



# Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

## *The Quail*

Volume 68, Number 10

November 2023

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### **Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, November 2nd, 7 PM**

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will meet in the Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library at 3491 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, 94549. **Please note our new location!**

\*Everyone is welcome to bring a snack to share, if they wish. As a conservation organization we encourage you to bring your own mug for coffee or tea.

#### Agenda:

6:30 PM Doors Open

7:00 PM Announcements

7:15 PM Refreshments and Raffle

7:30 PM Main Program: Bio-Bowerman

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### **Main Program: Bio-Bowerman**

Dan Fitzgerald and Dan Sandri



Mount Diablo Interpretive Association

The two Dans will take you on a walk along the highest trail on Mount Diablo, highlighting some of the insects like bees, dragonflies and butterflies, unusual plants, and a few birds that they have photographed along this 3/4-mile loop which circumnavigates the summit. Learn about the fabulous Mary Bowerman, who inspired the naming of this popular trail. Along this trail, because of the elevation, flowers bloom later than at lower parts of the mountain, providing insects with nectar later into the summer. The soils, elevation, and isolation of the peak impact the variety of flora and fauna found here, contributing to some of the rarities that can be seen. The summit and the trail lie entirely within early Franciscan Complex geologic rocks - greywacke, chert, greenstone, and mélange. Come along on this photo-filled exploration led by two local naturalists!

Dan Fitzgerald grew up in Concord with a view of the mountain and spent time exploring it. After retirement he became a state park volunteer active in environmental cleanup and as a docent in our visitor center and out on the trail. He is a California Naturalist and leads nature hikes for MDIA where he serves as Treasurer and a board director since 2016.

Dan Sandri has lived in the East Bay nearly all of his life, and the mountain has always been his favorite hiking place. With a B.S. degree in Entomology he enjoys observing and photographing insects, birds, reptiles, as well as other plant and animal life. Upon retirement, Dan became a volunteer visitor center docent, a member of the Native Plant Garden team, and a back-country rover. He is a California Naturalist and leads nature hikes for MIDA where he serves as Secretary and a board director since 2020.

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## President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*



I just returned from a birding trip to the highlands of Guatemala. Upon arrival, I found the country in the midst of some political turmoil, as pro-democracy grassroots groups set up roadblocks around the country to peacefully protest the current regime's efforts to undermine the victory of an opposition party in the latest democratic election (a common refrain, it seems). This meant our itinerary was broken from the start. The tour operator did a great job to enable the trip to continue, but this often meant leaving at 2 or 3 AM and traveling in the wee hours of the morning along roads even more tortuous than the main ones, to circumvent the blockades. We also faced some natural roadblocks, in the form of mudslides, and getting stuck on muddy tracks, to add to the adventure. In spite of these obstacles, we had a very successful trip, and saw a number of rather scarce Mesoamerican endemics, including Pink-Headed Warbler, Fulvous Owl, and Slender Sheartail. The indigenous practice of growing coffee and other crops in shade and in small plots surrounded by forest, results in great habitat for birds in this region. Of particular interest was that one of the most commonly encountered birds in the highlands was Townsend's Warbler. Wilson's Warbler was also plentiful, along with a number of eastern and resident warblers. This underscores the importance of this area for the birds we enjoy in the US during the other seasons of the year.

### In Chapter news:

Don't forget about the new venue for our November 2 monthly Membership Meeting – the Don Tatzin Community Hall at Lafayette Library, 3491 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, CA. We will be announcing the results of the **name-change vote** at this meeting. The December 7 meeting will be held at the Civic Park Assembly Hall, 1375 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Starting in January, we hope to settle in to the remodeled Camellia Room at Heather Farm Gardens for the remainder of the season.



We continue to **seek volunteers** for a number of other vital Board positions, including **Secretary, Education Chair, and Outreach Chair**. Our Board is now down to 9 members, the minimum required to operate as per our Bylaws. Contributing your time in this fashion is the single biggest way to make a difference. Please visit our website [here](#) and scroll down to 'volunteer Openings' to find out more information on these positions. To express an interest in one, please contact [president@mtdiabloaudubon.org](mailto:president@mtdiabloaudubon.org). Please consider helping in one of these areas, to keep our organization strong!

Stay safe, and get out there for the Birds!



Wine-Throated Hummingbird

Northern Pygmy Owl, Guatemalan

Photos by J. Britten

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## Need Volunteers for Board Positions

Rochelle Fortier, *MDAS Membership Chair*

Have you been thinking about doing something new that is worthwhile? Please consider volunteering for either a Board or an Advisory position! Some of these positions can be done from home; and some do not take that much time per month.

**Board positions.** The Board meets virtually on Zoom; and at this writing, we have no plans to change that. The meetings are on the second Thursday of the month, starting at 6:45 pm, from September thru June. There is no meeting in July, and sometimes there is an informal meeting in August.

- Secretary: Takes the minutes at our Board meetings; files legal forms with the State of California.

- Education: Updates birding brochures and items for the tabling events. Organizes educational activities, such as birding classes and outreach to schools and the community.
- Quail Newsletter Editor: We do have a current volunteer who only has the time to format the newsletter. But, we really need a volunteer who has the time to be on the Board; initiate ideas about articles; do editing, proofing. The newsletter is formatted using MailChimp.
- Two Member-at-Large positions: Provide input and new ideas.

#### **Non-Board/Advisory position (non-voting):**

- Hospitality: Attends the in-person meetings, brings and sets up coffee, tablecloths, paper plates, cups, etc.

#### **Board or Advisory Position:**

- Outreach Coordinator: Organizes volunteers for our tabling events usually held in summer and early fall at local festivals; as well as recruiting potential volunteers for other projects.

As you can see, we really need to fill these positions with members who can bring new ideas and energy to our chapter! If you would like to find out more information, or to volunteer, please **contact** Jerry Britten.

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## **Membership Updates**

Rochelle Fortier, *MDAS Membership Chair*

**Welcome New Members!** I want to give a warm welcome to the new members who joined in September: **Vicky Atkinson**, Martinez; **Patricia Pomidor**, Orinda; **Deborah Reiling**, Concord; and **Jutta Wiemhoff**, Richmond.



I hope to see you at our in-person meeting in November!

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## **First Condor Flock in 100 Year to Diablo They Still Need Help. Habitat, No Lead, Are Key**

Juan Pablo Galvan, *MDAS Conservation Chair*



In an exciting announcement that you may have read or seen in several news outlets ([HERE](#)), Save Mount Diablo announced that in early September, the first flock of California condors in 100 years flew in the Diablo area, with one individual flying a mile or two west of the peak of Mount Diablo itself.

This is great news! Their core habitat around Pinnacles National Park and Big Sur is their stronghold, and the relatively undeveloped huge swath of habitat of the Diablo Range gives them a great area to expand around.

However, if volunteers, park service staff, scientists and others weren't constantly tracking condors and treating them for lead poisoning, their populations would go down. And with about 550 birds in the whole world, both in zoos and flying wild, there's no wiggle room.

The greatest danger is lead poisoning from bullet fragments in deer, boar and other animals shot by hunters. The remains the hunters leave in the field are found by condors, which accidentally ingest highly toxic tiny bits of lead. While it is no longer legal to hunt with lead bullets in California, people have to follow the rules.

What can you do? Support habitat conservation efforts around Diablo and elsewhere in condor habitat. If you know hunters, or are one yourself, your community is key to stopping lead poisoning in condors.

If they have habitat to call home, and stop getting poisoned, the condor population of this endangered species can increase, and when we're birding around the Mount Diablo area, one day we may turn our binoculars skyward and realize that what we thought for a second was an eagle or a turkey vulture, is actually a beautiful condor.

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## **New Tricolored Blackbird Community Science Project**

Alan Bade, *MDAS Community Science*

For years, MDAS has been helping to monitor Tricolored Blackbird populations by participating in the triennial statewide **survey** and by placing acoustic recording units in local breeding locations. See the **September Quail** for Jerry's write up on these efforts. We have an opportunity this Fall to further contribute to the understanding of this species in a very important way.

Every Fall, very large numbers of Blackbirds gather in the Delta for the winter. They disperse widely during the day, but very large night roosts have been observed. A prominent Tricolored Blackbird researcher (Bob Meese, retired from UC Davis) made us aware of a VERY large and important roost site west of Sherman Island, over the Antioch bridge. The size of this roost may be staggering: many hundreds of thousands, even possibly in the 2 to 3 million range. They are coming from foraging areas to the east, north and to a lesser degree the south.

The exact location has not yet been identified but surmised to be **Lower Sherman Island**, a marshy low-lying island managed by CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife. Bob Meese thinks it is quite important to document the roost site so that it can be properly protected. The CDFW management **documents** do not mention the island's importance to Tricolored Blackbirds, a threatened species. The problem is that no one has yet documented that the Blackbirds are using the site in such large numbers.

Documenting it is difficult. The closest public access is **Sherman Island County Park**. The park has a boat ramp, day use area, and campground and is used by the windsurfing community. It does have a \$6 parking fee and has a caretaker, but we have parked there at dusk and birded next to our cars. Streams of birds can be seen passing over, but it's impossible to see where they are landing. Last year, the MDAS Board authorized hiring a small skippered boat to go out at dusk on Broad Slough close to the western shore of Lower Sherman Island if the numbers warranted it. The very wet winter kept this from happening due to constant rain and debris in the Delta. A small group of us went to look from Sherman Island park once in late **January** but the numbers were not sufficient to justify the expense of hiring the boat.

We'd like to try again. But first we need to check and see if the birds are still using the roost site in sufficient numbers! Bob says the wintering birds start using the site between late October and start dispersing by mid-February. The first phase of this project is to visit Sherman Island County Park at dusk regularly starting in early November to see if large numbers are flying over to the west. There are



numerous great birding destinations in the Delta and the park could be a last stop on the way home, or it could be a quick, specific trip. Ideally, we'd have birders checking at least once a week, maybe taking pictures and reporting what they find on eBird (and to us).

Bob made these recommendations for viewing:

"If/when you go out to survey the site and to look for birds coming in to roost, expect to have to use binoculars to see them as they're up hundreds of feet and with the unaided eye can appear as diffuse blobs or smoke, not flocks of birds....as soon as you look in your binoculars you see that they're huge flocks of blackbirds. Unlike anything you've ever seen. I think that I've seen it 4 times, and it boggles the mind. They continue on to the roost site, wherever it is, at this high altitude before descending vertically, in tight spirals, to the roosting substrate, and this act takes mere seconds. So, all you'll need to do, assuming that you're at the Sherman Island County Park, is look above and to the east, high in the sky beginning around 45 minutes before sunset and then scan with binoculars to get an idea of numbers, assuming that the birds are still coming in huge numbers. Try to bring someone along to get a comparison of your estimates.

I think that the birds begin to aggregate in late October and are at peak numbers from mid-November until mid-February. I've been there in December and January and when it's calm, the birds are high in the sky in vast numbers, but when it's windy they're hugging the contours of the land and only a few feet off the ground."

If we do see very large numbers streaming towards the west, we'd then organize the second phase of this project and hire a fishing charter boat with a skipper experienced with night conditions. It would leave from a harbor in Oakley about an hour before sunset and return in the dark. The sun will be at the observer's backs so it should be possible to get great views if the birds drop onto the island. Calm conditions are required to be able to estimate bird numbers from the water. The boat can only take a few passengers, but observers would be coordinated to be at various viewpoints simultaneously. I should note that Bob has tried to get CDFW and UC Davis to investigate this by boat to no avail, due to staffing issues.

My hope is to interest MDAS birders to independently but regularly bird Sherman Island County Park and see if the mega-roost is still happening. This is something folks can do on their own but at least two observers are recommended for more count accuracy. Please let me know if you are interested in documenting what Bob calls one of "California's Greatest Wildlife Spectacles" and I will send more information. We can set up a google doc spreadsheet for the timing of visits.

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## 2023 MDAS Christmas Bird Counts

Jerry Britten, *CBC Compiler*

Don't forget to participate in the **69th Annual Central Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count** on **Saturday December 16**, and/or **24th Annual East-County count** on **Wednesday December 20**. You can participate by being part of a group in the field, or by doing a count at your property if it is within the **Central-County Count Circle** on Saturday or the **East-County Count Circle** on Wednesday. We have many routes to cover with varied habitats and varying degrees of walking involved, so there will be something suitable for everyone. Sign up for the Central County Count by sending an email [here](#). Sign up for the East County Count by sending an email [here](#).



Chinspot Batis

Photo by J. Britten

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## From 50 Years Ago

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Interesting to know how little it cost to be a member of Mt. Diablo Audubon back in the day. Various online inflation calculators put the value of a 1973 dollar at around \$6.90 today. This means our current \$25 annual subscription has outpaced inflation a bit, but it is still a great deal!

Notice to MDAS CHAPTER MEMBERS. (This refers only to those who are LOCAL members but not members of National Audubon Society. Some members of MDAS chose not to join NAS when our chapter affiliated with National a few years ago and are permitted to retain their local membership.) The current membership cost does not cover expenses, therefore effective January 1974 dues per year for local members will be: single membership, \$2.50, family membership, \$4.00. Please remember the increase when renewing.

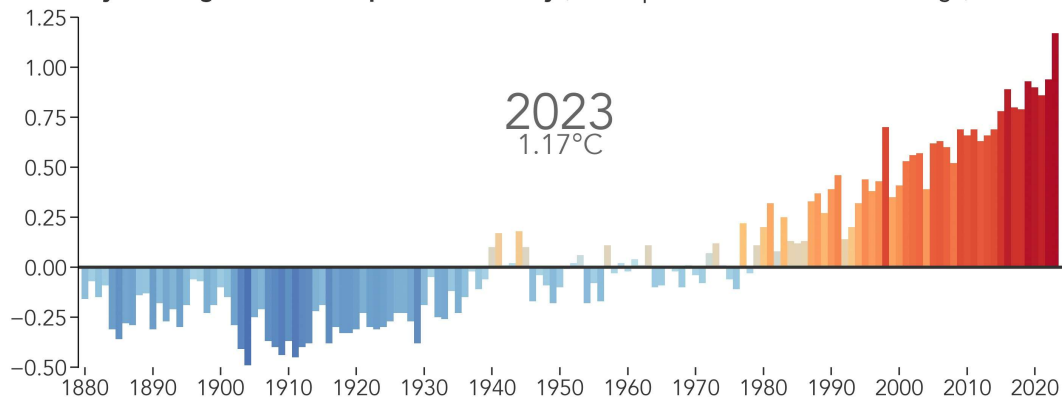
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## This Summer Was the Hottest On Record

Juan Pablo Galvan, *MDAS Conservation Chair*

### Summer 2023 Continues Long-Term Warming Trend

June, July, and August Global Temperature Anomaly (°C compared to the 1951-1980 average)



140 Years of Data – and 2023 Is the Hottest. We, YOU, NEED Action.

1. It's Official: Summer of 2023 Was the Hottest on Record. NASA scientists confirmed it last month ([HERE](#)). Check out the image above for what that looks like as a bar chart of temperature. That's not good for birds. Sea level rise, wildlife, eggs sizzling in their nests, water and food sources burning or drying up. Want to stop, and reverse, global boiling? Check out the green box [HERE](#) as a start.
2. Your COMMUNITY – Mobilize It. The town you live in. Your circle of birding friends. Where you go to church. The folks you take a walk with. Your neighborhood. One, or all of these, might be your community. And it's at the level of YOUR community that YOU need to take action on climate change. Just changing your own habits isn't enough. If each of us spreads the word, encourages others, sets an example, and even just talk about solutions to each other, that's making an impact. Project Drawdown has a community webinar series to give you ideas, resources and get you started. Check it out [HERE](#). Ask your City about a climate action plan, speak in favor of renewable energy, or make some tasty non-meat dishes, or make some tasty chicken rather than beef and share recipes. Whatever you like to do, there's a way to do it that helps us maintain a livable climate.
3. Insurance Going Up? Input Your Address and Learn Why. Have you noticed your car or home insurance costs rising? Want to know the risk of fire, flood and other

extreme climate dangers to your exact address? Insurance companies are experts at gauging risk, and a lot of places are getting a lot riskier, and more expensive, right now due to our warming climate. Enter your address [HERE](#) and find out how much your home is at risk. Read [THIS](#) to get even more info. Spoiler alert: Contra Costa is prominently featured, in a way that you should pay attention to.

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## MDAS Trip Report

Matt Tarlach, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*

### Hawk Hill Trip Report

Each Autumn, more migrating raptors are counted at Hawk Hill in the Marin Headlands than at any other location on the West Coast. In some years 30,000 birds are seen riding the thermals there, before they cross the Golden Gate on their annual trip south.

On Saturday September 23 a dozen MDAS members and guests traveled to Hawk Hill to witness the spectacle. We were welcomed by Carmen DeLeon, a volunteer with the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, and her colleague Woody; these experienced raptor-spotters gave an informative introductory talk and then helped us throughout the afternoon in sorting the Coops from the Sharpies.

In three hours on the hill we counted 90 birds, most of them raptors including Red-tailed, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, along with a Harrier, Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon. Just as we were leaving, the bird of the day arrived: a stunning dark-morph Broad-winged Hawk that had even the most hard boiled raptor experts shouting in excitement.

EBird [checklist](#)

GGRO [website](#)







All Photos by Alyssa Retodo

### **Point Reyes Trip Report**

The mischievous spirits that rule the skies over Point Reyes tricked the weatherman again September 30, serving up a bright sunny day for visitors who ignored the forecast of drizzly clouds. It was windy, especially in exposed locations, but by focusing on more sheltered areas a dozen brave birders enjoyed a spectacular day.

One top sighting was a Philadelphia Vireo, shortly after our group met at Drake's Beach. The rare migrant fluttered down to perch just a few yards from our group! Minutes later we spotted two Tropical Kingbirds, apparently a pair as they were sharing perches and interacting while hunting dragonflies. On and beyond the beach we had Whimbrel and Long-billed Curlew, Heermann's Gull, Surf Scoter and the trifecta of Common, Pacific and Red-throated Loon; Harbor Seals in the surf and a pod of Dolphins. Not a bad start to the day!

After nearly getting blown off the cliffs above the lighthouse---where we did manage to see a Peregrine in flight---we moved to the more sheltered Fish Docks. The highlight there was a pair of orioles that offered us extended views as they preened. One at least was an Orchard Oriole; our group is still discussing whether the second was an Orchard or a Hooded. Meanwhile, the 3 local species of cormorant were fishing in the waters below: Brandt's, Double-crested and Pelagic. There were female Elephant Seals with



pups on the beach, too, and coyotes glimpsed in the hills along with deer and elk.

After lunch back at Drake's Beach, one of our group spotted a Palm Warbler. Unfortunately no one else in our group was able to get on the bird before it retreated deep into the willows, so it's not on our official trip list.

By 3pm most of us were "winded" but a few continued to the old RCA facility. There we added Hairy Woodpecker, Pine Siskin and Ash-throated Flycatcher to our list, raising the species count for the day to 54.

EBird checklists, with additional photos: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)



Oriole

Photo by Rosemary Nishikawa



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Photo by Matt Tarlach



Oriole

Photo by Rosemary Nishikawa



Tropical Kingbird

Photo by Isaac Aronow



Pelicans

Photo by Rosemary Nishikawa



Pelicans

Photo by Rosemary Nishikawa



Brandt's Cororants

Photo by Isaac Aronow



Surf Scoter

Photo by Rosemary Nishikawa

### **Clifton-Court Bird-By-Bike Trip Report**

Eight birders/cyclists enjoyed a beautiful, warm, windless day at the Forebay on October 7, though it got a little too warm toward the end. This out-and-back trip covered almost 11 miles over paved, gravel and dirt levee roads and tracks. Unfortunately, one participant had to turn back with a flat tire – a reminder to always carry a spare tube, since the patch was unsuccessful, and with the myriad of bike designs today, no-one else had a spare tube that would fit.

For those who made it to the end, 75 total species were seen or heard, a very good tally, but not unexpected for this location and time of year. 5000 Coots were estimated, along with hundreds of Double-Crested Cormorants, Western/Clark's Grebes, Canada Geese and Savannah Sparrows. Highlights of the day were an early hatch-year White-Fronted Goose swimming among the Canadas, and a Snowy Plover, always a rare treat and the latest reported occurrence of this species at the Forebay.

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## MDAS Field Trips

Matt Tarlach, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*



MDAS mounts dozens of Field Trips throughout the year, ranging from easy, accessible strolls around our local parks to longer outings, including some vigorous hikes. On each field trip, one or more leaders guides our group to the best hotspots, in the best season... but the bird-spotting is really a team effort. *Come birding with us!*

You can see the field trip checklists we've recorded since transitioning to electronic records [here](#).

To ensure that trips are not overcrowded, pre-registration through Eventbrite is required. MDAS members have priority with member sign ups opening as soon as the trip is announced in our newsletter. Non-members are welcome on our trips too! Registration opens to the public a week before the trip.

All registration closes *2 days before the trip*, so leaders can know how many to expect. If you won't be able to attend a trip that you've signed up for, please cancel via Eventbrite *as early as possible* to open that spot up for someone else!

Out of respect for our members and community, we continue to ask participants to take sensible precautions for everyone's health. MDAS events do not require carpooling, though participants are of course free to make their own arrangements.

Field trips are ranked according to difficulty:

**Trail Rating 1: Easy.** Little walking, under 1 mile, on smooth paths.

**Trail Rating 2: Moderate.** 1 mile or more, possibly some rough terrain.

**Trail Rating 3: Challenging.** Extensive walking and climbing on rough terrain!

We always need new trip leaders! Please contact our field trip coordinator, **Matt Tarlach**. If you'd like some guidance in leading trips, he might be able to pair you up with an experienced leader who can show you the ropes.

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**Upcoming field trips include:**

### **A Birding Walk especially for Beginners**

*The experienced are invited too---to support, encourage, and have fun!*

Signups for these field trips will be open to beginners among both the MDAS membership, and the general public. *Experienced members who'd like to join in support, please contact [mdasfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:mdasfieldtrips@gmail.com) and let us know you're coming.* The same itinerary will repeat on October 29 and November 1, and hopefully again in the future.



White-breasted Nuthatch

Photo by Matt Tarlach

### **Introducing the Birds of Heather Farm**

**Sunday October 29, 8:30-10:30AM and Wednesday November 1, 8:30-10:30AM**

Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek is an underrated birding spot, home to dozens of resident species and attracting many migrants as well!



We'll meet at the overlook of the Natural Lake, on the west side of North San Carlos Drive about 100 yards beyond the community center.

**Meeting point GPS:** 37.921260813409184, -122.04358260674651

At 8:30AM an experienced birder or two will be on hand to demonstrate how to properly use binoculars, and to discuss birding guidebooks and apps. We'll begin scanning the lake too, looking to see which ducks and other birds might be arriving to spend the winter.

When we're good and ready, we'll set off on a walk around the lake and adjacent Nature Area---an easy stroll of about half a mile on mostly level, accessible trails. Along the way we'll hope to see and hear sparrow, finch, woodpecker and warbler, along with nuthatch and dove. Wrens, thrushes, raptors and heron are often found here too---though in birding, as in life, nothing is guaranteed! Our guides will explain what features on the birds to look for, that help tell one from the other. We should be done around 10:30, or 11 if the birding is especially good.

Birders of all experience levels are welcome! Binoculars will be available to borrow for those who need them. Trip will go on in gray weather, but rain or high wind cancels.

Signup for October 29 [here](#) or for November 1 [here](#)

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### **Palo Alto Baylands/Charleston Slough**

**Saturday, November 4, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**



American Avocets

Photo by Maren Smith

We see a variety of birds on the water on this trip, that is only about a 55 minute drive from Walnut Creek. It is exciting to be on the largest tract of undisturbed marshland remaining in the San Francisco Bay. Locations include Charleston Slough, Shoreline Lake, Palo Alto Baylands, and Redwood Shores.

**Hike Rating:** Category 2 – Moderate. We do some walking on flat terrain but drive from one location to the next.

**Elevation change:** Minor

**Leaders:** Herb and Randi Long, [herblong7@gmail.com](mailto:herblong7@gmail.com), 925-948-5113

**Meet:** Meet at entrance to Palo Alto Baylands on Terminal Boulevard in Mountain View at 9:00 AM.

**Directions:** If using Google maps, enter “Terminal Boulevard Mountain View, CA.” Take I-680 South 24 miles to Exit 12 for Mission Boulevard /State Route 262 (second Mission Blvd exit so that you head west on Mission Blvd). Keep right at the fork; follow signs for Mission Blvd West and merge onto CA-262 South/Mission Blvd. Continue through two traffic lights and take I-880 ramp South. In 3 miles, use the right two lanes to take CA-237 toward Mountain View. Connect to US-101 North toward San Francisco. Once on US-101 North, take Exit 400C for San Antonio Road. Turn right on San Antonio. Continue for about 0.4 mile and turn right onto Terminal Road and park. Entrance to Palo Alto Baylands is on the left. There is a bathroom at the entrance. Drive time is about one hour/ 5 minutes from Walnut Creek / Danville. Bring lunch!

This hike is limited to 15 participants. Participants must acknowledge the MDAS Liability Waiver.

Register [HERE](#).

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### **Lodi Lake & Woodbridge Preserve**

**Wednesday, November 15, 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM**

\*Please note: the date of this trip has been changed since the original announcement!\*



Great Blue Heron

Photo by Maren Smith

We'll bird first at Lodi Lake and its riparian area alongside the Mokelumne River. Plan to see waterfowl and many bird species including Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing, Herons, Warblers and Wood Duck. (We've had Varied Thrush in the past but cannot guarantee!) From Lodi Lake we'll move on to Woodbridge Ecological Preserve, where we'll see waterfowl and other birds, including hopefully some early-arriving Sandhill Cranes.

Dress in layers. Bring water, snacks and lunch if you choose.

Hike Rating: **2** - Easy to moderate loop of 1.5 - 2 miles on level ground with some paved areas. A few very short off-trail lookouts with easy to moderate slope access. There are a few benches to rest on as well.

**Elevation change:** N/A

**Leader:** Mona Lange 510-414-2959

**Meet:** Lodi Lake parking lot (1101 W. Turner Rd) (bathroom at parking lot). Parking fee \$5/car or \$3/car seniors CASH only.

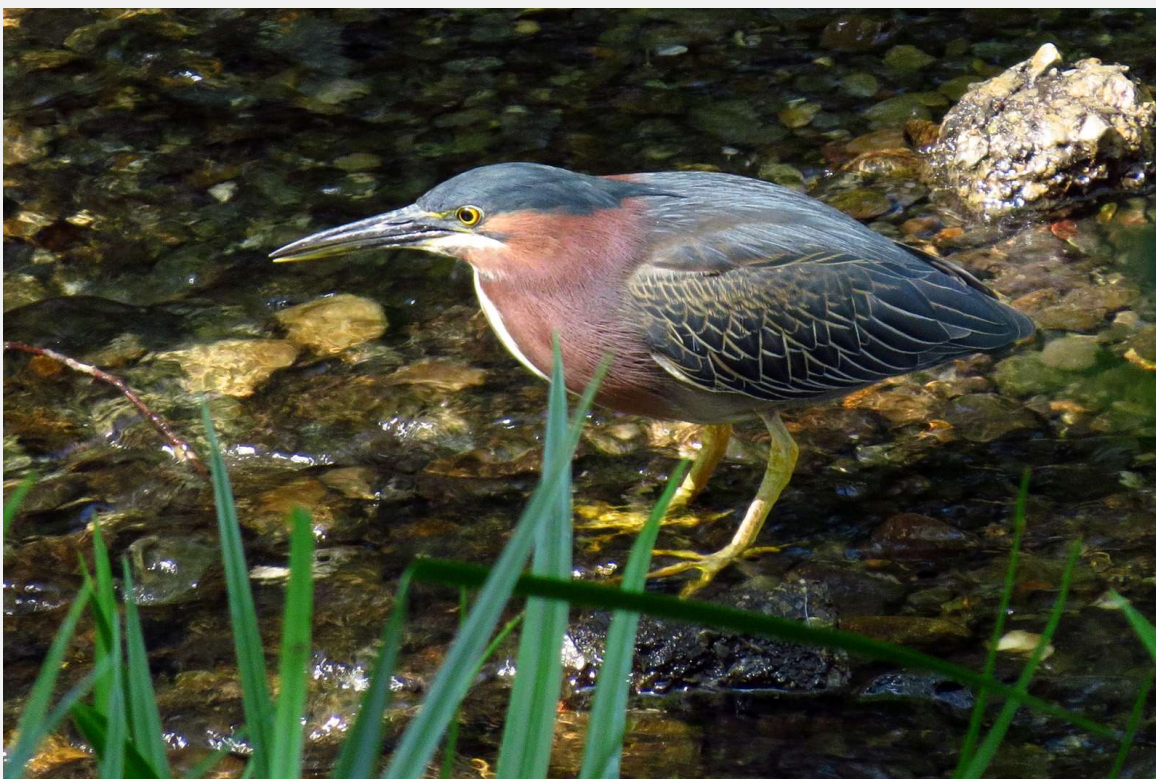
**Directions:** Hwy 4 East toward Antioch/Rio Vista. Go over Antioch bridge (toll). At stop light make **RIGHT** onto Hwy 12 toward Lodi. Stay on 12 East past interstate 5. About 2 miles past I-5 make a **LEFT** on DeVries Rd (the light after the RR tracks.) Carefully and safely watch for Yellow-billed Magpies in the area. At the second stop sign make a **RIGHT** onto W. Turner Rd. When in town, stay in the left lane. After crossing the RR tracks start looking for the Lake entrance on your **LEFT**. (On the other side of the Do Not Enter Sign.)

This trip is limited to 12 participants. Rain cancels. A fee of \$5.40 is required at the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve.

Register **[HERE](#)**.

## Mt. View Sanitary/McNabney Marsh

Tuesday November 21, 9:00 AM - 12:00PM



Green Heron

Photo by Matt Tarlach

We expect to see a variety of water birds here, from grebes and ducks to waders and peeps. Marsh passerines and raptors might also be present. This trip is suitable for beginners.

Hike Rating: **1** - Easy. Under 1 mile on flat terrain. Unpaved paths, potentially muddy.

**Elevation change:** N/A

**Leader:** Randy Huey, 925-518-8439

**Meet:** Mt. View Sanitary Visitor Center at 9:00 AM

**Directions:** Exit from I-680 southbound at Arthur Road, turn left and go under the freeway. Exit I-680 northbound at Pacheco Blvd, turn right onto Arthur Road and go under the freeway. Arthur Road will turn left. At .4 miles turn sharp left onto Mt. View Sanitary's private road. Follow the road through the entry gate, alongside the freeway and through the tunnel under I-680. Park and sign-in at the Visitor Center.

Limited to 15 participants. All Field Trips are first-registered, first-served. Participants acknowledge the MDAS Liability Waiver (available during registration).

**Signup [HERE](#).**

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## Lynch Canyon Open Space Preserve, Fairfield

Saturday December 9, 10:00 AM - 2:00PM



Golden Eagle and Raven

Photo by Isaac Aronow

Lynch Canyon Open Space, an asset of the Solano County Land Trust, is a fantastic place for raptors in the winter! It's also home to grassland species, and waterbirds on the reservoir. The trails are wide and firmly packed but unpaved. Participants will be able to choose between two routes: A loop of about 2.5 miles around Lynch Reservoir, with some gentle elevation gain; or a longer loop of about 3.25 miles with a longer, steeper climb (14% grade at one stretch). Co-leaders will be present to accompany along either route. On both routes we'll stop frequently to look for raptors, and to scope the reservoir. Lynch Canyon is still a working ranch so we can expect to encounter free-ranging cattle. Some of the trails are part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, and we may encounter bicyclists, e-bikes, and equestrians.

Please bring \$6 (exact bills) for the off-season parking fee. Bring ample water (none is available on site) and sun protection. There is almost no shade on the trails. There is a pit toilet at the parking lot. Solano County Land Trust asks us to bring our own hand sanitizer. Bring snacks or lunch. On the longer loop, there are picnic tables.

Hike Rating: **2** (longer route is 3) Elevation change on the longer loop trail option is approximately 500 feet.

**Leaders:** Susana de Trapaga ([trapaga@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trapaga@sbcglobal.net)) 510.333.2693 and Maureen Lahiff ([MLahiff@aol.com](mailto:MLahiff@aol.com)), 510.484.6529

**Meet:** Parking lot for **Lynch Canyon Open Space**

**Directions:** Take I-80 east to exit 36, American Canyon Road/Hiddenbrook Pkwy. At the stop sign at the end of the exit ramp, turn right and then immediately left onto McGary Road, which runs alongside the freeway. After about 1.7 miles, turn left onto Lynch Road, pass under I-80, and drive all the way to the parking lot.

Heavy rain cancels the trip. We'll send an email if we're cancelling, or if weather looks iffy. Participants acknowledge the MDAS Liability Waiver (available during registration).

Signup [HERE](#).

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## Other Birding Opportunities

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

### Prey-Go-Neesh Nes-Kwe-Chohl: California Condors Return to Yurok Country

Golden Gate Bird Alliance

Thursday, November 16, 7:00PM



Photo: Jeff Langford / [Macaulay Library ML 38716591](#)

Tiana Williams-Claussen, Director of the Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department, will join us and provide an update on the newly released population of California condor in

Yurok country in far northern California, after conclusion of the first year of initial releases. She will also discuss biology of the birds, their cultural importance to the Yurok people, and next steps for condor reintroduction in the Pacific Northwest.

**Date:** Thursday, November 16  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Location:** Zoom  
**Cost:** N/A  
**Zoom:** [Link](#), Passcode: 781063

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### **Dotson Family Marsh - Point Pinole Regional Shoreline**

**Golden Gate Bird Alliance**

**Saturday, November 25, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**



Photo: Bob Martinka / [Macaulay Library ML 56809791](#)



We are likely to see sparrows and Western Meadowlarks in the grassland areas. On the water, there will be many species of ducks, and shorebirds feeding on the mudflat as the tide continues to go out. This is a great area for raptors, and we may see Short-eared Owls as well. The trails are hard-packed, and fairly level, a bit narrower as we approach the jetty. Round trip is a bit less than 2 miles, out to the end of the Jetty Trail and back. Most of the terrain is exposed, with little shade. There are restrooms at the staging area. Please bring water and Snacks. Trip will be cancelled if there is heavy or steady rain. You're welcome to call the leader on Saturday morning to check if the weather is iffy.

**Date:** Saturday, November 25, 2023  
**Time:** 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM  
**Location:** Detailed directions will be emailed to those who register  
**Cost:** Free  
**Registration:** [MLahiff@aol.com](mailto:MLahiff@aol.com)

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### **Nature Walk: Birds, Butterflies and Blooms**

**MDIA**

**Wednesday, November 29, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Join naturalist Dan Fitzgerald for a nature walk in the Mitchell Canyon area. We will be looking for birds, butterflies, and some seasonal blooms. Bring water,

snacks, and binoculars if you have them. The walk is about 3 miles with some elevation gain. We ask participants who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 to please wear a mask. Limited to 15 participants.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023  
**Time:** 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
**Location:** In front of the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center: 96 Mitchell Canyon Road, Clayton  
**Cost:** Fee: \$6 per vehicle/\$5 for seniors - exact change only. Payable at the entrance to the Park by the stop sign.  
**Registration:** [onesuperhiker@aol.com](mailto:onesuperhiker@aol.com)

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## October Gallery & Media



### MDAS October 2023 Meeting

See the full video [HERE](#)

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## Exploring Bird Migration: Your Questions Answered

See the full video [HERE](#)

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## Bird Plumage is Subtle and Complex

Read the article [HERE](#).

Photo: Matthew Plante / [Macaulay Library ML 300529051](#)

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Broad-billed Hummingbird / Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, Cochise, Arizona, United States

Photo: **Justus P / Macaulay Library ML610121681**

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Red-bellied Woodpecker / OWC Upland Forest, Erie, Ohio, United States

Photo: **Joli Reising / Macaulay Library ML610120564**

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