



SEQUOIA NEEDLES

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April-May 2011

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, CANADA

BY SUE JAMES

Our flight arrived in Yellowknife near midnight on June 29, 2010. Being so far north there was still low light as Jerry and I picked up a rental car and drove to our B&B in the Old Town area on the shore of Great Slave Lake. We were looking forward to exploring and birding the area surrounding Yellowknife during the next few days before continuing on to our final destination above the Arctic Circle.

The highlight of our time in Yellowknife was the Ingraham Trail that is a 44-mile, dead-end road that passes through an amazing area of ponds, lakes, and marshes – water everywhere, even in the midst of a drought. We spent three days birding and hiking along this road. Birch, aspen, and willow trees grow close to the water while the short vertical spikes of black spruce woods are further back from the road.

Red-necked Grebes were a frequent sighting, exhibiting every behavior from constructing nests to incubating and caring for young. One of the first ponds we stopped at was home to a pair of Red-necked Grebes with three young, the



Red-necked Grebe family
Photo by Jerry James

smallest onboard an adult's back. We watched as the two larger chicks stayed alongside the parent. The other parent was diving repeatedly, surfacing to carry tiny fish and other morsels back to its brood. The black-and-white striping on the head and necks of the young grebes continued onto the bill, providing excellent camouflage in their shadowy world. All seemed to have insatiable appetites and actively vocalized upon seeing another food delivery arriving. Several Mew Gulls and Bonaparte's Gulls in full breeding plumage perched on dead birch trees scattered in the middle of the pond while Lesser Scaup and American Wigeon worked the back edges. We continued to check on this family of grebes during the next few days.

Further along we watched a female Bufflehead with four ducklings in another pond, but she quickly shepherded her brood into a thicket of shrubs and reeds when we stopped the car to watch. Beaver dams and lodges became commonplace sightings as we continued driving. Willow shrubs grew densely in some of these areas, and we watched a male Yellow Warbler singing in one of the clumps.

We stopped for a picnic lunch at a parking area near one of the bigger lakes and selected a table overlooking the water. While eating we noticed a Yellow-shafted Flicker perched on the dead snag of a birch tree nearby. We had excellent views of the red "V" on the back of his head, the yellow shafts, and the black moustacial stripe. Then a female Yellow-shafted Flicker flew into the same tree and started feeding nestlings in a hole just to the left of the perched male. The begging calls of the youngsters were very audible. After that, the adult pair made multiple trips bringing in food to the young without any apparent concern about our presence.

We observed four Pacific Loons with a single chick swimming on another lake. A Lesser Yellowlegs flew up to the top of a short dead tree and proceeded to shriek his annoyance at our presence since we were

(Continued on page 4)

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

(See program details on page 2)

April

Thursday, 14th, 7:00 PM

Program: Movie Night

May

Thursday, 12th, 7:00 PM

Program: Birding Class:
Spring Migration

Upcoming Field Trips

(See trip details on page 3)

April

Saturday, 2nd Redwood Shores*
Sunday, 3rd Pescadero Marsh
Docent Tour*
Sunday, 17th Mitchell Canyon*
Sunday, 17th Pescadero Marsh
Docent Tour*
Saturday, 23rd Filoli Estate
Sunday, 24th San Bruno
Mountain*
Thurs, 28th Mines Road
Scouting Trip

May

Sunday, 1st Mines Road
Sunday, 1st Pescadero Marsh
Docent Tour*
Saturday, 7th Garin Park
Saturday, 14th Birding Class Field
Trip
Sunday, 15th Central Park*
Sunday, 15th Pescadero Marsh
Docent Tour*
Saturday, 21st Pescadero Marsh

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MEETING PROGRAMS

BY SUE COSSINS AND SONNY
MENCHER

"Movie Night" - Two films on endangered species conservation

Courtesy of the Santa Clara Audubon Society
Thursday, April 14, 7:00 PM

Ghost Bird

An 85-minute documentary by Scott Crocker (ghostbirdmovie.com). Ghost Bird wades into a murky swamp of belief and obsession in this cautionary tale about birders, ornithologists, and the citizens of Brinkley, Arkansas who are certain they keep seeing a giant woodpecker that's been extinct for over half a century.

"This spellbinding documentary takes a small item from recent history ... and turns it into a cosmic lament for the forest primeval and man's search for environmental redemption." *New York Magazine*

"Crocker has turned a bird-watching tale into a multilayered story that will fascinate practically everybody in 'Ghost Bird,' a witty, wistful documentary ... " *The New York Times*.

"Beautifully crafted ... heartbreaking, ironic and infuriating. It's a stunner." *NPR*

Also on the program:

Reversing the Trend: The Fight to Save Santa Clara County's Burrowing Owls

A 6.5 minute documentary by filmmakers
Caroline and Jonathan Armer

From fields, highways, and sidewalk curbs they are watching. You may drive past them every day and not even know they exist. Yet everyday they emerge from underground to stand sentinel on the outskirts of the city. These are our neighbors, the Western Burrowing Owls and soon they may be moving out for good....

Birding Class: Understanding and Enjoying Spring Migration

By Alvaro Jaramillo

Thursday, May 12, 7:00 PM

Nothing in birding and ornithology is perhaps as exciting as migration! Throughout the world birds migrate and this has captured our imaginations since ancient times. Fortunately, today we have many more tools

at our disposal to understand migration and begin to explain how these little creatures do it. This course is an introduction and summary of bird migration, with a focus on recent amazing discoveries about the process. We will also enjoy some images of our local birds and get a sense of where they go in winter and how they do it. The how's, why's and wow's of migration is what this workshop is about. Birding level: Beginner on up.

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo
*Parkside Way is west of Alameda de las
Pulgas, between 26th & 28th Avenues.*

Accompanying Field Trip to the Birding Class of May 12.

Saturday, May 14, 8:30 – 11:30 AM

The field trip will take us to places where we can see local migrant birds, land birds, and shorebirds. We can not only brush up on identification, but also learn about their migration stage, where they are going, and where they have been. This field trip is open to everyone (no registration necessary) with a \$5.00 fee paid to the instructor. We will meet at the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve parking lot. From there we can move to other places to watch migration happen.

Directions: Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is located in Moss Beach about 40 minutes south of San Francisco on Highway 1, or 15 minutes north of the city of Half Moon Bay. Take Highway 1 to California Street in Moss Beach; turn west. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is at the end of the street.

Leader: Alvaro Jaramillo

SAS Board of Directors

Election to be held at our June
9, 2011 general meeting.

As the election date approaches, please check our website homepage for the proposed slate of officers for the term ending May 31, 2012. All SAS members are eligible to vote.



FIELD TRIPS

BY GINNY MARSHALL

Redwood Shores Walking Tour

Saturday, April 2, 8:30 AM – Noon

Visit many of the best birding sites in Redwood Shores. If you have done this trip before, we will be visiting some different sites. The walk is about five flat miles. Beginners are welcome. We will pass several restrooms during the walk. **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)

Beginner/Family Trip

Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo State Park

Sunday, April 17, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Mitchell Canyon on the east side of Mt Diablo is an exciting place during spring migration. Birds regularly seen here include Olive-sided Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Cassin's Vireo, Golden Eagle, and many more. We will make a special effort to find Calliope Hummingbird, which stops here on its way to the mountains. Expect to hike 3-5 miles, slowly, in this hilly park. Bring lunch and plenty of water. \$6.00 per car park fee.

Directions: Take the San Mateo Bridge (Hwy 92) to I-880 and go north on I-880. Take Highway 238 to I-580 east, then go north on I-680. In Walnut Creek, exit at Ygnacio Valley Rd East. Turn right on Clayton Rd and right on Mitchell Canyon Rd. At the end of the road, enter the park and pay the park fee. Bring cash for the machine. Meet at the parking lot nearest the bathroom. The drive takes about an hour and 15 minutes from the San Mateo Bridge.

Leaders: Ginny Marshall
(ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net) and Leslie Flint (lflint@earthlink.net)

Filoli Estate

Saturday, April 23, 8:30 AM – Noon

Filoli Estate is the property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. We have been invited for a morning of birding at this beautiful site on the edge of the San Francisco watershed. In addition to birds, the wildflowers should be

very plentiful at this time, especially in the shadier areas on the back roads. The grounds of Filoli have a beautiful formal garden surrounded by large oaks and trails leading to riparian, redwood, and farm habitats. Over 96 species of birds have been found here. Reservations are required because this trip is limited to 20 people (sorry, no children under 14). No food or picnicking is allowed but all are welcome to buy light food and beverages at the Café and to visit the gift shop.

Directions: Take Hwy 280 to the Edgewood Road exit; go west. Turn right/north on Cañada Road and drive approx one mile to the entrance of Filoli. We will meet in front of the Visitors Center. If you want to remain after the field trip to walk through the house and / or formal gardens, there will be a \$15.00 entrance fee. Heavy rain cancels.

Leaders: Sue James and Donna Petersen. Call Sue James at 650-348-0315 to reserve your spot.

San Bruno Mountain

Sunday, April 24, 8:00 – 11:30 AM

San Bruno Mountain stands as an island of open space on the border of San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. It is home to a wealth of wildlife, hidden pockets of woodland, and sheltered canyons. We will look for quail, nuthatches, towhees, vireos, warblers, mockingbirds, thrushes, flycatchers, sparrows, wrens, hummingbirds, and many other migrants. Depending on the winter rains we may see spectacular wildflower displays. There is a \$5.00 per car park fee.

Directions: Take Hwy 101 north to the Bayshore Boulevard / Brisbane exit. Proceed on Bayshore Boulevard to Guadalupe Canyon Parkway. Turn west onto Guadalupe Canyon Parkway toward the mountain and proceed up the hill to the park entrance on your right. Meet in the main parking lot just beyond the entrance kiosk. Dress in layers for warm-to-cold and windy weather. Wear sturdy walking shoes/boots; bring fluids and snacks. Not suitable for strollers. Heavy rain cancels. **Leaders:** Jeff Fairclough and Laurie Graham at 650-589-2133 or fair80@comcast.net

Beginner/Family Trip

(Continued on page 4)

Upcoming Field Trips

(Continued from page 1)

Sunday, 22nd San Bruno Mountain*
Sunday, 29th Arastradero Preserve

*Beginner/Family Trip

Check the field trip descriptions for any special information or requirements. Late comers may be disappointed. For all field trips, bring your binoculars, water, sun block, and a hat; wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, and always dress in layers for hot, sunny weather to cool, windy conditions. While we will attempt to stay on schedule, circumstances may dictate changes to field trip leaders, dates, or times. For the latest schedule and updates always go to the Sequoia Audubon website; contact the trip leader, or call Sue Cossins at 650-347-9358.

Wildflower Walks at Edgewood Natural Preserve

Every Saturday and Sunday from March 19th to June 5th

Walks begin at 10:00 AM and end around 1: PM

Walks start from the Main Entrance on Edgewood Road. In addition, on the five Saturdays in April walks will also start from the Clarkia Trailhead for easier access to the grassland flowers.

For information and maps:
www.friendsofedgeswood.org



Mines Road – The Ultimate Spring Bird Trip

Sunday, May 1, 8:00 AM

Scouting trip, Thursday, April 28, 8:00 AM

A variety of habitats provides a fascinating array of birds not found elsewhere in the Bay Area. This will be an all-day trip to this area in the Coast Range Mountains between Livermore and the Central Valley and Hwy 5. We will look for Phainopepla, Prairie Falcon, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Golden Eagles, along with sparrows and hummingbirds. If we are very lucky we may even see a Wild Turkey or Roadrunner. Have a full tank of gas, water, and food since facilities are scarce. There are only two reliable restroom facilities, one at the lunch-time stop and another at mid-afternoon at a county park. Weather is unpredictable, from cold and windy to hot and dry. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Take the San Mateo Bridge (Hwy 92) east and follow the signs to Hwy I-580. Stay on 580 for about 25 miles to Livermore. Take the South Vasco Road exit and follow Vasco Rd. to Tesla Road. Turn right on Tesla; go about ½ mile and turn left on Mines Road. Follow Mines Road for about ¼ mile to the Murieta Wells Winery turnoff on the right. The winery has installed a new gate so simply pull up to it; go through, and drive to the parking area by the winery itself where we will meet. Contact Leslie for carpooling arrangements.

Leader: Leslie Flint 650-573-6279 or lflint@earthlink.net

Garin Park, Hayward

Saturday, May 7, 8:00 – 11:30 AM

Garin Park is a great place to look for brightly colored birds and is only a short trip from San Mateo. We will 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 (Hwy 92). Before you reach I-880 take Industrial Blvd south. Stay on Industrial when it crosses -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

Accompanying Field Trip to the Birding Class of May 12

Saturday, May 14, 8:30 – 11:30 AM

See description on page 2 for details.

Central Park, San Mateo

Sunday, May 15, 9:00 – 11:30 AM

This popular city park has many mature trees that attract a variety of birds. The birds are accustomed to people and should all be singing. This is a gentle stroll on level ground. Children are welcome. Binoculars will be provided for those who need them.

Directions: From Highway 92 take El Camino Real north. Turn right on Ninth Ave, and park on Ninth or Palm. Meet the group at the park entrance at 9th Ave and Palm Ave.

Leader: Sonny Mencher (soccerquiz@yahoo.com)

Beginner Field Trip

Pescadero Marsh

Saturday May 21, 7:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Come explore Pescadero Marsh. Walk the trails and see the new bridge. Many rarities are found here each migration. Look for rails, shorebirds, and ducks. Just about anything can turn up.

Directions: Take Highway One south to Pescadero. Park in the middle of the three Pescadero Beach parking lots.

Leader : Jennifer Rycenga smcbgeditor@earthlink.net

Arastradero Preserve

Sunday, May 29, 8:00 AM – Noon

The rolling oak-dotted hills of Arastradero Preserve, just south of the San Mateo county line, support a large number of raptors.

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(Yellowknife, continued from page 1)

apparently intruding in his nesting territory. We decided to move on to give him a rest and allow silence to return. Ring-necked Ducks, a female Mallard with four ducklings, two Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, and Lesser Scaup were found in other ponds. A beautiful view of a Common Loon was a highlight. When we reached the end of the road, we realized we had spent more than five hours enjoying the wildlife viewing, and we still had the return trip to look forward to.

We started our return in late afternoon and almost immediately saw a female Spruce Grouse run across the road and into the grassy edge. She craned her neck and started actively calling, and at least five tiny youngsters appeared that were only a few inches high. The female continued her excited calling and the young started to run across the road. Only a few made the entire trip to join their mother while the remainder scurried back to our side. It took several attempts with constant vocalizing from the female before all the young had made a successful crossing. The youngsters were very colorful with a bright orangish color on the top of their heads, but they were hidden immediately after crossing and we could not locate the family again.

We had such an enjoyable time on the Ingraham Trail that first day that we decided to return the next day and go on a short hike to Cameron Falls. A pair of Gray Jays met us in the parking lot, which was a nice start. A trail guide explained the geological features along the way and the trail ended in a lovely view of the falls. Unfortunately, the water level was not as high as usual due to the drought, but it was a very pretty sight nonetheless.

A pair of Common Loons with two tiny chicks was close to shore on the next lake. They were calling softly and keeping the youngsters in between the parents. At one point an adult raised one wing and both chicks scrambled on board for a water taxi ride. It was the first time we had seen a Common Loon with a baby being carried and we were delighted.

On the way back to Yellowknife, we stopped again at the first pond to check on the Red-necked Grebe family. Both adults were now diving and returning with food for the three youngsters that were alone on the surface. A short time later, the smallest chick climbed up on an adult's back and appeared to go to sleep with its head hanging over the adult's shoulder.

Two days later the weather was very cloudy with light rain, and

SAN MATEO COUNTY BIRDING

BY GEORGE CHRISMAN

Sometimes we take living and birding in San Mateo County (SMC) for granted. Nestled between San Francisco and the Silicon Valley, SMC is easy to overlook as both a birding destination and as an amazing place to live as a birder. Our county is a world-class birding destination during most of the year. It has recorded over 454 species of birds within its borders, making it one of the best counties in the U.S. to see and enjoy birds. Our mix of open ocean, rugged coastline, redwood forests, agricultural areas, freshwater lakes, mudflats, and bays allows some of the greatest diversity of birds in a small geographic area. Our two Christmas Bird Counts, during which we have documented almost 200 species in a 24-hour period, routinely rank in the top 20 in the nation. This winter's Crystal Springs and Año Nuevo CBCs reported 192 and 160 species respectively for a single day. Birders reported 316 species in San Mateo County in 2010.

2011 birding is in full swing, with reports of nearly 220 species through February. Winter birding is an excellent opportunity to observe thousands of ducks, shorebirds, and wintering raptors. Through February, we have already recorded 30 species of ducks and geese. If you're up for a real challenge, there are also 30 species of gulls and terns that have been seen in the county over the years, not including hybrids. Rarities seen this year have included Iceland Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, and the first documented Lesser Black-backed Gull in county history. Most rare gulls have been seen along the beaches near Half Moon Bay, but in 2009 the water treatment ponds at Radio Road along the Bayside in Redwood Shores produced the first ever Gull-billed Tern for San Mateo County.

We can expect an additional 60 to 65 species of birds to arrive in the spring. Some will stay to breed, but many are just migrating through on their way to their northern breeding grounds. You never really know what will show up during migration. Last year brought us the first Least Bell's Vireo recorded here since 1905. Spring migrant traps for songbirds include Coyote Point County Park, Gazos Creek Road, upper Tunitas Creek Road, and the willows near Pillar Point Harbor in Princeton.

Summer can be a little quieter than the peak migration periods, but even quieter periods can produce surprises like last year's pair of Gray Catbirds on San Bruno Mountain or late migrants like Northern Parula or Summer Tanager.

Fall migration has become one of the most exciting times to bird San Mateo County. Fall is the best time of year to see migrating warblers and songbirds. It also brings thousands of shorebirds to the Bay, including rare but regular visitors like Semipalmated, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpiper. But the newest wrinkle in San Mateo County birding has been the fall pelagic trips focusing on offshore sea birds. San Mateo County has proven to be an excellent location for extreme rarities. Recent fall pelagic trips have resulted in the first ever county records of Cook's Petrel, Dark-rumped/Hawaiian Petrel, Short-tailed Albatross, and the first state record of White-chinned Petrel. Pelagic trips in 2010 were

(Continued from page 4)

We will also look for several species of swallow, California Thrasher, Lazuli Bunting, Western Bluebird, and House Wren. We will walk 3-4 miles with hills. Bring water.

Directions: Take Highway 280 south to Page Mill Rd. Turn right on Page Mill and right on Arastradero Rd. The parking lot will be on the right.

Leader: Ginny Marshall ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net

Pescadero Marsh – State Park Docent Nature Walks

First Sunday of each month is a morning walk from 10:00 AM – Noon

Third Sunday of each month is an afternoon walk from 1:00 – 3:00 PM

April walks are on April 3 and 17.

May walks are on May 1 and 15.

Come and discover Pescadero Marsh. The California State Park Docents will lead a field trip to learn about the marsh. The docents will point out the plants and animals that inhabit this San Mateo County treasure. If it is not raining, meet in the parking lot just over the bridge at Pescadero State Beach. Wear clothing in layers for cold and windy to sunny weather. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Go south from Half Moon Bay on Hwy 1, about 12 miles. Just past the bridge over Pescadero Creek, look for the south parking lot. If you get to the intersection of Pescadero Road and Hwy 1 you have gone too far.

Contact: Park ranger station at 650-879-2170 for voice mail information or Rita Jennings at 650-728-2254.

Beginner/Family Nature Hike

San Bruno Mountain

Sunday, May 22, 8:00 – 11:30 AM

Please see description under April 24 listing.



California Red-legged Frog
Photo by Brent Plater

very successful with reports of Wilson's, Leach's, and Fork-tailed Storm-petrels, all three Jaeger species, and several species of Shearwater. We should expect over 100 additional species to show up here that have not been seen yet this year.

All of the best birding hotspots in the county can be researched on the Sequoia Audubon Society's website, which hosts the San Mateo County Birding Guide <http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/>. This guide has excellent information on the most popular and productive birding locations and what you might expect to find there. It is a great resource for visiting birders and

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SAS NEWS



CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

by Nancy Arbuckle

Redwood City Salt Ponds

Sequoia Audubon has been working with Save the Bay, Committee for Green Foothills, Friends of Redwood City, Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, Sierra Club, and other local environmental organizations to fight the massive development Cargill is planning for the Redwood City salt ponds. The Notice of Preparation of the Environmental Impact Report has been issued by Redwood City and SAS has been working to identify impacts that should be addressed in the EIR. Save The Bay created an online album of photos and video of life in the salt ponds, which illustrates the critical habitat provided by the salt ponds for wildlife in the very area that Cargill/DMB proposes to build their new city of 30,000 people. You can find the photos at DontPaveMyBay.org/ Do-Facts-Matter.

Sequoia Audubon joins Wild Equity Institute and Sues Sharp Park Golf Course

Sequoia Audubon joined the Wild Equity Institute and four other conservation groups and sued Sharp Park Golf Course on March 2, 2011. The lawsuit alleges that the golf course is killing the California Red-legged Frog and the San Francisco Garter Snake without authorization from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Joining in the suit are Surfrider Foundation, Sierra Club, National Parks Conservation Association, and the Center for Biological Diversity. Our legal team includes the famed public-interest law firm Meyer, Glitzenstein & Crystal from Washington D.C. The golf course was first notified of its legal violations three years ago, yet the problems have only become more acute. The course regularly violates its so-called "compliance" plan, mowing endangered species habitats without biological monitors and draining endangered species habitats without ensuring that breeding areas are deep enough for aquatic animals to survive. Sharp Park Golf Course, located in Pacifica in San Mateo County, continues to cost San Francisco more than it earns, and if land management isn't changed, it may cost us all two of the Bay Areas most endangered species. Send an e-mail to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Mayor (Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org, mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org) and demand that the City stop subsidizing suburban golf in San Mateo County: ask them to close Sharp Park Golf Course and partner with the National Park Service to build a better public park at Sharp Park that everyone can enjoy!

2011 San Mateo County Science, Math, and Technology Fair

In February 2011, two SAS members, Sonny Mencher and George Chrisman, were special awards judges at this annual fair which honors top science projects from San Mateo County schools. They awarded three deserving students whose projects best exemplified the SAS mission and included an SAS gift of the *Laws Pocket Guide Set of the San Francisco Bay Area*.

Pescadero Marsh Trail Improvement Project

The Sequoia Audubon Society along with California State Parks, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, the San Mateo Coast Natural History Association and the Half Moon Bay accounting firm of Damasco & Associates have funded projects at Pescadero Marsh State Preserve. On January 11, 2011, the most recent and largest effort to date, a \$145,000, 115 foot long bridge was installed to connect the North Pond Trail with the Sequoia Audubon Trail. About 10,000 students from Peninsula schools visit Pescadero Marsh each year to learn about the estuary ecosystem.

Three BIG upcoming events involving SAS: Mark your calendars!

September 22 – 25: Monterey Bay Birding Festival - The seventh annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival, based in Watsonville, this year will include field trips, under the auspices of Sequoia Audubon Society, to Año Nuevo and Gazos Creek Road. Save the date, and visit Monterey Bay Birding Festival online at <http://www.montereybaybirding.org> . Links to their website and Facebook page are available on the Sequoia Audubon website

September 30 – October 3: The American Birding Association (ABA) and Sequoia Audubon will present a fun-filled conference featuring Alvaro Jaramillo with birding trips and workshops focused on the environments and habitats of coastal San Mateo County. Please visit the websites of Sequoia Audubon and the ABA for more information <http://www.aba.org/events/>.

October 9: The 17th annual Big SIT! will feature a Sequoia Audubon team for a day of birdwatching and fundraising. To celebrate the new bridge at Pescadero Marsh that Sequoia helped install, our team will birdwatch from the top of the hill overlooking the North Pond. There will be a dedicated team birding there all day, but anyone is welcome to stop by for a few hours or minutes to help the cause. We hope to detect between 60 and 80 species, but the sky's the limit! This event runs from dawn to dusk. The Sequoia Audubon team will be registered under the name "SASsy Seawatchers." For more information on the Big SIT! visit their webpage at <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/index.php?sc=migration>.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

California Bluebird Recovery Program

Bluebird trails are available to monitor. Assist bluebirds nesting in San Mateo County; help foil predators; learn about nest boxes and monitoring other cavity nesting birds and more.

Share your experiences with the rest of California's Bluebird Champions! No experience needed.

Trails are available at Menlo Country Club, Woodside Rd and Kite Hill in Woodside right now.

Contact: Margaret Gabil, County Coordinator, 650 572-9709 or mgabil@netscape.net

Audubon Canyon Ranch's 2011 Public Season began on March 19th and ends July 10th.

The Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons have arrived to nest and fascinated human visitors soon follow. ACR is seeking warm welcoming hosts to greet them. Please consider scheduling a day or two to help the Ranch Guides who volunteer on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. If you can help, please contact SAS ACR Coordinator Laurie Graham at fair80@comcast.net

The dates that SAS especially needs to fill are April 9th and 10th but other dates are also available.

(Yellowknife, continued from page 4)

we decided to stay close to the car and return again to the Ingraham Trail. In late afternoon we stopped at a lake to look for the pair of Red-necked Grebes with one chick that we had seen on the previous days. We saw and heard the parents calling repeatedly and in an agitated manner, but we could not locate the chick. Then we saw an adult Bald Eagle a few feet away partially hidden on a grassy hillock that might have been the grebe nest. The eagle was tearing at an unseen object, flapping its wings and flying a few feet off the ground and then returning to tear again. After reviewing Jerry's photos it was apparent that the eagle was holding the skinned grebe chick in its beak. The grebe parents continued calling, and the eagle picked up the remainder of the carcass and flew off across the lake. We had mixed emotions after watching this scene, knowing that the grebe pair had lost their only chick of the season.

We again checked on the first Red-necked Grebe family with three chicks on our last trip back to Yellowknife. A Wilson's Snipe flew over the pond and into a marshy area. We couldn't locate the smallest of the grebe chicks at first, but then its head popped up between the wings of the adult. It must have been asleep on her back. Its two siblings were also fine, so this grebe family appeared to be doing well.

We departed Yellowknife the next morning with good memories and hundreds of photos downloaded on the laptop. The Ingraham Trail is an exceptional place and each day provided some special memories.

OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

The Bay Area Bird Photographers Meeting

Spring Excursions by Tom Grey

Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, 2775 Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto

Wednesday, April 6, 7:30 – 9:00 PM

Details: <http://www.scvas.org/index.php?page=text&id=babp>

16th Annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival Arcata, CA

Thursday – Sunday, April 14 – 20

Keynote Speaker: Scott Weidensaul

For further information go to www.godwitdays.com or for assistance with registration for Godwit Days call 1-800-908-WING or 707-826-7050.

17th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature and Earth Day Festival

Weldon, Kern County, CA

Saturday, April 23

Workshop Leaders: Bob Barnes, Darrell Barnes, Bill Foster, Birdie Foster, Marya Miller, Alison Sheehey, Lee Sutton, Reed Tollefson

For more information: <http://www.kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm>

9th Annual Return of the Swallows to Chabot Festival

Chabot Community College, Cesar C. Chavez Plaza 25555 Hesperian Boulevard, Hayward, California

Tuesday, April 26 – John James Audubon's Birthday – 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Sponsored by Ohlone Audubon Society and Chabot College
Fee: None

Parking: \$2.00 (exact change)

Field Trip: Saturday, April 30: Swallows at Multiple Fremont Locations <http://www.ohloneaudubon.org/index.php/upcoming-events/calendar/view/127/31>

For more information: contact Phil Gordon at (510) 538-3550 or PAGPEG@aol.com

Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival

Friday – Monday, April 29 – May 2

Keynote Speaker: Alvaro Jaramillo

Event features trips for all levels of birders. Trips and talks are led by such experts as Rich Stallcup, Peter Pyle, Jules Evens, David Wimpfheimer, Lisa Hug, Joe Morlan, Sarah Allen, and Keith Hansen. Sponsored by the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin, the leading environmental advocacy organization in West Marin.

Contact: prbnfestival@gmail.com, 415-663-9312

Heron Festival and Wildflower Brunch

Clear Lake State Park, Kelseyville, CA

Saturday & Sunday, April 30 & May 1

Keynote speaker: Wildlife photographer Philip Greene

Co-sponsored by Redbud Audubon & Clear Lake State Park.

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(Other Birding Activities, continued from page 7)

For information and registration: www.heronfestival.org or
707-263-8030

**California Redwoods Bird and Nature Festival (formerly
Aleutian Goose Festival)**

**Crescent City Cultural Center, 1001 Front Street, Cres-
cent City, CA**

Friday – Sunday, May 6 – 8

Seventy bird, nature and heritage field trips and workshops, in
the home of Redwood National & State Parks, Smith River
National Recreation Area, and Lake Earl Wildlife Area.

Contact: <http://calredwoodsbirdfest.org/>

**Understanding and Enjoying Migration: Workshops with
Alvaro Jaramillo**

**San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, 600 Valley Way,
Milpitas**

**Tuesday & Friday, May 10 & 13, 6:30 – 9:00 PM -- In-
struction**

Sunday, May 15, TBA – Field Trip

Join acclaimed biologist and naturalist **Alvaro Jaramillo** for
these fun and informative workshops. Workshops include two
classroom sessions and a full-day field trip. Put your birding
into an ecological context! Birding Level: Beginner on up.

Information and registration: [http://www.sfbbo.org/
activities/workshops.php](http://www.sfbbo.org/activities/workshops.php)

(SMC Birding, continued from page 5)

locals alike. SAS's website also has direct links to the San
Mateo County checklist, and the San Mateo County Year list
(<http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/SMCbirds.php>) showing
all of the species seen year to date. Rarities can also be re-
ported and retrieved at the Peninsula Birding section on Ya-
hoo Groups at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/peninsula-
birding/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/peninsula-birding/). This is a great way to discover recent arrivals, spe-
cific directions, identification tips, and great insight to San
Mateo County birding and birders in a timely manner. Many
avid birders also record all of their sightings to eBird on a
regular basis (www.ebird.org). It is a tremendous resource
for historic records, arrivals, locations, and abundance. This
site uses Google maps to pinpoint locations and show you
where you should look for your next county or life bird.
Your sighting are collected by location, producing life and
year lists by site, county, state, country, year, etc. It is an
invaluable tool to improve your birding and add your contri-
bution to the county record. If you have any questions about
birding resources or discoveries, please contact me at [geo-
dani55@yahoo.com](mailto:geo-dani55@yahoo.com).

Yellow-
headed
Blackbird



**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.*