



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

Volume 44 • Issue No. 1 • September, 2018

Birds of Alaska: the Great Land

Speaker: Norman Kikuchi, MD

Redbud Audubon Society is pleased to present its first program of the season on Sept. 20, at the Kelseyville Presbyterian Church Social Hall, 5430 Third St., Kelseyville, starting at 7 p.m. The program will be on the Birds of Alaska: the Great Land, presented by Norman Kikuchi MD.

Alaska is truly a birder's paradise and it should be at the top of any birdwatcher's list to make the pilgrimage at least once in

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Thursday, Sept. 20

- **Topic:** Birds of Alaska: the Great Land
- **Speaker:** Norman Kikuchi, M.D.
- **Refreshments:** 7 pm
- **Announcements & Program:** 7:15 pm
- **Location:** Presbyterian Church Social Hall, 5430 Third St., Kelseyville.

their life-time. The name Alaska comes from the Aleut word Alyeska which means "Great Land." It is a paradise for birds who find that the vast expanses of tundra and boreal forests offer less competition for

breeding sites, along with relatively low density of predators per square mile, and an insect biomass that in summer rivals that of the Amazon Basin. Alaska is an ideal place



Norman Kikuchi has visited Alaska yearly for 20 years. This month's presentation features his photos from several different areas he has explored. (Above) The King Eider. Norman Kikuchi photo.



The Tufted Puffin (left) and Least Auklets (right). Norman Kikuchi photos.

for birds to breed and raise their young.

Norman Kikuchi has been fortunate to visit the Great Land almost annually for the past 20 years, each visit yielding experiences wonderful and unex-

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President's Message

by President Roberta Lyons

Some thoughts on the fire



By Roberta Lyons

As president of one of the environmental non-profits here in Lake County, I always struggle with my message during times like this. Times of disaster and loss for so many of our friends, neighbors, and supporters.

I'm not good at uplifting messages. It doesn't come naturally to me, so what I have to do is look into my own heart and consider how I feel. As a 60 year resident of this County, I remember the "so-called" good times here, I've seen communities decline and the march of development of all kinds disturb our scenic hills

But I've also seen something else, something that is enduring to me. I've seen those same communities that struggle with economic difficulties keep trying and keep hoping and moving ahead. I've made friends with people who have moved here, for

the same reason I have stayed: the beauty of this area. I've been introduced to so many people who volunteer their time and effort in so many ways, not just environmental groups but social welfare groups, civic organizations and historical societies. Think of our agricultural community, our teachers and administrators, our public servants, our public safety officials and county supervisors. There is a huge collective effort here by people who care.

I feel a deep sadness about the losses in the Mendocino National Forest and wonder, as we all do, what will become of the animals that lived there and how long will it take for the eco-system to recover?

I feel we have to think about what we love about Lake County and know that over time it will return and much of it, amazingly, is still here. I ask myself, how does one not lose heart? My answer is: think about the things you love or loved about this place. And, for me, the things I love are still here. Battered and struggling, perhaps, but here. Although what makes this place so wonderful is its beauty, it is also its people.

Welcome new and returning members

Thomas Rawley, Clearlake Oaks; Bella Kluyt, Kelseyville; Madeline Erceg, Kelseyville; Kathryn Corner, Lakeport; Jim Spahr, Lakeport;

Rob Patton, Lucerne; Toni Nelson, Clearlake Oaks; John Haedtke, Kelseyville; and Bonnie Thompson, Bend, OR.

Please provide us with your email

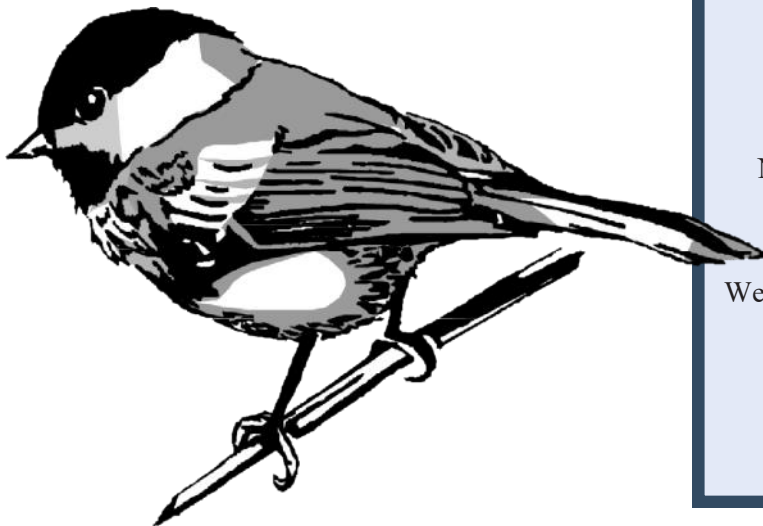
A number of our members have emailed us at redbud.audubon@gmail.com to opt to receive our newsletter, "The Western Grebe" by email as opposed to receiving it by mail.

Not only do you help save a tree, you help us save on expenses and energy in sending it to you by regular mail, and it comes to you in color versus the black and white mailed version. If you have been meaning to, but haven't yet done so, take the minute or two out of your time to do so.

Even if you still prefer to receive the mailed version of the "Grebe", we would like to have your email for our records. Once in a while, we send out emails to our members about important events or bird sightings that may be of interest. You are also welcome to email us with any information that you think would be of interest to the membership. Questions requiring expert opinions are forwarded to the appropriate persons.

Also, we rely on our members for whom we have emails to help us with any volunteer efforts that we may have. Often it just means a couple of hours of your time. Whether you have areas of expertise or birding skills that you can share, or are willing to help us with general staffing of booths, setting up booths and transporting materials, we welcome your participation.

So please give us your email address by sending it to redbud.audubon@gmail.com, and, if you wish, let us know in what areas you feel you can help.



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How wildfires affect birds

Editors Note: With the recent Mendocino Complex fire impacting Lake County, we found this article by Mike Eliot of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society in Contra Costa County, to be helpful and interesting. It has been re-printed with his permission.

With fires raging out of control in California, one wonders about the relationships between fires and birds. Research tells us that both positive and negative relationships occur. During wildfires, adult birds easily escape, while young are left behind and perish. Rebuilding the population may occur only after new plant growth or reentry of insect species on which the birds feed. However, some birds return to burned-out areas quickly.

Black-backed Woodpecker populations swell because they feed on wood- and bark boring insects that arrive and lay eggs in burned trees almost immediately.

Similarly, Red-headed Woodpeckers that nest high in trees often see a population boom right after fires. Adult birds that escape to unburned territory may disrupt local birds, creating overcrowding and influx of non-native species.

If new species dominate, they may cause local species to wane. Population shifts like this have been noted in areas by fire paths.

Sometimes, birds can cause wildfires. Research has shown that fires can be started by large birds, such as raptors on power lines. They contact two wires, leading to sparks or even burning birds that spread fire when they touch ground.

Some birds may spread wildfires on purpose by picking up burning sticks and dropping them in

Wildfires' Impact on Clear Lake Breeding Grebes

*by Dr. Floyd Hayes, Research Biologist,
Redbud Grebe Conservation Project*

"Eager to find out whether the Mendocino Complex wildfire was affecting the grebe colonies that spend the summer breeding season on Clear Lake, I went there on August 10, shortly after the fires burned very close to the lake. The air quality was horrible as fires were still raging farther away, but there were thousands of grebes busily courting, nest building, mating and incubating on more than 2,000 nests. I conclude that there was no measurable effect on the breeding behavior of the grebes, although it may negatively impact their longevity having to breathe in the smoke-filled air."

unburned areas to flush out prey. Black Kites, Brown Falcons, and Whistling Kites are being studied for this behavior.

Scientists predict that we will need to be ready for bigger fires than those of previous generations. This may be devastating to birds in the path of fire, but have a positive effect by rearranging habitats, foods that birds consume, and distribution of species.

This may help assure the diversity of species or may cause the demise of some and increase in others. Only time will tell.—*Mike Eliot*

Your membership explained

Just a quick reminder that you have a choice between two types of membership. Most of you are members of National Audubon and are assigned by National to our Redbud Audubon chapter. We now offer chapter-only membership whereby you must enroll via the internet. You can visit our website at www.redbudaudubon.org and click on membership

for further details. Also, as a reminder, if you are receiving this newsletter by regular mail and are open to receiving it by email, you can save the chapter significant printing and mailing costs by emailing us at redbud.audubon@gmail.org and letting us know. If you prefer to receive the newsletter by mail, please consider donating \$10 - \$15 to Redbud Audubon.

2017-18 Chapter Financial Report

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc

July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

Revenues	Audubon Membership Revenue	\$1,601
	Contributions	1,062
	Grebe Conservation Grant	15,300
	Educational Programs & Events (Heron Days)	5,980
	Sales (books, booth sales)	1,353
	Interest	<u>74</u>
	Total income	\$25,370
	Cost of Goods Sold	<u>\$725</u>
	Total Revenue	\$24,645
Expenditures	Administration	\$3,758
	Educational Programs & Events	2,450
	Grebe Conservation Grant	14,856
	Newsletter Printing/Mailing	2,492
	Marketing Outreach	642
	Storage rental	<u>1,322</u>
	Total Expenditures	\$25,520
	Net Income in Operating Funds	-\$875
	Beginning Retained Earnings 6/30/17	\$45,217
	Net Income 2017-2018	-875
	Ending Retained Earnings 6/30/18	\$44,342
Assets	Cash & Equivalents (Checking, Savings, etc)	\$43,955
	Inventory Held for Sale	387
	Total Assets	\$44,342
Liabilities	Accounts Payable	0
	Total Liabilities	\$0
Funds	Restricted (Grebe Conservation Fund)	0
	Reserved (Committed to Specific Programs)	2,181
	Unreserved (Not Committed)	41,774
	Total Fund Balances	\$43,955

The Clear Lake grebe protection project enters its ninth year

(Reprinted with permission, *Lake County Record-Bee*, July 26, 2018)

By Aidan Freeman

Lake County Water Resources Department placed 12 speed-limit buoys on July 26 as part of an ongoing effort by the Redbud Audubon Society to protect a sensitive but abundant population of grebes, a distinctive migratory freshwater diving bird that comes to nest each year on the shoreside waters of Clear Lake.

The Clear Lake Grebe Project, according to Redbud Audubon Society project manager Marilyn Waits, is in its ninth year, protecting grebes for their tenth protected season at Clear Lake. Biology professor Floyd Hayes of Pacific Union College said that the grebes arrived late this year, and could remain nesting until the end of September. He said that the latest he has seen grebes nesting in Clear Lake was in 2010, when birds remained until October.

Hayes added that “Unlike the last two summers, when nearly all of the grebes nested along the shore in channels seldom visited by motorboats at Rodman Slough and Anderson Marsh, this year they are nesting in open water on Clear Lake and are vulnerable to motorboat activities.”

Though Hayes reported the largest current colony to be present at Rumsey Slough near the Konocti Vista Casino, Water Resources Director David Cowan told the *Record-Bee* Tuesday that his team had not found grebes in that location. Instead, the Water Resources team placed buoys where they found grebes—5 near Soda Bay Road at the County Park and 7 at the mouth of the Rodman Slough. Depending on new findings, more buoys may be placed.

Two species of grebe—Western and Clark’s—come to Clear Lake annually by the thousands. The Western grebe can be distinguished from the Clark’s by its black patterning which descends from the top of the head to below the eye level, and its two-note call. The Clark’s grebe has black markings that end above eye level and a one-note call. Neither species is listed as endangered, but their numbers are declining, according to a report referred to by Waits. According to the

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A grebe parent and chick. The public is urged to avoid creating wakes that could drown small chicks. Photo by Gae Henry



The grebes arrived at nesting sites late this year, and may remain through September. Photo by Gae Henry



Stay at least 300 feet from grebe colonies and avoid making wakes in the areas. Photo by Gae Henry

Clear Lake grebe protection project enters ninth year

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same report, the most common causes of premature mortality for these grebes are of human origin. These causes of death range from pesticide poisoning and hunting to direct disturbance to the nests by boat wakes.

But the Clear Lake Grebe Project has been effective in reducing human-caused harm to grebes in the area. According to Hayes' 2017 report regarding the Clear Lake Grebe Project, human disturbance of the grebe nests on Clear Lake protected by speed-limit buoys accounted for only 9 percent of observed disturbances.

In a report sent by Waits, residents are urged to help protect the grebes in the following ways:

- Stay at least 300 feet away from a colony.
- Avoid colony areas when using a speedboat, jet-ski, or water-skis.
- Avoid boat wakes that create waves that can tip eggs out of a nest or drown small chicks.
- Pick up any leftover fishing line that can entrap and kill birds.
- Educate other lake-users about how they can help protect the grebe colonies.

Cowan said that in order to protect the grebes, Water Resources has tried to place as many buoys as possible while still allowing for recreation around the lake.

According to Hayes, the grebes are building nests now (7/26/18) and eggs will hatch in 24–26 days. The babies will then stay with the mothers for around 3 weeks.



Joint field trip planned for Rodman Preserve on Sept. 22

The field trip scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 22 at the Rodman Preserve, 6350 Westlake Rd., Upper Lake, will be a joint venture including members of Redbud Audubon, Napa Solano Audubon, and regular walkers that enjoy the Lake County Land Trust's bi-monthly walk. Attendees are encouraged to bring a lunch to enjoy on the back porch of the Preserve's nature center after the walk.

Please meet at a little before 9 a.m. at the Preserve's nature center at the corner of Westlake and the Nice-Lucerne Cutoff. As we often caution, don't confuse the Rodman Preserve with the County's Rodman Slough Park. They are at two different locations. To get to the Preserve from Highway 29, take the Nice Lucerne cut-off and turn left onto Westlake Road. If you stay on the Cutoff you will go over the Rodman Slough Bridge which is also the location of the County Park. If you go over the bridge, you are in the wrong place!

Because of the number of people expected to attend, we will have at least two leaders so the group may be divided if necessary. It should be a fun day. Expect to see raptors, probably some migrating songbirds, resident songbirds, and maybe even a coyote or two.

The Rodman Preserve is owned and operated by the Lake County Land Trust, a local charitable 501 (c) (3) that preserves habitat and open space in Lake County. The Rodman Preserve is a total of 234 acres made up of oak savannah, open meadows and wetlands. The Land Trust's website is www.lakecountylandtrust.org.



Walkers will learn about native birds, plants, and animals on the field trip.



Expect to see a granary tree like this one. Acorn Woodpeckers have stored hundreds of acorns in this tree.

Field Trip Calendar

Following is the field trip calendar for the Redbud Audubon Society for 2018 – 2019. 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 our field trip chair, Pat Harmon at (707) 263-4977 for information. Outings start at 9 a.m. unless otherwise noted.

September 22

Lake County Land Trust's Rodman Preserve
6350 Westlake Rd. Upper Lake, CA

October 20

Indian Meadows
Bottle Rock Rd. Cobb

November 17

Anderson Marsh State Historic Park
Highway 53, Lower Lake

December 15

Christmas Bird Count

January 19

Colusa and Sacramento
National Wildlife Refuges

February 23

Clear Lake State Park
Soda Bay Rd. Kelseyville

March 23

Lakeside County Park, Kelseyville

April

Heron Days

May 18

Potter Valley

Birds of Alaska

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pected. His presentation will feature his photos from Nome on the Seward Peninsula, St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea, Barrow on the North Slope, and Homer on the Kenai Peninsula.

His childhood interest in birds began while stalking Ring-necked Pheasants in the foothills of Mt. Diablo, but his real bird epiphany occurred during his college days when he witnessed the impalement of a Western Fence Lizard by a Loggerhead Shrike on a Joshua tree spine. He was transfixed by the moment!

Dr. Kikuchi graduated from the University of California, Davis with a degree in Zoology and a minor in Herpetology. He completed medical school and family practice residency at the University of California, Irvine. He practices Urgent Care and Occupational Medicine in Redding.

A two-year stint working in emergency room medicine in Saudi Arabia near the Red Sea led to two decades of traveling the world's oceans in pursuit of underwater images. Highlights from this period include being knocked around in cages by Great White Sharks in South Africa and being bubble-netted by a mother Humpback Whale defending her calf in the waters off the Dominican Republic.

In 1997, Dr. Kikuchi acquired the super telephoto Canon lenses. He switched to his present obsession, avian photography, and his ultimate goal of photographing all the breeding birds in the U.S. and Canada. He is a Santa Cruz Bird Club lifetime member and a field trip leader for Santa Clara Valley Audubon.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

Legislative support needed!

Some of our members who are also members of National Audubon may receive email from National on legislative issues that affect our birds. National Audubon (as well as California Audubon) makes it easy to click on a link to locate your representative in Congress and their email. Your voice is important! Our voices together can make a difference. Redbud Audubon forwards pertinent legislative notices via email to you. We hope you will not mind if you receive them both from National Audubon and us. The protection of our bird life is extremely important.



Long Beach, California Sunset. Photo by Ronnie Pitman (Flickr/Creative Commons)



Great Egret. Photo by Mick Thompson (Flickr/Creative Commons)

Redbud Audubon board members to attend Audubon Assembly

Redbud Audubon Society continues to be actively involved in the statewide community of Audubon Chapter leaders, members, and friends. This year two of our board members, our new vice-president, Beth Shaver and past president, Marilyn Waits, will be attending the Audubon California 2018 Audubon Assembly in Long Beach from Nov. 2 through 4.

The theme of the 2018 Assembly is Look Up. The weekend will be an opportunity to look outside local programs and learn from each other.

This event is an exciting opportunity for our board members to meet with chapter leaders, members, and partners from all over the state to enjoy birding coastal wetlands and other unique areas, explore conservation opportunities and practices, share stories with leaders from various regions, and establish peer-to-peer collaborations and partnerships. This program offers multiple interactive presentations and breakout sessions that focus on topics from advocacy, fundraising and communications to SoCal conservation and coalition building.

The last Audubon Assembly, held in Yosemite in 2016, offered chapter members a chance to connect with other conservationists from all over California. One chapter leader said: “Feeling part of something larger was my first ‘ah ha’ moment. I was also humbled by the education, experience, accomplishments and skills of some of the chapter leaders. Many were

inspiring to be around.” If any of our local Redbud Audubon members are interested in attending this inspiring conference, please visit the Audubon California website at <http://ca.audubon.org/about/chapters/audubon-california-assembly> to register, reserve lodging, and see the agenda. If you have any questions, please email the Chapter Network Team at chapternetworkca@audubon.org or call Redbud Audubon’s president, Roberta Lyons at (707) 994-2024.



Field trips will be a fun aspect of the November Audubon Conference in Long Beach.

Osprey Nests and Numbers

By Brad Barnwell

I get a lot of questions about the number of Osprey in Lake County and thought you might be interested in the following non-scientific survey.

In February of 2016 my wife and I conducted an informal count of active Osprey nests along the lakeshore of Clear Lake from Clear Lake State Park north to Nice. The survey included the Reclamation area north of the Rodman Bridge and some “inland nests” along Hill Road and the Highway 29 corridor, as well as Big Valley. The total number of nests occupied with at least one adult Osprey was 17. We conducted a follow-up count in the same area this July (see the map) and found 29 nests, 27 of which were occupied and two looked like they may have had some activity but no active birds were seen. If you do the math for the occupied nests using an average of 2 juvenile Osprey per nest and 2 adults per nest the total number of Osprey is 108. As you can see in the attached photo, there are some nests with 4 juveniles. I took this particular photo of 4 juveniles and an adult at Clear Lake State Park in June 2017. Considering that the area surveyed is just a small sample of the possible breeding pairs of Osprey in the county I have to believe that the Osprey population of Lake County is very much alive and well and could number more than 200 birds at the height of the fledging season.

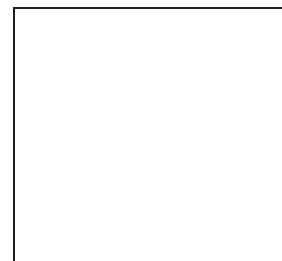


Osprey nest with four juveniles and one adult at Clear Lake State Park. Photo by Brad Barnwell



There are 29 nests (indicated by red dots) located in the area from Clear Lake State Park north to Nice. 27 of the nests were occupied.

Redbud Audubon
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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.

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

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- ☐ 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: _____
Please make check payable to Redbud Audubon Society. Mail your application and check to POB 5780, Clearlake, CA 95422

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