# The Western Grebe

**Redbud Audubon Society, Inc.,**

*www.redbudaudubon.org*

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# The land of ice and fire is also the land of millions of famous birds like Arctic Terns and Puffins

The Redbud Audubon Society is pleased to present Mendocino photographer and birder Tim Bray on Thursday, Oct. 15 with a 7 p.m. zoom program featuring Iceland, the "Land of Ice and Fire." Iceland has dramatic scenery that grabs your attention at every turn: mountains, glaciers, and volcanoes; but Tim Bray turned his camera to another feature: the millions of summer-breeding birds.

**Photographer and birder Tim Bray will share images and stories from his Iceland birding adventures during Redbud Audubon's Oct. 15 Zoom program.**

Its subarctic location in the middle of the north Atlantic makes Iceland a destination for millions of summer-breeding birds, nearly all in the narrow strip of habitable land around the coastline. Even non-birders are impressed by the famous breeding colonies of Puffins, and people are regularly attacked by Arctic Terns nesting near tourist attractions. Although it does not boast of any endemic species, the beauty and ubiquity of the breeding birds in Iceland draw many birders, and it is truly a paradise for photographers.

This program will feature photos of many birds seen on two trips to Iceland.

Tim Bray started birdwatching as a teenager but only got

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# REDBUD AUDUBON

## OCTOBER MEETING

**Date: Thursday, October 15, 7 pm**
**Topic: Birds of the land of ice and fire**
**Speaker: Tim Bray**

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:**

*The vividly patterned Harlequin Duck, one of North America's most distinctive sea ducks.*

# Exploring Iceland's remarkable summer birds

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serious about it after moving to the Mendocino coast. Inspired and challenged by the expertise of people like Art Morley, Toby Tobkin, and David Jensen, he has been playing catch-up for 25 years. He joined the Board of Directors of the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society in 2012 and has been its President since 2019. He also co-hosts two radio programs on KZYX: Oak & Thorn, a program featuring the traditional and contemporary music of Ireland and Scotland; and The Ecology Hour, a program featuring interviews with scientists exploring the natural world.

Please join us for what promises to be a very enjoyable program. Registration can be accomplished by going to Redbud Audubon's website: **www.redbudaudubon.org** and clicking on the link on the home page, or, by clicking on the link in this newsletter.

*Red-necked Phalarope on the water.*

*Puffin showing its characteristic colorful bill.*

# President's Message

*by Donna Mackiewicz*

# The wonder of fall migration

*Donna Mackiewicz*

October is one of my favorite times to be a birder in Lake County. The mornings grow cooler, the oaks begin to tell us that autumn has arrived, and overhead and sometimes almost unnoticed in the darkness—millions of birds are making their remarkable journeys south.

National Audubon reminds us that migration is about much more than the flight itself. Birds need safe places to stop, rest and refuel along the way, making the protection of wetlands, oak woodlands, shorelines and other healthy habitats especially important. Audubon research has also shown that fall migration can be an especially dangerous time for warblers and other songbirds.

We can each help. Many birds migrate at night, so turning off unnecessary outdoor lights and making our windows more bird-safe are simple ways to give these travelers safer passage.

Here at home, we have wonderful places where migrating and resident birds can find the food, water and shelter they need. **This month, Redbud Audubon is especially pleased to partner with the Lake County Land Trust for our bird walk at the beautiful Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve.** The Land Trust has spent more than 30 years protecting Lake County lands and waters, and Kuhlanapo is one of the special places under its stewardship.

I hope you will join us. Bring your binoculars, bring a friend, and come experience the magic of fall migration with us.

As the seasons change and the birds pass through Lake County, may they remind us that protecting even one wetland, one stand of old oaks, or one resting place can be part of something much larger, a journey connecting habitats across the Americas.

Happy fall birding!

# Exciting conservation news for Lake County!

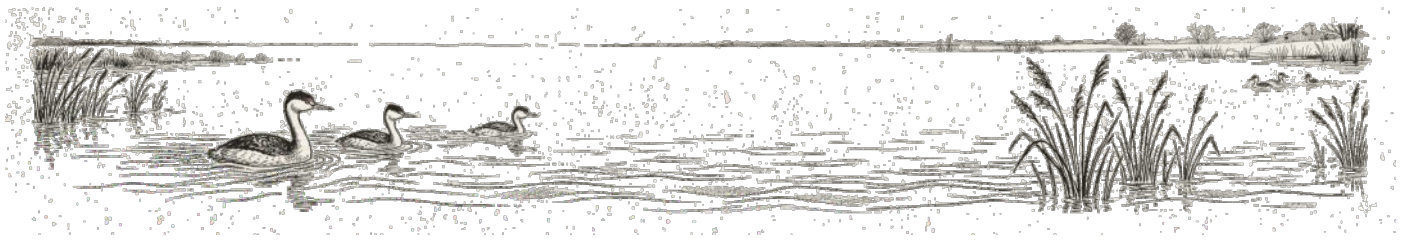
Redbud Audubon Society has received word from Audubon California that $50,000 will be awarded through the Jay J. and Sigrid E. Wimberly Wildlife Fund in support of the effort to protect the Passion Play property adjoining the Lake County Land Trust's Rodman Preserve near Upper Lake.

The Lake County Land Trust is currently working on a grant to purchase this 55-acre property. The Wimberly grant will serve as matching funds and strengthens the possibility of a successful acquisition. This will expand protected habitat and help safeguard an important landscape that includes seasonal wetlands and shoreline where you can view where Clark's and Western Grebes nest.

Redbud Audubon is especially excited about what this could mean for birds, habitat connectivity, community science, environmental education, and future generations. It is also a wonderful example of what can happen when conservation organizations and community partners work together toward a shared goal.

Redbud Audubon is grateful to Audubon California and the Jay J. and Sigrid E. Wimberly Wildlife Fund for supporting conservation here in Lake County.

More details will be coming in next month's Western Grebe as this exciting project moves forward!



# Joining and renewing Redbud membership is now online only

You have a choice between two types of Redbud membership. Both are offered online only and payment is done with a credit or debit card.

If you wish to join only our Redbud Audubon chapter, simply go to our website: **www.redbudaudubon.org**. Click on the Membership tab, then click on the link for Redbud Audubon Only. If you join Redbud Chapter Only, you will receive by email our local monthly newsletter with information on speakers and field trips, as well as articles and photos of Redbud's many education and conservation activities in Lake County. Our chapter uses a membership management software that automatically sends a renewal reminder email each year. Your local membership dollars go directly to support Redbud's programs and operating expenses (less a small percentage transaction fee paid to the membership software company).

As an option to Redbud Only, you can join our chapter through the National Audubon Society (NAS). Your full membership dollars paid to NAS support their crucial work responding to climate changes in bird populations across the flyways of our country and the Western hemisphere. Their extensive conservation programs focus on preserving essential habitats along migration routes. As a member of NAS, you will receive the quarterly prize-winning Audubon magazine and emails encouraging you to take action online to support important legislation or regulations affecting birds.

When you join NAS, you automatically also become a member of our chapter. If you include your email address during the NAS registration process, you will receive our newsletter The Western Grebe. Redbud no longer produces printed copies of the newsletter, only the online version which is emailed to both local and NAS members who have provided their email address.

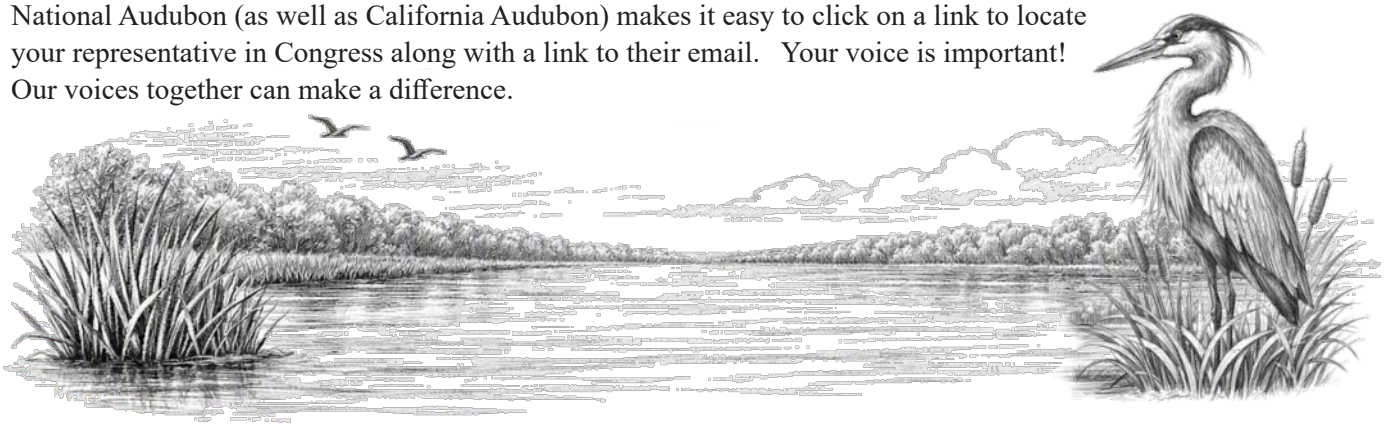
To join either our local chapter or through NAS, the Redbud Audubon membership page provides two links: one to join locally or one to join through National Audubon. Alternatively for NAS membership, you can also go directly to their website www.audubon.org. Whichever way you join, you are helping to protect the birds we all love.

# Can I still mail a donation check?

Although membership (either local or National) must be done online by credit card or debit card, Redbud still welcomes donation checks by mail. If you want to donate to Redbud Audubon, separately from your online membership dues, please feel free to do so by paper check if that is what you prefer. Mail that payment to P.O. Box 5780 Clearlake, CA 95422. Mailing a paper check directly to us avoids our having to pay a small percentage to the software company that processes credit card donations. We can simply deposit the check in our bank account. Thank you for considering a donation.

## *Help birds through Audubon's legislative updates*

Members of National Audubon receive email 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 along with a link to their email. Your voice is important! Our voices together can make a difference.



# Building a Western Bluebird trail and a commitment to the birds

Redbud Audubon Society recently had an opportunity to give some extra bluebird nest boxes, several in need of a little repair, to be installed on the property of the Van Eck family near Cole Creek and Clearlake State Park.

The Van Eck's plan to repair the boxes and create a Western Bluebird nest box trail, and they have invited Redbud Audubon members to return in the spring to birdwatch and help monitor the trail. This is a wonderful partnership of private landowners and birders working together to help our native wildlife thrive.

But putting up a birdhouse is only the beginning. The California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) emphasizes that establishing a nest box trail is a real commitment. Boxes should be checked regularly during nesting season, and monitors should keep records, watch for predators and parasites, make needed repairs, and clean boxes appropriately.

An improperly monitored box can provide an opportunity for invasive House Sparrows, which compete aggressively with native cavity-nesting birds and can destroy eggs, nestlings and even adult birds.

National Audubon Society likewise encourages responsible nest-box care. Boxes should be designed and placed with the birds' safety in mind, including the correct entrance-hole size, suitable habitat and protection from predators.

That is an important lesson for all of us: a nest box is not simply a decoration. It is a responsibility. If we invite a wild bird to raise its family in something we provide, we should be prepared to care for that box responsibly.

The same spirit applies to our bird feeders. Helping birds means more than putting out food or housing; it means keeping what we provide clean, safe and properly maintained. A little due diligence can make the difference between truly helping wildlife and unintentionally creating problems.

Redbud Audubon looks forward to a field trip to the Van Eck property next spring, enjoying the birds along beautiful Cole Creek, and helping monitor this new bluebird trail. Perhaps we'll even have the joy of watching the first young Western Bluebirds fledge. Stay tuned for more details in the coming months.

*Joanne Van Eck is looking forward to starting a Bluebird Trail.*

Interested in learning more about responsible nest box monitoring? Here are a couple of websites that have great information: California Bluebird Recovery Program Nest Box Monitoring: **https://www.cbrp.org/nest-box-monitoring/** and National Audubon Society – Welcome Bluebirds with Nest Boxes: **https://www.audubon.org/news/welcome-bluebirds-nestboxes**

*Some of the field trip attendees gather at the trailhead of Hammond Park, getting ready to begin Redbud Audubon's morning bird walk through Lake County's newest community park.*

*The group of birders pauses along the Hammond Park trail after catching sight of some sparrows.*

# Birding Hammond Park — Lake County's newest County park

**By Donna Mackiewicz**

Enthusiastic birders joined Redbud Audubon for the September field trip, on a beautiful morning exploring Hammond Park in Nice, Lake County's newest park.

As we walked the park's trail beneath magnificent heritage oaks, we also remembered the late Lake County Public Works Director Lars Ewing, who spearheaded the creation of Hammond Park. The park is a wonderful addition to the community, a place where recreation and wildlife habitat come together.

Around the baseball field and open areas, we found California Quail, Lesser Goldfinches, Killdeer, Savannah Sparrows and newly arriving White-crowned Sparrows, while Turkey Vultures circled overhead.

Our walk then took us alongside an open field and wetland, where sparrows were busy feeding among the grasses and seed heads. Merlin Bird ID even picked up the call of an American Pipit, a welcome

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*Birders pause at the wetland edge to observe shorebirds and a White-tailed Kite.*

# Hammond Park's first bird walk yields 44 species

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sign of fall migration. Western Bluebirds, House Finches, California Scrub-Jays and Red-winged Blackbirds added color and activity to the morning.

The heritage oaks offered another world of birds. We listened to migrating Orange-crowned and Yellow Warblers among the branches, along with Oak Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches and European Starlings. And what could be more fitting beneath these grand old oaks than Acorn Woodpeckers flying overhead carrying acorns?

By the end of our walk, we had recorded an impressive 44 species, a wonderful showing for a morning at a brand-new county park.

Hammond Park reminded us why community parks matter. A walking trail, ballfield, wetland, open grassland and old oaks can provide recreation for people while also offering food, shelter and resting places for resident birds and fall migrants.

Thank you to the birders who joined us, and to everyone whose work helped make Hammond Park a reality. As Redbud Audubon continues exploring and celebrating Lake County's birdlife, we look forward to watching this young park grow—and seeing which feathered visitors discover it next.

Every new park is also a new opportunity to notice, appreciate and protect the birds that share Lake County with us.

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*Restoration efforts continue at BLM sites, where volunteers help plant native species.*

# BLM is asking for volunteers to work on restoring plants at two public lands site

**By Laura Moreno-Baker**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ukiah Field Office is seeking volunteers to support fall and winter restoration plantings at two important public land sites: Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument–Molok Luyuk (Walker Ridge) and California Coastal National Monument–Stornetta Unit (Point Arena) .

At Molok Luyuk, volunteers will assist with chaparral restoration in sensitive areas affected by off-highway vehicle disturbance. Volunteers will be planting shrub species in unauthorized, user-created trail areas to create living barriers that discourage future off-trail use. Species planned for installation include sticky whiteleaf manzanita (Arctostaphylos viscida), chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum), and chaparral pea (Pickeringia montana).

Planting efforts may start as early as the week of Nov. 9 for volunteers who are flexible during the week and would like to lend a hand. One larger volunteer planting day is tentatively scheduled for November 21, weather permitting. Although chaparral ecosystems are naturally resilient, severe or repeated disturbance can slow or even halt natural recovery. "Active restoration—including planting, seeding, soil stabilization, and weeding—is essential to help these ecosystems rebound, especially where soils or seedbanks have been damaged. This work represents a hands on contribution to advancing the science and practice of chaparral restoration," a BLM spokesperson stated.

In Point Arena, recent planting efforts have focused on restoring coastal prairie habitat and improving conditions for sensitive species, including host and nectar plants that support the federally endangered Behren's silverspot butterfly. This year's work will build on restoration efforts over the past two years, including post prescribed fire planting where several native species showed strong recovery in burn scars and helped guide future restoration design.

These volunteer events offer monument conservationists, native plant enthusiasts, and OHV community members an opportunity to give back to their public lands through meaningful, place-based ecological restoration.

BLM will supply all plants and tools, but volunteers are encouraged to bring their own food, water, gloves, and foam pads (useful for kneeling). If you have a favorite planting tool for container stock, feel free to bring it along. Volunteers will also have the option to take home a few container plants, should they wish to start—or contribute to—a native garden of their own.

If you would like to participate, please reach out directly to BLM Ecologist, Laura Moreno Baker **(lmoreno@blm.gov)**, to express interest and to be added to a volunteer emailing list, where last minute weather dependent updates and scheduling information will be posted.

*Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve.*

## Redbud Audubon will join monthly walk at Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve

The October field trip for the Redbud Audubon Society has been changed from the Cache Creek Redbud Trail to the Lake County Land Trust's Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve near Lakeport.

During this walk with Lake County Land Trust staff we will learn about the Land Trust's wetland restoration projects as we bird the preserve. Mosquitos and some ticks may still be around so long pants and sleeves–and bug repellant–are suggested. Sturdy shoes are best and bring water.

A portable restroom will be available. The birds and wildlife are abundant–so bring binoculars! The address is 446 Soda Bay Road, Lakeport. As you head south towards Kelseyville from Lakeport go past the Lake County Transfer and Recycling Center and cross the Manning Creek bridge; then just past the black mailbox, make a left onto the road that will take you to the preserve entrance about ½ mile. There will be signage, including a "flag" to mark the entrance to the preserve.

**This field trip will start at 9 am, on Saturday, October 17.**

# Field Trip Calendar for 2026-2027

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

**October 17** –Kuhlanapo Wetland Preserve, Lakeport

**December 19 –** Christmas Bird Count

**January 16** – Colusa and Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges

**February 20** – Shigom Robinson Rancheria lands (Caravanning will be organized)

**March 20** – Private ranch on Steelhead Drive near Kelseyville

**April 17** – Tribal Eco-Restoration Alliance, office property on Parallel Dr. Lakeport

**May 15** – Witter Springs, Walnut Orchard of Erica Lundquist and Randy Krag

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. Because of insurance restrictions, Redbud Audubon no longer arranges "carpooling," opportunities, but caravanning will be provided for areas more difficult to find like the Robinson Rancheria lands and other private properties.
A meeting place will be determined and cars can caravan from there. Put these dates on your calendar and plan for a fun day of birding with friends!

## Redbud Audubon welcomes donations to support our important educational and conservation work in Lake County.

- You can contribute either online or by mailing us a check.
- To contribute online with a credit or debit card, visit our website **www.redbudaudubon.org** and click on any of the blue **Donate Now** links.
- You can also send us a check made out to Redbud Audubon Society and mail it to POB 5780, Clearlake, CA 95422. Mailing a paper check directly to us avoids our having to pay a small percentage to the software company that processes credit and debit card donations. We can simply deposit the check in our bank account.

**Thank you for supporting Redbud Audubon Society**

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