



The QUAIL

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

January 2001

Vol. 47, No. 5

Next Deadline: January 4

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

New Year's Resolutions?

Each new year millions of Americans resolve to get more exercise or give up Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream. Although a brave few are able to carry through for an entire year, the vast majority of us skulk away from our resolution, hoping no one will notice that our resolve of January 1 has become our albatross of February 1.

What about picking a resolution that we can achieve? Select something positive that we could actually enjoy accomplishing. A resolution I could achieve with pleasure is to eat a pint of chocolate ice cream every day. However, a resolution like that is akin to giving up broccoli for Lent for the Catholics in the crowd. It's just not in the right spirit.

How about doing something good for the environment each week? Sound a little too "do-goody" and perhaps ill-defined? I thought so. One key to a better environment is education. How about touching one person each week with one piece of information that helps them appreciate what's around them in Contra Costa County? People preserve what they appreciate.

Okay, I can live with a weekly resolution that involves something I like. Now, how would I do this? Here are some ideas that I have and which you can add to if you choose to adopt a similar resolution:

- Tell the person who asks what you're looking at an interesting fact about (continued on p. 3, President's Notes)

Upcoming Events:

Lomax To Speak on Pelagic Birds

Jim Lomax will be the guest speaker at the January 4 meeting. He will show slides of and talk about pelagic birds. Jim was MDAS president for 6 years in the 1990s and has been actively pursuing photographing all his life birds since he began birding. Recently retired from the San Francisco Police Department, Jim can now devote even more time to his pursuit of bird photography

Pelagic birds are birds that live mainly out in the ocean itself. Commonly referred to as "seabirds," there are more than 250 species of birds worldwide in more than 15 families that live either partially or exclusively at sea.

Although two-thirds of Earth is covered by water, seabirds constitute only 3% of the world's bird species.

Pelagic birds spend most of their time flying above the sea surface or perching on rocks and islands, returning to land to breed. All species belonging to the albatross, auk, frigatebird, gannet, penguin, petrel, and storm-petrel families feed exclusively at sea. In addition, many species of cormorants, grebes, gulls, jaegers, loons, pelicans, and terns feed either entirely or mainly at sea. The phalaropes are the only shorebirds that feed at sea.

Many pelagic bird populations are very numerous. Among those that breed in the southern hemisphere, Wilson's Storm Petrels, and Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters number in the tens of millions. In the northern hemisphere, Leach's Storm Petrel, the Common and Thick-billed Murres, the Atlantic and Tufted Puffins, and the

Dovekie also have populations exceeding 10 million birds.

Pelagic birds are amazingly unaffected by storms and waves. The large albatrosses are actually dependent on strong winds to allow them to glide the enormous distances that they need to cover in order to find the squid that are their main prey. However, a prolonged period of adverse weather conditions, especially in winter, can exhaust the energy reserves of some birds, resulting in their being washed up exhausted on beaches, or even driven far inland.

Come to the January meeting and enjoy these marvelous birds that Jim has captured in his photographs.

Birding Information

The Birding Information portion of the program will focus on the results of the December 16 Christmas Bird and the new eastern Contra Costa Bird Count that was conducted on December 23.

General Meeting

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, January 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!

Winter Birding in Southeast Arizona

by Mike Williams

Because we own a birdfeeding and birdwatching store, we, unfortunately, have little time to go birding. After the holiday madness and the cold, wet weather, we find it mentally rejuvenating to rediscover the spaciousness and the big, bright sky of southeast Arizona. As opposed to the warmer spring and summer when most people go to the mountains to bird, winter birding is more productive and comfortable in the lower elevations. Mornings are clear and crisp, but afternoons can be T-shirt time.

The Patagonia area of Arizona has many attractions for birdwatchers. The San Rafael Valley is spectacular with rolling hills covered with golden grasses and the Huachuca Mountains blue in the background. Our "life" birds there include Sprague's Pipit, Short-eared Owl, McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspur, and Baird's Sparrows. It's also a great place for raptors and sparrows. At Patagonia Lake you always have a good chance of finding a Rufous-backed Robin, rails, and flycatchers (Gray, Vermilion, and others). Regular residents include Inca Dove, Gila and Ladder-Backed



Woodpeckers, Bridled Titmouse, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Verdin, Rock, Bewick's and Cactus Wrens, Hutton's Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler and Pyrrhuloxia.

The city of Sierra Vista is a good place to make your base camp. From there, you can go to the San Pedro River for raptors, thrashers, and many sparrow species (Brewers, Lincoln's, Song, White-Crowned, Chipping, Brewer's, Vesper, and Black-Throated). You can spot Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers there as well. Green-Tailed, Abert's, and Canyon Towhees are easy to find. A Green Kingfisher has been there for the last two months and may even be over-wintering.

The Whitewater Draw Wildlife Refuge and surrounding area are absolute "must" birding spots and are not far from Sierra Vista. The highlight is 10,000 Sandhill

Cranes. How awesome as they land or take off together. Wonderfully loud, too! Birders also find thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, and both eagles. Raptors are plentiful, including the spectacular Ferruginous Hawks, Harris's Hawks, and Prairie Falcons.

If you have time, it's always worth the drive to Portal, in the incredible Chiricahua Mountains. In winter, you will find juncos, towhees, thrashers, woodpeckers, raptors, Blue-throated and Magnificent Hummingbirds, sparrows, and many others. We consider this area to be one of the best birdwatching areas in the U.S. The scenery is phenomenal, the birds are plentiful (especially in the spring and summer), and it is never crowded.

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY
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New Director, New Direction for California's Important Bird Areas

Audubon-California is introducing changes to its Important Bird Areas (IBA) program along with a new program director, Dan Cooper, a National Audubon Society biologist working in Los Angeles.

Since California's IBA program began in 1996, over 60 IBA nominations have been received, and nearly 50 sites have been designated Global, Continental, or National IBAs in the state. Sites include the Farallon Islands, Tule Lake/Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, and Big Morongo Canyon Preserve in Riverside County.

Cooper, who has over a decade of birding experience in California, is expanding the IBA program to eventually include 150-200 sites that are representative of the diverse habitats in the state. This process will culminate in a website similar to one launched in 1998 by New York State Audubon (<http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ny/iba/index.html>).

The certification of IBAs had been overseen by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), the U.S. arm of Birdlife International. However, ABC is no longer devoting attention to the program; and Audubon-California will assume sole responsibility for the identification of new IBAs and will devote more attention to coordinating conservation activities among them. (continued on p. 3, California IBA Program)

*Gloria Cannon, Editor,
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Pittsburg, CA 94565, email:
gcannon4@excite.com*

President's Notes

cont. from p. 1

bird (something like, "The males have blue-gray wings, and the females have brown wings.")

- Ask the person sitting on a bench what he/she considers the most beautiful part of the park. (They'll probably like telling you.)
- Ask a gardener friend to explain more about inter-planting or native plants. (They'll explain a little about natural methods of insect control or water conservation.)
- When conversation around the office coffee machine stalls, ask if anyone noticed the color of the hills or that there's snow on Mt. Diablo.

You get the idea. Sometimes you provide the information. Sometimes they provide the information. The point is that you have a dialog about how nature in Contra Costa County enhances your lives.

This is a resolution I can live with. Let me know if this works for you. Happy New Year!
Carol

California IBA Program

cont. from p. 2

Future IBAs will be identified using criteria already developed by the New York State IBA program, nearly identical to those developed by Bob Barnes and a team of advisors a couple of years ago.

Over the next year, Cooper will meet with experts on California bird distribution to plot the locations of future California IBAs, including David Fix, Don Roberson, and Mike San Miguel. The next step will be to connect sites with interested individuals who will serve as monitors and defenders of the IBAs.

Contact Dan Cooper directly for more information on nominating IBAs anywhere in California, or if you are involved in groups already working as stewards of particular sites. He can be reached at (323) 254-0252 or by email at dcooper1@pacbell.com.

MDAS Volunteers Participate in McNabney Marsh Cleanup



Hats off to the following volunteers who showed up and did such an outstanding job: Hugh Harvey, Carol and Ronnie Avila, Anne Blandin, Chuck and Jean Busch, Brian Murphy, Dave Simmons, Tom Lee, Mike and Rita Tischler, Carol Czarnowski, Penny Walker, Phil and Linda Myers, Jean Hegele, Bob Wisecarver, Doug and Nathalie Oram and their sons Spencer and Kevin, and Nancy Wenninger.

Balmy weather, a beautiful setting, and good company combined to make MDAS's first workday at McNabney Marsh a resounding success. On November 4, twenty-two enthusiastic volunteers worked together to prepare the upland area for next spring's construction of a staging area for Waterbird Regional Preserve by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). The crew cleared debris, removed old fencing material, and collected "klinker stones," non-natural stones fused by extremely high heat which were used as an old roadbed on the site. These stones are a historical feature which will be incorporated in the design of the new staging area.

When completed, this marshland complex will be a popular destination for birds and birders alike. Visible on the east side of I-680 and Martinez just before the Benicia bridge, the wetlands provide foraging and nesting habitat for numerous species of waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. This very productive marsh is being protected and managed by the Mountainview Sanitary District. Improvements planned by EBRPD for human visitors include paved

parking, restrooms, interpretive signage, and a system of trails to provide access to the ridge and its views.

MDAS is planning future workdays on site for habitat restoration plus fundraising for the construction of an observation platform.

Bird Class, Natural History of California Birds

Well-know birding instructor, Phil Gordon, is teaching a winter session class on physical adaptations for wintering song birds for beginners and/or experienced birders. The class is 10 sessions, Wednesdays, January 10 to March 14 (plus a weekend field trip) at 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Acalanes High School, Room 205.

The cost is \$70 payable to Acalanes Adult Ed.School, 1963 Tice Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94538. Call 1(925) 935-0707 or register at first class. Contact Phil Gordon, for more information, 1(510) 538-3550 or by email: PAGPEG@aol.com

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.

Thursday, January 4, San Pablo Reservoir. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking area of the 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 Category 2

Saturday, January 6, Putah Creek. Carpool leaves at 8:15 a.m. from the 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

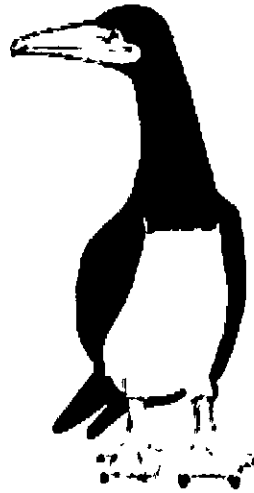
Wednesday, January 10, Sunol Regional Park. Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from LaGonda Way in Danville. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 mi north to El Pintado. Or meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot, 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: Hugh Harvey, 932-4715 Category 3

Thursday, January 18, 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 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

Wednesday, January 24, Thornton. Carpool leaves at 8 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 mi, 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

January 27, 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 mi north to El Pintado. Meet in Santa Cruz at Neary's Lagoon at 9 a.m. Take I-680 south to SR 237; west to I-880 and south on Hwy 17. In Santa Cruz, turn north on SR 1 to Bay St. Go left on Bay. Turn left on Laural and right on Blackburn



to parking lot. Trip may include a visit to the Butterfly Trees at Natural Bridges State Park. If you plan to go, call the leader. If no advance sign-ups are received, the trip may be canceled. Leader: Joel Summerhill, *82-925-753-0862 Category 1

February 1, Thursday, Grizzly Island Refuge. Carpool leaves at 7 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:15 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

Field Trip Reports

Mt. View Sanitary District and McNabney Marsh Field Trip, Nov. 30—We had 16 birders on a beautiful, sunny day and also one with several surprises. A Eurasian Wigeon and one—possibly two—snipe were spotted in the Marsh. One remarkable sight was that of a Red-tailed Hawk sitting at the edge of a pond in an inch or two of water. Also, a Black-Throated Gray Warbler was seen at the Martinez Marina Park. We saw a total of 54 species.—*Barbara Vaughn*

Sacramento Valley Refuges, December 2-3—This was a wonderful weekend to visit the Refuges, really warm and sunny on Saturday. We saw 76 species, including a Bald Eagle, two Eurasian Wigeons, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and a Varied Thrush as well as thousands of waterfowl. Perhaps the most awesome sight was 300 flying White-faced Ibis silhouetted by the setting sun at Colusa NWR.—*Joel Summerhill*

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.

News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Visit Our Website at
<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>.

Pine Siskins are being reported all over Contra Costa County. These birds are an irruptive species—most years we see very few. However, in some years, such as occurred about 7 years ago, we see many Siskins. They mostly flock together with American Goldfinch. The easiest way to differentiate the two is that Siskins have streaks on their breast and small, pointy bills. Siskins also have a little yellow on their wings.

Both Siskins and American Goldfinch love thistle seed. Our favorite thistle feeder is the mesh-style feeder. Birds cling to the sides of the feeder and pull seed through the mesh. You can have 15–20 birds feeding at the same time on this feeder.

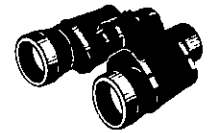
Suet is a very high-caloric food. It is beef fat that has been rendered (cleansed) of its impurities. Various ingredients are added to the suet to make it more attractive to certain birds. For example, suet with nuts or bugs (dead!) is very enticing to woodpeckers, titmice, nuthatches, chickadees, and sometimes Yellow-rumped Warblers. Suet with seeds is attractive to towhees and sparrows. During cold days you can see birds at your suet feeders all day long. Other birds that appreciate suet are jays, kinglets, and orioles in the spring.

Peanuts are also a very high protein food. Many of the same birds that love suet also love peanuts—chickadees, titmice, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and jays. We recommend the mesh-style feeders with shelled peanuts. The birds cling to the sides of the feeder and take bites of the peanuts. It's easy feeding for the birds and fun to watch.



Observations

by Steve Glover



Eleven **American White Pelicans** drifted over Hidden Lakes Open Space in Martinez on 11/11 (DW & class).

Four **Cattle Egrets** and a single **Green Heron** were noted at Holland Tract east of Brentwood on 11/10 (CL). This may be the most reliable location in the county for the egrets; Green Heron is just one of a handful of waterbird species that are more common in the county in summer than in winter.

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was at McNabney Marsh, Martinez, from at least 11/18 (S&CH) through at least 11/21 (HH, FB, MJC, BG). A drake **Redhead** was along the Richmond Shoreline at Shimada Friendship Park on 11/6 and another drake was at Heather Farms Park, Walnut Creek, 11/28-30 (HH, FB). Redheads are quite scarce in the county with just a few reports per winter, this despite the fact that a flock of 50+ winters annually just a few miles south at Emeryville.

A female **Hooded Merganser** was at Jewel Lake, Tilden Park, 11/24 (LT), and two females were seen there 12/2 (HG). At least 30 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were counted at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 11/30, and a flock estimated at about 100 birds was there 12/7-8 (KS). The largest flock ever recorded in the county was just 54.

Two **Clapper Rails** were seen at Meeker Slough north of Pt. Isabel on 11/21 (PM, BB). This is probably the most accessible site in the county for this species, but please do not try to entice them with tape recordings!

Eight **Sandhill Cranes** were at their customary site along Delta Rd. at Holland Tract in eastern Contra Costa on 11/10 (CL).

Once again there is news on the **Pileated Woodpecker** front. One of unidentified gender was found along the West Ridge Trail in Redwood Regional Park near the Alameda County line on 11/5 (SS) and again on 11/7 (RC). Another bird continues to be seen at nearby Joaquin Miller Park, Alameda Co, noted as recently as 11/20 (ML). Because Pileateds are found as migrants only extremely rarely, it seems likely that there is indeed a very small breeding population in this area.

A late **Western Tanager** was in a suburban Richmond yard 11/24-27 (PM).

A single **White-throated Sparrow** was at Hidden Lakes Open Space, Martinez, 11/11 (DW and class).

Four males and a female **Great-tailed Grackles** were found at Discovery Bay in East County on 11/25 (R&TD). I had long expected them to take up residency in this development, and perhaps they now have.

Two **Red Crossbills** were near Skyline Gate, Redwood Regional Park, on 11/25 (SG). A female **Evening Grosbeak** at a San Ramon feeder 11/18–19 was an exciting find for the county (where they are not recorded most winters) and was about the only local hint of the minor montane invasion that occurred this fall in California (AR).

Observers: Bruce Beyaert, Roy Carlson, Ryan and Tanya DiGuadio, Steve Glover, Helen Green, Calvin Lou, Phil Maynard, Audrey Riddlebacher, Kirk Swenson, Sylvia Sykora, Larry Turnstall, 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

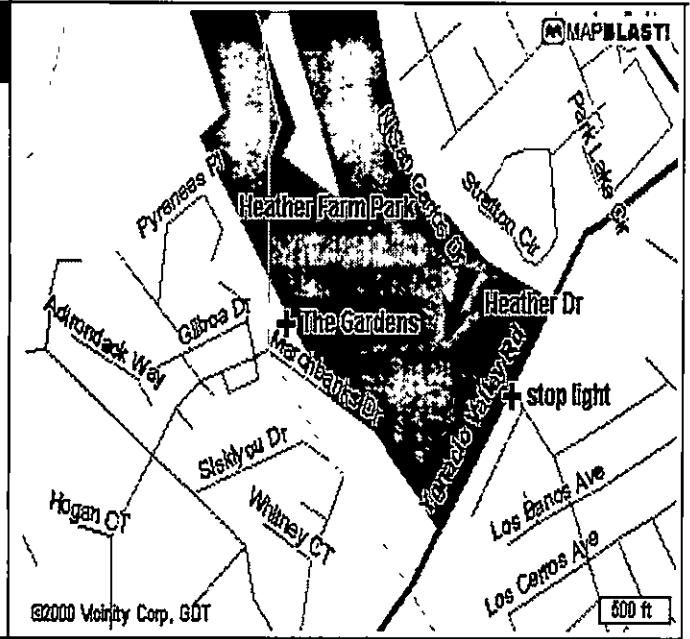
CALENDAR

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 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., Jan. 19—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 Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olomo Dr., Concord, CA 94521. 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.

10/1

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Vol. 47, No. 6

Next Deadline: March 1

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Campaign Report

Thank you to all those who made our first campaign for financial support so very successful. The funds raised will offset the loss of dues from the National Audubon Society. This was our goal. What this means is that we can continue to deliver the monthly programs, the newsletter, and our field trips program as we have in the past. In addition, we can continue our community outreach efforts and our public education programs. Finally, we can continue and potentially strengthen our conservation programs.

To all of those who contributed financially, thank you! To all of you who contribute by providing services to the Chapter, thanks also to you! Without the tremendous volunteer support we have, we would need to purchase more services,
Cont. on p. 5, President's Notes

General Meeting

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, February 1**, 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!

Upcoming Events:

Dragonflies of California Focus of February Meeting

Dragonflies, those lacy-winged, graceful gliders of summer, are the subject of our February program. Kathy Biggs, a former MDAS member who is now active in the Madrone Audubon chapter, will present slides and information about these amazing flying creatures.

Kathy is the author of *Common Dragonflies of California: A Beginner's Pocket Guide*, published last year; and copies will be available at the meeting. You can preview her talk at this website: <<http://www.sonic.net/~bigsnest/Pond/dragons/dragon-families.html>>.

Dragonflies are fascinating insects. Masters of the air, they are daring enough at times to hover almost within our reach. A member of the insect order Odonata, dragonflies are notable for having double pairs of delicate wings which are not linked together but operate independently.

Dragonfly larvae are aquatic and may spend one to even five years in their watery nursery. At the end of that stage, the nymphs climb out to dry land and begins their emergence as a dragonflies.

Many outdoor enthusiasts welcome dragonflies not only because of their beauty but also because of their feeding habits. Adult dragonflies feed mainly on annoying, bloodsucking insects, such as gnats, mosquitos, black flies, horse flies, and deer flies.

This information about the species is from an article by Ron Lyons of the Chula Vista Nature Center.



British stamp featuring dragonfly species, *Anax imperator*

You can also visit the Dragonfly website at <<http://dragonflywebsite.com>> for more information. Or pick up a copy of Kathy Biggs' book, which features 77 California dragonfly species and 177 color photographs in its 96 pages.

Birding Information

Dennis Galloway, photographer and musician, begins our February Birding Information with a presentation on how birds were taught to sing musical tunes in the 18th century. He will have musical examples from the 1717 book, *The Bird Fancier's Delight*.

During the second portion of Birding Information, Brian Murphy, one of our members and an outstanding bird photographer, will present bird slides of McNabney Marsh geared especially for beginning birders.

Losing Heather Farm Park: One Birder's Thoughts

By Hugh Harvey

As the last of 2000 has gone, and with the beginning of 2001, those of us who are "year listers" are busy. We already know how many species we saw in the previous year, and we want to get a big jump on the new year. As an example, last year I saw 255 species of birds in California. Though it looks like a big number, it is not a high count by any manner of means. Many birders get much higher figures. In fact, in the first 9 days of the new year, my list is already up to 120.

What strikes me, though, is not that I am almost half-way to last year's total. In looking over my list, I learned that 74 of the species I saw were seen in Heather Farm Park. This is not to say that I saw them only in the park, or even that they breed in the park. They may have only been seen one day, or they may have stuck around for a week. They might have been passing through during migration. The park covers a large area, and I do not always visit all the corners everyday. Some areas I do not visit at

all because they are too close to private residences, so it is possible that even more species were actually present in the park.

Many changes have occurred in 150 years at Heather Farm. Ygnacio Sbrian first built a home on the hillside here in 1850. John Marchbanks bought the area in 1920, built a horse track, and gave it its present name. Philip Bancroft Jr. first proposed a park in the late 1950s. The Garden Center where MDAS meets was not completed until 1983.

For anyone who has attended a chapter meeting recently, it is obvious that Heather Farm is undergoing further drastic changes. New sports fields are being added near the park entrance. At the north end is a maintenance yard. About 5 years ago a large section of brushy area there was paved and turned into a temporary skateboard park. Many eucalyptus trees and smaller oaks have been cut, and two of the large Valley

Oaks were diseased and needed removal. Numerous other areas have had brush cleared, and woodchips spread as a way to ease landscape maintenance.

The Ygnacio Valley is almost fully developed. We have Mount Diablo State Park, we have the Walnut Creek Open Space, and Heather Farm is becoming more and more of a city park. In the 19 years I have been birding, I have seen a noticeable drop in the numbers of birds as well as the numbers of species of birds in the park. Yet, in the year 2000, I saw 74 species of birds in this park. For how many more years will we have this little bit of "wildness" right here in our backyard?

**BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
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WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
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Wading Birds Rebound in So. Florida

Weather and changes in water management in south Florida are credited with triggering a boom in bird breeding not seen in the Everglades in decades, according to biologists monitoring avian populations in the River of Grass and surrounding natural areas

Among all wading birds species, nesting jumped 40 percent to nearly 40,000 overall.

The rare Wood Stork particularly thrived. The 2,000-plus nests were the most since the 1940s and a fourfold jump from 1999 for one of the region's most endangered creatures.

"In every case, you've seen it improved," said Dale Gawlik, a senior environmental

scientist with the South Florida Water Management District.

Although scientists don't fully understand the spectacular rebound, the nesting surge suggests that restoring the River of Grass to its historic wet-dry pattern—the chief aim of a landmark \$7.8-billion state and federal project Congress passed last year—bodes well for wildlife.

For restoration biologists, the status of wading birds is a report card for the entire system's health. "Science has known for a long time that wading birds will tell us something about the effects of hydrologic changes," Gawlik said.

Gawlik believes that most of the latest increases were driven by rainfall patterns,

Cont. on p. 3, Wading Birds

MDAS Logs Its 46th Annual Count; Initiates East Contra Costa County Count

Contra Costa Count

MDAS held its 46th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Saturday, December 16. Eighty people participated in the field, and two more participants counted birds at their backyard feeders.

Observers saw 151 species on Count Day. We reported a total of 58,125 individual birds (See Table). The weather on Count Day was pleasant and sunny—a beautiful day.

The potluck dinner following the Count was a big success. Alice Holmes, MDAS hospitality chair, and her crew, did an impressive job in decorating and organizing the dinner.

Counters saw four unexpected species: Swamp Sparrow, Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Finch, Plumbeous Vireo. (See "Observations," column, p. 5, for more details.)

Plan now on being part of the 102st Christmas Count in December 2001.

East Contra Costa Count

This year Jimm Edgar organized a second Christmas Bird Count in Contra Costa. This one focused on East Contra Costa where birds and wildlife are rapidly losing out to suburban development.

Twenty-four counters spent Saturday, December 23, counting birds in locations such as offshore at Big Break, the hills at the Vasco Caves, Bethel Island, Round Valley and the eastern slopes of Mt. Diablo

They saw 141 species, including some unexpected species, such as six White-faced Ibis and Swainson's Hawk. They saw 47,356 individuals of the blackbird species, and a total of 98,242 individual birds.

More CBC Details

Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern, the CBC co-compilers, have entered the results of

Summary of MDAS Christmas Bird Count, 1988–2000

<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
12/16/00	58,125	151	sunny, beautiful

the two Contra Costa County bird counts into the database maintained by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. To read the list of the birds observed by MDAS counters as well as the nationwide results, go to <<http://birdsource.tc.cornell.edu>>, which has all

the CBCs of all the chapters since 1900. Click on "Results of 101st Bird Count." Then to see MDAS results, go to California, then Contra Costa. Worldwide, Christmas Bird Counts counted over 37,250,000 birds.

Wading Birds

Cont. from p. 2

but he also credited the district's water managers for lowering Lake Okeechobee's water level without pumping a flood into the rest of the system

In addition to South Florida's wet-dry swing, another theory credits a drought across much of the southeastern United States, which may have displaced bird colonies and sent them south.

Species that demand drier conditions did better than others last year. Those happen to be the rarest birds—the Wood Stork, which is on the federal endangered species list, and the White Ibis, which is on Florida's threatened-species list. Drier Glades are particularly good for Wood Storks, a slow-moving bird that feeds in shallow pools.



Like the Wood Stork, White Ibis nesting skyrocketed, increasing 10 times from 1999 to about 22,000 nests—the most since the 1960s, Gawlik said.

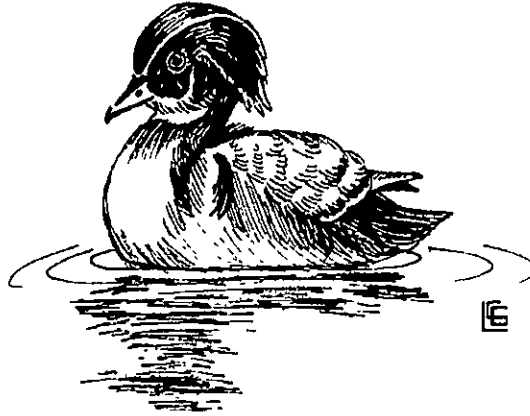
Breeding for all the region's wading birds is up over the last three years. Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, and Tricolored Heron all saw the average number of nests increase over the past three years. —from a story by Curtis Morgan, published Jan. 12, 2001, in the *Miami Herald*

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.

February 1, Thursday, Grizzly Island Refuge. Carpool leaves at 7 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at Refuge head-quarters. 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 area for raptors. Leader: Maury Stern 284-5980 Category 1



Saturday, February 3, 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 gas station (former Union 76 Station). Shorebirds, waterbirds, migrants. Leader: Fred Safer 937-2906 Category 1.

Wednesday, February 7, Briones Reservoir. Meet in staging area on the west side of Bear Creek Road at 8:00 a.m. We will hike along the north side of the reservoir. This is a new trip. Bring lunch. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 3

Thursday, February 15, Shadow Cliffs Regional Park. Carpool leaves LaGonda Way in Danville at 8:00 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. We can by-pass freeway traffic by going

east on El Cerro and making a sharp right turn onto Diablo Road. From Diablo Road, turn left onto Tassajara, which becomes Santa Rita south of I-580. From Santa Rita, turn left onto Valley Avenue and left onto Stanley Blvd. Entrance is on the right; park near the Information Kiosk. This is a new trip; Great-tailed Grackles have been seen here. Bring lunch. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, February 17, Tomales Bay State Park. Carpool leaves 7:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Heart's Desire Beach at Tomales SP (\$5 entrance fee). 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 stop light. 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. Follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Inverness. Just over the ridge, turn right onto Pierce Point Rd. The park entrance is on the right. Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980 Category 2

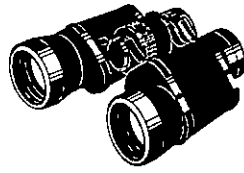
Wednesday, February 21, Yolo County. Carpool leaves southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8:00 a.m. This is a car-caravan trip to a number of Yolo County sites recommended by the Sacramento Audubon Society. These are good areas for raptors and water birds; Mountain Plovers are also possible. Carpooling is essential. Call the leader if interested in participating. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Thursday, 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 8:30 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. Loons, grebes, and bay ducks. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey 254-0486 Category 1

Difficulty of field trip:
Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths.
Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough terrain.
Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Observations

by Steve Glover



This month's column includes sightings not only from our traditional Contra Costa County Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CCCCBC) but also from our inaugural Eastern Contra Costa CBC (hereafter ECCCBC). This new ECCCBC included the vast majority of the county east of the Diablo Range as well as Los Vaqueros Reservoir, the Vasco Caves, and Round Valley. This should result in vast amounts of information from those underbirded areas. All sightings below from 12/16 are from the CCCCBC, and all sightings from 12/23 refer to the ECCCBC.

A single **American White Pelican** noted 12/16 along Waterfront Rd. was probably the same one seen nearby at Pacheco Slough on 12/18 (Jro, SG, JA, JE). More pelicans were noted at Marsh Creek Reservoir on 12/26 (14; SG, JA), Clifton Court Forebay on 12/26 (8; SG, JA), and at McNabney Marsh 1/1 (6; SG).

Sixteen **Cattle Egrets** were following a tractor on the ECCCBC at Holland Tract, including several birds riding on the roof! (SG, JA, N&AK). Six **White-faced Ibis**, rare but increasing in winter, were on the ECCCBC (SG).

A **Ross's Goose** at a city park in Concord was a first for the CCCCBC (BV & group). Two count week **Redheads** were at Clifton Court Forebay on 12/26 (SG). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at Iron House Sanitary on the ECCCBC (SG), and another was at Clifton Court Forebay 12/26 (SG). Those are child's play, however. On 12/11, Kirk Swenson revisited Carquinez Straits R.P. and counted 135 birds! At least 85 were still there on 1/1 (SG). **Hooded Mergansers** are usually found in tiny numbers in the county so sightings from the CCCCBC were exciting: 15 in Pleasant Hill (FB, MJC); 14 in Alamo (JR); and 3 at Waterfront Rd. (SG, JRo). Two more Hoodies were at Newhall Park in Concord on 12/27 (PB). Fifteen **Common Mergansers** were at Marsh Creek Reservoir 12/23 (CL). They are quite unusual at that location.

The highlight of the ECCCBC may have been three dark-phase **Swainson's Hawks** drifting over Holland Tract. These birds are almost certainly a part of the flock that winters annually just north-east of there (SG, JA, N&AK). **Rough-legged Hawks** have been scarce in the county in recent years, but they were seen by several groups on the ECCCBC. A **Merlin** on the ECCCBC was eating a male Tricolored Blackbird! (JA, SG).

Two **Black Rails** were heard on the ECCCBC at Iron House Sanitary (SG, JA). The 185 **Sandhill Cranes** at Holland Tract on the ECCCBC may have been the second highest count for the county (SG, JA, N&AK). A single **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Holland Tract 12/23 (SG, JA, N&AK).

Two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were in Round Valley R.P. on 12/17 (OH), and one was still there 12/26 (SG, JA). Although this species was once found regularly in this area, this one and the two reported here in November are the first recorded in winter in the county in about a decade.

A **Plumbeous Vireo** in Pine Canyon, Mt. Diablo S.P., on the CCCCBC was the first ever for the count and about the third for the county (MS & group).

At least 15 **Yellow-billed Magpies** on the ECCCBC may have been a one-day high for this locally-increasing species, with birds found in several locations at Bethel Island and around Knightsen (SG, JA, N&AK).

A singing **Canyon Wren** on 12/23 at Vasco Caves was at a previously unknown location (JE & group). A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, rare in winter, was also at the caves.

A **Swamp Sparrow** behind Mallard Reservoir on the CCCCBC was the first in the history of the count, and there are less than ten county records (JRo, SG). A **White-throated Sparrow** was at Carquinez Straits R.P. on 1/1 (SG).

Over 50,000 blackbirds were estimated on the ECCCBC, including at least 7,200 **Tricoloreds** and 445 **Yellow-headed**s at Holland Tract (JA, SG, N&AK). The number of Yellow-headed's was easily the most ever recorded in the county.

Observers: John Ascher, Florence Bennett, Polly Boissevain, Mary Jane Culver, Jimm Edgar and group, Steve Glover, Otto Haubensak, Nikki & Anne Kumaranayagam, Calvin Lou, Jean Richmond, John Robinson, Maury Stern and group, Barbara Vaughn and group.

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

President's Notes

Cont. from p. 1

requiring more dollars to run our programs.

By the way, for those of you who have asked about budget for the Breeding Bird Atlas, a formal budget has now been established. Thank you for bringing this important administrative oversight to my attention.

Enjoy the unique pleasures of winter birding and thanks again for your support,
—Carol

Calendar of Birding Events and Classes

Sandhill Crane Tours

The California Department of Fish and Game is offering Sandhill Crane tours. The two-hour evening tours focus on the dramatic flight of the cranes to their resting areas. The tours occur the second and third Saturdays, each Sunday, and on the second Thursday until February 25. Send a SASE, a note with first and second choice of date, the number in your party, and your complete address and phone number. A \$5 donation, per adult, payable to California Wildlife Foundation is requested. Mail to Crane Tours, Dept of Fish & Game, 1701 Nimbus Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. For information only, call 916-358-2353.

California Duck Days, Feb. 18–20

California Duck Days is scheduled for February 16–18 at the Veterans Memorial Center, 203 East 14th St., Davis. The festival features field trips in the Sacramento Valley region, workshops, demonstrations, and a large Exposition Hall full of educational displays about wetlands, wildlife, and ecology. A weeklong show at nearby Davis Art Center will feature wildlife-related art by local high school students. Call 800-425-5001 to receive registration information. Several types of passes are available. Visit the website at <<http://www.duckdays.org>>.

Birdwatching Class

Alice Hoch, a birder for 39 years and birding instructor for 25 years, is continuing her birding field classes through the Fremont Adult School. The class will meet on six Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. The next session is March 6 through April 10. For more information, call the school at 510-791-5841 or Alice at 510-657-0475.

Wild On Wetlands Weekend

Go to Wild on Wetlands in Los Banos 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>>.

Aleutian Goose Festival, March 23–25

Godwit Days Migratory Bird Festival, April 27–29

Crescent City, CA, hosts the Aleutian Goose Festival March 23–25. A month later, nearby Arcata, CA, hosts Godwit Days. Over 45 different field trips and workshops are offered featuring California's wild Redwood Coast. The combined bird list for the two counties is 463 species and include Marbled and Ancient Murrelet and Spotted Owls. Visitors can see more than 35,000 Aleutian Canada Geese—virtually the world's entire population. For more info, contact REDI in Crescent City at 1-800-343-8300 and Arcata Main Street at 1-800-908-9464.

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 is composed of historic log cabins (some of the only structures allowed to remain inside this federally designated Wilderness Area). Guests are provided with meals, showers, and tent camps. The sessions are one-, two-, and three-week sessions, very economical. Sessions start July 1, July 8, and July 15. Reserve early—the limited space is often full by April. For brochure, call 909-798-3060. See their website at <<http://www.lstartists.com/gtc/>>.

News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Visit Our Website at
<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>.

BIRDSEED SALE
February 1–25
15% off all 20–50 lb. bags
SUET SALE
Buy 4 cakes or tubs and get 1 FREE!

Activities at WBU

Sat., Feb. 3, 10:30 a.m.—The Native Bird Connection will bring an American Kestrel and give a program on "Hawks in Our Backyards."

Sat., Feb. 10, 10:30 a.m.—Workshop on "Planning & Planting for Bird Friendly Gardens." Plants will be available.

Wed., Feb. 14—Denise Wight's Birding Classes resume. She will be showing slides and covering many different birding topics. There will be six consecutive Wednesday night classes and one birdwalk. Cost is \$50. Call Wild Birds Unlimited for details.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is Friday–Monday, Feb. 16–19. Wild Birds Unlimited and the National Audubon Society are major sponsors of this event. You count birds in your backyard and report the results online or bring them to WBU (see the story on p. 7). It's a great website to investigate at <<http://birds.cornell.edu/gbbc>>. It's fascinating to watch the maps explode with bird reportings throughout the week.

Bird feeding tip: flocks of Pine Siskins and Goldfinches are being reported. The Siskins are very erratic migratory birds—we haven't seen this many in 6–7 years. Get out the thistle feeders!



Great Backyard Bird Count Needs Everyone, Everywhere to Count for Birds' Sake

From a National Audubon Society Press Release

What Is the GBBC

Many bird species are showing population declines due to habitat loss or other human impacts. Now, people of all ages and backgrounds can help monitor bird populations, including several that are showing declines, by participating in the 4th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, February 16-19, 2001.

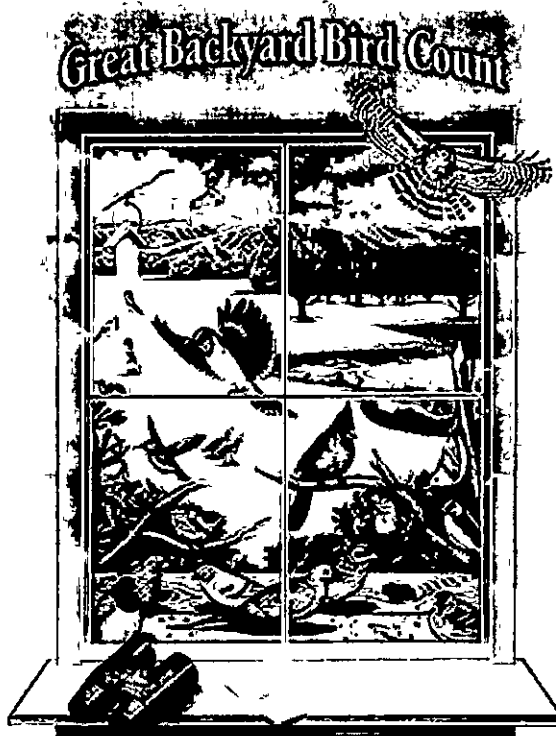
A project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society with funding provided in part by Wild Birds Unlimited and Ford Motor Company, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) combines high-tech web tools with "citizen-science" observation of birds.

The GBBC asks families, individuals, classrooms, and community groups to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders, local parks, schoolyards, and other areas during any or all of the four count days. Participants enter their observations at BirdSource <<http://www.birdsource.org>>, a user-friendly, state-of-the-art website.



How the GBBC Began

Began in 1998, the GBBC has engaged more than 100,000 people of all ages and skill levels in the effort to keep common birds common. "We're asking everyone, everywhere in North America to take a few minutes to tell us what birds they see on any or all of the count days," says



John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "By tracking changes in bird distribution and abundance over time, such a vast database can serve as the S.O.S signal for species that may be in trouble."

This is especially important for species already showing population declines such as quail, familiar in California and other parts of North America. "While most people recognize quail when they see them, few people are aware that some species are experiencing severe population declines," says Frank Gill, NAS's senior vice president for science.

Quail are flagship representatives of brush land/shrub habitat. Habitat loss and the results of some land management practices are the primary reasons for quail declines. In suburbia, cat predation of these ground-dwelling birds is also a serious concern. Visitors to the GBBC website can learn about all six North American quail species.

One of the BirdSource's ultimate goals is hemisphere-wide monitoring of bird

populations and the educational opportunities that go with these projects.

Because the GBBC charts findings in real time, scientists have already made connections between weather patterns and bird movements. For the last few years, American Robins have appeared farther north than typically expected, in areas where snow cover was scant or nonexistent. Such a correlation may be suggestive of global warming or other broadscale weather changes.

How to Participate

To participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, count the highest number of each bird species seen at one time (to ensure the birds are not counted more than once) and keep track of the amount of time spent counting. Log on to BirdSource and click on California

for a checklist of the most frequently reported birds in our state. Instructions for participating can be found at the website. There's no registration fee.

The BirdSource/GBBC website also includes useful information to make participation easy and enjoyable. There's a vocabulary section, bird watching and bird-feeding tips, bird vocalizations, and more. Educators will find the bibliography and geography sections as well as suggestions for conducting the count with groups of kids. Those who would like to participate, but are not online, can submit their reports through the Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., in Pleasant Hill.

Results are updated hourly in the form of animated maps and colorful graphs for all to view. Participants will be able to see almost immediately how their observations fit into the continent-wide perspective.



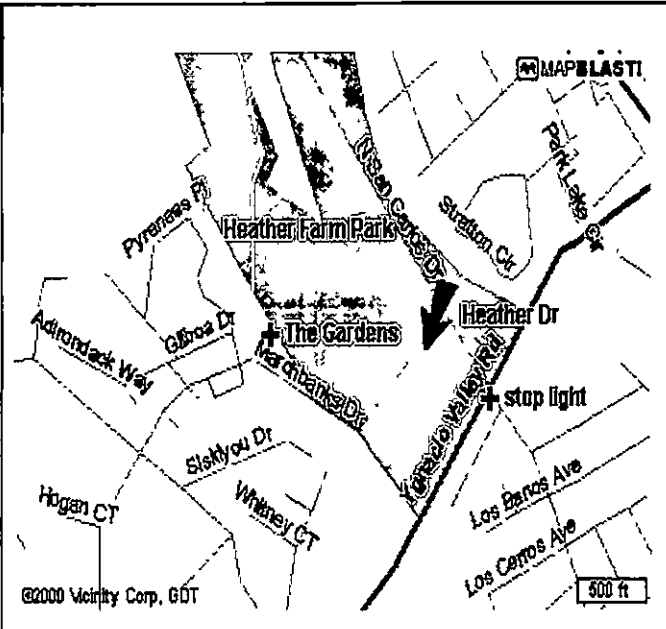
CALENDAR

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 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., Jan. 19—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 Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olomo Dr., Concord, CA 94521. 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
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TIME VALUE MAIL



Mr. Diablo Audubon Society
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Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053



The QUAIL

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



March 2001

Vol. 47, No. 7

Next Deadline: April 5

Upcoming Events:

Birds and Bugs in March

Our March program will feature Alan Kaplan, East Bay Regional Park District naturalist at the Tilden Education Center. He will be speaking on Bugs and Birds.

Insects and Aves have been companions on the Earth for a long time. Insect abundance during bird breeding season produces baby birds, and the great majority of the world's birds include at least some insects in their diet.

We'll look at insectivorous birds' adaptations, how they find insects to eat, and how insects avoid being eaten by them. Stories we'll highlight include the Monarchs in Mexico (although we think of these orange-and-black butterflies as poisonous, millions are lunch for grosbeaks and orioles); the Oropendola-wasp-cowbird connection (oropendolas unprotected by wasps don't care about cowbirds, and protected oropendolas do); and the latest information on oxpeckers (Once considered a textbook example of mutualism because they eat

ticks off the skin of wild animals in Africa, their benefits are now in question).

Alan Kaplan has been with the East Bay Regional Park District as a naturalist since 1977—first at Sunol Regional Wilderness and, since 1980, at Tilden Nature Area in Berkeley. He has led over 300 birdwalks for the EBRPD. He has a BA in Biology from Queens College of the City University of New York, and a MS in Entomology from the University of California at Berkeley.



Birding Information

Birding Information will be presented by Denise Wight, well-known birding instructor and MDAS member. Denise's program will be on Bird Song Identification with helpful hints on learning and remembering the sounds.



In Memory of Winnie

MDAS lost a dear friend with the passing of Winifred "Winnie" Young on January 18. She was an active volunteer with the Chapter until her death. Winnie served as Chapter Secretary for several years and was a mainstay on the mailing crew. She baked unforgettable cookies. Her many, many friends will remember Winnie for her sweet and gentle ways.

Her husband Gifford has requested that memorial gifts be given to the Chapter.

General Meeting

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, March 1**, 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!

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, March 1, Berkeley-Richmond Shoreline. Carpool leaves at 8 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the north end of the Emeryville Marina. Take 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. Loons, grebes, and bay ducks. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey 254-0486 Category 1

Wednesday, March 7, 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

Saturday, March 10, Capay Valley. Carpool leaves Sun Valley parking lot in Concord at 7:30 a.m. This is a 225-mile car caravan trip to Yolo County. We will be going west of I-505 on SR 16 and continue north to SR 20. Possible birds are raptors, including Bald and Golden Eagles, Lewis's Woodpecker, Common Mergansers, and Canyon and Rock Wrens. Trip will go in light rain. Leader: Florence Bennett, 689-3106

Thursday, March 15, Laurel Canyon-Tilden. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking lot at the Nature Center at the north end of the park. Depending in part on the weather, we will walk either down Wildcat Creek or up the Laurel Trail. A half-day trip for local birds. Good beginners' trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

Wednesday, March 21, San Leandro Reservoir. Meet at 8 a.m. at Valle Vista staging area off Canyon Rd. From Sr 24 west, take Orinda exit south; in Moraga, turn right on to Canyon Road. Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980 Category 3

Saturday, March 24, Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the park gate at the end of Somersville Road (park opens at 8 a.m.). Go east on Ygnacio Valley and Kirker Pass Roads; turn right on Buchanan Rd. Go east on Buchanan Rd to Somersville Rd. and turn right. Meet in the first parking lot. Woodland, chaparral, and some grassland birds. Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041 Category 3



Thursday, March 29, Huckleberry Reserve. Meet at 8 a.m. at parking lot on Skyline Blvd. From Hwy 24 west-bound take Fish

Ranch Rd, turn left onto Grizzly Peak and left again onto Skyline. Parking is on left just past Sibley Preserve. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 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.

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO
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WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA
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Vice President: Mike Williams, 376-1631
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Treasurer: Joe Frank, 674-1219

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Field Trip Reports

Santa Cruz, January 27—Eleven enthusiastic birders enjoyed a sun-splashed day in Santa Cruz. We had long comparison views of Double-crested, Brandt's, and Pelagic Cormorants along with Red-throated and Pacific Loons and seven species of gulls—all at Natural Bridges State Park. The highlight of the 68 species we saw may have been eight Black Oystercatchers.—*Joel Summerhill*

Grizzly Island, February 1—Twenty-one members and guests spent a clear day in 30- to 50-degree weather. We saw or heard 72 species. Highlights included American Bittern and five other herons and egrets; Blue-winged Teal; four Rough-legged Hawks, including one dark phase; Golden Eagle; Virginia Rail; Sora; Common Moorhen; Barn Owl; two Great Horned Owls; and a large flock of Tree Swallows. Rounding out the observations of the day were a large bull Tule Elk and a River Otter.—*Maury Stern*

Field Trip Reports continued on p. 3

Observations

by Steve Glover

Two **Snow Geese** wintering along the Richmond Shoreline were noted at the Albany Crescent on 1/4 (BF). An adult male **Tufted Duck** was once again found at Martinez Regional Shoreline on 1/28 (GF). Although this species is certainly still a rarity anywhere in the state, they have become annual in occurrence in Contra Costa in the past decade or so

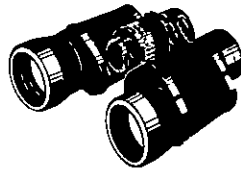
Lafayette Reservoir's wintering adult **Bald Eagle** was noted as recently as 1/12 (MS). Another Bald Eagle was along Vasco Rd. just inside Contra Costa County on 12/18 (MJ). Two more **Swainson's Hawks** at Jersey Island in the northeastern part of the county on 2/1 were likely a part of the annual San Joaquin County wintering flock although it is possible that they are very early northbound migrants (GF).

A **Long-eared Owl** was at Lafayette Reservoir on 1/12 (MS). Long-eared Owls have long maintained a very elusive presence in Contra Costa County, with extremely sporadic reports going back decades, but they are likely present in tiny numbers each winter, at least locally

A **Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird** was at San Pablo Reservoir 1/4 (MDAS). All wintering Rufous/Allen's in Northern California are believed to be Rufous; but this date, although at the early extreme for northbound Allen's, is possible for Allen's. In other words, there is no way of knowing which it is.

The wintering **Lewis's Woodpecker** continued at Round Valley Regional Park near Brentwood through at least 2/4 (BB). This is the first Lewis's Woodpecker known to winter in the county in a decade.

A **Hermit Warbler** in Lafayette 12/22-24 was a rare winter find for Contra Costa (JT). A spectacular find for Contra Costa County was a male **Hooded Warbler** in Rossmoor, first found 1/15 (JJ) and still present through at least 2/5 (SG,TL). Although there are apparently five previous records for the county, this is the first for winter. Interestingly, the other five were all from Jewel Lake in Tilden



Park, and several of those actually summered

Single **White-throated Sparrows** were in residential Martinez (returning for the fourth consecutive winter; DK) and Moraga 1/5-1/9 (JT). Even more interesting was a report of an apparent Golden-crowned X White-throated Sparrow hybrid at the Tilden Park Botanical Gardens 12/19-1/16 (ES).

Observers: Bob Brandriff, George Finger, Brian Fitch, Steve Glover, Mary Jessup, Debbie Kershin, Jim Jardine, Tom Lee, Maury Stern, Emilie Strauss, Jim Tietz

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

Field Trip Reports (cont)

Bodega Bay, February 3—Seven birders enjoyed a beautiful morning at Bodega Bay. After seeing 68 species, including Red-necked Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser, and Rough-legged Hawk (the three Rs?), we ended the trip early. Five of us motored down to Stinson Beach to gawk at a bird so rare that the experts (as of this writing) are still not sure whether it is a Mongolian Plover or a Greater Sandplover. It posed cooperatively in the dozens of scopes that were trained on it. As a bonus, most of us were able to see a Palm Warbler and a Cape May Warbler nearby. What a day!—Fred Safier

News from

Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Visit Our Website at

<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>.

Last winter we kept hearing the question "where are the birds?" What a difference a year makes!

This winter it has been a bird feeding frenzy. American and Lesser Goldfinches may be at record levels. We began seeing large flocks of Pine Siskins in December, and they are still here. This irruptive species has not been seen in such large numbers for many years in Northern California.

Goldfinch and Siskins love thistle (niger) and sunflower seeds and will readily use bird feeders. White-crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos have been quite abundant. We have also received many reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches, Nuttall's woodpeckers, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees visiting peanut and suet feeders. American Robins and Cedar Waxwings have been devouring the toyon and pyracantha berries.

Anna's Hummingbirds have already had their first nesting of the year. After mating, the male has nothing to do with the nest building and rearing of the young. The female makes a nest out of lichen, lint, and downy plant fibers that is often held together with spider webs. She usually lays two eggs and incubates them 14-19 days. She feeds nectar and insects to the young for 18-23 days in the nest. The young are fledged and on their own 1-2 weeks later.

Chickadees and titmice are already starting to nest too. It's not too late to put out birdhouses. Both of these species, along with woodpeckers, nuthatches, bluebirds, wrens, and others readily use nesting boxes. Birdhouses should have drainage, ventilation, and clean-outs to 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 hand-out on the requirements for different species, come to WBU.

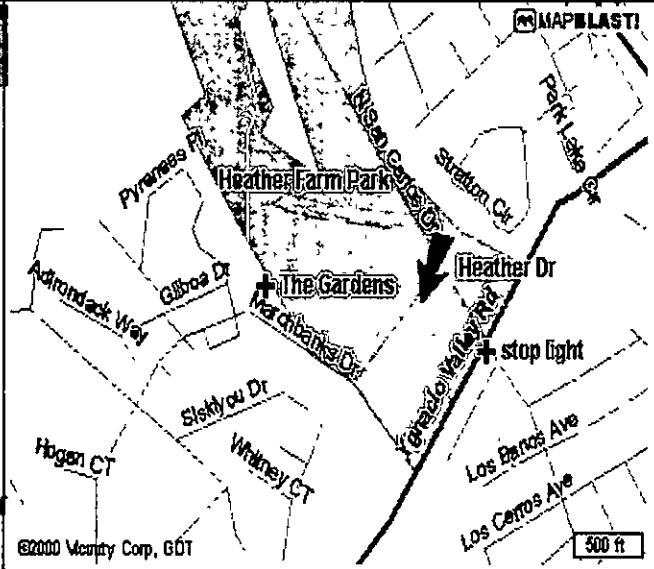
CALENDAR

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 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., March 16—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 Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olomo Dr., Concord, CA 94521. 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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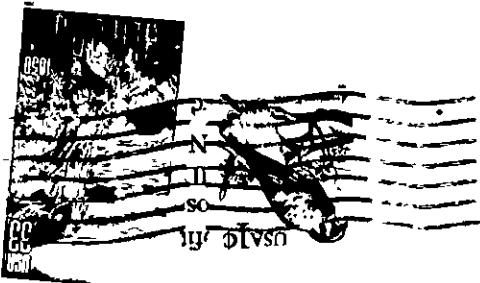
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Vol. 47, No. 8

Next Deadline: April 5

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

New President Needed!

MDAS needs a new President for the 2001-2002 program year. Why? Organizations need turnover at the Board level to keep ideas focused and fresh. Why now? I'm not seeking re-election. Personal needs dictate that I return immediately to education, the environment, and the community after spending 20+ years in high technology.

So, what's the job of MDAS President about? Today's President needs two capabilities: people and business management.

People management?

Our membership has diverse interests, concerns, and opinions. Members need to receive the value expected from MDAS—whether it be social, participative, contributory, or educational. The MDAS President works with the Board to ensure that member service is delivered.

Those with good intentions and those with less charitable intent also view our group as a community resource. On the positive side, we have many opportunities to contribute in the community—many more than we can fulfill. On many occasions, otherwise uninterested citizens or groups of citizens call the MDAS President requesting Audubon involvement when there's a problem in their backyard. People management skills are required to preserve the community relationships and focus the situations that
See President's Notes, cont. on p. 3

Upcoming Events:

April Program Features Granados and Raptors

Our April speaker will be Diana Granados from Native Bird Connection. Granados will discuss raptor species and bring live birds to help us learn identifying field marks.

Diana Granados is the former Director of the Live Collections at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. She is a member of the International Wildlife Rehabilitators Association and the American Zoological Association. She has over 20 years of experience in the culture of nonreleasable wildlife and in the training of volunteer assistants.

Native Bird Connection is a new venture that allows her to combine her skills in assisting institution with wildlife missions as well as to deliver educational programs to local groups that want to learn more conservation.



June Potluck

Plan now to attend our final program of the year, our annual potluck on Thursday, June 7. Traditionally members bring a few slides (no more than 10) to share, so now is the time to start going through your photographs and pulling out the best and most interesting shots!

Birding Information

Our speaker for Birding Information is Toni Fauver, local wildflower expert and author of two excellent wildflower guides: *Wildflower Walking in the Lakes Basin of the Northern Sierra* and *Wildflower Walks and Roads of the Sierra Gold Country*.

Her talk will concentrate on the wildflowers of the Gold Country, but there will be some mention of Mt. Diablo wildflowers as well.

Toni has taught wildflower classes and led field trips for years in the Diablo Valley. Her books will be available for purchase.

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will be Thursday, April 5, 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**Interior's Gale Norton: A Horror in the Making**by **Gloria Cannon**

In December 2000, President-elect George W. Bush announced that his choice for Secretary of the Interior would be Gale Norton, the former Attorney General of Colorado. His announcement unleashed a firestorm of controversy, and environmental organizations organized to oppose her confirmation. Despite this opposition, the Senate confirmed Gale Norton as Secretary of the Interior.

Interior Department Head

As Interior Secretary, Norton is responsible for the management of nearly half a billion acres of federal land, including the entire National Park system, the National Wildlife Refuge system, and vast tracts of other federal lands, mostly in the western region of the United States. She manages the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation (which controls the federal system of canals in California), Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Among the laws and regulations she is charged with enforcing are the National Environmental Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act. She has oversight responsibility for the Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan, the Everglades restoration plan, and, most important to California, the Cal-Fed agreements on restoring the San Francisco Bay and the Delta. She controls the amount of mining, oil drilling, timbering, and grazing allowed on public lands

Two Views of Norton

Gale Norton has been described as "an ideological hard-liner who see herself as a states' rights Joan of Arc leading the battle against the evil federal government" (Robert Cuddy, *Contra Costa Times*, 1/24/2001). The Sierra Club dubbed her "James Watt in skirts."

To the Libertarian Party, Gale Norton is "one giant leap for Libertarian-style

environmental policies. . . . Norton is a refreshing change of pace from the typical knee-jerk, anti-capitalism, tree-worshipping environmentalist," according to Steve Dasbach, the party's national director (Libertarian Party website at www.lp.org/pressarchive.php?function=view&record=177).

Her Career Choices

Norton is the first woman to serve as Secretary of the Interior. She is young—only 46—clearly on the Republican Party fast-track. She was born in Wichita, Kansas, in 1955. She graduated from the University of Denver in 1975 and received her law degree there in 1978.

Within a year, she was the Senior Attorney for the Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF), a conservative, anti-environmental legal foundation founded by James Watt. Watt was Ronald Reagan's controversial, anti-environment Interior Secretary; and he was described by the *Washington Post* as Norton's "former mentor."

According to Watt, Gale Norton sought out the MSLF. Watt and the MSLF support offshore oil drilling, oil and gas exploration in wilderness areas and wildlife refuges, opposed expanding national parks, and worked to limit federal control over land use. MSLF receives funding from powerful conservative interests, such as the Coors family, to pursue a "wise use" agenda of opening more public lands for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, mining, logging, and oil and gas exploration (*Washington Post*, 1/8/2001, *Denver Post*, 12/30/2000).

Libertarian Ties

Just out of law school in 1979, she joined the Libertarian Party and was a finalist for the party's national director in 1980. That year the Libertarians advocated the elimination of the National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and putting the

millions of acres they protect under state and private ownership (AP, 10/27/1980)

She left the Libertarian Party in 1980 and joined the Republican Party. "Yes, I was an active Libertarian. But then I decided to go into practical politics," Norton said (*Denver Post*, 2/13/1994).

Conservative Ties

For two years (1983-1984), she worked for the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. In 1984, she worked at the Political Economy Research Center (PERC) in Bozeman, Montana. The website of this organization displays the motto, "Free market solutions to environmental problems" (www.perc.org). One of

See Norton: Bush' Choice, cont. on p. 3

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Norton: Bush's Choice *(continued from p. 2)*

PERC's publications is intended for children to "counter the environmental movement's indoctrination of the nation's youth in the public schools" (www.nationalcenter.org/GreenPages897.html).

According to Thomas Kiernan of the National Parks Conservation Association, PERC has explored ways of selling off national parks (NPCA press statement, 12/29/2000).

In 1986, Norton worked in Watt's Department of the Interior, where she authored a paper that supported opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration (*Washington Post*, 1/8/2001).

By 1989, she was a senior research fellow at the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy. While there, she spoke at a legal forum. Her speech focused on the need to compensate property owners whose property is "taken" by the government due to regulations limiting the use of property containing wetlands or endangered species. Norton acknowledged that such compensation requirements would cripple the environmental enforcement, stating "I view that as something positive." Norton said compensation "provides fairness to the person who is harmed by . . . government action" and called for a "reasonable right to use our property. . . . We might even go so far as to recognize a homesteading right to pollute or make noise in an area" (*Associated Press*, 1/9/2001).

Colorado's Attorney General

Norton served two terms (1991-1999) as Colorado's Attorney General where she implemented a "self-auditing" procedure that allows polluters to evade environmental fines. She argued that industries that have the potential to pollute rivers and the environment should police themselves. In a case started by her predecessor, she did force the federal polluter, Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a chemical weapons complex that is a Superfund site, to follow stricter state standards in cleanup efforts. Others say that she dropped the ball on the case (*Denver Post*, 6/25/1995)

In 1992, Norton investigated the Summitville Consolidated Mining Corporation for spilling cyanide waste from a gold mine. The spill killed 17 miles of river and forced an emergency takeover of the gold mine site by the EPA. The *New York Times* reported that Colorado had to rely on the federal government to pursue the case and that Norton failed to pursue criminal penalties against mine owners even though state laws were broken (*NY Times*, 1/7/2001).

Forced by term limits to leave the Attorney General's office, Norton went to private law practice. One of her clients was NL Industries (formerly the National Lead Company). In that role, Norton defended NL in 75 cases involving Superfund or other toxic-waste sites plus a dozen lawsuits involving children allegedly poisoned by lead paint in New Orleans, New York City, Cleveland, Baltimore, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Rhode Island, and Erie County, New York (*Denver Post*, 1/5/2001).

Pseudo-environmentalism

She co-founded (in 1997) and served as National Chair for the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy (CREA). This pseudo-environmental group has been described as a "Who's Who of anti-environmental Republicans" and has been blasted by the Sierra Club. The gala kick-off for the organization was funded by coal, chemical, mining, and chlorine industry groups (*Washington Post*, 1/8/2001, *Atlanta Journal*, 6/29/1998; *Washington Times*, 7/14/1998).

As chair of the CREA, Norton stated, "We support market-oriented, property rights-based, locally controlled solutions" (*Chemical Market Reporter*, 8/17/1998).

Previous Testimony on NEPA

In 1998, she testified on the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) before the House Committee on Resources. There Norton stated that the government must do a better job of balancing societal needs with environ-

mental protection. She recommended that Congress "start the devolution of authority in the environmental area back to the States by amending NEPA. Specifically, Congress should require that agencies consult at an early state with state and local governments in developing environmental impact statements. It should be clear in NEPA that an environmental impact statement is not adequate if it does not address fully state and local concerns."

She objected to the "massive proliferation of federal environmental requirements." A healthy environment is important, but "we also need a productive society that fulfills social and economic needs," she stated (resourcescommittee.house.gov/105cong/fullcomm/98mart18/norton.htm).

See Norton, *continued on p. 7*

President's Notes

continued from p. 1

reach the Board, so that MDAS Board membership remains a job that volunteers are willing to do.

Business management?

Many of you may be surprised to learn that the MDAS Board is responsible for an independent non-profit corporation, including the finances and operational issues. Today's MDAS needs to be a self-sustaining business. The next President has some significant but very achievable challenges in carrying forward the financial independence that the Board has begun to establish.

If you have some people and business management experience and are interested in the position, please contact Shirley Ellis at 925-938-3703. Don't delay. Elections are coming up fast. Best wishes,
Carol

CoCo County Breeding Bird Atlas Effort Resumes

by Steve Glover

I hope all of you Atlasers have had a nice winter and that you are roaring and ready to start atlasing. We are already starting our fourth year! In a few months we will be 80 percent done with the Contra Costa Breeding Bird Atlas! It can be scary how fast time flies by even on a 5-year project like this one.

Please allow me to gently encourage you to accomplish as much as possible this season since next year will be our last season, and I have envisioned a scenario where next year will be sort of a wrap-up season with specific species and blocks targeted by as many of you as possible.

Is your current block complete?

During the past three years we have done a sensational job, and a great many of the blocks, particularly in the western two-thirds of the county, can already be called complete. A few others are in need of a bit more "fine-tuning." There are still a few suburban blocks in central county that need quite a bit of work so if anyone would like to tackle one of those, please let me know. I think that most are in the Concord area.

If you feel that you have covered your block so thoroughly that you simply can't add anything more or it would require an inordinate amount of time for one or two confirmations, let me know, and we will place you somewhere where your time would be better spent. It is very likely that we will be able to find a place for you that won't increase your driving distances too much.

If someone is assigned to your block . . .

Although it is unlikely that someone new will be assigned to help you with your block, it is possible, and all I can do is hope that no feelings will be hurt. Every atlaser differs in birding skills, ability to hike long distances and

climb steep hills, and amounts of time to dedicate to atlasing. Like all atlas projects, this atlas is a team effort and who confirms what does not affect its success. I know that all of you are doing your absolute best, so please do not be offended if someone new is assigned to your block. That person is being sent to help you, not to replace you!

Atlas Funding

Although this is my least favorite part of the whole project (as you could probably guess since I never bring it up!) the good news is that Mt. Diablo Audubon Society has generously donated \$1000 from this year's budget to the Atlas project. Obviously, this is just a start, but it is a huge start.

Red Siskin Recovery Project

The romantic Latin name, *Carduelis cucullata*, is almost as beautiful as the bird it classifies. Red Siskins are small, vermilion-breasted birds with jet-black wings, tails, and hoods. In Latin American countries, the Red Siskin is lovingly referred to as el cardenalito or "little cardinal." It vied with the troupial to become the national bird of Venezuela.

Red Siskins once enjoyed a wide range that extended from northeastern Colombia, across northern Venezuela, and on to Trinidad. Now heavy exploitation from the caged bird trade has made them endangered in the forests of Venezuela, Trinidad, and northeastern Colombia. Current field studies reveal only two areas of habitat in Venezuela where birds still remain, a small colony in Colombia, and a scattered feral population in Puerto Rico.

The Red Siskin has been a flagship species regarding conservation efforts. It became the first bird to be protected by Venezuelan law in 1944, which restricted their capture and export. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listed the Red Siskin as endangered in 1952. After the passage of the U.S. Endangered Species Act, interstate commerce of this species required federal Captive-Bred Wildlife Registration permits.

In 1985, the Venezuelan Audubon Society's Conservation Committee asked the American Federation of Aviculture to assist in conservation efforts for the Red Siskin. That request led to the American Federation of Aviculture Red Siskin Recovery Project (RSRP), whose goal is

to create a sustaining and stable captive breeding population of Red Siskins to meet the needs of commercial aviculture and thus relieve pressure on wild populations. The participants contribute a portion of the offspring to the program for propagation purposes.

The recovery project's long-term goal is to reintroduce the birds in Venezuela. But first safeguards to prevent smuggling must be in place. For now, the recovery project is trying to sustain the Red Siskin population, at least in captivity. Captive-raised birds may become the parents of birds that are reintroduced to the wild.

The breeding stock is composed of privately held birds and those on loan from the AFA-RSRP. Project participants must meet an established set of requirements before being inducted into the program. These requirements include breeding experience with passerines, knowledge and experience of proper aviary and flock management, a working relationship with an avian veterinarian, and the sincere desire to assist in the recovery of this species.

The American Federation of Aviculture welcomes your support and participation in the Red Siskin Recovery Project and general avicultural endeavors. To become involved in the AFA-RSRP, contact the Project director, Dr. Darrel K. Styles at: E-mail: dstyles@cvm.tamu.edu Or U.S. mail: American Federation of Aviculture/Red Siskin Recovery Project c/o Dr. Darrel K. Styles P.O. Box 56218 Phoenix, AZ 85079-6218

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.

Thursday, April 5, Borges Ranch.

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of Borges Ranch, off Castle Rock Rd. in Walnut Creek. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for more information.

Saturday, April 7, Garin RP. Carpool leaves 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 m north to El Pintado. Meet in the parking lot at end of Garin Rd., 8 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

Wednesday, April 11, Lake Lagunitas.

Carpool leaves 7:15 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in parking lot at lake (entrance fee). 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. In downtown Fairfax, turn left and then right onto Broadway, 1/2 block; turn left onto Bolinas Ave., and left again onto Old Fairfax-Bolinas Rd. Watch for signs for park entrance. Both land and water birds, spring migrants. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 2

Thursday, April 19, Ida Clayton Road.

Carpool leaves 7 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. The carpooling is needed due to limited parking on some roads. Leader: call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for information. Category 1

Saturday, April 21, Pine Canyon. Meet in parking lot at end of Castle Rock Rd, Walnut Creek, at 8 a.m. Hike up Pine Canyon. Carry lunch and liquids. Spring migrants. Leader: Pat MacEachern
Category 3

Thursday, April 26, 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

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.

Working to Conserve Wildlife Habitat in Our Community

Communities that are enriched with green space and environmental health are providing a critical connection with nature that is becoming scarce in traditional developments. To help communities to create and preserve wildlife habitat, the National Wildlife Federation and Wild Birds Unlimited are training a team of community volunteers to serve as Habitat Stewards volunteers.

These volunteers will make themselves available as resource persons to assist members of their community to create an environment that is beneficial for humans and for wildlife. Specifically, Habitat Stewards volunteers will help others create and restore wildlife habitat in backyards, schoolyards, and other private and public areas in the community

Enhancing and conserving wildlife habitat in our communities helps to foster a sense

of ecological awareness and responsibility in children and adults alike, and provides limitless hands-on learning opportunities, as well as the ability for individuals to positively impact their local environment. Native wildlife, citizens of the community, and neighboring communities all feel the rewards of efforts to preserve wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The training includes comprehensive study on topics ranging from butterfly gardening to using native plants. It will be offered locally on June 9, 16, 23, 30. Participants must be able to attend all classes to qualify.

When: June 9, 16, 23, and 30:
10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Where: Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill, CA
Interested? Please contact Ruth Girill, (510) 528-8358

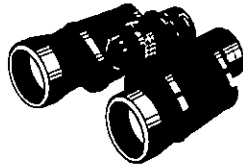
Observations *by Steve Glover*

Since the weather was rather poor throughout February (especially on the weekends!), there were very few sightings submitted this month, so much of this month's column will be devoted to seabirds inside the Bay, a phenomenon more common than many might assume

First, the non-seabird sightings. Six **Hooded Mergansers**, one male and five females, were at the Moraga Country Club on 2/20 (JC). At least two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** continued at Round Valley Regional Park west of Brentwood through at least 2/18 (ES,MM). Lewis's Woodpeckers have been virtually accidental in the county in the past decade. The male **Hooded Warbler**, the most outstanding bird of the winter, continued at Rossmoor through at least 2/18 (JP). A male **Tricolored Blackbird** was an unlikely visitor to a Brentwood backyard on 2/12 (JB).

Although seabirds are quite rare overall inside the Bay, at least 19 species have been seen in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. These include nearly all of the species typically seen on Monterey Bay pelagic trips. The vast majority of the records are of a handful of species, including Parasitic and Pomarine Jaeger and Common Murre—these species most often being found during the late summer and fall months. Less common birds that have still been found almost annually include Ashy Storm-Petrel (though there are still no records for Contra Costa County), Pigeon Guillemot, and Marbled Murrelet. Amongst the rarest of the rare have been Pink-footed Shearwater, Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, Magnificent Frigatebird, and even a Tufted Puffin!

Although most of our seabird records have come from July to November, occasional winter storms have been strong enough to blow seabirds into the Bay, and such was the case this year in late February and early March. On February 22, Denise Wight found a dark-phase Northern Fulmar at Emeryville, Alameda County. The only previous records were one found dead at Coyote Hills, Fremont, 5/9/76; one at Hayward



Regional Shoreline (hereafter H.R.S.) 3/23/91; and one inland in Contra Costa County 5/14/95. On 2/24 I visited Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline near Richmond, Contra Costa County, hoping that strong winds might have blown something else into the Bay. My efforts were rewarded with a dark shearwater and a Cassin's Auklet. The shearwater was most likely a Sooty although Short-tailed could not be ruled out. This is the first record of any shearwater for Contra Costa, and the only records for Alameda County of Sooty were in late July and early August when they would be more expected. The Cassin's Auklet was the first recorded in Contra Costa; and when it flew south, it became just the third for Alameda County, the previous two being Lake Merritt 8/19/90 and H.R.S. 5/1/95. On 2/27 Bob Richmond again visited the

Richmond area and found two more wonderful rarities. A Leach's Storm-Petrel was the second for Contra Costa, the previous record being of one picked up alive in Orinda (!!) 10/10/60. There are four Alameda records: two on 5/17/1917 at Oakland, 11/28/64 at H.R.S.; 11/14/92 at H.R.S.; and 9/23/95 at H.R.S. On that same day, Bob also found Contra Costa's first Rhinoceros Auklet swimming near Brook's Island. There are at least two Alameda County records: 9/17/89 at Berkeley and 9/11/94 at H.R.S.

Observers: Jeanne Bonner, Judi Cooper, Steve Glover, Mike McCloskey, J.D. Phillips, Emilie Strauss

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) 661-7422

Chapter Says Farewell to Gifford Young

Longtime MDAS Board member and dear friend, Gifford Young, passed away on March 1. Gifford played such a key role in our Chapter that it is not possible to list all his accomplishments. For the last few years, he managed our member database with meticulous accuracy and conscientiousness. He also organized the crew that met monthly to prepare the *Quail* for mailing.

He distributed copies of *the Quail* to libraries, faithfully attended general meetings and Board meetings, and contributed his original ideas to solving the Chapter's issues. He carried out all of his responsibilities with a kind heart and rare graciousness.

He will be greatly missed by all of us.

His family has asked that memorial donations be given to MDAS.



Norton *cont. from p. 3*

Under this arrangement says Doug Kendall, founder and director of Community Rights Counsel, a nonprofit law firm. "Either the government would have to pay polluters not to pollute, and thus the Bush administration would have to set up a corporate welfare program so large that it would make a farm bureau lobbyist blush, or it would repeal most of our health, safety, and environmental laws" (Kendall, *CC Times*, 1/13/2001). This latter option is the one Norton apparently prefers. She has stated that "if the government must pay compensation when its actions interfere with property rights, then its regulatory actions must be limited" (*CC Times*, 1/13/2001).

Beware of Budget Cuts

One of the easiest ways for Norton to achieve the goals that have been recurrent themes in her speeches and activities is to work with a Republican Congress to strip funding from environmental programs. No new laws would be required; no lawsuits would be fought. There simply would be no money for environmental protection. Already the proposed Bush budget cuts the EPA and Interior Department by at least 4% (*CC Times*, 3/11/2001).

In her confirmation hearings to be Secretary of the Interior, Norton said that she was proud of her record. She described herself as "a compassionate conservative and a passionate conservationist." She repeatedly stressed her willingness to cooperate and seek consensus. But her writings and her actions tell another story.

Although she professed sympathy to goals of the Endangered Species Act, she never espoused enforcing the law. A critical component of the Endangered Species Act ensures that habitat modifications on private land do not harm protected species. Norton, by the way, is an advisory board member for Defenders of Property Rights, which has attacked the Endangered Species Act (*ABQ Journal*, 1/14/2001, at www.abqjournal.com).

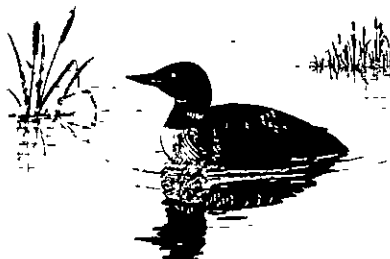
Beware of Cal-Fed Changes

Here in California, the Cal-Fed Program has been a joint effort of the federal and state governments to reach a compromise that will protect and restore the Delta and manage the water supply shipped to farmers and urban areas of California. Many farmers and ranchers have complained that the compromise makes the environment more important than their livelihoods. Under Norton, the Bureau of Reclamation could easily reverse course, relinquishing control of water to the state of California, which proposed a Peripheral Canal a few decades ago.

An area of most concern to environmentalists is the prospect of oil drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Norton, like George W. Bush, has supported the use of public lands for resource extraction and has worked to open the pristine, ecologically sensitive Alaskan refuge to oil drilling (*ABQ Journal*, 1/14/2001, at www.abqjournal.com).

"Gale has a very balanced view about multiple use of public lands," said New Mexico Republican Party chairman John Dendahl, who knows her. "You certainly won't see in Gale Norton any tendency to lean over backwards to use the Endangered Species Act to shut down human uses" (*ABQ Journal*, 1/14/2001, at www.abqjournal.com).

In addition to the sources cited here, see the Natural Resources Council website which has an extensive, detailed profile of Gale Norton and her positions: www.nrdc.org/legislation/norton/app1.asp and at www.nrdc.org/legislation/norton/findings.asp. The full text of Gail Norton's confirmation hearing is at washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/elections/norton_hearingtext011801.htm. (note: all websites referred to in this article begin with <http://>).



Calendar of Birding Events

Pittsburg Birdwalk

City of Pittsburg's Leisure Services is sponsoring a **free family birdwalk** at Buchanan Park, Pittsburg, 8:30-10 a.m., Saturday, March 31. The leaders are Joel Summerhill and Gloria Cannon. A limited number of loaner binoculars are available. Children must be at least seven years old. Meet at the Community Building at Buchanan Road and Harbor St. Call 753-0862 for more information.

Mt. Wanda Birdwalks

Ranger Cheryl Abel will lead two birdwalks, **April 14** and **May 12**, 8:30-11 a.m., on beautiful Mt. Wanda. Terrain is steep, so wear comfortable clothes and sturdy walking shoes, and bring water. Meet the ranger at the Cal-Trans Park-n-Ride lot at the corner of Alhambra Ave. and Franklin Canyon Road, Martinez. For more info, call the John Muir National Historic Site at (925) 228-8860.

Heron Days Festival

The 7th annual Heron Days are Saturday and Sunday, April 14 and 15, at Clear Lake. The event includes viewing two major heron rookeries from pontoon boats, slide shows and lectures, nature walks, children's activities, and food booths. Boat rides cost \$10 for the Anderson Marsh trip, \$5 for the Rodman Slough pontoon boat trip, and \$20 for kayak rentals. Reservations are required. Call the Lake County Visitor Information Center at 800-525-3743.

George Miller's Environmental Meeting

Congressman George Miller's Fourth Annual Environmental Town Hall will be Saturday, May 12, at Black Diamond Mines. The event times are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with the Brown Bag lunch at noon, followed by the town hall meeting from 12:30-1:30.

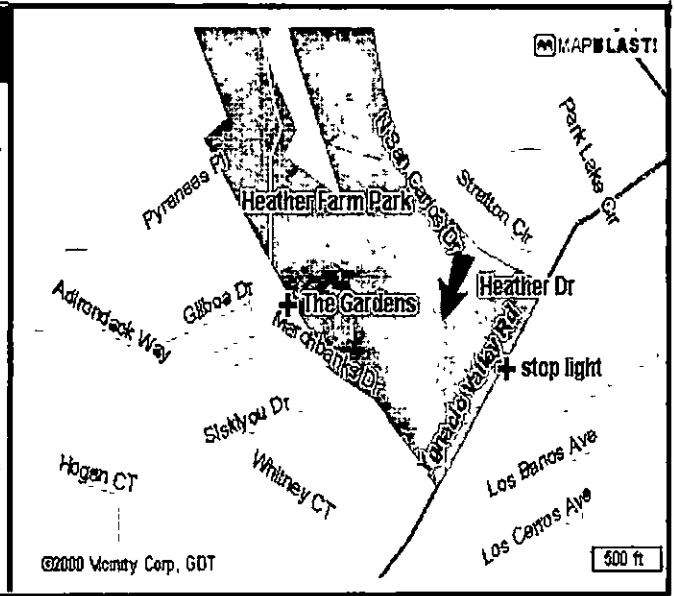
CALENDAR

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 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

Thursday, June 7—MDAS Potluck

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 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521 To subscribe to the *Quail*, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053 Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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May 2001

Vol. 47, No. 9

Next Deadline: June 7

MDAS Seeks Candidates for Chapter President

If you are interested in serving a one-year term as chapter president and working to further conservation and environmental education in Contra Costa, contact Shirley Ellis, 925-938-3703.

Chapter elections have been postponed until the June meeting.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

Reading for Meaning

I've been reading *The Search for Meaning* (Naylor et. al) and *On the Mesa* (John Nichols). This reading selection results from a convergence of birthdays, deaths, and yet another 4,000-square-foot home appearing in Dougherty Valley, my "next-door neighbor." You remember Dougherty Valley—the development that doesn't have a significant impact on the traffic, water supply, or the power grid.

The Search for Meaning moves the reader to understand that meaning comes not through having, but by being. If you're a birder, although having lots of books about birds is great, and having a Land Rover to get to them might be okay, what's really important is that you spend time with the birds that you love. Having the Land Rover in your garage won't do it for you. You are who you are, and just possessing things won't make you happy.

See *President's Notes*, continued on p. 5

Upcoming Events:

California Butterflies Featured in May Program

Our May program features a return visit by Steve Cochrane, who spoke about the San Francisco Estuary Project in December 2000. This time, San Francisco area butterflies are the focus of his program.

Cochrane will explain the growth cycle of the butterfly—from egg, to caterpillar, to chrysalis, and finally, to the emergence of a full-fledged butterfly—a miraculous transformation that takes only a few short weeks.

Butterflies are equipped with a finely tuned and highly sensitive sense of smell. They can identify their favorite plants from miles away and travel for hours to taste the nectar of the flowers. Butterflies suck out nectar as food, traveling from flower to flower, carrying pollen with them. This close relationship is one of nature's finest natural cycles.

Not only are butterflies attracted to specific flowers, but they also seem to favor specific colors. For instance, yellow Sulphur butterflies prefer yellow cassia, which affords them excellent camouflage among the flowers. This relationship is twofold because the yellow cassia is also the Sulphur caterpillars' favored food.

Steve Cochrane is an excellent speaker and teacher who has many years of experience in natural history. He has been a ranger-naturalist at Olympic National Park, at the Headlands Institute in Marin, Director of the Hayward Interpretive

Shoreline Center, and is now Director of Education for the San Francisco Estuary Project. He has degrees in Ecology and Natural Sciences. For more information on butterflies, see the websites listed on p. 4.

Toni Fauver, our April speaker, generously donated her honorarium back to the chapter. Many thanks, Toni!

Birding Information

World traveler and past MDAS president Jimm Edgar will speak on bird migration during the Birding Information portion of our program. May 12 is International Migratory Bird Day, and Jimm will talk about the challenges facing migratory birds as they search for food and a place to rest while battling changing weather. Jimm is widely recognized as one of the most skilled MDAS birders. He is also well-known for his dry wit and is sure to entertain us while informing us about migratory birds.

MDAS Meeting Information

The next MDAS General Meeting will Thursday, May 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

Plan to come Annual Potluck, June 7!

Connections

by Gloria Cannon

A New Era for LAFCO?

Local environmentalists are heartened by indications that Contra Costa County's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will limit urban expansion

The seven-member LAFCO Board decides whether cities can annex more land. County Supervisor and LAFCO chairwoman Gayle Uilkema has proposed revising every city's sphere of influence to match the urban limit lines.

The urban limit line is a County-adopted regulation that indefinitely precludes development outside the line. Although LAFCO is not bound by the line, it has a policy to honor the boundaries.

Uilkema may have the votes to hold the line on urban limits. According to the *Contra Costa Times*, LAFCO Commissioner David Jameson said, "If we say no to building on our open spaces then we can encourage development closer to jobs and transit."

Millie Greenberg, who was chosen by Contra Costa's mayors to represent the cities on LAFCO, has called for honoring the urban limit line.

In the near future, LAFCO will be deciding on annexing Roddy Ranch to Antioch and allowing developments on the outskirts of Pittsburg and El Sobrante.

Compassionate Conservatism Declares War on the Environment

While you were distracted by headlines about tax cuts, George Bush and his hench-team of Dick Cheney, Gale Norton, and Christie Todd Whitman declared war on the environment. Former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner said, "The breadth and speed of some of their anti-environmental actions has been stunning"

Recent Bush decisions include:

- Preventing higher water quality standards for arsenic in drinking water despite a 10-year study of its dangers.
- Backing out of international agreements (the Kyoto agreement) on gas emissions causing global warming.
- Reversing a campaign pledge to limit carbon dioxide emissions.
- Reducing funding of environmental enforcement and scientific research.

Wilderness and Oil

An energy task force, headed by ex-oilman Vice President Dick Cheney is reviewing a draft plan that will open millions of acres of public land to new oil and gas development in the Rocky Mountain area.

The 25-page draft report reflects recommendations from the Interior Department headed by Gale Norton. The plan leaves little doubt that the Bush administration is homing in on the West as a source of new energy supplies.

George Bush told reporters recently, "There's a mentality that says you can't explore and protect land. We're going to change that attitude."

"What they're proposing simply is not necessary," said Bill Meadows, president of the Wilderness Society. "There's no need to destroy our nation's wilderness areas, because it will not do anything to address our nation's energy needs." —from NY Times.com

Other reports indicate that Bush has oil plans for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (of course) and off the Gulf Coast of Florida. Although the administration is justifying its actions by pointing at the California energy crisis, it will take 10 years to develop new oil fields.

The Fox Is at Henhouse Door

Bush has asked Congress to kill a provision of the 1973 Endangered Species Act that allows citizens to sue to force the protection of threatened species

Under the president's proposal, Interior Secretary Gale Norton would have sole discretion to list endangered species and to set new criteria for imperiled wildlife.

This proposal would be particularly detrimental to California, where 92% of all endangered-species listings in the last nine years were as a result of either a citizen petition or a court order or most often both, according to the Defenders of Wildlife

More than 1,200 species are listed as endangered or threatened, and 250 others are awaiting review —from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 12

The Quail

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International Migratory Bird Day Slated for May 12!

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), May 12, is an opportunity to join in a nationwide celebration of a unique aspect of American wildlife—migratory birds. IMBD was created by Partners in Flight to foster an awareness of the millions of birds that migrate through the United States in the spring and fall as well as how and where they live and how they can be conserved.

These neotropical migrants reside here only for a brief time on their way to somewhere else. Almost 350 species of migratory birds spend their summers in Canada and the United States and their winters in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Most are common birds—warblers, tanagers, thrushes, and orioles. Although many species are not in immediate danger, some are declining in numbers.

Habitat destruction is one of the leading causes for the decline for all types of wildlife. Preserving these habitats—forests, grasslands, and wetlands—must reach beyond being concerned for the rapid losses taking place in Latin America. It must also center on what is occurring in our own backyards, here in California and the rest of the United States. Habitat along a bird's migrations route is just as vital as the habitat found on its wintering and breeding grounds.

The main idea behind IMBD is to create a day in which an awareness of migrants is brought to the front. How can you do this?

- Take a non-birder on a bird walk.
- Help plant some trees or work on a wetlands restoration project
- Build a nest box.
- Put up some bird feeders.
- Let your elected officials from the City Council to Congress know about the importance of environmental issues—now more than ever your voice is needed.

In 1990, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation began a program called Partners in Flight as a cooperative effort of numerous organizations whose purpose is to improve our understanding of neotropical migrants. Be sure to check out the Partners in Flight website at <<http://www.pif.nbs.gov>>.



Warblers are just a few of the many neotropical species that migrate between North America and Central and South America.

Link between Coffee and Birds

Your simple sip of a morning cup of coffee has become an environmental and economic statement.

The theme for IMBD 2001 is making the "Coffee Connection." On traditional coffee plantations, coffee shrubs are grown under a canopy of trees (hence the term "shade-grown coffee"). Shade trees planted around and in coffee plants help to maintain soil quality, reduce the need for fertilizers, and provide sanctuary for migratory birds. In many parts of the neotropics, shade-grown coffee farms are the only forest-like habitat remaining.

Unfortunately, due to the increasing demand for coffee worldwide, many traditional plantations have been converted to high-yield, sun-tolerant coffee plantations, which are devoid of trees. Studies have found that the diversity of birds and other wildlife plummets when coffee plantations are converted from shade to sun.

Sun-grown coffee, while yielding higher short-term output, requires higher levels of fertilizer and plant replacement, suffers increased risk of failure due to drought, and leads to soil damage. More forest is destroyed to expand coffee fields.

Many conservation organizations, coffee companies, and individuals are interested in promoting shade-grown coffee to consumers. MDAS serves shade-grown coffee at all its meetings.

As a birder, become an educated and aware consumer:

- Learn about the issues: shade-coffee vs. sun-coffee, organic, fair-trade, sustainable. The American Birding Association has a website at <<http://americanbirding.org/programs/consbcof3a.htm>> that defines the terms associated with shade-grown coffee.
- Ask for shade-grown coffee when you are at restaurants and espresso stands
- Support organizations that work these important coffee issues

Carol Browner Elected to NAS Board of Directors

Carol M. Browner, the longest serving Administrator in the history of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been elected to the National Audubon Society's Board of Directors. "Carol Browner has an amazing ability to create broad-based support for environmental and health issues, and her skills will be indispensable in Audubon's goal of developing 1,000 nature centers by the year 2020," said Audubon President and CEO John Flicker. "Carol's experience and knowledge make her a major asset to the board. We're honored to welcome her to the Audubon family."

"I am excited and proud to have been elected to Audubon's Board of Directors," said Ms. Browner. "I share Audubon's philosophy of connecting people with nature. I look forward to helping develop nature centers in all American communities, especially those that are underserved. These centers will be vital in helping children and adults learn about their place in the world around them."

Administrator Browner's career in public service spans two decades. She was appointed EPA Administrator by President Clinton in January 1993 and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Ms. Browner directed the agency for eight years in its mission to protect public health and the environment by safeguarding the nation's air, water, and land. Prior to her leadership of the EPA, she was Secretary of Florida's Department of Environmental Regulation. Earlier, she was legislative director to Albert Gore, Jr., and served on the staff of Senator Lawton Chiles.

Audubon Partner in Million-Dollar Wetlands Restoration

The National Audubon Society has received a million-dollar North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, allowing NAS to launch a program to restore and enhance wetlands and uplands in the historic Tulare Basin of the southern Central Valley of California.

The NAWCA grant, the first to apply to the southern San Joaquin, will support the acquisition and restoration of wetlands on 2,762 acres; the restoration of an additional 200 acres; and the enhancement of more than 22,400 acres. Ducks Unlimited, Inc., (DU) will partner with Audubon to deliver the projects.

"Historic Goose Lake, along with Tulare, Kern, and Buena Vista Lakes, once provided homes for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds. Today, these areas are dry in all but the wettest of winters. This project allows a desperately needed restoration of what was once among the nation's most significant wetland habitats," says Audubon-California Director Dan Taylor. "We look forward to working with Ducks Unlimited to help this area recover its natural resource value."

Less than 1 percent of the Tulare Basin's historic 520,000 acres of wetlands and seasonal wetlands has survived agriculture and development. The grant is expected to have major, long-term environmental benefits to waterfowl, shorebirds, and mammals. A total of 214 bird species have been counted in the region's remaining wetlands.

Partners contributing to the habitat rescue effort include the Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, private landowners, the Semi-tropic Water District, and DU. Partner funds and matching funds total over \$11 million of the \$12.78 million proposal. The effort to create permanent and seasonal wetlands hinges, in part, on the pipeline project by the Semi-tropic Water District. The pipeline will play a major role in supplying water, particularly during drought periods.

Comment on Preliminary IBAs Sought

With the help of dozens of experts throughout the state, Audubon-California has completed a list of nearly 300 potential Important Bird Areas ("IBAs"), representative of the wealth of bird diversity in the state. California's IBA program, modeled after similar efforts in other states (and in countries around the world), seeks to guide future bird conservation activities by drawing attention to critical habitats and regions for birds, using criteria such as concentrations of sensitive species, large numbers of particular groups of birds (e.g., shorebirds) and the presence of rare or unique habitats.

A list of preliminary IBAs for the state has been posted on the Audubon-California's website for comment. Daniel Cooper, Audubon-California biologist, is asking that you provide your comments and suggestions soon because Audubon wants to finalize the list and prepare accounts of each site for publication.

To view the list, go to: <http://www.Audubon-ca.org>. At the website, click on "Conservation" (left side, item under "Web Pages"), and then on "IBA Program" (top, far right). For a hardcopy of the preliminary IBAs, contact Daniel Cooper, Biologist, Audubon-California, The Audubon Center, 6042 Monte Vista St., Los Angeles, CA 90042, or call 323-254-0252.

Fascinated by Butterflies?

Can't wait until the general meeting? For more information about butterflies, visit these websites:

- The butterfly website at <http://butterflywebsite.com>
- Children's butterfly site at <http://www.mesc.usgs.gov/butterfly/Butterfly.html>
- Attracting butterflies and other wildlife to your backyard at <http://www.butterflies.com>

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 3, Mitchell Canyon. Meet at 9 a.m. in Mitchell Canyon parking lot. There is a 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. Spring migrants—Lazuli Bunting, Western Tanager, etc. Usually hot; carry water and lunch. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 3

Saturday, May 5, Mines Road. Because of limited parking along Mines Road, carpooling is essential. Carpools leave LaGonda Way in Danville at 7:30 a.m. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again. 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. Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, Costa's Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Lawrence's Goldfinch are possible. Leader: Hugh Harvey, 932-4715
Category 1

Wednesday, May 9, Mt. Diablo. Carpool leaves 8 a.m. from LaGonda Way and El Pintado in Danville (see May 5th trip). Meet at 8:30 a.m. in first parking lot on left after entering South Gate. Park entrance fee. Sage and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, spring migrants. Leader: Jimm Edgar, 510-658-2330
Category 2

Thursday, May 17, Napa River Ecological Preserve. Carpool leaves 7:30 a.m. from southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. From SR29 in Napa Valley, take Madison St. exit east in Yountville; go one block north on Yount St. and go right on Yountville Cross Road. Parking lot is on left about 100 yards before the Napa River bridge.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 2

Saturday, May 19, 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. on Cypress Rd. just beyond the Shortstop Market in Oakley. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, left onto Cypress Rd. Usually hot! Blue Grosbeak, Black-chinned Hummingbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat, maybe Burrowing Owl. Leader: Fred Safier, 925-937-2906
Category 2

Wednesday, May 23, West Briones. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking lot on the right hand side of the west entrance road, off Bear Creek Rd. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Category 2

May 31, Thursday, Caswell Memorial State Park. Carpool leaves from LaGonda on El Pintado (see May 5th trip) at 7 a.m. Caswell Memorial SP is located along the Stanislaus River near Ripon. East on I-580 and I-205, north on I-5 east again on SR 120, south on Hwy 99, take the Austin Rd. exit and go south to road's end at park entrance. Park entrance fee. Be prepared for mosquitoes and hot weather. The park's 258 acres protect riparian oak woodland and a number of endangered animal species. Bank Swallows have been seen. Leader: Maury Stern, 925-284-5980
Category 2

Plan now for the MDAS weekend trip to Yuba Pass. The trip will be Saturday and Sunday, June 23-24. Saturday at Yuba Pass for mountain birds. Sunday in the Sierra Valley for basin birds. This is one of MDAS's most popular trips.

You can reserve a motel room in Sierra City: Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916)

862-1151; Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110; Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. Or if you don't want to miss anything, make camping reservations at Chapman Creek and Yuba Pass. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 925-254-05486.
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.

President's Notes,

continued from p. 1

On the Mesa shares many views of a place beloved by John Nichols. The Mesa speaks to who he is and makes him happy. As power lines and development threaten the place from which his soul gathers strength, the reader shares the struggle, as there is someplace like this for all of us that love wildlife.

If there are enough of us who can say "I don't need that to be happy!" about the things we buy and the number of children we have, the places we love will be here for the next generation to rely on for strength. They will surely need it. If you are for conservation, you must find your own way to share this message with others. As Margaret Mead said, "One person surely can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." Surely, sharing this view is a step towards having a meaningful life.

Happy birding!
—Carol

Observations *by Steve Glover*

A **Cattle Egret** was along Willow Pass Rd. near the PG&E plant on 4/8 (SG). There are just a handful of county records west of the Antioch Bridge.

Eight **Black Brant** were at Brooks Island near Richmond on 4/8 (AR). Although brant are quite scarce in the county, nearly all records are from this exact location.

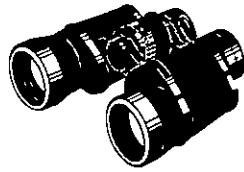
The breeding population of **Wood Ducks** in Contra Costa is exploding in recent years with most of the credit likely due to an ambitious nest-box program. At least three on 3/31 (DL) and two pairs on 4/5 (NW) were at Upper San Leandro Reservoir near Moraga, one of the locations included in the nest-box program. Apparently one of the nest boxes there is already occupied. A pair of **Hooded Mergansers** in San Ramon Creek, Danville, were present through at least 3/19 (SH).

A migrant **Osprey** was along Camino Tassajara east of Danville on 3/30 (SG)

The first report of **Rufous Hummingbird** was a male at an Antioch feeder on 3/12 (JB). At least four more were in the Stewartville area of Black Diamond Mines on 4/8 (SG,JA).

The pair of **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were last noted at Round Valley Regional Park west of Brentwood on 3/9 (JL). There are no known nest records for the county. March brought two more sightings of the always elusive **Pileated Woodpecker** along the West Ridge Trail near Skyline Gate, Redwood Regional Park. The first sighting was 3/11 (SS) and the second was 3/17 (AF). Although nesting has been assumed, "Log-cocks" have never been proven to nest in the East Bay.

A **Yellow-billed Magpie** along Buchanan Rd., Pittsburg, in mid-March was well west of its normal Central Valley haunts (K&TG). A female **Western Tanager** was at Markham Nature Park on Cowell Rd in Concord on 3/15 (SG). The early date indicates that this bird almost surely



wintered here, a rarity for the county, especially away from feeders.

A **Chipping Sparrow** on 3/23 was the first recorded in his Lafayette Yard (DL). A singing **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on 4/8 (SG,JA). Single **White-throated Sparrows** were in Blackhawk 3/8 (NH), a Concord yard 3/10-11 (S&CH) and Carquinez Straits Regional Park 3/11 (DW). Two more were at Markham Nature Park on Cowell Rd, Concord, on 3/15 (SG)

Approximately 750 **Tricolored Blackbirds** were at Marsh Creek Reservoir on 3/24 (SAG). Although they have nested here in the past, there was no breeding evidence on this date.

Observers. John Ascher, Jeanne Bonner, Anthony Fisher, Steve Glover, Kiki & Tony Gonzalez, Nancy Harrington, Susan Heckely, Scott & Claudia Hein, Don Lewis, John Luther, Allan Ridley, Sylvia Sykora, Nat Weber

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

**Celebrate
Earth Day!**
April 29, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
at the Concord Pavilion
Informative Booths, Events,
Exhibits, Food, Fun!

News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Visit Our Website at
<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>.

Activities at WBU

Sat., May 5, 10:30 a.m.—Birding Optics Workshop. Trying to select the right optics for local bird watching or that next birding trip? Join us 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 and close focus to 6 ft) 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.

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. These spectacular birds will readily come to an oriole feeder. Please report all oriole sightings to WBU. We are tracking and mapping all sightings.

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

Every year we seem to receive more reports of wild turkeys in Contra Costa County. Danville, Alamo, Walnut Creek, and now Lafayette and Moraga and even Brentwood. This is not a yard bird that you should really want!

Field Trip Reports

January 6, Putah Creek. A sunny, cool day greeted 23 birders. The number of individual birds was down. Highlights included Wood Duck, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, 60 Wild Turkeys, two Virginia Rails, three Soras, Brown Creeper, Canyon and House Wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. We saw a total of 89 species.
—*Florence Bennett*

March 10, Capay Valley. This scenic birding area in Yolo and Colusa Counties was new to 15 of the 18 birders. It was very windy at the beginning along Highway 16 but became warm and nice. Birds seen included two Bald Eagles, three Golden Eagles, Common Mergansers, five Lewis's Woodpeckers, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren (heard only), and Western Bluebirds. We saw a total of 48 species.
—*Florence Bennett*

March 21, Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Seven members spent the morning in 60- to 70-degree weather with skies and no wind. We saw or heard 56 species of birds. Highlights included three pairs of Wood Ducks (life birds for one member), Common Snipe, a Selasphorus hummingbird, Harry Woodpecker, Pacific-Slope Flycatcher, and the first Bullock's Oriole of the season for many.—*Maury Stern*

March 25, Black Diamond Mines Park. Twelve birdwatchers saw 41 species this beautiful day. Highlights were Golden Eagle overhead and close views of several singing California Thrashers. Many early spring wildflowers were in bloom.—*Pat MacEachern*

April 5, Borges Ranch. Seven members spent the morning on the trails around Borges Ranch. The weather was perfect with temperatures from 50 to 60 degrees. We saw or heard 43 species. The highlight bird was a brightly illuminated male Bullock's Oriole. Other birds of interest were Western Kingbird, House Wren, Western Bluebird, Loggerhead Shrike, many Lark Sparrows, and a Lincoln's Sparrow.—*Maury Stern*

April 7, Saturday, Garin Regional Park. Nobody else showed up for the trip, so the leader attached himself to a Golden Gate group. We saw 50 species and had great looks at singing orioles, grosbeaks, and warblers. But perhaps the highlight bird was a very loud Sora.
—*Fred Saifer*



SF State University Offers Sierra Nevada Field Classes, June–August

The Sierra Nevada Field Campus of San Francisco State University is offering field classes from June through mid-August. Located alongside the scenic North Yuba River just east of Sierra City, the campus is centered around the dining hall/lodge. Participants stay in platform tents with beds or chose an individual campsite. There are outdoor flush toilet facilities with hot water and showers.

All courses are open to the public and include Birds of the Sierra Nevada (June 11-15), Birdwatching in the Sierra Nevada (June 18-22), and Bird Identification by Song (June 18-22). Other classes include Butterflies of the Sierra Nevada (June 25-29), The Illustrated Nature Notebook (July 5-8) that teaches techniques for recording natural history information in words and sketches, and The Ecology and Conservation of California Bats (July 16-20). Classes are \$175. For more information and registration, contact Jim Steele, College of Science & Engineering, San Francisco State U., San Francisco, CA 94132-9987 or call 415-338-1571 or 650-738-1814.

Calendar of Birding Events

Lime Ridge Birding Hike, April 29

The Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation is sponsoring a 3-hour birding hike on Lime Ridge on Sunday, April 29, at 8 a.m. In Walnut Creek, turn south on Oak Grove Rd, then left at 3rd stop sign (Valley Vista Rd). Continue to paved parking lot just before left turn into Boundary Oak Golf Course. Bring water. Leader: Maury Stern

May 5 on Mt. Diablo

Mt Diablo State Park is 80 years old in May and the public was first allowed regular access 70 years ago. Join other park supporters at the Summit Museum to celebrate with cake & speeches at 11.30 a.m

Mt. Wanda Birdwalk, May 12

Ranger Cheryl Abel will lead a Mt. Wanda birdwalk on May 12, from 8:30–11 a.m. Terrain is steep, so wear comfortable clothes and sturdy walking shoes, and bring water. Meet the ranger at the Cal-Trans Park-n-Ride lot at the corner of Alhambra Ave. and Franklin Canyon Road, Martinez. For more info, call the John Muir National Historic Site at (925) 228-8860.

George Miller's Town Hall Meeting, May 12

Visit the historic and bird-rich Black Diamond Mines Park and attend Congressman George Miller's Fourth Annual Environmental Town Hall on Saturday, May 12, at Black Diamond Mines. The event times are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring your own picnic for lunch at noon, followed by the town hall meeting from 12:30–1.30.

10 a.m.—Mine Tour

10:30 a.m.—Naturalist-led walk to Rose Hill Cemetery (fascinating but very hilly, 1-mi. walk).

Directions: Hwy 4 east to Somersville Rd south exit in Antioch. Go south on Somersville Rd to the end (about 3 mi).

\$4 park entrance fee.

RSVP Kathy Hoffman in Miller's office (925-602-1880).

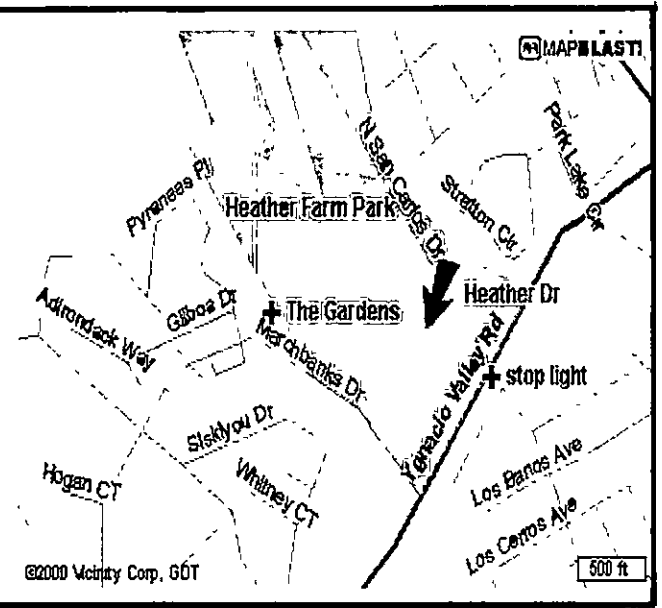
CALENDAR

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 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.

Thursday, June 7—MDAS Potluck

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. 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521. To subscribe to the **Quail**, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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





The QUAIL

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Walnut Creek, CA
94597-0053

June 2001

Vol. 47, No. 10

Next Deadline: July 5

Election of MDAS Officers Slated

In accordance with the bylaws 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 2001-2002:

President—Open
Vice President—Mike Williams
Secretary—Mike Tischler
Treasurer—Joe Frank

The election of officers will be held at the June 7 general meeting. MDAS is seeking a chapter president. If you are interested in serving, call Shirley Ellis, 938-3703.

Upcoming Events:

Potluck Marks End of Year for MDAS

MDAS will hold its annual end-of-the-year potluck on Thursday, June 7, at the Heather Farms Garden Center (See p. 8 for directions.) The doors will 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.

Dinner will be followed by a business meeting, the election of MDAS officers, and a recognition ceremony for our departing president, Carol Fischmann.

Lastly, we will be entertained by the ever-popular, member-provided slide program. Bring 10 or fewer slides of your birding adventures. In years past, the MDAS potluck has been an entertaining evening of food, fellowship, and a few tall tales of birds and birdwatchers. Come and join us for an evening of birding, elections, slides, and an array of delicious dishes.

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.

Thank You!

This is my last column as Chapter President. I will be stepping down at the end of June and exploring new professional opportunities and challenges.

This is my opportunity to say to all Chapter members, especially to the Board of Directors, thank you for allowing me to lead the Board for the last five years. Working with MDAS's very dedicated group of volunteers has provided me with more than I gave. Our members are enthusiastic and energetic about conservation and the pleasure of watching birds. Our Board is strong. Our newer volunteers bring new skills and will make our Board and Chapter even stronger.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Carol Frischmann

I've tried to provide leadership to the Chapter in two directions: a big vision and a stronger business orientation. Simplified, the big vision is that MDAS can serve many membership segments—social, birding, educator, activist. MDAS can and must also serve the public interest in bringing our perspective on issues that focus on habitat and wildlife.

The business orientation says there are some services that the Chapter should purchase in order to preserve our volunteer efforts for those activities and responsibilities that are the heart of our mission.

Although our Chapter has accomplished a great deal in the last few years, there is

still much for us to do. Our county is growing at a very fast rate. The new residents are not MDAS members and probably are not much involved in or aware of quality-of-life issues at stake here. We need to make our message more strongly to the community. No habitat, no birds, no quality of life. You'll be hearing more about this message and our Chapter's role in educating our public as the Board plans for the 2001-2002 year.

Thank you again to all MDAS members and volunteers for the Chapter work you do and for giving me the privilege of serving in this position.

Best wishes,
Carol

Connections

by Gloria Cannon

California Condors Lay First Egg in Wild in 15 Years

For the first time in 15 years, a California condor has laid an egg in the wild. Although the egg was found broken, biologists say this first nesting attempt illustrates the success of the captive breeding program that removed the last California condor from the wild in 1986.

Redford Leaves Norton with Egg on Her Face

In a rare show of environmental interest, Secretary Gale Norton was present when five young California condors were released into the wild in April.

However, actor and environmentalist Robert Redford declined Norton's invitation to attend the event. Redford wrote that Norton in three months on the job, has compiled an "abysmal record of capitulating to big business at the expense of the nation's public health, public lands, and wildlife." He added, "I intend to use what time I have to do what I can to focus on the devastating environmental repercussions of the agenda you and President Bush embrace." How well put.

Money Is the Game Plan

In April, I wrote that one of the easiest ways for the Bush administration to damage the environment was to strip the funding of environmental programs. This is happening faster than even my nightmares foretold. Bush's budget proposal for the fiscal year would cap at \$8.46 million the Interior's ability to respond to citizen suits to force listing of threatened and endangered species. Under the Bush budget proposal, it would take 32 years to process the backlog of some 2000 species that have been proposed for listing.

Bush is also proposing a 48 percent reduction in the environmental restoration efforts at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, a Superfund site. Without the funding, the Lab will be unable to

continue its efforts to clean up polluted groundwater under its Livermore site.

And this is just the beginning. First, the tax cut will occur. Then Bush will argue that further budget cuts are required in order to be fiscally responsible in certain programs (all of them containing the word "environment" in their title). And so the noose is tightened.

Support the Green Business Program

The Green Business Program is a partnership of public agencies, private businesses, professional associations, and utilities working together to provide a "green" alternative.

The Association of Bay Area Governments coordinates the Green Business Program, guiding the development and consistent application of standards. Implementation occurs in participating counties, like Contra Costa, where county coordinators help business obtain certification. The Green Program assists, recognizes, and encourages the public to patronize businesses that operate in an environmentally responsible way. The Program helps businesses comply with environmental regulations and then go beyond compliance to conserve energy, water, and other resources, and reduce pollution and waste.

The Green Business Program in Contra Costa has certified almost 50 auto repair shops throughout the county.

Public agencies participating in the Program include the Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Programs, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, Contra Costa Clean Water Program, Mt. View Sanitary District, Delta Diablo Sanitation District, West County Wastewater District, City of Richmond Wastewater, San Ramon Valley Fire, Contra Costa County Fire, Richmond Fire, Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority, West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority, Town of

Danville, City of Pittsburg, City of San Ramon, Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and PG&E.

By patronizing Green Businesses, you can help reduce waste and protect our environment. To learn more about the Green Business Program and to see an online listing of participating businesses, go to <<http://www.greenbiz.abag.ca.gov>>.

The Quail

is published 11 times a year by the Mt Diablo Audubon Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation and environmental education

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News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Visit Our Website at
<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>

10th Anniversary Party! Saturday, June 2

- Birdseed Sale (6/1-6/17).
- Serenescapes will have plants to attract birds and butterflies. Make your garden a true wildlife habitat!
- Native Bird Connections will be presenting programs with live birds.
- Sample environmentally safe coffee, grown in the shade to protect our neo-tropical migrants.
- Win a year's supply of birdseed and other prizes!
- Meet Keith Marks of Swarovski Optik and see those fantastic "EL" binoculars.

Birdfeeding Tips

Change the nectar in hummingbird and oriole feeders every 3-5 days to prevent mold. Make 2-3 quarts of nectar at one time. Rinse out and refill your feeders every 3-5 days. Keep the rest of the nectar in the refrigerator. You will then have minimal problems with mold. A ratio of 5 parts water to one part sugar is suitable if you are feeding both species. If you are only feeding hummers, you can use a 4:1 ratio.

Please report all oriole and grosbeak sightings as we are tracking them.

Last year Lesser Goldfinches continued to visit feeders throughout the summer. Keep those thistle feeders full.

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 parttime staff openings in the near future. If you are looking for an entertaining and rewarding experience, please give us a call.

Audubon's New Logo

Audubon's new logo builds on the equity and tradition of the Great Egret as a symbol for our organization. In keeping with our great artistic and ornithological heritage, we began with a sketch from renowned bird artist David Sibley. The sketch was digitally adapted, and our new logo combines the streamlined Great Egret with the word Audubon in a new font and color. We enlisted our own Science and Design staff to ensure that the ornithological integrity and aesthetic beauty of David's sketch was maintained.



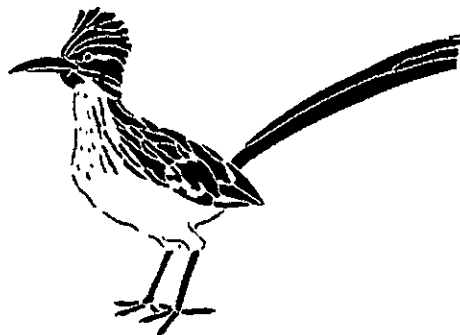
We chose green for the word Audubon because of its strong associations with nature and the environment, and gray for the Great Egret's outline because this color is also natural and warm. The resulting logo is easier to reproduce than our previous version. Even more important, its simple clean lines and fresh contemporary look make our visual identity even stronger than before.—from National Audubon Society at <<http://www.audubon.org>>

Ultralights May Lead Whooping Crane Migration

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed reintroducing a wild population of Whooping Cranes that would migrate between Wisconsin and Florida. The flocks could eventually spread into other regions, including North Carolina, although that could take 10 to 15 years, agency spokesman Charles Underwood said.

Ultralight aircraft would teach young Whooping Cranes the migration route, possibly as early as this fall, under a plan being considered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife. In November 2000, biologists successfully led 11 Sandhill Cranes on the 1,250-mile migration between Wisconsin and Florida, proving that the plan could work.

The birds would leave from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin



and fly to Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in central Florida, following the route of the Sandhill Crane migration. The proposed route would take them over Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia before reaching Florida.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife wants to designate the reintroduced cranes a non-essential experimental population in 20 states, including North Carolina, under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The designation would mean that federal, state, or private actions that would harm a Whooping Crane in the course of otherwise legal activities would not be considered illegal. The intentional killing or harming of designated Whooping Cranes would still be a violation of federal law.

Whooping Cranes, named for their loud mating call, were brought close to extinction because of unregulated hunting and habitat loss in the 1940s. They once numbered between 700 and 1,400 in North America. Some 187 birds comprise the only remaining wild flock, which breeds in Canada and spends winters at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas gulf coast. A second flock lives year round in central Florida as part of a separate reintroduction effort. —from the *PioneerPlanet / St. Paul (Minnesota) Pioneer Press / TwinCities.com*, March 28

The Great Texas Birding Trip, April 7–14

by Hugh Harvey

The Lower Rio Grande Valley at the extreme southern tip of Texas is one of the famous locales for birding. Over 400 species of birds live or visit the valley although some are true rarities of one or two times only. Falcon Dam's completion in 1954, the subsequent use of flood plain for agriculture, seven years of drought, and NAFTA have all contributed to changes in this area. The Rio Grande does not even reach the Gulf of Mexico, and a fence runs from the lagoon, which is the end of the river, across a wide beach and out into the Gulf. This prevents illegals from driving up the beach and into Texas.

Six members of MDAS visited this area during the second week of April. None of us had ever been to southern Texas, and we were all looking forward to new adventures in birding. For seven days, we birded some of the more popular areas: Sabal Palm Grove Preserve, Boca Chica, the great and now famous city of Weslaco (in our books), Laguna Atascosa NWR, South Padre Island, Benston State Park, Santa Ana NWR, the Falcon Dam area, and even Corpus Christi.

Most of us had a wish list of birds we were hoping to see. While we did not see everything we had been hoping to find, we did quite well. The total numbers of birds seemed to be low—some of us thought it was much easier to find birds in Arizona than in Texas. It is also possible that we were between waves of the spring migration. In all, we had close to 120 species for the group.

One of the most special events for us was the chance meeting of Richard Lehman in Weslaco. Working for the city as a Birding-Eco-Tour Director, he told us many places to look for birds in Weslaco. He has an Altamira Oriole pair building a nest over the street in front of his house. We looked for the Blue Mockingbird, which has lived in

the city for two years, but we could not find it. He took us to see the Red-crowned Parrot nest box, found us a Chuck-will's Widow in daytime, and took us to the Llano Grande south of town. There we saw Least Grebe, both Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Roseate Spoonbill, and Tri-colored and Little Blue Herons, but we could not find the Fork-tailed Flycatcher that he was sure he had spotted the previous night. Richard is not only an excellent local birder; but as an ambassador for his city, he even recommended to us two excellent area restaurants.

Some birds we found to be just about everywhere, such as Great-tailed Grackle, Plain Chachalaca, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Couch's Kingbird, and the very vocal Great Kiskadee. Others required being near some feeders or a mist-sprayer: Green Jay, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Long-billed Thrasher, Indigo Bunting, and Bronzed Cowbird.

Then there were the birds which we might have hoped to find, but required either going to the right place, being very lucky, or both. These birds would include White-tailed Hawk, Hook-billed Kite, Gray Hawk on a nest, Wilson's Plover,

Eastern Screech Owl, Common Pauraque, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Brown Jay, Olive Sparrow, and Reddish Egret. The egret was especially hard to find, as many of the coastal tidal pools are dry due to the drought. In fact, Laguna Atascosa, the body of water for which the Refuge is named, no longer exists, and three of the group drove to just north of Corpus Christi to find the Reddish Egret.

Naturally, there were some notable misses. While we found four Green Kingfishers, we could not find a Ringed Kingfisher. Our experiences were an education, however; and we will be well prepared for the next trip to our southern border. We will definitely use more insect repellent, leave our gloves and knit caps home, not bring a rain poncho, and probably be able to understand more quickly which areas will be the most productive for some more great birding.

A special thanks is due to Anne Blandin for dreaming up this trip and seeing it through to fruition. She convinced Joan Sullivan, Bevelyn Wolfe, Paul and Pat MacEachern, and me to give it a try. Many "lifers" were seen by all of us. For a list of birds seen, contact me by email at hugros@value.net.

Audubon Summer Camps for Adults

Every summer National Audubon sponsors a full week of instruction by natural history experts at its camps in Maine, Minnesota, Utah, Connecticut, and Wyoming.

If you are looking for a way to make this summer special, consider spending an engaging week at Audubon's camp in Maine, which is located on Hog Island in beautiful Muscongus Bay.

The Audubon camps offer summer-long schedule of workshops designed especially for adults who want to expand their knowledge and appreciation of nature. Audubon also offers family camps. The sessions are six days long and include bird biology, coastal ecology,

nature photography, field sketching, sea kayaking, and more from which to choose, all taught by nationally recognized experts in their fields

In each camp, accommodations are rustic but comfortable. Food is hearty. For more information, visit the website at <<http://www.audubon.org/programs/camps>> or for the Maine camp, contact the Maine Audubon Society at (888) 325-5261 (toll-free) or Audubon Camps at 1-866-428-3826.

In Denmark, a man claims that he has christened a bird in his garden "Nokia" because it copies the ringing tones of his cell phone. —from www.ananova.com

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. 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, June 2, 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. 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. Be prepared for variable weather. Leader: Pat MacEachern. 934-3041 Category 2

Wednesday, June 6, Annadel State

Park. Carpool leaves at 7 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 23-24,

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; Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. There are campgrounds at Chapman Creek and Yuba Pass. Co-leaders: Rosita Harvey, 932-4715, and Pat MacEachern. 934-3041 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.



Kids, Win a Bird Bonanza! Enter The "Save the Birds, Save the Trees, Save the Earth" Contest

Did you know that 12% or 1,186 of the earth's bird species are threatened? Some of these are our familiar backyard birds. This summer children can learn the facts about threats to birds and habitats and, at the same time, enter an exciting contest. Audubon invites children, classes, or clubs to participate in an educational and fun project to learn about the world's birds and birds in their own backyards and what the birds need to survive.

Children 8 to 11 years old may enter the "Save the Birds, Save the Trees, Save the Earth" contest. Children should think about why it is important to save the world's birds and local birds and explain their ideas in a painting, drawing, collage, web page, embroidery or other sewing, poem, short story, song, dance, or a play on a cassette or video. The three winning entries will receive a Bird Study Bonanza from Audubon, a collection of books, binoculars, and feeders especially selected for classes and youth groups.

To learn more, visit the Save the Birds, Save the Trees, Save the Earth website at <<http://www.audubon.org/contest/index.html>>.

Sierra Field Classes

The Sierra Nevada Field Campus of San Francisco State University is offering a variety of field classes from June through mid-August. Located alongside the scenic North Yuba River just east of Sierra City, the campus is centered around a two-story dining hall/lodge. Participants stay in platform tents with beds or choose a personal individual campsite on site. There are outdoor flush toilet facilities with hot water and showers.

All courses are open to the public and include Birds of the Sierra Nevada (June 11-15), Birdwatching in the Sierra Nevada (June 18-22), and Bird Identification by Song (June 18-22). Other classes include Butterflies of the Sierra Nevada (June 25-29), The Illustrated Nature Notebook (July 5-8) that teaches techniques for recording natural history information in words and sketches, The Ecology and Conservation of California Bats (July 16-20), and Mammals of the Sierra Nevada (August 6-10).

Classes are \$175. For more information and registration, contact Jim Steele, College of Science & Engineering, San Francisco State U., San Francisco 94132-9987 or call 415-338-1571 or 650-738-1814.

Observations *by Steve Glover*

Migrant flocks of **American White Pelicans** were widespread with 16 over Piper Slough on 4/21 (SG,JA); four at Pt. Molate, Richmond, 4/22 (JA,SG); 14 over Martinez on 4/22 (SG,JA); 52 on 5/5 near Antioch (SG); and 24 on 5/8 drifting over Antioch (KG and class).

Seventeen **White-faced Ibis** flew south-east past Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 5/6 (SG).

Single **Ospreys** were noted drifting south over Antioch on 4/18 (SG) and 4/30 (J&DB, K&TG). An immature **Bald Eagle** on 4/10 at Lafayette Reservoir had not been present there during the winter and is thus considered a migrant (MS).

Extremely welcome was news that the colony of **Least Terns** established last spring at Pt. Isabel near Richmond had returned by 5/4 when at least 14 birds were noted (ES). A new high count of **Swainson's Hawks** for Piper Slough, Bethel Island, came 5/6 when a flock of 26 was noted (SG).

Calliope Hummingbirds were reported in smaller than normal numbers this spring, perhaps simply a reflection of the amount of coverage: a female was in Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo State Park (MDSP), on 4/18 (JT); a male was an unusual find at an Antioch feeder on 4/23 (JB); and four were in Mitchell Canyon on 4/26 (JT). Single male **Rufous Hummingbirds** were at Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 4/21 and 5/6 (SG).

A **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen once again along the West Ridge Trail in Redwood Regional Park on 4/29 (PG), fueling speculation that they are nesting somewhere nearby.

Although we have a far better grasp on the status of the little empidonax flycatchers than we did only ten years ago, the biggest remaining question concerns how often **Dusky Flycatchers** occur. While one or two are reported annually from MDSP, few, if any, have actually been documented; and some have wondered if the flycatchers really



occur there at all. This season, though, brought a thoroughly documented report from Mitchell Canyon, MDSP, on 4/30 (JT). Our next rarest "empid" is **Gray Flycatcher**; and this spring brought two more reports: one in Mitchell Canyon on 4/23 (GF), and another in White Canyon from 5/5-5/8 (JT). The high count this spring of **Hammond's Flycatcher** came from Mitchell Canyon with 11 on 4/18 (JT).

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

Most bizarre was a **Canyon Wren** seen and heard on Red Rock Rd., Mitchell Canyon, MDSP, on 5/5 (JT). There is little if any "suitable" habitat in this area of the park. More expected was another **Canyon Wren** on the Waterfall Trail, MDSP, on 4/5 (H&RH).

Although **Tricolored Blackbirds** are regular in the area, a flock of 4,000+ on 4/1 near Marsh Creek Reservoir seems particularly large (P&PG). A male **Great-tailed Grackle** at Heather Farms Park, Walnut Creek, on 4 May was at a location that would seem to be a prime candidate for a future colony of this expanding species (HH,FB,MJC,B&BG).

Three **Lawrence's Goldfinches** at Pine Pond, MDSP, on 4/18 were at a site where breeding occurs regularly (MR).

Observers: John Ascher, Florence Bennett, Jeanne and Daryl Bonner, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Kiki and Tony Gonzalez, Phil and Pat Gordon, Hugh and Rosita Harvey, Marc Rauzon, Maury Stern, Emilie Strauss, Jim Tietz

Pixley National Wildlife Refuge Opens June 2

The Tulare County Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are dedicating the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge Self-guided Interpretative Trail on June 2. This event marks the first time that the refuge has been open to the public since it was formed in 1959. A guided tour at 9:30 a.m. will be followed by the dedication ceremony at 11.

The Pixley Wildlife Refuge was established to provide wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. In 1973, it was also designated as habitat for three endangered species: the Tipton Kangaroo Rat, the Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard, and the San Joaquin Kit Fox. It also provides wintering habitat for over 4000 Sandhill Cranes.

To get to the refuge, take Highway 99 to the Ducor exit, which routes you to Avenue 56. Drive west on Avenue 56 to Road 88 (approximately 5 miles), then turn north about 1 mile to Deer Creek. The entry to the refuge is just over the bridge.

Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the day.



Red Macaw under Great Danger of Extinction

There are less than 1000 Red Macaws (*Ara macao*) in populations in Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico. In the last 50 years, more than 90% of this species has been lost from its natural environment in Mexico and survives in only two small populations in the Oaxaca and Chiapas ecosystems. In Guatemala, the remaining birds are found in a few places in the Peten forest. Chiquipul and Red Bank are the only regions in Belize where the macaws are found; and their nesting sites there are endangered because of the construction of a hydroelectric dam.

Different threats are causing the disappearance of this species: the criminal looting of chicks and adults for the cage bird trade, the massive destruction of their habitat, and the expansion of agriculture and livestock. On account of these threats, researchers and governmental agencies from Belize, Guatemala, and

Mexico met from February 6-9 in the Chiapas, Mexico, to define an action plan to protect the species. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Belize Zoo (Belize); Defensores de la Naturaleza (Guatemala); Conservation International (Guatemala and Mexico), the Guatemalan National Committee of Protected Areas; the Institute of Natural History of Chiapas; the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve (Mexico); and the Institute of Ecology of UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico). The participants seek to integrate their conservation efforts in the program, "Guacamaya Sin Fronteras."

Routes Used by Migratory Birds of Prey Identified

Since 1995, FUNDAECO, with the collaboration of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Hawkwatch International, Idea Wild, Guatemalan Conservation Trust,

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Pronatura Veracruz, and biology students, has been identifying and documenting the migratory routes used by diurnal migratory birds of prey in Guatemala. By applying the methodology of counting and direct identification, FUNDAECO has identified two routes. The main one is located in the Pacific plain where more than 250,000 birds a day have been counted. The second route was found to be in the Atlantic coast of Guatemala, with approximately 85,000 birds counted a day during peak times.

The reported species that use Guatemala as a migration point are Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, American Kestrel, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Mississippi Kite, and the Swallow-tailed Kite. One of the specific objectives of the research is the use of this natural phenomenon as a tool for the environmental education of communities that reside near these routes.

Field Trip Reports

Pine Canyon, April 21—Because of the late rains, the trails at Pine Canyon were wet and muddy, but 11 members and guests were undeterred in their quest for spring birds. They were not disappointed as they recorded 72 species seen or heard. Also seen were three coyotes and a bobcat. The wildflowers were nice with scattered displays of Chinese Houses, Sticky Monkeyflower, Indian Paintbrush, and the endemic Mt. Diablo Globe Tulip. Avian highlights included a nesting Cooper's Hawk, nesting Hairy Woodpecker, three vireo species, eight warbler species, three goldfinch species, as well as the resident Peregrine Falcons, which we learned were nesting on the old Red-tailed Hawk nest.—*Hugh Harvey*

Del Puerto Canyon, April 26—An enthusiastic group of 16 birders were great at spotting birds on a very nice day. Highlights included Blue Grosbeaks; Grasshopper Sparrows; Lawrence's Goldfinches; Golden Eagle;

Barn Owl; two male Costa's Hummingbirds; Lewis' Woodpeckers; and Rock Canyon, and House Wrens. We also saw 18 Tule Elk on San Antonio Valley Road. Total species: 59.—*Florence Bennett*

Mines Road, May 5—Orioles, grosbeaks, Louies and Larrys. These and others treated the 10 members and guests on a warm day's drive up Mines Road.

One of the first birds we saw at Murietta's Well was a female Phainopepla which flew away and just kept going, but we had better luck later in the day. Before we turned around in the San Antonio Valley, we had Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler, Green Heron, White-throated Swift, Lewis' Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, California Thrasher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and a pair of Wood Ducks.

Scattered wildflowers were plentiful, but we were too late in the season for the large carpets of color. On our return, we detoured to Patterson Pass Road where

we were able to find a brilliant singing Blue Grosbeak. We also found Lark Sparrow and Loggerhead Shrike to bring our total to 65 species seen or heard for the day.—*Hugh Harvey*

Mt. Diablo, May 9—Five members and guests met at the Rock City area just inside the south gate entrance of Mt. Diablo State Park at 8:30 a.m. The temperature on the previous day had been nearly 100 degrees, and this day was pretty much the same.

The birds were pretty quiet at every stop as we worked our way up the mountain. We stopped and checked every familiar campground with little success. When we stopped at noon near the summit at Juniper campground, we had seen only 30 species that morning and probably for half of those species, we had seen only one bird—one Red Tail, one Lark Sparrow, one Flicker, etc. The highlight of the day was the discovery of a pair of Gnatcatchers building a nest using lichen.—*Jimm Edgar*

CALENDAR

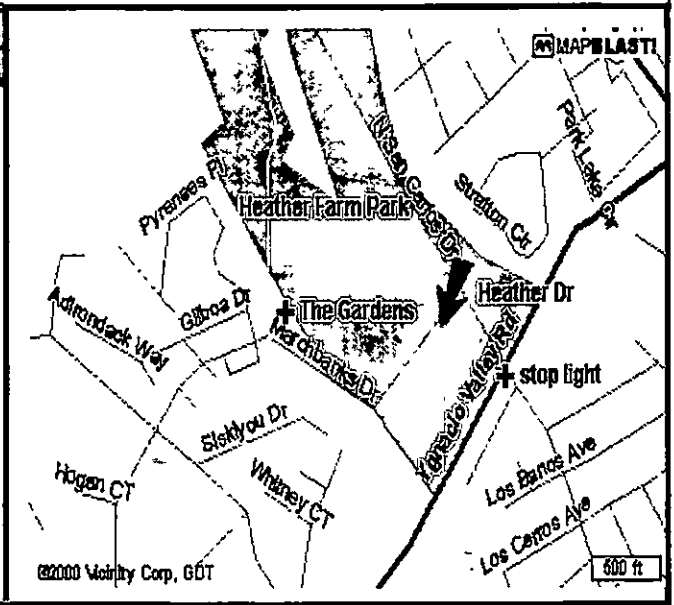
MDAS meets on the first Thursday of every month (except July and August when there are no meetings) at The Gardens, 1140 Marchbanks Dr., next to Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek.

Our remaining meeting for the 2000-01 activity year is 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.

Thursday, June 7—MDAS Potluck

Thursday, September 6—Meetings resume

There will no Board meeting in June.



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. 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.



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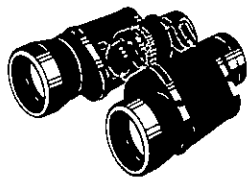
Observations

by Steve Glover

A **Brown Pelican** near the C&H Plant in Crockett on 5/18 was about as far east as we normally find them in the county (SGa)

Flocks of 48 **White-faced Ibis** flying north and 55 flying south over Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 5/19 were amongst the largest flocks yet recorded in the county of this increasing

species (FS & MDAS)



This was nice but paled in comparison to events in the South Bay

during that same week. On May 14, Mike Rogers found a **Glossy Ibis** in Alviso, Santa Clara Co., the first for Northern California. It was associating with a flock of White-faced Ibis that totaled as many as 27 birds. On 5/17, Peter Dramer saw a rather suspiciously sized flock of 27 birds at Hayward Regional Shoreline (HRS), Alameda Co., but was unable to sort through the flock for a Glossy.

On 5/20, Bob Richmond, Sheila Junge, and Peter Dramer found 30 Ibis at HRS, including what was most likely the same Glossy Ibis found at Alviso on 5/14. On 5/21, a flock of 27 ibis were seen flying south from HRS; and later in the day Bob re-found the flock at Coyote Hills, Alameda Co. With them was the Glossy Ibis. There have been several sightings from southeastern (cont. on p. 3)

Delta Science Center and Big Break Plans Previewed

East Bay Regional Park District previewed its land-use and business plans for its Big Break parcel, including the Delta Science Center, at a meeting of the Board of the Delta Science Center (DSC) on June 13.

Joel Summerhill, the MDAS representative on the DSC Board, said, "The plans are well conceived and preserve the habitat while making the area more accessible to the public."

A 40-acre parcel has been dedicated to the DSC and includes parking, trails, and other access points, such as piers, to provide birdwatching access to the waterfront.

The proposed Delta Science Center will be a research and educational center that will focus on the rich diversity of the Delta environment. It is a component of the EBRPD's Big Break Park, which contains the 688-acre Lauritzen Ranch and the 980-acre Porter Estates.

According to Steve Barbata, Executive Director of the Science Center, approximately \$5.2 million has been

raised through grants, state bond propositions, and CalFed funding. The money will be used to construct the proposed, \$12-million Center.

The public will have an opportunity to review the plans in August. Summerhill said, "The Delta Science Center is a significant opportunity to fuse education and research that could lead to the restoration of the entire Delta."

MDAS Election Results

MDAS elected officers at its June 7 general meeting and potluck. Mike Williams was re-elected MDAS Vice President; and Mike Tischler as Secretary, and Joe Frank as Treasurer. The position of chapter president remains open. Mike Williams will conduct the general meetings and chair Board meetings until a new president is identified

Outgoing President Carol Frischmann thanked the members for the opportunity to serve the chapter and expressed confidence in Mike and the Board to continue to direct the business of the chapter.

As an expression of gratitude from the chapter for her six years of hard work and dedication, Mike Williams presented Carol with a plaque and a gift from the Board. For photos, see page 2.

MDAS Meeting Information

There will be no general meeting in July or August. The next general meeting is Thursday, September 6, at the Gardens at Heather Farms.



Outgoing MDAS President Carol Frischmann shows off the plaque presented to her by the Chapter.



The potluck provided an opportunity to thank all our wonderful volunteers that contribute time and energy to MDAS projects.

The Quail is published 11 times a year by the Mt Diablo Audubon Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation and environmental education

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MDAS members help themselves to the bounty of delicious food at the annual potluck June 7.



One MDS member discovers the cookies on the table covered with delectable desserts.

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 4, 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 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 for more information. Category 2

Saturday, August 18, 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 gas station. Shorebirds, rails, waterbirds, migrants. Call Elizabeth Dickey, for more information. 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.

UC Davis Center a Haven for Injured Raptors

The California Raptor Center in Davis is a rescue center for injured hawks, falcons, eagles, and other raptors. It treats about 200 injured birds a year and returns them to the wild if possible.

The Raptor Center began in 1972 when a UC Davis lecturer in avian science began taking care of injured raptors. After several moves, it found a home on university land across the freeway from the main UC Davis campus.

Much of the work at the Center is done by volunteers. Docents give tours to groups for \$1 per person and allow school classes and individuals to sponsor birds to raise funds for the Center. A small bird, such as a Burrowing Owl, can be "adopted" for \$20, Turkey Vultures for \$30, and a Bald Eagle for \$50.

Injured birds are most often found beside roadways after being hit by cars. The birds are examined, treated, and released if possible. About 60 percent of the birds are returned to the wild. When the center runs out of room to house birds too damaged to be released, some of the birds are placed in licensed zoos or other rescue facilities.

Tours of the Raptor Center can be arranged by calling 530-752-6091.



Pacific Flyway Decoy Show

The Pacific Flyway Decoy Association Wildfowl Art Show will be held June 30-July 1 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. The Pacific Flyway Decoy Association is dedicated to the preservation of wildfowl art and sculpture.

Field Trip Reports

May 19, East Contra Costa—Six birders got up early and enjoyed a pleasant morning before a very hot day. We saw 46 species, including Black-chinned Hummingbird and Blue Grosbeak. A flock of about 50 White-faced Ibis flew over twice. The last three of us watched a pair of Burrowing Owls for a long time as they brought food to five (!) large downy chicks.—Fred Safier

Thursday, May 31, Caswell State Park—Three members braved the heat of the Central Valley to see the wonderful riparian areas of the Stanislaus River at Caswell Memorial SP. Temperatures were well over 100 in the open but much

cooler in the shade. The highlight bird was a male Blue Grosbeak. Among the 49 species of birds seen were Wood Duck with several young, Belted Kingfisher, Western Wood-Pee-wee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Yellow-billed Magpie, many House Wrens, and Wilson's Warbler. Notably absent were any raptors except American Kestrel. No Bank Swallows were seen.

For future reference, please note that the Durham Ferry State Park is now an Outdoor Educational School, and the public is not admitted.—Maury Stern

Observations

Continued from p. 1

California in the past two years, but few could have been expecting one this far north quite so soon.

A male **Blue-winged Teal** was along Waterfront Rd. north of Concord on 6/7 (SG). Although they were formerly rare in the county during the summer months, birds have been seen sporadically at this season the past several years; and breeding was confirmed for the first time just last year.

A female **Ruddy Duck** with seven precocial youngsters at Heather Farms Park, Walnut Creek, on 6/5 was a long-awaited first record for the Breeding Bird Atlas (HH). It was not expected that they would be such scarce nesters in the county.

Two singing **Black Rails** on the west side of the McAvoy Yacht Harbor at Bay Point were in an area that has gotten almost no attention by birders, but at which they are likely pretty common (SG).

Two pairs of **Western Gulls** and a recently-hatched youngster were near the McAvoy Yacht Harbor at Bay Point on 6/10 (SG). This is as far east as they are currently known to nest in the Bay/Delta system. The **Least Tern** colony first established last spring/summer on the artificial shellmounds at the north side of the Albany Crescent, Contra Costa County, is once again in operation this year with a county-high of 51 birds on or near the islands on 6/10 (MR).

As many as six **Lesser Nighthawks** were at the east end of Camino Diablo in Byron on 5/22 (SG). This is just north of the traditional locale at Clifton Court Forebay but may turn out to be even more reliable.

A **Pileated Woodpecker** on Pinehurst Rd. near Canyon on 5/21 was at a location where they have been found extremely sporadically over the years (JT).

A pair of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** at Blue Oak Picnic Area, Mt. Diablo State Park, on 5/20 were extremely unseasonal for such an arid locale; and it seems likely

that they were nesting, something unknown in the county east of I-680 (JT,LF,SH).

Confirmations of nesting **Winter Wrens** at Lake Anza, Tilden Park, on 5/6-9 were expected but warmly welcomed as they had only been confirmed in two other blocks (ES,DA)

A **Hermit Thrush**, probably the most local of all our nesting passerines, was along the East Ridge Trail in Redwood Regional Park on 5/21 (JT). This is across the canyon from the only known nest-site in the county near the headwaters of Redwood Creek. The number and extent of the **American Robin** population in the county continues to surprise with confirmations from 2/3 of the blocks in the county and even from nearly half of the blocks in East County! (many observers).

Quite possibly the most exciting news of the breeding season came from Jewel Lake in Tilden Park where on 6/9 three observers watched a pair of adult **Yellow Warblers** carrying mouthfuls of food, presumably to a nest (BB, K&TK). This is the first nesting confirmation for the Atlas and may be the first for the county in over a half century!

A **White-throated Sparrow** just inside of Alameda Co. near Redwood Regional Park on 4/29 was one of the latest to ever be recorded in the East Bay (SS).

Observers: Dustin Alcalá, Bob Brandriff, Peter Dramer, Lillian Fujii, Sharyn Galloway, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Steve Hayashi, Sheila Junge, Kris and Ted Koundakjian, Marc Rauzon, Bob Richmond, Emilie Strauss, Sylvia Sykora, Jim Tietz.

National Audubon Society President Critical of Bush Energy Policy

NAS President John Flicker recently released the following assessment of the energy policy adopted by the Bush administration.

The Bush Administration's energy policy is a series of misguided proposals that will be destructive for birds, wildlife, and their habitat. By emphasizing supply and production, the policy encourages the destruction of the last wild places in America, places like the Arctic Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. The energy policy encourages the blowing off of mountaintops in West Virginia, destroying endangered cerulean warbler habitat for a small amount of coal. The energy policy calls for the construction of 1,300 new power plants—the equivalent of 26 in every state—creating acid rain and producing other wildlife habitat destroying pollutants.

There is a smarter, quicker, bird-friendly way to address America's energy needs—energy efficiency. The Department of Energy has estimated that using the

energy efficiency technology we have today could cut in half the number of new power plants the President wants to construct. Technology available today can increase the nation's vehicle fuel economy by at least 65% over the next 10 years.

Investing in energy efficiency is investing in supply and generation of energy but is also investing in birds, wildlife, special places, and the future. We should invest in new energy supplies and new power plants. But the emphasis must be on how we use what we have better and smarter.

Audubon was established nearly 100 years ago. The Bush Administration energy policy is almost a century old in its approach. It reflects little in the way of creative policy making or the use of innovative technology. A national policy based on energy efficiency and new technologies will help Americans keep their lifestyles while letting birds and wildlife live too. Let's work for an energy policy that invests in the future—for people and birds.

Hats Off! to Bob and Brian

MDAS salutes two of its dedicated volunteers, Bob Wisecarver and Brian Murphy. The two MDAS members are avid bat-ers as well as birders, and their bat-ty activities were in the news June 13.

Brian designed and constructed the bat house that sits atop a 16-foot pole. Then local bat friends installed it at McNabney Marsh. In addition to Bob and Brian, the bat house-raising team consisted of Gary Bogue, well-known *Contra Costa Times* wildlife columnist; and Bill Bernard from the Board of the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation.

The new bat house was installed on the east side of the series of little lakes by Interstate 680 near the Marina off-ramp. This is the second bat house that Bob and Brian have installed in the McNabney Marsh area.

Before installing the bat house, they obtained permits and permission from East Bay Regional Park District, the county Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control District, and Mountain View Sanitary District.

The two bat-ers hope local bats look the new residences over and move in soon. Thanks, guys!



Joel Summerhill (center) helps young birders identify an interesting species.

In Memory of Gifford and Winnie Young

MDAS wishes to express its appreciation for the donations received from the following individuals in memory of Gifford and Winnie Young:

Bob and Betty Gallagher
 Donald E. Yoder
 Donna P. Klein
 Elizabeth Dickey
 Franklin H. Shoffner
 Gloria Cannon and Joel Summerhill
 Lois M. Foster
 Marian Harvey
 Pamela Alves Keiser
 Paul S. Schmidt
 Robin L.C. Leong
 Maury Stern
 Mike and Cecil Williams
 Hugh and Rosita Harvey

The donations will be used to further the work of the Chapter.

MDAS Volunteers Lead Family Birdwalk in Pittsburg

Recently MDAS members Joel Summerhill and Gloria Cannon led a family birdwalk in Pittsburg's Buchanan Park. Sponsored by the Leisure Services Department of the City of Pittsburg, the free birdwalk attracted more than 15 nature enthusiasts, including a local Cub Scout troop.

The birdwalk was one of the events that MDAS participates in to encourage interest in birds and other wildlife and to introduce families to the pleasures of recreational birdwatching.

"The families on our birdwalks are not expecting us to show them rare birds. They're happy to just learn the names of the birds in their backyards," said Gloria. If you are interested in participating or leading other family birdwalks, please contact Joel Summerhill at 925-753-0862.

My Favorite Birding Websites by Gloria Cannon

Lovers of Audubon's paintings, be sure to visit <<http://employeeweb.myxa.com/rrb/Audubon>>

Richard Buoanno, an employee of Myxa Corporation, took advantage of the company's offer of web server space to make available the entire folio of John James Audubon's *Birds of America* (1840-1844).

He added extensive cross-references, including lists of the plates, figures, and bird calls. One particularly telling addition has been the index to birds which have gone extinct or been added to the Endangered Species List since Audubon's time.

Richard points out that all the bird calls are copyrighted by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and may only be reproduced under license. The original CD Rom was produced and copyrighted by the CMS Company; however, the company itself appears to be extinct

This is a serious contender for best all-around birding website:

<<http://birding.about.com/hobbies/birding/mbody.htm>>.

It has information on types of birds, songs and calls, birdhouses and feeders, bird photography, birding chat groups, plants to attract birds, and more. It links to over 700 sites, including realtime cams trained on bird feeders and bird nests all

over the United States. (I use the site as a source of free birding clipart for the *Quail*)

Just want to see some pretty bird photos? Then bookmark this excellent site:

<<http://www.birdphotography.com/>> Currently, this website has photographs of 261 species, and more are added all the time. A truly beautiful site.

Just one more site of my favorite birding websites: <<http://lamington.nrsm.uq.edu.au/lintro6.htm>>

This site is so wonderful, so beautiful. It introduces the birds, wildlife, and plants of Lamington National Park southwest of Brisbane, Australia. Be sure to have your speakers turned on.

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. 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor

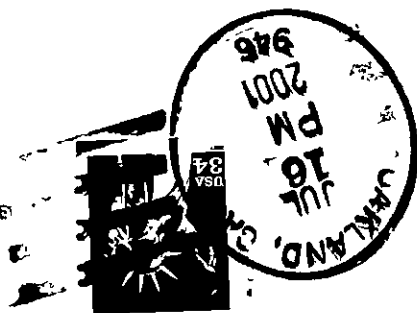
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Next Deadline: September 7

Observations

by Steve Glover

The sudden appearance of a flock of banded **Wood Ducks** at Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek in mid-July has raised questions about the origins of many of the birds found nesting in the county in recent years (R&HH, m.ob). If anyone out there has information about who is putting Wood Ducks where,

please contact me.

A Long-tailed Duck (formerly known by the less-than-flattering name of Oldsquaw) first found 6/19 at the south end of the



Albany Crescent, Alameda Co. (BF), was still present through at least 7/19 (RW). Surprisingly enough, this species appears to regularly summer in this area. Three baby **Ruddy Ducks** were noted at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek on 6/9; but while the observer was watching them, a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** swooped in and snatched up one of them, flying off with it in its bill! (BS) As mentioned previously, this is one of very few spots in the county where this species is known to nest. (There was also a confirmation this summer from the Chevron property in Richmond).

Two fledgling **Red-shouldered Hawks** 6/16 along Byron Hwy near Byron was one of the few nest records for the eastern part of the county (SG). **Peregrine Falcons** are rarely reported in the Diablo Range away from known nest-sites, especially in summer, so one over the East Ridge Trail in Redwood Regional Park on 6/25 was particularly noteworthy (MR). A very vocal and visible **Clapper Rail** has been seen daily since May at Meeker Slough, Richmond; and on 6/19, (see OBSERVATIONS, p. 7)

Corbett National Park and the Birds of India

Editor's Note: With the September meeting, MDAS begins an exciting two-part exploration of India. Vivek Tiwari, native of India and Intel executive, will introduce us to wild India with a visit to Corbett National Park. At the October meeting, we will hear internationally known author, James Norwood Pratt, who will present a slide program on his India travels with a focus on tea plantations and Natural Origins Tea.

Nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, Corbett National Park is the oldest and finest of India's National Parks. Best known for its magnificent mammals, including tigers and elephants, its scenic landscapes also harbor an extraordinary diversity of birdlife, with over 500 species recorded from the park.

Vivek Tiwari will introduce us to the birds of India through a photographic tour of this park and other parts of India. Tiwari provides expert information on travelling and birding in India.

Tiwari joined Princeton University as a graduate student in 1991. Since graduating with a Doctoral Degree in Electrical Engineering in 1996, he has been with Intel Corporation.

He is passionate about birds and nature and is enthusiastic about assisting more birders and naturalists to experience the joys of the Indian wilds firsthand.

The park covers a total area of 1,320 sq km in the foothills of the Himalayas, with a core area of 340 sq km. Its main purpose is to protect the plants and animals of the Ram Ganga river valley, especially the tiger and the gharial, a species of fish-eating crocodile. About 92 tigers inhabit the park. The most commonly observed wildlife are langur monkeys, rhesus macaques, wild boars, spotted deer, sambar, and wild elephants.

Birding Information

Don Yoder, founder and Program Director of the California Bluebird Recovery Project, will update the Bluebird Recovery program with numbers and types of birds in the bluebird/cavity nester boxes over the last few years.

NEW MDAS Meeting Schedule

MDAS has changed the schedule for our general meetings to better serve the needs of our members. The main program will now begin at 8:05—or 30 minutes earlier—and conclude the meetings by 9 p.m. Please let your Board members know how this schedule works for you! Here are the new times:

6:30 p.m.—Doors open
7 p.m.—Birding Information
7:25 p.m.—Business meeting
7:40 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing
8:05 p.m.—Program
Remember to bring your own coffee cup!

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, September 6**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1140 Marchbanks, Walnut Creek (see map on p. 8).

Connections

Some MDAS members are concerned about the rockers climbers in the Pine Canyon area disturbing nesting Peregrine Falcons there. Their letter to Pat O'Brien, General Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District, is printed below. You too can support their concerns with your own letter to the EBRPD General Manager asking for protection of these rare, endangered birds.—ed.

Mr. Pat O'Brien, General Manager
East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Ct.
Oakland, CA 94605

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

During a recent evening hike with other Audubon members at Diablo Foothills Regional Park, I was treated to thrilling views of a pair of Peregrine falcons and their young offspring. These wonderful birds have been breeding successfully now for a number of years in Pine Canyon, thanks to the ideal habitat which the canyon provides. The trees and rock outcrops on the Mt. Diablo State Park side of the canyon provide nesting sites for a number of other special birds, such as Red-tailed hawks, Turkey vultures, White-throated swifts and owls.

Unfortunately, the rock outcrops provide a powerful attraction for human climbers as well. Some people are not aware that they are disturbing nesting birds in this sensitive area; others, however, are well aware. Last Friday evening, we passed a young man carrying several large raptor feathers which could only have come from a nest high in the rocks.

I know that it is impossible to prevent people from climbing the rock formations at Castle Rock. However, I believe that a public education campaign would have an impact on many park users. If they were made aware of the sensitive nature of the habitat, I believe many would choose not to climb there or would help to discourage the bad behavior of others.

On behalf of the Conservation Committee of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, I would like to request that California Parks and Recreation and/or the East Bay Regional Park District erect a few signs at appropriate locations, such as at nearby staging areas, which will help to protect the habitat of these magnificent birds. Our committee will be happy to work with you to accomplish this goal.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Cc: Larry Ferri, California Parks and Recreation

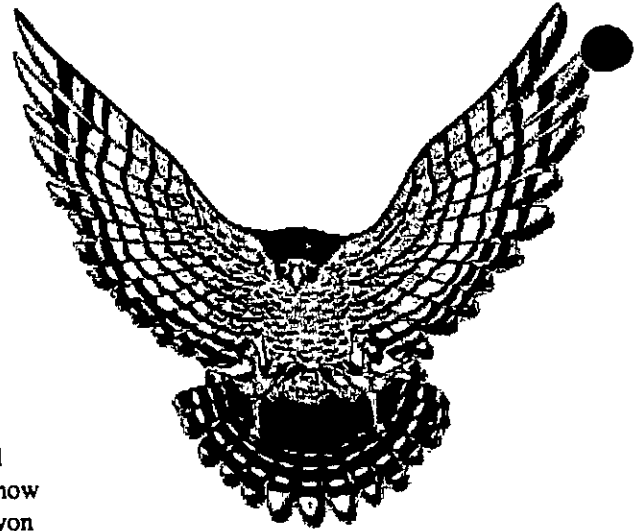
Walk Away from Violence

The Mt. Diablo Peace Center is holding a walkathon fundraiser at Heather Farm on Saturday, Oct. 6, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Through a pleasant, 1.2-mile stroll, you can help support local peace programs, such as "Peace Through Art and Writing," "Raising Peaceful Children," and "Race Awareness for High Schoolers." Participants, including children and pets (the pets will need your help in this), secure contributions from friends and acquaintances (your "sponsors"). For more information and a walker's information packet, call the Peace Center at 925-933-7850

Birding Classes

Alice Hoch is continuing her birding field classes for beginning and advanced birders through the Fremont Adult School. The class will meet on five Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The next begins Sept. 11 and ends Oct. 9. After that, there will be another session of five field trips from Nov. 13 through Dec. 11.

Class size is limited, so register before Sept. 6. Be prepared to birdwatch at the first class meeting. For more information, call the adult school at 791-5841 or Alice Hoch at 657-0475.



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Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley Trip Yields Record Bird List

by Rosita Harvey

A total of 20 delightful people, some regulars and some visitors, came to spend a cold and windy but enjoyable weekend with Pat MacEachern, co-leader, and me at Yuba Pass this year. Pat and I appreciate their sense of humor and observations, for all helped to make the trip more enjoyable. Eugenia Larson was invaluable as our main bird identifier. My goal for this trip was to come home with a list of 102 birds. But after almost two days of walking and driving and counting yellow birds, red birds, and clever smart birds, we returned home with a healthy list of 116 birds seen and/or heard.

Saturday at Yuba Pass

As always, we spent Saturday morning birding around the pass. The morning was overcast and rather cold, yet Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, Cassin's Finches, and a few Red Crossbills feeding either on the ground or on the trees welcomed us as always.

A few minutes after 7 a.m., we started walking on the dirt road north of Highway 49. The highlights during this slow walk were several White-headed Woodpeckers and Red-breasted Sapsuckers feeding on the many leftover short snags in the meadow; an anxious baby Flicker sticking its head out of its hole; several warblers such as MacGillivray's, Wilson's, Yellow-rumped and Hermit, busily feeding with one another in a forest of young willows next to the trail.

On our way back to the main road, we had the pleasure of watching for a long time a pair of Williamson's Sapsuckers constantly flying with food to a hole high up in a tree. They built their home in the same tree that they had used last year!

At about 9:30 a.m. we came to the parking lot and drove two miles on the gravel road south of Highway 49, behind the campground. Pat and I had scouted this road the day before and had seen several species of warblers and flycatchers. This morning, though, due perhaps to the cold weather, these species were hard to find although we could hear them singing in the tall trees. On our first stop, and with a

lot of work, we were able to see Olive-sided, Dusky, and Hammond's Flycatchers, a few Western Tanagers flying quietly in the lower parts of the trees, and a pair of Mountain Chickadees still feeding young. Mountain Quails were heard faintly a few times. On our way back, we saw a few warblers, sparrows, and more chickadees. The two families of Townsend's Solitaires seen the day before were never found.

Dipper Provides a Show

At about 12 o'clock, after a brief lunch, we carpoled about 7 miles west on Highway 49 to a manmade waterfall looking for one of my favorite mountain birds: the unusual American Dipper. Every year during this trip, this bird is seen either carrying food to nests which we can never see, or foraging on the bottom of the cold waters of the river across from the waterfall. This year our group was lucky to observe nature at its best. This remarkable bird's nest in the shape of an oven was visible on the cliff behind the waterfall barely 5 feet from where we were standing. Through its arched opening near the bottom, we had the pleasure of watching the bright yellow bill and mottled body of an anxious young while it was being fed by one of the adults.

Madora Lake

After this memorable moment, around 1 p.m. we left the stream and headed north to Highway 89 and Madora Lake, a small lake located near Graeagle. During our 2-mile walk around the lake, we saw a few warblers, swallows, ducks, and flycatchers. We also admired, like never before, several species of butterflies, such as monarchs, anise, and tiger swallowtails, and many other blue-and-whites ones which I could not identify. The wildflowers were also abundant. Years before we had seen a few flowers blooming in the meadow adjacent to the trail which leads to the lake. This year, though, the meadow was almost covered with Queen Anne's lace, blazing star, columbines, and tiger lilies. It was about 4:00 when we finally made it back to the cars and headed back towards Bassett's.

Bassett's

The town of Bassett's, which is located about 5 miles west from the pass, consists of one store, a small motel, and a couple of homes nearby. This is always a pleasant place to visit, and the best place for campers to pick up groceries, cold drinks and ice cream. This is also one of the few and most convenient places to enjoy the hummingbirds which choose to come to this part of the country to breed. Every year the owners hang feeders outside the store, so these birds are accustomed to visitors. This year, though, the cold weather and the abundance of wildflowers prevented them from coming to the feeders as often as they came in the past. Yet, with a lot of patience, a few of us enjoyed Calliope, Anna's, Rufous, Allen's, and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds sipping nectar from the many feeders visible from anywhere in the parking lot.

Nighthawks and Poorwills

After a quick dinner, we met again at the top of the pass before going east to Chapman Saddle Road to look for nocturnal species. While we waited for members to join us, we watched Red Crossbills, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Evening Grosbeaks, Red-breasted Sapsuckers and finches eating seed which I had previously dispersed near the parking lot. A pond created by a drippy faucet became a popular place where people waited for birds to show up either to drink or bathe.

At around 8 p.m., we carpoled east to look for Common Nighthawks and Common Poorwill. These are two species which we never want to miss during this trip. After a long wait, a single Nighthawk flew quietly above us.

Poorwills were more generous though. Although it took a while for one to respond to our tape, we saw at least three of them at one time seated motionless on the road a few feet from us. This night-hunting species and the wonderful vistas of the Sierra Valley closed the first day of our bird watching weekend trip. (See YUBA PASS, p. 6)

2001–2002 MDAS Field Trip Schedule

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chair

This is a **tentative** schedule of MDAS field trips in 2001–2002. 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

- 12, Wednesday—Jewel Lake (2)
- 15, Saturday—Monterey (2)
- 20, Thursday—Hayward RSLP (2)
- 26, Point Pinole RP (2)
- 29, Saturday—Outer Point Reyes (2)

October

- 3, Wednesday—Berkeley-Richmond Shoreline
- 11, Thursday—Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area (1)
- 13, Saturday—Hawk Hill (1)
- 25, Thursday—SF Bay Refuge (2)
- 27, Saturday—Abbott's Lagoon (2)
- 31, Wednesday—Wildcat Gorge-Tilden RP (2)

November

- 8, Thursday—Mt. View Sanitary District (1)
- 14, Wednesday—Arrowhead Marsh (1)
- 17, Saturday—Charleston Slough (2)
- 29, Thursday—Hidden Lakes Park (2)

December

- 1, Saturday—Limantour Lagoon
- 5, Wednesday—Niles Canyon (2)
- 13, Thursday—Concord City Park
- 15, Saturday—CHRISTMAS COUNT
- 22, Saturday—EAST COUNTY CHRISTMAS COUNT
- 29, Saturday—Palo Alto Baylands (1)

January

- 3, Thursday—Lake Merritt
- 9, Wednesday—San Pablo Creek Trail (2)
- 12, Saturday—Putah Creek (1)
- 17, Thursday—Lake Chabot
- 23, Wednesday—Sunol RP (1)
- 26, Saturday—Santa Cruz (1)
- 31, Thursday—Thornton (1)

February

- 6, Wednesday—Grizzly Island Refuge
- 9-10, Sat. & Sun.—Weekend trip to Panoche Valley & Los Banos
- 14, Thursday—Big Break Trail (2)
- 20, Wednesday—Lafayette Reservoir (2)

February (cont.)

- 23, Saturday—Tomales Bay SP (2)
- 28, Thursday—Yolo County Refuge (1)

March

- 6, Wednesday—Berkeley Shoreline (2)
- 9, Saturday—Carpey Valley (1)
- 14, Thursday—San Leandro Reservoir (2)
- 20, Wednesday—Shadow Cliffs RP (2)
- 23, Saturday—Black Diamond RP (2)
- 28, Thursday—Huckleberry Preserve (2)

April

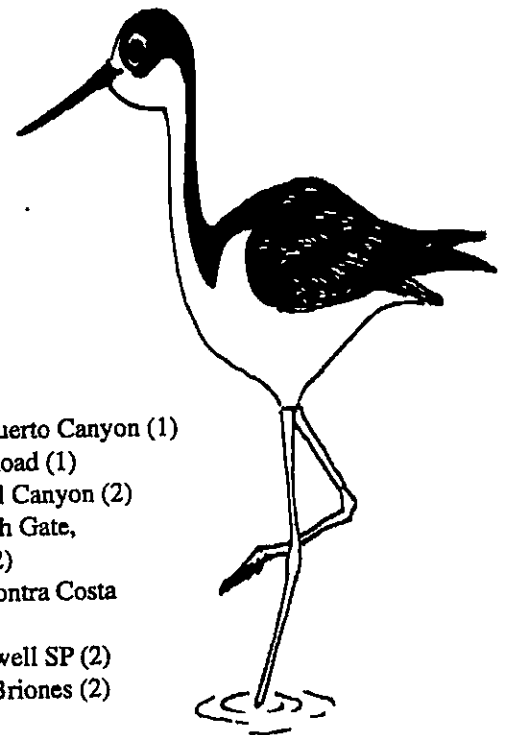
- 4, Thursday—Borges Ranch (2)
- 6, Saturday—Garin RP (2)
- 11, Thursday—Redwood RP (2)
- 17, Wednesday—Laurel Canyon-Tilden (2)
- 20, Saturday—Pine Canyon (3)
- 25, Thursday—Ida Clayton Road (1)

May

- 1, Wednesday—Del Puerto Canyon (1)
- 4, Saturday—Mines Road (1)
- 9, Thursday—Mitchell Canyon (2)
- 15, Wednesday—South Gate, Mt Diablo (2)
- 18, Saturday—East Contra Costa County (2)
- 23, Wednesday—Caswell SP (2)
- 29, Thursday—West Briones (2)

June

- 1, Saturday—Point Reyes (1)
- 6, Thursday—Annadel SP (2)
- 22-23, Sat-Sun.—Yuba Pass (2)



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.

Wednesday, September 12, 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.

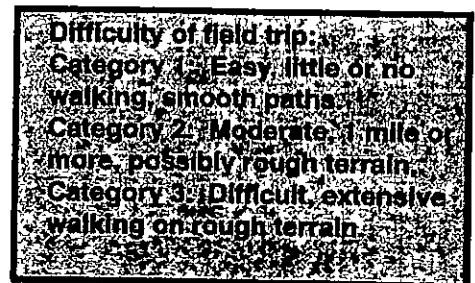
Saturday, September 15, Moss Landing—Monterey. Carpool leaves LaGonda Way in Danville at 6:30 a.m. From I-680 southbound, exit on El Pintado, turn right, and right again onto LaGonda. From I-680 northbound, exit at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, turn left, then right on LaGonda, and drive about 1/4 m north 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.

Thursday, September 20, 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

Wednesday, September 26, 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.

Saturday, September 29, 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



Road Threatens Birds, the Gardens at Heather Farm

by Hugh Harvey

Editor's Note: The City of Walnut Creek is considering a plan that would allow a 20-ft-wide, paved road to be constructed from San Carlos Ave. through part of the Gardens at Heather Farm (our meeting site). The City claims that the road would only be used to relieve traffic congestion in the park during the annual Art & Wine Festival and Walnut Festival. Hugh Harvey, MDAS member, reacts to the proposed road construction.

To the City Council of Walnut Creek: My specific objection to the proposed road is the continued development of the Heather Farm at the cost of the Farm. The City has steadfastly developed and removed this area's natural and wild environs. (Natural and wild do not necessarily mean the same thing.)

As the development has occurred, the loss of bird life in the park has been extreme. The hillside this road would bisect is the only area of the park I have ever seen Western Bluebirds. The small

creek just to the south of the Equestrian area is a springtime haven for Lesser Goldfinches, American Goldfinches, House Finches, and the Killdeer families which nest in the fenced area owned by Contra Costa Water District.

The trees and bushes there are also used by Nuttall's and Downy Woodpeckers, Lincoln's Sparrows, White-crowed, and Golden-crowed Sparrows as well as the occasional Red-shouldered Hawk who used to hunt the open fields now being made into your new Sports Field. STOP THE PLUNDER!

Field Trip Report

San Mateo Coast, August 4—Five MDAS members saw 59 species on a surprisingly sunny day. Highlight birds included Osprey, nine Common Mergansers, and seven Greater Yellowlegs together, a Parasitic Jaeger, and, for more excitement, a Baird's Sandpiper, and a Semipalmated.—Fred Safier

Yuba Pass

(continued from page 3)

Sunday in Sierra Valley

On Sunday, we met again at 7 a.m. before going to the Sierra Valley. The day was overcast, windy, and cold. Our first stop was Mountain Quail Road, near Calpine, a couple of miles from the intersection of Highway 49 and 89. Besides the local residents, such as chickadees and jays, we saw a Green-tailed Towhee and a couple of Gray Flycatchers. At Calpine, we turned right and drove over a mile to the end to the intersection of Calpine and A23. Every year Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows are found here, and this year was no exception although the wind forced them to take refuge on the sage along the fence a bit far from us.

At about 10 a.m., we headed north on A23 through an extended dry country before crossing the marsh. In the past, the unique vegetation of this marsh, which consists of a combination of high desert sage, cattail, grass, and vast areas of water was perfect for several species of birds who either visited it or lived here all year round.

This year, though, the valley was extremely dry. Two or three creeks replaced the vast blooming marsh we have seen in the past. A lot of the marsh has been cultivated, cattle have been let to pasture over almost all of it, and the vegetation which birds used to build their nests was mostly gone. Still we were lucky to see, among other things, Willets, Common Snipes, three Wilson's Phalaropes, a Common Moorhen, a few Yellow-headed Blackbirds, immature Marsh Wrens, a single American Bittern standing motionless near the water, a single White-face Ibis, four Sandhill Cranes, a few White Pelicans, and Killdeers.

Loyalton Surprise

It was close to 12 noon when we left the windy marsh, joined the pavement, and drove east towards Loyalton. On the way we stopped briefly on Harriet Lane looking for Black Terns and ducks, which we never found. Instead, a few members had the fortune of seeing a Sage Thrasher in flight. We stopped to eat lunch at the Loyalton Museum park on A24 and

compiled the list for those members who needed to drive home. As always, a Swainson's Hawk came to say good-bye to them by soaring quietly above us. For a number of years, this bird has built its nest in a lonely tree nearby; and as always, we could not avoid feeling sad for soon we had to leave this area and return to our daily routine.

The trip did not end for seven of us though. This year I had decided to include in it a couple of areas south of Loyalton. Every year my husband and I wish to include these areas on our trip but cannot because most members by now are tired and want to start driving home, but we drive through it on our way back to the camp ground at the top of the pass and always manage to see mountain birds.

By now the sun had come out, but the wind was still strong. First, we bird-watched at a picnic area a mile southeast of town. Soon we spotted House and Bewick's Wrens feeding young, Lewis' Woodpeckers, a Bullock's oriole, Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks, and a Western Wood-Pewee. Then, we drove 7 miles on Antelope Valley Road which circles the town on the south. While driving on it, we spotted Mountain Bluebirds, Pygmy, White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Mountain Chickadees, Brown Creepers, and a Clark's Nutcracker. This last species was a surprise for us this year. On Friday, while scouting the area around the pass, a couple of members and I had seen several Nutcrackers flying around. I already had lost hope about seeing them before the end of the trip!

A Few Misses

It was after 4:00 when we finally made it to Highway 49 and waved good-bye to some of the last members. During this trip, as in the last few years, we missed seeing Pileated Woodpeckers although there was plenty of evidence of them in the woods far across the campground. Blue Grouse were also around; I scared one away from a bushy area across the parking lot on Friday at about three in the afternoon in the same area where other birders had seen them Thursday.

Black-backed Woodpeckers were also seen a couple of days before the trip

flying across the meadow at the top of the pass. A Great Horned Owl was also heard Friday and Saturday night. Although we could not include some of these species in our list, I am not disappointed. I know that anyone who has been in this part of the country at one time or another knows well how much fun is to bird here. This year, I must say, was a successful one.

At the end of the trip we came home tired, but with a checklist way beyond my goals. We also returned with our hearts full of joy. The calm and green landscape of this high-altitude paradise left us soothed and rested, and the great amount of wildlife visible here gave us plenty to talk about back home.

Chapter News



Atlas Website

The Contra Costa County Breeding Bird Atlas website has been updated to include all data from 1998-2000. It does not include any data from this year. The address is <<http://www.flyingemu.com/ccosta/>>. If you find any omissions or errors, please let me know at emupilot@flyingemu.com.—Joel Herr
A really cool website for CoCo.—ed.

Photos, Art Wanted

MDAS is developing its website We are asking our members to donate the use of photos and art of birds and local scenes, especially Mt. Diablo, as part of the graphic design of the website. If selected, you would be given a credit line under the photograph or art. Please contact Gloria Cannon at 753-0862 or at gcannon4@excite.com. If you would like to discuss selling your art or photos by linking to our website, please contact Carol Frischmann at 735-3836

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, Ann MacGregor, at . Our database is separate from that of the National Audubon Society and will not be passed on to any marketing organization.

Observations (continued from page 1)

there was a pair (DA). A belated report was received, however, of two adults and five fledglings present there on 6/17 (JL,BH). On 6/25, at least three birds were seen, with at least one thought to be a juvenile (LF,SH). Rails, as you would guess, are extremely difficult to confirm nesting; and this is indeed the first for the atlas project.

Two **Wandering Tattlers** were inside the harbor at Marina Bay, Richmond, on 8/4 (LJP,NW).

A **Black Skimmer** was north of Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline near Richmond on 6/19 (DA), and three were nearby on 8/4 (LJP,NW). One of the latter three was a juvenile, likely the first ever found in the county. Skimmers are now annual, post-breeding migrants to the Richmond area.

Ever wonder just how common owls can really be? During about three hours of atlasing along Marsh Creek Rd. east into the Byron area on 6/28 no less than nine families of **Barn Owls** were detected. While most were not actually seen, the begging call of young Barn Owls is quite distinctive and is given with great frequency (SG).

A **Yellow-billed Magpie** along Buchanan Rd. near the Pittsburg/Antioch border on 8/9 was well west of their usual haunts in the Delta (JB).

Another highlight of the nesting season was the discovery of nesting **Say's Phoebes** on private property at the border of Mt. Diablo State Park and Blackhawk in mid-June (MSp). Another Say's Phoebe, this one at Lime Ridge Open Space on 6/19, was probably also nesting somewhere in the vicinity (MS). The most recent known nesting for the county was at Los Vaqueros in 1981 and Black Diamond Mines in 1984.

Two pairs of **Phainopeplas** at Lime Ridge Open Space on the north flank of Mt. Diablo had been present at least several weeks before two recently-fledged young were seen being fed on 7/8 (JH,MS). JH felt that two of the four adult birds may have been offspring from a previous nesting. The movements of

Phainopeplas are complex, and it has been theorized that some birds nest early in the deserts of the Southwest before moving north to nest again, so perhaps that is what has happened here.

Less than five **Northern Parulas** have ever been found in Contra Costa County, so a singing male on the very summery date of 7/2 at Jewel Lake, Tilden Park, was an exciting find indeed (BF). The only other Northern Parula found in the East Bay in mid-summer was at Lake Chabot Regional Park on 7/6/86. This species does currently nest in tiny numbers at a few locations along the coast.

In the last issue, it was mentioned that the first confirmation of **Yellow Warblers** in Contra Costa in as much as half a century had come from Tilden Park. Following quickly on the heels of that confirmation came yet another confirmation: a male feeding a fledgling on EBMUD property near Pinole on 6/16 (SH,LF). Hopefully, there will be more to come in the future. The first confirmation of nesting **Yellow-breasted Chats** for the atlas project came from Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 6/26 when begging youngsters were heard (SG).

We have found several **Blue Grosbeaks** during the atlas project away from their typical Central Valley haunts, with the most recent being a singing male at the Nortonville portion of Black Diamond Mines Regional Park on 6/30 (SG). It remains unclear if this represents a range expansion or more thorough coverage.

Observers: Dustin Alcalá, Jeanne Bonner, Brian Fitch, Lillian Fujii, Steve Glover, Barbara Hakala, Rosita and Hugh Harvey, Steve Hayashi, Joel Herr, Jean Lucken, Lina Jane Prairie, Malcolm Sproul, Bobbi Stacey, Maury Stern, Neil Whitehouse, Russ Wilson

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 8526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin 94568, or call (925) 825-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box
(415) 681-7422

News from Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Birdfeeding Thoughts

One of the fun aspects of bird watching and feeding is how each year is different than others. This summer we saw more **Bullock's** and **Hooded Orioles** than last summer, but the numbers are still down from a few years ago when drought conditions prevailed.

Chestnut-backed Chickadees were very numerous. Many people reported multiple broods in the nest boxes. These are resident birds, staying with us year round. They love sunflower seeds, suet, and peanut butter. Be sure and use "chunky" peanut butter and push seeds into the peanut butter. Birds do not have saliva glands. Straight peanut butter is very hard for them to eat safely.

The most exciting reports on summer birdfeeding came from about 10 people who had **Lazuli Buntings** (males) visiting their feeders. The buntings were eating sunflower seeds. In the last 11 summers, we had never had any feeder reports of this spectacularly beautiful bird.

California Thrashers seem to be expanding their range gradually. Years ago, the only backyard reports we received were in Lafayette. This year we also had some reports from Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and Martinez.

Anna's Hummingbirds were very abundant. There were very many reports of multiple birds feeding at the same time. This is more typical of what you see in Arizona, not in northern California where the males chase away the others.

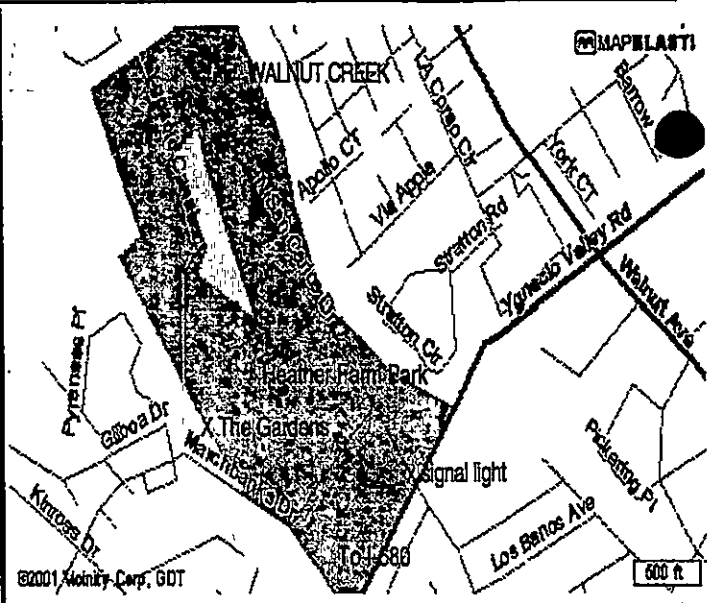
There were abundant numbers of **Lesser Goldfinches** at the thistle feeders with some **American Goldfinches**. That ratio will begin to change as we move into fall. More and more **American Goldfinches** will begin showing up at the feeders in flocks as they finish nesting. Visit our web site at <www.wbupleasanthill.com>. It is full of interesting information about your backyard birds, bird feeding ideas, supplies, and equipment.

CALENDAR

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: Sept. 6, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, and June 6.

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. 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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October 2001

Vol. 48, No. 2

Next Deadline: October 5

MDAS Partners with Natural Origins' Tea

MDAS and W. (Don) Raymond, CEO of Natural Origins' Tea, have formed a partnership to support good works in Contra Costa County and in India by co-marketing tea.

How Natural Origins' and MDAS plan to work together to share revenue and increase awareness of environmental goals will be presented to the membership at the October 4 general meeting, said MDAS's Carol Frischmann.

Natural Origins' sells select premium pure teas from India, carrying seals authorized by the Tea Board of India (see p. 2).

Natural Origins' will share 20% of its first year's sales with non-profit organizations. Mt. Diablo Audubon is one beneficiary of this commitment by Don Raymond. In return, MDAS will help raise awareness of these teas.

Natural Origins' is an environmentally sound and socially responsible company that wants to support and encourage participation in organizations that have similar goals. Raymond hopes that Natural Origins' can increase awareness of Audubon to a wide audience of tea drinkers.

"Natural Origins has a very special tea which we're glad to introduce to our caring community of conservationists. Don's generous revenue sharing allows expansion of our program to educate the public, especially young people, about Contra Costa's natural world," explained MDAS's Frischmann.

Additional local Audubon programs focus on preserving and restoring habitats and collecting data describing the status of

birds in our county. To carry out these programs, MDAS continues to team with local organizations such as East Bay Regional Parks in delivering programs.

"Our future is dependent on the support of organizations like Natural Origins'."

said Frischmann. "We look forward to the support of other organizations sharing these goals and thank Don for his leadership." For more information, visit the Natural Origins' Tea website at <http://www.naturalorigins.com/>.

Author James Norwood Pratt Presents India Tour

Editor's Note: With the October 4 meeting, MDAS continues its two-part exploration of India. In September, Vivek Tiwari introduced us to wild India with an exceptional program focused on the wildlife of Corbett National Park. At this meeting, we will hear internationally known author, James Norwood Pratt, who will present a slide program on his India travels with a focus on tea plantations and Natural Origins' Tea.

MDAS is honored to have world-famous author, traveller, and tea expert, James Norwood Pratt, as its guest speaker for the October program.

Mr. Pratt has recently toured India, exploring both the countryside and the

culture of central and southern India. He will share his experiences with us, and his observations about India and tea plantations promise to be entertaining and educational.

He is author of *The Wine Bibber's Bible*, an acknowledged classic in its field. His love of tea and his fascination with history and the lore of tea led him to write *The Tea Lover's Treasury*, *The Tea Lover's Companion*, and the whimsical *Reading Tea*.

His many articles and columns have made him one of the most widely read and recognized writers in the field.

James Norwood Pratt has been Honorary Director of the first traditional Chinese
Continued on p. 3

***This issue of the Quail
is dedicated to the victims of the
September 11 attack.***

No man is an island, entire of itself,
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
as well as if a promontory were,
as well as if a manor of thy friend's
or of thine own were:
any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind, and therefore
never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
it tolls for thee. —John Donne, 1572-1631

We will not forget.

Connections**Pesticides Identified as Cause of Bird Deaths**

A New York State wildlife official has discovered that of birds collected for a study on West Nile Virus, more died from pesticide poisoning than from the virus itself. In response to this early data, the National Audubon Society is calling upon Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia to begin testing dead birds for pesticide poisoning, if they have not already, and to publicly release their findings.

"This data is very troubling," said John Flicker, President of National Audubon Society. "States owe it to their residents to get to the bottom of this."

Last year, prompted by concern about the spread of West Nile Virus, New York State asked counties to report dead birds to its wildlife pathology laboratory. After receiving more than 80,000 birds, Dr. Ward Stone discovered that while the virus was a factor in some of the deaths,

the leading cause was pesticide poisoning. Common lawn care chemicals were among the most common toxins.

"Millions of us use pesticides like Diazinon and Dursban at home," said Frank Gill, Audubon's Senior Vice President of Science. "We deserve to know as much as possible about their effect on us. Like canaries in a coal mine, birds warn of danger in our environment. If these chemicals kill birds, what are they doing to our kids?"

In addition to threatening wildlife, pesticides are believed to harm humans. According to Pesticide Watch, pesticides have been linked to a wide range of human health hazards, from short-term impacts such as headaches and nausea to chronic conditions like cancer, reproductive harm, and endocrine disruption. According to NAS, the quantity of pesticides applied annually to

lawn areas equals 26 pounds for every man, woman, and child in the U.S. — more than three times more pesticide than farms use!

"State governments are responsible for protecting the public's health," said Audubon President John Flicker. "We think it's important for them to find out what these bird deaths mean."

The educational brochure, "Audubon Guide to a Healthy Yard and Beyond" can now be downloaded and printed from <http://www.audubon.org/bird/> and click on "Pesticide."

The Quail

is published 10 times a year by the Mt Diablo Audubon Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation and environmental education

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Virus Endangers Endangered Jay

In Florida, ornithologists are monitoring the endangered Florida scrub jay, which may fall prey to the West Nile virus as the virus moves into Central Florida. The scrub jay is expected to be especially vulnerable to the virus because of its historic susceptibility to other forms of mosquito-borne encephalitis.

Scrub jays nest in low sand pines and scrub oaks on sandy ridges. They are tenaciously territorial, and single birds will stay put, even if it means never mating. Ornithologists believe they live in small family groups, with each year's hatchlings staying on for a year to help the mother and father care for the next generation.

The American crow and the common blue jay, close cousins of the jay in the corvid family, have been hard-hit by West Nile, dying in droves in areas where the virus has been discovered.

"The problem that we face with scrub jays is they are already so precarious, their numbers are so low that we worry about catastrophic events," said Nancy

Douglass, a regional wildlife biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "A robust population, with lots of animals, can afford to lose quite a few. When you have a population that is no longer robust, you tilt the scales toward extinction."

West Nile is carried by birds and transmitted by mosquitoes to other birds, horses, and humans. In the United States, it was discovered in New York in the summer of 1999. Since then, the virus has moved steadily south, having been found in North Florida and the Keys just this summer where it sickened four people.

West Nile has been detected in more than 60 species of birds and likely has killed hundreds, if not thousands. Because West Nile is new, native birds have no immunity to it. That makes them very vulnerable, just as Native Americans were vulnerable to diseases brought to the New World by colonists and conquistadors.—*St. Petersburg Times Online*, Sept. 4, 2001

Tea Tasting Feature of October MDAS Meeting

At its October 4 meeting MDAS members and guests will have the opportunity to sample a variety of Natural Origins' Teas of India and learn why they are recognized internationally for quality, consistency, and rich flavor. Our Hospitality Chair Alice Holmes is planning a tea tasting celebration that includes traditional English High Tea fare

Unlike many brands of tea on grocery store shelves, Natural Origins' uses premium estate teas and luxury blends, giving their teas a delicious flavor unknown to most Californians.

The single-region teas (Darjeeling, Nilgiri, and Assam) bear the "Genuine Origin" seal and "Pure India Tea" stamp, authorized by the Tea Board of India, guaranteeing that they are grown 100% in the specified region and packed at the source.

The eye-catching packaging is comprised of handcrafted, little wooden chests. Inside the chests, a foil outer lining seals the flavor in, and a tissue inner lining keeps the delicate leaves dry.

Darjeeling, which means "Land of the Thunderbolt," is grown on the foothills of the Himalayas at elevations above 4,000 feet. It is often compared to the finest of French sparkling wines, and so dubbed the "Champagne of Teas." It has an exquisite bouquet and produces an amber liquor that has a mellow, delicate character and a muscatel flavor. You can enjoy this fine tea throughout the day. These select teas come from tea plantations in Darjeeling, such as Jungpana, Margaret's Hope, and Pussimbing.

Assam, the birthplace of Indian tea, is in northeastern India. The gardens lie along the fertile plains of the mighty Brahmaputra River where the climate is ideal for growing fine tea. Assam is full-bodied and yields a coppery liquor with a

robust, malty flavor. This rich, satisfying drink will enliven your mornings. Assam is acquired from high-quality estates that include Hajua, Marphuani, and Doomur Dullung.

Nilgiri, which means Blue Mountains in the local language, is in southwestern India where tea is grown at altitudes over 6,000 feet. Nilgiri is full-bodied with a bright, lively liquor and a rounded, mellow flavor. You will find it an invigorating all-day tea. Nilgiri comes from such tea estates as Glenmore, Glendale, and Runnymede.



Darjeeling Green has a lovely aroma, light liquor, and gentle, delicate taste. It yields a soothing infusion that makes a pleasing after-dinner drink. This delectable tea, which is acquired from one of the top estates in Darjeeling, is rare.

English Breakfast is a harmonious blend of luxury black teas from north and south India. It produces a dark amber liquor and a rich, full-bodied flavor with a lively character. Brew a strong pot and enjoy a cup or two in the morning.

Earl Grey is a blend of fine Indian teas flavored with oil of bergamot. One legend recounts that a British diplomat saved a Mandarin's life, and in appreciation the Mandarin presented this tea recipe to the Earl. You will find its pale liquor, delicate aroma, and subtle citrus flavor make it a refreshing drink throughout the day.

The meeting will provide you with information about how to purchase these teas and how revenue from future purchases will benefit MDAS.

Pratt and India

(continued from p. 1)

tea house in America and has been instrumental in creating the American Premium Tea Institute (APTI). He is founder and editor of *Tea Trade*, the magazine of the world tea business. He is a popular teacher and speaker on his favorite subject and each year dozens of new audiences enjoy his lively presentations on any and every aspect of tea. "A tea lover who is not elitist fares poorly," according to Mr. Pratt, yet he is not a snobbish writer but one gifted in making history entertaining.

Even coffee drinkers will find much to absorb in his account of tea's spread from its origins in China to the tea plantations of India.

Born in 1942 in Winston-Salem North Carolina and brought up on land which has been in his family since before the American Revolution, James Norwood Pratt has lived chiefly in San Francisco for over 35 years.

MDAS Meeting Schedule

The next MDAS General Meeting will be **Thursday, October 4**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1150 Marchbanks, Walnut Creek (see map on p. 8).

MDAS has a new schedule for our general meetings to better serve the needs of our members. Here are the new times:

- 6:30 p.m.—Doors open
- 7 p.m.—Natural Origins' and MDAS—partners for the environment
- 7:25 p.m.—Brief business meeting
- 7:40 p.m.—Tea tasting event & door prize drawing
- 8:05 p.m.—James Norwood Pratt



2001 Chapter Financial Report

Expenses:

Year-over-year 2000 vs. 2001 we did a good job on containing expenses. Current year expenses (2001) were \$1,340 lower than last year's (2000)

Revenues:

The net revenue for 2001 was \$9,358 higher than 2000. NAS Dues Share was less for 2001 than 2000 by about \$600 and will be approximately \$2,000 less for the coming year under the new policies implemented by NAS. Net 2001 revenues were \$8,018 higher than 2000. Our fundraising letter accounted for \$8,565. Without the fundraiser, revenues without the fundraiser would have been \$20,052, or \$547 less than 2000. Memorial gifts were also up in 2001

07/01/2000 - 06/30/2001

Revenues

NAS Chapter Dues Share	\$8,535.53
Grants/Contributions	\$4,936.58
Educational Events	\$515.00
Fundraising Events	\$8,287.37
Interest on Investments	\$2,014.48
Sales	\$4,121.14
Other (Newsletter)	\$596.00
	\$29,006.10

Expenditures

Administration	\$1,807.30
Newsletter/Postage	\$11,282.43
Education Programs	\$1,367.71
Grants Contributions	\$1,995.83
	\$16,453.27

Net Income **\$12,552.83**

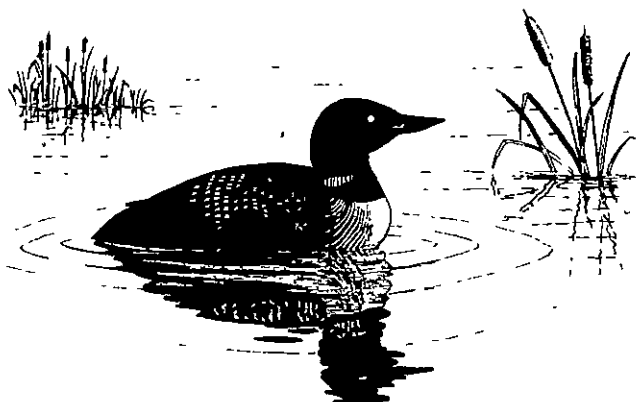
Beginning Balance \$47,283.00
 Ending Balance \$59,836.00

Assets

Cash & Equivalents	\$24,816.00
Investments	\$35,020.00
	\$59,836.00

Liabilities

Funds Reserved (CBRP)	\$7,268.00
Unreserved	\$52,568.00
	\$59,836.00



Breeding Bird Atlas Discussion List

As part of its efforts to compile a Breeding Bird Atlas, MDAS has an email discussion list. The Contra Costa County Breeding Bird Atlas Discussion List allows participants and interested observers to share information quickly through broadcast emails.

How to Subscribe to the List

Simply send an Internet email message to listserv@diab.com with the following command in the Body of the message, where first name and last name are your real first and last names:

`subscribe cccbbs first name last name`

How to Unsubscribe

If you decide that you would like to remove your name from the discussion list, simply send an email message to listserv@diab.com with the following command in the Body of the message:

`unsubscribe cccbbs`

Making Contributions

You can contribute to the list by sending an email message to ccbbs@diab.com. Your message will automatically be forwarded back out to all other members of the list.

General Comments and Cautions

Remember that **any message you send to the list will be forwarded to everyone else that is subscribed**. Therefore, you should use the list judiciously. Obviously, any personal or proprietary discussions should take place via direct email, not through the list. Also, when you reply to a message from the list, your reply is sent to the entire list, not the originator of the message.

The administrator of the Discussion List is Scott Heins. If you have questions or issues, contact him at jhein@diabloanalytical.com

Frischmann Named Executive Director

The MDAS Board has named Carol Frischmann, MDAS immediate past president, as Executive Director.

In this voluntary position, Carol will be carrying out specific projects, including

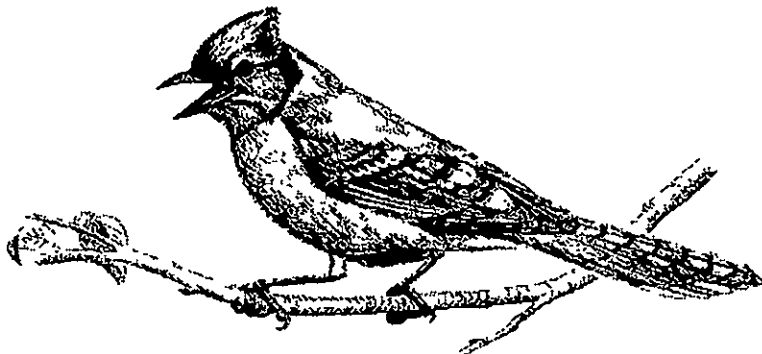
overseeing the development of an MDAS website.

"Carol knows the needs of the Chapter. We greatly appreciate her willingness to assist us in these projects," said Mike Williams, MDAS Vice President.

2002 Entertainment Books Are Here! Now Only \$30!

Entertainment 2002 books are as big as ever and cost only \$30—25% less than last year! Support your chapter and save up to 50% on restaurants, travel, entertainment, merchandise, services, and much more for the next 13 months. Pick up your great savings book at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill; or at MDAS monthly meetings.

Shop on the web at entertainment.com for additional savings by way of printable coupons, the Frequent Values Program, and an easy way to order out-of-town editions—a marvelous Christmas gift. Be sure to include the MDAS code of 175587. For assured Christmas delivery, order by October 31.



Workday Planned

Help Us Go Native at McNabney!

Construction has begun on the new staging area at East Bay Regional Park District's Waterbird Regional Preserve.

The contractor is racing the clock to install the new parking lot, restroom, trails and interpretative signs before the autumn rains begin.

Please join us Saturday, September 29, at 9:00 am until noon for a Mt. Diablo Audubon workday on site. We will be removing an old fence, seeding more than an acre of native grasses, and performing minor site cleanup.

Please wear sturdy shoes and bring work gloves and a rake if you have one. We will provide snacks and drinks for volunteers.

Directions: McNabney Marsh/ Waterbird Regional Preserve is located east of I-680 just south of the Benicia Bridge. Take I-680 to the Waterfront Road exit in Martinez. Go east on Waterfront to Waterbird Way. Turn right and into the park's new staging area. For more information, call Nancy Weninger at (925) 938-7987.

Central Valley Birding Symposium

The 5th Annual CVBS is November 15-18 at the Radisson Hotel in Stockton. Every year the Symposium just gets better. The speakers are consistently excellent, and this year include Ed Harper, Kimball Garrett, Joe Morlan, Steve Howell, Dick Walton, and Jim Lomax. The birding trips are excellent both in diversity of habitats visited and sheer numbers. Even if you just drop by to see the art exhibits and other vendors, it is well worth your time. For more information and registration materials, call 209-369-2010 or visit <http://www.cvbs.org>. Register early; space is limited.

Wetland Wonders

Lindsay Wildlife Museum is sponsoring Wetland Wonders from September 22-February 3. This marvelous exhibit allows you to explore the wonders of wetland ecosystems complete with fish, insects, reptiles, amphibians and microscopic animals.

Spiders & Snakes & Bats

October 27-28 the Lindsay Museum is celebrated the wonderful world of "scary" animals and adding new chills to Halloween with "haunted walkabouts" designed to appeal to the whole family. Admission is \$7/adults, \$6/seniors, \$5/children 3-17, and free if you're under 3 or a museum member.

Free Greenbelt Outings

This fall, Greenbelt Alliance offers a series of outings celebrating Bay Area peaks and other natural treasures. RESERVATIONS ARE NOT REQUIRED! For directions, call 415-255-3233 the week of the outing or check www.greenbelt.org anytime. Here's a sample:

BART to Vollmer Peak, Alameda County On Sat., Oct 13, explore a creek flowing through the Berkeley campus and ascend into the wild UC open space. Take a challenging, 10-mile hike to Vollmer Peak in Tilden for a great view to the east. Hike is challenging and steep in places. From 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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.

October 4, Thursday, Richmond Shoreline. Carpool leaves at 8 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 Point Isobel. Take SR 24 to 580 West; turn north. Take Central Avenue exit, turn left on Central, go to end of road, and park. We will bird here first and then move on to other parks. Possible shorebirds, loons, grebes, and bay ducks. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey 254-0486 Category 1

October 12, Thursday—Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area. Carpool leaves southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot at 8 a.m., Take I-80 north to Childs Road in Davis. Refuge headquarters are on Childs Road. Meet at 9 a.m. at headquarters. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey-254-0486 Category 1.

October 13, Saturday, 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 Casino 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 Safer, 937-2906 Category 1

October 17, Wednesday, 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. This a high tide day, and rails may be pushed out of the marsh. Mostly levee walking. Bring lunch. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

October 25, Thursday, Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Special trip to observe banding operations at the Marin Station. Carpool leaves at 7:00 a.m. from Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Call leader if you are interested. A \$2 per person donation is asked. Bring Lunch. Rain will cancel; call leader before 6:30 a.m. if weather is doubtful. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey 254-0486 Category 1

October 27, Saturday, 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 Casino 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: Maury Stern. 284-5980 Category 3

October 31, Wednesday, 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 walk up Wild Cat Creek. Bring lunch and liquids

Good beginner's trip. Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486. Category 2

Difficulty of field trip:

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

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

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain.

Field Trip Report

Bodega Bay, August 18—Ten members saw and heard 50 species. It was a picture-perfect day with warm sun and no wind until the last hour. No unusual birds were spotted, but highlights included a gray whale very well seen very close to Bodega Head as well as Osprey, Black Oystercatcher, Elegant Tern, and Wandering Tattler.—*Fred Safer*

Draft Compact Ready for Public Review

The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, a partnership of more than 45 organizations, including Audubon, has developed the Draft Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area. The Compact was developed to guide governments, employers, civic organizations, and individuals in steps to attain a better quality of life for all. The Draft Compact is available for public review and comment before it is finalized early next year. Participate in this regional project by providing your input. Workshops are being held throughout the Bay Area, including one on Oct. 6. Register by Sept. 24. Call 510-464-7978 or email InfoBAA@BayAreaAlliance.org to receive a copy of the report. Go to the website at <http://www.BayAreaAlliance.org> and submit your comments online.

Observations

by Steve Glover

A **Brown Pelican** circling over Iron House Sanitary in Oakley on 9/4 was certainly an attention getter! The only previous inland records for the County were lone birds at Lafayette Reservoir 11/26–12/4/1983 and Clifton Court Forebay near Byron 9/28–10/12/1994. There are apparently only about four previous records for the Central Valley, including one this August in nearby San Joaquin County. Interestingly enough, another inland bird was found at Shadow Cliffs Regional Park on 9/8 for Alameda County's first inland record (KR).

An **Osprey** on 8/15 was at Martinez Regional Shoreline where unusual (RM). A **Prairie Falcon** zipping south over Piper Slough, Bethel Island, on 9/4 was the first recorded at that heavily-birded site (SG).

Newly created ponds at Piper Slough, apparently built for the use of a new hunting club, lured in several first records of shorebirds for that location. The first was a **Lesser Yellowlegs** on 9/4, followed by a **Semipalmated Plover** and a **Baird's Sandpiper** on 9/8 (SG). Unfortunately, I was evicted from the site on the latter date; and as of this writing it would appear that we may have lost access to one of the prime birding areas in the county.

Though **Western Gulls** have long been considered rare as far east as the Delta, they appear to now be occurring with increasing regularity, with the latest sighting being of an adult at Piper Slough on 9/4 (SG). **Common Murres** are our most common seabird in Contra Costa County, and so far this fall (when they are most common), there were three on 8/25 (LP,NW), and two on 8/26 (CW) at the Richmond Marina.

An immature male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at a Lafayette feeder on 8/16 was one of few ever recorded in the county away from the Central Valley; fall records are particularly rare (JT). *Selasphorus* hummingbirds appeared at

an Antioch feeder 8/20 to at least 9/6 (JB). The status of Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds in California is still muddled at best but most believe that birds in September in Northern California are extremely likely to be Rufous.



Lewis's Woodpeckers are rare at all seasons in Contra Costa so the three flying north over Vollmer Peak in Tilden Park on 8/28 was extremely noteworthy (BF). Unlike Lewis's, **Acorn Woodpeckers** are fairly common in the county but not in the Berkeley Hills so at least one at Vollmer Peak 8/24–28 was also significant (BF).

As usual, Piper Slough was the place to see **Willow Flycatchers** in fall with a high of 15 there on 9/4 (SG). The total had dropped to four on 9/8 (SG)

A bird identified by the Lindsay Museum staff as a female **Tennessee Warbler** was picked up on a trail in Clayton on 9/12, but it later died (fide Susan Heckly). There are but a handful of records of this "eastern" warbler for the county. **Hermit Warblers** are decidedly uncommon in fall in the county. At least one was at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park 8/13–8/19 (BF,LT), and another was at Vollmer Peak 8/15 (BF).

Though most of our nesting songbirds have departed the breeding grounds by mid-August, the same cannot be said for **Blue Grosbeaks**. As is typical, a family group of a female and 3–4 juveniles were present at Piper Slough through at least 9/8 (SG).

A **Brewer's Sparrow** on 9/8 provided yet another first record for Piper Slough and was the first to be recorded in the eastern portion of the county in nearly 20 years. Though they are still considered rare in

the county, we have managed to turn one up in most falls in the last decade (SG).

Unusual finches at Piper Slough on 9/8 were four **Pine Siskins** and a **Lesser Goldfinch** (SG).

Observers: Jeanne Bonner, Brain Fitch, Steve Glover, Rob Matheson, Lina Prairie, Kathy Robertson, Jim Tietz, Larry Turnstall, Carolyn Wegner, Neil Whitehouse

Audubon's SF Bay Restoration Project

One flagship project of the National Audubon Society (NAS) is the restoration of San Francisco Bay wetlands. A monthly e-publication is now available to keep you informed of issues related to the San Francisco Bay Restoration Program. The website is <<http://AudubonSFbay.org>>. The project staff have offices at 131 Steuart St., Suite 200, San Francisco; the phone number is 415-947-0331.

Preservation and restoration of wetlands is an ongoing battle and one that is being lost to development. According to a recent National Academy of Sciences report, development projects that will drain or fill wetlands are routinely approved in exchange for promise to mitigate, or restore, wetlands elsewhere. Mitigation is not working. National Audubon Society is developing guidelines and practices for mitigation involving public works projects that involve San Francisco Bay. With expansion of San Francisco Airport looming, continuing problems with toxic runoff and discharge, and dredging, such guidelines are needed to protect the Bay. For more information about the SF Bay restoration, contact NAS's Mike Sellors at msellors@audubon.org.

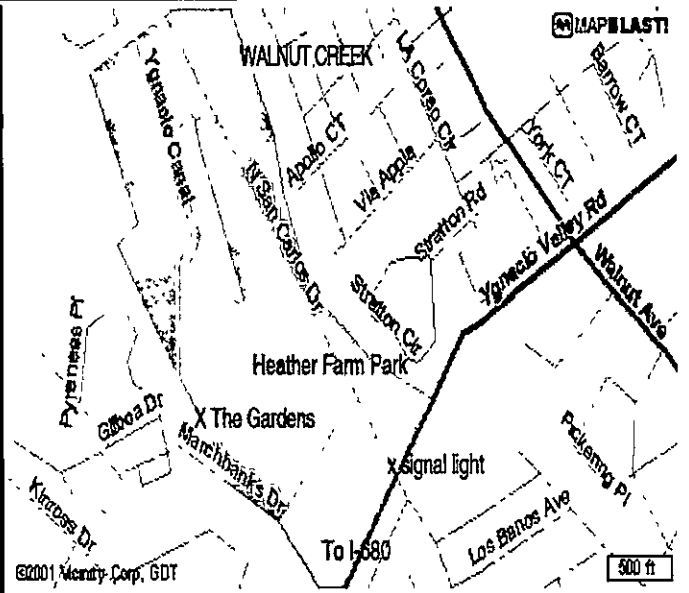
Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin 94568, or call (925) 828-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

CALENDAR

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, 1150 Marchbanks Dr, Walnut Creek: Oct. 4, Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, and June 6.

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 (published 10 times a year). 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. 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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November 2001

Vol. 48, No. 3

Next Deadline: November 9

Audubon President on New Realities and Old Values

Below is a letter from John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society, on the strength to be drawn from environmental values in the face of new global realities. His message is for all us who treasure the natural world.—Editor

On September 11, our staff at Audubon House in Lower Manhattan watched in horror as terrorists destroyed the nearby World Trade Center. Combined with the attack on the Pentagon and the downing of an airliner in Pennsylvania, it was a disastrous day for us all. At Audubon, we were fortunate all our staff are safe. Our sympathies continue to be with those less fortunate.

As we all struggle with this tragedy, we must begin thinking about how to adjust to new realities. As a consequence of these events, changes will occur in our society. As the country reorders its priorities, we at Audubon will recommit to our past ideals and prepare for the future.

The events of September 11th bring into focus what is most important to us—our families and loved ones, our communities, our freedoms, and the other core values that make our society strong.

For over 100 years, Audubon has been an American institution promoting values important to our society. We believe people are an important part of the solution to the environmental challenges we face. We believe that strong communities are the foundation of a strong country, and that a healthy environment is essential for our families, society, and a (see Flicker Letter, p. 6)

Cheeseman Presents the Birds of Australia and New Zealand

Doug Cheeseman, professor emeritus of zoology and ecology at De Anza College, will be our program speaker at the Nov. 1 meeting. Doug is an experienced observer and photographer of Australian wildlife, having been to Australia eight times and New Zealand three times.

The adaptations of the birds, mammals, and reptiles for survival on the narrow strips of land making up the coastal areas of Australia and New Zealand are a naturalist's delight. Australia is only slightly smaller than the United States and has habitats ranging from tropical rainforests to snow-capped mountains. This climatic diversity has fostered a bird list of 776 species.

Because both Australia and New Zealand have been geologically isolated, they have one of the largest numbers of endemics of any nation. Over 30 percent of all the birds in Australia—over 250 species—live exclusively on the mainland or nearby Tasmania.

Doug will emphasize the unique offshore islands of both countries. He will also include seabirds photographed off Kaikoura, NZ, and Tasmania, especially the Great Albatross and mollymawks. There will be lots of birds in the parrot family as well. Doug will present a program that demonstrates why Australia and New Zealand are two of the world's great birdwatching destinations.

Doug retired in 1997 after 34 years of teaching. He and his wife have been leading trips since 1978 and now lead five or six a year for Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris. In previous years, Doug has

presented excellent programs to MDAS on the Galapagos and eastern Africa.

Birding Information

Nancy Wenninger, land acquisitions manager for East Bay Regional Park District, will update us the improvements at McNabney Marsh and Waterbird Regional Park. She will also show slides of the many moods of the marsh.

One of the best birding destinations for Contra Costa County is McNabney Marsh near the city of Martinez. MDAS has a long history of protective concern for the marsh and has worked to make it more accessible to birdwatchers while restoring the wetlands habitat.

Waterbird Regional Park, where McNabney Marsh is located, is an important and highly visible marshland complex. Numerous species of waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds use the marsh for foraging and nesting. In September, MDAS volunteers spent a workday at the marsh, spreading native grass seed and clearing debris.

MDAS Meeting Schedule

The next MDAS general meeting will be **Thursday, November 1**, 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

7:25 p.m.—Business meeting

7:40 p.m.—Social time, refreshments and door prize drawing

8:05 p.m.—Program

Remember your coffee cup!

Connections

Utah Hunt Trouble for Trumpeter Swans

After a century of decline, things were starting to look up for the world's rarest swan, the trumpeter. An aggressive preservation program in Canada and habitat set-asides in the United States had helped bolster the numbers of the Trumpeter Swan. But now the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) has approved a hunting season on the Utah population of the birds, and scientist fear that it could mean extinction for this significant population of trumpeters and limit the recovery of the entire species.

Trumpeters are the largest swan in the world with a 6- to 7-foot wingspan. A century of hunting had driven the U.S. populations to the brink of extinction until the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act effectively made the trumpeter off-limits to hunters.

However, population recovery occurred slowly. In 1932, only 70 individual trumpeters remained in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Currently there are fewer than 350 trumpeters left in the resident U.S. breeding segment. The Alaska-based population is estimated to be 28,000.

(The status of the Trumpeter Swan in California has been a matter of considerable controversy. The Trumpeter Swan Society has suggested that as many as 200 birds may winter in California. However, the only firm evidence is a mere 21 accepted records out of a total of 58 sightings reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee.)

Mistaken Identity

An additional factor in the trumpeters' troubles is their resemblance to the more plentiful Tundra Swans. Several western states have a Tundra Swan hunting season, including Utah. Hunters have killed trumpeters, thinking they were taking aim at a Tundra Swan. The major difference between the two is size: trumpeters are roughly twice the size of Tundra Swan. But size differences are difficult to distinguish when a bird is in flight or at a distance.

Swans in Trouble

In 1995, FWS caved in to pressure from Utah state officials and set a legal quota of trumpeters, which, in effect, established a legal hunting season for the recovering trumpeters. Although trumpeters are still under consideration for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), FWS has failed to act. This five-year "experiment" ended earlier in 2001, but Utah game officials were reluctant to end the hunts.

As explored in a new book, *Swan Dive*, the FWS again caved in to pressure from Utah and renewed the hunting season for another three years. FWS scientists claim their agency ignored decades of science and bypassed required evaluations to approve the hunt. Politics dominated the decision made by the FWS and illustrates how politics shape the resource protection mission of public agencies.

FWS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark disagrees. "The results of a five-year experiment with restricted Tundra Swan hunts demonstrate that hunting can be managed in a way that protects the Rocky Mountain population, and we see no reason to eliminate current swan seasons," she said "We all share the desire to protect Trumpeter Swans and enhance their ability to survive by expanding their migratory range in the West, and we look forward to working with our partners in the Pacific Flyway to achieve that goal."

FWS will allow 10 birds to be killed and will issue 2,000 hunting permits. Ironically, the FWS approved the hunt terms before the public comment period for the 2000-2001 waterfowl hunting seasons ended.

According to Andrea Lococo, Rocky Mountain coordinator of The Fund for Animals, "It's bad enough that our national wildlife refuges are being transformed into killing grounds to pacify the sport hunting fraternity. Now, the FWS is opening up a hunting season on seriously imperiled Trumpeter Swans simply to

absolve Tundra Swan hunters of liability for killing trumpeters."

A Utah state game manager is quoted in a recent interview in the *Salt Lake Tribune* as saying, "Some hunts take precedence over the restoration effort."

FWS's own scientists are concerned that even limited hunts on trumpeters have discouraged the birds from migrating south during the winter. Non-migrating trumpeters have created a severe "bottle-neck" in one overpopulated region. That

(see *Troubles for the Trumpeter Swan*, p. 7)

The Quail

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Natural Origins's Gift: Fund-raising While Living MDAS Values

by Carol Frischmann

Natural Origins', MDAS's new fund-raising partner, was created to do good works for society, the environment, and the consumer. Jimm Edgar, MDAS Board Member and former chapter president, introduced us to Don Raymond, CEO of Natural Origins' and Jimm's friend of many years. When Don learned how MDAS was working to protect the quality of life in Contra Costa County and that we needed help to meet those challenges, he decided to donate 20% of Natural Origins' tea sales to MDAS—a very generous gift.

Last month at our general meeting, we savored Natural Origins' teas and heard from the highly entertaining tea expert, James Norwood Pratt. The staff of Natural Origins' provided us with information about the process used to produce these special teas and their health benefits.

Sustainable Benefits

All Natural Origins' tea comes from estates in India that do two unusual things. First, the estates provide local workers with a good quality of life. Their compensation includes housing, medical care, and wages. In addition, Natural Origins' supplier estates produce tea using the traditional, orthodox method. This method produces a significantly higher quality tea than does the increasingly prevalent mechanical process (CTC), a less expensive alternative. When we support Natural Origins' tea, we are not only getting a superior quality product but also underwriting better social and environmental responsibility policies on the tea estates in India.

Consumer advantages include the unusual combination of wonderful taste and excellent health benefits. Teas of India varietal teas—Darjeeling, Assam, and Nilgiri—are all different from each other in taste and body. Like wine, the flavor of teas is dictated by the soil and climatic conditions in the three major tea-growing regions as well as the quality of the root stock. Darjeeling is grown in the foothills of the Himalayas and produces an amber liquor that has a mellow, delicate character and a muscatel flavor. Nilgiri, from the mountains of southwestern India, is a medium-bodied tea with a bright, lively character and a rounded, mellow flavor. Assam, from northeastern India, is a full-bodied tea and yields a coppery liquor with a robust, malty flavor.

Tea Is Healthy!

The health benefits derived from tea are attributed to the disease-fighting anti-oxidants in the tea leaf. Recent scientific research has found that both black and green tea reduces the risk of heart disease, strokes, and cancer. It is a common misconception that tea contains as much caffeine as coffee. While coffee and tea contain the same amount of caffeine, pound for pound, about 40 cups of coffee are brewed from 1 pound of coffee, while 200 cups of tea are infused from 1 pound of tea. So, cup for cup, tea contains substantially less caffeine than coffee. In addition, the polyphenols in the tea leaf prevent the rapid absorption of caffeine, thereby avoiding caffeine "highs" and "lows." This makes tea a more steadily invigorating and rejuvenating drink.

Natural Origins' is also a major supplier of high-quality, organic cotton fabrics produced from Certified Organic Cotton, grown without the application of pesticides and insecticides. Among non-food crops, conventionally grown cotton is the largest consumer of pesticides and insecticides, accounting for nearly one-quarter of all such chemicals produced worldwide. It is a scientifically established fact that bird populations all over the world are impacted negatively by the application of these chemicals.

Contra Costa County's natural world will benefit from MDAS's relationship with Natural Origins' and your interest (and that of your friends) in its products. For more information about Natural Origins', please see <www.naturalorigins.com> or pick up information at our next meeting. For more on tea and the history of tea, try James Norwood Pratt's *New Tea Lover's Treasury*, which can be purchased at his website <www.jnptea.com> or at our next meeting.

How to Purchase Natural Origins' Tea and Help MDAS

Natural Origins' provides 20% of its sales to MDAS when customers designate MDAS as their donation recipient. How do you find the tea and make the designation?

- Direct from Natural Origins'. Call toll free 1-877-448-3832 and request that MDAS receive donation benefits when you order.
- Order online at <www.naturalorigins.com>. At checkout, indicate MDAS as the donation recipient.
- Purchase Natural Origins' tea at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill (925-798-0303). MDAS receives an automatic credit of 20% of all tea sales. Note: WBU is the only retail outlet whose sales benefit MDAS!
- At MDAS general meetings, The Gardens at Heather Farm. Purchase at the meeting or pick up an order form.

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.

November 7, Wednesday, Mountainview Sanitary Plant/McNabney Marsh. Meet at 9 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: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

November 14, Wednesday, 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

November 17, Saturday, Charleston Slough. Carpool leaves El Pintado at 8 a.m. From I-680 southbound, exit at El Pintado and turn right at bottom of the ramp; turn right again and park. From 680 northbound exit at El Cerro, turn left on El Cerro and right on LaGonda; the meeting place is about 1/2 mile north on LaGonda. Meet at 9:15 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 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

November 29, Thursday, Hidden Lakes Park, Pleasant Hill. Meet at 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

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.



Another Email Address Effort

MDAS wants to collect the email addresses of its members. The addresses would only be used by MDAS and would not be shared with any organization. Please send an email to Ann McGregor, our Database Coordinator, at AnnMcg@Pacbell.net. (This time I've made it easier by including Ann's email address!,—Editor)

News from

Wild Birds Unlimited

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

Visit Our Website at
<<http://www.wbupleasanthill.com>>

In the Backyard

Golden-crowned Sparrows have returned. Their plaintive, whistled, three-note song ("oh-dear-me") can be heard all day long but especially early in the morning. White-crowned Sparrows have also migrated in for the winter. They often flock with the Golden-crowned Sparrows. Both are ground- or tray-feeding birds and love white millet seed. They will also eat suet.

The Dark-eyed Juncos are also arriving. Mainly we see the "Oregon" sub-species with their dark hood. Sometimes it's possible to find a "Slate-colored" Junco with their dark bodies and white bellies. Look for the white outer tail feathers on both of these when in flight.

American Goldfinches should begin appearing in larger numbers, often accompanied by Lesser Goldfinches. Their numbers will continue increasing all through the winter. Both will readily come to thistle seed bird feeders. If you stand outside and hold your feeder at arm's length, goldfinches will come and land on the feeder because they are so anxious to feed.

It's not too early to put out birdhouses. Many birds, such as wrens, chickadees, titmice, woodpeckers, and bluebirds, will use the houses to roost in during cool fall and winter nights. If you already have birdhouses in your yard, this is the perfect time to clean them out. Wear gloves, remove the old nests, and clean with a 10% bleach solution. Rinse well, allow to dry, and then re-hang the house.

Looking for binoculars? WBU offers the high-quality Eagle Optics binoculars at competitive prices! Eagle Optics uses only the best materials and manufacturing processes to create the highest quality binoculars. All binoculars are guaranteed against defects in workmanship and materials for as long as you own them.

Observations

by Steve Glover

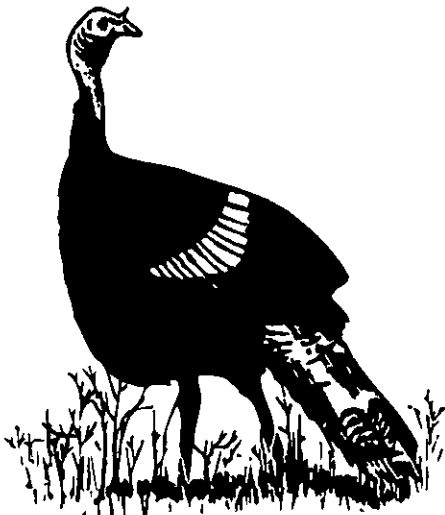
American White Pelicans are recorded only occasionally away from north and east county though this fall brought the following records: two on the pond at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Richmond, on 9/22 (SG); flocks of 10 and 21 over the Pt. Isabel area of Richmond on 9/30 (DA); and two flying east over Inspiration Pt., Tilden Park, on 10/14 (SG). A belated report of another inland Brown Pelican was received; this time of one bird at Discovery Bay near Byron on 9/2 (RD). You may recall that last month we reported Contra Costa's third inland record on 9/4 at Oakley, so it is possible that this is the same bird, though I see no reason to be convinced of this.

An American Bittern at Pt. Isabel Reg. Shoreline, Richmond, was one of very few ever recorded in west county (DA).

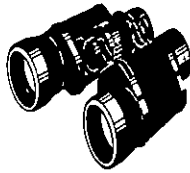
Four Greater White-fronted Geese flew east over Inspiration Pt. Tilden Park, on 10/14 (SG).

Ruddy Turnstones are quite scarce in the county though they are most often recorded in tiny numbers at the Albany Crescent, so the three there on 9/30 fits the pattern quite well (DA). A Baird's Sandpiper, rare but annual locally in fall, was at Pt. Molate, Richmond, on 9/15 (DW).

As mentioned previously, Acorn Woodpeckers are rare as far west as Tilden Park, but at least one bird was



noted around Inspiration Point, Tilden Park, on 9/23, 10/12, and 10/13 (SG). Even rarer, at least in most seasons, is Lewis's Woodpecker, but flybys at Inspiration Point were recorded 10/12 (2), 10/13 (one and a flock of four), and 10/14 (two)—all apparently migrating (SG). This is more than the combined total of



Contra Costa sightings for the past decade!

Although Hammond's Flycatchers are found fairly commonly in the interior of the county in April and May, they are rare away from there and in the fall, so one at Pt. Isabel Reg. Shoreline, Richmond, on 9/30 was significant (DA). Two Hutton's Vireos at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Richmond, on 9/22 were most unusual at that location and may, in fact, be the first recorded in far western Contra Costa (SG). Though Hutton's are common breeders in the woodlands of the interior, they are rarely detected as migrants.

Western Scrub-Jays are so common in the county that they rarely elicit any

comment whatsoever. Although they are generally thought to be quite sedentary, some sightings in recent years have cast doubt on this assumption. This fall brought a flock of 13 birds to Hayward Reg. Shoreline, Alameda Co., on 9/21, a location at which there have been only six sightings with a high count of just two birds. On 9/22 a flock of at least 26 was found in the eucalyptus forest at Pt. Pinole, and all of the birds were seen flying out to the south (SG).

Omitted from last month's report was Contra Costa's third record of Canada Warbler. It was found 8/31 at Contra Costa's most consistent spot for finding "eastern" warblers: Jewel Lake (BG). Scarce in fall were three Hermit Warblers and a single Nashville Warbler at Jewel Lake, Tilden Park, on 9/28 (SG).

Observers: Dustin Alcalá, Ryan DiGuadio, Bill Gilbert, Steve Glover, Bob Richmond, Denise Wight

Please send observations to Steve Glover, 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin 94568, or call (925) 628-7793. Please include your phone number with your observation.
Northern CA Bird Box:
(415) 681-7422

Shopping for Christmas Gifts?

Be sure to pick up copies of the new 2002 *Entertainment Book* for all your friends and family members at the next MDAS general meeting (and don't forget to get one for yourself!) This year the *Entertainment Books* are only \$30 a copy—a savings of \$10 from last year! 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 2002—the gift that keeps on giving the entire year.

Entertainment Books for the Bay Area are available at MDAS general meetings and at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill

Can't get to the meetings or to Pleasant Hill? Maybe your family and friends live out of the Bay Area? No problem. *Entertainment Books* are available for over 150 areas of the U.S. on the Internet.

To order ANY *Entertainment Book* online, go to <<http://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, be sure to enter 175587. You can have the books sent to you or directly to the recipient. MDAS receives \$6 for every *Entertainment Book* purchased with this code, so you are helping MDAS as well as pleasing the recipients of your thoughtful, practical gift.

Teatime Recipes Sought for Publication

Do you have a favorite recipe for a confection or unique finger food to accompany a cup of tea when you have that "sinking feeling"?

Alice Holmes and Barbara Wendorf would be pleased to have you share your recipe. Working with Susanna Ramji of Natural Origins', they are creating a small recipe booklet to be offered as a Premium with Natural Origins' Teas of India holiday gift packs. Please e-mail your recipe to Barbara at bearoaks@aol.com or call Alice at 925-938-1581. Because Alice, Barbara, and Susanna will be printing the booklet in November, please send in your recipes by November 1.

Here's an Australian teatime favorite:

Lamingtons

2 cups sifted flour
 3/4 t. cream of tartar
 1/4 t. baking soda
 1/8 t. salt
 1 cup sugar
 1/2 cup milk
 2/3 cup butter or margarine
 1 t. vanilla extract
 2 eggs

Preheat oven to 350° F. Cream together the butter, sugar, and vanilla extract. Beat in the eggs, one at a time. Sift together the dry ingredients and blend into the creamed mixture, alternating with the milk. Grease a 10-inch-square pan lined with paper and grease the paper. Put the mixture into the pan and bake 35-40 minutes. Cool; turn out on a rack; and when cold, wrap the cake in foil and let stand in refrigerator 24 hours. Cut into 2-inch squares, dip the squares in chocolate frosting to coat completely, and roll in finely grated coconut. Dry on wire rack.

Membership, Program Chairpersons Needed

MDAS is seeking volunteers to fill the positions of Membership Chair and Program Chair. The Membership Chair would develop and implement programs to grow the membership of MDAS and interface with the MDAS officers, the National Audubon Society, and Audubon-California on membership issues.

The Program Chair would arrange for speakers for both the main program and Birding Information at the monthly Chapter meetings. The Program Chair is also responsible for providing program/speaker notes to the *Quail* editor for publication in the *Quail* and for introducing the speakers at the meetings.

Both positions are Board positions. The Membership Chair is needed now; the Program Chair position would begin in July/August 2002. If you are interested, please contact Mike Williams at 925-798-0303.



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 wildlife, 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 925-798-0303.

Flicker Letter

(continued from p. 1)

prosperous economy. We believe that the world we leave to our children must include a diversity of wildlife and protected places such as refuges and parks. Now more than ever, conservation is patriotic

Our 500 Audubon Chapters are engaged in their communities in local projects with adults, children, and families to foster and protect the values we cherish. Our network of community-based Audubon Centers connects people to nature and provides places of reflection and rejuvenation during difficult times. At all levels of government, Audubon is promoting environmental policies that reflect the hopes and aspirations of people in the communities we serve.

Audubon will continue to provide leadership to our members and society at large, keeping environmental protection and environmental values at the forefront of decision making. From the Arctic to Latin America, from preserving Important Bird Areas to encouraging healthy habitats in backyards, Audubon has relevance to our daily lives and to our national agenda. Our programs, our Chapters, and our Centers will continue to enrich the lives of every American by insuring the protection and restoration of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats throughout the Americas.

Sincerely yours,
 John Flicker
 President

MDAS Schedules TWO Christmas Bird Counts for Central and East CoCo, Selects New Potluck Location

MDAS will conduct two Christmas Bird Counts this December in different areas of Contra Costa County, announced Jimm Edgar, co-compiler of the CBCs. The first Count will be held *dawn to dusk*, Saturday, December 15, *rain or shine*.

The second MDAS CBC will focus on East County and will be held the following Saturday, December 22. This is the second year that MDAS has held a CBC in East County. Last year's East County CBC produced 141 species, and the CBC in Central County 151 species

The December 15 Central County Count area will cover the 15-mile-diameter

Troubles for the Trumpeter Swan

(continued from p. 2)

area, along the Henry's Fork of the Snake River, does not have enough aquatic plants to provide winter food to support the swans and other waterfowl.

In August, less than a month after FWS approved this sport-hunting season, The Fund for Animals and the Biodiversity Legal Foundation filed a petition with the FWS to list the U.S. breeding segment of the Rocky Mountain population of Trumpeter Swans under the ESA.

If you want to write a letter to FWS about the trumpeters, send it to Craig Rieben, Office of Public Affairs, FWS, at craig_riebe@mail.fws.gov. Andrea Lococo of the Fund for Animals can be reached at 307-859-8840; Jasper Colton of the Biodiversity Legal Foundation is at 303-926-7606.

Information for this article came from a FWS press release at <http://darwin.ceb.uconn.edu/Documents/fws-20000728.html>, The Fund for Animals press release at <http://ens.lycos.com/e-wire/Aug00/22Aug0004.html> and the *PEER Review Newsletter*, Summer 2001.

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.

On the following Saturday, observers will cover an area east of Pittsburg, including Big Break, Clifton Court Forebay, Marsh Creek, Round Valley, and the eastern slopes of Mt. Diablo.

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 you do need binoculars. An all-day commitment is preferred. We also welcome home feeder counters if their home is within either of the Count circles.

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 him at

the address on the form. Please include a check for \$5 made out to MDAS. The \$5 charge covers the expense of publishing the annual Christmas Count issue of *American Birds*. Feeder watchers have no charge.

December 15 Potluck

A potluck dinner to which everyone—Counters and non-Counters alike—is invited will follow the Central County Christmas Bird Count. That dinner will be held at a new location, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. From Hwy 24 west, take the Pleasant Hill/Mt Diablo Blvd exit. Go south on Pleasant Hill Rd to Mt. Diablo Blvd. Turn right on Mt. Diablo Blvd. and then right again on Carol Lane. (If any MDAS member is a member of the Our Savior's congregation, please call Jimm Edgar.)

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!

MDAS Christmas Bird Count Volunteer Form

1.) I want to participate in the 2001 MDAS Christmas Bird Count(s).

- I volunteer to help with BOTH Christmas Bird Counts on Dec. 15 and Dec. 22.
 I volunteer only for the Central County Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 15.
 I volunteer only for the East Conty Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 22.

2.) I will help as an observer in the following ways:

- Put me wherever you need the help.
 I would prefer a hiking area.
 I would prefer a less strenuous area.
 I will monitor a feeder or garden.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Years of birding experience: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

(Make \$5 checks payable to MDAS.)

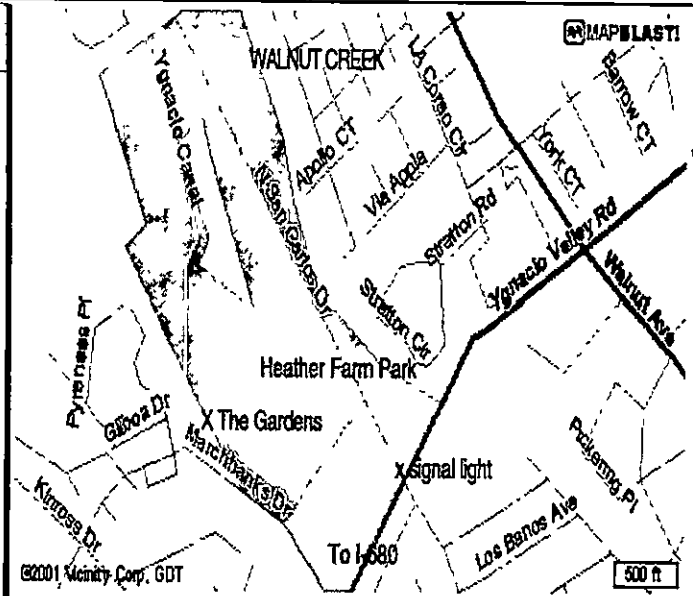
Mail to: Jimm Edgar, 4614 Jacobus Ave., Oakland, CA 94618

CALENDAR

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, 1150 Marchbanks Dr, Walnut Creek: Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, and June 6.

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 (published 10 times a year). 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. 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 join Audubon, send a check payable to NAS to Joe Frank, Treasurer, 4765 Olive Dr., Concord, CA 94521. To subscribe to the Quail, make the check out to MDAS and mail to Joe Frank. SEND ADDRESS CHANGES for both NAS and MDAS to P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053. Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.

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