



MADRONE LEAVES

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Production of Wind Energy and Avian Mortality

by Veronica Bowers

Today, nearly one-third of North America's 800 bird species are considered threatened, endangered, or in serious population decline. The threats affecting bird populations are diverse and complex, ranging from habitat destruction to climate change. Global warming and climate change are considered the greatest recent threats to wildlife and ecosystems around the world. According to scientists, 32% of the world's bird species are likely to become extinct by 2100 due to climate change.

Human dependence on fossil fuels is largely to blame for global warming and the devastating effect of climate change on our planet. Now, more than ever, the need for renewable energy resources and reduction of our dependence on fossil fuels is essential to preserve life on earth as we know it. Wind energy is an important and viable renewable energy resource, but without proper regulation and mandatory siting guidelines, ill-developed, industrial-scale wind farms will increase the negative impacts on wildlife and habitat.

By 2016 the market for renewable energy technology is expected to grow to \$225 billion. Wind energy is the fastest-growing and one of the lowest-priced technologies available today. Wind energy production costs between 4 and 6 cents per kilowatt hour, dependent on the wind source and finances of a specific project.

Wind power is harnessed through the spinning blades of a wind turbine, which connect to a generator within the turbine

and convert the kinetic energy to electricity. Modern turbines operate with blades that are 130 feet in length. Once mounted on a tower, total height of a large turbine can reach 400 feet. Wind farms operate 60-80% of the time throughout the year, and require an average wind speed of approximately 13 miles per hour.

There are approximately 25,000 wind turbines operating in the U.S., producing

about 3% of the overall electrical energy output. The federal government is calling for 20% renewable energy by 2030. Currently, Pacific Gas and Electric uses 14% of renewable energy, of which 2% is wind. Under the Energy Policy Act of 1992, the federal government provided a wind energy production tax credit of 1.8 cents per kilowatt for wind plants. This

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NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

"Wetland Icons: Herons and Egrets of the San Francisco Bay Area"

Monday, November 16, 7:30 PM

First United Methodist Church

1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

A hundred years ago, herons and egrets were rare in the San Francisco Bay area. Now, after a long recovery from intensive hunting, habitat loss, and other previous abuses by humans, these elegant birds have become popular symbols of wetland health and conservation. Such symbolism is validated by their sensitivity to wetland quality and their roles as powerful wetland predators. Details about the lives of herons and egrets in the San Francisco Bay area were mostly a mystery until 1991, when Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) began studies of all known heronries in the region. Dr. John Kelly will share results from this continuing effort.

John's investigations of herons and egrets have led to an unparalleled scientific database: a detailed atlas of San Francisco Bay area heronries, insights into the conservation of wetland landscapes, protection of nesting colonies, and effects of climate change. John has lived and worked at ACR's Cypress Grove Research Center on Tomales Bay for more than 20 years and currently serves as ACR's Director of Conservation Science and Habitat Protection. He has written numerous scientific articles on coastal and estuarine birds. In addition to presenting recent work on herons and egrets, John will provide an overview of other studies conducted by Audubon Canyon Ranch.

NO GENERAL MEETING IN DECEMBER

Coming 18 January 2010: "Galapagos Islands Ever Adapting", presented by Diane & Bryant Hichwa.



calendar

All walks and meetings are open to the public. Bird walks are recreational and educational in purpose, and all levels of expertise are welcome. Bring field equipment and wear comfortable shoes and layered clothing for variable weather conditions. Please carpool whenever possible. Forecasted heavy rain cancels. There is no charge for activities unless otherwise specified, but some parks have day-use fees.

The Conservation Committee exchanges information by phone and e-mail as soon as possible when an issue surfaces. Please contact Diane Hichwa at 785-1922 or dhichwa@earthlink.net.

Wednesday November 4, 7:00 PM

BOARD MEETING. Sonoma County Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa. For agenda information, contact Janeann Erickson at 795-2498.

Thursday November 5, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

BOLINAS LAGOON AND NEARBY AREAS. Bird Walk. We will search the area for wintering birds. Meet at the first large turnout south of the Bolinas turnoff on Highway 1. Bring lunch, liquids, and layered clothing. For information, contact Don McCarthy, (415) 883-0763.

Saturday November 7, 8:00 AM to Noon

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA. Beginners Bird Walk. From Highway 101, go east on 116 (Lakeville Highway). Turn right on Pine View Way and then left on Cypress Drive. Go to the end of the road and through the gates. We will meet at the parking lot nearest the gates. Informal carpools leave Santa Rosa at 7:30 AM. For carpooling, meet at Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa. The parking lot is behind the office (access from Carrillo Street.) Bring lunch, liquids, and layers of clothing. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 433-2528; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

Saturday November 7, 2:00 PM

PETALUMA WETLANDS ALLIANCE ANNUAL MEETING. Petaluma Regional Library, 100 Fairgrounds Drive, Petaluma. Guest speaker is Peter Leveque. See page 5.

Wednesday November 11, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY. Bird Walk. We will bird the wetlands and adjacent areas of the new facility in Petaluma. From Santa Rosa on Highway 101, take the Highway 116 exit (Lakeville Highway), go left under Highway 101, and turn right (south) at the South McDowell traffic light. Finally, turn right on Cypress Drive, which ends at the facility gate. Bring lunch, liquids, and layered clothing. For information, contact Andy LaCasse, 763-5167.

Saturday November 14, 9:00 AM

SHOLLENBERGER PARK. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads a bird walk. Meet at the first kiosk. Rain cancels. Contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577.

Saturday November 14, 9:30 AM

JUNIOR AUDUBON. Join Bob Speckels to look for birds at Spring Lake Regional Park. Call Bob at 569-0563 for reservations. See page 3.

Thursday November 19, 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM

LAKE HENNESSEY IN NAPA COUNTY. Bird Walk. From the intersection of Silverado Trail and Highway 128 (which is east of Rutherford), go east on Highway 128 to a parking area at the bottom of the Conn Dam spillway on the left of the road. Bring lunch, liquids, and layered clothing. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisypus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday November 21, 8:30 AM to Noon

RUSH CREEK. Bird Walk. Meet at Rush Creek Preserve at Novato. From Highway 101, drive east on Atherton Avenue, turn left on Bugelia Lane, which becomes Bahia Drive. Continue to the Rush Creek trailhead at the end of Bahia Drive. Rain cancels. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 433-2528; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; Bill Payne, 546-3331; and Bob Speckels, 569-0563.

Saturday November 21, 10:00 AM

SHOLLENBERGER PARK. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads two children/family nature walks. One-to-two hours, dependent on age of children. Meet at the first kiosk. Rain cancels. For the children/family walk in English, contact Gerald Moore at 763-3577; for the walk in Spanish, contact Connie Peabody at 338-2237.

Wednesday November 25, 8:30 AM till Noon

SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK. Bird Walk. Parking fee (\$5) for non-permit holders. From Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa, go east on Hoen Avenue, turn left on Newanga Avenue, turn right inside the park entrance gate, and meet in the parking lot near the restrooms at the top of the hill. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisypus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday November 28, 9:00 AM

ELLIS CREEK WATER RECYCLING FACILITY, PETALUMA. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance leads a walk at the Ellis Creek ponds. Go to the end of Cypress Drive and through the gates. Parking lot is on the left. Rain cancels. Contact Gerald or Mary Edith Moore at 763-3577.

Wednesday and Thursday, December 2 and December 3

SACRAMENTO VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGES. Auto birding tours (with stops at designated observation points) at Sacramento Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR.) Meet at the Sacramento NWR headquarters at 9:30 AM on Wednesday. Bring lunch and liquids. Exit from Interstate 5 at Princeton (approximately 17 miles north of Williams), turn north on the county service road, and proceed to the NWR headquarters on the right. Driving time from Santa Rosa is about 2.5 hours. Many of us will stay in Yuba City (Best Western Bonanza Inn, 530-674-8824) on Wednesday night and bird Gray Lodge Wildlife Area on Thursday. Those who also plan to spend Tuesday night in Williams or Willows can view a sometimes spectacular fly-in/out of waterfowl between 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM from the observation platform at the southeast corner of the Sacramento refuge. For information, contact Tom McCuller, sisypus@sonic.net, 546-1812.

Saturday December 12, 9:30 AM to Dusk

GRAY LODGE WILDLIFE AREA. Bird Walk. Directions to Gray Lodge: from the junction of Interstate 5 and Highway 99, take Highway 99 north to Live Oak. Turn west on Pennington (North Butte) Road. Turn right on Almond Orchard Avenue and continue to entrance. The distance from Live Oak is about eight miles. This is our annual trip to the Sacramento Valley. Some of our group will stay overnight in the area Friday and/or Saturday and visit parts of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Call one of the leaders for more information. Leaders: Tom Cashman, 433-2528; Bill Doyle, 483-8773; Bill Payne, 546-3331; Bob Speckels, 569-0563; and Ken Wilson, 775-2558.



WIND ENERGY

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tax credit expired on 31 December 2003; however, a new federal incentive was added in 2009. Since 2006 a number of bills and incentives have been implemented in California to encourage the growth of wind energy.

There are many advantages of wind power as an energy source. Wind power replaces the need to build coal-polluting power plants. Turbine installation is relatively quick and increasing energy production, as needed, is easy. Also, it is a non-depletable resource. While there are many positive environmental impacts of wind power, there are also negative impacts. Wind energy facilities can have detrimental effects on wildlife in four fundamental ways: loss, degradation, and/or fragmentation of habitats; disturbance and subsequent displacement from habitats; disruption of ecological links; and collision mortality.

Construction of support roads, storage and maintenance yards, turbine towers, and associated infrastructure contribute to negative impacts on wildlife. Human activity and turbines can disturb and displace wildlife from their habitats, forcing the wildlife to abandon preferred habitat to seek lower-quality habitat elsewhere.

Studies have shown that some grassland birds appear to avoid habitats with tall structures where raptors may be perched, watching for prey. Many North American grassland species are already in decline and large wind energy facilities may interfere with the ability of birds and other wildlife to travel between feeding, wintering, and nesting sites. This may cause birds to make longer or higher flights between such areas, resulting in higher metabolic costs with a reduction in survival and reproduction rates.

Collision mortality is a significant concern in major migration corridors, proposed sites on or near habitat for special-status species, areas with high concentrations of wintering and/or breeding raptors, and

near or connected to other wind farms that have experienced high wildlife mortality. Unfortunately, collision mortality is only being assessed at a few wind facilities in the country.

In a subsequent article, federal regulations and mandatory guidelines will be explored which will avoid or minimize wildlife collisions.

NOTE: Veronica thanks Garry George at CA Audubon who provided information and additional resources for this article.

**Welcome New Friends
of Madrone
Audubon Society**

Healdsburg
Sheherezade (Sherry) Adams

Petaluma
Sandy O'Hare

Saturday November 14, 9:30 AM

JUNIOR AUDUBON

Join Bob Speckels at Spring Lake Regional Park. We'll look for Acorn Woodpeckers, Osprey, Turkey Vultures, and other wildlife in the area.

Directions to Spring Lake Regional Park: from Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa, go east on Hoen Ave., turn left on Newanga Ave., turn right inside the park entrance gate, and meet in the parking lot near the restrooms at the top of the hill. Unless you have a regional parks permit, there is a parking fee of \$5.00. Call Bob Speckels at 569-0563.

A couple of ideas for November...

13th Annual Sandhill Crane Festival
November 6-8

The festival takes place at Hutchins Street Square in Lodi, CA and celebrates the

return of the Greater and Lesser Sandhill Cranes to the rich delta wetlands of the Lodi area. The festivities begin November 6 with a wine & hors d'oeuvres reception and art show from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. Family activities, workshops, wildlife demonstrations, and nature tours are featured. General admission to the festival is free, although there is a charge for field trips. For a schedule of activities/registration, visit <http://www.cranefestival.com/> or call 800-581-6150.



Bouverie Preserve, Nature Walks

*Saturday November 7, 21 and
December 5, 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM*

Half-day, guided nature walks are scheduled at the Bouverie Preserve, 13935 Sonoma Hwy12, Glen Ellen. Participants are divided into small groups and paired with a trained volunteer to explore the mixed evergreen forest, flower-carpeted oak woodland, and rugged chaparral. Visitors of all ages are welcome. Free of charge. For more information/reservations, call 938-4554 or e-mail bouverie@egret.org.

Identifying Those Birds Out There

By Dr. John Hewston

When it comes to identifying and tallying birds on winter counts (Thanksgiving or Christmas) or when you are just enjoying watching them, be aware that juveniles are full sized and generally may appear like the adults but frequently look different in some respects. So, you may confuse them with other, similar species.

Two of our wintering sparrows fit this category — White-crowned and Golden-crowned. Juvenile White-crowns don't have that black-and-white bicycle-helmet crown like the adults, but have brown-and-tan stripes. These juveniles are frequently mistaken for Golden-crowns.

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IDENTIFYING THOSE BIRDS

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The juvenile Golden-crowns do not have the black heavy stripes with a bright golden crown between them. Their heads are pretty much all brown, perhaps with a hint of yellow showing on the forehead in good light. Also, the adults do not have a large patch of gold showing in early winter. As winter progresses, the tips of their head feathers wear off and the gold crown shows brightly in late winter and early spring.

The ranges of Song and Savannah Sparrows overlap along the Pacific Coast west of the Cascades and the Sierra. These species should not be confused. Song Sparrows do not flock, nor do they usually frequent habitats in large numbers; Savannah Sparrows look like faded Song Sparrows, and they occur in loose flocks in rather open or brushy areas.

It's difficult to determine just how big that bird is out there in a tree or on your feeder. I found that measuring parts of the feeder helps me determine the size of the bird using it. For instance, my suet feeder is just six inches high (the portion that contains the suet block.) Since both Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers use my feeder, I can make a quick estimate of the size of the bird as soon as it lands on the feeder. The Downy Woodpecker is a small bird, about the size of a sparrow and a bit over six inches long. The Hairy is a larger, heavier bird about nine inches long. This becomes obvious when you know the dimensions of some feature of the area frequented by the birds.

Even though these two woodpeckers are look-alikes, there are some features you're supposed to be able to see — besides the size difference. Look at the head! If the length of the bill from base to tip is the same length as from base to the back of the eye (in the other direction), it's a Downy. That's not a big "woodpecker-ish" bill. If the bill from base to tip is

the same length as base to the back of the head, it's a Hairy. Also, look at the white outer tail feathers. If there are two black spots on the white tail feathers, it's probably a Downy. If there are no black spots, just plain white feathers, it's a Hairy. This doesn't always hold for identification, but usually does. You may be able to note which species it is when you hear the downward whinny of the Downy or the louder two-note "Pi-Tik" of the Hairy.

When one of these clues does not work, you can put them all together. This should be done for all species rather than depending on just one feature. After a while you'll be able to do this quickly—and surprise your companions.

Upcoming Holiday Bird Counts

You know the holidays are here when you don the hat and gloves, meet your friends, and start the bird counts. Rain or cold does not deter you—friends must get together again, count the birds, and enjoy the dinner celebration as the day's adventures are relived and shared with all.

Thanksgiving Bird Count. Counters are needed for the annual Thanksgiving Bird Count: one hour on *Thanksgiving Day*. The counter chooses the time that best fits his/her schedule. The count is made in a circle which measures only 15 feet in diameter. The circle's location is determined by the counter who usually chooses a favorite area frequented by the birds, such as feeders, baths, covers, and/or wetlands. Individual birds are counted only once during the hour, even if the birds continue to pay visits. Flocks should be estimated or counted, and only the highest number at any one time used.

Thanksgiving Bird Counts were begun in 1966 by Dr. Ernest Edwards and the Lynchburg Bird Club in Virginia. Counts slowly spread to the west, but there are still

many areas in the west in need of more counters and better count distribution. Because counters drop out each year, there is a constant need for new recruitments, and this bird count can be done in comfort, indoors near a window, and be a welcome respite from the Thanksgiving dinner. Count results (even if you see no birds at all) should be sent to Dr. John G. Hewston, Count Compiler, Natural Resources Building, Humboldt State University, Arcata California 95521. Instructions and bird count form are available at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org/Checklists/THANKSGIVING.pdf>.



Petaluma's Christmas Bird Count for Kids.

Tuesday 29 December, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Join Petaluma Wetlands Alliance for a half-day of birding, rain or shine, followed by a brown-bag lunch and a tabulation celebration! A special guest presenter will be at the celebration. The event is based at the Lucchesi Community Center, 320 N. McDowell Blvd. Teams of six kids each, ages 10-15, will work with experienced adult birders in assigned areas (such as Shollenberger, Ellis Creek, Alman Marsh, Lucchesi, Tolay, etc) and a common bird list. Parents are welcome to come along and *observe from a distance* the young birders in action. Their will be a \$5 donation requested in advance to cover event expenses. Call Al Hesla, 765-9411 or Mary Edith Moore, 763-3577 to learn more.



Sonoma Valley Christmas Bird Count.

Friday 1 January 2010, dawn to dusk

Celebrate New Years Day birding Sonoma Valley and the Petaluma Wetlands from dawn to dusk. This is the 5th Annual Sonoma Valley Christmas Bird Count, and all birders are most welcome! Forty birding teams (rain or shine) will once again hike/bike the mountains and boat the marshes, searching for the



HOLIDAY BIRD COUNTS

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winter and migrating birds known to the area. At 5:30 PM, a potluck tabulation dinner will take place at the Sonoma Community Center's Andrews Hall, 276 East Napa Street off the Plaza. Become a team leader or member by contacting compilers Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie at www.sonomabirding.org or call 939-8007. Cost \$5.00 per person.

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Madrone Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

Sunday 3 January 2010, dawn to dusk

Looking for a great way to begin the year? Join Madrone Audubon's 43rd annual Christmas Bird Count in West Sonoma County. Our counters cover the full spectrum of birding skills from beginner to expert, with each level of expertise filling an important niche. Whether your strength lies in identifying "peeps" or passerines, there's bound to be an area to suit your birding interests with our many diverse habitats. To save paper and postage, count information and necessary forms will be on the Web site, <http://audubon.sonoma.net>, or contact the committee co-chair, Janeann Erickson, at erickson@ap.net or 795-2498.

The Christmas Count is a great way to see old friends and meet new ones. Following the count, there will be a catered dinner at the Sebastopol Community Center. Volunteer helpers continue to be needed for this post-count dinner. Watch for more details on the count and the catered dinner celebration in the next issue of the *Leaves*.

Bird Walk Reports

Ragle Ranch, September 5

Submitted by Bob Speckels

With its gently sloping trails and varied habitat, Ragle Ranch County Regional

Park is a well attended bird walk. Sixteen birders were led by Bill Payne, Bill Doyle, Helen Kochenderfer, and Bob Speckels. Highlights included excellent scope views of White-tailed Kite, both young and mature. A kite caught a rodent and was ingesting it when it was joined by an American Crow. The two species were inches apart – a great color contrast. A male Western Tanager was a spectacular tree-topper; extra color was added to the view by Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers. The group also saw four woodpecker species (Acorn, Downy, Hairy, Northern Flicker) and heard the distinctive call of a Piliated. The species count for the day was 35.

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Point Reyes National Seashore, September 19

Submitted by Bob Speckels

Point Reyes during fall migration can be hit or miss. Hit it right and you may be rewarded by a variety of spectacular Eastern Warblers. Miss usually means fog, wind, and a 30-degree drop in temperature. A compact group of seven birders made a dash for the Lighthouse trees and were met with a largely miss experience – the Point was fogged in and the trees were dripping. A Say's Phoebe was the highlight – a site bird for all. Next stop was the Fish Docks to look for a Prairie Warbler, which was reported as seen earlier in the day. With 30 birders scanning the trees (a large Sacramento group joined us), the bird was finally found by Becky Olson who zeroed in on its chip note. The group also spotted an immature Bald Eagle – another Outer Point first for all. With the Ranches (A and B) absent of birds, the day's second-to-last stop was Drake's Beach where the highlight was probably the Strauss Ice Cream. Final stop was the RCA station where a Grey Flycatcher had been seen earlier. Failing to find the Flycatcher did not dampen the group's spirits and the day ended with glimpses of a male Common Yellowthroat. The count for the day was 43

species. The birders were co-led by Ken Wilson and Bob Speckels (we acknowledged that Becky was really in charge.)

Lest We Forget

Madrone Audubon members receive a 10% discount at Wild Birds Unlimited, 71 Brookwood Avenue, Santa Rosa. Manager Tim Stewart, 576-0861, tsosprey@sonic.net.

The Petaluma Wetlands Alliance holds its annual meeting Saturday 7 November, 2:00 PM, at the Petaluma Regional Library, 100 Fairgrounds Drive, Petaluma. Guest speaker is Peter Leveque who will give the history behind the name of some birds found at Shollenberger which have a person's name in either its scientific or common name.

Updates

Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas, Second Edition. The Atlas Committee rescheduled the start of data collection to 2011. Stay tuned.

Shollenberger Park. Sediment has been removed from the dredging ponds, deepening the ponds by 1 1/2 feet. The contractors and their equipment exited Shollenberger 24 September, completing the work in record time and reopening Shollenberger to the public.

<p>Memorial Gifts</p> <p>In memory of Phyllis Ellman Betty Groce, Jeffrey Holtzman, and Kimberly Wasson</p> <p>In memory of Virginia McDonagh Betty Groce, Jeffrey Holtzman, and Kimberly Wasson</p>



Sierra Nevada Field Studies — the first student reports

(Nina Antze, Julie Elias, and Adele Wikner attended San Francisco State University's Sierra Nevada Field Campus this summer, thanks to Madrone Audubon's educational grant program. Nina is a docent at Bouverie where she takes children and adults on journaling nature hikes.)

"Sierra Field Journal: Botanical Illuminations"

By Nina Antze

Saturday morning we worked outdoors creating color wheels, painting simple grasses, and focusing on our watercolor palettes and supplies. Indoors in the afternoon found us talking about an artist's approach to journaling and how she/he combines words and pictures to create personal statements and public art. We also set up our journals with various layouts based on medieval illuminations that we would paint, draw, or write in the next day. Back outdoors, we worked with watercolor and stick-painting to help us "loosen up" and experience process versus product and get accustomed to working outside in nature.

Sunday morning was devoted to painting leaves, followed by an afternoon in a purple penstemon meadow at Yuba Pass where we wrote and drew in our journals. After dinner, some of us joined our instructor, Andie Thram, to paint outdoors in the evening light. The next morning we left early for Graeagle Creek to hike a fabulous trail where dozens of wildflower species were still in bloom. Our destination was a large gravel flat filled with sunflowers, paintbrush, and gilia where we wrote and drew in our journal. A final show of our work and a wrap-up of what we had learned and liked took place in the afternoon at a small waterfall where we saw a dipper (water ouzel.)

It was a wonderful experience for me. I learned so much about working with watercolor, especially in an outdoor sketch setting. I gained valuable information on ways to structure a journal and how to combine both words and pictures to capture a time and place. Also, I learned a great deal about the flora and some fauna of the area.

Base camp was great. The director of the field studies, Jim Steele, was very helpful. The food was good. I highly recommend the experience for all, and I feel very fortunate to have taken this class and spent the time in the Sierra. I look forward to applying what I learned with the adults and children at Bouverie and my students in the community. (ed. Nina is giving a seminar at Bouverie, Saturday 14 November, on journaling the colors of fall. To register, e-mail leslie@egret.org or call 415-868-9244.)

First Audubon California Yellow-billed Magpie Survey

The Yellow-billed Magpie is one of California's most striking birds, distinguished by its yellow bill and by a yellow patch of bare skin around the eye. Popular among birders and compelling among conservationists, the bird prefers to live in oaks, especially more open oak grassland, orchards, and parks. It is a common resident of the rangelands and foothills of central and northern California's Central Valley and the coastal ranges in oak savannah woodlands and other similar habitats. For a variety of reasons – including habitat loss, poison, and West Nile Virus – the Yellow-billed Magpie population has found itself at risk in recent years, and it is now an Audubon Watchlist species.

In June 2009, Audubon California sponsored a four-day survey of Yellow-billed Magpies. This was citizen science in action! Volunteers counted more than 1800

birds in 18 of California's 58 counties and entered their results on eBird, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's online citizen science database. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about where this bird is living and in what numbers. This information will be shared with others to promote conservation of this great California bird. For the results of this survey, visit http://www.ca.audubon.org/pdf/Report_Magpie_survey09_final.pdf.

Coming next spring to a neighborhood near you

Submitted by Joannie Dranginis

Plan now to attend the first Point Reyes Birding Festival, April 23-25. This event is sponsored by the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin, the leading environmental advocacy organization in West Marin.

Point Reyes and the West Marin area are home to one of the most diverse bird populations in North America. April is a great time to see and hear breeding birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl.

Top birding experts such as David Wimpfheimer, Keith Hansen, and Jules Evens will lead participants on field trips to discover the best birding sites in the region. Displays and exhibits will expand your bird knowledge, and you can stay at one of the dozens of charming bed-and-breakfast or other lodging establishments. The event will also feature walks to see the West Marin natural world, including the famous wildflower displays and butterflies.

For more information on this event, visit <http://www.eacmarin.org>. Because accommodations fill up early for weekends, make an early reservation to stay in West Marin from Friday to Sunday afternoon.

We look forward to seeing you at the start of what we are sure will be a great tradition of Point Reyes Birding Festivals.



Observations

Late Summer, Early Fall 2009 • Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • birdsurf64@sbcglobal.net

Brant (6)	9/1	Bodega Harbor, continued over summer	BDP, DN
Common Murre	8/16	Russian River at Austin Creek	LP
Black Skimmer (5)	9/5	Pond at end of Redwood Shores Parkway, San Mateo County	JH
Cook's Petrel (several)	8/25	West of Cordell Bank	RS, et al.
Hawaiian Petrel (1)	8/25	West of Cordell Bank	RS, et al.
Swainson's Hawk (1 adult, 1 juvenile)	9/8	Redwood Shores, San Mateo County	RT
Bald Eagle (adult)	8/16	Lake George, Mono County	LJ, RJ
Peregrine Falcon (adult)	8/16	Lake George, Mono County	LJ, RJ
Peregrine Falcon (adult)	7/22	Downtown Petaluma River towers	DN, TCN
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	9/1	Glass Beach, Fort Bragg, Mendocino County	DT
Hudsonian Godwit (4)	8/30	Virgin Creek Beach, Fort Bragg	DT
Hudsonian Godwit (1)	9/1	Virgin Creek Beach	DT
Red-necked Phalarope	9/7	Russian River, one mile upstream from beach	NW, LW
Ruff (juvenile)	9/5	Doran Park mudflats	DR
Pectoral Sandpiper	9/6-8	Carmody Road pond	BDP
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	9/5	Phipps Ranch, Pescadero, San Mateo County	RT, LB
Broad-tailed Hummingbird (immature female)	8/30-31	Bolinas Art Gallery	KH, et al.
Black-chinned Hummingbird (immature male)	8/23	Bolinas Art Gallery	KH
Purple Martin (4)	9/8	Campbell Cove	BDP
Western Kingbird	9/1	Owl Canyon	DN, RS, et al.
Western Wood-Pewee	8/26-28	Sebastopol, visiting birdbath	CS
Olive-sided Flycatcher	9/1	North of Owl Canyon	RS, DN
Willow Flycatcher (2-3)	9/1	Campbell Cove	DN
Gray Catbird	9/1	Campbell Cove, in blackberries northwest of pond	DN
House Wren	9/1-9	Owl Canyon	DN
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9/1-2	Campbell Cove	DN
Northern Parula	9/1	West county trail, off Green Valley Road	LH
Yellow-rumped "Audubon's" Warbler	9/1	Campbell Cove (2+ weeks early)	DN
Virginia's Warbler	9/10	Point Reyes Lighthouse trees	RS, et al.
American Redstart (2)	9/10	Point Reyes Lighthouse trees	RS, et al.
Summer Tanager (male)	9/8	Glen Canyon Park, San Francisco	JRB
Hooded Oriole (2 pairs)	5/19-7/31	Oakmont residence	BG
Hooded Oriole (multiple, immature)	Through 8/25	Paula Lane, Petaluma, visiting feeders	DN
Brewer's Sparrow (juvenile)	9/8	Pioneer Log Cabin below Stow Lake, San Francisco	PM
Brewer's Sparrow	9/9	Coyote Point, San Mateo County	RT
Blue Grosbeak (1st year)	9/4	Bolinas, Marin County	KH

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Madrone Audubon Society
 Post Office Box 1911
 Santa Rosa, California 95402

November 2009

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MADRONE LEAVES



Madrone Audubon Society meets on the third Monday of each month, except in June, July, August, and December. Meetings start at 7:30 PM at First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. All meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: telephone answering service - 546-7492, e-mail - madroneaudubon@um.att.com.

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