



Madrone LEAVES

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

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Number 3

Saving the Ashy Storm-Petrel and Protecting the Farallon Islands

For some time, a controversial proposal has been considered to helicopter-drop a 2nd generation anticoagulant, Brodifacoum, over the Farallon Islands. This project comprises an attempt to poison and eradicate the mouse population. The more we have researched this proposal and studied unintended toxic effects of other similar projects, the more concerned we are. We are joined in our concern by other organizations and individuals who are opposed to the current poison drop proposal. We do support a multifaceted, nontoxic alternative to address the mouse population and protect the Ashy Storm-Petrel, the endangered bird at the center of the effort to address mice and prevent predation on petrel chicks.



Farallon Islands

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

Six to eight Burrowing Owls have been arriving at the Farallones to over-winter. They prey on mice and there have been reports that the owls prey on Ashy Storm-Petrel chicks if mice are not readily available.

The poison drop proposal was developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project describes potential impacts and mitigations. In 2019, USFWS appeared at a California Coastal Commission meeting to discuss and request the Commission's recommendation to move forward with the project. With many questions posed, risks identified, and opposition expressed by members of the public and organizations, along with stated Commissioner concerns, USFWS withdrew their proposal prior to a vote by the Commission, pledging to return with responses

and additional studies to address concerns. (We understand the Commission may agendaize this topic for Spring 2021.)

An EPA source has estimated hazing, one of the methods of trying to prevent other species from being in a targeted area where the poison pellets would be dropped, would need to be carried out for 3 months for gulls. During breeding season, gulls may try to return to their territory and, even if hazing were somewhat successful, up to 3,000 gulls could ingest the poison and die. The gull populations fly to the Farallones from San Francisco and Pt. Reyes National Seashore, and return to San Francisco and Marin.

The Farallon Islands are home to the largest seabird nesting colony in the contiguous United States and the largest colony of western gulls in the world. They support half the world's population of Ashy Storm-Petrels. More than 400 species of birds have been spotted and recorded. Five pinniped species, including Northern Elephant Seals, are found on the islands. Yes, we support protecting the Ashy Storm-Petrel. We cannot support a project with toxic risks that may poison an ecosystem with unintended long-term consequences.

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GENERAL MEETING

First United Methodist Church
1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

NOTE: In-Person Meetings at First United Methodist Church are postponed - January 2021 gathering is not looking promising. Please check our website, www.madroneaudubon.org, for updates.

See description for Gordon Beebe's Digitally Captured Nature Narratives on page 4.

We appreciate staying in touch with our members via *Leaves*, email/phone, our bird walks, and website. We may offer a webinar or Zoom meeting in the near future, accessed via our website, to enjoy within your own schedule.

Wishing for all of our members well-being and safety!



FARALLON ISLANDS

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A study prepared after a 2012 brodifacoum helicopter drop on Wake Island confirmed residues of this poison were still found in fish from the drop zone three years after the poison drop. The resulting scientific monitoring supports internal U.S. Air Force emails during 2012, in which the military recommended a fishing closure extending 942 days after the Wake Island poison drop. One can imagine the consequences of a fishing closure of similar duration, or a three-year tainting of local fisheries products, for commercial fishing fleets based out of San Francisco Bay, Half Moon Bay, Moss Landing, Monterey, and Bodega Bay. See www.researchgate.net/publication/339133771_Brodifacoum_residues_in_fish_three_years_after_an_island-wide_rat_eradication_attempt_in_the_tropical_Pacific.

Recently, AB 1788 became law. This law prohibits use of 2nd generation anticoagulants in California. The impacts of food chain infiltration have included agonizing slow deaths by bleeding to death of owls, hawks, eagles, and poisoning of bobcats, mountain lions and the Pacific Fisher. Poisoned rodents are ingested and the predator is subsequently also poisoned. AB 1788 exempted the Farallon Islands so Brodifacoum could be dropped over the islands if deemed the current proposal would move forward. Discussion that Brodifacoum dropped over the islands would be different from that used on the mainland is misleading. The ingredients of two versions of the anticoagulant are the same; the preparation of the poison-laced pellets is slightly different.

There must be an approach that can be considered, formulated, and implemented over a designated years' period of time.

Would capturing and translocating the Burrowing Owls, numbering 6-8, be possible? Our ongoing conversations with Burrowing Owl experts in the Bay Area indicate the answer is yes. While presenting some challenges, with cooperation of the Pt. Blue Conservation scientists and bird rescuers/rehabilitators experienced in Burrowing Owl capture and relocation, this part of a multifaceted approach is feasible and could be planned and carried out. Another primary component of a nontoxic project is mouse fertility control. When the current EIS was finalized, an effective mouse fertility product was not approved by the EPA or commercially available. Since release of the EIS, ongoing product development by the nonprofit charity, FYXX Corporation, has progressed through stages of development, now predicted to be available for the commercial market in 2021. The product consists of birth control pellets mice would ingest. Dr. Loretta Mayer, Co-Founder of FYXX, describes "formulating and creating a product for mice that is non-toxic, and registering as organic. It must not be lethal and has to be effective, must be solid, palatable, dropped from helicopters on the rugged terrain and pose no threat to secondary species. The product is formulated to have less than 1 minute as its half-life

New Members

Healdsburg
Rick Kaye

Petaluma
Katie Clas
Steven Jones
Adam Petersen
Sylvia Ross

Santa Rosa
Joyce MacLaury
Art Valencia

Art Schade & Sandra Shannonhouse

San Francisco
Nathanael Aff

Sebastopol
Lynn Keller

Sonoma
Kristy Godfrey



Orca with calf

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

in the species that consumes it. We also have to have a breeding diversity so it is not selected for resistance, and for the planet it must be biodegradable and not persist in soil or water."

The approach of addressing the six to eight Burrowing Owls for capture and translocation, implementing the alternative of a fertility control product for mice, significantly decreasing the population on the islands, and continuing to address measures to support nesting safety for Ashy Storm-Petrels is a multifaceted and concurrent approach Madrone Audubon can support. The risks and unknowns associated with dropping a 2nd generation anticoagulant over the Farallon Islands to attempt to eradicate mice are significant.

We are hopeful proponents of the poison drop proposal over the Farallon Islands will be able to broaden their considerations to a nontoxic, multifaceted alternative. Such an alternative carries with it the potential of being a better solution to address mice on the Farallon Islands and at the same time protect all species. To express support for our position, please visit <http://poisonfreesanctuary.org> to send a letter in support of the multifaceted alternative.

(Resources: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, Ocean Foundation, FYXX Foundation, California Legislature, Burrowing Owl experts/South Bay Area.)



Christmas Bird Count – Madrone Audubon’s West County December 2020

by Dr. Stacy Li

Missed Halloween? Pandemic-induced monastic existence got you down? Here’s a chance to recapture Halloween and break free of your troglodytic existence. Join our 54th annual Western Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 27, 2020. Wear a mask (N95 recommended) and recapture Halloween (sort of)! Be renewed by being outdoors while looking at birds with friends (staying 6 feet apart of course). Other pandemic protocols: No hand shaking, bring hand cleanser and use it often, cough into your elbow, and avoid touching your face.

Sadly, this year there will be no post-count dinner. Contact Stacy Li, Deputy Coordinator-West Sonoma Christmas Bird Count (707) 527-2037 to join a team. Participants of past Christmas Bird Counts, contact your Area Leader, but call me if you want to see another area.

Other Area Christmas Bird Counts for 2020

Santa Rosa CBC – Sunday, December 20th. Redwood Region Ornithological Society traditionally participates in this count, with existing teams. If you’ve participated in the past, please contact your Team Leader. If new, Coordinator Gene Hunn may be able to help you join a team. Contact Gene at enhunn323@comcast.net, 707-981-7301. Please share a little information about your experience and interests. (No post-CBC dinner this year for this count.)

Sonoma Valley CBC – Wednesday, December 30th. To participate in the 16th annual count, contact coordinator Gene Hunn at enhunn323@comcast.net, 707-981-7301. Data from this count is shared with Sonoma Ecology Center for the master spreadsheet and Gene then shares his summary and analysis, which we also share in *Leaves*.



Nuttall's Woodpecker

Courtesy of Dennis Luz

This count covers Sonoma Valley and Petaluma (southeastern Sonoma County). Established in 2005 by Darren Peterie and Tom Rusert of Sonoma Nature, the count continues annually and contributes CBC data for Sonoma County.

From Gene Hunn, a reminder and introduction for potential new participants:

“The center of the count circle is just west of Arnold Drive at Sperring Rd. We count within the standard 15-mile diameter circle, which includes the Sonoma Valley from



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

from north of Glenwood south to Wingo, extending east to the east slope of the Napa Ridge and west to include East Petaluma and the Shollenberger and Ellis Creek wetlands and south to Tolay Regional Park. We routinely tally over 160 species on count day and count on the assistance of up to 120 volunteer observers. I expect we may make do with somewhat fewer observers this year, but I hope to count on the most dedicated to cover the circle as always. Many of you are veterans and have teams ready to go... The areas and sub-areas are as follows: 1) : Sonoma – west of Highway 12, north of Temelec as far as Madrone -- organized by, south to north: Suzie Silverman, Cynthia Boyer, and Gina Roman; 2) Highlands – The Sonoma Valley east of Highway 12 from Vineberg north to Moon Mtn. Rd. -- organized by Jeff and Eva Valfer, with help from Gene Hunn, Karen Nagle, and Ian Morrison; 3) Schellville – inclusive of Schellville and vicinity -- organized by Malcolm Blanchard and Jeff and Eva Valfer; 4) Wingo/Donnell Ridge – south of Hwy. 12/121 and west of 121 to the edge of the circle, organized Richard Gibson (Donnell Ridge), Tom & Darren (east of 121 to Sonoma Creek), and Brian Bullick (east of Sonoma Creek to Ramal Road); 5) Petaluma Wetlands/Tolay – inclusive of Shollenberger, Ellis Creek, Tolay Regional Park, and points between -- organized by: Peter Colasanti; 6) Adobe – inclusive of East Petaluma and vicinity -- organized by: Lisa Hug and Richard Merriss, with Ken Wilson and Becky Olsen at the Fairfield-Osborn Reserve and vicinity; 7) Glen Ellen – inclusive of the Sonoma Development Center, Sonoma Valley Regional Park, Glen Ellen, and vicinity -- organized by Joan MacDonald, Mark Newhouser, and Jeffrey Loe; 8) Trinity – inclusive of Cavedale and Trinity Roads, Quarry Hill, Bouverie Reserve, and vicinity -- organized by David Leland; and 9) Napa Ridge – inclusive of the Napa County slice of the count circle -- organized by: Murray Berner.”

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Continued from page 1

Napa Solano Audubon CBC – Angwin CBC. Friday, Jan. 1, 2021. This circle includes St. Helena, Deer Park, Angwin and Pope Valley, along with Los Posadas State Forest, Bell Canyon, Lake Hennessey, and Lake Berryessa’s western shores. To participate or for questions, contact Murray Berner at vireocity@hotmail.com.

Christmas Bird Count for Kids

Spring Lake Regional Park December 2020 Walk, Madrone Audubon and Sonoma Co. Regional Parks. Not scheduled this year – hoping for next year!

Pt. Reyes National Seashore, 9th Annual, Saturday, Jan. 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This anticipated annual event is for youth ages 3-18. For questions, contact fieldinstitute@ptreyes.org. Registration available, also, via www.ptreyes.org/events/christmas-bird-count-kids-9th-annual-edition-0.

Petaluma Wetlands Alliance-sponsored CBC4K at Shollenberger Park, Petaluma: Event “grounded” this year, looking toward next year. Anticipating hosting the Spring 2021 Feather Fest. For info about the Spring 2021 event, contact Sheryl Nadeau at 33sheryln@gmail.com.

Gordon Beebe’s Narrative of Kaua’i’s Native Birds: Parts I, II, III, IV and V with works cited

Gordon Beebe introduces in this digital narrative a fascinating array of Kaua’i’s living native birds, as well as those birds that have disappeared forever. Part I returns us to the formation of the Hawaiian Islands with its volcanic upheavals, torrential rains and native flora and fauna colonization along with non-native arrivals. The Polynesians’ arrival is described in Part II. Bird migration may have guided the Polynesians to the islands in about 750 AD. In Part III, starting with Captain Cook, Gordon describes how many species of birds, animals and flowers were introduced to Kaua’i. Part IV details how over time introduced birds and animals have either supplanted or reduced many of the island’s native birds. Plantings from far-flung areas of the world have also replaced vital habitat. In Part V the viewer is taken deep into the forest canopies and wild spaces of the island’s now protected areas. The narrative provides intriguing stories and little-known facts, augmented with beautiful photographs and pictures.

To access the Nature Narratives: On our website Home Page, see New Items on the right. Click on “Nature Videos” to go to the page with the video descriptions. To the right of the description, see the icon for Gordon’s Nature Videos. Simply click on that icon – to go to the link for viewing. Scroll through the topics, moving to the right. Part I of Kaua’i begins second to the far right.

Donations

*In Honor of
Gordon Beebe
by Claudia Norby*

*In Honor of
Susan Kirks
Susan Kirks*

*In Honor of
Lisa Peters, Joyce Ambrosius, Patty Newland
by Carolyn Metz*

*In Honor of
Madrone Audubon Society – for Mill Bend Land
Acquisition & Project
by Warren Watkins
(\$4,500 grant provided to Redwood Coast Land Conservancy)*

*In Honor of
Madrone Audubon Society - Audubon Birds of America
(with Commentary by Roger Tory Peterson)
by Jeanette Griffiths*

A Conservation Leader Retires

by Susan Kirks

Madrone Audubon wishes Wendy Eliot the very best in her recent retirement. Wendy joined the Sonoma Land Trust in 1999 and served as Conservation Director for 21 years. Her guidance for successful acquisitions and projects included the Sears Point Tidal Restoration Project, Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway, and many others. Wendy’s family legacy in conservation, with her late parents, Ted and Pat Eliot, San Francisco Bay Area leaders, is deep and unparalleled. On behalf



Yellow-rumped Warbler, Myrtle sp.

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

of all of our Madrone Audubon members, we thank Wendy for her many contributions to Nature in Sonoma County as well as her vision and personal integrity. We intuit as Wendy takes a leisurely stroll or hike on one of the many lands she helped acquire and conserve during her SLT tenure, birds and other wildlife may look her way, perhaps sing a beautiful birdsong, expressing gratitude for saving their homes and their ability to survive.



Shifting Seasons – Sonoma County Coast

by Diane Hichwa

Bird monitoring done by the Coastal Stewardship Task Force has changed from weekly surveys observing nesting to a monthly check through the winter on what birds visit our islands. It always amazes me to realize we have a sizeable colony of nesting seabirds off our Sea Ranch coast that we cannot see from land. All summer on the top of Gualala Point Island, our largest North Sonoma Coast island, are several thousand birds. But, try as the observers do, we can see 29 Western Gull nests spread across the eastern top, while from the south viewpoint, just 8 Brandt's Cormorant nests can be seen, mapped and followed. The high count of the season from shore saw 280 Common Murres on May 15. Aerial pictures tell a different story.

A few drone flights are done each summer to capture the actual size of the colony that's hidden from view. Through our permit from the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, we can count the nesting birds and also help develop techniques and protocols to fly a drone, while minimizing any disturbance to seabirds and marine mammals. The accompanying photograph from July 14 is part of our drone record. It shows 77 Brandt's Cormorant nests, each on a mound of seaweed cemented by guano. And the Common Murres standing shoulder-to-shoulder packed together number more than 1500; from shore that same day and time, we could see only 147 of them.

Last year in 2019 we thought the murres might be pushing the cormorants from their colony as nests moved from the hidden side to being spread along the eastern edge of the island, in plain view from shore for the first time. This was also in part because there were 111 Brandt's Cormorant nests; the footprint of that many nests was larger than normal. The 2020 count of 77 nests is back to the more typical colony size.

As large and varied as the topography is of GPI, this island provides nesting habitats for very different species: Brandt's



Western Side of Gualala Point Island
Courtesy of Craig Tooley

Cormorants in a colony on the flatlands open to the sea, Common Murres standing together amid the cormorants, and Western Gulls across the higher top; Pigeon Guillemots fly into the crevices of the rocks; Black Oystercatchers blend into protected spots, and in years past a few Pelagic Cormorant

nests were on its steep side ledges. A Peregrine Falcon flies over as a regular visitor, finding a ready food supply in the nesting seabirds. And now we have a Bald Eagle that has been seen standing atop GPI!

In Sonoma County there is another colony of Brandt's Cormorants and of Common Murres on the islands just south of Goat Rock at Jenner. And murres were scouting or prospecting at Bodega Rock this summer so it will be interesting to see what happens in 2021.

Now, what birds will come in on the winter winds?

Two Handy Tips for Birders

by Christine Cohen

How often, when writing about birds, are you unsure of the spelling of the bird's name? I have found an easy solution. There is a website called: www.birdphotography.com/birdlist2.html. Or you can just google Alphabetical List of Birds. You will then get a column of bird names that can be put in your Favorites. In my case, I can click onto the list at any time and get the list of birds, all correctly spelled and set off to one side of the screen.

Along with being able to spell the bird's name correctly, it's nice to know how to pronounce some of the especially puzzling names of birds. How do you say, Pigeon Guillemot or Red Phalarope? The Audubon Society website has a list of tricky names. The title of the article is "How to Pronounce 17 Tricky North American Bird Names" by Nicholas Lund. Once you get to the site, just scroll down the list. The author clearly describes how to pronounce each name as well as including great pictures of each bird. This helpful article helps to get rid of Bird Name Jitters.

Ask a Bird Expert

by Christine Cohen

Do you have a question about birds, that our bird experts can answer? We invite you to send in a question. One of our very gifted bird experts might have an answer or idea.

I will start off this quest by asking a question that occurred to me as I was pumping gas into my car and heard the familiar honking of Canada Geese flying overhead. The geese were in a small V of about 20. The lead goose was flying along and suddenly veered diagonally to the left. The others dutifully followed. My question is this: How does a Canada Goose become the leader of the other geese?



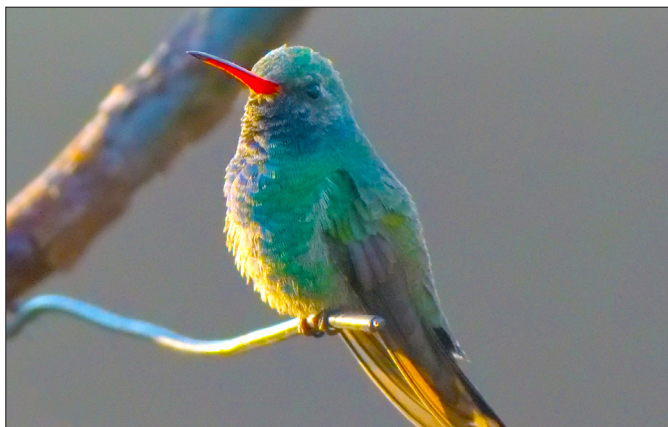
Hummingbirds Signal SOS

by Christine Cohen

Many years ago, on a freezing morning, when the temperatures had dipped into the 20's, I got up as morning light was just beginning to filter through the darkness. I poured myself a cup of coffee, freshly made from the automatic coffee maker, and looked out through the kitchen window. Light streamed out from the kitchen. Suddenly, as I stood there two Anna's Hummingbirds appeared in front of me. They were hovering side by side looking straight back at me. Immediately, I realized that something was going on! What could it be? Was something wrong with their feeders? I rushed outside and climbed a ladder to check the feeder. The sugar water had frozen. Removing the feeder, I sped back into the house and refilled their feeder with prepared sugar water. Once I hung the feeder back up, the hummingbirds went directly to their morning pick-me-up. I am convinced these two birds were communicating with me and knew that I could help them. On another occasion, during a hot 95-degree day, I saw an Anna's Hummingbird hovering in front of me. Once again, I checked the feeder. The sugar water was too hot. I refilled the feeder and relocated it. For years, I have provided feeders for hummingbirds, never realizing how they were observing and learning about me.

Rare Hummingbird at Sea Ranch

Recently at Sea Ranch there was a rare bird sighting. A colorful and distinctive male Broad-billed Hummingbird spent a week resting and refueling. John Batchelder and his daughter, Marianne, as finder reported it to the California Bird Records Committee for



Broad-billed Hummingbird

Courtesy of John Batchelder

the 3rd record in Sonoma County. (Others had been in January 1996 and November 2003.) It spent Oct 2-9, 2020 guarding their hummingbird feeder, and chasing all others away! Normally this bird would be seen in the desert canyons and low mountain woodlands of Southeastern Arizona and then going down into central Mexico.

The backstory that Marianne provided made the sighting all the more special:

“When I got my first bird guide when I was around 9 years old, I leafed through the book over and over again. Not surprisingly, I was fascinated by the hummingbirds, in particular the Broad-billed Hummingbird. I somehow decided that it would definitely visit the hummingbird feeder at our Southern California home and I spent many hours watching and waiting for one to appear. Needless to say, it never did. Fast forward to 2020, and I'm settling in to read on the deck of my parents' Sea Ranch home and I hear a hummingbird fly to the window feeder that is very different from the resident Anna's Hummingbirds. When I look up, I see bluish-green plumage, a forked tail, and, reflected in the window, a bright red bill. It took me only an instant to realize that it was a Broad-billed Hummingbird. I guess the moral of the story is that if you wait long enough, whatever species you wish to visit your feeders eventually will!”

This hummingbird is unmistakable. A blue throat gorget, a wide mostly red bill, dark green above with white undertail coverts and a wide forked tail. Add to that a chattering call that immediately sounds different than the usual cast of characters. What a treat it was!

(Information provided by Marianne Batchelder and Diane Hichwa)

The Hummingbird Learning Curve

by Katie Clas

A balmy afternoon in late July a couple of years back, as quickly as I saw the Northern Mockingbird flap its wings, a spark ignited within since I've vowed a life committed to Avian study and conservation. At the time, however, this was quite possibly the first time in my 30ish years of life that I'd noticed any bird.

I often find myself in comical oblivion when encountering new species I think are rare or an amazing hybrid perhaps! For example, last December I traveled to my hometown outside of Chicago where, mind you, I lived for decades of my life. Standing at the picture window in my childhood home with my dad, I interrupted him mid traffic harangue because, “A very rare and almost tropical looking bird was in my field of view and I had to get pictures for documentation!” I ran outside to snap a few photos as the obliging avifauna perched on a bare branch in the Maple. Flummoxed with where to begin to look in my field guide for an ID, I took to the internet and within seconds of posting 12 photos of the bird, a comment appeared – Female Northern Cardinal.

You'd think I'd be embarrassed, but all I could think was, I wonder what the male looks like?! It was later that night that the

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, our Board and Conservation Committee meetings are held virtually. For Board meeting information, contact President Susan Kirks, 707-241-5548, susankirks@sbcglobal.net. For Conservation Committee meetings and information, please contact Diane Hichwa, 785-1922, dhichwa@earthlink.net. Also, please visit our website, www.madroneaudubon.org for updates. Please see special instructions below for bird walks.

December 2020/January 2021 Outings

December Saturday Walk

COVID-19 Precautions

Conditions permitting, Madrone Audubon will be offering a Saturday bird walk in December. *For possible walks in January, check the Madrone Audubon Society website:* www.madroneaudubon.org **NOTE:** You must register for the walk(s) in advance; there is a limit of 11 participants per walk. Please read the following requirements carefully. Due to COVID-19 regulations in Sonoma County, participation in the event requires that each person is in good health (has no symptoms, nor recent exposure to someone with COVID-19), wears a mask, and maintains a minimum of six feet distance from others whenever possible during the walk. Carpooling is not recommended at this time, unless you are traveling with people you live with.



Brown Pelican Almost Landing

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

To add your name to the waiting list, please contact Gordon Beebe at gordbb@gmail.com or text at (707) 583-3115.

Future walks, if there are no changes regarding the COVID-19 situation, will favor those who were not able to join previous walks. Again, please check the Madrone Audubon website for any last-minute updates.

Saturday, December 5 (time TBD)

Delta Pond and Adjacent Wetland Preserve. There has been a major seismic renovation of Delta Pond this last summer, and it's just beginning to fill back up. A very "birdy" walk, in a wonderful place. Delta Pond is not normally open to the public. We will walk west along the creek trail to Delta Pond, about 1 mile. Add another mile for the walk around the pond. We are grateful to Denise Cadman, who arranges entry to this property in the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

December and January Thursday Walks

COVID-19 Precautions

The walks will be limited to 7 birders. Please drive by yourself. Reservations will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Future walks, if there are no changes regarding the COVID-19 situation, will favor those who have not joined a walk before. Your name will be put on a waiting-list, if a space becomes available. We will follow the COVID-19 protocols, staying 6 feet apart, wearing masks, and respecting passing trail visitors. Come in good health, with no recent exposure to COVID-19.

Last Third Thursday Bird Walk in 2020

December 17th

Spring Lake Regional Park, parking permit required. Take Newanga Ave. off Summerfield Road, turn left after the Ranger's kiosk, go past the campground, to the long pier parking lot. We will walk the Fisherman's Trail. ****To reserve a space, please call Janet Bosshard (707) 526-5883**



Six Pelicans

Courtesy of Richard Strunin

New --! Two Monthly Thursday Walks in 2021

Starting in 2021, there will be two Thursday walks a month, for the foreseeable future. Walks will be the 2nd and 4th Thursdays.

January 14th

Ragle Ranch Regional Park, parking permit required. From Santa Rosa, take Highway 12 through Sebastopol. Right on Ragle Road to the park entrance. Meet back by the restrooms, near the dog park. ****To reserve a space, please call Janet Bosshard (707) 526-5883.**

January 28th

Crane Creek Regional Park, parking permit required. Take Petaluma Hill Road to Pressley Road, Rohnert Park. Drive about 3/4 of a mile to Crane Creek Regional Park. ****To reserve a space, please call Janet Bosshard (707) 526-5883.**



HUMMINGBIRDS

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paradoxical nature of it all became almost laughable. How does a person go through decades living on a backdrop of crisp white snow and miss the figurative, 99 red balloons going by?



Anna's Hummingbird

Courtesy of Katie Clas

Birds capture me with a welcomed insatiable fervor and I was determined to see as many birds as possible to learn everything about every species. The colorful costly plumes, however, hold a sweet spot for my highest level of Avian adoration. After moving to Petaluma and learning about the possible migrants to pass through the Pacific Flyway, I couldn't help but fixate on photos that showed up when I searched for the reported hummingbirds. While the gorget colors swept around me in a dizzying stupor, the drive to get a confirmed sighting for these little collections of gram-sized hope mascots only visible by arranging timing in concert with a required sharpness for identification brought forth assiduous planning and a buzz of excitement!

The checklist of necessary year adornments included: Lots and lots of feeders, stations where the ports were clustered together, native plants, perches, and a gallon batch of 1:4 sugar water. I also concluded that no less than three feeding stations were required. Station 1: Operation Anna's Island, was positioned on the Chinaberry Tree in the front yard where our resident has adopted his familiar perch. I hung two feeders with four ports each hoping to ward off this bird's almost serpent-like strikes at any visiting birds attempting to belly up to the sugar water bar. Then, Station 2: Show Me the Rubies, consisted of seven feeders with over 30 ports hung at various levels from the A frame porch beams, set to appear like an oasis of red and yellow plastic flowers glistening in the golden state sun. Finally, Station 3: The Migrant Sweet, was set up in the backyard and had five large feeders and five mini single port feeders all clustered together in a descending circle similar to a baby's mobile. Next, I made perches from collected broken branches and attached them to the feeders with brass wire. After next filling the vessels, my bucolic hummingbird buttruss was built and within minutes as the sun was setting and the resident Anna's Hummingbirds halted their scratchy songs to dive towards each station offering the novel potables, I felt I had done well.

The next morning, I was up at 4 a.m., studying my field guides and anticipating arrivals of the Allen's or Rufous Hummingbirds who never fail to excite with their California Poppy orange plumages and gorgets. This one appeared to be a particularly tricky identification requiring a clear look or photograph capture of the notches of their tail feathers. Other possibilities I learned could be the tiny, but magnanimous reward that is a sighting of the Calliope Hummingbird. Here I needed to make sure to be on the lookout for primaries that extended beyond the tail and a white gape line sitting atop the upper mandible. Then, I read on to learn about the very similarly sized Costa's Hummingbird and here I was to confirm a post ocular stripe that connected to the neck in a "C" shape. As a fog of doubts began to surround my study, I figured it best to head outside with my binoculars and take it bird by bird.

As I approached the Show me the Rubies and Migrant Sweet stations, to my delectation, hummingbirds of all types of appearances and swirls of glittering colors were flying in and landing at each port. I enjoyed the moment and watched them buzz about. However, it wasn't long before I came back to the same bird several times, completely perplexed by its facial pattern that appeared to look like a dark thick stripe extending toward the neck from the back of the eye. Curiosity after this sighting came over me and I grabbed my Canon SX50 and began snapping away at what seemed to be a brigade of rare birds appearing in odd plumages that suggested South American origins. Then, a



Migrant Sweet Station

Courtesy of Katie Clas

bird with a rust red gorget flew up within inches of my face and stopped to stare me down. Was this a Ruby-throated Hummingbird? Had my colloquial naming of the station actually attracted one? This sighting will forever remain a big fish tale, as I never saw the bird again.

When night closed the curtain on all the excitement, I wasted no time transferring my Canon photos to my computer to sort through sightings of the day to prepare a report for expert consensus. I'd begun to grow especially envious of emails I'd recently received as



HUMMINGBIRDS

Continued from page 8

part of the North Bay Birding group, effusively declaring the rare hummingbirds that fancied their feeders, and sensed members of the group would be the perfect cohorts to embroil with my identification inquisition. I blasted out five or possibly more emails to the entire group with subject lines labeled Unknown Hummingbird 1-5. When I forgot to include the YouTube link to the video footage, more casual full-list email blasts were sent without cogitation. The garrulous behaviors emitted by my blasts were perhaps mediated by my drive to share my rarities with the best birders of the North Bay. These emails were expected to be met with felicitations for my sightings and therein, be it 5 or 20 emails, the word needed to be spread!

I found myself constantly hitting the refresh button on my browser to see if any reply emails had come through. After several ponderous minutes, I received the reply emails one after another echoing the same ID: Anna's Hummingbird. It looked as though it was definitive for all five of my rare birds and, with this, I could only acquiesce to my tyro birder status.

It's been almost a year that I've been living on the west side of Petaluma offering up sugar water in exchange for bursts of colorful thrills to learn that the best sightings take patience that spans the seasons and the years. Years that will teach me how to see in a way impossible to learn by reading a field guide or even reading 10! After consistently showing up for the Anna's Hummingbird, they begin to rely on you and trust you enough to pass along the information to their comrades in evolution and succeeding generations alike. Soon the young birds expand their families and glimpses of iridescence overtake your views!

I am beyond thrilled to be joining the Madrone Audubon Chapter and vow to consistently show up. Hopefully, I, like the Anna's Hummingbird, can build the trust of the members herein to be guided with information and given the pleasure to soar with knowledge beyond my current Hummingbird learning curve.

(Katie Clas is a conservationist and birder who resides in West Petaluma – and a Madrone Audubon member.)

In Memory of Two Madrone Friends *George Batchelder and Bill Bevans*

Long-time Madrone Audubon member **George Batchelder** passed away in October. As a member of United Methodist Church and Madrone Audubon, George served as church liaison to our Chapter. In 2004, he began to manage audio-visual needs for membership meetings and continued in that role for 10 years, to 2014. Those of us, who now co-manage this important part of our meetings, understand the skill and ability to problem solve needed to assure smooth meeting operations. Former Madrone President and retired Santa Rosa Junior College Professor Peter Leveque asked George to manage this important role for our Chapter, and he readily agreed. Peter remembers, "His level of service was remarkable. He was a true community servant." In addition to his service to the United Methodist Church and Madrone Audubon, George was an active board member of the local NAMI-SC Chapter for about 14 years and served as Secretary of the Santa Rosa East Rotary for almost 20 years. He was an accomplished birder, sailing expert, and loved traveling to natural places such as our National Parks. We extend our sympathy to George's family, extended family and many friends.

(See hummingbird photo taken by John Batchelder, George's brother, on page 6)

• • •

Our Sonoma County community also lost another wonderful human being in October - **Bill Bevans**. Bill and his partner, Rita, have been longstanding Madrone Audubon members for many years. Bill's service to the Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County was both needed and significant. As BRC Director of Avian Care, Ashton Kluttz, recently shared, "Never one to boast his own accomplishments, his volunteer career spanned the whole BRC, from the handling program and field rescuer to the rehabilitation hospital, and being a member of the board. I had to discover in an old file that he co-studied and wrote our protocol for raising baby hummingbirds. When brought to his attention, he only shrugged and gave me that wry smile of his..." Bill and Rita often scheduled their many travels with appreciation of birds and nature in mind. We extend our sympathy to Rita and Bill's family, extended family and friends.



The Return of the Jenner Bald Eagles

by Larry Broderick

Every summer to early fall, the resident Jenner Bald Eagles disappear for a few months, usually Mid July to Mid-October. Joan Bacci documented the Eagles' return mid-October. Nobody knows where the Eagles go for the 3 months every year, but they are now back. Courtship, territorial loyalty, hunting and mating have been seen over the last 10 years at the town of Jenner near and around the mouth of the Russian River. Nest location is unknown.



Flying Bald Eagle

Courtesy of Steve Pearce



Two Bald Eagles on a Rock

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

They can be seen from sunrise to when people and dogs start showing up on the beach. (Goat Rock Beach, near the mouth of the Russian River). The Eagles are best viewed from the Highway 1 pull-out above the river just north of the town of Jenner and also from the Visitor Center when they sit in the large Cypress tree on Penny Island behind the Jenner Visitor Center.

Photos and Updates on the Eagles, as well as any questions can be found/asked here: www.facebook.com/JennerBaldEagles (Larry Broderick contributes to the Jenner Bald Eagle Study Group)

Jenner HawkWatch 2020

by Larry Broderick

The Jenner Headlands HawkWatch annual migration count is finishing its 11th year. It was a good year, even as we practiced physical distancing, face covers and other CDC protocols to protect us from COVID-19. Lots of Accipiters (small woodland hawks) such as Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were counted. We have a decent run of Broad-winged Hawks, which are pretty rare visitors to our county. Some of the first observations of Broad-winged Hawks were documented by our own Madrone Audubon's Dan Nelson on Bay Hill Road back in the 1990s! We also saw dozens of Ferruginous Hawks over the last month. Rounding out the days, we also had Merlins, Harriers, Kites, Osprey, Eagles, Peregrines, along with the ever-present Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels.



Broad-winged Hawk

Courtesy of Dan Nelson

One of the most coveted birds we get out at the Jenner HawkWatch is the Rough-legged Hawk; we've had a couple of sightings thus far in 2020. We'll be partnering with Sonoma Land Trust and hosting a Zoom event; the presentation will be posted on YouTube and we will be announcing that video for you on the Jenner HawkWatch Page and via Madrone Audubon in future communications.

You can follow the Jenner Headlands HawkWatch here: www.facebook.com/JennerHawkWatch.

(Larry Broderick is the Jenner Headlands Hawk Migration Project Director.)



Bird Rescue Center Update

by Ashton Klutz, Executive Director, BRC

It's been a year for the record books, but true to our 44-year history of perseverance, we tackled each challenge the year threw at us and prevailed. Through October 2020, we admitted well over 2,400 birds, with 80% arriving during the five-month period known as "Baby Bird Season." We also patiently guided 222 people over the phone to determine they were observing not an injured or ill bird but normal bird behavior, thus preventing 222 cases of "bird-napping!"

These numbers reflect roughly 100 patients above average and include nearly 1,900 songbirds, 290 waterbirds, and 200 raptors—all during a pandemic! Not only did we have more birds than average, with 44 admits on June 16th we almost surpassed our record number of 48 birds admitted in a single day.

We took in 34 birds from Napa Wildlife Rescue when they evacuated from the Hennessey Fire, and we gratefully evacuated our birds to WildCare, Native Songbird Care and Conservation, and Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue when we evacuated during the Glass Fire.

Perhaps the brightest news is that despite the reduced availability of our volunteer base we maintained a stellar survival rate over 80%. That's a lot of wings returning to the wild!



Northern Saw-whet Owl

Courtesy of Bird Rescue Center

This year brought our first ever baby Golden Eagle (see September 2020 *Leaves*), and our first baby Barred Owl. The baby Barred Owl was found on the ground in Gualala as an orphaned nestling. Our faithful and talented bird network—including Madrone Audubon supporters Diane Hichwa, Roberta Chan, and Bob Sibley—got the bird to us quickly. On admit, it was a little dehydrated and underweight, but



"Marsh," Barred Owl

Courtesy of Bird Rescue Center

otherwise healthy. Considered an invasive species, Barred Owls can no longer be released in California, so we kept this little owl with hopes of placing it into a local wildlife education program.

It quickly became apparent that this small creature possessed a big personality and in no time the little one had fully captured the hearts of BRC staff and volunteers, so we applied to Fish and Wildlife to keep the bird ourselves. We are happy to report this young Barred Owl is now an official BRC Resident Ambassador!

The bird is not yet old enough to confirm its gender, but after an internal vote the bird's name is "Marsh" in honor of our former Raptor Release Coordinator, Brad Marsh, who recently passed away. In addition to being an integral and well-loved BRC volunteer, Brad led the investigation into training techniques appropriate for this species. The name seems especially fitting because Barred Owls prefer forested habitats near water, like swamps and yes—you guessed it—marshes.

Despite being unable to hold open houses or attend educational events, our Ambassador team ensured our resident birds received the physical and social enrichment needed for their well-being.

BRC's New Center

After concentrating our relocation efforts on two acres in Cotati for the last 18 months, there is big news! Land benefactors Heidi and Dave Jacquin have purchased the former Santa Rosa Equestrian Center, a 46-acre parcel on Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa and signed a new letter of intent providing 5 acres to BRC. This comes after plans to develop a parcel in Cotati met with significant challenges.

Continued on page 12



BIRD RESCUE

Continued from page 11

In addition to being more than double the acreage, the property already has a commercial license and compatible zoning for BRC's new hospital and education center.

Invest in the Skies, our capital campaign to raise the remaining \$3M needed to complete our new facility, publicly launched with a Challenge Match from a loyal supporter. She has pledged to match, dollar-for-dollar, every donation up to \$250,000! We are currently over halfway toward meeting our fundraising goal of \$6.8M and look forward to the Challenge Match results!

As a busy and challenging year draws to a close, we are optimistic about the future. Wildfires, power outages, a pandemic, a challenged economy, and the political uncertainties that are the hallmark of 2020 have not slowed the dedication of our staff and volunteers. That coupled with the generosity and support of our community has been humbling. Our future appears brighter than ever and we look forward to 2021!

Donations

In Memory of
Betty Burridge

by Diane & Bryant Hichwa

In Memory of
Mildred S. Vyverberg

by Mary Luttrell Cuoio

In Memory of
Terry Colborn

by John Klobas Family

In Memory of
Roger L. Sanborn

by Tim Sanborn

Phenology Project Volunteers

Madrone Audubon sponsored citizen science research

Two Petaluma Locations

Paula Lane: 9 avian, 2 mammal, 4 plant species

(This Nature Preserve project is currently modified & continuing.)

Petaluma River Bridge: Cliff Swallows (March-August)

Both Projects are in our 4th Year!

Accepting new volunteers for long-term, climate change impact project.

Visit 1 hour monthly, observe, record data for National Phenology Project

To volunteer, contact: Susan Kirks, Madrone Audubon President.

707-241-5548, susankirks@sbcglobal.net

(Beginning birders/naturalists welcomed)

News Updates

Migratory Bird Treaty Act Threatened – Please Comment

Prior to leaving office in January 2021, the Trump Administration will attempt to finalize a rule change to *significantly weaken the MBTA*, removing incidental take or killing of birds from the historic regulatory treaty's enforcement provisions. This rule favors relief from prosecution of energy companies, land developers, and construction firms who "accidentally kill" birds during operations. A 30-day comment period is in effect until December 28. Please visit the National Audubon Society website for more details, where a link to submit public comment is provided, and **comment** against this egregious action to remove MBTA protections. <https://www.audubon.org/news/administration-moves-finalize-bird-killer-policy>.

(Sources: National Audubon Society, Washington Post, NY Times, American Bird Conservancy)

Another Example of Unexpected Results

Ecologists Letnic and Crowther of Australia have discovered through comparison studies of Dingo Dog skulls, dating back to the 1930's to current ones, that the newer ones are larger by 6 to 9 percent. Dingoes prey on sheep and are routinely poisoned with sodium monofluoroacetate or 1080. The skulls belonging to the poisoned Dingoes are bigger by 6 to 9 percent than the skulls belonging to the Dingoes, who were not poisoned. The skull size is correlated with overall body size, the bigger the skull, the bigger the animal. The hypothesis is that Dingoes, who survive poisoning, may not only have a natural genetic advantage, but also have advantages in food supply. Locations where poison is used to get rid of the Dingoes, the population of Kangaroos goes up (less predation). Those Dingoes that do survive poisoning have a top-down advantage of more Kangaroos to prey upon and eat. If there are less Dingoes, the Kangaroo population goes up, hence more food for the surviving Dingoes.

(Source: Science News, September 12, 2020: Poison May Be Making Dingoes Bigger by Jake Buehler)

Good News for Klamath River, Karuk and Yuruk Tribes

Four century-old dams on the Klamath River will be removed by 2023, in the most ambitious salmon restoration effort in history. In November, Oregon Governor Kate Brown, California Governor Gavin Newsom, the Karuk tribe, the Yuruk tribe, Klamath River Renewal Corporation and Berkshire-Hathaway-owned PacifiCorp, made this announcement. This agreement is reported as a turning point in the national conversation about dams and their impacts on rivers and wildlife. "The Klamath dam agreement demonstrates what we can do when we work together to solve complex challenges," said Howard Penn, executive director of the California-based Planning and Conservation League. "By restoring the river, we are taking an important step toward bringing back salmon and honoring the tribal communities that depend on them."

(Source: National Wildlife Federation, November 13, 2020)

**Observations**

Fall 2020 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Gr. White-fronted Goose	9/26	Bodega Hwy. W. of King Rd.	DN
Cackling Goose (65+)	10/31	Salmon Creek, flying South	DN
Tundra Swan (3)	10/29	Shollenberger Park	MBI
Blue-winged Teal (2)	10/20	Hudemann Slough	MG
Red-footed Booby	9/27	Offshore West of Marin Co.	R.R.O.S.
Bonaparte's Gull (1)	10/31	Salmon Creek	DN, LH, BDP
Laughing Gull	9/30	Pine Gulch Creek, Marin Co.	MD
Common Tern (1)	9/27-28	Porto Bodega	SC, et al
Flesh-footed Shearwater	9/27	Offshore, Bodega Bay pelagic trip	R.R.O.S.
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	9/27	Offshore, Bodega Bay pelagic trip	R.R.O.S.
Black Storm-Petrel	9/27	Offshore, Bodega Bay pelagic trip	R.R.O.S.
Prairie Falcon	10/28	Valley Ford wetlands	J Snead
White-faced Ibis (6)	11/1	Ellis Creek ponds	AL
Least Bittern	10/12	Ellis Creek ponds	DE
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	9/2	Valley Ford Wetlands	NA, LC
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	10/19	Valley Ford wetlands	MBa
Spotted Sandpiper	10/18	Bodega Harbor, below Diekmann's	RR
Red Knot (2)	9/13	Spud Pt.	SC
Broad-winged Hawk	10/4	Islands in the Sky loop trail, S of Duncan's Mills	TT, MT
Short-eared Owl	10/9	Bodega Head	D Barry
White-winged Dove	9/17-18	Muir Beach residence	JW
Broad-billed Hummingbird	10/3-5	The Sea Ranch (3rd County Record)	M Batchelder, JB, DH, DN
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9/6	Tomales, Marin Co. (imm. fem.)	LC, CC
Black Swift (1)	9/11	Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay (overhead)	PC
Tree Swallow (15+)	10/31	Salmon Creek	DN, LH
Tropical Kingbird	9/20	Bodega Head Cypress Grove	PC
Great-crested Flycatcher	9/30-10/1	Drake's Beach Monument	M.Ob
Great-crested Flycatcher	10/1	The Sea Ranch; 36900 Green Cove Dr. (photos)	KB
Red-eyed Vireo	9/16	Inverness Tennis Courts; at foot of Mt. Vision Rd.	BB
Black-throated Blue Warbler	10/24	Willow Creek Rd. (male)	MBI, GH, et al
Blackpoll Warbler (2)	9/16	Bodega Marine Lab entrance trees	DN, et al
Blackpoll Warbler (1)	10/10	Campbell Cove	KG
Chestnut-sided Warbler (1)	9/10-12	Bodega Dunes Campground	DN
Chestnut-sided Warbler (1)	10/9	Yard-bird at 226 Paula Ln. Petaluma	DN
Palm Warbler	9/27-28	Bodega Head Cypress Grove	PC, DF
Palm Warbler (2)	10/31	Valley Ford Wetlands	M.Ob
Hooded Warbler	9/4	Russian Gulch	TT, MT
Yellow-breasted Chat	9/7	Valley Ford-Freestone Rd. in yard	J Snead
Worm-eating Warbler	10/27	Venice Beach/Pilarcitos Creek mouth, San Mateo Co.	AJ, M.Ob`
American Redstart	10/9	Campbell Cove	GH, DN, et al
American Redstart	10/9	Gualala Point Regional Park Campground	TT, MT
Connecticut Warbler	9/11-13	Redwood Creek, Muir Beach	LC, NA, RR
Northern Waterthrush	10/16	Porto Bodega	KM
Summer Tanager (male)	10/4	Forestville; near 9643 Hwy 116	J Snead
Rock Wren	10/31	The Sea Ranch; near Shell Beach Boat Ramp parking	KW
Lark Bunting (2)	9/20-23	Kehoe Beach	NA, JW
Swamp Sparrow (2)	10/31	Salmon Creek	LS, EI
Clay-colored Sparrow (2)	10/9	Owl Canyon	MBI, DN, DH, et al
Chipping Sparrow (15-20)	9/28	Green Valley Rd. cemetery, Graton	SC
Lapland Longspur (5)	10/27	Abbotts Lagoon	SH, et al
Lapland Longspur (1)	10/28	Bodega Head	MBa, et al
Snow Bunting (1)	10/27	Abbotts Lagoon	SH, et al
Snow Bunting (1)	10/25	Lynch Canyon Open Space Preserve, Solano Co.	EP, et al
Snow Bunting (1)	10/31	Salmon Creek, crossing Hwy 1	LS, EI
Green-tailed Towhee	9/7	Spud Pt. just S. of Crab Shack	PC, M.Ob
Green-tailed Towhee	10/4	2191 Laguna Rd. Santa Rosa	GB
Green-tailed Towhee	10/9-12	Owl Canyon	MBI, M.Ob
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9/7	Campbell Cove (male)	MBI

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

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