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Mount Diablo Bird Alliance

The Quail

Volume 70, Number 2

February 2025

February Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, February 6, 7 PM

Mount Diablo Bird Alliance will meet Thursday, February 6 in the Camellia Room at the Gardens at Heather Farm.

Address:

The Camellia Room @ The Gardens at Heather Farms
1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Please note that we will not provide plastic or paper cups anymore.

You will need to bring your own reusable mug for water, punch, or tea.

However, some reusable mugs will be available at the meeting.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Agenda:

6:30 PM Doors Open

7:00 PM Announcements

7:15 PM Refreshments and Raffle

7:30 PM Main Program: Birds and Art in Central Europe

Our Raffle table's success relies heavily on your fantastic donations! We're on the lookout for awesome bird-related items or anything similar, like books, art, collectables, feeders, bird boxes, and camera equipment. Basically, anything you think someone might be interested in buying raffle tickets for.

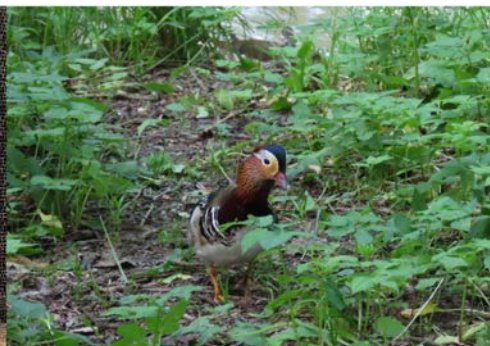
Feel free to bring your donations to our meetings. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

In Nature and Imaginations: Birds and Art in Central Europe

Jill Hedgecock



Parrott Mosaic



Mandarin Duck

Photos by J. Hedgecock

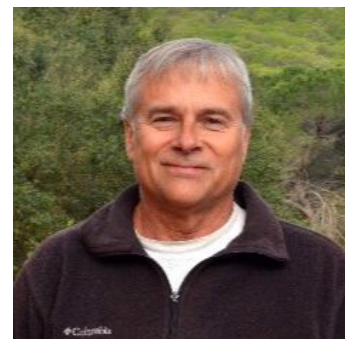
Jill Hedgecock will share photos from her birding adventures, museum visits, and more during her travels through Amsterdam, Germany, Prague, and Salsburg. From taking a cable car to the highest mountain in Germany and seeing the alpine cough, to stumbling upon a stunningly beautiful nonnative mandarin duck, Central Europe was full of birding surprises. Jill will also show how birds have found their way into many art forms in Europe. She will provide background information on bird-inspired paintings such as Rembrandt's 1639 Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern and his 1635 Abduction of Ganymede painting, from her visit to the Old Master's Picture Gallery in Dresden, Germany, and the parrot mosaic she saw in Berlin's Pergamon Museum.

Jill Hedgecock, who has spoken to MDBA on topics from rhino conservation, microplastics, and falconry in Scotland, returns to share more of her international travels with the Mount Diablo Bird Alliance. She has a M.S. degree in Environmental Management and is the author of two novels inspired by her love of rhinos. She previously served as the International Conservation Coordinator for the club back in the early 1990s and was a long-term leader of the Black Diamond Mine Christmas Count circle.

President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDBA President*

We recently spent a week at our new home in southeastern Arizona in early January, meeting with contractors to discuss upcoming remodeling work. I managed to squeeze in one birding expedition to the San Pedro River, located a short distance east of our property. I was thrilled to photograph a beautiful Vesper Sparrow and a vagrant Eastern Phoebe. I also spotted a Violet-crowned Hummingbird in our yard, and I'm eagerly anticipating the variety of hummingbirds we'll see once we move in.



In Chapter news, we're excited to welcome Janna Layton to our Board as Publicity and Social Media Chair! Check out her posts about us on Facebook and Instagram! A big thank-you to Rosalie Howarth, who diligently filled part of this role on an interim basis for over a year after resigning from the Board. Board members Rochelle Fortier, Janna Layton, and Rosita Ortega-Harvey have formed an Outreach Committee to coordinate our participation in local festivals and events. However, it would be fantastic to have someone fill the vacant Outreach Chair position to assist with these efforts! I'm also pleased to announce that Chris Ortega and Julie Starr will be collaborating to organize and compile our Christmas Bird Counts. Now, all we need is a new President for the next term starting in July!

All the best, and happy birding!



Vesper Sparrow, Arizona

Photo by J. Britten

Galindo Creek Songbird Banding Station is Operational

Jerry Britten



Master Bander Hallie Daly (right) and Susana de Trapaga extricate a Hermit Thrush from a net at Galindo Creek Banding Station

Photo by Elisa Fernandez-McDade

After nearly two and a half years of planning, the Galindo Creek Songbird Banding Station is now open for business! Sponsored by the Mount Diablo Bird Alliance in partnership with Cal-State East Bay Concord, the station operates under permits from federal, state, and university agencies. It is located at the Galindo Creek Field Station on the campus of Cal-State East Bay Concord (see map [here](#)). The station is part of the **MAPS** program (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship), managed by the **Institute for Bird Populations**, which establishes protocols and guidance for a network of over 1,200 banding stations in North America. In the greater Bay Area, there are also MAPS banding stations at **Coyote Creek Field Station** near Milpitas, run by the **San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory**, and at the **Palomarin Field Station** in Point Reyes, run by **Point Blue Conservation Science**. A banding program in our area, located midway between these two stations, will complement them and provide valuable data on bird population dynamics in the Mount Diablo eco-region. The Galindo Creek Field Station is a riparian area on the CSUEB campus that is rich in birdlife, situated near other protected lands such as Lime Ridge Open Space, Save Mount Diablo's Mangini Ranch property, and Mount Diablo State Park, with easy access by foot.

Currently, there are over 30 volunteers involved in this project, including several permitted banders and around 15 volunteers who have completed training and are authorized to handle birds. The first banding session for training was held on December 1, 2024. Training sessions are scheduled throughout the winter before full-scale operation with ten deployed nets begins in the spring. Field trips involving students from other CSU-East Bay campuses are already planned. This is envisioned to be a long-term project that will extend over many years.

To get involved, please contact the project leader Hallie Daly at mountdiablomaps@gmail.com to volunteer and get on the schedule for training. Many thanks to Hallie and to Kathy Cutting at CSUEB for making this project a reality!

Membership Updates

Rochelle Fortier, *MDBA Membership Chair*

Welcome New Members! I would like to give a warm welcome to the new members who joined in October and in the first half of December: **Robb Klau**, San Ramon; **Blake McPherson**, Martinez; **Danielle Osborne**, Martinez; **Carol Ann Quigley**, Martinez; **Malathy Sethuraman**, San Ramon; **Ann Spaulding**, Martinez, and **Dana and Kevin Wade**, Petaluma. I hope to see you at our next program meeting!



Results of the 2024 MDBA Christmas Bird Counts

Jerry Britten, *MDBA CBC Compiler*



Birders stymied by a King Tide on their quest for Black Rails

Photo by Joy Dardin



Steve Buffi stymied by treefall in Mitchell Canyon

Photo by Jill Hedgecock



Northern Rough-Winged Swallow at Central Sanitary District

Photo by Alan Krakauer

Central Contra Costa County, Saturday December 14

More than 60 intrepid birders braved torrential rain, gale-force winds, and falling trees during our 69th Central County Christmas Bird Count on Saturday. Despite these adverse conditions, and the fact that we were unable to access one of our most productive sites (the Military Ocean Terminal Concord, or MOTCO), we managed to tally 149 species, which is right around our 25-year average.

The highlight bird of this count was undoubtedly the Northern Rough-winged Swallow, observed on Central Sanitation District land in Concord by Alan Krakauer, Matt Tarlach, and Rosita Harvey. This bird is uncommon in the area during spring, summer, and early fall, and this is the first time it has ever been recorded on this count, which has been taking place since 1955!

Another first-time sighting on this count was Swinhoe's White-Eye, observed in Bay Point. This species is considered an exotic escapee in Northern California, although it is naturalized in Southern California. Other rarities recorded on this day included the Northern Saw-whet Owl and the Barn Swallow.

You can find the eBird trip report for the Central County Count [here](#). This report, as well as trip reports from previous years, is also available on our [website](#) (scroll down until you see them).

These trip reports are fascinating to study. They show an interactive map of all routes covered, followed by a species list. On the far right of the list is an icon that shows how many checklists the particular bird was on. Click on this icon to open up individual checklists, some of which include photos.

Take particular note of the many birds that appeared on only one or two checklists. Please note that the trip report you see will show 147 species, not 149, as public trip reports do not include sensitive species, such as Black Rail in this case, and the White-Eye doesn't count since it is an escapee.



Birders at the Discovery Bay Lighthouse

Photo by Georgette Howington



Vesper Sparrow on Briones Valley Road

Photo by Alan Bade

Eastern Contra Costa County, Wednesday December 18

The weather for this year's Eastern County Christmas Bird Count, although foggy, gloomy, and somewhat chilly, was much better than the weather on the previous Saturday. Around 30 participants contributed to this count, the 25th of the series, and tallied an impressive 150 species, well above the running average of 143.

A couple of new birds were added to the count: Yellow Warbler at Holland Tract and Common Poorwill in the Los Vaqueros Backcountry. In addition, several more rarities were seen, including Vesper Sparrow, Pacific Wren, Wilson's Warbler, Chestnut-backed Chickadee (rare in East County), Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, and Seven Burrowing Owls were spotted, the most since 2015.

You can find the trip report for this count [here](#).

Mark your calendars for **next year's counts!**

Central County – Saturday December 20, 2025.

Eastern County – Wednesday December 17, 2025.

From 50 Years Ago - The Quail, December 1974

Jerry Britten, *MDBA President*

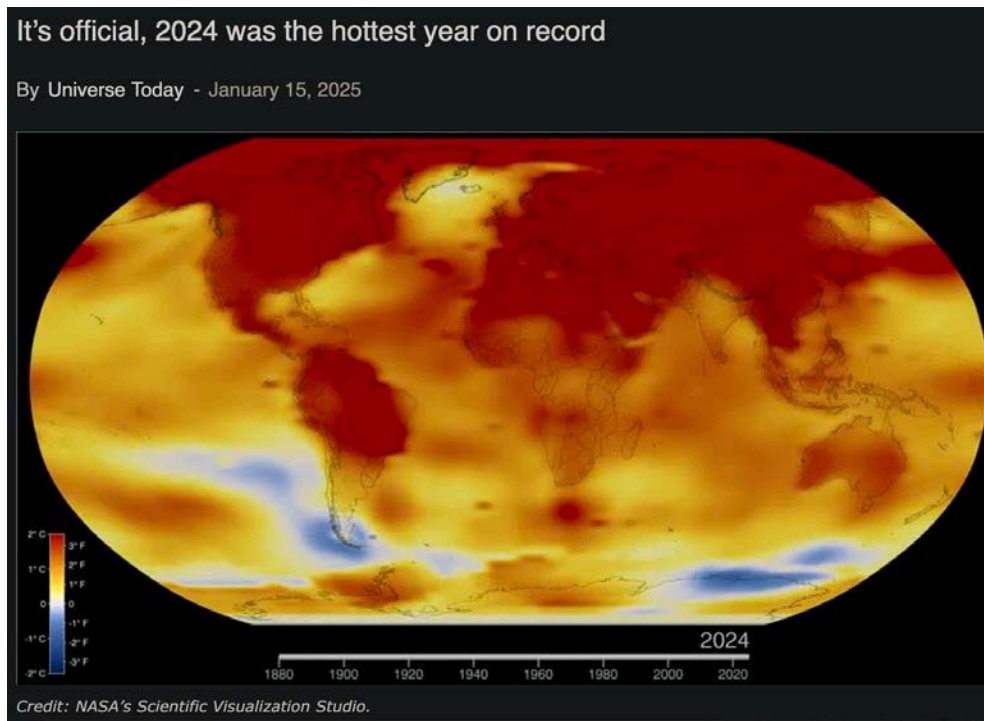
A story of MDAS partnering with the Regional Park District to help conserve something other than a bird species.

In mid-December MDAS past president Chris Nelson was seen on local television and on the front page of at least one major area newspaper with a story about attempts of the Regional Park District to help preserve newts, slow-moving, lizard-like amphibians which cross the roads near Briones Park. Chris, chief Park District naturalist, came up with the idea of newt crossing signs being put up to warn motorists to watch for the creatures and avoid hitting them with their cars. "People should have a consciousness of other living things," he said. "If they don't, how can they have a consciousness of mankind?" This is one more of Chris' contributions to the world of nature.

Tired of Climate Sound Bites?

Get Actual Facts and Take Local Action That Makes A Difference

Juan Pablo Galvan, *MDBA Conservation*



1. Wildfires and the Climate Change Question

Anything in the news lately? It certainly seems like we're seeing more and more devastating wildfires. The recent fires in and around Los Angeles have sparked widespread discussion and understandable horror. Unfortunately, as is often the case, many news outlets and online commentators have attempted to pin the blame for this entirely foreseeable disaster on everything from water management policies and endangered species protections to minority groups. Explanations have ranged from sensible to utterly ridiculous.

One of the most frequent questions arising from these events is: were these fires caused by climate change? An excellent article based on an interview with climate scientist Daniel Swain offers clear, insightful answers. You can read it [HERE](#) (or search for it on your phone if it's behind a paywall).

The key takeaway? Instead of asking "Was this event caused by climate change?", we should be asking "To what extent did climate change increase the likelihood or severity, or some other quantifiable characteristic of

this event?"

2. The Complexity of Wildfires

Swain goes on to explain: "Often, there's a tendency for people to get drawn into disingenuous, oversimplified arguments that pit one cause against another. Was this event caused by 'x,' or was it caused by 'y' or 'z' – whatever your preferred physical process or political scapegoat might be. The reality is that these events are almost always the result of multiple interacting factors that vary in importance depending on the specific context. This kind of nuanced answer doesn't make for a good sound bite, but it *is* the most honest answer and the one that helps us understand what's happening most clearly."

3. Facing the Future, Taking Action

Fires like those in the Bay Area a few years ago, and those that Los Angeles is experiencing now, are just the beginning. The generations born between 1890 and 1980 have left a world for their descendants that is increasingly unstable and on a path toward collapse. Those least responsible for this crisis will suffer the most.

Don't like it? Then do something. The Bay Area has many community organizations mobilized to confront the climate crisis. Click [HERE](#), [HERE](#), or [HERE](#) to join the movement.

Donate Used Binoculars to Argentinian Blackbird Project



Saffron-Cowled Blackbird

Photo: Jefferson Silva / [Macaulay Library ML 79119151](#)

Bob Meese, a UC Davis retiree and head of the Triennial Tricolored Blackbird Survey in California, is also working with Argentinian biologists monitoring the saffron-cowled blackbird, considered to be the world's

rarest/most endangered blackbird, in Corrientes Province, Argentina. The principal investigator is Florencia Pucheta, an expert on the species who has been studying them for over 10 years. Bob is seeking donations of optical equipment, primarily binoculars, for Florencia and her Aves Argentinas staff, as they are currently using inferior optics (bottom-of-the-line Nikons, heavily used Tascos, etc.). Nine or so binoculars are desired. Perhaps many of you have good used binoculars in your closet that you would like to put to good use. Donating them for use on this project would be a great way to help.

If you have good binoculars or a spotting scope to donate for this effort, please contact president@mtdiablobirds.org. Thank you!

2024 Northern Saw-Whet Owl Banding Summary

Julie Woodruff and Jerry Britten



A captured Northern Saw-Whet Owl

Photo by J. Britten

In 2024, we relocated our owl banding station to Briones Regional Wilderness from Las Trampas Regional Wilderness in hopes of increasing our capture rate. Unfortunately, we experienced the opposite outcome.

We netted a total of 9 new and 2 recaptured Northern Saw-whet Owls during the 13 nights of operation, from October 11 to November 16.

Data Breakdown (New Owls):

- Hatch Year Birds: 5
- After Hatch Year Birds: 4
- Male: 2

- Female: 6
- Unknown: 1
- Parasitic Hippoboscids: Present on 5 of 9 owls

Other Notable Statistics:

- Net Hours: 217
- Volunteer Hours: 3,450
- Owls per 100 Net Hours: 5.07
- Net Damage: 2 nets damaged by deer

Over the coming months, we will evaluate whether to continue banding at this site or relocate once again in our pursuit of more owls in the East Bay. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the volunteers who dedicated their time to these long nights in the woods!

Generating Interest in Birding

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee

In 2022, MDBA formed an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) team. Our focus has been on introducing birding to those who are unfamiliar with it or simply do not have the opportunity to explore the world of birds. To date, we have held introductory birding presentations at the Concord library, conducted a presentation on birding at Monument Crisis Center, and sponsored a presentation at their summer camp by an organization that cares for injured birds. We are also currently hosting pop-up birding events at the Heather Farm natural pond and participating in local fairs to promote the joys of birding.

We encourage our members to continue being welcoming to new members and helping novice birders on field trips.

We are always seeking new members for our team as well as ideas for introducing birding to marginalized communities. Please contact Ariana Rickard (Arianajrickard@gmail.com) if you have any ideas or are interested in joining the team.

Great Backyard Bird Count: February 14 - 17, 2025

How many birds can you find?

28th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

February 14-17, 2025

birdcount.org



Spotted Towhee/*Pipilo maculatus*.
Photo: Jim Merritt/Macaulay Library

How many birds will you find in **The Great Backyard Bird Count** (GBBC) held this year from February 14-17?

Held every February since 1998, the GBBC is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Observers' sightings provide data on bird species and location just before the beginning of spring migration on our continent. The GBBC was the first online community science project to collect data on wild birds and to display the results in real time.

You can participate by observing and recording online what species and how many individuals you see on any of the four days during the event. If you are a regular eBird reporter, simply report as usual during the four days, and your data will be included since eBird and the GBBC are completely integrated.

How to Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count

Participating is easy, fun to do alone or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds.

Step 1: Decide where you will watch birds. **Step 2:** Watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days, February 14–17, 2025. **Step 3:** Identify all the birds you see or hear within your planned time/location and use the best tool for sharing your bird sightings:

- **Beginning birders:** If you are a beginning birder and new to bird identification, try using the [Merlin Bird ID app](#) to help identify the birds you are seeing. It will also record your observations.
- **eBird users:** If you are comfortable using eBird, then record your observations in the [eBird Mobile app](#) or enter your bird list on the [eBird website](#).

If you already use Merlin or eBird, all entries over the four days count towards the GBBC. There is no need to register or sign up separately for the GBBC. To find out more information, click [HERE](#).



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MDBA Trip Report

Lynch Canyon Open Space Preserve, December 7

Trip Leaders: Maureen Lahiff and Susana de Trapaga



Golden Eagle



Sora

Photos by Isaac Aronow

On an unseasonably warm, smoggy day, seventeen birders gathered at this prime raptor hotspot. Western Meadowlarks were flying low and disappearing into the grass, small flocks of Western Bluebirds and Lesser Goldfinches were moving from tree to tree, and a Red-shouldered hawk perched on a fence. At the start of the hike on Middle Valley Trail, the first Golden Eagle appeared, and we set up scopes to look at a perched White-tailed kite.

Just before the reservoir, we spotted a Rock Wren on the boardwalk section of the trail. By the reservoir, while looking at Soras, Gallinules, Gadwalls, Buffleheads, American Coots, Killdeer, and Greater Yellowlegs, we flushed Wood Ducks that after takeoff kept circling over us. Easy count of 6! A Prairie Falcon flew over the hill on the other side of the reservoir, and another Golden Eagle and Northern Harriers were seen to the west.

We hiked up to the Bay Area Ridge Trail, where we took a break, then headed down to the Middle Valley Trail to complete the loop. We also saw many Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels, the usual suspects in the area.

We tallied 51 avian species on our four-hour and 35-minute, three-mile hike.

EBird [checklist](#).

Contra Costa Large Day, January 4

Report by Matt Tarlach



On January 4, a half-dozen intrepid MDBA birders set out before dawn, determined to make use of every one of the 575 minutes of daylight to record as many species as we could across the length and breadth of Contra Costa County. We began at Valle Vista in heavy fog, but heard a pair of Great-horned Owls hooting...and then a Wrentit calling...and a Thrasher...and many others as the fog grew slowly brighter. We walked down through the woods in misty twilight, and when we arrived at the reservoir the fog lifted as though on cue, allowing us to spot a pair of Snipe, a family of Wood Ducks, and a raft of 25 Common Mergansers.

From Moraga, we drove to Richmond for saltwater marsh and bay habitat. At Meeker Slough, we sighted not only the expected species but had great views of several Black Skimmers resting on the mud flats. At the marina, we spotted a pair of Black Scoters and a Pacific Loon; out in the Bay, we added Common Loons and a Red-throated to complete a loony trifecta.

On our way east to the Delta, we stopped at McNabney Marsh, where a few species not seen elsewhere were recorded, including Mute Swan, Cinnamon Teal, and Grackle. Very near the eastern end of the county at Holland Tract, we had Ring-necked Pheasant, Lincoln's Sparrow, Osprey, and Yellow-headed Blackbird—but the real highlight was standing on the levee watching thousands of Snow and Ross's Geese fly in across a glorious sunset. Hundreds of Sandhill Cranes, too!

Our final tally was 127 species. Trip report [HERE](#).

Thanks to Bill for driving, Steve and Vicky for doing the eBird, Rosemary for the images, John for spotting, and Ted for coming out to help spot, even though he couldn't join us for the full day. It was a real team effort.

Putah Creek, January 8

Trip Leaders: Maren Smith and Susana de Trapaga



Male Hooded Merganser

Male Common Goldeneye

Photos by Pam Lorenz



Barrow's Goldeneye Pair

Male Phainopepla

Photos by M. Smith

Twenty-one birders enjoyed temperatures in the 60s and sunny, spring-like weather at Putah Creek and Lake Solano County Park on Wednesday, January 8. We had great views of the usual ducks—American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, Pied-billed Grebes, and over 100 Buffleheads—and a favorite: the stunning Hooded Merganser. Greater Yellowlegs were plentiful, Common Gallinules were seen, but we managed only fleeting glimpses of the elusive Sora and Green Heron. Both male and female Phainopeplas called, then posed for the photographers. A Bald Eagle and a pair of Ospreys soared overhead, and a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks vocalized and posed across the water. The woodpeckers did not disappoint, giving us a seven-woodpecker day: Red-breasted Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, and Lewis's, Downy, Nuttall's, Acorn, and Hairy Woodpeckers. Trip report [HERE](#).

Eight birders ventured a mile west after the field trip to Putah Creek Fishing Access #3, where we were treated to a pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes along with four Common Goldeneyes, for good comparison views of both species. Our

tally for the day was 67 species seen and/or heard—a great start for 2025!

MDBA Field Trips

Matt Tarlach, *MDBA Field Trip Chair*



Update from the Field Trips Coordinator

MDBA mounts dozens of Field Trips throughout the year, ranging from easy, accessible strolls around our local parks to longer expeditions to more distant sites, and 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. MDBA members have priority, with member sign ups opening as soon as the trip is announced in our newsletter. Non-members are welcome 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.

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!

Out of respect for our members and community, we ask participants to take sensible precautions for everyone's health when carpooling and sharing spaces.

We always need new trip leaders! It's fun, and a meaningful contribution to our chapter's mission of education and outreach. Please contact our Field Trip Coordinator, Matt Tarlach, at mdbafieldtrips@gmail.com If you have a favorite birding spot you'd like to share with your fellow members but would like some help leading the trip, Matt can probably pair you up with an experienced trip leader.

If you're looking for still more bird-related outings in our area, the East Bay Regional Park District holds a variety of events. Go to their Birding page [here](#) and click View Activities.

Bridgeway Island Pond, West Sacramento

Wednesday, February 5, 9:15 AM - Early Afternoon



Blue-winged Teal

Photo by Mona Lange

New Trip!

This is a birding hotspot. We can hope for close views of an assortment of waterfowl and shorebirds. Blue-winged Teal., American Avocet, Cinnamon Teal, and Sora have often been seen here. Easy access with a mostly flat, grassy area. Not much walking will be required, more standing and observing at different areas along the pond.

On the way back we'll stop at another birdy spot, to be decided.

This is a good trip for beginning birders.

Hike Rating: 1, Easy

Leader: Mona Lange, 510-414-2959

Meet: McDonalds at 2244 Lake Washington Blvd. in West Sacramento at 9:15 AM for a restroom stop, proceeding to the pond by 9:30.

Directions: Take 80 East toward Sacramento. Exit at Enterprise and Harbor Blvd (exit 81) and go Right. Take the 2nd Left to Industrial Blvd. After a few miles Industrial Blvd changes its name to Lake Washington Blvd. Make a Left on Southport Parkway and then first left to enter the shopping center. Another first Left then leads to the McDonalds.

GPS for McDonalds: 38.55676326286286, -121.53992619423487

GPS for the pond: 38.54070384928736, -121.57784840910891

Register [HERE](#).

Thornton Area and Cosumnes Preserve

Wednesday, February 12, 8:45 AM - 2 PM



Sandhill Cranes

Photo by Sharon Anderson

Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes, hawks and grassland birds. Trip will go in light rain. Bring lunch and a beverage.

Hike rating: 1 - Easy

Elevation change: Minor

Leader: Mona Lange, 510-414-2959

Meet: 8:45 AM in Westgate Landing Park at the end of Glasscock Road.

Directions: Take SR 4 to Antioch Bridge, go north on SR 160 along the river to Rio Vista bridge. Turn right on SR 12 for 11.5 miles. East of Terminous, turn right onto the exit to Glasscock Rd. The road will go under the bridge. Turn left onto Glasscock Rd. proper and continue to the park at the end. After meeting at Westgate

Landing and a quick check of the area within view, we'll continue towards Thornton.

There is a \$5 parking fee at one of the stops; bring exact change.

Register [HERE](#).

Big Break and East County

Wednesday February 19, 9 AM - 1PM



Common Gallinule

Photo by Maren Smith

We will be birding at Big Break/Delta Science Center and then driving to at least one other location, to be determined by conditions. These locations are usually good for waterfowl, raptors and some passerines. Dress warmly, bring lunch and drinks. This trip is appropriate for birders of all experience levels, including beginners.

Hike rating: 1, Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Mona Lange, 510-414-2959

Meet: Big Break parking lot in Oakley at 9 AM

Directions: Take Highway 4 east toward Stockton/Pittsburg, after Antioch take right Exit 30 toward CA-160/Sacramento/Rio Vista. Take Exit 1A, East 18th/Main Street, turn right at the bottom of the exit onto Main Street, proceed east a little over 1 mile, then turn left onto Big Break Road. Turn into Big Break Regional Shoreline/Delta Science Center just past the last houses on the right.

Register [HERE](#).

Bodega Bay

Saturday, February 22, 9:30 AM - 3 PM



Common Loon

Photo by Isaac Aronow

Why do we go all the way to Bodega Bay? To see loons close up – the Common, Pacific, and Red-throated species are all likely. To see Brant, the sea geese that spend the winter here. To see Double-crested, Brandt's and Pelagic cormorants side-by-side to strengthen our ID skills. This is a great place for birders of all levels and birders new to the Bay Area.

We'll meet at 9:30 am at the Tides Wharf and Restaurant, out on the deck behind the restaurant. There are restrooms here. From the Tides we'll drive out to Bodega Head, and later bird Porto Bodega and other stops along the bay. [URL](#) for meeting place.

Be prepared for variable weather. Bring lunch, snacks, and liquids. There are pit toilets at Bodega Head, Campbell Cove, and Porto Bodega Marina.

Hike rating: 1, Easy

Elevation change: N/A

Leader: Maureen Lahiff, MLahiff@aol.com, 510-484-6529

Meeting point GPS: 38.328869668535894, -123.04502163182391

Directions: Take US 101 north to Petaluma. Exit at Washington and head SW. Washington becomes Bodega Ave, which becomes Petaluma-Valley Ford Rd, which eventually merges into CA Hwy 1. Take Hwy 1 to Bodega Bay. After passing the Inn at the Tides, you'll see the Tides Restaurant on the left. From Walnut Creek, it's about a 2 hour drive.

Register [HERE](#).

Local City Parks

Wednesday, February 26, 8:30 AM - Noon



White-breasted Nuthatch

Photo by Matt Tarlach

Starting in Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek, we will walk around the large, mostly natural pond, birding along the way. From there we will drive to two or three local parks as we may venture into Concord or Clayton.

Hike rating: 1, Easy. Maybe up to a mile walking total, on level paths.

Elevation change: Minor

Leader: Randi and Herb Long, hrlong13@sbcglobal.net

Meet: Wooden railing at the Natural Lake in Heather Farm (not the pond surrounded with concrete.)

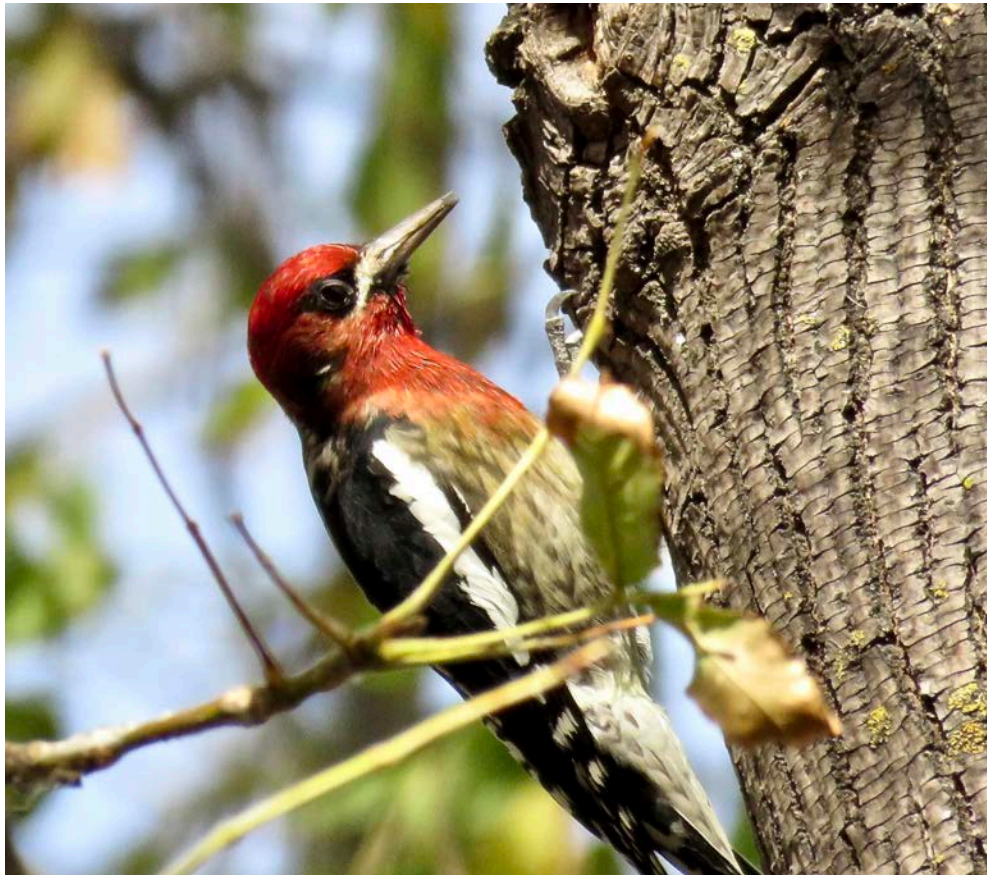
Directions: Turn into the park on North San Carlos Drive from Ygnacio Valley Road. This is east of John Muir Hospital; the intersection has a Shell and a Chevron gas station. Drive to the stop sign past the community building and turn left into the parking lot. The wooden railing is thirty yards beyond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

The field trip is limited to 10 participants.

Register [HERE](#).

Valle Vista

Monday, March 3, 8 AM - Noon



Red-breasted Sapsucker

Photo by Isaac Aronow

A walk through various habitats at this EBMUD property usually allows us to see 40-50 species. Bring your EBMUD trail pass, if you have one. This property is at the upstream end of the Upper San Leandro Reservoir. If it has been raining, the first part could be a bit muddy but most of the route is on a gravel trail or a road.

Hike rating: 2, Moderate. About a mile and a half walk, possible patches of mud, some short inclines.

Elevation change: Minor

Leader: Ted Robertson, 925-899-1872

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 is limited to 16 participants, with pre-registration required. MDBA members receive priority in registration but non-members are welcome, if we have enough spots.

Register [HERE](#).

Contra Loma Regional Park

Wednesday, March 12, 8:30 AM - 1 PM



American Bittern

Photo by Pam Lorenz

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

Hike rating: 2, Moderate. About a mile walk, some of it on turf.

Elevation change: Minor

Leader: Mona Lange, 510-414-2959

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 kiosk. Turn left and park in the first lot on the right, Channel Point Parking Lot.

This field trip is limited to 15 participants.

Register [HERE](#).

February Gallery & Media



Conservation and Recovery of the Scarlet Macaw in Mexico

See the full video [HERE](#)



'The Year of Flaco' will Celebrate a Beloved Owl

Read the article [HERE](#)

Photo: Wojciech Janecki / [Macaulay Library ML 626568019](#)



Painted Bunting / San Clemente Park, Pima, Arizona, United States

Photo: [elizabeth Leslie](#) / [Macaulay Library ML 628995980](#)



American Wigeon / San Diego, California, United States

Photo: [Ruslan Balagansky](#) / [Macaulay Library ML 628926033](#)

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Mount Diablo Bird Alliance

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