



Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

The Quail

Volume 67, Number 6

MARCH 2022

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, March 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: *The Mt. Diablo Audubon board will provide an overview of the chapter's activities, projects, and programs*
- 7:25 PM** Board Announcements
- 7:35 PM** Main Program: *SF Baykeeper and the State of the Bay with Sejal Choksi-Chugh*
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

Main Program:

SF Baykeeper and the State of the Bay

Sejal Choksi-Chugh, *Executive Director of San Francisco Baykeeper*

Sejal Choksi-Chugh, Executive Director of **San Francisco Baykeeper**, will discuss the state of the Bay and the major issues Baykeeper is tackling. San Francisco Baykeeper has defended the Bay



Sejal Choksi-Chugh

Photo: Gail Odom

since 1989 by patrolling on the water, investigating pollution, holding polluters accountable, and strengthening the laws that protect the Bay and the people of the Bay Area. For 30 years, Baykeeper's lawyers, scientists, and advocates have taken on the biggest threats to San Francisco Bay — and won.

Courtesy of an Equal Justice Works legal fellowship in 2002, Sejal joined the Baykeeper team straight out of law school inspired to hold

polluters and agencies accountable and to fight for healthy communities. Prior to being promoted to the Executive Director role in 2015, she served as an in-house attorney and program director, spearheading the charge to reduce toxic industrial runoff, mercury contamination, pesticides pollution, and sewage and oil spills around the Bay and its watershed.

Sejal grew up in Atlanta and attended Emory University as a Robert W. Woodruff Scholar. She holds a J.D. with a specialization in Environmental Law from the University of California at Berkeley. In addition to her day job, Sejal fills a permanent founders' seat on the Waterkeeper Alliance's Waterkeeper Council where she is a leader on the global Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, and she's a Board member of Sustainable Lafayette where she volunteers locally to help residents take action to protect the planet. Sejal co-founded the Bay Area chapter of Environmental Professionals of Color in 2020 to help increase equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Bay Area's environmental community.



Top Photo: Jeff Beckerman

Bottom Photo: SF Baykeeper

Webinar Access Info:

- Date:** Thursday, March 3, 2022
- Time:** 7:00 PM–8:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
- Location:** Zoom online meeting

Access: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85693870430?pwd=YUpsZVZyemh0Qis2eWtTT0JqT1pIU09>

Meeting ID: 856 9387 0430

Passcode: 812597

Phone access: **One tap mobile**
+16699006833,,87826809099#,,,,*639163# US (San Jose)
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Meeting ID: 856 9387 0430

Passcode: 812597

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85693870430?pwd=YUpsZVZyemh0Qis2eWtTT0JqT1pIU09>

President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Chasing Rarities in the Electronic Age.

By setting up alerts on your eBird account, you can be notified of rare bird sightings anywhere in the world within hours of the sighting being posted, with directions directly downloaded to your maps app, along with detailed descriptions of the bird's habits and schedule. I myself, along with I am sure many other MDAS members, have made the commute to Palo Alto twice during this new year (on weekends to avoid work traffic), once to see the Curlew Sandpiper at Palo Alto Baylands, and more recently to see the mega-rarity Oriental Turtle-Dove in a nearby residential area. Both were lifers for me, and it is always exciting to see new birds.



This ability for near instantaneous notifications is both a blessing and somewhat of a curse. With the popularity of Birding at what I believe is an all-time high, hordes of

birders can descend upon a residential area and seemingly overwhelm the local population. On the Saturday I went to see the dove, almost a hundred other birders were present, and on a couple of occasions motorists had to honk their horns to clear a path in the roadway. Luckily, the locals seem to take this ongoing event in stride, but, it's always good practice for Birders to be respectful of private property and the rights of egress on public roadways.

In **Chapter News**, we welcome Alyssa Retodo as Board Member-At-Large. She is also our Web Editor and posts Field Trips on our Events Registration site. We are still looking for volunteers to help out with other Board Membership tasks – please see details later in this edition.

At the next general meeting, we will be presenting a slate of candidates for our Elected Officer positions (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary). This slate, along with any other candidates nominated by membership, will be voted on by electronic email polling just prior to our May General meeting.

Due to a problem with auto-generated email notifications from our online payment site for membership renewals, some members were not recorded and did not receive our newsletter for a time, and others double-paid after they were notified erroneously of expired memberships. This problem has been rectified and our Member Database has been brought up-to-date.

The Board has decided to continue virtual membership meetings through May, with the possibility of an informal outdoor in-person finale for our June meeting. More details to come...

As always, stay safe and get out there for the Birds!



Curlew Sandpiper, Palo Alto Baylands.

Photo: Jerry Britten



Oriental Turtle-Dove, Palo Alto, CA.

Photo: Paul Schorr

Welcome, New Members!

Dawn Aniscourt, Concord
Jerome Boutte, Danville
Teresa Connell, Bakersfield
Vanessa Feron, Livermore
Rosemary Frazier, Walnut Creek
Jan Hagstrom, Brentwood
Rebecca Matsubara, Richmond
Barbara Matz, Hercules
Marilyn Riegelhuth, Walnut Creek
Bobbie Schmidt, Walnut Creek
Madelyn Stone, Berkeley
Lisa Weiss, Walnut Creek

Help Wanted! Volunteer Positions at Mt. Diablo Audubon

In the coming months, we will be losing two long-standing board positions to retirement: Membership and Field Trip Chair. In addition, we are still looking to fill another very important position: Quail Editor.

Two more vacancies become important when we resume in-person meetings and events: Sales Manager and Outreach Coordinator.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

Membership Chair – Duties include maintaining and updating the membership database, welcoming new members, and notifying existing members of expiring memberships (email and postcards).

Field Trip Chair – Organizes field trips by engaging trip leaders, setting schedules, providing trip descriptions, working with Web Editor to publish Field Trips on Web Calendar and Registration website.

Quail Editor – While we presently pay Floyd for editing and compiling *The Quail*, historically this has been a volunteer position. Duties include setting publication schedules, soliciting content inside and outside of the chapter, assembling online

and PDF versions of *The Quail*, and working with the MDAS Membership Chair to maintain the list of subscribers. MDAS publishes nine issues of *The Quail* newsletter each year. Familiarity with Mailchimp or other online newsletter platforms and basic HTML desired. Training on Mailchimp will be provided.

Sales Manager – Handles sales and inventory of publications and merchandise, conducts raffles and silent auctions at membership meetings, and maintains financial records of sales.

Outreach Coordinator – Responsible for coordinating volunteers to staff MDAS booths and tables, etc at local festivals and other public events at which MDAS has a presence.

If we are unable to fill these positions, our ability to function as an organization and provide services to our membership will be impacted. For example, our Board will have fewer members than is necessary to operate as per our Bylaws.

Please help by getting involved! You can contact one of the Board members at <https://mtdiabloaudubon.org/about/#leadership> to express your interest in volunteering!

Wood Duck Nest Box Monitoring

Jerry Britten, *MDAS President*

Mt. Diablo Audubon is sponsoring the re-activation of a Wood-Duck nest-box monitoring project at San Pablo Reservoir near the Orinda Connector Staging area, and at Upper San Leandro Reservoir near the Valle Vista Staging Area. The land at both sites is owned by East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD), who granted a research permit for this work. The operation is under the auspices of the **California Wood Duck Program**.

The initial stage of this effort was evaluation of existing boxes, which had been installed 15-20 years ago. Many were beyond repair. It was an adventure opening the lids of the intact boxes – you never knew what would be inside! We found squirrels, deer mice, bees and wasps, and a roosting Western Screech Owl pair in one.



A total of 6 new-old-stock boxes were retrieved from storage at EBMUD facilities. Our own Alan Bade made 14 new boxes for the project. Over the course of 4 weekends ending on Superb Owl Sunday, a small group of volunteers hacked through the poison oak to the sites and replaced/repared/prepped a total of 32 boxes at San Pablo Reservoir and 18 boxes at Upper San Leandro Reservoir. This is just in time for the beginning of Wood Duck nesting season. We saw several pairs of these beautiful waterfowl at both sites, presumably eyeing their new digs! Of the 32 boxes at San Pablo, 4 are Owl boxes – we hope to find Screech and/or Northern Saw-whet Owls nesting at the same time.

In a couple of weeks, we will start monitoring these boxes to determine and document nesting activity and band birds that are on the nest.

A big Thank You to the other Project members, Biologists Julie Woodruff and Andrew Ford, and MDAS volunteers Alan Bade, Susana de Trapaga, and Srikant Char!



Photos: Susana de Trapaga

**Protecting the Climate Locally Makes A Difference:
*Please Join Us and Act***

Juan Pablo Galván Martínez, *MDAS Conservation Chair*



Photo: [Erick Gustafson/Flickr \(CC BY-NC 2.0\)](#)

1) Help Ban New Oil & Gas Drilling in the County. We all know there are a lot of refineries in Contra Costa, but did you also know that there are active oil and gas drilling operations in the County too? In fact, new ones are being proposed right next to schools and residential neighborhoods! We are facing climate catastrophe, right now, and to dig the hole deeper is insane. Join us [HERE](#) for an event in March to say NO to drilling and sign the petition [HERE](#) to make your voice heard by decision-makers.

2) Embrace A Clean, Climate-Friendly Home. Please end 'natural gas' use in homes. In fact, stop calling it that. It's actually just methane, and it's not just terrible for your health, it's also a potent heat-trapping gas that's driving the climate catastrophe. Read more [HERE](#), and replace any natural gas appliances in your homes like water heaters, furnaces, stoves, and ovens, with electric. There

are rebate programs that will pay you money to replace them. 10 minutes of online searching could provide you with hundreds or thousands of dollars to help the climate.

3) Catastrophe Is Here, And It's Hitting California Hard. While both shocking and unsurprising, drought is familiar to all of us now. What's not familiar is that the mega-drought in the western US is worse than it's been in the past 1,200 years (read [HERE](#)). What's caused it? People, for the most part, and our burning of fossil fuels and destruction of natural ecosystems. We've all seen the impacts this has on water, fire, health, and everything else, just in the past 10 years. One-third of the US population is now experiencing temperatures above those called for in the Paris Climate Accords (see it in this interactive map [HERE](#)). Ventura County in southern CA has been hit hardest so far, with 2.6C of warming. Contra Costa is also past the Paris limit of 1.5 degrees of warming. Beyond that, disaster is imminent.

4) World's Best Building Meets Needs of Both Nature and People. Want to see, live, and work in amazing architecture that meets the needs of nature AND people? Bangladesh has it, why not around here? Check out the world's best building [HERE](#). Are you an architect or connected in real estate? Can you help make something like this more common in California? If so, Earth needs you!

5) Rare Good News – Offshore Oil & Gas Leases Cancelled! Good news is rare, and good climate news is even rarer, but sometimes it does happen. Large oil and gas leases in the Gulf of México were recently canceled due to the climate crisis (read [HERE](#)). This is wonderful, but it's just a start. This needs to be done the world over, and right now. Want to get out of a hole? First, stop digging!

MDAS Field Trips

Hugh Harvey, *MDAS Field Trip Chair*



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:

Wed, Mar 2	Contra Loma Reservoir	Paul Schorr
Tues, Mar 8	Mt. View/McNabney Marsh	Randy Huey
Fri, Mar 18	Valle Vista	Don Lewis
Wed, Mar 23	Lake Lagunitas	Hugh Harvey
Sat, Mar 26	Tomales Bay State Park	Linda Shinn
Wed, Mar 30	Orinda Connector Trail	Don Lewis

Contra Loma Regional Park

Wednesday, March 2, 8:30 AM to 3 PM

Leader: Paul Schorr, 925-998-0070

We will be birding the reservoir, Loma Island, and surrounding grassland areas. Expected species include waterfowl, woodland, riparian/marsh, and shore and grassland birds. Dress appropriately, bring lunch and drinks.

Rating: Category 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Paul Schorr, 925-998-0070

Meet: Contra Loma Regional Park—Channel Point Parking Lot

Directions: From Hwy. 4 in Antioch, go south on Lone Tree Way. Continue south to Golf Course Road and turn right. Continue on Golf Course Road to Frederickson Lane, turn right and continue into the park and the entry kiosk. Fee required at the kiosk. Turn left and park in the first lot on the right, Channel Point Parking Lot.

This field trip is limited to 12 participants. Register for this event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Mt. View Sanitary and McNabney Marsh

Tuesday, March 8, 9 AM to 12 PM

Leader: Randy Huey, 925-518-8439

Starting at the Mt. View Sanitation District Administration Building, we will spend most of our outing walking around the several large ponds making up Moorhen Marsh. Parking is free, and there are restrooms at the beginning of the walk. Winter birding at the Marsh has been excellent so far this year, and hopefully, March will be no exception. Some of the types of birds we should see include: swans, pelicans, ducks, egrets, herons, coots, grackles, gulls, and hawks. Following our walk around Moorhen, we will drive the short distance over to the birding platform at McNabney Marsh, and depending on how well and long our time goes, we may end up the trip across the marsh at Waterbird Regional Preserve.

Rating: Category 1 - Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Randy Huey

Meet: Mt. View Sanitary Administration Building

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 0.4 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 meet at the Administration Building, which will be on the right.

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

Valle Vista

Friday, March 18, 8 AM to 12 PM

Leader: Don Lewis, 925-284-5480

A walk through various habitats at the EBMUD property will allow us to see 50 to 60 species. If you have one, bring your EBMUD pass. This property is at the upstream end of the Upper San Leandro Reservoir.

Rating: Category 2 - Moderate

Elevation change: Some moderate changes

Leader: Don Lewis, 925-284-5480

Meet: Valle Vista Staging Area, Canyon Road

Directions: From SR 24 in Orinda, take Moraga Way to Moraga. From Mt. Diablo Blvd in Lafayette, take Moraga Road south to Moraga. At the Chevron station, go south 1

mile on Canyon Road to Valle Vista Staging Area.

This field trip has no participant limit. Register for the event [HERE](#). Participants must acknowledge the [MDAS Liability Waiver](#) (available during registration).

Lake Lagunitas

Wednesday, March 23, 9 AM to 1 PM

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 925-935-2979

Spring is approaching and we will enjoy birds and flowers on the north slope of Mount Tamalpais. The lake is part of the watershed for Marin Water District. An \$8 entry fee is required. After birding below the dam, we will hike around Lake Lagunitas.

Rating: Category 2 - Moderate

Elevation change: Some moderate changes

Leader: Hugh B. Harvey, 925-935-2979

Directions: Cross the San Rafael Bridge to US 101 north. Take the first San Rafael exit, go left on 3rd Street. In San Anselmo turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd, continue to Fairfax. Go left on Fairfax Bolinas Road, follow to left turn on Sky Oaks Road and continue to Kiosk. After paying the \$8 fee at the kiosk, drive to the last parking lot near the foot of Lagunitas Dam.

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

Tomales Bay State Park

Saturday, March 26, 8:30 AM to 1 PM

Leader: Linda Shinn, 925-597-0234

A popular site for birding along Tomales Bay, including a hike from Heart's Desire Beach to Indian Beach. We return uphill around the wet meadow behind Indian Beach. Some waterfowl, forest birds, and Osprey are possible.

Rating: Category 2 - Moderate

Elevation change: Moderate

Leader: Linda Shinn, 925-597-0234

Meet: Heart's Desire Beach

Directions: After crossing the Richmond Bridge, follow US 101 north and take the Lucas Valley Road exit. Drive 10 miles to Nicasio Valley Road and turn right. Drive through Nicasio about three miles to Point Reyes Petaluma Road. Turn left and drive three miles to the stop sign and a painted bridge. Turn right for another three miles to Hwy 1. Turn left and enter Point Reyes Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town and turn right after the bridge onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Follow "the Frank" through Inverness. Just over the ridge, turn right onto Pierce Point Road. The park entrance is on the right after about one mile. An entry fee of \$8 is required.

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

Orinda Connector Trail

Wednesday, March 30, 8 AM to 11 AM

Leader: Don Lewis, 925-284-2906

Meet: Trailhead at Camino Pablo and Bear Creek Road

A walk through an EBMUD property requires a trail permit, if you have one bring it with you. We walk downhill to San Pablo Creek, then toward the face of Briones Dam. Wood Ducks are hard to find, but some spring birds have arrived.

Rating: Category 2 - Moderate

Elevation change: Moderate

Leader: Don Lewis, 925-284-2906

Directions: Exit SR-24 at Orinda and turn north on Camino Pablo. Drive just over 2 miles to the intersection with Bear Creek Road. The trailhead parking is on the right.

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:



Least Sandpiper, Hayward Regional Shoreline

Photo: Sharif Uddin/[Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(ML173151251\)](#)

Hayward

Hayward Regional Shoreline is a very popular location for walkers, anglers, and birders. Parking at the Winton Avenue parking lot is best at the first area before entering through the open gate. One can walk to the low, elevated mound known as "Mt. Trashmore." Can you guess what is below the dirt and short grass vegetation? It is about a half-mile out to the edge of San Francisco Bay along the flood control channel. Going north past another landfill area brings one to a large, mostly dry mudflat known as "Frank's Dump." This can be shorebird heaven in late summer and fall, as they either gather for the winter or use the area as a stopping point during their southerly migration. One can see Willets, Marbled Godwits, Red Knots, Short-billed Dowitchers, Ruddy Turnstones, Black-bellied Plovers, and the occasional Pacific Golden-Plover. Migrant passerines may be seen in the trees and weedy areas near the parking lot; raptors can be anywhere.

Emeryville

Several places are worth checking in Emeryville. **Point Emery** is located on the bay north of Powell Street. Take W Frontage Road north past Chevy's Restaurant and turn left into the small parking at the stop sign. A short path leads out and often Black Oystercatchers and other birds may be seen along the edge. Scan the water for ducks and grebes, check the edges for shorebirds.

Going west on Powell Street takes one out to the **Emeryville Marina**. After passing the police/fire station, one will see the Emery Cove Yacht Harbor on the right. Park where possible and check the shoreline on the left, looking toward the Bay Bridge. Many shorebirds perch on the rip-rap here during high tide. Ducks and grebes may be on the water. Driving farther past the Chinese restaurant brings one to the marina parking area. A public bathroom is located here. Search the trees and surrounding area for passerines and more shorebirds.

Berkeley

At the west end of University Avenue is the **Berkeley Marina**. There are actually several places to check here, including behind the **Sea Breeze Cafe**, **McLaughlin Eastshore State Seashore**, **Cesar Chavez Park**, and the bay beyond **Skate's Restaurant**. The restaurant is located at the foot of the long Berkeley Pier, originally built for ferries to San Francisco. The pier started at the end of University Avenue before the building of the freeway and the filled areas where the marina is now located. A public bathroom is located near the Adventure Playground.

Oakland

Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline is a fairly new area located on the south side of the Bay Bridge toll plaza. Birds may be spotted in the basin facing towards the containership terminals. This is also the jumping-off point for the bicycle trail across the bridge.

Richmond Marina

Located at the site of the WWII shipyards, the marina and bay side of the park offers excellent viewing of winter ducks, shorebirds, and gulls. Look closely to find a Spotted Sandpiper along the rip-rap. Exit I-580 in Richmond at Marina Bay Parkway. Drive past houses all the way to the parking lot for **Barbara and Jay Vincent Park**. Public bathrooms are available. The Bay Trail passes around the park. A portion of Meeker Slough is accessible at the end of Bayside Drive. A long section of the Bay Trail here has excellent birding opportunities.

Field Trip Reports

East Contra Costa County, January 12

Paul Schorr, *Trip Leader*

Despite the dense morning tule fog and air temperatures in the upper forties to mid-fifties, eleven hardy participants enjoyed a winter's day of birding in Eastern

Contra Costa County. Beginning at Big Break Regional Shoreline, the group continued to Big Break Trail/Iron House Sanitary Dist., Cypress Grove Park in Oakley, and Marsh Creek Trail. Fifty-four species were seen or heard and some highlights included: Hooded Mergansers, Green Heron, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, Loggerhead Shrike, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrows. Due to battery issues that caused the leader to abandon the group and return later, a special thanks to Hugh Harvey and Herb and Randi Long for stepping up as leaders.



Orange-crowned Warbler



Black Phoebe

Photos: Isaac Aronow

Martinez Shoreline, January 25

Tracy Farrington, *Trip Leader*

Prospects for good birding appeared none too promising as a dense fog shrouded McNabney Marsh, and beyond, while several MDAS members and a few guests assembled at Waterbird Regional Preserve on the morning of January 25th, for the Martinez Shoreline field trip.



Great Egret

Photo: Isaac Aronow

I like to advise that one's birding success might well benefit from persistence tempered by patience. By adopting the latter, with good temperament, we watched as conditions lifted, and in due course, the day began. While there was a decent variety of the expected duck species on the water, the numbers were not great. A single Common Goldeneye was among them. Six or seven Mute Swans were seen but absent, however, were any White Pelicans. The usually present Great-tailed Grackles were also not to be found. From McNabney, we headed to the Trans Montaigne Pipeline trail. In the shallow flooded area, about a quarter-mile out, we added some Rudy Duck numbers, and Greater Yellowlegs. But a surprise came when Wilson's Snipes began taking short flights, individually or in pairs, perhaps eight to ten, in all. Walking back, a White-tailed Kite was seen, and several of us had good looks at the Common Yellow-throat, a lifer for one of our birders.

The remainder of the late morning and early afternoon was spent at Martinez Regional Shoreline Park, beginning at the end of Barrellesa St., and then a short hop over to the trailhead off the Martinez Sportsmen's Club parking lot. From the shoreline, near the shallow grave of that old wooden vessel, we had a raft of around three to four hundred ducks, nearly all Greater Scaup. There were but two

grebes, a Western and a Clark's. One male Surf Scoter turned up well beyond the raft. Following that early morning gloom, the sun kept us company as we tallied 63 total species for the day. It was my pleasure to see so many familiar faces, and make some new acquaintances, as well.



Mute Swan

Photo: Isaac Aronow



Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk

Photo: Cassie Tzur

Central Valley, February 5

Isaac Aronow, *Trip Participant*

The trip leader was Ethan (Chick) Chickering and there were 12 energetic participants and up to 56 species (species count may have been updated by Chick, for sightings after he left). We visited three areas, and with the exception of the first short visit, it was a beautiful day, sunny, warm, and with no wind. It was a wonderful day of birding.

1. Westgate Landing Regional Park: It was cool and overcast when we arrived, but a large group of California Quails welcomed us and we saw American Goldfinches. We then climbed stairs to the top of the levee, where a Green Heron was seen and also an Eurasian Collared-Dove near the top of a tree. Perhaps the highlight was seeing a swarm of Blackbirds flying over the fields to the east, and shortly flying towards us and then over our group on the levee.

2. Isenberg Sandhill Crane Refuge: We drove next to this refuge, with the sun now shining bright. We parked in the designated parking area off the road. There were many ducks swimming in the marsh, but we were looking into the sun, so

this reduced our clarity. We were serenaded by a Western Meadowlark standing on a ground branch who almost continually sang. There were active Yellow-rumped Warblers in a tree. Suddenly a mixed flock of Snow Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese which had been resting on the other side of the road flew directly over us. Chick then led us down the road, and near the end, close to the road, on the north side, were Sandhill Cranes standing in the water.



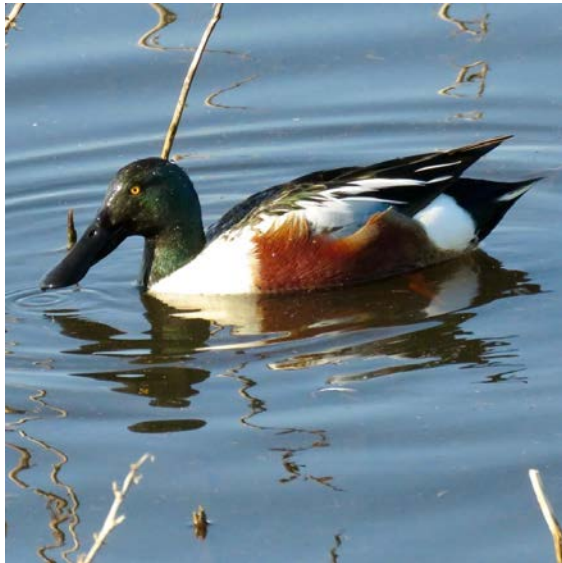
Western Meadowlark singing



Sandhill Crane

Photos: Isaac Aronow

3. Cosumnes River Preserve: Chick then led us to this preserve, and we drove to the north side of it to visit seasonal ponds. A stop was made near ponds to view a field covered with white Snow Geese. Then we drove to the ponds, and there were many ducks in them, including Northern Pintails and Northern Shovelers. In a dry pond next to it there were many Killdeer on the move. Driving back to the main Cosumnes River Preserve parking area we saw many Greater White-fronted Geese, ducks, Green-winged Teals, Northern Pintails, Northern Shovelers, and some Ruddy Ducks. Some of us remained after the trip ended, and walked the paved trail behind the visitor building and then the marsh boardwalk.



Northern Shoveler



Greater White-fronted Geese

Top Photo: Snow Geese (near Cosumnes River Preserve)

Photos: Isaac Aronow

Bodega Bay, February 12

Hugh Harvey, *Trip Leader*

The weekend at Bodega Bay was very popular, not just for fifteen MDAS birders. Parking at Bodega Head and Campbell Cove was at a premium. The weather was almost too gorgeous—some of us were sorry to not have shorts. We did have 54 species of birds, though, including a soaring Bald Eagle, Ruddy Turnstones at the Tides Restaurant, and wintering Brants in the harbor. Bodega

Head had the best birds of the day, including Surfbirds, Black Turnstones, Black Oystercatchers, three Cormorant species, and a Red-necked Grebe on the water.



Adult Brandt's Cormorant



View from Bodega Head

Photos: Rosita Harvey

Events

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

A Duck That Behaves Like a Cuckoo

March 10, 2022

BIRDY HOUR SPEAKER SERIES



A DUCK THAT BEHAVES LIKE A CUCKOO: OBLIGATE BROOD PARASITISM IN THE BLACK-HEADED DUCK OF ARGENTINA

by Dr. Bruce Lyon

Thursday, March 10, 2022 • 6:00pm Pacific • Free Virtual Event



The Black-headed Duck is a duck with the lifestyle of a cuckoo or a cowbird—they never raise their own offspring but depend entirely on other species to do so. This species is unique among the hundred species of professional brood parasitic birds in that their precocial chicks fend for themselves after hatching, so the parasites rely on their hosts only for incubation. This suggested that we might see a different type of relationship between the brood parasite and the host species they parasitize.

UC Santa Cruz professor Dr. Bruce Lyon will discuss the results of a four-year study of Black-headed Ducks in wetlands near Buenos Aires. His team investigated ecological and evolutionary aspects of their biology, including patterns of host use, the factors that influence the ducks' reproductive success, and the implications for conservation of the ducks.

Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Zoom online meeting

Presenter: Dr. Bruce Lyon
Sponsor: [San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory](#)
Cost: Free
Registration: [Click here to register online](#)

Our Wild Neighbors: The Practice of Animal Tracking

March 12, 2022



Ever wonder what takes place in the wilderness when we are not looking? Come explore the fascinating lives of animals at Pepperwood with local wildlife ecologist Meghan Walla-Murphy and Pepperwood's Wildlife Specialist Steven Hammerich, with this immersive class! If we can learn to interpret the signs of animals and the language of birds, we will begin to see and hear the living story of the land.

Date: Saturday, March 12, 2022
Time: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Location: Pepperwood Preserve, 2130 Pepperwood Preserve Rd,
Santa Rosa, CA 95404, USA
Presenter: Meghan Walla-Murphy and Steven Hammerich
Sponsor: [Pepperwood Preserve](#)
Cost: \$45
Registration: [Click here to register online](#)

SCVAS Speaker Series: Freya McGregor, Birdability

March 16, 2022

Through education, outreach, and advocacy, **Birdability** works to ensure the birding community and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, safe, and accessible for everybody.



We focus on people with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, chronic illness, intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those who are neurodivergent, deaf or hard of hearing, or who have other health concerns. In addition to current birders, we strive to introduce birding to people with disabilities and other health concerns who are not yet birders so they too can experience the joys of birding.

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Location: Zoom online meeting

Presenter: Freya McGregor

Sponsor: **Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society**

Cost: Free

Registration: [Click here to register online](#)

Webinar: Discover Mary Bowerman Trail

March 23, 2022



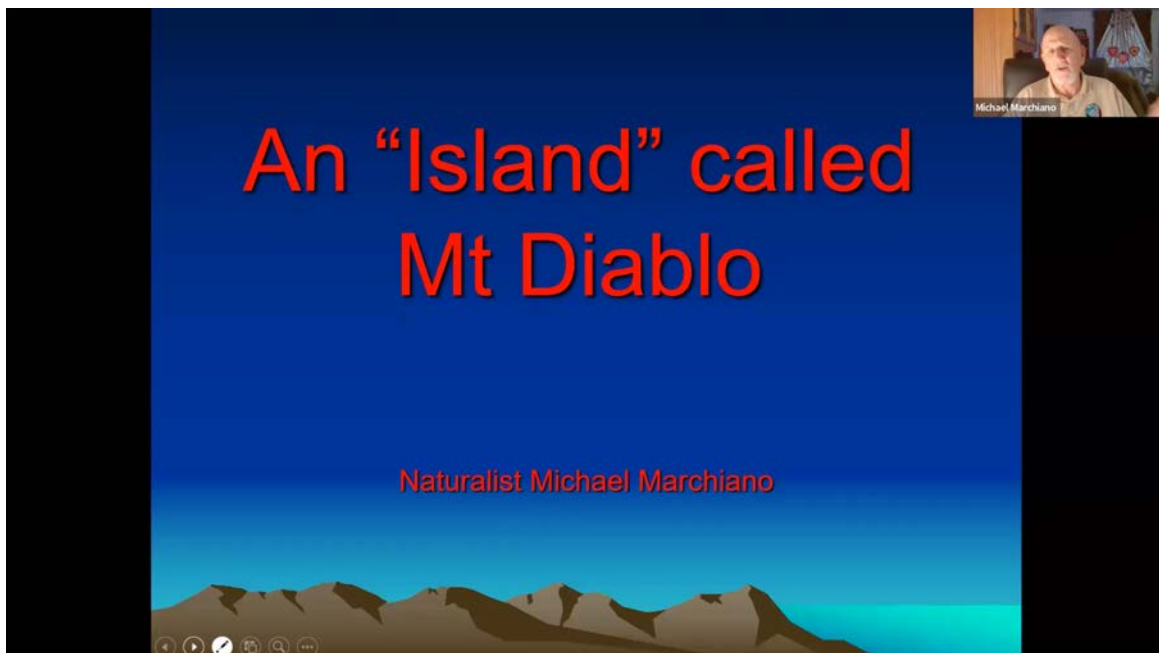
Devil's Pulpit on Mary Bowerman Trail

Photo: Floyd McCluhan

Join MDIA board member and California Naturalist graduate Dan Fitzgerald as he takes you on a virtual tour around the Mary Bowerman Trail at the summit of Mount Diablo. There are over 125 wildflowers that bloom on the Mary Bowerman Trail! Dan will show you some of the ones he has photographed along the trail and the butterflies he has found using them.

Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Zoom online meeting
Presenter: Dan Fitzgerald
Sponsor: **Mount Diablo Interpretive Association**
Cost: Free
Registration: **[Click here to register online](#)**

March Gallery & Media



MDAS February 3 Monthly Program Meeting:
Mount Diablo – an Island in Suburbia with Michael Marchiano

View the virtual meeting [HERE](#).



The Word on Warblers

These tiny, delightful birds have captured our hearts and minds around the world – but what exactly is a warbler?

Watch the video [HERE](#).



Watch These Peregrine Falcons Become Fierce Parents

High up in their 300-foot tower penthouse in Berkeley, falcon stars Annie and Grinnell's romance quickly gets real, as they face the tough demands of raising a family.

Watch the video [HERE](#).



Which Birds Are the Biggest Jerks at the Feeder?

The interactions between birds in the park or at your backyard feeder may look like chaos, but they're actually following the subtle rules of a hidden avian social order.

Read the article [**HERE**](#).

Photo by [**Rainer Hungershausen/Flickr \(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0\)**](#)



Marsh Wren at the Antioch Marina

Photo: Paul Schorr



Acorn Woodpecker at Hidden Lakes, Martinez

Photo: Paul Schorr



Wood Duck male with female Mallard on Grayson Creek

Photo: Paul Schorr

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Mt. Diablo Audubon Society Leadership

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