



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County

*Volume 75, No. 1
January - March 2024*

Sequoia's 75th Anniversary Announcement

2024 is Sequoia Audubon Society's 75th Anniversary! In marking this milestone, we can reflect on the rich history of SAS and consider how to continue our legacy. Over the years, one focus has been on Pescadero and its environs. The first SAS field trip to Pescadero occurred on April 4, 1954. In 1968, California State Parks acquired title to a substantial portion of the Pescadero Marsh area, and SAS members began advocating for the protection of the Marsh as a wildlife refuge. That effort led to the designation of Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve, protecting a coastal wetland complex that includes a lagoon at the confluence of Pescadero and Butano Creeks, fresh and brackish water marshes, and ponds. SAS members also raised funds for acquisition and improvements, created the Sequoia Audubon Trail, developed docent materials for State Parks, led many field trips, and extensively observed and documented bird species and their abundance.

In one instance, a rare sighting at Pescadero Marsh occurred on September 16, 1972. Peter Metropulos led his first SAS field trip to the Marsh when he was 17. They found an unusual bird looking like a Dunlin with a white rump. It was a Curlew Sandpiper, which was only the third record in California then. Imagine that. The bird was not in the Peterson guide. What a remarkable find!

Pescadero remains a treasure for us, with critically important habitat, the coastal experience, and a welcoming town.

SAS members also engage with National Audubon and other local chapters. In 1956, National Audubon, with the support of SAS members, planned and acquired a lease of Greco Island to create a wildlife sanctuary. National funded a warden until the property was conveyed to the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1969. Greco Island is a premier tidal marsh in southern San Mateo County, providing habitat for a high density of Ridgeway Rails.

Another example is the Williams Sisters Ranch on the west side of Skyline Ridge, which was donated to National Audubon. Over recent decades, SAS members have monitored birds and other wildlife at the ranch. The results show the place's value as a bird refuge, even as cattle grazing continues.

And one more: SAS considers the North Wavecrest area the most important habitat for wintering raptors in San Mateo County, supporting a greater diversity of raptors and number of individuals than any other location. An SAS member, Gary Deghi, led the advocacy effort to protect this area from development.

These four areas are representative of the incredible biodiversity that we enjoy in the county and for which we will need to remain ever vigilant and active. To continue that legacy for the next 75 years, we can commit ourselves to the Sequoia Audubon Society's mission: to protect native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy, and enjoyment. SAS does this through field trips, welcoming newcomers, programs, education, Christmas Bird counts, breeding bird observations, cavity nest box surveys, bird and pollinator-friendly landscaping, feeder watches, advocacy, and more. We are all grateful for the members who volunteer their time to make these things happen—way to go.

We encourage everyone to participate more, try something new, and meet someone new. Everyone can find a service or task that fits their interests and availability. They will be fulfilled, and we can achieve much together through this anniversary year. We're starting to plan a 75th Anniversary event, where we can gather in September 2024. If you'd like to help with the event email office@sequoia-audubon.org. *Rick Johnson, past board member, vice president, conservation chair and current committee member. Cohort in the Breeding Bird Atlas project.*

Monthly Meetings

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

January 11 - Hybrid

Biking for Birds:

**365 days, 18k miles, 618 species
1 amazing adventure**

Dorian Anderson

February 8 - Hybrid

Raptors Are the Solution (RATS)

Vishal Subramanyan

March 14 - TBD

MEETING PROGRAMS

January 11 – Hybrid

Biking for Birds: 365 days, 18,000 miles, 618 species, 1 amazing adventure – Dorian Anderson

On January 1st, 2014, Dorian Anderson boarded his bicycle for the adventure of a lifetime, an eco-friendly twist on the Big Year classic: a year-long project where a birdwatcher tries to observe as many species as possible. While most use cars, planes, and boats, Anderson aimed to complete his year without petroleum: a Herculean challenge no one before him had accepted. He cycled 18,000 miles and amassed 618 species; an unimaginable total deemed impossible for a cycling novice.

He will speak about the genesis of his bike-birding project, recount his travel adventures, highlight the birds he saw, and reveal how his adventure changed his life.

Dorian Anderson started birding in his backyard in Philadelphia at age seven and attended several youth birding camps. His educational rise and coincident alcoholism extinguished his birding desire. His birding passion atrophied through his twenties until he got sober at thirty and reconnected with his former obsession.

Despite alcoholism and drug use, he received his B.S. from Stanford University, did predoctoral research at Harvard University, and earned his Ph.D. in Developmental Genetics and Molecular Cell Biology from New York University. After getting sober, he spent three years as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital before undertaking his bicycle Big Year.

That life-changing project opened many doors, including public speaking and travel writing. Anderson worked in Colombia as a consultant for the National Audubon Society and is now a guide for Tropical Birding. He is an accomplished bird photographer and just finished his long-awaited memoir, *Birding Under the Influence: Cycling Across America in Search of Birds and Recovery*.

February 8 – Hybrid

Raptors Are The Solution (RATS) - Vishal Subramanyan

Raptors are the Solution educates the public about the dangers of rat and rodent poisons in the food web. They inform people about the ecological role of wild birds of prey, and work to eliminate toxic rodenticides to prevent further poisoning of wildlife, children, and pets. Rodent poisons undermine a critical piece of this system: the predator/prey relationship. This talk will discuss the various initiatives of RATS and how the public can get involved in these efforts.

Conservation Update

OneShoreline is a public agency in San Mateo County. It “is an independent government agency that works across jurisdictional boundaries to secure and leverage public and private resources for the long-term resilience of our region. We plan and build solutions to the climate change impacts of sea level rise, flooding, and coastal erosion, and enhance the environment, recreational opportunities, and quality of life within communities throughout the county.” So far, so good. However, it developed a plan to protect Millbrae and Burlingame shoreline by putting an offshore levee between SFO and maybe Coyote Point, if San Mateo agrees. This would create a large lagoon between the shore and this levee, potentially changing water salinity and quality, the organisms living in the water, and affecting almost every species up the food chain.

We participated in the scoping meeting for their “notice of preparation of the EIR” and have prepared a formal comment letter with our concerns, including the requirement that experts in estuarine biology and ornithology be retained to assess the biologic resources.

We are also looking for volunteers to monitor the agendas of City Councils and Planning Commissions in San Mateo County. If each city (there are 20) had one person reviewing agendas and alerting us to anything affecting birds and wildlife and habitat that SAS should pay attention to, it would be a huge help. Some cities, such as Burlingame and Redwood City, have a lot going on concerning sea level rise adaptation, big glassy buildings by the bay, and more. Others, such as Hillsborough and Woodside, are pretty peaceful from our viewpoint. If you would like to help monitor your city, we can help you sign up to have agendas emailed to you each week or month (cities make this very easy). Then you just check the agenda and let us know if we need to pay attention to an item, or if you and we can snooze till next time. A few cities (Burlingame, Millbrae, Foster City, Menlo Park, San Bruno) are already spoken for, but most are not.

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



All times are a.m. and rain or Air Quality Index over 150 cancels, unless otherwise stated.
Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and dress in layers as weather can change.

Wednesday, January 3, Pillar Point Harbor, Half Moon Bay (8:00-11:00) Pillar Point is a hot spot for birding. We should find a variety of resident and wintering birds. The walk will be on a mostly level dirt trail and some sand. Scopes will be helpful here. Restroom available. Directions: From CA 1, turn west at the stoplight at Capistrano Rd and continue along the harbor's north side to Prospect Way. Turn left onto Prospect, then a brief jog right on Broadway, to an immediate left on Harvard Ave. Proceed through the boat yards to the end of Harvard Ave, then turn right onto West Point Ave, which curves around the marsh and heads uphill. Meet at the "West Shoreline Access," popularly known as the parking lot to Mavericks, just below the radar station "golf ball". **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy, dpom@comcast.net. Register: <https://bit.ly/3sZINhS>

Saturday, January 6, Palo Alto Baylands for Beginners/Families, Palo Alto (9:00-11:00) Meet at Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center, Palo Alto Baylands, 2775 Embarcadero Rd for a leisurely outing on level gravel trails where we will explore this San Francisco Bay treasure. We should see a variety of shorebirds, waterbirds, and winter migrants. Restrooms available. **Leader:** JR Blair, jrblair20@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3N4JDQY>

Saturday, January 20, Raptors of San Benito County, Tres Pinos, (8:30-3:00) Let's explore the backroads of San Benito County in search of Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, and Prairie Falcons. San Benito County is an excellent area for wintering raptors. Bring lunch, liquids, and a scope if you have one. Since parking is limited, participants on this trip must be willing to carpool with other participants from Tres Pinos (we are limited to 4 cars on the trip route). All participants must have had the most current COVID-19 booster vaccination at least 2 weeks prior. Directions: Meet at Catholic Church (7290 Airline Highway (SR 25c) coordinates 36.787133, -121.316453) in the small town of Tres Pinos, San Benito County, south of Hollister. From San Mateo, allow about 2 hours driving time, taking Hwy 101 south to Hwy 25; follow Hwy 25 through Hollister to Tres Pinos. The large Catholic church is on the right. Park in the lot farthest from the church. Take advantage of bathroom facilities in Hollister before you drive to Tres Pinos. **Leader:** Leslie Flint. Register: email lflint@earthlink.net

Wednesday, January 31, 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 to 86 Canada Rd: 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. Entrance fee paid online in advance. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux, kimberliemoutoux@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/47YTM9R>

Tuesday, February 6, Pillar Point Bluff County Park, Half Moon Bay (9:00-12:00)

Pillar Point Bluff Park has sweeping views of agricultural land and the ocean, with an uncrowded trail system. There is a nice mix of birds here, including California Thrashers. The trail is 1.5 -2 miles and is moderately easy, with a short but steep descent at the end of the loop. Restroom available. Directions: Meet at the Pillar Point Bluff Park parking lot on Airport St. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy, dpom@comcast.net. Register: <https://bit.ly/47UsiT4>

Sunday, February 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. Wintering shorebirds and waterfowl will be present. Raptors, egrets, and LBBs (little brown birds) can also be seen. Bring your binoculars or borrow ours. 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, jrblair20@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3RmFgTW>

February 16-19, The Great Backyard Bird Count: join one of our trips or participate online at: <https://www.birdcount.org>

Saturday, February 17, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30-12:00) See January 31 trip description. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux. Register: <https://bit.ly/3RkHEe2>

Sunday, February 18, Natural Bridges State Park, Santa Cruz (8:30-12:00) This 2-3 mile level trail includes a rocky beach with tidepools, open ocean, and shoreline cliffs great for viewing shorebirds, loons, grebes, and alcids. There's also freshwater wetlands, coastal scrub, and eucalyptus groves to search. Restrooms available but not at the meeting location. Directions: From SR1 southbound entering Santa Cruz turn right on Western Ave, right on University Business Park, left on Natural Bridges Dr and proceed to approx. address 2340 Delaware Ave. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons, 1tiger1NL@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/49ZR2uH>



Monday, February 19, Pescadero State Nature Preserve, Pescadero (8:30-12:30) We'll travel along dirt trails and some sand. Pescadero State Nature Preserve is an important wintering ground and breeding area for a diversity of birds. We expect to see a variety of birds and hope to see, or at least hear, the elusive Virginia Rail and/or Sora. Restroom available. Directions: Take SR1 south from Half Moon Bay. Cross the Pescadero Creek Bridge and turn into the first parking lot just south of the bridge (also known as the Cabrillo Highway South Parking). If you get to Pescadero Rd you've gone too far south. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons, 1tigger1NL@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/47Z5Zvd>

Monday, February 26, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30-12:00) See January 31 trip description. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux. Register: <https://bit.ly/47GGbEz>

Sunday, March 3, Sunrise Drive, Woodside (8:30-11:00) Our ~2.5-mile hike will take us by tributaries of Alambique Creek to a historic logging bridge. The route has paved or 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/3N2o3MX>

Thursday, March 7, Lower Windy Hill, Portola Valley (8:00-11:30) This is a moderately strenuous, approx. 2-mile walk on dirt trails through a diverse range of habitats, which hosts oak specialties like White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse, and Nuttall's Woodpecker, and a small pond that hosts Wood Ducks in some years. Restroom available. Directions: Windy Hill Open Space Preserve lower parking lot, 555 Portola Valley Rd, Portola Valley. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy, dpom@comcast.net. Register: <https://bit.ly/47BpPgW>

Saturday, March 16, Jetty Road, Moss Landing and environs (8:30-3:00) Meet at Jetty Rd parking lot of Moss Landing State Beach off Hwy 1 (approximately 1 mile north of the Power Plant smokestacks) We will meet between the entrance gate and the first restroom. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons, 1tigger1NL@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/480h8fz>

Saturday, March 16, Bair Island Trail, Redwood City (9:00-11:00) Level dirt trails make this an easy outing for beginners. We should see a variety of ducks, shorebirds, and smaller songbirds. Restrooms available. Directions: From US 101 exit Whipple Ave. Heading east, it winds for 0.5 mile becoming East Bayshore Rd, then Bair Island Rd. Meet at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge Bair Island Trail parking lot. **Leader:** J.R. Blair, jrb Blair20@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/46FnArl>

Saturday, March 23, Nob Hill Pond, Redwood Shores for Beginners (9:00-11:00) This beginner and family-friendly bird walk is at an excellent area to view a variety of ducks and other waterbirds. Restrooms are available in the nearby shopping center. Directions: From US 101 in San Carlos, take the Redwood Shores Pkwy exit, pass the Nob Hill shopping plaza, turn right on Bridge Pkwy, then turn right at Tiller Ln. Follow Tiller Ln to its endpoint, and turn left on Spar Dr. (698 Spar Dr), where there is a small cul-de-sac with street parking. **Leader:** JR Blair, jrb Blair20@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3QZqSjf>

Sunday, March 24, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (8:00-4:00) Join us for a leisurely outing of ~3 miles in this bird-rich gem on a level gravel road leading to a historic barn. Resident birds and winter visitors will be present. There are two pit toilets along the trail. Directions: Take SR1 south from Half Moon Bay and turn east on Higgins Canyon Rd. Due to limited parking, we will carpool to the park, meet at the Johnston House parking lot, 110 Higgins Canyon Rd. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/413MYpd>

Saturday, March 30, Wilder Ranch State Park, Santa Cruz (8:30-1:00) After paying the \$10 day-use fee at the kiosk meet in the main parking lot by the restroom. We'll likely use the Old Cove Landing trail, approximately 2.5 miles depending upon bird activity. Directions: Located west of SR1, just north of Santa Cruz, 1401 Coast Rd, Santa Cruz. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons, 1tigger1NL@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3R0z7M4>

Saturday, March 30, Williams Sisters Ranch (WSR) Audubon property, Woodside (8:30-11:30) This is an incredibly special restricted reserve with a unique history and a rich mosaic of habitats. Access from Skyline Blvd, moderate trails with some nice hilltops, mixed grassy pastures, mixed forest, riparian, and chaparral patches. We'll look for local species, migrants, and lots of other wildlife. Limited to 8 participants, directions provided to confirmed reservations. **Leaders:** Troy Pittock, troypittock@gmail.com and Pati Rouzer. Register: email fieldtrips@sequoia-audubon.org

A TRIBUTE TO DOUG POMEROY – 1958-2023 – by Leslie Flint

Doug Pomeroy, Sequoia Audubon Board Member and Field Trip Coordinator, passed away from pancreatic cancer on August 14, 2023.

Doug and Donna were graduates of Humboldt State University with degrees in Wildlife Management and were lifetime birders and nature enthusiasts. Donna is also one of our favorite field trip leaders. They were married for 40 years.

Doug's biggest joy in life, besides his marriage to Donna, was being a father to their son Kevin, a nationally recognized diver at the junior level and a collegiate diver for the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



*Thanksgiving 2018, Mountain House
From left: Donna Pomeroy, Peggy Macres, Jennifer Rycenga, Doug Pomeroy*

Doug recently retired from the Federal Aviation Administration as an environmental protection specialist. He and Donna were able to pursue their love of travel with a trip to Finland, their last trip together. Other favorite trips included Svalbard, Churchill, Nome, Barrow, Gambell, and other parts of Alaska. They clearly loved the Arctic!

I was on my way to Mono Lake the morning of the 14th when Donna texted me that Doug had passed. I was flooded with sadness but then began to remember the great times we all had birding at Mono Lake, Mines Road, Panoche Valley, Merced NWR, and more. I remember Doug's kindness, helpfulness, and amazing patience every time there was a bird to photograph through the car's sunroof or along the side of the road where there was nowhere to pull off!

When George Chrisman heard of Doug's passing, he headed out to Mines Road to reminisce about a magical day he had spent with Doug in May 2014 during spring migration. They witnessed a fallout of Western Tanagers, warblers, and many other spectacular birds. "It's a day I will never forget," he said. This day in August 2023, it was hot and quiet. "Doug was on my mind, and I could sense his spirit. But the most spectacular part of the day was the sky, the solitude, and my way of sending off a good man who has left us too soon."

Ginny Marshall remembers: "The thing that stands out most in my memory is Doug's immense pride in his family. He was so joyful when talking about the accomplishments of Donna and Kevin. On birding trips, he was always checking that Donna was well positioned for photography and had everything she needed."

Nelle Lyons appreciated "Doug's wisdom about friendship. He noted that as we get older, we need to work more to ensure we make friends and nurture friendships. He saw birding as a great way to make and keep those connections. I will miss Doug's laughter, humor, and friendship. I will miss the brightness he added to some events wearing Hawaiian-style shirts. I will remember to challenge myself and others to improve our birding skills. I will do my best to inspire others to find birds both near and far, as Doug did."

Don Pendleton shared: "Here's one of my few pictures of Doug that I'll always treasure. He and Donna are in the back of a pickup, camera gear in hand, on a trip to Barrow, Alaska. What a team! What fantastic shots they took together. What great fellow Humboldt Staters!"

Jennifer Rycenga remembers: "Doug Pomeroy – friend, birder-naturalist, consummate board member for Sequoia. He was always upbeat; even when discussing things he disliked, he refused to turn moody about any subject. His reconceptualization of the field trips for Sequoia post-COVID was masterful and thorough. But I also think of him as a friend with whom we shared holiday dinners and birding trips, a warm, capable person with excellent parenting skills, admirable taste in music, and a ready laugh. He had quite taken to his role in retirement as equipment manager to his wife Donna, in addition to chairing the Fieldtrips. To say he will be missed is an understatement."

OFFICERS

Acting President: John Epperson
Vice President: Open
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.

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Snowy Plover Volunteer Workshop

Sunday, January 7, 2024, 9 am to 3 pm

For new Snowy Plover Watch volunteers on State Park beaches on the San Mateo Coast. Indoor classroom session 9 am at the Historic Train Depot, 110 Higgins Rd, Half Moon Bay, followed by outdoor field observations at Francis Beach.

Email Nelle Lyons at 1tigger1NL@gmail.com for more information and registration. Let's help these lovely little birds!



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 _____

6 SAS Newsletter January - March 2024

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Contact us: office@sequoia-audubon.org

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