



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County
Founded 1949

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April-May 2012

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

THOUGHTS ON HATCHING A LARGE BROOD

LET'S GROW THE MEMBERSHIP OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON

By JENNIFER RYCENGA

PRESIDENT OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Sequoia Audubon Society may be sixty-three years young, but the organization is still growing. Sequoia Audubon has helped preserve land in San Mateo County, expanded trails and birding opportunities, assisted in scientific projects, and sponsored two of the top fifty Christmas Bird Counts in North America. But our work – and our legacy – can only be celebrated, extended, and amplified when we keep adding to our brood!

A vital way of expanding the efforts of Sequoia Audubon Society is by increasing membership in our club. As readers of the newsletter, you know the advantages of membership: a community of fellow bird aficionados, a robust field trip schedule, special social events for volunteers, educational outreach, and local environmental advocacy. But do your neighbors know? Your colleagues and friends? Even your fellow birders? We are entering into a season beloved by poets, lovers, and birdwatchers: spring! Now is the time to take your children, your co-workers, your friends and family, out on a bird walk. Share the joys of birdwatching, and, while you are doing that, encourage them to attend a Sequoia meeting. You know we are a dynamic local Audubon: get your associates to join the organization.

Many members of the National Audubon Society are unaware that local chapters, like Sequoia Audubon Society, receive but a small fraction of money from the national organization. While we are supportive of the goals and initiatives of the National Audubon Society, we need people to sign up as dues-paying local members in addition to their National Audubon Society membership. Those things most important to us close to home – Christmas Bird Counts, field trips, educational programs, aids to birding like the San Mateo County Birding Guide, and, most crucially, local conservation battles – receive NO funding from National Audubon Society. We are dependent on local dues and donations to maintain these initiatives.

When Sequoia Audubon Society increases its local membership, this also makes us more effective local conservation advocates. When I speak as President of Sequoia Audubon Society on any environmental issue, people (both supporters and critics) want to know the size of our organization's constituency. The greater the number of local members, the louder our voice resounds on the crucial issues facing our county.

So I am asking you to help us recruit new members to Sequoia Audubon Society. Take the membership form at the back of this newsletter, or download a form from our webpage (<http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/memberform.html>), or direct your friends to the membership page on the website, where they can make a secure payment (<http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/membership.html>). We need people who love the birds and the environment, from the youngest to the oldest, from the most experienced birder to the novice identifying his or her first American Robin. Help us grow!

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

April

Thursday, 12th 7:00 PM

Program: Birding Class: eBird Basic Skills

May

Thursday, 10th 7:00 PM

Program: Achieving Immortality through Birdwatching

(See program details on page 2.)

Upcoming Field Trips

(See trip details on page 3.)

April

Sunday, 1st Redwood Shores
Wednesday, 4th Pinnacles National Monument
Sunday, 8th Mori Point
Saturday, 14th Birding Class Field Trip
Friday, 20th -- Sunday, 22nd

Mojave National Preserve

Saturday, 28th Filoli Estate
Saturday, 28th Mines Road

May

Wednesday, 2nd Lake Merced & Golden Gate Park
Friday, 4th Burleigh Murray State Park

Sequoia Audubon Society

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Send comments and contributions to:

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MEETING PROGRAMS

BY SUE COSSINS

Birding Class: eBird Basic Skills

By Jennifer Rycenga

Thursday, April 12, 7:00 PM

Make your birding count, by counting birds! Cornell's Lab of Ornithology sponsors the world's largest database of bird sightings, accessible to all, called eBird. At tonight's meeting, Jennifer Rycenga will take you from the basics to advanced dimensions of eBird: how to record your sightings,

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

(Parkside Way is west of Alameda de las Pulgas, between 26th and 28th Avenues)

how to make your sightings more useful to scientists, how to use eBird to improve your birding skills, how to use eBird to assist conservation efforts, and how to draw on the database to plan your birding trips to other areas. If you have a wireless-enabled device (laptop, smart phone, iPad), feel free to bring it to the meeting; however, all instructions will be available on a Powerpoint presentation. Saturday, April 14th, there will be a field trip intended to provide materials for developing your eBirding skills. Please visit eBird and explore it for yourself — before, during, and after this meeting!

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird>

Accompanying Field Trip

Saturday, April 14, 8:00 AM

We will visit two or three small parks to survey their circumscribed but bird-filled areas. We will begin at Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton at 8:00 am, and caravan on to the Union Cemetery and Stulsaft Park in Redwood City. We will then adjourn to a library or restaurant with internet access and enter our lists! Space limited, with priority to people who attend the general meeting on April 12th; no reservations taken prior to that time and place! Jennifer Rycenga, smcbgeditor@earthlink.net. Holbrook-Palmer Park is located at 150 Watkins Avenue in Atherton, between Middlefield and El Camino Real in Atherton. See the San Ma-

teo County Birding Guide for a map and more detailed directions [<http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/>].

Achieving Immortality through Birdwatching

By Ed Pandolfino

Thursday, May 10th, 7:00 PM

Sure, workshops on digiscoping, feather molt, and the finer points of shorebird identification are great...but let's talk about something we could all really use. Ed will take us through his late-life transformation from one of those unfortunate persons who are oblivious to birds to a lunatic-fringe bird nerd. But will he actually show us how to cheat the reaper through birdwatching? You'll just have to come to the talk and find out.

Ed's professional experience has ranged from touring Europe as a drummer for a rock 'n roll band, to postdoctoral research in biochemistry, to running divisions of a major medical device company. Since retiring in 1999, he splits his time between local conservation work and birding all over the state of California. He leads field trips and teaches birdwatching classes for Sierra Foothills Audubon and gives a variety of presentations on habitat conservation and basic bird identification. Ed is vice-president of Western Field Ornithologists and Conservation Chair for Sierra Foothills Audubon Society. He serves as a Regional Editor for Northern California for the publication, *North American Birds*, and is on the editorial committee of the Central Valley Bird Club Bulletin.



Redwood Shores Walking Tour
Sunday, April 1, 8:30 AM – Noon

Visit many of the best birding sites in Redwood Shores. Last year we saw 50 species. If you have done this trip before, we will be visiting some different sites. The walk is about two flat miles. Beginners are welcome.

Directions: Meet in front of Starbucks next to Nob Hill Market, located about 1/3 mile east of the Redwood Shores/Holly St/101 interchange.

Leader: Sonny Mencher,
soccerquiz@yahoo.com

The Pinnacles National Monument
Wednesday, April 4, 8:00 AM (all-day)

The Pinnacles lies just south of Hollister and affords the opportunity to see California Condor in the wild. We'll look for Canyon Wren, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Greater Roadrunner, Prairie Falcon. Bring a flashlight for walking through the caves.

Directions: Meet at the Pinnacles Campground Visitor Center. Take Hwy 101 south through the city of Gilroy to Hwy 25 south. On Hwy 25, go through Hollister and continue about 30 miles to Hwy 146. Turn right on Hwy 146, then turn left into the Pinnacles Campground and Visitor Center. \$5.00 entrance fee. Allow two hours driving time. Contact Leslie to carpool.

Leader: Leslie Flint, lfint@earthlink.net or 650-619-0836

Mori Point, Pacifica
Sunday, April 8, 8:00 AM

Mori Point deserves more attention from Peninsula birders and naturalists. It was saved from development after a generation of battles and added to the GGNRA in 2000. Heavily scarred in the past by off-road vehicles and unofficial trails, the park is being restored with the creation of new frog ponds and the closure of some trails. Area habitats include marsh, native coastal prairie vegetation, sandy shoreline, and ocean. More information is available at <http://www.parksconservancy.org/visit/park-sites/mori-point.html>.

Directions: Meet at Bradford Way, Pacifica. <http://g.co/maps/9b9fm>.

Leaders: Laurie Graham and Jeff Fairclough, fair80@comcast.net

Accompanying Field Trip to the April 12 Birding Class

Saturday, April 14, 8:00 AM

We will visit two or three small parks to survey their circumscribed but bird-filled areas. We will begin at Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton at 8:00 AM, and caravan on to the Union Cemetery and Stulsaft Park in Redwood City. We will then recess to a library or restaurant with internet access, and enter our lists! Space is limited, with priority to people who attend the general meeting on April 12th; no reservations taken prior to that time and place!

Directions: Holbrook-Palmer Park is located at 150 Watkins Avenue in Atherton, between Middlefield and El Camino Real. See the San Mateo County Birding Guide for a map and more detailed directions: <http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/>

Leader: Jennifer Rycenga
smcbgeditor@earthlink.net

Continuing Exploration of the Mojave National Preserve

Friday, April 20 – Sunday, April 22

Sequoia Audubon members might recall that we did an exploratory birding trip to the Mojave National Preserve a few years ago. Well, it's time to continue those explorations on a camping trip to the Mojave Preserve and vicinity. We'll cover some of the same areas as the first time – Cima Dome, New York and Providence Mountains, and Zzyzx – and perhaps some new nearby locations as well. We should expect to see the typical high desert birds, and, with some luck, one or more super-specialties such as Juniper Titmouse, Bendire's Thrasher, or Gilded Flicker. The precise itinerary will depend on the weather, birding and floral conditions, and the whim of the leader. This trip is limited to 10-15 people in a maximum of five, preferably four-wheel drive, vehicles. First come, first served. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. Comfort with unpredictable and rugged conditions, a flexible attitude, and open expectations are a must! If interested, please contact the leader.

Leader: Francis Toldi
ftoldi@earthlink.net

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Upcoming Field Trips

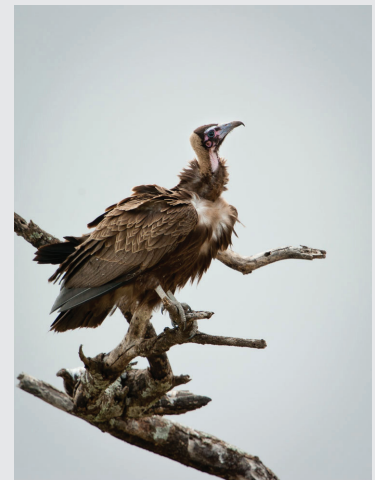
Continued from page 1

Sunday, 13th	Cypress Lawn Cemetery
Sunday, 20th	Pescadero State Beach
Sunday, 27th	Garin Park

Sequoia Audubon on the Web

Remember to check out our website for updates on field trips, conservation news, and links to great birding sites.

www.sequoia-audubon.org



Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*), note the beak is smaller and weaker than Gyps species

Photo by Justine Carson

(Field Trips, continued from page 3)

Mines Road – The Ultimate Spring Birding Trip

Saturday, April 28, 8:00 AM (all-day)

Scouting Trip, Thursday, April 26, 8:00 AM

The variety of habitats in the Mines Road area provides a fascinating array of birds not found elsewhere in the Bay Area. On this trip to the Coast Range east of Livermore, we will look for Phainopepla, Prairie Falcon, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Golden Eagles. Bring a full tank of gas, water, and food. Only two reliable restrooms, one at the lunchtime stop and one in mid-afternoon, are available. Weather is unpredictable, from cold and windy to hot and dry. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Take the San Mateo Bridge (Hwy 92) east. Follow the signs to I-580; stay on 580 for about 25 miles to Livermore. Take the South Vasco Road exit and follow Vasco to Tesla Road. Turn right on Tesla; go about ½ mile and turn left on Mines Road. Follow Mines Road about ¼ mile to the Murieta Wells Winery on the right. Pull up to the new gate; go through, and park in the area by the winery, where we will meet. Contact Leslie for carpooling.

Leader: Leslie Flint, lflint@earthlink.net or 650-619-0836

Filoli Estate, Woodside

Saturday, April 28, 8:30 AM – Noon

SAS members are invited for a morning of birding at this beautiful property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Over 96 species of birds have been seen here. The grounds include a formal garden surrounded by large oaks and trails leading to riparian, redwood, and farm habitats. Reservations are required; group is limited to 20 people, 14 and older. Participants may stay after to tour the house and gardens, or buy a light meal at the Café.

Directions: Take I-280 to the Edgewood Road exit; go west. Turn right/north on Canada Road; drive one mile to the entrance of Filoli. Meet at the Visitors Center. Call Sue James to reserve. Heavy rain cancels.

Leaders: Sue James, 650-348-0315, and Donna Petersen

Lake Merced and Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Wednesday, May 2, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

We Peninsulans often overlook the prime birding areas within San Francisco. This trip will combine walking and driving to cover many of the best areas in the city. Meet at the large parking lot at the south end of Lake Merced on John Muir Drive.

Directions: From San Mateo, take I-280 north toward San Francisco. Follow the signs for 19th Ave onto CA-1 N/Junipero Serra Blvd. Exit on Brotherhood Way. Turn left onto Lake Merced Blvd. Turn right onto John Muir Drive. Contact Leslie to carpool.

Leader: Leslie Flint, lflint@earthlink.net or 650-619-0836

Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay

Friday, May 4, 8:00 AM – Noon

We'll look for returning birds, nesting species, and rare migrants along this rich riparian trail mixed with coastal foothills habitat.

Directions: Meet at the parking lot off Higgins Canyon Road about 1 1/2 miles east of the intersection of SR1, Main Street, and Higgins Canyon Road. See the San Mateo County Birding Guide at <http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/> for more information. Heavy rain cancels.

Leader: Jennifer Rycenga, smcbgeditor@earthlink.net

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Cypress Lawn Cemetery, Colma

Sunday, May 13, 8:00 AM

Cypress Lawn Cemetery forms a beautiful park-like setting that happens to have amenities favorable to birds. The large lake and the smaller ornamental ponds at the entrance off El Camino Real (ECR) are used in the recycling of the water used to maintain the grounds. The appeal to birds was undoubtedly secondary. The lake, ponds, and shores are populated by gulls, ducks, American Coots, Canada Geese, Black-crowned Night Herons, passerines, Rock Pigeons, and the occasional surprise bird. The surprises may include Green-winged Teal, Greater White-fronted Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, a lost Red Phalarope during the famous 'wreck' of December 26, 2005, along with the only Marbled Godwit we have recorded there, and a lone Pectoral Sandpiper on the mudflat of the lake during a drain-down. Wood Ducks are frequent; Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser and Great Blue Heron are occasional visitors. Ducklings are seldom seen, often not surviving the attentions of the breeding Night Herons. All the swallows hunt over the lake, and Cliff Swallows nest on the old Columbarium. Cypress Lawn Cemetery is an excellent place to study gulls; so far there are nine species and one hybrid recorded. Recommended for beginners and those with disabilities.

Directions: 1370 El Camino Real, Colma <http://g.co/maps/m98k5>

Leaders: Laurie Graham & Jeff Fairclough, fair80@comcast.net

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Vultures of the African Savannah

By JUSTINE CARSON

Vultures are a familiar sight when on safari – whether gathered around a carcass or simply roosting in the tops of acacia trees. African species are quite different in appearance from our North American varieties and, having had a chance to observe and photograph them on a recent trip to Tanzania and Kenya, I've become fascinated with their behavior and the role they play in the ecology of the savannah ecosystem.



Ruppell's Griffon Vulture approaching a fresh carcass, Ndotu, Tanzania

Photo by Justine Carson

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OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

(Sequoia Audubon does not sponsor the following activities.)

8th Annual Kern River Valley Nature & Earth Day Festival Weldon, Kern County Saturday, April 21

Come celebrate spring in the Kern River Valley. On Saturday, Audubon-California's Kern River Preserve in Weldon hosts numerous free events including bird walks led by local volunteers, information booths, and exhibits located at the Kern River Preserve Headquarters.

Information: <http://www.kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm>

Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival Friday – Sunday, April 27 – 29

Birding during the breeding and migration season at one of the best locations in North America: Western Marin and Sonoma Counties. On-line registration opened in mid-February. *SAS board member, Melissa Hero, will be presenting at this festival and SAS will have a vendor table there. Save the date!*

Information: www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org

Heron Festival Saturday, May 5th Redbud Park, Clear Lake

This is a celebration of birds, wildlife, and springtime on beautiful Clear Lake, presented by the Redbud Audubon Society, Inc. This one-day event offers pontoon boat tours to Heron roosts, birding and nature walks, nature fair booths, and much more.

Information: www.heronfestival.org or 707-263-8030

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Bird Walk Shadow Cliffs East Bay Regional Park, Pleasanton Sunday, May 6th, Noon – 4:00 PM

Join Rich Cimino of Ohlone Audubon for an easy afternoon of birding. Shadow Cliffs borders the Arroyo Del Valle – home of a significant heron, egret, and cormorant rookery. Participants can also expect to see several species of waterfowl and comb a riparian trail lined with Cottonwood and Black Walnut. Space is limited to 15 people. Free for SFBBO members; \$10 for non-members. RSVP required.

Contact: Kathi Kendrick, 408-946-6548 x10 or kkendrick@sfbbo.org to RSVP.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Tour Coyote Creek Field Station, Milpitas Saturday, May 12th, 8:30 – 10:30 AM

Tour the Bird Observatory's banding station and learn about the Observatory's bird banding research at the Coyote Creek Field Station. We will tour mist nets, watch a bird banding demonstration, and explore a restored riparian habitat. Join us to learn why bird banding is so important for protecting birds and their habitats. Meet at the former Borders bookstore parking lot in McCarthy Ranch. Space is limited to 15 people. Free for SFBBO members; \$10 for non-members. RSVP required.

Contact: Kathi Kendrick, 408-946-6548 x10 or kkendrick@sfbbo.org to RSVP.

Annual Spring Wings Bird Festival Fallon, Nevada

Friday – Sunday, May 18 – 20

This year's event will be based out of the Churchill County Parks and Recreation multipurpose building and pavilion on the corner of Sheckler Road and Hwy 95 in Fallon, NV. There won't be any tours offered on Friday this year, but there will be plenty offered on Saturday and Sunday. The breakdown of each date is as follows:

Friday May 18: An evening social gathering along with a special program from 5 – 8 PM

Saturday May 19: Morning tours from 7 – 11 AM, followed by more tours in the afternoon from 2 – 5 PM. There will also be a free family festival at the fairgrounds from 10 AM – 4 PM.

Sunday, May 20: Morning tours will run from 7 – 11 AM

Information: <http://www.springwings.org/>

Walk on the Wildside Outdoor Festival Saturday, May 19th, 10 AM – 4:30 PM Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Beach Lake Preserve, Freepoint

If you'd enjoy a fun, FREE, family-oriented day in the country with lively entertainment and up-close and personal views of many wildlife species, mark your calendar and plan to attend Walk on the Wildside. Join Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and local partners in celebrating International Migratory Bird Day and local conservation successes. The event is held near the town of Freepoint, California, at the Beach Lake Picnic Area.

Event Highlights include wild animal presentations by Wild Things, Inc.; folk music by Horse Sense; children's puppet show by Jason Adair; and tours of wetlands, riparian forests, and heron rookeries. Event and parking are FREE!

Information: 916-875-WILD or

<http://www.fws.gov/stonelakes/wow.htm>

Bluebird Summer at Edgewood Natural Preserve

This summer, celebrate Western Bluebirds at Edgewood Natural Preserve. From late May through August Friends of Edgewood will sponsor hikes, talks, and activities centered on Western Bluebirds. Visit FriendsofEdgewood.org for more details.

11th Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua

Friday – Sunday, June 15 – 17

Lee Vining

Three days of evening presentations, workshops, field trips, art, music, food and great birding!

Presenters include locally-known names: Peter Metropolis, Bob Power, Keith Hansen, and Rich Stallcup.

All proceeds support continuing research in the Mono Basin. Presented by the Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541, 760-647-6595.

Note: Registration begins April 15

Information: www.birdchautauqua.org

Vultures, continued from page 4

There are ten African species of vulture, eight of which are sub-Saharan and five of which we were able to observe on our trip to Tanzania and Kenya in early 2011. In general, vultures are large, open-country birds. They can soar for extended periods on their long, broad wings. They are non-territorial and travel long distances in search of food. They have a poor sense of smell and rely instead on their exceptionally keen eyesight while patrolling the skies. They may be attracted to prey by the sight of other vultures or eagles circling or by seeing scavenging mammals on the ground. If they are seen circling or roosting in trees near a kill, it is usually a sign that other predators are still feeding.

Like other large heavy birds, they rely on warm rising air to aid in lift-off. Mornings and overcast days are not their best times and, after a cold night, it may be mid-morning before they are seen overhead in their characteristic soaring flight. Just as other vultures are attracted by these circling birds, safari guides use them to hone in on recent kills and the presence of predators.

While considered to be birds of prey, vultures are specially adapted to feed on carrion. Their mostly bare heads and necks give them a macabre appearance and they are considered to be unattractive birds by many – no doubt because of both their appearance and their diet. While many of the eight species of sub-Saharan vultures coexist and may be found together feeding on carcasses, each species has its own specialized role and niche to fill.

The largest species, the Lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*), has a thickset, squarish head and powerful beak and can tear open a carcass — especially important if other predators have not already been feeding on it. They are capable of eating the skin, sinews, and bones. The Lappet-faced is recognizable by its large light-colored beak and bare red face with fleshy lappets (folds or flaps of loose skin similar to a wattle) on the side of its head.

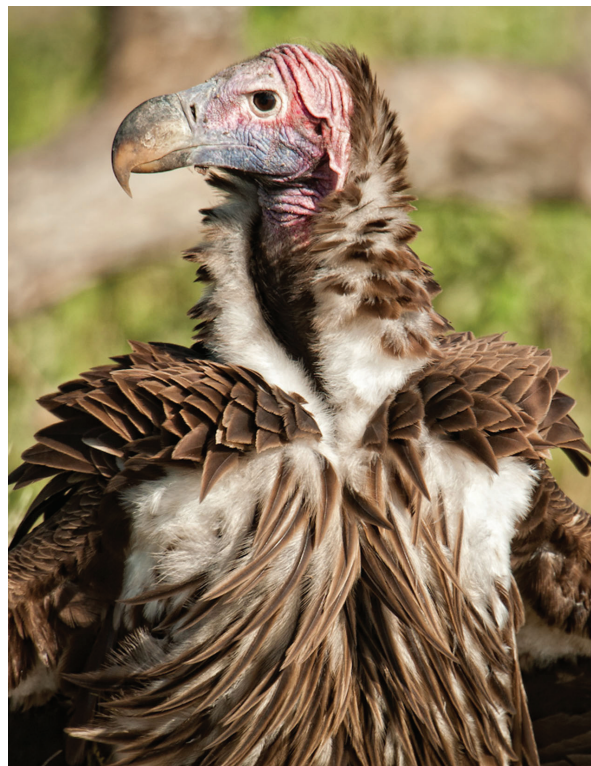
Once a carcass has been opened, the way is paved for the three large Gyps species of vultures. These birds have longer beaks with a sharp cutting edge and a barbed tongue for gripping soft tissue. With their bare heads and long necks they can reach into the interior of a carcass and feed on soft flesh and intestines. Of these three species, the African white-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*) is the most common and can be found in all sub-Saharan savannahs. The adults have an entirely dark beak and a white patch of feathers on the back just below the neck. The Ruppell's Griffon vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*) is the other Gyps species often seen in East Africa, while the Cape Griffin vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*) has a range restricted to southern Africa. Ruppell's Griffon vulture is similar in appearance to the White-backed, especially the juveniles, but has a light, almost yellow beak as an adult.

Collective Nouns for Vultures

Their behavior and social habits have inspired multiple collective terms for vultures.

- Kettle is used for a group of vultures in flight, as they use rising thermals to gain altitude
- Groups of vultures resting in trees are called committees, venues, or volts
- Wake is used for groups of vultures feeding on the ground.

This Lappet-faced Vulture shows the characteristic folds of skin (lappets) on its bare head. When seeking to intimidate other competing birds, it spreads its wings and displays its shoulder and chest feathers. Photo by Justine Carson



The smaller species of vultures, the Egyptian (*Neophron percnopterus*) and Hooded (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) vultures have long, thin, and relatively weak beaks. They cannot compete with the larger species at carcasses and will often wait on the outskirts of the activity to grab scraps. Hooded vultures also scavenge on refuse in towns and villages.

Vultures compete aggressively for food when it is available in the form of a fresh carcass. They spread their broad wings to intimidate late arrivals to the feast. After filling their crops, they rest in trees to digest their food and can go for a week or more before eating again. Their digestive fluids are more than usually corrosive and allow them to safely eat carcasses infected with bacteria that would be lethal to other scavengers.

The numbers of several species of African vultures are declining and some have been recently assessed as “near-threatened” on the IUCN Red List. African vultures have so far escaped the fate of several Asian species, though, perhaps because of the relatively larger areas of protected land in the sub-Sahara. In India and Pakistan, the Oriental White-backed vulture (*Gyps benalensis*), once the most common raptor on the Indian subcontinent, is near to extinction. It is believed that the species rapid decline is due to the presence of diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug often administered to livestock. Residue of the drug in carcasses causes renal failure in the scavengers that feed on livestock carcasses.

Despite their seemingly distasteful habits, or in fact because of them, vultures are important to the savannah ecology and have great value as scavengers, especially in hot regions.

Ten Ways to Make a Difference for Migrating Birds From the National Audubon Society

Birds of every kind – songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds – fly from their winter homes in the south to their summer breeding grounds in places as far north as the Arctic in the spring, and then back south in the fall. Along the way they encounter many perils including bright lights and tall buildings, cats, and toxic lawns.

Fortunately, people can help ensure a safer journey for migrating birds. Backyards and parks, often key stopover points for many species, can become bird-friendly rest stops with a few simple steps. Audubon urges people to take the following actions:

1) Reduce or eliminate pesticide and herbicide use.

2) Plant native plants. Native plants provide birds with food in the form of fruit and seeds and are also home to tasty invertebrates like bugs and spiders.

3) Keep cats inside. Keeping cats indoors ensures that birds outdoors stay safe and cats benefit too. Indoor cats live much longer than cats that go outside.

4) Prevent window collisions. Make sure birds can see (and avoid) your windows by putting up screens, closing drapes and blinds when you leave the house, or sticking multiple decals on the glass (decals need to be spaced closely together to be effective – no more than two to four inches apart).

5) Provide cover in your backyard. Leave snags for nesting places and stack downed tree limbs to create a brush pile, which is a great source of cover for birds during bad weather.

6) Help birds stay on course. Close your blinds at night and turn off lights you aren't using. Some birds use constellations to guide them on their annual migrations and bright lights can disorient them.

7) Create or protect water sources in your yard. Birds need water to drink and bathe in, just like we do. Be sure to change the water two to three times per week when mosquitoes are breeding.

8) Landscape for birds. Use lots of layers, including understory, ground cover, shrubs, and trees. Multiple levels of plants let birds use different layers for different purposes, such as nesting, feeding, and singing.

9) Extend a bird safety net beyond your backyard. Contact your local Audubon Chapter to learn about opportunities to create healthy habitat in parks, beaches, and other places in your community.

<http://athome.audubon.org/ten-ways-make-difference-migrating-birds>



Sonny Mencher is seen with San Mateo County Science Fair participant, Maggie Donaho. Maggie's project studied hummingbird feeding preferences. She was one of three students chosen to receive an SAS award at the fair. Photo by Jennifer Rycenga

Sequoia Audubon Society Membership Form

Individual membership for seniors (>62) \$15.00
 and students (<25) \$20.00
 Individual membership \$25.00
 Family membership \$
 Donation to SAS \$
 Total \$

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _____

Newsletter Preference: _____ Mail and / or _____ E-mail

E-mail address _____

Sequoia Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 620292
 Woodside, CA
 94062-0292

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 PERMIT NO. 293

Field trips, continued from page 4

Pescadero State Beach and Marsh **Sunday, May 20, 7:30 AM – Noon**

We will meet in the middle parking lot, just south of the bridge over the creek, and begin our day by scoping for seabirds and shorebirds from the cliffs. We will then hike the Water Lane trail and, time permitting, the Marsh Trail, searching for warblers and late vagrants. Heavy rain cancels. Check the San Mateo County Birding Guide for more information on this park, see <http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/>.

Leader: Jennifer Rycenga, smcbgeditor@earthlink.net

Garin Park, Hayward **Sunday, May 27, 8:00 – 11:30 AM**

Garin Park is a great place to look for brightly colored birds and is a short trip from San Mateo. See Orioles, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Goldfinches, and many more. Maybe we will find a baby coot. We will stroll around this mostly flat park, and may go down a wooded trail if the group wants.

Directions: Cross the San Mateo Bridge eastbound toward Hayward. Before you reach I-880, take Industrial Blvd south. Stay on Industrial when it crosses I-880 and turn right on Mission Blvd. Turn left on Garin. The park is at the end of the road. You may need to pay an entrance fee.

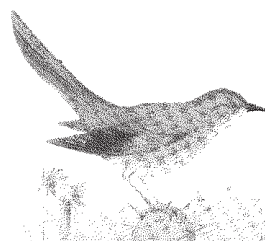
Leader: Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net

Welcome!

Sequoia Audubon Society is the San Mateo County affiliate of the National Audubon Society. If you are a new member or have recently renewed, thank you! If you have yet to join, we look forward to meeting you. Please join in the activities of your local organization.

If you'd like to join the local chapter you can find membership information above, or on our website:
<http://www.sequoia-audubon.org>.

Please note: Due to cost constraints the printed newsletter will only be mailed to National Audubon members once a year. Local members (unless indicated otherwise) will receive five issues a year. If you'd like to continue to receive printed newsletters, please check the renewal date above your address and make sure you're up to date. If you prefer e-mail, you can subscribe to our e-mail newsletter any time on our website



Bendire's Thrasher

The Bird Box
Rare Bird Alert
415-681-7422

Mission Statement

Sequoia Audubon Society protects native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy, and enjoyment.