



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County

*Volume 74, No. 2
April - June 2023*

Interactions and Connections through Birds

Growing up in Hawaii, I was exposed to birds at an early age and immediately knew they would forever be an important part of my life. Although my dream to be an ornithologist did not materialize, I would later realize that I could still make a difference in a meaningful way.

Slowly but steady, my avian journey progressed with the support of my two guiding stars, Susie and Natasha ... my first bird walks, buying my first "Sibley's", helping rehabilitate local raptors, songbirds, and seabirds as a volunteer with the PHS Wildlife Care Center. Then one November day in 2020, while walking with Natasha through my Burlingame neighborhood, we came across an Evening Grosbeak. And, with that beautiful bird, the next chapter of my life started.

The one thing I didn't expect to tell you now is that I've met more of my neighbors over the past two and a half years than I did in the entire 20+ years living here, and I can completely attribute it to birds. The Evening Grosbeak sighting was a catalyst, prompting me to invest in a quality pair of Kowa binoculars that allowed me to see countless birds I had missed with my old binoculars. Soon after that, I purchased a Canon PowerShot SX70 HS camera, which allowed me to capture photos to study as I perfected my ID skills while also documenting my sightings. I've since documented 67 species in my neighborhood - definitely the best money I've ever spent!

With my new tools in hand, I was excited to head out and bird my neighborhood. But to my surprise, once people saw me walking around with my binoculars and camera multiple times a day, they approached me out of curiosity. Who was I, and what was I doing? What was I looking at? Why was I looking at birds? Could I help them identify the birds in their yard? Will the Turkey Vultures eat their pets? (We have an established roost in the neighborhood, so this was a common question!)

As I spoke with people, I was continually touched to learn how many people are genuinely interested in birds, appreciate their presence in our environment, and really do care about their safety and well-being.

A few short conversations soon turned into numerous long ones, developing into wonderful friendships with many of my neighbors. I am incredibly honored to be an ambassador for birds and to have the opportunity to teach people how to listen, watch, identify, and respect birds.

I am humbled to learn that, after introducing people to birds, many of them have since started on their own journey as birders: they participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, provide food & water for birds, put up nest boxes, and even change their gardening practices to provide a safer habitat for birds in their yard. People who never realized we had birds in the neighborhood "suddenly" now see and hear birds everywhere. I regularly receive bird observations, videos and photos from people as they see birds locally or while traveling for work or vacation across the states and internationally.

People are especially drawn to the number of raptors and owls our neighborhood supports, particularly our resident Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk (a huge, dark morph, rufous individual), and Great Horned Owls. When sharing facts about the hawks and owls, I always take the opportunity to educate people about the deadly risks they face when ingesting poisoned rats and try to encourage them to avoid using rodenticides. One of my happiest moments came when a neighbor I'd previously met approached me to tell me that our last conversation made enough of an impact on her that she successfully convinced her neighbors to stop using rodenticide and let the hawks and owls do the pest control for free. Many tears of happiness were shed that day!

I recently started volunteering with Sequoia Audubon. I am grateful for the opportunity to help wherever or whenever I can, whether attending Planning Commission or City Council meetings or discussing strategies to mitigate conservation issues in San Mateo County. More recently, I've successfully connected with my city's Parks department to share how an extraordinary number of migrant birds descend upon our city's urban forest to feed during autumn and winter and how the timing of the city's pruning schedule can impact the development of the seed clusters and berries on the trees, as well as impact nesting or roosting birds.

Birds build bridges. And through these bridges, we make progress - small steps, small seeds planted, personal connections carefully forged. They pay off in dividends when you least expect it!

So, as we go out each day, remember that every little interaction matters, and every effort counts! If you are ready to make a difference, no matter how much time you have, please consider volunteering with Sequoia Audubon; all are welcome! *Joyce Courtney, Conservation Committee Member*

Monthly Meetings

2nd Thursdays at 7:00 pm
San Mateo Garden Center
605 Parkside Way, San Mateo
In-person and/or Zoom

April 13 - Hybrid

New Zealand & New Caledonia
Robert Siegel

May 11 - Zoom

Chinstrap Penguins of Elephant Island
Noah Strycker

June 9 - Hybrid

Share your Spark Bird Story
Jennifer Rycenga

MEETING PROGRAMS

April 13 -Hybrid

New Zealand and New Caledonia Adventures – Robert Siegel, MD PhD

In this talk Robert Siegel will provide an update on his quest to photograph every order of birds. He will focus on the birds of New Caledonia and the North Island of New Zealand in his pursuit of Eurypygiformes and Apterygiformes.

Robert Siegel, MD, PhD is a professor at Stanford University in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. His courses focus on human viral infections, nature photography, and biogeography. He has traveled to seven continents and has taught field seminars in the Pantanal, the Galapagos, Madagascar, Tanzania, Namibia, England, China, Tasmania, and Joshua Tree, as well as full-length courses in Oxford, Santiago, and Cape Town. Dr. Siegel has served in an advisory capacity for a variety of international NGOs, and organizations. He has won numerous teaching awards.



Bob with Kagu, Noumea Botanical Garden

May 11 – Zoom

The Chinstrap Penguins of Elephant Island - Noah Strycker

Antarctica's windswept Elephant Island may be best known as the bleak refuge of British explorer Ernest Shackleton and his crew after they lost their ship *Endurance* in 1916. Today, the island is a stronghold for thousands of nesting Chinstrap Penguins. To find out how these penguins are faring, Noah Strycker traveled to the island in 2021 with a team of Stony Brook University researchers on the Greenpeace ship *Esperanza*. Their mission was to count the penguins breeding there—a feat that had been done only once before, 50 years earlier by a British Joint Services expedition. From *Endurance* to *Esperanza*, Strycker recounts the adventures of life on the Southern Ocean—and follows the changing fortunes of the Chinstrap Penguins of Elephant Island. This presentation will give you an uncommon view of the most common penguin in the Antarctic.

Noah Strycker is Associate Editor of *Birding* magazine, the author of six well-regarded books about birds, a penguin scientist, and a regular contributor of photography and articles to all major bird magazines. In 2021, he earned a master's degree with honors from New York's Stony Brook University, focusing his research on Chinstrap Penguins. In 2015, Strycker set a world Big Year record, and his book, *Birding Without Borders*, relates the experience. He's written numerous books. Strycker has studied birds on six continents with field seasons in Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Australia, Antarctica, the Galapagos Islands, and the Farallon Islands. He also works as a naturalist guide on expeditions to Antarctica and Norway's Svalbard archipelago, literally spreading the inspiration of birds from pole to pole.



Noah Strycker in Antarctic, photo Christian Aslund

June 8 – Hybrid

Share Your Spark Bird Story – Jennifer Rycenga

The “spark bird” is that particular bird and moment that lured you into the lifestyle we call birding! Tonight we will share our stories of spark birds. Get your story ready, no more than 3-5 minutes long, and paint the picture in words of this special moment and special bird! We will have some special guest appearances via video and ZOOM, but this meeting will also be held live at the Garden Center, with refreshments and good times as we bid farewell to our outgoing President and Program Chair.



White-tailed Kite, Jennifer's Spark Bird



Sequoia Field Trips



*Please note that rain or Air Quality Index over 150 cancels, unless otherwise stated.
Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and dress in layers as weather can change.*

Monday, April 3, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30-12:00) This is a 2-2.5 mile moderate walk in mixed oak, redwood, madrone woodlands, riparian corridor, and historic horse pasture on maintained nearly level trails. There are restrooms available. There is a possibility of seeing up to 50 bird species, 33 of which are year-round residents. Directions: 86 Canada Rd, Woodside. From Highway 280, exit on Edgewood Rd and head west. At the T intersection, turn right onto Canada Rd. In ½ mile, turn left into the property, and proceed to park on the left side of the lot under the oaks where we'll meet. When you register, the leader will provide instructions for buying the Filoli ticket online. Email **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux, kimberliemoutoux@gmail.com. Rain does not cancel.

Wednesday, April 5, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Woodside (8:00 -11:00) Walk through the habitats of Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, including riparian, chaparral, lake, and oak woodland areas. It encompasses remarkable geologic, topographic, and biotic diversity within its 1,193 acres and provides a natural laboratory for researchers worldwide, educational experiences for students and docent-led visitors. We will cover ~ 4 miles on packed earth trails and roads, with mild to moderate elevation gain. There is a restroom. This docent-led field trip is limited to 15 participants ages 14+. Participants must stay with the docent-led group for the entire trip. Stanford University access requirements include signing Stanford's waiver of liability and proof of COVID-19 vaccination. Directions will be emailed to participants with approval of the reservation request. **Leaders:** Emily Kim and Sonny Mencher. For reservations email fieldtrips@sequoia-audubon.org.

Saturday, April 8, Pescadero State Nature Preserve for Beginners, Pescadero (8:30-12:00) On this walk on dirt trails and some sand, we'll look for water birds, raptors, and land birds. The Preserve is an important breeding area for a wide variety of birds. Restrooms are available. Directions. Take SR 1 south from Half Moon Bay towards Pescadero. Cross the Pescadero Creek Bridge and turn right (west) into the first parking lot just south of the bridge (also known as the Cabrillo Highway Middle Parking), approximately 14211 Cabrillo Highway. If you get to Pescadero Rd, you have gone too far south. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons ltigger1nl@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3IK4w28>

Tuesday, April 11, Arastradero Preserve, Palo Alto (8:00-12:00) We should see a nice mix of birds in this mixed habitat on this easy to moderate hike of 2-3 miles. Mid-April is a spectacular time to bird this park, with a nice overlap of wintering and breeding birds and the many resident species present. Meet in the parking lot. Restrooms are available. Directions: From Highway 280, take exit 20 for Page Mill Rd toward Palo Alto/Arastradero Rd. Keep left at the fork, follow signs for Arastradero Rd/Los Altos Hills. Turn left at Page Mill Rd and right at Arastradero Rd. The preserve parking lot is located at 1530 Arastradero Rd. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy, dpom@comcast.net. Register: <https://bit.ly/3Zesici>

Saturday, April 15, Año Nuevo State Park, Pescadero (8:30 - 12:00) Join us for an easy-moderate bird walk on the coast. We will search for birds in the grassland and trees around the parking lot, then check the freshwater pond and chaparral areas. Gulls, Cormorants, and sometimes Pigeon Guillemots are visible from shore this time of year. We will also look at the offshore island for birds and elephant seals. A spotting scope is helpful on this trip if you have one. Restrooms are available. Directions: Take SR1 south from Half Moon Bay for approx. 28 miles, New Year's Creek Rd. Meet in the main parking lot. The day-use parking permit fee is \$10. (The permit allows you to visit any other state park for the remainder of the day). Frequent state park visitors may consider purchasing a pass at www.parks.ca.gov. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons: ltigger1nl@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3kmZrDJ>

Sunday, April 16, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (7:45 -12:00) This is a leisurely 3-4 hour walk of ~3 miles in this bird-rich gem on a level, gravel, former ranch road leading to the historic barn. Migrating breeding birds will be arriving. There are pit toilets along the trail. Directions: Take SR1 south from Half Moon Bay and then turn east on Higgins Canyon Rd. Due to limited parking, we will carpool up to the park. Meet at the lower parking lot for the Johnston House at 110 Higgins Canyon Rd (big white house on the hill). **Leader:** Ginny Marshall. ginybirder@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3KvJ1n8>

Wednesday, April 19, Pinnacles National Park, San Benito County (8:00-3:00) Exciting opportunity to see California condors, Canyon wren, Lawrence's goldfinch, and migrating warblers. Meet at the Pinnacles Campground and Visitor Center at 8:00 AM. The entrance fee is \$30 per car unless you have a National Parks Pass. Bring a flashlight for walking through the caves. Restrooms are available. Directions, including carpooling options, will be provided for confirmed reservations. Maximum of 12 participants. To register, email **Leader:** Leslie Flint, lflint@earthlink.net.

Sunday, April 23, Bird Walk at Coastal Wildflower Day, Half Moon Bay State Beach (Francis Beach) (8:00-10:00) We will look for resident birds and visiting spring breeding birds. We may also go out on the beach to look at shorebirds, gulls, and birds on or flying over the ocean. Beginners welcome, wear shoes you don't mind getting sandy. After the walk, celebrate Coastal Wildflower Day visiting the wildflower displays or join a wildflower walk (info: <https://www.coastsidestateparks.org/cwd>). Directions: From SR1 in Half Moon Bay, take Kelly Ave west to the end of the road and meet at the Half Moon Bay State

Beach Visitor Center, 95 Kelly Ave. The day-use parking permit fee is \$10.00. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons: 1tigger1nl@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3kQDjBV>

Monday, May 1, Edgewood Park for Beginning Birders, Redwood City (8:00-11:00) We take the Clarkia Trail through grassland, scrub, and oak habitat while looking for resident birds and visiting spring breeding birds as well as looking for any remaining wildflowers. We will cover about 3 miles in 3 hours on a trail with some mild slopes. Bring water and binoculars, and a hat. Directions: Meet at the Edgewood Park Clarkia Trail trailhead. From the intersection of I-280 and Edgewood Rd, take Edgewood Rd west to its "T" intersection with Canada Rd. Turn left onto Canada Rd, go under the I-280 overpass, and then continue about 0.3 miles south to the Clarkia Trailhead and park on the right side of Canada Road. **Leader:** Chris Wilson, chris@cwcons.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3IK7DXS>

Wednesday, May 3, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30-12:00) See April 3 trip details. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux

Wednesday, May 3, Williams Sisters Ranch, (WSR) Audubon Property, Skyline Blvd. (8:00-12:00) WSR is an approximately 1,200-acre property off CA-35 Skyline Blvd. WSR includes redwood forest, grassland, chaparral, mixed hardwood/pine forest, riparian, and a pond. We will look for resident birds and spring-breeding birds. WSR is available to visit by appointment only. Group size; 8 people and 2 leaders. Email fieldtrips@sequoia-audubon.org to request space. Directions will be provided to confirmed reservations. **Leader:** Pati Rouzer

Saturday, May 6, Pacific Commons Linear Park, Fremont (8:30-11:30) Join us for an approximately 2-mile bird walk on level ground bordering wetlands with some grassland. We will look for resident and spring breeding birds of wetlands and grasslands, and raptors. No restrooms or water on-site. Directions: From I-880 in Fremont take the Auto Mall Parkway Exit heading west. Go west approximately 1.5 miles on Auto Mall Parkway to a cul-de-sac (7020 Auto Mall Parkway) and park in the dirt parking lot just past the cul-de-sac and before the railroad tracks. **Leader:** Don Pendleton. thyinspector@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3yyqOxX>

Wednesday, May 10, Año Nuevo State Park, Pescadero (8:30 - 12:00) See April 15 trip for details. We will take advantage of the low tide and look for Bank Swallows nesting in the coastal cliffs. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons: 1tigger1nl@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3Z3kc66>

Friday, May 12, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, California Coastal National Monument (CCNM), Davenport (8:30-approx. 12-1) We will look for resident birds such as California Thrashers and visiting spring breeding birds while enjoying excellent ocean views during a moderately strenuous hike with moderate grades in our first field trip to this area. Located near Davenport in Santa Cruz County, the Cotoni-Coast Dairies property extends from the steep slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains to the marine coastal terraces overlooking the Pacific Ocean. We will visit grassland, chaparral, riparian, and young redwood habitats. The Bureau of Land Management is preparing this area for public access. Currently, it can only be visited by appointment with a BLM guide. There are several restrooms along SR1, but none on-site. There are periodic bushes available. This area is grazed, and we will likely be walking past cows and their calves, which are usually docile. Participants must stay with the group for the entire walk and can't leave early. Email fieldtrips@sequoia-audubon.org. Directions will be provided to confirmed reservations. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons 1tigger1nl@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 18, Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside (9:30-12:00) See April 3 trip details. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux

Saturday, May 20, Lower La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, La Honda (8:00-12:00) Easy, mostly level, 2-3 mile bird walk in scrub, grassland, and forest. We'll look for resident grassland species, including Wild Turkey, California Quail, raptors, and spring breeding birds. A primitive restroom is available, water is not. Directions: Take SR 84 to La Honda, turn north on Sears Ranch Rd (opposite Apple Jacks bar), and follow it to the Lower La Honda Creek Preserve parking lot, 900 Sears Ranch Rd. **Leader:** Troy Pittock, TroyPittock@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3Sn7Y5W>

Saturday, May 20, Francis Beach for Beginners, Half Moon Bay State Beach (8:30-12:00) We'll look for resident birds and visiting spring breeding birds. Depending on participant interests and abilities, we may go out on the beach to look at shorebirds, gulls, and birds on or flying over the ocean. Bring binoculars or email the trip leader if you'd like to request loaner binoculars for the day. Restrooms available. Directions: From SR1 in Half Moon Bay, take Kelly Ave west to the end of the road and meet at the Half Moon Bay State Beach Visitor Center, 95 Kelly Ave. The day-use parking permit fee is \$10.00. The permit can be used to visit any other local state park for the day. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons: 1tigger1nl@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3Ht0xh>

Sunday, May 21, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (7:45 -12:00) See April 16 trip details. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall. Register: <https://bit.ly/3XRIKHi>

Sunday, May 21, Sunrise Drive, Woodside (8:30-11:00) In this area of willows, oak, and buckeye trees along a small creek and in second-growth redwoods we will likely see year-round resident birds and spring-breeding birds. Our ~2.5 mile walk will take us by tributaries of Alambique Creek to a historic logging bridge. Our route has paved or unpaved roads of slight to moderate grade. The area has typical woodland hazards such as ticks, poison oak, and yellow jackets. There is no water or restroom at the parking area, although there is a pit toilet about 1/3 of the way along the walk. Directions: Take Hwy 84 (La Honda Rd) headed west from I-280 to the intersection with Skywood Way. Turn right on Skywood Way and follow it to Sunrise Dr. Turn right onto Sunrise Dr and park alongside the right shoulder. **Leader** : Christin New, new.a.christin@gmail.com. Register: <https://bit.ly/3ImCDfp>

Sunday, June 4, Bay Area Ridge Trail, Skyline Blvd (CA-35) (8:00-12:00) We hope to see summer breeding warblers and thrushes while hiking in El Corte de Madera Preserve and on the Bay Area Ridge Trail (RT). This will be the first of a series of co-sponsored walks with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (RTC) and Sequoia, where participants can search for local birds and learn about the efforts of the RTC to plan, promote and sustain a connected hiking, cycling, and equestrian trail on ridgelines around San Francisco Bay. Restrooms are available. Directions: Meet at El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve parking area (16040 Skyline Blvd, Redwood City, GPS 37.39972, -122.295.06) on the west side of CA-35, 10 miles south of the intersection of CA-92/CA-35. **Leaders**: Jennifer Rycenga, gyrrifalcon@earthlink.net and Natalia Cortes, nataliacortes@ridgetrail.org. Register: <https://bit.ly/3kLG7QG>

Saturday, June 10, Francis Beach for Beginners, Half Moon Bay State Beach (8:30-12:00) See May 20 trip details. **Leader**: Nelle Lyons. Register <https://bit.ly/3Siz6mN>:

Sunday, June 18, Burleigh Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (7:45 -12:00) See April 16 trip details. **Leader**: Ginny Marshall. Register: <https://bit.ly/3ZumPhF>

Sunday, June 25, Sunrise Drive, Woodside (8:30-11:00) See May 21 trip details. **Leader**: Christin New. Register: <https://bit.ly/3KuRfTM>

Conservation Committee Update

2023 is starting out with plenty to keep us occupied. There are many ongoing developments, but also some good news.

Redwood City is pushing ahead with its plan for a ferry terminal at the harbor – at the end of Seaport Blvd. This will affect tidal wetlands along Bair Island and Greco Island, with the wake of the boats potentially eroding land edges. It will also bring more large motorized boats to Redwood Creek and West Point Slough, affecting wildlife there.

Foster City city council approved a contract with a firm to do an overall Canada Goose management plan, including non-lethal options such as habitat alterations and egg addling. The plan will be reviewed before making any decisions on which alternatives to use (or likely use all of them). Residents of Foster City do let your council and city staff know that you want them to avoid killing geese.

In early January, a wintering Burrowing Owl was seen at one of the West Bay Sanitation District's ponds on their land just past the northern point of Bedwell Bayfront Park, Menlo Park. We alerted them to this Species of Special Concern and attended the Board meeting to inform them about the bird. They were responsive and the General Manager told us he'd had his staff watch the video of POST's talk on Burrowing Owls.

Menlo Park has included bird-safe glass and lighting requirements in its Housing Element Update: Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report.

Burlingame now includes in its Municipal Code requirements for exterior lighting that will be dark sky compliant.

If you want to help birds and wildlife and join our committee, we'd love to have your help. *Chris MacIntosh, Conservation Committee, conservation@sequoia-audubon.org*

Birding Arrowhead Marsh

Sequoia Audubon's February field trip to Arrowhead Marsh was a reminder of what a treasure this 50-acre park is to Bay Area birds and birders. Arrowhead Marsh is part of Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, amid the bustling urban environment of Oakland and the nearby Oakland Airport. This tidal and seasonal wetland was restored in the 1990s and has since provided critical habitat for wintering, migrating, and resident species of birds, including the endangered Ridgway's Rail. On a high tide, Ridgway's rails, usually so secretive, often come into view and their distinctive chattering call can be heard throughout the marsh. This park is one of the best places in the Bay Area to see Ridgway's Rail, and when you hear them call, you can understand why they were called California Clapper Rails before they were split in 2014 from the Clapper Rail, which occurs on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

Besides three species of rails (Ridgway's, Virginia, and Sora), Arrowhead Marsh has a plethora of waterfowl species. On our February walk, we saw 18 species of ducks and geese, but I have personally seen 23 species of waterfowl on only seven visits. Another 11 species of waterfowl have been recorded here, for a total of 34 species of ducks, geese, and swans recorded here. Our waterfowl highlights included over 20 Blue-winged Teal, two flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese, a Cackling Goose, and a single Brant which has been present year-round since 2019. The geese most often congregate in the grassy meadow near the most northern parking area. The resident flock of Canada Geese attracts other goose species, such as different subspecies of Cackling Geese, Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Brant.

Arrowhead Marsh also attracts some rare passerines. I have seen a couple of lifers here; just about anything can occur in migration. A Red-throated Pipit was here for several weeks in 2013, and Nelson's Sparrow has been seen almost annually.

Besides the wetlands restoration to restore tidal flow, completed in 1998, there has been an ongoing attempt to create an upland habitat for Burrowing Owls, last reported here in 2019, but hopefully returning in the future.

I recommend visiting Arrowhead Marsh at any time of year, but particularly during the winter when large flocks of shorebirds come to feed on the mudflats and make San Francisco Bay their winter home. The marsh and its mudflats jut out into San Leandro Bay and are sheltered from the open waters and wave action of San Francisco Bay. There is a huge difference in the species composition between high tide and low tide, so make sure you visit at both times. An easy 2-mile loop trail takes you past a boardwalk out into the marsh, along San Leandro creek, a series of seasonal ponds at the southern end of the New Marsh, and along Airport Channel. There are bathrooms and an observation tower by the northernmost parking lot, the starting point for the loop. Be sure to check the park website for hours. *Donna Pomeroy, author and photographer*



Ridgway's Rail



Northern Harrier



Blue-winged Teal



Brant

Happy Spring Migration, Helpful eBird Tips

Everyone who has used eBird to report a **rare bird, unusually high species counts, or birds unusual for the time of year or location** is familiar with the automated prompt requesting more documentation. Just a few reminders about documenting your rare/unusual sightings on eBird:

Written Documentation: When prompted to provide documentation for an unusual or rare bird, the #1 comment to add is a **description of the bird**. It should contain field marks and defining physical or audible characteristics that help you separate it from similar species. **This is the most crucial element you can add to your checklist record.** The bird's behavior, what it was doing, and where it was seen can add depth to the record, but the most important component is a description of what the **bird looked/sounded like**. Remember, the rarer the bird, the more important thorough documentation becomes. **Early Arrivals:** It's understood that not everyone will know if a bird is extremely early, sort of early, or just a little bit early. Some migrants return earlier than others; some return a lot later than others. **So it's best to treat the prompt for more details for an early bird** in a similar way that you would treat **rare birds. Describe what the bird looked or sounded like.** **Lingering birds/Late departures:** Some species only spend the fall and winter here and not year-round. The eBird filters are set to catch these late/lingering birds that will soon be heading to their breeding grounds and will also prompt for descriptive details. When writing details, consider **how helpful your choice of words will be** to other eBirders, researchers, scientists, and people doing important conservation work now and far into the future.

Photos and Audio: eBird has made uploading photos and audio recordings relatively easy. Media are a great way to document your sightings. We are fortunate in San Mateo County to have many good photographers. However, there are times that reviewers see photos or hear audio that is less than optimal quality, and they alone do not support the ID. **If your uploaded media are less than optimal, please supplement your record by adding descriptions of the bird(s) as noted above.**

Merlin ID: Merlin can give accurate ID suggestions; however, it can also be tragically wrong for audio and photo ID suggestions. Always set your location for where you are birding. If Merlin is suggesting an audio ID, it is always best to try and see the bird that is vocalizing to help confirm its identity. If you report a rare bird and are prompted to add details, "ID'd by Merlin" is not considered sufficient details alone. Please upload your audio or photos to your checklist to support your observation.

Details and Photos/Audio to be added: When compiling checklists in the field using a smart device, it can be challenging to type detailed notes. **For birds flagged for more details, please use comments like "Details to be added" or "Photos/Audio to be added" only as a temporary placeholder in your checklist comments.** Avoid making them permanent. Try to write your descriptions of the birds and field marks/notes, etc., as soon as possible while the details are still fresh. Upload your supporting photos and audio as soon as it is convenient, especially if it is a rarity you are documenting.

Species High Counts for eBird records: The mobile app now prompts species "High Counts" with a request to add details. A brief comment describing how the number was determined, i.e., "counted by 10's" or "direct count," is what eBird is looking for. **In addition, in some cases, it may be necessary to confirm how the species was identified by providing a brief description and how it was separated from similar species.**

A Big Thank You to Everyone for your media contributions, documentation, and note-taking efforts to support rare bird sightings, unusually high counts of a species, or birds that are unusual for the time of year or location in San Mateo County. You make San Mateo County eBird a valuable database for all. *Malia DeFelice, eBird-San Mateo County Reviewer*

OFFICERS

Acting President: Jennifer Rycenga
Vice President: Open
Secretary: Open
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At Large: Doug Brown, Beverly Cronin, Marshall Dinowitz, John Epperson, Nelle Lyons, Chris MacIntosh, Doug Pomeroy

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MISSION STATEMENT

Sequoia Audubon Society protects native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy and enjoyment.

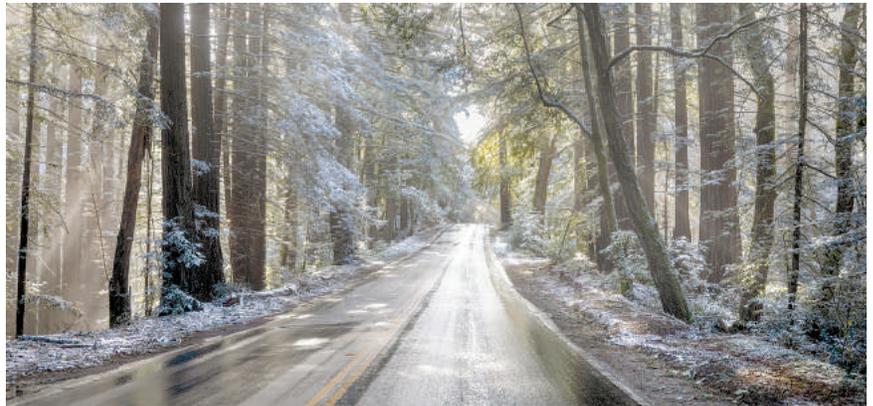
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Seeking Newsletter Contributions – Articles and Photography!

Do you enjoy reading articles by “just regular birders”? How about writing a short article for this newsletter? Sequoia’s newsletter is *for* you, so why not *by* you? You don’t have to be an expert birder. If you can write about how you got into birding/ what enthralles you about it/a good day out/rarities conservation, and other areas of interest, please email office@sequoia-audubon.org. High quality resolution photos, from San Mateo County, are especially appreciated.



Skyline Snow, photo credit Marie Susa

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P.O. Box 620292, Woodside, CA 94062-0292

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or

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