

The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
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Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

January 1996

Vol. 42 No. 5

Next Deadline: January 11

January Program:

Birds of the Delta

For our **January 4** General Meeting, Diane Williams will give a slide presentation on her winter birding tours exploring the Delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. Aboard the Delphinus, a 50 ft. ocean-going vessel, her tours explore the byways and sloughs of this bird-rich area. Sandhill Crane, Tundra Swan, and numerous duck, geese and raptor species will be shown amidst the fall colors and local history of the Delta. This will be a great program for anyone who would like to become acquainted with these birds that are not too far from our homes.

Diane Williams is a Bay Area naturalist who has been leading trips since 1976. She started her own company, Williams Wanderings, in 1992. She has led trips to Costa Rica, Mexico, Equador, and Alaska.

For January Bird Information, Jimm Edgar will recap our 1995 MDAS Christmas Count, filling us in on some of the highlights of the day.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, January 11, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, 838-8840. Board meetings are open to all interested members. The **Quail mailing meeting** will be on Friday, January 19, at 9:30 a.m., at the Wild Birds Unlimited store.

General Meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Our hospitality chair, Carol Frischmann, would like to request that our members continue to bring their own coffee mugs or tea cups to the General Meetings.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our January short, local field trip will visit Hidden Lakes Park in Martinez. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Trip leader will be Denise Wight, 370-7342. Meet on Sunday, January 28, at 8:30 a.m., at the end of Glacier Drive. From Contra Costa Blvd., turn west on Center and continue west to Glacier. Turn left to end.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

CHRISTMAS: WILL IT BE A MERRY ONE?

As Molly and Mabel discussed events of 1995, the conversation inevitably turned to environmental issues. Said Molly, "Gee, think of it, they are even thinking of selling off some of our national parks." "Crazy, isn't it?" responded Mabel

Turning to the recent series in the *Contra Costa Times*, we saw the headline, "Priceless Legacy is Struggling." Another, equally compelling headline caught Molly's eye. She commented, "Yes, as the *Times* article stated, our 'Cultural Heritage (is) at Risk.' The sad thing is we know what's happening, but we don't want our parks and wild spaces to be destroyed by defunding them."

East Bay Regional Park District is a fine example of a public entity watching over our precious open areas. Said Mabel, "Think of the pressures the Park District is under. We humans DEMAND more space for soccer, mountain bikes, trails, and a myriad of other recreational things. When we argue so strongly for such uses, we put at risk the areas used by Mom Nature to maintain its wild beauties."

An interested bystander would wonder. We've come a long way, baby. Each of us argues for "MY" particular recreational project, caring little that when ALL such uses are approved, we will have changed the landscape forever.

Look at Yosemite, a crown jewel in our park system. Each year the crush of humanity is greater and greater as we try to enjoy nature in a gorgeous setting. The pressures on fragile plant life become intolerable. Fumes fill the Yosemite Valley, created by hundreds of cars trying to drive right to the location in the park where human occupants want to camp, visit, or watch.

YES. WE should ask ourselves, "Will it be a Merry Christmas for our parks, open spaces, birds and wildlife?" If we ask the question, we'll eventually come up with the right answer.

How do we protect our parks? Dedicated park rangers, who are these days being hunted themselves by people from the "Wise Use Movement," struggle to maintain crumbling buildings, paths, and natural places. Without funds and with the human pressures growing each year, the prospects for major deterioration grow. There is also the very real matter of thousands of Americans who may NEVER even be able to visit one of our parks. They are poor and live in a crumbling BIG city without a hope of seeing, feeling or living nature.

Said Mabel, "Somehow in the struggle we go through each day in our daily lives, we're losing reality." Molly agreed, "True, among other things we have to fret about, we just MUST pay attention to our parks and natural places. If we lose our natural heritage, we may lose everything."

NATIONAL AUDUBON AND YOU

As has been pointed out, Audubon's national leadership has heard the call from the "folks," or grassroots as we are usually called. The recent BAAC meeting brought a number of bright, young, dedicated folks to the Bay Area. They came to develop and start to implement plans for bringing reality to the pledge "Audubon will be working from the bottom UP, not from the top DOWN."

Dan Taylor, the well-known and respected Western Regional Representative, will undoubtedly be named to head the new California (no longer Western Regional) Office in Sacramento. Based on advice from local Audubon leaders throughout the U.S., wetland protections will be a continuing MAJOR effort.

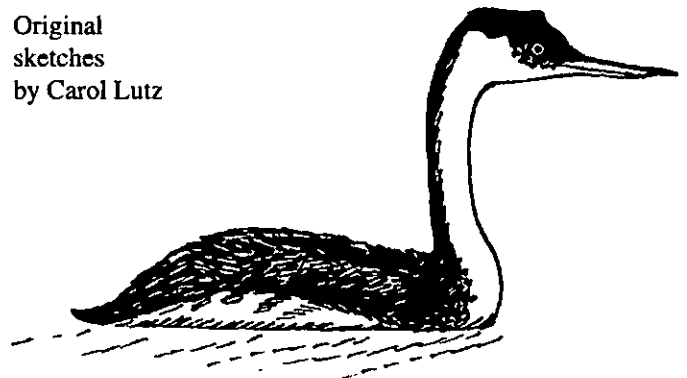
YOU, as an Audubon member will be playing a role in the NEW Audubon. Think of Bob Barnes and Birds in the Balance. New, exciting, important activities will "save" birdlife throughout the U.S. AND the western hemisphere

DESC

NO! That's NOT an acronym for the thing at which we usually sit, work, clean up, and stuff things into drawers. DESC is shorthand for the Delta Environment Science Center. Destined to be the THE most important environmental project in Contra Costa County, planning is well underway. Specific results will be evident in 1996.

Study of wetlands and the Bay/Delta will be the number one priority for DESC. Initially, K through 12 schools in eastern Contra Costa County will be a focal point for educational work. Mark Nickerson, Director, California State University Hayward, Contra Costa campus, chairs the DESC Program Committee. He will be inviting teachers from the East County schools to participate in a planning conference. The expected result is environmental education classes that will be initiated sometime in 1996. Presently an EBRPD ranger is conducting forays into wetland areas at the Ironhouse Sanitation District. Younger folks are taking these trips, which exposes them to birds, wetlands, AND nature. I suppose now and again, they also get a "bit" muddy, to the distress of Mom, who has to wash the clothes. It'll all be worth it! These are exciting times for those working to get DESC going.

Original
sketches
by Carol Lutz



FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle, if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Note. Because of bad weather or road conditions, field trips may be cancelled by the leader the day of the trip at the carpool location. If you have questions, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Saturday, January 6, **Putah Creek.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:15 a.m. at the intersection of Cherry Glen and Pleasants Valley Rds., approximately 1 mile north from I-80. Park on Cherry Glen. Dress warmly; this is a cold, windy area. Possible Osprey, Phainopepla, Canyon and Rock Wrens, and Hooded Merganser. Leader: Florence Bennett, 689-3106 Category 1

Thursday, January 11, **Lake Merritt.** Carpool 8:00 a.m. on El Nido near St. Stephens Drive. Take either St. Stephens or Acalanes exits from SR 24. Meet 8:45 a.m. at aviary at Lake Merritt. From SR 24, take Grand Ave. exit. Straight ahead at 1st light; at 2nd light, go left onto Grand Ave. Turn right into park at Fairyland. Park in lot between boat house and the large aviary. We will see ducks and other waterbirds. This is a good opportunity for new birders to see ducks at close range. Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732 Category 1

Saturday, January 20, **Sunol Regional Park.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet 8:00 a.m. in parking lot, Sunol Park. Go south on I-80 to Calaveras Rd. Go left under I-80 and 4 miles south on Calaveras Rd; turn left on Geary Rd. 2 miles to park. Watch and listen for Turkey along Geary Rd. Golden Eagles, raptors; Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Dipper, and Canyon and Rock Wrens possible. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for more information.

Category 2

Wednesday, January 31, **Grizzly Island Refuge.** Carpool 7:00 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:15 a.m. at Refuge headquarters. Take I-680 north, I-80 east to SR12. Follow SR12 through Fairfield; watch for sign to Grizzly Island Refuge on right and follow road to headquarters. Entry fee for refuge. Watch for raptors and Short-eared Owls along road; this is an outstanding raptor area.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 1

Future trip note: Saturday and Sunday, February 3 and 4, **Los Banos and the Panoche Valley.** It's not too early to make motel reservations. In Los Banos is the Bonanza Motel, (209) 826-3871. Nearby in Santa Nella are Best Western (Pea Soup) Andersen's Inn, (209) 826-5534, Holiday Inn Mission de Oro, (209) 826-4444, and Motel 6, (209) 826-6644. Either day of the trip may be done alone. If you plan to go on this trip, please call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Full trip information will be in the February *Quail*.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

LIMANTOUR, November 4.

The trip to the Limantour portion of Pt. Reyes was changed as the road to Limantour was still closed due to the fire. Instead we spent the day at the Pt. Reyes Headquarters, 5 Brooks, the Bolinas Sewage Ponds, and Bolinas Lagoon. The fourteen members and guests spent a beautiful day seeing 95 species of birds. The highlights were 13 duck species including Blue-winged Teal and Eurasian Wigeon, Osprey, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Pygmy Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, and Townsend's Warbler.

Maury Stern

CHARLESTON SLOUGH, November 9.

Only three people showed up on a dull, drizzly morning, but they were rewarded with excellent views of two adult and one immature Black Skimmer. The ponds were full of dabbling ducks as well as smaller numbers of waders. In the afternoon, we went to Ed Levin County Park and found the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker which had been reported on the Bird Box. A total of 70 species at the two sites.

Elizabeth Dickey

ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE, November 25.

Fourteen MDAS members spent a sunny, warm, windless morning viewing the vast variety of shorebirds and ducks. At Alameda, an Oldsquaw was spotted among the Surf Scoters, and at Arrowhead a pair of Burrowing Owls obliged at least four of the group by posing sedately by their burrow. 65 species were seen or heard.

Barbara Vaughn

MT. VIEW SANITARY, November 29.

The field trip was cancelled due to construction on the entry road.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
333 Goshen Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 829-7207.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Red-necked Grebe: 1 on 11/14 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR) Only the third record there.

Western/Clark's Grebe: 145 on 11/11 and only 12 to 15 on 11/13 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Tundra Swan: 1 adult, 5 immatures on 11/18 at Marsh Creek Reservoir (SG); ~2500 on 11/27 and 900 on 12/2 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County (SG).

Greater White-fronted Goose: 10 on 12/10 flying east over Danville (SG); 8 on 12/5 at Arrowhead Marsh (ED).

Wood Duck: 4 males and 2 females on 11/21 at North Lake, Golden Gate Park. (JR)

Blue-winged Teal: 3 males on 11/24 (FB) and 11/26 (Bo&BG) at Arrowhead Marsh.

Harlequin Duck: 1 male on 11/14 at the Monterey Coast Guard pier. (FB, MJC, BG, EL)

Hooded Merganser: 1 male and 1 female on 11/15 and 11/22 at Mt. View Cemetery, Oakland. (CS)

Common Merganser: 3 males since early November near the intersection of Bancroft and David, Walnut Creek. (DG)

Bald Eagle: 1 adult on 11/23 over Sunol Regional Park (JA); 2 adults on 11/28 at Lake Hennessey (JR).

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 on 10/28 at Las Trampas Regional Park. (KA)

Sandhill Crane: 3 on 12/8 over Piper Slough, Bethel Island. (DW)

Franklin's Gull: 1 immature on 11/13 at the Alviso Marina. (GF, JR)

Little Gull: 1 on 11/14 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 on 11/15 (JR) and 11/23 (BR) at the Alviso Marina.

Elegant Tern: 4 on 11/14 in Monterey Bay. (EL, BG, MJC, FB)

Pileated Woodpecker: 1 male seen and 1 to 2 others heard on 11/18 along Pinehurst Road, west of Moraga (SG) Approximately the fifth county record.

Eastern Phoebe: 1 on 11/8 (FB, MJC, BG, EL) and 11/14 (JR) at Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay.

Yellow-billed Magpie: 4 on 12/8 at Bethel Island. (DW)

Winter Wren: 3 still present on 12/8 at Piper Slough. (DW)

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 84+ on 11/18 in a 1.8 mile stretch along Pinehurst Road. (SG)

Sage Thrasher: 1 still present on 12/8 along Byron Hot Springs Road, 0.7 miles south of Holey Road. (DW)

Hooded Warbler: 1 male on 11/21 at Mallard Lake, Golden Gate Park. (JR, FB, MJC)

Painted Bunting: 1 on 11/7 (JR), 11/12 (SG), and 11/14 (FB, MJC, BG, EL) in residential Santa Cruz.

White-throated Sparrow: 1 juvenile present from 11/16 through 12/14 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Hooded Oriole: 1 male present through 12/12 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Observers: John Ascher, Kevin Attwood, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Elizabeth Dickey, George Finger, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Dee Guerra, Eugenia Larson, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Celeste Scanlon, and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by Jill Hedgecock

BIRDS IN THE BALANCE UPDATE

The rain has returned, our neotropical breeding migrants are gone, and it's the beginning of a brand new year, a perfect time to reflect on what we've accomplished through the Partners in Flight (PIF)/Birds in the Balance program. PIF is a cooperative initiative launched in 1990 involving both public and non-governmental agencies throughout North and Latin America. California's PIF (CPIF) program was launched in 1992. Birds in the Balance is Audubon's program associated with PIF. CPIF's accomplishments since its inception include:

- Habitat priorities have been established. Riparian and oak woodland are of primary importance. Grasslands, coastal scrub and mixed conifer forests are of secondary concern.
- Cowbird control activities have been initiated and are under further study. At the Kern River Research Center, the cowbird removal is in its third year, and high nesting success has been recorded for Willow Flycatchers. The number of breeding pairs of Yellow Warblers has increased from 14 in 1985 to over 150 in 1995.
- The Riparian Habitat Joint Venture has been established, with twelve participating state, federal and private organizations.
- The Department of Fish and Game has updated its list of species of special concern. Field surveys of Willow Flycatcher, Mountain Plover and Tricolored Blackbirds have been made.
- Monitoring techniques and training of volunteers have been standardized.

Using Al McNabney's adage "No habitat, no birds," as we look to the coming new year, I invite you to include in your New Year's resolutions at least one activity promoting conservation. You can and do make a difference. Write to your Congressman in support of the Endangered Species Act, recycle, tell a friend about conservation, etc. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

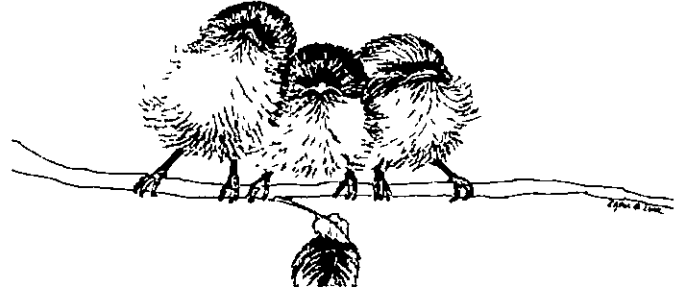
RARE BIRD ALERTS

Alabama - Statewide	(205) 987-2730	Montana - Statewide	(406) 626-2473
Alaska - Statewide	(907) 338-2473	- Big Fork	(406) 756-5595
- Kachemak Bay	(907) 235-7337	Nebraska - Statewide	(402) 292-5325
Arizona - Phoenix	(602) 832-8745	Nevada - Northwest	(702) 324-2473
- Tucson	(520) 798-1005	- Southern	(702) 649-1516
Arkansas - Statewide	(501) 753-5853	New Hampshire - Statewide	(603) 224-9900
California - Arcata	(707) 826-7031	New Jersey - Statewide	(908) 766-2661
- Los Angeles	(213) 874-1318	- Cape May	(609) 884-2626
- Monterey	(408) 375-9122	New Mexico - Statewide	(505) 662-2101
- Morro Bay	(805) 528-7182	New York - Albany	(518) 439-8080
- Northern California	(510) 524-5592	- Buffalo	(716) 896-1271
- Orange County	(714) 563-6516	- Ithaca	(607) 254-2429
- Sacramento	(916) 481-0118	- Lower Hudson Valley	(914) 666-6614
- San Bernardino	(909) 793-5599	- New York	(212) 979-3070
- San Diego	(619) 479-3400	- Rochester	(716) 425-4630
- Santa Barbara	(805) 964-8240	- Syracuse	(315) 668-8000
- SW Sierra / San Joaquin	(209) 271-9420	North Carolina - Statewide	(704) 332-2473
Colorado - Statewide	(303) 424-2144	North Dakota - Statewide	(701) 250-4481
Connecticut - Statewide	(203) 254-3665	(5 pm-7 am M-F; 24 hrs. weekends, holidays)	
Delaware - Statewide	(302) 658-2747	Ohio - Blendon Woods Metro Park	(614) 895-6222
District of Columbia - Districtwide	(301) 652-1088	- Cleveland	(216) 381-8325
Florida - Statewide	(941) 657-4442	- Columbus	(614) 221-9736
- Lower Keys	(305) 294-3438	- Cincinnati	(513) 521-2847
- Miami	(305) 667-7337	- NW Ohio	(419) 875-6889
Georgia - Statewide	(770) 493-8862	- SW Ohio	(513) 277-6446
- So. Georgia / N. Florida	(912) 244-9190	- Youngstown	(216) 742-6661
Idaho - Northern	(208) 882-6195	Oklahoma - Statewide	(918) 669-6646
- Southeast	(208) 236-3337	- Oklahoma City	(405) 373-4531
- Southwest	(208) 368-6096	Oregon - Statewide	(503) 292-0661
Illinois - Central Illinois	(217) 785-1083	- Northeastern	(208) 882-6195
- Chicago	(708) 671-1522	Pennsylvania - Allentown	(610) 252-3455
- Du Page	(708) 406-8111	- Philadelphia	(215) 567-2473
- Northwestern	(815) 965-3095	- Western Pennsylvania	(412) 963-0560
Indiana - Statewide	(317) 259-0911	- Wilkes-Barre	(717) 825-2473
Iowa - Statewide	(319) 338-9881	Rhode Island - Statewide	(401) 949-3870
- Sioux City	(712) 262-5958	South Carolina - Statewide	(704) 332-2473
Kansas - Statewide	(913) 372-5499	Tennessee - Statewide	(615) 356-7636
- Kansas City	(913) 342-2473	- Chattanooga	(423) 843-2822
- Wichita	(316) 681-2266	Texas - Statewide	(713) 992-2757
Kentucky - Statewide	(502) 894-9538	- Austin	(512) 483-0952
Louisiana - Baton Rouge	(504) 768-9874	- Corpus Christi	(512) 969-2731
Maine - Statewide	(207) 781-2332	- Northcentral	(817) 329-1270
(5 pm - 8 am M-F; 24 hrs. weekends)		- Northeast	(903) 759-8989
- Downeast / Central	(207) 244-4116	- Lower Rio Grande Valley	(210) 569-2331
Maryland - Statewide	(301) 652-1088	- Lubbock	(806) 797-6690
Massachusetts - Boston	(617) 259-8805	- San Antonio	(210) 733-8306
- Western Massachusetts	(413) 253-2218	Utah - Statewide	(801) 538-4730
Michigan - Statewide	(616) 471-4919	Vermont - Statewide	(802) 457-2779
- Detroit	(810) 477-1360	Virginia - Statewide	(804) 238-2713
- Sault Ste. Marie	(705) 256-2790	Washington - Statewide	(206) 526-8266
Minnesota - Statewide	(612) 780-8890	- Southeastern	(208) 882-6195
- Duluth	(218) 525-5952	West Virginia - Statewide	(304) 736-3086
Missouri - Statewide	(314) 445-9115	Wisconsin - Statewide	(414) 352-3857
- Kansas City	(913) 342-2473	- Madison (except 9 am - 3 pm M-F)	(608) 255-2476
- St. Louis	(314) 935-8432	Wyoming - Statewide	(307) 265-2473

NEW MEMBERS

We extend warm greetings to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Don Arundell, Nathan Bales, Mr. and Mrs. David Ballot, Lee Baxter, Roberta Becker, John Bobbitt, Rose Brenner, Charles Bridges, Jennifer Brown, Gerald Brown, Christopher Bruorton, Norden H. Cheatham, Kristina and Adam Cipriano, Krista Clem, Dagmar Cogill, Jennifer Coty, David A. Danker, M. Delinsta, Martin Dimbat, Donna Dong, Dean Fanara, Foley, Harold Fowler, Arnold Gilbert, Margaret Gipps, Jean Grimm, Jo Haegert, Dr. B. P. Harpole, Darren A. Hobbs, Dorothy Hodgess, Dennis Hoffman, John R. Holloway, Lillian Jensen, Jon Kaufmanomen, Sue Lee, Will McDaniel, Teresa Mead, H. S. Mountford, Shirley Neece, Tammara Newman, Yoram Papir, Terri Payne, Bob Pearson,

Karen Randle, Micheline Reeder, Bob Robinson, John Shaffer, Bessie Smyth, Michael Solari, Steven Sommerhalder, Adair Southard, Paul Swink, Susan B. Wagner, Patricia Wattam, C. Weiner, Virginia Wells, Betty Wentzel, Melinda Whitmore, Beth Wiese and Marion Williams.



The *Quail* is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the *Quail* and *Audubon* magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the *Quail* is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the *Quail* to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631

Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
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February 1996

Vol. 42 No. 6

Next Deadline: February 8

February Program:

California Ducks

For our **February 1** General Meeting, Rich Radigonda of the California Waterfowl Association will give a slide presentation and talk on ducks. Changes are taking place in California that affect how ducks, geese, and swans spend their winters and Rich will give us an update on some of these changes. With California Duck Days coming up in mid-February, this program will be a great headstart on learning about California wetland habitats and our wonderful, colorful waterfowl.

Rich Radigonda, a San Francisco native, grew up watching waterfowl on the Bay. He is a wildlife artist who also began photographing ducks and other water birds in 1970. He took second in California's 1993-94 State Duck Stamp competition and is a co-founder of the Pacific Flyway Decoy Show. Ducks Unlimited named Rich California Artist of the Year in 1987 and Carver of the Year in 1989. Rich will be one of the facilitators at the Duck Days festival.

The next board meeting will be on Thursday, February 8, at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Karen Enstrom at 21 Manti Terrace, Danville, 837-8392. The board meetings are open to all interested members. The **Quail mailing meeting** will be on Friday, February 16, at 9:30 a.m., at the Wild Birds Unlimited store.

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Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip on Sunday, February 11, returns for a winter look at Lafayette Reservoir. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. The trip leader will be Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the top of the dam (\$4.00 parking fee).

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

EDUCATION

One bright, sunny morning the phone rang. The caller said, "I'm Jan Knight. My sixth grade classes are studying endangered species. Is there someone in Audubon who could come and talk to them about that sort of matter?" After a brief exchange, I agreed I'd undertake to do just that. At the appointed day and hour, I arrived at the school with some degree of trepidation. I was ushered into a classroom that I would say was essentially a dump. It was small, ill-lighted, and cramped, with every inch of space occupied by something other than students. During a brief discussion before arrival of the students, the teacher and I talked about her work, classes, students, and problems. Some nice new marker boards hung on one wall. It turned out those boards had been purchased, hung, and readied by the teacher in an effort to do more for the students. Such is education in the 1990s.

It's been a while since I attended the sixth grade as a student. Some memories of those days are still with me. I concluded today's students and teachers are somehow NOT being well served. Classrooms in which I received my education were clean, airy, and well-lighted, with lots of windows. We had blackboards, chalk and all sorts of things that made it easy for the teacher to teach and I guess made it easier for me to learn. After all the formalities were over, I launched into my dissertation about the endangered species. I was pleased with the rapt attention given. The teacher had warned me the students had LOTS of questions so my remarks were relatively short. Then, QUESTION TIME! Amazingly (at least to me), most of the student's questions were thoughtful, excellent, and indicated a level of understanding I'd not anticipated. Suddenly class was over. The teacher suggested the students thank me, which they did, VERY nicely. Books and papers were stuffed into knapsacks and the students filed out in a very orderly manner.

The second class of about 36 students came in. That group was NOT orderly and didn't settle down. The teacher finally clapped her hands. In a fairly stern tone, she said, "When you settle down, turn and look at me. When you ALL do that, we will begin. You know we have a guest here to talk to you about endangered species, but because you've NOT settled down, we won't have very much time." Quickly the students quieted and in a few moments I was "ON." After a few brief comments I suggested to the class they should now know what a threatened species was, which brought a small laugh. Then I talked about the endangered California species. Again the class was VERY attentive. My short presentation over, the students began to ask questions. Again, most questions were thoughtful, seeking real information, and many questions demonstrated concern about "the environment." Finally the end of the hour arrived. The teacher collected papers, i.e., notes made by the students. Seats were set atop desks, and the students filed out. The teacher kindly suggested I'd received a passing grade and I was off, feeling pretty good.

What did I learn? Lessons:

1. Neither Audubon nor anyone else does a very good job of providing information to teachers in many K-12 classes.
2. Children are seeking information about environmental matters.
3. Teachers are actively seeking materials to use in bringing environmental information to the classroom and they are having trouble locating applicable material, not because the material isn't out there but because Audubon hasn't really done a good job of getting our environmental information to ALL schools and students.

Maybe in the NEW Audubon that's the sort of project we should look at. See if we can't do a better job of helping educators find material. Do a better job of bringing an Audubon view to the students in ALL K-12 grades.

My conclusion. I had fun. I felt as though I'd accomplished something and that's not always the case when I appear before adult decision-makers to bring some environmental matter to their attention.

DESC UP TO DATE

The good news is planning for the Delta Environment Science Center continues apace. The sad news is the project won't be completed for a while. "Why not?" you ask. Mainly due to funding or, in plain English, raising the dollars necessary to plan, create, and finalize the project. Don't be faint of heart! Planning meetings are going on, and on and on. That's the way the world works when many voices are to be heard and many hands have to be raised so decisions can be made. A week ago a five-person committee met via conference telephone. The two-hour discussion produced an agenda and the projects were allocated among the group. That meant when the Planning Group met on January 12 (at 7:30 a.m.) in the Board Room of the Contra Costa County Community College District in Martinez, much of the work had been done. An outline of the governing organization was agreed on. A fund-raising strategy was outlined. The VERY important education component was discussed. MDAS should continue to play an important role in these formative discussions.

VOLUNTEERS vs. PROFESSIONALS

At the January chapter meeting, I commented at some length (probably with feeling) about a proposal initiated by the new Congressional majority. If enacted into law, the proposal would not have permitted bird count data developed by Audubon to be used by any governmental agency. A later check with NAS leaders, however, found that the proposal had created so much controversy and opposition that the proposal had been dropped. SOOOOOOOOO, I was WRONG! However, the fact the idea will not, at least in this session of Congress, become law is a tribute to the folks who let their Congressperson know how they felt about such a proposal. So, sorry to have misstated the facts but glad to know opposition did the job.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Note: Because of bad weather or road conditions, field trips may be cancelled by the leader the day of the trip at the carpool location. If you have questions, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Saturday and Sunday, February 3 and 4, **Los Banos and the Panoche Valley**. Saturday in the Los Banos area we look for ducks and geese. Sunday up in the Panoche Valley we look for Mountain Plover and Mountain Bluebirds. There will be a group dinner Saturday at the Woolgrower's Restaurant in Los Banos. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, by 6 p.m. Friday, February 2, if you plan to attend the group dinner. Make your motel reservations **now**. In Los Banos is the Bonanza Motel, (209) 826-3871. Nearby in Santa Nella are Best Western (Pea Soup) Andersen's Inn, (209) 826-5534, Holiday Inn Mission de Oro, (209) 826-4444, and Motel 6, (209) 826-6644.

Leader: Steve Glover, 829-7207

Category 1

Wednesday, February 7, **Thornton**. Carpool 7:30 a.m., southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:45 a.m. in park at end of Glascock Rd. Take SR 4 to Antioch Bridge (toll), go north on SR 160 along river to Rio Vista. Turn right on SR 12 for 11.5 miles, then turn left onto Glascock Rd. Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes, hawks and grassland birds. Trip will go in light rain. If questions, call the leader.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 1

Thursday, February 15, **Berkeley/Richmond shoreline**. Carpool 8:00 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the north end of the Emeryville Marina. Take Hwy. 24, turn north onto I-80. Take the first exit, Powell St, turn left under the freeway to the end of the road. Park in parking lot. May be cold and windy. Loons, grebes, and bay ducks.

Leader: Denise Wight, 370-7342

Category 1

Saturday, February 24, **Bodega Bay**. Carpool 7:15 a.m., southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 9:00 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant. Go north on US 101. Take the Washington St. exit in Petaluma, go west on Bodega Hwy. to SR 1, turn right to Bodega Bay. The Tides Restaurant is on left, opposite a Union station. Can be cold and windy.

Leader: Shirley Ellis, 938-3703

Category 1

Thursday, February 29, **Hayward Regional Shoreline**. Carpool 7:45 a.m. at El Nido at St. Stephens, off SR 24. Meet at 8:30 in front of Visitor's Center. Take I-880 to SR 92 west. From the Clawiter exit, turn on Breakwater to Visitor's Center.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

ALTAMONT, December 7.

Nine birders in three cars traversed Dougherty Road, Altamont Pass, and Clifton Court Forebay. We saw 56 species with eight species of raptors which included six Golden Eagles, three Ferruginous Hawks, and one Merlin. One Burrowing Owl was seen off Dougherty Road.

Jim Lomax

NILES CANYON, December 13

The trip day followed one of the worst storms ever to hit the Bay Area and only two members plus this leader showed up. It was a clear day until noon, then it began raining again. The number of birds was radically down from normal years and we missed many "counted-on" species such as Green Heron and Spotted Sandpiper. The highlight of the trip was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher that has been at the same location the last three years. Two American White Pelicans were in Alameda Creek, which was unusual, and a 15-inch Racer Snake rounded out a brief morning.

Jimm Edgar

PALO ALTO BAYLANDS, December 30.

The tide was too low to bring out Black Rails, but the Clapper Rails were active and the seven birders had several sightings. Other highlights were a Peregrine Falcon, 50+ Redheads, and a pair of Blue-winged Teal on the ponds along Frontage Road. The weather was heavily overcast, but no rain. A total of 68 species was seen.

Elizabeth Dickey

DID YOU KNOW?

The first California specimen for **Yellow Rail** was taken in Martinez on December 15, 1863.

From *California Birds*, by Arnold Small, 1994

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
333 Goshen Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 829-7207.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Laysan Albatross: 1 still present on 1/5 at Pt. Arena Cove, Mendocino County. (SG, RL) Also on RBA.

Cattle Egret: 1 still present on 12/19 and 1/3 at Lake Merritt. (JR, GF)

Green Heron: 1 on 1/8 and 1/11 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (SG) Quite scarce in that area in winter, in fact one of very few waterbirds more common here in summer than winter.

Tundra Swan: ~1500 still present through 1/11 at Holland Tract (SG), 300-400 on 1/2 in a field north of the east end of Orwood Road, East Contra Costa County (GF, MP).

Greater White-fronted Goose: ~20 of the rare (*Two*) subspecies on 12/4 at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. (GF, MP)

Ross's Goose: 4 amongst 280 Snow Geese on 1/11 over Piper Slough, Bethel Island. (SG)

Wood Duck: a pair on 12/20 at Antioch Municipal Reservoir. (JS)

Blue-winged Teal: 2 males on 12/19 and 1 male on 1/3, all at Arrowhead Marsh (JR); 4 on 1/3 at Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FB, MJC).

Eurasian Wigeon: 2 males on 12/4 at Sacramento NWR (GF, MP); 1 on 12/16 at Mallard Reservoir north of Concord (SG, JRob).

Harlequin Duck: 1 male still present through 12/27 at Brooks Island, Richmond. (SG)

Oldsquaw: 1 on 12/27 at the Richmond Marina. (SG)

Black Scoter: 1 male on 12/27 at the mouth of the Richmond Marina. (SG)

Barrow's Goldeneye: 52 males and many females on 12/19 at Lake Merritt. (JR)

Red-breasted Merganser: 1 female on 1/3 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG)

Osprey: 1 on 12/16 at Mallard Reservoir. (SG, BR, JRob) Only the second Christmas Count record in 14 years.

Bald Eagle: 1 adult on 12/4 at Sacramento NWR (GF, MP); 1 adult on 1/1 at Lake Chabot Regional Park (JJ).

Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 1/11 on the transmission tower behind his San Ramon home. (SG)

Sandhill Crane: 34 on 1/11, some already dancing, at Holland Tract. (SG)

Mountain Plover: 30 on 12/26 at Rd. 102 and Rd. 16, Yolo County. (FB, MJC, HH)

Lesser Yellowlegs: 1 on 1/2 at Frick Lake near Livermore (MP, GF); 1 on 1/3 at Palo Alto FCB (FB, MJC); 4 on 1/11 at Holland Tract (SG).

Long-billed Curlew: 237 on 12/26 at the intersection of Deer Valley and Chadbourne Rds., west of Brentwood. (SG)

Red Phalarope: 1 on 12/19 at Lake Merritt (JD, JR); 6 on 1/2 in Bodega Harbor (FB, MJC, BG, HH).

Ancient Murrelet: ~200 on 1/5 from the Pt. Arena Cove to the Pt. Arena Lighthouse. (SG, RL)

Burrowing Owl: 6 on 12/19 at Arrowhead Marsh. (JR)

Short-eared Owl: 4 on 12/16 at dawn north of Waterfront Rd. (SG, BR, JRob)

House Wren: 2 on 1/8 and 1/11 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Winter Wren: 1 on 1/8 and 2-3 on 1/11 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Mountain Bluebird: 220 on 11/27 along Little Panoche Rd. (GF, MP); 12 on 1/2 (GF, MP) and 1/4 (HH, FB) along Patterson Pass Rd., east of Livermore.

Sage Thrasher: 1 still present on 1/11 along Byron Hot Springs Rd., 0.7 miles south of Holey Rd., near Byron. (SG)

Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 on 1/2 along Orwood Rd. near Knightsen (GF, MP); 2-3 on 1/8 and 1/11 at Piper Slough (SG). All three were of the race *Lutescens*.

Lark Sparrow: 200 on 11/27 along Panoche and Little Panoche Valley Rds. (GF, MP)

Fox Sparrow: 25-27 on 1/8 at Piper Slough, including one of a very rusty race, probably from the Pacific Northwest. (SG)

Swamp Sparrow: 1 on 12/4 along Sycamore Slough Rd., Colusa County. (GF)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 present through 1/11 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Rustic Bunting: 1 on 12/30 at Hoopa, Humboldt County. (SG) Also on RBA; approximately the fifth state record.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 1 male on 1/8 along Cypress Rd. near Oaklay. (SG)

Hooded Oriole: 1 still present through 1/11 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, John Jordan, Ron Lindeman, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, John Robinson, and Joel Summerhill.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for donations from Mike Williams of honoraria from the Orinda Garden Club and Diablo Home Economists for talks given to each group. His generosity is greatly appreciated.

THE 1995 CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Christmas Count on Saturday, December 16, 1995, was held on perhaps the most beautiful, sunny day in the history of the count. We tied our all-time high for number of species with 159 and a total of 31,686 individual birds. The total numbers were quite low as waterfowl were not present in very large numbers yet. Some good birds were seen that we only get about once every three or four years. Pacific Loon and Red-throated Loon were probably blown inland by the big storm. An Osprey seen at Mallard Reservoir was only the second ever for our count. A Hooded Oriole that remained at a feeder all fall was extremely rare and again only seen one other time, also at that feeder, in 1988. We added Wild Turkey to our list this year. Two or three flocks are being seen regularly on Mt. Diablo. Thanks to all 66 people who participated, plus 6 others at bird feeders.

Jimm Edgar, Compiler

<u>Red-throated Loon</u>	Red-shouldered Hawk	Band-tailed Pigeon	American Robin
<u>Pacific Loon</u>	Red-tailed Hawk	Mourning Dove	Varied Thrush
Pied-billed Grebe	Ferruginous Hawk	Barn Owl	Wrentit
Horned Grebe	Golden Eagle	Western Screech-Owl	Northern Mockingbird
Eared Grebe	American Kestrel	Great Horned Owl	California Thrasher
Western Grebe	Merlin	Short-eared Owl	American Pipit
American White Pelican	Peregrine Falcon	White-throated Swift	Cedar Waxwing
Double-crested Cormorant	Prairie Falcon	Anna's Hummingbird	Phainopepla
American Bittern	Ring-necked Pheasant	Belted Kingfisher	Loggerhead Shrike
Great Blue Heron	<u>Wild Turkey</u>	Acorn Woodpecker	European Starling
Great Egret	California Quail	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Hutton's Vireo
Snowy Egret	Black Rail	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Green Heron	Virginia Rail	Downy Woodpecker	Townsend's Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Sora	Hairy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Tundra Swan	Common Moorhen	Northern Flicker	Rufous-sided Towhee
Greater White-fronted Goose	American Coot	Black Phoebe	California Towhee
Canada Goose	Black-bellied Plover	Say's Phoebe	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Killdeer	Horned Lark	Lark Sparrow
Mallard	Black-necked Stilt	Tree Swallow	Sage Sparrow
Northern Pintail	American Avocet	Steller's Jay	Savannah Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal	Greater Yellowlegs	Scrub Jay	Fox Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Willet	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Gadwall	Spotted Sandpiper	Common Raven	Lincoln's Sparrow
Eurasian Wigeon	Long-billed Curlew	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	White-throated Sparrow
American Wigeon	Marbled Godwit	Plain Titmouse	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Canvasback	Western Sandpiper	Bushtit	White-crowned Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Least Sandpiper	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Scaup	Dunlin	White-breasted Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Lesser Scaup	Long-billed Dowitcher	Brown Creeper	Tricolored Blackbird
Common Goldeneye	Common Snipe	Rock Wren	Western Meadowlark
Bufflehead	Bonaparte's Gull	Canyon Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
Hooded Merganser	Mew Gull	Bewick's Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Merganser	Ring-billed Gull	House Wren	<u>Hooded Oriole</u>
Ruddy Duck	California Gull	Winter Wren	Purple Finch
Turkey Vulture	Herring Gull	Marsh Wren	House Finch
<u>Osprey</u>	Thayer's Gull	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Pine Siskin
White-tailed Kite	Western Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Lesser Goldfinch
Northern Harrier	Glaucous-winged Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	American Goldfinch
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Forster's Tern	Western Bluebird	House Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Rock Dove	Hermit Thrush	

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

WINTER SUPER SALE

BIRDSEED SALE

15% off all 20 lb. to 50 lb. bags

SUET SALE

\$0.30 off all suet cakes and \$0.60 off all suet tubs
(Sale ends 2/19/96)

15%-50% OFF

All Sweatshirts Fountains
Many Other In-store Specials

(Sale ends 2/19/96)

Feeding tips: There are now many chickadees and Nuttall's Woodpeckers being seen. Be sure and put out suet and peanuts. Not very many American Goldfinch and Pine Siskins are being reported. Because of mild weather in the north, many evidently didn't migrate south for the winter. Oriole feeders should be put out in late February, except for Jean Richmond. She has to leave her feeder out year round because she has had a male Hooded Oriole throughout this winter.

MDAS and BAAC

The Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC), comprised of people from the Bay Area Audubon chapters, meets every two months. On February 3, MDAS will host the next BAAC meeting at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, starting at 10:00 a.m. Any member can attend.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
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(510) AUD-UBON



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Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
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Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

March 1996

Vol. 42 No. 7

Next Deadline: March 14

March Program:

Four Seasons on Mt. Diablo

For our **March 7** General Meeting, Stephen Joseph, a local photographer, will give a 3-dimensional slide presentation of the changing seasons on Mt. Diablo. Stephen will provide 3D glasses to members to view these wonderful images. As most people have never seen a 3-dimensional slide show, this should be a fun, informative, and unusual program. Come and see Mt. Diablo in a way you may have never experienced it.

Stephen Joseph has been photographing for the past 30 years. He has a Masters degree from the California College of Arts and Crafts and has been making his living photographing Mt. Diablo in panoramic and 3-dimensional images for the last eleven years. Stephen is also an avid hiker, a passion that blends well with outdoor photography. A Pleasant Hill resident, he also teaches the Diablo Photo Workshop for Walnut Creek.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, March 14, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Barbara Vaughn, 59 Donna Maria Way, Orinda, 376-8732. Board meetings are open to all interested members. The **Quail mailing meeting** will be on Friday, March 22, at 9:30 a.m., at the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Pleasant Hill.

General Meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Our hospitality chair, Carol Frischmann, would like to remind members that a cupful of coffee is better than a handful of coffee and to continue to bring their coffee mugs or tea cups to the General Meetings.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip Sunday, March 17, will explore the Orinda Connector Trail. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Please call the trip leader Denise Wight, 370-7342, to reserve a place as the access permit limits the number of participants. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the corner of San Pablo Dam and Bear Creek Roads in Orinda.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

RATS

Golly Gee! Whoop-tee-dee. RATS. Well, folks, it's this way. The *Rossmoor News*, a paper dedicated to carrying information concerning residents of the area, has embarked on what will likely be a continuing saga. "So what?" you ask. Literally hundreds of Rossmoor residents are bird lovers. Feeders for seed eaters and hummingbirds can be seen hanging throughout the area. On February 7 the paper carried the headline "Oh rats! Mutual bans bird feeders." A longish article then describes how an individual with a penchant for feeding birds discovered that roof rats had invaded her Martinez home. The story alleges that the roof rats were drawn to that dwelling by a hanging seed feeder. Now the individual lives in Rossmoor, so no more feeders can be made available for the "birdies." The article goes on and on and on. What will be the next episode in this unwinding saga?

100 AND STILL DOING GOOD

Bet you didn't know that the National Audubon Society will celebrate its 100th year of activity this year. Founded in some degree of adversity, the National Audubon Society tried to halt (and eventually succeeded in stopping) the use of bird feathers in women's hats. Maybe it doesn't sound like much, but the hunters were shooting large numbers of birds just to garner the flowing tail feathers. These items eventually showed up to adorn women's hats. Lots of birds have flown and lived because Audubon halted the slaughter. That's history. You ask, "What's Audubon doing now?" The National Audubon Board has taken a major step. Audubon is being reinvented and is aiming to be a "ground-up" organization. That means YOU, as an Audubon member, will be important in creating Audubon policy, activity, and goals.

AUDUBON'S REGIONAL CONFERENCE

You might be interested in attending the Audubon Conference at Asilomar in March. Wonderful people. More information that you can possibly "soak up." Held in a beautiful setting in Monterey. (Editor: See below.)

DESC PROGRESS CONTINUES

Notices are out advertising the position of part-time Executive Director. Money has been allocated to further the educational elements of the Center. It is agreed many facets of the Science Center can proceed while the plans for the actual building are developed. Eventually a major funding drive will be initiated to raise the money needed for that part of the Center. Mark Nickerson is the director of the Concord Campus of California State University and chairs the DESC Program Committee. A number of educators who teach classes in grades K-12, as well as at Los Medanos Community College and CSU-Hayward, Contra Costa Campus, will be brought together on March 8 at the Ironhouse Sanitary District headquarters. There they will be exposed to an overview of the Center. When the entire Center is

operating, there will be a continuing environmental education curricula available to students from the earliest grades through college and university. The end result for one who is interested in environmental work may be a job. A worthy goal???

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON EXHIBIT

Are you aware of the exhibition of Audubon's paintings and watercolors for The Birds of America? Yep, 'tis true. See them at the De Young Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, through April 14. Days, hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Admission \$8.00 for adults, \$6.00 for 65 and over, and \$5 for youth 12-17. Children under 12 free.

THE NEW AUDUBON

Audubon Centers have been always important but under the "new Audubon" there is a vision. Audubon Center prototypes may operate under any of the following ownership/management arrangements: NAS owned and operated, NAS center and field office, NAS/chapter operated, NAS/chapter affiliate center, or non-site-based center. The Issues and Wildlife Conservation Centers will focus on conservation of wetlands, migratory birds, land use, forests, or marine life. Program-focused Audubon Centers will include the Audubon camps, teacher education, activist training centers, and outreach centers. In the future, Audubon Centers will:

- Encourage learning about the natural landscape
- Involve Audubon's grassroots network
- Create programs that integrate education and advocacy
- Create appreciation, knowledge and stewardship for the natural environment

1996 WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Make plans now to attend the National Audubon Society's 1996 Western Regional Conference, March 30-April 2, at the Asilomar Conference Grounds on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula in Pacific Grove. The interactive workshops, inspiring speakers, exhilarating field trips, and stimulating discussion will focus on Audubon's commitment to birds, wildlife, and habitat and building a culture of conservation necessary to provide for their long-term protection. Distinguished speakers include Audubon's new president John Flicker, noted ornithologist and Audubon's chief scientist Frank Gill, Cornell Lab of Ornithology director John Fitzpatrick, and American Bird Conservancy president George Fenwick. Young people are welcome to participate in age-appropriate youth programs, one for ages 3-12, and another for ages 13-17. Registration for the Conference is \$60 for adults and \$20 for youths. Field trips are \$30-\$40 extra. Housing at Asilomar starts at \$212 per person (\$133 for children) for three nights and includes 9 meals. For a registration form or more information, please contact the California Field office staff at (916) 481-5332.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

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- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Note: Because of bad weather or road conditions, field trips may be cancelled by the leader the day of the trip at the carpool location. If you have questions, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Saturday, March 9, **Tomales Bay State Park**. Carpool 7:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Heart's Desire Beach at Tomales SP (\$5 entrance fee). Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, turn left onto 3rd St. Follow 3rd S. and turn right onto Sir Frances Drake Blvd. Follow Sir Francis Drake through Inverness. Just over the ridge, turn right onto Pierce Point Rd. Park entrance is on the right. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 2

Wednesday, March 13, **San Mateo Coast**. Carpool 7:30 a.m., El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in beach parking lot off SR 1 opposite Pescadero Road. Cross the San Mateo Bridge, continue west on SR 92 to Half Moon Bay, go left on SR 1 for 15 miles to Pescadero Rd., turn right into parking lot.

Leader: Steve Glover, 829-7207

Category 2

Saturday, March 23, **Black Diamond Mines Regional Park**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot at park. Go east on Ygnacio Valley and Kirker Pass Roads to Hwy. 4. Go east on Hwy. 4 to the Somersville Rd. exit and turn right. Follow the road to the parking lot at the end. Woodland, chaparral, and some grassland birds.

Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041

Category 3

Thursday, March 28, **Briones Park**. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot at north entrance. Take Briones Road off Alhambra Valley Road. Wildflowers, spring birds. Poison oak along shaded trails.

Leader: John Davis, 228-9516

Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

PUTAH CREEK, January 6.

Twenty birders enjoyed a great day. Highlights included a Northern Pygmy-Owl (found by Lilian Fujii), Canyon and Rock Wrens, Phainopepla, Osprey, Ferruginous Hawk, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. Fifteen of us then drove northeast of Woodland and saw 200 Mountain Plovers. On the way home, my car stopped again along Putah Creek and saw the American Dipper and 7 Barrow's and 60 Common Goldeneyes. Total species: 74.

Florence Bennett

LAKE MERRITT, January 11.

How enjoyable to find a variety of waterbirds so close to home. The group compared Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes at close range, and a lone Cattle Egret seemed to enjoy the company of its two relatives at the lake shore.

Barbara Vaughn

SUNOL REGIONAL PARK, January 20.

The rain earlier in the week left and we had a beautiful day in the park. The eleven birders spent the day hiking up to Little Yosemite. 37 species were seen, an unusually low number for here, perhaps because of the earlier rain. We all had very good views of Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and one patient birder saw two Rock Wrens after the rest of us turned back.

Pat MacEachern

GRIZZLY ISLAND REFUGE, January 31.

The field trip was cancelled because of rain.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Denise Wight

Did you know that a favorite feeder bird, the Chestnut-backed Chickadee, hasn't been hanging around Contra Costa very long? According to Grinnell and Miller (1944), only vagrants had been reported from the "East Bay district," and these reports were mainly from Alameda County. By the spring of 1945, however, chickadees were nesting along Wildcat Creek in Tilden Park in Contra Costa County.

Why did they invade our county so recently? Before European settlement of California, the Santa Clara Valley may have been a barrier to the spread of chickadees. The planting of orchards and shade trees, which continued during the 1920s, may have permitted larger numbers of chickadees to cross the valley to the Diablo Range. They may have then spread northward along shaded slopes and riparian areas.¹

1. Dixon, K. "Some Ecological Relations of Chickadees and Titmice in Central California," *Condor* 56:113-124, 1954.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
333 Goshen Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 829-7207.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Red-throated Loon: 1 on 1/26 and 2/7 at Piper Slough. (SG)
Pacific Loon: 2 on 2/7 at Piper Slough. (SG) Rare inland but probably the fourth record for east Contra Costa County.
Laysan Albatross: 1 on 2/2 at Arena Cove in Mendocino County. (FB, EL, JR) Also on RBA.
Cattle Egret: 4 on 2/7 at Jersey Island. (SG)
Greater White-fronted Goose: ~12,000 on 1/26 over Webb Tract, seen from Piper Slough. (SG)
Snow/Ross's Goose: ~4,000 on 1/26 over Webb Tract (SG); ~500 on 1/17 at Holland Tract east of Knightsen (GF, JR).
Green-winged Teal: 1 "Eurasian" race male on 2/6 at Redwood Shores, San Mateo County. (JR) Also on RBA.
Ring-necked Duck: ~1,500 on 1/25, only 75 on 2/7 at Marsh Creek Reservoir. (SG)
Scaup species: ~1770 on 1/26 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
Oldsquaw: 1 female on 1/5 at Lake Merritt, seen again on 1/9 at nearby Channel Park. (JR, RR)
Barrow's Goldeneye: 12 on 1/5 at Lake Merritt and 29 on 1/9 at Channel Park. (JR, RR)
Hooded Merganser: 1 female on 1/5 at Lake Merritt and a male and 2 females on 1/9 at Channel Park (JR, RR); a pair on 2/7 in a flooded field along Cypress Road east of Oakley (SG).
Swainson's Hawk: 26 on 1/26 over Holland Tract. (SG) All but one were dark phase; these hawks are likely part of the San Joaquin County wintering flock.
Black Rail: 1 heard on 2/7 at Piper Slough. (SG) One was heard here 11/11/94 and they may prove regular here.
Sandhill Crane: at least 250 on 1/17 at Holland Tract. (JR, GF) If you add up all East Bay sightings from the last 40 years, you get only about 200!
Lesser Yellowlegs: 32 on 1/26 along Orwood Road near Knightsen (SG); 1 on 1/17 on Holland Tract (GF, JR); on 2/7, 2 on Jersey Island and 3 along Cypress Road (SG).
Laughing Gull: 1 on 1/23 (JR) and 1/26 (GF) at Marshall, Marin County. Also on RBA.
Mew Gull: 495 on 2/7 along Cypress Road. (SG)
Ancient Murrelet: 50-60 on 2/3 at Arena Cove. (EL, FB, JR)
White-throated Swift: 125+ on 1/25 at Marsh Creek Reservoir. (SG)
Dusky-capped Flycatcher: 1 on 1/9 at Fort Funston in San Francisco. (FB, MJC, BG, HH, JR) Also on RBA.
Winter Wren: 2 on 1/12 and 1 on 2/7 at Piper Slough. (SG)
American Dipper: 1 on 1/6 and 1/17 at Putah Creek, Solano County. (FB, HH, JR)
Mountain Bluebird: 12 on 1/4 along Patterson Pass Road, east of Livermore. (FB, HH)
Varied Thrush: 1 on 1/26 at the end of Orwood Road. (SG) First record for east Contra Costa County.

Sage Thrasher: 1 seen again on 1/12 (SG, RL) and on 1/17 (JR, GF) along Byron Hot Springs Road; 1 on 2/5 along Little Panoche Road, Fresno County (GF, MP).
Hooded Warbler: 1 on 1/9 at Mallard Lake, Golden Gate Park. (JR, FB, MJC, BG, HH) Also on RBA.
Vesper Sparrow: 20 on 1/23 near mile 5.88 along Hwy. 128 west of Winters (FB, MJC, BG, EL); 1 on 2/1 along the Del Puerto Canyon Road (MP, GF).
White-throated Sparrow: 1 still in her Alamo yard through 2/6 (JR); 1 on 2/7 at Piper Slough (SG).
Harris's Sparrow: 1 found on 1/18 (PK) in her Danville yard and seen by JR; seen through at least 1/30 at nearby Macedo Ranch Parking lot (KH, GF, SG, JR, FB, MJC). Probably the tenth county record, all found at feeders; the first record for Mt. Diablo State Park.
Yellow-headed Blackbird: 52+ on 1/12 at the intersection of Cypress Road and Sellers Road. (SG, RL)
Rusty Blackbird: 1 on 2/6 at Phipps Ranch, Pescadero, San Mateo County. (JR) Also on RBA.
Hooded Oriole: male last seen on 1/29 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Kevin Hints, Pam Keiser, Eugenia Larson, Ron Lindeman, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond, and Rich Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 24 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

BIRD-BANDING TRAINING

Are you looking for new birding frontiers? The world of bird banding awaits you! Banding is a fantastic opportunity to see birds up close, learn about plumages, molt sequences, and life habits, and, by participating in established banding programs, contribute in a direct way to their conservation.

The Institute for Bird Populations is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a global approach to the preservation of birds and their habitats. The IBP offers low-cost bird-banding courses at locations throughout the U.S. during June and July. Registration fee for a one-week course is \$400, which includes all instruction and materials. Room and board is usually \$100-\$200 extra. Upon completion of the course, capable students will be certified as banding assistants. For more information and registration materials, please contact Kenneth Burton, The Institute for Bird Populations, P. O. Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956, (415) 663-2051.

MIDWINTER BIRDING IN DULUTH, MINNESOTA

by Denise Wight

When I signed up for Wing's Duluth Weekend trip last fall, I knew it would be very cold, but I never imagined I would be outside birding the morning of February 2, 1996, when the town of Tower recorded Minnesota's coldest temperature ever, -59 degrees. And we were only 25 miles away!

At 7:30 a.m. that morning, I was the coldest I have ever been in my life. We were unsuccessful finding Spruce Grouse from the van along County Road #2 near Isabella, so we stopped and got out to look along the sides of the road. Two White-winged Crossbills darted above us, but it was so cold my contact lenses would not focus. My gloved hand could not work my binoculars, but it didn't matter because they had become frozen stiff and would not focus anyway. Five minutes and 100 feet from the van I realized that I and most of the other participants were not doing too well. We relocated the White-winged Crossbills for decent spotting scope looks, but we were all taking on a zombie-like appearance. Our faces were turning red, and there was little conversation. My contacts were now focusing, but I was having a hard time seeing because my eyelashes were frosting over and my left eye was stuck shut. Luckily, I returned to the van and once inside my eyelashes thawed and unstuck.

The birding was fantastic. Only 29 species were counted for the entire trip, but they were all quality birds. Our next stop was at a lodge. I spied my first Gray Jay outside on a suet ball from inside an 80 degree room. This I could enjoy. Black-capped Chickadees trying to keep warm were so puffed up they looked like baseballs with tails.

Great Gray Owls were puffed up, too, unlike the sleek birds I had seen in Yosemite. I was lucky enough to see another Great Gray fly about 30 feet over my head. A new bird for me was the Northern Hawk Owl. We actually saw three within an hour in the Sax-Zim Bog area northwest of Duluth.

Our group fortunately was told about a Hoary Redpoll coming to a feeder in Duluth. All eighteen of us viewed this bird from the comfort of the homeowner's kitchen. There were also about 100 Common Redpolls, one lone Evening Grosbeak, a few Pine Grosbeaks (the males splendidly colored pink), a Blue Jay, and a Downy Woodpecker. The redpolls were coming to a thistle feeder outside the window that separated us by only a foot. These cranberry-capped finches acted just their their congeners, the Pine Siskins, fighting for perches

Duluth Harbor was -18 degrees with a wind chill factor off Lake Superior that brought it down to about -50. There is nothing more exasperating than viewing a Gyrfalcon for the first time under these conditions. My glasses frosted up and the wind made the skin on my cheeks feel as if it were adhering to the bone

below. But I did see the falcon as it perched on top of a grain silo. Through the telescope we could see the bill tipped with dried blood. We found the remains of a recently killed Rock Dove nearby, of which only the wings, still attached to each other, remained.

The next day we saw a Snowy Owl out on the iced-over lake. The bird was painted dark green on the left side of its head and wing for tracking purposes. When we got closer views we could see a tag on the right wing that proclaimed this was #44. When we finally left this bird, it had flown to a street lamp over the freeway, presumably unannoyed by the motorists below.

Other birds we saw included two Red-tailed Hawks, a flyby Northern Shrike in downtown Duluth, Common Ravens and American Crows, and over 30 Glaucous Gulls at a dump site in Superior, Wisconsin.

The trip was a fine education in how birds deal with the cold and limited food resources. Tracks in the snow showed where a Mourning Dove had walked away from a potted plant container, having obviously taken cover there, and now was frozen where it lay. Jim Lomax and Kevin Hintsu were on this trip, too, but they stayed on. I'm sure they will have great stories to tell. Would I ever plan a trip to an area this cold again? I doubt it, but I wouldn't have missed the experience for the world.

BAY AREA MONITORING CONFERENCE

The third Bay Area Volunteer Monitoring Conference will be held on Friday, May 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Avenue. Optional field trips will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12. Volunteer monitoring issues will be explored through a morning plenary session and in afternoon workshops. The plenary session will include presentations that describe the goals of the volunteer monitoring programs, the sustainability of volunteer monitoring activities, and building partnerships.

The Volunteer Monitoring Conference is sponsored by the State Water Resources Board, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, and the Urban Creeks Council. Attendees will be charged \$15 for the conference and an additional \$15 per field trip and can register with the San Francisco Estuary Institute at 180 Richmond Field Station, 1325 South 46th Street, Richmond, CA 94804. Please contact Joelle Bouchard of the San Francisco Estuary Institute, (510) 231-9566, for additional information or to be added to the mailing list.

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and field trips: Paul Bennett, Laura Carden, T. Davidson, Doris Farkas, Bob Garner, Robert Hoerr, Linda Huffman, Elizabeth Irvine and Mrs. Steven Lathrop.

NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS

The most recent chapter change report from National Audubon appears to be reducing the grace period at the end of members' year memberships. This may result in members being dropped from the *Quail* mailing list for several months if membership renewals are received late or processed slowly by National. If you do not receive a *Quail* shortly after you have renewed your membership, please get in touch with either Dan Van Zile, who maintains the *Quail* mailing list for the chapter, at 229-0394, or Mike Williams, the membership chair, at 376-1631.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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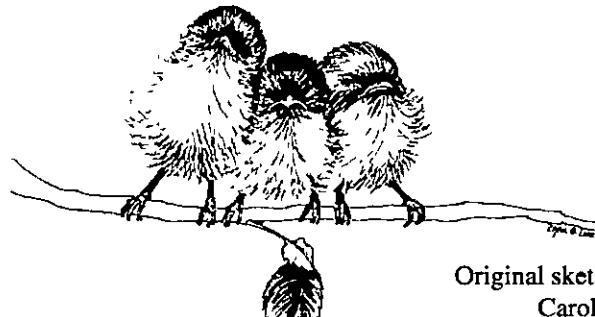
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BIRD INFORMATION

by Denise Wight

Unlike our main program, Bird Information is usually presented by a MDAS member. It is a half-hour time slot intended to help expand our knowledge and interest in birds. Unfortunately, this is the hardest slot to fill! If you would like to study up on some aspect of bird identification, behavior, life history, etc., and would feel comfortable sharing your findings with our group, please call me and we will talk. There is so much about birds we all can learn!



Original sketch by
Carol Lutz

TIME VALUE MAIL

The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



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Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

April 1996

Vol. 42 No. 8

Next Deadline: April 11

April Program:

The Bluebird Recovery Program

For the **April 4** general meeting, Don Yoder will give us a presentation on his involvement with the North American Bluebird Society and the Bluebird Recovery Program. Don will show slides from the Bluebird Society, Cornell Laboratories, and naturalist Charles Peck. He will also display different sample bluebird nest boxes, show monitoring techniques, and show some of the hardware that helps in monitoring and maintaining a nest box trail.

Don Yoder is a MDAS member. He is the originator and the Program Director of the California Bluebird Recovery Program. He is also a member of the North American Bluebird Society and an immediate past member of its Board of Directors. He lives in Walnut Creek where he maintains his own nest box trail of over 90 boxes!

Birding Information for the April meeting will be given by several MDAS members who have attended the National Audubon Society's 1996 Western Regional Conference held at Asilomar, March 30 through April 2. Birds, Wildlife, and Habitat: Building a Culture of Conservation will be the theme of the conference.

General Meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Weekend Birding Breaks will return in May.

TREASURER NEEDED. Election of MDAS board officials for the 1996-1997 term will take place at the May general meeting. It is with great regret that we must announce that Pam Keiser will be stepping down as Treasurer. Pam has done a terrific job as treasurer and will be missed by all. Anyone with bookkeeping or accounting experience who would be willing to take on this important chapter job is encouraged to call any chapter officer. There will be several other appointed committee chair positions available, as well.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

THE NEW AUDUBON

Over the past several months, this column, *Audubon Magazine*, and various speakers have reported on the reorganization taking place, pursuant to assessments by Audubon members and NAS Board action. Well known to most Audubon folks, Dan Taylor, now Executive Director, California Field Office, is busy as the proverbial beaver (maybe not creating but GIVING a dam). Dan's assessment of the new Audubon includes comments on the basic plan for Audubon activity. Audubon is to concentrate on sharpening Audubon's focus on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, investing in Audubon's distinctive system of grassroots chapters, and using basic tools of education joined with advocacy, thereby achieving the Audubon Mission. Dan points out, "The cornerstone of these changes will be the partnership of Audubon staff and volunteers working together to chart the course of wildlife conservation, starting at the local level." Dan is re-stating that to make the NEW Audubon effective will take "folks" like you and me to carry a basic load in the chapters. I interpret that to mean chapter officers are VERY important. Chapter boards have new challenges. Exciting projects involve fund-raising so chapters can be fully effective. New advisors are "on-board" at the Sacramento Office. For example, Marti Kie is coordinator of the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture. The new position represents a reality following much diligent effort. So, what role will YOU play in the new Audubon? Good question. The best answer is ACTION.

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

Sixteen educators representing kindergarten through college and university levels from throughout Contra Costa County came together March 8 and 15 to outline education goals. Attention was given to curricula and activities related to wetlands, all to be achieved through participation with DESC. Dr. Chris Kitting who led the very successful DESC boat trips last summer brought his boat to the March 8 event. NOT on water (too shallow just now) but on land. An assistant waded through shallow waters of Big Break Bay to gather live samples of "creatures" from those waters. The teachers were then given a chance to actually SEE some of the Bay/Delta life. Summing up, one teacher said at the end of the day, "I'm so excited. I just can't wait to get started." To my mind, she expressed the thoughts of all of us participants.

ESA -WHAT IS IT????

ESA is the shorthand for the ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT. California has an ESA (CESA) and there is a Federal ESA as well. By now, the infamous Young-Pombo bill and the various congressional efforts to weaken, eliminate, or defund the acts have slowed. ACTIONS by Administration officials both in state and federal agencies have been moving along. The successes of such efforts fall short of expectations. Failure would describe

most results. Streamlined processes covering listing, protecting and assessing the status of various species have been put in place. Suffice it to say, these processes are NOT working. Audubon has outlined the following ESA goals for 1996:

- Draft and support the legislation to be introduced in the state legislature AND Congress that will clearly articulate Audubon's vision of strengthened and reauthorized state and federal ESAs.
- Hold training and workshops followed by a cohesive grassroots action plan to support ESA legislation.
- Work with other interested groups such as the Endangered Species Coalition, headquartered in Washington, D. C.,
- Sponsor ESA events, one in Northern California and one in Southern California so there will be a full understanding as to WHY ESA is important.
- Continue discussions with landowners and industry groups, seeking cooperative ventures to "save" endangered species.
- Integrate CESA and ESA campaigns with activity of Audubon Centers, i.e., the Sacramento office, education programs and sanctuaries.

If YOU want to participate, more information is available about Audubon's ESA campaign from John McCall at (916) 444-5557. Just about every scientific study demonstrates more species are becoming extinct faster than at almost ANY time in recorded history. Most species loss is directly related to human activity. Remember two things:

**NO habitat, NO birds.
Extinction is forever.**

NAS BOARD ELECTION

Four nomination forms have been received for the upcoming Regionally-Nominated Board Member Election for the Western Region. The nominees are:

Charles C. Bragg, Jr., Santa Monica, CA
 Kenneth Fortune, San Clemente, CA
 David Jennings, Olympia, WA
 Arthur E. Mancl, Eugene, OR

Copies of resumes of the four candidates are available from the *Quail* editor, Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, 229-0394. All chapters have through June 30 to conduct their elections and return their official ballots to the NAS field office.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday, April 6, **Garin Regional Park**. Carpool 7:15 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet in parking lot at end of Garin Rd., 8:00 a.m. Take I-680 south and I-580 west to SR 238 (Mission Blvd.). Go south to Garin Rd. and turn left to park. Grasshopper Sparrow is one possibility. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for more information.

Category 3

Wednesday, April 10, **Lake Lagunitas**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet 8:45 a.m. in parking lot at lake (entrance fee). Cross San Rafael Bridge north to US 101, take San Rafael exit two blocks, turn left and go through town. Turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. In downtown Fairfax, turn left and then right onto Broadway, 1/2 block; turn left onto Bolinas Ave., and left again onto Old Fairfax - Bolinas Rd. Watch for signs for park entrance. Both land and water birds, spring migrants.

Leader: Jean Richmond, 837-2843

Category 2

Thursday, April 18, **Ida Clayton Road**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. This area is north of Calistoga in the Napa County mountains. This is a car birding trip with no meeting place in Napa County. The carpooling is needed due to limited parking on some roads.

Leader: John Jordan, 680-7490

Category 1

Wednesday, April 24, **Del Puerto Canyon**. Carpool at 7:45 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet west of I-5 at 9:00 a.m. at the Patterson Exit of I-5 (59 mi. from El Cerro). Costa's Hummingbird, Yellow-breasted Chat. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for more information.

Category 1

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

LOS BANOS, February 3-4.

Although the winds never abated, we were able to skirt the rain most of the weekend. Saturday in the Los Banos area produced most of the local specialties including 17 Cattle Egret, Ross's

Goose, White-faced Ibis, and Sandhill Crane. At the O'Neill Forebay, we added a male Barrow's Goldeneye. Although the Mountain Plover never appeared this winter, on Sunday in the Panoche Valley we did see many Mountain Bluebirds and, best of all, 2 Lark Buntings at the Silver Creek Ranch. Thirteen birders saw 112 species.

Steve Glover

THORNTON, February 7.

High overcast provided good visibility for flights of swans and cranes plus one large skein of White-fronted Geese and one of Snow Geese. Cranes were also seen beginning their dances. A total of 57 species was seen by 17 birders.

Elizabeth Dickey

BERKELEY / RICHMOND SHORELINE, February 15.

Nine people birded the Emeryville/Berkeley Shoreline area. We saw 14 Redheads on the Bay and 2 at Aquatic Park. Although no rarities were seen, we enjoyed the regular Black Turnstones, a Spotted Sandpiper, 11 species of ducks, a close-in Pelagic Cormorant, and a recent returnee, a male Allen's Hummingbird. At lunch, two Anna's Hummingbirds, a male and a female, fought for about 30 seconds within arm's length of our picnic table. We ended the trip when it began to rain with a total of 63 species.

Denise Wight

BODEGA BAY, February 24.

The field trip was cancelled based on the weather prediction. However, eight birders ignored weather forecasts and turned up at Bodega Saturday morning for what turned out to be a great day of birding. Over a thousand Brant plus three loon species and all seven grebe species were on the Bay. At the Head, an approaching squall brought in a Sooty Shearwater, Marbled Murrelet, murre, and guillemots. En route home, we caravanned past several back road ponds in Sonoma and Marin Counties. Highlights here were a Tundra Swan and a Golden Eagle perched on a deer carcass. A total of 99 species were seen or heard.

Elizabeth Dickey for Jean Richmond, leader pro tem

HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE, February 29.

The field trip was cancelled due to rain.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Denise Wight

Did you know that Lafayette once used to be a favorite field trip destination to see Yellow-breasted Chats? Members of Golden Gate Audubon Society would venture out from San Francisco or Oakland by train to enjoy a bird-filled spring day on the creek banks. According to a field trip write-up in the June, 1919, *Gull*, the Golden Gate newsletter, "The chat sang for us in full view during the entire luncheon hour."

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
333 Goshen Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 829-7207.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

American White Pelican: 2 on 2/25 at Lake Chabot (GD); on 3/7, 15 in a flooded field on Holland Tract near Knightsen and 15 flying north over Holland Tract (SG), none were in this area all winter.

Cattle Egret: 20 on 2/10 (J&RR, JD, EM) and 55 on 2/16 (FB, MJC) along Hwy. 140 east of Gustine, Merced County; 4 on 3/5 at Two Rock, Marin County (JR, JD, EM).

Tundra Swan: 500 on 1/17 at Holland Tract (GF, JR); ~1200 on 2/7 at Holland and Palm Tracts (SG).

Snow Goose: 500 on 1/17 flying south over Holland Tract (GF, JR); ~3300 on 3/7 at Palm Tract north of Orwood Road (SG).

Ross's Goose: 1 on 2/8 at Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove (JR, GF); 10 on 3/17 seen well with Snow Geese at Palm Tract (SG).

Tufted Duck: 1 male on 2/16 (JR, RR) and 2/20 (JR, JD, EM) at Spreckels Lake, Golden Gate Park.

Harlequin Duck: 1 male on 2/13 at the Coast Guard Pier in Monterey. (SG) Also on RBA.

Oldsquaw: 2 on 3/2 at the mouth of Pescadero Creek in San Mateo County. (FB, MJC)

Common Merganser: a pair on 3/1 at Heather Farms, Walnut Creek. (FB)

Red-breasted Merganser: a pair on 3/7 at the Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG)

Osprey: 1 on 3/7 circling over Holland Tract. (SG)

Swainson's Hawk: on 3/7, 6 over Palm Tract and 49 over Holland Tract. (SG) As nearly all were dark birds, these are probably still part of the San Joaquin County wintering flock.

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 dark-phase on 2/5 along Little Panoche Road, San Benito County. (MP, GF)

Rough-legged Hawk: 1 immature dark-phase hawk on 1/17 at Holland Tract. (GF)

Lesser Yellowlegs: 6 on 3/7 at Jersey Island. (SG)

Ruff: 1 on 2/12 (SG), 2/13 (BD), and 3/6 (FB, MJC, BG, EL) at Crittendon Marsh near Mt. View, Santa Clara County. Also on RBA.

Heerman's Gull: 1 on 2/12 at Charleston Slough, Santa Clara County. (SG) There are apparently less than ten county records.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 adult on 2/13 (BR) and 2/16 (SG) at West Warren Mitigation Ponds near Fremont, Alameda County. This bird has been seen sporadically throughout the winter in nearby Santa Clara County. This is the first East Bay record.

Glaucous Gull: 2 first-year birds on 2/14 and 1 on 2/16 at the West Warren Mitigation Ponds. (SG)

Thick-billed Murre: 1 on 2/13 at the Coast Guard Pier. (SG) Also on RBA.

Great Horned Owl: at least 8 on 3/9 calling in broad daylight along Pinehurst Road west of Moraga. (SG)

Northern Pygmy-Owl: 1 on 2/7 near mile 1.85 along Gazos Creek Road, San Mateo County. (FB, MJC)

Dusky-capped Flycatcher: 1 on 2/13 (SG) and 2/18 (GF, JR) at Moonglow Dairy, Monterey County. Also on RBA.

Sage Thrasher: 1 still along the Byron Hot Springs Road near Byron on 1/19 (BD); 1 on 2/5 (GF, MP) and 2 on 2/16 (FB, MJC) along Little Panoche Road, Fresno County.

Lucy's Warbler: 1 on 3/2 along Frenchman's Creek, Half Moon Bay. (MJC, FB) Also on RBA.

Prairie Warbler: 1 on 2/13 at Moonglow Dairy. (SG) Also on RBA.

Black-and-White Warbler: 1 on 1/29 at Mallard Lake, Golden Gate Park. (BD) Also on RBA.

Western Tanager: 1 male on 3/2 at Half Moon Bay. (MJC, FB)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 on 3/13 still in her Alamo yard. (JR)

McCown's Longspur: 1 on 2/18 along Brewer Road, Placer County. (SG) Also on RBA.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, Gayle Delalla, Bob Dunn, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Eugenia Larson, Ellie Mulke, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, and Jean and Rich Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 24 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

ORIOLES (both Hooded and the Bullock's subspecies of the Northern Oriole) will be arriving soon to nest in Contra Costa County. Last year over 1500 were reported to our Wild Birds Unlimited store. These spectacular birds are nectar feeders, like the hummingbirds. There are specially designed feeders for these birds who are too large to use hummingbird feeders.

Chickadees, wrens, and titmice are nesting now. These birds will often have two broods each year and will readily make use of birdhouses.

Have you seen the new *Stokes Field Guide to Birds, Western Region*, by Donald and Lillian Stokes? It's the only guide that includes nesting and feeding habitats, vocalization, status of the species, and behavior, along with range maps, description, and pictures, all on one page. On May 1, the authors will be at WBU for a book signing from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for donations from Judy and Alan Butts of Alamo, given in memory of Lotte Kendall, and from Mike and Cecil Williams, given in memory of Wayne Nelson, the father of one of their employees. Mike Williams has also generously donated to the chapter the honorariums he received from various groups to whom he has presented programs. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

CLASS, CENSUS, AND WEEKEND

SPRING FIELD CLASS

Norah Bain's spring field class for beginning and intermediate birders will meet April 16, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., April 23 and May 7, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and April 30, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For a class brochure, call the Orinda Community Center, 254-2445. With other questions, call Norah at 254-4516. The registration fee for Orinda residents \$44, for others \$46. Senior rates are available.

TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD CENSUS

National Audubon Society is helping the California Department of Fish & Game and the Tricolored Blackbird Working Group to coordinate the third year of the statewide counts of Tricolored Blackbird nesting and foraging locations. The counts will be held on April 20 and 21 and May 18 and 19. The counts include May dates in order to help identify the northward movement of Tricolored Blackbird colonies that seems to occur between early nesting in April and late nesting in May. For more information on how to participate, contact Bob Barnes, NAS, 555 Audubon Place, Sacramento, CA 95825, (916) 481-5332.

KLAMATH BASIN SPRING MIGRATION WEEKEND

Come to the Klamath Basin along the California/Oregon border May 16 to 19 and witness spring songbird migration and the height of waterbird nesting. See brightly colored neotropical migrants newly arrived from their Latin American wintering grounds. See waterbirds nesting by the thousands including those in one of the world's largest White-faced Ibis colonies. Visit world-famous National Wildlife Refuges and National Forests. Enjoy guided field trips, workshops, bird banding, and evening programs. Enjoy all this and more with Mt. Shasta forming a magnificent distant backdrop. For more information, contact Jill Shirley at the California Field Office of the National Audubon Society in Sacramento, (916) 481-5332.

THE 1996 ALL CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BIRDATHON

*by Barbara Burek
and Denise Wight*

The 1996 MDAS Birdathon will be held on Saturday, April 27. This year we are having an All Contra Costa County race. Steve Glover, MDAS Observations Editor and holder of the Best Contra Costa County List title for the last two years, will be in the field on Birdathon Day but a field in Texas. This opens the door for retiring MDAS President Jim Lomax, who has been honing his county knowledge the last two years and is in a good position to take the title. Denise Wight, MDAS Program Chair, who last year successfully defended her Best Bay Area List title, is going to try for the Contra Costa title this year. Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern, two former Birdathon leaders, will round out the chapter team field.

Why do we have a Birdathon? Unlike PBS, which has pledge drives three times a year (and it seems like more), and unlike other organizations, which continuously seem to be asking for money, MDAS has one and only one general fund-raising event each year - the Birdathon. The money raised the last two years has taken the chapter out of the red financially and into the black. This has allowed MDAS not only to continue chapter activities such as field trips and the general meetings but also to support our goals of conservation and education.

How can you help? Send your pledge of support on the form below to Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy, Martinez, CA 94553. Then go out on Birdathon Day and enjoy the spring migration, knowing you're helping to preserve our world.

1996 Birdathon Pledge

_____ I want to pledge _____ (amount)

or _____ per bird

for the team _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

NEW MEMBERS

It is with great pleasure that we greet these new members of MDAS and hope to meet them soon: Jacqueline Andrade, P. R. Araki, Sheryl Barton, Barry Baskin, Rod Black, Vicki Bodhaine, Mrs. John Chaddock, Jr., Cindy Chadwick, Betty Christensen, Vera Christofani, Mary Draper, Ellen Duree, Rosemarie Frydman, Paula Hamra, Lesley Hand, Marie Hanson, G. C. Hargrave, Mrs. H. H. Hargrove, Locke Highleyman, Breezer Howland, Leonard Kaku, John Kavanaugh, Laverne Kelly, Kristin Kirk, Steven Knapp, Charley Krueger, Felicie Leech, Amy Leighton, Maria Lochhead, Bill Maloney, Mrs. Thomas Maxstadt, Ann McGregor, Tom McLaughlin, Bob Medart, Nona Mikkelsen, Derek Morley, Ruth Morse, Donna O'Brien, James Platt, Scott Porritt, William Priest, Michael Radcliffe, Wolf Read, Janie Roskelley, Nanette Sand, Gordon Steveson, Jana Swanson, Russ Tricomo, Jaunita Villalobos-Bell, Margaret Walker, Deborah Webb and Joel White.

IN MEMORIAM

We extend our deepest sympathy to longtime MDAS members Betty and Bob Gallagher on the death of their son Michael on February 18. The family would appreciate memorial gifts to Michael T. Gallagher Children's Trust Fund, c/o Brennan and Wampler, 1981 N. Broadway, #430, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Betty and Bob's address is 2136 Ann Street, Concord, CA 94520.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
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Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

May 1996

Vol. 42 No. 9

Next Deadline: May 9

May Program:

Natural History of the Alaskan Subcontinent

For our May 2 General Meeting, Roger Harris will take us from the temperate rain forests of southeast Alaska to the ice floes of the Arctic. Come join us for a wonderful program on this exciting state.

Roger Harris is a long-time member of Audubon and a former National Audubon Society staff member. He is now a consulting wildlife biologist specializing in endangered species, native habitat restoration, and wetlands. He has spent a number of seasons in Alaska as a biologist and as a naturalist tour guide.

At our May meeting we will also vote on the elected officials for next year. Current candidates include:

President: Carol Frischmann
Vice-President, Conservation: Al McNabney
Secretary: Eugenia Larson

For Treasurer, we have a most unusual situation: two candidates. Clarence Marten and Joel Summerhill both are proposed by the board for the Treasurer position. Further information about both candidates can be found on Page 5. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

General Meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

The next board meeting will be May 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, 947-0479. The board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, May 17, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited Store in Pleasant Hill.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip this month will take us to Briones Regional Park on Sunday, May 12. Beginning birders and members new to our area are encouraged to join us for this weekend get-away. Meet trip leader Denise Wight, 370-7342, at 8:30 a.m. at the western entrance parking lot, off Bear Creek Road (entrance fee).

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

MUSINGS ON THE NEW AUDUBON AT ASILOMAR

Same old place, looks slightly more worn than in former years. An Audubon convention. Every two years that happens, but in 1996 it was different. Many of the same faces. A couple of folks have been coming to Asilomar to Audubon conventions since 1949 and THAT, said Mr. Flicker, President and CEO of the new Audubon, was the year I was born.

An environmental troubadour. Brought to the event to show what can be and IS being done to encourage young folks to care about environmental matters. Dana Lyons, who bills himself as an "environmental troubadour." Funny, interesting approach and evidently very effective with high school and young college folks. Funny, realistic, worthy of a listen.

Joint seminars drove me nuts trying to figure out which one to attend. Reaching Out to Youth, State Legislative Programs, or Taking Back the Land and Water Conservation Fund. How about Fund Raising for Chapters vs. Important Bird Areas? Maybe the eternal issue, Saving Wetlands. Decisions, decisions. Another day, The State of Bird Conservation in North America.

There was Dan Taylor's VERY eloquent tribute to the Audubon victory of saving Mono Lake. I hope someone will arrange to publish Dan's remarks. They were so eloquent Dan was in tears when he finished his talk. 'Course Audubon folks can be proud. Millions of dollars, years of concentrated effort, battling one of Southern California's most powerful utilities AND WINNING!!!! Shows what dedicated people CAN do to win environmental struggles.

YOU belong to Audubon. What do you know of the history of the individual whose name is on the masthead? Well, Dave Geison, Performing Artist, Mendicino Coast Audubon, dressed up and made up to look like John James Audubon, regaled the audience with a real-life history of Audubon. Was Audubon a saint? Probably not. Did Audubon paint great pictures of birds? Without question. Are we present-day Audubon people living up to his legacy? Who knows? At least we're trying.

Of course the field trips were the main event for some of the attendees, especially a pelagic trip on Monterey Bay. All the participants got seasick. None of the participants got seasick. Take your pick. They did see birds, which was the real point of the exercise.

John Flicker, President and CEO of the new Audubon, has set very ambitious goals for himself, the NAS staff AND the entire Audubon community. Serious efforts are being made to ensure that the organization is "ground up." A laudable goal and quite possibly achievable. Success depends on the levels of interest, participation, and support.

Eleven other members of MDAS also attended and participated in the conference. Shirley Ellis, who never quit button-holing folks to get a bit more information. Carol Frischmann, who, with Shirley, went birding and found an "interesting" bird perched on a rock. Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Enstrom were much in evidence. Jill Hedgcock "took it all in" but had to leave a bit early. Other attendees from MDAS included Dick Bogaert, Pat Burnham, Jane Hunninghaus, Millie Mico, Mariam Tranes, and Helen Tyrrell.

All in all, the three-day Western Regional Conference was a good one. Based on the theme, Birds, Wildlife, and Habitat, it gave appropriate emphasis to all levels of interest and need.

WHERE ARE THE BEST BIRDING AREAS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY?

We constantly make the point, "No habitat, no birds." One of the programs being set in motion is to DO something. So my question to you is, "Where is the best birding habitat in Contra Costa County that needs protection?" Drop a note to me at P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053.

DON EDWARDS

Say that name to the folks involved in "The Refuge" and they immediately think of the Honorable Don Edwards, the former congressman who did SO much to make the refuge a reality. Florence Le Riviere, a long-time battler for the refuge, advises that on June 1 there is to be a HUGE CELEBRATION. That day the refuge will be declared the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. A large sign proclaiming the new name will be erected at the refuge entrance and, because of requirements the sign be constructed to freeway specifications, it will cost \$5000. If YOU want to be a part of this celebration or donate toward sign construction costs, write to or send your donation to Florence LaRiviere, 453 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

LAND USE OR ABUSE?

The long-awaited land use report, "Land Use or Abuse?" issued by the Greenbelt Alliance was made public April 9. It brought the anticipated criticisms but a close reading should give any thoughtful person reason to think about the future. Contra Costa County has lost 50% of its orchards since 1970. The report says, "The 1990 Contra Costa County General Plan opened up 110 square miles of open space to development. The county NOW has a greater percentage of its land threatened by suburban sprawl than any other Bay Area county." Since 1990, more than 45,000 new single family homes have been approved and applications for an additional 30,000 are being processed. The report asserts that "to build out what is allowed in the (General) Plan would cost \$270 million for sewage expansion, \$352 million for flood control, \$375 million for water, and \$3 to 5 billion for roads." I predict you'll be hearing much more about this report in coming months.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday, May 4, **Mines Road**. Call for reservations and carpool instructions. Because of limited turn-out space along Mines Road, we must limit to 6 cars, with at least 4 people per car. Hot; bring lunch and liquids. Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, Costa's Hummingbird, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Lawrence's Goldfinch all possible.

Leader: Steve Glover, 866-1409

Category 1

Wednesday, May 8, **Mt. Diablo**. Carpool 8:00 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet 8:30 a.m. in first parking lot on left after entering South Gate. \$5.00 entrance fee. Sage, Rufous-crowned, and maybe Black-chinned Sparrows.

Leader: Jimm Edgar, 658-2330

Category 2

Saturday, May 11, **Mitchell Canyon**. Meet 9:00 a.m. in Mitchell Canyon parking lot. There is a \$5.00 parking fee. From I-680 in Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to Clayton Rd. Turn right on Clayton and right on Mitchell Canyon Rd. to the end. Morning emphasis on wild flowers; bird in afternoon for gnatcatchers, summer sparrows, etc. Hot!

Leader: Mary Jane Culver, 682-0509

Category 3

Thursday, May 16, **Napa River**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. A car birding trip with no meeting place due to limited parking on some roads.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 2

Wednesday, May 22, **Caswell State Park**. Carpool 6:30 a.m., El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet 8:00 a.m. at Caswell State Park. Take I-680 south, I-580 East, and I-205 east. Turn east on SR 20 to US 99. Go south on US 99 to Austin Rd. and follow to park entrance. \$5.00 fee. Swainson's Hawks, riparian species. Mosquitos, poison oak; may be hot.

Leader: Steve Glover, 866-1409

Category 2

Saturday, May 25, **East Contra Costa County**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 7:00 a.m. on Cypress Rd. just beyond the Shortstop Market. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, left onto Cypress Rd. Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat all possible. Hot.

Leader: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862

Category 2

Future trips: It's not too early to make reservations for Yuba Pass, June 22-23. Motels include Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916) 862-1151; Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110, and Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. More information in the June *Quail*. The Lassen Volcanic National Park trip, July 13-14, will begin from Manzanita Lake at the northwest entrance. Those not camping should make reservations as soon as possible at Hot Creek Resort, (916) 335-7121, in Old Station on SR 44/89 or at Padilla's Rim Rock Ranch, (916) 335-7114. See the July *Quail* for more information.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

TOMALES BAY, March 9.

Twenty members saw a total of 89 species on a lovely day, clear and comfortable. The trip began with two Purple Martins over the park turnoff, Western Bluebirds, and warblers in the trees. Along the trail we had a cooperative Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pygmy Nuthatches, and Golden-crowned Kinglets but no Spotted Owls. After lunch we birded at Limantour Beach, then walked down Muddy Hollow Trail west toward the pond through a burn area seeing woodpeckers and warblers.

Jean Richmond

SAN MATEO COAST, March 13.

Ten birders spent a windy but quite pleasant day along the San Mateo coast. Among the highlights were an Oldsquaw, a Black-legged Kittiwake, a Glaucous Gull, 3 Pacific Golden-Plovers, and a wintering Solitary Vireo. 105 species were seen.

Steve Glover

BLACK DIAMOND MINES REGIONAL PARK, March 23.

Ten birders spent a beautiful day hiking to the Ridge Trail for a great view of the Sierras and the valley below. 48 species were seen, with more hawks than usual, including Red-Tailed, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, American Kestrels, and a pair of White-tailed Kites apparently taking up residence. We also saw a Red-shouldered Hawk; it may be that the recent two years of wet weather have increased their food supply in this area. The highlight of the day was definitely two young Barn Owls (there may have been more) in a burrow of some sort in the side of a hill. (We had seen an adult Barn Owl in this burrow a week earlier.) After lunch we drove to the Nortonville side, to see Rock Wren, Lark Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, and one coyote.

Pat MacEachern

BRIONES WILDFLOWER WALK, March 28.

The fifteen members spent a lovely, not too hot, spring day with the leader and co-leaders Betty Smith and Bessie Smyth. Between the north end of the parking lot and the grasslands, less than a mile walk, the group saw a wonderful total of 40 species of wildflowers. Some of the group went on to Upper Sindicich Lagoon where they found both Red-breasted Mergansers and Bufflehead. All in all, it was a successful trip.

John Davis

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Pelagic Cormorant: 6 on 4/6 on nests on West Brothers Island near Richmond. (SG) Only known East Bay breeding location.

Cattle Egret: 19 on 3/16 and at least 17 on 3/20 seen at Jersey Island, East Contra Costa County. (SG)

Green Heron: none all winter, then at least 8 on 4/11 at Bethel Island. (SG)

Tundra Swan: 3 on 4/11 over Palm Tract north of Orwood Road, East Contra Costa County. (RL) This is at least a full month later than the latest Contra Costa County record.

Greater White-fronted Goose: at least 1200 on 4/11 at Palm Tract. (SG, RL)

Blue-winged Teal: 8 males and 5 females on 3/12 at the Palo Alto flood control basin. (FB, MJC, BG, EL)

Tufted Duck: 1 adult male on 3/15 (JR, GF) and 3/21 (JR, FB, EL, H&RH) at Spreckel's Lake, Golden Gate Park.

Harlequin Duck: 1 female on 3/6 at the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks. (GF)

Hooded Merganser: 8 females on 3/28 at the Upper Sindhich Lagoon, Briones Regional Park. (JR, MC, JD)

Red-breasted Merganser: a pair on 3/20, 3/27, and 4/2 still at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG)

Osprey: 2 on 3/27 over San Pablo Reservoir (GF, JR); 1 on 3/17 apparently on the nest at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline (SG).

Swainson's Hawk: 2 on 3/16 at Piper Slough, 6 on 3/27 over Webb Tract, 1 on 4/9 at Holland Tract, and 2 on 4/11 at Bethel Island. (SG) There were less than 10 county records until 3 years ago, approximately 40 since.

Wild Turkey: 5 males and 11 females during March behind their Walnut Creek home. (P&PMc)

California Quail: 1 calling on 4/9 at Piper Slough. (SG) First there since 5/17/94, probably due to cats or prescribed burning.

Pacific Golden-Plover: 5 on 3/19 at the Spaletta Plateau, Pt. Reyes. (FB, MJC, H&RH, EL)

Ruff: 1 on 3/19 (GF, JR) and 4/1 (H&RH) at Crittenden Marsh near Mountain View.

Common Snipe: 164 on 3/20 in a flooded field along Cypress Road near Oakley. (SG)

Black-legged Kittiwake: 3 adults, 1 first-winter bird on 3/18 at the mouth of Pescadero Creek, San Mateo County. (GF, MP)

Caspian Tern: 250 on 4/6 at Brooks Island near Richmond. (SG)

Spotted Owl: 1 on 4/2 (FB, MJC, BG) and 4/6 (H&RH) at Tomales Bay State Park.

Vaux's Swift: 1 on 3/26 at Del Valle Regional Park (JR) Early. The earliest East Bay record is 3/22.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: 1-2 males first noted on 3/9 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Costa's Hummingbird: 1 male on 3/21 (GF, MP) and 2 males on 3/27 (FB, BG, H&RH) at Del Puerto Canyon.

Hammond's Flycatcher: 5 on 4/8 in Mitchell Canyon at Mt. Diablo State Park. (SG)

Western Kingbird: 2 on 3/26 at Del Valle RP. (JR) The early date for the East Bay is 3/24.

Yellow-billed Magpie: 2 pairs on 4/9 at the only known nest site in Contra Costa County along Delta Road. (SG)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 1 on 4/2 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Mountain Bluebird: 1 female on 4/4 along the BLM access road in the Panoche Valley area. (GF, MP) Late.

Nashville Warbler: 1 on 4/8 in Mitchell Canyon. (SG)

Worm-eating Warbler: 1 seen briefly on 3/15 (GF, JR), 3/21 (EL, FB, JR), and 4/2 and 4/4 (H&RH) at Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 8 seen on 3/27 along the Del Puerto Canyon road. (R&HH, FB, BG)

White-throated Sparrow: 2 since late October through at least 4/4 in their Moraga yard (M&EM); 1 still in her Alamo yard on 4/7 (JR).

Observers: Florence Bennett, Maxine Clayson, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Eugenia Larson, Hugh and Rosita Harvey, Ron Lindeman, Pat and Paul MacEachern, Mimi and Ellis Myers, Marjorie Plant, and Jean Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 24 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

Have you seen the new Stokes' *Field Guide to Birds, Western Region*? It's the only guide that includes nesting and feeding habits, vocalization, status of the species, and behavior, along with range maps, pictures, and description all on one page. The authors will be at Wild Birds Unlimited for a book signing and to answer questions on May 1 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Orioles (both Hooded and Bullock's) have arrived to nest in Contra Costa County. So far over 100 have been sighted. Last year over 1500 were reported to WBU. These spectacular birds are nectar feeders, like the hummingbirds. There are specially designed feeder for these birds which are too large to use the hummingbird feeders.

We have received many reports of nesting Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Plain Titmice. The Black-headed Grosbeaks are now arriving and will be nesting soon. All of these birds love sunflower seeds.

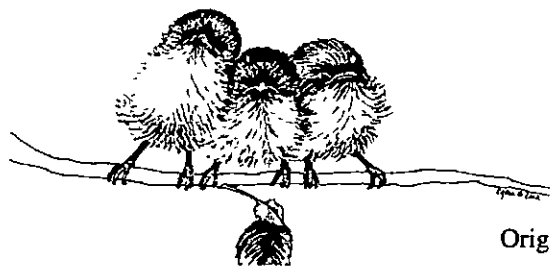
FLICKER OF HOPE

by Jill Hedgcock

I just returned from the Western Regional Audubon Conference where I had the pleasure of spending several hours on a pelagic bird trip with Audubon's new president, John Flicker (no joke). It rained almost the whole time, but he spent his time mingling with us, enthusiastically watching the birds, and listening to our ideas rather than hanging out with the captain in the dry cabin upstairs (which also would have afforded a perfect view of the birds). Despite the rain and cold, I wouldn't have missed riding with the porpoises right off our bow (so close you could almost reach down and touch them) or watching a sea otter with her rambunctious pup on her tummy, not to mention the Black-footed Albatross which fed on a fish unchallenged as Western Gulls waited nearby for their turn. I am quite excited about the new direction Audubon is heading. National Audubon Society will be focusing its effort where it is most effective, by lobbying in Washington and by partnering with the over 500 local grassroots chapters. And the emphasis is on birds, birds, and birds. Also Audubon is forming some unusual alliances, e.g., with timber and paper companies, to build wildlife-friendly management practices cooperatively. Chances to minimize environmental damage are greatly enhanced when people work together. It is interesting to note that while the "Red-shafted" Flicker is doing fine, the "Yellow-Shafted" Flicker population has declined 3.5% a year for the last 30 years (probably due to lack of fires). With National Audubon's new focus, there may still be hope for these and other birds.

Other interesting topics discussed at the Regional Conference included a new program to identify important bird areas. Local Audubon chapters are encouraged to participate in identifying areas with endangered or threatened species, areas with large numbers of birds, e.g., flyways or staging areas, or areas with unique habitats important to the birds. These areas will then be analyzed to prioritize them. Some areas may be purchased, while management plans may be developed for other areas.

Upcoming events include International Migratory Bird Day on May 11 and the statewide Tricolored Blackbird Census on May 18 and 19. If you are interested in planning an activity, e.g., letter-writing party, birding event, etc., for IMBD, please call Jill Hedgcock at 256-8270. See the April *Quail* for additional information on the Tricolored Blackbird census.



Original Sketch
by
Carol Lutz

CANDIDATES FOR TREASURER

In a turn of events unprecedented in the memory of even the longest-serving board members, MDAS has two candidates for a chapter office. Both Clarence Marten and Joel Summerhill have expressed their interest in serving as MDAS treasurer in place of Pam Keiser, who has served since October of 1992. The following is an introduction to the candidates from information they have provided to the board.

Clarence Marten is a licensed CPA in California and Wisconsin. He is a University of Wisconsin graduate cum laude who worked for Grant Thornton, a large national accounting firm. He now has his own accounting practice locally and lives in Clayton, where he enjoys feeding birds extensively in his backyard. He has been a member of National Audubon Society for 25 years and served on the board of the Madison, Wisconsin, Audubon Society where he was editor of their newsletter. Mr. Marten "would very much like to become involved with Mt. Diablo Audubon and sees being treasurer as a perfect opportunity to make a commitment."

Joel Summerhill has been Park Planner for the City of Pittsburg for 22 years. He is a landscape architect by training, with an MLA from Harvard University. He has been a member of MDAS, attended meetings, and participated in Christmas Counts since 1991. He is quite interested in backyard planting for birds and has a life list of approximately 410 species. Mr. Summerhill says, "I don't normally volunteer for office in the organizations that I belong to, but I feel that birding and birdwatching is on the leading edge of conservation. Birds are the precursors of the events occurring in the environment. You can't really know birds without an appreciation for habitat and habitat is critical for all species, especially those that are vanishing."

MDAS thanks both candidates for their interest and wishes them luck in the election.

JOIN THE MIGRATION

If you want to learn to identify the hawks, falcons, and eagles of California and you want to be part of a local long-term wildlife conservation project, then the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory wants you! The GGRO is seeking new volunteers for their 1996 class who can commit to one day of raptor counting or banding every two weeks from August through December 1996, along with some weekend and evening trainings in July. Their only 1996 recruitment meetings are on Thursday, May 2, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., or on Saturday, May 4, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Both programs will be held at GGNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. For more information, call the GGRO at (415) 331-0730.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Michael Amorosa, Jim Barch, Ann Bauer, Susan Becker, Janis Blaise, Walter Bromma, Cindy Chadwick, Dorothy Christians, Paul and Diddo Clark, Jim Courtney, Edward Downer, Helen Shorey Downham, Bob Dutcher, Y. R. Fukuda, Mark Gaede, Janet Gray, James Hillis, Carl Hoffman, Janet Horrocks, Jim and Judy Hovatter, Lisa Juergens, Charles Kluth, Colleen Lenihan, Alan Mathewson, Elizabeth Morena, Donna Murray, Sharon Neilon, Terrance O'Malley, Marvin Odegard, Geraldine Pember, Kirsten Petersen, Robert Pinney, John Place, James Richards, John Ridgway, Sue Ruebins, Jan Stayner-Hunt, Kay Underwood, Anne Virgadamo, Pamela Vogl, Alison Watts, Larry Williams, Suzie Yannes and Mr. and Mrs. Philip Zwald.

MURRELET BOOK

Pacific Seabird Group, an international seabird organization, has just published a Symposium Proceedings on *Biology of Marbled Murrelets: Inland and At Sea*. Papers from the Symposium cover Marbled Murrelet breeding sites and activity from Alaska to northern California, as well as reproductive success, fledging behavior, and flight patterns. Discussions of the murrelets at sea cover preliminary observations of the ratio of occurrence of juveniles and adults in southeast Alaska, distribution along the Oregon coast, and activity patterns adjacent to probable inland nesting areas in British Columbia. To order, send a check or money order for \$20.00 made payable to the Pacific Seabird Group to Jan Hodder, Treasurer, Pacific Seabird Group, Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, University of Oregon, Charleston, OR 97420.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON

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Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
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Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

June 1996

Vol. 42 No. 10

Next Deadline: June 13

June Program:

End of the Year Potluck

The next meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will be Thursday, **June 6**, at 6:30 P.M., at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. This will be our regular end-of-the-year potluck. Please bring a salad, casserole, or dessert for ten, your own table service, and any serving utensils you may need. Coffee and punch will be provided.

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Dinner

The program will be provided by members. Members are urged to bring pictures, old bird nests, unusual bird houses or feeders, or up to ten slides to share with the group. Anything that relates to natural history can be shown. Everyone is encouraged to participate and make this a varied and interesting evening.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trips will again be suspended for the summer. Look for the Weekend Birding Breaks again next fall.

The four MDAS elected officers for the 1996-1997 term were chosen at the May meeting. Carol Frischmann will serve as President. Al McNabney returns as Vice-President, Conservation, and Karen continues as Secretary. Joel Summerhill was chosen as Treasurer. We offer all our congratulations. MDAS would like to thank Shirley Ellis and her nominating committee for making this one of the smoothest and easiest transitions in many years.

Help wanted: Carol Frischmann would like help to create and maintain a MDAS chapter home page on www.html. Experience in html would be helpful but is not necessary. Call Carol at 735-3836 to volunteer or for more information.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, June 13, at 7:30 P.M., at the home of Jim Lomax, 3642 Granzotto Dr., Concord, 825-1513. The board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, June 21, at 9:30 A.M. at the Wild Birds Unlimited Store in Pleasant Hill.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WHOSE WATER IS IT, ANYWAY?

Those with long memories will recall that various organizations advised the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that unless the Agency lived up to its legal obligations, legal action would be instituted. That notice "appeared" to have a positive effect. An agreement was signed by various organizations (not Audubon), and the federal and state authorities on December 15, 1991. The agreement promised action to ensure waters from the Bay/Delta would be so cared for as to protect fish and wildlife and other resources, e.g., commercial and sport fishing and boating being just a few examples.

So what do you know? The December 15 agreement has gone nowhere. Protections for the Bay/Delta and its rich resources are no closer to being implemented than they were in 1992.

Question: What's to be done? The various organizations that originally gathered together to bring the EPA into California water wars has regrouped. Steve Volker, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, has again, in a VERY scholarly letter, advised the EPA that they MUST return to the water issues or legal action will be initiated to require the Agency to do so.

One can meditate as to WHY? Several possible reasons. The corporate farms in the San Joaquin Valley now get irrigation water at bargain basement prices. In fact, the taxpayers pay millions in subsidies. 'Nother reason. Federal law, (not yet implemented) requires substantial amounts of water be allocated to the wildlife refuges. "WHY would that happen?" you ask. Remember Kesterson and its deformed birds? Findings in that matter showed, among other things, that in divvying up the state's water resources no one gave real thought to wildlife usages. As a result, farmwater run-off, laden with toxics and pesticides, was supplied to the wildlife refuges. The deformed chicks finally made it clear wildlife HAD to be considered when allocating water.

Water is really a hot button issue, oft unrecognized as such. Central and Southern California were essentially desert until manmade diversions came about. Water has made it possible for agriculture to flourish in the San Joaquin Valley and for the millions of people to live in Southern California deserts without the adverse conditions one usually finds in desert areas.

What do we do about it? Eventually "something" will happen as a result of the proposed legal action. The outcome will be determined by a judge's view of the law on high level politics and to "some extent," the will of the people. Unfortunately for all of us, the birds and wildlife being adversely affected will have NO say in the matter. People will have a say.

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

An Executive Director is on board. A nonprofit organization is in business. Ambitious plans are being developed to implement environmental education programs for students. All are just part of the activity now underway. Major decisions are to be made as to buildings, roads, and summer informational cruises on the Bay/Delta. In the meantime, groups desiring to "bird" the area should contact Traci Parent, Ranger, East Bay Regional Park District office.

REMEMBER SHELL MARSH?

NO!?! You've not heard too much about that great wetland area for a long time but that doesn't mean things aren't happening. Substantial studies have been completed. It is likely contracts will be entered into in the near future to rework levies, tide gates, and a channel or two through the wetland. All this to ensure fresh, brackish, and saline waters are available. Plants, birds, and various animals react to particular conditions and the plan is to so work the hydrology so it has an optimum effect on the wetlands.

On April 21, Rhone Poulenc dedicated 17 acres of its wetlands to the City of Martinez in perpetuity as a conservation easement. The wetland lies just north of Shell Marsh. Hope was expressed that the dedicated land could be managed with Shell Marsh. The wetlands were given by Rhone Poulenc's Vice President, Myron Galuyskin. Accepting was Martinez Mayor Mike Menesini and former City Council member Kathi Radke.

A fly in the ointment, or a cow in the pasture? Hmmmm. After working for months to eliminate cattle grazing in and around Shell Marsh, the specter of a return to grazing is rearing its head. "Why," you ask, "does anyone want cattle grazing in THAT area?" Answer: It is argued that cattle-grazing will reduce or eliminate fire danger. If one takes a close look, one sees a former dump site to the east, I-680 to the west, and Waterfront Way, railroad tracks and wetlands to the north. To the south, where cattle do NOT usually graze, is a smallish community. I give my vote to NO renewal of cattle grazing.

DID YOU KNOW? AMAZING! DISTRESSING! TERRIBLE ENVIRONMENTALLY

So what's this all about? The majority in the U. S. House of Representatives, tossing aside 100 years of caring for habitat and environmental matters, has voted to establish as a principal purpose of refuge management, RECREATIONAL USES. Even valuable wildlife habitat is NOT protected. The proposed law HR 1675 would frustrate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's ability to claim water rights on the refuges, would permit a host of incompatible activities, and would make it more difficult to establish new refuges in the future. The President has affirmed by executive order that a full spectrum of recreational uses should be promoted on refuges WHERE APPROPRIATE. If you care about our national wildlife refuge system, write YOUR member of Congress. Object to the provisions of HR 1675 and urge a NO vote.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday, June 1, **Outer Point Reyes**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at Drake's Beach, 8:30 a.m. Cross San Rafael Bridge. From I-101 north, take San Rafael exit. Go 2 blocks, turn left and continue west to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake. At SR 1, turn right 1/2 mile, left onto Bear Valley Rd. about 3 miles, and onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. again. Continue about 14 miles to Drake's Beach Rd. on left. Spring vagrants. Be prepared for variable weather.
Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041 Category 2

Thursday, June 6, **Partrick Road, Napa County**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. This is a roadside birding trip and car-pooling is a must.
Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Saturday and Sunday, June 22-23, **Yuba Pass**. Saturday at Yuba Pass for mountain birds. Sunday in the Sierra Valley for basin birds. Motels in Sierra City: Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916) 862-1151; Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110; Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. Campgrounds at Chapman Creek, Yuba Pass.
Leader: Denise Wight, 370-7342 Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

GARIN REGIONAL PARK, April 6.

It was a beautiful, warm day for hiking streamside and through the grasslands. The newly-arrived Black-headed Grosbeaks and Bullock's Orioles were singing and calling. A restless Green Heron made four round trips across Jordan Pond. Five birders saw and heard a total of 52 species

Elizabeth Dickey

LAKE LAGUNITAS, April 10.

Nine members enjoyed the trip on a sunny day although it was cold and windy in the open areas. Frustratingly for the leader, many birds were heard that could not be found. A Pileated Woodpecker called briefly once and some recent workings on snags and logs were seen along the trail. An Osprey soared

overhead, and many Black-throated Gray Warblers were heard and a few seen, including a singing male out in full view. A total of 49 species were heard and/or seen.

Jean Richmond

IDA CLAYTON ROAD, April 18.

Six birders spent a pleasant, partly cloudy day. It rained briefly after lunch but had ended by our next stop. The fields of wildflowers were beautiful. The Dogwood was in full bloom, but we were a little early for the Fawn Lilies and Candysticks. The birding highlights included Wood Duck, nesting Ospreys and Great Blue Herons, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Chipping Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warblers, and a Pileated Woodpecker at the first pullout on Ida Clayton Road that was well heard but not seen. 62 species were seen or heard.

John Jordan

DEL PUERTO CANYON, April 24.

A beautiful day of birding began with a Grasshopper Sparrow singing on a fence post at our meeting place. It continued with two Costa's Hummingbirds preening and displaying and a Great Horned Owl sunning in front of his hole. For dessert after lunch we had five species of warblers in one tree. We ended the day watching a Lewis' Woodpecker working on a dead oak tree. Fourteen members and guests were on the trip. A total of 76 species were seen for the day, including Rock and Canyon Wrens, Nashville, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, and Hermit Warblers, and Western Tanager.

Elizabeth Dickey

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

720 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

Thank you for your generous support since we opened in 1991. Please come and help us celebrate our

5th Anniversary Saturday, June 1

- Seed sale (5/28 through 6/16)
- Plant sale by Heather Farms Garden Center: plants to attract birds and butterflies
- Birds from The Lindsay Museum, including "Lindsay," the Allen's Hummingbird
- Butterfly talk and exhibit
- Milkweed plants for butterflies will be available
- Live entertainment
- Win free birdseed for 1 year

Birdfeeding Tips: We have had many reports of Black-headed Grosbeaks. These birds will only eat sunflower seeds. Oriole sightings, both Hooded and Bullock's, total almost 400. Please continue to call in your reports.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Careed Horned Grebe: 1 on 5/7 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG) Late.

Brandt's Cormorant: 1 on 4/27 at the Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline near Richmond. (KH, JL)

American Bittern: 1 on 4/27 at the end of Jersey Island Road, East Contra Costa County. (KH, JL)

Cattle Egret: 1 on 4/27 at Piper Slough. (KH, JL) Late.

Brant: 1 on 4/27 at Pt. Isabel RS. (KH, JL)

Wood Duck: a pair on 4/30 at Detert Reservoir, Lake County. (JR, BG, EM, JH)

Harlequin Duck: 1 female duck on 4/27 near Brooks Island, Richmond. (KH, JL)

Oldsquaw: 2 on 4/27 (KH, JL) and 2 on 5/6 (SG) near Brooks Island.

Osprey: 1 on 5/5 over I-680 near Sunol. (SG)

Bald Eagle: 1 immature on 4/30 at Detert Reservoir. (JR, BG, EM, JH)

Swainson's Hawk: several seen through April and early May at Bethel Island, Holland Tract and Orwood Road. (SG, KH, JL, FB, JR, BG, EL) This would indicate that breeding is now occurring at undiscovered sites in East Contra Costa County. Swainson's Hawks were very rare here until 2 years ago.

Rough-legged Hawk: 1 on 4/23 at Piper Slough. (FB, BG, EL, EM, JR) The latest East Bay record I know of was 4/7!

Black Rail: 1 heard again on 4/28 at Piper Slough. (DW, DS)

Solitary Sandpiper: 1 on 4/28 at Clifton Court Forebay. (DW, DS) Rare but now nearly annual in spring.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 on 5/2 (SG, JA) and 5/4 (JR) at Steven's Creek Tidal Mitigation Area at Mt. View, Santa Clara County.

Curlew Sandpiper: 1 on 5/2 at Steven's Creek TMA. (SG, JA) Also on RBA. The third spring record for California.

Red Phalarope: 1 on 5/4 at Mt. View Forebay (GF, JR); 1 on 5/6 at Pt. Isabel (SG). Only second or third county records.

Mew Gull: 1 on 5/7 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG) Late.

Northern Pygmy-Owl: 1 on 5/5 along Mines Road at the county line between Alameda and Santa Clara Counties. (FS)

Short-eared Owl: 2 on 4/27 at Jersey Island. (KH, JL)

Vaux's Swift: 4-5 on 5/3 flying over Piper Slough. (SG)

Black-chinned Hummingbird: 2 males on 4/9 at mile 3.2 along Del Puerto Canyon Road (FB, MJC, JR); as many as 4 to 5 males from mid-April to at least 5/7 at Piper Slough (SG, GF, MP, FB, BG, EL, JR).

Costa's Hummingbird: 1 male on 4/9 and 3 males on 4/24 along Del Puerto Canyon Road. (FB, MJC, EL, JR)

Rufous Hummingbird: 1 male from 4/16-4/18 in her Alamo yard (JR); 1 male and 1 female *Selasphorus* on 4/12 in her Walnut Creek yard (EF); 1 male from 4/19-4/25 and another on 4/20 in his Walnut Creek yard (GF).

^{Hammond's}
Hammond's Flycatcher: 1 on 5/7 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Dusky Flycatcher: 1 on 4/25 and 15-20 on 4/29 in Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park. (GF, MP)

Cassin's Kingbird: a pair on 5/3 at Piper Slough. (SG) This may be only the second county record and the first since 1968.

Yellow-billed Magpie: probably 2 pairs nesting through April along Delta Road near Knightsen. (SG, KH, JL, EM, EL, BG, FB)

Phainopepla: 1 on 5/8 in their Pleasant Hill yard. (A&BL)

Nashville Warbler: 6 on 4/23 at Piper Slough. (FB, BG, EL, JR)

Yellow-breasted Chat: at least 4 singing males from 4/23-5/7 at Piper Slough. (EL, EM, FB, BG, JR, SG)

Western Tanager: 1 male from 4/17 to 4/19 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Grasshopper Sparrow: at least 12 on 4/9 at mile 0.2 along Del Puerto Canyon Road. (FB, MJC, JR, EM)

White-throated Sparrow: last seen on 5/4 in her Walnut Creek yard. (JR) Very late.

Observers: John Ascher, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Elizabeth Frei, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Kevin Hintsa, Jerry Howard, Ann and Bob Landfear, Eugenia Larson, Jim Lomax, Ellie Mulke, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond, Fred Safier, Dave Shuford, and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 24 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.



Original
sketch
by
Carol Lutz

DID YOU KNOW?

by Denise Wight

A Greater Roadrunner in Orinda? Sure enough! According to Lee Stallcup, one was seen on the 1950 Christmas Count. Harry Adamson first spotted the bird west of what now is San Pablo Dam Road. Even 46 years ago, it was not an expected bird for this area.

What are other birds that have been seen historically in Orinda? To find out, check out Harry Adamson's bird list in *The History of Orinda* by Muir Sorrick.

TEXAS TRAVEL CORNER

by Steve Glover

We landed in Houston on the afternoon of April 19 and quickly decided that 2.5 million people was about 2.45 million too many. The Piney Woods beckoned so we headed east to Beaumont. Our ambitious schedule left little time to waste so we headed straight for Tyrrell Park on the south side of town. Chimney Swifts twittered overhead and Carolina Wrens and Chickadees scolded from the trees. Two Fish Crows, at the western extreme of their range, flew over giving their nasal "cah"s.

Day 2 was devoted to the Big Thicket and its specialties. We arrived at Silsbee before dawn. Chuck-Will's-Widows were just finishing a hard night's work but still calling incessantly. Dawn brought Prairie Warblers singing from fledgling pines, roving bands of vocal Brown-headed Nuthatches and sweet-singing Hooded Warblers. A Greater Roadrunner scurried by, looking very out of place amongst the hardwoods. Prothonotary and Pine Warblers staked claim from the treetops. After several hours of searching, we found a reclusive Bachman's Sparrow, singing loudly but still amazingly inconspicuous in a small tree.

Days 3 and 4 were spent around the famous High Island where carloads of birders hoped for one of the fallouts that make it such a hot spot. Most seemed disappointed that it never came but not us. Our careful scrutiny of the undergrowth produced some wonderful birds such as Black-billed Cuckoo, Veery, and Kentucky and Swainson's Warblers. Brilliant Scarlet Tanagers and almost gaudy Painted Buntings bathed at the water drip.

Nearby Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge was unbelievable. Alligators loafed alongside of stunning Purple Gallinules, Sedge Wrens and Seaside Sparrows sang from every clump, and Little Blue and Tricolored Herons hunted quietly in the shallows. A Yellow Rail, always hoped for yet rarely seen, flushed and flew by, revealing his white wing patches. Nearby rice fields were crammed with shorebirds including Stilt, White-rumped, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and brick-red Hudsonian Godwits. The beaches at Bolivar Flats produced eight kinds of terns (in one flock!), plus American Oystercatcher and Piping Plover. Five days had produced 37 lifers but we were only half done!

On the morning of Day 6, we woke up at Brazo Bend State Park to look for the reported pair of Masked Ducks. The trail around the 40-acre lake was wonderful. Spoonbills sifted, Pileateds pounded, and the Masked Ducks cooperated, sitting calmly in the duckweed.

Ahead of schedule, we left the boarded-up beach resorts and belching refineries and headed for the boarded-up river towns and endless agricultural fields of the Rio Grande Valley. The remaining habitat was loaded with birds, many of which are found here but nowhere else north of Mexico. Green Jays, hardly done justice by the field guides, were easy at Bentsen State Park. Altamira Orioles busily fed on oranges put out by the "winter"

Texans. Long-billed Thrashers, the western counterpart of Brown Thrasher, sang from dense thickets which were also occupied by Olive Sparrows and White-tipped Doves. That night Pauraque hunted on the entrance road while Elf Owls called from the trees. At Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, we were able to add Least Grebes, the diminutive Green Kingfisher, Groove-billed Ani and Buff-bellied Hummingbird, another bird found nowhere else in the U. S. The dusty town of Salineño provided an opportunity to scan the Rio Grande and within an hour we found Red-billed Pigeon, Ringed Kingfisher and Audubon's Oriole. As we headed for the Edward's Plateau, I had 60 lifers!

The Edward's Plateau region of Texas looks much like home with its rolling hills and groves of oaks but with two exceptions: Black-capped Vireos and Golden-cheeked Warblers. The warbler, the only bird breeding solely in Texas, proved simple around the city park in Austin but the vireo was more difficult. It took a whole day but we eventually found one near Kernville, singing but still amazingly inconspicuous. The catchy song of the Field Sparrow came from every direction, halting only when a Zone-tailed Hawk drifted through.

With two days left, we drove back to Houston to try again for a couple of misses, Red-cockaded Woodpecker in particular. The W. G. Jones Forest is famous for them so there we went. Within minutes we had seen four. The under-appreciated Red-headed Woodpecker flew in, easily one of the most beautiful birds of the trip. Acadian Flycatchers called "pizza" from several spots.

On the last day, we went back to High Island and still the wind was blowing from the south. Two days earlier they had had 30 species of warblers, four more than we had for the whole trip! Still, we spent this last day happily knowing we had seen nearly everything we had hoped for, including 273 species and 68 lifers.

SUMMER BIRD CLASSES

San Francisco State University's Sierra Nevada Field Campus is located alongside the scenic North Yuba River in an idyllic mountain forest setting perfect for instruction and research in the environmental sciences. Again this summer the Field Campus is offering great bird classes taught by the experts in their field. These classes include Bird Identification by Sound, taught by Luis Baptista, Birds of the Sierra Nevada taught by Dave Shuford, Sierran Bird Banding taught by Dave DeSante, and Cornell's Bird Song Recording taught by Greg Budney.

Courses are available to the general public. Transferable college credit is available for all courses. Individuals interested in taking one of the courses should contact the Director for further details regarding the courses and field station reservations for lodging. Contact Jim Steele at the College of Science and Engineering, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway, San Francisco, CA 94132-9987, (415) 338-1571 before June 1.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: J. A. Barnes, Carla Bell, Allison Bodden, Sherry Busby, Duane Corwin, Horace Crawford, Crystal Doherty, Robert Dorrough, Kevin Farrar, Sharon Ferguson, Barbara Freet, E. C. French, Vicki Grant, Jo Ivonne, Robert Jakoby, Anne Kauffman, Ahsan Kushkaki, Julia Matisoo, Anne McEntorffer, Gisela and Manyu Mehta, Ellen Myers, Edward Parodi, Sharon Patterson, Jewel Rickli, Marilyn Rigdon, Joyce Rodrigues, Don Rody, Theresa Saunders, Alexandra Saunders, Joel Scott, Ralph Shallenburger, Joan Shelton, Mrs. John Sibley, Bonnie Talmage, John Tammen, Jr., Jane Taylor, Harold Tidwell, Orean Tidwell, Daniel Venor, Mrs. Adelma Walker and Denise Weingart.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

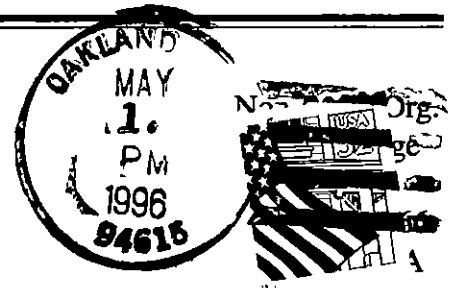
This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for a donation from Trudie and Bryant Fischback of Walnut Creek given in memory of Leon Coombs. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053



9702

MFAUD

JEAN RICHMOND
125 VIA SERENA
ALAMO CA
94507

TIME VALUE MAIL

The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

July/August 1996

Vol. 42 No. 11

Next Deadline: August 8

Upcoming Events:

Again this year, there will be no general meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society in July or August. The first fall general meeting will be in September. Information about the meeting time and place, birding information, and the program will be in the September issue of the *Quail*.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, **July 18**, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Carol Frischmann, 186 Teracina Dr., San Ramon, 735-3836. The August board meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on August 8 at the home of Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, 947-0479. The board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, August 16, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited Store in Pleasant Hill.

The yearly Field Trip planning meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 1, at the home of Elizabeth Dickey, 113 Hillcrest Drive, Orinda, 254-0486. Please call Elizabeth before the meeting day for directions, if you have requests, suggestions or special birds you are interested in, or if you would be willing to lead a field trip. Anyone who is interested in helping plan next year's field trips is welcome to attend.

Correction: It was incorrectly reported in the June *Quail* that Karen Enstrom was continuing as MDAS Secretary for the 1996-1997 term. Eugenia Larson was elected and will serve as Secretary. Apologies and welcome to Eugenia and thank you to Karen for her service to the chapter.

Summertime Travel Note: Summer is nearly here and many of you will be planning trips to places near and far. As you travel, remember to ask for an extra copy of any facility maps and bird lists or checklists when you visit refuges, sanctuaries, or parks. Please pass these extras along to Jean Richmond to place in the chapter file. Also, when planning a trip, contact Jean at 837-2843. She may have information on the area you plan to visit and the birds to expect there.

Have a good summer!

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trips will again be suspended for the summer. Look for the Weekend Birding Breaks again next fall.

AL McNABNEY AWARDED HONOR

by Dwight Meadows

Mt. Diablo Audubon's own Al McNabney was recently named "Environmentalist of the Year" in recognition of his long career of stewardship for the environment. The award came from the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council of the Boy Scouts of America, joined by an impressive array of supporting organizations. Al has long served MDAS as its Vice President, Conservation.

I was privileged to present Al with the award and spoke of his key leadership role in the Delta Environment Science Center, where I have come to know him well. The Center represents a coming-together of frequent opponents on environmental issues in a common endeavor to improve both the environment and the environmental education of our children and the public at large. The DESC includes environmental groups such as Mt. Diablo Audubon and the Diablo Group of the Sierra Club as well as business interests and government agencies from widely diverse fields, all working together toward a common goal.

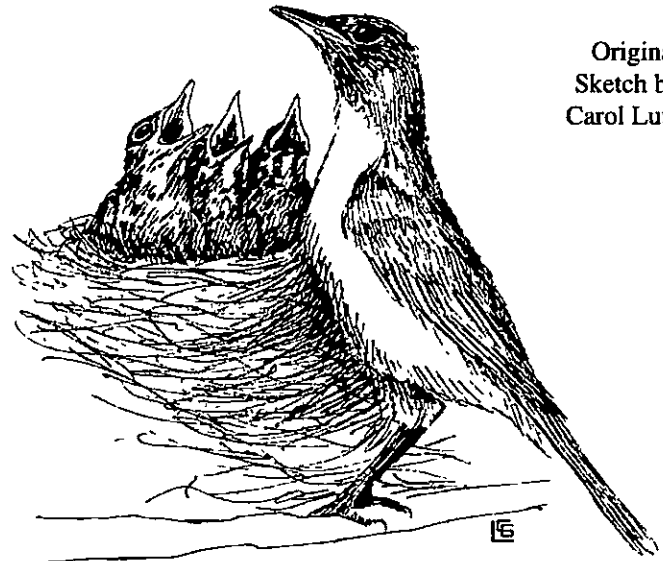
Al McNabney was the early visionary who saw the Center as a world class one and was able to communicate that vision and his enthusiasm, sparking others to join the effort. He has played a critical role in enlisting both the business community and the environmental groups, and as Coordinator and Chairman of the Finance Committee, has been instrumental in obtaining critical, necessary funding to enable the Center to go forward with its planning.

Al's instrumental role in launching the Center is only the tip of the iceberg. In decades of service on behalf of MDAS and the environment, Al has tirelessly served on a remarkable number of government and other advisory committees, including those for the East Bay Municipal Utilities District, Tosco Refinery, Shell Marsh, Keller Waste Management, and numerous others over the years. His persistent involvement and follow-up has frequently converted indifference and inattention to action on behalf of the environment. He has a remarkable capacity to keep his ego and personal involvement in the background and letting others take the credit for his initiatives and ideas. And he will unhesitatingly step into a fight on behalf of the environmental cause, taking unpopular positions, pressing litigation, enduring countersuits, and often displaying great courage in the face of personal attacks.

Al McNabney's role in the Shell Marsh certainly exemplifies his achievements. Quiet, persistent work spanning years and what must be hundreds of committee meetings has assured the acquisition and preservation of this vital wetland, and Al is now in the happy position of being able to direct his efforts towards wise use of Shell Marsh for its intended purposes.

Among the organizations joining the Boy Scouts in the award to Al were local government (East Bay Regional Parks District, Sanitation and Water Agencies of Contra Costa County, the State Fish and Game Department), business (Contra Costa Council, the Industrial Association), and labor (Contra Costa Council, COLAB), as well as MDAS.

(Editor's note: Dwight Meadows is a Director for the Ironhouse Sanitary District and Chairman of the Local Agency Formation Commission. He was also awarded by MDAS the Al McNabney Environmental Distinction Award in 1994.)



Original
Sketch by
Carol Lutz

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Happy birthday to Frank Beyer, a long-time active member of MDAS prior to moving north to Washington several years ago. Frank will be 90 years young on July 12. We of MDAS send our collective message of congratulations to him. Please send your own personal greetings to Frank at 7279 Fern Vista Place SW, Port Orchard, WA 98366.

PELAGIC TRIP

The Napa-Solano Audubon chapter is having a pelagic trip to the Farallones on August 18. Members of MDAS who would like to join them on this outing are asked to send a check for \$50.00 made out to Napa-Solano Audubon to the Napa-Solano Audubon Society, P. O. Box 5150, Vallejo, CA 94591. Please call leader Peter White at (510) 229-1714 for more information.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday-Sunday, July 13-14, **Lassen National Park**. Meet at Manzanita Lake at northwest entrance. Park campgrounds are first come, first serve. Motels outside the entrance include the Hot Creek Resort, (916) 335-7121, in Old Station on SR 44/89 and Padilla's Rim Rock Ranch, (916) 335-7114.

Leader: Steve Glover, 866-1409 Category 2

Wednesday, July 17, **Berkeley Botanical Gardens**. Carpool at 8:30 a.m. at Acalanes Ave. off SR 24. Meet at U. C. Botanical Gardens on Centennial Drive back of U. C. Stadium at 9:00 a.m. Hummingbirds may be abundant here and a very interesting plant collection. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 for further information. Category 1

Saturday, July 27, **San Mateo Coast**. Carpool 7:15 a.m. at El Nido at St. Stephens, off SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in parking lot off SR 1 opposite Pescadero Road. Cross the San Mateo Bridge, continue west on SR 92 to Half Moon Bay, go left on SR 1 for 15 miles to Pescadero Rd., turn right into parking lot. Black Swift, Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for further information. Category 2

Saturday, August 10, **Bodega Bay**. Carpool 6:30 a.m., southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:30 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant. Go north on US 101. Take the Washington St. exit in Petaluma, go west on Bodega Hwy. to SR 1, turn right to Bodega Bay. The Tides is on left, opposite a Union station. Early shorebirds, rails, waterbirds, migrants. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for further information. Category 1

Thursday, August 29, **Coyote Hills**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the refuge visitor's center off Thornton Rd. Take I-680 south to Fremont. Exit at Washington Ave. and continue to end. Go right at Fremont Blvd., and turn left onto Stevenson to I-880. Go north on the freeway to Thornton Ave. and go west (left) to refuge entrance.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732 Category 1

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

MINES ROAD, May 4.

Ten birders spent a warm but windy day winding through Mines Road, managing to find Costa's Hummingbird, Canyon Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Despite the good birds, the highlight of the day was certainly watching the leader, nearly blind due to allergies, trying to unlock his car with a coat hanger. 81 species seen or heard.

Steve Glover

MT. DIABLO, May 8.

Fourteen guests and members showed up for the field trip to Mt. Diablo on what turned out to be a very beautiful day. We saw or heard 56 species. Although numbers were low for many species that are often abundant, we had six species of warbler and very high counts for Hermit and Townsend's Warblers. We also saw at least two Townsend's/Hermit hybrids. An Anna's Hummingbird sat on a nest just six feet off the ground, which gave us excellent views of this tiny bird on a tiny nest. We heard Sage and Black-chinned Sparrows but unfortunately did not see them.

Jimm Edgar

MITCHELL CANYON, May 11.

No report received.

PARTRICK ROAD, May 16.

Eight birders enjoyed a warm, sunny day on the west side of Napa Valley. Western Tanager and Grasshopper Sparrow were the highlights. Five species in the flycatcher family and three species of vireos were also seen. Lazuli Bunting and Western Bluebird were among the 63 species seen or heard.

Elizabeth Dickey

CASWELL STATE PARK, May 22.

Like most days this spring, wind blew harshly and constantly, making finding the small passerines quite difficult. A Gray Flycatcher was one of the few exceptions. A farm pond along Airport Way had five male Yellow-headed Blackbirds and a male Great-tailed Grackle. A grand total of two birders saw or heard 62 species.

Steve Glover

EAST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, May 25.

How windy was it? Hats were flying and the willows were blowing so hard at times along Piper Slough that no birds could be seen (only heard)! Thanks for your help, Steve! The fifteen birders recorded 59 species. Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, and the newly renamed Spotted Towhee were among the species seen.

Joel Summerhill

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Common Loon: 1 on 5/29 at the Richmond Marina. (SG, RL)
Late.

Brown Pelican: 1 on 5/19 at Port Costa. (DW)

Oldsquaw: at least 5 and probably 6 on 5/29 at Brooks Island.
(SG, RL) The previous largest East Bay flock appears to have
had only 3 birds.

Common Merganser: 1 female merganser with young on 5/14
at Pescadero Lagoon, San Mateo County. (GF, MP)

Osprey: 1 on 5/14 at the end of Orwood Road, East Contra
Costa County (SG, RL); 1 on 6/5 at Piper Slough (SG).

Swainson's Hawk: a flock of 29 on 5/21 near the Contra Costa
Forebay. (SG)

Red Phalarope: 5, 2 of them in breeding plumage, on 5/11 at Pt.
Isabel Regional Shoreline near Richmond. (JL)

Franklin's Gull: 1 breeding-plumaged adult gull on 5/14 at
Pescadero Lagoon. (MP, GF)

Caspian Tern: ~350 on 5/29 at Brooks Island, including some
feeding young. (SG, RL)

Black-chinned Hummingbird: 1 on 5/9 and from 5/26 through
at least 6/5 at their Concord feeder. (Bo&BG)

Costa's Hummingbird: 3 males on 5/14 along the Del Puerto
Canyon Road, Stanislaus County. (FB, BG)

Willow Flycatcher: 3 on 5/21, 1 on 5/31, 1 on 6/2, 2 on 6/6, and
1 on 6/11, all at Piper Slough. (SG)

Gray Flycatcher: 1 on 5/24 at Back Canyon, Mt. Diablo State
Park. (GF) This is a full ten days later than the latest spring
record for the East Bay.

Bank Swallow: 1 on 5/9 at Piper Slough. (DW, JG)

Common Raven: 1 on 5/14 and 5/18 and 2 on 5/19 over her
Alamo home. (JR) Only noted there on 3 previous occasions.

Summer Tanager: 1 female on 5/14 at Piper Slough. (SG, RL)
Probably the fifth county record.

Blue Grosbeak: 6 on 5/14 along Patterson Pass Road, East
Alameda County. (FB, BG) This is the only known nest site in
Alameda County.

Black-chinned Sparrow: 1 on 5/11 at Muir Picnic Area, MDSP,
(JL); 3 singing on 5/29 along South Gate Road, MDSP, and 2
more on 5/29 at Muir Picnic Area (FB, MJC).

Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 singing on 5/19 along McKewen Road
near Port Costa. (DW)

Tricolored Blackbird: ~500 nesting on 5/14 along Del Puerto
Canyon Road 2 miles east of the San Antonio Junction. (FB,
BG)

Lawrence's Goldfinch: 2 on 5/28 at the Abandoned Ranch at Pt.
Reyes. (MP, GF)

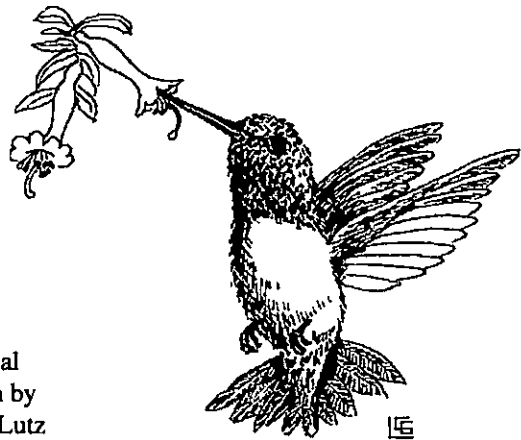
Corrections to Observations in the June Quail:

Eared Grebe: originally identified in the June Quail as a Horned
Grebe, the grebe was still present on 5/14 at the Contra Costa
Forebay. (SG)

Hammond's Flycatcher: these 15 to 20 flycatchers on 4/29 in
Mitchell Canyon were mistakenly listed in the June Quail as
Dusky Flycatchers. (GF, MP)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Fin-
ger, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Janet Goodman,
Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond,
and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-
mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 24
messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is
also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.



Original
Sketch by
Carol Lutz

AVIAN ANTICS

by Jean Richmond

I saw some strange bird behavior on April 4. As Rich and I were
sitting on our patio, a Sharp-shinned Hawk came up out of the
yard behind our south fence, flew toward us, circling as she
moved upward above our house. I saw that she had a California
Towhee in her talons. The Sharp-shinned then started circling
southeast as she climbed higher and higher. She was a long way
out, making larger circles, when she turned and flew toward the
west. A Red-tailed Hawk flew toward the Sharp-shinned from
behind and did a barrel roll at the accipiter who dropped the
towhee. The Red-tailed caught the towhee in mid-air and flew
back toward the east while the Sharp-shinned continued west
briefly, then dropped down out of sight. Without my 10 x 40
binoculars, I would have missed all that. At their book-signing
in Pleasant Hill on May 1, I related the story to Donald and
Lillian Stokes, who have written books on bird behavior, and
they said that they have never heard of such antics.

1996 BIRDATHON REPORT

by *Barb Burek*

The 1996 MDAS Birdathon was held on Saturday, April 28. This year the weather cooperated and the birders had a good day for the chase. All teams this year birded within Contra Costa County. Steve Glover, who has had the best Contra Costa County list for the last two years, was on a birding trip to Texas and did not compete. This opened the door for the other teams.

The "Wight-crowned Sparrows," Denise Wight and Dave Shuford, started their day at 4:30 a.m. with a Western Screech-Owl along Alhambra Valley Road outside Martinez. Dave found their "best bird of the day," a Solitary Sandpiper, at Clifton Court Forebay. Other highlights of their day included two Oldsquaws, a White-winged Scoter, Lesser Yellowlegs, three MacGillivray's Warblers, and "a great-looking alternate-plumaged Horned Grebe." They also got a response to hand-clapping from a Black Rail at Piper Slough. Denise and Dave ended the day at 8:00 p.m. just outside Oakley Sewer Ponds with a Great Horned Owl. Their 193 driving miles resulted in 145 species for their first Contra Costa County try.

Jim Lomax was joined by Kevin Hintsu this year as "The Early Worms." Jim had been chasing Steve Glover for the past two years for the Contra Costa County record and this year was his chance. Birding many of the same areas as Denise and Dave, Jim and Kevin managed to find two more birds, for this year's Best Contra Costa County list of 147 species. Congratulations to both of them. The good birds on their list included a Brant (unusual in Contra Costa County), a Harlequin Duck as well as the Oldsquaws seen by Denise and Dave, Swainson's Hawk, Red Knot, and a Short-eared Owl in place of Denise's and Dave's Western Screech-Owl.

Two other teams also participated in the Birdathon. Jimm Edgar's "Roadrunners" took a detour occasioned by Jimm's marriage just before the Birdathon. Florence Bennett and the Humdingers (Mary Jane Culver, Betty Gallagher, Rosita Harvey, and Jean Richmond) birded only Mt. Diablo and their own backyards. They still managed a respectable 75 species and Rosita found four hummingbird nests that day. Both teams reported a very enjoyable day.

Final reports on pledges to MDAS for the Birdathon are still being tallied and will be reported in the September *Quail*. We want to thank all who contributed to and all who participated in this year's Birdathon.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF BIRDING ETIQUETTE

by *Victor Emanuel*

1. Do not approach nesting birds too closely.
2. Obey all posted rules when visiting sanctuaries or preserves.
3. Do not enter private property without permission.
4. Do not use tape recorders in heavily birded areas during the nesting season. In other areas, use tape recorded bird vocalizations or imitations with discretion.
5. Be careful not to obstruct the view of fellow birders by stepping in front of them.
6. When the leader gets a bird in the scope, take a quick look when it is your turn, then come back for a second view after everyone has seen the bird.
7. Don't smoke in vehicles or near your fellow birders.
8. Be careful not to spray on insect repellent while standing near or upwind of other birders or while in vehicles.
9. Alternate positions in vehicles and on trails so that everyone has a chance to have the best position.
10. In general keep conversation to a minimum while on forest trails. Bird vocalizations are the best way to locate forest birds and are difficult to hear above conversation.

Editor's note: Several unfortunate incidents on recent field trips prompted a call for this reprise of Victor Emanuel's "The Ten Commandments of Birding Etiquette." To these, I would add an Eleventh Commandment:

11. If on a field trip with a leader, stay with the leader and behind the leader on trails or roads. If you want to go where the spirit moves you, bird on your own, not with an organized group.

All of us should remember that our actions affect not only the birds, butterflies, wildflowers, and other facets of nature that we seek to enjoy but also other people who are also trying to enjoy these same things. MDAS has a general reputation for courtesy and friendliness. Let's keep it that way!

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly greet these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and field trips: Joy Addiego, Isaac Aronow, John Baas, David Behrens, Jeanne Bell, Richard Bishop, Antonieta Bofill, Sam Briant, Edna Buchmann, Ben Budde, Opal Callaway, Charlotte Cooper, Eric Crowe, Eleanor Croze, Lelia Dempsey, Henry Dyck, Gayle Eleanor, Perry Ferguson, Adrienne Griscti, Donna Gross, Roberta M. Harris, Blanche Hatfield, the M. Hauser family, Ernest Holloway, Jr., Lee Jones, Norman Kekki, Helen Kruger, Stephanie Malaspina, Robin Miller, Linda Mitchell, Jenifer Morgan, Delia Nakayama, Rosalie Opperman, William Paff, Ann Potter, Alice Quadros, Jack Rabbitt, Cliff Sauvain, Barbara Starr, Sally Talyor, Michael Tischler, Karen Van Duinen, Verne Van Vlear, Robert Vickery, Pauline Weber, Norman Weil, Jay Wiley, Jr., Adolph Wolfensperger, Marie Woods, and Marloe Woollett.

THE LAST WORD

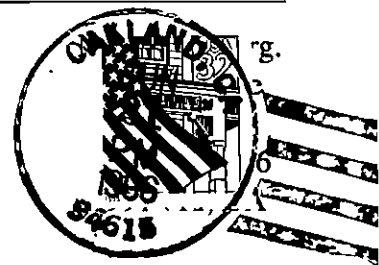
This, the end of my ninth year as editor, is noted with particular satisfaction. Just over a year after the chapter purchased a new laser printer to allow complete in-house production of the *Quail*, the "loan" from the MDAS Conservation and Education fund has been repaid. The money saved next year should give the chapter a good financial cushion. This has been a good year in other ways as well. My "regulars," Al McNabney, Elizabeth Dickey, and Steve Glover, have maintained their excellent work. Denise Wight has brightened these pages with her informative and sometime humorous "Did You Know?" items. The mailing crew has settled into in at Mike William's Wild Birds store (thank you, Mike) and continued its good work getting the *Quail* out expeditiously. Thank you to all of them and all the others who contributed to the newsletter. Hope you all have a good summer. See you next fall.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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P.O. Box 53
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Treasurer: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862
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Hospitality: Nancy Wenninger, 938-7987
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644

September 1996

Vol. 43 No. 1

Next Deadline: September 8

September Program:

Cold & Wet

Welcome back! No, that's not the weather forecast but our **September 7** program. Former MDAS president Jim Lomax will present this month's two-part show. The first part will show Northern Minnesota winter birds, including White-winged Crossbill, both redpolls, Gyrfalcon, Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, and more, in pictures he took last February. The second part of the show will cover the pelagic birds and mammals of the California seas. Included will be storm-petrels, auklets, shearwaters, and albatross, several kinds of whales such as Blue, Humpback, and Gray Whales, Pacific White-sided and Common Dolphins, and Dall's Porpoise.

For September birding information, Joel Summerhill will show us some exotic birds from our frequently overlooked international neighbor to the south.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, September 12, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Eugenia Larson, 160 Canyon Green Place, San Ramon, 806-0644. Board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, September 20, at 9:30 a.m. at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill. General meetings of MDAS are held on the first Thurs-

day of every month, September to June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Remember to bring your coffee mugs or tea cups to the General Meetings!

Weekend Birding Breaks return. Our short, local field trips will start on Sunday, September 22, with a trip to Lafayette Reservoir. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Trip leader for our first Birding Break will be Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the top of the dam (\$4.00 fee).

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WELCOME BACK! HOPE YOU HAD A GOOD SUMMER!

A trip to your favorite birding spot. A sea cruise, a hike into the high country in Montana or a visit to Alaska to see a polar bear. Or possibly just a sit at home, with an occasional visit to your backyard feeder. Whatever you did, you are now back to reality, to monthly Audubon meetings. Glad you are here. WELCOME.

A NEW BEGINNING WITH THE NEW AUDUBON

Take a look at your calendar. Then look at last year's. A LONG time ago (or so it seems), John Flicker became President and CEO of National Audubon. Dan Taylor heads the California Office in Sacramento. Impactwise, Audubon has increased its ability to "make a difference." The chapter has a new President. Jim Lomax is taking deserved time off to chase (photograph) birds from one hide to another. All indicate time has moved on

Legislatively, environmental matters have never been under greater attack than has been the case for the past year and a half. The MOST disastrous efforts to roll back effective, important legislative protections have failed. But, MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, THE EFFORTS CONTINUE. "Some" in Congress seem to understand extremism is NOT the way to go. Others seem ideologically intent on turning back the environmental clock. The continue attempts to destroy every environmental protection that's been put in place. The same AND MORE must be said about the Assembly here in California.

The California Coastal Commission has been "stacked" (my word) with appointees whose interest appear to be directed at "doing in" the Commission. In case you've forgotten, the Coastal Commission was created in 1972 by a referendum, voted for by a vast majority of us to PROTECT California's coastal areas from rampant development. Now the appointees of the Governor and legislative leaders have produced a majority of board members who appear to be opposed to the commission on which they serve.

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

One bit of important news. After months of trying to say Delta Environment Science Center, and after great soul searching and deliberation by the Board of Directors, the name has been changed. It is now

DELTA SCIENCE CENTER

at
BIG BREAK

The work of creating the Center continues to progress. Initial steps have been completed to establish a California non-profit entity and the task of obtaining IRS non-profit status is moving along. Planning for education activity is well underway. The summer cruises on the Bay/Delta under guidance of Dr. Chris Kitting are going well.

WATER, EPA, AND CALIFORNIA

As reported, a number of the organizations interested in seeing that California's water issues are resolved effectively are again reviewing alternatives and deciding on ACTION. The state's Water Resources Control Board has, in the view of most of us, failed to grasp the nettle and use its power, talent and abilities to "settle" major water issues. These alleged failures will adversely affect birds and other wildlife needs. Suffice it to say "something's" going to happen. Stay tuned.

AUDUBON'S RADIO SHOW

Two tracks are underway. First, those of you who have been around the Bay Area for a while probably know Jerry Kay. He broadcast nature-oriented radio shows for years. The Bay Area Audubon chapters are about to complete a test arrangement with Kay covering a trial period of possibly as long as six months. The shows would be brief and would be aired on major radio stations, probably in the Bay Area, Sacramento, and the San Joaquin Valley. Second, the Bay Area Audubon chapters are also developing an Audubon-supported radio show that will probably start airing toward the end of 1996. Pretty exciting stuff.

SHELL MARSH

What a frustrating exercise this is proving to be. After the area was purchased with funds developed from the BIG oil spill in 1988, a Technical Advisory Committee was established. The Committee has spent months working out operating systems, so the wetland will be as great as it should be. Studies, experts, more studies, more experts, more discussions. A contract will soon be let to implement the study results. Tide gates will be installed in the levies. The levies will be reconstructed and strengthened. Channels will be dug to facilitate the movement of water. IF all goes well and IF there are no interruptions, the work "could" be completed by the end of 1996. The frustration comes from cattle. An early-on decision was to remove cattle from the uplands around the wetland. That was done. The area quickly began to return to its untrammled state. But wait! Some authorities argued the grasses which grew after the cattle were removed constituted a fire hazard. A solution! Return cattle to the uplands. Fence the area so the cattle can't trample marsh areas, which then meant water had to be piped to a tank so the cattle would have water. On it goes. It is my expectation the entire area will eventually be seen as THE JEWEL of Contra Costa's wetlands. Eventually we will accomplish the task. THEN the bugs, birds, and creatures will really be served AND "we the people" will have a wonderful place where we can commune with nature.

CAL/FED

Do you know what CAL/FED stands for? For one thing, when the process is completed, water allocations for the state will be forever changed. Remember the Peripheral Canal? It may be the preferred option even though most knowledgeable water people still believe such water diversions will be harmful to the Bay/Delta and to California's wildlife and fish, and, yes, even to "we the people."

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT, FY 95-96

	Operating <u>Account</u>	Conservation <u>Account</u>
BEGINNING BALANCE, 6/30/95	\$5,936.98	\$13,133.07
RECEIPTS:		
Advertising	430.00	
Bird-a-Thon donations	711.45	
California Bluebird Recovery Program	2,392.00	
Donations	530.25	
Fundraising	3,731.00	
Interest earned	269.66	489.64
National Audubon Society dues share	8,882.48	
Subscriptions to the <i>Quail</i>	910.50	
Sales	269.79	2,781.35
Funds for Christmas Count	320.00	
TOTAL RECEIPTS:	18,447.13	3,270.99
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Administration	187.11	
BAAC	51.76	
California Bluebird Recovery Program Expenses	925.07	
Christmas Bird Count	848.18	
Conservation	432.81	290.00
Education	177.26	14.56
Fund-raising expenses	2,160.00	
Hospitality	66.36	
Insurance	505.19	
Programs	944.36	
Production and distribution of the <i>Quail</i>	4,779.00	
Rent, general meeting	830.00	
Sales expenses	68.00	169.07
Site Guide revision expense		110.00
Telephone (AUD-UBON)	190.08	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS:	12,165.18	583.63
CONTRIBUTIONS:	150.00	1,000.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS + CONTRIBUTIONS:	12,315.18	1,583.63
EXCESS RECEIPTS OVER DISBURSEMENTS:	6,131.95	1,687.36
Repayment of loan to Operating Account for <i>Quail</i> Printer	-2,200.00	2,200.00
ENDING BALANCE, 6/30/96	\$9,868.93	\$17,020.43

1996-97 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

IMPORTANT: This is a **tentative** schedule. Weather or availability of leaders may require changes. **READ THE QUAIL** or call the Audubon tape at 283-8266. Weekday trips are often switched between Wednesday and Thursday to take advantage of tides or other opportunities. Note that the San Luis Obispo trip is a three-day trip. Two-day or three-day weekend trips may be done either day or any day alone. Additional rarity chase trips may be added during the year.

We hope you all join us and enjoy this interesting schedule of trips for the coming year. Thank you to those who offered suggestions for trips and to those who will be leaders.

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chairman

Sept.	5	Thur.	Bolinas Lagoon	Mar.	8	Sat.	Tomales Bay
	14	Sat.	Moss Landing - Elkhorn Slough		12	Wed.	San Mateo coast
	18	Wed.	Hayward Regional Shoreline		22	Sat.	Black Diamond Mines Reg. Park
	28	Sat.	Point Diablo (Hawk Hill)		27	Thur.	Briones wildflower walk
Oct.	5	Sat.	Outer Point Reyes	Apr.	5	Sat.	Garin Regional Park
	9	Wed.	San Mateo coast		9	Wed.	Lagunitas
	19	Sat.	Bodega Bay		24	Thur.	Ida Clayton Road, Napa Co.
	24	Thur.	Alameda South Shore		26	Sat.	BIRDATHON
	30	Wed.	Limantour		30	Wed.	Del Puerto Canyon
Nov.	2	Sat.	Abbott's Lagoon	May	3	Sat.	Mines Road
	7	Thur.	South Bay		7	Wed.	Mt. Diablo State Park
	13	Wed.	Mt. View Sanitary		10	Sat.	Mitchell Canyon - Wildflowers
	21	Thur.	Ironhouse Sanitary Plant		22	Thur.	Napa River
	23	Sat.	Palo Alto Baylands		28	Wed.	Caswell State Park
Dec.	7-8	S-S	Sacramento Valley refuges		31	Sat.	Outer Point Reyes
	11	Wed.	Altamont	Jun.	5	Thur.	East Contra Costa County
	19	Thur.	Niles Canyon		11	Wed.	Las Trampas
	21	Sat.	CHRISTMAS COUNT		21-22	S-S	Yuba Pass - Sierra Valley
Jan.	4	Sat.	Putah Creek - Lake Solano	Jul.	12-13	S-S	Lassen County
	8	Wed.	Sunol Regional Park		26	Sat.	San Mateo Coast
	16	Thur.	Lake Merritt	Aug.	9	Sat.	Bodega Bay
	25	Sat.	Bodega Bay		27	Wed.	Coyote Hills Regional Park
	29	Wed.	Grizzly Island Wildlife Refuge				
Feb.	6	Thur.	Thornton				
	12	Wed.	Hayward Regional Shoreline				
	15-17	S-M	San Luis Obispo County				
	27	Thur.	Richmond/Berkeley shoreline				

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Thursday, September 5, **Bolinas Lagoon and Sewer Ponds.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 9:00 a.m. in front of Audubon Canyon Ranch. Go west through Vallejo and continue west on SR 37 to Atherton Blvd. On crossing US 101, Atherton becomes San Marin Drive. At the junction with Novato Blvd, turn right and continue to the end at Pt. Reyes - Petaluma Rd. Turn left and go to SR 1; left again on SR 1 to Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Leader: Denise Wight, 370-7342

Category 2

Saturday, September 14, **Moss Landing and Elkhorn Slough.** Carpool 6:30 a.m. El Cerro Blvd. west of I-680. Meet 8:30 a.m. in Moss Landing at the big turnout opposite Dolan Rd. just south of the PG&E plant on SR 1. Water, shore birds, possible vagrants.

Leader: Steve Glover, 846-7382

Category 3

Wednesday, September 18, **Hayward Regional Shoreline.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd. west of I-680. Meet at 8:15 a.m. in front of Visitor's Center. Take I-880 to SR 92 west. From the Clawiter exit, turn on Breakwater to Visitor's Center. Water and shore birds.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 2

Saturday, September 28, **Point Diablo.** Carpool 8:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24. Meet 9:15 a.m. in upper lagoon parking area. Take the San Rafael Bridge and US 101 south to SECOND Sausalito exit. At stop sign, go left UP the hill. At the intersection, go right downhill. At the next stop sign, turn left and continue on to parking lot at upper lagoon. Migrating hawks, swifts.

Leader: Jim Lomax, 825-1513

Category 2

Weekend Birding Breaks: Our short, local weekend field trips return with a visit to Lafayette Reservoir on September 22. See page 1 for details.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

OUTER POINT REYES, June 1.

The ten birders spent a foggy and windy morning searching for vagrants, without success. We did find a lot of the usual birds. The highlight was definitely a huge flock of Pacific Loons in many mixed plumages at the Fish Docks. I stopped counting at 500, guesstimates went higher. One Red-throated Loon was seen there also. We also saw a colony of sea lions, including young, and a number of murrelets from a spectacular high cliff view. After lunch, we headed for the headquarters and warmer weather for additional birds. Total species for the day: 75.

Pat MacEachern

PARTRICK ROAD, NAPA COUNTY, June 6.

Eight birders enjoyed a warm, sunny day on the west side of Napa Valley. Western Tanager and Grasshopper Sparrow were the highlights. Five species in the flycatcher family and three species of vireo were also seen. Western Bluebird and Lazuli Bunting were among the 63 species seen or heard.

Elizabeth Dickey

YUBA PASS, June 22-23.

We had great weather for a superb weekend in the Sierras. At Yuba Pass we saw the Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker and Mountain Bluebirds. Two Townsend's Solitaires made lovely display flights over the meadow. Seven species of warblers were seen, including MacGillivray's, Nashville and Hermit Warblers, but the Mountain Quail were heard only. We observed many parents feeding young in their nests, including White-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch at eye level. At the waterfall a few miles west on Highway 49, we watched as an adult American Dipper attended to the nest behind the waterfall (and wondered in awe how the adult avoided being smashed while flying low across the highway from the nest to the river!). Our evening outing produced two Common Poorwills in spite of windy conditions. The Sierra Valley marshes seemed quiet this year. The breeding season was early and most of the waterbirds were not displaying as much as we hoped. We saw two Black Terns, but neither was close enough for great views. Also seen in the valley were a Peregrine Falcon, a Swainson's Hawk on a nest, 100+ American White Pelicans, and Sandhill Cranes. This is such a wonderful yearly trip MDAS makes. I would encourage anyone who has never birded the eastern side of our state to make the journey next year. I want to extend my thanks to the many great spotters and helpers that made this a wonderful weekend. We had 23 birders and counted 106 species.

Denise Wight

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Redhead: 1 male on 8/4 along the frontage road between the Berkeley and Emeryville marinas. (SG) There are apparently less than five summer records for the East Bay.

Harlequin Duck: 1 female from 8/2 to 8/4 still present near Brooks Island, Richmond. (SG)

Oldsquaw: at least 2 still present from 8/2 to 8/4 near Brooks Island. (SG)

Osprey: 2 from 8/2 to 8/4 at Brooks Island. (SG)

Wandering Tattler: 1 on 8/6 on the breakwater at Richmond Marina. (JR)

Ruddy Turnstone: 1 on 8/6 on mudflats north of Pt. Isabel. (JR) Still rare in Contra Costa County.

Wilson's Phalarope: 1 on 8/2 at the Richmond Sewer Ponds. (SG)

Red Phalarope: 1 on 6/6 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (KH, RC)

Bonaparte's Gull: 10 on 7/9 at Wildcat Creek Marsh (ES) and 1 on 8/2 at the adjacent Richmond Sewer Ponds (SG). Rare in summer.

Elegant Tern: at least 80 on 8/3 at Brooks Island. (SG)

Arctic Tern: 1 on 6/1 building a nest at Hayward RS. (KH, RC) Third straight summer.

White-winged Tern: 1 on 6/25 at Arcata Marsh, Humboldt County. (SG, KH) Also on RBA. This was the first state record and the second for the West Coast.

Black Tern: 1 on 5/30 along Hwy. 37. (JR)

Black Skimmer: 2 adults and 3 young on 7/16 at Hayward RS (JR); 2 adults on 8/4 at the Albany Crescent, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (SG). Third record for Contra Costa County.

Common Murre: 1 on 8/3 at Brooks Island. (SG)

Marbled Murrelet: 1 on 8/3 at Brooks Island. (SG) Fourth county record.

Tufted Puffin: 1 on 5/31 at the Mendocino Headlands. (JR, RR)

Lesser Nighthawk: on 7/6, 2 in Panoche Valley, San Benito County, and 4 along the BLM Access Road, Fresno County. (SG)

Eastern Kingbird: 1 on 7/6 just north of Año Nuevo in San Mateo County. (SG) Also on RBA.

Gray Jay: 1 on 5/30 (JR, RR), 7/2 (JR, RR), and 7/15 (GF, MP) at Gualala County Park, Sonoma County. Southernmost locality in California.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 1 on 6/15 at summit of Mt. Diablo. (KH) This is an unusual location and date.

Pygmy Nuthatch: at least 2 on 7/29 at the Orinda Horseman's Association Pasture, 1.5 miles south of Inspiration Point at Tilden Regional Park. (ES) In the East Bay, restricted to stands of introduced Monterey Pines.

Winter Wren: 1 on 6/5 carrying food to a nest along Ward Creek in Hayward. (KH) This is only the second nest record for Alameda County.

Yellow Warbler: 1 singing on 6/27 at Pine Pond, Mt. Diablo State Park. (KH) Not known to breed there.

Wilson's Warbler: at least 13 pairs throughout the summer along Ward Creek. (KH) Previously unknown at a nester in the Hayward hills.

Western Tanager: 1 on 6/8 at Juniper Campground (probably a migrant) and 2 on 6/13 in Curry Canyon (where they probably nest). (KH)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 adult and 1 female or immature on 7/22 and 7/24 in her Orinda yard. (BV)

Black-chinned Sparrow: noted in early June along S. Gate Road and the Fire Interpretive Trail and at Wall Ridge and Juniper Camp, all MDSP. (KH) This was an exceptional year for this species.

Sage Sparrow: 1 on 5/8 on the MDAS trip at the intersection of A-23 and Westside Road. (JR, MDAS) Third record for the area.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 1 male on 6/18 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Great-tailed Grackle: 1 on 5/30 along Miner Hole Road. (JR, RR) Also on RBA.

Observers: Rich Cimino, George Finger, Steve Glover, Kevin Hints, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond, Rich Richmond, Emily Strauss and Barbara Vaughn.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to the most recent 24 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

CRANING FOR SANDHILLS

Enjoy magnificent flocks of Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost at the California Department of Fish and Game's Woodbridge Ecological Reserve near Galt. A series of 2-hour naturalist-led public viewings to two properties (including one normally closed) are scheduled the first and third Thursdays and Sundays, October 3 through March 6, all late afternoon. Registration is required. Call (916) 358-2353 for additional information or to register. A \$5.00 donation per person is requested. Trips do fill quickly, so call early. Other birds typically seen include stilts, raptors, waders, shrikes, swans, and songbirds.

VOLUNTEER - IT'S A GOOD FEELING

by Carol Frischmann

This morning I completed a questionnaire directed at volunteers at the Lindsay Museum. I work at various times in the wildlife hospital, as a raptor feeder, and as a member of the passerine bird team. Among the questions asked was why I volunteer. The choices given for the response included saving the environment, saving wildlife, educating the public, promoting the aims of the museum, and so forth. Thinking about the question, I realized the reason I like to work there is more simple. I feel good doing something to help the community (human and avian) and I have fun doing it. This is what working with Mt. Diablo Audubon is about...doing something that makes me feel good and having fun doing it.

Over the last month, I've also begun to learn about the enormous accomplishments of the volunteers of Mt. Diablo Audubon. (These people must really feel good!) Did you know that:

Al McNabney has been watch-dogging Contra Costa environmental issues since 1982?

Elizabeth Dickey has been organizing the 40+ field trips every year since 1981?

Barb Burek has been editing the *Quail* since 1987?

Dan Van Zile has been maintaining the chapter membership list since 1994 and printing the entire *Quail* since 1995?

Jim Lomax was President for six years?

Jean Richmond's *Birding Northern California* has provided \$33,000 net profit from \$64,000 in sales for our chapter's Conservation and Education fund?

Don Yoder started and runs the California Bluebird Recovery Program?

Steve Glover has been our Observations Editor since 1991?

Jimm Edgar, Maury Stern, and Barbara Vaughn have done jobs which include President and Field Trip Leader and other jobs too numerous to mention?

There are scores more people who have made contributions that I don't know about yet. The good news is that we don't have to do as much as these people to make a difference and to get that good feeling!!!

What can you do that doesn't take a condor-sized commitment? MDAS reflects the interests and desires of its members. Think about what you'd like to do. We need people to help with large projects and small. We need help from new volunteers who would like to do a variety of things including (but definitely not limited to) the following:

- * Augment our local, national and international conservation efforts by working on special projects.
- * Act as a point of collection for data on nests in Contra Costa County for a cooperative program with Lindsay Museum, which needs foster birds.
- * Help create and maintain our presence on the Internet.

- * Assist with public relations activities.
- * Create or help with education programs for school children.
- * Help maintain liaisons with other community groups.
- * Work on local community service projects involving educating the public about birds.
- * Help in securing donations for our raffles and special events.

Whether you can offer great people skills or scientific talents or can make a computer, pencil, or videocamera "sing," we need your help. We can use a contribution of a few hours in total or a few hours a week.

"I'd like to help but don't have time."

We could select an activity several months away, so that you can schedule around it. If the activity is something that you feel is important, you won't feel a few hours a month is a burden.

"I'd like to help but I don't know much about birds."

No problem. Mt. Diablo members are generous in sharing their knowledge and very kind to those who know less about birds than they do. But you don't need to know anything about birds to help maintain our World Wide Web page or provide copy to local newspapers or help us in our conservation activities. Other skills are also needed.

"Okay, I'm ready. What do I do now?"

If you know how you'd like to help and you've just been waiting to be asked, give me a call between 9:00 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. at 735-3836 and we can talk about what you'd like to do.

"I can't help but I am interested in Audubon."

Great! Please come to the meeting in September (or any other month) and meet some of the members and have a great time. Jim Lomax's slide presentations, as in the upcoming September program, are always informative and always a hoot!

By the way, thanks for the contribution you've already made to Audubon through your membership!



Original Sketches
by
Carol Lutz

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by *Jill Hedgecock*

Welcome back, everyone! Now Partners in Flight / Birds in the Balance has a WEB HOME PAGE at

[Http://www.pif.nbs.gov/pif](http://www.pif.nbs.gov/pif)

THE PANAMA CANAL -

IT'S MORE THAN A SHIPPING CHANNEL

Panama's diverse natural habitats provide a critical link for the migratory birds commuting to and from North and South America. These habitats are crucial for migrant and wintering birds throughout the western hemisphere as well as some of the world's most diverse resident bird populations. Portions of the Panama Canal's west bank connect tremendous biodiversity of plants and animal communities. Much of these valuable lands is on the property currently managed by the U. S. Department of Defense (DOD). This area has tremendous economic and biological importance. The Partners in Flight program met with DOD decision-makers mid-March of this year to stress the importance of preserving this area that could eventually be used for ecotourism and other low-impact land uses.

TRAVEL BUGS

There is an updated checklist of birds of Bolivia (1358 species) available from ARMONIA, Alameda Junin no 48, casilla 3081, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, or order by e-mail: armonia@scbbs-bo.com.

A Guide to Bird-watching in Ecuador and The Galapagos Islands by Williams et al. can be ordered from Biosphere Publications, 9 Throstle Nest Close, Otley, West Yorks. LS21 2RR, UK. The U.S. price of \$41.50 includes postage.

STATE OF THE ESTUARY CONFERENCE

The San Francisco Estuary Project announces the 3rd Biennial State of the Estuary Conference on October 10, 11, and 12 at the Officers Club, Presidio of San Francisco. The conference will update you on the current state of the San Francisco Bay/Delta Estuary through technical presentations, policy discussions, poster sessions, a CCMP implementation report card, and more. The session topics will include Protecting the San Francisco Estuary, Biological Resources, Creating Sustainable Communities, and Innovative Local Efforts to Restore and Protect the Estuary, among others. Registration fee for all three days is \$175, for October 10 and 11 \$150, for either October 10 or 11 \$85, and for October 12 only \$40. Make check payable to SFEP/ABAG and send to San Francisco Estuary Project, 2101 Webster Street, Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94612. For program details or a registration form, call 286-0460.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd.

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

798-0303

The most interesting development this summer in our backyards has been the influx of American and Lesser Goldfinches. They have been reported throughout Contra Costa County, Benicia and Vallejo in mixed flocks of 20 to 40 birds. American Goldfinch are usually here from November to May and only a few are seen at feeders in the summer. Lesser Goldfinch are hardly ever seen at feeders. There are also many immature birds being observed, obviously just out of the nest, begging their parents for food. Goldfinch love thistle seed and sunflower chips.

The oriole count is down this summer (1100 vs. 1400 in 1995). Please report any additional sightings to us. It has been a good nesting season for hummingbirds, chickadees, titmice, towhees, and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

FALL SALE 15% OFF

Bird Feeders	Trays & Baffles
Bird Baths	Fountains
Hardware	Bird Houses

September 7 - 22, 1996
(Seed sale will be in October)

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

School is fast approaching and it is time to think about Audubon Adventures. This program is a bi-monthly newspaper for each student, plus a teacher's guide, for third through sixth graders. The newspaper covers different areas of environmental education.

Won't you think about sponsoring a class? Help our young people appreciate their world. The fee is \$35.00 per class. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

SPONSOR: Name: _____
Address: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____
Grade: _____
Number of students: _____
Teacher's name: _____
School address: _____

CLASSES, TRIPS, AND MORE

Notice from Norah Bain: After 13 years, I am retiring from teaching birding classes. The experience has been happy and gratifying for me, mostly because of the delightful participants. Thank you to everyone who has been involved! I am very pleased that Denise Wight has consented to take over my class. We will all benefit from her expertise.

Norah Bain

FALL FIELD CLASSES

Denise Wight's two field classes for beginning birders will meet on Tuesdays from September 17 through October 22 and from October 29 through December 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Two classes on Bay Area diversity for intermediate birders will meet on Thursdays from September 19 through October 17 and from October 31 through December 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Registration will be September 5 at the Orinda Community Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563. Cost is \$49 for Orinda residents, \$51 for non-residents, for the beginning class, and \$55 for Orinda residents, \$57 for non-residents, for the intermediate class. For further class details, call Denise at 370-7342. For more information on registration, call the Orinda Community Center at 254-2445.

WORKSHOP CLASS

Phil Gordon of Ohlone Audubon Society will again teach his class, Natural History of California Birds, at Acalanes High School. The ten-week class includes two-hour workshop-type classes with lectures and slides, specimens, and microscope and dissection labs. Weekend field trips visit prime birding areas. Emphasis of this fall's class is on migration and identification of shorebirds. Register at the first class on Wednesday, September 11, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 410, Acalanes High School, Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette. Cost is \$60 for ten sessions (field trips are gratis). For further information call Phil Gordon, 538-3550, or Acalanes Adult Education Center, 935-0170.

ADVANCED BIRDING TECHNIQUES AND ART CLASSES

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is offering three fall classes. Pelagic Birds of Monterey Bay with Debbie Shearwater previews species seen on pelagic trips on Monterey Bay. Classes meet Wednesdays, September 18 and 25, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Fee is \$30 for SFBBO members, \$45 for nonmembers. Shaded Pencil Drawing with Charles Stasek helps beginners get started and more advanced students improve their skills. (Remember a good sketch can be a valuable element of birding field notes.) Class meets Saturday, October 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bring a lunch. Fee is \$45 for members, \$60 for nonmembers. HawkWatch: the Fall Migration with Allen Fish, Director of Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, covers raptor identification, behavior, migration ecology and conservation and takes a trip to Hawk Hill during the height of fall migration. Fee is \$40 for members, \$55 for nonmembers. Registration for all classes is by mail, check or money order only, to the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, P. O. Box 247, Alviso, CA 95002. All lectures are at the Observatory.

BIRDING ADVENTURES

Dave Reinsche, Naturalist at Coyote Hills Regional Park, is in charge of three birding adventures this fall. Raptor Enrapture, on Friday, October 18, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., and Saturday, October 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., includes both indoor activities and outdoor adventures as you learn the common hawks and owls. The Grand Birding Weekend, on Saturday, November 2 and Sunday, November 3, from 6:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. both days, visits six parks, hoping to record over 101 species. Backyard Bird Pleasing, Saturday, December 14, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., shows how to make your yard or school bird friendly. Registration is required from all classes. For more information on fees and registration, call 636-1684.

1997 GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON PANAMA TOUR

Golden Gate Audubon is arranging a second tour to Panama from February 15 through March 2 that will include meeting with Panama Audubon members. The first week will focus on the central lowland rainforest around the Panama Canal and the mountainous western region. The second week will spend five days in the remote province of Darien in the eastern part of Panama close to Colombia. Two nights of this stay will be spent tenting at Cerro Pirre in the cloud forest. Accompanying the tour will be Mr. Hernan Arauz of Panama. Cost of the land tour will be \$2059 for the first week and \$1695 for the second week. Tour arrangements are being made now so anyone interested should call Top Guides 1-800-867-6777 for further information or to request a detailed itinerary. To reserve a space, send a \$300 deposit made payable to and mailed to Top Guides, 1825 San Lorenzo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707.

BAY SHORE STUDIES TRAINING PROGRAM

Volunteers are needed to lead children on field trips to the edge of the Bay. Get your feet wet learning facts about marine life in San Francisco Bay at the Richardson Bay Audubon Sanctuary in their series of 14 training classes. The first session is Friday, September 20, from 9:00 to noon. Then lead small groups of 4th to 8th grade children to the edge of the Bay and share what you have learned. No previous experience necessary. For further information, call Meryl Sundove at (415) 388-2525 or stop by the Richardson Bay Center at 376 Greenwood Road, Tiburon.

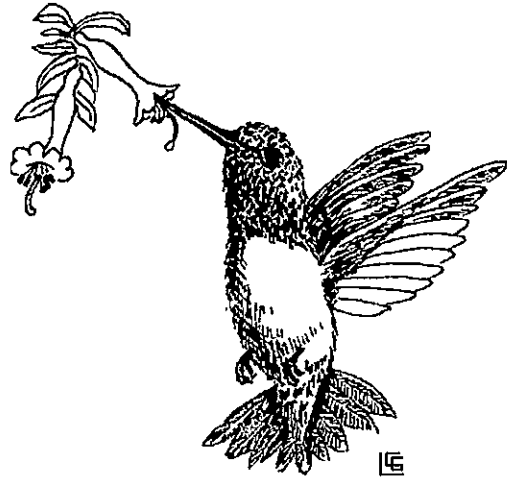
OFFSHORE SAFARI

The East Bay Regional Park District presents Over the Edge: Offshore Safari, a pelagic expedition to the deepwater Pacific. Two East Bay Regional Park District Naturalists, Mike Moran and Sharol Nelson-Embry, will lead an extended 12-hour cruise 50 miles offshore to ocean areas with depths of 11,400 feet. The water of the California Current may bring Black-footed or Laysan Albatross, gadfly petrels, storm petrels, shearwaters, kittiwakes, skuas, or other birds that spend most of their lives gliding the open ocean. The trip includes an orientation on Friday, October 11, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Crab Cove Visitor Center in Alameda. The Sunday, October 13, cruise from Sausalito, will leave at 5:45 a.m. and return at 6:00 p.m. The fee is \$80 for residents, \$100 for non-residents. For information, call Mike Moran at Black Diamond Mines, 757-2620. For reservations, call 636-1684.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend warm greetings to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: B. W. Abrams, Marion Allin, R. Arroyo, Morna Baird, K. Bartz, Lois Berlin, Dyann Blaine, Rose Bonacum, Leonie Bonarius, Albert Borazanian, Ashley Bridgeman, E. J. and Michele Carson, Michael Chen, Patricia Christian, Y. Cronin, Richard Doust, Kate Emery, D. Errington, Linda Ferreira, C. Florance, Lois and John Foster, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Freeman, Susan Skerbinc Gee, Teresa Glenn, Karen Goodnough, Gertrud Griffin, Pamela Gutman, J. Gary Gwillian, Mark Hall, Ronald Halsne, Phyllis Hampton, B. W. Hanson, Gayl Hard, Albert Hart, Priscilla Hawthorn, Kyost Honkola, Georgette Howington, Jane Joba, Kay Johnson, Dan Johnson, Cynthia Johnston, R. Steven Jones, Thomas Kaaret, Melody Kelly, K. A. Larue, Morris Legler, Lora Lemons, Joyce Letts, Edith Schamber Lucas, D. W. Mackley, Michael Makieve, Mary Man, Carol Markey, John Mason, Mary Mason, Mrs J. McConnell, Timothy McGlone, Thomas Morgan, Linda Mrnak, Mrs. W. E. Nexsen, Carole O'Hare, Danielle Orcutt, Julia Owens, Lynn Paiyou, Dannette Pastor, Marie Pipko, Roberta Rankin, Barbara Ray,

James Reese, Mickie Reynolds, Geneva Robinson, Antonio Romero, Steven Russell, Craig Simmons, Sally Smith, Virginia Smith, Irvin Starr, Robert Stithem, David Swam, Ronald Valdez, John Vierra, William Vowell, Mary Walker, Michael Walkowiak, R. V. Wallick, Carolyn White, Euline Wilburn, Sheila Wright and Roger Zeltmann.



The *Quail* is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the *Quail* and *Audubon* magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the *Quail* is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Joel Summerhill, 4801 Shavano Peak Ct., Antioch, CA 94509. First class mailing of the *Quail* to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
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(510) AUD-UBON

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Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644



October 1996

Vol. 43 No. 2

Next Deadline: October 10

October Program:

Adventures of an Urban Birder

What California county has nesting Caspian Terns, Red Crossbills, and Tufted Puffins? What county has records for Snowy Owl, Thick-billed Kingbirds, and two records of Northern Wheatear? San Francisco, of course! Join us at the **October 3** general meeting when Alan Hopkins will share with us more than twenty years of bird watching experience in San Francisco. Alan will highlight many of the city's most exciting birds and birding areas. He will also cover some discoveries made on the San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas and highlight some of the city's current conservation issues.

Alan Hopkins' photographs have been published in *American Birds*, *Birding*, and *Western Birds*. He is a co-compiler of the San Francisco Christmas Bird Count. He is also currently the First Vice-President of Golden Gate Audubon Society and the Executive Director of the Native Species Network. Alan gave a wonderful program to Mt. Diablo Audubon in May, 1995, on the birding tour he led to Kenya.

The next board meeting will be on Thursday, October 10, at the home of Elizabeth Dickey, 113 Hillcrest Dr., Orinda, 254-0486. The board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, October 18, at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill.

The general meetings of MDAS are held on the first Thursday of every month, September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meetings times are as follows:

- 6:30 Doors open
- 7:00 Birding Information
- 7:30 Business Meeting
- 8:00 Social Time
- 8:30 Program

We are again asking for donations of items suitable for raffle prizes. A bird theme is welcome but not necessary. Please contact Sales Manager Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732, if you have such an item.

Weekend Birding Break. Our October short, local field trip will visit the Martinez Regional Shoreline. Trip leader John Davis, 229-9516, will be joined by co-leaders Bess Smyth and Betty Smith. Meet on Sunday, October 27 at 9:00 a.m. (remember the time change!) at the fishing pier parking lot. Take the Marina Vista exit from I-680 west to downtown Martinez. Go north on Ferry Street past the Amtrack station, cross the tracks, and bear right on N. Court Street into the park, then left to the parking at the end of the road.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

REALLY BIG NEWS

I often hear someone say, "Why don't conservation people do something positive?" Well, folks, starting soon MDAS, most of the Bay Area Audubon chapters, and the Sacramento office of National Audubon Society will be **DOING** something positive. "What is that?" you ask. We have all joined in producing an Audubon radio program.

Jerry Kay, long-time environmental Bay Area radio broadcaster, and the Audubon representatives have been working to develop an environmentally-oriented radio program. It will **SOON** be a reality.

Purposes of the programs are many. For example:

- Influence public attitudes toward wildlife and habitat, i.e., create a constituency for wildlife and birds.
- Effect and inspire the public to take an active role in protecting wildlife.
- Provide ongoing, **ACCURATE** information about wildlife conservation issues.
- Increase the image of Audubon as a responsible, thoughtful and caring organization.

We want listeners to understand that their health and survival ultimately depend on the health of a sustainable environment, that their voices and their actions are the keys to preserving the environment, and that their participation in Audubon can be fun, entertaining and educational.

Programs will include, as often as possible, comments about the following:

- **BIODIVERSITY**
 - What is biodiversity
 - The importance of maintaining diverse forms of life
 - The Endangered Species Act, what it is, and how it operates to protect biodiversity
- **HABITAT**
 - What is habitat
 - Key habitat types in this region and the species that rely on such
 - The need for habitat preservation (no habitat, no birds)
 - Local threats to habitat
- **MIGRATION**
 - What is migration and why do birds migrate
 - The importance of habitat throughout migratory bird routes

The comments will include what Audubon is doing to protect birds, wildlife, habitat, and biodiversity and what the listeners can do. Programs will be aired six times daily. Radio stations KQED, KCBS-AM, KDFC-FM, KOIT-FM, KAZU in Pacific Grove, and stations in Sacramento, Stockton, Santa Cruz, and San Luis Obispo will all be involved. The programs will be distributed by Jerry Kay on the World Wide Web and will be linked to the Audubon Web site. This program is the first step. Sometime early in 1997, we expect to have our OWN Bay Area Audubon Radio Program, but more on that later. I think this is pretty exciting stuff! How about you?

WHAT YOU CAN DO. First, listen to the programs. Next, comment and make suggestions to me or other chapter board members. I know we will be proud of the Audubon radio shows. You can play a role with ideas or speaking. You name it.

DELTA SCIENCE CENTER

New name, same objectives. As announced in the September *Quail*, the name is now

The DELTA SCIENCE CENTER at Big Break

No, no, Nanette! Despite everything you might think, the name was **NOT** changed to protect the innocent. One reporter had charged the name was changed because the term "environment" had become a dirty word. Not so! After lengthy discussion, the board changed the name because too many people couldn't say the name Delta Environment Science Center. It often came out the Delta Environmental Science Center, or it was The Science Center, or some combination thereof. The objectives remain exactly the same. The new name flows, is easily spoken and written, and reference to Big Break brings local color into the project.

NOTE: Big Break refers to a "BIG" break in a levee many years ago. The break was never repaired, and the Bay/Delta is now the larger as a result.

ELECTIONS

Before the November edition of this paper may reach you, the important 1997 elections may be history. It is imperative that everyone vote. Mt. Diablo Audubon, because of its non-profit tax status cannot promote or oppose any individual candidates. However, environment issues are serious. Candidates should give clear expression as to how they stand on such matters, and a comparison between current comments and past actions should be a major consideration

WHATEVER YOU DO, VOTE, VOTE, VOTE!

(Editor's note: Al is **not** suggesting, as a Chicago politician once did, that you vote early and vote often. However, it is important for all of us to vote!)

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday, October 5, **Outer Point Reyes.** Carpool 6.30 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet at Drake's Beach at 8:30 a.m. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, turn left onto 3rd St. In San Anselmo, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 mile, then left onto Bear Valley Rd. for about 3 miles, then onto Sir Francis Drake again. Continue 14 miles to Drake's Beach Rd. on left.

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906

Category 2

Wednesday, October 9, **San Mateo coast.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in parking lot off SR 1 opposite Pescadero Road. Cross the San Mateo Bridge, continue west on SR 92 to Half Moon Bay, go left on SR 1 for 15 miles to Pescadero Rd, turn right into the parking lot.

Leader: Steve Glover, 866-1409

Category 2

Saturday, October 19, **Bodega Bay.** Carpool 7:30 a.m., southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 9:30 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant. Go north on US 101. Take the Washington St. exit in Petaluma, go west on Bodega Hwy. to SR 1, turn right to Bodega Bay. The Tides is on left, opposite a Union Station. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 1

Thursday, October 24, **Alameda South Shore.** Carpool 8:00 a.m., on El Nido near St. Stephens Drive. Take either St. Stephens or Acalanes exits from SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Broadway and Shoreline Ave. in Alameda. Take SR 24 to I-880, and go south to Government Island exit. Continue on Kennedy St. to the bridge approach. The Alameda side of the bridge is Park St. Continue on Park; left on Shoreline. Park at end of Broadway or on Bayview. Shorebirds, maybe Clapper Rails.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Category 1

Wednesday, October 30, **Limantour.** Carpool at 7:00 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Pt. Reyes. Follow Outer Point Reyes directions, but turn left into Visitor's Center off Bear Valley. Shorebirds, waterfowl, land birds on the ridge. Trails may be muddy.

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980

Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

LASSEN NATIONAL PARK, July 13-14.

Six birders spent an interesting Saturday searching for montane birds while trying to avoid thundershowers. Sadly, we failed on both counts. Fortunately, Sunday dawned brightly and amongst many species at Burney Falls were Black Swift, Bank Swallow, and Bald Eagle. 91 species were seen by the group over the two days. A one-man extension trip to nearby Honey and Eagle Lakes produced 90 species in five hours, including Black Tern, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Pinyon Jay.

Steve Glover

BERKELEY BOTANICAL GARDENS, July 17.

Five birders enjoyed a pleasant walk through a small part of the Berkeley Botanical Gardens. Hummingbirds were quite active, but almost all were female and immature Anna's Hummingbirds. Only ten species of birds were seen or heard, but we found the flowers very interesting.

Elizabeth Dickey

SAN MATEO COAST, July 27.

Low fog prevented our seeing any birds far out on the ocean, but the returning Surfbirds and Wandering Tattlers still in alternate plumage were seen well. Two Marbled Murrelets swam in close to shore. Because of fog, much of the day was spent inland. The most interesting sighting of the day was a Sea Otter seen completely out of the water. It was just on the edge of the sand among a large group of Harbor Seals. After grooming, it lay on its back, flapping its forelegs. A total of 73 species were seen by seven birders.

Elizabeth Dickey

BODEGA BAY, August 10.

Seven members escaped one of the hottest days of the year in Contra Costa County (do you remember the big power outage?) for the cool fogs of Bodega Bay. We saw 64 species, including almost no passerines, but had good views of a raft of Pacific Loons, Osprey, Black Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, and Baird's Sandpiper, among others. There was also a mystery alcid, which engendered much discussion but no firm conclusion.

Fred Safier

(Editor's Note: A further communication from Fred after a talk by him with Jean Richmond indicates that the mystery alcid may have been an Ancient Murrelet, three of which were seen by Jean at Bodega Bay three days after the field trip.)

COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK, August 28.

Seven MDAS participants spent a pleasant morning and racked up 50 species of water and land birds. Perhaps 2000 avocets were feeding in the shallows of the Bay, and many phalaropes were out doing their "spin." The highlight of the day might have been our enticing a Virginia Rail to saunter across our path.

Barbara Vaughn

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

White-faced Ibis: 2 on 8/24 (SG), 85 on 8/30 (SG, DW), and 1 on 9/9 (SG) along Cypress Rd. near Bethel Island. First county records for fall; 85 is the high count for the East Bay.

Wood Duck: 1 male on 8/24 at Marsh Creek Reservoir. (SG)

Redhead: 1 female on 8/24 and 9/9 at Marsh Creek Reservoir (SG) Very rare in summer.

Harlequin Duck: 1 female still present through 9/2 at Brooks Island. (SG)

Oldsquaw: at least 1 on 8/27 and 8/29 at Brooks Island. (SG)

Common Goldeneye: 1 male and 2 females on 8/25 (DW, DS) and 1 male and 1 female through at least 9/9 (SG) at Clifton Court Forebay.

Osprey: 1 on 8/25 at Piper Slough. (DW, DS)

Clapper Rail: 8 to 10 on 8/16 at the mouth of Alameda Creek, west of Coyote Hills Regional Park. (SG)

Mongolian Plover: 1 on 9/3 at Doran County Park near Bodega Bay. (FB, MJC) Also on RBA. Extremely rare in California.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 2 on 9/9 with 59 Greater along Cypress Rd. (SG)

Baird's Sandpiper: 2 on 8/2 at Abbott's Lagoon in Marin County (GF, MP); 2 on 8/28 at the north end of Shell Marsh (SG). The latter is only about the seventh county record.

Wilson's Phalarope: 2 on 8/25 at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley (DW, DS); 2 on 8/25 at Pt. Edith, north of Avon (DW, DS).

Common Tern: 1 on 8/25 at Iron House SD. (DW, DS) Unusual this far inland.

Least Tern: 1 on 9/1 at Iron House SD. (SG, MM) This bird probably came from the nearby tiny Pittsburg nest colony.

Black Tern: 3 on 8/22 and at least 4 on 8/24 at Clifton Court Forebay (SG); 1 on 8/25 (DW, DS) and 1 through at least 9/1 (SG, MM) at Iron House SD; 1 on 9/3 at Bodega Bay (FB).

Black Skimmer: 1 juvenile on 8/20 at the San Leandro Marina (GF, JR); 2 adults and 1 juvenile on 8/27, 3 adults on 8/29, and 1 adult and 1 juvenile on 9/2 and 9/6, all at Brooks Island (SG). Only the third county record; these birds probably are the birds that nested at Hayward Regional Shoreline.

Common Murre: 1 on 8/29 near Brooks Island. (SG)

Pigeon Guillemot: 2 on 8/23, 8/27, and 8/29 and 1 on 9/6, all near Brooks Island. (SG) Fifth county record, but now proving annual here at this time of year.

Ancient Murrelet: 3 on 8/13 off Bodega Head. (JR, EM)

Western Screech-Owl: 1 from 8/15 through 8/30 in his Pleasant Hill yard. (BL)

Short-eared Owl: 2 on 8/24 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Willow Flycatcher: 12 on 8/22 (SG), 8 on 8/25 (DW, DS), 8 to 9 on 8/30 (SG, DW), 6 on 9/1 (SG), and 4 to 5 on 9/12 (DW), all at Piper Slough.

Least Flycatcher: 1 heard and seen well on 9/12 at Piper Slough. (SG) First county record.

Bank Swallow: 3 on 8/22 at Piper Slough (SG); 1 on 9/1 at Iron House SD (SG, MM).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2 on 8/19 and 8/20 in her Alamo yard. (JR) First there since 1990.

Phainopepla: 1 on 8/30 flying west over Piper Slough. (DW, SG) First for eastern Contra Costa County.

Red-eyed Vireo: 1 on 8/29 (GF, MP) and 9/5 (FB, MJC) at Pine Gulch Creek, Marin County. Also on RBA.

Yellow-breasted Chat: 1 on 8/29 at Martinez Regional Shoreline. (DW)

Blue Grosbeak: several females and immatures still present through at least 9/12 at Piper Slough. (SG, DW)

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 2 to 3 on 9/1 at Iron House SD. (SG, MM)

Hooded Oriole: at least 2 females or immatures through at least 9/12 at her Alamo feeder. (JR)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Steve Glover, Bob Landfear, Mike Moran, Ellie Mulke, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond, Dave Shuford, and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box telephone number has now been changed to (415) 681-7422. The Bird Box is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to the most recent messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

School has started but there is still time to think about Audubon Adventures. This program is a bi-monthly newspaper for each student, plus a teacher's guide, for third through sixth graders. The newspaper covers areas of environmental education.

Won't you think about sponsoring a class? Help our young people appreciate their world. The fee is \$35.00 per class. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail **now** to Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

SPONSOR: Name: _____
Address: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____
Grade: _____
Number of students: _____
Teacher's name: _____
School address: _____

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by *Jill Hedgecock*

COOK ISLANDS, KAKERORI, AND KIWIS

I had the privilege of going to the Cook Islands at the end of August this summer. The Cook Islands include fifteen islands that are located west of Tahiti and far south of Hawaii in the South Pacific. We visited two of the islands, Rarotonga and Aitutaki (I-too-talk-e). Aitutaki, in particular, is largely unspoiled as they have laws that prohibit buildings from being built taller than a coconut tree and their beach front is largely unspoiled.

There are only four native landbirds that live and breed in the rugged mountains of Rarotonga. As a result the birding was not spectacular. The Cook Island Fruit Dove is a delicacy and, as you can imagine, was not about to hold still for a human with a strange object in her hands. Therefore, my view of this bird was a fleeting glance of green and white. I did get some nice views of Blue Lorikeet and Bristle-thighed Curlew on Aitutaki, though.

Under the water, the Crown of Thorns, an aquatic invertebrate, has reeked havoc on the corals of both islands. Although it has been successfully eradicated from Rorotonga, lagoon corals are not recovering and marine biologists are trying to find out why. Nonetheless, there were beautiful corals outside the lagoon. On Aitutaki, we saw at least a dozen Crown of Thorns on a scuba dive and our guide took along a syringe full of copper sulfate and methodically injected them as we marveled at a green sea turtle and reef fish.

Kakerori (no, it's not pantomiming singing) is the traditional Maori name for the Rarotonga Flycatcher. There were only forty birds counted during the last complete census in 1991 and they are in imminent danger of extinction. Sadly, the Rarotonga Flycatcher's closest relatives, the Tahiti Flycatcher and the three species in the Marquesas Islands, the Eiao, Fatuhiva, and Marquesas Flycatchers, are also suffering from reduced habitat and ship rats. Predation by ship rats is the major threat to all of these flycatchers. As a result of rat poisonings and tree banding, which prevents the rats from climbing to nests, the Rarotonga Flycatcher increased from 29 birds in 1989 to 40 birds in 1991. The three-year conservation study of these birds also corrected the widely accepted view that females are orange. The species has three sequential color phases over four years: orange for two years, mixed for one year, and then gray.

Kiwis, the nocturnal state birds of New Zealand, are also what New Zealanders call themselves. We met several wonderful New Zealand couples during our travels but were distressed to learn that the kiwis (birds) are experiencing population declines, mostly due to cats and rats. New Zealanders are considering changing their state bird as a result.

ABA CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS

PRINCIPLES OF BIRDING ETHICS

All who enjoy birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In a conflict of interest between the birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

- Support the protection of important bird habitat.
- Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger.
- Limit methods of attracting birds.
- Remain well back from nests, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites.
- Keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law and the rights of others.

- Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.
- Follow all laws governing use of roads and public areas.
- Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

- Keep dispensers, water, and food clean and free of decay or disease. Feed birds continually during harsh weather.
- Keep birds safe from predation from cats and other domestic animals.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

- Respect your fellow birders. Share your knowledge, especially with beginners.
- Document unethical birding behavior, intervene if prudent, and notify appropriate organizations.
- Leaders should teach ethics through word and example.
- Limit group impact on birds and their environment and on others using the same area.

The American Birding Association developed and promotes this Code of Ethics. ABA goals are to promote recreational birding, contribute to development of bird identification and population study, and help foster public appreciation of birds and their vital role in the environment. This depends on a diverse and viable avifauna, so the ABA strongly supports and encourages efforts to protect wild birds and their habitats. All who share these pleasures and purposes are invited to join the ABA. Copies of the detailed Code of Ethics or information about the ABA can be obtained by writing the ABA at P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO 80934-6599.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE?

by Carol Frischmann

As the days get shorter and fall migration begins, I think about planning. I love to see the birds at several of the many regional "collection points" in the fall. I also like to make one longer trip to a warm place with birds I want to see. A key element to seeing the birds you want is planning.

Thinking about my own planning causes me to wonder whether we should do more long-range planning for our chapter. I'd like to hear from you on this topic. Do you have concerns about what is happening with bird populations in Contra Costa County and the Bay Area? As many bird populations are migratory, do you also have some concerns about happenings in their "other homes" or *en route*? Should MDAS be doing something more or something different to address these concerns?

Working towards long-term goals to protect our beloved birds and their habitats takes time, focus and funding. Just a few of the questions we might ask include:

- When developers plan long-range, should we think about planning with them? (Dougherty Valley has been 25 years in the planning. Would we have a better result if we had worked with the developers from the beginning?)
- Should we plan "lifelong" public education for both political candidates and voters?
- If the birds we want to see in the wild are no longer able to live and reproduce there, should we continue the species through special breeding programs?
- Because strength comes through numbers, should MDAS consider more close alliances with other local and regional groups to achieve our goals?

Although these questions include some global issues, I think the questions also apply to our lives here in Contra Costa County.

What's your view? Should we be doing additional long-term thinking and planning? Or have we done enough? If not, which are the most important concerns? Please call me at 735-3836 between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., catch me at a meeting, or send a note to let me know what you think.

P.S. In preparation for this fall's migration, I've been reading *How Birds Migrate* by Paul Kerlinger. This book provides very interesting descriptions of the many problems migrating birds face, and brief case studies which illustrate how the problems are overcome. The bibliography provides additional resources at many levels, non-technical to technical.

ANNOUNCING!

The Sequoia Audubon Society of San Mateo County is proud to announce the immediate availability of a newly revised edition of *San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching*, their chapter's guide to birding sites in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.

The magnificent diversity of the habitats and birds found in this area is covered in the detailed descriptions of over 25 favorite bird-watching spots, including Golden Gate Park, Pescadero Marsh, Foster City shoreline and lagoons, Princeton Harbor, Año Nuevo State Reserve, Edgewood Park, Lake Merced and many other sites.

This thoroughly revised version features:

- 174 pages of text
- 23 fully updated, plus 3 entirely new, birding area descriptions
- Completely new maps of the best birding areas
- Over 20 all new high-quality illustrations
- A handy chart showing where and when to find the counties' most sought-after birds
- A current checklist of the birds of San Mateo County
- An extensive list of further references of interest to the resident or visiting birder
- A complete index of bird species and locations

All of this information is available for the low price of \$14.95. Novices and experienced birders alike will find *San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching* indispensable. To expedite your order, send your check made out to Sequoia Audubon Society for \$18.25 per copy (\$14.95 plus \$3.30 for tax, shipping, and handling) to Sequoia Audubon Society, Inc., 30 West 39th Avenue #202, San Mateo, CA 94403 or call the SAS Office at (415) 345-3724 for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Denise Wight

Need a Ruddy Turnstone for your Contra Costa County bird list? I do. In the *Directory to the Bird Life of the San Francisco Bay Region* by Grinnell and Wythe, 1927, these flashy shorebirds were reported to have been observed at Stege. But this left me puzzled. Where in Contra Costa County was Stege? Well, Stege was on the Richmond shoreline, across from Brooks Island (which is a good place to look for Ruddy Turnstones today). Steve Glover says there are about ten sight records now for this area. Other bird names given in this book include Checkered Snipe, Red-legged Plover, and Calico-back!

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

MDAS Benefit and Seed Sale

Saturday, October 12 9:30-5:00

A portion of all sales on Saturday and Sunday will be donated to MDAS. Events on Saturday include:

- MDAS Seed Sale: 15% off all 20 - 50 lb. bags
- Seed Bank available. buy your seed at sale prices and pick it up as you need it
- Butterfly banding demonstration
- Butterfly releases at 10:30 and 2:30
- Heather Farms Garden Center sale of plants that attract birds and butterflies
- A Swarovski Optik expert on hand to show these superb optics and answer questions

Seed & Suet Sale

15% off all 20 - 50 lb. bags
\$0.30 off all suet cakes and \$0.60 off all suet tubs
(Sale: 10/7/96 - 10/27/96)

Have you ever looked through Swarovski binoculars? Images are extraordinarily sharp and crystal clear. 98.2% of the light is transmitted to your eyes, which is the highest rating of all the binoculars. They compare very favorably to Leica and Zeiss. Now available at Wild Birds Unlimited.

PLANT SALE

The East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is holding their 30th Annual Sale of California Native Plants on Saturday and Sunday, October 5 and 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each day. The sale will continue every Tuesday thereafter from 9:00 through noon through January, 1997. The sale will be at the Merritt College Landscape Horticulture Department, 12500 Campus Drive, Oakland. Thousands of native plants will be on sale, including trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, perennials, groundcovers, grasses, bulbs, and seeds, all ready for planting as the rains come. Experts from CNPS will be on hand to give friendly advice and to answer your questions about gardening with native plants in the Bay Area. Payment by cash or personal checks only, please. Take Highway 13 (the Warren Freeway) to the Redwood Road exit. Drive east (up the hill). Follow the plant sale signs, turning right on Campus Drive, then up the hill to the free parking areas on the Merritt College campus. For more information, call (510) 559-9269 or (510) 376-4095.

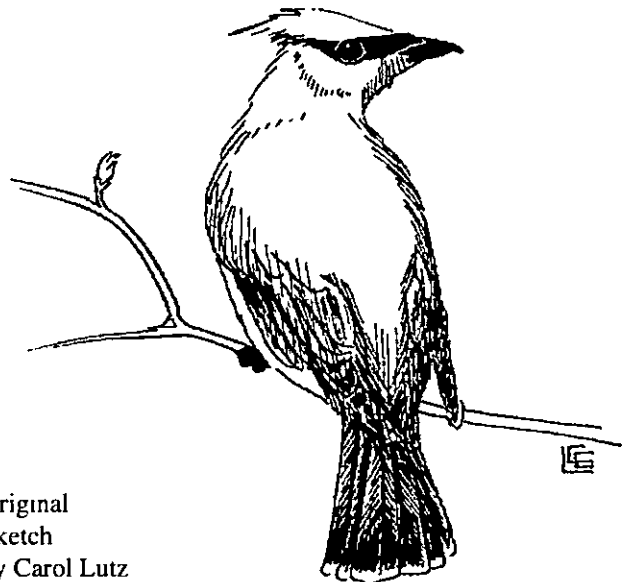
EVENTS AND SEMINARS

DON EDWARDS SAN FRANCISCO BAY NWF

As part of National Wildlife Refuges Week for 1996, the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge is holding an Wildlife Art Auction and a Sale of Native Plants on Saturday, October 5. The Wildlife Art Auction will take place at 2:00 p.m. and will include paintings, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, photography, stained glass, and fabric arts by the West Coast's finest wildlife artists. The Sale of Native Plants will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and have thousands of trees, shrubs, subshrubs, and herbs. Saturday, October 12, will be Shark Day at the refuge, with an opportunity to touch live leopard sharks. Presentations will take place from 10:00 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. on a variety of topics. The National Wildlife Refuge also has a full schedule of fall activities and Explore the Wild! seminars. For the full schedule or for more information on any of these events, call the Refuge at (510) 792-4275

POINT REYES FIELD SEMINARS

The Point Reyes Field Seminars program conducts courses within Point Reyes National Seashore in natural history, photography, environmental education, and the arts, all taught by recognized professionals. Bird seminars include Raptors - Monarchs of the Sky, Winter Birds, and A Shorebird Spectacular. By offering educational opportunities which utilize the tremendous resources available within the Seashore, the seminars strive to foster in others an understanding of, concern for, and desire to preserve the health of the natural environment. The Point Reyes Field Seminars program is a non-profit, self-supporting program and a division of the Point Reyes National Seashore Association in cooperation with Point Reyes National Seashore. For further information and a full schedule of seminars, write to the Point Reyes Field Seminars, Point Reyes National Seashore, Point Reyes, CA 94956, or call (415) 663-1200 weekdays between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.



Original
Sketch
by Carol Lutz

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly greet these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and field trips: Verna Allee, Mrs. Rich Ambrosino, Karen Barber, Joseph Bort, Diane Burk, Dorothy Cotton, D. M. Crabtree, Judy Darst, Argel Demanuel, Michele Dixon, M. B. Donohue, Pat Dugand, Rebecca Farmer, M. Finn, Benjamin Fong, Robert Foster, Gary Fritz, Laura Gonzales, Howard Guild, Sherill Guiliano, Suzanne Hall, Otto Haubensak, M. J. Helbig, Ken Hooker, Eva Hughan, Beverly Jacobs, Charles James, Dorothy Kole, David Leslie, Shirley Lewis, Mrs. Bill Lockwood, Joseph Marcelino, V. L. McKesson, Brett Moore, Elaine Moore, Grisell Navas, George Pelpel, Tom Phillips, Pat Prevost, Kasturi Rangan, Dolores Raskob, William Reed, Arno Reinhold, Fred and Tricia Rentschler, Willie Rose, Suzanne

Rueter, Leslie Rupley, Jerry Sanders, Luanna Smith, Dwight Steele, Rita Thompson, Melisande Thornton, Harold Tobin, Elizabeth Towell, Bob Van Dahlen, Joseph Wierzbicki and Beth Woodson.

ENTERTAINMENT '97

The 1997 Entertainment Book is now available, offering terrific savings on travel, restaurants, theater, sporting events, and more.

Help your Audubon chapter by purchasing this great savings book at chapter meetings or at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Joel Summerhill, 4801 Shavano Peak Court, Antioch, CA 94509. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Nancy Wenninger, 938-7987
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644

November 1996

Vol. 43 No. 3

Next Deadline: November 14

November Program:

Farallon Islands: Sentinels of the Golden Gate

At the November 7 General Meeting, the program will be on the fascinating natural and human history of the Farallon Islands, presented by Martinez resident Peter White. The Farallons are a group of small islands 35 kilometers west of San Francisco, rich in seabirds, marine mammals, and other sea life. Come learn about how the human species affected the islands, too, from Russian and American fur companies to "egggers" who collected Common Murre eggs during the Gold Rush.

Peter White's interest in natural history has led him to complete nine tours as a volunteer assistant to Point Reyes Bird Observatory biologists on the Farallons. Pete is a member of Mt. Diablo Audubon Society and the author of the book *The Farallon Islands, Sentinels of the Golden Gate*.

For November Bird Information, Jim Lomax will offer one of his Birding Quiz presentations. Don't miss it!

The next board meeting will be Thursday, November 14, at the home of Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy, Martinez, CA, 229-0394. Board meetings are open to interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, November 22, at Wild Birds Unlimited.

The general meetings of MDAS are held on the first Thursday of every month, September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meetings times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Please continue to bring your own coffee mug or tea cup to the General Meetings!

Weekend Birding Break. Our short, local field trip for November will visit Hidden Lakes Park in Martinez. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Denise Wight, 370-7342, will lead the trip. Meet on Sunday, November 10, at 8:30 a.m. at the end of Glacier Drive. From Contra Costa Blvd., turn west on Center and continue west to Glacier. Turn left to the end of Glacier.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

BAIR ISLAND: TREASURE OR TROPHY?

In this modern world where instant breaking news is in your living room and where a national event of major (or possibly minor) importance is brought to you by "the tube," you MUST have heard about Bair Island. That means you know the Bay Area Audubon chapters are working to ensure that Bair Island remains a treasure and that it will NEVER become a trophy, subjected to being used for other than its wildlife values.

The New York Times on October 8 carried a full page ad, bought and paid for by Bay Area Audubon chapters and the California National Audubon Society office. The ad was the culmination of several months of hard work. Audubon's officers and the members of Bay Area Audubon chapters have participated in an all-out education effort to "get the attention" of Kumagai Tachiro, president of the Japanese construction company, Kumagai-Gumi. "Why?" you ask. "Because Mr. Kumagai's company owns and apparently intends to develop Bair Island," say I.

Bair Island is one of the few major remaining wetlands in the Bay Area. It is home to the endangered Clapper Rail and other species, many of which "commute" between northern areas and South America during migration. Let's hear it for Bair Island where an all-out Audubon effort is working to "save" the island.

THE RADIO PROGRAMS

You will read in the next column on this page a listing of the times and radio stations broadcasting the Bay Area Audubon chapters radio show with Jerry Kay. This is a beginning effort. When you listen to these programs, you will find them to be short, hopefully interesting, and worthwhile. Let us know what you think of them. Sometime early in 1997, Bay Area Audubon chapters and the California National Audubon office, will be broadcasting a second series of radio shows which will also be Audubon's. Stay tuned.

CONGRESS ADJOURNS, BUT THE MALADY LINGERS ON

The just-concluded session of the U. S. Congress will likely go down in history as one of the WORST from an environmental point of view. That MAJOR efforts made to "do in" important environmental laws and regulations failed is NOT due to a change in view on the part of the Congress. Presidential vetoes and the public awakening as to what the Congress was trying to do forced a bit more moderation. The California Legislature learned little to nothing from what happened in the U.S. Congress. The Coastal Commission, as a result of appointments made by legislative leaders, was the focus of major disputes. A water pollution law, sponsored by the oil industry, weakens strict liability standards by allowing violators to escape criminal liability by reporting a spill and commencing a cleanup before charges can be filed. There's more but space won't permit coverage of all the changes.

AUDUBON ON THE RADIO

The new Audubon radio program is really happening! Listen for Audubon on the radio! This exciting new radio program has been launched by Audubon in association with producer Jerry Kay and "Science in Action." Many of you will recognize Jerry from his long-time association with the California Academy of Sciences. Now Audubon will be utilizing broadcast media and Jerry's talents and taking this opportunity to reach thousands of our citizens with educational information about wildlife, Audubon's conservation message, and opportunities to become involved in Audubon.

Following the format of "Science in Action," each segment will be a 90-second interview with a wildlife expert or an Audubon activist, followed by a message as to ways to become involved in wildlife conservation or Audubon activities. The programs will focus on wetlands and the San Francisco Bay, migratory birds, specific events, and other natural history topics of interest to a wide general audience.

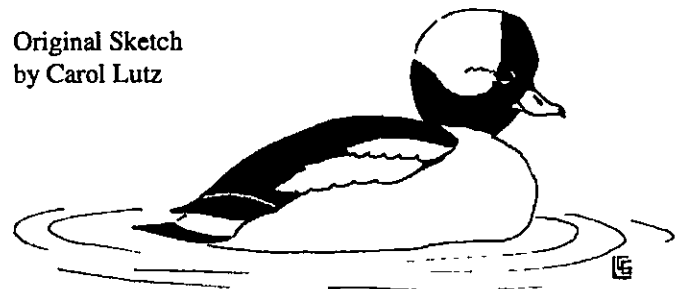
The days of the programs will vary weekly. The programs may now be found at the given times on the following stations:

KQED-FM (88.5)	3:58 p.m. Mondays through Fridays
KCBS-AM (740)	5:35 p.m. and 9:23 p.m. Saturdays 7:26 p.m. Sundays 1:21 a.m. and 3:21 a.m. Mondays 4:23 a.m. Mondays through Saturdays
KDFC-FM (102.1)	6:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m. Saturdays 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Sundays

Other Bay Area stations are being added, and later in the year the broadcast will be expanded to stations in San Luis Obispo, Sacramento, Stockton, and Pacific Grove.

The Richardson Bay Audubon Center will be working with the Bay Area Audubon chapters to coordinate the program content, identify speakers, and fulfill general requests for information. If you would be willing to help with this project by volunteering to answer telephone questions and requests, please contact any of the MDAS board members or the Richardson Bay Audubon Center at (415) 388-2524.

Original Sketch
by Carol Lutz



FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday, November 2, **Abbott's Lagoon**. Carpool 7:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet 8:30 a.m. at Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Point Reyes. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, left onto 3rd St. In San Anselmo, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 mile, then left onto Bear Valley Rd. Turn left off Bear Valley into the Visitor's Center. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and possibly hawks or eagles. Carry lunch and liquids.

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906

Category 3

Thursday, November 7, **South Bay**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the end of Terminal Rd., Mountain View. Take Dumbarton Bridge and go south on US 101 to San Antonio Rd. exit. Go north and east on San Antonio and turn right onto Terminal.

Leader: Steve Glover, 866-1409

Category 2

Wednesday, November 13, **Mt. View Sanitary Plant**. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at parking lot at the plant. Take Pacheco Blvd. exit from I-680, turn right onto Arthur Rd. and go under the freeway. Arthur turns left, then right; at the second turn, turn sharp left onto a non-county maintained road. Follow the road into the sanitary plant. Trails may be muddy. Close-up looks at dabbling ducks; possible bitterns and heron.

Leader: Norah Bain, 254-4516

Category 1

Thursday, November 21, **Ironhouse Sanitary**. Carpool 8:15 a.m. at the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the plant office. Take Hwy. 4 to Oakley. In Oakley, turn left on Vintage Pkwy. Take first right onto Walnut Meadows Dr. Follow this and turn right to office.

Leader: Judi Cooper, 376-1031

Category 2

Saturday, November 23, **Palo Alto Baylands**. Carpool 8:00 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot near Nature Center at Baylands. Take the Dumbarton Bridge to US 101 south. Take Embarcadero exit and go east on Embarcadero to stop sign. Go left toward Yacht Harbor, follow road to end in parking lot on right. Clapper Rails and possibly Black Rails. Prepare for mud, cool breezes. There is a lot of waiting for the rails.

Leader: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862

Category 1

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

BOLINAS LAGOON, September 5.

83 species of birds were seen or heard by thirteen birders on this warm end of summer day. Highlights included a Pileated Woodpecker flying along Bolinas Ridge, three species of loons seen off Stinson Beach, and small flocks of western migrants seen in Stinson Gulch. Ten Wood Ducks were seen on 5 Brooks Pond.

Denise Wight

MOSS LANDING - ELKHORN SLOUGH, September 14.

The first half of the trip was more like an obstacle course with one fiasco after another. First road closures. Then fog. Then the leader careening through a red light and ditching half the group. Those with the courage to press on after lunch were eventually rewarded. We saw a Northern Waterthrush at the Carmel River, a Ruff and an Orchard Oriole at the Moonglow Dairy and tens of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters milling around the mouth of Moss Landing Harbor. 110 species were seen.

Steve Glover

HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE, September 18.

Four birders enjoyed a warm morning along the Bay shore. Thousands of ducks were moving from one pond to another. Highlights were six Lesser Yellowlegs and three Blue-winged Teal. A total of 40 species was seen.

Elizabeth Dickey

POINT DIABLO, September 28.

No report received.

MARTINEZ NATURE WALKS

Nature walks for birds or wildflowers sponsored by the John Muir Historic Site take place twice a month throughout the year at different locations in Martinez. The walks are led by MDAS member John Davis, with co-leaders Bessie Smyth and Betty Smith. November walks for birds include trips to the Mt. View Wastewater Treatment Plant on November 2 and to the John Muir Historic Site on November 16. December trips visit the Martinez Regional Shoreline on December 7 and the John Muir Historic Site on December 14. Further information on meeting places and times or 1997 walks can be obtained from John Davis, 229-9516. Walks are open to all interested participants.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Tricolored Heron: 1 on 9/17 (JR, FR) and 9/20 (FB) at Doran State Beach, Bodega Harbor. Probably the same bird was at Limantour Estero at Pt. Reyes on 10/6 for the first Marin record. (ML)

White-faced Ibis: 2 on 9/16 at Moonglow Dairy, Monterey County. (GF, MP)

Brant: 2 on 9/21 at Brooks Island, Richmond. (SG)

Wood Duck: 4 on 9/26 at Piper Slough, Bethel Island. (SG)

Osprey: 1 on 9/24 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Swainson's Hawk: 2 on 9/24 at Piper Slough and 1 on 9/26 near Knightsen. (SG)

Pectoral Sandpiper: 18 on 9/16 at Moonglow Dairy (GF, MP); 5 on 9/17 at Spaletta Ranch, Pt. Reyes (FB, MJC, BG); 8 on 9/24 at the south end of Shell Marsh (SG).

Stilt Sandpiper: 1 juvenile reported on 9/19 at Shell Marsh. (CA) I am eagerly awaiting details of what would be a long overdue first county record.

Black Skimmer: 3 adults and 1 juvenile on 9/19 just north of Pt. Isabel, Richmond. (SG)

Black Swift: 6 on 9/23 at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Richmond. (SG) This is the first fall record for the East Bay.

Hammond's Flycatcher: 1 on 9/5 at Tilden Regional Park. (GF, MP) Very rare in fall in the East Bay.

Dusky Flycatcher: 1 on 9/21 at Miller/Knox RS. (SG) Very rare in fall in the East Bay.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher: 1 found on 10/1 at the Mendoza Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (JR, JD, FR) Just the third record from Northern California.

Tropical Kingbird: 1 on 9/25 at the Hall Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (FB)

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2 on 9/25 in his Walnut Creek yard. (GF)

Townsend's Solitaire: 1 on 9/19 at the summit of Mt. Diablo. (MJC) This is the earliest fall record for the East Bay by 11 days.

Red-eyed Vireo: 1 on 8/29 at Pine Gulch Creek, Marin Co. (GF, MP); 1 on 9/5 at Jewel Lake, Tilden RP (GF, MP). The latter is only the seventh or eighth Contra Costa County record.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1 male on 9/30 at the Nunes Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (MP, GF)

Prairie Warbler: 1 on 9/17 at the Mendoza Ranch (FB, MJC, BG); 2 on 9/14 at Pt. Reyes (GF)

Palm Warbler: 2 on 10/6 at the Bolinas Sewage Ponds. (ML)

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 on 9/30 at the Nunes Ranch. (GF, MP)

Northern Waterthrush: 1 on 9/16 at the Carmel River. (MP, GF)

MacGillivray's Warbler: 1 on 10/1 in her Danville yard. (PK)
Yellow-headed Blackbird: 2 males on 9/24 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Hooded Oriole: 2 females or immatures last seen 9/22 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Observers: Cheryl Abel, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Pam Keiser, Marty Lycan, Marjorie Plant, Fred Rentschler, and Jean Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box telephone number has now been changed to (415) 681-7422. The Bird Box is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to the most recent messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

THANKSGIVING BIRD COUNT

Although not as well known as Christmas Counts or Breeding Bird Surveys, annual Thanksgiving Bird Counts were begun in 1966. Dr. John Hewston is coordinating and compiling Thanksgiving Bird Counts for the Western States for the fifth year. Last year Dr. Hewston received 261 reports tallying 144 species from the 13 western states reporting to him.

Thanksgiving Bird Counts take place on Thanksgiving Day and last for only **one hour**. Participants select the hour that best fits their schedules. The count is to be made within a 15-foot diameter circle. Participants determine the location of their count circles and should use the same one each year. Usually, these count areas are in a yard where they can be observed from a comfortable spot near a window. The circles may contain feeders, bird baths, or other attractions to birds, but these are not required. The "circle" is actually a cylinder, as birds passing over the circle and those perching in vegetation above the circle as well as those on the ground are to be counted. Participants are encouraged to send in count results whether or not they see any birds during the one-hour count period. Weather or other disturbances do occasionally result in "no birds seen." Some explanation and documentation of any unusual or out-of-range species should also accompany the results.

A Thanksgiving Bird Count Form with complete directions for the count procedures is available from Dr. John G. Hewston, Natural Resources Building, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521, or a copy of the form may be obtained from the *Quail* editor, Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553, or 229-0394 (evenings). The completed form should be returned to Dr. Hewston.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by Jill Hedgecock

VENEZUELA AND CONDORS

If you think of condors only in terms of the California Condor, you might wonder what Venezuela has to do with it. However, Venezuela has its own Andean Condor (I hope you got to see the one that was displayed at Lindsay Museum) and its own condor re-introduction program. The Venezuelan Condor Foundation was established in 1992. In 1993, ten captive-bred birds were released to the Sierra Nevada and Paramo de la Culata National Parks. The birds adapted successfully, until, one by one, four of the released condors were systematically shot down. The death of these birds was instigated by Mayor Avelino Villarreal who seeks to retract the status of these lands as national parks. These parks lie above the treeline and agricultural development would have a devastating effect on the soils. If preserved instead as they are now, full of birdlife that will attract visitors, the parks would have greater economic value resulting from small scale ecotourism. Venezuela Audubon has requested our support and has asked for short letters to be written to the governor and the local newspaper editor encouraging preservation of the national parks and letting them know how many bird-watchers there are all over the world. Postage for Venezuela is 60 cents for one page per envelope. Please take just a few minutes to write this very important letter. Thank you!!!

Gobernador William Davila
Palacio de la Gobernacion
Plaza Bolivar
Merida, Estado Merida 5105
Venezuela

Luis Velasquez Alvaray
Diario Fronteras
Apartado No. 528240
Merida, Estado Merida 5101-A
Venezuela

WILD WINGS: HEADING SOUTH!

National Audubon Society and PBS are teaming up to present three Electronic Field Trips on some of the most magnificent bird migrations on the planet live for students and educators on November 20-22. The field trips are organized around three themes: Birds and Migration, Wetlands, and Global Climate Change. Schools can enroll for the Wild Wings: Heading South package for only \$99.95. The package includes the three 45-minute live Electronic Field Trips, a comprehensive curriculum guide with lesson plans, a poster of migration routes and a map of National Wildlife Refuges, and a teacher training video. To enroll or for more information, call toll free 1-800-278-4176.

FINAL BIRDATHON RESULTS

The 1996 MDAS Birdathon was held on Saturday, April 27. The four teams competed in an All Contra Costa County race. Jim Lomax and Kevin Hints, "The Early Worms," found 147 species, best of the day. Denise Wight and Dave Shuford, "The Wight-crowned Sparrows," were two back with 145 species. Their team, however, had the honor of raising the most money for the Birdathon, \$392.25. The contributions to the 1996 Birdathon totaled \$796.45.

MDAS would like to thank the following for their Birdathon contributions this year:

Florence Bennett
Carolyn Cogan
Elizabeth Dickey
Shirley Ellis
Oscar Enstrom
Carol Frischmann
Janet and Daniel Goodman
Hugh and Rosita Harvey
Pam Keiser
Norman Kirshen
Diane Marten
Mary Lou Martin
Al and Helen McNabney
Mel Smith
Don Snodgrass
Joel Summerhill
Marian Tranes
Wild Birds Unlimited
Gifford and Winifred Young

Their generosity is very much appreciated.

1997 CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Audubon-California's Conservation Leadership Conference will be held from January 11 to 13, 1997, at the Radison Inn near Lake Natoma in Folsom, California. The focus of the meeting will be conservation issues in the state. Interactive workshop topics will include the state of bird conservation and land use planning challenges in a variety of habitats throughout the state. Group discussions will highlight information on wetlands, coastal sage scrub, Sierran forests and oak woodland restoration. On Monday, Audubon activists from all over California will spend a morning lobbying at the state capitol. Registration for the conference is \$35.00 per person, including fees and voluntary participation in a field trip. Housing is available at the Radisson starting at \$88.00 per night for a double. Alternate off-ground housing is also available. To register or for more information, call the Audubon-California office at (916) 481-5332.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome these new MDAS members and we hope to meet them soon: Susan Alcamo, Darlene Allwright, Joan Anderson, Mary Atwood, Beverly Barnes, Shirlita Barron, Sandra Bates, Neil and Constance Bell, Harold Blumberg, Michael J. Boyle, Jessica Bruns, Mrs. Richard M. Christens, Dean Clingenpeel, Maureen Corbett, Mary Corder, Dan Danner, Jim Donnelly, Peter Duda, Martha Erwin, Barbara J. Farrell, Paul Fitzpatrick, Jack Fuller, Kathryn Funk, Shirley Garrison, John Georgeovich, Manuel Gomez, Mrs. Freidel Goodman, Michael A. Hadley, Dr. Ann Hallstone, Francaen Henderson, Lynn Henze, Dorothy Jackson, Carl Johnson, Randolph Jones, Sara Kestell, Ramona Larsen, Florence Linke, Arvin Livingston, Joe Lucido, Mary Lou Martin, Dorothy Martin, Michael Martin, Jeffrey McVane, Dr. and Mrs. Edward Moler, Nancy Munsch, Frances Niksic, Akira Nishioka, Gloria Oslen, Carla Owens, Pajaro, P. E. Pifer, Mabel A. Powell, Ken Rasmussen,

Diane Rigney, Dr. Howard B. Schneider, Karen Schuermann, Joan M. Searle, David Simpson, Brian Snow, Shinghai Song, M. Joan Stewart, J. Leroy and Joan Thompson, Belinda Thue, Marc VanZwoll, Laura Wagner, Brian Woods, Connie Woods, Mary Anne Zalokar and William Zimmerman.

ENTERTAINMENT '97

The holidays are approaching and now is a good time to think about purchasing the 1997 Entertainment Book, which offers terrific savings on travel, restaurants, theater, sporting events, and more.

Help your Audubon chapter by purchasing this great savings book at chapter meetings or at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Joel Summerhill, 4801 Shavano Peak Court, Antioch, CA 94509. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Nancy Wenninger, 938-7987
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644

December 1996

Vol. 43 No. 4

Next Deadline: December 12

December Program:

Bats and Birds

For our **December 5** General Meeting, Bob Wisecarver will present an encore program on his successful work with bats and birds as natural pest controllers. Bob will tell us about some of the new projects he's worked on since he last reported to our chapter. (He said he's improved his "batting average.") He will also show us a "bat cave" he helped build near the Jackson Creek Spillway, near Pardee Reservoir. Bob is a long-time member of MDAS.

Bird Information for the December meeting will be given by Mike Williams and Ed Hase of Wild Birds Unlimited. The topic will be optics, both binoculars and spotting scopes, for birding. Examples, including Zeiss and Swarovski, will be available for hands-on inspection.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, December 12, at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Mike Williams at the Wild Birds Unlimited store, 692 Contra Costa, Pleasant Hill, 798-0303. Board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, December 20, at 9:30 a.m., also at the Wild Birds Unlimited store.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Christmas Count information - page 5.

Weekend Birding Break. Our short local field trip will visit Heather Farms on Sunday, December 15. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. The trip leader will be Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732. From I-680, take the Ygnacio Valley exit east to San Carlos Dr. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot.

Happy Holidays to all!

WATCH LIST

by John Flicker

President, National Audubon Society

America's birds are in serious trouble. That's what the Watch List reports. 90 species of birds, fully 14 percent of the total number of bird species in the U. S. are suffering, with either their numbers declining or their habitats disappearing. Simply put, these birds desperately need our help.

These birds are targeted by the first-ever Watch List. Released by the National Audubon Society and Partners in Flight, the Watch List will annually document birds in decline or in danger. These are not necessarily rare birds; the Watch List announces birds as common as the Yellow-headed Blackbird, the Bobolink and the Gray Catbird are experiencing declines. With its listing of 90 species of birds in decline and more to come following intensive scientific review, the 1996 Watch List is a clarion call to take action now.

At Audubon we view this as a wake-up call for all of us who value birds in our daily lives. Twenty-five years ago when there was no list of birds in trouble beyond the endangered species list, the National Audubon Society published the "Blue List," an early-warning catalogue of species suffering serious declines, but not sufficient enough to cause those birds to be listed as "threatened" or "endangered." Now it's 1996, and the Watch List contains 90 birds struggling at the turn of the millennium.

The Watch List is a true example of citizen-science cooperation. It was developed through the work of expert ornithologists and dedicated citizens working together within a cooperative effort called Partners in Flight. There are birds in your area, perhaps birds you once saw in your own backyard, that are becoming harder and harder to find. With the Watch List, Audubon and Partners in Flight are sounding an early warning, before it's too late to stop these declines.

What can you do to help? There are several simple yet effective steps that almost everyone can take to help these birds. As an Audubon member, you have already taken one step. Here are five other ways that you can help birds in your immediate area and contribute to maintaining the Watch List. Some of these simple steps can go a long way toward reversing downward trends.

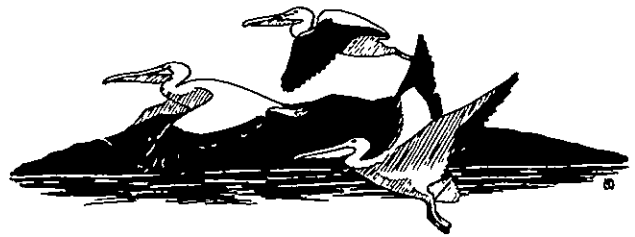
1. Join Project Feederwatch. Counting birds is a key to helping scientists monitor their status.
2. Create a bird-friendly backyard environment by landscaping with native plants that flower and fruit; hang bird feeders and nest boxes, and provide water in simple bird baths; place hawk decals or reflective streamers on your windows to prevent bird collisions; keep your cat indoors.

3. Take note of wildlife habitat in urban areas, help protect woods and wetlands that are home for birds.

4. Support your state and local government wildlife programs and public officials who are committed to conservation.

5. Get the word out about bird conservation. Free information about the Watch List is available by calling Audubon's toll-free number, 1-888-AUDUBON. Project FeederWatch is a joint project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies Canada, and Canadian Nature Federation. For information about Project FeederWatch, write the Cornell Lab at P. O. Box 11, Ithaca, NY 14851-0011 or call 1-800-843-BIRD.

Autumn is here and winter fast approaching, two seasons in which birds are particularly vulnerable and could use help in the form of food and shelter. The Watch List shows a pending decimation of our birds and that's a potential disaster for all of us, whether we think about birds or not. The health of our birds is inextricably intertwined with the health of our environment, and the Watch List shows us we've all got some serious work to do.



Sixteen species of birds from the Watch List which may be the highest under-recognized avian conservation priorities in the continental United States and Canada:

Mountain Plover, Swainson's Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Bicknell's Thrush (a recent split from the Gray-cheeked Thrush), Gray Vireo, Swallow-tailed Kite, Cerulean Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Hermit Warbler, Black Rail, Baird's Sparrow, Painted Bunting, Steller's Eider, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Red Knot.

OPTICS SEMINAR

Mike Williams, co-owner of Wild Birds Unlimited and a MDAS member, will give a 30-minute lecture on "How to Buy Birding Optics" on Saturday, December 7 at 8:45 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited Store, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill. There will also be many brands of binoculars and spotting scopes on display. Mike will be in the store all day to answer questions. Coffee and donuts will be served. As seating is limited, please RSVP to 798-0303.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday and Sunday, December 7-8, **Sacramento Valley Refuges**. Saturday, Gray Lodge, 9:00 a.m. Meet at the first parking lot beyond Headquarters. There is a \$5.00 per person entrance fee. (Note: California Wildlife Campaign cards are good for a year and will also be usable for the Grizzly Island trip in January as well as Gray Lodge. They are also good at the Los Banos Refuge). Sunday, Sacramento NWR, 10:00 a.m. Meet in the parking lot at visitor's center. To get to Gray Lodge, take I-80 to SR 113. At Tudor, take US 99 north to Pennington Rd. and follow Pennington Rd. to refuge entrance. There are several turns and the road eventually runs north. For the Sacramento Refuge, leave I-5 at the Norman exit and go north on frontage road.

Leader: Harry Adamson, 283-2164 Category 1

Wednesday, December 11, **Altamont**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, west of I-680. A caravan trip, with mostly car birding. Migratory hawks, Mountain Bluebirds, and grassland species

Leader: Jim Lomax, 825-1513 Category 1

Thursday, December 19, **Niles Canyon Gravel Pits**. Carpool 8:00 a.m., El Cerro Blvd., Danville, west of I-680. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at Vallejo Mill Historical Park in Fremont. Take I-680 south through Dublin to SR 84; go west 7 miles to park entrance on left. Varied habitats; Green-backed Heron, Ring-necked Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, often many land birds.

Leader: Jimm Edgar, 658-2330 Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

OUTER POINT REYES, October 5.

Eight members found 68 species at the end of the Point Reyes peninsula on a beautiful fall day with patches of fog alternating with sun. Virginia's Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Sage Thrasher as exciting vagrants led the list, but there were also great views of Great Horned Owl, Say's Phoebe, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and other more common birds. A Gray Fox also put in an appearance for several of us.

Fred Safier

SAN MATEO COAST, October 9.

Ten birders spent a foggy day birding the usual hot spots along the coast and although no rarities were found, we managed to do quite well. The highlights included Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented Shearwaters, a flock of Snowy Plovers, Marbled Murrelets, and 89 other species that I can't remember at this moment.

Steve Glover

BODEGA BAY, October 19.

The five birders enjoyed a sparkling clear day at Bodega Bay. Noteworthy was a "Yellow-shafted" Northern Flicker seen well in flight but perched in deep shade at a distance making the nape marking indistinguishable. We had many very good views of two loon species, Red-throated and Common. Before meeting the group, the leaders saw 36 White Pelicans and 60 assorted Great and Snowy Egrets feeding on the pond at the entrance to Doran Park. It was a very uplifting experience. Waterfowl were also among the total of 72 species.

Norah and Hugh Bain

ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE, October 24.

Ten MDAS participants spent fairly fruitful 2.5 hours on the island of Alameda at the Elsie Roemer Sanctuary and Crab Cove before being rained out at 11 a.m. No rails were to be coaxed out, but in all 47 species were sighted.

Barbara Vaughn

LIMANTOUR, October 30.

Four members spent a pleasant 60° day in overcast conditions (but it rained most of the day in the rest of the Bay Area). The highlights included two flocks of about a dozen Townsend's Warblers and the first Varied Thrushes and Pine Siskins of the season. 81 species were seen by the group.

Maury Stern

BIRDFEEDING NOTES

by Mike Williams

Pine Siskins are here! It's been three years since we saw many of these winter visitors. Flocks of 20 to 50 are being reported from throughout the county to us at Wild Birds Unlimited. They often flock with goldfinches (which arrived very early this fall). A favorite food of siskins is thistle seed, a small seed that comes from abroad and will not grow here. These birds will be with us through the spring. Put out a thistle feeder and enjoy this winter phenomena. Many people are also reporting Lesser Goldfinch coming to their thistle feeders for the first time ever. These birds have often visited their yards for natural seeds on wild plants but have not used the feeders even though American Goldfinch may be feeding on them. This year both species of goldfinch may use the feeders at the same time. Two possible explanations of this unusual behavior may include a severe lack of natural food or a very successful breeding season. Please keep us informed of any other unusual behavior you observe.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
178 County Brook, San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 866-1409.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Cattle Egret: 21 on 11/9 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (SG, RL) This has been the most reliable location in the county in recent years.

White-faced Ibis: 2 on 10/19 along Woodbridge Road, San Joaquin County. (W&GY)

Snow Goose: 3 on 10/31 over the rail pond at Bodega Harbor. (JR, EM)

Blue-winged Teal: 1 male, 3 females on 11/4 at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basis. (JR, EM)

Hooded Merganser: pair on 11/4 on Marina Lagoon, Foster City. (JR, EM)

Northern Goshawk: 1 immature circling for 5 minutes at eye level at Nichol's Knob, Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline in Richmond. (SG) This is probably the fourth record for Contra Costa County.

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 on 10/12 at Nichol's Knob. (SG)

Merlin: 1 on 10/3 at Nichol's Knob. (SG)

Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 11/9 along Orwood Road, East Contra Costa County. (SG, RL)

Pacific Golden-Plover: 12 on 10/8 at the Spaletta Plateau, Pt. Reyes. (JR, EM)

Long-billed Curlew: 200 on 11/9 along Cypress Road, East Contra Costa County. (SG, RL)

Ruff: 1 on 10/7 at Johnson's Oyster Farm, Pt. Reyes. (GF, MP)

Vaux's Swift: 1 on 10/21 in Hayward. (GF)

Eastern Kingbird: 1 on 10/3 at the Bolinas Sewer Ponds in Marin County. (GF, MP)

Cliff Swallow: 2 on 10/17 at Nichol's Knob. (SG) This sighting appears to be the latest East Bay record by a full month.

Clark's Nutcracker: 3 on 11/6 at Jack's Peak Regional Park near Monterey. (FB, MJC, HH, EL) Also on RBA. This is part of an invasion that has brought many montane species into the lowlands this fall.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 45 on 10/30 and 51 on 11/12 in the introduced Monterey Pines around Inspiration Point, Tilden Regional Park (SG); 1 from 10/7 to 11/6 in her Alamo yard (JR). This is another species noted in irruptive numbers this fall, including, I would suspect, in many of our members' yards.

Pygmy Nuthatch: 24 on 10/30 at Inspiration Point. (SG) I have never heard of numbers like this in the East Bay but it may be normal with so many Monterey Pines.

Townsend's Solitaire: 1 on 10/22 near Skyline Gate, Redwood Regional Park, Contra Costa County. (SG)

Phainopepla: a pair on 10/13 (JP) and 1 female on 10/28 (DW) at Hidden Lakes Park in Martinez.

Yellow-Green Vireo: 1 on 10/7 (GF, MP) and 10/8 (FB, MJC, JR, EM) at Drake's Beach, Pt. Reyes. Also on RBA.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 1 on 10/14 at the Carmel River. (GF) Also on RBA.

Palm Warbler: 1 on 10/29 (MJC, FB, HH, EL) and 10/31 (JR) at the rail pond at Bodega Harbor.

Prothonotary Warbler: 1 on 10/19 (JR, GF) and 10/22 (FB, MJC, EL) at North Lake in Golden Gate Park. Also on RBA.

Northern Waterthrush: 1 on 10/29 (EL, HH, MJC, FB) and on 10/31 (JR, EM) at the rail pond at Bodega Harbor.

Brewer's Sparrow: 1 on 10/12 at Hidden Lakes Park. (DW) This is the third straight year this species (possibly the same bird) has been here.

White-throated Sparrow: 1 on 11/11 and present about three weeks previous in his yard. (DR)

Lapland Longspur: 20 on 10/15 near the North Beach turnoff at Pt. Reyes. (JR, EM)

Chestnut-collared Longspur: 2 on 10/15 near the North Beach turnoff. (JR, EM)

Cassin's Finch: 1 on 10/21 in the willows at the north end of Princeton Harbor. (GF) Another of this fall's invasion species.

Red Crossbill: 4 on 10/22 at Skyline Gate, and 10 on 10/30 at Inspiration Point. (SG) This species has also irrupted this fall, appearing in many unlikely spots including U. C. Davis.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Eugenia Larson, Ron Lindeman, Ellie Mulke, Marjorie Plant, Janice Poet, Don Rodriguez, Jean Richmond, Denise Wight, and Winnie and Gifford Young.

The Northern California Bird Box, (415) 681-7422, is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to recent messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

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Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
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Put nature under your tree!

Holiday gift ideas for Bird Lovers:

- Field Guides for your next birding vacation
- A wide selection of birding optics
- Nature jewelry and music
- T-shirts and sweatshirts with a nature theme
- Holiday ornaments
- Feeders for your chickadees and woodpeckers
- A new thistle feeder for Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch

Come in for your free gift for the birds!

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

INTRODUCED SPECIES: A CALL FOR INFORMATION

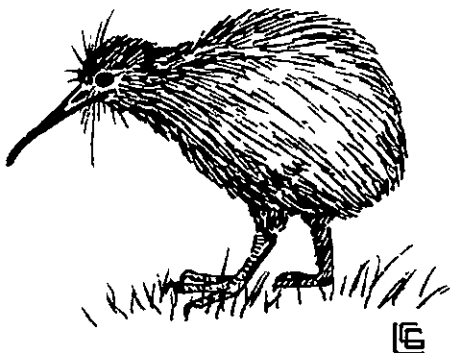
Introduced species have a significant effect on bird populations. Introduced predators reduce populations by killing and eating parents or young, upsetting nature's balance. Introduced species can also compete for nesting materials and space, depriving the naturally-occurring species of normal reproductive opportunities. In addition, the introduced species may carry parasites or other pathogens, pressuring the native populations. Those populations evolve and distribute in such a way that competition for food is minimized. Introduced species disturb this balance and create competition where there was none before.

Introduced species which have created significant problems for native birds in their environments include mongooses, goats, and pigs in the Hawaiian Islands, Dunnocks, Song Thrushes, and Blackbirds in New Zealand, and House Sparrows in Argentina.

Some species' introductions have been accidental and some have been deliberate. Whether those who caused the introduction of those species understood the potential effects of those species doesn't change the outcome for the native species, including birds.

Audubon's mission includes both education and conservation. Accidents happen. Deliberate introduction of non-native animal species is a choice which we make. Educating ourselves and other members of the public so that we can make informed choices is a mission from which the birds we love will benefit.

Please help me collect the information we need about the effects of introduced species on birds while they are in Contra Costa County. I'm especially interested in articles and other published data or contacts which might have such information. Introduced species in Contra Costa County of which I am aware include "Baster" ducks and chicks, cats, and non-native birds. If you have information on the effects of these or other species on our bird populations, please write to me at P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 or call (510) 735-3836. I'll be reporting to you in a subsequent column on the information collected. Thank you for your help!



Original
sketch
by Caro

97th CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 1996 MDAS Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday, December 21. All members and guests are invited to participate. Every pair of eyes can be helpful in seeing birds; you do not need to be an expert birder to participate. Last year 66 field observers and 6 feeder watchers tied the MDAS all-time record high of 159 species. 31,686 individual birds were counted during the day.

Nationally, there are about 1600 counts each year. Valuable bird population knowledge has been learned over the years. Our count area will cover the 15-mile diameter circle centered near Treat and Cowell. This includes most of Mt. Diablo, Black Diamond Mines, the Pittsburg marshes, some of Briones Park, Heather Farms, the suburban creeks of Alamo, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek, and many other green places in Contra Costa County. We also need feeder and home garden watchers.

A pot-luck dinner will follow the Christmas Count. Details of the location and time will be announced at the December general meeting. All members and guests are invited to attend. Please bring your own table service and a salad, main dish, or dessert for 8 to 10 people, plus any serving utensils needed.

Jimm Edgar is this year's compiler. To participate, please sign up at the December meeting, call Jimm at 658-2330, or return this form to Jimm at 4614 Jacobus Ave., Oakland, CA 94618. There is a \$5.00 charge to cover the expense of publishing the annual Christmas Count issue of *American Birds*. Feeder watchers have no charge.

_____ I would prefer to bird with one of the field groups on Christmas Bird Count Day, December 21, 1996.

_____ I would prefer a hiking area.

_____ I would prefer a less strenuous area.

_____ I can monitor a feeder or garden.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

NEW MEMBERS

Season's greetings to these new MDAS members whom we hope to welcome in person very soon: Sharon Ahern, C. G. Ambrose, Shara Anderson, Gerry Argenal, Cathy Basen, Mariece Batey, Emily Berg, Jeanne Bonner, Granville Bowie, Patricia Bowman, James and Evelyn Boykin, Robert Cavestany, Oliver Christen, Emilie Corcoran, Beth Danise, Donna Dawkins, Debra Delvasto, Dorothy Edmondson, Lenore Engel, Avis Eukel, Robert Felker, Shirley Fenton, Derek Ferrington, Marilyn Fickett, Victoria Flavell, Renie Gannett, Alan Gould, Kenneth Gustafson, N. Hall, Janet Hamlin, Joan Herrick Hansen, William and Marcia Henning, Nancy Henriquez, Larry Hirtzel, Glenn Hori, Richard Komatsu, Frank Lench, Maxine McCormick, William McKereghan, L. Meckenstock, Fran Myers, Gladys Northcutt, Maria G. Ochomogo, Richard Otto, Susan Parr, Thomas Posz,

Bud Rosenbaum, Sarah Ryerson, Gina Sarbo, Diana Saribalis, Elizabeth Slate, Pat Smyers, Wendy Snyder, Amy Stroot, Julie Stroube, Margaret Tunnell, Elizabeth Walts, Debra Weberling, Magdalen Weyhmiller, Ruth Whittington, Sandra Wilson and Gary Witz.

IN MEMORIAM

The chapter extends its deepest sympathy to former MDAS treasurer Pam Keiser and her son Thomas on the death of their husband and father Michael Keiser. Michael died Monday, October 21, at age 45. A CPA by profession, Michael enjoyed golf, fishing, and his son's sports, acting as the team soccer coach. Pam's address is 505 Wildflower Place, Danville, CA 94526.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Joel Summerhill, 4801 Shavano Peak Court, Antioch, CA 94509. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053



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