



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

Volume 44 • Issue No. 5 • January, 2019

How climate change is impacting local birds

Starting in January, Redbud Audubon will meet at the Methodist Church Social Hall, 16255 Second St. in Lower Lake as we have been doing for the last few years. 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. Sadly, the beautiful Methodist Church was destroyed in the Clayton Fire but the Social Hall where we meet was spared. We have felt that moving our meetings to the south end of the county for half of our season is a way to accommodate all of our Redbud Audubon members county-wide. Hope to see you there!

JANUARY MEETING

Thursday, January 17

- **Topic:** How Climate Change is Impacting Local Birds
- **Speaker:** Dr. Wendy Schackwitz
- **Refreshments:** 7 pm
- **Announcements:** 7:15 pm
- **Program:** 7:30 pm
- **Location:** Methodist Church Social Hall, 16255 Second St. in Lower Lake

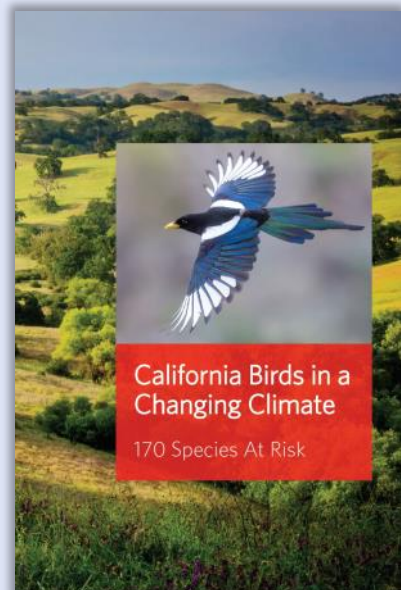


Dr. Schackwitz

As our climate changes, the entire web of life must adapt or perish. If a flower blooms earlier due to increased temperatures, insects that depend on that flower must hatch earlier, and birds that consume those insects must arrive from their spring migration earlier.

Whether birds will be able to adapt to this change is uncertain. National Audubon has determined that 50% of our birds will be threatened by climate change. During this program, Dr. Wendy Schackwitz will explain the science behind this research and provide a set of actions that you can take to help our climate-threatened birds. She will discuss how Citizen Science projects such as Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts were used to identify bird population trends. She will also describe how two new Citizen Science projects, Bird Seasons and Climate Watch, are improving our understanding of these trends.

Continued on page 6



January meeting attendees will receive a free copy of Napa-Solano Audubon's booklet, "California Birds in a Changing Climate."

President's Message

by President Roberta Lyons



Redbud Audubon Society held a successful and fun Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Dec. 15. You can read about the preliminary results in this newsletter. Redbud Audubon has been holding CBCs for 44 years now.

I've often written about the origins of the CBC and many of you probably already know how it came about, but it doesn't hurt to mention it now and again. According to National Audubon's website: "Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the "Christmas Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns—whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

"Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day

1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them."

It is encouraging that over 100 years later, more people than ever have taken a great interest in the well-being of birds and becoming citizen scientists by participating in annual CBCs all over this country and worldwide. However, you don't have to wait until December to become a citizen scientists. Thanks to eBird, everyone can take part in an exciting and growing project that is popular worldwide. According to the eBird website, the program "began with a simple idea – that every birdwatcher has unique knowledge and experience. The goal is to gather this information in the form of checklists of birds, archive it, and freely share it to power new data-driven approaches to science, conservation and education.

"eBird is the world's largest biodiversity-related citizen science project with more than 100 million bird sightings contributed each year by eBirders around the world. A collaborative enterprise with hundreds of partner organizations, thousands of regional experts, and hundreds of thousands of users, eBird is managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology."

I have known about eBird for quite a while, but didn't sign up until I saw a Roadrunner on Highway 29 outside of Lower Lake. I was so excited I wanted to share the news with someone, and when talking to Brad Barnwell, organizer of Redbud's CBC every year (along with his wife Kathy) he encouraged me to join eBird. So I did and it has really been fun.

So, bird on everyone and join eBird (www.ebird.org) to become part of a fabulous vast network of citizen scientists!

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.

Welcome new and returning members

Sandra Moura, Kelseyville; Cynthia Edwards, Kelseyville; Shelley Aldrich, Kelseyville; Kenneth O Spoon, Kelseyville; Ann Blue, Lakeport; Patti West-Truby, Lucerne; Nancy Thornton, Lakeport; Paul Farley, Lakeport; John Frye, Lakeport; Susan Rode, Kelseyville; Peter Ambrosia; Clearlake Oaks, and Karen Weston, Lakeport.

REDBUD AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS



OFFICERS

President: Roberta Lyons

Vice President: Open

Treasurer: Nicola Selph

Secretary: Katherine Lindsley

Past-President: Marilyn Waits

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Bird Observations - Jerry White

Christmas Bird Count - Brad and Kathy Barnwell

Conservation - Roberta Lyons & Evelyn Wachtel

Education - Lisa Prather

Field Trips - Pat Harmon

Grebe Project Manager - Marilyn Waits

Historian - Pat Harmon

Hospitality - Pat Harmon

Member-at-Large- Tina Wasson

Membership Manager - Susanne Scholz

Newsletter Editor - Roberta Lyons

Newsletter Email Distribution - Lisa Prather

Newsletter Production - Jim Scholz

Programs - Marilyn Waits

Publicity - Roberta Lyons

Webmaster and Social Media - Bonnie Thompson

To contact a board member:

Phone 707/ 263-8030

Email: redbud.audubon@gmail.com



Almost 3,000 White Pelicans were seen on the Redbud Audubon Society's 44th annual Christmas Bird Count on December 15. Photo by Brad Barnwell.

2018 Christmas Bird Count Preliminary Results Released

By Brad and Kathy Barnwell, CBC organizers

One hundred twenty-two species of birds were seen on the Redbud Audubon 2018 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) held Dec. 15, 2018.

It's the third year in a row that we did not see at least 130 species, and the fifth time in the last 21 years that our count was below 130 species. In the last 21 years the highest count was 153 in 2007, and the lowest was 122 in 2003, and now 2018.

Despite the light rain, the 39 participants who birded in 14 different groups were able to count 52,527 birds. Although this tally is well below the 68,301 birds seen in 2017, it is the third highest number since 2004, when our count was 135,312.

Additionally, the only bird seen by all 14 groups was the California Scrub-Jay and only one of each of the following species was seen this year by our excellent birders: Mute Swan, Redhead Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-necked Grebe, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Yellow Warbler, and Townsend's Warbler. Congratulations to the participants who found these birds!

None of the following, normally seen/heard, birds were recorded this year: Killdeer, Barn Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Varied Thrush, Lark Sparrow, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin. This year did produce a new bird for the CBC, the Great-tailed Grackle.



This Great-tailed Grackle was pictured a couple of years ago at Library Park in Lakeport. This year the grackle was listed as a "new," bird for the Lake County CBC.

Using only the preliminary bird numbers the top species were:

- 1. Western/Clark's Grebes at 18,691**
- 2. Ruddy Duck at 6,977**
- 3. American Robin at 4,026**
- 4. American White Pelican at 2,935**

We truly appreciate and thank all the participants for their support and efforts in making the bird count as accurate and complete as possible.

We hope that all the participants had a good time and will join us next December for the 120th Annual Christmas Bird Count. Happy Birding.

Latest Salton Sea bird population survey

Editor's Note: The Salton Sea's importance for many bird species was the topic of our October meeting with speaker Andrea Jones, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon California. This new report shows how bird populations are changing at the Salton Sea.

Audubon California's November 2018 rapid-assessment waterbird survey conducted by Dan Cooper at the Salton Sea marks the start of the third year of bi-monthly surveys of fourteen 1-km-by-1-km survey boxes along the shoreline of the sea.

Both Pelican species continue to decline. Fish-eating waterbirds continue their decline, with just a single American White Pelican detected (more were observed outside the survey boxes, but not many). Nov. 2016 had 174 white pelicans, while Nov. 2017 had 13. Brown Pelicans were also scarce with two found (vs. 62 in Nov. 2016, then 10 in Nov. 2017). Double-crested Cormorant numbers have similarly plummeted, with 65 across the 6 counts in 2018, vs. 753 in 2017.

Large waders (herons/egrets) continue in small numbers, but Snowy Egret counts exceeded 100 for the 2018 survey, so it's possible they're feeding on small fish, which may indicate successful spawning (It would be interesting to see if fish monitoring confirms this). Most birds were observed at freshwater inlets to the sea, as along the southeastern seawall.

Eared Grebes may be making a small comeback, with 672 birds tallied in Nov. 2018, vs. 0 in Nov. 2017 (and 466 in Nov. 2016). It is possible they are eating water boatmen (insects) now abundant on the surface of the sea, an ephemeral food source that has been particularly common in the past year.

Some duck and shorebird species show 2018 increase in population

Ducks remain common if not increasing, with nearly 12,000 Northern Shoveler recorded for 2018, vs. 8600 in 2017. While we don't have many prior years for comparison, Nov. 2016 found 795 Northern Shoveler, while Nov. 2018 found more than 5,000. Northern Pintail numbers also jumped from c. 300 in 2017, to c. 2000 in 2018. These are most abundant along the southwestern corner of the sea, visible from the end of Poe Rd. Ruddy Duck counts roughly doubled 2017-2018, from c. 6000 to c. 11,000. Shorebirds continue

to increase, with 6,462 "peeps" (small shorebirds) in 2017, to c. 10,000 in 2018. Individual species counts also showed many increases across the past three Novembers, such as Willet, going from 116 to 188 to 308 on November counts from 2016-2018.

Membership explained

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 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. 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.

Join 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 15, 16, 17 and 18. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish!

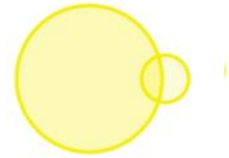
If you're new to the count, or have not participated since before the 2013 merger with eBird, you must create a free online account to enter your checklist. Go to gbbc.birdcount.org. If you already have an account, just use the same login name and password.

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!



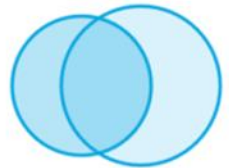
Species Range 2000 - 2080

SUMMER



4% stable
89% decrease

WINTER



58% stable
31% increase

How climate change is impacting local birds

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Schackwitz is the previous president of Napa-Solano Audubon, retired scientist at the Joint Genome Institute, and an independent bioacoustics researcher. Dr. Schackwitz worked for 13 years at the Joint Genome Institute/Lawrence Berkeley National Lab,

where she led a group studying the genetics of organisms important for bio-fuel production. Her current work is using audio recordings to track the impacts of climate change on bird species distributions as well as the timing of the reproductive success and failures of Tricolored Blackbird colonies.

Field Trips and Ride Sharing

Due to insurance requirements, Redbud Audubon leaders are no longer organizing carpools for out-of-county or distant field trips. However, participants can voluntarily share rides. Any carpool arrangements are private arrangements between the driver and the passengers. By arriving at least 10 minutes early at the specified meeting place for distant field trips any necessary travel arrangements can be made. Drivers should carry adequate insurance coverage. It is also appreciated to offer to share gas expenses with the driver.



Northern Pintails are just a few of the many species that can be viewed at the Sacramento and Colusa NWRs.



This is what we hope to be doing on Jan. 19 for our annual NWR field trip, but we will have to wait and see as of press time.

Redbud Audubon hopes to host field trip to Colusa and Sacramento NWRs

At the time of this writing, it is still unknown if the “government shutdown,” is going to continue through Jan. 19, this year’s date for Redbud Audubon’s annual field trip to the Colusa and Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges. Even if the government is still shut-down, it still may be possible to visit one or both of the NWRs, but of course we won’t know until we get over there. The website for the NWRs does say that they are closed, but individuals are reporting that visitors are able to drive into the Colusa NWR. Bathrooms are closed though.

So, we are taking a “wait and see,” approach and will announce at the meeting on Jan. 17 if the field trip will be held.

This field trip to the NWRs is one of our most popular events and is a great way to get to know your wildfowl and shorebirds.

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. Please see our new carpooling policy that is printed in this newsletter. 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.



Lots of ducks and wildfowl are always about this time of year at the NWRs.

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.

January 19

Colusa and Sacramento
National Wildlife Refuges

February 23

Clear Lake State Park
Soda Bay Rd. Kelseyville

March 23

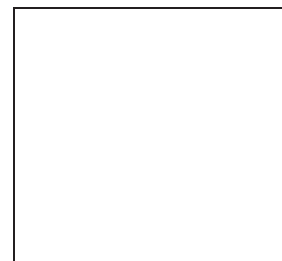
Lakeside County Park, Kelseyville

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
Connecting People with Nature since 1974