MESSAGE FROM THE STATE CHAIRMAN
Mark Low

Hello DU Members and DU Volunteers,

Thank you all for being on the California DU Team! 2012 was a great year in California - we finished with more than $500,000 from events (lots of habitat) and increased numbers and efficiencies. This is the result of members attending banquets and special events with their pocketbooks in hand, board members staying focused on such things as communications, recruiting and training, and volunteers attending meetings, rolling up their sleeves to participate in recruitment events, putting on very successful banquets and just caring for and believing in the mission of Ducks Unlimited. California DU has set a standard that is very high and we are now seeing those standards produce wetland habitat.

Again, thank you!

Where do we go from here? Your state board members will be meeting on several occasions in the coming months to review and finalize a strategic plan moving forward.

While DU's mission has never changed, organizational strategies constantly evolve. California’s business strategies must evolve as well. Just as a marksman adjusts his sights, Ducks Unlimited adjusts its work to meet new challenges, address emerging threats and account for ever-changing conditions. California is doing the same as we focus on grassroots fundraising. Such recalibrations are imperative to ensuring that DU’s programs and California’s approach to fundraising are efficient, effective and directly aligned with DU’s conservation mission.

Our California strategic plan will be presented at our April 19-21 state convention. Everyone is invited to attend to help celebrate California DU’s many successes and to recognize a large number of volunteers who took the lead to help move California into the #1 position in the nation. Please join me! You will find more detail about the convention in this newsletter.

Please feel free to contact me any time at (530) 249-3286 or lowdownm@msn.com. I welcome your input and feedback.

I hope you had a great waterfowl season in 2012/2013.

Remember to please take a kid hunting,

Mark Low
BLACKHAWK DIAMOND EVENT – PLEASE JOIN US

Please join hosts Paul Bonderson Jr., John Thompson, Tom Seeno and Mark Paine; other dignitaries; partners; and Ducks Unlimited members and volunteers for the 2nd Annual CA DU Diamond Event on Thursday, February 28, at the Blackhawk Auto Museum in Danville. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Highlights of the evening include a cocktail hour followed by a sumptuous dinner, a silent auction and a live auction featuring exotic hunting trips, vintage and classic guns, original artwork, Ducks Unlimited memorabilia and more.

Single: $200
Bronze: $350 (Includes Bronze Sponsor Membership)
Table: $2,500 – Table for 10
       $5,000 – Bronze Table*
       $10,000 – Silver Table*
       $100,000 – Life Table*

*Tables seat 10 and include individual stated memberships.

RSVP
Please reply by February 14

John Faires
johnnduducks@yahoo.com
(510) 331-8971

Frank Leonardi
fleonardi@ducks.org
(916) 984-3073
INTERNATIONAL SPORTSMEN’S SHOW

The International Sportsmen’s Show was held January 11-13 in Sacramento. More than 600 leading resorts and lodges, outdoor-product manufacturers, boat dealers, regional and specialty retailers, hunting and fishing guides and outfitters, national and local conservation organizations, state and federal government agencies and nonprofit groups were present, including California Ducks Unlimited.

The DU booth was very busy as many attendees stopped by to talk and pick up literature. California DU representatives recruited additional volunteers for chapters, renewed more than 50 memberships and had good conversations with attendees.

Pictured on the left are some of the volunteers who worked the show: (left to right) Eric Rudgers, Diane Rudgers, Rich Dengler and Regional Director Frank Leonardi.

For 36 years, the International Sportsmen’s Exposition (ISE) has presented America’s premier adventure-travel, hunting, fishing, shooting-sports, boat and camping products and services to outdoor enthusiasts. ISE events are held from January to March throughout the largest western U.S. markets.

ISE’s industry-leading interactive features allow any attendee to view, learn about and actually experience a wide variety of outdoor products and activities, including:

- Breathtaking world-record displays on elk (RMEF) and deer (Eastmans), stunning wildlife paintings, sculpture and lifestyle furnishings
- Fun and informative sporting-dog demos and DockDogs national competitions
- A 7,000 square-foot. 3D pop-up archery range, and a 40 foot-long aquarium demonstration tank filled with living fish found in local waters
- Multiple locations to try a game call or cast with a fishing rod
- By partnering with state fish and wildlife departments, ISE Youth Fairs from 5,000-20,000 square feet are designed to introduce kids to the outdoors. Staffed with dozens of experienced guides and experts, the fair draws thousands of youth and their families, helping create the next generation of enthusiastic and informed outdoor participants.
- Theaters offering multimedia presentations on destinations local or exotic, techniques simple or sophisticated and garage-built solutions to tomorrow’s gear
- Expert-led demonstrations and seminars involving youth, newcomers, pros, media personalities and celebrities
WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECTS

California was once home to an estimated 4-5 million acres of wetlands, but today more than 95 percent of our historic marshes and more than 90 percent of our riparian corridors have been destroyed or radically modified. The state is considered by Ducks Unlimited to be one of the five highest-priority habitats in North America. Case in point: the combined Central Valley and San Francisco Bay-Delta areas provide critical resting and refueling habitat for millions of migratory ducks and geese every year, yet are among the most degraded and overdeveloped areas in the Pacific Flyway. Other highly endangered regions important to Pacific Flyway waterfowl are northeast California’s Great Basin and the Sonoran Desert’s Salton Sea and Lower Colorado River Region.

After the successful 2011 levee breach of the salt ponds at the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve in San Francisco Bay, the Cullinan Ranch Restoration Project in San Pablo Bay is the next large tidal restoration project slated for completion. More than 1,549 acres will be influenced to provide waterfowl habitat within Cullinan Ranch, as well as Napa River and San Pablo Bay.

In central California, DU is working on critical waterfowl habitat in the Tulare Basin, an area that has experienced the state’s greatest wetland loss. A massive, multi-phase project on the 5,200-acre Ace High Adventures Ranch includes restoring 1,266 acres of wetlands and 20 acres of riparian habitat and enhancing another 300 acres of wetlands and 358 acres of associated upland habitat. It’s the largest property enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program in California.

As California’s population continues to grow and water-use issues escalate, Ducks Unlimited remains committed to actively pursuing every opportunity to protect, restore and rehabilitate the state’s dwindling wetland habitat.

Bair Island
By Renee Spenst, DU Biologist

Comprised of Inner, Middle and Outer islands, Bair Island is the largest remaining undeveloped island in South San Francisco Bay (see map on page 6). Historically, Bair Island was part of a large expanse of tidal wetlands associated with Belmont Slough. In 1946, the area was converted to salt-production ponds with associated levee and channel construction, which eliminated important tidal marsh habitat. Salt production continued until 1965. In 1989, the land was purchased by a developer seeking to build 20,000 homes, a shopping center and office space. Development of the island was blocked by a Redwood City voter referendum and the bulk of the island complex was eventually brought under public ownership for conservation and restoration. Small parcels of land on Middle Bair Island along Redwood Creek remain in private ownership. However, the majority of Bair Island is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and is managed by the USFWS as a unit of Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

Acquisition of the parcels comprising the Bair Island complex has been a major priority since the boundaries of Don Edwards NWR were expanded in 1990.

Restoration of Bair Island is among the refuge’s highest priorities and has been identified by the FWS as a priority action as part of the 2012 Draft Tidal Marsh Recovery Plan. The goal of this project is to restore a more natural tidal hydrologic regime and salt-marsh habitat on Inner and Middle Bair islands and to provide public access to the Bair Island complex. This is the second component of a larger restoration project aimed at restoring the entire complex.
Restoration of tidal flow on Outer Bair Island was completed in January 2009. Restoration of Middle Bair Island will occur on 541 acres of former salt ponds, and will enhance the habitat value of 307 acres that have breached naturally because of failing levee infrastructure. Specific project actions include the protection of Redwood Creek and infrastructure along its banks, internal earthwork, excavation of historic channels, levee breach construction and implementation of the Bair Island complex plan for wildlife-oriented recreation and public access. Protection of Redwood Creek includes the installation of two flow-control structures – one in Smith Slough and one in Corkscrew Slough – to limit project-related sediment deposition into Redwood Creek, a channel maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The contractor started construction on Middle Bair Island in 2011 and completed all of the internal connector channels and ditch blocks by December of that year. The contractor remobilized in mid-July 2012 to install flow-control structures in Corkscrew and Smith sloughs and excavate four levee breaches to Middle Bair Island and one levee breach to Outer Bair Island. A second contractor mobilized in November 2012 to complete in-water work associated with the pedestrian bridge.

Some unforeseen construction challenges have led to delays in completion of the Corkscrew Slough structure. USFWS, Ducks Unlimited, the contractor and the design team have been working closely together to move the project forward. Breaching in Smith, Steinberger and Corkscrew sloughs is anticipated to be completed by January 2013.

Cullinan Ranch Update
By Renee Spenst, DU Biologist

The contractor has completed construction of the Cullinan Ranch setback levee, with the exception of where it ties into Highway 37, and has completed improvements to the levee separating Cullinan Ranch from Pond 1 on the western side of the property. The contractor is now working on public-access amenities including a kayak launch facility and a fishing pier. DU is continuing to work with Caltrans to find a design for the acceleration and deceleration lanes to access Pond 1 that will be amenable to all parties.

If you haven’t seen it yet, be sure to check out the great new website designed by our own Russ Lowgren at www.restorecullinan.info.

Tulare Basin Wetlands Restoration II NAWCA Project: Kern NWR Unit 6 Wetland Restoration
By Chris Hildebrandt, DU Biologist

The Kern National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) consists of publicly owned wetlands that are managed to provide wintering habitat for migrating birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl in the southern San Joaquin Valley. The refuge also provides habitat for upland species such as the endangered Buena Vista Lake shrew, San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

This project will restore 640 acres of palustrine emergent wetlands and 3.4 acres of riparian habitat, as well as restore 3 acres of associated upland habitat on Kern NWR and is part of the second phase of a large-scale NAWCA grant that will restore and enhance wetlands in the Tulare Basin. Wetland restoration will include excavation of accumulated sediment in wetland basins to improve topography and water conveyance efficiency. The restored wetlands will benefit a host of waterfowl species, shorebirds, colonial
water birds and neotropical migrants, as well as resident wildlife such as ring-necked pheasants and California quail. Palustrine emergent wetland functions will be restored to areas lacking sufficient water delivery infrastructure.

Wetland restoration activities will provide increased wetland connectivity and function to areas that currently lack topography. These infrastructure improvements will greatly improve wetland flooding and management efficiencies for the refuge, and enable them to provide higher-quality habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species. This project will greatly increase water deliveries and wetland functions, and inherently increase management capabilities while decreasing maintenance time and cost.

Excavated material will be used to rebuild dilapidated levees to enable wetland impoundment and create loafing islands to diversify seasonal wetland habitats. Highly efficient and durable concrete water control structures with HDPE pipe will be installed to provide water depth-control and efficient conveyance between moist-soil units. Improved wetland embankments will be planted with native creeping wild rye grass by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff to restore upland nesting cover and strengthen embankments. In addition, riparian restoration will consist of willow and cottonwood trees planted along slough and swale embankments to provide additional thermal and nesting cover for wildlife.

**CA-460-7 Uslan Project**  
**By Aaron Wil, DU Biologist**

This project is part of the Delta Working Landscape (DWL) project series. The DWL program was created in partnership with the Delta Protection Commission and Hart Restoration. The program was funded by an Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grant.

The project is located near the Clarksburg area, southeast of Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. Conservation work included the expansion of an existing pond for brood habitat and the development of new managed seasonal wetland and development of adjacent upland habitat. The project provided a total of 8 acres of new wetland habitat. Drill seeding and emergent planting on the project site have been scheduled for this winter.
CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

Ripon Crab Feed and Fundraiser – January 5
By Rich Dengler, CA State Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

The Ripon Chapter held its annual crab feed and fundraiser on January 5 with more than 400 in attendance. Thanks to the dedicated volunteer work of committee members Tony Pinheiro, Ed Vermeulen, Dave Escobar, Mark Largent, Greg Wilson and Dave Van Vliet, this event was an outstanding success for DU and the Ripon community.

One has to ask if guests come for the crab or the fundraiser - I say both!

The Ripon crab feed has become an annual tradition for this small community, which is largely agriculture based and known especially for its high almond production. It has a small-town atmosphere that is restful and friendly, but close enough to cities like Sacramento and San Francisco to enjoy on a day trip. I made the trip to attend this event and am thankful I did.

According to Area Chairman Tony Pinheiro, “DU members and the Ripon community have come to expect and look forward to this fun crab feed, and it becomes more successful each year.”

Personally, I believe the success of this event is the result of Tony Pinheiro looking back and planning ahead to ensure DU reaps the benefits. This was the chapter’s third annual crab feed and they have doubled their attendance just since last year!

When I arrived, there were hundreds of people already seated family style. The majority looked like they had been to a crab feed or two. Some wore bibs, brought their own utensils, sauces, lemon, wine, etc. I think I could have passed for having been to one before, as I brought a few crab utensils myself!

Before the main course arrived, we were served Caesar salad, garlic bread and pasta. Trays of Dungeness crab soon came rolling out of the kitchen. Each person close to me started grabbing about four or five crab legs and centers before they passed the tray. I started getting worried the tray would be empty before it me, but there was no reason to as it was a deep tray and there was plenty of crab. The trays were also refilled several times by the volunteers, so you could eat all you wanted. The crab was fresh and meaty - I definitely got tired of cracking them open before I got tired of eating them! It was entertaining to watch guests use their hands and get messy.
NB Safaris Representative April Dias was present and proudly displayed the South African two-man hunting trip that was part of the live auction.

April is an avid hunter and has been a volunteer for the Friends of NRA for many years. She lives in Folsom and travels throughout the state and into Nevada to represent NB Safaris at various fundraising dinners (Friends of NRA, Ducks Unlimited and California Waterfowl Association).

April provides a display table, answers any questions guests may have, and of course, encourages them to purchase the hunt through an event’s live auction. She has many stories to tell about her adventures in South Africa and she loves to share them!

Everyone around me seemed to be having a grand time. In addition to the meal, the auction and raffle were a big hit. DU supporters were anxious to bid on their favorite items and excited when they won something in the raffle. Overall, it was a great event and I definitely plan to attend next year!

During the evening’s festivities, Tony was awarded a certificate of recognition from the California State Legislature. It was a thank-you for 25 years of invaluable service in fundraising for Ducks Unlimited. The recognition was through the efforts of Senator Tom Berryhill and Assemblyman Bill Berryhill, who are passionate outdoorsmen and conservationists. The brothers are good friends of Tony, support their local DU fundraisers and are dedicated to the mission of DU. Congratulations Tony!

Tony Pinheiro (left) and Frank Leonardi
TONY PINHEIRO CELEBRATES 25 YEARS WITH DU

Tony Pinheiro has been an active DU volunteer for the past 25 years. His dedication and commitment began in Oakdale, when he was asked to co-chair the chapter's annual fundraising banquet. He soon took over the chapter chairmanship and then started the Ripon chapter. In 2003, Tony accepted the district chairman position to develop and promote DU activities within San Joaquin County and continues to be an active state board member and the Ripon dinner chairman, putting on two events a year.

Tony also held the position of state recruitment chairman for four years. In this position, he was responsible for developing and promoting the state’s membership programs and volunteer recruitment activities.

When asked about his passion for DU, Tony said, “Participation in waterfowl hunting fuels the passion of many DU supporters to give something back to the resources that make their outdoor experiences so enjoyable. My passion goes beyond that. I am a single father to 12-year-old Madison and believe that preserving our sporting traditions are the key to ensuring healthy habitats for wildlife in the future so she and others like her can have what we have today. Things like hunting traditions, ethics and the important role of hunters in conservation are key messages that I share with my daughter.”

Tony has always enjoyed hunting anything that has feathers, but his true passion is upland game, and he tries to get away to enjoy the outdoors as often as he can. Between his full-time job working for UPS, where he has been for 35 years; volunteering for DU; and spending time with his daughter, Tony doesn't hunt as often as he would like. In spite of these time constraints, he always finds time for Ducks Unlimited, and for that we thank him.

The Mission of Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.
PLEASE ATTEND THE CALIFORNIA STATE CONVENTION – APRIL 19-21

This year’s state convention will be held April 19, 20 and 21 at the Doubletree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country in Rohnert Park. This year’s convention activities include a Friday evening sportsman’s night out dinner party and hospitality central; Saturday business meeting, lunch and evening banquet; and Sunday morning board meeting. The cost is $100 per person. The Doubletree has extended special overnight accommodation pricing of $115 double occupancy.

Friday’s festivities will begin with a spectacular sportsman’s night out dinner party: a delicious buffet of BBQ chicken, an assortment of artisan sausages, slow-roasted BBQ tri-tip of beef, assorted salads and dessert. Hospitality central will open at 9 p.m.

Saturday’s festivities will include a thoughtful and informative business meeting agenda to thank our many volunteers for their dedication and commitment to Ducks Unlimited, and to discuss and entertain our state’s strategic plan moving forward, our state’s wetlands conservation efforts and waterfowl habitat. A buffet luncheon will be included, followed by some workshops. In keeping with DU tradition, the banquet and fundraiser will take place in the evening, consisting of a sumptuous mesquite-grilled pork chop with apple onion chutney dinner and all the trimmings.

Sunday morning there will be a state board meeting, which everyone is welcome to attend.

About the DoubleTree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country

Nestled in the heart of Sonoma County, the DoubleTree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country is located near Santa Rosa and Petaluma and less than an hour’s drive from Napa and San Francisco.

Enjoy a warm welcome and homelike surroundings as soon as you walk in the door. The hotel’s attentive staff will greet you with a delicious, freshly baked chocolate chip cookie upon arrival. Experience Sonoma County’s world-renowned wineries, exquisite dining and picturesque countryside, and enjoy popular attractions such as Armstrong Redwoods and the Safari West Wildlife Reserve. Airport shuttle service is available to and from San Francisco Airport (SFO) and Oakland Airport (OAK).

What to Do Around the Area

Enjoy easy access to hundreds of well-known Sonoma County wineries, including Viansa, Kendall Jackson, Clos Du Bois and Korbel. Many popular attractions are also within close proximity to the hotel, such as Infineon Raceway, Armstrong Redwoods and Bodega Bay, all less than 30 minutes away. For an exciting day out for the whole family, visit the Safari West Wildlife Reserve or the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center (creator of the Peanuts gang). Outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to see and do with numerous golf courses, picturesque walks and beautiful landscapes. Take a hot-air balloon ride over the Sonoma Valley for an unforgettable trip.

Click here to register online with DU and obtain more information
Click here to make your online hotel reservation with DoubleTree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country
Early Bird Registration Form

Join us in Rohnert Park on April 19, 20 & 21

REGISTRANT INFORMATION

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________ State: _______________ Zip Code: _____________

Email Address: _________________________________________________________

Phone Number: ____________________________________________________________________________

Number of Registrations - $100 per person: __________________________

Includes Friday evening sportsman’s night out dinner party and hospitality central; Saturday business meeting, luncheon, workshops and evening banquet; and Sunday morning state board meeting.

Names for Badges: _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Payment Method: Check# ______  Credit Card # ________________________________

MC Visa AMEX Discover  Expiration Date: ________________________________

Signature: ____________________________________________________________________________

Checks payable to Ducks Unlimited

Mail check and registration form to:
Rich Dengler, 10281 Stonydale Drive, Cupertino, CA  95014-1029

Overnight hotel reservations can be made with the Doubletree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country for a DU group rate of $115 per night double occupancy.

To make a hotel reservation, visit DoubleTree by Hilton or phone 707-584-5466 / 1-800-222-TREE and identify yourself as part of the DU group.
UPCOMING WINTER AND EARLY SPRING EVENTS

Attend a local event in your area and take part in the fun while supporting the mission of Ducks Unlimited. Traveling or vacationing? You can find an event on the California Ducks Unlimited website. Traveling out of state? Simply select the state you will be visiting in the dropdown menu at the top of the California DU webpage and that state’s upcoming events will be listed for you to browse. Don’t miss an opportunity to show your support and have fun at the same time!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Morgan Hill</td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Larry Lundberg @ 408-259-5286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Redding</td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Robert Richardson @ 530-243-0595</td>
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<td>Sacramento Crab Feed</td>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Colby Craig @ 916-205-3987</td>
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<td>Konocti/Lake County</td>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Stacie Judson @ 707-655-0988</td>
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<td>Fresno</td>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Jonathan Wills @ 559-301-6445</td>
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<td>Tracy</td>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Gian Marcucci @ 209-640-0733</td>
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<td>Anderson Bunco Tournament</td>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Rich Buchanan @ 530-917-3874</td>
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<td>Diamond Event at Blackhawk</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>John Faires @ 510-331-8971</td>
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<td>Amador County</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Mark Bentley @ 209-304-2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antelope Valley</td>
<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Patti Nygaard @ 661-943-5456</td>
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<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>Tim Falsken @ 805-796-1117</td>
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<td>Wine Country</td>
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<td>Rick McGlone @ 707-829-8486</td>
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<td>Chico</td>
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<td>Kera Giampaolo @ 707-845-8529</td>
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<td>Placer County</td>
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<td>Rocky Allison @ 916-870-9697</td>
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<td>Coalinga</td>
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<td>Bobby Oliveira @ 559-967-5216</td>
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<td>Honey Lake</td>
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<td>Loyal Taylor @ 530-310-1796</td>
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<td>Oroville</td>
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<td>Greg Kostick @ 530-515-2345</td>
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<td>Milpitas</td>
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<td>Steve Rodgers @ 408-649-0795</td>
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<td>St. Helena</td>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>Kyle Vella @ 707-287-4143</td>
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<td>Mike Kinnard @ 707-447-8027</td>
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<td>Andy Bridwell @ 530-643-1340</td>
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<td>Corning</td>
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<td>Roy Geer @ 530-514-3663</td>
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<td>Greg Petersen @ 707-964-4044</td>
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<td>Anderson Golf Tournament</td>
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<td>Rich Buchanan @ 530-917-3874</td>
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<td>Intermountain</td>
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<td>Craig Gideon @ 530-604-9967</td>
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<td>Benicia/Vallejo</td>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>William Warren @ 707-334-4319</td>
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<td>Willits</td>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>Kevin Kvasnicka @ 707-345-0482</td>
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EDITOR’S NOTE

Whether you are a longtime DU supporter, or a first-time member, News from the Nest is YOUR California DU newsletter. For any aspiring writers and photographers, what makes News from the Nest truly ours are stories and photos by California DU members. Please take the time to send me a story or photos of your events, members, conservation projects, Greenwing activities, trips, or whatever you feel is important to share.

It is my goal to provide articles relating to national and local conservation news, events, outdoor adventures, hunting, regulations, and much more. With your help, we can make News from the Nest a publication that we all look forward to reading.

Rich Dengler, California Ducks Unlimited Newsletter Editor
rich.dengler@sbcglobal.net