Membership Meeting

Date: June 2
Time: Setup: 5:00 p.m., Dinner: 6:00 p.m.
Place: **NEW LOCATION!**
Alviso Adobe Community Park
3465 Old Foothill Road, Pleasanton 94588

Topic: Annual Potluck, Installation of Officers and Birdathon Awards

We hope you can join us at the Alviso Adobe Community Park in Pleasanton, a new location for Ohlone Audubon’s annual meeting. Nestled along Foothill Road, this interpretive park sits on 7 acres of land overlooking the city. The land here has played an important role for several groups of people with Ohlone Indians being the first recorded population, dating back to the time of the Egyptian pyramids. Francisco Alviso built the adobe in 1854, and this original building is one of a few remaining in the Bay Area.

The adobe is set up like a traditional museum and depicts what the home would have been like in the 1920s. It’s very well done and quite interesting. City Naturalist Eric Nicholas will be in attendance and available to answer questions. It’s a good time to enjoy a relaxing evening in mild Pleasanton weather and lovely surroundings. There will be a nice spread of delicious food prepared by our members. If you would like, you can come early and bird on and near the grounds of the Alviso Adobe. The birding can be pretty good with several large oaks in the area.

Please bring your own table service, serving utensils, and a favorite dish to share (about 10 to 12 servings). Last names — (A – H: Vegetable or Salad); (I - P: Entree); (Q – Z: Dessert). Beverages will be supplied courtesy of OAS. Visitors are requested to refrain from bringing alcoholic beverages into the park.

To reach Alviso Adobe from Fremont or Contra Costa, take I-680 toward Pleasanton to the Bernal exit. Drive west on Bernal to Foothill and turn right. Follow Foothill a little more than half mile to the Alviso Adobe on your left. From Hayward, take I-580 to the Foothill exit and follow Foothill about 3 miles to the Alviso Adobe on your right. Meet in the Milking Barn. —MLT/J&AB

New Field Trip Chair!

Calls Planning Committee Meeting

I’ve accepted the position of field trip chair and first want to express a grand THANKS to the people who were willing to share their time, experience, and passion for birding as field trip leaders this last year:

Please take time to personally thank them the next time you see them.

I’m a relative “newby” when it comes to birding, compared to many of the Ohlone members I’ve met, and it never ceases to amaze me how everyone on these field trips is so willing to share their knowledge and birding experiences. Being the “newby”, I’m going to need your help to make next year another successful field trip year. We’ll have an annual field trip planning meeting on Sunday, June 14th. It will be held at my home starting at 4:00 p.m. with a planning session, followed by a potluck. I’d appreciate your letting me know if you have a favorite birding spot you’d like included and even more importantly, if you would be willing to lead, or co-lead one or more of our trips. You can contact me with suggestions or willingness to lead at tgdgmb@pacbell.net or call me at 510.537.0311. Also, please contact me if you are able to attend the planning session.

—Mona
Field Trips

May 31, Sun., 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Del Valle Regional Park, Leader: Steve Huckabone, shuckabone@sprint-mail.com, 925.449.1625

We’ll meet at the Eagle’s View parking area to start our approximately three mile walk. Expect varied trails from single file path to paved road as we search for possible nesting or fledgling species. Restrooms and water are available at the parking area.

To reach the meeting place, exit I-580 eastbound or westbound in Livermore at North Livermore Avenue. Head south and proceed through town (North Livermore Avenue will become South Livermore Avenue in town). About 1.5 miles beyond town, turn right at Mines Road, go about 3.5 miles and continue straight on Del Valle Road (Mines Road turns left). The park entrance is about four miles ahead. After entering the park, take a quick right toward the boat launch and take the first left into Eagle’s View.

June 27-28, Sat. and Sun., 8:30 a.m., Annual Sierra Cam prosecution—Carson Pass, Hope Valley, Caples Lake, and Minden, Nevada, Leaders: Pat & Phil Gordon, pagpeg@aol.com, 510.538.3550.

Join us as we return to the high Sierra for our annual bird trip. We plan to use camp sites at Caples Lake Campground, El Dorado National Forest, on SR-88. These are first-come-first-served sites, so the earlier the better. Mountain forest species (many of them Neotropical migrants) will be in various stages of nesting. We plan to visit several lakes, streams, and wet meadows. Flowers should be abundant; they will be sought and appreciated.

To reach Caples Lake (formerly called Twin Lakes) follow I-580 onto I-205 (pass Tracy) to I-5 (short stay) onto SR-120 to SR-99 north. Take SR-88 at the Waterloo turn off and head for Jackson. Caples Lake Campground is 60 miles on a good highway from Jackson, beyond Silver Lake and Kirkwood Meadows. The campground is across the road from the Caples Lake Lodge in front of which we will meet both mornings. Lodging is available at Sorenson’s Resort in Hope Valley. There are other forest campgrounds in the area (Woods Lake, Silver Lake). Note that South Lake Tahoe is only 16 miles away, thus a route from SR-50 to Caples Lake is a bit longer.

Rich Cimino Leads Walks For Pleasanton

Rich Cimino will begin a series of First-Saturday, birding beginners walks for families and individuals on June 6th. The walks will meet at the Alviso Adobe on Old Foothill Road and then move to various other Pleasanton parks. The city of Pleasanton offers a variety of habitats and many bird species.

Visit http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation/ for schedules and fees.

Help Plan Shadow Cliffs

East Bay Regional Parks (EBRP) has kicked off its land use study of Shadow Cliffs Regional Park with a public scoping meeting on May 1st. EBRP is taking comments and suggestions from the public about future uses of the park lands. There will be more scoping meetings later this year so now is a good time to get involved. A group of concerned local residents have come together and formed the Friends of Shadow Cliffs (FSC) to gather suggestions from the community. FSC will organize and communicate those suggestions to EBRP. FSC has a web site where you can read the details of their six recommended uses. Ohlone is a member of FSC. Members are urged to review the web site and add your suggestions. Go to: www.friendsofshadowcliffs.com

Wind Wars

The first meeting of the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) Stakeholder Process will occur April 30. Rich Cimino will be representing Ohlone Audubon Society.

This NCCP/HCP is hoped to be a resolution of the 25-year-old problem of the windmills killing birds while they generate non-polluting, renewable, energy. As early as 1995, research led by Tom Cade of the Boise Raptor Observatory, regarding the birds’ vision, their behavior around operating windmills and the locations of dead birds had led researchers to some important recommendations: towers should not offer perches, mills should not be sited at the saddles between hills, and painted blades should reflect ultraviolet light. New turbines were introduced that were larger and produced more electricity. Plans were offered, to replace two or three of the shorter, laddered towers with one of the taller, tubular towers topped with the larger turbines, avoiding the saddles. These conclusions were reflected in the permits issued by counties for “repowering” (replacing existing turbines) and for opening new territory.

Then the tax incentives lapsed and the windmill company leading the studies collapsed and many of the windmill operators chose the status quo. We still look at the original laddered towers and small turbines, and the few test turbines of the large size, some with UV paint, when we travel I-580 east from Livermore.

A number of studies and agreements ensued, punctuated by lawsuits and threats of lawsuits. A very small number of turbines have been sited and sized to agree with the late 90’s recommendations and later modifications. Birds still die in staggering numbers. Companies still object to the conversion.

We have recently seen tables of bird kills published on a website headed “Industrial Wind Action Group” http://www.windaction.org/documents/13936. The numbers are astonishing to some who have been watching birds for a long time. For instance, the 150 Burrowing Owls found dead in two years (10/05-9/07) represents at least the approximate population of BuOw some expected to inhabit the 50,000 acres of the study area. The application of statistical manipulation, to account various factors, for example, scavenging and sample size, lead to the estimate that over 1,300 BuOw died those two years. The 150 BuOw bodies found and the numbers of 14 other raptor species, and 38 other species found near 2500 of the 5400 turbines in the area are shocking enough even if you don’t allow for sample size. The numbers are in: http://preview.tinyurl.com/chkkcq

The NCCP/HCP that Rich is helping produce will result in an agreement that allows the companies to make a profit and that will have enough coercive power to give bird lovers confidence that it will be observed. That is the goal we hope for. —DE

—RC

helpful
New and Renewing OAS Members

Ohlone sends a warm welcome and thank you to the following new and renewing chapter members:

Patricia Bagwell, Rick and Nancy Baker, Debra Bedford, Bruce Brown, William Devore, Jo Anna Dixon, Anne Marie Gonzales, Marie Grubbe, Pat Kite, Mary Krentz & Steve Sleinke, Roberta Schane, Harley Schultz, Daniel Sullivan —PAG

Water Water Water

In recent months there have been a number of articles and meetings on the issue of water availability and distribution in California. One meeting was held in Oakland by the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area. Another was held by The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry in Walnut Creek. At that workshop I learned that California has over-allocated its water supply by more than 8%. The speaker stated that several underground aquifers have been contaminated by runoff containing pesticides and other forms of pollutants. Some, like those in the central valley, have collapsed from pumping over a long period of time. She also noted that ranchers in a large aquifer in Northern California, located mainly in Modoc and Shasta counties, are fighting to prevent the aquifer being tapped which would take water from ranching and cattle raising in that mostly rural area.

Much has been said about water in the Delta, which supplies a great deal of water for drinking and agriculture here in the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and Southern California. Some folks advocate removing dams to restore water flow through the various rivers feeding the delta. Others want water storage increased either by building more dams or increasing capacity of those already in existence. The Delta Smelt and salmon have been big losers in all of this, causing them to be severely threatened species.

Along with these problems there is the problem of weakened levees in danger of collapse in the delta, which would cause great damage to fields and be incredibly expensive to restore. Rising sea level as a result of global warming might put an end to the whole discussion of levees because saline water from the bay would flow into the delta to a depth of a meter or more and inundate much of the land, putting it under water.

So what can be done about our need for water vs. our limited supply? For one thing we all need to conserve water as much as possible. This might mean giving up those lovely green lawns. Another is to get more farmers to convert to less thirsty agriculture. This problem will require us all to work together to come up with some effective solutions. For those of us who love birds and other wildlife it is especially important to address the issues surrounding water shortage in California.

—EC

Fremont-Newark Report

We have been told the Patterson Ranch draft environmental impact report (DEIR) should be released the end of April or beginning of May. Concerns remain regarding the impacts of the development on the wildlife resources of Coyote Hills Regional Park, which is immediately adjacent to the proposed massive subdivision.

The City of Newark has released the Program DEIR for their housing element. The draft housing element includes proposals for housing in the area of the Whistling Wings and Pintail duck clubs and lands adjacent to the DESFB National Wildlife Refuge. The Biological Resources section of the DEIR is a mere 9-1/2 pages in length, and 3-1/3 of those pages are standard boiler plate language regarding agencies that might have some regulatory authority over the proposed actions. Comments on the DEIR are due by 5 p.m. on May 26th. Comments should be sent to: Terrence Grindall, Community Development Director, City of Newark, 37101 Newark Blvd., Newark, CA 94560. The document can be found on the City’s website at: http://preview.tinyurl.com/de5dlh

We were expecting the release of the City of Newark DEIR for the Whistling Wings and Pintail Duck Clubs (Area 3 & 4 Specific Area Plan) at the end of April or the beginning of May. We will report with comments deadlines and where to read the DEIR when and if it is released.

The release of the DEIR regarding the proposed expansion of the Newby Island Landfill has been delayed until June 2009.

The Habitat Means Home Poster Contest is underway. The poster contest’s theme is “Habitat Means Home” and is meant to celebrate the diverse habitats and species found at Coyote Hills Regional Park. The contest is open to elementary school students in the Fremont, Newark, and New Haven school districts. Senator Ellen Corbett continues her support of the poster contest and will present certificates to the contest winners and display their winning posters in her district office. “Thank you, Senator Corbett!”

—CH

Photographs Desired!

Attention all OAS members! We’re looking for donations of photographic prints of Ohlone Audubon events—field trips, work parties in the garden, membership meetings, the Swallow Festival, our annual membership meetings, or any event that shows OAS members in action. The photos are to be used on the OAS display board that we use at Earth Day celebrations, the Swallow Festival, the state Audubon Assembly, etc. If there’s a need, they may even appear in our monthly Kite Call, or in a future photographic history of OAS.

Remember show and tell in school? Bring your prints to the June 2nd membership meeting at Alviso Adobe Community Park in Pleasanton for show and tell. We can swap stories and view each other’s photos while helping to support OAS. If you can’t make it to the annual meeting, don’t despair, you can send digital copies of your photos to our tireless editor Don Emery at: demery6468@comcast.net—EC

OAS Searches Dublin’s Emerald Glen Park in 2006 © DEMery