



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

- Nov 15 **FIELD TRIP**
Vargas Plateau
- Nov. 18 **FIELD TRIP**
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
- Dec 5 **GENERAL MEETING**
Niles Community Church
- Dec 6 **FIELD TRIP**
Elsie Roemer, Alameda
- Dec 9 **FIELD TRIP**
Cosumnes River Preserve
- Dec 17 **Hayward-Fremont CBC**
- Jan 9 **GENERAL MEETING**
Via Zoom
NOTE 2nd TUESDAY!

Follow us on Facebook!

See updates and photos from our activities that you can share with your friends! Find us by doing a Facebook



ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

Welcome! You are invited to join a meeting: Ohlone Audubon Membership Meetings. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the meeting.

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

Membership Meetings



Member Holiday Cookie Exchange and Photo Show

*Date: Tuesday, December 5, 2023
Time: 7:00 PM*

*Location: Niles Discovery Church, 36600 Niles Blvd, Fremont.
We are meeting in the Fellowship Hall, and there are parking lots on both sides of the church.*

Come and join us once again for our annual holiday cookie exchange. As in previous years, we 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, 2023. 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 photo-sharing. 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!

Coming in January: (via Zoom)

A History of Field Identification - A Retrospective Celebrating Decades of Misidentifications, with Joseph Morlan.

NOTE: THIS WILL BE HELD THE 2nd TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, ON JANUARY 9th.

*Date: January 9, 2024 Time 7:30PM Via Zoom
(See Zoom directions to the left)
(Continued on page 2)*

(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.

(January Program continued)



Joe and Robbie Fischer,
Japan 2019

Joe Morlan will present a history of bird identification starting with early pioneers in sight identification, and a personal look back at how birding and bird identification has changed over the decades. Sight identifications, considered by Ludlow Griscom to be impossible in 1922, are routine today. Likewise, our knowledge of bird distribution has grown dramatically since the days of Griscom and other pioneers. But what will future generations think of our own conventional wisdom when it comes to bird identification and distribution? Technology continues to advance in the fields of optics and photography. These advances have been an integral part of the rapid evolutionary changes in the way we see birds and the way future generations will see them. Join us for this entertaining and thought provoking presentation.

Joe Morlan taught Field Ornithology at City College in San Francisco for forty years. He was awarded the ABA's Ludlow Griscom Award for outstanding contributions to regional ornithology in 2010 and served on the California Bird Records Committee for thirty years, most recently as chair. He co-authored two books on birds and published numerous scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals. We welcome him back as a presenter!



Field Trips

Vargas Plateau
Wednesday, November 15 8:30 - 11:30 am
Leader: Vicki Robinson
vickirolinson@comcast.net

Join us as we explore this East Bay park. Vargas Plateau rises from the bay plain to an elevation of 1,000 feet, overlooking Niles Canyon, Fremont, Union City, Newark and the San Francisco Bay. At this prime location for birdwatching, especially raptors, we will look for Golden Eagles and hawks such as Red-tailed and Cooper's, along with owls, turkeys, and other birds.

Directions: From I-680 in Fremont, exit at Vargas Road and go north. Drive about 1.6 miles to Morrison Canyon Road and turn right. The staging area is about 0.4 miles up on the left. Carpooling is recommended as the staging area parking is limited and there is no street parking in the area.

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Saturday, November 18, 8:30 to 11:30 am
Leader: David "Doc Quack" Riensche
RSVP: driensche@ebparks.org

Join "Doc Quack" for some "fowl fun" in the shadow of California's capital city, where over 100,000 waterfowl annually winter! The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area is an Important Bird Area, supporting globally significant numbers of waterfowl, continentally significant numbers of Least Sandpipers and Northern Pintails, and nationally significant numbers of American White Pelican, Canvasback, and Dunlin. More than 200 bird species have been recorded here, so bring your scope!

Directions: To reach the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, located approximately 6 miles east of the cities of Davis and 2 miles west of Sacramento, use I-80 and take the East Chiles Road exit. At East Chiles Road (also known as Road 32B) turn left and travel roughly 0.2 miles (east) to the packed gravel access road and follow it up to the top of the levee berm. Here you will make a left turn through the gate and follow the road into the Wildlife Area. Meet at the beginning of the Auto Tour Route.

Field Trips continued

Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary
Wednesday, December 6 9:00 am-noon
Leader: Kathy Robertson
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: Take I-880 north to Davis Street; exit west and go to Doolittle Drive. Turn right on Doolittle and follow it to the bridge to Alameda, where the street becomes Otis Drive. Turn left on Broadway, drive southwest to Shore Line Drive, and park along the street. Bring your scope if you have one. This is planned as a 3-hour trip. We'll end at Crab Cove Visitor Center, where facilities are available.



Eastern Alameda Co. CBC
Friday, December 15, 2023

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 SFPUC 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. Please send an email to eac.cbc@gmail.com*



Hayward -Fremont CBC
Sunday, December 17, 2023

Last year, our team of 76 field participants and 20+ feeder watchers found 180 species, our second-highest total ever. Let's see if we can beat that total this year! As always, we're looking for more volunteers to help out, including possibly some more experienced birders who would like to take over leading an area (all birding skills levels are welcome, though).

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 us with your address and we will let you

Season of the Sandhills - Cosumnes River Preserve, Staten Island, and Woodbridge
Saturday, December 9 11:00 am - 5:30 pm
Leaders: David Riensche & Bill Scoggins
RSVP: driensche@ebparks.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.

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 Woodbridge. 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/>. You can purchase a day pass and print it online for \$4.89.

know if your home is in the count circle. Data, including species seen and numbers, along with hours watched, can be submitted to the compiler, Bob Toleno.

Our in-person, catered CBC dinner will be held at the Math-Science Nucleus at 4074 Eggers Drive, Fremont. Doors will open at 5pm on the evening of the count, with dinner served at 6PM. Please bring own dinnerware.

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 17 section leaders, and the work of each field and feeder counter.

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

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS

Fall/Winter 2023

By Vicki Robinson

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 **White-throated Sparrows**. A sometimes visitor, a **Clay-colored Sparrow**, was seen at MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline.



White-throated Sparrow



Clay-colored Sparrow



House Finches have never left, but **American** and **Lesser Goldfinches** are now here, and **Pine Siskins** are showing up, even in my backyard in Fremont.

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

Pine Siskins

Canada Geese are here year-round in large numbers, but **Greater White-fronted** and **Cackling Geese** are now showing up. Our resident **Brant** can still be seen at Arrowhead Marsh.

Winter ducks are returning. **Northern Shovelers**, **Northern Pintails**, **Buffleheads**, and **Blue-winged Teals** are at Arrowhead Marsh.



Blue-winged Teal



Lapland Longspur

Burrowing Owls are returning and have been seen at Hayward Shoreline's Mt. Trashmore, along with our yearly visit of **Lapland Longspurs**. **American Pipits**, **Horned Larks**, and **Western Meadowlarks** can also be seen there.

Tricolored Blackbirds have returned to Ardenwood Farm to mix with the **Red-winged Blackbirds**. A very uncommon, for Alameda County, **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen at Lake Elizabeth.

The rare bird that got the most attention of birders was a **Bar-tailed Godwit** at Middle Harbor Shoreline Park, a species usually only seen in Alaska and very rare to Western North America.



Yellow-headed Blackbird

(Beautiful photos by V. Robinson)

President's Corner

Hope you are looking forward to a great birding year in 2024. Whether you bird from your porch or travel the world, birding is one of the best hobbies of all. For the past couple of years, I have been tracking New Year's Resolutions for Birders. Let's see how 2023 went, one resolution per month.

1. **Chase one rarity.** Nope. There were a few around, but of birds I have already seen. Will need to chase one in 2024.

2. **Attend one birding festival.** Complete, as we went to the Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival. For the fourth year in a row, we are targeting the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival. I was so impressed by a talk on Godwit Days we are going to try for that one too.

3. **Go birding at least 24 times.** Complete. According to eBird, I went birding 198 times in 2023. This is down from 282 times in 2022. Need to pick up the pace in 2024.

4. **Go on a pelagic trip.** Still nope

5. **Target ten life birds and get them.** Wow, just one this year, the Ruff. It is getting harder to add them. I may have to break down and go on a pelagic trip on the east coast or Southern California.

6. **Learn 20 bird songs.** Gad no. Merlin is still helping me get better at the songs I already know. I may have to make this a focus for 2024.

7. **Get a nemesis bird.** This was so frustrating. Must have taken four trips specifically to get Pygmy Nuthatch. Everyone is seeing them everywhere. Was birding with someone yesterday and she said she has them on her porch. UGH! For sure in 2024.



*Pygmy Nuthatch everywhere
except where I am*

8. **Start using eBird.** Going to retire this one and replace it with: Go on one international birding trip. Did great in 2023, as we went to Japan and Africa. Next year we are already signed up for Australia. If you aren't using eBird, start. It is easy and very helpful, especially when paired with Merlin.

9. **Buy a new gadget or guide.** Nothing new this year, but after new binocs and scope last year, I am pretty well set.

10. **Volunteer for one citizen science project.** Continues, very complete. Still mist netting at Coyote Creek. T and I monitor Snowy Plovers and shorebirds, participate in two Christmas Counts and run two USFWS Breeding Bird Census routes. If you aren't involved in Citizen Science please look into it. It adds so much to your birding experience.

11. **Adopt a birding hotspot and get to know it.** Getting there for Sycamore Grove in Livermore, ditto for Big Break Regional Shoreline near Oakley.

12. **Write one letter or attend one meeting promoting bird conservation.** Protecting raptors on the Altamont met this one. I am very interested in the status of the mouse eradication program on the Farallons. There is no information on all the various websites after 2022. Will have to dig into this.

Doing OK. I need to chase a rarity, get the nemesis bird, and work on bird songs for 2024. Set your own resolutions, whatever you do — have fun birding!

-Bill Happer

Conservation

SAVE Tesla Park

Protecting the Tesla Park

Tesla Park

Our work is not finished! Now, we are asking for your help to convince the California State Parks Department to classify Tesla Park as a Reserve. (See more info at <https://teslapark.org/get-involved/>)

A State Reserve Classification Protects Tesla and Allows Public Access

Our goal is to have Tesla's 3,100 acres classified as a State Reserve under PRC 5019.65. State Reserves help fully preserve particularly rare and sensitive plants, animals, scenic qualities, geological features and cultural resources of statewide significance. Tesla has all of these qualities.

People are still allowed and encouraged to visit reserves and there is public access for day use within reserves with the focus on preservation, enjoyment and education. A Tesla Reserve can include hiking, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, nature appreciation, self-guided interpretive trails, guided tours, trail signs and educational exhibits and picnicking. Reserves can support education and research for K-12 schools, college students and scientists. A Tesla Reserve can also serve the Native American community for traditional and ceremonial purposes.

Understandably, use and management actions such as development of facilities, resource manipulation and more active/intrusive recreation activities, are not generally allowed in a reserve. Given Tesla's terrain, landscape, intact ecosystem and extensive sensitive resources, activities such as mountain biking and e-bikes, driving, multi-use trails, drones, rock collection, geocaching, hunting, fishing, driving and camping (all of which State Parks has presented as options) would disrupt and degrade the sensitive resources that cover the entire Tesla site.

Importantly, however, State Parks has other adjacent property that is already impacted, including Carnegie SVRA, where these more impactful active recreation activities can be located, thereby protecting Tesla as a Reserve. Carnegie SVRA has camping already and mountain and e-biking could be located there. State Parks also owns over 300+ acres along Tesla Road

adjacent to the Reserve area where these more intensive activities could also be located while fully protecting the Tesla Reserve.

Join Public Visioning Process for Tesla Classification (See State Parks website www.alamedateslaplan.com)

As of this time, State Parks has announced two public engagement activities to provide input into the Tesla Classification process:

Online survey

Public in-person and virtual workshops

Please help us establish Tesla as a Reserve by completing the online survey and attending at least one of the public workshops. Following is the **survey** link for classification of Tesla as a reserve.

[<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3T6JHN9>](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3T6JHN9)

WE RECOMMEND COMPLETING THE SURVEY FOR PASSIVE RECREATION.

We offer the following Suggestions:

Section1:Q.3 Select: ●Hiking, walking, running

Section1:Q.4 Select among:

●Picnicking ●Social or cultural gatherings ●Stargazing
●Birdwatching or other nature observation ●Photography,
pleinaire painting or other artistic activities ●Volunteering
(such as environmental stewardship)

Section2: Visioning I Agree strongly with: ●Preserve ecological and geological processes for future generations
●Protect plants and animals that live on and pass through the property ●Respect and support California Native Americans that have used the site for generations
●Preserve the history that shaped the Alameda-Tesla property ●Provide experiences for scientists and students to complete academic studies ●Make accessible for people of all ages and abilities

Virtual Workshop

November 28, 2023

6 – 7:30pm

RSVP here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/alameda-tesla-plan-virtual-visioning-workshop-tickets-740486794937?aff=oddttdtcreator>

*Conservation continued***City of Livermore Proposes to Extend Urban Growth Boundary Eastward**

As part of Livermore's broader General Plan update that will guide the city's activities through 2045, the General Plan Advisory Committee is working on a set of land-use scenarios to provide options for meeting the city's goals around jobs, services, entertainment, housing, parks, and open space. The most controversial of this involves the East of Greenville Road focus area, because it fell outside of the city's North and South Urban Growth Boundaries, as well as the Alameda County Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The East of Greenville focus area, bounded by I-580 to the north and Tesla Road to the south, extends east from Greenville Road to the South Bay Aqueduct along the eastern edge of the Livermore Valley.

City of Livermore to Host Town Hall on Garaventa Hills Project

Livermore city officials will hold a November town hall meeting to discuss the latest developments in a controversial proposal to build on Garaventa Hills in north-east Livermore, 47 homes on 32 acres of the 85-acre Vasco Road site. Although the California 1st District Court of Appeal ruled last year in favor of a community group's (Save the Hill) lawsuit to stop the project, the developer reapplied to the city and is in the process of trying to gain approval again.



*Garaventa Hills site
(Photo - Doug Jorgensen
dog is Bodie)*

Fall Is Here: Remember to Leave the Leaves By Marlina Selva



The fall season has arrived. As an essential part of the ecosystem, leaves provide coverage and natural fertilizer for the soil. Leaves put nutrients back into the soil for the trees they fall from to utilize. They also support wildlife in various ways. Without leaves, the majority of pollinators and insects would not survive.

Leaves provide coverage for the insects to mature in winter and become food for birds to eat. Nearly all terrestrial bird species rear their young on insects, especially caterpillars. For bird reproduction to occur in a backyard, the yard needs to sustain a healthy insect population.

Keep in mind that many plant-eating insects depend on plant species that they have co-evolved with. Therefore, native plants support native insects, which support native birds. Think of the relationship between the native narrowleaf milkweed and the Monarch Butterfly. The Monarch caterpillar feeds exclusively on milkweed, and so it is important to understand that relationship, especially when the milkweed in the garden is reduced to small stubs!

The benefits of leaving the leaves are endless. They provide habitat for wildlife, increase biodiversity, moderate temperature extremes, reduce greenhouse gases, help soil erosion, and reduce flooding, runoff, and pollution. Leaves are a natural process. Remember to leave the leaves.

For more information, please visit <https://www.newhopeaudubon.org/bird-friendly-certification/leave-the-leaves/#:~:text=Leaf%20litter%20provides%20winter%20habitat,saves%20you%20time%20and%20money> and <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2022/10/17/fall-leave-leaves>.



Thanks to the following for joining or renewing with us!

*Norma & Gary Baker
Chris & Gary Bard
Diana Brumbaugh
John Cant
Bill Chestnut
Vic Cloutier
Kellie Collier
Ramona Confer
Joanna Dixon
Georgeann Hardy
Carin High
Bruce & Judy Jund
Don & Roberta Lenkeit
Joan Lewis
Suzanne Naone
Hans & Pam Peeters
Don & Judy Person
John Sack
Carol Schneider
Rita Sklar
Christina Wilson
Esteban Zapiain*

And thank you for your donation:

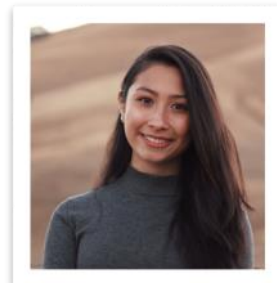
*Chris & Gary Bard
Diana Brumbaugh
Don & Roberta Lenkeit
Joan Lewis
Don & Judy Person
Carol Schneider*

Sara Matthews and Helen Sowers 2023 Scholarship Recipients

Ohlone Audubon was able to fund four scholarships from our Sara Matthews (3) and Helen Sowers (1) Fund, made possible by Sara's and Helen's generous donations to us. These funds are to be used to support our "Women in Science" program, thru the American Women in Science Association (AWIS) East Bay Chapter. See the four bios of these deserving young women. We also gave the AAUW (American Association of University Women) \$2000 for two camp scholarships in 2023 for high school students.

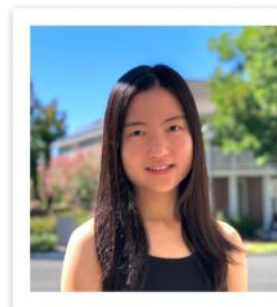
Jessica Cope 2023 (Sara Matthews recipient)

I am a senior at UC Berkeley studying Molecular and Cell Biology with a concentration in Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Structural Biology. My research is on the structures involved in peroxisomal targeted protein import and the associated enzymes which will help to later determine the biochemical mechanism for this essential import process. I hope to continue to research biochemistry and contribute to our understanding of the processes that sustain life in the natural world.



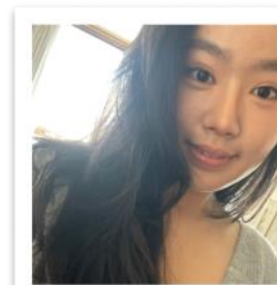
Eunice Tsang (Sara Matthews recipient)

I'm a senior at UC Berkeley, currently pursuing a double major in Molecular & Cell Biology and Molecular Environmental Biology. My passion lies in exploring the interactions between microbes and the environment. I am also passionate about mentorship and teaching students. In the future, I hope to pursue a PhD in microbiology to explore the complexity of microbial metabolism using omics technologies.



Meralda Jeong (Sara Matthews recipient)

Hello! My name is Meralda Jeong, a dedicated Molecular and Cellular Biology student at the University of California, Berkeley. My academic journey is driven by a profound passion for advancing human health, particularly through therapeutics-related research. Currently, I'm engrossed in the "Rapid Reviews/Infectious Diseases" project within the Medical Sciences domain, focusing on testing and diagnostics, therapeutics and treatments, and prevention and vaccines. My aspiration is to further bolster my expertise through ongoing laboratory investigations and an exploration of the pharmaceutical field. Beyond my academic pursuits, I find genuine happiness in nature's embrace and cherish opportunities to travel, hike, lend a helping hand to sheltered animals, and experiment with culinary delights.



Siena Gunari (Helen Sowers recipient)

Hi, my name is Siena Gunari. I am majoring in Speech Pathology and Audiology with a minor in Chemistry at Cal State East Bay. I enjoy learning about anything science-related, conducting research, and serving my community. I am currently working on a research project identifying new treatments for pain and headache. This is important because there is a growing opioid epidemic and a need to find new pain-relieving agents. I enjoy research because it helps to expand my skill set and knowledge base, as well as help to address the challenging issues in society. I currently work as a learning assistant in the STEM lab, a community learning space that provides academic support to students who need help in a STEM subject. I also enjoy spending my time serving my community through hospital volunteering. This allows me to help patients who are going through a difficult time to feel more comfortable, as well as assist the hospital staff when needed. I also have served as treasurer of a speech and hearing club on campus. Through that role, I had the opportunity to host fundraisers to raise money for both a hearing aid organization and an organization that supports underrepresented minority groups with communication disorders. After graduating, I plan to apply to gain more work experience and then apply to graduate school or medical school. My hobbies include hiking, gardening, helping sheltered animals, and cooking.



Too Many Swallows to Choose From

by Bill Hoppes

It is a bright summer day and you lift your eyes from the underbrush trying to spot that wren and look into the sky. There they are, swooping and dashing, swallows! We are lucky in our area. We have five species of swallows that are easy to see. Two are easy to identify, two can be a bit confusing and the fifth, recognizing its blandness is the key to its ID. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. What else could be up there, why swifts of course. One of the early challenges for beginning birders is to be able to tell swallows from swifts. So let's get that out of the way. There are two swifts you are likely to see in our area, the White-throated and the Vaux's. The first thing I notice about swifts is that they seem to fly much higher than swallows. So if the flying birds seem just overhead, likely swallows, if high in the sky, likely swifts. The second cue for me is wing shape.

To the right—a swallow on the left and a swift on the right. The swifts wings are longer, narrower and more pointed.



The third clue for me is how they fly. Swallows often bend their wings at the wrist as they fly. Their flight was once described to me as “swimming through the air” and I think that is pretty accurate. Swifts never bend their wings, keeping them outstretched. Their wings seem to “vibrate” as they fly through the air. Once you see swifts in flight a few times, the difference between them and swallows is pretty obvious. Finally, you will almost never see a swift perched on a wire or tree.

OK, so we know a swallow when we see one. Five to go. Let's start with two of the most common and easily identified ones: Barn Swallow and Cliff Swallow

Barn Swallow



Cliff Swallow



The swallow on the left above is a Barn Swallow. I think it is one of the prettiest birds in the air. As its name implies, the Barn Swallow builds its mud nests on wooden structures. The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is the most widespread species of swallow in the world. It appears to have the largest natural distribution of any of the world's passerines, ranging over 251 million square kilometers globally. It is easily identified by its metallic blue back and long forked tail. There are six subspecies, with *H. r. erythrogaster* being the one we have in North America. In winter, our birds head for Central and South America.

The bird on the right is the other swallow that is fairly easy to ID, the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*). The Cliff Swallow is found in the Western Hemisphere. It nests in large colonies of mud-based nests. It has benefited greatly from construction of highway overpasses and multi-story buildings. At first glance, there is some similarity in color with the Barn Swallow, but the Cliff Swallow lacks the forked tail on the Barn Swallow, and most importantly, it has a distinctive buffy rump. You may need to watch the birds for a few minutes until one of them banks toward you and the buffy rump is visible.

(continued on page 10)

(Swallow id continued)

Those are the easy ones, now let's look at two that might be a bit harder -the Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) and the Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*). These two have a lot of similarities. They are restricted to North America, with the Violet-green found only in the west. Both are cavity nesters. The Tree Swallow often competes with the Western Bluebird for nest boxes. Both have metallic greenish-blue backs and bright white breasts.

Tree
Swallow



Violet-green
Swallow



Here are both birds in flight. The metallic, greenish-blue back is somewhat similar on both species. There are two field marks that are useful but hard to see. In the Violet-green, the white on the head extends above the eye as opposed to the Tree Swallow, where it remains below the eye. The Violet-green also has a somewhat forked tail that the Tree Swallow lacks. The diagnostic feature to tell these two apart are the white "saddlebags" on the Violet-green. These can sometimes be hard to see as the birds twist and turn in flight, but be patient and you will see their presence or absence and be able to tell these two apart.

For the final bird, we are going to leave the dramatic metallic blues and greens, rust and bright white colors behind to focus on a bird that is totally bland-the Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*). The Northern Rough-winged is found throughout North America. As opposed to building nests on structures or in tree cavities, this swallow uses burrows made by other animals located in soil banks and in human-made cavities such as gutters and tubes.



Northern Rough-winged
Swallows

Tree Swallow—immature



As you can see from the above photos, the Northern Rough-winged is overall a dull brown bird. So that is what you need to look for. No bright white breast, no metallic blues or greens, just a dull brown swallow and you should have the Northern Rough-winged. But wait, who is this guy? He is pretty much a dull brown swallow, but he isn't a Northern Rough-winged, he is an immature Tree Swallow. Beginning birders will sometimes call these immatures Rough-winged. Don't be one of them. The immature Tree Swallow has a brighter breast and may have some metallic colors coming in. Most importantly, it will probably be flying with other adult Tree Swallows. So, take your time and you will get your Northern Rough-winged Swallow.

There is one more swallow that I haven't covered and that is the Bank Swallow. Its range is so limited that you will likely need to go on a special field trip to see one.

Swallows are a set of birds beginning birders should get to know. I never tire of watching them fly or see them peeking out of their nests. They are a sure sign that summer has arrived.

What's in a bird name? Big changes Coming!

It was recently announced that The American Ornithological Society will be changing the names of many of our familiar birds— Steller's Jay, Wilson's Warbler, Wilson's Snipe, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Lewis' Woodpecker, among so many others. Proper names used in naming will be replaced, as well as any other offensive name. Certainly a huge task! This is part of the movement to make birding more diversified and welcoming to all groups. Please click on the link below for the full article to read or listen to on NPR KQED from Nov 1, 2023. I have also included David Sibley's take on the changes—(P. Gordon)

These American birds and dozens more will be renamed, to remove human monikers



https://www.npr.org/2023/11/01/1209660753/these-american-birds-and-dozens-more-will-be-renamed-to-remove-human-monikers?fbclid=IwAR1ToRv14kG3dTHfoQjhJldykt_Up7ZJdP074HdSC1mD5WlBpIqzQKwBRv4

Get ready to say goodbye to a lot of familiar bird names, like Anna's Hummingbird, Gambel's Quail, Lewis's Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Bullock's Oriole, and more.

That's because the American Ornithological Society has vowed to change the English names of all bird species currently named after people, along with any other bird names deemed offensive or exclusionary. (*Click on link above to continue*)

From David Sibley:

A lot of people have been talking about bird names for the past few days. I'm so glad that people are thinking about birds but have seen some confusion and misinterpretation. These are my personal thoughts on eponymous bird names...

It's not for me to judge what makes someone else uncomfortable, but I know that after I started learning a little more about the history of some of the people honored in bird names, it makes ME uncomfortable. For example, Winfield Scott was a US Army officer in the 1800s. Scott's Oriole was named for him by a junior officer, but there is no evidence that Scott himself ever had an interest in birds. He was very highly regarded as a General, but, among other things, he presided over the forced removal of the Cherokee (the Trail of Tears). Many people today could say that Scott's Oriole is named for a person who carried out the brutal persecution of their ancestors. That bothers me.

We should not ignore that history, but it shouldn't be linked to the bird.

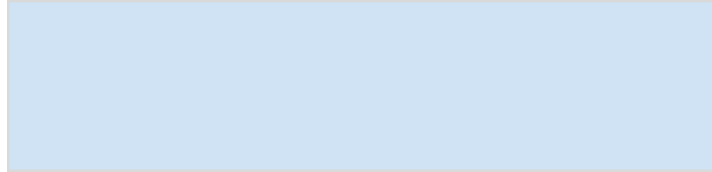
The AOS has already accepted that such names can be changed (Thick-billed Longspur), and it is clear that Scott's Oriole and many others should also be changed. Taking names case-by-case would be a quagmire of moral judgment, competing interests, PR campaigns, influence-peddling, and more. Renaming ALL these birds for their appearance, sounds, habitat, etc. is the only viable solution. Not because all these people were bad, but because it's impossible to determine who was "good enough" to put their name on a bird. And simply because birds are not objects, and should not have to carry the banner for a person, no matter how good that person was.

This process will not be fast and I don't expect anyone to adjust immediately to new names as they are announced. I ask everyone, myself included, to keep an open mind and stay flexible as things change.

RETURN TO:
OHLONE AUDUBON SOCIETY
1922 HILLSDALE STREET
HAYWARD, CA 94541

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN LEANDRO, CA
PERMIT NO. 5759

RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED



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.

PRESIDENT: Bill Hoppes, President@OhloneAudubon.org
VICE PRES: Marty Morrow VicePresident@OhloneAudubon.org
TREASURER: Gail Ryujin Treasurer@OhloneAudubon.org 925-829-1895
REC SECTY: Kathy Robertson Secretary@OhloneAudubon.org
CORR SECTY: Jackie Bertillion 510-782-4874
DIRECTORS: 2023: Dr. Marlina Selva Director2023@OhloneAudubon.org
2024: Vicki Robinson Director2021@OhloneAudubon.org
2025: Dave Riensche Director2022@OhloneAudubon.org
WEBMASTER: B. Hoppes webmaster@OhloneAudubon.org
WEBSITE: <http://OhloneAudubon.org>

CONSERVATION: Carin High (West) Bill Hoppes (East)
Conservation@OhloneAudubon.org
EDUCATION: Marty Morrow education@ohloneaudubon.org 510-357-1615
EDITOR: Phil & Pat Gordon, editor@Ohloneaudubon.org 510-538-3550
FIELD TRIPS: Bob Toleno FieldTrips@OhloneAudubon.org
HOSPITALITY: Allen & Jackie Bertillion 510-782-4874
MEMBERSHIP: Pat Gordon, Membership@Ohloneaudubon.org 510-538-3550
PROGRAMS: Diana Brumbaugh, ohloneaudubonprograms@gmail.com
PUBLICITY: Vicki Robinson, Director2024@OhloneAudubon.org
NAS CALIFORNIA: 765 University Ave, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95825
916-649-7600, <http://www.ca.audubon.org>

Yes, I want to Join Ohlone Audubon Society!



Please sign me up today

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Join Ohlone Audubon Society
By mailing a \$25 check payable
To OAS with this coupon to:

Pat Gordon
OAS Membership
1922 Hillside St.
Hayward, CA 94541

I prefer to receive the Kite Call by e-mail ☐ (Recommended) Please send me e-mail updates and action alerts ☐.

Ohlone Audubon does not share our mailing list or your personal information with others.
National Audubon Society membership dues are separate from those of Ohlone Audubon Society.