Clay Anderson, GGAS’s Youth Programs Manager, remembers his wow moment with birds. As a 10-year-old, he was in his backyard in the neighborhood where he grew up, outside of Chicago. The family had a dog that used to get its food for the whole day each morning in a large bowl. The dog would enjoy breakfast and then finish the rest of his food later in the day. In the meantime, the birds would come in and help themselves.

CONTINUED on page 5
Recently, as I was going for a walk in my neighborhood, a small boy asked for my assistance in locating some wild turkeys. His budding enthusiasm and excitement were evident. His father had smiling eyes behind his mask. I pointed the boy and his father in the direction of wild turkeys I had seen on my walk. This small boy’s question about birding was an uplifting moment for me. We all need these moments that show us a way forward. Mr. Christian Cooper—noted birding expert and a Black birder—deserves a way forward, too. At this point, the racist interaction between Mr. Cooper and a white woman reacted with extreme hostility to Mr. Cooper’s polite request to leash her dog; her racist remarks and threats are now woefully famous. While this woman may eventually gain back some sense of security, the same cannot be said for Mr. Cooper or birders of color. As Mr. Cooper’s sister expressed in a May 2020 New York Times op-ed piece, birders of color have many challenges White birders do not face. These challenges stand in the way of birding safely. She said, “Every time we walk out of our door, we worry. My brother worries when [he goes out] to catch a glimpse of a beautiful warbler…So many of us…across America are done with having to wonder if we’ll be put at risk by our mere existence.” We at Golden Gate Audubon Society stand with Mr. Cooper and with all persons of color who risk threats to their safety while peacefully enjoying their park or outdoor experience.

With renewed vigor, we at GGAS highlight our commitment to welcoming all persons, especially persons of color, into our birding family. We adopt the wisdom of our beautiful mixed flocks of varieties of birds and take pride in our own mixed flock here. In true flock behavior, whether we’re Chickadees or Juncos or Towhees, we fly forward together. From our new Strategic Initiative on Climate Change that promotes the need for environmental justice initiatives in our communities, to our award-winning Eco-Education field trips for Title 1 students, our flock is growing. We are proud of GGAS programs for the underserved in the Bay Area. And as we move to Phase 2 of this season’s shelter-in-place order, we also strive to ensure our diverse community is safe for every person who wants to learn about birds.

There are ways you can help to continue our goal of diversifying GGAS. For instance, with your participation in our upcoming summer donation campaign, our goals for inclusive programming can expand. We are growing our diverse community through our online Speaker Series that invites persons of color from our environmental community. We can expand our Eco-Education and outreach programs, and continue free birding trips for the Café 1951 team, a nonprofit organization that promotes the well-being of refugees in the United States. Help us reach our wider community with your gifts and donations.

Mr. Cooper’s wise countenance resonates deeply: “The birds belong to all of us. The birds don’t care what color you are.”

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

BY PAM YOUNG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GGAS’s Online Auction
Our first ever online bird art auction was a success thanks to your support. We raised over $16,000 with proceeds split 50/50 between GGAS and featured artists! Participating in our auction helps artists and also helps us fund important programs like Eco-Education and habitat restoration.

Calling All Blogs!
GGAS’s Communications Manager, Melissa Ramos, wants to hear from you! Do you have a shelter-at-home birding essay you’d like to share? Observed some cool birds lately? Email Melissa at mramos@goldengateaudubon.org to have your piece published on our Golden Gate Birder blog.

Website Revamp
Our website is getting a makeover! We have been hard at work ensuring our website remains both functional and filled with useful, important birding information. Expect a gradual roll out of new features and functionalities over the coming weeks, with the final revamp coming later this year.
Nature is always presenting us with opportunities to learn if we take a moment to fully absorb these gifts. I have the privilege of having a tree outside my window as well as access to local spots to experience birds ranging from songbirds to shorebirds and even the occasional raptor. Not everyone has access to safe outdoor spaces and I don’t take this for granted.

I started a bird journal to take notes on the birds that visit the Brush Cherry (Syzygium paniculatum) tree outside my window and the neighborhood. I also use this journal to record sightings of birds and other creatures when out on trails and walking around my neighborhood. I find this to be a therapeutic tactile experience in this digital world. Do I get bored with observing one tree? Not in the slightest. Don’t be fooled into thinking one tree or spot can’t present new experiences. The relatively small sample size of birds that stop by has fast-tracked my audio identification skills. I know when there’s a flock of Bushtits in a tree without visual confirmation and when the Cedar Waxwings are in the vicinity. I have been known to come to a full stop when I hear bird calls to see if I can determine their location.

The short list of visitors to the tree and my neighborhood include (depending on time of year): Cedar Waxwings, Townsend’s Warblers, Dark-eyed Juncos, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Robins, California Towhees, Scrub Jays, Black Phoebes, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Mourning Doves, Cooper’s Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and more recently Goldfinches and a family of House Sparrows. This doesn’t include the myriad shorebirds and gulls that call Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary home. This includes Elegant Terns, Snowy Egrets, Pelicans, Oyster Catchers and many more. The Least Terns return to Alameda Wildlife Reserve in the spring and Ospreys nest at Alameda Point.

I encourage everyone to keep tabs on one tree or one patch of grass that’s close by or in your front or backyard, not only during these times, but as your interest in birds evolves. Limiting observations to one particular personal hotspot can help to hone your birding skills and prepare you for expanding your knowledge once the splendor of the outdoors is available on an unrestricted basis. Keeping our eyes on the messages we receive from nature is crucial. We need nature to revive us just as nature needs us to honor it.

Have a favorite birding site you’d like to share? Contact mramos@goldengateaudubon.org.
LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE, WITH HOPE

BY MELISSA RAMOS

Despite multiple crises that have gripped our lives in recent weeks, Golden Gate Audubon Society is determined to adapt to these situations by continuing our mission of protecting Bay Area birds and people. The racist treatment of Black birder Christopher Cooper and the murders of unarmed Black Americans have prompted GGAS to recommit to keeping both nature and our communities safe. Our love of birds is also linked with the love for our diverse communities. Recently, GGAS released a statement regarding our stance on civil and environmental justice. Please go to the home page of our website to read it. GGAS remains committed to equality and inclusiveness, and welcomes all people into our community.

GGAS staff has modified many of our in-person programs to online platforms; our hope is that online forums will allow us to reach new, diverse populations and keep members connected. Eco-Education Manager Clay Anderson also plans to bring ecology education online. He says, “No one knows what September is going to look like. As I turn the Eco-Education program toward this challenge, engagement is high on the priority list. We continue in our determination to prompt students to explore nature and the outdoors.”

Clay’s work is supplemented by several free Eco-Education activities on our website. The activities for children are in English and Spanish, and include informative videos of Clay exploring the outdoors. Some kids’ activities revolve around our popular Osprey Cam and the newly hatched Osprey chicks. GGAS has also translated our Speaker Series into an online format, with up to 100 participants joining at once, enabling folks from all over to tune in and learn about birds. Janet Carpinelli, Volunteer Services Manager, has also individually continued conservation efforts where it safely possible to do so, particularly at Pier 94 and other locations in San Francisco.

As Communications Manager, I have been busy revamping the organization’s website. It has been my pleasure to highlight extraordinary blogs from members on their “shelter at home birding” activities. Recently, I also helped to promote GGAS’s highly successful online bird art auction. The auction—organized and driven by dedicated volunteers who wanted to help raise funds after Birdathon was cancelled due to Coronavirus—brought in over $16,000! Donations were split 50/50 between GGAS and artists. These funds will go to critical programs like Eco-Education and habitat restoration projects.

GGAS Board President Linda Carloni says, “I appreciate the innovative work of GGAS staff and volunteers as we’ve responded to stay-at-home mandates. From worksheets and videos to provide nature education, to remote meetings with government officials to keep our advocacy going, to our terrific first online Speaker Series, to our blogs, we’re still engaging people to experience the wonder of birds and to translate that wonder into actions which protect native birds and their habitats.”

Although we do not know what the future will bring, we remain hopeful and committed to adapting in any way necessary to connect our communities and protect Bay Area birds.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bird Evolution Class Goes Online
The first-ever GGAS online adult education class is coming this fall. Bob Lewis and Bruce Mast will offer their acclaimed Evolution of Birds course via Zoom, with 1.5-hour lectures and half an hour of Q&A. Registration opened June 3, 2020. Go to our classes page to learn more.

Speaker Series Moves to Online Format
Due to COVID-19, our Speaker Series is now online! We’ll send out email alerts one week before the events. Our emails have details including Zoom links and passcodes. Our Speaker Series has a first-come, first-serve sign-in basis with a limit of 100 participants.

Free Online Kids Activities
Enjoy fun projects designed to help children learn about birds. Activities are geared towards elementary school-aged children, and incorporate STEM, as well as direct observations of nature and outdoor activities. More activities to come! Check out our education page for the list. Available in English and Spanish.

Summer Donations Campaign
Your financial support helps us protect the birds we love. Because of you, GGAS can continue to translate vital programs into an online format, like our Eco-Education programs and our Speaker Series. Keep your eyes out this summer for more information from GGAS on how you can support birds!
When he first noticed the birds eating the dog’s food, Clay thought he was watching a melee—there were House Sparrows all around the bowl. But as he sat and watched, he noticed that the feeding was actually quite ordered—the birds would take turns, coming to eat in pairs. Watching this tiered feeding, he was hooked.

Nature, he realized, had a lot to teach him: “I learned a lot of things from nature,” he said. “I learned a lot of basic rules about living. From those sparrows, I learned that there is order; there are things that take turns.” And even at that age Clay knew that he wanted to share this knowledge with others.

He got his first pair of binoculars in high school, and that event was transformative. Clay describes this experience as going from “night to day”—he could now see birds in all of their detail. He started college in Wisconsin, wanting to study environmental education, and eventually completed his bachelor’s degree at San Jose State University in 1989, after moving to California at the invitation of his father.

During his last year at San Jose State, Clay got a part-time job with Sharon Kleinhaus, a former nun and high school math teacher who had started the LoveLife Environmental Education Program, which did nature presentations at local parks. This was his first taste of teaching Environmental Education. “I learned so much about environmental education during those experiences,” he said. “I performed tasks ranging from setup/teardown of our natural history displays, to holding a 7-year-old boy’s attention while talking geology, to leading a group when the assisting parent is constantly spreading misinformation and paranoia about wild animals and the natural environment.”

Clay’s incredible career took off after that experience. He has held positions with the California State Parks at Big Basin Redwoods State Park near Santa Cruz, served as a nature aid at Año Nuevo State Park, and worked for the Lindsay Wildlife Museum (among many other incredible jobs). For a while, he even ran his own tropical fish business. But throughout these experiences, he also knew he wanted a chance to teach again. He secured positions at both Stepping Out Stepping In (SOSI), an environmental education nonprofit funded by the Port of Oakland, and Sustainable Agricultural Education (SAGE), an organization funded by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Clay also led walks for Outdoor Afro, a national nonprofit that “celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature.” In 2016, he caught the eye of Anthony DeCicco, who was then the Youth Programs Manager for the GGAS Eco-Education program. When DeCicco left in 2017, Clay was his ideal replacement.

Clay’s current role as Youth Programs Manager is his “dream job.” He envisions the Eco-Education program as a means of extending the reach of GGAS beyond its traditional membership and into communities of color and those who wouldn’t normally gravitate to birds, birding, and conservation issues. “I want to extend the reach of the Eco-Education program beyond the elementary-school students we’re already serving and into middle schools,” he said. “It took a long time to create the divisions in our society, so it will take time to fix them.”

Clay’s work with students also extends to classes that he teaches at the Rotary Nature Center at Lake Merritt. He was part of a team that worked with the City of Oakland to reopen this space, believing it could be a strategic teaching center for GGAS classes, serving people who would be new to birding and to GGAS. Since the opening a year ago, he’s already taught a range of classes there, including “Bird as Icon,” “Winter Birds at Lake Merritt,” and a year-long course on journaling about birds.

What advice does Clay have for people who want to check out birding for the first time? “Go to your local park—check out the pigeons and the gulls. Get yourself a bird feeder for your backyard. But you can also just sit quietly on a bench. It’s amazing! Turn everything else off and turn on to nature. Pick one thing and pull that string—eventually you’ll see that it’s connected to everything else around you.”
SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY WATERBIRD RESEARCH

DR. MAX TARJAN

Learn about four decades of waterbird research and conservation in the San Francisco Bay Area! The Bay Area offers important habitat for nesting and migratory birds at the center of the Pacific Flyway. This region also supports a large human population, and has lost an estimated 90% of historic tidal marsh habitat to urban development, industry, and agriculture. For four decades, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory has worked with Bay Area citizens to study and protect the area’s remaining waterbirds and their habitats. These projects rely on rigorous data collection, citizen science, and local partnerships to understand bird habitat use and inform conservation actions.

Dr. Max Tarjan is the Waterbird Program Director at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Dr. Tarjan has over a decade of experience tracking the spatial movements and populations of birds and mammals in central California.

hhuman populations, climate change and birds

HANNAH EVANS

Bird health and human health are linked. In this talk, learn about population growth, the rise in carbon emissions and the impacts of U.S. foreign assistance policies on global health. Hannah Evans will outline how all three of these factors are affecting bird populations throughout California and in other regions.

Hannah promotes positive social and environmental change in her work by integrating population studies into mainstream discussion. Through an examination of some of the root causes of population growth, her mission is to highlight the interconnections between poverty, marginalization, women’s rights, and environmental pressures made worse by climate change.

wildlife and wildfire: animal adaptations for a dynamic ecosystem

LYNN SCHOFIELD

Wildfires are an important part of ecosystems. Many species adapted to these systems. Recently, forest fires have been increasing in frequency and species are struggling to survive. Lynn examines how animals can thrive despite fires and what we can do to help protect the balance of these special ecosystems.

Lynn Schofield is a biologist for the Institute for Bird Populations. Her research covers topics including bird migration and forest fire ecology. Lynn works to help make nature accessible to all. She is a core member of the Cal Falcons social media project and the Feminist Bird Club, and a volunteer for the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory.

GGAS’s monthly Speaker Series is now online!
To sign up for email alerts with more info, email our Communications Manager, Melissa, at mramos@goldengateaudubon.org
Thank you for joining our donor community.

Donations from March 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020. With gratitude to everyone, business, and organization who made a recent donation. We are especially appreciative of all donations during the Coronavirus pandemic. Despite the impact to our in-person events, your donations and support have kept us going. Large or small, the gifts you send support our conservation, education, and member programs, and directly benefit the birds you love.

Donations

**GOLDEN EAGLE** ($1000 and above)
Chris and Gary Bard, Arden Bucklin-Spore, Jane Freeman, Patricia Greene, Alan Tobey

**PEREGRINE FALCON** ($500 to $999)
Carol Baird, Jacqueline Craig, Dan Harris, Anne Rowe

**LEAST TERN** ($250 to $499)
Elizabeth Bartz, Eleanor Briccetti, Jim Cunradi, Elaine Geffen, David Quady, Jaz Zaitlin

**RIDGWAY’S RAIL** ($100 to $249)
Beatrix Bunny Fund, Catherine Abbe, Cyndi Bakir, Yates Barreda, Barbara Boyle, Marion Brackett, Catherine Cocard, Bill Collins, Penelope Deleray, Cornelina Foster, Margaret Goodale, Nancy Issel-Mayes, Martha Joseph, Denise Loomis, Gail MacDonald, Jean Matsuno, Pamela Brigg McEwan, Catherine Pannell, George Peyton, Hilary Powers, Madhav Puri, Siobhan Ruck, Jennifer Steele, Jennifer Tirmauer, Liz Varnhagen

**GIFTS** (To $99)

**2020 Premium Members**

**LEAST TERN MEMBERSHIPS**
David Loeb, Valerie and John Matzger, Liz Varnhagen

**RIDGWAY’S RAIL MEMBERSHIPS**
Jane Anfinson and David Wick, Kathleen Archambauve, Bruce Bell, China Brotsky, Mary Dowdell, Frank Graeth, Susan Hamby, Liz Hoadley, Terry Mead, William Rosenthal, Maria Sabatini, Steven Weinberg, Sam Ann Williams, Robert Youngs

**CALIFORNIA QUAIL MEMBERSHIPS**

**BROWN PELICAN MEMBERSHIPS**
Clayton Anderson, Janice Brezislav, Leslie Doughty, Crystelle Egans, Gregory Finnegan, Sally Galway, Saralinda Jackson, Logan Kahle, Barbara Keck, Nano Visser Klein, June Kodani, Alan Krakauer, Linda Lyons, Elizabeth Mandala, Janine Martin, Rani Marx, PhD, MPH, Amy Meyer, Susan Miller, Elaine Miller Bond, Matthew Rivette, Emily Roth, Marilyn Siegel, Eleni Sotos, Mary Takemoto, Terry Taplin, Wendy Webster, Elizabeth Winstead

**FLEEDGLING MEMBERSHIPS**
Jane Armstrong, Robert Burlingame, Sue Carlisle, Penelope Collins, William Edelen, Sidney Hollister, Barbara O’Hearn, David Sharp, Nancy Styble

**WILDLIFE GUARDIANS**
Cyndi Bakir, Peter Bramstow, Peter Caldwell, Ann Cromey, Frances Dupont, Sue Gallagher, Gerald Green, Eliza Greene, Linda Gregory, Mary Ellen Hannibal, Rowena Heny, Lynda Hurley, Tabin Kendrick, Maureen Lahiff, Elizabeth Littell, Doris Lopez, Marsha Maslan, Kent McDonald, Cynthia Nation, Glene Neville, Martin Nicolaus, Christine Okon, Eric Schroeder & Susan Palo, J. Stacey Sullivan, Sam Talario, Jane Taylor, Evelyn Wilson, Lori Wilson, Alana Yoel, David Zinniker

**EMPLOYEE GIFT MATCHES**
AAA (Marianne Campbell)
Apple (Guillaume Brasseur)
Chevron (Dawn Lemoine)
Chevron (Robert Lewis)
Clorox (Rachel Watson-Clark)
PG & E (Catherine Cocard)

**GRANTS**
East Bay Community Foundation (Agenter Judd Fund)

**GIFTS IN HONOR OF**
Barbara Chan, in honor of Kendra Chan, James Cunradi, in honor of Ida Cunradi, Catherine Moore, in honor of the Whirley Crane nest Marie Sarria, in honor of Whirley, Gamma & Peace Up David Weisz, in honor of Zach Weisz

**GIFTS IN MEMORY OF**
Anonymous, in memory of Hazel Mersfield, John Canham, in memory of Brian Canham

Please know that we work hard to ensure the accuracy of this list. If your name has been omitted or misspelled, let us know at 510.843.2222.
BACKYARD BIRDER

3 Bay Area Hotspot: Alameda
An abundance of Alameda birds invites time for reflection and awe.

4 Looking Toward the Future, With Hope
Updates on how GGAS has adapted during unprecedented national crises.

6 Speaker Series
Learn about our upcoming online Speaker Series features.

FEEDER BIRDING
IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

BY BOB LEWIS

Our yard is small, but we have a hummingbird feeder and a sunflower seed feeder. Our feeder hangs from a pole that extends out from our second story deck at about 45 degrees. Band-tailed Pigeons discovered it some years ago, and about 15 of them were battling over access when the pole broke and everything crashed to the ground.

We put a wire grid around the feeder with openings large enough to let the smaller birds enter while turning away the Pigeons, as well as the squirrels. Our visitors now include Pygmy and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Oak Titmice, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, House and Purple Finches, American and Lesser Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, and a Bewick’s Wren. California Scrub Jays also occasionally visit, and below the feeder, a variety of Sparrows, Towhees and Mourning Doves clean up the dropped seed. The sugar feeder draws Anna’s, Allen’s and Rufous Hummingbirds.

About seven years ago, we were delighted to see a male Black-headed Grosbeak at the feeder. The following year, the male brought a female friend, and in years after, we have hosted the whole family: Dad, Mom and as many as three offspring. These large-billed members of the Cardinal family are reasonably common in the Western United States, and breed in our area. They winter in Mexico and their song, which sounds like a panicked American Robin, always says “Spring” to me. They are not here long, arriving in May, nesting in June, and heading south in August.

The male, with his black head, orange breast and two white wing-bars, is unmistakable. The female is less showy, with a white supercilium on her brown face, and streaking on her pale orange breast and belly. The young look like their mother. She closely resembles the eastern Rose-breasted Grosbeak, which very rarely appears in our area during migration. Black-headed Grosbeaks like open woodland habitat, and the Berkeley hills suit them.

Another California relative, the Blue Grosbeak, prefers drier stream-sides and brushy roadsides more to the east. Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, although having the same last name, are not related to our Black-headed Grosbeak. They are members of the Finch family and are found in the Sierra.