



Madrone LEAVES

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

VOLUME 44

February 2011

Number 5

Birding Tolay Regional Park Through the Year

By Peter Colasanti

There is a sea of grass separating the island of forest that is Marin from the Pacific Northwest which biogeographers call the coastal prairie. A few years back, the County of Sonoma saw fit to protect three square miles of this prairie as Tolay Regional Park (TRP). Petaluma Wetlands Alliance (PWA) was involved in the initial acquisition of the property and later we agreed to conduct monthly bird surveys during the development of the property as a park. When Tolay Creek Ranch, downstream from TRP, was acquired by the Sonoma Land Trust with the intention of eventually adding it to TRP, we commenced surveys there as well. After four years, we've begun to get a glimpse of avian events on both properties, and can offer some suggestions for birding the park through the seasons.

January features wintering raptors. Both Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks are likely, four species of falcon and three of accipiter have been found. The night shift includes Barn, Great Horned, Short-eared, and Burrowing Owls.

In a typical year, the lake is flooded for a while come February and then we see our greatest numbers of waterfowl, over 1,000 individuals possible on both sides of the causeway. An approaching storm is likely to accentuate this, as southerly winds drive birds up from the bay.

In March spend some time around headquarters for the *Selasphorus* show. Large numbers of migrant Allen's and Rufous hummers tarry around the flowering euc

(Ed.: eucalyptus trees) behind and around headquarters, the latter refueling for their flight to as far as Alaska, the longest migration of any of the more than 300 species of hummingbirds. Grassland birds nest early, and sparrows are much in evidence now. Watch for soon departing White-throated and Lincoln's along the causeway. House Wrens, too, frequent this area in late winter, later heading up to the old growth oaks on East Ridge where they divvy up the available cavities among themselves and Violet-green Swallows, Western Bluebirds, Ash-throated Flycatchers, White-breasted Nuthatches... and yes, starlings.

April is birdy like September, only in technicolor. Climb the East Ridge now; you may find Black-throated Gray Warblers, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and a fine view of San Francisco. In April 2008 we observed a pair of Swainson's Hawks at the foot of East Ridge having a look for themselves. Maybe we'll find them nesting in Tolay during the upcoming breeding bird surveys.

By May the lake is starting to diminish noticeably, but is still attractive to late shorebirds and nesting waterfowl.

Breeding season is in full swing and activity on East Ridge is high well into June.

In July, take a trip to the Sierra. August is when shorebirds return. Ponds 1 & 2 may be worth a look at this time, as they're presently the likeliest spots for shorebirds in the park.

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

"Wildlife on Norway's Svalbard"

Monday, February 21, 7:30 PM
First United Methodist Church
1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

Jerry and Buff Corsi are avid photographers and international travelers, traveling to many of the finest wildlife hotspots of the world, such as the Antarctic, Galapagos Islands, Alaska, and Africa. Their photography has been published nationally and internationally, and they occasionally lead photo trips. Because of their love of cold summer climates, they have been to Svalbard four times with their video and still cameras.

Svalbard is an archipelago that is part of Norway, but located about 800 miles from the North Pole. Well known for polar bears, reindeer, and walruses, it is also home to many interesting birds. Buff and Jerry will show much of this in their Svalbard video, devoted to the wildlife of this fascinating, far-flung, beautiful place.

The Corsis live in Santa Rosa and conduct nature photography workshops at their company, Focus on Nature, Inc.

Coming 21 March: Bryant and Diane Hichwa, past presidents of Madrone, will take us to Ireland for seasonal birding, pubs, and traditional music.

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calendar

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.

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

February 1-28

BIRD-A-THON. Madrone's major fundraiser. See page 5.

Wednesday February 2, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Bob Speckels at robertspeckels@yahoo.com.

Thursday February 3, 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

HUICHICA CREEK AND HUDEMANN SLOUGH. Bird Walk. Meet at the Huichica Creek Unit of Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area parking lot. From Sonoma, take Highway 12 (Carneros Highway) toward Napa. Turn right (south) on Duhig Road, left on Las Amigas Road, and right on Buchli Station Road, which leads to the wildlife area. Bring a lunch. In the afternoon, we will bird the nearby Hudemann Slough wetlands and ponds. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday February 5, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

BODEGA BAY. Come explore with us one of Sonoma County's richest bird areas. From the center of the town of Bodega Bay, drive north on Highway 1. Turn left at East Shore Road (the Bodega Head turnoff), then right at the stop sign and continue 0.3 mile to the large, dirt parking lot on the right. Informal carpools leave Santa Rosa at 7:15 AM from the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District Office, 747 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa. To participate, please arrive by 7:05 AM to make arrangements. The parking lot is behind the office, accessed from Carillo Street. Bring lunch. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

Wednesday February 9, 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

BODEGA BAY. Bird Walk. From the center of the town of Bodega Bay, drive north on Highway 1, turn left at East Shore 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 a lunch. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday February 12, 9:00 AM

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

Thursday February 17, 8:30 AM to Noon

SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK. Bird Walk. Parking fee (\$6) for non-permit holders. From Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa, go east on Hoen Avenue, turn left on Newanga Avenue, turn right inside the park entrance gate, and meet in the parking lot near the restrooms at the top of the hill. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday February 19, 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 Gerald Moore at 763-3577; for the walk in Spanish, contact Connie Peabody at 338-2237.

Saturday February 19, 8:00 AM to Noon

SONOMA BAY LANDS. A wealth of ducks, raptors, and shorebirds, with good, close-up views. Meet in the parking lot of Port Sonoma Marina at the mouth of the Petaluma River. From Petaluma, take Lakeville Highway south to Highway 37. Go west on Highway 37, approximately one mile, then turn left into the Port Sonoma entrance. Follow the entrance road west all the way to the lot on the river. Carpooling is encouraged. We will visit a number of productive spots. Rain at the meeting site cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; Bob Speckels, 569-0563; and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

Monday February 21, 7:30 PM

GENERAL MEETING. Buff and Jerry Corsi will show a video of the wildlife on Svalbard, a group of islands in the Arctic Ocean, at the First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive in Santa Rosa. Please see the front page announcement. The public is always invited to attend these programs.

Wednesday February 23, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

GRIZZLY ISLAND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA. Bird Walk. Meet at McDonalds in the Sunset Shopping Center in Suisun City, located at the intersection of Highway 12 and Grizzly Island Road. Bring a lunch. Driving time to meeting point from Santa Rosa is approximately 1¹/₄ hours. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday February 26, 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 Bob Dyer, 763-2934.

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

SHOLLENBERGER PARK/ELLIS CREEK. Bird Walk. Search for wintering birds at the Shollenberger Park ponds and wetlands in Petaluma. Bring a lunch and afterwards, we will bird the wetlands of the adjacent Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility. Meet in the Shollenberger Park parking lot. From Santa Rosa, take the Highway 116 exit (Lakeville Highway), go left under Highway 101, turn right at the South McDowell traffic light, proceed to the City Park sign, and then turn right into the parking lot. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday March 5, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM

PUTAH CREEK/LAKE SOLANO. Sample the wealth of bird life in Solano County. Meet at Lake Solano Park, 8685 Pleasants Valley Road, Winters CA. Take Calistoga Road (becomes Petrified Forest Road) to Highway 128. Turn right onto Highway 128, left onto Deer Park Road, right onto Silverado Trail North, and then left onto 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. To carpool, please arrive by 7:30 AM at our Santa Rosa meeting place, the Safeway parking lot at the northeast corner of Highway 12 and Calistoga Road. We will park at the edge of the parking lot bordering on Calistoga Road. Bring lunch. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; Bill Doyle, 483-8773, and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

**BIRDING TOLAY**

Continued from page 1

Things pick up in September when Tolay's potential as a vagrant trap pays off. Migrants from-and-to moister climes in need of some quality downtime can be hard put to find vegetative moisture in the coastal prairie, and the riparian oases in Tolay is where they concentrate. We've had some luck in the riparian corridor along Tolay Creek south from headquarters with a Least Flycatcher in 2007. Headquarters itself is certainly worth checking as well as easy to access, but Pond 2 makes a better getaway. This year we've done best in Tolay Creek Ranch, with Bay-breasted Warbler, Mountain Bluebird, and Northern Goshawk on successive surveys through the fall.



Shortly after the first soaking rain is the time to experience another big country phenomenon as "crickets" come up out of the cracked adobe recesses on the ridges, providing a feast for a number of short-range migrants. Flocks of dozens of meadowlarks and killdeer take advantage of this, as do Red-tails. One day during the Pumpkin Festival in October, 24 juvenile Red-tails arrayed themselves along the southern reaches of East Ridge, both hovering and grazing. On a November morning this year, we logged over 400 Savannah Sparrows on the two ridges.

Thanks to everyone involved in the Tolay surveys, especially the principals, like Andy LaCasse, Elaine Pruet, Gary Compari, Len Nelson, ... and our county facilitators Steve Ehret, John Ryan, and Brandon Bredo.

For a more complete look at what we've found on our Tolay surveys, log onto eBird. Haven't tried that yet? Well don't waste the next rainy day. You can click up checklists of thousands of hotspots and select for year, highs, first arrivals, departure dates... So far we're over 160 species and counting. Have you seen anything you can add to that?

Petaluma Wetlands Alliance (PWA) Gets Major Impact Grant from the Petaluma Educational Foundation, 2010-2011

By Gerald Moore

For the third consecutive year, the PWA Education Committee has received a Major Impact Grant from the Petaluma Educational Foundation to help support their third grade wetlands educational program. The goal of this partnership is to grow the docent program so that we can reach every third grade class in Petaluma.

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Nestbox Notes

By Phil Persons

The breeding season for cavity-nesting passerines (song birds) has begun. Oak Titmice are building nests, others are getting in the mood, and migrant species will soon arrive. For those of us who support cavity nesters, it is time to get to work.

Nestboxes left up from last year need to be cleaned out. Good tools for the chore include a paint scraper to remove the accumulated bird poop, and an old toothbrush and small paintbrush to scrub and sweep out the debris. Overwintering insect pupae should be removed, since these may be blowflies. Active squatters include paper wasps of the genus *Polistes*, which build small nests of six-sided cells suspended by a thin stalk. Unlike its yellow jacket and hornet relatives, *Polistes* is generally a mild-mannered tenant that flies away when threatened, but returns to its nest and young. Most birds will not nest in a box occupied by *Polistes*, so you may decide to squash her; however, be prepared for a new wasp tenant soon. Another squatter that you might encounter is the deer mouse, *Peromyscus*, with a nest of pink, blind, hairless young. In these situations, your choice is to evict mom and kids or pair the box with another box that may attract a bird couple.

With housekeeping chores completed, consider adding new nestboxes. Boxes installed in suburban and rural areas may attract Western Bluebird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, House and Bewick's Wrens, Oak Titmouse, Tree and Violet-green Swallows, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, all three nuthatches and, alas, European Starling and House Sparrow. All of these species will breed successfully in the "standard" bluebird nestbox, easily and inexpensively built of long-lasting 1x6-inch redwood or cedar fence boards with a 1x8-inch roof. Exterior-grade plywood, used siding, and other scrap lumber in good condition are also acceptable. Construction drawings and tips are available on the Web sites of the North American Bluebird Society, www.nabluebirdsociety.org, and the California Bluebird Recovery Program, www.cbrp.org. If you prefer to buy, check out the high-quality boxes at the Songbird Hospital in Sebastopol by contacting Veronica Bowers at 484-6502.

Among the essential features, not all shown on the construction plans cited above, are the following:

- Construct the box so that one side, rather than the front, can be opened for viewing and cleaning.
- The diameter of the entrance hole should be 1½ inches. A smaller hole excludes bluebirds while a larger hole invites starlings.
- The roof should extend a minimum of three inches (more is better) beyond the box front to deter cats and raccoons from reaching through the hole to grab a meal.
- Because a perch below the entrance hole will invite House Sparrows and assist predators, do not add a perch to your box and reject any commercial box with a perch.
- Make horizontal cuts, spaced about one-inch apart, inside the box and below the hole to help weaker birds, especially migrating swallows, to exit.
- Cut small triangles from all corners of the floor board to permit water drainage. If the box is purchased and lacks drainage holes, drill several 3/8-inch holes through the floor.

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NESTBOX NOTES

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- Leave a 1/4-inch gap between the roof and sides for ventilation. If the purchased box does not have ventilation holes, drill 3/8-inch holes just below the roof.
- Do not paint boxes, but a coat of clear non-toxic preservative to the roof top may extend its life.

In a well-built box, the occupant's successful reproduction is determined by the location of the box with regard to habitat, weather, and predators. These factors will be reviewed in a future issue of *Madrone Leaves*.

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National and International Recognition

Nadananda, Executive Director for Friends of the Eel River, was selected as a River Warrior for 2010. These awards are given by the Water Heritage Trust, a project of the Resource Renewal Institute (RRI), "recognizing individuals and organizations that protect and improve water quality, fish, wildlife, and riparian ecosystems and acknowledging the sacrifice and dedication required to meet the challenge of climate change impacts on our land, water, and wildlife."

RRI, located in Mill Valley, California, was founded in 1985 by environmentalist Huey D. Johnson after his service as California Secretary of Resources in the Brown Administration (1978 -1982.) The organization has facilitated the creation, development, and implementation of practical strategies to solve environmental problems in a comprehensive framework. RRI maintains a streamlined organizational structure and works with expert consultants from around the world.

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Complex is to be named a Wetland of International Significance on World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2011, by the Ramsar (Iran) Convention on Wetlands.

Ramsar says, "Wetlands are among the world's most productive environments. They are cradles of biological diversity,

providing the water and primary productivity upon which countless species of plants and animals depend for survival. They support high concentrations of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrate species."

The City of Sebastopol tells us, "The Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Complex is located in Sonoma County, California, west of the City of Santa Rosa and east of the City of Sebastopol. The site is within the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed, with the Laguna de Santa Rosa being the largest tributary to the Russian River. The Laguna Wetland Complex is of particular international importance due to the rare and endangered plant and animal species it supports, the biodiversity of the region – one of the world's few diverse "hotspots," and the presence of unique vernal pool environments."

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Call for Mini-Grant Applicants

Funds help organizers create fun neighborhood events

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Celebrate Urban Birds" project is now accepting applications for another round of mini-grants. Grants average \$250-\$500 and are used to fund neighborhood events that promote an appreciation for birds and nature. Deadline to apply is 15 February.

Neighborhood events or projects feature activities involving birds, community service, art, greening, and science. Participants collect simple information about common birds and report to the Cornell Lab. "Celebrate Urban Birds" mini-grants could be used to support a bird-activity day at a local museum, afterschool program, library, or community center, or fund art and gardening activities at your club, business, school, senior center, or neighborhood.

To apply for a mini-grant, visit www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org. Organizations working with underserved communities are strongly encouraged to apply. No experience with birds is required.

"Celebrate Urban Birds" is a free, year-round citizen science project in which

participants watch birds in their neighborhoods and report what they see. This information helps scientists better understand how birds survive in cities and make use of green spaces, including parks and gardens.

Contact: Karen Purcell, Project Leader, 607-254-2455, urbanbirds@cornell.edu.

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Dutra Wins (for now)

By Gerald Moore

On 14 December 2010 the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, without allowing more public comment, approved the Dutra asphalt project by a vote of 3/2 (Kerns, Kelly, Carrillo.) The citizens of Petaluma (and elsewhere) are enraged and are evaluating their legal strategies. If you are against Dutra Materials building an asphalt plant across from Shollenberger Park and want to help continue the legal fight, please consider donating to our ongoing legal expenses. You can send a tax-deductible contribution to the O.W.L. Foundation (Open Space and Water Resource Protection and Land Use), 1390 North McDowell Blvd., Suite G-306, Petaluma, CA 94954. On the memo line of your check write "Save Shollenberger." The O.W.L. Foundation is the fiscal arm of the Petaluma River Coalition, which has mobilized the legal efforts against this asphalt plant project. One hundred percent of these contributions will go toward our legal expenses.

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Update on the Roblar Quarry

By Susan Kirks

On 14 December 2010, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 (Kerns, Kelley, Brown) in favor of the Barella rock quarry proposal on 70 of 200 acres in West Petaluma. Located in a pastoral agricultural area, the property is upland habitat with findings of California Tiger Salamander, California Red-legged Frog, American Badger, and Burrowing Owl. The proposal to use explosives and blasting also includes

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ROBLAR QUARRY

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up to 300 trucks daily, going in-and-out of the property. The property is 200 feet from the closed, unlined Sonoma County landfill. Residents are concerned about toxic leakage from the old landfill into the groundwater supply of the *Estero Americano* watershed.

The supervisors also voted 3-2 (Kerns, Kelley, Brown) in favor of allowing John Barella, the applicant, to use adjacent land for mitigation. In spite of this land having an open space agricultural easement, the supervisors are allowing the land to be used by Barella as mitigation for the destruction of California Tiger Salamander habitat and species on the quarry property.

Sadly, a pristine upland habitat area for the California Tiger Salamander, California Red-legged Frog, American Badger, and Burrowing Owl is now in jeopardy of destruction. In addition, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's reputation could be severely tarnished and this precedent may lead to the agency's demise.

The grassroots community organization, CARRQ (Citizens Advocating for Roblar Road Quality of Life/Opposing the Roblar Rock Quarry), led by President Sue Buxton, is considering its legal options and plans legal action in the form of both a CEQA lawsuit related to the project and an action related to the open space easement violation.

For more information, visit www.carrq.org.



Christmas Bird Counts

The 44th Western Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) a Success!

By Veronica Bowers

On Sunday 2 January 2011 Madrone Audubon conducted its 44th Christmas Bird Count in Western Sonoma County. Under partly cloudy skies and cool weather, 164 volunteers divided into 20 teams and searched the hills, valleys, rivers, and oceans of Western Sonoma County for birds. As usual, we enjoyed a high diversity of species. Our estimated species count is 182. The confirmed and final total will be reported on the Madrone Audubon and Na-

tional Audubon Web sites by February and a summary report will be printed in the March issue of the *Leaves*.

The success of this count can be attributed to the hard work of many people. Jeff Holtzman helped smooth the CBC registration process by bringing it online. Dennis Wheeler coordinated the snail-mail hardcopy invitation. Doug and Audrey King setup the post-count dinner, catered by Out to Lunch Catering. Janeann Erickson organized the dinner cleanup crew. And last but not least, Betty Burrige, Ken Wilson, and Peter Leveque helped review the raw data and continue to be an invaluable source of moral support and infinite wisdom. Many, many thanks to all!

The Second Annual Petaluma Christmas Bird Count for Kids

By Al Hesla

Petaluma's Christmas Bird Count for Kids in 2010 was a great success with 14 kids and their parents participating. Following some Binocular Boot Camp lessons by their birding team leaders at the Kenilworth Recreation Center, the four teams of kids, accompanied by their parents, set out to their assigned trails in the Petaluma wetlands for 90 minutes of birding. They identified 55 species in a total count of 1,618 birds. The teams then returned to the center for a cup of hot chocolate to warm-up.

The group enjoyed a brown-bag lunch and Gerald Moore told the history of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Each team reported their favorite bird observations with one group especially excited to see a gopher! The kids then enjoyed a rousing game of Bird Bingo--including prizes--where they matched bird names on their bingo cards with Bob Dyer's bird photographs projected on a screen. We were then treated to a special presentation from the Bird Rescue Center of Santa Rosa with three of their live, wild birds: a Turkey Vulture, a Merlin, and a Red-tailed Hawk. The kids learned about the care of injured wild birds and what harm humans can have from "imprinting" on the birds who attempt to care for them. All-in-all, a great day was had by all!

Special thanks to all who helped out in the event: Marilyn Blume, Peter Colasanti, Bob Dyer, Janeann Erickson, Kath-

leen Garvey, Helen Heal, Larry Johnson, Andy LaCasse, Gerald Moore, Mary Edith Moore, Len Nelson, Nora Lee Pearl, John Richards, Sally Rowland, John Shribbs, Bob Speckels, and Wayne Till. A very special thank you goes to co-sponsor Jan Mandrell, Recreation Supervisor in the Petaluma Parks & Recreation Department.



BIRD-A-THON 2011... A Reminder

By Marcia Johnson, Bird-A-Thon Coordinator

Please remember to support our Bird-A-Thon teams this month. The money raised promotes our educational and conservation programs. Donate any amount per bird species, or a set amount, and Madrone's teams will count birds on a day of their choosing in February. So when "The FeatherQuesters" with Diane Hichwa; "The Gray-headed Seersuckers" with Betty Burrige and friends; "The Roadrunners" with Betty Groce and Don McCarthy; or, new this year, "The Wandering Tattlers" with Barbara Arbvnich, Lisa Shiffirin, and Carol Zeidman ask for a donation, please do what you can to help.

We also remember the passing of Phyllis Schmitt, "The Dabbler", who did so very much for Madrone. If you would like to make a contribution in Phyllis' name, you are invited to send a check made out to Madrone's Bird-A-Thon (BAT), referencing Phyllis' name. Please send any donations to: Marcia Johnson, 1460 Big Cedar Lane, Sebastopol, CA 95472. Any questions? Contact Marcia at owlsnest@hughes.net or 829-3808.



Audubon Canyon Ranch Needs You

By Janet Bossard

If you have ever visited Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR), I am sure you have found it magical. It is a preserve with many different habitats and wildlife with nesting egrets and herons.

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AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

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Madrone is one of four Bay Area chapters that sponsors the Ranch's many educational and research programs. One of our commitments, as a supporting chapter, is to provide volunteers on the weekends that the Ranch is opened to the public during the nesting season, spring and beginning of summer. Membership is unnecessary to host. No experience is required; just wear a smile and show interest when greeting the visitors, culminating in a wonderful, fun day.

I have been recruiting hosts for many years and will be requesting volunteers, beginning at the February meeting. My list, a loyal but aging group of faithful members, is dwindling; and I need your help to continue our commitment to ACR. Volunteer for one day, Saturday or Sunday; however, you are welcome to volunteer for more days. If enough people sign-up, I will not make a call, asking that you volunteer an additional day.

Call Janet at 526-5883 for more information or to volunteer.

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Winter Outings

The 15th Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival

February 11-13, Mare Island, Expo Building 897, Azuar Ave & I Street, Vallejo CA.

The festival celebrates the annual wildlife migration through the San Francisco Bay Estuary. Activities include family wildlife exploration, birdwatching outings, guided nature walks, boat tours, and tours to discover some of the best local wetlands, wildlands, open spaces, and historic sites in the Bay Area. There will be exhibits, live bird visits, educational presentations, art, photography, and optics. There will be docent-led tours at the Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility, 9:30 AM to Noon on Friday and Sunday morning. For more information: contact Myrna Hayes, Festival Coordinator, 557-9816; myrnahay@pacbell.net; or visit www.sfbayflywayfestival.com.

Migration Festival at Natural Bridges State Beach

February 12, Santa Cruz CA

From 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Santa Cruz State Parks celebrate the wildlife that migrates to, through, and beyond the Santa Cruz area. Whether they creep, crawl, fly, or swim, local migratory creatures such as newts, steelhead trout, and bats take center stage at Natural Bridges where visitors can experience a variety of kids' activities, tours, interactive booths, and educational talks for adults. Cost: \$10 per vehicle parking fee; walk-ins free. If you buy one of the picnics provided, proceeds support ongoing educational programs.

For more information, call 831-423-4609 or visit <http://www.santacruzstateparks.org>.

Fourteenth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

February 18-21

This count is a joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon. Participants include all levels of birders. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Here's what to do:

- 1) Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes during the three days. Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like—just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location.
- 2) Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, and write it down.
- 3) Enter your results at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Audubon California Assembly

March 4-6, San Diego CA

(For details and/or register, see article in December 2010/January 2011 *Leaves*.)

Mark your Calendar: the upcoming Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival April 29 through May 2

Last year, nearly every walk and outing sold out well before the Festival weekend, so send an e-mail to aweiss@eacmarin.org asking to be notified when the online registration period opens for the 2011 Festival.

You can see the Festival species list and read about the terrific walks and outings that were offered at the 2010 Festival at www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org.

Memorial and Honor Gifts

In memory of Roy Adams Ashbrook

Kay Ashbrook

In memory of Martha Bentley

Al and Yolanda Wood

In memory of Elaine Buffington

Fredrick Crichton

In memory of Pat Carlson

Stanley M. Salomon

In memory of Cindy Hwang

Kathy Rodrigues

In memory of Craig Maynard

Cheryl Maynard and Anthony Mountain

In memory of Phyllis Schmitt

Terry Carroll, Mike Heffernon, Diane and Bryant Hichwa, Richard Hurley, Paula Lane Action Network, Wendy and Steve Smit, Daphne Smith, Janice Vough

In memory of Jim Tonascia

Jean L Tonascia

In memory of Jack Troutfetter

June England

In memory of Sally

Diane Noel

In honor of Val and Adele Skirk

Kay Ashbrook

In honor of Mi Mi and Zoe: two indoor-only cats who enjoy watching the birds at the bird bath and feeder

Denise L. Matlak

**Observations**

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

Eurasian Wigeon (male)	Dec.	Bodega Harbor, south end	M.Ob
Long-tailed Duck	Dec.	Bodega Harbor, west of The Tides	M.Ob
Long-tailed Duck (1-2)	Dec.	Off Second Street, Benicia, Solano County	M.Ob
Barrow's Goldeneye (male)	1/3	Laguna de Santa Rosa, from High School Road	BD
Barrow's Goldeneye (3)	Nov.	Petaluma River at Highway 37	DN
Barrow's Goldeneye (12+)	12/26	Off Second Street, Benicia, Solano County	RR
Hooded Merganser (8)	12/24	Shiloh Regional Park	CK, NK
Great White-fronted Goose (4)	9/26	Bridgehaven pond	DBarry
Tundra Swan (2)	Dec.	Tomales Road pond, west of Coast Guard Station	M.Ob
Common Moorhen (40+)	Dec.	Ellis Creek pond	RR
Red-necked Grebe (2)	Nov-Jan	Doran Jetty area	M.Ob
Rhinoceros Auklet (1)	1/2	Observed 100 meters off Bodega Head	DN, BDP
Marbled Murrelet (2)	1/2	Off Bodega Head	M.Ob
Ancient Murrelet (8-10)	1/2	Off Bodega Head	M.Ob
Arctic Loon	1/2	Dillon Beach, Marin County, just offshore	DW
Glaucous Gull (1st yr.)	12/19	Rohnert Park, pond near dog park just east of Highway 101	RL, RM
Glaucous Gull (1st yr.)	1/5	Doran Jetty area	DF
Rough-legged Hawk	10/26	Point Reyes	DBarry
Ferruginous Hawk	9/25	Mann Ranch, north of Jenner	DBarry
Merlin	9/22	Shollenberger Park	AL, MEM
Prarie Falcon	12/30	Lichau Road	KW, BO
Prarie Falcon	12/28	Las Gallinas treatment ponds, Marin County	CB
White-tailed Kite (2)	10/13	Paula Lane, Petaluma	SK
White-tailed Kite (30+)	Nov.-Dec.	Rohnert Park, historical winter roost site; Lyman/LaSalle area	M.Ob
Burrowing Owl	9/25-26	Mann Ranch, north of Jenner	DBarry
American Bittern	9/26	Shollenberger Park	GM, fide MEM
Least Bittern	12/30-31	Pickleweed Trail, Martinez Regional Shoreline	JL, et al
American Golden Plover	mid Nov.	Still present at Shollenberger Park	BDP, DHo
Pacific Golden Plover (3)	12/27	Shollenberger Park	RR, et al
White-headed Woodpecker	12/9-12	"First county record", Sea Ranch, just west of airstrip	D&B Hichwa, BDP
Red-breasted Sapsucker	Oct.-Nov.	Larkfield	CK, NK
Tropical Kingbird	12/23	Las Gallinas treatment ponds	DBengston
Yellow Warbler	Dec.-Jan.	Diekmann's store, Bodega Bay	DN, BG, et al
Nashville Warbler	Dec.	Santa Rosa, west 3rd St. pond, east side	DBarry
Black-throated Gray Warbler	12/19	Doyle Park, Santa Rosa	BD
Swamp Sparrow	12/28	Las Gallinas treatment ponds	CB
Swamp Sparrow	12/27	Ellis Creek	RR
Swamp Sparrow	1/6	Sebastopol Community Center, north of Baseball fields	SC
Rusty Blackbird	11/11	"First county record", Doran Kiosk pond	DHo
Rusty Blackbird (male)	11/18	Doran Launch ramp (photo)	DBrown
Western Tanager	1/6	High School Road/Occidental Road, in Vineyard	SC
Evening Grosbeak (4)	12/3	Circadian Way, north of Occidental Road	DBarry
Evening Grosbeak (15)	12/15	S.R.J.C. Campus, east side near gym	GW
Evening Grosbeak (4)	Dec.	Fountaingrove Parkway area, near Agilent	AW
Arctic Loon	12/23	Bodega Harbor, near Campbell Cove (Q:same bird as later found at Dillon's?)	GF
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	12/18-21	Point Reyes, off estero trail to bay	M.Ob

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February 2011

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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 7:30 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 - madroneaudubon@um.att.com.

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