



# LEAVES

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

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Number 2

## Threats to Birds and Our Environment – Audubon Responds

by Susan Kirks

We are watching and participating in several initiatives to protect our environment, birds and wildlife. In this *Leaves* issue:

### *Standing Up for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act*

In May 2018, Co-Plaintiffs Center for Biological Diversity, American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Defense Council filed a lawsuit to defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) from the Trump administration’s efforts to “hand industry a blank check for bird deaths.” (Sarah Rose, Audubon California, message 08/08/2019). The Migratory Bird Treaty Act is the landmark federal law protecting birds, including the Bald Eagle, Snowy Egret and Sandhill Crane.

In December 2017, US Department of the Interior issued a memo, relaxing the government’s interpretation of the MBTA when reviewing possible violations of the Act. This opinion reversed decades of bipartisan cooperation and administration policy and practice for implementing and enforcing the MBTA.

At the heart of the MBTA is prohibition of killing or “taking” of migratory birds, extending to incidental take from industrial activities (unintentional, but predictable and avoidable, killing.)

The Trump administration’s revised interpretation would mean MBTA protections would apply only to activities *purposefully* killing birds. “Incidental” take – regardless of how inevitable or harmful an impact on birds, would be immune from legal enforcement.

Oil and gas industry, wind energy companies and power transmission line operators, operating within MBTA regulations, have had incentives to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to minimize bird deaths, directly related to the risk of liability under the MBTA.

Continued on page 2

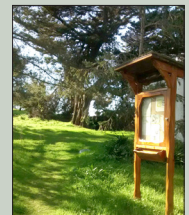
### GENERAL MEETING

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa  
Monday, October 21, 2019, 7:00 PM

#### “Phenology at the Preserve”

Join volunteers of the Phenology Project at the Paula Lane Nature Preserve in West Petaluma, for an introduction to a project that is also part of the National Phenology Project. We will learn about our Madrone Audubon-sponsored citizen science research, currently in the 4th year of collecting and recording data. Volunteers visit monthly, observe and record data for 9 avian, 2 mammal and 4 plant species. The project is designed for beginning and advanced observers. Phenology, the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life, is a focus of citizen scientists across the U.S., carefully observing, collecting and recording data – to build a database of information – with the hope of informing decisions related to climate change impacts.

*Madrone Audubon sponsors the Phenology Project at the Paula Lane Nature Preserve, a protected open space property in West Petaluma, home to over 100 avian species, American Badger and other wildlife.*



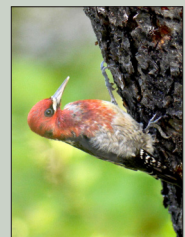
Paula Lane Nature Preserve  
Courtesy of Susan Kirks

Monday, November 18, 2019, 7:00 PM

#### “How Woodpeckers Can Save the World!”

Woodpeckers represent one of the most specialized bird families in the world, and these woodland carpenters perform critical ecological services in North America’s forested habitats; nowhere else on Earth are woodpeckers such important contributors to forest ecology. Join author, naturalist, field biologist, and woodpecker fanatic Steve Shunk, for an exciting journey into the lives and times of California’s woodpeckers. Steve will share secrets of woodpecker anatomy and stories of their natural histories as he interprets the keystone roles that woodpeckers play in our North Bay forests and woodlands.

*Author of the Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America, Steve gives presentations and leads birding tours from North America to Sicily and Borneo. He co-founded the East Cascades Bird Conservancy and the Oregon Birding Trails program, and he has studied woodpeckers for more than 20 years from his home in Central Oregon’s ‘Woodpecker Wonderland’.*



Red-breasted Sapsucker  
Courtesy of Gordon Beebe



### THREATS TO BIRDS

Continued from page 1

The Trump administration's attempted MBTA rollback would eliminate this incentive to minimize and mitigate impacts of their activities. The MBTA also provides legal protections for birds from fossil fuel development. The Trump administration attempted gutting of the MBTA would mean



Sandhill Crane pair

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

industry would no longer need to take measures to protect birds from these hazards. When the 2010 British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon disaster caused more than 210,000,000 gallons of oil to spill into the Gulf of Mexico, and more than 1,000,000 birds were killed in the subsequent 4 years, BP paid \$100,000,000 in fines under the MBTA - with support for wetland and migratory bird conservation. The new memo and interpretation, if it stood as law, would bar the federal government from seeking mitigation like this under the MBTA for devastating oil spills.

A federal court ruled in Summer 2019 the lawsuit can move forward. Said David Yarnold, President and CEO of the National Audubon Society, "Industrial practices that kill birds should be punishable by law, and any attempt by the White House to change that should be challenged in a court of law. We'll see you in court, Mr. President."

*(Resources: Audubon California, Sarah Rose; National Audubon Society; windAction; United States District Court, Southern District of New York, Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief, May 2018.)*

## Bird-a-Thon 2019 is in the Books!

by Carolyn Greene

Bird-a-Thon (BAT) is Madrone's major fun/fundraiser - money we raise helps to fund the annual Nature Festival at Lincoln Elementary School, family bird walks, youth activities, the W. 9th Street heron and egret nesting support project, the Phenology Project, our speaker series for membership meetings, bird checklists for Sonoma County Regional Parks, potential donations to help other chapters (such as in post-fire recovery), and our many conservation efforts throughout Sonoma County.

We thank all of the team leaders, members, and especially each and every sponsor who donated. If I missed any names, please contact me (cgnpark@icloud.com), and we can credit you and correct our records.

This year, Madrone's six BAT teams raised **\$6,208.20** for these important programs.

Following are team members, reports and sponsors.

**"Roadrunners"** - Cathy Vancik, Ron Brown, Isobel Meisler, Barbara Kendrick, Carolyn Greene, Tom Reynolds, Geri Brown, Melinda Harris - We split our big day into two halves - one morning around Oakmont and Spring Lake, and a second morning at Shollenberger and Ellis Creek. We observed the usual rich diversity of oak woodland, forest and water birds, highlighted by an American Bittern cameo close-up, thanks to Tom Reynolds' experienced eye. At Shollenberger, we were approached by a young hot-shot birder who asked if we might like to see a Common Gallinule and a Black Rail. We sure did! We saw all the usual waterfowl and shorebirds, Osprey, orioles and other arriving migrants, with a final total of 82 species, and raised **\$921**.



American Bittern

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

Roadrunner Sponsors: Jim Batchelder, Malcolm Blanchard, Janet Bosshard, Geri Brown, Susan Dean, Darlene Donat, Marilyn Edmondson, Isobel Meisler, Joe Ferrari, Stanley Gold, Betty Groce, Dale Kuhn, Pat Marsh, Sandra Martensen, Shirley Maxson, Jacqueline Rienecker, Frances Waska, Melinda Harris, Don Howard, Tish Brown, Daphne Smith, and Carolyn Greene

**"Featherquesters"** - Diane Hichwa (the one and only team leader/member!) - "This was my 23rd BAT year, with a goal of 100 species, even though I was only able to bird the coast. Balmy Bodega Bay produced Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets including clicking of chicks. The Hole-in-the-Head still had a hunched over Black-crowned Night-heron in the willows across from the viewing area. And once again a Virginia Rail popped up in the pond at Hwy 1 and 116! Other highlights included a Bald Eagle, Dunlins and Red Knot in breeding plumage, Vaux's Swifts, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wilson's and MacGillivray's warblers. I got CLOSE to my 100 goal - 97 species observed, and an interesting challenge to search ONLY coastally!"

Diane again led all teams in fundraising, bringing in **\$2,750** from her sponsors.

Featherquester Sponsors: Danna Vough, Beverly Penn, Katherine Hichwa, Cathy and Larry Zbikowski, Loretta and Richard Zweig, Bill & Paget Lenarz, Ann Luft, Glenda & Jim Gentile, Phil Carlsen, Lynn Cominsky & Garret Jernigan, Richard Shipps, Dorcas Allison, Kathleen Rosskopf, Debby & Lloyd Kreuzer, Mike & RuthMary Parmeter, Eileen Bill, Kathy Mugele, Don & Donna Friedrich, Ellen Krebs, Becky Olsen, Ted & Karen Nagel, Kit & David Daine, John & Jo Kleis, Gloria Shay,



## BIRD-A-THON

Continued from page 2

Dave & Chris Powell, Deyea & Jack Harper, Dorothy Gregor, Gerry & Buff Corsi, Sally Pola, All Tails Wagging Vet Clinic, Kathy & Roland Pesch, Jim & Judy Seeser, Karlene Hall, Deborah Votek, Carol Harrison & Don Tanner, Marguerite Li.

**“Burrowing Owlers”** - Susan Kirks and Art Slater – We had a diverse and abundant 2-month period of time, observing in several areas of Sonoma and Marin Counties, including backyards. We identified 85 species, ranging from Great Egret at the W. 9th St. nesting site to Violet-green Swallows at the Paula Lane Nature Preserve in West Petaluma. We saw a Burrowing Owl, but it was in a short excellent documentary, so we couldn't count it as an actual sighting! American Coot, one of our favorites, was seen at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma. And Earth Day at Safari West in April gave Guinea Hen and Pink Flamingo sightings. We consider ourselves the “working person's” team, observing and recording when we can in the midst of full schedules – the BAT experience is a great stress managing experience to connect with Nature during a fully scheduled day. This team raised **\$353**.

Burrowing Owlers sponsors: Linda & Thomas Ahlers, David Oliver, Stan Salomon, Art Slater, Judy Johnson, Jean Martin, Mari & Kenneth Wright, Carolyn Greene, Marguerite Li,

**“Gray-headed Seersuckers”** - Ken Wilson, Becky Olsen, Ted Eliot, and Ian Morrison went out early this year - mid-March. “Enjoying the sunrise at Howarth Park, we worked our way to the coast and then back to Petaluma, finishing the day at 7:00 pm. We saw a total of 127 species that included early Orange-crowned Warblers and a late departing Ferruginous Hawk. Other birds included an adult Bald Eagle at the Laguna, a Pigeon Guillemot in Bodega Harbor and Great-tailed Grackles at Howarth Park. Western Bluebirds were abundant throughout our route.” This team raised **\$1,371**.

Our dear friend, Ted Eliot, who recently passed away, was a dedicated member of the Gray-headed Seersuckers for many years. He will be greatly missed by us all.

Gray-headed Seersucker Sponsors: Susan Bass, Gordon Beebe, Rita and Bill Bevans, Arden Bucklin-Sporer, Ted Eliot, Bill Doyle, Donna Halow, Jeffrey Holtzman, David Leland & Ann Howald, Ian Morrison, Michael Nelligan, Earl & Kathy Rathbun, Carolyn Stone, Anne Teller, Stacy & Marguerite Li, Deyea & Jack Harper.

**“March Madness”** - Gene Hunn - “I decided to focus my ‘pure’ green big day (no fossil fuels used) around Petaluma. I set off in the dark on my clunker bicycle in a light rain, with tripod, scope, lunch, water, and coffee in my backpack. Shollenberger produced a wet Great Horned Owl and three Black Rails calling their “kick-ee-doo” from the pickleweed. Other highlights were an American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Long-billed Curlew, American Avocets and a Dunlin, Western Sandpiper, Bonaparte's and Mew gulls, American Kestrel, a flock of Western Meadowlarks, White-tailed Kites, and soon I was at 99 species! As luck would have it, I heard a Spotted Towhee churr on my Lynch Creek Trail. 5:00 pm cocktail hour had arrived and my goal (just barely) achieved.” Gene's effort raised **\$135**.

March Madness Sponsors: Andy LaCasse, Art Wang, Marguerite Li

**Zonotropias** - Bill Doyle, Helen Kochenderfer, Don Kirker - “We had a great day, scouting the County for BAT birds. Numbers were down in spite of good conditions, but we managed 124 species. Next year, we'll try for a CO2-free/Green Birding Big Day!” Their 2019 sponsors donated **\$678.20**.

Zonotropia Sponsors: Rita & Bill Bevans, Ira Byock, Charles & Dian Doyle, Teresa Doyle, Brent & Sarita Eastmen, Mookie Fudemberg, Will & Karen German, Jeff Hanson, Bob & Carol Hasenick, Denise Herzberg, Rick Marsi, Bill Nelson, Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña, Ken Wilson.

2020 BAT teams will be forming in early spring, and birders of all skill levels are invited to participate! Contact me for information - [cgnpark@icloud.com](mailto:cgnpark@icloud.com).

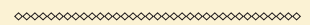
## New Members

**Forestville**

*Katherine Caddes*

**Sonoma**

*Anne Goldmann*



## Donations

*In Memory of*

**Ted Eliot**

*by Richard Hurley*

## Our Basic Membership now \$25

At our annual planning meeting in August this year, our Board considered and approved a \$5 increase in our annual Basic Membership, from \$20 to \$25. All other categories will remain at current levels. We have not increased our Basic Membership in many, many years, and this additional \$5 per year may support generating an additional \$4,000 in revenue for our Chapter. With our multitude of activities, programs and conservation work, we hope to apply the additional revenue to support and enhance our work in Sonoma County for our members and the community. We appreciate our members' understanding and, for those of you who renew as Basic Members, adding \$5 to your annual membership renewal check is appreciated. If for any reason, a member cannot add this \$5 to renew your Basic Membership, please renew at whatever level or amount you are able.

Again, please note - our other categories of membership will remain at the same level for new members and renewals. Please know how much we appreciate you, our members!



## Update on \$13K Madrone Challenge Grant for Bird Rescue Center

Ashton Kluttz, Executive Director of the Bird Rescue Center reports that \$21,400 in matching donations have been raised since the announcement of the \$13,000 dollar-for-dollar Madrone Challenge Grant, bringing the grand total in the Center’s building fund to \$34,400! But BRC still has a long way to go to raise the \$600K needed by year-end 2019 for the Phase 1 infrastructure at their new Cotati location. Please help our partner BRC meet this critical deadline so that they can continue the lifesaving work they have been doing for thousands of birds annually for forty years. To be part of the Madrone-sponsored effort, you can simply send your donation directly to: Bird Rescue Center, 3430 Chanate Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404, noting in the memo line you are MFoBRC. It would also be helpful if you could email Nancy Hair, doghairnancy@yahoo.com, so we can keep track of the MFoBRC total.

**Membership renewals, Fall 2019, are due now.**  
Please renew your membership today.  
*Thank you!*

## Good News for the Wild

### California First State to Ban Fur Trapping

There’s good news to share for our California wildlife! On Sept. 4, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed The Wildlife Protection Act of 2019 into law.

The Act is a statewide ban on commercial and recreational fur trapping. Native animals protected by this Act include bobcats, gray foxes, badgers, beavers and minks. The Act includes prohibition of selling of pelts. “We thank Governor Newsom for relegating this cruel and antiquated practice to the dustbin of history in California,” said Center for Biological Diversity’s Conservation Director, Brendan Cummings. Madrone’s President, Susan Kirks, the California Naturalist for American Badgers, also said, “This legislation was put forward through a strong, dedicated coalition of conservation organizations, with the goal of wildlife protection – there was enormous effort, coordination and perseverance.” Project Coyote’s Camilla Fox shared additional news of pending legislation with the potential of signing into law by Governor Newsom: On September 10, 2019, “the



Juvenile badger Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

California State Legislature passed bills to prohibit fur sales and the trophy hunting of bobcats.” As we go to press, this legislation is on its way to Governor Newsom’s desk to sign into law. Let’s keep hope alive!

*(Resources: Center for Biological Diversity, Project Coyote, Paula Lane Action Network, California State Legislature.)*



Juvenile bobcat

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

### A Victory for Birds in California

Better late than never, but still leading the way for others...on July 1, 2019, California implemented the nation’s first 100 percent lead ammunition ban to protect wildlife from lead poisoning. When consumed in carcasses by carrion-eating birds like condors and eagles, lead ammunition can cause sickness and death. Audubon California, other wildlife organizations, and many



Bald Eagle

Courtesy of Vishal Subramanyan, Hawkwatch

concerned individuals lobbied for this action for more than 10 years. Let’s hope other states soon follow this lead. Madrone Audubon thanks Mike Lynes, Policy Director, and Juan Altamirano, Assoc. Director of Public Policy for their continued legislative advocacy on behalf of Audubon California.



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 2019 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 3, 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 5, 8:30 AM to noon*

**RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK,** on Ragle Ranch Road, in Sebastopol. Join us to look for fall migrants, as well as a wide variety of our familiar county birds. Meet in the parking area near the dog park and Peace Garden (from entry kiosk, the road slowly veers left - continue to the parking lot). Parking fee (\$7) for non-permit holders. We will be walking the Blackberry Trail, about 1.5 miles long. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Thursday, October 17, 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM*

**COASTAL PRAIRIE TRAIL,** 2255 Highway 1, Bodega Bay, CA 94923. The Coastal Prairie Trail is a 1.1-mile

pedestrian trail between the Bodega Bay Community Center and Keefe Avenue. The trail passes the 18-foot Children's Bell Tower memorializing 7-year-old Nicholas Green. Dress according to coastal weather conditions. We will walk on the flat path, along the coastal prairie habitat. Leader: Janet Bosshard, 526-5883.

*Saturday, October 19, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM*

**BODEGA BAY.** 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. Bring Lunch. There is a \$7 parking fee at Doran Beach if we get there later in the day. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Monday, October 21, 7:00 PM*

**GENERAL MEETING.** First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. "Phenology at the Preserve." This is a free event and all are welcome.

## November 2019 Calendar

*Thursday, November 7, 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 9, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM*

**TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK.** An expansive hawk-rich habitat. Parking fee (\$7) for non-permit holders. We will walk out the Causeway trail from the parking lot. Bring lunch. Leaders: Larry Broderick, northcoastraptor@gmail.com, and Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Monday, November 18, 7:00 PM*

**GENERAL MEETING.** First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. "How Woodpeckers Can Save the World!" This is a free event and all are welcome.

*Thursday, November 21, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM*

**SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK.** Please note later start time. We will meet at the south entrance, Newanga Avenue, near the restrooms and children's grove. We will walk along

the lake path and possibly if conditions are on the dry side, walk the Fisherman's Trail. Use your park pass or buy a day pass for \$7. Be prepared for late fall weather. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Janet Bosshard, 526-5883.



Sora

Courtesy of Malcolm Blanchard



## OUT & ABOUT

### “Winging It Wednesdays” Bird Walks

Enjoy leisurely, family-friendly bird walks for all levels of experience on the last Wednesday of the month at one of Sonoma County’s beautiful regional parks. Upcoming walks include:

**October 30, 2019, 8:30 – 10:30 AM** at Riverfront Regional Park

**November 27, 2019, 8:30 – 10:30 AM** at Shiloh Ranch Regional Park.

Additional information at <https://parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Play/Bird-Watching/>.

### Guided Nature Walks

Bouverie Preserve, 13935 Highway 12, Glen Ellen, CA 95442

**Saturday, October 12 and October 26, 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM**

Join a small group led by a trained Bouverie volunteer to explore the mixed evergreen forest and flower-carpeted oak woodland. Walks are no more than 2.5 miles long and visitors of all ages are welcome. \$20 per person suggested donation. Go to <https://www.egret.org/calendar-public/month> for information and online registration for these events.

### Marin Audubon Field Trips

The North Bay region is home to several Audubon chapters, and all...like Madrone...offer amazing field trip opportunities. Below are two upcoming trips hosted by the Marin Audubon Society. For additional information, go to <http://www.marinaudubon.org/events-field-trips.php>.

### Point Reyes National Seashore

*Sunday, October 6, 2019, 7:30 AM to 2:30PM*

Explore some of the best know migrant hotspots in the area, including Drakes Beach and Fish Docks/Chimney Rock.

### San Francisco Bay Boat Trip

*Sunday, November 17, 2019, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM*

Cruise by ten islands, under two bridges, and up two creeks in four counties in search of migrating and resident waterfowl, water and shore birds, and marine mammals. \$110 per person, limit of 25 attendees. Sign up soon for this one if you’re interested!



*Chestnut-sided Chickadee*

*Courtesy of Dennis Luz*

*Coming soon....*

### **Doran Regional Park Bird Checklist Doran Beach, Bodega Bay**

(Compliments of Madrone Audubon Society, many contributors, Sonoma Co. Regional Parks)

### **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.



# COASTAL COLUMN

by Diane Hichwa

The rocky intertidal areas of our North Coast are ideal habitat for the Black Oystercatcher (coded as BLOY). This is the black shorebird with bright red beak and loud ringing call. Its nest is a small pile of pebbles with a speckled egg to blend in with the rocks. Since 2010 we have participated in an Audubon California study of reproductive success of this species; interest is heightened by the fact that, in nesting so close to the tide line, BLOY may be an early indicator of climate change along our coast. In 2019 our volunteers surveyed one hour each week at each of the 21 nests we found along the ten mile stretch of The Sea Ranch.



Food delivery to oystercatcher chick Courtesy of Craig Tooley

On June 11 we observed the first chicks, and they would need another 38-40 days before they fledge, i.e., can fly. This year had our highest number of nests, including 3 RE-nests, but 10 of the earliest nests failed. It also had some of our LATEST nesting observed. At the end of August we still had 5 nests active with 8 BLOY chicks being fed and waiting to fledge.

Our Coastal Stewardship Task Force sponsored a student intern, a young woman from our local area who is entering her Junior year at Berkeley. One of Elise's days involved a 5:30 a.m. start on June 16 to help the UC Santa Cruz researchers in the intertidal zone; the experts ID and count while our volunteers record data. Sea Ranch was one of 6 sites where studies began in

1985 to observe and document recovery rates in mussels and algae, but the study has expanded to include other target species including the Ochre Star. All this data is included in the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network (MARINE; see their website for more information at <https://marine.ucsc.edu/index.html>). The next day, Elise ventured out with a group from Oregon surveying the results of Sea Star Wasting disease. Along our North Coast precipitous declines in several species of sea stars have led to a dramatic increase in numbers of purple sea urchins, a common prey species of sea stars. The population explosion of urchins has, in turn, scrubbed the rocky near-shore reefs and coves of nearly all plant life, which then has caused starvation of the red abalone which rely on bull kelp and other seaweeds for food.

A surprise that first day was seeing gaping mussels, likely affected by June's extreme hot weather, early in the season and coinciding with low tide's directly exposing the animals. The mussels were cooking to death in their own shells! And scientists tell us to expect more of this with changing climate.



Dead mussels gaping open after the heat wave Courtesy of Craig Tooley

We wonder if the failure of earlier Black Oystercatcher nests, and the subsequent large number of late nests, was also related to the mussel die-off since the BLOY feed in those intertidal areas. As we share data with surveyors in other North Coast areas we will see if they made similar observations!

# Optics Festival in Sonoma

by Susan Kirks

Sunday, Sept. 14, was a great day for conservation groups and nature lovers in the Bay Area. Madrone Audubon shared our display space with Redwood Region Ornithological Society and Paula Lane Action Network (PLAN-Save the Badgers), to join in Sonoma Nature's and CA State Parks' annual gathering. A unique feature of the festival is the presence of several optics companies and suppliers, available to demonstrate equipment to interested nature lovers, and offer equipment for purchase.



Optics Festival 2019 - MAS booth Courtesy of Susan Kirks

We had a great day, chatting with visitors from Sonoma County, Oakland, Berkeley and Marin County, to name a few. Anne O'Donnell, President of RROS, Madrone's President, Susan Kirks, and a leader of PLAN, and former Madrone Treasurer Kathleen Barker greeted festival-goers and provided information, the opportunity to donate for a cap, peruse some of the older bird guides cherished by many, and visit with "MO-AB" and "BO-AB" (Mother of all Badgers and Baby of all Badgers), hand-created replicas of the American Badger.

We always enjoy communing with other conservation organizations invited to the festival by Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie of Sonoma Nature, and this year being able to visit with Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County, Bay Nature Magazine, Project Coyote,

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## The Phenology Project

Since 2016, Madrone Audubon has sponsored a citizen science research project at the Paula Lane Nature Preserve in West Petaluma. At this gentle property, a longstanding grassland habitat for American Badger, the avian life is diverse and sometimes surprising. The Phenology Project includes observations and data recording for 4 plants, 2 mammals, and 9 avian species. Suzanne Reta and Judith Wagner are two original volunteers who began observations in 2016 and continue to visit the Preserve monthly to observe, record data and add information for the National Phenology Project. This long-term project may contribute useful information regionally and nationally for changes or congruence in pheno-phases. (See the October 2019 membership meeting program description; please join us to learn more.)

Here's a partial list of bird species observed at the Paula Lane Nature Preserve from 2016–2019. Observations were made the second Monday of every month and include species seen flying overhead.

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. American White Pelican          | 32. Scrub Jay  |
| 2. Double Crested Cormorant        | 33. American Crow (resident)   |
| 3. Great Egret                     | 34. Common Raven   |
| 4. Great Blue Heron                | 35. Oak Titmouse   |
| 5. Canada Goose                    | 36. Chestnut-Backed Chickadee  |
| 6. Mallard                         | 37. Bushtit  |
| 7. Killdeer                        | 38. White-Breasted Nuthatch  |
| 8. Western Gull                    | 39. Bewick's Wren  |
| 9. Turkey Vulture                  | 40. Ruby-Crowned Kinglet   |
| 10. Red-Shouldered Hawk (resident) | 41. Western Bluebird   |
| 11. Red-Tailed Hawk                | 42. American Robin   |
| 12. Osprey                         | 43. Northern Mockingbird   |
| 13. American Kestrel               | 44. European Starling  |
| 14. California Quail               | 45. Yellow-Rumped Warbler  |
| 15. Wild Turkey (resident)         | 46. Townsend's Warbler   |
| 16. Rock Dove                      | 47. California Towhee (resident)   |
| 17. Mourning Dove (resident)       | 48. Song Sparrow   |
| 18. Eurasian Collared Dove         | 49. Dark-Eyed Junco  |
| 19. Anna's Hummingbird (resident)  | 50. White-crowned Sparrow  |
| 20. Northern Flicker               | 51. Golden-crowned Sparrow   |
| 21. Acorn Woodpecker               | 52. Western Meadow Lark  |
| 22. Nuttall's Woodpecker           | 53. Red-winged Blackbird   |
| 23. Western Kingbird               | 54. Brewer's Blackbird   |
| 24. Ash-Throated Flycatcher        | 55. Hooded Oriole (nested, raised young<br>in Palm tree May – July 2016) |
| 25. Black Phoebe                   | 56. House Sparrow  |
| 26. Say's Phoebe                   | 57. American Goldfinch   |
| 27. Western Flycatcher?            | 58. Purple Finch   |
| 28. Tree Swallow                   | 59. House finch  |
| 29. Violet-Green Swallow           | 60. White-tailed Kite  |
| 30. Cliff Swallow                  | 61. Lesser Goldfinch*  |
| 31. Barn Swallow                   |  |

*\*Judy Wagner, Phenology Project volunteer, adds Lesser Goldfinch, October 2018.*

**Note:** Total number avian species per Dan Nelson's avian survey, baseline documentation for the Paula Lane open space property: Over 100.





## MEMBERS' COLUMN

by Moss Henry

Trinidad is a small island seven miles off the coast of Venezuela and considered the southernmost island in the Caribbean. It's famous for nesting Leatherback turtles and numerous birds, including the Oilbird, the Bearded Bellbird and the endangered Piping Guan. The Asa Wright Nature Center is the most visited location for birds. Driving is challenging on the island, but the Center can arrange to pick you up and bring you back to the airport. Guides lead walks on a network of trails and trips to other island locales can be arranged. There is a covered veranda at the Center that is excellent for photographing birds coming to flowers, hummingbird feeders and fruit.



Barred Antshrike Courtesy of Moss Henry

Hummingbirds seen there include the White-necked Jacobin, Black-throated Mango, White-chested Emerald, Tufted Coquette, Ruby-topaz and Brown Violetear. Other common species include Barred Antshrike, Orange-winged Parrot, Violaceous Euphonia, Green Honeycreeper, Purple Honeycreeper, Silver-beaked Tanager and Turquoise Tanager. Birds of the nearby forest include the Bellbird, Spectacled Thrush, White-bearded Manakin, Golden-headed Manakin,



Green Honeycreeper Courtesy of Moss Henry

Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Violaceous Trogon, Red-crowned Ant-tanager, Channel-billed Toucan and Crested Oropendola.

I then drove to the east coast town of Matura where Leatherbacks nest. It was magical to watch a massive turtle go through the intimate process of digging a nest, laying eggs, covering them up, camouflaging the nest and making its way back into the ocean.

Birds seen in this area include Plumbeous Kite, Pauraque, Southern Lapwing, Little Hermit, Rufous-breasted Hermit, Blue-Black Grassquit, Short-tailed Nighthawk, Yellow-headed Caracara, Swallow-tailed Kite and Yellow-rumped Cacique.

Then, I drove to Grande Riviere on the north coast, the best place to see Leatherbacks in numbers. It's a small beach with many turtles using it. Some even stayed into the morning so I was able get video and pictures in daylight. Usually, they come up at night to avoid predators and the heat of the tropical sun. Birds seen along the road or here include the Piping Guan, White-flanked Antwren, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Pearl Kite, Common Black Hawk, Yellow Oriole and Magnificent Frigatebird.

My final stop was Caroni Swamp on the west coast, a great place to see Scarlet Ibis. These birds are electric red all over and, when flocks fly in, it's breath-taking. In fact, they flew in over flocks of Greater Flamingos and those birds look washed out by comparison! Other birds seen here included Common Potoo, Cocoi Heron, Tropical Screech Owl, Streaked Flycatcher, Tri-colored and Little Blue Herons, and Red-capped Cardinal. We also saw a Silky Anteater and a Tree Boa in the Mangroves. Guided boat tours were the key here.

If anyone is interested in talking with me further, please feel free to contact me at [mosshenry@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mosshenry@sbcglobal.net)

## OPTICS FESTIVAL

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International Bird Rescue, and others brought moments of joy and shared challenges and experiences.

The day after the Optics Festival each year, Sonoma Nature reaches out to participants, with a message, and this year's message seems most appropriate to share with our members:

*"Mother Nature's "crockpot" once again had us all on her front burner as non-profits conscientiously shared the ingredients that help make for a better understanding of the planet we share.*

*Dozens of significant nature organizations have annually shared hundreds of lively conversations and critters with a steady stream of inquisitive adults and families alike. It is always heartening to see this "outdoor classroom" come alive annually with the mission of educating, encouraging volunteerism, outdoor safety and hopefully being more informed consumers and voters.*

*Annually over the past eight years, several thousand people have enjoyed displays representing bears, beavers, bats, bees, badgers, raptors, river otters, reptiles, songbirds, water-wise plants, mountain lions, parks and wildlife refuges, bird rescue, coyotes, nature artists, astronomy, journalists along with an incomparable display of the latest binoculars and telescope technology. All of this creating a rare opportunity for the public to mingle among amazingly dedicated and caring individuals, non-profits, sponsors and media. . ."*

We thank Sonoma Nature and California State Parks for hosting the 8th annual Optics Festival, a wonderful day for a great cause.

### **A note to all Madrone members...**

Do you have bird observations or nature experiences to share? Something seen in your backyard, on a walk or 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 in the **Members' Column**.



## Serve on our Board – Help our Chapter

Current openings on our Board are: *Recording Secretary* and *Corresponding Secretary*.

The *Recording Secretary* takes notes at Board meetings and produces our minutes for the Chapter's records. Basic computer skills and typing are required for this role.

The *Corresponding Secretary* manages correspondence for the Chapter, working closely with the President. Writing, producing and mailing letters are the primary task for this role. Twice a year, the volume of correspondence is fairly significant. Computer skills, Microsoft Word and a printer are needed skilled and equipment.

If you have been concerned about driving at night or the ability to attend Board meetings, please don't worry! With technology, our Board is able to convene and conduct our business with members as needed participating from the comfort of your home.

Have you wanted to serve on our Board, but haven't yet taken that step forward? Now's the time! Contact Susan Kirks, our President, for more information – [susankirks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirks@sbcglobal.net), 707-241-5548. We are flexible and welcome our members to serve and help us. We need you!

### ***Background of our New Board Members - Suzanne Reta and Larry Broderick***

In September, we featured information about new Board Treasurer Suzanne Reta and new Ex Officio Board Member Larry Broderick. We're so pleased Suzanne and Larry have joined our Board, bringing with them many years of conservation and birding experiences, as well as diverse and interesting experiences.

**Suzanne Reta** has been a bird watcher since 1978 when she first took a bird walk on Cape Cod and fell in love with the Phalaropes at the Audubon Sanctuary in Eastham, Massachusetts. She has been a member of Madrone since 1988 and has volunteered to do bilingual presentations for Junior Audubon Adventures and participates in the annual Christmas Bird Count. Suzanne has lived in Sonoma County since 1986 and currently resides in Sebastopol on a small farm where she grows and sells fruit. Her various volunteer and service activities have included Child Protective Services, YWCA Domestic Violence Hotline, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Sonoma County (President), and helping to found the Hispanic Student Scholarship Fund. Suzanne has also volunteered for 17 years at the local food bank in Forestville, helping to serve Spanish-speaking clients. She has also served public radio, promoting programs for ecology, good citizenship and education. And, Suzanne shares her proudest moment was winning the Sweepstakes Blue Ribbon award for the best apple pie in Sonoma County.

**Larry Broderick** is a Bay Area Birds of Prey Natural History and Interpretive Specialist, working with birds of prey for over 25 years. For the last 15 years, Larry has led walks, hikes and presentations with Solano and Sonoma Land Trusts, Madrone Audubon, Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County, Redwood Region Ornithological Society, and the Winter Wings Festival, to name a few. Larry has conducted bird and wildlife surveys for The Wildlands Conservancy, Sonoma Land Trust, Solano Land

Trust and Pepperwood Preserve. He assists docents, photographers and tour guides in the course of his work, and has been certified for wildlife rehabilitation with the Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County and Kenwood Wildlife Center, dedicating many years to rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing our native wildlife.

Larry's work includes leading the regional raptor enthusiast group, West County Hawk Watch. He founded the Jenner Headlands Hawk Watch Group and is also a Certified UC California Naturalist.

Larry will be co-chairing with our President, Susan Kirks, the Renewable Energy Subcommittee of Conservation. The breadth of Larry's raptor conservation work includes the ability to reach out to and engage a team of over 100 Raptor enthusiasts with dozens of recreational and professional photographers. When called into action, they can rally and contribute significant documentation. The group has saved Swainson Hawk nesting sites, protected Peregrine Falcon nesting locations, helped with re-nesting displaced raptors, and documented migratory movements of raptors here in our region. Being tuned into potential or proposed wind power proposals in Sonoma County, Larry's experience is relevant to ensure vital flyways and habitats are protected and wind or solar installations are appropriately sited and do not negatively impact birds and wildlife. West County Hawkwatch is also recognized for study of overwintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks in the area and the current resurgence of Bald Eagles in the region.

**Observations**

Summer 2019 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Horned Grebe (alt. pl.)(1)	6/23	Shollenberger Park	Gil Ewing
Red-necked Grebe (1)	8/21	Doran Park	GH
Parakeet Auklet (1)	Aug.	Cliff House area, S.F. (returnee)	M.Ob.
Least Tern (1)	6/3-4	Hudemann Slough wetlands	DK, GT ph.
Arctic Tern (3)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Long-tailed Jaeger (1)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/ Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Laysan Albatross (1)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Wilson's Storm-Petrel (1)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Black Storm-Petrel (1)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Ashy Storm-Petrel (6)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel (1)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Blue-winged Teal	6/24	Willow Creek Ct., Petaluma	CH
White-faced Ibis (8)	8/31	Ellis Creek ponds	DK
Little Blue Heron (ad.)	6/22	Bodega Harbor/ Doran Park (photos)	Matt Davis
Cattle Egret (2)	8/2	9th Street ponds, Santa Rosa	DN
Least Bittern	Aug.	Ellis Creek (photos)	DK
American Bittern	9/1	Shollenberger Park	J Snead
Red Knot (2)	8/29	Westside Park, Bodega Harbor	GH
Baird's Sandpiper (1)	8/28	Shollenberger Park	RO'D
Baird's Sandpiper (2)	9/1	Shollenberger Park	J Snead
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8/17	Doran Park entrance pond	DK, et al
Lesser Yellowlegs	8/28	Shollenberger Park	RO'D
Wilson's Snipe	9/2	Carmody Rd. South pond	AW
Red Phalarope (32)	8/25	Offshore Sonoma/Marin County	RR0S, AJ et al
Wilson's Phalarope (1)	9/1	Shollenberger Park	GH
Barred Owl	8/22	Woodside Dr. Forestville	MB
Black-chinned Hummingbird	6/1	Santa Rosa, 9th St.	MB
Costa's Hummingbird	9/3-5	Piner Rd. at Meadow View (photos)	ide DH
Purple Martin (2)	9/4	Piner Rd. at Meadow View	JS, LH
Willow Flycatcher (1)	9/2	Santa Rosa Creek trail	DK
Willow Flycatcher (1)	9/4	Salmon Creek ponds/bridge	LH
Pygmy Nuthatch (1)	9/4	Petaluma; Queens Lane residence	AW
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9/2	Santa Rosa Creek trail	DK
Red-eyed Vireo (singing)	6/1-2	Bodega Head, between Owl C. / C.Cove	DN, et al
Nashville Warbler	8/10	Spring Lake Park	RO'D
Black-thr. Gray Warbler (2)	9/2	Santa Rosa Creek trail	DK
Yellow-breasted Chat	8/28	Kenwood residence	RR
Western Tanager (2)	9/2	Santa Rosa Creek trail	DK
Tricolored Blackbird (5)	9/4	Chanslor Ranch, S. of Salmon Creek	LH
Great-tailed Grackle (5)	8/31	Ellis Creek ponds	DK
Hooded Oriole (2)	8/18	Petaluma; Paula Ln. residence	DN
Black-throated Sparrow (imm.)	9/4-5	Campbell Cove	GH, et al
Grasshopper Sparrow	8/12	Hudemann Slough	LH
Indigo Bunting (imm. male)	6/1-2	Owl Canyon	DN, MB

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## Madrone Audubon Society

Post Office Box 1911  
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### October/November 2019

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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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**Recording Secretary:** Position open  
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**National Audubon Society:** 225 Varick Street, NY, NY 10014 ..... 212-979-3000

### Join Madrone Audubon – Support Your Local Chapter

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.

- New member       Renewal
- Senior \$15       Basic Member \$20       Family \$30
- Sustaining \$50       Supporting \$100       Patron \$500

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Visit us on the Web at: <http://www.madroneaudubon.org>