



# SEQUOIA NEEDLES

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

Volume 60, No. 2  
November-January 2009-2010

## SUMMER MUSINGS, PART II

BY SUE COSSINS

### Dark-eyed Junco, Brown-headed Cowbird Encounters

In early July 2009, I fielded an email from a man in Los Gatos who said that he saw a junco feeding a sparrow near his bird feeder and asked "Is it common for adult birds of different species to feed one another?" I replied that it probably was an immature junco that was being fed and that they looked somewhat sparrow-like and streaky – without the dark hood of the adult. I added that it also could be a junco feeding an immature Brown-headed Cowbird, but that was much less likely.

Well, he wrote back, this time with three photos, and said that he was pretty sure it was a sparrow. The photos proved to me that it was indeed a cowbird. We were both amazed, given the size difference, and agreed that nature can be surprising.

Less than two weeks later another astounding thing happened at my own backyard feeder. A male and female Dark-eyed Junco pair were feeding TWO Brown-headed Cowbird fledglings!

When I mentioned this to a birding friend, she said that the same week she had also seen a junco/cowbird pair in her neighborhood. In thinking that this may be more widespread than I had known, I decided to do a little web search to learn more about it.

I couldn't find any mention of Dark-eyed Junco nest parasitism in particular, but I learned that there are more than 200 bird species whose nests have been parasitized by cowbirds. A cowbird egg is 2mm larger in both length and width than a junco egg. So it might be difficult for a junco to incubate them.

Bill Bousman (and Alvaro Jaramillo) from pen-bird gave me additional information:

As Alvaro points out, juncos may be more vulnerable to cowbird parasitism in urban areas than they are in the mixed evergreen

(Continued on page 4)



This photo of a juvenile cowbird, adult Dark-eyed Junco, and a juvenile junco looking on was taken at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino on June 19, 2009 by Ken Phenicie, Jr., a San Francisco Bay Area Bird Observatory volunteer and member of Bay Area Bird Photographers.

### Rare Birds in San Mateo County

By  
Kris Olson

July-September 2009

Fall migration starts in July for shorebirds and continues into October for land birds. San Mateo County has had six very rare birds during this season—birds seen only 10 times in the county or offshore waters.

- August 2<sup>nd</sup> – The county's first **Cook's Petrel** was seen on a boat trip (see photo on website).
- August 4<sup>th</sup> – **Lesser Nighthawk** seen in Butano State Park.
- August 24<sup>th</sup> – A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was seen briefly near Princeton.
- September 5<sup>th</sup> – A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was seen at Phipp's Country Store in Pescadero – only the third sighting in the county.
- September 19<sup>th</sup> – A **Chimney Swift** was spotted at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve.
- September 30<sup>th</sup> – A **Plumbeous Vireo** was seen (fifth county record.)

These six birds are just a small part of all the wonderful birds breeding or migrating through San Mateo County – 318 species to date this year!

Learn more about these sightings and who saw them on the SAS website: <http://sequoia-audubon.org/SMCbirds.php>.

For SAS Program  
and Field Trip  
information,  
see pages 2 and 3

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## MEETING PROGRAMS

BY SUE COSSINS & SONNY  
MENCHER

### Birding Class: Raptors in Winter

By Lisa Myers

Thursday, November 12, 7:00 PM

This presentation will be centered around the raptors that can be observed in the San Francisco Bay Area each winter. We'll review the different genera so we can distinguish a buteo from a falcon or a

Monthly Meetings  
San Mateo Garden Center  
605 Parkside Way, San Mateo  
*Parkside Way is west of Alameda de las  
Pulgas, between 26th and 28th Avenues.*

vulture from an eagle. Living in California we get to see some spectacular wintering raptors including Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks and the elusive Merlin. We'll also go into detail on how one can distinguish a Sharp-shinned Hawk from a Cooper's. In addition to field marks and behavior, we'll go over preferred habitats and food preferences.

Lisa is a San Francisco Bay Area native. With a desire to get more people into birding, she opened her own business, Let's Go Birding, and leads birding tours throughout Northern California and Costa Rica. She also teaches adult birding classes throughout the Bay Area and especially for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Lisa is a Nikon Birding Prostaff member and is Vice President of the Board of Directors for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Check out her website: [www.LetsGoBirding.com](http://www.LetsGoBirding.com)

### Accompanying Field Trip: Raptors of Wavecrest

Sunday, November 15, 9:30 AM – Noon  
Open to everyone. Bring \$5.00 fee to be paid to the instructor. Check the Field Trips section for more information.

### Digiscoping Peru's Wildlife

By Rose Braz

Thursday, December 10, 7 PM

In 2008 Rose Braz and her husband, Brent Plater, traveled to Peru with a single goal

in mind: to see as many animals as possible. With the help of some of the best wildlife guides in the country, they saw over 350 species of birds, dozens of herpetofauna, one of the rarest mammals in the country, and one that was much more abundant and nearly trampled them to death! Join Rose, the Climate Campaign Coordinator for the Center for Biological Diversity, on her photographic journey of this trip from Peru's rainforest to its cloudforest and see some of the wondrous wildlife she encountered.

### Also on this program:

#### Twain's Frog and the Beautiful Serpent – a short video

By Brent Plater

The California Red-legged Frog and the San Francisco Garter Snake have been intertwined with our history and identity for hundreds of years, but they may not survive into the next hundred. Sharp Park Golf Course, located in Pacifica but owned and operated by San Francisco, has been harming both species, and now San Francisco is considering closing the course and incorporating the land into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Join Brent Plater, director of [restoresharppark.org](http://restoresharppark.org), to learn more about the proposal to turn Sharp Park into a community-centered model for outdoor recreation and endangered species recovery, and the biology and ecology of the restoration proposal.

A potluck dinner beginning at 6 PM will precede this program. Doors open at 5:30. Please bring a plate, cup, utensils, and a side dish to share. SAS will provide the main course, hot beverages, and dessert.

### Birding Class: Understanding Behavior of Our Local Birds

By Alvaro Jaramillo

Thursday, January 14, 7:00 PM

This class will focus on bird behavior, in particular that of our San Mateo County birds. We will explore examples ranging from odd breeding behavior to song, courtship, foraging,

*(Continued on page 5)*

**Pescadero Marsh – State Park Docent Nature Walks**

**First Sunday of each month is a morning walk from 10:00 AM – Noon**  
**Third Sunday of each month is an afternoon walk from 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**November walks are on November 1 and 15**

**December walks are on December 6 and 20.**

**January walks are on January 3 and 17**

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 shore line, rocky cliffs and, of course, a world-famous marsh.

**Contact:** Rita Jennings @ 650-728-2254 or email rjenhmb@hotmail.com.

**Directions:** From Half Moon Bay, go south about 12 miles on Hwy 1. 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.

**Beginner/Family Nature Hike**

**Golden Gate Park Bird Walk: Chain of Lakes**

**Saturday, November 7, 9:00 AM – Noon**

This will be a leisurely two-mile loop walk around the three lakes that form the chain. North, South, and Middle Lakes are wetlands rich in bird diversity. This time of year we will be looking for residents and wintering birds. Some of the birds found there in past winters have included warblers, ducks, Mew Gulls and the resident egrets, herons, and Belted Kingfisher. We may even be so lucky as to find a rarity like the cryptically patterned American Bittern that spent some time at North Lake last winter.

**Directions:** Enter the park at Lincoln Way and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue (which becomes Chain of Lakes Drive as it enters the park). Continue to the parking lot on Chain of Lakes Drive between South Lake and Middle Lake. If time permits we can bird the Bercut Horse Center and/ or Buffalo Paddock.

**Leaders:** Martha Wessitsh - martha@wessitsh.com and Sue Cossins - sas-sue@earthlink.net or 650-464-5159

**Raptors of Wavecrest**

**Sunday, November 15, 9:30 AM – Noon**

**Follow-up field trip for the November 12 birding class.**

The North Wavecrest area is considered by the Sequoia Audubon Society as the most important habitat for wintering raptors in San Mateo County, supporting a greater diversity of raptors and number of individuals than any other site. We expect to see Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Harriers, White-tailed Kites, and American Kestrels. If we are lucky, we may see rarities such as Ferruginous Hawk or Rough-legged Hawk.

**Directions:** Take Hwy 1 South from Hwy 92. Turn right (west) on Wavecrest Road. Meet at the ball field at the end of Wavecrest Road at 9:30 AM.

**Instructor:** Lisa Myers - lisa@letsgobirding.com or 408-656-7524  
Open to everyone. Bring \$5.00 fee to be paid to the instructor.

**Coyote Point Bird Walk**

**Sunday, December 13, 9:00 AM – Noon**

Discover the birds at Coyote Point. This area has become a hotspot for birders on the Peninsula. The wetland fronting San Francisco Bay attracts numerous shorebirds. The trees and grassy areas also provide good birding.

**Directions:** Take 101 to Coyote Point exit, San Mateo. Make a northbound turn at Dore Ave., a southbound turn at 3rd Ave, go east over the overpass, and back onto 101 northbound to Dore Ave. Follow the signs to Coyote Point. Meet in the parking lot near the Yacht Club at 9:00 AM sharp. Bring your binoculars and scopes and dress in layers. This trip will be wheelchair accessible on paved pathways.

**Leader:** George Chrisman 650-343-3109  
**Beginner/Family Trip**

**Saturday, January 16, Follow-up field trip for the January 14 birding class.**

**Time and place TBD. Check our**

*(Continued on page 5)*

**Attention Parents, Grandparents, and Teachers!**

**Mountain Bluebird Trails Association of Montana (MBT) has made available the new revised 2009 Children's Bluebird Activity Book.**

The book is 52 pages of information on all three bluebird species and contains fascinating facts, stories, quizzes, puzzles, pictures, coloring pages, and more. It's written at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level and is available to read online, print your own copy, or order a hard copy at

[www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com](http://www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com).



Western Bluebird  
Photo by Justine Carson



(Summer Musings, continued from page 1)

forests in our hills (which cowbirds mostly avoid in Santa Clara County). Cowbirds rarely show up in our urban areas before the first week of April, and we've noticed that urban juncos sometimes get their first brood hatched by the end of March, a good strategy. Also, as Alvaro says, Dark-eyed Juncos are an abundant bird, just like California Towhees, another common host. But to some degree, both the junco and towhee may enhance the cowbird population by their abundance as hosts.

An article in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* reported some interesting observations of Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism of Prothonotary Warbler nests. The researchers removed cowbird eggs from some nests and left them in others. The nests where cowbird eggs were accepted (not removed) remained safe. But the majority of nests where they removed cowbird eggs were depredated by cowbird "mafia behavior" retaliation. This questions the former theory that many host species seem to be unable to detect the unfamiliar object, but may really have no choice but to accept the eggs.

Hoover, Jeffrey P. & Robinson, Scott K. "Retaliatory mafia behavior by a parasitic cowbird favors host acceptance of parasitic eggs." *PNAS* **104** (11): 4479-4483. 2007. doi:10.1073/pnas.0609710104



**Photo taken in Peters Canyon Regional Park, Orange County, California on May 24, 2009 by Joe Morlan.**

**Joe writes:** In addition to managing for Western Bluebirds, this park also has an active Brown-headed Cowbird control program. This species of cowbird is an abundant obligate brood parasite that has caused the endangerment of locally breeding Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*), Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) as well as Yellow Warblers, Swainson's Thrushes, Yellow-breasted Chats, etc. The use of traps has been highly successful in controlling cowbird populations in riparian areas in Southern California and all of the endangered species were present on our recent visit. The trap is large and a human can stand inside. In the middle of the roof are two narrow slits just the right size for a cowbird. Birdseed is placed in the bottom of the trap and often a female cowbird remains in the trap to entice the males. Once a cowbird slips down through the slots, it cannot get back out. Instead it flies up to one of the vaulted screen

areas on each side. Other species besides Brown-headed Cowbirds are often caught in the traps. At other sites I have occasionally seen Black-headed Grosbeaks and Spotted Towhees in the traps. The traps are checked regularly by biologists. The entrance door is on the left side. Researchers release any non-cowbirds that may have been caught and euthanize most of the cowbirds. However they may leave a few cowbirds in the trap to entice more Cowbirds.

## THE NAS REQUESTS WE CONTACT OUR US SENATORS

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Climate change poses an imminent danger to the survival of many species of birds and wildlife and to the integrity of the ecosystems on which they depend. Recently over 100 of Audubon's state offices and local chapters, including SAS, endorsed a letter to the Senate requesting that it pass climate legislation that includes crucial funding to protect wildlife and natural resources from the ever-growing threat of climate change.

While the letter is a great step in the right direction, it is essential that we continue to let our senators know that we strongly support climate legislation that provides for 5% of total revenues generated through the cap-and-trade program to go toward natural resources adaptation.

These funds would increase the coffers of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other successful conservation programs. They would provide much-needed resources to National Wildlife Refuge managers as they battle invasive species and other refuge threats that will only be exacerbated by climate change. Research, monitoring, and education need to increase as well.

This fall the Senate will take up global warming legislation. A quick call or email to your senators will help us build public demand for strong climate legislation and increased funding—5%—for wildlife.

To reach your senator, please call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121, or find your senator's contact information online at [www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm). If you prefer to send an email, you can do that at your senator's website or through Audubon's Action Center, at [www.audubonaction.org](http://www.audubonaction.org).

Tell your senators that you want:

- Strong climate legislation *this year* to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Legislation that protects birds, wildlife, natural resources, and ecosystems by dedicating 5% of revenues from cap-and-trade to wildlife adaptation.

It will help us a lot if you could drop a quick email to [audubonaction@audubon.org](mailto:audubonaction@audubon.org) and let us know you sent the letter.

(Meeting Programs, continued from page 2)

and migration. The aim will be to pique your interest in bird behavior and to help you observe it in the field.

Alvaro leads birding tours of California and South America for Field Guides and has authored two birding books: *The Birds of Chile* and *New World Blackbirds: The Icterids*. He also contributes both popular and scientific articles to various publications. He also wrote the icterid chapter in *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*.

#### **Accompanying Field Trip:**

Saturday, January 16, Time and Place TBD

Alvaro will lead a field trip in the Bay Area and we will aim to look carefully at what birds are doing.

Check our website for more information as the date nears: [www.sequoia-audubon.org](http://www.sequoia-audubon.org). It will also be announced at the class on January 14. Open to everyone. Bring \$5.00 fee to be paid to the instructor.

(Field Trips, continued from page 3)

**website as the date nears: [www.sequoia-audubon.org](http://www.sequoia-audubon.org) It will also be announced at the class.**

The field trip will be in the Bay Area and will aim to look carefully at what birds are doing. We may do some simple experiments with song to illustrate the role of vocalizations in birds – even in the middle of winter!

Open to everyone. Bring \$5.00 fee to be paid to the instructor.

**Leader:** Alvaro Jaramillo

**Beginner/Advanced Trip**

#### **Wavecrest Raptors & Short-Eared Owls**

**Saturday, January 23, 3 PM – Sunset**

The recent purchase of a portion of the Wavecrest property by POST has come as great news, because any development of this area would impact this very unique habitat for wintering raptors. Gary Deghi will talk about the long fight to save Wavecrest from developers. We expect to see Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Harriers, White-tailed Kites, and American Kestrels, and then at dusk we will make a special effort to see the Short-eared Owl (a species of special concern) that winter here every year.

**Directions:** Take Hwy 1 South from Hwy 92. Turn right (west) on Wavecrest Road. Meet at the ball field at the end of Wavecrest Road at 3:00 PM.

**Leader:** Gary Deghi 650-726-1340

**Beginner/Advanced/Family Trip**



## OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

(Sequoia Audubon does not sponsor the following activities.)

#### **Sandhill Crane Festival**

**Hutchins Street Square, Lodi, California**

**Friday – Sunday, November 6 – 8**

Free general admission includes: reception, exhibit hall, art show, workshops, and presentations.

Nature tours - costs vary.

For information: [www.cranefestival.com](http://www.cranefestival.com) or call 1-800-581-6150

#### **Friends of Bedwell Bayfront Park**

**Menlo Park, California**

**Monthly opportunities to look at birds close up and to learn more about them.**

**Join them on the second Saturday of each month, from 9:00 until 11:00 AM.**

**November 14, December 12, and January 9.**

They'll have binoculars and spotting scopes for you to get "up close and personal" with some of the birds.

Find them along the entrance road by the tidal pond, not far inside the park entrance. Depending on the tide, weather, and what's around, the leaders may stay near Flood Slough and the tidal pond to look at the birds there. Or they may lead a short walk to find birds in the grasslands and sloughs.

Drive to the traffic light at the intersection of Marsh Road and Bayfront Expressway. The park entrance is there.

For more information contact Chris MacIntosh - [cmaci@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@sbcglobal.net)

**Beginner/Family Event**

#### **Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival**

**Harlingen, Texas**

**Thursday – Sunday, November 12 – 15**

There is no better way to experience the 30 unique South Texas species than attending the famed RGV Birding Festival. Harlingen offers a warm winter getaway that is extremely affordable for this economic climate. Highlights include special field trip workshops with Jon Dunn (author of the *National Geographic Field Guide*), Rio Grande canoe trips, wine socials, a keynote by Don Kroodsma of Birdsong by the Seasons renown, and an on-the-stage TV-style quiz show that will have you laughing and learning!

Complete information and registration at [www.rgybirdfest.com](http://www.rgybirdfest.com).

#### **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium**

**Stockton, California at the Hilton Stockton**

**Thursday – Sunday, November 19 – 22**

Attend workshops with raptor expert Bill Clark, birding pros Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan, as well as other informative folks. Evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The Magic of Birding."

There will be drawing and digiscoping workshops, the always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, programs for beginning birders, and more. The many field trips frequently turn up chase-able goodies. The Birder's Market is full of artists

(Field trips, continued from page 5)

and vendors with a wonderful selection of bird- and nature-related items.

For more info, check the website at [www.cvbs.org](http://www.cvbs.org), or contact Frances Oliver at [hummer52@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hummer52@sbcglobal.net) or 209-369-2010.

### **Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Family Fun Day & Night Tide-pooling Tour**

**Moss Beach, California**

**Thursday, December 17, 4:00 – 7:00 PM**

Bundle up in warm clothes, bring your flashlights, and come explore the reef by night with staff and volunteer naturalists. All ages welcome. Register before December 12<sup>th</sup> by calling Ranger Sarah Lenz at 650-728-3584 with your name, phone, number attending, and ages of kids.

**Ohlone Audubon Society and the Alameda Creek Alliance are sponsoring a new Christmas Bird Count circle this winter in eastern Alameda County, within the Alameda Creek watershed.**

**Friday, December 18**

Volunteer birders of all levels are invited to join the Alameda Creek watershed CBC as an area leader or to help with the count.

The count circle is in the vicinity of the towns of Sunol, Pleasanton, and Livermore, and includes five East Bay Regional Parks, significant SFPUC watershed lands, and exciting East Bay birding hotspots such as Lower Mines Road, Sunol Wilderness, Calaveras Reservoir, and Springtown Preserve. Birds expected to be found within this count circle are Yellow-billed Magpie, Golden and Bald Eagle, Burrowing Owl, Peregrine and Prairie Falcon, and maybe even Lewis' Woodpecker and Rufous-crowned Sparrow.

Ohlone is seeking area count leaders who can scout birding areas before the count date, plan survey routes for the count day, and cover count areas during the count week (December 15-21) to locate, identify, and record rare bird species.

Please contact **Rich Cimino** ([rcimino@earthlink.net](mailto:rcimino@earthlink.net); 925-353-0266) or **Jeff Miller** ([alamedacreek@hotmail.com](mailto:alamedacreek@hotmail.com); 510-499-9185) if you are interested in being an area count leader.

See [http://www.alamedacreek.org/Upcoming\\_Events/CBC/CBC.htm](http://www.alamedacreek.org/Upcoming_Events/CBC/CBC.htm) for more information and a list of available count areas, a tentative list of significant bird areas within the new count circle, and a map of the new count circle.

### **17<sup>th</sup> Annual “Wings Over Willcox 2010” – Birding and Nature Festival**

**Willcox, Arizona**

**Wednesday – Sunday, January 13 – 17**

Come to Arizona’s mecca for wintering Sandhill Cranes, raptors, and sparrows.

The banquet will feature Keynote Speaker Rich Glinski on “Getting a Clue from Burrowing Owls.”

Free nature expo with live animals, birding, geology, history, and other tours. Free seminars on birding, astronomy and more.

Online registration: [www.wingsoverwillcox.com](http://www.wingsoverwillcox.com). Call 1-800-200-2272 to receive a brochure.

### **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival**

**Morro Bay, California**

**Friday – Monday, January 15 – 18**

Morro Bay on the central California coast is an important stop on the Pacific flyway. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of resident and wintering birds. At last year’s festival over 200 birds were identified.

At this year’s festival all-day and half-day tours will take participants to a wide variety of habitats, including deep water pelagic, oak woodland and riparian, wetland and estuary, and the unique grassland habitat of the Carrizo Plain. Workshops will cover a vast array of topics ranging from beginner birding classes to gull identification. Outstanding evening speakers will make presentations on Saturday and Sunday. A variety of vendors will be present with nature-related artwork, books, field equipment, attire, and local merchant wares.

For information: [www.morrobaybirdfestival.org](http://www.morrobaybirdfestival.org) or 1-805-772-4677

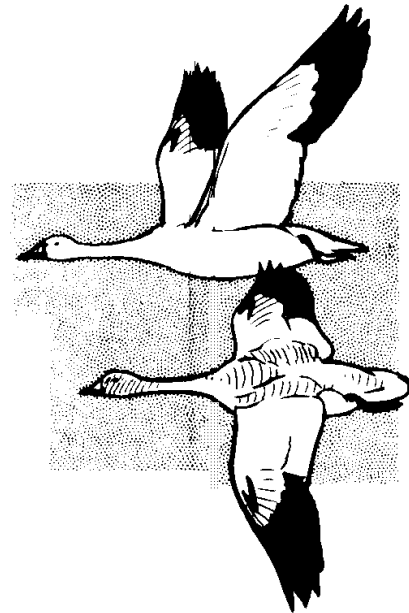
### **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Snow Goose Festival**

**Chico and Red Bluff, California**

**Thursday – Sunday, January 28 – 3**

Experience the sights and sounds of the Pacific Flyway migrating waterfowl at the Snow Goose Festival. A weekend full of fun, adventure and learning for all ages with field trips, presentations, and workshops available to all.

For information: [www.snowgoosefestival.org](http://www.snowgoosefestival.org) or 530-345-1865.







**CONSERVATION: Brisbane Baylands Update**

By Laurie Graham, South San Francisco

I think I may be the only member of Sequoia Audubon to live north of Highway 92, and, as such, I am interested in Northern Peninsula conservation issues. I have become involved with the proposals regarding the Brisbane Baylands. Brisbane is a quirky little town of about 3,000 people who live with a huge eyesore between them and the Bay. The Baylands are comprised of a tank farm, a clean fill sorting facility, abandoned rail yards, a crumbling roundhouse, acres of weeds, and a less than pristine lagoon. This large piece of property (660 acres) is owned by a real estate company, Universal Paragon Corporation, which wants some return on its investment. Proposals have gone back and forth between UPC and the people of Brisbane about what should be done to the Baylands and how. UPC wanted an office park and housing, mixed with linear parks, throughout the property. Brisbane said “How about we have nature in the south part and the office stuff in the north?” This has been going on for years, with numerous workshops and meetings. The best parts of three previous plans are now being integrated into a single plan which will be studied in an Environmental Impact Report.

A couple of points of contention are:

**Housing.** Many people in Brisbane do not want more residents for fear they might form a separate voting bloc.

**School.** A Charter High School has been proposed. There is opposition to siting a school within 1,000 feet of a former garbage landfill.

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, I boarded a bus provided by UPC and toured the Baylands, with access to areas that are closed to the public, including the landfill, the roundhouse and rail yards, and the former Schlage Lock property. As a follow-up, I attended a presentation on September 17<sup>th</sup> regarding the use of restoration ecology to improve the biodiversity of the Baylands, which was fascinating. Some residents of Brisbane don’t want to change anything; they should have been at this presentation.

What does all this have to do with birds? Well, it was the subject of birds that got me involved with Brisbane and its Baylands. Sometime in December, Carol Masterson emailed me and asked me if I wanted to have some input on interpretive signs about birds at the Lagoon. Jeff and I have birded the Lagoon since we became birders five years ago, so I was interested. I was connected to Peter Grace and, in January on a drizzly day, he and Jeff and I took a walk around the lagoon and into the landfill area. We saw a fair amount of wildlife on our walk, from the usual birds of the season on the lagoon\*, to jackrabbits and Red-tailed Hawks at Visitation Creek. We all thought that the city should have interpretive signs regarding the history of the area with “before” pictures in addition to bird signs. Next thing I knew, I was going to a City Council meeting and realizing just how huge the scale of this project is.

I will continue to attend the community forums. The next, on September 29 at 6 pm, is called “Honoring the Baylands History,” exploring how Brisbane’s cultural and ecological heritage can lead to distinctive solutions for public lands. As Sequoia Audubon’s Conservation Committee representative for the Northern Peninsula, I will keep you informed as Brisbane enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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\*CBC 2008 69/91 species, 3072 individuals.

**Sharp Park Golf Course Update**

San Francisco is considering closing the course and incorporating the land into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area – a move supported by your SAS Board of Directors. But this is just one alternative put forth in a report by the San Francisco Park and Recreation Department. For up-to-date information and to learn how you can help in this effort go to [www.restoresharpark.org](http://www.restoresharpark.org).

**SAS Has Moved**

After renting a pleasant office space for five years at the Woodside Community Museum, we’ve been notified that the town of Woodside needs the room for other activities. So on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, a hearty crew of members hauled our belongings to a temporary storage facility.

We will keep the Woodside PO Box and also the same phone number for now. If you know of a potential office site, please let us know by calling 650-529-1454.

Pictured left to right are: Nancy Arbuckle, Steven Russell, Jennifer Rycenga, Sonny Mencher and Sue Cossins. Photo taken by Michael Roche




**It's that time of year  
again!  
Enclosed is an  
envelope  
for our annual fund-  
raising appeal.**

**We sincerely  
appreciate your  
donation to keep SAS  
going.**

**Sequoia Audubon Society**

PO Box 620292  
Woodside, CA  
94062-0292

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### **2009 Annual Christmas Bird Counts**

**Crystal Springs Count — Saturday December 19, 2009**

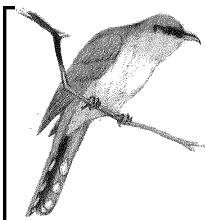
**Año Nuevo Count — Saturday January 2, 2010**

While there is a specific methodology to the CBC and you need to count birds within an existing Christmas Bird Count circle, everyone can participate! If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher. If your home is within the boundaries of a Christmas Bird Count circle, then you can stay home and report the birds that visit your feeder or join a group of birdwatchers in the field.

San Mateo County has 2 count circles - the Crystal Springs count in the northern half of the county and the Año Nuevo count along the southern coast

The Crystal Springs Count is on Saturday December 19, 2009, and the Año Nuevo Count is on Saturday January 2, 2010. For information contact: Leslie Flint [lfint@earthlink.net](mailto:lfint@earthlink.net) 650-573-6279 or Gary Deghi at [gdeghi@h-bgroup.com](mailto:gdeghi@h-bgroup.com).

And don't forget the dinner held after the counts. Have some great food and review what birds were found on the count. You can access the Christmas Count database at the Audubon web site [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/)



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

#### **THE BIRD BOX**

**RARE BIRD  
ALERT**

**415-681-7422**

#### **Report Possible West Nile Virus Cases**

Please call the **West Nile Virus Hot Line** at 877-968-2473 to report dead birds found without sign of injury or apparent cause of death. Not all dead birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting provides important information for mosquito control efforts.

#### **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.*