

[View this email in your browser](#)



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

The Quail

Volume 68, Number 2

DECEMBER 2021 – JANUARY 2022

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, December 1, 7 PM

We're meeting in a new location!

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will meet Thursday, December 1, in the McHale Room of the **Pleasant Hill Community Center at 320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill, 94523**. Parking is free at our new location.

Everyone is welcome to bring a snack to share, if they wish. As a conservation organization we encourage you to bring your own mug for coffee or tea.

- 6:30 PM** Doors Open
- 7:00 PM** Birding Info: *Northern White Rhinos*
- 7:25 PM** Announcements
- 7:40 PM** Refreshments and Raffle
- 8:00 PM** Main Program: *Birds and Agriculture*

Main Program:
***Harmonizing Bird Conservation with Food Production
in Farming Landscapes***

Daniel Karp

A critical challenge for this century is transitioning towards sustainable farming systems that simultaneously produce food and conserve wildlife. Yet conservation scientists and practitioners have traditionally fixated on protected areas and overlooked opportunities for conserving wildlife alongside us in working landscapes. Dr. Daniel Karp uses ecological research to develop strategies for co-managing agriculture for bird conservation, crop production, and food-safety outcomes, both in the tropics and here in California. For this talk, Daniel will first discuss how climate change and habitat conversion are affecting tropical bird communities, and how shifts in farming practices may mitigate their combined impacts. Then, Daniel will shift his focus to California agricultural systems, where birds play multiple roles on farms, not only consuming crops and spreading foodborne diseases, but also consuming crop pests. Daniel will outline his lab's work striving to find ways to manage California birds and take advantage of the benefits they can provide farmers, while minimizing harms to food production.

Daniel Karp is an associate professor in the Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology at UC Davis. Daniel completed his Ph.D. in 2013 and undergraduate studies in 2009 at Stanford University's Department of Biology. Following his graduate studies, Daniel became an inaugural NatureNet postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Berkeley and the Nature Conservancy. He then received a Killam Postdoctoral Fellowship to conduct research at The University of British Columbia, before beginning his position at UC Davis in 2017.

Birding Info:

The Race to Bring Northern White Rhinos Back from the Brink of Extinction

Jill Hedgecock

Northern white rhinos were deemed functionally extinct in March 2018 after the death of Sudan, the last male rhino. Currently, only two females remain on the planet. Jill Hedgecock will describe science's innovative solution to hopefully save the species.

Jill Hedgecock has long-standing roots with MDAS, serving as the International Conservation Coordinator in the early 1990s. She has a

master's degree in Environmental Management from USF and has written two rhino-inspired suspense novels to promote awareness about the plight of rhinos.

Upcoming Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, January 5, 7 PM

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

- 7:00 PM** Welcome and Introductions
- 7:05 PM** *Birding Info: 2022 Christmas Bird Counts Highlights with Jerry Britten*
- 7:25 PM** Board Announcements
- 7:30 PM** *Main Program: Highlights of a Career in Journalism with Joan Morris*
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

Main Program: *Highlights of a Career in Journalism*

Joan Morris

Joan Morris will talk about the highs, lows, and crazy assignments she had during her 44-year career as a newspaper reporter and columnist — assignments that included a double homicide on her first day on the job, a mass shooting in Concord on her shift covering night cops, wading through ankle-deep water hours after a violent prison riot, to the landing of the shuttle in a New Mexico desert, launching a community garden, and the biggest challenge of all, taking over Gary Bogue's column when he retired. Joan knew she wanted to write for newspapers in the 6th grade, when her essay on the life of a pack rat was chosen to be "published" and placed in the school library. Did it get any better than that? Yeah, it kind of did. Joan will talk about her career and how journalism changed over the years.

Joan Morris started her career in 1978 at the Artesia (N.M.) Daily Press after graduating from the University of New Mexico with a BA in journalism. She later became chief of bureau for the El Paso Times' Alamogordo and then Las Cruces bureaus. She joined the staff of what was the Contra Costa Times in 1988, taking on a number of assignments including covering the death and dying beat. In 2006, Joan became the Home & Garden editor for the Times, and then as the paper was sold and merged with other newspapers, for the Oakland Tribune and San Jose Mercury News.

In 2012, Joan was asked to take over the pets and wildlife column, replacing Gary Bogue, who started the column 42 years earlier. Joan held that position until her retirement in mid-November 2022. She continues to write the column once a week for the East Bay Times and Mercury News. Joan lives in Brentwood.

Birding Info:

Highlights Of The 2022 Christmas Bird Counts

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society President Jerry Britten will report highlights of the 2022 Christmas Bird Counts.

Webinar Access Info:

Date: Jan 5, 2022 7:00 PM Pacific Time
Time: 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
Location: Zoom online meeting
Access: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88327456278?pwd=T1gzSINHNVNFa1VqVSt6YmNCYWc0dz09>
Meeting ID: 883 2745 6278
Passcode: 306228
Phone access: **One tap mobile**
+14086380968,,88327456278#,,,,*306228# US (San Jose)

Be on the lookout for our annual fundraising campaign letter in your mailbox soon after Thanksgiving, and thank you in advance for all the support that you give us! We also have Official U.S. Fish and Wildlife Duck Stamps for sale at our in-person meeting, with of course all proceeds going towards preserving waterfowl habitat nationwide.

As for our annual **Christmas Bird Counts**, we are in good shape for the Wednesday December 14th East-County Count, but could use a few more people for the Saturday Dec. 17 Central County Count. If you want to participate on a field trip that day or count birds in your yard or immediate neighborhood, please contact mdascentralcbc@gmail.com.

Finally, for some eye-candy, a photo taken on my recent trip to Guyana.

Have a fantastic Holiday Season!

Membership Updates

Rochelle Fortier, *MDAS Membership Chair*

I want to give a warm welcome to new members who joined in October: **Jeffry Dunne** of Moraga and **Margaret Cassidy** of Pleasanton. We hope to see you at the December 1st Program Meeting, which will be in-person at the Pleasant Hill Community Center.

I have noticed that some previous members whose membership had lapsed for two or three years are renewing again! I am glad they are continuing to support bird conservation. Welcome back!

Have you been to our “Join/Renew” membership webpage? It has been completely updated to be concise and easier to navigate. Also, a short, optional volunteer interest survey was added. Visit the link mtdiabloaudubon.org/join-renew/.

As a reminder, if you have moved recently, please email me your new address at membership@mtdiabloaudubon.org. Also, I wish you Happy Holidays, Happy New Year, and Happy Birding!

A Day With Richard Crossley

Wild Birds Unlimited of Pleasant Hill is pleased to announce **A Day with Richard Crossley** on **Sunday, December 4, 2022**. Please join us at the store for either a “Learning to Look – A Field Exercise” and/or the “Past, Present and Future” talk and book signing. Richard Crossley is an internationally acclaimed birder, photographer and award-winning author of “*The Crossley ID Guide*” series. **Read Richard Crossley's bio here.**

THESE ARE FREE EVENTS BUT RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. More information will be available on our website and social media, but as Mt. Diablo Audubon members, you have early access to RSVP. Please email the store at pleasanthillwbu@gmail.com to RSVP for the following events:

Learning to Look – A Field Exercise *(Limited to 15 people each session)*

Location: **Wild Birds Unlimited**
692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Program time(s): 8:00 AM – 10:30 AM &
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Program Description: You will enjoy an intimate setting connecting with nature. You will learn to look like the experts do with Richard. This program focuses on how to understand and interpret what you are seeing, observe interesting behaviors and discover identification tricks of the birding trade!

Past, Present and Future *(Limited seating)*

Location: **Wild Birds Unlimited**
692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Program time(s): 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Program Description: Tales of lessons learned while growing up in the wild British birding scene, from travels around the world, to living in Japan and settling down in his birding utopia, Cape May, NJ. It will be a fast-paced story told in a Yorkshire brogue, through a camera lens that loves color and art, but with a strong point of view.

With humor and depth, Richard will also highlight the thoughts behind the revolutionary '*The Crossley ID Guide*' series to self-publishing his latest guide on Western Birds. He also talks about the positive impact of birds on people through Ornithotherapy: For your Mind, Body and Soul (co-authored with Holy Merker, Sophie Crossley).

Come and listen to Richard's optimistic outlook for birding, lifestyles and conservation. It's sure to change the way you think!

Climate Catastrophe Is Completely Avoidable – But It's a Choice

Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, *MDAS Conservation Chair*

If you read about climate change, most of the news you read is probably bad. True, things are not looking good for avoiding global catastrophe. The good news is, IT IS AVOIDABLE (**HERE**). But it is a choice that the vast majority of us (yes, all humans), must work furiously to make a reality. You don't want to lie to your grandkids. You want to tell them you made the right choice and acted in a big way. What are the consequences of doing nothing? US cities feeling like the Middle East (**HERE**), for one. Of course, it is not just in its own interest for the US to stop climate change in its tracks, it is also the just thing to do since rich countries have caused the most harm to the planet (**HERE**). Read below to walk the walk.

1. **Get to Work Restoring Forest Habitats** – Especially in the tropics. It should surprise no one that many of the areas most important for protecting birds on the planet are the ones that must be restored to both ensure the survival of birds and millions of plant and animal

species, but also stop climate catastrophe ([HERE](#) and [HERE](#)). Donate or mobilize your community to contribute to these efforts directly, but avoid common mistakes. There is definitely a wrong way to do restoration, and many well-intentioned (and not-so-well-intentioned) efforts have fallen into those traps ([HERE](#)). Restoring tropical forests the right way will make your life thousands of miles away a lot better.

2. **Say Yes to Renewable Energy** – At home and on the community level. Call your State and Federal government representatives and ask what they're doing to make a huge, rapid transition to wind and solar energy. There's a right way to do this: comprehensive policy, and talking to all stakeholders to identify areas of least conflict. People that care about the environment can help by celebrating good news ([HERE](#) and [HERE](#)), saying yes to good projects ([HERE](#) and [HERE](#)), understanding the scale of change necessary ([HERE](#)), realizing BIG change needs to happen FAST ([HERE](#)), and being able to talk about the difference between false narratives ([HERE](#)) and issues that do legitimately need to be solved ([HERE](#)).
3. **Want Less Traffic, More Fun, Healthier Planet?** – Then spread the word to your community and ask decision-makers to make the necessary changes. Experts know how to solve traffic jams ([HERE](#)), so ask decision-makers to listen and make the changes. Also, say YES to SOME development. The suburbs are worse for the planet than cities that are denser ([HERE](#)). If a multi-story apartment complex is being proposed within a developed city, that's a lot better than sprawl at the edge. Recognize some change is good, and tell leaders the same.
4. **Enjoy Healthier, More Delicious, More Climate Friendly Food** – A massive amount of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by transporting food long distances ([HERE](#)). Check the label. If it's from another continent, choose a California-grown alternative instead. Ask your school, business, caterer, and favorite restaurants to do the same. Reducing your meat intake to the equivalent of two burgers a week would help the world in a HUGE way ([HERE](#)). It doesn't matter that much if it's organic or free range ([HERE](#)), avoiding beef and other red meat will always be the easiest, best choice. And now it's easier than ever to know which restaurants are good for the planet ([HERE](#)), and which aren't. Make a wise, delicious choice, and don't just make it for yourself, talk and move

your community to act. Check out some large-scale ideas on how to do it **HERE**.

MDAS Field Trips

Matt Tarlach, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*

The 2022-2023 field trip season is in high gear! Descriptions of upcoming trips may be found on the **Calendar** along with links for registration.

Pre-registration, currently handled online through Eventbrite, is required to ensure that groups are not overcrowded. As group size is limited, be aware of the need to sign up early to make sure you get a spot! If you won't be able to attend a trip that you've signed up for please cancel via Eventbrite to open that spot up for someone else. And please note that registration will close two days before the trip date, so the leader can know how many to expect.

Out of respect for the health of our members and community, we continue to ask trip participants to take sensible precautions. MDAS events do not require carpooling — though participants are of course free to make their own arrangements. And 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.

Our chapter now has an account on the eBird app for collecting and reporting our field trip observations. This will allow us to share sightings, photos, and notes more easily, and to have our sightings contribute to research that's important for conservation. If you've submitted checklists to eBird while on past MDAS outings, please "Share" them with the eBird account "MDAS Fieldtrips."

Take a look at the checklists already submitted, here:

<https://ebird.org/profile/MzMzMDExMQ/world>

Note that some excursions we had planned to repeat this year are at risk of being skipped, for want of leaders. New trip leaders are always needed! This is a fun way to serve our chapter's mission while sharing a day out in nature with

your fellow enthusiasts. If you're interested in serving as a trip leader please contact Matt Tarlach, our Field Trip Coordinator: mtar925@gmail.com. He will send you the one-page "Guidelines for Field Trip Leaders" and outline what's required. The most important thing is to get there on time — bird-spotting is a group effort!

MDAS Field Trips

You can view and print a complete list of planned MDAS field trips for the 2022 - 2023 season [HERE](#).

Upcoming field trips include:

Sacramento & Colusa National Wildlife Refuges

Saturday, December 3, 8:15 AM - 5:00 PM

Sacramento and Colusa National Wildlife Refuges are premier locations to see massive flocks of Snow and White-fronted Geese and tons of other waterfowl, raptors and other birds. They are must-see annual winter destinations. We will drive the auto tour routes and stop at the viewing platforms at both of these refuges, and visit a couple of other nearby locations.

Rating: 1 - Easy

Distance: Little walking, but plenty of driving, 250-300 miles.

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Jerry Britten, (925) 321-5332

Meet: North Dunnigan rest area on I-5 at 8:15 AM

Directions: Go north on I-680, cross the Benica Bridge (toll), merge onto I-80 East at Cordelia. At Vacaville, merge onto I-505 North, follow for 34 miles and merge onto I-5 North just south of Dunnigan. Continue past the town to the rest stop. This is an all day trip and we will not be home until after dark.

This hike is limited to 15 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration). [Register for this event HERE](#) (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

NEW TRIP!

The Sandhill Cranes of Staten Island, plus Cosumnes Preserve

Tuesday, December 6th, 9 AM - 1 PM

Staten Island is an excellent area to see Sandhill Cranes, and Cosumnes Preserve provides habitat for more than 200 species of birds. We will meet and coordinate cars at the Walnut Grove Elementary School. From there, our trip will begin with a drive along Staten Island Road, primarily to view the migrating Sandhill Cranes. Next, we will drive to the Cosumnes Wildlife Preserve for a walk along the several trails throughout the Preserve. Some things you may need for our outing: binoculars, drinking water, sunblock, insect repellent, a warm jacket, and appropriate footwear. Also, bring lunch and drinks.

Hike Rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Randy Huey, (925) 518-8439

Meet: **Walnut Walnut Grove Elementary School**, 14181 Grove St, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Directions: From Central Contra Costa County, take I-680 N toward Sacramento. Keep right at the fork to continue on CA-242 N, and follow signs for Concord/Pittsburg/State Route 242. Use the left 3 lanes to take the CA-4 E exit toward Stockton/Pittsburg. Take exit 30 for CA-160 toward Sacramento/Rio Vista. Continue straight onto Isleton Rd. Turn left to stay on Isleton Rd. Turn left onto River Rd. Turn right onto Depot Ln. Turn left onto Grove St. Turn right onto N South St. Arrive at Walnut Grove Elementary.

This trip is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event [HERE](#)** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

American Canyon Wetlands

Thursday, December 8, 8 AM - 12 PM

A walk out to the wetlands, ponds, and sloughs along the Napa River produces many exciting birding opportunities. We expect plenty of waterfowl, raptors, waders, shorebirds, and passerines. It can be quite cold in this area, so bring appropriate warm layers. The availability of restrooms is uncertain.

Hike rating: 2 - Moderate.

Elevation change: None

Distance: We may walk 2 - 3 miles depending on the route decided.

Leader: Chris & Teri Wills: (925) 408-5364

Meet: Meet at the parking lot at the end of Eucalyptus Drive at 8 AM.

Directions: Go north on I-680 to Benicia, merge left onto I-780 west to Vallejo, exit to I-80 East, and merge to Hwy 37 west (Exit 33). Exit at CA 29/Sonoma Blvd toward Napa. After 1.5 miles turn left on W American Canyon Road, and at the end turn right on Wetlands Edge Road. Turn left on Eucalyptus Drive and into the parking lot.

This hike is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Solano County Raptors

Saturday, December 10, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

This trip features wintering birds on the edge of the Central Valley. Ferruginous Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks are special targets, and Prairie Falcon and Burrowing Owls are possible. Grassland birds and blackbirds, and ducks and shorebirds at Jepson Prairie (if there is water), where we will stop for a late lunch.

Hike rating: 1 - Easy. The trip has little walking; lots of driving and stopping.

Elevation change: None

Leader: Maureen Lahiff, MLahiff@aol.com (510) 484 - 65294

Meet: at the McDonald's in the Sunset Shopping Center at the intersection of Highway 12 and Sunset Ave in Suisun City. (There are other eateries and coffee shops close by; these are the last amenities on our trip.) At our meeting point participants may consolidate into fewer cars for safety when stopping at the side of the road. We'll drive a loop of about 45 miles, some on unpaved roads, and stop for lunch at Jepson Prairie.

Directions: From the SF Bay Area, take I-80 east and then merge onto CA highway 12 east toward Rio Vista. In about 4 ½ miles, take a left at the light on Sunset Ave and enter the shopping center. The McDonald's sign, where we'll

meet, is visible from Highway 12.

Bring liquids, snacks, lunch, and layers of clothing for varying temperatures and windy conditions. Please bring “walkie talkie” two-way radios if you have them. Spotting scopes are welcome and very useful!

This hike is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

East Contra Costa County Christmas Bird Count

Wednesday, December 14, zero-dark-thirty till about 6 PM

This count, sponsored by MDAS, has been in existence since 2000. Please join us to census birds within this **count circle**. To participate, email **mdaseasterncbc@gmail.com**. Feeder/Yard watchers as well as field-trip participants are needed! We will go over what we saw as a group at the virtual post-count get-together at 7 PM (Zoom link to be provided to participants).

Central Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 17, zero-dark-thirty till about 6 PM

This count, sponsored by MDAS, has been a tradition since 1955! Please join us to census birds within this **count circle**. To participate, email **mdascentralcbc@gmail.com**. Feeder/Yard watchers as well as field-trip participants are needed! We will go over what we saw as a group at the virtual post-count get-together at 7 PM (Zoom link to be provided to participants).

Putah Creek

Saturday, January 7, 9 AM - 2 PM

This is a great chance to see birds and ducks along Putah Creek and Lake Solano. Possible target birds include Osprey, Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser. Dress warmly; this is a cold, windy area. Bring lunch. The exact itinerary to be determined on the day of the trip. Rain cancels.

Hike rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: Minor

Distance: Depending on the route decided.

Co-Leaders: Maren Smith, (925) 322-9477, and Susana de Trapaga

Meet: 9 AM at the large gravel pull-out on the right side of Putah Creek Road, west of the Lake Solano dam.

Directions: When driving from the Bay Area to Vacaville on I-80, take Exit 51A at Cherry Glen and Lagoon Valley Roads. Turn left to cross over the freeway, heading north, and drive approximately 1 mile on Cherry Glen Road to the stop sign at Pleasants Valley Road. Turn left on Pleasants Valley Road. Drive 12 miles and keep an eye out for Yellow-billed Magpies and raptors. Turn right on Putah Creek Road, and drive about 1.2 miles, to the large gravel parking turn-out on the right (with “no camping, no dumping” signs). This is about an hour's drive from the Walnut Creek area.

This hike is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event [HERE](#)** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

East Contra Costa County

Wednesday, January 11, 9 AM - 1 PM

We will be birding at Big Break/Delta Science Center, Iron House Sanitary, and possibly other places in East Contra Costa. Usually good for waterfowl, raptors, and some passerines. Dress warmly, and bring lunch and drinks.

Hike rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Paul Schorr, (925) 998-0070

Meet: Big Break parking lot in Oakley at 9 AM

Directions: Take Highway 4 east toward Stockton/Pittsburg, after Antioch take right Exit 30 toward CA-160/Sacramento/Rio Vista. Take Exit 1A, East 18th/Main Street, turn right at the bottom of the exit onto Main Street, proceed east a little over 1 mile, then turn left onto Big Break Road. Turn into Big Break Regional Shoreline/Delta Science Center just past the last houses on the right.

This field trip is limited to 12 participants. All field trips require registration and

participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Shollenberger Park/Ellis Creek, Petaluma

Saturday, January 14, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Both sites are good for wintering waders, shorebirds, waterfowl, and a few raptors.

Hike rating: 2 - Moderate

Elevation change: minor

Leader: Sandy Ritchie (925) 381-2514

Meet: Access point to Shollenberger Park behind the Point Blue parking lot.

Directions: Take I-680 across the Benicia Bridge. Go west on I-780 towards Sacramento, and exit to SR37. Follow SR37 to Lakeville Road, then turn right. Before reaching Petaluma, look for the water recycling facility on the left and turn left on South McDowell Blvd. After a short distance, turn left onto Cypress Drive. The Shollenberger access is behind the Point Blue offices on the right. Bring lunch and a beverage.

This field trip is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Lake Merritt, and Arrowhead Marsh at High Tide

Saturday, January 21, 8:30 AM ~ 1 PM

We should find a good variety of wintering ducks and gulls at Lake Merritt, before driving to Arrowhead Marsh at around 9:45 AM. The rising tide should flush out rails that are usually hard to see. The area is also good for shorebirds, and more wintering ducks on the estuary. A visit to Garretson Point will finish our trip. Bring lunch and a beverage.

Hike rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Sandy Ritchie, (925) 381-2514

Meet: Lake Merritt parking lot off Bellevue Avenue, 8:30 AM

Directions: Take SR 24 to Oakland and I-980, take 27th Street exit and turn left. Cross Broadway and Harrison, then join Grand Avenue. Turn into the park at Children's Fairyland (fee possible) and follow around to the parking lot entrance on right between the boathouse and aviary.

This field trip is limited to 15 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Birding the Martinez Waterfront

Wednesday, January 25, 9 AM - 2 PM

We will be birding multiple locations for this MDAS Martinez Shoreline field trip, looking for shorebirds, waders, waterfowl, gulls, raptors, and others. Areas will include Waterbird Preserve (overlooking McNabney Marsh), TransMontaigne Pipeline, Mococo Marsh, and Martinez Regional Shoreline. Precise driving directions for each location (with mileage) will be handed out when we gather in the Waterbird Regional Preserve parking lot. Walkie-talkies for each vehicle will also be available. Dress warmly, and bring a lunch and drinks.

This trip is appropriate for birders of all experience levels. Beginners are especially welcome!

Hike Rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Tracy Farrington, (925) 788-6223

Meet: Waterbird Regional Preserve parking lot at 9 AM

Directions: From I-680, exit Waterfront Road; when driving north this is the last exit before the Benicia Bridge. Go east about 1/2 mile and turn right onto Waterbird Way. Go around the bend to the left and then turn right into the parking lot.

This field trip is limited to 15 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Birding Cosumnes Preserve and the Thornton Area

Saturday, February 4, 8:45 AM ~ 2 PM

Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes, hawks, and grassland birds. The trip will go in light rain. Bring lunch and a beverage. If questions, call the leader.

Hike rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: Minor

Distance: Depending on the route decided.

Co-Leaders: Ethan Chickering, (925) 890-3833

Meet: 8:45 AM in Westgate Landing Park at end of Glascock Road.

Directions: Take SR 4 to Antioch Bridge, and go north on SR 160 along the river to Rio Vista bridge. Turn right on SR 12 for 11.5 miles. East of Terminous, turn right onto the exit to Glasscock Rd. The road will go under the bridge. Turn left onto Glasscock Rd. proper and continue to the park at the end.

This field trip is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event [HERE](#)** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Grizzly Island Refuge

Tuesday, February 7th, 9 AM - 1 PM

Grizzly Island provides habitat for more than 200 species of birds and is home to a variety of threatened or endangered wildlife and plants. Our trip will begin at the Refuge Headquarters and continue for about 7 ½ miles along Grizzly Island Road, which is unpaved and runs through the middle of the Wildlife Area. Some things you may need for our outing at Grizzly Island: binoculars, drinking water, sunblock, insect repellent, a warm jacket, and appropriate footwear. Also, bring lunch and drinks.

Hike Rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Randy Huey, (925) 518-8439

Meet: **Wildlife Refuge Headquarters**, 2548 Grizzly Island Road, Suisun, CA 94585

Directions: From Central Contra Costa County, take I-680 N toward Sacramento. Take Highway 12 off-ramp east toward Rio Vista. Turn onto Grizzly Island Road, at the stoplight at Sunset Shopping Center. Hill Slough Wildlife Area is on both sides of Grizzly Island Road from Highway 12 to the first one-lane bridge. The Grizzly Island Complex Headquarters is 9.5 miles further on Grizzly Island Road.

The trip is limited to 20 participants. All field trips require registration and participants must acknowledge the **MDAS Liability Waiver** (available during registration). **Register for this event HERE** (registration is available two weeks before the event and closes two nights before).

Field Trip Reports

Charleston Slough/Palo Alto Baylands, 11/5/2022

Herb and Randi Long

Twelve participants enjoyed birding Charleston Slough, the Palo Alto Baylands, and Nob Hill Pond on Saturday, Nov 5. It was a mixture of experienced and newer birders so there was a lot of sharing and learning. It was a thrill to be on the largest tract of undisturbed marshland remaining in the San Francisco Bay. It took only about 50 minutes to reach this destination. We spotted 55 species. Arriving about 3 hours past low tide at Charleston Slough, we enjoyed seeing large numbers of Northern Shovelers, and Green-Winged Teal along with a number of Night Herons lined up along Adobe Creek. There also were large numbers of Ruddy Ducks, American Avocets, and Black-necked Stilts along with a few Northern Pintails and Gadwalls. Walking to the lake, we saw Greater Yellow Leg, Forster's Terns and a couple of elusive Cinnamon Teal.

A ten-minute drive brought us to Palo Alto Baylands. A Peregrine Falcon was spotted on the utility tower. Everyone got a close-up view of a Western Grebe. After lunch we drove about 15 minutes north to Nob Hill Pond where we saw numerous water birds; some of the new ones being Canvasback, Bufflehead, Eared Grebe. The highlight of the day was just as we were about to depart from Nob Hill Pond, a birder (not in our group) told us she had just spotted two Eurasian Wigeons mixed in with the large numbers of American Wigeons. She led us to the place where we got

good views of this special bird. Another example of birders always willing to help each other out. It turned out that she was the daughter of a birder whom Hugh Harvey knew from many years ago.

A special thanks to Michael Sullivan for being the Ebird recorder.

Shadow Cliffs, 11/15/22

Steve Taylor

Twenty birders joined the Shadow Cliffs bird walk on November 15th. The day started out a little cold but quickly warmed up. We pretty much covered 80% of the park observing many different birds. Highlights included really good views of an Osprey, Green Heron, Kingfisher, Red-tailed Hawk, Say's Phoebe, three different woodpeckers, and lots of smaller birds. All in all, it was a good day for a park where some rain is badly needed.

Events

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

Domestic Cat Management: Challenges and Opportunities

December 8, 2022

Domestic cats (*Felis catus*) can make wonderful pets, but their unrestrained presence on the landscape presents serious challenges. Outdoor cats are introduced predators that inflict serious harm to birds and other wildlife and contribute to a variety of public health risks. Cat management, however, has historically been complicated by unclear authorities, resource limitations, competing priorities, and a tradition of laissez-faire attitudes. This talk will review the wildlife conservation and public health evidence emphasizing the need for owned and unowned cat management and present solutions for cat owners and communities to effect meaningful change that will benefit cats, wildlife, and people.

Grant Sizemore earned B.S. degrees in Zoology and Environmental Science from Miami University in Ohio and an M.S. in Wildlife Ecology

and Conservation from the University of Florida. He has experience in wildlife conservation research, education, and policy and is currently the Director of Invasive Species Programs at American Bird Conservancy, where he has run the Cats Indoors program for the last 10 years.

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2022
Time: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Location: Zoom, Virtual Presentation
Sponsor: **Marin Audubon Society**
Cost: Free
Registration: **[Click here to register online](#)**

The Seaside Heermann's Gulls

December 8, 2022

Heermann's Gulls are beautiful seabirds that were thought to breed exclusively on small islands in the Gulf of California and off the Mexican coast, where their numbers are declining due to warming seas and overfishing. In 1999, a few Heermann's gulls nested on a man-made island on Roberts Lake in Seaside, California. These birds founded the only known nesting colony of Heermann's Gulls in the United States. Since then, the colony has survived and grown to about 100 individuals despite many challenges and loss of nesting habitat. Today the colony nests on rooftops around Roberts Lake, and in the last three years, they have even harmoniously shared their nesting territory with a colony of California Gulls.

Join us as Byron and Joanna Chin cover the natural history of the Heermann's Gull, the history of the Seaside colony, the environmental challenges they have endured, and their efforts in conjunction with Monterey Audubon to protect and help these gulls through monitoring, community outreach, and the deployment of a floating nesting island.

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2022
Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Location: Zoom, Virtual Presentation
Sponsor: **San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory**
Presenter: Byron and Joanna Chin

Cost: Free

Registration: [Click here for more information](#)

Winter Solstice Saunter

December 18, 2022

Take a break from holiday shopping and indulge your inner Druid on a nature walk up Mitchell Canyon. We'll search for signs of the season, including mistletoe, Christmas berry, and those natural tree ornaments, "apple galls" and "California pears." Along the way, we see Foothill and Coulter pines, two conifer species that will never replace Douglas fir as Christmas trees, but are famous for their humongous cones!

Date: Sunday, December 18, 2022

Time: 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Location: Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center

Sponsor: [Mount Diablo Interpretive Association](#)

Leaders: Liz Watson and Ken Lavin

Cost: \$6 per vehicle/\$5 for seniors — exact change only.
Payable at the entrance to the Park by the stop sign.

Registration: [Click here for more information](#)

Nature's Best Hope

January 11, 2023

Recent headlines about global insect declines and three billion fewer birds in North America are a bleak reality check about how ineffective our current landscape designs have been at sustaining the plants and animals that sustain us. To create landscapes that enhance local ecosystems rather than degrade them, we must 1) remove the invasives on our property and 2) add the native plant communities that sustain food webs, sequester carbon, maintain diverse native bee communities, and manage our watersheds. If we do this in half of the area now in lawn, we can create Homegrown National Park, a 20 million-acre network of viable habitats that will provide vital corridors connecting the few natural areas

that remain. This approach to conservation empowers everyone to play a significant role in the future of the natural world.

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2022
Time: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Location: Zoom, Virtual Presentation
Sponsor: **Golden Gate Audubon Society**
Presenter: Doug Tallamy
Cost: Free
Registration: **[Click here for more information](#)**

Copyright © 2021 Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, All rights reserved.

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

Email address:
info@mtdiabloaudubon.org

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Leadership

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can **[update your preferences](#)** or **[unsubscribe from this list](#)**.