



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10 7:30 PM

Bay Area Shorebirds

With *Rusty Scalf*



Elaine Bond

Shorebirds

Twenty-seven shorebird species can be found in the San Francisco Bay Area with several more occurring occasionally. Each bird has a different story: different nesting grounds, different migration, different foraging strategy, with some new discoveries and plenty of surprises. A few nest here, some stage here on migration, others call the bay home for two-thirds of their year. For a good number of these species, our bay is the most important habitat on the continent's Pacific coast. Rusty's photographs will please all shorebird lovers but may also be a helpful review for upcoming Christmas Bird Counts. He will discuss significant field identification markings and distinctive behaviors for our local species.

Rusty has been an avid birder since childhood. Marin birders are familiar with Rusty's discovery and steadfast monitoring of the Vaux's Swift population at their fall roosting site at McNear Brick & Block in San Rafael but may not know of his wider knowledge of Bay Area birds. Since 1990 he has taught bird ID classes for beginners and for the past 25 years he has been very involved in the Breeding Bird Atlas movement. *Breeding Birds of Solano County* features range maps created by Rusty for each of the county's breeding birds. He also leads field trips for Golden Gate Audubon and is a Point Blue volunteer in an annual shorebird survey. His day job is computer mapping and database work—geographic information systems.

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

OSD Trail Workshops – Disasters

The Marin County Open Space District (OSD) has now held two workshops that were intended to begin the process for identifying and establishing what they call “system trails”, i.e., trails that are approved as part of their trail system and will be maintained by the OSD. By all accounts from environmental attendees, these two workshops have been disasters.

The pattern followed at each workshop has been that a staff person explained the process for proposing trails to be closed, improved or approved as a system trail. There are forms on which proposals should be submitted to the OSD. Staff will evaluate and consider proposals from the community along with their own priorities.

Then attendees were divided into groups and assigned to tables on which several maps were laid out. The maps showed trails proposed for consideration as system trails or to be closed marked with small numbers that were difficult to see.

Both workshops were heavily attended by bicyclists who gathered around the tables several deep making it difficult for those in the back to see the maps. The cyclists appeared quite familiar with what was on the maps (probably because they have suggested them and already ride them). Others, in addition to not being able to see the maps, were at another disadvantage of not having information in advance.

Although there is a facilitator at each table, the discussions were disorderly with people calling out opinions. There was little effort to maintain order, direct and control the input, and ensure that all views, opinions and recommendations were expressed, heard, and recorded. There was no effort to ensure everyone could see the maps, or understand which trails were being considered. Some environmental comments were criticized and/or openly disputed by other attendees. Most unfortunately, there was no information provided about sensitive environmental resources that could be adversely impacted by expanding use of trails. In a private conversation at the second workshop, one of the attendees admitted that he would have liked to know about the environmental constraints.

Of course, one of our major concerns is the presence of spotted owls on OSD lands in Larkspur, Mill Valley and Giacomini and other Preserves in Region 2. It is unclear whether the OSD will ensure protection of the areas where spotted owls are nesting in the Giacomini Preserve, Baltimore Canyon, Camino Alto and other preserves. The OSD is even considering designating some trails within Legacy Zones as system trails. Legacy Zones were identified in the Vegetation Management Plan as being the

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Robert Hinz

Members of the MAS Board on their annual property tour were pleased with the condition of Bahia and the other visited MAS properties, but there are always things to be done. See page 4 for story.

Like Us on Facebook!

We are thrilled to announce that Marin Audubon Society is now on **Facebook!** Do check us out. Follow us! Leave a comment! Be our Friend!

We hope the site will give you more timely updates, information on what Marin Audubon is doing, and what is going on around Marin birds and habitats.

If you have a bit of time and would like to help us stay current, please contact Flinelizmora@comcast.net.

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
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Finance Chair	Greg Block 479-8254
Conservation	Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
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Speaker Series/Programs	Board Members
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 668-1242
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Volunteer Coordinator	Katy Zaremba, 847-9933
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
At Large Board Member	Jane Medley 559/760-1551
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.

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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Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
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Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing 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 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 pleased finally to be on Facebook. We've been working on this for a long time. Do join us.

This month brought a troublesome experience for some and a reminder for all of us that federal law prohibits taking or keeping wild native animals. The law's purpose is to ensure our wildlife stay wild. Well-meaning folks at Bello Gardens Nursing Home raised an orphaned duck and then when it escaped and ended up at Wildcare, they discovered that permits were needed for the duck to return. Unfortunately, the situation was seized upon by certain DC politicians as an opportunity to bash the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Congressman Huffman's office stepped up to help and a position for a paid independent contractor, a "Wildlife Caretaker and Environmental Educator," to work at Bello Gardens has been developed. Federal standards for such positions require having experience caring for wild species as well as providing environmental education. Classes can be taken to gain this experience. Contact Neysa Hinton, Executive Director, Bello Gardens.

One gift you should not get for anyone this holiday season is a drone—and if you own one make sure you don't use it over any habitats. To ground-dwelling birds, migratory shorebirds, waterfowl, or many species that are hunted, a drone overhead would be taken to be a hawk and would cause the birds to try to escape the perceived threat. Birds need to devote their attention to feeding or resting when they have the opportunity, i.e., when the food is present, tides are low, etc. Wildlife should not

be subject to such harassment just so people can have a little fun with their toys. Recently, two people were observed flying drones over Tomales Bay. Fortunately, the overwintering waterfowl had not yet arrived. A drone and its operator have also been observed on our Corte Madera property. Recreational drone flights are reported to be having negative consequences at Mono Lake, and we expect this is happening in many other places. Please save our native birds from this unwarranted disturbance.

Remember our native birds during the holiday season with a gift to Marin Audubon Society to protect their habitat. You may have already received our winter appeal letter, and we hope you will be generous. Our winter appeal is dedicated to supporting our operational expenses, which are the most difficult funds to raise through foundation grants. We need your generous gift to enable us to advocate most effectively for wildlife and keep MAS's programs going.

Do get out to enjoy our winter waterfowl and shorebird residents. Join one of our field trips, Christmas Bird Counts, and/or just go out on your own.

Hopefully we will have some rain soon, although not much has come as this newsletter goes to press. We have three articles that may be helpful for gardening for wildlife—the native plant article below, where to purchase native plants and to how collect rainwater on page 5.

Happy Holidays!

Plant Milkweeds to help Monarch Butterflies

By Kevin Stockman

The monarch butterfly may be most recognizable and beloved insect in North America. Western monarchs spend the coldest months of the winter densely clustered in Monterey pine, redwood and eucalyptus trees at scattered groves along the California Coast. The much larger eastern population overwinters in a high elevation fir forest in central Mexico. In the spring the butterflies disperse north and east in search of milkweed plants. Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) are the host plants for monarchs, the only plants on which the caterpillars will feed and grow.

Monarch populations are in steep decline. Loss of naturally-occurring milkweed habitat is a primary reason. Fortunately, you can help. Milkweeds, named for their milky sap which makes them unpalatable to most animals, are a fine choice for the sunny home garden or any grassy neighborhood patch that isn't mowed. They have clusters of small flowers in spring



A Monarch on Mexican milkweed

and summer followed by inflated seed pods in the fall. Milkweed will self-seed to provide volunteers for next year's garden.

There are fifteen species of milkweeds native to California. Narrow-leafed milkweed and

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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 or co-host, Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

San Rafael

Thursday, December 3, 2015

9 AM to Noon

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. The ponds provide an opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other 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 Hwy. 101 take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit, and go east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch Rd., 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. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.

Christmas Bird Count season. After lunch we will take a look at two nearby areas—Rush Creek and the Rowland Ave wetlands.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in north Novato take the Atherton Avenue exit east about 2 miles. Then turn left onto Bugeia Lane, which becomes Bahia Drive, and follow it to the end where there is some street parking. No restrooms available here.

PIPER PARK

Larkspur

Sunday, December 13, 2015

1 to 3 PM

With Rich Cimino

Join us for a bird walk in Piper Park, located in Larkspur on Doherty Drive behind the Larkspur Police Station. This is an easy walk on a paved trail. We'll bird a mix of pine, oaks and ornamental trees, the sports field and the Corte Madera tidal marsh. The trip is in the afternoon to take advantage of the tides.

DIRECTIONS: From the north, take Hwy 101 and exit at Lucky Dr. Turn left from Fifer Ave. to Lucky Dr. and then turn right at the school onto Doherty Dr. Coming from the south you can exit on Tamalpais Dr., turn right onto Magnolia Ave. for one mile, turn right on to Doherty Dr. and look for the park on your left. We will meet on the green area next to the electric car charging stations on the left as you enter the Piper Park parking area.

BAHIA, RUSH CREEK AND ROWLAND AVENUE WETLANDS

Novato

NO. 8, BIRDING IN MARIN SERIES

Saturday, December 5, 2015

(Note: Because of Christmas Bird Counts, this is the 1st Saturday in December, not the 3rd)

8:30 to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Please meet at the foot (east end) of Bahia Drive in Novato where Marin Audubon is continuing a large marsh restoration project. Shorebirds, ducks, herons, swallows and rails will be reaping the benefits here for years to come. After viewing the birds and the restoration area we intend to walk the trail along the edge of the mixed oak woodland. Next we plan to drive around to the end of Topaz Street to view the horseshoe-shaped pond where some diving ducks, including a few Barrow's Goldeneyes, like to winter. During the day we will practice some bird counting to help prepare for the upcoming

BOLINAS LAGOON

NO. 9, BIRDING IN MARIN SERIES

Saturday, January 16, 2016

8:30 to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Bolinas Lagoon is an important bird area (IBA) since over 10,000 ducks and shorebirds winter there. We will look on and over the lagoon from the meeting area and from two or three other pullouts along the lagoon. Then we will drive 3 miles to the Duxbury reef overlook to see what is happening on and over the ocean. The Bolinas mesa oxidation ponds are another good place for a bird walk. We will then have a lunch break in downtown Bolinas. After lunch, with the lower tide we will look for shorebirds near the Pine Gulch Creek delta.

DIRECTIONS: Please meet at 8:30 on Highway 1 at the Stinson/Bolinas primary school, which is 1.5 miles north of the central Stinson Beach stop sign.

Christmas Bird Count Reminder

Don't forget to sign up to participate in Marin's Christmas Bird Counts. See our website, www.marinaudubon.org, or last month's issue of *The Rail* for more information.

Here is a schedule for some of the Bay Area counts:

Monday, December 14

- Benicia

Thursday, December 17

- ▶ Cheep Thrills/Northern Marin

Friday, December 18

- Eastern Alameda County

Saturday, December 19

- ▶ Point Reyes

Sunday, December 20

- Hayward-Fremont
- Oakland
- Santa Rosa

Monday, December 21

- Palo Alto

Saturday, December 26

- ▶ Southern Marin

Sunday, December 27

- Western Sonoma County

Tuesday, December 29

- San Francisco

Wednesday, December 30

- Sonoma Valley

For more information on these CBCs, go to www.natureali.org/cbcs.htm.

MORE RESTORED BAY WETLANDS

After 10 years of planning and \$18 million raised, on October 25, the Sonoma Land Trust breached a levee along San Francisco Bay allowing the tides to once again flow onto 1,000 acres for the first time in over a century. The restored area will undoubtedly greatly benefit the Bay's resources. Our congratulations to the Land Trust for a job well done!

eBIRD.ORG

Do you or did you record bird observations in a series of notebooks? Can you find all those notebooks? Make it easy on yourself and at the same time share your sightings with science. Submit observations to www.eBird.org.

DECEMBER HABITAT STEWARDSHIP WORKDAYS CANCELLED

We will NOT have our usual workdays at either Triangle Marsh or Bahia in December. After a very effective October and November at removing invasives at both sites, December has provided too many conflicts of activities for our leaders.

Although we have had some rain by mid-November, there surely is dry soil only a few inches below the surface. Without significantly more rain or supplemental watering it would probably be too soon to plant.

We will be back in action on January 2 at Triangle and January 9 at Bahia. Planting will probably be the activity at both places. Resolve to make the world a little better next year and help restore our marshlands next month.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Bundy, Dave Chenoweth, Laura Cox, Bob Hinz, Flinn Moore Rauck, San Marin School, Lowell Sykes, Zofie, Lily, Lukas and Katy Zarembo; Marin Country Day School K-2 students and parents, Mark Day School students, San Marin School students

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS

Mariah Baird, Barbara Benson, Carol & Donald Davis, Michael Freeman, M.D., William Gonda & Sally Sehring, Michael & Valerie Hancock, Mark Lindberg, Jan R. Medley, Donald Reinberg, Schwab Charitable, Stuart Siegel, Jeanne & Peter Tymstra, Sharon Wilkinson

Frank P. Greene for Corte Madera Restoration

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Are you handy with a computer and want to help MAS get the word out?

We're just getting going on Facebook (check us out, we need posts!) and we want to expand our e-mail messaging. We also need to combine some of our e-mail and address lists.

We value any time and help you can give—for a few hours and/or ongoing computer work.

Contact Martha Jarocki at marthajarocki@comcast.net or 415/461-3592 or Flinn Moore-Rauck at flinlizmora@comcast.net or 415/892-7554. We look forward to hearing from you!

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

We're very pleased to have had a number of school classes and others volunteer at both Bahia and Triangle. Such volunteer sessions are not only a great help to us restoring habitat, they are also an important way for students to learn about marshes and get hands-on experience actively restoring habitat. We had a wonderful array of volunteers this month.

Bahia On our regular October Saturday Work Day seven very helpful volunteers removed eight bags full of cocklebur from the Central Bahia seasonal pond. Meanwhile a grassfire raged across the Petaluma River; we found out it was a controlled burn.

In addition, we were pleased to welcome lots of students:

On October 20, ninety students from San Marin School removed a lot of ice plant, this time from the north end of the Central Peninsula.

On October 22-25, students from Mark Day School removed even more ice plant from the end of the Central Peninsula. Katy Zarembo also gave an in-school presentation the week before.

Triangle Marsh On the first Saturday in October volunteers, including some from Marin Country Day School (MCDS), watered plants, pulled Russian thistle (*Salsola soda*) and *Dittrichia*, and dug out Harding grass. On October 24 about 35 youngsters and parents from Marin Country Day School helped to remove more Russian thistle and they got a lot removed! On the first Saturday of November, volunteers pulled Russian thistle and dug Harding grass near the old part of the marsh.

BOARD FIELD TRIP

Our Board had its annual field trip to our properties on November 1. We schedule such visits to check and evaluate the status of the properties and to identify any problems or corrective measures needed. This year we visited Triangle Marsh, MAS's Tiscornia Marsh, the small piece we own in the Calpark neighborhood, Simmons Slough, Bahia and MAS's Petaluma Marsh properties. Generally we found the properties to be in good condition.

At Triangle we again admired the success of our marsh restoration and noted that ongoing work is needed to remove the Harding grass at the west end of the property. Tiscornia Marsh, at the mouth of the San Rafael Canal, looks about the same but the disappearance of Ridgway's Rails is a concern. There was usually a pair until about two years ago. At Simmons Slough the removal of Harding grass was in evidence but there were signs of regrowth. We will have to continue mowing and will try to reduce the potential for regrowth by planting coyote bush in some of the removal areas. At Bahia



Jude Sautler

San Marin School students pulled a "ton," maybe more, of ice plant at Bahia in October.

the SEP pond appears to be doing well, and we also visited the area where we recently removed junk. No new debris has been left. At Petaluma, the marsh looks wonderful and vegetation is gradually increasing along the levee bench. This is the area that had extremely high sulfide levels which killed the plants we planted. After several unsuccessful efforts to remediate the problem soils by irrigation, we gave up and let nature do the work.

We identified some areas needing attention and ways to address these problems. Overall, we were pleased with our success at working toward self-sustaining habitats, although most properties need ongoing work.

BAHIA AND SIMMONS SLOUGH SEP

Our Quarterly Reports for these sites were submitted on time to the Regional Water Quality Control Board and Novato Sanitary District at the end of October. The sites are our tidal pond at Bahia and the southern section of our Simmons Slough property adjacent to Deer Island. We had little to report: At Simmons we checked on the plants we planted last winter. At Bahia we reported our work watering removing weeds and mulching.

The Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) funding is through a program of the State Regional Water Quality Control Board which allows sanitary districts and others, that are cited for spills, to donate funds to a project that will benefit the environment. In this case, the Novato Sanitary District had spills into both our Simmons Slough and Bahia properties, and they chose to fund environmental improvements on these habitats.

BAHIA MONITORING REPORT

We are pleased to announce that the wetland system restored at Bahia in 2008 is evolving along anticipated paths and timelines, as reported in our third monitoring report that is now being finalized. Physical processes were monitored by Dan Gillenwater and vegetation work was done with assistance from Claffey Ecological Consulting Inc. and Volmar Natural

Lands Consulting. Special thanks to Jude Stalker and Katy Zaremba who volunteered their time and expertise to map and monitor for the presence of invasive species thereby enabling our costs to be reduced.

Physical Processes

For the Physical Processes Report, sedimentation levels, breach and channel configuration were monitored in West Bahia, Central Bahia and Mahoney Spur. The data was compared with the progress anticipated by the engineers and permitting agencies at the time the project was permitted. It takes years for marshes to evolve into an equilibrium after restoration projects.

In Central Bahia there is some difference in the flow patterns that are developing from what was originally planned. The channel that was constructed and intended to be the major channel is now a minor feature. Instead a channel network is forming at the south end and a large swale has formed at the northern end and is continuing into West Bahia. These new channel networks are now dominant and seem to be functioning well.

In West Bahia, the tidal exchange has improved since this basin was opened to full tidal action in 2012 in Phase 2 of the Bahia restoration. Although the tidal range is still muted, the amount of muting is within the range that was anticipated for this stage. As expected, the tide range in Black John Slough has increased by 1.1 feet since 2012. The breaching of levees upstream in Black John now draws more water upstream which results in the widening of Black John Slough. It is the movement of water that widens and keeps channels open.

The engineer's recommendations are to continue to monitor the evolution of the flow pattern, channel formation and tidal hydrology in Central and West Bahia as well as Black John Slough and to use Richmond as the reference station to track tidal ranges.

Vegetation Monitoring

The Vegetation Monitoring revealed the vegetation is progressing as required in the BCDC and Corps permits:

- In the West Bahia lagoon, a fringe of more than three acres of tidal marsh vegetation has developed around the entire basin;
- In Central Bahia, tidal marsh vegetation has established and is spreading within the graded intertidal levee slopes, intertidal marsh platform and berm areas. There is 98 percent native vegetation in these areas.
- The constructed seasonal wetlands are dominated by a combination of brackish tidal, and fresh water species. There are six areas of seasonal wetlands: three have evolved into tidal marsh due to tidal inundation; two have large areas of standing water; and one is dominated by fresh water plants.
- Undesirable exotic plants, yellow star thistle and perennial pepperweed, account for <5% of the tidal marsh and lower transition zone species.

The Vegetation Report concludes that vegetation establishment is generally proceeding as anticipated with no adaptive management necessary. The consultants recommend stepping up management actions in the tidal marsh and transition areas to control the exotic species to comply with the permit requirement that invasive species be reasonably controlled.

OSD Trail Workshops

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most pristine of the Preserves and, therefore, the habitats to be given most protection.

We have written the OSD and the supervisors about the lack of order and procedures (or lack thereof) followed at the workshops. It is not in the interest of the public and, more importantly, of making sound decisions on protecting natural resources for these workshops to be conducted in such a disorderly, crowd-driven manner.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

If you attended one of the meetings, make your displeasure known to the Acting Director of the OSD, Ron Miska, by mail or e-mail, and to your Supervisor. Attend subsequent meetings and speak up for wildlife and habitat. We'll publish the dates and locations in *The Rail* or via e-mail. We hope the format and conduct of the meetings will change by then.

Milkweed

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showy milkweed are native to Marin and will grow in a wide variety of conditions. They have pink or white flowers and die back to woody stems in the winter. Although Mexican milkweed, also known as tropical milkweed, is the species that you are most likely to find in commercial nurseries, monarchs and pollinators will benefit more if you take the time to find and plant regionally appropriate native milkweeds. Seeds for native milkweed species can be ordered online.

An ideal pesticide-free monarch habitat patch could have multiple species of milkweeds to host caterpillars along with nectar-producing flowers such as asters, sunflowers, and purple coneflowers to feed the adults as they visit to lay their eggs. Several generations of butterflies are produced in spring and summer, each generation moving north, until the last generation for the year mysteriously migrates all the way back to its winter group site.

Purchasing Native Plants for Your Garden

Planting season is coming up—as soon as the rain comes. Because we are promoting planting native plants to support wildlife, we want to help members find the native plants to plant. While it is our policy to not endorse or advertise for private enterprises, we offer some suggestions on the list below for where you might purchase native plants. The only nursery we have experience with on this list is The Watershed Nursery which is where we purchase most of the plants for our restoration projects. Marin seems to have quite a few sources for native plants, and there are others in Berkeley, San Francisco and Oakland.

- O'Donnell's Fairfax Nursery
1700 Sir Francis Drake Blvd,
Fairfax, 415/453-0372
- CNL Native Plant Nursery
254 Shoreline Hwy, Mill Valley
415/720-6253
- Mostly Natives
27235 Shoreline Hwy, Tomales
707/878-2009
- The Watershed Nursery
601 Canal Blvd, Richmond
510/234-2222

Other nurseries, such as Ace mentioned last month, may also have a selection of native plants.

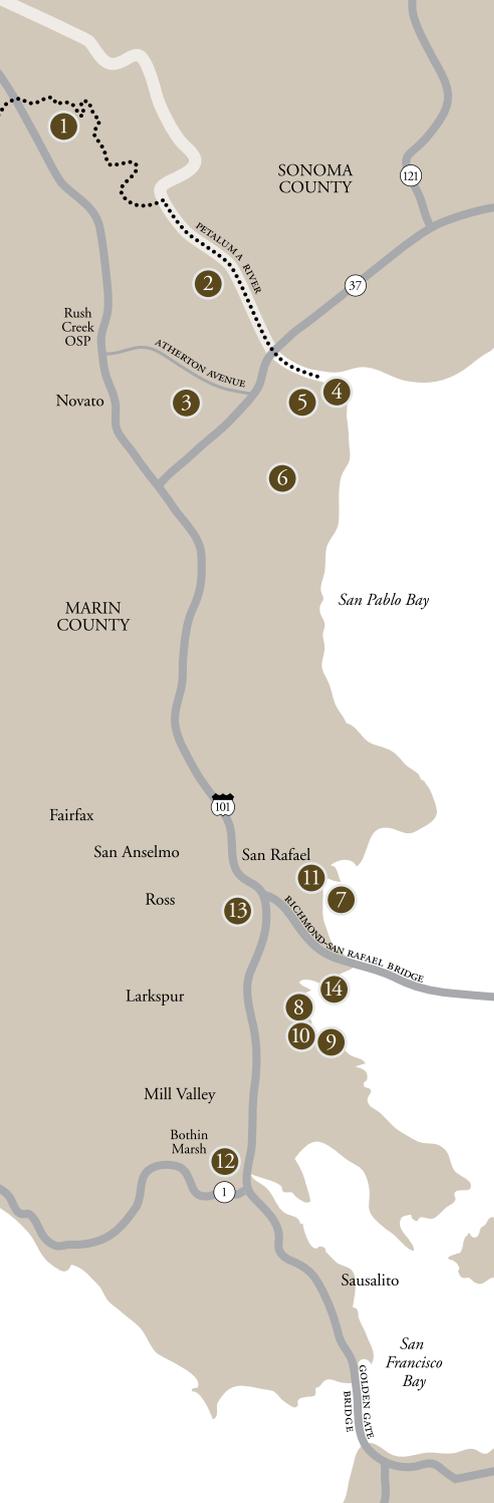
For more information, search the Web for "Native plant nurseries Marin County."

GARDENING HINT

A good way to collect rain water for future manual irrigation usage, if and when it begins to rain, is to use a 50-gallon capacity barrel that you can seal so mosquitoes and other insects cannot enter it. Make sure the barrel includes a spigot and garden hose adapter. Connect the barrel to a downspout. Gravity is your friend, allowing the runoff to flow from the roof and collect in the barrel for you to store and use, as you wish.

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.



MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	144 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	4 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
13. Cal Park	<1 acre
14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site	5.2 acres

PREVENT BIRDS STRIKING WINDOWS

The graphic depictions of songbird mortality in the recent film, *The Messenger*, have reminded us of the major threats that windows and night lighting are to birds.

Many species migrate at night guided by the setting sun, moon, and stars. Most of the bird strikes at tall buildings occur at night. Migrating birds are attracted by brightly-lit urban buildings and drawn away from their navigation route. They appear to be mesmerized, fly in circles in the light, become confused and exhausted, and eventually collide with the buildings and die either quickly with a broken neck or more slowly.

At just one Chicago building from 1978 to 2004 the death toll from bird collisions included 4,136 Song Sparrows, 3,632 Dark-eyed Juncos, 3,362 Swamp Sparrows, 2,532, White-throated Sparrows and 1,417 Hermit Thrushes. Collision with man-made structures ranks third, just behind cats, (habitat loss ranks #1) among the causes of death of migratory birds in North America. An estimated 100 million to one billion birds die in collisions every year. That San Francisco, New York and Chicago now have Lights Out Ordinances to try to protect birds from these death traps, are small rays of hope.

Tall buildings are not the only problem. Half of the collision fatalities occur at our houses. These are usually day-time collisions caused when birds see the surrounding habitat (trees or shrubs) reflected in the window, or they see through and are attracted by objects inside or through the structure.

How to Make Your Yard Safer for Birds

Move feeders close to your house, 1.5 feet or closer, so birds won't be able to build up enough speed to hurt themselves if they fly against the glass; close curtains and blinds to make the surface appear more solid; move house plants away from windows so birds are not attracted to them. Another suggestion is to not wash your windows so they can't see a reflection or appear to be a solid surface.

Or you can use one or more of the many devices to keep birds away from windows. The FLAP.org and www.abcbirds.org websites report on 15 such devices: bird screens or netting that keep birds away from windows; films of antireflective vinyl or polyester that are applied to windows; anti-collision decals and tempera paint; etched glass; strings hung in front of windows; tape applied to outside of windows; UV technology that reflects UV light the birds can see but we can't; and specially

treated protective glass.

Deterrents that don't work include hawk silhouettes, single window decals, plastic owls, noise deterrents and magnetic fields.

DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

We can expect to see the Proposed Rule for the regulation of dogs in GGNRA released for a 60-day comment period on January 16, 2016, as announced in a recent Notice from GGNRA. The Proposed Rule will reflect how GGNRA will operate under the National Park Services (NPS) preferred alternative. The rule will be arrived at after review and analysis of all of the comments received on the Draft Dog Management Plan by the Department of Interior. The Rule will describe how people will be able to enjoy the park with their dog, and the parameters for responsible dog walking.

During the public review period, informational meetings will be held in the three counties where the park is located. The meetings will explain the proposed rule, how it fits into the 14-year-long dog management planning process, and take public comment.

Following the comment period, NPS evaluation of the comments, and completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the NPS will issue a Record of Decision (ROD), which is a summary of the overall process and reasons why the NPS has chosen their preferred action. The process is expected to be completed in late 2016.

There is intense political pressure to allow off-leash dogs to roam unregulated throughout the trails, habitats and picnic areas of GGNRA. As reported by Amy Meyer and William Shepard in a recent Chronicle letter, GGNRA has more endangered and threatened species than Yosemite, Yellowstone and Sequoia combined. These special status species as well as all of the more common native species, in order to keep them common, need people to speak up on behalf of protecting them and their habitats by requiring dog uses to be controlled and limited. Our National Parks should not be managed for the sole benefit of one user group.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

When the Management Plan is released, attend the public meetings and comment. To access the SEIS and other dog management planning documents, go to <http://tinyurl.com/qzhvsgh>

MARIN BIRDLOG: OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2015

By Josiah Clark

By most accounts this fall has been a bit disappointing overall for vagrants in Marin, with a couple of major exceptions in the southern part of the county. On 10/15 banders at Point Blue Conservation Science mist-netted a **Dusky Warbler** along Redwood Creek near Muir Beach. After first being missed for a day or so, this skulky bird was re-found on 10/16 (TG), and then enjoyed by many through 10/20. On that day, a **White Wagtail** was found at Rodeo Lagoon (WL) and enjoyed by many through 10/22. I know of a lucky few observers who were able to see both of these Asian vagrants on 10/20.

Outer Point Reyes used to be the hotspot in Marin, where 75% of the vagrants in the North Bay area were located each fall, but this year, anyway, it seems to have lost some of its luster, with Owl Canyon near Bodega Head (Sonoma County) taking charge. Is this a trend due to more observers scouring every corner of these counties, catching up to the coverage typically enjoyed by Point Reyes? Or was it simply due to chance influences of precise local weather patterns on migrating birds? Southeast Farallon Island was also a bit slow this fall, suggesting the latter, but it will be interesting to see how this develops moving forward. Not that the Outer Point didn't provide a few goodies this fall, with a **Pine Warbler** on 10/17 (TE) and a **Yellow-green Vireo** on 10/23 (DS), both at the Fish Docks, being quite notable. Other vagrants or interesting migrants this period on the Outer Point included **White-winged Doves** at the Lighthouse 10/15 (DF) and one and two at Nunes Ranch (A Ranch) 10/17-18 (TE, ES), a **Magnolia Warbler** at the Fish Docks 10/15 (DF) and two there 10/16 (RH), a **Long-eared Owl** 10/19 (JC), up to three **Palm Warblers** at Mendoza (B Ranch) 10/20-31 (m.ob.), and two **Lapland Longspurs** at Spaletta Plateau 10/25-26 (DS, ST). Toward the end of the period up to four **Rough-legged Hawks** and four **Ferruginous Hawks** were noted at various spots on the Outer Point 11/11 (AA), perhaps indicating a flight year for the former.

Elsewhere in the county, another **Magnolia Warbler** was found at the Las Gallinas Ponds 10/15 (BA) and another **Palm Warbler** was also there 11/6 (BB), a dozen or more **White-faced Ibises** at Abbott's Lagoon 10/20 (BH), and a **Sage Thrasher** and **Nashville Warbler** along Paradise Drive in Corte Madera 10/23-24 (JW, MF). Generally, numbers of **Fox Sparrows** seem very high this winter, while those of **White-throated Sparrows** and **Slate-colored Juncos** seem lower than normal.



Nashville Warbler

Glen Tapke, gtpke@pbac.com

Observers and Acronyms **AA:** Anne Ardillo, **BA:** Bob Atwood, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **DF:** Dea Fried, **DS:** Dan Singer, **ES:** Emilie Strauss, **JC:** Jim Chiropolos, **JW:** Jim White, **MF:** Mark Forney, **M.OB:** many observers, **RH:** Roger Harshaw, **ST:** Steve Tucker, **TE:** Todd Easterla, **TG:** Ted Gilliland, **WL:** William Legge

THANK YOU TO THESE \$1000+ DONORS TO THE CORTE MADERA PROPERTY

You'll be seeing the following list regularly during the coming months because we promised to recognize donors of more than \$1,000 to our Corte Madera acquisition in our newsletter and on the property for a year. The list below includes donors to both Marin Audubon and Marin Baylands Advocates. Our thanks to everyone who contributed to make this purchase possible.

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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. When National Audubon discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor. Wendy Dreskin conducts the program in elementary school classrooms in several schools. For more information, visit "Junior Birdwatchers" under the "Birds" tab at www.marinaudubon.org or contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.

All of this month's Junior Bird Watchers were fourth graders at Ross School last year when they passed their birdwatching exam.



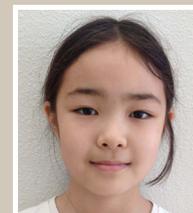
Jacqui Domet says "Once an American Robin came into my house! It was pretty funny."

Justin Hoeveler would like to see a Marbled Godwit.



Otis Hunt would like to go to Costa Rica to see parrots someday. In the meanwhile, he'd like to see a Cedar Waxwing.

Gabriella Grujic was excited to spot two Great Horned Owls at Phoenix Lake!



Violet Finch enjoyed watching a crow trying to get at her bird feeder. "He kept falling off!"

Kate Singer was thrilled to see Bald Eagles in Alaska!



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January 7 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas
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January 16 **Field Trip:** Bolinas Lagoon,
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With Bob Battagin & Jim White

January 21 **Field Trip:** Cypress Grove
and Tom's Point
With John Kelly

January 26 **Field Trip:** Tomales and
Chileno Valley
With David Wimpfheimer

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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 Rail*. 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 because all of your chapter-supporting dues stay with MAS.

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 website 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 chapters. With this joint membership, you 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: MAS, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.**

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