



# Madrone LEAVES

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

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## The Black Oystercatcher: Our Coastal “Canary in the Coal Mine”

*Compiled by Diane Hichwa with Oystercatcher material contributed by Dorothy Gregor of the Stewardship Task Force*

Birders visiting the rocky shores of our North Coast are always pleased to catch sight of an all-black shorebird, with pinkish legs, a large orange-red bill and an eye ring to match, poking through the rocks at the water line. It's a Black Oystercatcher, a resident of our coast year round known as an ABOY in birding lingo.

Aside from admiring its deliberate movements and slightly clownish appearance, experts have recently taken to studying this shorebird as a species of special concern. It is our “canary in the coal mine,” likely to be sensitive to global climate change. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has identified it as a Focal Species for priority conservation action, due to small global population size, restricted range, threats to preferred habitat, lack of baseline data to assess conservation status, and other factors that may limit long-term viability.

The Black Oystercatcher is a large, long-lived shorebird occurring uncommonly from the Aleutian Islands to Baja California with a currently estimated global population of about 10,000 individuals. They are most abundant from Alaska to British Columbia. The California and Baja California population size is roughly estimated at 1000 individuals. They are completely dependent on marine shorelines, favoring sheltered areas of high tidal variation that support abundant limpets and mussels; despite their name, they feed largely on California Mussels.

As usual, it's human activities that threaten the Oystercatcher. Humans sometimes interfere with nesting on islands or coastal

rocks, and another major threat is the introduction on islands of predators such as rats. Because of its small population size, Oystercatchers are especially at risk from large-scale disturbances such as oil spills. In California ninety-three percent of foraging is in areas washed intermittently by waves because mussels washed regularly by waves open more often and are easier targets for the Oystercatcher. So, if our



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Photo by Gordon Beebe

### ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER

Monday, May 16, 6:00 PM

First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

#### PROGRAM

#### **Awards and Installation of Officers “Bringing Back the Burrowing Owl”**

Wildlife advocate and conservationist Scott Artis has made it his mission to find ways to protect the Burrowing Owl in California.

Already listed as endangered in several states, Burrowing Owl numbers are in a stunning decline. Scott's presentation will show us the progress being made to save the species, the obstacles yet to be overcome, and some ways by which we can help, too.

The Burrowing Owl makes its nest in underground burrows in dry, open areas with low vegetation. Since such habitat is easily subject to bulldozing and backhoeing from farmers and developers, this little owl is under severe pressure from habitat destruction here in the Bay Area.

Scott holds degrees in microbiology, molecular biology, and environmental science. He created the Burrowing Owl Conservation Network, and he has a website, [www.journowl.com](http://www.journowl.com), from which he catalogues his efforts to save the species.

**NOTE:** For the potluck dinner, please 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 to set up before the dinner starting at about 5 PM (or to clean up afterwards) is much appreciated. If you can lend a hand, please contact Linda Hammer at 823-4389 or [linda@devinedelights.com](mailto:linda@devinedelights.com).



# calendar

All walks and 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.

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

**Sunday, May 1, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**MAYACAMAS FIELD TRIP SERIES.** Digital Nature Photography for the Eco-Tourist with Bryant Hichwa. The photo workshop will include tips for the semi-professional nature photographer as well as fundamentals for the beginner. Children OK under careful supervision. For details, see the April *Leaves*, or the MAS website.

**Wednesday, May 4, 8:30 AM to Noon**

**SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK.** Bird Walk. Parking fee (\$6) for non-permit holders. From Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa, go east on Hoen Avenue, turn left on Newanga Avenue, turn right inside the park entrance gate and meet in the parking lot near the restrooms at the top of the hill. For information, contact Tom McCuller at sisyphus@sonic.net or 546-1812.

**Wednesday, May 4, 7:00 PM**

**BOARD MEETING.** Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Bob Speckels at robertspeckels@yahoo.com.

**Saturday, May 7, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**WILLOW CREEK, DUNCAN'S LANDING, JENNER.** One of our most productive bird walks—not to be missed! Meet at the parking lot of Sizzling Tandoor Indian Restaurant in Bridgehaven at the south end of the Russian River Bridge on Highway 1 (Coast Highway). Informal carpools meet at 7:00 AM at Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District Office, 747 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa. The parking lot is behind the office (access from Carrillo Street). Bring lunch. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

**Sunday, May 8, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM**

**MAYACAMAS FIELD TRIP SERIES.** Botanist and ecologist Peter Warner leads a plant walk. Walk will be slow to moderate; please bring field guides, hand lenses, cameras. Children OK with supervision. For details, see the April *Leaves*, or the MAS website.

**Thursday, May 12, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM**

**MAYACAMAS FIELD TRIP SERIES.** Birdwatchers' Walkabout on the Mayacamas Sanctuary and Pine Flat Road led by Tom McCuller of Madrone Audubon. For details, see the April *Leaves*, or the MAS website.

**Saturday, May 14, 9:00 AM**

**SHOLLENBERGER PARK.** Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads a nature walk. Meet at the first kiosk. Rain cancels. Contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577.

**Monday, May 16, 6:00 PM**

**ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER.** We will present awards and install new officers for the 2011-2012 year. Guest speaker Scott Artis of the Burrowing Owl Conservation Network will talk on "Bringing Back the Burrowing Owl." At the First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. Please see the front page announcement. The public is always invited to attend these programs.

**Wednesday, May 18, 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM**

**SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK.** Bird Walk. From Kenwood on Highway 12, go east on Adobe Canyon Road to the park entrance and parking lot (\$6

parking fee). Bring portable lunch and liquids—we will lunch away from cars. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, or 546-1812.

**Saturday, May 21, 7:30 AM to Noon**

**ANNADEL STATE PARK, CHANNEL DRIVE.** This short stretch of road has some of the best spring birding in the county. Meet in the Annadel State Park parking lot (\$6 fee), at the very end of Channel Drive. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

**Saturday May 21, 10:00 AM**

**SHOLLENBERGER PARK.** Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads two children/family nature walks. One-to-two hours, dependent on age of children. Meet at the first kiosk. Rain cancels. For the children/family walk in English, contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577; for the walk in Spanish, contact Connie Peabody at 338-2237.

**Thursday, May 26, 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM**

**SALMON CREEK ROAD. BIRD WALK.** Meet in Bodega at the junction of Bodega Highway and Salmon Creek Road, on the north side of Bodega Highway, opposite the Bodega Post Office. Bring lunch and liquids. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisyphus@sonic.net, or 546-1812.

**Saturday, May 28, 7:30 AM to Noon**

**SPRING LAKE BIRDERS' CHALLENGE.** Rev up your competitive juices for a spirited morning of birding at Spring Lake. We'll break into two teams, bird the lake from opposite directions, and meet at noon to compare notes and numbers over lunch. Parking fee (\$6) for non-permit holders. From Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa, go east on Hoen Avenue, turn left on Newanga Avenue, turn right inside the park entrance gate, and meet in the parking lot near the restrooms at the top of the hill. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

**Saturday May 28, 9:00 AM**

**ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA.** Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads a walk at the Ellis Creek ponds. Go to the end of Cypress Drive and through the gates. Parking lot is on the left. Rain cancels. Contact Bob Dyer at 763-2934.

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

**PINE FLAT ROAD.** A bird-rich outing that we look forward to every year. We will meet at the first bridge on Pine Flat Road, just east of its intersection with Highway 128, north of Healdsburg. We will combine into as few cars as possible. Please do not join us in an additional vehicle, after the trip has started, as a large number of cars negatively impacts the birding and the residents of the area. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 217-5103; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; Bob Speckels, 569-0563; and Ken Wilson, 775-2558.

**Sunday, June 5, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM**

**MAYACAMAS FIELD TRIP SERIES.** Dragonfly walk with Kathy and Dave Biggs. Please see announcement on page 5.

**Sunday, June 12, 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM**

**MAYACAMAS FIELD TRIP SERIES.** Plant walk with Lynn Houser, botanist and past president of the CNPS Milo Baker Chapter. Please see announcement on page 5.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There will be no mid-week bird walks in June, July or August.



## BLACK OYSTERCATCHER

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climate continues to change and warm and seas rise, the Oystercatcher's habitat and the source of its food will be impacted.

From Monterey to Mendocino Counties this year there is a breeding season survey to establish baseline numbers of density and abundance and to provide a population estimate for California. In addition to estimating population size, which is the priority action of the Conservation Action Plan, in the future the survey would assess reproductive outcomes at key sites and conduct banding studies.

Gathering the information is crucial to the success of the survey. We can all contribute to the "Citizen Science" being gathered here; a coastal walk can provide valuable information that will be welcomed and sincerely appreciated. You can submit it by email to Diane Hichwa at dhichwa@earthlike.net, or call her at 785-1922.

### What to look for and how to look: Some helpful hints about ABOY breeding activity

**If you can walk along the Sonoma coast in May and June we ask you to listen, look for, and report back to us.** These birds are often heard calling a loud "kee, kee ah" before being seen. We ask you to make note of any observations of: the number of birds, their locations, pair status and nests (if found). Behaviors observed might be: sleeping, standing, feeding, walking, preening, chasing, territorial display of head bowing, etc. They often feed by flipping over a large blade of seaweed to find the attached mollusk on the underside.

How far apart are they standing if two are seen? If two birds are less than 10 feet apart and not acting aggressively toward each other they are likely a pair, OR two birds acting aggressively toward a third adult also indicates pair status. A single adult sentinel standing near the top of a rock will often be "on watch" near its incubating mate. You have located a nest if you see any of the following behaviors:

- A sitting bird stands or flies off and cream-colored eggs are visible
- A bird flies off from a sitting position then returns to the exact same location and sits down again

- A second bird trades places with the first bird and sits in the exact same location (both males and females take turns incubating).



Photo by Craig Tooley

Oystercatchers don't go to a lot of trouble with their nests; they line a depression in the rocks above high tide with bits of shell and rock and that's it. They appreciate a nest with a view, the better to keep an eye out for predators such as gulls and the occasional Peregrine Falcon. Starting around late May you might see an Oystercatcher sitting on a nest and in June there may be gray-brown chicks in view.

The female usually lays one to three eggs and incubation ranges from 26-32 days. Both parents sit on the nest (not simultaneously, of course). Once hatched, the chicks leave the nest within hours of hatching and are soon following the parents to feeding areas. Chicks hatched first often take advantage of their later siblings by shouldering them aside to take food from a parent or even stealing from their smaller kin. It's tough out there on the rocks!

If a nest is found, describe the location by GPS or on a map and write a detailed description of nest location so that later it can be located by another observer. The key period for surveying the nests is the first week of June—official dates are June 2-5. If you have additional time to sur-

vey it can be June 9-12 or May 20-23. Contact Diane if you are interested in covering a particular area or being part of a team to do follow-up at possible nest sites.

For the USFWS Black Oystercatcher Conservation Plan go to:

[www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/Current-BirdIssues/Management/FocalSpecies/Plans/BLOY.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/Current-BirdIssues/Management/FocalSpecies/Plans/BLOY.pdf).

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## Agreement Reached in Altamont Pass to Save Birds

*By Mike Lynes, Golden Gate Audubon Society Conservation Director, reprinted from the March-April 2011 issue of The Gull.*

For more than 30 years, wind turbines in the Altamont Pass east of Livermore have been killing thousands of birds annually. In December 2010, Golden Gate Audubon signed an agreement with the largest turbine operator in the Altamont Pass to facilitate the removal of more than 2,000 old-generation turbines and replace them with fewer than 300 new-generation turbines that have less impact on most bird species.

Golden Gate Audubon joined Santa Clara Valley Audubon, Marin Audubon, Mt. Diablo Audubon, and Ohlone Audubon in the agreement with the California Attorney General's Office and NextEra Energy Inc. that requires NextEra to remove and replace its wind turbines in three phases over the next several years. All of NextEra's old turbines will be shut down before the end of 2015.

NextEra will install new turbines only after completing a comprehensive study of bird use and density in the area and undertaking a verifiable effort to site the turbines in areas that pose fewer risks to birds. The settlement also provides \$1.25 million for on-the-ground conservation of habitat to benefit birds affected by turbine operations in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) and \$1.25 million for research to better understand and protect species affected by turbine operations.

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### ALTAMONT PASS

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The new agreement implements recommendations from the Alameda County Scientific Review Committee, an independent body of scientists. The committee has repeatedly stated that the only way to significantly reduce avian mortality in the Altamont Pass is to remove old turbines.

The agreement also builds on the 2006 settlement that Golden Gate Audubon and its partners signed after suing Alameda County to prevent the reissuance of permits in the APWRA without environmental review. Golden Gate Audubon settled that lawsuit after extracting promises from the wind companies to reduce avian mortality by 50 percent within three years. When the reduction in bird kills did not occur, Golden Gate Audubon prepared to take further legal action to protect birds in the APWRA.

Last summer, the California Attorney General's Office and NextEra Energy approached the Audubon chapters and proposed negotiations to explore new solutions for the problem. NextEra put forward an aggressive schedule for removing the old turbines and replacing them with new ones, a process called "repowering." The new turbines are much more efficient, with a single turbine capable of generating as much power as 30 old-generation turbines.

The agreement is a significant step in the right direction in the APWRA. Studies in other repowered turbine fields in the APWRA indicate a reduction in mortality for most species of 60 to 80 percent. Yet, much work remains to be done. Golden Gate Audubon is working to persuade other turbine operators to repower and otherwise reduce environmental impacts from their operations. Also, where necessary, Golden Gate Audubon and its partners will challenge projects that fail to adequately protect local wildlife. We are also greatly concerned about impacts to other wildlife resulting from turbine operations, including the endangered California Tiger Salamander, the Red-legged Frog, and bats and are actively working with agencies such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service to address these impacts.

The progress we've made would not have been possible without the support of the other Audubon chapters, particularly Santa Clara Valley Audubon, and funders including the Weeden Foundation, Mary A. Crocker Trust, Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, Firedoll Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and Resources Legacy Fund.

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### BOOK REVIEW

*Bird Feathers*, by S. David Scott and Casey McFarland

Stackpole Books, 2010

*Reviewed by Gerald Moore*

A great new book has appeared to help birders and naturalists when they pick up a feather on the trail and ask, "What bird dropped this feather?"

*Bird Feathers* by Scott and McFarland is a new Stackpole Book that treats feathers from two points of view. The first 63 pages give us a general introduction to bird feathers. We start with a chapter on the evolution of feathers and then move into a short chapter about bird physiology so that we can appreciate how bird bodies have specialized many of their functions to make flight possible. Chapter Three deals with how feathers are shaped and how the shape of a bird's wing is influenced by its life style, or from the flip side – how a bird's migration patterns have influenced evolutionary changes in wing shape. The fourth chapter focuses on feather identification principles with a discussion of the effects of wing shape and the usual patterns of wing and tail feathers that permit flight.

By page 64 the book starts to look more like a classic bird book. Three hundred seventy-nine species are presented, either one or two per page. The presentation includes a photograph of wing and tail flight feathers from an individual bird. Not every flight feather of a bird is shown but enough are included to give a good representation of how the shape and size changes over the total feather array. In many cases some contour feathers are included. The length of each feather is indicated as well as the shape of the species wing and

a map of the species distribution in North America.

The quality of the photographs and drawings is excellent. The text is well written and easy to follow. The book (a paperback) is slightly larger than Sibley's *Western Birds* book, but is also slightly thinner with about the same final weight. It should be available in most bookstores. I purchased my copy at the Point Reyes National Seashore visitor's center.

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### MAS Officers for 2011-2012

Continuing officers President Bob Speckels and Vice-President Susan Kirks will be installed at our Annual Meeting on May 16. Discussions are "pending" with folks who have expressed interest in the Treasurer and Secretary positions, and we hope to fill these positions by the time of the May meeting.

Please remember that we need volunteers in several committee posts: Outreach, Junior Audubon and Publicity. If you are interested in helping in these areas, contact Bob Speckels at 569-0563 or at robertspeckels@yahoo.com.

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### Dept. of Corrections...

We omitted credits for three photos in the April issue of the *Leaves*: Bryant Hichwa sent us the flying Sandhill Crane photos and the fetching little Snowy Plover was provided by Craig Tooley. We appreciate their contributions!



Photo by Phyllis Schmitt



## CALIFORNIA'S WETLANDS NEED YOUR SUPPORT

*By Barbara Salzman, President of Marin Audubon, from the April 2011 issue of The Clapper Rail*

To fill the gap left by the federal court decision (Rapanos vs. US) the state of California has begun a process to assume regulatory authority over some types of wetlands. In the so-called Rapanos decision, the courts decided that the federal government does not have jurisdiction over so-called "isolated wetlands."

The proposal is for the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards to regulate those wetlands no longer regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps would continue regulating those areas that fit its definition of wetlands, and the Regional Boards would regulate those additional areas that meet the state's definition.



*Photo by Phyllis Schmitt*

California has more than 13 wetland ecological systems that occur in partial or total isolation from other water bodies. These systems, that include vernal pools and alkali sinks, no longer have any kind of regulation in California. The urgency for California to assume jurisdiction is underscored by the documented loss of these historic resources; 91% of the state's historic wetlands have been lost, more than in any other state.

The first step in assuming regulatory jurisdiction is for the state to adopt a broader definition of wetlands. The proposed definition is more inclusive than that used by the Corps. The definition provides that an area is a wetland if under normal circumstances it is saturated by ground water or inundated for a duration sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions; exhibits hydric substrate conditions; and either lacks vegetation or is dominated by hydrophytes (plants adapted to live in wet areas). In contrast, the Corps definition requires that the substrate be soil and requires a predominance of hydrophytes.

As part of the process of adopting the new regulatory program, the lead agency, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the agency with oversight authority over Regional Boards, will be preparing an Environmental Impact Report. The SWRCB has published a Scoping Notice and Initial Study, and is seeking comments from the public for issues to be addressed in the EIR.

The more inclusive definition and the potential for the state to assume regulatory authority has brought out the pro-development, anti-wetlands folks in force, opposing state assumption and trying to place stumbling blocks in the process.

MAS (Marin Audubon Society) has submitted comments supporting the broader wetlands definition proposed by the SWRCB and urged it move quickly to assume jurisdiction. We recommended that the program be based on a "no net loss" policy and include a requirement for a 2:1 mitigation ratio (creation of two acres of wetlands for the loss of each acre of wetlands) where wetland loss is unavoidable, and a requirement for 100-foot buffer zones around wetlands. We requested that the EIR address these provisions as being necessary for an effective wetlands regulatory program.

**You Can Help By Sending Comments to:** Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board, State Water Resources Control Board, P.O. Box 100 Sacramento, CA 95812-2000. Subject Line—Wetland Area Protection Policy and Regulation. Please feel free to address any or all of these issues in your comments. The comment deadline is May 10, 2011.

### Mayacamas Field Trips in June

*(Meet on Pine Flat Road between Red Winery Road and the Sausal Creek Bridge. For more information contact Suzanne at 829-7234.)*

### Dragonfly Walk

**Sunday, June 5, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM**

Kathy and Dave Biggs will help us find and identify the dragonflies found along Pine Flat road and through the sanctuary. Behavior and biology will be explained. We'll visit seeps, springs, ponds, creeks and end at the Russian River. Each habitat should present us with different Odonata (Dragonflies and Damselflies) fauna. Close focus binoculars are best. A ten-power or higher hand lens would be helpful. Please wear shoes and clothes that can get wet. OK for children over 12. Note: any rain cancels this easy hike.

### Late-season Wildflower Walk

**Sunday, June 12, 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM**

Lynn Houser, botanist and past president of the CNPS Milo Baker Chapter, will lead a hike to see what is blooming late season at Red Hill. Rare plants documented by Betty and Jack Guggolz will be identified, and serpentine plant communities, the Geysers pipeline, and post-fire growth will be topics of conversation as we trek up to see beautiful views of Alexander Valley and beyond. Kids welcome with parents; wear boots, bring binoculars, lunch, water and warm clothes and hat for possible changeable weather. Moderate elevation gain and activity.

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## Charles Allen's Hummingbird

**"Discovered" in the 1870s—  
in Marin County, California**

*By Rich Stallcup, PRBO Conservation Science Naturalist, from the Winter 2011 Observer*

The Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) is closely connected with the region that is home to PRBO.

For nesting, this species is almost a California endemic. The bulk of its world population breeds along coastal regions of the

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### CHARLES ALLEN

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state, with the rest in southwestern Oregon. There are two subspecies: *S.s. sasin* occupies that range and winters in northwestern Mexico, south to Sinaloa. The sedentary (non-migratory) *S.s. sedentarius* lives on at least five of the Channel Islands in what is called the Santa Barbara Group (though a fraction of that race winters on the adjacent California mainland in places like the Palos Verdes Peninsula).

Brilliantly colored and pugnacious males are the first spring migrant landbirds to arrive at our latitude, with the earliest ones in the last days of January, followed soon by females. Their blazingly iridescent throats and crowns amaze most humans who actually see them... and are irresistible to female birds that wander into a male's courtship territory.

A male usually centers his courtship territory on blossoming flowers (manzanita or currant, early; others as spring advances) or a water source, and he aggressively defends it against other male Allen's. As a passing or local female is attracted to the territory for its forage or water, the male will bedazzle her with flashes of his blazing plumage as he air-dances above her. It seems to work every time. Copulation takes place immediately, the fertilized female moves on, and the male waits for more opportunities.

Females then find places to build their nests, lay eggs (two, always two), and parent the young, alone. The males take no domestic responsibility, and after time passes and there is no more chance to procreate they go back to Mexico.

#### Mr. Allen

Who was the person who gave his name to this bird? In the fall of 1873, at the age of 32, Charles Andrew Allen took a job as "timber guard" on the Miller Ranch near Nicasio, Marin County, California. He had had little opportunity to gain formal education, but he brought along a childhood appreciation for birds and for collecting. So when not guarding timber and on days off, he collected, prepared, and mailed specimens to museums in the eastern U.S.

He must have been an excellent observer, because behavioral notes that accompanied many of his specimens contained "new" information still valid today.

One shipment of skins that Allen sent to ornithologist William Brewster in Massachusetts held a number of *Selasphorus* specimens—the bird then known only as Rufous Hummingbird. Allen's notes clearly suggested that the "green backs" among them had tail feathers of a different shape than did the "rufous-backs" and that the two might be different species. He also detailed behavior differences, observed in life.

The specimens were handed over to Henry Henshaw, who had collected in California, and he agreed with Allen. The two closely related species became separate, and Charles Allen's finding was honored in the "new" hummingbird's common name.

Charles remained close to the birds of this region. In the 1880s, he moved with his wife and three daughters to the San Geronimo Valley, also in Marin County's interior. The Maillard family had given them a cabin and a piece of land on their property there. The young Maillard brothers, Joseph and John, were amateur ornithologists who learned from Charles Allen's experience and later became accomplished field biologists themselves.

Charles Allen is long gone and barely remembered, but the hummingbird that bears his name is very much alive and full of energy.

### Computer Birding

If you would like to view a nesting Allen's Hummingbird, subspecies *S.s. sedentarius* as described in Rich Stallcup's article, go on the webcam at <http://phoebeallens.com/>. As of mid-April the female is sitting on a nest in a rosebush containing the requisite two eggs.

Webcams have folks across the United States checking in daily on nesting sites. In addition to the hummer, Auduboners have sent in some webcam addresses, see below. You can catch a quiet time or just happen to tune in when a parent relieves its mate for nest duty. Sorry about the ads—and remember to tune in early for different time zones or you'll see a dark screen!



#### Welcome New Friends of Madrone Audubon Society

##### Windsor

Marge Cunningham

##### Santa Rosa

Jonna Allen

##### Rohnert Park

Dale Trowbridge

##### Sebastopol

Ervin Curtis, Nancy Hair

##### Sonoma

Georgia Quadres

##### • Red-tailed Hawk:

[nytimes.com/cityroom](http://nytimes.com/cityroom)  
(3 eggs, parents sharing sitting duties)

##### • Bald Eagle:

[www.ustream.tv/decoraheagles](http://www.ustream.tv/decoraheagles)  
(2 chicks, big wind)

##### • Red-tailed Hawk:

[www.ustream.tv/channel/the-franklin-institute-haw-cam](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/the-franklin-institute-haw-cam)



## SPRING IDEAS

**GO ORIENTEERING!** Sharpen your map and compass skills at the Bay Area Orienteering Club's Spring Lake event on May 15. If you can't make that event, there will be another at Indian Valley College and Open Space in Novato on June 12th. Both events will have beginner clinics and courses for all levels of ability. More information, including costs and directions to the event sites, can be found on [www.baoc.org](http://www.baoc.org).

### Valley of the Moon Nature Lecture "Trees Among Us: Extraordinary California Native and Cultivated Trees"

Stone Hall at the Vintage House  
264 First Street East, Sonoma  
Thursday, June 2, 7:00-8:30 PM;  
\$5 at the door

The guest speaker is Dr. Matt Ritter. He is the Director of the Plant Conservatory at Cal Poly and the author of *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us*.

Learn the stories behind the trees that shade our parks, grace our yards, and line our streets. Whether native or cultivated, trees muffle noise, create wildlife habitats, mitigate pollution, conserve energy, and make urban living healthier and more peaceful for all of us. Matt Ritter's fascination with California trees shines through and opens our eyes to a world of majestic beauty just outside our front doors. Visit [sonomabirding.com](http://sonomabirding.com) for additional information.

### Free Lectures at Pepperwood Preserve

Pepperwood Preserve is located at 2130 Pepperwood Preserve Road off Franz Valley Road, adjacent to Safari West. Directions are available at [www.pepperwoodpreserve.org](http://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org).

### Observing Pepperwood through Science and Art

Friday, May 6, 7:00 PM at the Dwight Center  
(Facility opens at 6 PM for building tours and exhibit viewing)

Pepperwood's Academic Director Steve Barnhart, Santa Rosa Junior College Art Instructor Marsha Connell, and the

Pepperwood Foundation have partnered in a unique program of environmental education at the Pepperwood Preserve. Here, science and the arts find common ground in meticulous, repeated observation and study in nature. Come with all your senses tuned in for visual tour of Pepperwood's landscape, facilities and programs.

### Mayacamas Forum: The Once and Future Landscapes of Sonoma County

Friday, May 13, 7:00 PM at the Dwight Center

Join historical ecologist Arthur Dawson of the Sonoma Ecology Center for a fascinating evening of exploring Pepperwood Preserve and the surrounding region as it was in the early 19th century. The purpose of this forum is to connect landowners and land managers of the Central Mayacamas range with scientists and conservation planners working in our geographic area. RSVP via [events@pepperwoodpreserve.org](mailto:events@pepperwoodpreserve.org) and find out about the afternoon walk to Arthur Dawson's research sites at Pepperwood.

### "Climate Change, Birds and the Role of Conservation in Securing our Future": a Special Joint Presentation with Sonoma County Climate Campaign

Friday, June 3, 7:00 PM at the Dwight Center (Facility opens at 6 PM for building tours and exhibit viewing)

Join us at Pepperwood to hear the dynamic Ellie Cohen, CEO and President of PRBO Conservation Science, present the latest in global climate change science plus recent findings regarding regional bird and ecosystem impacts. Cohen will share novel approaches to managing natural resources on land and at sea in the face of accelerating climate, ocean, and land use change and provide recommendations about what we each can do to make a difference.

### Select Spring 2011 Classes at Pepperwood that may be of interest (see the website for details):

### Water World: The Lives and Habits of Aquatic Insects

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM with Frederique Lavoipierre, Director of the SSU Entomology Education and Outreach Program

### Grass Identification: Tools and Techniques

Saturday, May 21, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Sunday, May 22, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM with expert botanist Peter Warner



## It's Heron and Egret Season at ACR

The Martin Griffin Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch is open to the public through mid-July, as Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons tend their nests at one of the most significant and most studied nesting sites on the West Coast.

Madrone Audubon is represented on the Board of Audubon Canyon Ranch, and volunteers from Madrone help staff the Preserve during the season.

Open hours are Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 10 AM to 4 PM (Tuesday through Friday by appointment only, call 415-868-9244).

For over 40 years, the Martin Griffin Preserve was known as the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch. In July 2010, the ACR Board of Directors formally renamed the preserve the Martin Griffin Preserve in honor of L. Martin "Marty" Griffin's lifelong commitment to the environment and in recognition of the critical role he played in permanently protecting this unique section of the Marin County coastline.



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

May 2011

**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL  
 PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY  
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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 7:30 PM at First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. All meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: telephone answering service - 546-7492, e-mail - madroneaudubon@um.att.com.

- President:** Bob Speckels - robertspeckels@yahoo.com ..... 569-0563
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- Bird Walks and Field Trips:** Tom McCuller - sisypus@sonic.net ..... 546-1812
- Saturday Bird Walks:** Bob Speckels - robertspeckels@yahoo.com ..... 569-0563

- Bird-A-Thon Coordinator:** Marcia Johnson - owlsnest@hughes.net ..... 829-3808
- Leaves Co-Editor:** Mary Edith Moore - maryedithmoore@comcast.net ..... 763-3577
- Leaves Co-Editor:** Daphne Smith - dwarsm@comcast.net ..... 546-7808
- Leaves Production:** Kris Hutchins - krishutch@comcast.net ..... 477-8156
- Hospitality:** Linda Hammer - linda@divinedelights.com ..... 823-4389
- Observations:** Dan Nelson - birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net ..... 479-2918
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Please complete this form if you wish to join Madrone Audubon, renew your Madrone membership or make a contribution to Madrone.

**Joining or renewing with Madrone only.** Basic Madrone Audubon membership dues cover the cost of your subscription to the Madrone Leaves newsletter. Please consider joining or renewing at a higher level to support the important work of Madrone Audubon in environmental education and conservation critical to the protection of wildlife and the environment. **Note: By joining Madrone you will not become a member of National Audubon.**

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