



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*

Membership Meetings

Salton Sea: A Looming Crisis

By Andrea Jones

Date: March 1, 2022 Time: 7:30PM

Location: Online via Zoom (Zoom details next page)



The Salton Sea, an inland saline lake covering 330 square miles in southern California, is a critically endangered Important Bird Area that hosts almost two-thirds of California’s bird species. For years, irrigation run-off water in the Imperial Valley fed the sea. But in 2003, a deal was struck to divert more than

400,000 acre-feet of water that once flowed to the Salton Sea to San Diego and Coachella for urban uses. In 2018, water provided to the Salton Sea as mitigation for the 2003 deal was shut off, meaning the sea shrank even further.

Starting in 2017, the Salton Sea was predicted to lose 40% of the water currently flowing into it, dropping by 20 feet and exposing 100 square miles of dust-generating lake bottom. The region’s strong winds will create contaminated dust clouds, worsening the already poor air quality in the region for more than 650,000 residents. Salinity in the lake will triple, eliminating its fishery that provides value to birds. (continued pg 2)

Calendar

- Feb 21 FIELD TRIP
Lake Solano
- Feb 27 FIELD TRIP
Ballena Bay, Alameda
- Mar 1 GENERAL MEETING
Via Zoom
- Mar 27 FIELD TRIP
Don Edwards NWR
Alviso
- Apr 5 GENERAL MEETING
Via Zoom

The Magic and Mystery of Migration

By Bruce Mast

Date: April 5, 2022 Time: 7:30PM Location: Online via Zoom
(Zoom details on next page)



Next summer, somewhere in Canada, a Blackpoll Warbler will hatch, fledge, and grow to young adulthood. Come August, this half-ounce bird will fly 3,000 miles to the Maritime provinces and then out over the Atlantic Ocean to catch a northwest tail wind that will take it south to around Bermuda. A northeast trade wind will carry it back to land to complete its 80-hour journey over 2,000 miles of open ocean. Why? Join Bruce Mast for an exploration of the magic and mystery of bird migration. We’ll consider why birds migrate, how they know when and where to go, and how we can help them arrive safely. (continued pg 2)

March program (continued) - Salton Sea

Photo: Luciane Coletti

Our speaker, **Andrea Jones**, is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon — CA. She will highlight why the Salton Sea is so important that almost 400 species of birds use its habitats. She Will also describe which species are most threatened

by a changing Sea and what species are actually benefitting from its current condition. She will also discuss current restoration projects and the positive impacts those will have on bird species and other wildlife. Ms. Jones will also discuss past efforts to “restore” the sea and describe how Audubon is engaging currently in a new solution for the Salton Sea that will be beneficial to both birds and people.

For the past 15 years, **Andrea Jones** has led conservation programs and worked with staff and the network of Audubon chapters across the state to implement conservation projects at high priority Important Bird Areas (IBAs). She oversees Audubon’s efforts in priority bird species and serves as the spokeswoman for bird conservation across California. Prior to Audubon California, Andrea worked at Massachusetts Audubon where she served as the Director of the Coastal Waterbird Program. Andrea received her M.S. in Wildlife Conservation/Ornithology and her B.S. in Wildlife Biology and Management from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is a past board member of Morro Coast Audubon and currently resides in the East Bay of San Francisco.

April program (continued) - Migration

Bruce Mast is a veteran birder, field trip leader, lecturer, photographer, and GGAS board member. His birding quests have taken him to far-flung corners of Africa, Southeast Asia, Central and South

America, as well as all over North America. When he’s not birding, Bruce likes to help people reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from their homes.

**ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Due to COVID-19 and the new variant, Ohlone Audubon’s membership meetings will continue to be online via Zoom for the next two meetings. Registration is needed for OAS’s membership meetings in 2022. As before, you only need to do it once for ALL meetings. **Click the URL / link below to register for OAS’s 2022 membership meetings:** (After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88107564735?pwd=dEpPajh4bGJKWjJHYmZFU1dVSSStJdz09>

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 www.ohloneaudubon.org

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!!!!!!** See all of these beautiful photos in color! Also, note that links are live!

GO GREEN!

Send your request to pagpeg@aol.com

**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

Lake Solano County Park
 Monday February 21 9:00 AM—lunch
 Leaders: Phil and Pat Gordon
 pagpeg@aol.com

Lake Solano lies along Putah Creek below Lake Berryessa and near the town of Winters. The Day Use area is open again after the fires of last year. 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. In year’s past we all had gathered for lunch post field trip at the Putah Creek Café. We will be foregoing this great lunch in view of COVID protocols. Bring your lunch and we will eat outside at the park. **The trip is limited to 20 participants.** Please reserve your spot by emailing Phil & Pat at pagpeg@aol.com or 510-538-3550

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 Rd. to reach the park. Parking fee \$6. Drive time is a short 2 hours.*



Panoche Valley OAS trip 1/27/22 (M. Clark)

Ballena Bay
 Sunday, February 27, 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
 Leaders: Bob Toleno, Juli Chamberlin
 & Megan Jankowski
 birding@toleno.com

Located on the southern shore of the island of Alameda, Ballena Bay hosts a great diversity of wintering and resident waterfowl and shorebirds, including diving ducks, loons, cormorants, terns, and rocky shorebirds. Rarities like Long-tailed Duck, White-winged and Black Scoter, and Common Tern have all been observed here in the recent past, and it's one of the best places in the county to see Surfbirds. Join Bob and Juli for a short morning walk around the Ballena Bay peninsula. Bring a scope if you have one. Rain cancels. No RSVP necessary

Directions: *From Oakland, take the Webster Street Tube to Alameda, then keep right at the fork to stay on Webster, turn right onto Ralph Appezzato Memorial Parkway, then left on 3rd St, left on Central Ave, and right on Ballena Blvd. Continue on Ballena Blvd to the dirt parking lot at the very end, adjacent to the marina and breakwater.*

Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge - Alviso
 Sunday, March 27, 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
 Leaders: Rich Nicholson & Vicki Robinson
 rsn711@yahoo.com

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 cold and windy. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

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

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

Winter 2022

By Vicki Robinson

Welcome to Winter 2022! We finally got a good amount of rain and the lakes are full, the streams are running and the birds are enjoying the season.

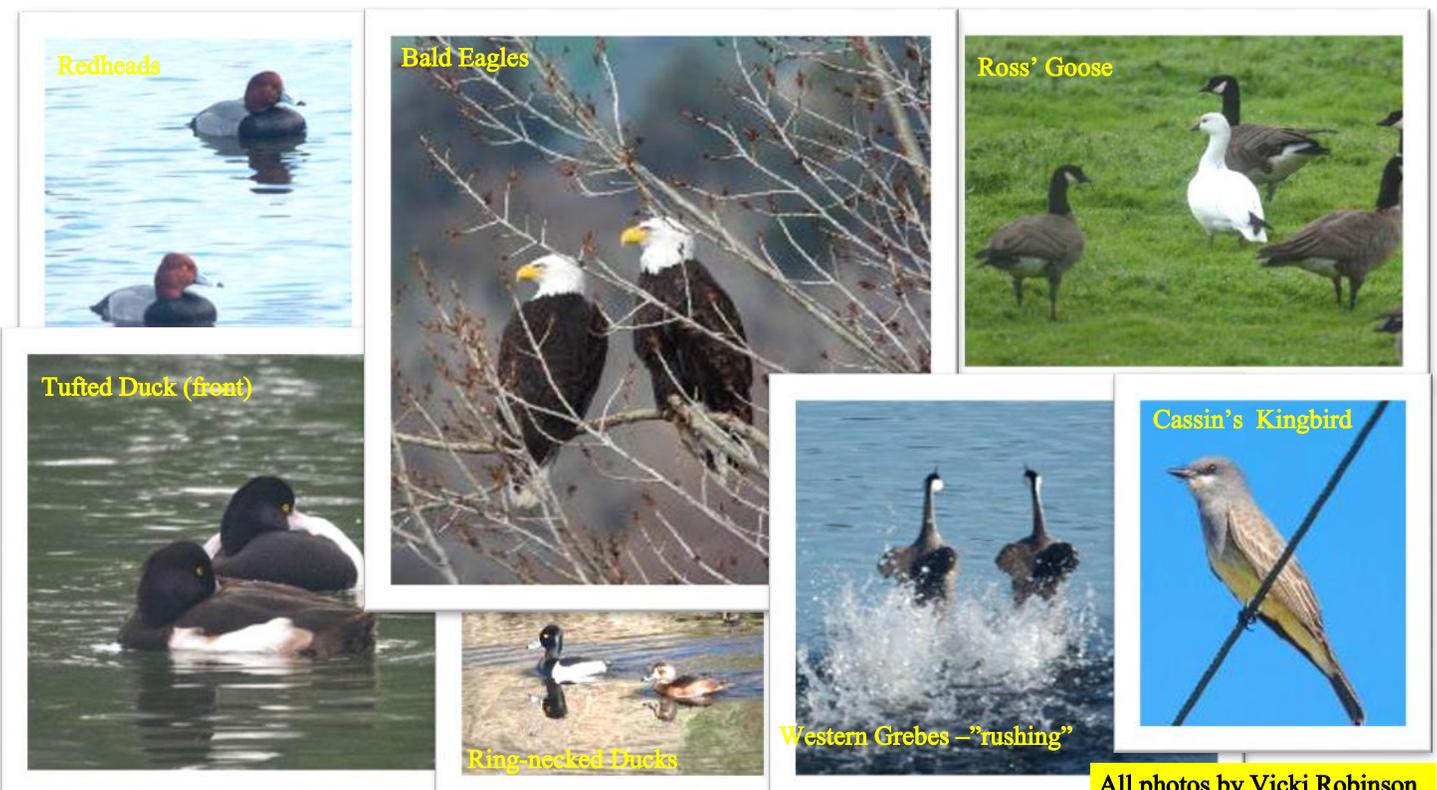
Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks and **Canvasbacks** are being seen at Shadow Cliffs and Quarry Lakes Regional Parks. **Common Goldeneye's, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks** and **Gadwalls** are seen on Alameda Creek and many other creeks and ponds. The surprise duck of the year so far is a **Tufted Duck** that has been hanging out with scaup at the Lake Merritt overflow area. Many of you may remember the Tufted Duck at Lake Merritt that returned every year for at least ten years, last seen 2014. Will this duck return next year and why did he come to the same place as one before?

A large flock of **Black Skimmers** over 50 have been active off of the Emeryville Shoreline. We are still seeing migrating geese at various places. **Greater White-Fronted, Snow and Ross's Geese** have been seen at Pacific Commons and Hayward Shoreline. A **Brant** is still hanging out with **Canada Geese** at Arrowhead Marsh but the majority of the **Brants** are being seen on the Bay near Emeryville. **Cackling Geese** have been seen along with **Canada Geese** at Lake Elizabeth and Mt. Trashmore at the Hayward Shoreline. **Tropical Kingbirds** have been showing up at Arrowhead Marsh and Berkeley Aquatic Park. A **Cassin's Kingbird** is back at Tesla Rd/ Cross Rd in Livermore.

Bald Eagles are becoming common in many places with a local pair at Quarry Lakes and Ardenwood. They were unsuccessful nesting last year due to being scared off the nest. Let's hope this year is a success.

Western and Clarks Grebes are at Quarry Lakes doing their courtship behavior which includes rushing where the birds walk on water.

Warbler migration is still months away, but our local warblers have been making up for that with high numbers of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** just about everywhere. A few **Townsend's** and **Orange-crowned Warblers** have been overwintering in local gardens and backyards.



All photos by Vicki Robinson.

President's Corner

Just got back from two weeks birding in Costa Rica. We had a fabulous time and saw fabulous birds. Travel is clawing its way back. We talked to our guide, and he said prior to COVID he led 15-20 tours a year, the last couple of years he has done 1-2. Similar impacts have been felt throughout the country and I am sure everywhere that depends on eco-tourism. This impacts the conservation of birds and wildlife. One of the areas of cooperation with local communities and even nations is the understanding that protecting wildlife can bring important economic advantages as many people are willing to spend major dollars to see these birds and other animals. Resumption of eco-tourism to anything like pre-pandemic levels is an important step in continuing to protect wildlife and habitat and continue to bring economic benefits to local communities that are needed to protect them.



One of the things I enjoy when visiting Central America and southern Mexico is seeing birds like this guy, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. If you are back east during the summer, you could see him, but for nine months of the year or so, you have to head to southern Mexico or Central America to find him. So many of the birds we enjoy are like this. They spend most of their year in the tropics and then for a few months, dash north to breed and then return south where they spend nine months of the year.

If you are interested in learning more about bird conservation in tropics check out **International Bird Conservation** <https://nabci-us.org/international-bird-conservation/>

**Partners in Flight
National Audubon**

<https://partnersinflight.org/>
<https://www.audubon.org/conservation>

Finally I hope you are getting out and birding. This is some of the best days for birding in our area. Ohlone has some great field trips coming out, read up on them in the Kite Call or on our website.

<https://www.ohloneaudubon.org>

- *Bill Hoppes*

Board "Migrations"

There has been a couple of "migrations" among our Board of Directors. **Diana Brumbaugh** has stepped up to become our Program Chairperson, filling the big shoes of **Debbie Wong**. We deeply appreciate Debbie's years of service with her dedication of finding us excellent programs! We wish her the best as she has joined SFBBO's board. Read more about Diana to the right.

Our second "migration" is of our Field Trip Chair, **Bob Toleno**, who is only taking a leave of absence and "migrating" to Midway Atoll NWR, volunteering for the Fish & Wildlife Service. **Kathy Robertson**, our Recording Secretary and field trip leader extraordinaire, will fill in for Bob. We are in good hands! Bob will be working on the control and removal of non-native species and restoration of the habitat, in addition to the fun stuff of monitoring seabirds!

Finally, we are saying good bye to one of our Directors at Large, **Sandy Ferreira**. Sandy is

"migrating" to Idaho to be closer to those grandkids. Look for a board opening soon! Read about Sandy's projects on Page 13.

Diana Brumbaugh is excited to join the Ohlone Audubon Society's Board as Program Chair this year. She has been involved with environmental organizations including the Alameda Creek Alliance as Outreach Coordinator and the Sierra Club as Secretary of the Southern Alameda County Group. While she always noticed the birds around her while camping and hiking, it took a CBC with Pat Gordon at Eden Landing in 2008 to get her hooked on birding. She hasn't missed a CBC since, and attends Audubon field trips, birding festivals and ornithology courses when she has the time. She was a high school science teacher before entering administration in Fremont Unified School District. She is currently principal of Niles Elementary School.



Conservation

Proposed Hayward U-Haul on the old Oliver Brothers Plant site

On July 8, 2021, the Hayward Planning Commission denied approval of a proposal to construct a new U-Haul warehouse and office building on the former Oliver Brothers Salt Production site located south of the eastern end of the San Mateo Bridge and immediately adjacent to the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve. The industrial building would be approximately 116,844 square feet and approximately 50 feet in height. The Planning Commission cited several reasons for denying the proposed project:

- The project doesn't align with the goals of growing the high-tech sector
- The proposed project would not generate enough jobs or taxes to off-set the environmental and other impacts
- The site is inappropriate for development as it is projected to be inundated due to sea level rise

The proposed project was brought before the City Council in December 2021 and was then continued until the January and now February 15, 2022 City Council meeting to provide time for the applicant to respond to concerns raised. The applicant addressed the concerns of job creation stating the number

analyzed was incorrect. Several City Councilmembers expressed concerns regarding environmental impacts of the project, however the comments suggested the project will likely be approved. Biological impact concerns that have been raised include: loss of tidal wetland migration space, potential adverse impacts to the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse, night light impacts on wildlife (a recent scientific article suggests that Western Snowy Plover are highly sensitive to light pollution, the potential for bird strikes due to the use of glass in the building design, attraction of nuisance species, and flood inundation of the site due to sea level rise and groundwater rise, etc.

It is a shame that the principles of planning for climate resilience that were demonstrated north of the San Mateo Bridge with the Hayward Shoreline Adaptation Master Plan don't appear to apply south of the San Mateo Bridge. If you have concerns about this project please attend the Hayward City Council meeting February 15th at 7pm. The agenda will be posted a day or two in advance here: <https://hayward.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

C. High

Ruby Meadow Update

On January 25, 2022, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors voted to provide millions of dollars in public funds, known as Measure A1, to developer Eden Housing to build the 4-story apartments and paved parking lots in Ruby Meadow. The community wrote letters and spoke to the Board, stating they do not want the Eden Housing project to be built in Ruby Meadow and that this destruction of the environment should not be paid for by voter-approved Measure A1 funds. The Board ignored the public outcry and would not consider the numerous blighted places and vacant lots nearby that are more suitable for this project and that are not within a sensitive habitat. The project is not even actually eligible for Measure A1 funds.



-M. Selva

We Want to Hear from You: Participate in our East Bay Trails Survey!

Right now the East Bay Regional Parks District is developing new trail policies and approaches that will shape the way we experience the trails in the East Bay Parks for years to come.

We believe that our members (you!) can provide valuable insight and feedback to assist the park district in making wise decisions during this critical time of park policy-making, and we have joined several partner organizations in developing a survey to gather our members' experience and feedback.

Please click here to participate in our East Bay Trails Survey!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSehlNWozcKdxCiPUT-n7rJTii7hrJRRb-bM03yd0gR-71tILA/viewform>

It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete -- and will help us ensure that your voice is heard when it comes to the management of East Bay Parks trails across the Park District's 125,000+ acres.

Newark's Wetlands Area 4 Update



We've been amazed by the regional recognition of the ecological significance of these lands and the role they can play in supporting the biodiversity of the Bay, providing inland migration space for tidal wetlands and improving sea level rise resilience for the region.

A disappointing piece of news Citizens Committee and the Center for Biological Diversity received in late December was that the First District Court of Appeals ruled against us in our CEQA legal challenge to the City of Newark's approval of the Sanctuary West development. We had argued that Newark's environmental review was inadequate for the project on a number of grounds, including failure to fully study how the proposed siting of the executive housing development, when considered with the escalating rates of sea level rise, would negatively impact wetlands and endangered wildlife. The appeals court judges determined that previous 2015 environmental review for this area was sufficient, and let the city off the hook for detailed review of the adverse impacts of the project that we still feel should be necessary for a project of such magnitude.

While the loss of the CEQA case was a disappointment, we are undeterred in our decades-long efforts to protect these lands, and we continue to urge state and federal agencies, who have been on the record expressing concern about the proposed project, to exert the full extent of their regulatory authority. Stay tuned, as you can be sure we will be calling on our supporters in the coming months to ensure that our regulatory agencies stand up for our Bay's wetlands. You can read more on the legal decision in this [article](#) from KQED News.

(https://www.kqed.org/science/1978191/california-court-oks-controversial-newark-housing-plan-along-its-climate-vulnerable-wetlands?link_id=5&can_id=c25d9c9bb4046d85a153bd4eb53bf20b&source=email-take-the-next-step-to-save-newark-wetlands-2&email_referrer=email_1426261&email_subject=update-on-save-newark-wetlands-campaign-february-2022)

In the meantime, we have been working to continue to spread awareness of the regional significance of these lands to decision-makers, agencies, the

scientific community and the public. There's just too much at stake to do otherwise. One of the most important successes of our work over the past months has been to build awareness at the regional level of the importance of Newark Area 4 to the future health and resilience of the Bay. This past December, KQED climate reporter Ezra David Romero took a deep-dive into the proposed "Sanctuary West" development and the implications of building in a flood zone as sea levels rise in his story *"The Bay is Rising: Newark Residents Wonder Why the City Plans to Develop Its Shoreline."*

Romero quotes regional experts including UC Davis' Mark Lubell who calls Newark Area 4 "a terrible place to put a development", SF Planning + Urban Research (SPUR)'s Laura Feinstein, who emphasized the importance of Area 4 for the inland migration of the Bay's wetlands as sea level rise and urges Newark to focus its development within its existing urban footprint, and long-time CCCR leader and Newark resident Jana Sokale, who describes the environmental and community benefits that would be provided by permanent protection of these lands.

This story follows previous in-depth coverage by *Bay Nature*, *the San Jose Mercury News*, and other outlets that have highlighted Newark Area 4 as an important case study in how the SF Bay Area will respond to sea levels rise.

Please check the [SaveNewarkWetlands.org](https://savenewarkwetlands.org) website (<https://savenewarkwetlands.org/>) from time-to-time to view recent articles and other media pertaining to Newark Area 4.

We have fought for over two decades to protect these lands and we will continue our efforts. We cannot let opportunities to protect lands as important as Newark Area 4 to be squandered on development that will likely require future flood protection. Stay tuned for more updates on our efforts to protect these lands!

- C. High

*New Members
and Renewals*



John Ball
Val Blakely
Jo Ann Bloom
Stephanie Byous
Maggie Clark
Susie Claxton
Maurice Cloutier
Linda Dalton
Larry Danos
Greta DeGroat
David Furst
Lisa Garza
Sandra Hamilton
Carin High
Bill Hoppes
John Hurley
Erika Johnston
Joe Kilzer
Pat Kite
Gordon & Polly
 Krauter
Donna Krehbiel
Sue Krupke
Don & Roberta
 Lenkeit
Cathy Loewen
Sandra Love
Hans Mortensen
Ethel Murphy

Rich Nicholson
Kathleen O’Sullivan
Denna Rose
Marilyn Russell
Pam Ryan
Barbara Sacks
Francine Salvaggio
Claudia Schwalm
William Scoggins
Andrey Semyonov
Judy Sha
Lynn Shaeffer
David Sinclair
Sally Swanson
Samantha Swatling
Brian Swift
George & Marilyn
 Trabert
Mr. & Mrs. James
 Watt
Lester & Rebecca
 Whitaker
Susan Wijeyesкера
Joyce Wilson
Viviana Wolinsky
Debbie Wong

Donations

Val Blakely
Daniel Brower
Maggie Clark
Susie Claxton
Fenna Gatty
Lisa Garza
Sandra Hamilton
Carin High
Bill Hoppes
John Hurley
Erika Johnston
Polly Krauter
Don & Roberta
 Lenkeit

Pat Macsata
Carol McCabe
Hans Mortensen
Mary Norton
Rich Nicholson
Marilyn Russell
Pam Ryan
Francine Salvaggio
William Scoggins
Judy Sha
David Sinclair
Brian Swift
Scott Whitaker
Susan Wijeyesken
Viviana Wolinsky



Hayward-Fremont CBC 2021 Report

Statistics: 175 species; 94, 412 individuals; 79 participants in 40 parties; Covered about 240 miles, 135 by foot and 100 plus by car and 6 miles by bike and spent 247 party hours doing it!

Thanks to everyone who participated on Sunday, December 19, 2021. Weather was good and our 175 is a little better than our average expected of 172, even as we continued to follow Covid-19 guidelines.

Best bird(s) of the day included the **Long-tailed Duck** at Don Edwards found by the Rich Nicholson team, the **Glaucous Gull** at Coyote Hills by Highs, and **Ferruginous Hawk** found by Paul Smith in Palomares Canyon! We did well on owls this year: Paul Smith started us out with Screech Owl in Palomares and added thru the day by others were Great Horned, Barn and a single Burrowing Owl, but also three Long-eared owls and 4 Short-eared Owls were nice! Rails were present in their usual small numbers: 4 Ridgeways, only 2 Sora, 6 Virginia, and 1 Black Rail – thank you Dave Reinsche. There were outstanding numbers of shorebirds: our **Dunlin** count is over 10,000; **Black-bellied Plovers** 8,137; **Western Sandpipers** at 7635; An incredible number of **Long-billed Curlews** at 977 were seen mostly in the Coyote Hills and southern Eden Landing Preserve areas. Not to be overlooked were 23 of our favorite **Snowy Plovers**.

We were fortunate to have several students with us this year, Sahithi Adiraju, Kabir Samsi, and from the Junior Wildlife Ranger program, Lynnea Shuck, Emi Fogg, and Keith Sibal. Not to be forgotten was the excitement of the kids when a Peregrine Falcon dove into the large group of Dunlin and sandpipers – the air was just full of birds everywhere!

Concerning was the miss of **Loggerhead Shrike, Orange-crowned Warbler, Wood Duck, and White-breasted Nuthatch**. But we love the singletons of **Blue-Winged Teal, Eurasian Widgeon, American Bittern, Osprey, and House Wren**. There was a **Prairie Falcon** seen and photographed in Coyote Hills the day of the count.

We very much appreciate the efforts of each of the leaders to make this happen: Ned Lyke, Paul Smith, Karen Kramer (who filled in for Lawrence Abbott this year), Jerry Steenhoven, Sandy Ferreira, Kathy Robertson, Cherie Holcomb, Michael Christopherson, Rich Nicholson, Christina Garcia, Maggie Clark, Bob Toleno, Ethan Monk, Diana Brumbaugh, Forrest Bottomley, Mary Morrow and Bill Scoggins, Allen and Jackie Bertillion, Vicki Robinson, and Andrey Semyonov. We also thank the cooperation of the agencies: HARD, Cal Fish & Wildlife; Don Edwards NWR, and EBRPD.
Phil & Pat Gordon, compilers

UPDATES ON MONARCHS AND OTHER POLLINATORS



THE WESTERN MONARCH POPULATION RALLIES

In a surprising twist, the 2021 Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count resulted in a final tally of 247,237 monarch butterflies. Volunteers totaled the numbers of overwintering monarchs at 283 sites, which included thirty additional sites compared to last year. This follows a bleak year in 2020 where the numbers of individual western monarchs dropped to less than 2,000. This is cause to celebrate but the reality is that we are not yet out of danger. The monarch population still remains over 95% below its size in the 1980's when millions were counted.

The question of what is behind this recent surge has yet to be answered. According to monarch butterfly experts there may be several factors that led to an increase in the numbers counted this year. According to Emma Pelton of the Xerces Society, “populations of species approaching extinction show their numbers can take wild swings—even more so for insects that reproduce rapidly.” This could partially explain the recent population increase. Additional factors may include:

- an influx of monarchs from the eastern migratory monarch population,
- unique weather conditions that supported population growth,
- an increase in intense western wildfire behavior which may have prepared the ground for an increase in wildflowers and

- other food sources for the monarchs,
- possible western drought induced reduction in crops and thus the pesticides necessary to grow them
- the right timing and combination of weather conditions that were beneficial to monarchs.

The public response to the low numbers last year by planting milkweed may have also contributed somewhat to the results. Ultimately, most experts agree that the answer is very likely to be some or all of these factors, since no one factor could result in such a dramatic increase in numbers. Louie Yang, an insect ecologist at University of California, Davis, calls this recent phenomenon a “series of fortunate events”. He also emphasizes that there is much that is still unknown about this species and must yet be learned.

It is clear that further scientific studies are necessary to shed light on the surprising mystery of this dramatic population increase. One proposed study by Emma Pelton of Xerces Society and monarch researcher Cheryl Schultz at Washington State University will attempt to study monarch genetics to determine whether the monarchs are coming from eastern or western populations. Other studies of this unique species are sure to occur.

According to monarch experts, western monarchs are still on a dangerous path towards extinction. We need to take the opportunity that we have just been given to learn and apply that knowledge towards recovery of this remarkable species.

UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF H. R. 1983 - THE MONARCH ACTION, RECOVERY, AND CONSERVATION OF HABITAT ACT or THE MONARCH ACT of 2021

The **Monarch Act of 2021** was introduced in the Senate by Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon and introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Jimmy Panetta and Salud Carbajal of California. **The Monarch Act** provides support for the conservation of western monarch butterflies (the monarch butterfly population that overwinters along the coast of California and breeds across California, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah). Specifically, the bill establishes the Western Monarch Butterfly Rescue Fund. The Department of the Interior must use the fund to provide grants for the conservation of such butterflies. In addition, Interior must enter into an agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to facilitate

the implementation of the Western Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan, which was prepared by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The bill was introduced 3/29/2021 into the Natural Resources Committee; subcommittee Water, oceans, and wildlife which held hearing on 7/29/2021; now awaiting.

For the latest information on the Monarch Act go here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1983/cosponsors?r=91&s=1> To show support for this bill, contact your Representative in Congress. Letting legislators know your priorities is the most productive action you can take.

RECENT COURT DECISION:***THE CALIFORNIA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT DOES NOT PROTECT INSECTS***

In November of 2020 the Sacramento Superior Court dealt a serious blow to all Californian insect species. In the case of *Almond Alliance v. California Fish and Game Commission* (the Commission), the Court ruled that the State of California lacks the authority to list four threatened bumble bee species as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The decision by Superior Court judge James P. Arguelles removed protection from the four sensitive bumble bee species, and it also removed protection under CESA for all California insect species.

In an immediate response to a 2019 vote by the Commission to begin the listing process for the four species of bees, the Almond Alliance, along with several agriculture groups representing pest control interests, cotton growers and other ag interests sued the Commission. The agricultural industry argued that based on the language of section 2062 of the Fish and Game Code, terrestrial invertebrates, such as the four bumble bee species, are not protected by CESA and therefore could not be listed as candidate species.

In CESA, the state legislature defined “fish” very broadly in the Fish and Game Code, stating in Section 45 that “ ‘Fish’ means a wild fish, mollusk, crustacean, amphibian, or part, spawn, or ovum of any of those animals.” Since bumble bees are invertebrates, the State of California, as well as the Xerces Society and other conservation allies (the intervenors), argued that the state has the authority to protect bumble bees *under CESA*. *Unfortunately, Judge Arguelles concluded that the legislature meant only marine invertebrates when it included the term.*

According to Sarina Jepson of the Xerces Society, in Feb. 2021 The Xerces Society, Center for Food Safety, and Defenders of Wildlife appealed the November 2020 decision, as intervenors in the case. The California Fish & Game Commission and CA Department of Fish and Wildlife also appealed the decision. It is expected that the appeal will be heard in late 2022. For more information on the appeal go to: <https://xerces.org/blog/california-court-case-protection-of-insects-under-california-endangered-species-act>



Climate Change Impact on Birds of the Bay Art Show

The Castro Valley Library is hosting an exhibit of paintings of birds of the San

Francisco Bay Area, by award-winning local artist (and OAS member!) **Rita Sklar** (www.ritasklar.com).

The show highlights the vanishing birds of the bay area and beyond. Birds are important indicators of the overall health of our environment. Like the proverbial canaries in the coal mine, they send an urgent warning about threats to our climate, water, air, and natural resources.

Rita Sklar's wildlife paintings have been featured at the California State Building in Oakland, Lindsay Wildlife Museum, the Oakland Zoo, and Tilden Park Education Center. Ms. Sklar received a commission from the Alameda County Art Commission and two grants from the Oakland Cultural Arts Fund. Her paintings have been selected into national shows by acclaimed jurors. She has received over twenty-five awards for artistic excellence.

*Showing now thru April 4, 2022 at the CV Library,
3600 Norbridge Ave, Castro Valley
Free, open to the public; wheelchair accessible*

The Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18-21, 2022



See details in January 1,
2022 *Kite Call*

Review the Tools to Participate for 2022 (click here)
<https://www.birdcount.org/participate/>

Two Phalaropes and two Orioles, I can never remember which is which

By Bill Hoppes

Back on bird identification again this month. I was going to call this two more difficult pairs, but they really aren't that hard. It is just I can never keep them straight. So if I have trouble remembering which is which, some of you may too. So the pairs we are working on this month are: Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope, and Hooded and Bullock's Oriole.

Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes

Phalaropes are common birds in the SF Bay Area but often beginning birders have trouble identifying them as phalaropes, so let's start there. Phalaropes are medium sized shorebirds, smaller than yellowlegs but bigger than the sandpipers. You won't see them running around on the mudflats like sandpipers, or probing the edges of marshes like yellowlegs, or huddled in huge flocks like dowitchers. They are birds of the open water, usually swimming around in small flocks or "whirligigs" as groups of phalaropes are called.

Although they can be colorful on the breeding grounds, when they are here during late summer, they are mainly gray and white. They have longish, thin necks with dark, needle like bills. If you are fortunate, when they are out in the open water they will perform their "whirling" foraging behavior. Both species are seen throughout the bay area and inland in late summer. So, next time during the summer doldrums you are out on the salt ponds. You see a flock of small gray and white shorebirds with long pointed black bills swimming around. If you are lucky you see some of them spinning around in the water. We have phalaropes, now which one.

Our default is Red-necked. According to eBird they are twice as abundant in the bay area as Wilson's. To tell them apart we are going to focus on the head. If you look at the head of a Red-necked, there is a distinct black dot extending around and behind the eye. When you look at Wilson's there is a line through the eye, but the color is smudged and there is no distinct spot. Kind of like Horned and Eared Grebes. Side note: Wilson's Phalarope was named after Alexander Wilson (July 6, 1766 – August 23, 1813). Wilson was a Scottish-American poet, ornithologist, naturalist and illustrator. Historians consider Wilson as the greatest American ornithologist prior to Audubon.

So, Red-necked-black dot, Wilson's black smudge. I have never been able to remember a memory trick to keep them straight and I always have to look them up in my field guide. See if you can come up with one.



**Red-necked Phalarope on the left with its distinct black dot around the eye.
Wilson's Phalarope on the right with its "smudge" around the eye.**

(Continued next page)

(*Phalaropes-Orioles continued*)

Hooded and Bullock's Orioles

Hooded Oriole

Summer brings two of our most colorful birds, the Hooded and Bullock's Orioles. Hooded Orioles, arrive in Northern California in late March from their Mexico wintering grounds. Hooded Orioles have undertaken a dramatic northward expansion in California. Their summer range was limited to southern California until the 1930s. This expansion was dependent on the planting of fan palms in residential areas and parks; palm fibers are the essential building material for their nests, and the palms are generally themselves the nest sites. Because of this, in our area, Hooded Orioles are almost always found in suburban areas where these palms are found. Hooded Orioles' preferred palm is the California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*), native to southern California, but they will occasionally use other non-native palms as nest sites. Male Hooded Orioles have the fabulous yellow-flame orange coloring, black back and wings with white wing-bars and most importantly, extensive black on the throat with no black on the head. This seem opposite to the way it should be to me. A Hooded Oriole should have a black hood, but here it doesn't, in this case hooded refers to the "golden hood".

Bullock's Oriole

Bullock's Oriole also arrive in summer from their wintering grounds in Mexico. Bullock's Oriole was named for William Bullock (c.1773 – 7 March 1849) an English traveler and naturalist. Like the Hooded Oriole, they have also benefited from human civilization in their nesting habitats, for many decades favoring horsehair whenever available. Now they use a combination of plant fibers and a wide range of artificial materials, readily employing whatever strings and yarn they come across. They nest in a variety of trees, including native oaks and willows, and are frequently found in the general vicinity of watercourses.

Just like the Hooded Oriole, the Bullock's has the wonderful yellow orange color, with black back and black wings with extensive white wing bars. Pretty much just like the hooded so far. Here is where things get different. The Bullock's has black on its throat, but much less than the hooded, and finally, black on the head that the Hooded lacks.



Hooded Oriole on the left with its golden hood. Bullock's Oriole on the right with its black non-hood. Also note the far more extensive black on the throat of the Hooded Oriole.

So Hooded, golden head (hood) and Bullock's black head (not a hood). That seems backward to me, so such is bird nomenclature. This is another one I always have to look up. See if you can figure out a way to remember it.

Youth Projects

Ranger **Sandy Ferreira**, our retiring board member, has worked with several Eagle Scout groups completing the following:

Ritam Nandi (Troop 125) built 20 Tree Swallow boxes, 12 of which were donated to the San Leandro Creek Watershed group, to be placed near Lake Chabot. Watch for the March 12, 2022 unveiling, headed up by Susan Levenson, of Friends of San Leandro Creek. The remaining boxes replaced old or damaged boxes at Lake Elizabeth. The Tree Swallows are already investigating them!

Two other projects at Lake Elizabeth in Fremont included installing three new trough planters (Ray Chen Troop 468)and a raised garden box and vine trellis for pollinators at the Nature Learning Center (Praneet Joshi Troop 154) ; and a new interpretative display signboard at Stiver’s Lagoon (Tristian Xu Troop 155).



Boat-billed Heron from Bill Hoppes’ recent trip to Costa Rica

Sad news to share. . .



Eugene Makishima

We recently learned of the passing of OAS member **Eugene Makishima** of Fremont on December 20, 2019. He endured a handicap and traveled by wheel-chair with the help of his loving wife, Akiko Makishima.

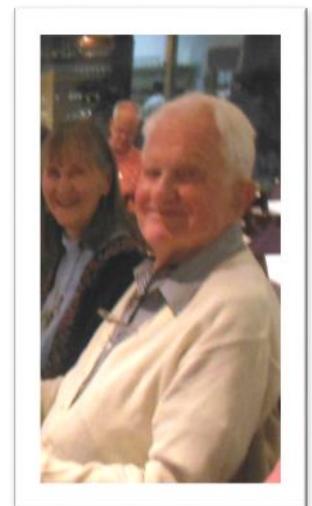
Eugene was an avid and very knowledgeable bird watcher. His skill of bird recognition by sound was always appreciated. Before his chronic ailment; Eugene established a new kind of bird finding record, “How many species in ONE MILE.” As his initial model; he counted all kinds of birds found on the mile inland from Hwy 1 to the rock jetty at Elkhorn Slough. He logged over 70 species that Day; It was a “Linear Bird Count.”

In his earlier days, Eugene also made a trek of about 30 miles from the top of Mission Peak (Alameda County) starting at 2:00 AM to Dumbarton Point, Fremont. His count was over 100 species. He is recorded as finder of the only Merlin in the Bette Wentzel Butterfly and Hummingbird Memorial Garden at Shinn Park, Fremont. This Garden is an Ohlone Audubon Society Project, now with wheelchair friendly pathway covering, as suggested by Eugene. We enjoyed Eugene’s and Akiko’s continued support of OAS at many of our functions. Akiko tells us Eugene enjoyed our meetings, socializing and our cookies !

Don Emery

It is with much sadness we announce the passing of Don Emery on December 25, 2021.

Don was our cherished editor for 24 years, with his co-editor and wife of 62 years, Margaret. Don took us from a typed version to modern day software. With every current issue I ask myself , would Don like this? We have such fond memories spending time together.



Margaret shared with us this: “A favorite memento of Don’s is a little flat rock with a bee painted on it that reads: *Bee Humble. Bee Kind. Bee Happy.* That describes Don perfectly.”

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CONSERVATION: Carin High (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: Bob Toleno *FieldTrips@OhloneAudubon.org*
HOSPITALITY: Allen & Jackie Bertillion 510-782-4874
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PROGRAMS: Diana Brumbaugh, *Programs@OhloneAudubon.org*
PUBLICITY: Vicki Robinson, *Director2024@OhloneAudubon.org*
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