

SEQUOIA NEEDLES

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

*Volume 57, No. 4
April-May 2007*

COYOTE POINT MUSEUM AND SEQUOIA AUDUBON COLLABORATE

BY MARK BATCHELER
EDUCATOR AT COYOTE POINT MUSEUM

Coyote Point Museum and the Sequoia Audubon Society have banded together in order to create an Audubon exhibit at Coyote Point Museum in San Mateo. The current plan for the exhibit includes the use of some of Coyote Point Museum's many bird mounts, most of which are native to the Bay Area. Carol Masterson and several volunteers from Sequoia Audubon are currently meeting with the Education staff from the museum to utilize the knowledge and experience of all individuals involved.

The goal of the exhibit will be to aid the general public, particularly children, in gaining interest and knowledge of birding while promoting the missions of the Museum and the Audubon Society. Much of the design and scope of the exhibit is still being developed; thus we are looking for individuals to participate by helping us plan, design, and construct this exhibit.

As birding is often a gateway to the natural world for many people, this exhibit is ideal for the mission of Coyote Point Museum -- to inspire life-long commitments to caring for the earth. By expanding our awareness and understanding of the natural world, birds can draw us deep into the wilderness that surrounds our homes, towns, and cities. This makes sense, as no animal or any living entity can stand alone; we are all interconnected at the most basic level.

If you are interested in working on this project, please contact Carol Masterson at 650-347-1769.

2006 CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT

BY AL DEMARTINI

This year the stars lined up for us as we passed the magic 200-species threshold for the first time since 1994 -- a very satisfying result! Thanks to all who helped out. Everyone did a great job, particularly my co-compilers, Leslie Flint and Gary Deghi. I believe we've been averaging about 190 species per annum in the intervening years. I was a bit surprised when it worked out this way, considering that we missed a few of our rare but usually reliable species such as Bald Eagle, Common Moorhen, Glaucous Gull, and Black-legged Kittiwake. We also did not see several count week birds we assume were present -- Tufted Duck, Palm and at least 6 Nashville Warblers and Red Crossbills. (I think the afternoon wind hurt us on some of these passerines, though in general the lovely DRY

(continued on page 4)



Pileated Woodpecker

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center
(See program details on page 2)

April

Thursday, 12th, 7:00 PM

Program: Let's Get Back to the Basics of Birding

May

Thursday, 10th, 7:00 PM

Program: Photo Safari to East Africa

June

Thursday, 14th, 6:00 PM

Program: Birding Tour of Costa Rica
Potluck Meeting

Upcoming Field Trips

(See trip details on page 3)

April

Saturday, 7th Filoli Estate

Saturday, 14th Basics of Birding

Saturday, 28th Yerba Buena Nursery

Sunday, 29th Mines Road

Sunday, 29th Edgewood Park

May

Sunday, 6th San Bruno Mountain*

Saturday & Sunday, 12th & 13th

Int'l Migratory Bird Days*

**Beginner/Family Trip*

Check the field trip descriptions for any special information or requirements. Late comers may be disappointed. For all field trips, bring your binoculars, water, sun block, a hat; wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, and always dress in layers for hot

(Continued on page 3)

Sequoia Audubon Society

OFFICERS

President

Carol Masterson 650-347-1769
Vice-President & Second V.P.

Open

Secretary

Norma Vite 650-560-9740

Treasurer

Douglas Cook 415-621-1112

DIRECTORS

07 Gary Deghi, Robbie Fischer, Kathy Peila

08 Sue Cossins

09 Open

*Term ending

STANDING COMMITTEES

Audubon Canyon Ranch Host

Sue Cossins 650-347-9358

Audubon Canyon Ranch Representative

Francis Toldi, Leslie Flint

Bluebird Recovery

Open

Audit/Finance

Open

Bookkeeper

Christine Krenzel 650-557-9321

Christmas Count

Al DeMartini 650-345-6988

Conservation Committee Chair

Robin Smith 650-325-3306

Education

Nelle Lyons 650-726-8819

Field Trips

Carol Masterson 650-347-1769

Hospitality

Eileen Kay 650-592-4626

Membership

Open

Needles Editor

Justine Carson 650-560-9776

Programs

Sue Cossins, Paula Miller

PO Box 620292

Woodside, CA 94062-0292

650-529-1454

office@sequoia-audubon.org

www.sequoia-audubon.org

Members are encouraged to submit original or uncopyrighted material – articles, artwork, cartoons, photos – for Needles. The deadline for submission is the first day of the month preceding publication. Send comments and contributions to:

sas_editor@yahoo.com



Printed on recycled paper

MEETING PROGRAMS

BY CAROL MASTERSON

Let's Get Back to the Basics of Birding

By Allan Ridley

Thursday, April 12, 7:00 PM

Allan Ridley, leader of the Golden Gate Audubon monthly bird walks at the San Francisco Botanical Gardens, will offer an evening class and Saturday field trip focused on Birding Basics. He will cover how to look; what to look for; what to look through; guidebooks and references; tips for effective spotting; confident identification, and rewarding observation of birds. Participants should bring their binoculars and field guides to class as well as to the field trip.

Accompanying Field Trip

Saturday, April 14, 8:30 AM – Noon

The follow-up field trip will be to upper Edgewood Park. Directions and meeting place will be announced at the Thursday night lecture. (\$5.00 per person)

Leaders: Allan will be assisted by his partner in birding (as in life), Helen McKenna-Ridley.

Now retired and volunteering as a ZooMobile instructor for the San Francisco Zoo, Allan taught ornithology for many years at the Urban School of San Francisco. Helen and Allan have been leading regular monthly walks in the San Francisco Botanical Gardens for the past nine years and have led birding trips to Australia, Costa Rica, and New Zealand.

Photo Safari to East Africa: Rwanda and Kenya – The Great Migration and Gorillas, Too

Thursday, May 10, 7:00 PM

By Diane and Bryant Hichwa

In the summer of 2006, Diane and Bryant Hichwa toured seven national parks and preserves in East Africa. The trip started with a sobering visit to the Genocide Memorial in Kigali, Rwanda, followed by an exhilarating hike to observe two families of Mountain Gorillas in the misty Virunga Mountains. In Kenya the route was planned to visit varying habitats of plains, mountains, and rainforest in order to see everything from antelope to zebras and wildebeests crossing the Mara River as they move from the Serengeti into the Mara Triangle.

Diane and Bryant are both past presidents of Sonoma County's Madrone Audubon Society. Bryant is currently the president of the Board of Audubon Canyon Ranch. He is Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Sonoma State University and a recent recipient of the campus teaching award. Diane volunteers with several environmental organizations in Sonoma County. She leads environmental hikes and gives educational presentations for the Bird Rescue Center in Santa Rosa. Diane is also a long-time docent at the Bouverie Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

Parkside Way is west of Alameda de las Pulgas, between 26th & 28th Avenues.

Birding Tour of Costa Rica

Thursday, June 14, 7:00 PM

By Bob and Sue Cossins, and Larry and Eileen Kay

Come along on this photo journey to Costa Rica. This small Central American country boasts over 800 species of birds and spectacular wildlife, steamy jungles, active volcanoes, and beautiful beaches. This is one of the really great birding destinations. Learn about the recent trip that our own members enjoyed earlier this year. They will have great stories to tell and great pictures to share.

Eileen Kay is our Hospitality Chairman; you have probably seen her happy smile when you arrive at our Thursday evening programs. Eileen is active in the Plover Watch program at Half Moon Bay and has been a field trip leader. Her husband Larry owns the NAPA auto parts store in Half Moon Bay. He volunteers many hours as referee for high school varsity basketball. Sue Cossins has been an active member of Sequoia Audubon for many years. She has served as our Secretary, and is the current Audubon Canyon Ranch host, a field trip leader, active in Edgewood Park and Filoli bird monitoring and nest box programs, and is currently on our Board of Directors.

(Continued on page 5)

Filoli Estate

Saturday, April 7, 8:30 AM – Noon
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. In addition to birds, the wildflowers should be very plentiful at this time, especially in the shadier areas on the back roads. The grounds of Filoli have a fine planted 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 because this trip is limited to 20 people maximum. (Sorry, no children under 14.) No food or picnicking is allowed, but all will be welcome after the walk to buy light food and beverages at the Café and to visit the gift shop.

Directions: Take Hwy 280 to the Edgewood Road exit; go west. Turn right/north on Canada Road and drive approximately one mile to the entrance of Filoli. We will meet in front of the Visitors Center. If you want to remain after the field trip to walk through the house and/or formal gardens, there will be a \$12.00 entrance fee. Heavy rain cancels. Call Sue James (650) 348-0315 to reserve your spot.

Leaders: Sue James and Donna Petersen

Let's Get Back to the Basics of Birding

Saturday April 14, 8:30 AM – Noon
This Saturday morning field trip is the follow-up for our Thursday, April 12th evening program. The walk will be at upper Edgewood Park. Directions and meeting location will be announced at the Thursday lecture. There will be a \$5.00 charge for the instructor's time. Bring binoculars and field guides. Dress in layers; bring fluids. Heavy rain cancels.

Eastern Mojave Desert Long Weekend Birding Adventure

April 13-15
Sorry, trip full.

Yerba Buena Nursery - Spring Birds in a Bird-friendly Native Plant Garden

Saturday, April 28, 9:00 AM – Noon

Yerba Buena Nursery is a wonderful place devoted to California native plants. It features a beautiful, long-established 2.5-acre demonstration garden. With so many native plants, the nursery is very attractive habitat for local birds. First, we will bird around the grounds of the nursery looking for sparrows, vireos, warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, and many more species. Then we will learn from a Yerba Buena Nursery expert which native plants are best for attracting birds and butterflies. Bring your lunch, and we can picnic at the nursery's tables. Cold drinks are available for purchase in the Garden Shop, which has hundreds of interesting items related to gardening, nature, and country living. You also can purchase bird-friendly plants for your garden at the nursery.

Directions: From Hwy 280 drive west on Woodside Road (Hwy 84) about 6 miles through the town of Woodside to Skyline Blvd. Turn left/south onto Skyline Blvd. Drive about 4.5 miles then watch for signs for Fogarty Winery. Where Fogarty Winery is on the left/east of Skyline there is a sign for Yerba Buena Nursery on the right. Turn right/west onto the dirt road at the sign for Yerba Buena Nursery. Stay to the right at each fork in the road for 2 miles until you reach the nursery. We will meet in the parking lot at 9:00 AM. Dress in layers; bring lunch. Rain cancels. For information call (650) 347-9358

Leaders: Susan Peterson (650) 595-1438 and Sue Cossins (650) 347-9358.

Mines Road – the Ultimate Spring Bird Trip

Sunday, April 29, 8:00 AM
A variety of habitats provides a fascinating multiplicity of birds not found elsewhere in the Bay Area. This will be an all-day trip to this area in the Coast Range Mountains between Livermore and the Central Valley and Hwy 5. We will look for Phainopepla, Prairie Falcon, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis' Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, and sparrows and hummingbirds. If we are very lucky we may even see a Wild Turkey or Roadrunner. Have a full tank of gas, water, and food since facilities are scarce. There are only two reliable restroom facilities, one

(continued on page 4)

Upcoming Field Trips

(Continued from page 1)

sunny weather to cool windy conditions. While we will attempt to stay on schedule, circumstances may dictate changes to field trip leaders, dates, or times. For the latest schedule and updates always go to the Sequoia Audubon website; contact the trip leader, or call Carol at 650-347-1769.

Audubon Canyon Ranch, Bolinas Lagoon Preserve Public Season 2007

SAS has again been asked to provide hosts for the upcoming egret and heron nesting season at ACR.

Please consider volunteering on one or more of the dates listed below. You will have an enjoyable time as you experience the beauty of ACR, view the magnificent birds and meet wonderful people. Duties include working from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM to greet and register guests and provide them with information and trail maps.

Available dates:

Saturday or Sunday, April 14 or 15
Saturday or Sunday, May 26 or 27
Saturday or Sunday, June 23 or 27
Wednesday, July 4

Free lodging is available at adjacent Volunteer Canyon if you would like to spend the night.

Please call Sue Cossins at 650-347-9358 for details and to reserve your day.

(Field Trips, continued from page 3)

at the lunch time stop and another at mid-afternoon at a county park. Weather is unpredictable and can range from cold and windy to hot and dry. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Go east over the San Mateo Bridge and follow the signs to Hwy I-580. Stay on 580 for about 25 miles to Vasco Road; exit right. Follow Vasco to Tesla Road and turn right. Turn left on Mines Road. Follow it for about 1/4 mile to the Murietta Wells Winery turnoff (on the right) We will meet in the small parking area alongside Mines Road (don't cross the bridge into the winery). Carpooling encouraged.

Leader: Leslie Flint (650) 573-6279

Edgewood Park – Spring Birds and Wildflowers

Sunday, April 29, 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Edgewood Park has spectacular wildflowers and spring birding at its best. Over 60 species of birds have been identified here. Beautiful wildflowers and more than 300 species of plants including rare plants are found in this rich area. Ask Lee and Marilyn how you can volunteer to help the wildlife at Edgewood Park. The walk is over moderately strenuous terrain. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: The Edgewood Park entrance is east of Hwy 280 on Edgewood Road in Redwood City. Meet the leader Lee Franks in the paved parking lot at the main gate.

Leader: Lee Franks and Marilyn Travis. (650) 592-7733

San Bruno Mountain

Sunday, May 6, 9:00 AM

San Bruno Mountain stands as an island of open space on the border of San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. It is home to a wealth of wildlife, hidden pockets of woodlands, and sheltered canyons. We will look for quail, nuthatch, towhees, vireos, warblers, mockingbird, thrush, flycatchers, sparrows, wrens, hummingbirds, and many other migrants. Depending on the winter rains we may see spectacular wildflower displays.

Directions: Take Highway 101 north to the Bayshore Boulevard/Brisbane exit. Proceed on Bayshore Boulevard to Guadalupe Canyon Parkway. Turn west on Guadalupe Canyon Parkway toward the Mountain and proceed up the hill to the Park entrance on your right. Be prepared to pay a fee. Meet in the main parking lot just beyond the entrance kiosk. Dress in layers for warm to cool and windy weather. Wear sturdy walking shoes/boots and bring fluids and snacks. We have binoculars to share. Not suitable for strollers.

Leader: Leslie Flint (650) 573-6279

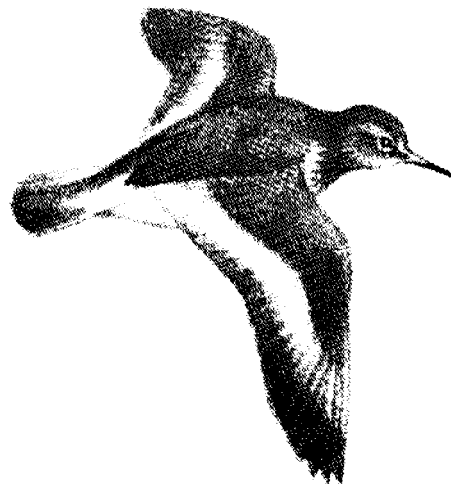
Beginner/Family Trip

2007 International Migratory Bird Days – Half Moon Bay

Saturday and Sunday, May 12 & 13, 10:00 AM

Guided bird walk each day at 1:00 PM

Join the nation in celebrating and learning about migratory birds – a day of fun and learning for the whole family. The weekend of May 12-13 is designated Migratory Bird Days. Learn about how climate changes effect the migration of birds from North America to Central and South America. Activities include exhibits, arts and crafts, information about bird houses, guided bird walks, and activities for children.



Rock Sandpiper

(Crystal Springs Count, continued from page 1)

day was quite laudable.) This overall good weather, together with a stellar alcid day at Pillar Point as well as 2 other good seawatches and a wide range of good scores and contributions from our varied coastal, interior, and bayside regions produced these excellent results.

At sea some highlights included 2 Craveri's Murrelets (new to the count and possibly the North American database), Elegant Tern and Parasitic Jaeger (both third ever records for the count), 5 Pomarine Jaegers (new high count), Red-necked Grebe, Oldsquaw, plus 2 species of tubenose. Pigeon Guillemot, on top of 4 of our 5 'normal' alcids (Cassin's Auklet has become quite scarce due to an absence of krill) rounded off a great day of sea watching. Rock Sandpiper was our rarest shorebird with Wandering Tattler and Lesser Yellowlegs being welcome as good finds tend to be. Whimbrel posted a new high count of 117. Snowy Plovers came in at 52, a healthy number. Coastal landbirding turned up our fourth ever Yellow Warbler to complement 2 Black-throated Gray and a Wilson's Warbler along with a Rough-legged Hawk, Short and Long-eared Owls, 10 Barn Swallows, 3 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and a Swamp Sparrow. European Collared Doves may be here to stay coastally, posting a new high of 27.

The interior count area contributed some exceptional finds including our second ever Pileated Woodpecker. (Soon to be regular? We certainly hope so!) We also recorded American Dipper and Hermit Warblers, 3 Wild Turkeys, Osprey, another Swamp Sparrow, 3 Golden Eagles, 9 White-throated Swifts, and our only Red-breasted Nuthatches (scarce this year). Standouts on or near the bay included Harlequin Duck and a new high count of 5 Blue-winged Teal to go with another Osprey, European Widgeon, and a couple of Redheads and Green Herons plus Burrowing Owl. Two years in a row of good Clapper Rail numbers gladden the heart.

Final tally: 202 species plus 5 count week species.

We had 69 counters in the field plus 3 feeder watches.

Thanks again to all the participants and helpers as well as the agencies and landowners that gave us special access. Hope to see you all next year!

(Programs, continued from page 2)

(Sequoia could not function without her.) Sue's husband Bob is a nature photographer and has presented numerous photo exhibits in the Bay Area. He has generously donated photos for our fundraising auctions.

This meeting is a "potluck" meeting. Potluck begins at 6:00; program starts at about 7:00. Bring your own plate and utensils. Please bring a main dish, casserole, or salad to share. Sequoia Audubon will provide coffee, tea, and dessert. Come and meet our friendly members and vote on our slate of officers and directors.

(Field trips, continued from page 4)

Directions: Take Hwy 92 west to Hwy 1. Go south to the first intersection, Kelly Ave.; turn right and go west to the Half Moon Bay State Beach entrance. Admission to the State Park is \$6 per car. Dress in layers for warm-to-cool weather. Bring a picnic lunch and fluids. Be ready for a fun day.

Beginner/Family Event – Wheelchair Accessible

2006 AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT

BY AL DEMARTINI

Very fine weather along with our highest ever number of counters (59) and amount of effort (223.25 hrs) plus two extra parties at Big Basin helped produce over 25 record high counts of species, as well as an equal number of near record highs. Well done! Standout birds and notable phenomena observed included a new-to-count Hooded Warbler with an accompaniment of 350 Townsend's and 1 Nashville Warbler, as well as an array of other species (count week American Redstart to boot). Many were feeding at ground level in a field of rotting Brussels sprouts. A new-to-count Vesper Sparrow along with a Clay-colored Sparrow and 400 Savannah Sparrows (high count) were sharing a weedy field. A high count of 550 Myrtle Warblers was spread over approximately 3 square miles of scrub and riparian vegetation, along with a new-to-count Common Poorwill and a Red-naped Sapsucker. We also counted record highs of Pileated Woodpecker (17), Varied Thrush (1,718!), Western Screech (41) and Northern Saw-whet Owls (22), all at Big Basin. We had some good finds of easily missed waterfowl (Cackling Goose, Hooded and Common Mergansers, and Red-necked Grebe). We also recorded shorebirds (Ruddy Turnstone, Dowitcher, Western and Least Sandpipers, and Green Heron), gulls (Ring-billed and Pomarine Jaeger), alcids (Marbled and Ancient Murrelets), owls (Burrowing and 2 Long-eared), and White-throated Swift. Added to this are songbirds (Tree and Violet-green Swallows), Oak Titmouse, 7 (high count) House Wrens, Northern Mockingbird, California Thrasher, and 3 Hermit Warblers. All told, we came up with a very respectable total of 173 species and stayed bone dry doing it. Everyone seemed especially pleased with that aspect of the count after one-too-many blustery and sodden counts among counts gone by. Thanks again to all counters and helpers and especially to my co-compiler Leslie Flint and, of course, all the agencies and landowners that granted us special access.

TRIP REPORT — LOS BANOS AND PANOCHÉ VALLEY

BY LAURIE GRAHAM

On Saturday, January 20, twelve intrepid members of the Sequoia Audubon Society met at McDonald's in Santa Nella for a two-day trip. The leaders were Joe Macho and Martha O'Neal. The followers were Jim Stillwell and Annie Boddum, Jean Ovenden, Eileen and Larry Kay, Barbara Wilson, Sue Cossins, Ron and Cindy Watson, John Johnson, Jeff Fairclough and Laurie Graham, your humble reporter. The weather for the weekend was cold and moderately hazy.

Day one concentrated on the Los Banos area refuges. Our first birds of the trip were House Sparrows, in the parking lot of McDonald's. More interesting birds were seen as we hit the road, specifically Hwy 33 northeast of Santa Nella: Western Meadowlark, Northern Harrier, and Yellow-billed Magpie. Along Santa Fe Grade Road, we saw many familiar shorebirds in an unfamiliar place. A few standout species: Wilson's Snipe, White-faced Ibis, Lesser Yellowlegs, American Pipit, and two American Bitterns in one spot, seen by everyone except Jeff and myself. The sheer numbers of American Coots were remarkable – over 6000.

At San Luis NWR, we followed the Tule Elk Tour Route. Besides the elk, notable birds were Wood Ducks flying over, and a few Sandhill Cranes flying in the distance. Loggerhead Shrikes were seen at every stop. At Merced NWR, 50 Greater White-fronted Geese flew overhead at the entrance. While Cindy and I chased down an owl that turned out to be a Great Horned, everyone went to the viewing platform where the most interesting birds were an American Bittern that gave great looks, Snow and Ross's Geese, and early Tree Swallows. Best bird was a young male Cooper's Hawk who either was just practicing or was very inept; he missed a ground squirrel and a coot. We recorded 61 species for the day.

We all met for dinner at the Woolgatherers' - er, Woolgrowers' - Restaurant in Los Banos, a French Basque establishment that hasn't changed in about 100 years. We timed it just right -- when we left, the line was out the door and around the building.

On Day Two, we woke to hundreds of American Crows

(continued on page 6)



Photo by Larry Kay

(Los Banos, continued from page 5)

around the motel. Our first stop was Panoche Reservoir, which was a bit of a bust -- 52 Ruddy Ducks and only 3 Coots. As we traveled Little Panoche Road, we had a nice Prairie Falcon, 3 Ferruginous Hawks, and a field full of Lark Sparrows. Just before Mercey Hot Springs, we had Horned Larks in another field.

Mercey Hot Springs is totally incredible. In the campground, there are a few Tamarisk trees, the only trees for miles around, in which owls spend the daylight hours. We saw two Barn and at least 24 Long-eared Owls. You just stand under a tree and look up. "There's one -- oh, there's another -- wait, there's two more -- wait, over there are six!" It's amazing, and all for 5 bucks a pop, hot springs included. Do the nice folks there a favor, and reserve small bills for them.

We left MHS for Panoche Access Road, but didn't find anything interesting besides Leslie Flint, who joined us for lunch back at MHS. After lunch, spent in our various vehicles (did I mention it was darn cold?), Cindy and I went back to see the Long-eared Owls again. Meanwhile, someone spotted a Greater Roadrunner and great excitement ensued. We watched the bird cross a large space, Larry firing off his motor drive. Suddenly, a Cottontail ran right by the Roadrunner. Larry got the picture.

We left Fresno County for San Benito County, and soon turned onto Panoche Road, a continuation of J1. We stopped at mile marker 22.49 at a fabulous oak tree hosting a Phainopepla, a Lewis's Woodpecker, and 6 or more Western Bluebirds, who entertained us by bathing in a stock tank at one point. We stopped again at marker 17.86, south of Panoche Pass, where we had a Golden Eagle overhead (thank you, Leslie), Oak Titmice, and California Quails crossing the road. Slightly farther on, at marker 13.00, we stopped in someone's front yard, for some marvelous birds, including Wrentits, visible in a tree.

Our last stop was at Paicines Reservoir. First birds out of the bag were a pair of Bald Eagles, one adult and one immature, on a power tower across the water from us. Wow! Other good birds here were over 100 Common Mergansers along the far shore, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Mergansers, and again Tree Swallows. Our day ended at 5:00 pm, with everyone else heading home up Hwy 25. Jeff and I spent another night in Los Banos, and birded the Pinnacles on Monday. Best bird? California Condor.



Photo by Larry Kay

OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

9th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival, Crescent City **Friday – Monday, March 30 – April 2**

Celebrate spring with virtually the entire world's population of the once nearly extinct Aleutian Canada Goose. There will be 80 different bird, nature, ocean charter, and heritage excursions. For reservations and information, see <http://www.aleutiangoosefestival.org/> or call (707) 465-0888.

Beginner/Family Activity

Audubon Canyon Ranch – Bolinas Lagoon Preserve **March 17 – July 8 – Open weekends and holidays 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

Visit this rich wildlife sanctuary and see the Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, and Snowy Egret nesting colony. The birds return each spring to nest in the tops of tall redwood trees near the Bolinas Lagoon. ACR also offers programs for children. For information, go to www.egret.org or call (415) 868-9244.

Beginner/Family Activity

12th Annual Godwit Days Bird Festival, Arcata **Friday – Sunday, April 20 – 22**

Visit California's North Coast redwood trees, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, and expansive marshes and mudflats of Humboldt Bay and view the over 271 species this area has to offer. Held at the peak of the spring migration, this festival is a must for birders. There will be field trips, lectures, and activities. Preregistration is encouraged at <http://www.godwitdays.com/> or (800) 908- WING.

2007 Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival **Friday – Monday, April 27 – 30**

The 13th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival is centered on Audubon-California's 3200-acre Kern River Preserve along the South Fork Kern River in north central Kern County, California. Formerly known as the BioFest, this festival celebrates a Globally Important Bird Area that has garnered international recognition for its natural diversity. Two hundred thirty-seven bird species were tallied during last year's four-day festival, a remarkable number for an inland location. A full slate of field trips is scheduled for all four days of the festival including a record five owl trips. Check out the website (<http://kern.audubon.org/bioregionactivities.htm>) to see what is scheduled. Birds are not the only attraction. The Kern River Valley/Southern Sierra Nevada is also known widely for its diversity of butterflies, mammals, moths, plants, and reptiles. The KRV Nature Fest strives to celebrate all the natural diversity of this amazing region through children's activities, demonstrations, evening dinner programs, field trips, informational exhibits, music, special presentations, and workshops. For more information contact: Alison Sheehey, KRV Spring Nature Festival Coordinator at krpfriends@lightspeed.net or call (760) 378-2029.

2007 Yosemite Birding Festival, El Portal **Friday – Sunday, May 4 – 6**

Enjoy a weekend celebration of birds in world-renowned Yosemite National Park, featuring workshops, lectures, field trips, au-

(continued on page 7)

ARASAKI CRANE PRESERVE

BY WERNER SCHUMANN

I had known about the Arasaki Crane Preserve for many years. In the fall of 2006, I decided to visit it to observe the wintering cranes. The preserve is located just outside Izumi on the west coast of the southern Japanese island of Kyushu. Much of the preserve area is reclaimed land, evidenced by the massive levees surrounding it. There are hills to the west, south, and east of the preserve.

I arrived at the preserve in the late afternoon. To see hundreds of cranes just outside my room at Minshuku Surumi-Tei left me just about speechless. That evening a storm blew in and the rattle of the building competed with the calling of the cranes throughout the night.

Most cranes fly out early in the morning to surrounding fields, but many also remain in the vicinity of the Minshuku. Two main species occur here, the Hooded Crane and the White-naped Crane. The official count estimate for both species was 8,000 birds. They migrate between their breeding grounds in Siberia and this area on the island of Kyushu. The Hooded Crane is called Nabezuru in Japanese, in reference to its dark body, reminiscent of the soot on the bottom of a pan. Its head and neck are white. It sports a black forehead and red crown. The White-naped Crane is Manazuru, meaning the "genuine one." Its body is grey with a white neck and prominent red face. Watching two pairs of this species display with their heads pointed skyward and their whitish tertials flipped up, I have to admit that I was more impressed by this latter species. During my stay, I also sighted one Common Crane and one Sandhill Crane.

During my day-long exploration of the preserve I took delight in watching many more Japanese bird species. At times there were huge flocks of ducks in the sky -- mostly Eurasian Wigeon, but also Spot-billed Ducks, Northern Pintails, and Green-winged Teal. Locating a Chinese Pond Heron was special; all brown, but flashing white wings and a white tail when airborne. For a while I watched a Common Kingfisher moving up and down a canal like a flying turquoise gem. Another sighting was a common bird of prey throughout Japan -- and for that matter throughout Eurasia -- the Black Kite.

Passerines of interest were Daurian Redstart, Skylark, Dusky Thrush, Pale Thrush, Gray-headed Starling, Black-faced Bunting, Siberian Meadow Bunting, and Bull-headed Shrike.

Visiting the Arasaki Crane Preserve was indeed a wonderful experience. I found traveling around the island of Kyushu on public transportation quite easy.



Cranes photo by Art Wolfe

(Other Activities, continued from page 6)

thors, artists, photography, and more. Reservations required. <http://www.yosemitestore.com/Templates/fmTemplatePI.asp?CatalogID=370&Zoom=Yes&SubFolderId=131> Or call

(209) 379-2321.

Wings over the Basin – Big Basin State Park Friday – Sunday, May 18 – 20

Big Basin Redwoods State Park invites you to the 6th Annual Wings over the Basin. Experience the park's varied birdlife at the height of the nesting season on guided bird and butterfly walks. All activities are free and open to the public. We are lucky to have a special group campsite under the redwoods near headquarters (\$15/per person for the weekend). Space at the group campsite is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot soon by going to our website, downloading the Registration PDF, and sending in the registration form. Check out our website at: <http://home.comcast.net/~wingsoverthebasin/> There is a \$6.00 day use/parking fee, whether you camp at the park or drive in for the day.

Beginner/Family Weekend Trip

Sequoia Audubon Membership Form

*Yes, please continue to send me
my copy of Needles!*

- ☐ Individual \$15
- ☐ Family \$20
- ☐ Student/Senior \$10
- ☐ Add'l donation \$ _____

Please cut along the dotted line
below (making any needed
corrections to your printed
address) and return this half of
the page with your check
payable to SAS.

Thank you!

Sequoia Audubon Society

PO Box 620292

Woodside

CA 94062-0292

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN MATEO, CA
PERMIT NO. 293

Printed on Recycled Paper 

Time Valued Material—Please Do Not Delay

Clip and return this half of page for renewal



Sequoia eNews — Signup Today!

Want to get updates about Sequoia Audubon activities? Special events? Important conservation issues? Sign up today for the *Sequoia Audubon eNews*, a once-a-month update via email.

Send your email address to office@sequoia-audubon.org. Your name and email address will never be shared with or sold to other organizations.

Nominations for SAS Officers

Would you like to nominate a candidate for SAS office? Would you like to be nominated or participate on a the committee to help nominate? If you would like more information about serving on the SAS Board, please contact Carol Masterson 650-347-1769

2007 International Migratory Bird Days

Sequoia Audubon is a supporter and co-sponsor, with California State Parks, of Half Moon Bay's celebration of the 2007 International Migratory Bird Days. This two-day event starts at 10 AM on Saturday and Sunday, May 12th and 13th.

The theme this year is *Birds in a Changing Climate*. Learn how climate changes effect the migration of birds from North America to Central and South America. Activities include exhibits, arts and crafts, information about bird houses, guided bird walks (each day at 1:00 PM), and activities for children.

Join the nation in celebrating and learning about migratory birds – days of fun and learning for the whole family. Take Hwy 92 to Hwy 1 and turn south to Kelly Ave. Turn right onto Kelly and go west to the Half Moon Bay State Beach entrance. Admission to the State Park is \$6 per car.

This event is appropriate for beginning birders, families, and is wheelchair accessible.

Craver's Murrelet



THE BIRD BOX
RARE BIRD ALERT
415-681-7422

Mission Statement

The mission of Sequoia Audubon Society is to participate in environmental education and conservation and in the restoration, preservation, protection, and enjoyment of our native natural resources with emphasis on birds and their habitats.