

# DEL MESA BIRD & NATURE NEWSLETTER

## JUNE 2021

**SUPPORTING BIRDS AT ALL LEVELS:** Governor Cox of Utah has declared '2021 the Year of the Shorebirds at the Great Salt Lake as it celebrates The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Western Shorebird Reserve Network Sites. The Group Meetings held are some of the only meetings focused on the issues of migratory birds from North, South, and Pan American countries over the years and across borders.

**CHALLENGERS OF THE SKIES:** *Demoiselle Cranes* are the smallest species of cranes standing a mere 3-5 feet tall, 4-7lbs., with a long elegant black head with white feather and extensive wings capable of their extreme migrations. They are Eurasian species and many groups fly to and from Indian. One large flock crosses the Himalayas to a group of small villages in China, over 2,000 miles to breed and have their young and over the decades the Chinese have feed their flocks with foods they have raised for this purpose. On websites for birds, this last month you might see a program on this occurrence or put the species on your "search" option.

**SEXUAL SHOWOFF!** Study the world of birds for one of the most enthusiastic, highly colored bird who puts on a great show and one stands out repeatedly....'the golden-collared manakin' of the Panamanian rainforest. There are dozens of species of this bird in tropical forest all brightly colored for males and as I browsed the internet, many have their dance moves recorded! But for the choice of my article, our species has a routine that starts with a fluffing of its neck till fur-like, followed by a razing of the wings, then clapping of the wings-at a speed of 60 x a second..... followed—with female watching—by a back- twisting flip! Scientists speculate that it is a show of fitness and are studying the animal genomes to see if there is a trigger for some special muscle developments.

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** For the many years I've written this I have never suggested the following, so here goes. I would love to hear from you about what you are seeing for birds during Covid...let me know what you've seen/where. I really am interested! If anyone responds I know it could be very varied since one of you was in Brazil! You could share an exciting single bird find or a friendly backyard visitor. Somehow, I think it will help me as I bring you more articles. Feel free to send me notes on line.

Locally, remember to check out the Monterey's Audubon newsletter 'Sanderling'-on line now-always useful-and they have great birding options when conditions allow for field trips.

.....wrote this yesterday for the newsletter

**GOOD READ:** A most interesting article from AUDUBON, May 2021 or “AUDUBON” website by Corryn Wetzel, “Meet Elizabeth Gould, the Gifted Artist, Behind Her Husband’s Famous Bird Books. I clicked on this article this past weekend, being familiar with the texts from the mid-eighteen hundreds. The tale is of a talented young woman who marries an inquisitive young scientist, John Gould, who wants to produce bird books for ‘the-world-at-large’. She bore him 8 children. In the early years of marriage she refines her sketching skills necessary to render the images, specific details and coloring and then paint the plates to produce the lithographs for his 3 major books on birds from three different regions of the world. She worked from skins, partial carcasses, and live species producing over 650 lithographs over eleven years. She followed her husband to Australia for two of the years taking her seven year old with them while leaving their three younger children with relatives in England. Her brother from England joined her and was taxidermist and scientist and brought his wife to study the animal life of Australia. They also cross paths with Darwin as he returns from his journey on the H.M.S. Beagle to write his book and leave his skins with Gould to help with the lithographs. It is noted that Elizabeth can be credited for over 50 of the illustrations in Darwin’s book. At this point go to Wikipedia for more details of her phenomenal productiveness. Sadly, Elizabeth dies within a year of their returning to England and her birthing their eighth child. \*perhaps you can tell I was moved by the note in this research that many a gifted young woman was used in preparing the works for publication of animal articles from around the world with credit given only to the scientist. Therefore, I devoted a bit more of this publication to let you not miss this absence.

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*Enrichment Committee(inspired)*