

LAKE LAGUNITAS - March 6, 2010

Leader: Neill Fogarty

The trouble with going birding in Marin, in early March, is the flowers. There they are, growing along side the trail, and so easy to watch because they stay put! In spite of the allure of Fetid Adder's Tongue, Indian Warrior, Trillium and Footsteps of Spring, we managed to see 45 avian species around Lake Lagunitas, although the plants definitely slowed us down. The birds started before we reached the parking area with a beautiful, male Western Bluebird flying across the road. On the water we were greeted by the stunning black and white and red beauty of the male Common Merganser. Did you know that these birds swim along with their heads underwater as they search for fish? Speaking of eating, we watched a Pied-Billed Grebe struggle, and eventually succeed, with the consumption of a large crayfish. Turtles sunned themselves and a pair of Kingfishers flew back and forth over the lake. A Green Heron flew in and landed in the reeds right in front of our group. We listened to a Marsh Wren, but only got a brief glimpse as it popped up once to take a look at us.

From the woods we could hear the faint song of a Hermit Thrush, and the "little tin horn" sound of the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Six members of the Picidae family were represented: Acorn Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Sapsucker and the woods rang all morning with the calls of the Pileated Woodpecker. We got to see it a few times too! Other highlights included: Brown Creeper, Bewick's Wren, Hutton's Vireo (heard only), Purple Finch, Allen's and Anna's Hummingbirds, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tree Swallow and Lesser Goldfinch. A non-bird related special sighting was a large, ephemeral pond filled with Rough-skinned Newts answering the call to reproduce! Thanks to our leader Neill Fogarty for a wonderful trip!



Photo Len Blumin

By Maggie Rufo