



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Corte Madera Inn DEIR Out for Review

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild Project is out for review. The comment deadline is January 19. The project calls for tearing down the current 110-room facility, increasing the number of rooms to 185, filling the pond, eliminating the restaurant, building a new guests-only pool, a spa, conference rooms and a pond feature, and installing a lawn.

The only biological consultant identified in the DEIR is the applicant's consultant. This means that the evaluation of the pond is that of the applicant's consultant, and, of course, he says it has low habitat value. There is a lengthy discussion comparing the pond with the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. The bird surveys that were reported for the Ecological Reserve were actually done at Shorebird Marsh, which is a much different kind of habitat, is owned by the Town and is not part of the Reserve.

The pond's conditions are sufficient for it to be regulated by the various state and federal agencies. Regulation by these agencies is not dependent on habitat value. It doesn't need to have high wildlife use, but it does have impressive use by birds, in particular by a stable colony of Black-crowned Night-Herons that roost there. During this year's Christmas Bird Count, 23 Black-crowned Night-Herons were observed roosting in the trees.

Also of concern is the proposed mitigation that the DEIR reports as credits in the Burdell Wetland mitigation bank which the applicants purchased in 2007 when they last applied to fill the pond. Purchasing credits in this mitigation bank should be unacceptable for a number of reasons, foremost being that it has not been determined that filling the pond is unavoidable. Further, this bank is too far away, about 20 miles from Corte Madera, it is not a bank intended to produce pond habitat and it has not successfully produced the riparian habitat it was intended to produce.

As required by CEQA, the DEIR presents three other alternatives and evaluates the



The Corte Madera Inn pond with an immature Black-crowned Night-Heron roosting (pictured in insert)

alternative that retains the pond (Alternative 2) as environmentally preferable. This discussion states that water quality could be maintained by seasonal circulation or spray fountains which are used at the Civic Center lagoon for the same purpose. We agree.

At the hearing on December 9, a few people supported the project but most spoke in opposition for various reasons including increased traffic, the height and bulk of the building which were likened to Wincup, loss of the swimming pool for public use and/or because of loss of the pond.

Although within the boundary of the building moratorium recently approved by the Town Council, the Town has exempted this project from the moratorium because they were far along in the planning process.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Review the DEIR and submit questions and information you may have about the pond. Feel free to mention any of the issues we raised above. Submit comments to:

Planning Director Adam Wolff
Town of Corte Madera
Corte Madera Avenue
Corte Madera CA 94925

After the consultants respond to the comments and produce a Final EIR, the Town will schedule a hearing on the merits of the project. Your voice will be needed then to support keeping the pond.



Photos courtesy of Gordon Beebe

Blue-capped Tanager

Using multimedia, Gordon Beebe, President of Madrone Audubon Society, will present "Exploring the Colombian southwest Andes and intermountain valleys."

Torrent Ducks, Cock-of-the-Rock and more are shown in photos, video, and audio recordings, all seamlessly integrated into the presentation. Experience the visual beauty and unique songs and calls of the birds of the varied habitats of southwest Colombia, from the valleys, cloud forest, freshwater lagoon and rivers, to the páramo, high in the Andes. Watch the antics of a Black-billed Mountain Toucan as it feeds in the cloud forest, see five species of Antpittas up close at Río Blanco Preserve, hear the unusual song of the Jet Antbird at Sonso Lagoon, and delight in the Buffy Helmetcrest, a hummingbird of the páramo.

Gordon Beebe is a project coordinator for the Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas, a Saturday bird walk leader, and the website editor for Madrone Audubon. He lives with his wife, Judy, in Santa Rosa, California.

Come at 7:15 PM for refreshments. The meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

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Photos courtesy of Barbara Sulzeman (pond) and Bob Fitz (bird)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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Website: 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 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 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

Thank you to all who have responded to our winter appeal. We know multiple appeals are sometimes annoying, but for us to continue our work, they are also necessary this year. We need to raise money both to acquire the Corte Madera property and to continue our regular operations. So think of our needs and the needs of our wildlife that your donation to MAS will support. It is not too late—send your donation to P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942 if you have not done so already.

Sign up for a new feature—flash mob—on our website. We'll let you know when the brief and unpredictable Herring runs occur in San Francisco Bay so you can join us to view the spectacle of thousands of birds feeding both on the herring roe and the spawning adults. It is wondrous to see!

The New Year will bring challenges: closing the gap in our fund-raising to finalize our purchase of the Corte Madera property, continuing our advocacy and habitat restoration work to protect habitats in the face of development proposals. Please read our conservation section and participate in the public processes to help us

advocate for wildlife habitat. Informed voices speaking up for wildlife are a powerful force to influence decision-makers.

Do also join our field trips to view the overwintering shorebirds, waterfowl and other waterbirds that spend the winter in our diverse and productive habitats.

We also invite you to join us in restoring and enhancing habitats on one of our properties. These properties belong to all MAS members and your participation in our work to improve them would be most welcome. The opportunities extend along the Bay from Mill Valley to the boundary with Sonoma County.

Sign up to participate in Audubon's Great Backyard Bird Count. See page 7 for the National Audubon website for information.

As we go to press, our Christmas Bird Counts are over—all were successful. Interim counts for: Point Reyes Count is 190 species, for Cheep Thrills 175 species and Southern Marin 185 species. See our February issue for write-ups on each of the counts. Have a healthy and wonderful new year!

DECEMBER 10 FIELD TRIP

Cypress Grove and Tom's Point With John Kelly

By Vicky Van Meter



Photo courtesy of Beth Schriock

Horned Grebe

Ten of us joined John Kelly at the 150-acre Cypress Grove Research Station on Tomales Bay as a huge storm was moving in from the west. The property includes shoreline, wetlands, grasslands, forest, and a cluster of lovely Victorian cabins surrounded by Monterey Cypress. John explained that many birds can detect changes in barometric pressure. The **Greater Scaup**, **Buffleheads**, and **Black Brandt** in the bay were feeding in anticipation of the storm. Birds must continuously assess body mass to maximize energy stores while minimizing predation. A bird that is too heavy has slower reflexes. We

watched **Common** and **Red-throated Loon** and **Horned Grebe** near the shore. John said that grebes will catch pipefish in the eelgrass and that he had once seen a pipefish wrap around the bill of the bird. A short time later we saw this for ourselves. Highlights of the birds on the bay and in the cypress trees included a male **Common Goldeneye**, a **Peregrine Falcon** and **Red-tailed Hawk** being mobbed by crows, a **Belted Kingfisher** that posed for us by a pond, **Brown Creepers**, and **Townsend's Warbler**.

After a stroll along the shore and across the boardwalks in the marsh, we headed to Tom's Point—another Audubon Canyon property. We hiked along the cliffs and learned about the complex geologic and human history of the area. It was invigorating to watch the storm approaching as we looked out from the bluff to the high surf at Dillon Beach to the west. Some of us continued on to Dillon Beach to look at gulls – a favorite spot of Rich Stallcup. A big tom Turkey that must have been fed from a car at one time, trotted along by our front tire for a mile before giving up. It is always a pleasure to spend a day with John Kelly. We always leave with something new to think about.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, January 1, 2015

9 AM to 12 PM

With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

Join Susan and Len for a New Year's Day walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds. Birders of all levels are welcome. Winter 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. Dress for all weather and bring water. We'll be walking about 2 miles on the levees that surround the ponds. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: *From Hwy 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then 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 .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. Late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.*

SAN QUENTIN POINT AND THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL

Saturday, January 10, 2015

8:45 AM to 12:30 PM

With Rich Cimino

Join guide Rich Cimino for an easy bird walk during a low tide. We will bird the shoreline of San Pablo Bay for diving ducks, grebes, peeps and gulls. We will also look for the Puget Sound variety of White-Crowned Sparrow. Bring your scope, water, snacks and a smile! We won't break for lunch, but there are restaurants nearby for lunch after our walk. Restrooms are available at the bird walk halfway mark (Target Store). Meet in the parking lot for the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Park trailhead. Light rain will not stop the walk; a heavy rain will cancel.

DIRECTIONS: *Take Hwy 101 to the Bellam Blvd. exit. Proceed to Francisco Blvd. East, which is the access road next to I-580. Head east (toward the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge) for about 1.5 miles. You will see a Bay Cafe sign at the Bay Park Center. Turn left and continue straight to the trailhead parking area. For GPS, use the Bay Cafe address, 2165 Francisco Blvd., San Rafael.*

BOLINAS LAGOON

NO. 9, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, January 17, 2015

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Bolinas Lagoon is an important bird area (IBA) because 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 turnouts 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 oxi-

dation ponds are another good place for a bird walk. We will then have a lunch break in downtown Bolinas. After lunch we will look for shorebirds near the Pine Gulch Creek delta with the lower tide.

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

COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE AND SUNSET CRANE 'FLY-IN' SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Saturday, January 17, 2015

8:30 AM to 6 PM

With Terry Colborn

The Cosumnes River Preserve, managed by The Nature Conservancy, is one of the last remnants of a once vast riparian habitat in the Sacramento Valley. This is the only river from the Sierra flowing into the Delta that isn't dammed. Situated on the eastern edge of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, this 1,500-acre preserve of mixed oak woodlands, grasslands and wetlands hosts a nice array of wintering passerines and waterfowl, including numerous species of ducks, geese and Tundra Swan. The surrounding wetlands and flooded fields provide excellent refuge for many waterfowl, waders and Sandhill Cranes. The lush oak woodlands can often yield a number of passerines and wintering raptors. Past visits have even afforded views of river otters, an uncommon resident.

We will walk about a mile on a flat trail, have lunch on the deck at the Visitor's Center and then enjoy watching the winter waterfowl in the nearby impoundments. Late afternoon we'll head to Staten Island, a renowned area that is an evening roost for hundreds of Sandhill Cranes. The sight and sound of hundreds of Sandhill Cranes coming to roost at sunset is a sight to behold.

DIRECTIONS: *We will meet at 8:30 AM at Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor's Center lower parking lot. From Marin take Hwy 101 to Hwy 37; go east to I-80 east. At Fairfield/Suisun City turn onto Hwy 12 (southeast) and continue to Hwy I-5 near Lodi. Go north on Hwy I-5 approximately 13 miles to the Twin Cities Road exit. Travel 1 mile east; turn right (south) on Franklin Blvd. and drive 1.7 miles to the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor's Center on your left. Travel time from Marin County is approximately 2 hrs.*

Bring binoculars and scope, lunch/snacks and liquids. Wear comfortable footwear and dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels. For more information contact Terry at 916-705-8991 or at www.TLCBirding.com.

SKAGGS ISLAND AND HUICHICA CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

HWY. 37, SONOMA COUNTY

Friday, January 30, 2015

9 AM to 12 PM

With Daniel Edelstein

Daniel is a Consulting Biologist, teaching ornithologist at Merritt College, and long-

time bird tour leader (www.warblerwatch.com). Join Daniel as we visit Skaggs Island along Hwy 37 in southeastern Sonoma County. Here, the vast wetlands and open area often attract uncommon visiting, non-breeding season raptors such as Rough-legged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, and Merlin, along with sightings of White-tailed Kite and other raptors. In addition we will see diverse shorebirds, waders, and ducks — with many visiting us only for our "winter" pleasure. Afterward, if we have time, we'll carpool to the Huichica Creek Wildlife Area (HCWA), immediately north of Skaggs Island. We will meet on Skaggs Island Road off Hwy 37 where we can safely park away from traffic for a walk before carpooling to HCWA. The road to Skaggs Island is closed but we can walk the short distance to the bridge where we have a panoramic view of the marsh. Bring lunch, water and be prepared for any kind of weather. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: *Take Hwy 101 north to Hwy 37. From the 121 turnoff (Sears Point), continue straight on Hwy 37 for about 4 miles to Skaggs Island Road. We will meet on Skaggs Island Road about 200 feet from Hwy 37.*

SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP Boat leaves and returns to the Antioch Marina

Sunday, February 8, 2015

8:15 AM to 4:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join us aboard Dolphin Charters' *Delphinus* for a wonderful day of exploring the richness of the California Delta with naturalist David Wimpfheimer as our guide. Ronn Patterson, a Bay Area historian and naturalist, is captain of the *Delphinus* and owner of Dolphin Charters. The boat is very comfortable and the outer decks provide views over the levees of the amazing array of birds found in the Delta during the winter. This rich area hosts a wide variety of raptors including uncommon species such as Swainson's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and Great Horned Owl. Large numbers of shorebirds, Sandhill Crane, Tundra Swan, Snow, Canada and White-fronted Geese, ducks, as well as gulls, terns, bitterns and passerines make the cruise a highlight for birders. Uncommon mammals such as beaver, river otter, coyote and mink often add interest to the cruise. We also will learn about the history, ecology and politics of the levees and the Delta as we travel through its meandering channels.

The trip is limited to 25 participants and the cost is \$105. Deadline for reserving space and making payment is February 1, 2015. This year you can register and pay online at www.marinaudubon.org. Online registration is preferred, but to register by mail, send a check to Marin Audubon at Box 599, Mill Valley, CA, 94942. **Include the name, email address and contact phone number of each participant.** Please write "Delta Trip" on the envelope and check. Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions the week before the trip.

\$1,075K

\$860K

\$645K

\$430K

\$215K

\$0K



Close the Gap!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS TO PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY

Susan & Howard Blair, Patricia Campbell, Lois Cannady, John Crawford, Christine Cuccia, Thomas Delebo, Richard & Joyce Finley, Lizabeth Gluck, Elizabeth & Jon Goerke, Ron & Belle Guelden, Gretchen Hoskins, Joan & Eugene Jacks, Victoria Jackson, David C. Kimball, Josephine Kreider, Diane & Leslie Lynch, Ewan MacDonald, Peter Mason, Linda McCann, Doyleen McMurtry, Robert & Dorothy Moy, Jessica Muller, Barbara Munden, Myra J. Natter, Russell Nelson, Judith & John Obedzinski, Joanne K. Powell, Pasadena Com Fndn, Sara Griffith, Henry & Barbara Randall, Jordan Rinker, Dorothy C. Rosso, Carol B. Schwartz, Ann Sheldon, Virginia Soper, Langdon R. Stevenson, Kandice K. Strake, Lisa & Peter Tarantino, Ruth M. Voorhees, Rona Weintraub, David Werdegar, M.D., Kerry W. Wilcox, Donna Williams, Chris & Teri Wills

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Joyce & David Applen, Elaine Bachelder, Holly A. Bacuzzi, Keith Bancroft, Bob Battagin, Greg & Giselle Block, Charles Brousse, Ione Conlan & Guido Frosini, Carroll Covey, Frank Cox, John Crawford, Lewis Fredrickson, Elizabeth & Jon Goerke, Erika W. Harris, Frederic & Sandra Hirschfield, Julien I.E. Hoffman, Russell & Paula Hunt, Richard Jenkins, Lowden Jessup, Doreen & Richard Kanter, Josephine Kreider, David & Carolyn Long, Kathy Lowrey, Kellie Magee, Morton McMichael, Cathi D. Mendle, Carland & William Nicholson, Norma T. Ooghe, Marilyn Pfeffer, Alison & Keith Pinto, Norma Pomerance, Jeanne Price, Donald Reinberg, Walter & Joan Rentsch, Susan & John Ristow, Carla Ruff, Stuart & Carol Schneider, Jean Starkweather, Charles & Carla Stedwell, Helen L. Stoddard, John & Jill Templeton, Christine Wood

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.

CLOSE THE GAP IN THE CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE UPDATE

We have now raised more than half of the necessary funding to purchase the 5.2-acre property at the end of Industrial Way in Corte Madera, but we are only two months away from our target date for closing of January 31.

Thank you to our many members who have responded with generous donations: those who responded right away to our first mailing and those who responded to our second, reminder, mailing. So far our members and donors to the Marin Baylands Fund, and community organizations and foundations have donated almost \$300,000 to help acquire this property.

We got further good news from Audubon California, that we were approved for a Wimberly grant of \$30,000 and have an opportunity to increase that to \$100,000. To receive that grant, we will have to extend our contract into February because the Board that must approve the grant does not meet until February. We greatly appreciate Audubon California's help on this acquisition.

The above donations together with the \$175,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation bring us to our current total of more than \$575,000. We will not hear about the federal grant until the end of January, and about the state grant until February.

Our ongoing fund-raising included a presentation to residents of the Greenbrae Boardwalk, one of the neighborhoods closest to the property, in the hope of gaining donations from residents and from their homeowners association.

Congressman Jared Huffman wrote in support of our application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a federal grant and to the Wildlife Conservation Board in support of state funding. Assemblyman Marc Levine also wrote to the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Coastal Conservancy in support of state funding.

SAN RAFAEL GOAT GRAZING PROBLEMS

We appreciate the prompt response from San Rafael's city manager, Nancy Mackle, to our letter of concern about the damage to native vegetation by the grazing goats on and adjacent to the Canalways site along the San Rafael bayfront.

Ms. Mackle explained that the goat grazing in the drainage channel and the areas adjacent to Target and Home Depot were not part of the grazing areas that were delineated by

the city's Fire Department. Rather they were commissioned by San Rafael's Public Works Department as part of a regular vegetation management program for an area that had historically been managed with herbicides. She acknowledged that public works staff failed to communicate the project boundary to the goat herder and that this led to the overgrazing. The city manager expressed regret and said steps are being taken to remedy the situation.

Ms. Mackle responded that the Park Superintendent believes the plants should recover because only the lower branches of key species were stripped by the goats. The city promised to monitor the plants through the winter and to replace any that fail to thrive or die. Embankments affected by the goats would also be monitored for erosion and addressed as necessary.

The city manager also promised that future grazing work will be mapped in advance with environmentally sensitive areas, private property and the perimeter clearly delineated, and the map will be included in the bid packages.

We appreciate the prompt response from the city manager. We will express our appreciation and support for all of the actions they promise will be taken. We are also planning to suggest that contracts with grazers include a penalty if the directions are not followed, to suggest that the city improve internal communications and to question why the city has been using herbicides in areas adjacent to a drainageway and on private property.

MARIN COUNTY ROAD AND TRAILS PLAN

The Marin County Open Space District Road and Trails Management Plan (RTMP) Final EIR has been out for a brief review period and the final hearing before the Board of Supervisors (BOS) was held on December 16. While we recognize the District's difficult position in having to contend with the demands for more bike use, little is changed from the Draft EIR. If the promises are kept, conditions should improve. We fully support the stated overarching purpose of the RTMP "to avoid or reduce environmental harm during maintenance and construction and to reduce over time the environmental footprint ...".

The main problems we have with the RTMP are that obtaining most of the essential information necessary to make informed decisions, and the processes to be followed to make those decisions, are all put off to some future time.

Obtaining basic information needed to avoid harm to wildlife (like where the species are), explanations and clarifications of policies, and finalizing worksheets that are used to evaluate projects are put off to some future time. Promised in the future are studies to identify where wildlife are, consideration of policy issues in a new document “Analysis of Policy Related Comments” and updating of worksheets used to evaluate impacts. So, the RTMP relies on trust that the stated purpose will be achieved; that staff with the same vision and intent, and decision-makers with the same political philosophy, will be in place 5, 10, 20 years from now. They are big uncertainties. The information should have been obtained and the analyses have been completed before adoption of the plan.

The EIR repeatedly denies that there is any potential for adverse impacts to result from the RTMP because all of the impacts already are occurring. We contend that there is indeed a potential for increased use, and therefore increased impacts, because in an attempt to address current impacts, some trails will be created, some will be made more usable by widening, improving the surfaces and all-weather, bridges and steps will be repaired and slopes flattened. We think there is a very real potential for these improvements to result in increased use and therefore increased impacts, particularly in areas where there is poor information on wildlife. The EIR analyses conclude that, in “the overall,” impacts will be reduced. We expect that some trails will be closed, but we are not so sure adverse impacts to wildlife will be reduced at specific locations and in “the overall”, particularly when there is no information on where wildlife is present nor has an enforcement plan been made available for public review.

A curious feature of the EIR is that almost every response repeats a disclaimer statement that the comment does not raise new issues, and many responses claim that the commenter’s do not understand the nature of the RTMP. One would never believe, reading these staff comments, that some of the responders have been reviewing plans and EIRs for decades.

There were 133 comments on the Road and Trails Management Plan, 85 of which were generated by Access4Bikes on a form generated by Access4Bikes, and some of those responders even left the instructions on the response.

The supervisors adopted the RTMP at their meeting on December 16.

HOUSING AT ST. VINCENT’S/ SILVEIRA PROPERTIES

Protection of the St. Vincent’s and Silveira lands has been a long-time concern of the Marin Audubon Society. Accordingly, we spoke in support of maintaining the land use designation in the Countywide Plan (CWP) at the December 9 Board of Supervisors hearing on the housing element. The hearing went on for more than four hours.

Usually we don’t comment on housing matters, but this time was different because the Planning Commission’s recommendation for the potential number of houses on St. Vincent’s/Silveira properties far exceeds the CWP designation. Our preference has always been to permanently protect the property for wetland restoration.

The number of units unanimously supported by the BOS in 2007 was 121, based on extensive study and analysis including two advisory committees, one in 1994 and a second in 2000. The many constraints on the properties include Miller Creek and its riparian habitats, wetlands and oak woodlands.

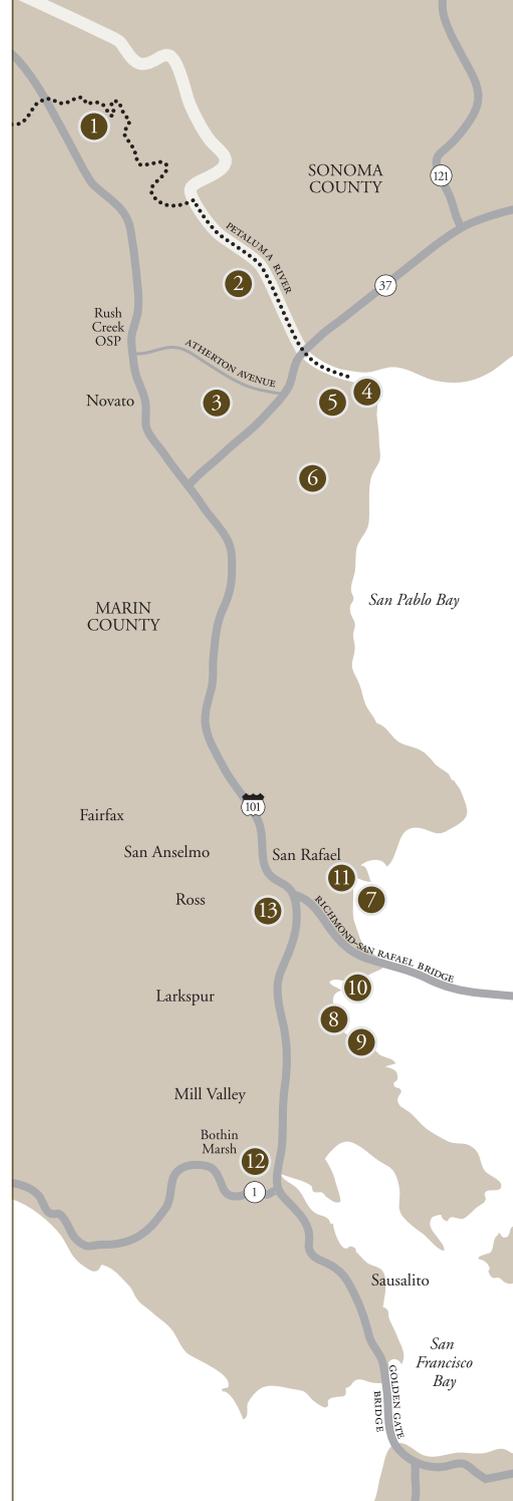
The Supervisors made a number of changes in the Planning Commission’s recommendations, including removing the Seminary property and Strawberry in Mill Valley from the list of affordable housing sites. Unfortunately, lowering the potential for developing St. Vincent’s/Silveira was not one of them. The number of potential units remains at the high number of 221 units.

WEST MARIN COMPOUND PROPOSED

A proposal by Hidden Dragon LLC for an 8,300-square-foot compound on Balboa Street in Inverness has raised many concerns. The project consists of a 3,300-square-foot house with outbuildings. Thirty large native trees would be removed to accommodate the buildings, driveway, and parking.

The building’s design includes extensive glass windows and entry halls in spite of increasing awareness that plate glass is often lethal to birds. They may see their own reflections and perceive it as a competitor, or see reflections of the vegetation nearby and fly into the windows, sometimes breaking their necks. The latest information is that the project will use a special treated glass that birds can see which is intended to avoid impacts.

The applicant has requested a 90-day extension that would bring the deadline to mid-February. We hope they change the design and size of the development.



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

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

We'll probably be doing more planting during January workdays. The very surprising but most likely obstacle to that activity could be rain or flooded planting areas. That's weather! Mulching plants would also be worthwhile. That can prevent erosion, slow the growth of weeds and keep moisture in the soil during the dry season. Otherwise we'll be removing non-native invasive vegetation.

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: February 7

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: January 10, February 14

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

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

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Breana Biggi, LaRon Bullock, Dave Chenoweth, Abby Frazee, Bob Hinz, Sharon McCloskey, Linda Nicoletto, Mike & Aidan Reese, Eliza & Lauren Ross, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Anton Timms, Lily Wyle, Katy Zaremba

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michelle Allen, Ralph Barhydt, Jerrold B. Beilly, Kathy Chebib, Mr. C. Cullimore, Lawrence Enos, Dale Evje, Ashley Ferry, Pamela Rickard & Brian Hertz, McKenzie Himes, Nikki Johnson, Stephen Johnston, Ashok Khanna, Elizabeth McCluskey, Frances Michener, Beverly Mooney, Deborah Morrison, Nancy Payne, Michael Reese, Elisabeth Rosen, Ginny Sjoberg, Mary Margaret Sullivan, Anne Takashige, Judy Van Evera, Elliott Wolfe, Paul Zaferiou

We love the rain and are thankful that we got many inches of it in early December particularly after last year's drought. Now, however, it's creating some problems for us. Our property at Simmons Slough is already flooded. When we will be able to plant the 2,000 wetland plants that have been grown for us by The Watershed Nursery is unclear.

BAHIA FENCING AT EAST PENINSULA

We are planning to install fences on either end of the eastern peninsula on our property. We have struggled since we completed the marsh restoration to maintain that peninsula as wildlife habitat; that was part of our plan and included in all of our permits. People have damaged and stolen signs we have erected, identifying it as a habitat restoration area, and they continue to use the area, many with unleashed dogs. We wish this were not necessary, but our purpose is to provide and enhance habitat for wildlife on that peninsula. Fencing at the north end will be shorter but fencing at the south end will not have space for people to get through. So to avoid getting trapped, people should not venture past the short fence at the north end.

Any members at Bahia with questions, please give me a call.

BAHIA

Volunteers at the December workday planted and mulched 126 creeping wild rye (*Elymus triticoides*) plants and Santa Barbara sedge (*Carex barbarae*) in and next to the seasonal pond at Central Bahia. The pond is full of water.

Volunteers came from several local high



Photos courtesy of Jude Stalker

Pictured above are students from several local high schools who helped plant creeping wild rye and Santa Barbara sedge at Bahia

schools and were recruited through the Center for Volunteer Leadership.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the first Saturday of December volunteers took advantage of the early rain to plant three native species, California gray rush (*Juncus patens*), sticky monkeyflower and coffeeberry. These plants were put into an area of the berm that has been cleared of much of the Harding grass but has been lacking in native plants to fill in the space. The soil was already thoroughly wet after the first December rains, and the later heavier rains should have helped to settle the soil around the new plants. A natural by-product of the planting was the removal of adjacent Harding grass and fennel.

THANK YOU

PG&E for their \$2,000 grant for equipment and supplies to use for our habitat restoration at Bahia.

JOIN THE RICHARDSON BAY AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY FOR THE

2nd Annual Waterbird Festival

WHEN: January 31st, 2015 from 9 am to 4 pm

WHERE: Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, California 94920

WHAT: This fun community and family-friendly event is FREE to attend and will include naturalist led bird walks, spotting scope stations, interactive educational activities, and expert speaker sessions. There will also be exclusive fee-based field trips available, an art exhibit by Keith Hansen and a Crab Feed fundraiser.

INFO: Schedule and registration information can be found on the Center's website, <http://richardsonbay.audubon.org/2015-waterbird-festival>.

MARIN BIRDLOG: NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2014

By Josiah Clark

Mid-November brought the first signs of what has been our wettest period in over five years. As the ground becomes moist, mushrooms, salamanders and banana slugs emerge. Up in the mountains things fast become cold sending birds downslope in search of easier living. Meanwhile birds in the foothills and valleys this year experienced one of the poorest acorn crops in years, induced by the preceding 2 years of drought. This may have been what caused a **Lewis's Woodpecker** to wander into the northeast-most corner of the county on 11/24 (DS).



Glen Tepke, gtepk@phase.com

Snow Bunting

inconclusive. Two days later word of a Red-footed Booby hit the networks, but the identity was eventually determined a **Brown Booby** (SH, MB, MB, LK). A stop at the ranches by chasers about then turned up an **Indigo Bunting** and a **Slate-colored Junco** at Nunes and continuing **Tropical Kingbird** and **Palm Warbler** at Mendoza (JTC, LK, CD, RM, KH).

On 11/18 photos of an interesting hybrid warbler at the fish docks began circulating and everyone placed their bets. Ultimately the bird was deemed a **Townsend's X Black-throated Gray Warbler**, surprisingly rare and little known in these parts (RM, PP). 11/19 brought photos of a **Snow Bunting** outside the Tennessee Valley Nursery. The first record for the county in years was a one-day wonder seen only by the photographer (JC).

Bolinas birders kicked into gear when on 11/21 a continuing **Clark's Nutcracker** and a **Summer Tanager** were reported from yards on the mesa (DHu, KH). On 12/4 a **Black Tern** was an unprecedented sighting this late in the year (MD, PP, KH), just so an **Elegant Tern** on 12/5 was a rare record for the month.

The darling of the month was likely the **American Dipper** found at Shafter Bridge on 11/26, the first one in the county in years and seen by many at Shafter Bridge outside Lagunitas (AD).

Back before the rains began, the east winds kept birders on the lookout. With most vagrant hunters long gone from the outer point by this time, a **Rusty Blackbird** was lucky to be found out at the Mendoza Ranch on 11/16 (RM). Out at the fish docks **Ancient Murrelets** remained about as easy to see as they ever are from shore, and seen they were 11/16 (DHa). It was 9 days later when news of the continent's first **Japanese Murrelet** hit the airwaves sending birders to the fish docks from far and near. Over 80 birders sorted through at least as many murrelets but the rarity was ultimately never confirmed and photos were



Photo courtesy of Len Blamin

American Dipper

WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS CONFERENCE

Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) is planning a conference in Billings, MT on June 10-14, 2015. Each year WFO hosts a conference in one of the Western states.

Western Field Ornithologists is an organization of amateur and professional field ornithologists that promotes the study of birds throughout western North America including Hawaii, the northeastern Pacific Ocean, and Western Mexico. The organization strives to increase knowledge, appreciation, and protection of birds and their habitats through annual meetings, field trips, and publications, primarily *Western Birds*.

WFO provides competitive scholarships to help interested young people attend birding trips or conferences. The Pasadena Audubon/WFO Youth Scholarship fund was created to honor the memory of Mike San Miguel, a key contributor to and beloved friend of Pasadena Audubon and WFO. Applicants must be members of Western Field Ornithologists.

All students in Grades 6 through 12 who attend our conferences automatically receive a scholarship waiver of the \$95 conference registration fee. Up to four youth scholarships for all expenses (including hotel) will be awarded prior to conference registration. See the WFO website for more details: <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/scholarship.php>.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

The 18th Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held Friday, February 13th through Monday, February 16th, 2015. Anyone from beginning bird watchers to experts can take part. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes to as long they wish. Last year, participants turned in more than 144,000 online checklists, creating the world's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded. Visit the official website at www.birdcount.org for more information and to sign up.

Observers and Acronyms **AD:** Adam Donkin, **CD:** Cédric Duhalde, **DHa:** Daphne Hatch, **DHu:** Diana Humple, **JC:** Jim Caldwell, **JTC:** Josiah Clark, **KH:** Keith Hansen, **RH:** Roger Harshaw, **LK:** Logan Kahle, **DM:** Dan Murphy, **MB:** Mark Butler, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **RM:** Ron Mallory, **SH:** Steve Howell



THE Clapper Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- Jan. 10 **Stewardship Day**, Bahia
- Jan. 25 **Sausalito Herring Festival**
Gabrielson Park, Sausalito
- Feb. 5 **Field Trip: Las Gallinas**
- Feb. 7 **Stewardship Day**, Triangle Marsh
- Feb. 13-16 **Great Backyard Bird Count**
- Feb. 14 **Stewardship Day**, Bahia
- Feb. 19 **Field Trip: Restored Hamilton Wetlands**
- Feb. 21 **Field Trip: Las Gallinas and Marin Civic Center**
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

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SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter supporting members. We work collaboratively with the National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. MAS relies on local support for our habitat protection efforts, conservation advocacy, birding field trips, educational speakers series, and publication of *The Clapper Rail*, which you will receive as a MAS member. To better ensure we can continue our programs on the local level, MAS offers a separate chapter membership. Your membership in MAS will help us protect local habitats, resident and migratory birds and provide you with educational and enjoyable programs as well.

If you are not already a chapter supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

You can also join or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to www.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**.

- Enroll me as a Chapter Supporting Member
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- \$25 Basic
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- \$100 Sustaining
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- Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ _____

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