Bringing Wildlife Home - Creating Wildlife Habitat for Urban Birds

Spring is garden time and now, more than ever with the changing climate, it’s important to provide food, water and shelter for our breeding birds. Your green space, be it a few acres or a small balcony, can provide a critical nesting spot, nectar or food source. Don’t consider yourself a gardener? Practice No Fear Gardening and just Dig In!

The Sequoia Audubon Society (SAS) website has links to plants lists for regional habitats in San Mateo County, nurseries, plant suggestions for specific birds, and many other helpful resources. Gardening has proven benefits for mood, and counts for exercise. Share your successes with friends and neighbors; create a bird-friendly neighborhood and urban wildlife corridors. Include in your bird-friendly green space nectar sources for other pollinators such as our native bees and butterflies. Leave the space a little ‘messy’ for shelter, leaves on the ground for worms and salamanders, survey for collision hazards on windows and keep cats indoors.

At the May 12th general meeting SAS will have a native plant demonstration with resource materials.

Pacifica Snowy Plover Decoy Project

These plovers look a bit odd – that is because they’re the decoys that will be installed on Pacifica beaches this spring to encourage nesting. Along with the symbolic fencing and signage installed last year, Margaret Goodale and her team of school children will paint the wooden decoys before placing them on the beach. Check our website for dates to help with this fun and important project. Supported by the Pacifica Shorebird Alliance and Sequoia Audubon. Photo of the SNPL decoys by Mad River Decoys.

To Our Members

From the SAS President and Board of Directors, a most grateful and heartfelt thank you to all our members who gave to the annual end of the year donation appeal. Your generosity and continued support allows us to work hard to protect birds and their habitats, provide outstanding birding trips, speakers, communications and the many other tasks of a successful chapter.

You make it possible!
Getting to Know Your Board of Directors

Edwin Geer

Many of you already know Director Edwin Geer. He greets you at the table each month during our general meeting, reminding you to sign in and find your name tag. With his partner JC Shaver, he coordinates the food, drinks (including making the Bird-Friendly coffee donated by Sue Rowinski), materials and general birdy display we enjoy each month.

Edwin Geer began chasing birds as a young boy in wooded Dime, Pennsylvania. It started when his mother noticed his interest in nature and an intense curiosity about the things he discovered in the woods around his family’s farm. She told him that if he wanted to capture a robin all he had to sprinkle salt on its tail. Edwin spent a lot of time chasing robins, and to this day the American Robin is still his favorite bird.

Currently in Pacifica, he is also on the board for the Pacifica Shorebird Alliance monitoring Snowy Plovers and chairs the SAS Conservation Committee.

Melissa Hero

Melissa is so much more than a self-identified BirdNerd. She is an educator, a Hawk Watcher at the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, teaches quilting, presenter at education, tech and birding conferences and winner of many awards; and most recently awarded as a Google Innovator in Education. Her B.S. in Avian Sciences and M.Ed in Cross-cultural Education benefits the many worlds in which she adds value. Melissa is the Board Secretary and official SAS super-geek. Follow her blog at: https://about.me/melissahero

SAS Counts

Each year SAS sponsors two CBC counts, Crystal Springs which had 100 counters finding 193 species and Año Nuevo with 92 counters and 167 species. Well that was fun! Looking for the next big count? Join the 2016 North American Breeding Bird Survey. There are still many available routes in deliciously remote areas. Check this site and claim your own route: https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/RouteMap/Map.cfm#

SAS regularly coordinates with other organizations to survey birds. Send an email to office@sequoia-audubon.org and we’ll get you involved.

California Bluebird Recovery Program

Caryl Carr has graciously agreed to take over the organization of the Bluebird Box Recovery Program in our county. Along with John Chamberlain who will build and repair the boxes, San Mateo County will continue to support the recovery of these beautiful members of our avian community. There are many ways to help this important program. Contact Caryl at: carylc@gmail.com.
April 14, 2016 “Garden Wild: Joining the Urban Ecological Matrix” with Ildiko Polony

Ildiko Polony will go over the basics of habitat gardening with native plants to attract local wildlife to your home garden, giving concrete examples of plant and animal relationships that you can help foster. She will also share some of her favorite plants found in the South Bay, their ecological, ethno-botanical and garden uses. She will illustrate how gardening for habitat connects you with minute details in your own backyard, how these details can be seen in the larger ecosystem, giving you a sense of place and timelessness. How this ultimately fosters a connection to nature that most of us have lost, or never had, and the grave importance of finding this connection in the 21st century world.

Ildiko has been a lifelong environmentalist. She primarily focused on advocacy for action on climate change - until she started gardening in her San Francisco backyard and discovered local wildlife. She quickly became a native plant fanatic and a habitat restoration gardener directing her environmentalism towards immersion in local ecology and its restoration while contemplating through this immersion how humans can live more harmoniously with the non-human world. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Conservation and Resource Studies, completing her thesis titled “Connecting People, Connecting Wildlife: A Bicycle Wildlife Corridor on Arguello Boulevard in San Francisco.” Since graduation she has worked at Larner Seeds, a California Native Plant Seed Company, is a habitat landscaper and is currently a coordinator for Nature in the City’s Backyard Native Nursery Network as well as the Nursery Manager at San Bruno Mountain Watch’s Mission Blue Nursery.

May 12, 2016 “De-extinction and the Vital Ecology of the Passenger Pigeon” with Ben Novak

In 2012 the non-profit group Revive & Restore formed with a mission to use emerging biotechnologies for 21st century conservation. New technologies can fight diseases, re-store genetic diversity, remove invasive species, and even replace extinct species - a pro cess dubbed de-extinction. In 2013 Revive & Restore announced their pilot project “The Great Passenger Pigeon Comeback”, stating the extinct passenger pigeon will fly above us again in this lifetime. But what exactly does that mean? How do we bring back an extinct species? Is there a place in nature needing the bird? Ben’s collaborative research over the past 3 years pursues answers to these questions, discovering some amazing new things about a largely misunderstood bird. Ben will share these new insights and other progress from the growing field of biotechnology for bird and habitat conservation.

Ben J. Novak was raised in the badlands of North Dakota, where Theodore Roosevelt was inspired as a conservationist. He studied Evolution & Ecology at Montana State University. Ben’s passions are natural history of extinct birds and conservation. He trained in paleogenomics under Hendrik Poinar, at McMaster University. He then joined Revive & Restore taking to lead their passenger pigeon de-extinction work. The project brought him to the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he has written his master’s thesis on the ecology of the passenger pigeon while coordinating multiple efforts to move de-extinction forward. His newest venture for the project involves training in avian genetic engineering at the CSIRO Animal Health Laboratory in southern Australia.

June 9, 2016 “A Photography Trip to Madagascar -Searching for Endemics” with Sue and Bob Cossins

Professional photographer Bob and super-spotter Sue, with friends Eileen and Larry Kay traveled to Madagascar in October 2015, capturing images of the North East Rainforest and a broad spectrum of animals and plants, as well as the people and culture of Madagascar. SAS members, the Cossins and Kays have traveled extensively around the world and frequently share their travels with our chapter.
Sequoia Field Trips

Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve
Wednesday, April 6, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Pulgas Ridge OSP is not as well-known as its neighboring park across the road, Edgewood Preserve. We will explore this oak woodland and grassland in search of birds, wildflowers and butterflies. Directions: From Edgewood Road (near I-280), go north on Crestview Drive, then take an immediate left onto Edmonds Road. The parking lot is clearly marked on Edmonds. The trail is moderately strenuous, but the slow pace should allow everyone to keep up. Bring fluids, sunscreen, hat, etc.

Leader: Donna Pomeroy Contact: dpom@comcast.net

Edgewood County Park - Clarkia Trailhead
Sunday, April 10, 8:00am - 12:00 pm (note different meeting location for this date only)

Explore this gem of a park while hiking 3-6 miles through oak woodlands, some hills and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird year round. Directions: Take 280 to Edgewood Rd. in Woodside. Go west down Edgewood; turn south on Cañada Road to the Clarkia Trailhead (see map at http://parks.smcgov.org/edgewood-park-trails)

Leader: Susie Hons Contact: susieturtlewings@mac.com

Pinnacles National Park
Wednesday, April 13, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Pinnacles National Park lies just south of Hollister and affords the opportunity to see California Condors in the wild. We’ll also look for Canyon Wren, Lawrence’s Goldfinch, Prairie Falcon and more. This is a good time of the year for wildflowers and with all the rain we have had, it may be excellent. Directions: Take Hwy 101 south through the city of Gilroy to Hwy 25 south. On Hwy 25, go through the town of Hollister and continue about 30 miles to Hwy 146. Turn right on Hwy 146, then turn left into the Pinnacles Campground and Visitor Center. Allow 2 hours driving time. Entrance fee is $15 per vehicle and if you have a National Parks Senior Pass, it is free. Bring a flashlight for walking through the caves - the trail is steep in some places. Contact the leader to carpool and to reserve a spot.

Leader: Leslie Flint Contact: lflint@earthlink.net

Windy Hill OSP – Sausal Pond area
Saturday, April 16, 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Windy Hill Open Space Preserve can be a great spot for Spring migrants. Sausal Pond is one of the better places in the county to look for Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser and Green Heron. Black-crowned Night-heron, Ring-necked Duck, and Pied-billed Grebe have also frequented this haunt. The Ridge, Meadow, and Betsy Crowder Trails form a nice loop to the south of the pond, through a quick variety of habitats. There are some small stream crossings here, forming under-birded riparian corridors for potential migrants. This walk will include some gain and loss in elevation. Bring snacks, water and sunscreen. Directions: Traveling north on I-280, take the Alpine Road exit; go west on Alpine Road to the corner with Portola Road (there is a stop sign there). Take a right on Portola, and look for the MROSD sign indicating Windy Hill Parking to the left. Traveling south on I-280, get off at Sand Hill Road and travel southwest. Sandhill Road becomes Portola Road just past Jasper Ridge. Stay attentive for an equestrian center; after that, look to your right for the Windy Hill parking area. Leaders: Malia DeFelice and Chris Hayward Contact: malia.defelice.sas@gmail.com Heavy Rain Cancels

Garin Regional Park, Hayward
Sunday, April 17, 8:00 am - 11:30 am

Garin Regional Park is a great place to look for brightly colored birds and is a short trip from San Mateo. See Orioles, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Goldfinches and many more. Maybe we will find a baby coot! We will stroll around this mostly flat park, and may go down a wooded trail if the group so chooses. Directions: Cross the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge eastbound toward Hayward. Before you reach I-880, take Industrial Blvd south. Stay on Industrial when it crosses I-880 and turn right on Mission Blvd. Turn left on Garin Avenue; the park is at the end of the road. You may need to pay an entrance fee.

Leader: Ginny Marshall Contact: ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net

Filoli Estate
Saturday, April 23, 8:30 am - 12:00 pm. Reservations are required; participants must plan to remain the entire time as early departures are not allowed.

Filoli Estate is the property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. We have been invited for a morning of birding at this beautiful site on the edge of the San Francisco Watershed land. The grounds of Filoli have a beautiful formal garden surrounded by large oaks and trails leading to riparian, redwood and farm habitats. In addition to birds, the wildflowers should still be blooming; especially in the shadier areas on the back roads. Over 96 species of birds have been found here. Reservations are required as this trip is limited to 20 people maximum (sorry, no children under 14). Participants may remain after the field trip to walk through the house and/or formal gardens at no charge. No food or picnicking is allowed but light food and beverages at the Cafe are available for purchase and the
Mount Diablo State Park-Migration in Mitchell and White Canyons  
**Sunday April 24, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm**

The centerpiece of the Diablo mountain range is Mt Diablo, a 3,849-foot chaparral-covered peak; good not only for birds but wildflowers and butterflies as well. We’ll time our visit to coincide with peak bird migration. On a good migration day the area can be great for warblers (Nashville, Black-throated Gray, Townsend’s, Hermit and MacGillivray’s), hummingbirds (Anna’s, Rufous, Allen’s and Calliope), and vireos (Cassin’s, Hutton’s, Warbling). If you like a challenge, flycatchers can also be impressive, with up to 7 species possible! Taken together with the supporting cast of raptors, swifts, sparrows, wrens, and goldfinches, this is a truly fabulous spring birding location. We’ll spend the majority of the morning walking slowly along Mitchell and White Canyons (5-mile round-trip hike). These have gently sloping fire road trails that offer some of the best birding on the mountain. After the walk, we’ll drive roads around the SW of the mountain, birding as we go and stopping in picnic areas and campgrounds. We’ll have lunch at one of these spots, and the trip will end when bird activity dies down, likely after lunchtime. The trip is suitable for beginner and experienced birders alike. The tour is predominantly on foot on a variety of easy trails. Bring lunch, plenty of water, snacks, and prepare for potentially hot weather with suitable clothing, hat, and sturdy footwear. Directions: Exit I-680 in Walnut Creek at Ygnacio Valley Rd. Turn east on Linda Mar Boulevard. Drive for about two miles, to the end of Linda Mar. Turn right here on Oddstad Boulevard and make an immediate left into the Park. To park inside the Park there is a $6.00 fee. Seniors park free on non-holiday weekdays. We will meet at the Visitor’s Center. Leader: Sue James and Martha O’Neal

San Pedro Valley Park  
**Thursday, April 28, 8:30 am - 11:30 am**

San Pedro Valley Park is a beautiful wilderness area located in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains in the city of Pacifica. We will visit the Old Trout Farm Trail and the picnic groves. Expect to see or hear riparian breeders such as Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson’s Thrush, Wilson’s Warblers and Orange-crowned Warblers. Directions: Take SR 1 to the city of Pacifica, 10 miles south of San Francisco or 12 miles north of Half Moon Bay. Turn east on Linda Mar Boulevard. Drive for about two miles, to the end of Linda Mar. Turn right here on Oddstad Boulevard and make an immediate left into the Park. To park inside the Park there is a $6.00 fee. Seniors park free on non-holiday weekdays. We will meet at the Visitor’s Center. Leader: Robbie Fischer Contact: robbie22@pacbell.net

Rarely Birded Parks of San Mateo County: Eaton and Big Canyon, San Carlos  
**Saturday, April 30, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm**

We will take a leisurely stroll through these two under-birded parks. Prepare for some hills. We should see birds of prey, Oak Titmouse, Hutton’s Vireo, Nuttall’s Woodpecker, and hopefully some migrant passerines. Directions: Meet at the western end of Eaton Street in San Carlos (Eaton intersects with Alameda de las Pulgas, close to Edgewood, for reference). Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Jennifer Rycenga Contact: gyrrlfalcon@earthlink.net

Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park  
**Wednesday, May 4, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Burleigh Murray State Ranch Park is a hidden treasure on the coast. It has very low visitor usage and a very high density of breeding birds. The only trail is the mile-long, old ranch road that leads to an historic and picturesque barn. The high number of singing birds will keep this walk at a slow pace. This is a great location to learn and practice birding by ear. Morning fog is common here, but it usually burns off and it can be warm and sunny. Directions: We will meet at the lower parking lot to the Johnston House, located on Higgins-Purisima Road in Half Moon Bay. Higgins-Purisima Road begins just off of SR1, going east where Main Street ends. The Johnston House is the big white 1850s farm house on the hill. We will caravan to Burleigh Murray, which is 1 ½ miles up Higgins-Purisima Road from here. Leader: Donna Pomeroy Contact: dpom@comcast.net

Birding by bike on Cañada Road, Belmont/Woodside  
**Sunday, May 8, 8:00 am to 10:30 am**

On this biking trip we’ll enjoy the breeding songbirds that make May such a noisy month. We will bird the stretch of Canada Road from Route 92 to Edgewood Road, enjoying oak woodland, willow thickets, the Crystal Springs Reservoir, and some grassland. Expect to see and hear several species of flycatcher and warbler, as well as a mix of other local breeding songbirds. Cañada Road is closed to car traffic starting at 9am on Sundays, so the ride is relatively peaceful. 6-8 miles of biking in total. Any bike is fine, but you should come prepared with binoculars, water, sunscreen, warm clothes, and snacks. Heavy rain cancels. Directions: We’ll meet at the northern end of Cañada Road, just south of the intersection of Route 92 and Cañada Road. Parking is available along the sides of the road. Leader: Rob Furrow Contact: robertfurrow@gmail.com
Field Trips continued from Page 5

Edgewood County Park
Sunday, May 8, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Explore this gem of a park while hiking 3-6 miles through oak woodlands, some hills and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird year round. Directions: Take 280 to Edgewood Rd. in Woodside. Go east down Edgewood to the park entrance on the right. Meet at the Nature Center.
Leader: Susie Hons Contact: susieturtlewings@mac.com

San Francisco Watershed, San Mateo County
Sunday, May 15, Time TBD (Reservations required)
Join leader Ginny Marshall and SF Watershed docents on a walk in the San Francisco Watershed in San Mateo County. We will enter this restricted area off Highway 92 and walk about 5 relatively flat miles along the ridge top. This is a beautiful hike, mostly in the forest, and we will be alone on the trail. This walk is limited to 15 people. You must RSVP to the leader at least two weeks before the walk as a permit will need to be issued with participants names. Bring lunch, water, layers and sun protection.
Leader: Ginny Marshall Contact: ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net

Horseshoe Lake (Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve)
Saturday May 21, 8:30 am hike will last 3 to 4 hours
Join Malia and Chris and explore Horseshoe Lake and vicinity as we search for spring birds such as Ash-throated Flycatcher, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak and Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Western Tanager. We will hike through diverse habitat of chaparral, willows, and mixed forests. This easy hike will be 2 to 3 miles. Directions: The main entrance is .9 miles south of the intersection of Alpine Rd. and Skyline Blvd. (SR35). The turnoff is on the west side of the road. We will meet in the equestrian parking lot, the southern-most lot of the three parking areas. Restrooms are located at the northern and middle parking lots. Wear layers. Bring water, snacks and sunscreen.
Leaders: Malia DeFelice and Chris Hayward Contact: maliadances@yahoo.com

Gazos Creek & Pigeon Point Lighthouse
Wednesday, June 1, 8:30 am -12:00 pm
Gazos Creek is prime location in the county to see and hear our summer resident woodland birds such as grosbeaks, warblers and thrushes. This lush coastal canyon, with its permanent stream and light traffic, is an excellent birding location. We will meet at the parking lot at the lighthouse and then carpool to Gazos Creek, since there is limited parking along the pullouts on Gazos Creek Road. When we return to our cars at the lighthouse, we will spend some time looking at the Pigeon Guillemots, other waterbirds and whales. Scopes will be useful at the lighthouse, when we look for seabirds. The weather at the lighthouse can be cold and windy; bring layers.
Directions: Take Hwy 1 south from Half Moon Bay for 20 miles. Turn right at the lighthouse and drive to the end of the road to the parking area.
Leader: Donna Pomeroy Contact: dpom@comcast.net

Edgewood County Park
Sunday, June 12, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Explore this gem of a park while hiking 3-6 miles through oak woodlands, some hills and natural meadows. Look for California Thrasher, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird year round. Directions: Take 280 to Edgewood Rd. in Woodside. Go east down Edgewood to the park entrance on the right. Meet at the Nature Center.
Leader: Susie Hons Contact: susieturtlewings@mac.com

Monthly Nature Walks Offered by California State Park Docents at Pescadero Marsh:
Docents lead nature walks the first Sunday of each month from 10:00 - 12:00 noon, and third Sunday from 1:00 - 3 pm. Check it out April 3 and 17, May 1 and 15, and June 5 and 19. Dress in layers, bring binoculars, water, wear a hat, and enjoy the marsh. Meet the volunteer docents in the middle parking area for Pescadero State Beach on Highway 1. Pescadero State Beach has three parking areas. Directions: From the north, the parking area for marsh walks is immediately south of the bridge, on your right. From the south, the lot is 1/4 mile past the flashing light at Pescadero Road and before you reach the bridge, on your left. More info: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=26931
Vayun is an 11yr old 6th grader at Harker Middle School. Besides bird photography, his other interests are playing competitive league soccer and playing the trumpet in his middle school Jazz band. While Vayun has been birding with his dad, Vivek Tiwari for a few years, and has participated in birdathons with the Fledglings, Pati Rouzer’s youth team, he started bird photography during a family trip to the Everglades in 2012. Since then he has also photographed in California, Panama and Peru. He uses his dad’s hand-me-down equipment (lately the Canon 7D and 400/5.6L) but is eager to get his own brand new gear (which mom will only allow if he keeps his grades up!). In his own words, he likes birding because he “enjoys travelling and being outdoors searching for different and interesting species of birds”. He also “enjoys taking photos of birds since he likes photography and learning about the different settings of the camera and lens”. This year he wants to learn more about post-processing on Photoshop.

**Get Out!**

Birding the eastern Sierra Nevada is always a treat and even more so when birding at the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua in July where expert leaders take you to the hot birding spots. Field trips tend to fill early: [http://www.birdchautauqua.org](http://www.birdchautauqua.org). Extend your visit along the Eastern Sierra Birding Trail. Get the map at: [http://www.easternsierrabirdingtrail.org](http://www.easternsierrabirdingtrail.org)

Want to get out of California? How about the desert in July? Check out the Southwest Wings festival July 29-Aug1 in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Not hot enough or need more humidity? Iberville Parish, Louisiana on July 19th sponsors the unique Wood Stork and Wading Bird Event.
Sequoia Audubon Society
P.O. Box 620292
Woodside, CA
94062-0292

Support our Chapter’s Work - Donate
Please consider an extra donation to your chapter in support of the work we do to provide birding trips, monthly programs, monitoring conservation concerns around the county, education and outreach. Thank you!

Give a Gift Membership or in Recognition
Has someone inspired you, or just done something kind for the world or for the birds? A donation in recognition gives toward supporting our Chapter’s work.

Support SAS through Amazon Smile when you shop online
A percentage of your purchase can be donated to support the work of SAS whenever you shop on Amazon. You get the same products, prices and service and support our work to protect native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems. The only difference is that, to support SAS through Amazon Smile, you must access the site: http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-60929053.

Have fun and help birds – volunteer!
We’re looking for an Environmental Educator, Graphic Designers, Field Trip Leaders and a home office. If you have skills, talents and enthusiasm, we want you!

Make Sure Your Coffee Supports Birds – Buy Bird Friendly SMBC Certified Coffee
Does your daily coffee support bird habitat or contribute to the demise of Neotropical landscapes? If it doesn’t have the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) Bird Friendly certification seal your money does not support farming practices that support resident and migratory birds. During our monthly public meetings Sequoia proudly serves Certified Bird Friendly coffee, 100% organic and shade grown from Birds and Beans, The Good Coffee (https://www.birdsandbeans.com) and generously donated for each monthly meeting by Susan Rowinski.

Sequoia Audubon Society Membership Form
Individual membership for seniors (>62) and students (<25) $15.00
Individual membership $20.00
Family membership $25.00
Donation to SAS $_____
Total $_____

Yes, I am interested in volunteering ________
Newsletter Preference: ________ Mail and / or ________ E-mail
E-mail address ____________________