



Madrone LEAVES

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

VOLUME 53

February – March 2020

Number 4

Mill Bend Preserved on the Gualala River

by Cheryl Harris and Diane Hichwa

We are excited about the recent acquisition of the 113-acre Mill Bend parcels which lie in both Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, straddling the Gualala River. There are dense mixed redwood forests along the river's upper stretches and wetland willow vegetation in the lower reaches. Historically, a lumber mill stood on the site. Scenic views and abundant wildlife may be viewed from above.

Mill Bend is situated where the Gualala River makes its final curve before flowing into the ocean. It has been secured by the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy



Mill Bend aerial view

Courtesy of Craig Tooley

(RCLC) in partnership with a conservation buyer. The acquisition of this scenic property, visible on both sides on the Highway One bridge as you approach Gualala from the south, is the first major step in preserving and protecting the gateway to the Gualala River watershed. Most of this river basin is in Sonoma County; the mountainous watershed has an area of 298 square miles, three quarters of it in Sonoma County!

Continued on page 2

GENERAL MEETINGS

First United Methodist Church • 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa

Monday, February 17, 2020, 7:00 PM

“Changing Scenes of Sonoma County Wildlife”

“Sasquatch/Bigfoot: Myth? Or do large hairy man-like animals reside in our nearby wilderness?”



Bigfoot

Courtesy of Patterson-Gimlin film

And what does this have to do with Audubon and birding? How many of you have had a strange experience while birding, hiking or camping? Eerie noises, strange smells, weird footprints or just that creepy feeling of being watched? Not a new phenomenon, sightings and stories of Sasquatch have been around for centuries. Discussion of the facts and science behind this interesting creature as well as compelling stories will follow including more modern pop culture references. Do you believe?

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 16, 2020, 7:00 PM

“Birds of Alcatraz”

Alcatraz Island, known for its military history and infamous federal prison, is also home to a rich variety of natural resources including regionally significant populations of nesting waterbirds. The island supports the only nesting colonies of Brandt's and Pelagic cormorants in San Francisco Bay, and the largest nesting colony of Western Gulls. There are also nesting Pigeon Guillemots, California Gulls, Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egrets, Black Oystercatchers, and Great Blue Herons. This presentation will cover the nine species of waterbirds nesting on Alcatraz, including their ecology and current population status. We'll discuss why these birds are significant to the area, how disturbance to the birds can affect their breeding success, and actions taken to help protect these birds.



Western Gull and chicks

Courtesy of Tori Seher

Tori Seher has worked for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area since 2011. As the biologist on Alcatraz Island she provides leadership in the protection and management of nesting bird colonies. Prior to working on Alcatraz, Tori was the Wildlife Biologist overseeing the Human-Bear Management Program in Yosemite National Park for eight years. Tori holds a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Conservation Biology from Arizona State Univ. and a master's degree from San Francisco State Univ. in Geography- Resource Management & Environmental Planning.



GUALALA RIVER

Continued from page 1

Madrone Audubon has joined other organizations in endorsing plans to protect and restore Mill Bend and the Gualala River watershed in the far northwest part of Sonoma County. Other collaborating groups include: California State Coastal Conservancy, Mendocino Land Trust, Sonoma Land Trust, California Native Plant Society, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Mendocino Coast Audubon and, a key player, the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy.

So where is it? Envision travelling north from Jenner along scenic Hwy 1, you pass Fort Ross, Salt Point State Park and Kruse Rhododendron Reserve; then after passing through The Sea Ranch community, you arrive at the south edge of the Gualala River where you'll discover Gualala Point Regional Park. The park offers a Visitor Center, a campground and a network of trails with stunning views. As you enter the park on the west side of Hwy 1, you will find a group of interesting Russian totems or serge'. Park here and take a few steps down to an overlook where you can sit with magnificent views of the Gualala River and Mill Bend property. From this location you may observe egrets, kingfishers, bald eagles, merganser, bufflehead and more.



Bald Eagle

Courtesy of Craig Tooley

Although it is not yet open to the public, the recent purchase of Mill Bend will enable the local community to protect and restore the estuary and wetlands which are critical habitat for many species of fish and wildlife. At the same time, it will provide opportunities for developing riverfront trails and better river access for fishing and paddling.

The Gualala River estuary provides an especially important freshwater environment for young steelhead, a small Coho salmon population, the Gualala roach and other fish. Red-legged frogs, Harbor seals, river otters, osprey, green heron and other birds are among the many wildlife species that may be spotted along the river.

“The Mill Bend Conservation purchase is important for local residents as well as for visitors throughout the Bay

Donations

In Memory of

William Jacoby
by Sally Jacoby

Esther Boitano
by Gary Dertien

Betty Burrige
by Marilyn & Don Toms

Roy E. Green
by Linda Green

In Honor of

**Paula Lane
Phenology Project**
*by Deidre Harrison &
Thomas Crane*

Nancy Hair
by Asenath LaRue

Susan Kirks
by Claudia Norby

**Tom McCuller and
Susan Kirks**
by Suzanne Reta

Area” says Kathleen Chasey, Mill Bend Conservation Project Manager for RCLC. “This purchase allows access to the vital river estuary for habitat restoration. As a result of our purchase, the National Marine Fisheries Service has now added the Gualala River to their Salmon Recovery Program for California. Planning work will begin in early 2020 with goals to enhance steelhead habitat and to bring back the Coho salmon to the Gualala River Watershed. It’s very exciting!”

The Mill Bend property includes a 13-acre parcel on the south bank of the river, adjacent to Sonoma County’s Gualala Point Regional Park; this acquisition will allow the existing park boundaries to be extended to the estuary. Securing this scenic property will also provide an opportunity to extend the California Coastal Trail south from the Gualala Bluff Trail through Mill Bend and eventually on to the County Park

RCLC has two years to pay back the Allemall Foundation of Libertyville, MD, which holds the property while RCLC raises \$1.8 million to repay the Foundation for the purchase plus \$600,000 to plan for and support stewardship of the property, ensuring its permanent preservation. RCLC is seeking government and foundation grants to fund the Mill Bend Conservation Project in addition to individual contributions.

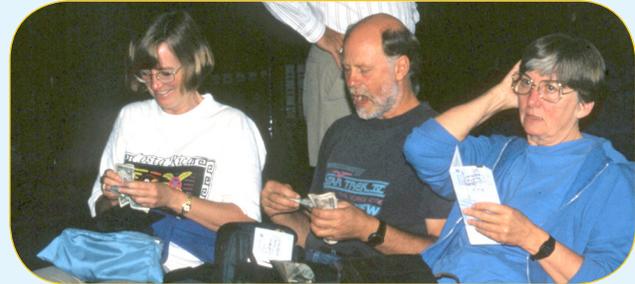
This newly preserved property will provide many educational opportunities, as noted by Diane Hichwa, Madrone Audubon’s Conservation Chair: “Our Coastal Stewardship group has been studying nesting birds of the islands and rocky coast. The river area provides other habitats to learn about. We plan to host several pubic bird walks and talks at the County Park.”

More information about RCLC and about the Mill Bend acquisition can be found on the RCLC website at www.rclc.org. Contributions for Mill Bend can be made to the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy via its website or by sending a check to P.O. Box 1511, Gualala, CA 95445.



In Memory of Joannie Dranginis

Madrone notes with sadness and appreciation the passing of Joannie Dranginis in November, 2019. Our group and many others were enriched by Joannie’s kindness, enthusiasm, and devotion to birds and nature in general. Diane Hichwa recalls that as Board president in 1988-89, Joannie was always “forward-thinking,” and with difficult issues such as Santa Rosa’s planning for disposal of wastewater (ultimately at the Geysers), as “...leading us through the decisioning process thoughtfully and carefully.” Joannie was part of a trio of Madrone members equipped with hard hats and orange vests to monitor and mitigate the biological impacts of the building of the pipeline...the Mayacamas Mountain Audubon Sanctuary was being monitored by us at that time. Joannie later organized speakers for general meetings, helped with *Leaves* circulation, and was a veteran of many Christmas Bird Counts. When our Chapter joined the Cliff Swallows-Petaluma River Bridge litigation, Joannie’s input and support were notable. Her participation in the Santa Rosa Paulin Creek open space advocacy was significant. “Joannie and her group helped create the example so we in Petaluma could begin to advocate for Paula Lane open space land conservation,” recalls our current Board President, Susan Kirks.



Joannie, Ken & Betty, 1997

Courtesy of Bryant Hichwa

Joannie loved to bird. With fellow Madrone members Rhio Reigh, Janet Bosshard, and Wendy Peterson (who dubbed their group the California Gulls), she traveled to American Birding Association conventions and to birding destinations in Arizona, Texas, and Florida. An early birding trip abroad with Madrone members to Costa Rica remained a source of happy memories... she’s shown in this photo with trip leader Ken Wilson and Betty Burrige. Joannie shared her love of nature with husband Mike, their daughters, and grandchildren, creating a tradition of personal investment to protect wild places and wild things. Our heartfelt condolences go to Joannie’s family and friends. In the words of friend Rhio Reigh, “We all loved our Joannie and miss her terribly.”

53rd Annual West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count

by Stacy Li

The 120th annual Christmas Bird Count in the U.S. includes contributions from hundreds of Audubon Chapters and groups – taking a day to identify, literally count and record the findings of the day. This year, our 53rd annual West Sonoma County occurred on Sunday, December 29th. Our observers emulated the US Postal Service due to the rain, which reduced observer visibility and presence of some bird species that ducked for cover and consequently reduced the number of species observed. However, our observers persevered with interspersed viewing, counting, creativity, repeat visits to areas, and some soggy wet parkas and jackets. We then gathered at the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center to compile, report and enjoy a warm meal.

Our preliminary total species for the 2019 West County count was 166, low for our area (2018 was 180).

The West Sonoma County geographic area included:

Area 1, Jonive Road, led by Colin Talcroft and his observation group of eight. They managed to see 51 species, but missed several common species normally observed in this area. Total species in 2018 were 54. A highlight for the day was observing 18 Hooded Mergansers and hummingbirds at each



Pileated Woodpecker

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

of the 28 hummingbird feeders with other hummers waiting for their turn.

Area 2, Freestone/Monte Rio, led by Gordon Beebe worked on skills of holding an umbrella, binoculars and a scope at the same time. A favorite moment in the rain was seeing 10 Yellow-rumped Warblers in shallow water in a driveway, all at the same time. With 6 observers, including Brock DolmSteve Corey, reporting for Area 3, Valley Ford, and 5 other dedicated observers, found Josh Speed’s property

Continued on page 4



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Continued from page 3

along Freestone/Valley Ford Road to be productive. A lot of Red-tailed Hawks were seen. This year's species total was 58, compared to 52 last year.

Area 4, Joy Road, with Bill Baldewicz subbing for John Coddling as leader this year, had four observers. Among the observers were Diane and Kaitlin Magoon. The late Ken Magoon was leader of this area for many years. Bill shared some inspiring Greta Thunberg climate change impact comments, encouraging all in attendance to do what we can – teach others to do what they can, and shared a total of 47 species this year (59 in 2018). The last 2 hours of the 6.5 hour day were most productive – sitting in an electric car and counting. Bill noted how quiet the car was - the birds flew right in.

Sean Jeane led 12 observers in Area 5, Salmon Creek Road and, despite the rain, felt they had a great day. They identified 70 species, including an unusual Red-naped Sapsucker and 37 Evening Grosbeaks. The birds were in small numbers, but represented many species.

Area 6, the Estero, has 2 leaders, Jennifer Michaud for the terrestrial count and Peter Colasanti via kayak. Peter paddled for four miles before heavy rains caught him. He saw 39 species and commented in particular about the Sora, Wilson's Snipe, and a gorgeous view of a Golden Eagle circling closely above his boat. The intrepid Jennifer Mischaud proceeded in the morning into the predicted bad weather despite a lingering illness, but with the help of three observers, she checked the Bodega pond and then walked the Sonoma Land Trust property and then drove along the road. So, under the challenging conditions of poor weather and slightly challenging health Jennifer and her crew identified 47 species. Thank you, Jennifer, you're the best. Together, the aquatic and terrestrial teams matched the number of species seen last year of 70.

Dea Fried covers Doran Beach, Area 7. Dea was concerned because she lost two of her gull and waterfowl experts this year. Luckily, some last-minute volunteers from the East Bay and our area were hot birders. With Dea's team of eight, and even with bad weather, they counted 104 species (119 in 2018). They missed the expected Northern Harrier and had a low number of raptors. They did see a Downy Woodpecker, 2 House Wrens, Eurasian Wigeons, and a female Barrow's Goldeneye. Also, 18 Mourning Doves and a hunting bobcat.

Bodega Bay, Area 8, with team leader Ian Morrison saw a good 3 hours of birding, more land birds than ever since he began doing the CBC. The team started with 5 observers, but lost two because of the rain. Their species included Brown Creeper, Townsend's Warbler, Hutton's Vireo. They recorded 1 Killdeer, not so many plovers this year, but loons, grebes and cormorants were plentiful. A total of 101 species (98 in 2018). Lisa Hug found a Golden-crowned Warbler in the parking lot, west side of the park.

Dan Nelson and Mike Parmeter braved the head winds and rain of Bodega Head (Area 9) for 7 party hours to identify 36 species, an almost equal number of seabird and passerine species. This team saw 53 species last year.

Jackie Sones surveyed Bodega Marina Lab, Area 10, alone and identified 55 species. She identified lots of loons, grebes, cormorants, gulls and raptors. Of the several species of sparrow was a highlight of a Swamp Sparrow, a bird not listed on our tally form. She also found a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher! Jackie with two others saw 60 species last year. This looks like a great area to join next year.



Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Courtesy of Monica Wohlferd

We were pleased to welcome 5 new counters this year, joining JaneAnn Erickson's Area 11, Cheney Gulch. JaneAnn's team reported 44 species, a low for her area, but similar to 2018 (45). Sometimes counting from cars, observing at Salmon Creek Ranch was challenging, with mist coming in and cars fogging up. Cups of hot chocolate helped fortify the counters. A highlight was watching a bobcat in the North Harbor area on Harbor Way and also seeing salamanders and banana slugs at Salmon Creek. JaneAnn was happy with the new participants in our count.

Scott Carey who leads the team for Area 12, Seahorse Ranch, also known as Chanslor Ranch, shared interesting observations for the rainy day. He and his observer were amazed to see along Salmon Creek in large numbers – Red-bellied Newts and Rough-skinned Newts. They also saw Sierra Tree Frog, and a total of 57 avian species. Red-breasted Nuthatches were highlights. They usually see Cowbirds and Tri-colored Blackbirds, but only saw 2 Tri-colored female Blackbirds at the end of the day and 1 male Brown-haired Cowbird. In 2018, their total was 58 species.

(No Area 13 for honoring superstitious conventions).

Ken Wilson and Becky Olsen and their team for Area 14, Highway 1, were also met with rain challenges, but persevered. They got three good hours of birding before the rains came. Seven counters were on their team this year, covering Salmon Creek along the coast up to Jenner. They had near perfect conditions until about 11 a.m. Then, rain began to pour. They counted 84 total (80 in 2018). Their sightings included 4 species of wrens, 1000+ Western Grebes, a flock of 1700 gulls at the mouth of the Russian River. Then, Red-tailed Hawks, Kestrels, Western Bluebirds, Brewer's Blackbirds and many sparrows.

Continued on page 5



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Continued from page 4

David Berman and his team of four covered Area 15, Willow Creek Road. Their total was 48 species (66 in 2018). Heavy rain and heavy mist ended the survey at noon. They stopped at Marty Hale's house where coffee and scones helped to sustain the team during the day. Marty's feeders had a lot of activity. It was as if the birds knew bad weather was coming and were chowing down before the rains hit. Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, White-crowned Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, House Finch, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee and California Scrub Jay were feeding like crazy. Another highlight was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet seen just 20 feet away, flashing its red crown to keep Ezra Berman away.

Area 16, Duncans Mills, is covered by Mike Heffernon's team of six. They recorded a total of 67 species (68 in 2018). Past observations have been 90-100.

Peter Leveque's group of seven surveys Area 17, Freezeout Canyon. They found 56 bird species this year (67 in 2018). While observations were similar to last year, no Killdeer were seen, a bird normally seen in past years. The group notably did record, however, five river otters, a Sonoma chipmunk, and a Harbor seal.

David Leland took the lead for his and Diane Hichwa's team of eight in Area 18, Coleman Valley Road in Occidental. This area includes the ridge and down to the coast. Suzanne Reta joined this team this year, and Paula Fleischer brought a friend and her son from San Francisco. One highlight was a Hairy Woodpecker at Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, gorging on a pear, still on a tree. Visibility was fairly low due to rain, raptor counts were low, but in the late afternoon, the team counted 60 or so White-crowned Sparrows, flushed out by a Northern Harrier. Another notable observation was a Spotted Owl. The team's total count was 39 (62 in 2018).

Linda Petruvias led a team of seven other observers on Austin Creek (Area 19). They saw 35 bird species this year, while her team saw 39 bird species last year.

Carolyn Johnson of Area 21, Harrison Grade, and her team of seven included a Western Screech Owl coincidentally observed on Saturday, 28 Varied Thrush, 541 American Robins, 25 Acorn Woodpeckers, 14 Northern Flickers, 5 or less of the other woodpeckers. Rain was a factor for her group as for others on Sunday. Total bird species for Carolyn's group was 65 (40 in 2018).

There is no Area 20

The boat did not go out on the Bay this year, so we undoubtedly lost some pelagic species normally counted in our survey. The usual boating team scoped in the Bodega Dunes and saw Golden Brown Kinglets, 2 Peregrine Falcons and a Merlin as highlights. Last year, the boat trip resulted in 17 observed species.

(Many thanks to Peter Leveque and Dr. Stacy Li, for serving once again as Madrone Audubon coordinators of the Christmas Bird Count. Our Chapter report is

submitted to National Audubon Society. Contributions to this article, also, from Susan Kirks and Marguerite Li.) Would you like to participate next year in our West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count? Please contact Stacy Li (stacyli@sonic.net), Co-Chair, and we'll look forward to providing a nice meal for you at the end of the day. (Note: We endeavor to be efficient – Dinner begins 5:15 pm, donation of \$5-10 requested, we report, dine and depart usually by 8:00 or 8:30 p.m.)

Thank you to Madrone's Post Christmas Bird Count Dinner Volunteers

Madrone Audubon is so fortunate to have volunteers each year for our post-count dinner, rain or shine, at the Sebastopol Cultural Community Center. We were challenged a bit this year, as the center has not yet fully recovered from the 2018 floods, and the kitchen was not available, with some other challenges. Our volunteers came through – We improvised with 2 electric hot plates, 2 chafing dishes with sterno from **Encore Rentals in Petaluma**, and a creative arrangement for our hot teas, coffee and beverages. Nancy Hair created our menu with **Oliver's Market in Santa Rosa on Stony Point Road**, and picked up, transported and caringly delivered all of our dinner items. We were ready for the counters at 5:00 p.m., with vegetable lasagna, two salads, carrot ginger and split pea soups (with large pots and ladles donated by our volunteers), and the usual amazing array of donated desserts. We request a \$5-10 donation per person for the dinner. We were fairly amazed to host 52 diners of our 120 total counters, given weather conditions, and gathering, drying out jackets and parkas, and providing service to our counters was a real joy for us. *Thank you, volunteers! – Nancy Hair, Mayda Nathan (Washington, DC), Judi Parker, Sandra Martensen, Marguerite Li, Claudia Norby, Susan Kirks.* Members, join us for dinner and to hear about the daily count next year if you like, even if you aren't able to join the count – we'd love to share the mealtime with you!

2019 Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count

by Bill Doyle

The Santa Rosa team enjoyed clear weather on their count day, Sunday, December 15th. In 2018, the total species count was 131. This year 140. This was higher than their earlier 2 years. The Common Black Hawk, still in the Laguna area, was a highlight. This was in Area



Common Black Hawk Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

2, with a total of 101 species. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, spotted by Jack Harper, in Area 10, was an excellent sighting. (Courtesy of Redwood Region Ornithological Society which coordinates the Santa Rosa CBC)



2019 Sonoma Valley Christmas Bird Count

by Gene Hunn

We had almost perfect weather for our count this year (Friday, Dec. 27th). Just over 100 birders spent the better part of the day in their appointed territories doing their best to count each bird of each species detected. This is not difficult when a Golden Eagle flies overhead but can be a challenge to count (or even estimate) the number of starlings in a massive murmuration. Nevertheless, our tallies prove to be quite consistent year by year. Our species total for count day this year was 163, spot-on our 15-year average. Three additional species – all count firsts -- were observed during “count week,” which runs from three days before through the three days following count day (December 24-30 this year): two immature Scaly-breasted Munias (also known as Nutmeg Mannikins) continued at Bob Dwyer’s Sonoma feeders through the 24th. The day after the count the elusive but persistent Tropical Kingbird was relocated at the Ellis Creek Polishing Ponds. Finally, on the 30th, Mary Grishaver spotted, and captured a recognizable photo of, a Least Bittern. So our grand total species count reached 166.

As many observers noted, total bird numbers on count day seemed low this year, despite the fine weather. This hunch was borne out by the numbers: the total of individual birds counted this year was just 45,953, 72% of our long-term average and just a shade above our all-time minimum of 44,842 recorded in 2014. Compare this to last year’s high count of 125, 139. Of course, that high count included some 67,000 starlings versus some 7000 this year. Where did they all go? If we compare this year’s counts species by species, the low total numbers are clear: 111 species were below average while just 54 species were above average this year; 39 species were below 50% of the average while just 10 were more than double the average. This continues a pattern noted last year.

There is no clear pattern that might explain these low numbers. Shorebirds and gulls were in disproportionately low numbers. Sixteen species down versus five species up. However, while nine duck species were well below average -- Northern Pintails were way down at just 2% of average -- eight were at or above average -- Ring-necked Ducks and Hooded Mergansers did very well. Three waders were down a bit; three others stable or up. Raptors and owls were evenly split as to “winners” and “losers,” as were wrens, finches, and sparrows. Only woodpeckers were consistently above average. Thrushes were mostly down, but so were our “flying rats,” Rock Pigeons (30% of average), Eurasian Starlings (50%), and House Sparrows (22%). Despite the overall low counts, eight species were at record highs: Semipalmated Plovers

(5), Herring Gulls (113), Wild Turkeys (481), Western Screech-Owls (22), Common Ravens (343), Horned Larks (16), Barn Swallows (17), and Marsh Wrens (88). Two species were at record lows (not counting zeros): Long-billed Curlews (4) and Long-billed Dowitchers (7). In other words, a mixed bag.

Highlights of this year’s count might include the following: Mandarin Ducks, an Osprey, and Scaly-breasted Munias in the Highlands sector; American Bittern and White-faced Ibis in the Petaluma Wetlands sector; Green Herons in the Sonoma and Adobe sectors; Golden Eagles in three sectors; Ferruginous Hawks in the Wingo and Adobe sectors; Burrowing and Short-eared Owls in the Wingo/Donnell sector and Saw-whet Owl in the Trinity sector; White-throated Swifts and Barn and Tree Swallows at Wingo; a Red-naped Sapsucker in the Adobe sector; Prairie Falcons in the Wingo and Tolay areas; Loggerhead Shrikes and Horned Larks at Wingo; House and Pacific Wrens in the Napa Ridge sector and a Rock Wren on Donnell Ridge; Golden-crowned Kinglets at Trinity and Napa Ridge; California Thrashers in the Highlands and Trinity sectors; Chipping and Rufous-crowned Sparrows in the Wingo/Donnell sector and White-throated Sparrows in the Highlands and Trinity Sectors; Slate-colored Juncos in the Sonoma, Schellville, and Glen Ellen sectors; Yellow-headed and Tricolored Blackbirds at Wingo; and an Orange-crowned Warbler at the Petaluma Wetlands.

Our nine sectors represent diverse observer opportunities. Our two sectors with extensive wetland habitat, Wingo/Donnell, Petaluma Wetlands/Tolay, not surprisingly, always record the largest sector counts. This year Wingo/Donnell wins the high count prize, 127 species, to 116 for Petaluma Wetlands/Tolay. Adobe tallied 92. The remaining six sectors reported between 71 and 84 species, quite evenly matched. Each sector contributed over 2000 individual birds to the count total. Twenty-nine species were recorded in just one sector while 33 were recorded in every sector. It is worth noting: 11 of our 163 species were represented by just one individual, 11 more by just two. This highlights the importance of every team’s efforts.

Thanks to our sponsors, the Sonoma Ecology Center and Sonoma Nature, to the Sonoma Community Center for hosting our dinner, and to our kitchen crew volunteers, Nancy Hunn, Carolyn Greene, Annette Roth, and Anne O’Donnell.

(Courtesy of Gene Hunn, Compiler, Sonoma Valley CBC)



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 2020 Calendar

Saturday, February 1, 8:30 AM to noon

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY. Ellis Creek always has an assortment of waterbirds and marshland species, with flyovers of hawks or falcons. From Highway 101 in Petaluma, go east on 116 (Lakeville Highway), turn right on South McDowell Boulevard, then right on Cypress Drive. Go straight at the bend in 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, February 6, 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 15, 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 railroad tracks and park in the dirt lot. Lunch optional. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

Thursday, February 20, 8:30 to 10:30 AM

RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK,

Sebastopol. Meet near the restrooms/dog park. \$7 park fee or free with parks pass. We will walk mostly flat, paved paths, depending on wetness and showers. Heavy rain cancels. Be prepared for winter conditions. Third Thursday birders have proven tough and face the challenges of whatever the weather brings. Leader: Janet Bosshard, 526-5883.



Thursday birding group Courtesy of Janet Bosshard

Saturday, February 29, 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 Highway 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 continue to the lot at the end of the road. Lunch optional. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.

March 2020 Calendar

Thursday, March 5, 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 7, 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.

Thursday, March 19, 8:30 to 10:30 AM

BODEGA BAY MARINE LAB. Join us for a special tour of the Bodega Marine Lab, led by Jackie Sones, Bodega Marine Reserve Research Coordinator. Meet at Campbell Cove parking lot, before heading up to the Bodega Head. We will gather and carpool to the Bodega Lab, due to limited parking. We will bird the Bay until the tour time. Afterwards, if birders would like to bird and lunch, that is a possibility. Wear layers. Wind and temperatures can change during the day. Watch the weather for rain. The tour is mostly inside, however, we will bird with light showers. The tour is

limited to 20 birders. RSVP early: reserve your spot by calling Janet Bosshard, 526-5883.

Saturday, March 21, 8:00 AM to noon

GLEN OAKS RANCH. Glen Oaks Ranch is Sonoma Land Trust's 234-acre preserve in Glen Ellen. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this preserve features oak woodlands and has Stuart Creek flowing through it. Located in the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor, the land is being managed for the benefit of wildlife. This gentle walk will take us along the riparian corridor and through a portion of the oak woodlands. Space is limited to 20 participants. Registration: <https://sltgor032120.eventbrite.com> or email outings@sonomalandtrust.org, or call Corby Hines at 707.526.6930 x110. Leader: Gordon Beebe. Special thanks to Marcia Luisi for arranging this new walk!

Saturday, April 4, 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. Please do not leave valuables visible in your car at this location. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115 call or text msg.



OUT & ABOUT

Docent Training Orientation

Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road,
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

If you'd like to help children learn to appreciate nature, volunteering to become a docent for the Learning Laguna Program may be right for you. Orientation sessions will be offered **Monday, February 10, 2020, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM** and again **Thursday, February 27, 2020, 3:00 – 5:00 PM**. The 60-hour training course begins March 16, 2020. Visit the website for the training schedule and fees: www.lagunafoundation.org



Gull species, immature

Courtesy of Gordon Beebe

An Ecological Perspective of Sonoma County Wildfires

Sonoma Land Trust office, 822 5th Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Wednesday, March 11, 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Peter Warner will survey some of the benefits of recent Sonoma County fires, including the renaissance of flora and vegetation achieved through burning. Questions? Visit sonomalandtrust.org or (707) 526-6930 x 110.

Guided Nature Walk

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

Saturday, March 14, 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Small group guided nature walks resume at the Bouverie Preserve for the spring season. Walks are no more than 2.5 miles long, and visitors of all ages are welcome. \$20 per person suggested donation. Go to <https://www.egret.org/calendar-public/month> for information and online registration for these events.

Bay Area Audubon Field Trips

The North Bay region is home to several Audubon chapters, and all...like Madrone...offer amazing field trip opportunities. Check out what's offered in February and March at <https://www.marinaudubon.org/events-field-trips.php>, <https://goldengateaudubon.org/upcoming-field-trips/>, or <https://mtdiabloaudubon.org/birding/birding-trips/>.



Tundra Swans

Courtesy of Dennis Lutz

Save the Date

Spring Family Bird Walk

Saturday, March 28, 10:00 am – 12:30 am

Spring Lake Regional Park

Co-hosts: Sonoma County Regional Parks &
Madrone Audubon Society

Check out Sonoma County's Regional Parks Calendar,
www.parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Play/Calendar/
or for more info, 707-241-5548.

No pre-registration required.
Free refreshments after walk.



Spring Lake Regional Park Outing – Dec. 14, 2019

We were fortunate to have clear, cool weather for our 3rd annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids and Families. Sonoma County Regional Parks and Madrone Audubon co-sponsor



Snacks after birding

Courtesy of Janet Bosshar

this outing. This year, we loved having 47 participants, with 28 adults and 19 youth (average age 6-8 years).

Janet Bosshard and Tom Reynolds led the walk for Madrone Audubon and Meagan Horeczko, an experienced birder and nature lover, provided Regional Parks’ staff support for our day. Susan Kirks, Marguerite and Stacy Li also provided support for Madrone for the walk. Meagan Horeczko has been our Regional Parks staff contact since beginning the Winter and Spring walks, and we enjoy planning the outings together. After the walk, refreshments were served on the Environmental Discovery Center patio. Mountain Mike’s Pizza, beverages, cookies and fruit were enjoyed in a light sunny setting, and participants were also invited to explore in the Environmental Discovery Center.

Phenology Project Volunteers

Madrone Audubon sponsored citizen science research

Two Petaluma Locations

Paula Lane: 9 avian, 2 mammal, 4 plant species

(This Nature Preserve project is currently modified & continuing.)

Petaluma River Bridge: Cliff Swallows (March-August)

Both Projects are in our 4th Year!

Accepting new volunteers for long-term, climate change impact project.

Visit 1 hour monthly, observe, record data for

National Phenology Project

To volunteer, contact: Susan Kirks, Madrone Audubon President.

707-241-5548, susankirks@sbcglobal.net

(Beginning birders/naturalists welcomed)



Circle of Friends

Courtesy of Janet Bosshard

Our total species count for the day was 33. The next Spring Lake Regional Park co-sponsored outing: March 28th. Hope to see you there! And, thanks to all who enjoyed the December 14th count experience and refreshment time together (until next year...).

Bird list – Dec. 14th Family Bird Walk

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Pied-bill Grebe | Double-crested Cormorant | Mute Swan |
| Canada Goose | Mallard | Common Goldeneye |
| Bufflehead | Ruddy Duck | Ring-billed Gull |
| American Bittern | California Quail | Sharp-skinned Hawk |
| Red-tailed Hawk | Red-shouldered Hawk | Turkey Vulture |
| Anna’s Hummingbird | Acorn Woodpecker | Nuttall’s Woodpecker |
| American Crow | California Jay | Oak Titmouse |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | Bewick’s Wren | Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| American Robin | Hermit Thrush | Cedar Waxwing |
| Townsend’s Warbler | Fox Sparrow | Spotted Towhee |
| California Towhee | Mourning Dove | American Goldfinch |



Red-shouldered Hawk Courtesy of Tom Reynolds



Bewick's Wren Courtesy of Dennis Luz



MEMBERS' COLUMN

by Cathy Carney Henning

I was very happy to find 36 caterpillars of Monarch Butterflies in my garden. Five, I gave to a trusted friend (and major expert) on Monarchs. The others I planned to raise myself in a house made of tulle netting. Soon they literally turned themselves into their gorgeous chrysalides and later, when ready to fly, I would release them.

As that miraculous transition occurred, the tragic fires of 2019 burned in Sonoma County. That meant heavy smoke at all times and sub-freezing temperatures for 4-5 nights.

I knew these conditions threatened a safe journey south to their regular wintering grounds in Pacific Grove. I thought of a dear friend who was leaving Marin for Carmel that very afternoon. Inspired, I realized she could take them with her and get them to the Museum on Monday morning. When Monday came, someone from the Museum called me and informed me that they frowned completely on what I was doing (raising the butterflies in captivity). Even though I expressed my worry that I have even seen wild turkeys eat the chrysalides, they refused to help. I was most dejected and called my friend with the bad news.

She said her nephew, who is 8, visited her house and had begged her the night before to change my mind and give them to his school (a few towns over)! This was a miracle! The school librarian has traditionally made it a class project to hatch and release the Monarchs. They have a parade every fall. All the kids in the class dress up as Monarchs and march through the town to welcome them back. The school also has a garden which raises all the Monarchs' foods. The school had collected no Monarchs in any form this year.

That is...until my friend arrived at the school on Monday afternoon with the net house and all 31 chrysalides....joy reigned in the school....see the picture below! As you can see, they hatched into healthy Monarchs and made it safely to their wintering grounds to start the magic next year! I have a "contract" with the school to provide chrysalides into the future.



Monarchs with young conservationist
Courtesy of Cathy Henning

New Members

Petaluma
Garnet McClure

Sebastopol
Sam Leader

Sonoma
Peter O'Donovan

Tour the Bodega Marine Laboratory and Reserve

March 19, 8:30 – 10:30 AM

Join Madrone members for a behind-the-scenes tour of UC Davis' Bodega Marine Laboratory and Bodega Marine Reserve led by Jackie Sones, Bodega Marine Reserve Research Coordinator. Jackie will discuss the history of the marine laboratory and will provide an overview of the types of research and classes conducted at the laboratory. The tour will also include a short loop on the Reserve, one of 41 outdoor laboratories in the University of California Natural Reserve System. For details on meeting and the visit, see our March Calendar on page 7, Thursday, March 19th, outing.

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 in the **Members' Column** in future issues.



Audubon News Update

Federal Legislation Introduced in 2019 to Protect Birds

We reported on threats to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in the October/November 2019 *Leaves*. “In May 2018, Co-Plantiffs Center for Biological Diversity, American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Defense Council filed a lawsuit to defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) from the Trump administration’s efforts to ‘hand industry a blank check for bird deaths.’ (Sarah Rose, Audubon California, message 08/08/2019). The Migratory Bird Treaty Act is the landmark federal law protecting birds...” (*Threats to Birds and Our Environment-Audubon Responds*).

In 2019 in Congress, Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-California) with bipartisan cosponsors introduced H.R. 5552, the Migratory Bird Protection Act, “To amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to affirm that the Migratory Bird Treaty Act’s prohibition on the unauthorized take or killing of migratory birds includes incidental take by commercial activities, and to direct the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to regulate such incidental take, and for other purposes.” (U.S. Congress). This legislation is introduced while litigation to protect the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is being considered. Co-sponsors include Jared Huffman (CA-02), Ted Lieu (CA-33), Jerry McNerney (CA-09), Grace Napolitano (CA-32), along with Representatives from VA, OR, HI, MI, AZ, NM, NH, MN, Del, DC, FL, NJ and NY. Read more about this proposed legislation: <https://www.audubon.org/news/a-new-bill-aims-counter-rollback-bedrock-bird-law>.

Australian Fires – Impact on Life

As we follow the tragic events in Australia, including the impacts on wild creatures and birds, we will share a summary of our review and compilation of information in a future *Leaves* issue. The consensus seems to be consistent related to global

warming and climate change impacts as a primary factor in this continental catastrophe.

Roseland Creek Preserve – Santa Rosa City Council Jan. 14, 2020

The 20+ years of community effort to conserve lands (grassland, oak woodland, Roseland Creek and heavily impacted open space) in southwest Santa Rosa has been supported by Madrone Audubon, with information shared with our members. The Community Master Plan for the park put forth by City of Santa Rosa staff, was discussed at the Santa Rosa City Council on Jan. 14. Madrone Audubon’s President, Susan Kirks, and our Treasurer, Suzanne Reta, with many community members, appeared at the meeting to speak in favor of protecting the habitat and providing important environmental education opportunities for our local schools. The latter would introduce students to college and career pathways in ecology, environmental science, biology, and conservation. The agenda item was continued to another meeting, for further review and discussion. With others, we are exploring alternative locations for the desired turf field and sports courts in the City’s Master Plan, both of which are desired by the community, but are not appropriate activities for this property. An alternative ideal plan put forth by the long-time community advocates for the Nature Preserve is very appealing and supports native gardens, peace, passive recreation, restoration and education. Are you aware of any flat land that might be available in SW Santa Rosa for active athletics? If so, please contact us and help us work with the community and the City to ensure the Roseland Creek Preserve becomes a reality for families, students and the community, as well as wildlife, birds and the creek; help ensure the youth and adults have a great location for a new athletic field and sports court. Contact Susan Kirks with any ideas and suggestions (susankirks@sbcglobal.net, 707-241-5548).

Are you a National Audubon member?

Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.

(see membership form, back page)

2020 Bird-a-thon is coming soon!

Teams, prepare!
Contact Carolyn Greene to join or for info:
cgnpark@icloud.com or
805-443-7289



Madrone Audubon Society

Post Office Box 1911
Santa Rosa, California 95402

February/March 2020

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:** Position open
- Treasurer:** Suzanne Reta - vineline@sonic.net 829-7234
- Membership:** Questions to Susan Kirks (Position open) - susankirks@sbcglobal.net
- Conservation:** Diane Hichwa - dhichwa@earthlink.net 785-1922
- Renewable Energy Subcommittee:** Susan Kirks & Larry Broderick, Co-Chairs 241-5548
- Education Kits:** Barbara Novak - b.novak34@gmail.com 795-3996
- Programs:** Position open
- Junior Audubon:** Position open
- Publicity Chair & Investment Advisory Committee Chair:**
Nancy Hair - doghaimancy@yahoo.com 823-1073
- Website Editor:** Gordon Beebe - gordbb@gmail.com 583-3115
- Saturday Bird Walks:** Gordon Beebe - gordbb@gmail.com 583-3115
- Bird-A-Thon Coordinator:** Carolyn Greene - cgnpark@yahoo.com 805-443-7289

- Audubon Adventures:** Carolyn Greene - cgnpark@yahoo.com 805-443-7289
- Ex Officio Board Member:** Larry Broderick - northcoastraptor@gmail.com
- Leaves Editor:** Asenath LaRue - asenathlarue@gmail.com 608-293-1719
- Leaves Production:** Kris Hutchins - kris@hutchins1.net 477-8156
- Hospitality:** Position open
- Observations:** Dan Nelson - birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net 479-2918
- ACR Rep:** Bryant Hichwa - bhichwa@earthlink.net 785-1922
- Habitat Gardening:** Cheryl Harris - cheryleh70@gmail.com 294-5423
- Sonoma County Water Coalition Rep:** Paula Zerzan - pzerzan@comcast.net 935-1523
- BBA:** Gordon Beebe, gdbeebe@earthlink.net; Tiffany Erickson, tiffymm66@gmail.com
- 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 \$25 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>