



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

- Jan 3 GENERAL MEETING
Via Zoom
- Jan 8 FIELD TRIP
Shadow Cliffs
- Jan 14 FIELD TRIP
Cosumnes Crane Trip
(rescheduled)
- Jan 16 FIELD TRIP
Panoche Valley
- Jan 21 FIELD TRIP
Arrowhead Marsh
- Jan 28 FIELD TRIP
Springtown, Livermore
- Feb 7 GENERAL MEETING
Via Zoom



ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

Due to COVID-19 and the new variant(s), Ohlone Audubon's membership meetings will continue to be online via Zoom. Registration is needed for OAS's membership meetings. As before, you only need to do it once for ALL meetings. **Click the URL / link below to register for OAS's 2023 membership meetings:** (After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/tZIsf-iupj4iGNwWOZRGoiFQxSQ-ANIL8dNP>



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Membership Meetings

Birds in a Changing World

By JD Bergeron

Tuesday January 3, 2023

7:30PM via Zoom



Experts around the world agree—aquatic birds are in crisis. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation reports that “Seabirds are declining faster than any other group of birds. Populations of oceanic seabirds are most threatened” (2018). Earth's delicate ecological systems are woven together by intricate and far-reaching threads of movement and change. As habitats shift, wildlife is affected. At International Bird Rescue, we are called to continue to take action, to innovate and evolve in response to the changing needs of our patients. As we move into our next 50 years, we build partnerships which help protect the natural world waterbirds rely on for their survival. In the future, Bird Rescue will continue to respond to these crises as they emerge and also to center conservation as a critical and growing part to the work we do. And we can't do it alone. The public must be involved—willing, engaged, and connected to the collective challenge.

JD Bergeron brings his passion for birds and nature together with 20 years of non-profit leadership as the CEO of International Bird Rescue. An unconventional problem solver, JD has worked in poverty alleviation, economic development, and served in the U.S. Peace Corps. He is the co-founder of a bicycle fundraiser in Zambia to raise money for girls' empowerment and HIV/AIDS and a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis.

(ZOOM instructions to the left)

Upcoming February 7th program to be determined (ZOOM)

March 7th: Alvaro Jaramillo! (ZOOM)

Shadow Cliffs, Pleasanton
January 8, 2023, Sunday, 9AM - noon
Leaders: Kathy Robertson and Rich Nicholson
katbirdca@aol.com

Join us at Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area to explore the lake, levees, and marsh for wintering waterfowl, Common Gallinules, egrets, herons, and grebes. Osprey are found around the lake and ponds, while the trees hold woodpeckers and nuthatches. Notable sightings in past years included Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Great-tailed Grackle, California Thrasher, Common Loon, Common and Hooded Merganser, Wilson's Snipe and Peregrine Falcon. Wide, level trails make walking fairly easy except for one short, steep uphill section to get onto the levee. Scopes are helpful.

Directions: From I-580 eastbound, take the Santa Rita Road exit, keep right and follow signs for Downtown to merge onto Santa Rita Road. Turn left on Valley Avenue and left on Stanley Boulevard. Turn right in to the park. Meet in the first parking lot by the swimming beach. \$6 parking fee/park pass.

RESCHEDULED FROM DECEMBER!

**Season of the Sandhills - Cosumnes
 River Preserve, Staten Island, & Woodbridge**
January 14, 2023, Saturday
11:00AM - 5:30PM
Leaders: David Riensche & Bill Scoggins
fieldtrips@ohloneaudubon.org

Each fall Sandhill Cranes return to the Central Valley where they feed, socialize, and rest in the fields and then fly to roost overnight in wetlands. Tundra Swans, Cackling Geese, Snow and Ross's Geese, rafts of winter ducks, and other waterfowl and raptors are commonly seen. During this "season of the sandhills" more than 200 species of birds may be seen! We'll bird the boardwalk at Cosumnes River Preserve and drive by the Desmond Road ponds, check out Staten Island, and make our way to Woodbridge Ecological Reserve for sunset fly-in at 4:45 PM. The field trip ends at Woodbridge where you can easily get back on I-5 for the drive home. Rain, flooding, or heavy fog cancels. Wear layers and bring snacks and water. All are welcome, and pre-registration is not required. Cosumnes River Preserve is about 70 miles from Livermore.

Field Trips



(Cosumnes continued)

Directions: Take I-580 east to I-205 east to I-5. Take I - 5 north to the Twin Cities Road exit. Go east on Twin Cities Road about 1 mile and turn right on Franklin Blvd. Continue about a mile or so to the visitor center (facilities available). Look for the group in the parking lot or on the boardwalk.

Note: CDFW requires you to carry a Lands Pass at Wood- bridge. For general information on Lands Passes go to <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/lands-pass>. To purchase a Lands Pass to print at home go to: [https:// www.ca.wildlifelicense.com/InternetSales/](https://www.ca.wildlifelicense.com/InternetSales/). You can purchase a day pass and print it online for \$4.89

Panoche Valley
January 16, 2023, Monday (MLK Day),
8:30AM - 4:30PM
Leaders: Bob Toleno & Juli Chamberlin
birding@toleno.com

All are welcome. Bring a lunch and plenty of water, as there is no place to buy food on the route. Heavy rain will cancel the trip. There's a port-a-potty at Little Panoche Reservoir, and a couple other spots on our route, but services are very limited. A little walking may be involved, but nothing difficult, and no serious hiking

We'll meet at 8:30AM at the dirt parking lot overlooking Little Panoche Reservoir, just over four miles down Little Panoche Road from I-5. We'll start at the reservoir, bird a few spots along the road in Little Panoche Valley and Griswold Hills. We'll then continue south through Panoche Valley and finish in Paicines around 4:30 PM. We'll be looking for all the area specialties, especially Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Bell's Sparrows (and maybe even a Sagebrush Sparrow), Sage Thrasher, and of course, Mountain Plovers.

Directions: From Castro Valley, head east on I-580, then head south on I-5, continue past Los Baños, and take exit 379 (Shields Avenue/Mendota). From there, turn right onto Little Panoche Road and drive west about 4 1/2 miles to Little Panoche Reservoir

Field trips continued page 3

Field Trips continued

Arrowhead and New Marsh - Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline

January 21, 2023, Saturday, 9:00AM - noon

Leaders: David Riensche & Maggie Clark

An 8.4' high tide will hit Arrowhead Marsh at 11:12 AM, creating an opportunity to see Ridgway's Rails, Virginia Rails, and Soras. Wintering ducks and shorebirds will be plentiful. The area is completely paved, so if it's raining, we'll still go as rain and high tide are optimum conditions for seeing rails. One year a very rare Yellow Rail was seen here in cold, driving rain! We will use "Doc Quack's" special access code to visit the New Marsh and "peep at" the newly finished "Shorebird Sanctuary" island. Dress in layers and rain gear as needed. This is a wheelchair-accessible field trip. Pre-registration is not required, and all are welcome.

Directions: From I-880, go west on Hegenberger towards the airport and turn right on Pardee. Make a left at Swan and turn right into the entrance to Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline. Follow the entrance road all the way to the end. On the way to the parking lot, drive slowly and keep an eye out for Burrowing Owls on the berms to the right.

North Livermore/Springtown

January 28, 2023, Saturday, 9:00AM - noon

Leaders: Kathy Robertson and Rich Nicholson
katbirdca@aol.com

We will walk along the Arroyo, where we can expect wading birds such as stilts and egrets, ducks, incl. Cinnamon Teal, and many wintering and resident songbirds. Rails and snipe are possible. The open fields are productive for raptors - Golden Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk have been seen here. Wide, level trails make walking easy. Bring your scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Take I-580 east to Exit 54 for First Street/Springtown Blvd; turn left onto First Street, which becomes Springtown Blvd. Turn right (east) on Bluebell Dr. and continue about a mile and a half to Marlin A. Pound Neighborhood Park. We will meet at the bridge crossing the Arroyo. Park on either side of the street. No restrooms are on our route, so you may wish to make a pit stop before arriving at the meeting point.

President's Corner

How did those New Year's resolutions go?

Last January I wrote about twelve New Year's resolutions for birders. It's January again and time to see how I did.

1. **Chase one rarity** Complete. Chased Streak-backed Munia several times as well as the Oriental Turtle Dove. Thanks to the help of other Ohlone members got the Munia at Gomes Park.
2. **Attend one birding festival** Complete. T and I had a spectacular time at the Biggest Week in American Birding in Ohio. We are looking at the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival in Washington for 2023
3. **Go birding at least 24 times** Complete. According to eBird I went birding 282 times in 2022. That is way more than I thought.
4. **Go on a pelagic trip**—Nope
5. **Target ten life birds and get them** With trips to Ohio and Florida and the Munia, added 17 life birds in 2022. If I am going to get too many more lifers I am going to have to do a pelagic trip on the east coast or southern California.
6. **Learn 20 bird songs** Incomplete. I got much better at bird songs I already knew (thanks to Merlin). The ones I felt were new were Brown Creeper and Cedar Waxwing.
7. **Get your nemesis bird** Complete. See Munia above. I had planned to get Great Gray Owl in 2022, that one will slip to 2023.
8. **Start using eBird** Complete. Use it for all my bird records. Probably going to retire this one.
9. **Buy a new gadget or guide.** Overdid it this year. T spoiled me with a new pair of Zeiss binoculars and a very cool lightweight Kowa scope.



A target for 2023

(continued page 4)

President's Corner continued

10. **Volunteer for one citizen science project** Complete. Still mist-netting at Coyote Creek. T and I monitor for Snowy Plovers all year, do the annual SF bay shorebird survey, participate in two Christmas Counts and run two USFWS Breeding Bird Census routes
11. **Adopt a birding hotspot and get to know it** Incomplete. Wanted this to be Coyote Hills as it is my favorite birding spot, but I don't get out there enough. I have arbitrarily set a rule that to adopt a hotspot you need to visit it at least monthly. I will see if I can do this at Shadow Cliffs or Sycamore Grove.
12. **Write one letter or attend one meeting promoting bird conservation** Complete. Work to protect raptors at the Altamont continues well into 2023.

Did you set some resolutions? Hope you did and got them all. Happy birding in 2023!

-Bill Hoppes



The generosity of our members!

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ACTION ALERTS

Want to be included in our action alerts when items come up that need your help?

Please send an email to pagpeg@aol.com.
(We do not share contact information)



IS IT TIME TO RENEW?

Look at your mailing label - it will tell you. A "RENEW?" indicates that this is your last *Kite Call*! A **cmp** means you are chapter membership paid; a **nnmp** means you are a national member only and a "JOIN LOCAL?" on your label indicates that you have joined the National Audubon Society, but alas, **not** your local Ohlone chapter.

We would love to have you join us. If you receive your *Kite Call* electronically, look for a reminder in your email box. To **renew** or join us please send a \$25 check to : Pat Gordon, Membership Chair, 1922 Hillsdale Street, Hayward, CA 94541 or thru PayPal on our website
www.ohloneaudubon.org

PLEASE CONSIDER AN ELECTRONIC KITE CALL!

We are urging members to switch over to an electronically issued *Kite Call* (but you don't have to! The benefits are a cost savings to our chapter, in both printing costs and postage. Other benefits include getting it quicker and it is **much more colorful!!!!!!** See all of these beautiful photos in color! Also, note that links are live! **GO GREEN!**

Send your request to pagpeg@aol.com



See descriptions of all our field trips and register at

www.snowgoosefestival.org

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

By Vicki Robinson

We are finally getting to winter birding. The days are shorter and colder. And it's raining!

Some uncommon visitors have been showing up at Oakland and Alameda Shores. A **Long-tailed Duck** has been puttering about Ballena Bay in Alameda. A **Black Scoter** was also seen at Ballena Bay and Seaplane lagoon. A **White-winged Scoter** was seen off in the distance at Crown Memorial Park.

The expected winter visitors, **Lesser and Greater Scaup**, **Surf Scoters**, and **Canvasbacks** are found in the bay waters. **Common Goldeneyes**, **Buffleheads**, **Redheads**, and **Ringed-necked Ducks** can be found in various water streams including Alameda Creek and Quarry Lakes Regional Park. The harder to find **Barrow's Goldeneye** has been seen at Arrowhead Marsh. The teals are back: **Cinnamon**, **Blue-winged** and **Green-winged**. All can be found at Coyote Hills and Arrowhead Marsh.



Blue-winged Teal



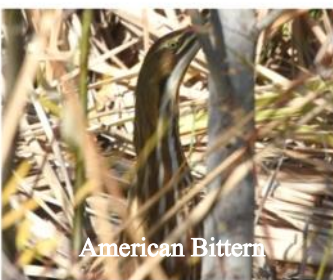
Hooded Merganser

Hooded Mergansers can be seen on Alameda creek as well as **Common Mergansers** and **Red-breasted** ones out in the bay. **Wood Ducks** are back and seen at Lake Elizabeth and Jordan Pond at Garin Regional Park.



Tundra Swans

Another favorite, the **Ferruginous Hawk** is back at Pacific Commons and Vargas Plateau and **Merlins** have been seen in many parks including Coyote Hills and Pacific Commons. A **Snow Goose** was at Coyote Hills and three **Tundra Swans** were swimming around Lake Elizabeth. **American Bitterns** are back at Pacific Commons and Coyote Hills. They can be difficult to see as they point their head up and blend into the weeds.



American Bittern



Snow Bunting

A **Tropical Kingbird** has shown up in San Leandro and one was seen at Lake Elizabeth. (Ed Note: one was at end of Winton Avenue, Hayward, found on CBC). A **Sage Thrasher** was easy to find (except CBC day!) eating Toyon Berries at Coyote Hills. While viewing the **Tundra Swans** at Lake Elizabeth a **Swamp Sparrow** popped up in the weeds which we have not seen there in many years.

And the star of this winter is again at the coast at Half Moon Bay- a **Snow Bunting**, that rarely is seen in California. It attracted many birders and photographers to get a look at this beautiful bird.

(Snow Bunting photo by B. Toleno, all others V. Robinson)



Ferruginous Hawk



Sage Thrasher



Swamp Sparrow

A Difficult Pair for the New Year-Goldeneyes

by Bill Hoppes

Winter is here and every bay, lake, pond and marsh is full of waterfowl. Leaving aside the scaup and rarities such as Tufted or Long-tailed Duck, most birders know the common species. There is a more difficult pair out there. One is pretty common and the other common enough that you should be looking for it. This pair is the Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) and Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*). These are diving ducks that frequent bays, large lakes, rivers and sloughs. Any body of water large enough to give them the running start they need to take into the air. Common Goldeneye is much more abundant of the two and is here from November through April. Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) is here over the same period, but is much less common. According to eBird records the ratio of Common the Barrow's in the San Francisco Bay Area is about 30:1. That is frequent enough that we should be looking for both. Barrow's Goldeneye is named for Sir John Barrow (1764-1848) an English geographer who held the position of Second Secretary of the Admiralty for 40 years where he was a great promoter of arctic exploration. The name "goldeneye" comes from these species bright yellow eye. One thing about this pair that amazes me is that they nest in tree cavities in the northern forests.



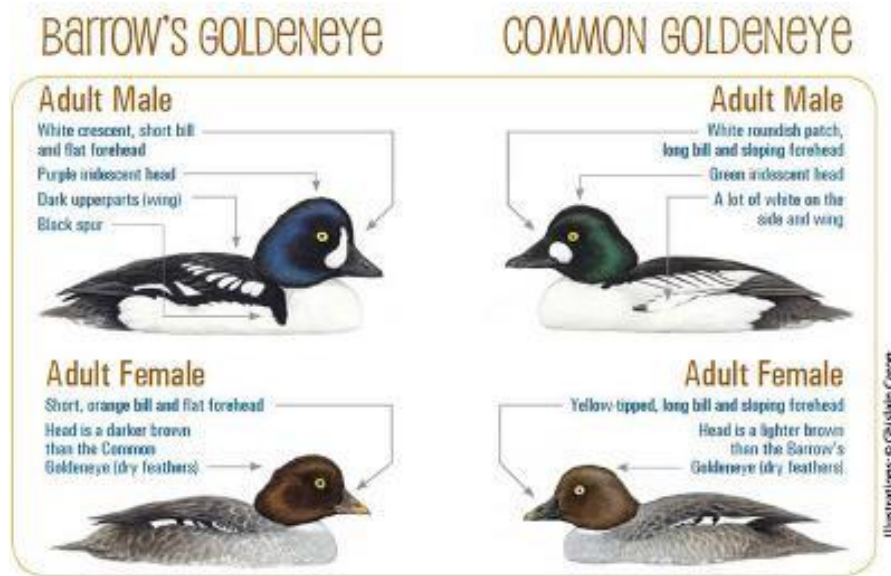
Our two goldeneyes, Common on the left and Barrow's on the right

Enough with nomenclature, let's get to identification. First things first, how do we know we have a Goldeneye. Before getting to plumage features, there are three things I look for when checking for Goldeneyes. First, they seem to ride low in the water compared to other ducks. Second, they usually don't hang around in mixed flocks but are off by themselves solo or in groups of two or three. Third, they have a triangular head with a very short bill for a duck their size. So, putting those together we are pretty sure we have a Goldeneye. Let's move on to plumage starting with the one we are most likely to see, the Common Goldeneye. If they are still in breeding plumage, it is pretty easy to spot the male. The male Common Goldeneye has a white body; black back with white streaking; black-appearing (actually glossy green) head; and most importantly a large, round white spot in front of eye. Switching to the Barrow's Goldeneye, things are pretty much the same except the sheen on the head is blueish. This is tough unless the light is perfect, kind of like the different color sheens on the heads of scaup. The Barrow's also has less white streaking on the back and most importantly, instead of a round spot in front of the eye, the Barrow's white spot is crescent shaped. The shape of the facial spot is the clincher to distinguish males of these two in breeding plumage. Even in eclipse plumage the facial spots should be visible enough to tell these two apart.

(continued page 7)

Continued from page 6

Females in any plumage are much harder. In females of both species, the head plumage is a nice chestnut brown. The only possible cue is that the bill of the Common Goldeneye is mostly dark with a “light” tip and that of the Barrow’s much more orange. Following is a good graphic from Environment Canada on identifying these two in breeding plumage.



Identification of Barrow's and Common Goldeneye in breeding plumage. Note crescent-shaped facial spot in the Barrow's compared to round spot in the Common. Light-tipped bill in female Barrow's compared to darker bill in the female Common.

Here is a couple of close up shots of females giving examples of bill coloration. There is variability in bill color in both species so care is needed when using this clue.



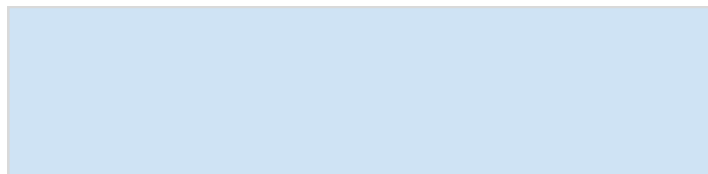
Bill coloration in female Barrow's Goldeneye on left and Common Goldeneye on right. Individuals can range from an all orange bill in Barrow's to an all black bill in the Common.

There are lots of goldeneyes around right now. Odds are the ones you will see are Common. But Barrow's are abundant enough that you should be aware of its markings. Regardless of species, take a look at the “golden eye”, it is really striking. Identifying males should not be hard. With females take a look at a few bills and see if you can make a judgement based on bill color. Keep looking, both species are out there.

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