



# Madrone LEAVES

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

VOLUME 46

Summer 2014

Number 6

## Congratulations to the 2014 Award Recipients

Another interesting year has gone by for Madrone, and we've had many wonderful activities: birding opportunities, fun events for adults and children, excellent and entertaining programs, habitat restoration, research, and successes in the area of conservation. Madrone is fortunate that it has members who are willing to step forward when the going gets tough, and it has been a very tumultuous year. It is unusual for Madrone to give out so many annual awards, but this year reflects the dynamic activities which took place during the lawsuits against Caltrans. And now we honor some of those members who have made outstanding contributions to our chapter.

### The Evalyn and Les Bowen Award – Gordon Beebe

In 1967 it was the countless hours and abundant energy from Evalyn Bowen that launched the new Chapter, the Madrone Audubon Society. Recognizing that same energy and involvement, Gordon Beebe is the recipient of the Bowen Award, established in 1988. Gordon's contributions include helping in the update of Madrone's website, followed by time-consuming hours interacting with the web designer while maintaining the current website. He also stepped into a coordinator's position for the Breeding Bird Atlas update. As a Bird Walk leader,

Gordon's low-key, informative approach has helped beginning birders feel comfortable on bird walks amidst experienced birders. Gordon has a deep commitment and appreciation of birds, wildlife, and nature.

### Bewick's Wren Award – Tom McCuller

The Bewick's Wren Award, named for the bird that is Madrone's logo, was established in 1991 to acknowledge individuals who have given long-time, exceptional service to the chapter. In 2014 we recognize Tom McCuller as this individual. For many years Tom has planned and led Madrone's mid-week bird walks. He is knowledgeable, kind, and patient. Every trip with him is a learning experience. Last year he took the birders on an overnight trip to the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges. Tom planned the route, selected the motel, arranged a restaurant, made maps for participants, and made sure everyone had a walkie-talkie in the car to communicate sightings.

### The Bentley-Smith Award – Veronica Bowers and Helen Heal

Madrone Audubon Society instituted the Bentley-Smith Award in 2002. The award is given to recognize a Madrone member for contributions to the protection and enhancement of the environment through education and/or conservation activity in the community. This year we present the award to two individuals, Veronica Bowers and Helen Heal.

Veronica has had many roles in Madrone: leading the then-named Pee-Wee (Junior)

## A NOTE FROM YOUR BOARD

### New Officers and a Big Vacancy

At the April 21 General Meeting we introduced a Slate of Officers for the 2014-2015 year. The vote was unanimous for:

**President** – Gordon Beebe

**Vice President** – Tiffany Erickson

**Treasurer**– Kathleen Barker

**Recording Secretary** – Emily Heaton

**Corresponding Secretary**– Vacant

We wish to thank the "retiring officers": Susan Kirks who will step down as President but remain on the board as Past-president to help in the transition and Monica Schwalbenberg-Pena as Corresponding Secretary.

The Nominating Committee (Diane Hichwa, Susan Kirks, Gordon Beebe) is grateful to all of the volunteers who offer their time to keep this chapter thriving and active.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

No General Meetings in the months of June, July, or August. Enjoy your summer—it will be over only too quickly.

### Coming Monday September 15

Robert Lewis, a Golden Gate Audubon board member and award-winning photographer, will present his "Marvelous Madagascar."

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

**info@madroneaudubon.org**

You will get your copy faster and help save paper.

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## Summer 2014 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 June 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.

*Saturday June 7, 7:30 AM to Noon*

**SALMON CREEK ROAD.** Meet at the corner of Bodega Highway and Salmon Creek Road, in the town of Bodega (not Bodega Bay), where we will combine into as few cars as possible. Please do not join us in an additional vehicle after the trip has started, as a large number of cars negatively impacts the birding and the residents of the area. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

*Saturday June 14, 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 June 21, 7:30 AM to Noon*

**ANNADEL STATE PARK, CHANNEL DRIVE.** Meet in the Annadel State Park parking lot, at the very end of Channel Drive. Parking fee (\$8) for non-permit holders. Rain cancels. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

*Saturday June 21, 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 June 28, 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 at 763-2934.

*Saturday July 12, 7:30 AM to 1:00 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. Bring lunch. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

*Saturday August 16, 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM*

**BODEGA BAY.** See directions above to Bodega Bay. Bring lunch. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

*Wednesday September 3, 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM*

**BODEGA BAY.** See directions above to Bodega Bay. Bring lunch. Information: Tom McCuller, sisypus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

*Saturday September 6, 8:00 AM to Noon*

**RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK** on Ragle Ranch Road, Sebastopol. Join us to look for early fall migrants, as well as a wide variety of our familiar county birds. Meet in the parking area near the dog park. Parking fee (\$7) for non-permit holders. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

### AWARD RECIPIENTS

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Audubon, organizing activities for International Migratory Bird Day, coordinating the West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count for the past six years, and coordinating the project for the Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas. Her education and conservation efforts have direct impact on injured and orphaned birds as she is Director of Native Songbird Care and Conservation in Sebastopol. In 2013 she discovered dead Cliff Swallows in exclusionary netting on the Petaluma River Bridge, which prompted formation of a coalition to take legal action and then corrective action by Caltrans. She has authored an educational pamphlet to help property owners understand how to coexist with swallows.

**Helen** became a Petaluma Wetlands Alliance (PWA) docent in 2005 and two years later agreed to become the Education Chair, continuing and expanding the third grade schoolchildren wetlands program for all the third grades in the Petaluma River Watershed. This is a monu-

mental task, but Helen's background as a Ph.D. in Child Development Psychology and her professional experience as an educator and facilitator is definitely an asset. She has brought this professional experience to PWA and used it to optimize the quality of material presented in PWA's third grade curriculum. The children who go through the two-day program learn a great deal of wetlands science and are excited about it, often the children's first exposure to science.

Helen has distributed leadership and responsibility in the program and considers her role to be supporting other docents in bringing their particular expertise and skills to the program and the students.

#### Burridge Award – Hollis Bewley

The Betty Burridge award was established in 2008 to honor Betty's lifetime contributions to citizen science. Fittingly this award recognizes those who contribute to research and education through citizen science; this year Hollis Bewley is the recipient. Hollis has been active on

the Sonoma Coast from Bodega to Jenner where she participated in the Black Oystercatcher survey for a population census in CA. She has shared many of her photographs, documenting observations of coastal natural history. Also in the past two years, she has helped start a seabird monitoring program with Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods at sites from Bodega Rock to Jenner. Hollis has trained other volunteers and mentored them as they began their counts. Her enthusiasm for the birds and desire to know more about them is contagious and a great example for the trainees.

**Madrone Audubon Special Recognition** (previously Friend of Madrone Award) –

**Marc Levine, Scott Brodhun, Elaine Pruetz, Brian Gaffney, Animal Legal Defense Fund, and Meyer, Glitzenstein & Crystal**

This award goes to a business, agency, or contact that has assisted Madrone Audubon Society or the environment in a noticeable way.



### AWARD RECIPIENTS

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**Assembly member Marc Levine** and his staff successfully legislated into Caltrans' budget approval process the requirement to coordinate plans with conservation organizations prior to nesting season in order to protect migratory birds at the Petaluma Bridges. This innovative process of connecting the Caltrans State Budget approval with improving protection for migratory birds is deeply appreciated by our Madrone Audubon Chapter and the conservation community.

**Scott Brodhun, Assistant City Manager and Director of Parks & Recreation for the City of Petaluma**, has worked closely with Petaluma Wetlands Alliance to support habitat restoration and wildlife protection. He devoted extraordinary time and energy to facilitate review and approval by the Petaluma City Council to submit the city's five wetland properties for inclusion in the San Francisco Bay/Estuary designation as Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. Scott is also skilled in negotiating conservation land acquisitions. We recognize Scott as a friend of the environment and a person within government who reflects integrity and fairness. Scott brings these qualities to his work and relationships in the community.

**PWA Docent Elaine Pruett** championed the native plants, protecting them from the invasive nonnative Yellow Star Thistle (YST) in Shollenberger Park and the Petaluma public wetlands. She thought the YST should be given the highest eradication priority so that restoration would succeed. At daybreak you could find her along the trail with a stool and pockets which held hand tools and pruning bags. Restoration volunteers followed her example by removing the thistle, resulting in a dramatic reduction of YST. Elaine's habitat restoration continued at Shollenberger when she took on the removal of other invasive nonnatives.

Elaine was a team member of the Maya-

camas Mountain Sanctuary Stewardship Patrol to remove litter and report vandalism. For many years she recorded bird surveys (see eBird) at Shollenberger, Ellis Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Tolay Regional Park, and Tolay Creek.

Today Elaine has curtailed some of her activities; however, you can still find her in the early morning attacking Harding Grass seed heads along the Shollenberger trail.

**Brian Gaffney, Esq.** initiated the legal process related to the Cliff Swallow deaths at the Petaluma River Bridge. Mr. Gaffney's expertise and expedient actions helped set in motion a legal pathway that was able to be continued by the coalition. We are grateful for his and his staff's expertise and assistance.

The two law firms, **Animal Legal Defense Fund (Danny Lutz, Esq. and Carter Dillard, Esq.)** and **Meyer, Glitzenstein & Crystal (Eric Glitzenstein, Esq.)**, led the coalition of Veronica Bowers, Native Songbird Care & Conservation, Madrone, Marin and Golden Gate Audubons, and the Center for Biological Diversity in filing the Cliff Swallows lawsuit against the Federal Highway Transportation Administration and Caltrans.

Although the injunction to halt work at the Petaluma bridges was not granted, an amendment of the lawsuit to seek additional environmental review for the large nesting colony at the Petaluma bridges (information not included in the original Marin Narrows Highway Widening environmental document) moved through a process to eventual settlement with the defendants. In this settlement, the plaintiffs achieved new standards of exclusion and protection for migratory birds, requirement for close monitoring during construction, and funding for the public and educational outreach. We are deeply grateful to the skilled legal teams for guiding us through a challenging process to an outcome with the potential for new exclusionary methods during bridge construction in California

which will afford higher levels of protection for migratory birds.

*Madrone Audubon would like to thank the members of the Awards Committee—Susan Kirks, Gordon Beebe, Janeann Erikson, Joannie Dranginis, and Diane Hichwa—for making the final selections and contributing information for this article.*

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## Summer Adventure in the Sierra

**13th Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua**

*June 20-22 at Lee Vining, California*

A Chautauqua is an institution that began in the late 19th century to provide higher education opportunities through the combination of lectures, concerts, and public events. Following this tradition, the popular Mono Basin Chautauqua offers over 40 presentations, workshops, field trips, and special events between Friday evening, June 20 and Sunday, June 22.

The Mono Basin encompasses one of California's richest natural areas, stretching from the Sierra Crest to the shores of Mono Lake, with a diverse mix of habitats. Thirty years ago birds became a rallying point for the protection of Mono Lake. Go to [www.birdchautauqua.org](http://www.birdchautauqua.org) for more information and registration.

### Are you a National Audubon member?

Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon (see membership form, back page)





## BIRD-A-THON 2014...And the Results Are Mostly In!

by *Marcia Johnson,*  
*Bird-A-Thon Coordinator*

We started out with four teams and ended with five...all very worthy birders. So far, the teams earned \$8,410.70 with more to come to support all of our biggest events. These include Christmas Bird Count, Junior Audubon, Lincoln Elementary School Bird Festival, and Audubon Adventures for the 3rd-5th grade students in Sonoma County.

Thank you to all the sponsors, and Tish and Brendan Brown who donated to the cause, for making this possible and the teams who did the work.

**“FEATHER QUESTERS”:** Diane Hichwa was solo this year, but spotted 121 species. It was a nice start at Sea Ranch for Diane, with first-of-the season Purple Martins overhead. At the Gualala River, an otter swam along and a Belted Kingfisher perched on the railing. Rough-winged Swallows were diving every which way, and a Red-breasted Sapsucker was busy at work. Virginia Rails answered Diane’s calls from her cell phone at the little ponds along Highways 116 and 1, and one Ross’s Goose still hung out with farm geese in Petaluma. Being later than usual in the spring meant hearing the familiar descending song of the Orange-crowned Warblers, the increasingly loud song of the Wilson’s, while Hutton’s Vireos sang their repeat performance over and over. Grebes, both Eared and Horned, sported breeding plumage colors and fancy feathers. Shollenberger Park had delicate long-legged American Avocets in breeding plumage with a wash of rust along their necks and heads. Ellis Creek nearby had chunky Northern Shovelers feeding. At Crane Creek near their Pressley house, Diane was able to locate the Lewis’s Woodpecker, a bird she had not seen in many years. The owls were out there also – a Western Screech Owl called as she went up the driveway, the

Great Horned “erked” for food in the night, and Sonoma State still had a Barn Owl persisting, with eight pellets and a fresh mouse below the nesting ledge.

**Sponsors:** All Tails Wagging Veterinary Clinic, Inc., Dorcas Allison, Gordon Beebe, Jeanne Marie and Davie Black, Betty Burrige, Scott Campbell, Buff and Gerry Corsi, Kit and David Daine, Gwen Dhesi, Joannie Dranginis, Don and Donna Friedrich, Jim and Glenda Gentile, Karlene Hall, Stephen Hemenway, Katherine Hichwa, Dr. Lynn Comminsky and Jesse Jernigan, Peter and Olivia Leveque, Susan Kirks, John and Jo Kleis, Lloyd and Deborah Kreuzer, Ann Luft, MaryAnn Desmond and Bill McKee, Kathleen Mugele, Karen and Ted Nagel, Mike Nelligan, Becky Olsen, Mike and Ruth Parmeter, Bev Penn, Sally Pola, Dave and Chris Powell, Rich Kuehn and Dean Schuler, Marilyn Scott, Richard Shipp, Daphne Smith, Carol Harrison and Don Tanner, Judy and Phil Temko, Danna Vough, Janice Vough, Linnea Westerberg, D.D.S., Anne Ysunza, and Cathy Zbikowski. **Amount raised: \$2,331.05**

**“ROADRUNNERS”** with Betty Groce and Don McCarthy completed their Bird-A-Thon February 25th under blue skies. As usual, they started in Betty’s yard near Annadel State Park, where they got the best birds of the day. A Pileated Woodpecker called from the park, and all three hummers came to feeders. Betty has been sidelined from birding with severe back pain, so their Bird-A-Thon was done from the car and in-or-near parking areas. She wanted you to know that so you wouldn’t think the sky had fallen when they only got 86 species for a full day’s effort. Good news—Betty is on the mend.

**Sponsors:** Judy Barker, George Batchelder, Jim Batchelder, Dennis Beall, Gordon Beebe, Ellen Bingel, Malcolm Blanchard, Janet Bosshard, Linda Cadwell, James Clegg, Beth Combs, Ann Conger, Neal Conner, Rachel Corso, Steve DeSalvo, D.D.S., Nancy Dill, Kathleen Dowdakin,

Harriet Draper, Marilyn Edmondson, June England, Janeann Erickson, Jeanette Evans, Barbara and Joe Ferrari, Bob Frescura, Stan Gold, Gary and Terry Haag, Gordon Harlander, Susan Harris, Carol Harrison, Bob and Carol Hasenick, Denise Herzberg, Catherine Hickey, Don Howard, Richard Hurley, Susan Kirks, Karen Kubrick, Andy LaCasse, Joan Langfeld, Dennis Luz, Pat Marsh, Sandy Martensen, Shirl and Tom Maxson, Tom McCuller, Alexandra McDonald, Ellie Miller, Mary Edith Moore, Judy Morrison, Rob O’Donnell, Charlotte Oldaker, Carol Orme, Norm Ortman, Mike Parmeter, Liz Parsons, John Perry, Gaines Post, John and Polly Post, Elaine Pruett, Gail Purtell, Cynthia and John Rathky, Frank and Marilyn Rathman, RhioReigh, Suzanne Reta, Jaci Rienecker, Mike Rosen, Maureen Rumford, Jack and Joy Ryan, Bonnie Saito, Don and Marilyn Sanders, Virginia Schrock, Robin Schudel, Minnie and Tom Silman, Daphne Smith, Bobbie Sparrow, Lise Stevens, Marilyn Strand, Monica Schwalbenberg-Pena, Laurence Taylor, Barbara Toschi, Ernestine Trujillo, Frances Waska, Betty Witchey, and Richard Woodman. **Amount raised: \$2,838.90**

**“MARCH MADNESS”** with Gene Hunn and Ron Storey. This new team logged 185 miles over 15 hours, in temperatures up to 80 degrees, for a total of 149 species...wow! March 12 was a great day, starting at 4:30 AM on Adobe Canyon Road they heard a pair of Western Screech Owls, and a Northern Saw-whet Owl strafed Ron’s scalp. As dawn arrived, a pair of Northern Pygmy-Owls and Wild Turkeys called from Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. Spring Lake produced Osprey, Green and Black-crowned Night Herons, Eurasian Collared and Mourning Doves, Acorn, Downy, and Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, singing Brown Creepers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Orange-crowned Warblers. On to the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Delta Pond trail for White-tailed Kite, White-throated, Fox, Lincoln, Song, and Golden-crowned rounded out the Sparrows. What was

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**BIRD-A-THON**

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thought to be a Pileated Woodpecker, morphed into a Cooper's Hawk near last year's nest site. Heading west to the Russian River area were Steller's Jays, Violet-green and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Varied Thrush, and Wood Duck. From Jenner south, Red-necked Grebe, California and Herring Gulls, Willets, Black Turnstones, a single Whimbrel, more grebes, loons, cormorants, and Brant's Geese were spotted. Midday from Bodega Head produced an immature Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoters, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Red-throated and Pacific Loons, plus oystercatchers. Continuing on, a House Sparrow at the Tides, and on Smith Brothers' Road 2,000 Marbled Godwits and a mix of shorebirds were added. The town of Bodega produced a flock of Pine Siskins, and on to Gene's for a female Rufous Hummingbird, California Quail, and a Ring-necked Pheasant. At Lucchesi Park, Ring-billed and Thayer's Gulls were added, as well as a Ross's Goose. Shollenberger added a Sora and Virginia Rail, Long-billed Curlews, Killdeer, Black-bellied and Pacific Golden-Plovers, and a Mew Gull. Ellis Creek had Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged Teals, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Tree and Barn Swallows, Northern Harrier, Canvasbacks, Savannah Sparrows and a lone American Pipit. At Hudemans Slough, a Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitchers, Bonaparte's Gulls, a Redhead, and Cliff Swallows were seen. Skaggs Island Road added a Loggerhead Shrike and, on the way home, the last bird was a Great Horned Owl.

**Sponsors:** Gordon Beebe, Kurt Grote and Amy Hunn, Gerald and Mary Edith Moore, Ron Storey, and Arthur Wang.  
**Amount raised: \$288.45**

Visit our new website at  
[www.madroneaudubon.org](http://www.madroneaudubon.org).

**"GREY-HEADED SEERSUCKERS":**

Ken Wilson, Ian Morrison, and Ted Eliot had their big day on March 9th, beginning at 7:00 AM and ending at 7:00 PM for a total of 125 species. The team drove to the coast to catch the receding high tide at sunrise. The not-so-high-tide left plenty of mudflats for them to search on the harbor side of Doran where six species of shorebirds, including Sanderling, Semi-palmated Plover, and large flocks of Dunlin were counted. Other noted birds were a very pretty Eurasian Wigeon, Red-necked Grebe, and three species of loons, many of which were showing signs of alternate plumage. At Bodega Head, a group of Grey Whales were going north, while California Sea Lions swam below. Pelagic Cormorants sported distinctive alternate plumage, while a juvenile male Harlequin Duck showed well amongst many Surf Scoters. Also added were a lone Common Murre along with grebes and gulls. A short stop at Campell Cove brought in a calling Wrentit that alerted them to a passing Peregrine Falcon. The second falcon, an American Kestrel did not show until many hours later. Diekman's Store produced five species of sparrows, including Fox, Song, Lincoln's, White-crowned, and Golden-crowned, plus four species of warbler, Nashville, Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, and Townsend's. Also found were several Pine Siskins and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Next was Bodega "Farm Pond" where Canvasback plus Tree, Violet-green and Barn Swallows were seen. A flock of American Wigeon made a dramatic "fly-in" before the team left for Carmody Road. The ponds here were too full to provide habitat for shorebirds, but several species of ducks, including Ring-necked, were present. Also seen were Savannah Sparrows, Northern Mockingbirds, and Say's Phoebe. As time was at a premium, there was only one short foray to a forest habitat where Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco, and Varied Thrush were added. The balance of their day was spent at Shollenberger and Ellis Creek in Petaluma. Many gulls, but nothing out of the ordinary was seen, including California,

Ring-billed, Western, Glaucous-winged, and an occasional Herring Gull. Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets were abundant however. The low tide on the southeastern side uncovered new species including Long-billed Curlews, Black-bellied Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, and a lone Pacific Golden-Plover. White-tailed Kite and Northern Harrier rounded out the search before driving to Ellis Creek, the final stop. The pond closest to the parking lot held Cinnamon Teal and Lesser Scaup with a lone Northern Pintail. A walk around the rest of the ponds did not produce much more, but a willow tree provided food for Lesser and American Goldfinches, the last birds of the day. A "Drone" flying above the ponds, led this team to contemplate the future of the skies.

**Sponsors:** John Barinaga, Sue Bass, Gordon Beebe, Veronica Bowers, Harriet Derwingson, Bill Doyle, Ted Eliot, Whitney Evans, Caryl Hart, Mike Hayes, Roger and Kay Heigel, Jeff Holtzman, Ann Howald, Susan Kirks, Bill and Lucy Kortum, David Leland, Robin Leong, Ian Morrison, Becky Olsen, Earl and Kathy Rathbun, Margaret Salenger Haywood, Elisa Stancil, and Dave Stollmeyer.

**Amount raised: \$2,052.25**

**ZONOTRIPIAS:** The team was reduced this year by the loss of one member and the illness of another, resulting in the very lean team of Don Kirker and Bill Doyle. The team started the day at 4:00 AM at the Ellis Creek wetlands, listening for rails. They missed the Black Rail this year but did get the Clapper, Sora, and Virginia. Next stop was Sugarloaf Ridge State Park where they picked up Great-horned, Screech, and Spotted Owls. Onward to Alimos Road, where Mountain Quail, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker, plus many of the oak woodland birds were counted as dawn broke. And on they went, in a carefully planned look around the center of Sonoma County, getting many great birds, and missing some "easy" ones...the way it always is with the Bird-A-Thon. At the end of

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### BIRD-A-THON

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day, the duo team was back at Ellis Creek, where they found the two Blue-winged Teal that had been hanging around, plus the many great birds for which the Shollenberger/Ellis Creek public wetlands is famous. As the light was fading, they stopped at Lucchesi Park in Petaluma for the resident Ross's Goose and a very convenient Thayer's Gull. Finally they went to Sonoma State University to look for the always tough Golden-crowned Kinglets and the lingering Hermit Thrushes. As the team walked back to the car in the dark, tired but satisfied, a California Quail called from the brambles...the first one all day and species bird 152, capping a long and interesting day. Now the Zonotropias are looking forward to next year.

**Sponsors:** Gordon Beebe, Ira Byock and Yvonne Corbeil, Bill Doyle, Charles Doyle, Brent and Sarita Eastman, Amy and James Gray, Jeffrey Hanson, Robert Hughes, Julia Loomis, and Daphne Smith. **Amount raised: \$611.60**



## At Last, A Memorial for Doug Ellis

by *Diane Hichwa*

On Sunday March 30 a gathering and memorial for Doug Ellis was held at the entrance to Alman Marsh in Petaluma located at the Petaluma Marina/Sheraton Hotel. A kiosk and bench now stand there, in Doug's memory.



**Doug Ellis Kiosk Memorial**

*Photo courtesy of Gerald Moore*

I remember Doug as an excellent birder, but a bit shy. He was someone who could call

in owls of all types. It was a surprise to him one evening when nearly 50 people showed up for a Madrone Owling Field Trip with him on Salmon Creek Road. We stayed as quiet as we could while he took it in stride and was able to show us Northern Pygmy-Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Western Screech Owl, Barn Owl, a Spotted Owl called and in came a Great Horned Owl. When Doug had the birds "down pat" he started in on butterfly identification. And Kathy Biggs indicates he knew his dragonflies too! Several long-time friends of Doug were able to attend, and I asked them to share some memories.



**Long-time friends of Doug Ellis**

*Photo courtesy of Gordon Beebe*

*Standing left to right: Peter Leveque, Mike Parmeter, Richard Merriss Seated left to right: Rick LeBaudour, Dan Nelson, Ruth Rudesill, Sally Parmeter*

**Ruth Rudesill** knew Doug probably the longest of all of us. She wrote: I first met Doug in 1979, when I was a teenager, while attending a Peter Leveque Condor expedition. (It was awesome that Peter could attend the dedication!...he never seems to age...does he?) Doug lived a few blocks from me, and we became very close friends. We talked several nights a week on the phone and birded together a lot, including several out-of-state trips. We went to Giants baseball games together - baseball was his other love. (At the memorial Dan Nelson was wearing his Giants hoodie in Doug's honor.) Doug and I experienced several flash floods, a tornado in Minnesota, a sudden blizzard in the Sierra, and a break down at Candlestick Park after a night game. We saw many lifers together.

Doug was a top-notch birder, extremely intelligent and was well known for his quick

wit. I don't remember ever hearing him swear. He was extremely private but always shared his knowledge with others and participated in many bird counts (he was the Santa Rosa Count compiler for years), surveys, and atlased an insane number of blocks for the FIRST Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas.

His untimely death hit me very hard. I'm so glad this Memorial finally happened, as Doug passed away a dozen years ago. Sharing our remembrances was wonderful and tearful too. Thank you.

His owling was legendary - I remember once at Annadel he called in a very angry Northern Pygmy-Owl who raked his head, taking off a cap and scratching his head. Doug was proud of that scar! Doug found many folks their "lifer" owls of all local species.

His wit was also legendary - **Richard Merriss** recounted some of Doug's spoonerisms: "Bitter Americans" for American Bitterns, "See da Waxwing?" for Cedar Waxwing, Willetor "won't it", Moc-Kingbird; he started off many bird trips with his "Walkthis way" and would fake a limp ala Monty Python or Igor in Young Frankenstein (Doug was also a film fan).

We also thank Peter Colasanti for his craftsmanship in building the kiosk and bench.

We hope you will stop by and rest a while...



## Madrone's New Membership Chair

We welcome Elizabeth Gould as our new Membership Chair. Elizabeth has a deep connection to nature and a love for birds. She shares with us: "In January 1972, a flock of Cedar Waxwings graced our backyard deciduous peach tree in Davis. Immediately, my Dad's 1941 edition of Petersen's Field Guide appeared, and I was hooked." Elizabeth works with Clos Du Bois winery and enjoys daily walks around the pond. How appealing that her email address is cedarwaxwings@sbcglobal.net. She will begin to assume membership chair responsibilities this summer; her contact information will appear in the September issue of the *Leaves*.



## Observations

Spring 2014 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Eurasian Wigeon (male)	3/7	Doran Park entrance pond	DH
Blue-winged Teal (3-4)	March	Ellis Creek ponds	M.Ob
Tufted Duck (male)	2/10	Stafford Lake, Marin County	SK, MP
Redhead (3)	2/16	Hudeman Restoration Ponds	LH, RROS
Long-tailed Duck (male)	2/17-4/24	off Bodega Head, Doran jetties	DShu, et al.
Harlequin Duck (imm.male)	3/7-20	off Bodega Head	DW
Greater White-fronted Goose (8)	2/27	Rainsville Road	GH
Snow Goose (1)	2/20	"D" Street bridge over Petaluma River (fly-by)	DB
Marbled Murrelet (alt. plu.)	3/7	off Bodega Head	SC
Lesser Black-backed Gull (ad.)	2/13	Hay Road, Solano County	JM, DSi
Glaucous Gull (2nd yr)	2/12	Portuguese Beach	GH
Sabine's Gull (sub-ad.)	4/27	Tomales Bay, south of Inverness	PP, DSibley
Laughing Gull (ad.)	5/3	Gaffney Point, Bodega Harbor	RL
Franklin's Gull (ad.)	5/3	mouth of Russian River	RL
Forster's Tern (24)	2/16	Doran Park	DF
Caspian Tern (4)	2/17	Hamilton Field Restoration marsh, Marin County	JE
Rough-legged Hawk (dk. mor.)	2/20	Penngrove	JC
Rough-legged Hawk	2/23	Hudeman Slough	DM
Common Black Hawk	4/15	northwest of Sebastopol, apparently paired w/Red-shouldered Hawk	DN, et al.
Swainson's Hawk (2)	4/30	high over Bolinas, Marin County	PP, KH
Swainson's Hawk	4/24	Hudeman Slough	DN
Black Vulture	3/21	Tolay Creek	JC, SP
Black Vulture	4/13	near Joy Road	BM,DM,LH, LK, JL
Black Vulture	4/16	Laguna Road, off Guerneville Road	GB
Northern Pygmy-Owl	4/30	south of Freezeout Road	DN
Saw-whet Owl	4/26	west of Guerneville, near Northwood G.C.	DN
Barred Owl (2)	4/26	west of Guerneville, near Northwood G.C.	DN
American Bittern	4/28	Valley Ford, flying east over marsh	DN
Pacific Golden-Plover	Feb.-Mar.	Shollenberger Park	M.Ob
Solitary Sandpiper	5/1	N. McDowell Blvd ponds	RW
Marsh Sandpiper	4/9-11	Liberty Island Road (1st California Record)	RM, M.Ob
Northern Gannet	4/19-26	Alcatraz Island, courting a cormorant (Farallon Island bird)	JW
Common Poorwill	3/16	west end of Coleman Valley Road	KB
Lewis' s Woodpecker	through 4/15	Crane Creek Park	LS
Red-naped Sapsucker	2/16	Zimpher Creek near Brookhaven School	RStr
Rufous Hummingbird	2/24	Sebastopol	SC
Rufous Hummingbird	3/15	Windsor	RB
Rufous Hummingbird	4/13	Owl Canyon	SC
Rufous Hummingbird	4/25	Paula Lane, Petaluma	DN
Vaux's Swift (2)	3/1	Ellis Creek	BD
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	3/11	Phoenix Lake- Ross area, Marin County	RC
Olive-sided Flycatcher	4/12	Audubon Canyon Ranch, Marin County	JK, LF
Purple Martin (1)	4/30	Bolinas, Marin County	PP
Cliff Swallow (1)	2/20	Shollenberger Park	AW
Cliff Swallow (group)	3/4	Sebastopol Community Center	VB
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (2)	2/27	Spring Lake	RO'D
Warbling Vireo	3/29	Stinson Beach	DN
Nashville Warbler	through 2/17	Diekmann's Store, Bodega Bay	DShu
Wilson's Warbler	3/16	Willow Creek Road	DN
MacGillivray's Warbler	5/3	Pine Flat Road at Little Sulfur Creek Bridge	DK
Northern Waterthrush	through 3/20	Diekmann's Store	DF
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/5	east of Kelly Pond	DK
Western Tanager	4/30	Paula Lane, Petaluma; singing male in yard	DN
Great-tailed Grackle (2)	2/28	Ellis Creek	GH
Bullock's Oriole (male)	3/15	Windsor	RB
Hooded Oriole (2 female)	3/25	Paula Lane, Petaluma	DN
Swamp Sparrow (2)	2/26	Spring Lake; northeast side, near spillway	RR
Brewer's Sparrow	2/18-21	Shollenberger Park	RSto, GH, DN et al.
Lazuli Bunting	4/20	Chileno Valley Road, Petaluma	DN
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4/8-10	Santa Rosa Creek, west of Willowside Road	DK

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## Madrone Audubon Society

Post Office Box 1911  
Santa Rosa, California 95402

Summer 2014

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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 - info@madroneaudubon.org.

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