



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, SEPTEMBER 12 7:30 PM

Nests: Photos of Birds' Nests and Stories About the Birds That Built Them
With Sharon Beals



Photo courtesy of Sharon Beals

Golden-winged Warbler's Nest

Sharon Beals has photographed birds' nests in the ornithology departments of four science museums: the California Academy of Sciences, the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, and the Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates.

Concerned about the modern day threats to the survival of so many avian species, she has used her photographs to invite even those who might never pick up a pair of binoculars to be interested in the birds who have built so many wonderful creations. Her work has appeared in Scientific American and Audubon Magazine, and it will be on display in the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC this year from August 25 to May 5, 2014. She is the author of *Nests: Fifty Nests and the Birds That Built Them*, published in 2011 by Chronicle Books. Besides the nests, she photographs untidy wild habitats, and is working on a series of ocean plastic images.

Refreshments and chat at 7:15 PM.

Stream Ordinance in Trouble – Your Help is Needed



Photo courtesy of Jude Stalder

MAS's Arroyo San Jose Property

MAS 2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Check out this year's annual report on pages 4 and 5.

The Board of Supervisors may be headed toward abandoning the Stream Conservation Area Ordinance (SCA) in favor of amending the Countywide Plan and changing the ordinance to allow more "flexibility." This further delay in adopting the ordinance, of course, further delays protections in place for creeks. The Supervisors need to hear that this is not the way to go.

The County Planning Staff has been working on this stream ordinance for several years and has presented it for extensive public review over the last six months. To get the Supervisors back on track, they need to HEAR from the public that:

- we DO NOT want the Countywide Plan amended; and,
- we DO want the SCA Ordinance adopted now.

We have been through this before. Stream setback policies actually were in the 1973, 1982, and 1994 Countywide Plans but a supporting ordinance was never adopted. Just six years ago, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to adopt the Countywide Plan including its policies recommending

adopting an SCA ordinance. Without an ordinance many streams in the county are not protected. Countywide Plan policies only apply to planned district areas. The Planning Commission conducted many hearings at which there was extensive public testimony before approving the ordinance and sending it on to the supervisors.

In 2010, under a separate process, the county began a procedure to adopt an ordinance for San Geronimo Valley where Lagunitas Creek supports the endangered Coho Salmon. Because of the objections of some residents and a law suit filed by SPAWN, the Supervisors changed direction to focus on adopting a countywide ordinance. Now the countywide ordinance is here,

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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.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Vice President	Lowell Sykes 388-2821
Secretary	Mariah Baird 456-3355
Treasurer	Josephine Kreider 533-7370
Finance Chair	Greg Block 479-8254
Conservation	Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Earthshare	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Field Trips	Vicky Van Meter 299-2514
Membership	
Fundraising	Flinn Moore Rauck 892-7554
Programs	Helen Lindqvist 789-0703
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Nominating	Phil Peterson 828-4780
Editor, <i>The Clapper Rail</i>	Bob Hinz, 383-8688
Volunteer Coordinator	Shele Jessee, 530/519-1291
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. If you wish to attend please call 924-6057.

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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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

Here we are beginning another year at MAS. Our fiscal year extends from July 1 through June 30. Please take a look at our Annual Report that begins on page 4. We think you will be impressed with the extent and diversity of our activities. A special thank you to each of our Board members who worked so hard to make this a productive and successful year.

Our finances are in good shape and we transferred title to the 20-acre property we restored at the intersection of Olive and Atherton Avenues to the County Open Space District.

We invite each of our members to become more involved with us, attend a field trip, attend a program, take a class, and join us on a stewardship work day to help restore habitat on a one of our properties and/or join one of our committees. Our Field Trips and Speaker Series will begin again in September.

We are here to protect the natural environment and to serve you.

Thanks to everyone who donated to our Spring appeal. Your donations all go to benefit our habitat enhancement projects on lands that we own. It's not too late, if you forgot to donate or lost your envelope. Just use Paypal or use your own envelope.

We were very pleased that the Supervisors granted our appeal of the Planning

Commission's vote, thereby, denying a permit for a large solar facility adjacent to our wetlands (see write-up on page 6). Throughout California and the nation, people are struggling to deal with solar facilities because little is known about the impacts of many solar modules. With government financial benefits available, it seems they are being proposed in many habitats. We just received a notice that a Yuma Clapper Rail, also an endangered species like our California Clapper Rail, was found dead at a desert solar project. There are many locations where solar arrays would not cause impacts, such as roofs and in parking lots as shade structures. We are hopeful that the county will move quickly to develop an ordinance that will direct solar projects to sites where they would not cause environmental damage, and thereby facilitate permitting.

Still unsettled is approval of a stream ordinance to protect riparian habitats throughout the county. Please take a look at the article on the ordinance and contact the Supervisors to support adoption of the ordinance that was prepared by staff in accord with policies in the Countywide Plan.

We hope you are all having a wonderful summer. Where did it go so fast?

Stream Ordinance in Trouble

continued from page 1

and the call from some residents of San Geronimo and several other communities is to abandon an ordinance and take a watershed approach.

On June 18, the Supervisors declined to vote on the SCA that the Planning Commission, MAS, and other organizations supported. Instead they appointed a subcommittee, consisting of Supervisors Kinsey and Sears, to consider amending the Countywide Plan to allow more "flexibility." At the Supervisors' August 20 meeting, four supervisors said they would consider adopting a countywide ordinance and are interested in not amending the Countywide Plan.

It is time to adopt an ordinance to protect all Marin County's streams. The focus of the proposed ordinance is protecting riparian vegetation. Riparian vegetation—trees, shrubs, and forbs—provides vital habitat and movement corridors for birds, fish and other wildlife. Riparian vegetation is critical to stabilizing

stream banks; protecting against flooding; moderating climate; improving water quality; and sequestering carbon, helping to counter global warming. Studies have shown that trees add to the value of properties.

The Planning Commission approved ordinance is not perfect, but it is better than what we have now. It would protect streams while providing both certainty—everyone will know the rules—and flexibility. There are exceptions for some activities and intrusions into the setbacks or area along creek banks where a permit would be needed. The current pattern is wasting staff time and taxpayer money.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: Write or e-mail the Supervisors and urge them to adopt the ordinance and not amend the Countywide Plan when they meet again on September 18. Or, better yet, attend the meeting and speak. Supervisors' address: 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903. E-mail addresses at www.marincounty.org/depts/bs/contact-us

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

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

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, September 5, 2013
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, continuing a tradition started years ago by Bruce Bajema. 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. Fall 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, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette. 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 Highway 101 exit at Smith Ranch Road and go east on Smith Ranch Road toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, stay on Smith Ranch Road and go about 0.5 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 9:00 but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. Rest room facilities only at the parking area.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC BIRDING WEEKEND

September 14-15, 2013

With Terry Colborn

There are still a few spots left on Terry's weekend birding trip to the Monterey Bay area, September 14-15, 2013, for Marin and Mt. Diablo Audubon Societies. If you would like to join the trip, please let Terry know right away.

This annual two-day trip to the beautiful Monterey Peninsula will feature a pelagic trip on Saturday with Monterey Seabirds (www.montereyseabirds.com) and land birding on Sunday. This trip is planned to coincide with the start of the fall seabird migration. The cost for the two days is \$95 per person.

See www.marinaudubon.org for the complete trip description or contact Terry at tlcgdc@aol.com or by phone: 530/758-0689.

FALL VAGRANTS AT BODEGA BAY

Saturday, September 28, 2013
9 AM to 3:30 PM

With Peter Colasanti

Spend a day at Bodega Bay in prime vagrant season when just about anything can happen. We'll meet at the Rail Ponds at 9:00 AM. From there we'll make some stops for shorebirds before the tide gets too low. By then there should be good activity at Owl Canyon, Sonoma County's premier vagrant trap, where we'll stop en route for a seawatch at Bodega Head before the wind awakens and with the sun at our backs. From the Head we'll return clockwise around Bodega Harbor with likely stops at Campbell Cove, Owl Canyon again, Porto Bodega and winding up at Doran Park where there's always an entrance fee and sometimes Snowy Plovers.

DIRECTIONS: For the Rail Ponds take 101 North and exit to East Washington, the third Petaluma exit. East Washington becomes Bodega Avenue; follow it through Two Rock and then Valley Ford; at Hwy. 1 turn right toward Bodega Bay. Drive through town past Diekmann's Bay Store and The Boat House and take the left on Eastshore Road; go right on Bayflat Road at the bottom of the hill. Drive to the harbor shore where you'll find the horse trailer (Rail Ponds) parking lot on the right, just shy of the northernmost part of the harbor. Expect some horse trailers there by then to let you know you are at the right place.

If this is confusing, the GPS address is 1600 Bayflat Rd. You also can Google "Rail Ponds Bodega Bay" to see photo maps.

FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP CLIPPER YACHT HARBOR SAUSALITO

Sunday, October 6, 2013
7:30 AM to 4 PM

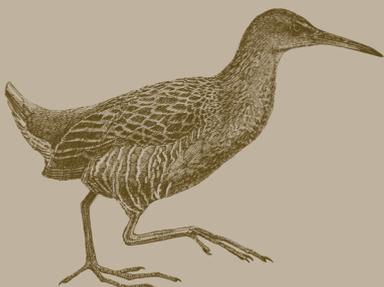
With David Wimpfheimer

Join us for our sixth annual day of seabird and marine mammal watching as we head to the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. The outing will be led by naturalist David Wimpfheimer aboard Jim Robertson's power catamaran *Outer Limits*. This is the same boat we chartered last year and it proved very stable and comfortable. On past trips we have sighted more than fourteen pelagic bird species, including albatross, shearwaters and auklets, as well as many sea lions, porpoises, dolphins and whales. We will get an up close look at the islands and learn about their interesting natural and human history. This is a trip that both experienced and first-time birders and nature lovers will enjoy.

The cost will be \$110 per person. To register, please send a check to Marin Audubon, PO Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942. **Include the name, e-mail address and contact phone number of each participant.** There is always a chance the trip may need to be rescheduled at the last minute due to sea conditions, so we need to be able to reach participants. We will send an e-mail to participants a few days before the trip. Write 'Farallons' on the envelope and check.

Please sign up early, as we will limit the number of participants to make for a comfortable trip. Be prepared for any kind of weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. Bring lunch, snacks, water and plenty of sunscreen.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy. 101 to the Marin City/Sausalito exit, head south on Bridgeway, take a left on Harbor Drive and proceed to the parking area at the end. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot to check in before boarding.



Annual Report for 2012-2013

Marin Audubon Society Statement
of Financial Position as of June 30, 2013

ASSETS

Current Assets – Checking Accounts	
Unrestricted Accounts	23,023
Restricted Accounts	189,089
Total Current Assets	212,112
Fixed Assets – Real Estate	3,400,950
Other Assets – Endowment	978,684
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,591,745

Marin Audubon Society Statement
of Financial Income and Expense
July 2012 through June 2013

INCOME

Donations (cash)	135,592
Events & Activities	10,472
Interest Earned	125
Marin Baylands Advocates Income	3,270
Membership	29,642
Income for Operations	\$179,101

Grant Income for Restoration	377,449
Donations (land)	
Endowment Investment Earnings	27,657
TOTAL INCOME	\$584,207

EXPENSE

Copy & Printing Services	23,468
Insurance	7,436
Marin Baylands Advocates Expense	3,688
Miscellaneous	5,627
Office Supplies & Expenses	793
Permits & Fees	1,000
Postage & Shipping	3,751
Professional Services	26,745
Program Expenses	9,487
Property Management Expenses	8,044
Property & Sales Taxes	7,748
Rent	858
Web site	1,170
Expenses for Operations	99,815

Wetlands Restoration Construction	371,771
Endowment Advisory Fees	5,630
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$477,216
NET INCOME	\$106,991

Land Transfer to Marin Open Space District	\$314,999
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NET INCOME AFTER LAND TRANSFER	(\$202,008)
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It has been a busy year, as you will see from our long list of activities and involvements. We continue to carry out our mission through many activities and through partnerships and advocating for the protection of habitats.

PROTECTING HABITAT

MAS owns and manages approximately 500 acres along the bay, stretching from Mill Valley to Novato. We completed restoration of a 20-acre bayland parcel at the intersection of Olive and Atherton Avenues in Novato and transferred its title to the Marin County Open Space District as required by our funding agreement with the Coastal Conservancy.

With our partner Marin Baylands Advocates, we also focused on possible acquisitions and habitat restorations at Corte Madera marshes.

HABITAT RESTORATION

Bahia Phase 2 – We completed Phase 2 of the Bahia project which excavated two more breaches in the levee around the large diked western bayland to improve tidal flows to the wetlands.

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

National Resource Conservation Service – We completed enhancement of approximately 30 acres at Simmons Slough property along Atherton Avenue with funding from the Federal Wetlands Reserve program administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. We excavated to lower the elevation of five areas in order to increase the ponding of water during winter. We also expanded several low hills, using the soil removed to create the ponds, and scattered seeds of wetland plants. *Bahia Supplemental Environmental Projects* – We obtained supplemental environmental project funding for two spills from the Novato Sanitary District, through a Regional Water Quality Control Board program, to improve habitat of a tidal pond we own at Bahia and the second at the south end (near Deer Island) of our Simmons Slough property. We planted and have maintained creeping wild rye rhizomes and 1500 native plants around the pond. At Simmons, we mowed a large mat of cocklebur and plan to plant native wetland plants in winter.

Also at Bahia, we contracted with the Watershed Nursery to create and maintain special treatment for problem soil where we have had very poor plant survival. We are pleased to report that the thickets are doing quite well.

Our volunteers maintained habitats on properties we own at Bahia, Simmons Slough in unincorporated Novato, Triangle Marsh in Corte Madera, and Arroyo Corte Madera in Mill Valley and Petaluma Marsh.

EDUCATION/OUTREACH

MAS sponsored 10 speaker programs focused on bird identification and habitat, and 25 field trips to such special places as the Farallon Islands, Wildlife Refuges near Sacramento and the Delta, as well as local sites. We produced ten editions of our outstanding newsletter *The Clapper Rail*. We also offered a birding class conducted by Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris and sponsored Junior Bird Watchers.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

MAS sponsored three Christmas Bird counts: Southern Marin, Pt. Reyes and Cheep Thrills in Northern Marin. That count is now called the Rich Stallcup Cheep Thrills Count.

PARTNERSHIPS/COLLABORATION

MAS continues to serve as fiscal agent for Marin Baylands Advocates (MBA), a group that has been meeting now for more than 15 years to strategize and work for protecting baylands. Our partnership with MBA in many ways makes possible our acquisition program.

MAS volunteers served on other Boards to represent MAS: the Water Trail, Audubon Canyon Ranch, San Francisco Estuary Institute, San Francisco Estuary Partnership, and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture representing the Bay Area Audubon chapters.

Community Marin – We continued our partnership with other Marin organizations and, after years of careful consideration, successfully completed and published this document. *Community Marin* sets forth the environmental community's recommendations for protecting environmental resources. These are intended to be guiding principles for project review and for future revisions of the Marin Countywide Plan and general plans in Marin's cities and towns.

CONSERVATION ADVOCACY

Measure A

We supported and donated \$3,000 to this Open Space ballot measure which passed with a significant majority and will provide funds for habitat acquisitions, and other needs of the Marin County Parks.

Green Point Solar Farm

After the Marin County Planning Commission approved this project we urged the Planning Commission to require an Initial Study and to prepare an ordinance but they approved (on a 3-4 vote) these 2,212 solar panels in the Baylands Corridor. We then joined several community organizations in successfully appealing the decision to the Board of Supervisors. (see article on page 6).

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Drakes Estero

We have consistently supported Secretary Salazar's decision not to extend the Drakes Bay Oyster Company's contract so that this important estuary can be restored to wilderness and the adverse impacts of the commercial oyster operation can be removed.

Port Sonoma

MAS with other environmental organizations in Sonoma and Marin sought legal assistance to persuade Sonoma County to require an EIR for the proposal to construct and use a rehandling facility to bring in dredged material, pump it across highway 37 and use it to "enhance" agricultural fields. The owner of the Port Sonoma property has changed his mind and is now interested in restoring the site to wetlands, possibly as a result of our efforts.

San Rafael Quarry

We supported protection and improvement of the wetlands on the site during environmental review for the closure plan for this facility.

Greenbrae Interchange

We opposed this project and hired legal council (Shute Mihaly and Weinberger) to comment on the need for an EIR to address the environmental damage that would result from the interchange project. In the face of substantial community opposition to the preferred plan, a Working Group of elected officials was formed to come up with another plan. An outgrowth of this endeavor is the promotion of Greenway Path—which we consider an "Ungreenway" and oppose because it would construct a wide Bay Trail-type trail adjacent to the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve along the former railroad right-of-way that would result in adverse impacts to the Reserve and its endangered species population.

Central Marin Ferry Connection

We commented to Marin County on the EIR and to BCDC supporting no filling of the tidal wetlands and mitigating near the site of loss for any unavoidable wetland losses by the project.

San Rafael Recreation Facility

We commented to the City of San Rafael on this plan to build multiple indoor and outdoor soccer fields on the banks of Gallinas Creek. We joined with neighborhood groups and hired the law firm of Shute Mihaly and Weinberger to submit comments on the adverse impacts of this massive project adjacent to endangered species habitat. The city approved the project.

MMWD Vegetation Management Plan

We attended a public meeting and submitted scoping comments on the EIR for MMWD's Vegetation Management Plan, a major focus of which is how to remove the highly invasive French Broom.

Marin General Hospital

We commented to the Marin Health District on deficiencies in the EIR for seismic safety plans for the hospital. The project would also significantly expand the hospital which is not necessary for earthquake safety.

Child Study Center at College of Marin

We submitted EIR comments asking for an improved transition zone between the project and tidal marsh adjacent to the site. They ignored our comments.

Swallow Nests on Petaluma River Bridge

MAS joined with Madrone Audubon, Golden Gate Audubon and others in seeking an injunction to stop a Caltrans contractor from causing the death of nesting swallows by erecting exclusion devices incorrectly and other actions. The motion was denied because the killings had been reduced by the time we got to court. We are now pursuing legal action under the National Environmental Policy Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Local Coastal Plan

We testified at hearings and through letters on protecting natural resources in West Marin. The plan yielded some improved policies such as identifying and regulating buffers around terrestrially Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas. Despite some deficiencies, the Supervisors recently approved the plan. The Coastal Commission's review is not completed.

650 San Pedro Road

We opposed development near the pond and heron rookery tree on this property.

Binford Road Temporary Storage

MAS wrote several letters requesting changes on this application for a temporary use permit for this smaller project than originally proposed. The revised project removed development from peninsulas that extend into the tidal marsh of Black John Slough. There remains an inadequate buffer between the project and tidal marsh.

Plan Bay Area

MAS submitted comments on *Plan Bay Area* as well as the *Plan Bay Area* EIR. Our comments focused on the fact that the plan will direct development along the Bay in Marin which is where the Bay and its marshes are located. We objected to the measures proposed to address adverse

impacts to natural resources along the Bay which include the use of mitigation banks.

Priority Conservation Areas

We submitted acquisition projects for consideration as priority conservation areas and attended meeting to discuss. Our suggested acquisition sites are on the list but are not ready for purchase.

Sir Francis Drake Improvements

We submitted comments to the Regional Water Quality Control Board on improvements proposed for this road as in the vicinity of Samuel Taylor State Park. Project impacts were reduced and few trees would be removed.

RAMSAR

MAS attended a special event celebrating the designation of San Francisco Bay as a "Wetland of International Importance." MAS's properties are included as RAMSAR sites.

Marin County Stream Ordinance

We participated in numerous meetings and hearings in support of the passage of a Stream Ordinance by the Board of Supervisors (see article on page 1).

Marin County Road and Trails Plan

We commented on the plan and presented issues to be addressed in the EIR that is now being prepared.

Thank You!

Alpine Foundation for a grant that has enabled us to water plants that are long distances from water sources on our revegetation projects.

Bev Bucklee for her generous donation to remove fallen acacia trees from our property at The Redwoods.

Marin County Wildlife and Fishery Commission for approving a grant for plants to be planted on the Central Peninsula at Bahia.

Supplemental Environmental Projects undertaken as part of the settlement of an enforcement action by the Regional Water Board against the Novato Sanitary District

RHE Foundation grant for use in the Corte Madera Marsh area.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Only a few invasive nonnative species are left to bloom this season including *Dittrichia*, cocklebur and bull thistles. We'll be looking for them all. *Dittrichia* may already be whipped at Triangle, and now it's only scattered at Bahia. We also might be watering last winter's plantings. 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: September 7, October 5

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: September 14, October 12

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

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



Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

eBIRD.ORG

It's for travelers, too. Check the eBird records to see where to find your target birds when you are going out of town or even out of the country. Of course, submit your observations, too.

We have been working over the summer months to maintain our habitat enhancement sites. The long periods of dry weather have been particularly trying. It has required replacing the DriWater inserts much more frequently than anticipated. Even the company that makes them was surprised.

For our Novato Sanitary District/Regional Board Supplemental Environmental Project, we had Shelterbelt Builders mow the cocklebur at the south end of our Simmons property on Atherton Avenue in unincorporated Novato. The mowing needed to be timed for when the soil dried out enough and the cocklebur seeds were not yet mature. We will keep an eye on the area as it may need to be mowed again before we plant after the rains begin.

We received a number of donations for our habitat restoration efforts:

- We are grateful to have received from the Marin County Fish and Wildlife Commission their grant of \$2100 for signs and fencing for Triangle Marsh. We plan to begin that work soon.
- We also received a generous donation from Beverley Bucklee to remove the highly invasive acacia trees from along the tidal section of Arroyo Corte Madera in Mill Valley. Beverley even arranged for the work to be done and supervised the workers.
- A grant from the Alpine Club Foundation enabled us to purchase a motorized cart that our volunteers use to carry irrigation water and supplies to our restoration locations.
- Thanks, too, to the Novato Sanitary District for allowing us to use water from their spigot at Bahia.

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.

GREEN POINT PERMIT DENIED

A 2,212-module solar project won't be built on 19 acres at the intersection of Olive and Atherton Avenues surrounding the Green Point Nursery. On a 4-3 vote, the Planning Commission approved the project but MAS, the Black Point Improvement Club and the Olive Ridge Community Association appealed the approval to the Board of Supervisors.

On August 6, with only Supervisor Kinsey dissenting, the Board of Supervisors granted our appeal. Supervisor Adams was absent. The supervisors' concerns reflected many of those expressed by the speakers, and included the need for environmental review, concern about community character on this highly visible site, the precedent for other parcels, impacts to the adjacent wetlands, conflicts with the Community and Countywide Plan policies, and the need for an ordinance to locate solar in the right places.

The Supervisors and speakers alike expressed support for solar, when it is in the right place and without environmental impacts. Of the 34 people who testified only six supported the project and one was neutral.

We hope the Supervisors will add a solar ordinance to the Planning Department's work plan, so solar can be directed and encouraged in suitable places (like rooftops and parking lots).

OTHER CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

EASTON POINT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

MAS commented on the final EIR for this

residential project located on the Tiburon Peninsula along Paradise Drive. The project, for 43 large houses on a hillside riddled with unstable slopes, would result in the destruction of native oak trees, wetland and grasslands and adversely impact the endangered red-legged frog and other freshwater resources downstream at Keil Cove.

PROPOSED VERIZON TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT PT. REYES SEASHORE

MAS submitted scoping comments for this 45-foot-tall tower and related fencing, roadway and metal building on Pt. Reyes Hill at Point Reyes National Seashore. We asked that the environmental assessment address impacts to scrub habitat and consider alternatives that would reduce the size of the project or combine it with other facilities to avoid habitat loss.

LOCAL COASTAL PLAN (LCP)

MAS submitted another round of comments on the latest revisions to the LCP. Recommendations from the Coastal Commission staff were addressed, although Marin County Planning staff was still deliberating some with the Commission staff. We supported Coastal Commission staff recommendations to prohibit dredging for boating in wetlands, to limit grazing in wetlands where grazing had not occurred within only five years (instead of 10 favored by the Marin County Planning staff), and supported including more specific descriptions of endangered and special status species

MARIN BIRDLOG – SUMMER 2013

By Josiah Clark

By May, spring migration is winding down and most species rarely venture far from their breeding grounds. Formerly a mega rarity, **Brown Booby** records have been on the rise in our area. One first found at the Pt. Reyes lighthouse (MF+JM) was likely the same individual found again that was using its dramatic fishing style on baitfish off Kehoe Beach about a week later (BH).

MacGillivray's Warbler is a breeder worth special mention, as most of us rarely see the sparse and elusive clans tucked away in some of Marin's most inaccessible areas. One was observed on territory along Sir Francis Drake near the intersection with Pierce Pt Road (JM) and another along the Coastal Trail in the Marin Headlands below the hawkwatch (DM). These two spots represent the furthest north and south breeding populations in the county for what is probably Marin's least numerous, regularly breeding warbler species. Hint- To find them, first learn to identify Cow Parsnip.

A **Green-tailed Towhee** near the top of Pine Mountain on June 1 was remarkable for many reasons. The species is rarely detected in the county in the fall, but is even rarer anywhere near the coast in spring. Up in the xeric scrub, it must have felt quite at home, though the species' nearest breeding sites are located over a hundred miles away in the interior mountains of Mendocino. Also of note from that same day was one of Marin's very few remaining resident **California Thrashers**. The focus of the search, the coastal breeding **Bell's Sage Sparrow**, was not found. This species was last observed breeding in Marin in 1992 (JE).

A pair of female **Evening Grosbeaks** in mid-May in Corte Madera were in keeping with an invasion that continued across the Bay Area further into the spring than most years (NW, GD, LB).

Bolinas lagoon had at least a couple notable water bird sightings during the peak of summer. A **Black Tern** made a brief visit and was the first for the county this year (BB). Even rarer for this time of year, a **Ross's Goose** first found on the playing fields of Tam High School in Mill Valley (WL) soon relocated to Bolinas Lagoon on May 31. It remained through at least early July hanging with the breeding **Canada Geese** and represents Marin's first July record, when the rest of its kind are deep in the far north and Arctic. Over at Rodeo Lagoon a molting **Red Phalarope** on July 21 seems a bit early (WL).

Though the SE winds that create late spring vagrant conditions at the outer point were fleeting, at least a few informed observers were on top of things and were rewarded with eastern gems. On June 5 the Point Reyes Lighthouse had a **Magnolia Warbler** and **Indigo Bunting**, while the Fish Docks had a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**. An **Ovenbird** and a **Northern Waterthrush** were found the next day (PP, PC and others). Later waves of vagrants often bring birds that are even more lost, as was proved in the last week of June when a **Brown Thrasher** and **Philadelphia Vireo** appeared to be the only birds on the move (RH and MB). In the eBird only category word of a **Scott's Oriole**, on June 12 reached few of us (AH). An adult male **American Redstart** on August 4th at the Nunes ranch marked the first vagrant for the coming fall migration (MB +MAR).

Over on the Bayside in mid-July at Las Gallinas, the precious sewage lagoon sported at least a few birds of note. A small group of **White-faced Ibis** spilled over into Marin, making a quick pass before heading northeast. An **American Bittern**, rare for the area assumed the diagnostic posture in the open, suggesting this recent Marin breeder may be exploring its way east. Also in the reed breeding and locally rare category, at least one pair each of **Common Moorhens** and **Great-tailed Grackles** appeared to attempt raising young in one of Marin's only large freshwater wetlands (JC and others). Not far away in locations that should stay as secret as the bird, several **Black Rails** were reported calling from bayside pickleweed expanses through the day well into late July (ML).

At Hamilton Field **Western Snowy Plovers** were found breeding and **Least Terns** were reported in late May by PRBO observers. Yes, PRBO, I will still always find it hard to call it anything else.

Observers and Acronyms **AH:** Al Helsa, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **BH:** Burr Henneman, **GD:** Gary Deghi, **JC:** Josiah Clark, **JE:** Jules Evens, **JM:** Jeff Miller, **LB:** Len Blumin, **MF:** Mark Forney, **ML:** Margareta Luff, **MAR:** Mary Anne Rotella, **PS:** Peer Colasanti, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **RH:** Roger Harshaw, **KC:** Kate Carolan, **NW:** Nick Whelan, **MB:** Mark Butler, **WL:** William Legge.

MacGillivray's Warbler

Photo courtesy of Glenn Tepke, getpke.photoc.com



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