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Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

The Quail

Volume 68, Number 3

FEBRUARY 2023

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, February 2, 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** Board Announcements
- 7:10 PM** *Main Program: A 27-Year Wildflower Journey*
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

Main Program:

A 27-Year Wildflower Journey: The Making of Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change

Rob Badger and Nita Winter



Nita Winter and Rob Badger Backpacking in Carson Pass

Photo by unknown fellow hiker

Rob Badger and Nita Winter take you behind the scenes on their 27-year journey photographing wildflowers throughout California and the West. It began in 1992 when they discovered and fell in love with California's spectacular wildflower blooms in the Mojave Desert's Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve. Photographing these beautiful landscapes and individual flowers evolved into their documentary art project, "Beauty and the Beast: Wildflowers and Climate Change." Their beautiful, multiple award-winning coffee table book, co-published with the California Native Plant Society, focuses on California's amazing plant diversity. It is a companion to their traveling educational exhibit.

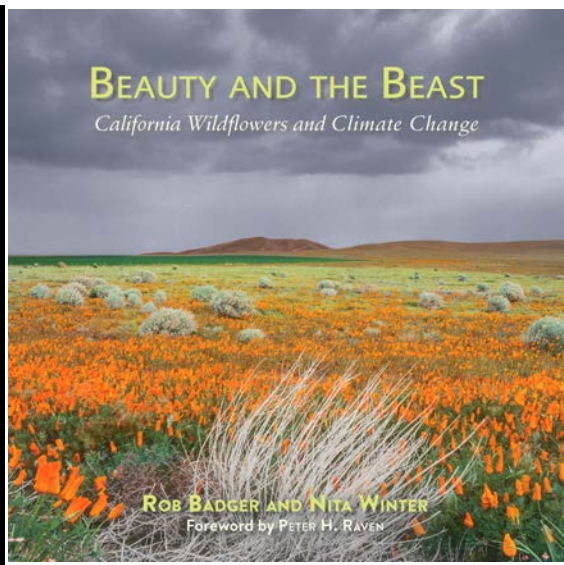
Gorgeous superbloom scenery isn't the only thing that makes this series so special. The photographers show how they create wildflower portraits in the field, lugging 80 pounds of cameras and their "natural light" studio equipment from below sea level in Death Valley National Park to 13,000-foot-high mountain passes. Rob also shares two innovative field techniques he developed to capture unique floral portraits that go beyond traditional wildflower photography.

Because most land based birds directly, or indirectly, rely on the existence of wildflowers and other native plants for their survival, creating native plant gardens is an important way to support local wildlife. Nita and Rob will take you into their

evolving native plant garden and share the joy and rewards it brings them.

Internationally acclaimed conservation photographers Rob Badger and Nita Winter have been life partners and creative collaborators for more than three decades. Their work has been featured in Time, Mother Jones, and Sierra magazines, the New York Times, Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, and the Los Angeles Times. They are the recent recipients of the Sierra Club's 2020 Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography.

Purchase books and learn more at wildflowerbooks.com. Photography website: WinterBadger.com.



Top left: *Fritillaria recurva* and hummingbird
Top right: "Beauty and the Beast"

Bottom left: Calypso orchid setup
Bottom right: Great red paintbrush

All photos by Rob Badger and Nita Winter

Webinar Access Info:

Date: Feb 2, 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/88113297784?
pwd=dGw2Mkx4VktuSTd5d2lnbkITK00xZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88113297784?pwd=dGw2Mkx4VktuSTd5d2lnbkITK00xZz09)
Meeting ID: 881 1329 7784
Passcode: 875621
Phone access: **One tap mobile**
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+14086380968,,88113297784#,,,,*875621# US (San Jose)

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+1 564 217 2000 US
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 646 931 3860 US
+1 689 278 1000 US
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
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+1 309 205 3325 US
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 360 209 5623 US

Meeting ID: 881 1329 7784

Passcode: 875621

Find your local

number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kes5ZROhtA>

President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

We wish you a Happy 2023 in our first newsletter of the year. We have a new feature in this edition which we hope you enjoy – we will be reprinting sections of *The Quail* from 50 years ago. Also look for a recap of our December Christmas Bird Counts, where we mobilized almost 100 people to census birds in the county.



In **Chapter news**, we have accepted the resignation of Mike Eliot from the Board. Mike is the former owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Pleasant Hill. He is moving on to another chapter in his life. He kept his store open to MDAS for storage and for our monthly board meetings. We are grateful for this and for his service. Since the pandemic, we have transitioned to Board meetings via Zoom, but Susan Pfau, the current owner of WBU, still allows us storage space at her store, for which we are also thankful.

We have a new Board-Member-at-Large, Farley Connolly. Farley recently moved back to the SF Bay after spending the last 6 years in Australia completing a Ph.D. in Animal Behavior, focusing on Australian magpies. He has a strong passion for wildlife, especially our winged friends, which is reflected both in his professional life as an ecologist and his personal life as an avid birder. He is excited to join the board as a member-at-large and use his knowledge and experiences to help the MDAS achieve its goals.

Last but certainly not least, we welcome our new volunteer Quail editor, Aria Capelli. Aria is a nature enthusiast with a passion for the environment, who continually works to make a positive impact in her community through both sustainability initiatives and civic engagement. She has recently taken the lead in starting a community garden to feed members of her surrounding community. She also builds owl boxes to help increase local owl populations. These owl boxes have been donated to Lindsay Wildlife

Museum, East Bay Parks, and Gallo Wineries. In her free time, Aria enjoys writing, cooking, swimming, and bird watching. Aria will be working with our current editor, contractor Floyd McCluhan, to transition the Editor responsibilities over the next couple of months.

We are still looking for an **Outreach Coordinator** to help with organizing MDAS presence and staffing for tabling events at festivals etc. This kind of activity is ramping back up to pre-Pandemic levels so we sure could use some help. If you are interested please contact me at president@mtdiabloaudubon.org.

May 2023 be the Year of Birds for all of you!

Membership Updates

Rochelle Fortier, *MDAS Membership Chair*



Welcome New Members! I want to give a warm welcome to new members who joined in November and December: **Aria Capelli**, Diablo; **Sarah Danridge**, Oakland; **Liz Kuo**, Berkeley; **Danielle Leone**, San Ramon; **Valerie Morrison**, Concord; **Weiran Liu**, Palo Alto; and **Warren Regelmann**, Danville.

Renewal Reminders: When your membership is going to expire, please be on the lookout for a reminder email from my email address, rochellefortier@hotmail.com. This email contains links to our online renewal form and the print-at-home form.

I will email reminders over three months. The first email is sent out one month before your expiration month. The second email will be sent out in the month that your membership actually expires. The third email would be sent in the month after your membership expired.

Also, after one week that you would have received the email, I will mail out friendly postcard reminders to members who have not yet responded.

If you have an automatically recurring Subscription, you will not receive a reminder email or postcard. You can confirm your recurring renewal in your banking statement. If you have a question about your renewal expiration date, or questions about your Subscription, please email me at membership@mtdiabloaudubon.org.

Please note that we have a newly-redesigned reminder postcard. Here is the postcard that you would receive when it is time for you to renew:



The 3rd MDAS Photo Contest is ON!

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

After a year hiatus, the MDAS Photo Contest is back! Do you have hundreds, maybe thousands, of bird photos trapped in bulging folders in your computer? Well, those great shots aren't going to admire themselves sitting there in the dark, so bust out the best (or worst) and enter them in our Third Annual Mt Diablo Audubon Photo Contest! Open to MDAS members only except for the Youth category which is open to anyone under the age of 18. Surely you've got some shots in one or more of these 6 categories:

- **California Birds:** Photos taken in-state.
- **International Birds:** Favorites from your trips abroad.
- **Birds in Action:** flight, fight or just having a bath, for example.
- **Birds Eating:** birds dining on seeds, berries, algae, bugs, (fish, frogs, lizards? snakes??)
- **Youth:** We'd especially like to encourage young people 8-17 to enter, and they need not be members. Any type of bird photo can be submitted in this category.
- **Worst Bird Photo EVER:** We KNOW you've got a couple of these! Losers you still didn't delete for some reason. Extra points for humor.

This is a casual, friendly competition; no special equipment or professional skills required (but use 'em if you got 'em). Pictures can be taken anywhere in California, on any date. Deadline is May 14. Winners and runners-up will be shared at the June members' meeting and in the Quail.

Click the "2023 Photo Contest" link at the top of the website www.mt Diablo Audubon.org to see Official Rules and entry link.

The 3rd MDAS Photo Contest - It's just for fun! (But there are modest prizes involved...)

From 50 Years Ago:

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

This month we begin a new section of *the Quail*. We are taking snippets of Quail editions from 50 years ago and re-publishing them for your enjoyment. Turns out that the late Jean Richmond (long-time Editor of the Quail) kept copies of the newsletter in binders all the way back to 1971. So, here are some sections from February 1973:

* * * * *

HOORAY!!! Gov. Ronald Reagan last month signed the "wild rivers" bill by Senator Peter Behr and vetoed the rival bill by Senator Randolph Collier. In doing so, the governor said the Behr bill "goes further in solving the problem of protecting the natural state of our north coast rivers."

* * * * *

The following are warmly welcomed into Mt. Diablo Audubon:
Concord: Mrs. George W. Clemens, Jr., Mrs. Elva Peck, Richard Wallace;
Danville: Betty R. Gordon, Mrs. Elsie Lamm; Walnut Creek: Lynn Lakso,
Douglas Wright; Pleasanton: Sam & Verdi Swyers.

* * * * *

Observations:

On Dec. 9-10, the weekend after our field trip to the refuges in the Sacramento Valley, Harry and Betty Adamson led a Golden Gate Audubon trip there. The weather was clear but very COLD and many of the water-fowl had moved south. (We humans should have been so wise!) The report from the Adamsons included a Blue Goose, European Widgeon, Bald Eagle immature, and a "Wren-on-the-Rocks"---a Bewick's Wren would briefly flit around on the surface of the frozen pond then hop up onto the reeds sticking up through the ice, seemingly to get his feet off that cold surface. The Adamsons also reported Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagles on the trip home.

At least 6 Blue Winged Teal were at Palo Alto Salt Marsh on Jan 2.

On Jan. 7 Mary Jane and Bill Greene of Golden Gate Audubon and your editor saw a flock of 150 Turkey Vultures just north of Sunol.

Sally Steller found 105 Band-Tailed Pigeons in the oaks behind their property on Dec. 22. She also reports that during the holidays a hummingbird was trying to feed from a red Christmas light on the eaves of a neighbors' house!

A Western Flycatcher was seen by yours truly on Dec. 6 at Berkeley's U.C. Botanical Garden on a Golden Gate field trip. The bird was properly identified later after discussions with well-qualified birders. It was still there for the Golden Gate Christmas Count.

A Loggerhead Shrike has turned up in the Adamsons' garden.

Lynn Farrar had an Orange-Crowned Warbler in his yard on Jan. 2. He also reports 92 species on a recent trip to Tomales Bay---an excellent birding spot!

At Bay Farm Island on Dec. 29 your editor, with 3 Golden Gate birders, had a Lapland Longspur and a Snow Bunting in the scope at once. As of that date the Bunting had been there for 27 days. Elsie Roemer, of Alameda, provides the information that the previous longest stay of a Bunting in California had been 11 days.

Good birding areas for February: See the October, November and December issues. February is probably the best time to see the Whistling Swans and Sandhill Cranes around the Thornton area. These, plus geese, ducks and other birds can also be seen along Highway 12 east of Rio Vista and along Highway 4 east of Byron.

Note: Nowadays a 'Western Flycatcher' seen around here would most likely be a Pacific-Slope Flycatcher (quite rare in winter, however) and a 'Whistling Swan' is now a Tundra Swan. Also, in the present day, birding along HWY 4 east of Byron is not recommended due to traffic!

Results of the 2022 East and Central Contra Costa County Christmas Bird Counts

Jerry Britten, *MDAS CBC Compiler*

2022 East Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count:

35 participants birded 9 areas of East-Contra Costa County on Wednesday, December 14. The final tally was 148 species, better than the running 22-year average of 143, most likely due to the great weather. The Ebird Trip Report is here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/93182>.

To the far right of each species listed is the number of checklists it appeared on. Clicking on this opens up the checklists that can be further explored.

Total numbers were good as well. 27 Lewis's woodpeckers was a good number but far short of the 55 recorded in 2014.

'Common' birds we missed this year:

Gadwall (though as Srikant Char said, they were present at Clifton Forebay, just out of the circle to the east)

Black-Necked Stilt

Rufous-Crowned Sparrow (regraveling road work at their usual location Mariposa Canyon at Los Vaqueros a likely cause)

Uncommon/Rare birds picked up:

Iceland Gull - Los Vaqueros and Clifton Court Forebay 8/22 years

Hairy Woodpecker - Los Vaqueros 8/22 years

Common Loon - Los Vaqueros by boat 6/22 years

Mountain Bluebird - Los Vaqueros, 6/22 years

Townsend's Warbler - Los Vaqueros and Creekside Park 6/22 years

Red-Breasted Merganser - Clifton Court Forebay 5/22 years

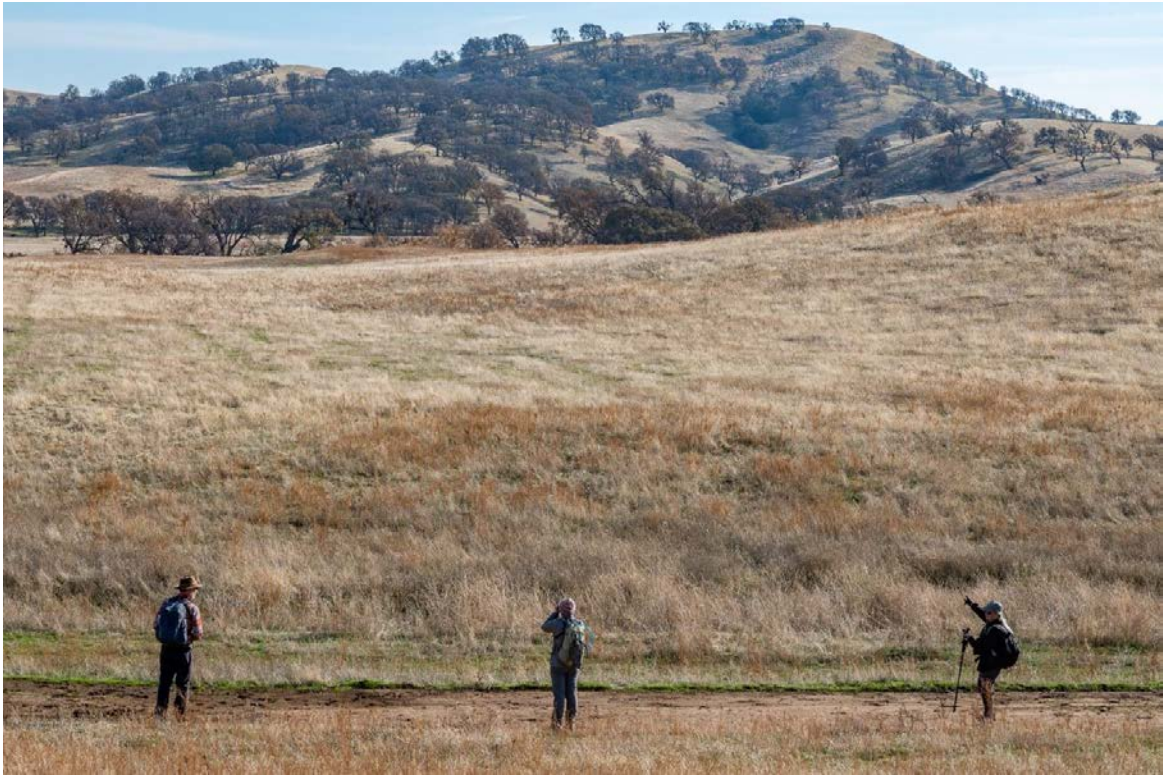
Eurasian Wigeon - Clifton Court Forebay 3/22 years

Swamp Sparrow - South Bethel Island 3/22 years

Chestnut-Backed Chickadee - Los Vaqueros 2/22 years. Seems strange that such a common bird in Central County is rare out here! I think that if we had more feeder watchers for the east-county count we would always get this one!

Willet - Big Break, new to the count!

Thanks to all for participating. Next year's count is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 20.



Birders at Round Valley Regional Park.

Photo by Scott Hein



Captain Jeff Manker on Los Vaqueros Reservoir

Photo by Srin Raman



Red-breasted Sapsucker at Creekside Park, Brentwood

Photo by Robert Raffel

2022 Central Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count:

The Central County CBC on Dec 17 had around 75 participants covering 24 patches, plus a few feeder-watchers. Plus, East-Bay Regional Parks held a CBC walk at Thurgood Marshall Park (the former Concord Naval Weapons Station – not yet open to the public) with an additional 15-20 people in attendance along with Rosemary Nishikawa and Herb Long representing MDAS.

The final tally stands at 160 species, one short of the 2020 record of 161. Outstanding weather once-again contributed to this great result.

An eBird trip report summarizing our tally is here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/96958>. This report doesn't show **Black Rail** because it is a sensitive species, but it was reported both by the MOTCO group and Chris Ortega at Bay Point Regional Shoreline. The report contains a map of areas covered. To the right of the species is a checklist icon. Clicking this allows for opening of specific checklists, some with photos.

Birds new to the count (in the last 25 years anyway) are **Long-Tailed Duck** at MOTCO, and **Northern Saw-Whet Owl** at Briones (Thanks to Robert Raffel for getting out for

some 5 AM birding – he got the only Western Screech Owl of the count as well).

One **Common Loon** at Mallard Reservoir and the 6 **Mountain Bluebirds** seen by many at Thurgood Marshall Park have only been seen once before in the last 25 years.

Other notable sightings, either rare birds, high numbers, or special events:

Common Goldeneye: Over 7000, almost all of them at MOTCO, soundly beats the old record of 1100. A number of duck species recorded record high counts this year.

American Avocet: 788, most at MOTCO, surpassed the old record of 487.

Townsend's Solitaire: Previous counts have reported at most 1 bird, usually none. This year we had 3.

Lewis' Woodpecker: 35 obliterates the previous high count of 6.

Phainopepla: 12 almost doubles the previous high count of 7.

Semipalmated Plover: 80 seen between two locations by far the record for this species.

Pine Siskin: Rare so far this winter, only one heard by Julie Woodruff at Black Diamond.

Sandy Ritchie's group at Hillcrest Park got the single **Greater-White-Fronted Goose** of the day.

Purple Finch: 32 seen, including 17 by Joan Duffield and Andy Cuellar on Green Ranch Road in MDSP, beat the previous record of 29.

Say's Phoebe: 69 seen were a record for the count.

White-Throated Swift encounter with **Red-Tailed Hawk:** Michael Sullivan and I were observing approximately 250 White-Throated Swifts exiting their night roost, a crack in a rock face at Black Diamond Park, Nortonville area, when a Red-Tailed Hawk swooped in and tried unsuccessfully to catch one. This is likely a daily occurrence out there.

We've only included Stoneman Trail in Pittsburg for the last few years, and it is paying off. Chris Ortega got some **Horned Larks** there, the only ones of the count, as well as one of two **Burrowing Owls** for this count. This area is one of the few remaining patches of heavily grazed extensive grasslands accessible to this count with good habitat for these types of birds.

Thanks again for all who participated! The 2023 Central County CBC is tentatively scheduled to be Saturday December 16.



Bruce Hamilton on Mt. Diablo

Photo by Scott Hein



Anna's Hummingbird on Green Ranch Road, Mt. Diablo State Park

Photo by Joan Duffield



American Avocet and Black-Necked Stilt at McNabney Marsh

Photo by Alan Krakauer

Summary: 2022 Northern Saw-Whet Owl Banding at Las Trampas

Julie Woodruff

2022 marked year four of Northern Saw-Whet Owl banding at the Las Trampas Regional Wilderness. Our banding season went from October 8 through November 19, 4 days/week with a few cancellations due to wind, rain and illness. While our capture numbers were low, we got some incredible news regarding past owls we've banded here in the past. Three of our owls have been recaptured at other stations in far northern CA!! Their summary is below:

Table 1. Northern Saw-Whet Owls captured at Las Trampas, recaptured in 2022 at other locations.

Band No.	Original Band Date	Age	Sex	Weight	Bander	Recap site	Recap Date	Recap Age	Recap Weight	Recap Sex
1104-4 1634	11/9/2019	SY	F	90.6	Andrew Ford	3.1 Mi. SW of Forest Ranch, Butte Co., CA	10/22/2022	5Y		F
1104-4 1646	10/29/2020	HY	?	83.6	Grace Mannell	Blue Lake, CA	10/28/2022	3Y	80	F
1104-4 1650	10/29/2021	HY	?	82.3	Sarah Parnell	Blue Lake, CA	11/10/2022	2Y	92.8	F

Having recaptured owls was one of our target goals for the station - it is VERY exciting -and shows that bird banding works! To me, it's especially interesting that 1 owl from each of the three prior years of owl banding was captured -- especially considering that 2020 was a very low capture year, and the last owl of the season we caught on 10/29/20 was recaptured. You never know where our birds will turn up! Here's to hoping some 2022 owls show up somewhere further north or east!

That said, our summary stats for 2022 are as follows:

- 14 evenings out /58 banding hours
- 10 Northern Saw-Whet Owls caught and banded
- 2 recaptures
- 2 Western Screech-Owls caught and banded
- 2 pallid bats caught
- 5 field trips with 29 total guests.

At least one more year of banding is planned for Las Trampas.



One of the Las Trampas Northern Saw-Whet Owls recaptured at Blue Lake CA in 2022.

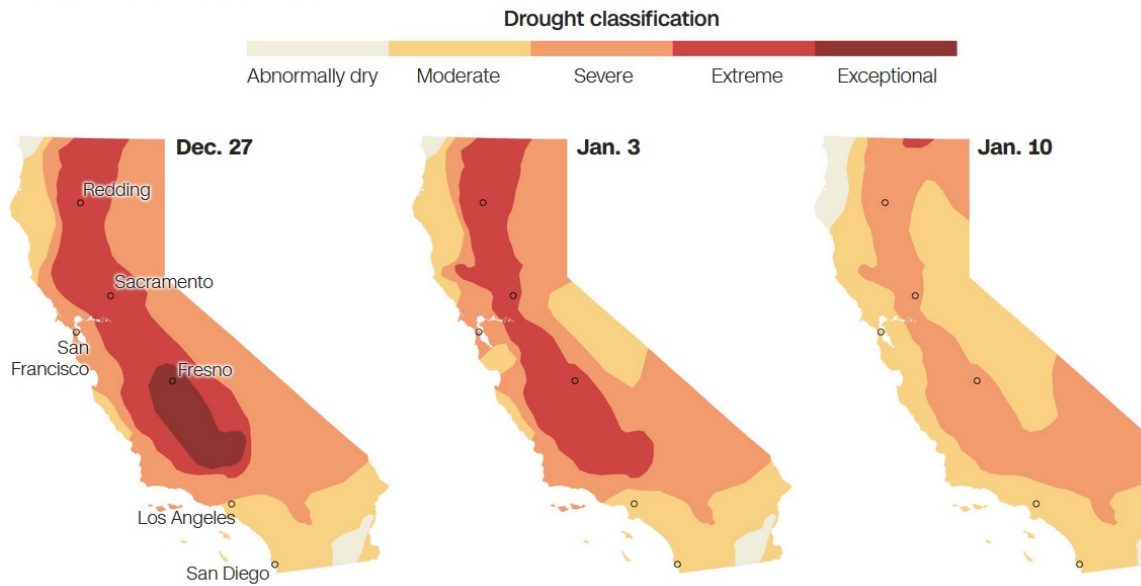
Photo: Maycee Hash

If Rains Bring Floods, Is Drought Still a Problem?

Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, *MDAS Conservation Chair*

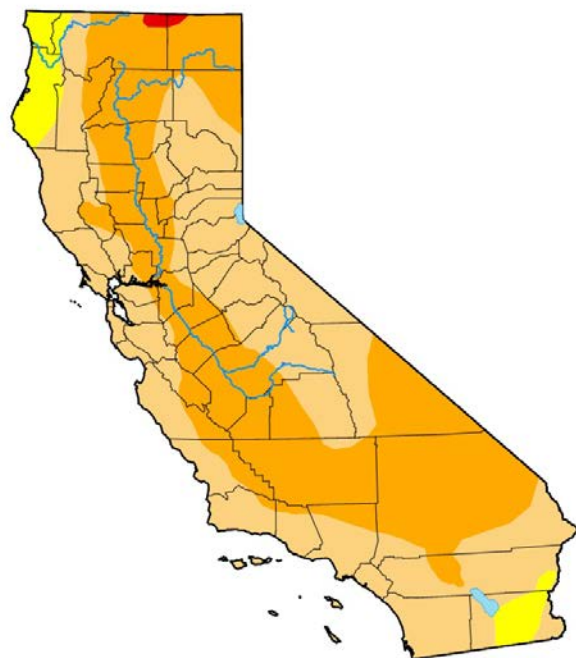
Drought conditions are improving in central California

Most of California is still in drought, but conditions have improved since a series of atmospheric river events brought much-needed precipitation to the state. 46% of the state is classified as “severe drought” or worse, down from 81% in late December.



Source: US Drought Monitor

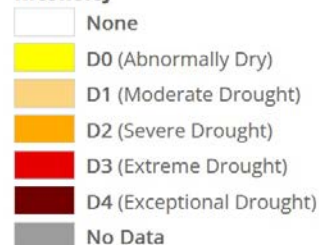
Graphic: Renée Rigdon, CNN



Map released: Thurs. January 12, 2023

Data valid: January 10, 2023 at 7 a.m. EST

Intensity



Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
Richard Tinker, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):
Curtis Riganti, National Drought Mitigation Center

You might have noticed . . . it's been raining! Since late December to mid-January, there've been about three weeks of solid rain. That's a great way to start the new year, especially given years of serious drought. Have you wondered if the drought is over? What's this mean for birds? If climate change was supposed to mean more heat and drought, what's with the rain? Read below for answers.

1. **Can There be Drought and Flood at the Same Time?** – Yup, and that's what's happening. Even after these storms, the majority of California is still in a drought that started years ago. The series of late-December to January storms helped, but a lot more will be needed to have a major positive impact on the long-term California drought. This year, 3 to 4 major storms would be good, but long term, it'd require a matter of years. "We are in a flood emergency while we still have an active drought emergency. That pretty much says it all about the new normal we have with climate change." – Karla Nemeth, CA Dept. of Water Resources, Director. Read [HERE](#) for more info.
2. **What Does Climate Change Mean for Birds?** – Unless greenhouse gas emissions are massively reduced over the next decade (which requires huge, extremely rapid change at all levels of society), almost half of California's birds will likely lose half of their current range (the geographic area where they live). Sea-level rise, drought, heat waves, and wildfire are just some of the dangers that climate change is, and will, make larger, more frequent, and more intense. Western and boreal forest birds, along with waterbirds, will be especially hard hit. Click [HERE](#) for great maps and visuals. It's great that recent rains have helped alleviate the drought, but that won't make up for the long-term chronic impacts that are already impacting birds across the state, and the world.
3. **Making Changes to Your Home Can Help Your Health, Wallet, and the Planet** – It's Winter, so you've probably turned your furnace on. And in like six months, you'll probably be turning your AC on. Did you know both systems can be combined into one, and that it helps your wallet and the climate at the same time? Click [HERE](#) for more info. You might even get paid to make these changes. While you're at it, do you cook with a natural gas stove? It's been known for years that they increase air pollution, and research confirms they negatively impact health, including increasing asthma risk. They're also terrible for the planet (click [HERE](#) for more). Want to get paid to switch to a stove that's good for you and the Earth? Click [HERE](#).

MDAS Field Trips

Matt Tarlach, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*



The 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>

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 2023 season [HERE](#).

Upcoming field trips include:

Birding the Martinez Waterfront

Wednesday, January 25, 9 AM to 2 PM

We will be birding waterfront areas in the Martinez area, looking for shorebirds, waders, waterfowl, gulls, raptors, and others. Dress warmly, bring a lunch and drinks. These areas may include Waterbird Preserve, TransMontaigne Pipeline, Mococo Marsh, and Martinez Regional Shoreline.

Hike Rating: Category 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. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Putah Creek - Rescheduled!

Thursday, January 26, 9 AM to 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 is 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). About 1 hour drive from the Walnut Creek area.

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

Solano County Raptors – Rescheduled!

Saturday, January 28, 9:00 AM to mid-afternoon

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, as well as ducks and shorebirds at Jepson Prairie (if there is water), where we will stop for a late lunch.

Rating: 1 – Easy. The trip has little walking; lots of driving and stopping.

Elevation change: none

Leader: Hugh Harvey

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 at Sunset Ave and enter the shopping center. The McDonald's sign, where we'll meet, is visible from Highway 12.

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

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

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

Grizzly Island Refuge

Tuesday, February 7th, 9 AM to 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: Category 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.

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

Shollenberger Park/Ellis Creek, Petaluma - Rescheduled!

Saturday, February 11, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

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

Hike rating: 2 – Moderate

Elevation change: minor

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

Leader: Sandy Ritchie (925) 381-2514

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. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Bodega Bay

Saturday, February 18, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM

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

Hike rating: 1 – Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Maureen Lahiff, MLahiff@aol.com, (510) 484-6529

Meet: **Porto Bodega Marina**

Directions: Take US 101 north to Petaluma. Exit at Washington and head SW. Washington becomes Bodega Ave, which becomes Petaluma-Valley Ford Rd, which eventually merges into CA Hwy 1. Take Hwy 1 to Bodega Bay. Just past "downtown" Bodega Bay turn left on Eastshore Rd and follow it all the way down to the marina. From Walnut Creek, it's about a 2-hour drive.

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

Sunol Regional Park

Canceled for 2023

Due to potentially hazardous conditions after the recent heavy rains.

Walnut Creek Parks

Wednesday, February 22, 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Starting in Heather Farm Park, we will walk around the large, mostly natural pond, birding along the way. We will visit one or two other parks within the city, to be determined on the day of the trip.

Hike rating: 2 – Moderate

Elevation change: None

Leader: Hugh Harvey

Meet: The wood railing at the natural pond in Heather Farm Park.

Directions: Turn into the park on North San Carlos Drive from Ygnacio Valley Road. This is east of John Muir Hospital, the intersection has a Shell and a Chevron gas station. Drive to the stop sign past the community building and turn left into the parking

lot. The wooden railing is straight ahead.

This field trip is limited to 10 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Los Banos/Panoche Valley

Saturday & Sunday, February 25 to 26

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

NOTE: The planned itinerary for this trip has been impacted by our recent heavy rains. Registration will not open until two weeks before, when we may have a better handle on conditions.

Hike rating: 1 – Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Hugh Harvey, Beth Branthaver

Meet: The McDonald's in Gustine, at 8 AM

Directions: Drive south on I-5 to Hwy 140, Exit 418. Turn left and drive 3-1/2 miles to the intersection with Hwy 33. Turn left, drive into Gustine and look for the restaurant and Chevron station on the left. Lodging in Los Banos includes Best Western Executive Inn 209-827-0954, Los Banos Days Inn 209-826-9690, Vagabond Inn Executive Los Banos 209-427-4677.

This field trip is limited to 10 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Events

Be sure to check the [MDAS website](#) for the most up-to-date listing of events.

Feathers to Form - How Birds Can Shape an Art Practice

February 9, 2023

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY**

BIRDY HOUR SPEAKER SERIES

**FEATHERS TO
FORM:
HOW BIRDS CAN
SHAPE AN ART
PRACTICE**

by Walter Kitundu

Thursday, Feb 9, 2023
6pm Pacific
Free virtual event

Walter Kitundu will discuss his history as an instrument builder and performer and share how birds impacted his artistic trajectory. This photo-rich presentation will span his early days as a DJ making instruments powered by wind, fire, and pigeons, his unique relationship with a wild Red-tailed Hawk, and his work as a raptor researcher with the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. Walter will share the lessons he has learned from birds and discuss large-scale projects he is currently working on that honor cultural histories using birdsong, language, storytelling, and volcanic eruptions.

Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023
Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Location: Zoom, Virtual Presentation
Sponsor: **San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory**
Cost: Free
Registration: [Click here to register online](#)

Golden Eagles of the Northern Diablo Range
February 9, 2023



The northern Diablo Range of west-central California supports one of the largest and densest known breeding populations of golden eagles in the world. This region includes the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) where collisions with wind turbines constitute a substantial source of mortality for golden eagles and other raptors. This presentation will provide an overview of an ongoing study by authors Patrick Kolar, M.S. and J. David Wiens of golden eagles in the area and discuss how their broader research in the Diablo Range is being used to avoid or mitigate impacts to breeding pairs of eagles at the APWRA. They will also discuss preliminary analyses of nest-site selection, occurrence and distribution of breeding and non-breeding subadults, and possible impacts of the 2020 SCU lightning-wildfire complex that affected an estimated 80 pairs of eagles monitored prior to this mega-fire event.

Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023
Time: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Location: Zoom, Virtual Presentation
Sponsor: **Peninsula Open Space Trust** and the **Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority**.
Leaders: Patrick Kolar
Cost: Free
Registration: [Click here to register online](#)

A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds

February 16, 2023



Photo by Sylvia Hunt

Scientists continue to make astounding discoveries about the navigational and physiological feats that enable migratory birds to cross immense oceans, fly above the highest mountains, go weeks without sleep or remain in unbroken flight for months at a stretch. Scott Weidensaul, author of *A World on the Wing* (2021), takes us around the globe -- to the shores of the Yellow Sea in China, and the remote mountains of northeastern India where tribal villages saved the greatest gathering of falcons on the planet, to learn how people are fighting to understand and save the world's great bird migrations.

Scott Weidensaul's field research focuses on bird migration. He is a co-director of Project OwlNet, studying owl migration, and is a founder of the Critical Connections project, which is tracking the migration of birds that breed on National Park lands in Alaska. He co-founded the Northeast Motus Collaboration, which is creating a network of telemetry receivers to track the movements of bats, insects, and small birds.

Date: Thursday, February 16, 2023

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Zoom, Virtual Presentation

Sponsor: **Marin Audubon**

Presenter: Scott Weidensaul

Cost: Free

Registration:

[Click here for more information](#)

February Gallery & Media



MDAS January 5 Monthly Program Meeting:
Highlights of a Career in Journalism with Joan Morris.
View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).



How to Sketch Birds with John Muir Laws

Here are some fun and helpful techniques for sketching birds in a field journal.
Watch the video [HERE](#).



The Surprising Health Benefits of Bird-Watching

From the New York Times, "Spending time outdoors with a pair of binoculars is good for your body and soul."

Read the article [HERE](#).

Photo: Alan Harper/Flickr ([CC BY-NC 2.0](#))



Dunlin, Emeryville Southern Seawall

Photo: Steven Hunter/Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab ([ML511620371](#))



American Kestrel, American Canyon Wetlands

Photo by Rosemary Nishikawa



Bald Eagle, American Canyon Wetlands
Photo by Randy Huey

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Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Leadership

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