



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

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Audubon California's Meghan Hertel will discuss climate change and birds at risk

The Redbud Audubon Society is starting off the new year with a presentation by Meghan Hertel, Director of Land and Water Conservation for Audubon California. The Thursday, Jan. 16 meeting will be held in



Meghan Hertel

Lower Lake at the Methodist Church Social Hall, 16255 Second St. starting at 7 p.m. Roughly two-thirds of America's birds are threatened with extinction in the face of climate change. This is the key finding in the October 2019 report from the National Audubon Society. The groundbreaking climate report, ***Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink***, included stark findings that showed the likely fate of hundreds of bird species under various climate warming projections.

The study also provided hope demonstrating that keeping temperatures down will reduce that risk for many species.

Hertel will discuss this study, provide a call to action, and report what Audubon is doing in California and nationally on climate change.

Meghan Hertel has been with Audubon California since 2010. She co-leads Audubon California's conservation programs with a focus on inland water and working lands strategies. These include scaling bird-friendly manage-

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Please note meeting place change

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 on Main Street in Lower Lake, turn left on Lake Street and then right on Second St. The church social hall is on the right. We believe 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 16

- **Topic:** Climate Change and Birds at Risk
- **Speaker:** Meghan Hertel
- **Refreshments:** 7 pm
- **Announcements:** 7:15 pm **Program:** 7:30 pm
- **Location:** Methodist Church Social Hall, 16255 Second St., Lower Lake.

President's Message by Roberta Lyons

Clearing native vegetation is not the only solution to our fire threat



I've had some trouble coming up with a President's Message for this January newsletter. I thought it appropriate to focus on something positive and upbeat, but I'm so troubled by the recent approval of Cal Fire's Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) that I chose to make that my topic.

To start, let me point out, that I understand the fear and concern about fires. I live here too. I have lived through several evacuations, know friends and have family members who have lost their homes to wildfire.

However, in my mind, future protection from wildfires gets down to choice. Do we want to live in the wild areas of California and take the risk? Or, do we want to destroy much of those wild areas so we can feel safer?

The Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) which was certified by the State means that none of the proposed clearing projects will need to have individual EIRs. Even the Board of Forestry and Cal Fire note that "CalVTP will result in some significant and unavoidable environmental impacts, including the degradation of scenic landscapes and the destruction of archaeological and historical artifacts." The degradation of scenic landscapes is going to hit Lake County hard as more and more of our beautiful gray-green carpets of chaparral are destroyed.

The following section of this message quotes an editorial by one of the Chaparral Institute's leaders. The writer describes and explains what is happening much better than I can. The editorial accompanied a petition that was sent to the Governor and other State leaders. Sadly, to no avail.



"The California state government has just refused to do what is necessary to protect us from the wind-driven wildfires that kill the most people and destroy the most homes.

"Their solution? To double down on what they've always done - clear 250,000 acres of native habitat per year through grinding, burning, and herbicides in their proposed Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP). Even though the state admits that this approach will fail to protect lives and property during the most devastating wildfires, it nonetheless remains California's priority solution to the wildfire problem.

"Here is what the state admitted in response to our proposals to make communities fire safe: "When high-wind conditions drive a large fire, such as when large embers travel long distances in advance of the fire, vegetation treatment would do little, if anything, to stop downwind advance of the fire front."

"In other words, the state is going to ignore the fires that cause the greatest loss of life and property. Instead, Cal Fire, the state fire agency, will only address 95% of the fires - the ones they can easily control under calm conditions.

"This is absurd. Imagine if we designed buildings to withstand only 95th percentile earthquake movements, or what you would feel as a result of a magnitude 2.5.

"The science is clear. Proper vegetation management around homes and directly around communities is an important part of reducing fire risk. But the wholesale destruction of the natural environment is not. We need to follow the science. We need to protect communities from the fires that actually do the most damage. And we need to stop pretending we can control Nature by destroying hundreds of thousands of acres of native habitat through Cal Fire's proposed

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President's Message

Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP).

"The California state government has shown a pattern of failure when it comes to protecting us. State politicians say they agree that making communities fire safe is a priority, but Governor Newsom rejected \$1 billion in funding to do so. Instead, he championed a \$21 billion program to protect utility corporations from liability for the fires they cause. The state promotes its efforts to protect biodiversity, yet it is planning on clearing 250,000 acres/year of native habitat under the guise of fire protection.

"The California state government needs to fulfill the main obligation it has to its citizens—protect them from harm." *For more information, see www.californiachapparel.org*



Brad Barnwell found a **TUNDRA SWAN** at the Reclamation area on November 2, 2019. This is the earliest Fall arrival date for the county. Also Brad found an **AMERICAN AVOCET** on November 22nd in the Reclamation area. This is the latest Fall record for this species for the county. On October 8, 2019 a **NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** was found by Bryan McIntosh at Clear Lake State Park. The bird was also seen that day by Dave Woodward. Some distant photos were taken. I (JRW) saw the bird on October 10th. This species is found within the state only in Southern California. It is a first county record for Lake. A **PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER** was found on October 19th on Cobb by Darlene Hecomovich. She noted that this was the latest Fall Record ever for the Cobb Mountain area. The first county record for **PHILADELPHIA VIREO** was a bird found by Bryan McIntosh at Clear Lake State Park on August 25th. Another county first by B. McIntosh was a **HOODED WARBLER** first found on August 18th at Anderson Marsh State Park and which stayed until at least August 31st. The bird was seen by Dave Woodward and I (JRW) on August 28th and was throughout its stay either seen or heard by a number of local birders.

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2019 Christmas Bird Count Preliminary Results

One hundred thirty-four (134) species of birds were seen on the Redbud Audubon 2019 Christmas Bird Count held December 14, 2019. Since 1997, the highest count was 153 species in 2007, and the lowest was 122 in both 2003 and last year.

The weather was mild this year, with light rain late in the day. The 34 participants who birded in 11 different groups were able to count a total of 41,951 birds. Although this tally is well below the 68,266 birds seen in 2017, it is the sixth highest number since our biggest year in 2004, when our count was 135,312.

These three birds were seen by all 11 groups: **Oak Titmouse**, **Black Phoebe** and **Golden-crowned Sparrow**; and the following nine birds were seen by all groups, except one feeder watcher: **Turkey Vulture**, **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Northern Flicker**, **California Scrub-Jay**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **American Robin**, **Dark-eyed Junco**, **California Towhee**, and **Brewer's Blackbird**.

The following birds were seen by only one of the 11 groups:

Snow Goose (2)
American Wigeon (12)
Green-winged Teal (3)
Scaup species (1)
Barrow's Goldeneye (3)
Green Heron (1)
Golden Eagle (1)
Cooper's Hawk (1)
Ferruginous Hawk (1)
Virginia Rail (2)
Killdeer (2)
Spotted Sandpiper (1)
Wilson's Snipe (1)
Band-tailed Pigeon (6)
Barn Owl (1)
Western Screech Owl (1)
Lewis' Woodpecker (4)
Hairy Woodpecker (1)
Pileated Woodpecker (1)
Merlin (1)
House Wren (1)
American Pipit (1)

Lark Sparrow (2)
Bell's Sparrow (1)
Rufous-crowned Sparrow (1)
Great-tailed Grackle (4)
Lawrence's Goldfinch (1)

And three new birds were added to our CBC list

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Counters on the bridge at Clear Lake State Park during the recent Christmas Bird Count.



Northern Flicker

2019 Christmas Bird Count Preliminary Results

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this year: **Wilson's Warbler**, **Yellow-headed Blackbird** and **Tricolored Blackbird**.

Congratulations to the participants who found all these birds! Using preliminary bird numbers, top species were:

1. **Western/Clark's Grebes** at 11,754
2. **Ruddy Duck** at 4,880
3. **Double-Crested Cormorant** at 4,510

4. **American White Pelican** at 3,455

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 National Audubon's Annual Christmas Bird Count.

Happy Birding.

Help further research by counting birds during the Great Backyard Bird Count February 14-17

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at birdcount.org.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share.

Last year, more than 160,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded.

The 23rd annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 14, through Monday, February 17, 2020. Please visit the official website at birdcount.org for more information and be sure to check out the latest educational and promotional resources.

"This count is so fun because anyone can take part—whether you are an expert, novice, or feeder watcher. I enjoy discovering the birds that occur in my own back yard and on my block and then comparing with others. Get involved and see how your favorite spot stacks up." -Chad Wilsey, Interim Chief Scientist

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2014 GBBC data highlighted a large



A Ruby-crowned Kinglet is one of the many birds you might see in your yard during the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count. Photo by Carol Butzbach, Spring Valley Lake.

irruption of Snowy Owls across the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes areas of the United States. The data also showed the effects that warm weather patterns have had on bird movement around the country. For more on the results of the latest GBBC, take a look at the GBBC Summary, and check out some of the images in the 2017 GBBC Photo Contest Gallery.

On the program website, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during and after the count. Be sure to check out the Explore a Region tool to get an idea of what you can expect to see in your area during the GBBC.

For questions and comments, please contact the National Audubon Society or Cornell Lab of Ornithology: **National Audubon Society**, citizenscience@audubon.org

Cornell Lab of Ornithology: Inside the US: (800)843-2473. Outside the US: (607)254-2473), gbbc@cornell.edu

Redbud Audubon to host field trip to Colusa and Sacramento NWRs

Redbud Audubon is hosting its annual field trip to the Colusa and Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) on Jan. 18, 2020. This field trip to the NWRs is one of our most popular events and is a great way to get to know wildfowl and shorebirds, as some of our expert birders attend and are happy to point out the many different species that we will be seeing.

Participants leave Lower Lake at 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 read our carpooling policy that is printed on page 7 in this newsletter. Don't miss this great opportunity to view a wide variety of migrating wildfowl with expert Audubon birders.

For more information, contact Pat Harmon at 263-4977. Information about the Redbud Audubon Society is also available at www.redbudaudubon.org.

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.



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 a 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.



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.

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Audubon California's Meghan Hertel will discuss climate change and birds at risk

ment practices and habitat restoration on farms and ranches, Audubon's engagement at the Salton Sea, and overseeing Audubon California's sanctuaries.

Prior to her current position, Meghan served as Interim State Co-Director in 2017, as well as in various other Audubon positions including Associate Director of Public Policy and San Joaquin River Project Manager. Before Audubon, Meghan worked as Conservation Program Administrator with the Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) where she managed the organization's engagement in the South Bay Salt Ponds restoration in the San Francisco Bay area and worked on several philanthropic programs focused on the Central Valley. She holds a Master's degree in

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Environmental Science and Policy from Clark University. She is a 2018 American Leadership Forum Fellow, a 2009 Water Education Foundation, William R. Gianelli Water Leader, and a 2006 Albert Schweitzer Fellow. Meghan was recently recognized as one of Sacramento's 40 under 40 for 2019.

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.

January 18 (8 a.m.)

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 25-26 and May 2-3

Heron Days

May 23

Eel River, Potter Valley

Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway January 22-26

The Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway is an event that celebrates the millions of birds and hundreds of species that use this great avian highway each year. The festival, hosted by the Altacal Audubon Society, is set for January 22-26, at the Chico Masonic Family Center in Chico.

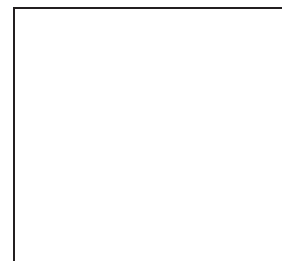
The portion of the Pacific Flyway that goes through the Northern Sacramento Valley features an ideal combination of mild winter weather, abundant food and rich quantities of water, attracting a huge wintering population of waterfowl and raptors. A local favorite among these is the majestic Snow Goose, and the festival, that has been going strong for 21 years, is named accordingly.

The event offers an opportunity to increase public awareness, understanding, appreciation, and conservation of our incredible wildlife. Those who attend will have a chance to participate in a five-day celebration that includes field trips, workshops, exhibitions and other activities that revolve around a variety of geese, herons, ducks, raptors and more, all in their natural splendor.

If you have any questions, please email info@snowgoosefestival.org, or call the Festival Office at 530-592-9092.

The Festival Headquarters and Welcome Center will be located at the Chico Masonic Family Center at 1110 W. East Ave. Chico, CA.

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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