

SEQUOIA NEEDLES

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URBAN NATURE OBSERVATIONS: THE WESTERN SCRUB JAY

BY CORDELIA NAUMANN

Until I moved to San Bruno in December, my interest in birds was purely a passing one. I was an apartment dweller in Sunnyvale for the previous 10 years, and for the most part only got to see the Anna's Hummingbirds that visited our feeder and the flirtatious Phoebe that on occasion would visit my windowsill.

Since purchasing a home in San Bruno and becoming an Audubon Society member for the first time, I'm taking more of an interest in how the birds in my new backyard are making their way through winter. Of particular interest was a Western Scrub Jay who had lost one of his feet. I speculated that it was probably from a cat, or that he had got it caught in something, but he had a very clever way of eating seed from my feeder. You see, my feeder hangs from our gazebo and swings – and as you can imagine the Scrub Jay had trouble balancing on it given he only had one foot. So, he would balance briefly on the feeder and scoop all the seed he wanted onto the ground, and then he would fly down and eat it, keeping an eye out for predators. I thought this was very clever, and I've been making a point of keeping my feeder filled while he's still around.

The Western Scrub Jay, (*Aphelocoma californica*), also known as California or Long-tailed Jay, is a species of scrub jay native to western North America, ranging from southern Washington to central Texas and Mexico. These jays inhabit areas of low scrub and are known for hoarding and burying brightly colored objects. They have also shown an ability to plan ahead in choosing food storage locations to maintain their future food supply.

In addition to learning the basic facts about Western Scrub Jays, I stumbled upon something that might tell me why my "lucky" bird had been so clever in acquiring his food, in spite of his disability.

(Continued on page 7)

2007 CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT

BY AL DEMARTINI

This past season's Crystal Springs Christmas Bird Count (CBC) proved to be both pleasant and successful. Of course sunny weather and plenty of birds gladdened our observers out on the count-circle prowl, old timers and newcomers alike.

Approximately 70 attendees (the most we've had in 10 or so years) and two feeder-watchers put on a fine effort by tallying 194 species on count-day, which was above our 10-year average of ~190, but short of last year's exceptional count of 202. This was in addition to another seven count-week birds.

Highlights included the American White Pelican that lingered at Redwood Shores (our first in over 20 years), the scarce wintering Yellow, Wilson's (2), and Hermit Warblers, three Evening Grosbeaks at Madonna Creek Ranch, Swamp and Spizella Sparrows on the coast, as well as 11 Wild Turkeys at Filoli.

(continued on page 5)

Monthly Meetings

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

April

Thursday, 10th, 7:00 PM

Program: Reproductive Life of Birds

May

Thursday, 8th, 7:00 PM

Program: Shorebird Migration

Upcoming Field Trips

(See trip details on page 3)

April

Saturday, 5th Filoli Estate

Sunday, 6th Pescadero Marsh*

Saturday, 12th Reproductive Life of Birds Field Trip

Sunday, 20th Pescadero Marsh

Saturday, 26th Filoli Estate

Sunday, 27th Edgewood Park

Sunday, 27th Mines Road

May

Saturday, 3rd Yerba Buena Nursery

Sunday, 4th Pescadero Marsh

Sunday, 4th San Bruno Mountain*

Saturday, 10th Shorebird Field Trip

Saturday & Sunday, 10th & 11th Int'l Migratory Bird Days*

Saturday, 17th Filoli Estate

Sunday, 18th Pescadero Marsh*

Sunday, 18th Yerba Buena Island

*Beginner/Family Trip

(Continued on page 3)

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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



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MEETING PROGRAMS

BY SUE COSSINS AND PAULA MILLER

The Reproductive Lives of Birds

By Stephanie Ellis

Thursday, April 10, 7:00 PM

Spring is just around the corner ... this is the perfect time to learn about the birds and the bees! This class will cover the basics of avian reproduction including reproductive anatomy, copulation, egg production, incubation, and types of development in different species of birds. We will discuss parental care and learn tips for identifying young birds.

Stephanie Ellis manages all outreach and communications for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. She coordinates monthly walks and other organization-wide events, and also compiles and edits publications. Stephanie has recently moved to California from Massachusetts where she worked for nearly a decade rehabilitating a wide array of species from Atlantic Puffins to state-threatened Diamondback Terrapin turtles. Stephanie worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary as a Seasonal Ornithologist and Naturalist, offering a variety of bird trips, workshops, and educational classes. Also through the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Stephanie was actively involved in restoration efforts involving Piping Plover and Least Tern colonies on the East Coast.

Stephanie graduated from the University of Massachusetts, Boston with a B.A. in Psychology and BioBehavior with a focus in Ornithology. She also has an A.A. in Business Management.



Atlantic Puffin

Accompanying Field Trip

Saturday, April 12. Place and time TBD. There will be a \$5.00 fee to cover the instructor's time. For information, contact Sue Cossins (650) 347-9358.

Shorebird Migration

Thursday, May 8, 7:00 PM

By Alvaro Jaramillo

Shorebirds are fascinating birds. Not only do they show interesting reproductive behavior such as sex-role reversal and gorgeous plumage, and odd bill sizes and shapes, but they also are among the most fantastic of our avian travelers. The

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

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

migrations of shorebirds are long, arduous, and even more incredible than we thought possible. Satellite technology, conservation efforts, and research studies have shown that what these birds do is truly amazing. This short course will look at various aspects of shorebird migration and we will explore details of their identification as well.

Alvaro Jaramillo is a biologist at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. He is also a birding guide for Field Guides, and leads birding tours both in California and internationally. He has written a field guide to the birds of Chile as well as a guide to the New World Blackbirds, which includes the colorful orioles and meadowlarks. He has written articles for *Birding Magazine*, and the "Identify Yourself" column in *Birdwatcher's Digest*. Al's interests range from bird identification to their biology and conservation. He is known for his enthusiasm in teaching even tricky subjects such as gull and shorebird identification, while remembering that birding should always be a good time!

Accompanying Field Trip

Saturday, May 10. Place and time TBD. There will be a \$5.00 fee to cover the instructor's time. For information, contact Sue Cossins (650) 347-9358.



FIELD TRIPS

BY CAROL MASTERSON

Bird Walk at Filoli Estate, Woodside

Saturday, April 5

This walk is sponsored by Filoli. Reservations and entrance fees are required. Adults: \$12.00; Students age 5-17: \$5.00; Group rates available for 12 or more adults. For more information, phone Filoli Visitor Services at 650-364-8300 or go to www.filoli.org/visitor_gen.html

Leaders: Sue Cossins and Martha O'Neal

Pescadero Marsh – State Park Docent Nature Walks

Sunday Morning Walks, 9:00 AM -- Noon

April 6, May 4, June 1

Sunday Afternoon Walks, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

April 20, May 18

Come and discover Pescadero Marsh. California State Park docents will lead a field trip to learn about the Marsh. This beautiful park has a mile-long shoreline, rocky cliffs, and of course a world-famous marsh. The birding at the Marsh is great at this time of year. We will look for the nesting herons. The docents will point out the plants and animals that inhabit this San Mateo County treasure. If it is not raining, meet in the parking lot just over the bridge at Pescadero State Beach. Wear clothing in layers for cold and windy to sunny weather. Heavy rain cancels. Contact Norma Vite (650)560-9740 or email nolema@coastside.net.

Directions: Go south from Half Moon Bay on Hwy 1, about 12 miles. Just past the bridge over Pescadero Creek, look for the south parking lot. If you get to the intersection of Pescadero Road and Hwy 1 you have gone too far.

For more information, see http://www.greenfoothills.org/news/2001/08-2001_PescaderoButano.html.

Beginner/Family Nature Hike

Filoli Estate – Spring Bird Walk

Saturday, April 26, 8:30 AM to 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 required** because this trip is limited to 20 people maximum (sorry, no children under 14). No food or picnicking is allowed but all are welcome after the walk to buy light food and beverages at the Café and visit the gift shop.

Directions: Take Hwy 280 to the Edgewood Road exit; go west. Turn right/north on Canada Road and drive approx 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 Peterson

Edgewood Park – Spring Birds and Wildflowers

Sunday, April 27, 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Come and visit this unique habitat with oak woodland, grasslands, and chaparral. Spring is the best time for this beautiful San Mateo County Park. Sparrows, meadowlarks, flycatchers, bluebirds, hawks, and more are all possible. Depending on the winter rains we will look for spring wildflowers, ferns, and fungi. Ask Marilyn about volunteering to help the wildlife at Edgewood Park. The walk is over moderately strenuous terrain. Heavy rain cancels.

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

Leader: Marilyn Travis. (650) 592-7733

Mines Road – The Ultimate Spring Bird Trip

Scouting trip on Wed. April 23, 8:00 AM
Field trip on Sunday, April 27, 8:00 AM
A variety of habitats provides a fascinating variety of birds not found elsewhere in the Bay Area. This will be an all-day trip in the Coast Range Mountains be-

(continued on page 4)

Upcoming Field Trips

(Continued from page 1)

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, and a hat; wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, and always dress in layers for hot, 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.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Sequoia Audubon Society Board of Directors has appointed a nominating committee to seek out and screen possible applicants for officers and directors. Nominating committee members are Gary Deghi (chairman) and Jennifer Rycenga.

A slate of officers and directors will be presented to the membership for approval at the June general meeting. The committee members welcome your suggestions and recommendations. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the June general meeting provided that the nominee has given prior consent to the nomination.



(Field Trips, continued from page 3)

tween Livermore, the Central Valley, and Hwy 5. We will look for Phainopepla, Prairie Falcon, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Golden Eagles, along with 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 at the lunchtime stop and another at mid-afternoon at a county park. Weather is unpredictable from cold and windy to hot and dry. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Cross the San Mateo Bridge and follow the signs to Hwy 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

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

Saturday, May 3, 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 a very attractive habitat for local birds. First we will bird around the grounds of the nursery looking for sparrows, vireos, warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers, and hummingbirds. 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 also 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. Drive about 4.5 miles; then watch for signs for Fogarty Winery. Where Fogarty Winery is on the left/east side of Skyline, there is a sign for Yerba Buena Nursery on the right side of Skyline. 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 Yerba Buena Nursery at (650) 347-9358.

Leaders: Sue Cossins (650) 347-9358 and Eileen Kay (650) 592-4626

San Bruno Mountain Sunday, May 4, 8:00 AM

San Bruno Mountain stands as an island of open space on the border between San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. It is home to a wealth of wildlife, hidden pockets of woodland, and sheltered canyons. We will look for quail, nuthatch, towhees, vireos, warblers, mockingbirds, thrushes, 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. Park fee is \$5.00. 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 or boots, and bring fluids and snacks. We have binoculars to share. Not suitable for strollers.

Leaders: Jeff Fairclough and Laurie Graham (650) 589-2133
fair80@comcast.net

Beginner/Family Trip

2008 International Migratory Bird Days – Half Moon Bay Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats, and People Saturday and Sunday, May 10 & 11 starts at 10:00 AM Bird Walk each day at 1:00PM

Join the nation in celebrating and learning about migratory birds. A day of fun and learning for the whole family. Learn about bird migrations from North America to Central and South America. Activities include exhibits and arts and crafts. Learn ways to help birds; enjoy guided bird walks and activities for children.

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.

Presented by Sequoia Audubon and the California State Parks www.sequoia-audubon.org or

http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=531

For info call (650) 726-8819

Beginner/Family Event - Wheelchair Accessible

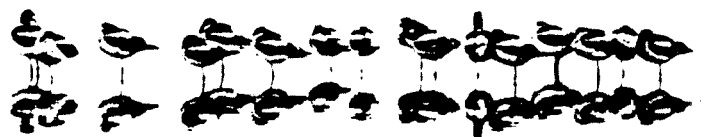
Bird Walk at Filoli Estate, Woodside

Saturday, May 17

For details, please see April 5 listing.

Yerba Buena Island – An Island in the Bay Sunday, May 18, 8:00 AM - Noon

Interested in birding new and unusual places in the Bay Area? If so, join Eric Lichtwardt for an excursion to search for spring migrants and local breeding species on Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay, once called Bird Island. Thousands of people visit this island every day, but most stay less than a minute as they pass through the tunnel while driving the Bay Bridge between San Francisco and Oakland. There is little information available on the bird life of this island, so if you enjoy exploring new places, come along on the trip and we will see what we can discover about the bird life of Yerba Buena. If interested, call Eric at (510) 376-5694 or e-mail eric.lichtwardt@comcast.net for the meeting place and directions.



(Crystal Springs CBC, continued from page 1)

We had a strong showing among raptors, notably the Prairie Falcon and the tundra form of Peregrine, plus three Golden Eagles, two Osprey, and a Bald Eagle - all the while posting record numbers of the Northern Harrier and Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks.

Diversity among smaller aerial birds was great, too. We saw three species of swallow (12 Violet-green Swallows, six Tree Swallows and two Barn Swallows) at Crystal Springs Reservoir. Seven White-throated Swifts were found closer to the coast.

We had no truly rare gulls to report, the Glaucous-winged Gull and two locally scarce Bonaparte Gulls notwithstanding. But a count of ~21,000 was a goodly number overall. We saw mostly Western and Glaucous-winged Gulls, with the normally abundant California Gull posting its lowest total since 1972. Only one Heermann's Gull was seen.

Scarcer shorebirds included two Red-necked Phalaropes, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wandering Tattler, and Rock Sandpiper, while we counted record highs for Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers (1770 and 1117) as well as 479 Red Knots at the Foster City shell bar (only topped back in '73).

A new spot for Burrowing Owl at Bair Island was welcome news and overall our owling teams did a fine job. Trends among our black corvids are of interest as American Crow populations continue to expand (376 a record number), while Ravens seem to be leveling off these last few years after their expansion.

Many thanks to all who helped out, especially the area leaders, my co-compilers Leslie Flint and Gary Deghi, and Norma Vite and crew for putting on the very welcome compilation feast. Hope to see you all again next year.

2007 AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT

BY AL DEMARTINI

The predicted heavy rain thankfully didn't materialize, but there was some drip and drizzle in the higher forested areas that seemed to suppress bird activity locally. On the coast, the birding conditions were quite decent.

Our 54 hardy counters (and one feeder-watcher) roamed the varied trails, roads, and parks and uncovered 160 species on count day with another four count-week birds.

The Williamson's Sapsucker at Big Basin was our first ever sighting and stands as "best find." Other highlights included the Eurasian Green-winged Teal and Wigeon at the Pescadero Marsh, a Ferruginous Hawk and a Barn Swallow off Cloverdale Road, three Lark Sparrows at Driscoll Ranch, a Swamp Sparrow at Año Nuevo Reserve, and a Slate-colored Fox Sparrow at Water Lane.

BLUEBIRD NEST BOX SPRING CLEANING

BY SUSAN KRITZIK

Today, as I drove to work, a pair of bluebirds was checking out a nest box on Whiskey Hill Road. Already? Yes, it's time for spring cleaning! Oak Titmice will be moving in any day!

Nest box monitors, now is the time to clean out your boxes and make the needed repairs. Make sure old nest material is removed and scrape out any unwanted deposits with a putty knife or spatula. Remove any insect nests and make sure the doors open easily and close securely.

If woodpeckers have roosted in your nest boxes, they may have enlarged the opening. The best solution is a metal patch. They are very inexpensive and are available at Birder's Garden (formerly the Wild Bird Center) of San Carlos. The problem with wood patches is that they get chiseled again. Very large holes may need a wood patch topped by a metal one. Cavity nesters will avoid a box with a larger-than-normal hole - a good self-protective instinct as predators can gain easier access through a larger hole.

Spring is also the time to move boxes that have suffered repeated predation or have had no nesting activity for a couple of years. Of course, new boxes may be put up as well. You should add an inverted cone baffle to pole boxes (also available at Birder's Garden or homemade by the handy) if they have had raccoon predation. For information about predator control, visit <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/predatorcontrol.htm>.

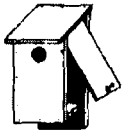
(continued on page 7)

Sea watching at Pigeon Point was eventful with 2000+ Common Murres complementing four other less numerous alcids, including the ever-harder-to-see (locally) Cassin's Auklet. Jaegers made a decent showing with five Pomarine and two large Jaeger Sp. Brandt's Cormorant posted record numbers with 4200 seen at Año Nuevo Island alone. A Forster's Tern was there during count week.

Overall local trends in diversity and numbers were up for waterfowl (record numbers of Common Goldeneye and Greater Scaup), down for gulls (despite the presence of one scarce Ring-billed Gull), and down for shorebirds. The American Crow seemed to be more regular in small numbers while Ravens looked to be down (only somewhat) after their recent explosion countywide. Eurasian Collared-Doves seem here to stay, showing a steady increase since their first appearance. The discovery of a new Burrowing Owl spot on POST-protected land is hopefully the start of a trend.

Thanks to all the counters, my co-compiler Leslie Flint, and Norma Vite and crew for the lovely food at the compilation dinner.

SAS PROGRAM UPDATES



Bluebird Monitors' Meeting!

Susan Kritzik

We will have a Bluebird Monitors' Meeting at a place to be determined on Sunday, March 30th, from 1 to 2:30 PM. Please email or call Susan Kritzik for meeting place: sgkritzik@shcglobal.net 650-851-4529.

We will discuss monitoring and recordkeeping, share solutions to problems, answer questions for new monitors, and review the data entry system. Dick Blaine, the California Bluebird Recovery Program Director, will join us and discuss the use of data by Cornell researchers, educating kids about cavity nesters, and other topics of interest. Refreshments will be served! Any member who wants to learn more about the program is welcome!

Another beautiful day at the Pescadero Marsh

Norma Vite



On Saturday, February 9th, Trail Center workers spent another beautiful day at the Pescadero Marsh. They were able to clear the trail to the top of a hill, where they enjoyed lunch and a great view of the marsh.

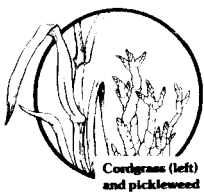
You can enjoy this new trail by participating in a nature walk with the Pescadero docents. See the Field Trips section for details. With a clear trail and clear skies, it should be a great outing. These walks are not just for birders – the Pescadero docents also talk about the plant life in the area and the history of the marsh. However, birders will be especially happy to see Heron nests again this year. And before long spring will be at the marsh and we will be able to see some beautiful wildflowers.

Many thanks to the Trail Center workers for donating their time and energy at the Pescadero Marsh so that we can all enjoy the area on foot. For more information about the Trail Center visit <http://www.trailcenter.org/>

[About the Trail Center: The Trail Center and its volunteers give back to the land much needed care and maintenance of trails. Trail work is the perfect blend of community service, outdoor awareness, conservation, physical exercise and camaraderie set in places of natural beauty. Source: Trail Center website.]

Proposed Development of Seaport Boulevard Salt Ponds

Robin Winslow Smith



As you probably know, Cargill owns the salt ponds along Seaport Boulevard in Redwood City. These ponds were not part of the larger sale of salt ponds for the restoration project because of the inflated appraisal price. Cargill is in the process of putting together a project to present to the Redwood City Council for development of these ponds.

This salt pond area is currently zoned “tidal plain” under the Redwood City general plan, which is in the process of being updated. The Sequoia Audubon Board of Directors has passed a resolution in favor of retaining the tidal plain designation to exclude development of the former salt ponds, as they are important to birds.

Many kinds of birds use the area year round. The dikes on the Menlo Park side of the ponds provide roosting area for the thousands of shorebirds that migrate through this area in the spring and fall. Gulls are seen hanging out on the ponds during the winter. Restoration of these ponds to a mixed area of salt marsh and ponds would greatly benefit our bayfront bird species.

This area would be greatly affected by sea level rise. To see maps of the area and of the impact of sea level rise, take a look at the Save the Bay website, www.savesfbay.org. Click on the Flickr photos and then on the salt ponds.

Sequoia Audubon is cooperating with Save the Bay and other environmental organizations in a campaign that aims to keep the area undeveloped.

REDWOOD SHORES LIBRARY INTERPRETIVE CENTER

BY JACKY AVERILL

Coming soon to Redwood Shores is a beautiful state-of-the-art branch of the Redwood City Public Library. What does that have to do with Sequoia Audubon? Inside the library will be a highly interactive Interpretive Center that we hope will be a hub of environmental activity and education.

This Interpretive Center will highlight the abundance of life in our Bay mud, water, and air. The most obvious of abundant life in Redwood Shores is the birds! Visitors to the Interpretive Center will learn about identifying birds by their key characteristics, as well as by their calls or even their footprints in the mud.

Redwood City Public Library and the Sequoia Audubon Society are teaming up to take full advantage of teachable moments. The activities we offer can be the key to turning any library patron into a life-long bird watcher and conservationist!

Even before the September opening day, we can offer bird walks from the site of the building. The location at the intersection of Marine Parkway and Bridge Parkway has us in close proximity to several bodies of water frequented by birds. Between now and September we can prepare the public by having evening or weekend programs on gardening for birds, backyard feeders, or bird identification at our Downtown Library, 1044 Middlefield Road.

On the Redwood Shores Library opening day, perhaps we can offer family bird walks on the Bay Trail and a craft activity on one of the library decks.

Once the library is open, we can plan for family outings, evening programs in one of the adjoining community meeting rooms, after-school activities for school-age kids, and an occasional preschool activity for the youngest patrons.

SAS members have already given generously of their time and expertise by helping with exhibit planning, entering photographs to be considered as graphics for informational signs, and by suggesting future collaborations with the library.

We are very excited to be involved with the Sequoia Audubon Society and look forward to having a fun and active partnership.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email javerill@redwoodcity.org or by telephone 650-780-7016.



(Bluebird Spring Cleaning, continued from page 5)

Sometimes mice will winter in a nest box. The removal of their nests can possibly expose one to Hantavirus, a potentially fatal respiratory virus. Do not disturb the nest material as the virus is transmitted by dried material that becomes airborne. Do not attempt to remove a mouse nest without taking the precautions outlined by the CDC at the following site: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hanta/hps_stc/stc_clean.htm.

Hatch Graham's *Monitor's Guide* contains an excellent list of supplies that are useful for monitoring and maintaining nest boxes and is a trove of great information. See http://cbrp.org/documents/monitor_guide.pdf.

And what would the point of monitoring be without record-keeping? All of the forms that you need can be found at the CBRP's website, <http://cbrp.org/>. This site provides a portal for data entry, links to all kinds of useful sites, plans for nest boxes, the yearly reports for California by county, and much more. Kudos to state CBRP Director Dick Blaine for this wonderful website!

When all of your boxes are clean and sound, it's time to enjoy the increasing bird activity leading up to nesting season.



Photo by Cordelia Naumann

(Western Scrub Jay, continued from page 1)

In a study done by the Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Cambridge, a group of Scrub Jays was "... given the opportunity to steal other birds' hidden food caches; another group of Scrub Jays was not. The first group re-hid their own food caches if they were observed when first hiding the food. The second group, who had no experience stealing from hidden caches, did not exhibit the same behavior." According to the study, these findings were a major development in the field of animal cognition – that the Scrub Jays could demonstrate planning and determine that events might guide how they should behave in the future.

Thinking back to my one-footed friend, this made sense. His "event" was losing his foot, and his balancing act on my feeder was how he learned to secure food for himself.

Sequoia Audubon Membership Form

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In the tropics, full sun coffee farming destroys native trees, leaving only a monoculture of coffee trees, with little provision for bird and wildlife habitation. That's why SAS encourages you to only purchase shade grown (preferably Rainforest Alliance certified), 100% organic coffees. Please look for them when you shop. Shade grown decaf is especially hard to find in the local markets. Two sources that we know of are Audubon Premium Shade Grown Coffee Company in San Leandro (1-800-770-9381) and Outland Java Company in Half Moon Bay (1-888-442-5282 or www.outlandjava.com).

Williamson's Sapsucker



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Your name and email address will never be shared with or sold to other organizations.

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.

2008 International Migratory Bird Days

Sequoia Audubon is a supporter and co-sponsor, with California State Parks, of Half Moon Bay's celebration of the 2008 International Migratory Bird Days. This two-day event starts at 10 AM on Saturday and Sunday, May 10th and 11th.

The theme this year is *Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats, and People*. 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.