



# *The Western Grebe*

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

[www.redbudaudubon.org](http://www.redbudaudubon.org)

Volume 43—Issue No. 3—November 2017

*Please note change of location for this program...*

## *Bee-Friendly Gardens topic of November program*

The month's Redbud Audubon Society program, at the Kelseyville Methodist/Unitarian social hall will be presented by Ukiah's Kate Frey, a noted garden designer. She will focus on planting bee-friendly gardens to help support pollinators of all varieties, ensure your vegetables are pollinated,

### **NOVEMBER MEETING**

**Thursday, Nov. 16**

- \* **Topic:** Bee-Friendly Gardens
- \* **Speaker:** Kate Frey
- \* **Refreshments:** 7 pm  
**Announcements:** 7:15 pm  
**Program:** 7:30 pm
- \* **Location:** Kelseyville Methodist/Unitarian Social Hall, Corner of Main and First Streets

and help perpetuate plants that depend on pollination—over 80% of the world's plants. Though many of us think of honeybees when we think of pollinators, there are 4000 species of native bees in the United States. Butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, beetles and many beneficial insects also act as pollinators, and bee-friendly gardens support them as well.

Bee-friendly gardens are necessarily

*(Continued on page 7)*



*Join Redbud Audubon on November 16 for an interesting talk on bee-friendly gardens.*



*Bee-friendly gardens are enjoyable for everyone.*

# President's Message

by President Roberta Lyons



The fires of the last three years have brought devastating loss to our Lake County communities and now, Sonoma, Mendocino and Napa counties as well. We have lost historical buildings and homes and many

of our friends have lost their residences and treasured memories reflected in their keepsakes, photographs, and objects. Pets and livestock have been injured or killed and our beautiful landscapes have been decimated, including the wildlife that made those landscapes their home.

Worst of all, of course, has been the loss of life; in Lake County two years ago and in the most recent fires in Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa Counties. Horrific stories have emerged about the fate of elders and families during the Tubbs and Redwood Complex blazes.

As a community we are traumatized by these events which seem to have become the “new normal.” Our thoughts go out to any of our community members who have been impacted by the North Bay, Mendocino and Sulphur fires. It is heartening to see people coming together and to hear stories of heroism, generosity and sharing. We welcome the upcoming rainy season and hope that all who have been affected may recover and heal.

## Welcome new members

Welcome new and returning members: Kimberly Jacobs, Lakeport; Renee Natcher, Lakeport; Dolores Groves, Middletown; James Chapman, Nice; Johnny Pott, Hidden Valley Lake; Brenda Lawrence, Kelseyville; Nancy Smith, Kelseyville; Jean Johnsen, Lakeport; Anne Frappier, Middletown; and all from Upper Lake: Michele Quere, Jane Ahrens, Beverly Thomas, and Michael Dolan.

## Redbud Audubon to participate in annual Christmas Bird Count on December 16

This year, the annual Clear Lake Christmas Bird Count, held by the Redbud Audubon Society, will be on Saturday, December 16. The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a traditional project of Audubon societies around the country and takes place between December 14 and January 5.

If you are interested in participating in the bird count, call (707) 263-8030, leave a message with your phone number, and someone will return your call. Prior to the bird count, the annual Bird Identification program will be held at the regular Redbud Audubon Society meeting, which will be held early this year on December 14, the second Thursday of the month instead of the third.

## Audubon President delivers message of support to California residents

*Our Audubon Network Manager for the coastal area, Ariana Rickard, shared this message from National Audubon's president, David Yarnold.*

Dear Audubon California staff, board members, and chapter leaders,

As a native Californian, my heart is with you during this unprecedented time of disaster for our state. The loss of life and destruction of property and habitat is wrenching.

Audubon is a family, and we stand with you during this time. I know that our staff team in California has stepped up to offer assistance in every way they can. We will do whatever we can to help support you, and please know that the entire Audubon network is thinking of you and will be there with you in the days and weeks ahead.

The California leadership team will stay in touch with you and coordinate what help they can. Please let them and me know what else you need.

David



*Black bears were pictured playing in Clear Lake during the Grebe tally last summer.*

## ***2017 Grebes' breeding season on Clear Lake shows high tally of nests and chicks***

*By Floyd E. Hayes*

For the 8th consecutive summer, several research assistants and I studied the breeding biology of Western Grebes and Clark's Grebes at Clear Lake during 2017. Because of heavy rainfall during the previous winter, water levels were higher than during any previous year of our study. Our research is revealing that the grebes benefit in several ways from higher water levels. When water levels are very low, the grebes cannot attach their floating nests to emergent vegetation along the shore, especially in sheltered channels adjacent to the lake. Instead, they are forced to attach their nests to emergent vegetation out in the open water of the lake, where they are vulnerable to being blown ashore by strong winds or disturbance from boating activities.

This year we tallied 5,075 nests, which was our second highest tally since our study began in 2010. About 70% of the nests were attended by Western Grebes and 30% by Clark's Grebes. For some inexplicable reason, the grebes began breeding earlier this year than during any previous year, by mid-April. And the breeding season was exceptionally prolonged, with grebes nesting continuously for more than 4 months at Anderson Marsh.

As a consequence of the high water levels, 87% of the nests were located in sheltered channels at Rodman Slough at the north end of the lake and at Anderson Marsh at the south end of the lake, with only 13% of the nests in Clear Lake. Furthermore, 99.7% of the nests were placed in emergent vegetation near the shore, with only 0.3% of the nests attached to submergent vegetation farther from shore. Given the pro-

longed breeding season and the high proportion of nests in sheltered areas, the grebes produced more chicks this year than during any previous year. During a round-the-lake trip by motorboat in mid-

*(Continued on page 7)*

## **REDBUD AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



*President:* Roberta Lyons

*Vice President:* Tina Wasson

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### **STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Bird Observations - Jerry White
- Christmas Bird Count – Brad and Kathy Barnwell
- Conservation - Roberta Lyons & Evelyn Wachtel
- Education - Joyce Anderson and Lisa Prather
- Field Trips - Pat Harmon
- Hospitality - Pat Harmon
- Membership Manager - Susanne Scholz
- Newsletter Editor - Roberta Lyons
- Newsletter Production - Jim Scholz
- Publicity - Roberta Lyons
- Grebe Conservation—Marilyn Waits

**To contact a board member:**

**Phone 707/ 263-8030**

**Email: [redbud.audubon@gmail.com](mailto:redbud.audubon@gmail.com)**



*Compared to the Snowy Egret, the Great Egret, above, is a much larger bird and sports a yellow-orange bill instead of black. Both have black legs, but the Great Egret has black feet and the Snowy Egret has yellow feet.*



*The Snowy Egret, shown above, is smaller, and has a black bill and black legs with yellow feet.*

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

## ***Great Egret vs. Snowy Egret***

*Photos and Story by  
Brad Barnwell*

Many new birders have a hard time identifying a white egret as either a Snowy Egret or a Great Egret. There are two fail-safe characteristics that separate these two birds. They are size and bill color.

The Great Egret is about 37" to 41" long/tall with a wingspan of 51" to 55" and weighs about 2 lbs. The Great Egret has a yellow almost orange bill and black legs.

The Snowy Egret is about 22" to 26" long/tall with a wingspan of 38" to 45" and weighs about 13 oz. The adult Snowy Egret has a black bill, black legs and yellow feet. The juvenile may have yellow/green legs or olive color running down the backside of its legs with black on the foreleg. In addition to the photos of each species I have included a photo of two Snowy Egrets hanging out with the much larger Great Egret at the mouth of Kelsey Creek. The size difference is substantial.



*The larger birds in the center and right side of the photo are Great Egrets, easily spotted by their larger size and bright yellow beaks. There are two snowy egrets, the first two smaller birds with black beaks appearing on the left side of the photo.*



*The bird on the left is a Great Egret with the yellow bill and black feet. Flying below, a Snowy Egret with black bill and black legs with yellow feet.*





Jeannette Knight, Brad Barnwell and Darlene Hecomovich enjoyed seeing a Northern Harrier and 36 other species at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. Redbud Audubon holds its field trips on the third Saturday of the month, usually the Saturday after the Thursday night program meeting.

## Field trip at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park

A small group of birders gathered for the Redbud Audubon field trip at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park for our monthly field trip. This walk was led by Brad and Kathy Barnwell and 37 species were seen. One of the highlights of the day was Brad “calling in,” a Wren-tit, which came so close that everyone was able to get a great look.

It was a wonderful day at the Park. Following this article is a list of birds that were seen; thanks to Kathy Barnwell for keeping track of them.

- Canada Goose 12
- Mallard 10
- Pied-billed Grebe 1
- Great Blue Heron 2
- Great Egret 1
- Green Heron 1
- Turkey Vulture 6
- White-tailed Kite 2
- Northern Harrier 1    Actually not rare on the open grasslands of Anderson Marsh SP. Listed as uncommon for Fall. Bird appeared to be a female with brown above and brown and cream streaking on the chest with the white patch on the rump. Tail had distinct white and dark banding.
- Red-shouldered Hawk 1
- Belted Kingfisher 2
- Acorn Woodpecker 15
- Nuttall's Woodpecker 1
- Downy Woodpecker 1
- Northern Flicker 3
- Black Phoebe 6
- California Scrub-Jay 6
- Common Raven 9
- Oak Titmouse 2
- Bushtit 11



Enjoying a lovely morning at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park were Darlene Hecomovich, Harry Lyons and Brad Barnwell.

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| White-breasted Nuthatch 3 | Savannah Sparrow 6     |
| Wren-tit 2                | Song Sparrow 1         |
| Western Bluebird 1        | California Towhee 1    |
| Northern Mockingbird 8    | Western Meadowlark 6   |
| European Starling 10      | Red-winged Blackbird 2 |
| Cedar Waxwing 6           | Lesser Goldfinch 7     |
| Phainopepla 1 Female      |                        |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler 1   |                        |
| Dark-eyed Junco 2         |                        |
| White-crowned Sparrow 8   |                        |
| Golden-crowned Sparrow 15 |                        |

## Field Trip Calendar 2017-2018

Following is the field trip calendar for the Redbud Audubon Society for 2017-2018. Prior to each field trip a description will appear in our newsletter, the *Western Grebe* and on our website with more information about the upcoming outing. You can also call Pat Harmon at (707) 263-4977 for information. Outings start at 9 a.m. unless otherwise noted.

### November 18

Indian Meadows Camp  
13095 Bottle Rock Road

### December 16

Christmas Bird Count

### January 20

Colusa and  
Sacramento National  
Wildlife Refuges

### February 17

Clear Lake State Park,  
Soda Bay Road,  
Kelseyville

### March 17

McKerricker State Park  
Highway 1, Fort Bragg

**April and May (TBA)**

## *November field trip will be to Indian Meadows in Cobb*

Instead of Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, our November field trip will be to Indian Meadows camp in the Cobb Valley at 13095 Bottle Rock Road in-between the Glenbrook Cemetery and the Yogi Bear Camp. Starting at 9 a.m. look for people parked at the gate. If coming from Kelseyville to Cobb, it is on the right hand side.

It is probable that many songbird species will be seen as well as some wildfowl on a small pond. Call Pat Harmon at 263-4977 or Roberta Lyons at 994-2024 for more information.

Heavy rain will cancel. Bring snacks, water and good shoes. The public is invited.

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## *2017 Grebes' breeding season*

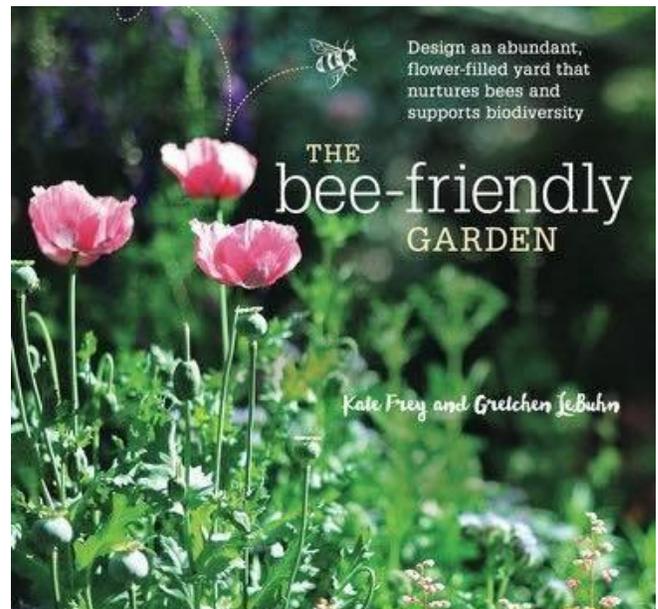
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September, we counted 2,374 adult grebes and 599 chicks within 100 meters of our boat, revealing a ratio of 0.25 chicks per adult. Extrapolating the proportion of chicks among the estimated 4,560 adults counted on the lake (including grebes more than 100 meters from the boat), we estimate that there was a minimum of 1,151 juvenile grebes on the lake. Our counts are very conservative, of course, because we were unable to count grebes out in the middle of the lake, where we know there are many grebes.



Because nearly all the grebes were nesting in sheltered areas where humans enter mostly by kayak or canoe, we observed very few disturbances by humans. However, we observed American Crows and Common Ravens preying on grebe eggs, and several motion-activated cameras documented Northern Raccoons preying on grebe eggs. Our most exciting observation of mammal predators occurred when we watched two Black Bears swimming and playing with each other in the water at Anderson Marsh. Although the bears were near an active grebe colony just 150 meters away, they were not interested in grebe eggs for breakfast.

I thank Mychal Hellie, Bryan McIntosh and Dylan Turner for assisting me with field work, and Bob Schoenherr for graciously taking us out in his motorboat to count grebes in September.



*Kate Frey will have her books available for sale at the Nov. 16, Redbud Audubon Society program meeting.*

## *Bee-Friendly Gardens*

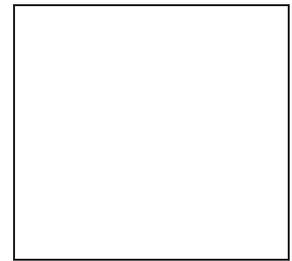
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flower-filled gardens. The same flowers that offer pollen and nectar rewards to bees make us happy, and create an uplifting and inspirational environment that will forever transform your relationship with your yard. This talk will detail what factors create a garden where bees thrive, and look at many plants they visit, and show examples of bee-friendly gardens.

Along with being a garden designer, Kate Frey is an eloquent advocate for pollinators, and a popular garden speaker and educator. She designed and managed noted and widely admired gardens such as the famous organic public garden at Fetzer Vineyards, the Melissa Garden in Healdsburg, and the gardens at Lynmar Winery in Sebastopol.

Her gardens won two gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show in London, a rare honor for an American designer. Kate currently writes two gardening columns for the *Press Democrat* newspaper and her book, *The Bee-Friendly Garden*, was published in 2016 by Ten Speed Press and was selected as one of the best gardening books of the year in 2017 by The American Horticultural Society. Her newest educational venture, The American Garden School, made its debut in 2017. Kate holds a B.A. Summa Cum Laude with Distinction in English at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California.

**Redbud Audubon**  
**PO Box 5780**  
**Clearlake, CA 95422**



**National Audubon/Redbud Audubon**  
**Joint Membership Application**  
**New Member Introductory Rate — \$20 for the first year**

- YES** Enroll me in both the National Audubon Society and local chapter Redbud Audubon. Start my subscription to **Audubon Magazine**, and **The Western Grebe** chapter newsletter.
- Check this box only if you wish to receive **The Western Grebe** newsletter by regular mail. Otherwise, it will be emailed to you.
- From time to time, National Audubon may share its mailing list with other environmental organizations. If you do not wish to be contacted, please check this box.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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I would also like to make a contribution to the local work of Redbud Audubon. My check is enclosed for \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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You have the option of just joining the Redbud Chapter by enrolling online at [www.redbudaudubon.org](http://www.redbudaudubon.org).  
Newsletter by email \$25/year; by regular mail \$35/year.

**Please make check payable to Redbud Audubon Society. Mail your application and check to POB 5780, Clearlake, CA 95422**

**Thank you for supporting Redbud Audubon Society**  
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