



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

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November meeting will feature Lake County's Dark Skies and efforts to preserve them



Elisa Prather

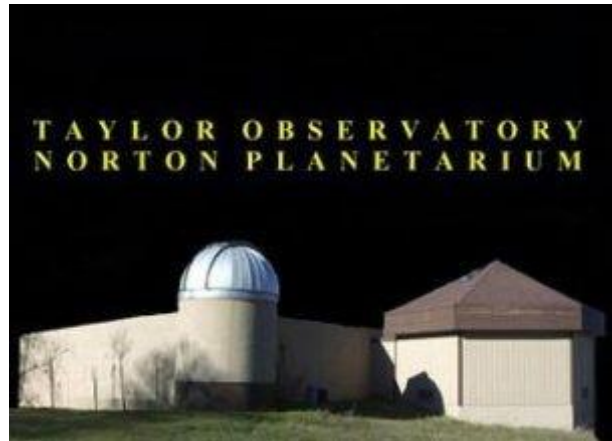
The November Redbud Audubon Society meeting will be a special one! Elisa Prather and Angelo Parisi from the Lake County Office of Education are pairing up to provide a talk at the Taylor Observatory and Norton Planetarium start-

ing at 7 p.m. The facility is located at 5725 Oak Hills Lane in Kelseyville. (Driving directions are provided at the end of this article.)

In the Observatory's classroom, Elisa Prather will share information about Lake County's Dark Sky Initiative and how it can bring astro-tourism to Lake County. Part of the talk will include a focus on the environmental impacts of light pollution on nocturnal migrations of birds.

After Elisa's talk, attendees will move to the Planetarium, where Angelo Parisi will share his wealth of astronomical knowledge to point out major objects in the night sky and to answer questions. Weather permitting, Angelo will delight visitors with a look through his 14" Dobsonian telescope. Dress warmly as much of the evening will be outside.

Prather is the Science and Math Education Specialist for the Lake County Office of Education. She previously taught science classes at



both middle school and high school levels in Lakeport. In 2016 she was honored as the Lake County Teacher of the Year. She has been a member of the Redbud Board of Directors for four years and chairs the chapter's Education

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Note: location of this month's meeting is changed to the Taylor Observatory in Kelseyville

NOVEMBER MEETING Thursday, November 21

- **Topic:** Lake County's Dark Skies
- **Speaker:** Elisa Prather
- **Program:** 7 pm
- **Location:** Taylor Observatory, 5725 Oak Hills Lane, Kelseyville (see directions on page 7)

President's Message by Roberta Lyons

Proud of our board and volunteers



Recently I was visiting with my friend Val Nixon, a former Park Ranger and now president of the Lake County Land Trust. We were talking about the difficulties in achieving diversity in our local non-profits and I mentioned to her that Redbud Audubon had recently placed Osprey interpretive panels at the Lakeside County Park and we had one done in Spanish.

Val thought that was pretty cool and a good effort. Then she said: "You know, Redbud Audubon is really a neat organization. You guys do a lot of things: your monthly meetings and field trips, the Christmas Bird Count, Heron Days, the Grebe Project, the Osprey panels." Her comment made me think.

As a small organization with no paid staff, operated by pretty much the same group of folks for many years, it is easy to look at neighboring organizations, see all of the "cool," stuff *they* are doing and feel, well, inadequate. I tend always to feel that we should be doing more, especially when I read or hear about the fabulous projects being accomplished by other groups.

So, this is just a quick thank you to Val for making me feel better about our local efforts. We are doing some important work here and we should be proud of what we do. Here's to our board of directors and volunteers who make what we are able to do possible. And, by the way, if you would like to join our efforts give me a call at (707) 994-2024. We would love to have you!

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.



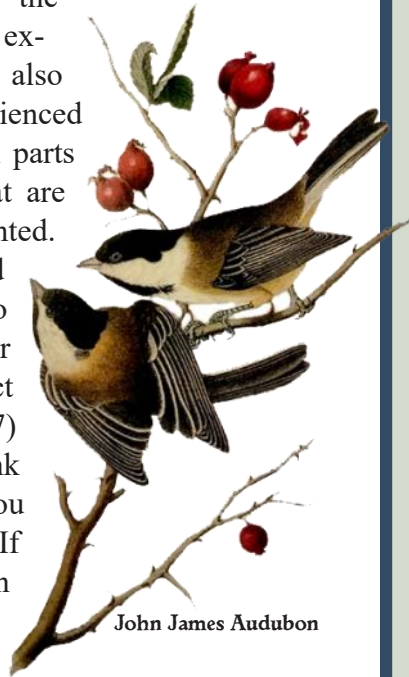
Redbud Audubon to participate in annual Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 14

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

If you are interested in participating in the bird count, call (707) 263-1283, leave a message with your phone number, and someone will return your call. Previous to the bird count the annual Bird Identification program will be held at the regular Redbud Audubon Society program meeting, which will be held early on Dec. 12, the second Thursday of the month instead of the third.

Redbud Audubon welcomes all levels of birding experience, from the beginner to the expert. This year we are also looking for more experienced people to be 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. Please contact Brad Barnwell at (707) 263-1283 if you think this is something you would be interested in. If you have participated in previous bird counts you will be receiving a packet of information from Brad and Kathy Barnwell, Redbud Audubon's CBC coordinators.

A fun ending of the day is planned at Kelseyville Pizza Parlor where participants enjoy a hosted pizza dinner. People start arriving for the dinner at 5 p.m.



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The 2019 breeding season of Western and Clark's Grebes at Clear Lake

Editor's Note: The 2019 season marks the end of Redbud Audubon's grant funded Grebe project. We thank Dr. Floyd Hayes, his volunteers, including Bryan McIntosh, and his college students for providing such detailed and careful reporting of Grebes on Clear Lake. The Western and Clark's Grebes of Clear Lake are one of our most iconic waterfowl and the effort to understand their behavior and track their breeding success is invaluable. Also, many thanks to former President of Redbud Audubon, Marilyn Waits, for her managing of this project and conducting public outreach.

**By Floyd E. Hayes, Bryan J. McIntosh
and Jessica J. Edens**

For the 10th consecutive summer we studied the breeding biology of Western Grebes and Clark's Grebes at Clear Lake during 16 days of field work in 2019. The breeding season began more slowly than usual, with the first four nests found on May 27. The first eggs were found on June 20. Only 158 nests were present by July 2 and 301 nests by July 15. However, the pace of nesting accelerated afterward, with an estimated total of 2,829 nests in 13 colonies, of which 84% were attended by Western Grebes and 16% by Clark's Grebes. It was an average year for reproductive effort, with 2,829 nests ranked as our 6th highest of 10 years (range = 888-5,936 nests).

Considerable annual variation occurs in the sites selected by grebes for nesting. This year was very unusual in that only 6% of the nests were in the lake's major tributary (Rodman Slough) and in the northwestern arm of the lake, while 94% of the nests were in the southeastern arm of the lake and the lake's outlet (Anderson Marsh). For the first time we documented a colony at Indian Island in the southeastern arm of the lake which delighted many residents who visited the colony by boat. We are puzzled by why so few grebes nested this year in the major tributary and northwestern arm of the lake. Most nests were attached to emergent vegetation along the shore (80%), which typically occurs during years with high water. The remaining nests were attached to submergent vegetation in open water, placed up to 408 meters from shore. The first chick observed was on Aug. 19. Many nests were still active by Sept. 6 but a thorough



*Baby grebe rides on the back of its parent.
Photo by Gae Henry*



Grebe and eggs in the nest. Photo by Gae Henry.



*Clutch of eggs in a floating grebe nest.
Photo by Gae Henry*



A colony of grebes nesting at Indian Island, near Clearlake, on August 19. Photo by Floyd E. Hayes.

search of the lake's perimeter by motorboat on Sept. 22 failed to find any nests, indicating that the breeding season had ended. During our Sept. 22 survey we tallied 2,746 adult grebes within 100 meters of our boat, of which 84% were Western Grebes and 16% were Clark's Grebes (the same ratio as nesting birds). We also counted 108 juvenile grebes within 100 meters of our boat, of which 83% were Western Grebes and 17% were Clark's Grebes (nearly the same ratio of nesting grebes), for an overall ratio of 0.039 juveniles per adult. Extrapolating the ratio of juveniles to adults within 100 m of our boat to the total number of adult grebes counted, including those beyond 100 m of our boat, we estimate a minimum number of 144 juveniles for the lake. Of course our counts are very conservative, because we were unable to count grebes out in the middle of the lake, where we know there are many grebes. Reproductive success was average,

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American Crow eating eggs from a grebe nest. Photo by Floyd Hayes

The 2019 breeding season of Western and Clark's Grebes at Clear Lake

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with our ratio of 0.039 juveniles per adult ranked as our 6th highest of 10 years (range = 0.0006-0.25 juveniles per adult). We are still puzzled by why reproductive success is so low, with only a tiny fraction of the eggs laid successfully hatching and developing into adults.

We recorded only three disturbances of nesting birds during 13.25 hours of observation of nests with eggs, for an average of 0.23 disturbances per hour. We observed eight intrusions by the California Gull (*Larus californicus*) and 26 intrusions by the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), with only two instances of predation by the American Crow. Because boaters usually avoid entering the weedy areas where grebes nest, we observed only one instance of a motorboat entering a colony. Unfortunately, more than 50 nests in open water in the vicinity of Indian Island were blown ashore by strong winds, which is a common cause of nesting failure.

We are grateful for the generous funding received from the Luckenbach Trustee Council during 10 years of field work on the grebes of Clear Lake. We are also grateful for the support of the Redbud Audubon Society and the residents of Clear Lake. During the next six months we will be writing a detailed report summarizing the results of our long-term study of the nesting ecology of grebes on Clear Lake, which will provide scientists and policymakers with more information on the resources required to more effectively manage the lake and protect the grebes for posterity.



*Grebes dance across the water.
Photo by Gae Henry.*



*A grebe busy gathering nesting material.
Photo by Gae Henry*

November meeting will feature Lake County's dark skies

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Committee. Angelo Parisi is a retiree from the US Postal Service and currently the Taylor Field Trip Coordinator for Lake County Office of Education. In this capacity he coordinates field trips and provides engaging learning activities for students from Kindergarten to adult. Angelo has been a favorite guest at the Windows on the Universe public events that are hosted by the Friends of Taylor Observatory. At these events he weaves his knowledge about the universe with his skill as a musician to entertain as well as educate his audiences. Angelo is an amateur astronomer and founding member of the Robert Ferguson Observatory located in Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. During his work there, he formed the Big Bang Band Traveling Star Show.

Friends of Taylor Observatory, with collaboration from many community stakeholders, is seeking Dark

Sky Certification from the International Dark Sky Association (IDA). The group has been successful in its first effort towards this certification by convincing the Lake County Board of Supervisors to pass a proclamation in November 2018 to show support for this effort. Redbud Audubon was among the community groups that supported this first step.

A Certified IDA International Dark Sky Community is a town, city, municipality or other legally organized community that has shown exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky through the implementation and enforcement of a quality outdoor lighting ordinance, dark sky education and citizen support of dark skies.

The dark-sky movement is a campaign to reduce light pollution. The dark-sky movement encourages the use of full-cutoff lighting fixtures that cast little or

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November meeting will feature Lake County's Dark Skies

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no light upward in public areas and encourages communities to adopt lighting regulations. Among the impacts of light pollution is that it has been found to affect human circadian rhythms.

There are two principal goals of the Dark Sky Initiative in Lake County. The first is to foster an astronomy tourism industry for Lake County. The San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, and Santa Rosa regions have limited star visibility because of extensive lighting. The second goal is to preserve Lake County dark skies for future generations of students.

Please plan to attend this interesting and informa-

tive meeting. The public is welcome. For more information about the Redbud Audubon Society, go to www.redbudaudubon.org.

Driving directions to Observatory: From Highway 29, (as if you are coming from Lower Lake) take the first Kelseyville Main Street exit. After passing Kelseyville High School, turn right onto Konocti Road for about 1.2 miles. Take a right on Oak Hills Lane which turns into a dirt road, and the Observatory 5725 Oak Hills Lane, will be through an entrance on the left. Obviously, if you are coming from Lakeport, the directions will be opposite.

Rob Patton is working hard to keep fishing line out of Clear Lake

Redbud Audubon Society Volunteer, Rob Patton, our Fishing Line Recycle Co-ordinator, has been working on an amazing project now for several years. He has built and installed 25 recycle bins to hold used fishing lines at various boat launching areas around Clear Lake.

He, along with volunteers Donna and Richard Mackiewicz and others are monitoring the bins and make sure the line is removed, along with trash that people tend to dump in them as well. Following are just a few of the areas that Rob and his volunteers are keeping track of:

Shady Acres Campground, in Clearlake. The bin was full of fishing line, but there was not trash.

The bin at Clear Lake Vista Resort on Soda Bay Road was ¼ full of fishing line, with five to ten pieces of trash.

Clarks Island, had about the same ratio. Other bins near boat ramps around Clearlake include Redbud Park, Redbud Park Fishing Pier, Highlands Park in front of the fishing wall in Clearlake; Clearlake State Park on Soda Bay Road, Lakeside County Park, Konocti Vista Casino, Library Park, Skylark Shores Resort, Lakeport; Rodman Slough County park, Keeling Park, Nice; Holiday Harbor Park, Nice; Alpine Park, Lucerne, Harbor Park Lucerne, Indian Beach Resort, Glenhaven, Kono Tayee Boat Launch, Lucerne; and the Highland Springs Recreation area.



Volunteers needed to empty recycling bins.

Most of the bins were full of both used fishing line and trash. Signs asking people not to deposit trash are prominent, but nevertheless, trash is still getting stuffed into the bins so it is really necessary to monitor them and clean them out. If anyone lives near these bin locations and would like to volunteer to help Rob monitor and empty the bins, contact him at (707) 319-8983.

Field Trip Calendar

Following is the field trip calendar for the Redbud Audubon Society for 2019 – 2020. 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.

December 14

Christmas Bird Count

January 18

National Wildlife Refuges at Colusa and Sacramento – carpool from Lower Lake

February 22

Clear Lake State Park – Soda Bay Road, Kelseyville

March 21

Highlands Springs Reservoir – Lakeport

April 25-6 and May 2-3

Heron Days

May 23

Eel River, Potter Valley

November Field Trip to the Reclamation Area

The Saturday, Nov. 23 Redbud Audubon Field trip will be held at the Reclamation area near Upper Lake. This will be a new trip for us and should be interesting. There are trails developed by the County, who owns the property. Meet at the county park on Highway 20 (near Upper Lake) next to Running Creek Casino.

There is a large parking lot with restrooms. Wear good walking shoes and bring water. The walk will be led by Pat Harman and Brad Barnwell.

Expect to see Song Sparrows, Pelicans, Cormorant, perhaps a Bald Eagle or Peregrine Falcon, a variety of raptors, perhaps even some Snow Geese and Green-winged Teal, and of course the American Coot, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets and even Snowy Egrets. It might even be possible to see the Wilson's snipe or Virginia Rail.

"Expect a two hour walk, depending on what we see and how long we linger," noted Brad Barnwell. The harvested rice fields are wet and flooded so there could be some good birding, Brad reports.

Please arrive at 8:45 to be able to arrange car-pooling. For information, call Pat Harmon at (707) 263-4977.

Welcome new members

Welcome new and returning members: Dorothy Patterson, Auburndale, FL; Barbara Hill, Crossville, TN; Philip Burton, Pope Valley; Charlotte Bower, Clearlake Oaks; Franz Waltenspuhl, Cobb; Thomas Moore, Lakeport; Gaylord Starin, Lakeport; Rita Franklin, Stonyford; Sharon Reynolds, Clearlake; Heidi Fitzsimmon Fitzsimmons, Kelseyville.

Harry Wagner, Kelseyville; Beatrice Garcia, Lower Lake; Rachel Heher, Lower Lake; Ruth Berman Mellion, Hidden Valley Lake; John Stierna, Hidden Valley Lake; Marion Rita Franklin, Stonyford; Katherine Lindsley, Lakeport; Janice Jennings, Lucerne; Nancy Case, Clearlake;

Dennis Johnson, Clearlake; Carlene Leskar, Clearlake Oaks; Sophie Koot, Kelseyville; Cherri Giovannini, Cobb; Lemuel Cheney, Nice; Michele Quere, Upper Lake; Jack Elizares, Clearlake; Valerie Nixon, Kelseyville; Donald Donaldson, Kelseyville.

Brad Barnwell, Lakeport; Kathleen Sullivan, Lakeport; Marion Onstad, Lower Lake; Laura Debaun, Lower Lake; P. Pneumatikos, Lucerne; Linda Tea, Lucerne; Kimberly Watson, Clearlake Oaks; Teresa and Jeff Fetter, Ukiah; Debbie and Eric Woysilt, Oakland; John and Dyani Bachelder, Hidden Valley Lake; Nancy Rhoades, Kelseyville; and Lucy Hunter, Lakeport.



Western Meadowlarks were once a common sighting at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. They are not seen there often now, but visitors on September's field trip to the park were treated to seeing a flock.

Anderson Marsh State Historic Park Field Trip was a fun day for a small group

By Pat Harmon, Field Trip Chair

A small but enthusiastic group of birders braved the weatherman's prediction of showers for the October Redbud Audubon field trip at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, and were rewarded with an excellent morning of birding with 28 species seen including:

Western Meadowlark
American crow
Common raven
Western bluebird
Double-crested Cormorant
White-crown Sparrow
Golden-crown Sparrow
Black Phoebe
Woodduck
Bushtit
Western Scrub Jay

Northern Flicker
Downy woodpecker
Yellow-rump Warbler
Phainopepla
Cedar Waxwing
Song Sparrow
Mallard
Belted Kingfisher
American Coot
Pied-billed Grebe
Hairy Woodpecker
Red-shouldered Hawk
Orange-crowned Warbler
Oak Titmouse
Northern Mockingbird
Spotted Towhee
California Towhee

Redbud Audubon Society hosts Northern California Council

The first weekend in October the Redbud Audubon Society hosted the Northern California Council meeting. This is an annual regional event for Audubon chapters. Redbud hosted about 25 leaders from seven chapters in our region.

The Friday night dinner and Saturday discussion meeting were both held at the Lakeport Yacht Club.

The dinner started with a tasting of Lake County wines and a delicious dinner catered by Dancing Poly Farms. Dr. Harry Lyons provided the evening's program with a talk on "A Brief History of Clear Lake." Harry's presentation was followed by one of his delightful and humorous original songs.

One guest commented later that it was the very best "flip-chart-and-guitar" scientific talk she had ever heard!

Those attending the dinner and Saturday meeting included chapter leaders from Altacal (Chico), Mendocino Coast, Peregrine (Ukiah), Plumas, the Redwood Region (Humboldt), Wintu (Redding) and two representatives of Audubon California: Andrea Jones, Director of Bird Conservation, and Meghan Hertel, Director of Land and Water Conservation.

The yearly Council event is designed to update chapter leaders on projects being undertaken by each Audubon chapter and to hear from State Audubon leaders who give updates on major policy issues and projects.

The weekend included an early morning walk at the Rodman Preserve led by Ryan Keiffer of Peregrine Audubon and Roberta Lyons of Redbud.

The walk started at 7 a.m. Since all the participants were expert birders, a number of interesting and unusual birds were seen, including a Brown Creeper, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Wood Duck, Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Sora Rail, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and numerous other species totaling 46 altogether.

The Council meeting was a successful event, with attendees commenting on the beauty of Clear Lake and the hospitality extended by Redbud Audubon Society.



Katherine Lindsley and Tina Wasson were kept busy during the regional council meeting making sure everyone was fed and happy. Katherine is Redbud's secretary and Tina is a long-time board member and former vice-president and treasurer.



Traveling from Ukiah for the event were Helen Menasian (L) and Marisela de Santa Anna; Mary Muchowski, executive director for Altacal traveled from Chico.



Andrea Jones, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California gives a presentation at the Northern California Council meeting held recently in Lakeport.



Ken Sobon, (foreground) and other council attendees enjoyed the 7 a.m. walk at the Rodman Preserve. Ken is vice-president of the Altacal Audubon Society from Chico and also is a California Audubon board member.



Ryan Keiffer, of the Peregrine chapter in Ukiah helped lead the group on an early morning walk at the Lake County Land Trust's Rodman Preserve.

Oak woodlands expert and author invites volunteers to help plant acorns

Author Kate Marianchild is looking for volunteers to help restore oaks to lands burned in the Redwood Valley Fire of October, 2017. All ages are welcome. Volunteers will plant acorns and put protective cages around existing oak seedlings from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day.

During lunch, Marianchild, author of *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals among California's Oaks*, will share fascinating lore about oaks and the animals and plants that live among them.

This event is free of charge; RSVP required, and space is limited. You can register at www.oakgranary.org. Directions will be sent upon registration. (Moderate to heavy rain cancels).

Volunteer Days Available

- **Saturday 11/16 9:30 - 3:30**
- **Saturday 11/30 9:30- 3:30**
- **Sunday, 12/15 9:30 - 3:30**
- **Saturday 1/18 9:30 - 3:30**
- **Sunday. 1/19 9:30 - 3:30**

Membership explained

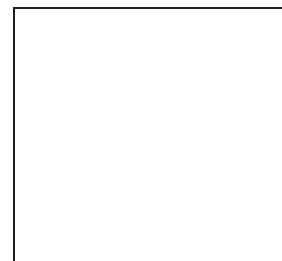
Just a quick reminder that you have a choice between two types of membership. Most of you are members of National Audubon and are assigned by National to our Redbud Audubon chapter.

We 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.

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 _____

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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
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