



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

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A program on “Birds, Buds, and Bugs” to be presented by noted Mendocino naturalist

“Birds, Buds, and Bugs: Nurturing the Web of Life” is the topic of the Thursday, Feb. 20 meeting of the Redbud Audubon chapter at the Methodist Church Social Hall in Lower Lake starting at 7 p.m. The speaker, Kate Marianchild, is the author of the popular book *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals among California’s Oaks*. She gives talks and leads walks throughout central and northern California and has spoken to Redbud Audubon several times in past years.

Marianchild’s presentation will consist of the first part of a video, *The Living Landscape*, followed by a slideshow on related subjects. This program is especially relevant now in light of the recently recognized “insect and bird apocalypse” that is negatively impacting food webs and the future of life on earth.

In *The Living Landscape*, wildlife ecologist and entomologist Doug Tallamy demonstrates, with startling facts and spectacular images, the reliance of most terrestrial animals on insects, and the dependence of many of those insects on only a few types of plants—mostly native plants or their close relatives. The video focuses particularly on moth and butterfly caterpillars, which Tallamy and his students have determined are critically necessary to the survival of most songbird babies. Oak titmouse parents,

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Kate Marianchild getting to know “Almost,” an injured Acorn Woodpecker she met at Hastings Natural History Reservation in 2017.

FEBRUARY MEETING **Thursday, February 20**

- **Topic:** Birds, Buds, and Bugs
- **Speaker:** Kate Marianchild
- **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

Current administration is trying to destroy the MBTA



About 10 Redbud Audubon members and guests had a great time on the annual National Wildlife Refuge field trip in January. This is always a fun day. We see amazing birds and enjoy each other's company; plus it is great to bird with people who can easily identify the many ducks, geese, shorebirds and raptors that we see.

As many of you know, our current environmental protections are under siege by the Trump administration; especially the very important Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) which has been in place since the turn of the last century. In December 2017, the Department of the Interior (DOI) issued a legal opinion that, for the first time, exempted all incidental take from enforcement. Now, the DOI wants to double down on this opinion by making it a part of the MBTA in federal code. According to Congressman Alan Lowenthal (CA) the new language within the MBTA "seeks to eliminate incidental takes by commercial activity. An incidental take is when birds are killed during an otherwise legal activity. For example, birds which are killed by flying into open oil pits. Previous administrations have used fines and financial incentives to reduce incidental takes by commercial and business entities." This would mean that companies like BP would have gotten off with no penalties after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that killed more than a million birds that were protected under the MBTA. "A similar incident happening today, under the Trump Administration policies, would not result in a single dollar's worth of fines. That is simply wrong," Lowenthal states.

The California Congressman has introduced HR 5552, bipartisan legislation that would codify important protections for millions of migratory birds. The legislation would reverse the Trump Administration's reinterpretation of the MBTA.

To learn more about how to oppose the destruction of the MBTA, go to National Audubon's website, www.audubon.org. We could also contact our representatives, Congressman Mike Thompson and John Garamendi to urge support for Lowenthal's bill.

Legislative support is 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.



Oak Titmouse chicks need 400-500 caterpillars a day.

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for instance, have to bring a total of 7,000-10,000 caterpillars to their nestlings during the nesting period—approximately 400-550 caterpillars every day! Tallamy’s research has proven that if there are no native plants nearby, caterpillars will not be there either, and baby birds will starve. That alone, says Marianchild, is a reason to turn every yard, town, and city into a caterpillar paradise!

After showing *The Living Landscape*, which depicts only east coast species, Marianchild will “bring the food web home” to Lake and Mendocino Counties, with fascinating facts and colorful images of our butterflies, moths, birds, and the native plants that sustain them. Kate will also discuss the devastating effects of neonicotinoid insecticides, their role in the insect apocalypse, and what we can do about them.

The program will be followed by a discussion and Q&A session. Handouts will be provided that will help you determine which locally available native host plants would be appropriate for your garden and yard. She will also bring copies of her book, *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands*; her new laminated two-sided full-color guide *Identifying the Common Oaks of Northern California*; and close-focusing binoculars, which she says will change your nature-viewing life!

The presentation is free to the public, and Redbud Audubon encourages Lake County’s Master Gardeners and members of garden clubs like Lakeport’s Trowel and Trellis to attend and contribute to the discussion.

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Christmas Bird Count results

The 45th Redbud Audubon Christmas Bird Count is in the books, and after reviewing and eliminating possible double counted birds, the total species remains at one hundred thirty-four (134) species reported on our 2019 Christmas Bird Count held December 14th. This number is a little below our average (136) over the last 22 years. Our high was 153 species in 2007, and our lowest count was 122 in 2003 and 2018.

The weather was cool with partly cloudy conditions and a light rain at the end of the day. The low temperature reported was 36 and the high was 53. We had 34 participants, five fewer than last year, and eight fewer than our average (from 2004 to 2018) of 44 participants. Our effort (birding hours) was also down. We had a total of 69 hours, which is 25.5 less than our average (from 2004 to 2018) of 94.5 hours.

Despite the reduction in birding hours, the total number of birds seen was 41,666, which is a bit higher than our average over the last 16 years of 39,636. Our highest count is still 135,312 in 2003.

The rare birds seen this year were the Tri-colored Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Great-tailed Grackle. This is the first CBC sighting of the Yellow-headed Blackbird, the second CBC sighting of the Great-tailed Grackle, and the eighth CBC sighting of the Tricolored Blackbird. Other high numbers included 71 Hooded Mergansers, 9 Greater White-fronted Geese, 3,355 American White Pelicans, 4,510 Double-crested Cormorants, 77 Brown-headed Cowbirds, 26 Townsend's Warblers, and 3 White-throated Sparrows.

For the third year in a row, the Western/Clark's Grebes win the prize of the highest number with 11,754, however this total is the lowest number counted for these species in the last six years. Other higher-than-usual numbers include 78 Ring-necked Ducks (high of 61 last year), 1,966 Common Mergansers (1,217 last year); 8 Brown Creepers, and 507 Red-winged Blackbirds.

The overall picture shows lower counts for most species. Species with lower than average numbers include the following thirty-six species: Gadwall, American Widgeon, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, California Quail, Common Loon, White-tailed Kite, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, California Gull, Herring Gull, Mourning Dove, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Stellar's Jay, California Scrub-Jay, Oak Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, American Pipit, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, Song Sparrow, White and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Western Meadowlark, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

We hope the lower numbers this year can be attributed to the lower number of participants and hours birded. Please let us know if you have any ideas for encouraging more birders to participate in our count.

We truly appreciate all the participants and their support and efforts in making the bird count as accurate and complete as possible. Please join us next year for the 121st Annual Christmas Bird Count, which will be held Saturday, December 19th, 2020.

Final CBC Tally

1	Greater White-fronted	9
2	Snow Goose	2
3	Cackling Goose	3
4	Canada Goose	257
5	Wood Duck	21
6	Gadwall	14
7	American Widgeon	12
8	Mallard	470
9	Northern Shoveler	51
10	Green-winged Teal	3
	Canvasback	cw
11	Ring-necked Duck	78
12	Scaup Sp.	1
13	Bufflehead	379
14	Common Goldeneye	165
15	Barrow's Goldeneye	3
16	Hooded Merganser	71
17	Common Merganser	1966
18	Ruddy Duck	4870
19	California Quail	174
20	Ring-necked Pheasant	7
21	Wild Turkey	30
22	Pied-billed Grebe	171
23	Horned Grebe	25
24	Eared Grebe	449
25	Western Grebe	3737
26	Clark's Grebe	832
	Aechmophorus sp.	7185
27	Double-Cr Cormorant	4510
28	American White Pelican	3355
29	Great Blue Heron	45
30	Great Egret	119
31	Snowy Egret	4
32	Green Heron	1
33	Black-cr Night Heron	32
34	Turkey Vulture	131
35	Osprey	3
36	White-tailed Kite	3
37	Golden Eagle	1
38	Northern Harrier	0

39	Sharp-shinned Hawk	5
40	Cooper's Hawk	1
41	Bald Eagle	8
42	Red-shouldered Hawk	20
43	Red-tailed Hawk	40
44	Ferruginous Hawk	1
45	Virginia Rail	2
46	American Coot	2766
47	Killdeer	2
48	Spotted Sandpiper	1
49	Wilson's Snipe	1
50	Bonaparte's Gull	850
51	Ring-billed Gull	260
52	California Gull	203
53	Herring Gull	243
54	Iceland Gull=Thayers	5
55	Glaucous-winged Gull	13
	Gull sp.	2335
56	Rock Pigeon	44
57	Band-tailed Pigeon	6
58	Eurasian Collared Dove	77
59	Mourning Dove	57
60	Barn Owl	1
61	Western Screech Owl	1
62	Great Horned Owl	4
63	Anna's Hummingbird	34
64	Belted Kingfisher	18
65	Lewis' Woodpecker	4
66	Acorn Woodpecker	227
67	Red-breasted Sapsucker	6
68	Nuttall's Woodpecker	21
69	Downy Woodpecker	9
70	Hairy Woodpecker	1
71	Northern Flicker	55
72	Pileated Woodpecker	1
73	American Kestrel	11
74	Merlin	1
75	Peregrine Falcon	3
76	Black Phoebe	57
77	Say's Phoebe	6
78	Steller's Jay	21
79	California Scrub-Jay	138

80	American Crow	399
81	Common Raven	124
82	Chestnut-bckd Chickadee	7
83	Oak Titmouse	62
84	Bushtit	172
85	White-breasted Nuthatch	35
86	Brown Creeper	8
87	House Wren	1
88	Marsh Wren	7
89	Bewick's Wren	9
90	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	8
91	Golden-crowned Kinglet	9
92	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	87
93	Wrentit	9
94	Western Bluebird	114
95	Hermit Thrush	7
96	American Robin	602
97	Varied Thrush	4
98	California Thrasher	3
99	Northern Mockingbird	34
100	European Starling	637
101	American Pipit	1
102	Cedar Waxwing	23
103	Phainopepla	6
104	Orange-crowned Warbler	3
105	Yellow-rumped (form ?)	69
	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle's)	0
	Yellow-rumped(Audubon's)	24
106	Townsend's Warbler	26
107	Wilson's Warbler	1
108	Lark Sparrow	2
109	Fox Sparrow	4
110	Dark-eyed Junco - OR	214
111	White-crowned Sparrow	167
112	Golden-crowned Sparrow	163
113	White-throated Sparrow	3
114	Bell's Sparrow	1
115	Savannah Sparrow	4
116	Song Sparrow	15
117	Lincoln's Sparrow	6
118	California Towhee	74
119	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	1

120	Spotted Towhee	41
121	Red-winged Blackbird	507
122	Tricolored Blackbird	2
123	Western Meadowlark	52
124	Yellow-headed Blackbird	1
125	Brewer's Blackbird	618
126	Great-tailed Grackle	4
127	Brown-headed Cowbird	77
	Blackbird Sp.	325
128	House Finch	23
129	Purple Finch	4
130	Pine Siskin	7
131	Lesser Goldfinch	63
132	Lawrence's Goldfinch	1
133	American Goldfinch	13
134	House Sparrow	32
	TOTAL BIRDS	41666
	TOTAL SPECIES	134

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.



Murmurations

Thanks to a tip from Cobb resident Joe Fusik, Redbud Audubon member Darlene Hecomovich, made a point of visiting Boggs Lake on Mt. Hannah to observe an astounding spectacle of nature. At around 5 every evening, the European Starlings start to gather and begin forming these amazing clouds of birds. Called murmurations, the sight is truly amazing. It is believed that murmurations act as “giant signposts,” attracting all the other starlings in the area so that all the birds can roost together – safety in numbers. When there are thousands of birds all wheeling and turning together, it makes it much harder for predators to single out one particular bird. European starlings are a non-native invasive species and can be damaging to our native birds, mainly by taking over their nesting cavities. Nevertheless, as Darlene has pointed out, the starling murmurations are still a spectacle of nature, even though starlings are considered by many as “bad birds.” After they form in these groups in the sky, they drop down to roost in trees for the night. Photos by Darlene Hecomovich

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.

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



February Field Trip to Clear Lake State Park

The Feb. 22 Redbud Audubon Society Field Trip will be at the Clear Lake State Park on Soda Bay Road. This is always a great walk with the likelihood of seeing numerous songbirds and wildfowl as well as raptors, Great Blue Herons, and egrets.

Please check in at the gate and pay the entry fee if required. Participants will meet in the parking lot area near the visitor's center and begin the walk at 9 a.m.

As with all Audubon events, the public is cordially invited to join us. For information call (707)263-4977.

Welcome new and returning members

Welcome new and returning members: Lucy Hunter, Lakeport; Sandra Zalusky, Cobb; Lonna Young, Lakeport; Valerie Nixon, Kelseyville; Carl Cunningham, Cobb; William E. Bennett, Clearlake; Jason Gentle, Kelseyville; Sophia Roberts, Clearlake; Debbie and Eric Woychilt, Oakland; Kimberly Watson, Clearlake Oaks; Carrie Hanks, Kelseyville; Linda Tea, Lucerne; John and Dyani Bachelder, Hidden Valley Lake; Teresa and Jeff Fetter, Ukiah; Karen Dann, Clearlake; Margaret Staniek, Clearlake Park; Barbara Bridges, Lakeport; Susan Thomas, Lucerne; Ken Ling, Clearlake; Vicki Hays, Lakeport; and Peter G. Stanley, Lakeport.

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.



Pat Harmon braved the cold at the Colusa NWR, getting her scope out for all to enjoy great sightings of Green-winged Teal and more.



Harry Lyons and Pat birding at Colusa.



Group birding at Colusa.



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo by Roberta Lyons.

NWR Field Trip report

Redbud Audubon members and guests enjoyed a fabulous trip to both the Colusa and Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) on Jan. 18, the usual third Saturday in January when the trek is made to the Sacramento Valley. First stop was the Colusa NWR, followed by Sacramento where everyone enjoyed their lunch at the tables outside of the Nature Center and then took the auto tour through the refuge. Brad and Kathy Barnwell kept the list for both areas and noted that approximately 1800 Snow Geese were seen; as well as 1800 Ross's. Other noted ducks were Gadwall, at least 650 Northern Shoveler and 1,000 Pintail. Always fun are the Black-crowned Night Herons that perch along the creek on the driving tour at Colusa. Brad and Kathy counted 180. A nice flock of White-faced Ibis were viewed as were two Peregrine Falcons and several Bald Eagles. Redbud Audubon makes this trip every year and all are encouraged to come along. It's great fun.



A Peregrine Falcon and White-fronted geese spotted at the NWR in Colusa. Photo by Brad Barnwell.



Peregrine Falcon at NWR. Photo by Brad Barnwell.



White-faced Ibis. Photo by Roberta Lyons.



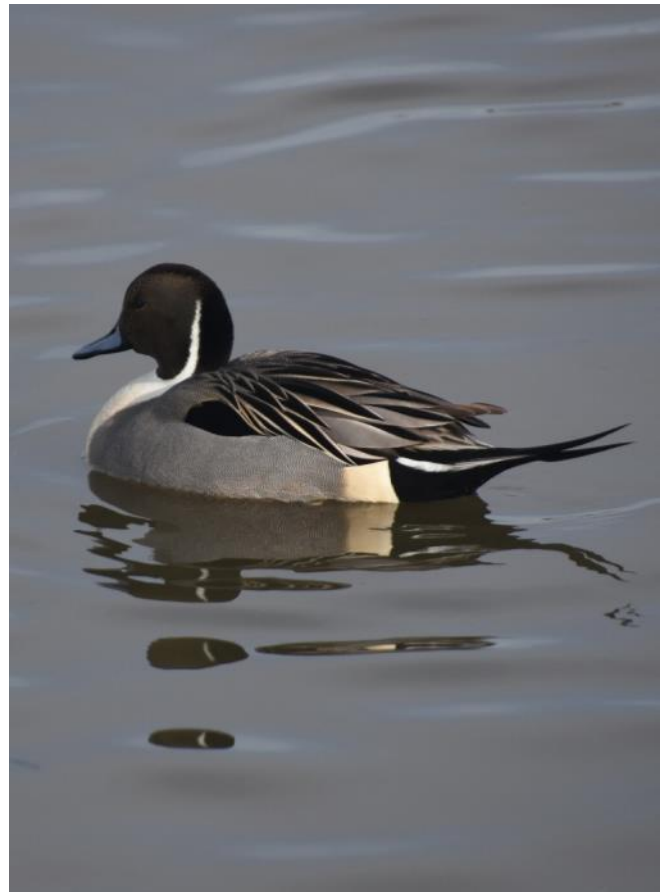
Kathy and Brad Barnwell and Tess McGuire at the Sacramento NWR.



Redbud Audubon members, family and friends enjoying lunch outside the Sacramento NWR.



Ring-necked Pheasant. Photo by Brad Barnwell.



Northern Pintail. Photo by Roberta Lyons.

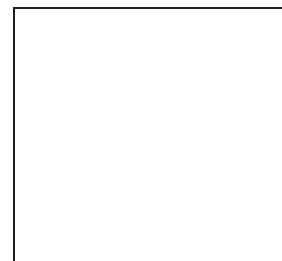


Bald Eagle at NWR.
Photo by Brad Barnwell.



Egret at NWR in Sacramento Valley.
Photo by Brad Barnwell.

Redbud Audubon
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New Member Introductory Rate — \$20 for the first year

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☐ 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.

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