



# THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

**SPEAKER SERIES**

Free and Open to the public

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

**THURSDAY, MARCH 8 7:30 PM**

**Restoring the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge**

With Melissa Pitkin



**Farallon Islands**

The islands of the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge, which host the largest seabird colony in the United States outside of Alaska and Hawaii, have 25% of California's breeding seabirds with more than 300,000 individuals of 13 species. About 50% of the world's population of the rare Ashy Storm-Petrel breed on the Farallons, but non-native house mice are threatening this globally significant colony. Melissa will speak about the impacts the mice are having on the ecosystem and on the need for mouse eradication. She will review the process being used by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to decide how best to respond to the problem. More at [www.restorethefarallones.org](http://www.restorethefarallones.org)

**Melissa Pitkin** began working with PRBO in 1998. As Director of Communications and Outreach, Melissa oversees the design and delivery of PRBO's conservation communications and education programs to students, community members and conservation professionals. She is chair of the SF Bay Joint Venture Outreach Committee, and is active with the education committee for Partners in Flight.

Come at 7:15 PM for cookies and conversation.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 12 7:30 PM**

**Sandhill Crane Behavior**

With Paul Tebbel

## Update: Port Sonoma/Carneros Ranch Fill Project

By Phil Peterson

In the face of legal and environmental challenges to a massive plan that would have filled over 530 acres of historic baylands along the Petaluma River, owners of the Port Sonoma Marina and Carneros Ranch have agreed to pay for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Approvals for the project given by the Sonoma Board of Zoning Adjustments last July would have been allowed to stand had not the Sonoma Group of the Sierra Club appealed the decision to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

As reported in last month's *The Clapper Rail*, a hearing was set for January 24th before the Supervisors to rule on the appeal. In a surprise move just days before the hearing, County

officials received a letter from the property owners agreeing to conduct "further environmental review." The applicant's representative announced at the hearing that they would pay for an EIR. We assume, with this public declaration, that Sonoma County will formally begin the EIR process.

Marin Audubon Society, along with the Sierra Club's Sonoma and Marin Groups, the Black Point Improvement Club, and the Marin Conservation League can be credited for organizing a very effective campaign to strongly advocate for the protection of wildlife and habitat found at this site as well as lands surrounding it. This coalition raised funds to pay for expert legal guidance from the noted environmental law firm of Schute Mihaley and Weinberger who has advised Marin Audubon in the past. The coalition also submitted expert reports on biological impacts from Peter Baye, Ph.D. and air quality concerns from the firm of Pless Environmental. A special thank you is in order to Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey for providing a compelling letter urging the Supervisors to require a thorough environmental review and EIR.

We now await the next steps which presumably will include an opportunity to submit comments on issues to be addressed in the EIR, preparation of a draft EIR and ultimately a final EIR. Marin Audubon will most certainly be following this process closely, along with our partners. We will keep you all informed as things unfold and bring your attention to opportunities to comment as they arise.

**Adelle penguin** — Barbara's favorite species of penguin. See President's message on page 2.



Photo courtesy of Jay Salzman

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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.

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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. If you wish to attend please call 924-6057.

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.

*The Clapper Rail* is published ten times a year by the Marin Audubon Society on 100% recycled paper. Edited by Bob Hinz rbrthnz@comcast.net, 383-8688; and assisted by other members of MAS. Deadline is the first of each month.

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**Web site:** 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

I've returned from a spectacular visit to Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. The scenery, ragged mountains, cliffs, rolling hills, rocky shorelines, fjords and icebergs, is quite incredible, and the wildlife was even more impressive. We saw all eight species of penguins (one immature emperor on an iceberg), four species of Albatross, Giant Petrels, Shearwaters, Kelp Gulls, Shags, and other indigenous birds such as Sheathbill. Sadly, the Wandering Albatross population has declined significantly. They are caught in long-line fishing hooks and in the mesh of trawlers. But the decline has slowed since the South Georgia government has enacted fishing restrictions.

We stayed on a Russian ship, traveled in zodiacs from the ship touring shorelines to view habitats and wildlife, and landed to visit penguin colonies and a few albatross colonies. We also spotted birds and mammals from the ship. Occasionally we were cold and wet, but for the most part the temperature was tolerable, in the 30s or higher; after all, it is their summer. We had close encounters with humpback whales, Weddell, leopard, crab eater, and elephant seals and penguins that use icebergs for resting. Global warming was evident. Glaciers have been receding at a rapid rate in recent years.

Sadly the Antarctic has some of the same problems that we do with invasive species. Rats, introduced by early sealing ships, are voracious consumers of eggs and chicks of most small seabird species. The South Georgia government has concluded that the only effective way to

eradicate these rodents is to spread toxic bait via helicopter. Their program includes collecting carcasses, and there has been minimal evidence of incidental kills for a number of reasons. Most birds eat only prey from the oceans, and the baiting is timed to avoid the seasonal migratory bird scavengers, skuas and giant petrels. Most rats die in their burrows so they are inaccessible to potential predators. The government anticipates full eradication. Since the first treatment in 2011, the South Georgia pipit, which was on the verge of extinction, has shown an impressive rebound.

Back home, Bay Conservation and Development Commission Executive Director, Will Travis, retired in late December and was honored for his 16 years as Executive Director at a festive event in the Ferry building. Travis walked the thin line between conservation and development with humor and creativity. He will be missed but will still be active serving as a consultant to the Joint Powers Agency, a regional body that will be preparing a sea level rise adaptation strategy for the region.

MAS has two special activities coming up: Meryl Sundove's Spring Birds Class and our Mother's Day Barbecue. For additional information, please see the flyer insert and page 5 of *The Clapper Rail*.

Very special thank yous again to Susan Kelly and Mark Forney, co-compilers of the Cheep Thrills and Southern Marin CBCs, and to John Longstreth and Tom Gaman, co-compilers of the Point Reyes Count. By all reports, the three counts were most successful.

## Highlights of the Southern Marin CBC

On December 31, 2011 the 37th Southern Marin County (count code = CAMC) Christmas Bird Count was conducted in fine weather and good company. Over 120 observers in 23 Areas within the 15-mile diameter Count Circle observed a total of 184 species, three species more than the 36-year historical average for the CAMC. Several additional observers monitored their backyards and bird feeders. Thank you to all the participants who continue to make the CAMC one of the best attended and most well-counted Christmas Bird Counts in the United States.

Count Day ended with a compilation dinner at the Tam Valley Community Center. Thanks go to the staff there who helped make it a great evening. Thank you as well to the volunteers who prepared for the dinner and saw it through to a successful conclusion.

Unusual species, those not observed in at least five of the previous ten CAMC Counts, included:

Species	Observed by	Location
Bald Eagle	Doug Henderson's Team Josiah Clark's Team	Audubon Canyon Area Bolin's Lagoon Area
Black Rail	Peter Pyle	Bolin's Lagoon Area
Bullock's Oriole	Keith Hansen	Bolin's Lagoon Area
Cassin's Vireo	Rich Stallcup's Team	Stinson Beach Area
Nashville Warbler	Marian Porter's Team Keith Hansen	Alpine Lake Area Bolin's Lagoon Area
Northern Pygmy-Owl	Rich Stallcup's Team	Stinson Beach Area
Prairie Falcon	Gene Hunn and Keith Hansen Rich Stallcup's Team	Bolin's Lagoon Area Stinson Beach Area
Redhead	Jean Starkweather's Team	Terra Linda Area
Rhinoceros Auklet	Scott Carey's Team	Fort Cronkhite Area
Summer Tanager	Keith Hansen	Bolin's Lagoon Area
Violet-green Swallow	Rich Stallcup's Team	Stinson Beach Area
Wilson's Warbler	Peter Pyle	Bolin's Lagoon Area

## MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility and weather check: Vicky Van Meter, 415/299-2514, vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com

### LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Thursdays, March 1, April 5  
8:30 AM to 12 noon  
With Susan Kelly and friends

Beginner birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds near McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and over 100 species have been reported over the course of a year. Late winter and spring are busy times at the ponds and provide an opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other groups, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy. 101 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 end of the road to the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 8:30 AM but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group.

### DEL VALLE REGIONAL PARK, LIVERMORE

Wednesday, March 14, 2012  
8:30 AM to 2 PM  
With Rich Cimino

Join Rich Cimino to explore Del Valle Park, ten miles south of Livermore. Rich has been birding this area for 35 years and is active in many environmental groups. He is an enthusiastic teacher and leads birding trips throughout the West through Yellowbilled Tours. This will be a walking birding trip on mostly flat surfaces. We will bird several habitats, including lake, shoreline, cattail swamp and oak woodlands. Yellow-billed Magpie frequent this area. Bring lunch, fluids, scopes, and layered clothing. Rain cancels trip.

**DIRECTIONS:** Del Valle Regional Park is located south of Livermore on Del Valle Rd. off Mines Rd. (\$6/vehicle parking fee). Exit I-580 eastbound or westbound in Livermore at N. Livermore Ave. Head south and proceed through town; N. Livermore Ave. will become S. Livermore Ave. in town. About 1.5 miles outside town, turn right at Mines Rd., go about 3.5 miles and continue straight on Del Valle Rd. (Mines Rd. turns left). The park entrance is about four miles ahead. We will meet in the Eagle View Group Camp parking area just beyond the entry kiosk. To find us in case of late arrival, call Rich on his cell at 925/353-0266. [www.ebparks.org/parks/delvalle](http://www.ebparks.org/parks/delvalle)

### HUDEMAN SLOUGH, SONOMA

Saturday, March 17, 2012  
8 AM to 12 noon  
With Murray Berner

Murray Berner will be our guide at Hudeman Slough in southeastern Sonoma County. Murray leads a weekly field trip for Napa-Solano Audubon and is the primary author of the Napa Breeding Bird Atlas. Hudeman Slough is a unit of the Sonoma Wetland Enhancement Project. The flooded freshwater lowlands attract waterfowl and shorebirds including a Ruff this winter. By mid-morning, raptors are aloft, including Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle and various falcons. Songbirds are typical of North Bay tidal marsh plus Loggerhead Shrike and lots of wintering sparrows. River Otter is common. A 2.5 mile levee loop trail provides access. Be at the parking lot at 8 AM.

**DIRECTIONS:** Hudeman Slough access is off Ramal Rd. between Skaggs Island Rd. and Hwy. 12. To get to Ramal Rd. from Marin, take Hwy. 101 North to Hwy. 37 East (toward Vallejo). At the big Infineon Raceway sign, turn left onto Hwy. 121 North/Carneros Hwy. Follow 121 for 8-9 miles. You will pass the Fremont Diner on your left and then Ramal Rd. will be on your immediate right. Continue on Ramal Rd. for about 2 miles. The gravel parking area is adjacent to a large open hay barn on the south side of the road. There are no bathroom facilities at Hudeman. Allow about 30-40 minutes from north Marin. [www.sonomahikingtrails.com/parks/hudeman-slough-wetlands](http://www.sonomahikingtrails.com/parks/hudeman-slough-wetlands)

### SILENTLY SEEKING SONGBIRDS: PRACTICING THE ART OF LISTENING MT. BURDELL, NOVATO

Tuesday, April 3, 2012  
7:30 AM to 12 noon  
With Susan Kelly and  
Marian Porter

Join Susan Kelly and Marian Porter on Mt. Burdell to listen to spring bird songs. Serious birders know that silence is essential to locating and observing spring songbirds. This trip, limited to the first 15 who sign up, will take us up the gentle slopes of Mt. Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of nesting songbirds that make this area their summertime home. Birds we hope to find include Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Kingbird and Lark Sparrow. We'll visit with each other at the beginning of the trip, but otherwise we'll practice silence to better find and appreciate the birds we're seeing and hearing.

Marian is a professional biologist from Vancouver, Canada. She has worked on bird surveys for the Canadian government and waterfowl surveys for Ducks Unlimited. Marian was an area leader for our Southern Marin CBC last year and for many years was an area leader for CBCs in the Vancouver area. Susan has been birding for several years and is a co-compiler for Marin Audubon's two Christmas Bird Counts.

Wear comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing; bring water and snacks.

**DIRECTIONS:** To sign up and to receive directions, please contact Susan Kelly at [S.Kelly@sbcglobal.net](mailto:S.Kelly@sbcglobal.net).

### MINES ROAD/DEL PUERTO CANYON LIVERMORE

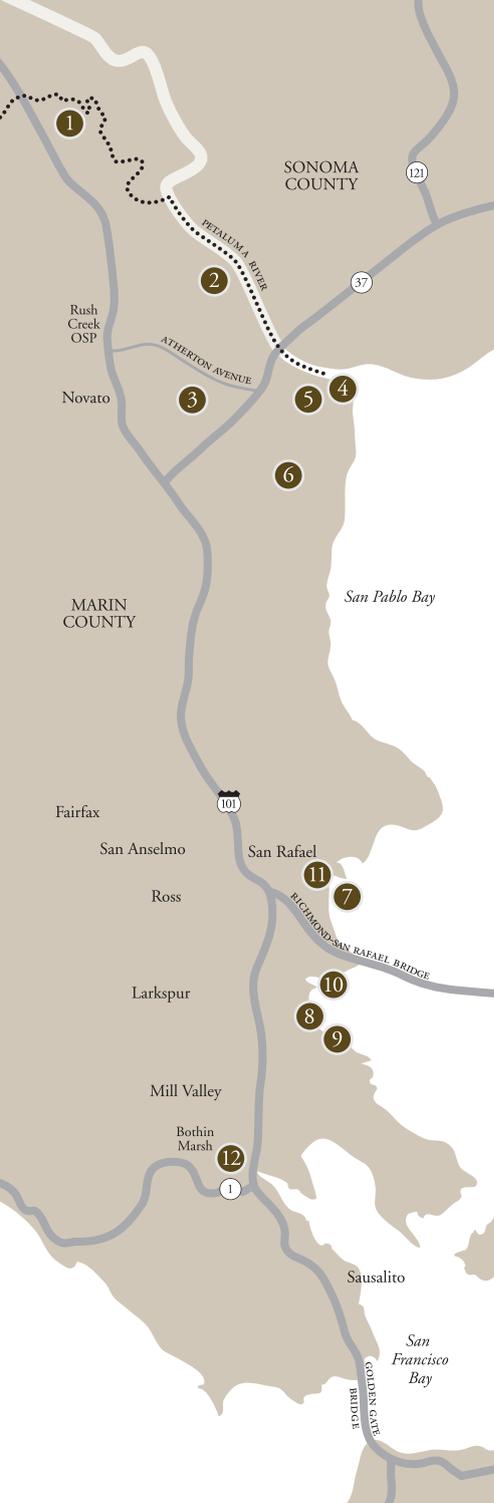
Saturday-Sunday, April 21-22  
7:30 AM  
With Terry Colborn

Long recognized as one of the premier birding areas in the Bay Area to observe an array of resident species and Neotropical migrants, the combination of Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyon provides easy access to a number of different habitats. The bird list is quite impressive for this popular destination, and ranges from Costa's Hummingbird to the elusive Greater Roadrunner. We'll also visit Del Valle Regional Park (fee) and Frank Raines Park. This weekend trek will start in Livermore on Saturday at 7:30 AM and will conclude on Sunday at 3 PM. Overnight hotel accommodations will be in Patterson, off of I-5, affording us an opportunity for an early Sunday morning start. There will be an optional group dinner on Saturday night.

This is a very popular weekend trip and often fills up very quickly. Sign-ups are required, and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Carpooling is a must as there is very limited space for vehicles to park on Mines Road. To sign up and receive further details, contact Terry: [www.tlcbirding.com](http://www.tlcbirding.com) or 916/705-8991.

# 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.



## GNOSS FIELD EXPANSION

In February, MAS provided comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Marin County and the Federal Aviation Authority’s Environmental Impact Statement for the Gnos Field Runway Extension. The project calls for lengthening the runway of this county airport in Novato from 3,300 to 4,400 feet at the north end, and making related changes including relocating drainage channels and rebuilding levees.

Extending the runway would allow aircraft to operate at maximum weight in hot weather. Currently, in hot weather aircraft have to operate with either fewer passengers or reduced fuel load.

Because the runway is constructed entirely on diked historic baylands, any expansion requires filling seasonal wetlands. The project would fill 11.83 acres of wetlands and an additional approximately 10 acres would be temporarily disturbed. Alternatives discussed in the DEIS/ EIR for mitigating the wetland losses include projects on Sonoma Creek and at Cullinan Ranch at the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge and on Sonoma Land Trust property. While these are worthy projects, they are too far away. Mitigation banks and paying “in lieu fees” are also mentioned as mitigation. These are unacceptable because they would have even less potential to benefit species and ecosystems at the site of loss. Actually, these options are not even needed.

A privately owned parcel just south of the runway, appears to be available to use as mitigation. Wetland habitat could be restored on this parcel in a manner that would not impact airport operations and that would greatly benefit the endangered California clapper rail.

## GRADY/BIG ROCK RANCH SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (SEIR)

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report is to inform decision-makers and the public about a project, the potential impacts and the adequacy of the proposed mitigation. The Grady Ranch/Big Rock Ranch SEIR fails as a public disclosure document.

Usually EIRs summarize and evaluate technical documents and evaluate potential mitigations. This SEIR simply refers readers to a multitude of studies and other background documents in many locations making it extremely difficult to find, review, and evaluate the information. This approach, combined with the fact that the SEIR is supplemental to

a 16-year-old Master Plan EIR (on a somewhat different project), some aspects of which are still relevant, makes understanding and evaluating the project next to impossible.

Our primary concern is about potential failure of the proposed 1.5-mile-long creek restoration at the headwaters of Miller Creek, a stream that supports threatened steelhead trout. The design proposes to “restore” the degraded creek by filling it, using the exact quantity of soil that would be excavated to build other components of the project. Our questions sought information that would enable us to evaluate the likelihood of success of this unusual restoration. The responses did not provide that information.

Our primary concern is about potential failure of the proposed 1.5-mile-long creek restoration at the headwaters of Miller Creek, a stream that supports threatened steelhead trout.

We are also concerned about impacts associated with various other project activities: (a) inadequate stream buffer (50 feet instead of 100 feet); (b) failure to identify the location of the mitigation sites for wetland and native grassland losses; (c) fencing of the property to exclude native deer; (d) impacts to the creek ecosystem by diverting water to the proposed 400,000-gallon and the 40,000-gallon water tanks to serve the development; and (e) the removal of 411 mature trees. We suggested mitigation by salvaging and replanting existing trees that would be removed.

## MAS JOINS EFFORTS TO PREVENT LEAD POISONING OF WILDLIFE

Marin Audubon joined with 75 other organizations in a petition to the US EPA requesting a rulemaking to protect the environment, wildlife, and human health from lead poisoning. The petition was prepared by the Center for Biological Diversity.

Lead has long been known to be a highly toxic substance with lethal properties that have numerous pathological effects on living organisms. Health effects can run from acute paralytic poisoning and seizures to subtle and

## MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	3 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

# Spring Birds and Their Songs – 2012



Join the *Spring Birds and their Songs* class and tune into the varied chorus of birds nesting in the Bay Area. Once you clue into bird songs, the enjoyment of spring will be forever heightened. Sign

up early as this class fills quickly.

Naturalist **Meryl Sundove** and wildlife biologist **Roger Harris** teach the class for beginning and intermediate bird watchers who want to use calls and songs to help find and identify birds.

Class consists of a Thursday evening presentation with slides and bird songs (**Thursday, April 19, 2012** from 7-9 pm at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center) and two early morning field trips (**Saturday, April 21** and a dawn chorus on **Saturday, May 7**) designed to get you outdoors

practicing what we learned in class. The dawn chorus field trip starts a few minutes before dawn.

If you have never experienced the spring dawn chorus you are in for a treat.

For information, contact Meryl Sundove at 415/927-4115 or msundove@comcast.net.

#### FEE:

- \$65 non-Audubon members
- \$60 Audubon members
- \$110 2 members from same household

#### TO REGISTER:

Send this form and a check made out to

“Marin Audubon Society” to:

**Marin Audubon Society**

**P.O. Box 599**

**Mill Valley, CA 94942**

*All proceeds go to the Marin Audubon Society to support their conservation work.*

NAME	TELEPHONE	
ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP
E-MAIL	Are You an Audubon Member? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

long-term mental impairment, miscarriage and impotence.

The Federal government has begun to implement long-overdue regulations to reduce lead in paint, drinking water, toys, batteries, etc. In the 1970s some jurisdictions began to place restrictions on the use of lead ammunition. Hunting waterfowl with lead shot was banned in 1997. The 2007 Condor Preservation Act prohibited lead shot use within the condor range. Yet lead continues to be widely used in hunting and sport shooting, and spent lead ammunition is uncontrolled, exposing humans and wildlife to its toxic effects.

Particularly susceptible to lead poisoning are scavengers that eat carcasses left in the wild, gut piles (viscera) from animals cleaned in the wild and wounded animals that carry lead bullets. Some animals ingest spent bullets and shotgun pellets which they mistake for food, grit or bone fragments. Species at risk include bald and golden eagle, other raptors, turkey vultures,

swans, loons, eiders, game birds, songbirds, coyotes, and other mammals.

**How you can help:** In California on March 7, the Fish and Game Commission is expected to consider a number of administrative rules to reduce the threat of lead ammunition, including a restriction on the use of lead shot on more than 600,000 acres of state wildlife areas. **E-mail the commission to support a ban on lead shot at [fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov).** Include the subject of the regulation on which you are commenting in the subject line of the e-mail. Thank you.

#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Nominating Committee Members are Martha Jarocki, chair; Flinn Moore Rauck and Jude Stalker. Please contact one of the committee members if you are interested in being a member of the Marin Audubon Society Board.

#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Betsy Alperin, Rip Anzalone, Judy Ardzrooni, Mary Baker, Jean Banning, Leslie Barry, Shaya Barry, Brittany Barry, Kate Bartschat, Katie Baughman, Julia Bell, Robt Berner, David & Kamala Berry, Mel Blue, Mikayia Boginsky, Abby Bordin, Amelia Borinshteyn, Kirsten Brockman, Caroline Brockman, Morgan Buckley, Molly Lazarus & Craig Burke, Ben Burlock, Gisella Cardamone, Carla Cardamone, Suzanne Carswell, Courtney Carswell, Kyle Cato, Sarah Christensen, Johnna Coats, Adriene Coffey, Susan A. Cohen, Glenna Coleman, Dayton Coles, Alex Cowley, Payne Cowley, Cindy Daifotis, Katherine Daifotis, Elena Daly, Ann Davis, Charles De Ferrari, Vera & Risa De Ferrari, Maureen Donahoe, Kelly Donahoe, Grace Donahoe, Bridget Donahoe-Duffy, Anne Doyle, Maggie Doyle, Susan Elliot, Elpida House, Inc., Meg Feil, Diana Ferguson, Isabel Flax, Jackie Flax, Patty Flax, A. M. Foley, Nancy Foster, Allison Galuszka, Natalie Galuszka, Suzanne Galuszka, Anna Garman, Megan Gillfillan, Kenneth Harlan, Jennifer Hartwell, Natalie Hartwell, Jamie Hecht, Nancy Hecht, Karen Henry, Alexandra Hood, Gloria Hood, Leigh Hurst, Alicia Inza, Gita Isola-Henry, Suzanne Jack, Elizabeth Jack-Schimmel, Katie Jarman, Joy Johnson, Sydney Joyner, Claire Joyner, Katerina Kakkis, Isabelle Kashefi, Noreen Kashefi, Ella Katz, Nicole Kennedy, Shaelyn Kennedy, Danielle Kisseberth, Kelly Klein, Kris Klein, Ally Klionsky, Alexandra Korngut, Joan Korngut, Hope Kragh, Maddie Kragh, Olivia Larocca, Yvonne Larocca, Renee Ann Lazzareschi, Michelle Leifer, Charles Lightfoot, Siegfried Linkwitz, Jackie Long, Nicole Long, Cassidy Lynch, Kim Lynch, Paige Lyons, Eliza Mantz, Jill Mantz, Shane Marble, Tom Yglesias & Marge Waltrip, Casey Mathews, Lisa Mathews, Stephen McKenna, Julie McMillan, Richard K. Merchant, Troy Michel, Cate Neukranz, Maddie Neukranz, Nancy Neukranz, Denise Nolan, Flaria Patino, Meredith Pechoulkes, Christina Pelfini, Tyler Poppel, Wiley Poppel, Sydney Peraver, Cathy Peterson, Natalie Peterson, Ginny Preston, Tandis Rafii, Genevieve Rauck, Karin Reeves, Lizzie Reeves, Debra Rose, Eliza Rosenban, Kira Rosenban, Linda Rouda, Madelyn Ryan, Joe Sher, Sydney Soofer, Jenny Soriano, John G. Stuber, Idalia Sullivan, Jeanne Sutter, Alexander Thurner, Kiana Tsau, Madeleine Tsau, Mansau Tsau, Alyssa Urban, Julie Urban, Katherine Van Camerik, Julia Walter, Katie Walter, Charles Webster, Ali Welisch, Gina Welisch, Lucie Wells, Olga & Jose Zaladon, Ellie Zimmer

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The sun is higher, days are longer, temperatures are warmer and weeds want to flower. Help us stop the weeds so that the native plants benefit from the sunshine and the year's low rainfall. It's a good time to be out there. Note that there are a couple of Thursday work days at Bahia in March.

We have the tools, gloves and snacks. We generally work until about 1 PM, but even an hour is valuable help. All are welcome. Steady rain cancels.

### VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

#### Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: March 3, April 7

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

#### Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturday: March 10

Thursdays, March 15, 29

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Drive near Bolero Court and the tennis courts.

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

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

Bruce & Ann Adams, Anonymous, Juliette Anthony, Donna M. Cameron, Tessa & Fred Cherniss, Carroll Covey, Stephen & Sally Fee, Madelon & Gerald Halpern, Roberta Hoffman, Forrester Kennedy, Lincoln Financial Foundation, Inc. (donor match), Helen & William Lindqvist, Santa Venetia Neighborhood Assn., Dean Zucconi, Paul Zucconi, Sam Zucconi

### THANKS TO OUR MAS VOLUNTEERS:

Debbie Ablin, Cristine Albert, Vera De Ferrari, Bob Hinz, Jessica Lopet, Jon Martin, Prem McMurdo, Alison Owings, Demetrius Rauck, Flinn Moore Rauck, Genevieve Rauck, James Robertson, Idalia Sullivan, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Dean Zucconi, Paul Zucconi, Sam Zucconi

### POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

#### APRIL 27-29

Sign up at [pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://pointreyesbirdingfestival.org) today! Last year, nearly every walk and outing sold out well before the Festival weekend, so don't delay!

We were busy last quarter. For our quarterly report to the San Francisco Estuary Partnership for our grant, we counted up 193 hours of work by volunteers at Bahia alone. In addition, we hired the Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB) to plant natives, both at Bahia and our Olive/Atherton property. For the most part volunteers removed invasives and the CCNB planted coyote bush, oaks, and willows sprigs.

Thanks to six Natural Resource Conservation Service volunteers who contributed a day, a huge dent was made in the broom population that has invaded our 20-acre property at Olive and Atherton. They were fulfilling a commitment to do volunteer work on Martin Luther King Day. We were thrilled they chose our property.

We are worrying about the survival of newly-planted plants with the lack of rain. We had hoped to do considerably more planting but have not wanted to plant with the dry weather. We will be planting creeping wildrye at Bahia from our nursery beds and hope for the best.

While native plants are thriving at Triangle Marsh, we have had one misfortune. Someone has stolen our small sign marking the "Overlook" entrance.

You may have noticed that we have not had weekday work days in February and will be cutting back in March. This is due largely to the lack of availability of our volunteers. We have scheduled two mid-week work days in March at Bahia with Bob Hinz.

### JANUARY 28 FIELD TRIP

## Introduction to the Birds of Las Gallinas With Len Blumin

By Len Blumin



Photo courtesy of Len Blumin

### Eurasian Wigeon

Twelve enthusiastic birders, including several new birders, joined the walk at Las Gallinas, led by Len Blumin, and assisted by Patti Blumin and Susan Kelly. The agricultural field

The agricultural field just west of Las Gallinas was transformed into a lake, where we watched hundreds of waterfowl and shorebirds.

just west of Las Gallinas was transformed into a lake, where we watched hundreds of waterfowl and shorebirds, including a **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Ross's Goose**, and many **Cackling Geese**. **Wilson's Snipes** and **Greater Yellowlegs** foraged there, along with a **Long-billed Curlew**.

Continuing around the water treatment ponds we were thrilled by close low flights of a male **Northern Harrier**, while an **American Kestrel** posed in her usual stunning fashion to provide some participants with their first view of our smallest falcon. There were a few more



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### American Kestrel

Snipes around pond number 1, but the highlight was a **Lesser Yellowlegs** posing nicely on the island right next to a **Killdeer** of the same size, with both dwarfed by a nearby Greater Yellowlegs. On pond number 2 we spotted the continuing **Laughing Gull**, an unusual out-of-area visitor, along with **Common Merganser** females. Other highlights included many flycatching **Western Bluebirds** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, plus the usual **Black** and **Say's Phoebes**. In all we tallied about 54 species, including 14 waterfowl and 10 shorebirds.

# MARIN BIRDLOG – JANUARY 2012

By Rich Stallcup

On 1/8 there were single **Red-throated Loons** on Nicasio Reservoir (BB) and Stafford Lake (HC). There are 13 records of Red-throated Loon compared to one of Common Loon in Marin's "interior." Maybe this is because Red-throateds attend herring-runs more faithfully than do other loons and fly over the Marin peninsula between Tomales Bay and Richardson Bay.

**Cattle Egrets** were regular winter visitors to Marin County from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s. Most arrived in November and most departed in early April. About thirty birds were involved and all died one year in a ten-day freeze. There have been very few sightings since. Over the next 25 years only two or three briefly visiting Cattle Egrets were seen here. On 1/25/12 John Kelly identified two at Marshall that are still present now, early in February. It is likely that these birds drifted south from the species' strong presence (and nesting colonies) in Sonoma County.



**Bald Eagle chick**

A **Common Poorwill** was seen in twilight 1/7 near the Palomarin Trailhead, Point Reyes National Seashore (PP). While most of the population of Poorwills is migratory, a few individuals overwinter at this latitude and do so by entering torpor (short-term hibernation) during cold weather when their nocturnal aerial-insect prey is absent. During mild weather this species is occasionally seen here on the roads through proper habitat at dawn or dusk.

Two **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, one in Bolinas and one at Stinson Beach (m.ob), is about an average number for a Marin County winter.

The **Palm Warbler** seen at Stinson Beach on the Christmas count was still being flamboyant there 1/10 (RS, HC), and a different individual was found at Bolinas 1/17 (JE). While Palm Warblers are expected with multiple birds some days on outer Point Reyes in October, they are rare mid-winter at this latitude.

A nice surprise (because no grosbeaks were found on local CBCs) was a hatch-year male **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Tomasini Canyon, Point Reyes Station 1/8 (JE). There are more mid-winter records for the "eastern" Rose-breasted Grosbeak than there are for "western" Black-headed Grosbeak in Northern California.

There hasn't been a **Red Crossbill** irruption here for many years and even the few that are resident in coniferous forests of high ridges remain elusive. Thus, two reported in the Stinson Beach parking lot 1/31 (BB) were a very cool find.

**OBSERVERS:** Bob Battagin, Patti and Len Blumin, Mark Butler, Heather Cameron, CBC – Christmas Bird Count, Jules Evens, Keith Hansen, Logan Kahle, John Kelly, Jeff Miller, m.ob – many observers, PRBO Conservation Science, Peter Pyle, Don Reinberg, Mary Anne Rotella, Rich Stallcup, Amy Trainer, Kerry Wilcox

## MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC BIRDING WEEKEND

Saturday-Sunday, October 6-7, 2012

With Terry Colborn

Terry Colborn is leading a weekend birding trip for us to the Monterey Bay area, October 6-7, 2012, during the peak of fall migration. The weekend will feature a pelagic trip on Saturday with Monterey Seabirds ([www.montereyseabirds.com](http://www.montereyseabirds.com)), and land birding on Sunday.

The pelagic trip, \$95/person, is limited to 25 participants. Sign-ups will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis beginning March 1. This trip will fill up very quickly. Make your check payable to Terry Colborn and mail to: 1714 Magnolia Place, Davis, CA 95618. Include each participant's full name, address, cell phone number and e-mail. Your payment in full is your reservation. More details about the trip can be found at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org). For questions, contact Terry at [tlcgdc@aol.com](mailto:tlcgdc@aol.com), or by phone: 916/705-8991.

## Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

Junior Bird Watchers is an in-school program designed to teach elementary school children to identify birds in their neighborhoods. The program was developed by National Audubon Society (NAS). When NAS discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor, conducting the program in classrooms at several elementary schools. If you would like more information, please visit "Junior Birdwatchers" under the "Birds" tab on our web site at [marinaudubon.org](http://marinaudubon.org), or contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.



**Cooper Kraham** is in kindergarten at St. Rita Elementary. Cooper would like to see a Peregrine Falcon "because they swoop so fast."



**Jonathan Wentzell** is in kindergarten at St. Rita Elementary, too. Jonathan's favorite birds are American Crows "because they're black and I like black."



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The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter supporting 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 supporting 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 web site using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.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 Ruth Pratt, Membership Chair at 415/453-2989.

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