



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

Volume 48 • Issue No. 7 • March, 2023

Taking a deep dip: the lives of North America's only aquatic songbird



Kate Marianchild

Redbud Audubon will be presenting a fascinating program on Thursday, March 16, starting at 7 p.m. on Zoom with Kate Marianchild.

How many North American songbirds dive fearlessly into raging rapids? How many build large dome-shaped nests of moss and flash bright-white eyelids from their dark interiors? How many forage for food on the bottom of freezing cold streams?

(Continued on page 2)



Peeking out from its soft and snug abode, this tiny baby Dipper cries for a meal.

REDBUD AUDUBON

MARCH MEETING

Thursday, March 16, 7 PM

Topic: The lives of North America's only aquatic songbird

To register for this Zoom meeting, click link:

[Redbud Audubon Program Registration](https://www.redbudaudubon.org/registration)

Or visit RedbudAudubon.org and click on the registration link

Or scan the following QR code:



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This Dipper perches atop a rock, poised to dive into the crystal-clear waters below in search of food on the river bottom.

Learning about the Dipper

(Continued from page 1)

Answer: Only one—the American Dipper, *Cinclus mexicanus* (aka “water ouzel”).

Acting on a tip from a friend, Kate Marianchild spent several afternoons during the summer of 2020 searching the upper reaches of the Russian River for a Dipper nest. After she finally found a large mossy dome on a boulder ledge over thundering whitewater, she began observing, photographing, and videoing the nesting behaviors of American Dippers, returning several times over the season.

The following two summers she documented another nest on a boulder several hundred yards downstream from the first. During her talk about this extraordinary species, Kate will show videos and photographs of Dippers feeding their babies, flashing their semaphore-like eyes, singing exuberantly, dipping (bobbing up and down), foraging, and building a nest. She will also share sightings of other species she and her friends saw along the river, including an American mink, as well as borrowed underwater images of Dippers doing what they are most famous for: foraging for food on river bottoms.

(Continued on page 3)



Huddled together in a cozy nest - these baby Dippers with tiny beaks and feathered chests cry for their mother.

American Dippers topic of March meeting

(Continued from page 2)

Please join us for a deep dip into the lives of the unique, fascinating, and endearing American Dippers. This talk, which is based on Marianchild's photos and videos of these birds and their nests over the past three breeding seasons, will also include an overview of the world's four other Dipper species.

Please register for the meeting by going to

www.redbudaudubon.org and click on the registration link on the home page; or, if you receive this newsletter by email, click on the link at the bottom of the first page. After you register, the Zoom link for the program will be sent on the day of the presentation.

President's Message

by Roberta Lyons



Roberta Lyons

sparrows and juncos.

I've noticed a lone Audubon's Warbler (Yellow-rumped?) at one of my bird feeding stations. "Poor little thing," I thought. He was mingling with the sparrows and juncos and eating the soggy seed along with the others on the rock wall. I was a little surprised because I thought warblers were just insect eaters, but he was making a go of it. I decided to put a block of suet out for him and he loves it! Now I'm worried I'm going to give him a heart attack by feeding him all that fat.

I'm no ornithologist and only a middling birder, so don't be surprised that I'm unclear on some probably well-known bird facts (like Audubon's vs. Yellow-rumped, and the fact that insect-eating birds also eat seeds). I just love looking at our feathered friends and hearing their songs, especially in the winter. I am also dedicated to preserving and improving their habitat.

Which brings me to another subject. Last spring, I was infuriated when I observed extensive unpermitted grading along Point Lakeview Road near my home. I reported it to the County grading officer and it was stopped, but not before at least 15 acres had been completely graded. Come to find out, the excuse for this destruction was a warning delivered by the County of Lake to the property owner declaring that the property had "hazardous vegetation," and needed to be abated. The owner's answer was to simply grade all of the native chaparral (as opposed to hand clearing a shaded fuel break). Making matters worse was that it was done in the middle of nesting season for our Wrentits and other chaparral-loving songbirds.

After much back and forth the County agreed it was a mistake, they were sorry, the land owner was sorry,

Wow, the last week of February was certainly challenging! I don't remember getting so much snow since 1979. We live in Jago Bay and received 6 to 7 inches. It was pretty, but I know it was a hardship for many, including our wintering birds like the

and they were going to try to keep it from happening again. One way to prevent this from happening again, is to change the "hazardous vegetation," citation/warning that is posted on people's property. Has this change happened? I don't know, but I plan to find out.

Once again I have to stand up for our most prevalent biome here in Lake County, our native chaparral. It is not hazardous fuel, it doesn't get "overgrown," it doesn't "need" to burn. I encourage everyone to check out the Chaparral Institute at www.californiachaparral.org to get educated about the beauty and importance of chaparral; it is our home and the home of the animals we love.



Painting of the Audubon Warbler in the snow.

Field trip updates

With the unusual winter weather that has been hitting Lake County, changes in Redbud Audubon's field trip schedule are occurring.

The February field trip to the Reclamation area was cancelled because of weather conditions. The next proposed date for that adventure will be March 25. As the month goes on, we will try to keep members and friends updated either through Facebook posts or email blasts. Meanwhile, we hope everyone's power is on again and that you are all at least enjoying bird-watching from your windows.

The field trip to Highland Springs is indefinitely cancelled because the area, which is owned by the County, is closed because of dangerous trail conditions, including falling and hanging trees. If that trip is still not available by April, we will plan on visiting the Rodman Preserve or one of the State Parks.

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.

Welcome new and returning members

Welcome new and returning members: John Portner, Clearlake; Debra Sally, Clearlake; Jeanne Welch, Kelseyville; Evonne Landwehr, Lakeport; Susan Samota, Lakeport; Rachel Hutchinson, Lower Lake; Valerie Baldisserotto, Middletown; and Aaltuc Koski, Upper Lake.

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 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.

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.



Val Nixon works on a nest box at the Lake County Land Trust's Rodman Preserve which is part of Redbud Audubon's Blue Bird Trail project.

Are Your Nest Boxes Ready?

If you have nest boxes in your yard for cavity nesting birds, it is important to take care of the boxes and make sure they are mounted in a place as predator-free as possible. If you monitor your nest boxes and report to the California Bluebird Recovery program, or to Redbud Audubon, cleaning, inspecting and repairing your nest boxes is part of being a responsible monitor. If you want to report your nest box activity locally, you can report to Donna Mackiewicz at www.redbud.audubon@gmail.com.

By cleaning and repairing your nest box you will not only prepare it for the next nesting pair, you'll also be making it available for roosting.

The nest box cleaning kit should contain disposable gloves, dust mask (to avoid inhaling harmful fecal dust), plastic bag for removed nest and debris, putty

knife or paint scraper, wire brush and a spray bottle with vinegar water or 10% bleach/water solution.

Wearing your mask and gloves, use the putty knife or paint scraper to remove any droppings and if there is an old nest, remove it. Place the old nest in a plastic bag for disposal. If you didn't bring a bag, leave it at least 20 feet from the nest box to avoid attracting predators.

Scrub bottom and sides of the box with the wire brush.

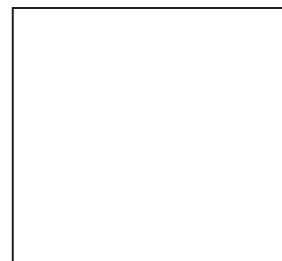
Spray with disinfectant, let the box dry and close.

And once again, as spring approaches, it is time for one more inspection. Winters can be hard on nest boxes. You will want to check all the boxes again and clean out any feces if the birds did use it for roosting! Then it's time to start a whole new season of nesting.



A mother Western Bluebird feeds her chicks.

Redbud Audubon
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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.

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☐ 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

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