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THE WANDERING TATTLER

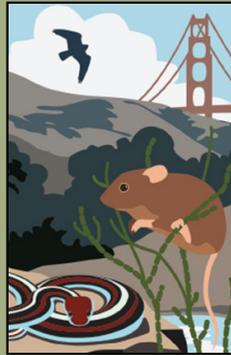
THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CHAPTER
OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

**This newsletter is desktop-friendly, but may have formatting issues on your mobile device. Please use a computer because, we don't want you stepping on a salamander while reading this newsletter.

Vol 10 | No 3 | Spring 2020

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..and more.



Happy Spring to you all. February was as dry as a Sunday bar in Utah. Salamander eggs were left high and dry and the frogs couldn't make up their minds whether the brown grass was coming or going. March has blessed us with some later rains, hopefully not too late to encourage our slimy little friends. The birds are singing and the flowers are pushing up through the duff.

Our Board is diligently working to bring you news, keep you apprised of changes to the scheduled events and generally offering support during this most unprecedented time. Check out the Tattler for a wealth of stories and info and rep some merch too.

BIG NEWS FROM OUR BOARD

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We have several new Board Members starting in 2020 and a few of our current members are in a new position for 2020

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Natalie Paloma-Greer has stepped down from the President position and is now resting in the past-president position. Remaining very active in chapter proceedings, she hands the reigns to Natalie Reeder, our current president. (We didn't want the members to get too much of a transitional shock so we kept the first names the same). Nat Reeder has already launched into 2020 with a friendly and aggressive member-supportive agenda, one that offers lots of opportunities to get social, get educated and get involved. One of her emphases is holding events in each quadrant of the SF Chapter's geographical regions. Knowing that it is challenging for some folks to travel to events, we are going to bring the event to you. Look east, north, west and south this year for a chance to circumnavigate the chapter and socialize with some new members.

Trending on this president thread, we also have Rachel Roberts preparing herself as the incoming president, officially now our chapter President-elect. Wide eyed and observant, she is gleaning from the current leadership and readying herself for her chance to take the wheel next.

Kathleen Grady has accepted the position as Chapter Representative to the Western Section and will be our very own "fly-on-the-wall" at meetings with the Western Section to bring important information to and from the Section.

Etching this and more in stone is our newly appointed Historian Mary Yan. Mary is enthusiastic about bringing the past to the present and obtaining information and interviews to add to our archives. This chapter, and some of its members, has been around for a long time (before many of our current members were even born). Mary hopes to capture that history and bring it to the forefront to both educate and honor our membership. If she calls, please answer the phone!!

Hailey Pexton is our new Diversity Chair. She'll be working with the Chapter and the Western Section to initiate an inclusive process to bring together members with diverse life styles, backgrounds, races and beliefs to culture a warm welcome to current and new members alike. Rather diverse herself, she brings friendly love of people, music, science and, in her words, a knack for "Bad Dad Jokes".

And of course, scribbling all of this down in some fashion in order to bring it to you all with some level of organization and clarity, is our new Secretary, Carli Baker. Her fast fingers will be wiggling all year as she records and reports the jib and jab of the Chapter meetings. Welcome to all new and old and thanks for your work and commitment.

Corona Virus and its effects on the Chapter

I have no intention to duplicate or repeat what everyone not living under a rock has been witness to over the last few months. Be safe, be well and take care of eachother.

With that said, the virus and all of the restrictions that it has imposed on society has definitely impacted the Chapter especially in affecting the list of planned events. Until further notice, all scheduled social activities (face-to-face meetings, field trips and social affairs) have been postponed.

The chapter received an email from National that recommended caution and safety for all members, advising us to cancel affairs that may put members at risk.

I know the level of energy and planning our Board has put into developing and coordinating these events but unfortunately, we are at the mercy of regulations and a tiny little virus that is reaping chaos on society. We will roll with this like everyone else and get back on schedule as soon as we can to bring you opportunities for future engagements. Hang in there, be safe and be well.

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Dendrobates auratus photo by Ivan Parr

POINT AND COUNTERPOINT ABOUT CHYTRID IMPACTS

Our colleague David Bradford, coordinator of the CA/NV Declining Amphibian Population Task Force (DAPTF) recently sent out an article of interest regarding the "lack" of data in direct support of Chytrid impacts on worldwide amphibian populations. While there is no disagreement that Bd and Bsal have an effect on amphibians and has caused significant loss in species' populations, not all of the species have reliable data from which to make such clear determinations. Read below the article, point and counterpoint on the subject. As is sometimes the case, we realize a problem and scurry to find adequate information from which to make judgements on its impacts. The speed at which impacts from Chytrid has been realized sent the global scientific community into a rapid search for answers.

National Geographic article:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2020/03/chytrid-fungus-amphibian-decline-debate/>

Here is the link to the "Comment"

<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/367/6484/eaay1838>

Cite as: M. R. Lambert et al., Science 10.1126/science.aay1838 (2020). TECHNICAL COMMENTS

Publication date: 20 March 2020 www.sciencemag.org

Link to "Response to Comment": <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/367/6484/eaay2905/tab-pdf>

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OK NOW

FOR A BIT OF FUN

One of my favorite things to do is to identify birds by a molted feather I find in the field. Admittedly, I am not infallible (big surprise) and sometimes don't even try based on the specimen (little brown jobbies). Sometimes the information is important to the project on which I am working, as in a burrowing owl feather found near a ground squirrel burrow or a Cooper's hawk feather in a grove of oaks with several stick nests. Feathers can help during pre-construction surveys when the birds are aloof.

On the other hand, while out enjoying a hike, I might find an unusual feather that gives me a chance to hone my skills. I remember finding a large dark primary with a bit of white on a hike in Sonoma County several years back. I had never seen this feather before, had never held this bird in my hands and frankly, haven't even paid much attention to the details of this bird. Ironically, I picked up the feather and knew at once the species: pileated woodpecker.

How does one determine the likely species from which this plume had dropped? I first look at the feather and try to determine from which part of the bird's body did this come? Flight feather? Body feather? Tail feather? After that initial assessment one can determine relative size of the bird. Once you're that far, you can pick up other clues: in which habitat did you find it, what is the color, does it have a distinctive pattern, is it very curved or straight, is it fat or narrow? Like Columbo (for those of you who don't know, the actor Peter Falk starred in a classic detective series), I add these clues together until I feel confident I am on track. Sometimes I use a field guide to check and I have even taken feathers and bones to the Cal Academy to compare to museum specimens. I did this often with raptor bones found under wind turbines in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area on past mortality surveys.

I find it personally rewarding to be able to identify birds from a feather and it has become a hobby of mine while afield. There are also valuable online and published sources to help one in the identification of feathers (and bones). These include:

1. Bird Feathers: A guide to North American Species. Scott, S.D and C. McFarland. 2010. Stackpole Books.Mechanicsburg, PA.
2. Guide to Raptor Remains: a photographic guide for identifying the remains of selected species of California raptors.2004. EDM International, Inc. Fort Collins, CO.
3. David Sibley's Tips for Identifying Found Feathers. 2017. BirdWatching. <https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/birds/david-sibleys-id-toolkit/david-sibleys-tips-identifying-found-feathers/#>
4. The Feather Atlas: Flight Feathers of North American Birds. USFWS Forensics Lab. 2020. <https://www.fws.gov/lab/featheratlas/>

OK Your turn. Use your skills and perhaps some of the resources listed above, to identify these feathers below. Answers are posted at the end of the Newsletter. Good luck and have fun.

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is innocent as it appears, collecting feathers without a permit is a violation of state and federal law.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



""NEWSFLASH"" For Immediate Action

State Fish and Game Commission is considering the listing of the Mountain Lion as a threatened species under the state ESA. The Center for Biological Diversity has petitioned the State Commission to review the Southern and Central Coast populations of the mountain lion for listing. The Item was received by the Commission and is under review. CDFW is recommending the Fish and Game Commission accept the petition for further consideration at the April 16th meeting. A favorable vote would then trigger a year-long review of whether Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions should be formally protected under the Act.

The link to the Commission item is included below:

https://mcusercontent.com/024d1ede5ac345bac7c322c99/files/05d4cd61-4420-4f57-9613-a6ac61989343/Item_7_Mountain_Lion.pdf

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The Western section of the Wildlife Society's Annual Conference held in Redding this year was a great success and an opportunity to cross paths with friends and colleagues. The Chapter was well represented and had a very nice turnout for our Chapter meeting on Thursday night. There was even rumors and tall tales of karaoke and acoustic music played til the wee hours.

Rep the SF Bay Chapter!



[Click here](#) to buy high performance t-shirts and Monarch (i.e. "one of a kind") pins. Visit our online store [here!](#) These items are also available at our workshops and field trips.

Answers to the Feather Quiz

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1. Most tail feathers and wing feathers show an asymmetric balance (i.e. one side has longer barbs than the other). The center tail feather is generally symmetrical, the leading primaries and external tail feathers are very thin on one side.
2. Two of these four feathers are tail feathers, one is a primary and one is a body feather from the bird's flank.
3. Pay attention to details on the primary feather to correctly identify this *Buteo*. (*size, color, light areas*).

From Left to Right:

Tail feather, Red-shafted flicker (note the central "point" that helps support the bird against the tree)

Tail feather, ruffed grouse, gray phase.

Flank feather, wood duck

Primary, red-shouldered hawk

OFFICER DIRECTORY

Elected Board Members:

President.....Natalie Reeder
 President-Elect.....Rachel Roberts
 Past-President.....Natalie Paloma Greer
 Chapter Rep.....Kathleen Grady

Appointed Board Members:

Secretary.....Carli Baker
 Treasurer.....Ricka Stoelting
 Newsletter Editor.....Joe DiDonato
 Media Director.....Meghan Bishop
 Conservation Affairs.....Patricia Valcarcel
 Historian.....Mary Yan

Committee Chairs:

Professional Development.....Molly Peterson
 Student Affairs.....Halia Eastburn
 Public Outreach.....Laura Duffy

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Are you a photographer or have something you want to share? Submit your photographs and stories to the editor by July 15 for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Editor: Joe DiDonato
 jedidonato@gmail.com

BLAST FROM THE PAST

If you have any interesting wildlife tales from your adventures in the field, or photos that you would like to share, please write to us at

<https://www.sfbaywildlife.org/contact>

Photo Credits

Feathers, landscape, mt. lion, SF Chapter members: Joe DiDonato
 Tropical frog *Dendrobates auratus*: Ivan parr

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Merchandise: Riska Stooling

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