



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 22 **FIELD TRIP**
Redwood Reg Pk
- Mar 1 **FIELD TRIP**
Quarry Lakes
- Mar 3 **GENERAL MEETING**
Livermore
- Mar 7 **FIELD TRIP**
Lake Solano
- Mar 14 **FIELD TRIP**
Don Edwards-Alviso
- Mar 21 **FIELD TRIP**
Mt. View Cemetery
- Mar 29 **BIRDING BY EAR**
FIELD TRIP
Garin Park
- Apr 4 **FIELD TRIP**
Del Valle
- Apr 7 **GENERAL MEETING**
Fremont
- Apr 8 **FIELD TRIP**
Alameda South Shore

Membership Meeting



Audubon Climate Change Report

by Juan Pablo Galvan



Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Avenue, Livermore CA 94550 Meeting Room: Palo Verde

Audubon’s new science shows that two-thirds (64%) (389 out of 604) of North American bird species are at risk of extinction from climate change. The good news is that our science also shows that if we take action now we can help improve the chances for 76% of species at risk.

Juan Pablo Galván will present Audubon’s new report on the impacts of climate change on birds. He’ll also show the drastic impacts that climate change is already having on the Bay Area and other parts of the world, attempt to explain why it has been so difficult to make progress against a drastically warmer climate caused by humans, and make a provocative case for who is responsible for this tragedy. Most importantly, every person in the audience and audiences everywhere on the planet must ACT NOW to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Juan Pablo is Mt. Diablo Audubon’s Young Birders Club coordinator. He grew up in Benicia, but since high school has lived and worked in Costa Rica, Mexico, Washington D.C. and different parts of California. Juan Pablo has always loved animals and been interested in learning about and protecting them and the habitats they live in – even since kindergarten when he brought an octopus in for show and tell. Juan Pablo graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a B.S. in Ecology, Behavior and Evolution and a minor in Political Science. Then after working in Mexico for a year, he pursued an M.S. in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology at the University of Maryland, College Park. He’s been back and forth between Mexico, Sacramento, and other places, but has lived in the Bay Area the past six years hiking the mountains and checking out the beaches. *(Directions on page 2)*

April Meeting

MOVIE NIGHT



Come and join us for a showing of **THE BIG YEAR** and popcorn!

Tuesday, April 7, 2020—
7:30PM

March Program Directions:

From Hwy 580 in Livermore, Exit First Street / Springtown Blvd., right to First Street, left on N. Mines Road, right on East Ave. Note: The front of the building has a tall flag pole. There are two parking lots for this large complex. Meeting place has the address "4444 East Ave" on the building.



Harlan's (Red-tailed) Hawk from American Canyon Wetlands Pop-up Trip, 1/18/20 (D. Pan)

Field Trips



you have an EB Parks annual pass. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

Redwood Regional Park, Oakland
Saturday, February 22 8:15-11:15 AM
Leaders: Jerry Ting & Elizabeth Olin
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org

We are going to bird around the meadow area and along the stream on both sides. Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush, Hairy Woodpecker and Brown Creeper are species on the watch list.

Directions: From I-580 W, follow signs for Oakland/San Francisco. Keep right at the fork to continue on CA-13N/Warren Fwy., following signs for Berkeley. Take exit 1 for Carson St. toward Redwood Rd. Follow Redwood Rd. for about 3.2 miles. Turn left at the sign for the Park. Meet at the Canyon Meadow Staging Area parking lot (end of park entrance road) at 8:15am. A \$5 entrance fee will be collected at the kiosk if you are not an EBRPD member.

Quarry Lakes Regional Rec Area, Fremont
Sunday, March 1 8:30-11:30 AM
Leaders: Jerry Ting & Kathy Robertson
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.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 in Fall 2015, and it's not unusual to see Peregrine Falcons and Merlins. 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

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.

Lake Solano County Park
Saturday, March 7 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Leaders: Rich Nicholson
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org

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 other 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.

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. which 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. (Note: a group lunch is not planned at this time)

Field Trips (continued)

Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge - Alviso
Saturday, March 14 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Leader: Vicki Robinson & Rich Nicholson
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org

Part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge complex, the Environmental Education Center (EEC) 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. We could find a Burrowing Owl in the nearby fields or a Peregrine Falcon on a power tower. If time allows, we'll also visit the marshland and salt ponds of Alviso Marina County Park. We'll 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 and then turn right onto Los Esteros Road.

Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland
Saturday, March 21 8:00 AM- 11:00 AM
Leaders: Megan Jankowski and Phil Georgakakos
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org

We will walk uphill scanning the ponds for ducks, grebes, and roosting herons, and the banks for sparrows. After the ponds, we will head towards the ridge top, looking for finches and other songbirds. From there we will walk back down under the oaks looking for woodpeckers and birds perching on tombstones, and end where we started. The route should take between 2 and 3 hours depending on our pace. Walk difficulty: moderate 2-3 miles on mostly paved roads, but with some elevation change, and dirt trail/ grass walking throughout. Rain cancels. All are welcome; no fee and no pre-registration required.

Directions: Mountain View Cemetery is at the northeastern end of Piedmont Ave. in Oakland. After passing under the gate, continue to the roundabout, and take the 1st exit, which leads just right of the main drive adjacent to a large grass patch. Park here on the road behind the large building. We will meet on the grass patch.



Birding by Ear for Beginners -
Garin Regional Park
Sunday, March 29 9 - 11:00 AM
Leaders: Bill Scoggins &
Maggie Clark,
Bill.Scoggins@yahoo.com, (510-581-5186)
and Maggie Clark (925-890-3100)

Join us for an exploration into the audible world of the stream, woods, pond, and marsh of Garin Regional Park. We will be listening for the song and chip notes of harder-to-see birds like Bewick's Wren, Spotted Towhee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and for the distinctive melody of spring's Bullock's Orioles. Along the way we can review the calls of old friends like Western Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird, 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. Although this is a beginner's trip 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. \$6 parking fee/EBRPD pass if kiosk is manned.

Del Valle SRA
Saturday, April 4 8:30 AM - 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 some 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. 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.)

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).

Field Trips cont'd pg 4

Alameda South Shore
Wednesday, April 8 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Leaders: Jerry Steenhoven, 510-881-1233
& Maggie Clark, 925-890-3100

Catch views of shorebirds in breeding plumage before they leave for northern breeding grounds. Meet at the Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary viewing platform where Broadway meets Shoreline Drive. Bring binoculars and a scope if you have one. This is planned as a 3-hour trip. We'll end at Crab Cove Visitor Center. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: From Hayward or San Leandro, take I-880 to Davis Street. Exit west and go to Doolittle Drive. Turn right on Doolittle and follow it to the bridge to Alameda, where the street becomes Otis Drive. Turn left at Broadway, drive southwest to Shoreline Drive, and park along the street.

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

Winter 2020

By Stephanie Floyd

OAS kicked off the new year with our annual King Tide visit to Arrowhead Marsh where we found 43 species, including **Blue-Winged Teals**, chattering **Ridgway's Rails**, and an uncommon **Brant** among the **Canada Geese**. Meanwhile, a rare, bright red male **Summer Tanager** made news in San Francisco's Glen Canyon, and in Oakland we had our own rare female (mostly yellow) **Summer Tanager**. **Pine Siskins**, **Purple Finches**, and **White-Throated Sparrows** returned to our feeders. A rare **Red-Necked Grebe** continued at Quarry Lakes, a rare **Sage Thrasher** showed up at Coyote Hills, and **Snow Geese** showed up in the goose flock at the Tony Lema Golf Course at San Leandro Marina. **Bald Eagles** continued at Ardenwood Farm. In late January, Derek Heins posted photos on E-bird of a **Rough-Legged Hawk** found, as in past years, at the junction of Midway Road and Altamont Pass in Livermore. The weather is improving; spring is on the way - and so are the birds!

Eastern Count CBC

We had **101 volunteers** count birds Friday, December 20. We tallied **147 bird species** in the count circle, which is the average for our count. The count sheet will be posted <http://www.alamedacreek.org/join-volunteer/CBC.php>

Jeff Miller, compiler

Christmas Bird Count 2019

Success! We had a very productive day, Sunday, December 15, 2019, finding an all time high of **179 species** and **104,955 individuals**. Once again, we thank the great effort of our section leaders and all who helped them – 88 of you. Much appreciation.



Wilson's Snipe, one of 7 found on Vargas Plateau—CBC 2019 (J. Ting)

Highlights of the count included the most unusual bird, a **Red-necked Grebe** (first identified as a loon!) on Quarry Lakes, but great photos confirmed the identification. Thank you Jerry Ting for the correct id. We also had an unusual probable **Wilson's Phalarope** in Area 8, the southern portion of Don Edwards. As per our usual, there were high counts of shorebirds including 5858 American Avocets, 4067 Marbled Godwits, 7449 Dunlin, 3404 Western Sandpipers and at least 11,000 unidentified peeps. On the bay itself we counted about 7000 unidentified ducks along with 5106 Surf Scoters! What a valuable resource our bay is.

Good finds and singletons included a **Common Loon** on Quarry Lakes, 1 **Ferruginous Hawk** up Morrison Canyon, along with 1 **Loggerhead Shrike**, 1 **Vaux's Swift** at Coyote Hills, 1 **Wood Duck** in the Alameda Creek area in Fremont and 2 **Hooded Mergansers**. Maybe evidence of climate change, **17 Barn Swallows** spent the winter with us along with a single **Caspian Tern**. We also enjoyed a good count of **5 Black Oystercatchers**, and **6 Ridgway's Rails**, **6 American Bitterns**, and **96 Snowy Plovers** in Eden Landing. Lastly – yeah for the feeder counters who found **3 White-throated Sparrows** and our intrepid owl team lead by Paul Smith!

Of course, this could not be completed without the invaluable help of the following participants (area leaders bolded): Lawrence Abbott, Anne Ackerman, Jim Allen, **Allen & Jackie Bertillion**, Val Blakely, **Forrest Bottomley**, Mona Brauer, Diana Brumbaugh, **Debbie Brusco**, John Cant, Christine Carino, Bill Chen, Nancy Christensen, **Michael Christopherson**, **Maggie Clark**, Gary Cooper, Erica Costanzo, Lynn Feindel, Sandy Ferreria, Sarah Flaherty, Stephanie Floyd, **Pat & Phil Gordon**, Jerry Green, Jim & Charles Hargrove, Lloyd Hartshorn, Kai Hayden-Mills, Erica Herron, Carin & Sam High, **Cherie Holcomb**, **Steve & Debbie Witke-Huckabone**, Erica Kawata, Helen Keating, Christina Kelleher, Karen Kenny, Leslie Koenig, Karen Kramer, Anne Krysiak, Cathy Loewen, Yesenia Lopez, **Ned & Carol Lyke**, Laurie Matthews, Nancy Mendoza, Ethan Monk, **Marty Morrow**, Ethel Murphy, **Rich Nicholson**, Duke Otsoshi, Amelia Owen-Casillas, Ivan Parr, Bernt Pettersson, Marta & Gordon Porter, Kabir & Srividya Prakesh, Michael & Terry Preston, Larke Reeber, **Kathy Robertson**, **Ted Robertson**, Barbara Ryan, Gail Ryujiin, Shelly Sack, **Bill Scoggins**, Andrey Semoyonov, Brenda Senturia, Scott Severn, **Paul Smith**, Jana Sokale, Vicki Stadelman, Donna Stanley, **Susan Stanton**, **Jerry & Judy Steenhoven**, **Jerry Ting**, Janet Townsend, Manny Vara, Carol Weicker, Debbie Wong-Ottman, Judy Wuelfing (*send an email to pagpeg@aol.com for complete list*)

Conservation

State considers major land purchase for new State Park south of Livermore

A scenic, 51,000-acre cattle ranch in the hills near Livermore that straddles four counties could become the state's newest, and one of its largest parks. In the proposed state budget, Governor Gavin Newsom dedicated \$20 million toward the purchase of a new state park. Though Newsom didn't specify where the park would be, 17 lawmakers, mostly from the Bay Area, sent him a letter last week urging him to target the N3 Cattle Company Ranch, which went on the market in July, 2019 for \$72 million. The N3 ranch, which lies where Alameda, Santa Clara, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties intersect, is south of Livermore and east of San Jose. About 80% of the property, including 9,600 acres of the Alameda Creek watershed, provides drinking water for the Bay Area and California residents.



SAVE Tesla Park

Protecting the Tesla Park Land

We Will Save Tesla Park

The veto of AB 1086 – Alameda Tesla Expansion Area by Governor Newsom's was extremely disappointing on many levels. The Governor's apparent support for the plan to expand Carnegie SVRA and open Tesla to damaging Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation betrays the environmental protection principals he ran on. One only needs to look at Carnegie SVRA, which the OHMVR Division states is well managed, to know the devastating fate that awaits Tesla, a rare biologically diverse ecologically intact native landscape in the urbanized East Bay. (Excerpt from Friends of Tesla Park website by Nancy Rodrigue)

While the potential to protect the N3 Ranch south of Tesla supports preservation of the important Diablo Range, of which Tesla is a part, Tesla's unique geographic location and concentration of rare natural and cultural resources cannot be replaced, substituted or sacrificed. Currently, three lawsuits are pending and awaiting judge's decision on how to proceed. In addition, the group is encouraging efforts with local legislators to work with the governor's office.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING OHLONE MEMBERS!

Ohlone sends a warm welcome and thank you to the following new and renewing chapter members:

Lee Aurich, Bob Battagin, Val Blakely, Jo Bloom, Ann Brown, Carol Castro, Susie Claxton, Michael Clive, Linda Delta, Paula Flessatti, Lisa Garza, Ramesh Gopalan, Phil & Pat Gordon, Joyce Gross, Helen Hancock, Mary Hannon, Christine Hayamizu, Carin High, Pat Mahoney, Kate Marchetti, Paul McCollom, Wayne Miller, Ray & Charlotte Miranda, Hans Mortensen, Carolyn Norman, Stephen Oppenheimer, Kathleen O'Sullivan, Deborah Pan, Pam Reuling, Tamara Reus, A.C. Riddlebarger, Marilyn Russell, Gail Ryujin, Claudia Schwalm, Andrey Semenov, D. Lynn Shaeffer, Shawne Sorenson, Jerry & Judy Steenhoven, Susan Towle, Suzanna Townsend, Jo S. Wang, Robert Wieckowski, Joyce Wilson, George & Wendy Winsted, Faye & Lee Younker.



We also want to thank those who have generously donated:

Gary & Chris Bard, Bob Battagin, Jo Bloom, Ann Brown, Carol Castro, Susie Claxton, Michael Clive, Lynn Feindel, Sandy Ferreira, Paula Flessatti, Lisa Garza, Phil & Pat Gordon, Helen Hancock, Mary Hannon, Christine Hayamizu, Carin High, Ed & Esther Keller, Joellen & Peter Lippett, Paul McCollom, Ray & Charlotte Miranda, Hans Mortensen, Carolyn Norman, Pam Reuling, Tamara Reus, A.C. Riddlebarger, Marilyn Russell, Barbara Ryan, Gail Ryujin, Steve Shay, Shawne Sorenson, Jerry & Judy Steenhoven, Margie Swezey, Marshall Trackman, Jo S. Wang, Joyce Wilson, George & Wendy Winsted, Faye & Lee Younker

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 pagepeg@aol.com



Is it time to renew? Look at your mailing label - it will tell you. A **"RENEW?"** indicates that this is your last *Kite Call*. A **cmp** means you are chapter membership paid; a **nnmp** means you are a national member only and a **"JOIN LOCAL?"** on your label 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 Or thru PayPal on our website.ohloneaudubon.org) Thanks!**

President's Corner

Hope you have been out getting your birding in. Ohlone has some great field trips coming up. I just went on one to a new area for most of us the American Canyon Wetlands Park, up against the Napa River. Great birding with good diversity of habitat. I always tell people that birdwatching is the best hobby there is, you can do it sitting on a park bench watching the birds come to you, you can become a wiz at bird identification, you can go nuts traveling around the world on your quest to 8000 birds, you can get involved in citizen science and adapting technology to birding. Whatever your interest level or ability and where ever you are, you can be birding. There are a few things, some old, some new that have caught my eye over the past few months.

Bird Cams. This is an old one, there are many locations that have set up cameras at feeders, nest sites and other bird-worthy locations that you can watch online in real time. Cornell Laboratory at <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/> has a nice list of a few if you want to try them out. I particularly like the Panama Fruit Feeders cam and watching the squirrels take over the Ontario feeder watch cam. The one on the Royal Albatross in New Zealand is about as serene as it gets. There are many others out there.

Fantasy Birding. My son and his friends are into fantasy football, me not so much. A colleague put me onto Fantasy Birding. Participants compete to record the most species in the American Birding Association Area. Fantasy birders don't have to spot the species themselves. Using eBird, players choose one locale per day by placing a 10-km circle on a map. Any species that an eBird user submits on a checklist from within that circle on the following day counts toward the player's total (if that species isn't already on their list.) Currently, there are two main competitions; one for a North American Big Year, and one for a Global Big Year. I am sure this will grow. That day, my colleague was sweating it out whether the few birders on Midway Island would get up that morning and go find some rare Asian migrant that had been reported that week, or switch to a birding tour hitting Florida hot spots. If you want to learn more go to <https://fantasybirding.com/>

Submitting bird song recordings with your eBird list: Remember those photos of ornithologists recording bird songs from the 1930 and 1940's, maybe not. It was hard work requiring loads of equipment. Now all you need is your smart phone. Recording bird songs is important data when it is linked to specific locations as it provides insight in various dialects in

Mark Your Calendars: Great Opportunity for Birding and Learning about Birds

Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) is celebrating its first 50 years with a conference in Reno, NV September 9-13, and everyone is invited. If you've never been to a WFO conference, it offers a mix of great field trips, workshops to help learn more about birds and birding, and engaging talks on local research. WFO links ornithologists who love birding with birders who have an interest in the science of birds.

Early September in Reno is an ideal time, with mild weather and both shorebird and passerine migration in full swing. Our field trips will take advantage of this. You can learn more about this conference, past conferences, and WFO in general on our web site www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php. We will open registration for the conference in June so keep checking for updates. Or, better yet, become a member (www.westernfieldornithologists.org/join.php) and you will get early notice for registering for the conference (as well as a subscription to our journal *Western Birds*).



Sabine's Gull: one of the species we have a chance of finding at this conference (AND the logo bird for WFO!) photo by John Ranlett



Among many sites we will visit is Carpenter Valley, a recently-preserved mountain meadow in Nevada County. photo by Ted Beedy



bird and identification of subspecies. You can submit bird song records along with your eBird checklist. Adding smartphone recordings to you eBird checklist requires some figuring out but the folks at eBird are trying to make this as easy as possible.

Check their website at <https://ebird.org/news/anew-way-to-upload-and-tag-photos-and-sounds>, or <https://ebird.org/news/add-audio/> to get started.

As I said, birding is the best hobby

-Bill Hoppes



Oh No! More gulls

By Bill Hoppes

The next GBBC is February 14-17, 2020 BirdCount.org

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, more than 160,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded.

A few months ago I wrote about identifying four species of gulls, Herring, California, Ring-billed and Western, that make up the vast majority of gulls we see in our area. I focused on looking at body size, color on the top of the wing, eye color, and bill markings to help ID these species. Except for the Herring Gull that takes off north to breed during summer, the other three are present year round. When winter rolls around, post breeding movements bring Herring Gulls and another group of gulls to our area. Birding gulls is never easy. Here I discuss four additional species of gulls that visit our area during the winter months. None of these species will be as abundant as the common four, but you will have a good chance of seeing them when you are out. As before, I am not going to discuss immature gulls or hybrids. We are looking for "field guide" grade adults. The harder stuff will come in a later article.

Glaucous-winged Gull

Another large-bodied gull. When I started birding in the 1970's we rarely, if ever, saw this species, now they are fairly common in the Bay Area. The Glaucous-winged Gull



Herring Gull on the left and Glaucous-winged Gull on the Right. Note the black wing-tips and light eye on the Herring Gull, compared to the gray wingtips and dark eye on the Glaucous-winged gull.

f 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



Remember to bring your own cup to meetings!

is a resident of the west coast, from Alaska to the coast of Washington. During winter, they can be found along the coast of California, Oregon, Baja California and Sonora, usually never far from the coastline. There is all kinds of hybridization going on among this gull, the Western Gull and the Herring Gull that I am not going to discuss here. Identifying this species in the field isn't hard if you don't assume that every light-gray mantled, large gull you see is a Herring Gull. The Glaucous-winged Gull is about the same size as the Herring Gull, the mantle on both is light gray, and they both have flesh colored legs. There are two key differences that will help you. Remember that the wingtips on the Herring Gull are black. Wingtips on the Glaucous-winged gull are about the same gray as on the mantle. Eye color is the opposite, Glaucous-winged gulls have a dark eye, and the Herring Gull has a light eye. Next
(Continued on page 8)

(more Gulls continued)

time you are scoping what looks like a Herring Gull, check the wingtips, if they are gray rather than black and the eye is dark, you likely have a Glaucous-winged Gull. There are other field marks you can use, so read up on your field guide. These are the ones that work for me.

Heerman's Gull

Ninety-five percent of the world's Heermann's Gulls and Elegant Terns nest on Isla Rasa, a 0.21 sq./mi island in the Gulf of California. After breeding is over in July, Heermann's Gulls head north all the way to southern Canada. By December they head back south and most breeders are at the Isla Rasa by March. So from late summer through winter, Heermann's Gulls can be moving through or spending the winter in our area. That's right, the Heermann's Gull moves north in the winter and south in the summer, the opposite of what most northern hemisphere birds do. When they show up here they can look of two types. If the gull is still in its breeding plumage, the Heermann's Gull looks just another medium sized, gray backed, white-headed gull. If they are into their non-breeding plumage, they will look all slate gray. Confusing, no? But if you look closely you will see that the Heermann's Gull has, in all plumages, a blood red bill with a black tip. No other gull in our area has this mark. So, if you see a white-headed, or a slate gray gull with a funny looking bill, take a closer look. If the bill is red with a black tip, it's a Heermann's.



Heermann's Gull in breeding (left) and non-breeding (right) plumage. Note the blood red bill with the black tip.

Bonaparte's Gull

This is the smallest of the gulls you will see, smaller than the California or Ring-billed gulls. Bonaparte's Gull breeds in boreal forest across southern Alaska and much of interior western Canada. It winters along the coasts of North America, and in the Great Lakes. We see them on migration from April through June and as they disperse after the breeding season from November through January. The adult has grey upper-wing and white underparts; its wingtips are black above and pale below. In breeding plumage, it has a slaty black hood. No other gull you are likely to see in our area has this hood. As it transitions to non-breeding plumage this black hood is lost and replaced with a black spot behind the eye. The legs are orange-red and the bill black. At first glance you are most likely to think that you are seeing a tern rather than a Bonaparte's Gull. Two of the terns that are likely to be in our area in spring when the ***(cont'd page 9)***



From left to right, Bonaparte's Gull in breeding plumage, Bonaparte's gull in non-breeding plumage, and Forster's Tern in non-breeding plumage. Note that black area in tern is much larger than in the gull, extending around and over the eye.

(More Gulls cont'd) Bonaparte's pass through are the Caspian and Elegant. The Caspian Tern is twice the size of the Bonaparte's and has a bright red/orange rather than black bill. The Elegant Tern is about the size of a Bonaparte's but has that bright orange bill. Forster's Terns are here pretty much all year. The Forster's tern is smaller than the Bonaparte's, and during the non-breeding season, can have a black bill and a large black spot around the eye (much larger than the Bonaparte's gull). However the gull has black wing tips while the Forster's tern has dark edging, and, most importantly, the Forster's Tern has that wonderful forked tail.

Mew Gull

This one is the hardest for me. In North American, Mew Gulls breed in Alaska and northwest Canada and head south to the Pacific Coast in winter and are here in abundance from November through April. At first glance, they are another gray and white gull, slightly smaller than the Ring-billed Gull. It is easy to confuse these gulls with Ring-billed and California gulls, or just assume that any small gray and white gull you see is one of these two and not something different. The first thing I notice about Mew Gulls is the bill. It looks small and weak, dull yellow and rather pathetic compared to the powerful bills of other gulls. If you look closely, it is unmarked, without the ring of the Ring-billed Gull, or the red spot of the California Gull. If you look very closely, you will see that the Mew Gull has a dark eye compared to the light eye of the Ring-billed Gull.

Mew gulls have large white spots at the wing tips, larger than the Ring-billed Gull, and that the California Gull lacks. I have always had trouble with that field mark but look for it. If you are out birding and you see a small gray and white gull and your first reaction is "that bill looks pathetic for a gull", take a closer look. If it is all yellow with no marks, and the bird has a dark eye, you likely have this species. See, not so hard. Now you should be able to confidently identify eight of the gull species you are likely to see in the San Francisco Bay area.



From left to right, Mew gull, note the smallish, unmarked bill compared to the marked and more powerful bills of the Ring-billed Gull (center) and the California Gull (right).

See, not so hard. Now you should be able to confidently identify eight of the gull species you are likely to see in the San Francisco Bay area.

The **Friends of Sierra Nevada Field Campus** are offering a \$500 scholarship to support students interested in any of the following birding classes. Visit the SNFC website for class details. <https://sierra.sfsu.edu/course-calendar>

1. **Bird Identification by Song w/ Jim Steele** - May 31-June 5, 2020
2. **Birds of the Sierra Nevada w/Dave Shuford** June 12-17, 2020
3. **The Natural Sound Recording Workshop w/ Greg Budney** June 6-13, 2020
4. **Birding 101 w/JR Blair** June 28-July 3, 2020

To apply you must first register and pay for the class. Then send an email titled "SNFC Bird Scholarship" to jsteele@sfsu.edu, requesting your interest in the scholarship and identifying the class in which you enrolled. A random drawing will determine the winner. Application deadline is April 30, 2020.

UC Bird Workshop

March 27 – 29, 2020

This course will provide an introduction to the diversity, morphology, and general ecology of birds of the world, with a special emphasis on birds of the San Francisco Bay Area. Topics covered with include: the bird fossil record, diversity of modern birds, bird traits and ecology, behavior, breeding biology, and communication. Students will meet in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (MVZ) for lectures. Hands-on demonstrations will use specimens from the MVZ bird collection, which contains study skins, eggs, skeletal specimens, and fluid-preserved specimens. The workshop will also include two three hour field trips to observe birds in the field. Instructor is Rauri C.K. Bowie, professor in Dept. of Integrative Biology & Curator of Birds in MVZ.

Transportation: Personal vehicle required for field trip (car-pooling possible) Start/End: Friday, 1:00 pm – Sunday 3:00 pm. \$275/\$305; For more info or to register, please see <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/workshops/>

RETURN TO:
OHLONE AUDUBON SOCIETY
1922 HILLSDALE STREET
HAYWARD, CA 94541

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN LEANDRO, CA
PERMIT NO. 5759

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED



Please renew your Ohlone membership by the date shown on your address label. For those receiving electronic copy, an email will be sent. Direct questions about Kite Call delivery to the Membership Chair.

PRESIDENT: Bill Hoppes, *President@OhloneAudubon.org*
VICE PRES: Marty Morrow 510-357-1615
PAST PRES: Evelyn Cormier 510-471-0475
TREASURER: Gail Ryujin *Treasurer@OhloneAudubon.org* 925-829-1895
REC SECTY: Kathy Robertson *Secretary@OhloneAudubon.org*
CORR SECTY: Jackie Bertillion 510-782-4874
DIRECTORS: 2020: Debbi Brusco *Director2020@OhloneAudubon.org*
2021: Vicki Robinson *Director2021@OhloneAudubon.org*
2022: Terry Preston *Director 2022@OhloneAudubon.org*

CONSERVATION: Carin High (West) Terry Preston (West) Bill Hoppes (East)
Conservation@OhloneAudubon.org
EDUCATION: Marty Morrow *education@ohloneaudubon.org* 510-357-1615
EDITOR: Phil & Pat Gordon, *editor@Ohloneaudubon.org* 510-538-3550
FIELD TRIPS: Lynn Feindel, *FieldTrips@OhloneAudubon.org*
HOSPITALITY: Allen & Jackie Bertillion 510-782-4874
MEMBERSHIP: Pat Gordon, *Membership@Ohloneaudubon.org* 510-538-3550
PROGRAMS: Debbie Wong, *Programs@OhloneAudubon.org*
PUBLICITY: Vicki Robinson, *Director2021@OhloneAudubon.org*
NAS CALIFORNIA: 765 University Ave, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95825
916-649-7600, <http://www.ca.audubon.org>

WEBMASTER: L. Koenig *webmaster@OhloneAudubon.org*
WEBSITE: <http://OhloneAudubon.org>

Yes, I want to Join Ohlone Audubon Society!



Please sign me up today

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Join Ohlone Audubon Society
By mailing a \$25 check payable
To OAS with this coupon to:

Pat Gordon
OAS Membership
1922 Hillsdale St.
Hayward, CA 94541

I prefer to receive the Kite Call by e-mail [] (Recommended) Please send me e-mail updates and action alerts [].

Ohlone Audubon does not share our mailing list or your personal information with others.
National Audubon Society membership dues are separate from those of Ohlone Audubon Society.