



# Madrone LEAVES

Madrone Audubon Society, Inc., Post Office Box 1911, Santa Rosa, California 95402

VOLUME 52 February/March 2019 Number 4

## 52nd Annual West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count

by Stacy Li

The 119th annual Christmas Bird Count in the U.S. includes contributions from hundreds of Audubon Chapters and groups – taking a day to identify, count and record the day’s findings. The national compilation produces a picture of our birds in America.

National Audubon Society has hosted this activity since 1900. Data collected and compiled was recently used in the *Birds and Climate Change* report published by

The preliminary species total for our count this year: 170, a little low for our area. In years past, we have seen as many as 194 species and have ranked in the top 10 Christmas Bird Counts in the continental United States. Noticeably absent from many groups’ experience were passerines,

including Bewick’s Wren and Nuthatches, predictably normally observed each year.

The theme of absent passerines carried through the day. For our newer birders, passerines are songbirds, members of the

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Ferruginous Hawk

Courtesy of Ken Wilson

National Audubon, concluding, of 588 North American Bird species, more than half, or 314, will lose more than 50% of current climatic range by 2080.

Madrone Audubon hosts the West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count. 2018 was our 52nd year, and 136 participants divided into 20 groups to survey the wide geographic area. At the end of the day, many of the 136 participants made their way to the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, where a simple, nutritious dinner was served for a \$5/person donation, and groups began compilation and reports.

### GENERAL MEETING

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

Monday, February 18, 2019, 7:00 PM

#### “Little Known Great Birding Locations in Northern California”

Most birders visit the famous spots: Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Bodega Bay, Golden Gate Park, Vic Fasso Yolo Wetlands, Klamath/Tulelake and Sacramento NWRs, Monterey Bay, Arcata Marsh, etc. But there is a growing number of lesser known spots, hidden gems for birding and scenery. Ruthie Rudesill will share birding stories and discuss a few special places for those who want to travel to new exciting areas of Northern California.



Swainson's Hawk  
Courtesy of Ruthie Rudesill

Ruthie Rudesill is Past President of Redwood Regional Ornithological Society. She has a Wildlife degree from Humboldt State University. She has led and participated in many Christmas Bird Counts, surveys and field trips for over 30 years. Ruthie maintains the records for rare birds in Sonoma County and sends quarterly reports to North American Birds (part of the American Birding Association).

Monday, March 18, 2019, 7:00 PM

#### “Beavers and Birds”

A vital part of our local ecosystems, beaver were once close to complete extinction in the United States. Kate Lundquist of the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center WATER Institute (OAEC) will share the historical plight of this “keystone” species as well as insights about its remarkable biology and many ecological benefits. Learn how beaver can help both urban and rural communities across California restore watersheds, create excellent habitat for many bird species, recover endangered salmon, and increase climate change resiliency. Kate will discuss current beaver policy and how the Bring Back the Beaver Campaign ([www.oaec.org/beaver](http://www.oaec.org/beaver)) is working with communities in California and beyond to create a culture of beaver stewardship.



Beaver swimming  
Courtesy of Kate Lundquist

Kate Lundquist is a conservationist, educator, artist and community collaborator. She has been co-directing OAEC’s WATER Institute since 2005. Kate manages the Bring Back the Beaver Campaign towards the greater inclusion of beaver in habitat restoration and the recovery of listed species. Kate enjoys increasing her watershed literacy through observing and tending diverse ecosystems in the western United States.



## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Continued from page 1

order Passeriformes, able to perch, based on the shape of their toes and feet. They are small, perch and sing – thus the common term songbirds. (Passerines are the focus of Veronica Bowers' Native Songbird Care and Conservation nonprofit based in Sebastopol.) Our Bewick's Wren, the symbol for Madrone Audubon, is a passerine.

The day on December 30th started cold, in the upper 30s (Fahrenheit), but warmed nicely until gusty offshore winds beginning around 11 o'clock chilled observers and apparently the birds, too. Several of our veteran team leaders noticed some typical species sightings were absent. However, some new birds were seen in several areas.

### Brief Summaries for Each West County Area

Species totals are semi-official, pending rare bird confirmations. A full listing of species and numbers of individuals will be included in the April-May *Leaves*.

Area 1, Jonive Road, is inhabited by mostly upland species, but a few water fowl were found on farm ponds. Leader Colin Talcroft reported 54 observed species and noted several missing species. New species for the area were Marsh Wren, Sora and Western Tanager. Western Tanager is not even listed on our field forms.

Area 2, Freestone/Monte Rio. Observers led by Gordon Beebe identified 56 species. Gordon also noted several species absent, but they spotted an American Dipper at Dutch Bill Creek per guidance by Brock Dolman. An immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was also identified. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is an eastern bird not listed on our field forms.

Area 3, Valley Ford, was ably led for many years by the late Ken Magoon. Ken passed away last July, so Steve Corey stepped up to lead the team this year, acknowledging Diane and Kaitlin Magoon for participating and keeping the Magoon longstanding connection to Area 3. This group identified 52 species. Two notable sightings were an immature Golden Eagle being mobbed by a crow and a Peregrine Falcon.

In Area 4, Joy Road leader John Codding and his four observers located 59 species.

Three Ferruginous Hawks were seen early in the day. Expected sightings, again, along Joy Road in Occidental up to Highway 12 were absent. The group recorded a Bald Eagle flyover early in the day, and a new route in the area produced a Peregrine Falcon. A Pileated Woodpecker in the middle of a redwood grove was also a highlight.

In Area 5, Salmon Creek Road, leader Sean Jeane and his team found 71 species, including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Spotted Owl and numerous Great Horned Owls

Area 6, the Estero Lane, has two leaders. Jennifer Michaud leads the terrestrial

Doran Beach typically produces high species number counts because it consists of both upland and marine habitats. Of note, Black-crowned Night-Herons almost always seen were missing from Doran Beach, but identified at another location in the area. Brook O'Connor also recorded a Barn Owl and 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in the area. Raptors, including Prairie Falcon and Ferruginous Hawk were also plentiful in this area.

Area 8, Bodega Bay observers led by Ian Morrison, reporting the area was not as lively as usual, with numbers down overall. The group recorded 98 species,



California Quail

Courtesy of Brock Dolman

portion while Peter Colasanti uses a kayak and birds from the Estero. Their team identified 70 species. Peter reported a sand bar closed the outlet to Estero Americano. The resultant back flooding causes species to disperse and fewer species were identified. However, they saw a Northern Harrier chasing a Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, Harlan's Hawk, and Palm Warbler. Palm Warbler is not listed on our field forms.

In Area 7, Doran Beach leader Dea Freid and her team enjoyed sun with a breeze picking up in the afternoon. They, too, missed many species normally counted, including Northern Shovelers and Gadwalls. But, they did identify 119 species, including Red Phalarope and Harlequin Duck near Pinnacle Gulch.

with Brandt's Cormorants and Ruddy Ducks easily visible. Then, recording the Harlequin Duck, with Ian and Gene Hunn locating the recently reported Swamp Sparrow in the area, added to their species count.

Area 9, Bodega Head, was led by Dan Nelson. He was assisted by Mike Parmeter. Both were deservedly featured in the Press Democrat article for this year's CBC. These two avid birders braved the howling winds to scope out to sea for marine birds. Dan noted low numbers (53 total species) due to the difficulty in spotting birds in choppy water, but they did tally 3 Marbled Murrelets, 2 Harlequin Ducks, 1 Red Phalarope and 11 Northern Pintail from their lookout.





## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Continued from page 2

Jackie Sones is the leader of Area 10, Bodega Marine Lab. She and her two observers spotted 60 species.

Jeanne Erickson is the leader of Area 11, Cheney Gulch. She and her team identified 45 species, which is a low number for her area. But, one of their highlights was birding on a nearby ranch and recording a Red-breasted Sapsucker. A Turkey Vulture perched on and sunning on a *No Parking* sign and an immature Red-tailed Hawk, screeching with intermittent periods of quiet, were also enjoyable sightings.

Area 12, Seahorse Ranch, is also known as Chanslor Ranch and the ponds by Salmon Creek. Leader Scott Carey noted that the cold made the birds inactive, but also seemed to aggregate them. His team saw as many as 80 Bushtits bunched together in the bushes. They also saw 9 Tricolored Blackbirds intermingled with Red-winged Blackbirds. The usual diversity of diving ducks was missing, but Mallards and American Wigeons were observed, including a super-flock early in the count of American Wigeons totaling 80, sitting in the brush and basking in early morning sun. Many raptors, Ferruginous Hawk, American Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon were also recorded. This group's total was 58 species.

There is no Area 13 for superstitious reasons.

Ken Wilson led the Area 14, Highway 1, team. This is a large area and Ken's group, along with Bill Doyle and Helen Kochenderfer, divided into 2 teams for full coverage. Early morning observations were sparse. A Black Scoter sighting at the bottom of the beach in the Coleman Valley area was a highlight. On the east side of the road, although they missed Merlin and both eagles, they recorded 2 Peregrine Falcons, 14 American Kestrels, 6 Ferruginous Hawks and 29 Red-tailed Hawks. A special bird toward the end of the day was a Tropical Kingbird in a yard north of Carmet. The group's total count for the day was 80 species.

Area 15 is Willow Creek Road. David Berman leads this team which identified 66 species. The best bird was Virginia Rail at the first bridge. The most interesting bird was a Red-breasted Sapsucker that

may have been a hybrid. The group heard a Spotted Owl and recorded 3 Great-horned Owls the night before the Dec. 30th count. A row of 5 Turkey Vultures in a row, sunning, was a memorable sight for the day.

Mike Heffernon's team in Area 16, Duncans Mills, identified only 68 species, a record low. They usually see 90 to 100 species. Strong winds could have been a factor, but notable was the group observed very little at the Jenner Headlands, with 3 Ferruginous Hawks. This group also counted 3 sparrow species, possibly a Common Goldeneye near the pullout on 116 and Highway 1 at the Russian River. A young Mute Swan was observed on the river, along with Wood Ducks.



Post CBC dinner

Courtesy of Susan Kirks

Peter Leveque is the leader of Area 17, Freezeout Canyon. They found 67 species. Peter noted the weather in his area was mild, so the area didn't live up to its name. The group used to regularly see Killdeer and American Robins, but there were none this year. Morning did not produce that many sightings and notably toward the end of the day, Peter shared they accrued most of their sightings. The group recorded Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, and several Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. This is an area where there are also some restrictions on entering properties in order to count.

Diane Hichwa and David Leland co-lead Area 18, Coleman Valley Road in Occidental, including the ridge and down to the coast. Diane reported this can be a beautiful place to bird and their group

of 11 this year welcomed some new participants who reside in the area. They saw 4 Hooded Mergansers. The group heard one Belted Kingfisher and then Bryant Hichwa observed 3 kingfishers fly across a pond. David Leland documented a Lincoln's Sparrow and the group took time to watch a Ferruginous Hawk gliding in the wind as well as a Northern Harrier. California Quail and Red-winged Blackbird were also on this group's list. They recorded 62 species.

Linda Petrulias is the leader of Area 19, Austin Creek. On Saturday, evening, Terry Haag provided their team's report. This team searched high and low, but could only find 39 species. Included were Wood Ducks at the water treatment plant, and Red-naped Sapsuckers were also seen.

The reason for no Area 20 cannot be explained by superstition.

Carolyn Johnson is the leader of Area 21, Harrison Grade. Her team saw fewer species and lower abundance this year, but described a fantastic day. They saw only 250 American Robins and 11 Varied Thrush. Also, 100 Western Bluebirds. Historically, the group records large numbers of Bushtits, absent this year, but they did see 85, along with 40 Ruby-crowned Kinglets and 78 California Quail. They were disappointed to not see the 2 pair of Hooded Mergansers observed for days prior to the CBC, but absent on Dec. 30. Carolyn wondered if the mergansers observed by the Hichwa/Leland team were those four. Total species: 40.

Area 22 - The boat out on Bodega Bay (thanks to the Tuckers and their boat). Gene Hunn goes out on a boat roughly three miles out to observe marine birds. This year, Lisa Hug accompanied Gene to assist. Offshore winds were too strong and, consequently, waves were too high to venture out any distance. This undoubtedly cost us species numbers because this is the only area where offshore pelagic birds can be easily observed. Total species: 17.

### Thanks to our Madrone Audubon Volunteers

Nancy Hair, Madrone's Publicity Chair and Chair of our Investment Advisory Committee, suggested Mombo's Pizza in

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## Breeding Bird Atlas Maps

by Gordon Beebe

The Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) team has finished creating the species maps for both Atlases, showing all of the blocks in which breeding was confirmed for each species.

This will give Madrone members and the public a sense of what the volunteers found when they surveyed all of Sonoma County for breeding birds, both during the first Atlas, completed in 1991, to the second Atlas, completed in 2016.



Common Loon

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe



Common Yellowthroat

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

The BBA webpage on Madrone’s site has also been updated, with a link to the maps page, and instructions for those who might need a little extra help in understanding how to view the documents side-by-side. By viewing the two map files, viewers will be able to compare results species-by-species.

Many changes have occurred in that time, with some species found in more areas in the county, and others less so. A few example maps, of Canada Goose, Cinnamon Teal, and Eurasian Collared-Dove, illustrate some of the changes discovered.

To view the maps, either go to Madrone’s homepage and select Birds/Sonoma County BBA from the drop-down menu, or paste this link into your browser window: <https://madroneaudubon.org/birds-sonoma-county-breeding-bird-atlas.php>

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

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Sebastopol for this year’s West Sonoma County post-Christmas Bird Count dinner. We enjoyed Worth Our Weight (WOW) caterers providing our dinner for the past 2 years. With WOW’s closing, we needed a new provider. Mombo’s did not disappoint! Pizza and salads were enjoyed by all, and desserts donated by Madrone and our diners were bountiful. We appreciate the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center staff for their always excellent assistance and our dinner volunteers, Sandra Martensen, Marguerite Li, Nancy Hair, Claudia Norby and Susan Kirks, for providing service.

Peter Leveque who co-chairs the Madrone CBC with Stacy Li was the emcee at the community center for the evening reports. His routine provided historical perspective and appreciated humor to the narrative. While everyone dined in the informal atmosphere, we listened to reports to compile an overall picture of West Sonoma County’s bird and natural life.

Would you like to participate next year in our West Sonoma County Christmas

Bird Count? Please contact Peter Leveque (707-542-8946) or Stacy Li (707-527-2037), Co-Chairs, and we’ll look forward to also providing a nice meal for you at the end of the day.

### Santa Rosa and Sonoma Valley Christmas Bird Counts

The Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by Redwood Region Ornithological Society, was held on a rainy day, December 16th. Leader Bill Doyle reported the dedicated participants recorded a total of 131 species, compared to 136 in 2017, right after the wildfires. (Bill notes Santa Rosa species counts historically averaged in the 150s, but have been progressively declining. The longstanding drought has also been an environmental reality.) A special 2018 observation was a Wren-tit discovered by Miles and Teresa Tuffli from an audio recording made on count day. The Santa Rosa CBC counters gathered at Adel’s Restaurant to compile and report their results and share a meal at the end of the day.

The Sonoma Valley CBC, led by Gene Hunn, was scheduled for December 28, 2018. This year’s total species count

was 166, similar to past years (long-term average = 162). The Sonoma Valley CBC also includes areas of Petaluma such as Tolay, Shollenberger and Ellis Creek wetlands. On the up-side, according to Gene’s report to participants, several species exceeded past counts, including White Pelican, American Robin, Northern Pintail, Pied-billed Grebe, Band-tailed Pigeon, Northern Saw-whet Owl and Tree Swallow. Barn Swallow and White-throated Swift, also. Golden Eagles, Western Bluebirds, Say’s Phoebe and Hutton’s Vireos were also up in count. Apparent declines were noted, however, in Lesser Scaup, Cackling Goose, Ruddy Duck and Eared Grebe. By contrast, the Sonoma Valley CBC recorded 17,936 American Robins and an abundance of European Starlings, accounting for 66,697 birds in the total count of all birds. This correlated with a “vast Starling murmuration at Tolay and Ellis Creek.” (Gene Hunn). A mega-rarity sighting during the Sonoma Valley CBC was a Zone-tailed Hawk which was in the vicinity until December 31.

Contributors: Stacy Li, Marguerite Li, Gordon Beebe, Bill Doyle, Gene Hunn, Susan Kirks.



All walks and membership meetings are open to the public. Bird walks are recreational and educational in purpose, and all levels of expertise are welcome. Bring field equipment and wear comfortable shoes and layered clothing for variable weather conditions. Please carpool whenever possible. Forecasted heavy rain cancels. There is no charge for activities unless otherwise specified, but some parks have day-use fees.

## February 2019 Calendar

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE exchanges information by phone and email as soon as possible when an issue surfaces. Please contact Diane Hichwa at 785-1922 or dhichwa@earthlink.net.

*Saturday, February 2, 8:30 AM to Noon*

**BODEGA BAY:** Porto Bodega. We will explore one of Sonoma County's richest bird areas, looking for wintering shorebirds, waterfowl, and landbirds. From the center of the town of Bodega Bay, drive north on Highway 1. Turn left at East Shore Road (the Bodega Head turnoff), then go straight at the stop sign at the bottom of the hill to Porto Bodega. We will carpool from the large dirt parking lot. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Thursday, February 7, 7:00 PM*

**BOARD MEETING.** Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Susan Kirks at susankirks@sbcglobal.net.

*Saturday, February 16, 8:30 AM to Noon*

**HUDEMAN SLOUGH.** We will walk out on the levees surrounding the ponds to view waterbirds, hawks, and more. Meet at the Sonoma County Water Agency property on the northern edge of the Napa-Sonoma Marshes. From the town of Sonoma, drive south on Highway 12/121. Turn south on Ramal Road and drive approximately 2.4 miles until you reach the entrance to Hudeman Slough. There is a large hay barn on the right. Cross the train tracks and park in the lot in front of the barn. Lunch optional. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Monday, February 18, 7:00 PM*

**GENERAL MEETING.** First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. "Little Known Great Birding Locations in Northern California." This is a free event and all are welcome.

*Thursday, February 21, 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM*

**CRANE CREEK REGIONAL PARK,** Rohnert Park. Remember your Parks pass or pay \$7.00. Level and gently sloped paths through woodland/riparian forest. Bird possibilities include woodpecker and raptor species. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Janet Bosshard 526-5883.

## March 2019 Calendar

*Saturday, March 2, 8:30 AM to Noon*

**ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY.** Ellis Creek always has an assortment of waterbirds and marshland species, with frequent flyovers of hawks and falcons. From Highway 101 in Petaluma, go East on 116 (Lakeville Highway), and right on Pine View Way, then left on Cypress Drive. Go to the end of the road and through the gate. We will meet in the parking lot, near the bathroom. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Thursday, March 7, 7:00 PM*

**BOARD MEETING.** Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Susan Kirks at susankirks@sbcglobal.net.

*Saturday, March 16, 8:30 AM to Noon*

**LAS GALLINAS PONDS,** Marin County. The ponds and surrounding wetlands contain a great variety of birds, from ducks to hawks to rails, and even grackles. Meet at the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot. From Hwy 101 in northern San Rafael, take the Smith Ranch Road exit, go east to the McInnis Park entrance, turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, and go to the lot at the end of the road. Lunch optional. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Monday, March 18, 7:00 PM*

**GENERAL MEETING.** First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. "Beavers and Birds." This is a free event and all are welcome.

*Thursday, March 21, 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM*

**SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK.** Remember your Parks pass or pay \$ 7.00. Meet in the larger lot across from the swimming lagoon.

We'll stroll down to the spillway and into the wooded forest and along the lake trail below the dam. It is the beginning of the season when birds are mating and getting ready to breed. We'll listen for mating songs and look for new season plumage. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Janet Bosshard, 526-5883.

*Saturday, March 23, 10:00 AM to Noon*

**SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK.** Spring Family Bird Walk. Meet at Shady Oaks Picnic Area near Environmental Discovery Center, off Violetti Road. Free refreshments after walk. Co-hosts: Sonoma County Regional Parks & Madrone Audubon Society. See <http://www.parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Play/Calendar/> or for more info, 707-241-5548. No pre-registration required.

*Saturday, March 30, 8:00 AM to Noon*

**CRANE CREEK REGIONAL PARK.** Take Rohnert Park Expressway east from 101, then turn south onto Petaluma Hill Road. Turn left (east) onto Roberts Road. At Lichau Road, Roberts Road turns into Pressley Road. Continue on Pressley Road to the park entrance. We will meet in the parking lot. There is a \$7 entry fee if you do not have a park pass. More information about the park can be found via the parks link on our website. Lunch optional after walk. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

*Saturday, April 6, 8:00 AM to Noon*

**SANTA ROSA CREEK at WILLOWSIDE ROAD.** We will walk from Willowside Road to Delta Pond and back. Expect a variety of riparian residents and recently-arrived migrant species. Meet on the southwest side of the bridge over Santa Rosa Creek, on Willowside Road, mid-way between Hall Road, and Guerneville Road. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.





## OUT & ABOUT

### South Africa: Birds, Beasts, and Blooms: The Cape Province

Richard Bay Audubon Sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Blue Classroom.

**Thursday, February 14, 2019, 7:30 PM**

Roger Harris, certified wildlife biologist, presents on the diverse birds and wildlife of the Cape Region of South Africa. Hosted by Marin Audubon Society.

### Winging It Wednesdays

Tolay Lake Regional Park, 5869 Cannon Lane, Petaluma, CA 94954

**February 27, 2019 from 8:30 to 10:30 AM**

Enjoy leisurely bird walks for all levels of experience on the last Wednesday of every month. These outings are designed especially for older adults and their friends to enjoy nature and each other's company. See the parks' calendar for future Wednesday birding walks <https://parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Play/Calendar/> or call Regional Parks at (707) 565-2041.

### Guided Nature Walk

Bouverie Preserve, 13935 Highway 12, Glen Ellen, CA 95442

**Saturday, March 16, 10 AM to Noon**

Enjoy a 2-hour walk through mixed evergreen forest and oak woodland with a trained docent, Visitors of all ages are welcome --- walks are 2.5 miles or less. \$20 suggested donation. Go to <https://www.egret.org/calendar-public/month> for information and registration. And....if you have a love of nature and would like to share that with children, consider becoming a docent at the Bouverie Preserve. Attend an orientation program on March 27, 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM or inquire at the link shown above. Training begins in September.

### Pine Flat History

Modini Mayacamas Preserves, Pine Flat Road, Healdsburg, CA 95448

**Saturday, March 16, 2019, 9 AM to Noon**

Join local historian Joe Pelanconi and Audubon Canyon Ranch biologist Michelle Cooper on a casual walk to learn about the mercury-mining boom-town of the mid-1870s and personalities involved. Joe tells great stories based on his research, and Michelle brings present day natural resources to the experience. Suggested donation: \$20. Questions? Inquire at [michelle.cooper@egret.org](mailto:michelle.cooper@egret.org).

## Attention eBirders!

Madrone is working on a checklist of the birds at Taylor Mountain Regional Park, in conjunction with Sonoma County Regional Parks.

Post your sightings to eBird and help us build our database.

## In Memory of Don McCarthy

Don's library, a collection of field guides & books - Available for free at our monthly membership meetings.

Please peruse, select a book.

## Are you a National Audubon member?

Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.

(see membership form, back page)



Great Blue Heron

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe



## Coastal Column

by Diane Hichwa

While preparing for the new year, I found myself thinking back over years past. It brought back a smile and a thankfulness for Madrone folks. Our Coastal Stewardship group came into being after fireworks exploded over the ocean off the northernmost piece of Sonoma County coastline in 2006. The California Coastal National Monument, managed since 2000 by Bureau of Land Management, was responsible for the islands, and their wildlife. As summer 2007 arrived with another 4th of July fireworks planned near Gualala Point Island, Betty Burrigge came up the coast to help us monitor the nesting seabirds. Phyllis Schmitt, always with a camera in hand, video-recorded the birds at night on the bluff during the fireworks. They were followed by Elmarie Hutchison and Phil Persons from Occidental and several from Santa Rosa. Phyllis Schmitt, Bob Speckels, and Ken Wilson came up and helped over 3 or more summers! These folks all drove an hour and a half



Night photography crew: Bryant Hichwa, Phyllis Schmitt, Diane Hichwa and Connie Schimbor Courtesy of Diane Hichwa

discussed the unique efforts of the Coastal Stewardship group including: experience brought together by birders, photographers, pilot, and data people, the unique photography (digiscoping, infrared, land and aerial) to capture information at a specific time, monitoring for publishable research by scientists from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as a model study and forms that BLM and others can use and apply more broadly to establish a network of stewards in California.

Fast forward 10 years and additional groups are monitoring the coastally nesting seabirds, including Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods watching at Jenner and at Bodega Island. A Seabird Protection Network (<http://seabirdprotectionnetwork.org/>) has been established with a Sonoma County chapter; education at heavily visited sites helps to lessen disturbance to nesting from air, land, and water. Black Oystercatchers are studied through Audubon California as an indicator species at the coast for changing climate conditions. The rocky intertidal zone common along our Sonoma Coast is good habitat for oystercatchers. And Pelagic Cormorants, their nests and chicks, are watched and counted for nesting success from Northern Sonoma County into Mendocino County.

The connections between people, groups and Audubon Chapters are still strong and thriving.



CA delegates to Making a Difference Awards, with Kenneth Salazar-Diane Hichwa, MAS, on left. Courtesy of Diane Hichwa

up the coast to sit on the cold windy bluff and count birds, as well as watch for chicks in the nests. Dennis Wheeler, then Membership Chair, sat out on the bluff counting birds, while Mary Wheeler, as Madrone's Treasurer, assisted our group with grant applications, management and record-keeping. Nighttime photos and aerials from a plane were presented in San Francisco before the California Coastal Commission. The fireworks were stopped (although the ban is not permanent), and birds continue to nest on Gualala Point Island.

Our group received a National Making a Difference Volunteer Award, presented in 2009 in Washington DC by then Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. Diane Hichwa, in her remarks after accepting the award,

## APPRECIATED DONATIONS

*In Memory of...*

**Ernestine Smith & Martha Bentley**

by Diane & Bryant Hichwa

**Gene Broderick**

by Judith Christensen Trust

**Mildred Vyverberg**

by Mary & Michael Cuoio

*In Honor of...*

**Altacal Audubon-Fire Recovery Donation/Butte Co.**

by Georgia Brown

by Brendan Hutchinson

by Charlyn Stetson

**Deyea Harper**

by Kathleen Mugele

**Tom McCuller**

by Suzanne Reta

**Susan Kirks**

by Olivia & Peter Leveque

## MAS donates to Audubon in Butte County

Madrone Audubon's end of 2018 fundraising total:

**\$4,509.49**

Donation to Altacal Audubon, Chico, for Butte Co. recovery:

**\$451.00**

*Our gratitude to everyone who donated for end of year 2018.*





## BIRD-A-THON - a fun/fund-raising event!

by Carolyn Greene

We enjoyed some great Christmas Bird Counts and are looking forward to Backyard Bird Count in February, which also means that **Bird-a-Thon (BAT)** is just around the corner. 2018's BAT raised over \$7,000, thanks to our team leaders and members and, of course, sponsors - large and small.

BAT is THE major fundraiser for Madrone Audubon and supports our Lincoln Elementary School Bird and Nature Festival, Christmas Bird Count, Breeding Bird Atlas, Spring Lake family bird walks, West 9th St. nesting support project, Phenology Project at Paula Lane Nature Preserve, Junior Audubon, Audubon Adventures and various conservation efforts. All funds are used locally.

There will be many opportunities to contribute - as a birder/counter to help on a "big day" and/or as a sponsor of one or more teams. You can sponsor any team by making a single donation or pledge per species observed. Contributions of any size are welcome. Contact Carolyn, Madrone's BAT coordinator, at [cgnpark@icloud.com](mailto:cgnpark@icloud.com) if you have suggestions or questions.

Team leaders will be announced in the next Leaves. We welcome both new teams and counters and new sponsors. Please support this important and fun/fund-raising program.

## Winter Bird Walk at Spring Lake December 15

by Susan Kirks

I must have looked at the weather forecast between Dec. 9 and Dec. 15 about 100 times – no exaggeration. We were carefully monitoring rainy and non-rainy weather, hoping for a cool, less than windy, clear morning for our 2nd annual Spring Lake Regional Park family and youth bird walk, co-sponsored with Sonoma County Regional Parks. We were lucky! December 15th arrived – the morning was clear with a slight breeze, no rain. About 17 adults and youth gathered at the Shady Oaks Picnic Area near the Environmental Discovery for our walk.

Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña and Janet Bosshard co-led the outing for Madrone Audubon, along with Sonoma Co. Regional



Stopping and observing

Courtesy of Eva Valfer



Looking at Coots & Pie-billed Grebes

Courtesy of Eva Valfer

Parks staffer Meagan Horeczko. Monica explained to our group a little about the history of Christmas Bird Count. The walk is also modeled on the Christmas Bird Count for Kids, created by Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie.

At about 10:15, the group set out on the walk and all reports were it was a productive and enjoyable day, with learning and discovery, including an oriole nest hanging from a tree branch. We timed the walk for an experience that wasn't

too tiring, and the group returned to the Environmental Discovery Center at 11:45 to enjoy a half-hour of refreshments. Madrone Audubon provided Mountain Mike's pizza, beverages, fruit and cookies. Janet Bosshard who also serves on the Board of Directors of Bird Rescue of Sonoma County shared information with everyone about what to do if an injured bird is discovered and also about the Bird Rescue Center. Meagan provided information about the Environmental Discovery Center and passed out copies of the new Spring Lake Regional Park Bird Checklist. Our group debriefed about experiences and observations for the day. Then, everyone moved on with their Saturday, with the weather still clear and the sun peeking through the clouds.

Our next co-sponsored family and youth bird walk with Regional Parks at Spring Lake will be Saturday, March 23rd at 10:00 AM. Refreshments will be provided afterwards. Please see our Calendar, page 5 of this issue for details.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Spring Family Bird Walk**  
 Spring Lake Regional Park  
 Saturday, March 23, 10:00 am – 12:00  
 Details in Calendar on page 5.





## MEMBERS' COLUMN

### Chance Moment with Woodpeckers

by Asenath LaRue

This story comes from half-way across the country, from chilly Wisconsin. The winter birds arrived by mid-October, and with fall temperatures



*Downy Woodpecker*  
Courtesy of National Audubon Society

well below average, the perches at our feeders have been constantly occupied, and we've been upping our budget for bird seed.

A few feet outside my study window one gray afternoon, a Downy Woodpecker landed on a snowy ledge and began pecking away at a small twig. Seconds later, a Hairy Woodpecker displaced the smaller look-alike, probably thinking that the Downy had discovered an edible prize. The Downy moved just a foot or so closer to the house, and for a second, I could see the two birds in profile only a few inches apart. How often does that happen? It was a great (if brief) compare-and-contrast lesson about two birds whose appearance is quite similar, except for size. Now, if I can only convince a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Cooper's Hawk to perch beside each other....



*Hairy Woodpecker*  
Courtesy of National Audubon Society

### A note to all Madrone members...

Do you have bird observations or nature experiences to share? Something seen in your backyard, on a walk or hike in one of Sonoma County's parks or open spaces, or on a recent vacation? Please send a brief description (and a photo if you have one), and *Leaves* will include as many of these contributions as we can.

### Viewing Scope Donated for Bird Walks

Madrone Audubon thanks John Donnelly for the thoughtful gesture of a scope donation. John has given a Nikon Prostaff 5, 60 mm Field scope to our Chapter for Gordon Beebe's use on bird outings and field trips. John noted he's enjoyed several of our walks led by Gordon. The donation creates the opportunity for bird walk participants to enjoy close-up views of birds and special sightings. Check out our Calendar of Events, Saturday walks with Gordon Beebe and the once monthly Thursday walk with Janet Bosshard, page 5 of this issue. Thank you, John!

### Welcome, New Members

#### Cotati

Sharon & Richard Bloom  
Bridget McCoy

#### Guerneville

Jefferson Finney  
Jonathan Staub

#### Petaluma

Clyde & Kim Schultz  
Gift membership from  
Nanette Tufts  
Jennifer & Jim Wheeler

#### Rohnert Park

Brenna & Jim Healy

#### Santa Rosa

Nicole Karres  
Anne Murphy  
Phyllis & Douglas Onstad

#### Sebastopol

Chloe O'Gara  
Patricia McCarthy  
Elizabeth Sutton

### 2019 Nominating Committee

Madrone Audubon's Nominating Committee will be meeting soon to recommend Officers and Committee Chairs for the 2019-20 term.

Please consider serving our Chapter!

Info: [susankirk@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susankirk@sbcglobal.net), 707-241-5548



## Madrone Audubon Society

Post Office Box 1911  
Santa Rosa, California 95402

### February/March 2019

Madrone *Leaves* is published bimonthly from October through May, plus one issue each in June and September.



**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL  
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY  
CALENDAR ENCLOSED**

## MADRONE LEAVES



Madrone Audubon Society meets on the third Monday of each month, except in June, July, August, and December. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. All membership meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: e-mail - info@madroneaudubon.org.

**President:** Susan Kirks - susankirks@sbcglobal.net ..... 241-5548  
**Vice President:** Position open  
**Recording Secretary:** Position open  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Susan Dean - susanepdean@gmail.com ..... 360-481-2646  
**Treasurer:** Christy Holmes - christyeholmes@gmail.com ..... 805-895-6482  
**Membership:** Questions to Susan Kirks (Position open) - susankirks@sbcglobal.net  
**Conservation:** Diane Hichwa - dhichwa@earthlink.net ..... 785-1922  
**Education Kits:** Barbara Novak - b.novak34@gmail.com ..... 795-3996  
**Programs:** Position open  
**Junior Audubon:** Position open  
**Outreach:** Position open  
**Publicity Chair & Investment Advisory Committee Chair:**  
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**Website Editor:** Gordon Beebe - gdbeebe@earthlink.net ..... 583-3115  
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**Habitat Gardening and Ex Officio Board Member:**  
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**Sonoma County Water Coalition Rep:** Paula Zerzan - pzerzan@comcast.net ..... 935-1523  
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**IMBD:** Veronica Bowers - vlbowers@gmail.com ..... 829-2955  
**Christmas Bird Count:** Peter Leveque and Stacy Li - stacyli@sonic.net ..... 566-7937  
**Bird Rescue Center:** ..... 523-BIRD  
**Native Songbird Care & Conservation:** ..... 484-6502  
**Northern California Rare Bird Alert** ..... 415-681-7422  
**Audubon-California:** Gaylon Parsons - gparsons@audubon.org ..... 415-644-4605  
**National Audubon Society:** 225 Varick Street, NY, NY 10014 ..... 212-979-3000

### Join Madrone Audubon – Support Your Local Chapter

Please complete this form if you wish to join Madrone Audubon or renew your Madrone membership

Please note: We are a chapter of National Audubon, but membership in and donations to Madrone Audubon are separate and support our local chapter. Membership and donations are tax deductible.

- New member       Renewal
- Senior \$15       Basic Member \$20       Family \$30
- Sustaining \$50       Supporting \$100       Patron \$500

Madrone Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our tax identification number is 94-6172986

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please send my *Leaves* via email

**Please make your check payable to "Madrone Audubon Society."**

Detach this panel and mail to: **Madrone Audubon Society,**

**P.O. Box 1911, Santa Rosa, CA 95402**

Visit us on the Web at: <http://www.madroneaudubon.org>