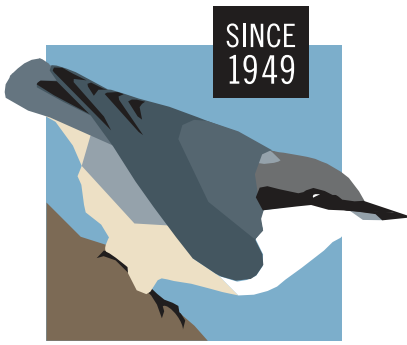




SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County

*Volume 75, No. 2
April - June 2024*

2023 Crystal Springs Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

For the Crystal Springs CBC, 104 participants identified a total of 92,999 individual birds, with 193 species identified. Technically, we reported 194 species, as a Cassia Crossbill was identified at Skylawn Cemetery. However, the Audubon CBC data entry system doesn't yet recognize Cassia Crossbills as a distinct species from Red Crossbill. (Cassia Crossbill was recognized as a full species in 2017.) In any event, this is the highest number of species recorded for this count since 2014, though well short of the 202 species reported that year.

All-time firsts for the Crystal Springs count included a Mandarin Duck in the San Francisco Peninsula Watershed, a Common Poorwill found along Tunitas Creek Rd., and a Green-Tailed Towhee at the SFO mitigation lands west of Hwy 101. We also had our first CBC report of a Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler hybrid.

We recorded all-time high counts for Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Wild Turkey, Pacific Loon, Osprey, Cooper's Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Band-tailed Pigeon, Merlin, American Crow, and Violet-green Swallow. 175 Whimbrel was an amazing high count: previously we had 115 in 1979, 110 in 1998 and 117 in 2006.

Other notable birds included four Snow Geese, a Ross's Goose (last recorded in 2013), a Tufted Duck (third time in four years), four Swamp Sparrows (first time since 2018), a Western Tanager (first since 2013), a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (first since 2014), and two Palm Warblers (first since 2018). Count week birds included Scaly-breasted Munia, Northern Gannet, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

2023 Año Nuevo Christmas Bird Count

Although rainy weather greeted birders on the morning of the Año Nuevo CBC, it was nothing like the extreme weather we encountered last year. 79 birders tallied 19,421 birds and 154 species. That is fewer than the 15-year average of 163 species (leaving out last year, when weather reduced the overall effort substantially, resulting in only 110 species reported).

No new species for this count were reported this year. Rare birds included Spotted Sandpiper (first since 2013), Lapland Longspur (seen only once in the previous 15 years), Fox Sparrow (Red), Bullock's Oriole (only three times ever for this CBC), Red-naped Sapsucker, Black-and-white Warbler, and Palm Warbler (just once in the previous 15 years). Snow Goose was tallied as a count week bird. Surprisingly, Rock Pigeon was a last-minute save - a counter went out after dark to find it on a roost.

We established all-time high counts for Hooded Merganser, California Quail, Golden Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Snowy Plover, and Hairy Woodpecker. On the low side, just six Band-tailed Pigeons and one American Goldfinch.

We - Chris and Curt in particular - are very grateful to our wonderful and steadfast volunteer counters, who make these counts possible and fun, in addition to bringing in these excellent tallies. Also to the land owners and managers who give us permission to count on their properties. To those of you reading this, we are happy to have new counters join each year, as inevitably some people have to drop out.

Monthly Meetings

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

April 11 - Zoom
Japan's Iconic Species
Donna Pomeroy

May 9 - Hybrid
iNaturalist
Tony Iwane

June 13 - TBD

MEETING PROGRAMS

April 11- Zoom

Japan's Iconic Species – Donna Pomeroy

A trip to Japan in winter was on my bucketlist for many years. If one iconic bird, the Steller's Sea-Eagle, isn't enough to tempt you, there are wintering flocks of cranes, Blakiston's Fish-Owl (the largest owl in the world), and Snow Monkeys (Japanese Macaques). Japan has four major islands, and we visited three over the two-week trip. We spent time on Kyushu in the south, with its mild climate, Honshu, the home of the Japanese Alps, and Hokkaido in the snowy north. This program will give an overview of the birds we saw, with special emphasis on the iconic species.

Donna Pomeroy has a BS in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University. She has been a birder since high school and a photographer even longer. Now retired, she spends much of her time photographing wildlife and volunteering for SAS, the California Academy of Sciences intertidal monitoring project at Pillar Point, and many other ongoing citizen science projects.



May 9 – Hybrid

iNaturalist – Tony Iwane

Our speaker, Tony Iwane, is iNaturalist's Outreach and Support Coordinator. He will be speaking about recent updates and changes at iNaturalist, review how-to's for birders such as recording sounds in the field and discuss how more than 175 million observations are contributing to science.



Tony is a former interpretive naturalist with several organizations. Born and raised in Hawaii, he now resides in Oakland. He does photography and has made most of the videos on iNaturalist. He writes occasionally for Bay Nature Magazine and was interviewed for the Nature's Archive podcast.

June 13 - TBD

Conservation Update

We joined with other environmental organizations in submitting a letter to OneShoreline with concerns about their proposed lagoon barrier off the Burlingame/Millbrae shoreline.

Another comment letter addressed the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the 3705 Haven EIR. This development is in Menlo Park, close to Bedwell Bayfront Park and Flood Slough.

Well done, Brisbane! On January 18, 2024, the Brisbane City Council adopted an ordinance "adding Chapter 15.88 Outdoor Lighting Standards to the Brisbane Municipal Code to protect and enhance the local environment and public health by reducing light pollution at night through reasonable restrictions on outdoor lighting." A big thank you to our volunteer who keeps an eye on this city council and notified us.

SAS had a table at the annual meeting of the Redwood Shores Community Association. We were very well received. As we (and other environmental orgs) are genuinely concerned about the proposed expansion and development of the Redwood Life business park there, this was an excellent way to have the community learn more about SAS.

We commented in support of the appeal to the plan to remove mature oaks from the development at 477 9th Avenue in San Mateo. The appeal was unsuccessful, but we hope that the city will realize how much its residents care about trees and consider this in future.

If anything here is of concern to you and you'd like to help our team, please get in touch. We'd love to have your help. conservation@sequoia-audubon.org



Sequoia Field Trips



Please note that rain or Air Quality Index over 150 cancels, unless otherwise stated. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and dress in layers as weather can change.

Tuesday, April 2, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30 – 12:00) Join us for a 2-2.5 mile moderate walk on the Filoli Gardens and Estate trail. Habitats include mixed oak, redwood, madrone woodlands, riparian corridor, and historic horse pastures. Restrooms are available. Directions: from Hwy 280, exit at Edgewood Rd and head west. At the T intersection, turn right onto Canada Rd. In ½ mile, turn left into the property. Park under the oaks on the left side of the lot and look for the leader there. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux, kimberliemoutoux@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/3TtGtKs>

Thursday, April 4, Las Gallinas, San Rafael (8:00 – 11:00) The Las Gallinas Ponds are an excellent area to view a wide variety of waterfowl and other wetland birds. This is a slow-paced trip, along level trails, 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 Highway 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then go east on Smith Ranch toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch, and go about 1/2 mile to the end of the road, at the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot where we'll meet. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy, dpom@comcast.net Register: <https://bit.ly/48LbC0b>

Sunday, April 14, Still Creek, Woodside (8:30 – 11:00) Our ~2.5-mile hike will take us by tributaries of Alambique Creek to a historic logging bridge. Our route has paved and unpaved roads of slight to moderate grade. There is no water or restroom at the parking area, although there is a pit toilet about 1/3 of the way along the walk. Directions: Take Hwy 84 west, turn right on Skywood Way then right on Sunrise Dr and park along the shoulder. **Leader:** Christin New new.a.christin@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/3Pfg7sS>

Saturday, April 20, Palo Alto Baylands for Beginners/Families, Palo Alto (10:00 – 12:00) Meet at Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center, Palo Alto Baylands, 2775 Embarcadero Rd. for a leisurely walk on level gravel trails where we will explore this San Francisco Bay treasure. We should see a variety of shorebirds, waterbirds, and spring migrants. **Leader:** JR Blair, jrbclair20@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/4a7YrHV>

Sunday, April 21, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (7:45 – 12:00) This is a leisurely 3-4 hour walk of ~3 miles in this bird-rich gem on a level, gravel, former ranch road leading to the historic barn. Migrating breeding birds will be arriving. There are pit toilets along the trail. Directions: Take SR1 south from Half Moon Bay and then turn east on Higgins Canyon Rd. Due to limited parking, we will carpool up to the park. Meet at the lower parking lot for the Johnston House at 110 Higgins Canyon Rd. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/3Tszn8T>

Monday, April 22, Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve, Redwood City (8:00 – 11:00) 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 Rd (near I-280), go north on Crestview Dr, then take an immediate left at Edmonds Rd. 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, dpom@comcast.net Register: <https://bit.ly/4c7oVLi>

Wednesday, May 1, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Woodside (8:30 -11:30) Walk through the habitats of Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, including riparian, chaparral, lake, and oak woodland areas. It encompasses remarkable geologic, topographic, and biotic diversity within its 1,193 acres and provides a natural laboratory for researchers worldwide, educational experiences for students and docent-led visitors. We will cover ~ 4 miles on packed earth trails and roads, with mild to moderate elevation gain. There is a restroom. This docent-led field trip is limited to 15 participants ages 14+. Participants must stay with the docent led group for the entire trip. Stanford University access requirements include signing Stanford's waiver of liability and proof of COVID-19 vaccination. Directions will be emailed to participants with approval of the reservation request. **Leader:** Emily Kim and **Co-leader:** Sonny Mencher. Register: email fieldtrips@sequoia-audubon.org.

Sunday, May 5, Bird Walk Coastal Wildflower Day, Half Moon Bay State Beach (Francis Beach) (10:00 – 12:00) Multiple hour long walks. We will look for resident and visiting spring breeding birds. We may also go out on the beach to look at shorebirds, gulls, and birds on or flying over the ocean. Beginners welcome, wear shoes you don't mind getting sandy. Directions: From SR1 in Half Moon Bay, take Kelly Ave west to the end of the road and meet at the Half Moon Bay State Beach Visitor Center, 95 Kelly Ave. The day-use parking permit fee is \$10.00.

Friday, May 10, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, California Coastal National Monument (CCNM), Davenport (8:30-approx. 12:00) We will look for resident birds such as California Thrashers and visiting spring breeding birds while enjoying ocean views during



a moderately strenuous hike with moderate grades. Located near Davenport in Santa Cruz County, the Cotoni-Coast Dairies property extends from the steep slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains to the marine coastal terraces overlooking the Pacific Ocean. We will visit grassland, chaparral, riparian, and young redwood habitats. There are several restrooms along SR1, but none on-site. There are periodic bushes available. This area is grazed, and we will likely be walking past cows and their calves, which are usually docile. Participants must stay with the group for the entire walk with BLM guides. Register: <https://bit.ly/4c1xYxr>

Saturday, May 11, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30 – 12:00) See April 2 field trip. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux, kimberliemoutoux@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/3V5DTLO>

Saturday, May 11, Bedwell Bayfront Park, Menlo Park (10:00 – 12:00) Beginner and family-friendly bird walk on fairly level trails exploring the upland and wetland areas of the park. Raptors, egrets, and LBBs (little brown birds) can be seen. Loaner binoculars available. Directions: From US 101, take Marsh Rd east (SR84 East), then continue straight into the park. Meet in the parking lot near the restrooms. **Leader:** JR Blair, jrbair20@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/4a24AVW>

Sunday, May 19, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (7:45 – 12:00) See April 21 field trip. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/4a2JxCt>

Saturday May 25, Coyote Point Recreation Area, San Mateo (8:00 – 11:30) Join us for a leisurely stroll around Coyote Point Park. With the large variety of habitats at Coyote Point, we should see a number of species. With luck we may see the resident Harlequin Duck. Restrooms available. Directions: Exit Peninsula Ave. from US 101 and follow the signs. (1701 Coyote Point Drive). Meet near the yacht club. \$6 admission charge. **Leader:** Troy Pittock, Register: <https://bit.ly/3Tq5NAO>

Tuesday, May 28, Lower La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, La Honda (8:00 – 11:00) Easy, mostly level 2-3 mile walk in scrub, grassland, and a small forest. We'll look for resident grassland species including Wild Turkey, California Quail, and raptors. A primitive restroom is available, water is not. Directions: Take SR 84 to La Honda, turn north on Sears Ranch Rd (opposite Apple Jack's bar) and follow it to the preserve parking lot, 900 Sears Ranch Rd. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy, dpom@comcast.net Register: <https://bit.ly/4caJhn8>

Sunday, June 2, Still Creek, Woodside (8:30 – 11:00) See April 14 field trip. **Leader:** Christin New, new.a.christin@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/3PeYadZ>

Saturday, June 8, Mori Point, Pacifica (9:00 – 11:00) Beginner and family-friendly bird walk on accessible level trails through coastal scrub, lagoon, salt marsh, beach, and ocean rocks. We will look for sparrows, finches, gulls, wading birds, seabirds, and more! Most of the walking is flat, with a slight incline toward the beach. However, the optional walk up to the elevated bluff is short but moderately steep and less accessible. Restroom and port-a-potty at the trailhead. Directions: From SR 1 south of Sharp Park Rd, turn right on Mori Point Rd and follow it west to the parking area (798 Bradford Way) in Pacifica. Limited parking with nearby street parking. **Leader:** Emily Kim Register: <https://bit.ly/3PamsWA>

Thursday, June 13 – Sunday, June 16, Sierra Valley for Beginning and Intermediate Birders

Sierra Valley is a year-round birding paradise. In summer it is home to breeding songbirds, waders, and waterbirds. Sierra Valley's habitats support the Sierra Nevada's greatest diversity and abundance of birds. We will also spend some time in the Yuba Pass area. Our trip leader, J.R. Blair, is the former Director of the San Francisco State University, Sierra Nevada Field Campus. The trip will commence at 1:00 PM on Thurs, June 13 at the Field Campus in Sierra City and end about 12 PM on Sun, June 16. Our days will begin at 8:30 am. Participants are responsible for their own food, lodging, and transportation. Carpooling may be an option. Limit 10 people. Accompanied young birders welcome. Email fieldtrips@sequoia-audubon.org for reservation requests.

Sunday, June 16, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (7:45 – 12:00) See April 21 field trip. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/4a7jXMD>

Thursday, June 20, Filoli Historic House and Garden (9:30 – 12:00) See April 2 field trip. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux, kimberliemoutoux@gmail.com Register: <https://bit.ly/4caQdAo>

Sunday, June 23, Coyote Point Recreation Area, San Mateo (8:00 – 11:00) See May 25 field trip. **Leader:** Doug Brown Register: <https://bit.ly/3Ta2dcX>

Meet Sequoia Audubon Board Member Melissa Hero

As part of our continuing series of “Meet the Sequoia Audubon Board Members,” I’m happy to introduce Melissa Hero. Melissa is currently serving as Secretary and working on an exciting set of projects.

Q: I understand you have quite a multi-faceted background. Please tell us a little about yourself. Melissa: I studied Avian Sciences at UC Davis, focusing on ecology and conservation. I had a Lovebird in college, which I adopted from Mickaboo Rescue, and later joined Mickaboo as a volunteer to teach the basic care class for new adoptive owners. I also volunteered with GGRO as a hawk watcher and participated in the SAS Christmas Bird Count. I also have an educational background focusing on technology and teach at a local high school. I’m also a Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space and Edgewood Park docent.

Q: What brought you to the SAS board? I was on the board about six years ago but paused due to work commitments. I missed the activities and birding, so when Chris invited me, I rejoined the board as Secretary about a year ago.

Q: What are some of the current projects you are working on? I’ve been helping organize and transition the SAS website to a non-profit website format. Also, the platform supporting our San Mateo Birding Guide is being phased out, so we need to create a mobile app to maintain the guide in the future.

Q: As you think about the work that lies ahead, are there any volunteer opportunities for someone with the right skills? Since the platform supporting the San Mateo Birding Guide tool is being phased out, we are looking for an experienced App Developer to help us transfer our data over to a new App, an App that could be linked from the SAS website and downloaded onto Android and Apple tablets and phones. For those who do not know, the San Mateo Birding Guide is the brainchild of Jennifer Rycenga. It lists the county hot spots and other birding locations, providing details on the birds seen at each location, what time of the year to see them there, accessibility, parking info, rare bird info, photos, and more!

Q: Could you give us more detail about the available roles and desired experience level for volunteers to participate in the San Mateo Birding Guide project? Yes! We are looking to fill the following roles: 1) Developers to create a new App. 2) Volunteers to manage the content that would go into the Guide, for example, updates to hot spot/location data, including the addition of new trails, changes to entry hours or parking fees, adding new bird sightings, etc.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share? You can enjoy birds every day, even if you work! Bring your binoculars to work and take a break during the day to walk outside and observe the birds!

In closing, I’d like to thank Melissa for a great conversation! Please join me again in the next newsletter for another introduction to one of our board members. Until then, get out, enjoy nature, and don’t forget to look up! *Joyce Courtney*



Left: Participants at the Feb 10 Nest Box Monitor Training at Huddart Park. Right: Leader students from the Redwood City Teen Advisory Board check nest boxes at Union Cemetery. Nesting season is underway!

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Secretary: Melissa Hero
Treasurer: Julie Dull

At Large: Doug Brown, Beverly Cronin, Marshall Dinowitz, Nelle Lyons, Chris MacIntosh.

Consulting Biologist

Alvaro Jaramillo

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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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Join the fun, help Sequoia spread the word at events!

Do you enjoy talking about birds? Like meeting people? Sequoia has upcoming events and need a few volunteers to help by sharing their enthusiasm for birding talking with others. No hard work involved only fun! Email office@sequoia-audubon.org



*Family Fun Day at Wunderlich Park, Woodside 8/27/23
Patti Berryhill, Davena Gentry, and Doug Brown*

Sequoia Audubon Society Membership

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 _____

Newsletter Preference:

_____ Mail and / or _____ E-mail

E-mail address _____

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Check out our Online Birding Guide:

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