



The QUAIL

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

A Gift for the New Millennium: Natural Capitalism

Recently on one of my frequent airplane trips, I sat next to Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute (www.rmi.org). Mr. Lovins co-authored a book and a summary article for the *Harvard Business Review* exploring the concept of natural capitalism.

Natural capitalism is the idea that "business strategies can be built around the radically more productive use of natural resources [to] solve many environmental problems at a profit."

In my professional life, I've had the opportunity to hear several of the CEOs that Mr. Lovins refers to in his work. Startlingly, there are CEOs who believe they can run their businesses better by making simple changes which will benefit the environment.

For example, Ray Anderson, chairman of Interface (a floor covering company) has created a manufacturing environment where zero waste goals produced a 60% reduction in landfill waste over four years. Because Interface regards fossil fuel inputs as waste, it built a solar-powered carpet factory. Mr. Anderson encourages other manufacturers to look to a new way of increasing profits.

See page 4, *President's Notes*

Birding Mount Everest with George Peyton

While most people think of the challenge of climbing Mt. Everest, George Peyton faced the challenge of birding between 9000 and 19,000 feet, trekking high up the slopes of the great mountain in the Everest Base Camp region.

Peyton timed his trip for the end of April and early part of May to coincide with bird migration headed north from India over the passes around Everest to Tibet, China, and the Soviet Union. Although the altitudes are high, he found many species there.

Adding additional excitement and beauty to the mountainsides were blankets of rich colors from giant blooming rhododendrons, some towering 30-40 feet.

George's program will feature spectacular mountain scenery and a cross-section of the birds he saw as well as views of the unique village life at those elevations. In addition, as a contrast, the program will also include the birdlife and lowland scenery of the Royal National Park at Chitwan where Tiger Tops is located.

George Peyton, a long-time member of Golden Gate Audubon Society, has given presentations for MDAS many times in the past on his travels around the world. He is a lawyer who has spent many *pro bono* hours working for Mono Lake and Audubon Society causes.

Please welcome him back to the Mount Diablo Audubon Society

January Birding Information

During Birding Information, Maury Stern will give us the results of the December 18th Contra Costa County Christmas Bird Count. Join us to see what our annual count revealed about the wintering species in our area this year.

Coming in Feb.: Update on the Breeding Bird Atlas

For February's general meeting, Steve Glover will give us an update on the results of the second year of the Contra Costa County's *Breeding Bird Atlas*.

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will Thursday, January 6, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8)

6:30 p.m.—Doors open

7 p.m.—Birding Information

7.30 p.m.—Business meeting

8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing

8:30 p.m.—Program

Remember to bring your own coffee cup.

Connections

Out with a Bang or a Whimper?

Despite much talk about congressional cooperation, intense partisanship and the thin margin of the Republican majority rendered a Congress unable to pass many new initiatives. Again and again, members failed to act on issues ranging from gun control to health maintenance organizations to campaign finance reform. However, the environment was one of the few issues that saw modest gains during the first session of the 106th Congress.

In the final budget agreement, natural resource agencies received \$14.9 billion, a 3% increase over last year. And despite the exorbitant number of anti-environmental riders—54—attached to various appropriations bills, most were removed or had their language softened, including:

- A rider removing the requirement that wildlife surveys on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management forests be conducted during land management planning processes.
- A rider blocking funds for the reintroduction of grizzly bears in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness of Idaho and Montana.
- A rider preventing the recalculation of the amount that oil companies pay to drill on public land.
- A rider preventing the National Marine Fisheries Service from taking steps to protect endangered Pacific Northwest salmon in Alaskan waters.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) will receive about \$400 million for federal land acquisition and \$40 million for state land acquisition. The state portion of the LWCF is particularly notable because it hasn't seen funding in years.

Better America Bonds Stall

One smaller but potentially significant proposal that didn't receive congressional consideration was Better America Bonds. Announced by Vice President Gore last January in direct response to the

overwhelming support of open space initiatives demonstrated in the November 1998 elections, this program would have used tax credits to raise nearly \$10 billion for local land acquisition and improvement projects. Despite the fact that the program was relatively uncontroversial and that only congressional approval, rather than additional appropriations, was needed to set the program in motion, it failed to gain momentum on Capitol Hill this year.

Winged Victory

Audubon won a major victory when Enron Wind Corp. agreed to withdraw its proposal to site a wind farm near the California Condor's federally designated critical habitat.

The agreement, which was orchestrated by Audubon, Enron, and the Tejon Ranch Company, represents a rare win-win outcome that will benefit California condor recovery while also facilitating a wind power project to supply green energy to the Los Angeles area.

Enron, the largest wind-turbine manufacturer in the United States, had originally proposed to build the wind farm between two blocks of California Condor habitat. Because of their location, the wind turbines could have interfered with the California Condor's flight patterns. These environmental concerns, plus a possibility that Enron would be denied the Wind Energy Tax Credit due to these impacts, led Enron to consider alternate sites. Tejon Ranch, a land development company that owns property next to the original area proposed for the wind farm, has agreed to lease a similar parcel of land in a different location to Enron for the project.

Administration Moves Forward on Forests

U.S. Forest Service Chief Michael Dombeck made efforts to implement his "Natural Resources Agenda," which recommitments the Forest Service to multiple-use forest management. The Forest

Service proposed new regulations for implementing the National Forest Management Act of 1976. These new regulations are based on scientific recommendations and will direct most Forest Service activities related to resource management—from wildlife planning to logging practices. The proposed regulations would make the maintenance of biodiversity the central purpose of Forest Service management.

**Comments on the proposed regulations are being accepted through January 4. The proposed regulations and instructions on how to comment can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/forum/nepa/rule/index.html>. —from the *Audubon Advisory*, December 1, 1999.

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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NAS Plans National Conference at Asilomar

During April 14–18, National Audubon Society will hold its National Convention at the Asilomar Conference Center on the Monterey Bay Peninsula. All members are invited to attend.

The theme for the convention is “Audubon: Gateway to Nature.” Audubon Centers are a gateway to nature and Audubon’s 2020 Vision calls for an Audubon Center in every community, and a network of Audubon Centers in each state. To demonstrate how Centers can accomplish educational, activist, and conservation goals, we will transform the Asilomar Conference Grounds into a virtual Audubon Center.

Programs will emphasize the landscapes featured at the Monterey Peninsula and surrounding areas: the marine environment, coastal dunes, forests, riparian habitat, the urban environment, coastal wetlands and the agricultural landscape. Each session will offer different workshops targeted at four audiences: parents and their children, teenagers, the general interest audience, and those with a keen interest in science and public policy.

The concurrent youth program for children ages 3 to 12 will be directed by the educational staff of the Richardson Bay Audubon Center, assisted by other Audubon staff and chapter volunteers.

We are also offering a Youth Program for high school and college age students interested in learning about environmental issues. In addition to interactive workshops and field trips for these attendees, there will be special, youth-oriented activities, including tidepool walks and social hours.

While offering a fun and interesting program on site, we also have an exciting variety of field trips planned. Jesse Grantham will lead a California Condor field trip while Bob Barnes will be leading folks on trips through some of the best birding spots in Central California, including the Kern River Valley. Staff and local leaders will lead attendees on a variety of half-day trips to some of the birding highlights of Monterey County.

Registration materials are available online at <<http://www.audubon-ca.org>>. You can also email Jennifer Jacobs in the Audubon-California office for a registration packet at jjacobs@audubon.org.

The National Audubon Society Convention is an event that continues to excite and inspire Audubon leaders throughout the country. It is an opportunity to see old friends and kindred spirits, and make new friends in one of the most beautiful settings in the world. Plan to join us!

Eating Out for Free!

Tired from holiday activities? Hate these cold, short winter days? Beat the Blues—Eat OUT!

Now that the holidays are ending and Y2K is with us, what else can spark our interest? Well, there’s always dinner out! The *Entertainment Books 2000* are still available to help you do it.

By merely presenting your gold, credit-card-size Entertainment card when you order, you can *save money* at elegant restaurants like the California Cafe, Le Virage, and Zheng Long in Walnut Creek; La Cocotte in Clayton; T.R.’s, Korea Palace, and Grissini in Concord, and Pacific Fresh and Il Bacio in Pleasant Hill as well as many, many more in all East Bay cities as well as Lake Tahoe, the Peninsula, and San Francisco. For those of you Auduboners in Brentwood and Antioch, try the new Bunkers Grill at the Brentwood Golf Course—it’s beautiful, the food’s great, and with your Entertainment card, you get one free dinner.

Want just a quick bite? Rip out a coupon for a meal at Magic Garlic in San Ramon, Tony Roma’s Ribs in Danville, Sweet River at two East Bay malls, and Mel’s in Walnut Creek. Then after lunch, head for a movie and use an Entertainment coupon to get in free. I feel happier already!

Get your *Entertainment Book* at either Wild Bird location or from Barbara Vaughn at the general meetings. Hurry! Your free dinners are waiting!

MDAS Needs Your Help

Remember MDAS as you make out your checks for year-end, tax-deductible charitable donations.

For a donation of \$35, you can provide a class with Audubon Adventures, an environmental education kit that includes 30 student newspapers on birds and other wildlife, a CD-ROM, book and video resources, a teacher’s guide, a nature video, and Internet access to Audubon birding experts.

MDAS has several educational outreach programs underway. We are developing a program of Family Nature Walks and need funds to purchase videos featuring California birds and print handouts. We are contributing toward the nature signs and displays at McNabney Marsh in Martinez. We have plans for an outdoor classroom and nature displays at the Julia Freeman Cox Wetlands in Antioch. Your donations would help us reach more people with our message about the value of habitat and the importance of birds and other animals.

On your check, just write on the memo line how you want MDAS to use your donation. Send your check to our treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Pl., Alamo 94507-2704. Give the gift of nature to the next generation!



Field Trip Reports

Arrowhead Marsh, Thurs., Nov. 4—Weather was gloomy with occasional sprinkles, but five birders had a great day. A Short-eared Owl gave a great display at South Shore, flying almost overhead. Tide was a little low for rails, but we heard a Clapper Rail call at South Shore. An Eurasian Wigeon was present at Arrowhead. The new marsh is providing great habitat for shore birds. We heard or saw 51 species.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Limantour, Saturday, November 6—Ten members and guests birded the Pt. Reyes Headquarters area, Sky Camp parking area, and the Limantour/Muddy Hollow lagoons and shoreline. The weather was ideal. The birds were exceptionally quiet in the first two areas. Birding picked up at Limantour with large numbers of ducks at the Muddy Hollow pond. In spite of the quiet times, we saw 63 species. Highlights: 20 Brant and 11 duck species, including Black Scoter, Virginia Rail, Common Snipe, and Varied Thrush.—*Maury Stern*

Lake Merritt, Wed., Nov. 10—One Barrow's Goldeneye was present among the Common Goldeneyes and Scaup seen at the lake. The day was very cold and gloomy with little activity, so two birders tried other waterfront spots. Arrowhead had few birds. Finally, at Hayward Shoreline we saw huge flocks of Shovelers—hundreds, possibly in the thousands. Only 25 species were seen.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Mountain View Sanitary District & McNabney Marsh, Thurs., Nov. 18—A cool but sunny and pleasant day brought out nine birders, and our efforts were well rewarded. To quote Hugh Harvey, it was a "five-heron day" together with views of the White Pelicans both on the water and in flight. A bit of excitement was generated when we saw an otter half leaping out of the middle of the pond several times at Mountain View Sanitary Plant in pursuit of a fish. Late in the morning, we traveled to Martinez Shoreline and were able to pick up several more species in spite of having to navigate around several hundred walkers out for the Great American Smokeout.

By early afternoon we had logged in 58 species.—*Barbara Vaughn*

Bodega Bay, Sat., Nov. 20—Five birdwatchers saw 58 species on this beautiful day at Bodega. The best bird was a Red-necked Grebe that we saw very well at the cove.—*Pat MacEachern*

Niles Canyon/ Alameda Creek Gravel Quarries, Wed., Dec. 1—After a few days of rain, December 1 proved to be quite beautiful and, at times, even warm. Three members and guests spent the day looking at a nice variety of birds. Of the 60 species we saw during the day, there were seven raptor species, four heron species, nine ducks, and a wide variety of small birds. We had a good long look at an adult Golden Eagle, which was a life bird for one guest. We also saw a Green Heron, one of the target birds for the trip but no Spotted Sandpiper this year. A lingering Orange-crowned Warbler was a good bird for the area.—*Jimm Edgar*

Birding Classes Available

Alice Hoch is continuing her birding field classes through the Fremont Adult School. The class is designed for both beginning and experienced birders.

Alice Hoch has been teaching birdwatching for the Fremont Adult School since 1975. She has been a birder for 38 years and is a longtime member of Ohlone Audubon Society.

The class will meet on six Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The next session begins January 11 and ends February 15. A second session begins on February 29.

In these classes you will observe and learn about the field identification, life styles, and ecology of local birds. Each Tuesday morning the class will visit a different birding spot.

Be prepared to birdwatch at the first class meeting. For more information, call the Fremont Adult School at 791-5841 or Alice Hoch at 657-0475.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

(continued from page 1)

"Take back" and recycling programs are tactical methods industry uses to reduce resource usage. Fundamental design changes, closed-loop manufacturing, business models that reward efficiency and re-investing in natural capital are strategic ways that Mr. Lovins suggests businesses can profitably restructure for the benefit of employees, shareholders, and the environment. There are several significant examples of each of these strategies producing success stories in manufacturing and service businesses.

What better gift for the generations to come in the new millennium than actually employing these and similar strategies to improve our environment and our quality of life while preserving the ability to produce the goods and services that we continue to demand as consumers?

Happy New Millennium and Happy Birding!
—Carol Fischmann

References:

Lovins, Lovins, and Hawken, "A Road Map for Natural Capitalism," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1999, pp. 145-158.

The Conference Board, "Harvesting EHS Value for Business Growth," February 1999.

Chemical Manufacturers' Association, "Annual Meeting," November 1998.

Volunteer Opportunities

MDAS is seeking a volunteer to review and comment on local environmental impact reports and negative declarations. You could do this review in your own home when it suits your schedule. You would review the EIRs and provide written comments to the Board. Call Nancy Weninger, 938-7987, if you have experience working with EIRs.

MDAS is looking for volunteers to staff our educational booth at the Pacific Flyway Festival at Mare Island, January 21-25. If you planned to go, add in an hour or two and help us out! Call Cecil Williams at 376-1631.

January 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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders

Future trip note: MDAS has a weekend field trip to Los Banos and the Panoche Valley on Saturday and Sunday, February 5 and 6. Make motel reservations now. In Los Banos, there's the Best Western John Jay Inn ([209] 827-0958 or [800] 528-1234). Nearby in Santa Nella are Best Western (Pea Soup) Andersen's Inn, (209) 826-5534, Holiday Inn Mission de Oro, (209) 826-4444, and Motel 6, (209) 826-6644. Motels in Santa Nella are preferable. Either day of the trip may be done alone. If you plan to go on this trip, please call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Full trip information will be in the February *Quail*.

Thursday, January 6, San Pablo Reservoir—Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking area of northeast corner of Camino Pablo and Bear Creek Rd. From Route 24 westbound, take Orinda exit north. Pass Wagner Ranch School and turn left at last stoplight. Morning walk through riparian area to lake. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

Saturday, January 8, Putah Creek.—Carpool leaves at 8:15 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Cherry Glen and Pleasants Valley Rds, approximately 1 mi 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

January 12, Wednesday, Sibley Volcanic Preserve—Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from Acalanes Ave. and Pleasant Hill Rd just north of Highway 24. Or meet at Sibley. From Highway 24 west, take Fish Ranch exit. At top of hill, go left on Grizzly Peak Blvd. At the intersection with Skyline, go left. Park entrance is on left about 100 yards from intersection.

Sibley Reserve is interesting geologically. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

January 20, Thursday, Sunol Regional Park—Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd, Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Or meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the nature center in Sunol Park. Go south on I-680 to Calaveras Rd. Go left under I-680 and drive 4 mi south on Calaveras Rd; turn left on Geary Rd. and go 2 mi to park. Watch and listen for Turkey along Geary Rd. Golden Eagles and other raptors, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Dipper, and Canyon and Rock Wrens possible. Leader: Steve Glover, 828-7793. Category 3

January 26, Wednesday, Grizzly Island Wildlife Refuge—Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Refuge headquarters. Take I-680 north, then 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

January 29, Saturday, Santa Cruz—Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Meet in Santa Cruz at Neary's Lagoon at 8:45 a.m. Take I-680 south to I-280 and then south on Hwy 17. In Santa Cruz, turn north on SR 1 to Bay St. Go left on Bay. Parking lot is at the intersection of Bay and California St. Trip may include a visit to the Butterfly Trees at Natural Bridges State Park. Leader: Joel Summerhill, 753-0862. 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.



Observations *by Steve Glover*

November was a slow month for bird sightings, so this is a good chance to discuss some of the species we tend to take for granted. Because many have rightly criticized the Observations columns for focusing on rarities rather than local breeders, this also seems like a good time to summarize the results of the first two years of our Breeding Bird Atlas project

Pied-billed Grebe has been confirmed in 15 blocks—all but two of which were in western or central county. The grebes in nearly all of these observations were seen in manmade reservoirs or ponds.

The only widespread breeding heron in the county is Green Heron, thus far confirmed in seven widely spaced locales. American Bittern, definitely a species of concern, has only been found in six blocks and has resisted confirmation. Snowy Egret apparently no longer nests in the county; the colony having relocated to West Marin Island.

A paucity of cliff habitat and increasing urbanization has resulted in just three confirmations of Turkey Vulture, all around Mt. Diablo.

The well-documented spread of Canada Goose continues, with confirmations from 17 disparate locations, most near manmade lakes and ponds. Mallard, not surprisingly, is our most common nesting waterfowl with 35 confirmations and 23 more probables.

The status of our two nesting species of accipiters is still somewhat muddy, but Cooper's Hawk (nine confirmations) is clearly much more common than Sharp-shinned Hawk (one confirmation). Red-tailed Hawk is clearly our most common nesting raptor (32 confirmations, 17 probables), but Red-shouldered Hawk—first confirmed 20 years ago—has already been confirmed in 14 blocks, all but one in West and Central County. Swanson's Hawks also continue to increase with three confirmations and four probables, all from the Delta region

Band-tailed Pigeon, an elusive species to confirm, has been confirmed in just five

blocks, while the ubiquitous Mourning Dove has already been confirmed in 35 and is probable in 29 more. It is conceivable that we could confirm them in all of the complete blocks

Acorn Woodpecker, a species of concern, particularly in residential areas, has been confirmed in 11 blocks, all in Central County. A nice contrast is offered by Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. Hairys, being hardwood specialists, have been confirmed in only six blocks while Downys, being more habitat generalists, have been confirmed in 11 blocks with probables in 20. Hairys are also restricted to the Coast Ranges while the Downys are found throughout the county.

Western Kingbird and Ash-throated Flycatcher offer another nice contrast. The Kingbird has been confirmed in 21 blocks, nearly all in East County, while the flycatcher has been confirmed in 17 blocks, all except one in Central County. The kingbird is one of the few species found mostly in East County. Black Phoebe, not surprisingly, is one of our more widespread breeders, having been confirmed in 42 blocks

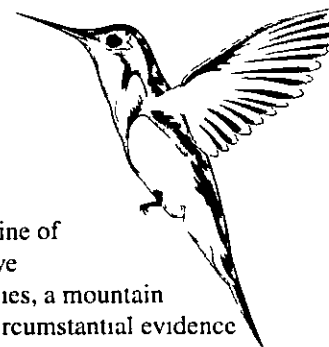
Another extremely widespread breeder, Western Scrub-Jay, has already been confirmed in 42 blocks, whereas its forest-dwelling relative, the Stellar's Jay, has been confirmed in just 29, all in West and Central County. American Crows, as anticipated, have been found in many blocks (32); but Common Raven, once unknown as a breeder here, has already been confirmed in 15 blocks.

Wrens are well-represented in the county with six species, but only House and Bewick's are widespread with 24 and 21 confirmations, respectively. Canyon Wren, due to a strong preference for rocky cliffs, has thus far resisted

confirmation while Rock Wren, a fairly local breeder in the county, has been confirmed in just two blocks

Western Bluebirds (30) and American Robins (40) are both apparently doing well, but they are far less abundant than European Starling, which has already been confirmed in 60 blocks and may very well be confirmed in every single block. They are also the most common breeder in many of the blocks. Although

there may be no definitive scientific studies to support the theory that the invasion of this species has resulted in the



decline of native species, a mountain of circumstantial evidence says otherwise.

Sage Sparrow is a local species of chaparral; and as a result, it has been confirmed in just three blocks. Our most common breeding sparrows, on the other hand, are Song Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco, with 27 and 34 confirmations respectively. The Junco was unknown as a breeder in the East Bay until early in the century.

Red-winged Blackbirds have been confirmed in 46 blocks already while the embattled Tricolored Blackbird has been found in only three. In truth, Red-wing numbers should also be monitored because the recent spate of development is usurping mustard hillside breeding sites at a rapid rate.

A final contrast is offered by House and Purple Finches. House Finches are common throughout the county and have been confirmed in 48 blocks while conifer-dwelling Purples have been confirmed in just seven blocks, none east of Morgan Territory

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.

**Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422**

Great Backyard Bird Count Scheduled for February

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is scheduled for February 18–21 and gives everyone—families, individuals, classes, and community groups—the opportunity to be involved in monitoring and protecting birds. There are no signups and no fees required—just an interest in birds. You can look for birds in your backyard, playgrounds, local parks, anywhere.

To participate in this year's count, you simply tally the highest number of each bird species you see at one time (to prevent counting the same birds more than once) and record the amount of time spent counting. Then go to the BirdSource website at <<http://www.birdsource.org>> and click on California for a checklist of our most frequently reported birds. Just follow the instructions provided at this easy-to-use website.

Results will be updated hourly in the form of animated maps and colorful graphs, so you will be able to see right way how your observations fit into the continent-wide "snapshot."

While you are at the BirdSource website, check out the variety of information available, including bird images, bird songs, and educational material on birds, and bird feeding.

During last year's GBBC, over 42,000 bird enthusiasts reported over 3 million birds and 350 species.

GBBC is a joint project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. The GBBC is helping scientists keep an ongoing index of North American birds that will yield insight into long-term trends in abundance and distribution. It will allow changes in population and ranges to be identified and tracked.

Winter Birding Events

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 14–17

Morro Bay is a designated Globally Important Bird Area. Recognized for its thousands of resident and wintering birds, it is the site of Winter Bird Festival, featuring over 35 field trips. Among the area's possible 200 bird species that you might see are Golden and Bald Eagles, shearwaters, jaegers, Ferruginous Hawks, owls, Peregrine Falcons, surfbirds, turnstones, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Workshops and programs will be conducted by birding experts, including Kimball Garrett, Ornithology Collections Manager at the National History Museum of Los Angeles County and co-author of *Birds of Southern California*. Former MDAS President Jim Lomax will give a raptor talk on Friday.

For more information, call the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-231-0592, or visit the website at <www.morro-bay.new/birds>.

Fourth Annual Northern San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival, January 21-23

Mare Island is the site of the 4th Annual Northern San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival. Hosted by the Napa-Solano Chapter of National Audubon Society and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, the Flyway Festival features a Family Wildlife Exploration and Birding Day on Sat., January 22, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

More than 50 natural resource-related exhibits and a fine art exhibition indoors and wetland, birding, and historic tours of Mare Island, located near Vallejo. The three-day free festival celebrates the return of over 1 million shorebirds and hundreds of thousands of waterfowl that migrate through or winter in the San Francisco Bay Area each year. A wine-and-cheese reception featuring the festival's fine art exhibition will be held

Friday evening, January 21. For a detailed festival brochure with directions, call Myrna Hayes at (707) 557-9816

Seventh Annual Duck Days, February 18-20

California Duck Days will take place on President's Day weekend. The festival features fascinating field trips, workshops, demonstrations, and a large Exposition Hall full of educational displays about wetlands and Central Valley wildlife habitats. Call 1-800-425-5001 to receive a Schedule of Events. A one-day field trip pass is \$20 per adult and other options are available. Visit their website at <www.yolobasin.org>.

NAS Praises Passage of Snow Goose Bill

National Audubon Society praised President Clinton's approval of legislation designed to halt widening destruction of fragile arctic habitat. The legislation calls for interim population control measures of the mid-continent population of Lesser Snow Geese and Ross's Geese.

Increasing agricultural development along the Mississippi and central flyways have provided Snow Geese with an unusually large amount of forage during their seasonal migrations. This abundant forage caused an explosion in the population of mid-continent Snow Geese. The population is estimated to have tripled in the last 30 years. The Canadian Arctic, the birds' breeding ground, cannot support this level of growth.

"Snow Geese have literally eaten themselves out of house and home," NAS President John Flicker said. "The area around Hudson Bay, stripped of vegetation, no longer provides habitat for scores of declining bird and animal species."

The legislation allows 24 midwestern and southern states to institute Snow Goose control measures, including a longer hunting season

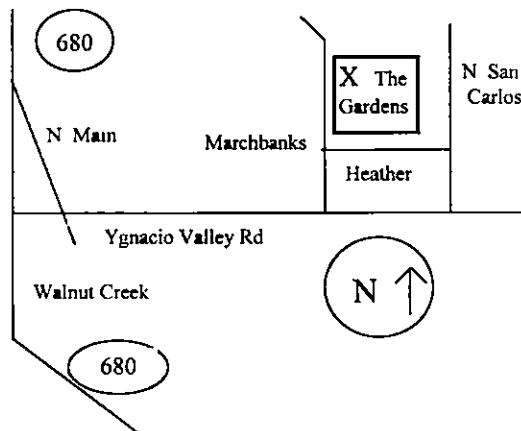
CALENDAR

Jan. 6, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, The Gardens at Heather Farms. See map on the right. Doors open at 6:30 p.m ; meeting starts at 7 p.m

Jan. 13, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members welcome to attend.

Jan. 21, Fri., 9:30 a.m.—*Quail* mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. (Volunteers prepare the *Quail* issue for mailing.)

General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. The schedule for the remaining meetings for 1999-2000 is February 3, March 2, April 6, May 4, and June 1. General meeting dates are also *Quail* deadlines.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15, membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Alamo, CA 94507-2704. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to GIFFORD YOUNG, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632.

Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor

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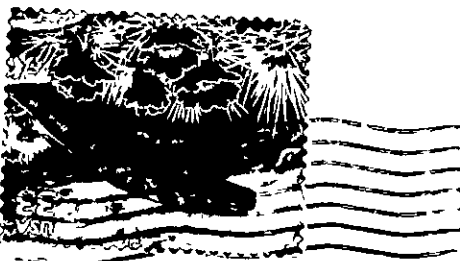


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Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053



The QUAIL

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

February 2000

Vol. 46, No. 6

Next Deadline: March 2

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

A Prescription for the Winter Blues

By now we all need a little "pick-me-up." The days are still short. The holiday bustle is over. Flu season is upon us. Here are some ideas for bird lovers to lift the winter blues or cure the flu.

Cranes: Listening and Watching

Drive out to Thornton Road to Woodbridge. Take a thermos of hot beverage and a book. Pull off at the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve. Take a look around the site for wintering waterfowl and cranes (a scope is useful). Return to the car for beverage and perhaps a nap. Roll the window partway down and just listen. Don't those cranes sound great?

Watch Indoor Birds

At a pet store, friend's home with pet birds, or at aviaries like the one at Wild Birds Unlimited (Pleasant Hill), just sit and watch the birds for 20 minutes. Focus on one or two birds. Imagine that you are that bird. What are they doing? What do you see?

Watch Birds at a Feeder

Put out a feeder or a shallow bowl of water. What birds are coming? Add another feeder with a different seed or suet type. Do different birds come? (See *President's Notes* on p. 5)

Glover to Update MDAS on Breeding Bird Atlas

At the February 3 general program, Steve Glover will update us on the results of the second year of MDAS Breeding Bird Atlas observations. Glover, who is coordinating this five-year effort for MDAS, will be showing block-area, colorized computerized maps for each species known to nest in the county to date. He will briefly discuss the reasons for conducting the project, methodologies being followed by the atlasers, and the findings of the atlas team.

A Breeding Bird Atlas maps all the bird species that breed in a given geographical area. Observations for the Breeding Bird Atlas are conducted during the peak of the nesting season, March through June. Atlasers follow a consistent methodology, 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 will set up a baseline of accurate breeding bird information in Contra Costa that will be of great value to local bird conservation and other environmentalists and land use planners.

Steve Glover, one of MDAS's best birders, is the founder and coordinator of the MDAS Atlas project; he is the

Observations editor for the *Quail* and a regional editor for *North American Birds* magazine.

Birding Information A Program Designed for Beginning Birders

For February's Birding Information program, Denise Wight will give an informative slide show about some of those frustratingly similar species. We'll start out easy, looking for field marks that distinguish different species and then get just a little bit harder to make it challenging.

This program will be geared towards beginning birders, so bring your friends who are teetering on the edge of becoming birders! For you seasoned birders, come and quiz yourself and learn how much you think you know.

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will Thursday, February 3, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8)
6:30 p.m.—Doors open
7 p.m.—Birding Information
7:30 p.m.—Business meeting
8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
8:30 p.m.—Program

Remember to bring your own coffee cup.

Connections

Audubon Supports Props 12 and 13

Audubon-California is joining other activist organizations, like the League of Women Voters and the AARP, to support Propositions 12 and 13—two important propositions that will be on the March 7, 2000, ballot. These propositions will raise funds for parks and clean water. We urge you to vote for them!

What are Props 12 and 13?

Prop 12 is the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection bond. Prop 13 is the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection bond. These bond acts received strong bi-partisan support in the Legislature in recognition of the tremendous need in California for parks, open space, and recreation as well as for clean water for its growing population and the environment.

What will Prop 12 do?

Prop 12 is a \$2.1-billion bond act that includes much needed funding for dilapidated state and local parks and other agencies that protect open space and recreational resources. Funds will also be made available for land acquisition, habitat restoration, coastal protection, open-space protection in fast-growing suburbs, and protection of remaining wildlife areas in some of our fastest-growing counties as well as for playgrounds, urban conservation corps, and youth recreation.

What will Prop 13 do for cleaner water?

Water is essential to California's economy and the well-being of its residents and the environment. Outdoor recreation based around surface water not only brings pleasure to many thousands of people but also is a huge industry in California. Birds and other wildlife depend on clean water and healthy wetlands

But water quality in California continues to be a problem. Prop 13 addresses water

pollution issues and makes our drinking water safer by funding watershed restoration, improving sewage treatment, and reducing "non-point source" pollution.

Why do we need Prop 12 and Prop 13?

California voters approved similar bond acts in the 1970s and 1980s, but those funds ran out years ago. There has not been a park bond passed since 1988. California is growing at a rate of more than 600,000 people per year, and all residents need places to recreate, appreciate wildlife, and exercise. The California Department of Water Resources predicts major shortages of pollution-free water.

Who is supporting Prop 12 and Prop 13?

Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike recognize the benefits of safe neighborhood parks and clean water. Governor Gray Davis is actively campaigning for these propositions. Fiscal conservatives, such as the California Taxpayers Association, support Prop 12 and Prop 13 because the bond issues will not raise taxes. All funds will be appropriated through the state budget and will be subject to review and annual public audits

Audubon-California, the League of Women Voters, the Nature Conservancy, and the California Chamber of Commerce all support Prop 12 and Prop 13. In addition, the California Organization of Police and Sheriffs and the AARP endorse Prop 12, and the Association of California Water Agencies and Agricultural Council of California back Prop 13.

Why are Prop 12 and Prop 13 important to Audubon?

Prop 12 and Prop 13 contain ENORMOUS potential for Audubon and its chapters. These bond acts provide funding and grants to state and local agencies that protect and restore land and wildlife habitat. Local projects that

we support and our own projects will be eligible for bond funds.

How else can we help?

Your help is needed to pass these important bond acts! To get more information, donate funds, or volunteer locally to help the campaign, please contact your friendly Audubon legislative advocate Kathie Schmiechen at <kschmiec@quiknet.com> or call (916) 313-4522.

Further information on Prop 12 and Prop 13 is available on Audubon-California's website at <http://www.audubon-ca.org/>.

Register to vote by February 7! Vote Yes on Prop 12 and Prop 13 on March 7!

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 53

Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053

(925) AUD-UBON**(925) 283-8266**<[http://www.audubon.org/
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*Gloria Cannon, Editor, (925) 753-0862,**P.O. Box 8367, Pittsburg, CA 94565.**email: gcannon@hotcoco.infi.net*

**News from
Wild Birds Unlimited
692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA
798-0303**

BIRDSEED SALE

15% off all 20 lb to 50 lb bags

SUET SALE

Buy 4 cakes or tubs and Get 1 FREE
(Sale 1/26/00 - 2/21/00)

Saturday Events at WBU

(Each starts at 11 am)

January 29: Two new organizations will be at WBU. The Native Bird Connection will bring a Swanson's Hawk. A representative from Cygnus Research and Education will discuss the organization's Peregrine Project and how you can participate.

February 12: Slide show on "Birds and Mammals of the World" with Bill Klapproth.

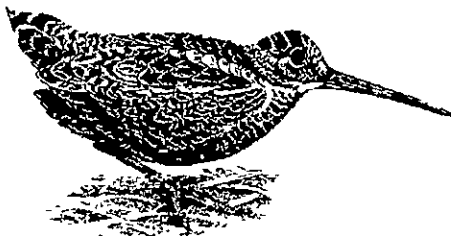
February 19: Don Yoder will give a slide presentation on "Bluebirds and Other Cavity Nesters." There will also be birdhouses on display.

February 26: Habitat Management Workshop. Learn how to prepare your garden for the spring migrants.

March 4: Bob Wisecarver will give a slide program on owls.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is Friday-Monday, February 18-21. To participate, count the birds in your backyard and report the results online or bring them to WBU. Cornell University has a great web sit to investigate at <<http://birdsource.cornell.edu.gbcb>>.

Bird feeding tip: flocks of Goldfinches are being reported. Get out your thistle feeders!



Field Trip Reports

Palo Alto, Saturday, December 4—

Nine birders spent the day in the marshes at the south end of the Bay. The tide was too low for good rail viewing (one Clapper Rail was seen briefly), but we did see other water birds and raptors in good numbers. We saw both Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. White-winged Scoter and Clark's Grebe were on the Bay. At Charleston Slough we counted eleven Black Skimmers. A total of 76 species were seen.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Altamont, Thursday, December 9—No one was at the meeting spot at 8:15, and the leader cancelled the trip.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Hidden Lakes, Wednesday, December 15—

12 birders enjoyed a walk around

this Martinez park. We saw seven species of raptors. A mistletoe-loaded tree attracted Western Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings. Red-breasted Sapsucker and Purple Finch were other interesting sightings among the 37 species seen.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Putah Creek, Saturday, January 8—A foggy start to the trip didn't dampen the spirits of the 20 birders. The temperature was in the mid-forties and the fog did lift. Highlights included Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, Hooded and Common Mergansers, White-throated Swifts, Wild Turkeys and Red-breasted Sapsuckers. As we were making our trip checklist, a Great Horned Owl called several times nearby. Species total: 71.—*Florence Bennett*.

Calendar of Birding Events

Third Annual Wildlife Festival at the Lindsay

Wild Valentines is February 12-13 at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. The festival features the largest collection of native California wildlife assembled in the museum's 45-year history. The weekend will be filled with fun activities, educational speakers, and hands-on crafts as well as special exhibits and animal guests. Festival admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and \$4 for children. Members are admitted free.

Seventh Annual Duck Days, Feb. 18-20

Seventh annual Duck Days is scheduled for February 18-20 at Davis. The festival features field trips, workshops, demonstrations, and a large Exposition Hall full of educational displays about wetlands, wildlife, and ecology. Call 800-425-5001 to receive registration information. A one-day field trip pass is \$20 per adult and other options are available. Visit their website at <<http://www.yolobasin.org>>.

Wild On Wetlands Weekend

Can't make the MDAS field trip to Los Baños? Go on March 11-12 for the guided tours, workshops, wildlife viewing opportunities, demonstrations and family activities at California's largest contiguous block of wetlands—the 160,000-acre Grasslands Ecological Area. Demonstrations on wildlife photograph, sketching, duck calling, fly fishing techniques, and retriever training are at Merced College's Los Baños campus. Admission is \$10 a day or \$15 for a two-day. Youth 16 and under are free with a paid adult. For more information and registration, call 800-336-6354. Or visit their website at <<http://www.losbanos.com/wow.htm>>.

Golden Trout Natural History Workshops

At this hike-in wilderness camp at 10,000 ft near Mt. Whitney, guests have an superb opportunity to learn from professional botanists, naturalists, and geologists. The Golden Trout Camp consists of historic log cabins (some of the only structures allowed to remain inside this federally designated Wilderness Area). Guests are provided meals, showers, and tent camps. The sessions are one-, two-, and three-week sessions, very economical. Sessions start June 25, July 2, August 6. Reserve early—limited space is often full by April. For brochure, call 909-798-3060. See their website at <<http://www.1startists.com/gtc/>>.

MDAS Completes Christmas Bird Count

by Maury Stern
CBC Co-compiler

MDAS held its 45th annual Christmas Count on Saturday, December 18.

Sixty-nine people participated in the field and two more participants counted birds at their backyard feeders. We reported a total of 70,000 individual birds—the highest since 1992 (See Table).

Observers saw 155 species on count day and two more during count week. Over our 45-year history of CBCs, we have observed 206 different species.

The count day was as nice as anyone can remember—a real break from some of the rainy, cold, and foggy days we have had some years.

Our potluck dinner was a big success. A special thank-you goes to Alice Holmes, our hospitality chair, and her crew, for their help with it.

We had several surprises. We spotted a Pacific loon as well as Red-throated loon, American white pelican, American bittern, Blue-winged teal, Wood duck, Redhead, Bald eagle, Ferruginous hawk, Peregrine falcon, Black rail, Short-billed dowitcher, Western gull,

Blue-gray gnatcatcher, Orange-crowned warbler. Counters were excited to find five Canyon wrens, a Winter wren, and Sage sparrow

The most unusual count bird was the Bald Eagle spotted flying over Rossmoor. The only other time one was seen was 1974

The species missing from this year's count were Horned grebe, Tundra swan, Snow goose, Surf scoter, Osprey, Wild Turkey, Costa's hummingbird, Townsend's solitaire, Yellow-headed blackbird, Long-billed curlew, and Pine siskin.

Jimm Edgar, my fellow co-compiler, and I want to thank our section leaders, many of whom have been leading their areas for many years. It's a great help to have people so familiar and so skilled in checking their areas.

Plan now on being part of the 101st Christmas Count in December 2000.

Read the nationwide results at <<http://birdsourc.tc.cornell.edu>>, which has all the Christmas Counts of all the chapters since 1900.

<u>Date Held</u>	<u>Total No. of Individuals Seen</u>	<u>No. of Species Observed</u>	<u>Weather Conditions</u>
1/2/88	53,742	153	cold, rainy
12/31/88	36,385	152	cold, foggy
12/30/89	33,703	158	pleasant
12/15/90	34,500	156	cold, 25 degrees
12/14/91	44,747	157	cloudy but nice
12/19/92	89,000	159	good weather
12/18/93	51,785	156	good weather
12/17/94	33,471	158	foggy
12/16/95	31,686	159	sunny, beautiful
12/21/96	30,083	144	very rainy
12/20/97	32,228	160	overcast
12/19/98	58,108	152	sunny, bright
12/18/99	70,000	157	sunny, springlike

Species Seen

Red-throated Loon
Pacific Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
American Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Clark's Grebe
American White Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
American Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Greater White-fronted Goose
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
American Green-winged Teal
Mallard
Northern Pintail
Blue-winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal

Northern Shoveler
Gadwall
American Wigeon
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Tufted Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Common Goldeneye
Bufflehead
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Turkey Vulture
White-tailed Kite
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk

Golden Eagle
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Prairie Falcon
Ring-necked Pheasant
California Quail
Black Rail
Clapper Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Common Moorhen
American Coot
Killdeer
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Willet
Spotted Sandpiper
Long-billed Curlew
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Dunlin
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher

Common Snipe
Bonaparte's Gull
Mew Gull
Ring-billed Gull
California Gull
Herring Gull
Thayer's Gull
Western Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Forster's Tern
Rock Dove
Band-tailed Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Barn Owl
Western Screech-owl
Great Horned Owl
Northern Pygmy-Owl
Burrowing Owl
Short-eared Owl
White-throated Swift
Anna's Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Acorn Woodpecker
Red-breasted Sapsucker



Continued on p. 6

February 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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Thursday, February 3, Sindiwich Lagoon, Briones Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the top of Briones Rd. off Alhambra Valley Rd. This trip is approximately 3 miles round trip through grasslands to the ponds. Interesting ducks are sometimes found here. Also raptors and grassland species. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 3

Saturday and Sunday, February 5 and 6, Los Baños and the Panoche Valley. This is one of the special weekend field trips that MDAS sponsors annually. Make motel reservations now. In Los Baños, we suggest Best Western John Jay Inn (209-827-0958 or 800-528-1234). Nearby in Santa Nella are Best Western (Pea Soup) Andersen's Inn, 209-826-5534, Holiday Inn Mission de Oro, 209-826-4444, and Motel 6, 209-826-6644. Motels in Santa Nella are preferable. Either day of the trip may be done alone. Space is limited to a first-call, first-come basis, so you must contact the leader, Steve Glover, at 828-7793.

Wednesday, February 9, Thornton. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from 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 bridge. Turn right on SR 12 for 11.5 miles, then turn left onto Glascock Rd. Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes, hawks and grassland birds. Trip will go

in light rain. If questions, call the leader. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Thursday, February 17, Big Break. Carpool leaves from the southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot at 8 a.m. Meet on Jordon Lane in Oakley at 8:30. Hike along Big Break Trail between the river and Iron House Sanitary property. Take SR 4 east to Vintage Parkway in Oakley. Turn left, then right onto Walnut Meadows, and left onto Jordon Lane. Parking is on a residential cul-de-sac so carpooling is important! Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, February 19, Yolo County— Carpool leaves southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8:00 a.m. This is a car-caravan trip to a number of Yolo County sites recommended by the Sacramento Audubon Society. These are good areas for raptors and water birds; Mountain Plovers are also possible. Carpooling is essential. Call the leader if interested in participating. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Wednesday, February 23, Bolinas Lagoon—5 Brooks. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at 8:45 a.m. in front of Audubon Canyon Ranch. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Dam Rd. to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and proceed straight through stop light. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US101 north, take the San Rafael exit. Go two blocks, turn left and continue west to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake. At SR1, turn left and follow SR1 to Bolinas Lagoon and Audubon Canyon Ranch. Pullout area on lagoon shore.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2



President's Notes

continued from page 1

Position the feeder so you can watch while you peel veggies or work at the computer. Make a list day by day or have the kids draw pictures of the feeder birds.

Plan Bird-attracting Gardens

Seed catalogs are arriving. Plan a spring planting that provides birds with food and cover. Consult with your local nurseryman or friends who know about plants. Contact the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society for assistance at 510-464-4977 or www.ebcnps.org/Contacts.htm.

Bird the Web

Bird the web using information developed and presented by Maury Stern at a recent Chapter Meeting. Maury's summary information is accessible from our website at www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/mt-diablo

Cure the blues. Cure colds and flu. Watch Birds! Happy Birding!

—Carol Frischmann

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*

Thirty **American White Pelicans** were noted heading west over Iron House Sanitary District, near Oakley on 11/26, and three more were found the same day at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron (SG).

A single **Cattle Egret** was at Iron House Sanitary District 11/26 (SG).

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** continued to winter on the pond at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline through at least 1/10 (JR). Eurasian Wigeon was a rare miss on the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC) this year, having been recorded virtually annually in recent years. Two male and three female **Redheads** were at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 11/26 (SG). This species is quite scarce in East County and is missed there some winters. Two more Redheads, both males, were at Mallard Reservoir north of Concord on 12/18 (SG, JRo). These were the first on the CBC since 1993.

An adult male **Tufted Duck** was at Clifton Court Forebay on 11/26 (SG). Another Tufted Duck, possibly a young male, was at Berkeley Aquatic Park, Alameda County, 1/1 (DW,RS,DB).

Tufted Duck, although rare, has been found virtually annually in recent years in Contra Costa County, and still more would be found with careful scrutinization of large scaup flocks. A pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were at Iron House Sanitary District on 11/26, a location where they are proving to be regular winter visitors (SG).

An adult **Bald Eagle** in transit over Rossmoor toward Lafayette Reservoir on 12/18 furnished our first CBC record since 1975! (NW,JE et al.). It was seen the next day at Lafayette Reservoir during the Oakland CBC (MS). A **Prairie Falcon** was at Iron House Sanitary District, where scarce, on 11/26 (SG).

An adult **Western Gull** was unusually far east into the Delta at Iron House Sanitary District/ Big Break on 11/26 (SG). This

species has traditionally been noted only as far east as about Bay Point.

A **Long-eared Owl** in Pine Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park, on 12/18 provided a very rare CBC record although it is thought that there is probably a resident pair at that location (SG, JRo).

A wintering **Sage Thrasher** at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline at Pt. Richmond 1/5 (KB) to at least 1/10 (JR) was the first for the county since 1995-96 and the first ever for western Contra Costa County.

Surely one of the most exciting recent bird finds in Contra Costa was a **Canada Warbler** around the parking lot at Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline near Richmond 12/11-12 (DN). Extensive searching thereafter proved unsuccessful. This was just the third county record and the first since 1981.

Observers: David Bradley, Ken Burton, Jimm Edgar, Steve Glover, Dan Nelson, Jean Richmond, John Robinson, Rusty Scalf, Maury Stern, Nat Weber, Denise Wight

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

1999 CBC Species (continued from p. 4)

Nuttall's Woodpecker	Marsh Wren	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Lark Sparrow
Hairy Woodpecker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Flicker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Sage Sparrow
Black Phoebe	Western Bluebird	Fox Sparrow
Say's Phoebe	Hermit Thrush	Song Sparrow
Tropical Kingbird	American Robin	Lincoln's Sparrow
Horned Lark	Varied Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Tree Swallow	Wren-tit	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Steller's Jay	Northern Mockingbird	White-crowned Sparrow
Western Scrub Jay	California Thrasher	Dark-eyed Junco
American Crow	American Pipit	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Raven	Cedar Waxwing	Tricolored Blackbird
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Phainopepla	Western Meadowlark
Oak Titmouse	Loggerhead Shrike	Brewer's Blackbird
Bushtit	European Starling	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Hutton's Vireo	Purple Finch
White-breasted Nuthatch	Orange-crowned Warbler	House Finch
Brown Creeper	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Lesser Goldfinch
Rock Wren	Black-throated Gray Warbler	American Goldfinch
Canyon Wren	Townsend's Warbler	House Sparrow
Bewick's Wren	Common Yellowthroat	
House Wren	Spotted Towhee	
Winter Wren	California Towhee	

In Memory of Gen Sattler

Gen Minnich Sattler, an Audubon member since 1965 and well known to many chapter members, passed away on November 13 at age 84. She and her late husband Bill worked tirelessly with a variety of environmental organizations and in 1971 helped found Save Mt. Diablo. memorial gifts may be sent to:

American Cancer Society
 1710 Webster St., Ste 210
 Oakland, CA 94612-3495

or
 Save Mt Diablo
 P.O. Box 5376
 Walnut Creek, CA 94596-1376

Great Backyard Bird Count Feb. 18–21

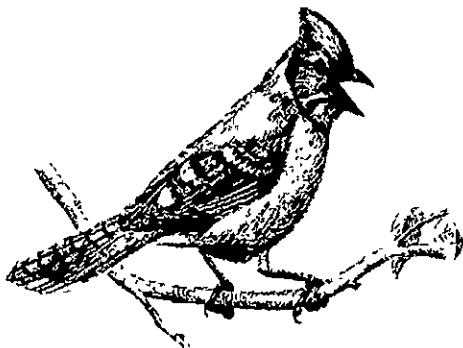
The Great Backyard Bird Count is scheduled for the weekend of February 18–21. This is an easy and fun event that you can use to introduce anyone, including children and non-birders, to birdwatching. Here's how to participate:

- Select a location for your watch. It can be your backyard, a schoolyard, or a park.
- Download the tally sheet and step-by-step guide available at BirdSource <<http://birdsource.cornell.edu>>.
- On a day between February 18–21, count the number of birds and the number of species present at your site over your chosen time period—anywhere from 15 minutes to all day!
- Report the information online at the BirdSource website. Or if you do not have access to the internet, take your tally sheet to Wild Birds Unlimited, and they will transmit your report.

Visit the Cornell University website to see the results of the reports from participants. Watch as the online maps are updated before your eyes.

Last year's concentrated effort created an immense snapshot of the distribution and population of birds that winter in North America.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored by the National Audubon Society, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ford, and Wild Birds Unlimited. The count helps scientists define the status of birds.



Point of View

Y2K Humbug

by Christopher Panton

The (quasi) millennium is finally here—putting a welcome end to all those tiresome “best of” and “worst of” lists which grew like fungus all over 1999. Absent from this flood of intellectual stimulation was the “Millennium’s Most Inane Responses to Wildlife” list. If such a list were published, Failure to Recognize Root Cause would rank highly.

Of the millions of possible examples, one truly metaphorical story serves to demonstrate the importance of both this overlooked category and of the list itself. About a year ago, an article, written by a local professional ornithologist (and Auduboner), was published by one of the greater Bay Area Audubon Society chapters. The central theme was the mourned loss of beloved Acorn Woodpecker flocks from acreage surrounding a local educational institution. The woodpeckers’ disappearance was accompanied by the virtually simultaneous appearance of the heinous European Starling.

The writer left no doubt about where he stood regarding the avian upstart, nor about where he adamantly believed responsibility for the disappearing woodpeckers resided.

The author then proceeded to chastise local authorities for cutting down a clearly significant number of large oak trees on campus. The text made no connection between tree removal and woodpecker disappearance. A total failure to recognize the possibility of root cause

The article’s fundamental metaphor typifies a widespread affliction within the wildlife community: failure to recognize root cause. Sadly, the symptoms are often accompanied by potentially devastating consequences and not just for starlings, as the following recent, non-avian example shows.

The Sierra bighorn sheep is endangered. Its population has been severely

reduced by loss of habitat, hunting, and disease imported from livestock.

Occasionally, the mountain lion hunts the sheep. Because of this, the state Department of Fish and Game has proposed the unrestricted removal (i.e., killing) of the predator

Killing every mountain lion in California will not halt the demise of the sheep because the lion is not the root cause of the problem. If the root causes—loss of habitat, hunting, and disease—remain unaddressed, then two species will almost certainly be extirpated instead of the possibility of one.

Dr. Ted Case, a respected research biologist, performed a ten-year study that leads to the conclusion: when man moves into a habitat, many indigenous species cannot adapt to his depredations; and they decline as a result; other species which adapt to man move in and thrive.

While not addressing starlings *per se*, Case’s research is wholly relevant to root-cause scapegoating associated with that unfortunate bird. Yet, as we enter the enlightened 21st century, very little has changed as a result of the doctor’s efforts.

Deliberate ignorance of root cause seems as prevalent as ever. Most people continue to jump to the inevitable, and putatively wrong, conclusion. It is strange that, with all this “negative” circumstantial evidence and empirical data available, nobody has yet conducted a scientific and statistically meaningful study of the starling. Perhaps a proposal to this effect will be on somebody’s list for the next millennium.

The Quail welcomes opinion articles by MDAS members. If you have written an article with an environmental focus, send it as an email to gcannon@hotcoco.inf.net. A copy of the Quail’s editorial policy is available upon request

CALENDAR

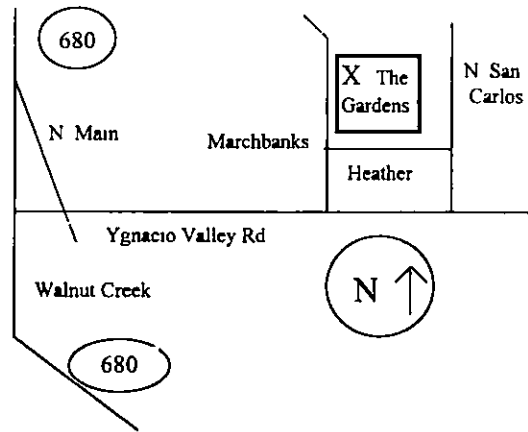
Feb. 3, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, The Gardens at Heather Farms. See map on the right. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.: meeting starts at 7 p.m.

Feb 10, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members welcome to attend.

Feb. 14, Mon.—Valentine's Day

Feb. 18, Fri., 9:30 a.m.—Quail mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. (Volunteers prepare the Quail issue for mailing.)

General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. The schedule for the remaining meetings for 1999-2000 is March 2, April 6, May 4, and June 1. General meeting dates are also Quail deadlines



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years Seniors and students only \$15, membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Alamo, CA 94507-2704. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to GIFFORD YOUNG, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632.

Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

2/00



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JEAN RICHMOND

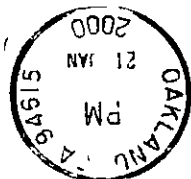
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Mr. Diablo Audubon Society
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The QUAIL

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Mt Diablo Audubon Society
Walnut Creek, CA
94597-0053

March 2000

Vol. 46, No. 57

Next Deadline: April 6

NAS Mourns the Death of Hazel Wolf

The National Audubon Society mourns the passing of Hazel Wolf, who died January 21. A 101-year-old crusader for Audubon, Wolf inspired thousands with her wit, drive, and dedication to the environment.

"The entire Audubon family is saddened by the loss of Hazel Wolf," said John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society. "Our grief is tempered only by the fact that Hazel's life was so full of joy and accomplishment. She was an inspiration to all of us who knew her. She challenged us to be better conservationists and better human beings. She will be greatly missed."

"Through her hard work and her force of personality, Hazel Wolf made a lasting impression on the Audubon movement," said National Audubon Society Chairman of the Board Donald O'Brien. "No one did more than she on behalf of the environment. She represents the very best in Audubon. We now have a responsibility to continue her important work."

Wolf played a prominent role in environmental efforts on local, national and international levels. She co-founded the Seattle Audubon Society, and she served as its secretary for 37 years. She organized 21 of the 26 Audubon chapters in the region, including the Black Hills Audubon Society in Olympia.

(Continued on page 4)

Robinson's Field Experiences in the Great Lakes Region

Join us on March 2 for a program about wildlife in Minnesota and the Great Lakes Region. Biologist John C. Robinson promises a presentation that will reveal an exciting, humorous, and insightful look into some of the biological field work involving the management of black bear and migratory waterfowl populations found in the Great Lakes Region.

In addition to seeing colorful slides of this beautiful north country, we'll learn how waterfowl biologists actually catch and place leg bands on thousands of newly hatched ducks, using a technique called "Nightlighting." Leg banding allows biologists to monitor waterfowl populations and manage hunting seasons according to the annual fluctuations in waterfowl numbers.

Robinson will also present some captivating slides of a black-bear radio telemetry study performed during the middle of winter in the northeastern part of Minnesota, the land of many lakes and six-month winters.

John C. Robinson is a wildlife biologist for the Regional Office of the USDA Forest Service and is currently stationed at Mare Island. He is also owner of LANIUS Software, a database development and consulting company located in Walnut Creek. His latest software product is the North American Bird Reference

Book multimedia CD-ROM. He is also author of two books, *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee*, published in 1990 (University of Tennessee Press), and *Secret of the Snow Leopard*, a science-fiction book published in 1999 (Lost Coast Press in Fort Bragg, CA).

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will Thursday, March 2, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8)

6:30 p.m.—Doors open

7 p.m.—Birding Information

7:30 p.m.—Business meeting

8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing

8:30 p.m.—Program

Remember to bring your own coffee cup.

NAS Convention at Asilomar

The national convention of the National Audubon Society will be April 14–18 at the Asilomar Conference Center on the Monterey Bay Peninsula.

Registration materials are available online at www.audubon-ca.org <<http://www.audubon-ca.org>>. You can also contact Jennifer Jacobs in the Audubon-California office for a registration packet by email at jjacobs@audubon.org.

Connections**Audubon Supports Props 12 and 13****Vote Yes! on Prop 12**

Over the last decade, the state's commitment to state, regional, and local parks and conservation of wildlife habitat has dwindled. The last statewide park bond was passed in 1988; and California and its communities have not kept pace with the needed funding for rehabilitation, development, and acquisition of parks and open space.

Already largely an urban state, California will continue to grow. By 2020, it is projected that the state will have 18 million more residents, placing more pressure on existing parkland, open space, and habitat.

Proposition 12—the Safe Neighborhoods, Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000—provides \$2.1 billion for state and local park projects to preserve our natural heritage and allow urban areas to expand much needed recreation facilities that serve children, youth, seniors, and

families. Prop 12 provides \$82.5 million to match funds contributed by federal or local agencies or nonprofit organizations for the acquisition, restoration, or protection of habitat or habitat corridors that promote the recovery of threatened, endangered, or fully protected species. Among other projects, the Bond Act provides:

- \$50 million for the acquisition of lands projects that protect habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species.
- \$5 million for the acquisition, preservation, restoration, and establishment of habitat for waterfowl or other wetlands-associated wildlife.
- \$5 million for the acquisition, development, restoration, and protection of wetlands and adjacent lands outside the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley.
- \$5 million for environmental restoration projects pursuant to the Salton Sea Restoration Project.

Vote Yes! on Prop 13

Anyone who lived through the 1982–1989 drought knows that water is the lifeblood of California.

Proposition 13—the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act of 2000—increases the safety of drinking water by keeping water supplies free of pollution. It provides commonsense flood protection by avoiding development in the paths of floods and by protecting and restoring fisheries and wildlife habitat along rivers and streams.

Neither bond act will raise taxes. **Vote Yes on Prop 12 and Prop 13 on March 7.**

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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(925) 263-8266

<[http://www.audubon.org/
chapter/ca/mt-diablo/](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/mt-diablo/)>

Guide to America's Important Bird Areas Published

The first-ever-published guide to Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in North America was released this month by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).

North American Important Bird Areas: A Directory of 150 Key Conservation Sites lists key areas of highest conservation priority in Canada, the United States, and Mexico—50 sites in each country. Identified using standardized criteria, IBAs include sites with significant abundance or diversity of species, areas with endemic birds, and sites that protect endangered and threatened species.

This book represents a major advance in bird conservation in North America. The 150 profiled sites include Pennsylvania's Hawk Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge, among the world's prime raptor migration corridors; and New York

City's Jamaica Bay, a globally-significant area for many migratory shorebirds and others.

The book includes maps depicting the IBAs in each of the three countries; an overview of the sites and descriptions of each; its key species listed; and conservation threats summarized.

For ordering information, contact the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, 393, rue St-Jacques Ouest, Bureau 200, Montreal (Quebec), Canada H2Y 1N9; phone: (514) 350-4300; on the Web at <www.cec.org>.

National Audubon Society's IBAs Program continues to identify IBAs in the U.S., a number expected to reach 5,000, containing more than 30 million acres. Audubon's IBA Program works at the state level to promote effective conservation and management action.

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**News from
Wild Birds Unlimited
692 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA
798-0303**

A recurring question we kept hearing this winter was "where are the birds"? Many people reported that there were far fewer birds at their feeders this winter when compared to previous years.

This was probably due to weather conditions, both locally and to the north. Our winter has been very mild this year. How many days have you had to scrape the frost off your windshield? Rainfall has also been moderate. Normally, heavy rain and cold weather will force the birds to feed heavily as they need more calories to withstand the elements.

The weather all the way north to Washington has also been mild. Both Oregon and Washington have not had a lot of rain or cold, and there are still many birds in the Cascades.

Chickadees and titmice are already starting to nest. It's not too late to put out birdhouses. Both of these species, along with woodpeckers, nuthatches, bluebirds, wrens, and others will readily use nesting boxes.

Birdhouses should have drainage, ventilation, and cleanouts. These elements provide a safe, secure home for the birds. Also, depending upon the species you are trying to attract, specific hole sizes and floor dimensions are required. For a free handout on the requirements for different species, come to WBU.

A new product is the "Hummingbird House." It is actually a set of brackets that allows the female hummingbird to erect her nest in a safe, secure place. The brackets are designed at the correct angles that hummingbirds require to securely support the nest. It also includes nesting material.

Anna's are already nesting, but it's not too late to put up a "Hummingbird House" Anna's can start nesting again 40 days after the hatching of the previous nest's eggs.

New Birding Series Available to PBS

A new film series by Don and Lillian Stokes has begun airing on some PBS stations across the country. The 13-week series called StokesBirdsAtHome.com. It has a special appeal for us because part of the 8th week's program was made in Walnut Creek.

PBS stations in Fresno, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Redding are carrying the series. However, KQED, Channel 9, in San Francisco has NOT scheduled the Stokes program.

Call or write KQED and urge them to schedule the program. You can e-mail the program manager, Ms. Red Dana, at

audserv@kqed.org or call (415) 864-2000.

KCSM, Channel 60, in San Mateo is running the series at 12:30 on Saturdays. The last program in the series will be shown the first week in March. Following that, KCSM will show "On the Birding Trail," until May when it will repeat <StokesBirdsAtHome>. Contact KCSM at (650) 574-6586 for the May program times of <StokesBirdsAtHome>.

The Stokes will be featured speakers at the NABS annual convention in June in Galena, IL. —Don Yoder

Calendar of Birding Events

After The Storm: Bob Walker and the Art of Environmental Photography

The Independent Documentary Group and the Lindsay Wildlife Museum are presenting "After the Storm: Bob Walker and the Art of Environmental Photography," an exhibition of landscape photographs, opening in March and running through August at the Lindsay Museum at 1931 First Avenue, Walnut Creek.

The exhibit features the extraordinary landscape photographs of Bay Area photographer/activist, Bob Walker, who died of AIDS in 1992 at the age of 40. "After the Storm" includes examples of his work for the East Bay Regional Park District and will focus on the theme of what one person can accomplish as an actively involved citizen.

Civic Action Network 2000 Symposium, March 4-5

You're invited to this major statewide environmental meeting in the San Jose area. Sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League Foundation, this will be an exciting weekend of panels, workshops, and speakers that will address smart growth and sustainability issues. Visit the website for more information and to register online at <<http://www.pcl.org>> or contact the Planning and Conservation League Foundation at 916-313-4539.

Wild On Wetlands Weekend, March 11-12

The festival features guided tours, workshops, wildlife viewing opportunities, and family activities at California's largest contiguous block of wetlands—the 160,000-acre Grasslands Ecological Area. Festival headquarters are at Merced College's Los Baños campus. Admission is \$10 a day or \$15 for a two-day. For more information and registration, call 800-336-6354. Or visit their website at <<http://www.losbanos.com/wow.htm>>.

Butterfly and Hummingbird Festival, March 26

The Ohlone Audubon Society is one of the sponsors of the Butterfly and Hummingbird Festival at the Fremont Main Library, 2200 Stevenson Blvd., Fremont. The event focuses on education and information with slide shows, videos, and experts on hand. There will be door prizes, refreshments, and books and craft items for sale.

Venezuelan Audubon Society Offers April Birding Trip

The Venezuelan Audubon Society (VAS) cordially invites you to join them for a spectacular 14-day adventure throughout eastern and southeastern Venezuela. The trip is planned for March 22 to April 4, 2000, and will be led by Rodney Fuentes, an outstanding and thoroughly knowledgeable bilingual guide.

The excursion will include the submontane forest of the Tepuis National Monuments in the vast and breathtaking Gran Sabana. The tour group will also explore the tropical rainforest of the Orinoco Delta along the Morichal Largo, as well as the coastal mountain range of the Paria Peninsula National Park. And they'll see the amazing Oilbirds and the fabled cave they inhabit. Many of these regions are wild, rugged, and untouched and shelter more than 600 species of birds, including 68 endemic species.

The Guianan Cock of the Rock, Capuchinbird, Scarlet-horned Manakin, Pompadour Cotinga, Crimson Topaz Hummingbird, Musician Wren, White-plumed Antbird, Harpy Eagle, Venezuelan Flower-piercer, Scissor-tailed Hummingbird, Groove-billed and Chestnut-tipped Toucanets, Cream-colored woodpeckers, Oilbirds by the thousands, and many others will be waiting here to show off for you!

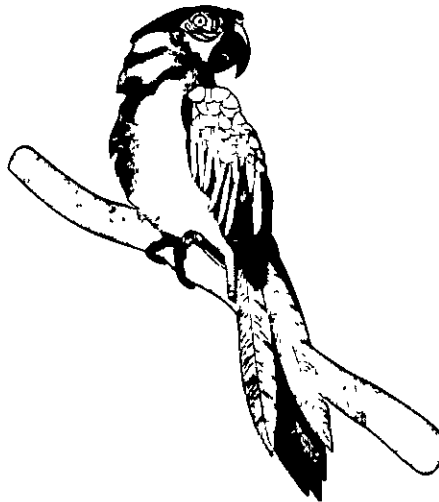
Join VAS for this unforgettable journey. The weather will be sunny and warm—a perfect tropical vacation. You will enjoy not only the fabulous birds but also the stunning beauty of these unique and marvelous places. The group will be limited to a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 15 persons.

As a nonprofit environmental organization, all proceeds go to conservation efforts in Venezuela. Until recently, the small Venezuelan Audubon Society was forging ahead with projects of environmental education, protection of the country's avifauna, and work in advocacy. Unfortunately, over the past 12 months, Venezuela's bad economic situ-

ation has prevented many members from renewing their membership. Most corporate sponsors are now donating their funds to aid the victims of last December's flood rather than renewing their contributions to the Society. Furthermore, due in great part to the media's portrayal of the floods, ecotourism has dropped by almost 70 percent.

In a tremendous effort to keep VAS afloat, this special tour is being offered at a most reasonable price to top birding areas in Venezuela.

For further information, please contact Mary Lou Goodwin by email at advocacy@telcel.net.ve or the Web site at <http://www.audubonvenezuela.org>.



New Director at Richardson Bay

The Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary has a new Director. She is Patty Hedge, a long-time resident of Mill Valley.

Hedge has worked in conservation for many years. Previously, Hedge worked with the Wilderness Society during the mid-'80s for California wilderness, the Tuolumne River, and Mono Lake. She also served on the staff of the California Coastal Commission. Hedge is eager to move back into a more community-based conservation setting.

Mourning Hazel Wolf

Continued from page 1

Wolf was born on March 10, 1898, in Victoria, British Columbia, and moved to Seattle in 1923.

She was the recipient of numerous conservation awards, including the Audubon Medal for Excellence in Environmental Achievement (1997), the Washington State Department of Game's Award for Services in Protection of Wildlife (1978); the State of Washington Environmental Excellence Award (1978); and State University of New York's Sol Feinstein Award for her work with Seattle Audubon's "Trailside Series" of books on the Northwest.

Wolf was a social activist for over seven decades. During the Depression, while employed by the Works Project Administration, she helped to unionize workers. In 1979, she helped organize the Indian Conservationist Conference. In 1990, Wolf held discussions with a Soviet delegation that paved the way for the founding of the Leningrad Audubon Society. Like former President Jimmy Carter and Senator Dan Evans (Washington), she was sent as an observer to the 1990 Nicaraguan elections.

Author Studs Terkel portrayed Wolf in his book, *Coming of Age*. She told Terkel that living three centuries was one of her goals. "Then, I'm going," she said. Wolf took the \$50 that she was paid for the interview and signed Terkel up as a National Audubon Society member.

She is survived by her daughter, Nydia Levick, of Port Angeles, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and four great-great grandchildren.

The family requests donations in her memory be sent to the Kids for the Environment Fund, created in Mrs. Wolf's honor on her 100th birthday. Contributions may be mailed to the Seattle Audubon Society, 80560 35th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98115.

I had the privilege of interviewing Mrs. Wolf at the Western Regional Conference in 1998. She was an extraordinary human being, charming, witty, and totally dedicated to activism.—Editor

March 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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Wednesday, March 1, Berkeley-Richmond Shoreline. Carpool leaves 8:00 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:45 a.m. in the parking lot at the north end of the Emeryville Marina. Take SR 24 to 880 West; turn north onto I-80. Take Powell St. exit, turn left on Powell; go out to Emeryville Marina, park in last lot near pier. May be cold and windy. Field trip will visit several Bay sites. Bring lunch. Loons, grebes, and Bay ducks. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, March 4, Anderson Marsh, Lake County. Carpool leaves at 6:30 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 9 a.m. at the parking lot (\$\$fee) at Anderson Marsh State Park. Take SR 29 into Lake County to Lower Lake where SR29 goes to left, continue straight onto SR 53. About 1 mile north turn left onto Anderson Marsh Parkway and right into Park. Marsh birds and possible Bald Eagles. We will join Red-bud Audubon for their monthly marsh tour and visit Clear Lake State Park in the afternoon. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

March 8, Wednesday, Round Valley. Carpool leaves at 7:15 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot on Marsh Creek Rd. Take Willow Pass Rd. north to Clayton Road. Turn right on Clayton Rd and follow it to Clayton

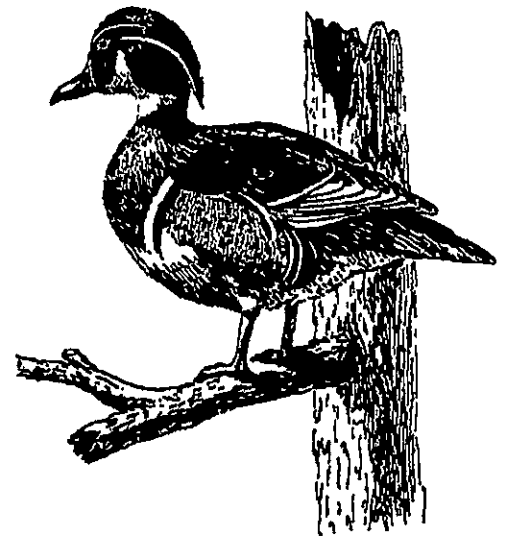
where it curves to the right and becomes Marsh Creek Rd. The Round Valley parking lot is on the right before Marsh Creek splits and turns north. The field trip ends at noon. Leader: Maury Stearn, 284-5980 Category 3

Wednesday, March 15, Wildcat Creek, Tilden Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking lot at the Botanical Gardens. Depending in part on the weather, we will walk either down Wildcat Creek or the Jewel Lake Nature Trail. A half-day trip for local birds. Good beginners' trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

Thursday, March 23, San Leandro Reservoir. Meet at 8 a.m. at Valle Vista staging area off Moraga Rd. (road to Canyon). Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Group will decide length of hike. For further information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 3

Saturday, March 25, Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot at the park. Go north on I-680 to Hwy 4. Take Hwy 4 east to Antioch. Exit on Somersville Rd. south. Follow Somersville Rd. into the park and to the parking lot at the end. Woodland, chaparral, and some grassland birds. Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041 Category 3

Thursday, March 30, Huckleberry Reserve. Meet at 8 a.m. at parking lot on Skyline Blvd. From Hwy 24 westbound take Fish Ranch Rd, turn left onto Grizzly Peak and left again onto Skyline. Parking is on left just past Sibley Preserve. Morning walk. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2



Forestry Institute for Teachers

This free, week-long summer program is for California's K-12 teachers.

Participants update their knowledge of forests and forest management and develop a curriculum unit for the classroom by working with professional natural resource managers and environmental education specialists.

Teachers will receive a \$200 stipend, housing and meals, training in Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and more. For information on how to apply call 1-800-738-TREE or visit the program's website at <<http://www.toshop.com/forestry>> for online registration. Applications are due by March 15.

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*

Nine **Cattle Egrets** were at Iron House Sanitary District, Oakley, on 2/8 (SG,LC). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Pt. Isabel near Richmond on 2/3 (AK and group). This species is a regular fall visitor in west county but is rare in winter.

Two **Wood Ducks** were at Lafayette Reservoir on 2/14 (MS). The **Eurasian Wigeon** at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline near Richmond continued to at least 1/16 (SG,JL,JB,LC) while another male was at McNabney Marsh near Martinez on 2/8 (LC,SG). Both locations are regular wintering spots for this species.

Four male and one female **Greater Scaup** at Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 2/4 provided the first record for that heavily birded locale (SG). A female bird thought likely to be a hybrid scaup crossed with Tufted Duck was at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 2/4 (SG). Two male and one female **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 1/17 and two females were there on 2/4 (SG).

A pair of **Hooded Mergansers** were at Lafayette Reservoir on 2/15 (MS). A female **Red-breasted Merganser** was at Piper Slough on 2/4 (SG). This may be the same bird that has been here sporadically during the past several winters.

The wintering adult **Bald Eagle** was noted many times at Lafayette Reservoir though at least 2/3 (MS). The **Peregrine Falcon** was again on its usual perch on the radio towers of Pt. Isabel near Richmond on 2/3 (AK and group).

A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was at Piper Slough on 2/4, and two were detected there on 2/8, providing first winter records for that location (SG,LC). Western Contra Costa's first **Sage Thrasher** continued to winter at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline to at least 1/16 (LC,JL,JB,SG).

Rare wintering warblers continued to winter in Alameda County at least to

mid-January: Alameda's **American Redstart** was seen to at least 1/15 (JL,LC,JB,SG) and Oakland's **Lucy's Warbler** was seen as recently as 1/16 (SD).

A **Fox Sparrow** thought to represent one of the slate-colored races was at Piper Slough on 2/8 (SG,LC). The **Fox Sparrow** complex is still quite muddled but it appears that at some point it will likely be split into four separate species. Two **White-throated Sparrows** have been in a Martinez yard throughout the winter (DK).

At least four male **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were amongst thousands of **Red-**

winged and Tricolored Blackbirds at Holland Tract near Knightsen on 2/8 (SG,LC). This has proven to be the most reliable spot in the county for this species.

Observers: Joelle Buffa, Luke Cole, Sheila Dickie, Steve Glover, Alan Kaplan, Debbie Kershin, John Luther, Maury Stern, Denise Wight

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 8526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

January Field Trip Reports

San Pablo Reservoir, January 6—Six birders enjoyed a brisk, overcast morning. The walk was remarkable for seeing more Varied Thrushes than Golden-crowned Sparrows. Groups of five or six thrushes were seen in several places along the trail. A Great Horned Owl was another good sighting. A total of 50 species were seen or heard.
—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Sibley Volcanic Preserve, January 12—A very quiet day for the four birders who braved the muddy trails. Only 23 species were seen; a Sharp-shinned Hawk was the best sighting.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Sunol Regional Park, January 20—A compact group of just three birders spent a nice morning birding Sunol Regional Park. Highlights included at least ten Wood Ducks that we were able to watch at a distance at our leisure, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Warbler and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Unfortunately, the Canyon Wren and the American Dipper eluded us this morning. Forty-eight species were seen.—*Steve Glover*

Grizzly Island, January 26—Sixteen members and guests spent a perfect day at the Grizzly Island Refuge. The air was crisp and clean after several days of heavy rain and the refuge roads were dry

(a surprise). We saw 61 species. Highlights were three large male Tule elk as well as many others in the herd; three owl species (including a Barn Owl pair in a nest box at the headquarters, a Great Horned Owl in the eucalyptus grove at the far side of the refuge, and excellent views of a Short-eared Owl both perched and flying); two Rough-legged hawks; an adult Harris' Sparrow seen by four members of the group; many Tree swallows; many White-throated swifts; 25 American White Pelicans; an American Bittern; several Horned Larks; and large numbers of Loggerhead Shrikes, Northern Harriers, and White-tailed Kites. The only birds we didn't see many of were ducks and geese, which are the usual highlight birds of the refuge.—*Maury Stern*

Santa Cruz, January 29—The rain held off long enough for 11 members and guests to enjoy a fine day of birding in Santa Cruz. We visited Neary's Lagoon, Antonelli's Pond, Natural Bridges State Park, and the San Lorenzo River walk under partly cloudy skies. We saw 63 species, including Brandt's Cormorants displaying beautiful bright-blue throat pouches, Ross' Geese, Common Goldeneyes, and two male Common Mergansers, a Peregrine Falcon, and a mystery bird that, according to group consensus, was an injured Greater Scaup.—*Joel Summerhill*

Slow Dance

—Author Unknown

Have you ever watched kids
On a merry-go-round
Or listened to the rain
Slapping on the ground?
Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight
Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?
You better slow down.
Don't dance so fast
Time is short;
The music won't last.

Do you run through each day on the fly
When you ask, "How are you?"
Do you hear the reply?
When the day is done,
Do you lie in your bed
With the next hundred chores
Running through your head?
You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast
Time is short;
The music won't last.

Ever told your child,
"We'll do it tomorrow,"
And, in your haste, not see his sorrow?
Ever lost touch?
Let a good friendship die
'Cause you never had time
To call and say "Hi"?
You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short;
The music won't last

When you run so fast to get somewhere
You miss half the fun of getting there.
When you worry
and hurry through your day,
It is like an unopened gift
Thrown away—
Life is not a race.
Do take it slower.
Hear the music
Before the song is over.

Birders' Roundup

National Audubon is looking for a few master birders to answer e-mail questions from the general public about birding, bird identification, and some conservation questions. If this sounds like you, and you have the time to answer three to five short e-mails per week, please let NAS know. You can contact Audubon List Manager Jason Gross (jgross@audubon.org), and he will add your name to the list of prospective experts.

EBMUD and Birders

The East Bay Municipal Utility District has published its third edition of "Checklist of the Birds of the East Bay Municipal Utility District Watershed." For a copy of the free checklist, or to report any potentially valuable observation for the EBMUD Biological Survey Studies, or to volunteer for the program, contact Steve Abbors, manager of EBMUD's Watershed and Recreation Programs at 510-287-0459.

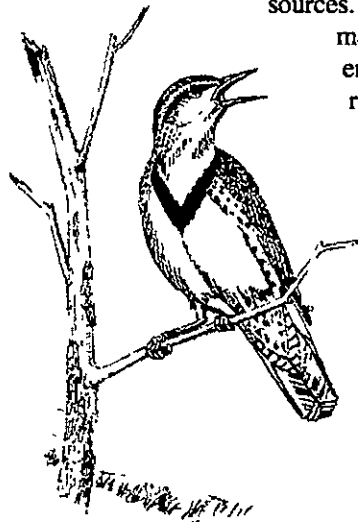
Birdwatching in Belize

The Belize Audubon Society is holding two exciting birdwatching events during 2000. The Second Annual Neotropical Birdathon, April 15–17, is an exciting, 24-hour, sponsored birdcount. Audubon members are invited to participate personally, be a sponsor of the Belize count, or take part in simultaneous sponsored birdcounts at home.

The Belize Birding Festival 2000 is scheduled for October 8–15. This festival takes advantage of the great October migrations and provides an opportunity to spend a whole week sampling the best Belize has to offer birders.

Sitting on the edge of the Caribbean in Central America, Belize is a birder's paradise. With over 540 species reported, this little country has one of the world's richest concentrations of bird species, and it plays a vital role as a resting area for thousands of migrating birds as they pass through the Americas. The country boasts lush tropical forests, a spectacular Mayan heritage, important wetlands, and the hemisphere's longest barrier reef. Belize recognizes the importance of its environment, and more than 40% of the country has been designated as "protected."

As the longest established conservation organization in the country, the Belize Audubon Society works towards maintaining these amazing and unspoiled natural resources. The Belize Audubon Society's work includes the management of eight national parks and protected areas, environmental education, and advocacy for Belize's environment.



By supporting the Belize Audubon Society and participating in these events, you will personally benefit from a unique and fantastic birding experience, and at the same time contribute to the preservation of this ecologically crucial part of Central America.

For more information, contact the Belize Audubon Society by phoning 501-2-35004 or by fax (501-2-34985). Or e-mail base@btl.net or visit the website at <http://www.belizeaudubon.org>.

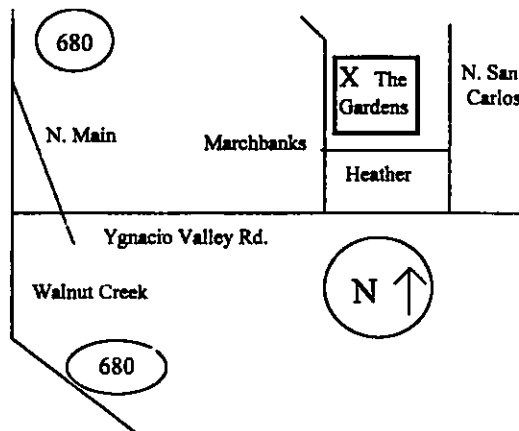
CALENDAR

March 2, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, The Gardens at Heather Farms. See map on the right. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7 p.m.

March 9, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.

March 17, Fri., 9:30 a.m.—*Quail* mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. (Volunteers prepare the *Quail* issue for mailing.)

General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. The schedule for the remaining meetings for 1999-2000 is April 6, May 4, and June 1. General meeting dates are also *Quail* deadlines.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly Audubon magazine and the Quail (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The Quail may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Alamo, CA 94507-2704. First-class delivery of the Quail is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to GIFFORD YOUNG, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632.

Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

3/00



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Mr. Diablo Audubon Society
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The QUAIL

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

April 2000

Vol. 46, No. 8

Next Deadline: April 6

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

By Carol Frischmann

Audubon National Meeting at Asilomar

Come join a group of other MDAS members in one of the most beautiful spots in the world where people who are passionate about birds and their habitat will gather for a few days of fun, fellowship, and learning.

Our journey is to the Asilomar Conference Center for the Biennial Audubon Convention and Western Regional Meeting. These meetings are being held together on April 14-18.

Fun and Variety

Organized activities at the meeting include:

- MDAS member event
- Field trips
- Concurrent Seminars
- Youth Program

MDAS Member Event

When you arrive, check out the bulletin board for information about a pre-dinner gathering on Saturday night for MDAS members. Enjoy beverage and snacks and have some social time with your fellow MDAS locals.

Field Trips

From condor watching to Elkhorn Slough, there are a variety of destinations, durations and leaders for many trips before, during, and after the convention.

(Continued on page 4)

Albatrosses: Living on the Oceans of the World

At the general meeting April 6, Scott Shaffer, a biologist from the University of California, will inform us about the "Foraging Ecology of Procellariiform Seabirds." The focus of his presentation is the story of albatrosses and how they live searching for food in the open sea. The presentation will include flight behavior and techniques used to study flight patterns of albatrosses at sea. He will also review the impact of conservation issues, like global warming and pollution, on albatross populations of the Southern Ocean.

Shaffer has worked for the past 13 years with a variety of birds (waterfowl, parrots, penguins, alcids, shorebirds, ravens, and now seabirds) and marine mammals (bottlenose dolphins and beluga whales).

Recently, he has focused on the foraging ecology of albatrosses in the Southern Ocean and has completed three field seasons working in the French sub-Antarctic islands of the Crozet and Kerguelen Archipelagos, conducting studies in collaboration with Dr. Henri Weimerskirch of C.N.R.S., France.

Albatrosses are among the world's largest flying birds, weighing in at up to 22 lb. They all have a stocky body, webbed feet, and a wingspan of about 7 feet (7 feet!) Albatrosses live most of their lives at sea, finding fish and squid food on the open ocean. They come to land on islands only to breed and raise

their offspring. Albatrosses can cover thousands miles during a single foraging expedition.

Come to the April meeting to learn more about these fascinating birds. If you want to bone up before the meeting, visit this informative website: <<http://www/wfu.edu/albatross>> (it is designed to appeal especially to children).

Birding Information

Jimm Edgar, former MDAS president, popular field trip leader, and co-coordinator of the chapter's Christmast Bird Count, will discuss the mysteries of sparrow identification during the Birding Information portion of the program.

Jimm, who is as well known for his dry sense of humor as for his birding expertise, will shed some light on recognizing those "little brown jobs" (LBJs).

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will Thursday, April 6, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8)

6:30 p.m.—Doors open

7 p.m.—Birding Information

7:30 p.m.—Business meeting

8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing

8:30 p.m.—Program

Remember to bring your own coffee cup.

Connections**Death of the Flamingos**

Despite all evidence to the contrary, there are those who still deny the need for environmental regulations to protect water supplies. Those people should take a field trip to Kenya and observe the passing of the flamingos. About 1 million flamingos live at Lake Bogoria in Kenya, but now they are dying by the hundreds. An estimated 30,000 have died at the national park there since last July.

Lake Bogoria is a nearly dead lake in the Great Rift Valley. Flamingos, standing knee-deep in the water, congregate near the shoreline, forming a living pink fringe. These flamingos have not bred since 1997, perhaps because they lack the energy for the journey to Tanzania's Lake Natron, where they used to lay eggs on an island beyond the reach of predators

Scientists are alarmed because the death rate continues and because high levels of heavy metals have been found in the carcasses of the birds. The cause of this die-off actually lies elsewhere. According to biologist David Harper, the birds at Lake Bogoria actually spent most of their lives 60 miles to the south at the larger, shallow Lake Nakuru. The flamingos deserted Lake Nakuru in 1997 when heavy rains diluted its salinity, which is a requirement for spirulina algae. The flamingos live by straining spirulina from the water.

Nakuru was the first bird sanctuary in Africa, but it rests at the bottom of a 1,200-square-mile catchment and has no outlet. It absorbs runoff not only from hundreds of farms—some of which still use the banned pesticide DDT—but also from a city of 360,000.

The heavy metals found in the flamingo carcasses—mercury, arsenic, cadmium, lead, and chromium—correspond directly with the effluents of an Eveready battery factory, a tannery, and an electroplating factory as well as other industries in the area. Until two years ago, the city of Nakuru dumped barely treated waste water into the lake.

Phoeniconaias minor is the most abundant of the flamingo species with a total population of 4 million. But it is a frail bird, especially now that the metals have accumulated in its fatty tissue. Under stress (such as flying), the flamingos metabolize the heavy metals.

The long-range outlook for the flamingos is unclear. Kenya, like the rest of Africa, lacked environmental regulations that would force industries to remove pollutants from effluent. Heavy metals already in the lake have long half-lives. Even if the flamingos were strong enough to return to the lake, its water would continue to poison them.

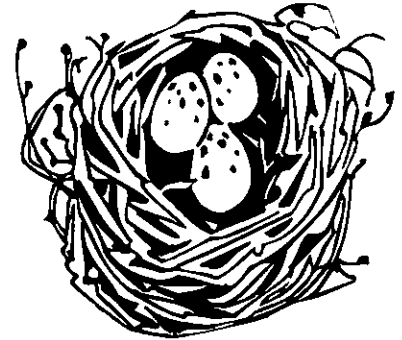
There is some hope. "People did not know better," said Sarah Njoki Kinyanjui, an official at Nakuru Tannery, which once dumped its waste water thick with sulfides and chromium into the city sewer. Now, the company has installed settling tanks for its effluents.

"Those who understand, see the connection from the waste running into the lake to the birds," she said. "We want to see them survive and multiply." The town has built a new municipal treatment plant; trash bins have been installed around town; and a dozen industries now submit regular reports on their waste emissions to a Pollutant Release and Transfer Registry, a first in Africa.

"The flamingos are beautiful," Kinyanjui said. "People understand now. They want a clean environment." —from "Kenya's Pink Death." *Washington Post*, March 7, 2000, p. A12.

**Congratulations to
California's voters!**

**You passed
Props 12 and 13 by
almost two to one!**

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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News from

Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Spring Nesting Tips

Spring nesting time comes early in California. Some of our early cavity nesters have already started establishing housing. Others will begin soon. As natural habitats continue to disappear, nesting boxes not only provide cavity-nesting birds with needed nest sites, but they also give you an opportunity to learn more about their fascinating courtship and family life.

You can play a part in nest building by providing colorful string, yarn, hair, and fibers (no longer than 3 inches long) for birds to use when building their abodes. Chickadees, wrens, titmice, and nuthatches prefer a smaller house with a 1 1/8–1 1/4-inch hole size. The house should be mounted 6–10 ft up in a tree or foliage, at least 15 ft from feeders. These birds may have more than one brood each year.

Bluebirds, woodpeckers, flycatchers, and swallows are larger birds and need bigger houses with larger hole sizes (1 1/2–1 9/16 inches). To attract Western Bluebirds, you need to live very near open space or grasslands. (Stop by and pick up your FREE copy of our Housing Guide.)

Each species has different and interesting facets to their nesting behavior. Watch for the male Bluebird to feed the female and sing sweet warbled notes as he raises a quivering wing to further entice her. The male House Wren will work hard making 2 or 3 nests to attract a female. As part of courtship, he takes the female to each site to choose her favorite nest.

Denise Wight's bird classes are starting: Beginning April 4: 7–9 p.m.
Continuing: April 5: 7–9 p.m.
Each costs \$40 and includes five evening classes and a weekend birdwalk.

MDAS Needs a Treasurer! If you have an accounting background and have approximately 10 hours a month available, please consider serving on the Board as Treasurer. Contact Carol Frischmann at 735-3836, or Mike Williams at 376-1631.

Audubon Supports Conservation and Reinvestment Act

California Senator Dianne Feinstein is one of the sponsors of a companion bill to the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA, or H.R. 701). Mirroring the popular House version of the bill, Senate Bill 2123 would direct approximately half of the annual revenues from oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to provide over \$2.8 billion in conservation funding.

To express support for CARA, hundreds of parks and wildlife advocates, including Audubon leaders from across the country, converged on Capitol Hill to testify how this legislation could benefit their communities. The bill, which both its supporters and detractors agree, would be the most sweeping land conservation act in decades, would provide the following dedicated funding:

- \$1 billion for drilling impact assistance and coastal conservation.
- \$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (divided equally between the state and federal sides).
- \$350 million to state fish and wildlife agencies.
- \$125 million for urban parks and recreation.
- \$100 million for conservation easements.
- \$50 million for incentive programs for endangered species recovery.

CARA has emerged as the clear front-runner among several bills proposing to spend a portion of OCS revenues on conservation efforts.

The House version has 310 cosponsors. The bill was the result of months of negotiation between its two lead cosponsors, Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and George Miller (D-CA), and has offered a rare glimpse of bipartisanship during this Congress

Despite growing support for CARA, it still faces critical opposition from the leadership of the Appropriations and Budget committees. By automatically allocating \$2.8 billion each year through 2015, the bill would decrease the committees' pot of discretionary money. An alternate scenario is that the bill could be packaged into an omnibus budget deal this fall.

New Roads Policy Proposed

The Forest Service has proposed a new policy for managing its vast network of roads.

The new proposal—which is separate from the Forest Service's roadless area proposal—would allow new roads to be built but envisions a much smaller role for road building in national forest management. The crux of the proposal is public involvement in the decision-making process that determines which roads receive the scarce funds for improvements or maintenance and which roads are neglected or removed.

Audubon supports the proposed roads policy although we are concerned about its enforceability. Off-road vehicle groups and the timber industry, however, have already mounted opposition to the proposal. The policy should be finalized by September 1.

** Comments on the Forest Service Roads Policy are due on May 2 and can be submitted by e-mail to roads/wo_caet-sic@fs.fed.us, by fax to 801-517-1021, or by mail to CAET-USFS, Attn: Roads Project, P.O. Box 22300, Salt Lake City, UT 84122. For more information on the proposed policy, visit the Forest Service's Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>. —from March 3 *Audubon Advisory*

February Field Trip Reports

Briones, Sindhich Lagoon, Feb. 3— Early fog met three birders on a walk to Sindhich Lagoon in northern Briones Park. Outstanding sighting was of flock of about 50 Band-tail Pigeons. A total of 24 species were seen.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Thornton, February 9—A break in the weather and five birders ventured out to the Delta. Everyone else missed a great day. Swans and cranes were present along the woods in good numbers. White-fronted, Snow, and Canada Geese flew over. Marsh Wrens at the Consumes Preserve were unusually cooperative. We saw 58 species —*Elizabeth Dickey*

Big Break, February 17—Three birders hiked along the Big Break trail on a pleasant morning. There were very few ducks in the Iron House ponds, but we had a fine sighting of Sora and good looks at Moorhen. About a dozen Cattle Egrets were feeding among the cows in the pastures. A total of 49 species were seen or heard.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Yolo County, February 19—Eight birdwatchers enjoyed a good day and a break in the rain to explore this area. We

saw 60 species, even though some of the roads were closed due to flooding. We found a pair of Great Horned Owls, one sitting on a nest, the other standing guard right next to the nest. The best bird was a Rough-legged Hawk. We had good views, both while it was perched on the ground and while flying.—*Pat MacEachern*

Bolinas Lagoon, February 23— Considering that February 2000 was the rainiest February in 20 years, we had a remarkable luck on the field trips in February. The 23rd was a beautiful day, but only the leader showed up. The turkey flock between Fairfax and Lagunitas is growing. At least 25 birds were in the field, and a number of the males were displaying. A least three Eurasian Widgeons are at the south end of the lagoon and a gorgeous Allen's Hummingbird was at 5 Brooks. A total of 52 species were seen. A note of apology to anyone who came to the Marin County meeting place: The traffic on the Richmond Parkway to the bridge has increased drastically. I spent over half an hour on the bridge ramps.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

President's Notes

Continued from page 1

Concurrent Seminars

The programs are organized into tracks based on a variety of habitats, such as urban, marine, or agricultural, and whether your interest is in public policy or general.

Youth Program

Programs emphasizing fun, learning, play, and craft are scheduled for kids 3-18. For high school and college students, there are interactive workshops and field trips.

Sign up for the convention at the website at <http://www.audubon.org> or call the Audubon California office at (916) 481-5332.

I hope to see you there. Happy Birding!

—Carol Frischmann



Worldwide Web Provides View of Eagle Hatchlings

Thanks to the Internet, Audubon Society of Florida's Center for Birds of Prey, and the Orlando *Sentinel*, you can watch two baby Bald Eagles grow and develop. The downy eaglets will grow up in a 75-ft-high tree in central Florida. (The exact location has not been revealed in order to protect the birds.)

"With a video camera mounted in a tree above the nest a safe distance away from the eagles, we are able to witness this miracle of nature," said Resee Collins, director of the Audubon Society of Florida's Center for Birds of Prey, a recovery center for injured birds.

The website of the Orlando *Sentinel*, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/projects/eagle/>, has hosted video footage of the eagle parents for a year. Until

the hatchlings leave the nest in about three months, a video camera will record their development.

The hatchlings will spend most of their time eating and sleeping but there is always occasion to play with "toys." Eaglet toys are items that the parents have brought into the nest and may include plastic bottles, tennis balls, and even sneakers. The growing birds use these items to practice the grasping and squeezing techniques they will need to become hunters.

Bald Eaglets grow faster than any other bird in North America, weighing 1/4 lb when they hatch and gaining as much as 6 ounces a day. After reaching 10-12 lb and having developed strong wings and legs, they will begin flight practice. When

they fledge, they will be larger than their parents.

The nestlings survival is not guaranteed. Only three out of every ten eaglets survive their first year. Although under constant parental supervision, one or both eaglets may not survive. One eaglet may be killed by the larger sibling or by a parent sensing a genetic defect. Storms and predators also make the eaglets' future uncertain.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the survival of these raptors is human-related. Eagles, affected by pesticides such as DDT and the loss of habitat, have rebounded from the brink of extinction and were proposed for removal from the endangered species list last year. But the survival of each and every eagle is important, and the protection of every nest site crucial

April 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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Wednesday, April 5, 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: Elizabeth Dickey and Bessie Smyth, 228-6033 Category 2

Saturday, April 8, Garin Regional Park.

Carpool leaves at 7:15 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. 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. Meet in parking lot at end of Garin Rd., 8:00 a.m. Take I-680 south and I-580 west. Exit on East Castro Valley Blvd. and continue west. Turn left onto Crow Canyon Rd. and go under freeway. Crow Canyon Rd becomes Grove Way and then A St. At A St and SR238 (Foothill Blvd.), turn left. Foothill Blvd./SR 238 becomes Mission Blvd. Go south about 3 mi to Garin Rd., turn left, and follow to end. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906 Category 3

Thursday, April 13, Shell Ridge. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at Borges Ranch (Walnut Creek) foothill walk. Take Walnut Ave to Castle Rock Rd to Borges Ranch Rd. This is a new area that we will be exploring. Maury Stern, 284-5980 Category 3

Wednesday, April 19, Ida Clayton Road, Napa County. Carpool leaves at 7:00 a.m. from 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 Sonoma County. Carpooling is necessary because of limited parking on some roads. Leader: John Jordan, 680-7490 Category 1

Saturday, April 22, Pine Canyon.

Meet in the parking lot at end of Castle Rock Rd at 8 a.m. Hike up Pine Canyon. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids. Spring migrants. Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041 Category 3

Thursday, April 27, Del Puerto Canyon.

Carpool leaves at 7:45 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn

right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Meet on Del Puerto Road west of I-5 at 9 a.m. at Patterson Exit of I-5 (59 mi. from El Cerro). Take 580 east by I-5 south. (Recommend stop at Westley Rest Area. There are no facilities on trip until noon.) Yellow-breasted Chat, Costa's Hummingbird, and other goodies. Leader: Florence Bennett, 689-3106 Category 1

Future trip: Make reservations now for the **Memorial Day weekend trip to San Luis Obispo, May 27-29.** Please call Steve Glover, 828-7793, if you are planning to go on this trip.

First Bird of the Century

by Hugh Harvey

Written in the foothills of the Andes mountains outside Parral, Chile, January 1, 2000—We are visiting my wife's parents in Chile. Living as many country people do, they have many fruit trees around their house, and the kitchen is a separate building where a fire on the ground is used for cooking. A ramada is in the patio with a table and chairs where we often sit to eat. As we were up late for the New Year, we did not start the first day as early as usual.

Many birds were singing, the Diuca finches, Austral thrushes, the Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, as well as the House Wren. Many of the birds we see in Chile are either the same as those that we have in North America or closely related counterparts.

One of our nephews had shown us the nest of Chilean swallow under the roof-

tiles at one corner of the kitchen. While cleaning before the New Year, I found a small, dead swallow on the ground below the nest, apparently having fallen accidentally. For several days, the adult came to a nearby post, calling with its thin, descending four-part trill. As the days passed, we heard it less and thought it had finally abandoned the nest after the single chick died.

As we sat in the ramada in the hot afternoon, we look out; and up on the electric wires behind the kitchen was an adult Chilean swallow, plaintively calling to the now-empty nest and occasionally lifting one wing to preen. Here was proof that nature cares not for the arbitrariness of new millennia but continues in a seemingly never-ending cycle.

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*

Forty **Cattle Egrets** were on Delta Rd. near Knightsen on 1/26, and six more were seen the same day on Cypress Rd. near Bethel Island (FB,MJC,BG). Cattle Egrets continued to be noted at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley, with the most recent sighting being 18 on 3/10 (GF).

Three hundred **Tundra Swans** were at Holland Tract near Knightsen on 1/26 (FB,MJC,BG). The adult male **Tufted Duck** at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron was seen again on 2/19 (TW). An **Oldsquaw** first found at the Richmond Marina on 2/19 (LF,SH) was still present through at least 3/12 (CP).

Lafayette Reservoir's wintering adult **Bald Eagle** was present through at least 3/4 (LV). Another adult Bald Eagle was near Clifton Court Forebay on 2/19 (TW). A **Northern Harrier** carrying nesting material at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park near Antioch on 3/8 provided a very rare nesting confirmation for our portion of the Diablo Range (JL). An immature **Northern Goshawk** was at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park near Antioch on 3/7 (SG). This species is very rare in the county, but there is a pattern of March records. Two **Peregrine Falcons** were again on their usual perch on the radio towers at Pt. Isabel near Richmond on 3/5 (CL).

Three **Black Rails** were heard singing at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 3/10 (GF). This is amongst the most accessible locations for hearing this species in the county.

Seven **Black Oystercatchers** at Vincent Park in Richmond on 2/15 apparently equaled the previous high number for the county (FB,MJC,BG). **Lesser Yellowlegs** are uncommon in winter in eastern Contra Costa County, so 25 on 1/26 along Delta Rd. near Knightsen were significant (FB,MJC,BG).

Forty-five **Band-tailed Pigeons** were at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on 3/7 (SG). They are apparently unusual there.

A male **Rufous Hummingbird** was at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline near Richmond on 2/29 (MR). This species is likely regular in west county but has rarely been recorded

An immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Black Diamond Mines Regional park, first found 3/7 (SG) and noted through at least 3/12 (MF), provided just the third or fourth county record. An unidentified adult sapsucker seen there on 3/4 was either a Yellow-bellied or a Red-naped Sapsucker (JS). Both Red-naped and Red-breasted Sapsuckers undergo their molt from juvenile to adult plumage in late summer or very early fall. This means that a sapsucker of this trio that remains in brownish juvenal through the winter and spring is most assuredly a Yellow-bellied.

The wintering **Sage Thrasher** at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Pt. Richmond, was seen through at least 3/7 (CL).



A pair of **Phainopeplas** continued at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park through at least 3/12 (JS,MF).

Oakland's wintering **Lucy's Warbler** was last reported 2/19 (SD). This was just the second record for Alameda County.

Two **Chipping Sparrows** were at Hidden Lakes Park, Martinez, on 2/26 (DW). It is unclear whether these birds were wintering or exceptionally early migrants.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Sheila Dickie, Mike Feigner, George Finger, Lillian Fujii, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Steve Hayashi, Calvin Lou, John Luther, Cheri Pillsbury, Mark Rauzon, Joel Summerhill, Linda Vida, Denise Wight,

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.

Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

Fourth Annual Wetlands Cleanup! Celebrate Earth Day with MDAS!

Donate just 3 hours (10 a.m. to Noon) on Saturday, April 29, and join other MDAS volunteers in cleaning up our own Julia Cox Freeman Marsh in Antioch. See the April *Quail* for details on how you can participate.

A Life Saved

by Douglas Floyd

While walking my dog, a Jack Russell terrier, along the Bay shoreline near the Bay Bridge toll plaza, I noticed a beautiful male common loon (*Gavia immer*) quite near the shoreline among the rocks.

At first, I just figured that he was fishing. But after my dog noticed him and charged over for a closer look, I noticed that he did not move.

Curious about his behavior, I walked a bit closer, and again he didn't try to get away. I thought this was rather a strange behavior so I went even closer, and suddenly he tried to flee.

Unfortunately, he was snared by what appeared to be fishing line.

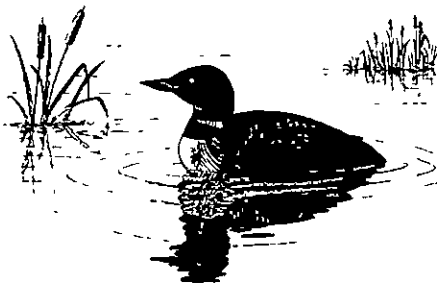
The tide was rapidly coming in, so I had a decision to make: rescue or ignore. Since I consider the common loon to be one of the most beautiful of our water birds, the answer was made for me.

I drove closer, opened the back of my car and took out a blanket and a pair of pliers. I also placed my dog in his carrier, where he always travels, to avoid his interference. Then I got a crooked stick and waded out to where the poor bird was struggling to keep afloat against the pull of the tide and the fishing line.

He was very tired, so I was able to pin his head/neck and grab him. When I tried to pick him up, I noticed that he was so wrapped up in the string, which was caught under the rocks, that I had to take out my pocketknife to cut him free.

I carried him over to the blanket and covered his head and upper body, which made him calm down immediately. That was when I saw he had a fishhook imbedded in each foot.

I took the pliers and cut off the barb of each hook and then backed them out of



his body. Then I untangled the fishing line from around his body and wings.

He looked tired but in fair shape. I let him rest for a short period and then carried him over to the edge of the Bay again. When I released him, he swam out about 20 feet, turned around and gave me what I think was thank you—the forlorn call of the loon.

The last I saw of him, he was swimming and diving about 100 feet offshore and looked fine.

I considered the saving of this bird's life to be the greatest gift that I was able to give last year. We don't often have the ability to give this greatest of gifts. The main reason I am writing is to ask you to mention, in a future column, the extreme hazard monofilament fishing line poses in wildlife. It is impossible to walk along the Bay or around a lake any more without finding tangled balls of this line along the shoreline.

Please caution fishermen that this line could cause a very slow and horrible death to any bird or animal that gets caught up in it. All they have to do if they have a backlash or tangle is to take the line home with them or dispose of it in an appropriate container.

If we can save one animal with this warning, then this subject would be well worth the effort.

—reprinted with permission from the column of Gary Bogue, *Contra Costa Times*, January 26, 2000.

Calendar of Birding Events

San Francisco State University is again offering short courses in environmental sciences at its Sierra Nevada Field Campus located along the scenic North Yuba River. The snow-capped Sierra Buttes and east slope deserts provide a spectacular settings for this enriching educational experience. Campus facilities include a dining hall/lodge, tent platforms with tents and beds, and restrooms with flush toilets and hot showers. For the less adventurous, there are motels and lodges in the area. Among the 19 courses are Birds of the Sierra Nevada (\$165/June 12-16), Bird Identification by Song (\$165/June 19-23), and Medicinal and Edible Plants (\$165/July 17-21). For details and registration, contact Jim Steele at San Francisco State, (415) 338-1571.

Aleutian Goose Festival, March 24–26
13,000 of the expected 35,000 Aleutian Canada Geese (the world's entire population) have already returned to Castle Island off Crescent City, CA. Check out the festival website at <<http://www.delnorte.org/soar>> for all programs, field trips, workshops or call 800-343-8300 for registration info.

Heron Days at Clear Lake, April 8–9
The sixth annual Heron Days Wildlife Festival features pontoon boat rides, nature walks, slide shows, and kids' activities. Advance reservations are required for the \$10/person pontoon boat rides through Anderson Marsh where you can get good looks at the Great Blue Heron Rookery. Call the Lake County Visitors Information Center at (800) 525-3743 to make reservations or get more information.

California Native Plant Sale, April 15
Want to make your yard more attractive to birds? At the Plant Sale (10 a.m.–3 p.m.), you can buy native plants for your garden and visit the beautiful Botanical Gardens. The Regional Parks Botanical Garden is located in Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley, at the intersection of Wildcat Canyon Rd and South Park Drive near the Brazil Building.

CALENDAR

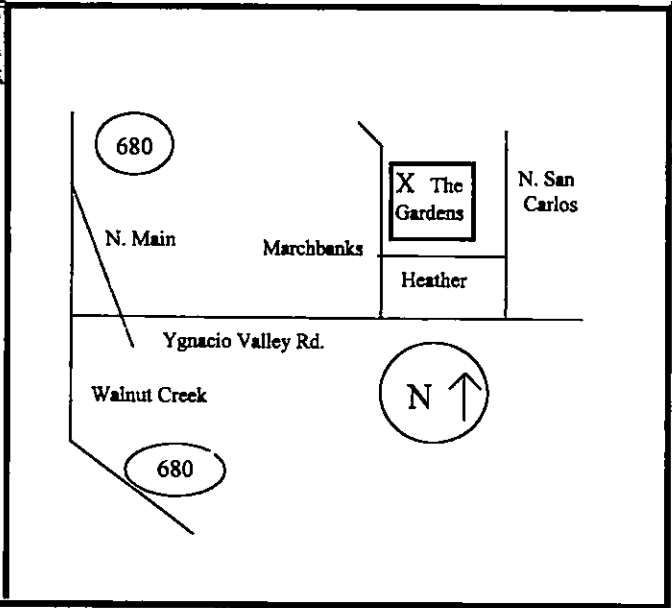
April 6, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, The Gardens at Heather Farms. See map on the right. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7 p.m.

April 13, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.

April 14-18—National Audubon Conference, Asilomar, Monterey

April 21, Fri., 9:30 a.m.—*Quail* mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. (Volunteers prepare the *Quail* issue for mailing.)

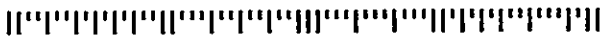
General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. The schedule for the remaining meetings for 1999-2000 is May 4 and June 1. General meeting dates are also *Quail* deadlines



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Alamo, CA 94507-2704. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to GIFFORD YOUNG, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632.

Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

4/00



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Next Deadline: June 4

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Your Direction Needed

Who are we? To help us find more about our membership, we are enclosing a member survey with the *Quail*. Please take a couple of minutes to fill it out—and then be sure to return it.

The results for the survey will help indicate where MDAS Board members should direct their planning and volunteer efforts. Survey results will be used to:

- Focus or expand Chapter programs to meet member wishes
- Improve monthly meetings.
- Understand our untapped volunteer resources.
- Improve and focus the *Quail* to serve members better.
- Improve the MDAS website.

With your help, MDAS can provide more of what members and the community ask of us. Programs such as our projects at the Julia Freeman Cox Marsh project in Antioch are the results of volunteer input (and labor). Our Chapter needs to service all segments of the membership. The most effective way we know to gather this information is through the survey. *continued on p. 5*

Wildlife Adventure in Panama: Sights and Sounds and Stories

This evening we will hear an account of the 1999 Transect Trip to Panama sponsored by Ohlone Audubon Society. Presenters will be Phil and Pat Gordon, who were escorts and leaders who have had several years' experience in taking small groups to natural regions attractive because of the area's unique flora and fauna (especially birds).

The Gordons and their group visited all three Panama regions (including the recently opened Cana Station in the Darien). For the May program they will illustrate samples of habitats and their birds with pictures or sounds recorded by members of the group. They saw 323 bird species. These, along with many exotic plants and other wildlife, as well as the wonderful people, will comprise the basis of the story.

Join in for a fun (anecdotal) program and see and/or hear of the records of Jaguars, Capybaras, Tapirs, Crab-eating Foxes (probably a brand new discovery!), King Vultures, Red-and-Green and Blue-and-Yellow Macaws, Greater and Smooth-billed Anis, Snowy-bellied and Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds (of the 24 hummingbird species encountered), Resplendent Quetzal, along with all the

Woodcreepers, Ovenbirds, Flycatchers, Seedeaters, and Caciques—not to mention getting stranded along the Colombian border.

Phil and Pat, longtime Ohlone members and popular speakers who are well known to many MDAS members, are also Co-compilers of the Hayward-Fremont Christmas Bird Count. Pat is Membership Chair for Ohlone and served as *Kite Call* newsletter editor for 11 years.

Birding Information

During the Birding Information portion of the program, Shirley Ellis will host a discussion and a slide showing of the biennial National Audubon Society Conference held at Asilomar in April. Chapter members will share their experiences and impressions of the Conference whose theme was "Audubon: Gateway to Nature."

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will Thursday, May 4, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8)

- 6:30 p.m.—Doors open
- 7 p.m.—Birding Information
- 7:30 p.m.—Business meeting
- 8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
- 8:30 p.m.—Program

Remember to bring your own coffee cup.

MDAS needs a Treasurer! If you have an accounting background and have approximately 10 hours a month available, please consider serving on the Board as Treasurer. Contact Carol Frischmann at 735-3836, or Mike Williams at 376-1631.

Connections

Saving California's Last Wilderness

Wilderness advocates will come together at the California Wilderness Conference at California State University in Sacramento, May 5-7 to learn, celebrate, and take action on behalf of the last wild places of the Golden State.

The conference will build support for the effort to designate additional wilderness throughout California.

Scientists, artists, people of faith, activists, and college students will participate. Panelists and workshops will assess the current state of California's publicly owned wildlands and discuss strategies for land conservation. Keynote speakers and participants include David Brower, Jim Eaton, Marge Sill, and Harriet Allen.

The conference will include keynote presentations from national leaders, including Doug Scott, former Sierra Club Conservation Director; Gary Snyder, Pulitzer prize winning author, Dave Foreman, founder of The Wildlands Project; and Susan Tixier of Great Old Broads for Wilderness. Panels include "Wilderness as Habitat," "Women in Wilderness," and "Wild and Scenic Rivers."

The California Wilderness Conference is sponsored by the California Wilderness Coalition, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, Friends of the River and The Mountain Lion Foundation.

Californians have lost wilderness an area the size of Yosemite over the past 20 years. There are 291 areas of 5000 acres of unprotected publicly owned wilderness remaining totaling nearly over 5 million acres. Much of this is more lowland areas and important ecologically for habitat and a wide variety of bird species. The California Wilderness Conference will focus on learning about, celebrating and acting to protect these lands. All those caring about wilderness (including bird habitat) should be there.

"The California Wilderness Conference will inspire, educate and activate friends

of wilderness. Wilderness faithful— young and old, new and seasoned; people of faith and people of color; Native Americans; and wilderness users—will meet to celebrate our victories, learn from those with experience, and organize a campaign to preserve 1 California's remaining six million acres of unprotected wilderness," stated Paul Spittler, California Wilderness Coalition Executive Director.

For additional information call the California Wilderness Coalition at 530-758-0380, email to info.calwild.org, or download the registration form at www.calwild.org. You can also call 530-758-4315 for a conference brochure by mail.

Golden Gate Raptor Observatory Seeks Volunteers

From August through December, many thousands of hawks, falcons, and eagles pass over the Marin Headlands. Join other GGRO volunteers to keep track of the Pacific states' largest bird-of-prey migration.

GGRO volunteers must be 18 years of age and must commit to one regular day every two weeks from August through December 2000 along with weekend and evening training in July.

Come on Tuesday, April 25, 7 to 9:30 p.m., or on Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 to see if you want to get involved. All meetings will be held at GGNRA headquarters, Building 201 at Upper Fort Mason in San Francisco. Enter the fort at Franklin and Bay. For more information, call the GGRO at (415) 331-0730.

Alice Hoch Celebrates 25 Years of Teaching Birders

In honor of 25 years of teaching birdwatching classes for the Fremont Adult School, Alice Hoch is having a reunion of the students of those classes on Saturday, May 6, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.. The reunion will be held at Central park in Fremont. The directions are go to the community center at 40204 Paseo Padre Parkway (at the end of Mission View Dr.) and look for tables behind the community center. In case of rain, the reunion will be at Noll School, 39600 Sundale Dr., Fremont. Bring your lunch and come renew old friendships and make new ones. If you have questions, please call Alice at (510) 657-0475 or the Adult School at (510) 791-5841.

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O.Box 53

Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053

(925) AUD-UBON

(925) 283-8266

<<http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/mt-diablo/>>

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MDAS Asks Members to Complete Survey

Enclosed with this issue of the *Quail* is a member survey. Why is the MDAS Board asking you to do this?

The Chapter exists for our members. You are the source of our volunteer strength and the foundation of our financial support. Your Board of Directors wants the Chapter to reflect your interests and concerns. We will use the survey to set priorities, select program speakers, and give direction to the contents of the *Quail*. We want your ideas.

Please fill out the survey and return it to MDAS by June 15. There are two ways to return it: you can mail it to the MDAS Post Office Box printed on the survey. Or bring it with you to the next general meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Hats Off! to Two Special Volunteers

Thank you, Denise!!

An MDAS member who has been to other Audubon chapter general meetings often realizes that we have a much, much larger attendance at our meetings than do most other chapters. One of the primary reasons for our great turnouts has been our excellent programs. Taking us from California to Florida, from Alaska to South America, these programs have filled us with awe and the yearning to explore these destinations. The person who has organized these wonderful programs for us for eight years is Denise Wight. Denise is stepping down from her position. We salute her for a job well done for all these years!

Thank you, Pam!!

Some of us have trouble balancing our checkbooks. Some of us find a budget impossible. But not Pam Keiser. Overseeing our financial health is an enormous responsibility. MDAS has been fortunate to have Pam as our Treasurer. Since 1992, Pam has kept perfect books for MDAS, paid our bills and our taxes, recommended investments, and prepared detailed monthly financial reports for the Board. She brought MDAS into the computer age when she converted MDAS accounts from hand-written account books to computer software. Pam has now decided to relinquish that role. Pam, you have our deep appreciation and respect for a job well done!

Celebrate Earth Day in Fourth Annual Marsh Cleanup

We need your help! On Saturday, April 29, from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., MDAS is holding its fourth annual cleanup of the Julia Cox Freeman Wetlands. All ages are welcome. Celebrate Earth Day in a new way and teach your children about community activism.

The East Antioch Creek Marsh (also known as the Julia Cox Freeman Wetlands) is about 22 acres of urban wetland located on Wilbur Avenue near the San Joaquin River not far from downtown Antioch. Although the marsh is surrounded by residential and industrial development, it remains a gem of nature. For the past three years, MDAS volunteers have picked up litter and enjoyed the fellowship of doing a good deed, cold drinks, and snacks.

Because of the importance of the marsh to birds and other wildlife, MDAS is

partners with the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the city of Antioch to restore and protect this critical salt marsh habitat in the western Delta. MDAS is working to make this the site of an outdoor environmental classroom and education center for school-children and families.

This type of habitat is among the most productive in the world, important for fish, wildlife, and plants dependent on marshes and tidal shallows. Once continuous from San Francisco Bay into the Delta, this kind of saline emergent wetland habitat has been severely reduced and fragmented by land use changes over the past century.

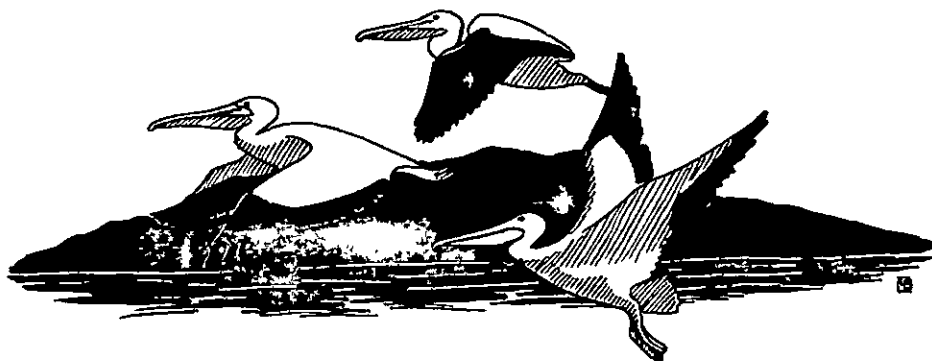
This summer, the Flood Control District plans to enlarge the wetland area and improve the tidal flow that will flush the marsh, replace nutrients and balance the

concentrations of salinity. We are also investigating methods of controlling water hyacinth, currently a serious threat to the health of the marsh.

In the interim, the MDAS Wetlands Action Committee is overseeing the site, performing species surveys, and beginning community education efforts.

To find the marsh, take the A Street/Lone Tree exit from Highway 4, turn left on A St. to Wilbur Ave. Turn right on Wilbur Ave. and right on Marie St. to the parking area. The marsh is between Marie and Cavallo Rd.

Please wear clothes and shoes or boots that can get muddy and a hat. We will provide rubber gloves and plastic bags. Call Nancy Wenninger at 938-7987 for more information.



March Field Trip Reports

Berkeley Shoreline, March 1—Nine birders spent a sunny morning along the waterfront. It was a five-grebe-species day with good opportunity to study differences between Eared and Horned Grebes. The grassland on the northern area of the Berkeley shoreline was full of singing Savannah Sparrows apparently on territory. Other highlights were four Oystercatchers flying along the Bay and a White-fronted Goose feeding with a large flock of Canadas. A total of 53 species were seen.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Lake County, March 4—Four Mt Diablo birders joined Redbud Audubon for their monthly walk in Anderson Marsh. A sunny day turned cloudy with light showers in the afternoon. Highlights were the flocks of White Pelicans which winter at the lake and an immature Bald Eagle. We saw 39 species.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Jewel Lake, Tilden, March 16—Wet trails made Jewel Lake the better choice for six birders. We were able to observe a pair of Mourning Doves collecting twigs and arranging them into a nest and a Hutton's Vireo adding lichen to her nest above the Packrat Trail. There were a Kingfisher at Jewel Lake and an Orange-crowned Warbler singing in the underbrush. We saw or heard 39 species.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Tomales Bay State Park, March 18—Four members went to Tomales Bay State Park for a field trip that was

announced only at the March MDAS meeting. The weather was perfect, mid-60s with no wind and no clouds. Unfortunately no Spotted Owl either. We saw 53 species. Highlight birds included Brant, White-winged Scoter, Osprey, Spotted Sandpiper, Allen's Hummingbird, a courting Belted Kingfisher pair, and Winter Wren.—*Maury Stern*

Upper San Leandro Reservoir, March 23—Six birders saw 62 species at Upper San Leandro Reservoir on a mildly overcast day that progressed to sunny as the morning went on. Highlights: Wood Duck (fleeting looks), 9 Common Snipe, and 5 woodpecker species.—*Maury Stern*

Black Diamond Mines Regional Park, March 25—Five birders enjoyed a fine spring day in the park. Morning was a little windy and cool, but this lasted only about an hour. Birds were very active with Western Bluebirds, holding the title of Most Abundant and Cooperative. The bird of the day, however, was a female Phainopepla. She posed twice, giving the birders time to enjoy seeing her. We saw or heard a total of 44 species.—*Donald Mays*

Huckleberry Preserve, March 30—Seven birders enjoyed a spring hike in a beautiful canyon. This area is very attractive to hummers; and we had good looks at Anna's, Allen's, and Rufous and saw Anna's and Rufous in courtship flight. A Wilson's Warbler sang persistently, but stayed hidden in the brush and trees. A total of 28 species were seen or heard.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Resignation

I am hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult.

I have decided I would like to accept the responsibilities of an 8-year-old again.

I want to go to McDonald's and think that it's a four star restaurant.

I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle and make a sidewalk with rocks.

I want to think M&Ms are better than money because you can eat them.

I want to lie under a big oak tree and run a lemonade stand with my friends on a hot summer's day.

I want to return to a time when life was simple; when all you knew were multiplication tables and nursery rhymes, but that didn't bother you because you didn't know what you didn't know and you didn't care.

All you knew was to be happy because you were blissfully unaware of all the things that should make you worried or upset.

I want to think the world is fair. That everyone is honest and good.

I want to believe that anything is possible. I want to be oblivious to the complexities of life and be overly excited by the little things again.

I want to live simple again. I don't want my day to consist of computer crashes, mountains of paperwork, depressing news, doctor bills, gossip, illness, and loss of loved ones.

I want to believe in the power of smiles, hugs, a kind word, truth, justice, peace, dreams, the imagination, mankind, and making angels in the snow.

So . . . here's my checkbook and my car-keys, my credit card bills and my 401K statements. I am officially resigning from adulthood.

And if you want to discuss this further, you'll have to catch me first, cause.....
"Tag! You're IT!"

—author unknown

May 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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Thursday, May 4, Mitchell Canyon.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in Mitchell Canyon parking lot. There may be 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. Trip is primarily for birds, but the canyon is also good for butterflies and wild flowers. It is usually hot, so carry liquids and lunch.. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 3

Saturday, May 6, Mines Road. Because of limited parking along Mines Road, carpooling is essential. This is an all-day trip and usually hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Carpools leave at 7:30 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, Costa's Hummingbird, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Lawrence's Goldfinch all possible. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Wednesday, May 10, Napa River.

Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from 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 17. South side of Mt Diablo State Park. Carpool leaves LaGonda Way at 7:45 a.m. (From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado.) Or meet at 8:15 a.m. at first parking lot on right inside park. Go east on El Cerro and left on Diablo to South Gate Road. There may be an entry fee. Leader: Jimm Edgar, 658-2300 Category 2.

Saturday, May 20, East Contra Costa County. Carpool leaves at 6:30 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Or meet at 7 a.m. at corner of SR 4 and Cypress Road. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, and turn left onto Cypress Rd. Usually hot; bring lunch and liquids. Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat all possible. Leader: Steve Glover, (925) 828-7793 Category 2

Wednesday, May 24, West Briones. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot on the right hand side of the west entrance road, off Bear Creek Rd. From SR24 westbound, exit Orinda, turn right on Camino Pablo to Bear Creek Rd (last light) and turn right to the park. Wildflowers, spring birds; Lazuli Buntings are usually abundant. Carry water. Poison oak along shaded trails. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, May 27-29, Mt. Pinos/San Luis Obispo County. We have an upcoming field trip to the Mt. Pinos/Morro Bay area. We will spend Saturday and Sunday birding the Mt. Pinos area (where we will see many montane species) and points west of there where birds should include Scott's Oriole, Gray Flycatcher, Black-chinned Sparrow, etc. On Monday morning we will bird the Morro Bay area. For those of you who are interested, it is important that you let me, Steve Glover, know as soon as possible because this is a first-call, first-go trip and you will need to arrange for lodging or camping. This should be a really fun weekend, so I hope some of you will be able to join us. Please call Steve Glover, 828-7793, if you plan to go on this field trip.

President's Notes

Continued from page 1

Please add any comments or suggestions on a separate sheet of paper. Either mail the survey in to the MDAS Post Office Box or turn it in at the May or June general meeting.

The Board will make best efforts to ensure that your expressed needs and wishes are reflected in our 2000-2001 programs and activities.

Finally, it's spring! Let's get out there and enjoy the season.

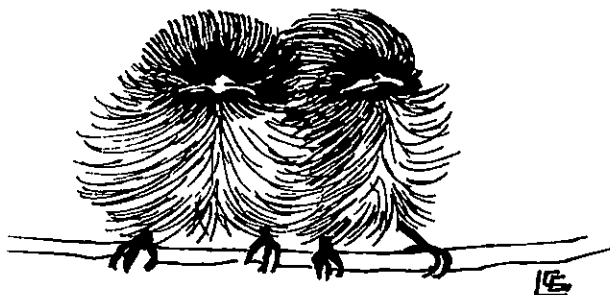
—Carol Frischmann

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*

Two **Wood Ducks** were at Pine Pond, Mt. Diablo State Park, on 3/25 (J&MRo). Four **Hooded Mergansers**—three females and a male—were along the creek at the Royal Vista Golf Course in San Ramon on 3/28 (SG,MM).

Yet another **Swainson's Hawk** nest has turned up, this one east of Brentwood on Byron Highway, first found on 3/26 (SG). Swainson's Hawks have now been confirmed nesting in four atlas blocks in eastern Contra Costa County and are thought to have nested in four others.

A male **Calliope Hummingbird** in White Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park, on 3/13 may represent the earliest county record by over two weeks and appears to be just the second record for March (MP). A male **Rufous Hummingbird** was in an Antioch yard, where unusual, on 3/14–15 (JB).

Are **Yellow-billed Magpies** expanding their range in the county or are we just looking harder? Previously unknown nest sites at Bethel Island (BC) and on Byron Highway east of Brentwood on 3/26 (SG) have recently been discovered. Unknown as a nester in the county just a few years ago, we have already confirmed them nesting in five atlas blocks.

At least two males and one female **Phainopepla** continued at the Black Diamond Mines Regional Park parking area to at least 3/11 (JB). A female **Phainopepla** was at the south end of Los Vaqueros Reservoir on 3/16 (SG).

An immature male **Summer Tanager**, in the process of molting into alternate plumage, was found at the Tilden Park Environmental Education Center on 3/26 (GG) and was seen through at least 3/31 (AK). This bird almost surely wintered at this location, providing the first winter record for Contra Costa County and only the sixth ever with three previous records being from fall and two from spring.

Most unusual was a flock of nine **Chipping Sparrows** along Creek Lane near Byron on 3/26 (SG). Although it is likely that this was a flock of migrants it seems

more likely that this flock wintered at this location for just the third county winter record. The other two winter records were single birds. Single **White-throated Sparrows** were along the Upper Packrat Trail at Tilden Park on 3/18 (LC), Pine Pond, Mt. Diablo State Park, on 3/25 (J&MRo), and in El Cerrito on 3/27 (LT).

Three **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were at Bethel Island on 3/15 (BC).

Observers: Jeanne Bonner, Bethi Carver, Lew Cooper, Steve Glover, George Griffeth, Alan Kaplan, Misty Mendiola, Marjorie Plant, John and Marlene Robinson, Larry Turnstall

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

Action Network Nominated

Action Network, the website that brings you urgent email action alerts on environmental issues, has been nominated for a Webby—considered to be the Oscars of the Internet world—in the Activism category. Action Network is a leader in email activism. Visit the Action Network website of the Environmental Defense at <<http://www.environmentaldefense.org>>. If you like what you see, you can register and cast your vote for Action Network:

><http://www.webbyawards.com/peoplesvoice/registration.html> >



News from

Wild Birds Unlimited

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

May Activities at WBU

Sat., May 6, 10:00 am. Birding Optics Workshop. Trying to select the right optics for local birdwatching or that next birding trip? Join us at for a 45-minute workshop on "How to Buy Birding Optics." There will be many brands of binoculars and scopes on display. Check out the Bausch & Lomb Elite binoculars (incredibly sharp & close focus to 6 feet) and the 60-mm KOWA scope. Call for reservations, as seating is limited.

Sat., May 13: Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with WBU:

- Serenescapes will have available many varieties of plants to attract birds and butterflies.
 - Monarch caterpillars will also be available.
 - Native Bird Connection will have a Peregrine Falcon here for a program.
 - Birding software demonstration.
- Join us for many other activities.

Birdfeeding Tips

It's time to put out your oriole feeders. Both Hooded and Bullock's Orioles are now arriving. They are nectar feeding birds but are too large to feed from most hummingbird feeders. They will readily come to an oriole feeder. These are the most spectacular birds that we can attract to our backyards during the summer. Please report all oriole sightings to WBU. We map all sightings.

Black-headed Grosbeaks are back. They usually start arriving in April and stay until late summer. These birds love sunflower seeds. They nest in our backyards and seem to return each year.

Join Our Team!

It's not only fun at Wild Birds Unlimited; it's also very rewarding helping people discover the "world of birds". We are anticipating a few part-time staff openings in the near future. If you are looking for an entertaining and rewarding experience, please give us a call.

CBRP Sees New Fledging Record in '99

The California Bluebird Recovery Program reported recently that totals of cavity-nesters fledged in California increased in 1999 to over 13,000 and included 19 species. The number of boxes was a little under 4600. Nearly half of the fledglings were either Western or Mountain Bluebirds.

In 1997 the CBRP reported a total of 8,393 birds fledged from their monitored nestboxes. For 1998, the group total is 11,326 from 4,142 nestboxes. As shown in Table 1 below, over 5,000 Western Bluebirds were fledged in California. Tree Swallows fledglings increased nearly fourfold—up from 554 in 1997 to 2,008 in 1998.

Founded in 1994, the California Bluebird Recovery Program is for the encouragement and conservation of

cavity-nesting birds, especially bluebirds, anywhere in the West. The nonprofit CBRP is supported by Audubon-California and is affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society. CBRP members have placed and monitor over 4,500 nestboxes.

New members are welcomed, and the organization needs your help both financially and with donations of time and effort. CBRP can furnish nestbox plans, a monitoring guide, forms for monitoring and reports, technical advice through a network of county coordinators, and sometimes the nestboxes themselves. Membership, which includes a quarterly newsletter, is available for a donation of \$5 or more, made payable to "MDAS—Bluebirds" and mailed to CBRP, 2021 Parmigan Dr. #1, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Fledglings</u>
Western Bluebird	6050
Mountain Bluebird	130
Acorn Woodpecker	2
Western Screech Owl	8
Ash-throated Flycatcher	487
Tree Swallow	1984
Violet-green Swallow	450
House Wren	365
Bewick's Wren	21
Oak Titmouse	680
Mountain Chickadee	84
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	88
White-breasted Nuthatch	115
Common Barn Owl	372
American Kestrel	33
Wood Duck	2225
House Finches	10

Name That Bird: A Few Tips on Identification

If you are a beginning birder or want to teach your spouse or children to appreciate birds, sometimes you don't know where to begin or what details to look for. Then when you try to tell someone about a new bird, all you can remember is color and maybe size.

When you spot a new bird in your backyard or at a feeder, which important features should you look for in order to identify your visitor correctly? Here are few tips:

SIZE: How large is the bird? Smaller than a crow? Larger than a house finch? About the same size as a robin?

COLOR: Look at the feathers on its breast, back, wings, head, throat, rump, and observe the color(s) on each body part. What are the distinct colors?

FIELD MARKS: Look for unique markings such as an eye-ring or an eye stripe, wing bars or stripes, spotted or striped breast, a crest or streaks on the crown, or white outer feathers on the tail.

BILL: Is the bill large and thick like that of a Grosbeak? Or is it long and pointed like a Pine Siskin's?

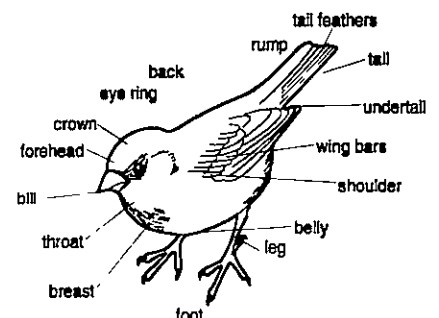
BEHAVIOR: Look for unusual actions, such as repeated bobbing or flicking of the tail. Does it sit patiently on a branch or does it flit from branch to branch?

VOICE: Listen for its song or call. Is it a melodious song? Or a sharp or harsh or chattering call?

With your notes in hand, consult a good bird field guide which typically describes each bird, including distinct field marks, and groups similar species together. Look at the Range Maps for quick, accurate geographical locations. Most importantly, join an MDAS field trip and stick close to the leader. Ask questions about what distinguishes a particular species from another.

Although not all birders keep Life Lists, many find that keeping such a

list is enjoyable. A simple list can be kept in your field guide. Simply mark the date and the place where you first see the bird right on the photograph or drawing of the bird. Over the years, our first field guide has become a valued keepsake because it records dates and places that bring back memories of special field trips and vacations.



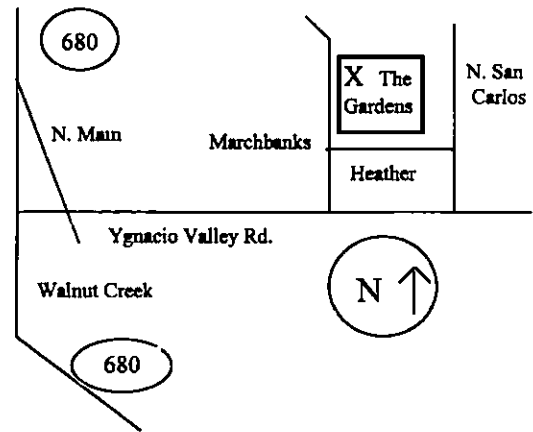
CALENDAR

May 4, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, The Gardens at Heather Farms. See map on the right. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7 p.m.

May 11, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.

May 20, Fri., 9:30 a.m.—*Quail* mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. (Volunteers prepare the *Quail* issue for mailing.)

General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. The schedule for the remaining meeting for 1999-2000 is June 1. General meeting dates are also *Quail* deadlines.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Alamo, CA 94507-2704. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to GIFFORD YOUNG, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632.

Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

5/00



JEAN RICHMOND
125 VIA SERENA
ALAMO CA 94507-1841
FEB 01 MFB

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TIME VALUE MAIL



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



The QUAIL

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Mt Diablo Audubon Society
Walnut Creek, CA
94597-0053

June 2000

Vol. 46, No. 10

Next Deadline: June 1

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Your chapter participates as a part of the Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC). This Council has succeeded in having Audubon at both the state and the national levels make the restoration of 150 square miles of Baylands a priority in its Vision 2020 plan.

The Baylands Campaign will become the "Everglades of the West." As you probably know, the Everglades is an \$8-billion restoration project—the largest restoration project ever attempted.

What this means for us in Contra Costa County is:

- Improved habitat for local and migratory birds
- Heightened awareness through a very strong public education campaign, conducted at the national, state and local levels.
- Opportunity to use newly available funds for restoration of habitat
- Opportunity to develop relationships with our local, county and state government on an issue of importance to constituents
- Focus to tie together MDAS programs to achieve public interest and support
- Opportunity to make a difference to our community for the future.

Please see the story on page 2 for additional information. Call (925-735-3836) or e-mail me at (frischma@mindspring.com) if you have an interest in public policy, land acquisition (or making a donation toward land acquisition), or education, or assisting with or supporting special meetings and programs regarding our Baylands. Happy birding!

Upcoming Events:

MDAS Potluck Set for June 1

MDAS will hold its annual end-of-the-year potluck on Thursday, June 1, at the Heather Farms Garden Center (for directions, see p. 8). Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. Members should bring a dish—salad, entree, casserole, vegetable, or dessert—for 10. Remember to bring serving pieces for your contribution and your own cutlery, plates, and cups. The Chapter provides complementary tea, coffee, and punch.

There will be a short business meeting, including election of MDAS officers, followed by the ever-popular, member-provided slide program. Bring 10 or fewer slides of your birding adventures, bird nests, bird houses, or bird feeders to share with the group. You are also invited to bring and display anything interesting that relates to natural

MDAS Meeting Information

There will be no general meeting in July or August. The next general meeting is Thursday, September 7, at the Gardens at Heather Farms.

MDAS needs a Treasurer! If you have an accounting background and have approximately 10 hours a month available, please consider serving on the Board as Treasurer. Contact Carol Frischmann at 735-3836, or Mike Williams at 376-1631.

history. In years past, the MDAS potluck has been an entertaining evening of food, fellowship, and a few tall tales of birds and birdwatchers.

This year we are adding a new feature to our annual potluck. You are also invited to come early and take a walk around the natural areas of Heather Farms as well as the Garden Center. The variety of birds thriving in this urban park is impressive, and the gardens are lovely. Come and join us for an evening of birding, elections, slides, and wonderful dining!

Election of MDAS Officers Slated

In accordance with the by-laws of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, the Nominating Committee is presenting to the general membership the following slate of nominees for the elective offices of the Society for the year 2000-2001:

President—Carol Frischmann
Vice President—Mike Williams
Secretary—Mike Tischler
Treasurer—Open

The election of officers will be held at the June 1 general meeting. Nominations from the floor may also be made at that time.

Audubon Launches Baylands Restoration

On April 5, National Audubon Society President John Flicker visited the Bay Area to announce the beginning of Audubon's Baylands Campaign. Joining with the Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC) and Audubon California, NAS plans a 20-year campaign to restore 100,000 acres—150 square miles—of Bay Area tidal wetland, seasonal wetland, and associated upland habitats.

The San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary has been described as the most modified estuary in the United States. We're not surprised given that nearly 7 million people live along its shores and in its immediate watersheds.

In spite of urbanization, the Bay-Delta is still the largest and most important estuary on the West Coast of North America. Consider that the Bay-Delta estuary contains 90 percent of California's remaining coastal wetlands.

Three-quarters of all Pacific Flyway shorebirds feed or breed here. Other species, such as Pacific herring, chinook salmon, harbor seals, and California sea lions, rely on these habitats for survival. Conservation and restoration of Bayland ecosystems has been a priority for Bay Area Audubon chapters for decades. Now we have the added visibility and financial backing of NAS.

NAS is giving the Baylands restoration the same priority as restoring the Everglades. By breaching levees, flooding North Bay hay fields, and converting South Bay salt ponds into tidal marshes, Audubon plans to fundamentally alter the Bay's shoreline from Alviso to Martinez.

Our chapter responsibility is to provide the grassroots support for a public outreach effort to educate Contra Costa residents and decision-makers about the economic and ecological benefits of restoring the Baylands, especially those in Contra Costa County. National Audubon and Audubon-California will lead the effort to secure the public and

private funding needed for acquisition and restoration of these critical habitats.

"by 2020, a plan to restore the Baylands' ecosystems can be translated into cleaner water, more natural open spaces, and a better quality of life for millions of people around the West Coast's most import estuary," wrote Dan Taylor, Audubon California Director.

This renewed support to restore wetlands and tidal marshes around San Francisco Bay stems from the publication of the San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Ecosystem Goals Project's *Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report* in 1999. Recognizing the importance of the Habitat Goals stated in this report, the chapters of the BAAC proposed a Bay-wide conservation campaign focused on tidal wetlands.

In the best Audubon tradition, the Bay Area Audubon chapters proposed that a significant conservation campaign be based on the sound scientific recommendations put forward in the Goals Report. The Goals Report represents the finds of a group of 50 Bay Area scientists and resource managers. It provides a blueprint that details the types, amounts, and distribution of wetlands and related habitats needed to sustain a healthy ecosystem in San Francisco Bay, and sets restoration goals for 124 individual sites.

BAAC and Audubon-California have already dedicated significant financial and personnel resources to the Baylands Campaign. Audubon-California staff member Mike Sellors moved to the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary to organize the state office effort.

The services of William L. Rukeyser, who was instrumental in the successful Campaign to Save Barr Island, have been retained as media consultant.

We have the opportunity to achieve substantial regional habitat gains. You can contribute to Audubon's Baylands Campaign by identifying sites in Contra Costa's coastal wetlands, leading bird walks there, writing letters to local officials, and talking about the campaign with your friends and family. To get involved, contact Mike Sellors (mgsellors@earthlink.net) or Carol Frischmann (frischma@mindspring.com).

**Remember to mail in
your member survey
by June 15 to
P.O.Box 53,
Walnut Creek 94597-0053
or bring it to the June 1
meeting!**

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 53
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
(925) AUD-UBON
(925) 283-8266

<[http://www.audubon.org/
chapter/ca/mt-diablo/](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/mt-diablo/)>

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Vice President: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Secretary: Mike Tischler, 689-5552
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Mgr: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Maury Stern, 284-5980
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Nominations & Members: Open
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Alice Holmes, (925) 376-8464
Education: Cecil Williams, 376-1631
Access: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Chapter Development: Joel Summerhill,
753-0862
Conservation and Christmas Count:
Jimm Edgar (510) 658-2330
Field Guide: Jean Richmond

Mailing: Gifford Young (707) 745-4134
Webmaster: Mani Keeran

Gloria Cannon, Editor, (925) 753-0862,
P.O. Box 8367, Pittsburg, CA 94565,
email: cannon4@excite.com

Field Trip Reports

April 6, Briones Wildflowers—We saw 47 species of flowers and ferns along the Old Briones Rd. Birds were very quiet in the wooded areas. Most interesting sighting was on the hillside along Briones Crest trail where we saw a pair of Lark Sparrows with a nearly grown fledging—*Bessie Smyth and Elizabeth Dickey*

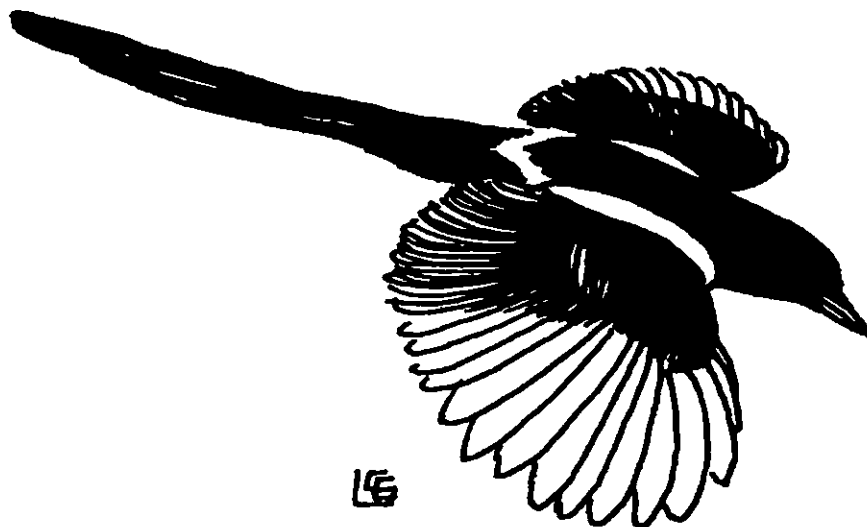
Wednesday, April 13, Borges Ranch—Ten members and guests spent a pleasant morning on the trails around Borges Ranch on the Diablo Foothills. Highlights included Golden Eagle, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Rock Wren, Chipping Sparrow, and Lark Sparrow. We saw or heard 46 species.—*Maury Stern*

April 22, Pine Canyon—Fourteen birdwatchers saw 49 species on a day that tried to rain us out several times. We saw both Cassin's and Warbling Vireos. One Warbling Vireo was singing on a nest. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow sang for at least 5 minutes from a post top about 10 feet away in perfect view. We also saw a Peregrine Falcon, both flying and then perched in a treetop.—*Pat MacEachern*

April 27, Del Puerto Canyon—Twelve birders enjoyed the great weather and the birding. Highlights included Grasshopper, Chipping, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, five Costa's Hummers, many Lawrence's Goldfinches, ten Lewis' Woodpeckers, Golden Eagle, two burrowing Owls, Ash-throated flycatcher, Canyon, Rock, and House Wrens, and Tricolored Blackbirds. Bullock's Orioles and Western Kingbirds were busy nest building. We saw a total of 62 species.—*Florence Bennett*

May 6, Mines Road—The cool day may have slowed some of the birds, as the numbers seemed low, but eleven birders still saw 59 species on the Mines Road field trip. There were none of the spectacular fields of flowers, which had occurred about one month previous. Instead, many species of flowers peppered the hills with a variety of colors. These flowers included Blue Witch, California Larkspur, Paintbrush, Lupines, and many Sticky Monkey flowers. Bird highlights included Wood Duck, Red-tailed Hawk with two downy chicks in a nest, a young

Golden Eagle harassed by American Crows, Spotted Sandpiper, White-throated Swift, California Thrasher, Painopepla, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Lawrence's Goldfinch.—*Hugh B. Harvey*



Special Events for Birders

Audubon Camps

Audubon is sponsoring a full week of instruction by natural history experts at its camps in Maine, Minnesota, Utah, Connecticut, and Wyoming. For example, Audubon's Wyoming camp is at the Whiskey Mountain Wildlife Conservation Camp in Torrey Creek Canyon of the Wind River Mountains. Accommodations are rustic and comfortable. Food is hearty. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.audubon.org/education/cw/>

Partners in Flight conference, June 21–25

The Kern River Preserve is hosting a conference and riparian habitat field workshop at its Weldon, CA, location. This is the height of the nesting season in California's largest Fremont cottonwood and red will riparian forest. Field trips, conference, and workshops, bird banding are featured. For more info, contact Bob Barnes at 760-378-3044 or at bbarnes@lightspeed.net.

Nature Photography Workshop July 23-25

Professional photographer, Steven Ruley, is offering a class in outdoor photography. You'll learn the techniques needed to meet the challenges of outdoor photography and improve the visual impact of your images. Along with leisurely hikes, there'll be slide presentations, group and individual critiques, field demos, and shared experiences. The setting will be the Carson Pass and Hope Valley area of the Sierra Range. For details and reservations, call (925) 449-2245. Cost is \$140/one person; \$250/a couple.

Southwest Wings August 16–19

Sierra Vista, Arizona, is holding its 9th annual birding festival. This is a wonderful birding area anytime of year. The conference features birding and butterfly trips, nature exhibits, and natural history programs. To receive a brochure, call 800-946-4777.

Observations

by Steve Glover

A **Red-throated Loon** in a flooded field at Iron House Sanitary near Oakley was in unusual habitat and was the first record for that location (SG).

An unhealthy **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel** has been the unfortunate highlight of the spring in Contra Costa County. Found on the mudflats at Pt. Isabel on 4/6, it provided just the second county record and the first since 8/31/1937! (ES).

The resident pair of **Harlequin Ducks** at Brooks Island, Richmond, was noted once again on 4/7 (MR). This pair is seemingly the same pair present in the area since the winter of 1990-91!

As mentioned previously, the quantity of **Swainson's Hawks** found nesting in the county has been surprising. This spring it has been confirmed in five new atlas blocks, bringing the new total to eight—all in east county. It is interesting to note that all of the nesting records have involved light-phase birds whereas the famous wintering flock in the Delta is composed almost exclusively of dark-phase birds.

A **Wild Turkey** at Mt. Wanda near Martinez on 4/15 was the first reported from that area as this species continues to spread rapidly into Contra Costa County (CA).

Wandering Tattlers are recorded much more frequently in fall than in spring in the county so one at Marina Bay, Richmond, on 5/6 was of interest (NW,LP). Eight **Surfbirds**, rarely reported in Contra Costa County, were on the breakwater at Brook's Island on 4/7 (MR).

A **Black Tern** was at the east end of Camino Diablo in Byron on 5/6 (SG).

Most Contra Costa records of **Costa's Hummingbird** are of birds at backyard feeders, but one on 4/8, a male, was in Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo State Park (J & MR). **Calliope Hummingbirds** continued to stir up interest on the heels of the first March record for the county.

The first April report was one on 4/8, followed by 9 on 4/23, and 15 on 4/29, all in White Canyon, MDSP (J & MR). This likely represents a new high for the county.

The first report this spring of **Hammond's Flycatcher** came from Mitchell Canyon, MDSP on 4/1 (MF). The first East Bay spring record of **Tropical Kingbird** was a stunning find at Hayward Regional Shoreline, Alameda Co., on 4/12 (PD). It was still present to at least 5/4 (CL).

A **Sage Sparrow** at Lime Ridge Open Space near Concord on 3/19 was at a spot from which they appear to have been previously unrecorded (JH).

Lawrence's Goldfinches, traditionally thought of locally as birds of the arid interior, have actually been found in more

atlas blocks in the Berkeley Hills than in the Diablo Range. One at Pinole on 4/30 (LF, SH) and a pair at Inspiration Pt., Tilden Regional Park, on 5/9 (DW,DF) continued this trend.

Observers: Cheryl Abel, Peter Dramer, Mike Feigner, Dorothy Furseth, Lillian Fujii, Steve Glover, Steve Hayashi, Joel Herr, Calvin Lou, Lina Prairie, Mark Rauzon, John and Marlene Robinson, Emilie Strauss, Neil Whitehouse, and Denise Wight

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin 94568, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your telephone number with your observation.
Northern California Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

Habitat Conservation Planning Comes to East County

Habitat conservation plans (HCPs) are a significant and controversial tool for managing endangered species on private and nonfederal land. According to CoCo County planning staff, several East County cities and private entities have initiated efforts for an East County HCP.

What is an HCP

A HCP is a plan that, once developed and approved, allows nonfederal landowners to obtain an "incidental take permit" for species that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in return for conservation commitments.

These incidental take permits allow landowners to carry out specified economic activities on their land that may harm threatened or endangered species. Under the Supreme Court's current interpretation of the ESA, "harm" includes the destruction of an imperiled species' habitat. It also includes the killing of individual members of a species if the species itself survives.

An HCP is a deal cut between a federal agency and a landowner to allow new-home construction, commercial logging, or other development to go forward in exchange for conservation measures undertaken by the property owner. An HCP attempts to balance property rights with wildlife needs, while skirting what Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt has called "environmental train wrecks" that stir up opposition to species protection.

HCPs must be approved by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce. Before this happens, the appropriate Secretary must determine that the landowner's activities will not reduce the likelihood of species survival and recovery, and the adverse impacts of those activities will be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. Once the permit is granted, individual members of the species are no longer protected by the ESA, only the species overall. (See East County HCP on p. 5)

June 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Thursday, June 1, Consumes Preserve. Carpool leaves at 7 a.m. from southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking area on the left side of Franklin Road. Take SR4 east to Antioch Bridge, then take Highway 160 to Interstate 5. Go north on I-5 to Twin Cities Rd. Go east to Franklin Rd and south to the preserve. This is a new trip to explore riparian trails along the river. Expect heat, humidity, and mosquitoes. Carry liquids, bring lunch. (The scheduled trip to Bobelaine Sanctuary has been cancelled; the Consumes Preserve has similar habitat.) Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, June 3, Outer Point Reyes. Carpool leaves at 7:00 a.m. from Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at Drake's Beach, 8:30 a.m. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight through stoplight. Cross the 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 left onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. again. Continue about 14 miles to Drake's Beach Rd. on left. Leader: Pat MacEachern

Wednesday, June 7, Annadel State Park. Carpool leaves at 7:00 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Or meet 8:30 a.m. at parking lot of Annadel Park. Go north on Interstate-680, west on I-780 to Vallejo. Go north on State Route 29 to State Route 121/12. Go left to SR 12, turn right and drive about 17 miles. Turn left onto Los Alamos Rd., right on Melite Rd., and then left on Montgomery Rd. for 0.6 mi. Turn

left on Channel Dr., 2 mi. to road end. Pileated Woodpecker possible. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday and Sunday, June 17-18, Yuba Pass. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot on the southside of SR 49 at 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. Make reservations now. This is always one of our most enjoyable weekend trips, and the Harveys are excellent leaders. For more information, call Hugh and Rosita Harvey, 932-4715. 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.

East County HCPs (continued from p. 3)

In the past 10 years, dozens of such plans have been negotiated throughout the country; many of them are already being implemented. The nation's first HCP—one that served as a model for amending the ESA to allow the conservation plans—was created to permit housing construction on San Bruno Mountain near San Francisco on land used by three species of rare insects: the mission blue butterfly and San Bruno elfin butterfly, both listed as endangered; and the callippe silverspot butterfly, then a candidate for listing. The mountain provided 97 percent of the habitat for the mission blue and the only known habitat for the callippe silverspot.

In exchange for being allowed to destroy some of that habitat, developers agreed to give up other land they owned and to pay for improving habitat for the insects.

Some experts laud this HCP as a success story, pointing to the continuing survival of the butterflies and the fact that the HCP protected 90 percent of the remaining butterfly habitat. But that HCP protected a far greater percentage of endangered species habitat than any HCP approved since, according to John Kostyack, an endangered-species specialist with the National Wildlife Federation. Kostyack notes that some HCPs approved in recent years have even allowed destruction of habitat that earlier FWS documents said

were important for recovery of the species in question.

HCPs are now being used to juggle the dreams of developers and the needs of a raft of creatures, including woodpeckers in North Carolina, beach-dwelling mice in Alabama, desert tortoises in Utah, and sea turtles that nest on the Florida coast.

Because of the importance of HCPs, the National Wildlife Federation has set up a website exclusively for HCPs at <http://nwf.org/endangered/hcp/hcp2.html>. This information is from that website.

See the July/August *Quail* for "How an HCP Works."

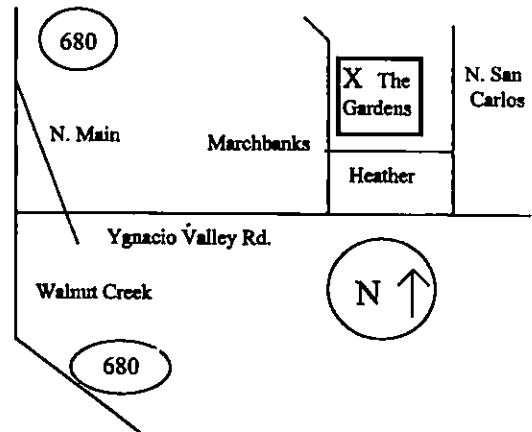
CALENDAR

June 1, Thurs., 7 p.m.—General Meeting, The Gardens at Heather Farms. See map on the right. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; potluck starts at 7 p.m.

June 8, Thurs., 7 p.m.—Board Meeting, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.

June 16, Fri., 9:30 a.m.—*Quail* mailing, Wild Birds Unltd., 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. (Volunteers prepare the *Quail* issue for mailing.)

General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. General meeting dates are also *Quail* deadlines. Next meeting is September 7.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly Audubon magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year. To subscribe to the *Quail*, make the check out to MDAS and mail it to Gifford Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to Gifford Young. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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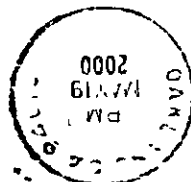


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Mt Diablo Audubon Society
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The QUAIL

a publication of the
Mt Diablo Audubon Society
Walnut Creek, CA
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July-August 2000

Vol. 46, No. 11

Next Deadline: August 5

Bay Area Open Space Council

by Barbara Vaughn

About one-fifth of the open lands of the Bay Area have already been permanently protected due to the actions of more than 150 public agencies, land trusts and concerned citizens. Focus on the need to preserve remaining critical open spaces and farmland has intensified of late, and no county in the Bay Area has a greater necessity to continue this legacy than Contra Costa.

With a projected regional population increase of 1.5 million people by the year 2010, added to the existing 6 million, we face a major challenge to preserve both the quality of life and economic opportunity that makes the Bay Area such an attractive place to live.

The Bay Area Open Space Council, a collaboration of land trusts and public agencies, has been working for several years to identify land areas in jeopardy and how to pay for their preservation. Obviously, it is essential to mesh land owners' interests and environmental concerns for these efforts to be successful.

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society is represented on the Contra Costa County Advisory Committee on Open Space Funding. Many Committee participants worked diligently to achieve passage of Measures 12 and 13 last November, which represent a springboard to generate local funding, grants and matching funds.

It is our belief that with so many talented and experienced people on the Bay Area Open Space Council that solutions to often difficult and confrontational situations can and will be found.

How HCPs Work and Why Worry

This is the second in a series of articles about Habitat Conservation Plans that are being widely used in conjunction with the Endangered Species Act. Several East County cities recently proposed an HCPs for that part of Contra Costa.

Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) swap landowner cooperation for flexibility in meeting Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections. The federally negotiated plans allow non-federal landowners to harm some plant and animal species and their habitat in the course of developing or using their land in some other way. In return, the landowner takes steps that are supposed to leave the species better in the long run, such as relocating the birds and animals or setting aside land elsewhere as habitat mitigation.

Approved HCPs vary greatly in size, duration, and species covered. A two-year agreement for 1/2 acre allowed a landowner in Texas to take Golden-cheeked Warblers in order to build a single-family residence. Another HCP agreement with a timber company in Washington State affects 170,000 acres, nearly 200 listed and unlisted species, and will last for 100 years. In 1999, the

MDAS Meeting Information

There will be no general meeting in July or August. The next general meeting is Thursday, September 7, at the Gardens at Heather Farms.

federal Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) approved a plan that covers 5 million acres owned by International Paper. The land includes habitat for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt made HCPs more attractive in 1994 by adding "no surprises" clauses. A "No Surprises" clause guarantees to the landowner that the government won't change the conditions of an HCP for a specific period (30 to 100 years), even if the situation becomes more dire for a species.

Increasingly, HCPs are including species that are not unlisted under the terms of the ESA, and the application of "No Surprises" assurances may undermine efforts to conserve a species if it is eventually listed under the ESA. For example, the Burrowing Owl is an unlisted species, but its habitat is disappearing at such a rate that most conservationists predict that it will be a listed species within 5 years.

See "HCPs" on p. 3

Conservation Notes**MDAS Seeks Support for East Bay Regional Park District**

If you have been reading the newspapers, you know that the East Bay Regional Park District is being blistered for having poor financial controls that allowed an employee to embezzle funds.

The Board of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society believes that this criticism has become excessive and attacks the EBRPD unfairly. The MDAS Board supports the mission of EBRPD and sent a representative to speak at a public meeting on this subject on June 13.

If you value the mission and the achievements of the EBRPD, this would an excellent time to demonstrate that support.

The MDAS Board asks that you write letters to local newspapers or to the Board of Directors of the EBRPD. Here is a sample letter that you can copy, add your name and address, and your own thoughts about what this park system means to you.



Black-necked Stilt

**Board of Directors
East Bay Regional Park District
P.O. Box 5381
Oakland, CA 9460-0381**

Dear Members of the Board of the East Bay Regional Park District:

In these difficult days, I want to express my support for the mission and the achievements of the East Bay Regional Park District. Thanks to the EBRPD, 91,000 acres is preserved as priceless open space throughout the East Bay. As the East Bay becomes more crowded and open space is replaced with subdivisions and shopping malls, the EBRPD park system provides critical habitat for many endangered and threatened species of birds, animals, and other wild creatures. EBRPD is the cornerstone of environmental restoration in the East Bay and does invaluable work in ensuring a legacy of nature for future generations.

The EBRPD park system provides a haven for me and my family as well. We have only a short journey to reach a park where we picnic, walk a trail, swim, or just enjoy the peace and beauty of nature. Thank you for making that possible.

While I recognize there were weaknesses in your financial controls, I believe that you are acting swiftly to implement additional controls that will prevent recurrence. Please continue your vital work in acquiring new parklands and developing programs to raise public awareness of the park system and the environment.

Sincerely,

(Be sure to sign your name and provide your address.)

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**P.O. Box 53
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
(925) AUD-UBON
(925) 283-8266**

**<[http://www.audubon.org/
chapter/ca/mt-diablo/](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/mt-diablo/)>**

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gcannon4@excite.com*

News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Summer Bird Feeding

Both Hooded and Bullock's Orioles are being reported throughout area, but, just like last year, in much smaller numbers than in previous years. Southern California and Arizona, just as in 1999, are seeing many more orioles than normal. Perhaps some did not migrate as far north this year due to our cool spring.

The lack of oriole sightings in backyards could also be due to the abundance of natural food after good rainfall this winter. Have you seen any of the spectacularly beautiful nectar-feeding birds? Please call in your reports so we can map the sightings.

Try safflower seed if squirrels or blackbirds are a nuisance. They do not like safflower, which is a high-energy food source. Doves and titmice really appreciate it. Other birds such as finches, chickadees, and jays, will acquire a taste for it.

Establishing a squirrel feeding station 15-20 feet away from bird feeders will help keep squirrels occupied and full. They will then tend to avoid bird feeders. The key to having a successful squirrel feeding station is to offer a variety of foods: squirrel mix (sunflower, peanuts, and corn), corn on the cob, and squirrel suet.

We are receiving many reports of Black-headed Grosbeaks. The males have an orange breast and collar and black head. Females have a buffy, lightly streaked breast and eyebrows. They certainly live up to their name with a very large bill, which is ideal for eating their favorite food—sunflower seeds. They will readily come to bird feeders. These Grosbeaks nest in our backyard and return year after year.

Join Our Team! It's not only fun at Wild Birds Unlimited, it's also very rewarding to help people discover the "world of birds." We are anticipating a few part-time staff openings in the near future. If you are looking for an entertaining and rewarding experience, please give us a call.

HCPs continued from p. 1

The National Audubon Society was so concerned by the proliferation of HCPs that it formed a task force to examine them. (see <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/esa/task_force.html> for the full "Report of the National Audubon Society Task Force on Habitat Conservation Plans" [1995]).

The Audubon Task Force found many problems areas with HCPs and developed *A Citizen's Guide to Habitat Conservation Plans* at <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/esa/hcp_guide.html> to help local citizens review and comment on HCPs.

Incidental Take Permits

Section 10 of the ESA authorizes states, local governments, and private landowners to apply for an Incidental Take Permit for activities that may harm listed species or their habitats. To obtain a permit, the applicant submits a HCP outlining what the applicant will do to "minimize and mitigate" the impact of the permitted take on the listed species. The principle underlying the Section 10 exemption from the ESA is that some

individuals of a species or portions of their habitat may be expendable over the short term as long as enough protection is provided to ensure the long-term recovery of the species.

The applicant develops an HCP with technical assistance from a FWS or NMFS field office. Then the application package is reviewed by the appropriate regional office for compliance with legal standards. A notice of application for the HCP is placed in the *Federal Register* to begin a public comment period of 30 days to 45 days. The public comments are reviewed, and a ruling is made on issuing the permit.

One of the most disturbing aspects of HCPs is that the FWS and the NMFS do not have a system in place to monitor approved HCPs nor do they have the funds or personnel to carry out a monitoring system, even if one existed.

Leeona Klippstein, conservation director for the California environmental group, Spirit of the Sage, said "HCPs do nothing for conservation of the species; they just provide for development plans to go forward."

CoCo County Supes Say "No" to Proposed HCP

Contra Costa Supervisors refused to support some East County cities and the Contra Costa Water District to develop a habitat conservation plan. Supervisors said there wasn't enough support among East County cities and landowners to attempt the volatile task of establishing a HCP for East County.

Without the County's participation, it is uncertain if city, water, and park agencies will attempt to devise a plan on their own.

"I think habitat conservation plans are a good idea, but it takes a high degree of local support and enthusiasm to make them work. Otherwise, this turns into a bad marriage," said Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier of Concord.

The board voted 4-0 to decline participation in the plan for at least one year.

Supervisor Garber said she abstained because she believes a HCP can be a good tool to minimize conflicts between building and endangered species protections. But she said she worried that the conservation plan might be used to allow development that otherwise might not occur in East County.

Supervisor Joe Canciamilla of Pittsburg said it would be unfair to saddle landowners with the development restrictions in just one area of the county. He said he was uneasy because there is no limit on the time and cost of coming up with the plan that requires complex studies on endangered species.

City councils in Antioch, Clayton, and Brentwood supported the proposal, as did the Contra Costa Water District and the East Bay Regional Park District.

Observations

by Steve Glover

Flocks of nine and 50 **American White Pelicans** drifted south over Iron House Sanitary District on 5/20 (SG, MDAS). Another pelican circled over McNabney Marsh on 5/25 (SG).

An **American Bittern** was at the north end of Jersey Island on 4/25 (MJC, HH). A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** nest at Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek on 5/5 was the first atlas breeding record away from the Richmond area (BM, HH). Although **White-faced Ibis** were formerly very rare in the county, they have become almost routine in recent years. The following records are from this spring: eighteen on 5/19 at McNabney Marsh (JS); 36 on 5/20 at Piper Slough (SG, MDAS); 62 on 5/20 at Iron House Sanitary District (SG, MDAS); 34 on 6/1 at Piper Slough (SG).

The first east Contra Costa records of **Brant** came from Iron House Sanitary District with eight on 5/20 (SG, MDAS) and 15 on 5/21 (JL,CL). Brant are very rare anywhere inland. **Wood Ducks** are very rare breeders in the county, particularly away from San Pablo Reservoir there they use nest boxes, so a female with two fledglings on San Ramon Creek at Livorna Rd. 6/2-3 (GF) and three families at Marsh Creek Reservoir near Brentwood on 6/5 (SG) were particularly exciting. A male **Blue-winged Teal** at McNabney Marsh on 5/25 was very late (SG) and may summer. A female **Common Merganser** flying south past the Antioch Bridge on 5/19 was at an unlikely time and place (SG).

An **Osprey** was at Iron House Sanitary District on 5/20 (MS, MDAS)

A high total of 46 **Caspian Terns**, some copulating, were at Los Vaqueros Reservoir on 5/21 (BG). The closest colonies are near Fremont and at Brooks Island near Richmond

Even common species can be noteworthy when in unusual locations, an example being a female **Anna's Hummingbird**

building a nest at Piper Slough on 5/20 (SG, MDAS).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** on 5/2 was an unusual migrant in Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo State Park (MDSP) (MJC, FB, BG, HH). Single **Willow Flycatchers** were at Piper Slough on 5/20 (SG, MDAS) and 6/1 (SG). A **Gray Flycatcher** was at Round Valley Regional Park west of Brentwood on 5/21 (MS).

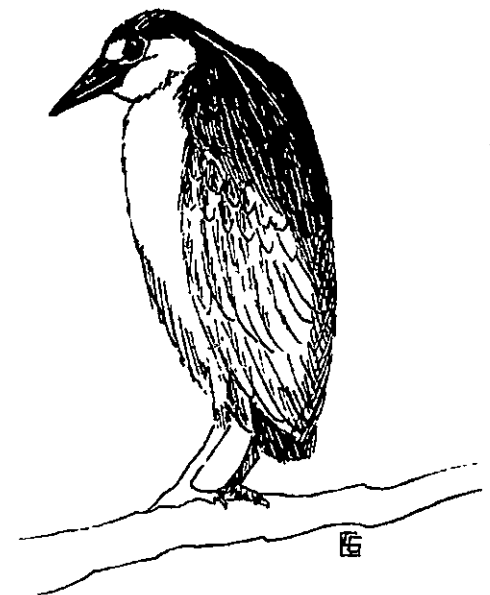
A male **Phainopepla** was along North Gate Rd., MDSP, on 5/30 (MJC, BG, FB).

A singing male **Indigo Bunting** was at Piper Slough on 6/1 (SG). This is presumably the same bird that hybridized with a female Lazuli in 1998 as it was singing from the exact same spot. A copulating pair of **Blue Grosbeaks** near Marsh Creek Reservoir 6/5 provided a very rare record away from its usual Central Valley strongholds (SG).

Great-tailed Grackles have long been anticipated breeding in the county; and although they have not yet been confirmed, it appears that 2000 will be the year. A pair was first noted at McNabney Marsh on 5/5 (TW) and were first reported there on 5/19 (RT). By 5/25 there were at least 4 males and a female (SG). Additional singing males were at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 5/19 (RT) and Iron House Sanitary District on 5/21 (JL).

A male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** feeding a fledgling and a female on a nest provided nesting confirmation near Pinole on 5/19. Another six were noted flying over (DW, LF, SH). It is interesting to note that we have confirmations in four blocks from moister areas in the western half of the county, yet in only one from the more arid eastern half where they are generally more expected.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Lillian Fujii, Betty Gallagher, Bingham Gibbs, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Steve Hayashi, Calvin Lou, John Luther, Mt. Diablo Audubon Soc., Brian Murchey, John Sterling, Maury Stern, Robert Thomas, Denise Wight, Terri Wills



Black-crowned Night Heron

New Website for MDAS Atlas Established

A new web site for the Contra Costa Breeding Bird Atlas has been set up by Joel Herr.

The main page at <www.flyingemu.com/ccosta/> has an index map which shows all the blocks overlaid on a map of Contra Costa County. From the main page, there are links to maps for each species showing their breeding status (as determined so far) in each block in the county.

It will be updated periodically for any species that change significantly

For those of you who tried to use free BBA List software last year but had problems installing it, it is now much easier! Just download the file and double-click on it to install the software on your computer. The web site for the BBA List is <www.flyingemu.com/bbalist.html>

July-August 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. MDAS has a limited number of loaner binoculars available. Call the leader at least one week in advance if you want to borrow a pair.

Saturday, August 5, San Mateo Coast. Carpool leaves 7:15 a.m., at LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd, Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. 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. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for information Category 2

Thursday, August 3, at 7:30 p.m. Field Trip Planning Session. Elizabeth Dickey is hosting a planning session at her home (113 Hillcrest Drive, Orinda) for next year's field trips. She also wants feedback on this year's trips and suggestions for new areas. All members are welcome to attend. Please call her at 254-0486 if you plan to come.

Saturday, August 19, Bodega Bay. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd. north of Highway 24. Meet at 9:15 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant in Bodega Bay Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight through stoplight. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. Go north on 101 to 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 '76 station. Shorebirds, rails, waterbirds, migrants. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906 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.

Field Trip Reports

April 8, Garin Regional Park—Gray skies, green hills, 4 birders, 52 species. Best bird: there were quite a lot of Bullock's Orioles, but the singing (not just chattering) male was the best.—
Fred Safier

May 20, East County—Eleven birders spent a beautiful, albeit rather warm, morning at Piper Slough and Iron House Sanitary District. Highlights at Piper Slough included 36 White-faced Ibis drifting south, a Willow Flycatcher, and all of the local specialties, including Black-chinned Hummingbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, and Hooded Oriole.

At Iron House Sanitary we added American White Pelican, American Bittern, Osprey, Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes and 62 White-faced Ibis. By far, the highlight of the day was eight

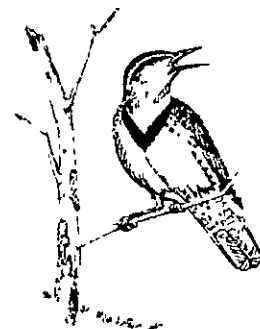
Brant out on Big Break. 72 species seen.—*Steve Glover*

May 27–29, Mt. Pinos/Morro Bay—Fourteen birders spent an enjoyable extended weekend in Condor country. Saturday was spent at Mt. Pinos where we managed Calliope Hummingbird, White-headed Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, and Green-tailed Towhee. In the afternoon, we headed east in search of sparrows but instead found something that by itself made the trip worthwhile: two adult California Condors drifting fairly low and right over our heads! That night, two birders heard Flammulated Owls on Mt. Pinos. On Sunday morning we birded Ballinger and Quatal Canyons to the east where we saw Costa's Hummingbird, Black-chinned Sparrow, a pair of Scott's Orioles and Black-chinned Sparrow. Braving the afternoon sun, some of the group managed glimpses of

flying LeConte's Thrashers at Maricopa, surely one of the garden spots of California

Sunday at Morro Bay yielded a baby Peregrine Falcon, Black Skimmer, Least Tern and several pairs of Lawrence's Goldfinches building nests. On the way home, most of the group saw a pair of Purple Martins near Atascadero. A healthy 151 species were seen.

—*Steve Glover*



Meadowlark

Summer Events

Pacific Flyway Decoy Show

The Pacific Flyway Decoy Association Wildfowl Art Show is set for June 24-25 in Sacramento at the Double Tree Hotel (Arden Way exit off Business 80). the cost is \$2/person. This show features nationally recognized wildlife artisans exhibiting the highest quality fine art, traditional wildlife carvings, antique decoys, and sculpture.

Dedicate Turtle Rock Ranch

Save Mount Diablo and the Department of Parks and Recreation will dedicate the Turtle Rock Ranch to Mt. Diablo State

Park on Sunday, July 9, at 11 a.m. The program will be followed by a BBQ lunch, short walks, tours of the historic ranch house, and swimming. RSVP by June 28 to Lucea Keller, SMD, 925-947-3535. The 66 acres of Turtle Rock Ranch was part of the 1834 Mexican land grant Rancho Miguel.

Texas Audubon International Bird Festival

The Texas Audubon On-the-Border, By-the-Sea International Bird Festival will showcase unique birding opportunities in south Texas and northern Mexico on

July 12-15, with field trips to Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary, Boca Chica Wetlands, Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Texas and Rancho Rincon de Anacahitas in Mexico. Typical summer bird specialties in the Brownsville area include Great Kiskadee, Couch's Kingbird, Green Jay, Plain Chachalaca, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Altamia Oriole, Magnificent Frigatebird, and Aplomado Falcon. Festival program and registration information is available from the Brownsville Convention & Visitors Bureau by phone at 1-800-626-2639 or email dlee@brownsville.org.

National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly Audubon magazine and the Quail (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The Quail may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. First-class delivery of the Quail is an additional \$3.50/year. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail it to Gifford Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to Gifford Young. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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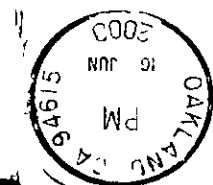


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The QUAIL

a publication of the
Mt Diablo Audubon Society
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Next Deadline: September 7

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

MDAS—The Next Five Years

Your MDAS Board has begun a strategic planning process to take MDAS into the next 5 years. Our community is changing. Our membership is changing. Audubon itself is changing. The Board needs to review our structure, activities and finances to ensure that we are in alignment with what our membership considers important.

As we look at the awesome array of our chapter's activities, such as our monthly meetings and our annual field trip schedule (see p. 7), we can be proud of the services that we provide our membership. In addition to what we're doing right, the membership survey (see p. 3) elucidates issues we as an organization should address. Among these is the aging of our membership.

Our local chapter should serve our membership and local community. Special challenges for us include land development and associated infrastructure, or lack thereof, in response to our growing population here in Contra Costa County. We also need to take advantage of the opportunities presented by partnerships with other organizations, including Audubon National. Audubon California is a new organization, begun only five years ago. The state organizations are one way that Audubon National is changing its programs to fit the Vision 2020 strategic plan.

How does our local chapter fit with the new Audubon? Next month, I'll write about how our Chapter currently spends its money. In the following months, I'll see PRESIDENT'S NOTES, p. 5

Upcoming Events:

Alaskan Adventure Feature of September 7 Program

Alaska is known for its spectacular beauty and abundant wildlife. MDAS begins its Fall 2000 general meetings with a slide presentation on Alaska by Joel Summerhill and Gloria Cannon. At the **September 7** meeting, Joel and Gloria will take us along on their cruise of the Inside Passage and their RV adventure on the Kenai Peninsula.

For people who inhabit the communities along the Alaskan Panhandle, the Inside Passage is a transportation corridor. For cruise passengers, this 1,000-mile waterway is a constant revelation. Protected by offshore islands, this vast maze of deep channels, quiet bays, and lovely forested islands is as beautiful as it was 200 years ago when Captain George Vancouver mapped it. In Glacier Bay National Park and in College Fjord, Gloria and Joel photographed Margerie, Johns Hopkins, Yale, and Harvard glaciers—some of the most spectacular tidewater glaciers in North America—from their cruise ship as it glided 100 yards offshore.

During their visit to Ketchikan, they traveled by small excursion ship and float plane into the beautiful Misty Fjord, the nation's second largest wilderness area. During their weeklong cruise, they also visited Juneau, the capital of Alaska; Skagway; and Seward.

From Anchorage, they drove their RV throughout the Kenai Peninsula and visited Homer, Kenai, Seldovia, Anchor Point, and Seward. The Kenai Peninsula is considered Alaska in miniature. From Kachemak Bay to Turnagain Arm to Kenai Fjords National Park, you will marvel at the bird, mammal, and sea life that makes Alaska a must-see destination for nature lovers. Come join us and see for yourself the highlights of this exciting and wonder-filled trip to this vast wilderness state.

Birding Information

For September bird information, Tina Batt, Executive Director of the Muir Heritage Land Trust (formerly Martinez Land Trust) will speak about her organization's goals. This local, non-profit land trust is trying to raise money to preserve local, open space for wetlands, and wildlife corridors through the hills and local ridges.

Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will **Thursday, September 7**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8).
6:30 p.m.—Doors open
7 p.m.—Birding Information
7 30 p.m.—Business meeting
8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
8 30 p.m.—Program
Remember to bring your own coffee cup.

Connections

by Gloria Cannon

Open Space Saved by CoCo Supervisors

On July 28, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors cast historic and heroic votes to tighten urban limit lines. After decades of developer-driven decision making, the County has turned away from sprawl and toward smart growth. Following two days of public hearings, the Supervisors voted to put nearly 15,000 acres of threatened greenbelt off-limits to sprawl.

The victory is unprecedented. New development on the land in question would have been worth \$5 to \$10 billion had it been developed. Developers had already spent an estimated \$15 to \$20 million in planning and lobbying for sprawl development on these sites. But in the end, it was not enough to beat overwhelming public opposition to sprawl.

The newly protected land includes over 4000 acres in Tassajara Valley, nearly all of Cowell Ranch, all of Roddy Ranch, all of Clayton Ranch, and hundreds of acres south of Pittsburg.

The victory is a testament to committed leadership from Supervisors Donna Gerber and Joe Canciamilla. Gerber and Canciamilla have consistently steered the county in a new direction. They are willing to stand up to developers and do what is best for the county as a whole.

Continue the Sprawl Fight at the State Level

Assembly Bill 2140, the Smart Investments and Quality Growth Act of 2000, is under consideration by the State Senate. It recognizes the intertwined relationship between transportation and growth. It requires each region to begin tracking a standardized set of basic transportation performance indicators related to safety, congestion, road repair, and public transit; it establishes a standardized method of financial reporting to help the public and local officials know what their money's being spent on;

and it requires an "alternative planing scenario" to present growth patterns in each region's 20-year transportation plan. The alternative scenario would identify ways to minimize future demand on transportation infrastructure, protect open space, and save taxpayers' money.

State Senator Richard Rainey, who represents most of central and east Contra Costa, is in critical position to support the bill. Please let Senator Rainey know that you support AB 2140 by writing him at the Senate Transportation Committee, State Capitol, Sacramento 95814.

Dogs vs. Birds in Golden Gate NRA

Park managers at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) have allowed off-leash dog walking along the bluffs at the 230-acre Fort Funston. Recently, the Park Service fenced off a small section of the area to protect the nesting habitat of Bank Swallows.



Dogwalkers went to court on the basis that the Park Service had acted too quickly and had not held a public comment period. The dogwalkers won a preliminary ruling, and dogs may soon be allowed to run freely in the six acres that had been temporarily fenced to protect Bank Swallows.

Bank Swallows return from South America each March to nest in the sand cliffs below Fort Funston. The birds remain through August and make up one of two remaining colonies with coastal nesting sites in California. Bank Swallows are a state threatened species.

Although a public comment period on most issues related to the environment is important, this suit is ridiculous. The Park Service needed to act quickly to protect nesting habitat. The service should be commended for its flexibility and quick action; but instead, the preliminary judgement upholds bureaucratic delay as a value.

Fight to List Cuckoos as Endangered

Twelve environmental groups in Oregon have sued the federal government for failing to list the Yellow-billed Cuckoo as an endangered species. More than 18 months ago, they had petitioned the government to give endangered species protection to the cuckoo, but the government had failed to act (see the story about the dogwalkers).

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is in danger of becoming extinct throughout the United States. Today, the only known western populations are in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said they are studying the situation and will probably publish its findings sometime next year (see the dogwalker story).

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
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New Officers, Board Members for MDS in 2000-2001

At the June election, Carol Frischmann was re-elected as MDAS president for 2000-2001. Mike Williams and Mike Tischler were re-elected chapter vice president and secretary, respectively.

MDAS welcomes Joe Frank as its new Treasurer and Board Member. Joe is a currency manager with Bank of America. His email address is jfrank2@inreach.com. Give him a warm welcome for taking on this big responsibility for the chapter.

Maury Stern is our new program chair and already has exciting programs identified for the entire year.

In fact, when you see them or call them, why don't you give all our Board members a thank you for keeping this organization running? All of them—including Carol, Mike Williams, Mike Tischler, and Board members Gloria Cannon, Elizabeth Dickey, Jimm Edgar, Barbara Hawley, Jill Hedgecock, Alice

Holmes, Joel Summerhill, Nancy Wenninger, Barbara Vaughn, Cecil Williams, and Gifford Young—spend many hours every month planning chapter activities and carrying out their responsibilities.

While you are at it, send an email to Mani Keeran, our webmaster, to thank him for his work on our website problems.

There's room for you too. We would welcome a volunteer to help organize our other volunteers. If you have skills in organizing and fundraising, consider volunteering to chair our Birdathon committee.

If you have only a few hours occasionally, we need volunteers to host our chapter display at festivals in Contra Costa, or serve as MDAS representatives on local boards. Or if you are the social sort, call Alice Holmes and tell her you'll help bring refreshments to our general meeting.

Chapter News

Send Us Your Email Address

MDAS is adding email addresses to its membership records. We request all members who have an email address to email message to our Database Coordinator, Gifford Young, at gifyoung@value.net. Our database is separate from that of the National Audubon Society and will not be passed on to any marketing organization.

Problems with MDAS Website

Several MDAS members have pointed out that our website is out of date. We are working to correct the situation.

Our web pages are stored on a server owned by the National Audubon Society. In March, NAS experienced problems with its server. Our link was broken, and our website is still inaccessible. NAS has now decided that it will no longer host chapter websites.

We will establish a new website on a commercial server and will publish its address when it is up and running. Thank you for your patience.

Readers React: Results from Reader Survey

Last spring, 127 MDAS members responded to our reader survey, representing about 8 percent of our total membership.

The survey responses will help the MDAS Board in its strategic planning now underway. In research that relies on statistics, you don't need to have a response from everyone in order to draw conclusions about the whole group. You do need a "representative" sample of the group, and our return rate is considered a good basis.

We learned that our membership base is very sound. Our members are older (57% are over 60 years old, another 24% are 51-60 years of age). Almost 50% of our members have been members for six years or longer. About one-third (37 respondents) indicate that they have intermediate birding skills. Another 25 have high-intermediate or advanced birding skills. Forty-one respondents consider themselves as beginning (8) birders or are on moving into intermediate (16) birding skills.

They attend our meetings regularly with 20% coming three to six times a year. From their comments, we learned that while our members enjoy the types of programs offered, they lead busy lives (55%), live too far away (19%), or the meetings last too long or start too late (34%) for them to come more often or participate more actively.

The *Quail* is popular with MDAS members; 94 respondents (94%) indicated that they read all or almost all of every issue. Three of the most popular features are field trip reports (27 respondents), upcoming field trips (23), and Observations (24).

One surprise was the number of MDAS members who have email addresses. Of the 127 respondents, 70 told us that they access the Internet and use email; however, only a few indicated that they visited the MDAS website.

When we asked about priorities for the chapter, the greatest number indicated that "protecting and restoring wildlife habitat in Contra Costa" should be the chapter's highest priority, followed by "participating in environmental activism in Contra Costa County," and "organizing and leading birdwatching field trips," and "providing meetings for people who love birds to share this interest with others."

Our members suggested that MDAS work in partnership with other environmental/natural science organizations, such as Save Mt Diablo and the Nature Conservancy, to further mutual goals. They want meetings focused on environmental activism and restoration of wildlife habitat.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond.

Birds and MDAS Lose a Valued Friend

MDAS members were saddened by the recent death of Dr. Luis Baptista, a renowned songbird expert and one of our former guest speakers. Dr. Baptista was a scientist who knew the languages of songbirds from Alaska to Costa Rica and found friends among just about every winged creature in Golden Gate Park. He died unexpectedly on June 13 at his home in Sebastopol. He was 59.

As the curator of ornithology and mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences, Dr. Baptista had turned a childhood fascination with bird life into a scientific career highlighted by expeditions to records the "dialects" of birds and laboratory research into their evolution.

At his home in Sebastopol, he would often call to the local quail coveys in their own voice, and they would come and surround him. As a leader of many Academy-sponsored field trips, he amazed his companions with his ability to identify scores of unseen birds by their songs and calls.

Golden Gate Park was one of Dr. Baptista's favorite haunts, and he knew virtually every song, alarm cry, and mating habit of the 178 bird species that live there. He was fascinated by the music of bird songs and its kinship to human music.

Dr. Baptista was particularly interested in White-crowned Sparrows and had worked for more than 20 years as part of a team studying their singing behavior. He documented individual songs in various subspecies of the birds and recorded dialects among birds from different areas.

Dr. Baptista was born in Hong Kong, a descendant of a family that had lived on the Portuguese island colony of Macau since the 17th century. He graduated from the University of San Francisco in 1965 and received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1971.

MDAS member Florence Bennett said that Dr. Baptista will always be

remembered as the "very best speaker we ever had." She said, "His talks and the sounds he could make were inspiring. He loved to discuss the White-crowned Sparrows and their diversity by locale and migration."

—from article by David Perlman, *San Francisco Examiner*, 6/14/2000



Brushy Peak Preview

by Hugh B. Harvey

The Bosley/Weaver property, named for its previous owners, is 120 acres and includes the origins of one of the four main tributaries of Altamont Creek. Just to the north is an additional parcel of 507 acres owned by the Livermore Area Park and Recreation District. Known as Brushy Peak Regional Preserve, this area includes Brushy Peak proper and a portion of the North Slope.

Located east of Vasco Road and north of Interstate 580, this area of primarily Mediterranean grassland is easily reached by driving to the end of Laughlin Road. Some MDAS members may recognize Frick Lake, a seasonal body of water located below a series of four still-private ranches. Laughlin Road and the lake are mentioned in Jean Richmond's book, *Birding Northern California*. Unfortunately, these EBRPD and LAPRD properties will remain closed for up to two more years. Site plans and some property improvements and modifications will need completion before the general public will be allowed access.

Nancy Wenninger, the new EBRPD Land Acquisition Manager, asked Rosita and myself if we would be able to represent MDAS at a preview of the Bosley/Weaver property. We were more than willing to visit this area which is still in the process of being purchased.

Representatives from East Bay environmental groups joined three of the seven directors of the park district on a tour. Besides MDAS, other groups which were represented included Ohlone Audubon,

Golden Gate Audubon, Save Mt. Diablo, and the California Native Plant Society. Joining the three directors were the following EBRPD personnel: Brad Olson, environmental specialist; Joe DiDonato, wildlife programs; Lou Gigliati, the unit manager and site supervisor. All together, we numbered 20.

Before viewing the property firsthand by walking up to and through a saddle just below the peak, we were shown an aerial photographic map of the area. Brad and Joe explained some history, biology, and geology, as well as plans for the area. Discussions took place concerning the neighbors: private ranches, wind farms, and a dump. A partial plant list and a written description of the Brushy Peak area were distributed.

The recent addition to the EBRPD is important not just as part of the Altamont Creek watershed. Several unique life forms are present here. The Federally-threatened California red-legged frog breeds here, and California tiger salamanders are found here. Though not documented on the property, the San Joaquin kit fox uses the grassland habitats in all four cardinal directions from the property.

While 80 percent of this area is Mediterranean grassland, with its associated plant life, 10 percent is coast live oak/buckeye savanna. As we walked up the west side of Bosley/Weaver, many discussions took place concerning the plant life, hillside seeps, some with sulfur springs, the alkali wetlands, wind turbine tower design, and See PREVIEW, p. 6

September 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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

~~THURS~~
Wednesday, September 14, Jewel Lake, Tilden Park. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the nature area (north end of Tilden Park) for a morning walk around the lake. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2.

Saturday, September 16, Moss Landing—Monterey. Carpool leaves LaGonda Way in Danville at 6:30 a.m. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Or meet at 8:30 a.m. in Moss Landing at the parking area opposite Dolan Rd just south of the PG&E plant on SR 1. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for information Category 1

Wednesday, September 20, Pt. Pinole. Carpool leaves 7:15 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet at parking lot at the entrance from Richmond Parkway. Take San Pablo Dam Rd to El Sobrante. Going north on I-580/80, Richmond Parkway. Exit on Giant Rd from parkway; follow signs to the park. Bay shore and marsh areas. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2.

Thursday, September 28, Hayward Regional Shoreline. Carpool leaves LaGonda Way in Danville at 8 a.m. From

I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Or meet at 8:45 a.m. in front of HRS 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. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for information Category 2

Saturday, September 30, Outer Point Reyes. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at Drake's Beach, 9 a.m. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight through stoplight. Cross the 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 left onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. again. Continue about 14 miles to Drake's Beach Rd. on left. Fall vagrants. Be prepared for variable weather. Leader: Steve Glover, 828-7793 Category 2

President's Notes,

cont. from p. 1

highlight Chapter programs and the results from those programs. MDA is in an organization for education, conservation, and for fun. Your ideas are solicited to help us in our planning process, so that our program evolves to meet our needs and the needs of our community. Please send your feedback to frischma@mindspring.com or write to me at the MDAS address on p.2.

Happy birding!

Rookery Relief for the Blues by Bethi Carver

Reeds, weaving
random in a regular sort of way.

Tinkling tulle xylophone,
delta breeze symphony.
Rhythm of moon orbit
rotates
tide ebb and flood.

green and ochre patterns,
a tapestry and vibrations of
wind,
sun,
rain,
tides and
birds perching,
play tulle rides all summer.

Barn swallows feed fluffy fledglings
huddled on one tulle,
arched horizontally over the
slough water.
The favorite hot summer perch.

Another tulle,
still new,
has spring left.
Perfect for an afternoon of aerial
acrobatics.

Tulle roots showing at ebb time,
bulbous and
anchored into the levee,
strong tendrils hold
dark peat mud.
A rare sight in original wetlands.

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 Report

Pt Reyes, June 3—Six birdwatchers saw 52 species this day. Highlights were a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak singing in the trees at the lighthouse and a beautiful Magnolia Warbler at Nunez Ranch.

—Pat MacEachern

Observations *by Steve Glover*

Once again, the highlights from this summer were the direct result of intensive work on the *Contra Costa Breeding Bird Atlas*. Although we found no new first county nest records during the first two years of the project, we managed to turn up a staggering four this year. Details are below.

Twenty-one **American White Pelicans** were noted drifting west over Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 6/29 (SG). Fifteen more were noted over Briones Reservoir on 7/5 and flocks of 4 to 22 were noted over the Albany waterfront on 7/6, 7/11, and 7/13 (BF).

A **Common Murre** chick was picked up near Golden Gate Fields, Alameda Co., on 7/13 and taken to the bird rescue center at Berkeley Aquatic Park (BF). Common Murres regularly wander into the Bay in very small numbers, particularly in summer and early fall. **White-faced Ibis** continue to be found almost routinely in the northeastern portions of the county. On 6/14 three flocks totalling 23 birds were noted around the Big Break/Jersey Island area, a strong indication of local nesting (SG). **Wood Ducks** were confirmed nesting on 6/8 at Marsh Creek Reservoir (at least seven families) and along Empire Mine Rd. (female with a 1/2 grown fledgling), bringing the number of nest locations during the Atlas to six. Another pair was at Big Break near Oakley on 6/14 (SG).

Two stunning finds amongst the ducks at McNabney Marsh near Martinez were a female **Blue-winged Teal** with ten tiny young on 6/8 and a female **Green-winged Teal** with four half-grown young on 8/2 (SG). Each represents the first documented nest records for the county. At least two male Blue-winged Teal were also present on 6/8 (SG). At least four male and one female Blue-winged Teal were in a flooded field at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 6/10. Although nesting appeared imminent, the pond dried up too quickly, and the birds moved elsewhere (SG).

A single **Marbled Godwit** near Big Break was noted on the unusually summery date of 6/14 (SG). Fifteen

Wilson's Phalaropes were at Iron House on 6/29 (SG).

Four **California Gull** nests were found amongst the massive Caspian Tern colony on Brooks Island near Richmond on 6/14, providing the first nest record for Contra Costa County (SB). The small colony of **Least Terns** at the north end of the Albany Crescent was still active through at least 8/12, when there were still several flightless young present. At least 16 adults were in the area on that date (SG).

At least two **Lesser Nighthawks** were at the traditional site along the entrance road to Clifton Court Forebay near Byron on 6/8 (SG).

A singing male **Northern Parula** along Bailey Rd. near Pittsburg on 6/8 was one of only a handful ever found in Contra Costa County (SG). Completely unexpected was a **Hermit Warbler** at Vollmer Peak in Tilden Park on 7/26 (BF). This species has never been suspected of nesting anywhere in the East Bay although the date leaves open the possibility that this is a very early migrant. **Yellow-breasted Chats** are known from just a handful of sites in the county, so the two pairs along Marsh Creek near Big Break on 6/29 were particularly noteworthy (SG).

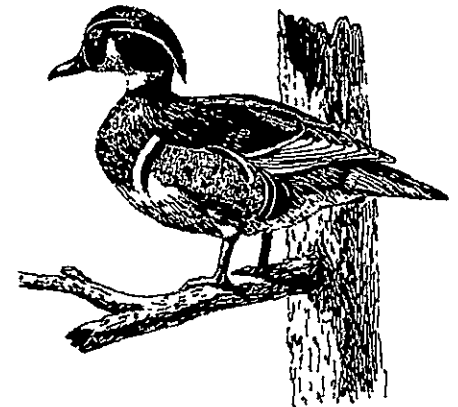
A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** has been present in a Lafayette yard since about the first of July (LF). In the past ten years, there have been sporadic reports of males of this species visiting feeders in the area from Lafayette to the Berkeley Hills during the summer months.

A rather out-of-place male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at the north end of McNabney Marsh on 6/8, indicating the possibility that nesting is taking place somewhere in the vicinity (SG). Two male and one female Yellow-headed were at Iron House on 6/29 (SG). The long overdue first county nest record of **Great-tailed Grackle** was finally obtained on 6/8 at McNabney Marsh

when a female was noted building a nest in the tules at the north end (SG).

Observers: Lynn Farrar, Brian Fitch, Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422



Preview, cont. from p. 4

park district elections, and political divisiveness or lack thereof on the district board.

We saw a red-legged frog in Joe DiDonato's hands, watched a golden eagle as it was harassed by ravens, and we saw, and then descended, the narrow canyon through which would have passed the privately operated toll road known as the Delta Expressway. Fortunately, the expressway died in the planning stages.

A thank-you is owed to all those from EBRPD who contributed to our enjoyable day, including Brad Olson and Joe DiDonato. A special thank-you is due to our own Nancy Wenninger for asking Rosita and myself to represent MDAS on this occasion. She received glowing praise from at least one of the directors. Thank you all very much. It is hoped that within two years, the membership of MDAS, other Bay Area environmental groups, and the general public will be able to enjoy the history and the wonders of the Brushy Peak area.

2000–2001 MDAS Field Trip Schedule

by Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

This is a **tentative** schedule of MDAS field trips in 2000–2001. Trips are open to members and non-members alike. Weather or the availability of leaders may require changes. Read the *Quail* for details or call the Audubon tape at (925) 283-8266. Weekday trips are often switched between Wednesday and Thursday to take advantage of tides or other opportunities. Two-day or three-day trips may be done either day or any day alone. We are planning two or three more weekend trips with details to be announced in future *Quail* issues. The number in parentheses indicates difficulty of the trip with (1) easy with little walking, (2) moderate, and (3) difficult with extensive walking.

September

- 14, Thursday—Jewel Lake (2)
- 16, Saturday—Monterey (2)
- 20, Wednesday—Point Pinole RP (2)
- 28, Thursday—Hayward RSL (2)
- 30, Saturday—Outer Point Reyes (2)

October

- 4, Wednesday—Lafayette Reservoir (2)
- 12, Thursday—Wildcat Gorge—Tilden (2)
- 14, Saturday—Hawk Hill (1)
- 18, Wednesday—SF Bay Refuge (2)
- 26, Thursday—Hidden Lakes Park (2)
- 28, Saturday—Abbott's Lagoon (2)

November

- 1, Wednesday—Big Break Trail (2)
- 9, Thursday—Yolo County Refuge (2)
- 11, Saturday—Charleston Slough (2)
- 15, Wednesday—Arrowhead Marsh (1)
- 30, Thursday—Mt. View Sanitary district (1)

December:

- 2–3, Saturday–Sunday—Sacramento Refuges (1)
- 6, Wednesday—Niles Canyon (2)
- 13, Wednesday—Palo Alto Baylands (1)
- 16, Saturday, Dec. 16—CHRISTMAS COUNT

January

- 4, Thursday—San Pablo Reservoir (2)
- 6, Saturday—Putah Creek (1)
- 10, Wednesday—Sunol RP (2)
- 18, Thursday—Sibley RP (2)
- 24, Wednesday—Grizzly Island WR (1)
- 27, Saturday—Santa Cruz (1)

February

- 1, Thursday—Thornton (1)
- 7, Wednesday—Briones Reservoir (2)
- 10, Saturday—Bodega Bay (1)
- 15, Thursday—Shadow Cliffs Park (1)
- 21, Wednesday—Yolo County (1)
- 24, Saturday—Tomales Bay SP (2)

March

- 1, Thursday—Berkeley-Richmond Shoreline (2)
- 7, Wednesday—Lafayette Reservoir (2)
- 10, Saturday—Carpey Valley (1)
- 15, Thursday—Laurel Canyon-Tilden (2)
- 21, Wednesday—San Leandro Reservoir (2)
- 24, Saturday—Black Diamond RP (2)
- 29, Thursday—Huckleberry Preserve (2)

April

- 5, Thursday—Borgas Ranch (2)
- 7, Saturday—Garin RP (2)
- 11, Wednesday—Lagunitas (2)
- 19, Thursday—Ida Clayton Road (1)
- 21, Saturday—Pine Canyon (3)
- 25, Wednesday—Del Purto Canyon (1)

May

- 3, Thursday—Mitchell Canyon (2)
- 5, Saturday—Mines Road (1)
- 9, Wednesday—Mt Diablo (2)
- 17, Thursday—Napa County (2)
- 19, Saturday—East Contra Costa County (2)
- 32, Wednesday—West Briones (2)
- 31, Thursday—Caswall SP (2)

June

- 2, Saturday—Outer Point Reyes (1)
- 6, Wednesday—Annadel SP (2)
- 23–24, Sat–Sun.—Yuba Pass (2)

August

- 4, Saturday—San Mateo Coast (2)
- 18, Saturday—Bodega Bay (1)

Support Your Chapter and Save Money Too!

The **2001 Entertainment Book** is a terrific book of discount coupons. The price is still an incredible \$40, and the coupons can be used immediately. This great savings book will be available after September 16 though year's end at MDAS general meetings or at either of the two Wild Birds Unlimited locations: 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill; or 7182 Regional St., Dublin. Look for information about buying the Entertainment Books online in the next *Quail*.

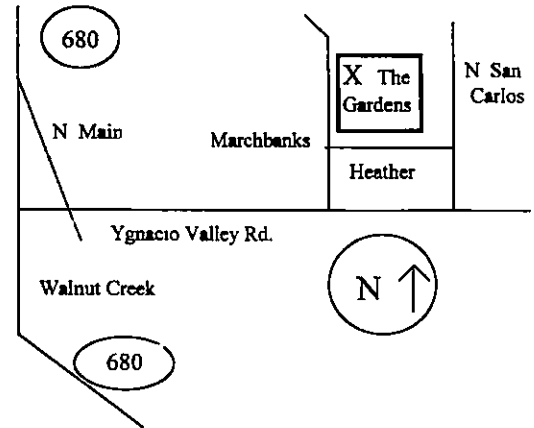
CALENDAR

2000-2001 General Meeting Schedule

MDAS holds its general meetings on the first Thursday of every month except July and August when there are no meetings. Mark your calendars now so that you won't miss any of our meetings at The Gardens at Heather Farm: Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7, Jan. 4, Feb. 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7.

If you are a new member or new to the area, let us know. We want to welcome you and tell you about our activities. All new members and visitors receive a free door prize ticket.

The MDAS Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of the month at the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited. 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year. To subscribe to the *Quail*, make the check out to MDAS and mail it to Gifford Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to Gifford Young. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.



ALAMO CA 94507-1841
JEAN RICHMOND
125 VIA SERENA

9/00

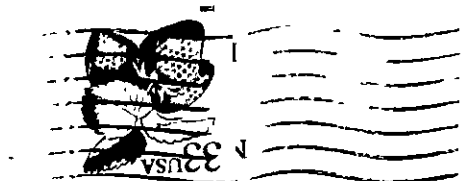
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The QUAIL

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

October 2000

Vol. 47, No. 2

Next Deadline: October 5

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Making Sense of MDAS's Finances

On Page 4, you'll see a copy of the 1999–2000 MDAS Financial Report. This report tells us where our funds come from, and what we do with them, providing a window on the financial health of our organization. Funds coming in include contributions, dues share, sales, subscriptions, and investment income.

Contributions include memorial donations and other gifts to our Chapter.

Our dues share from the National Audubon is based on the number of members our chapter has. Income from sales and subscriptions includes our monthly raffles, income from *Birding Northern California* by Jean Richmond, and sales of miscellaneous items at our meetings.

Expenses are led by our newsletter production and distribution. Because this is our most important means of communicating with our membership, this is logical. Our dues share from National Audubon covers the cost of our newsletter.

MDAS makes donations to other organizations that share our goals. Our recent donations include binoculars to support teaching activities at McNabney Marsh, land acquisition programs through Save Mt. Diablo and Muir Heritage Land Trust, and funds to support the legislative monitoring and advocacy activities of John McCaull, one of the Audubon California employees in Sacramento.

Programs and services include honoraria for our monthly meeting speakers and (see *President's Notes* on p. 5)

Upcoming Events:

MDAS to Hear of Restoration of the California Condor

Holly Barnes, Education Coordinator of the Ventana Wilderness Society will present a program about the restoration of the California Condor. Currently 15 of California's 30 condors in the wild are in the Big Sur area and another 20 are in Arizona. Other areas in Central California are being considered for releases as well.

The Ventana Wilderness Society has been in the forefront of training and re-training the California Condors that have been raised in captivity to learn to survive in the wild. Ultimately, plans are to have a self-sustaining population of about 300 condors in the wild.

At the turn of the century, the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

Birding Information

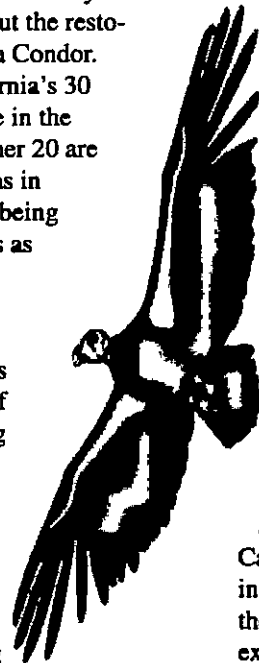
During the Birding Information portion of the program, Cecil Williams, MDAS Education Chairperson, will discuss "Audubon Adventures." If you have a child or grandchild in grades 3–6, be sure to attend to find out how you can provide a classroom of children with Audubon's premier environmental education kit.

population began to plummet after decades of wanton shooting and poisoning.

While habitat loss is a factor and limits the total population, the habitat that remains is still enough intact to sustain a population of condors.

In 1987, the last wild condor was taken into captivity to join 26 others. A successful captive breeding and reintroduction program turned the tide.

The Ventana Wilderness Society has been working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to join the California Condor Recovery Program in a ten-year, first-phase effort to bring the condor back from the brink of extinction. The goal of VWS is to restore condors to California. (See *Condors* on page 7.)



General Meeting

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, October 5**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1140 Marchbanks, Walnut Creek (see map on p. 8).
6:30 p.m.—Doors open
7 p.m.—Birding Information
7:30 p.m.—Business meeting
8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
8:30 p.m.—Program
Remember to bring your own coffee cup!

Connections

The Sierra Club has a website comparing the environmental record of Presidential candidates, Al Gore and George W. Bush, Jr. Because it is important to elect a President that will value and protect the environment, we are reprinting as much of the Sierra Club comparison as space allows. To view the entire website, go to <http://www.northstar.sierraclu.org/gore-bush_environmental_comparison>.—*Editor*

ISSUE: TOXIC POLLUTION

GORE

- Expanded Community Right to Know program requiring companies to report toxic chemical emissions.
- Sped up and increased Superfund cleanups.

BUSH

- Seeks to weaken Superfund cleanups.
- Texas leads the nation in injecting toxic waste into underground wells, disposing 60% more toxic waste into injection wells than any other state.

ISSUE: CLEAN AIR

GORE

- Strengthened soot and smog clean-air health standards, fighting legal challenges to those protections.
- Adopted strictest-ever emissions standards for cars, SUVs, and light trucks.
- Required elimination of 90% of sulfur from gasoline.
- Called on power plants to cut their air pollution and global warming emissions.
- Proposed slashing sulfur levels in diesel fuel.

BUSH

- Texas leads the U.S. in toxic industrial air pollution, but Bush chose not to require outdated facilities to clean up.
- Texas state officials sought to weaken Clean Air Act.
- Houston passed Los Angeles last year as America's smoggiest city.
- When came to office in 1995, canceled auto emissions testing program in Houston.

ISSUE: CLEAN WATER

GORE

- Expanded funding for clean water programs
- Proposed slashing arsenic levels in drinking water.

BUSH

- Proposed weakening Texas clean-water standards.
- Texas leads the U.S. in violation of clean-water discharge standards.

ISSUE: PROTECT WILD LANDS

GORE

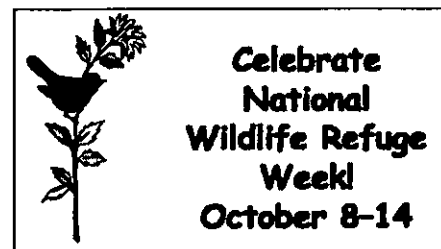
- Has a stronger position than the Administration on protecting roadless, wild areas of our National Forests. Called for an end to all logging in those unspoiled places and immediate protection for the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.
- Enacted the California Desert Protection Act, largest public lands protection bill ever in the lower 48 states.
- Opposes drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Created or expanded 10 new National Monuments to protect landscapes threatened by development.
- Reduced logging in National Forests by 80% since 1993.
- Extended offshore oil leasing moratorium in California and Florida for 10 years.
- Proposed Lands Legacy Initiative.
- Supports expanding the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

BUSH

- Seeks to increase logging in National Forests.
- Would allow oil companies to drill in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Aims to reverse President Clinton's plan to protect, wild roadless National Forest areas.
- Opposes newly created National Monuments.
- Supports funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

McNabney Marsh Agreement Reached

On September 19 East Bay Regional Park District signed an agreement that turns over management of McNabney Marsh to the Mountainview Sanitary District. MDAS welcomes this agreement and believes that the marsh will benefit from the sanitary district's stewardship. In the meantime, EBRPD is proceeding with its plans to make some areas of the marsh more accessible for hiking, birdwatching, and other appropriate recreational use.



**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
94597-0053
(925) AUD-UBON
(925) 283-8266**

President: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Vice President: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Secretary: Mike Tischler, 689-5552
Treasurer: Joe Frank, 674-1219

Nominations: OPEN

Sales Mgr: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Programs: Maury Stern, 284-5980

Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Membership: OPEN

Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270

Hospitality: Alice Holmes, 938-1581

Education: Cecil Williams, 376-1631

Access: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479

Chapter Development: Joel Summerhill,
753-0862

Hands-On Conservation: Nancy Wenninger,
938-7987

Field Guide: Jean Richmond
Christmas Count: Jimm Edgar (510) 658-
2330

Mailing: Gifford Young (707) 745-4134

*Gloria Cannon, Editor,
(925) 753-0862, P.O. Box 8367,
Pittsburg, CA 94565, email:
gcannon4@excite.com*

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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Wednesday, October 4, Lafayette

Reservoir. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at the top of the dam. Parking costs \$4 and is prohibited at the bottom of the hill. A good place to learn local birds. Morning trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Thursday, October 12, Wildcat Gorge/

Tilden Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking lot across from the Botanical Gardens. We are exploring a slightly different area by taking a 3-mile walk up Wildcat Creek. Bring lunch and liquids. Good beginner's trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, October 14, Point Diablo

(Hawk Hill). Carpool leaves at 8 a.m., from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Or meet at 9:15 a.m. in parking lot at upper Rodeo lagoon. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight through stoplight. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. Take US 101 south to second Sausalito exit (Alexander Ave). At stop sign, go right up the hill. At the intersection, go right downhill. At stop sign, turn left and continue to upper lagoon. Migrating hawks and swifts. At noon there is a talk and demonstration by the Raptor Watch people. Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906 Category 1

Wednesday, October 18, San Francisco

Bay Wildlife Refuge. Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north to El Pintado. Meet at 9 a.m. at

parking lot at refuge entrance. Take I-680 to I-580 west, south on I-880, to Thornton Ave. exit. Go right on Thornton to refuge entrance. We will bird the marshes east of the entrance road first. Mostly levee walking. Bring lunch. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Thursday, October 26, Hidden Lakes,

Pleasant Hill. Carpool leaves 8 a.m. in parking lot at corner of Morello Ave. and Chilpancingo Parkway. Oak woodlands and ponds. This has been a very productive area in the middle of housing areas. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, October 28, Abbott's Lagoon.

Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at 9 a.m. at Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Point Reyes. Alternate route to San Rafael Bridge: take Camino Pablo to El Sobrante, go 1 1/2 miles east on I-80 to Richmond Parkway exit; turn left and go straight

through stoplight. Cross the 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 0.25 mile, then left onto Bear Valley Rd. Visitors' Center is off Bear Valley. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and hawks. Carry lunch and liquids. Leader: Joel Summerhill, (925) 753-0862 Category 3

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.



Entertainment Books Now on Sale!

Entertainment Books are now available for locations throughout the U.S. Last Christmas, I sent an Entertainment book to my brother and sister-in-law in Houston, Texas. All year long, they've told me what new restaurants they've tried thanks to my gift of the Entertainment Book! They've used the coupons for take-out and at the dry cleaners, and saved money on show and movie tickets. The special people in your life would be thrilled to receive the Entertainment card for discounts at elegant dining locations and hotels/motels as well as coupons for entertainment events, and much, much more.

You now have FOUR ways to purchase this valuable book: at MDAS general meetings through January; at Wild Birds Unlimited (692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill); by picking up an Order Form at either of the above locations; or on the Web at < <http://www.entertainment.com> >. I did the Web—it was so easy! Be sure to enter our account number, 175587, so that MDAS receives 20% of the purchase price.

For assured Christmas delivery, your order should be processed by October 31. I've already put in my order and added my husband's family and my best friends—my Christmas shopping is done in September! If you need more information about the Website, e-mail Barbara Vaughn at Barbaravau@aol.com, and she'll promptly send it to you.

MDAS Annual Financial Report, FY 1999

Joe Frank, Treasurer

	GENERAL		RESERVED	TOTAL
	FUND	FUND	FUNDS	
REVENUE				
Contributions				
Audubon Adventures	\$	315.00	\$ --	\$ 315.00
Donations		327.50	3,103.00	3,430.50
Birdwalk Donations		155.75	--	155.75
Door Prize Donations		1,196.00	--	1,196.00
Birdathon Donations		259.00	--	259.00
Total Contributions	\$	2,253.25	\$ 3,103.00	\$ 5,356.25
Christmas Bird Count	\$	75.00	\$ --	\$ 75.00
National Audubon Dues Share		9,107.47	--	9,107.47
Investment Income		488.63	862.81	1,351.44
Quail Subscriptions		458.50	--	458.50
Sales				
Advertising		540.00	--	540.00
Entertainment Books		3,400.00	--	3,400.00
Books and Other		39.25	271.58	310.83
Total Sales	\$	3,979.25	\$ 271.58	\$ 4,250.83
REVENUES	\$	16,362.10	\$ 4,237.39	\$ 20,599.49
EXPENSES				
Administrative and General				
Corporation Filing Fee	\$	10.00	\$ --	\$ 10.00
FTB 199 Filing Fee		--	--	--
Insurance		435.43	--	435.43
Office Supplies		265.41	138.02	403.43
Professional Fees		400.00	--	400.00
Rent		515.00	--	515.00
Telephone		210.59	80.78	282.37
Travel		85.00	--	85.00
Total Administrative and General		1,912.43	218.80	2,131.23
Donations to Other Organizations	\$	--	\$ 1,301.69	\$ 1,301.69
Cost of Sales		2,735.82	11.33	2,747.15
Membership and Promotion		--	368.66	368.66
Newsletter Expense		6,464.66	2,140.30	8,604.96
PROGRAMS & SERVICES				
Christmas Bird Count		575.92	--	575.92
Education		70.00	420.00	490.00
Hospitality		247.38	--	247.38
Monthly Programs		938.27	--	938.27
Total Programs and Services	\$	1,831.57	\$ 420.00	\$ 2,251.57
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	12,944.48	\$ 4,460.78	\$ 17,405.26
EXCESS REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$	3,417.62	\$ (233.39)	\$ 3,194.23

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

(Continued from p. 1)

expenses for activities like our Marsh Clean-Up and Audubon Adventures, an educational program supporting local classroom teachers. Cost of sales is the purchase of Entertainment Books for sale and in the past has been for printing *Birding Northern California*.

For nearly 10 years, MDAS has been running "in the black," allowing a small reserve fund to be built.

If we wish to change the scope of our activities, our finances need to accommodate that change. If we are satisfied that we are meeting our goals and our community needs, our present financial plan will work. However, there has been considerable discussion by National Audubon regarding the re-allocation of dues share to Audubon chapters. This topic and the potential effect on our Chapter will be discussed in the next column.

Until then, Happy Fall Migration!

—Carol

Report Your MDAS Volunteer Hours!

This issue of the *Quail* includes two forms: an MDAS Community Service Form and a Volunteer History Form. The MDAS Board is asking all the members to use these forms to record and report volunteer hours that you may have contributed to MDAS.

Use the Volunteer History Form (tan form) to estimate your history of past volunteer hours spent on MDAS activities since 1980. Mail this form as soon as possible to 1301 Leisure Lane #7, Walnut Creek 94595.

Use the Community Service Form (pink form) to keep track of your volunteer hours spent on MDAS activities from June of this year to next May. Mail this form to 1301 Leisure Lane #7, Walnut Creek 94595 by May 15, 2001.

More copies of the form are available at the general meetins and at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill.

Observations

by Steve Glover

Three **American White Pelicans** were over Webb Tract north of Bethel Island on 8/26 (SG). There were only about five previous records for this area. A **Brandt's Cormorant** along the north shore of Pt. Pinole Regional Park was the deepest into the bay that one has yet been recorded in the county (SG). Five **Brant** were at Brooks Island near Richmond (where they likely summered) on 8/12 (SG) through at least 8/20 (CL). At least one was noted there on 8/25 (MF).

A single **Long-tailed Duck** (formerly known as Oldsquaw) was at Brooks Island on 8/12, and three were there on 8/13 (SG). It is likely that all three of these birds summered at this location. The resident male **Harlequin Duck** was at Brooks Island on 8/13 (SG) and 8/25 (MF).

An **Osprey** at Piper Slough at the north end of Bethel Island was first noted on 8/11 and was later noted 8/23 and 8/26 (SG).

Snowy Plovers are recorded but rarely in the county so one on the mudflats at the Richmond Marina on 8/12 was a welcome sight (SG).

As many as 16 **Least Terns**, including at least two still unfledged youngsters, were in the area of this year's nest site at the north end of the Albany Crescent on 8/12 (SG). This is probably the high count for the county. At least six were still present on 8/22 (BF). A **Black Tern** at Iron House Sanitary District in Oakley on 8/10 was likely the earliest fall migrant ever found in the county (MS, EBRPD). A **Black Skimmer** was at Brooks Island on 8/13 (SG) through at least 8/20 (CL). Although skimmers have become more common inside the bay in recent years, they still remain rare in Contra Costa.

A **Common Murre** was in Contra Costa waters in the Albany Crescent on 8/21

(ES), and an adult with a chick was present there on 8/22 (BF). Common Murres are regular inside the bay, especially in late summer through fall, and are recorded annually in the county.

Four **Willow Flycatchers** were at Piper Slough on 8/23, but by 8/26 the count had risen to 23, tying the record high count for the county. The total had dropped to eight by 8/30 (SG). A single bird was at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 9/7 (GG, ES).

Five **Yellow-billed Magpies** were along Taylor Rd. on Bethel Island on 8/19 (BC).

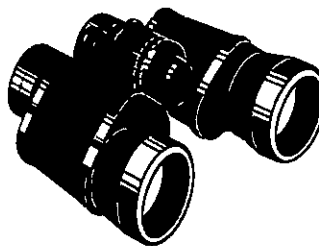
A total of 1708 **Tree Swallows** were noted moving southwest past Piper Slough on 8/26. A late **Cliff Swallow** was amongst them (SG). Three **Bank Swallows**, a species rarely recorded in the county, were at Piper Slough on 8/11, and another was noted moving southwest with **Tree Swallows** on 8/26 (SG). All were originally detected by call.

A total of six **Winter Wrens** were at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 9/8 (SG). An **American Redstart** was at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park on 9/8 (SG). Although they are quite rare in the county, they are amongst the most common of the "eastern" vagrants.

A **Lesser Goldfinch** at Piper Slough on 8/11 was just the third recorded at that heavily-covered area (SG).

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.

Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 661-7422



Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley Field Trip, June 17–18

by Rosita O. Harvey

Many thanks to the 17 wonderful people who spent an enjoyable weekend of warm days and cool nights with us in Yuba Pass this year. Hugh and I love and appreciate all your comments, observations, and, most importantly, your sense of humor, for all helped to make the trip more complete and fun. Special thanks and congratulations to Sharon Fernandez and Dennis Calloway, who chose to celebrate their honeymoon in this peaceful area. We do not expect you to make it a tradition, but we hope to see you often in Yuba from now on.

As many of you know, Yuba Pass is located about 50 mi north-east of Truckee at a delightful 6701 ft of elevation, in the heart of the Sierra Mountains. This is a high-altitude paradise, a perfect place to see mountain birds. The abundance of old growth and snag forest, wildflowers, and water attract a great variety of species, including several woodpeckers, finches, and even pelicans. This year, although spring came a bit early, we were fortunate to see a grand total of 99 species, some still sitting on their nests or feeding their young.

We spent the cool Saturday morning birding around the pass north and south of Highway 49. Among the species we observed around the parking lot and campground were a pair of Williamson's Sapsuckers, Mountain Chickadees, White- and Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Calliope Hummingbird, Evening Grosbeaks, and Pine Siskins eating along the road. An evasive Townsend's Solitaire kept us busy as it flew from tree to tree.

Across the highway in a logged clearance, we saw a couple of Red-breasted Sapsuckers, a pair of White-headed Woodpeckers, and Mountain Chickadees still feeding their young, and a Mountain Quail running across the road.

After lunch at the campground, we visited the store at Bassetts. Besides giving campers the chance to pick up camping necessities, cold drinks, and ice cream, the store also has several hummingbird feeders. The feeders hang from the building, so these "flying jewels" are accustomed to visitors. A few hummingbirds, especially Calliope and a few Anna's hummingbirds, were hawking insects in the trees above the store or sipping nectar from a feeding station.

Then we drove down the road looking for one of my favorite mountain birds: the American Dipper. We saw three at one time swimming and feeding in the river across the waterfall.

At about 2 p.m., we left the stream and headed north on Highway 89 to Madora Lake, a small lake located near Graeagle. On the way, we stopped briefly at Salmon Lake where we saw two Spotted Sandpipers taking advantage of its cool and peaceful waters. During our 2-mi walk around Madora Lake, we saw

a few warblers, swallows, flycatchers, and several species of mountain wildflowers. It was about 5:30 when we finally made it back to the campground.

After a quick dinner, some members met at the pass and carpoled east to Chapman Saddle Road. Halfway down the highway, we saw two Common Nighthawks flying a few feet above the road, forcing the group to pull off immediately. We watched the pair for several minutes playing and circling peacefully, barely over our heads, but ignoring us completely. We closed our first birdwatching day at Chapman Saddle Road with a wonderful look at a Poorwill, the call of Common Nighthawks, and Thrushes, and wonderful vistas of the Sierra Valley.

Sunday was perfect to bird the Sierra Valley. The day was sunny, and the breeze was soft and cool. At about 5000 ft of elevation, the valley is a large mountain meadow which combines a high-desert sage habitat with vast marshes.

At 8 a.m. we met at Mountain Quail Road, near Calpine, a few miles from the intersection of Highway 49 and 89. Besides local residents, such as Chickadees and jays, we saw a Green-tailed Towhee and a Gray Flycatcher. At Calpine we drove the end of the intersection of Calpine and A23. Every year Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows are found here, and this year was no exception. At about 11 a.m. we headed north on A23 through extended sage country before crossing the marsh. Here we saw Sage Thrashers, American Bitterns, many White-face Ibis, five Sandhill Cranes, an eagle, and a few White Pelicans flying high in the sky.

It was close to 1 p.m. when we left the marsh and drove east toward Loyalton. On the way we stopped on Harried Lane, our last stop before lunch and the end of the trip. We were fortunate to see a couple of Wilson's Phalaropes and several gulls and ducks. Later, while we ate and compiled our list under a spacious gazebo at the Loyalton Museum park, a Swainson's Hawk came to say good-bye, soaring quietly above us. After observing its magnificent size and colors, we could not avoid feeling sad, for soon we had to leave this peaceful area and return to face the noises of our everyday life.

For Hugh and I, Yuba Pass is a special place, one generous with its authentic gifts. June's days are sunny and warm, wildlife is abundant, there are always plenty of wildflowers in bloom, and its tranquillity deepen our smiles and increase our laughter. Although the group missed few expected species, none of us felt discouraged. After all, there is always a next time. There will always be another June weekend waiting for us in Yuba Pass.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR

from Hoffman, *Birds of the Pacific States*, 1927.

The ambition of every California bird student is to see a Condor. The great size of the bird, its restricted range and the comparative inaccessibility of its haunts combine to give the student a tremendous thrill when the last canyon wall is climbed and the great black bird is seen soaring over the next jagged peak. In many an earlier hunt a distant Buzzard or a Golden Eagle has been scrutinized in the vain hope that it is a Condor, but when the real Condor appears, the great expanse of black wings, the majestic flight and above all the clear white along the under side of the wing next to the shoulder make identification certain. A Golden Eagle often shows white areas in the wings but they are toward the middle of the wing and in this plumage the Eagle also shows a whitish rump.

The cut of the wings of the two species is different; the Eagle's wings are comparatively blunt but the Condor's wing-tip extends almost to a point and when the bird is soaring, the tips of the primaries actually point forward. When a Condor's breeding haunt is invaded, the birds are often seen perched on the crags above the breeding cliffs.

Occasionally a number are seen in the air at the same time, the old birds showing the white under the wings, the young ones wholly black. At such times the birds seem to wish to examine the intruder and float near enough to show the yellow or orange head and neck. The Condor's flight is like the Buzzard's; when rising from the ground or flying low, it flaps heavily, but soon begins to soar and rise in wide circles or sails off over the mountain-ranges and canyons. Resident in the mountains of southern Cal., chiefly in Santa Barbara and Ventura Cos., locally north to Monterey Co., east to Kern Co. and south to Los Angeles Co.

Condor (cont. from p. 1)

In 1998, the total population reached 150 birds, and 35 of those were in the wild. On March 4 this year six more young condors were released in Big Sur bringing the number to 15.

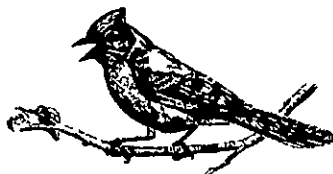
These majestic birds can again be seen flying over the mountains and valleys of California's Central Coast. For more information on condor releases, visit the Ventana Wilderness Society website at <<http://www.bigsurcalifornia.org/condors.html>>.

Meeting Room Feedback

MDAS is seeking feedback on the setup of the Camellia Room meeting space. Do you have trouble seeing the speaker? Is it hard for you to hear the speaker? Do you have any comments about the arrangement of the chairs? Contact either Bev Hawley at 947-0479 or Alice Holmes at 938-1581 with your comments.

Email Addresses Wanted

MDAS is collecting email addresses of our members. Please send your email address to Gifford Young, database coordinator, at gifyoung@value.net. Our database is separate from that of the National Audubon Society and will not be passed on to any marketing organization.

**Central Valley Bird Symposium, Nov. 16-19**

The fourth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium is slated for November 16-19 at the Radisson Hotel, Stockton. Workshops, field trips, birder's market, birding art, and more. Kenn Kaufman, Jon Dunn, Debi Shearwater, and Joe Morlan are featured speakers. Contact Frances Oliver at (209) 369-2010 or at ffoliver@ucdavis.edu. Visit the website at <<http://www.geocities.com/aegolius/BirdingSymposium4.html>>.

**News from
Wild Birds Unlimited**

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

**Seed & Suet Sale
October 5-29**

Stock up at 15% savings and get ready for fall and winter birdfeeding!

While you're at WBU, sample our Shade Grown Coffee which benefits the birds. This coffee preserves the migratory bird habitats by maintaining the native tree canopy and helps protect endangered species. (WBU donates Shade Grown Coffee to the MDAS meetings.)

Kenn Kaufman's new book, *Kaufman Focus Guides: Birds of North America*, has just been released. It is composed of 2000 digitally enhanced photos that are very well done. Kenn spent over 3000 hours working to improve the images for color and lighting and improving contrast. The bird families are arranged in a more user friendly manner, and the range maps are fantastic.

We are in a lull now in backyard birdfeeding, but Juncos, White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and other sparrows will start arriving soon. Their favorite foods are millet seeds and suet. The numbers of American and Lesser Goldfinches should begin to increase in October. Their favorite food is thistle seeds.

Feeding Tips

As fall gets into full swing, we should see feeder activity increase. There will be less natural food available. Some species will be eating more seeds, suet, or peanuts, and fewer insects. These include woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees and titmice.

Something else that you can provide is Woodpecker Treat. It is the same size as other suet cakes and readily fits into your suet feeder. It is composed of pecans, peanuts, and sunflower seeds. In addition to being very attractive to woodpeckers, other birds that will love it include chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and jays.

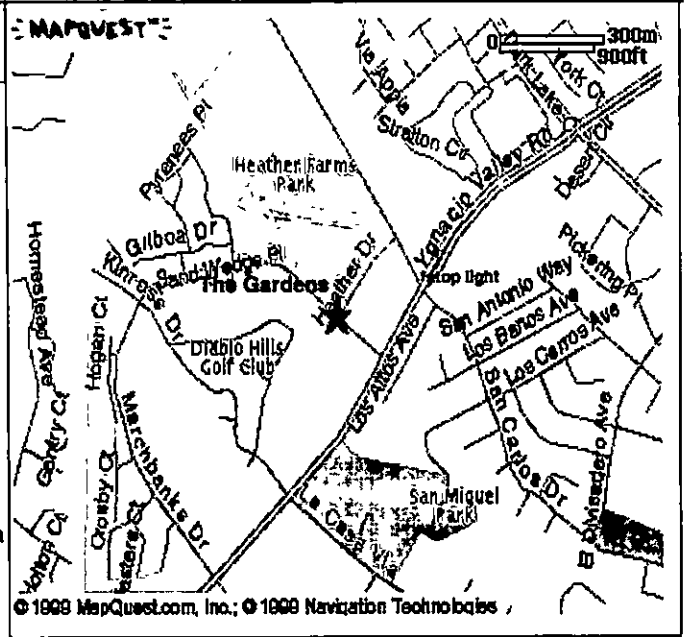
CALENDAR

2000-2001 General Meeting Schedule

MDAS meets on the first Thursday of every month (except July and August when there are no meetings) at The Gardens, 1140 Marchbanks Dr., next to Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek. Our meeting schedule is Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7, Jan. 4, Feb. 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7. If you are a new member or new to the area, let us know. We want to welcome you. All new members and visitors receive a free door prize ticket.

Fri., Oct. 22—The *Quail* mailing crew meets at 9:30 a.m., at Wild Birds Unlimited.

The MDAS Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of the month at the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly Audubon magazine and the Quail (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The Quail may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. First-class delivery of the Quail is an additional \$3.50/year. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail it to Gifford Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to Gifford Young. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.



JEAN RICHMOND
125 VIA SERENA
ALAMO CA 94507-1841

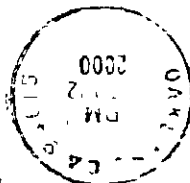
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November 2000

Vol. 47, No. 3

Next Deadline: November 2

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Changes in Audubon

Over the last year, the National Audubon Society, Audubon California, the Bay Area Audubon Council, and your Board of Directors have been discussing a change proposed by NAS in the membership dues apportionment to local chapters, like Mt. Diablo.

Beginning with July 2001, that Audubon arm which is identified as the recruitment source of new members will receive the dues allocation from those new members. In other words, if a member is recruited through National Audubon or Audubon California, the dues allocation for that member will stay with the recruiting organization. This is true even if the member is located within the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society's geographical boundaries.

The intention of this new approach is to motivate all Audubon organizations to recruit new members actively, and to reward them for doing so. Audubon organizations that do not recruit will need to find other means of supporting their programs, or reduce their programs to fit their then-current budgets.

Because the new policy will be phased in over three years, we at Mt. Diablo Audubon have an opportunity to enhance our membership recruitment efforts. Also, your Board is working on a strategic and financial plan which will allow the Chapter to continue to provide a vibrant array of programs and services, such as community education and outreach, monthly membership meetings, the *Quail*, more than 50 field trips/year, as well as support for local conservation efforts with like-minded organizations. (See President's Notes, p. 4)

Upcoming Events:

Stephen Joseph Showcases Beauty of Contra Costa

At the November 2 general meeting, Stephen Joseph, well-known local photographer who specializes in Mt. Diablo landscapes, will present a show highlighting Mt. Diablo, Los Vaqueros Reservoir, and the Vasco Caves.

Stephen did a spectacular 3-D slide show for us several years ago. He specializes in panoramic and 3-D photography and frequently works with vintage cameras that he has restored. He has been photographing CoCoCo for the past 16 years. Much his work captures the beautiful scenery of Mt Diablo in its many moods. His photographs reflect his concern for the environment as well as his art.

Stephen Joseph earned a master's degree from California College of Arts and Crafts. He is active in Save Mt Diablo. Of note is his upcoming Open Studio on November 4 and

November 18, at 3089 Vessing Rd., Pleasant Hill. Call 925-934-2128 for more information.

Birding Information

A new publication, *Bay Nature*, which will explore the natural history and heritage of the Bay Area will begin publication in January 2001. The Feature Editor, David Loeb, will tell us about this exciting new publication during Birding Information at 7 pm.

McNabney Marsh Accord Reached

On Saturday, November 4, MDAS volunteers will have the opportunity to contribute to the efforts to restore McNabney Marsh.

Waterbird Regional Preserve, part of the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), is located east of I-680 and south of Waterfront Road in Martinez. This important and highly visible marshland complex is part of the Pacific Flyway. Numerous species of waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds use the marsh for foraging and nesting. The highest densities of birds occur during the winter and during spring and fall migrations. The adjacent upland area is also home to songbirds and raptors.

Construction of a major rail line through the area in the 1880s helped to create the (See Workday on p. 3)

General Meeting

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, November 2**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8).
6:30 p.m.—Doors open
7 p.m.—Birding Information
7:30 p.m.—Business meeting
8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
8:30 p.m.—Program
Remember to bring your own coffee cup!

Connections

MDAS Comments on Grazing Policy

The East Bay Regional Park District is re-considering its grazing policy, which has been a subject of controversy between ecologists and those concerned about grass fires. The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society wrote the following letter to Beverly Lane, EBRPD Board Member and chair of the Grazing Review Task Force:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, I would like to commend East Bay Regional Park District for its willingness to re-examine its grazing practices, as well as its solicitation of public input on this controversial issue. As with many public land use issues, there is no simple solution. Mt. Diablo Audubon Society welcomes the opportunity to comment on this method of vegetation management and encourages the District to adopt the following standards.

- Make the decision to graze site-specific. Large tracts of open grassland are good candidates for this type of vegetation management. Some species of wildlife actually benefit from grazing, e.g., ground squirrels and the raptors which prey on them as well as burrowing owls. However, on a site such as Waterbird Regional Preserve, the area available for grazing is so small as to be marginally viable for the rancher/tenant, while the presence of cattle can have a negative impact on the wetlands in nearby McNabney Marsh.
- Graze seasonally and in appropriate numbers. Remove the cattle in spring before the grass has stopped growing. Examples of grazing which is being well-managed can be found in the District's Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. Instead of being reduced to stubble, the grass has been allowed to recover sufficiently to preserve the soil but has not grown so high as to choke out the beautiful native wildflowers which will bloom next spring.
- Fence cattle out of sensitive creeks and provide alternative water sources. Cattle foul the creeks and decimate native plant communities which grow along riparian corridors. Over time this grazing results in creekbank instability, erosion, and siltation. Native trees, shrubs and perennials are replaced by annual exotics, and many wildlife species which depend upon these native plants for food and shelter are permanently displaced by the degraded streambeds.

Overgrazing does not constitute good stewardship of the land. We understand that the District must balance ecological preservation with competing demands to reduce fuel loads. Mt. Diablo Audubon Society urges the Park District to re-think its priorities on a site-by-site basis and to make "eco-smart" decisions for future vegetation management.



**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
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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.

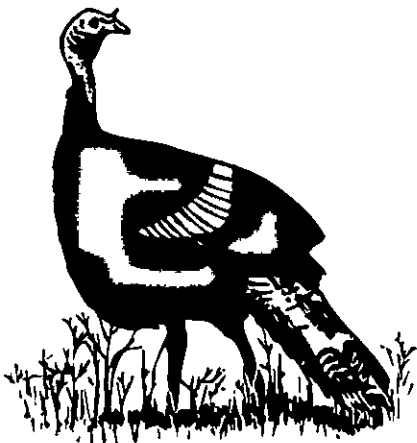
The cost of Audubon Adventures is \$40 per classroom. If you want to sponsor a class or nominate a class for sponsorship, call Cecil Williams at (510) 798-0303.

Shopping for Christmas Gifts?

Why not pick up copies of the *Entertainment Book* for all your friends and family members at the next MDAS General Meeting (and don't forget to get one for yourself!) The *Entertainment Books* are only \$40 a copy. Those discount coupons for meals and movie tickets as well as hotels, car rentals, and much more can be enjoyed now and until the end of October 2001—the gift that keeps on giving!

So, your family and friends live out of the Bay Area? No problem. *Entertainment Books* are available for over 150 areas of the U.S. Can't get to a general meeting? No problem. They're also available at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill, and at Entertainment.com on the Internet.

To order ANY *Entertainment Book* online, go to www.entertainment.com. Then enter the city or ZIP code and the state, and follow the directions on the screen. When it asks you to enter the group number, ours is 175587. MDAS receives \$8 for every *Entertainment Book* purchased with this code, so you are helping MDAS as well as pleasing the recipients of your thoughtful, practical gift.



Spotted Owl Confronts Another Threat

Another problem has been added to the list of those plaguing the Northern Spotted Owl—another owl.

The Barred Owl's territory has expanded over the past 50 years from its native habitat in the eastern U.S. to spotted-owl country in the West.

Some environmentalists believe man-made changes to the forests are the driving force behind the Barred Owl's increasing numbers. Others say their expansion is a naturally occurring event, and that the spotted owl was doomed from the start.

The Barred Owl is a little larger than spotted owls and more aggressive in defending their territory.

"Where they occur together, they're competing for habitat, competing for resources," said wildlife biologist Peter Loschl of the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station.

U.S. Forest Service biologists have been tracking the Northern Spotted Owl for about 10 years. They have seen Barred Owls move into nearly a quarter of the sites they monitor.

"If this is a national expansion of the Barred Owl and it does have negative consequences on the spotted owl, it's gonna be hard to decide how to manage for spotted owls. There may be little we can do," Loschl said.—from *Fox News.com*, Oct. 11, 2000

Workday at McNabney Marsh Scheduled cont. from p. 1

marsh. In 1988 plans were underway to develop the site for industrial uses when a massive oil spill from the nearby Shell Refinery inundated the marsh.

In a comprehensive settlement, Shell paid over \$10 million into a Natural Resources Fund to be used to restore, rehabilitate, and acquire the equivalent of the natural resources damaged by the spill.

EBRPD used a portion of these funds to acquire the property in 1992. Besides preserving and improving the wetland area, the Park District plans to install a small staging area with restrooms, parking lot and interpretive signage. A network of recreational trails will be built in the upland area to provide access to the ridge and its views. For the short term, the preserve will be accessible by reservation only.

In September, the EBRPD and the Mountain View Sanitary District approved the terms of an

agreement by which MVSD will permanently protect and manage McNabney Marsh as a wildlife habitat. The wetland was named in memory of Al McNabney, a beloved member of Mt. Diablo Audubon Society and local environmental advocate who was instrumental in preserving the marshland.

As a partner, MDAS will continue to play an important role at McNabney Marsh. Workdays will give volunteers an opportunity to help by removing non-functional fencing and other debris. The chapter's future plans include raising funds for an observation platform to be installed at the water's edge and assisting with habitat restoration.

Please join us Saturday, November 4, at 9 a.m. until 12 noon for our first workday. Please dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes, and bring work gloves. For more information, call Nancy Wenninger at (925) 938-7987.

News from

Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Book Review: *Sibley Guide*

Years in the making, the finest field guide we have ever seen is now available. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* contains more than 6600 beautifully detailed illustrations and descriptions of 810 species and 350 regional populations of North American birds.

This guide provides a wealth of new information to birders, such as many previously unpublished field marks. Nearly every species is shown in flight. Measurements include length, wingspan, and weight. Complete voice descriptions are included for each species. Range maps showing summer and winter range, and migration routes are depicted.

An introductory page for each family or group of related families makes comparisons simple. Clear, concise labels with pointers identify important field marks. Sibley's illustrations are very well done, and the text is very easy to read.

The only drawback with this book is its size. It is a little larger than the field guides most of us have been using.

David, the son of well-known ornithologist Fred Sibley, began working on this book in 1988. His goal was to show every plumage and in detail, every subspecies at rest and in flight, show complete distribution, and describe their songs. He has succeeded.

Book Review: *Wild Birds of California* by David Lucas

Within California over 600 species of birds—about 2/3 of the birds found in North America—inhabit, migrate through, or visit here.

This book celebrates our tremendous wealth of wild birds and the natural areas that sustain this abundance. This rich diversity of birds shown through various seasons, throughout their life cycles, and

in many habitats, is represented here in colorful images by some of the state's best photographers.

The awesome images of thousands of Snow Geese and Tundra Swans at Tule Lake and Klamath remind birders of their own memorable experiences there. The owl pictures are outstanding, from Gray to Spotted to Great Horned. From Golden Eagle to Clapper Rail to Painted Bunting, you will want to study and enjoy all of these images.

David Lucas has written numerous articles appearing in *Audubon*, *Birding*, *Wild Bird*, and other publications. He also wrote *Watchable Birds of the Great Basin*.

President's Notes

cont. from p. 1

MDAS is entering a new era. We're going to be trying some new approaches to fundraising (including membership recruitment); the first is a letter just prior to Thanksgiving requesting donations to support chapter and outreach activities. Using these funds and other means, we will continue to increase our presence in the community, support education of the public and conserve the habitat for our birds and the quality of our lives.

No habitat, no birds!—Carol

Research on Wandering Albatrosses May Provide Survival Key

The Wandering Albatross is the largest seabird in the world, spending more than 90 percent of their lives over the oceans of the Southern Hemisphere. Through banding and satellite tracking, they have been shown to travel tens of thousands of miles in a breeding season foraging for food.

But Wandering Albatrosses breed only once every two years, and not much has been known about where they spend their non-breeding, or "sabbatical," year in the southern ocean—the great unbroken ring of water south of Africa, Australia, and South America.

Now, researchers have started to fill in some of the gaps in the Wandering Albatrosses' existence. The birds do not wander aimlessly during their sabbatical year. Rather, each tends to fly to its own part of the ocean, often thousands of miles from its nesting ground, and stays there until it is time to breed once again.

As reported in the journal *Nature* and ornithological literature, Wandering Albatrosses often do not return from their journeys. As we learn about their travels more might be done to protect them.

Albatrosses often become the incidental victims of commercial fishing operations, including those for bluefin tuna and Antarctic seabass. The birds go after baited hooks on long lines as the lines are played out by fishing boats. Once snagged, they are dragged underwater to their deaths as the lines sink. Mitigation measures, like weighting the lines so they sink more quickly, are practiced in some fisheries, but they have not been enough to protect the roughly 20 albatross species in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres. It is estimated that more than 44,000 albatrosses are killed each year by longline fishing.

Wandering Albatross have declined in all seven of their major breeding grounds during the past several decades to the point where there are only about 15,000 pairs left (the birds mate for life). Knowledge of where the birds spend their non-breeding year could eventually lead to regulations that would close parts of the southern ocean to fishing at certain times of the year. For more information, see <http://www.isofish.org.au/ref>

Birding Events and Festivals

Sandhill Crane Festival, Nov. 3-5

Hutchins Street Square in Lodi is the site for this annual festival named for the beautiful Sandhill Cranes that winter in the Central Valley. Field trips, workshops, family programs, performances. For information or a registration form, call (209) 376-7840 or go to <<http://www.lodichamber.com>>.

Birds of Mitchell Canyon

Maury Stern will lead a bird walk on Saturday, Nov. 11, in Mitchell Canyon as part of Mt. Diablo (State Park) Interpretive Association's hiking series. Meet at 10 a.m. at MP-2 on the deck of the Mitchell Canyon Interpretive Center.

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, Jan. 12-15

Plan to attend this fifth annual festival that features over 35 field trips. A Globally Important Bird Area, Morro Bay is recognized for its thousands of resident and wintering birds, including Black Brant, Golden and Bald Eagles, shearwaters, jaegers, Ferruginous Hawks, surf-birds, turnstones, Prairie Warbler, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow among others. Last year participants spotted five California Condors in the Los Padres National Forest. For more information or a brochure, sign onto <<http://www.morro-bay.net/birds>> or call 1-800-231-0592.

Texas Birding Trip Planned

Some MDAS members and birders are planning birding trip to the lower Rio Grande region in Texas. They invite other birders to join them. The first day of birding will be Sat., April 7, 2001, and the last will be Sat., April 14. The four plan to stay in Harlingen, Texas, the entire trip with day trips to the nearby wildlife refuges and to Bentsen State Park. For more information, contact Anne Blandin at ablandin@hotcoco.infi.net or 925-754-9260, or Joan Sullivan at 837-2518 or jasullivan11@hotmail.com.

Observations

by Steve Glover

Very few bird sightings were reported for the month of September, so I will again use the opportunity to summarize our progress on The Breeding Bird Atlas project. With the first three years behind us, we are now 60% of the way to the finish line. With so much effort expended by all of the volunteers during this time, the last two years will in some ways be a kind of mop-up effort. We have now confirmed nesting in every single one of our full-size or nearly full-size blocks, with just a very few tiny partial blocks remaining. The general outline for the range of nearly every species in the county has taken shape—the exceptions being nocturnal or secretive species, primarily rails and owls (the bane of all atlas projects!)

Although detected in six blocks in the northern and northeastern parts of the county, we have still not managed to confirm American Bittern. Green Heron has now been confirmed in nine widely scattered locales. Turkey Vultures, although reported from throughout the county, have been confirmed at only three sites, all around Mt. Diablo State Park (MDSP).

Mallards are by far our most common breeding waterfowl with confirmations in 43 blocks. Exciting were first county nest records of Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, both from McNabney Marsh, yet we still have no confirmations of Ruddy Duck!

Sharp-shinned Hawk has still been confirmed in just one block but the number of confirmations of Cooper's Hawk has risen to 13. Swainson's Hawk is now confirmed in eight blocks in East County. We have zero confirmations of any of the four small rails.

Another first county nest record involved California Gulls nesting amongst the Caspian Tern colony on Brooks Island near Richmond. Just as exciting was the establishment of a small colony of Least

Terns on the newly-built shell islands near Pt. Isabel, Richmond. They are known to nest at only one other site in the county, that being near Pittsburg.

Olive-sided Flycatcher has thus far defied attempts at confirmation (probable in four blocks) while Black Phoebes have proven to be one of our most widespread species with confirmations in 51 blocks. Western Kingbirds have now been confirmed in a healthy 30 blocks, nearly all in East County. Concern has been expressed about the future of Loggerhead Shrikes, so let it be noted that we have thus far confirmed them in 18 blocks, mostly in East County. Western Scrub-Jays are one of the more ubiquitous species locally, with confirmations in 58 blocks, and Common Ravens have continued to amaze us, with confirmations now totalling 21 blocks.

Western Bluebirds, one of the local favorites, have been confirmed in 36 blocks. European Starlings, apparently not one of the local favorites, has far and away been confirmed in the most blocks with a total of 70 thus far.

Red-winged Blackbird is the second most common species so far with 61 confirmations but, alas, Tricolored Blackbirds have been confirmed in just five, four of them in extreme southeast county. The fourth new county nest record this season was a pair of Great-tailed Grackles at McNabney Marsh. Lawrence's Goldfinches remained enigmatic as we now have four confirmations and three probables from the Berkeley Hills and just one confirmation and one probable from the Diablo Range.

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Wednesday, November 1, Big Break Trail. Carpool leaves from the southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot at 8 a.m. Meet on Jordon Lane in Oakley at 8:30. Hike along Big Break Trail between the river and Iron House Sanitary property. Take SR 4 east to Vintage Parkway in Oakley. Turn left, then right onto Walnut Meadows, and left onto Jordon Lane. Parking is on a residential cul-de-sac so carpooling is important! Leader: Don Mays, 708-2371
Category 2

Thursday, November 9, Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. Carpool leaves southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8 a.m. Entrance to the area is from Childs Road in Davis. This is a new site recommended by the Sacramento Audubon Society. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 1

Saturday, November 11, Charleston Slough. Carpool leaves El Pintado at 7:30 a.m. From 680 southbound, exit El Pintado, turn right and right again; park on La Gonda. From 680 northbound, exit El Cerro, turn left on El Cerro and right onto La Gonda and go north to El Pintado. Meet at 9:30 a.m. on Terminal Rd. in Mountain View. Take Dumbarton Bridge and drive south on US 101 to the San Antonio Rd. exit. Go north and/or east on San Antonio and turn right onto Terminal Rd. Water and salt marsh birds. Levees may be muddy. Bring lunch. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 2

Wednesday, November 15, Arrowhead Marsh. Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24. Or meet at the corner of South Shore and Broadway in Alameda at 8:30 a.m. Go west on Hwy 24 or I-980 to I-880. Then go south on I-880 to

Alameda exit. Take Webster St. tunnel and Webster St. Go left on Central and right at the first light. Continue to Shoreline Dr. Follow Shoreline Dr to end at Broadway. We will visit several marsh and pond areas and reach Arrowhead near high tide. Rails possible. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 1

Thursday, November 30, Mountainview Sanitary Plant/McNabney Marsh. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the plant's parking lot. 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. If you wish, bring a lunch and explore Martinez shoreline in the afternoon. Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
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.

Field Trip Reports

Monterey, September 16—Six birders enjoyed Moss Landing and the Carmel River on a day of scattered and shifting fog and beautiful sunshine. At Moonglow Dairy there were five Pectoral Sandpipers and three Red Knots. During lunch, we watched a Prairie Falcon harass a flock of gulls. We ended the day with a sighting of a male Summer Tanager in the Carmel River bed. A total of 64 species were seen or heard. —Elizabeth Dickey

Point Pinole Shoreline, September 20—Six birders hiked around Pt. Pinole on a pleasant fall day. Five species of warblers were seen—the best, a Black-throated Gray, feeding around a picnic area. Five Black Turnstones along the shore were unusual so far up the Bay. We saw or heard 43 species. —Elizabeth Dickey

Hayward Regional Shoreline, September 28—All the birders who wisely decided against making the trek to Hayward missed a lot of traffic and very few birds. Many of the ponds are dry. Only 21 species were seen by the leader. —Elizabeth Dickey

Outer Point Reyes, September 30—Fourteen birdwatchers saw 46 species this day. Highlights were a White-wing Scoter, Common Snipe, and Pectoral Sandpipers. There was a much-studied Kingbird at Drake's Beach. Two Great Horned Owls were in their usual perches in the trees over the monument. There was also a White-winged Dove at Nunez Ranch. —Pat MacEachern

Hawk Hill, October 14—Eight members went to Hawk Hill, but the best bird we saw was a Snipe! We birded Rodeo Lagoon in the morning and watched two Snipe at close range. We puzzled over two strange birds, a hummingbird with a golden-spangled back and a duck with a maroon head and gray-brown body (eclipse plumage? *Aythya* hybrid?). At the top of the mountain we saw only a very few raptors as the fog got thicker and colder. We had a total of 49 species. —Fred Safier

Audubon Seafood Scorecard

Living Oceans is the National Audubon Society program focused on preserving sustainable, healthy oceans. The program has published a scorecard that reflects the state of the fish species, roughly in order from "Least Problematic" to "Most Problematic."

Fish labeled "Most Problematic" have many problems—such as overfishing, severe depletion, or poor management. Significant concern about a single factor, such as fishing method effect on habitat, puts a species in the middle category. "Least problematic" are fish species that are abundant and relatively well-managed species. We need to keep this listing in mind when we buy fish in the market or order in restaurants.

Least Problematic

- Alaska wild salmon
- Mahimahi (dolphin, dorado)
- Albacore tuna, troll-caught
- Striped Bass
- Pacific Halibut
- Tilapia
- Mackerels
- Farmed scallops

Single-factor concern

- Alaskan Pollock
- Canned Tuna
- Calamari (squids)
- Lobster
- Catfish
- Abalone
- Queen Conch
- Crabs
- Clams, Oyster & Mussel
- Yellowfin Tuna (Ahi)

Most Problematic

- Flounders, Soles
- Haddock
- Redfish
- Cod & Scrod
- Wild Scallops
- Atlantic Halibut
- Monkfish
- Orange Roughy
- Groupers
- Farmed & Atlantic Salmon
- Swordfish
- Mako, Thresher, all sharks
- Chilean Seabass

Christmas Bird Count Slated for Dec 16

The 2000 MDAS Christmas Bird Count will be held *down to dusk* Saturday, December 16, *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.

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 Farm, 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.

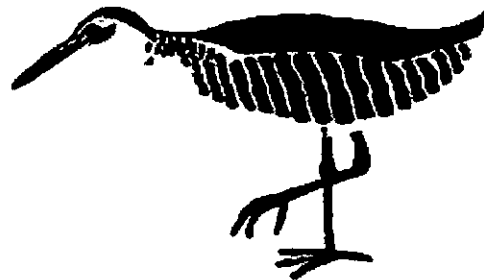
A potluck dinner to which everyone—Counters and non-Counters alike—is invited, and countdown of birds seen

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. 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. Bring your own coffee cup please!

Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern are again the co-compilers. 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.



Yes! I want to participate in the 2000 MDAS Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 16, 2000.

- 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

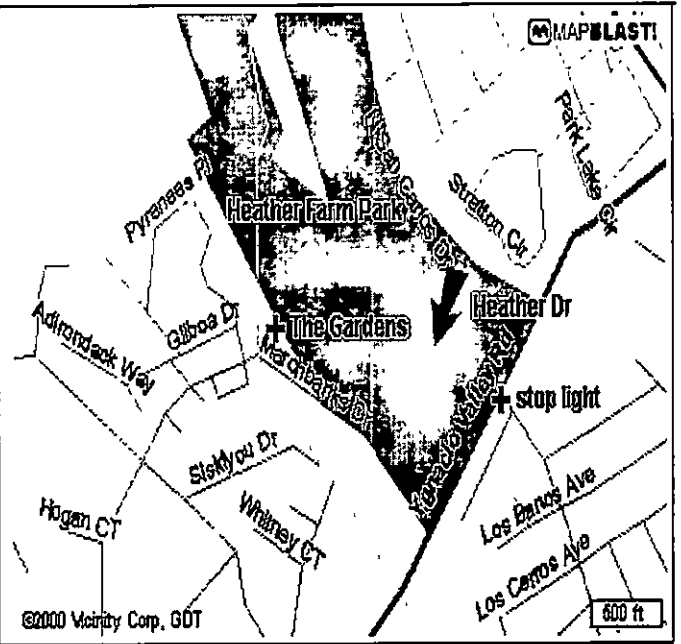
CALENDAR

2000-2001 General Meeting Schedule

MDAS meets on the first Thursday of every month (except July and August when there are no meetings) at The Gardens, 1140 Marchbanks Dr., next to Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek. Our remaining meetings are on Nov. 2, Dec. 7, Jan. 4, Feb. 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7. If you are a new member or new to the area, let us know. We want to welcome you. All new members and visitors receive a free door prize ticket.

Fri., Nov. 17—The *Quail* mailing crew meets at 9:30 a.m., at Wild Birds Unlimited.

The MDAS Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of the month at the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., PH. All members are welcome to attend.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year. To subscribe to the *Quail*, make the check out to MDAS and mail it to Gifford Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to Gifford Young. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.



11/00

ALAMO CA 94507-1841
 125 VIA SERENA
 JEAN RICHMOND

FEB 01 MFB

TIME VALUE MAIL



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



The QUAIL

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

December 2000

Vol. 47, No. 4

Next Deadline: December 7

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Cape May—A Miracle

The faithful were gathered at the hawk platform. "Welcome Birders" banners hung from motel balconies. Restaurant signs proclaimed: "Breakfast 5 a.m.!" and "Box lunches!" None of the locals looked twice at the unusually clad out-of-towners carrying excessive amounts of optical equipment. Cape May in October. For me, a dream realized.

Mind you, I lived in New Jersey from 1980–1990. My first (completely frozen) Christmas Count was with NJ Audubon. My first field trip with Audubon featured woodcocks performing flights of passion in a farmer's field at night. But in those ten years, Cape May didn't hold special meaning to me.

Why this October take five of ten precious vacation days to walk around meadows in a cold rain and freeze my gazingers off on a platform looking over a marsh? At first, I thought, "This is Cape May. All the famous and never-to-be-famous excellent birders pass this way." Then I thought it was the birding itself. In several days of birding, you can see the incredible: tens of thousands of tree swallows flocking over their nighttime roost, hundreds of black skimmers on the beach and warblers, warblers, warblers. I saw a gull hunt tree swallows on the beach day after day. I saw catbirds everywhere (confirming my somewhat astonishing life catbird seen at Pt. Reyes). I saw more merlins than I could count.

Learn why Carol was at Cape May; see page 7

Upcoming Events:

Birds of Japan Featured at December Meeting

Mike Danzenbaker is an outstanding bird photographer living in the South Bay. Recently, he and his wife, Lee Hung, lived in Japan for two years, photographing birds whenever possible. His slide show for the December 7 general meeting will concentrate on northern Honshu, where they lived, as well as some remote sites.

Mike will show us slides of wintering eagles and cranes of Hokkaido, Black-faced Spoonbills of Kyushu, breeding birds, island migrant traps in the Sea of Japan, and juvenile fall shorebirds.



Honshu Island is the largest of the four main islands of Japan and its most populous. Its climate ranges from subtropical in the south to a cold-temperate, alpine climate in the north. The inaccessibility of much of this mountainous area has preserved the area's natural beauty.

Birding Information

During the Birding Information portion of the program, Steve Cochrane will discuss Friends of the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary with which he has been involved as a consultant or director since 1995. Steve is a local naturalist who was Director of the Hayward Interpretative Shoreline Center for eight years.

The San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary is a rich and treasured resource. The largest estuarine system on the west coast of North and South America, it encompasses approximately 1600 sq. miles.

**Annual MDAS Christmas
Bird Count slated for
Saturday, December 16
see page 7 for details**

General Meeting

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, December 7**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm (see map on p. 8).
6:30 p.m.—Doors open
7 p.m.—Birding Information
7:30 p.m.—Business meeting
8 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
8:30 p.m.—Program
Remember to bring your own coffee cup!

Connections: Open Space and Transit Winners in Election Results Around the Bay

According to Greenbelt Alliance, the decisive victories of seven growth management and public transit measures on November 7 indicate Bay Area voters are fed up with traffic and sprawl

Alameda Measure B Transit Funding

In Alameda County, which includes both urban areas, such as Oakland and Berkeley as well as sprawling suburbs and ranchlands in the eastern part of the county, voters gave a landslide 81% victory to a transportation funding tax, Measure B, that will fund BART, buses, and roads. The measure that included unprecedented amounts for pedestrian and bicycle safety and focused heavily on express and local buses, won widespread support.

Santa Clara County Measure A Sales Tax for Transit

In Santa Clara County, heart of horribly congested Silicon Valley, voters gave a 70% victory to Measure A, a sales tax that would bring BART to San Jose and fund light rail and buses. The victory is significant because this is a transit-only measure, with no road funding, showing that voters are looking to public transit for transportation solutions.

San Jose Choses Greenline

Voters in the heart of sprawling Silicon Valley expressed their support for open space preservation and smart growth by approving a measure to protect San Jose's greenbelt of hillsides and baylands from urban development. Citizens of San Jose, California's third largest city, approved an urban growth boundary known as the Greenline in an astounding 81% yes vote on Measure K. This makes San Jose one of the largest cities in the country to lay down a voter-approved urban growth boundary.

Alameda Measure D Protects Open Space

By approving Measure D with 57% of the vote, Alameda County voters gave a resounding thumbs down to poorly planned sprawl development and

expressed their desire to preserve remaining open space. Measure D will protect the beautiful rolling hills of the eastern part of the county and help direct investment into older, existing communities, including Oakland and Hayward, rather than drain infrastructure dollars into new sprawl development.

Dublin's Measure M Protects Ridglands

With new corporate centers and housing developments sprouting rapidly, Alameda County's Dublin is one of the fastest-growing communities in the Bay Area. By passing open space protection Measure M in a clear 59% yes vote, Dublin residents have expressed their determination to preserve the beautiful rolling hills that are a key part of their city's quality of life.

Sonoma Measure S Supports Urban Growth Boundary

The city of Sonoma passed an important measure to protect open space around the city and encourage smart growth within already developed areas by passing Measure S with a solid 64% yes vote. Sonoma joins six other Sonoma County cities that have urban growth boundaries, a key to controlling sprawl in this fast-growing area.

Rohnert Park Says No to Sprawl with Measure N

Also in Sonoma County, Rohnert Park citizens demanded the preservation of open space by passing Measure N with a stunning 71% of the vote. With the addition of urban growth boundaries in Rohnert Park and the city of Sonoma on Tuesday, every city in Sonoma except Cloverdale now has these sprawl-busting limits.

Sonoma Farmland Protection Defeated

Sonoma County, world-famous for its wines, has some of the most productive farmland and vineyards in the Bay Area, which are rapidly being eaten up by sprawling subdivisions as the booming

regional economy pushes jobs and housing northward. A coalition of community members, farmers, and conservation groups, including Greenbelt Alliance, campaigned hard to pass the Rural Heritage Initiative, or Measure I, which affirmed the county's existing general plan and would have made it more difficult to transform farmland into sprawl development. However, the farming community was divided on the measure, and a well-funded campaign by pro-development interests helped defeat it by a 43% to 57% margin.

Greenbelt Alliance is non-profit, membership supported organization. See <http://www.greenbelt.org/get_involved/electionresults.html> for more information on election results.

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
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WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
94597-0053
(925) AUD-UBON
(925) 283-8266

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Hands-On Conservation: Nancy Wenninger,
938-7987

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Christmas Count: Jimm Edgar (510) 658-
2330

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Gloria Cannon, Editor,
(925) 753-0862, P.O. Box 8367,
Pittsburg, CA 94565, email.
gcannon4@excite.com

Field Trip Reports

Lafayette Reservoir, September 4—

Six birders enjoyed a beautiful fall day. Overhead were a Golden Eagle, three White Pelicans, and the usual TVs, Redtails and Red-shouldered Hawks. In the trees were a late Western Wood Pewee, an early Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Townsend's Warblers; in the underbrush were newly arrived Fox and Golden-crowned Sparrows. A total of 50 species were seen or heard.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Wild Cat Gorge, October 12—A

great fall day to explore this unfamiliar trail in Tilden Regional Park, which leads through brush-edged fields, riparian growth of willows and alders, oak forest and along the quiet side of Lake Anza. Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creeper were good sightings among the 32 species seen or heard.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

S.F. Bay Wildlife Refuge, October 18—

Another fine day for four birders. Few ducks were in yet, but there were large numbers of shore birds, both in terms of species (16) and number of individuals. Best sightings were a Clapper Rail, several Lesser Yellowlegs and early Dunlin. We also had several good looks at Marsh Wren. Both species of Turnstone and Eared Grebe in partial breeding plumage were also present among the 49 species seen.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Hidden Lakes Park, October 26—

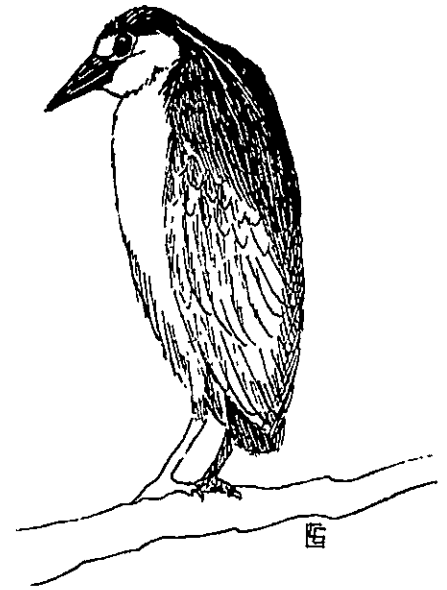
Between downpours, five birders spotted 24 species on the southwest side of the park. (We never got to the lakes.) Several Pine Siskins were with a flock of American Goldfinches, and Western Bluebirds made a bright spot on a gloomy day.—*Elizabeth Dickey*

Abbott's Lagoon, October 28—

Two birders made the trip to Pt. Reyes, but were prevented by torrential rains and gusty winds from making the 3-m roundtrip to Abbott's Lagoon. But in

the rain and after the storm ended about 3:30 p.m., we saw a total of 40 species. At Olema Marsh, we saw Wood Ducks, Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, and mating kites.—*Joel Summerhill*

Big Break, November 1—Ten birders, saw 55 species, and enjoyed a beautiful, fall day, mild temperatures, and no delta winds. Black-Necked Stilts put on a great air show, flying in formation. Several duck and gull species, were feeding at Ironhouse ponds. But the bird of the day was the sighting of a Virginia Rail, which gave the observers 30 seconds of viewing, before running for cover. Several other rail calls were heard during the day.—*Don Mays*



Just Once a Year— That's Our Promise

In November, MDAS mailed letters to our members asking for donations. We want to minimize the time and resources we spend fundraising, and promise that you'll receive this request from us only once a year. Then we can concentrate on the things we all love: leading bird watching walks, helping set up homes for bluebirds and other needy nesters, teaching children about the environment, helping preserve or restoring our local creeks, wet lands and open space for wildlife and people.

Our Plans for 2001!

In 2001, we will be:

- Intensifying our efforts to help preserve Contra Costa County habitats needed by our birds and the quality of life needed by everyone, especially future generations.
- Help set up an Education Kiosk/platform at McNabney Marsh so that more people will be able to enjoy and appreciate these wonderful wetlands and the wildlife.
- Expand our membership, programs and volunteerism to provide greater opportunities for involvement, and better protection for Contra Costa County birds and habitat.
- Increase our outreach to schools by providing more Audubon Adventures, further development of our life science pilot program for high schools, and expand our schoolroom presentations
- Increase our support to, and involvement with, sister environmental organizations with the goal to improve natural habitats.
- Further develop our relationships with public agencies that are involved with habitat protection.

Your donation will help us raise the money needed to continue our good work for the community and increase the programs and the number of people (not mention the birds and other wildlife) that we serve. Make your checks payable to MDAS and mail them to Treasurer Joe Frank, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord 94521.

As always, Audubon means birds, wildlife, endangered species, habitat, and the many people (like you) who care about the natural world. Thank you for your support. (Contributions may be tax deductible. Please consult your tax advisor.)

Lead Poisoning Fatal to Arizona Condors

Efforts to reintroduce California Condors to the Grand Canyon National Park were set back this summer when 16 re-introduced condors had to be captured and treated for lead poisoning. Five other condors were either found or presumed dead from the substance.

Though scientists could not pinpoint the source of the lead, they suspect the birds fed on an animal carcass full of lead shot—showing that they are increasingly finding their own food sources instead of relying on carcasses left by the recovery team

“We hope what happened out there is an anomaly,” said Shawn Farry, The Peregrine Fund’s Arizona manager for the project.

The Peregrine Fund, a nonprofit conservation group that helped save the peregrine falcon in the 1970s, started the condor reintroduction program in 1996. The first captive-reared birds were released from captivity into the wild from the towering Vermilion Cliffs, BLM land 60 miles northeast of the Grand Canyon. Each year, about a dozen birds are released here.

Farry’s team has observed the birds feeding together and suspects the poisoning could come from a single carcass although they don’t exactly know where the carcass was located because the radio collar signals used to track the condors are interrupted when they fly below the canyon’s rim.

Scientists can only speculate as to why the carcass was full of lead shot. Hunting is allowed on some federal lands surrounding the Grand Canyon, but no big game seasons were open when the birds began dying in June. Bill Heinrich, species restoration manager for The Peregrine Fund, said that it’s possible the birds found the carrion on private land.

All of the condors captured in July had lead in their bloodstreams. Most were

treated with chelate, a substance that binds to the lead and allows the birds to excrete it; a few needed surgery to remove the lead pellets. Ten of the 16 birds have been re-released, and the other six are awaiting release.

Heinrich said that the poisonings are also a concern because they are an indication that the toxic environment could be harming other creatures that are not being monitored, such as eagles and turkey vultures

Getting the condors to forage on their own, Farry said, has been one challenge of the program, which began in 1996 as a cooperative effort by The Peregrine Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). To train the young birds to forage, carcasses are left out by the recovery team. Some of the older condors, however, are now showing a preference for dead big horn sheep, deer, and elk in the park.

The recovery team also hopes to persuade local hunters to use nontoxic bullet alternatives, such as the “green” bullet, a composite of tungsten, tin, and bismuth or TTB.

Although foraging skills improve among the birds at the Grand Canyon, high mortality and the condor’s inquisitive nature create other obstacles for recovery. In the wild, a baby condor stays with its parents for the first year, learning to feed and avoid dangers, but the released birds are juveniles that must fend for themselves. Some are killed by golden eagles and coyotes while competing for food; others have flown into power lines.

Because condors cannot smell, the bird’s inquisitive nature evolved to help them find food by following other animals, such as ravens or eagles. Introduced condors have shown up in campsites, parking lots, and picnic areas, and their nine-and-a-half-foot wingspan probably

causes some people to be a little uneasy, Farry suggests.

“Some people have the misconception that they are looking for food, but they really like to play,” Farry said. “They’ve shown up in some fishermen’s sites and dragged away firewood and never touched any food,” he said.

At Grand Canyon National Park, people have put children next to the birds for a photo or walked up to them for a close view, said Park Service biologist Elaine Leslie—not behavior that the park recommends. “It’s a wonderful experience to see one of them, and we want people to know that the Endangered Species Act works,” Leslie said. “But we also want people to see them in their natural, wild state.” This means keeping people at a distance so the birds are not habituated.

If the juvenile birds learn to avoid the dangers of human interaction and competitive species, they have a good chance of reaching sexual maturity. The first condors released—now about six years old—are reaching that stage and beginning to show signs of pair bonding. The team hopes to see wild birds born in the next three to four years.



News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Holiday Open House
Sat., December 2
Free Refreshments!
Free Gift with
Each Purchase!
Free Gift for the Birds!
Prize Drawings!
Put nature under your tree!

Winter is our favorite time of the year for backyard birdfeeding. White- and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-breasted Nuthatches are all visiting the feeders. American Goldfinch numbers are beginning to increase.

We are always on the outlook for Pine Siskins. Every year we see some in the fall for a few days. Then they are gone! Six to seven years ago, thousands of this irruptive species

stayed all winter. So far this season we have had flocks of about 100 reported in Moraga and the Oakland hills. Smaller flocks have been seen in Martinez, Lafayette, and elsewhere. They often travel with goldfinches. Both species love thistle (niger) seed and readily come to bird feeders. Please report any Siskin sightings.

Birding Optics Seminars Saturday, December 13

Mike Williams, of WBU and a member of MDAS, will lead a FREE workshop on "How to Buy Birding Optics" on Sat., Dec. 9, at 10:30 am at Wild Birds Unlimited. Check out those crystal-clear Bausch & Lomb Elite and the new Zeiss and Pentax binoculars. There will also be many other brands of binoculars and spotting scopes on display. As seating is limited, please RSVP.



Observations

by Steve Glover

Thirty-five **Cattle Egrets** were along Cypress Rd. near Oakley on 11/1 (SG), and five more were at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 11/4 (SG).

Although 75 **Eared Grebes** would be a modest count at many locations, it may have provided a new county high count at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 11/4 (SG).

The 11 **Canvasbacks** at Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 11/1 were the first to be found there (SG). A female **Common Goldeneye** at Clifton Court Forebay near

Byron on 9/17 was so early that it probably summered at this site, as they don't usually begin to arrive until late in October (SG). Five **Hooded Mergansers** were at Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga on 11/5 (LF, SH)

An adult **Bald Eagle** was observed at Round Valley Regional Park west of Brentwood on both 10/18 and 10/21 (SA). It seems likely that Bald Eagles will become increasingly regular in the area due to the presence of Los Vaqueros Reservoir.

A dark juvenile Parasitic Jaeger was found 9/16 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron (DW) and seen through at least 9/19, when it appeared quite unhealthy (SG). Although jaegers appear inland in small numbers in California every fall, this is the first inland record of any jaeger for Contra Costa County.

The status of **Pileated Woodpeckers** in the East Bay continues to be confusing, with birds noted occasionally here and there but never with any consistency. Adding to the confusion were reports of single birds at Huckleberry Botanical

Preserve in early October (fide DV) and Joaquin Miller Park. Alameda Co., 10/13 (ML).

A **Winter Wren** was at Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 11/1 (SG). Sixteen **Golden-crowned Kinglets** on 11/1 provided a new high count for Piper Slough (SG).

A **Black-and-White Warbler** was at Lake Anza, Tilden Park, on 9/23 (CM). Although rare in the county, they have been found annually in recent years.

A rather late **Black-headed Grosbeak** was at a feeder near Tilden Park on 10/6 (DQ).

Single **White-throated Sparrows** were noted at Lake Anza, Tilden Park, 10/20-24 (CM) and in residential Concord from 10/25 onward (MR).

Just the second county record of **Bobolink** was at Clifton Court Forebay on 9/18 (BR).

Pine Siskins are normally quite rare in eastern Contra Costa County, except in invasion years, which this appears to be. Two at Piper Slough at the north end of Bethel Island on 11/1 were just the second ever recorded at that heavily birded locale. One was at Iron House Sanitary District near Oakley on 11/4 (SG).

Observers: Sue Allsbrook, Lillian Fujii, Steve Glover, Steve Hayashi, Martha Lowe, Collin Murphy, Dave Quady, Bob Richmond, Mike Robertson, Debbie Veiss, Denise Wight

Please send observations to
Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga
Lane, Dublin 94568,
or call (925) 828-7793;
email: Sgloverccc@aol.com.
Please include your phone
number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

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. We have a limited number of loaner binoculars available by calling the trip leader at least 7 days in advance. 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: 20 cents per mile shared among driver and riders; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders.

Saturday and Sunday, December 2–3, Sacramento Valley Refuges. MDAS plans a weekend (Dec. 2–3) field trip to the Sacramento Valley Refuges, including Sacramento NWR, Delavan NWR, Gray Lodge, Sutter, and Colusa. Past trippers have seen over 100 species with good looks at American Bittern, Snow and Ross's Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, and White-face Ibis. Yuba city has motels and B&Bs in a wide price range, such as the Best Western Bonanza Inn (very nice) (530/674-8824), Days Inn (530/674-1711), and the Holiday Inn Express (530/674-1650). Make your reservations now.

On Saturday, meet at the Sacramento NWR at 9 a.m. in the parking lot at visitor's center. To reach the Sacramento Refuge, leave Interstate-5 at the Norman exit and go north on frontage road. Follow the signs to the Visitor's Center parking lot. On Sunday, meet at the first parking lot at the entrance booth at Gray Lodge, which has a \$5 per person entrance fee. (Note: California Wildlife Campaign cards are good for a year and will also be usable for the Grizzly Island trip in January as well as Gray Lodge. They are also good at the Los Banos Refuge). To get to Gray Lodge, take I-80 to SR 113. At Tudor, take US 99 north to Pennington Rd. and follow Pennington Rd. to refuge entrance. There are several turns and the road eventually runs north. If you plan to go, call the leader. Leader: Joel Summerhill, 925/753-0862
Category 1

Thursday, December 7, Niles Canyon Gravel Pits. Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit

at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 mile 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 right. Varied habitats; Green-backed heron, Ring-necked duck, Spotted Sandpiper, often many land birds. Leader: Jimm Edgar, 658-2300
Category 2

Wednesday, December 13, Palo Alto Baylands. Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 mile north to El Pintado. Or meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot near the Nature Center at

Baylands. Take the Dunbarton Bridge to US 101 South. Take Embarcadero exit and go east on Embarcadero to stop sign. Go left toward Yacht Harbor, follow road to end in parking lot on right. We could see Clapper Rails and possibly Black Rails. Prepare for mud, cool breezes. There is a lot of waiting for Rails. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 1

Saturday, December 16. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

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.

Shopping for Last-minute Christmas Gifts?

I've been Christmas shopping for two weeks. The stores are crowded; everything blurs with indecision—would Uncle Bob prefer a blue tie or a red golf shirt? And I think drivers are the last ones to get any Christmas spirit.

Fortunately, I keep my new *Entertainment Book* in my car. Last week, when I just couldn't take one more bell-ringer or one more crying, exhausted child, I tore out a coupon, rounded up my husband, and headed out to dinner. Ahhhh—dinner out! Think of the money I saved with the coupon's buy one dinner, get a second one free! (I love that word "free"!)

It's not too late to get your sanity-saving, money-saving *Entertainment Book* for 2001. *Entertainment Books* are available at the MDAS general meetings and at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill.

You can still order over the Internet, but you may not receive your copy until after Christmas. To order ANY *Entertainment Book* online, go to <www.entertainment.com>. Then enter the city or ZIP code and the state, and follow the directions on the screen.

When it asks you to enter the group number, ours is 175587. MDAS receives \$8 for every *Entertainment Book* purchased with this code, so you are helping MDAS.

MDAS Readies for Christmas Bird Count December 16

The 46th annual MDAS Christmas Bird Count will be held *dawn to dusk* Saturday, December 16, *rain or shine*, according to Jimm Edgar and Maury Stearn, the MDAS co-compilers and organizers of this event.

All members and guests are invited to participate. Every pair of eyes is helpful in seeing birds—you do not need to be an expert birder to participate, but you do need binoculars. An all-day commitment is preferred, says Edgar.

Last year for the millenium CBC, we had beautiful, warm weather and 157 species. Sixty-nine field observers and two feeder watchers spotted 70,000 individual birds. We have not seen less than 150 species since 1984.

This is the 101th 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

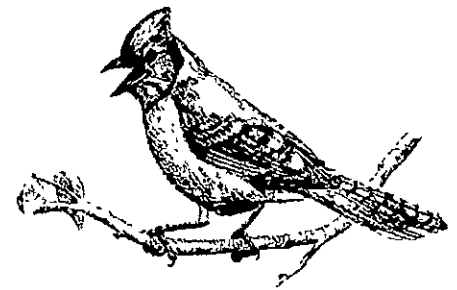
is within the count circle.

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.

To participate, 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.

The data from our CBC will be entered into the national database maintained by Cornell University Ornithology Laboratory. Go to <<http://birdsource.tc.cornell.edu>> to see all the CBC numbers since 1900.



President's Notes

cont. from p. 1

Light dawns! Being in Cape May is not about any of that. It's about being a part of the annual ritual. It's about knowing that human beings are making it tougher for the participants in the ritual to survive. It's about now working in conservation to protect the critical, migratory stop-overs (e.g., I now have skin in the game). It's about seeing hundreds of thousands of avians, some as light as a paperclip, making a trip under their own power with no protection, no maps, and no food—a trip that we cannot accomplish in an airplane without complaining mightily. The birds are completely stunning in what they can accomplish.

Cape May is a symbol of what the birds are. Cape May gives us a place to stand on the sidelines and admire a miracle. Cape May reminds me that we need to work to maintain the possibility for the miracle to occur. But, for the holiday season, let's just admire miracles. Happy Holidays, Carol

Yes! I want to participate in the 2000 MDAS Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 16, 2000.

- 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

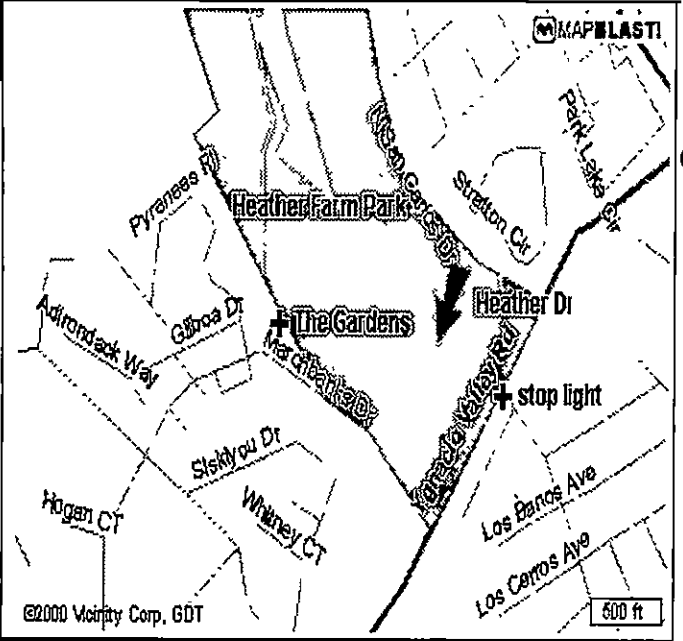
CALENDAR

2000-2001 General Meeting Schedule

MDAS meets on the first Thursday of every month (except July and August when there are no meetings) at The Gardens, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., next to Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek. Our remaining meetings are on Dec. 7, Jan 4, Feb. 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7. If you are a new member or new to the area, let us know. We want to welcome you. All new members and visitors receive a free door prize ticket.

Fri., Dec. 17—The *Quail* mailing crew meets at 9:30 a.m., at Wild Birds Unlimited.

The MDAS Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of the month at the conference room of Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, PH. All members are welcome to attend.



National Audubon Society membership includes the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine and the *Quail* (monthly except August). Introductory 1-year membership is \$20 or \$30 for 2 years. Seniors and students only \$15; membership renewal is \$35/year. Of that, \$10 is to Audubon and is nondeductible. To join, send a check payable to NAS to Mike Williams, Membership Chairman, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556-2602. The *Quail* may be subscribed to by non-members for \$10/year. First-class delivery of the *Quail* is an additional \$3.50/year. To subscribe to the *Quail*, make the check out to MDAS and mail it to Gifford Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510-2632 SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to Gifford Young. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.



12/00

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