



# 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

- Jan 1 FIELD TRIP**  
Arrowhead Marsh
- Jan 2 GENERAL MEETING**  
Fremont
- Jan 7 FIELD TRIP**  
No. Livermore
- Jan 13 FIELD TRIP**  
Las Gallinas
- Jan 20 FIELD TRIP**  
Don Edwards NWR
- Jan 27 FIELD TRIP**  
Shadow Cliffs
- Feb 2-3 FIELD TRIP**  
Sacramento Refuges
- Feb 6 GENERAL MEETING**  
Fremont (Niles)
- Feb 14 FIELD TRIP**  
Lake Elizabeth

(see details inside!)

**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*

### Membership Meetings

#### Indonesia: Birding the Spice Islands

**Hans Peeters**

**Date:** January 2, 2018  
**Time:** 7:30 PM  
**Location:** Carlton Plaza  
3800 Walnut Avenue, Fremont 94538

It was mostly nutmeg that lured the first Europeans (and before them, Arabs) to Indonesia 500 years ago, but today one of the big draws (besides orangutans) is the incredible birdlife on these enchanted islands. The dazzling



White-crowned Hornbill (Hans Peeters)

variety of brilliantly colored kingfishers in Sulawesi is matched by a riot of parrots on nearby Halmahera; brilliant sunbirds vie for attention with elegant bee-eaters and gaudy trogons, and the raptors have some surprises. The pigeon family surely finds its colorful pinnacle in Indonesia. And starlings. Yes, starlings! And why did we keep seeing birds we last spotted in far-off Australia?

Mammals gravitate toward the unusual here as well, and the bugs and plants are definitely worth a look. A naturalist's paradise.

*(continued on page 2)*

#### How Diet Plays a Role in the Recovery of the California Least Tern

**Meredith  
Elliott**



**Date:** February 6, 2018  
**Time:** 7:30PM  
**Location:** Niles Discovery Church  
36600 Niles Blvd, Fremont, CA 94536  
(corner of Nursery Ave. & Niles Blvd.)

**Meredith Elliott**, Senior Scientist at Point Blue, has been studying the diet of the Alameda Point population of the California Least Tern, *Sternula antillarum browni*. She will share with us how diet contributes to the breeding success and recovery of the species.

The California Least Tern is an endangered species largely due to habitat loss. While a lot of effort in the recovery of this species is devoted to managing breeding sites and predators, not much attention is given to what this species eats. Scientists at Point Blue Conservation Science have been studying the diet of the California Least Tern at different breeding locations since the early 2000s.

*(continued on page 2)*

**(Indonesia continued)**

**Hans Peeters** has entertained Ohlone Audubon members over the years with talks on Thailand, Australia, India, and other topics, but his new favorite part of the world is Indonesia, where he has spent a month each summer for the past three years. He taught biology, zoology, and ecology for 37 years and is a raptor biologist, an award-winning painter of wildlife and author of books including *Raptors of California*, *Owls of California and the West*, and *Mammals of California*.

**Directions: From I-880:** In Fremont, take the Mowry Ave exit, then Mowry east (inland) to Fremont Blvd. Turn right on Fremont Blvd., then left on Walnut Avenue. Carlton Plaza is on Walnut between Fremont Blvd. and Paseo Padre Pkwy.

**From Mission Blvd.,** turn onto Walnut Avenue and Carlton Plaza will be on the left, between Paso Padre and Fremont Blvd.

**(Least Terns continued)**

As a Senior Scientists, Meredith Elliott's work in Point Blue's Conservation division includes the monitoring of seabirds and their diets, as well as researching Least Terns of Alameda, and zooplankton communities in Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries.

**Directions: From the South or West via I-880,** Take Mowry Avenue exit. Follow Mowry across Fremont (toward the hills) to Mission Boulevard, turn left. You will pass Niles Blvd and the Sullivan Underpass. Turn left at Nursery Ave. Turn left on Niles Blvd. You will see the church just on the left after the turn.

**From the North via I-880 :**Take Alvarado Niles Boulevard (east): From the freeway exit, turn left to go over the overpass, then in approximately four miles (through Union City and into the Fremont city limits), you will see the church on your left (just after Nursery Ave.).

**From Pleasanton or Livermore, or other points to the east of the hills ,** you can take I-680 to the first Mission Boulevard exit, and turn right onto Mission. Stay on Mission until you get to Nursery Avenue, and turn left. Turn left on Niles Blvd. You will see the church just on the left after the turn.

**From the North via Mission Boulevard** Turn right on Nursery, and left on Niles Boulevard. You will see the church just on the left after the turn.

# Field Trips

**Arrowhead Marsh:  
Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline  
January 1, Monday 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM  
Leaders: Stephanie Floyd & Mona Brauer**



An 8.4' high tide will hit Arrowhead Marsh at 10:48 AM, creating an opportunity to see Ridgway's Rails, Virginia Rails, and Soras. Wintering ducks and shorebirds will be plentiful. The area is completely paved, so if it's raining, we'll still go as rain and high tide are optimum conditions for seeing rails. One year a very rare Yellow Rail was seen here in cold, driving rain! This is a wheelchair-accessible bird walk. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

**Directions:** From I-880 in Oakland, go west on Hegenberger towards the airport and turn right on Pardee. Make a left at Swan and turn right into the entrance to Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline. Follow the entrance road all the way to the end. On the way to the parking lot, drive slowly and keep an eye out for Burrowing Owls on the berms to the right.

**FIELD TRIPS CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

# Field Trips (continued)

**North Livermore/Springtown**  
**January 7, Sunday 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM**  
**Leaders: Steve Huckabone & Kathy Robertson**  
**fieldtripsATOhloneAudubon.org**

We will walk along the Arroyo where we can expect many wading birds such as stilts, avocets, herons, ducks, teal, and many songbirds. Raptors are around- a Golden Eagle was observed a few years ago. Wide, level trails make walking easy. Pre-registration is not required. Beginners are welcome and encouraged. Bring your scope if you have one .

**Directions:** Take I-580 east to exit 54 for First Street/ Springtown Blvd, turn left onto First Street and continue onto Springtown Blvd. Turn right (east) on Bluebell Dr. and continue about a 1-1/2 to Marlin A. Pound Park (North Livermore Neighborhood Park). We will meet at the bridge crossing the Arroyo. Park on either side of the road. Heavy rain cancels. No restrooms are on our route, so you may wish to make a pit stop before arriving at the meeting point.

**Las Gallinas Storage Ponds, San Rafael**  
**January 13, Saturday 9AM-2PM**  
**Leaders: Phil & Pat Gordon**  
**pagpegATAOL.com, 510.538.3550**

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 hundreds of bird species in and around the ponds in the reclamation area, as well as other creatures that call the reclamation area "home". 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. Dress in layers and plan on a 2 mile walk. Bring your lunch to enjoy after the walk. Rain cancels.

**Directions:** From Highway 101 North take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then go east on Smith Ranch toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch and go about .5 miles to the end of the road to the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot.

**Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR**  
**January 20, Saturday 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM**  
**Leaders: Rich Nicholson & Maggie Clark**  
**fieldtripsATOhloneaudubon.org**

We'll search the marshes, mudflats, salt ponds and possibly the open bay as time allows. There's always a good variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors and passerines here. This field trip features easy walking on mostly paved paths. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

**Directions:** To reach Don Edwards, take I-880 to Decoto Rd./Dumbarton Bridge exit. Take the Thornton/ Paseo Padre exit, turn left at the bottom of the ramp and go south over the freeway. Turn right at the entrance and park in the first lot on the right.

*Ohlone members on Ohlone platform, La Riviere Marsh trail, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR.*



**Shadow Cliffs Reg. Rec Area, Pleasanton**  
**January 27, Saturday 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM**  
**Leaders: Steve Huckabone & Kathy Robertson**  
**fieldtripsATOhloneaudubon.org**

Join us at Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area to 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 and nuthatches. Notable sightings in past years included Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Great-Tailed Grackles, California Thrasher, Common Loon, Common 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.

**Directions:** From I-580 eastbound, take the Santa Rita Road exit, keep right and follow signs for Downtown to merge onto Santa Rita Road. Turn left on Valley Avenue and left on Stanley Boulevard, then right into the park. Meet in the first parking lot by the swimming beach. \$6 parking fee/EBRPD permit.

**More trips page 4!**

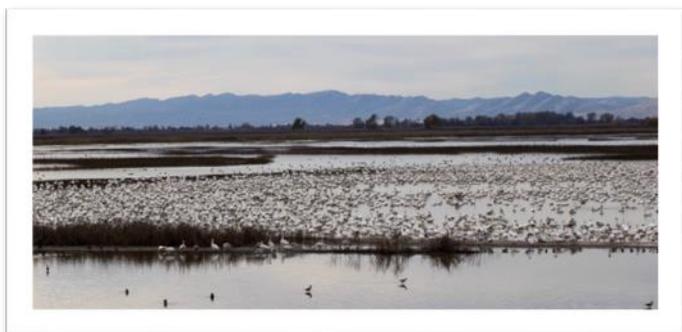
**Sacramento Valley Wildlife Refuges**  
**February 3-4 Saturday & Sunday**  
**Leaders: Pat & Phil Gordon**  
**9AM Saturday at Sacramento NWR**  
**9AM Sunday at Colusa-Sacramento River**  
**State Wildlife Area**  
**pagpegATAOL.com, 510.538.3550**

This year we are refuge birding to the north. **Saturday** will be spent birding the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, followed by a look at the Delevan unit, and ending the day at Colusa NWR. **Sunday**, we will begin the day at the Colusa-Sacramento River State Wildlife Area, on the Sacramento River, in Colusa; then travel to the Llano Seco unit of the Sacramento NWR, and depending on time, may go to Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area for the fly-in at dusk.

The refuges promise good long looks at flocks of waterfowl, including myriads of Snow and White-fronted Geese, as well as several species of ducks. We have often found Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons among all the wintering Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels. It is hoped we will find the fields full of Sandhill Cranes and Tundra Swans. In past years we have found many Wood Ducks in the Llano Seco area.

Trip will go, rain or shine, with only heavy flooding canceling.

**Directions:** The **Sacramento NWR** is located north of Williams off of I-5. Use the Norman Road exit and follow the signs. Driving time is about 2 hours from the Bay Area. There is an entrance fee (Duck stamp or hunting license or day pass.) The **Colusa Wildlife Area** is located right in the town of Colusa, along the Sacramento River. Take Hwy 20 east from Williams, and in the town of Colusa, continue straight across Market and Main Street, and up the levee to the park entrance. This is a fee area also.



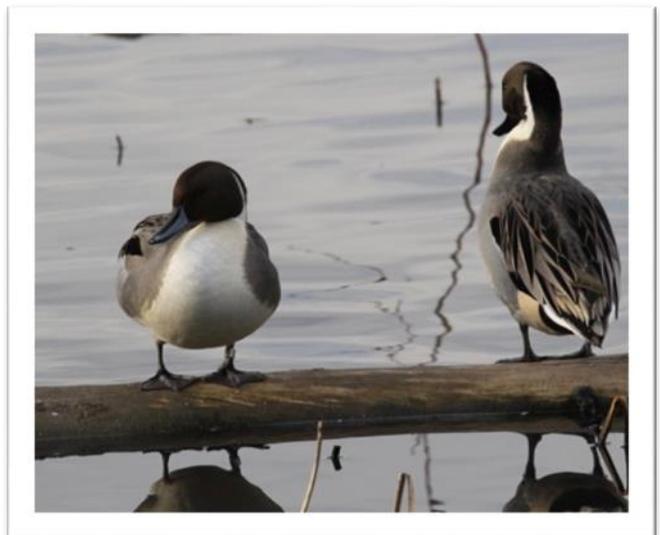
**Snow Geese, Sac NWR (S. Ferreira) 11/17**

## More Field Trips!

**Lake Elizabeth - Fremont Central Park**  
**February 14, Wednesday 9:00 AM - noon**  
**Leaders: Stephanie Floyd & Park Ranger Sandy Ferreira**  
**fieldtripsATohloneaudubon.org**

Lake Elizabeth in Fremont's Central Park is a great place to enjoy winter birds. Cackling Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, and sometimes Ross's and Snow Geese visit the soccer lawns with the Canada Geese. Wintering ducks may be plentiful on the lake. In the reeds that line the lake and in the willows along the creek we often find herons, woodpeckers, sparrows, and sometimes a surprise, such as an American Pipit. Tree Swallows and Allen's Hummingbirds will be arriving. Ranger Sandy Ferreira may invite us into the garden and classroom at the Nature Learning Center, and she always has great stories to share about the Tree Swallow nesting program and all the different species that use the nest boxes, from Bewick's Wrens to chickadees to bluebirds. Plan to walk about 2.5 miles on paved paths. Rain cancels.

**Directions:** From I-880, exit at Stevenson and go east (towards the hills). Turn right at Paseo Padre Parkway and follow the signs for the Aqua Adventure Waterpark. The parking lot for the Waterpark dead ends at the south end of the lake. Meet at the five tall palm trees at the end of the parking lot.



**Northern Pintail , Colusa State Wildlife refuge 11/17**  
**(S. Ferreira) Note band on left bird**

## BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

November thru early December, 2017

By Stephanie Floyd

The first of November brought our winter friends the **Hermit Thrushes, Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, White- and Golden-crowned Sparrows,** and **Fox Sparrows.** Two **Nelson's Sparrows** with creamsicle-colored bibs put on a show in the long grass at Arrowhead Marsh. Winter ducks - **Buffleheads, Surf Scoters, Ruddy Ducks, Wigeons, Pintails,** and **Shovelers** - arrived on the bay.

A **Tropical Kingbird,** perhaps a repeat visitor, arrived at Heather Farms in Walnut Creek and in December the Hayward Shoreline got its own!



Tropical Kingbird, Hayward Shoreline, 12/17

(J. Ting)

At our popular mid-November Pacific Commons field trip, we found **Redheads** on the main pond along with freshly-arrived **Green-Winged Teals.** Raptors were present and accounted for: **Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, Merlin** and **Prairie Falcon!** **Cedar Waxwings** flew around calling. **Swamp Sparrows** showed up here and there around the bay.

In mid-November, we were treated to a couple of **Lapland Longspurs** on their brief annual stay on Mt. Trashmore at Hayward shoreline along with **Horned Larks** and **American Pipits.** Lots of "**Aleutian**" **Cackling Geese** were among the **Canadas** up there, too. In late November a couple of immature **Mute Swans** flew in to spend some time at Coyote Hills. A **Glaucous Gull** stayed for a few days on the levee there. A few **Snow Geese** showed up as a little white sprinkle among the **Canadas** on the golf course at San Leandro Marina and at Fremont Central Park's ball fields. **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were spotted with the **Black-Bellied Plovers** on the edge of the Bay trail and **Common Goldeneyes** were on the bay. The first weekend in December, a tiny "**minima**" **Cackling Goose** arrived with a group of "**Aleutians**" at the lake in Newark.

OAS took a side trip to Lodi where we were wowed by the spectacle of hundreds and thousands of **Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans, Greater White-Fronted Geese** and **Cackling Geese** coming in to winter at Cosumnes, Woodbridge, and State Island. Over at the coast, a very rare (ABA code 4) **Red-Footed Booby** was a huge draw from November into December! A **White-Winged Dove** stayed awhile at Moss Beach, too.

Winter is a great time to go birding!

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

Janet Armantrout	Susan Mayfield
Anna Bagniewska	Paul McCollom
David Bazzani	Michael McDonnel
Debra & Ray Bedford	Lori Moon
Forrest Bottomley	Gary & Merna Morse
Stephanie Floyd	Bernt Pettersson
John Giles	Bill & Laurel Quirk
Phil & Pat Gordon	Marie Ross
Helen Hancock	Steve Shay
Mary A. Hannon	Paul & Melanie Smith
William & Tanya Hoppes	Terry Spaggins
Steve Huckabone	Jean-Marie Spoelman
Irene Jones	Stan & Vicki Stadelman
Bruce & Judith Jund	Donna Stanley
Jeanette King	Gail and Ruby Stanton
Polly & Gordon Krauter	Paul J. Svec
Don & Roberta Lenkeit	Dr. Lawrence Thompson
David Lovejoy	George & Marilyn Trabert
Carol & Ned Lyke	Martin Vitz
	Julice Winter



## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING OHLONE MEMBERS!

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

Janet Armantrout, Anna Bagniewska, David Bazzani, Debra & Ray Bedford, Peter Beiersdorfer, Forrest Bottomley, Deborah Brusco, Kate Buddenbaum, John Giles, Grant Gladman, Phil & Pat Gordon, Joyce Gross, Helen Hancock, Sandra Hermerding, Irene Jones, Jeanette King, Polly & Gordon Krauter, Eduardo Kneler, Jaan Lepson, Carol & Ned Lyke, Susan Mayfield, Michael McDonal, Lori Moon, Gary & Merna Morse, Hans Peeters, Bernt Pettersson, Paula Preusser, Bill & Laurel Quirk, Simi Raman, Sanjay Reddy, Marie Ross, Steven A. Rothi, DDS, Marilyn Russell, Steve Shay, Carol Silva, Paul & Melanie Smith, Beth Spease, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Stan & Vicki Stadelman, Gail & Ruby Stanton, Sue Stanton, Paul J. Svec, Stephen Taylor, Dr. Lawrence H. Thompson, George & Marilyn Trabert, Martin Vitz, Julice A. Winter, Stanley Winterman, Jo Wang, Zermano Family

# Conservation



## Save Tesla Park Update

### State Department rejects offer to buy land

The California State Parks Department has rejected a request from the Altamont Landfill Open Space Committee for the department to explore the proposed “Tesla” expansion of the Carnegie ORV park. The committee sent a letter to California Department of Parks and Recreation that stated, “There is approximately \$12 million available in the Open Space Fund to acquire open space land in East Alameda County.”

A letter of response from the State Parks Department to Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty turned down the request stating that the Tesla area does not meet the statutory criteria to be considered surplus property. The Carnegie ORV Park now has 1,575 acres for off-highway motor sports; expansion into Tesla would add an additional 3,100 acres.

This past fall, both the General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Carnegie SVRA were approved. Lawsuits filed by environmental groups and Friends of Tesla note that Tesla is habitat for rare and endangered plants and animals, as well as a key corridor for migratory animals. They point to a rich historical legacy first, as a ceremonial site for early Native Americans and later, as the location of the 19th Century coal mining town that gave Tesla its modern name. The suits claim that the Environmental Impact Report approved by the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division failed to live up to provisions of California’s Environmental Quality Act.  
B. Hoppes

## Marina Bay Park

### San Leandro

The city of San Leandro sponsored two events to gather input from local residents and others interested in the proposed planning for Marina Bay Park. The points made by attendees, particularly from Golden Gate Audubon to our north, offered several recommendations regarding development of the park.

Some of the recommendations involve that this is an area recognized as *Important Bird Area (IBA)* featuring Ridgeway Rails, the Alameda Song Sparrow, a species of special concern, the Salt Marsh Common Yellowthroat, and the seasonal appearance of the endangered California Least Tern.

Recommendations included establishing a bayside birding trail with interpretive signage and nesting platforms for Osprey. There seemed to be strong support for a “living shoreline”, meaning incorporating the natural tidal flow to establish native eelgrass and planting other trees and bushes reflecting the Mediterranean bayside climate, that would offer habitat for birds and native oysters, and protection from King tides. The area also needs to be managed for the overwintering Monarch butterfly population. Appropriate lighting, requirements for dogs, boating and other activities would be spelled out with signage.

Cindy Marguli of Golden Gate Audubon was a vocal and well-spoken advocate for what would be best for the area and urged Ohlone to follow this development closely to be sure it continues to be a great place to be birding. It behooves us to watch and observe as the park takes shape.  
E. Cormier

**Is it time to renew?** Look at your mailing label - it will tell you. For example: “Pd Thru 1/18” indicates that you are paid thru January 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!



## President's Corner

Hope you are enjoying the holiday season, and those who participated, had fun at the Christmas counts. Winter is one of the best seasons for birding in our area with thousands of shorebirds along the bay, tens of thousands of ducks and geese in the refuges in the Central Valley and the daily spectacle of the Sandhill Cranes flying in up near Lodi. Ohlone has some great field trips coming up so take advantage of them before all these birds head north and we are left with the doldrums of summer birding in the Bay Area.

Have you gotten your copy of the 7th edition of the National Geographic Field Guide? I picked one up at the Central Valley Bird Symposium (great to see a dozen Ohlone members there). Working my way through it and can't believe how much info they have crammed in.

One last thing, if your Ohlone Annual Appeal letter is still sitting there calling to you, please open it and consider making a donation to Ohlone. We need your support to continue our great programs, field trips and conservation work. Now get outside and see great birds.

*Bill Hoppes*

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO DONATE!**

Send your donation to treasurer, OAS,  
3067 Montevideo Drive, San Ramon, CA 94583  
or thru our website: [www.ohloneaudubon.org](http://www.ohloneaudubon.org)

### 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](mailto:pagpeg@aol.com)**

## Annual Appeal

Please contribute to Ohlone Audubon Society's annual Fall fundraising appeal.

Ohlone Audubon's work in protecting birds and the habitats that support them, presenting thoughtful and engaging speakers, leading exciting and varied field trips, and educating the next generation of birders is made possible by your continued financial contributions.

Your donations to Ohlone's 2016 appeal directly led to the following achievements:

We contributed significant financial support to many ongoing conservation efforts such as protecting Tesla Park's critical habitat from the threat of proposed expansion of an off-road vehicle park.

- In venues convenient to our members, we offered an excellent series of speakers at our monthly member meetings, presenting topics ranging from bluebird recovery projects to "The Birds of Sunda".
- We led field trips that were second to none, ranging from Point Reyes and the High Sierras to our own local hotspots and even our first pelagic adventure!
- We supported educational programs including the Habitat Means Home poster contest, Native Bird Connection's raptor program in the classroom and work by the Math Science Nucleus, who provide outreach science education to children and local community environmental advocacy.

The funds we receive from memberships alone are not enough to support these activities. Your continued financial support will enable us to continue working tirelessly to protect the environment and habitats, to share with you inspiring and thought-provoking speakers, to offer plenty of fun, active field trips, and to offer educational programs that lead to the protection and appreciation of birds and nature.

Please take advantage of your membership in Ohlone by attending one of our excellent programs, going on one of our exciting field trips, and through your donation supporting our efforts to educate, protect, and conserve.

Thank you for your support!

William G. Hoppes  
President Ohlone Audubon Society  
& the Board of Directors

# Little Green Birds

By William Hoppes

Beginning birders always seem to get frustrated over all the “little brown birds”. There are a group of “little green birds” that always give me trouble. Yellow Warblers, Orange-crowned Warblers, and Common Yellowthroat males are pretty easy to tell apart. Especially if they are singling males. But what happens when you are comparing Orange-crowned Warblers to female Yellow Warblers and female Common Yellowthroats? They all look green to me. Habitat choice helps, Orange-crowned Warblers are usually found in the woodland canopy, but do occur in willow runs where you would expect to find Yellow Warblers, which also are found in the shrubby, reedy habitat where you would expect Common Yellowthroats. Below is an example of each:



Female **Common Yellowthroat**, note facial markings that can look like orange-crowned, but note the yellow throat.



Female **Yellow Warbler**, note the lack of facial markings and the prominent black eye. females appear more overall “yellow” than the other two species.



**Orange-crowned** male on the left and female on the right.

Note the overall “olive color and the dark line through the eye in both sexes. Both sexes lack of the contrasting yellow throat of the Common Yellowthroat female and prominent black eye of the Yellow Warbler.

When I am confronted by a “little green bird” I have always had to work my way through it. Following are some key characters I use to tell these bird apart in the field.

Orange-crowned Warblers are overall olive green birds. They have a dark line through the eye and the appearance of a broken eye ring. Female Yellow Warblers lack the dark line through the eye or other facial markings. This makes the black eye stand out. Female Common Yellowthroats may appear to have the dark eyeline of the Orange-crowned, but have a brightish yellow throat that stands out. Also the Common Yellowthroat lacks the prominent black eye of the female Yellow Warbler.

**(continued on page 9)**

***(Little Green Birds continued)***

Presented with a "little green bird" I now look first for height, the higher in the canopy the more likely it is an Orange-crowned Warbler, the closer to the ground, a Common Yellowthroat. Second, can I see the dark line through the eye and broken eye ring that would tell me it is an Orange-crowned? Then I look for the prominent black eye of the female Yellow Warbler or the yellowish throat of the female Common Yellowthroat.

So in summary, the steps I go through are:

- If there is an eyeline, but no contrasting yellow throat, then most likely it is an Orange-crowned, especially if the bird is up in the canopy.
- If there is no eyeline or other facial marks, there is no contrasting yellow throat, and the bird is overall yellowish with a very prominent black eye, the bird is likely a female Yellow Warbler.
- If there maybe is an eyeline, but there is a contrasting yellow throat, and the bird is in the understory, then it is likely a female Common Yellowthroat.

These are the field marks that work for me. Other folks use bill size and head shape but I have never been able to make those work. Use what works for you, but above all don't confuse them with Ruby-crowned Kinglets which seem to be everywhere this year.



**The next GBBC is  
February 16-19, 2018  
BirdCount.org**

Go to the website **gbbc.birdcount.org** for information needed to participate. Included are instructions, a video, checklists, and much more.

**Itching to Count Birds? GBBC is Coming!**

Greetings from the Great Backyard Bird Count team at Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada! We want to remind you to mark your Calendars for the 21st GBBC, coming up **February 16 through 19, 2018**. Meanwhile, you can use your GBBC login information to record your sightings with **eBird**, any day of the year.

<b>2017 GBBC Stats</b>
181,291 checklists submitted
6,240 species found
29,574,031 Individual birds

## Waterbird Festival

Visit us on **January 27th, 2018** for the 5th Annual Waterbird Festival! Celebrate scaups, scoters, cormorants and more! Visit Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary for naturalist-led bird walks, exclusive field trips, and fun bird-themed activities. Bring a pair of binoculars or use our spotting scopes to see the waterbirds that call Richardson Bay home. **<http://richardsonbay.audubon.org/programs/waterbird-festival>**

These are just some of the things that are planned:

- Gull identification bird walk
- Sketching class
- Birding Basics
- Bird walks on Audubon Center grounds and Blackie's Pasture
- Offsite field trips with Bay Area Audubon chapters.
- Bay boat trip
- Kayak & paddleboard trip on Richardson Bay/Aramburu Isle

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY**

### Snowy Plover Habitat Restoration Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed to assist with a habitat restoration project currently underway at Eden Landing Ecological Reserve in Hayward. The project goal is to remove overgrown and invasive vegetation that has encroached up Western Snowy Plover breeding habitat. Plovers rely on being well camouflaged at all life stages to evade predation. At this site, there are two 10,000 oyster shell plots that provide enhanced plover breeding habitat by increasing camouflage for adults, chicks, and eggs. Over time, these plots have become overgrown with vegetation and no longer serve their intended function. Thus, this project will make oyster shell plots available for plover breeding again. With help from volunteers, the project should be finished by the end of 2017, with the next work session scheduled December 23. However, additional restoration work is planned for early 2018, before the beginning of the breeding season in March.

Contact Ben Pearl, Plover Program Director at SFBBO, 408-946-6548 or [bpearl@sfbbp.org](mailto:bpearl@sfbbp.org).

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