



The Kite Call

Ohlone Audubon Society, Inc.

*A chapter of the National Audubon Society
Serving Southern & Eastern Alameda County CA*

*Our Mission: To celebrate and protect birds and their habitats in
Southern and Eastern Alameda County
www.ohloneaudubon.org*

Calendar

Feb 20 MEMBERSHIP “LIGHT” MEETING via Zoom –2pm

March 2 GENERAL MEETING via Zoom—7:30PM

April 1, 8, 15 SPECIAL EVENT (details page 8)

April 6 GENERAL MEETING via Zoom—7:30PM

ALL FIELD TRIPS CANCELED AT THIS TIME. CHECK WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

Membership Meetings

A Year in the Lives of North American Owls



By Paul Bannick

Date: March 2, 2021
Time: 7:30PM(PST)
Location: Online Video Via Zoom
(Details on page 2)

Trial by fire: California Condor Recovery amid a turbulent year on the central coast



By Mike Stake

Iniko, baby condor

Date: April 5, 2021
Time: 7:30PM(PST)
Location: Online Video via Zoom
(Details on page 2)



OAS ZOOM Meetings are recorded!

If you missed one of our great meetings, they are recorded. Please check our Membership Meeting page on our website for the link. Zoom recordings are posted, about 1 week after live, on our website:

www.ohloneaudubon.org

SEE NEW ZOOM REGISTRATION DETAILS NEXT PAGE

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE NOVEL CORONA VIRUS & OHLONE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES



Ohlone Audubon has canceled all field trips in the foreseeable future. We hope to be in the field soon.

We are continuing to hold our General Meetings via Zoom. We have added a monthly “light” membership meeting on Saturday afternoon. Please connect and tune in! As we continue with our Zoom meetings you will have to register for the 2021 meetings if you have not done so already. See details on next page.

Remember, we are in this together. Please stay safe and remain vigilant about taking safety precautions. Wear the Mask! Practice social distancing. Avoid gatherings. Get your vaccine shots! Getting outdoors is so important for both our mental and physical health and birding just adds to that enjoyment.

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL?

We often send out emails regarding meeting reminders, special events, and action alerts. If you would like to share your email to receive these notices please send to pagpeg@aol.com.

**WE DO NOT SHARE CONTACT INFORMATION
Just staying connected!**

Follow us on Facebook!

f See updates and photos from our activities that you can share with your friends! Find us by doing a Facebook search for Ohlone Audubon Society



Meeting Details

March 2, 2021 Meeting - Owls

Paul Bannick will present a program featuring video and stories from the field and from his 2017 book with the same title. We will witness the four seasons on territory in an owl's life chronicled through courtship, mating, and nesting in spring; fledging and feeding of young in summer; dispersal and independence in fall; and finally migrations and competitions for food in winter.

All 19 species found in Canada and U.S. will be featured, with a special focus on Northern Pygmy-Owl, Great Gray Owl, Burrowing Owl, and Snowy Owl. Paul's presentation represents nearly ten years of working in some of the most remote parts of the continent, at the darkest hours of the day, tracking owls as they move through their lives.

Paul Bannick is an author of four books: *Snowy Owl: A Visual Natural History*; *Great Gray Owl: A Visual Natural History*; *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls*; and *The Owl and the Woodpecker, Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*.

Paul is also a wildlife photographer specializing in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat. Coupling his love of the outdoors with his skill as a photographer, he creates images that foster the intimacy between viewer and subject, inspiring education and conservation.

April 6, 2021 Meeting - Condors

The year 2020 started well for condors in central California. The regional population topped 100 for the first time, and a season record of eight breeding pairs tended chicks in active nests. But, fortunes would turn when the Dolan fire ignited in late August 2020, destroying management facilities at the condor sanctuary. Five active nests were also in the path of the wildfire, and nine free-flying condors went missing. Now, ten months have past, **Mike Stake**, a biologist with Ventana Wildlife Society, will describe the losses of 2020, share an update on rebuilding efforts, and recount stories of survival and human kindness that bring renewed hope for the full recovery of the population.

Mike Stake is a wildlife biologist at Ventana Wildlife Society in Monterey. A San Francisco Bay Area native, Mike became interested in birds when his 6th-grade teacher took the class to a local sewage pond to identify ducks, herons, and kingfishers. Mike left California in 1988 to attend the University of Nebraska. After graduation, he worked with The Nature Conservancy in Texas (Black-capped Vireos and Golden-cheeked Warblers) and Hawks Aloft in New Mexico (Gray Vireos and Mountain Plovers), before getting his Master's Degree at the University of Missouri. Along the way, he assisted with research in the Bahamas, Australia, Peru, and Ecuador, and taught English classes in Russia. Mike has been back home in California since 2009 assisting with California Condor recovery on the central coast.

ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:



Due to COVID-19, Ohlone Audubon's membership meetings will continue to be online via Zoom. Registration is needed for OAS's membership meetings in 2021! As before, you only need to do it once for ALL 2021 meetings. **Your old 2020 meeting link will NOT work in 2021!**

Click the URL / link below to register in advance for OAS's 2021 membership meetings:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0ldeyopjoiHdxrIasw95GYo7GazoqhtELu>

(After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.)

February "Light" Membership Meeting

When: **February 20 at 2:00pm**

Topic: **Useful and fun resources on the net**

Come share with others your favorite online avian related resources that keep you entertained and educated during shelter-in-place.

Debbie Wong, our Program Chair, will start with a few of her favorites including resources already listed on Ohlone Audubon's website.

Your Zoom link for January 2021's membership meetings will work for this meeting (in fact, for all 2021 membership meetings).

If you haven't joined a OAS membership meeting yet, please to register at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0ldeyopjoiHdxrIasw95GYo7GazoqhtELu>



Field Trips

If there was no Covid-19 and we had field trips this is where we would have gone . . .

We all miss our birding field trips and birding with friends, seeing new places and new birds, and returning to favorite places. We offer the following list of places Ohlone would have gone!

In January we would have gone to:

North Livermore and Springtown

A walk along the Arroyo where you can expect many wading birds such as stilts, avocets, herons, ducks, and many songbirds. Raptors are around- a Golden Eagle was observed a few years ago. Wide, level trails make walking easy.

Las Gallinas, San Rafael

The multi-faceted reclamation project includes a freshwater marsh, irrigated pastures, storage ponds, a saltwater marsh and is a great place for watching ducks and other waterfowl, raptors, and occasional rarities. The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District's Wastewater Treatment Reclamation Project provides several miles of even-ground hiking trails, unobstructed views of San Pablo Bay, Mt. Tamalpais, sitting and picnic benches and the opportunity to enjoy dozens of bird species.

American Canyon Wetlands, American Canyon

The low-lying flood plains found in American Canyon include mudflats, tidal and seasonal wetlands, former salt ponds, riparian corridors, and lands reclaimed for agriculture and development. The wetlands is home to many animals, including species of birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, and fish. Ohlone had its first trip there last year and we were hoping to return this year.

ALL OAS FIELD TRIPS IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE ARE CANCELED. CHECK WEBSITE AND/OR FACEBOOK FOR UPDATES

Shadow Cliffs, Pleasanton/Livermore

At Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area, one of Ohlone's favorite places, explore the lake, levees, and marsh for wintering waterfowl, Common Gallinules, egrets, herons, and grebes. Osprey are found around the lake and ponds, while the trees hold woodpeckers. Also seen here often are Bald and Golden Eagles, Great-tailed Grackle, California Thrasher, Common Loon, and Hooded Merganser, Wilson's Snipe and Peregrine Falcon. Wide, level trails make walking fairly easy except for one short, steep uphill section to get onto the levee. Scopes are helpful.

In February we would have visited:

Refuges! Visit Sacramento NWR, Colusa State Wildlife Area, Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area or head south to Merced NWR for a spectacle of Snow Geese and other waterfowl and Sandhill Cranes.

Lake Elizabeth and Gomes Park

On our annual field trip here we often find newly-arrived *Selasphorus* hummingbirds by the palm trees and winter geese on the soccer fields with a side trip to Gomes Park, where rare sparrows are sometimes found. Plan to walk about 2.5 miles, mostly on paved paths

Redwood Regional Park, Oakland

Birding around the meadow area and along the stream where Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush, Hairy Woodpecker and Brown Creeper are often found.

Then there is ***Coyote Hills, Hayward Shoreline and Arrowhead Marsh*** – all very good right now! Oh, and an American Dipper in ***Sunol RP.*** . .

We believe in the power of birds to ignite discovery and inspire action —Cornell Lab of Ornithology



PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

Project FeederWatch turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. **FeederWatch** is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. **You don't even need a feeder!** All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water or food that attracts birds. **The schedule is completely flexible.** Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing, then

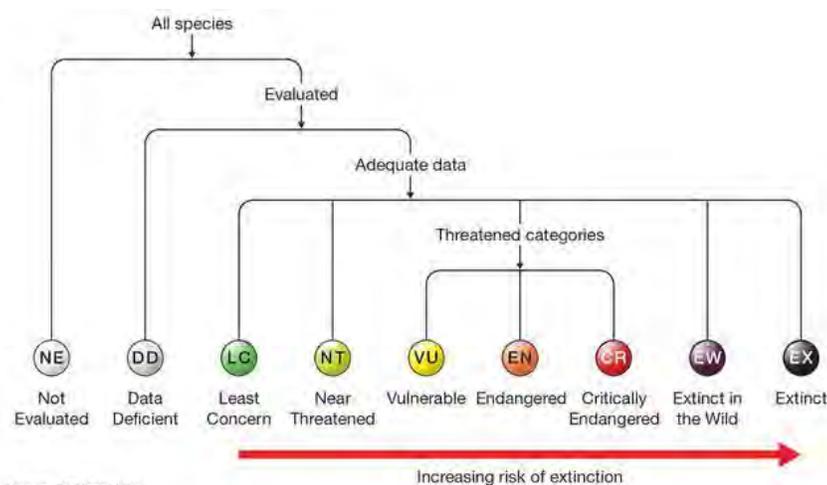
enter your counts online. Your counts allow you to track what is happening to birds around your home and contribute to a continental data-set of bird distribution and abundance. With **FeederWatch**, your observations become part of something bigger than your backyard. Click here [Join now](https://feederwatch.org/join-now) or go to <https://feederwatch.org/join-or-renew>. Participation is \$18 (\$15 Cornell members) and will include thru the 2021-22 season. This season ends April 9, 2021.

President's Corner

Endangered Species

Elsewhere in this *Kite Call* is an article on Least Tern recovery in the U.S. The California Least Tern is considered Endangered by both the State of California and the U.S. However, other species of birds such as the Great Gray Owl and Bank Swallow are considered endangered and threatened respectively by California, but are not listed at all by the U.S. Both the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike are considered Endangered by the U.S., but not listed by California. That got me thinking of the various classifications of threatened and endangered species there are out there. First consider international lists.

The most recognized international list is the famous “Red Book” put out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Founded by UNESCO in 1948, IUCN's mission is to “influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”. IUCN first published the Red List of Threatened Species (Red Book) in 1964. It has become the world's most comprehensive inventory of the status of biological species. As of 2019, the Red Book lists 105,000 species surveyed, of which 28,338 are considered at risk of extinction because of human activity. Species are classified by the Red Book into nine groups, specified through criteria such as rate of decline, population size, area of geographic distribution, and degree of population and distribution fragmentation.



Species are classified by the Red Book into nine groups, specified through criteria such as rate of decline, population size, area of geographic distribution, and degree of population and distribution fragmentation.

A second international agreement is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). CITES, a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals, was adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the IUCN and entered into force on 1 July 1975 after ten nations had signed on. Currently, 182 nations and the EU are signatories. CITES

aims to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild, and it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species of animals and plants. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of endangered species to certain controls. Violators are subject to international trade sanctions.

In the US the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is the primary law for protecting endangered species. Designed to protect critically imperiled species from extinction as a "consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation", the ESA was signed into law on December 28, 1973. The U.S. Supreme Court called it “the most comprehensive legislation for the preservation of endangered species enacted by any nation”. The purposes of the ESA are two-fold: to prevent extinction and to recover species to the point where the law's protections are not needed.

Key components of the ESA include:

- The federal government must determine whether species are endangered or threatened. If so, they must list the species for protection under the ESA
- Critical habitat must be designated for listed species.
- It is illegal to “take” an endangered species without a permit. “Take” can mean kill, harm, or harass.
- Federal agencies cannot jeopardize listed species existence or destroy critical habitat.
- Any import, export, interstate, and foreign commerce of listed species is generally prohibited.

(continued on page 5)

thank you!

For your support:

Mary Ashby
Val Blakely
Tom Browne
Stephanie Byous
Richard Cho
Maggie Clark
Susie Claxton
Evelyn Cormier
Linda Dalton
Lynn Feindel
Paula Flessatti
Lisa Garza
Fenna Gatty
Elsa Glines
Ramesh Gopalan
Joyce Gross
Christine Hayamizu
Erica Herron
Carin High
Barrie Hoffman
Ruth Ann Hunt
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Jerry & Judy Steenhoven
Lynn Stinnett
Ricki Stoelting
Eugenia M. Swyers
Tri-city Ecology
Chris & Teri Wills
Joyce Wilson
Marge Wood
Susan Wijeysekera
Kathleen Wiley
Angela Zinn

President's Corner (continued)

The major classes of endangered species under the ESA include :

Endangered – any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range other than certain insect pests; **Threatened** – any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range; **Candidate** – a species under consideration for official listing .

Currently, 2,244 species are listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, with 1,618 of those in the United States (95 bird species). Foreign species are listed because the ESA also protects foreign species by restricting trade and may prohibit certain activities, including import, export, take, commercial activity, interstate commerce, and foreign commerce. By regulating these activities, the ESA ensures that US citizens and agencies do not contribute to the further decline of a listed species, such as the Cheetah, Red-tailed Parrot, or Green Turtle, wherever they are found.

In 1970, California became one of the first states to implement its own endangered species act. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) declares that "*all native species of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and plants, and their habitats, threatened with extinction and those experiencing a significant decline which, if not halted, would lead to a threatened or endangered designation, will be protected or preserved.*" Note that the CESA does not include insects. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) oversees the CESA, and reviews and analyzes petitions for adding species. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is typically the driver of the CESA. Projects subject to CEQA that have the potential to significantly impact listed species must consult with CDFW to get an Incidental Take Permit. Similarly, if a species is

listed by both the ESA and CESA, consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and CDFW is required. Currently the CESA lists 222 plant and 93 animal species (16 birds).

In 2002, Canada passed the Species at Risk Act (SARA). The goal of SARA is to protect endangered or threatened organisms and their habitats. It also manages species not yet threatened, but whose existence or habitat is in jeopardy. SARA currently has more than 800 entries for Canadian species considered vulnerable: 363 classified as endangered, 190 as threatened, 235 special concern, and 22 extirpated.

In Mexico, threatened and endangered species are regulated under the general terms of the Ecology Law. This law establishes a list of wildlife species classified as either endangered, threatened, under special protection, and probably extinct in the wild. Mexico has the most endangered species of any country in the world. About 33 percent of Mexico's mammal species are either threatened or in danger of extinction. Seventeen percent of the birds, 18 percent of the reptiles, 17 percent of the amphibians, 4 percent of the fishes, and 2 percent of the vascular plants share this unfortunate distinction.

That's a lot to digest. Protecting endangered and threatened species has a lot of moving parts. Listing, designation of critical habitat, recovery plans, international trade agreements, and, especially for birds, (since so many species cross international boundaries annually), international agreements and cross border protections. You can get more information on the National Audubon Society international efforts to protect birds at <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/international>

-Bill Hoppes

Conservation



GREAT NEWS FOR TESLA!

On Tuesday, January 12, 2021 the Sacramento Superior Court issued its Ruling in the County of Alameda Petition challenging the State Parks Carnegie SVRA (Tesla) EIR and General Plan. The Ruling, is a GREAT WIN for Tesla preservation.

with CEQA . This means the CSVRA EIR and General Plan will have to be redone (the fourth time State Parks has been forced to do this) to comply with CEQA.

This is a tremendous win for those working to protect Tesla. State Courts are reluctant to declare EIRs

Court finds EIR and General Plan to open Tesla to OHV recreation legally invalid

The Court found that:

- State Parks' Final EIR violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by refusing to acknowledge that State law allows for the Alameda Tesla Expansion Area to be designated for non-motorized recreation.
- State Parks' misunderstood its governing legislation that authorizes use of OHV Trust Fund monies for non-motorized recreation, and for restoration and conservation of lands.
- State Parks' "Program" EIR violated CEQA and State Parks should have prepared an EIR that addressed site specific uses identified in the General Plan and thus unlawfully delayed environmental review of the Project's environmental impacts.
- State Parks' EIR violated CEQA because some mitigation measures failed to specify performance standards or provide guidelines for management requirements.

The key finding was that State Parks' improperly relied on an erroneous interpretation of the law that it had to prioritize OHV recreation and OHV Trust Funds could only be used for OHV recreation - the court ruled that this was a "pervasive error, making it impossible for the Court to parse out specific sections of the EIR that have been impacted and therefore legally incorrect.

Accordingly, the Court found the EIR invalid and could not be used to support the project." According to the ruling, a judgment in favor of the County and Writ of Mandate will be issued commanding State Parks to set aside the Carnegie SVRA EIR and General Plan and to take no further action to implement the project until State Parks has complied

invalid as long as the agency preparing them follows a documented process. There are two other petitions challenging the State Parks' Carnegie SVRA EIR pending, including Friends of Tesla Park's petition. These remaining cases will be considered by the Courts in the coming months.

Work to protect Tesla is not done. The State Parks ORV Commission has planned for the Carnegie expansion into Tesla for over a decade. Ohlone will continue to monitor the Save Tesla effort and keep you informed.

-P.Gordon, B. Hoppes

Share the posts and tweets:

Twitter - https://twitter.com/tesla_park and [saveteslapark](https://twitter.com/saveteslapark)

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/SaveTeslaPark>

<https://www.instagram.com/saveteslapark/>

RUBY MEADOWS UPDATE

The community filed a CEQA lawsuit in an effort to protect Ruby Meadow. The case was accepted. As a part of the initial hearing process, a Case Management Conference has been scheduled by the Alameda County Superior Court for March 12, 2021. *-Marlina Selva*

DECISION ON NORTH LIVERMORE SOLAR PROJECT PUSHED BACK TO FEBRUARY

The Alameda County Planning Department has pushed back a decision on approving the 410 acre Aramis solar power plant in North Livermore to February. The Planning Department will use the extra time to focus on the appeals received since the East County Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) approved the project Nov. 24, 2020 *-Bill Hoppes*

*Conservation continued***SAVE NEWARK WETLANDS**

Thank you to all members who responded to our appeal by signing the petition to save the wetlands through **Change.org**. These wetlands, which are at the most imminent risk of destruction of the San Francisco Bay restorable wetlands - developers want to pave them over. . . There still is time to sign.

Go to <https://www.change.org/savenewarkwetlands>



**CITY OF FREMONT PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
AND A PROPOSED SPORTS PARK FACILITY AT PACIFIC COM-**

The City of Fremont is considering the construction of a regional sports park at the end of Automall Parkway adjacent to the Pacific Commons Linear Park and the Warm Springs Unit of the Don Edwards San Francisco National Wildlife Refuge. OAS and Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge voiced concerns about the proposed regional sports park at the January Fremont Recreation Commission meeting.

In the late 1990's, when permits were issued by state and federal agencies to fill an unprecedented 46-acres of very rare vernal pool wetlands that supported rare and federally listed species to develop the Pacific Commons Development, the developer, Catellus, was required to preserve 390 acres of the approximately 840-acre site and to create replacement vernal pool habitat. The developer was also required to mitigate for the loss of Burrowing Owl habitat. The mitigation occurred in three areas, the largest to the south of the Pacific Commons Shopping Center and east of Cushing Parkway, the second closer to the terminus of Automall Parkway, and the third near the terminus of Stevenson Boulevard. All three areas have since been turned over to the Refuge and have been incorporated into the Warm Springs Unit. As part of the deal, the City purchased the 40-acre site at the end of Automall

Parkway for a potential park, flood control facility and/or transportation center. During the creation of vernal pool wetlands mitigation areas, the Pacific Commons Linear Park was also created.

Today, nearly a decade later, in addition to supporting Burrowing Owls, this area – the Warm Springs Unit of the Refuge and the Pacific Commons Linear Park - are a birding hotspot, ranking 24th in all of Alameda County. Possibly due to the expanse of grazed lands, habitat diversity (wetlands and grasslands), proximity to the saltponds and Bay and limited human disturbance, this area hosts a variety of uncommon and rare birds during the fall and winter migration. Golden Eagles, Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, American Bittern Swamp Sparrow, etc. have been documented in the area and this past fall and winter birders have been “flocking” to the site hoping to catch a glimpse of Ferruginous Hawks or the rare Harris’ Sparrow.

This area is not the appropriate location for a regional sports park – it is not located near public transit so people will have to get into their cars to get to the location. This also raises the

question of equity for those who don't have access to a car or for children whose parents are working. From OAS's perspective this is an inappropriate place to locate a regional sports facility. Such a facility will result in significant human disturbance factors including noise, movement, attraction of nuisance and predatory species, and potential trespass into restricted areas by humans and dogs and will have significant adverse impacts on wildlife within the adjacent Warm Springs Unit of the Refuge. Burrowing Owl and other species have already been relocated once because of the Pacific Commons Development. This is an area more suitable for passive recreation.

We encourage OAS members who are Fremont residents to become involved in the **Fremont Parks and Recreation Master Plan** process and to speak up for passive nature parks, nature education programs and the use of native plants that could support wildlife in all parks.

To learn more about the **Fremont Parks and Recreation Master Plan** you need to view two different webpages as the information hasn't been combined into one page: <https://www.fremont.gov/3421/Parks-Master-Plan> and <http://www.inventfremontparks.com/index.html>- Carin High

SPECIAL EVENT!**BIRD ID SEMINAR WITH JON DUNN**

April 1, 8 & 15
7—8:30PM
Cost \$30 members
\$45 non-members

In an effort to promote bird knowledge and interest, OAS has partnered with **Jon Dunn** to present a 3-part set of 1-1/2 hr sessions on three consecutive Thursdays from April 1. thru April 15th, starting at 7PM. The species focus for the identification workshop will be waterfowl, gulls, and sparrows. This seminar is targeted for intermediate to advanced birders. **Jon Dunn** is one of the top birders in the world, a leading expert on the identification and distribution of North American birds, consultant for *Birding* magazine, author of National Geographic's *Field Guide to Birds of North American*. and current president of Western Field Ornithologists.

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bird-id-seminar-with-jon-dunn-tickets-140641222683>

Please provide your email address for contact for the Online Seminar registration.

Registration information will be sent starting March 13, 2021.

Questions? Email programs@ohloneaudubon.org or ohloneaudubon@gmail.com



Great-tailed Grackles, L. Elizabeth 12/20/20 (S. Ferreira)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2020

First a big thank you, all 77, who participated in this annual event on **December 20, 2020 AND it was our most incredible year, species-wise ever – 182 species was an all time high!** It was touch and go up until the last minute whether it was a go this year. We decided to proceed, with all safety protocols in place. All teams were small – 1-3 people and we had 43 groups out there and 7 feeder watchers, and all areas except two were covered. The morning started with several groups excited with the flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese overhead. The day closed with many of us sharing at our compilation ZOOM meeting. We welcomed two new participants this year: our Field Trip Chair Bob Toleno and his wife Juli Chamberlein. We are very fortunate in our caliber of dedicated birders!

We also want to thank the agencies that allowed us access including California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Alameda County Flood Control, and East Bay Regional Park District. As we lacked vehicle access to some refuge areas, we also thank our bicycle crews for covering the area admirably and thank Dave Riensche of EBRPD with helping out with a boat. This feature added shorebird identification and numbers to our count! The restoration work at Eden Landing continues to astound – see the numbers below!

Highlights included the rare: a **Glaucous Gull** and **Lapland Longspurs** (2) at Coyote Hills (the High Family), a **Pacific Golden Plover** and a **Cassin's Auklet** (on the bay) along the Hayward Shoreline (Bob Richmond) and a **Black-throated Grey Warbler** along Alameda Creek, near the Sequoia Bridge in Fremont (Kathy Robertson and Ramesh Gopalan),

and then our same unusual or hard to find – Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Barrow's Goldeneye, Eurasian Wigeon, Black Oystercatcher in two areas now; and continuing to add the Yellow-billed Magpies just inside the circle near Vargas Plateau and Morrison Canyon Road along with a Ferruginous Hawk in the area (Vicki Robinson); House Wrens, Rock Wrens, shoreline Horned Larks, a single Hooded Merganser, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows being found in several areas. Owl species included 3 Burrowing Owls, and a one each: Short-eared Owl and Long-eared Owl at Coyote Hills. We had a single person early morning owl team (Paul Smith) who added Western Screech Owl, along with several Great Horned Owls in Palomares Canyon. And yes, Snowy Plovers were found! Surprisingly we missed Wood Duck this year!

Our total number of individuals was good at 99, 887 vs 104,995 found in 2019; Some incredible counts and comparisons include: **American Avocet 4618 (2020) 5858 (2019); Black-bellied Plover 7218(2020) 6614 (2019); Dunlin 13,490 (2020) 7449 (2019); Least Sandpiper 9758 (2020) 1765 (2019); Western Sandpiper 10,171 (2020) 3404 (2019).**

As an added note, Ohlone placed 19th in the 2019 Count out of 2646 total counts! We have also set the record to date of all-time highs for Black-necked Stilt (5226), Black-bellied Plover (19256) and Marbled Godwit (18,943). In 2019 we placed high in the nation for America Avocets, Black-bellied Plovers, Willets, and Marbled Godwits.

If you would like to see the entire spreadsheet of all areas and total counts, participants, or effort, please email us at pagepeg@aol.com. *-Phil and Pat Gordon*

CBC PHOTO ALBUM QUIZ



You could see these photos in color!

PLEASE CONSIDER AN ELECTRONIC KITE CALL!



We are urging members to switch over to an electronically issued *Kite Call* (but you don't have to!).

The benefits are a cost savings to our chapter, in both printing costs and postage. Other benefits include getting it quicker and it is *much more colorful!!!!!!*

GO GREEN!

Send your request to pagpeg@aol.com

1. Aleutian vs Canada Goose, Lake, Elizabeth (S. Ferreira)
2. Lapland Longspur, Coyote Hills R.P. (C. & K. High)
3. Bonaparte's Gull, Area 11, Union City (B. Toleno)
4. Harris Hawk, Area 11 Union City—falconer's (B. Toleno)
5. Ridgway's Rail, Don Edwards NWR (M. Christopherson)
6. Lesser Yellowlegs, Area 11, Union City (B. Toleno)
7. Black-crowned Night-Heron, L. Elizabeth (S. Ferreira)
8. Black Phoebe, Lake Elizabeth (S. Ferreira)
9. Glaucous Gull, Coyote Hills R.P. (C. & K. High)
10. Ring-billed Gull (imm) Lake, Elizabeth (S. Ferreira)

KEY

Least Tern Recovery

By Bill Hoppes

I am always interested in endangered species success stories, so I was pleased to read that on October 24, 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*) would no longer be listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). There is local interest in Least Terns as the “California” subspecies (*Sterna antillarum browni*) remains on the endangered species list and breeds in our area.

The Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) is closely related to, and was formerly often considered conspecific with, the Little Tern, found throughout Europe and Asia. It is a small tern looking like a Forster’s with a forked tail and black cap. What helps identify it in the field is its small size and its bill. The bill is yellow with a small black tip in summer when they are here. No other tern in our area has a yellow bill. They are migratory, wintering in Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America.



Least Tern, three subspecies that all look alike

During the breeding season, the Least Tern is found throughout the U.S. and consists of three subspecies: the Least Tern, the Interior Least Tern, and the California Least Tern. The Least Tern is found throughout the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico while the Interior Least Tern is found along rivers in the Midwest and the California Least Tern is found along the west coast of California and Mexico. All three subspecies look alike and are considered subspecies because of their geographic separation.



Distribution of the Least Tern in the U.S.

Both the Interior and California Least Tern became endangered due to habitat loss. The Interior Least Tern, first observed in 1804 by Lewis and Clark, was listed as endangered under the ESA in 1985. The Interior Least Tern experienced habitat loss from dam and reservoir construction, river and bank channelization, hydropower generation, and water diversion. Additionally, introduction of invasive plants to the tern’s sparsely-vegetated sandbar habitat contributed to its decline. Before it was placed on the endangered species list in 1985, just 1000 nesting pairs of Interior Least Terns could be found.

It was a similar story for the California Least Tern. Tern numbers fell due to development and recreational pressures which destroyed and altered their sandy beach habitat, along with increased predation by introduced and native species. The construction of the Pacific Coast Highway brought all these threats to much of California’s coast. By the 1940s, terns were gone from most beaches of Orange and Los Angeles counties and were considered sparse elsewhere. To avoid humans, some tern colonies nested at more inland mudflat and dredge fill sites, which made them more susceptible to predation by foxes, raccoons, cats, and dogs. When placed on the endangered species list in 1970, just 225 nesting pairs of Least Terns were recorded in California.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a recovery plan for the Interior Least Tern in 1990, with recovery criteria designed to remove threats to the bird’s essential habitats, enhance existing habitats, and achieve a range-wide population of at least 7,000 individuals. The population size goal was first met in 1994 with Interior Least Terns nesting along more than 2,858 miles of river channels in 18 states — from Montana to Texas and Illinois to Colorado.

Interior Least Tern recovery resulted in large part from a cooperative agreement between the USFWS and the Army Corps of Engineers which manages water flow along the rivers where the terns nest. USFWS wanted the terns protected and the Corps wanted to keep barge traffic moving. In the end, the solution was

(Continued on page 11)

Example of dike “notching.” Originally dikes were placed in the river to protect the shipping lane. Notched dikes still protect shipping but by allowing water flow on both sides creates nesting islands protected from predators.



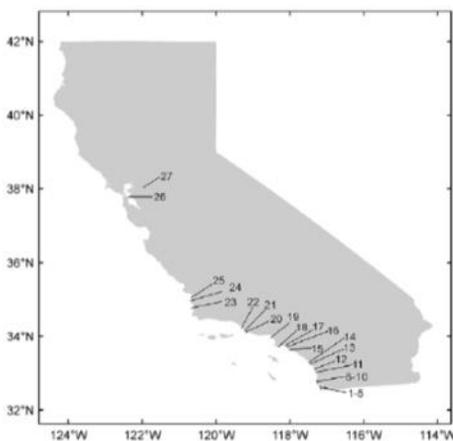
(Continued from page 10)

an adjustment of the dikes used along the rivers to control water flows. By ‘notching’ the dikes, the Corps ensured that water flowed around both sides of the sandbars where terns nest. In this way, they created backchannels in the river that separated the nesting sandbars from the shore. This effort 1) provided good habitat for the small fish that terns feed on, and 2) kept predators like cats and raccoons off the sandbars.

California Least Terns nest in colonies on relatively open beaches kept free of vegetation by natural scouring from tidal action. The typical colony size is 25 pairs. The majority of the California Least Tern population relies on degraded habitat on the beaches of Southern California, surrounded on all sides by human activity. Nesting habitat is often separated from ocean access by recreational beach use. The larger tern colonies are on military lands and are surrounded by constant military training. There is little opportunity for tern nesting sites at new locations. Recovery efforts included creating human-made nesting sites to compensate for impacted habitat. The sites, made up of carefully designed sandy substrate islands, are usually built in the immediate vicinity of known nesting areas. Protection of these sites and historic sites involves intensive management. Preseason site inspection, fence construction or repair, weed removal, sign posting, and patrolling to minimize human disturbance are done annually at most sites. Many sites also have been provided with clay roof tiles that serve as chick shelters.

The use of fencing and predator control measures has reduced levels of predation. These efforts have resulted in a major increase in overall tern numbers to over 7000, however the number of nesting colonies and chick survival rates remain far below recovery goals.

Currently, there are five breeding colonies of California Least Terns spread across the SF bay area, including Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, the Hayward Shoreline and the largest colony at the old Alameda Naval Air Station. Although it varies from year to year, there are 400-500 breeding pairs in the SF bay area. Breeding success is highly variable with sites doing well one year and poorly the next. A major factor impacting nesting success is predation, often from raptors and Red Foxes.



Distribution of Least Tern Colonies in California



Curved roof tiles provide protected sites for Least Tern chicks.

You can get involved in California Least Tern recovery. Both the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and East Bay Regional Parks District have programs. SFBBO uses citizen science volunteers to monitor Least Terns in the area during the breeding season and manage habitat. If you would like more information please contact Ben Pearl at bpearl@sfbbo.org.

Dave “Doc Quack” Riensche and his wildlife volunteers created 15,000 square feet of new island nesting habitat for California least tern. They continue to manage tern habitat and monitor nesting success. To learn more contact Dave "Doc Quack" Riensche at docquack@ebparks.org

PROJECT ZOPILOTE Starting a Turkey Vulture research

Where to report tagged Turkey Vultures? Check out the article about the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory’s new research project here [GGRO https://www.parksconservancy.org/article/project-zopilote](https://www.parksconservancy.org/article/project-zopilote) and read Teresa Ely’s story! It’s a good read about our scavengers.



Tagged Turkey Vulture photographed by James Watts, Jr. during CBC 12/20/20 along Sulphur Creek

I have always loved Turkey Vultures. It all started when I met Toulouse . . . –Teresa Ely

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