



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

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Topic of January meeting is “Our Changing Ocean”

In the past few years we have seen incredible concentrations of anchovies and krill along our coast at the same time that starfish have been dying. Now the ocean is very warm and the Humpback and Blue Whales are close to shore. What is going on?

Our ocean is warming, there is an increased level of Carbon Dioxide dissolved in the water and the sea level is rising. Of course there is increasing amounts of plastic in our ocean as well. These have far-reaching consequences to our marine animals and those of us living along the coast.

JANUARY MEETING

Thursday, January 19

- * “Our Changing Ocean” by Biologist Ron Le Valley
- * Refreshments: 7 pm
Announcements: 7:15 pm
Program: 7:30 pm
- * Methodist Church Social Hall,
16255 Second St,
Lower Lake

Our January speaker, Ron LeValley, will be discussing these trends and changes and how they are affecting our local climate and the local ocean.

animals and those of us living along the coast.

While not everything is predictable, there are certainly some trends that are obvious. One of the aspects of our local region is an eddy in the California Current that changes our annual ocean conditions.



(Above) Ochre Sea Star: Starfish along the Pacific Coast have almost disappeared. We are hoping that they will come back.

Please note meeting place change

Starting in January, Redbud Audubon will meet at the Methodist Church Social Hall, 16255 Second St. in Lower Lake as we did last year. If you are coming through Lower Lake, turn left on Lake Street and then right on Second St. The church social hall is on the right. We feel that moving our meetings to the south end of the county for half of our year is a way to accommodate all of our Redbud Audubon members county-wide.

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President's Message

by Co-President Bonnie Thompson

Welcoming in the New Year

Happy 2017 to all our birding friends! We wish Roberta Lyons a speedy recovery from her recent *mis*-adventure as she slipped on icy steps while attempting to fill her outdoor feeder just before New Years.

Redbud Audubon is starting out this year with two great events—our January program will feature Ron LeValley with the topic of our *Changing Oceans*. You won't want to miss this great program to be held at our "spring" location in Lower Lake.

Following this, our annual visit to the National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) should be a magnificent experience. Because I was unable to attend last year, two fellow birders took me on a "private" tour that left me filling one entire memory card on my camera! I would almost go as far as to call this a spiritual experience!

Also coming up in February is the Great Backyard Bird Count. Thanks to Joyce Anderson and Lisa Prather for tapping three area schools to be key participants in this educational experience. All are invited to participate; please see the newsletter article on page 7.

On a final note, I want to thank those of you who have already participated in our *Donation Campaign for 2016-2017*. Our goal is \$2,000 to help offset expenses of having premier speakers who travel to Lake County for our programs as well as our outreach to schools and more. To date, we are at 45% of our goal!

If you would like to make a donation, please visit our website, www.redbudaudubon.org and DONATE today!

Hope to see you at our January Program!



Pat, Jim, Lynne Bruner and Vivian McFarling participated in the Christmas Bird Count.



Supervisor Jim Steele and Pat Harmon. Pictures by Charlotte Griswold

Early Christmas Bird Count tallies 130 (+/-) species

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on December 17 was a chilly one! There were 13 groups with 37 local Audubon folks out in the count circle participating in this fun annual event which was organized by Brad and Kathy Barnwell. The preliminary Redbud Audubon Society's tally was approximately 130 separate species; the most numerous species was the Ruddy Duck with 16,250 birds and Western Grebe with 13,809 birds.

Participants were lucky to see 17 Bald Eagles and one Golden Eagle. Also noteworthy were 2 Yellow Warblers, 1 Pacific Slope Flycatcher, and 1 Black-throated Gray Warbler.

The Annual Christmas Bird Count in Lake County is usually held on the third Saturday in December. Redbud Audubon has been participating in the bird count for over 30 years.

Wild About Birds--Bird Education in Lake County

By Joyce Anderson

Redbud Audubon is very excited to have three teachers in Lake County using "Audubon Adventures" in their classrooms: Jackie Millar, Coyote Valley 5th grade teacher in Middletown Unified; Lisa Prather, Terrace Middle School teacher, Lakeport Unified; and Kortnie Brockwalder and Cathy McCarthy at the STEM School in the Kelseyville Unified School District. Teachers and their classes will write an article about their experiences with this curriculum and participate in the Backyard Bird Count in February.

Audubon Adventures is an environmental education curriculum created by the National Audubon Society for grades 3-8. The program introduces students to science-based exploration in nonfiction reading and outdoor and classroom activities. The website www.audubonadventures.org provides interactive games, puzzles and quizzes and topic-related resources for both teachers and students. The kits given out are called Wild About Birds and introduce wading birds, owls, and birds found around the neighborhood.

Redbud Audubon hopes the students will explore, learn about and enjoy the natural world around them.



*Icy teasels spotted on the Christmas Bird Count.
Photo by Charlotte Griswold.*

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Annual field trip to National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) Jan. 21

The January 21 field trip hosted by the Redbud Audubon Society will be to the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge and the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge in the Sacramento Valley.

Carpooling is available. Participants leave Lower Lake around 8 a.m. and meet on the east end of the Main Street to park in a place that won't interfere with merchants in town. Don't miss this great opportunity to view a wide variety of migrating wildfowl with expert Audubon birders.

For more information and to make reservations, contact Pat Harmon at 263-4977. Information about the Redbud Audubon Society is also available at www.redbudaudubon.org.



Redbud Audubon will carpool to the Colusa and Sacramento Wildlife Refuges on January 21. Snow Geese (left) and Northern Pintails (above) will be just some of the birds that will be seen.

Field Trip Calendar 2016-2017

Following is the field trip calendar for the Redbud Audubon Society for 2016/17. Prior to each field trip a description will appear in 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.

January 21

Colusa and Sacramento
National Wildlife Refuges.

February 18

Bodega Bay

March 18

Clear Lake State Park – Kelseyville

April 22 – McKerricher State Park,

Fort Bragg

May – Heron Days

Our Changing Ocean

(Continued from page 1)

Part of the presentation will be the changes we are observing in local marine life, especially changes in distribution and seasonal trends. He will also discuss some of what we can expect from El Nino, the Pacific Decadal Oscillation and other long-term trends in oceanography. Ron will also discuss what some of us can do to help the future of our local oceans.

Biologist Ron LeValley was founder and Senior Biologist of Mad River Biologists, a biological consulting firm in Northwestern California. Best known for the identification and distribution of birds along the Pacific Coast, he also has extensive understanding of natural history subjects. A lifelong interest in marine birds and mammals was enhanced by his involvement with Point Reyes Bird Observatory beginning in 1966, including serving as a biologist at the Farallon Island research station. Ron gathered a world-wide perspective on ecological issues when he founded and for 15 years directed Biological Journeys, a pioneering ecotourism company. One of Ron's outstanding attributes is sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm with others. He is adept at explaining complex biological principles in understandable terms.

Ron graduated from Sacramento State College in 1969 with a B.A. degree in Biology and received his M.A in Biology from Humboldt State University in 1980. His affiliations include American Ornithologists Union (Life Member), The Pacific Seabird Group, National Audubon Society, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Life Member), and Western Field Ornithologists. He also serves as an Associate Editor for Western Birds and served for eight years as Treasurer of the Pacific Seabird Group.

Ron also has been enamored with photography for the past 40 years. He specializes in photographs of wildlife of all kinds, from whales and birds to insects and natural scenes. As a professional photographer, Ron has compiled an impressive collection (over 90,000 images!) of wildlife and nature photographs that he uses for presentations and publications. Ron's photography started back in the 1960's and has evolved with the technology of the time.

Ron is a founding member of Mendocino Coast Photographer Gallery, 357 North Franklin St., Fort Bragg, CA where his work can be seen. He shows at G2 Gallery in Venice, CA, Icons Gallery in Mendocino and various shows around Northern California.



January speaker Biologist Ron LeValley will discuss the changes we are witnessing on our coast.



Brown Boobies are occurring farther north and in greater number annually now.



The Cassin's Auklet is a small, burrowing seabird that lives almost entirely on krill. Their numbers have increased in the past years, but during the last year there was an unprecedented and unexplainable die-off.



Krill are an important food source for many marine animals from salmon, to small birds like the Cassin's Auklet and the large Blue Whale. We don't know what is going to happen to them with ocean acidification. (Bottom left) Blue Whale numbers are increasing thanks to the protection we have given them. But their main food source, krill, could be in trouble.

Photos by Ron LeValley

Birds of California treasury of over 2,000 pages at the Lakeport Library

By Darlene Hecomovich

A treasure of delights awaits birders in the Lake County Lakeport Library. Housed in the library is William Leon Dawson's (1873-1928) *Birds of California, A Complete Scientific and Popular Account of the 580 species and Subspecies Found in the State* at the time of its publication in 1923, an edition of 1,000 copies. It is not a diminutive piece of work. It is covered in four massive 8" x 11" x 2" embossed green leather volumes totaling 2,120 pages and weighing in at some 20+ pounds. In comparison, today's popular field guides covering not only the birds of California but all the birds of North America total 576 pages for the National Geographic Field Guide and 624 pages for the Sibley Guide with each weighing less than a couple of pounds.

An indication of the detailed information provided are the eight and a half pages devoted to the Great Blue Heron detailing description, recognition marks, nesting, range and distribution plus a wealth of anecdotal material that is a delight to read. Writing of the herons at the nesting site, he states:

The bellowing of the herons . . . is without exaggeration, the most soul-emptying succession of expletives in the North American bird language.

Another example of the Dawson's writing style can be found in his treatment of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee:

. . . he is one of our darlings, one of the daintiest and most alluring of the dwellers in the redwoods. What busy little midgets these are as they go trooping through the treetops intent on plunder! . . . And what a merry war they wage on beetle and nit, as they scrutinize every crevice of bark and bract!

Or, in the description of our beloved Acorn Woodpecker (California Woodpecker in Dawson's time):

" . . . handsome, saucy, debonaire, as faultless in dress as a Spanish fandanguero "

And, you learn that the Acorn Woodpecker's scientific name *Melanerpes formicivorus* is a misnomer with the term *formicivorus* denoting ant-eating. It does eat ants but they form only 8 per cent of its food. The Latin name would more aptly apply to the Flicker with ants forming 50 per cent of its diet or the Wil-



This watercolor entitled, "The Nuthatches", is one of 48 full color plates featured in the treasury.

liamson's Sapsucker at 85%. It is acorns that the aptly named Acorn Woodpecker covets. An accompanying photo depicts a tree with an unbroken shaft at least 40 feet high and 3 feet across inlaid with a solid mass of some 20,000 acorns. Dawson estimates a Ponderosa Pine he encountered to be imbedded with no less than 50,000 acorns. Again, in the singular style of Dawson's words:

Why does the bird hoard treasure on this lavish, irrational scale? For exercise? Perhaps. To be doing something – for the same reason that a high school girl chews gum or a callow youth sucks cigarettes, a matron does embroidery, or a middle-aged gentleman of increasing girth trots after a twinkling white ball – to kill time.

Distribution and Range information is provided for each species. At the time of publication our familiar

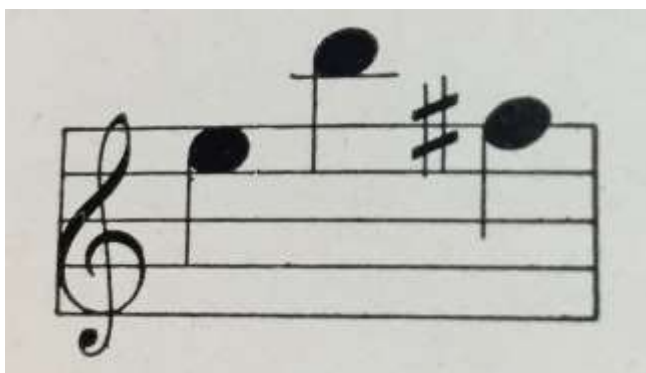
Great Egret (then known as American Egret) was scarce because of its status as a game bird as well as the fact its population had been decimated by the trade in its feathers for the hats of fashionable ladies. Dawson gives its distribution in California:

Breeds sparingly in the San Joaquin Valley and at Clear Lake. Formerly abundant and breeding in other large lakes . . . Now scarce and of irregular occurrence irrespective of season . . .

Dawson was a life-long photographer of birds and many of his photos as well as those of others photographers comprise the 1100+ photos found throughout the book. They are noteworthy for their charm and nostalgia of the black and white photography of yore as well as the quaintness of their captions: *Feather Beds will always be in Fashion* captions the photo of a Tree Swallow nest and *A Doorstep Child* is the label given to a photo of a Cowbird egg perched on the edge of a warbler nest.

One of the outstanding features of the work is the 48 superbly delineated full-page color plates done in meticulous, awe-inspiring detail created chiefly by Major Allan Cyril Brooks (1869-1946). Note the attached elegant watercolor of *The Nuthatches* as an example. Initially, Dawson sought out the distinguished bird artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874-1927) to do the artwork but found him too expensive. Interestingly, it was Brooks that was the artist selected to complete the artwork Fuertes was creating for the *Birds of Massachusetts* upon his untimely death in a car accident.

Tidbits of information are also offered as in his depiction of the *really ravishing sweet* tones in the musical notation of the *hoo hee hee* song of the Mountain Chickadee:



This is just skimming the surface of what the *Birds of California* offers; so do dip into the delights of Dawson for yourself. It is on the Reserve Shelf in the

Lakeport Library and can be read in the Library only. To find it in the catalog, you must go into Advanced Search and enter both the title and the author. For some reason, entering the title only does not detect the work. Volume IV contains the Index and various Keys that provide Species and Families information, so you can check out Volume IV first or all four volumes at once, which is the more efficient method. The only other library in the North Coast Library System that has this work is the Ukiah Library, so that is something to keep in mind should you ever find yourself in Ukiah with a couple of hours to spare. Enjoy!

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

We invite you to participate. Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 17-20, 2017. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish!

If you're new to the count, or have not participated since before the 2013 merger with eBird, you must create a free online account to enter your checklist. Go to gbbc.birdcount.org. If you already have an account, just use the same login name and password.

In 2016, GBBC participants in more than 130 countries counted 5,689 species of birds on more than 162,000 checklists!

Your help is needed to make the GBBC successful!

We have extended the GBBC days for our schools because of the holiday and weekend. We have asked schools to participate on Friday, February 17 or Tuesday, February 21.

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- ☐ **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.
- ☐ 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.

- ☐ Save printing and mailing costs by sending my newsletter to my email address.
- ☐ I want to receive the newsletter by regular mail, but please email notifications to me.

My Email Address is:

- ☐ In addition to my membership, I would like to make a contribution to the local work of Redbud Audubon Society:
____ \$10 ____ \$20 ____ \$50 ____ \$100 ____ Other

Name _____ Phone: _____

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Please make check payable to Redbud Audubon Society.

Mail your application and check to POB 5780, Clearlake, CA 95422

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