



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, NOVEMBER 10 7:30 PM

Natural History of Hummingbirds

With Meryl Sundove



Photo courtesy of Richard Panek

Anna's Hummingbird

Hummingbirds have many awe-inspiring qualities packed into their tiny bodies making them appealing and special. They are at the functional limits on miniaturization of body parts like brain and bone. Hummingbirds are also at the smallest size physiologically possible for warm-blooded animals like birds and are found only in the Americas.

Meryl will weave stories with the help of slides to tell about unique features and adaptations of hummingbirds. She will discuss which hummingbird species are found in Marin County and how to attract them to your garden!

Meryl Sundove is a teacher/naturalist who worked for National Audubon Society at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center as education coordinator for 22 years. She is a popular field trip leader and teacher of the Marin Audubon Society's annual *Spring Birds and Their Songs* class, and has been the Audubon naturalist on many National Audubon Society nature travel adventures worldwide. She is currently a faculty member of S.T.R.A.W. (Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed) which is part of PRBO Conservation Science.

Come at 7:15 PM to socialize and have refreshments before the program.

Drakes Estero Action Alert

by Rick Johnson



Photo courtesy of Terry Nordbye

Oyster racks exposed at low tide

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a new Drakes Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) Special Use Permit (SUP). The Draft EIS is now available for public review and comment at this web link: parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=333&projectID=33043&documentID=43390

The Draft EIS evaluates four alternatives. The first one, Alternative A, ends the oyster operation when scheduled on November 30, 2012. Although Point Reyes National Seashore was established in 1962, NPS did not acquire ownership of all lands and waters within the Seashore's boundary immediately. In 1965, the state-held water bottoms of Drakes Estero were conveyed to NPS by the State of California. In 1972, NPS purchased fee title to the upland parcel where the oyster processing facilities were located from Mr. Johnson, the owner of the oyster operation. As part of the purchase agreement, Mr. Johnson elected to retain a 40-year Reservation Of Use. Subsequently, the area was designated by law to become a Federal Wilderness Area once the oyster operation ceased.

When Drakes Bay Oyster Company purchased the remaining Reservation Of Use in 2005, the new owners knew it would expire in 2012, and said they could make their money back in that

time frame. Ever since, DBOC has worked to undermine the Wilderness designation and keep the Estero for their own use.

In the draft EIS, Alternative A honors the commitment to end the oyster operations, create the wilderness area, and provide the best possible protection of native species and habitat. In the EIS, Alternative A is identified as the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

The other three Alternatives (B, C and D) propose a new special use permit to allow Drakes Bay Oyster Company operations in the Estero for 10 more years. The alternatives vary with three levels of increasing oyster production. According to the EIS, all of these will result in more adverse environmental impact in the Estero. MAS agrees.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The NPS is required to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in its EIS documents for public review and comment. This alternative is "the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources." Alternative A is identified as the environmentally preferable alternative because it has the most potential to protect the biological, physical, and cultural environment in and around Drakes Estero. This is based on considerations of the negative impacts of the oyster operations, as we have discussed in *The Clapper Rail*. Here are the benefits of Alternative A; all of these contribute to the protection of the natural ecosystem of Drakes Estero:

continued on page 2

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.

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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members.

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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Web site: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
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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 will see from our conservation articles, this is a very busy and important time for protecting our natural resources. Not only are major plans undergoing revisions (the Local Coastal Plan, GGNRA Management Plan, Marin County Road and Trails Plan, Larkspur General Plan) but there are a number of projects proposed and being evaluated. This month we only had space for the GGNRA Management Plan and San Rafael Airport Athletic complex. Other developments being reviewed include a Bike Park at Stafford Lake, the Tiburon Library expansion and Hanna Ranch, to name a few.

We hope members take advantage of the public processes available to comment on the lands and resources that you are concerned about. Many parts of the country do not have environmental review. In this *The Clapper Rail*, we try to present our view, the view to protect the birds that we all enjoy and the habitats that they depend on. The natural resources we have in Marin are here because lots of people worked to protect them. We depend on each of you to continue and help with that work, whether it be writing or e-mailing to a decision-making body, testifying at a public hearing or coming to help

at one of our habitat stewardship days – or all of the above.

Another threat to wildlife and habitat is use or overuse of trails through natural habitats.

A recent press release from the Marin County Bicycle Coalition announced that it has hired a lobbyist to advocate for bike use on single-track (narrow trails that will accommodate one person). Bicycles are currently prohibited on most single track trails in the county, except some in state parks. This would discourage most of the people who enjoy more passive recreation, such as observing wildlife, on such trails. People who enjoy these quiet uses, may need to speak up to be able to continue.

MAS has two Christmas Bird Counts coming up soon – register to join us for one or both and take advantage of the class we will be offering in preparation. We also have some exciting field trips coming up.

Backers of the campaign to repeal SMART (“RepealSMART”) have begun their effort to collect signatures to qualify a repeal measure for the ballot. They may need as many as 40,000 signatures. If you see any of their signature collectors do sign on.

Drakes Estero

continued from page 1

- Eelgrass beds in Drakes Estero would benefit from removal of shading by oyster racks and damage by motorboat propellers. These special aquatic ecosystems, functioning as habitat, nursery grounds, and food for numerous species of fish, waterfowl, and other marine species, would not be disrupted on a daily basis under Alternative A.
- Control of the invasive tunicate *Didemnum* would be more manageable under Alternative A. Already present within Drakes Estero, this invasive species most often attaches to hard substrates, including hanging culture and racks. Alternative A would remove the artificial hard mariculture structures currently used as habitat by the *Didemnum*. Alternatives B, C, and D would enable and promote continued expansion of this invasive species.
- Removal of cultivated non-native species under Alternative A would best protect the natural ecosystem of Drakes Estero.
- Alternative A would eliminate the daily use and operation of motorboats on Drakes Estero, thereby reducing the potential for disturbance to the resident and migratory wildlife species that depend on its resources.

- Wetland functions and values would be restored through natural processes under Alternative A. Fringe wetland habitat and eelgrass beds are susceptible to impacts from continued wave action (such as that caused by boat wakes) and placement of fill material. Alternative A would eliminate from Drakes Estero the daily motorboat traffic and the oyster growing bags, allowing these natural habitats to reestablish.

- Atmospheric and underwater noise associated with boat motors, oyster tumblers, pneumatic drills, and daily customer traffic would be removed under Alternative A, thus restoring a more natural soundscape within Drakes Estero. These noise generators and associated disturbance would persist and in some cases increase for another 10 years under Alternatives B, C, and D.

- Subsequent to expiration of the SUP, the congressionally designated potential wilderness would be converted to congressionally designated wilderness, as directed by Congress and NPS policies, providing a marine wilderness experience to the public.

How You Can Help: MAS strongly urges you to submit comments to the National Park Service by November 29, 2011. *Each individual voice*

continued on page 7

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, November 3, 2011
Thursday, December 1, 2011
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. Fall is a good time to see many of the migrants that stop at the ponds. 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 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 but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group.

ABBOTT'S LAGOON

Sunday, November 13, 2011
9:30 AM to 2 PM
With John and Carolyn
Longstreth

Join John and Carolyn for a walk at Abbott's Lagoon. John, who ran an Audubon Center in Connecticut, is the co-compiler of the Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count. Carolyn helps organize the Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival.

Abbott's Lagoon has a variety of habitats where we can expect to see waterfowl, herons, raptors, wintering shorebirds, loons, grebes and possibly a few late migrating landbirds. With luck, we might find Virginia Rail or Sora on the upper pond. If time allows, we will look for wintering Snowy Plovers. We'll walk the 1.5 easy miles to the lower lagoon and another 0.3 mile to the ocean beach.

DIRECTIONS: Allowing about an hour and a half travel time from San Rafael, follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd (SFDB) to Olema. From Stinson Beach go north on Hwy 1 to Olema. From Olema continue north on Hwy 1 (SFDB), take the second left turn (SFDB west), continue through Inverness, turn right (north) onto Pierce Point Road and keep driving until you come to the Abbott's Lagoon parking lot on the left (west) where our group will gather.

DUCK, DUCK! ... PELICAN! FAMILY WALK LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Saturday, November 26, 2011
(Thanksgiving weekend)
10 to 11 AM
With Mark Forney

Join Mark and his family for a bird walk at the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds. The path at the Ponds is flat, gravel-covered, and wide—no bushwhacking involved—and we'll go as far or near as the group desires. The trip is open to absolutely anyone who has the slightest interest in birds and children are welcome; no experience necessary. Mark will provide an introduction to the birds of Marin, and we will look for different sizes, colors, shapes, behaviors and perhaps listen for sounds. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available if you don't have any.

DIRECTIONS: See November 3 above.

GRAY LODGE & SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Saturday and Sunday,
December 3 and 4, 2011
With Bruce Deuel

Join us for a winter weekend at the refuges. We'll spend most of Saturday at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, managed by the California Department of Fish and Game. Normally about half a million birds use this area in winter and favorable breeding years can bring more. We will walk a 2-mile loop observing birds until lunch, then hike out to the viewing platform to look for additional species. If time permits, we will take a drive around part of the Sutter Buttes and then return for the evening fly-out.

Ducks and Snow Geese abound, and perhaps Sandhill Cranes will arrive in the late afternoon. At dusk great clouds of birds leave the ponds to go to the rice fields to feed (dusk = no hunters!). Then motel, dinner and get ready for Sunday's early morning walk along the Feather River in Oroville, where there will be a completely new cast of birds. From there we will caravan to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge arriving around noon. After a brief tour, we will drive around the ponds and fields that usually have new species missed elsewhere.

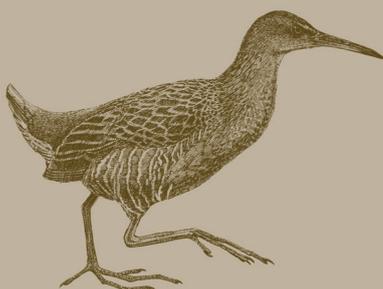
Please let me know if you plan to attend. Contact Vicky Van Meter at Vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com or 415/299-2514 (e-mail preferred). This fall, visitors to Gray Lodge must purchase a \$4.32 Daily DFG Lands Pass in advance. The new system is complicated, so I will buy the passes for everyone once I have a head count. If you want to carpool, indicate if driver or rider and where you live. We will try to link you up with participants in your area so you can make your own arrangements.

Please be prepared for a bit of cold or rain. Meet at 10:30 AM Saturday at the large parking lot just beyond the small museum, well within Gray Lodge.

NOTE: Most people stay in Oroville Saturday night for an early start on Sunday for birding by the Feather River. A forecast of heavy rain will cancel.

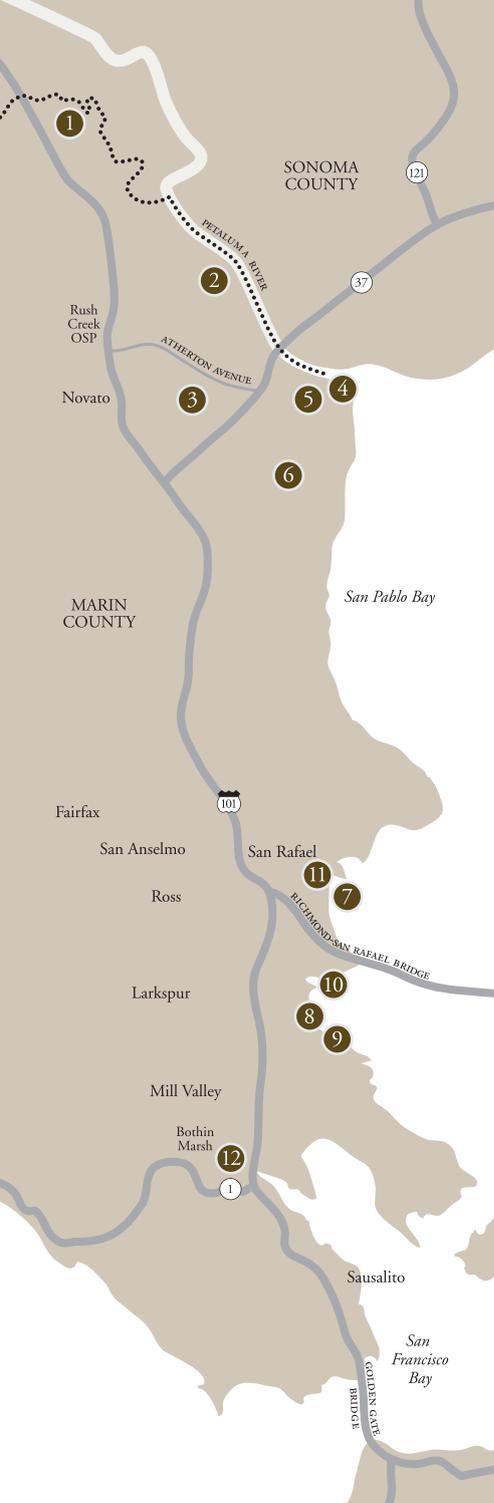
Motels in Oroville: Villa Court Inn, 530/533-3930 (discount to MAS participants); Best Value Inn, 530/533-7070; Comfort Inn, 530/533-9673; Motel 6, 530/532-9400
Motel in Gridley: Gridley Inn, 530/846-4520

DIRECTIONS: From Marin to Gray Lodge, take I-80 to Davis, Hwy 113 north to Hwy 99 near Tudor, north to the town of Live Oak, west on Pennington Rd to the Gray Lodge entrance. Allow 3.5 hours.



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.



GGNRA GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

This major update of the now 30-year-old GGNRA Management Plan will guide Park development for at least the next 20 years. The Plan, which addresses GGNRA lands in Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties, is now out for public review. The comment deadline is November 11.

Here’s an overview of the Park’s alternatives and recommendations and of MAS’s position on the Marin County sites plus Alcatraz Island:

Three alternatives are presented:

Alternative 1, “Connecting People With Parks,” seeks to encourage visitor access while maintaining the integrity and diversity of natural resources and systems.

Alternative 2, “Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems,” would restore natural processes, reconnect fragmented habitats, and optimize recovery of special status species and survival of a wide range of wildlife while providing a more modest level of public use.

Alternative 3, “Focusing on National Treasures,” emphasizes the Park’s cultural and natural resources.

In addition, Park lands are divided into the following zones: Diverse Opportunities, Scenic Corridor, Cultural, Historic, Interpretive Corridor, Natural Zone, Sensitive Resource and Park Operations. The maps provided are at a small scale so the boundaries of these zones can only be generally determined.

MAS’s preferred Alternative is 2; the Park’s preferred Alternative is 1 for the Marin county sites; and Alternative 3 for Alcatraz.

Our analysis, focused on specific sites, is as follows:

Alcatraz – The GGNRA’s preferred Alternative 3 would immerse visitors in the island’s prison landscape, improve the prison buildings and expand public access. The regionally important colonial nesting bird colony would be protected, enhanced and interpreted, but how this would happen is unclear given the extensive improvements of buildings and paths and increased public access that is envisioned. The problem at Alcatraz is that if adult birds are disturbed, they leave the nest and the eggs/young are then vulnerable to predation by gulls.

Under Alternative 2 the island would be managed to enhance bird habitat by controlling visitor use. Old debris piles in the parade ground would be retained as heron nesting habitat. Access would be provided for wildlife

viewing but would be highly controlled. Some buildings would be stabilized. MAS has no problems with stabilizing buildings.

Under both Alternatives, an offshore zone 300 feet around most of the island would be managed as a marine protected area for seabird colonies on the cliffs, but management under Alternative 2 would be more controlled.

In **Marin County**, the Park’s stated intent in choosing Alternative 1 for most sites is to preserve and restore interconnected coastal ecosystems while enhancing facilities that support visitors experiences, improving trailheads and trails, roads, campsites, picnic areas, restrooms and other structures at popular destinations. Some new facilities would be developed.

Muir Woods National Monument – Alternative 3 is preferred by the Park because it balances the restoration of past disturbances with implementing a comprehensive education and interpretive program with thematic trails. Alternative 2 would seek to restore the primeval character of the old-growth redwood forest and would be managed to ensure the highest level of resource integrity. Visitors would “experience the sights, sounds, light and darkness of the forest with a more primitive experience than today.” Buildings, parking lots and historic trails would be removed. All visitors would arrive by shuttle. The restoration of Redwood Creek, a salmon stream, would be accelerated.

Offshore Ocean and Bay Environment – The Park prefers Alternative 1, but MAS prefers 2 because it includes protection of Redwood Creek salmonids. In other respects these alternatives are the same. It is claimed both would preserve the integrity of the ocean and bay environment while accommodating uses: surfing, boating (including the Water Trail), non-commercial fishing, marine habitats (caves, rocks and other natural features). MAS wants limits on recreational uses to protect the nesting and roosting bird colonies that are disturbed by boats, etc. coming near them.

Stinson Beach – The Park Preferred Alternative 1 envisions new and improved facilities to support beach recreation, possibly improving information services, improving access, and expanding the creek buffer to protect endangered species habitat and coastal ecosystems. MAS’s preference, Alternative 2, has more environmental restoration by removing the south parking lot and restoring sand dunes.

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

Lower Redwood Creek Area – The Park’s preferred Alternative 1 calls for more development: trail connections to Mt. Tamalpais State Park, picnic areas and other trails, and relocating the stewardship center here from Muir Woods. MAS’s preferred Alternative 2 calls for continued restoration of coastal ecosystems including wetlands and uplands and protecting Redwood Creek and removal of all facilities unless needed for stewardship activities.

Muir Beach – This beach is designated a “natural zone” and would be managed to restore and sustain wetlands under both alternatives.

Tennessee Valley and Oakwood Valley – Under Alternative 1, the trailhead and upper stables area would be improved with new facilities including restrooms, more parking and potable water; the Oakwood trailhead would be improved; and camping would be possible. Alternative 2 would retain existing uses but with a minimal level of visitor facilities. Facilities could still be built to support stewardship, education and youth programs, but would be modest. Wetland and riparian habitats would be restored under Alternative 2.

Under both Alternatives, the lands surrounding the main trail from the trailhead to the ocean and surrounding uplands are designated “Natural Zone” and would be managed to preserve and enhance undeveloped coastal habitat. Remaining dams and artificial ponds would be removed or converted to trails, and the Tennessee Valley Trail would be improved for multiuse under both 1 and 2.

Forts Barry and Cronkhite – Under Alternative 1, Ft. Cronkhite would be a visitor portal to the headland “with expanded amenities, possibly improved trailheads, trails, camping, picnicking and a visitor facility providing food service at Ft. Barry. The Rodeo Beach is an “Evolved Cultural Landscape Zone” that would be managed for people use of the beach and trails. Rodeo Lagoon and Lake are recognized as “Sensitive Resources Zones” and would be managed to preserve and restore coastal habitat for threatened and endangered species. Under MAS’s preferred Alternative 2 Rodeo Lagoon and Valley would be managed as habitat for threatened and endangered species with visitor access highly controlled. Historic military facilities would be preserved under both alternatives.

Conzelman, Bunker and McCullough Roads; Battery Spencer; and Hawk Hill – These areas are designated a “Scenic Corridor Zone.” Management would “highlight” coastal resources and endangered species habitat, while providing multi-use trails and road access.

Alternative 2 is the same as 1 except that with 2 lands immediately outside of the road corridor would be managed to protect and restore coastal resources (mission blue butterfly) and visitor use would be highly controlled and restricted to designated trails.

The Draft Plan also covers Slide Ranch, Golden Gate Dairy (former Banducci Ranch), Marin City Ridge, Gerbode Valley, areas around Panoramic Highway, Capehart Housing Area and Kirby Cove. In each area, MAS prefers Alternative 2 because it emphasizes protection of habitats and native species over increased development, while allowing limited public use.

Submit written comments to: Frank Dean, Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Attn: Draft GMP/EIS, Building 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123 or online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/> goga by November 11.

SAN RAFAEL AIRPORT RECREATIONAL FACILITY

The Final Environmental Impact Report for this 17,000 square foot indoor sports building plus two outdoor soccer fields and parking lot on a portion of the San Rafael Airport diked bayland is out for review. As of this newsletter deadline, the City has not provided any information on a meeting date or deadline for comments.

The Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) responds to comments on the Draft EIR. There were 77 written comments, plus testimony made at Planning Commission meetings, that raised a variety of concerns including wildlife, habitat and flooding impacts, and effects of lighting, noise, and traffic. The majority of the FEIR consultant’s (Lampier Gregory) responses to comments supported the development and defended the consultants, which indicates to us that the city wants the project.

In particular, the response to MAS’s and Avocet Research’s comments on the DEIR were lengthy and excessively detailed in its effort to defend the applicant’s consultant, Monk and Associates, endangered species survey. Monk did not find clapper rails along the shoreline of the project site whereas Avocet Research Associates did. Jules Evens of Avocet Research is a recognized clapper rail expert with more than 20 years experience surveying rails.

There are many environmental reasons to oppose this project: impacts on the bay, Gallinas Creek, baylands, habitat, wildlife and endangered species and climate change. The project would fill and build on diked historic baylands, precluding future marsh restoration. Diked historic baylands offer the best opportunity to restore the Bay, endangered

continued on page 6

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES ADOPTED BY THE BCDC

The Bay Conservation and Development Commission voted unanimously (24-0) to approve the Climate Change Amendment to the Bay Plan that had been debated for three years. Representatives of four development-oriented organizations spoke in support of the Amendment – no environmental groups spoke. As we have reported earlier, although a first step in addressing climate change impacts by a regulatory agency, it is not a very big first step and there are lots of holes.

SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR THE LOCAL COASTAL PLAN

The schedule has been revised in response to environmental organizations request for more review time:

NOVEMBER 7, 2011; 10 AM TO 5 PM
Carryover issues from Socioeconomic, Built Environment and Agriculture hearings

DECEMBER 1, 2011
Natural Resource Systems/Resource Management Standards

JANUARY 9, 2012
Carry over issues from Natural Systems/Resource Management Standards hearings and other topics

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Celeste Binnings, Adam Boers, Karen Bogetz, Michael Budwig, Judy Morris & Cronk, Heinz Dreier, V. & E. Neumann Dwelly, Robert Farrell, Faisal & Amy Faruque, Richard E. Flathman, Jane Hanson, Joan M. Harter, Jason & Gail Hartka, Will & Morla Hastings, Karen Hazelhurst, Maria Hobbs, James Hollingshead, Janet Jacobs-Frithiof, Michelle Javrotsky, Edward P. Jepsen, Glenna M. Joe Violette, Ethel Kirk, Mary L. Kunkel, Alice Long, John Maggiora, Marie Martin, Anne G. Montgomery, Fiona Nolan, E. J. O’Neil, Deborah Phillips, Valerie Renwick, Colette Riegelmayr, Erica Rudolph, Susan Stewart, Janice Taylor, Lucy Vanpelt, Laureen Welting, Dora D. Williams, Emelie Wilson, Patricia Windom, Tess Zimmer

MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

Lee and Kent Fitzgerald, Maria Mangold

THANKS TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS:

Debbie Ablin, Cristine Albert, Kate Bartschat, Vera De Ferrari, Scott Foss, Bob Hinz, Luis F. Martinez, Prem McMurdo, Linda Nicoletto, Lowell Sykes, Kiara Wade

Christmas Bird Counts

Please join us this year in one of Marin Audubon's favorite traditions: The Christmas Bird Count.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Early October rain has put enough moisture into the ground to help both our native plants and the invaders. Planting season will begin soon when there has been more rain, but it is always time to remove some of the non-natives. A little moisture in the soil makes the task of digging and pulling some invasive species just a little easier, and cool weather keeps our hard-working volunteers more comfortable. Help us tip the balance toward *Mimulus*, *Leymus* and *Baccharis* on one of our work days. We have the tools and gloves. 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: November 5,
December 3

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturday: November 12

Wednesdays, November 2, November 16
Thursdays, November 10, December 1

We will 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 or 415/383-8688.

PLEASE ATTEND!

You are urged to attend the next Marin Parks "Road and Trail Management Plan" Workshop on Saturday, October 29, 10 AM to 12:30 PM. This is the fourth in the series of Workshops conducted by Marin County Parks. Scheduled for discussion are: the range of alternatives for the Management Plan and updates on the assessment and responses to public comment on trail use. The Workshop will be held at the Marin County Health and Wellness Center Campus, 3240 Kerner Blvd, San Rafael.

CHEEP THRILLS CBC, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

This count was conducted from 1978 to 1987, and this year we're starting it up again. It covers the following important birding areas: Mount Burdell, Stafford Lake, Bahia, Rush Creek, Indian Valley, and some of the Nicasio Reservoir. The southern edge of this circle is at the intersection of Nicasio Valley Road and Lucas Valley Road and the center is on Mount Burdell, so this count will include some of San Rafael, all of Novato, and a chunk of west Marin.

SOUTHERN MARIN CBC, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

This is the count Marin Audubon has been successfully conducting for over 35 years, and it's one of the top counts in the country in both the number of species seen and number of participants. It covers these areas: Bolinas Lagoon, Audubon Canyon, Stinson Beach, Muir Beach, Fort Cronkhite, Muir Woods, Tennessee Valley, Sausalito, Tiburon, Ring Mountain, Mill Valley, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Alpine Lake, Bon Tempe, Phoenix Lake, Rock Springs, Fairfax, and some sections of San Rafael, including Terra Linda.

CBC WORKSHOP

CBC compilers Mark Forney and Susan Kelly will be conducting an informational workshop for CBC volunteers at 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 3 at Richardson Bay Audubon Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Road in Tiburon. It will include an indoor presentation/discussion and an optional field trip where we'll practice identifying common birds. Both new and experienced volunteers are welcome. If you plan to stay for the field trip, bring a lunch.

SIGN UP NOW!

Our counts will take place on December 15 and 31, regardless of the weather. You can sign up for either of the counts (or both) by e-mail or by filling out our Web form. No Internet access? Sign up by calling Susan or Mark. E-mail: cbc@marinaudubon.org
Web: marinaudubon.org/cbc_form.php
Phone: Mark Forney 415/847-2837 or Susan Kelly 415/497-4240

CHEEP THRILLS CBC COMPILATION DINNER

This dinner will be held from 5 to 8 pm at the Bahia Clubhouse on 3008 Topaz Drive, Novato. We'll serve vegetarian pizza and salads, and you can pay at the door.

SOUTHERN MARIN CBC COMPILATION DINNER

Reservations and Advance Payment Required

The vegetarian dinner will be held from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the Tamalpais Valley Community Center at 203 Marin Avenue in Mill Valley. We encourage you to attend even if you aren't purchasing a dinner. Also, please bring a dessert to share.

How to Reserve a Dinner: You will not be able to purchase a dinner at the door this year. Instead, you must pay by check and mail it in advance. Make your check for \$14 per person payable to "Marin Audubon Society" and mail it by December 20th to Marin Audubon Society, Attention Mary Anne Cowperthwaite, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942-0599. Please include the following information: Name(s) of the individual(s) you are paying for, a contact e-mail, a mailing address and a phone number.

Conservation

continued from page 5

species habitat and tidal marshlands, and are the best defense against sea level rise. Furthermore, any development in the baylands would be at risk from flooding and sea level rise. For these reasons, Baylands should be reserved for future restoration to maintain Bay resources and compensate for losses of existing tidal marshes that will be inundated sea level rise.

The development would cause adverse impacts to endangered species and their habitat. It would bring many more people, noise, soccer balls and litter close to the marsh. No matter how heavily used the trail on the north side of the Creek may be, (comments in the FEIR reported both high and low levels

of use) this project would bring considerably more people and noise to the south bank of the creek, that currently is not well used. This would significantly increase the cumulative impacts to Clapper Rails and other wildlife, including the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse which is known to seek refuge more than 100 feet from its tidal marsh habitat during extreme high tides. This could bring them into the project site.

Soccer may be a popular sport but this massive project is simply in the wrong place.

To comment: Look on the City of San Rafael's Web site (cityofsanrafael.org) for the public hearing date or send a letter to the city: Craig Tambornini, Planning Department, City of San Rafael, 1400 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.

MARIN BIRDLOG – SEPTEMBER 2011

By Rich Stallcup

Because there are more birds on-the-move than at any other time, September is the best month of the year for many birders.

Long distance migrants with faulty genetic compasses (all juveniles) or environmental irregularities (like missing rectrices) appear in places far from where they should be, like the coast of California. While rare birds were found throughout the month, September 2011 showed total numbers and species diversity way below what we have come to expect.

American Redstart, Tennessee, Prairie, Blackpoll, Palm, Chestnut-sided and Magnolia Warblers appeared on the O.P. when the weather was right (overcast with breeze from anywhere but northwest) as expected but other regulars didn't show.

The rarest wood warbler, either a **Mourning** or a **Connecticut** is still being debated and delightfully demonstrates that we don't know as much as we thought. The only other rare warbler was a female **Cape May** at Drake's Monument 9/14 to 9/25, an unusually long stay.



Photo courtesy of Glen Topke, pbase.com/gepke

Ovenbird

Northern Mockingbirds are rare migrants at many spots on the coast so one at the Point Reyes Lighthouse 9/12 and one at Schooner Bay 9/25 were of interest.

Eastern Kingbirds were the only vagrant species found in above average numbers. The "famous" one, chased by many birders was at Las Gallinas 9/10 to 9/17, and one at Bolinas 9/9 (LS) and one on Point Reyes 9/10 (*fide* LH) were seen by only one human each.

At Hawk Hill in the Marin Headlands 9/26 it was a great day with 26 **Broad-winged Hawks** and 43 **Black Swifts!** (GGRO). A young **Northern Goshawk** was seen by an experienced observer (JK) there 9/20—rare and early.

Observers Sara Acosta, Bob Battagin, Tim Behr, Mark Butler, Heather Cameron, Renee Cormier, Todd Easterla, Jules Evans, Allen Fish, Mary Anne Flett, Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, John Keane, Jill Harley, Lisa Hug, Logan Kahle, William Legge, Jeff Miller, Outer Point Reyes, Claire Peaslee, PRBO Conservation Science, Mary Anne Rotella, Rich Stallcup, Lynn Stenzel, Scott Terrill, Linda Terrill, Janice Tweedy, Hilary Winslow

Drakes Estero

continued from page 2

is important. Ask NPS to select Alternative A as the recommended preferred alternative. If you have time, you can add more comments and explanation. The key thing is to register your support for Alternative A.

You may provide comments using one of the following methods:

- Comment online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/pore>. Click on "Open For Comment", then click on "Draft EIS DBOC SUP" and finally, click on "Comment on Document."
- You may also mail or hand deliver comments to: Draft EIS DBOC SUP c/o Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore, 1 Bear Valley Road, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956.

REPEAL SMART EFFORT UNDERWAY

Marin Audubon Society has consistently opposed SMART primarily because of its environmental damage. A citizens group RepealSMART has begun efforts to collect signatures to repeal the measure that approved the SMART project. That group is collecting signatures to qualify an initiative to repeal Measure Q, the ¼ cent SMART sales tax. They are collecting signatures at the Marin County Farmers Market on Sundays and possibly at other locations. We urge you to sign.

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

Bacich student **Pierre Beaurang** is the first third grader to become an 8th grade Junior Bird Watcher! He learned



90 birds. He is looking forward to the PRBO Bird-a-thon this October where he hope to raise money for his team and get some life birds!

Bacich 3rd grader **Jesa San Andres** became a

Junior Bird Watcher last year and is continuing his nature studies this year as a 4th grader.



Cecilia Berardi was a second grader at St. Rita School when she



became a Junior Birder. She is in the third grade this year.



THE Clapper Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

November 17-20 **Central Valley Birding Symposium**
Stockton, cvbs.org
A non-MAS event

December 10 **Field Trip**
West Coast Water Birds
With Jim White

December 15 **Northern Marin Christmas Bird Count**

December 31 **Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count**

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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 web site 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 Ruth Pratt, Membership Chair at 415/453-2989.

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