



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 13 FIELD TRIP**
Quarry Lakes, Fremont
- Feb 17 FIELD TRIP**
Lake Elizabeth, Fremont
- Feb 20 FIELD TRIP**
Del Valle, Livermore
- Feb 28 FIELD TRIP**
San Quentin, San Rafael
- Mar 1 MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
Pleasanton
- Mar 6 FIELD TRIP**
Hayward Shoreline
- Mar 8 BOARD MEETING**
(Call E. Cormier for details)
- Mar 12 FIELD TRIP**
Don Edwards NWR, Fremont
- Mar 20 FIELD TRIP**
Lake Solano
- Apr 5 MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
- June 25-26 FIELD TRIP**
Sierras—Yuba Pass

We are in for a treat in **April!** **Ed Harper** will conduct his well-known and well-liked: "Bird ID Panel" for us in our membership meeting on **April 5**. Come learn the finer points of bird identification from panel members' deduction and discussion.

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Birds in a Changing Climate

Presenter: Sarah-Mae Nelson

Date: March 1, 2016

Time: 7:30PM

Location: Pleasanton Middle School, 5001 Case Ave., Pleasanton, 94566

Sarah-Mae Nelson will talk to us on the big and important issues of carbon emissions, global warming, climate change, ocean acidification and their implications for coastal and seabird populations. And what we, as citizens, can help both in understanding the situation and taking actions to mitigate carbon emissions and adapt to changes. Come be inspired and enlightened!

Sarah-Mae Nelson is Conservation Interpreter for the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Online Community Manager for www.climateinterpreter.org. Collaborating with the National Association for Interpretation, National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and others, Sarah-Mae creates specialized training materials focusing on climate and interpretation.

Sarah-Mae has personally been involved in training hundreds of

staff and volunteers to be effective interpreters of climate science and solutions.

In 2015, Sarah-Mae was one of eight people recognized by the White House as a Champion of Change in Climate Education and Literacy. In 2010, the Monterey Bay Aquarium presented her the Green Tree Award that recognizes employees who are committed to conservation efforts at work, in the community and in their personal lives—people who are making our planet a better place. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Directions to Pleasanton Middle School: 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 the meeting room.

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.



FIELD TRIPS



Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area Leaders: Jerry Ting and Kathy Robertson ,

Saturday Feb 13 8:30-11:30AM
field trips AT ohloneaudubon.org

Join us at Quarry Lakes in Fremont to explore the lakes and marsh for wintering waterfowl such as pelicans, egrets, herons, and 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. A pair of Bald Eagles moved in in Fall 2015, and it's also 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 levee paths. Scopes are helpful. Parking fee \$5 unless you have an EB Parks annual pass. Heavy rain cancels.

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 right (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 Elizabeth - Fremont Central Park

Wednesday, Feb 17 9:00 AM - Noon
fieldtripsATohloneaudubon.org

Leaders: Stephanie Floyd and Park Ranger Sandy Ferreira,

Lake Elizabeth in Fremont's Central Park is a great place to find birds in winter. 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 should be arriving. Ranger Sandy 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. Plan to walk about 2 1/2 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.

Del Valle SRA

Leader: Steve Huckabone, shuckabone@comcast.net

Saturday, February 20, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

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.) 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). Heavy rain cancels.

And more field trips!

San Quentin Point and the SF Bay Trail, Marin County Leader: Rich Cimino, 925-353-0266

Sunday, Feb 28, 12:30 - 4:00 PM

Join birding guide Rich Cimino in Marin County for an easy bird walk beginning at low tide and ending at high tide. We will bird the shoreline for peeps and the back bay for gulls, diving ducks, and grebes as well as wading birds. We will also look for the Puget Sound variety of White-Crowned Sparrow. Bring your scope, water, a snack, and a smile! We won't break for lunch, but there are restaurants nearby for after. Restrooms are available at a Target store at our turnaround point. Meet in the parking lot for the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline

Park trailhead. **Directions:** Take I-580 west over the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge (\$5 toll). Take the first exit and merge right on to Francisco Road. Continue past the Marin Rod and Gun Club one-third mile to a business center on the right. You will see a Bay Cafe sign at the Bay Park Center. Turn right and continue straight to the Jean and John Starkweather Beach trailhead parking. If you want to create a map, use the Bay Cafe address, 2165 Francisco Blvd., San Rafael.

Hayward Regional Shoreline Leaders: Bob Toleno and Juli Chamberlin,

Sunday, March 6, 8:00 AM - noon
fieldtrips AT OhloneAudubon.org

Join Bob and Juli for a morning at the Hayward Shoreline. We'll first look for Horned Larks and American Pipits on Mt. Trashmore, then walk out to Frank's Dump at high tide for shorebirds including Red Knot, Snowy Plover, and Ruddy Turnstone. Wintering gulls, terns, and waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and more are possible.

Directions: Take I-880 to West Winton Avenue in Hayward and go west through the park gate to the second parking lot (where the road ends). Scopes are desirable. Check the weather; rain cancels this trip.

Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge - Alviso Leaders: Stephanie Floyd and Vicki Robinson

Saturday, March 12, 8:30 - 11:30 AM
field trips AT ohloneaudubon.org

Part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge 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. 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 windy. Check the weather: we won't go if it's raining. **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. The EEC parking lot is at the end.

Lake Solano County Park Leaders: Phil and Pat Gordon pagpeg@aol.com

Sunday, March 20, 9:00 AM – late lunch

Lake Solano lies within Putah Creek between 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. After birding, we will drive a short way into Winters for a late lunch at 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. Meet in the day use parking lot. Parking fee \$5 payable by envelope (no change available). Drive time is a short 2 hours

Field Trips continued

Birding by Ear for Beginners - Coyote Hills RP Leaders: Bill Scoggins and Maggie Clark

Saturday, March 26, 9:00 - 11:00 AM
bill.Scoggins@yahoo.com (510-581-5186)

Join us for an exploration into the audible world of the freshwater marsh. We will listen for harder-to-see birds like Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Yellowthroat, and American Bittern, and review songs of old friends like Marsh Wren, Song Sparrow, and Mallard. One familiar sound is the buzz of the mosquito - bring your insect repellent as well as sunblock. Check the weather; we will not go if it's raining heavily.

Directions: From I-880 in Fremont, take CA-84 (Decoto Road) west towards the Dumbarton Bridge. Exit at Paseo Padre Parkway/Thornton Avenue and turn right to reach the park. Turn left at Patterson Ranch Rd. and meet at the visitor center parking lot. \$5 parking fee unless you have an EB Parks pass.



Upcoming Field Trip!

Save June 25-26, 2016 on your calendar for our annual Sierra weekend to Yuba Pass area

**Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley
Saturday and Sunday, June 25-26
Meet both days at Yuba Pass Snow Park parking lot: 7:30 a. m. Saturday and 6:30 a. m. Sunday.
Leaders: Phil and Pat Gordon pagpeg@aol.com**

On Saturday we will begin our bird explorations at the almost 7,000 ft. elevation of the Sierras. Meet at 7:30 a. m. at the Yuba Pass Snow Park lot (also the entrance to the Yuba Pass Campground) along SR-49. Snow may still be on the ground this year, so dress accordingly. We will be looking for some of the area's specialties including Williamson's Sapsucker, Black-Backed and White-Headed Woodpeckers, Golden-Crowned Kinglets, and Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers. The trip may include a visit to San Francisco State's Field Station, where we have found American Dipper in the past, and to Bassett's Store for hummingbirds, including Calliope. Other stops may include birding along the Gold Lakes Basin road, Sand Pond, and Frazier Falls (wildflowers!).

On Sunday we will meet at 6:30 a. m. for the early morning bird chorus at Yuba Pass Snow Park lot. From here we will travel to the graveled Mountain Quail Road to check for Green-Tailed Towhees, Brewer's Sparrow and maybe Gray Flycatcher. We will then move on to Sierra Valley with a stop at "sparrow corner" near Calpine. Sierra Valley should be productive this year with all the water from winter snows! Expect to see White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Yellow-Headed Blackbirds, among many

other species. The day should end near Loyalton for Lewis' Woodpeckers and Black-billed Magpies. Loyalton is roughly 4 hours from the bay area.

Campgrounds are available at Yuba Pass and along SR-49 as well as in the Gold Lakes Basin. See <http://www.forestcamping.com/dow/pacficsw/tah.htm>

Other lodging possibilities (with driving time to the meeting site):

- Bassetts Station in Sierra City (10 minutes)
530.862.1297
<http://www.bassetts-station.com/index.html>
- Herrington's in Sierra City (15 minutes)
530.862.1151
<http://www.herringtonssierrapines.com>
- Sleepy Pines in Portola (30 minutes)
916.832.4291
<http://www.sleepypinesmotel.com>
- River Pines in Blairsden (45 minutes)
916.836.2552
<http://www.riverpines.com>
- Globe Hotel/Sierra Hot Springs in Sierraville (20 minutes)
530.994.3773 www.sierrahotspings.org

Check TripAdvisor.com for additional lodging options in the Sierra City and Sierraville area.

For more information, give Phil or Pat Gordon a call at 510.538.3550 at home or 510.364-6472 on the road, or e-mail us at PAGPEG@aol.com.

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS JANUARY

By Stephanie Floyd

According to Cornell Lab's ebird.org list of all reported sightings for all time, so far 357 species have been found in Alameda County! For those of us who love birds and love to count birds, January 1 is the day to start fresh on this year's county list. Winter's specialties won't be here long. Want to see Barrow's Goldeneyes? Head over to the Lake Merritt outflow channel (across from Laney College in Oakland). Mountain Bluebirds? Appearing now at Patterson Pass Road in Livermore.

Tropical Kingbirds are a rare but regular winter visitor along the west coast. One was at Arrowhead Marsh late last year, and one's been seen this month along Winton Avenue at the Hayward Shoreline where Bob Richmond also recently reported seeing a Pinyon Jay (a casual visitor)!

Miller-Knox shoreline in Richmond (west Contra Costa County) is known for its herring run "gullapaloozas". A Slaty-Backed Gull, apparently a repeat visitor, joined in this month. Alameda County had a herring run as well this month along the shoreline by Ballena Bay. Thousands of gulls of various kinds and waterfowl, primarily Surf Scoters and scaups, took part.



**Redhead at Pac Commons
1/22/16 (Vicki Robinson)**

Mike Christopherson and others found a Redhead at Pacific Commons Linear Park toward the end of the month. Pac Commons is a great place to see Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, and even a Prairie Falcon if you're lucky.

Spring is in the air!

Paired-up Red-Tailed Hawks and other raptors are soaring overhead and perched side-by-side on power towers. Many species from resident Mallards to newly arriving Allen's Hummingbirds are already about the business of starting a family.

**OAS Board Member Bill Hoppes presenting
"Citizen Science" at February meeting (Phil Gordon)**

CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN SURVEY

California Brown Pelican
Roost and Coastal Access
Point Survey - **May 7, 2016**
(5:00-7:00 PM)



In 2016, Audubon California, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird are collaborating to initiate a biannual survey of the California Brown Pelican subspecies (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*).

This iconic bird was removed from the Endangered Species List in 2009 after decades of successful conservation efforts. In recent years, however, this subspecies has experienced poor breeding success and unusual mortality events raising questions about its conservation status. It is more critical than ever to track the distribution, abundance, and population structure of Brown Pelicans as their ocean and coastal environment changes. Of highest importance in the survey are observations of pelicans at known roosts, as they are ideal places for citizen scientists to reliably report on the numbers and ages of pelicans. Pelicans at roosts will be counted, aged, and photographed. Data will be reported through a special portal set up in eBird. In addition to roosts, participants can report observations at other coastal access points within the same time frame.

Please participate on **May 7** and help your California Brown Pelicans!

For more information, please see <http://ca.audubon.org/news/audubon-network-helping-pacific-brown-pelicans>. If you would like to sign up as a volunteer, please email Ariana Rickard (arickard@audubon.org).



CONSERVATION



The California State Parks Department's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Division released the proposed Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area general plan in late January in advance of the Feb. 5 public meeting where the OHMVR commission will receive oral comments on the document.

The FEIR describes a planned addition of 3,100 acres in eastern Alameda County, just west of the existing 1,575-acre Carnegie SVRA (OHV area -off highway vehicle). Of concern to OAS are the plans to expand the off-road activity into an area known as Telsa Park.

Ohlone Audubon's review of the FEIR has found it deficient in many areas:

- beginning with the insufficient description of the existing environment
- failure to identify the full project itself
- failure to provide measures to mitigate impacts of the project on biological resources
- failure to provide an adequate range of reasonable alternatives.

The "Final EIR" is supposed to be released 30-days prior to a decision by the commission on the adequacy of the FEIR expected later this spring.

Several OAS members attended the Feb 5 meeting and spoke at the meeting. In the words of Friends of Telsa, "Overall, as a hearing to document opposition to the CSVRA expansion plan and the substantive reasons why Tesla is not appropriate to OHV use and the DEIR is defective, we think it went great." There were 65 speakers and it was approximately 2:1 against the expansion. Some of the speakers against the expansion included OAS, Mt. Diablo AS, CCCCR, Sierra Club, CNPS, Center for Biological Diversity, Alameda Ck Alliance, Save Mt. Diablo, Livermore Heritage Guild, Friends of Springtown, Society of American Indians, Alameda County CDA, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, and local ranch owners.

Telsa Park is an area of outstanding biological diversity, including numerous state and federal listed species and special status species. In addition, there are historic and cultural resources that should be permanently protected. The area is inappropriate for OHV use and should instead be permanently protected as mitigation for the impacts of the existing Carnegie SVRA on natural resources. If you would like to learn more please visit the **Friends of Tesla Park website: www.teslapark.org**
-Bill Hoppes, Carin High, Pat Gordon

President's Message

This is a BIG SHOUT OUT to all of Ohlone Audubons' members and friends. Thank you one and all for your very generous response to our annual appeal letter and all of your donations to our organization. We literally could not function without you as we are an all-volunteer organization. In order to provide our member programs, our fieldtrips, and our efforts for preservation of habitat and protection of birds and other wildlife we very much depend upon your generosity and we hope you are happy with our efforts. Again thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!!!

Evelyn Cormier

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We've received the **2016 International Migratory Bird Day** catalog and like the t-shirt design so much, we'd like to order some for our members. Again this

year, in addition to the regular t-shirt style, they are offering a women's fit shirt with a deeper neckline. To offer these to our members at a reasonable price, we must order a



FRONT

minimum of 24 shirts. Please let me know if you would like to participate in this order by either calling me, 510/537-0311 or e-mailing me at dennismona@outlook.com with the number of shirts you would like, whether you prefer the standard style or women's fit, and what sizes. The cost per shirt will be \$17.00. (Add \$2.00 for XXL) I need these orders by April 8th. You can also sign up to order at our membership meetings on March 2 or April 5. The t-shirt is blue with the design on both the front and back with the conservation logo on the back. T-shirt design can also be seen on our website-Mona Brauer

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Lowell Ankrom, Janet Armantrout, Ken & Linda Back, Albert & Marsha Badella, Cheri Boulton, Marie Brower, Gail Bunker, Brian Cartier, Malca Chall, Nancy Christensen, Michael Christopherson, Margaret Clark, Kathleen "Susie" Claxton, Patti Cole, LaVonne Coleman, Richard & Wendy Comisky, Donna Droogas, Dietrich Erbeling, Jeff & Carol Garberson, John Giles, Anne Marie Gonsalves, Phil & Pat Gordon, Joyce Gross, Mary Ann Hannon, Lee Hartman, Carin High, Michael Hill, Nan Ho, Alice Hoch, Pat Hotchkiss, Irene Jones, Ed & Esther Keller, Elsie Jean Kinkella, Eduardo Kneler, V. Anne Krysiak, Alison Lewis, Lois & Harry Lutz, Ned & Carol Lyke, Richard Matsutani, Susan Mayfield, Margaret McCluckie, Melinda McCollister, John Mena, Elizabeth Milam, Lois Moore, Marty Morrow, Mr. & Mrs. Hans Mortensen, Rich Nicholson, Hank & Julie O'Brien, Judy Ohmott, Don & Judy Person, Stefanie Pruegel, Bill & Laurel Quirk, Ray, Charlotte & Paula Miranda, Steve Rentmeesters, Victoria Robinson, William Scoggins, Brenda Senturia, Jill Shuey, Shawna Sorenson, Vicki & Stan Stadelman, Jerry & Judy Steenhoven, Lynn Stinnett, Lawrence Thompson, Marilyn & George Trabert, Jo Wang, Joan Wehr, Scott Whitaker, Julice Winter, Fred & Marge Wood, Marina & John Zucca

Is it time to renew? Look at your mailing label - it will tell you. For example: "Pd Thru 4/1/16" indicates that you are paid thru April 2016. 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**. **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. You can also renew thru PayPal on our website www.ohloneaudubon.org. Thanks!



AND MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS !

Lowell Ankrom	Don & Roberta Lenkeit
Janet Armantrout	Lynn Locher
Ken & Linda Back	David Lovejoy
Albert & Marsha Badella	Lois & Harry Lutz
Gary & Christine Bard	Ned & Carol Lyke
Bob Battagin	Sherry Mattson
John & Becky Bradley	Eva Gayle Marion
Diana Brumbaugh	Susan E. Mayfield
Brian Cartier	John D. Mena
Malca Chall	Lois Moore
Arlene Chin	Marty Morrow
Nancy Christensen	Mr. & Mrs. Hans Mortensen
Michael Christopherson	Rich Nicholson
Margaret Clark	Hank & Julie O'Brien
Kathleen Claxton	Judy Ohmott
LaVonne Colman	Don & Judy Person
Richard & Wendy Comiskey,	Bill & Laurel Quirk
Joanna Dixon	Jeanne Robinson
Donna Droogas	Bill Rose
Don & Margaret Emery	William Scoggins
Jeff & Carol Garberson	Brenda Senturia
John Giles	Helen Sowers
Anne Marie Gonsalves	Jerry & Judy Steenhoven
Phil & Pat Gordon	Lynn Stinnett
Joyce Gross	Lawrence Thompson
Mary Ann Hannon	Marilyn & George Trabert
Michael Hill	TriCity Ecology
Alice Hoch	Joan Wehr
Irene Jones	Scott Whitaker
Karen Kenney	Julice A. Winter
Elsie Jean Kinkella	Judy Wuelfing
Eduardo Kneler	Faye & Lee Younker
Anne Krysiak	Marina & John Zucca



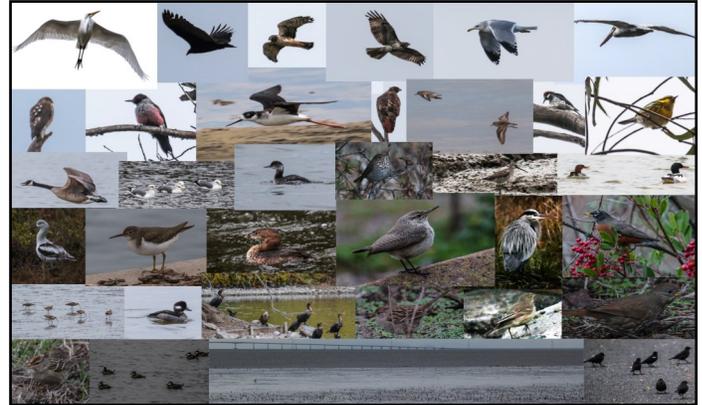
E-Kite Call? You can now receive your Kite Call via email! An electronic version (with color!) can be sent to your email address. Save trees! Saves \$\$\$\$. Please consider and let us know at pagpeg@aol.com

THE BIRD BOX



Got a bird question that needs an answer? Submit your question to pagpeg@aol.com And we will get an answer!

HAYWARD-FREMONT CBC 2015



Birds seen CBC (Wendy Nauvo) 12/20/15

The singletons found are also good birding finds including Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Green Heron, Ridgeway Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, Black Turnstone, Sanderling, Short-eared Owl, Lewis' Woodpecker, Violet-Green and Barn Swallow, House Wren, Lapland Longspur and Great-tailed Grackle. Previewing lets us know they are out there, but they don't always show up on count day. Other highlights include a continuing increase in Acorn Woodpeckers this year (38) and the continuing presence of Pine Siskins. Two Burrowing Owls were also found and 99 Snowy Plovers.

Our shorebird numbers are good, but less than in past years, but include 2774 Black-bellied Plovers, 4936 American Avocets, 3264 Willets, 1227 Marbled Godwits, and 8729 Dunlin. The Western Sandpiper count (12022) and Least Sandpiper count (11214) along with another 2000 plus unidentified sandpipers are indicative of the success of the Salt Pond Restoration for these species. Ohlone has led the nation in shorebird numbers in past years for Dunlin, Black-bellied Plovers, Willets, American Avocets, and Marbled Godwits. (P & P Gordon)

WOW! Ohlone conducted the 2015 CBC on Sunday December 20, 2015 and logged **175** species, a very good number for us! The overall individual count was down, with 98,402 found. Participants, all 83, worked very hard and we wish to sincerely thank the following section leaders: **Carol and Ned Lyke, Helen Sowers, Paul Smith, Debbi Brusco, Jerry Steenhoven, Sandy Ferrerira, Jimm Edgar, Vicki Robinson, John & Becky Bradley, Rich Nicholson, Maggie Clark, Steve Huckabone, Ted Robertson, Phil & Pat Gordon, Forrest Bottomley, Debbie Wong Ottman & Tadd Ottman, and Jackie & Allen Bertillion.** It goes without saying, but we will say it anyway, thanks to all of the rest of the participants who generously gave up their day to help us. We also want to acknowledge the invaluable cooperation and support from Cal Fish & Wildlife, EBRPD, Alameda County Flood Control, and the Don Edwards SF Bay NWR. Totals can be found online later in the year by signing up at <http://www.Audubon.org/citscisignup> or via email request to pagpeg@aol.com.

There were many highlights to this great day: A **Vesper Sparrow** on the Hayward Shoreline, identified by Jim Hargrove, a **White-Winged Scoter** on the bay photographed by Natalie Washburn of SFBBO, a **Townsend Solitaire** surprise by the Niles team, a **Red-necked grebe** in the Union City/Newark shore area found by Steve Huckabone, and a **Yellow Warbler** spotted by Debbie Wong in the Oro Loma area.



**Townsend's Solitaire
(Lynn Feindel)
12/20/15**



**Turkey Trot or CBC? Coyote Hills
(Bill Scoggins) 12/20/15**

EASTERN ALAMEDA COUNTY CBC 2015

On behalf of Jeff Miller and Susan Stanton, the count co-compliers, THANK YOU! Thanks to Jeff for his support in finding count volunteers and to Susan for arranging the post-count dinner. I'd like to thank everyone who participated in the 2015 CBC, held December 16th. You all continue to contribute an amazing amount of energy on count day. The post-count dinner is always abuzz with stories of your bird sightings over the day, and the dinners are a great way to relax while sharing a nice, warm meal and seeing old friends.

We ended with 149 species this year and 38,740 individual birds in contrast to 2014 when we had 148 species and 41,969 individual birds. Some of the species with much lower than normal counts were Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Band-tailed Pigeons, Brewer's Blackbirds, Western Meadowlarks and Tri-colored Blackbirds. Each of these species were half of past year averages.

Some highlights include: Hans Peeters and team finding **Cliff Swallows** over San Antonio Reservoir (closed to the public); Joe Di Donato and team found an **Orange-crowned Warbler** on San Francisco PUC watershed property; Anthony & Yvonne McHugh found a **Western Tanager** in the Pleasanton Sport Park on Hopyard Rd at Valley Ave.

Bottom-line Reason's for: WHY DO WE HAVE THIS 116th CBC?

Perhaps the bottom-line goal with this popular enterprise (sometimes at considerable effort, or even risk) is a perceived need to gather facts about animals we care about. Could be that we see this as a way to combat a repeat of a history of exploitation by un-caring or ignorant people that, in hind-sight, appears (or appeared) to have us heading toward extermination of whole species populations, and/or permanent alteration of habitats (sadly, examples exist already). Both being revered by many – and even seen as clues to threats for human solemnity or even existence on our planet. So, our years of censusing and extrapolating for trends of change, may indeed give us our best windows into the future (and insights into mistakes of the past). The annual Christmas Bird Count is now estimated to be one of the greatest masses of data in the world for a Class of animals – Birds! Thus, we need to keep up these meaningful tasks! Then too, there's always the FUN of it! PEG.

Also of interest were two **Common Loons** on Shadow Cliff EBRP found by Bill Rose and his team. Not far from Shadow Cliff EBRP, on Zone 7 Chain of Lakes (closed to the public) the Phil & Pat Gordon team recorded 81 **Horned Grebes** and 110 **Clark's Grebes**. In Del Valle EBRP Steve Huckabone and team recorded a **Bell's Sparrow**. Brenda Senturia and her team in Sunol recorded 20 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. Jeff Miller and his team counted 21 **Rock Wrens** in Sunol EBRP. Four missed birds which have been recorded on the past six EAC-CBC counts were the Northern Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Green Heron and Marsh Wren.

The EAC-CBC was established to gain knowledge of and to inventory raptors using the Amador Valley (now Tri-Valley) floor for wintering raptors west of the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area. The 14-raptor count for EAC – CBC 2015 was: Osprey 4, White-tailed Kite 26, Bald Eagle 8, Northern Harrier 27, Sharp-shinned Hawk 11, Copper's Hawk 12, Red-shouldered Hawk 40, Red-tailed Hawk 175, Ferruginous Hawk 4, Golden Eagle 33, American Kestrel 87, Peregrine Falcon 13, Merlin 7 and Prairie Falcon 2.

This CBC is made possible by you. Please mark your calendars for Friday, December 16, for the 2016 CBC. A big part of my satisfaction is seeing so many of you year after year. Remember, it's all about the birds.

Happy New Year and thank you,
Rich Cimino Compiler EAC CBC



**Ferruginous Hawk, Jersey Island Rd,
Solano County
(Vicki Eggert)**

Getting up early is Part of the Game of Bird Banding!

(Photos by Debbie Wong)



Wilson's Warbler

Well, it could be quite early in the summer as the protocol is to open nets half an hour before sunrise, so the nets are all in place at first light, and bird banders are ready for the 5 hours of bird banding operations. Net opening during the summer is as early as 5:20am. The bright side is that highway 880 is not stop and go traffic at 4:30am!

Even though I have been banding birds with Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) since 2000, getting up so early is never easy, since I am not a lark but an owl! It is hard for me to go to bed when the sun is still up at 9:00pm during the summer! However,

once I am up and am in Alviso, where CCFS is located, the morning light and the air are beautiful and rewarding. I see the planets Mercury and Mars with my naked eye at certain times of the year on banding mornings. Otherwise, the planets might be there, but I sure don't get up that early to see them.

It may come as a surprise that not all bird banders are bird watchers. Some people just like handling birds and seeing them up close, very close. When birds are this close for viewing, you can observe some field marks that would often be close to impossible to see in the field, for instance:

- female Bushtits have a light or yellow iris (all Bushtits are born with a dark iris)
- the sixth primary flight feather of a Swainson's Thrush and a Hermit Thrush differ enough to distinguish the two species, one has emargination and the other doesn't
- seeing the ruby on the Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- and exposing the orange feathers of the Orange-crowned Warbler.

When I pause during bird processing, I still marvel at the physical structure of each bird, the way feather tracts are laid out on the body, the rate of their heart beat, the structure of their wings, etc. I listen to the heartbeat of birds often and it is totally amazing! Different sizes of birds have different hums. I call it hum because you can't tell individual beats, especially with hummingbirds. Years ago, after I listened to the heartbeat of an Anna's Hummingbird, its tiny claws somehow hung onto my ear. Okay, if you like it there, you can be there. So I walked around with a hummingbird on my ear for a few minutes before the bird realized it was not constrained and took off. Another bird bander was amazed and took a picture of me with my special earpiece. What a treat!

For me, it is still fun to process each bird. I play a mental game to see if the bird is: a new bird for the day; a new bird species for the year; a new bird species banded by me; or a new bird for the banding station, which is very rare indeed, since CCFS has been operating year round with volunteers and scientists for over two decades. And



Warbling Vireo

our very own Howard Cogswell was an instrumental founder in the early years of SFBBO and its bird banding station, CCFS. Even very common breeding resident birds often teach us a thing or two when we look at them up close. New banders are often surprised by how buffy and yellow a newly hatched Song Sparrow can look, and they may do a double take to check if it is a Lincoln Sparrow. Holding my first (and only) Brown Creeper totally befuddled me for a while. (I knew it wasn't a wren, but what was it?). As bird watchers, in the field, seeing so much behavior and habitat, we tend to ID birds without really seeing them well. A static bird in hand gives another picture. Besides, at five or six o'clock in the morning, sometimes the gears in the brain just haven't engaged yet.

Bird Banders do notice some bird behaviors most birders would miss, such as how a bird likes to lighten its "load" when in the cloth bag where it is kept before being processed, or just before takeoff, or very often on your clothing during processing. That's why banders wear grubby clothes; just imagine how wild berry bird poop stains your clothing! That's why when banders see each other in a non-banding context, one may say something like: Wow, I couldn't recognize you with (real) clothes on! That usually doesn't go well with other people around!

The force that ties all bird banders together is a love of birds and science. Each bander in his or her own small way contributes to the data collection process for bird distribution, migration, and measurements. To be able to identify a pattern or a change requires decades of data. While data collection is not sexy, it is fundamental and essential work. Nearly any breakthrough, new discovery, or deep study relies on having quality data, and the more, the better. That's why there is such rigorous training and licensing to establish protocol to standardize data collection practices.

In the U.S., the US Geological Survey administers bird banding operations via the Bird Banding Laboratory. Together with the Canadian Wildlife Service, these two government organizations oversee all bird banding operations in North America, and they have done so since 1923. Of course, bird banding is not limited to North America. In fact, it has been a long tradition in Europe and England. It is called by a different name there: bird ringing. Special projects and studies by various organizations also conduct bird banding operations in South America, the tropics, and Asia. And it was a high point of my bird banding when I banded a Motmot in Peru.

We band birds for the birds, so each bird's safety and well-being always comes first. That's why we are trained to hold birds in our non-dominant hand: left hand for right-handed person, so that we don't exert too much force in our instinctive reaction, which could hurt the bird in hand. And that's why I keep telling myself, "I love birds" when a woodpecker pecks my hand. Yes, they draw blood!

(continued on page 11)



Varied Thrush

Bird Banding (continued from page 11)



Occasionally, we band hawks, with no gloves, very carefully paying extra attention to how we hold the bird, for its razor sharp claws could be in a "locked" mode once they latch onto your hand, arm or any body part, then it would require help from another person to pull out the claws from your skin, one at a time. But hey, the benefit is that you can get a great photo-op with such birds and "bragging" rights in your year-end newsletter to your friends and family!

**Debbie Wong (left) is a birder, a certified bird bander with USGS, a docent in the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, a top-bar beekeeper, and the program chair of Ohlone Audubon Society, Inc. of Southern Alameda County.

Confused about Ridgway's Rail? **King and Clapper Rail**

For many Eastern North American birders the King and Clapper rails are similar, but usually not a huge identification issue as King is brighter and keeps to fresh water marshes, and Clapper duller and keeps to salt marshes. But leave the east and things become more complicated. There are bright colored large rails in fresh water marshes in the highlands of Mexico, often classified as Kings, but sometimes as Clappers. On the West Coast, such as in California Clappers are in salt marshes, but they are relatively small and bright colored, not as dull as birds from the east. Then in South America Clappers are small and dull, and restricted to mangroves. Neotropical Birds has a range map and info for the King and Clapper rails. Very recently James Maley and Robb Brumfield of Louisiana State University tackled this problem by looking at the genetic relationships of these birds. They found that they sorted out into various groups, and that the eastern Clapper Rails were the closest relatives of the King Rail; interestingly the California Clapper Rail is not as closely related to the eastern Clapper Rail, it is related to the rails in the highlands of Mexico! They make the proposal to divide the complex into five species, based on each being genetically related to each other, and morphologically identifiable. Voice was not analyzed in the group, but King and Clapper rails are not all that different from each other vocally. For more information on voice, head over to earbirding.com. So the five species suggested would be:



- 1) **King Rail** (*Rallus elegans*) of fresh water marshes of the East and Cuba.
- 2) **Clapper Rail** (*Rallus crepitans*) of the East and Gulf Coast, Caribbean and Yucatan. The bird in the photo above is in the Caribbean subgroup of the Clapper Rail.
- 3) **Mangrove Rail** (*Rallus longirostris*) of mangroves of South America.
- 4) **Mexican Rail** (*Rallus tenuirostris*) of the highlands of Mexico, living in fresh water marshes.
- 5) **Ridgway's Rail** (*Rallus obsoletus*) of California, Arizona, Baja and NW coast of Mexico. This is the one you can see in the San Francisco Bay Area. Note also that if this taxonomic change is accepted, this would become a federally endangered species, rather than three endangered subspecies. I wonder if folks will warm up to the English name or if another will be proposed, we shall see.

Assuming the South American and North American committees of the AOU vote and accept this proposal, we could have several additional rail species to look for. But importantly, another reason to come to California – to see Ridgway's Rail. Great place is Palo Alto Baylands on a high tide. – Alvaro Jaramillo (from www.alvarosadventures.com) - 7/ 22/13



Horned Lark
Mission Peak, Fremont
2/3/15
(Vicki Robinson)



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