

Conservation of *Aechmophorus* Grebe Colonies at Clear Lake
Redbud Audubon Society
Quarterly Report #2 for Phase Two, Year Two
October 1, 2016 – March 15, 2017

Public Outreach and Education

**Deliverable #1: Classroom Presentations and
Distribution of Outreach Materials**

Grebe Project Featured in “Know Lake County” Series at Public Library

Over 50 adults and children attended a presentation on Redbud’s grebe conservation project by Marilyn Waits on Saturday, February 25, 2017. The grebe talk was part of an ongoing monthly lecture series sponsored by the Lake County Public Library system. The purpose of the series is to introduce the public to a variety of interesting activities, places, and groups within Lake County. Recent topics have included the Health of Clear Lake, Archaeological Sites in the County, the Lake County Quilt Trail, and the local public radio station KPFZ.

The grebe presentation included showing the 18-minute video made by Dr. Floyd Hayes in 2012, as part of Redbud Audubon’s outreach effort in Phase One of the grebe grant. Besides vivid footage of grebe behaviors in courtship, nesting, and parenting, the video clearly explains how residents and visitors can protect the grebes during breeding season. The library talk also featured a PowerPoint presentation showing the various activities Redbud has undertaken since 2010 as part of the grebe project. A group of enlarged photos of Clear Lake’s grebes, the life-size wooden models of a Western Grebe and a Clark’s Grebe with a baby on its back, and the “Putting on a Show” brochure complemented the talk. A lively question-and-answer period added information from local bird experts and concluded the afternoon event.

Grebe Talk To Be Broadcast on Local Public Television Channel

The entire one-hour grebe presentation at the public library (see above item) was videotaped by Beth Kaiman, the interim Station Manager on the Lake County public access television channel. She said she will notify Redbud when the program is scheduled for broadcast.

Grebe Talk to Combined 4th Grade Classes at Clearlake Magnet School

At the Konocti Education Center, a magnet school for the arts in Clearlake, two 4th grade teachers Holly Sherman and Sue Condit jointly conducted in late February a study unit on “Saving the Grebes on Clear Lake.” The unit was designed to meet several science standards that included studying how the grebes’ internal and external structures function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction. They studied the grebes conservation status and threats such as the mercury in Clear Lake and the herbicide spraying to kill invasive hydrilla plants. Special attention was focused on how

the students can help protect the grebe colonies during the summer breeding season. After the students had viewed Dr. Floyd Hayes' grebe video on YouTube, Marilyn Waits was asked to come talk with the students to answer questions about the grebe project. The 43 students in the combined two classes showed enthusiastic knowledge of the birds and the various ways they can help the grebes by talking with friends and relatives who boat, jet-ski, water-ski, or fish on the lake, alerting them to avoid disturbing the grebe colonies.

Grebe Study Unit for 7th Graders in Lakeport

During the last week of March, science teacher Lisa Prather will be doing a study unit on grebes with the 120 students in her 7th grade classes at Terrace Middle School in Lakeport. Early last year Lisa joined the Redbud grebe team and is also serving as Co-Chair of the chapter's Education Committee. She will use not only the Floyd Hayes video, but also grebe sequences from the BBC "Life of Birds" series, as well as PowerPoint slides developed by Redbud and Altacal chapters for the grebe project.

First Annual Lake County Agriculture and Natural Resource Day

Over 1,000 students from K-6 grades will attend a first-time event at the Lake County Fairgrounds on March 16. From 9:00 am to noon, students will talk to farmers, see farm animals and equipment, view demonstrations and exhibit booths that teach about the role of agriculture and natural resources like Clear Lake as they impact Lake County's economy. Redbud will have a "kid-friendly" exhibit booth featuring the grebe project, including a special handout with a drawing of a grebe parent with four babies on its back and a short message about how to protect grebe families during summer nesting season.

Deliverables #2: Grebe Exhibit Booth at Community Events and Festivals

The Redbud grebe team will participate with an exhibit booth at four community events in April and the first weekend of May.

Earth Day Fair at Lake County Campus of Woodland Community College

On April 20, Redbud Audubon will participate in an Earth Day celebration at the local community college in Clearlake. This event is an opportunity to reach college students with information about the grebe project and ways that young adults

Heron Days Audubon-Guided Tours on Clear Lake

Redbud chapter's 22nd annual Heron Days event on April 29-30 and May 6-7 features 90-minute Audubon-guided pontoon boat tours on Clear Lake. Because of the event's longtime popularity, this year Heron Days has been expanded from two days to four days. The first weekend of the tours will leave from Lakeside Coounty Park in Kelseyville, and the second weekend the tours will leave from Shady Acres Resort in the City of Clearlake. The tours offer a unique experience for local and visitor

participants to view firsthand the courting Western and Clark's grebes and nesting Great Blue Herons. Each Audubon bird-guide had a script provided by the grebe project to inform the guests about the grebe behaviors they are likely to witness during the boat tours and the conservation efforts being conducted by the grebe project. The expansion of Heron Days is expected to significantly increase the number of guests from last year's 231 people.

Olive Festival Exhibit Booth

A new community festival begun four years ago at the Chasewater Winery in Kelseyville has become a popular venue for reaching both residents and tourists with information about the grebe project. This will be third time that Redbud has participated in the one-day event, scheduled for April 30 this year. Using the chapter's grebe photos, banners, displays, and handouts, the exhibit booth is an effective resource for talking with the public and providing information about the county's most beloved bird species, and the need to protect them during breeding season.

Deliverables #3: Individual outreach at Local Lake Communities

Grebe Information on Redbud Website

The chapter website www.redbudaudubon.org has a section entitled "Those Amazing Dancing Grebes." The four-page Question & Answer section explains grebe behavior and breeding, with lots of great photos, and information about the grebe conservation project. This material was developed in conjunction with Redbud's 2011 webcam, but has been used as a handout and on the website since then as part of the outreach to individuals.

Total of 21 Fishing Line Recycle Bins at Shoreline Parks and Resorts

Redbud initiated in 2013 the construction and placement of fishing- line recycle bins to protect grebes and other wildlife from injury or death caused by discarded fishing line. The value of the recycle bins has been such that park managers and resort owners have requested additional recycle bins. Starting with five recycle bins in the initial installation, the number now totals 21 bins around the 19-miles of shoreline on Clear Lake. The bins now cover most of the primary dock and ramp areas used by local and visiting fishermen and women.

Redbud volunteers Rob Patton(who has constructed all 21 recycle bins) and Tom McFarling currently handle all the maintenance of the recycle bins, visiting each one to remove the fishing line (and, unfortunately, trash that people put in the bins), and send it to an Iowa recycling manufacturer.

Project manager Rob Patton reported that in January of this year, he mailed to the recycled products manufacturer over 12.8 pounds of fishing line retrieved from the 21 recycle bins. This is significant evidence of the number of fishermen who are cooperating with the effort to protect the grebes and other wildlife from the discarded plastic line.

Grebe Interpretive Panels at Local Shoreline Public Parks

Redbud is grateful to the Luckenbach Council that Lake County receives continuing value from the five interpretive panels installed at state, county, and city parks around Clear Lake to educate the public on an ongoing basis to understand grebe courtship and breeding behaviors, and the need to protect the grebe colonies from human disturbance during the breeding season. The panels are installed at two county parks, two city parks, and one state park on Clear Lake. The panels bring the grebe conservation message to individuals and families visiting the parks throughout the year.

Deliverables #4: Monitoring and Evaluation of Breeding Colonies on Clear Lake

Please see the separate report submitted by Dr. Floyd Hayes on the results of the 2016 grebe breeding season on Clear Lake.

Photos on the following pages are from the March 16 “Agriculture and Natural Resources Day” at the Lake County Fairgrounds. This highly successful first-time event for local schools drew impressive support from teachers in K-6 grades. There were 986 students pre-registered, as well as some home-schooled students brought by their parents, bringing the total attendance to well over 1,000 students.

Over the three hours of the half-day event, most of the student groups viewed the Redbud Audubon tables with information, photos, and handouts about the grebe conservation project.







