



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

The Quail

Volume 67, Number 8

MAY 2022

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, May 5

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** Board Announcements
- 7:15 PM** Main Program: *Soundscapes to Landscapes with Dr. Leo Salas and David Leland*
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

Main Program: *Soundscapes to Landscapes with Dr. Leo Salas and David Leland*

The Earth's biodiversity and associated ecosystem services are in a severe state of decline due to human pressure, however, our knowledge of these changes and impacts is often incomplete and limited to few and small areas. Join us to learn how **Soundscapes to Landscapes** is using a combination of multiple technologies and the power of citizen/community scientists to fill this data gap – starting with a focus on Sonoma County bird diversity.

Soundscapes to Landscapes (S2L) is a science-based project that seeks to advance the monitoring of animal biodiversity across large areas using audio recorders, Earth-observing sensors, and Artificial Intelligence. In this special presentation, we will hear from two of the Soundscapes to Landscapes team members about their innovative approach and some of their findings thus far.

Dr. Leo Salas is a Quantitative Ecologist in the Ecoinformatics and Climate Solutions group at Point Blue Conservation Science. Originally from Venezuela, he obtained his MSc in Wildlife Conservation and Ph.D. in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has worked with a variety of organisms and ecosystems, and specializes in novel data analysis methods, and modeling biological systems at large spatial and temporal scales, including future climate scenarios. David Leland is a member of Madrone Audubon, National Audubon, and Redwood Regional Ornithological Society. He has been on the S2L team since 2017, participating in community outreach, field placement of recorders, analysis of recordings to identify bird species present, and development of models for individual species of interest. In addition, he is also working with his Sonoma County community on ways to reduce carbon emissions.

Webinar Access Info:

Date: Thursday, May 5, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM–8:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Location: Zoom online meeting

Access: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85611148464?pwd=aFBHbzZCVVpSY1UwMmZDazVRWIRiZz09>

Meeting ID: 856 1114 8464

Passcode: 691644

Phone access: **One tap mobile**
+16699006833,,87826809099#,,,,*639163# US (San Jose)
+14086380968,,87826809099#,,,,*639163# US (San Jose)

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+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 856 1114 8464
Passcode: 691644

Find your local
number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kes5ZROHtA>

President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Update on Wood Duck Nest Monitoring

As I wrote about for the March newsletter, MDAS is sponsoring a Wood-Duck nest box monitoring effort at Upper San Leandro and San Pablo Reservoirs. Over the course of the spring, we installed/refurbished a total of 32 boxes at San Pablo (of which 4 are owl boxes), and 18 boxes at Upper San Leandro. Some of the latter can be seen when hiking along the Valle Vista section of the watershed (permit from EBMUD required).

We are now in the monitoring phase, with a small group of volunteers going out almost every weekend to check a subset of these boxes. On April 3, I accompanied Biologist Andrew Ford on a section of San Pablo Reservoir. Of the twelve boxes checked, we found only one occupied by a hen Wood Duck, incubating 14 eggs. However, we found two Western Screech Owls in two separate boxes near each other. We banded and measured these birds and put them back in their boxes – the photo attached shows one of the birds sporting its new bling.

To date, 6 boxes are occupied by Wood Ducks, with a total of 69 eggs being incubated. It's not too late for new nests to be established. We will continue to monitor the boxes until the fledglings leap out of their tree and follow their mother down to the water. If any readers would like to volunteer for this effort, please contact me at president@mtdiabloaudubon.org. Please be aware that you will likely encounter some poison oak at many of the sites.

In **Chapter news**, we welcome Rochelle Fortier to the Board as Membership

Chair, and wish Bill Chilson safe travels as he begins his extended stay abroad. Be on the lookout for our annual elections ballot coming to your email inbox in early May, and be sure to cast a vote for our elected officers, and for our bylaw amendment as well.

Stay safe, and get out there for the Birds!

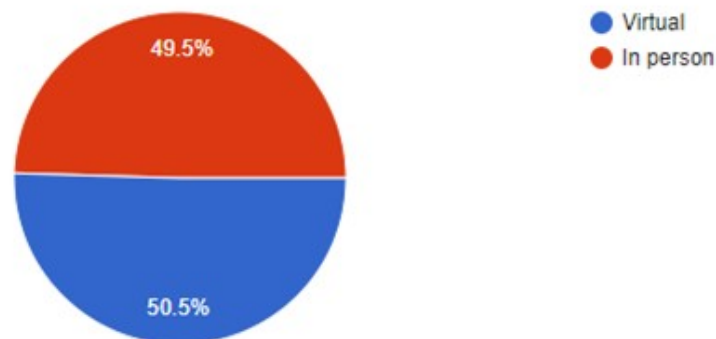
Membership Meetings for 2022-23

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Last month, we sent out an email poll asking our membership for opinions on how our general meetings should be conducted next year. The results were very interesting. Out of 105 respondents, 53 preferred all-virtual meetings, while 52 preferred in-person meetings. I expected the vote to be close, but (!).

What is your preference for the 2022-2023 membership Mt. Diablo Audubon Society meetings?

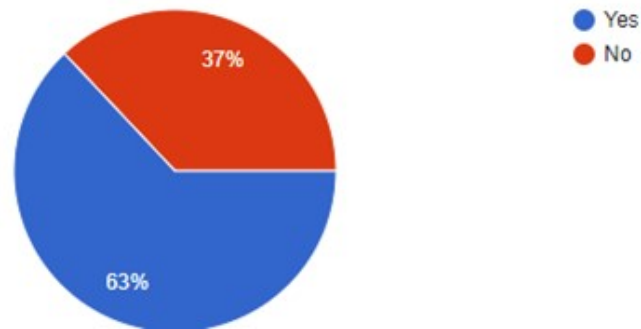
105 responses



We then asked members if they preferred an alternating schedule of in-person and virtual meetings. This time, there was a significantly higher level of consensus, favoring this approach by a 63%/37% margin.

Would you be in favor of an alternating schedule of in-person and virtual membership meetings?

108 responses

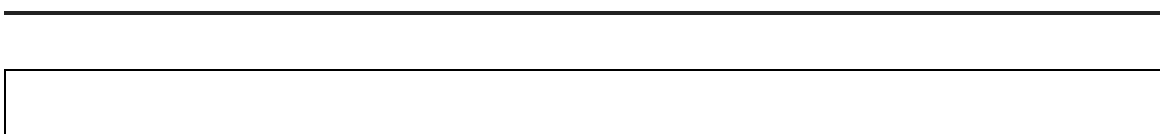


There are a number of advantages of virtual meetings. Our organizational carbon footprint becomes smaller. People can enjoy the presentations from the comfort of their homes. We can attract speakers from farther afield, and we save on hall rental fees. However, there is no substitute for the human element of in-person interaction, and the chance to catch up with old friends, or make new ones.

Based on your input, the Board has decided on the following schedule for our 2022-23 membership meetings:

September:	In-Person
October:	Virtual
November:	Virtual
December:	In-Person
January:	Virtual
February:	Virtual
March:	In-Person
April:	Virtual
May:	Virtual
June:	In-Person

This schedule offers our members the chance to catch up and connect at the start of the season, make contact just prior to the holidays, and see each-other off at the end. We hope that this schedule will be a good compromise and offer the broadest appeal to our members. Thank you for your responses and opinions on this very important matter!



Got Photos to Share?

Ariana Rickard, *Vice President*

Do you have some cool nature photos you would like to share with your fellow Mt. Diablo Audubon members? We are looking for a speaker for our in-person meeting on Thursday, September 1. If you have any photos or programs you would like to share, please contact Ariana Rickard, our Program Chair, at vicepresident@mtdiabloudubon.org. Feel free to send along any other ideas you have for speakers and programs for our upcoming meetings!

Thanks for your help.

Welcome, New Members!

Bill Conaway, Pleasanton

Joan Duffield, Clayton

Bethi Carver Gibb, Bethel Island

Anna Gil, San Francisco

Lisa Kalil, Walnut Creek

Terry Mead, Orinda

Bruce Phelps, Clayton

Judy Sierra, Oakland

Anna Gil, San Francisco

Election: Look For Your Email Ballot May 6th!

Rosalie Howarth and Hugh Harvey, *Nominating Committee Chair*

The annual election for Officers of the Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 term takes place in early May. Look for an email with "Ballot" or "Election" in the subject line, vote, and return it as soon as possible. Please check your spam filter or junk folder if you don't see it. There are two items on the ballot this year: the officer candidates, and a bylaws/articles revision. Please vote on both!

A slate of candidates has been proposed by the Nominations Committee that consists of: Jerry Britten continuing as President, Ariana Rickard re-upping as Vice-President, Steve Buffi staying on in the role of Treasurer, and

Carol Pachl remaining as Secretary.

We also need your vote on a revision in the Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation to change the minimum number of Directors required to operate from 12 to 9. Read the full text of the proposed amendments [here](#).

Results will be announced in the June Quail and at the June 2nd membership meeting.

Please check your email for your ballot around May 6, vote on both provisions, and return it by the deadline May 16. Every Vote Counts!

All of us on the Board of Directors of Mt. Diablo Audubon thank you for your support and participation.

MDAS Helps With Statewide Tricolored Blackbird Survey

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

On April 15, 16, and 17, MDAS and GGAS members combined forces to participate in this year's statewide Tricolored Blackbird Survey. Ohlone Audubon and other chapters throughout the state also participated. This nearly 40-year triennial survey is a joint effort between Audubon California, UC Davis, and government agencies such as the CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife to monitor the distribution and abundance of tricolors, which were once one of our state's most plentiful birds. They now face many challenges. The 2008 survey estimated the statewide population at approximately 400,000 birds. The 2011 survey estimated that only 258,000 birds remained. In 2014 the estimate was only 145,000 birds, but in the 2017 estimate it went up to 177,600 birds. This survey is an excellent tool for researchers to estimate numbers and to discover where the colonies are congregating to breed, which GREATLY aids in their protection. The Survey was canceled during the pandemic for two years, so it was particularly important to conduct this year's count.

Tricolored Blackbirds breed in colonies, some of which are quite large. With habitat loss, there is an urgent need to monitor colonies in known breeding

locations and to identify new ones. Sites vary from year to year and are dependent on rainfall and climatic conditions, but numerous sites are consistently used. Climate change exacerbates habitat loss, and some sites this year simply did not have habitat of suitable height due to lack of water.

MDAS volunteers, consisting of three groups of birders, scouted potential breeding sites in marshland and other thickly vegetated areas, predominantly in East Contra Costa County, and then participated in the official survey on April 15-17. We also coordinated outings with groups from GGAS in eastern and central Alameda County. During the survey period, the birders determined the presence/absence of colonies, estimated the numbers of birds in colonies found, and recorded data on site size and characteristics.

Field data reports are still coming in from the survey teams. These data are entered into a statewide Tricolored Blackbird database maintained by UC Davis (<https://tricolor.ice.ucdavis.edu/>). A more thorough report on the results obtained is forthcoming, after the data is collected and analyzed more thoroughly. MDAS is proudly using some of our collective birding skills to help avian science and conservation!

One exciting development this year is that MDAS helped place audio recorders next to colonies. Researchers from UC Davis and Point Blue Conservation Science are studying the vocalizations of breeding colonies. They hypothesize that regional dialects exist across the state and currently don't have data from our East Bay birds. **A description of the project can be read here.** They are also studying whether CA bicolored Red-winged Blackbirds are adopting some of Tricolored Blackbird vocalizations. MDAS received permits to place recorders called "**audio moths**" on CC County Flood Control property and on CC Water District lands near Los Vaqueros Reservoir. The recorders will be active throughout the breeding cycle and will be retrieved in about 45 days. Permits may be forthcoming for EBRPD lands in the future.

A recording of a raucous Tricolored Blackbird colony out at Los Vaqueros Reservoir earlier this spring is **here**.

13th Annual Beaver Festival

One of the most surprising parts of visiting a beaver pond isn't what you see – it's what you *hear*. Even before your eyes have adjusted to the early morning light you will be dazzled with the rousing soundscape of birds, crickets, and frogs – a cacophony of buzzing, chirping, croaking, and chittering. Beavers build the neighborhood and everyone moves in. These tireless rodents create dams that slow water and are rich in nutrients to feed invertebrates, water bugs, small fish, mergansers, and wood duck. The little fish are food for bigger fish which are eventually eaten by great blue heron and river otter. A beaver pond is where coppiced trees provide dense nesting habitat for warblers and wrens, dead trees offer cavities for obligate nesters, and flooded trunks make just the right place to raise young heron – eventually the an entire impossible soundscape is lovingly populated and brought to raucous life.

It's no wonder that beavers are called "*Ecosystem Engineers*".

In 2007, the community of Martinez was faced with a dilemma when a pair of beavers settled in downtown Alhambra Creek. The city was Concerned that their dam would elevate the risk of flooding but residents wanted the creatures to stay. Worth A Dam was formed to help advocate for the beavers and educate about their value.

A heated battle ensued, blossoming into a celebrated news story that eventually forced the city to coexist with the beavers by hiring an expert from Vermont. The successful installation of the first "flow device" in California showed that coexistence was possible and set the stage for a creek filled with new birds, frogs, steelhead and otters.

After 13 years of celebrating their beavers with an annual festival, Worth A Dam and Martinez have learned both how and why to cooperate with these hard-working animals. Every summer we celebrate with a festival designed to teach other cities why beavers matter. MDAS has been part of this event since its founding days in 2008. Back then the tiny offering was barely a defiant '*yop*' on the ecological landscape – now it has become one of the largest wildlife events in the state.

The free, open-air, conservation jamboree boasts wildlife booths from all over northern California, live music, children's activities, a silent auction, and

lots of wildlife education. It provides a unique celebration of urban wildlife and citizen science. Acclaimed wildlife chalk artist Amy G. Hall from Napa will be there to illustrate the amazing wildlife of a beaver pond by creating a giant mural in the central plaza.

This year's children's activity revolves around solving the "Case of the missing salmon" – and before any curious grandchild blames its disappearance on the suspicious blue heron they will need to gather all the clues to understand what has happened and claim their prize!

Join us on June 25 from 11-4 at Susana Park in downtown Martinez to see what the Beaver Festival is all about. It's free family fun in a community setting that is impatient to be back after two years of quarantine.

And it promises to be a *dam* good time.

Despite Everything, Good Things Are Happening With Climate. Join and Build a Better Future!

Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, *MDAS Conservation Chair*

It's no secret that the bad news has pretty consistently outweighed the good on the climate front. Watch **THIS** to get a quick sense of why, at least in the US there seems to be a whole lot of inaction when big change is what's needed most. This huge problem is solvable (**HERE**), but it's now or never (**HERE**) to implement the **Solutions**. Check out good things that are happening and how you can be a part of it below.

1) For the First Time, Wind Power Was the 2nd Biggest Power Source in the US! The US hit a huge milestone this year! Wind power has beat coal and nuclear energy as the biggest power source. Natural gas took the number one spot. Clean renewable energy like wind and solar must still be massively increased as soon as possible, but this is still great news. Read more **HERE**.

2) Do You Fly? Tell Your Airline to Power it With Cooking Oil! Traveling by air is well known to be extremely bad for the climate because it's so inefficient. On average, one long flight causes more emissions than driving

more than a month in your car. Recently, for the first time, an airliner completed a whole flight using not fossil fuel, but cooking oil. Tell airlines to eliminate unnecessary routes and switch out of fossil fuels! Read more [HERE](#).

3) If You Eat Beef, Make Sure It Comes From a Happy, Eco-grazed Cow.

Eating a plant-based diet and avoiding inefficient foods that create lots of heat-trapping gas emissions, like shrimp, farmed catfish, farmed tilapia, and beef, is one of the least-expensive and most important ways to solve the climate crisis. But if you do indulge in beef once in a while, tell your store and restaurant that you want, and the planet needs, beef raised using regenerative grazing practices that are better than the climate. Check out an example [HERE](#).

4) Rethink the Car. There's good news on cars! Gas efficiency rules have been backed up by the auto industry itself ([HERE](#))! If any gas-powered cars are sold, they must be much, much more efficient than what they've required to be in the past. More mpg's means more dollars in your wallet. Of course, eliminating gas-powered cars and relying on electricity-powered transport must become the norm as quickly as possible. This has benefits for our planet, but did you know it would save hundreds of thousands of lives in the US alone ([HERE](#))? Did you know a electric cars save you money too ([HERE](#))? Quickly moving to e-transportation on a massive scale must happen in tandem with reducing the overall number of cars as well. Want to reduce cars in your city to make things safer and happier to move around? Check out what you should ask your City Council to do [HERE](#).

5) Transform Your Home For Healthier, More Reliable, Cleaner Energy!

Are you tired of PG&E? Wondering if there's an alternative that can fight climate change and put energy in the hands of your local community? Then form a micro-grid! Check them out [HERE](#) and talk to your neighbors and leaders you want a change for the better! One of the cheapest ways to help the planet and lower your bills is to make your home, office, or any building you can, more energy-efficient. Read more [HERE](#)! Also, if you've read this letter, you know that it's a fact natural gas stoves, heaters, etc, are bad for the planet and your health. Read about electric heat pumps [HERE](#) and how you can give your body and Mother Earth a break! Finally, think about how much energy you use in your home, car, or office, and think if you really need that much? Think the more devices you plug in, the better off you are?

Research shows that using more energy might actually be making you less happy. Check it out [HERE](#).

MDAS Field Trips

Hugh Harvey, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society field trips are back. 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 view and print a complete list of planned MDAS field trips for the 2022 season [HERE](#).

Upcoming field trips include:

Sat, April 30

East Contra Costa County

Randy Huey

Mon, May 9

**West Briones Regional
Park**

Mike Marchiano

Sat-Sun,
June 11-12

Yuba Pass

Hugh & Rosita Harvey

East Contra Costa County

Saturday, April 30, 7 AM to 1 PM

Leader: Randy Huey, 925-518-8439

This is a trip which often can be very hot by the finish. We will walk part of the Marsh Creek Trail, and then visit Piper Slough north of Bethel Island. Other locations are possible. Target birds include: Blue Grosbeak, Hooded Oriole, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Swainson's Hawk, Yellow-billed Magpie, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

Bring lunch, snacks, and water.

Rating: Category 2 — Moderate hiking

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Randy Huey, 925-518-8439

Meet: Marsh Creek Trailhead on Cypress Road, Oakley

Directions: Go north on I-680, exit Highway 4 toward Stockton/Pittsburg, take right Exit 30 toward CA-160/Sacramento/Rio Vista (just past Hillcrest Avenue exit; do NOT continue straight on Highway 4). Take exit 1-A East 18th/Main Street, turn right at the bottom of the exit onto Main Street, and drive through Oakley for about 4 miles, turn left onto Cypress Road. Make a U-turn at Picasso Drive, the stoplight after the railroad tracks.

This field trip is limited to 20 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration).

West Briones Regional Park

Monday, May 9, 8 AM to 1 PM

Leader: Mike Marchiano, 925-372-6328

A visit to the west entrance of Briones Regional Park in the spring offers views of spring wildflowers and spring birds. Lazuli Buntings are usually present, often the

first viewings of the year for most of us.

Bring water and snacks.

Rating: Category 2 — Moderate hiking

Elevation change: 200 feet

Leader: Mike Marchiano, 925-372-6328

Meet: Bear Creek Staging Area parking lot

Directions: From SR 24 in Orinda, drive north on Camino Pablo for about 2.25 miles, turn right on Bear Creek Road, and continue for 4.5 miles to the park entrance. Drive to the farthest parking lot on the right.

This field trip is limited to 20 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Yuba Pass

Saturday-Sunday, June 11-12, 7 AM Saturday to 1 PM Sunday

Leaders: Hugh and Rosita Harvey

This is always a productive and well-favored weekend trip to the northern Sierra which requires driving and walking, some of it over rough terrain. Saturday we will bird in the Sierra Valley for basin birds. Sunday we will be birding in the Yuba Pass area for mountain birds.

Rating: Category 2 — Walking at a high elevation

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Hugh and Rosita Harvey, 925-935-2979

Meet: Yuba Pass parking lot at top of Hwy 49

Directions: Yuba Pass is located at 6700 feet of elevation and is a popular place to see many species of California's mountain birds. It is north of Truckee on Hwy 49, between Sierraville and Sierra City. Saturday we will bird around the Sierra Valley, Sunday we will be in the mountains.

Campgrounds are closed except for possibly Sardine Lake. Hotels are Sierra Pines Resort (530-862-1151), which is the largest accommodation in Sierra City; The Buttes Resort (530-862-1170); Bassetts Station (530-862-1297); Yuba River Inn (530-862-1122). Best to make reservations early.

This field trip will be limited to 15 participants. Register [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Other Birding Opportunities:

This month is the height of migration with lots of birds arriving or passing through. Go anyplace you want to see the spectacle of spring!

Field Trip Reports

Valle Vista, March 18

Donald Lewis, *Trip Leader*

Nineteen birders enjoyed this-always nice trip around the Riche Loop trail and along the Kings Canyon trail as far as the corner lake overlook. The Upper San Leandro reservoir is almost full but most of the ducks were way down the lake where they had gathered when the lake was very low, only six weeks ago. Highlights included an early Orange-crowned Warbler and a good look at a Red-breasted Sapsucker and a close-up male Allen's Hummingbird at "Hummingbird Corner" at the bridge.

However, by far the greatest sighting was of an adult Bald Eagle making pass after pass over an unfortunate Coot with the Coot diving and swimming desperately but having to surface and dive away again and again. The eagle finally nabbed the Coot and flew around with it in its talons until landing out of sight to begin preparing its meal.

Tomales Bay, March 26

Linda Shinn, *Trip Leader*

Twelve Birders gathered at Heart's Desire Beach with hearts desiring a beautiful day filled with bird sounds and sightings. We began under partly cloudy skies wearing jackets that really felt good. By lunch, we had plenty of sunshine! A covey of California Quail greeted us with their antics. In the bay, we found Greater Scaup, Buffleheads Common Loons, Surf Scoters, an

Eared Grebe, and Double-Crested Cormorants. Along our walk to Indian Beach, we heard so many Wrentits driving us crazy as they were so difficult to spot; but not impossible, as we were rewarded with several peeks.

We heard Wilson's Warblers all along our walk getting good views now and then; one look also yielded a brilliant Common Yellowthroat. Even though Warbling Vireos and Purple Finch serenaded us, we did not get even a glimpse. Very rewarding were the interactions of at least two pairs of Osprey – gathering nesting materials, carrying small fish, and one sitting on a nest. At one spot, a beautiful Red-Shouldered Hawk overhead sounded quite upset at something? Our total species seen and/or heard was 34. A delightful day of friendship while birding.

Orinda Connector, March 30

Donald Lewis, *Trip Leader*

Nine MDAS birders had a pleasant although unsunny morning on the Orinda Connector trail which starts at the intersection of Camino Pablo and Bear Creek roads in north Orinda. Fifty species were seen or heard including a FOS House Wren. We were repeatedly surprised by the number of Great Blue Herons, in the creeks, on a hill slope, and flying by; at least ten were counted, and there were likely several more. It may be that the heron-egret nest trees at the fairly nearby EBMUD facility are in use. A pair of Common Mergansers and a Wood Duck were on the creek but not seen by many. There are 40-50 Cliff Swallow mud nests under the lip of the Briones spillway but almost all of the swallows were elsewhere this time. Everyone finally got a long look at a close Wrentit after hearing them repeatedly, as usual.

North Briones, April 5

Cheryl Abel, *Trip Leader*

A lovely walk to the Sindicich Lagoons and back was enjoyed by 10 participants. A very good look at a pair of Lark Sparrows made this the favorite bird for many in the group. Several Anna's Hummingbirds were feeding at the sticky monkeyflowers. Finally, several Ring-necked Ducks were seen at the last lagoon.

The highlight of the walk was the continuous wildflower display along the

entire route. The favorites were Mt. Diablo globe lily/fairy lantern (yes, they do exist beyond the borders of Mt. Diablo) and a nice hillside of wind poppies.

By the end of the walk, 36 species of birds were seen or heard and almost as many kinds of flowers.

Black Diamond Mines, April 12

Hugh Harvey, *Trip Leader*

It was cold and breezy, but a gorgeous day for a strenuous hike in Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. A lot of birds were missing, which may be due to the cold. A few of the birds we saw well were an Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Canyon Wren, California Thrasher, and a Hairy Woodpecker. We even had a flyby Peregrine Falcon.

The flowers were really great, too. Though we were late for Indian Warrior, we saw lots of Wild Onion, Sticky Monkey Flower, and white Globe Lilies. We had some Mariposa Lilies, Paint Brush, and Ithurial's Spears, but we were late for the Indian Warriors high on the ridge.

The group of 11 participants identified a total of 37 bird species.

Pine Canyon, April 19

Tracy Farrington, *Trip Leader*

At 8:30 am, 18 birders set out from Castle Rock Recreation Area (EBRP), Walnut Creek, on the annual MDAS Pine Canyon springtime field trip. This hike includes both the recreation area and a continuation through Diablo Foothills Regional Park up to the Mt. Diablo State Park boundary. Pine Canyon is a particular favorite not only because I'm about a five-minute drive from the trailhead, but more importantly as it expresses a mix of habitats which, in turn, support a wide diversity of bird species: residents, seasonal nesters, and migrants passing through. Weather conditions were mild; cool and overcast in the morning, clearing and warming as afternoon approached. And the last few days of rain have given us a light flow through the creek.

From the outset, we heard an Ash-throated Flycatcher and were then treated to a pair of Bullock's Orioles seen from the parking lot in a nearby oak. Several more of the flycatchers would be heard (one seen) throughout the morning, and eight more Bullock's found during our time spent. Within the recreation area, a pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks were spotted near the top of one of the Locust trees on the west side of the basketball court. A male Kestrel perched nearby, then appeared to give chase to a House Finch. Kestrels are seen none too often in this park. Shortly thereafter, Wilson's Warblers could be heard. We would have good looks, later on, at a bright Wilson's bathing in the creek. Further, towards the entrance to Foothills RP, a few smart-looking Golden-crowned Sparrows showed up, as did two White-crowned, both species soon to leave. Along the way, a few of us heard one or two Orange-crowned Warblers. We got some good looks at a couple more on the way back. Sprinkled overhead, were a few Violet-green Swallows. Many more would be seen, along with White-throated Swifts, at the Castle Rocks, where both species nest. Before getting to the rocks, the group was pleased to get good looks at a Hammond's Flycatcher, the only Empid we managed, I believe. Also heard but never seen, a singing Hutton's Vireo. The few Yellow-rumped Warblers (Audubon's) spotted were brilliant in alternate plumage. A couple of hundred yards beyond the rocks, some of us put eyes on a single male Lazuli Bunting. I see these birds up there from time to time, never in numbers.

At the picnic benches just outside the State Park, I managed to call up a couple of Warbling Vireos. Both were heard only. On our return, a perched Cooper's Hawk was spotted, a single Lark Sparrow was seen, and a trailing group discovered a singing Rufous-crowned Sparrow. All in all, the trip was relaxed and enjoyable. And we managed 53 species.

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Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Leadership

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