



# THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

**SPEAKER SERIES**

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center  
376 Greenwood Beach Road  
Tiburon, California 94920  
Information: 415/789-0703

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 7:30 PM**

**Coexisting With Coyotes:  
America's Native 'Song Dog'**

With Camilla H. Fox of Project Coyote  
[www.projectcoyote.org](http://www.projectcoyote.org)



Photo courtesy of projectcoyote.org

**Coyote pup**

Come learn about the remarkable adaptability and resiliency of *Canis latrans*, the coyote. He is a survivor through his amazing resourcefulness and keen intelligence and should engender our understanding and respect as an essential part of the ecosystem. Camilla's presentation will cover coyote biology and ecology in urban and rural areas, coyote-human coexistence, conflict management and the value of community-based conservation approaches.

Also to be shown is the informative award-winning documentary *American Coyote - Still Wild at Heart*. This short film is a virtual case study of the coyote's natural range expansion continent wide from Northern California to New York City's Central Park to Chicago and points in between.

**Camilla Fox** is a wildlife consultant, a leader in her field, with expertise in native carnivore conservation, human-wildlife conflict mitigation and the mission of promoting educated coexistence between people and coyotes.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 3 7:30 PM**

**Owls of Marin**

With Joe Mueller

## The 2010 Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count



Photo courtesy of Bill Lindquist

By Susan Kelly

**O**ur Christmas Bird Count on December 26 was successful and fun. One hundred and forty dedicated counters fanned out across South Marin, wandering the trails on Mt. Tam and Muir Woods, tromping around in the muddy wetlands at Corte Madera and Mill Valley Marsh, hiking and bicycling in the rugged Marin Headlands, kayaking in Bolinas Lagoon, scoping the ocean and beaches, and checking out local parks, creeks, and neighborhoods in the suburban areas of Fairfax, San Rafael, and Larkspur. Participants came from as far as Washington and Texas. In addition, 8 feeder watchers observed birds from their homes, an important aspect of the Count. We extend our gratitude to all of you, including a few teenagers: Cedric Duhalde and Logan Kahle, who helped us this year with their sharp eyes, ears, and excellent birding skills and a new and enthusiastic birder, Elisa Henderson.

We were fortunate to have many outstanding and experienced area leaders: Ellen Blustein, Albert Brewster, Courtney Buechert, Josiah Clark, Bridget Greuel, Mike Heffernon, Bob

Hirt, Alan Hopkins, Bob Lewis, Dominik Mosur, Ed Nute, Barbara Salzman, Rich Stallcup, Jean Starkweather, Lowell Sykes, James Weigand, Jim White, and David Wimpfheimer. We also welcomed several new area leaders: Iris Clearwater, Mark Forney, Andy Kleinhesselink, and Joe Mueller. We're truly grateful for their participation and hope they'll continue in future years.

The diversity of birds in our area was well reflected in our 2010 species total: 175 species on Count Day and 1 additional species during the Count Week period (12/23 - 12/29). Kudos to Josiah Clark's team at Bolinas Lagoon, who recorded an astonishing total of 133 species! We found several uncommon and/or unexpected birds, including Clapper Rails, several Vaux's Swifts, a Bald Eagle on Mt. Tam, a Bullock's Oriole, a Northern Pygmy-Owl, a juvenile Grosbeak (photographed at a feeder) and a Western Tanager that was observed during Count Week.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All phone numbers are in the 415 area code unless otherwise noted. Questions? Please contact the Board member.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
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Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

## DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members.

7:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month  
Richardson Bay Audubon Center  
376 Greenwood Beach Road  
Tiburon, California 94920

**MAS telephone:** 721-4271 (for messages only)

Marin Audubon Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All memberships and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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**Website:** [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org)  
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422  
(Provided by Golden Gate AS)

## DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Marin Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor or memory of someone. Gifts may be directed to any MAS project. Unspecified gifts of more than \$100 will be placed in the Endowment Fund for conservation, the protection of wildlife species and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats. Since MAS is an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes to its projects. All gifts are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged in *The Clapper Rail*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society. Checks should be made out and mailed to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

Our Christmas Bird Count was a great success thanks to the dedication and hard work of our volunteer compilers, Susan Kelly and Mark Forney. Do read Susan's excellent report on the count on page 1. On behalf of the MAS Board, I would also like to thank, in addition to those thanked by Susan, the other members of our CBC Team, Harrison Karr, Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris; Dianne Sierra who provided maps and help with data recording; Mary Ann Cowperthwaite, who kept track of dinner payments; Mariah Baird and Ankie Bajema, who staffed the sign-in table at the compilation dinner; Bob Hinz, who kept us on track with the Strawberry Recreation Center where we held the dinner this year; Ann Merrifield, Ed Nute and others who helped set up the room and clean up after the dinner, and Susan Ives for her clever bird-count poem sung to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." We couldn't have done it without each of you. It was a great day.

The Board also agreed to sponsor another bird count that would cover the north-eastern part of the county and include such notable birding spots as the Las Gallinas Ponds and Bahia. We will depend on the continued leadership of this year's compilers Susan Kelly and Mark Forney to make this new count happen.

A huge thank you to each who sent a year-end donation to MAS. As we have said before, we cannot do what we do without your financial help. Membership dues and grants provide an important part of our funding, but they are simply not enough to keep us going.

If you haven't sent in your donation yet, it is not too late. Do it now!

We are very pleased to announce that the award of a \$2,000 grant from Patagonia for habitat restoration on our Bahia property. Thank you to our fundraising chair, Flinn Moore Rauck for her work on this grant and, of course, special thanks to Patagonia for choosing our project.

Regarding our Speaker Series, the Board decided to continue the series on Thursdays for the rest of the year. The Board decided that three months has not been sufficient time to evaluate the day change, particularly considering that the newsletter did not get to members in time for one of those months. We will reconsider the day of the week for the Speaker Series next summer.

It's time to nominate board members again. Members interested in joining our Board should call the Nominating Committee (Phil Peterson, Martha Jarocki or Jude Stalker) for more information.

If I may be so presumptuous as to add to David Sibley's discussion (see the article on The Great Backyard Bird Count) – birders are never bored even when traveling on other continents. There is always a challenge of seeing a new bird, a satisfaction and joy in recognizing an old friend and identifying a new one. Backyard birding and going on our field trips are all great ways to learn about identifying birds. I learned by going on our field trips and I recommend it highly.

APRIL 29 - MAY 2, 2011

## 2011 Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival

Hold April 29 - May 2 for the 2011 Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival. Don't miss it!

Did you attend the Festival last April? If so, you know about the top guides, fabulous bird walks, outstanding pelagic trip to Cordell Bank, and tremendous camaraderie experienced by the 500 people who attended.

Festival attendees took part in over 50 walks and outings, and saw 200 species of birds (not to mention dozens of mammals, butterflies, marine mammals, and other wildlife!) in Western Marin and Sonoma Counties.

You can see the Festival species list, and read about the terrific walks and outings that were offered at the 2010 Festival at [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org), (currently our 2010 website).

For our 2011 Festival, we will once again

have great leaders and presenters such as Jules Evens, Lisa Hug, David Wimpfheimer and Sara Allen, plus Alvaro Jaramillo, field guide author and birding guide, as keynote speaker.

The 2011 Festival website and registration will be online soon. Last year, nearly every walk and outing sold out well before the Festival weekend, so, before you forget, send an e-mail to [prbnfestival@gmail.com](mailto:prbnfestival@gmail.com) to be notified when the on-line registration period opens for the 2011 Festival. You'll receive an e-mail a few weeks in advance of registration, and then two days before registration opens.

The Festival benefits the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC). You can read about some of EAC's conservation work at [www.eacmarin.org](http://www.eacmarin.org).

See you in April!

## MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

Bring lunch, field guide, and binoculars. For information, weather check and accessibility: Vicky Van Meter at 415/299-2514

### LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, February 3, 2011  
8:30 AM to 12 noon  
With Len Blumin

All are welcome to join Len Blumin on the first Thursday of each month for a walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds near McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and this walk is great for all levels of birders. February is prime time for waterfowl and a dozen or more species can be expected. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. Over 100 bird species have been reported as likely to be seen over the course of a year.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Highway 101 North, take the Smith Ranch Road exit, go east toward the McInnis Park entrance, turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and go to the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. Late arrivals should be able to find the group.

### RAPTORS, RAILS + WATERFOWL CENTRAL VALLEY/YOLO BASIN WILDLIFE AREA

Saturday, February 5, 2011  
8 AM for all-day trip  
With Terry Colborn  
916/705-8991  
www.tlcbirding.com

The open agricultural lands of the Central Valley provide great foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area are the winter home to thousands of waterfowl including ducks, geese, swans and many shorebirds, as well as both Sora and Virginia Rail. This all-day field trip will visit several local wintering habitats in search of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks; Merlin; Prairie Falcon; Burrowing, Barn and Great-horned Owls; as well as the elusive Mountain Plover. We also expect to see a representative sampling of the waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Davis Wetlands. Participants meet in Dixon.

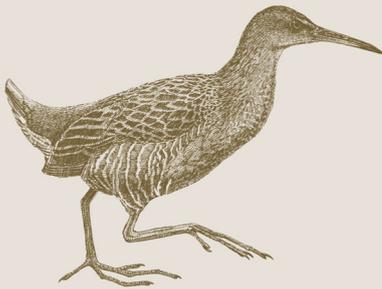
**DIRECTIONS:** From the Bay area take I-80 east to the Hwy 113 exit in Dixon. Meet in the southwest corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot located on East Dorset Drive at the Hwy 113 exit. Bring a lunch and liquids; dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels.

### CAPAY VALLEY YOLO COUNTY

Saturday, February 19, 2011  
8:30 AM to 3 PM  
With Terry Colborn  
916/705-8991  
www.tlcbirding.com

Join Terry Colborn for a delightful day in picturesque Capay Valley. The almond orchards should be at peak bloom as the valley's harbinger of the coming spring season. Our stops will include historic Capay Cemetery, Cache Creek and several favorite birding spots in idyllic Capay Valley. We'll look for Yellow-billed Magpie, Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Phainopepla, Western Bluebirds and resident raptors, as well as any lingering wintering raptors. We also hope to see some early spring arrivals such as Barn and Violet-green Swallows, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and warbler species. Past trips have produced Golden and Bald Eagles, Western Kingbird and Prairie Falcon. We should also see some early spring wildflowers along with Redbud, that very conspicuous flowering shrub along the roadside. Participants meet at Community Park in Esparto. Participants who wish to can also carpool from there.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 37 east to Vallejo then go east on I-80. Just past the new Nut Tree Center take I-505 north. Travel I-505 for about 20 miles to the Route 16 exit and turn left (west). Esparto is located about 4 miles west on Route 16; the park is in the center of town. Driving time is about 1.5 hrs but allow a little extra time, as there may be early morning fog. Bring lunch, liquids and dress in layers and wear sturdy footwear, as we will do a little walking. Heavy rain cancels. For more information contact Terry. Contact information is on the left.



### HUMBOLDT COUNTY WEEKEND AND ALEUTIAN GOOSE FLY-OFF

Saturday - Sunday, March 5 - 6, 2011  
8 AM or Noon  
With Ken Burton

Former MAS board member and outstanding ornithologist and guide, Ken Burton, will lead us on a two-day exploration of his current stomping grounds. The itinerary will be loose and flexible. We'll spend time looking for species that don't occur in our area (such as Black-capped Chickadee and Gray Jay) and any vagrants that may be around. We'll also visit some of Humboldt's awesome general birding sites such as the Arcata Marsh and Humboldt Bay NWR. Participants wanting to drive up on Friday can meet Ken at 8 AM Saturday at the south end of South I Street in Arcata. We'll be back there at noon for lunch and high-tide birding and to meet anyone traveling on Saturday. Pack a picnic lunch at least for Saturday. Sunday morning we'll witness the Aleutian Goose fly-off at the Refuge and bird that area until early afternoon. Recommended lodging at Silver Side Motel in Fields Landing (707/445-5931). Call Ken at 707/825-1124 or Vicky Van Meter at 415/299-2514 (vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com) for more information. Please write to Ken at shriekthree@gmail.com if you will be attending and whether you are arriving Friday or Saturday.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 101 north to Arcata. Exit at Samoa Blvd (Exit 713), then turn left at South I Street. The road ends at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. Allow six hours travel time from Marin.

## Christmas Bird Count

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Far more important than the actual number of species we counted is the long-term perspective on bird populations our data provides to scientists, ecologists, and conservationists. As noted in an article on National Audubon's website "In 2009, the data were instrumental in Audubon's Birds and Climate Change analysis, which documented range shifts of bird species over time." CBC data



Photo courtesy of Susan Kelly

### CBC counters at Tennessee Valley

was studied to assess "the winter distribution of 305 species to see if their winter range had shifted over the last 40 years." Their conclusion: Warmer temperatures are altering their ranges, as "177 of these species showed a significant shift north and this northward shift was correlated with an increase in mean January temperatures in the contiguous 48 states of almost 5 degrees during that time." (Quoted from *Birds and Climate Change: An Analysis of the Christmas Bird Count*, at <http://birdsandclimate.audubon.org/cbcanalysis.html>).

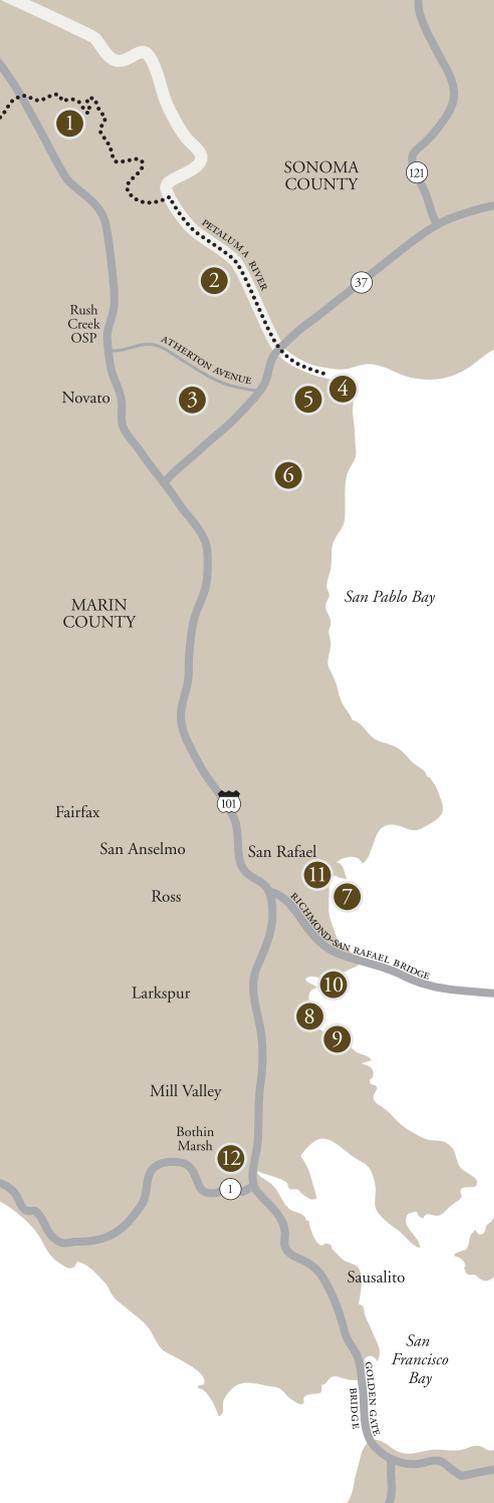
Remember this when you're out in the field on a cold wintry day next December counting common birds like robins, chickadees, sparrows, hummingbirds, crows, and even those noisy starlings.

For those of you who participated: Way to go! For those of you who didn't, please consider joining us next year. It's hard work, but fun and rewarding. Our 2011 plans include several training sessions to help improve our bird identification skills and learn how to estimate large flocks.

Stay tuned!

# CONSERVATION

Marin Audubon Conservation Committee reviews critical issues related to wildlife habitats and comments to cities, agencies, and other jurisdictions. To attend, phone Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057.



## MIRA MONTE, MORE FUNDS NEEDED

We have fewer than two months left to raise the funds we need to purchase the Mira Monte property. We are continuing to look for funding and are trying to work with the Department of Fish and Game to address their concerns that include public access and sufficient funding to manage the property. We finally have a meeting scheduled with the Department for mid-January.

We also have been working with our legislators, Assemblyman Mark Leno and Senator Jared Huffman to help move the project along. MAS will retain ownership of the property until the buildings are removed and marsh and other habitats restored, or longer if necessary until Fish and Game is willing to take over ownership.

*What you can do to help:* Donate to the Marin Baylands Fund at the Marin Community Foundation.

## MAS APPEALS DECISION ON MET TOWERS

MAS has appealed to the California Coastal Commission the Marin County Board of Supervisors' approval of meteorological towers on two ranches in West Marin. Our appeal requested the Commission to require an Initial Study to provide sufficient information and analysis to ensure compliance with the Coastal Act and the Marin County Local Coastal Plan. An Initial Study would provide a more adequate description and analysis of the project including potential impacts, as well as baseline information about the unique habitats of the watershed where the project is located. We believe this is essential to protect the unique natural resources of the Estero de San Antonio watershed as required by the Coastal Act and Local Coastal Plan.

The two towers would be built within the watershed of the Estero de San Antonio. Jules Evens, principal at Avocet Research Associates, describes the towers as being "located amidst wetlands and coastal environments that have been designated as protected areas (Ramsar site) because of their great natural diversity and biological value, especially to birds." County staff and Supervisors completely ignored these unique values in rushing to approve the project.

Evens goes on to assert that "An Initial Study to define and identify these variables (topographic and meteorological features, coastal fog, wind, and abrupt ridgelines) is critical to ensure that this project does not result in adverse impacts to native wildlife."

The Environmental Action Committee of West Marin, five private citizens and two Coastal

Commissioners also submitted appeals of the Supervisors' decision to the Coastal Commission.

## CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO CONSIDERS BIRD-SAFE BUILDING ORDINANCE

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Dr. Daniel Klem is quoted in San Francisco's *Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings* "collisions with glass on buildings may account for between 100 million and 1 billion birds deaths annually in North America."

The first recorded collision event was on September 10, 1948 when more than 200 birds of 30 species were killed upon colliding with the Empire State Building. San Francisco is about to take action to protect from that fate the 400 bird species that move through that city.

Glass is one of the least recognized but one of the most serious threats to birds. Steel and glass buildings came into widespread use after World War II. Clear glass is invisible to birds and to humans. Both can learn to recognize and avoid it, but for birds the first encounter is often fatal and often not instantaneous. They may die as a result of internal hemorrhaging over days. Birds collide with transparent windows that are reflecting the sky, clouds or nearby vegetation. These appear to be safe routes, shelter and even sources of food. Low buildings are more of a hazard because windows at the canopy level are more likely to reflect adjacent vegetation. Windowed courtyards and open-topped atria can be deathtraps, especially if heavily planted. Birds fly down into such places and then try to fly out by flying toward the reflections. In the suburbs, office park buildings with large windows have been documented to kill 30 birds per building annually (O'Connell 2001).

Lighting increases the risk for songbirds, many of which migrate at night. There are numerous documentations of single-night mortalities of hundreds of birds at a single location. Lights impede birds' ability to see navigational markers in the stars and moon. Birds have been observed clustering around lights circling upward appearing disoriented but unable or unwilling to move away, increasing the likelihood of collisions. Important energy stores are consumed in such non-productive flight (Ogden 2006). White and red lights and skyglow from brightly lit buildings can distort normal flight routes (Poil et al. 2008). Single event strikes are often tied to inclement weather, which obscures obstacles and exacerbates skyglow conditions (Ogden 1996).

San Francisco's draft ordinance would require

*continued on page 5*

## MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	2 parcels
5. Black Point Parcels	2 parcels
6. Arroyo San Jose	2 parcels
7. Tidelands at Murphy's Rock	34 acres
8. Corte Madera Marsh	1.8 acres
9. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
10. San Clemente Creek	4.34 acres
11. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres

# Join the 14th Annual Backyard Bird Count

Folks of all ages and skill levels in bird identification are welcome to join the thousands of people throughout the US and Canada for the four-day Backyard Bird Count. It is a great way to learn about birds in your backyard and community.

Participation means counting birds for at least 15 minutes per day on one or more days of the count. You may count in as many places and on as many days as you like, recording the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any time. Go to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/) for more information and to sign up. You then send your results – a list for each new day and location – to [gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/input](http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/input). Your data will be included in the national database maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, co-sponsors of the count.

Teachers and grandparents who participated

in the Backyard Counts in previous years talk about the benefits and enthusiasm of their students and grandchildren. Benefits of backyard birding are well articulated in a recent article by noted ornithologist, David Allen Sibley: “Backyard is an elastic term. It may be stretched to include a tree-lined neighborhood street or a vacant lot. Birdwatchers are never bored. No matter where their travels take them on this continent, they are bound to spot familiar species, or ones that by plumage or voice, announce their close relationship to old acquaintances at home. There is a satisfying resonance to renewed contact with any bird. Each encounter may bring back pleasant memories of other sightings – in their periods and places . . . . These [backyard birds] are the birds of our own environment, promising a lifetime of pleasure and knowledge as we move out into a wider world.”

## Conservation report

*continued from page 4*

owners of new buildings and major remodels to evaluate buildings according to a bird-safe check list. Provisions include:

- Identifying bird hazards and using bird-safe treatments such as glazing, ceramic dots applied between layers of glass, angled glass, external screens, and louvers to deter birds where bird hazards are high.
- Requiring wind generators to be solid in appearance so birds can see them.
- Eliminating or reducing night lighting near windows; using the minimum exterior lighting necessary for public safety; and using fixtures that direct light downward.

Just turning off lights significantly reduces bird deaths. San Francisco already has a “Lights Out” program that requires building owners, managers and tenants to turn off unnecessary lighting during spring and fall migrations.

*How you can help:* Express your support for this innovative ordinance to: AnMarie Rogers, Mgr. of Legislative Affairs, San Francisco Planning Dept., 1650 Mission St., Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103.

The Planning Commission will consider adopting the standards in early 2011. To view the draft *Standards for Bird Safe Buildings* publication from which the above information was gleaned, go to the San Francisco Planning Department’s web site, [www.sf-planning.org/](http://www.sf-planning.org/); it is on the list of Latest Publications. It is a well-researched and compelling presentation of the history of building hazards, the problems for birds, and solutions.

A NON-MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIP

## Birding at Bahia

Novato

Saturday, February 12, 2011

8:45 AM to 12 noon

With Lowell Sykes

*Marin Audubon Society Field Trip Leader*

This event is held in conjunction with the 15th Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival headquartered on Mare Island in Vallejo. For more information about the Festival see [www.sfbayflywayfestival.com/default.htm](http://www.sfbayflywayfestival.com/default.htm).

This field trip area consists of rare blue oak woodlands bordering salt marsh habitat. Shallow, newly restored fresh water ponds and tidal marshes provide excellent habitat for a diverse assemblage of birds. Expect to see migratory shorebirds, waterfowl, diving birds and raptors, as well as land birds on the adjacent oak woodlands and grasslands. All levels welcome.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 in Novato, take Atherton Avenue exit, go east about 1 mile, and turn left onto Bugeia Drive, which becomes Bahia Drive. Park at the end of Bahia Drive.

From Hwy 37, take Atherton Avenue exit, travel north about 2.3 miles on Atherton Avenue, turn right onto Bugeia and then follow directions above.

Heavy rain cancels. Call 415/388-2821 for information.

### THANKS TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS:

Christine Albert, Bella Amex, Peter Clay, Shayne and Sianna Decent, Shea Drake, Jack Duncan, Bob Hinz, Jane Piel, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Therese and Story Vreeland.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Donna Alexander, Janet Allen, Elise and Francis Ardourel, Ellen M. Arnaud, Victoria Beckner, Roxanna Bishop, Margaret G. Burke, Charlene Carty, Paul Cassella, Martin Cline, Janet and Floyd Dean, Rowena DeMayo, Joan Farrell, Allan J. Flach, Birgitta Garde, Peter Gear, Walter and Diana Giachini, Kathleen Goodhue, Stephen Grant, Lucile Griffiths, Karen Hemmeter, Donald Humphreys, Tory Hutchinson, Paul Kelemen, Sheri Liebscher, Wendy Lilienthal, The Lillestol family, Emi Lin, Albert Lubersky Trust, Katherine Martinez, Ruth McCarty, Lori McLoughlin, Janet McRoberts, Emaline Meill, L. Musetti, Gloria Neumier, Anne Norman, Nancy and James Osborn, Cheryl Patton, Ellen Pesavento, Pia Saldarriaga, Nancy Sanftner, Sandra Sedgwick, Anitra Seitamo, Roland C. Smith, Gary and Judith Sorgen, James Stoppello, Mike Tar, Thomas Taylor, Max and Phyllis Thelen, Sabra Valdick, Dick and Jackie Walton

### MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

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## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

Rains during November and December have been phenomenal. We made a great effort to get the creeping wild rye rhizomes planted out to the end of the east and west peninsulas. The earlier they get into the ground the longer the growing season will be. This is the first year that we have had early rain since project construction was completed. Hopefully the rains will continue.

We hired the Conservation Corps North Bay to finish planting creeping wild rye on the east and west peninsulas, remove Harding grass and plant creeping wild rye rhizomes in its place. In addition, we hired workers from the Watershed Nursery to help us establish “scrub thickets” along the east and west peninsulas. The thickets will serve as high tide refuge habitats, foraging areas and roosting habitat, as recommended by

our plant ecologist, Peter Baye, Ph.D. Working with the Watershed Nursery, we planted five thickets on the west peninsula and six on the east, with California Rose, Coast Live Oak, Blue Elderberry, and Coyote Bush.

Our Estuary 2100 grant enabled us to hire workers to get the basic planting finished in December. There remains a lot to do, filling in areas where the rhizomes did not survive from last year, making the planted areas more dense and, as always, removing invasive plants.

We depend on our dedicated volunteers to maintain and plant these habitats. We just wish we had more of you. At Bahia we will continue to have workdays on the second Saturday and alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays. See the schedule on the left.

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Longer days and warmer temperatures mean that the growth of some of our invasive non-native annual plants will accelerate. Our work days at Triangle Marsh and Bahia will largely turn to removing radishes, various thistles and other early season weeds. The planting season is practically over, but we may put a few more of the ‘good guys’ into the ground. Late winter planting may not allow enough time for new plants to establish themselves before the dry summer. We usually work until about 1 PM, but even an hour is valuable help. Everyone is welcome.

#### Bahia, Novato:

Thursday, February 3

Wednesday, February 9

Second Saturday, February 12

Thursday, February 17

Wednesday, February 23

Thursday, March 3

We will meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Drive near Bolero Court and the tennis courts.

#### Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturday, February 5

Ask before coming on this date.

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Drive directly across from the main Ring Mountain trailhead.

If you would like to help, please contact Bob Hinz at [rbrthnz@comcast.net](mailto:rbrthnz@comcast.net) or 415/383-8688.

### eBIRD.ORG

Are you disappointed that you couldn't make the Southern Marin CBC the day after Christmas? Have your own mini 'makeup count.' Invite a friend. Go birding. Report your bird observations at [eBird.org](http://eBird.org)

### DECEMBER 12 FIELD TRIP

## Birding the Northwest Passage, Tomales Bay And Chileno Valley

By Dave Herrema

Many of us had never been to Dillon Beach and Lawson's Landing, so this was a particularly interesting trip. We enjoyed the sweeping views of Tomales Bay as it hits the Pacific, Pt. Reyes Peninsula across the Bay, and Bodega Head to the north. Always an outstanding trip leader, David Wimpfheimer discussed the issues surrounding Lawson's Landing, the largest private campground on the California coast. I thought I saw the peninsula move a bit when he talked about the San Andreas Fault.

We set up our scopes to survey the open water of the bay and nearby mudflats. Although there were almost 30 participants, we had at least 10 scopes so everyone had good looks at some of the more distant birds. These included Brant, grebes (including Red-necked), cormorants and loons. Hundreds of Least Sandpiper shared the flats with Western Sandpiper, Dunlin, Sanderling, Short-billed Dowitcher, Marbled Godwit, and Black-bellied Plover. Forster's Tern, Surf Scoter and Western Gull added to the mix. All eyes were watching the shorebirds overhead in anticipation of what put them in the air. Two Peregrine Falcon soon appeared.

Leaving the coast, we birded some of the spectacular ranch country along Valley Ford and Chileno Valley Roads in West Marin. At one stop, we had at least a dozen Red-tailed Hawks and a pair of White-tailed Kites all doing their thing; it seemed like hawks were everywhere. The elusive Ferruginous Hawk



Loggerhead shrike

Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin



Least sandpipers

Photo courtesy of Bill Lindquist

stayed that way. A farm pond produced 20 Hooded Mergansers, including six drakes, and a beautiful drake Ring-necked Duck. Another pond had several Bufflehead, one of our smallest ducks and a favorite of many. A Loggerhead Shrike finished the great day.

# MARIN BIRDLOG – DECEMBER 2010

By Rich Stallcup

December 2010 was wet but there were no prolonged freezes. Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) at the end of the month thus yielded more than the usual number of unseasonable frugivores and insectivores. Waterbirds appear to be in good shape but Loggerhead Shrike is teetering on the edge of extirpation. Some very rare species were found!

**Eurasian Wigeon** were in widespread evidence but a male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** at Bolinas 12/16 (RS) was the only one reported. Two male and one female **Redheads** 12/9 (RS, m.ob) off Millerton Point were on Tomales Bay (where 20 years ago over 100 were usual) and stayed for the CBC 12/18. A male **Tufted Duck** at Abbott's Lagoon 12/18 (AK) was almost certainly the same one at the same place observed by the same birder on the 2009 CBC.

A **Yellow Rail** was closely watched at the south end of Tomales Bay for the Point Reyes CBC 12/18 (TE,KH) and two **Black Rails** were seen during the flood-tide nearby 12/20 (RS) for inclusion in the CBC period.

A basic (winter) plumage **Little Stint** found 12/16 (AK) at lower Abbott's Lagoon was there the next day (m.ob) but gone on count day! This **Paleartic** sandpiper is accidental anywhere in the Americas – especially in winter! A **Rhinoceros Auklet** was actively feeding near Marshall inside

Tomales Bay 12/9 (AB,m.ob). Healthy “rhinos” are usually offshore in the ocean.

Several **Long-eared Owls** were once again at their historic roost in Southern Marin on the CBC 12/26 (SK,LK). For the protection of the species, we do not publish directions to the location of particularly sensitive wildlife.

We have become used to the fact that a very few **Vaux's Swifts** are slimly seen at Las Gallinas during winter but 25 of them with 40 **White-throated Swifts** 12/16 (Birdschool) over the town of Stinson Beach were startling. The same day an adult male **Barn Swallow** was coursing over Stinson Beach dunes (JO, m.ob). Barn Swallows *should* be in the southern cone of South America in mid-December. A big surprise was a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** near Barrie's Bay on the O.P. 12/18 (KB,KW,JS), only the sixth ever for Marin, the second for the CBC, and the first on the O.P. A “**Western**” **Flycatcher** (we cannot specifically identify silent, out-of-range or unseasonable individuals ... and the two are not species anyway) was very well seen 12/18 (SK,IS,HC,RS) on the Point Reyes CBC at the PRNS Headquarters' riparian. On 12/7, PRBO biologists captured and banded an **Eastern Phoebe** at the Muddy Hollow monitoring site (*fide* DH), and a Bullock's Oriole at Bolinas 12/26 (IS,SK) was nice for the Southern Marin CBC. Two **Palm Warblers** were reported on the PRCBC from the south end of Abbott's 12/18 (SP).

A female **Pheucticus grosbeak** at a feeder in Corte Madera most of December (NW) was an apparent **Black-headed x Rose-breasted** hybrid. Two or three **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** together near the south end of Tomales Bay 12/18 (TE,KH) were high-tide refugees from the salt marsh where their winter presence is nearly annual.

For the second winter a “**Large-billed**” **Savannah Sparrow** (almost certainly its own full species) was found in sedges on the west side of lower Abbott's Lagoon (m.ob). It represents the first of its taxa for Marin County.

An off-ratio flock of six **Zonotrichia sparrows** at Olema 12/18 was made up of one **Golden-crowned** and five **White-throateds** (HC). It is not unusual for some West Marin feeders to attract several White-throated Sparrows but it is very rare to locate a nearly homogeneous “wild” flock. One “**red**” **Fox Sparrow** near Inverness Park 12/18 (TE) was almost certainly *Passerella iliaca zaboria* from Alaska. Over twenty **Swamp Sparrows** found 12/18 on the PRCBC was back up to the numbers of 15 years ago.

An invasion of **Evening Grosbeaks** to the coastal lowlands of Central California included thirty-two munching on Box Elder seeds behind the PRNS Headquarters' buildings 12/18 (IS,SK,RS).

The Point Reyes Peninsula CBC totaled just over 200 species which, for diversity, will be in the top ten in the nation!

Observers Sarah Acosta, Bob Battagin, Kathi Borgmann, Al Brewster, Mark Butler, Heather Cameron, Todd Easterla, Jules Evens, Keith Hansen, Diana Humple, Logan Kale, Susan Kelly, John Kelly, Andy Kleinhesselink, Stefani Krantz, William Legge, Margareta Luff, m.ob = many observers, Judy Obedzinski, O.P.= Outer Point Reyes Peninsula, Steve Phillips, PRBO Conservation Science, Mary Anne Rotella, Maggie Rufo, Ivan Samuels, Jim Saracco, Rich Stallcup, Nick Whelan, Jim White, Kerry Wilcox.

## Junior Bird Watchers

Christmas Bird Counts for Kids began in Sonoma in 2008 and have multiplied to several states and Canada with the support of National Audubon. This year with various sponsors and organizers there were at least three in the North Bay area. They are patterned after the CBCs for adults but are designed to be less demanding and more family friendly. Look for one next year!

## First Children's Christmas Bird Count at Point Reyes

By Pierre Beaurang  
Second grader, Bacich E. S.

Point Reyes is the best place to go birding! It has 45% of all the birds in North America. Here are just a few of the ones you might see: Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Moorhens, Cinnamon Teals, Song Sparrows, Varied Thrushes, Wilson's Warblers, Hermit Thrushes, Fox Sparrows, American Kestrels, Turkey Vultures, American Robins, Acorn Woodpeckers, Brewer's Blackbirds, Black Phoebes, Peregrine Falcons, Say's Phoebes, and more!

I saw many of these birds when I attended the First Children's Christmas Bird Count at Point Reyes National Seashore. It was the first Children's Christmas Bird Count in any national park in the United States! It felt like we were making history. It was very exciting seeing the ruby crown of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet while on the Bear Valley Trail. Our flock of bird counters was called the Peregrine Falcons. Our “bird brain” group leader was Wendy Dreskin. Wendy is a great teacher. Not only does she teach birds, but she also teaches about butterflies, mushrooms, and other insects and plants.

I can't wait until the Second Children's Christmas Bird Count at Pt. Reyes next year!



Photo courtesy of Len Blainin

Tufted duck



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The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter members. We work collaboratively with the National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. MAS relies on local support for our habitat protection efforts, conservation advocacy, birding field trips, educational speakers series, and publication of *The Clapper Rail*, which you will receive as a MAS member. To better ensure we can continue our programs on the local level, MAS offers a separate chapter membership. Your membership in MAS will help us protect local habitats, resident and migratory birds and provide you with educational and enjoyable programs as well.

If you are not already a chapter member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

You can also join or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to [marinaudubon.org](http://marinaudubon.org).

## JOINT NAS-MAS MEMBERSHIP

A National Audubon Society Membership is a joint membership with National and the chapter. With this joint membership, you will receive our newsletter and other chapter benefits, however, MAS receives no portion of your National Audubon Membership dues. We receive a fixed amount based on our 2001 membership. We will receive, however, a portion of any new memberships that are generated by MAS, the local chapter. So we request that you send all checks for new National memberships to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

For NAS membership renewals, send your check directly to NAS.

## Join or Donate to the Marin Audubon Society

Please fill in this form and mail to the address below. If you are paying by check, please make it payable to **Marin Audubon Society**. For more information, please contact Mary Nealon, Membership Secretary at 415/233-6602.

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