

THE 2020 WOOD DUCK REPORT



WOOD DUCKERS RALLY, POST STRONG NUMBERS DESPITE PANDEMIC

The California Wood Duck Program is the largest and most successful citizen science project of its kind. More than 400 volunteers install, maintain and monitor thousands of nest boxes across the state. This impressive project has helped mitigate the effects of habitat loss that almost drove wood ducks to extinction a century ago.

The program began when forward-thinking people at California Waterfowl — people like Steve Simmons and Iva Rogers — years ago decided to do what they could to increase the number of wood ducks in our state and increase the number of citizens participating in their recovery.

Of course, 2020 was a very difficult year to tend to nest boxes. The state-issued stay-at-home orders made it nearly impossible to get to the boxes in the spring, and the wood duckers, as they are affectionately called, could not get together

for their annual Wood Duck Dinner and other events. Still, the cadre reported impressive numbers. They maintained more than 4,000 nest boxes last year, in which more than 28,000 ducklings hatched. That is quite an accomplishment given the challenges of 2020.

In 2021, the program turns 30. The collective effort continues to bring it closer to an impressive milestone: 1 million ducks hatched. The number could be attained in the next few years at the rate these wood duckers get things done. That really would be something to celebrate!

Thank you to all the volunteers, district managers and program sponsors who made 2020's effort a major accomplishment. Hopefully, as nesting season begins soon, wood duckers will be there to usher in the next generation of Aix sponsa, the gaudy and resilient wood duck. —*John Geiger*



Brandon Fien

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Jim Paroli named 2021 Bellrose Award winner

Jim Paroli is dedicated to the ducks. The 2021 Frank C. Bellrose recipient installed his first wood duck box on McDonald Island in 1997. He was accompanied by Ken Murray, the area's California Wood Duck Program's District 6 manager at the time.

Paroli later stepped into Murray's shoes and managed that same district a few years later. It's been nearly 25 years of non-stop advising, managing and mentoring others on wood duck projects on all over the Delta area. He has been leading the group as chairperson since 2014.

"Jim is always the first to respond when I need help with anything related to wood ducks," said Brian Huber, Wood Duck Program coordinator. "He has volunteered countless hours of his time to help grow the wood duck program and encourage people to get involved. Jim is very deserving of this award."

Paroli has lent a hand to fellow wood duckers at Tyler Island, Brack Tract, Empire Island, Rindge Tract, Medford Island, Mandeville Island, Lower Jones Tract, Roberts Island, Brovelli Estates and, of course, McDonald Island. McDonald Island now has 50-plus boxes and produces over 360 ducklings

annually, thanks in large part to Paroli's efforts.

But his passion for waterfowl and the Delta goes beyond the wood duck program. He is a trustee of Reclamation District 2030 and a Delta Protection Commissioner for the Central Delta. He recently designed and built an 80-acre riparian habitat mitigation project on McDonald Island. He is employed by Eddie Zuckerman and Dennis Gardemeyer as the Habitat Operation Director for Heritage Land Co., Delta Blue Grass and the Clavius Duck Club.

Despite his busy schedule, Paroli takes the time to mentor and share his passion with people who are new to the program or interested in waterfowl. You can always find him at CWA events, Yolo Duck Days and Wood Duck 101.

—Eric Sheffield



Dr. Frank C. Bellrose was one of the pioneers of wood duck nesting research. His career-long commitment to understanding wood duck biology began in the late 1930s and resulted in the development of predator-resistant nest boxes. His dedication to waterfowl, especially the wood duck, is why the California Wood Duck Program honors one outstanding volunteer in his name each year.

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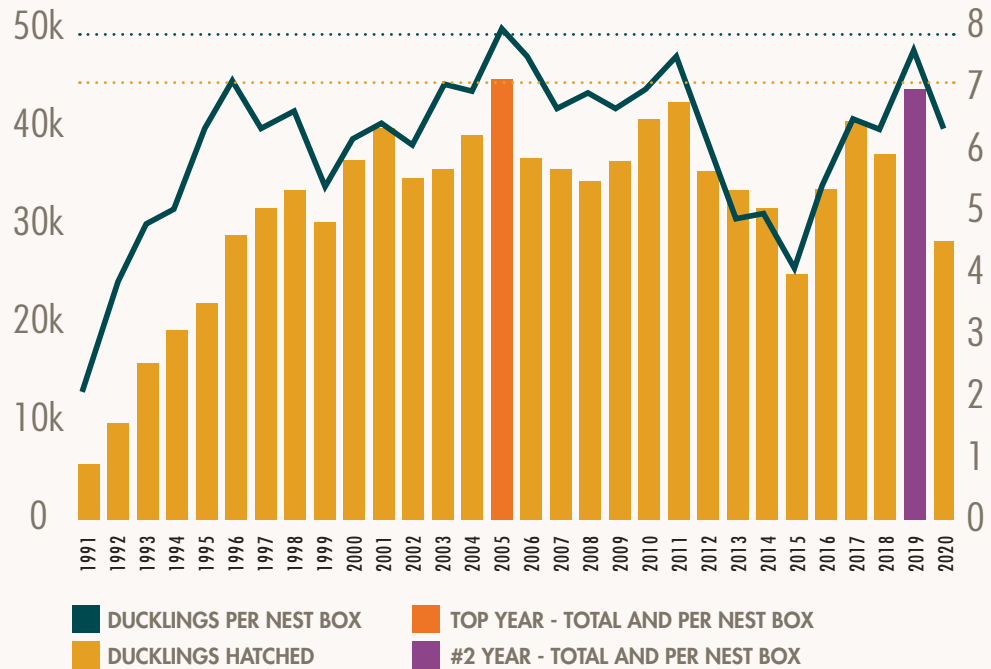
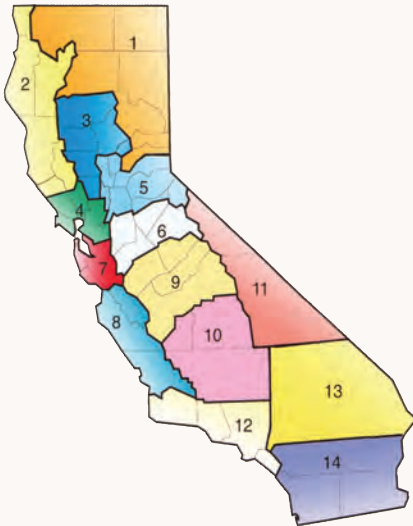





916,296

HATCHED SINCE 1991

Last year was a tough year all round but the California Wood Duck Program volunteers stepped up and added another 28,832 hatched duckling to the program's total, which is closing in on 1 million.



Project Name	# Boxes	# Ducklings	Volunteers
District 1, NORTHEAST CALIFORNIA (Nevada, Sierra, Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc counties). District Manager Craig Ferrari, 530-268-1661.			
Bar-E Ranch	10	81	Maddie Nightingale, Mikey Nightingale, Caleb Wells, Vince Aiello
Beedy	6	38	Ted Beedy
Bidwell	26	102	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Budge	6	11	W.W. Budge
Ferrari Farms	15	37	Craig Ferrari
Golden Oaks	10	22	Craig Ferrari
Goose Valley	21	57	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Lake Margaret	8	44	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Napoli	6	18	Len Napoli, Gail Napoli
Nevada Co. F & W Commission	17	219	Craig Ferrari
Sanders Ranch	16	121	Rick A. Sanders
District 2, NORTH COAST (Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, Lake counties). District Manager Taylor Norris, 707-616-8672.			
Harpshire	3	0	Kevin Harper
District 3, SACRAMENTO VALLEY (Tehama, Glenn, Butte, Colusa, Yolo counties). District managers Steve Mortensen, 707-592-5545; Mike Johnson, 530-521-8066; Jim Carr, 530-514-4352; Bryce Johnson, 530-624-9752; Matt Meyer, 510-352-4844; John Garriga 530-815-4998.			
5R Ranch	5	24	Greg Silva, Patti Silva
49er Duck Club	10	86	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello

Project Name	# Boxes	# Ducklings	Volunteers
Angel Ranch Duck Club	50	327	John Garriga, Doug Garriga Jennifer Garriga, Jim Carr, Rod Miller
Argo & Vickery Farms	9	52	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Barale Ranch	15	90	Dave Barale, Pete Barale, Joe Barale, Eric Sheffield, Jim Paroli
Barale Ranch West	5	17	Dave Barale, Pete Barale, Joe Barale
Behring Ranch	196	1,986	Isabelle Romo, Ernesto Jimenez, Gerardo Jimenez, Lazaro Romo, Janine Grupalo
Bens	10	54	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Broken Wing Duck Club	11	128	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Burgard	36	155	Dirk Burgard
Butte Creek Farms	60	250	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Butte Creek Island Ranch	17	113	CWA
Bypass Farms	20	8	Ammy Reyes
Casa de Patos/ Bird Haven Ranch	196	1,364	Paul & Sandi Bonderson, UC Davis
Colusa NWR	53	615	Mike Peters, Larry Garrett, Barbara Garrett
Cozzolino	14	136	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Crim-Sky Hi	39	250	Bill Crim, CWA
Crippled Mallard	21	100	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello

Project Name	# Boxes	# Ducklings	Volunteers
Fonseco	8	44	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Foothill Mallard Club	29	75	The Hammett Family, Honcut King, Bobby Grilli, Glen Weldon, Justin Wall, Faith Wall
Double Down Duck Club	3	6	Guy Delorefice, Lani Delorefice, Capri Delorefice, Bob Nichols, Holly Nichols
DC	13	116	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Foster City Rod & Gun Club			Darold Givens, Ken Stenquist, Eric Swanson, Don Woods, Matt Plut
• Gordon's Pond	25	117	Darold Givens, Ken Stenquist, Eric Swanson, Don Woods, Matt Plut, Bruce Billings
• Laughing Mallard	47	200	Darold Givens, Ken Stenquist, Eric Swanson, Don Woods, Matt Plut, Bruce Billings
Fresh Water Creek	11	91	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Gardner Farms	15	231	Dan Erben, Avery Erben, Kelsey Erben, Kaila Erben, William Gardner Jr.
Gray Lodge Wildlife Area	346	2,576	Carol Allen, Lori Dieter, Donna Dugan, Cal Dugan, Dan Furr, Craig Gifford, Dorothy Glass, Duane Linander, Jennifer Linander, Jack Macfarlane, John Royce, Kristin Shorrock, Meghann Shorrock, Edith Shubert, Marie Smith, Hal Stoner
Hollywood Duck Club	78	672	Dave Barale, Pete Barale, Joe Barale, Erik Hora, Ron Hora, Eric Sheffield, Jim Paroli
Joe Paulo Ranch	46	209	Mike Johnson, Bryce Johnson, Joe Paulo, Jim Carr, John Garriga, Doug Garriga
Larry Merlo Youth	32	362	Mike Johnson, Jim Carr, Michael Felkins, Rocque Merlo, John Garriga, Doug Garriga, Bryce Johnson
Lone Star Duck Club	10	93	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Mallard Ranch	50	281	Dominic Gillibert
Mom's Farm	16	121	Dennis Burkell, Kathie Burkell, Tommy Bippart
Murdock Gun Club I	61	443	Brian Huber, Caroline Brady, Jason Coslovich, Landon Eskridge, Jamie Oskowski, CWA
Murdock Gun Club II	104	967	Brian O'Connor, Kathleen O'Connor
MVS Fowl Estates	10	83	Matt dePolo, Giovanni dePolo, Anthony dePolo, Vincent Andreuccetti, Luciano Andreuccetti
Nannini Bros.	9	10	Michael Nannini, Jeffrey Nannini, Brian Nannini
North Colusa	3	49	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Ohm Road Club	10	65	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Opa's Dead End Duck Club	7	38	William Owen
Oroville Wildlife Area	212	710	Amanda Geahry, Byron Stone, Roy Moore, AJ Dill, Brian Young, Richard Cain, Diane Flores
Packer Rd	19	226	Gene Beauchamp, Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Paradise Farms	10	82	Tiffany Podesta, Anthony Lopez
Pintail II	10	70	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Pioneer Duck Club	28	343	Johnny Drury, Matt Drury, Morgan Richardson
Prime Time Duck Club	62	454	Don Springer, Bruce Billings
R67 Ranch	18	136	John Garriga, Jennifer Garriga, Doug Garriga, Jim Carr

Project Name	# Boxes	# Ducklings	Volunteers
Rancho Esquon	67	112	Mike Johnson, Bryce Johnson, John Garriga, Jim Carr, Doug Garriga, Brian Huber, Loretta Gardner, Claude Grillo
Riverside Cottage	2	22	Kristin Shorrock, Merrily Stover, Larry Jendro
RJ Finney Rod & Gun Club	50	309	Dominic Gillibert, Rene Gillibert, Dave Ciapponi
UC Davis - Roosevelt Ranch	100	479	Roosevelt Ranch Partners, UC Davis
RSCT Inc Duck Club	3	0	Tom Orgain, Russ Morth
UC Davis - Russell Ranch	16	124	UC Davis
Sanborn Slough	23	153	CWA
Sebia Duck Club	39	218	Mark Kirsten, Rhys Kirsten, Matt Artz, Ryan Artz, Dan Artz, Anna Artz, Jim Wruck, Andrew Costamagna, Jack Dolan, Allen Francis, Doug Farel, Jon Berglund, Caroline Brady, Brian Huber
Seven Mile Duck Club	19	105	John Garriga, Doug Garriga Jennifer Garriga, Gary Lechner, Gillian Lechner
Stone Creek	9	44	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Sutter Buttes Boys Club	31	63	Vic Parachini, Walt Sikes, Eric Hohener, Don Sande
Thuis Ranch	6	12	Steve Mortensen, Neal Van Alfen, Pam Kazmeirczak, Dave Howes, Wyatt Ensley, Garrett Ensley, Jack Ensley, Noah Riesche
Tin Can Louie	12	78	Jeff Huff, Chris Perry, Bill Maudru
Vista Ranch	23	207	Mark Borrell, Mike Schuster, Steve Mortensen, Ruth Mikkelsen, Erin Spencer
West Delevan Duck Club	7	37	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Wild Goose	125	558	J.P. Stover, Luke Pfister
Willow Creek Wood Ducks	114	1,669	Harlan Albers, Curtus Amaro, John Amaro, Randy Hansen, Troy Hansen
District 4, NORTH BAY (Napa, Sonoma, Marin, Solano, Contra Costa counties). District Manager Robert Franco, 707-290-3601.			
Arnold Ranch Duck Club	59	295	Mike Lenzi, Sophia Koehler, Olivia Koehler, Gianna Koehler, Brielle Cardwell, Emma Cardwell
Denverton Ranch	5	0	CWA
EBMUD	24	47	Douglas Vaughan, Robert Bartholomew, Sandy Ferreira, Doris Kretschmer
Green Valley Creek	10	29	Anthony Iaccarino, Theresa Iaccarino, John Iaccarino
Greenhead Duck Club	24	57	Kevin Brush, Trinity Brush, Malina Brush, Amber Brush
Grizzly Ranch	12	0	Robert Franco, CWA
Jacksnipe	10	120	Albert Seeno III, Paul Silva, Eric Sheffield, Jim Paroli
Laguna Creek	4	0	Steve Broadley, Benjamin Broadley
Machado	14	139	Don Alvarado, Sam Alvarado
McDaniel	12	65	Gary McDaniel, Joeni McDaniel, Gianna Rose McDaniel, Jared McDaniel
Nixon	2	0	Brian Nixon
Peaceful Glen	7	44	Steve Mortensen, Bob Brown, Jeanie Brown, Dave Howes, Wyatt Ensley, Garrett Ensley, Jack Ensley, Noah Riesche

THE CALIFORNIA WOOD DUCK PROGRAM

Project Name	# Boxes	# Ducklings	Volunteers
Ryer Island Fin & Feather Ranch LLC	40	22	Bill Hobin, Joe DaSilveira
Stuart Creek Sonoma	3	0	Tony Nelson, Eric Fessenden, Bo Kearns, Taj Hihenberger
Willow Pond	8	76	Steve Mortensen, Joann Tomlinson, Dave Howes, Wyatt Ensley, Garrett Ensley, Jack Ensley, Noah Riesche, Robert Eddings

District 5, SACRAMENTO/SIERRA (Yuba, Sutter, Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Amador, Alpine counties). District managers Greg Damitz, 916-705-4544; Mike Merlo, 916-248-6595; Tim Anderson, 707-474-8448.

Beale Air Force Base	50	77	Chadwick McCready, Trevor Moore, Jeff Radar, Nick Nugent, Mathew Saiz, Maia Lipschutz, Jacob Miller, Luca Lagares, Mark Suek, Blake Lawver, Jane Tavares, Clay Crow, Brandon Swalla, Justin Hutchinson, Mary Walker
Bear River	25	106	Brett Lawson, Bo Lawson, Hunter Lawson, Brad Thompson, Toby Woodworth, Steve Mortensen
Boy Scouts Troop 83			
• Elk Slough	69	972	Russ van Loben Sels, Yuuto van Loben Sels
• Babel Slough	22	288	Russ van Loben Sels, Yuuto van Loben Sels
Brown's Valley	3	9	Mike Schuster, Ruth Mickelsen
Conaway Ranch	71	157	Mike Hall, Conaway Ranch partners, UC Davis
D & T Tackle	3	0	Dennis Byrne, Terra Byrne
Footrot Flats	49	202	Steve Broadley, Benjamin Broadley, Mike Johnson, Grace Phillips, Mike Dardzinski, Donna Dardzinski, Bryce Johnson
Greenberg	7	39	Stu Greenberg, Deb Greenberg
Jeri Langham	17	204	Jeri Langham, Cliff Hawley, Oleta Melnicoe, Jim Pompy, Carla Barbaro, Peter Ross, Cavi Cavness, Sara Denzler, Chery Cobbs
Mike Merlo Pleasant Grove Creek	13	0	Mike Merlo
Mike Merlo Yuba City	33	201	Mike Merlo
Moe	9	34	Rich Moe
North Delta Conservancy	264	1,739	John Erickson, Tom Uslan, Davis Uslan, Jim Kerraish
Pasture Creek	3	28	Josh Holme, Jackson Holme, James Holme
Pompy	8	48	Jim Pompy
South Lake Tahoe	2	0	Dave Huber, Ginger Huber, Daniel Huber, Brian Huber, Wyatt Huber, Karlie Huber
South Pleasant Grove	19	100	Greg Damitz Sr., Gregory W. Damitz Jr.
Township South	26	75	Steve Broadley, Benjamin Broadley, Mike Johnson, Grace Phillips, Mike Dardzinski, Donna Dardzinski, Bryce Johnson
Whitney Oaks	5	14	Ed Price
William's Pond	6	77	Tad Gantenbein, Erik Gantenbein, Zack Reuter

District 6, DELTA (San Joaquin, Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne counties). District managers Jim Paroli; CWDP Co-Chair, 209-993-0808; Eric Sheffield, 925-699-9452.

Project Name	# Boxes	# Ducklings	Volunteers
Brack Track	12	131	Jim Paroli, Eric Sheffield, Pete Costamagna
Brush Duck Club	19	87	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Eudy	12	18	John Eudy, Robbin Eudy
Kautz Ironstone Winery	60	173	Joe Valente, Claudia Valente
Mandeville Island	320	1,829	Jim Paroli, Eric Sheffield, Tony Marnell
McDonald Island	53	464	Jim Paroli, Eric Sheffield
Medford Island	10	22	Rigo Sevilla, Peter Ottesen, Seven Partneas
Nelson	59	329	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Trion Ranch	17	130	Matt Meyer, Dennis Corvello
Tyler Island Habitat	11	132	Eric Sheffield, Jim Paroli, Stu Greenberg

District 7, SOUTH BAY (San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara counties). District Manager Sandy Ferreira, 925-420-6256.

Quarry Lakes	10	0	Dave Riensche, Sarah Riensche, Daniel Riensche, Nathan Riensche, Rebekah Riensche
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District 8, CENTRAL COAST (Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo counties). District manager position open. Contact Jim Paroli, 209-993-0808, for information.

District 9, NORTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY (Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno counties). District Manager Erik Knorr, 831-809-1571.

Dallas Duck Club	152	160	Al Sturla, Anthony Lopez, Rene Lopez, Jess Nelson, Chris Chung, Tiffany Podesta
Dryad Ranch	7	0	Bill Ralph

District 10, SOUTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY (Kings, Tulare, Kern counties). District Manager Ken Barton, 818-367-4158.

California Living Museum	9	41	Andrew Kenyon
Tulare Basin Wetlands Assoc.	18	108	Andrew Kenyon, Ken Barton

District 11, INYO/MONO (Inyo, Mono counties). District manager position open. Contact Jim Paroli, 209-993-0808, for information.

District 12, SOUTH COAST (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange counties). District manager position open. Contact Jim Paroli, 209-993-0808, for information.

District 13, MOJAVE (San Bernardino County). District manager position open. Contact Jim Paroli, 209-993-0808, for information.

Camp Cady	2	0	Andrew Kenyon, Bruce Kenyon
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District 14, IMPERIAL VALLEY (Riverside, San Diego, Imperial counties). District manager position open. Contact Jim Paroli, 209-993-0808, for information.

So. Cal Wood Ducks			
• Prado Regional Park	53	94	Bonnie Johnson, Natalia Doshi, Miranda Peters, Deborah Dornisch Jack Hall, Ronda Hall, John McKeon, Rod Chambers
• Yorba Regional Park	36	285	Mike Geraci, Rick Spitler, Don Mendenhall, Rick Dawson, Jim Ehret

TOTAL BOXES, 4,647 TOTAL DUCKLINGS, 28,832

If you are a volunteer, and your name or project is not listed or is incorrect, please contact Brian Huber at bhuber@calwaterfowl.org.

Ducks get boxes, Girl Scout gets top honor

MURPHY MARSHALS 20 VOLUNTEERS TO HELP BIRDS

Many Boy Scouts look to wood duck nesting boxes for their Eagle Scout project, but we hear from far fewer Girl Scouts.

Jordan Murphy motivated others in her community to create and maintain wood duck and bluebird boxes at Anderson Lake Park in Santa Clara County. Her project was key in attaining the highest achievement in Girl Scouting, the Gold Award.

"I was thrilled to be able to work on a project that had such impact on the wood duck population," said Murphy.

The Gold Award is the equivalent of the boys' Eagle Scout Award. Only 5.4% of Girl Scouts attain it, according to Girl Scouts of the USA.

Murphy, 18, enlisted the help of other scouts to build and install seven new boxes. They also refurbish four others at the park near Morgan Hill. Murphy worked with Ranger Brian Christensen and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society to monitor and report box results. She created trail



Jordan Murphy reached out to California Waterfowl's Wood Duck Program as a resource to help her complete her Girl Scout Gold Award.

attending Sacramento State. Murphy said she is interested in studying business and working with a company that has an environmental or wildlife aspect. 🦋

maps, a maintenance logbook that the park makes available to visitors, and a YouTube video to inspire others to help wildlife in their communities.

"The best part of putting up the nesting boxes was learning how to build the boxes and knowing I was contributing to helping increase the wood duck population," said Murphy.

But it was a heavy lift as well, and COVID-19 didn't help. It made everything more difficult and slowed down the schedule when access to the park was restricted.

"It was more challenging than I thought, but I learned a lot of skills," she said, including budgeting, soliciting donations and woodworking.

"I encourage everyone to think about ways to take action and help your communities," said Murphy who is now

Pre-COVID timing works out for ducks

Dominic Gillibert started building and maintaining boxes with friends in high school. But the 20-year-old has now taken it to a new level. He and a handful of buddies have 111 boxes on two duck club properties, and in 2020 he recorded nearly 600 successful hatches.

"Every year it's getting better and better," said Gillibert of Oakland. "We had high expectations because the fields flooded late. There were a lot of wood ducks around in March, their nesting season. I thought it might be a good year, and it sure was."

While the COVID stay-at-home orders restricted many people from getting out to check their boxes, Gillibert's timing was perfect. He cleaned out and maintained his boxes at the end of February, right before the pandemic hit. So, through the late winter and spring, the boxes were ready for nesting ducks.

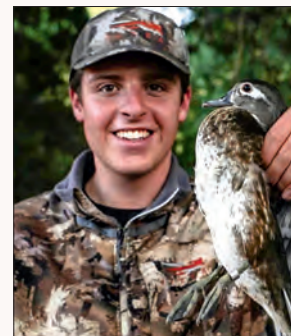
"When late May came around, I started counting eggshells, and that told the story of a great hatch during the shutdowns," he said.

Gillibert got involved through a class project at Campolindo High School in Moraga and then went to several CWA events to learn about wood ducks and the volunteer program. He and his hunting buddies started building boxes in 2015. He now attends Diablo Valley College and is transferring to Chico State for the spring semester.

At one Butte Sink club they maintain 57 boxes and 54 at another.

While greenheads are his favorite ducks to hunt, Gillibert said he loves seeing the woodies in the marsh. "I must say, I do try to avoid taking the woodie hens," he said. "I have a lot of respect for them."

In addition to the wood ducks,



Dominic Gillibert of Oakland tends 111 boxes with the help of his buddies.

Gillibert said he enjoys being outside and seeing the other species attracted to the boxes. Boxes on the club properties also bring in a large number of hooded mergansers. In fact, Gillibert counted 231 merg ducklings this year alone.

"And I always come across some unexpected critters in the nest boxes when I am cleaning them out," he said.

"When you're opening more than 100 boxes, you're bound to find some interesting things. I've seen ringtails, rats, opossums, raccoons and bees, lots of bees. But it's worth it." 🦋

Unfinished business

HOLME FAMILY DETERMINED TO SEE DUCKLINGS FLY THE COOP THIS YEAR

Josh Holme and his two young sons dove into the Wood Duck Program in 2020. They built boxes, put them up along a creek near their home and maintained them. Everything went well. Three hens took up residence in the spring, and the Holme boys watched their comings and goings. But one day, they were gone. The eggs had hatched, but ducklings left before the boys saw them. It was a bit anticlimactic.

“The boys were so interested in seeing the ducklings in the box. I think they had it in their minds that they’d see the 12 ducklings that they helped hatch come out of the nest box,” said Josh, a veterinarian and longtime member of CWA who lives with his wife, Kelly, in Wilton. “But that didn’t happen this year. Hopefully next year.”

Next year, Josh is putting up a few trail cams to see the exodus. Said Jackson, 10, “I am looking forward to the next season, and I hope to be able to see the ducklings this time.” His brother is James, 8.

Thankfully, the boys can see various wood ducks in the area, and some of them could have been hatched in their boxes.

For 2021, the family expects to be building more boxes to bring the total to five homemade boxes on the creek that borders their home. They’ll access some with their kayaks.

The Holme’s entrance into the Wood Duck Program is similar to others’ journey. Back in high school, Josh had helped friends put up boxes on a public-land creek. He enjoyed it and years later attended Yolo Duck Days with his children. They met CWA volunteers there, and they got bit by the bug. They realized their new property (they moved into their current home in 2019) would be a perfect spot for boxes.

The boys are fascinated by the ducks, and this project satisfied some of Josh’s interest in wildlife biology. Josh studied wildlife biology in college and was planning a career in the field. But a mentor told him there were no jobs in the field and that a veterinary practice was a more practical career path.

“Hey, wildlife biology and working with nest boxes can always be my hobby, right?” said Josh.

Regardless, Josh now has a foot in both fields.

“We’re all looking forward to getting out there and getting more active in volunteering with CWA and other groups to help wildlife and the environment.” —*John Geiger*



Jackson Holme, 10, checks a nest box that hangs from an oak near his home in Wilton. He, his dad and brother, built boxes and participated in the program for the first time in 2020.

12 EGGS? WHO KNEW?

Dad Josh, Jackson, 10, and James, 8, learned a lot about nest boxes because it was their first year putting them up.

- Hens leave the nest at very specific times. “I told Brian (Huber) I needed to check a box but didn’t want to disturb the hen.” Huber, the Wood Duck Program coordinator, told Josh to check it at 4 p.m. “Sure enough, I watched the box, and at 4 p.m., the hen left,” said Josh.

- You can tell if the ducklings hatched or were victims of predators by looking for the leather-like membrane that surrounded the embryo. If it’s in the egg cup, they hatched on their own.

- Jackson was surprised to learn how many eggs a little duck could lay or at least incubate. One hen had 12 hatched eggs in her nest (hens are known to drop eggs in other hens’ nests).

- Jackson was interested as well to know how persistent starlings are. The Holme boys removed the starling nest, but it (or others) kept coming back again and again and laying eggs in the box.

“He thought it was only for wood ducks,” said Josh. “We all learned a lot about nature from this project.” 🦆

DISTRICT MANAGERS ARE THE GLUE

District managers are vital to the California Wood Duck Program. They train volunteers, gather nest box building material, raise money and coordinate events. The program would not be where it is today without

the dedication of these individuals. If you are interested in volunteering in the Wood Duck Program, the district manager near you is the person to contact. (They’re listed starting on page 32). And if you are a volunteer

and you’re interested in stepping up and being a district manager yourself, then email Brian Huber at CWA at bhuber@calwaterfowl.org. Thank you volunteers and district managers for your commitment to the ducks!



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Steve Simmons and Iva Rogers were both instrumental in building the foundation of the Wood Duck Program.

IN TRIBUTE: WOOD DUCKERS LOSE FOUNDING LEADERS IN '20

The California Wood Duck Program lost two pioneering volunteers in 2020.

Stephen B. Simmons, the first chairperson, died in June, while Iva R. Rogers, the group's second chairperson, died in January 2020.

"We lost a lot of great people last year," said Robert Franco, one of the program's co-founders. "There are not many of us around. But I am glad to see the program is going strong."

The group started in 1991 and now has more than 400 volunteers.

Simmons, affectionately known as the "Bird Brain," had built hundreds of wood duck boxes over the years and is said to have banded more than 100,000 birds (see "Wood Duck Guru," page 59, *California Waterfowl*, Fall 2020 issue).

Rogers was a Life Member of CWA and received many awards for her work with the organization, such as the exceptional service award in 1993, 1995 and 1997, and the

Frank C. Bellrose Award in 1998. She also was a past board member for CWA, and past president of Cal-Ore Wetlands and Waterfowl Council. The Outdoor Writers Association of California honored her as the Californian of the Year in 1995.

In 1996, Rogers told *California Waterfowl*, "I am so busy these days that I can't hunt as much as I used to, but I enjoy it so." Rogers loved late-season hunting for mallards, especially when there was ice on Tule Lake and Lower Klamath refuges because "the birds are so big and beautiful that time of year," she said.

She was a hard worker and dedicated, said Franco.

"Iva was a friendly, nice person who just wanted to help because she loved waterfowl and waterfowl hunting," he said.

She had been involved in CWA since the 1970s and pushed to get more women involved in the organization and the sport.

Donations can be made in their memories to CWA. 🌿

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