



Madrone LEAVES

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

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Stacy Li, Ph.D., is a semiretired consulting aquatic biologist with 28 years experience. His credits include participation in the Mono Lake hearing, eight years service as a fish ecologist and water rights specialist with the National Marine Fisheries Service, and currently serves as an officer on the board of the Madrone Audubon Society.

The Deep and Troubled Waters of California

Part Two by Stacy Li, Ph.D.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) has a coequal goal of improving Delta ecology in addition to its charge to secure a water supply. Thus far, the BDCP has not specified how this goal is to be achieved. This installment describes how various species of fish are affected by the current water export operations and how conditions from these impacts can be improved in the San Joaquin Delta.

The Sacramento Delta is fundamentally different from the San Joaquin Delta due to the gradient of the respective rivers. The Sacramento River from Sacramento to Sherman Island is 1.6 times higher in gradient than the San Joaquin River from Stockton to Sherman Island. The San Joaquin River is basically flat once the river reaches the Central Valley floor. Therefore, the Sacramento River has hydraulic energy, considerable inertia and momentum, and the delta-related San Joaquin River has none of these physical properties.

There are many adverse environmental impacts occurring in these deltas, but the largest direct adverse impact from

water export operations affecting Delta fish ecology is flow reversals. All the major channels of the San Joaquin system can be pumped upstream for over 30 river miles. The number of days when flow reversals occur has been trending towards 300 days a year. The export pumps can reverse flows in this part of the San Joaquin River because it has no hydraulic energy, inertia, or momentum.

Two anadromous fish species that inhabit the two major watersheds are Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. They spawn in fresh water and juveniles grow for some period in fresh water before migrating to the ocean to mature; adults return to fresh water to spawn. Both use the deltas as migration conduits between spawning and rearing areas, and the ocean.

Continued on page 2

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

Monday, February 16, 7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

David Rice lives and works as a clinical psychologist in Berkeley, CA. He has been birding since his early twenties and has co-authored the *Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas*. David has co-led a Golden Gate Audubon Society backpack birding trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park for more than thirty years. He will talk about his own experiences birding, and give us the psychologist's view of what compels us to engage in this activity. David has written a book, *Why We Bird*, that draws on his adventures and those of other birders, and describes seven reasons why we love this activity.

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Monday, March 16, 7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

Tom Reynolds is a life-long, self-taught nature photographer living in Sonoma County. He has a distinguished record of volunteerism with the County Regional Parks Department and has won several awards for his leadership, educational skills, teaching photography, and leading bird walks in the regional parks system. He received the Sonoma County Volunteer of the Year Award in 2012, and the Best of the Best Award in 2011 from the County Parks Department. Last year he received the Bentley-Smith Award from the Madrone Audubon chapter.

Tom has generously shared his beautiful photos with many local organizations including Sonoma Land Trust, Bird Rescue Center, and Audubon Canyon Ranch. Lately he has participated in the remote camera project on the Modini Mayacamas Preserve. We will be treated to Tom's video presentation that was created for the International Migratory Bird Day celebration at Lincoln Elementary School last year.

To receive *Leaves* via email in PDF format just email your request to:

madroneaudubon@um.att.com

You will get your copy faster and help save paper.



TROUBLED WATERS

Continued from page 1

The Anadromous Fish Restoration Program (AFRP) has been monitoring Chinook salmon populations for many years in both the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds. Since 1993, AFRP has had a goal of doubling the production (represented as 100%) of all anadromous fishes in all of the tributaries in both watersheds from their baseline period (1968-1992). While a few of the Sacramento watershed streams are producing less than their baseline, some have exceeded their doubling goal: Battle Creek (258.6%), Butte Creek (222.4%), and Clear Creek (205.9%).

In contrast, all of the San Joaquin River Chinook salmon production is way below their respective baselines: Merced River (-24%), Tuolumne River (-62.1%), and Stanislaus River (-50.9%). This poor salmon production performance in the San Joaquin tributaries reflects in large part the effects of water export. Steelhead populations have not been monitored because their populations are bound by international treaty, but Steelhead would be similarly affected due to the nature of flow reversals.

Flow reversals occur in the San Joaquin Watershed when both Chinook salmon and Steelhead smolts (juveniles) are migrating to the ocean, and when adults of both species are emigrating from the sea. The San Joaquin salmon populations lose virtually all their smolts because with flow reversals there is no downstream to the ocean; they are drawn into the pumps instead. Returning adults cannot find

their natal streams because of these flow reversals and resulting lack of attraction flows from their natal streams.

There were four species of fish that became part of the pelagic organism decline (POD) when their abundance indices plummeted to all-time lows for several years.

These fish are: Delta smelt, longfin smelt, threadfin shad, and young-of-the-year striped bass.

Delta smelt is a finger-long backwater-adapted species whose historical population center was the San Joaquin Delta. It is a relatively weak swimmer (bullfrog tadpoles are probably stronger swimmers) because its ancestral habitat was without significant current. It is adversely affected by flow reversals. The current created by reverse flows can be so strong that it can drag a fourteen-foot wooden rowboat backwards despite a fully powered up eight-horsepower outboard motor.

Longfin smelt are found throughout the western Delta, but are limited upstream to Rio Vista in the Sacramento Delta. Their Delta occurrence is related to outflow. When outflow is high they are found west of Carquinez Strait, but at lower outflow levels they are generally found further east along the freshwater/saltwater interface. Their spawning period is from November through April and their embryo development takes a month, with an additional two-week period in the egg sac larval lifestage. The reverse flows occur throughout these periods. Entrainment susceptibility within export water is high, particularly with the embryos and egg sac larvae.

Threadfin shad and young-of-the-year striped bass are planktivores. Plankton communities require a long residence time in the water to develop abundant and diverse plankton communities. The San Joaquin River had this condition prior to water exports because water within the San Joaquin Delta was only slowly pushed downstream from tributary waters leaving the western slopes

of the Sierra. Water residence time was long. Simply, the water export operations cut into water residence time—reducing the conditions to create robust plankton communities.

Last, current fish protection facilities are ineffective. Both the CVP (Central Valley Project, the federal system) and the SWP (State Water Project, the state system) use louvers (think venetian blinds) rather than screens, so there is always the possibility of fish passing through the protection structure. Even worse, there is no downstream from these pumping stations, so fish are constantly and repeatedly exposed to being entrained.

If the new water diversion is on the Sacramento River and no water exports are taken from the San Joaquin, vast improvement should occur with all these fish species: anadromous salmonid juveniles could find the ocean and returning anadromous adults would have improved attraction flows conditions because of the lack of reverse flows. The historic backwater habitat would return to the San Joaquin Delta, greatly improving habitat conditions for Delta smelt. Entrainment risk is eliminated for longfin smelt because of no reverse flows; and their upstream distribution in the Sacramento River is at Rio Vista, far downstream of any proposed Sacramento River export facility. Water residence time will increase in the San Joaquin Delta to allow development of robust plankton communities so that threadfin shad and young-of-the-year striped bass won't starve.

Because of the Sacramento River's higher gradient, water export pumps will not be able to create flow reversals, so the present water export-related adverse affects will not reappear in the Sacramento River.

Finally, the new fish protection facilities will have the necessary downstream component, but cost-consideration substitutes for effective screening must not be allowed.

Are you a National Audubon member?

Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.

(see membership form, back page)



Western Sonoma County's 48th Annual Christmas Bird Count

By Jeff Holtzman

Relatively mild temperatures and clear skies greeted the 134 volunteer counters, both veterans and rookies, participating in Madrone Audubon's 48th annual Western Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count (WSCCBC) held on Sunday, December 28, 2014. Twenty-two teams spanning out over western Sonoma County identified an unofficial total of 185 species and 38,738 individuals (give or take an American Robin or two).

Although Sunday was the assigned count day, birds found within the designated circle three days before and three days after may be added to the total. Four such sightings, including a rarity—the Black-chinned Hummingbird, padded our current total.

This year's species total is one higher than then the previous year where the WSCCBC's total of 184 species ranked as tied for the 16th highest count in North America. The WSCCBC regularly places in the top 20 nationally.

Madrone Audubon President, Gordon Beebe, offered thanks to the many counters, the team leaders and Veronica Bowers for her six years of prior service as the Christmas Bird Count chair and to this year's co-chairs, Peter Leveque and Stacy Li.

"As always, it was a great group of people counting birds all day instead of staying home," Beebe said. "It's so important to get the information gained from the work of our volunteers."

It would have been difficult for Dr. Frank Chapman, the founder of the Christmas Bird Count, to imagine that 115 years later the Count would be stronger than ever with an estimated 70,000 volunteers counting birds in North America. The value of this citizen science program rests in establishing long-term trends relating to bird populations, both expanding and

decreasing, as well as range expansion and other important topics.

Some highlights of this year's WSCCBC include strong overall numbers for raptors with six Bald Eagles counted in five territories and in two territories, Salmon Creek and Duncans Mills, all four of our local falcons—Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine and Prairie were found. A leucistic* Red-tailed Hawk was seen again this year in the Austin Creek territory while the Harrison Grade team repeated seeing all of our local woodpecker species. Diligence and persistence also paid off the for Harrison Grade squad when they found a California Thrasher on their territory after a 20-year absence. Doran Beach team leader Dea Fried noted seeing all three surf scoters within view at the same time in her scope.



Counters set out by water as well as by land. Thanks to the generosity of Jim and Elaine Tucker, Gene Hunn was able to spot over 1,000 surf scoters as well as other sea birds near Bodega Bay. Also on the water, were Estero Americano canoers Peter Colasanti and Roger Marlowe, whose efforts included adding a Bald Eagle and the count's sole Barn Swallow.

Species with some of the largest numbers of individuals: American Robin (4376), Brandt (3569), Marbled Godwit (2074), Surf Scoter (1739), Brewer's Blackbird (1671), European Starling (1309), Yellow-rumped Warbler (1248) and White-crowned Sparrow (1131).

Fourteen species had just a single individual located. In addition to the previously mentioned California Thrasher and Black-Chinned Hummingbird, singles were found of Eurasian Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler,

Harlequin Duck, Green Heron, Red Knot, Red Phalarope, Western Screech-Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Long-eared Owl, Barn Swallow and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Prominent no-shows included Cinnamon Teal, Northern Pintail, Cattle Egret, Gadwall, Black-necked Stilt and American Bittern.

The ever increasing numbers of and expansion of range for the non-native Eurasian Collared Dove was of special concern this year with its 217 individuals outpacing Bang-tailed Pigeon (184), Mourning Dove (78) and Rock Pigeon (7).

The CBC dinner, attended by close to 90 people was provided by Out to Lunch Catering, with desserts contributed by our members. Madrone appreciates the setup and dinner service of our volunteers: Nancy Hair (Publicity Chair), Linda Hammer (Hospitality Chair), Rhonda Rockwood, Sandra Martensen, Jackson Mayes, Marguerite Li and Susan Kirks (Past President).

No Christmas Bird Count would be complete without acknowledging and appreciating the many individuals and entities who opened their land to our counters and otherwise provided support and assistance to the count. With apologies to those not mentioned, Madrone Audubon offer thanks to the following: Tina Martinez, Jim and Elaine Tucker, John and Lesley Brabyn of Salmon Creek Ranch, George Gross of Chancellor Ranch, Cassisni Ranch Family Campground, Davis and Maureen Feinberg, Phillip Person, Tony King, and Phyllis Hughes.

**Leucism is a genetic mutation that prevents melanin and other pigments from being deposited normally on feathers. Leucism comes in two main varieties—paleness, an equal reduction of pigment in all feathers; and pied, an absence of pigment in some feathers creating white patches. (Definition from FeederWatch) Ed.*



Species	Number	Species	Numbers	Species	Numbers
Snow Goose	26	Peregrine Falcon	23	Downy Woodpecker	28
Brant	3569	Prairie Falcon	2	Hairy Woodpecker	19
Canada Goose	122	Virginia Rail	8	Northern Flicker	138
Wood Duck	36	Sora	7	Pileated Woodpecker	6
Eurasian Wigeon	1	Common Gallinule	3	Black Phoebe	167
American Wigeon	49	American Coot	424	Say's Phoebe	22
Mallard	95	Black-bellied Plover	13	Hutton's Vireo	33
Blue-winged Teal	1	Snowy Plover	35	Steller's Jay	299
Northern Shoveler	1	Semipalmated Plover	16	Western Scrub-Jay	284
Green-winged Teal	9	Killdeer	10	American Crow	298
duck sp.	20	Black Oystercatcher	59	Common Raven	350
Canvasback	17	American Avocet	2	Barn swallow	1
Ring-necked Duck	14	Spotted Sandpiper	4	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	379
Greater Scaup	205	Willet	198	Oak Titmouse	17
Lesser Scaup	23	Greater Yellowlegs	2	Bushtit	290
scaup sp.	10	Whimbrel	9	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10
Surf Scoter	1739	Marbled Godwit	2074	White-breasted Nuthatch	7
White-winged Scoter	7	Ruddy Turnstone	2	Pygmy Nuthatch	141
Black Scoter	3	Black Turnstone	86	Brown Creeper	60
Harlequin Duck	1	Surfbird	65	Bewick's Wren	50
Bufflehead	786	Red Knot	1	Pacific Wren (Winter)	29
Common Goldeneye	59	Sanderling	410	House Wren	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	2	Western Sandpiper	225	Marsh Wren	19
Hooded Merganser	20	Least Sandpiper	160	Golden-crowned Kinglet	72
Common Merganser	56	Dunlin	653	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	436
Red-breasted Merganser	79	peep sp.	120	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1
Ruddy Duck	488	dowitcher sp.	4	Wrentit	42
Wild Turkey	71	Wilson's Snipe	2	Western Bluebird	276
California Quail	404	Red Phalarope	1	Hermit Thrush	151
Red-throated Loon	288	Bonaparte's Gull	8	American Robin	4376
Pacific Loon	92	Heermann's Gull	130	Varied Thrush	281
Common Loon	64	Mew Gull	322	Northern Mockingbird	9
loon sp.	16	Ring-billed Gull	318	California Thrasher	1
Pied-billed Grebe	41	California Gull	832	European Starling	1309
Horned Grebe	88	Herring Gull	153	American Pipit	35
Red-necked Grebe	3	Thayer's Gull	19	Cedar Waxwing	24
Eared Grebe	170	Western Gull	833	Orange-crowned Warbler	8
Western Grebe	339	Glaucous-winged Gull	198	Nashville Warbler	1
Clark's Grebe	7	Glaucous-winged Gull X		Yellow-rumped Warbler	1248
Aechmophorus sp.	67	Western Gull (hybrid)	7	Townsend's Warbler	131
Black-vented Shearwater	45	gull sp.	674	Hermit Warbler	1
Brandt's Cormorant	128	Forster's Tern	16	Common Yellowthroat	5
Double-crested Cormorant	60	Common Murre	842	Spotted Towhee	168
Pelagic Cormorant	100	Pigeon Guillemot	2	California Towhee	240
American White Pelican	13	Marbled Murrelet	15	Savannah Sparrow	74
Brown Pelican	395	Ancient Murrelet	15	Fox Sparrow	113
Great Blue Heron	24	murrelet sp.	7	Song Sparrow	229
Great Egret	18	Rhinoceros Auklet	7	Lincoln's Sparrow	3
Snowy Egret	35	Rock Pigeon	7	White-throated Sparrow	9
Green Heron	1	Band-tailed Pigeon	184	White-crowned Sparrow	1131
Black-crowned Night-Heron	5	Eurasian Collared-Dove	217	Golden-crowned Sparrow	863
Turkey Vulture	392	Mourning Dove	78	sparrow sp.	72
Osprey	4	Barn Owl	2	Dark-eyed Junco	1144
White-tailed Kite	9	Western Screech-Owl	1	Red-winged Blackbird	134
Bald Eagle	6	Great Horned Owl	20	Tricolored Blackbird	25
Northern Harrier	9	Northern Pygmy Owl	1	Western Meadowlark	459
Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	Burrowing Owl	2	Brewer's Blackbird	1671
Cooper's Hawk	13	Spotted Owl	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	17
accipiter sp.	3	Long-eared Owl	1	blackbird sp.	100
Red-shouldered Hawk	47	Short-eared Owl	2	Purple Finch	43
Red-tailed Hawk	179	Black Chinned Hummingbird	1	House Finch	282
Ferruginous Hawk	6	Anna's Hummingbird	164	Pine Siskin	127
hawk sp.	2	Belted Kingfisher	24	Lesser Goldfinch	17
Golden Eagle	2	Acorn Woodpecker	172	American Goldfinch	8
American Kestrel	114	Red-breasted Sapsucker	16	House Sparrow	91
Merlin	8	Nuttall's Woodpecker	35	Total of Individuals	38738



All walks and meetings are open to the public. Bird walks are recreational and educational in purpose, and all levels of expertise are welcome. Bring field equipment and wear comfortable shoes and layered clothing for variable weather conditions. Please carpool whenever possible. Forecasted heavy rain cancels. There is no charge for activities unless otherwise specified, but some parks have day-use fees.

February 2015 calendar

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE exchanges information by phone and email as soon as possible when an issue surfaces. Please contact Diane Hichwa at 785-1922 or dhichwa@earthlink.net.

Wednesday February 4, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Gordon Beebe at gdbeebe@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, February 4, 8:30 AM till Noon

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING WETLANDS. Bird Walk. We will bird the wetlands and adjacent areas of this facility in Petaluma. From Santa Rosa on Highway 101, take the Highway 116 exit (Lakeville Highway), go left under Highway 101, turn right (south) at the South McDowell traffic light, turn right on Cypress Drive, which ends at the facility gate. Information: Don McCarthy, (415) 883-0763.

Saturday February 7, 9:00 AM

SHOLLENBERGER PARK. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance/Madrone leads a nature walk. Meet at the first kiosk. Rain cancels. Contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577.

Saturday February 7, 8:30 AM till Noon

HUDEMAN SLOUGH. Meet at the Sonoma County Water Agency property on the northern edge of the Napa-Sonoma Marshes. From the town of Sonoma, drive south on Highway 12/121. Turn south on Ramal Road and drive approximately 2.4 miles until you reach the entrance to Hudeman Slough. There is a large hay barn on the right and a parking lot in front of the barn. We will park at the edge of the parking lot bordering on Ramal Road. Rain cancels. Leaders: Bill Doyle 483-8773, Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

Saturday February 14, 10:00 AM

SHOLLENBERGER PARK. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads two children/family nature walks. One-to-two hours, dependent on age of children. Meet at the first

kiosk. Rain cancels. For the children/family walk in English, contact Mary Edith Moore at 763-3577; for the walk in Spanish, contact Connie Peabody at 338-2237.

Monday February 16, 7:00 PM

GENERAL MEETING. David Rice lives and works as a clinical psychologist in Berkeley, CA. He has been birding since his early twenties and has co-authored the Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas. David has co-lead a Golden Gate Audubon Society backpack birding trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park for more than thirty years. He will talk about his own experiences birding, and give us the psychologist's view of what compels us to engage in this activity. David has written a book, "Why We Bird", that draws on his adventures and those of other birders, and describes seven reasons why we love this activity. First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. Please see the announcement. The public is always invited to attend these programs.

Saturday February 21, 9:00 AM

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads a walk at the Ellis Creek ponds. Go to the end of Cypress Drive and through the gates. Parking lot is on the left. Rain cancels. Contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577.

Saturday February 21, 9:30 AM till 3:00 PM

PUTAH CREEK/LAKE SOLANO. Meet at Lake Solano Park, 8685 Pleasants Valley Road, Winters, CA at 9:30 AM. Take Calistoga Road (becomes Petrified Forest Road) to Highway 128. Turn right on Highway 128. Turn left on Deer Park Road. Turn right on Silverado Trail N. Turn left on Sage Canyon Road/128. Follow Highway 128 until you reach County Road 86/Pleasants Valley road. Turn right. The park is immediately over the bridge to your left. There is a \$5 day use fee at Lake Solano Park. Bring lunch. Rain cancels. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

March 2015 calendar

Wednesday March 4, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Gordon Beebe at gdbeebe@earthlink.net.

Thursday March 5, 6 PM - 8 PM OR Saturday March 7 10AM till Noon.

BABY BIRD SEASON NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION. Native Songbird Care & Conservation in Sebastopol. Pre-registration is required, space is limited. To register, call (707) 484-6502. Become a volunteer at Native Songbird Care & Conservation and help give injured and orphaned songbirds a chance to fly free in the wild again. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. NSCC is licensed by US Fish and Wildlife and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. For more info, visit www.nativesongbirdcare.org

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Saturday March 7, 8:30 AM till Noon

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY. From Highway 101 in Petaluma, go East on 116 (Lakeville Highway), and right on Pine View Way, then left on Cypress Drive. Go to the end of the road and through the gate. We will meet in the parking lot, near the bathroom. Bring liquids and layers of clothing, and a scope if you have one. Rain cancels. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

Saturday March 21, 9:00 AM

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads a walk at the Ellis Creek ponds. Go to the end of Cypress Drive and through the gates. Parking lot is on the left. Rain cancels. Contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577.

Saturday March 21, 8:30 AM till Noon

LAS GALLINAS PONDS. Meet at the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot. From Hwy 101 in northern San Rafael, take the Smith Ranch Road exit, go east to the McInnis Park entrance, turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, and go to the lot at the end of the road. Rain cancels. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

Thursday April 2, 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

BODEGA BAY. Bird Walk. From the center of the town of Bodega Bay, drive north on Highway 1, turn left at Eastshore Road (the Bodega Head turnoff), then turn right at the stop sign, and continue 0.3 miles to the unpaved parking lot on the right. Bring lunch, liquids, and layered clothing. Information: Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday April 4, 8:00 AM till Noon

CRANE CREEK REGIONAL PARK. Bring lunch, liquids and layers of clothing. Rain cancels. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.



Observations

Nov-Dec 2014, January 2015 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Eurasian Wigeon (male)	12/1	Doran Park entrance pond	DF
Harlequin Duck (fem.)	12/28	Bodega Harbor	RR
Hooded Merganser (4)	1/5	Carmody Rd. N. pond	DN
White-winged Scoter (2)	12/28	Bodega Head; S-bound fly-bys	DN, AW
Black Scoter (fem.)	1/2-3	Port Sonoma	GH, TB
Barrow's Goldeneye (4)	1/3	Port Sonoma	TB
G. White-fronted Goose (300)	11/7	Santa Rosa, Rincon Valley	BO, KW
Cassin's Auklet	11/5	Doran Park jetty area	DH
Ancient Murrelet (40)	11/24	off Bodega Head	SC
Marbled Murrelet (2)	1/5-6	off Bodega Head	DN
Black Tern	12/4	Bolinas Lagoon	MD
Black-vented Shearwater (525+)	1/4	off Bodega Head	DN
Ferruginous Hawk (dk. morph)	11/15	E. Railroad Ave, Cotati	AW
Common Black Hawk	1/4	Delta Pond, W. of Willowside Rd.	DS
Merlin (1)	1/5	Bodega Hwy. @ Carmody Rd (w/ YRWA kill)	DN
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1/5	Salmon Creek Rd.	DN
Short-eared Owl (2)	1/4	Hudemann Slough restoration area	TB
Burrowing Owl	1/2-3	Lakeville Hy. Riverside Equestrian Ctr.	GH, TB
American Bittern	11/17-25	Foothill Regional Park, pond "C"	DH, DN
Least Bittern	11/16-26	Foothill Regional Park, pond "C"	CR et al
Red Phalarope (1)	12/13	Bodega Harbor at Campbell Cove	DH
Common Snipe (15-20)	1/5	Gehricke Rd ponds, Bodega Hwy.	DN
Spotted Sandpiper	12/31	Bodega Harbor at Diekmann's Store	BDF, JP
Lewis' Woodpecker (7+)	Nov.-Dec.	"I" St. extension, S. of Petaluma	DN, AW, GH
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12/19	Nicasio town square, Marin Co.	BB
Black-chinned Hummingbird	12/21	Occidental visiting feeder, (female)	MH
North American Dipper	Nov.-Dec.	Lagunitas Creek, Marin Co.	M.Ob
Mountain Bluebird	1/1	Adams St., St. Helena	MB
Nashville Warbler	Dec.	Diekmann's Store, Bodega Bay	M.Ob
Palm Warbler	1/4	Delta Pond, W. of Willowside Rd.	DS
Northern Waterthrush	12/1	Kennedy Park, Napa	D&DH
Summer Tanager	11/21	Bolinas; yard-bird	D. Humple
Western Tanager (2)	12/25	Laguna de Santa Rosa, Sebastopol	SC
Bullock's Oriole (ad.male)	12/31	Diekmann's Store	JP
Rusty Blackbird	11/16	Mendoza Ranch pond, Pt. Reyes	R. Mallory
Green-tailed Towhee	12/15	Goodyear Rd., Benicia	S&DR
Harris' Sparrow (imm.)	11/18	Bodega Bay "Bird Walk" area	D. Herzberg
Harris' Sparrow	1/1	Salmon Creek	PC
Clay-colored Sparrow	11/27	Bodega Bay "Bird Walk" area	DN, DF
Le Conte's Sparrow	12/20-1/4	Abbott's Lagoon, Marin Co.	WD, M.Ob
Rustic Bunting (fem.)	12/6-1/4	Golden Gate Park S.F., behind Academy of Sciences	AH, M.Ob
Evening Grosbeak	12/6	Wikiup Drive, Santa Rosa	DS

CONTRIBUTORS: Bob Battagin, Muray Berner, Tony Briggs, Scott Carey, Peter Connors, Mark Dettling, Wendy Dreskin, Dea Freid, Denise Hamilton, David Hamilton, Mike Heffernon, Denise Herzberg, David Hofmann, Alan Hopkins, Diane Humple, Gene Hunn, Ron Mallory, Dan Nelson, Becky Olsen, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Diane Rose, Steve Rose, Craig Roth, Ruth Rudesill, Doug Shaw, Alan Wight, and Ken Wilson.



6th Annual Petaluma CBC 4 Kids January 2, 2015

This year we faced frigid temperatures just above freezing at 9:00 AM before the combination of sun and hot chocolate warmed up the group of 15 kids, 9 parents, and 11 docents. It was a beautiful morning and the Petaluma Wetlands were full of water!

The kids tallied 71 species in 1,399 birds; the highest species total in our 6-year history. The bird of the day was unanimous—a Bald Eagle! It was a good day for observing other birds-of-prey including: Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper’s Hawk, American Kestrel, White-tailed Kites and Turkey Vultures.

We concluded the morning with a pizza tailgate party at Shollenberger Park and a sharing of the morning observations by the kids. Thanks go out to the helpful volunteer docents: Andy LaCasse, Len Nelson, Peter Colasanti, John Richards, Monica Schwalbenberg-Pena, Wayne Till, Gerald Moore, Mary Edith Moore, and Al Hesla. Thanks also to Amy Hesla and Rae Ann LaCasse for baking cookies.

One of the group leaders, Peter Colasanti, summed up the event well in a North Bay Bird post:

“Spent the morning with a group of 4 highly motivated knee-high birders on the Petaluma Kid’s CBC, headed by Al Hesla. At Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility there were 2 ROSS’S GEESE, continuing birds, with a flock of Canadas west of the Ephemeral Pond at the entry. Meanwhile back in Shollenberger Park the two groups there were treated to a marauding full adult BALD EAGLE which left with an American Coot, but not the almost fully leucistic one on the central pond behind the entrance. While we were all eating pizza

we had flyover Peregrine Falcon and a sub-adult GOLDEN EAGLE. It was the most fun I’ve had on a CBC yet this season. Seven down, 1 to go.”

A kind e-mail was received from one of the adults, addressed to Peter and me: “Thanks for all the work which you put into the birding event for kids yesterday. You fellows are great not only in finding and explaining birds to the kids (and their adults!) but you both are really terrific in how you work with the kids - so respectful, funny, and fun - great role models!”

That comment makes it all worthwhile.

Al Hesla



Allen’s Hummingbird named Audubon California’s 2014 Bird of the Year

San Francisco, CA

One of California’s most beloved birds today was named the 2014 Audubon California Bird of the Year. The Allen’s Hummingbird - which lives exclusively along the Pacific Coast from Mexico to Oregon - received the designation after totaling nearly 30 percent of votes cast during an online poll this fall.

The Allen’s Hummingbird migrates between wintering grounds in Mexico and breeding ground in California and southern Oregon, though some birds will stay in the Golden State year-round. The Allen’s Hummingbird prefers coastal areas with trees and shrubs, and is commonly seen taking nectar from flowers. It is also a popular visitor to backyard feeders.



Photo by David Levinson Published: Dec 15, 2014

“Every one of the nominated birds is beloved by Californians, but I’m not surprised to see the Allen’s Hummingbird come out on top,” said Brigid McCormack, executive director of Audubon California. “Everybody loves hummingbirds. It’s so small and delicate, but also remarkably hardy.”

An adult Allen’s Hummingbirds is about 3.5 inches long, with a wingspan of about 4 inches. It has an iridescent red throat and a shiny green back, and it weighs about the same as three or four paperclips. While the Allen’s Hummingbird is not

Continued on page 8

How to be part of Bird-A-Thon 2015

For Birding Teams:

Contact BAT coordinator Marcia Johnson at owlsnesttwo@att.net or 829-3808, and she will send you a sign-up sheet with instructions. Start signing up your sponsors.

After your “big day”, tell your sponsors how many species you saw and how much they owe.

Teams, send ALL your checks to Marcia at 1460 Big Cedar Lane, Sebastopol 95472, or bring them to the next General Meeting.

For Sponsors:

Say “Yes” to anyone who asks you to pledge. If no one asks, you can sign up to support a team at the General Meeting or contact Marcia.



HUMMINGBIRD

Continued from page 7

considered to be of conservation concern, Audubon researchers fear that could change in the coming years as development and non-native plants continue to chip away at its coastal habitat. Global warming is also predicted to have an impact on the Allen's Hummingbird. By 2080, the species could lose up to 90 percent of its breeding range, forcing it to find more hospitable areas elsewhere. To those who love watching the Allen's Hummingbird at their feeder, this could be a big loss.

More than 8,800 votes were cast in this year's Bird of the Year poll. The Allen's Hummingbird finished with 29.4 percent of the vote. The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo came in second place with 23.2 percent, followed closely by the Brown Pelican at 23 percent.

"Every species nominated was a focus of our conservation work over the last year," said McCormack. "Our hope is that the attention this award brings to the Allen's Hummingbird will help raise awareness of the conservation needs of all birds throughout the state. We encourage everyone to go outside or look out their window for the Allen's Hummingbird. It is a state treasure."

Cliff Swallows Legal Update

by Susan Kirks

In September 2014, plaintiffs met with Caltrans representatives for pre-2015 nesting season discussions, as required by our Settlement Agreement terms. Caltrans presented continued construction plans for the Petaluma River Bridge and indicated Lakeville Highway Overpass construction would be complete before the 2015 nesting season. Caltrans requested that plaintiffs consider an earlier end date to the officially established nesting season end date of August 15th. Caltrans was interested in a mid-July date, coinciding with Caltrans' ability for possible expedited 2015 construction activities. Plaintiffs considered Caltrans' request and respectfully declined the date change. Veronica Bowers of Native Songbird Care & Conservation has noted observations of late nesting swallows at the site into August. We will monitor Petaluma River Bridge construction activity March-August. If you would like to help as a bridge monitor, please contact Susan Kirks susankirks@sbc-global.net, 707-241-5548.

Article for Louisiana Ornithological Society Newsletter 12/9/2014

Audience: Birders (some with cats)

Focus: Education, links to resources, facts

Do a Little, Save a Lot: Keep Cats Indoors

As self-proclaimed bird lovers, members of birding and nature organizations across the country are uniquely positioned to enjoy, monitor, and protect America's resident and migratory birds. Whereas enjoying and monitoring these birds is standard practice, how to protect the birds we see is sometimes less apparent. It turns out that one of the best ways to contribute to bird conservation in the United States is to promote the practice of keeping domestic cats (*Felis catus*) indoors.

Outdoor Cats: Impacts on Birds

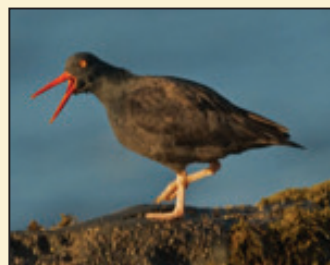
The introduction of domestic cats to environments around the world has resulted in substantial ecological damage and contributed to the extinction of 33 species. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists cats among the world's worst invasive species globally, and in the United States the Department of Interior's State of the Birds 2014 Report recognized outdoor cats as the number one source of direct, human-caused mortality for birds (Fig. 1). [see Fig.1 online at website address below]. A 2013 study by scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that outdoor cats kill approximately 2.4 BILLION birds every year in the contiguous United States alone.

Unfortunately, feeding cats is not enough to eliminate the risks to birds. Even well-fed cats instinctively hunt and kill. Although surprising to some cat owners, this behavior is confirmed repeatedly inside the home. When a cat plays with a feather toy or laser, it is demonstrating hunting behaviors that

NEW ITEM!

You can purchase a DVD about the northwest coast of Sonoma County. Madrone's Stewardship Task Force Committee, working on coastal research and restoration in far NW Sonoma County, has made up a dvd of video clips of birds, mammals and studies going on right now. Set to relaxing background music, there are wonderful photos as well as descriptive interviews of the projects HERE in the California Coastal National Monument off the Sonoma Coast. Bring views of the coast into your own home!

Contact Diane Hichwa to purchase one. \$10 for a standard disk and \$15 for a high-def disk. Please include mailing cost of \$3 for either.





CATS INDOORS

Continued from page 8

are often lethal when practiced outside on thrushes, sparrows, or other unfortunate victims. Even when cats do not directly kill birds, their mere presence has been shown to result in a reduction in the feeding of nesting chicks by one-third and an increased likelihood of nest failure by an order of magnitude.

Cats Indoors: Protecting Wildlife, Protecting People

Maintaining cats indoors also benefits birds, other wildlife, and people when it comes to disease transmission. Cats are known to carry and transmit a wide variety of parasites and diseases and may serve as a reservoir for some of these. Rabies and toxoplasmosis are of particular concern. Domestic cats are the number one carrier of rabies among domestic animals and, according to scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, represent a “disproportionate risk for potential human exposure” because people are much more likely to interact with a cat than with wildlife. Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by infection with

the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, which relies on felids to complete its life cycle. Up to 74% of all cats will host *T. gondii* during their lifetimes and subsequently excrete in their feces hundreds of millions of eggs (called oocysts) into the environment, where they remain infectious to all warm-blooded species for up to 18 months. Consequences of infection in people include miscarriage, blindness, memory loss, and death. For both rabies and toxoplasmosis, outdoor cats are far more likely to spread these diseases than indoor cats.

How to Help

Birding organizations have an opportunity to lead on an issue that is critical to the conservation of birds in America. For those of us that own cats, like myself, we can no longer avoid the inconvenient truth that allowing our pets outdoors kills birds. Whether our cats are walked on a leash or kept in an outdoor enclosure, we must represent the change we wish to see in the world and lead by example. Second, kind but persistent education of our communities about the many benefits of maintaining cats indoors (e.g., cats live longer, healthier lives) is necessary.

A number of resources are available to help with this endeavor, but I recommend beginning with American Bird Conservancy’s Cats Indoors website (www.abcbirds.org/cats). Finally, promoting bird-friendly legislation and speaking against misguided public policies is essential to ensuring long-term conservation. With determination, it is possible to prevent the deaths of billions of birds throughout the United States and to show people that keeping cats indoors is better for cats, better for birds, and better for people.

Grant Sizemore

Director of Invasive Species Programs
American Bird Conservancy

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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 meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: telephone answering service - 546-7492, e-mail - info@madroneaudubon.org.

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