



The Western Grebe

Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,

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A small group of Western Bluebirds taking advantage of a garden bird bath.

What makes bluebirds special will be topic of March Redbud Audubon presentation



Mike Azevedo

The iconic bluebird is so beautiful, it brings a sense of peace to all who see it. But life hasn't always been happy for bluebirds. At the upcoming March 19, Redbud Audubon Society Zoom program, discussion and photos will focus on what makes bluebirds special, as well as how they should be considered as an indication of the health of our ecosystem. The program starts at 7 p.m. Register

(Continued on page 2)

REDBUD AUDUBON

MARCH MEETING

Thursday, March 19, 7 pm

Topic: What makes bluebirds special

Speakers: Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington

To register for this Zoom meeting, click link:

[Redbud Audubon Program Registration](#)

Or visit RedbudAudubon.org and click on the registration link

Or scan the following QR code:



Bluebird experts Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington present March program

(Continued from page 1)

early by going to www.redbudaudubon.org and clicking on the link on the home page of our website.

Featured speakers

Mike Azevedo is one of the co-directors for the California Bluebird Recovery Program. Mike has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management and has been a wildlife enthusiast for four decades, serving as a naturalist, park ranger, and even a BSA merit badge counselor for seven nature related merit badges.

Mike is compiler of the San Jose Audubon Christmas Bird Count and works with Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and their nest box monitors. He also works with Sequoia Audubon Society on a project to save the Western Purple Martin, a bird species of special concern that is battling habitat loss, deadly competition with the introduced European starling and food source crash due to the rampant use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

Mike is also involved with the California Native Plant Society, and gives presentations on birds and nest boxes, habitat gardening in your backyard and the importance of native plants to a variety of groups and organizations. Together with Georgette Howington, Mike is an editor of the CBRP Facebook Page and is currently working on books and videos with Georgette to encourage the use of native plants, nest boxes and habitat improvement in general.

Georgette Howington is Co-Director of The California Bluebird Recovery Program (www.CBRP.org) and has been a nest box monitor since 1996. Her



niche is the study and conservation of Western bluebirds, cavity nesters and their associated habitats. Georgette Howington is a Life Member of California Garden Clubs, a certified Horticulturist and certified UC Davis Naturalist of the Mt. Diablo Region. Her affiliations as a

Georgette Howington conservationist in our community in the Bay Area for over 35 years include membership in Mt. Diablo Bird Alliance among others. Georgette has sponsored over 150 scouts and students over a period of 25 years. An avid gardener, Georgette is Pollinator Co-Chairperson for the Pollinator Team in the Rossmoor Community Garden and Club. She and the team prepped, planned and installed six gardens for pollinators and birds in the community garden this year. Georgette and her husband Bruce live in Rossmoor with their two indoor cats.

Join us on March 19 for this interesting program After registering the zoom link for the meeting will be sent to you the day of the meeting.

Changes are coming for Western Grebe Delivery - we really do need your email now

Due to changes in membership procedures at National Audubon, and the continuing rising cost of printing and mailing newsletters, Redbud Audubon is moving towards producing an “email only,” newsletter. Most small societies now send their newsletters only by email and we hope to soon follow that model.

We hope that you all understand and support this effort and if we don’t already have your email that you will supply us with one. If you absolutely must have a printed copy, for a limited time we will still print and mail newsletters to our few remaining members who prefer this method of receiving the Western Grebe.

President's Message

by Donna Mackiewicz



Spring is beginning to stir across Lake County, and with it comes one of the most joyful seasons for those of us who watch the natural world with anticipation and gratitude.

The Double-crested Cormorant rookery is once again alive with activity (over 100 nests)— a sure sign that nesting season is underway. These remarkable birds, so perfectly adapted to Clear Lake's waters, remind us that our community remains part of a vibrant and living ecosystem.

Equally exciting, Wood Ducks have been busy investigating nest boxes, bringing flashes of color and quiet elegance to our mornings. Watching them explore potential nesting sites is one of spring's great pleasures, a gentle reassurance that our long-standing conservation efforts continue to bear fruit.

And yes — the Ospreys are returning.

Few sights rival the thrill of seeing these magnificent fish-hunters back in our skies, circling above the lake with unmistakable purpose. Their arrival always feels like a celebration of seasonal rhythm — a reminder that despite everything, nature continues its ancient cycles.

Our nest boxes stand ready for the lively energy of Tree Swallows, the cheerful presence of Western Bluebirds, and the charismatic Ash-throated Flycatchers. Each species brings its own story, its own beauty, and its own role in the delicate balance we are privileged to witness.

Beyond the birds themselves, there is encouraging news for conservation more broadly. With the passage of AB 107 and the promise of Proposition 4 funding, the future for habitat restoration and environmental stewardship in California looks brighter than ever. These developments offer real hope for protecting the landscapes and waters we cherish.

Spring is here, life is returning, and Clear Lake is once again full of wings.

Warmly, Donna M.

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These two ladies from Redbud's former nest box monitoring project pose.



Participants checking out a nest box at a monitoring project led by Donna Mackiewicz.

Take part in the joy of creating homes for birds

By Donna Mackiewicz

In 2000, I helped build my first bluebird nestbox trail with children, never imagining how something so simple would become such a lasting joy. Since then, in every neighborhood I've called home, hundreds of bluebirds have fledged from boxes installed at elementary schools, outdoor classrooms, Girl Scout and 4-H properties, churches, parks, and Land Trust lands.

What I've learned over the years is something the California Bluebird Recovery Program wisely emphasizes: a nestbox trail is not just about putting up boxes — it's about monitoring and care. A box only becomes good habitat when someone checks on it regularly, observes respectfully, and ensures it remains safe for native birds.

And the reward? It's extraordinary!

Monitoring isn't just data collection — it's the quiet privilege of watching a gentle species raise its young. Soft wingbeats. Patient parents. Nestlings growing week by week. Moments that stay with you for life.

At a time when North America has lost billions of birds over recent decades, small actions matter. Nest boxes, healthy habitat, and everyday observation all play a role in conservation — and in reconnecting us with the natural world.

Want to be part of the bluebird story?

You can adopt a nest box on one of our local trails at Rodman Preserve or Kuulanapo Preserve, or even better, place a box at your own home if you have suitable habitat. Although we refer to it as a Bluebird Trail, and bluebird nest boxes, don't be dismayed if our Tree Swallows also make use of the boxes. That is ok. Other cavity nesting birds may use them too, such as the Ash-throated Flycatcher.

If you've never watched bluebirds raise a family, you're missing one of nature's purest joys.

One box can change your spring. To get involved email Redbud Audubon at redbud.audubon@gmail.com.



(Pictured at left) Donna Mackiewicz shows kids how to monitor a nest box.

(Above) One of Donna's former students eagerly watches the birds.



A baby bluebird is being placed back in its nest after trying to fly too soon.



Numerous nests of both cormorants and herons can be seen from the Clearlake Keys viewpoint.



Double-crested Cormorants are already on their nests in the wetland next to the Clearlake Keys.

Join us for a morning of birding in Clearlake Oaks – a dynamic bird habitat

Join us March 21 for a wonderful morning of birding in Clearlake Oaks — one of the most dynamic bird habitats on Clear Lake.

We will meet at 9 a.m. (rain or shine) in the parking lot by the boat ramp: 12684 Island Drive, Clearlake Oaks.

Early spring is an especially exciting time here. With luck, we hope to observe several grebe species, including Western, Clark’s, Pied-billed, Horned, and perhaps even Eared Grebes, along with a variety of migrating waterfowl moving through the lake.

Following our waterside observations, we will take a short drive to view the rookery near Clearlake Keys, where nesting activity is already underway and new life is beginning to appear.

2025-2026

Field Trip Calendar

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

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!

CBRP says it's time for the pre-season check of nest boxes

The following information is provided by the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) and pertains to small nest boxes (chickadee and bluebird). Large nest boxes (barn owl, kestrel, screech owl, and wood duck) have a wholly different regimen.

Ideally, a pre-season check of nest boxes is done by March 1st, as numerous species normally begin nesting in March, depending upon the weather. Below is a list of actions and considerations in performing this task.

Clean out the nest box if needed (a 2" putty knife with a steel blade works nicely). You may find a nest (yellow jacket, mud wasp, bird, or mouse), acorns, and even dead birds. Yellow jackets move slowly on cool mornings, so I usually crunch them using the putty knife.)

If you find a dead bird, remove it using a pair of pliers, a vinyl glove, or a plastic bag. Bird flu is a concern. Safely bury or dispose of the bird. You may want to spray the inside of the box and any tools or non-disposable gloves used with a 10% bleach solution or a no-scent disinfectant.

Verify the box is physically ready for a new nesting season. Repair or replace if necessary.

Move the box if the branch or tree it is mounted on or hung from is dying or dead.

For mounted boxes, replace the mounting post if it is loose or failing. The box falling during active nesting can be disastrous.

If the box is a hanging box, ensure it will be shaded by the tree's canopy from at least noon to early evening (the hottest part of the day). If not, consider installing a sun shield and/or painting the box a light color (white or

a light earth tone).

Trails that have public access may be subject to vandalism. If you suspect vandalism, consider removing the box or, if it is a hanging box, hanging it higher.

You should consider moving the nest box to a new location if there has not been nesting activity or successful fledging for two seasons or more.

The reason for previous losses should be evaluated. Was the loss due to predation? If so, consider installing a predator guard. Were house sparrows to blame? If so, consider removing the box or being proactive, such as installing a Sparrow Spooker at the appropriate time or trapping when losses occur.

Was heat the cause of the losses? If so, consider adding a sun shield or painting the box a light color. Did the nest get wet? If the box is near irrigated turf, ensure it will not be hit by sprinklers. Wet nests may be abandoned, and nestlings can die from hypothermia. Note that sprinklers may hit the back or sides of the box without being obvious.

Lee Pauser, CBRP spokesman



It's time to start cleaning out your nest boxes!

Membership explained

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. 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 providing us your email address.

Legislative support needed to help protect wildlife

Some of our members who are also members of National Audubon may receive emails 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.

Here are the final numbers for Redbud Audubon's 2025 Christmas Bird Count

By Kathy Barnwell

The data for the 51st Redbud Audubon Christmas Bird Count has been compiled and reviewed, and the total species seen on Saturday, December 20, 2025 was reduced to 127. The total birds seen has been adjusted up to 31,706 and our count week birds remain at 7.

The weather conditions were likely a factor in our count numbers this year. Although the temperatures were warmer than usual, the cloudy morning and rainy afternoon made viewing and identifying birds more difficult. Several groups, including our kayakers, were forced to stop birding early due to steady rain. Fortunately, we had 37 birders, bumping up our total effort hours to 73.

This year we had two birds we have not had on our count before: **Ross's Goose** and **Long-tailed Duck**. We had good numbers of **Wood Ducks** (60), **Wild Turkey** (84), **Pied-billed Grebe** (175), **Eared Grebe** (638), **Western and Clark's Grebes** (4587-W; 1077-C; 4836-W/C), **Double-crested Cormorant** (2785), **Great Egret** (91), **California Thrasher** (13), **Brewer's Blackbird** (797), and **Lesser Goldfinch** (260).

We had birds show up that we haven't seen in many years: **Northern Pintail** (4) - not reported since 2009; **Barrow's Goldeneye** (1) - not reported since 2019; **Golden Eagle** (1) - not reported since 2021, and **Tree Swallow** (25) - not reported since 2017. On the other hand, we missed birds that we usually get, including **Cackling Goose**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Osprey**, **Pileated Woodpecker**, and **Townsend's Warbler**.

There were no unusually high numbers of any species, but there were a few unusually low numbers: **Common Merganser** (5) **Oak Titmouse** (45) and **Western Meadowlark** (29).

We really appreciate all the participants who went out this year in poor weather conditions and completed your routes and paperwork. We also want to thank all the pre and post count day birders. Their extra work provided us with sightings of 7 very good birds during count week, showing that we had at least 134 species in our count circle from 12/17/25 through 12/23/25.

Please join us this coming December for the 127th Annual Christmas Bird Count, and Redbud's 52nd count, on Saturday, December 19, 2026. Mark your calendar!

See Christmas Bird Count tallies on pages 8-10; see how they compare to years past on pages 10-11.

	SPECIES	2025 totals
1	Greater White-fronted Goose	12
2	Ross's Goose	1
3	Canada Goose	428
4	Wood Duck	60
5	Gadwall	15
6	American Wigeon	31
7	Mallard	508
8	Northern Shoveler	195
9	Northern Pintail	4
10	Canvasback	2
11	Ring-necked Duck	57
12	Greater Scaup	4
13	Lesser Scaup	14
14	Long-tailed Duck	1
15	Bufflehead	260
16	Common Goldeneye	71
17	Barrow's Goldeneye	1
18	Hooded Merganser	17
19	Common Merganser	5
20	Ruddy Duck	6468
	Duck Species	16
21	California Quail	167
22	Ring-necked Pheasant	2
23	Wild Turkey	84
24	Common Loon	1
25	Pied-billed Grebe	175
26	Horned Grebe	18
27	Eared Grebe	638
28	Western Grebe	4587
29	Clark's Grebe	1077
	Aechmophorus sp.	4836
30	Double-cr Cormorant	2785
31	American White Pelican	191
32	Great Blue Heron	46
33	Great Egret	91
34	Snowy Egret	7
35	Green Heron	3
36	Black-cr Night Heron	34

37	Turkey Vulture	83
38	White-tailed Kite	4
39	Golden Eagle	1
40	Northern Harrier	3
41	Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
42	Cooper's Hawk	3
43	Bald Eagle	6
44	Red-shouldered Hawk	24
45	Red-tailed Hawk	30
46	Ferruginous Hawk	2
47	Virginia Rail	2
	Sora	CW
48	American Coot	863
49	Killdeer	19
50	Spotted Sandpiper	4
51	Least Sandpiper	1
52	Bonaparte's Gull	78
53	Ring-billed Gull	78
54	California Gull	931
55	Herring Gull	539
56	Iceland Gull=Thayers	2
57	Glaucous-winged Gull	3
	Western/Glaucous hybrid	1
	Gull sp.	607
58	Rock Pigeon	32
59	Band-tailed Pigeon	12
60	Eurasian Collared Dove	57
61	Mourning Dove	62
62	Barn Owl	2
63	Western Screech Owl	1
64	Great Horned Owl	4
65	Anna's Hummingbird	37
66	Belted Kingfisher	21
67	Lewis's Woodpecker	4
68	Acorn Woodpecker	200
69	Red-breasted Sapsucker	4
70	Nuttall's Woodpecker	28
71	Downy Woodpecker	5
72	Hairy Woodpecker	3
73	Northern Flicker	43

74	American Kestrel	12
	Peregrine Falcon	CW
75	Black Phoebe	61
76	Say's Phoebe	3
77	Steller's Jay	9
78	California Scrub-Jay	106
79	American Crow	143
80	Common Raven	181
81	Tree Swallow	25
82	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	3
83	Oak Titmouse	45
84	Bushtit	153
85	White-breasted Nuthatch	41
	Pygmy Nuthatch	CW
86	Brown Creeper	1
	House Wren	CW
87	Pacific Wren	1
88	Marsh Wren	1
89	Bewick's Wren	13
90	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	53
91	Wrentit	19
92	Western Bluebird	103
93	Hermit Thrush	4
94	American Robin	433
95	California Thrasher	13
96	Northern Mockingbird	32
97	European Starling	569
98	Cedar Waxwing	21
99	American Pipit	1
100	Phainopepla	3
101	Orange-crowned Warbler	1
102	Yellow-rumped (form ?)	205
	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle)	1
	Yellow-rumped (Audubon)	4
	Chipping Sparrow	CW
	Lark Sparrow	CW
103	Fox Sparrow	5
104	Dark-eyed Junco - OR	211
105	White-crowned Sparrow	215
106	Golden-crowned Sparrow	235

*CBC continued
from page 9*

107	White-throated Sparrow	2
108	Bell's Sparrow	1
109	Savannah Sparrow	10
110	Song Sparrow	29
111	Lincoln's Sparrow	9
112	California Towhee	87
113	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	7
114	Spotted Towhee	33
	Western Tanager	CW
115	Red-winged Blackbird	335
116	Tricolored Blackbird	1
117	Western Meadowlark	29
118	Brewer's Blackbird	797
119	Great-tailed Grackle	15
120	Brown-headed Cowbird	5
121	Hooded Oriole	1
122	Bullock's Oriole	1
	Blackbird Sp.	356
123	House Finch	34
124	Purple Finch	4
125	Lesser Goldfinch	260
126	American Goldfinch	25
127	House Sparrow	25
	TOTAL BIRDS	31706
127	TOTAL SPECIES	127
	Plus 7 CW birds = 134	

Redbud Audubon Society needs you to volunteer!

About 35 years ago I was very concerned about environmental issues happening all around me, especially in our own Lake County. I wanted to do something but wasn't quite sure what that "something" was. After seeing an article about a Redbud Audubon program, I thought, "well, maybe that is a good organization to get involved with." So, I called up someone listed in the newsletter and said I wanted to get involved.

And so, after 35 years, I am still involved with Redbud Audubon, and it has been incredibly fulfilling. I often wonder if there are others who, like me back then, feel compelled to address their concerns but are uncertain about where to start. If you find yourself in that position, I encourage you to do what I did: volunteer for Redbud Audubon!

Opportunities to Make a Difference

Redbud Audubon has many projects and activities that offer fun and rewarding ways to get involved. Even if you can spare just an hour a week, your contribution will have a meaningful impact. Volunteering will not only give you a sense of fulfillment but also introduce you to some wonderful people.

How to get involved

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please email us at redbud.audubon@gmail.com or call (707) 805-9410. Leave your contact information and mention your area of interest. Someone will reach out to you.

Roberta Lyons, past president

Further thoughts on the Christmas Bird Count data

By Brad and Kathy Barnwell

After reviewing the statistics for the state of California and Lake County based on the 2024 125th CBC, I thought I would add a few more observations. Keep in mind that Lake County is not a large county, and only has a population of approximately 70,000, with only one CBC count circle.

The 2024/25 CBC ran from Dec. 14, 2024 to Jan. 5, 2025, and there were 124 count circles reporting. The entire state reported a grand total of 396 species. Lake county reported 120 species or 31.66% of the total species for the state. Almost one third of all the species, which is pretty good. The website also referenced a major storm system

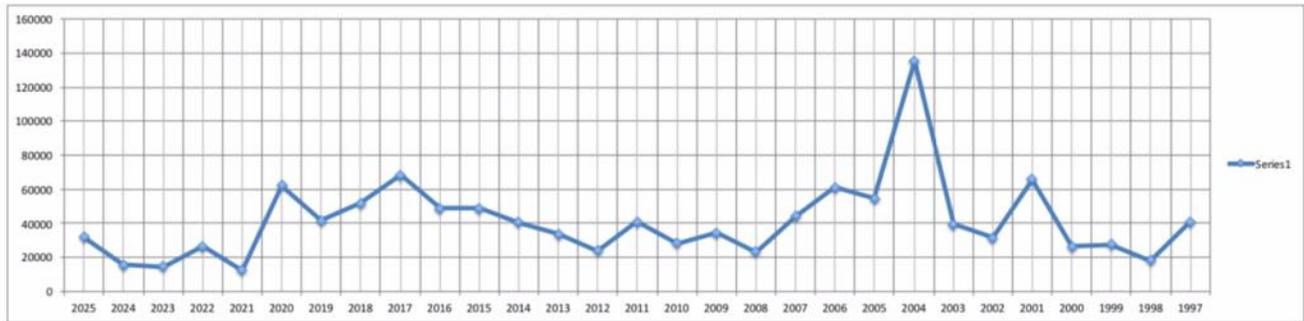
in Northern California on Dec. 14, 2024 and Dec. 15, 2024, which affected several counts, including our own. Our total species of 127 on Dec. 20, 2025 was a good improvement over the 120 reported Dec. 14, 2024.

Another interesting but disturbing statistic revealed by the CBC data on the Audubon website is that, while the overall number of reporting circles is increasing, the raw count of the number of birds reported has been declining since 2014.

Conclusion: Lake County is a pretty good area for birding—and we all need to help protect the birds. Thank you to the CBC participants and their support of our birds!

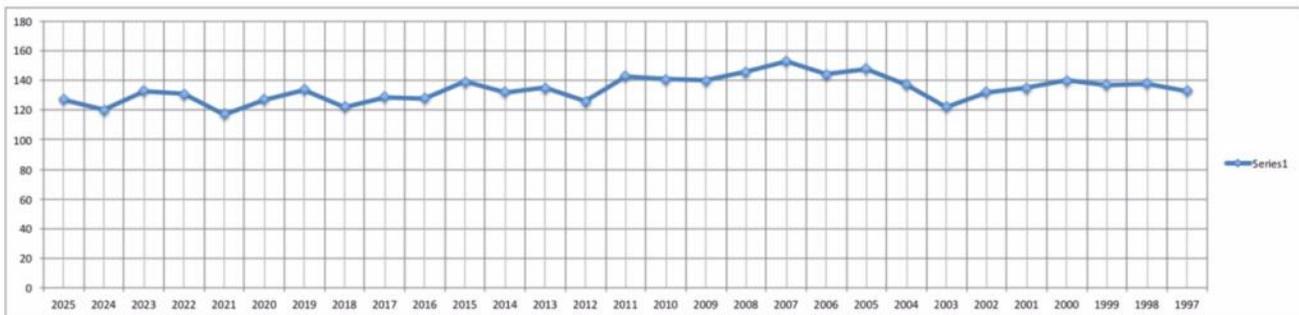
Total birds seen annually on the Christmas Bird Count

2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
31706	15824	14494	26517	12289	62165	41666	51683	68266	48957	48775	40621	33768	24114	40770	28362	34488	23314	44239	60945	54451	135312	39540	31394	65792	26426	27466	18007	40858



Total species seen annually on the Christmas Bird Count

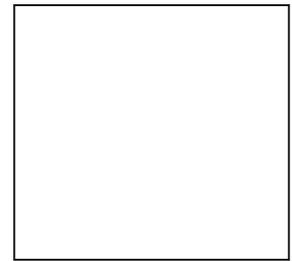
2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
127	120	133	131	117	127	134	122	129	128	139	132	135	126	143	141	140	146	153	144	148	137	122	132	135	140	137	138	133



Participants, hours, and weather 2025 back to 1997

SPECIES	2025-1-26	2024-1-25	2023-1-24	2022-1-23	2021-1-22	2020-1-21	2019-1-20	2018-1-19	2017-1-18	2016-1-17	2015-1-16	2014-1-15	2013-1-14	2012-1-13	2011-1-12	2010-1-11	2009-1-10	2008-1-09	2007-1-08	2006-1-07	2005-1-06	2004-1-05	2003-1-04	2002-1-03	2001-1-02	2000-1-01	1999-1-00	1998-99	1997-98
Participants	37	27	35	33	33	37	34	39	37	42	52	59	48	56	55	49	55	40	42	31	29	35	29	21	25	28	20	17	
Hours	73	65.5	74	87.5	82.8	89.5	69	80.5	74.8	78.3	95.5	108	99	82.8	102	110	92.5	100.25	109.75	94.5	85.25	104.5	67	69.8	85	84	79	89	79
Count Date	12/20	12/14	12/16	12/17	12/18	12/19	12/14	12/15	12/16	12/17	12/19	12/27	12/14	12/15	12/17	12/18	12/19	12/20	12/15	12/16	12/17	12/18	12/20	12/21	12/15	12/16	12/18	12/19	12/20
Weather	47°/60° Cloudy / Rain	39°/52° rain, light rain	31°/65° Clear, partly cloudy	20°/61° clear	26°/59° foggy/mostly clear	24°/61° mostly clear	36°/53° cldy/lt rain	40°/54° cldy/lt rain	31°/64° clear	18°/51° clear	39°/51° clear	20°/53° cld/cle ar	21°/65° clear	26°/37° pt cldy	53°/67° rain/sn ow	40°/46° clear	41°/61° cldy/lt rain	24°/45° Foggy	30°/50° Clear	20°/43° cldy/lt rain	32°/40° cldy	30°/62° cldy/lt rain	41°/49° Foggy	40°/55° Li rain am, Hvy rain am, partly clear	32°/65° Cloudy	34°/61° Partly cloudy	36°/60° Partly cloudy	17°/48° Clear	22°/52° Li rain am, pt cldy

Redbud Audubon
PO Box 5780
Clearlake, CA 95422



National Audubon/Redbud Audubon Joint Membership Application

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

YES Enroll me in both the National Audubon Society and local chapter of Redbud Audubon.
(It is easier to go to our website and sign up online!
www.redbudaudubon.org)

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.
Membership starts at \$25 a year.**

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email (Required to receive local chapter newsletter): _____

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society. Mail your application and check to POB 5780, Clearlake, CA 95422

I would also like to make a donation to the local work of Redbud Audubon. My separate check is enclosed for
_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 Other: _____

Thank you for supporting Redbud Audubon Society
Connecting People with Nature since 1974