



Madrone LEAVES

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

VOLUME 51 October/November 2017 Number 2

A Legacy for the Future

by Diane Hichwa

In our 50th Anniversary edition of *Madrone Leaves* (April/May 2017) the top line of the Milestones-50 years tree says: 2017 Madrone welcomes first estate bequest, from Ernestine I. Smith.

Ernestine, better known as Ernie, was one of the Charter members of Madrone Audubon Society fifty years ago. She put her heart and soul into teaching and into protecting the environment.

Ernie was: a ranch girl in Paso Robles, a physical education teacher at Santa Rosa Junior College, a world traveler in a time when women traveling independently was not a norm or considered "acceptable," a docent and trainer and Quercus Quire singer in the Bouverie Preserve outdoor

education program, an assertive environmental letter writer and head-shaker at Supervisors meetings and for many years Madrone's Conservation Chair who mentored those following her. The conservation ethic Ernie established for our Chapter is one we continue to honor and endeavor to sustain.

A very unassuming person, the gift from Ernestine's estate to the Chapter of \$100,000 came as an honor, and a complete surprise.

A Bequest Committee of members who knew Ernie over the years was formed by Madrone's Board of Directors to discuss how to best honor her intentions and to bring their recommendations to the Board.



Ernie

Courtesy of Linda Curry

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GENERAL MEETINGS

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

Monday, October 16, 2017, 7:00 PM

"ACR's Mountain Lion Project: Meet Your Neighbors"

Join us to learn about the latest findings of the Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) Mountain Lion Project, a community-based research and education project in the Mayacamas Mountains of Sonoma and Napa Counties.



Young mountain lion
Courtesy of Quinton Martins & ACR

ACR's principal investigator on the Project is Dr. Quinton Martins, a leading expert on large mountain cats. Together with a team of ACR staff and advisors, Dr. Martins is studying the movement of mountain lions fitted with GPS collars within a study area that encompasses approximately 1,000 square miles, primarily in the Mayacamas Mountains (areas east of Highway 101 and west of 29) in Sonoma and Napa Counties. ACR's project will lead to a better understanding of mountain lion

ecology, connectivity in this fragmented landscape, and identification of priority areas for conservation. ACR is one of only four organizations in California to hold a capture and collaring permit issued by CDFW.

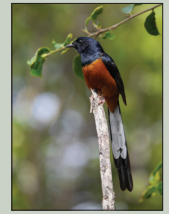
Dr. Martins has over 20 years of field experience in wilderness areas throughout much of Africa, Saudi Arabia and the USA. His work highlights the manner in which charismatic and iconic apex predators like leopards and mountain lions, act as umbrella species, and can lead to broad ecosystem conservation.

Monday, November 20, 2017, 7:00 PM

"Kaua'i, the 5.1 Million Year Experiment: 'The bird not found, and why'"

When Gordon Beebe traveled to Kaua'i in 2016, there was a species of bird he was particularly looking forward to seeing, the I'iwi. The fact that he didn't find it led him to research why not.

The reason, he learned, is complex, best explained by examining the entire history of the island. The presentation begins with the volcanic birth of Kaua'i, the subsequent arrival of the first plant and animal species, and their adaptation to the new environment. It then continues with the arrival of the first humans from Polynesia, the subsequent arrival of Europeans and others, their manipulation of the environment, introduction of foreign animals and diseases, and the effects of all of these changes on native species.



White-rumped Shama
Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

Native and introduced species of birds, other animals, plants and scenic views are showcased in photos, audio and video.

Graphics and animations are included, illustrating significant events in the history of Kaua'i. The presentation concludes by highlighting the efforts of many local and international groups to preserve and protect the native species and habitats on this fragile island paradise.

Gordon Beebe is past president of the Madrone Audubon Society and the current website editor. Gordon generously shares his bird expertise on MAS-sponsored Saturday bird walks and has been a key observer and coordinator for the second Madrone Breeding Bird Atlas of Sonoma County.



ERNIE'S LEGACY

Continued from page 1

We thank Janet Bosshard, Linda Curry, Jack and Deyea Harper, Bryant and Diane Hichwa, Jeff Holtzman, Peter Leveque, Karen Nagel, and Michael Nelligan for their efforts and guidance. Their report was presented to the Board at the August Planning Meeting and their recommendations were received with a unanimous vote of YES!

Our Chapter is pleased to maintain Ernie Smith's legacy with long term commitments in education and environmental areas. We are placing her funds with two local Foundations to maintain her legacy into the future. At the Santa Rosa Junior College we are establishing the Ernestine Smith-Madrone Audubon Society annual scholarship for student(s) transferring to a 4-year degree program in the fields of life science and/or environmental science. Two Madrone members will serve on the Scholarship Selection Committee with SRJC staff and faculty to assist in the selection of recipients.

Thanks to some generous donors and Bird-a-Thon sponsors, and the Madrone Board's decision to match those donations from our Conservation and Education Fund, on behalf of our members, we will be able to award the first scholarship in 2018 while the official Scholarship fund is established to begin in 2019.

Other funds from the bequest will be placed with the Community Foundation Sonoma County in the Ernestine Smith Memorial Fund. Several Madrone members will form a Selection Committee and this fund will support an annual or as appropriate selection of a project for our greater Sonoma County community – examples include nature education programs, environmental play areas in our county regional parks, and important conservation efforts. Note: We welcome ideas and suggestions.

Ernie inspired us and encouraged us to act, to make things happen. She has done just that — one more time.

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17 New Species Found Nesting in Sonoma County

by Gordon Beebe

This is the third article summarizing results from Madrone's second Breeding Bird Atlas of Sonoma County, or BBA (see the Summer and September editions of *Leaves* for previous articles).

There were 17 species newly confirmed to breed during our latest BBA survey which had not been confirmed in the 1995 survey. Some of them are new arrivals to the county, such as the Mute Swan, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Barred Owl, and Great-tailed Grackle. Others are species that we knew must be nesting here, but were not able to confirm in the first survey. It is a tribute to the hard work and many hours spent by our atlasers (plus a little luck!) that these new species were confirmed.

Each of these species has a story to tell, about why we found it this time, and not before. For some, like the Eurasian Collared-Dove (confirmed in 38 blocks), and the Mute Swan (6 blocks), these are non-native species that were introduced elsewhere in the United States, and have now multiplied and spread to Sonoma County.

Others, such as the Bald Eagle (5), are a testament to the successful elimination of the pesticide DDT from our waters, as well as their inclusion in and subsequent protection as an endangered species by the Endangered Species Act. Other, more common species affected by DDT may have benefitted from this as well: Ospreys were confirmed in 27 blocks this time, compared to only 14 blocks in 1995.

Some of the others are expanding their ranges, either north or south. Whether this is due to temporary weather and food-related issues, to climate change, or to a combination of these factors, is still unclear. Common Murres (2) have historically nested mainly to our north, and this is the first confirmation of them nesting on rocks offshore of Sonoma County. From the other direction, Great-tailed Grackles (4) have historically nested only south of San Francisco. If these changes are due to climate change, then it would seem likely that other species currently nesting farther to our south would also begin to show up, perhaps for our Third Atlas Project, beginning in 2036! Indeed, the National

Audubon Society's 2014 climate change report predicts, for example, that Bell's Vireo may be extending its wintering range to the Sonoma coast by the year 2080 (see climate.audubon.org/birds/belvir/bells-vireo).

The Barred Owl (1) is another new species that has slowly been moving west from central and eastern US, to Washington State, then south, displacing Spotted Owls in the process. It is thought that this forest-loving species has



European Starling

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

been able to cross the previously treeless Great Plains due to human development and tree planting in that region over the last century. In comparison, the Spotted Owl went from confirmation in 10 blocks in 1995 to only 2 by 2016. There's more than meets the eye with these figures, however, as there was a concerted effort to survey Spotted Owls by Ted Wooster of the California Department of Fish and Game in 1992, and no survey specific to owls since. Also, since the Spotted Owl has a habit of going quiet when Barred Owls are around (for good reason, as they could become dinner), it's difficult to know exactly how many Spotted Owls are still around.

Other species are very secretive and/or inhabit areas that are difficult for atlasers to reach. We have three new rail species confirmed in the county, though we know they were likely breeding here all along: Ridgway's Rail (2), Sora (2), and Black Rail (1). The Marbled Murrelet (1) is another species that was suspected to breed in Sonoma County. Following up on evidence of post-breeding birds seen offshore in previous years, adult birds were seen and heard by BBA Regional Coordinator Ruth Rudesill in late June of 2014 inland along the Gualala River, then a week later, a fledgling bird was spotted by birders Denise Herzberg and Will German as it flew down the river on its way to the ocean, a one-way trip from its nest somewhere high in a conifer.



17 NEW SPECIES

Continued from page 2

The other species newly-confirmed this time are: Band-tailed Pigeon (10 blocks), Swainson's Hawk (2), Rock Wren (2), Blue-winged Teal (1), Sooty Grouse (1), Cattle Egret (1), and Canyon Wren (1).

These new sightings are exciting and thought-provoking; however, we must also note that there are a few species that we missed this time around, each confirmed in one block in 1995: Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Gray Jay, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Leach's Storm-Petrel, and Wilson's Phalarope. The Storm-Petrel was



Black Phoebe

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

discovered on a special offshore island survey in 1989 by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Grosbeak and Jay were late additions to the survey data, just getting in to the last-minute additions before the book went to press. We may find that we have some other last-minute species to add this time around as well, so please continue birding with an eye out for breeding activity, and input your data with the breeding codes in eBird. Every new data point adds to our understanding of the bird species in Sonoma County and their responses to changes in the environment and climate.

As promised, the top-10 breeding species, by number of blocks (out of 191 surveyed): Eurasian Starling (149), Black Phoebe (149), California Scrub-Jay (145), Bushtit (141), Dark-eyed Junco (140), Chestnut-backed Chickadee (139), Western Bluebird (138), American Robin (137), California Towhee (130), and Oak Titmouse (126).

For the next article, we will compare the success rates of some of the more common species found on this survey. Did they fare better, or not, and what are the possible reasons why?

Update - National Marine Sanctuaries and National Monuments

August 23rd Public Forum in Sausalito

A standing room only crowd of several hundred gathered August 23rd at 10:30 a.m. at the Bay Model in Sausalito. Audience members were heartened to hear from Bay Area elected officials about their strong support for National Marine Sanctuaries and National Monuments, in direct *opposition* to Executive Order (EO) 13795. The forum was organized by Congressional representative Jared Huffman and his staff. The reason for the August 23rd Forum? From Rep. Huffman: "There should have been Congressional hearings and extensive public comment on his (President Trump) attempt to reverse public protections... We're taking matters into our hands today so that the people – you, the owners of public lands and oceans, can actually be heard."

In his opening remarks, Rep. Huffman also stated, "This president wants to keep monuments to Confederate leaders and their rebellion against the United States, but he wants to shut down public national monuments that protect uniquely American landscapes and oceans for future generations." Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and retired Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, along with California Senator Mike McGuire and Democratic Congresswoman Jackie Speier, assured members of the audience and the public they would stand up and fight for the California coast, the oceans, the fishing industry, the marine life, research and education, tourism and exceptional qualities of the sanctuaries and monuments, and strongly oppose any attempt for changes and/or oil and mineral drilling. Leader Pelosi also encouraged and urged citizens to be engaged, speak up, and speak out.

According to the Department of Commerce, over 100,000 public comments were received since EO 13795 was issued on April 28, 2017. The Marine Conservation Institute estimates over 99% of the comments advocated leaving the sanctuaries in place.

Putting the current Executive Order into context, Rep. Huffman explained, "What's astounding about President Trump's attempt to destroy these much needed ocean protections is that protecting special marine areas has *never before* been a partisan issue. President George W. Bush designated our nation's first four National Marine Monuments. And no President has ever attempted to revoke a predecessor's National Monument designation

Sign up for Madrone Audubon's Conservation Alerts

Send your email address to Diane Hichwa, Conservation Chair, at dhichwa@earthlink.net



no matter how controversial that designation may have been initially."

August 24th: Interior Secretary's Initial Recommendations on National Monuments

The Associated Press reported Interior Secretary Zinke sent recommendations to the White House related to 22 National Monuments, recommending to shrink "a handful" with several sources stating a recommendation to sharply reduce the Bears Ears Monument in



August 23rd forum

Courtesy of Susan Kirks

Utah, established by former President Barack Obama, was included. The Washington Post reported, for unstated reasons, six monuments were removed from the review list. In addition to Bears Ears, reductions in Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante and Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument were reported to be included. Grand Staircase-Escalante was established in 1996 by former President Bill Clinton, Bears Ears designated by former President Barack Obama in 2016, and Cascade-Siskiyou, now over 113,000 acres, established by former President Clinton and expanded by former President Obama in January 2016. Many media resources are available to learn more about the background and positions of Interior Secretary Zinke who was confirmed for his position on a 68 to 31 vote.

For background on EO 13795, please see September 2017 *Leaves*.

(Additional Resources: *Washington Post*, *KRCB*, *Press Democrat*.)



Lincoln School Bird Festival

Bird Day Activities

by Kathie Noguchi

Each May at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School in Santa Rosa, there is a whole morning devoted to learning about birds and nature. We call it Bird Day, and it began over 10 years ago, inspired by beloved educator and



Great Egret young feeding Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

Audubon member Phyllis Schmitt. Bird Day is packed with experiences for the children of Lincoln School — including a visit to the wonder in their own backyard — the heronry on West 9th Street. Each year about half of the school (the

kindergarteners, 2nd, and 4th graders), visit the 300+ nest heronry guided by volunteers and staff from Audubon Canyon Ranch and Madrone Audubon, an experience that has been fostering a love of wildlife and creating a culture of respect for our “bird neighbors.”

Tom Reynolds does two assemblies so the entire school gets to enjoy his amazing photos and video of Sonoma County wildlife. Bird Rescue also does two assemblies so the students get to see a couple of birds up close. Janeann Erickson and Janet Bosshard do a garden walk in the school garden for the younger students, to encourage them to think about how plants, bugs, birds, and other animals all need each other. This year they focused on worms and bees. Laguna de Santa Rosa docents do an activity with the older students (4th, 5th, and 6th graders). This year they dissected owl pellets. Some years they focus on feathers, or beaks and feet, or nests.

Then there are activities in the classroom, also led by volunteers. There is Birdo (bird bingo) for the older students. They also play a game called Life Cycle Lottery (which is a challenge for the volunteers to lead!). The 5th and 6th graders learn to make origami cranes. The younger students have stories about birds read to them by volunteers.

It’s a lot packed into one morning! Janeann Erickson, Janet Bosshard, and I are the organizers, and we tweak it a little every year. It takes a lot of dedicated volunteers, but our hope is that the kids begin to see their surroundings in a different way, and learn to feel regard for and appreciate nature. A couple of years ago the school secretary told me her daughter (a student at Lincoln) told her, “Bird Day is my favorite day of the whole year!”

Everyone at Lincoln School sends a big THANK YOU to the volunteers from Madrone Audubon, Audubon Canyon Ranch and elsewhere who make it all happen!

Viewing the Herons and Egrets

by Emiko Condeso

By mid-May, West 9th Street abounds with the sounds, sights and smells of a vibrant heronry. Bird Day at Lincoln School has been a fun and effective way to teach the students about the value of their neighborhood for wildlife. Before Bird Day, Audubon Canyon Ranch staff and volunteers hold a special workshop for the kindergarteners, 2nd, and 4th grade students, all of whom will later participate in the heronry visit. At this workshop, the children learn a little about the ecology of birds they will see, how to use spotting scopes to get a close look, and how to avoid disturbing the birds, especially during this sensitive part of their life cycle. By the time this pre-festival experience is done, the children are excited to visit the nesting birds! On Bird Day, each class walks to a viewing area next door to the school where volunteer docents are there to meet them. They see courtship displays, feedings, squabbles, and of course—downy chicks! The children of Lincoln Elementary encounter this heronry daily as they go to and from school, but on Bird Day, they have an opportunity to see the nesting birds with new eyes, and they go home with a new sense of connection to the natural world.

Many Nests on West 9th Street – Summer 2017

by Susan Kirks

The large nesting site in urban southwest Santa Rosa on West 9th Street, near Lincoln Elementary School, continues to attract nesting egrets and herons. We appreciate receiving data from David Lumpkin and Brett Lane who this year documented the nesting process for Audubon Canyon Ranch’s North Bay Heron and Egret Project. Here are 2017 totals, with prior year comparisons:

Species:	2017	2016	2015
Total Nests	357	239-269	325
Great Egret	79	74	67
Snowy Egret	59	65	55
Black-crowned Night Heron	185	100	174
Cattle Egret	34	20-30	29



BCNH adult with stick Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

A juvenile Cattle Egret was the last noted rescue by volunteer rescuer Gayle Kozlowski on August 13th. Nesting season appeared to conclude this year in the third week of August. Each year, even with Madrone Audubon’s “big nest” of rice straw mats placed in the median under the two large Eucalyptus trees and over closed asphalt traffic lanes, a significant number of young nestlings fall and pass away, or fall and are struck by vehicles driving by in open traffic lanes. Sometimes, adult birds standing in the open traffic lanes are also struck and killed before they can lift off and fly out of harm’s way. The natural process of selection of the strongest nestlings, with weaker ones pushed out of nests or falling out, and landing on the ground below, or asphalt, or straw, is a rather messy process in many ways. This is also Nature. The intervention of volunteer rescuers from Bird Rescue of Sonoma County and our support project of enclosing the area under the trees and maintaining the “big nest” on the ground, as well as using our industrial sized broom to sweep around the area and keep it at least semi-managed, is a minimal intervention in Nature’s process, in an urban residential area, to support the amazing phenomenon of this large nesting site on West 9th Street. Often unseen except by those of us around the site quietly performing our tasks are some missed feeds of fish, small frogs, lizards, and lots of crayfish claws on the ground under the trees.



All walks and membership 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 2017 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.

Thursday, October 5, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Susan Kirks at susankirks@sbcglobal.net.

Saturday, October 7, 8:00 AM to noon

SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK. Birdwalk around the Lake, looking for migrants and wintering birds. 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. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

Monday, October 16, 7:00 PM

GENERAL MEETING. First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. "ACR's Mountain Lion Project: Meet Your Neighbors." This is a free event and all are welcome.

Wednesday, October 18, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

BODEGA BAY. Bird Walk at Bodega Bay Harbor and environs. To meet the group, take Doran Park Road from Hwy. 1 at the southern end of Bodega Bay harbor and follow signs to Doran County Park (a Sonoma County park permit or \$7 entrance fee is required). Continue 0.5 miles past the park entrance to the parking lot of the Cypress Day Use Area on the left side of the road. After birding Doran Park, the group will search the harbor and adjacent seas and woodlands for birds. Weather permitting, the group will eat a picnic lunch on the west side of the harbor. Leader: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

Saturday, October 21, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

BODEGA BAY. (MEETING LOCATION CHANGE: Porto Bodega; directions below.) We will explore one of Sonoma County's richest bird areas, looking for wintering 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 go straight at the stop sign at the bottom of the hill to Porto Bodega. We will carpool from the large dirt parking lot. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

OUT & ABOUT

The **Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR)** properties host a variety of nature education outings throughout the year (go <https://www.egret.org/calendar-public> for monthly listings of activities and event details). For October and November, nature outings at the Modini-Mayacamas and Bouverie Preserves in Sonoma County include:

- **Biodiversity Bioblitz** Fridays (first Friday of the month, including October 6, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM): Participants are invited to explore the Modini-Mayacamas Preserves with other serious "nature nerds" and experts, with the goal of adding species records to the Preserves' iNaturalist site.

Saturday, Oct 21 2017 - 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

- **Grand Tour of the Modini Mayacamas:** Join veteran hike leader and retired Engineering Geologist Simon Lowings on a moderately strenuous hike, about 7.5 miles long, to see the best views of these beautiful properties.

Saturday, October 28, 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM

- **Guided Nature Walk** at the Bouverie Preserve. These half-day walks are offered on selected Saturdays in the fall and again in the spring. Participants are divided into small groups and paired with a trained Bouverie volunteer to explore the diverse habitats of this beautiful Glen Ellen preserve.

The **Sonoma Country Regional Parks** system is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2017. Go to <http://parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Activities/Calendar.aspx> for a listing of events and outings at various Regional Parks, including **Winging It Wednesday** bird walks. These 2-hour walks are easy-paced and open to all ages and are a good way to begin to learn about birds in our area.

- On Wednesday, October 25, the **Winging it Wednesday** bird walk will be at the Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail, 8:30 to 10:30 AM. Meet at the parking lot off of the Highway 12 entrance to the Laguna.
- On Wednesday, November 29, the **Winging it Wednesday** bird walk will be at the Riverfront Regional Park.

Annual Open House – International Bird Rescue
Saturday, October 21, 12:30 – 4:30 PM

IBR, 4369 Cordelia Road, Fairfield, CA 94534

Come and learn about our wildlife rehabilitation center! Exhibits, children's activities, tours, panel of experts, and silent auction. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/international-bird-rescue-open-house-tickets-37741258119>.



Red-tailed Hawk

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

Attention eBirders!

Madrone is working on a checklist of the birds at Taylor Mountain Regional Park, in conjunction with Sonoma County Regional Parks. Post your sightings to eBird and help us build our database.



All walks and membership 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 2017 Calendar

Thursday, November 2, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Susan Kirks at susankirks@sbcglobal.net

Saturday, November 4, 8:00 AM to noon

DELTA POND and ADJACENT WETLAND PRESERVE. 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. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

Wednesday, November 15, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

BODEGA BAY. Bird Walk at Bodega Bay Harbor and environs. To meet the group, take Doran Park Road from Hwy. 1 at the southern end of Bodega Bay harbor and follow signs to Doran County Park (a Sonoma County park permit or \$7 entrance fee is required). Continue 0.5 miles past the park entrance to the parking lot of the Cypress Day Use Area on the left side of the road. After birding Doran Park, the group will search the harbor and adjacent seas and woodlands for birds. Weather permitting, the group will eat a picnic lunch on the west side of the harbor. Leader: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

Saturday, November 18, 8:00 (carpool) or 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM

TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK. An expansive hawk-rich habitat 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/tolaypermitorientation>. For CARPOOL, meet at the Ellis Creek Water Treatment Facility parking lot, on Cypress Drive in Petaluma at 8:00 AM, or meet us at TOLAY LAKE at 8:30 AM. Leaders: Larry Broderick, northcoastraptor@gmail.com, and Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

Monday, November 20, 7:00 PM

GENERAL MEETING. First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. “Kau’i, the 5.1 Million Year Experiment: The bird not found, and why.” This is a free event and all are welcome.

Saturday and Sunday, December 2-3, 9:00 AM to dusk

CENTRAL VALLEY - GRAY LODGE and SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Reinstating our annual late fall 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 (fee \$6). 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 the leader for more information. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.



Warbling Vireo

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

51st West County CBC
December 30, 2017
SAVE THE DATE!

Are you a National Audubon member?
Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.
(see membership form, back page)



BIRD-A-THON – a fun fundraising event!

Another Bird-a-Thon (BAT) is in the books for 2017 - 6 teams enjoying focused birding for a great cause. BAT is THE major fundraiser for Madrone Audubon, and supports our Lincoln Elementary School annual Bird and Nature Festival, Christmas Bird Count, Junior Audubon, Audubon Adventures and our many conservation efforts.

This year's teams included the Feather Questers, Burrowing Owlers, Zonotripias, Grey-headed Seersuckers, March Madness and Chickadiddies.



Osprey at Diekmann's Store

Courtesy of Ken Wilson

At last count, we have raised \$6,182.80. All contributions are tax-deductible and volunteers are in the process of acknowledging sponsor contributions.

Several "Big Days" were delayed by rain; general highlights included great looks at an osprey eating a fish at Diekmann's store, looking down on a swooping Peregrine Falcon at Bodega Head, seeing more than 50 Pacific Loons in breeding plumage, an American Bittern in flight over Salmon Creek, and Northern and Hooded Orioles at Spring Lake. Gene Hunn did a "green" day, traveling by bicycle and still had an impressive species count.

Finally, and most importantly, we offer a BIG thanks to the team leaders and members, and especially to all who pledged. We also appreciate those who donated to several teams.

1. Burrowing Owlers

Team Members: Susan Kirks, Linda Hammer, Nathaniel Roberts.

Susan Kirks' team had another good year with 99 total species. Known as the "working person's team," the Burrowing Owlers extend their time for observations and identifications over two months, from late February to the end of April. After looking everywhere for an hour or so at a time (in yards, at the coast, inland, while driving from one location to another, and at places of work!), we compiled our observations to arrive at the total number of species for the team.

This year's species ranged from Allen's and Anna's Hummingbirds to Acorn, Downy and Nuttall's Woodpeckers to a Western Screech Owl, White Pelican and Hooded Orioles. The Bird-a-thon for the Burrowing Owlers is a great opportunity to practice observing and identifying birds. Susan thanks Nathaniel and Linda for their astute and abundant observations to help the team and the Chapter!

Sponsors: Center Electrics, Patrick Schafer, Mary Abbott, Patrick Woodworth, Coco & Chester Kirks.

Amount Raised: \$265

2. Zonotripias

Team Members: Bill Doyle, Don Kirker, Helen Kochenderfer, and Bob Speckels.

We started at Alman Marsh at 4:00 a.m. - got Clapper, and the other common rails, but missed Black. Then we headed up to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park for owls. For the first time ever, we completely blanked; next year, we will switch to Salmon Creek Road. As the sun came up, we headed up Los Alamos Rd, where we had many species hard to find elsewhere, like breeding Rufous-crowned Sparrows. Next was Howarth Park and lakes, which were productive, as always, and then to the 9th Street rookery, where we picked up all the local herons and egrets. After a productive walk along the Willowside Trail to the pond, we headed out to Bodega Bay, where we spent quite a bit of time, and picked up many birds. We observed the Pygmy Nuthatch at Austin Creek, hard to find anywhere else. We next headed to Petaluma, Shollenberger Park and Ellis Creek for more species, including moorhen and curlew and ended the day at Sonoma State. As we walked to the car in the dark, we heard California Quail for the first time...the last bird of the day! It was a fun, productive, and tiring day - 16 hours! We look forward to doing it all again next year.

Sponsors: Rita and Bill Bevans, Teresa Doyle, Charles and Dian Doyle, Anita Doyle, Sarita Eastman, Jeffrey Hanson and Peggy Kearns, Julia/Brooke Loomis, Frederick Marsi, Ian Morrison, Rob and Anne O'Donnell.

Amount Raised: \$480.

3. March Madness

Team: Gene Hunn's "Hike and Bike Green Big Day."

My plan was to shoot for 100 species in one day while burning no fossil fuels. In past efforts, I hiked 15 or more miles, but I figured a bicycle could enhance the diversity of species I could

find by extending my range somewhat (subject to my physical limitations [that is, no big hills], my old clunker of a bike, and the very real dangers of highway traffic). I started at sunrise at Shollenberger, hiked the long loop, then biked through Alman Marsh and around to a Starbucks on Lakeville for breakfast. An early Cliff Swallow, a "singing" male Great-tailed Grackle, and a nice perched Merlin woke me up. I then biked to the Ellis Creek wetlands (7 Aleutian Cackling Geese with Canadas there). Here I met my first serious obstacle: the trail out to the mud flats and the river had just closed for the Ridgway's Rail nesting season, so my shorebird list got cut short. Nevertheless, by noon I had recorded nearly 80 species and so I figured 100 was in the bag, with Tolley Lake Regional Park down the road. Then I hit my next big impediment: I had forgotten that Tolley Regional Park was open only on Saturday and Sunday until April 1. I was rudely ejected after pushing my bike all the way up the Cannon Lane hill climb. Despite the setback, I was able to locate roosting Black-crowned Night-Herons at the old Papa's Restaurant off Lakeville and picked up a few additional species while dodging speeding 18-wheelers along Lakeville. I made a last minute strategic decision to ride on down Lakeville (taking my life in my hands from the traffic) to Reclamation Road and the San Pablo Bay Shore dike, hoping for more shorebirds, horned larks, raptors, etc. Then, just short of Highway 37, the final straw: that sinking feeling of an impending flat, the wobbly wheel and the thumper rhythm; I limped on down to the Reclamation Road parking lot and called my wife to come rescue me at just 2 p.m. Total of 86 species, nevertheless, not too shabby considering.

Amount Raised: Pending

4. Feather Questers

Team: Diane Hichwa and friends

Highlights of the 2017 Bird-a-Thon included:

- A Barn Owl sat atop the sign post at the corner of the airstrip, and a Barred Owl perched in a redwood in morning light.
- A VERY unexpected sighting of a secretive American Bittern flying up Salmon Creek.
- May is late enough to see BEAUTIFUL breeding plumage on Black-bellied Plovers in the mudflats and over the ocean the sleek silver/black/white of Pacific Loons in long low lines of 50 or more, followed by another line and another!

Continued on page 8

**BIRD-A-THON**

Continued from page 7

- Common Murres stood shoulder to shoulder in black-and-white tuxedos in the narrow view-window of Gualala Point Island and the Brandt Cormorants threw back their heads to display brilliant blue throat patches.
- A Red-tailed Hawk hassled a 2nd year Bald Eagle over the Jenner estuary.
- At the Doran Park entrance a Northern Harrier stood on the ground with its owl-like facial disk and across Bodega Bay the tall Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets still nest in the eucalyptus trees! White-wash seen and loud clicking of chicks heard.
- A glossy green Tree Swallow delivered food to a hole in the fence post and nearby a watchful Raven was dive-bombed by an upset Red-winged Blackbird.
- And the SOUNDS! Quick, 3 beers! calls the Olive-sided Flycatcher, loud and LOUDER sings the bright yellow Wilson's Warbler.

With 111(!) species seen, it was once again fun and an interesting challenge to search only coastally! (PLUS the Grey Whale moms and calves, sheep and lambs, Mallard with 4 chicks and frogs calling-- all signaled Spring!)

Sponsors: Dorcas Allison, David and Kathy Biggs, Philip Carlsen, Dr. Lynn Cominsky, Gerry and Buff Corsi, David and Kit Daine, Don and Donna Friedrich, Jim and Glenda Gentile, Dorothy Gregor, Karlene Hall, Valerie Hanelt, Carol Harrison and Don Tanner, Katherine Hichwa, John and Joanne Kleis, Deborah and Lloyd Kreuzer, William and Paget Lenarz, Peter and Olivia Leveque, Ann Luft, Alida Morzenti, Kathleen Mugele, Ted and Karen Nagel, Michael Nelligan, Rebecca Olsen, Benjamin and Ruthmary Parmeter, Beverly Penn, Sally Pola, David and Chris Powell, John and Linda Reichel, Jim and Judy Seeser, Gloria Shay, Richard Shipp, Danna Vough, Marilyn Scott, Daphne Smith, Richard Stradford, Janice Vough, Anne Ysunza, Cathy Zbikowski, Loretta and Richard Zweig.

Amount Raised: \$2,648.25

5. Chickadiddies (formerly Roadrunners)

Team Members: Carolyn Greene, Asenath LaRue, Melinda Harris, Jim Rosso.

Following the passing of legendary BAT birder and Madrone supporter Don McCarthy last fall, Betty Groce decided she wasn't ready to convene the legendary "Roadrunners" BAT team in 2017. Betty graciously offered her list of past sponsors to the "Chicks" with her blessing and

encouragement. The "Chicks" extend a very special thanks to Betty and to our supporters, especially since most of them don't know the team members, but continue to support this important effort. Our day started local - Spring Lake and Howarth Park, where we were happy to spot 2 oriole species, a Black-headed Grosbeak, Belted Kingfisher and several Red-winged Blackbirds in a variety of juvenile plumages. We continued to Shollenberger and then to Bodega Head, where we overlooked in amazement as a swooping Peregrine Falcon gave us quite an aerial show. We were most pleased with our 79 species for the day.

Sponsors: Richard Abbott, George Batchelder, Judith Barker, Gordon Beebe, Malcolm Blanchard, Janet Bosshard, Patricia Brown, Judith Christiansen, Neal Conner, Susan Dean, Richard Donat, Marilyn Edmondson, Joe Ferrari, Stanley Gold, Carolyn Greene, Janet Hurley, Dale Kuhn, Andy LaCasse, Asenath LaRue, David Leland, Dennis Luz, Patricia March, Sandra Martensen, Liz Parsons, Gaines Post, Jr., Cynthia Rathkey, Marilyn Rathman, Rhio Reigh, J.M. Rienecker, Ruth Rudesill, Joylyn Ryan, Bonnie Saito, Teresita Salter-Haag, Marilyn Sanders, Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña, Thomas Silman, Daphne Smith, Marilyn Strand, Barbara Toschi, Ernestine Trujillo, Frances Waska, Thomas Wysham, Dr. Stephen DeSalvo.

Amount Raised: \$1,782.40

6. Grey-Headed Seersuckers

Team Members: Ken Wilson, Becky Olsen, Ian Morrison.

We began our day of birding just before daybreak with Ian locating owls, after which we drove to the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery, a very birdy site at this time of the year. Highlights here were a flock of Purple Finches, an abundance of White-breasted Nuthatches, a Townsend Warbler and a pair of Cooper's Hawks. At Howarth Park, we added Violet-green Swallow and Hutton's Vireo before moving on to Spring Lake where we picked up Warbling Vireo, Bewick's Wren, Bullock's Oriole and Song Sparrow. Because of the pending rain that had been forecast, our goal was to reach Bodega Bay as early as possible, not a bad thing as it helped keep the pressure on to keep adding species and not "bird watching," a big distraction on a Bird-a-Thon. On our way to Bodega, we stopped at the Laguna de Santa Rosa and found many Hooded Mergansers, Common Mergansers and a calling Sora.

We encountered our first rain as we neared Bodega, much sooner than had been forecast. However, it was not enough to deter us from our quest. The tide was high when we arrived, making it difficult

to find shorebirds, so we drove the Bodega Head where all three possible cormorants were present plus Pigeon Guillemots, a large group of Eared Grebes engaging in synchronous diving, a few Red-throated Loons making their way North and a Northern Harrier working the hillsides. At Campbell Cove, we added a singing Wilson's Warbler and a Red-necked Grebe. As the tide dropped, wading birds began to appear on the mudflats along with an unexpected Black-legged Kittiwake, probably the highlight of the day, plus a single Caspian Tern. An Osprey consuming a fish at Diekmann's Store was fun to watch and gave us a lot of opportunity for close-up photos. We also had very good looks at an adult Thayer's Gull at Salmon Creek.

From there, we drove south towards Petaluma in an attempt to get ahead of the rain. At Shollenberger Park, amongst the many gulls, we found a single, first year Glaucous Gull, another highlight for the day. Shorebirds were plentiful and included Long-billed Curlews and Short-billed Dowitchers plus many, many American Avocets. A walk around Ellis Creek yielded small numbers of ducks plus a couple of male Great-tailed Grackles and a very accommodating American Bittern which sat beside the trail as we walked by. It would have been a good time to have had my camera with us.

As it was getting late in the day, we drove home, having decided to make a detour in search of our last bird of the day - a Loggerhead Shrike along East Railroad Avenue in Penngrave, well worth the detour.

Our total number of species for the day was 130, not as many as we had hoped for, but we all had a great day and were happy to have contributed to Madrone's annual fundraising effort.

Thank you all for your support of our team.

Sponsors: Susan Bass, Gordon Beebe, William Bevans, Veronica Bowers, William Doyle, Theodore Eliot, Anthony Hicks, Jeffrey Holtzman, Keith Marshall, Lisa Peters, Earl and Kathy Rathburn, Ruth Rudesill, Daphne Smith.

Amount Raised: \$649.65

Plans are already in the works for BAT 2018. Our established teams will welcome our members' support, and if you can join a team and find one that seems best for you, we welcome your participation! If you would like to form a new team, our Chapter will benefit from your creativity.

For more information, or questions, please contact Coordinator Carolyn Greene at cgnpark@icloud.com.

Also, please watch future issues of *Leaves* to see how you can support our Bird-a-Thon next year!



Wine Country Optics & Nature Festival — September 9th

The weather (in the low 80s) was just right for the 6th annual Wine Country Optics & Nature Festival on E. Spain Street at the Sonoma Barracks. As has become our tradition, Madrone Audubon hosted a display, shared with the “Save the Badgers” conservation nonprofit, Paula Lane Action Network, based in Petaluma.



Gina Roman of Sonoma visits our booth Courtesy of Susan Kirks

We shared complimentary copies of our September 2017 Leaves, our 50th anniversary Bewick's Wren bookmarks, and copies of our October/November Calendars for bird walks, meetings and activities. Thanks to Kathleen Barker, Madrone's former Treasurer, and Susan Kirks, our current President, for hosting our display (Susan also hosts the Badger conservation display). Kathleen shared some of her older bird guides, which attracted some expert birders and photographers familiar with these older guides. In fact, one visitor to our booth actually took a photograph featured in one of Kathleen's guides – of what is believed to be in the U.S. one of four known hybrids

of a Black-necked Stilt and Avocet (taken by Jim Rosso in the wetlands of Elkhorn Slough, east of Highway 12, north of Moss Landing Harbor, Monterey County, in 1994).

This year, Madrone Audubon was “neighbors” at the festival with Sonoma Ecology Center and Pt. Reyes National Seashore, which we very much enjoyed. We welcomed visitors of all ages, including many of our Madrone Audubon members. We interacted with more families this year and also engaged in fun conversations with parents and young people about birds, nature and wildlife. It is encouraging to experience the many young nature lovers in Sonoma County. Also, for this event, we featured the historic Acorn Woodpecker gavel, and much enjoyment was felt from pushing the woodpecker's beak to the tree trunk to peck the log. Now, the gavel will be gently replaced in its box, and returned to a shelf for safekeeping, until appropriate to display again.

This year's festival featured over 50 displays and booths, including nature artists and photographers and many major binocular and scope companies, displaying equipment and providing opportunities to test-view.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this quality conservation event and look forward to next year! Thanks to Sonoma Nature (Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie) and California State Parks for organizing and sponsoring the festival.

MEMBERS' COLUMN

Solar Eclipse

by Art Montana

On August 21st, at the height of the eclipse, streetlights illuminated the outpost town of Guernsey, Wyoming at about 11:00 am. Although the train roared through town, nothing else appeared to be on schedule.

I had flown to Denver and driven to Guernsey, which is about 111 miles southeast of Casper. Other towns along the path of totality were booked months ago when I made my reservations, but one modest room was available in Guernsey at about four times the going rate. I didn't mind the cost at all. Folks had descended there from all over the country, and locals welcomed and treated us hospitably.

I hadn't witnessed a total solar eclipse for nearly 50 years, but as a physicist, I particularly recalled the last one as the tree leaves cast a most spectacular refraction pattern at and near totality. In Guernsey, we parked ourselves on the bank of the North Platte River under a long-needle pine. For over an hour preceding and following totality, the needles cast these refraction patterns onto the ground, producing hundreds of silver-dollar-sized images of the sun/moon pair, permitting one to track the progress without looking up!

For those planning for the next one, things look grim for Sonoma County for the remainder of this century, but Carbondale, Illinois holds promise for April 8, 2024.

I didn't observe anything notable regarding birds during my eclipse experience, but birders across the country recorded interesting changes in bird behavior as darkness descended (see eBird postings at www.birdcast.info/forecast/eclipse/). And in New Mexico, a friend reported that his house cats asked to be fed again, although they had eaten but a short time before.

A note to all Madrone members...

Do you have bird observations or experiences to share? Something that caught your eye in your backyard, on a hike in one of Sonoma County's parks or open spaces, or on a recent vacation? Please send a brief description (and a photo if you have one), and *Leaves* will include as many of these contributions as we can.

Post Christmas Bird Count Dinner...Join Us

Madrone Audubon's West County Christmas Bird Count this year will be on Saturday, December 30, 2017. For any questions about the day and to join a team for the count, contact Dr. Stacy Li at 707-566-7937 or stacyli@sonic.net. Peter Leveque and Stacy Li are the Christmas Bird Count Co-Chairs.

At the end of that day around 5:15 p.m., everyone gathers at the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center at 390 Morris Street in Sebastopol to compile data, report highlights and enjoy a meal together. If you're not birding and counting that day, would you like to volunteer to help us with set-up and dinner service (buffet)? Everyone helps with clean-up afterwards. We usually depart the Center by 8:30 p.m. If you would like volunteer to help with dinner, please contact Susan Kirks at susankirks@sbcglobal.net or 707-241-5548.

We're pleased to report *Worth Our Weight* caterers based in Santa Rosa, who provided last year's post-count meal, will help us again this year, providing a hearty, yet simple, vegetarian meal. We ask all participants, as is our tradition, to contribute a dessert if possible and also donate \$5 per person for the meal (and to bring your own dishes and cutlery, if you can). For more information on *Worth Our Weight*, please visit their web site at www.worthourweight.org. Thanks to Nancy Hair, Madrone publicity chair, for suggesting this terrific catering group. If you're not birding and counting that day and would like to join us for the meal and hear the CBC results, please just let us know, so we can include you in the total dinner count. Again, contact Susan at susankirks@sbcglobal.net, 707-241-5548.



Madrone Audubon Society

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October/November 2017

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MADRONE LEAVES



Madrone Audubon Society meets on the third Monday of each month, except in June, July, August, and December. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. All membership meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: e-mail - info@madroneaudubon.org.

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

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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