



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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April - June 2018

2018: The Year of the Bird by Nelle Lyons

Join the National Audubon Society, National Geographic, BirdLife International, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in a yearlong celebration of birds. We don't need a reason to celebrate birds, but in 2018 Audubon is making a big deal of them. Not only is it the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)—a pivotal piece of legislation that continues to save countless birds' lives — but birds are also facing many new and serious threats, including attacks on the MBTA itself. National Audubon has excitedly teamed up with National Geographic, BirdLife International, and the Cornell Lab to officially make 2018 the Year of the Bird.



Spotted Towhee photo by Donna Pomeroy

What exactly is Year of the Bird? Throughout the year, all the partners, along with more than 150 other participating organizations, are celebrating birds. To make the Year of the Bird a true success, though, they need everyone. Each month they're asking people to take simple actions that will help

birds. For January, it was about joining the cause, whether as individuals or organizations. In February, it was participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Sequoia Audubon did its part by leading 5 walks over the 4-day weekend. In March, the theme centered on growing native plants. You can find out what is going on in the coming months by checking the National Audubon and National Geographic websites.

If you have not taken political action in the past, this is the year to get involved. Speak up to your national, state and local government representatives to ensure we maintain and strengthen protections for birds. Check the National Audubon website under the "Take Action" tab to keep up on critical issues. You can find contact information for your federal representatives here: <https://www.senate.gov/> and <https://www.house.gov/>.

Get involved with our local chapter, Sequoia Audubon Society, and make this your Year of the Bird, too! Our chapter is operated almost completely through volunteer work. We are in need of help with local conservation issues, outreach events, planning local speaker programs, educating youth through school programs, and engaging people to help birds through birding field trips. Send us a message at office@sequoia-audubon.org and let us know what areas you are interested in working on during your Year of the Bird.

Monthly Meetings

2nd Thursdays 7:00 pm
San Mateo Garden Center
605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

April

Thursday, April 12th
Learning, Teaching
Matthew Dodder

May

Thursday, May 10th
Community Science
Anna Weinstein

June

Thursday, June 14th
SF's Natural History
Harry Fuller

Upcoming Field Trips

April

Wed. 4th Pulgas Ridge
Wed. 11th Pinnacles
Sat. 21st Edgewood Park
Fri. 27th Skyline Ridge

May

Wed. 2nd Burleigh Murray
Fri. 11th Coyote Point

June

Sat. 2nd Burleigh Murray
Wed. 6th Bedwell Bayfront
Sat. 16th Las Gallinas
Sat. 30th Año Nuevo

Green Birding: The Birds at our Doorstep *by Rob Furrow*

Springtime is coming. If you live on the coast, you may have noticed the arrival of the Allen's Hummingbird – the earliest migrant bird species to return to San Mateo county each year. Now keep an ear out for a thin, descending trill coming from woodland, scrub, and riparian habitats. These are Orange-crowned Warblers, and they're on the move. Overhead, swallows are filling in their territories and entertaining with their aerial acrobatics. It's also a great time to get out for some green birding. Don't worry, there are no rules on what color to wear or how much kale you have to eat. Green birding refers to going carbon-free; try birding your local patches on foot or by bike, kayak, or public transportation.

When it comes to green birding, San Mateo county is hard to beat. Over the past few years, a team of bike-birders has set, broken, and re-broken the California green birding record for most bird species seen in single day. The record stands at 187 species... by bike... in a single day! Core to this effort is the incredible habitat diversity of our small county. For a taste, let's take a journey through the 15-mile transect from Pillar Point Harbor in Half Moon Bay to Cañada Road in Belmont. We begin with coastal birding, watching loons migrating northward and squinting at distant shearwaters. At the lush willow thickets where our creeks wind into the Pacific, we find glowing yellow American Goldfinches and, later in the season, Swainson's Thrush song bubbling upward. The stands of cypress play host to the inconspicuous and spritely Golden-crowned Kinglet. California Thrasher sing their varied song from the coastal scrub, peppering in mimics of frogs and towhees. Stands of pine near Skyline Blvd evoke lands more elevated and northerly, with Red Crossbill kip-ping and Pine Siskin zheer-ing. At Crystal Springs Reservoir we enjoy our very own breeding Bald Eagles. The small patches of grassland and oak woodland on Cañada Road round things out, with Grasshopper Sparrows buzzing away, their song seeming to come from every direction.

Josiah Clark, Dorian Anderson, and I will attempt another green big day this spring, beginning in Half Moon Bay. We'll continue on to the bay, crossing into Santa Clara county and up into the hills to the east. As we scout, plan, and finalize our route, we will keep you updated on the peninsula-birding mailing list. In the meantime, savor the spring crescendo and give your own green birding a shot!



Upcoming Bio-Blitzes *by Donna Pomeroy*

Sequoia Audubon is participating in several bioblitzes this spring. If you enjoy being out in nature, particularly in spring, and want to learn more about our amazing flora and fauna in addition to birds, a bioblitz is an excellent way to gain exposure and experience with other taxa. No special skills are necessary, just enthusiasm, curiosity, and a smart phone or camera.

The first event is at San Bruno Mountain on Saturday, April 28 from 9 – 2 pm. This is an amazing site for native wildflowers, many rare and unique, as well as the best place in the county to see rare and endangered butterflies.

Another bioblitz is scheduled for Saturday, May 12 from 9 – 12 pm at Wavecrest in Half Moon Bay, with an optional wrap-up session at nearby Cameron's Restaurant. Wavecrest is a series of undeveloped properties south of Half Moon Bay, owned by Coastside Land Trust and POST. It is an extremely important wintering area for raptors, but this bioblitz is scheduled to coincide with the spring wildflower bloom and arrival of our local breeding birds. More details and a link to sign up will be on the Sequoia Audubon website soon.



Dwarf Checkermallow photo by Donna Pomeroy

MEETING PROGRAMS

San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

April 12, 2018, 7 pm

“There’s no better way to learn a subject” with Matthew Dodder

In 1999, Matthew began teaching the beginning birding class at Palo Alto Adult School. Sometime later, it evolved to become an intermediate level class, and then finally an advanced class. Is this the normal progression? Or is it an indication of something else? Join Matthew for an investigation of what makes a good birding class, and how both teacher and student can advance together.

Matthew started birding in 1977 (Boston), came to California, got a degree in English Literature at Berkeley, went to seminary (just because), became a graphic designer without training, started leading bird walks and teaching a class, got married, dabbled in drawing, cooking, and then lost his job. It’s been a lot of learning...



May 10, 2018, 7 pm

“Audubon and Community Science” with Anna Weinstein

Citizen science, also known as “community science” is growing in importance globally as a means to engage the public in natural resource monitoring and conservation. National Audubon is dedicated to engaging in and supporting these types of programs to better understand and protect the birds we care about. We are fortunate to have local chapters as partners in these efforts. At Audubon California, the marine program houses two community science programs focused on Black Oystercatcher and the California Brown Pelican subspecies. Anna will describe these programs, the roles of chapter and agency partners, the results and what they mean for these species, and the challenges we are addressing to improve their effectiveness. Feedback and discussion from Sequoia Audubon members and others will be welcomed and encouraged.

Anna Weinstein is a conservation biologist with over 20 years of experience in policy, biology, organizational development, and strategic planning. Anna was a co-founder of Island Conservation, and for many years was an environmental scientist at the San Francisco Estuary Institute. In her nine years at Audubon California, Anna has led or been part of successful campaigns to protect marine habitats and food resources for birds on the west coast from Washington through California. Anna grew up in rural New Jersey. She has a biology degree from Oberlin College and an M.S. in marine ecology from the Boston University Marine Program in Woods Hole, MA.



Black Oystercatchers

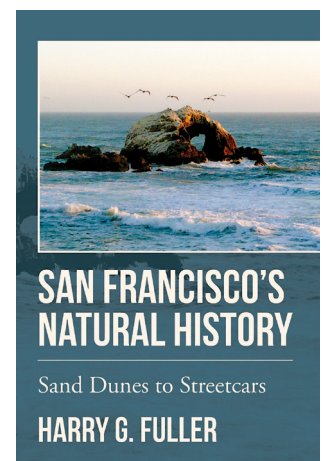
June 14, 2018, 7 pm

“San Francisco’s Natural History” with Harry Fuller

This fascinating presentation will move across three centuries of observation and change in the wildlife and ecology of San Francisco. Once rattlesnakes ruled Telegraph Hill and a grizzly bear was seen swimming across Mission Creek. Today most creeks are underground and exotic trees fringe the horizon. We will look at the introduced, the invasive, the survivors and the prospects of the future. From nano-plastic pollution to climate change, people now can alter the future of all living organisms in the environment. The banning of DDT in 1974 and the subsequent return of Brown Pelicans and Peregrine Falcon can be a road map to where we should go now.

Copies of Harry’s new book, *San Francisco’s Natural History: Sand Dunes to Streetcars*, has just been published and will be available for purchase.

Harry Fuller is a resident of Ashland, Oregon and an active volunteer with Rogue Valley Audubon Society and Klamath Bird Observatory. Harry was a long-time San Francisco resident and birder. He was a founding member of the San Francisco Field Ornithologists. In addition, Mr. Fuller has led dozens of field trips for Golden Gate Audubon Society, Strybing Arboretum, Carleton College Alumni and San Francisco Recreation and Park Dept. He’s written and published *Now and Then*, a history of changes in San Francisco’s natural habitats and wildlife since the earliest written records. His pieces on birding West Coast locations have also appeared in *WildBird* magazine. While living in Europe from 2001-2005, Mr. Fuller wrote articles on urban birding in London, Paris and Frankfurt for the American Birding Association’s newsletter.





Sequoia Field Trips

Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve

Wednesday, April 4, 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Pulgas Ridge OSP is not as well-known as its neighboring park, across the road, Edgewood Preserve. We will explore this oak woodland and grassland in search of birds, wildflowers and butterflies. **Directions:** From Edgewood Road (near I-280), go north on Crestview Drive, then take an immediate left onto Edmonds Road. The parking lot is clearly marked on Edmonds. The trail is moderately strenuous, but the slow pace should allow everyone to keep up. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy. **Contact:** dpom@comcast.net

Pinnacles National Park -- Reservations Required (Max 12 participants)

Wednesday, April 11, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Pinnacles National Park lies just south of Hollister and affords the opportunity to see California Condor in the wild. We'll also look for canyon wren, Lawrence's goldfinch, prairie falcon and more. **RSVP Required** to Leslie Flint as there is a maximum of 12 participants for this trip. **Directions:** Take Hwy 101 south through the city of Gilroy to Hwy 25 south. Continue to Hwy 126 and turn right and then left into the Pinnacles Campground and Visitor enter. \$15.00 entrance fee (per car). Bring a flashlight for walking through the caves. Contact Leslie for no-host carpool. **Leader:** Leslie Flint. **Contact:** lfint@earthlink.net.

Filoli Estate - RSVP Required

Saturday, April 21, 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

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 land. In addition to birds, the wildflowers should be plentiful at this time. 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, trip is limited to 20 people maximum (sorry, no children under 14). Participants may remain after the field trip to walk through the house and / or formal gardens at no charge. Picnic tables are available near the Visitor Education Center if you wish to enjoy your own food, or you can purchase a wide variety of lunch items and beverages at the Quail's Nest Cafe. The gift shop will also be open. **Directions:** Filoli is on Canada Rd. about 1 mile north of Edgewood Rd. We will meet in front of the Visitors Center. **Call Sue James (650) 348-0315 to reserve your spot. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders:** Sue James and Martha O'Neal.

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve - RSVP Required

Friday, April 27, 8:30 am - hike will last 3 to 4 hours

Join Malia DeFelice and Chris Hayward and explore Alpine Lake (also called Alpine Pond) and vicinity. We will hike around Alpine Lake through mixed habitat of willows and chaparral, mixed oak, madrone and conifer forest. Turning onto the Ipiwa trail, we will move through dense oak forest out to open grassland. Our moderately easy hike has some gain and loss in elevation and will be 3 to 5 miles. We'll look for Ash-throated Flycatcher and Black-throated Gray Warbler. **Directions:** Meet at the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve parking lot at the intersection of Skyline Blvd. (Hwy 35) and Alpine Rd. Restrooms are located at the parking lot and at Alpine Lake. **Leaders:** Malia DeFelice and Chris Hayward. **RSVP** to malia.defelice.sas@gmail.com.

Burleigh Murray State Park

Wednesday, May 2, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Burleigh Murray State Park is a hidden treasure on the coast. It has very low visitor usage and a very high density of breeding birds. The only trail is the mile-long, old ranch road that leads up to an historic and picturesque barn. The high number of singing birds will keep this walk at a slow pace. This is a great location to learn and practice birding by ear. Morning fog is common here, but it usually burns off and it can be warm and sunny. **Directions:** We will meet at the lower parking lot to the Johnston House, located on Higgins-Purisima Road in Half Moon Bay about ¼ mile from Hwy 1 on the right. We will caravan to Burleigh Murray, which is 1½ miles up the road from here. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Contact:** dpom@comcast.net.

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Check our website and Facebook page for updates and new listings.

Searching for Migrants at Coyote Point County Park (RSVP)

Friday, May 11, 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Coyote Point needs no introduction as one of the most productive birding sites on the Bay. At this time of year there is a wide variety of species at the park, complimented by the chance of interesting migrant passerines such as flycatchers, tanagers, vireos, kingbirds, warblers and orioles. Let's see what we can find! Meet in the parking lot by the Eucalyptus Group Picnic Area and walk trails at a leisurely pace, about 1 1/2 miles all told. High tide is 10:10am so we will be there at a good time to see shorebirds close-in as the tide recedes. Beginners welcome! **Directions:** Exit Peninsula Ave. from Hwy 101 and follow the signs to the park. There is an admission fee of \$6 per vehicle. **Heavy rain cancels. Leader:** Adam Dudley **Contact:** Adam.Dudley@iCloud.com.

Burleigh Murray State Park

Saturday, June 2, 8:00 am-11:00 am

Burleigh Murray State Park hosts a wonderful trail through lush riparian, with patches of scrub and eucalyptus groves. The site has many breeders that are uncommon elsewhere in the county, including Western Wood-Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and MacGillivray's Warbler. It also has great potential for wandering eastern songbirds that tend to show up late in spring. We'll do a lot of listening, enjoying the early morning chorus of our local songbirds. Expect about 2 miles of walking in total. There are bathrooms on site. **Directions:** Burleigh Murray State Park is located on Higgins-Purissima Road in Half Moon Bay, about 1.5 miles east of Hwy 1, on the left side. **Leader:** Rob Furrow. **Contact:** robertfurrow@gmail.com.

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve – Horseshoe Lake

Wednesday, June 6, 8:00 am - 11:30 am

Skyline Ridge OSP attracts an abundance of spring migrants and breeding birds as well as a wonderful variety of resident species. Horseshoe Lake is just one of the many diverse habitats in this park. The hike we will take around the lake will be relatively easy and we will take our time exploring this gorgeous park. Dress in layers. **Directions:** The main entrance to this 2,143-acre preserve is located .9 miles south of the Alpine Rd. and Skyline Blvd. intersection on Skyline Blvd. The turnoff is on the west side of the road. We will meet in the equestrian parking lot, the southernmost lot of the three parking lots. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Contact:** dpom@comcast.net.

Las Gallinas Ponds, San Rafael: Least Bittern Odyssey

Saturday, June 16, 7:30 am - 11:00 am

For the last few years Least Bitterns have bred at Las Gallinas Ponds. If the birds return, this trip coincides with when they should be starting their breeding activity. It's a good chance of hearing, and maybe seeing, the smallest North American heron. This is also an excellent area to view a wide variety of waterfowl and other wetland birds, and maybe even have a chance to see one of the resident River Otters. This is a slow-paced trip, excellent for all levels of birding. A scope is useful here, if you have one, but many of the birds are close enough for great photo opportunities. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in San Rafael take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit, head east toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch, and go about .5 miles to the end, at Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet in the parking lot. **Heavy rain cancels. Leader:** Adam Dudley **Contact:** Adam.Dudley@icloud.com.

Año Nuevo State Park - Swallows and Swifts, RSVP Required - \$10 entrance fee

Saturday, June 30, 8:30 am - hike will last 3 to 4 hours

Join Malia and Chris to explore Año Nuevo State Park. This is a wonderful birding location for a variety of seabirds, coastal prairie birds and raptors of all sorts. At this time of year, one can see the six expected swallow species, and if we're lucky, Black Swift. We will focus on ID'ing and comparing the swallow species in flight! A predicted low tide at 9:52 will allow us access to Cove Beach where we can view the largest Bank Swallow nesting colony in San Mateo county. We will keep our eyes to the skies for Black Swift which also nest in the area. This time of year, we can walk out to the point without a docent, so we will go and see what birds we can find out there. Heavy rain will cancel. **Directions:** Meet at the parking lot inside Año Nuevo State Park. There is a \$10 entrance fee. **Leaders:** Chris Hayward and Malia DeFelice. **Contact:** malia.defelice.sas@gmail.com **to RSVP.** Call 650-346-2009 **if you are running late.**

Barry Sauppe (1947-2018), Birding Pioneer

Barry Sauppe was a legendary birder who passed away in January. He moved out of San Mateo county in 2001, but his positive impact on birding here remains. A full obituary ran in the Eureka Times-Standard and can be found on their website. A few local birders shared some memories of Barry.

Alvaro Jamarillo: “When I moved into the county, one of the very active birders here was Barry Sauppe. He was famous as the birder who discovered a Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Vancouver (still a near mythical record), and the birder who found the Smew at Leo Ryan Park. That was before my time here, but I always look over to the lake when I drive by. Just in case. He also was one of the first seawatchers in the state, and made Pigeon Point the hot spot we know it as today.”

Roy Carlson: “So many stories; so much learned. One of the first times I heard his name, it was about a Sequoia Audubon meeting in the early 1970s where he talked of hearing Black Rails in (I think) Belmont Slough. The older members told him that there weren’t any Black Rails there. The next meeting, Barry showed up with a box, opened it, and showed the Black Rail, which he then returned to the Slough. This story may be apocryphal, but I’m sure Al DeMartini and Peter Metropulos would know.



Barry Sauppe

“The first birding trip I took with him was to Death Valley and other SoCal stops, with Peter, on Memorial Day weekend in 1976. It was hotter than Billy Blue Blazes’ pitchfork that weekend, so we birded at dawn and dusk, and napped or drank beer between times. I learned so much about HOW to bird from those younger guys on that trip. In October of that year, the three of us went to New Hogan Reservoir to see the Blue-footed Booby - an amazing inland record.

“The last time I saw Barry was at the beach beyond Maverick’s parking at Pillar Point Harbor in April, 2000. He was standing behind his scope with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other - practicing the patented Sauppe method of birding, waiting for the birds to come to him. And they did. He was one of a kind.”

Ron Thorn: “I met Barry Sauppe in the early eighties at the Christmas Birds Counts. Being the compiler, Barry had a high standard for getting everyone on the Crystal Springs CBC to reach the goal of being one of the highest counts in the country. The high counts came with Barry getting participants to scout and stake out birds beforehand.



Pigeon Point photo by Donna Pomeroy

“When I heard of Barry finding a Smew in Foster City, I said what the heck is a Smew? I had one book with an illustration of a Smew. Wow, what a cool looking bird and I raced out to Foster City to see it.

“I was told of Barry’s reputation as a dedicated seawatcher. He was Mr. Pigeon Point and will always hold the title. Barry put in over 10,000 hours of seawatching from Pigeon Point. There were rarities such as Yellow-billed Loon, Laysan Albatross, Mottled Petrel, Little Gull and Black-headed Gull. On one of his spring seawatches, there was a gale force wind strong enough to blow out windows at the lighthouse. Black-footed Albatrosses were at the rock near the lighthouse. Sabine’s Gulls, Common and Arctic Terns were blown in, flying across the field between the lighthouse and Highway 1.

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"I wanted to learn about seawatching, but I did not know if Barry wanted a rookie to hang out with him. He did not mind my company at all. I had heck of a time identifying birds on the ocean. Over time, he became a mentor to me. Without Barry and even Peter I would have never become the seawatcher I am today.

"Barry told me about looking for weed birds. He said the percentage of finding rarities in weed patches would be low compared to riparian. I followed what he said and found rarities. The Dusky Warbler in the fall of 2016 in South San Francisco was in a weed patch. Thank you for that one Barry!

"There are many stories to tell. One time in mid-winter, Barry stopped at the nursery pond along Cloverdale Road. He saw a Merlin struggling in the water. He stripped down to his shorts, jumped in the water, and swam out to the Merlin, bringing it back to shore. The Merlin promptly flew off. Barry was happy with the outcome, even though he was freezing his buns off.

"Barry and Peter were owling one night. Barry played a recording of Northern Saw-whet Owl. One responded by landing on his head. Barry's head was bleeding from the talons. Barry was freaking out and running around yelling at Peter to help. Eventually the owl flew off. The next time Barry went owling he wore a football helmet. The sheriffs came by and stopped the car. They stared at Barry, shook their heads and drove off.

"I will be returning to Pigeon Point with spring migration beginning. When I see the migrating birds I will joyfully thank Barry, as I know his spirit will be there to hear me."

State Parks Volunteer Training

Do you enjoy the beach and spending time outdoors? Do you want to share knowledge with others and promote conservation and stewardship? This is your opportunity to become a volunteer with at Half Moon Bay State Beach. Join our team of dedicated volunteers who interact with visitors and school groups, help monitor wildlife, garden in the native plant nursery, or operate the visitor center. Volunteers help with activities at State Parks in Montara, Half Moon Bay, and Pescadero. Spring training is scheduled for four Sundays beginning in late April. For more information, please contact Ellen Tjosvold at HMBParksVolunteer@parks.ca.gov or call (650)726-8814.

Antique Ornithology Publications Available Through June by Doug Pomeroy

Your Executive Board recently rummaged through our Society's virtual attic. Among some gems we found during our routine inventory were: original Smithsonian Institution editions of Bent's Life Histories of North American Birds, various copies of The Condor publication of the Cooper Ornithological Club/Society from 1915 – 1970's, Audubon magazines from the mid-1940's to mid 1960's, and various other books and Smithsonian reports like Birds and Mammals of the Pribilof Islands from 1923, and a copy of Oology, a reminder of when egg collecting was all the rage.

There are ornithological items, stories of conservation losses, such as the demise of the once common Eskimo Curlew due to market hunting in Bent, to stories that were later conservation successes. For example, the discussions of the effects of DDT on non-target birds and mammals in early Audubon magazines helped remove that chemical from the market. On the lighter side, for those looking for a unique gift for birders of a certain vintage, you can get them an Audubon magazine from the month and year of their birth. Education is part of our mission, and these old gems are not educating anyone staying in our storage locker. So these will be available at monthly meetings through June. Free or donation gladly accepted.



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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.

Sequoia Audubon Society

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April 27-30, 2018: over 60 cities around the world are competing to see who can find the most nature.

Find and photograph plants and animals in your backyard, in parks, at the beach, along city streets, in the bay, in the hills and mountains... anywhere you find nature in the nine SF Bay Area counties.
Make observations April 27-30 • Help ID observations until May 3 • Results announced May 4!



Sequoia Audubon Society Membership Form

Senior or Student membership	\$15.00
Individual membership	\$20.00
Family membership	\$25.00
Supporter	\$100.00
Donation to SAS	\$ _____
	Total \$ _____

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _____

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