



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 13 7:30 PM

Birds of the Sierra Nevada

With Ted Beedy & Keith Hansen



Photo courtesy of Ted Beedy

Red-shouldered Hawk

Ted Beedy and Keith Hansen will take you on a tour of the range from the oak savanna through serene conifer forests of the west side, up into the alpine regions, and down the steep eastern escarpment to the pinyon/juniper woodlands and open steppes of the Great Basin. Along the way we'll see and hear the diversity of birds that make the Sierra their home. We'll learn about which birds are in decline and which are expanding and increasing. We'll address some mysteries surrounding some of those species and discuss how birders can help to solve them.

Ted and Ed Pandolfino have co-authored a new book, *Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution*, which was illustrated by Keith Hansen. Ted works at his own firm, "Beedy Environmental Consulting," in Nevada City. Ed is President of Western Field Ornithologists, a Regional Editor for Northern California for the North American Birds, and has published more than two dozen articles on status and distribution of western birds. Keith Hansen has been a bird illustrator since 1976. He recently completed the 14-year project of illustrating Ted and Ed's book. His workspace, "The Wildlife Gallery" is located in Bolinas, California.

Come at 7:15 PM for refreshments. Meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

Road and Trails Plan Updated



Photo courtesy of Bob Manetti

Pinheiro Fire Road, Rush Creek Open Space Preserve

Revisions to the October 2013 draft of the Marin County Open Space Road and Trails Management Plan were presented and discussed at the Parks Commission meeting in late January. Only the parts of the plan for which changes are proposed, the management chapter, and policy changes, were rereleased recently. MAS is supportive so far because the proposed changes focus more clearly on protecting natural resources.

Among the more important changes to the draft plan are changes to the proposed Visitor Management Areas. The Management Areas have been reduced from four to three, and their titles and definitions have been changed to more reflect natural resources. The revised categories are:

- **Sensitive Resource Areas** Comprising 16 percent of preserve lands, these are areas where visitors can expect a relatively undisturbed natural environment well buffered from development, with few encounters with others and good opportunities to see wildlife. These areas will be designed to accommodate low to moderate visitor use, although all existing uses of trails—hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and on-leash dog walking—would still be allowed. Cascade Canyon and Gary Giacomini preserves are examples of Sensitive Resource Areas.
- **Conservation Areas** These are large natural areas with access into more remote places. Visitors can expect to have good views and experience being connected to nature, but with frequent encounters with other visitors and compromised wildlife viewing.

Conservation Areas will be managed to promote moderate to high levels of visitor use but with minimal to moderate disturbance to plants and wildlife. Some 73 percent of Marin's Preserves are in this usage management category, including portions of Baltimore Canyon, Blithedale Summit Preserve, Pacheco Valley and Loma Verde preserves.

- **Impacted Areas** These are areas that primarily provide opportunities for recreation. Visitors can expect frequent encounters with other people, limited or no wildlife viewing, and exposure to homes or other developments. These areas would be managed for high visitor use and to provide varied experiences (e.g. hiking, dog walking, bicycling, or horseback riding). Typical examples are portions of Terra Linda and Sleepy Hollow Divide Preserves. About 11 percent of preserve lands are in this category.

Marin County Parks plans to use a public process to determine which roads and trails, existing in November 2011, would be managed as "system roads and trails." A scoring process will help inform whether a road or trail would become part of the "system" and then be improved, converted or rerouted.

If not approved as part of the "system," a trail would be decommissioned as budget and staff resources allow. The

continued on page 7

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members. If you wish to attend please call 924-6057.

6:30 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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Web site: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
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Members can receive *The Clapper Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by e-mailing joandbijou@sbcglobal.net

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

We are thrilled to again be sponsoring Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris' popular Spring Bird Song Class which will begin this year on Wednesday, April 9. You must sign up right away because the class fills up very quickly. Information about how to register is on page 4.

The approach of dog owners at the recent Supervisors' hearing on GGNRA's Dog Management Plan reminded me of the demands of cyclists. Dog owners objected to GGNRA's restricting dogs on trails and demanded that more areas be opened to both on-leash and off-leash dogs, with no apparent regard for impacts of dogs on the environment and wildlife, even endangered species. Many voiced the view that they are entitled to use the trails because they live next to them or have used them for so many years. We wonder if they ever stop to think what GGNRA habitats would be like if their demands, and those of all of the other special interest groups, ruled? We would have no more wildlife because we would have no more habitat.

MAS always advocates for wildlife. Wildlife has nowhere else to go. We work to protect wildlife because they are an essential part of the food web. Marin trails pass through or

near wildlife habitat: often this is endangered species habitat. And that is why dog use and other impacting uses need to be prohibited or restricted.

It is often a challenge to put the needs of wildlife and plants above our personal interests. Our environment is in pretty dismal shape and needs the help of each one of us. That is yet another reason why MAS is, and will remain, a voice for wildlife and preservation of habitat.

The public time to visit the egret nests at Audubon Canyon Ranch has been postponed this year due to the failure of the nests last year. We support ACR in their efforts to limit impacts in an effort to encourage the birds to return. See page 5 for more information.

It's nominating time. Please contact us to ask about volunteering with MAS. Can you help to restore habitat on one of our properties? How about doing a bird survey? Call Flinn Moore-Rauck or Phil Peterson (contact information in the column on the left) to see how you can help out. We want to hear from you.

Finally, many thank-yous again to our wonderful donors who make our advocacy, environmental protection and education work possible and so successful.

Join Golden Gate National Parks BioBlitz 2014

On March 28-29, 2014, thousands of volunteers will descend upon the Golden Gate National Parks for BioBlitz 2014. Led by National Geographic, in partnership with the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the Presidio Trust, BioBlitz is a 24-hour event to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, microbes, fungi, and other organisms as possible, to explore and document the biodiversity of the parks. Using Bay Area-developed iNaturalist technology, BioBlitzers will be able to upload their findings in real time, and contribute to the broader knowledge base of biodiversity in the region and world. Scientist-led inventories will take place at selected GGNRA lands in San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin Counties. Marin sites will include Muir Woods, Giacomini Wetlands, and the Marin Headlands.

A two-day BioBlitz Biodiversity Festival at East Beach in the Presidio will feature hands-on science and nature exhibits, photography workshops, panel discussions on research and conservation, food, art, entertainment, and more. All BioBlitz activities are free and open to the public.



Western Gull

To be part of an inventory team, participants must register online—public registration opens in late February. Spaces on inventory teams are limited and will be filled on a first-come basis, and children aged eight and older must be accompanied by an adult. No registration is required for the BioBlitz Biodiversity Festival. Updated information and the full schedule of Golden Gate National Parks BioBlitz programs will be posted at nationalgeographic.com/bioblitz. For more information about the parks, see nps.gov/goga.

Photo by David Iliff. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

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

CAPAY VALLEY

Saturday, March 1, 2014
8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
With Terry Colborn

Join Terry Colborn for a delightful day in Yolo County's picturesque Capay Valley. Our stops will include Capay Cemetery, Cache Creek and several favorite birding spots in the area. We'll look for Yellow-billed Magpie, Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Western Bluebird as well as any lingering winter residents. We also hope to see some raptors and early spring arrivals such as Cliff, Barn, Rough-winged and Violet-green Swallow, and perhaps a warbler species or two. Terry will meet everyone at Community Park in Esparto at 8:30 AM and we'll carpool from there. Bring lunch/snacks, liquids; dress in layers and wear sturdy footwear, as we will do a little walking on flat roads. Heavy rain cancels. For more information contact Terry at: 530/312-0047; www.TLCBirding.com.

DIRECTIONS: To Esparto from Marin County, take Hwy 37 east to Vallejo; go east on I-80; just past the Nut Tree Center in Vacaville, take I-505 north for about 20 miles to the Route 16 exit; 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 1½ hours but allow a little extra time, as there may be early morning fog.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, March 6, 2014
9 AM to 12 PM
With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

On the first Thursday of each month we meet for a birding walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds just north of McInnis Park. Birders of all levels are welcome. Each month the avian cast of characters will change, and we'll try to keep track of newly arriving species. Early spring is a busy time at the ponds and provides 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 bird families. Try to bring a pair of binoculars, as well as some water. We'll be walking about 2 miles on the levees that surround the ponds.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 take the Smith Ranch Rd exit, then east on Smith Ranch toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch and go about .5 mi to the end of the road, at the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 9 AM but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. Rest room facilities only at the parking area.

TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK PETALUMA

Saturday, March 8, 2014
8:30 AM to mid-afternoon
With Gene Hunn

This 1,700-acre park, located between the Petaluma River and Sonoma Valley, includes pristine farm and grasslands, ridges, a seasonal freshwater lake, ponds, wetlands, and many other natural resources. Except on guided hikes this area is not open to the general public without permits; Gene Hunn will be our guide. Gene led this trip for us last June and we look forward to visiting the area again.

We will meet at 8:30 AM at the boat launch parking lot next to Papa's Taverna (now closed) on Lakeville Hwy and then carpool on Cannon Drive to the Tolay Lake Regional Park. There is a \$7/day vehicle use fee at the Park. We will hike several miles to check all the available habitats at the park. We hope to see Barn and Great Horned Owls, resident raptors including Golden Eagle, Allen's Hummingbirds, woodpeckers, Loggerhead Shrikes, wrens, and perhaps Rufous-crowned and Grasshopper Sparrows, and maybe Horned Larks. For those who wish to continue birding after lunch, we can visit the Ellis Creek ponds a few miles north at the south edge of Petaluma. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and be prepared to hike for several miles. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, hat and dress in layers.

DIRECTIONS: The address of Papa's Taverna is 5688 Lakeville Hwy, Petaluma. From Marin take Hwy 101 north to CA-37 E toward Napa/Vallejo. Continue about 6 miles on Hwy 37 to Lakeville Hwy. Take a left on Lakeville and continue for another 6 miles. The entrance to the boat ramp will be on your left, the first drive just south of the Papa's entrance.

BOUVERIE PRESERVE GLEN ELLEN, SONOMA COUNTY

Saturday, April 12, 2014
8:30 AM to 1 PM
With Hugh Helm

Audubon Canyon Ranch's Bouverie Preserve (egret.org/preserves_bouverie) is near Glen Ellen in Sonoma County's Valley of the Moon; the property was formerly the home of David Bouverie. The 535-acre preserve includes diverse ecosystems of oak woodland, mixed evergreen forest, riparian woodland and chaparral. One hundred thirty species of birds and 350 species of flowering plants have been recorded, as well as bobcat, gray fox, coyote and mountain lion. Hugh Helm, a Bouverie docent and steward, will be our guide. Hugh is also a land monitor with the Sonoma Land Trust and on the board of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation.

If you would like to attend, please e-mail Rona Weintraub at roweintraub@earthlink.net by Monday, April 7th. The Preserve needs a headcount to arrange for docents. Bring lunch, water, hat and sunscreen, and comfortable walking shoes.

DIRECTIONS: From Marin, take Hwy 101 north to CA-37 toward Napa/Vallejo. Bear left at the Sears Point Raceway onto CA-121 north/Arnold Drive. Stay on Arnold Drive for about 12 miles. Turn right onto Agua Caliente Rd and then left onto CA-12/Sonoma Hwy. The Bouverie Preserve will be on your right. The address is 13935 Sonoma Hwy, Glen Ellen. **Please plan to be at the Preserve by 8:30 AM as the gate will be closed shortly thereafter.** If you can't get in, call Hugh at 707/481-6613 or Rona at 415/328-3138.

MINES ROAD AND DEL PUERTO CANYON

Saturday, April 19, 2014
7:00 AM to 4:30 PM
With Terry Colborn

Terry will lead a one-day Mines Road trip, one of the premier springtime birding areas in the Bay Area. The combination of Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyon provides easy access to a number of habitats, including oak woodland, grasslands and chaparral. The bird list is quite impressive, and includes Costa's Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Yellow-billed Magpie, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren; Nashville, Orange-crowned, Hermit, Yellow and MacGillivray's warblers; Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager, Wood Duck and Lawrence's Goldfinch. The elusive Greater Roadrunner is reported annually. We'll also visit Del Valle Regional Park (fee) and Frank Raines Park. This all-day trek will start in Livermore on Saturday morning; if you wish to eliminate the early Saturday morning departure from home there are a number of hotels in Livermore.

This is a very popular springtime 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 Colborn at: tlcbirding@gmail.com, 530/312-0047; www.TLCBirding.com

Spring Birds and Their Songs

APRIL 9, 12 AND 19, 2014



Join the *Spring Birds and their Songs* class and tune into the varied chorus of birds nesting in the Bay Area.

Once you cue

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. **Jean Schulz**, an experienced birding-by-ear birder, will be assisting.

Class consists of an evening class room presentation with slides and recorded bird songs, Thursday, **April 9**, 7-9 pm at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center; two early morning field trips, Saturday, **April 12** and a dawn chorus on Saturday, **April 19** are designed to get us 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 _____

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E-MAIL _____

Audubon member? Yes No

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.

DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The extended deadline for comments on GGNRA's Dog Management Plan and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) ended February 19. With reservations expressed by some of the Supervisors, the Marin Board of Supervisors, in support of local dog walkers, voted to send a resolution asking GGNRA to consider the appeals of local dog walkers and take another look at the Plan segments in Marin County and provide more trails for on- and off-leash dog walking and more loop trails. The resolution supported the GGNRA's efforts to protect sensitive habitat. But it also included a request that restoration projects be located away from public areas. This is a questionable request because restorations should only be located where conditions are right (i.e., suitable soil type, topography, enough water) for them to be successful. At best the Marin Supervisor's resolution sends a mixed message.

It is clear from reading the DSEIS that the reason GGNRA restricted dog use on Marin County trails is to protect wildlife and habitat. On many Marin trails the wildlife species of concern are endangered species; e.g., Northern Spotted Owl, Mission Blue Butterfly, Tidewater Goby, and Coho Salmon. The DSEIS cited 24 peer-review studies demonstrating the adverse impacts of dogs on wildlife, as well as experiences of many people that don't want to be near dogs.

Far from being a "virtual ban" on dog use, as the Supervisor's resolution claims, the Plan provides for 25 miles of trails that would be open to dogs under the Plan's preferred Alternative F. In addition, under the Plan all of the main beach at Rodeo would be open to unleashed dogs and the recommendation for Muir Beach is changed from "no dogs" to "on-leash dogs"—both of these designations being a change from the Plan's first draft in an apparent attempt to please dog walkers. The Plan is not perfect. MAS problems with it have to do with the lack of information on the enforcement program, which will be the key to compliance, and how mitigation is addressed. Existing and past habitat restoration projects are cited as mitigation even though habitat restorations that have been completed or are underway would do little to offset the impacts of dogs.

The Plan provides for dog walkers and non-dog walkers, by designating trails where dogs are allowed and other trails set aside for use only by people. It also tries to protect wildlife, but given the easing of restrictions on dog-walking this outcome is uncertain.

GGNRA would be the only national park in the nation that allows dogs to be off-leash. What an unfortunate precedent! GGNRA is responsible to protect natural resources for the benefit of all citizens—not just one special interest group, be they dog owners, bikers, equestrians or birders. To us this plan is now weighted in favor of dog owners. Each user and user group should ask themselves whether or how their activity will impact the habitat and the species in it, and then take action to stop the damage or disturbance.

WATER ... A SCARCE RESOURCE

The good news of several months ago—that there were high numbers of Coho Salmon returning to spawn in Lagunitas Creek—was dampened by our current, continuing drought conditions. As this newsletter goes to press, storms have come our way but it is not clear that the drought is over. While it is difficult for us humans to cope with drought conditions, these conditions are even harder on fish and other wildlife.

As a result of drought conditions, the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) began discussions with water resource agencies to explore a Temporary Urgency Change Petition to State Water Board requirements to change stream flow releases for Lagunitas Creek. Because Coho Salmon are a state and federally listed endangered species the agencies involved are the State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lagunitas Creek has one of the largest, if not the largest population of endangered Coho Salmon left in the state. The construction and operation of Peter's Dam trapped water and blocked access to and flooded substantial Coho spawning habitat. In the early 1990s, the State Water Resources Control Board, after a lengthy hearing process that concluded with Water Rights Decision (WR 95-17) to release sufficient water, required MMWD to release sufficient water from Lagunitas Creek to protect the endangered Coho Salmon population.

The amount to be released varies depending on stream flows from storm events and the requirement that enough water be released to maintain appropriate flows at the stream gages. Due to the drought, the flows in Lagunitas and Walker Creeks have been maintained by releases from Kent and Soulajuli reservoirs.

Before the storms, MMWD's Board called

Limantour Beach & Muddy Hollow, Point Reyes with Jules Evans

By Vicky Van Meter



Photo courtesy of Rick Sabbing

Questing birders on Limantour Beach

As our warm, dry winter weather continued, we started our day by walking along beautiful Limantour Beach, the long sand spit between Drakes Bay and Limantour Estero. Offshore one **White-winged Scoter** popped out among the **Surf Scoters**, **Eared** and **Red-necked Grebes**, and **Common** and **Red-throated Loons**. Farther up the beach we began to see **Snowy Plovers** along the shallow puddles along the dune front. Jules discussed efforts to protect this endangered species. Marion Porter explained that one approach has been to remove local ravens and crows that have been identified as specializing in preying on plovers and other species, such as **Least Terns**. These corvids teach their young to prey on plovers so it is important to break the cycle. In addition, there has been some success with “taste aversion,” using fake eggs with a bad taste to “reeducate” predators. Jules also explained the difference in feeding strategy between plovers, which are visual feeders, and probing shorebirds that have highly enervated bills to feel for prey. Snowy Plovers can find mole crabs, a favorite prey, by spotting the antennae sticking out of the wet sand.

Moving over the dune to the estero, we learned about the problems with introduced European beach grass. Native beach grasses create a dynamic, mobile dune that supports a variety of wildlife; the introduced grasses hold the dunes in place, but support very few insects and birds. Beyond the estero we could see Tule Elk. An **Osprey** perched on a piling was probably a male, the first to return to set up their nest sites and await the females. Waterfowl in the estero included **Buffleheads**, **American Wigeon**, **Gadwall**, **Northern Pintail**, and **Green-winged Teal**. A flock of about 40 **White Pelicans** circled in the distance.

After lunch, we walked along Muddy Hollow Trail. The number of birds was certainly down. We saw signs of river otters and found elk scat along the trail. Bird sightings included **Northern Flicker**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Pine Siskin**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **Hermit Thrush**, and **Ravens** mobbing a **Red-tailed Hawk** overhead. Susan Kelly tallied 48 species for the day. Look for the book, *Birds of Coastal Northern California*, co-authored by Jules and Rich Stallcup, to be published in April.

for a 25 percent voluntary reduction in water use by customers and the North Marin Water District requested its customers reduce water use voluntarily by 20 gallons per day and anticipated increasing cuts to 20 percent of previous water use. But much of their water comes from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA). SCWA has also called upon its customers to voluntarily reduce water use by 20 percent.

While our recent storms probably have eased conditions somewhat in southern Marin’s reservoirs, conditions are still well below normal for this time of year. Undoubtedly, if the lack of rainfall abates and Marin reservoirs begin to hold more water, our water Districts will modify their actions if they feel continued cut-backs are not needed. But until we can be sure

the worst of the drought is behind us, all of us should continue to make creative reductions in the water we use. This will help us both conserve a precious resource and share it with the salmon of Lagunitas and other wildlife.

OYSTER COMPANY’S NEXT STEPS

Despite its failure to convince any agency or legal body to their point of view, the Drake’s Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) continues to pursue efforts to remain in business. Their latest effort is to sue the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to obtain a permit to continue in operation, despite the fact that it does not have the approval of the property owner, the National Park Service.

Two years ago, the CCC issued a Cease and Desist Order against the DBOC for violations



Photo courtesy of Len Blumstein

Great Egret

ACR DELAYS OPENING DUE TO NEST FAILURE CAUSES

Audubon Canyon Ranch has announced that it is postponing the opening of the Martin Griffin Preserve for the 2014 public season due to a complete nesting failure of the heronry during the 2013 nesting season. The herons have moved nesting activities elsewhere and are no longer nesting on the preserve.

Opening of the public season will be delayed until a minimum of 32 pairs of egrets have established nests on the preserve or nearby Bolinas lagoon area. Every effort is being made to reduce possible impacts from human activities near the heronry.

For more information call 415/868-9244, e-mail acr@egret.org or www.egret.org.

MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

Jane A. Allen, Amazing Grace Music, Georgia H. Couderc, Jules Evans, Jean Gilbert, Lowden Jessup, Nancy C. Merritt, Jessica Muller, Claire & George Nadeau, Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association, Barbara Searles, Suzanne Shelhart, Tom & Brittmarie Thorner, Victoria & John Welisch, Sharon Wilkinson and especially Collin Cochrane and Robert & Karen Kustel.

of the Coastal Act. To this day, the company remains in substantial non-compliance. Their continued operation allows the highly invasive marine invertebrate *Didemnum vexillum* to spread through the estuary, and allows other adverse impacts on marine mammals and birds to continue.

Last month we reported that DBOC intended to pursue its federal law suit to the Supreme Court after its appeal was rejected by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. While denying rehearing request, the Appeals Court did grant a 90-day stay, the effect of which is to allow DBOC to continue in operation a bit longer.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

No plants, native or not, are putting on much growth in this extraordinarily dry weather. Mulching and watering our newer plantings will give them a chance at becoming established enough to survive till the rains come. The invasive annuals aren't much competition, yet, this winter. We'll continue to remove the hardiest invasive non-natives such as broom and Harding grass. Act locally and join us on a workday. You would make a difference.

We have the tools, gloves and snacks. We generally work until about 1 PM, but even an hour is valuable help. Everyone is welcome.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: March 1, April 5

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: March 8, April 12

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Dr. near Bolero Ct. and the tennis courts.

If you would like to help, please contact Bob Hinz at rbhrthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Kyle Albayrak, Marisela Alvarez, Steve and Ami Bluestone, Megan Bosley, Bob Bundy, Darragh Carobene, Dave Chenoweth, Kacie, TJ & Ray Cox, Richard Diaz, Tony (Mario) Duran, Alexandra and Kelly Fister, Lauren Frantz, Garbo Gan, Louis Henry, Emily Johnson, Laurel Southwell Johnson, Nicole Johnson, Kellie Lawler, Sophia Lin, Theresa Lohrbach, Kyle Martin, Rosa Mendoza, Craig ODay, Aisling Oglivie, Jude Stalker and Kate Theriault.

We have worked this past month on the two Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) areas at Simmons Slough, adjacent to Deer Island, and at MAS's tidal pond at Bahia. The SEP funds came through a program of the State Water Resources Control Board in which sanitary districts can allocate funds to a local beneficial project. MAS received funds for discharges from two Novato Sanitary District facilities onto our properties.

Bahia Tidal Pond A year after planting native plants along the edge of the Bahia Pond, we contracted with the Watershed Nursery (TWN) to monitor the condition of our plants as required by our agreement with the Novato Sanitary District.

To provide water to our plants, the North Marin Water District provided us with a water tank and reclaimed water. As reported last month, we finished the job by hiring Shelterbelt Builders to bring their water truck and irrigate with reclaimed water.

Bahia Pond is tucked away along the Petaluma River near the peninsulas we own. It was not part of our original Bahia restoration project. The pond consists of a high berm along the north side, a lower and wider berm along the south side and a low area along the western reach with very poor gravelly soil. The eastern edge has a breach that allows tidal water to enter the Pond.

The monitoring was conducted on the transition zone, an edge habitat bordering the pond where 1500 plants were installed. The monitoring included an assessment of survival, vigor of the plants that have survived, and an estimate of the percent cover.

A comparison of this period's monitoring data with the monitoring by MAS volunteers over the last year, showed that the number of plants surviving was relatively consistent for the shrub/sub-shrub species: *Artemisia californica*,

Baccharis pilularis and *Mimulus aurantiacus*. Overall percent survival ranged from 28% to 89% for the six species planted. Coverage ranged from five to ten percent.

Despite the challenging conditions on the site (clay soils, steep slope) and the lack of rain, the plants that have been planted with Driwater™ (a gel-like source of packaged, slow release water) seem to be establishing well. It is likely that the scenario would be different if we had not used Driwater,™ especially for the higher plants on the northern berm. Some of the plants have established and had prolific flowering and fruiting on this first year after installation. In particular *Artemisia* on the north berm and *Euthamia* on the south berm have been quite successful.

A special thank you to the Novato Sanitary District for allowing us to use water from their facility at Bahia. This water is proving to be vital to our maintenance of the plants.

Simmons Slough As reported in last month's newsletter, we hired Shelterbelt Builders and finished planting native plants at Simmons Slough in late December. A *very* special thank you to the Marin Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District for their help with this project. We also thank the North Marin Water District for their assistance.

To provide water to our plants, the North Marin Water District provided us with a water tank and reclaimed water. As reported last month, we finished the job by hiring Shelterbelt Builders to bring their water truck and irrigate with reclaimed water.

With the drought conditions, we needed to water again at the end of January. The Marin Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District came to the rescue with their 1,300 gallon water tank and they saved the day! They irrigated the entire planted areas.

Volunteer Activities at Bahia and Triangle Marsh

January and early February was a challenging time for our Stewardship Program at Bahia. We had ordered over 300 native rushes and sedges from The Watershed Nursery to plant in a seasonal pond there this year during the rainy season (November through March), yet had had no rain and the pond was bone-dry. We decided to go ahead and plant, making sure to get the soil around the new plants particularly wet and to insulate the plantings with plenty of mulch.

With the help of 25 volunteers working on three separate days, we were able to plant, water and mulch 150 plants.

A special thanks to Kacie Cox of Drake High

School who recruited 15 people (family, friends, teachers and fellow Richardson Bay Audubon Center Interns) to come and help restore Bahia as part of a project for her environmental science class (see picture on left).

At Triangle Marsh this month, we had a very energetic group of 14 people who worked hard to water, weed and mulch the newly planted native plants and to remove a large patch of invasive Harding grass from the berm alongside Paradise Drive.

Thank you so much to all of the MAS Volunteer Stewards. Your help is so valuable to Marin Audubon and we appreciate it greatly!



Volunteers recruited by Kacie Cox

MARIN BIRDLOG – JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2014

By Josiah Clark

While temperatures this winter have been reminiscent of summer, the recent rains offer a reprieve to flora and fauna across the landscape, and the birds seem to be wasting no time with the early blossoms. **Allen's Hummingbird**, like the Footsteps of Spring of the bird world have returned to stake out loose colonies among actively breeding and more widespread **Anna's Hummingbirds**. The first Allen's reported this year in Marin was on the 1/31 (ML).

Herring runs along Marin's rarely-birded bay shore continue to attract rare gulls and the rare breed of gull watchers that work to decipher the identification riddles they present. "THE" adult **Slaty-backed Gull** with an aberrant white wing mark has been seen at several herring runs, and has become well-documented by the gull gang. Its most recent Marin showing was with the other big gulls at the height of the spawn on 1/31 at Paradise Park (TE, DS, NA, JC). The following day a second-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was studied and photographed at the same spot (ST, PP), constituting a second county record.

Birders noted several **Northern Fulmer** off Rodeo Beach on 2/7, a species that has moved onshore this winter as it often does (WL). On 1/31 a birder toiled over mysterious owl sounds in Mill Valley, where careful study suggested an observation of the very elusive and rarely heard **Long-eared Owl** (SS).

On 2/7 a **Brown Booby** was observed flying north off Bolinas (MD), something they have apparently been doing more often. Also in Bolinas the **Harris's Sparrow** originally found on the South Marin Christmas Count (KH) was seen again on 1/26 (DW). On 1/21 a Barn Swallow was likely an early northbound migrant along with two wintering **Tree Swallows** at Pine Gulch Creek (MD).

Up north, the **Tufted Duck** continues for at least the third year out at Abbott's Lagoon as well as one of the locally wintering **Ferruginous Hawks** and an, increasingly rare in Marin, **Horned Lark**. At least a few informed birders worked over birds fleeing the King Tide on 1/31, finding a **Palm Warbler** in the mix in Giacomini Marsh near Inverness Park (PC). On 2/14 a **Harlequin Duck** was at Limantour beach with at least one of the many wintering **Red-necked Grebes** there (TG).

Out east an influx of 30+ **Cackling Geese** on 1/12 showed up at Las Gallinas (DE). On 1/14 a **Short-eared owl** was also noted at this remarkable sewage treatment facility that remains as popular as ever with visitors. On this same date a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Rush Creek, where this rarely wintering shorebird has occurred before in winter. On 1/21 seven **Great-tailed Grackles** showed a strong presence in preparation for breeding at their favorite reeds at Las Gallinas. On 1/21 a **Ross's Goose** (JE) at the Marin Civic Center pond waddled and swam among the many **Ring-billed Gulls** that appear to love this spot like none other. On 2/7 a **Tufted Duck** was found on eBird (MF) and then among the other black-and-white ducks at Stafford Lake (SK). The first of season **Caspian Tern** flew high above Las Gallinas on 2/15 and four were seen on 2/17 at the Hamilton Wetlands restoration site. Finally, a **Black-headed Grosbeak** has been grinding down regularly on safflower seed in a San Rafael backyard, and was identified by photo (SC).

Observers and Acronyms **BN:** Bill Noble, **DE** Daniel Edelstein, **DS:** Dan Singer, **DW:** David Whimpeimer, **JC:** Josiah Clark, **JE:** Jules Evans, **KH:** Keith Hansen, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **MF:** Mark Forney, **ML:** Margareta Luff, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **PC:** Peter Colasanti, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **SC:** Scott Carey, **ST:** Steve Tucker, **TE:** Todd Easterla, **SK:** Susan Kelly, **SS:** Sharon Salisbury, **TG:** Tom Gardali, **WL:** William Legge

Road and Trails Plan Updated

continued from page 1

goal for "system" trails is to have fewer overall impacts on Marin Parks' resources than in November 2011.

A new policy designates other trails as "social" trails (non-"system" roads and trails) and allows them to be used only by pedestrians without dogs. Equestrian and cyclist users would be required to use only roads and trails that are approved as part of the "system" and designated for that use. Off-trail riding would be prohibited.

Pedestrians would be encouraged to stay on trails, but would be allowed to walk off trails and roads except in Sensitive Resource Areas. Dogs, bicycles and horses would not be allowed off roads and trails designated for their use. Dogs would be allowed off-leash but under voice command in most preserves except Rush Creek/Bahia, Cascade Canyon and Ring Mountain. Other use restrictions might be imposed by

Marin County Parks to minimize conflicts between trail users and protect resources.

Most of the proposed changes appear to benefit natural resource protection. When and if the changes are approved, the real test will be how they are implemented. We still have problems with the acceptance of unauthorized trails constructed before November 2011 because this will legitimize and allow the resulting impacts of these trails on natural resources to continue. And we don't agree with the policy of allowing dogs off-leash because their presence negatively impacts wildlife and habitats and dogs are rarely, if ever, dependably under voice command.

Finally, enforcement has not yet been adequately addressed. There is no indication as to how Marin County Parks plans to ensure that the new policies will be enforced. Given that many current destructive practices will only be controlled or restricted, not eliminated, the question remains as to how the anticipated

Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

Brody Orlick, a third grader, passed the Junior Bird Watcher test. He'd like to see a Kiwi and a Cassowary,—but if he can't hop on a plane, he'd like to see a Belted Kingfisher and a Bald Eagle.



Caden Fuchs, a second grader, celebrated his 50 Bird Day in January. As he and his classmates were eating Bird Day cake, a Varied Thrush landed in a redwood. It was a life bird, and identifying it set him on his way towards his next Bird Day!



Brian Browne, a second grader, celebrated his 50 Bird Day in January. As he sat down with his classmates to eat Bird Day cake at Marta's Marsh he suddenly pointed overhead and called out "White-Tailed Kite!" Kiting above him, it was as if it had come to celebrate the occasion!

conditions will be assured. Enforcement will be crucial to successfully implementing the management plan and protecting natural resources.

At the last hearing, many more people spoke out for protecting natural resources. It is critical to support this positive trend. We emphasize that the Supervisors have not yet approved the draft Plan changes.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Keep a look-out for the fully revised draft of the Management Plan and a draft EIR, both of which will be released sometime in spring 2014. Express your support for natural resource protection by speaking at hearings, by writing letters to the editor in newspapers and other media, and by contacting your supervisor.



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Bahia
- April 4-6 **Olympic Peninsula Birdfest**
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www.olympicbirdfest.org
- April 12 **Field Trip: Bouverie Preserve**
Glen Ellen, Sonoma County
With Hugh Helm
- April 19 **Field Trip: Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyon**
With Terry Colborn

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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.

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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.

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