



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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July 2013 — Sept. 2013

Campground Birding

By Sue Cossins

In May, 2013, my husband and I took a trailer trip throughout the southwest. Our days were spent sightseeing – mostly visiting national parks. But every morning I tried to get up early and bird the campground and surrounding area for an hour or so. A smartphone app, BirdLog, made it easy to keep track of the birds I saw. It would find my exact location with GPS and note the date and time, then give me a list of the likely birds that I could see. All I had to do was scroll through and select the species and the number of birds I had seen, or I would just mark an X if I saw lots of one species. It then allowed me to save the list and/or send it to eBird. I also kept an Excel spreadsheet of my sightings.

Right away I quickly realized what made a campground more or less appealing to birds. I found the most species near water (a pond, creek, river, etc) and vegetation, especially trees. Irrigated areas or bird baths brought in more birds. I also tried to walk toward bird song especially unrecognizable ones and check bird feeders for close ups of what's in the area. Hummingbird feeders at one camp also attracted Black-headed Grosbeak, Acorn Woodpecker, and Bullock's Oriole. Another factor in the bird count of a campground was me - if the weather is miserable, cold and windy, I don't want to stay out very long.

The birdiest camp was Cave Springs Campground in Oak Creek Canyon near Sedona - 42 species. The least birdy was an RV park near Las Vegas with just
(Continued on Page 6)



American Coot with Young
Bluff, Utah
Photo by Bob Cossins

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

July - August

No General Meetings.

Field Trips are Ongoing.

Have a Great Summer!

September

Thursday, Sept. 12th 7:00 PM

Birds of the Sierra Nevada

Upcoming Field Trips

July

Sat., 6th Radio Road

Sun., 7th Pescadero Marsh

Sun., 14th Edgewood Park

Sun., 21st Mori Point and

Pescadero Marsh

Sun., 28th Pillar Point - Princeton

August

Sun., 4th Pescadero Marsh

Sun., 11th Edgewood Park

Sun., 18th Pescadero Marsh

Sat., 24th Bedwell Bayfront Park

September

Sun., 1st Pescadero Marsh

Wed., 4th Coyote Point

Sat., 7th Bluff Walk - HMB

Sun., 8th Edgewood Park

(Continued on Page 3)

Sequoia Audubon Society

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Online Birding Guide:

www.birding.sequoia-audubon.org

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/
SequoiaAudubon

Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/
SequoiaAudubon

MEETING PROGRAMS

There are no scheduled General Meetings in the months of July and August. However if you want to be involved in shaping the chapter's future for the coming year, you're invited to the:

SAS Annual Summer Planning Meeting

Sunday, July 21, 2013.

Activities include an afternoon meeting, open to all members, followed by a barbeque hosted by SAS.

Please RSVP a.s.a.p. to Sue Cossins (sas-sue@earthlink).

Our General Meetings will resume with the September 12th program listed below.

Birds of the Sierra Nevada

By Ed Pandolfino, Ted Beedy and Keith Hansen

Thursday, September 12, 7:00 pm

Ted, Ed, and Keith will take you on a virtual transect of the range from the oak savanna in the west, through serene conifer forests of the west side, up into the majestic alpine regions, and down the steep eastern escarpment to the pinyon/juniper woodlands and open steppes of the Great Basin. Along the way we'll see and hear the stunning diversity of birds that make the Sierra their home. We'll learn about which birds are in decline and which are expanding and increasing. We'll address some mysteries surrounding some of those species and discuss how birders can help to solve them.

Ted Beedy co-authored *Discovering Sierra Birds* and has written numerous technical publications and articles on Sierra birds. During more than 20 years at Jones & Stokes, he studied Tricolored Blackbirds as well as many other sensitive species at Mono Lake, Kern River Valley, and elsewhere in the Sierra.

Ed Pandolfino is President of Western Field Ornithologists, a Regional Editor for Northern California for *North American Birds*, on the editorial board of the *Central Valley Bird Club Bulletin*, and has published more than two dozen articles on status and distribution of western birds.

Keith Hansen is a professional bird artist who illustrated *Discovering Sierra Birds*, *Distributional Checklist of North American Birds*, *Birds of Yosemite and the East Slope*, *California Wild Lands: A Guide to the Nature Conservancy Preserves*, and *The Natural History of the Point Reyes Peninsula*, among many other books. Much of his art can be seen at www.keithhansen.com.

Ted and Ed co-authored a new book, *Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution*, illustrated by Keith and published by U.C. Press.

After the program they will be selling and signing copies of their book.

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)



FIELD TRIPS

BY GINNY MARSHALL

Pescadero Marsh – State Park Docent Nature Walks

First Sunday of each month is a morning walk starting at 10:00 am till Noon

The Third Sunday of each month is an afternoon walk starting at 1:00 pm till 3:00 pm

Walks in July are on the 7th and 21st

Walks in August are on the 4th and 18th

Walks in September are on the 1st and 15th

New monthly field trip on the second Sunday of each month:

Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve

Sundays, July 14, Aug 11, Sept 8, 8:00am - hike will last 3-4 hours

Join Susie Hons and explore Edgewood Natural Preserve throughout the seasons. Hike through oak woodlands and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird year round. In spring and summer look for Grasshopper Sparrow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Ash-throated Flycatcher, and of course wonderful wildflowers. In fall and winter the park hosts many migrant birds.

Hike 3-5 miles with some hills.

Directions: take 280 to Edgewood Rd. in Woodside. Go east down Edgewood to the park entrance on the right. Meet at the Nature Center.

Leader: Susie Hons susieturtlewings@me.com

Radio Road, Redwood Shores

Saturday, July 6, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

The ponds at Radio Road are productive year-round for waterbirds of all kinds. In summer it provides an opportunity to observe this year's young at close range. Radio Road is the only place in the county you can reliably see Black Skimmers. Join us while we admire the skimmers, young stilts, and other local breeding birds. This location is a favorite among bird photographers. Bring binoculars, cameras, and scopes if you have them. This location is mostly flat and we will never be very far from the cars. No restroom is available.

Directions: Radio Road is located at the eastern end of Redwood Shores Parkway. From US 101, take exit 411 to Redwood Shores Parkway and head toward the bay. In a few miles, look for the tall electrical towers just past a slough on your right. There is a sign there that says "SBSA 1400 Radio Road." Turn right at this sign; you are now on Radio Road. You come to a stop sign; in front of you are the ponds of Radio Road; to your right is the Dog Park. Turn right and you will reach the main parking lot for Radio Road.

(Sept. Field Trips from Page 1)

Wed., 11th Moss Landing/Elkhorn

Sun., 15th Pescadero Marsh

Sun., 22nd Golden Gate Park

More information: <http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/description.php?loc=58&p=0>

Leader: Donna Pomeroy dpom@comcast.net

Mori Point – Pacifica Birding

Sunday, July 21, 8:00 – 11:00 am

Join us at Mori Point in Pacifica for fascinating birding in a changing habitat. Mori Point has been undergoing restoration by Trails Forever, including a boardwalk, man-made ponds for Red-legged Frogs, and plantings of natives -- all of which is attracting birds. California Thrashers have returned after an absence of 30 years.

We will walk approximately 3 miles on mostly flat trails. When we arrive at the beach, we can return to the parking area by one of several different trails, depending on the whim of the leaders and the desires of the followers. Anyone with time or distance constraints can turn around at any time, making this an ideal walk for any fitness level.

Bring a scope for sea-watching if you have one, wear layers, all the usual caveats of coastal birding apply.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 am at the trailhead at Bradford Way, Pacifica.

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

Pillar Point and Princeton Harbor

Sunday, July 28, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Pillar Point is a hot spot for birding year-round. With such a wide variety of habitats, we should find many species of breeding birds and hopefully, some early migrant shorebirds. Most of the walking will be on fairly level dirt trails, but if time permits, we may hike up onto the bluff top for a better view out to sea. Bring binoculars, camera, scopes if you have them, water and snacks. A primitive restroom is available at the parking lot.

Directions: The harbor is located just west of Coast Highway One, 18 miles south of San Francisco and 4 miles north of Half Moon Bay. From Coast Highway One, turn west at the stoplight at Capistrano Road and continue along the north side of the harbor to Prospect Way. Turn left onto Prospect, then a brief jog right on Broadway, to an immediate left

(Field Trips on Page 4)

on Harvard Avenue. Proceed through the boat yards to the end of Harvard Avenue, and then turn right onto West Point Avenue, which curves around a marshy area and heads uphill to an Air Force Radar Facility. Meet at the "West Shoreline Access" parking lot below the "Golf Ball".

More information: <http://birding.sequoia-audubon.org/description.php?loc=18&p=0>

Leader: Donna Pomeroy dpom@comcast.net

Bedwell Bayfront Park, Menlo, Park

Saturday, August 24, 8:00 am -12:00 pm

With its marsh, mudflats, open fields and trees any bird can turn up at Bedwell Bayfront Park. Come and look for returning shorebirds, early fall migrants and lingering local birds. Join Don Pendleton at this local gem and view the Cargill salt flats that may soon become a housing development.

Directions: take hwy 101 to Marsh Rd in Menlo Park. Travel east on Marsh Rd. When Marsh Rd. ends at Bayfront Expressway go straight into the park. Meet at the parking lot by the bathroom.

Leader: Don Pendleton pen55ton@yahoo.com

First Wednesday Field Trip

Coyote Point County Park

Wednesday, September 4, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

We will meet at the parking lot by the yacht club for a leisurely stroll around Coyote Point Park looking at the abundant shorebirds and hopefully, some fall migrants. With such a variety of habitats at Coyote Point, we should be able to see quite a number of species. There is an admission charge to the park of \$6 or free for seniors.

Directions: Exit Peninsula Ave from Hwy 101 and follow the signs to the park.

Leader: Donna Pomeroy dpom@comcast.net

Bluff Walk and Sweetwood Group Camp, Half Moon Bay

Saturday, September 7th 8:00 am – 10:30 am

This approximately 2.5 mi. loop walk will take us through Sweetwood Group Camp and along blufftop trails that overlook Dunes State Beach and Venice State Beach. Frenchman's Creek mouth and Pilarcitos Creek mouth will also be visited during our walk.

Beginning Birders Welcome!

Directions: Meet at the restrooms at Venice Beach State Park. Park at Venice State Beach for a \$10 day use fee or there is free street parking at the north end of Pilarcitos Ave. at Wave Ave. and on adjacent streets. If opting for free

parking, park, then walk towards the beach, where you will intersect with the paved coastal trail. Head north along the paved trail to the meet-up location at Venice State Beach.

Leader: Malia DeFelice maliadances@yahoo.com

Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough

Wednesday, September 11, 2013 – whole day trip – 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

This trip will explore some of Monterey County's best fall birding hotspots. We will plan to bird at Moss Landing, Moon Glow Dairy, Zmudowsky State Beach, and other spots as we have time. Plan to have lunch with the group at a great local seafood restaurant.

Contact the leader to reserve a space and for carpooling and directions info.

Leader: Leslie Flint lfint@earthlink.net

Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park

Sunday, September 22, 8:00 am -12:00 pm

Explore one of the birdiest areas of Golden Gate Park. We will walk around Middle and North Lake and also check out the Bison Paddock and other nearby areas. This is flat easy terrain and we will travel at a leisurely pace.

Directions: Travel north on 280 and take the 19th Ave exit. Take the right-hand exit for Brotherhood Way west. At the end of Brotherhood turn right. This will turn into Sunset Blvd. At the end of Sunset turn left, then right onto Chain of Lakes. Pull into the parking lot on the right.

Leader: Ginny Marshall ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net



SAS member, Eileen Kay, is showing a hummingbird nest to K-5 students during Discovery Day at Redwood Shores Elementary School, May 29, 2013. She and Sue Cossins led three sessions of birding activities with the students.

Photo by Sue Cossins

OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

(Sequoia Audubon does not sponsor the following activities.)

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

SFBBO invites bird experts and enthusiasts to lead their favorite bird walks on behalf of SFBBO.

For information please contact Outreach and Membership Coordinator Kristin Butler, kbutler@sfbbo.org.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Workshops with Alvaro Jaramillo for the Birder and Naturalist

Put your birding into an ecological context! These workshops incorporate ecology, evolutionary biology, behavioral ecology, and natural history to complement bird identification information taught in class. Alvaro always offers up fresh materials gleaned from his extensive travels and research. Please join him for these fun and informative workshops!

The classroom portion of the workshops will be held at the Sobrato Center for Non-profits in Redwood City.

Shorebirds

Tuesday, July 30th, Thursday, Aug. 1st (instruction), 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Sunday, Aug. 4th (fieldtrip), TBA

Seabirds

Tuesday, Aug. 27th, Thursday, Aug. 29th (instruction), 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Fieldtrip TBA

For more information and to register, contact: <http://www.sfbbo.org/activities/workshops.php#signup>

Birding Classes in San Francisco

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan will be starting September 10 and 11, 2013. All classes meet 7-9:15 p.m. in room 218 at City College of San Francisco, John Adams Campus. The instructor is co-author of "Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area" and "Birds of Northern California." He is also coordinator of the recorded "Northern California Birdbox," Chair of the California Bird Records Committee, and winner of the 2010 Ludlow Griscom Award for contributions to regional ornithology. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is "A Field Guide to Birds of North America," sixth edition, by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing study of North American birds including finches and waterfowl. The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Fees are \$145 for each seven week class but there is a \$15 discount for each class if you pre-register at least a week early.

For further information call (415) 561-1860.

Register online at: <https://www.evolveview.com/ce.ccsf/> .
More information at: <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/fall13.htm>

Golden Gate Raptor Observatory Public Programs Weekends in September and October

Hawk Talks and Banding Demonstrations normally occur every Saturday and Sunday during September and October; weather permitting (heavy fog or rain cancels). The Hawk Talk begins at noon - a GGRO volunteer speaks about hawk migration and identification, and what is done at the GGRO. Then at 1pm, a banding volunteer brings up a newly banded hawk, talks about the banding program, shows everyone the hawk, and lets it go in front of the crowd. It is a great way to learn about hawks and see one up close. You do not have to RSVP – just show up on the hill. Look for the big banner just west of the main hawk watching platform on the very top of Hawk Hill. The docent will gather everyone by announcing that the talk will begin in a few minutes. We recommend that you arrive at Hawk Hill around 11:30, watch some hawks, listen to the talk, then stay longer or not, depending on the hawks.

For information: www.ggro.org

Joint Conference of Western Field Ornithologists and The Washington Ornithological Society Hosted by Black Hills Audubon Society August 22-25, 2013 Olympia, Washington

The conference will feature workshops to enhance your field skills and a full set of field trips (including Pelagics). The keynote talk is by John Marzluff on those amazing Corvids.

Contact:

<http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php>

2013 Ninth Annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival Sept. 12-15, 2013 Watsonville Civic Plaza

Specially designed field trips will take participants to Big Sur to see California condors. Join a pelagic trip by Shearwater Journeys to one of the world's most productive regions for albatrosses, shearwaters, storm-petrels and more. Jump into a kayak and get closer to nature or take a scenic ride at Elkhorn Slough Safari. All field trips are led by top quality, friendly leaders.

For information: www.montereybaybirding.org

(Other Birding Activities - Continued on Page 6)

six species – House Sparrow, House Finch, Great-tailed Grackle, Mourning Dove, Eurasian Collared Dove, and Rock Pigeon. This campground was mostly paved with a few scraggly trees and very hot and dusty.

One observation is that Eurasian Collared-Doves are almost everywhere, even at our highest elevation of 9,300 feet in Silverton, CO. Surprisingly the only place I didn't find them was the lush riparian habitat of Oak Creek Canyon, AZ. According to Sibley, they are usually found in suburban habitats where they forage mainly on the ground for seeds. This bird was introduced from Europe to Florida and has spread rapidly throughout North America.

I was surprised to find other species fairly widespread, in a large range of habitats and elevations – White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Bullock's Oriole and Common Raven. Did you know that Dark-eyed Juncos have several subspecies in North America? The two that we encountered were the Red-backed and Gray-headed.

Then there's the thrill of seeing a new species - trying to watch the bird as long as possible and memorize all the field marks before checking the book for a positive ID. Some birds in this category were Red-faced Warbler, Painted Redstart, and Bridled Titmouse.

At a campground in Southern Utah in a hot, dry sagebrush habitat I heard a repeated chip note that I didn't recognize. When I found the bird flitting around in a cottonwood tree all I could pick out was a small, fast moving, pale grey, warbler probably. I kept following it until I finally saw a hint of a rusty rump. After that it was easy to pinpoint it as Lucy's Warbler - another new bird.

On a pond at a campground in Bluff, Utah we noticed a pair of American Coots. Upon closer inspection we saw little specs of something following them. We soon realized they were six new hatchlings. Bob got some nice photos of the family interactions.

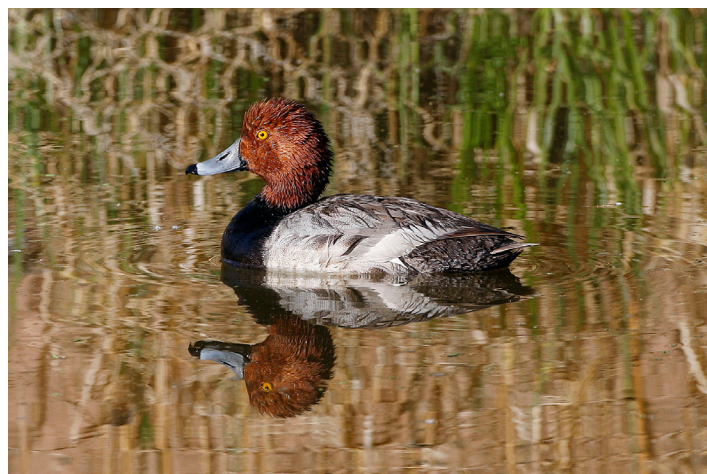
One wonderful memory from the same pond is sitting outside on a warm evening watching as about 30 white-faced ibis quietly flew in for their nightly roost in the reeds.

The trip was great fun and the daily exposure to birding helped reinforce my listening skills – a great help in bird ID. With the help of the spreadsheet I was able to see a broad picture:

I noted 94 species in 11 campgrounds. The most numerous birds were:

Bullock's Oriole was in six, Common Raven and Mourning Dove were in seven, European Collared Dove and House Sparrow were in nine.

The most common bird, in all but two campgrounds was House Finch and I never got tired of seeing them and hearing their song.



Redhead
Cadillac Ranch RV Park
Bluff, Utah
Photo by Bob Cossins

(Other Birding Activities - Continued from Page 5)

19th Annual Kern River Valley Autumn Nature & Vulture Festival

Saturday, September 28, 2013

Kern River Preserve, Weldon, CA

The Kern River Valley Autumn Nature & Vulture Festival is an annual celebration of the fall migration of Turkey Vultures and the beginning of the fall season in the South Fork Kern River forest. The late September festival date also corresponds with what is historically one of the finest weekends for observing fall land bird migration in California. In addition to the presence of many western migrants attractive to eastern birders, there are excellent chances for observing eastern rarities at nearby desert oases. Look for the free booths, exhibits, and workshops at the Kern River Preserve as well as nature walks.

For information: <http://kern.audubon.org/tvfest.htm>

North American Bluebird Society

36th Annual Conference

"The Art of Bluebirding"

Hosted by the South Carolina Bluebird Society

October 3-5, 2013

In friendly, beautiful and historic Aiken, South Carolina

To learn more about NABS and the conference contact:

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/index.htm>

Conservation

Highway nets are killing swallows – stop them (From the Center for Biological Diversity)

Construction netting on Highway 101 is putting swallows in grave danger. The nets were intended to prevent cliff swallows and other birds from nesting along bridges in Petaluma, Calif., but the nets aren't working -- swallows attempting to nest in the nets are getting trapped and killed, while swallows nesting in the un-netted portions of the bridges are getting knocked down before they can finish their nests. Nearly 100 cliff swallows, as well as barn swallows and white-throated swifts, have already been killed.

Swallows nest in the region after migrating 6,000 miles from South America. In past years up to 1,000 cliff swallows nested in the bridges. But this year, after the long trip, the graceful birds are being struck down by the lethal nets.

We need your help to tell Caltrans to remove the deadly netting and stop disturbing swallows and their nests during nesting season.

To take action go to: <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/> and click on "action" to find this issue and send your letter.

Cargill Salt Ponds - the Battle Continues (from Redwood City Neighbors United)

In May 2010, agribusiness giant Cargill and luxury housing developer DMB proposed a huge housing and commercial development on the salt ponds east of Hwy. 101.

Thanks to the vocal opposition of residents and neighbors, in May of 2012 Cargill and DMB withdrew their pending "Saltworks" proposal from further consideration by Redwood City. However, at the same time, they announced they would return with a revised development plan for the salt ponds.

RCNU states that any project, regardless of its size, that builds on the salt ponds runs counter to good land use practices, citing among other things, potential traffic gridlock and loss of renewable wetlands.

More information: <http://rcnu.org/>

Restore Sharp Park (From Wild Equity Institute)

Sharp Park is a wetland owned by San Francisco but located in San Mateo County. The City drains Sharp Park year-round so people can play golf on the land. The Wild Equity Institute is working to build a better public park at Sharp Park, a park that saves San Francisco money, protects the environment, sustainably adapts to sea level rise and climate change, and provides recreational opportunities that everyone can enjoy.

Take Action: Tell San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee to support restoration of Sharp Park: <http://wildequity.org/alerts/257>

More information: www.wildequity.org

Kick the Bag Habit! (From Save the Bay)

The multi-billion dollar plastic bag industry is putting profits over the health of the Bay, the ocean and wildlife. The plastics industry is infiltrating local communities, blocking proposals that limit the use of plastic bags and suing cities that attempt to ban or require a fee on single-use bags.

Californians use an estimated 19 billion plastic bags per year. Only five percent of these are recycled. With a little incentive, we can kick our bag habits together.

Urge your elected officials to end the free distribution of single-use plastic and paper bags today!

More information: <http://www.savesfbay.org/kick-bag-habit>

PS: (Associated Press, 5/31/13: "The state senate rejected a bill yesterday that would have phased out, statewide, the use of single-use plastic checkout bags in grocery, drug and convenience stores. Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Los Angeles, said he will try again next year.")

Volunteer Opportunity **Bluebird Recovery Program**

County Coordinator, Pat Neumann, is currently looking for people to assist with monitoring bluebird nest boxes for the 2014 season.

Since the nesting season is winding down, training will begin by working with a current monitor in preparation for the 2014 season. Monitors usually walk a trail of about 10 to 20 boxes once a week to gather data. The season runs from March through mid July.

For more information contact Pat Neumann at 650-339-5774 or pneumann716@gmail.com

Sequoia Audubon Society Membership Form

Individual membership for seniors (>62)

\$15.00

Individual membership

\$20.00

Family membership

\$25.00

Donation to SAS

\$

\$

Total

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _____

Newsletter Preference:

_____ Mail and / or _____ E-mail

E-mail address _____

Sequoia Audubon Society

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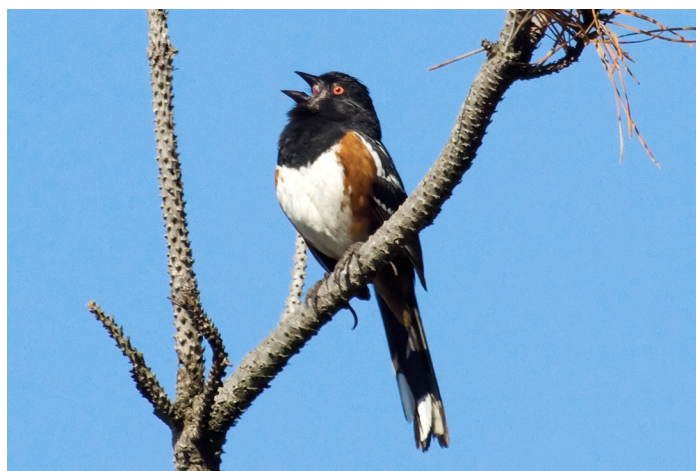
SAN MATEO, CA

PERMIT NO. 293



Bird walk along Pillar Point Bluff Trail

Photo by Larry Kay



Spotted Towhee

Photo by Donna Pomeroy

Sunday, May 19, 2013, SAS active members were treated to a bird walk led by SAS President, Jennifer Rycenga, along Pillar Point Bluff Trail. The group was serenaded by a Spotted Towhee. The walk was followed by a luncheon at Flavor Restaurant in El Granada.

Thank You Volunteers!

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.