



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, MARCH 3 7:30 PM

Owls of Marin: Their Secret Lives

With Joe Mueller

Join College of Marin Biologist Joe Mueller for an in-depth look into the ecology, natural history and diversity of Owls that live in Marin County. As we delve into their lives we'll pay



Photo courtesy of Joe Mueller

Great Horned Owl

special attention to how we, as bird enthusiasts, can experience the lives of owls around us. The sounds they make, the habitats they live in and the time of year they're active will help us understand owls in such a way that we can visit their world.

Joe Mueller has been teaching biology at the College of Marin for 20 years. Of the 15 different courses he has taught at COM his subjects of particular interest include ecology, marine biology, ornithology and environmental science. Taking a holistic approach to science, Joe emphasizes the need to understand the reasons we have become so disconnected from the very planetary ecosystems we depend on. An animal lover by nature Joe tends an animal orphan farm where he loves spending time with an assortment of critters ranging from llamas to lizards.

Joe is the recipient of the 2008 Terwilliger Environmental Award and he has developed and directs the Natural History Program at College of Marin.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

THURSDAY, APRIL 7 7:30 PM

Birds of Costa Rica

With Bob Stewart

Dog Management Plan Released for Public Review

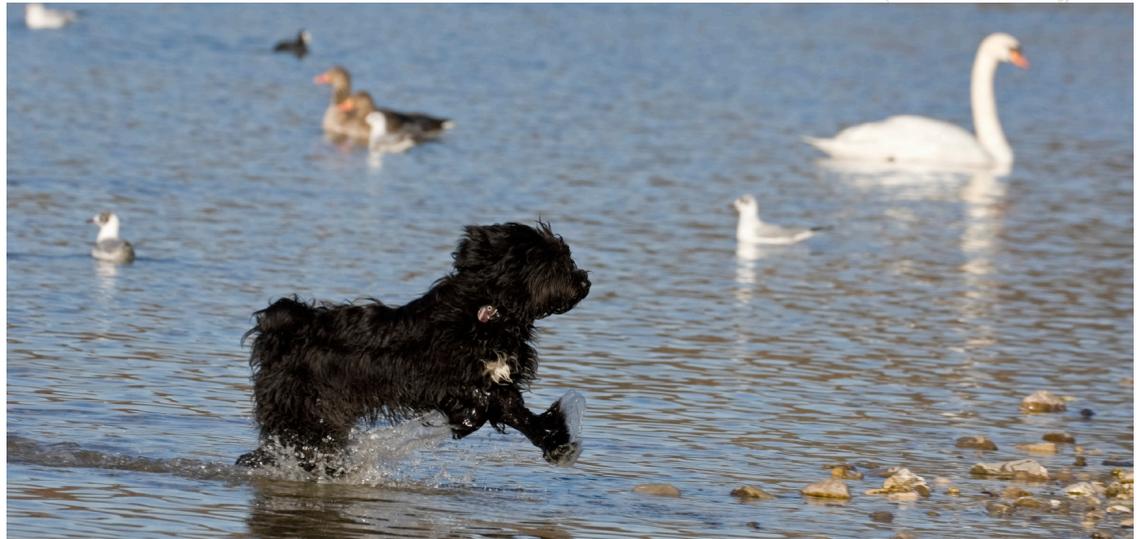


Photo: ©Andy Gehrig, iStock.com

Golden Gate National Recreation Area's Dog Management Plan covers all of GGNRA's lands that extend from Marin to San Mateo County.

GGNRA reports it is preparing this plan because without it "resources and values in some areas of the park might not be available for future generations. Additionally, a dog management policy inconsistent with NPS [National Park Service] regulations and increased public expectations for use of the park for dog recreation have resulted in controversy, litigation, and compromised visitor and employee safety, affecting visitor experience and resulting in resource degradation. The conflicts are likely to escalate if not addressed..."

Currently, dog management varies by area and is a combination of a Federal regulation that requires dogs be on-leash wherever dogs are permitted in a national park, a "1979 Pet Policy" recommended by the GGNRA Advisory Commission, protection of Federal endangered species for Snowy Plover, and other specific rules.

The newly-released Dog Management Plan's purpose is to "offer national park experiences to a large and diverse urban population while preserving and interpreting its outstanding

natural, historic, scenic and recreational values."

Natural resource objectives of the plan are:

- Protect native wildlife and their habitat from detrimental effects of dog use including harassment or disturbance by dogs.
- Minimize degradation of soil and water resources by dog use and preserve opportunities for future natural resource restoration and enhancement.

The Plan and accompanying Draft EIR present and evaluate five alternatives (A through E) representing a range from most protective of natural resources to most open for dog use/most management intensive. The plan also identifies a sixth alternative, the preferred alternative, for each of the 21 areas. Alternative D is the most protective of natural resource and visitor safety, while alternative C emphasizes multiple uses.

Listed and briefly described below are the preferred and the most protective alternatives that were developed by park staff for the sites in Marin County:

continued on page 5

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Field Trips	3
Conservation Report	4
Birdlog	7

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
Vice President	Lowell Sykes 388-2821
Secretary	Mariah Baird 456-3355
Treasurer	Josephine Kreider 381-1910
Finance Chair	Greg Block 479-8254
Conservation	Phil Peterson 898-8400 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Earthshare	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Field Trips	Vicky Van Meter 299-2514
Fundraising	Flinn Moore Rauck 892-9554
Programs	Helen Lindqvist 789-0703
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Nominating	Phil Peterson 898-8400
Volunteers	Bob Hinz 383-8688
Property Management	Ed Nute 457-9241
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.

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.

©2011 Marin Audubon Society

Website: 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

As you see from the enclosed flyer, our Mother's Day Barbecue is just a few months away. This annual event is a tradition at Marin Audubon. It is held on lands not usually open to the public, Volunteer Canyon, a property of Audubon Canyon Ranch just south of the newly-named Marty Griffin Canyon. For many the Mother's Day Barbecue is a family tradition. If you have never attended, you are in for a treat. Join us for a fun day in this special place, enjoy good food, visit the nesting herons and birds on the lagoon, take a hike in the woods, or just relax and enjoy. Space is limited so get your reservations in early.

Once again Meryl Sundove is presenting her popular Spring Bird Song Class. Meryl's class fills up quickly so get your reservation in immediately.

There is still time to let us know if you are interested in participating with Marin

Audubon as a board member. Currently, we need someone to oversee membership, coordinate the volunteer program for our habitat enhancement activities, and also to help us with special projects.

Our special thanks to those who donated to our end of the year appeal. Your generous donations will make it possible for us to continue our conservation activities, field trips, speaker series, newsletter and other activities during the rest of the year.

Spring is almost here, and we are having some warm days along with the cold. Soon the waterfowl will be migrating north and upland birds will return to nest. Some birds may be setting up nests beginning in February, so be careful with tree trimming. To avoid damaging nests, which can be well hidden, it's best to delay tree work until mid to late summer. Do join us on our field trips before the waterfowl leaves.

Mariculture Promotes Spread of Invasive Species in Drakes Estero

By Rick Johnson

Drakes Estero is a soft sediment estuary—meaning the bottom is primarily sandy and muddy. A variety of native invertebrates including clams live in these sediments. Oyster racks placed in the Estero introduce hard surfaces which promote the spread of non-native species. This effect is one of the ways that mariculture alters the habitat in the Estero with negative consequences to native species.

Kimberly Heiman, a researcher at Stanford, did her doctoral research in another soft sediment estuary, Elkhorn Slough. She found that human-introduced hard materials such as mariculture structures promote the spread of non-native species and states that control of hard substrates may limit the spread of non-native species in soft sediment estuaries. (Heiman, 2006)

At least eight years ago, an invasive species, *Didemnum vexillum*, appeared in Drakes Estero and has been growing and flourishing on the oyster racks in the Estero. *Didemnum* is a tunicate (Sea Squirt) that grows over surfaces and displaces other species. Recently, *Didemnum vexillum* has been found growing on eelgrass near oyster racks in Drakes Estero. This confirms a pattern of spread similar to what was documented earlier in bays around Cape Cod on the east coast. Carman and Grunden (2010) reported that for years

D. vexillum attached to artificial substrates including boat bottoms, dock pilings, aquaculture cages, bags and ropes. Then, *D. vexillum* spread to eelgrass and it is considered a serious threat in Massachusetts. They state that invasive tunicates can smother bivalves and other sessile invertebrates and can likely smother eelgrass. The heavy weight of tunicates coupled with their rapid reproduction may make them more harmful to eelgrass communities than other non-native species. The surface of *D. vexillum* has an average pH value of 3 to 4. There are no known predators of healthy *D. vexillum*. In the absence of predators, they can grow unimpeded.

Because *Didemnum vexillum* grows over the oysters raised on racks in Drakes Estero, the oyster company must scrape them off, and the pieces can colonize new areas. The current company practice of disposing of scraped-off fragments into the Estero increases the risk of spread, perhaps even to eelgrass given recent reports of the colonization of eelgrass blades. (NRC, 2009)

In commenting on the scope for the Drakes Estero EIS, MAS asked the National Park Service to assess whether removal of mariculture from Drakes Estero in 2012 may help control the spread of *Didemnum vexillum* in the Estero.

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 at 415/299-2514

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, March 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 is a great walk for all levels of birders. March is still a good 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. The walk starts at 8:30 but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group.

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 8:00 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 shrikethree@gmail.com if you will be attending and tell him 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.

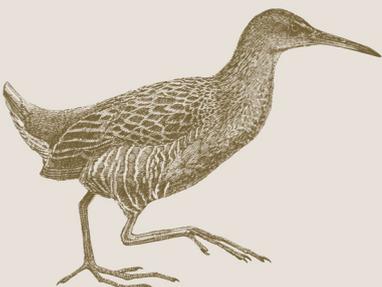
BIRDING AT BODEGA BAY – VERNAL EQUINOX

Sunday, March 20, 2011
8:30 AM at Smith Ranch Rd.
Park 'n' Ride to carpool or
9:30 AM at Doran Beach, Bodega
With Len Blumin

We start at 9:30 AM on the Doran Beach (\$6 fee required!) side and hopefully our first bird will be a Snowy Plover! We stay at Doran for a few hours, watching as the incoming tide brings a good variety of shorebirds for close viewing. We look for Loons and Grebes (5 or even 6 Grebe species are sometimes seen!), then scan for ducks and Brant. Raptors are sporadic, but Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle are possible, and even the occasional Merlin. Later we'll go around Bodega Bay to the North side, where we'll stop for lunch and bird from Bodega Head and back toward Porto Bodega. Time permitting we'll finish the day at Duncan's Landing (5 miles to the north) to pick up some of the rock-loving shorebirds. Some of you may want to meet at the Smith Ranch Road Park 'n' Ride at 8:30 and then carpool to Doran Beach, splitting fees and reducing your carbon footprints. Significant rain or winds about 25 knots will cancel, as Bodega Bay gets nasty during a storm.

DIRECTIONS: Smith Ranch Rd. Park 'n' Ride: From Hwy. 101 at the Lucas Valley/Smith Ranch exit, go east; Park 'n' Ride is first entrance.

To Doran Beach: Check maps as there are several options – here's one of them – From Hwy. 101 in Petaluma at the East Washington exit turn left (west) on East Washington. This turns into Bodega Ave. At Tomales Road, bear to the right on Valley Ford Road. As you approach Bodega, look for Doran Beach Road. After entering Doran, drive down about half a mile to the main parking area for the beach, on the left. It is surrounded by Cypress trees and there are excellent restrooms.



Volunteer Bird Watchers Needed for Project

Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR), a leader in conservation science, habitat protection and restoration and hands-on environmental education programs, is seeking volunteers for its 2011 North Bay Heron and Egret Project.

Audubon Canyon Ranch's North Bay Heron and Egret Project is an ongoing (more than 20-year) effort to track changes in the status of colonially nesting herons and egrets throughout the northern San Francisco Bay region and to understand their ecological roles in wetland systems. Study species include Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Snowy Egret, and Cattle Egret.

Volunteers monitor a heron and/or egret nesting site assigned to them by ACR's Cypress Grove Research Center, and may request to observe and track a nest site in their neighborhood or vicinity. They are asked to monitor their colony at least once during each of the monitoring periods shown below, and more if they desire. Volunteers use scopes and binoculars to view nesting activity from formation of the first pair bond to fledging of the chicks. For first-time volunteers, ACR biologists offer training and assistance.

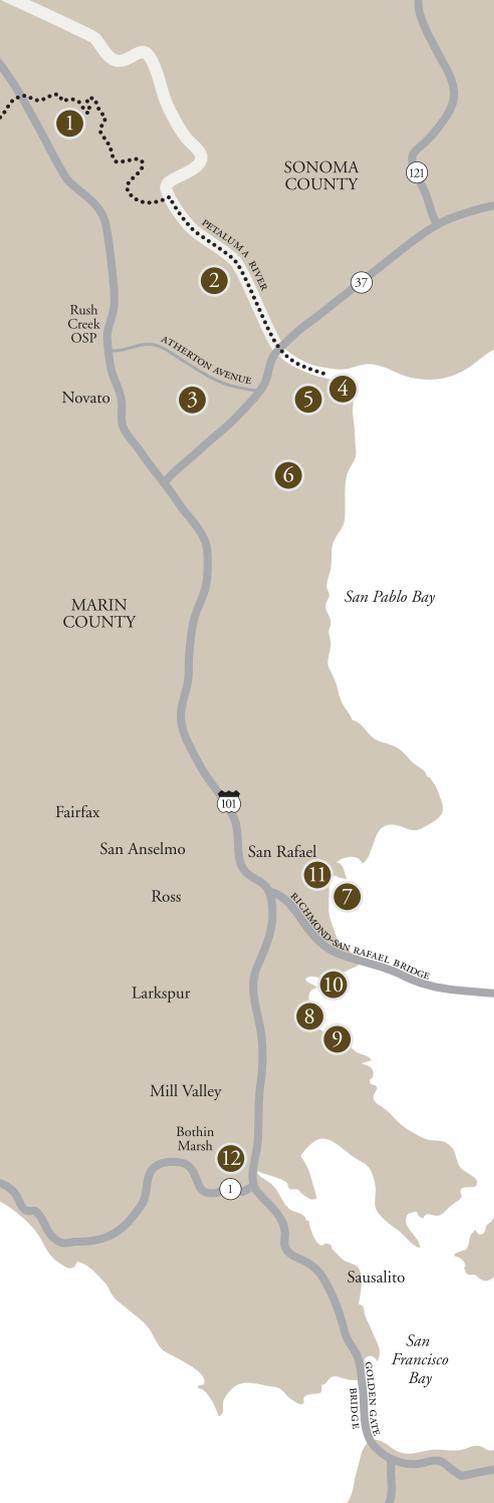
Upcoming observation dates include: March 4-6, April 2-4, May 6-8, June 4-6 and June 17-19

Data generated by volunteers are published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, submitted as technical reports to partner agencies, and provided to land-owners, biologists, conservationists, and local and regional planning departments.

To participate in the project, call 415/663-8203 or e-mail cgrc@egret.org. Volunteer observers will receive a detailed packet of information including the observation protocol and instructions for accessing their site.

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.



MAS APPEALS TO COASTAL COMMISSION

MAS has two appeals pending before the Coastal Commission:

Lawson's Landing: The appeal hearing for this site is now scheduled for consideration before the Coastal Commission in May. No further information is available.

Meteorological Towers: The analysis in the Coastal Commission staff report identified the following potentially substantial issues raised by the appeals (ours was one of five). The county's approval: 1) does not conform to the Agricultural policies of the Local Coastal Plan (LCP); 2) incorrectly identified the project as an electrical structure (which it clearly is not) which is allowable in an agricultural production zone; and 3) is in conflict with several natural resource and environmentally sensitive provisions of the LCP based on the presence of rare and endangered species. The Commission must make the final decision on whether the issues raised are substantial and will do so at its March 4 hearing in Santa Cruz. If the Commission votes in support of the appeals, a *de novo* hearing will be set for sometime in the future.

Members wishing to join us in attending

the Commission hearing should call Barbara Salzman (924-6057). Otherwise, *please write* in support of our appeal to California Coastal Commission, 45 Fremont Suite 2219, San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

FRIENDS GROUP FOR MT. TAM

A very ambitious vision was proposed by a consultant hired by MMWD to look at the possibility of setting up a Friends group for Mt. Tam. While supporting a Friends group, MAS recommended against some of the proposals of the consultant, including constructing a building and hiring a large staff (five people) which would be expensive, time consuming and divert resources from protecting Mt. Tam itself. We also commented that the focus should be on protecting and restoring natural resources and that Mt. Tam be the classroom for educational activities, not a building.

At its February 2 meeting, the MMWD Board voted to accept the business plan prepared by the consultants stipulating that their acceptance of the document did not mean that they agreed with all of its recommendations and that changes would

continued on page 5

Spring Birds and Their Songs – 2011

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 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 an evening presentation with slides and bird songs (Thursday, April 21 from 7-9 PM at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center) and two early morning field trips (Saturday, April 23 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 the form and a check made out to *Marin Audubon Society* to Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ Are You an Audubon Member? Yes No

*SATURDAY, MAY 14 WILL BE A RAINY DAY MAKE-UP DATE IN CASE OF A RAINED OUT FIELD TRIP

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

Dog Management Plan

continued from page 1

Stinson Beach: Alternative C, chosen as the preferred alternative, would allow dogs in the parking and picnic areas but not on the beach because it is a swimming beach. The environmentally preferred alternative, D, would not allow dogs at Stinson, therefore, there would be no impacts to resources.

Muir Beach: Alternative D, the preferred alternative, would allow unleashed dog walking only on the Pacific Way Trail and the parking area. D would be the most protective for shorebirds, gulls and terns using this site on which wetland habitat has recently been restored, and for any marine mammals that are stranded on the beach.

Rodeo Beaches: Alternative C is preferred. A ROLA (regulated off-leash area, explained further below) would be created on North Rodeo Beach between the ocean and a proposed cable fence at the western end of the lagoon to protect the lagoon's shoreline habitat. On-leash dogs would be allowed on the footbridge. South Rodeo Beach would be closed to dogs. Under alternative D on-leash dog walking would be allowed on the footbridge and on the beach north of the footbridge. The lagoon and lake are currently closed to dogs and would remain so under all alternatives.

Fort Baker: Alternative D would allow on-leash dog walking on the lodge and conference center grounds and on the bay trail, but not on the parade ground, other trails or the beach. Preferred alternative C allows on-leash dog walking on the fire road, other trails and the Parade Ground but not on Battery Yates trail due to the presence of the endangered mission blue butterfly

Homestead Valley: Alternative D allows on-leash dog walking only along Homestead Fire Road and not other areas in order to protect wildlife and coastal chaparral. Preferred alternative C would allow on-leash dog walking on neighborhood connector trails that would be designated in the future.

Alta Trail and Orchard and Pacheco Fire Roads: Alternative D would not allow dogs on this site. Preferred alternative C would allow dogs on all of these trails.

Oakwood Valley: Under alternative D on-leash dogs could be walked only on the Oakwood Valley Fire Road from Tennessee Valley Rd. to the junction with Oakwood Trail. Preferred alternative C has a ROLA (see below) from the Oakwood Valley Fire Rd. to the junction with Oakwood Valley Trail that would include double gates at both ends.

Marin Headlands Trail: Alternative D would prohibit dogs on the trails. Preferred alternative C would allow on-leash dogs along the Lower

Rodeo Valley Trail, and several other trails including the lagoon, Miwok and Rodeo Valley trails, Battery Smith-Gutherie Fire Road Loop, and Old Bunker Fire Road Loop. Dogs would be allowed only on these perimeter trails to protect the integrity of the interior habitat.

In all of the alternatives, leashes would have to be no longer than six feet. This acknowledges that impacts would occur adjacent to trails because dogs could go off trails for this distance. Commercial dog walkers could walk up to three dogs without a permit; with permits, up to six dogs could be walked.

ROLAs, which are recommended in several alternatives, are areas where dogs can be walked off-leash, under voice control. ROLAs can be changed to on-leash or no dog if voice control compliance is not achieved.

A public hearing will be held in Marin on Wednesday, March 2, at the Tamalpais High School Student Center, 700 Miller Avenue, Mill Valley, from 4 to 8 PM. The comment deadline is April 14. You can view the entire Plan at www.nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/dog-management.htm.

Conservation

continued from page 4

likely be made. Many of the Board members expressed agreement with MAS's recommendation that the focus be on protecting habitat. Protecting habitat will protect water quality which is MMWD'S major responsibility.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Marin County Department of Public Works released the Final EIR for this road-widening project with only a 14-day review period. The Final EIR consisted of written responses, the many letters from agencies, organizations and individuals and 12 master comments responding to issues raised repeatedly.

The consultants, LSA Associates, disagreed with many issues raised by MAS and many others who commented. They described the purposes of the project as "to enhance safety, as well as pedestrian and bicycle use while protecting the environment." Yet a trail already exists to serve bicyclists and pedestrians that parallels the exact route of the project and that safely removes these users from vehicle traffic. The EIR does not address using that existing trail in order to avoid environmental impacts. With a requirement to remove 9 to 17 mature native redwood trees, the project does not effectively protect the environment. In our view, a reduced project that resurfaces the degraded sections of the roadway surface and avoids any loss of ancient native redwood trees is far preferable.



Photo courtesy of Richard Panek

GREAT BLUE HERON WITH CHICKS

THANKS TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS:

Debbie Ablin, Bob Hinz, Phil Peterson, Flinn Moore Rauck, Barbara Salzman, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Betsy Aldrete, Leah Anton, Katharine Ballinger, Gregg E. Berman, Irvin Busbee, Jon Carter, Beulah Chang, James Codington, Winifred Crittenden, Dawn Daniel, Tom & Laurel Doehne, Mikele Dunbar, Bridget Ernser, Robert J. Fallat, Bill & Shirley Freeman, Dorine George, Dory Gresl, Paula L. Hafling, Nate Hamilton, Douglas Hanford, Sandra Lamke, Seela Lewis, Irene Lopez, Patricia Lynch, Brian & Dolores McCarthy, Andrew McLaughlin, Barbara Mooney, Thomas Mullin, Pam Nichols, Lia O'Neale, Marian Porter, N. T. Rea, Ann Read, Thunder Redwomin, Phil Reilly, Harvey Rogers, Charles & Susan Savage, Nancy Valentine, Ruth Voorhees, Dora Williams, Union Bank Foundation

MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

Anonymous, Jeanne Ballestero, Mario Barrios, Robert & Sandra Chilvers, Jeanne Cohn, Daniel Edelstein, MaryAnne Flett, Brad Gaffney, Normand & Michelle Groleau, Madelon & Gerald Halpern, Peter Hargreaves, Roberta Hoffman, Forrester Kennedy, Janet Kerby, William Legge, Helen & William Lindqvist, Pam Nichols, Phil Peterson, Edward Sattizahn, David & Julie Schnapf, Stuart Siegel, Union Bank Foundation, Jett Walker, Dianne Ziola & Ian Tait, Patagonia, San Francisco

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Longer days and warmer temperatures mean that the growth of some of our invasive non-native annual plants will accelerate. Radishes will start blooming and thistles will grow tall. Our work days at Triangle Marsh and Bahia will largely turn to removing these and other early season weeds. The planting season is over. Late planting does 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.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Bahia, Novato:

Thursday, March 3
Wednesday, March 9
Second Saturday, March 12
Thursday, March 17
Wednesday, March 23
Thursday, March 31

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, March 5

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 rbhrhinz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

During January, we held several weekend work days during which volunteers from the Center for Volunteer and Non-Profit Leadership provided enthusiastic assistance planting rhizomes of creeping wildrye. We continue to be grateful for their support. We also hired the Watershed Nursery to rejuvenate our growing beds. They along with our volunteers, Debbie Ablin, Flinn Moore Rauck, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Phil Peterson, Bob Hinz and Barbara Salzman, prepared rhizomes, dug up the beds, replanted the rhizomes and mulched the beds to replenish the transplant stock for next year.

Our storage shed has finally arrived and has been installed at Bahia. It will house our equipment and make life much easier for our volunteers. Until now we have had to call around to search for tools, arrange to pick them up at people's houses and transfer them to the worksite—a cumbersome process! Lowell Sykes is now busy transferring our tools and equipment to the shed and fitting it with shelving.



Some of the crew that replanted MAS's nursery beds

Photo courtesy of Robert Hinz

Our thanks to Patagonia for providing most of the funding to purchase the shed. We are submitting grants to other potential funders for the remaining amount needed.

We have begun to work with the Marin County Open Space District on an easement agreement in anticipation of transferring title to the 19-acre Simmons Slough property from MAS to the Open Space District. We recently completed a restoration project at the property.

Comments Needed on County Road and Trail Management Plan

The Marin County Open Space District is seeking comments on issues to be addressed in the environmental impact report (EIR) they will be preparing for a Road and Trail Management Plan to guide management of the more than 200 miles of roads and trails on the 16,000 acres of land the District owns. The EIR will evaluate impacts and alternatives including:

- 1) maintenance of the existing system of roads and trails,
- 2) additions to the existing system;
- 3) decommissioning of specific segments, and
- 4) changes in current use. Usually, a draft plan is released that the EIR evaluates. In this case, however, neither a draft plan or trail maps have been provided to evaluate.

The District's public notice states that the Plan and EIR will study the environmental impacts of overall trail management. Four overarching goals are identified: 1) to reduce the impact of road and trail network on riparian areas, wetlands, streams, environmentally sensitive habitats, and special status plant and animal species; 2) to align the network with the District's maintenance and enforcement capacity; 3) to provide an appropriate range of

experiences for visitors; and 4) to address visitor opportunities and conflicts.

In recent years, the District has diverged from their historic strong protection of natural resources to include a focus on more active visitor uses. So, it is important for them to hear from many residents that you are concerned about protecting, enhancing and restoring natural habitats, not just reducing impacts to these resources.

Help By: submitting written comments urging that the Plan protect natural habitats for all native species, not just special status species, and that connectivity between habitats is preserved. Also include your concerns about management issues on Open Space District lands so they can be addressed in the EIR. Send comments to: Elise Holland, Planning and Resource Chief, Marin County Parks and Open Space Department, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 260, San Rafael, CA 94903. Comments should be mailed on or before March 1 to reach the District by March 3. A public scoping session was scheduled with a lead time too short for our newsletter.

TRIANGLE MARSH



Photo courtesy of Robert Hinz

eBIRD.ORG

Do you or did you record bird observations in a series of notebooks? Can you find all those notebooks? Can you find the details of those unusual species you saw back when? What did you see in Monte Verde, Costa Rica? Make it easy on yourself and at the same time share your sightings with science. Submit observations to eBird.org.

MARIN BIRDLOG – JANUARY 2011

By Rich Stallcup

As happens every winter some “inland” geese come to the coast. Representatives in January 2011 were: a young **Snow Goose** 1/17 near Two Rock (HC), two young **Ross’s Geese** and five **White-fronted Geese** 1/14 at Las Gallinas (NB), and 46 (**Aleutian**) **Cackling Geese** going west over Rush Creek 1/20 (RS).

A pair of **Harlequin Ducks** were on Tomales Bay at Tom’s Point 1/23 (ACR) during their thorough periodic waterbird survey and one **Long-tailed Duck** was tallied near Hog Island. Much rarer, a female eider was located on the same survey, with scoters, near Tony’s Seafood 1/23 (ACR) and was identified as a **King Eider** 1/24 (JE,RS,LH). There are five previous Marin County records, the first being a “Young female taken in channel at mouth of Tomales Bay...December 16, 1933 and two others seen with it” (Moffitt, Conder 42). Another record was on lower Abbotts Lagoon and there have been three singles from the Fish Docks to Chimney Rock.



Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin

Harlequin duck



Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin

Glaucous gull

“Waldo’s Pasture” during high tide. At least five and possibly eight were present 1/17 and 1/18 (TE,SH,JW,RS). There is a sparse winter population (2-3 birds) here each winter.

There have been many very rare birds in California this winter – almost enough to let one forget there is no movement but here comes spring with rioting wildflowers and far-flung brightly-colored feathered flying objects.

Observers ACR – Audubon Canyon Ranch Cypress Grove Research Center, Bob Battagin, Dave Bergston, Heather Cameron, Todd Easterla, Jules Evens, Deborah Fitzpatrick, Steve Hampton, Keith Hansen, Lisa Hug, Diana Humple, Susan Kelly, William Legge, m.ob – many observers, Native Birds, PRBO Conservation Science, Don Reinburg, Maggie Rufo, Rich Stallcup, Jim White.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HOST AT AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

March 26, 27; April 30, May 1, 21, 22, May 30 (Memorial Day); June 18, 19 (Father’s Day); July 2, 3

The four supporting Bay Area Audubon chapters traditionally provide hosts during the time Audubon Canyon Ranch is open for public visitors. Hosting is an easy way to help out Audubon Canyon Ranch, meet nature-loving visitors, and enjoy a day outside with the birds. Hosting does not require any previous training or special skills.

Hosts welcome visitors to the Ranch, help them park, give them a map and ask for donations among other things. Hosts work from 9:15 to 4:15 with breaks for lunch, hiking, and visiting the heron rookery. What hosts really are, though, was perhaps best said by Audubon Canyon Ranch’s first naturalist, Clerin Zumwalt, who wrote “[Hosts] are the face of the ranch, the first contact for most people, and they add an open friendliness to the Ranch.”

A perk of hosting is the opportunity to stay overnight at Volunteer Canyon. Please contact Lowell Sykes, 388-2821; or Robert Hinz, 383-8688, rbrthnz@comcast.net.

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 website at marinaudubon.org, or contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.



Parker Leopold, third grader at Bacich School, celebrated his 75 Bird Day on January 12. His 75th bird was a long-billed curlew. One bird he really hopes to see by his 100 Bird Day is the clapper rail.



Pierre Beaurang, celebrated his 50 Bird Day with his Nature Detective classmates at Bacich Elementary School. His favorite bird so far is the peregrine falcon. Attending the Children’s Christmas Bird Count at Point Reyes added a hermit thrush, a moorhen and a varied thrush to his list of birds he has identified himself, with or without the help of a bird book. Birds that are simply pointed out to students do not count for their Bird Day list.



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN RAFAEL, CA
PERMIT NO. 87

Box 599 | MILL VALLEY, CA 94942-0599

Return Service Requested

Time Value

SAVE THE DATE

- March 5-6 **Humboldt County Weekend and Aleutian Goose Fly-off**
With Ken Burton

- March 20 **Birding at Bodega Bay – Vernal Equinox**
With Len Blumin

- April 3 **Speaker Series**
Owls of Marin with Joe Mueller
Note: Lecture is now on Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m.

- April 14-20 **Godwit Days Festival**
Arcata, www.godwitdays.com,
800/908-WING (9464)

Printed on 100% recycled paper

SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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.

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.

- Enroll me as a Local Chapter Member
- Renewal
- New Member
- \$1,000 Benefactor
- \$500 Patron
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$25 Basic
- Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ TELEPHONE _____

This is a Gift Membership from: _____

Please send me *The Clapper Rail* by e-mail only.

- Master Card
- Visa

PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD:

NAME ON CREDIT CARD _____

CREDIT CARD NO. _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

Fill out form and mail to:
Membership Secretary
Marin Audubon Society
P.O. Box 599
Mill Valley, CA 94942