



# Madrone LEAVES

Madrone Audubon Society, Inc., Post Office Box 1911, Santa Rosa, California 95402

VOLUME 55 April - May 2022 Number 5

## The Sea Ranch Christmas Bird Count - 25 Years and Counting

by Diane Hichwa

On January 3, 1998, four women at The Sea Ranch (TSR) decided to hold a Christmas Bird Count. Uncertain whether anyone would continue it after they were gone, they did not set up an official National Audubon Count (of a 7.5 mi radius circle) but chose to count the length and breadth of The Sea Ranch, a 10 mile long and nearly 1 mile wide corridor in the farthest northwest corner of Sonoma County, just before the Mendocino County line. Interest DID continue and on January 8, 2022, ten teams and leaders fanned out for the 25th Sea Ranch Christmas Bird Count. Starting at 8:30 a.m., everyone reported a lack of small birds and low diversity early on a chilly morning. Even the numbers of kinglets and chickadees were low! The deep forest team got a boost from a neighbor who provided gingersnaps and sugar cookies. And even with a slow start, we still found 5,704 birds spread over 115 species!



Yellow-rumped warbler  
Courtesy of Michael Reinhart

Our ten territories include the Mid-Ranch Transect, which gets a higher species count (53 species seen) with the variety of habitats from ridge to bluff, and our Mid-Coast team had the highest count at 57 species. The bluff-top teams had many loons, both Red-throated and Common on the water and nearly 300

Cormorants (168 Brandt's Cormorants, 102 Pelagics, and 24 Double-crested), likely because of a good food supply. Surf Scoters topped all ducks with 315. Also counted were a large number of the light-winged Glaucous-winged Gulls, 20 of the delicate Bonaparte's Gulls and 1 single Heermann's. It was unusual to see many small flocks of Cassin's Auklets, totaling 92, and only the second time to see them on our count. Rocky coast shorebirds scurried away from the surf—several groups of 20+ Sanderlings and of Black Turnstones. Plus 62 Black Oystercatchers, birds that are very territorial as residents but

juveniles and non-breeders come from the far north and gather together in winter.

Highest number of individuals of a species goes once again to the Yellow-rumped Warblers (aka "Butter Butts") with 455 individuals gleaming through the greenery.

Among the small land birds was a surprising number of Wrentits, small, long-tailed birds of coastal scrub (no chapparal here). Two Northern Mockingbirds were vocal and evident. Being coastal,

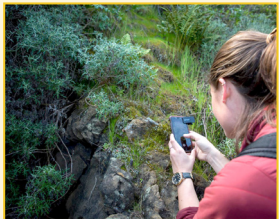
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### GENERAL MEETING

Monday, April 18, 7-8 pm

#### We're Documenting Nature to Help Nature

Love Nature or photography? Interested in contributing to scientific research and conservation? This talk by Alison Young, Co-Director of the Center for Biodiversity and Community Science at the California Academy of Sciences, will focus on how you can take photos (or record audio) of Nature for science! iNaturalist is a free platform to record observations of plants and animals in Nature. Using photographs, share what you've found, and contribute to a global dataset of biodiversity information. Making observations is as simple as exploring, being curious, and documenting organisms (or evidence of those organisms (like tracks, nests, shells, or skulls) via photo or sound. Learn about the upcoming international City Nature Challenge and become a part of this community contributing to a rapidly-growing, global biodiversity database used extensively for science, management, and conservation!



Out in Nature  
Courtesy of Cal Academy of Sciences

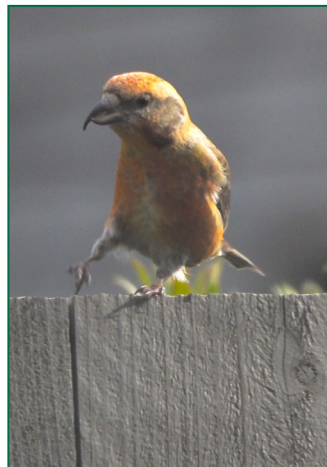
Check our website Home Page for the Zoom meeting link and info: [www.madroneaudubon.org](http://www.madroneaudubon.org).



### SEA RANCH CBC

Continued from page 1

we see 0 crows. but 88 Common Ravens. Six Barn Swallows surprised us and 18 Tri-colored Blackbirds were found wintering coastally. In the first years of the count, 2 Acorn Woodpeckers were found; now 25 years later. we find 28!



Red Crossbill  
Courtesy of Karen Wilkinson

American Kestrels, small falcons often seen perched on posts and chimneys, are back to winter at the coast (they do not nest here). A chocolate brown Harlan's red tail has stayed around the south meadows. Two Peregrine Falcons sat on Gualala Point Island and four total were seen. Late afternoon, 3:40 p.m., very high above the stables, was a big soaring bird. Karen's team was west of Highway 1 when they spotted and photographed it.

### GENERAL MEETING

Monday, May 16, 7-8 pm

**Ernestine Smith Lecture Series:  
Recovery of the California Condor**

Join biologist Mike Stake of the Ventana Wildlife Society as he shares all about our California Condors. A new decade began in 2020 with strong momentum toward Condor recovery in central California. The regional population topped 100 for the first time, and a season-record eight breeding pairs tended chicks in active nests. But, fortunes turned when the Dolan wildfire ignited in August of that year, destroying management facilities at the condor sanctuary. Nine free-flying condors died in the fire and two active nests were destroyed. Adding to the crisis, a surge in lead poisoning has impacted the population in the wake of the pandemic. Mike will update the Ventana Wildlife Society's efforts to rebuild, protect condors from lead, and assist with establishment of the new condor population in northern California.



California Condor  
Courtesy of Ventana Wildlife Society

This is our first in the annual Ernestine Smith Lecture Series. Check our website Home Page for the Zoom meeting link and info: [www.madroneaudubon.org](http://www.madroneaudubon.org).

### New Members

#### Calistoga

Jessica Campbell

#### Sebastopol

Jill & Jim Stephens

#### Santa Rosa

Kelley Lamke

Terry Parker

Shawna Nielsen

A good look at the photos confirmed an immature Bald Eagle! One team did spot a free-roaming cat WITH a songbird in its mouth. Too late. (PLEASE keep your cat indoors for its own health and safety as well as for our local wildlife.)

Totally missed species included Great Blue Heron, Killdeer, Brown-headed Cowbird and any and all owls! After our wrap-up, a few die-hard birders went out in successful search for a few missing Count Week birds: Virginia Rail, Marsh Wren, and Common Yellowthroat in the Golf Course ponds, an Osprey mid-Ranch, one Brown Pelican to the north and in the LBJ category, two "little brown job" birds: a White-throated Sparrow and a Lincoln's Sparrow were added. Chris Pechal in rechecking to confirm a warbler near Ohlson Ranch House, an



Orange-crowned warbler  
Courtesy of Chris Pechal

Orange-crowned Warbler, rare here in winter, was seen and photographed. It looked "a little different" so the photo was sent off to an expert who commented "This is indeed an Orange-crowned Warbler. It appears to be one of the two Gray-headed subspecies, rather than the brighter (and more common I believe) *lutescens/sordida* subspecies." (A photo is helpful for a solid confirmation of an unusual bird.) Karen Wilkinson returned home from a walk and looked out her window to see an unusual bird on the fence. Grabbing her camera. she saw and photographed her first Red Crossbill and the only one on the count—the value of a photo!

We look forward to year 26!



## Bird-A-Thon is Now - Support our Chapter!

Coordinator Carolyn Greene is encouraging and motivating our 2022 teams to have their best fundraising year ever! From March to June 15, our teams will be out for a marathon day or days of birding and counting species to share with donors and fundraise for our Chapter. Many members are long-time supporters of Bird-A-Thon, which we greatly appreciate. This year offers an opportunity for long-time supporters and new members to donate to boost our Chapter's activities and



*Bufflehead at Howarth Park*

*Courtesy of Tom Reynolds*

projects. In addition to helping fund our West 9th Street nesting support project and education program, this year we are raising funds for internships to be offered to Sonoma State University Environmental Studies students beginning Fall 2022. We plan to welcome two interns for a one-year period to participate in our Board of Directors, help with Chapter-related activities

and/or design and complete projects to support their education as well as our mission of bird and wildlife appreciation and protection, conservation and climate action. (Our goal for the internship fundraising is \$3,000.)

Will you please take a moment to review our teams and decide which team you'd like to support this year? Questions go to Carolyn Greene, [cgreene@yahoo.com](mailto:cgreene@yahoo.com), (805) 443-7289. General donations to support the Chapter can be mailed to Madrone Audubon, PO Box 1911, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. Write: Bird-A-Thon on memo line.

**Grey-headed Seersuckers** – led by Becky Olsen, Ian Morrison and Ken Wilson

**March Madness** – led by Gene and Nancy Hunn.

**Oakmont Birding Buddies** – led by Carolyn Greene (formerly the Roadrunners of Betty Groce and the late Don McCarthy).

**Burrowing Owlers** – led by Susan Kirks.

**Featherquesters** – led by Diane Hichwa. Featherquesters are taking a break this year. Diane welcomes her loyal supporters to contribute to the Bird-A-Thon with a general donation, to be divided among all of the 2022 teams.

Now through June 15, please support one of our teams or give a general donation. We'll report totals in the September *Leaves* and share if we meet our total 2022 goal of \$5,000. 2023 preview: Larry Broderick suggests he may create a new team for next year. If you feel motivated to support our Chapter with a new team, too, or to join an existing team and help, please let us know!

## West 9th Street & Lincoln Elementary School 2022

Egrets and herons are nesting at West 9th, our support project will be installed in April, and this year, we hope the students will enjoy a modified Bird Festival. Since 2022, the pandemic impacted the annual Bird and Nature Festival. Last year, adapted materials about Ephron the Egret were created and provided by Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) to teachers. This year, a half-day festival may be held in May. Would you like to volunteer at the rookery to help with binocs and scope viewing? Contact us\* and we'll coordinate with ACR, Emiko Condeso and her great team.

Our amazing team, Janeann Erickson and Janet Bosshard, will be retiring from festival planning and leadership this year. We're deeply grateful to Janeann and Janet. Madrone has been engaged with the evolving festival for 13 years, beginning in 2009 when art projects were provided for students. The late Kathie Noguchi who taught at Lincoln Elementary fulfilled a dedicated leadership role for many years. In 2010, Madrone

began the full morning Bird Day activities for students. Kathie was joined by Marcia Johnson, Janeann Erickson, Janet Bosshard, Tom Reynolds, Gordon Beebe and many others over the years to expand the festival day and program. ACR and the Bird Rescue Center have been involved with the festival since 2017, and ACR will be carrying on as our society opens up, hoping for 2023 as a more complete experience. We will continue to participate with ACR and of course install and maintain our nesting support project on West 9th St. April to September.

\* (707-241-5548, [susankirks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirks@sbcglobal.net))





# Coastal Column – March 2022

by Diane Hichwa

Eleven years ago, Madrone volunteers participated in an effort to count all oystercatchers along the entire Sonoma Coast. With access limited by many private properties, we covered as much coast as we could. The stretch of Sea Ranch coast, with 10 miles accessible, was ideal for following Black Oystercatcher (BLOY) nesting and success of fledging chicks. Now, after 10 years of weekly May to August nest surveys, that data is included in a research paper and the data becomes part of the MARINe (Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network) database, which the public and researchers can search. Nest surveys were also done in 4 other regions by Audubon Chapters of: Mendocino Coast, SF Bay, Monterey Bay area, and San Luis Obispo. Here at Sea Ranch, we have +/- 20 nests that we have been monitoring. Volunteers find the charismatic birds to be masters of camouflage on our black rock coast UNTIL they show the orange bill OR let out their loud ringing call. One thing we learned is that we need to know more! Proposed now is Index Monitoring for 5 (and possibly 10) years to assess reproductive success. Locally, we will have 5 randomly-selected nests to monitor for a more robust statistically significant sample. (We hope they are easily observable, but selecting only easily observable would skew the data!) The Index Survey is intended to address: the long-term productive trend of the CA BLOY population and what is the viability of the BLOY population? Changing climate conditions make Black Oystercatchers very vulnerable. A 2015 report from the



Adult Black Oystercatcher

Courtesy of Craig Tooley

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries/NOAA listed Black Oystercatchers and Blue Whales as the marine species most at-risk due to climate change. In winter, many oystercatchers come from points north to feed and remain here. Many are migratory and younger birds, before breeding age of 4-5 years, who band together in small flocks in winter. While we do not look for nesting until May, this year we are having volunteers verify if our pairs are maintaining their territories — and many of them have been doing just that here in February and March!

## Legacy Giving

*Helping Sonoma County's  
Birds and Wildlife into the Future*  
Madrone's Legacy Care Program



Black Oystercatcher at Pinnacle Gulch      Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

Please contact Madrone Audubon  
707-241-5548

## Spring Membership Renewals Due Now

*Thank you!*



Peregrine Falcon Pair

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

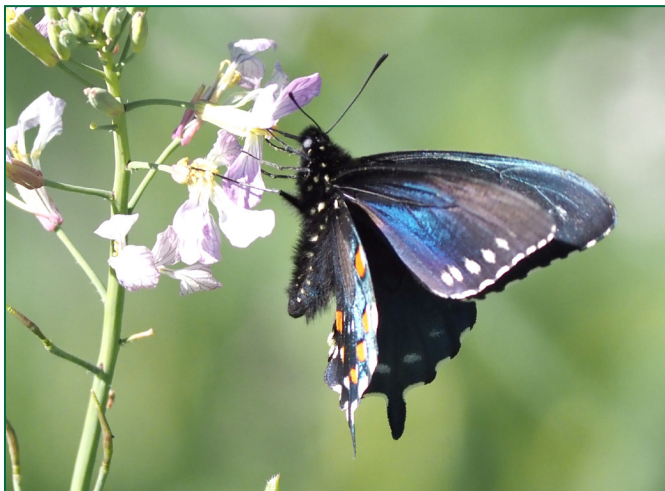


## SchoolYard Habitat Program – Volunteers Welcomed

by Susan Kirks

The School Garden Network based in Sebastopol ([https://www.schoolgardens.org/schoolyard\\_habitat-859621.html](https://www.schoolgardens.org/schoolyard_habitat-859621.html)) is supporting our local schools via the SchoolYard Habitat Program. Laurel Anderson of SGN contacted us, and we're organizing volunteers to help. This is timely and exciting! In the Climate Emergency, helping students learn about, create and nurture habitat gardens at school will connect action to address the threat of species extinction.

We're seeking members to volunteer in an area of Sonoma County where you live or where you might like to help. I estimate the time commitment over a school year and possibly



Pipevine Swallowtail

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

birds and creatures and helping them in their habitat areas. Please consider helping our Chapter and our schools. Contact me if interested to explore what would be best for you (707-241-5548, [susankirks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirks@sbcglobal.net)). If already volunteering at a school in the Garden Network, this could be a fun addition for volunteering.

Laurel and I have discussed possibilities for the Loma Vista Immersion Academy and McNear Elementary School, both in Petaluma. Also, Petaluma Junior High School had a project at one time; of course, the nearby Paula Lane Nature Preserve (needing significant attention, habitat restoration and care) could serve as the connection for PJHS if and when a property title transfer is successful for that open space land. (Madrone Audubon has offered to accept that property title on an interim or permanent basis. We're hopeful discussions can begin for that pathway.)



Bobcat

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

in the summer will be 2 hours per month. We will create our role to be an adjunct to teachers, students and garden coordinators. For this school year nearing an end, we will give a classroom presentation about the wonderful world of

## Board Openings and a Word of Thanks

We're recruiting for members to serve on our Board of Directors. Each role has different tasks and time commitments and supports our many activities and programs. Christine Cohen who served for a year as our *Leaves* Editor is moving on, and we appreciate Christine's time and contributions. If you are creative, with writing, editing and organizational skills, and love Nature and conservation, please consider our Editor's role. For questions or to explore, contact our Chapter President, Susan Kirks, 707-241-5548, [susankirks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirks@sbcglobal.net). Other Board openings are available and can be matched with your skill sets and interests. We generally ask for a one-year to two-year commitment of time, and our Board meetings occur once monthly (virtually via Zoom), 10 months of the year.

For planting and habitat consideration, see our **Tree and Vegetation Planting Guide**

[https://madroneaudubon.org/pdf/Tree and Plant List.pdf](https://madroneaudubon.org/pdf/Tree%20and%20Plant%20List.pdf)



Our Board and Conservation Committee meetings are held virtually. For Board meeting information, please contact President Susan Kirks, 707-241-5548, susankirks@sbcglobal.net. For Conservation Committee meetings and information, please contact Diane Hichwa, 707-785-1922, dhichwa@earthlink.net. Also, visit our website, www.madroneaudubon.org for updates.

COVID Precautions will be followed. We will follow the latest protocols. Come in good health, vaccinated, with no symptoms or exposure to someone else with COVID. Attendance is limited to 15 people. Reservations will be accepted on a first call basis. There will be a waiting list. If you must cancel, please, call ASAP to make space for someone waiting to join. (This may be the last time we request sign-ups related to protocols that may be relaxed, especially outdoors.)

Starting time will be given when you sign up. We are pleased to offer our outings free to our members and to the public.

## April - May 2022

*Thursday, April 14, 2022*

### **Crane Creek Regional Park, Rohnert Park**

Leader: Janet Bosshard. Take Petaluma Hill Road to Pressley Road. Parking lot will be ¾ mile on the left side. Park pass is required. Mostly level to easy rolling paths to see the county's birds. \*\*To reserve a space, call Janet (707) 526-5883.

*Saturday, April 23, 2022*

### **Spring Lake Regional Park, Santa Rosa**

Leader: Linda Fraley. Come see the breeding birds. Enter from Newhanga entrance and meet by restrooms at 8 a.m. To reserve a space and for questions, call Linda (559) 779-5211.

*Thursday, April 28, 2022*

### **Cloverdale River Walk, Cloverdale**

Leader: Janet Bosshard. From Santa Rosa, take Hwy 101 to exit 522 just north of Cloverdale. Turn right on Redwood Hwy, then first right on McCray Road. Follow it to the end. Parking lot is on your left. Parking pass required. It is a flat 1.1 mile asphalt path. \*\* To reserve a space, call Janet (707) 526-5883.

*Saturday, May 7, 2022*

### **Santa Rosa Creek from Willowside Road to Delta Pond, Santa Rosa**

Leader: Linda Fraley. A morning walk to look for breeding birds. To reserve a space, for directions and meeting time, call Linda (559) 779-5211.

*Thursday, May 12, 2022*

No walk this day.

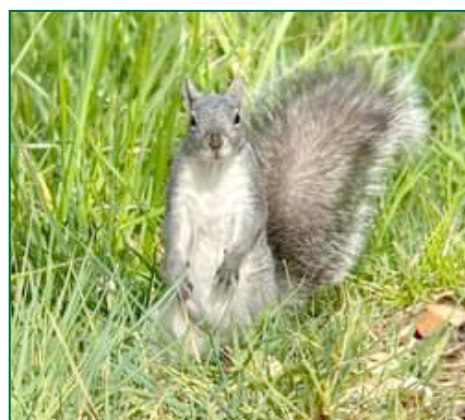
*Thursday, May 26, 2022*

### **Spring Lake Regional Park, Santa Rosa**

Channel Drive entrance. Meet in the large parking lot on the right across from the swimming lagoon. Parking permit is required. To reserve a space, call Janet (707) 526-5883.



*White-crowned Sparrow* Courtesy of Tom Reynolds



*California Grey Squirrel* Courtesy of Brian Webb

## OUT AND ABOUT

*Saturday, April 23, 2022 – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

### **Party for the Planet – Earth Day Celebration at Safari West,**

3115 Porter Creek Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Info: <https://www.safariwest.com/calendar/earth-day/>

*Saturday, May 7, 2022*

**Spring Feather Fest** at Shollenberger Park, Petaluma. Sponsored by Petaluma Wetlands Alliance. Sign-ups via email to 33sheryln@gmail.com

*May 2022, select Saturdays by appointment*

### **EARTHseed Farm, U-Pick season,**

3175 Sullivan Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

Info: <https://www.earthseedfarm.org/>

**Observations**

Winter 2022 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Blue-winged Teal	1/31	Las Gallinas water treatment ponds	DE
Blue-winged Teal	2/5	Ellis Creek ponds	CH
Common "Eurasian" Teal	1/1	Las Gallinas water treatment ponds	DE
Long-tailed Duck (fem)	12/30-1/2	Bodega Harbor near Doran Launch ramp	MBa, DN, et al
Cackling Goose (59)	1/31	Las Gallinas Water treatment ponds	DE
Tundra Swan (3-4)	Jan.-Feb.	Spring Hill Rd, Petaluma	M.Ob
Common Murre (64,250 estimated)	1/2	Flying N. past Bodega Head on count day	DN, JS, et al
Black-legged Kittiwake (1)	12/19	Rare inland at Delta Pond (photos)	BW, et al
Prairie Falcon	1/24	Diamond W Ranch, Valley Ford area	LS, LC, RC
Barred Owl	Jan.	Sonoma Dev. Center	GH
Sandhill Crane (continuing)	1/29	Laguna Lake, Sonoma Co. side	DN
Least Bittern	10/25	Ellis Creek marshes	DN, SM
Lesser Yellowlegs	1/24	Inverness Marsh	LS, LC, RC
Common Poorwill	1/28	Willow Creek Rd. (photo)	LC
Lewis' Woodpecker	1/29	Faught Rd, Santa Rosa	D.Barry
Lewis' Woodpecker	Jan-Feb	Hanna Winery area, Hwy 128	M.Ob.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12/12-27	Riverside Dr, Guerneville	SC
Red-naped Sapsucker	12/20	Riverside Dr., Guerneville	SC
Allen's Hummingbird (male)	1/24	N. Russian Gulch Vista point; fly-by	LS
Allen's Hummingbird (fem.)	1/31	Occidental area	MH
Allen's Hummingbird (male)	2/1	Paula Lane residence, Petaluma	DN
White-throated Swift (several)	12/30	Ellis Creek	PC
Tree Swallow (2-3)	2/6	Paula Lane residence, Petaluma	DN
Barn Swallow (3)	1/2	Bodega Head	DN
Vermilion Flycatcher	12/30	Ellis Creek (sub-adult male)	JM, AL, PC
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	2/2	Santa Rosa Creek trail	BW
Loggerhead Shrike	1/24	Spring Hill Rd.	LS, LC, RC
Loggerhead Shrike	2/5	Napa/Sonoma marshes	MB
Horned Lark	1/24	Bridgehaven	LS, LC, RC
Rock Wren	12/6	Goat Rock Beach (S. lot area)	SC
Rock Wren	1/29	Carmody Rd.	LS, MS
Nashville Warbler	Jan-Feb	Diekmann's Store	DN, et al
Black-and-White Warbler	12/27	Yard bird at 90 Center Rd., Liberty Valley, Petaluma	Claudia?
Yellow Warbler	12/30	Ellis Creek	PC
Hermit Warbler (2)	1/14	Bodega Dunes campground	DN
Black-throated Green Warbler (photos) - not included in Fall <i>Leaves</i>	9/29	Logan's Place, Petaluma	LR
Summer Tanager (fem.) (2nd year returnee)	2/4	"A Place to Play" Park, Santa Rosa	JS
Rusty Blackbird (photos)	12/28	Ludwig Ave, in flooded fields with other blackbirds	D Maxwell
Swamp Sparrow (3)	12/4	Inverness Marsh	LS, LC
Swamp Sparrow	1/24	Bridgehaven Pond	LS, LC, RC
Swamp Sparrow	1/29	Ellis Creek Marsh; near parking lot	LC, LS
Clay-colored Sparrow	12/5	Logan's Place, Petaluma	LR
Lapland Longspur	1/5	Skaggs Island Rd.	LS, MS, et al
Chestnut-collared Longspur	1/5	Skaggs Island Rd.	LS, MS, SC
Lesser Goldfinch (black-backed form)	2/3	Thompson Creek/Westridge area of Petaluma	CC

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**Madrone Audubon Society**

Post Office Box 1911  
Santa Rosa, California 95402

**April - May 2022**

Madrone *Leaves* is published bimonthly from October through May, plus one issue each in June and September.

**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL  
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY  
CALENDAR ENCLOSED**



**MADRONE LEAVES**



Madrone Audubon Society meets on the third Monday of each month, except in June, July, August, and December. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. All membership meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: e-mail - info@madroneaudubon.org.

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- Vice President:** Position open
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- Corresponding Secretary:** Position open
- Treasurer:** Position open
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- IMBD:** Veronica Bowers - vlbowers@gmail.com ..... 829-2955
- Christmas Bird Count:** Peter Leveque and Stacy Li - stacyli@sonic.net..... 566-7937
- Bird Rescue Center**..... 523-BIRD
- Native Songbird Care & Conservation**..... 484-6502
- Northern California Rare Bird Alert** ..... 415-681-7422
- Audubon-California:** Gaylon Parsons - gparsons@audubon.org..... 415-644-4605
- National Audubon Society:** 225 Varick Street, NY, NY 10014..... 212-979-3000

**Join Madrone Audubon – Support Your Local Chapter**

Please complete this form if you wish to join Madrone Audubon or renew your Madrone membership

Please note: We are a chapter of National Audubon, but membership in and donations to Madrone Audubon are separate and support our local chapter. Membership and donations are tax deductible.

- New member       Renewal
- Senior \$15       Basic Member \$25       Family \$30
- Sustaining \$50       Supporting \$100       Patron \$500

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please send my *Leaves* via email

**Please make your check payable to “Madrone Audubon Society.”**  
Detach this panel and mail to: **Madrone Audubon Society,**  
**P.O. Box 1911, Santa Rosa, CA 95402**

Madrone Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our tax identification number is 94-6172986

Visit us on the Web at: <http://www.madroneaudubon.org>