ages are welcome with adults.



Meet in Salesforce Park at the Main Plaza. The rooftop park has several access points (see **MAP**). We will walk about 2/3 mile on a flat, paved trail that is ADA-compliant (i.e., wheelchair accessible and stroller-friendly). Restrooms are available on the park level. Bring binoculars if you have them; we'll also have a few to borrow. Heavy rain cancels.

Date:	September 1, 2021
Time:	8:00 AM–9:00 AM
Location:	Salesforce Park
Trip leader:	Whitney Grover
Sponsor:	Golden Gate Audubon Society & Salesforce Park
Cost:	Free
Registration:	Not required - see HERE for more info.

Magic & Mystery of Migration—4 sessions on Tuesdays

September 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2021

This summer, somewhere in Canada, a Blackpoll Warbler will hatch, fledge, and grow to young adulthood. Come August, this half-ounce bird will fly 3,000 miles to the Maritime provinces and then out over the Atlantic Ocean to catch a northwest tail wind that will take it south to around Bermuda. A northeast trade wind will carry it back to land to complete its 80-hour journey over 2,000 miles of open ocean. Why? Join Bruce Mast for a four-week exploration of the magic and mystery of bird migration. We'll consider why birds migrate, how they navigate, how they fuel their marathon flights, and the evolutionary forces that have shaped migration over the millennia.



Recordings of the lecture presentations will be available to class participants for a limited period of time.

Date:	September 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2021
Time:	7:00 PM–8:30 PM

Location:	Zoom online meeting
Presenter:	Bruce Mast
Sponsor:	Golden Gate Audubon Society
Cost:	\$50 (MDAS members get the GGAS rate)
Registration:	Click here to register online

Snowy Plover Conservation in the Bay Area

September 9, 2021

The Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) is a federally threatened, ground-nesting shorebird species that breeds, roosts, and forages along the Pacific Coast from Southern Washington down to the tip of Baja California. While their typical habitat across the range is sandy beaches, within the San Francisco Bay, where up to 10% of the range-wide breeding population may be found, Snowy Plovers instead utilize salt panne habitat found within former salt production ponds. Snowy Plovers in the Bay Area face unique challenges to recovery compared to other parts of the range due to their habitat type and location within a large urbanized area. For close to 20 years, SFBBO has been working closely with federal, state, and local agencies to better understand these challenges and help Snowy Plovers meet regional recovery goals. This talk will focus on recent Snowy Plover conservation successes and challenges within the South Bay, especially within Alameda County, which annually holds the majority of Snowy Plover breeding in the Bay Area.



Date:	September 9, 2021
Time:	5:00 PM–6:30 PM
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Presenter:	Ben Pearl

Sponsor:

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Cost:

\$5

Registration:

[Click here to register online](#)

Birds & Mammals of Tanzania

September 9, 2021

Famous for having the biggest concentrations of large mammals on the planet, Tanzania is also an exciting birding destination. This presentation will feature birds travelers would be likely to see on a safari to Northern Tanzania in the winter, before migratory birds have left for their breeding grounds, as well as some of the large mammals. Birds you will meet include the Hammerkop, a compulsive nest-builder, the Sacred Ibis, extirpated from Egypt but easily seen in Tanzania, the vulnerable Southern Ground Hornbill, the endangered Saddlebilled Stork and other storks, Ostriches, Coursers, Bee Eaters, the Secretary Bird, and a variety of eagles



Date:

September 9, 2021

Time:

7:30 PM–9:30 PM

Location:

Zoom online webinar

Presenter:

Wendy Dreskin

Cost:

Free

Registration:

[Click here to register online](#)

Purple Martins in The Central Valley: Going, Going, Gone?

September 16, 2021

Purple Martins have been in long-term decline in California due to factors such as habitat loss, competition with the European Starling, disturbance from construction projects, and declines in their insect food supply due to neonicotinoid insecticide use. Dan Airola has been studying and working for over two decades to conserve the last Central Valley population of Purple Martins, which nest in elevated freeways and overpasses in Sacramento. This program will present his study results and describe conservation measures that have been implemented and are needed to protect this species and help it recover.



Date:	September 16, 2021
Time:	7:00 PM–8:30 PM
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Speaker:	Dan Airola
Sponsor:	Golden Gate Audubon Society
Cost:	Free
Registration:	Click here to register online

September Gallery



MDAS June 3 Monthly Program Meeting:
Krista Vossekuil and Rosalie Howarth showed us the winning photos from the Second Annual MDAS Photo Contest.

View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).



MDAS June 3 Monthly Program Meeting:
Lauren Schmaltz discussed parrot conservation and welfare efforts for protecting one of the most threatened groups of birds on earth.
View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).



Townsend's Warbler

Photo: Matt Brady/Macaulay Library at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML45702491\)](#)



Common Yellowthroat

Photo: Ryan Sanderson/Macaulay Library at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML249203731\)](#)



Wood Duck

Photo: Ryan Schain/Macaulay Library at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML35998481\)](#)



Snowy Plover

Photo: Sharif Uddin/Macaulay Library at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML237415341\)](#)

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Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Leadership

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