



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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July - September 2017

A San Mateo Big Day by Robert Furrow

Any day where you get to see stars and planets in the dark night sky, sunrise in the mountains, and an ocean full of life has got to be a good day. On April 1, a gang of 10 merry fools embarked on a San Mateo County big day – a quest to see and hear as many bird species as possible in the 24 hours of a single calendar day. The day wasn't just for fun, it was also a fundraiser. This year Sequoia Audubon Society joined forces with the annual Santa Clara Audubon Society Birdathon. Anyone could join the trip, as long as they agreed to raise at least \$50 in funds for Sequoia Audubon, to help fund our future trips, monthly programs, and educational school visits.

It's not easy to meet strangers at 5:30 a.m. in a windy parking lot on Skyline Boulevard. So we all felt very lucky to have such enthusiastic companions. Our first official bird was a hooting Great Horned Owl, but the pace accelerated at dawn as grassland birds like Western Meadowlark and Grasshopper Sparrow appeared. A Wild Turkey would not be missed. It caught our attention by strutting across the road right in front of our cars. By 10 a.m. we had worked down the mountains and out to the ocean by Pescadero State Beach, delighting in the Black Scoters feeding comfortably among the chaos of breaking waves and sharp rocks. This was the winter of Black-legged Kittiwakes, and indeed a few of them were perched upon their squat little legs on offshore rocks.

Coastal birding on the weekends brings some non-birding challenges as well. Pillar Point Harbor was loaded with cars and people, but that didn't stop us from enjoying the Red-breasted Mergansers, loons, and grebes that take advantage of the food and shelter offered in the calm waters. We soon crossed to the bayside where shorebirds species were foraging by the dozen. As the day wound down, we crossed westward to take a late afternoon look at the Crystal Springs Reservoir. A distant male Wood Duck was unmistakable, its helmeted head looking like an upside-down boat.

Big days are a lot of fun. They allow you to see and hear a lot of birds (166 species, in this case). But they also provide perspective on the diversity of habitats, the timing of migration, and the human impact on patterns of bird distribution and behavior. Every big day teaches us something new, and builds friendships forged by backwoods bathroom breaks and treacherous footing on dark trails. We hope you'll join on one in the future!



Monthly Meetings

2nd Thursdays

San Mateo Garden Center
605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

September

Thursday, September 14th 7 pm
Bird Identification and the Brain
Alvaro Jamarillo

October

Thursday, October 12th 7 pm
Spoon-billed Sandpipers in Burma
Aaron Maizlish

Upcoming Field Trips

July

Sun. 9th Edgewood County Park
Fri. 21st Mono Lake
Fri. 28th Pillar Point, etc.

August

Sat. 13th Edgewood County Park
Sun. 27th Arastradero Preserve

September

Wed. 6th Coyote Point Park
Sun. 10th Edgewood County Park
Tues. 12th Hawk Hill
Wed. 13th Moss Landing
Sun. 24th Kayak Birding
Fri. 29th Sweetwood Camp

When birding on a big day, look every which way. *Photo by Byron Swift*

Cumulative Yearlist for April 2017 by Malia DeFelice

[Editor's Note: The SAS website has a plethora of information. This article is adapted from the website as an example. More can be found at <http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/SMCbirds.php>.]

Greetings San Mateo County Birders! April 2017 added a whopping 36 birds with an end of month total for the year so far of 281. Januaries excluded, this is the highest number of new birds added in any one month Feb-Dec since the start of the cumulative yearlist in 2009. A truly exceptional month and overall start of the year!

As you read through the list of birds below, please note that the number in parenthesis next to the bird name is the rarity code assigned for San Mateo County. The definitions for the rarity codes can be found on Sequoia Audubon's website. You can also download a checklist which shows seasonality, frequency, and county breeding information.

April birds and their finders were:

MURPHY'S PETREL (6), HAWAIIAN PETREL (6), COOK'S PETREL (6), PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER (2) FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL (4), LEACH'S STORM-PETREL (4), ASHY STORM-PETREL (2), RED PHALAROPE (2), CASSIN'S AUKLET (2) and SABINE'S GULL (2) - were found on 2 different repositioning cruises as they passed through San Mateo County waters. WHITE-FACED IBIS (5) - Chris Hayward and Chris O'Connell. SWAINSON'S HAWK (5) - Ron Thorn. PECTORAL SANDPIPER (5) - Ron Thorn. SOLITARY SANDPIPER (4) - Ron Thorn. FRANKLIN'S GULL (4) - Gerry McChesney. LEAST TERN (4) - George Chrisman. COMMON TERN (2) - Josiah Clark. VAUX'S SWIFT (3) - Adam Dudley. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (3) - Lisa Sheffield Guy. WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (3) - Joseph Morlan's Ornithology Class. HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (4) - Adam Dudley and Logan Kahle. ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (2) Adam Dudley and Jane Dixon. TROPICAL KINGBIRD (4) - Adam Dudley. SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (6) - Adam Dudley and Jane Dixon. CASSIN'S VIREO (2) - Ben Wieland. PURPLE MARTIN (4) - Kent Forward. SWAINSON'S THRUSH (2) - Lisa Sheffield Guy. MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (3) - Steve Miller and Troy Pittock. YELLOW WARBLER (2) - Ginny Marshall. HERMIT WARBLER (2) - Malia DeFelice and Chris Hayward. YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (4) - Ron Thorn. CHIPPING SPARROW (2) - Richard Hopf. LARK SPARROW (4) - Chris O'Connell. WESTERN TANAGER (2) - Rich Ferrick. LAZULI BUNTING (2) - Chris Hayward. LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH (4) - Ron Thorn.

Want to see birds? Why not join a Sequoia Audubon led field trip! A schedule of upcoming field trips can be found here: <http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/fieldtrips.html>. Are sea birds high on your must see list? Alvaro Jaramillo is running a May pelagic and other pelagic trips through October. His pelagic trip schedule can be found at <http://www.alvarosadventures.com>. Please post all your sightings to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/peninsula-birding/> and/or www.eBird.org. Thank you!

New Species Added per Month

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2009	214	13	17	21	18	5	6	16	8	13	2	2	335
2010	206	5	19	31	10	7	11	2	11	9	3	2	316
2011	212	8	14	30	13	5	12	8	16	8	4	3	334
2012	211	9	12	30	5	7	5	13	12	9	3	2	318
2013	207	11	21	20	14	5	11	10	11	10	5	2	327
2014	221	5	10	24	9	1	12	7	22	11	2	2	335
2015	216	16	24	17	16	6	4	8	18	2	2	1	331
2016	216	17	15	20	12	1	13	6	15	5	4	4	328
2017	218	8	19	36									281

Sequoia Audubon's Yahoo Group by Georgia Stigall

Just as our chapter has "something for everyone" with our various activities, advocacy and events, we also strive to utilize communications methods that collectively do the same. In addition to our newsletter (both printed & online), our website, and our Facebook page, we also maintain and utilize a Yahoo Group. To join the SAS Yahoo Group, simply send an empty email message to sequoiaaudubon-subscribe@yahoogroups.com (note the dash between "sequoiaaudubon" and "subscribe"). Since the postings are date-specific and traffic is modest, we recommend a setting of "individual messages" rather than digest. In other words, it includes information on engaging, educational and fun events that you won't want to miss! If you have questions or need help, contact SAS Yahoo Group moderator Georgia Stigall at georgiastigall@yahoo.com or 650-941-1068.



MEETING PROGRAMS

2nd Thursday of each month
San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

There are no meetings in July or August.

September 14, 2017

“Birding and Birder Brains” with *Alvaro Jaramillo*

A few years ago, I gave a talk about the trickery that goes on behind the scenes to identify a bird. This talk is an updated version of that. In trying to understand how people learn birds and what they look like, I have been led to all sorts of interesting paths, from psychology to neurobiology. What happens when we try to identify a bird is actually very complicated, and it differs if you are learning or new at birding, in contrast to someone who has been doing it for years.



I will give you the background of how it appears that our brains identify a bird, and then what to do to make it come easier to you. But the

other facet that came through in my journey to understand birder brains, is that we are also getting a healthy dose of medicine when we are birding. It is healthy to be outside, and be birding, and now science is starting to show that this is true and how it happens. The end result of my foray into understanding birders

is that I am convinced that everyone should become a birder, or at least a nature enthusiast. This not only lowers your stress, but also works you brain, and puts you in a position where you are constantly learning and there is nothing better for us, particularly as we age.



October 12, 2017

“Surveying Spoon-billed Sandpipers in Burma” with *Aaron Maizlish*





Sequoia Field Trips

Edgewood County Park

Sunday, July 9, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Explore this gem of a park while hiking 3-6 miles through oak woodlands, some hills and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse & Western Bluebird year-round. **Directions:** Take 280 to Edgewood Rd. Go east down Edgewood to the park entrance on the right. Meet at the Nature Center.

Leader: Susie Hons. **Contact:** susieturtlewings@mac.com.

Mono Lake Basin & Eastern Sierra Slope (Full with waiting list)

Friday, July 21 – Sunday, July 23

Join us for spectacular scenery and birding in a variety of habitats around Mono Lake, Lee Vining, and the Eastern slope of the Sierra. On Friday we'll meet at our motel in the afternoon and head out to some local spots to see the common residents of the area before having an early supper. This will be followed by an optional evening trip to search for Common Poorwill and Common Nighthawk. On Saturday we'll start at dawn, heading east into the local canyons to look for the special birds of the region including Plumbeous Vireo, Virginia's Warbler, Juniper Titmouse, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, and multitudes of desert sparrows. After lunch we'll escape the heat by working our way into the Eastern Sierra for woodpeckers (White-headed and Hairy Woodpeckers, Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers), flycatchers (dusky, gray and willow), Pinyon Jay, Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, and other mountain specialties. Sunday morning will also start early, searching for sagebrush specialties such as Greater Sage Grouse, Sagebrush Sparrow, Sage Thrasher and Brewer's Sparrow. We'll end our time together in the high Sierra by having brunch/lunch at a nearby resort with feeders and gardens that attract high-altitude species including Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Cassin's Finch, Mountain Chickadee and Clark's Nutcracker.

This trip is very popular and is limited to 14 participants. At time of publication this trip is full; contact Adam Dudley to be placed on the waiting list.

Leader: Adam Dudley. **Contact:** Adam.Dudley@iCloud.com.

Pillar Point and Princeton Harbor

Friday, July 28, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

RSVP - Please confirm if you intend to attend this field trip.

Join us on a weekday for birding this popular destination without the weekend crowds. Pillar Point is a hot spot for birding year-round with great habitat for a variety of waterbirds. 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, and a scope if you have them, plus water and snacks. A primitive restroom is available at the parking lot. Heavy rain cancels. **Directions:** The harbor is located just west of Hwy 1, 18 miles south of San Francisco and 4 miles north of Half Moon Bay. From Hwy 1, 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 on Harvard Avenue. Proceed through the boat yards to the end of Harvard, 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".

Leaders: Chris Hayward and Malia DeFelice. **RSVP:** malia.defelice.sas@gmail.com. If you are running late text or call 650-346-2009.

Edgewood County Park

Sunday, August 13, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Explore this gem of a park while hiking 3-6 miles through oak woodlands, some hills and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse & Western Bluebird year-round. **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. **Contact:** susieturtlewings@mac.com.

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

Enid Pearson Arastradero Preserve

Sunday, August 27, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Arastradero is a wonderful park with rolling hills, oak trees and meadowland. We will look for Western Bluebirds, swallows, Lazuli Bunting, Acorn Woodpeckers and several hawk species. Golden Eagle and Bald Eagle are also possible here. We will walk 2-4 miles at birders' pace. It can get hot here so bring water. **Directions:** Take highway 280 south. Exit Page Mill Rd. and go west (right). Turn right on Arastradero Road. The parking lot will be on the right.

Leader: Ginny Marshall. **Contact:** ginnybirder@gmail.com.

Coyote Point County Park

Wednesday, September 6, 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. **Contact:** dpom@comcast.net.

Edgewood County Park

Sunday, September 10, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Explore this gem of a park while hiking 3-6 miles through oak woodlands, some hills and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse & Western Bluebird year-round. **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. **Contact:** susieturtlewings@mac.com.

Hawk Hill - Marin Headlands

Tuesday, September 12, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

There has been an official raptor count in the Marin Headlands for more than 25 years. Peak migration lasts from mid-September through mid-October. Robbie Fischer has been a Hawkwatch volunteer for ten years. We will enjoy the spectacle and attempt to identify raptors as they fly by Hawk Hill. The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory website for additional background is at <http://ggro.org/>. **Directions:** Cross the Golden Gate Bridge and take the second exit, Alexander Avenue. Get in the left lane following signs that read "101 San Francisco." Turn left at the stop sign and cross under the freeway. Turn right onto Conzelman Road and drive 1.8 miles to Hawk Hill. Park alongside the road at the top of the hill, just before the road becomes one-way. Walk up the west side of Hawk Hill past the locked gate. It's just a few hundred feet to the summit. Bring binoculars, lunch and a chair if you like.

Leader: Robbie Fischer. **Contact:** robbie22@pacbell.net.

Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough; RSVP REQUIRED

Wednesday, September 13, 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. **Contact:** lflint@earthlink.net.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (aka the Duck Stamp) is a permit required for hunting at National Wildlife Refuges. Since 1934, over 6 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat have been protected pursuant to the program so birders can appreciate this.

The American Birding Association has promoted the purchase of Duck Stamps to promote conservation. To support this program, Sequoia Audubon Society is selling Duck Stamps for their face value of \$25. Get a Trumpeter Swan stamp at our next meeting!



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

Birding by Kayak, Redwood Creek and Bair Island – RSVP Required

Sunday, September 24, 9:30 am - 1:30 pm, Cost is \$20

Join Barbara Kossy and explore Redwood Creek by kayak, looking for shorebirds, raptors, terns, cormorants, and more. We meet at 9:30 at the center to get our life jackets, have a brief kayak lesson on land, and launch in double kayaks. Late September conditions are usually mild, with warm temperatures and light breezes. This trip is limited to 8 participants plus the guides. Please be comfortable around water and be able to sit in a kayak for three hours. Be willing to paddle. We can picnic on the lovely property after our trip. To confirm, please RSVP to Barbara Kossy at bkossy@coastside.net. Leave me your phone number and a good time to reach you. I'm also available to answer questions you may have about the trip. I will talk with you to confirm that you're a good fit for the trip. **Predictions of strong wind will cancel. Directions:** Meet at California Canoe and Kayak, Redwood City, 487 Seaport Court, Redwood City. **Leader:** Barbara Kossy. Barbara has led kayaking trips on Italian islands and on Bulgaria's Black Sea.

Beach Bluff Walk and Sweetwood Group Camp, Half Moon Bay

Friday, September 29, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. RSVP - Please confirm if you intend to attend this field trip.

This approximately 2.5 mile 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 parking lot at Venice Beach State Park. Park at Venice State Beach for a \$10 day use fee (which can be used at any State Beach that day) or there is free street parking at the north end of Pilarcitos Ave., at Wave Ave. and 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.

Leaders: Chris Hayward and Malia DeFelice. **RSVP:** malia.defelice.sas@gmail.com. If you are running late text or call 650-346-2009.

Other Events: Pescadero Marsh Guided Walks



**COASTSIDE
STATE PARKS
ASSOCIATION**

Pescadero State Beach and Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve comprise a rich ecosystem with many birding opportunities. The Coastside State Parks Association is a nonprofit group that, among other things, trains docents to lead walks at the marsh there. The paragraph below is taken from their website and provides some details.

One or more docents and volunteers lead guided walks from the central parking lot onto the beach and into the Marsh twice a month on the first Sunday at 10 a.m. and the third Sunday at 1:00 p.m. In addition to leading scheduled Marsh walks, docents act as roving naturalists pointing out landscape features and marsh wildlife. They emphasize stewardship as vital in the Natural Preserve: to stay on the trails, view animals quietly at a distance, not to collect plants or seeds and not to leave litter behind. Docents also plan and lead special walks as requested by the Volunteer Coordinator for school groups, college classes and community organizations. Volunteers at the Marsh may also help with bird, fish and water-level monitoring projects and trail maintenance.

The Joy of Local Patch Birding

by Adam Dudley

I vividly remember the first time I realized that I loved Alresford Pond. I was 17 years old, and had just found a long-eared owl nest with chicks on one of my bird walks around the pond. What made it extra special was that this was on my local birding patch! And long-eared owls just shouldn't be there!

Alresford Pond was about 10 miles from my home, and I spent three glorious years birding there as often as I could. Before I could drive, I would get there using public transport or my bike, sometimes more than once a day. My family used to think I was crazy, but by spending so much time at the pond I got in "tune" with the rhythm of the seasons. I got to know what the local birds and wildlife might be doing, and when. I figured out how they dealt with different weather conditions. And I knew individual birds, personally: "Good morning, robin. Good morning, hawk". I had found my birding home; it was my local patch.

There are many delights and frequent disadvantages of being a local patch-watcher. From the day a rare bird turns up on your doorstep to the day when it looks as though the waters and skies have permanently emptied, the patch-watcher's life is rich and broad-ranging. At times, it drives you mad – dogs off leads chase birds away, or other birders see a choice rarity that you miss – but at other times there is simply nothing more delightful.

Having a local patch is great way to get to grips with watching birds at your own pace in a familiar place. Finding one is really easy. Simply identify an area close to your home or place of work and start watching it regularly. Your patch could be a park, stretch of river, local reservoir, cemetery or almost any open space. eBird is a great resource that you could use to find a place you might like – look at the hotspot explorer section and pick one that isn't visited that often. Visit it several times a week and follow the same route each time. Count the birds that you see and track their coming and going using eBird's "patch list" feature.



Alresford Pond near Winchester, England

Don't expect to see everything on your first visit. In time, you'll get to know where to find the local residents – perhaps there's a quiet, bushy corner that's a haven for sparrows or a reedy section of marsh that's home to a secretive rail. After a year of regular visits, you will begin to notice changes in the populations as different seasonal visitors, such as swallows and warblers, make springtime appearances. The exciting part is when you begin to recognize the common birds on your patch with relative ease or, better still, without even realizing it.

Don't worry if your chosen patch doesn't look like a birding paradise. Sometimes at first glance, your patch could appear to be the most unlikely place to find birds! But you'll be amazed by the variety of birds you'll find when you watch somewhere regularly. You will look forward to visiting your patch in the mornings and will vehemently resist attempts by anyone to threaten the peace in your haven. When you start having these feelings, you know that you have finally found your local patch.

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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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Support our Chapter's Work - Donate

Please consider an extra donation to your chapter in support of the work we do to provide birding trips, monthly programs, monitoring conservation concerns around the county, education and outreach. **Thank you!**

Give a Gift Membership or in Recognition

Has someone inspired you, or just done something kind for the world or for the birds? A donation in recognition gives toward supporting our Chapter's work.

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Support SAS through Amazon Smile when you shop online

A percentage of your purchase can be donated to support the work of SAS whenever you shop on Amazon. You get the same products, prices and service **and** support our work to protect native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems. The only difference is that, to support SAS through Amazon Smile, you must access the site: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-60929053>.

We're looking for Volunteers! Get Involved! Take Action!

You can make a difference! How can you help? Join our team! For more information, email: office@sequoia-audubon.org

Make Sure Your Coffee Supports Birds – Buy Bird Friendly SMBC Certified Coffee

Does your daily coffee support bird habitat or contribute to the demise of Neotropical landscapes?

If it doesn't have the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) Bird Friendly certification seal your money does not support farming practices that support resident and migratory birds. During our monthly public meetings Sequoia proudly serves Certified Bird Friendly coffee, 100% organic and shade grown from *Birds and Beans*, *The Good Coffee* (<https://www.birdsandbeans.com>) and generously donated for each monthly meeting by Susan Rowinski.



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 _____

Newsletter Preference:

_____ Mail and / or _____ E-mail

E-mail address _____

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Contact us: 650.529.1454

or

office@sequoia-audubon.org

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Check out our Online Birding Guide:

www.birding.sequoia-audubon.org

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