



# 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](http://www.ohloneaudubon.org)

### Calendar

- Aug 23 **FIELD TRIP**  
Middle Harbor, Alameda
- Sept 2 **GENERAL MEETING**  
Via Zoom
- Sept 13 **FIELD TRIP**  
Swift Spectacle
- Sept 14 **MEMBERSHIP**  
**APPRECIATION PICNIC**  
Livermore (new location!)
- Sept 20 **FIELD TRIP**  
Elkhorn Slough Safari
- Sept 25 **FIELD TRIP**  
Pt. Reyes
- Oct 7 **GENERAL MEETING**  
Via Zoom

### Membership Meetings



#### Autonomously-Monitoring Birdboxes: An Eco Innovate Initiative!

Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025  
 Time: 7:30 PM Via Zoom  
 (instructions to the left)

Eco Innovate is a youth-founded nonprofit combining technology and sustainability. Starting in early 2024 with their founding project, **Birdboxes**, the organization innovated a system to revolutionize the field of nest box monitoring. They utilize technology to power autonomous remote-monitoring systems which remove the manual aspects of nestbox monitoring for ornithology and climate change research. They have installed 15 Birdboxes at local gardens and parks in the Bay Area, and have received over 40,000 data points from these installations. Founding members of Eco Innovate are Pooja Verma, Sophie Le, Lisa Sun, Sai Sri Lashya Gillella and, Harshitha Loganathan.



#### 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/joining/register/tZIsf->

Annual Field Trip  
Schedule Inside!

**October 7, 2025 Meeting (via zoom) Tuesday 7:30PM**

**Migratory connectivity of shorebirds across the Pacific  
Flyway with a focus on the importance of coastal  
estuaries and interior wetlands in Alaska and California.**

Presenter: River Gates, Pacific  
Shorebird Conservation  
Coordinator, National Audubon  
Society (Alaska Program)

(more details next issue)

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Sunday  
September 14, 2025  
Membership Appreciation  
Picnic**  
*Details inside!*  
**RSVP REQUIRED!**



## Field Trips

**Middle Harbor Shoreline Park**  
**Saturday, August 23, 10am - 12:30pm**  
**Leaders: Bob Toleno and Juli Chamberlin**  
**birding@toleno.com**

This 38-acre park opened to the public in 2004, and is an excellent example of how former industrial sites can be transformed through habitat restoration. Shorebirds will be the main focus of the trip, with a possibility for some rarities at this time of year (Baird's Sandpiper and Bar-tailed Godwit have been found at this location). Terns, gulls, Ospreys, pelicans, and other piscivores will also be seen, as well as maybe some rocky shorebirds, like turnstones or Wandering Tattler, all with the photogenic background of the San Francisco skyline.

**Directions:** Take I-880 north toward Oakland to the 7th St exit toward West Grand Ave. Turn left onto 7th Street and head west to the stoplight at Middle Harbor Rd. Proceed through the intersection and take the first right turn into the MHSP parking lot.

**Schollenberger Park & Vaux's Swift Spectacle**  
**Saturday, September 13, 3pm - sunset**  
**Leaders: Bob Toleno & Juli Chamberlin**  
**birding@toleno.com**

Join us to see the spectacle of thousands of migrating Vaux's Swifts entering a single chimney at Rio Lindo Adventist Academy in Healdsburg at sunset! It's truly a spectacle not to be missed. We'll meet at Schollenberger Park in Petaluma, where we'll walk a flat 2-mile trail, birding the wetlands and mudflats. Then we'll continue about 45 minutes north to Healdsburg, allowing some time for folks to grab some food along the way, then meet at Rio Lindo around 6:45, in time for sunset at 7:23 PM. The sky will be swirling with birds, and into the chimney they'll go. The field trip ends after the swifts have entered the chimney.

*(Directions continued next column)*

**Another great field trip page 3!**

*(Schollenberger continued)*

**Directions:** Take I-580 west and cross the Richmond Bridge to connect to 101 north. Exit at CA-116E (Lakeville Hwy) and go east through several stoplights. Turn right on South McDowell Blvd, then right on Cader Lane - look for a narrow lane with a very small sign that says "Schollenberger Park" - to reach the parking lot. **To reach Rio Lindo Academy,** take 101 north to Exit 502 for Healdsburg Ave, where you'll turn right, then turn right again onto Bailhache Ave. Continue until the name changes to Rio Lindo Ave. The road winds up into the hills, and in 3 miles you'll reach the Academy's main entrance. Follow the swift signs to reach the chimney, and park on the right. Bring a folding chair and enjoy the show.

## Special Event!

**Elkhorn Slough Safari**  
**Saturday, September 20 9:15AM**  
**Leader: Pat Gordon**  
**RSVP by 9/12/25 to pagpeg@aol.com**

**We are offering a popular trip from the past:**

Enjoy a relaxing cruise on calm waters, and get exclusive access to playful Sea Otters, seals and numerous

bird species. With a crew of friendly, knowledgeable captains and naturalists, Elkhorn Slough Safari has been a trusted guide to locals and tourists for 30 years!

Ohlone has reserved a boat of our own and we have 20 spaces available for the tour beginning at **9:15 am**. We will follow-up after lunch with a local field trip led by Pat Gordon and others.

**Guest check-in is at the Gift Shop at 7981 Moss Landing Rd. Ste. E. Tours depart from "A" Dock in the Moss Landing South Harbor. We have a special cost of \$40 (Children 3-12 \$36) per person and you must RSVP by September 12.**

*Confirmation and directions upon receipt of check.*





*Field Trips continued*

**Point Reyes Rare Bird Round-up**  
**Thursday, September 25, 7am - 4pm**  
**Leaders: Bob Toleno & Kathy Robertson**  
**birding@toleno.com**

Early autumn can be an excellent time for migrants and rarities at the birding hotspots in outer Point Reyes National Seashore. This all-day, caravan-style birding trip will visit some of the prime birding locations on the outer point, such as the fish docks, lighthouse, various ranches, and Drake's Beach, where we'll have lunch. We'll plan to finish the day at the RCA building cypresses and the Inverness Tennis Club.

We will leave from Bovine Bakery in Point Reyes Station at 7:15am so we can get to the outer point as early as possible. You should plan to arrive at 7am if you want to get coffee and delicious pastries from the bakery. Wear layers—the outer point can be chilly! Bring lunch, liquids, sunscreen, and a full gas tank. We will try to bring as few cars as possible to the outer point because parking is very limited in place.

**Directions:** Take the Richmond Bridge to Hwy 101N, take Lucas Valley Rd exit and turn left, then turn right on Nicasio Valley Rd, left on Petaluma-Point Reyes Rd, and left on Shoreline Hwy (Hwy 1). The address of Bovine Bakery is 11315 Shoreline Hwy, Point Reyes Station, CA

### Mono Lake Trip Report—July 12 & 13, 2025

Juli Chamberlin and Bob Toleno led six participants on a trip exploring Mono Lake and the surrounding area. They visited a variety of habitats, including grassy parks, desert ponds, saline lakeshore, sagebrush, and mountain canyon. Some of the special species seen included: Calliope Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, Sage Thrasher, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Sagebrush Sparrow, and MacGillivray's Warbler. The most thrilling event of the trip was an extremely close encounter with Greater Sage-Grouse in Bodie State Historic Park--less than 30 feet away!!!  
 (all photos by B. Toleno)



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch at Virginia Lakes feeder



Sage Thrasher on Mono Lake shoreline



Greater Sage-Grouse at Bodie State Historic Park



# OAS FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2025-2026



<b>SUNDAY, SEP 7</b>	<b>MIDDLE HARBOR SHORELINE PARK</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO &amp; JULI CHAMBERLIN</b>
SATURDAY, SEP 20	ELKHORN SLOUGH	PAT GORDON
<b>THURSDAY, SEP 25</b>	<b>POINT REYES</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO &amp; KATHY ROBERTSON</b>
MONDAY, OCT 6	RODEO LAGOON & HAWK HILL	BOB TOLENO
<b>FRIDAY, OCT 10</b>	<b>COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK</b>	<b>DAVID RIENSCHKE &amp; MAGGIE CLARK</b>
SUNDAY, OCT 26	BIG BREAK REGIONAL SHORELINE	BILL HOPPES
<b>SATURDAY, NOV 1</b>	<b>YOLO BYPASS WILDLIFE AREA</b>	<b>DAVE RIENSCHKE</b>
WEDNESDAY, NOV 12	VARGAS PLATEAU	VICKI ROBINSON
<b>SUNDAY, NOV 30</b>	<b>PACIFIC COMMONS LINEAR PARK</b>	<b>RICH NICHOLSON &amp; BOB DUNN</b>
EARLY DECEMBER TBD	ELSIE ROEMER	KATHY ROBERTSON & KAREN KRAMER
<b>WEDNESDAY, DEC 10</b>	<b>COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK - SOUTH</b>	<b>RICH NICHOLSON</b>
THURSDAY, DEC 11	GARIN REGIONAL PARK	BOB TOLENO
<b>SUNDAY DEC 14</b>	<b>CBC HAYWARD-FREMONT</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO, COMPILER</b>
SATURDAY, DEC 27	COSUMNES & WOODBRIDGE	DAVID RIENSCHKE
<b>FRIDAY, JAN 2</b>	<b>ARROWHEAD MARSH</b>	<b>DAVID RIENSCHKE</b>
SATURDAY, JAN 10	PANOCH VALLEY	BOB TOLENO & JULI CHAMBERLIN
<b>SAT-SUN, JAN 17-18</b>	<b>SACRAMENTO, COLUSA NWR</b>	<b>PAT GORDON &amp; KATHY ROBERTSON</b>
SATURDAY, JAN 31	SPRINGTOWN WETLANDS	KATHY ROBERTSON & KAREN KRAMER
<b>EARLY FEBRUARY TBD</b>	<b>GARIN OWLING</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO</b>
SUNDAY, FEB 8	SHADOW CLIFFS	KATHY ROBERTSON & KAREN KRAMER
<b>SATURDAY, FEB 14</b>	<b>WATERBIRD REGIONAL PRESERVE</b>	<b>DAVID RIENSCHKE</b>
SATURDAY, FEB 21	AMERICAN CANYON WETLANDS	KATHY ROBERTSON & PAT GORDON
<b>WEDNESDAY, MAR 4</b>	<b>QUARRY LAKES</b>	<b>KATHY ROBERTSON &amp; KAREN KRAMER</b>
WEDNESDAY, MAR 11	LAKE ELIZABETH	VICKI ROBINSON
<b>WEDNESDAY, APR 8</b>	<b>SABERCAT CREEK</b>	<b>BILL HOPPES &amp; PAT GORDON</b>
SATURDAY, APR 11	BAY POINT REGIONAL SHORELINE	DAVID RIENSCHKE
<b>THURSDAY, APR 16</b>	<b>GARIN - BIRDING BY EAR</b>	<b>MAGGIE CLARK &amp; BILL SCOGGINS</b>
SATURDAY, APR 25	DIABLO FOOTHILLS	RICH NICHOLSON & BOB DUNN
<b>SATURDAY, MAY 2</b>	<b>MILL CREEK ROAD</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO &amp; JULI CHAMBERLIN</b>
MID-MAY TBD	DEVIL'S SLIDE	PAT GORDON
<b>WEDNESDAY, MAY 13</b>	<b>MITCHELL CANYON</b>	<b>RICH NICHOLSON &amp; BOB DUNN</b>
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20	NILES HOTSPOTS	KATHY ROBERTSON & KAREN KRAMER
<b>MAY 25 - 30</b>	<b>INYO COUNTY TOUR</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO &amp; JULI CHAMBERLIN</b>
MONDAY, JUN 1	POINT REYES	BOB TOLENO & JULI CHAMBERLIN
<b>SATURDAY, JUN 12</b>	<b>HAYWARD INTERPRETIVE CENTER</b>	<b>DAVID RIENSCHKE &amp; MAGGIE CLARK</b>
JUNE 20-21	SIERRA VALLEY & YUBA PASS	PAT GORDON & DIANA BRUMBAUGH
<b>AUGUST TBD</b>	<b>SOUTHEAST ARIZONA TOUR</b>	<b>BOB TOLENO &amp; JULI CHAMBERLIN</b>

*This is the tentative schedule for the next year and trips may change due to changing circumstances.*

*Final trips with details will be published in the Kite Call. For more info contact*

*Field Trip Chair, Bob Toleno at [Birding@toleno.com](mailto:Birding@toleno.com).*





## Ohlone Audubon Society Invites You to

### The Sara Matthews & Helen Sowers MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION PICNIC

**Date:** Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Schedule:** Field Trip with Bob Toleno at 11:00, Lunch at Noon (**RSVP required**), Presentations at 1:00

**Location:** 3 Calhoun Sisters' Ranch, 12461 Mines Road, Livermore

**Presenters:**

History of 3 Calhoun Sisters' Ranch - Nancy Mueller

Bluebird Boxes at 3 Calhoun Sisters' Ranch - Irv Tiessen

Audubon California Conservation Ranching Program Staff

This picnic is to show appreciation to members for their support.  
You and your family are invited to a catered (no charge) luncheon.

**Please RSVP to Pat Gordon - [pagpeg@aol.com](mailto:pagpeg@aol.com)**

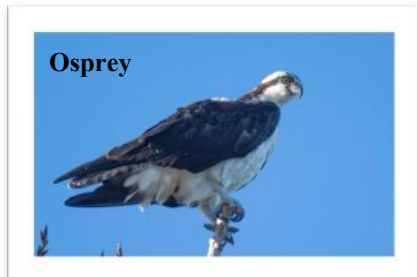
**Directions:** From 580 East take exit 52B North Livermore Avenue. Turn right on Livermore Ave. and head south. Take Livermore Ave. all the way to the very end where it makes a left and becomes Tesla Road. At the first stoplight, turn right onto Mines Road. Once you are on Mines Road you will drive about five miles and come to a Y. Just before the Y there is a sign that shows you can turn left towards San Jose, or go straight up the hill to Lake Del Valle. You will turn left there to continue driving on Mines Road. Continue on Mines Road for about another 4 miles. Watch for the 8.7 mile marker. The gate for the ranch is on the right just past that mileage marker.

# ***BIRDING OBSERVATIONS***

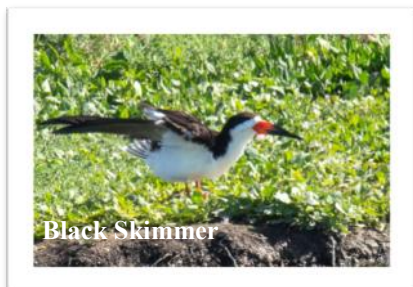
**Summer 2025**

**by Vicki Robinson**

Shorebirds are starting to return to our local shores. On our July 26 field trip to Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary, at the east end of Shore Line Drive in Alameda, one of the best places to see large numbers of shorebirds we saw:



Osprey, Brown Pelicans, Snowy Egret, Double-crested Cormorant, Black Skimmer, Western Sandpiper, Sanderling, Willet, Short-billed Dowitcher, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Curlew, Whimbrel, Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Black Oystercatcher, Surf Scoters. Most of the shorebirds were in breeding or transitional plumage.



A highlight of the trip were the terns, including Forster's, Elegant, and the small Least Terns. Some were bringing food to their young. A surprise Black Skimmer, skimming along the shoreline, also showed up to give everyone a good look. A Bald Eagle made a fly-by for everyone to see.

Our spring migrants have finished nesting and rearing their young. Most have moved on, but some Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Western Kingbirds are still around. A Cassin's Kingbird has been seen at Pacific Commons in Fremont.



This time of the year is a great time for raptors to do their hunting. White-tailed Kites have been seen in many locations. Peregrine Falcons have been spotted at Vargas and Garin, and a Swainson's Hawk was seen at Hayward Shoreline.

Ospreys, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Cooper's Hawks, as well as American Bitterns, are also being seen at Coyote Hills and Niles Community Park has Wood Ducks.



Woodpeckers are enjoying the summer and home feeders. This time of the year you can find Acorn, Downy, Nuttall's, and Hairy Woodpeckers.

A Pigeon Guillemot has again been seen at Seaplane Lagoon in Alameda. Gulls are plentiful, and a Heerman's Gull has been spotted at Elsie Roemer, along with Western, Ring-billed, and California Gulls. (all photos by V. Robinson)



## Conservation

### Dublin's Efforts to Move its Urban Limit Line East Still in Court

The legality of Measure II, the 2024 ballot measure that opened up unincorporated land east of Dublin for commercial development by breaking the city's urban limit line (ULL), remains in question following an Alameda County Superior Court hearing last week of a lawsuit opposing the measure approved last fall by Dublin voters. Attorneys representing Save Mount Diablo and Friends of Livermore are asking the Court to undo the changes brought by the measure. The measure sought to amend the City's general plan to allow commercial development east of the City's boundary and urban limit line on 80 acres known as the Crosby Properties. Prior to the election, Save Mount Diablo and Friends of Livermore filed requests for two temporary restraining orders with the Alameda County Superior Court to remove the measure from the ballot. They claimed that under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental review was required before allowing

commercial development, and that voters deserved to understand the environmental impacts of the measure before deciding.

The City of Dublin plans commercial development within the Crosby acreage as a way to help fund the Dublin Boulevard Extension project, which would build 1.5 miles of a four- to six-lane highway from Fallon Road in Dublin along North Canyons Parkway into Livermore. Dublin has so far identified \$76 million for the project, which is estimated to cost \$153.6 million. While the City of Livermore supports the extension project, it opposed breaking the ULL to allow commercial development on the Crosby land, which is now protected open space between Livermore and Dublin. Livermore representatives said the City would withdraw its share of funding, about \$27.5 million, should Dublin move the ULL.

(B. Hoppes)

### Proposed Increase in Benefit Assessments for Flood Control Projects Fails to Pass

The proposed increase in benefit assessments put forth by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) was voted down by property owners in Zones 2, 4, and 9. The ballot tabulations took place on June 20, 2025. The proposed increases failed to pass for the fiscal year 2025-2026.

According to the Castro Valley Forum, the results regarding the proposed tax increase were 82 percent against in Zone 2, which includes Castro Valley; 78 percent against in Zone 4, which includes parts of Hayward; and 72 percent against in Zone 9, which includes part of southwestern San Leandro.

The money from the increase was to fund carefully selected flood control projects identified in each specific zone. These projects included critical repairs and upgrades.

Please refer to the District's website link for more information: <https://acffloodcontrol.org/notices/> (M. Selva)



*Thank you new members, renewals, and donations!*

#### ***New Members & Renewals***

*Debra Bedford  
N. Gulamhussein  
Mary Ann Hannon*

#### ***Loretta Heisler***

*Jean King  
Debra and Bob Lovendusky  
Keith & Cindy Markbreiter  
M. Nurmuhhammad  
Kathy Robertson*

#### ***Donations***

*Jean King in memory of  
Phil Gordon  
Debra and Bob Lovendusky in  
memory of Phil Gordon*

## President's Corner

Hope you are getting out birding. There are reports of fall migrant shorebirds coming through, as well as a few other upland migrants. I check visitors to my feeders as I sit on my front porch having my morning coffee. It is pretty much the same dozen species each morning, led by the Lesser Goldfinch. I am on the lookout for the first White-crowned Sparrows of the Fall.



*Lesser Goldfinch,  
top dog at my feeders*

I am a big eBird user. If you haven't signed up for eBird, you should give it a try. It is much more than simply submitting lists. eBird organizes birding locations as "hotspots". If you click on one on the map, it will tell you what has been seen there over the last week or month, or whatever interval you are interested in. An area I have been looking at recently is those "hotspots" that could use more coverage from birders. If you access the hotspot map and click on a hotspot, eBird will tell you how many checklists have been submitted in the past week, month, or ever. Some hotspots are well covered. Nearly 10,000 checklists have been submitted for Coyote Hills. Other well-known birding areas, such as Garin, Clifton Court Forebay, Sycamore Grove, Patterson Pass, and Shadow Cliffs all have well over 1000 checklists submitted. As you drill down, some sites that you would think were well covered have surprisingly few checklists. Brushy Peak has over 500, which seems right, but excellent birding locations such as Springtown Wetlands, Morgan Territory Regional Preserve, and Round Valley Regional Preserve, all have fewer than 300 checklists and surprisingly, Welch Creek Road at Sunol, only has 127.

Finally, there are hotspots that have received surprisingly little coverage. Martin Canyon Creek Trail in Dublin, an excellent forested trail, only has 36 checklists, and Shinn Park and Arboretum only has 22. While Patterson Pass has nearly 1000 checklists, nearby Altamont Pass has only 16. Even the Meadows Canyon Trail, a beautiful site in Tilden, has only 7.

Our understanding of avian diversity in the East Bay benefits from the more coverage we have, and submitting checklists to eBird is one way to support this. Next time you are looking for a new birding spot, check the hotspot map on eBird and look for a location that would benefit from a few more checklists.

- Bill Hoppes



## Year End Message from the Treasurer

We finished this fiscal year, ending June 30, 2025, with record results, mostly due to the surge in the income from our Mutual Funds. We are hoping for another record year and plan to distribute more donations to worthy causes. As usual, we will support our fellow like-minded organizations and will continue with our scholarship programs. New this year is our effort to adopt a California Condor to be named Ohlone! We are going through the process now. Hopefully, we will have news soon. We will miss all the members that we have lost this year. Thank you for your generous donations.

-Gail Ryujin

INCOME	YTD actual	Previous budget	Budget 2025-26	EXPENSES	YTD actual	Previous budget	Budget 2025-26
NAS DUES	\$2,712.25	2,712.25	2,712.25	KITE CALL	\$6,070.41	8,300.00	9,300.00
CHAPTER DUES	7,000.00	6,500.00	6,500.00	MEMBER MEETINGS	2,991.69	4,500.00	5,000.00
SALES	0.00	0.00		PURCHASE MDSE	0.00	0.00	
CONTRIUTIONS	18,241.11	11,800.00	13,000.00	OPER EXPENSE	3,696.89	5,313.00	6,013.00
DIVI/INTEREST	25,678.74	14,000.75	24,000.75	CONSERVATION	4,895.55	1,200.00	4,000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$53,632.10</b>	<b>35,013.00</b>	<b>46,213.00</b>	EDUCATION	590.92	1,000.00	1,900.00
				C'MAS BIRD COUNT	358.00	1,200.00	1,500.00
				FUND RAISING	503.41	2,000.00	2,000.00
				BW MEM GARDEN	0.00	500.00	500.00
				SPECIAL EVENT	6,033.20	11,000.00	16,000.00
				SALES TAX	0.00	0.00	
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>\$28,492.03</b>			<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$25,140.07</b>	<b>35,013.00</b>	<b>46,213.00</b>



# Adding Subspecies to Birding ID Challenges

By Bill Hoppes

Birding is a hobby where you seemingly can drill down to deeper and more complex levels forever. One of the levels that always interests me is the topic of subspecies. When we are out birding and see an Acorn Woodpecker or a Hermit Thrush or a Fox Sparrow, there are more to these birds than just a simple ID. These birds and others can be subdivided into taxonomic groupings called subspecies. Subspecies are populations of a species that live in different areas and vary in size, shape, or other physical characteristics but that can still successfully interbreed. IDing subspecies is an advanced skill, but there are several reasons we should try it.

## 1. Greater Understanding of Biodiversity

Subspecies often reflect adaptations to specific environments—whether in plumage, behavior, or song. Learning to identify them highlights the richness of avian diversity beyond just species level.

## 2. Improved Field Skills

Training your eye and ear to detect subtle differences in size, coloration, vocalizations, or habitat preference sharpens overall birding skills. It teaches you to observe more carefully and notice finer details.

## 3. Conservation Insight

Some subspecies are more at risk than their parent species. Recognizing them can help track local population changes and contribute to conservation priorities.

## 4. Regional and Historical Significance

Understanding subspecies helps interpret a bird's distribution, migratory patterns, and evolutionary history. This is especially useful for documenting range shifts due to climate change.

## 5. Better Contribution to Science

When birders submit observations to platforms like eBird and include subspecies where possible, it adds valuable data to scientific studies—particularly for population tracking, migration, and taxonomy.

## 6. Challenge and Satisfaction

Identifying subspecies adds a layer of challenge that many birders find rewarding. It can keep local birding fresh, even when you're seeing the "same" birds repeatedly.

## 7. Potential Taxonomic Splits

Finally, one of the most important reasons is that some subspecies may eventually be recognized as full species. Knowing them now puts you ahead of the curve and helps with "life list" tracking if splits are accepted later.

So, let's look at a local example.

The Song Sparrow is one of the most subspecies-rich bird species in North America. A total of 52 subspecies have been named over time, of which 25 are still recognized. These 25 subspecies are organized geographically. There is an Eastern Group with three subspecies, a Northwestern Group with nine subspecies, a Southwestern Group with three, a Mexican Plateau Group with four and, in our area, the Cismontane California Group with six.

Of the six subspecies in the Cismontane Group, four are in the San Francisco Bay Area. Three of the four Song Sparrow subspecies in the San Francisco Bay Area are restricted to tidal marshes: in San Pablo Bay, Suisun Marsh, and the saltwater marshes around Alameda and the south bay. The fourth in our area is the one we see most frequently in upland areas. The other two in the Cismontane group are located on the coast and on the Channel Islands. Below are these four subspecies in our area in more detail.

*(continued on page 10)*

(Sparrows—continued from page 10)

### Cismontane California group

***Melospiza melodia heermanni*** Coastal central California, interior valleys and foothills. A very brown and clear-marked subspecies; buffish (not light gray) fringes of upper back. This is the one you are most likely to see if you aren't in the saltmarsh habitats listed below.

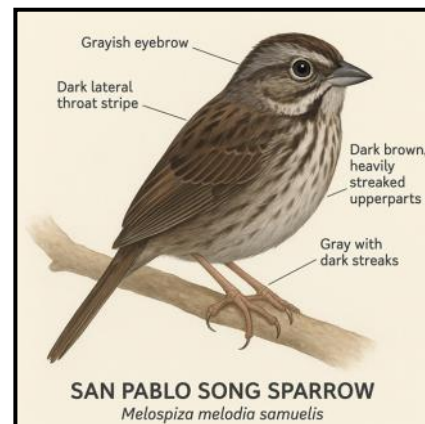
***Melospiza melodia samuelis*** San Pablo song sparrow. Northern San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay saltmarshes. A small, tiny-billed subspecies with dirty olive upperpart background.

***Melospiza melodia maxillaries*** (Grinnell, 1909) Suisun song sparrow. Suisun Bay saltmarshes. Dark upperparts; brown with gray mantle edges; plump bill base.

***Melospiza melodia pusillula*** Alameda song sparrow. East and South San Francisco Bay saltmarshes. Yellowest subspecies, paler than *samuelis* and clear yellow hue below.

A fifth subspecies, ***M. m. gouldii***, occurs along the coastal zone from Mendocino down to Santa Cruz, but generally north of San Francisco Bay.

It's hard to get photos of these subspecies that help in identification, but here are some drawings that may help. Differences are subtle and will take some work.



Now, where can we find these guys? Remember, other than ***heermanni***, these subspecies are very restricted in their range, isolated to saltwater marshes in Suisun, San Pablo, and the south bay. If we take advantage of eBird, we can find some hotspots where we are most likely to find them.

**Suisun Song Sparrow** can be most easily found at Rush Ranch Marsh Trail, Grizzly Island Wildlife Area

**Alameda Song Sparrow** at Alviso Marina County Park, Tidal Marsh sites at Don Edwards NWR

**San Pablo Song Sparrow** at San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Tubbs Island, Reclamation Road

If you head to one of these sites and are in tidal marsh, Song Sparrows you see are likely the local subspecies. Do your best and try to use the ID cues to spot one. It won't be easy, but see if you can do it. You will learn more about one of our most common species and you will improve your field skills.



**Follow us on Facebook!**

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

**Save these dates!**

**The fall Native Plant Extravaganzas will take place at various native plant nurseries in the East Bay on the Saturdays**

**September 20, October 18, and November 15, 2025**



Below are the talks that will be given at the next event:

**Talks in the Nurseries, September 20**

**Down by the Bay Native Plant Nursery**, 2363 Catalpa Way, Hayward **11:00 and 1:00**

“How to create a Pollinator Pathway!” Down by the Bay owner Josh Cheng-Rubietta will lead guided walking tours down the block to four Pollinator Pathway gardens planted with local natives. Josh will discuss how to create a neighborhood Pollinator Pathway, including how to connect with neighbors, sheet mulch, plan, plant, and maintain these gardens, and the importance of gardening with local native plants.

**East Bay Wilds**, 2777 Foothill, Oakland (the entrance is on 28<sup>th</sup> street) **12:00**

“Beautiful plants that will add color and interest to your garden throughout the year” by Pete Veilleux, owner of East Bay Wilds

**The Watershed Nursery**, 601 A Canal Blvd. Richmond **1:00 and 2:30**

Join the Watershed Nursery staff and three local native landscape designers for an informative panel and Q&A on designing and gardening with CA native plants! Featuring: Sallie Bryan of 4B Garden Design, Chris Garcia of Four Dimensions Landscape Cooperative, Christopher Telomen of Soft Earth Landscapes, Oaktown Native Plant Nursery, 702 Channing Way, Berkeley; **2:30** “How to create beautiful, diverse, and colorful shade gardens under oaks, redwoods, or in urban shade. We will include balancing the elements of light, soil health and water” by Oaktown owner Suzanne Carter

**SAVE THE CONDOR FUND**

\$410,000 by October 2025

If existing donors give 25% more than last year and we gain at least 150 new donors, together, we can keep these magnificent condors flying free!

**The federal grant funding for Condor Recovery will not be renewed and expires in December of this year. Your support is needed now more than ever to fuel our strategy of Condor Recovery**

**Actions for the success of this Critically Endangered Species.**

Information here: <https://www.eleoonline.net/Pages/WebForms/Mobile/ShowFormMobile.aspx?id=cc62e9ca-4ca4-41df-8e29-f128465c04c9&linkto=346>

**Happy Belated 105th Birthday Malca !!!!**

*Long time Ohlone member Malca Chall at 105! Her husband Harold was one of Ohlone's earliest presidents.*



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