

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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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

January 1997

Vol. 43 No. 5

Next Deadline: January 9

January Program:

A Hike Along the Appalachian Trail

For our **January 2** General Meeting, naturalist Randy Gates will give a slide presentation that will take us on a hike along the entire length of the Appalachian Trail. Randy began his 2143 mile hike at Springer Mountain in northern Georgia on March 27, 1989, and completed it September 9 of that year at Mt. Katahdin in Maine. The Appalachian Trail, the longest U. S. footpath, passes through fourteen states and attracts hikers from all over the world. Randy will show us the beautiful scenery, birds, and flowers he saw along the trail and give us insights into the charm of the small towns and the friendly people he encountered along the way.

Randy Gates is a full-time naturalist at the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District, dividing his time between Sulfur Creek Nature Center and the Hayward Regional Shoreline. He draws and edits "Mud and Fun," a children's insert to the Hayward Interpretive Center newsletter.

Bird Information will be given by Jimm Edgar who will discuss MDAS and other Christmas Count results.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, January 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Jill Hedgecock, 536 Coralie Dr., Walnut Creek, 256-8270. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, January 17, at Wild Birds.

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

Meet John James Audubon!! Details on page 2.

Weekend Birding Break. Our short local field trip will visit Shell Marsh and Mt. View Sanitary Plant on Sunday, January 19. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. The trip leader will be Joel Summerhill, 753-0862. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the plant parking lot. Take the 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.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

SHELL MARSH: THE SAGA CONTINUES

Since the BIG oil spill into Shell Marsh and other portions of the Bay, a committee has been at work with the charge to "fix" the water levels to optimum levels. Studies of upland vegetation have been carried out by experts. The Martinez Regional Land Trust has acquired grant funds for teacher and docent training based on usages of Shell Marsh.

Shell Marsh Oil Spill Litigation Settlement Trustee Committee has spent \$4 million acquiring the marsh and adjacent uplands, including funds for studies. Other funds are being "held" for "plumbing" which means fixing levees, installing tide gates, and purchasing all the other equipment essential to ensure the marsh is optimal for birds and other wildlife.

After all these years, the studies have been completed and the experts have submitted bids to do the work necessary to "fix" the hydrology of the marsh. So guess what's happened? The bids call for a larger expenditure of money than was expected. The saga continues. One day Shell Marsh will be a real jewel in Contra Costa County for birds, other wildlife, and people.

COWELL RANCH

Ever hear of it? For many, the answer will be no. To those who want to build a 5000+ house community in eastern Contra Costa County and the decision-makers, as well as those who watch such things, the project is well known. More than 1100 acres of prime agricultural land will disappear. Highway 4 and Vasco Road, already clogged, will be further impacted. In fact, even the Environmental Impact Report for the project suggests the various roads and intersections will be at Level F, i.e., traffic will just about not move. Despite all these difficulties, more hearings are underway. Public comment is sought, but still the process moves inevitably toward a bad conclusion. What is needed is some opportunity for busy people who will be affected by the project to tell decision-makers what they really think. Will that happen? Unlikely.

NEW CITY, COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL ELECTTEES

Soon the newly-elected (or in some cases reelected) officials will be sworn in and the new terms of office will be underway. These officials DO make a difference. The decisions will be made which affect wildlife and its habitat and the quality of life of the public. Do you know your representatives? You should get acquainted. Let your representatives know what you think on various matters. That's how our system is supposed to work. Try it. You might like it.

(Bird Migration Game answers: swallow, oriole, finch, magpie, robin, chickadee, lark, cardinal)

AN EVENING WITH JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

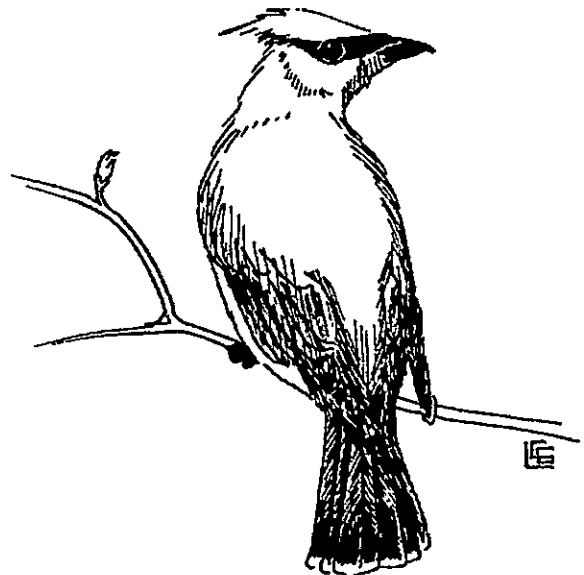
John James Audubon is coming to visit our own Mt. Diablo Audubon Society!! On Sunday, March 16, 1997, learn more about Mr. Audubon as David Giesen, playwright and scholar, performs his acclaimed one-man show portraying the eminent 19th century naturalist and painter. "Audubon" is visiting MDAS to honor chapter's members who best exemplify his vision through five or more years of volunteer service to the chapter within the last ten years.

"Audubon led a life that is clearly an inspiration to all of us to follow our heart's leanings," states Giesen. "Audubon, and many others of his ilk in the first half of the last century, had a vision of North America as Eden, and they lived their lives in such a way as to honor the wilderness magnificence. Some painted it; others, like Thoreau and Emerson, philosophized about it. Still others, like Audubon, lived in it on its own terms. Then they returned to cities of the East Coast to share their experience."

Audubon faced not only the hardships of the frontier but of the entangling academic world jealous to protect its established voices. "What John James Audubon as a figure offers us today is encouragement to create and maintain communities that are rich and active with a diversity of life, human and otherwise." The impersonation is set in 1945, at the end of Audubon's life.

Don't miss this very special evening. Festivities will include dinner, "Mr. Audubon's" visit, and acknowledgment of our chapter's honorees. Tickets will be on sale at the January 2 General Meeting. Seating will be limited to the first 130 guests. Mt. Diablo Audubon members will be given first opportunity to buy tickets. Circle March 16 on your calendar right now!!!

For further information, please call Shirley Ellis, 938-3703. Shirley is chairing the committee for this exciting evening.



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 4, **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 9, **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. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 2

Wednesday, January 15, **Lake Merritt**. Carpool 8:00 a.m. Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of 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: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Wednesday, January 29, **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: Maury Stern, 284-5980 Category 1

Future trip: Make reservations now for the President's Day weekend trip to San Luis Obispo, February 15-17. Also please call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, if you are planning to go on this trip.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

ABBOTT'S LAGOON, November 2.

A tremendous horde of three (3) birders tramped enthusiastically along the trail to Abbott's Lagoon after a few stops along the way. Though outnumbered thirty to one by bird species, we managed to count 92 (species, that is) and that doesn't include the (not countable) Mute Swans who flew into the water and swam peacefully as we went by. We saw nothing particularly unusual; the weather was cold and foggy. Highlights included many Townsend's Warblers, Pygmy Nuthatch, Cattle Egret, and thirty-two Snowy Plovers.

Fred Safier

SOUTH BAY, November 7.

Seven birders spent a wonderful morning in search of waterbirds around South San Francisco Bay. Highlights included Redhead, Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, and Hooded Mergansers. The best birds of the day were the three Black Skimmers at Charleston Slough. An extension trip to Ed Levin County Park and Calaveras Road brought the total to a robust 108.

Steve Glover

MT. VIEW SANITARY PLANT, November 13.

Fifteen birders enjoyed a warm, sunny day viewing the Sanitary District Plant area and some portions of Shell Marsh. There were numerous waterfowl but few shorebirds. An American Bittern was seen briefly by a few people as it flew. Longer and very clear were views of a cooperative Sora. 38 species were seen for the day.

Norah Bain

IRONHOUSE SANITARY, November 21.

Four people took a chance on the "iffy" weather and enjoyed a rain-free morning at Ironhouse Sanitary District. 48 species of birds were indentified. The highlights were nice long looks at four different Soras and a quick look at a Virginia Rail. We were excited to hear from Mike Loran that the trail through the District is expected to be done and open to the public by the end of the year.

Judi Cooper

PALO ALTO BAYLANDS, November 23.

Eighteen MDAS birders mixed and mingled with at least two other Audubon field trips, all looking for the Black Rail at high tide. The Black Rail was a "no show" but everyone was treated to good views of a Clapper Rail, a diving Peregrine Falcon, Short-eared and Barn Owls, and Blue-winged Teal amongst the total of 66 species.

Joel Summerhill

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 Bittern: 1 on 12/11 at Mallard Reservoir, north of Concord. (JE)

Cattle Egret: 26 on 11/17 (DW, DS) and 2 on 11/23 (SG) at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County.

Tundra Swan: 260 on 11/23 at Holland Tract (SG); 4 on 11/25 at Marsh Creek Reservoir near Brentwood (GF).

Wood Duck: 9 on 11/12 at Lake Solano, Yolo County (FB, MJC, HH); 12 on 11/21 at a small pond along Bear Creek Road, near entrance to Briones Regional Park (DW); at least 24 on 11/27 at Briones Reservoir (SG).

Redhead: 155 on 12/7 on the Bay between the Emeryville and Berkeley Marinas. (SG) 60 or 70 have traditionally wintered here but numbers have increased in recent years. This is the second largest flock recorded in the East Bay, the largest being 200 birds.

Harlequin Duck: 1 on 11/26 at the Point Reyes Fish Docks. (FB, MJC, BG)

Oldsquaw: 2 on 11/15 at Brooks Island near Richmond. (SG)

Barrow's Goldeneye: 60 males and 45 females on 11/26 at Lake Merritt. (JR) This appears to be the largest flock ever recorded in the East Bay; about 60 birds usually winter here.

Hooded Merganser: 1 female on 11/27 near Seven Hills School, Walnut Creek (FB); 3 male and 2 females on 11/27 at Briones Reservoir (SG)

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 females on 11/17 (DW, DS) and on 11/23 (SG) at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron.

Merlin: 1 on 11/23 along Deer Valley Road south of Antioch, eating a *Zonotrichia* sparrow. (SG)

Burrowing Owl: 1 on 11/26 at the Point Reyes Fish Docks. (BG, MJC, FB)

Lewis's Woodpecker: 10 on 11/19 along San Antonio Valley Road, Santa Clara County. (FB, MJC, BG, HH, RH)

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 41 on 11/12 in Monterey Pine Forest that stretches from Inspiration Point at Tilden Regional Park about 1/4 mile back toward Orinda (SG); 2 on 12/6 and 1 on 12/8 around her Alamo yard (JR).

Western Bluebird: 4 on 11/26 over her Alamo home. (JR)

Mountain Bluebird: 150 on 11/19 along Del Puerto Canyon Road, Stanislaus County (FB, MJC, BG, HH, RH); 2 on 11/23 along Armstrong Road near Byron and 1 the same day along Chadbourne Road south of Antioch (SG).

Phainopepla: 1 on 11/16 along Jersey Island Road (JS), second record for East Contra Costa County; a pair on 11/16 at Via Cima Court in Danville (PK); 1 on 11/27 at Howe-Homestead Park in Walnut Creek (MS, FB).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 first-fall male on 11/26 (FB, HH, MJC, BG, JR) and 12/3 (FB, HH, MJC, BG) at Point Reyes Station.

Vesper Sparrow: about 15 on 11/23 along Empire Mine Road south of Antioch. (SG)

Harris's Sparrow: 1 immature on 12/6 near the end of Pine Creek Road, Walnut Creek. (MS) This is about the tenth record for the county.

Cassin's Finch: a pair on 11/16 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Red Crossbill: 5 on 11/12 at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline near Richmond. (JR)

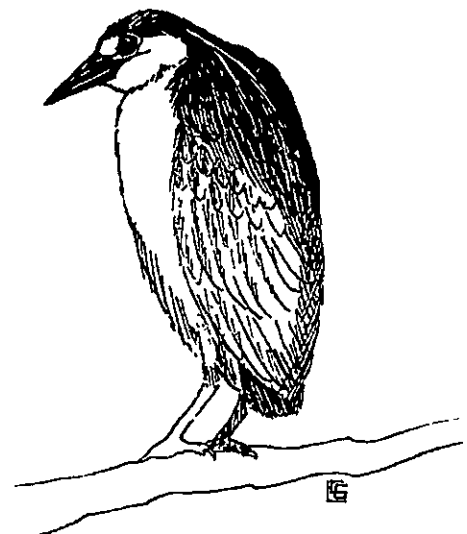
Pine Siskin: up to 15 from 11/30 to 12/8 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jimm Edgar, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Rosita Harvey, Pam Keiser, Jean Richmond, Dave Shuford, Maury Stern, Joel Summerhill, and Denise Wight.

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.

HERON OBSERVATIONS?

During the spring and summer of 1996, Pete Bloom and Robb Hamilton color-banded about 450 juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons as part of a dispersal study in Orange County. Each bird has an aluminum U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band on the right leg and a plastic color band on the left. Each plastic band has a large horizontal two-digit number or a letter and number engraved on it. All birds are presently (as of November, 1996) in immature plumage. If you observe a color-banded heron, please note the numbers and/or letters, color, and on which leg the plastic band was placed. Then please send this information, with the date, location, and your name, address, and telephone number to Pete Bloom, 13611 Hewes Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705.



Original sketch by Carol Lutz

HAWK WATCH IN VERA CRUZ

by *Vida Dawson*

Imagine seeing up to 500,000 raptors in a day! It is possible. In the fall of 1992, the world's largest known hawk migration was discovered just north of the city of Vera Cruz, Mexico. With leader Jim Rogers, board member of the Kern River Research Center, Dee Mitchell and I had the pleasure of witnessing this migration from the roof-top of the Bienvenido Hotel in Cardel and in other areas near Jalapa (Xalapa) and Vera Cruz. Kettles included Broad-tailed Hawks, Aplomado and Peregrine Falcons, Black and Turkey Vultures, gorgeous White Hawks, Roadside Hawks, frigatebirds, Caracara, and on and on - thousands! Flocks of Wood Storks and Ibis were migrating also. An amazing sight! We also saw Laughing Falcon, Chachalaca, Lineated Woodpecker, many warblers, vireos, chats, hummers, and Blue Mockingbird on other trips in the area.

We also visited the Museo de Anthropologia (second only to Mexico City's famous museum in importance) in Xalapa with its exhibits of artifacts of the Olmec and Totomic cultures including many large Olmec stone heads. We visited the 13th century Totomic ruins in Zampoola including temples and pyramids and a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. When we left from the airport at Vera Cruz, we had a great send-off: another kettle of hundreds of raptors.

The organization which monitors this hawk watch is called Pronatura. It is non-profit and staffed mainly with volunteers. Bird watchers from around the world were helping with the count at Cardel. A similar migration occurs in the spring. Trips can be arranged by writing Pronatura, Apartado Postal 399, Xalapa, Vera Cruz, Mexico 91000, or calling (28) 12 88 44.

ENVIRONMENTAL SYMPOSIUM

The Environmental Legislative Symposium, presented by the Planning and Conservation League Foundation, is moving from Sacramento to the Bay Area and will be held Saturday, March 15, instead of in January as in previous years. The theme of this 14th Annual Symposium will be "The Emerging Threats to the Bay Area," which reflects the impacts of state demographic and populations shifts on environmental policy-making in general and on regional environmental issues affecting Bay Area residents in particular. The Symposium will bring together environmental leaders, citizen activists, and state and local officials to review the factors affecting environmental policy and policy-making in California and plan strategies for shaping future environmental laws. The Symposium will be held at the Berkeley Conference Center, 2105 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The registration fee will be \$60 with meals or \$20 without. To register or for more information, write Jamie Phillips, PCL Foundation, 926 J Street, Suite 612, Sacramento, CA 95814, or call (916) 444-8726, extension 86.

BIRD FESTIVALS

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS

The fourth annual California Duck Days festival will be held from February 14 to 17, 1997. The festival showcases the wonders and diversity of the Sacramento Valley wetlands, and serves to increase public awareness and to promote education about the importance of wetlands and wildlife. This year California Duck Days will offer a wide variety of field trips all over the Central Valley. The field trips will feature many outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities for waterfowl, shorebirds, Sandhill Cranes, and Tule Elk. There will also be family and youth activities and educational workshops. The registration fee is \$12 for adults for a one-day pass or \$18 for the entire weekend. The festival is free to children 16 and under. The exhibition hall is free to the public and is a great opportunity to learn about regional organizations and agencies that promote wetlands and waterfowl conservation. California Duck Days headquarters for all weekend activities is Veterans Memorial Center, 203 East 14th Street in Davis (at 14th and B Streets). For further information or to receive a schedule of events, please call (916) 758-1286. California Duck Days is a project of the non-profit Yolo Basin Foundation and is sponsored by a wide variety of organizations including the Sacramento and Yolo Audubon Societies and National Audubon Society.

MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Witness one of the most diverse winter gatherings of birds (over 230 species) in this country, including Mountain Plover, Pacific Golden-Plover, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Eurasian Wigeon, and 24 species of raptors including California Condor, Peregrine Falcon, and many owls, at the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival from January 17 to 20, 1997. The Festival is co-sponsored by Morro Coast Audubon. Expert-guided field trips during the Bird Festival will include trips for pelagic birds by boat, for Bald Eagles, condors, owls and raptors on the Carrizo Plain, and for wintering vagrants. Other activities will include identification and banding workshops, slide shows, whale watching, children's activities, and a birders' banquet. Eight trips have wheelchair access. For more information, please contact Suedene Nelson, Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 876, Morro Bay, CA 93443, (800) 231-0592.

SALTON SEA INTERNATIONAL BIRD FESTIVAL

The 1st Annual Salton Sea International Bird Festival will occur during Presidents' Weekend, February 14-17, 1997. Guided and self-guided tours will bird the hot spots around the Salton Sea, Imperial Valley, and Northern Baja California with experienced and informed guides for over 100 species in five extensive bird habitats. The Exhibits and Trade Show will offer over 50 booths of bird-related products and exhibits, with fine arts and crafts, gifts, cameras, binoculars, books, and posters. Speakers and workshops will discuss bird identification, creating backyard habitat, and migration. Programs and games for children will offer a nest exhibit, a bird maze, and a child's bird checklist. For more information, please call the Brawley Chamber of Commerce at (619) 344-3160.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend warm greetings to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Scott Abercrombie, Barbara Bahador, Howard Berbman, Wendy Beukema, Betty Bias, Jon Boley, Becky Bordewick, Jacqueline Bower, Elton Butler, Clark Cail, John and Mary Lou Correia, Bob Doyle, Lynda Draper, Thomas and Ellen Duffy, Michelle Emmett, J. G. Foott, Marci Friedman, William Grove, Pete Hubler, Walter Kelly, Anne Long, Robert Luger, Sandra Luger, Joan Mahoney, Aimee Martin, Jean McAlister, Jacqueline McCormick, Dennis McManamon, Max Melinger, Anne Marie Parker, Dale Porter, Lorraine Richter, Erin Silveira, E. L. Steinbock, Jennifer Wald, Jean Marie Walker, Mrs. R. Winter and Sunny Wood.

BIRD MIGRATION GAME

Use the clues at right to guess the missing names of birds.

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------------|
| S | _____ | Annual visitor to Capistrano |
| O | _____ | Baltimore player |
| N | _____ | They come in gold, blue and bull |
| G | _____ | A constant talker |
| B | _____ | Herald in spring |
| I | _____ | W. C. Field's little one |
| R | _____ | Carefree, impulsive outing |
| D | _____ | Redbird or clergyman |

Submitted by Sharyn Fernandez. Answers on page 2.

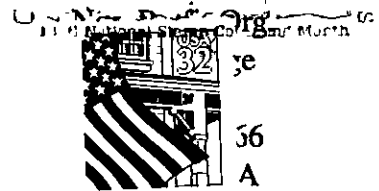
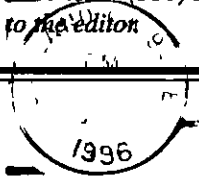
The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter 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

Protect Endangered

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 Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053



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TIME VALUE MAIL

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February 1997

Vol. 43 No. 6

Next Deadline: February 6

February Program:

The Battle to Save Mono Lake

In September, 1994, the California Water Resources Control Board reached its historic decision regarding the fate of Mono Lake. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power was ordered after fifteen years of litigation to return water to the Lake and restore its damaged streams and wetlands.

How did this conflict start? Why was Mono Lake so important? What has happened since the Water Board decision? Join us **February 6** at our general meeting when Jill Shirley, Director of National Audubon's Chapter Outreach Programs, tells the story of Mono Lake, its importance to birds on the Pacific Flyway and the rebirth of this magnificent landscape. Expect beautiful photographs and an interesting story about one of Audubon's most significant conservation battles in the West.

Jill Shirley has been working with Audubon since May, 1993. Before that, she was Research Director for the Planning and Conservation League where she worked on statewide environmental initiative campaigns.

February Bird Information will be given by Maury Stern about his favorite birds: woodpeckers.

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
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8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

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Weekend Birding Break. On Sunday, February 1, our short, local field trip will visit the Contra Costa Canal. Beginning birders and any members new to our area are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. The field trip leader will be Denise Wight, 370-7342. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot closest to the street of the McDonald's on Chilpancingo.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

HAPPY NEW YEAR

A BUSY YEAR

The new Audubon is busy. A number of projects are underway which will be interesting, environmentally friendly, and FUN!

ESSAY CONTEST

Friends, educators, students, lend us your ears. After you've done that, spread the word. MDAS will soon be sponsoring an essay contest among Contra Costa County high school science students. The contest subject: Biodiversity, Its Importance to Maintenance of Human Life, Birds, and Wildlife in an Era Where Consumption of Land and Other Resources for Human Purposes is Proceeding Apace. This important contest will be announced formally at the MDAS general meeting on February 6. First prize: \$150.00. Second prize: \$75.00. The essay should not exceed 2000 words. The contest is open to high school science students attending school in Contra Costa County. Audubon members can help spread the word.

COWELL RANCH

This major development project is now in the formal stages. A VERY comprehensive Environmental Impact Report is OUT. Many organizations and individuals are reviewing the document and will present formal comments prior to the new deadline. MDAS is joining other groups to create a major presentation showing serious deficiencies that exist in the proposed project.

NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Byron K. Williams, North American Waterfowl Management Plan Coordinator, provided a 1998 Plan Update Consultation Kit. The ambitious Plan established goals to be met. Among Mr. William's comments:

"Despite tremendous accomplishments, at the current rates of funding, partners will be unable to achieve by the year 2000 goals established in the Plan's 15-year phase."

The processes involved in drafting a new Plan will begin in June, 1997.

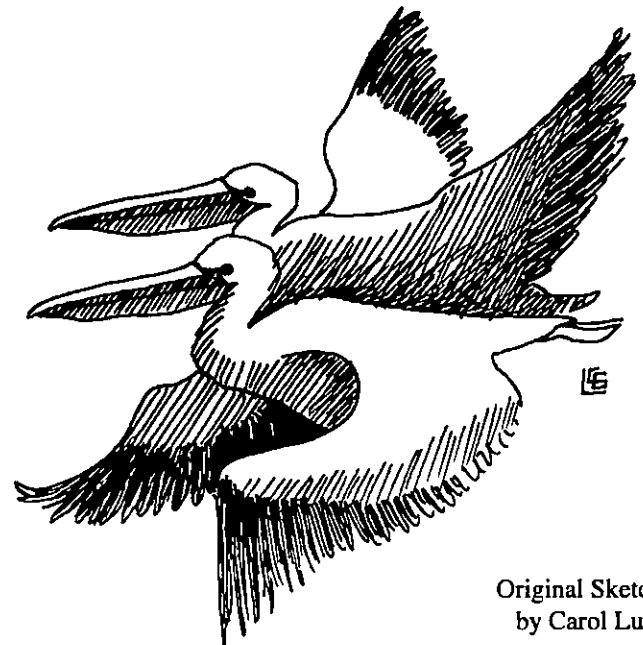
DO WE HAVE MORE TO DO?

The California Resources Agency is again proposing regulations that would have drastic, adverse impacts on endangered species of all sorts. A similar effort was also undertaken last year. The concerted opposition from concerned people and organizations, including MDAS, evidently worked, for the effort then was dropped. It's BACK! Issues involve wetland regulations, many of which are proposed to be turned over to the state regulatory agencies, and which will have drastic and adverse impacts on wetland areas. One of National Audubon's major goals involves "saving" wetlands.

Even though Congress is not yet in session, proposals are being floated. Some of them will have heavy impacts on many of our important environmental laws. So the letter-writing is already underway. Remember the adage: Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. That adage is equally applicable to environmental issues.

THE FLOODS

You will remember we have been imploring land-use decision-makers to deny development proposals on lands considered to be in flood plains, on Delta islands, and or in other areas where flooding may occur. Delta islands surrounded by levees should be considered to be VERY poor locations for development. Wildlife, farm animals, and pets will be suffering from impacts of the floods. This is to say nothing about crop losses and the ravages of the flood waters on people's lives and property.



Original Sketch
by Carol Lutz

AN EVENING WITH JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

Plans are underway for the MDAS Evening with John James Audubon. Tickets will be on sale at the February meeting at a cost of \$19.97 each. Only 130 tickets will be available, so buy early. If you would like to have a ticket reserved for you, call Joel Summerhill at 753-0862. Tickets can also be purchased at Wild Birds Unlimited. The Evening will be Sunday, March 16, at the general meeting location, the Pleasant Hill Senior Center. Doors will open at 4:30 p.m. Opening remarks will begin at 5:00 and our chapter volunteers will be honored. Dinner will be served at 6:00. The after-dinner program will be by David Giesen, John James Audubon Impersonator. We hope our MDAS chapter membership will support us in this endeavor by attending this event.

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, February 1, **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. Shorebirds, waterbirds, rails. Can be cold and windy.

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906

Category 1

Thursday, February 6, **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

Wednesday, February 12, **Hayward Regional Shoreline**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. Because of heavy commuter parking along El Cerro, we will try a **new meeting place** in Danville. Going southbound on I-680, take the El Pintado exit, turn right (away from the freeway) and right again onto La Gonda Way. Park along the open space area. 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 the Visitor's Center. Water and shore birds.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Category 2

Saturday, Sunday, Monday, February 15-17, **San Luis Obispo County**. We will visit the Carrizo Plains Saturday, and the Morro Bay coast and other sites in San Luis Obispo County on Sunday and Monday. Full day trips on Saturday and Sunday, until noon on Monday. **Please call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, if you plan to go on this field trip.**

Thursday, February 27, **Berkeley 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

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

SACRAMENTO VALLEY REFUGES, December 7.

Though the skies were portentous of rain, 18 people turned up at Gray Lodge State Game Refuge on Saturday. The birding was difficult. It was miserably cold and the light was execrable. In addition, the usual skeins of thousands of Snow Geese were mysteriously absent. Nevertheless, we carried on. A Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher was probably the most unusual bird of the day. Other special species seen were Ross's Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Long-billed Curlew, a winter daytime roost of Black-crowned Night-Herons, and a flock of perhaps 35 White-faced Ibis. We searched in vain for the Emperor Goose that Shirley and Carol had observed amongst Snow Geese the previous day. A total of 67 species was seen.

Harry Adamson

ALTAMONT, December 11.

Field trip was cancelled because of weather.

NILES CANYON GRAVEL PITS, December 19.

Six members and guests met in the fog at the carpool location and traveled to the field trip meeting place. The fog lifted early and the day was fairly nice. We continue to see loss of habitat in small doses in this area and in many other of our field trip locations. The impact on birds is clearly evident. We did see most of the anticipated species but in small numbers. Spotted Sandpiper, Common Merganser, and Ring-necked Duck were seen along with others. 59 species were seen during the day. This has been an area over the years with a somewhat isolated and protected habitat. Much of this area is being lost and "restored" by Park departments. Unfortunately this will mean the loss of more and more birds. This is inevitable, I suppose, but sad to see.

Jimm Edgar

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.

Red-throated Loon: 1 on 1/3 on Lake Solano in the Putah Creek area. (FB, MJC)

American Bittern: 1 on 12/21 at Mallard Reservoir (SG, JR);
1 on 1/3 at Piper Slough at north end of Bethel Island (SG).

Cattle Egret: 6 on 12/12 at Holland Tract, east of Brentwood (FB, MJC, HH); 2 on 12/12 along Bethel Island Road (FB, MJC, HH); 9 on 1/3 at the intersection of Cypress and Bethel Island Roads (SG).

Blue-winged Teal: 1 male on 12/21 and 12/24 at Mt. View Sanitary District. (FB, MJC, HH)

Tufted Duck: 1 adult male on 1/3 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG) Third Contra Costa County record.

Hooded Merganser: 1 female on 12/6, 12/8 and 12/14 at 7-Hills School in Walnut Creek (HH); 1 male and 2 females on 12/31 at Newhall Park in Concord (BG, MJC, FB); 1 female on 1/5 at Aquatic Park in Berkeley (HH).

Swainson's Hawk: 3 on 12/12 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (FB, MJC, HH)

Sandhill Crane: 75 on 12/12 at Holland Tract. (FB, MJC, HH)

Lesser Yellowlegs: 1 on 12/12 along Cypress Road between Oakley and Bethel Islands. (FB, MJC, HH)

Black Skimmer: 5 on 1/8 at Charleston Slough. (H&RH)

Common Raven: 1 on 12/23 over her Alamo yard. (JR)

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 1 on 12/8 at Heather Farms in Walnut Creek (HH); 2 on 12/6 in her Alamo yard (JR).

Mountain Bluebird: 2 on 1/3 along Hwy. 128 west of Winters in Yolo County. (FB, MJC)

Phainopepla: 1 female on 11/29 (HH) and 1 male on 12/31 (FB, MJC, BG) and 1/3 (HH), both at Howe Homestead Park in Walnut Creek.

Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 present in her Concord yard to at least 1/6. (AY)

Vester Sparrow: 12 on 1/3 along Hwy. 128 west of Winters, Yolo County. (FB, MJC)

Harris' Sparrow: 1 immature male still present on 12/29 (FB, HH) and 1/1 (FB, MJC, Bo&BG, HH) at the end of Pine Creek Road in Walnut Creek.

Oriole species: 1 female or immature oriole, probably Hooded, on 12/26 in her Concord yard. (AY)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Rosita Harvey, Jean Richmond, and Andree Youngston.

John Robinson

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

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

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 1/24/97 - 2/17/97)

Feeding tips: There are currently many chickadees, nuthatches and Nuttall's Woodpeckers being seen; be sure to put out suet and peanuts. Large flocks of American Goldfinch are also being reported at thistleseed feeders, often accompanied by Pine Siskins and Lesser Goldfinches. Your oriole feeders should be put out in late February for any early arrivals.

BLUEBIRD NOTES

CALIFORNIA BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM

The California Bluebird Recovery Program is completing the summation of the 1996 Nest Box figures which are expected to be distributed with the upcoming newsletter. Copies will be available to all paid newsletter subscribers and to persons who have submitted an Annual Report for their nest box trail. For more information, call Don Yoder at (510) 937-5974.

BLUEBIRD CONVENTION

From May 15 through 18, the Sea and Sage chapter of National Audubon Society, located in Orange County, will host the 20th annual meeting of the North American Bluebird Society. They solicit the participation and attendance of Audubon members throughout California. This is a great opportunity to boost bluebirding activities in California and assist in rejuvenating bluebird populations. Techniques for doing so will be presented which have been effective in Orange County (over 1000 fledged in 1996). The meeting will include field trips to Newport Beach Pier and Harbor, Yorba Regional Park, and Bolsa Chica Wetlands to observe bluebird and Wood Duck nesting sites. The meeting site will be the Sheraton Newport Beach Hotel, 4545 MacArthur Boulevard, Newport Beach, right next to the Orange County (John Wayne) Airport. Pre-registration deadline is April 19, 1997. For more information or a registration form, please write to Ernest Schimmelman, 6131 Foxfield Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92886-5824 or call (714) 693-9025.

THE 1996 CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Christmas Count on Saturday, December 21, 1996, took place on a very rainy day which resulted in our lowest species count (144) in twelve years. We have not seen less than 150 species since 1984. It also caused many counters to stay home so only 47 brave and committed people ventured out. Hats off to those folks! Three feeder watchers also participated. We did see some very good birds, including Winter Wren, House Wren, Canyon Wren, and Forster's Tern. The two best birds were a Long-eared Owl at Black Diamond Mines and a Harris' Sparrow along Castle Rock Road. The Harris' Sparrow was new for our count and only one other sighting of Long-eared Owl has occurred. The 30,083 individuals was also a low total for the day and also a reflection of the weather. Thanks to everyone who made the day a success.

Jimm Edgar, Compiler

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

NEW MEMBERS

We are happy to greet these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and trips: Audra Abrahamian, Joseph and Janice Adragna, Sabra and Bill Ambrose, Mr. and Mrs. Al Arrigoni, Pat Bivens, Don Blackard, Wendi Bowling, Pam Buck, Colleen Camerlo, Brian Coleman, Tony and Lisa Cutino, Beth Dansie, Matt Davis, Ray Dondero, Hisako Evans, William Flynn, Alan French, Laura Gee, Ravi Gill, Mark Harmon, P. Hatfield, Michele Holtz, Scott Lawrence, Don Lewis, Diane Marlow, Kenneth Mason, John McPhee, Charla Miller, Mary Mills, Doug Minor, Maribec Natividad, Robyn Norton, Brigette Parman, Karen Pearson, Elizabeth Pfeiffer, Vickie Plaisance, Jerry Raftery, Andrea Rigel, Robert Rucker, Hendrika Schalkoord, Lenwood Shields, John Shoemaker, Norma Shoemaker, Christina Sixt, Mary Sondag, Sandra Sprowl, Marjorie Sullivan, S. Thayer, Veronica Torres, George Uhe, Lee Underwood, Ruth Westfall and Bevelyn Wolf.

KIDS IN CREEKS WORKSHOP

The Contra Costa Clean Water Program, the City of Concord, and Presley Companies are sponsoring a two-day *Kids in Creeks* workshop for K-12 educators. The workshop will take place on Saturday, March 1, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Markham Science Center, Concord, and Saturday, March 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Diablo View Middle School, Clayton. The participants will engage in creek-related activities, learn to teach about creeks across the curriculum, and gain assistance with projects that reduce urban runoff pollution. The cost is \$30, and includes a curriculum guide and extensive resource materials. For information or to register, call Carole Bennett-Simmons at the San Francisco Estuary Institute, (510) 231-5783. Academic credit is available through California State University, Hayward.

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



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MFAUD

JEAN RICHMOND

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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: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Joel Summerhull, 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

March 1997

Vol. 43 No. 7

Next Deadline: March 13

March Program:

The MOLE and the Peeper

Take a trip during our **March 6** general meeting to Siberia's Lake Baikal, the world's oldest and largest freshwater lake. Jim Woolett, a wildlife biologist with the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, helps us sample the region's wildlife. Lake Baikal is a rich and unique ecosystem that has been affected by civilization only slightly during its 25 million years of existence. An integral part of this discussion involves examination using subterranean probes to study remote underground habitat features. Research using these probes, the MOLE (Miniature Optical Lair Explorer) and the Peeper, offers surprising insights into the underground life styles of denning birds and animals. This type of high technology may well save such secretive and shy species around us from extinction in the near future.

Bird information will be given by Bob Wisecarver who will speak about bird houses.

The next board meeting will be on Thursday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Al McNabney, 1161 Leisure Lane #7, Walnut Creek, 945-1785. The board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, March 21, at 9:30 a.m., at the Wild Birds Unlimited 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

Don't forget! An MDAS Evening with John James Audubon on Sunday, March 16.

Weekend Birding Break. Our short, local field trip Sunday March 2, will explore the Orinda Connector Trail. Beginning birders and any members new to our area are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Please call field trip leader Denise Wight, 370-7342, to reserve a place on the trip 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

ESSAY

The MDAS essay contest announced last month is underway. The contest is open to any high school student in Contra Costa County who is attending at least one science class. Students are challenged to write on the subject:

“BIODIVERSITY: Its importance to maintenance of human life, birds, and wildlife in an era where consumption of land and other resources for human purposes is proceeding apace ”

A first prize of \$150.00 and a second prize of \$75.00 give an incentive for writing.

CONTEST RULES

1. The essay should be typewritten or produced through use of a computer.
2. The written material should not exceed 2000 words.
3. Illustrations can be used, provided the illustration enforces some point being made in the essay.
4. Essays will be judged on the quality of the writing and the material presented. Neatness will be considered.
5. Entries MUST be submitted no later than March 10, 1997.
6. Entries must show full name, address, and telephone number of the individual who did the research, wrote, and submitted the essay.
7. Decision of the judges will be final.

Essays should be sent to: AUDUBON ESSAY CONTEST, P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

The award winners will be publically announced at the regular meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society on April 3. Awards will be presented at that meeting. For more information, please call Al McNabney, (510) 945-1785.

A NEW ERA

November's election results have produced a new era in Contra Costa County's affairs. The newly elected decision-makers are finding their offices, and getting telephone and FAX machines working. New staff personnel have been employed and impacts of the new jobs are now beginning to be felt. We have met or participated in group meetings with Donna Gerber, 3rd District Supervisor, Joe Canciamilla, 5th District Supervisor, Ellen Tauscher, 10th Congressional District Representative, and Lynne Leach, 15th Assembly District Representative. Wide-ranging discussions were the order of the day with a strong emphasis on environmental issues. Greenbelt Alliance now has a full-time staff person working out of an office in Walnut Creek. That office ensures environmental matters are not neglected. Tom Moores is the Greenbelt's full-time representative.

REFINERIES

I've been participating in the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) for the Tosco Refinery for a number of years. During that time, issues involving safety, protection of the general public from toxic emissions, and a host of other matters have been before the CAP. The recent explosion and fire at the Tosco Plant caused one fatality. A number of individuals were injured, most not seriously. The exact cause of the disaster is not yet known. Cal OSHA is leading the investigation to determine the cause and a number of local, state, and federal agencies are also involved in the investigation. When the facts have been fully established, I will have more to say on the matter.

DELTA SCIENCE CENTER

The Delta Science Center at Big Break is a project that MDAS is supporting. Even though the project is still in the planning stages, educational activities have been going on. The Boy Scouts of America have been conducting an Environmental Award contest for the past two years. MDAS's president has been advised that an award submission entered by MDAS has been accepted as finalist. The actual award winners will be announced at a dinner on February 27. Anyone interested in attending can obtain tickets from Carl Ellwood, Mt. Diablo Silverado Council, Boy Scouts of America, 800 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, or by calling (510) 674-6100. Be sure to mention you are a member of MDAS. The event will be held at the Concord Sheraton Hotel with a reception at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m. The Honorable Douglas Wheeler, Secretary for Resources, California Resources Agency, will be the guest speaker.

AN EVENING WITH JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

Plans have now been made for the MDAS Evening with John James Audubon. Tickets will be on sale at the March general meeting at a cost of \$19.97. Only 130 tickets are available, so buy early. If you would like to have a ticket reserved for you, call Joel Summerhull at 753-0862. Tickets can also be purchased at Wild Birds Unlimited. The Evening will be on Sunday, March 16, at the general meeting location, the Pleasant Hill Senior Center. Doors will open at 4:30 p.m. Opening remarks will begin at 5:00 and chapter volunteers will be honored. Dinner will be served at 6:00. The after-dinner program will be by David Giesen, John James Audubon Impersonator. We hope our MDAS chapter membership will support us in this endeavor by attending this event.

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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, March 8, **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 San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, turn left onto Sir Frances Drake Blvd. Follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Inverness. Just over the ridge, turn right onto Pierce Point Rd. The park entrance is on the right.

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980

Category 2

Wednesday, March 12, **San Mateo Coast.** Carpool 7:15 a.m., La Gonda Way, right off El Pintado from 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, 866-1409

Category 2

Saturday, March 22, **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 Road, 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 27, **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 4.

The group of 23 birders was glad finally to have a day without rain, even if it was cloudy and cool. The highlights included Ring-necked Duck, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Osprey, Golden Eagle, ten Wild Turkeys, White-throated Swift, Red-breasted Sapsucker, and Vesper Sparrow. Total species: 74.

Florence Bennett

SUNOL REGIONAL PARK, January 9.

Nine birders in two groups enjoyed a beautiful rain-free day in the Alameda hills. The trip highlights were Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Prairie Falcon for one group and Varied Thrush for the other. A total of 43 species were seen, a rather low count for this trip.

Elizabeth Dickey

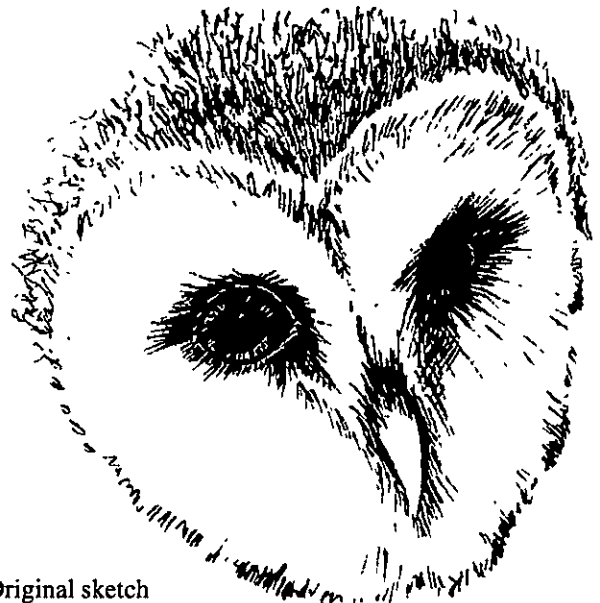
LAKE MERRITT, January 15.

Field trip was cancelled because of rain.

GRIZZLY ISLAND REFUGE, January 29.

Fourteen members and two guests spent a dry day with 60° fair weather at Grizzly Island. 67 species of birds, Tule Elk, and many Western Pond Turtles were seen. Highlights included a Short-eared Owl periodically harassed by a female harrier, long looks at a co-operative Rough-legged Hawk, a flock of nine American White Pelicans soaring overhead, good looks by part of the group at a Virginia Rail, male Anna's Hummingbirds displaying mating behavior, and many Tree Swallows and a few Violet-green Swallows.

Maury Stern



Original sketch
by Carol Lutz

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.

Red-throated Loon: 1 on 1/18 at Piper Slough at the north end of Bethel Island. (SG)

Common Loon: 8 on 1/16 in the harbor at the Richmond marina. (SG)

American White Pelican: 33 on 1/29 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG)

Green Heron: 1 on 1/13 at Mt. View Sanitary District (GF, JR); 1 on 1/18 at the marina at the east end of Orwood Road near Knightsen (SG). This is one of only five waterbirds breeding in the East Bay that is more common in summer.

Tundra Swan: 1000+ on 1/28 along Orwood Road. (GF)

Greater White-fronted Goose: 900+ on 1/18 north of Piper Slough. (SG)

Snow Goose: 2500+ on 1/18 north of Piper Slough on Bethel Island including at least a few Ross's Geese. (SG)

Emperor Goose: 1 on 1/14 at Bodega Harbor. (JR, GF, EM)
Also on RBA.

Canada Goose: one of the race *minima*, known as the "Cackling" Canada Goose, on 1/29 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Wood Duck: 3 males and 2 females on 1/9 and 5 males and 4 females on 1/28 at Discovery Bay (KP); 8 males and 6 females on 1/29 at mile 27.92 along Hwy. 1 south of Pt. Reyes Station (JR, GF).

Blue-winged Teal: a pair on 1/28 at Shell Marsh. (GF)

Eurasian Wigeon: 1 male on 1/18 at Holland Tract, eastern Contra Costa County (SG); 1 on 1/19 at the Clifton Court Forebay (SG).

King Eider: 1 female on 1/29 at Chimney Rock, Pt. Reyes. (GF, JR) Also on RBA.

Harlequin Duck: a pair on 1/29 at the Fish Docks at Pt. Reyes. (JR, GF)

Oldsquaw: 1 on 1/16 near Brooks Island at Richmond. (SG)

Hooded Merganser: 1 male on 1/19 in the outflow channel at Lake Merritt. (BB)

Common Merganser: 1 male, 5 females on 1/22 on Pacheco Creek in Pleasant Hill (DK, EH); 25 on 1/7 and 30+ on 1/16 at Discovery Bay (KP).

Osprey: 3 on 1/11, 1 on 1/18, and 1 on 1/25 at the Lafayette Reservoir. (LL)

Bald Eagle: 1 adult on 1/29 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Rough-legged Hawk: 1 on 1/13 at Holland Tract. (GF, JR)

Merlin: 1 noted sporadically through at least 2/5 near corner of Wiget and Lennon Lane in Walnut Creek. (MS)

Black Rail: 1 on 1/19 at Arrowhead Marsh. (BB)

Sandhill Crane: 44 on 1/18 at Holland Tract. (SG)

Glaucous Gull: 1 on 1/14 at the mouth of the Russian River. (JR, JD, EM)

Greater Roadrunner: 3 on 12/16 along Little Panoche Road. (GF, MP)

Short-eared Owl: 1 on 1/13 along Byron Hot Springs Road. (JR, GF)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 male on 1/28 (GF) and 2/6 (GF, MP) at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. Third county record.

Barn Swallow: 1 on 1/16 at Shell Marsh. (SG) I can't find any winter records for the county.

Yellow-billed Magpie: 2 on 1/18 at the Bethel Island Golf Course. (SG)

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2 all winter in her Lafayette yard (LL); 1 on 1/16 at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline in Richmond (SG); 1 on 1/26 in her Discovery Bay yard (KP). This last is the only record of any nuthatch for eastern Contra Costa County.

Mountain Bluebird: 90 on 12/16 in the Panoche Valley area. (GF, MP)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 from 1/9 to 1/12 in her Martinez yard. (DK)

Harris's Sparrow: still present on 2/4 at the end of Pine Creek Road in Walnut Creek. (GG)

Observers: Barbara Burek, Jane Dang, George Finger, Steve Glover, Gen Graves, Ed Hase, Debbie Kershin, Lynn Lakso, Ellie Mulke, Karen Pierson, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond and Maury Stern.

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.

HAWK WATCHERS WANTED

If you want to learn to identify the hawks, falcons, and eagles of California and if you want to be part of a local long-term wildlife conservation project, then the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory wants you! Recruitment meetings are Thursday, April 24, and Tuesday, April 29, both from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 26, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. You need only come to one program. All programs will be held at GGNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Enter the fort at Franklin and Bay.

The GGRO has more than 230 volunteers dedicated to tracking and monitoring the autumn flight of 19 species of birds of prey over the Marin Headlands. They seek new volunteers for their 1997 classes who can commit one day every two weeks from August through December, 1997, along with some weekend and evening trainings in July. For more information, call the GGRO at (415) 331-0730.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Carol Frischmann

WANTED: BIRD PHOTOGRAPHS AND ART WORK

MDAS is cooperating with Mt. Diablo Interpretive Association to hold a photography and art exhibit. Framed photographs or art work by chapter members will be shown at the Mt. Diablo Summit Museum Art Gallery from March 26 through June 22. The theme of the exhibit is Birds of the Mountain, featuring birds which can be found on Mt. Diablo. Please consider exhibiting your work!

Potential results:

- Public education about birds of the mountain
- Awareness of Audubon and our mission
- Better bridges with "sister" organizations concerned with the environment
- More fun

What's needed:

- Your work; please see notice on page 6 for details
- People to help coordinate the exhibit
- People to help create educational signs

Please call today. We're just a few weeks away from the exhibit. Regarding photos or art work, please call 943-1945. Regarding help with the project, please call 735-3836.

ECOLOGY OF GOLDEN EAGLES AT ALTAMONT PASS

Golden Eagles are found throughout many parts of the world and are highly regarded symbols of grace and majesty. While they are beautiful to behold, they are often elusive, except at Altamont Pass and Los Vaqueros Watershed, where they are found in relatively high numbers and are year-round residents. In fact, this area has one of the highest breeding densities of these eagles of any place on earth. Grainger Hunt, a senior scientist with the Predatory Bird Research Group, has for the last four years been researching this striking population of Golden Eagles. Dr. Hunt will give an illustrated talk about his research here, sharing what he has learned about the eagles' movements by radio telemetry monitoring, breeding habits, and survival rates, along with the impact that Altamont Pass' wind energy turbines have had on them. John Steere, Resource Management Planner with Contra Costa Water District, will introduce Dr. Hunt and describe how his work relates to the District's environmental commitments in its newly acquired Los Vaqueros Watershed. The talk will be Monday, March 17, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the Contra Costa Water District Board Room, 1331 Concord Avenue, Concord.

MORE FROM THE WATCH LIST

In the December, 1996, *Quail*, John Flicker, President of the National Audubon Society, outlined the reasons for establishing the Watch List, an annual report on the status of birds in danger or in decline in the United States. Given below is information from the Watch List about five birds found in our area which are of particular concern.

Yellow-Headed Blackbird

The Yellow-headed Blackbird, so named as a tribute to the male's striking plumage, is a highly social species, breeding in harems in prairie and deep-water wetlands throughout western North America. Despite its conspicuousness, this bird has undergone a 33% decline since the early 1980s, largely as a result of the draining of wetlands and the indiscriminate use of herbicides that remove necessary vegetation.

Rufous Hummingbird

Widely known in the northwest United States and Alaska for its aggressive territorial behavior and brilliant red-orange plumage, this is the most northern breeding hummingbird. Recent studies reveal that this species has declined since the 1960s. The exact causes of decline are unknown.

Hermit Warbler

Living high in the canopy of the tallest redwoods and Douglas Firs, the Hermit Warbler is more often heard than seen. This elusive warbler has highly restricted summer and winter ranges, breeding in mountains from northern California to Washington, and wintering in high-elevation pine-oak forests from Mexico to Honduras. Logging and increasing development on the warbler's breeding grounds, changing land-use practices, and an exploding human population on its wintering grounds have decimated the Hermit Warbler. This species has declined by at least 40% over much of its breeding range since the mid-1980s.

Lawrence's Goldfinch

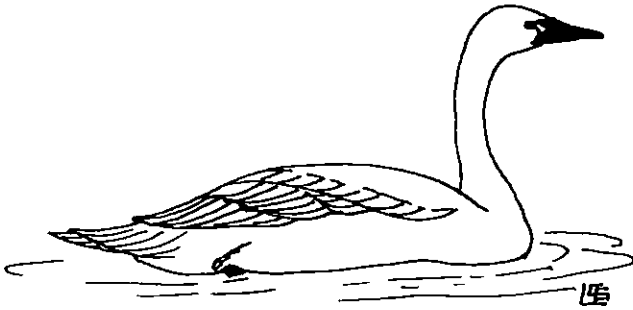
Lawrence's Goldfinch, a small songbird once familiar in the dry weed patches and open woodlands of southern California, is a late nester among songbirds. Waiting until plants have bloomed and gone to seed, this bird feeds its nestlings the new, soft seeds of early summer. From the mid-1960s to the present, increasing development and a burgeoning human population have caused this goldfinch to decline by 10 to 20% over much of its range.

Loggerhead Shrike

The Loggerhead Shrike, named by early observers the "Butcher Bird," is a small predatory bird that ends its hunt in a fascinating manner. This species stores its captured prey, typically large insects or small mice, on sharp thorns and barbed-wire in its habitat of meadows and open, grassy woodlands. This shrike is declining precipitously across North America, and has already disappeared from most of the northeast because farms have been converted to suburbs, grasslands are being developed, and feral domestic cats kill nestlings and incubating adults.

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and field trips: Trish Corby, Laurie Ericson, June and Laird Fort, Shoilen Ghose, Ronald Godzinski, Liza Hill, Dona Hoefs, Jody Johnsonbaugh, H. C. Lorenz, Carole Miller, David Parr, Jan Rominger, Jean Sullivan, Claudia Tromp, Christine Walmsley, Shauna Weller and Mrs. Frank Wilson.



MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY EXHIBIT

**Call for entries due March 18
framed photos or art work
depicting birds of Mt. Diablo**

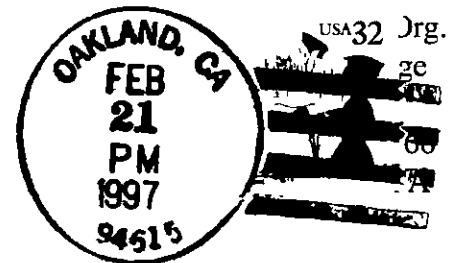
**Summit Museum Art Gallery
March 26-June 22, 1997
Information: 943-1945**

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



9802

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



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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

April 1997

Vol. 43 No. 8

Next Deadline: April 10

April Program:

Quail Re-introduction Program

For the April 3 general meeting, Dave Riensche will give a slide presentation on his involvement with the California Quail Habitat and Re-introduction Program at Coyote Hills Regional Park. Located in Fremont, along the south San Francisco Bay shoreline, Coyote Hills is a favorite MDAS birding destination. Just a decade ago, the park had over 60 California Quail, our state bird. By 1989, there were none to be found in the hills, willows, or brush fields. An unnatural explosion in the populations of introduced Red Fox and feral cats destroyed the park's covey of quail. Since 1992, Dave Riensche, a naturalist at the park, has been working with assistance of Birding Parks Partners Volunteers and many others to establish a healthy and thriving California Quail population at Coyote Hills. Dave's efforts to create a "quail friendly" environment are just beginning to pay off. By the year 2000, they should see the successful return of truly wild-raised quail.

Birding Information for April. Spring is here and it's time to learn birdsongs. Denise Wight will focus on some memory tricks that will help you recognize some of our common birds' songs. This talk will be geared especially to those who can't carry a tune.

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 Thursday, April 10, at 7:30 p.m. hosted by Denise Wight, 370-7342, at the home of Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez. Board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, April 18, at Wild Birds Unlimited.

BIRDATHON WEEKEND - see page 5

Weekend Birding Breaks will return in May.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WANNA BIRD AT IRONHOUSE?

The wetland areas around Ironhouse Sanitary District, which will be part of the Delta Science Center at Big Break, are loaded with birds. Many MDAS members have asked, "How can I bird the Ironhouse area?" Now it can be told. An arrangement has been completed which permits birding on Ironhouse property. Announced at a DSC Program Committee Meeting a few days ago, the rules are as follows:

1. Access to the private lands of Ironhouse Sanitary District is available through East Bay Regional Park District, specifically through the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. Staff can be reached at (510) 757-2620. Public programs are scheduled regularly and advertised through EBRPD's "Regional in Nature" program schedule. School programs can be arranged through the Black Diamond office.
2. Special programs and trainings can be arranged to focus on various topics including land use, natural and cultural history, and wetlands. Programs requiring multiple visits or special needs may be accommodated as schedules allow.
3. East Bay Regional Park District's Big Break Regional Trail, now under construction, will provide unguided public access to portions of Ironhouse property on a flat paved trail. Access will be strictly limited to the trail right-of-way as per all Regional Trails. Access to other areas of Ironhouse can be arranged through the above procedure.

The purpose and intention is to accommodate access requests whenever it is possible. Ironhouse Sanitary District is an active sewage treatment facility that may be hazardous to the general public, and their liability requires limited access to guided visits at this time. Fortunately, Ironhouse Sanitary District is eager to share this incredible resource with the public and is willing to work to accommodate specific needs. There will be regular on-site access for Audubon researchers, educators, and students.

DELTA SCIENCE CENTER AT BIG BREAK

The Delta Science Center Program Committee, headed by Mark Nickerson, Director, Cal State Hayward, Contra Costa Campus, is making progress toward the goal of having specific science programs ready for use in the fall of 1997. The DSC Executive Director Stephen Barbata has established a "Time Schedule" for accomplishing various objectives. A Business Plan, funded by the East Community Foundation, is being formulated. This means that many technical matters prerequisite to developing major funding have been completed.

CREEKS AND STREAMS

As reported earlier, the Santa Clara County Supervisors adopted an ordinance to protect and permit enhancement of creeks throughout that county. Shortly thereafter, we met with the appropriate Contra Costa County department heads to try to develop adequate protections for Contra Costa County creeks. A recent meeting with county, state, and federal regulatory agency representatives, together with many other individuals concerned about Contra Costa County's creeks, met to develop a decent plan for creek protections. STAY TUNED!!!!

WATERSHED WALKS

In eastern Contra Costa County, there is a place of grasslands, wetlands, and valley oaks, where the Central Valley meets the coastal ranges, a place called the Los Vaqueros Watershed where the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) is building the Los Vaqueros Reservoir. Soon CCWD will complete a Watershed Management Program that will be a blueprint for stewardship of this land's environmental and cultural resources, dictating fire and grazing management practices among others. The Water District has just initiated work on the watershed's recreation program. You're invited to participate in the planning process leading up to it by joining John Steere, Resource Management Planner, on one or more Los Vaqueros Watershed Walks on a series of Saturdays from April through June.

The Watershed Walks are envisioned as a way to familiarize people with the nature of the watershed and the Water District's commitments to it and as part of the planning process to show the potential recreational program opportunities, constraints, and features. Each Watershed Walk will focus on one of these three points: 1. Exploration of different locales in the watershed, 2. Illustration of issues and potential components of the recreational program, and 3. Investigation of roles of and activities involved in partnerships for watershed stewardship. Here are the walks' scheduled dates:

- * April 12. Explore southwestern portion of Los Vaqueros
- April 26. General tour of the watershed
- * May 10. Explore central western portion of the watershed
- May 17. Explore northwestern portion of the watershed
- * May 31. Investigate potential opportunities and locales for partnerships in habitat restoration, interpretation, stewardship
- June 14. General tour of the watershed.
- * Walks co-sponsored by MDAS; see Field Trips

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 5, **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 SR238 (Mission Blvd.). Go south to Garin Rd. and turn left to park. Grasshopper Sparrow is one possibility. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 3

Wednesday, April 9, **Lake Lagunitas**. Carpool 7:15 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet 8:30 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: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 2

Saturday, April 12, **Special Field Trip**. An opportunity to see part of the Kellogg Creek watershed, riparian habitats and oak woodlands, on a CCWD tour co-sponsored by MDAS (see page 3). Trip runs 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Carry lunch and plenty of water. Lug sole shoes are **strongly** recommended. The attendance is limited; we have 14 spaces. If interested, call Elizabeth Dickey at 254-0486 by Tuesday, April 8.

Category 3

Thursday, April 24, **Ida Clayton Road**. Carpool 7:00 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. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 1

Wednesday, April 30, **Del Puerto Canyon**. Carpool at 7:45 a.m. in the shopping center at the southwest corner of Crow Canyon Road West and San Ramon Blvd., near Garcia's Restaurant. Meet west of I-5 at 9:00 a.m. at Patterson Exit of I-5 (59 mi. from El Cerro). Yellow-breasted Chat, Costa's Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, spring warblers.

Leader: Florence Bennett, 689-3106

Category 1

Saturday, April 26, **CCWD Field Trip**. A general tour of the CCWD watershed, illustrating the management practices and recreational opportunities and constraints. Attendance is limited. If interested, call CCWD at 688-8109.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

BODEGA BAY, February 1.

It was a beautiful mild day for the four birders who showed up at Bodega Bay. No unusual birds were seen, but the usual birds included Osprey, Black Oystercatcher, and many Brant, among a total of 63 species seen and heard.

Fred Safier

THORNTON, February 6.

Patchy, shifting fog frustrated the nine birders on this trip. We finally saw a few cranes in the fields and several large flocks in flight. Swan sightings were brief and distant, and very few ducks were present. The lunch stop at Lodi Lake yielded a number of land birds. Total species: 64.

Elizabeth Dickey

HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE, February 12.

After some initial confusion about the new meeting place in Danville, four members finally made it to the Headquarters in Hayward for a leisurely walk out to the Bay. No rarities were sighted, but a pleasantly cool day led to an enjoyable morning. 42 species were seen.

Barbara Vaughn

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, February 15-17.

Ten observers and two guests enjoyed two and a half days of birding. Saturday and Monday morning were spent along the coast and Sunday in the interior in the Soda Lake Valley. We had two days of excellent weather, but Monday was very windy and ended with a rain shower. Highlights included four species of falcons, Lewis's Woodpeckers, a pair of Great Horned Owls, a Burrowing Owl, Lawrence's Goldfinches, five California Thrashers, Mountain Plovers, and a huge flock of Horned Larks. Total species: 132.

Elizabeth Dickey

BERKELEY SHORELINE, February 27.

Six of us braved the cold winds and a bit of rain to bird this highly urban area. The Emeryville crescent shoreline is no longer accessible along the freeway. The small viewing platform has been removed and a sign prohibiting pedestrians along the freeway on-ramp has taken its place. Still, when it comes to seeing shorebirds and ducks, this is an extremely productive area. Highlights included 3 Redheads, a Barn Owl (thanks, Maury), a female Hooded Merganser, and at least 30 Surfbirds. 70 species were ticked.

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.

Laysan Albatross: 1 still present on 2/25 at Pt. Arena Cove. Mendocino Co. (MJC, FB, Bo&BG)

Great Blue Heron: 9 birds, at least 3 on nests, on 2/22 at Marsh Creek Reservoir, between Clayton and Brentwood. (SG) This is a new nest site for this species known to nest only at two other sites in the county.

Cattle Egret: 3 on 1/14 at Jersey Island (Bo&BG, FB, MJC); 100 at dusk on 1/28 along Santa Fe Grade Road in Merced County (FB, MJC, Bo&BG); 19 on 2/12 at Jersey Island, East Contra Costa County (SG); 1 on 2/24 and 3/6 at Lake Merritt, Oakland (JR); 3 on 3/11 along Cypress Road near Oakley (SG).

White-faced Ibis: an estimated 5000+ on 1/28 heading toward a night roost along Santa Fe Grade Road. (FB, MJC, Bo&BG) The California wintering population has increased dramatically in the 90s.

Emperor Goose: 1 seen on 1/21 (Bo&BG, FB, MJC) and 2/10 (FB) at Westside County Park at Bodega Harbor.

Brant: 300 on 1/21 at Bodega Harbor. (FB, MJC, Bo&BG)

Blue-winged Teal: 1 male on 1/23 at Shell Marsh. (HH)

Eurasian Wigeon: 1 male on 1/13 (HH) and 2/22 (SG) at Shell Marsh; 3 on 2/4 at Waldo's Pasture, Pt. Reyes (GF, JR, JD).

Tufted Duck: an immature male on 3/6 at the pond along the Harbor Bay Parkway, Bay Farm Island. (JR)

Oldsquaw: 2 on 2/4 (FB, MJC, GF, JR) and 1/31 (HH) at the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks; 1 on 2/7 at O'Neill Forebay, Merced County (DW, DS); 2 adult males on 2/22 near Brooks Island, Richmond (SG).

White-winged Scoter: 1 on 2/7 at O'Neill Forebay. (DW, DS)

Common Merganser: 1 male from 1/23 through 2/5 at Heather Farms, Walnut Creek (FB); 5 on 2/22 at Marsh Creek Reservoir (SG).

Osprey: 1 on 3/9 over her Alamo home. (JR) Only her second there.

Bald Eagle: 1 adult on 2/7 over her Alamo home. (JR) The first ever at that location.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 adult on 1/24 in her Concord yard. (FB)

Ferruginous Hawk: 3 on 1/14 at Byron Hot Springs near Byron (FB, MJC, Bo&BG); 1 on 1/26 along Bollinger Canyon Road north of San Ramon (JRob).

Rough-legged Hawk: 1 on 1/14 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (FB, MJC, Bo&BG)

Merlin: 1 on 2/10 behind his mother's home in San Ramon. (SG)

Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 1/6 at Pt. Pinole Regional Park. (JRob)

Sora: 1 on 1/23 (HH) and 1/25 (SE) at Heather Farms, Walnut Creek.

Sandhill Crane: 75 on 1/14 at Holland Tract. (FB, MJC, Bo&BG)

Mountain Plover: 124 on 2/14 along Road 101 north of Woodland (JR); 35 on 2/16 at Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (GF); 110 on 2/18 at the intersection of Roads 106 and 16 north of Woodland (FB, MJC).

Red Knot: 20 on 1/6 at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline. (JRob)

Mew Gull: 250 on 2/22 at Richmond Sewer Ponds. (SG)

Black Skimmer: 5 on 1/7 at Charleston Slough, Santa Clara County. (JR, FB, MJC, BG)

Short-eared Owl: 2 on 2/22 at Byron Hot Springs. (SG)

Black-chinned Hummingbird: a male on 2/22 along Little Panoche Road, Fresno County. (GF, JR)

Costa's Hummingbird: 1 male on 2/25 (GF, MP) and 2/27 (JR, FB) in Del Puerto Canyon.

Rufous Hummingbird: 1 on 3/9 at his Clayton home. (MR)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 immature on 2/5 (DW) and 2/18 (DW, SG) at Hidden Lakes Park, Martinez. Third county record.

Yellow-billed Magpie: 2 on 2/22 at the nest site along Delta Road near Knightsen. (SG) This is the only known nest site in the county.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: up to 3 from 9/3/96 to at least 2/25/97 at his home between Brentwood and Oakley. (JB)

Mountain Bluebird: 200 on 1/28 along Little Panoche Road. (FB, MJC, Bo&BG)

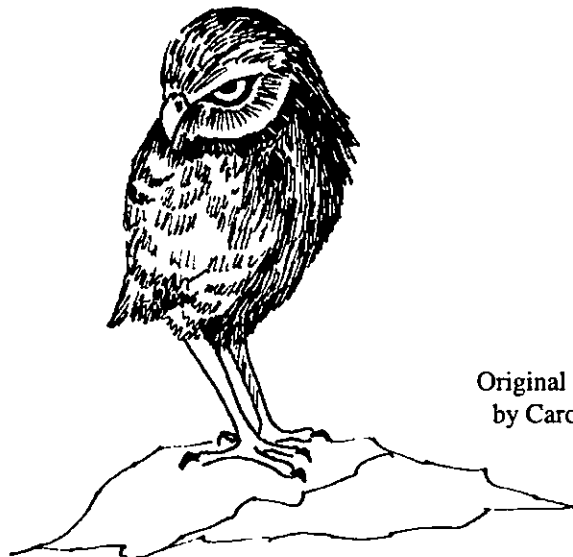
Phainopepla: 1 still present on 2/12 and 2/22 at Jersey Island. (SG)

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 on 2/24 (JR) and 3/4 (FB, MJC, BG) at Lake Merritt.

Lawrence's Goldfinch: 3 males on 1/26 along Bollinger Canyon Road. (JRob)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Jerry Britton, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, Shirley Ellis, George Finger, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond, Mike Robertson, John Robinson, Dave Shuford, and Denise Wight.

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.



Original sketch
by Carol Lutz

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

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

Goldfinches everywhere!! For many people this has been the best winter in memory for backyard feeding of goldfinches. There have been many reports of flocks of 25-75 American Goldfinches accompanied by Lesser Goldfinches. Prior to last summer, there had only been a few sightings of Lessers at the feeders. It is now normal for flocks to be 25% or more Lesser Goldfinches. Is this a short-term phenomena or does this represent a change in their feeding habits? It will be interesting to see if the trend continues during the summer. Please report your sightings to us.

Hooded and Bullock's Orioles will be arriving soon. Like the hummingbirds, these spectacular backyard birds love nectar and there are special feeders designed for them. They nest locally and seem to remember where they fed in previous years.

Spring is the ideal time to put out nesting boxes. Several species such as chickadees and wrens will raise multiple broods, one in the spring and another in summer. Woodpeckers, titmice, nuthatches, bluebirds and others will also readily use birdhouses.

CLASSES AND A WORKSHOP

SIERRA BIRD CLASSES

Sierra Nevada Field Campus of San Francisco State University is offering five summer bird classes. "Bird Identification by Song" meets June 2 to 6, taught by Luis Baptista. "Birds of the Sierra Nevada" meets June 9 to 13, taught by Dave Shuford. "Birdwatching in the Sierra Nevada" meets from June 30 to July 4, taught by David Lukas. and "Sierran Bird Banding 1 and 2" meet from July 14 to 18 and July 28 to August 1, taught by Jim Steele, Mac McCormick and staff and Dave DeSante and staff. For more information, contact Jim Steele at (415) 738-1814.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK WORKSHOP AND SURVEY

Audubon California has recently assumed management responsibilities of the Kern River Preserve. You are invited to participate in the Red-shouldered Hawk Workshop and Survey at the newest Audubon California preserve. Learn about Red-shouldered Hawk biology and survey methods, then use your new skills to help conduct a comprehensive survey in the Kern River Valley, including California's largest cottonwood willow riparian forest. The Workshop will take place Saturday, April 5, the survey Sunday, April 6. A \$10.00 donation is suggested to help cover workshop expenses. For additional information or to reserve a space, write Reed Tollefson at the Kern River Preserve, P. O. Box 1662, Weldon, CA 93283 or call (619) 378-2531.

THE 1997 MDAS BIRDATHON

by *Barbara Burek*
and *Denise Wight*

The 1997 MDAS Birdathon will be held the weekend of April 19 and 20. This will be an Almost All Contra Costa County race. MDAS Observations Editor Steve Glover of "Glover's Plover Lovers" will be returning after his absence from the race last year and from a trip to Four Corners. He will take on last year's winner Denise Wight and her "Wight-crowned Sparrows" who will be attempting to better their 1996 total of 145 species.

This year a new team will join the field. "The Fledglings" is headed by MDAS president Carol Frischmann and Treasurer Joel Summerhill. It is rumored they hope to see at least 50 species. An extension team, "The Southern Fledgling," represented by Hospitality Chair Nancy Wenninger, will be birding in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday and may prove serious competition for the home team.

Any other members who would like to challenge any of these teams, celebrate Earth Day or just get out and enjoy the spring migration are encouraged to participate. Any members wishing to join a chapter team may bird with "The Fledglings."

The Birdathon is the only MDAS fund-raising drive each year. Money raised by the Birdathon allows MDAS to pursue its goals of conservation and education here in Contra Costa County. We encourage all members to help. Send your pledge of support on the form below to Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553.

1997 Birdathon Pledge

_____ I want to pledge _____ (amount)

or _____ per bird

for the team _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

_____ I want to bird with "The Fledglings"

_____ I will be birding with my own team

NEW MEMBERS

It is with very great pleasure that we greet these new MDAS members and hope to meet them soon: Susan Abbott, Diane Alexander, Samir Ayoub, Ruth Barcelon, Lilliam Berta, Don Bonnell, Anna Bowers, Mr. and Mrs. Archy Bowle, Mallory Brown, Janet Bruno, Dora Chow, Edward Christie, Grace Clark, Trudy Clawson, Mark Cornelius, Edith Cvietusa, W. L. Dornaus, Mary Driscoll, Ruth Dushkin, Mrs. John Feack, Walter Flood, Thomas Fogwell, Nell Fraser, Eric Hanna, Tom Harrison, David Haveman, Merry Haveman, Robert Henderson, Inez Hiller, Muriel Hilliard, Margaret Holland, Charle Howard, Herbert Hughes, Charlotte Johnson, Sandra Kelly, C. Kesselring, Bonnie Knowlton, Sherry Kobylarek, Arlene Kull, J. C. Langley, Don Loux, Dr. Marian Maynard, Leslie Mays, Phil McGarry, Irene Menegas, R. L. Meyer, Pamela Miller, Muriel Miller, Laura Motamed, Darlene Pangilla, Janine Pierce, Roxanne Polk, Evelyn Radford, Ruth Rayner, Patricia Renshaw, June Roberts, John

Sandusky, David Sansome, Leo Schell, Keith Silva, Marcella Simon, Lee Sloan, Kevin Smith, Catherine Spiro, Frank Stanton, Patti Staples, Joseph Starr, Robert Stephens, Ruth Stewart, James Stockdale, John and Mary Sullivan, Helen Troxel, Russell Turnbull, J. S. Warren and Bevelyn Wolf.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

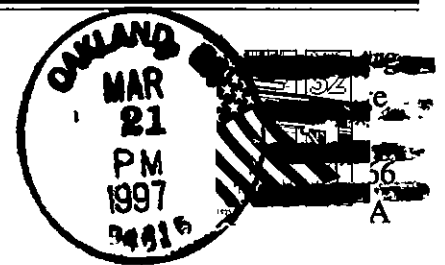
As part of Earth Day this year, MDAS is sponsoring a marsh cleanup for East Antioch Creek at Wilbur Avenue and Cavallo Road in Antioch. The date will be Saturday, April 26, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. To volunteer or for more information, call Nancy Wenninger at 938-7987.

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



9802

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: 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: Eltzabeth 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

May 1997

Vol. 43 No. 9

Next Deadline: May 8

May Program:

Crane Research and Conservation

There are fifteen species of cranes in the world, of which eleven are now facing serious trouble. These charismatic birds date back at least 38 million years and are now facing incredible challenges worldwide. For the **May 1** general meeting, Mini Nagendran, Bird Conservation Director for Audubon, California, will give a presentation on her research and conservation efforts with cranes in the United States and overseas. Mini has worked with six species of cranes in the wild, including two of the most endangered, the Whooping Crane and the Siberian Crane.

Meenashi Nagendran (Mini for short) was born and raised in India. She has a Ph. D. in zoology from North Dakota State and has worked with the International Crane Foundation, the Wild Bird Society of Japan, and USFWS International Affairs. She joined Audubon, California in October, 1996.

For May Bird Information, Jill Hedgecock will speak about owls, using words to go with calls to help us with identification.

At the May general meeting, the members will vote on the elected officials for next year. More information on page 5.

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 Thursday, May 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Barbara Vaughn, 59 Donna Maria Way, Orinda, 376-8732. The Board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, May 16, at Wild Birds.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip this month will take us to Briones Regional Park on Sunday, May 18. Beginning birders and members new to our area are encouraged to join us for this weekend get-away. Meet trip leader Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732, at 8:00 a.m. at the western entrance parking lot, off Bear Creek Road (entrance fee).

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

ESA ITSELF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

Wednesday, April 2, months of planning and action on the part of Audubon leaders produced results. The results? A meeting with California's Senior Senator Dianne Feinstein in her San Francisco offices. The subject of discussion was the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a 900+ million dollar fund developed from taxes on off-shore oil drilling. The Fund is SUPPOSED to be used to purchase open space, protect important wetlands, etc. Instead Congress has used a major share of the fund to balance the budget.

You will remember the energetic campaign waged by the Bay Area Audubon chapters together with Audubon, California which finally resulted in a large Japanese company agreeing to sell Baer Island. A peninsula land trust has amassed \$7 million and an additional \$10 million is being sought from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Senator Feinstein agreed funds should be appropriated for the purchase of Baer Island. She will work with Audubon to ensure that funding is made available.

On the Endangered Species Act front, things were not so rosy. Clearly the Senator has been heavily lobbied by forces seeking to "do in" the ESA. The Senator will provide Audubon's John McCaull with details of situations which she believes represent the worst of ESA applications. A statewide Audubon group will meet shortly to review the issues and develop a plan to offset criticisms as to the application and/or necessity for having a strong Endangered Species Act

DELTA SCIENCE CENTER AT BIG BREAK

On April 16, Stephen Barbata, Executive Director, will present updated proposals for full implementing, funding and activating the Delta Science Center at Big Break. This presentation will be very important. The East Bay Regional Park District has pledged a VERY substantial sum toward the project on a matching basis. Other funders are in the wings and it is expected that additional substantial funds will become available for the project.

On the DSC education front, Miriam Bell and a committee of educators have been doing monumental work in developing the curricula for use in K-12 programs. At the same time, a second group of educators is working on the curricula for college and university level students. It is expected the actual programs will be incorporated in East County schools beginning in September.

HEATHER FARMS PARK

Do you have any ideas how this wildlife area in Walnut Creek could be improved? Drop a line to me at P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053.

MDAS ENVIRONMENTAL ESSAY CONTEST

The first-ever environmental essay contest promoted by MDAS came to a conclusion at the regular meeting on April 3. The winner, Cheryl Chun, wrote about "The Dangerous Decline of Biodiversity" for which she received a cash prize of \$150. Rashi Chand, the second-place winner, wrote about "An Item of Business ..Called Biodiversity." He received a cash award of \$75. Both winners were accompanied by their parents and, in the case of Ms. Chun, her grandparents as well. Each winner was presented with an appropriate MDAS certificate and Nancy Wenninger topped the event off with a beautiful cake.

BIODIVERSITY IN REAL LIFE

After months of hard work, study, and discussion, the Alameda-Contra Costa County Biodiversity Working Group will meet April 16 regarding the public involvement process for the East County pilot study. MDAS will be a part of the process. The April 16 meeting will be conducted in two parts. Part One is the access for the Pilot Study. Part Two is the organizational meeting for participants in the process. All components of the East County Pilot Study, including purpose, approach, data, methodology, results, and implementation will be involved.

SHELL MARSH

After years of work, study, discussion, and fund raising, actual construction of a new levee, tide gates to control the hydrology of the area, and allied work will start soon. It is expected this work will be completed by September. In the meantime, the committee overseeing various tasks (Audubon is a participant) will be drafting a proposed plan for upgrading the uplands and for full public participation in the viewing of the flora and fauna that use the wetlands. Said one participant, "It's been a long struggle but we can begin to see an end to the work." Once completed, Mother Nature will begin to restore the plants and species. In a year or two, the area will be returned to close to its natural state and will be a Contra Costa County wetland jewel.

NATIONAL WETLANDS MONTH

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has declared May to be National Wetlands Month. MDAS President Carol Frischmann and Conservation VP Al McNabney have jointly extended invitations to U. S. Senators Feinstein and Boxer, Representatives George Miller and Ellen Tauscher, California Senator Richard Rainey, and Assemblywoman Lynne Leach to visit one or both local wetlands areas, i.e., Shell Marsh or Ironhouse, where the Delta Science Center at Big Break will eventually be located. There will be a full discussion of this event at the DSC Board Meeting on April 16. The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors has also been requested to adopt a resolution declaring May to be National Wetlands Month and to extend support for that on the part of Contra Costa County.

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 3, **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. Turkey, Roadrunner, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Lawrence's Goldfinch possible. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 1

Wednesday, May 7, **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 10, **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 wildflowers; bird afternoon.

Leader: Mary Jane Culver, 682-0509

Category 3

Thursday, May 22, **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 28, **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: Maury Stern, 284-5980

Category 2

Future trips: It's not too early to make reservations for Yuba Pass, June 21-22. Motels include Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916) 862-1151; Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110, and Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. The Lassen Volcanic National Park trip, July 12-13, will begin from Manzanita Lake at the north-west 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 June and July *Quails* for more information.

WATERSHED WALKS

The Watershed Walks sponsored by the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) continue in May with the following two trips co-sponsored by MDAS. These walks are intended to be a way to familiarize the public with the nature of the Los Vaqueros Watershed and to give the public a chance to participate in the planning for the watershed's recreation programs. Attendance is limited, so please call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, or CCWD, 688-8109, for reservations or more information.

Saturday, May 10, exploration of the Central Western Portion of the watershed.

Saturday, May 31, investigation of potential opportunities and locales for partnerships in habitat restoration, interpretation, and stewardship.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

TOMALES BAY STATE PARK, March 8.

Fourteen members spent six hours at Tomales Bay State Park in lovely early spring weather, with blue skies and low 60° temperatures. The day began with two Ospreys flying above our meeting place at Heart's Desire Beach with large numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets and Townsend's Warblers in nearby trees. 55 species were seen, including these highlight birds: Spotted Sandpipers, Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Varied Thrush, and Warbling Vireo. We searched diligently for the Spotted Owl but were unable to find one.

Maury Stern

SAN MATEO COAST, March 12.

No report received.

BLACK DIAMOND MINES REGIONAL PARK, March 22.

Twelve birders spent a beautiful day at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. Some of the group were lucky enough to see a Barn Owl over the road on the way to the meeting point at the ranger station. Instead of climbing to the ridge this year, the group birded on the Nortonville side of the park, where some special birds had been seen during the Christmas Count. Among the many birds that were seen were Western Kingbirds, Rock Wren, Western Bluebird, Lark Sparrow, and Northern (Bullock's) Oriole.

Pat MacEachern

BRIONES WILDFLOWER WALK, March 27.

Twenty-five members and guests joined trip leader John Davis and co-leaders Bessie Smyth and Betty Smith for a nice day at Briones Regional Park. During the two-hour walk, they found 40 species of wildflowers in bloom, which included most of the common wildflowers expected to be found at this time of year.

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.

Cattle Egret: 3 on 3/11 at the intersection of Knightsen and Sellers Avenues, east Contra Costa County (SG); 1 on 3/15 at Jersey Island (SG); 55 on 4/1 along Hwy. 140 east of Gustine, Merced County (FB, MJC).

Emperor Goose: 1 still present on 3/17 (GF, MP), 3/28 (FB), and 4/1 (JR, JD, EM) at Bodega Harbor, Sonoma County.

Brant: ~2500 on 4/4 at Bodega Harbor. (JR, GF)

Wood Duck: 2 males and 1 female on 3/18 at Murrietta Wells, Mines Road. (BG, FB, MJC)

Blue-winged Teal: 1 male on 3/17 (FB) and 3/19 (MJC) at Shell Marsh.

Oldsquaw: 2 on 3/29 at Brooks Island, Richmond. (SG)

Common Merganser: 8 on 3/15 at the Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga. (SG)

Bald Eagle: 1 pair on 3/12 (JR, JD, EM) and 3/18 (FB, MJC, BG) at last year's nest site at Del Valle Regional Park.

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 immature on 3/29 still at Jersey Island. (SG)

Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 3/15 and 3/29 on the radio towers at Pt. Isabel, Richmond. (SG)

Wild Turkey: 8 on 3/18 at Del Valle RP. (FB, MJC, BG)

Black Rail: 2 on 3/25, 3 on 3/29 and 1 on 4/8 at Piper Slough on Bethel Island. (SG) This is the third consecutive winter they have been recorded here.

Red Knot: ~350 on 3/15 at Pt. Isabel. (SG)

Ruddy Turnstone: 2 on 3/15 at Pt. Isabel. (SG) This is still the high count for the county.

Thayer's Gull: at least 25 on 3/6 at Frick Lake, Livermore. (SG)

Marbled Murrelet: 1 on 3/15 in breeding plumage at Brooks Island. (SG) Third spring record for Contra Costa County, all in March.

Greater Roadrunner: 1 on 3/10 along Little Panoche Road, Fresno County (GF, MP); 1 on 3/12 at mile 4.75 (JD, EM, JR), 1 on 3/18 at mile 11.16 (MJC, FB, BG), and 1 on 4/4 at mile 8.0 apparently at a nest (SG), all along Mines Road.

Short-eared Owl: 1 on 3/18 at Hayward Regional Shoreline (JR); still 3 on 3/29 at Byron Hot Springs, east Contra Costa County, very conspicuous late in the afternoon (SG).

Cassin's Kingbird: 1 on 2/27 at the Tracy Golf Course. (FB, JR) This is probably the most northerly nesting pair in the state.

Western Kingbird: 1 on 3/10 along Little Panoche Road (GF, MP); 1 on 3/15 at Jersey Island (SG).

Common Raven: 2 throughout March over her Alamo home. (JR) This species appears to be increasing rapidly in the East Bay.

Yellow-billed Magpie: 2 on 3/29 at the nest site along Delta Road near Knightsen. (SG)

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2 on 3/20 at her Alamo home. (JR)

Varied Thrush: 3 on 3/19 in Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park. (GF)

Phainopepla: still present to at least 4/6 along Jersey Island Road. (JS)

Warbling Vireo: 1 on 3/18 in Mitchell Canyon. (GF)

Palm Warbler: 2 or 3 on 3/25 at the Mendoza Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (JD, JR, EM)

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 on 3/9 still at Children's Fairyland, Lake Merritt. (GF)

Red Crossbill: 3 on 3/14 and 6 on 3/15 near her Alamo home. (JR)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Ellie Mulke, Marjorie Plant, Jean Richmond and Joel Summerhill.

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

692 Contra Costa Blvd.

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

798-0303

Optics and Spotting Scope Seminar Saturday, May 3

Trying to select the right pair of binoculars for a holiday gift or summer bird watching? Answers in abundance will be provided on Saturday, May 3, at 8:30 a.m. Mike Williams of Wild Birds Unlimited will give a 30-minute lecture on "How to Buy Birding Optics." There will be many brands of binoculars and spotting scopes on display for your testing. Have you looked through the crystal-clear, bright Swarovski binoculars? See the Wild Birds Unlimited minis - perfect for a pocket, purse or the kitchen table. Coffee and donuts will be served. Seating is limited. Please call us for a reservation.

May 10 is Butterfly Day!

Join us in celebrating butterflies with these events:

- Sale of milkweed plants to attract Monarchs
- Seminars on butterfly raising and gardening
- Displays of larvae, chrysalises, and butterflies
- Hourly prizes

Call for details.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

The *Quail* is our major means of intra-chapter communication and is an important part of our Audubon lives every month. Whether you're focused on the latest Observations, the date of the next field trip, or the speaker for the next meeting, the *Quail* is there with the information.

Barbara Burek has been editing the *Quail* for ten years and Dan Van Zile has been maintaining our membership database for over four years and has printed the last 27 issues. Not only have they provided us with a great publication, but by printing the *Quail*, Dan provides thousands of dollars of savings for the chapter each year. Following the 1997 July/August issue, Barbara and Dan will be heading north to start a new phase in their lives. I know that you'll all agree our community has been lucky to have them make these and many other contributions.

The Board wants to give Barbara and Dan a proper send-off at the June potluck dinner. Your help is needed. We're collecting messages from the membership to send with them as they start this adventure. Please send your thoughts and thank yous for this terrific duo, with the envelope (not the message) addressed to me at P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053 or drop them with me at the May meeting. We'll put them into a book and present this at the June meeting. Let me get us started "Thank you, Barbara and Dan!"

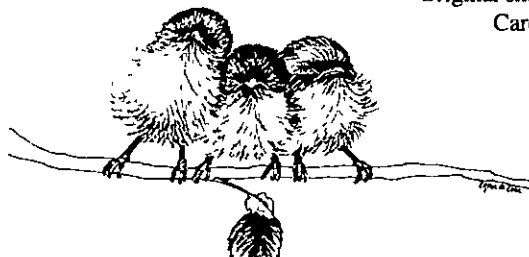
MDAS BOARD ELECTIONS

Four Board positions are elected by the general membership. These elections will take place at the May meeting. The current candidates proposed by the Board are the following:

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

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Original sketch by
 Carol Lutz



VOTE!

VOTE!

AN EVENING WITH JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

This special MDAS event was held on Sunday, March 16. The purposes of the event were to reward chapter volunteers and encourage others to come forth, to educate the chapter and the community about the goals and achievements of the National Audubon Society, to reach out to the community, to promote conservation, and to have fun. Committee members Shirley Ellis, chair, Al McNabney, Opal Calloway, Cecil Williams, and Joel Summerhill, with Carol Frischmann an ex-officio member, worked hard to create a memorable evening. The 100 members and guests in attendance agreed that they succeeded admirably.

Seventeen members of MDAS were honored during this event, selected for five or more years of service to the chapter within the last ten years. They are the following:

- Norah Bain for 19 years as publicity chair, education chair, and guardian of the chapter study skin collection 17
- Barbara Burek for ten years as the *Quail* editor 19
- Elizabeth Dickey for over 20 years as president and field trip chair 20
- Jimm Edgar for over 20 years as president, Christmas Count compiler, and BAAC representative 20
- Shirley Ellis for eight years as publicity chair, nominations chair, Bird Information chair, and chapter historian
- Steve Glover for six years as Observations Editor
- Jill Hedgecock for five years as international conservation chair and publicity chair
- Al McNabney for 15 years of service to the community as vice-president for conservation
- Jean Richmond for ten years as the *Quail* editor and for her donations to the chapter from *Birding Northern California* 21
- Maury Stern for 14 years as president, program chair, and Christmas Count compiler
- Dan Van Zile for ten years assistance with and production of the *Quail* and management of the chapter membership data base
- Barbara Vaughn for eleven years as president, sales manager and publicity chair 11
- Denise Wight for nine years as program chair, hospitality chair, and Bird Information chair
- Mike Williams for six years as membership chair and for the contributions from his work with Wild Birds Unlimited
- Bob Wisecarver for his community outreach service
- Gifford Young for over 20 years as treasurer, sales manager, and head of the mailing crew 21
- Winifred Young for over 20 years as secretary, hospitality chair, and work with the mailing crew 21

Thank you all for your contributions to MDAS and thank you to the members who supported this event with their attendance.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Diane Accolla, Albert Aguilar, Susanne Anderson, Shelly Bever, Sally Bly, D. Boatwright, Maryanne Britten, James Carroll, C. Casaretto, Gail Chamberstain, Edward Cheslak, David Cox, Jim Di Nicolantonio, Marilyn Dorsey, Leona Fernbach, Vinaya Gokara, Raymonde Grattepanche, Steve Grote, Dale Haukland, Andrew Havell, Henry Herrmann, Brad Hoyer, Everette James, Michelle Jones, Regina Kail, Cindy Land, Fernande Leger, Mark Lehtinen, Barbara Leinart, Becky and Jeff Leyser, Tom Lindemuth, Mabelle Loaf, Wanda Longnecker, L. G. Mahler, Victor and Linda Maletic, Margaret McFadden, Arthur McGowan, John McNamanra, Elizabeth Nelson, Kathy Noss, Susan Osterhout, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Owens, Bill Patterson, Leslie Peters, Natalie

Presa, Trish Proctor, Roger Riley, Roger Rittenhouse, Ruth Riva, Gael Rodgers, S. Romanelli, L. J. Rothfeld, Elizabeth Saldinger, Yvonne Smallwood, Ruth Stanton, Terry Welte, Robert Woehl and Vera Wold.

RAFFLE REVISION

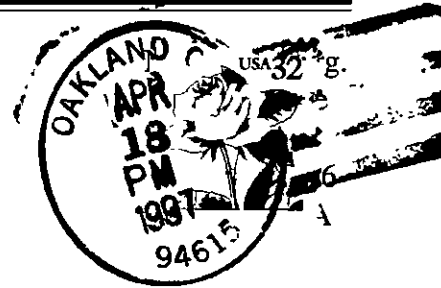
It was announced at the April general meeting that an *Audubon's Birds of America Baby Elephant Folio* would be raffled off at the May meeting. This almost-new book currently retails for \$250 and has appreciated since its publication. After discussion by the Board, it has been decided that to postpone this raffle until next fall. The September *Quail* will have more details.

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



9802

MFAUD

JEAN RICHMOND
125 VIA SERENA
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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: 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

June 1997

Vol. 43 No. 10

Next Deadline: June 12

June Program:

End of the Year Potluck

The next meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon society will be Thursday, **June 5**, 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 Door 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. If you are interested in having these trips again next fall, please let one of the board members know.

The four MDAS elected officers for the 1997-1998 term were chosen at the May meeting. Carol Frischmann will again serve as President, with Al McNabney as Vice-President, Conservation, and Eugenia Larson as Secretary. Pam Keiser returns as Treasurer. We offer all of them our congratulations.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, June 12, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Joel Summerhill, 4801 Shavano Peak Court, Antioch, 753-0862. The Board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be Friday, June 20, at Wild Birds Unlimited.

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.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

SHELL MARSH

Is it really possible? On May 6, bids were opened for initiation of the rebuilding of levees, installation of tide gates, and various other water-related matters. By now, more than \$3 MILLION has been spent for land acquisition (funds came from the Shell Oil Spill Mitigation Settlement Trustee Committee). Assuming the bids were okay, work on the hydrology project will start within a week or two and should be completed by the time the fall rains arrive. What of the uplands, the habitat for critters, birds and even people? Audubon has submitted a plan to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The plan will require substantial participation by Audubon people, the Martinez Land Trust, East Bay Regional Park District, and others if it is to succeed. The plan will be fully considered by the TAC at its June meeting.

HEATHER FARMS AGAIN!!!!!!!!!!!!

Last month a squib in this column solicited any suggestions for improving the wildlife area at Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek. Whaddya know? Not a single suggestion arrived. We'll try once again. Drop a line to my attention at P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

BAY AREA ECONOMIC FORUM

We don't oft see this name in our Audubon materials. Why is it there? Is it important? I'm not certain I know the answers, but let's state a few facts and then speculate a bit. One fact is the Bay Area Economic Forum (BAEF) has been around for nine years. BAEF has generated an idea and, working with major business groups, has created a Strategic Action Plan, which if fully implemented would:

1. Foster public-private collaboration and partnerships.
2. Maximize competitive advantages and enhance economic strengths
3. Minimize weaknesses and respond to challenges

It all sounds good. Lawrence Baac, President of BAEF, hosted a meeting on May 6. Audubon was invited. It is clear BAEF and other major businesses have expended lots of time, money, thought and effort in developing this plan. There's LOTS that's VERY GOOD in the plan. Audubon was asked to comment with one question leading the way:

Does the plan cover the key ingredients for promoting economic prosperity for the Bay Area?

If one believes, as we do, that any real prosperity will have to include attention to environmental matters, then the plan is sorely lacking. That's what we told the BAEF meeting. It was an interesting session. We will be looking forward to additional opportunities to participate in such efforts.

AMERICAN WETLANDS MONTH: MAY, 1997

Bet you didn't really know that the Environmental Protection Agency has proclaimed May to be American Wetlands Month and that Audubon has embarked on a major effort in support of the principle. A request to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors to proclaim May as American Wetlands Month in this county was approved UNANIMOUSLY:

IT IS BY THIS BOARD ORDERED that the Month of MAY is PROCLAIMED as "American Wetlands Month" in Contra Costa County, as requested by the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society."

It would be a worthy thing for YOU to do if you'd take pen in hand and drop a line saying THANK YOU to your Supervisor.

Note: Audubon has sent an article to the editor of the *Contra Costa Times*. He, in his wisdom, has not yet deemed the item worthy. Who knows, maybe later on. Alas, someone's always stultifying the efforts of would-be writers.

RADIO AUDUBON

The Jerry Kay radio show goes on with Audubon a sponsor. Have you heard any of the shows? Do you have suggestions for improvement? The Bay Area Audubon Chapters are still working to air our own fully Audubon radio show. I've heard the promo tapes and they are GOOD! Stay tuned to this station for more info.

DELTA SCIENCE CENTER AT BIG BREAK

The DSC Executive Committee has viewed the updated plan. Approval was unanimous. The plan will be presented to the full Board of Directors in late May. Overwhelming approval is anticipated. Then comes the daunting task of raising the \$12 MILLION necessary to "make it all work." At every public meeting I attend where DSC is a topic, I suggest that it is "the most important environmental effort ever undertaken in Contra Costa County."

DOW WETLANDS

Saturday, May 3, Dow opened its wetland area to the public. One guest, probably uninvited, was the wind. It was strong and ever present. MDAS's table, manned by Lloyd West, displayed some of the collection of bird skins so capably managed and protected by Norah Bain. The wetland provides a base for many avian species, a place worthy of a visit.

CRANES AND MEENASHI NAGENDRAN

No, folks, that's not a new language. "Mini" for short is a learned exponent of what it will take to save birds in years to come. Her slide-illustrated talk at the MDAS chapter meeting May 1 was simply great. If you missed it, you missed a lot of what Audubon has to be about. Maybe Mini can make another visit in the fall. Sorry if you managed to miss this visit.

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, June 5, **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: Steve Glover, 866-1409

Category 2

Saturday, June 7, **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: Fred Safier, 937-2906

Category 2

Wednesday, June 11, **Las Trampas Regional Park**. Meet 7:00 a.m. in parking lot at park entrance. From I-680, go west on Crow Canyon Road and right onto Bollinger Canyon Road. Parking lot is to the left at end of road. Carry liquids, the area can be hot. Grasshopper Sparrows are possible. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey. 254-0486

Category 2

Saturday and Sunday, June 21-22, **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. There are campgrounds at Chapman Creek and Yuba Pass. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-05486.

Category 2

WATERSHED WALKS

The Watershed Walks sponsored by the Contra Costa Water District conclude in June and July with the following three

trips co-sponsored by MDAS. These walks are intended to be a way to familiarize the public with the Los Vaqueros Watershed and to give the public a chance to participate in the planning the watershed's recreation programs. The attendance is limited, so please call the Contra Costa Water District at 688-8109 for reservations or more information.

Saturday, **June 14**, a general tour of the watershed, illustrating recreational program alternatives and trail linkages.

Saturday, **June 28**, a general tour of the watershed, illustrating recreational program alternatives and facilities

Saturday, **July 12**, a general tour of the watershed, illustrating recreational program alternatives, access and trails and resolving conflicts.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

GARIN REGIONAL PARK, April 5.

The leader would like to apologize to anyone trying to follow the directions in the *Quail* to the meeting place. The directions were taken from an old map and turned out to be no longer good. The three people who did manage to meet for the trip had beautiful weather and 49 species of birds seen. Early migrants included Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, House Wren, and Wilson's Warbler.

Elizabeth Dickey

LAKE LAGUNITAS, April 9.

The six birders had good weather for this trip. 40 species were seen. The highlight of the trip was a good look at a Pileated Woodpecker excavating a nest hole.

Elizabeth Dickey

IDA CLAYTON ROAD, April 24.

Six birders enjoyed a beautiful sunny day. The wildflowers were beautiful, especially the Dogwood, but we were still early for Fawn Lilies and Candysticks. Birding highlights included a singing California Thrasher at twenty feet, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Vaux's Swift, Wood Duck, nesting Ospreys and Great Blue Herons, and excellent close-range comparisons of Clark's and Western Grebes. 69 species were seen or heard, including a life bird for one and year birds for several of us.

John Jordan

DEL PUERTO CANYON, April 30.

A delightful day was had by twelve birders. Highlights included Prairie Falcon, two male Costa's Hummers, three Lewis's Woodpeckers, Barn and Great Horned Owls, Canyon and Rock Wrens, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Chipping Sparrow. Total species: 61.

Florence Bennett

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 in breeding plumage on 4/29 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Cattle Egret: 1 on 5/2 at Jersey Island. (SG) This appears to be the latest spring record for the county.

Northern Pintail: 1 female with 6 young on 4/27 at Shell Marsh. (SG)

Oldsquaw: 1 on 4/27 at Brooks Island, Richmond. (SG)

Swainson's Hawk: 1 on 4/27 at Pt. Isabel, Richmond, (SG), first record for West Contra Costa County; 1 on 4/27 over White Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park (SG).

Peregrine Falcon: 1 noted on 5/2 zooming northeast over her Alamo home while watching a Golden Eagle, a Red-shouldered Hawk, and two Red-tails. (JR)

Wild Turkey: 1 on 4/8 at Del Puerto Canyon. (GF, MP)

Black Rail: 1 on 4/29 at Piper Slough, Bethel Island. (SG)

Solitary Sandpiper: 2 on 4/26 at Colusa National Wildlife Refuge, Colusa County. (SG)

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 on 4/26 at the Woodland Trestle Ponds east of Woodland. (SG)

Baird's Sandpiper: 1 on 4/26 at Colusa NWR. (SG)

Black Tern: 1 on 4/26 at the Davis Sewage Ponds. (SG)

Black Skimmer: 1 on 4/27 on the beach at Brooks Island. (SG) Not recorded in the county until 1995, but now almost routine.

Black Swift: 2 on 4/19 in a northbound flock flying over her Alamo home that included hundreds of swallows (mostly Tree Swallows), dozens of White-throated Swifts and 3 Vaux's Swifts. (JR)

Vaux's Swift: 30+ on 4/27 at Mitchell Canyon, MDSP (SG); 1 on 4/29 at Piper Slough (SG).

Costa's Hummingbird: 1 on 4/9 (GF, MP), 1 male on 4/15 5.3 miles west of I-5 (FB, MJC), and 1 male on 4/30 3.6 miles west of I-5 (MDAS), all in Del Puerto Canyon.

Lewis's Woodpecker: 5 on 4/9 at mile 9.3 along Del Puerto Canyon Road (GF, MP); 5 on 4/15 in San Antonio Valley 0.5 mile south of the junction (FB, MJC).

Willow Flycatcher: 1 on 4/28 in Mitchell Canyon. (FB, MJC, BG, HH)

Hammond's Flycatcher: 1 on 4/28 in Mitchell Canyon. (FB, MJC)

Gray Flycatcher: 1 on 4/28 in Mitchell Canyon. (FB, MJC) Still less than 10 county records but now recorded annually in spring.

American Dipper: 1 on 4/4 along Kingridge Road, Sonoma County. (GF, MP)

Northern Shrike: 1 adult on 5/4 at Sequoia National Park in Tulare County. (SG) Extremely late.

Palm Warbler: 2 on 3/25 at the Mendoza Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (FB, MJC)

Dickcissel: 1 female on 4/7 (GF, MP, SG) and 4/15 (EM, JD, JR) along Pescadero Road, San Mateo County.

Black-chinned Sparrow: 3 singing males on 4/29 along South Gate Road, 2.6 miles from Diablo Road in MDSP. (JR, JD, EM)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 on 4/7 along Pescadero Road. (GF, MP, SG)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, MDAS Field Trip group, Ellie Mulke, Marjorie Plant, and Jean Richmond.

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.

Addendum to Observations: Bob Wisecarver reports that he has a pair of nesting Cooper's Hawks in his Walnut Heights yard in Walnut Creek. The Cooper's Hawks have apparently flattened the top of a squirrel's nest to use as a platform for their nest.

MDAS HONOREES

As part of the Evening with John James Audubon on March 16, seventeen members of MDAS were honored for five or more years of service to the chapter during the last ten years. The members of the committee who organized the event and selected those members honored also wish to acknowledge service by nine other MDAS members who did not attend the event. These nine members are the following:

Florence Bennett
Mary Jane Culver
Betty Gallagher
Bob Gallagher
Jim Lomax
Sheree Lomax
Pat MacEachern
Sally Steller
Ruth Stewart

Thank you all for your contributions to MDAS.

MANY THANKS

Our chapter from time to time receives monetary bequests, gifts, or donations for which we are very appreciative. This month we would like to acknowledge contributions of a different nature, which also support our chapter's goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation. We thank the following for their generosity with their time, work, and resources.

MDAS Hospitality Chair Nancy Wenninger declares the marsh clean-up was a success and thanks those who participated. On Saturday, April 26, more than thirty volunteers joined in the East Antioch Creek marsh clean-up sponsored by MDAS. The adults and children from our chapter and the community worked hard together to pull the shopping carts and other debris and litter from the site. MDAS hopes to create a wetlands preserve there, working with the County Flood Control District and the City of Antioch. A special thanks to all who helped with this first step in protecting this important habitat!

Vice-President, Conservation, Al McNabney and MDAS thank Bob Wisecarver of Walnut Creek for his donation to the chapter of several conservation books to be given to the Delta Science Center at Big Break for inclusion in DSC's budding library. Bob's gift will be of value to the Center's educational work.

On Earth Day, April 19, Cecil Williams organized and manned a booth jointly for MDAS and Wild Birds Unlimited at the John Muir Historical Event. She was assisted by Don Yoder, Norah Bain, and Georgette Howington. On May 3, Lloyd West did a yeoman's job organizing and manning a booth for MDAS at the Dow Wetlands Day. Norah Bain organized some of the chapter study skins for this event. Participating in these community events are very important in reaching a wider audience with the Audubon message of wildlife appreciation and conservation and we thank those who contributed their time to these efforts.

Thanks from Shirley Nootbaar of the Mt. Diablo Interpretive Association Art Committee to MDAS President Carol Frischmann, Rosita Harvey, Denise Wight, Mike Robertson, and participating artists/photographers Bob Gallagher, William Gill, Alan Gould, Bonnie Harrigan, Brian Murphy, Joel Summerhill, Doug Thompson, and Andree Thompson for helping with the *Birds of the Mountain* exhibit at Mt. Diablo Summit Museum. The show will hang until June 22.

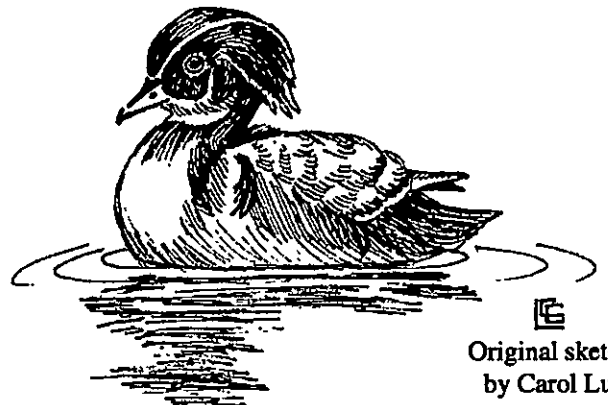
If you would like to contribute more to Audubon and MDAS than just the yearly membership dues, there are many ways in which you can do so. With calls for volunteerism coming from leaders both political and social, more of you may feel moved to help. MDAS would like to encourage you to "Think globally, act locally." Talk to any board member about possibilities. We are grateful for all support, large or small, financial or other, regular or on a one-time basis. We would also encourage you to thank those mentioned here personally for their contributions.

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: Happily, there have been no unpleasant incidents reported from recent field trips, but a reminder as we go out birding this summer should not be taken amiss. 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 trying to enjoy these same things. MDAS has a general reputation for courtesy and friendliness. Let's keep it that way while we enjoy our world.



Original sketch
by Carol Lutz

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Susan Andrews, Jill Bennett, Jim Bleckestaff, Tina Burroughs, Dave Dailey, Libby Dalcamo, Laura Dalton, Rebecca Davis, Reshma Devam, James Erickson, Matt and Chris Fleming, E. A. Follansbee, Richard and Ellen Ha, Wendy Hall, Horvath Family, J. Hutsen, Ed Jose, Mani Keeran, Mary Kessler, Audrey Kuppenbender, Ed Lahay, Patti Larson, Sam LeCount, Jo Lee, Renay Madeiros, Doug Matthew, Mike McClellan, Jesse Meyer, Phil and Linda Myers, Sylvia Nachlinger, R. E. Olson, Daniel Payne, Mrs. L. E. Peetz, Robert Polanco, Thea Priebe, Fritz and Ceclia Robbins, Allyn Lynn Rudow, Georgene Schriener, William Sears, Ingeburg Shaffer, Anna Spitz, Rick Sumner, Andree Thompson, Frances Torrey, Jeff Valentine, Drs. L. S. and B. S. Vodzak, Tommy Wagoner,

David Wallwork, Mel Weiner, Richard Wicker, John Will and Fritz Winje.

NEW GENERAL MEETING PLACE?

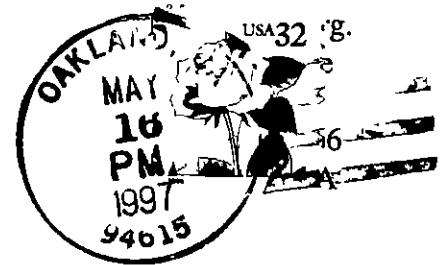
MDAS is currently discussing with the Lindsay Museum the possibility of holding our general meetings in one of the museum's rooms starting next fall. It is felt that the hooting of Great Horned Owls and the calling of Red-tailed Hawks would add a certain ambiance to the meetings. This is a preliminary announcement and will not affect the end-of-the-year potluck dinner in June which will be held at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center as announced. Watch for further information in the July and September *Quails*.

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Secretary: Eugenia Larson, 806-0644

July/August 1997

Vol. 43 No. 11

Next Deadline: August 7

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, bird information and the program will be given in the September issue of the *Quail*.

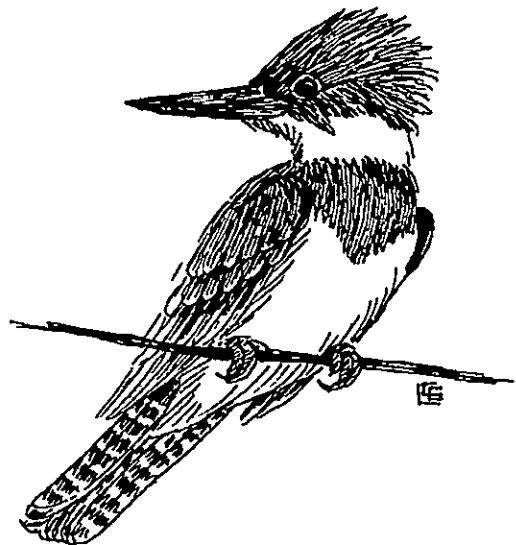
The general meeting place for meetings starting next fall will be the **Lindsay Museum** at 1931 1st Avenue, Walnut Creek. More information and directions will also be in the September *Quail*.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, July 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, 838-8840. The August board meeting will be Thursday, August 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Carol Frischmann, 186 Teracina Dr., San Ramon, 735-3836. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, August 22, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Pleasant Hill.

Eugenia Larson has regrettfully announced that due to professional constraints on her time, she will not be able to serve as MDAS Secretary next fall. Anyone who would be interested in serving the chapter in this position should please call any of the officers.

HAVE A GOOD SUMMER!



CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The MDAS year is ending. Some new officers will take charge when we meet next September. Others, like Barbara and Dan, will be heading for points north, a new life, and new challenges. They've made a huge contribution to MDAS and the MDAS activities. We wish them well. So, to those who are leaving, good luck. To those individuals picking up the reins and the challenges, we welcome your participation.

CAL/FED

The CAL/FED Process, Phase II, will bring major changes to the Bay/Delta. Substantial funds will be available to restore, rehabilitate, expand, and fix wetlands and adjacent uplands. Birds, fish, and other wildlife will be a focus of attention. For once, the needs of "the creatures" will receive helpful attention (providing the process works as intended). MDAS is interested in three projects: Shell Marsh, which has been written about almost *ad nauseum*, the Delta Science Center at Big Break, and the Julia Cox Freeman wetlands in Antioch.

TOSCO: THE EXPLOSION AND THE FINDINGS

Between 7:41 and 7:42 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 1996, an explosion and fire occurred at the hydrocracker unit at the Tosco refinery. One individual was killed, a number were injured, and an in-depth, concentrated investigation has been underway ever since. State, local, and other government regulators as well as Tosco's own people and experts have been seeking the causes.

The accident report, many pages long, was recently presented to the County Board of Supervisors in depth by Tosco's president, vice president, and general manager. A summary (confidential) report was provided to Tosco's Community Action Panel a few days earlier. A second report was also presented to the Board of Supervisors by County Health Services officials which included comments about training of hydrocracker operators.

This incident appears to be without precedent in the refining industry. The explosion was traced to a pipe rupture caused by a rapid rise in temperature in a section of the hydrocracker. The incident happened quickly and was unlike anything previously experienced. An action to "depress" the hydrocracker in response to the indicated heat rise was not taken.

Corrective actions will include automatic devices that will shut the unit down in the event of an unusual temperature increase in the unit. The criticisms about alerting the public were noted. Actions taken by Tosco should eliminate any similar recurrence. The Community Warning System should be in full operation. That system is designed to warn the public quickly if an incident occurs.

RADIO AUDUBON

The Audubon radio program featuring Jerry Kay has now been on the air for about a year. From September 1, 1996, through June 30, 1997, 56 individuals have taken time to appear with Jerry Kay on the Audubon programs, the topics of which have covered among others the Endangered Species Act, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, restoring our wetlands, and observing shorebirds. Knowledgeable participants believe the programs reach some 135,000 listeners. Let's see if we can increase the listening audience to 200,000 by the end of 1997.

HEATHER FARMS

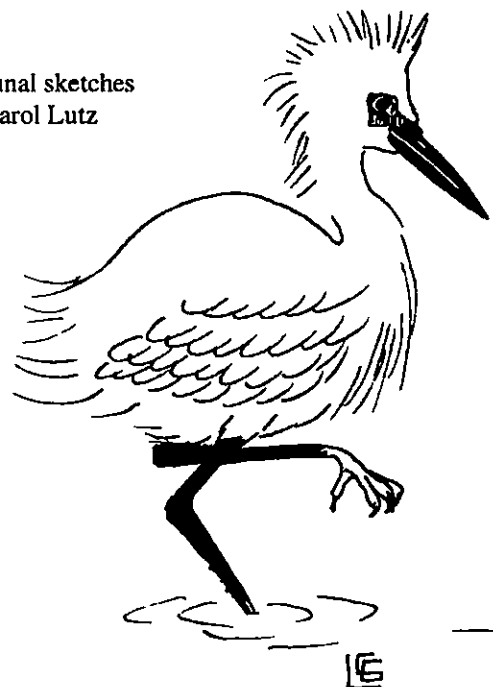
A thank-you to everyone who has so far taken the time to tell us what they think could be and should be included in a review of Heather Farms to improve this area for wildlife.

CONCORD NAVAL WEAPONS STATION

Fact or rumor? Wishful thinking or reality? City of Concord officials are initiating planning for the future of the Concord Naval Weapons Station in the event it is closed. The U. S. Navy and elected and federal officials deny there is ANY likelihood of the base being closed, but rumor and the prospect of all that land being available for development are just too much. So discussions are ongoing. MDAS has asked Concord officials to bring all interested parties into the planning process early on. MDAS people have carried out Christmas Bird Counts over many years in the area, so we KNOW, from observation, a good deal about it.

HAVE A HAPPY BIRD-WATCHING SUMMER

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

Saturday-Sunday, July 12-13, **Lassen National Park**. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Manzanita Lake at northwest entrance. We will spend Saturday looking for montane species at Lassen. The 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. Sunday morning we will meet at 7:30 a.m. at Lassen and head east to the Honey and Eagle Lakes area for montane and some Great Basin species, including Black Tern, Pinyon Jay and Yellow-headed Blackbird. We expect to see 130 to 140 species. The drive home through Reno is about six hours.

Leader: Steve Glover, 866-1409

Category 2

Saturday, July 26, **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.

Leader: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862

Category 2

Saturday, August 9, **Bodega Bay**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. at the 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.

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906

Category 1

Thursday, August 28, **Coyote Hills**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at La Gonda Way, turn right from El Pintado off I-680. Meet 8:15 a.m. in parking lot at the refuge visitor's center off Thornton Road. Call trip leader for directions to the refuge.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

MINES ROAD, May 3.

No turkeys, no roadrunners, no tanagers, and no Bald Eagles, but most important, almost no birders. Only four members toured Mines Road on this first warm Saturday in May. What we did have was good company, leisurely birding, 57 species of birds, and one coyote. The trip highlights included an active Red-tailed Hawk nest with three downy chicks, two sightings of Phainopepla, two sightings of Lewis's Woodpecker, two male Lawrence's Goldfinches, as well as the usual Bullock's Orioles, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Lazuli Buntings. Next year you will have another chance to join us when we visit what may be the most reliable spot in the Bay Area for some of these birds.

Hugh Harvey

MT. DIABLO, May 7.

Seven members and guests showed up for the annual trip up Mt. Diablo. It was a very warm day with temperatures reaching 85°-90° by mid-afternoon. 58 species were seen or heard during the day. Although Black-chinned Sparrow had been seen just two days before, we could not relocate the birds on this day. Many highlights occurred throughout the day, however. Sage Sparrow was well seen, and we had seven species of warblers including Yellow, Wilson's, Townsend's, and Black-throated Gray. Perhaps the best birds of the day were the Lawrence's Goldfinch seen at the junction campground. We rarely see these birds at the mountain. They rounded out a wonderful day on Mt. Diablo.

Jimm Edgar

MITCHELL CANYON, May 10.

Due to confusion resulting from closure of part of the park for a bicycle rally, the field trip was cancelled.

Mary Jane Culver

NAPA RIVER, May 22.

The trip began with the six birders watching a flight of twelve Canada Geese and ended with them watching a Green Heron strolling the shore of Lake Hennessy. Both sides of the Napa River Reserve were accessible and the orioles, grosbeaks, and towhees were abundant. We listened to the calls of Western Grebes during lunch but none danced this year. A total of 45 species was seen.

Elizabeth Dickey

CASWELL STATE PARK, May 28.

Three birders spent an aggravating morning dodging mosquitoes and searching for roads not damaged by winter flooding. The highlights were Wood Duck and Swainson's Hawk at Caswell, Black-chinned Hummingbird near Durham Ferry, and, on a trip extension to Corral Hollow Road, leisurely views of a Greater Roadrunner. 68 species noted.

Steve Glover

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.

Fared Grebe: 3 on 5/16 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG) Late.

Northern Pintail: 1 female with 5 half-grown young on 6/11 at Shell Marsh. (SG)

Blue-winged Teal: a pair on 5/9 at the Olema Marsh, Marin County. (MP, GF). This teal pair was later seen with young, representing the first confirmed nesting for Marin County.

Swainson's Hawk: 56 on 5/16 along the east side of Clifton Court Forebay. (SG) This is the largest flock yet noted in the county.

Prairie Falcon: 1 on 5/5 at Sunol Regional Park. (MP, GF)

California Quail: a pair on 5/11 and several noted throughout May and early June at Piper Slough on Bethel Island. (SG) Had disappeared from here until recently.

Mountain Quail: 2 seen and 20 heard on 5/8, 1 seen and 8 heard on 6/3 along Ice House Road, El Dorado County (FB, HH, RH, MJC); 4 heard 5/15 along Hauser Road, Sonoma County (MP, GF).

Black Rail: 2 heard on 5/21 and 1 heard on 6/11 at Piper Slough. (SG) These dates indicate breeding.

Whimbrel: 55 on 5/16 flying north over Piper Slough. (SG)

Caspian Tern: 40 on 5/14 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Greater Roadrunner: 3 on 5/21 along Mines Road, Alameda County. (FB, MJC, BG)

Vaux's Swift: 1 on 4/23 in Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park. (FB)

Black-chinned Hummingbird: 1 arrived on 4/28 and stayed through mid-May in their Concord yard (Bo&BG); 4 males throughout May to mid-June at Piper Slough (SG, GF, MP).

Lewis's Woodpecker: approximately 15 on 5/27 at Mitchell Ravine on the Alameda/San Joaquin County line (SG); on 6/7 at least 45 in Alameda County at Mitchell Ravine and up to 1 mile south of the Mitchell Shaft, including an adult feeding a juvenile, first confirmed Alameda County nesting in 20 years (SG).

Willow Flycatcher: 1 on 6/7 at Mitchell Ravine and 2 on 6/11 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Ash-throated Flycatcher: 1 on 6/11 at Piper Slough. (SG) Very late.

Common Raven: 1 on 6/8 over San Ramon. (SG)

Canyon Wren: 1 adult feeding 4 juveniles on 5/27 at Mitchell Ravine. (SG)

Yellow-breasted Chat: 3, possibly 4, singing males throughout May and early June at Piper Slough (SG), there were 7 here last year before bulldozing began to strengthen the levees; 2 on 5/21 at Mile 6.36 along Mines Road in Santa Clara County (FB).

Black-chinned Sparrow: 6 singing males on 5/2 along South Gate Road, MDSP. (FB, MJC, HH)

Black-throated Sparrow: 3 males on 5/22 along Grant Creek Road, El Dorado County. (MP, GF)

Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 singing on 5/29 along Wildcat Canyon Road, 1/3 mile below Inspiration Point on the way to Orinda. (SG)

Evening Grosbeak: one on 6/12 in her yard on North Gate Road. (LA) This is very late but there is one record from Oakland on June 13, 1973.

Observers: Lynn Ashlock, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Rosita Harvey, and Marjorie Plant.

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.

CALIFORNIA PIF MEETING

California Partners in Flight will meet on Friday, July 18, and Saturday, July 19, at Richardson Bay Audubon, Marin County. The session on Friday will deal with the Important Bird Areas Program, updates from the PIF working groups on education, monitoring, management, and research, a report on the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, and a discussion of conservation goals for riparian birds. The Saturday session will include local field trips.

Conservation goals for California's riparian obligate species are required to direct the protection, enhancement, and restoration of riparian habitats for birds throughout California. California PIF proposes to define the bird population and habitat objectives of fourteen of California's riparian obligate species. The fourteen species which are of special concern or on the state endangered list include Swainson's Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, Bank Swallow, Swainson's Thrush, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Song Sparrow, and Black-headed Grosbeak. Additional species will be added as they are identified. The information gathered on these fourteen species will be used to set measurable habitat restoration and protection goals for riparian bird communities through the Riparian Habitat Implementation Plan. Anyone with interest in any priority species is invited to attend this meeting and let their ideas be known.

For more information, please contact either Mini Nagendran, NAS, California PIF Co-Chair, at (916) 481-5332, extension 9, or Beth Hunning at (415) 388-2526, extension 23.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Is MDAS Living Your Vision?

Your Board of Directors is beginning long-range planning to update the mission, vision, and plans for MDAS as we look to the future of Audubon and our county. What is your vision? What would you like to see MDAS doing as a group? What role should we play in our rapidly-more-populated Contra Costa County? What should we be doing regarding the larger issues in California? Where should we be in five years? In ten years? Your suggestions and participation in realizing that vision are essential to our chapter.

There have been many accomplishments during the 1996-97 year.

We have had a full program of meetings and field trips. The Christmas Count and the Observations column in the *Quail* as well as the Bluebird Society (NABS) kept us in touch with the status of birds in our area. Elementary school children benefited through the Audubon Adventures education program. The chapter also participated in public outreach activities at various special events around the county and the country.

Conservation was also an important part of chapter activities. This year we began a "hands-on" conservation effort with the Flood Control District and the City of Antioch to restore the wetlands at the soon-to-be-named Julia Cox Freeman Wetland. Al McNabney continued to provide phenomenal representation of MDAS at projects which included the Delta Science Center and Shell Marsh. Al also was among those seeking reasonable solutions in the East County development corridor, including the Cowell Ranch. In his spare time, he helped to keep our local legislators aware of what MDAS sees as the critical issues.

Should we be doing more in education and public outreach? How can we attract more members in East Contra Costa County? How can we productively be involved in finding the solutions to the seemingly conflicting needs for more housing (roads, water, etc.) and the need to keep our environment healthy? How can the Board communicate better with the members? How can we get even more involvement from our membership?

Please write to me care of MDAS, P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053 with your ideas. If you're interested in being involved in our planning process, let me know that too. We have a terrific chapter with a very high level of active, contributing members. We're seeking to build on this excellent foundation and meet the challenges our county is facing over the next ten years. Thanks for your help and for your support.

THE 1997 MDAS BIRDATHON

by Barbara Burek

The Birdathon covered both ends of the country this year and two weekends. Denise Wight's Wight-crowned Spare-"O"'s birded Contra Costa County on April 19 and had the high total number of birds for the Birdathon. The Fledglings, consisting of Carol Frischmann, Joel Summerhill, and Barbara Vaughn, also birded Contra Costa County on April 19, while the Southern Fledgling, Nancy Wenninger, was birding that day in Georgia. The Fledglings raised the most money as a team for the Birdathon. Steve Glover returned from an out-of-state trip to bird Contra Costa County on April 27 and was only three birds behind Denise despite adverse weather conditions. The following reports from the three teams tell of their experiences.

Wow! Did we have a great day birding! Our total of 158 species included a few birds we had not seen on past Birdathons, and we missed a few species we thought were givens. Rain had been predicted but we were lucky. We stayed dry all day. Dave Shuford and I started our mad dash pre-dawn, at 4:45 a.m. at Mitchell Canyon, with a Barn Owl being our first official bird of the day, identified by its screechy call. We ended the day after dark at Point Edith, at 8:45 p.m.

Denise Wight

The Contra Costa contingent (of the Fledglings) spent 12 hours in the field and covered the county from the Martinez Regional Shoreline to Jersey Island in far East County. (We) turned in a respectable total of 94 species. Nancy contributed another 26 species, including several warblers, from Georgia, for a team total of 120 species.

Joel Summerhill

It's frustrating to know before you even start a Big Day that you won't break the record. Fog is a nuisance, rain is annoying, but neither compare to wind and it was blowing 15-20 mph overnight. You do what you can, but you miss a target species here, another there, and it's wait till next year. My route of Tilden to Richmond to Shell Marsh to Mitchell Canyon to East County worked well. It all added up to a nice day of 155 species but a full ten species from a new record.

Steve Glover

In addition to having fun birding, the teams raised \$865.00 for the chapter. MDAS would like to thank the following for their contributions: Hugh and Norah Bain, Gloria Cannon, Pierce Cauvin, Elizabeth Dickey, Shirley Ellis, Carol Frischmann, Daniel and Janet Goodman, Hugh and Rosita Harvey, Jill Hedgecock, Dave Hobbs, Norman and Deborah Kirshen, Helen and Al McNabney, Robert Soderbery, Spagy & Wilson, Joel Summerhill, Barbara Vaughn, Nancy Wenninger, Wild Birds Unlimited, Frank and Betty Williams, and Winifred and Gifford Young. Their generosity is very much appreciated.

THE LAST "LAST WORD"

This is the end of my tenth full year as editor of the *Quail* and the end of my tenure as editor. After I was involuntarily retired from U. C. Berkeley, Dan and I decided to try something new. We are moving north to the Arcata-Eureka area where Dan will try his hand at finishing the 3900 square feet of our new English Tudor home, while I am planning to do some serious birding at the Arcata Marsh. The claim is that Arcata has 425 species of birds. Let's see how many I can find.

It's been a privilege to serve as editor, as well as a challenge, a reward, and occasionally a frustration. It's also mostly been fun. I want to thank you all for your kind words and encouragement over the years. I am happy to announce that Gloria Cannon will be taking over as editor with the September issue. Please give her your continued support.

An editor does not produce a newsletter in a vacuum. I would like to thank the following for their invaluable contributions: Denise Wight for the chapter program write-ups, Al McNabney for Conservation Notes, Elizabeth Dickey for the field trips, Steve Glover for bird observations, Carol Frischmann for her President's notes, and Jill Hedgecock for International Corner. I also want to thank all those who wrote field trip reports or submitted other articles or notes of interest. Also thank you to the mailing crew, currently headed by Winnie and Gifford Young, which has continued its admirable and timely work assembling and mailing the printed *Quails*. Finally, a big thank you to my husband Dan for his work maintaining the chapter membership data base, helping edit the *Quail*, and printing the final result. All of you have helped create a newsletter of which we can all be proud.

I won't say "Good-bye" as I expect to be back from time to time. Perhaps "See you later." Certainly "Good birding." Over to you, Gloria.

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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The QUAIL

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Next Deadline: September 9

PRESIDENT'S NOTES by Carol Frischmann

Creating Synergy

"Lindsay Wildlife Museum fosters a living connection between people and wildlife in order to create a deeper commitment to the welfare of the natural world."

From the Lindsay Wildlife Museum mission statement.

The change in our meeting place is a step towards closer association with the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, an organization with which we share many core values. Some MDAS members know the Lindsay because you volunteer in the Wildlife Rehabilitation or Live Collections, visit the museum, or participate in other museum programs. For others, the Lindsay will be new.

I remember going to the Lindsay shortly after I arrived in California six years ago. As many others have before me, I became transfixed by the resident birds. Through volunteer work at the wildlife hospital and with the museum's live collection, I learned much about the birds and the issues confronting both wild
Continued on page 6

Upcoming Events:

MDAS Meetings Move to Lindsay Museum in Walnut Creek

Beginning with the September 9, Mt Diablo Audubon Society (MDAS) is moving to a new meeting location, the Community Room of the **Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Avenue, Walnut Creek.**

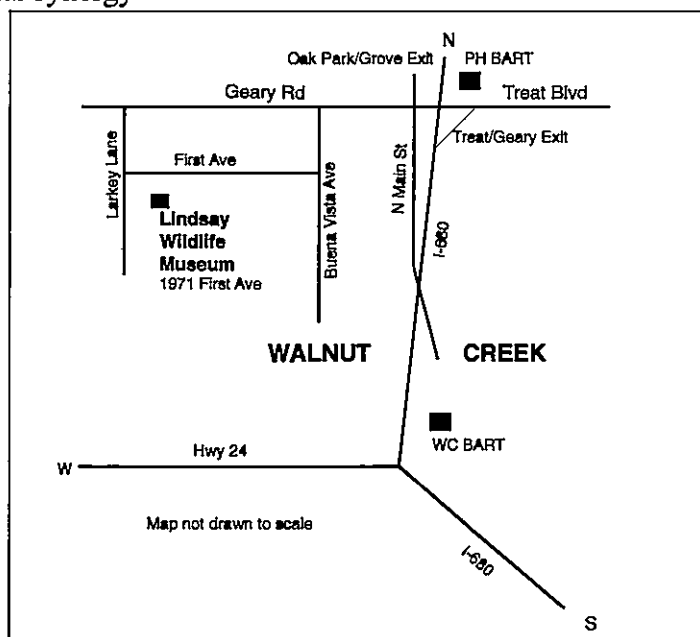
During the birding information portion of the September meeting, Cecil and Mike Williams will discuss the potential synergy

between MDAS and Lindsay Museum. A surprise visit by some of Lindsay's feathered residents promises to make this a memorable presentation for the whole family.

A Costa Rica Tour

Ever dream of birding in **Costa Rica**? For the September main program, Joel Summerhill will act as our guide to three of Costa Rica's most popular birding sites: Tortuguero National Park on the Caribbean side, Santa Rosa National Park on the Pacific side, and

Continued on page 6



The new meeting location of MDAS is the Lindsay Museum Community Room, 1931 First Avenue (next to Larkey Park), Walnut Creek. Ample parking is available. Handicapped access.

Conservation Notes

by Al McNabney

Welcome Back

Your visit to Madagascar, the Antarctic, or even Vallejo is now behind you. The memories will fade quickly. It's time to get back to business. Your participation in MDAS activities is important for birds, wildlife, and, YES, even for you. So welcome back. Hope you had a wonderful summer.

Is There Light at the End of the Tunnel?

July 31 may well become a day to be remembered. "Why?" you ask. That's the day Congressman George Miller (whose District includes many MDAS members) introduced H.R. 2351. It is the (now) preferred measure to replace the existing Endangered Species Act.

H.R. 2351, Endangered Species Recovery Act (ESRA) was possible because of Miller's long experience with environmental matters. If passed, ESRA will require the recovery of listed species by:

- Improving recovery plan development and implementation.
- Establishing deadlines for the development of recovery plans and requiring the plans to include biological criteria and definitive statements on how the goals would be achieved.
- Ensuring that federal actions will not jeopardize the recovery of listed species.
- Improving Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs).
- Providing tax incentives to landowners and communities.
- Making technical assistance available to landowners who undertake voluntary species conservation efforts.
- Providing planning assurances to landowners and communities that develop HCPs to aid in recovery of listed species.
- Establishing a streamlined permitting process for small landowners who develop "low effect HCPs."

Miller's H.R. 2351 is a proposal that reasonable people can support.

CAL/FED

Get to know those initials. The process they represent is going to affect not only YOUR future but the future of agriculture, wildlife, birds, and just about everything done in California.

The initial phase found CAL/FED issuing "Requests for Proposals" (RFPs) with about 100 million dollars to be allocated for improving, rehabilitating, restoring, and creating wetlands along with many other hoped-for Delta improvements.

Three projects in which MDAS has an interest have been submitted for either funding or solicitation of approval when the next round of funding occurs, probably in January or February 1998. The three projects are our old friend, the Shell Marsh; the Delta Science Center at Big Break; and the Julia Cox Freeman/Mt. Diablo Audubon Wetland Preserve in Antioch.

Water for Fish and Fowl or Beets and Cotton

The historic Miller-Bradley legislation, now five years old, has **never** been implemented. Strong interests, supported by leaders in the state of California, have actively blocked efforts to provide additional water (800,000 acre feet) for environmental needs.

Interestingly, over all these years, California water policy never allocated water for environmental purposes. Miller-Bradley legislation, passed as the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), "fixed" that. Congressman Miller said: "What we are seeing here is yet another effort by Pete Wilson and the agricultural community who actively opposed water reforms, to weaken the reforms designed to restore the devastating damage done by the operation of the

[federal] Central Valley Project."

Miller stated further, "It was never agreed—in fact, could not be agreed—that the CAL/FED process would result in the abandonment of the fish restoration goals established in federal law. Congress clearly recognized that the water dedicated to Bay-Delta purposes prior to CVPIA was insufficient and had resulted in the destruction of fisheries. That is why additional water was provided in CVPIA and that commitment cannot be rescinded."

Birding Articles Sought

We encourage MDAS members and readers to submit their own articles and observations about California birds and habitat. Macintosh format preferred or email to gannon@hotcoco.infi.net

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
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753-0862
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Christmas Count: Jim Edgar

Field Trip Reports

Las Trampas Regional Park, June 11

Six birders enjoyed a breezy June day and saw or heard 33 species. Our target bird was the **Grasshopper Sparrow**, which we found singing and in good view.

Unfortunately, realignment of the park roads made birding less enjoyable along the creek. We were either down in the trees with only chickadees and juncos about or up on the road too far for really good looks.

—Elizabeth Dickey

Yuba Pass, June 21-22

Thirty MDAS birdwatchers saw at least 100 species on the weekend trip to Yuba Pass. We had clear, warm weather and wonderful birdwatching. Several **White-headed Woodpeckers** were nesting in or near the campground, and a **Black-backed Woodpecker** awakened the campers each morning with loud, vigorous hammering. We watched for some time a male and a female **Williamson Sapsucker** feeding at their sap holes, and also found their nest. Nesting **Pygmy Owls** were near the campground, very easily seen in early morning and evening. Many of us saw the male owl bringing food to the nesting female.

We observed a **Poorwill** at very close range and listened to its call for at least 5 minutes on Saturday night on Chapman

Road. While we were waiting for darkness that evening, an adult **Golden Eagle** circled closely overhead several times. We saw many nesting birds with young on both days: **Ring-necked Ducks**, **coots**, **mallards**, and **Buffle-heads**; and a few lucky birders observed a **Wood Duck** family with seven young birds at Madora Lake. An **Osprey** flew overhead at this pond.

One very good birder found a **Gray Flycatcher** off Mt. Quail Road after most of us had given up. We had good views of **Sage Thrashers**, **Vesper Sparrows**, and **Brewer's Sparrows**. In the Valley, we saw many birds, including **White-faced Ibis**, **Sand Hill Cranes**, and an adult **Bald Eagle**. The **Swainson's Hawk** nest that we discovered a few years ago was again occupied by two adults, one a very light phase who stood guard and circled overhead.

The wildflowers this year were more beautiful than I ever remember them. This trip was lead by a combined effort and a lot of good birders. Many thanks to all.

—Pat MacEachern

Lassen National Park, July 12-13

O.K., I know I promised 130-140 species. Hopefully, 119 will be enough to attract a larger group next year to this wonderful area.

As anyone present on the field trip will tell you, Saturday was dreadfully slow. Still, we did manage over 50 species, including **White-headed Woodpecker**, **Clark's Nutcracker**, **Evening Grosbeak**, and **Townsend's Solitaire**.

Gratefully, Sunday was a vast improvement. Around Honey and Eagle Lakes, we managed many of the Great Basin specialties, including **Green-tailed Towhee**, **Mountain Bluebird**, **Bald Eagle**, **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, **Sage Thrasher**, **Pinyon Jay**, and **Black Tern**. An extension trip to Red Rock Road added **Juniper Titmouse**, the now split-off relative of our Oak Titmouse.

—Steve Glover

San Mateo, July 26

Ten birders enjoyed a beautiful day on the slightly breezy but warm San Mateo coast from Princeton Harbor south to Año Nuevo. We saw 75 species, including **Marbled Murrelets**, **Bank Swallows**, **Pigeon Guillemots**, **Common Murres**, three species of **loons**, three species of **terns**, and a **Wandering Tattler**.

—Joel Summerhill

Bodega Bay, August 9

Eleven birders enjoyed a mild, moist day at Bodega Bay. We saw 53 species, including **Black Oystercatchers**, **Wandering Tattler**, **Osprey**, and a raft of 20 or so **Pacific Loons**. Much discussion, but no conclusion, about a *Tringa* species that may well have been a Lesser Yellowlegs.

—Fred Safier



Hats Off!

Mt Diablo Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges the dedication of Gifford and Winnie Young and the mailing crew volunteers. The Youngs head the volunteer crew who collate, fold, label, and sort the *Quails* for mailing. Last year they mailed over 18,000 *Quails*. Gifford is putting his computer skills to new use after assuming responsibility for maintaining the MDAS database of members. Winnie has taken on more responsibilities as well; she is now the Chapter's acting Secretary. Many thanks to all the volunteers who, like Gifford and Winnie, make it possible to continue work of Audubon.

1997-1998 MDAS Field Trip Schedule

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

This is a **tentative** schedule of MDAS field trips in 1997-1998. Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Read the *Quail* for details 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 Kern River trip to southern California is a three-day trip. The Los Banos-Pinoche Valley trip, Yuba Pass, and Lassen trips are two days. Two-day or three-day trips may be done either day or any day alone.

September	13, Saturday	Moss Landing—Monterey	Category 3
	17, Wednesday	Hayward Regional Shoreline	Category 2
	27, Saturday	Outer Point Reyes	Category 2
October	2, Thursday	Bodega Bay	Category 1
	11, Saturday	Natomas Fish Hatchery	*
	15, Wednesday	Pt. Diablo (Hawk Hill), Marin Cty	Category 2
	25, Saturday	Abbott's Lagoon, Pt. Reyes	Category 3
	30, Thursday	Mountain View Sanitary Plant	Category 1
November	8, Saturday	Limantour, Pt. Reyes	Category 2
	13, Thursday	Arrowhead Marsh	Category 1
	22, Saturday	Charleston Slough near Mt. View	Category 2
December	4, Wednesday	Altamont	Category 1
	13, Saturday	Palo Alto Baylands	Category 1
	18, Thursday	Niles Canyon gravel pits	Category 2
	20, Saturday	CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	Volunteers Needed
January	10, Saturday	Putah Creek	Category 1
	15, Thursday	Sunol Regional Park	Category 2
	24, Saturday	Santa Cruz	*
	28, Wednesday	Grizzly Island Wildlife Refuge	Category 1
February	7&8, Sat. & Sun.	Los Banos—Pinoche Valley	Category 3
	12, Thursday	Thornton	Category 1
	21, Saturday	Bodega	Category 1
	25, Wednesday	Berkeley—Richmond Shoreline	Category 1
March	7, Saturday	Tomales Bay State Park	Category 3
	11, Wednesday	Hayward Regional Shoreline	Category 2
	26, Thursday	Briones Wildflowers	Category 2
	28, Saturday	Black Diamond Regional Park	Category 3
April	4, Saturday	Garin Regional Park	Category 3
	9, Thursday	Lake Lagunitas	Category 2
	18, Saturday	San Mateo coast	Category 2

April (cont)	22, Wednesday	Ida Clayton Rd, Napa County	Category 1
	25, Saturday	BIRDATHON fundraiser	
	30, Thursday	Del Puerto Canyon, Alameda County	Category 1
May	2, Saturday	Mines Road, Alameda County	Category 1
	6, Wednesday	Mt Diablo State Park	Category 2
	9, Saturday	Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo St. Park	Category 3
	14, Thursday	Napa River	Category 2
	23-25, Sat., Sun. & Mon.	Kern River	Category 3
27, Wednesday	East Contra Costa County	Category 2	
June	6, Saturday	Outer Point Reyes	Category 2
	10 or 11	TBA	
	20-21, Sat. & Sun.	Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley	Category 2
July	11-12, Sat. & Sun.	Lassen National Park	Category 2
August	1, Saturday	San Mateo coast	Category 2
	15, Saturday	Bodega Bay	Category 1

† indicates new trips.

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.



September Field Trips

Saturday, September 13, **Moss Landing-Monterey.**

Carpool: 7 a.m. on El Cerro Blvd west of I-680 freeway. Or meet at 9 a.m. in Moss Landing at the parking area opposite Dolan Rd, just south of the PG&E plant on SR 1. Category 3. Leader: Steve Glover, 846-7382

Wednesday, September 17, **Hayward Regional Shoreline.**

Carpool: 7:30 a.m. in Danville. From the north, take El Pintado exit off I-680, turn right (away from freeway), turn right again on La Gonda Way, and park along La Gonda. From the south, take the El Cerro exit, turn left on El Cerro to La Gonda and go right

to near the El Pintado offramp. Or meet at 8:15 in front of Visitor's Center at the Hayward Regional Shoreline. Take I-880 to SR 92 west. From the Clawiter exit, turn on Breakwater to the Visitor's Center. Water and shore birds. Category 2. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Saturday, September 27, **Outer Point Reyes.**

Carpool: 7 a.m. on Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Or meet at Drake's Beach at 9 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. Be prepared for variable weather. Category 2. Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041.

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

Observations

by Steve Glover

- Red-throated Loon**—1 on 8/3 at the Richmond Marina, possibly the first summer record for the County. (SG)
- Brown Pelican**—2 in Richmond area 6/24, 10 on 7/23, and 150+ on 8/3 (SG).
- Little Blue Heron**—1 adult on 6/23 at Bolinas Lagoon, Marin County (MP, GF); 1 adult on 7/28 at Crittenden Marsh, Mountain View (HH, BG, MJC, FB); 1 first year "calico" patterned bird on 7/22 at Marshall, Marin County (FB, HH, MJC).
- Oldsquaw**—one summering at Brooks Island near Richmond on 6/24 (SG).
- Harlequin Duck**—Pair still present at Brooks Island from 6/24-8/3 (SG).
- Common Merganser**—1 female at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 7/21 (SG).
- Osprey**—6 on 7/4 at Abbott's Lagoon, Marin County (GF, MP); 2 on 6/24 at Pt. San Pablo, Richmond (SG).
- Swainson's Hawk**—1 at CCF on 7/21 and 1 over Piper Slough on 8/3 (SG).
- Snowy Plover**—1 on 7/24 at Alameda South Shore (GF)
- Wandering Tattler**—2 at the Richmond Marina and 1 at Pt. Molate on 8/3 (SG).
- Curlew Sandpiper**—1 at 7/30 at Crittenden Marsh near Mountain View (GF). Very rare in northern California.
- Wilson's Phalarope**—at least 5 on 8/3 at Shell Marsh (SG).
- Heermann's Gull**—15+ in 5 minutes. Flying northeast past the Pt. San Pablo Lighthouse (SG). This is quite early for the County.
- Elegant Tern**—650 on 6/24 and 500+/- on 7/23 at Brooks Island (SG). Previous high count for County that I'm aware of was 250 This is also very early for so many.
- Arctic Tern**—1 on 7/8 at the Hayward R.S. (FB, MJC, BG). This is the 4th consecutive year that this bird has summered here. Otherwise, accidental in California in the summer.
- Horned Puffin**—1 on 6/2 at Chimney Rock, Pt. Reyes (MP, GF).
- Great Horned Owl**—4 juveniles giving their stellar jay-like calls on 8/3 along Bear Creek Rd (SG).
- Burrowing Owl**—35 on 7/31 around Sunset Rd near Knightsen (GF).
- Long-eared Owl**—1 calling on Bear Creek Rd on 8/3 (SG). Rare in the County but status poorly understood.
- Black Swift**—2 on 7/21 at Año Nuevo State Reserve (GF, MP).
- Purple Martin**—3 on 6/11 (JR, GF); 2 on 6/12 (GF, MP); and 8 on 7/1 (FB, MJC, BG, HH) on Limantour Road, Pt. Reyes
- House Wren**—1 on 7/19 in his Walnut Creek yard; his first there in 15 years (GF).
- MacGillivray's Warbler**—1 male, 1 female, and another heard on 8/3 just below Inspiration Point, Tilden Park (SG).
- Western Tanager**—1 male on 6/27 in his Walnut Creek yard (GF). This is a very "summery" date.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak**—1 male on 6/11 in the Berkeley hills (GF, JR).
- Lawrence's Goldfinch**—3 at Pt. San Pablo on 6/24 (SG). First record for western CCC.
- SG = Steve Glover
 JR = Jean Richmond
 MP = Marjorie Plant
 HH = Hugh Harvey
 GF = George Finger
 FB = Florence Bennet

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

PRESIDENT'S NOTES Continued from page one

life and people trying to coexist in an increasingly populated county. What I was learning at the Lindsay was complementary to what I was learning at Audubon

Like Audubon staff, members, and volunteers, the staff, members, and volunteers at the Lindsay are awesome. Lindsay folks have a talent for connecting people with wildlife at a gut level. They look forward to benefiting from the expertise of our members. Together we can find better ways to educate people about wildlife and the need for adequate habitat.

At this first meeting, we'll get acquainted with some Lindsay people and Lindsay birds. I hope we'll meet some new Audubon members too. MDAS is a wonderful organization. We're going to create synergy with another impressive organization. A new adjective will need to be created for the resulting activities

SEPTEMBER MEETING Continued from page one

Monteverde cloud forest along the central mountain spine.

The varied habitats of Costa Rica produce a bird list of over 850 species from a country the size of West Virginia. This small Central American country of three million has a literacy rate higher than the United States, no standing army, low unemployment, and approximately 15 percent of the country is preserved in national parks.

Plus Joel's presentation will give you much information on nature tours, Costa Rica's renowned naturalist guides, and world famous lodges.

See page 8 for the meeting schedule.

1997-1988 MDAS Meeting Schedule

MDAS General Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month except July and August. Mark your calendar for the 1997-1998 meetings:

- September 4
- October 2
- November 6
- December 4
- January 8
- February 5
- March 5
- April 2
- May 7
- June 4

The agenda for general meetings is as follows:

- 6:30 Doors open
- 7:00 Birding information
- 7:30 Business meeting
- 8:00 Social time
- 8:30 Program

Refreshments are provided; raffle; Audubon books, T-shirts, and gift items are available for purchase. New members are welcome.

Mailing Meeting

The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, September 18, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited store, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, in Pleasant Hill. Volunteers are welcomed.

MDAS Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be Thursday, September 11, 7:30 p.m., at the Interpretative Center, Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill. Board meetings are open to all interested members.



Recycled paper

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join, write a check (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available) 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: Mike Williams, Membership Chair, (510) 376-1631.

*Gloria Cannon, Editor, P.O. Box 8367, Pittsburg, CA 94565 (510) 753-0862, email: gcannon@hotmail.com
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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



TIME VALUE MAIL

News from *Wild birds Unlimited*

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

Wild Birds Unlimited Interpretative Center will be holding classes on Northern California birds. Learn how to identify them, how birds behave, and what kind of food they like. The instructor is Denise Wright, who has been actively birding for 11 years and is a long-term member of MDAS. She also teaches bird classes in Orinda. Her classes are fun and informative.

Beginning class: suitable for beginner and intermediate birders. Starts Tuesday, September 2. Meets for 5 consecutive Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m.

Continuing class: suitable for those with some birding skills. Emphasis will on those hard-to-identify "LBJs," such as sparrows and wrens. Starts Wednesday, September 3. Meets for 5 consecutive Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.

Both classes also include one Saturday birdwalk (date and time to be determined).

Cost per class: \$40

Wanted: MDAS Volunteers

MDAS has many ongoing projects that are important not only to California wildlife but to all of us in Contra Costa. Please be an active member of the Mt Diablo Audubon Society. Your skills, knowledge, and time are valuable, and we need YOU.

If you are detail-oriented and want to be more involved with Chapter activities, please consider volunteering to be the MDAS Secretary. This is an important position on the Board. Call MDAS President Carol Frischman (735-3836) for more information.

If you enjoy meeting people and have a few spare hours on an occasional weekend, MDAS needs volunteers to serve at its booth at various festivals and events in Contra Costa County. Call Joel Summerhill (753-0862) for more information.

If you have an hour or two on one Friday a month, join the mailing crew. The next Quail mailing meeting will be on Friday, September 18, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited store, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill.



Snapshots

Six black ibis
step through the black and mossy panels
of summer water.

Six times
I sigh with delight.

Keep looking.

The way a muskrat
in the snick of its teeth can carry
long branches of leaves.

Small hawks
cleaning their beaks
in the sun.

If you think daylight is just daylight
then it is just daylight.

Believe me these are not just words
talking.
This is my life, thinking of the darkness
to follow.

Keep looking.

The fox, his barking, in god's darkness,
as of a little dog.
The flounce of his teeth.

Every morning
all those pink and green doors
into the sea.
—Mary Oliver

reprinted from the *Amicus Journal*, Sept. 1997

Birding Websites

The **National Audubon Society** website offers information on national campaigns, bird conservation, education, activities for children, Audubon support, and national chapters:

<http://www.audubon.org/>

Wild Wings Heading North—Track Snow Geese on the Web—what is more beautiful than a flock of snow geese in flight? This Website can be enjoyed by the whole family:

<http://north.audubon.org/>

Audubon-California, a beautiful website, provides a wealth of information about Audubon at the state level:

<http://www.audubon-ca.org/>

Birding on Web offers Hot Lists, Chat lines, Links to other birding sites. Definitely bookmark this one

<http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/birding.html>

New MDAS Members

Lana Aguilar, D.Ahumada, Joselito Asuncion, Victor Bacigalupi, Jean Backeberg, Teresa Balnesi, Colleen Barnard, Marvin and Roberta Baron, Charlotte Barr, Diane Bauer, Ruth Beeve, M. Belas, Mrs. S. Channing Bingham, Cornalia Bleuel, Harry Bows, Judy Boyd, Michael Boyer, Peggy Bronthron, Jennifer Buys, Barbara Calderon, Leroy Calhoun, Rod Cambridge, D. Capell, Arthur Chan, Shao Chen, Mareva Cheung, Linda Cho, Ben Cochrane, Sharon Craig, Julia Dejauregui, Carmen Duarte, Joseph Eiden, Enid Emerson, Judith Fewster, Lisa Francisa, Margaret Gannon, Angelo Garcia, D. L. Garrison, Cynthia Golfus, Janet and Ron Goodman, Edward Gould, Stanley Graham



The QUAIL

a publication of the
Mt Diablo Audubon Society
Walnut Creek, CA
94597-0053

October 1997

Vol. 44, No. 2

Next Deadline: ~~November 6~~

Oct 2

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

MDAS Finances

Each year the MDAS Chapter Financial Report is published in the *Quail* (see page 4). This report covers the period July 1996 through June 1997. The Board of Directors, as your elected representatives, has responsibility for the Chapter's finances. Let's take a quick look at where our money comes from and where it is spent.

The National Audubon Society returns an allocation of the national dues paid by our membership, which provides 36% of our income. Administrative activities, such as our interest income, account for 6% of our total income. Fundraising efforts account for 46% or almost \$10,000 of our revenue. Site guide sales are our largest grossing effort, rising more than \$2,500 this year. Sales of *Entertainment* books also provide a substantial income. Our most profitable fundraising included the Bird-a-Thon (\$1,125), raffles and donations.

The *Quail* is our largest expense at 32% of our spending. In-house production has kept this expense well below that of other chapters for many years. Conservation and education activities accounted for 28% of our spending. Fundraising expenses (purchase of *Entertainment* books, reprinting of *Birding Northern California*) were 17% of our budget. (Continued on page 5)

Upcoming Events:

MDAS Initiates Breeding Bird Atlas for Contra Costa County

Contra Costa County is going to have its own *Breeding Bird Atlas*! For the October program, Steve Glover and Rusty Scalf will give a presentation on the MDAS project to develop a *Breeding Bird Atlas* for our county.

A breeding bird atlas maps all the bird species that breed in an given geographical area, based on specific criteria for possible, probable, and confirmed breeding.

When the atlas is completed, we will know what birds breed in Contra Costa and where they breed, and we'll have a sense of their abundance. The atlas sets up a baseline of accurate breeding bird information in Contra Costa that will be of great value to local bird conservation.

Steve will be heading the atlas project, and Rusty will be producing the informational maps. Rusty is also currently mapping many other atlas projects in California.

Contra Costa is one of the last Bay Area counties to complete a breeding bird atlas, so we look forward to getting started. This will be an exciting project in which you can participate. Join us for this presentation and be in on the fun

from the beginning!

For more information on the organization of the project, see page 3.

Restoring a Wetland, Rebuilding Habitat

MDAS is making a difference in eastern Contra Costa County. During the Birding Information portion of the October program, Nancy Wenninger will explain the unique partnership between MDAS and the Contra Costa County Flood Control District in efforts to preserve the wildlife habitat and restore a valuable wetland on East Antioch Creek. Nancy is leading the project planning and fundraising.

Birding Information begins at 7 p.m. at the General Meeting. See page 8 for date and directions.

Lindsay Director Welcomes MDAS

At the September General Meeting, Michael Duty, Director of the Lindsay Museum, welcomed MDAS members to their new monthly meeting location in the Community Room of the museum. He outlined his hopes for a close working relationship between the two (Continued on page 2)

Conservation Notes

by Al McNabney

Update on CAL/FED

Study phases of the CAL/FED process are moving into high gear. So far, it's difficult to determine just what the recommended results will be. Over 400 proposals have been submitted for improving the Delta environment.

CAL/FED has about \$70 million in hand with additional millions from the recently signed Federal budget balancing law. Even so, the amount of money requested in the existing proposals is about double the total funds that will be available for funding this round of proposals.

The CAL/FED process identified a number of avian species for consideration. However, few appear to be speaking to the need for ACTION. MDAS has requested that

CAL/FED give attention to the listed avian species to the end that proposals will be submitted to ensure the species will be considered for recovery.

Unless the CAL/FED process gets bogged down (which is a possibility) the ultimate impacts will be felt by every individual in the state. Environmental matters will be affected. Hopefully in a positive manner. Water allocations for the Bay/Delta, the

environment, agriculture, northern California, and the southern parts of the state will all be affected. Throw in the ongoing battle between the LA Metropolitan Water District and the City of San Diego re-use of Colorado River water, and we have a stew of monumental proportions. At least it'll be interesting.

Audubon Radio Calling

Recent word indicates another contract has been completed between Audubon-

California and Jerry Kay, well-known radio personality. In addition to this lineup of broadcasts (see inset box) in the Bay Area, KAZU Pacific Grove will be added in about a month.

The Audubon programs can also be heard through

the Environmental News Network on the Worldwide Web and are being picked up by media such as the San Francisco *Chronicle's* web site, <http://www.sfgate.com>

You can be helpful. Listen for the broadcasts. Give us your opinion. Are the broadcasts good, bad, indifferent? Further, if you have suggestions for topics, or speakers, let us know.

AUDUBON RADIO SCHEDULE

KQED-FM (88.5)

3:58 p.m., Monday-Friday

KCBS-AM (740)

5:55 p.m. and 9:23 p.m., Saturday;

7:26 p.m., Sunday;

1:21 a.m. and 3:21 a.m., Monday;

4:23 a.m. Monday-Saturday

KDFC-FM (102.1)

6:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., and

9:30 p.m. Saturday;

3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Sunday.

Continued from page 1
conservation organizations.

Duty told the large group of attendees that he envisions the Lindsay Museum as a hub for groups that care about the environment and that want to make a difference. He urged MDAS members to use the museum and pledged his support for joint projects.

Lindsay Museum, according to Duty, is one of the largest and oldest wildlife rehabilitation centers in the U.S., treating some 6,000 animals a year. It returns as many of these animals as possible to the wild—about 45%.

This institution is a pioneer in teaching about the natural environment and how people can live with wildlife. "The real job of the Lindsay," said Duty, "is to teach people how to be better humans. In being here for the animals, we're here for each other. We gain insight into what it is to be human in the late twentieth century."

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON
(510) 283-8266**

President: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Secretary: Mike Tischler
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Nominations: Shirley Ellis
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: Carolyn Erdman (707) 426-9847
Education: Cecil Williams, 376-1631
Access: Beverly Hawley
Chapter Development: Joel Summerhill,
753-0862
Hands-On Conservation: Nancy Wenninger
Field Guide: Jean Richmond
Christmas Count: Jim Edgar

Audubon Adventures

With school starting, MDAS is again sponsoring Audubon Adventures, a program that provides a bimonthly newspaper on nature and the environment for each student in a class as well as a teacher's guide, for third through sixth graders.

If you want to sponsor a class or nominate a class for sponsorship, call Cecil Williams, at (510) 798-0303.

MDAS Begins 5-Year Project

● Glover To Lead Breeding Bird Atlas Effort

Steve Glover, the *Quail's* Observations correspondent and MDAS field trip leader, has agreed to lead the Chapter's effort to develop a **Breeding Bird Atlas for Contra Costa County**.

Goal of the Project

The ultimate goal of this project is to "publish an accurate account of the distribution of the breeding birds of Contra Costa County during the years of 1998 to 2002," said Steve.

To accomplish this, the project will break the county down into 5-kilometer-square blocks, and volunteers will then census the blocks during the breeding season. This field work will occur during the springs and summers of the years 1998-2002. "We will search for evidence of breeding for every species in the block," Steve said.

● When the Atlas Is Completed

"When the atlas is completed, we will be able to produce a map for each breeding species," Steve stated. "These maps will serve as a baseline for judging future population changes as well as provide a reference for biologists, politicians, and

land-use planners."

According to Steve Glover, the maps will be of a much finer scale than anything presently available. In addition, they match up perfectly with the rest of the atlases already completed, thus allowing the creation of maps for the whole Bay Area and eventually for the state. Steve points out that just as MDAS begins its atlas, seven of the other eight Bay Area counties have already completed work on matching five-year projects.

Volunteer Effort

Another exciting aspect of this project will be the Chapter's unique attempt to involve local high school students in the project. Final details have yet to be worked out, but MDAS and the Lindsay Museum will coordinate volunteers to involve younger people in the world of conservation.

Like the project itself, this plan can only be successful with the help of MDAS members, but commitments, both of time and money, will be relatively minimal. Volunteers will be asked to spend about

30 hours in their block between the months of March and July and especially during May and June.

Volunteers don't have to be a expert birders to help, just patient and ready to learn. Because the atlas relies completely upon the efforts of volunteers, costs should be minimal. There may be a small yearly fee for participating in the project.

Training Sessions Scheduled

Training sessions covering general procedures and data reporting as well as identification and nest finding strategy will be given in February and March. Steve will provide more details at the general meeting in October.

What You Can Do

If you would like to join in this valuable project, or if you just have some questions, come to the October meeting and hear the details from Steve. Or get in touch with him by e-mail at sgloverccc@aol.com or by phone at 510-866-1409, or write to him at 178 Country Brook Loop, San Ramon, 94583.



Hats Off!

At the heart of what Audubon is all about is birdwatching and field trips. What makes the difference between a field trip that's a pleasant walk and one that's an exciting outing for birders is often an experienced field trip leader, and MDAS has some of the best. Leaders like George Finger, Barbara Vaughn, Barbara Burck, Jimm Edgar, Denise Wright, Shirley Ellis, Steve Glover, Jim Lomax, Maury Stern, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, John Davis, Gen Sattler, Kevin Hintsa, Jean Richmond, Dan Van Zile, Pat MacEachen, Harry and Betty Adamson, Hugh Harvey, Betty Gallagher, Bill Chilson, Ed Hase, Bob Richmond, Fred Safier, Joel Summerhill, John Jordan, Norah and Hugh Bain, Judi Cooper, and Elizabeth Dickey have shared their birding expertise and enthusiasm for nature with hundreds of Audubon member and nonmembers. Elizabeth Dickey is not only one of the best birders in northern California, but she has also organized—and frequently led—over 40 field trips a year since 1980. Birders leave her field trips as better birders—we all have learned from her to see more clearly and to enjoy nature more. Take advantage of the knowledge of all our field trip leaders and join them for a field trip soon.

MDAS Annual Financial Report, FY 1997

Pam Keiser, Treasurer

	<u>Operating Account</u>	<u>Conservation Account</u>
REVENUE		
Advertising \$	400.00	
Birdathon	1,125.40	
Calif Bluebird Recovery Program	2,718.50	
Donations	762.00	
Fund Raising Revenue		
Birdwalks	262.00	
Entertainment	2,370.00	
Napkins	31.75	
Raffle	875.00	
T-shirts	<u>174.00</u>	
Total Fund Raising Revenue	3,712.75	
Interest Earned	288.75	433.21
National Audubon Dues Share	7,871.53	
<i>Quail</i> Subscriptions	237.00	
Recognition Dinner Ticket Sales	1,438.70	
Other Sales	<u>65.08</u>	<u>2,526.55</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	18,619.71	2,959.76
EXPENSES		
Administration	1,165.22	
Bluebird Recovery Expenses	1,271.85	
Christmas Bird Count	318.00	
Conservation	76.75	
Contributions	1,270.00	1,100.00
Dues Remitted to NAS	120.00	
Education	—	297.70
Fund Raising Expense	1,696.00	
Hospitality	73.89	
Insurance	553.00	
Programs	700.00	
<i>Quail</i> Expense	6,623.48	
Recognition Dinner	2,224.31	
Rent	830.00	
Sales Expense	375.83	31.36
Site Guide Revision Expense		1,290.00
Telephone	<u>213.63</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES	17,511.96	2,719.06
EXCESS REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	1,107.75	240.7
BEGINNING CASH BALANCE	11,060.02	17,020.43
ENDING CASH BALANCE	12,167.77	17,261.13

PRESIDENT'S NOTES (Continued from Page 1)

Other administrative expenses were 15%, including insurance and volunteer recognition. Program expenses for monthly meetings were 8% of our budget.

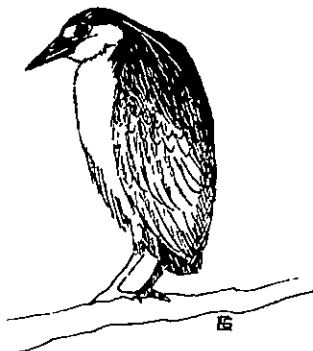
Many thanks to all of you who contributed through your National dues, *Quail* subscriptions, raffle tickets and *Entertainment* book purchases, donations, and support of the Bird-a-Thon and our other fundraising events. If it weren't for you, there would be no revenue to support our Chapter functions. If you have comments or questions, please contact me at the Chapter address or at our next membership meeting.

Field Trip Report

Coyote Hills, August 28

Three MDAS members enjoyed a few cool and breezy morning hours (near the Bay) followed by a few much warmer ones when we moved a few hundred feet inland.

The day was memorable for what we didn't see: The tide was high and so few shorebirds were evident. The resident kites were nowhere to be seen, and attempts to call rails were in vain. Nevertheless, a beautiful morning and spectacular location made it quite worthwhile.—*Barbara Vaughn*



October Field Trips

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

Field trips are open to MDAS members and nonmembers alike. You do not have to be a birding expert; only one who enjoys nature. Bring binoculars, field guides, and lunch. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Trips go in light rain or drizzle. If in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure. Carpool time is the departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Thursday, October 2, Bodega Bay.

Carpool meets at 7:30 a.m., southwest corner of Sun Valley Shopping Center parking lot. Or meet at 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 the left, opposite a Union '76 station. Shorebirds, rails, waterbirds, migrants.

Leader: Steve Glover (510) 866-1409
Category 1

Saturday, October 11, Natomas Fish Hatchery.

Carpool meets at 7:30 a.m. at the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. The hatchery will be near the peak of the fall salmon run. We will also bird along the American River below the dam.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey,
(510) 254-0486 Category 1

Wednesday, October 15, Point Diablo (Hawk Hill).

Carpool meets at 8:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Or meet at 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 and swifts.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey,
(510) 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, October 25, Abbott's Lagoon.

Carpool meets at 7:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Or meet at 8:30 a.m. at Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Point Reyes NP near Olema. 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: Maury Stern, (510) 284-5980
Category 3

Thursday, October 30, Mountain View Sanitary Plant.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the new Visitor's Center. Take Pacheco Blvd. exit from I-680, turn right onto Arthur Rd., and go under the freeway. Arthur Rd. 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; possibly bitterns and heron.

Leader: Norah Bain, (510) 254-4516
Category 1

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Observations

by Steve Glover

Common Loon: One on 8/26 in the Richmond Marina (SG). Extremely rare in the county during summer, but it could also be a very early migrant.

Eared Grebe: 16 on 8/20 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. This is early for the county. (SG)

White-winged Scoter: 2-3 on 8/26 at Brooks Island, seen from the Richmond Marina at the end of Marina Way (SG).

Osprey: One on 8/20 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron (SG). Surprisingly rare at this seemingly perfect habitat.

Swainson's Hawk: Five on 8/20 at Piper Slough at the north end of Bethel Island Rd. on Bethel Island. (SG).

Peregrine Falcon: One on the pair of radio towers at Pt. Isabel Reg. Shoreline in Richmond on 8/26 and 9/1 (SG).

Lesser Yellowlegs: One on 8/10 at the north end of Shell Marsh (SG).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: One juvenile on 8/26 at the Richmond Sewer Ponds (SG). A fine example of how few birders are actively looking for birds in the county, this is but the third county record.

White-rumped Sandpiper: One adult on 9/5 at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station near Milpitas in Santa Clara Co. (SG, Ron Lindeman, Kevin Hints). First found 9/3 as reported on the Rare Bird Alert. Very rare in the state.

Pectoral Sandpiper: One juvenile on 9/1 at the Richmond Sewer Ponds (SG).

Wilson's Phalarope: 6 on 8/10 and one on 8/14 at the north end of Shell Marsh (SG).

Parasitic Jaeger: One on 8/24, seen from Friendship Park at the end of Marina Bay Parkway in Richmond (Lilian and Steve Fuji). Just the third record for the county.

Common Tern: One juvenile on 8/26 at Pt. Isabel Reg. Shoreline (SG).

Common Murre: One on 8/21 at Pt. Isabel Reg. Shoreline (SG).

Marbled Murrelet: One on 8/24, seen from Friendship Park at the end of Marina Bay Parkway in Richmond (Lilian and Steve Fuji). Rare in the county, but the records are increasing in recent years.

Vaux's Swift: 24 on 9/4 flying by the hawkwatch site at Miller/Knox Reg. Shoreline. (SG).

Willow Flycatcher: Two on 8/29 at Piper Slough at the north end of Bethel Island. (SG).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One on 8/30 at Miller/Knox Reg. Shoreline (SG).

Warbling Vireo: 25+ on 9/4 at Jewel Lake in Tilden Reg. Park (SG).

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

What Happened to the Titmouse?

The designations of some California birds have changed:

Species Splits

The Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus pedrix*) of the western Pacific is split from **Marbled Murrelet**.

Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) and **Juniper Titmouse** (*B. ridgwai*) are split out of the former **Plain Titmouse**. Oak Titmouse generally inhabits foothills west of the Sierra Nevada, and Juniper, Great Basin habitats east of those mountains.

Solitary Vireo is split three ways: **Blue-headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*), the eastern one; **Plumbeous Vireo** (*V. plumbeus*), mountains of the southern Great Basin and Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts; and **Cassin's Vireo** (*V. cassinii*), the western one.

Phylogenetic Changes

New World Vultures move from diurnal raptors to the order *Ciconiformes* and are now listed after the storks, to which they are more closely related.

Whistling Ducks move from puddle ducks to the top of the *Anseriformes* which is where they belong.

Oscine passerines now belong with shrikes, then vireos, then corvids. Vireos and warblers are not as close as was formerly thought.

News from *Wild Birds Unlimited*

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

Visit Wild Birds for
an exciting October Fest!!
Saturday, October 4

Come for a fun-filled, educational day:

- Seed and suet available to stock your feeders.
- 8 a.m. Birdwalk—call for reservations.
- Meet Gary Bogue, local nature writer.
- See Takai, the 3-year-old gray wolf.
- Visit with Woodrow, the Acorn Woodpecker
- See the Lindsay Wildlife Museum presentation on live bats.
- Free Halloween Bat from Spirit Halloween.
- Heather Farms Garden Center exhibit on plants that attract birds and butterflies.
- Contra Costa Beekeepers will be there with honeybees (not from Africa).
- Exhibits by Mt Diablo Audubon Society, Martinez Land Trust, and Save Mt. Diablo Association
- Display of Wild Bryde nature jewelry.
- Release of 100 Monarch Butterflies.

Sample shade-grown coffee and talk to the roast master. Shade-grown coffee preserves the habitat of migratory birds by maintaining the native tree canopy and helps protect endangered species.

*Celebrate the
Wild Things*

**National Wildlife
Refuge Week,
October 12-18**

Chapter Announcements

The MDAS Board welcomes Mike Tischler to its ranks. Mike has volunteered to assume the responsibilities of Chapter secretary. The Board appreciates the assistance of Winifred Young, who served as acting secretary for the past few months

We sadly inform you of the death on August 2 of former MDAS member, Frank Beyer, 91, in Port Orchard, WA, following a lengthy illness. Among his many contributions to MDAS, he served as field trip chairman and field trip leader and also presented a number of excellent slide programs at our meetings. Condolances may be sent to his daughter, Ruth Heim, 7279 Fern Vista Pl SW, Port Orchard, WA 98367-7523.

MDAS gratefully acknowledges the donations of

- Diane and Bob Malucelli.
- Beverley Chamberlain who has given the Chapter a beautiful collection of porcelain butterflies to aid our fundraising.

Please be an active member of the Mt Diablo Audubon Society. Your skills, knowledge, and time are valuable, and we need YOU.

If you have an hour or two on one Friday a month, join the mailing crew. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, October 17, at 9:30 a.m. at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill.

MDAS Welcomes New Members

James Greenwood, Hannie Gross, Alicia Guerra, Jim Hafft, M. Hardisty, Mark Harrigan, Mrs. V. Hartley, Julie Heng, Dr. Jerrold Henry, Susan Hill, R. Hobbet, Bernard Hochendoner, Milton Hughes, Fa Lu Hutson, Bob Jeanes, Coreen Johansson, Mark Jonas, Gloria Joseph, C. J. Kalin, Virginia Kalsbeek, Emmy Kennerley, Geraldine Khan, Gail Koscelnik, Luann Kresevich, Diane Krpan, Gordon and Lynn Lakso, Joan Lawrence, John Lechmanik, Howard Lederer, Harris Levy, Barbara Mackey, Harold Maddox, Leona Maillette, Joanne Mailman, Sherrill Mar, Meghan Mason, Margaret Meilandt, Barbara Markstein, Tertia Mason, Dr. Dianna Matthias, Miles Maynard, Angela Mazur, Edward McIntosh, Anne Meyer, Mary Miller, Richard Moerschell, Patrick Moore, Michael Morris, F. W. Moulthrop, Carol Mulcahy, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mullin, William Muraoka, Brian Murphy, Mr. and Mrs David Nelson, Trisha Oldenkamp, K. A. Oliver, Donald Ome, K. E. O'Meara, Theresa O'Shea, Dick Overstreet, Alice Parker, Ronald and Chris Parks, Elizabeth Perez, Barbara Piepho, Thea Priebe, Nancy Rampani, Frances Reimer, Carmel Rice, June Richard, Christine Ritter, Stephen Rojek, Lior Rubin, Dominique Santos, Nooka Sasaki, Louis Saylor, Diane Schmurr, Suzanne Schnyder, J. M. Schuller, Irving Seely, Suzanne Seidman, June Shimaura, Louis Sison, Edward Skelly, James Slusser.

Entertainment '98

The 1998 Entertainment Book is here and it's bigger and better than ever! The Greater East Bay Area edition now covers BOTH CONTRA COSTA AND ALAMEDA COUNTIES.

Help your Audubon chapter by purchasing this great savings book at chapter meetings or at either of two Wild Birds Unlimited locations: 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill; or 7182 Regional St., Dublin.

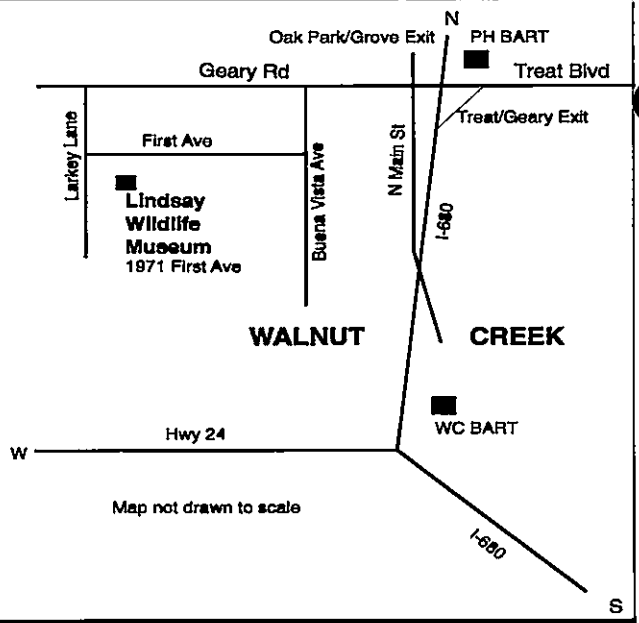
CALENDAR

Oct. 2, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, Community Room, Lindsay Museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek (For directions, see map to the right.)

Oct. 9, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Cost Blvd, PH

Oct. 17, Fri., 9 a.m.—*Quail* Mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH (Volunteers prepare *Quail* issue for mailing.)

Dec. 20, Sat., all day—Christmas Bird Count. Volunteers work in teams. Call Jimm Edgar for info. 658-2330.



The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join, write a check (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available) 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: Mike Williams, Membership Chair, (510) 376-1631.

Gloria Cannon, Editor, P.O. Box 8367, Pittsburg, CA 94565, (510) 753-0862, email: gcannon@hotcoco.infi.net
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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



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Walnut Creek, CA
94597-0053

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Population and Habitat

In talking with my father about a state Audubon meeting I attended, he made the comment, "If you're so interested in birds and the environment, why don't you talk about population! That's at the root of the problem. With the population of the United States doubling since World War II, how can you be serious about conservation if you don't consider this issue?"

I'm not sure what the population growth has been in the last 50 years, but all we need to do is look around, and we can see what the impact of increasing population has had on Contra Costa County. What my father (a closet conservationist?) said made a lot of sense to me

Last year, I asked Dan Taylor, Executive Director, Audubon-California, what the Audubon Society would do to educate us about the impact of population growth, so that we're at least aware of the facts.

One answer is World Population Awareness Week, October 26–November 1. The National Audubon Society, along with 365 other organizations in over 72 countries will commemorate World Population Awareness Week to help people understand that population may be the single largest environmental concern of the twentieth century.

The Population and Habitat Campaign of the National Audubon Society is
(Continued on page 5)

Upcoming Events:

Klaproth To Take MDAS on African Safari

Tanzania is famed for its spectacular wildlife, and this February 1996 safari was timed to coincide with the annual wildebeest calving. At the November MDAS general meeting, Bill Klaproth will provide us with a slide presentation of his African trip where the countryside is part of the drama.

In Tarangire National Park, Klaproth and his party marveled at huge herds of elephants and searched for the elusive leopard. At Ngorongoro Crater, the world's largest caldera, they enjoyed great views of the endangered Black Rhino and the famous black-maned lions found only there.

After a short stop at Olduvai Gorge to visit the famous dig of the Leakeys', they spent three marvelous days in Serengeti National Park, where off-road viewing permitted incredible glimpses of lion and cheetah as they followed the beginning of the northward migration.

Next, they stayed at the "enchanted" Nduku Safari Camp, where they lived the quintessential "African safari experience." They closed their trip with a visit to Lake Manyara National Park, where they got very close to a wide variety of mammals and birds.

Tanzania has a wide variety of ecosystems that have given rise to a host of different species, including over 1,000 species of birds. This stable African country has set aside 25% of its land for ecology and wildlife conservation. It outspends the U.S. on wildlife conservation by 100%.

Bill's group saw many fabulous birds along the way, and Bill photographed them with a telephoto lens to bring them up close and personal. This program begins at 8:30 p.m.

Birdwatching in Hidden Lakes Park

Denise Wight, one of MDAS's best-known birding experts, will give a presentation on the birds of Hidden Lakes Park in Martinez at the Birding Information portion of the November meeting

Denise began birding there in 1986 and has tallied 152 different species within or above the park. She will explain how birding in your own neighborhood area can be exciting and challenging and how working a "patch" can turn up birds you never expected. Her presentation begins at 7 p.m.

Conservation Notes

by Al McNabney

ESA—A Winner

Audubon's Sacramento representative John McCaull and most Audubon Chapters have been working for over two years to improve and strengthen California's Endangered Species Act (ESA). NOT easy to Do!!! Opposition came from not only the groups we would have expected but from some in the so-called environmental community as well. California's former ESA was fraught with problems. It wasn't being properly enforced, and endangered species were being "taken" all over the place. Substantial opposition came from farm groups, developers, and others because of (alleged) restrictions on the right of individuals to "use" their own lands.

Clearly something had to be done.

Audubon developed a proposed new law, which initially appeared to have garnered major support. Eventually major groups opposed the proposed ESA, and it didn't go forward.

Then late in this year's session, a number of substantial organizations indicated support for the proposed ESA. Lo and behold, the law suddenly passed both houses of the legislature. It went to the Governor where it was signed into law. Now, with the new law, a question—Will it work? Time will tell. If the new ESA doesn't do what it is intended to do, i.e., "save" endangered species, we will have to try again.

The ESA from Congress isn't too good. Congressman George Miller introduced a revision of the ESA which has gained wide support in the House of Representatives. But two Senators have introduced an unacceptable bill in the Senate, and the Chair of the House Resources Committee refuses to even take up Miller's bill. So far, environmental support is lacking in most areas on measures being developed in the U.S. Congress. More on that at another time.

Delta Science Center

An important action taken by the Board of Directors of East Bay Regional Park District will produce \$400,000 for Delta Science Center planning and ACTION. The CAL/FED proposal awaits approval. Hopefully, such will be forthcoming within the next few weeks.

Delta Science Center—More

Do you like to play golf? If you do, and you want to support the DSC Project, then stop, look, and listen. On Monday, November 3, Assemblyman Tom Torlakson is sponsoring an invitational Golf Tournament at the Discovery Bay Country Club (one of the best in the area). The golf course will be available for the exclusive use of individuals and organizations wishing to support the Delta Science Center.

Here's the schedule: 9 a.m. Registration and Range. 10:00 a.m. shotgun tee off. BBQ lunch on the turn; hosted bar, reception and dinner to follow. Tax deductible. For information, call Martha or Barney Parons (510) 757-8138.

Shell Marsh Again!

Most of the hydrology planning for Shell Marsh has been completed. Contracts have been or will be let to strengthen levees and install tide gates. A substantial amount of the funding for the project is "in hand."

A proposal was developed for submission to CAL/FED, but due to a series of misadventures, that proposal will not actually be presented until the next funding round in probably two to three months.

Federal programs have won an exemption from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, making them free to incidentally kill or harass migratory birds or to destroy their habitat.

This exemption was ordered by outgoing Acting Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, John Rogers.

—from *PEER* review, a publication of the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, Summer 1997.

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
94597-0053
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(510) 283-8266

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Joel Summerhill, 753-0862
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Field Guide: Jean Richmond
Christmas Count: Jimm Edgar

Baby Elephant Folio Raffle

MDAS will hold a special raffle of *Audubon's Birds of America, Baby Elephant Folio*, at the December general meeting.

The Baby Elephant Folio of *Audubon's Birds of America* is a collector's item with an estimated value of \$250. This spectacular edition reproduces all 435 of Audubon's hand-colored engravings from the original plates of the Audubon Society's archival copy of the Double Elephant Folio.

Published in 1990, the Baby Elephant Folio edition is notable for following the modern phylogenetic order for birds (that is, following the evolutionary history of genetically-related groups) and arranging them (e.g., hawks, swans, pigeons) in discrete sections. Roger Tory Peterson, one of America's best-known birders, reorganized the folio and wrote the volume's illuminating commentary.

Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased at the November and December MDAS meetings. Raffle tickets may also be purchased through the mail by sending a check payable to MDAS to Lloyd West, 123B Clipper Lane, Martinez 94553.

All proceeds will benefit Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, and you need not be present to win. This is your opportunity to own this spectacular volume or give it as a unforgettable Christmas present to your favorite birder.



Thanksgiving Birdcount

Birdcounts are an important tradition in the Audubon Society. The data collected by volunteers provide a snapshot of the bird population of a given area at a point in time. MDAS has long participated in the Christmas Bird Count (see the December *Quail*.)

Began in 1966, the Thanksgiving Bird Count also provides a benchmark of birds present in an area on Thanksgiving Day. And it takes only ONE HOUR! Dr. John Hewston of Humboldt State University is seeking volunteer counters in Contra Costa.

Counters can take a break on Thanksgiving Day and do this bird count from their own home, or while visiting elsewhere, or at a favorite birding spot. Select a "count circle," an area 15 feet in diameter where local birds are likely—perhaps one that surrounds your feeder and is visible from your favorite chair. This count circle should be viewed as a cylinder extending upward indefinitely.

Count birds on the ground, at a feeder or bird bath, in bushes or trees, or flying through or over the count circle. Count all species entering the cylinder during the hour—but only once. Do not count the same birds more than one time. This may mean estimating how many times a single bird enters and leaves or counting a flock when its numbers are highest, then using only that figure.

Identify the species and the total number entering the cylinder. Keep a separate count of those outside the cylinder. Even if you don't count any birds, Dr. Hewston wants to hear "no birds seen" from participants. Send the results with your name and address, the date, location of the count circle, temperature, time of day, weather, and habitat description to Dr. John Hewston, Natural Resources Building, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521.

Birding Events and Programs

New PBS Birding Series

BirdWatch with Don and Lillian Stokes, a lively, new PBS series focuses on the wonderful world of watching birds, including segments on attracting birds to your backyard and feeding stations, and traveling to "birding hot spots" in North America. Underwritten by Wild Birds Unlimited nationwide, the 13-part series will be aired on Channel 9, KQED, Saturdays at 6 a.m., and on Channel 5, KPIX, on Sundays at 7.

Kern Valley Vulture Watch

The Kern River Research Center is requesting information on the migratory movements of vultures. If you know of a regular vulture migration route or roost, or observe large or unusual numbers of vultures migrating, send the

details to KRRC. Include date, location, time of day, number of vultures, behavior, weather, and any other relevant data to KRRC, PO Box 990, Weldon, CA 93283. Between September 1 and October 31 over 33,000 vultures pass through the Kern Valley.

Festival of the Cranes

Nov. 13–16, Socorro, New Mexico
Over 150,000 birds winter at the Bosque del Apache NWR, including 20,000 Sandhill Cranes. The Festival features more than 30 programs and workshops as well as demonstrations at the Refuge, tours, and guided hikes. For more information and tickets, contact: Festival of the Cranes, Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 743, Socorro, NM 87801 (505) 835-0424

chamber@socorro-nm.com

Audubon Watchlist: Birds at Risk

A centerpiece of National Audubon Society's programs in bird conservation is the WatchList. The Watchlist calls attention to birds at risk before they require federal listing. Birds on the list below are under stress—on their summer breeding grounds, on their tropical and southern temperate wintering grounds, and on the places they need to rest and refuel during migration. Many of our songbirds, shorebirds, seabirds, raptors, and wading birds have declined in number primarily due to loss of habitat but also due to nest parasitism by cowbirds, ravaging by domestic cats, and pesticides.

Since 1996, Audubon has released a Watchlist as part of its efforts to stress preventative action today over last-ditch rescue attempts in the future. Compiled by scientists within Partners in Flight (of which the National Audubon Society is an active partner), the WatchList annually identifies birds at risk and in need of our immediate attention. Look for a special report on the WatchList in the November *Audubon* magazine. Or explore the WatchList website: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/watch/> The new website not only lists the WatchList bird species but provides the science behind the listing.

Seabirds

Black-capped Petrel
Black-vented Shearwater
Ashy Storm-Petrel
Black Storm-Petrel
Xantus' Murrelet

LongLegged Waders

Reddish Egret
American Bittern
Limpkin

Waterfowl

Emperor Goose
Steller's Eider

Birds of Prey

Swallow-tailed Kite
Short-tailed Hawk

Rails

Black Rail

Shorebirds

Mountain Plover
Black Oystercatcher
Long-billed Curlew
Hudsonian Godwit
Red Knot
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Franklin's Gull
Black Tern

Pigeons and Doves

White-crowned Pigeon
Band-tailed Pigeon
Common Ground-Dove

Cuckoos

Black-billed Cuckoo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Owls and Nightjars

Short-eared Owl
Chuck-will's-widow

Swifts and Hummingbirds

Black Swift
Chimney Swift
Lucifer Hummingbird
Rufous Hummingbird
Allen's Hummingbird

Woodpeckers

Lewis' Woodpecker
Red-headed Woodpecker

Songbirds

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Western Wood-Pewee
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Island Scrub-Jay
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Veery
Bicknell's Thrush
Wood Thrush
Gray Catbird
Bendire's Thrasher
Curve-billed Thrasher
Le Conte's Thrasher
Sprague's Pipit
Loggerhead Shrike
Bell's Vireo
Gray Vireo
Golden-winged Warbler
Colima Warbler
Lucy's Warbler

Hermit Warbler

Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Swainson's Warbler
Kentucky Warbler
Canada Warbler
Painted Bunting
Dickcissel
Abert's Towhee
Bachman's Sparrow
Cassin's Sparrow
Rufous-winged Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Brewer's Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Black-chinned Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Sage Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Baird's Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Harris' Sparrow
McCown's Longspur
Smith's Longspur
McKay's Bunting
Bobolink
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Rusty Blackbird
Orchard Oriole
Audubon's Oriole
Lawrence's Goldfinch

PRESIDENT'S NOTES Continued from page one

designed to strengthen U.S. leadership on population control through expanding the network of citizens who understand the linkages between population and environment.

If you're interested in becoming involved, please contact the Population and Habitat Campaign at 1-800-741-9658 or e-mail population@audubon.org.

It's really simple: no habitat, no birds!

It took from the dawn of humanity until 1830 for the first one billion people to be born. The next billion will take only 11 years.

— Population Communication Int'l

Of the 21 most endangered ecosystems identified by the U.S. Geological Survey, seven are all or partly in California.

California has lost 99% of its native grasslands, 85% of its coast redwoods, and 80% of its coastal wetlands.

46 California species have vanished. 205 more are listed as threatened or endangered. 105 more species have been proposed for listing, more than twice as many as any other state.

—from "Wildlife Needs Wild Places,"
U. S. Public Interest Research Group
and the Sierra Club

November Field Trips

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

Field trips are open to MDAS members and nonmembers alike. You do not have to be a birding expert; only one who enjoys nature. Bring binoculars, field guides, and lunch. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Trips go in light rain or drizzle. If in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure. Carpool time is the departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Saturday, November 8, Limantour, Pt. Reyes.

Carpool meets at 7:00 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24. Or meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Pt. Reyes National Park, Olema. Cross San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, turn left on Third St. In San Anselmo, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 miles, then left on Bear Valley Rd. for about 3 miles. Turn left into Visitor's Center off Bear Valley. We expect shorebirds, waterfowl, and land birds. Trails may be muddy. Category 2. Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980.

Thursday, November 13, Arrowhead Marsh, Alameda County.

Carpool: Meet 8 a.m. on Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd, just north of Hwy. 24. Or meet in parking lot by the marsh

at 8:30 a.m. From I-880 take Hegenberger Road west (toward Oakland Airport). Turn right onto Doolittle Drive, right again at Swan Way (first light) and left into Regional shoreline. Park at end of road. This is a high tide, and we may see Clapper Rails. Eurasian Widgeon and Blue-winged Teal are often flushed out of the marsh by the tide. Category 1. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Saturday, November 22, Charleston Slough.

Carpool meets at 7:00 a.m. on El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at end of Terminal Rd., Mountain View. Take the Dumbarton Bridge and drive south on US 101 to the San Antonio Rd. exit. Go north and east on San Antonio and turn right onto Terminal Rd. We expect water and salt marsh birds. Trails may be muddy. Category 2. Leader: Steve Glover, 846-7382.

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Field Trip Reports

Moss Landing—Monterey, September 13. Eleven birders spent the day in Moss Landing, Carmel, and environs where the weather was beautiful, but birds seemed hard to come by. Birds of interest included a couple of Parasitic Jaegers, two Pectoral Sandpipers, and a very cooperative Virginia Rail at the Carmel River. The species total of 86 is not indicative of how slow the birding was on this day.

—Steve Glover

Hayward Regional Shoreline, September 17. Nine birders enjoyed a walk into the marsh on a sunny day. Shovelers and Pintails still mostly in eclipse were present in good numbers. Several hundred Avocets were moving from pond to pond. A few Snowy Plovers were present along the Bay shore. We saw a total of 34 species.

—Elizabeth Dickey

Observations

by Steve Glover

Welcome to the new format of the Observations column. This is my first attempt, but I believe that eventually the column will be much improved. It will be much more readable, and I should be able to put in a lot more useful information.

As always, I am especially looking for local observations, particularly from Contra Costa County. Birds from farther afield will continue to appear but will always take a backseat to the locals. If anyone has any comments about the new format, I would like to hear them.

A **Cattle Egret** was found on 9/20 at Iron House Sanitary at Oakley (DW, DS, *et al*). This species is regular in the area but normally doesn't appear until early November. **Green Herons**, an uncommon species locally, were noted on 9/12 (three at Marsh Creek Res.) (SG, RL) and on 9/29-30 (up to two at Lafayette Res.) (H & NB). The male **Harlequin Duck** and the **Oldsquaw**, apparently resident at Brooks Island near Richmond, continued through the end of September (DS).

Swainson's Hawks, thought to be rare in the county until recently, were seen at Bethel Island and Clifton Court Forebay on 9/12 (SG, RL). Four **Lesser Yellow-legs** were in a flooded field on Jersey Island on 9/12 (SG, RL). A juvenile **Semi-palmated Sandpiper**, just the third for the county, was at the Richmond Sewer Ponds on 9/25 (SG) and 9/26 (JR).

A **Curlew Sandpiper**, almost accidental in the state, was at Crittendon Marsh, Santa Clara Co., on 8/14 (FB, MJC, HH). **Stilt Sandpipers** seemed to be more common this year, including one on 8/26 at Abbott's Lagoon, Marin Co. (HH, MJC, FB, MJC) and another at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station, Santa Clara Co. on 9/6 (GF, JR—RBA). A

Buff-breasted Sandpiper was at the Hayward Regional Shoreline on 10/3 and was only the third for Alameda Co. (BR). There was also a **Ruff** in the same pond on the same day! (BR). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was inland at Shell Marsh on 9/11 (SG).

Four **Parasitic Jaegers** were seen chasing terns at Moss Landing, Monterey Co. on 9/13 (FB, MJC). Twenty-four **Vaux's Swifts**, a regular but inconspicuous migrant, flew over Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline at

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

Richmond on 9/4 (SG). **Ash-throated Flycatchers** are hard to find in the county in fall so one at Miller/Knox R.S. on 9/19 was nice (SG). Two **Yellow-billed Magpies** were on Delta Rd. near Knightsen, the only known nesting area in the county, on 9/12 (SG, RL).

Red-breasted Nuthatches are fairly common in the Berkeley Hills, but a flock of 50 on 9/12 at Big Leaf Picnic Area in Tilden Park was spectacular (SG, RL). A **Veery**, extremely rare in the state, was at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on 10/3 (RS, H & NB). There are less than ten records of **Red-eyed Vireo** for the county, so one at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park was noteworthy (JR).

A **Northern Parula** was at Lake Merced in San Francisco on 9/9 (HH—RBA). Any "eastern" warbler is exciting in the East Bay so a **Black-and-White** (9/10-12) and a **Northern**

Waterthrush (9/12) were good finds (SG, RL). A **Prothonotary Warbler** was at Campbell Cove at Bodega Bay on 9/23 (JR).

An immature male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was in Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo S.P. on 9/18 for just the second park record (SH). A **Clay-colored Sparrow**, just the fourth for the county, was at Pt. San Pablo near Richmond on 9/20 (DW, DS, *et al*).

Observers: Hugh and Nora Bain, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Scott Hein, Ron Lindeman, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Rich Stallcup, Dave Shuford, Denise Wight

Canoe Trips and More at Lindsay Museum

Float and paddle through two of northern California's most beautiful birding areas, Elkhorn Slough and Lake Solano. Transportation and canoes are provided.

Elkhorn Slough

Sat., Oct. 25 or Sun., Nov. 23
Time: 6:30 a.m.—6 p.m.
Fee: \$60/ member \$50

Lake Solano

Sat., Dec. 6
Time: 7 a.m.—4 p.m.
Fee: \$60/ member \$50

Winter Marsh Birdwalk with Phil Gordon

Sat., Nov. 22
Time: 8 a.m.—1 p.m.
Fee: \$20/member \$15

For reservations, call Lindsay Museum Program Hotline, 935-1978, ext. 57.

News from *Wild Birds Unlimited*

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

Wild Birds Unlimited has three exciting events on Saturday, November 1:

- Meet Bob Stewart, author of *Common Butterflies of California*. This book contains 127 beautiful, full-page photographs of common California butterflies. It includes key field marks, hibernation information, plants attractive to butterflies, and geographic ranges.
- 1:30 p.m. Monarch Butterfly Release. Come and release a Monarch as part of a migration study. They are tagged, and we will be tracking their migration.
- Birdwalk to Hidden Lakes Park. Meet at WBU at 7:45 a.m. Cost is \$2 (proceeds go to MDAS). Please call WBU for reservations (798-0303).

Denise Wight's next Birding Class will start on Tuesday, Nov. 11, at WBU. Classes run on consecutive Tuesday nights from 7-9 p.m. Fee is \$40, which includes 5 classes and 1 birding outing. Come join the fun. Call WBU for reservations.

The *Peterson Field Guide to the Warblers of North America* is now available. This guide is the latest addition to the Peterson series and contains 140 photographs and 60 range maps. Helps prevent "warbler neck."

MDAS Welcomes New Members

Robert Small, Robert Smith, Veronica Snyder, Dale Staley, Valerie Steele, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sullivan, Warren Tarshis, Max Teed, Linda Terry, Lorraine Thomas, George Thompson, Donna Tims, Stacy Tobias, Andrew Verdi, Margaret Voorhees, L. R. Wade, Richard Waldo, P. Ward, Patti Watson, Lisa Windflower-Weske, Mike West, Phyllis Williams, Harold Yates

Chapter Announcements

Each month MDAS holds a raffle to raise funds for its activities. We would appreciate donations of raffle prizes, especially bird-related items. Contact Lloyd West at the general meetings.

If you have an hour or two on the third Friday of the month, join the mailing crew. The next *Quail* mailing meeting will be on Friday, November 21, at 9:30 a.m. at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill

MDAS continues its sale of the 1998 **Entertainment Book**. Help your Audubon chapter by purchasing this great savings book at chapter meetings or at either of two Wild Birds Unlimited locations: 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill; or 7182 Regional St., Dublin.. What a great gift idea!

Please be an active member of the Mt Diablo Audubon Society. Your skills, knowledge, and time are valuable, and we need YOU.

MDAS Initiates Contra Costa IBA Program

MDAS is participating in the Audubon-sponsored California Important Bird Area (IBA) Program.

The greatest threat to birds in their breeding grounds and migratory routes is loss of habitat as a result of human activities. The IBA Program is a coordinated response—a comprehensive effort to protect habitats critical to birds' survival. The purpose of the IBA Program is to identify a network of sites in each state to be protected or managed for the benefit of birds and their habitats.

In Pennsylvania, which has already completed its IBA inventory, the Lancaster County Planning Commission cited the IBA designation as one of the key reasons to protect a wetlands known as Conejohela Flats.

Jill Hedgecock is chairing the MDAS efforts. If you have a favorite Contra Costa birding site to propose for IBA designation, contact her at 256-8270.

Audubon Adventures

Are you interested in teaching children to observe, understand, and appreciate birds, other wildlife, and the relationship of the human species to the natural world? Consider subscribing to, or sponsoring a classroom in **Audubon Adventures**. The program is targeted for grades 4-6 and any public or private classroom can enroll.

Materials include 32 student newspapers for each topic; a Teacher's Resource Manual with hands-on suggestions and copy sheets; Resource Directory for Internet; CD-Rom, book and video resources; a 20-minute video on wolves, and Internet access to National Audubon experts.

The classroom topics include: Wetlands, Migration, Nature in Our Neighborhoods, Amphibians, Endangered Species, and a special Earth Day edition on birds and wildlife.

The cost of Audubon Adventures is \$35 per classroom. If you want to sponsor a class or nominate a class for sponsorship, call Cecil Williams at (510) 798-0303.

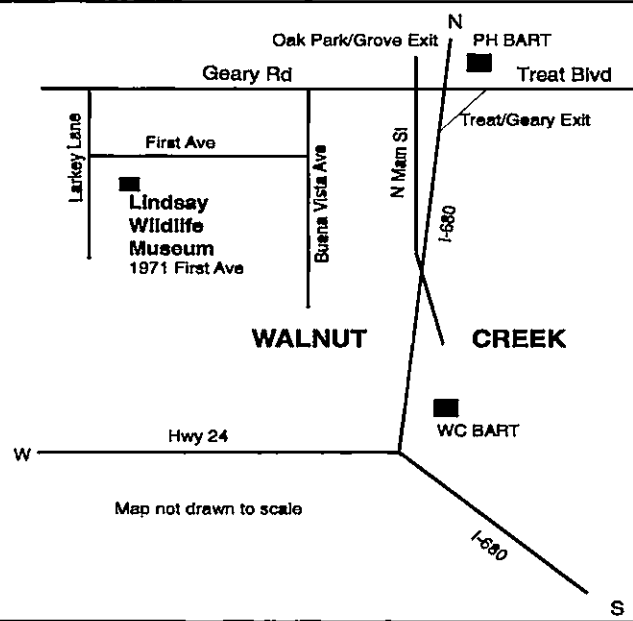
CALENDAR

Nov. 6, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, Community Room, Lindsay Museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek (For directions, see map to the right.)

Nov. 13, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Cost Blvd, PH

Nov. 21, Fri., 9 a.m.—Quail Mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH (Volunteers prepare Quail issue for mailing.)

Dec. 20, Sat., all day—Christmas Bird Count. Volunteers work in teams. Call Jimm Edgar for info. 658-2330.



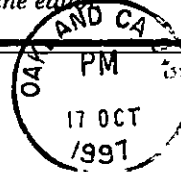
The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join, write a check (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available) to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 172 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 Kelsor, 205 Wild Flower Place, Alamo, CA 94507. 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: Mike Williams, Membership Chair, (510) 376-1631;

Gloria Cannon, Editor, P.O. Box 8367, Pittsburg, CA 94565, (510) 753-0862, email: gcannon@hotcoco.infi.net

Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor

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

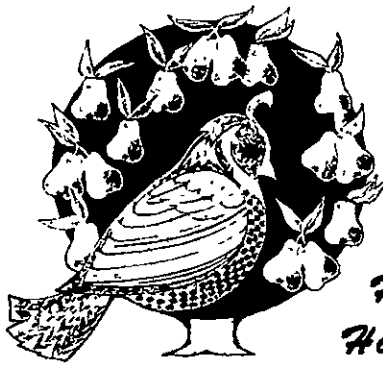


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*Happy
Holidays!*

The QUAIL

a publication of the
Mt Diablo Audubon Society
Walnut Creek, CA
94597-0053

December 1997

Vol. 44, No. 4

Next Deadline: January 8

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Cats and Birds Don't Mix

Feral cats and domestic cats which are allowed out of doors have a startling effect on bird populations. A few points on this controversial issue gathered from various sources are reported below. I would appreciate hearing any suggestions from you on how cats and wildlife can coexist happily in our increasingly urbanized county. In a subsequent column, I'll report on solutions proposed by various responders, groups, and concerned communities.

Researchers at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory note that of the 55 million U S cats, 44 million cats are allowed out of doors. The resulting bird predation rate is 4.4 million songbirds each day.

The Australian Department of Conservation reports that each pet cat kills an average of 16 mammals, 8 birds, and 8 reptiles every year. Feral cats eat the equivalent of 7 native bush rats or 10 native birds each week. Stray cats in cities kill 5 wildlife each week. The total is 211million wildlife killed by cats in Victoria each year.

Forgotten Felines (a volunteer group to control feral cats humanely) estimates that, without spaying and neutering, two feral cats and their progeny create 12,000 cats in five years
(Continued on page 3)

December Meeting:

Seabirds and Seals of Antarctica and the Southern Oceans

For the December 4th general program, Doug Cheeseman will take us on an exploration of Antarctica and the Southern Oceans with emphasis on the Falklands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula. This remote area is a world apart, devoted to peace, science, and the preservation of birds and marine mammals.

As leaders of seven trips to the Antarctic, Doug and Gail Cheeseman are intimately familiar with its astonishing sights, including the penguin rookeries of the Falklands, the rugged, towering cliffs of South Georgia, and the stunningly beautiful Antarctic Peninsula itself.

The Falklands provide sanctuary for breeding birds; five species of penguins, including Magellanic and Rockhoppers. Among the many species of seabirds that the Cheesemans have observed on such trips are Chilean skua, South American tern, Wandering albatross, and eight species of petrels.. Doug will emphasize sea birds from this area and will make some comparisons with sea birds that are found offshore on the Pacific coast of California.

One of the most remote areas in the world, South Georgia has a severe,

dramatic landscape of ice and rock, penguins, and seals. Harems of Antarctic fur seals lounge on the beach, and the Southern elephant seals send belching cries into the cold, still air. Cheeseman will tell us about the lives of the Antarctic's seals and fur seals.

At the end of the earth is the Antarctic Peninsula, where magnificent ice towers are flamed-colored in the long sunsets of 24-hour days. Doug has taken his tours as far south into the Weddell Sea as ice and fog conditions permit in search of Emperor penguins, Humpback whales, and Weddell, Crabeater, and Leopard seals.

The Cheesemans will be leading another trip to the Antarctic in December 1998. *See page 8 for the meeting calendar and directions to the Lindsay Museum.*

Birdfeeders and Optics

Mike Williams will give the Birding Information portion of the December meeting. Beginning at 7 p.m., Mike will share tips on winter birdfeeding and choosing birding optics. He will have some of those beautiful Zeiss and Swarovski binoculars available for hands-on inspection and dreaming.

Conservation Notes

by Al McNabney

Fish, Birds & Fishy Stuff

Fishermen are generally considered to be sportsmen. Fishing is recreational, a money-maker, and for many, just plain fun. However, a news report from NAS tells the story of special interest efforts to do away with fish-eating birds so that fishermen and fish farms wouldn't have to compete with birds.

Audubon leaders discovered language buried in an Interior Appropriations bill that would have permitted unrestricted killing of fish-eating birds. The particular language dealt with Double-crested cormorants. The language was so broad that it would have permitted unlimited killing of not only cormorants but also Pelicans, Great blue herons, Ospreys, and similar birds.

After an item appeared in a Gannet paper (October 28), several congressional aides commented, "Most Senators and House members had no idea what the Committee had done until Audubon found out what was going on and rallied public opposition."

Erin Kelley, a reporter for the Gannet News Service, commented, "A craving for catfish by a big, voracious bird called the double-crested cormorant has sparked congressional action that environmentalists fear could result in the nationwide slaughter of birds ranging from pelicans to great blue herons."

Who put the offensive language in the bill? No one admits to so doing. So, not unlike the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder, we may never know "who did it." **The moral: Vigilance is the price of freedom.**

CAL/FED

This multi-major project continues to move forward. It holds promise for a renewal of the Bay/Delta region—for restoration of fish populations, water for wildlife refuges, and many other good things. But, like everything else, there's also a (possible) down side. CAL/FED leaders are discussing and are just short of actually proposing inclusion of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to cover the entire Bay and Delta, as well as much of San Joaquin Valley. Most environmental people assert that there is NO HCP in operation today that covers as much territory. There is NO HCP that would have such an open-ended effect on birds, fish, and other wildlife. A matter of concern, which will have to be watched closely.

Delta Science Center

Two important events have occurred to further the development of the Delta Science Center near Oakley. The East Bay Regional Park District has granted \$400,000 to the DSC project, and a fundraiser hosted by Tom Torlakson produced some \$30,000 for the Center.

Audubon's California Legislative Effort

The California Endangered Species Act (ESA) has probably generated about as much controversy as any law on the books. ESA is vital to the protection of all manner of wildlife, but the (at times, unreasonable) opposition appears to care little about critters. A major priority of Audubon's California legislative activity has been to develop a law that would protect species, would be enforceable, and "reasonable." Two years of effort have been successful. The legislature passed, and the Governor signed the Audubon-sponsored revision of the California ESA. John

McCaul, Audubon's California Legislative Director, has earned great respect and credit for his work. But the successful enactment of the new ESA would not have been possible without support from the broad-based Audubon memberships.

Now, we have to see how effective the new ESA law will be. Much depends on the will of the State's regulatory people. The attempts to cooperate or evade (or comply with) the law by individuals will be interesting to watch and, hopefully, the State's wildlife will be major beneficiaries.

MDAS Welcomes Its New Members

MDAS invites its new members to be an active participant in its conservation, educational, and birdwatching programs. Help MDAS continue its environmental leadership in Contra Costa.

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON
(510) 283-8266**

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News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Put nature under your tree!

- New feeders for your wintering chickadees and woodpeckers
- 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 nature ornaments.

Come in for a free gift for the birds!

Birding Optics Seminars

Saturday, December 13,
10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Mike Williams, of WBU and a MDAS member, will lead two 30-minute seminars on "How to Buy Birding Optics" on Sat., Dec. 13, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The presentations will be held at Wild Birds Unlimited. A Swarovski representative will also be present to introduce you to these phenomenal optics. There will also be many other brands of binoculars and spotting scopes on display. As seating is limited, please RSVP to 798-0303.

Denise Wight's next Continuing Birding Class will start on Wed., Dec. 3, at WBU. Classes run on consecutive Wed. nights from 7-9. Cost is \$40, which includes 5 classes and 1 birding outing. Come join the fun. Call WBU for reservations.

Central Valley Birding Symposium,

Stockton, Dec. 4-7

Programs will include birds, photography, field sketching, and butterflies. Speakers include author Kimball Garrett (*Peterson Guide to Warblers*), naturalist Rob Hansen, and photographer Jack Wilburn. Registration fee is \$75. For information, call Cindy at (800) 350-1987 or by email at kfoley@inreach.com

Hazel Wolf, 99, to Receive NAS Medal at Silverado

Hazel Wolf, an ardent environmentalist and birder for much of her 99 years, will be honored with the 1997 Audubon Medal for Excellence in Environmental Achievement. This 41st presentation of the Audubon Medal will take place at a special ceremony to be held December 6, 7 p.m., at the Silverado Resort in Napa.

An active member of the Seattle Audubon Society since before 1962 and the founder of more than 20 other Audubon chapters, Hazel Wolf is being honored at the annual Audubon Medal Ceremony for her work as a driving force in bird conservation in the U.S.

"Hazel Wolf has organized more local Audubon Society Chapters than anyone else in the history of the Audubon movement," explained John Flicker, NAS President. "To say that Hazel's devotion to the environment is complete, and her enthusiasm unflagging is an understatement. She has been an inspiration to me and to all who know her. It is altogether fitting that we honor someone who has given so much of her time and boundless energy to helping birds and other wildlife. Hazel personifies all that is best in Audubon and America."

Ms. Wolf is past president of the Federation of Outdoor Clubs and served as editor of its magazine, *Outdoors West*. In addition to her work in founding 20 local Audubon chapters, including the Black Hills Audubon Society, she is co-founder of the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice through which she worked to improve environmental safety in low-income, inner-city housing. She also served as secretary of the Seattle Audubon for 26 years.

Born in British Columbia in 1898, Ms. Wolf has led a life that can only be called extraordinary. During the Depression,

she was employed by the Works Projects Administration and also worked to unionize workers. In 1979, she met with each of Washington state's 26 tribal leaders to help organize the Indian Conservationist Conference.

She met with a Soviet delegation in 1990 and began the discussions that led to the founding of the Leningrad Audubon Society.

Her life is featured in Studs Terkel's book, *Coming of Age*. She took the \$50 she was paid for the interview and signed Mrs. Terkel up as a member of National Audubon.

She is the recipient of over a dozen awards, including the Washington state Department of Game's Award for Services in Protection of Wildlife, 1978; State University of New York's 1978 Sol Feinstein Award for her work with Seattle Audubon's "Trailside Series" of books on the Northwest; and NAS Conservationist of the Year Award, 1978. In 1996, on her 98th birthday, Washington state Governor Mike Lowery declared March 10 "Hazel Wolf Day."

The Audubon Medal is awarded for great individual achievement in the field of conservation or environmental protection. This distinguished honor recognizes either a single, extraordinary feat or a long record of significant contributions.

For ticket information, call Jennifer Lopez, NAS, at (212) 979-3049. Tickets to the NAS fundraiser are \$100.

You can visit Hazel Wolf's homepage at <http://www.wolfenet.com/~brainkid/HazelWolf.html>

PRESIDENT'S NOTES (Continued from page 1)

80-90% of birds and mammals that are caught by cats but not immediately killed by them still die within hours from naturally occurring bacteria transmitted from a healthy cat's mouth and claws. This occurs even when no wound is visible.

According to the California Coastal Conservancy, cats are preying on the Clapper rail, the Least tern, and the Pacific pocket mouse

Luis Baptista, who advises the Mexican government on controlling cat predation, says that cats on the Socorro Islands has almost eliminated ground birds (including quail) and rabbits.

A study of house cats in England shows that cats kill about 70 million animals annually in England.

A study in Richmond, VA, estimated that 1 million cats kill 3 million birds annually in Virginia.

The Bodega Marine Laboratory estimates that half a million birds are lost to cats annually in Sonoma County.

In rural Wisconsin, estimates range from 7.8 million to 219 million birds killed each year by roaming cats.

The number of feral cats in California was estimated to be 3.5 million in August 1995.

What are your thoughts on this issue?

Let me know:

510-614-3652 (FAX)

carol@mdl.com

P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek 94597-0053

What You Can Do about Cat Attacks

Belling your cat doesn't help birds because birds don't know what the sound means, and belled cats can still catch a bird because cats don't move until they leap for the bird.

The bacteria in a cat's saliva will cause an infection that can kill a bird if the bird's skin has been broken. An antiseptic (hydrogen peroxide, Bactine—not alcohol) should be administered to the wound IMMEDIATELY, then call a rehabilitator like the Lindsay Wildlife Museum.

During baby season (May through August), cat owners should make every effort to keep their pets indoors. Once a cat knows where there is a nest, it will return until all the babies are killed.

—from "Tips For Wild Bird Care" by Karen M. Dvornich and the Rainier (Wash.) Audubon Society.

Chapter Announcements

Help your Audubon chapter by purchasing the **1998 Entertainment book** at the December meeting or at either of two Wild Birds Unlimited locations: 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill; or 7182 Regional St., Dublin. This great savings book makes a wonderful gift!

Audubon Adventure continues. Are you interested in teaching children to observe, understand, and appreciate birds, other wildlife, and the relationship of the human species to the natural world? Consider subscribing to, or sponsoring a classroom in **Audubon Adventures**.

The program is targeted for grades 4-6, and any public or private classroom can enroll. The cost is only \$35 per classroom. If you want to sponsor a class or nominate a class for sponsorship, call Cecil Williams at (510) 798-0303.

MDAS is now sponsoring 13 classrooms.

Wight on Birding a Patch

Denise Wight, well-known Contra Costa birding instructor, shared some tips on birding a "patch" during the birding information portion of the November 6 MDAS meeting. Her experience in birding Hidden Lakes park has proven that birders can have great birding success by regularly visiting a few acres—their patch—that they can get to know like their own backyards.

Denise emphasized that it is important to become familiar with the terrain and the types of habitats present in a patch because helps to focus on the species most likely to be present.

An area will have its "regular" birds that nest and live there while other species are seasonal visitors. Among the regular birds at Hidden Lakes are Loggerhead shrikes, Yellow-rumped warblers, and Say's phoebes. Denise mentioned a favorite "hawk tree," which is frequented by Red-tailed hawks, Kestrels, and White-tailed kites..

The blue oaks that dot the hillsides at Hidden Lakes attract native birds, like the Oak titmouse and Nuttalls woopecker; and the park's open grassland attracts Western meadowlarks, Northern harriers, and a wide variety of sparrows.

Hidden Lakes, said Denise, is a "sparrow-y kind of place." Among the 14 species she has observed there, Denise listed Golden-crowned, White-crowned, Savannah, White-throated, Chipping, Fox, Lark, Lincoln, Clay-colored, and Vesper sparrows. Although spotting the regular birds are like seeing old friends, there are the occasional thrills, like spotting Slate-colored junco, Wren tit, Lazuli bunting, and a rare Field sparrow.

Once the most likely species are identified, a patch birder becomes familiar with the food preferences of these birds and the availability of food and seeks out those spots where birds may congregate.

Progress on CoCo Bird Atlas

by Steve Glover

Under the direction of Steve Glover, MDAS is beginning a 5-year project to develop Contra Costa's Breeding Bird Atlas. Steve discussed the project at the October meeting. Here is his progress report.

Thanks to all of you atlasers who have responded. I finished a 16-page guide covering every bird species that has ever bred in the Contra Costa County, where they are to be expected, how to identify the tough ones, and what strategy to use for finding breeding evidence. I have also begun to create the field card that you will all use to report at the end of the year.

In January and February, I will be conducting classes on everything you will need to know about atlasing. Attendance is not mandatory but is strongly suggested, especially if you have never atlased before.

Anyone wishing to atlas in a specific area should let me know. I hope to get everyone in areas that they will find exciting. We still need volunteers for the project. Call me at 866-1409 or email me at Sgloverccc@aol.com

Psst! Want to Buy a Baby Elephant?

The MDAS raffle for that very special collector's edition of *Audubon's Birds of America, Baby Elephant Folio*, will be held at the **December** meeting.

This spectacular edition reproduces all 435 of Audubon's hand-colored engravings from the original plates.

Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased by calling 228-9037 or by sending a check payable to MDAS to Lloyd West, 123B Clipper Lane, Martinez 94553, or at the December meeting. All proceeds benefit MDAS. Are you going to be the lucky winner?

December Field Trips

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

Field trips are open to MDAS members and nonmembers alike. You do not have to be a birding expert; only one who enjoys nature. Bring binoculars, field guides, and lunch. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Trips go in light rain or drizzle. If in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure. Carpool time is the departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Wednesday, December 3, Altamont.

Carpool 7:30 a.m. at La Gonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto La Gonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 mi north to El Pintado... A caravan trip, with mostly car birding. Migratory hawks, Mountain Bluebirds, and grassland species. Leader: Steve Glover, 846-7382 Category 1

Thursday, December 18, Niles Canyon Gravel Pits. Carpool meets at 8:00 a.m.,

at La Gonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto La Gonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 mi north to El Pintado.. Or 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 Edgat, 658-2300. Category 2

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Field Trip Reports

Natomas Fish Hatchery, Saturday, October 11. Beautiful fall day for three birders to visit the American River. The weather and the water were too warm for the fish ladders to be opened (the hatchery doesn't start bringing the salmon in until the water cools to 50° so the eggs will hatch.) However, we saw many fish in the river below the dam and watched many fishermen trying and a few succeeding in landing a big salmon. Along the bank we saw a number of oak woodland birds—the most interesting were three wild turkeys. A total of 28 species were seen.

—Elizabeth Dickey

Hawk Hill, Thursday, October 16.

The weather was so nice that the hawks

didn't want to leave Marin. A very quiet day at the lookout but good looks at a few individual raptors. At the lagoon, the usual ducks and gulls; the most unusual was a White-fronted goose. Three birders saw a total of 45 species.

—Elizabeth Dickey

Abbott's Lagoon, Saturday, October 25.

Twenty-four birders spent a sun-filled, 70° day at Pt. Reyes Headquarters and Abbott's Lagoon. We saw 75 species, including American white pelican, White-winged scoter, Hooded merganser, Peregrine falcon, Snowy plover, Pectoral sandpiper, Horned lark, Winter wren, American pipit, and a large flock of Tri-colored blackbirds.

—Maury Stearn

Observations

by Steve Glover

Red-necked Grebes are rare inland, so the one at Crowley Lake, Mono Co., on 10/31 (SG) and another on 11/8 at Seven Hills School near Heather Farms Park (HH) are noteworthy. The Mono record may be a county first, and the Walnut Creek bird is one of only a handful to be found inland in the county. The latter also appears to be the earliest county record.

A **Leach's Storm-Petrel** was at Hayward Reg. Shoreline on 10/31 (BR). Surprisingly enough, there are about 7 records for Alameda County. An immature **Greater White-fronted Goose** was among the resident **Canada geese** at Miller/Knox Reg. Shoreline on 11/9 (SG). There was also one of the small races of Canada Goose present there on the same day. Having 130 Canada Geese at Heather Farms on 10/13 (HH) seems like a high number, but note that these are the introduced population, and the population seems to still be increasing.

Four **Redheads** were at Emeryville/Berkeley Aquatic Park on 10/22 (HH), and 18 were at Hayward Reg. Shoreline on 11/6 (BR). This is a very high number this deep into the bay. **Lesser Scaup** are usually the scaup of inland waters so two **Greater**s at Heather Farms from 10/19-21 are of interest

Ospreys were noted at many of their usual haunts in October and into November, including Pt. Isabel, Lafayette Res., and San Pablo Res, with 2-3 at each (many observations). The **Peregrine Falcon** continues at his/her normal spot on the radio towers at Pt. Isabel, at least through 11/5 (SG)

A **Mountain Plover**, very rare on the coast, was at the North Beach Turnoff at

Pt Reyes on 10/28 (FB, MJC, BG, HH).

Three **Black Oystercatchers** were at the East Brothers Lighthouse at Richmond on 11/5 (SG). This is the most reliable spot in the county. Because **Long-billed Curlew** is apparently declining throughout its range, it was nice to see a flock of 352 on Delta Rd. near Knightsen on 11/6 (SG) Santa Clara Co. has been the shorebird mecca in recent years, and a **Ruff** and **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** at Coyote Creek Riparian Station on 10/5

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

did nothing to hurt that reputation (H & RH). A **Parasitic Jaeger** on 10/20 at Hayward Reg. Shoreline was noteworthy, particularly since it was not a good year for Jaegers inside the bay.

The **Lesser Black-backed Gull** has returned for another winter at Alviso (H & VH); and, incredibly, another has appeared in Santa Clara Co.—this one at Lake Cunningham. **Sabine's Gulls** are rare inland so one in a slough at Alviso is bizarre (10/12—H & VH, RBA). A **Caspian Tern** at Pt. Isabel on 11/5 was probably the latest for the county (SG). Hayward Reg. Shoreline's third **Ancient Murrelet** was noted 10/24 (BR).

The status of **Common Poorwill** is somewhat muddled, but two on 11/1 at Tilden Reg. Park are late unless they attempt to winter (BF). An unidentified **Hummingbird** was at Clifton Court Forebay on 10/14; this date being unseasonal for east county.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher had only

been noted three times in Northern California so one at Owl Canyon, Sonoma Co., was most welcome (9/29, FB, HH—RBA). A **Tropical Kingbird** was at Pt. Reyes on 10/28 (FB, MJC, BG, HH). A **White-breasted Nuthatch** at San Pablo Res. on 10/24 was at the extreme western limit of its distribution in the county, while a flock of **Pygmy Nuthatches** at the same location were at their known eastern limit (SG)

Five **House Wrens** were at Piper Slough on 11/6 (SG). A **Marsh Wren** was at Heather Farms on 10/31 and 11/1 (HH). A **Dusky Warbler** thrilled many observers at Antonelli Pond in Santa Cruz in mid-October and provided one of very few records for the U.S. A **Sage Thrasher** was at Hayward Reg. Shoreline on 10/24 (BR).

A female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Hayward Reg. Shoreline on 10/16 was the first for that location and only the second for Alameda Co. (BR) An adult male **American Redstart** was at Pt. Pinole Reg. Shoreline on 11/9—will it winter? (SG). **Lark Sparrow** is not a common migrant so note one at Heather Farms on 10/17 (HH).

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Bryan Flaig, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Rosita Harvey, Vickie Harvey, Bob Richmond.

MDAS Readies for Christmas Bird Count December 20

The 1997 MDAS Christmas Bird Count will be held *dawn to dusk* Saturday, December 20, *rain or shine*. All members and guests are invited to participate in this longstanding chapter event. Every pair of eyes is helpful in seeing birds; you do not need to be an expert birder to participate, but binoculars are essential. An all-day commitment is preferred.

In 1996, we experienced rain the entire day and had our lowest count in over a decade. Forty-seven field observers and three feeder watchers spotted 144 species and 30,883 individual birds. We have not seen less than 150 species since 1984.

This is the 97th Christmas Bird Count. The first took place on Christmas Day, 1900 to protest the traditional bird shoot that killed every bird in sight. Today, there are counts every state, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, and many Pacific islands. Over 45,000 volunteers will participate in about 1,700 counts this year. This is the longest running ornithological database and provides valuable data on resident and migratory bird populations. As important as all this is, it is also a great social event and a lot of fun.

Our count area will cover the 15-mile-diameter circle centered near Treat and Cowell in Concord. This circle 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 urban parks and communities in Contra Costa County. We also welcome home feeder counters if their home is within the count circle.

A potluck dinner and countdown of birds seen will follow the Christmas Count.

That dinner will be held at the San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church, 902 Danville Blvd., Alamo. (1.3 miles southeast of Danville Blvd and Stone Valley Rd.)

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. 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. Coffee and punch will be provided.

Jimm Edgar is this year's compiler. To participate, please sign up at the December meeting, or call Jimm at (510) 658-2330, or return this form to Jimm at the address below. 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.



MDAS, Take a Bow

A letter from NAS-California to MDAS President Carol Frischmann recognized the efforts of the MDAS Board of Directors and members. Commenting on the Annual Report submitted to NAS by our MDAS President, the letter reads:

"What an outstanding report! The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society continues to be real environmental leader in the Bay Area and, indeed, California. The chapter should feel very proud of its many accomplishments this past year."

Audubon's National Board to Meet in Napa

The NAS Board of Directors will met in formal session in Napa in early December. The Bay Area Chapters are developing a slide show to demonstrate various wetland activities. MDAS will have two projects in the program: the Julia Cox Freeman wetlands in Antioch and the Delta Science Center at Big Break.

Morro Bay Bird Festival,

January 16-18

The festival features over 35 guided field trips, including pelagic bird/whale trips, van trips to seek the California condor, and an outing to a Monarch butterfly wintering site. For a brochure, call the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-231-0592.

Yes! I want to participate in the 1997 MDAS Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 20, 1997.

- Put me wherever you need the help.
- I would prefer a hiking area.
- I would prefer a less strenuous area.
- I can monitor a feeder or garden.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ **Years of birding experience:** _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

(Make checks payable to MDAS.)

Mail to: Jimm Edgar, 4614 Jacobus Ave., Oakland, CA 94618

CALENDAR

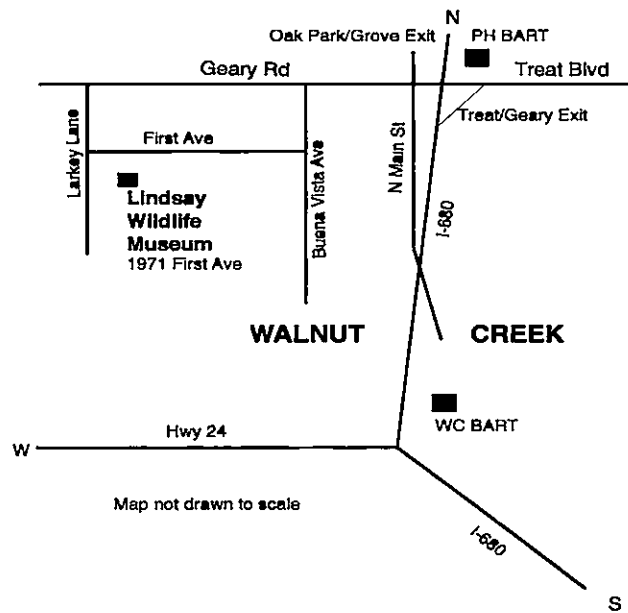
Dec. 4, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, Community Room, Lindsay Museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek (For directions, see map to the right.)

Dec. 11, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Cost Blvd, PH. All members are welcome.

Dec. 19, Fri., 9 a.m.—Quail Mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH

Dec. 20, Sat., all day—Christmas Bird Count. Volunteers work in teams. Call Jimm Edgar for info. 658-2330.

Jan. 8, Thurs., 7 p.m.—January General Meeting (This is a week later than the usual first Thursday of the month)

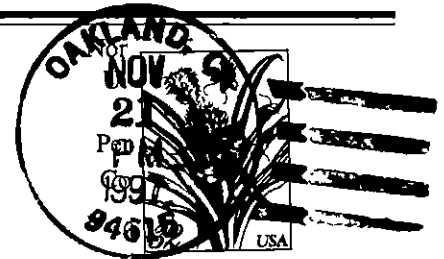


The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join, write a check (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available) to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter 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, Alamo, 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: Mike Williams, Membership Chair, (510) 376-1631.

Gloria Cannon, Editor, P.O. Box 8367, Pittsburg, CA 94565, (510) 753-0862, email. gcannon@hotcoco.infi.net
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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