



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

Volume 46 • Issue No. 9 • May, 2021

May program topic: Beavers in California, Creating a Culture of Stewardship

The Redbud Audubon Society will present a Zoom program on Thursday, May 20 starting at 7 p.m. This will be the chapter's last program until meetings and field trips resume in September. Please join us for "Beavers in California: creating a culture of stewardship," to be presented by Kate Lundquist and Brock Dolman.

Beavers are a vital part of aquatic ecosystems across North America. They came close to extinction in California by the late 1800s. Lundquist and Dolman of the [Occidental Arts and Ecology Center WATER Institute](#) will share the historic and current plight of this "keystone" species, interesting facts about its remarkable biology and how the North American Beaver can benefit humans, birds and the environment. Learn how this ecosystem engineer is helping urban and rural communities restore watersheds, recover endangered species and increase climate change resiliency. Brock and Kate will share how over ten years of research and collaborative restoration are successfully working to [Bring Back the Beaver](#) across California.

Lundquist co-directs the Occidental Arts & Ecology Center's [WATER Institute](#) and the [Bring Back the Beaver Campaign](#). Kate collaborates with landowners,

Continued on page 3



REDBUD AUDUBON

MAY CHAPTER MEETING

Thursday, May 20, 7 PM

**Topic: Beavers in California,
Creating a Culture of Stewardship**

Presenter: Kate Lundquist and Brock Dolman

To register for this Zoom meeting, click link:

[Redbud Audubon Program Registration](#)

Or scan the following QR code:



President's Message

By Roberta
Lyons



A stunning photo by Brad Barnwell of a pair of Great Blue Herons at the McGaugh Slough Rookery which as of this year is no longer there.

Where have all the Great Blue Herons gone?



Roberta Lyons

didn't have a boat and we didn't get out on the lake that much; just swam in it a lot at our home in Jago Bay.

Several years after discovering this rookery, I somehow learned that the trees were being cut down where the birds were nesting. I did an "expose," for the Times Star newspaper where I worked at the time. The tree cutting stopped, but it was too late. The Herons had moved on.

Then, I became aware of a large Heron Rookery on Slater Island in Anderson Marsh near the now City of Clearlake and also one on Reeves Point in the Big Valley near the Big Valley Rancheria. The rookery on Slater Island was of particular interest because that is the one that gave Susanne Scholz and me the idea to start a "Heron Days" through our Redbud Audubon Society. We would take people in pontoon boats

The first time I saw a Great Blue Heron Rookery was around 1988 when I saw the rookery on Quercus Point in the Big Valley area on the western side of Clear Lake. I had never seen a rookery before. Although I grew up on Clear Lake, my family

along Cache Creek to view the herons on Slater Island, the herons that were always there, year after year. This was a great place for a "festival," we thought, as the herons are *always* there. They could be depended on. It would be great! Heron Days started in 1994.

Meanwhile, through my involvement with the Lake County Land Trust, I became aware of a huge Heron Rookery on the Rodman Ranch, (now the Rodman Preserve) a property near the Nice-Lucerne Cut-off and the Rodman Slough that we had decided as a land trust to attempt to purchase. This rookery was magnificent. One of the largest in the county with over 100 nests. We used the rookery as part of the argument to purchase the property for preservation when applying for a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board. Fish and Game biologists loved the project and sure enough, we received the grant and were able to purchase the property in 1999 with this fabulous nesting site of the beautiful Great Blue Herons.

Two years after the land trust purchased the property, the Herons left. The land trust had been diligent about not disturbing the birds. No walking was allowed under the trees and there was no disturbance that could be identified; the Great Blue Herons had just left.

(Continued on page 6)



PG&E work crew dismantles a dangerous nest on a power pole near Austin Park in the City of Clearlake and installs an alternate safe location for the Osprey. Photo by neighbor Michael Johnson.

PGE and Redbud team up to help Osprey pairs nest safely on power poles

For more than a decade, PGE has helped breeding Ospreys who have unwisely chosen to build their “penthouse” nests on electrical power poles. The birds endanger themselves with potential electrocution and can inconvenience PGE’s customers by shorting out the power and causing an outage.

To avoid these problems, PGE’s local crews install an alternative nest platform on the pole but away from the electrified lines. When possible, they move the nest materials to the new nest site. Most times, the Osprey pair accept the new platform, add more nest material, and then proceed with egg-laying, incubation, and raising their young.

Redbud Audubon has played an important role in this process, in that it is often neighbors who first identify the dangerous situation and contact Redbud to solve the problem. Redbud contacts the local Lake County PGE crew manager, and usually within days or a week, the utility crew is at the site of the problem nest and re-locates it to a safer place on the pole.

During March and April, this three-step involvement resulted in two new nest platforms at the south end of Clear Lake. The first is near the Gooseneck in Clearlake Park, and the second is near Austin Park in the City of Clearlake. In both instances, a concerned neighbor called Redbud’s chapter phone number and left a message asking for help. Past-President Marilyn

Waits, who has handled these situations for Redbud since 2006, called the neighbor to get a street address near the pole. She then contacted Bill Marquart, PGE’s local crew chief, who resolved the problem in a short period of time.

Among hawks, Ospreys are in a class by themselves, there being only one species in the world. The large fish-eating birds – the only hawks that dive into water – resemble bald eagles and can attain a wingspan of up to six feet. Ospreys usually build their bulky nests in dead trees or on rocky pinnacles. Along the Pacific flyway, they winter in South America and fly north to breed along the coast, from Mexico to Alaska, or at inland locations like Clear Lake.

Program speakers for: “Beavers in California, Creating a Culture of Stewardship”

(Continued from page 1)

communities, tribes, conservation organizations and resource agencies to uncover obstacles, identify strategic solutions, and implement beaver-based restoration treatments to conserve watersheds, recover listed species, increase water security and build resilience to climate change (www.oaec.org/beaver).

Dolman is a co-founder of the Sonoma County based Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (www.oaec.org), where he co-directs with Kate Lundquist the WATER Institute’s Bring Back the Beaver Campaign (<https://www.oaec.org/projects/bring-back-the-beaver-campaign/>). He is a wildlife biologist and watershed

ecologist who has been actively promoting the idea of Rewilding Beaver in California since the early 2000’s. He was given the Salmonid Restoration Federation’s coveted Golden Pipe Award in 2012 for his leading role as a proponent of working with beavers to restore native salmon habitat.



Kate Lundquist



Brock Dolman

Concern over diminished nesting sites of Great Blue Herons

(Redbud's President Roberta Lyons submitted the following article to the Department of Fish and Wildlife in April to bring the agency's attention to these changes. Brad and Kathy Barnwell contributed to the tracking data, graph, map, and chart.)

In 1998 the Lake County Land Trust purchased the Rodman Ranch on West Lake Road near the Rodman Slough. The State Department of Fish and Wildlife supported the project and a grant was received through the Wildlife Conservation Board. Part of the attraction of the acquisition was the location of a huge Heron Rookery with approximately 100 nests.

Two years later, the Herons left. It was theorized that those Herons moved to the northwest, near the main channel of Rodman Slough. At recent count there were 34 nests at this "Rodman Rookery," which is located about a mile west of the Nice-Lucerne Cut-off Road. This rookery is not easily visible other than a significant hike or kayaking (when there is water in the slough.) It should be noted that the Land Trust was diligent about not disturbing the rookery on its property and closed off the nesting area of the preserve during the nesting season, starting in February. The Herons left anyway.

As part of the Redbud Audubon Society's annual Heron Days event, the public was taken to see a Heron Rookery at Reeves Point in the Big Valley area of Clear Lake. Since 1998 this rookery has maintained its existence, but has expanded with Double-crested Cormorants and white egrets. Great Blue Heron nests have diminished and now consist of only

seven active nests when they formerly numbered about 25. We believe that many of the Herons relocated to a large property on McGaugh Slough to the east, near the Corinthian Bay subdivision. This location is also on the west shore of Clear Lake in the Big Valley area where up until three years ago, approximately 20 nests were located. There are now no nests at the McGaugh Slough/Corinthian Bay site. There is a new, small rookery of seven nests off of Clipper Lane (part of the Lands End subdivision) which is to the west of the Corinthian Bay/McGaugh Slough to the west of Adobe Creek, but not as far west as Reeves Point.

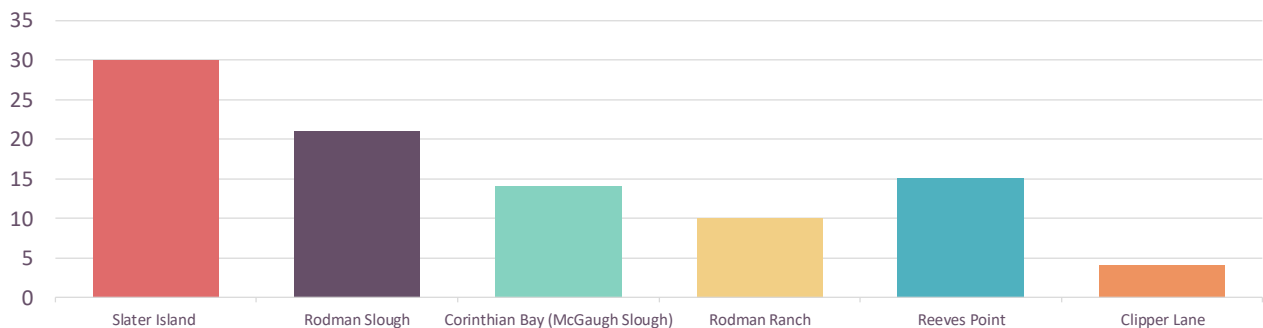
No matter what happened with the rookeries on the north end of Clear Lake, it seemed that the Slater Island Rookery in Anderson Marsh was a constant. Year in and year out, the Herons would begin arriving in late February and Early March to start building their nests.

The early Heron Days occurred in March and April so the nests and birds were more visible and the baby herons were just starting to hatch. As time went on it was decided to move the festival to the end of April and early May to avoid rain and cold weather. Still, the Herons on Slater Island remained and the viewing was satisfactory. The babies were bigger and louder and it was amusing to watch the parent herons feeding their young.

Then, in 2018 something happened. The Herons on Slater Island, after having nested there for over 30 years, along with the nesting herons on McGaugh

Great Blue Heron Rookeries

Sites in Lake County and number of years active

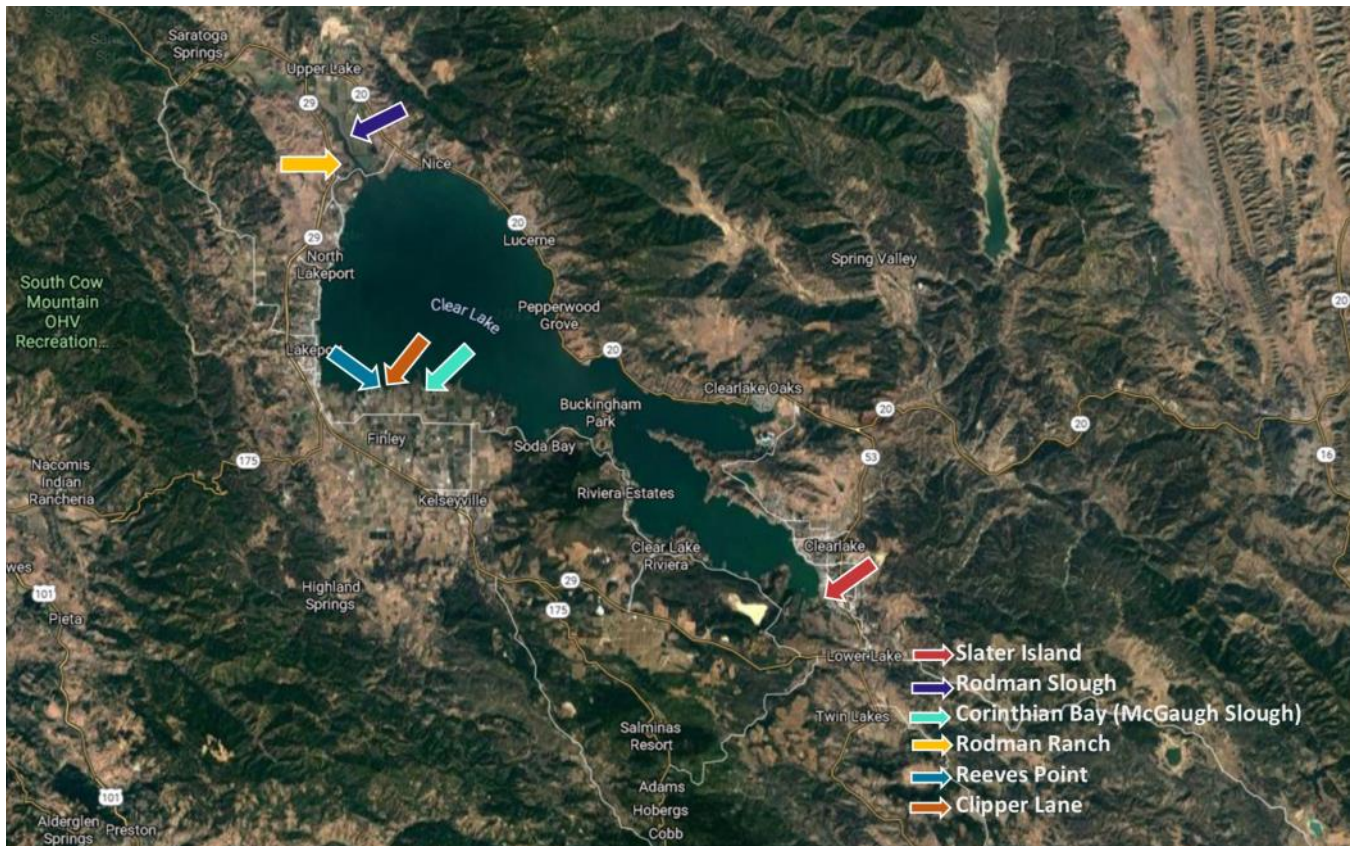


Slough diminished greatly. In 2019 there were even fewer; in 2020 and 2021, almost none at either site. Where did they go? What is happening to our Heron nesting sites on Clear Lake? Because they have never been studied, never banded, nor officially counted, the disappearance of the Herons remains a mystery.

All we have are reports from lay people, like this

report. We can name the years when the rookeries were here and pinpoint fairly accurately the years when they started to diminish, but that information is not particularly helpful from a scientific standpoint in regards to finding out if there is a problem and if something can be done about it. Or, if it is just a long natural cycle of nature.

GREAT BLUE HERON ROOKERY SITES, LAKE COUNTY



Location	Years Active	Under 30 Nests	Over 30 Nests	Year Decrease Noted	No Nests Noted	Number of Active years
Slater Island	1990 to 2020		x	2018	2020	30
Rodman Slough	2000 to 2021		x		Still active	21
Corinthian Bay (McGaugh Slough)	2006 to 2020		x	2019	2020	14
Rodman Ranch	1990 to 2000		x	2000	2000	10
Reeves Point	2006 to 2021	x			Still active	15
Clipper Lane	2017 to 2021	x			Still active	4

Where have all the Great Blue Herons gone?

(Continued from page 2)

We theorize that those Herons moved to the North West, near the main channel of Rodman Slough. At recent count there were 34 nests at this “Rodman Rookery,” which is located about a mile west of the Nice-Lucerne Cutoff Road. This rookery is not easily visible but can be seen by hiking or by kayak (when the slough has water in it.)

As time has passed, the rookery on Reeves Point has maintained its existence, but has expanded with cormorants and white egrets. Great Blue Heron nests have diminished and now consist of only seven active nests. We believed that many of the Herons relocated to a large property on McGaugh Slough, to the east, near the Corinthian Bay subdivision, (which is also on the west shore of Clear Lake in the Big Valley area) where up until three years ago, approximately 20 nests were located. There are now no nests at the McGaugh Slough/Corinthian Bay site.

There is a new, small rookery of seven nests off of Clipper Lane which is to the west of the Corinthian Bay/McGaugh Slough and to the west of Adobe Creek.

No matter what happened with the rookeries on the north end of Clear Lake, it seemed that the Slater Island Rookery in Anderson Marsh was a constant. Year in and year out, the Herons would begin arriving in late February and Early March to start building their nests. The early Heron Days occurred in March and April, so the nests and birds were more visible

and the baby herons were just starting to hatch. As time went on, it was decided to move the festival to the end of April and early May to avoid rain and cold weather. Still, the Herons on Slater Island remained and the viewing was satisfactory. The babies were bigger and louder, and it was amusing to watch the parent herons feeding their young.

Then, in 2018 something happened. The Herons on Slater Island, after having nested there for over 30 years, along with the nesting herons on McGaugh Slough diminished greatly. In 2019 there were even fewer; in 2020 and 2021, almost none at either site. Where did they go? What is happening to our Heron nesting sites on Clear Lake.

We would like to request that anyone who knows of an active Great Blue Heron Rookery to please let us know, or enter your finding on ebird. You can contact the Redbud Audubon Society by emailing redbud.audubon@gmail.com. We also note that the years and numbers reported in this newsletter are estimates. If you have more accurate observations, tell us.

We have sent the graphs and charts along with a similar story as this President’s Message to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife to see if we can garner some interest in our concerns.

This will be my last President’s Message until September. I hope we continue to recover from the pandemic and are able to start meeting in person in September. Meanwhile, have a great summer everyone!

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.

Election results announced for the Redbud Audubon 2021-22 Board of Directors

We received “yes” votes from 35 members who replied to our request for votes or nominations for the Redbud Audubon Society Board of Directors. We are pleased to announce the same slate of officers has been approved. The officers for the Redbud Audubon Society board of directors for 2021-2022 will be: President, Roberta Lyons; Vice-President, Donna Mackiewicz; Treasurer, Nichola Selph and Secretary, Katherine Lindsley. Other board members include Marilyn Waits, Susanne Scholz, Tina Wasson and Lisa Prather.

Heron Days re-scheduled for 2022

For those who may not have seen this information on the website or on Facebook, please note that Heron Days will be held in April and May of 2022. Because of uncertainties involving the Covid –19 Pandemic, it was impossible to plan and schedule the event for this Spring. We are looking forward to starting up this popular and fun event in 2022 and look forward to seeing everyone then.

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 for which 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 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



OFFICERS

President: Roberta Lyons
Vice President: Donna Mackiewicz
Treasurer: Nicola Selph
Secretary: Katherine Lindsley
Past-President: Marilyn Waits

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

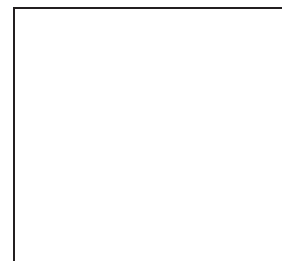
Bird Observations - Jerry White
Christmas Bird Count - Brad and Kathy Barnwell
Conservation - Roberta Lyons
and Donna Mackiewicz
Education - Lisa Prather
Field Trips - Pat Harmon
Historian - Pat Harmon
Hospitality - Pat Harmon
Member-at-Large- Tina Wasson
Membership Manager - Susanne Scholz
Newsletter Editor - Roberta Lyons
Newsletter Email Distribution - Lisa Prather
Newsletter Production - Jim Scholz
Programs - Marilyn Waits
Publicity - Roberta Lyons
Webmaster - Bonnie Thompson
Social Media - Donna Mackiewicz

To contact a board member:

Phone 707/ 263-8030

Email: redbud.audubon@gmail.com

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 joining just 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 donation 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