



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

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Adventures in Fiji with Dr. Floyd Hayes features photos and video

This month the Redbud Audubon Society welcomes speaker Floyd E. Hayes, Ph.D., who will be presenting his program “Adventures in Fiji.” The meeting is Nov. 15, at the Kelseyville Presbyterian Church Social Hall, 5430 Third St. Kelseyville, starting at 7 p.m.

Situated in the tropical South Pacific Ocean, Fiji is an archipelago of more than 330 islands varying greatly in size. An enormous diversity of plants and animals inhabit a variety of terrestrial and marine environments.

November MEETING

Thursday, November 15

- **Topic:** Adventures in Fiji
- **Speaker:** Dr. Floyd Hayes
- **Refreshments:** 7 pm
- **Announcements & Program:** 7:15 pm
- **Location:** Presbyterian Church Social Hall, 5430 Third St., Kelseyville.

The talk will be a PowerPoint presentation with many photos and a few short videos, mostly of colorful marine animals, from a scouting trip in December 2017 and a trip with students from Pacific Union College in March 2018 to two small Fijian

islands, Mana and Viwa.

The highlight of the December trip was scuba diving with a hungry pack of reef sharks of three species, which will be shown in a video. During the March trip, eight students taking a



Dr. Floyd Hayes enjoying the fury of a tropical storm on Denarau Island, Fiji



A Pale Fileclam, just one of many colorful marine critters inhabiting the coral reefs of Fiji.

course in tropical biology surveyed the terrestrial vertebrates of Mana Island and learned about the marine plants and animals inhabiting the region's coral reefs. The students were part of a larger group that helped construct a new home for school teachers and assisted with dental and

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President's Message

by President Roberta Lyons

The Grebe Project



I would encourage all to read this month's article by Marilyn Waits about the Western and Clark's Grebe breeding season this year on Clear Lake. Although it isn't very good news, it is very interesting and a good example of how the Audubon Society—

National, states, and chapters including our Redbud Audubon, contribute to the very important databases for bird conservation. I found the part about how smoke may be affecting waterfowl and songbirds to be particularly interesting.

Redbud Audubon is now in the ninth year of working on this Grebe project, and I for one want to congratulate both Dr. Floyd Hayes and Marilyn Waits on their hard work. Marilyn is a Redbud board member, our former President, and has headed the Grebe project which is funded by the

Luchenbach Grant through Audubon California. It is an invaluable piece of research and has led to other really neat projects, like the fishing line recycle bins project around the lake. These bins, constructed, and installed by Redbud Audubon volunteer Rob Patton are proving to be important for not only Grebe conservation, but also for other birds on Clear Lake including pelicans, cormorants, dabbling ducks, mergansers and more. The bins provide safe disposal of fishing line that can get wrapped around birds' legs, wings, or bodies, causing great harm and often death.

Over the nine years of the grebe project, the other major focus has been outreach efforts to educate the communities around Clear Lake about the grebes and how to protect their colonies from human interference. Outreach efforts have included exhibit booths at local festivals, brochure handouts, radio interviews, and even a webcam on a grebe nest.

I'm looking forward to our upcoming program on Fiji, by Dr. Floyd Hayes and also our walk at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. Please join us for both events.

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.

Please provide us with your email

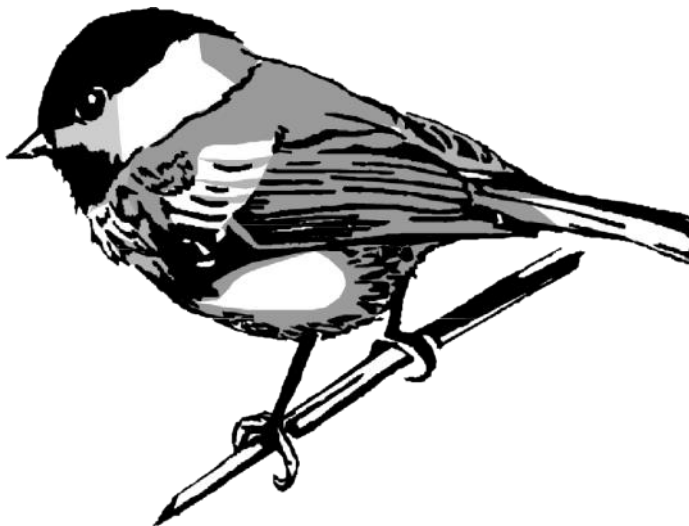
A number of our members have emailed us at redbud.audubon@gmail.com to opt to receive our newsletter, "The Western Grebe" by email as opposed to receiving it by mail.

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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A Western Grebe gathering weeds as part of the mating ritual. Photo by Gae Henry.

2018 Grebe breeding season brings unusual results

*by Marilyn Waits,
Grebe Conservation Grant Manager*

The 2018 grebe breeding season on Clear Lake started unusually late and produced the fewest young grebes in the nine years that Redbud has been monitoring the annual season. This research has been conducted by Dr. Floyd Hayes, professor in the Biology Department at Pacific Union College in Angwin. This article summarizes his 2018 monitoring report.

Breeding season starts late

No nests were found in April or May, unlike the previous two years in which nesting began much earlier than usual. The first eggs were found on July 3 (although some were probably present in late June).

Nesting peaked at different times at the north and south ends of the lake:

- Late June and early July in the southern arm and outlet of the lake,
- Mid-July in the colonies south of Lakeport
- Mid-August at the north end of the lake and its major tributary Rodman Slough.

Over the season, the survey team estimated a total

of 4,022 nests in 14 colonies. The vast majority (95%) were attached to submerged vegetation in open water, with the remaining 5% attached to emergent vegetation along the shore.

Only one juvenile seen during brood survey

Throughout the summer, many birders and boaters had reported seeing either no grebe chicks or just one or two. This was confirmed during the brood survey by motorboat at the end of the breeding season, on September 23, when only one juvenile was observed within the transect area. This was the lowest reproduction rate (0.0006 juveniles per adult) of the nine seasons, despite the fact that the number of nests this year was the fourth highest. (See accompanying charts.) No nests at all were seen during the September survey this year.

Wildfires might have impacted lack of chicks this year

It is difficult to explain why the nesting success was so low. One possible explanation is the proximity of the two huge wildfires that ultimately burned 717

square miles of Lake and adjoining counties. The fires brought evacuation of numerous towns along Clear Lake. They burned within 3 km of the north-western shore of the lake during the last few days of July and within 3 km of the northeastern shore of the lake during the first week of August.

The grebes apparently did not stop nesting during the fires.

With almost all the nests this year located at the

north end of the lake, that geographical area was also the area of Lake County with the heaviest smoke from the fires. On August 10, while the smoke was still thick over Clear Lake, the survey team counted 2,665 nests, mostly at the north end of the lake and its largest tributary Rodman Slough. Many of the nests were active, with the grebes participating in nest construction, copulation, and incubation.

However, it could be possible that the fires' smoke, ash, and fire retardant falling on the nesting birds might have adversely impacted them. Since both children and the elderly are known to experience serious health impacts from smoke inhalation, perhaps the smoke could also have affected the recently-born chicks.

Dr. Floyd Hayes, the biologist who conducts Redbud's grebe research said that "It's very possible that grebe chicks are more vulnerable to smoke inhalation than adults. Perhaps that is the best explanation for such massive reproductive failure."

National Audubon's article on how wildfires affect birds

An article dated October 2017 on the National Audubon website says that "Smoke might still affect birds' health in ways that aren't very well understood. 'We do know that exposure to particulate matter, which of course is of great concern for human health, can affect birds as well,' says Olivia Sanderfoot, a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow at the University of Washington Seattle who studies how air pollution affects birds.

"For example, veterinarians and poultry scientists who study captive birds have found that smoke can damage lung tissue and leave the animals susceptible to potentially lethal respiratory infections.

"How that plays out in the wild is largely unknown, Sanderfoot says. Her current research aims to track changes in bird populations and diversity after exposure to smoke from large wildfires." (To read the full Audubon article, go to <https://www.audubon.org/news/how-wildfires-affect-birds>.)

Whatever the causes of this year's Clear Lake breeding failure, this was the most disappointing season in the nine years of Redbud's current grebe research.

Clear Lake Grebe Breeding Data

By number of juveniles recorded in late September

<u>Juveniles</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Reproductive</u>		<u>Year</u>
	<u>Nests</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Rate</u>	
704	4,993	6,245	0.1100	2016
599	5,075	4,560	0.0250	2017
442	5,936	2,799	0.1600	2014
361	2,382	7,760	0.0330	2012
211	2,737	8,250	0.0270	2013
121	1,322	2,694	0.0450	2010
29	1,248	6,443	0.0050	2011
9	888	3,253	0.0027	2015
1	4,022	3,703	0.0006	2018

By breeding season year

<u>Juveniles</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Reproductive</u>	
	<u>Nests</u>	<u>Grebes</u>	<u>Young</u>	<u>Rate</u>
2018	4,022	3,703	1	0.0006
2017	5,075	4,560	599	0.0250
2016	4,993	6,245	704	0.1100
2015	888	3,253	9	0.0027
2014	5,936	2,799	442	0.1600
2013	2,737	8,250	211	0.0270
2012	2,382	7,760	361	0.0330
2011	1,248	6,443	29	0.0050
2010	1,322	2,694	121	0.0450

Based on research data from Redbud Grebe Conservation
Grant funded by Luchenbach Council and Audubon California



The osprey nest at the Lakeside County Park. The tree it was built on was dying and had to be removed, but a new osprey pole and platform are being installed. Photo by Terry Knight



Chalked circle shows new nest pole site between removed trees.



Nest platform will be attached to new Osprey pole (shown upside-down)



County parks crew saved the large, heavy existing osprey nest built over many years.

Osprey family will return to a new home next spring

Redbud Audubon is working with partner organizations to install a new nesting platform for the osprey family that has built its nest for many years at the top of a decaying tree at Lakeside County Park. The tree and nest were in an open area with an unobstructed view from all sides that allowed people to watch the osprey throughout the long breeding season as the osprey parents raised their young.

Because the tree was dying and needed to be removed, Audubon reached out to several groups to cooperatively replace the tree with a new osprey pole.

Calpine Corporation is constructing the pole, attaching the nest platform, and working with the County of Lake Parks Department to install the new pole near the original nest site. The County Parks crew saved the large 4'x3' nest that the Osprey pair had built over many years, and that nest will be placed on the new platform. The new pole will be installed in the park in mid-November.

The project goals are to draw more people to visit Lakeside Park and to encourage the public to watch and enjoy these interesting birds.

Redbud Audubon to participate in annual Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 15

This year, the annual Clear Lake Christmas Bird Count, held by the Redbud Audubon Society, will be on Saturday, Dec. 15. The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a traditional project of Audubon societies around the country and takes place between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5.

Prior to the bird count, the annual Bird Identification program "Know Your Local Birds" will be held at the regular Redbud Audubon Society program meeting, which will be held on Dec. 13, the second Thursday of the month instead of the third.

Redbud Audubon welcomes all levels of birding experience for the Christmas Bird Count, from the beginner to the expert. This year we are also looking for more experienced birders to be team leaders in parts of our count circle that are not currently represented.

We especially need folks with boats who could go out on Clear Lake. If you are interested in participating in the bird count in any of these various ways, please contact Brad Barnwell at (707) 263-1283 and someone will return your call.

Adventures in Fiji with Dr. Floyd Hayes features photos and video

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medical clinics for the island's residents. A deadly tropical storm passed through the islands at the end of the March trip, which will be portrayed in a short video.

Dr. Hayes is a zoologist specializing in the ecology, behavior and biogeography of birds, but has studied a diversity of other organisms including anemones, crustaceans, sea urchins, frogs, turtles, snakes and bats. While an undergraduate student, Dr. Hayes took off a year to teach in an elementary school on the island of Kosrae in Micronesia (1981-1982). He worked for three years as a vertebrate biologist for the US Peace Corps, based in the National Museum of Natural History of Paraguay (1987-1989). He also taught biology for nine years at the University of the Southern Caribbean and the University of the West

Indies in Trinidad and Tobago (1993-2002), and spent a year working as a wildlife biologist for the Division of Fish and Wildlife in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands (2002-2003).

Since 2003 Dr. Hayes has worked as a Professor of Biology at Pacific Union College. During the past nine summers he has been studying the breeding grebes of Clear Lake.

He has published the results of field research in 14 countries in peer-reviewed scientific journals, and was the editor in chief of Journal of Caribbean Ornithology from 2005-2013. In his spare time he enjoys birding, rock climbing, mountaineering, snorkeling, scuba diving, and documenting his adventures with photos and videos.

Please join us for what promises to be a fascinating program.





Getting ready to head out for the October field trip at Indian Meadows.

Indian Meadows was fun; now join us at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park!

The Redbud Audubon Society October field trip to Indian Meadows on Cobb Mt. was a fun day. After birding for a couple of hours on the beautiful Indian Meadows camp property, everyone attending enjoyed lunch together. Many thanks to Jeannette Knight for arranging this great field trip that we enjoy every year. She makes sure we have nice tables to sit at and restrooms! Very important, as we all know.

For November we will be at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. The field trip starts at 9 a.m. with everyone meeting in the parking lot. Please come prepared to “feed the iron ranger,” as parking fees are enforced. The fee is \$4. This trip should yield some nice songbirds, raptors, herons and egrets along the creek, and who knows what else? All are welcome and we look forward to seeing you.



Just one of the interesting aspects of our Audubon field trips.



Margit Pataki, Jeanette Knight, and Roberta Lyons are ready for a fun hike.



Jeannette Knight and Margit Pataki enjoying one of the ancient oaks on the Indian Meadows property.



Margit Pataki, Rebecca Rees and Janis Irving, also known as the "Anderson Springs Fire Survivors," enjoyed the field trip in October at Indian Meadows.

Save the Date! *Olympic Birdfest*

Olympic Birdfest, April 12-14, 2019. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction, raffle, gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker: John Marzluff, professor of wildlife science at the University of Washington and author. Join our festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 9-11, 2019 or extend your festival with our Neah Bay post-trip on April 14-16, 2019: three days exploring northwest coastal Washington. To learn more and register, visit www.olympicbirdfest.org.

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.

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.

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

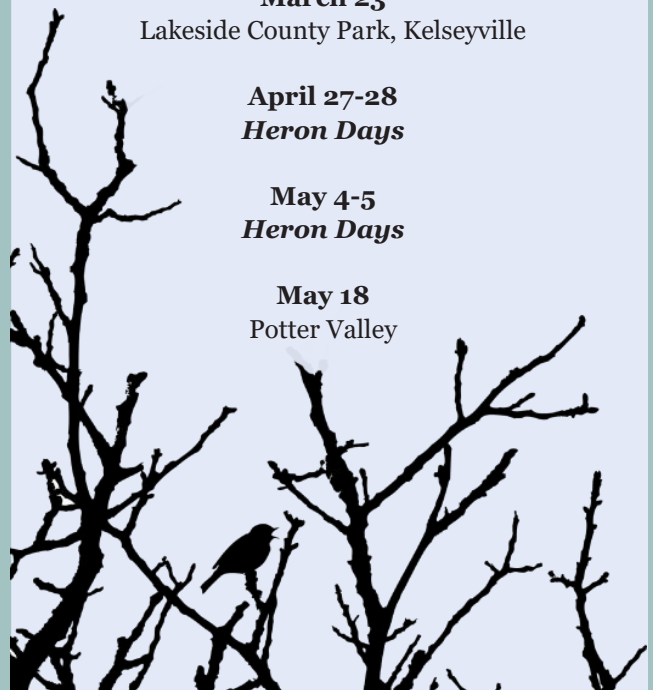
March 23

Lakeside County Park, Kelseyville

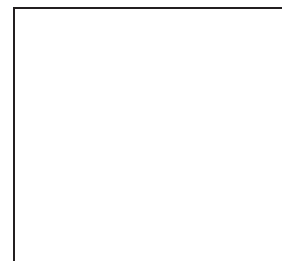
April 27-28 Heron Days

May 4-5 Heron Days

May 18 Potter Valley



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.

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**

Thank you for supporting Redbud Audubon Society
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