



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*

Calendar

- Feb 24 FIELD TRIP**
Quarry Lakes, Fremont
- Mar 4 FIELD TRIP**
Coyote Hills, Fremont
- Mar 6 GENERAL MEETING**
Pleasanton
- Mar 11 FIELD TRIP**
Don Edwards, Alviso
- Mar 17 FIELD TRIP**
Lake Solano
- Mar 25 FIELD TRIP**
Birding by Ear
Garin Park
- Apr 2 GENERAL MEETING**
Castro Valley
- Apr 8 FIELD TRIP**
Del Valle, Livermore
- June 23-24 FIELD TRIP**
Weekend in Sierras

Membership Meeting

A Case Study in Shorebird Restoration

David "Doc Quack" Riensche

Date: March 6, 2018 **Time:** 7:30PM
Location: Pleasanton Middle School 5001 Case Ave, Pleasanton CA 94566

Do you know we have a "Tern Town" in Ohlone Audubon's own backyard?

Nestled along the eastern shoreline of the San Francisco Bay is a sanctuary for three special status birds, built by the hands of thousands of citizen scientists. After twelve years of success, the Hayward Regional Shoreline supports the second-largest California Least Tern colony north of Ventura County, and it also provides nesting habitat for the Western Snowy Plover, Black Skimmer, and six other waterbird species. Averaging 279.6 California Least Tern nests per hectare, "Tern Town", as it is affectionately known, has one of the highest breeding density on the West Coast. Equally impressive is its concentration of procreating Western Snowy Plovers, ranging from 4.1 to 32 nests per hectare.

The presentation will discuss: island construction, substrate enhancement, social attractants, invasive noxious weed control partnerships, implementation and management of a predator control program, reproductive trends of nesting species, diet studies, and kleptoparasitism.

Lastly, **David "Doc Quack"**, will also highlight the trials, triumphs and teaching approaches that have communicated science to the public, policy makers and peers, while generating more than 25,000 hours of volunteer help to assist in the recovery of these endangered and threatened birds.

David "Doc Quack" Riensche, a Certified Wildlife Biologist, is a Wildlife Biologist for the East Bay Regional Park District where he has worked for over 29 years. For 20 years he has been an instructor at Las Positas College, where he teaches courses in biology, ecology, and vertebrate natural history. He is a recipient of The National Association for Interpretation - Outstanding Field Naturalist Award. His current research and habitat restoration efforts are diverse, focusing on many species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern and riparian and oak woodland breeding bird community structure, shorebird nesting population studies, upland gamebirds and waterfowl management.

See **Directions** next page

**WATCH FOR POP-UP
FIELD TRIPS!
ON OUR WEBSITE -
WWW.OHLONEAUDUBON.ORG**



**Follow us on
Facebook!**

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

March Meeting Directions: From I-680 take the Bernal Avenue exit and head east on Bernal to Case Avenue. Turn right on Case. The school is on the right. Enter the first driveway and

park at the south end of the parking lot. Follow signs to meeting room. <https://www.thinglink.com/scene/947529283671162883>
<http://pleasantonmiddle.pleasantonusd.net/apps/maps/>

Field Trips



Quarry Lakes Regional Rec Area, Fremont
Saturday, February 24 8:30-11:30AM
Leaders: Jerry Ting & Rich Nicholson,
fieldtripsATohloneaudubon.org

Join us at Quarry Lakes in Fremont to explore the lakes and marsh for wintering waterfowl. Pelicans, grebes, ospreys, loons, ducks, cormorants, and sometimes rare gulls are found at the lakes, while the trees hold woodpeckers, kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers and more. Bald Eagles moved in here in Fall 2015, and it's not unusual to see Merlins and Peregrine Falcons. We'll be on the lookout for early spring arrivals. Be prepared to walk about 2-1/2 miles on flat, gravel paths. Scopes are helpful. Parking fee \$5 unless you have an EB Parks annual pass. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

Directions: Exit I-880 at Decoto Road and go northeast (away from the bay, towards the hills). Turn right on Paseo Padre Parkway, then left on Isherwood Way. Continue on Isherwood past the Isherwood staging area through several stop signs to reach the main park entrance on your right, on Quarry Lakes Drive. From Mission Blvd., take Nursery Avenue to Niles Blvd. and go west (away from downtown Niles). Turn left on Osprey Drive, then left on Quarry Lakes Drive. After entering the park at the kiosk, follow the sign to head left and park by the swim beach to meet the group.

Coyote Hills Regional Park
Sunday, March 4 8:30AM - 11:30AM
Leaders: Jerry Ting and Steve Huckabone
fieldtripsATohloneaudubon.org

March at Coyote Hills is all about the changing of the guard. Winter's ducks will be gathered up in preparation to fly to their breeding grounds. Great Horned Owls are on the nest. Early spring migration will be underway with dwindling numbers of crowned sparrows and great numbers of incoming swallows. The tules will be full of the sound of singing Common Yellowthroats and chattering Marsh Wrens. Come out and see what we can find! Scopes are helpful. Be prepared to walk a couple of miles on paved and gravel paths. Bring insect repellent. Heavy rain cancels.

(Coyote Hills continued) Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome. \$5 parking fee payable at kiosk, free to East Bay Parks annual pass holders. All are welcome. \$5 parking fee payable at kiosk, free to East Bay Parks annual pass holders.

Directions: To reach the park from I-880 take SR-84 towards the Dumbarton Bridge. Exit at Paseo Padre Parkway, turn right on Paseo Padre and go about one mile. Turn left on Patterson Ranch Rd to enter the park.

Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge - Alviso
Sunday, March 11 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Leaders: Rich Nicholson and Vicki Robinson
fieldtripsATohloneaudubon.org

Part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR complex, the Environmental Education Center in Alviso is the gateway to salt ponds that in winter fill with waterfowl and shorebirds. Commonly seen are avocets, stilts, egrets, pelicans, cormorants, and wintering ducks along Coyote Creek, but rarities also turn up here, such as Ruff and Black Tern. Last year we had 63 species on this field trip, including baby Barn Owls near the visitor center! We could find a Burrowing Owl in the nearby fields or a Peregrine Falcon on a power tower. If time allows, we will also visit the marshland and salt ponds of Alviso Marina County Park. We will walk a few miles on boardwalks and flat, paved and unpaved levee paths. It can be cold and windy. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

Directions: To reach the EEC, exit I-880 south at CA-237 and go west towards Mountain View. Take the Zanker Road exit and keep right at the fork, following signs for Waste Disposal Facility. Turn right onto Zanker Road. Continue onto Los Esteros Road to the parking lot.

Upcoming! April 28-29, 2018



Join Bob and Juli for a special overnight trip to Mercey Hot Springs on the western edge of Fresno County. The trip is limited to participants staying overnight at MHS resort, so make reservations early at merceyhotsprings.com. Owls, nighthawks, migrants, and nesting songbirds will be the targets. Contact us at fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org if you plan to participate.

Field Trips (continued)

Lake Solano County Park
Saturday, March 17 8:00 AM - late lunch
Leaders: Pat and Phil Gordon
pagpeg@aol.com (510)538-3550

Lake Solano lies along Putah Creek below Lake Berryessa and the town of Winters. We expect to get good looks at wintering waterfowl – the “hoodies and woodies”, goldeneyes, and ring-necked ducks. Bald Eagle and Osprey are often seen. We will check the park’s trees for resident Phainopeplas, Lewis’s Woodpeckers and others, and we can expect to see wintering raptors. Check the weather; we will not go if it’s raining. Dress warmly and bring snacks, water, and a spotting scope if you have one. Meet in the lower lot by the restrooms.

After a great morning of birding, join us for lunch at the Putah Creek Cafe!

Directions: The scenic route from the bay area, with good birding along the way, is to take I-80 east and between Fairfield and Vacaville exit at Lagoon Valley Road toward Cherry Glen Rd. Go north on Cherry Glen Rd. which soon becomes Pleasants Valley Rd. and takes you right to the park. If you prefer to stay on the freeway, take I-80 east to Vacaville and exit onto I-505 north. Take the exit for Highway 128/Winters. Turn left on Highway 128 and drive through Winters. Turn left onto Pleasants Valley Road to reach the park. Parking fee \$5. Drive time is a short 2 hours.

Birding by Ear for Beginners Only
Garin Regional Park
Sunday, March 25 9:00 - 11:00 AM
Leaders: Bill Scoggins & Maggie Clark,
bill.Scoggins@yahoo.com (510-581-5186)



Join us for an exploration into the audible world of the stream, woods, pond, and marsh of Garin Regional Park. Bring your inside voice and practice listening with us for the song of harder-to-see birds like Common Yellow-throat, for the buzz of newly-arrived Allen’s and Rufous Hummingbirds, and for the distinctive melody of spring’s Bullock’s Orioles. Review the calls of old friends like Marsh Wren, Song Sparrow, Coot and Mallard. One familiar sound is the buzz of the mosquito - bring your insect repellent as well as sunblock. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required. All are welcome!

Directions: From I-880, go east on Tennyson or Industrial Parkway to Mission Blvd. in Hayward. Go south on Mission and turn left on Garin Ave. Go east up into the hills to reach the park. \$5 parking fee if kiosk is manned.

Del Valle SRA
Sunday, April 8 8:30 - noon
Leader: Steve Huckabone,
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org

We will take a ~3 mile route looking for seasonal and resident birds including sparrows, Purple Finches, Merlins, eagles and Phainopeplas. Warning: the hike involves some steep, potentially muddy terrain, so would be considered strenuous by most birders. Bring walking sticks if you like. Restrooms and water are available at the north end of the lake (turn right after the entry kiosk.) Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

Directions: To reach the park, exit I-580 in Livermore at North Livermore Avenue. Head south and proceed through town. North Livermore Avenue will become South Livermore Avenue. About 1.5 miles outside town, turn right at Mines Road, go about 3.5 miles and continue straight onto Del Valle Road (Mines Road turns left) to the park entrance (\$6 fee unless you have an EBParks annual pass). Meet at the parking lot at the west end of the bridge at the south end of the lake (straight ahead after the entry kiosk.)

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Sierra Campout
Yosemite NP/Mono Lake

June 23-24, 2018, Saturday & Sunday,
Leaders: Pat & Phil Gordon

Join us as we return to the eastern and the high Sierras for our annual bird trip. Who knows what kind of winter we will have had ! We plan to use campsites in canyons of the Lee Vining area (e.g., Lee Vining Canyon and Lundy Canyon); some higher altitude camps may be available near lakes of eastern Tioga Rd. or the June Lakes loop from Hwy 395 south of Lee Vining a few miles. These are first-come-first-served sites, so the earlier the better. Lodging can be found in 2 - 3 Lee Vining motels; and RV Parks with hook-ups are in town.

Details in next *Kite Call!*

This trip is limited to 20 participants. Please let us know if you plan to attend. Call Phil or Pat at 510-538-3550 or email: pagpeg@aol.com

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

January 2018

By Stephanie Floyd

OAS kicked off 2018 with a king tide field trip to Arrowhead Marsh where we saw more than 50 species including **Ross's** and **Snow Geese**, **Burrowing Owl**, **Blue-Winged Teal**, **Belted Kingfisher**, numerous **Ridgway's Rails** and **Soras**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and **American Pipits**.

A rare **Swamp Sparrow** spent weeks at Gomes Park in Fremont from December into January, and a **Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher** - maybe more than one - found at Coyote Hills on New Year's was still there weeks later. Birders enjoyed a **Redhead** at Pacific Commons, and more than one **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen there and at Coyote Hills. A **Harris's Sparrow** found in mid-December in Livermore by Bob Dunn continued at least through mid-January. **Short-Eared Owls** were hunting every day on the hillsides near the West Winton entrance to the Hayward shoreline.

During a field trip to Del Valle, a large group of birders from beginners to experts was thrilled to find some 56 species including **Lark Sparrows**, **Phainopeplas**, **Western Screech-Owl**, **Red-Breasted Sapsuckers**, and **Yellow-Billed Magpies**. The *pièce de resistance* was a large flock of colorful **Mountain Bluebirds** - sometimes as many as 80 birds! - on the wires above the vineyards across from Cedar Mountain Winery on the edge of the Altamont. **Cassin's Kingbird**, **Merlin**, **Ferruginous Hawk**, and **Golden Eagle** were out there, too.

As January comes to an end, **Tree Swallows** are back in town, swirling around nest boxes, and **Allen's Hummingbirds** are arriving, buzzing around looking for mates. **Western** and **Clark's Grebes** are calling and courting at Quarry Lakes. Our local **Great Horned Owls** - the earliest nesting owl - are probably already on nests, with eggs.



Thank you to the following for your generous donations to our 2017 Appeal:

Albert & Marsha Badella	Genny Marciel
Bob Battagin	Sherry Mattson
Barbara Benda	Margaret McCluckie
Allen & Jackie Bertillion	Nancy Mendoza
Jo Bloom	Marty Morrow
Sheila Brossman	Prasanna Narayana
Thomas Browne	Debbie & Tadd Ottman
Nancy Christensen	Donald & Judith Person
Margaret Clark	Stefanie Pruegal
LaVonne Coleman	Pam Reuling
Don & Margaret Emery	Victoria Robinson
Beth Farmer	Marguerite Ryan
Judith Felber	Gail Ryujiin
Lynn Feindel	Shelly Sack
Sandy Ferreira	James & Patricia Scofield
Janet Forcier	Andrey Semyonov
Lisa Garza	Brenda Senturia
Alan Goggins	Jana Sokale
Diane Grubbe	Donna Stanley
Christine Hayamizu	Mary Steel
Carin High	Jerry & Judy Steenhoven
Beth Hillard	Eugenia Swyers
Frank Johnson	Irv & Diane Tiessen
Karen Kenny	David Thomas
Joanna Koch	Holly Walters
Donna Krehbrel	Carol & Paul Weicker
Joan Lewis	Teri Wills
Sherman & Alison Lewis	George & Wendy Winsted
Patricia Lindsey	Fred & Marge Wood
Joellen Lippett	Susan Wijeyesekera
Harry and Lois Lutz	Faye & Lee Younker
	Judy Zlatnik



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING OHLONE MEMBERS!

Cynthia Angers, Rick Arellano, Albert & Marsha Badella, Bob Battagin, Claudette Begin, Barbara Benda, Allen & Jackie Bertillion, Val Blakely, Jo Bloom, Mona Brauer, Sheila Brossman, Marie Brower, Thomas Browne, Gail Bunker, William Chestnut, Jane Chinn, Alex Chis, Nancy Christensen, Michael Christopherson, Richard Cimino, Denise Clark, Margaret Clark, Patti Cole, LaVonne Coleman,

Marilyn Davis, Alvin Dockter, Don & Margaret Emery, Beth Farmer, Judith Felber, Ray Fontaine, Jeffrey Garberson, Lisa Garza, Elsa Glines, Alan Goggins, Mike Hall, Christine Hayamizu, Carin High, John Hovenden, Frank Johnson, Karen Kenny, Joanna Koch, Donna Krehbrel, Audrey LePell, Ruth Levenson, Joan Lewis, Sherman & Alison Lewis, Harry and Lois Lutz, Patricia Mahoney, Richard Matsutani, Laurie Matthews, Margaret McCluckie, Elizabeth Milam, Gary Miner, Marty Morrow, Merna & Gary Morse, Mr. & Mrs. Hans Mortensen, Prasanna Narayana, Carolyn Norman, Judy Olmott, Michael T. O'Brian, Kathleen

O'Sullivan, Debbie & Tadd Ottman, Donald & Judith Person, Stefanie Pruegal, Mark Rauzon, Charlotte, Miranda, & Paula Ray, Pam Reuling, Victoria Robinson, Niles Runge, Marguerite Ryan, Pam Ryan, Gail Ryujiin, Shelly Sack, James & Patricia Scofield, Andrey Semyonov, Brenda Senturia, Peter Shen, Jana Sokale, S. Sorenson, Mary Steel, Jerry & Judy Steenhoven, Eugenia Swyers, Irv & Diane Tiessen, David Thomas, Holly Water, Carol & Paul Weicker, Teri Wills, George & Wendy Winsted, Fred & Marge Wood, Susan Wijeyesekera, Faye & Lee Younker, Stephanie Woods, Judy Zlatnik

Conservation

2017-18 Conservation Review

Ohlone Audubon has always taken a strong position to preserve and protect the habitats that support birds and other wildlife. Following is a brief review of the top conservation issues your efforts and donations to Ohlone supported in 2017 and how things look for 2018.

-B. Hoppes

Save Tesla Park

One of the major continuing efforts by Ohlone Audubon was joining a coalition of environmental, government agencies and community groups lead by Friends of Tesla challenging the proposed expansion of an off-road vehicle park east of Livermore into a key wildlife corridor and biodiversity hotspot known as Tesla Park. Approved by the Department of Parks and Recreation Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission October 26, 2016, the expansion of the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area into Tesla would nearly triple its size to 4,675 acres and put threatened and endangered wildlife including California Red-legged Frogs, California Tiger Salamanders, Alameda Whipsnakes, Golden Eagles and Burrowing Owls in the path of off-road vehicles.

Ohlone Audubon was well represented at the many public hearings and opportunities to provide comment during CEQA process. In addition Ohlone contributed funds to support the four pending lawsuits challenging the adequacy of the EIR. During Audubon's

Advocacy day in Sacramento, Ohlone representatives met with State Senators Glazier, Skinner, and Wieckowski and Assemblywoman Baker. We shared the scientific consensus of the biological data attesting to the richness of the area, the overwhelming support of agencies, local officials, and environmental groups; and a means to purchase the land thru the Altamont Landfill Settlement Agreement funds. Numbers were also shared showing that off-road usage is down, while visits to surrounding parklands has increased.

Subsequently State Senator Steve Glazer and Assemblyperson Catherine Baker sent a letter to Lisa Mangat, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, dated May 17, 2017, encouraging the Department to work with appropriate stakeholders to explore the option of selling the land set aside for the Tesla expansion of the Carnegie Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area. Sixteen local legislators eventually signed onto a Glazer-Baker letter. A letter from the Altamont Landfill Open Space Committee was also

sent to Director Mangat asking for a purchase proposal. East Bay Regional Park District expressed willingness to manage Tesla.

Late in 2017 Director Mangat finally responded to the Glazer-Baker and Altamont letter stating that Parks and Recreation would not enter into negotiations to sell Tesla and would proceed with the development of the expansion.

Efforts to preserve Tesla continue on two fronts, first we continue to work Friends of Tesla to gain support for a sale of the Tesla property using Altamont Landfill Settlement Agreement Funds and managed by a conservation organization such as East Bay Regional Park District. Failing an agreement, lawsuits on the inadequacy of the EIR are planned. Regardless, Tesla will continue to be a major issue for Ohlone in 2018.



SB 249 Reforming the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act

During the efforts to protect Tesla, the inadequacies of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act of 2003 came to light. This act created the Division of Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (division) within the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). This is the commission that is pushing for the expansion of the Carnegie ORV Park into Tesla. The division acquires lands in state vehicular recreation areas (SVRA) which are units with the state park system. The division receives a percentage of fuel taxes associated with off-highway (actually any 4WD vehicle whether it ever goes off road or not) vehicles to fund its activities and acquisitions.

SB 249, sponsored by southern California State Senator Ben Allen, was a reform bill that grew out of the Tesla hearings and aimed to make the division's work more closely aligned with the mission of Department of Parks and Recreation's goals of resource and cultural site protection and to strengthen the scientific integrity of the division. The bill also addressed a fairer allocation of the fuel tax, transferring fuel taxes paid by all 4WD, to the State Parks and Recreation Fund.

SB 249 passed the Senate in early June and its first Assembly hurdle at the Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee on July 11, 2017. The OHV lobby fought to block any correction in

fuel tax transfers and improvements in natural and cultural resource protection requirements. Unfortunately the ORV lobby was successful, gutting all reforms. Ohlone Audubon, along with the Friends of Tesla and the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, had originally supported the bill. We felt the bill provided long term benefits to the OHMVR program. However, we pulled our support, along with the two groups listed above, at the last minute, as the bill was amended. Ohlone will continue to work for reforms in the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act of 2003, continue with the litigation regarding the inadequate EIR and on continuing advocacy for purchase of Tesla during 2018.

Alameda Creek Bridge Replacement

Caltrans issued a revised draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the proposed Alameda Creek Bridge replacement project in Niles Canyon in December 2016. Ohlone Audubon joined with the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge and the Alameda Creek Alliance in comments to Cal Trans' Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment (RDEIR) for the project concerning the Alameda Creek Bridge Replacement Project. The RDEIR for the project is in response to the original January 2015 DEIR because of numerous comments

received noting the lack of meaningful alternatives and severe environmental impacts of the project. The RDEIR states that the original comments would not be responded to and will only be kept with the project's file. Thus, the public's perception is that Cal Trans is attempting to disregard the comments, rather than be transparent about the project's impacts. One of Ohlone's concerns with the proposed project is the removal of riparian trees. The DEIR stated the proposed project will result in temporary and permanent impacts to riparian communities in the canyon from post mile

13.0 to 13.6. Since the riparian corridor is relatively intact and contiguous, there are few opportunities to mitigate for the lost riparian trees within the canyon, so mitigation was proposed to occur off-site. The DEIR concludes "project impacts to riparian natural communities are considered a significant impact that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance." Ohlone remains concerned that trees that were cut during the now abandoned Phase 1 project, still have not been mitigated. We will monitor this project during 2018

Niles Canyon Draft Environmental Impact Report

Ohlone provided extensive comments on Cal Trans Niles Canyon Safety Improvements Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Ohlone's concerns remain that the project as proposed will exacerbate rather than rectify traffic safety issues, the project as proposed does not address the underlying problems of speeding and inattentive or reckless driving, and in fact, may encourage drivers to travel at greater

speeds through the canyon. Meanwhile, mitigation for the cutting of 143 mostly native trees still has not occurred after 6 years. The DEIR fails to address the cumulative and significant adverse impacts to trees as a result of the cutting of 143 trees in the now terminated Phase 1 project, the proposed project, and the Alameda Creek Bridge replacement project described above. The DEIR does propose the replacement of the culvert at

Stonybrook Creek with a clear span bridge to enable fish passage upstream. This culvert replacement is being proposed as mitigation for the cutting of 143 trees in the Phase 1 project. While this project will improve conditions for fish, the culvert replacement will not replace lost functions and values of the trees for other species, notably birds, bats, amphibians, mammals and insects.

PG&E Operations and Maintenance Draft EA/HCP

Ohlone and other local environmental groups were caught off-guard by the unannounced release of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)/ Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) by PG&E to address the issue of "take" of 31 federally listed animal and plant species within the 9 bay area counties for Pacific Gas and Electric's Operations and Maintenance activities. The only avian species that would be covered under the proposed plan is the Ridgway's Rail. Bay area wide, environmental groups quickly rallied together to submit comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first to appeal

for a time extension, since we were not properly notified, and second to point out substantive flaws in the documents. While the USFWS provided additional time to submit comments for the draft HCP, a time extension was not provided for the environmental review document.

The purpose of an EA is to provide sufficient information to determine whether the project" (issuance of an incidental take permit) is a major federal action or not. Comments were submitted from a number of organizations stating the EA was flawed in that it did not

provide sufficient information to reach a Findings of No Significant Impact (FNSI) and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be required. Organizations identified species they believe should be covered by the HCP based upon known locations of species and locations of PG&E work. Also, the EA did not adequately identify, analyze or mitigate for impacts to nesting and migratory birds. Lengthy comments were provided regarding the significant number of avian deaths attributable to PG&E power facilities.

Eden Landing Plans, Draft EIR

Plans are underway for the next spate of construction at the Hayward-area ecological reserve. The Draft EIR for Phase 2 DEIS/DEIR was scheduled for release in 2017. The Eden Landing Phase 2 focuses on all ponds between Old Alameda Creek and the Alameda County

Flood Control Channel in the State Department of Fish and Wildlife reserve. Alternatives under consideration included extensive wetlands restoration, either full or phased, as well as an alternative retaining a portion of the acreage as managed ponds. The alternatives also

include various approaches to enhancing levees, and a number of options for new trails. Ohlone will be working with other environmental groups to attend hearings and provide comments.

ACE Forward

The ACE Forward DEIR was released May 31st CCCR (Committee to Complete the Refuge) and OAS provided comments on the DEIR by the 31 August deadline. Both groups are concerned in particular with the segment of the project beginning in Newark and continuing through the wetlands in Alviso. The ACE Forward Longer-Term Improvements alternatives all involve double track (track expansion from single track to double track) from

Santa Clara to Newark. The difference between the alternatives is whether the Alviso Baylands crossing is on an expanded berm, a raised berm, a double trestle, or a raised berm and a double trestle. Of course the environmentally superior alternative on this segment would be a double trestle. Of additional concern to Ohlone Audubon, is the near term proposal to add an additional rail line in the Niles Canyon corridor. The

proposal to expand the existing rail line from a single track to a double track through Niles Canyon would require installation of new retaining walls 5- to 20-feet high, protective debris flow and rockfall energy absorbing fences 10- to 20-feet high and new or replacement bridges over Alameda Creek. As yet none of these issues have been adequately evaluated or addressed in the DEIR for the Project.

AB 1687 Ban on Anti-Coagulant Rodenticides

This bill died in January of this year, as the ESTM (ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND TOXIC MATERIALS) Committee and the Chair, Assemblymember Bill Quirk, felt they did not have enough

documented, peer-reviewed data to support the bill. The Committee heard quite a bit from the industry who strongly opposed this bill despite great efforts to appease them.

(See page 9 for in-depth discussion on this bill)

Altamont Pass Project to Replace and Upgrade Wind Turbines breaks ground

NextEra Energy Resources and Sonoma Clean Power held a May 24 groundbreaking ceremony of the Golden Hills North Wind Energy Center, a re-powering project located in the Altamont Hills. This project removes 283 30-year-old wind turbines, replacing them with 20 2.3 MW GE turbines. The project will have a generating capacity of 46 MW, enough to power more than 13,500 homes. As part of a 20-year power purchase agreement, the project will serve customers of Sonoma Clean Power. Sonoma serves residential and commercial customers in California's Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

Audubon Advocacy Day

Several Ohlone members, met with our local legislators June 8 in Sacramento. Audubon California priority issues including SB 49/50/51, involving the Endangered Species Act, federal lands in California that could be sold be made available to the state first, and protection of whistle blowers; Salton Sea funding; climate issues (Cap & Trade), and rodenticide use were discussed. In particular we urged our legislators to support SB 249 (off-road monitoring, reallocation of fuel taxes) and the Tesla purchase. Legislative offices visited included Assemblypersons Baker and Quirk, and Senators Glazer and Wieckowski .

2018

What is in store for 2018?

Many issues will carry forward. Efforts to preserve Tesla will intensify and Ohlone will continue to support meaningful reform of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act of 2003. Efforts to protect Alameda Creek and Niles canyon from overzealous plans from Cal Trans and AceForward will continue as will our efforts to gain meaningful revisions in the PG&E operations and maintenance HPC. Certainly we will continue to monitor Phase 2 planning and implementation of plans for Eden Landing, the future of AB 1687 and the Altamont windmills. New issues such as construction plans for the San Leandro Marina the future of Camp Parks, and the Dublin Blvd extension will call for attention. Your continued effort and support to Ohlone Audubon is critical to our work to protect birds and the habitats that support them.



White-tailed Kites in your front yard? Photo by Terry Preston, Castro Valley 2/18

More Conservation News

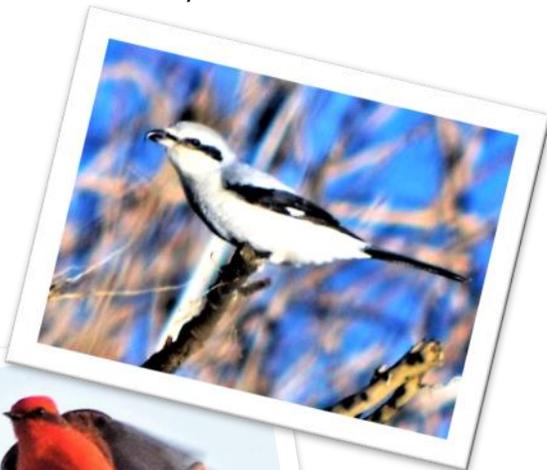
Newark Slough Mitigation Bank

This proposal is back after being quiet for a year. OAS signed on to a comment letter Committee to Complete the Refuge (CCCR) March 2016. Ian Wren of the *Baykeeper* is working on this now and CCCR has hired Dr. Peter Baye to help assist with comments. This project is important because it could set a very bad precedent for the establishment of mitigation banks (people pay into the mitigation bank for filling wetlands or endangered species habitat elsewhere) in areas susceptible to inundation from sea level rise. There is much concern about the long-term viability of this site since a good portion is inundated during King Tides!

Dumbarton Rail

We are waiting for the actual proposal for the alignment of this. The Don Edwards NWR managers have been telling proponents for years that use of the old Dumbarton Rail alignment should be underground, just as the Hetch Hetchy lines ultimately were, but new concepts keep floating around. The current alignment is through the largest intact salt marsh complex remaining in the south bay. The bridge would have to be rebuilt as would the approach berms on both sides of the bay - causing havoc to the tidal marsh ecosystem.

- C. High



Two rare birds seen on OAS Sacramento Refuge trip 2/3/18: **Northern Shrike** at Sac Refuge; **Vermillion Flycatcher** at Maxwell Cemetery. (P Gordon)

President's Corner

Can you feel Spring creeping our way? We are on the back shoulder of winter and spring and with it great birding is on the way. Be sure to connect on one of our great field trips to enjoy this terrific time for bird-watching and just being in the Bay Area outdoors.

This year 2018 is the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the most important pieces of legislation to protect birds. To help celebrate, National Audubon has designated 2018 the Year of the Bird. Throughout the year Audubon will have events and activities to celebrate birds in our lives. You can get more information at Audubon's Bird of the Year website <http://www.audubon.org/yearofthebird>.

One of the first events you can participate in is the Great Backyard Bird Count on 19 February. You can get more info on the count at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>.

Are you listers excited about ABA adding Hawaii to its North America count area? Long ago when I started birding, getting to 600 birds was a big deal. You could only count birds in the ABA North America area which included the lower 48, Alaska, Canada and a few nearby islands, but not Hawaii. Now with all of Hawaii's endemics and Asian exotics, getting to 600 will be a bit easier. I'm a traditionalist, I probably will keep my North America count to the old area.

However you do it, get out there and enjoy the birds.

Bill Hoppes

PLEASE CONSIDER AN ELECTRONIC KITE CALL!
We are urging members to switch
over
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
 Thank you for considering this!

AB 1687 dies

An update on the worsening anti-coagulant rodenticide crisis

Lack of support and stiff opposition has resulted in the death of California AB 1687. This bill would have banned the use of nine first and second generation anti-coagulant rodenticides (AR'S) in the State of California. In spite of the agricultural and exterminator exemptions the powerful agricultural and pesticide industries strongly opposed this bill. According to sources a new bill will likely be introduced in the Assembly in the near future, possibly this year. In 2014 a statewide ban on the sale of these products to the general public was enacted. Unfortunately, due to the agricultural and pesticide industry exemptions, loopholes and regulatory failures, the products are still readily available to many and the poisoning of over 25 species of California wildlife is on the rise. An example of one loophole is illustrated by a 2014 agreement the US EPA reached with the manufacturer of d-Con AR's. The manufacturer Reckitt Benckiser agreed to stop manufacturing certain d-Con AR's but was allowed to keep distributing remaining AR's until all stocks were gone. Four years later they are still available for sale on-line and in stores.

AR's are commonly used for rodent control. Once ingested they deplete the victim of Vitamin K which is needed to clot blood and do not kill instantly often taking up to 1 week to kill the rodent. In the meantime the dehydrated rodent, whose clotting and immune systems are crashing, is wandering free in search of water and perhaps more rodent bait. They are easily picked off by predators, some of which have learned to hunt near bait stations. This secondary poisoning of predators can kill outright or weaken the immune system and alter the behavior of the animal. Even a small scratch can result in the animal bleeding to death and increases their chance of susceptibility to mange, distemper and other diseases.

This escalation of wildlife poisoning by AR's is illustrated by several studies. Traces of AR's are now found in our wildlife in almost every Class of animal including insects, fish, amphibians, birds and mammals. This includes many predators such as bears, raccoons, skunks, opossums, Mountain Lions, fishers, San Joaquin Kit foxes and other foxes, coyotes, raptors and other species. The AR's are quickly bioaccumulating in the food web. The risk to predators and scavengers is higher because of the numbers of contaminated prey species they feed upon to survive.

The California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, the National Park Service and researchers are finding that the number of animals with exposure to AR's has climbed considerably since the partial ban was enacted in California in 2014. Studies show that at least 70%-80% of wildlife species

tested had second generation rodenticide in their systems. It is obvious the partial ban is not working.

One study recently released by UC Davis and Integral Ecology Research Center's Mourad Gabriel et al has shown us that in their study area in NW California 70% of tested dead Northern Spotted Owls were positive for AR's. This species is federally listed in the United States under the Federal Endangered Species Act and recently listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act. This owl faces increasing pressure because of significant habitat loss and competition with the more aggressive Barred Owl. In the same study, 40% of the Barred Owl tissue samples collected tested positive for anticoagulant rodenticide. The owls, like other predators, are being exposed through the prey they eat.

One growing problem with the spread of use of AR's is the proliferation of illegal marijuana farms in California. Studies by Gabriel et al in 2012, 2013 and 2015 were the first to link rat poison and illegal marijuana farms to the deaths of fishers. Gabriel has visited many illegal marijuana sites and says "*the human waste, the garbage, the food, the rodenticides...and then you now take that picture of one site and then extrapolate that to the thousands of sites in California*" is an enormous problem. Clearly the AR problem is worsening. Gabriel reports that so many species are at risk and the problem is only going to further worsen unless something is done. The AR's are now ubiquitous. Study authors state that an estimated 4,500 – 15,000 private cultivation sites are in Humboldt County and most of them are illegal. The recent passage of Prop. 64 (legalizing recreational use of marijuana in California) and the resulting uptick in demand will surely intensify this crisis.

Law enforcement and others have attempted to destroy the illegal grow sites but the culprits return and repeat the cycle. A lack of funding for reclamation, enforcement and monitoring is an ongoing problem. Currently legal marijuana farms are to be regulated by the Dept. of Public Health, the Dept. of Consumer Affairs, the EPA and the Dept. of Pesticide Regulation. The question is whether this regulation will work. It will certainly not work on unregulated illegal marijuana grows.



A sick mountain lion poisoned with AR's with mange. Photo: National Park Service

We can only hope that comprehensive and effective legislation addressing AR's, the contemporary DDT, also addresses availability, regulations and funding for enforcement of the law and will be passed soon. Ideally Agriculture and exterminators will not be exempt. The sooner, the better. It's not over yet.

- Terry Preston mtmpreston@comcast.net

YOU ARE A CITIZEN SCIENTIST !

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - Hayward-Fremont

Sunday, 17 Dec. 2017

Last year another citizen-science endeavor took place in a carefully marked 15 mile diameter circle, within habitats in communities from San Lorenzo to Fremont in Alameda County – its center at Whipple Rd. X Nimitz Freeway (SR-880). Christmas Bird Counts of these 175 square mile spaces are repeated about 2,700 times with over 60,000 counters from Canada to South America and many other countries through the world. Volunteers spend up to 24 hours on one selected day during a three week window near Christmas time. For Ohlone Audubon Society this started in 1967, exactly a half century ago, a couple of years after its founding for Southern Alameda County.

Christmas Bird Counts started in the eastern U.S. at the turn of the Century as an alternate event for what many concerned folks detested – the contests for whom ever could shoot the most birds in one day. This antidote to bird slaughtering plus recording of statistics was widely adopted, now becoming the of the most significant databases of a population of animals as yet known. This knowledge is being used in assessing major changes in our essential environment today and structuring more appropriate modes of wildlife and habitat preservation.

A sample of a day in the life of a bird-counter might look like this:

- The year before ask for new binoculars for Christmas.
- Get the best bird field guide and start studying – only a handful of birds at a time; especially joining all the excellently led OAS Field Trips and keeping notes and sketches; even join a bird class.
- Make friends with good birders.
- Volunteer for other citizen science projects: see Cornell Lab of Ornithology Lab's projects such as: Habitat Net work; Project FeederWatch; NestWatch; Great Backyard Bird Count; subscription to "Living Bird."
- Plan vacations, being sure to include places you visit with habitats that can have many of the birds that are also going to be where your Bird Count will take place (remember you might consider doing several CBC's – marry an airline steward or stewardess – travel can be good for learning about birds).
- Volunteer for the annual Hayward-Fremont Christmas Bird Count!

Results for this year's CBC:

Total species: 172 spp. (of 247 species in 50 yrs.)

Total individuals: 150,842 birds found

Some high counts: Western Sandpiper- 31,260; Dunlin -16,046; Least Sandpiper—7,857

Willet - 5,725 Snowy Plover -319

Participants: 81 folks - Thanks! **Section Leaders*:** 20 - Special big thanks!

Several Agencies and other Landowners – EBRPD, HARD, City of Fremont, Cal Fish & Wildlife, DENWR, Alameda County Flood Control, Masonic Home - Many Thanks!

Special Species (includes Remarkable; Extremely Rare): "Thayer's" Iceland Gull ; Brown Pelican; American Bittern (2); Ferruginous Hawk; Hairy Woodpecker (1); **Tropical Kingbird** (extreme rarity); Barn Swallow (5); Pine Siskin (2); **Swamp Sparrow** (extreme rarity); Chipping Sparrow (1); Western Tanager (1)

Owls (Thanks to those willing to start at the early hours): Barn Owl (5); Western Screech Owl (1); Great Horned Owl (5); Northern Pygmy Owl (1); Burrowing Owl (4); Short-eared Owl (2)

And it goes with saying thanks to everyone to making this a successful count and special thanks to the area leaders, who gather their troops, gain access, pre-bird their areas, and struggle thru the paperwork!

***Section Leaders:** Ned Lyke, Paul Smith, Debbi Brusco, Vicki Robinson, Sandy Ferreira, Kathy Robertson, Michael Christopherson, John Bradley, Rich Nicholson, Maggie Clark, Steve Huckabone, Ted Robertson, Pat Gordon, Forrest Bottomley, Chris & Teri Wills, Allen & Jackie Bertillion, Phil Gordon, Susan Reneberg, Neal Kernes

For a detailed account of this year's CBC email us at pagpeg@aol.com

-Phil & Pat Gordon– co-compilers

A New Blackbird?

By William Hoppes

During the Central Valley Birding Symposium, I attended a field trip to Colusa National Wildlife Refuge. While scoping a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, the field trip leaders kept talking about looking for “bicoloreds”. I thought I was mishearing them and they were looking for Tricolored Blackbirds. I kept thinking about it and the next day, to satisfy my curiosity, I plugged “bicolored blackbird” into a handy search engine on my phone and Great Scott!!! there is such a thing.

The Bicolored Blackbird, *Agelaius phoeniceus gubernator* is a subspecies of the Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus*. It breeds only in the Central Valley of California and winters only in central Mexico. The male bicolored lacks the yellow median wing coverts of the Red-winged. Instead the median coverts are black. Both the Bicolored and the Red-winged differ from the Tricolored Blackbird in this respect as the median coverts in the Tricolored are white. The female bicolored is much darker than the typical female Red-winged. It is uniformly dark brown or sooty, with limited striping on the throat or upper breast. There are other differences in body structure, behavior, and vocalization. Much of this is poorly understood and currently subject to research. Bicoloreds are sufficiently distinct from surrounding blackbird populations that they were originally described as a separate species, *Agelaius gubernator*. Subsequent work has shown that both the California and Mexico populations intergrade more or less extensively with “typical” Red-winged Blackbirds. Hence their status as a subspecies, not a full species.

Bicolored Red-wings share their breeding range in California with Tricolored Blackbirds, a closely-related species. According to a paper by Yasukawa and Searcy in 1965, the loss of the yellow color in the Bicolored Blackbird may be an isolating mechanism to keep this subspecies from interbreeding with the Tricolored Blackbird.

Figure 1

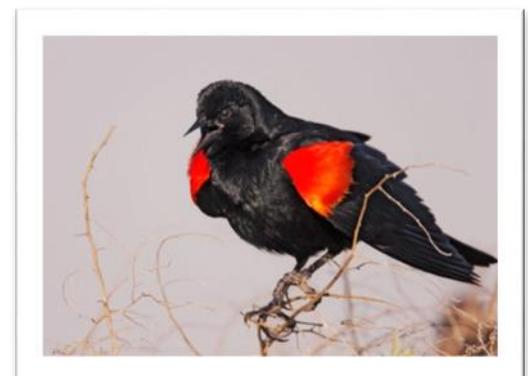


Sampling of bicolored and typical populations of the red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). The breeding range of the species as a whole is shown in light gray, and the range of bicolored phenotype blackbirds highlighted in dark gray (van Rossem 1926; F. K. Barker, unpubl. data); white stars mark the locations of genetic sampling.

Bicolored Red-wings share their breeding range in California with Tricolored Blackbirds, a closely-related species. According to a paper by Yasukawa and Searcy in 1965, the loss of the yellow color in the Bicolored Blackbird may be an isolating mechanism to keep this subspecies from interbreeding with the Tricolored Blackbird.

Not to make your birding life more complicated, but when you

are next checking out those countless Red-winged Blackbirds in the Central Valley, take a few minutes to see if you can spot a Red-winged with black median wing coverts. I sure will be looking for one.



Typical Red-winged Blackbird male, note yellow median coverts

The Bicolored Blackbird mal; if you look closely you can tell that the median wing coverts are actually black compared to yellow in the Redwing and white in the Tricolored.

(Continued page 12)



A female Bicolored Blackbird, note overall darker color and lack of heavy streaking on breast.



A male Tricolored Blackbird, here the median coverts are white compared to yellow and black.

A typical female Red-winged Blackbird. Overall lighter in color than the Bicolored, with the heavy streaking on breast more apparent. Good luck picking these two apart in the field.



2019 Audubon Convention July 26-28, 2019

Situated on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee is a beautiful and historic place to gather, learn, and network. The convention will be packed full of great workshops, networking events, speakers, field trips, and more. We'll be sharing much more information soon. For now, please save the date on your calendars.

More info at Audubon.org

"Grandma Birdie"



Marie Grubbe

July 18, 1927—Nov. 27, 2017

Known by many as Grandma Birdie, and especially by her grandchildren, Marie was President of Ohlone in 1995. Marie was a very special person, both in her professional and personal life. She had a great interest in birds and nature, enjoying both from her home up on Fairview Avenue in Hayward,. Her professional achievement was working with Cathexis, focusing on very disturbed adults. She was also well-known and highly regarded for her skills in diagnosis and counseling, working with younger, elementary school age children in the Fremont schools.

We remember Marie as lighting up a room with her smile. Our condolences to her family.

The family has suggested memorial contributions to Ohlone Audubon Society.

Is it time to renew? Look at your mailing label—it will tell you. For example: "Pd Thru 3/18" indicates that you are paid thru MARCH 2018. A **"RENEW?"** indicates that this is your last *Kite Call*! If you see a **"JOIN LOCAL?"** on your label this indicates that you have joined the National Audubon Society, but alas, **not** your local **Ohlone chapter**.

We would love to have you join us!

If you receive your Kite Call electronically, look for a reminder in your email box.

To renew or join us please send a \$25 check to Pat Gordon, Membership Chair, 1922 Hillsdale Street, Hayward, CA 94541-5428. Thanks!



In light of recent concerns regarding disturbance to birds, we publish again a reminder for birders and photographers alike:

ABA CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

- Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.
- Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.
- Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private landowners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise, keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a Group Member:

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies.

Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities [amateur and professional trips and tours]:

4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

4(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area.

4(e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.

4(f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g., no audio playback allowed).

4(g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

Please Follow this Code and Distribute and Teach it to Others

The American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics may be freely reproduced for distribution/dissemination. Please acknowledge the role of ABA in developing and promoting this code with a link to the ABA website using the url <http://www.aba.org>. Thank you.

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HAYWARD, CA 94541

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Yes, I want to Join Ohlone Audubon Society!



Please sign me up today

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By mailing a \$25 check payable
To OAS with this coupon to:

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