AT LAST - A LAKE WITH NO TRASH: First you take a boat ride, then you walk several miles through a wilderness and climb a few vertical ladders. Go past the waterfall and crawl through a natural tunnel and there you will find Crypt Lake. You are now at elevation 6,400 feet in Waterton National Park, Alberta, Canada. Surrounded by lofty peaks and snowfields, this alpine jewel is a lake without people, and without trash (hmm, perhaps there is a connection there).

But if you can’t make it that far, come on down to our local lagoon where there are people, and trash, and help clean it up. When the rains come, so does the trash. Then we need your help.

BIRD FEEDERS: Do You Cause Angel Wing In Ducks And Geese?

Angel wing, also known as slipped wing, crooked wing or drooped wing, is a condition of ducks and geese where the last joint of the wing is twisted and the wing feathers point out, and do not lay smooth against the body.

The cause of angel wing is thought to be a nutritional problem due to excess feed. The only wild waterfowl populations known to be affected are those fed by man. In Sweden, ten different park populations of Canada geese produced angel wing. The following year one flock was not fed any artificial feed and there were no angel wing goslings produced. This condition can also be seen at Lake Merritt.

Lake Merritt birds have plenty of natural food. They don’t need your bread, or other human food, which is made for people, not for birds. So, unless you want to harm them, please do not feed the birds. (http://www.domestic-waterfowl.co.uk/index.htm)
**CLIMATE CORNER:**

- While the August heat wave and firestorm in Russia doubled the death rate and were the worst in many years, 17 other nations set or matched record temperatures. The list of countries setting their own records: Belarus, Ukraine, Cyprus, Russia, Finland, Qatar, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Niger, Chad, Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Ascension Island, and the Solomon Islands. Although not yet verified by the World Meteorological Organization, this summer a temperature of 128°F was recorded in Pakistan. The world record temperature may be 136°F, set in September 1922 in Libya.

Meanwhile at Lake Merritt, summer temperatures have been cool, perhaps due in part to a hotter central valley (where hot air rises and pulls in our cool, marine layer). In Fresno, about half of June was above average and 23 days in July were above normal (Fresno Bee, August 7, 2010). So it seems that while the rest of the world warms up, Oakland may experience cooler summers.

- Climate destabilization also brings trash, as shown by this photo on the Yangtze River at the Three Gorges Dam in China where floods carried so much debris that concerns were raised that a key outflow may be blocked. More than 3,000 tons of trash was being collected at the dam every day, but (unlike at Lake Merritt) there was still not enough manpower to clean it all up. Each flood cannot of course be blamed on climate change, but where is all the water from those melting upstream glaciers going? Down the Yangtze river.

And you thought Lake Merritt trash was bad!

**CREEK TO BAY DAY:** Mark your calendars - Saturday, September 25th will be Creek to Bay Day in Oakland (Coastal Clean Up Day). Once again the faithful will gather at the
Boathouse courtyard and sign up to clean a section of shoreline or clean an aeration fountain or outfall barrier. NOTE however that another group of 500-800 people will be using the parking lot so there will be limited (any?) parking anywhere nearby and probably congestion at the Lakeside Park entrance. Walkers, bikers and users of public transportation are therefore highly encouraged.

**GONDOLA SERVIZIO OFFICE UPGRADE:** Work is proceeding (and may now be done) on the new office for Gondola Servizio adjacent to the Lake Chalet dock. Included will be a new docking facility for the authentic Italian gondolas, and a gift shop where you may obtain masks and other appropriate items for your romantic tour of the Lake. Stop by whenever you can. Each boat can hold six, so the price per person is very reasonable.

**CITY TO OBTAIN NEW OUTFALL BARRIERS:** Sometime soon, hopefully before the winter rains, there will be brand new outfall barriers protecting the Lake at storm drain inlets by the 18th Street dock and at two locations along Lakeside Drive. Requested by the City’s Water Quality Technical Committee, the booms will be larger than the ones they are replacing and will have better floats. They may therefore not need the annual “removal of the mussels” procedure done by volunteers on Earth Day and Creek to Bay Day. Although they do not extend to the bottom, the floating barriers do prevent watershed litter from escaping into our Lake. Trapped there, the trash succumbs to our nets, is summarily deposited in bags and hauled off to a more appropriate location i.e. The Davis Street Transfer Station; good riddance. We look forward to this important improvement.

**LAKE MERRITT ON KQED:** “Polishing Oakland’s Crown Jewel: Lake Merritt Re-born” can be found by going to www.kqed.org/quest and doing a search for Lake Merritt. There you will find a delightful summary of recent upgrades, photos, a bit of history and interviews with local folks. What is Lake Merritt? How did measure DD get started and what has it accomplished? What lies in the future? These facts and more await you, as does the Lake that spawned it all.

**REPORT DUMPERS ONLINE:** You can report illegal dumping to Public Works through Keep Oakland Clean and Beautiful http://www.oaklandpw.com/Page856.aspx

**BIRD COLUMN:** Hey, Isn't It Spring?

Well, no, but some of the birds seem to think it is. At any rate, the Double-crested Cormorants are still hard at it in the trees on the islands, some with quite young babies to rear. And a pair of Nuttall's Woodpeckers - the ones with crosswise stripes down the back - were chasing each other through an oak tree by Children's Fairyland. We also had what I
was sure was a pair of Belted Kingfishers on the islands - but we later got a good look, and both were female, by the bright rust-colored belt across the middle. (This was the first time I recall seeing more than one kingfisher at the lake.)

All in all, the lake was surprisingly busy. I was figuring Canada Geese, Mallards, and maybe a few of the big Western Gulls, but we had all those, along with two other gulls (California and Ring-billed), five kinds of herons (all the usual suspects except Cattle Egrets), and Pied-billed Grebes and American Coots, too, both back from their summer meanderings. Plus a flotilla of American White Pelicans - seven of them, floating in like warships to join the rescue pelican on the lake.

On the domestic-bird front, the Midnight Goose-Dropper has been at it again, leaving a new black-beaked Chinese Goose (at any rate, it's been months since I've seen one of those) and three weird white geese with gold beaks about half as high as the Chinese Goose's black one and tufts of white feathers on top of their heads.

Over in the woods, the woodpeckers were joined by the usual Chestnut-backed Chickadees and a huge flock of Dark-eyed Juncos (the little ground-hoppers with pale beaks, slate-gray heads, and tails with two white feathers). One pair of juncos was accompanied by a young Brown-headed Cowbird, half again bigger than they but still begging - successfully - for food. (Nest parasitism at work, alas.) When they're around, juncos look so totally at home in the park you'd think they were there all the time, but we see them only a couple of times a year.

And there was a Bewick's Wren in the tree masquerading as a chickadee, and all sorts of Black Phoebes, and Oakland's scruffiest teen-aged robin, and hordes of hummingbirds, and something bright yellow that flew behind a branch and disappeared utterly. A very good - and unexpectedly interesting - day at Lake Merritt, where every day is a good day but some are even better than others....

**RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE:**

*Help name the Boating Center’s New Tour Boat.*

Recently launched, this larger vessel will soon be outfitted with a motor, canopy and seats. But what shall it be named? Contact the Center with your suggestions ([sherbelin@oaklandnet.com](mailto:sherbelin@oaklandnet.com)).

Hmmm. The RV Merritt Princess?

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