



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

www.redbudaudubon.org

Volume 51 • Issue No. 2 • October, 2025

Learn about the adventures of Scott Harris on his “Raptor Quest,” on Zoom Oct. 16

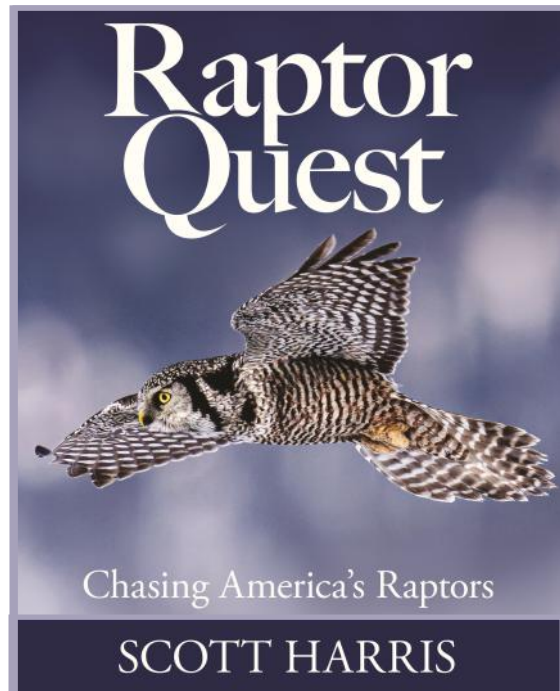


Scott Harris will share stories and photos from his travels to find raptors at the October 16 Zoom meeting.

or just curious about wildlife this is a program you won't want to miss. And, you can enjoy it from the comfort of your living room!

The Redbud Audubon Society is happy to welcome birder and adventurer Scott Harris as its Thursday, Oct. 16 program presenter starting at 7 p.m. Harris's presentation promises stunning photographs, fascinating natural history, and heart-warming stories that bring raptors to life in a way that's both educational and entertaining for all ages. Whether you're a lifelong birder,

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Harris' book Raptor Quest is a thrilling read.

REDBUD AUDUBON

OCTOBER MEETING

Thursday, October 16, 7 pm

Topic: *Raptor Quest: Chasing America's Raptors*

Speaker: Scott Harris

To register for this Zoom meeting, click link:

[Redbud Audubon Program Registration](http://RedbudAudubon.org)

Or visit RedbudAudubon.org and click on the registration link

Or scan the following QR code:



Harris to recount tales from his quest to track every species of Raptor in the lower 48 states

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Harris became an avid birder when he and his wife, Randi, retired to South Carolina in March of 2020. It was a hobby he never imagined himself participating in but now can't imagine living without.

In addition to his writing, Scott also hosts a podcast – *Naturally Scott* – that focuses on birds, wildlife and the great outdoors, and just signed a book deal for his upcoming book – *Why We Love Birds: 52 Birders on Birding*.

His interests and hobbies include the largest collection of John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* in the world, playing harmonica in a blues band and he has written more than fifty books in the past 10 years – though the one he'll be discussing today is his first entrée into the world of birding and birds.

That book, *Raptor Quest: Chasing America's Raptors*, is the story of his year-long adventure tracking down every species of Raptor in the Lower 48 states. We'll learn about his adventures, misadventures, successes, and failures. Harris spent 17 months, chasing 53 Raptors across 34 states—his version of a Raptor Big Year. From -36 degree days to ones over 100 degrees, to just getting on the bird just in time, to the frustrations of missing one by minutes. It is about the birds—of course—but it's also about the people he

met, the things he learned and why he is already working on his next adventure.

Registration for the program is required and can be accomplished by clicking on the link in this newsletter (if you receive it by email) or by going to the Redbud Audubon website: www.redbudaudubon.org and clicking on the registration link on the home page.

Legislative support 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 representatives 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.

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.

President's Message

by Donna
Mackiewicz



Donna Mackiewicz

As the seasons turn, we welcome the sights and sounds of fall migration across Lake County. The skies and waters are alive with movement—flocks of waterfowl, raptors on the wing, and songbirds such as warblers and sparrows making their way south. It's a reminder of how connected our local habitats are to the larger natural world, and how important our conservation work is in sustaining these landscapes.

Thank you to everyone for your support of the Grebe Monitoring Grant Appeal. The \$7,000 in contributions are greatly appreciated and the project is on the ground running in the schools and working with tribal students, also!

This month also brought exciting news from the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake. At its 9/24 meeting, the Committee announced general fund allocations totaling \$13.62 mil-

lion for projects that will directly benefit our community and our wildlife. Among the highlights are the US Davis Hypolimnetic Oxygenation Project and Clearlake Oaks Property Owners Association Revitalization with important improvements for Schindler Creek, along with 13 other outstanding projects.

Here at Redbud Audubon, we are proud to contribute through our own on-the-ground science and education. Our Grebe Monitoring Project continues this fall, with volunteers documenting nesting success and population trends for Western and Clark's Grebes—iconic waterbirds whose health reflects the condition of Clear Lake itself. This work not only supports local conservation, but also inspires students, families, and community members to become stewards of the lake and its wildlife.

Fall is a wonderful time to be outdoors. I invite you to join us on one of our monthly field trips, where the joy of birding brings people of all ages together in appreciation of nature. Together, we are building a stronger future for Clear Lake, its wildlife, and our community.

CDFW offers Tundra Swan tours in the Central Valley

Tundra Swan Tour Registration Opens

Celebrate the billion-bird migration on the Pacific Flyway this fall and winter during one of CDFW's wildly popular Swan Tours, held most Saturdays from November through early-January. In partnership with Mathews Rice Operation, these free tours transverse privately-owned flooded rice fields, north of Marysville. This area boasts one of the largest overwintering populations of tundra swans in the Central Valley, as well as abundant geese, ducks, shorebirds and raptors.



Tundra Swan

Tundra Swan Tours

For more info or to register, visit the CDFW Tundra Swan Tour page with the QR code, or at <https://www.register-ed.com/programs/california/273-tundra-swan-tours/page:1> or contact genelle.treaster@wildlife.ca.gov.





This amazing image of a Western Grebe was captured by photographer Brad Barnwell.

Grebes, Drones, and Youth Science Education and Curriculum Development in Lake County

Two years ago, our Pacific Union College team, led by me, Scientist in Residence Dr. Scott Butterfield, and professors Aimee Wyrick and Dr. Floyd Hayes, engaged Donna Mackiewicz and the amazing Redbud Audubon Society team in an exciting effort to extend and expand Dr. Hayes's long-term grebe monitoring project at Clear Lake. We dreamed about being able to increase our ability to consistently monitor grebes across the lake across multiple years using drones and artificial intelligence. And doing it in collaboration with local high school students, tribes, and other partners. We wanted to develop a program that would live on in the community, providing students with real-world opportunities to learn and apply new technologies and to directly participate in efforts to rehabili-

tate the health of Clear Lake, including helping to protect the grebes we all care so much about.

In May 2024, our project team, including members from Robinson Rancheria, Big Valley Rancheria, Upper Lake High School, and Lower Lake High School presented our project "***Monitoring grebes as a bioindicator of Clear Lake ecosystem health using drone technologies and student-driven education and outreach***" to the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake (BRC). The BRC approved the 5-year \$288,988 project, but funding from the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) had been on hold because of state budget issues. That was until we heard the good news on September 24th that

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A Western Grebe "couple" at Rodman Slough. Photo by Vicky Oakley-Hanson.



Clark's Grebe on a nest. Photo by Vicky Oakley-Hanson.

Many donors helped fund the grebe monitoring project at Clear Lake

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our project would be funded, likely in Winter 2025-2026. Our team is thrilled to be able to fully launch the project this year using these funds.

Since project approval in May 2024, we have been busy building relationships with local schools and tribes and developing the plans for how we would engage students in activities like drone flight planning, drone flying, coding and AI algorithm development to automatically detect and count grebes, data analysis, and publication. To do this, we have been incredibly lucky to have financial support from District 4 and Supervisor Brad Rasmussen and the Redbud Audubon Society. The September appeal to Redbud Audubon Society members brought \$7,000 to our project, which will support student education and outreach efforts this Fall and Winter and the launch of drone clubs at both Upper Lake and Lower Lake High School's in Winter 2025. We have been busy planning with Robert Keen at Upper Lake High School and Kaila Budwell and Katie Mirabelli at Lower Lake High School.

These drone club pilots will allow us to begin to work with the students to develop our drone flight plans for monitoring in Spring and Summer 2026, get students to the lake to participate in drone test flights, and to begin to develop and test AI algorithms for automated monitoring.

We have worked hard to launch this project and could not have done it without the support of so many local community members including Redbud Audubon Society members. Thank you to everyone who donated. We received donations from \$25 to \$2,500 and it was all very much appreciated. Many thanks to: **Kate Lyons, Salesforce, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Barbara Hepburn, Lucinda Wilson, Julie Pimentel, Pat Harmon, Jim Steele, Charlottee Griswold, Jean Johnson, Sandra Boorn, Hans Dobusch, Nicola Selph and Peggy Campbell**, for a total of \$7,045. Thank you all for your generosity!

The excitement we have seen in the students and teachers we have interacted with over the last year plus has been truly inspiring. Students are excited to see that they can learn real-world skills while helping to protect their local environment. We believe this project is different than most because it focuses not just on developing monitoring procedures and reporting on the health of grebes and Clear Lake, but on co-developing a program with local high schools that inspires local students and residents to be our informed Clear Lake environmental advocates of the future. We look forward to getting Society members out with us and our student collaborators this coming monitoring season! Until then, we thank you, the grebes thank you, and the students of Lake County thank you!



Great Blue Heron at the Reclamation Area. Photo by Ed Oswalt.

39 species counted on September's Field Trip to the Reclamation Area

By Donna Mackiewicz, President

Redbud Audubon's recent field trip to the Reclamation Area near Upper Lake was a lively success, with participants tallying **39 bird species** on a beautiful fall morning. Highlights included hearing the distinctive calls of **Wrentits** and **Common Yellowthroats**, as well as watching both **Lesser and American Goldfinches** flitting among the trees. Over the fields, a graceful **White-tailed Kite** hovered in search of prey, thrilling observers with its elegant hunting style.

Perhaps the most memorable sighting was a gathering of **12 Wood Ducks**, with nine captured together in a striking photograph by member Ed Oswalt—perched on a snag overlooking the pond.

Field trips like this are a reminder of how much fun birding can be for people of all ages. They offer a chance not only to see amazing wildlife but also to share discoveries and laughter with fellow nature lovers.

Redbud Audubon hosts monthly field trips, and our

October outing will be to Clear Lake State Park. We welcome new birders and experienced alike—to join us on these friendly, educational excursions.

Audubon membership choices 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.***

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 to defray printing and mailing expenses.



Green Heron. Photo by Ed Oswalt.



Ed Oswalt got some great images on our Reclamation Area field trip in September, including this beautiful one of Wood Ducks perched in a row on a branch.



Cole Creek is often a good spot to see wading waterfowl.

October Field trip will be to Clear Lake State Park

Redbud Audubon's field trip on Oct. 18, will be to Clear Lake State Park, 5300 Soda Bay Rd. near Kelseyville. Please meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot near the visitor's center. We will also be expected to pay the entry fee to the park which is done as you enter.

Fall is a good time of the year to view waterfowl in the creeks that run through the park and often migrat-

ing warblers are found flitting through the bushes. Raptors also make the park their home.

Everyone is welcome on Redbud Audubon walks, no matter what your level of birding skill is. So, join us! Saturday morning, Oct. 18 at 9 a.m. for a fun morning of fellowship, fun, and birding!



Townsend's Warblers were numerous at last year's field trip to Clear Lake State Park. This year's trip to the park is set for October 18 at 9 am.

2025-2026

Field Trip Calendar

Please Note: field trips will start at 9 a.m. unless otherwise announced in the newsletter

October 18 – Clear Lake State Park

November 22 – Boggs Demonstration Forest

December – Christmas Bird Count TBA

January 17 – Sacramento and Colusa National Wildlife Refuges

February 21 – Lake County Land Trust's Rodman Preserve

March 21 – Clearlake Oaks Boat Ramp/Clark's Island/Wetlands/Rookery

April – TBA

May – Annual Picnic

Details for each field trip will be published in the preceding newsletter, including directions and start time if different from 9 a.m. Field trips are weather dependent and will be cancelled if there is severe weather or weather issues make accessibility difficult. Put these dates on your calendar and plan for a fun day of birding with friends!

REDBUD AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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To contact a board member:

Phone 707/805-9410

Email: redbud.audubon@gmail.com

CDFW 2025–26 Sandhill Crane tours at Woodbridge Ecological Reserve

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is pleased to announce the return of its popular docent-led **Sandhill Crane Wetland Tours** at the **Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (Isenberg Sandhill Crane Reserve)** in San Joaquin County.

Each fall, thousands of Sandhill Cranes migrate into the Delta and Central Valley, where they spend the winter months. The Woodbridge Ecological Reserve offers one of the best opportunities in California to witness the cranes' spectacular evening fly-ins.

Tour Details:

- **Season:** October through February
- **Schedule:** Tours begin 90 minutes before sunset and last approximately two hours
- **Location:** Woodbridge Ecological Reserve, South Unit (meeting point), west of Lodi
- **Format:** Docent-led presentations on crane ecology, Reserve habitat management, and guided viewing of cranes and other wintering waterfowl
- **Accessibility:** Tours take place rain or shine; restrooms available; sites are wheelchair accessible

Registration and Requirements

- **Pre-registration is required;** tour sizes are limited. Reservations open the first working day of each month at 9 a.m. for the following month.
- **CDFW Lands Pass or valid hunting/fishing license** is required for all participants age 16 and older. A one-day Lands Pass is \$5.66; annual passes are also available.
- **Self-guided viewing** is available at the South Unit any evening without reservations.
- **Visitor Information:** participants are encouraged to bring binoculars or spotting scopes, dress for outdoor conditions, and arrive prepared for a memorable wildlife experience. Tours typically conclude about 30 minutes after sunset with the dramatic arrival of cranes at their evening roost.



Sandhill cranes have been in North America for over 2.5 million years, making them one of the continent's oldest bird species. With wingspans up to 7 feet, they migrate in massive flocks, calling out with a trumpet-like cry that can be heard over a mile away.

Sandhill Crane Tours

For more information or to register, visit the CDFW Crane Tour page with the QR code, or at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/3/Crane-Tour#2205887-do-you-have-to-go-on-a-tour-to-see-the-sandhill-cranes> or email cranetours@wildlife.ca.gov.

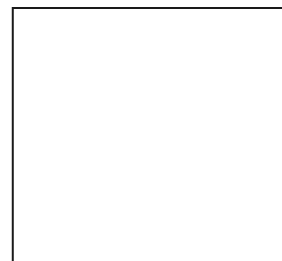


2024-25 Chapter Financial Report Redbud Audubon Society, Inc

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

Revenues	Audubon Membership Revenue	\$1,998
	Contributions	2,664
	Contributions (Grebe Project)	2,500
	Sales Taxable	245
	Interest	<u>1</u>
	Total income	\$7,408
	Cost of Goods Sold	<u>\$253</u>
	Total Revenue	\$7,155
Expenditures	Administration	\$3,862
	Educational Programs & Events	1,492
	Newsletter Printing/Mailing	2,864
	Audubon in Action Grant	13,607
	Marketing Outreach	1,011
	Storage & PO Box rental	<u>730</u>
	Total Expenditures	\$23,566
	Net Income in Operating Funds	-\$16,411
	Beginning Retained Earnings 6/30/24	\$50,055
	Net Income 2023-2024	-16,411
	Ending Retained Earnings 6/30/25	\$33,644
Assets	Cash & Equivalents (Checking, Savings, etc)	\$33,941
	Inventory Held for Sale	0
	Total Assets	\$33,941
Liabilities	Accounts Payable	298
	Total Liabilities	\$298
Funds	Reserved (Osprey Fund)	5,494
	Resereved (Grebe Project)	2,500
	Unreserved (Not Committed)	25,947
	Total Fund Balances	\$33,941

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