

Kim Steinhardt

Sea Otter mom and pup

Join environmental writer and marine wildlife photographer Kim Steinhardt for a talk and photographic journey into the past, present, and probable future of California's coast. This program features cautionary tales and personal anecdotes based on a lifetime growing up along the shoreline – including the creation of the Marin Audubon Society. You will also hear about threats to the sea otter, rising sea level, and more, drawn from his recent book exploring the relationship between humans and nature (*The Edge: The Pressured Past and Precarious Future of California's Coast*, co-authored with coastal science expert Gary Griggs).

Recognized as a "keen observer and a wonderful storyteller," Mr. Steinhardt has served as a photo contributor and advisor to *National Geographic's Explore My World* series, and his photographic work appears in other books, publications, and TV. A former administrative law judge, he now teaches law courses on legislation and is board president of the U.C.S.C. Seymour Marine Discovery Center.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14 7:30 PM

South Africa: Birds, Beasts, and Blooms

By Roger Harris

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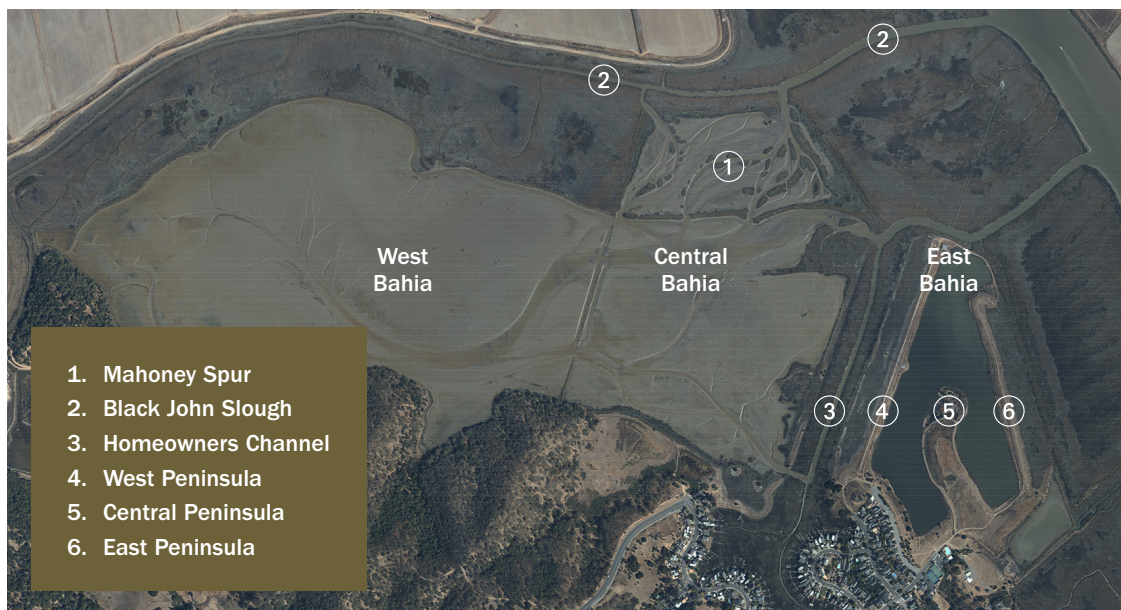
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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bahia – 10 Years Later



Source: ESA 2018

Ten years have passed since Marin Audubon began restoring almost 355 acres to tidal marsh at Bahia in eastern Novato. Monitoring surveys have found that the marsh is maturing well.

For many years the baylands of Bahia lay fallow and were pumped dry at the end of the rainy season by the owner who was making every effort to fill them and the surrounding hills with houses. After three or four tries over twenty years, much public controversy, and a referendum, the owner agreed to sell to Marin Audubon in 2003. In 2008, Marin Audubon restored almost 355 acres to tidal marsh. Now, ten years later, we've completed our fourth monitoring to document how the marsh is doing.

This Year 10 monitoring was conducted by Environmental Services Associates (ESA) as was the Year 1. The Years 5 and 7 were performed by different consultant firms. All four monitoring surveys have found that the marsh is maturing well and is in general conformance with performance expectations that were established in the Monitoring Plan approved by regulatory agencies.

The goal of the project is, and has been, to restore tidal marsh with channel patterns and transitional habitat similar to historic marshes. It takes many years for a new marsh restoration to evolve into tidal marsh. At first there is mud but, over time, physical processes

will deposit sediment raising the elevation of marsh plain and allowing colonization by native marsh plants. The forces of the tides will erode channels and breaches, leading eventually to an equilibrium condition that provides unrestricted tidal exchange to the new marsh. During those evolving years things can go wrong and may need correction, but they also inform subsequent restorations, hence the need to record the progress of the evolution.

In the 2008 restoration, tidal action was restored to 139 acres in Central Bahia by breaching levees and excavating channels within the new marsh plain. In 2013, additional breaches were made in the levee connecting Black John Slough to the 216-acre West Bahia. Prior to that, several breaches occurred naturally in the levee between Central and West Bahia.

The current monitoring survey reports that the mudflat elevations have increased throughout the restoration area. Sediment has continued to deposit on the mudflats. As a result, mudflat elevations are now closer to elevations suitable for the establishment of vegetation as evidenced by scattered patches of

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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Website: www.marinaudubon.org

Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org

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 \$500 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

As we begin the New Year, I have been reflecting on the positives and challenges ahead. We can be thankful that our political climate and attacks on regulations on the national level are likely to end or at least moderate with the incoming congressional assemblage. On the state level we have a new governor who hopefully will look favorably on protecting our environment. State and federal funding for environmental restoration has been most helpful. Our work to restore and enhance Marin's shoreline habitats has enabled us to protect and restore native habitats we share with wildlife.

The impacts of climate change would hit hard our habitats and the species that depend on them. Of great concern are ground-dwelling species such as towhees, fox sparrow and others that will lose significant habitat not only to wildfires but to clearing chaparral habitats. The native shrubs and forbs that form the woodland understory are also of concern. These habitats are under attack by many who see clearing forest floors and low-growing vegetation as the way to prevent forest fires that are being exacerbated by climate change. I was pleased to see the sound advice from the retiring CAL FIRE director, Ken Pimlott, that officials should consider prohibiting construction in particularly vulnerable areas. A major part of the problem is that structures are built in areas of high risk. It's time to consider changing land use planning.

Bahia – 10 Years Later

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cordgrass popping up. High marsh species such as gumplant have begun to establish along the upland margins, and pickleweed and cordgrass are expanding.

Aerial photography shows the site breaches to be mostly stable as are the Black John Slough and the Homeowners channels. The two breaches constructed as part of Phase 2 have had only minor changes since they were excavated, but the outboard marsh channels connecting the breaches to Black John Slough have been widening in the last three years. Tidal marsh vegetation has nearly doubled each survey year since 2011. The invasive species within the marsh have not increased since the last monitoring and are remaining at manageable levels. The story is less positive for seasonal wetlands.

Although within the seasonal wetlands much greater total vegetation cover was observed, non-native species continue to be dominant. They are less so than at the last monitoring, however. Now 32% of the total cover of vegetation in the seasonal wetland at

In addition to development threats, wetlands are also under threat from sea level rise and the increase in the number and intensity of storms and storm surges which, with man-made factors such as boat wakes, cause erosion of the edges of tidal marshes. Join us in our efforts to grapple with these pressing issues, restore habitats, and advocate for wildlife and habitats.

You can help by joining our Conservation Committee and/or by volunteering to help watch over and maintain our habitats—perhaps a site near your home. We also have a Property Management Committee. Committees are open to all members. Or you might consider joining the Marin Audubon Board. We have several seats open. Contact me for additional information.

Thank you to all who have donated to our end-of-year appeal. Your generous gifts will enable us to continue to protect habitat, support wildlife and bring you informative programs and field trips during the coming year. Without this help, our ability to maintain and enhance our properties and provide you with informative, exciting field trips and programs would be limited.

Hope you're all having a wonderful holiday and have a happy and healthy new year. Get out and enjoy our spectacular overwintering birds either on one of our field trips or on your own or at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center's Waterbird Festival on February 2.

the south end of East Bahia is native species, but in Central Peninsula seasonal wetland only 7% is native species.

Now performance expectations that were met in previous monitorings were not surveyed again this year. These include: the increase in bed elevations through sedimentation, the increase in tidal range in Black John Slough and adjacent wetlands and in Central Bahia, and the increase in interior channel size in Central Bahia.

ESA reports that the current pattern of native tidal vegetation establishment bodes well for continued increase in tidal marsh vegetation as the site continues to aggrade (rise in elevation) and channels develop. Other native plant species are expected to colonize the interior mudflats as sedimentation continues. Also, as the site continues to aggrade, the outboard channels should begin to fill in and resize towards long-term equilibrium geometries.

We have one more monitoring event required by our Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit in Year 15 post-construction. We will continue to work on eliminating invasive plants and promoting the establishment of native marsh vegetation in the seasonal wetlands and uplands.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one-day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, snacks, water, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility, and weather check: Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

THE PONDS AT LAS GALLINAS

San Rafael

Thursday, January 3, 2019

8:30 AM to noon

With Sande & Bob Chilvers

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. Join our friendly leaders as we search for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. Wintering birds including **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Lincoln's Sparrow**, **Palm Warbler**, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** as well as **Merlin** were spotted by many birders in December.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, so come assist in our search. You don't even have to arrive on time because we spend the first 30 – 60 minutes studying the birds around the first pond and the group is easy to find. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101, exit at Smith Ranch Rd. Drive east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward McInnis Park. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and drive about 0.5 mile through the LGVSD gates and into the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. There is an outhouse in the parking area for public use or you can use the bathrooms at nearby McInnis Park.

SKAGGS ISLAND

Sonoma County

Friday, January 11, 2019

9 AM to 1 PM

With Daniel Edelstein

Join Avian Biologist and Birding Guide, Daniel Edelstein, for this special opportunity to visit Skaggs Island, a rich winter birding location not generally accessible to the public. The island was formerly home to a naval facility but is now part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. It often attracts uncommon visiting, non-breeding season raptors such as **Rough-legged Hawk**, and **Ferruginous Hawk** and other raptors in addition to shorebirds, waders and ducks.

Meet on Skaggs Island Rd. after turning from Hwy 37. We'll carpool through the locked gate far into the heavenly solitude and bird-filled environs of this amazing birding venue. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 101 North to Hwy 37. At the intersection with SR 121 (Sears Point), continue straight on Hwy 37 for approximately 4 miles to Skaggs Island Rd. Please be careful crossing Hwy 37 to turn onto this road because oncoming traffic is often heavy.

FAMILY FRIENDLY BIRD WALK – INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!

LOCH LOMOND MARINA

San Rafael

Saturday, January 12, 2019

10:30 AM to noon

With Eric Scholz and Alex Scholz

Join brothers Eric and Alex with their young families including beginning hikers, toddlers in strollers, and babies in backpacks for a relaxing walk around the paved pathway of the Loch Lomond Harbor. This is a great location for sharing a variety of birds, particularly water birds, with your family in the company of other families.

We'll meet on the grass in front of Andy's Market and spend an easy 1.5 hours exploring the local bird life around the harbor. There are restrooms and a nice playground along our walking route. Join us or pass news of this trip along to your friends with kids who might be interested. Dress warmly as some winter days here are cold and windy. Heavy rain cancels.

See past and recent bird sightings on Loch Lomond's eBird hotspot page: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L7014778>.

DIRECTIONS: From the Central San Rafael exit of Hwy 101, go east on Third Street/Point San Pedro Road. Continue approximately 2 miles past the Montecito Shopping Center to a traffic light at the intersection of San Pedro Rd. and Loch Lomond Dr. Turn right at the light, then turn left where the road comes to a "T" at the waterfront. Follow this road along the edge of the marina and find a place to park. Please do not park in the Andy's Market parking lot.

BIRDING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Tomales, Lawson's Landing, and Chileno Valley

Thursday, January 17, 2019

9:00 AM to 3:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

This field trip repeats David's popular guided explorations of the less familiar habitats in Marin near the town of Tomales. We will meet at the Tomales Bakery, and our itinerary for the day will cover coastal and interior habitats. Our first destination will be Lawson's Landing, a private resort near the mouth of Tomales Bay. If we are lucky, we may spot the now uncommon-in-Marin **Loggerhead Shrike**.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Tomales Bakery at 9 AM. Plan on arriving early to sample the delicious pastries. If the bakery is closed, the deli nearby has a nice variety of food and beverages. Check your map for your best route to Tomales. You can head west from Hwy 101 at Old Redwood Hwy in Petaluma or from Novato at San Marin Dr. The address of the bakery is 27000 Hwy 1, Tomales. Allow about an hour from Marin. Light rain will not cancel this trip, but a heavy storm will.

BOLINAS LAGOON

No. 1, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, January 19, 2019

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join us as we begin our sixth (WOW!) season of Birding in Marin with Jim and Bob. Last year our record fell short of the 205 species seen during 2017 birding trips, and we ended 2018 with a species count of 187. We now invite you to help us forge a new record for 2019 by participating in our monthly trips to twelve of Marin's most productive birding hot spots.

Bolinas Lagoon, one of Marin's Important Bird Areas (IBA), is home to many resident bird species and also serves as a wintering ground for thousands of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. 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 often provide another good place to look for birds. We will then take a lunch break in downtown Bolinas. After lunch with the lower tide we will look for shorebirds near the Pine Gulch Creek delta.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at 8:30 AM on Hwy 1 at the Stinson/Bolinas Primary School, which is 1.5 miles north of the central Stinson Beach stop sign. Heavy rain cancels.

LOCH LOMOND MARINA

San Rafael

Monday, January 21, 2019

9 AM to noon

With Jim White

Join Jim for an easy stroll around the Loch Lomond Marina breakwater recently refortified and made wheelchair accessible with a paved path out to the end. Winter birds here include **Black-bellied Plover**, **Black Turnstone**, **Least** and **Western Sandpipers**, **Black Oystercatcher**, and a variety of ducks on the bay. We may stop for coffee and/or snacks at a local market. On our trip date, there will be a King Tide, and if time allows, we may follow San Pedro Rd. further along the bay shore in search of additional bird life.

DIRECTIONS: From the Central San Rafael exit of Hwy 101, go east on Third Street/Point San Pedro Road. Continue approximately 2 miles past the Montecito Shopping Center to a red light at the intersection of San Pedro Rd. and Loch Lomond Dr. Turn right here, then turn left in front of Andy's Market where the road comes to a "T" at the waterfront. Continue all the way to the end of the road where you will find ample parking and a public restroom. Dress warmly as some winter days here are cold and windy. Heavy rain cancels.

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CONSERVATION

PROPOSED HOUSING WOULD REMOVE NATIVE TREES

A proposal to build sixteen residential units with 8 ADUs (additional dwelling units) totaling 24 units on 5.93 acres of a 15.42 property, off of Robin Drive, is being considered by the Town of Corte Madera. The project would preserve 9.4 acres of private open space with public access to the Ring Mountain Preserve.

The site's natural resources include native grassland (species not identified), the endangered Oakland Star Tulip, streams, wetland patches and native trees. The project proposes to cut down 68 trees: 28 mature Coast Live Oak, 25 California Bay Laurel, 5 Arroyo Willow, 1 Toyon and nine nonnative trees.

The loss of mature oaks is troubling. Mature oak trees are rich and diverse habitats. They are known to support 800 animal and insect species and provide many benefits for people and the environment. Oaks moderate climate and sequester carbon reducing the impacts of climate change. They are beautiful, contribute to the value of properties as individual trees and, together with other native plant species in the landscape, they are an ecosystem. At this time when native oaks are being attacked by sudden oak-death syndrome, it is even more critical not to lose healthy native oaks. The IS does not address whether any of the trees have Sudden Oak Death.

To compensate for the tree loss, the project proposes to plant 1.6 replacement trees for each tree removed. The trees would be planted along Paradise Drive, according to the IS, to block the spread of SOD. Why SOD would necessarily invade the site from Paradise Drive and why the trees would block SOD are unclear. It appears this location is more of a benefit to the development by blocking noise, undesirable views, etc., than to the oaks. The existing oaks are part of the grassland-oak savannah habitat extending from the adjacent Ring Mountain habitat. Even if all of the planted oaks survive, which is unlikely, 1.6 young trees do not replace the habitat or provide the many other benefits of a mature oak. It would take many years, if ever, before they would.

The site has several stream lengths, of which the lower one would be surrounded by houses. Although streams would not be filled, it is not clear how they would be protected in the long term. The characteristics of the streamside buffer, if any, that would be required is not known. The other length of stream is in the upper portion of the site that will not be developed.

An Initial Study (IS) was prepared for the project and the comment deadline has passed. We have expressed our concerns to the Town, and requested additional information and overlays of the project on the native trees, so that we can evaluate how the project can be reduced or redesigned to avoid the proposed tree removal. We have recommended that an alternative that eliminates or significantly reduces the oak tree loss be developed. While an alternatives analysis is not required in an IS, one could be included.

A response to comments will be prepared and a revised environmental document will be released. This will open another opportunity to comment. Hearings on the merits of the project will also be held later.

IMPACTS OF CATS OUTDOORS

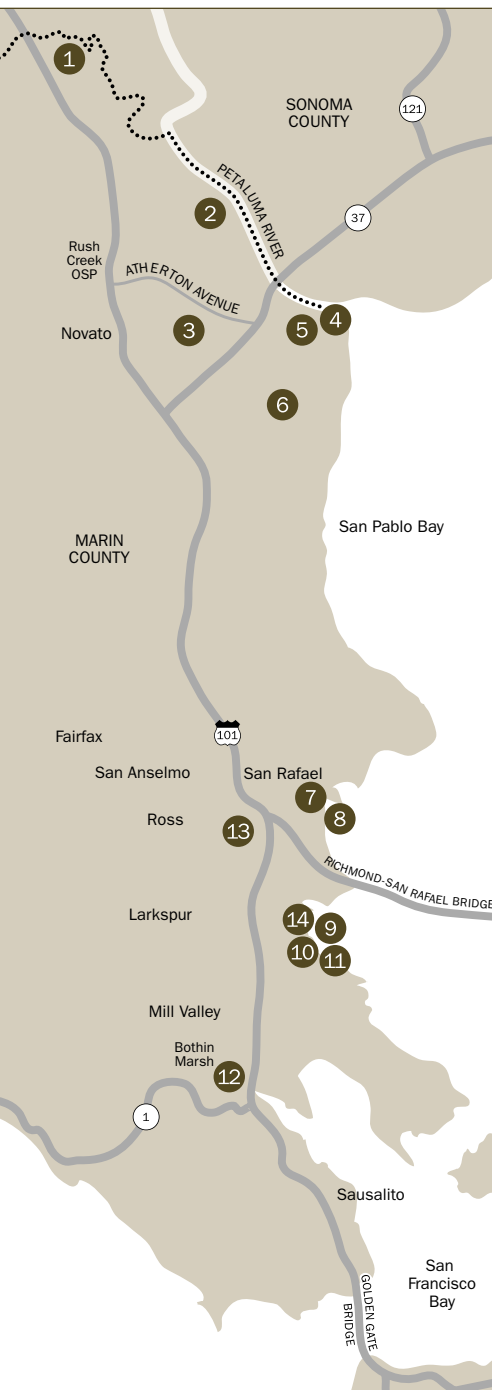
A recent newspaper Opinion article lauded the benefits of feral cat colonies. Unfortunately, many of its statements made in support of that position are inaccurate. There are many scientifically valid studies that demonstrate the substantial loss of native birds and other wildlife to cats. The American Bird Conservancy has a specific program devoted to cat-bird impacts called "Cats Indoors" (<https://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors>).

The fact that the cats may be neutered and well-fed simply exacerbates the problem. Cats do not necessarily hunt for food. Their instinct is to pounce because that is what enables them to survive in the wild. As any cat owner knows, they will stalk and pounce on almost anything that moves. Some studies show that cats that are well-fed are better hunters because they are healthier. And the bird or mouse that is caught may not die on the spot. Some people feel that because the prey animal is not dead on the spot their cat did no harm, when in reality the prey will die a slow death due to infections from the puncture wounds.

Actually, it is not just feral cats that are the problem—it is **all** outdoor cats. And the fact that birds are killed by other causes, simply makes the impact of cats even more significant. Cat-caused mortality must be added to all of the other man-caused impacts, such as window collisions, and poisons. And these are on top of our changing climate which is disrupting food sources and impacting breeding cycles.

So, if you care about our wild birds and want to aid our native bird populations, keep your cats indoors and do not maintain cat colonies. The animals that need help are our native ones.

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MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh Expansion Site	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. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
8. Tidelands and Murphy's Rock	34 acres
9. San Clemente Creek Tidelands	4.34 acres
10. End of Channel Drive	?? acres
11. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres
13. Cal Park	<1 acre
14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site	5.2 acres

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

Winter is the time for planting in our Mediterranean climate, and our volunteers have been busy at work at our Corte Madera and Triangle properties. With the last of our grant funds, we hired Hanford ARC to plant at Corte Madera and will also be contracting for some planting work at Bahia.

CORTE MADERA PROPERTIES

This is the last step in the long saga of our work to protect five acres adjacent to the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. The work began 40 years ago, opposing an office development; it is now almost over with the planting of 15,200 native plants on the upland adjacent to the marsh newly excavated by Hanford ARC. After Hanford's crew planted on the three mounds that were created with the fill material excavated from our property and from the Ecological Reserve, they finished spreading mulch around the plants after MAS volunteers started that work.

On December 8, sixteen dedicated volunteers spread about 15 cubic yards of mulch around many of the plants. An assembly line of sorts was quickly organized with four wheelbarrows repeatedly filled and moved to the plants where other volunteers could scoop out compost and spread it along the base of the plants. It was a very impressive operation. The compost will add nutrients to the soil and help hold moisture in the soil. We are most appreciative of our volunteers (see column on right) giving of their time and efforts. On December 19, a smaller group began to install the goose exclusion structures—stakes and string—to discourage them from landing.

We say a **huge thank you to Redwood Landfill** for its most generous donation of 45 cubic yards of WM Earthcare Homegrown Compost that's helping our plants grow. We would not have been able to afford to purchase the compost, so the landfill's donation made it

possible for us to have a successful project and will help our plants grow strong and healthy. Homegrown Compost is made from yard trimmings and food scraps Marin residents place in their green carts. It's created at the landfill's Covered Aerobic Static Pile (CASP) composting facility. The state-of-the-art facility composts nearly 130,000 tons of material each year that is approved for organic farming and carries the industry's highest standards of excellence. The process begins at your carts and ends about four months later when your organic material has become compost. To see how Redwood makes compost, watch this video: <http://bit.ly/HowCompostIsMade>. The compost and other materials are available for purchase by the public at the landfill. Visit <http://wmearthcare.com> for more information.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the first Saturday in December, the regular Triangle workday, Bob Hinz's volunteer crew of seven planted over 200 native plants, mostly Purple Needlegrass, at Triangle Marsh. Triangle, of course, is a pretty well matured site where the tidal marsh has completely filled in with native marsh plants, and most of the shrubs in the upland are mature. There is still a relative lack of native grasses and forbs and we are gradually adding to these. The original planting occurred 14 years ago after Marin Audubon purchased the property from a local developer, removed fill to restore the marsh and created an adjacent upland transition zone.

BAHIA, SIMMONS SLOUGH AND BLACK POINT

Planning is underway to install plants at Bahia and Simmons Slough using the Conservation Corps North Bay, and volunteers. We expect this work to take place in January but dates are not yet set. We also plan to remove a stand of broom on the property we just purchased in Black Point.

Milkweeds For Monarchs!

The Marin Audubon Society and the Marin chapter of the California Native Plant Society are teaming up to increase habitat for the regal Monarch Butterfly here in Marin. Populations of this beautiful and iconic creature are greatly reduced, partly through reduced access to viable healthy populations of their larval host plants.

We've designated a section of Marin Audubon's Simmons Slough preserve as an initial experimental planting area. Marin CNPS will be providing plants and seeds of three local native species: Narrow-leaf Milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), a native milkweed species with only remnant stands remaining in Marin;

Bay Area Gumplant (*Grindelia stricta* var. *platyphylla*) and California Goldenrod (*Solidago californica*). Planting *Grindelia* in a seasonal wetland is experimental. The latter two are late-blooming species that provide a nectar source for the adult butterflies.

We'll be planting both seedlings and sowing seeds of the milkweed; planting bareroot divisions and sowing some seeds of the goldenrod; and sowing seeds of the gumplant. The plants and seeds being provided all originate in Charlotte's organic habitat garden in Novato.

The work involved will be some minor preparation of the soil, planting, sowing, and

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Most of the season's planting will be finished by early January and our attention will be on eliminating the competition, the invasive non-native species. The rains of December have given our new plantings just what is needed to start growing, but they can quickly be lost among the rapidly growing non-native annuals. Rain will cancel our workdays.

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

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: January 5, February 2

There might be some planting to finish in January, but then our attention will quickly turn to weed control.

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Dr. directly across from the main Ring Mountain trailhead near the Montessori School.

Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion:

Workdays will be more regular, perhaps the second Saturday of each month, now that the season's planting is finished. Contact Martha Jarocki, marthajarocki@gmail.com or phone 415-461-3592.

THANK YOU CORTE MADERA AND/OR TRIANGLE VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Bundy, Dave Chenoweth, Max & Phil Gutierrez, Bob Hinz, Gerry & Martha Jarocki, Linda Nicoletto, Lucienne O'Keefe, John Perone, Mere, Nancy & Masi Raga, Barbara Salzman, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Marla Ulrich, Emily Wong

BIRDING WESTERN YOLO COUNTY

Beginning in Winters

Saturday, January 26, 2019

8 AM to 3 PM

With John Klobas & Sarah Brooks

Located within a one and one-half hour drive of many North Bay locations, Yolo County offers diverse habitats ranging from Coast Range mountains to near sea level agricultural lands of the Sacramento Valley. This one-day trip will visit many prime birding sites during the height of winter bird diversity and numbers.

We will meet in Winters where we will introduce our itinerary for the day and our target birds for the morning at Lake Solano Park. This park straddles both Yolo and Solano counties along Putah Creek at the base of the Coast Range. We will bird both outside and inside the park (\$5/car day use fee) and, weather permitting, have lunch there, as well. Specialties here include **Barrow's Goldeneye** and **Phainopepla**.

After lunch we will follow Putah Creek to several access points for water birds and gleaning flocks of land birds as we climb in elevation toward Monticello Dam and Lake Berryessa. Our day will conclude with a stop at a raptor hot spot south and west of Woodland.

The companion trip to this day features eastern Yolo County and is scheduled for Saturday, February 23, 2019. This trip begins in Davis.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at Rotary Park located at Main and Railroad Streets in Winters. From Marin take Hwy 101 North to Hwy 37. Then exit onto Hwy I-80 East. In approximately 22 miles, take Exit 56 to merge onto I-505 North toward Redding. Take the Hwy 128 exit (west toward Lake Berryessa) from Hwy I-505. Take a left over the freeway, then stay on Hwy 128 until the light at Railroad Ave. Turn left (south), travel 2 blocks to the intersection of Railroad and Main. Rotary Park is at the south side of

this intersection. We will meet at the gazebo in the park.

STAFFORD LAKE, Novato

Saturday, March 2, 2019

9 AM to noon

With Bob Atwood

Located west of Novato, Stafford Lake is a less birded area that is productive for waterfowl and raptors. Approximately 172 species of birds have been spotted at Stafford Lake throughout the years, and our group is likely to see a considerable variety of the resident as well as wintering birds. The county park has facilities, parking, mostly level terrain and water views that make for pleasant birding as we walk around a portion of the lake and the surrounding area. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in Novato, exit onto San Marin Dr. and go west 2.9 miles. Turn right onto Novato Blvd. for 2.6 miles. The park is on the left. Turn left after the gatehouse to reach the parking lot. Our trip has been scheduled on a "Measure A" day of free entrance to Marin County Parks, so no fees will be required. Nice scheduling, Bob!

HUMBOLDT COUNTY WEEKEND AND ALEUTIAN GOOSE FLY-OFF, Arcata

Saturday – Sunday, March 2 – 3, 2019

Signups begin January 14, 2019

With Ken Burton

Former MAS Board member and compiler of our Bird Checklist for Marin County, California, Ken Burton, will lead us on a two-day exploration of his current home territory. The itinerary will be flexible allowing us to look for species that don't occur in our area and any vagrants that may be around. We'll also visit some of Humboldt County's incredible birding sites such as the Arcata Marsh and Humboldt Bay NWR.

At any time of year, it is possible to see over 100 species in a day.

DIRECTIONS: Participants who drive up on Friday can meet Ken at 8 AM Saturday at the south end of South I St. in Arcata (40.855695, -124.098106). We'll meet anyone traveling on Saturday at noon at the Humboldt Bay NWR Visitor Center (40.686082, -124.206460) for lunch. Pack a lunch at least for Saturday. Sunday morning we'll witness the Aleutian Goose fly-off at the Refuge and bird that area until early afternoon. Call Ken at 707/499-1146 or write to him at shrikethree@gmail.com for more information. Signups for this trip will open on Monday, January 14, 2019. Please email Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net if you wish to sign up. Indicate whether you will join the group on Saturday morning or Saturday midday.

BIG DAY AT POINT REYES

Trip Full — Wait List Open

For Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members Only

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

8 AM to 4 – 5 PM

With Keith Hansen

AND ...

SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP

Trip Full — Wait List Open

Sunday, February 3, 2019

(Super Bowl Sunday)

8:15 AM to 4:30 PM

Boat leaves from and returns

to the Antioch Marina

With David Wimpfheimer

The trips above are full. If you wish to be placed on a wait list, contact: Jeanine Starritt at Jeanineis@comcast.net.

Specify the trip and include the name, email address and phone number for persons wishing to attend. Once confirmed for the trip, you will receive an email with necessary information.

Waterbird Festival

Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary

Saturday, February 2, 2019

Celebrate scaups, scoters, cormorants and more! Visit Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary for naturalist-led bird walks, exclusive field trips, live music, great food, and fun bird-themed activities. Bring a pair of binoculars or use our spotting scopes to see the waterbirds that call Richardson Bay home.

The full 2019 Waterbird Festival schedule will be posted soon. Keep checking back for updates!

FEMALE DUCK IDENTIFICATION (Space still available, signups required)

Richardson Bay Audubon Center

Blue Classroom

376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon

Sunday, January 6, 2019

9 AM to 3 PM

With Lisa Hug

In this duck identification workshop, we will pay special attention to the challenges in separating the female ducks from each other. Instead of ignoring those drab brown ducks that all look the same, we're going to acknowledge their existence for a day and actually look at them. First, we will have a PowerPoint presentation on the different ducks in the North Bay. After lunch we will drive to several locations to study ducks in the field.

Bring notebook and pencil (or laptop) for the classroom session, lunch, water, snacks,

binoculars, scope if you have one, field guide, layered clothing, and comfortable walking shoes.

The cost is \$20 for Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members and \$55 for other adults. Young birders under 18 years of age may attend for \$10. Please be prepared to pay with cash or a check at the workshop. We will not be able to process payments by credit card. If you are not yet a Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Member, you may sign up now at www.marinaudubon.org or at the workshop to enjoy the reduced price.

Signups for this workshop are now open and will be limited to 25 participants. To sign up, contact Jane Medley at janermedley@gmail.com. Please include your name and phone number. We will confirm your registration, and if the workshop fills, we will accept names for a waiting list.

MARIN BIRDLOG: NOVEMBER 2018

By Noah Arthur

November is early winter in Marin. The fall surge of migrants and vagrants has mostly passed by the end of October, but a new set of less-predictable rarities, such as uncommon winter sparrows and inland waterfowl, tend to make their appearance in November.

Continuing from October and especially rare so far inland was a getting-late **Tropical Kingbird** that was enjoyed by many observers in the first week of November at Las Gallinas. While most everyone was enjoying the kingbird, a **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was found at the Fish Docks on the 2nd (DS), continuing this year's series of Outer Point records of the species. Another getting-late regular fall vagrant was a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Mendoza Ranch on the 3rd (NB).

Along with continuing **Townsend's Solitaires** the previous day, a **'Thick-billed' Fox Sparrow** was observed on Mt. Tamalpais on the 4th (MS, LS).

The rarest bird of the month, and surely one of this year's most impressive rarities in Marin, was a juvenile male **Northern Goshawk** banded at Hawk Hill on the 5th (AG). The hawk was seen again in the area on the 7th (RC).

Presumably the same **Sage Thrasher** put in an appearance at Las Gallinas on the 9th (JH).

The second week of the month brought an incursion of inland waterfowl to the coast, including a fly-over flock of 3 **Snow Geese** and 3 **Ross's Geese**, as well as 7 **Tundra Swans** on the water, at Kent Island in Bolinas on the 11th (PP). The season's first **Eurasian Wigeon** was also at Kent Island (PP). Early the following day, 5 **Tundra Swans** showed up at Abbotts Lagoon (EC).

Very late were two **Barn Swallows** at Mendoza Ranch on the 12th (DS), and a **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Inverness on the 15th (DF). (Black-headed Grosbeak is, in fact, rarer than Rose-breasted Grosbeak in winter in coastal California!) Another uncommon and late migrant was a **Chipping Sparrow** along the Estero Trail on the 18th (LN).

Rare subspecies of Fox Sparrow are classic early winter vagrants on the California coast, and two were found on the 25th: a **'Red' Fox Sparrow** in Marshall (NW) and another **'Thick-billed' Fox Sparrow** at Pine Mountain Fire Rd. (DL).

The number of **Tundra Swans** on Abbotts Lagoon had increased to seven by the 28th, and yet another vagrant from the interior valleys on the 28th was a **Cattle Egret** on a soccer field in Bolinas (SH).

Observers and Acronyms **AG:** Alane Gray, **DF:** Dea Freid, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **DS:** Dan Singer, **EC:** Everett Clark, **JH:** Jack Hayden, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **NB:** Nigel Bates, **NW:** Nils Warnock, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **RC:** Rich Cimino, **SH:** Steve Howell

Conservation

continued from page 3

EBIKES ON MMWD TRAILS

The Marin Municipal Water District held a public meeting on use of electric bikes (ebikes) on their trails. Pressure is being put on the District primarily by older men wanting more access. Currently the District does not allow ebikes on their trails and allowing them would be a major departure from procedures that are, first of all, intended to protect the watershed and water supply.

The best way to protect public water supply is to protect its watershed, namely, the vegetation and streams, and these are the components that support wildlife. Some water districts do not allow any use at all, others minimal use. Allowing motorized vehicles will open the trails and fire roads to considerably more use, and change the character of the water district lands. Most of the MMWD trails are now set aside for passive use. If ebikes are allowed, use can be expected to increase, even on fire roads where

bikes are already allowed. Increased use, especially with vehicles, changes the nature of the habitat for people and for wildlife—more noise from riders, more human presence. Vehicles, even if they stay on trails, mean more human impacts. Some of the ebikers testified that they enjoy talking to their buddies while riding. MAS favors the current MMWD regulations.

There are other places where people can ride motorized vehicles to recuperate from illnesses, enjoy time with their friends, etc. These are some of the reasons folks gave for wanting to use the trails. Just because some user groups want to go somewhere does not mean that it is best for the resource. There are many places other than MMWD habitats where folks can ride ebikes. No user group has a right to go everywhere they want, nor does MMWD have a responsibility to provide access to all user groups. What is best for the resources should be the guiding principle.

Submit your comments in writing to MMWD.



Black-headed Grosbeak



Ross's Goose

MOTHER'S DAY PICNIC NEEDS COORDINATOR

As many of you know, the Mother's Day Picnic, a fun event, is a fund raiser for both Marin Audubon and Audubon Canyon Ranch. If you have enjoyed this annual event, enjoy organizing and are interested in seeing it continue, we need you! Call Barbara Salzman for more information.

THANKS FOR YOUR DONATIONS

David L. Berry, William A. Clarke, Carroll Covey, Christine Cuccia, Ron & Belle Guelden, Harry & Elaine Hicks, Peter & Bonnie Jensen, Robert Kennis, Josephine Kreider, Molly Grey Kushan, William Legge, John Kirk McDonough, Barbara E. Nathan, Lucienne O'Keefe, Flinn & John Rauck, Donald Reinberg, Elizabeth Schiff, Sherry Sweet

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Peter Cancellier, Sara Christensen, Sharon Constant, David DePue, Robert J. Fallat, Christa Godfrey, Susan Hoagland, Jim King, Susan King, Bill & Valerie Kircher, Merrily Labarthe, Sarah Martin, Barbara McCarroll, Kathryn McCormick, Shelly McLaughlin, Heidi Paillon, Richard Paillon, Kathleen Ries, Hugh & Georgia Schall, Sherry Sweet



The Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- February 2 **Waterbird Festival**
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
- February 2 **Field Trip: Skaggs Island**
With Murray Berner
- February 3 **Boat Trip: Sacramento Delta**
Wait List Only
With Daniel Edelstein
- February 7 **Field Trip: Las Gallinas**
With Bob & Sande Chilvers
- February 9 **Field Trip: Cemetery Marsh**
With Jim White
- February 10 **Bike Trip: Hamilton Wetlands**
With David Sexton & Jack Gedney
- February 14-17 **Winter Wings Festival**
Klamath Falls
<http://winterwingsfest.org>
- February 15-18 **Great Backyard Bird Count**
<http://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/>

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SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

We invite you to become a Chapter-supporting member of Marin Audubon Society (MAS) to support our important habitat protection and restoration work, conservation advocacy, our full calendar of birding field trips and speakers and our newsletter, *The Rail*. Marin Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon (NAS). However, becoming a **Chapter-Supporting Member** of MAS is separate and distinct from a membership in NAS. While MAS works with NAS on issues of mutual concern, we are a separate non-profit Section 501(c)(3) all-volunteer organization. Marin-based NAS members do receive this MAS newsletter, *The Rail*, however we encourage all NAS members to also become Chapter-supporting members of MAS to support our local work. Very little of our funding comes from NAS, and we rely on our MAS Chapter-supporting members and donors to help us fund our land acquisitions, restorations, habitat protection, conservation advocacy, this newsletter and our local programs.

If you're not already a Chapter-supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors and relatives to join us, too.

You can join MAS or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal by going to www.marinaudubon.org. Alternatively, you can join by filling out this form and sending us your payment by mail.

ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO JOIN NATIONAL AUDUBON FOR THE FIRST TIME ...

MAS will receive 100% of your initial membership if you enter **MAS's chapter code C04** on your application. To join, go to www.audubon.org/join.

The best option for the birds: Join MAS **and** 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
- Renewal
- New Member
- \$25 Annual rate for students (18 years and under) and seniors (65 and over)
- \$35 Basic
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$500 Patron
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$1,000 Benefactor
- Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ _____

- Master Card
- Visa

Fill out form and mail to:
Membership Secretary
Marin Audubon Society
P.O. Box 599
Mill Valley, CA 94942

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Please send me *The Rail* by email only.

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