



The Kite Call

Ohlone Audubon Society, Inc.

A chapter of the National Audubon Society
Serving Southern & Eastern Alameda County CA
Our Mission: To celebrate and protect birds and their habitats in
Southern and Eastern Alameda County
www.ohloneaudubon.org

Calendar

- Dec 1** **FIELD TRIP**
Pacific Commons
- Dec 3** **GENERAL MEETING**
Niles Discovery Church
- Dec 11** **FIELD TRIP**
Coyote Hills
- Dec 12** **FIELD TRIP**
Garin Reg Park
- Dec 15** **Hayward Fremont CBC**
Dec 20 **Eastern Alameda CBC**
- Dec 27** **FIELD TRIP**
Elsie Roemer

Membership Meeting

Member Holiday Cookie Exchange, Photo Share, and Arroyo Los Positas Restoration



By Leslie Koenig, Wildlife Biologist

Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 **Time:** 7:00 PM

NOTE TIME CHANGE!!!!

Location: Niles Discovery Church, 36600 Niles Blvd, Fremont.

We will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall, and there are parking lots on both sides of the church. (Directions pg 2)

Come and join us once again for our annual holiday cookie exchange, photo share and a special presentation by Leslie Koenig giving us an update on the Arroyo Los Positas area restoration in north Livermore. (details below). As in previous years, we also invite members to bring/send ten of their favorite photo images/slides to share. There are some great photographers in our group, and we would all love to see your photos. Please bring a flash drive to the event, or email photos to ohloneaudubonprograms@gmail.com by December 1, 2024. If you email them in advance, please include your name in the email so we can credit the photos to you.

Our annual Cookie Exchange will follow the presentation. If you would like to bring a plate of cookies and copies of your recipe, that would be great. However, all are welcome to attend whether or not you bring cookies. There are always plenty to go around!



Multi-agency + Community Partnerships in the Restoration & Enhancement of the Arroyo Las Positas Riparian Corridor in North Livermore

This presentation will summarize an ambitious, multi-faceted project in the Springtown area of Livermore focused on habitat restoration and enhancement of unique habitats in the area. Leslie will summarize the unique history of the Springtown Alkali Sink and current efforts to enhance habitat conditions for California red-legged frog, western pond turtle and the many native bird species. The project requires the commitment and cooperation of local municipalities, businesses and community members. *(continued on page two)*

Membership Meetings (continued)

Leslie Koenig is a principal biologist at Swaim Biological, Inc. with over 15 years of biological experience in both public and private sectors. Her background in conservation biology focuses on special-status species management with an emphasis in permitting, amphibians and project management with a strong knowledge of state and federal environmental policies and permitting processes. She has experience conducting biological assessments, wildlife and species surveys and meets the qualifications for USFWS and CDFW approved biologist for many Bay Area species. She is also one of our former Directors at Large and webmaster!

(December meeting directions)

Directions: From the South or West via I-880, Take Mowry Avenue exit. Follow Mowry across Fremont (toward the hills) to Mission Boulevard, turn left. You will pass Niles Blvd and the Sullivan Underpass. Turn left at Nursery Ave. Turn left on Niles Blvd. You will see the church just on the left after the turn. **From the North via I-880:** Take Alvarado Niles Boulevard (east): From the freeway exit, turn left to go over the overpass, then in approximately four

miles (through Union City and into the Fremont city limits), you will see the church on your left (just after Nursery Ave.) **From Pleasanton or Livermore, or other points to the east of the hills,** you can take I-680 to the first Mission Boulevard exit, and turn right onto Mission. Stay on Mission until you get to Nursery Avenue, and turn left. Turn left on Niles Blvd. You will see the church just on the left after the turn. **From the North via Mission Boulevard:** Turn right on Nursery, and left on Niles Boulevard. You will see the church just on the left after the turn.

Upcoming 2025 Programs (all via zoom)

Rescheduled for **January 7, 2025** program— “**60 years of Conservation Science and Counting**”, with Lishka Arata, Point Blue Communications Manager; **February 4, 2025**—Jeff Miller of the Alameda Creek Alliance ; **March 4, 2025**—Scott Harris of RaptorQuest



Field Trips

Pacific Commons Linear Park
Sunday, December 1, 8:30 AM - Noon
Leaders: Rich Nicholson & Kathy Robertson
rsn711@yahoo.com

Fremont's Pacific Commons Linear Park is a productive winter birding site. The ponds are excellent for many waterfowl species. Waders such as American Bittern inhabit the pond edges and wetlands. The fields are productive for wintering sparrows. We have a good chance at seeing interesting raptors such as Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle. Snow, Ross's and Cackling Geese often visit this time of year. Bring a scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels..

Directions: To reach the park, exit I-880 in Fremont at Auto Mall Parkway. Go west on Auto Mall Parkway for a mile to a small pull-off area on the left at an entrance sign, and park along the road. No facilities at Pacific Commons, but you pass a Starbucks on the north side of Auto Mall Parkway on your way to the park.

Coyote Hills Regional Park
Wednesday, December 11, 8:30am - noon
Leaders: Rich Nicholson & Bob Dunn
rsn711@yahoo.com

No Name Trail leads us out about a mile into the heart of San Francisco Bay where thousands of birds using the Pacific Flyway stop off to rest and refuel. Good numbers of birds, and sometimes rarities, can be seen here. The trail is flat and well worth the walk, but it turns to sticky clay in the rain. Restrooms are available. Rain cancels. Meet at the Quarry staging area, first parking lot on the left after you enter the park. \$5 parking fee, free to annual EBRP pass holders.

Directions: To reach the park from I-880 take SR -84 towards the Dumbarton Bridge. Exit at Paseo Padre Parkway, turn right on Paseo Padre and go about one mile. Turn left on Patterson Pass Rd. to enter the park.

(Field Trips Continued)

Garin Regional Park
Thursday, December 12, 8:30 - 11am
Leader: Bob Toleno
bob@toleno.com

Garin Regional Park in late fall can be especially beautiful. Come get a little preview of the Christmas Bird Count that will be held here a few days later. We'll look for wintering sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers, thrushes, and other species. Be prepared for cold. Heavy rain cancels. All are welcome, and pre-registration is not required.

Directions: From I-880, take the Industrial Pkwy exit and head east. Make a right on Mission Blvd. then an immediate left on Garin Ave. Follow Garin Ave uphill until you reach the park. Meet in the parking lot near the bridge.

2024 Hayward Fremont CBC Sunday, December 15



Last year, our team of over 100 field participants and feeder watchers found 178 species, only three species short of our highest total ever. Let's see if we can beat that this year! We're looking

for more volunteers to help out counting birds in the field.

As in past years, we are also encouraging feeder counters. Involve your family and neighbors! If you would like to participate as a feeder counter, please contact me with your address and we will let you know if your home is in the count circle.

Our in-person CBC compilation dinner will be held at the Math-Science Nucleus building in Fremont. All counters are welcome and encouraged to join. Doors will open at 5pm on the evening of the CBC, with dinner served at 6pm.

We have been successful in years past and need your help to be successful once more. Community science projects like the CBC benefit from broad participation, consistent coverage from our area leaders, and the work of each field and feeder counter.

Want to help? Email our compiler, Bob Toleno bob@toleno.com

Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary
Friday, December 27, 8:30 - 11:30 am
Leaders: Kathy Robertson & Karen Kramer
katbirdca@aol.com

San Francisco Bay is one of the most important areas for wintering shorebirds on the west coast of North America. Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary usually provides good views of shorebirds on their wintering grounds. Meet at the Elsie Roemer viewing platform where Broadway meets Shore Line Drive.

Directions: From Hayward or San Leandro, take I-880 to Davis Street; exit west and go to Doolittle Drive. Turn right on Doolittle to the bridge to Alameda, where the street becomes Otis Drive. Turn left at Broadway, drive southwest to Shore Line Drive. **NOTE: There are parking restrictions on Shore Line Drive on Fridays due to street sweeping. Alternative parking can be found on Park St. and Bayview Drive.** Bring binoculars and scopes. This is planned as a 3-hour trip. We'll end at Crab Cove Visitor Center where facilities are available.

2024 Eastern Alameda County CBC Friday, December 20

Join us for the 16th annual Eastern Alameda County Christmas Bird Count on Friday, December 20, 2024.

The annual Eastern Alameda County bird count was initiated in 2009. The 15 mile radius count circle is in the vicinity of the towns of Sunol, Pleasanton, and Livermore, and includes five East Bay Regional Parks, significant San Francisco Public Utilities watershed lands, and East Bay birding hotspots such as lower Mines Road, Sunol Wilderness, and Sycamore Grove Park.

Birders and volunteers with any level of experience can participate in the Christmas Bird Count. If you are interested in participating please send an email to eac.cbc@gmail.com.





eBird Seminar - Monday, December 9, 7:30-8:30pm

The eBird project, created and maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, represents one of the largest community science projects ever created. It's a powerful tool used by scientists worldwide, and it's made possible through the contributions of millions of birders. Have you been interested in participating in eBird, but felt too unsure or technologically challenged to take the leap? Or do you have an eBird account already, but want some help making your checklists more useful to scientists? Are you participating in the upcoming Christmas Bird Count? Then please join Bob Toleno for a live video chat eBird seminar on Monday, December 9 at 7:30!

To participate, email Bob (bob@toleno.com) and reserve your spot. A few days before the seminar, a Zoom invitation will be sent to all who signed up. I hope to see a lot of you there!

President's Corner

Hope you are out birding; fall migration is in full swing. Something else comes in the fall, and that is the annual Ohlone Audubon Society fundraiser appeal. Your financial support helps Ohlone in five key areas: Protection of birds and their habitat, our monthly programs, the *Kite Call* newsletter, science education, and our field trips. Your annual membership in Ohlone helps pay some of the costs of these programs, but we could not participate as significantly in protecting habitat like Tesla, the Altamont, the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, or attract the excellent speakers for our monthly programs, without the additional financial support you provide in response to the Ohlone annual appeal. Please read about the successes we've had this past year and our futures plans, and please contribute what you can.

Back to birds. Some news on the endangered species front.

The **Red-cockaded Woodpecker**, an iconic bird in southeastern forests, has recovered enough of its population to be downlisted by the USFWS from an endangered species to threatened. At one point in the 1970s, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker population had dipped as low as 1,470 clusters — or groups of nests. Today, there are an estimated 7,800 clusters. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are habitat specialists that nest only in mature, long-leaf pine forests, building nests in cavities of living trees partially hollowed out by a fungus. Longleaf pine forests once spanned much of the Atlantic and Gulf coastal regions, from New Jersey to Texas, but logging and development in the region reduced that to only 3% of



this original habitat today. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were one of the first species designated as “endangered” in the United States in 1970, and the birds received full protections with passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Since then, habitat restoration and protection on both public and private lands have helped the species to partially recover.

Closer to home. After years of effort, the **western Burrowing Owl** achieved “candidate” status for protection under the California Endangered Species Act on October 10, 2024. Burrowing Owl numbers have significantly declined across California, vanishing from 19 of the 51 California counties they once inhabited and nearing extinction in 10 others. Only 225 breeding pairs are left in central-western and southwestern California. They have been nearly wiped out from a third of their former range. Thanks to the California Fish and Game Commission's vote establishing the birds' candidacy, Burrowing Owls statewide will be protected while the California Department of Fish and Wildlife conducts a full status review, which could last 12 to 18 months.

The commission will then vote on whether to protect the Burrowing Owls as endangered or threatened under state law. Protecting Burrowing Owls under the California Endangered Species Act would require state and local agencies to manage threats to the owls, including urban sprawl, agriculture, and rodenticides, to name a few. Accordingly, these protections would end the state law that allows owls to be removed from lands slated for development. They could also require more robust mitigation for habitat loss. Ohlone will continue to monitor the petition to fully list the Burrowing Owl and will provide comments on the petition.

—Bill Hoppes

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

Fall 2024

by Vicki Robinson



Golden-crowned Kinglet



Chipping Sparrow



Lincoln's Sparrow



Fox Sparrow

Fall migration is in full swing, with our backyards full of **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows**. **Lincoln's Sparrows** show up occasionally, along with **Hermit Thrushes**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, and a **White-throated Sparrow** if you are lucky. **Savannah** and **Fox Sparrows** also are showing up.

A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** has been seen at Coyote Hills and attracted many birders and photographers.

A migrating visitor, **Clay-colored Sparrow**, almost always shows up, and this year was seen at the Hayward Shoreline. **Chipping Sparrows** also often appear at this time of year and have been seen at Ardenwood Farm. Two **White-throated Sparrows** also made an appearance at Ardenwood, and a **Swamp Sparrow** has been seen at Coyote Hills.

House Finches and **House Sparrows** have never left, but **American** and **Lesser Goldfinches** are here again.



Townsend's Warbler

Most of the migrating warblers have moved on to warmer lands but have been replaced with **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. A few **Yellow**, **Wilson's**, **Townsend's**, and **Orange-crowned Warblers** are still around.



Canvasback



Eurasian Wigeon

Winter ducks are returning, including **Northern Shovelers**, **Northern Pintails**, **Gadwalls**, **Buffleheads**, and **Cinnamon**, **Green-winged**, and **Blue-winged Teals**.

American Wigeons are usually seen in large numbers, but if you look through them you might find a rarer **Eurasian Wigeon**.

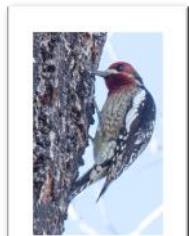
Our diving ducks - **Ring-necked**, **Redhead**, and **Canvasback** - are also starting to show up.

Burrowing Owls are returning and have been seen at Hayward Shoreline. **American Pipits**, **Horned Larks**, **Western Meadowlarks**, and **Lark Sparrows** can also be seen there.



American Pipit

Tricolored Blackbirds have returned to Ardenwood Farm to mix with the **Red-winged Blackbirds**.



Red-breasted Sapsucker



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Northern Flickers have returned and **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** are around. A rare **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was seen at Don Castro. We last had a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker there in 2014.

Keep an eye out for a few birds that we need and sometime miss for our Christmas Bird count: **Varied Thrush**, **Rufous-crowned Sparrow**, and **Swamp Sparrow**.
(all photos by V. Robinson)

Conservation

Tesla

Please see the new video just released presenting why Tesla should be classified as a Reserve. Titled ***Tesla - Hismet Warep - Sacred Earth***, the 6-minute video tells the story about Tesla's extraordinary natural resources and Tribal Cultural Landscape, and the opportunity to establish the only State Parks Reserve in the Diablo Range District. We hope you will take a few minutes to view it.

<<http://www.teslapark.org>> and <https://teslapark.org/see-new-video-teslahismet-warep-sacred-earth/>

Winery Plan Draws Attention

East County Board of Zoning Adjustments (ECBZA) directed the architects of a proposed events center and golf course in South Livermore wine country to return to their drawing boards after residents voiced concerns about the projects' effects on traffic, noise, groundwater supplies, and the environment. The ECBZA, holding its first public hearing on Avaanti Vineyards' proposed development, heard from 17 residents, each of whom said they opposed the project in its current form. Avaanti is proposing to build a winery on a 113-acre vineyard near the intersection of Reuss and Tesla roads on unincorporated county land outside the urban growth boundary. The plan includes four buildings with a breezeway, totaling 30,234 square feet. The buildings will include a production winery, a tasting room and shop, a restaurant, and a 200-person event center for corporate and social events. The plan also includes an eight-acre, 242-space parking lot, a nine-hole golf course and putting green, and a nearly 9,500-square-foot, two-story, 10-bedroom single-family home with a pool that will be rented out during events.

Zone 7 Commits More Funds to Delta Tunnel

The Zone 7 Water Agency committed another \$6.6 million through 2027 to the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP), despite concerns that other project partners might still withdraw. The funds will go toward planning, permitting, and pre-construction work for the project, which is expected to be completed in 2045. The Zone 7 board voted unanimously on October 16 to provide \$6.6 million in funding. Prior to the decision, the agency, which supplies water to the Tri-Valley, had already committed \$7.6 towards the project. *(B. Hoppes)*

Benefit Assessment for Funding for Proposed Flood Control Projects on Upcoming Ballot Mailed to Property Owners

Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) has begun stakeholder engagement (e.g., elected officials, agencies, community organizations, and general public) in their effort to put forth a property owner vote to increase flood control revenue to fund approximately \$373 million in unmet capital needs in flood control zones 2, 4, and 9. Zone 2 includes the San Lorenzo Creek Watershed.

On October 21, the District discussed their goals and some of the proposed projects within the Castro Valley area during their presentation at the Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council (CVMAC) meeting. The District stated that their goal is “to increase the capacity of our flood infrastructure to withstand more severe storms, to meet current FEMA

design standards, and to upgrade or reconstruct aging facilities.” Some projects will be on San Lorenzo Creek and Don Castro Dam.

Public comment was provided at the meeting. Conservation organizations, including Friends of San Lorenzo Creek (FSLC), advocated for the need of the District's efforts to include fish (i.e., rainbow trout, steelhead trout, and salmon) and fish passage barriers. Public comments made at the meeting included restoration of fish passage. Ohlone Audubon Society (OAS) commented on the importance of habitat and fish passage restoration. The District's timeline shows ballots plan to be mailed to property owners in February 2025 to vote in favor of, or in opposition to, the proposed benefit assessments. *(M. Selva)*

Essay

Obstacles to Conservation: European-American Agriculture as a Historic Symbol of Colonization and Imperialism

Beginning in 2018, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) deleted 50% of the streams from their topographical maps. Ohlone Audubon Society wrote a letter to Public Works in 2022, asking Alameda County to regain its jurisdiction for protecting intermittent streams under the Watercourse Protection Ordinance. The Alameda County Agricultural Advisory Committee voted in 2023 to not protect streams and instead for the county to use the current USGS maps that have 50% less intermittent streams than the previous maps. Public works now has agreement from the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission to protect 50% less streams.

The obstacles to conservation of land and water exist in the renewable energy sector as well. Agriculture (i.e., chickens, cows, beekeeping) in Alameda County is being used as a form of mitigation for the destruction of habitat of endangered and threatened species by the Aramis Solar Energy Project. There will be no restoration of habitat. It is not possible to actually mitigate destruction of the natural landscape while destroying it with technology and agriculture at the same time.

For example, as with chickens and cows and other livestock, honey bees are not native and negatively impact ecosystems, causing native bees to compete for resources. Even today, honey bees dominate the wild bee populations, continuing to pollinate and spread non-native plants throughout the wilderness. Researchers have also documented honey bees monopolizing and damaging native plant reproduction.

Agricultural practices have their roots in European-American colonization and imperialism. According to an article from the Dorothy Ramon Learning Center, Western honey bees first came to North America about 400 years ago, sailing with the first colonists from England to Virginia. The article states:

As Native Americans lost their homelands to masses of newcomers, the landscapes of native pollinators also became dominated by the imported honey bees.

Already Southern California Native American homelands had been altered by cattle of missions and ranchos. The roaming, unfenced cattle competed with wild animals — and Native Americans — for vital plant foods. As we reported in “Horses”, by the 1830s, varied counts place a half-million cattle in California, and non-native plant invaders such as black mustard already were overtaking native plants. Honey bees, by the way, like black mustard. Then people began setting out hundreds of bee boxes in the canyons and foothills.

This matters because the native pollinators, which include native bees, other insects such as moths and beetles, birds such as hummingbirds, and animals such as bats, have specific roles vital to all plant life. Certain wild plants cannot reproduce without their relationships with specific pollinators.

<https://dorothyramonlearningcenter.substack.com/p/bees-as-colonizers>.

According to an article from the Center for Biological Diversity:

The ecological costs of livestock grazing exceed that of any other western land use. In the arid West, grazing is the most widespread cause of species endangerment, irreparably harming the ecosystems they depend on.

Despite these costs, livestock grazing continues on state and federal lands across the West. It's promoted, protected and subsidized by federal agencies on about 270 million public acres in the 11 western states.

Cattle destroy native vegetation, damage soils and stream banks, disrupt natural processes, and contaminate waterways with fecal waste. After decades of livestock grazing, once-lush streams and riparian forests have been reduced to flat, dry wastelands; once-rich topsoil has been turned to dust, causing soil erosion, stream sedimentation and wholesale elimination of some aquatic habitats; overgrazing of native fire-carrying grasses has starved some western forests of fire, making them overly dense and prone to unnaturally severe fires.

https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_land/grazing/#:~:text=TAKE%20ACTION-,ECOLOGICAL%20COSTS,contaminate%20waterways%20with%20fecal%20waste.

Furthermore, chickens were brought by English colonists to Jamestown in the early 1600s and have continued to spread throughout America as livestock, in backyards, and in industrial farming. Chickens have devastating effects on native bird populations. Environmental impacts include spreading pathogens, destruction of wildlife habitat, harming water quality, and contributing to climate change. <https://news.uga.edu/wild-birds-and-backyard-chickens/>
If only the buffalo were left alone as a keystone species to safeguard the ecosystem...

~Marlina Selva

Welcome**Renewals**

Karin Adhikary
Julie Allen
Janet Barton
Margaret Barton
Chris & Gary Bard
John Cant
Deborah Frederick
Peini Kao

Tameka McGlawn
Wayne & Mari Miller
Duke Otoshi
John S. Sack
Bruce Schine
Carol Schneider
Kathleen Stone

Donations

Chris & Gary Bard
Tameka McGlawn
Wayne & Mari Miller
Duke Otoshi
Carol Schneider
Terry Spraggins

*In Memory of Nancy Mendoza
Joanna Dixon*

More Bird Names

By Bill Hoppes

This is another in a continuing series of articles looking at the folks that had birds named after them and their contributions to the avocation we all love. Today we are starting with a threefer.

Swainson's Hawk
Swainson's Thrush
Swainson's Warbler

These species were named after William Swainson, a British naturalist, (1789 – 1855), ornithologist, malacologist, conchologist, entomologist, and artist. Swainson was born in Newington, London, and was one of the original fellows of the Linnean Society in 1815. In 1816, he accompanied the English explorer Henry Koster to Brazil. Swainson returned to England in 1818, in his words "a bee loaded with honey", with a collection of over 20,000 insects, 1,200 species of plants, drawings of 120 species of fish, and 760 bird skins. Based on his work in Brazil, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1820.

It is for the quality of his illustrations that he is best remembered. His friend, William Elford Leach, head of zoology at the British Museum, encouraged him to experiment with lithography for his book, *Zoological Illustrations* (1820–23). Swainson became the first illustrator and naturalist to use lithography, a relatively cheap means of reproduction that did not require an engraver. He began publishing many illustrated works, mostly serially. Subscribers received and paid for small sections of the books as they came out, so that the cash flow was constant and could be reinvested in the preparation of subsequent sections of the total manuscript.

**Williamson's Sapsucker**

This sapsucker takes its name from Robert Stockton Williamson (1825-1882), who was the leader of a surveying expedition which collected the first specimens. Williamson's expeditions were trying to identify the best route west for a railway to the Pacific Ocean. Born in New York, Williamson joined the Navy in 1843 as a master's mate on the USS Princeton, the first screw-driven steam ship in the Navy. Williamson was appointed to the United States Military Academy and graduated fifth in his class in 1848. Appointed a second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers, he was assigned to conduct surveys for proposed routes for the transcontinental railroad in California and Oregon. In 1853, War Secretary Jefferson Davis chose Williamson to lead surveys of California's southern Sierra and mountains near Los Angeles for the Pacific Railroad. Following service with the 1st Battalion of Engineers during the Civil War, *(continued page 9)*

(Bird names continued)

where he saw action in the battles of New Bern and Fort Macon, Williamson returned to California as the Chief Topographical Engineer of the Department of the Pacific. In 1863, Williamson transferred to the Corps of Engineers and served as lighthouse engineer for the Pacific Coast. He also worked on defenses and harbors along the coast. In addition to the sapsucker, Mount Williamson, at 14,379 feet, the second highest mountain in California and the sixth highest in the lower 48, is named for him.



A mountain and a cool sapsucker,
not too bad a legacy

Lewis's Woodpecker

Alexander Wilson named the Lewis's Woodpecker after Meriwether Lewis, one of the leaders of the expedition that explored the Louisiana Purchase (1803-1806). Lewis's Woodpecker was described and illustrated in 1811 by Wilson in his American Ornithology, or, the Natural History of the Birds of the United States. Wilson based his description on skins collected on the Lewis and Clark expedition in Montana. Wilson coined the English name "Lewis's Woodpecker" and the binomial name *Picus torquatus*. Unfortunately, the Ringed Woodpecker was already called *Celeus torquatus* so, in 1849, English zoologist George Robert Gray coined a new name *Picus lewis*. Lewis's Woodpecker is now placed in the genus *Melanerpes*, which was coined by the English ornithologist William Swainson (see above) in 1832.



Ringed Woodpecker,
got there first with the name

Bicknell's Thrush

Bicknell's Thrush was named after Eugene Bicknell (1859-1925), an American amateur ornithologist, who made the first scientific discovery of the species on Slide Mountain in the Catskills in the late 19th century.

John Burroughs, in his essay, "The Heart of the Southern

Catskills" (1886), wrote:



"..... a musical whisper of great sweetness and power....."

In its appearance to the eye among the trees, one would not distinguish it from the gray-cheeked thrush of Baird, or the olive-backed thrush, but its song is totally different. The moment I heard it I said, "There is a new bird, a new thrush," for the quality of all thrush song is the same. A moment more, and I knew it was Bicknell's thrush. The song is in a minor key, finer, more attenuated, and more under the breath than that of any other thrush. It seemed as if the bird was blowing in a delicate, slender, golden tube, so fine and yet so flute-like and resonant the song appeared. At times it was like a musical whisper of great sweetness and power.

Bicknell was interested in natural history from an early age. He wrote an article on the birds of the Hudson Valley in 1878, and in 1882 he wrote about the birds of the Catskill Mountains in the bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. He collected a specimen of a thrush that was described by Ridgway and named as Bicknell's Thrush. He served as a secretary to the American Ornithologists' Union upon its founding and was a member of the Torrey Botanical Club and the New York Botanical Garden.



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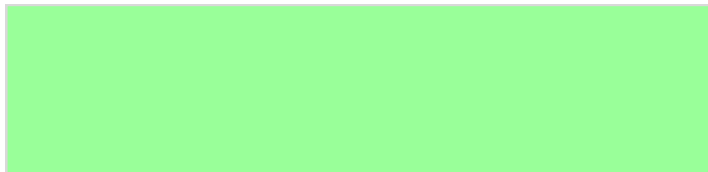
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Season's Greetings!



**Please renew your Ohlone membership by the date shown on your address label.
For those receiving our electronic copy, an email will be sent. Direct questions about Kite Call delivery
to the Membership Chair.**

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Please sign me up today

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