



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

The Quail

Volume 67, Number 5

FEBRUARY 2022

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, February 3

Please mark your calendar for our next virtual monthly program meeting.
See **BELOW** for webinar access info.

- 7:00 PM** Welcome and Introductions
- 7:05 PM** Birding Info: *Mt. Diablo Audubon board members Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, Ariana Rickard, and Krista Vossekuiil will present a draft Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement for the chapter. See article below.*
- 7:25 PM** Board Announcements
- 7:35 PM** Main Program: *Mount Diablo—an Island in Suburbia with Michael Marchiano*
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

Main Program: *Mount Diablo—an Island in Suburbia*

Michael Marchiano, *Naturalist*

Michael will provide an overview of plant and animal life on Mount Diablo, including trees, shrubs, wildflowers, insects, spiders, reptiles, birds, and mammals. This short natural history presentation will also cover the best time to

see these magnificent creatures in the state park.

Michael Marchiano is a naturalist who has been hiking the Bay Area and California for the last 60 years. Since childhood, he has studied various animals, insects, and flowers. Now he seeks to share his knowledge with those around him in the community.



Flame Skinner

Photos: Michael Marchiano



Diablo Range Garter Snake

Photos: Michael Marchiano

Birding Info:

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement

We need your input!

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society has joined a small group of chapters working one-on-one with National Audubon Society on their Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) initiative. For more information on this initiative, including the National Audubon Society's EDI statement, and other programs to support this work, please visit the NAS website: <https://www.audubon.org/about/edi>

Three MDAS board members, Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, Ariana Rickard, and Krista Vossekui, have been working with a consultant hired by National Audubon Society, Jumana Vasi, to advance EDIB goals at Audubon chapters. This is a pilot program for the broader network, with plans to share the results at next year's national convention in Tacoma.

We have been participating in monthly meetings from August through January 2022 with Jumana, Columbus Audubon Society, and state and national Audubon staff. We set EDIB goals, such as crafting an EDIB statement for the chapter, and receive feedback and guidance from the group on our progress. We also complete homework assignments, like readings and videos, and discuss EDIB issues with the group to further our individual and collective understanding.

We drafted a statement on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging and incorporated feedback from the MDAS board. We would love to hear from our membership on the statement before the board votes to adopt it. We will be sending a survey in February to solicit comments from our members.

Here's the draft statement:

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society's Commitment

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society is committed to the diversity of our community and the natural world. To this end, we cultivate and promote environments that are inclusive, supportive, and welcoming to all. We recognize that it is only through this commitment that we can work to fulfill our mission of protecting birds and preserving their habitat while connecting people of all ages and backgrounds to them.

We intentionally choose to integrate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging as a core value, priority, and guiding principle.

Please complete the survey when you receive it via email. The deadline for feedback is February 11. Thanks in advance!

Webinar Access Info:

Date:	Thursday, February 3, 2022
Time:	7:00 PM–8:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Access:	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87826809099?pwd=MDRreUVMTjl4Z3Q3bkRMaGVKamM2dz09
Meeting ID:	878 2680 9099
Passcode:	639163
Phone access:	One tap mobile

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 878 2680 9099

Passcode: 639163

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kc22hK0K6K>

President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Mt. Diablo Audubon is working with the **California Wood Duck Recovery Program** and the **East Bay Municipal Utility District** (EBMUD) to revitalize a Wood Duck and Northern Saw-whet Owl nesting box monitoring program on EBMUD land near San Pablo Reservoir. Over the holidays, I was among a small group of volunteers who located, assessed, and cleaned out these old boxes, several of which contained interesting items such as beehives, deer mice, squirrels, and in one Wood Duck box, a pair of roosting Western Screech-Owls. In the coming days, we will be clearing overgrown access trails, and replacing and/or repairing several of these boxes in preparation for the coming nesting season.





Western Screech-Owl

Photo: Julie Woodruff

In chapter news, we say goodbye and thank you to Web Editor and Quail Editor **Marc Desin**, who resigned at the end of 2021. He was of immense help in our transition from paper to electronic newsletter a couple of years ago. To start the new year we welcome our new Web Editor, **Alyssa Retodo**, and thank her for getting involved! We also introduce **Floyd McCluhan**, interim Quail Editor who is publishing our newsletter on a

contract basis.

In addition to our ongoing vacancies for **Outreach Coordinator** and **Sales Manager**, we are looking for a volunteer **Quail Editor**. This person is responsible for soliciting content and publishing our monthly newsletter, *the Quail*. This is a Board position. We also soon will be in need of a **Membership Chairperson**. This person is responsible for maintaining the membership database, welcoming new members, and notifying existing members of expiring memberships. This also is a Board position. You can find out more info about our openings on our website

<https://mtdiabloudubon.org/about/#volunteeropenings> .

If you have any interest in getting involved or helping out in any capacity, please email president@mtdiabloudubon.org.

May the New Year bring you the best of birds!

Recap of 2021 Christmas Bird Count

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

MDAS held our East County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Wednesday, December 15, and our Central County CBC on Saturday, December 18. Participation on both counts was back to pre-pandemic levels, with 80 birders contributing to the Saturday count. The weather cooperated for the most part on both counts—chilly but no pervasive fog or rain to speak of. Both counts ended with well-attended Zoom countdown get-togethers, where we shared sightings and totaled results.



Birders at Round Valley Regional Preserve during East County CBC

Photo: Scott Hein

The East County CBC tallied 137 species, below the historical average of 143 and the lowest total since 1990. Several species common to the count such as Sora, Common Gallinule, Black-necked Stilt, Prairie Falcon, and Green-winged Teal were not seen or heard. In addition, irruptive species like Pine Siskin and Red-breasted Nuthatch were not present in the area so far this year. No birds new to the count were seen, but Western Tanager, Mute Swan, and Band-tailed Pigeon were seen for only the second time in count history. Another highlight of the count was the continued appearance of a large flock of Mountain Bluebirds at Los Vaqueros Reservoir, easily accessed by the Walnut Trailhead. We hope they stay in the area all winter!



Mountain Bluebird, Los Vaqueros Reservoir

Photo: Jerry Britten

The Central County CBC on Saturday tallied 151 species, down from our record 161 in 2020, but still above the 25-year average of 149. The difference in species totals from 2020 to 2021 can be attributed in large measure to an overall lack of shorebird species seen this year. Also, the large flyover flocks of geese and swans seen on the 2020 count were not present this year.

Notable this year was a sighting of Lawrence's Goldfinch near the Clayton Library, a species not seen on the count since 1990! Also, Chipping Sparrow was tallied for the third year in a row after a long absence. Notable by its absence was Varied Thrush, missed for only the second time in the 67-year history of this count. This species is getting more and more scarce in wintertime in the central county over the past several years.

Since 2019 we have been using eBird to compile sighting data for the CBC's. This year eBird has a new 'Trip Report' feature that consolidates all pertinent checklists into a web page summarizing all birds seen and showing where and on how many checklists they were seen. Trip report summaries for this year's CBC's, as well as those from 2020 and 2019, are now available on our website:

<https://mtdiablaudubon.org/conservation/community->

science/#christmasbirdcounts.

A lot of information is contained, and it makes for a good resource for future counts and for planning excursions to see some birds you may have missed.

Save the dates for our next Christmas Bird Counts: **Wednesday, December 14** for East County, and **Saturday, December 17** for Central County!



Lewis's Woodpecker, Central County CBC,
Thurgood Marshall Regional Park

Photo: Kevin Dixon



Peregrine Falcon, Central County CBC, Marine
Ocean Military Terminal Concord

Photo: Isaac Aronow

Welcome, New Members!

Jon Alexandr, Pleasant Hill
Dee Allen-Kirkhouse, Martinez
Kathleen Baird, Concord
Graelyn Brashear, Martinez
Susan Dagnese, Danville
Lyn Diana, Walnut Creek
Deborah Dobin, Lafayette
Nancy Griffin, Alameda
Barbara Haines, Berkeley
Brian Hayse-Gregson, Berkeley

Zach Hutton, Walnut Creek
Karen Kramer, Hayward
Joellen Lippett, Orinda
Judith Olson, Walnut Creek
Patricia Power, Walnut Creek
Judith Roberts, Pleasant Hill
Lori Rogala, Walnut Creek
Spenser Silva, Martinez
Linda Zercher, Walnut Creek

Great Backyard Bird Count 2022

Alan Bade, *MDAS Community Science Advisory & Board Member-at-Large*

This year, the **Great Backyard Bird Count** (GBBC) starts on Feb 18th and runs through Feb 21st. The GBBC was started in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society to capture important data on where birds are right before migration. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online.

All birders are welcome, beginners and experts alike. If you are an eBird user, simply report your observations as usual either by eBird mobile or on your computer, as eBird and the GBBC are completely integrated. Another way is through the Merlin bird app with instructions **HERE**.

The data collected in this global community science project is considerable! In 2021, over 300,000 participants contributed 379,726 eBird checklists and 479,842 Merlin Bird IDs—a new record! 151,393 photos were added to Macaulay Library and 6,436 species of birds were identified from 190 countries. Data collection on this global scale just can't happen without the help of birders and community scientists like you! You can view the final results **HERE**.



White-crowned Sparrow

Photo: Ian Hearn/Macaulay Library at the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology (ML152285881)**

The GBBC augments bird population data from other community science programs such as **eBird**, **Feederwatch**, and **the Christmas Bird Count**. The GBBC also

educates and raises awareness of birds in a fun, interactive way for new audiences, as results can be observed in real-time during the event. On the [program website](#) click the “Watch the Live Map” button to see what others are reporting during and after the count.

The 25th annual GBBC will be held all day **Friday, February 18** through **Monday, February 21, 2022**. Wild Birds Unlimited is a founding sponsor. MDAS encourages its members to contribute to this important community science project. Have fun!

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Project—2021 Results

Julie Woodruff, *Biologist, Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Project*

Our third year of Northern-saw Whet Owl (NSWO) banding at Las Trampas Regional Wilderness started in early October for the 2021 season in an attempt to capture an earlier migration window based on the low capture rate observed in 2020. While a few owls were captured in the first two weeks of October, few were captured until the very end of October and into November, when we had our best night ever in the Bay Area with 5 NSWO netted.

Our season concluded on November 13, with one additional capture on this evening to end on a high note. 2021 totals are as follows: 11 hatch-year owls, 4 after hatch-year owls, 5 bats (4 pallid and little brown bat). One hatch-year owl was recaptured, banded at the same site at Las Trampas a month prior on October 9. Our early season wet and windy storm systems shut us down for a week but we still managed 18 nights out, which is consistent with the prior season's effort, due to our earlier start this year. As always, we are looking forward to our next season with hopes that 2022 will bring us an elusive "foreign recapture" (a bird previously banded somewhere else)!

This year marked the first time we hired a part-time intern to help our volunteer staff with site setup, banding, and data entry work. Also, for the first time, we offered several field trips where a limited number of guests could accompany us into the field to observe the banding process, with a good possibility to see an owl or two up close! Stay tuned for more opportunities to participate in such field trips this coming fall!



Northern-saw Whet Owl

Photos: Julie Woodruff

**Climate Paralysis on the National Level:
Local and Regional Efforts Are More Important Than Ever**

Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, *MDAS Conservation Chair*



The world is likely on track to warm a dire 2.5 degrees C, UN says

Long-term COP26 promises don't match
immediate actions needed

(Washington Post illustration; iStock)

BY SARAH KAPLAN AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM
NOVEMBER 9 AT 8:19 AM

You probably don't need me to tell you, things aren't great. Nationally and internationally, multiple crises around the world are sapping energy and even recognition of the singular most important issue for each one of us and for the planet overall: the continuing, and at the same time, imminent, climate catastrophe. What's the good news? ACTION is still possible, and more important than ever. See what you can do below.

1. **Become a Certified Climate Steward.** Modeled after the astoundingly successful California Naturalist Program, the University of California and local organizations throughout the state have teamed up to provide a crucial, in-depth program focused on making a difference in the fight against the climate crisis. Act in your hometown, your region, and be part of a network of individuals that grew tired of worrying and feeling powerless, and are gaining the skills and tools necessary to take effective climate action. It

starts in March. Register and find out more [HERE](#).

2. **Take the Fight to Where It Matters Most.** For better or worse, effectively confronting climate catastrophe is 50% politics, 45% economics, and 5% science. This year's elections could determine if reversing our destruction remains difficult, becomes impossible, or even speeds up. Sign up to take targeted action where it can make the most difference. Click [HERE](#).
3. **Local Efforts That Matter.** Team up with friends and neighbors trying to make positive change in your community. Learn more [HERE](#).
4. **We Need Policy With Teeth.** Support these national groups [HERE](#) that many say are some of the most effective in the large universe of people taking effective action.
5. **CA Just Acted on Food Waste, A BIG Climate Win.** California is launching a huge food waste recycling program (read [HERE](#)), and it's coming to Contra Costa. If you're like me and use Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery, click [HERE](#) to urge them to hurry up and start the program for residential and multi-family buildings. What does wasting food have to do with climate? A LOT. Food that rots in landfills and that's wastefully grown, transported but never bought at the store or eaten at a restaurant or home doesn't just waste energy, it creates planet-warming gases when it rots improperly in the trash instead of being composted. Fight climate change by not buying more than you need, eating what you buy, and not trashing what you don't.

MDAS Field Trips

Hugh Harvey, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society field trips are back. There are some changes from the way we used to do things, however. First, there will be a sign-up process for each field trip, accessible on our website [HERE](#). By signing up, you will be acknowledging the **MDAS Liability Waiver**. Second, some of the trips may require limited participation due to traffic/parking limitations. The sign-up process will allow us to manage this.

The biggest change to previous years is that, due to safety concerns brought about by the ongoing COVID-19 situation, MDAS will no longer organize or meet up at staging areas for carpooling. Participants are encouraged to arrange their own carpools with people they are comfortable traveling with, but must expect to provide their own transportation to meet at the trip destination. This is the main reason why participation may be limited on some excursions. Some historical destinations will be abandoned for now, as well, due to traffic/parking considerations.

As usual, the field trips will be ranked according to difficulty:

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.

MDAS Field Trips

You can view and print a complete list of planned MDAS field trips for the 2022 season

[HERE](#).

Upcoming field trips include:

Thornton Area/Cosumnes Preserve

Saturday, February 5, 8:45 AM-1 PM

Leader: Ethan Chickering, 925-890-3833

The major portion of the birding is done along Woodbridge Road, the Isenberg Crane Reserve, and at the Cosumnes River Preserve. In winter, these areas are thick with Sandhill Cranes, Snow, Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese. Also present will be many winter ducks and raptors. Much of the birding is from our cars, but bring warm clothing for short walks. Bring lunch and drinks.

Rating: Category 1-Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Ethan Chickering

Meet: Westgate Landing Park east of Terminous, State Route 12

Directions: From Central Contra Costa County, take Hwy 4 east to Antioch. Go north over the Antioch Bridge on SR 160 to Rio Vista. Turn east on SR 12, for 11-1/2 miles. After passing Terminous turn right on Glasscock Road. The road will circle to the right and under the highway. Turn left onto Glasscock Road proper on the north side of the highway, then drive to the end and Westgate Landing Park.

The trip is limited to 20 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Bodega Bay

Saturday, February 12, 9:15 AM-2 PM

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979

Many opportunities for spotting great birds are available on this trip. Wintering shorebirds and waterfowl sometimes number in the thousands. We will not be attacked by any of the birds in Hitchcock's famous movie. After meeting at The Tides Restaurant, we will stop at several places around the harbor including Bodega Head, Campbell Cove, and Porto Bodega. Dress appropriately, bring lunch and drinks.

Rating: Category 1-Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Hugh Harvey, please call to confirm, 925-935-2979

Meet: The Tides Restaurant, Bodega Bay

Directions: From Central Contra Costa drive to Vallejo and then toward Sacramento on I-80. Exit to SR 37 and drive 15 miles to Lakeville Hwy. Turn right and go 11.5 miles into Petaluma. Turn left on E. Washington Street. After passing the downtown area, drive west toward Bodega Bay for about 21 miles. The road will change names but is always the same road. You will pass through Valley Ford. The Tides Restaurant will be on the left with a large parking lot. Look for the birders on the deck on the waterside of the restaurant.

This field trip is limited to 15 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Walnut Creek City Parks

Wednesday, February 23, 8:30 AM-1 PM

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979

Starting in Heather Farm Park, we will walk around the large, mostly natural pond, birding along the way. We will visit one or two other parks within the city, to be determined the day of the trip.

Rating: Category 2-Moderate

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Hugh Harvey

Meet: Wooden railing at the big pond

Directions: Turn into the park on North San Carlos Drive from Ygnacio Valley Road. This is east of John Muir Hospital, the intersection has a Shell and a Chevron gas station. Drive to the stop sign past the community building and turn left into the parking lot. The wooden railing is straight ahead.

The field trip is limited to 10 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Los Banos/Panoche Valley

Saturday/Sunday, February 26-27, two full days

Leaders: Beth Branthaver and Hugh Harvey

On Saturday this trip takes us through marshy areas of the Central Valley, where we should see large numbers of waterfowl, raptors, and waders. Sunday will be a visit to the Panoche Valley, which may have more raptors and other birds. An overnight stay in Los Banos will be required. Participants need lunch for both days. No communal dinner is being planned for Saturday.

Rating: Category 1-Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leaders: Beth Branthaver, 510-502-4860, Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979, please call to confirm

Directions: Meet at McDonald's in Gustine at 8 AM. Drive south on I-5 to Hwy 140, Exit 418. Turn left and drive 3-1/2 miles to the intersection with Hwy 33. Turn left, drive into Gustine and look for the restaurant and Chevron station on the left. Lodging in Los Banos includes Best Western Executive Inn 209-827-0954, Los Banos Days Inn 209-826-9690, Vagabond Inn Executive Los Banos 209-427-4677.

This field trip is limited to 10 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Other Birding Opportunities: See Sandhill Cranes



Sandhill Cranes, Merced NWR

Photo: Jim Gain/[Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML387229591\)](#)

This is the time of year to see Sandhill Cranes in the Central Valley. Some locations are closer to home than others. Starting in the north, drive the roads east of Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). **The Llano Seco Unit** is a good place to go and has a viewing platform and bathroom.

Sometimes the cranes may be seen and heard around the **Colusa NWR**, which also has an **auto tour route**. Plenty of waterfowl will be visible on the auto-route.

Another good place to look for Sandhill Cranes is in the Lodi/Walnut Grove area. A great place is **Staten Island**. Sometimes it is best to go late in the day and watch the sunset while the cranes and geese fly in for the night. Staten Island is located just a little east of Walnut Grove.

A visit to Woodbridge Road west of I-5 and Lodi is also a very good spot. The road leads west into wet fields for three to four miles before ending at a levee for the S. Mokelumne River. **The Isenberg Crane Reserve** is located here and has parking, a viewing platform, and a bathroom. The road is lightly used, so driving farther west and parking off the shoulder may be advantageous. Again, a late visit for the sunset is also really good, though our MDAS field trip visits in the morning.

The Cosumnes River Preserve is also visited by MDAS and also in the morning. Many flooded fields surround the area with great birding opportunities.

Farther south near Los Banos, **Merced NWR** offers one of the premier locations for thousands of Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and other waterfowl. An auto tour route has two viewing platforms and a walking trail from one of them.

Field Trip Reports

Sacramento/Colusa National Wildlife Refuges, December 4

Beth Branthaver, *Trip Leader*

Seventeen of us headed off in the fog for the Sacramento Refuges, December 4th. We spent the day moving through a number of the refuges including Colusa NWR, Llano Seco Wildlife Management Area, and Sacramento NWR. Fortunately, the fog lifted about noon. In total, we saw 65 species.

Highlights of the trip included several sightings of Bald Eagles, a single Great

Horned Owl in the “owl tree” at Sac Refuge, flocks of geese on the ground and in the air, several groups of Tundra Swans, a small group of Sandhill Cranes next to the road, and all the usual wintering ducks. Among the geese, we found Ross’s and Snow (including a few blue morphs), Canada and Greater White-fronted. Ducks included Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, Mallards, and American Wigeon. We did find a few Common Gallinules and a single Wilson’s Snipe. For raptors, we saw—in addition to the Bald Eagles—Northern Harriers, Cooper’s Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and numerous Red-tailed Hawks.

American Canyon Wetlands, December 6

Chris Wills, *Trip Leader*

On a cold and overcast December 6, sixteen birders from Mt Diablo Audubon braved the elements and walked around the American Canyon Wetlands in Napa County. They were amply rewarded with sightings of over 80 species. Highlights included hundreds of waterfowl, with particularly close views of Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal; the greatest numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons (200) that most participants had ever seen; and thousands of avocets and other shorebirds. All agreed that this is one of the best spots in the Bay Area for a variety of wetland birds.

Lake Merritt/Arrowhead Marsh, January 3

Sandy Ritchie, *Trip Leader*

Twelve birders participated on a cloudy and cold day. The numbers at Lake Merritt continue to be down. Surprisingly, for the first time in my memory, there were a few Brown Pelicans resting on a couple of the booms. Missing were Clark’s and Western Grebes and the much sought after Barrow’s Goldeneye.

At Arrowhead Marsh, there were many Ridgway’s Rails and a few Soras to be seen. The artificial structures to protect the rails during high tides were gone, so many of the Ridgway’s Rails were way out in some grassy areas. There was one very entertaining Sora that took a bath right opposite the dock, which was covered with Willets, Marbled Godwits, and a few Black Turnstones. We had great looks at a Peregrine Falcon at Garretson’s Point. A total of 64 species were seen for the day.

Putah Creek Field Trip, January 5

Maren Smith and Susana de Trapaga, *Co-trip Leaders*

A sunny day greeted 14 birders for a spectacular day of birding along Putah Creek and Lake Solano County Park, with a whopping 65 species seen and/or heard. Highlights included two Lewis's Woodpeckers and Yellow-billed Magpie, four Sora (seen and heard), a number of elegant Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye ducks, plus Common Gallinule, chattering Kingfishers, and both male and female Phainopepla. Three peacocks, remnants of a flock of 80 from the 1970s, provided a brilliant feather display, as well.

Schollenberger Park/Ellis Creek, January 15

Sandy Ritchie, *Trip Leader*

Eight of us participated on a cold and gray day that eventually finished up sunny. There was plenty of water at Schollenberger, and there were more shorebirds than in the last several years. Large flocks of Least Sandpipers were seen occasionally lifting off of the water, only to settle back down from where they had been previously feeding. There was also a very large group of American Avocets present. Early on, a juvenile Bald Eagle was spotted in the middle of the lake, perched on a post. Other than to shift one post over, it remained there for our entire viewing time. We saw 12 duck species, but we were unable to find any Blue-winged Teals that have been seen there in previous years. We walked along the shoreline hoping for an American Bittern, with no luck. We also missed the Bittern at Ellis Creek. We spent a good bit of time checking out the different gulls roosting on a sandbar and coming up with five different species.

Ellis Creek provided closer looks at some of the same duck species we had seen at Schollenberger. We had fun at a stretch of reeds trying to spot the Marsh Wrens that were being very chatty with us. We also had sightings of a roosting Red-tailed Hawk and a Red-shouldered Hawk. A total of 52 species were seen.

Peacock

Photo: Maren S. Smith

Hooded Merganser

Photo: Maren S. Smith



Events

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

Mastering Mundane Lighting: How to Take Compelling Images in Overcast and Low Light

February 2, 2022



Golden Eagle and squirrel

Learn some rationale and techniques for taking images in low light situations. Typically we are often told that the best photography is during clear, direct morning, or evening lighting. While this lighting often produces stunning images, what about situations where we cannot achieve this lighting?

These could include conditions such as deep forest, subjects that are crepuscular, or even subjects that are active during midday when light is harsh. Sometimes overcast and low light conditions are our best or only option to photograph certain species. Speaker Shravan Sundaram will teach you some techniques while showing stunning photos.

Date:	February 2, 2022
Time:	7:30 PM - 9:00 PM
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Presenter:	Shravan Sundaram
Sponsor:	Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
Cost:	Free
Registration:	Click here to register online

Bats of North America

February 5, 2022



East Coast Long-eared Bat

Photo: [Michael Pennay \(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0\)](#)

Listen to Nat Goodby—regional coordinator for the North American Bat Monitoring Program—for an informative and exciting look at the Bats of North America. Learn about the diversity of bats (in California and globally), why bats are amazing and important, threats to bats and conservation needs, and an overview of the North American Bat Monitoring Program and emerging research.

Date:	February 5, 2022
Time:	4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Presenter:	Nat Goodby
Sponsor:	Environmental Volunteers
Cost:	Free
Registration:	Click here to register online

[Waterfowl Identification with Bob Lewis](#)

February 16, 2022



Green-winged Teal

Photo by Rob Mikulec/Macaulay Library at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML296005431\)](#)

Winter is the peak viewing time for waterfowl in California. Swans and Geese migrate from their northern breeding areas and create spectacular concentrations in the Central Valley. Diving Ducks flock in large numbers in San Francisco Bay, and Dabbling Ducks can be found almost everywhere there is a bit of water. Now is the time to polish up your identification skills. In this presentation, we'll take a look at our common waterfowl and note what characteristics help to identify them, with special attention to female and eclipse plumages. A few rarities and some confusing but beautiful hybrids will add to the mix.

Date: February 16, 2022
Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Location: Zoom online meeting
Presenter: Bob Lewis
Sponsor: [Contra Costa County Library](#)
Cost: Free
Registration: [Click here to register online](#)

The California Spotted Owl

February 17, 2022

Wildfires swept through California again in the summer of 2021. While forest thinning and controlled burns may help reduce the risk of future fires, laws that protect old-forest species that are associated with dense canopies and big, old trees often slow the pace and scale of these treatments.



California Spotted Owl

Photo: Garrett Lau/Macaulay Library at

the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML362080701\)](#)

However, these species are simultaneously threatened by high-severity fires as well, leading to a lose-lose scenario. The California Spotted Owl is one such old-forest species, yet like other Sierra Nevada natives, it evolved under a frequent lower-severity fire regime, begging the question: “How do different kinds of fire influence the California Spotted Owl?”

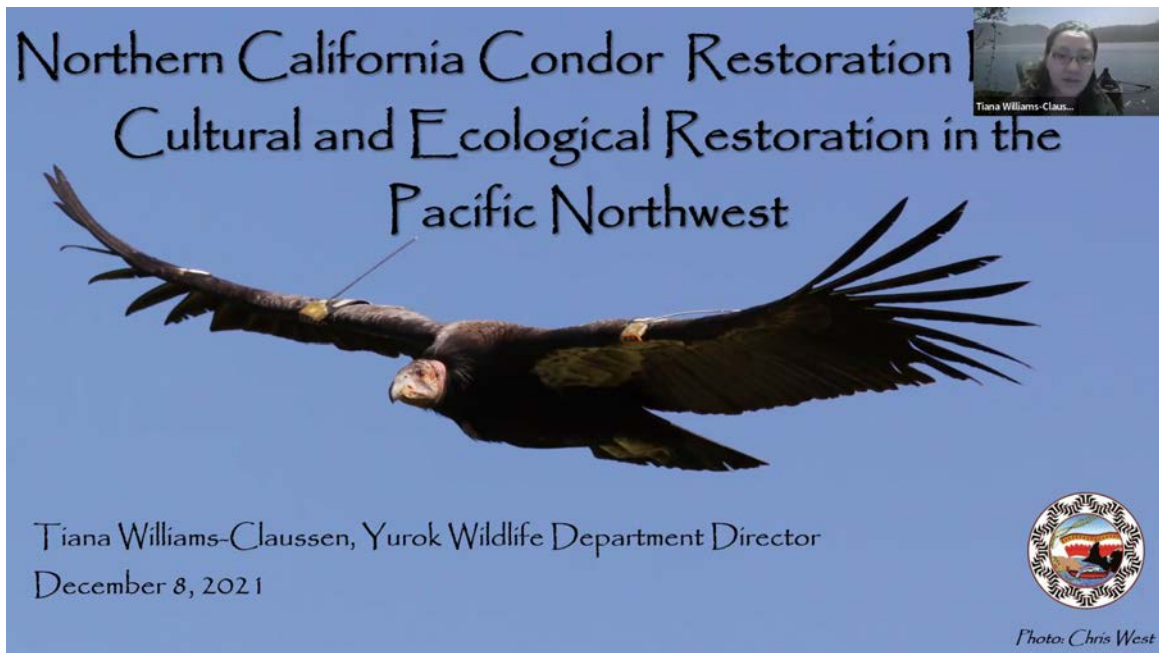
We examined owl behavior in a high-severity mega-fire, as well as in fire-restored National Parks and found consistent preferences regarding fire severity and patch size that inform future forest and fire management throughout the region and influence the future of these owls as well as human communities and the Sierra Nevada ecosystem as a whole.

Date:	February 17, 2022
Time:	7:00 PM
Location:	Zoom online meeting
Presenter:	Anu Kramer
Sponsor:	Golden Gate Audubon Society
Cost:	Free
Registration:	Click here to register online

December/January Gallery & Media



MDAS December 2 Monthly Program Meeting:
Mono Lake Phalaropes with Ryan Carle
View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).



MDAS December 8 Special Program:
Yurok Condor Restoration Program with Tiana Williams-Claussen

View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).

A virtual meeting slide with a dark blue background. At the top left, the text "An invitation to adventure" is written in a light green font. In the top right corner, there is a small video thumbnail of a person with the name "Joan Hamilton" below it. The central part of the slide features a wide landscape photograph of rolling green hills under a blue sky with white clouds. Below the photograph, the title "Audible Mount Diablo" is displayed in large, bold, white letters. At the bottom left of the slide, the text "JOAN HAMILTON 2022" is written in a smaller, light green font.

An invitation to adventure

Joan Hamilton

Audible Mount Diablo

JOAN HAMILTON 2022

MDAS January 6 Monthly Program Meeting:
Audible Mount Diablo with Joan Hamilton
View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).



"Located in the heart of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, Staten Island has 8,500 acres of farmland where The Nature Conservancy is researching wildlife-friendly agriculture and irrigation techniques that promote bird conservation in this essential habitat."

Watch the video [HERE](#).



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Bonapartes Gull

Photo: Alan Krakauer



Lawrence's Goldfinch

Photo: Adam Jackson/Macaulay Library at the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology (ML94065451)**



Great Blue Heron

Photo: Andrew Newmark/Macaulay Library at the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology (ML316983781)**

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