



Madrone LEAVES

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

VOLUME 49 April/May 2016 Number 5

Celebrating 100 Years of Migratory Bird Conservation

This year we mark the centennial of the Convention between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds - also called the **Migratory Bird Treaty** - that was signed on August 16, 1916. This important treaty and formation of the National Park Service were two bright accomplishments in a year that saw the Western world in turmoil.

Today, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provide for protection of migratory bird species, birds in danger of extinction, and their active nests. It is illegal to possess or take any bird protected under the act without a depredation permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which includes protection of eggs, young, and nests in active use. Although the MBTA technically provides for protection of most bird species, it is typically applied as a mechanism to protect active nests of raptors and colonial nesting species through the breeding and nesting season such as the Cliff Swallows at the Petaluma Bridge and the colony of nesting herons and egrets on West 9th Street in Santa Rosa.

Need for Protection and Early Successes

A century ago, many migratory bird populations in North America were critically imperiled. Unregulated hunting of birds for commercial sale, coupled with loopholes in import and export laws, had

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GENERAL MEETING

Monday, April 18, 7:00PM
First United Methodist Church
1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

“International Bird Rescue: Life after Release”

Each year, International Bird Rescue (IBR) receives approximately 5000 aquatic birds between their two year-round wildlife clinics that serve Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay. IBR continually works to improve the care of wild aquatic birds whether coming into temporary captivity due to oiling, illness, parental separation, or injury.

Dr. Rebecca Duerr, clinical veterinarian and Director of Research at IBR’s two wildlife clinics, will tell us about IBR’s mission and some of the remarkable stories of individual birds after their recovery and release, through information garnered from resightings, restrandings, and band returns.



Black-crowned Night Heron
Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK

Monday, May 16
First United Methodist Church
1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

Potluck Dinner – 6:00 to 7:00PM

Bring a dish to share (entree, salad or dessert), and remember to bring your own plate, cup, and utensils. We will provide drinks; sorry, no alcoholic beverages allowed at the church. Help with set-up before the dinner (starting at about 5:15 PM), or with cleanup afterwards, is much appreciated. If you can lend a hand, please contact Linda Hammer at 823-4389 or gardenladylee@aol.com.

Awards, installation of officers, and speaker: 7:00 PM

“Seeing Rare Birds in California: Why our state list is the highest in the US at 660 species and how you can help find more”.

Joe Morlan will discuss recent expansion of the California State list and the contributions by active birders in detecting new species for the state. Joe will offer tips on finding and documenting rarities and how listing can help advance our understanding of distribution and status of some of the rarest birds in the state. Please join us for what promises to be an informative and entertaining presentation.



Mystery Shrike
Courtesy of Joe Morlan

Joe Morlan teaches Ornithology at City College of San Francisco. He has been a member of the California Bird Records Committee of Western Field Ornithologists since 1981 and served as committee chair. He received the prestigious American Birding Association’s Ludlow Griscom Award for outstanding contributions in regional ornithology in 2010 and is the coauthor of two books on birds in Northern California.



100 YEARS

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allowed massive and unsustainable harvesting of many bird species. Public awareness campaigns launched by Audubon societies in the early 1900s raised alarms over the drastic drop in bird numbers and over the need to stop killing birds for use in the commercial millinery trade and for market sale. The crisis came into sharp, tragic focus with the plight of two once-numerous North American species, the passenger pigeon and the Carolina parakeet. The world's last passenger pigeon died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914; the last Carolina parakeet perished at the same zoo in 1918.

The most obvious success story resulting from the MBTA is the Snowy Egret, which was hunted almost to extinction for its delicate feathers before early conservationists like the Audubon Society, along with the federal government, stepped in to stop the slaughter. Since then the act has been expanded to include a wide variety of birds that live in or migrate through the United States, Canada, Mexico, and beyond.

New Challenges

For nearly 100 years, the MBTA has served as one of our country's bedrock environmental protections, but a recent ruling by a federal court of appeals (see U.S. v Citgo) could greatly limit its power to safeguard birds. Many of the problems birds face today—wind turbines, high-tension power lines, communications towers, and the like—are relatively new. The USFWS wants to strengthen implementation of the MBTA to cover these and other hazards to birds. Currently, enforcement of the act is arbitrary and difficult, but its existence continues to provide a legal

context for the Audubon Society and other conservation organizations to challenge companies whose activities pose threats to migratory birds to take action to reduce that risk.

Madrone Audubon and the MBTA

Gordon Beebe, Madrone's chapter president, has emphasized the importance of the MBTA for local efforts to conserve and protect bird species. The relevance of the MBTA to the Petaluma Cliff Swallow situation is explained by Susan Kirks, who coordinates Madrone Audubon's efforts on this project:

"The public interest law firm of Meyer Glitzenstein & Eubanks LLC of Washington, D.C., has provided valuable expertise in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in assisting the Animal Legal Defense Fund in representing Plaintiffs in the 2013 litigation against the Federal Highway Transportation Administration and Cal Trans. The litigation, filed to address tragic and unnecessary deaths of migratory Cliff Swallows trapped in netting at the Petaluma River Bridge, is in the third year of a Settlement Agreement which was reached in 2014. "

Another local challenge to the MBTA is the Altamont Wind Energy farm near San Francisco which has created controversy over the number of birds killed by older wind turbines. After Bay Area Audubon chapters – including Madrone Audubon - pushed for improvements, newer turbines have been installed which are killing fewer birds. Madrone is also watchful of alternative energy projects in Sonoma County and their potential impact on wildlife.

This year, Madrone Audubon and partnering local conservation groups hosted a screening of the documentary film The Messenger about current threats to migrating songbirds. See page 7 for a report on this screening and everyday action steps to ease the path for birds.

View from Above

Can you imagine migrating birds' view from the air? Day or night, landing must

be frightening. How can they possibly know that hundreds – even thousands of feet below – humans, through Madrone Audubon and like-minded conservation organizations, are working hard today, much as their predecessors did in 1916, to protect the Pacific Flyway in Sonoma County and throughout the North Coast? The sight of birds on the wing is the reward that fuels these efforts.

By Jann Eyrich, with assistance from Diane Hichwa and Asenath LaRue. Sources for this article include: Madrone Audubon – see February/March 2016 issue of Leaves; California Audubon - www.audubon.org/news/the-migratory-bird-treaty-act-explained and www.ca.audubon.org/node/23401 re U.S. v. CITGO; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/RegulationsPolicies/mbta/MBTANDX.HTML; and National Geographic Society - www.voices.nationalgeographic.com/2016/03/03/obama-trudeau-summit-chance-celebrate-conservation/

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Members Encouraged to Volunteer for the Madrone Board

by Gordon Beebe

Madrone Audubon Society was founded 49 years ago by a group of individuals dedicated "to speak up for the wildlife that was losing its local habitat" in Sonoma County. It has continued all these years through a succession of like-minded people, who have taken the time out of their other activities to serve on the board or other committees. Countless hours have been spent in these endeavors, providing services to both the birds and to our human community. In order to continue our work, we need your help. Several board positions have opened up in the last few months. As your current president, I will be completing my two-year term this coming May, then continuing to serve as Past-President for the next year.

Dear Members – if you prefer to receive *Leaves* in PDF format, just email your request to:
info@madroneaudubon.org



MADRONE BOARD

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In May, the following elected positions will be open: **President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Corresponding Secretary.** Our hope is that by the time you get this in the mail or online, some of these positions will be filled, but as it stands now, we need several members to step up and take a turn.

If you care about the services that Madrone Audubon provides, and you have time and some experience with any of the listed positions, please consider volunteering for one of these positions on the board. We could use your help!

To volunteer, or if you have questions, contact any of the board members serving on the Nominating Committee: Gordon Beebe, gdbeebe@earthlink.net, Diane Hichwa, dhichwa@earthlink.net, Janeann Erickson, erickson@ap.net, or Asenath LaRue, asenathlarue@gmail.com.

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Position Opening: Vice-President

We are looking for a new Vice-President to assist the President in carrying out his/her duties. The Vice-President has this time as an understudy and may take on some projects as asked by the President, but the primary responsibilities are to help and learn, and to preside at meetings in the absence of the President. He/she should assume the Chairship of one of the Standing Committees. In the past, the Vice-President has attended Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC) meetings, which are held quarterly. The term of the Vice-President is limited to 2 years, then continuing as President. This is a commitment, but if it sounds like something you would like to do to help our chapter, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members (see “*Members Encouraged to Volunteer for the Madrone Board,*” above).

Looking to the Future – Nurturing a Passion for Nature

Madrone Audubon has a strong commitment to providing opportunities for children and young adults to learn about birds, other wildlife, and natural habitats. Junior Audubon outings and the annual Lincoln School bird festival are two of the best ways a young person can learn about birds and wild habitats first hand. Do you have young friends who love nature – or might, if they knew more about it? Check out the opportunities below!

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Junior Audubon Walks and Events

by Janet Bosshard and Janeann Erickson

Bodega Bay Jr. Audubon Bird Walk Saturday, April 16, 9 AM to Noon

Take the East Shore Road (the Bodega Head turnoff), then turn right at the stop sign, and continue 0.3 miles to the unpaved parking lot on the right. Park on the side closest to the road.

We will meet and greet, then head out to Bodega Head to search for ocean and cliff feeding birds. We will visit Campbell’s Cove and Hole in the Head looking for passerines and more water birds. Birds will be in spring breeding plumage and easier to identify this time of year. We will scope out birds along the exposed mudflats of the Bay, watch for shore birds, and will also check Owl Canyon for song birds.

Wear layers and be prepared for changing weather conditions as fog, wind, and sun are all possible through the day. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Janet Bosshard, (707) 526-5883.

Spring Lake Jr. Audubon Bird Walk Saturday, May 14, 9:00 to 11:00 AM

Use the main entrance to Spring Lake Park off Channel Drive in Santa Rosa. We will meet and greet at the parking lot at the foot of the hill near the swimming lagoon.

We will take a walk, looking for song birds and the lake’s water birds. Spring Lake is a wonderful nesting habitat for breeding birds. We can listen quietly to hear their spring songs. Bring your binoculars, if you have them, and also, a small pack to hold some drinking water. Wear walking shoes and layers to prepare for cool morning temperatures. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Janet Bosshard, (707) 526-5883.

Fun Day at the Leveque Museum

In February, Junior Audubon visited Peter Leveque’s home museum. Pete set up a display of mammal and bird skulls, with challenging questions for the group, and children and their parents worked together to figure out the answers. We then walked down to his



*Jr. Audubon Leveque Museum
Courtesy of Janet Bosshard*

back yard nature ‘classroom,’ where the juniors looked carefully underneath boards, discovering salamanders, ants, and earthworms. Pete climbed a ladder to an owl box to see if the Screech Owl had begun nesting yet. All along, the group was entertained by Pete’s many stories. Drawing on his background as an instructor at Santa Rosa Junior

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JUNIOR AUDUBON

Continued from page 3

College, Pete quizzed the group about the connections between the different animal species, the feeding habits of animals, etc., encouraging the juniors' reasoning skills. The morning was a great learning experience for us all.

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Bird Festival at Lincoln School

by Janeann Erickson

Madrone Audubon's annual Bird Festival at Lincoln School will be held on Wednesday, May 4th.

Volunteers are needed to help with the many activities planned for this half-day event, which include art and craft projects, classroom games, viewing birds through scopes and binoculars, and activities in the school garden. Lincoln School is located just one block from the West 9th Street nesting site of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Cattle Egrets and Black-Crowned Night Herons, and visiting this rookery is a highlight of every Bird Festival day. Activities also include a visit from Santa Rosa Bird Rescue volunteers with their resident bird ambassadors and presentations by local naturalist and photographer Tom Reynolds.

If you can help with this special event, please contact Janet Bosshard, bossard@sonic.net, or Janeann Erickson, erickson@ap.net.

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YES ON AA for a Clean + Healthy Bay

by Diane Hichwa

What an exciting time it was to be there, October 25, 2015, celebrating

Sea Change at Sears Point and watching the levee breached. Water started over the dirt in a trickle, then a gush, then a torrent. And it poured and poured and poured in, flowing continuously into the channels of the re-instated marsh. This project works to reclaim 1000 acres of tidal marsh sealed off from the Bay for 140 years. Search online and you can watch it as it happened. Some shorebirds were already there to watch as well!

Projects such as these can take years and many organizations, agencies, and hands to make it happen. But SUCH a happening it is!

Now we have a historic opportunity. Bay Area voters will have a chance in June to approve a \$12/year parcel tax that will restore 35,000 acres of wetlands -- critical habitat for birds and wildlife, as well as a buffer for sea level rise. Audubon California is among the groups supporting this visionary plan.

Madrone is encouraging YOUR SUPPORT of the measure -- only \$1 a month per parcel that we are being asked to contribute as landowners and residents of this Greater Bay Area. Please vote YES when you vote on June 7 for the "Clean and Healthy Bay" Parcel Tax, Measure AA.

Department of Corrections...

Our reporting of the CBC post-count dinner team in the February-March 2016 *Leaves* (under "Madrone Audubon fields over 137 Volunteers for the 2016 CBC") was incomplete. We are most grateful to *everyone* on that team --- Linda Hammer, Susan Kirks, Marguerite Li, Claudia Norby and Liz King.

Coastal Commission Transparency – Assembly Bill 2002

Over the years, Madrone Audubon has seen strong and serious efforts made by the California Coastal Commission to protect our coast, locally and beyond. Let's help to keep it that way. Join us in supporting the legislative initiative (sponsored by Sonoma County's Assembly Member Marc Levine) to require lobbyists to register when conducting business with the California Coastal Commission. To learn more, see www.ca.audubon.org/node/24451.

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49th Annual Christmas Bird Count – Final Results Are In

Thirty-nine birding groups comprised of 137 volunteers took to the field for Madrone Audubon's West Sonoma County CBC on a chilly and damp December 27, 2015, and together, recorded a total of 36,928 individual birds and 176 species (compared to 38,738 individuals and 185 species in the 2014 count). As noted in the preliminary report in the February-March *Leaves* chilling cold was the likely culprit behind the lower numbers. Weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of volunteers, in the field or at the post-count dinner, and we are already looking forward to the 50th Madrone Audubon CBC (yes, 50th!) to be held on January 1st, 2017.

The Christmas Bird Count continues to set the bar for citizen science in support of birds. Thanks go to Stacy Li and Peter Leveque for coordinating the 2015 Madrone CBC, to leaders of each birding group, to the many individuals and entities who opened their land to counters or otherwise provided support, to volunteers who organized and staffed

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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.

April 2016 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, April 2, 8:00 AM to Noon

CRANE CREEK REGIONAL PARK. Bird Walk. Take Rohnert Park Expressway east from 101, then turn south onto Petaluma Hill Road, then 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. Leader: Bill Doyle, 483-8773.

Wednesday, April 6, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Gordon Beebe at gdbeebe@earthlink.net.

Saturday, April 16, 8:00 AM to Noon

SANTA ROSA CREEK at WILLOWSIDE ROAD. Bird Walk. A short walk, but an intense birding experience. 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.

Saturday, April 16, 9:00 AM to Noon

JUNIOR AUDUBON EVENT – BODEGA BAY SPRING BIRD WALK.

Take the East Shore Road (Bodega Head turn-off), then right at the stop sign; continue 0.3 miles to the unpaved equestrian parking lot on the right. Park on the side closest to the road. Leader: Janet Bosshard 707-526-5883. For more information, see page 3.

Monday, April 18, 7:00 PM

GENERAL MEETING. First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. “International Bird Rescue: Life after Release.” This is a free event and all are welcome.

Wednesday, April 20, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

BODEGA BAY. Bird Walk at Bodega Bay Harbor and environs. To meet the group, drive north on Highway 1 in the town of Bodega Bay. On the edge of town, turn left at East Shore Road (the Bodega Head turnoff), then turn right at the stop sign, and continue 0.3 miles to the unpaved parking lot on the right. The group will search the harbor and adjacent seas and woodlands for birds, including Doran County Park. Weather permitting, the group will eat a picnic lunch at the Westside County Park on the west side of the harbor. A Sonoma County park permit or \$7 entrance fee is required for both Westside and Doran County Parks. Leader: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

Saturday, April 30, 7:30 AM to Noon

ANNADEL STATE PARK, CHANNEL DRIVE. Bird Walk. Meet in the large dirt parking lot on Channel Drive at the trailhead to the Cobblestone Trail. We will walk along Channel Drive and back; later, we may drive in to the parking lot at the very end of Channel Drive. The park has an entry fee of \$8. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

**Are you a
National Audubon
member?**

Please consider joining
our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.

(see membership form, back page)





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.

May 2016 calendar

Wednesday, May 4, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Gordon Beebe at gdbeebe@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, May 4

BIRD FESTIVAL AT LINCOLN SCHOOL. Bird appreciation and nature activities at Lincoln Elementary School, 850 W. 9th Street, Santa Rosa. For more information, see page 4.

Saturday, May 7, 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM

PINE FLAT ROAD. Bird Walk. A bird-rich outing, exploring the length of Pine Flat Road. We will meet at the first bridge on Pine Flat Road, just east of its intersection with Hwy 128, north of Healdsburg, then combine into as few cars as possible. Bring lunch. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

JUNIOR AUDUBON EVENT – SPRING LAKE BIRD WALK. Join us to scope out breeding birds at Spring Lake. Meet at the main parking lot, near the swimming lagoon. There is a \$7.00 entrance fee, or use your annual pass. Leader: Janet Bosshard 707-526-5883. For more information, see page 3.

Monday, May 16, 6:00 to 8:30 PM

ANNUAL MEETING and POTLUCK. First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. Join us to share good food and conversation and to recognize special contributions by Madrone Audubon members this past year. Dinner is followed at 7:00 PM by the general meeting and speaker: “Seeing Rare Birds in California: Why our state list is the largest in the US at 660 species and how you can help find more.”

Wednesday, May 18, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

BODEGA BAY. Bird Walk at Bodega Bay Harbor and environs. To meet the group, drive north on Highway 1 in the town of Bodega Bay. On the edge of town, turn left at East

Shore Road (the Bodega Head turnoff), then turn right at the stop sign, and continue 0.3 miles to the unpaved parking lot on the right. The group will search the harbor and adjacent seas and woodlands for birds, including Doran County Park. Weather permitting, the group will eat a picnic lunch at the Westside County Park on the west side of the harbor. A Sonoma County park permit or \$7 entrance fee is required for both Westside and Doran County Parks. Leader: Tom McCuller, t.sisyphus@comcast.net, 707-546-1812.

Saturday, May 21, 7:15 AM to 3:00 PM

NORTH GEYSERS ROAD. Bird Walk. This trip visits a very rich and underappreciated area of Sonoma County. We expect birds not seen on other trips, with lots of breeding activity. Meet at the Park and Ride lot adjacent to the PGE substation on River Road, just west off Hwy 101. We will need to combine into as few cars as possible, as parking is very limited along the Rd. Bring lunch. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115

Saturday, June 4, 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM

WILLOW CREEK and DUNCAN’S MILLS. Bird Walk. One of our most productive bird walks. Meet at the junction of Highway 1 and 116, at the triangular parking area at the stop sign near the north end of the Russian River Bridge on Highway 1 (Coast Highway). Bring lunch. Leader: Gordon Beebe, 583-3115.

Support your favorite Bird-a-Thon team – it’s not too late to pledge

Have you been meaning to call in a pledge of support for one of the industrious teams of Bird-a-Thon field observers, but don’t know how to get in touch with team leaders? Contact BAT coordinator, Marcia Johnson, owlsnesttwo@att.net or 707-829-3808. Funds raised through Bird-a-Thon support Madrone’s local education and conservation programs.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

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the post-count dinner, to Night Owl Catering, to all the volunteer counters, and to the birds who graced the day.

For results of West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Counts from previous years, visit the Madrone Audubon webpage at MadroneAudubon.org and navigate to the National Audubon's CBC search feature. The code for our count is CAWS. Complete results for the 2015 count will be posted there later in the year.

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The Messenger – a timely warning

by *Tiffany Erickson*

A lively crowd of about 150 people joined us for a screening of *The Messenger: Imagine a World Without Birdsong* at the Summerfield Cinemas in Santa Rosa on February 18th. Madrone Audubon and our partners (Native Songbird Care and Conservation, Redwood Regional Ornithological Society, Bird Rescue Center of Santa Rosa, and International Bird Rescue) thank all who were able to attend.

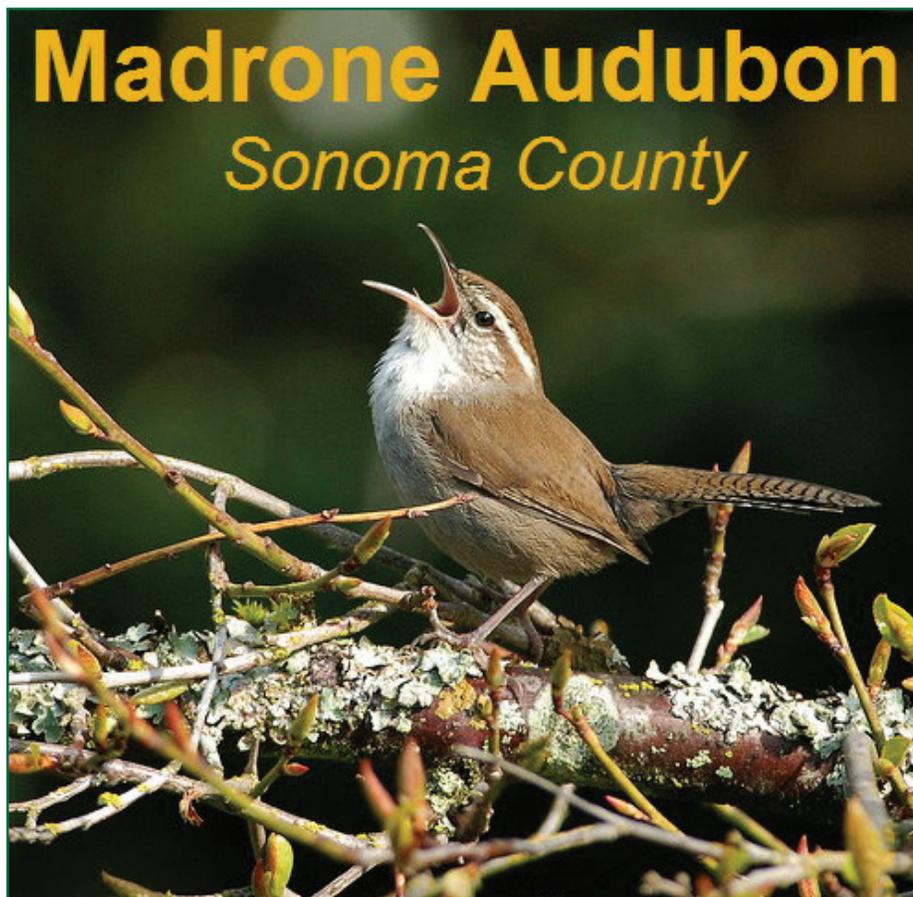
The documentary took us on a journey that was both beautiful and provocative. It provided an artful investigation into

the causes of mass songbird depletion and also introduced some of the compassionate people who are working to turn the tide. Stunning visual images revealed how the problems facing songbirds also pose daunting implications for our planet and for us.

It was hard not to feel disheartened and powerless while experiencing these stories and images. But after the screening, members of the audience and experts from the partnering bird conservation organizations offered tangible things that individuals and communities can do to help songbirds. Here are a few important actions that each of us can take:

- **Keep cats indoors.** See www.abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors for detailed information about this critical issue.
- **Make windows safer, day and night.** The program *Lights Out for Birds* works with building managers to turn off excess lighting during bird migrations months. To make sure that your windows and home are visible to birds so they can avoid collisions, see www.audubon.org/conservation/project/lights-out and www.allaboutbirds.org/why-birds-hit-wuindows-and-how-you-can-help-prevent-it.
- **Citizen Science – lend your eyes and ears to the cause.** Participate in a breeding bird survey or atlas or join a Christmas Bird Count. Join Project Feeder Watch or Hummingbirds at Home. Report your bird sightings to eBird.
- **Create a haven in your backyard for birds and wildlife.** Native plantings are especially beneficial.
- **Drink bird friendly coffee.** See www.birdsandbeans.com.

The next local screenings of *The Messenger* will be at the Sonoma International Film Festival: April 1, 2:30 PM or April 3, 9:30 AM. www.sonomafilmfest.org/



Find us on Facebook for conservation alerts, birdwalk reminders, special announcements and more.



Coastal Stewards

by Diane Hichwa

We come in all sizes, shapes and ages. Our volunteers include retirees who want a reason to spend an hour at the ocean (looking for Black Oystercatchers on a nest, counting every seabird sitting on Gualala Point Island, or checking Pelagic Cormorant nests for eggs or chicks), plus those still working who can fit an hour or two into their schedules, PLUS undergraduate student interns who want experience in environmental monitoring. The Stewardship Task Force (www.madroneaudubon.org/committees-stewardship-task-force.php) focuses on The Sea Ranch area but has assisted efforts from Bodega Bay to Jenner to Fort Ross and beyond.

For two summers several **student interns** have given us their energy and enthusiasm. They go back to Pomona College to finish data analysis on their area of interest and then present their findings in a poster session at their school or at a seabird conference. One topic selected was “Common Murres in Uncommon Numbers: The Effect of the Resurgence of Common Murres

on Brandt’s Cormorants Nesting Behavior;” another chose “The Bigger the Beak, the Faster you Seek: Provisioning Patterns of Pelagic Cormorants.” The Task Force volunteers and the students get to participate with researchers from the UC Santa Cruz Center for Ocean Health in a yearly survey of the Intertidal Zone. Since testing it out on us, the Center is developing a protocol to expand the use of citizen scientists with these surveys.

With the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary extension north of Bodega Bay to Point Arena, opportunities to do Beach Watch surveys and more research are becoming available. Beach Watch volunteers check once a month for birds and marine mammals (live and dead), wrack composition, signs of oil, beach use by people and by boats off shore. Their research has supported oil spill restoration and damages assessed.

So if the ocean calls to you—think about joining a volunteer effort to learn what we need to protect. For more, see www.madroneaudubon.org/conservation-citizen-science.php.



Interns monitoring seabirds

Courtesy of Diane Hichwa

A Good Day for Birds at the Annual Waterbird Festival

by Susan Kirks and Kathleen Barker

The 3rd Annual Waterbird Festival was held on Saturday, February 6th at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center in Tiburon. It was a beautiful day, and



Waterbird Festival

Courtesy of Susan Kirks

close to 500 people attended this year. California Audubon and the Madrone, Marin and Napa Solano Audubon chapters each hosted displays and enjoyed visiting with the public. We were pleasantly surprised to see three of our long-time Madrone Audubon colleagues: Daphne Smith, Sandy Martensen and Judi Barker.

Festival events included naturalist-led bird walks, speakers, bird-themed children’s activities, waterbird sketching, beach cleanup, kayak outings, a photo exhibit of the winning 2015 Audubon Photography Awards, and many informational booths. There really was something for everyone.

Birds were in abundance, too, including a Great Egret that appeared about 40 feet from our table and a brief Peregrine Falcon flyover. We highly recommend attending the Annual Waterbird Festival in Tiburon next year, but RSVP early for events and activities you’d like to enjoy, as some fill to capacity quickly. It’s a family friendly festival. Thanks to Casey



WATERBIRD FESTIVAL

Continued from page 8

Arndt, National Audubon and Audubon California for providing this wonderful venue and day of gathering for birds and people --- very enjoyable.

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A note from *Leaves* co-editors...

As Madrone Audubon approaches its 50th year, *Leaves* would like to celebrate with a year-long tribute to its members who have made significant contributions to the protection of the natural world and wildlife – especially birds – in Sonoma County. Do you have stories, names, or photographs to share for this anniversary series? Please contact Asenath (asenathlarue@gmail.com,; 707-528-3648) or Jann (jann.madrone@gmail.com, 707-235-4160) with your ideas and contributions for this project.

New Members

Geyserville

Wes Stokes

Petaluma

Davis Airey

San Anselmo

Patricia & Richard Diluzio

Santa Rosa

Jann Eyrich
Vicki Haddad

Sebastopol

Judy Johnson & Sam Siggins

Sonoma

Katie & Lee Farrell

Donation

In memory of

Jean Tonascia

by Betty Groce

Here's an excerpt from the first edition of *Leaves*, February 1967:

"Slides of local birds and flowers will be presented by Mrs. Merrel (Alice) Ackley of St. Helena. 'Excellent' is the report from those already having enjoyed a presentation by Mrs. Ackley."

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OUT & ABOUT

Spring Birding at Poff Ranch

Saturday, April 9, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Landpaths hosts a birding hike at Poff Ranch, just South of Red Hill, along the Sonoma Coast Registration required. See www.landpaths.org/eventdetails.aspx?EventId=28092 for details.

Arena Theater Ocean Film Festival

Saturday, April 9, 2:00 to 8:30 PM

In partnership with the San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival, this day of films explores endangered species and threats to fisheries impacting our vibrant coastal communities, all the while presenting solutions to protect the health of our ocean environment. A 'Whales and Wildflower Walk' starts the day at 10:00 AM at Salt Point. www.arenatheater.org

Birdwatching and Natural History Walks in the Laguna de Santa Rosa

Saturday, April 16, and Sunday, May 22, 8:30 AM -1:00 PM

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

Fee: \$45 per walk. Pre-registration required.

Visit parts of the Laguna not generally open to the public to watch for resident songbirds and colorful migrants. Leader Lisa Hug is a past president of Redwood Region Ornithological Society and has recently completed an updated Bird Checklist for the Laguna de Santa Rosa. See www.lagunafoundation.org/laguna_walks_classes.shtml.

Birdathon for Youth - Pt Reyes Bird Festival *Sunday, April 24. 10:00AM - 1:00PM*

Join Sonoma Birding at the height of the 2016 spring migration within the Point Reyes National Seashore and surrounding areas for a half day Birdathon event for youth (ages 8-16) in honor of the National Parks 100th Anniversary. Check www.sonomabirding.com/ for details.

California Brown Pelican Roost and Coastal Access Point Survey

Saturday, May 7, 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Removed from the Endangered Species List in 2009, the California Brown Pelican subspecies (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) has recently experienced poor breeding success and unusual mortality events, raising questions about its conservation status. It is more critical than ever to track the distribution, abundance, and population structure of Brown Pelicans as their ocean and coast environment changes. Pelicans at roost will be counted, aged, and photographed, and data will be reported through a special portal set up in eBird. In addition to roosts, participants can report observations at other coastal access points within the same time frame. See www.ca.audubon.org/brownpelicansurvey for information or contact Ariana Rickard, Coastal Chapter Network Manager, Audubon California, at arickard@audubon.org. Please note that there are only a few small roosts in Sonoma County. If you would like to volunteer to survey, please e-mail Diane Hichwa, Madrone Conservation Committee chair, dhichwa@earthlink.net.

Endangered Species Day

Friday, May 20, 2016

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will observe Endangered Species Day on May 20th to recognize the national conservation effort to protect endangered species and their habitats. Check www.fws.gov/endangered/ESDay/index.html for information about endangered species and what you can do to help. To locate events in your area in honor of Endangered Species Day, go to www.endangered.org/campaigns/endangered-species-day/.



Madrone Audubon Society

Post Office Box 1911
Santa Rosa, California 95402

April/May 2016

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



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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.

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Native Songbird Care & Conservation 484-6502
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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, renew your Madrone membership or make a contribution to Madrone.

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