



# Madrone LEAVES

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

VOLUME 48 October/November 2015 Number 2

## Gone, But Her Garden Lives On

by Linda Curry

Ernestine “Ernie” Smith was born September 22, 1914 in Paso Robles, CA and died August 12, 2015 in Santa Rosa, CA. A founding member of Madrone Audubon Society with Evalyn and Les Bowen, Martha Bentley, and Jack and Deyea Harper, they created a strong foundation for a vibrant organization that has served local Audubon members for 50 years. Ernie was always active in chapter conservation and education initiatives, and many chapter members got their first taste of nature with guidance from Ernie out in the field or from Martha’s many visits to local classrooms.

When Martha moved to Santa Rosa, it was stroke of luck that she moved across the street from Ernie’s cousin, Docia Patchett. It was the beginning of a long friendship that joined two friends in many endeavors to preserve local agricultural lands, maintain coastal access for all Californians, and provide stewardship to local creeks and Sonoma County before the general plan was adopted in 1980s. Ernie was the driving force to establish the

Sinkyone Wilderness area. Any recent visitor to “Lost Coast” can appreciate that some of the prime areas that originally served Native Americans for thousands of years have been protected permanently as a CA state park.

Ernie would credit her love of nature to growing up on a ranch near Creston, riding a horse to school. On her way to becoming a very experienced birder with an extensive life list, she studied insects for her BA in Biological Sciences in 1940

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Photo courtesy of Linda Curry

### GENERAL MEETING

Monday October 19, 7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

#### “Waterbirds – Update on Conservation Efforts”

Kerry Wilcox, Waterbird Program Manager at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary, will speak on the newly formed Waterbird Program which is housed at the Sanctuary. The program aims to focus conservation action on dwindling waterbird populations such as Surf Scoter and Greater Scaup throughout the SF Bay and Pacific Flyway. The lecture will describe the goals of the program, what has been accomplished thus far, and how chapters might be able to get involved.



Photo courtesy of Gordon Beebe

### GENERAL MEETING

Monday November 16, 7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

#### “Birds and Climate Change: How Will Local Species Be Affected?”

Andrea Jones, Audubon California’s Director of Bird Conservation, will highlight the recent National Audubon Society report on birds and climate change, discussing how local bird ranges might be changed and shrunk over the next 100 years. Of the many climate-endangered species listed in the study, Audubon California has prioritized six for conservation focus: Western Grebe, Clark’s Grebe, Black Oystercatcher, Long-billed Curlew, Allen’s Hummingbird, and Yellow-billed Magpie.



National Audubon Society

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### HER GARDEN LIVES ON

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and received an MA in 1956 in Science Education from San Jose State. Never shy about getting into nature, young Ernie captured countless insects, and even a lamprey, to share with girl scout campers while working on her Master's thesis. From 1948 to 1973, she taught physical education at Santa Rosa Junior College, where a scholarship in her name is awarded annually to students in the natural sciences.

In later years, at one of many wastewater hearings, a Press Democrat reporter asked what she did. Always modest, Ernie replied, "I'm retired. I work in my garden a lot." When pressed for more details, she said she had always been a farmer of sorts, as her companion quipped that she was "growing a new crop of environmentalists". They both had a good laugh when her testimony was quoted in the PD and referred to her as a farmer.

While teaching at the junior college, she lived with cousin Docia till she bought the small house next door. Docia and Ernie entertained students, friends, and family from all over the world by organizing field trips and campouts throughout CA, especially Yosemite, the Sierras and North Coast. She corresponded with several exchange

students and teachers, with some for over 50 years. Her letters to the editor, the governor, and various legislators were famous for well-researched facts presented in a compelling manner. She continued writing lengthy, longhand letters well into her '90s.

Ernie was invited by David Bouverie along with Jack Harper, Clark Nattkemper, Iva Warner and Linda Curry to visit his ranch in Glen Ellen as he was considering a donation to Madrone Audubon. Ernie had also been part of the team to get Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) started and knew the Madrone organization as an all-volunteer group was ill-equipped to steward the potential bequest. Working with Les Perry, Phyllis Ellman and others, the Bouverie Preserve was finally deeded to ACR for outdoor education and scientific research. Phyllis and Ernie were part of the original docent class and started a healthy, outdoor education program for 3rd and 4th graders. Her research activities in Stuart Creek went on for over 20 years. Ernie was one of the original Quercus Quire that still bring nature songs to schools throughout Marin and Sonoma counties. We will all miss her very accurate frog imitation.

Due to her many efforts for the environment, Ernie was awarded as Earth Elder, the Otto Teller award in 1993, and the Environmentalist of the Year award. She was recognized as key contributor/fundraiser for campaigns that established the CA Coastal Commission and the Rural Heritage Initiative in Sonoma County that created the Open Space and Agricultural Preservation District to acquire lands to serve as community separators and wildlife corridors while conserving agricultural soils. Madrone continues

to present an Ernestine Smith award for outstanding efforts in conservation each year.

Ernie used shoe leather, telephones, and door-to-door campaigns. She saw the Internet created, but never had a computer. What a legacy of taking the next generation out on the trails with spirited, but always courteous, discussions full of tenacious advocacy for Nature based on experience and science. No memorial at Ernie's request, but we might still plant some trees or clean up a beach or creek in remembrance. Her estate was donated to Audubon Canyon Ranch.

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### Cliff Swallows and the Petaluma River Bridge 2015

by Susan Kirks

Nesting season at the Petaluma River Bridge has concluded. This was not an easy year for the cliff swallows. Daily monitoring at the bridge beginning in mid-April and continuing through mid-August revealed many concerns. Animal Legal Defense Fund (ADLF) attorney Jeff Pierce brought these issues to Caltrans' and regulatory agencies' attention – on several occasions.

The construction season for 2015 primarily involved demolishing the old northbound lane of the bridge pre-nesting season, then constructing the new northbound lane during nesting season. Demolition of the old southbound lane was also part of the 2015 construction schedule. The cliff swallows historically nest on column tops and in girders under the old

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Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.

(see membership form, back page)



## CLIFF SWALLOWS

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southbound lane, particularly near and over the river. The timing for this demolition was important in terms of ensuring the end of all active nesting prior to demolition.

Cliff swallows arrived in the hundreds in late April and constructed nests, basically everywhere in preferred nesting locations. Caltrans had informed Plaintiffs, now in the 2nd year of litigation Settlement, a full exclusion to prevent nesting at the bridge would occur. This would be achieved through use of the same hard surface exclusion material that was effective in the prior year and, also, *nest scraping and pressure washing to prevent nesting*. This decision emanated after Plaintiffs declined to agree to Caltrans' request to modify the end of nesting

season date to July 15 from August 15. Caltrans had indicated, based on their biologist's observations, nesting had concluded in prior years by July 15. Caltrans representatives expressed the belief that a July 15 nesting season end date would also be better for the birds next year, in terms of their construction season and impacts, allowing Caltrans to proceed with old southbound lane demolition after July 15, along with other construction activities. Prior to the beginning of nesting season, our legal counsel requested the undersurface of the bridge be left open for nesting. Caltrans eventually agreed to leave the undersurface of the new median only under the bridge open for nesting. Plaintiffs' request for construction of an alternate nesting structure close to the bridge was rejected by Caltrans. Caltrans representatives had

indicated Lakeville Highway Overpass would be left open for nesting, with bridge construction complete there. While Plaintiffs viewed this possibility favorably, we explained to Caltrans there was no guarantee the cliff swallows would decide to move over to the Lakeville Highway Overpass and nest when the river bridge was historically their preferred nesting site after such a long migration. When the cliff swallows arrived and their nest construction speed exceeded Caltrans' ability to nest scrape and remove nest starts, Caltrans then communicated they had left the entire undersurface of the bridge open for nesting.

On July 15, active nesting was still in process at the bridge, as it was through August into August 15, based on Plaintiffs' monitoring. Our monitoring indicated the possibility of 3 or more remaining active nesting sites. Caltrans' biologist reported one active nest under the bridge in the old southbound lane area. Caltrans began what they described as "prep" for demolition on August 17. Plaintiffs received this report from the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife two days after Caltrans informed the Department of their planned activity of "prep" with a 33 foot buffer zone to reportedly protect the active nest with nestlings. Our observation indicated the "prep" was demolition, with heavy construction equipment positioned on the top deck, in the immediate area of this one identified nest. Also under the bridge, in the girder area of the old southbound lane, beginning on August 17, were workers in cherry picker lifts, shoveling out from the girders what they described as debris. Prior to this, on two occasions,

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**Find us on Facebook for conservation alerts, birdwalk reminders, special announcements and more.**





**CLIFF SWALLOWS**

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the Caltrans contracted biologist was observed in a cherry picker lift with a CC Myers contracted worker, removing what they described were all inactive nests, to prevent other birds from beginning nesting in the mud cups. We observed cliff swallow behavior on July 21st to indicate the biologist was in an area of active nesting, with two adult cliff swallows repeatedly dive bombing him and the CC Myers contractor worker. Our expression of concern about this to regulators was not addressed. Plaintiff Veronica Bowers of Native Songbird Care & Conservation explained, “It is also worth noting, in terms of the legality of nest removal, that newly fledged Cliff Swallows return to their nest throughout the day for several days post-fledge to rest and receive feedings from their parents at this time as well as out in the field while they’re learning to hunt on their own. They also, depending on the condition of their nest (parasite loads are sometimes too high to return), will continue to roost in their nest at night for many nights post-fledge... These concerns are not new and I have expressed them before, particularly during settlement and discussions of nest removal during certain phases of construction.”

During the nesting season, ALDF attorney Pierce requested and received from Caltrans daily biological reports filed by the contracted biologist who visited the bridge each day. Our monitors compared observations with these reports and raised questions about Caltrans’ contractor’s nest exclusion activity, noting that in one area where a concentration of nest building on the

east side of the bridge occurred, nest scraping was done with a long pole without a clear view of what was being scraped to fall into the river and, from mid June onward, recommended nest scraping by the biologists (2x a day, including Sunday, until early August) appeared to not occur at all. An inquiry by a Dept. of Fish and Wildlife biologist of Caltrans to provide photographs yielded a photo file of 169 photos. Six of these documented nest scraping and no scraping photos in the questioned areas were available for the time period we questioned. The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife accepted this photo file as a resolution of the question – with which we continue to disagree.

ALDF attorney Pierce requested on more than one occasion of Caltrans and the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife a collaborative meeting at the bridge the week before August 15 to determine end of nesting at the bridge. While such a meeting was not required in Years 2 and 3 of our Settlement Agreement, as it was in Year 1, our motivation was to collaborate and ensure together that all active nesting had ended. Our request was repeatedly denied by Caltrans. Then, an invitation was extended by the Department of Fish and Wildlife to meet at the bridge a week after the “prep” occurred to discuss the end of nesting season and upcoming demolition of the old southbound lane. Plaintiffs declined to meet with Caltrans and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, citing actual demolition beginning on Monday, August 17, with active nesting still at the bridge. Caltrans responded that they disagreed that active nesting still existed and all birds had fledged by August 18.

We appreciate all members’ support in this challenging situation, as Madrone Audubon and our Co-Plaintiffs, Native Songbird Care & Conservation, Golden Gate Audubon, Marin Audubon and Center for Biological Diversity, consider how to address what was observed at the Petaluma River Bridge this year and ongoing concerns related to the 2016 construction and nesting season, Year 3 of our Settlement Agreement.

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**Audubon Adventures –**

Madrone’s Gift to 3rd-6th Grade Teachers in Sonoma County

*by Marcia Johnson*

National Audubon’s “Audubon Adventures” is once again being offered for free by our Madrone Chapter to all 3rd-6th grade teachers in Sonoma County for 2015-2016. Teachers can opt for an Action for Planet Earth Online Subscription with e-newsletters, downloadable student newspapers, online interactive features, and a teacher guide and resources, or for a Printed Version subscription, with one of the six following options for classroom kits:

- **Action for Planet Earth Classroom Kit with Print and online Components.** Covers three topics focusing on protecting Earth’s natural resources: why and how to protect habitats that are home to all living things; sources of and challenges to essential clean water resources and how to preserve them; and different forms and sources of energy and their pros and cons.



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.

## October 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.

**Saturday, October 3, 8:30 AM - noon**

**ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY.** Bird Walk. We are timing this trip to visit the ponds during their drawdown cycle, so at least one should be almost empty of water, with much bird activity out in the open. Meet at the Ellis Creek Water Treatment Facility in the parking lot, near the bathroom. From Highway 101 in Petaluma, go East on 116 (Lakeville Highway), turn right (south) on South McDowell, turn right on Cypress Drive. Go to the end of the road and through the gates. Parking is to the left. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

**Wednesday, October 7, 7:00 PM**

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

**Thursday, October 8, 8:30 - 2:30 PM**

**BODEGA BAY.** Bird Walk. To meet the group, drive north on Hwy. 1 in the town of Bodega Bay. On the edge of town, 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. The group usually begins by searching around the marsh (the Rail Ponds)—which borders the meeting place—for raptors, rails, and passerines. After examining the north part of the harbor for loons, grebes and ducks, the group usually travels by car to the Bodega Head overlook to search for sea ducks and alcids. Weather permitting, the group typically eats lunch at the Westside County Park on the west side of the harbor (county park permit or \$7 entrance fee required). The group will bird the remainder of the harbor and Doran County Park on the south-side of the harbor in the afternoon. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

**Saturday, October 10, 9:00 AM**

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

**Wednesday, October 14, 8:30 AM - noon.**

**HUICHICA CREEK UNIT, NAPA-SONOMA MARSHES.** Bird Walk. To meet the group at the Huichica Creek Unit parking lot, take Hwy 12 (Carneros Hwy.) toward Napa from Sonoma; turn right (south) on Duhig Rd.; turn left on Las Amigas Rd.; turn right on Buchli Station Rd., which leads to the wildlife area. The habitat includes marshes, meadows, tidal flats and ponds. We will search for ducks; raptors; and meadow, marsh, and shore birds. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

**Saturday, October 17, 8:00 AM - Noon.**

**SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK.** Bird Walk. Parking fee (\$7) for non-permit holders. From Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa, go east on Hoen Ave, turn left on Newanga Ave, turn right inside the park entrance gate, and meet in the parking lot near the restrooms at the top of the hill. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

**Saturday, October 17, 10:00 AM**

**SHOLLENBERGER PARK.** Bird Walk. 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, October 19, 7:00 PM**

**GENERAL MEETING.** First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. "Waterbirds - Update on Conservation Efforts."

**Thursday, October 22, 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM**

**RUSH CREEK MARSH & LAS GALLINAS PONDS IN MARIN COUNTY.** Bird Walk. To meet the group at Rush Creek Marsh, from US 101, go east on Atherton Ave., and turn left (north) on Binford Road. We will bird the marsh from the shoulder of Binford Road. The marsh often contains a large variety of shore birds and water birds at this time of year. Afterwards, we will travel to the Las Gallinas Ponds between Novato and San Rafael. The ponds are at the east end of Smith Ranch Road. The road makes an unmarked, sharp left turn past the railroad crossing near the entrance to McInnis Park. The ponds usually contain a variety of waders, shorebirds, and water birds. Raptors and passerines are often found in the adjacent fields. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

**Saturday, October 24, 9:00 AM**

**ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA.** Bird Walk. 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, October 24, 5:00 PM**

**OWL PROWL AT THE ERICKSON RANCH.** Junior Audubon outing. We will meet at dusk to look for barn owls, great horned owls and possibly some bats. We will walk along a historic narrow gauge railroad bed to search for owls in the trees along the way. Wear warm clothes and comfortable walking shoes. Bring binoculars and a flashlight. Ranch address is 30901 Shoreline Hwy (State Route 1). The ranch is the first ranch on the right after you turn off the Valley Ford Rd and also home to Hands Full Farm (you will see the signs). Meet at 5:00 pm. Contact Janeann Erickson at 707-795-2498 or erickson@ap.net. Snacks will be provided after the walk.

**Wednesday, October 28, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

**POINT REYES.** Bird Walk. The group will meet for the trip in the dirt parking lot across from the Bear Valley Visitor Center of the Pt. Reyes National Seashore. To reach the meeting place, take Bear Valley Road from Hwy. 1 in Olema, go north approximate 0.5 miles and turn left onto the park headquarters road, which leads to the Bear Valley Visitor Center. First, the group will bird the short Earthquake Trail, which adjoins the meeting place. Latecomers can easily find the group on the trail. Next, the group will bird the outer point areas, searching for migrants and vagrants. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

**Saturday, October 31, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**BODEGA BAY.** Bird Walk. We will explore one of Sonoma County's richest bird areas, looking for migrant shorebirds, waterfowl, and landbirds. 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. Leaders: Bill Doyle, 483-8773, and Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.



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.

## November 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, November 4, 7:30 PM*

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

### *Thursday, November 5, 8:30 AM – noon*

**ELLIS CREEK.** Bird Walk. We will bird the wetlands and adjacent areas of this facility in Petaluma. The facility contains a number of wastewater finishing ponds. The facility is reached by taking Highway 116 east (Lakeville Highway) in Petaluma, turn right (south) on South McDowell, turn right on Cypress Drive, which ends at the facility gate. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

### *Saturday, November 7, 8:00 AM - noon*

**DELTA POND AND ADJACENT WETLAND PRESERVE.** Bird Walk. A very “birdy” walk, in a wonderful place. Delta Pond is not normally open to the public. We are grateful to Denise Cadman, Natural Resources Specialist for the City of Santa Rosa, who arranges entry to this property in the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Meet on Willowside Rd. at the bridge over Santa Rosa Creek, mid-way between Hall Rd. and Guerneville Rd. Park off the pavement. We will walk west along the creek trail to Delta Pond, about 1 mile. Add another mile for the walk around the pond. Leaders: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 and Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

### *Wednesday, November 11, 8:30 AM – noon*

**HUDEMAN SLOUGH.** Bird Walk. We sometimes find a variety of raptors, shorebirds, and water birds at these ponds and wetlands in south-east Sonoma County. We bird from trails that wind through marshes and around ponds in the project. There are no restrooms at this facility. The group will meet in the project parking lot: From Petaluma and Sonoma, turn right from Highway 12/121 onto Ramal Road. Continue on Ramal Road 2.4 miles to the gravel project parking lot on the right. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

### *Saturday, November 14, 9:00 AM*

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

### *Monday, November 16, 7:00 PM*

**GENERAL MEETING.** First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. “Birds and Climate Change: How Will Local Species Be Affected?”

### *Thursday, November 19, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM*

**SONOMA COAST.** Bird Walk. Meet the group at Duncan’s Landing (within the Sonoma Coast State Beach), which is approximately three

miles south of the Russian River on Highway 1. The group will bird the coast and adjacent waters from various stops north of Duncan’s Landing along Highway 1. We will eat lunch at Goat Rock State Park. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

### *Saturday, November 21, 8:30 AM - 2:00 PM*

**TOLAY REGIONAL PARK.** Bird Walk. A new location for Madrone Saturday bird walks, Tolay requires at least three participants to be permit holders. Permits are now easy to obtain online by watching an orientation and completing a quiz at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tolay-permitorientation>. Leaders: Bill Doyle, 483-8773; and Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

### *Saturday, November 21, 10:00 AM*

**SHOLLENBERGER PARK.** Bird Walk. 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.

### *Saturday, November 28, 9:00 AM*

**ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA.** Bird Walk. 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.

### *Wednesday, December 2, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM*

**LAKE HENNESSEY IN NAPA COUNTY.** Bird Walk. The group will meet for the trip at a parking area at the bottom of the Conn Dam spillway on Highway 128. From the intersection of Silverado Trail and Highway 128 (which is east of Rutherford), go east on Highway 128 to the meeting spot. We will bird both the southern and northern trails around the lake. We usually find a large variety of both passerines and water birds. We often see eagles as well. Information: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

### *Saturday, December 5, 9:30 AM - dusk*

**CENTRAL VALLEY - GRAY LODGE and SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.** Bird Walk. Our annual winter trip to the Central Valley to enjoy the enormous concentrations of waterfowl, raptors, cranes, geese, and other interesting birds seldom seen in Sonoma County. Directions to Gray Lodge from 5 & 99: From the junction of Interstate 5 and Highway 99, take Highway 99 north to Live Oak. Turn west on Pennington (North Butte) Road. Turn right on Almond Orchard Avenue and continue to entrance. The distance from Live Oak is about eight miles. After birding Gray Lodge, we will go to Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge for the afternoon, hopefully enjoying good views of the fly-out at dusk. Some of our group will stay overnight in Willows or Yuba City Friday and/or Saturday to visit parts of the nearby Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Call Bill Doyle at 483-8773 for more information.



### AUDUBON ADVENTURES

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- **Sharing Our World with Birds:** Seabirds: Feathered Ocean Mariners; Hooray for Hummingbirds; Caring for Our Planet: Join in the Action; Raptors
- **Exploring Ecosystems:** Sharing Our Shores; Caring for Our Planet: Cleaner, Greener Communities for All; the World of the Forest; Grasslands: A Prairie Tale
- **Feathers, Fur, Fins and You:** Pollinators; Wild Alaska; Rivers; Caring for Our Planet: Kids are making a difference
- **Wildlife on the Move:** Bird Migration; Monarch Butterfly Migration; Marine Migration
- **Feats of Nature:** Animal Defenses; Animal Builders; Animal Migration; Plants

AUDUBON ADVENTURES is filled with great resources for students and teachers. The classroom kit can be used across the curriculum and offers correlations to National Language Arts and Science Standards

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



plus student assessment material. Audubon Adventures meets CA state standards.

Teachers of 3rd through 6th grade students may contact Marcia Johnson at [owlsnesttwo@att.net](mailto:owlsnesttwo@att.net) - 707-829-3808 before **December 1, 2015**, to receive an "Audubon Adventures" Resource Kit for your class. Contributions to support this project would be greatly welcomed. The cost of a kit for use in a classroom is - Digital: \$16.00; Printed: \$45.95 (incl. shipping). Please contact Marcia for more information.

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### Christmas Bird Count Set for Sunday, December 27, 2015

By Jeff Holtzman

The 49th Annual Western Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count, hosted by Madrone Audubon, takes place on Sunday, December 27th from dawn to dusk. A catered dinner will be held at the Sebastopol Community Center after the teams complete their census activity. Following immediately after the dinner, teams will announce the birds observed and highlight special sightings and unusual occurrences.

Every year during the Christmas season tens of thousands of volunteers in numerous locations in the US and Canada and other countries in the Western Hemisphere count numbers of species and individual birds seen or heard during a 24-hour period. The original Christmas Bird Count was started in 1900 by Frank Chapman and has proven to be one of the best examples of "citizen science," with invaluable data collected over the years.

Last year, the Western Sonoma County CBC fielded 22 teams with over 134 volunteers identifying 185 species and 38,738 individuals. Madrone's teams usually score in the top 20 for most bird species observed among all teams participating.

Check the upcoming Leaves newsletter and the Madrone Audubon website for more details. Birders of all levels are welcome and encouraged to participate. The Madrone count is co-chaired by Peter Leveque and Stacy Li. Please contact Co-chair Stacy Li, [stacyli@sonic.net](mailto:stacyli@sonic.net), if you want to participate in your first count or if you have any questions about this year's count.

We have a new caterer, Night Owl Food Company, who will provide a delicious vegetarian meal for the post-count dinner at the Sebastopol Community Center. A \$5 donation per person is requested. We would appreciate volunteers to help with dinner setup, serving, and cleanup. If you'd like to help volunteer with our post-count dinner, contact Susan Kirks at [susankirks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirks@sbcglobal.net).

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### Out and About

#### Farallon Islands Boat Trip

Sponsored by Marin Audubon  
Clipper Yacht Harbor, Sausalito  
*Sunday, October 4th, 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM*

Enjoy a day of seabird and marine mammal watching at the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. The outing will be led by naturalist David Wimpfheimer aboard a power catamaran. On past trips, more than fourteen pelagic bird species, including albatrosses, shearwaters and auklets,



**OUT AND ABOUT**

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have been sighted, as well as many sea lions, porpoises, dolphins and whales. You'll get an up-close look at the islands and will learn about their interesting natural and human history. This is a trip that both experienced and first-time birders and nature lovers will enjoy. Fees: \$120 per person, pre-registration required. For trip details, directions to Clipper Yacht Harbor, and registration, go to <http://www.marin-audubon.org/events-field-trips.php>.

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**Raptors of the Laguna: Birds of Prey Identification and Natural History Talk**

Presentation with raptor specialist, Lawrence Broderick

*Saturday October 10, 3:00-4:30pm*

Heron Hall, Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

\$10 at the door. No RSVP necessary.

Lawrence (Larry) Broderick runs West County Hawk Watch. With a strong background in hawk identification, raptor survey and census techniques, Broderick's fascinating and visually-exciting presentation will include first-hand stories from the field, as well as interesting information about raptor habits, identification, and suggestions of where to spot them. Larry will also lead a **field trip** Sunday morning, October 11th (9:30 AM to 1:00 PM) to see raptors first-hand. Pre-registration is required for this field trip (check [http://www.lagunadesantarosa.org/laguna\\_walks\\_classes.shtml](http://www.lagunadesantarosa.org/laguna_walks_classes.shtml) for details).

**Birds of the Sierra Nevada and Carbon Free Birding**

Presentation by Keith Hansen, artist  
*Thursday, October 22nd – 7:00 – 8:30 PM*  
Veterans Memorial Building, 126 First St. West, Sonoma

Hansen is among the finest bird artists in the western United States and has just completed a “Carbon Free Year” of birding. The wildlife artist has dedicated his life to the “inspirational and accurate portrayal of birds,” and recently finished illustrating his 13th book on birds.

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**Fall Retreat: Bird Language and Animal Tracking: Reading the Signs of a Landscape**

Pepperwood Preserve, 2130 Pepperwood Preserve Road, Santa Rosa, CA  
*November 7th, 9 AM, through November 8th, 3 PM*

Why do the birds sing in the morning, crows make a racket, or critters drop scat in your front yard? Join Meghan Walla-Murphy to learn bird language basics and the many intricacies of animal track and sign. As an educator, ecological consultant, and writer of books, articles, and essays, Meghan strives to connect people with their internal and external landscapes.

Most of this class will be held in the field and will include hiking 1-3 miles at a slow pace. Bring a tent to sleep under the stars or sleep in the Bechtel House (optional overnight). Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast are included. Fees: \$180 per participant (\$160 for members). Ages 13 and older welcome. For more information or to register, go to event listings at [www.pepperwoodpreserve.org](http://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org).

**The American Badger in Sonoma Valley**

Presentation by Susan Kirks, naturalist and former Madrone Audubon president  
*Thursday, November 19th - 7:00 - 8:30 PM*  
Veterans Memorial Building, 126 First St. West, Sonoma

In this second talk in Sonoma Nature's Fall Series, now celebrating its 12th year, Susan Kirks will share her experiences with the American Badger. Susan's 16 years of studying badgers in their natural habitat reveals the badger's “true nature.” Learn about seasonal behaviors, cultural myths to be dispelled, and the benefits of badgers in our Sonoma County coastal and inland areas. The lecture series is curated by Sonoma Birding, co-sponsored with Sonoma County Regional Parks. Parking is free. Requested donation \$8.00 at door. Information: Tom Rusert, [sonomanature@gmail.com](mailto:sonomanature@gmail.com), visit [www.sonomabirding.com](http://www.sonomabirding.com), or Susan Kirks, [susankirks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirks@sbcglobal.net), 707-241-5548.

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**Central Valley Birding Symposium**

Field trips, workshops, and presentations

*November 19th – 22nd*

Stockton, CA

The Central Valley Bird Club (CVBS) will be hosting the 19th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 19-22, 2015 at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA. Check <http://www.cvbsreg.org> for a listing of the exciting speakers, workshops and fieldtrips. Registration: <http://www.regonline.com/central-valleybirdingsymposium2015>



**Observations**

May - August 2015 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Black Scoter (fem./imm.)	7/26	South of Coleman Beach, Sonoma Coast	WA, LH
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	Aug.	Lake Ralphine/ Spring Lake (bird of unknown origin)	M.Ob
Pigeon Guillemot (35-40)	8/6	Offshore Bodega Head	DN, VO
Northern Gannet (1)	Sept.	Drake's Bay (same as Farallones/ Alcatraz bird pres.)	BDP, BL, DSi
Brown Booby (2-3)	Sept.	Farallon Islands	M.Ob
Blue-footed Booby	Sept.	Farallon Islands	M.Ob
Laughing Gull (2nd yr.)	7/22-25	Doran Jetties	KL, et al
Franklin's Gull (juv.)	8/29-9/5	Huichica Cr. Napa Co.	MB
Sabine's Gull (12)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Arctic Tern (2)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Common Tern (2)	8/20-25	Gaffney Point, Bodega Harbor	M. Ob
Black Skimmer (2)	7/3	Bolinas Lagoon	JW, PP
Long-tailed Jaeger (2)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Pomarine Jaeger (2)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Parasitic Jaeger (1)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Black-footed Albatross (45)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Buller's Shearwater (20)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Sooty Shearwater (60)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Sooty Shearwater *	8/16	Duxbury Reef, Marin Co. *est. 20,000+ birds streaming N.	DN
Pink-footed Shearwater (250)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Hawaiian Petrel (1)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Ashy Storm-Petrel (2)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Swainson's Hawk	7/3	Sonoma Mountain Rd., Petaluma	RO'D
Prairie Falcon	9/4	Bodega Hwy. near Tomales Rd. (photo)	SS
Black Vulture	8/21	Pt. Reyes Fish Docks (had been near Bolinas last 2 mo.)	DSi
Least Bittern	5/24-6/15	Campbell Cove	DN, PC, M.Ob
American Bittern	5/27	Flying N. along Hwy 1, Bodega Bay	GH, DN
American Bittern	5/28	Circling, landing at Campbell Cove (same 5/27 bird?)	DN
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8/25	Carmody Rd. farm pond	LH, RR
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8/27-28	Kelly Farm/Laguna Trail pond	WA, DK
Pectoral Sandpiper	8/29	Doran Park	SS
Baird's Sandpiper	8/26	Campbell Cove, calling fly-over bird	DN
Ruff	9/4-5	Bodega Hwy/ Tomales Rd. farm pond	TB, M.Ob
Solitary Sandpiper	8/24-28	Kelly Farm/ Laguna Trail pond	LH, GH, DN et al
Red Phalarope (6)	8/6	Offshore Sonoma County	DN, VO
Red-necked Phalarope (2)	8/21	Bodega Farm Pond	DF
Wilson's Phalarope (25)	7/3	Shollenberger Park	RO'D
Wilson's Phalarope (5)	7/24	Spud Point, Bodega Harbor	DN
Common Nighthawk (2)	6/29	Salt Point S.P. over Pygmy Forest	GH
Common Poorwill (2)	7/16	Pine Flat Rd.	AW
Black-chinned Hummingbird	8/30	Petaluma; Queen's Ln. residence (fem. or imm.)	AW
Vermilion Flycatcher	5/20	S.R. Creek trail, E. of Willowside (not confirmed thereafter)	DS
White-eyed Vireo	6/7-8	Campbell Cove, singing. First County Record.	DN, BDP, AW, et al
Prothonotary Warbler	5/30	Campbell Cove, weakened odd bird	MH
Prothonotary Warbler	6/11-17	Pt. Reyes at Drake's Beach	DF, et al
Tennessee Warbler	6/9	Campbell Cove, singing male	DN, CM, JL, DF
Palm Warbler	6/9	Campbell Cove, alternate-plumaged	DN, DF, et al
Black-and-White Warbler	5/27	Eastshore Rd., heard only singing male	DN, RR
Black-and-White Warbler	6/1-2	Campbell Cove, singing; likely same as 5/27 bird	DN, AW et al
Yellow-throated Warbler	5/27	Eastshore Rd., singing/recorded; First County Record	DN
Chestnut-sided Warbler	6/9-10	Bodega Bay Marine Laboratory; singing male	JS, et al
Magnolia Warbler	6/13	Hwy 1 at Stengel Beach parking lot, singing male	BL, PL
Kentucky Warbler	5/28	Pt. Reyes Fish Docks, male	DSi, et al
Northern Waterthrush	5/29	Campbell Cove pond	DN, et al
American Redstart	5/28	Eastshore Rd. Bodega Bay	MB
American Redstart (2)	6/24	Eastkoot Creek, Stinson Beach Park (2 birds; 1 singing)	DN
American Redstart	8/26-27	Owl Canyon	DF, SC
Prairie Warbler	8/13-14	Pt. Reyes Fish Docks	DF et al
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/28	Santa Rosa Creek W. of Willowside Rd.	RO'D
Scarlet Tanager (fem.)	5/27	Campbell Cove (odd bird with mis-shaped bill)	DN, PC
Great-tailed Grackle (2)	5/20	Santa Rosa fairground G.C.	EH
Great-tailed Grackle (3)	9/4	Ellis Creek Treatment ponds	R Storey
Baltimore Oriole	5/15-21	Terminous, San Joaquin Co. male seemingly on territory	M.Ob
Baltimore Oriole	5/26-27	Owl Canyon, singing 1st yr. male	RR, DN, DF, RO'D et al
Baltimore Oriole (fem.)	5/27	Eastshore Rd., seen well by group	DN, BDP, DF, RR et al
Blue Grosbeak (male)	7/18-21	Willow Creek Rd. near 1st bridge, rd. to C.G.	HK, DH, GH, DN et al
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/14-15	Campbell Cove (fem.)	PC, SC, DN
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/26	Owl Canyon, singing; heard only	DN, RR
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/27-28	Johnson Gulch/Eastshore Rd. (same as 5/26 bird?)	DN, M.Ob
Yellow-headed Blackbird	5/6	Santa Rosa Creek W. of Willowside Rd.	R. Stradford

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## Madrone Audubon Society

Post Office Box 1911  
Santa Rosa, California 95402

### October/November 2015

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



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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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Please complete this form if you wish to join Madrone Audubon, renew your Madrone membership or make a contribution to Madrone.

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

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