

NOTE THAT THIS WILL BE THE
FIRST THURSDAY OF JUNE

THURSDAY, JUNE 2 7:30 PM

**Herons and Egrets – Ecology and
Regional Status and Trends**

With John Kelly



Len Blamin

Great Egret

There are no better iconic symbols of Audubon than the majestic herons and egrets, commonly seen feeding in the tidal marshes of the San Francisco Bay. The campaign to save these birds from extinction in the early 1900s led to the foundation of the National Audubon Society. The movement to save one of the largest nesting colonies in coastal California was launched in the 1960s by the Marin Audubon Society (supported by the Madrone, Sequoia and Golden Gate Audubon Societies) and resulted in the founding of Audubon Canyon Ranch.

In his presentation, John will provide a look at heron and egret ecology and conservation, report on regional status, describe climate effects and more.

As the Director of Conservation Science at Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR), John Kelly has been monitoring, researching and reporting on the herons and egrets found throughout the North Bay region for 27 years.

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

New Hope for Corte Madera Inn Pond

New information from vegetation ecologist, Dr. Peter Baye, confirmed the presence of the aquatic plant wigeon grass in the Corte Madera Inn pond. This is in direct conflict with the information from the applicant's consultant and the consultants hired by the Town to produce the Environmental Impact Report. But it is completely in line with our observations of wetland-dependent wildlife using the pond, undoubtedly feeding on the wigeon grass and associated species, and in line with our comments that the EIR erroneously failed to recognize the pond as an important aquatic resource. The presence of this plant dictates wetland status. As reported in the Independent Journal, comments from regulatory agencies warn that they may not be able to issue permits for destruction of the pond.

Pending further review of the wetland information, the Town of Corte Madera has delayed

the hearing before the Town Council at which final approval of the project was anticipated. The Council hearing was originally scheduled for May 17.

The Army Corps of Engineers' public notice soliciting comments on this project was just released. The Corps will be deciding whether to issue a 404 permit to fill the pond based on an evaluation of the probable detriments or adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts. As described in the notice, their evaluation will reflect the national concern for the protection of important resources, including wetlands, and will also consider: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, wildlife values, recreation and flood hazards particularly regarding sea level rise. For example, you could address one or more of the following: the importance of the pond for the Black-crowned Night-Heron colony and other

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APRIL 16 FIELD TRIP

Birding in Marin: Mount Burdell With Jim White and Bob Battagin

By Jim White

Marin County's Mount Burdell Open Space Preserve's oak savannah and grassland have miles of trails with many wildflowers and several species of birds singing while preparing to nest. Recently arrived **Ash-throated Flycatchers** were heard calling and we detoured to get fine views of them. The bubbling enthusiasm of singing **House Wrens** led to their detection.

Then we climbed the mountain! Following a vote of 20 to 2 we continued up and it was worth it. On the crest Susan Kelly and Sande Chilvers heard and located **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** which we all got to see. Then we watched a **Golden Eagle** soaring over the vast bit of California spread out north of us. A pair of **Lark Sparrows** searching a small oak tree, perhaps for a nest site, was spotted as a life-bird for a new resident from South Africa.

As we descended, the broken song of a **Bullock's Oriole** attracted our attention and



Tony Higgett

A male Hooded Oriole in a fan palm

then we enjoyed scoped views of two beautiful males. After we returned to our cars a few of us stopped on the upper end of Simmons Lane

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| President | Barbara Salzman 924-6057 |
| Vice President | Lowell Sykes 388-2821 |
| Secretary | Mariah Baird 456-3355 |
| Treasurer | Josephine Kreider 707/230-3553 |
| Finance Chair | Greg Block 479-8254 |
| Conservation | Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057 |
| Field Trips | Jane Medley 559/760-1551 |
| Membership | William Legge 388-7883 |
| Fundraising | Everett Clark 789-9224 |
| Speaker Series/Programs | Matthew Perry 734/904-7608 |
| Special Projects | Jude Stalker 668-1242 |
| Nominating | Phil Peterson 828-4780 |
| Editor, <i>The Rail</i> | Bob Hinz, 383-8688 |
| Volunteer Coordinator | Katy Zaremba, 847-9933 |
| Property Management | Ed Nute 669-7710 |
| Publicity | Martha Jarocki 461-3592 |
| BAAC Repts | 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
(Provided by Golden Gate AS)

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

My husband and I have recently returned from three weeks in Croatia during which we visited old cities as well as national parks and wetlands, and traveled the Dalmatian Coast in a ship for seven days. There were surprisingly few birds along the coast, but we did see lots of birds in the parks, wetlands and villages including a small breeding colony of Little Cormorants, White Storks nesting on rooftops in several villages, and lots of swifts—Alpine, Pallid and Common. It was also very interesting to learn that protecting natural resources is a high priority for the European Union. The EU gives grants to protect and enhance important natural areas and for environmental education. We visited several wetland areas that were benefiting from these grants. We saw a few buildings riddled with bullet holes that still remain from the 1991 war between Serbia and Croatia. It was hard to believe that war was taking place at the same time we were purchasing Triangle Marsh and planning its restoration.

Welcome to the newly elected members of our Board: William Legge who will be our Membership Chair, Everett Clark will take over the position of Fundraising Chair, Matthew Perry will be our new Program Chair and Martha Jarocki and Jude Stalker will continue in Publicity and Special Projects, respectively. Our new Board will take over at our June meeting. I'm looking forward to an exciting new year.

We say a fond farewell to departing Board members Vicky Van Meter, Flinn Moore Rauck and Periann Wood. We greatly appreciate all of the time they have given to Marin Audubon. They have helped to make MAS a stronger, more productive, and responsive organization, and one that more effectively protects wildlife and their habitats and conveys that purpose to others.

A huge thank you goes to Martha Jarocki, for her leadership in bringing about this year's Mother's Day Picnic, and to our volunteers,

donors and attendees as well. I am sorry I had to miss it but by all reports it was a great day. All of the work planning and carrying out the event, obtaining donations, preparing and serving the food, taking reservations, etc. is done by Martha and the MAS volunteers she recruited. The majority of the proceeds benefit ACR with a lesser amount going to MAS.

Our Spring solicitation letter will be a bit late this year because of my trip. Look for it in late May or early June. This is the time when MAS asks you to support ongoing habitat enhancement on the properties we own. This year we have a special financial need to repair the damaged fence and habitat destruction at Bahia (see article on page 6). We ask you to give generously.

Special thanks also to Jude Stalker, Flinn Moore Rauck and Susan Ristow for dealing with the destruction of our property at Bahia, and other Board members who stepped up in my absence.

Carol Schneider, passed away in December. Carol was active with Marin Audubon Society in the early 1980s, when her husband Stu was on the MAS Board. We send our condolences to members of Carol's family.

The June election is almost here. We urge you to vote with the environment in mind for candidates that will protect our wildlife and other natural resources. And remember to vote YES on Measure AA.

This will be our last newsletter until the September issue. We skip July and August. We will still be attending hearings, reading environmental documents, submitting comment letters, planning activities for the coming year—our fiscal year begins in July.

Check our website, email messages and Facebook page for updates on projects and alerts for meetings. Have a wonderful summer and do join us for our last program in early June and on the summer field trips we are offering. See you in September.

Mount Burdell Field Trip

continued from page 1

and watched the California Fan Palms. In a few minutes a gorgeous male **Hooded Oriole** flew in and posed for us.

The seven species mentioned brought our Season 2 total to 198 species. While a touch below my goal of 200, the extra effort and diversity of these field trips have been satisfying, interesting, educational and fun for many participants. With encouragement from several, Bob and I have agreed to continue this MAS sponsored series for another year.



A nest with a female Hooded Oriole (look carefully) in its preferred nest tree, the fan palm.

Barbara Salzman

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.

MUDDY HOLLOW TRAIL

Point Reyes

Monday, June 6, 2016

8 AM to mid-afternoon

With Todd Plumber

Join Todd on this easy trail as we watch and listen for a variety of birds in the coastal riparian forest. This is a particularly good area for Great-horned Owls, Wilson's Warblers, and all three of our local Picoides woodpeckers—Hairy, Downy, and Nuttall's. We will watch for large Dusky-footed Woodrat lodges beneath alders and willows and hope for Virginia Rails in the marsh area.

We will meet at 8 AM in the big lot at the Bear Valley Visitor Center where bathrooms are available and we can arrange carpools. We will then carpool to the Muddy Hollow Trailhead. We will bird along the 1.8 mile trail and return along the same route. Be prepared for variable weather and bring a lunch and water.

DIRECTIONS: From Point Reyes Station, go south on Hwy 1 about 2.5 miles. Look for a brown "Point Reyes National Seashore" sign just beyond the Olema RV Resort & Campground. If you get to a flashing red light, you've gone 100 yards too far. Turn right onto Bear Valley Road and head west about one-half mile. Look for a big red barn on the left and a sign for "Visitor Center" on the right. Meet at the big parking lot at the Bear Valley Visitor Center.

FIVE BROOKS AND BEAR VALLEY

No. 6, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, June 18, 2016

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob on this trip as part of their year-long series of Marin walks. We will meet at Five Brooks to walk the trail. We have a chance of finding Wood Ducks and other pond-nesting birds at the retired logging pond. We will also look for birds in the Douglas-fir forest. We will then travel to Bear Valley where there is a fine place to picnic under an Acorn Woodpecker granary. Walks on the Earthquake Trail and to the Miwok village Kule Loklo will add to our knowledge of nesting birds.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd for about 20 miles. Turn left onto Hwy 1 and drive about 3.5 miles to the signed entrance to Five Brooks on the right side of the road. We will meet at the Five Brooks parking area, which is 0.25 west of Hwy 1. If traveling from the south on Hwy 1, Five Brooks will be approximately 5 miles north of Stinson Beach.



ALCATRAZ ISLAND

History and Birding on "The Rock"

Tuesday, June 21, 2016

Boat leaves at 8:45 AM, Trip ends early PM

With Ranger John Cantwell and

Karen Vandergrift

This special trip to Alcatraz is designed for people who are interested in both the human and natural history of the island and varies from our usual trips focusing more exclusively on birds.

We will begin our morning with a special tour of the island led by Ranger John Cantwell who has worked on Alcatraz for 25 years and currently supervises all National Park Service operations there. Our walking tour will highlight the island's layers of history including the Civil War, Army, Federal Prison, Indian Occupation, and National Park Service eras. Our special behind-the-scenes tour may include visits to the Officer's Gun Gallery, the Dungeon, and an extremely rare opportunity to climb to the top of the Lighthouse!

The second half of the tour will focus on the island's natural history and bird life with opportunities to view breeding colonies of Western Gulls, Brandt's Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemots, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and Snowy Egrets. Our guide, Karen Vandergrift, leads tours as a Waterbird Docent and has adopted Alcatraz as her "patch" in conjunction with training as a Master Birder. She will share her observations of the natural history and bird life of the island as we tour several active nesting sites.

Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, as we will be covering 2 miles, sometimes on steep and uneven paths. Bring water, a lunch, layered clothing, and binoculars.

The trip is limited to 25 participants with a cost of \$21 each for the round-trip boat ride. We will depart from Pier 33 on the 8:45 AM boat. The tour will end in the early afternoon. However, after the tour, participants may stay on the island and return on any boat they wish. **To sign up, register online at www.marinaudubon.org.** Additional information will be sent before the trip to confirm your reservation. For further information, contact Jane Medley at janermedley@gmail.com or 559/760-1551.

BIG ROCK TRAILHEAD

No. 7, Birding in Marin Series

Sat., July 16, 2016

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Trails at Big Rock, while rather steep, allow us to view some of the expansive grasslands and forested ravines in Marin. A few of the grassland nesting birds we will be looking for include Lazuli Buntings, Lark Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, and Ash-throated Flycatchers. We will also have a vast amount of sky visible so that swallows, swifts, and raptors may appear, and there is a chance for a Golden Eagle. Plus, we will be looking for the rare, brilliantly-hued Indigo Bunting, which has attempted to nest here for the past two years!

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in San Rafael, exit on Lucas Valley Road and go west approximately 5.5 miles (look for the big rock). We will be walking approximately 3 miles. Since this area can get quite hot in the summer, be sure to wear a hat, use sunscreen and carry plenty of water.

LIMANTOUR BEACH AND ESTERO

Point Reyes National Seashore

No. 8, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, August 20, 2016

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

August will find Jim and Bob exploring Limantour Beach and Estero. We will meet at the Limantour parking lot in the Point Reyes National Seashore where there are restrooms and ample parking. We intend to hike up the beach until we find Snowy Plovers, Brant and the declining White-winged Scoters. We will walk back on the Estero side expecting to see more shorebirds and ducks. After lunch (bring your own) we intend to walk a ways up the Sky Trail to look for fir forest birds.

DIRECTIONS: Take Sir Francis Drake to Bear Valley Road south of Inverness Park, then take Limantour Road south/west to its end at the parking lot, about 7 miles.

DRAKES BEACH AND THE FISH DOCKS

No. 9, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, September 17, 2016

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

September is the most surprising month of birding here as many juvenile birds make their first migration south and west without the aid of Google. Some western migrants such as Nashville, Hermit and Black-throated Gray Warblers may be in the Point Reyes tree islands, and we sometimes see more unusual Eastern species. Drakes Bay also begins to harbor wintering species like Red-necked Grebes, Marbled Murrelets and Loons. We will picnic early and then head over to the Fish Docks and/or the Point Reyes Light House.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Drakes Beach parking lot near the monument. Take Sir Francis Drake west to Hwy 1 in Olema, then take Hwy 1 north and turn left onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. (just after the Marin Sun Farms shop and just before you get to Point Reyes Station).

Alternatively, take Novato Blvd. or Lucas Valley Road and Nicasio Valley Rd. west to Point Reyes-Petaluma Rd. and follow it to Hwy 1. Turn left on Hwy 1 and head through downtown Point Reyes Station. Then turn right after the bridge onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Inverness out to Point Reyes National Seashore. Keep going until you get to the Drakes Beach Rd. where you'll bear left. Expect about a 35-minute drive from Point Reyes Station to Drakes Beach.

FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP ON PAGE 7

CONSERVATION

Corte Madera Inn Pond

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wildlife that use it, your enjoyment in visiting the pond, the existence of alternative building locations including at least three other on-site alternatives that would keep the pond and allow the rebuild project, and the possible increasing importance of the pond as a flood basin as sea level rises.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Regulatory agencies are sensitive to public comment so it is essential that you send comments to them. To review the Corps' public notice, go to San Francisco District Army Corps of Engineers public notices on the web: www.spn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/PublicNotices.aspx. At the time I checked, it was the first one. Submit comments to the Corps by the deadline of June 16: Sahrye.Cohen@usace.army.mil or Sahrye Cohen, Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, Regulatory Division, 1455 Market Street, 16th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103-1398. Copy your comments to Xavier Fernandez at the Regional Water Quality Control Board, 1515 Clay Street, 14th Floor, Oakland CA 94612

Check the Town of Corte Madera website and MAS's website and Facebook page for updates and information on comment periods for the Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Town.

OTHER CONSERVATION PROJECTS

GNOSS FIELD

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has recommended that the size of the proposed GnoSS Field runway expansion be reduced. According to the public notice, the FAA has decided that, due to changes in the aviation activity, they now recommend a total runway length of 3,600 feet down from 4,400 feet. A runway length of 3,600 feet could be obtained with a 300 foot extension instead of the 1,100 feet identified June 2014 Final EIS."

This changed recommendation is surprising because, in our experience listening to the FAA positions presented at hearings through the years, they are usually supportive of longer runways. This time they are taking a different stand, with which we agree. A significantly reduced extension will enable wetlands to be protected; the wetlands are primarily along the edges of the runway, including the north end. We would have to see the plans to determine how much. A shorter runway will also serve to limit the size of planes that can use the facility.

The FAA and Marin County will be preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement because of the changed project. Comments submitted will be considered to be scoping input for the revised EIS.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Attend the hearing on June 2 before the Board of Supervisors and testify in support of protecting the wetlands and/or state any issues you believe should be addressed. Alternatively or in addition, send comments in writing or by fax to douglas.pomeroy@faa.gov or Mr. Douglas Pomeroy, Federal Aviation Administration, San Francisco Airports District Office, 1000 Marina Boulevard, Suite 210, Brisbane, CA 94005-1835. The comment deadline is June 17.

HAMILTON

The applicant reports that the proposed soccer Complex Project has been revised and is now being reviewed by the public. We have not seen the new plans, but apparently there has been some reduction in size and the lights have been removed. The review for this massive and controversial project for multiple sports fields and other facilities is expected to extend over more than a year. An Environmental Impact Report will be prepared and then there will undoubtedly be numerous hearings, so there is plenty of time to register your views. We, of course, will be looking at the potential impacts of the project on wetlands and wildlife.

SUPPORT ASSEMBLY BILL 2148

(Assemblyman Chris Holden)

The purpose of this bill is to protect wildlife on state property from drones. It was introduced following reports of disturbances to birds and habitats by drones. The goal is to establish clear rules about the appropriate use of drones on lands managed by the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife and State Parks. We wish it would cover our properties.

DO NOT SUPPORT ASSEMBLY BILL 2087

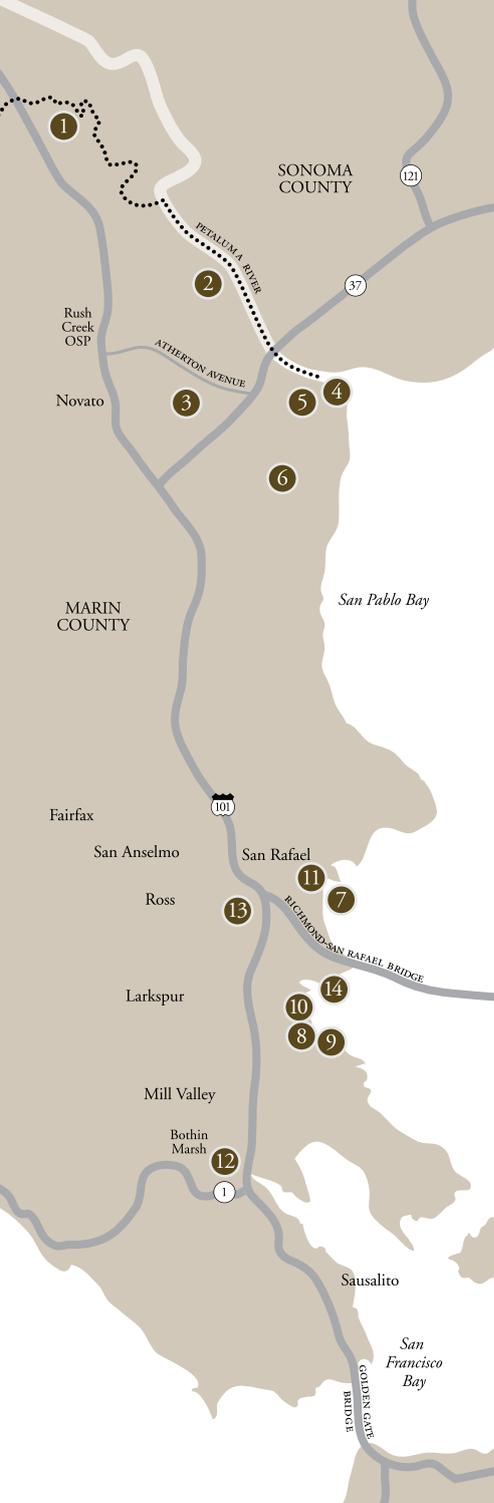
(Assemblyman Marc Levine)

This bill sounds good, but it isn't. It proposes the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife or other public agencies to propose a regional conservation framework including habitat enhancement actions, however, its intent seems to have changed from one of protecting resources to promoting mitigation banks. The Corte Madera Inn is an example of how mitigation banks lead to the filling of wetlands. The developer purchased credits way before environmental review and the EIR, and the Town has gone along with it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

AB 2148: Email, call or write Assemblyman Marc Levine (<http://asmcd.org/members/a10/>) and urge his support for AB 2148.

AB 2087: Tell Assemblyman Levine that AB 2087 would contribute to the loss of wetlands. To overcome this problem, references to mitigation banks and credits should be deleted.



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 |

Mother's Day Picnic - May 8th, 2016



Our annual Mothers Day fundraiser unfolded under a vanishing fog in Audubon Canyon Ranch's stunning Volunteer Canyon. The weather in early May had been coolish, even rainy two days before the event—which did not encourage ticket sales but did green our carpet of grasses and sustained the California Buckeye's truly extravagant bloom.

This event, our 53rd (or it might be our 56th) annual fundraiser in which Marin Audubon fulfills its founding commitment to Audubon Canyon Ranch for annual support—raises funds for ACR (60%) and for Marin Audubon (40%). Donations of food and supplies for the luncheon, and help from many volunteers make the event a success each year.

Our generous food sponsors are listed on the right. Please remember their support and patronize them.

Thank you volunteers who helped by picking up donations, cooking the food, serving and cleaning up. We couldn't have done it without you: Mary Ann Cowperthwaite, Wendy Dreskin, Dave Herrema, Garth Herrema, Bob Hinz, Patty Hoyt, Gerry Jarocki, Mardi Leland, Jane Medley, Ed Nute, Matthew Perry, John



Jude Stalker

Cherone, Carol Stalker, Jude Stalker, Vicky Van Meter, Rona Weintraub, Jim White, and Katy Zaremba.

Thanks also to those who helped before the event: Greg Block, Jo Kreider, Flinn Moore Rauck, Barbara Salzman, and Periann Wood.

APRIL 14 FIELD TRIP

Bird Songs at Five Brooks

By Sandra Chilvers

The sky was rain-washed and partly sunny for the eager birders who joined Lisa Hug and Susan Kelly at Five Brooks for the Thursday Morning Bird Songs field trip. Lisa laid out some ground rules: no talking, step quietly and open your ears—today was to be a mostly aural experience. We practiced listening with closed eyes in the parking lot and learned **Wilson's Warbler**.

Moving along the trail we identified **Wrentit's** bouncing ball song, **Pacific Slope Flycatcher's** up-slurred dog whistle, **American Goldfinch's** squeeze toy and potato chip calls, the nasal *jenk* of the **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **California Quail's** *Chi-ca-go* call. Lisa explained the difference between the **Purple Finch** and the **House Finch** songs, that the **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** says a lot and occasionally its name. We learned to distinguish calls of the **Northern Flicker**, the **Red-shouldered Hawk**, the rattle of the **Belted Kingfisher**, the deep call of the **Pileated Woodpecker**.

We got acquainted with the very high-pitched notes of the **Brown Creeper**, **Pine Siskin** and

Golden-crowned Kinglet. We caught the tinkly notes of the **Bushtits**, the twittering of **Tree Swallows**. Lisa gave us a visual image to remember the **Pacific Wren's** long, cascading song—imagine a falling crystal chandelier.

Of course there were visual treats as well: a **Wood Duck** drake on the pond, a perky **Wilson's Warbler** flitting through the tree over our heads, **Allen's Hummingbird** on a wire, **Red-tailed Hawks** circling, an **Osprey** winging overhead. We moved on to Bear Valley and saw a **White-throated Sparrow** disappearing behind a fence. We got up-close views of freshly plumaged **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, heard and found **Acorn Woodpeckers**. And, because it was Lisa's trip, a lone **Western Gull** wandered by.

But the visual treat of the day was an example of how learning a bird's call can enhance your birding experience. It took some sleuthing, but by following its call to the Morgan horse pasture in Bear Valley, we tracked down a **Chipping Sparrow**, more vividly colored than the plate in the *Sibley Guide to Birds Second Edition*.

Altogether we saw or heard 55 species.

THANKS MOTHER'S DAY DONORS!

Bovine Bakery

Pt. Reyes Station

Brickmaiden Breads

Pt. Reyes Station

Don & Sons (Sebastiani)

Napa

Judy's Breadsticks

Mill Valley

Lagunitas Brewing Company

Petaluma

Redwood Empire Disposal/ North Bay Corp.

Safeway Stores

Mill Valley and Corte Madera

Sloat Garden Center,

Mill Valley

United Markets

San Anselmo and San Rafael

Three Twins Ice Cream

Petaluma

Trader Joe's

San Rafael and Corte Madera



Brown Creeper



Andy Reigo and Chrissy McClarren

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The early spring invasive nonnative plants have mostly finished their season. Following the early Italian thistles, other thistles, namely, bull thistle and star thistle, now continue the thistle season through much of the summer. Harding grass currently presents an important target because it is producing its tremendous crop of seeds. We can cut off the seed heads before the seeds mature and so save the marsh uplands from innumerable seedlings next winter. After decent rains this past winter, it's time to start thinking about watering our youngest native plantings to keep them going until they are established.

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: June 4, July 2, August 6

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: June 11, July 9, August 13

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Dr. near Bolero Ct. and the tennis courts. If you would like to help, contact Katy Zarembo at 415/847-9933 or volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Bundy, Bob Hinz, Nick Johnson, Sharon McCloskey, Flinn Moore Rauck, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Cub Scout Pack 59

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Louise Armour, Thomas J Bauch, Constance Benz, Madeleine Boshart, Center For Volunteer & Nonprofit Leadership, Tamaron Combs, Virginia Dacosta, Julie Dashiell, H. R. De longh, Barbara Quinn De Pinto, Robin E. Demandel, Bryan Eckert, Sharon Elsbree, Joan Farren, Carol Frenchak, Joseph M Gardewin, Paula Granucci, Hiroko Hanes, Blake Hayunga, Tinsley Hutson-Wiley, Karen Land, Nancy Major, B. Mickens, Mary Mikkelson, Susan E. Moody, Patricia Morris, Cathy Nason, V. Ogier, Stephanie Plexico, Dana Pratt, Katherine A. Reid, Belinda Rowbury, Ryan Simon, Donald W. Steiger, Ellen Stein, Robert Stevenson, David Sullivan, Suzanne Sutton, David J. Tirrell, April Topfer, Eva Valfer, Jason Yee, Anthony Zanze

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

PROBLEMS AT BAHIA

In mid-April, after extensive efforts to communicate with Bahia residents through signage and the Homeowners Association that the Eastern Peninsula was closed to people use, we erected fencing to protect the habitat. Our plans and permits all identify the East Peninsula being for wildlife habitat only whereas the Central and West Peninsulas are open for people to use. No sooner was the fence installed when it was vandalized. Fencing at the north end was bent and damaged. At the south end the gate was dislodged and the fence damaged.

It seems not enough that MAS has protected and is attempting to restore 65 acres, about 40 of which is open to the public. The peninsulas were to be developed with streets and houses, not the natural lands that MAS is protecting. Some folks were angry they could not have boat access through the lagoon. Although it is not yet known who vandalized the fence, this area is primarily used by Bahia residents unlike the Marin County Open Space District trails

through the hills. You may recall that the vandalism of Open Space District signs in that area was found by the police to have been done by a Novato resident out of Bahia.

Some of the local residents express the belief that we are depriving them of a previous use and that they have a right to go onto these lands even though they are our property. We note that the Eastern Peninsula was not used by the public prior to our restoration project because it was overgrown and unsafe. The vegetation was so dense that walking was difficult and moving through it almost impossible. In addition, the top of the berm was narrow and gullied making it uncomfortable and unsafe for walking. Areas open and closed to access have been shown on signs since we took ownership.

We are following through with the police in an attempt to control this vandalism of MAS property. We will be repairing the fencing, which will be expensive and may need to be ongoing until we find the responsible person(s). We are prepared to protect our property and its wildlife.



TRIANGLE MARSH

We're pleased to have had 20 Cub Scouts from Corte Madera help last month at Triangle. They worked diligently pulling fennel that regrew after Lowell Sykes mowed all the invasive species in February. Then the Scouts covered the work area with cardboard and wood chip mulch. They succeeded in ridding quite a large area of Harding grass and fennel at the end of Cay Passage. Thank you Cub Scout Pack 59.

On our regular first Saturday work day in May we continued to pull Italian thistle which was flowering.



Marin Cub Scouts covered an area of invasive nonnative plants with cardboard, fastened it in place with "staples," and covered it with wood chip mulch to prevent anything from seeing the light and growing. Next winter they would like to help plant native plants in the same area.



All photos on this page: Jude Stalker

MARIN BIRDLOG: APRIL – MAY 2016

By Josiah Clark

May showers have kept the hillsides green and prolonged spring processes for the first time in years. While the bayshore and mudflats are notably depleted of wintering water birds, the lush hills are alive with bird song. With wintering birds gone, land birds that are here now intend on breeding. As some birders anticipate the return of familiar north bound migrant songbirds in late April, so do vagrant-hunting birders anticipate the arrival the first vagrant songbirds in mid-May into mid-June. The fruiting of Red Elderberry near the coast in early to mid-June is another local birding phenomenon that should not be forgotten in the coming months.

None of our migrant songbirds is more tied to Red Elderberry than **Swainson's Thrush**, and the first ones showed up "whitting" in our area around 4/19 (DE). **Vaux's Swifts** numbers peaked at McNear Brickyard near San Rafael with 1,366 on April 28 (ES). Not far away at Corte Madera Marsh, the presence of a **Loggerhead Shrike** (ME) in spring harkened back memories of another age when this species would have been a common breeder here.

In the county's interior the Big Rock trailhead hosted not only returning **Grasshopper Sparrows**, but also a singing male **Indigo Bunting** for at least the 3rd year in a row on 5/12. This individual appears to fancy breeding with **Lazuli Buntings** (BA, LH).

Patch birders saw the **Brown Booby** from Rodeo Beach on 4/18, as almost all the other nearby ones appeared to have moved on (WL). On the continuing theme of unseasonal sightings from oceans to the south, was a preponderance of 111 **Elegant Terns** at Bolinas Lagoon on May 4. That's an unprecedented and confounding number for this date; it's presumed they are "prospecting" for new nest sites due to apparent food shortages on their Baja breeding grounds. Failed **Brown Pelican** breeders are returning early in numbers as well. Two **Common Terns**, uncommon migrants here, also showed up on the lagoon as well (PP).

The first outer Point Reyes vagrants for the year have included a **Townsend's Solitaire** on 4/17 (EC), a **Hooded Warbler** 5/2 (MF) and a **Yellow-breasted Chat** on 5/6 (CA), with murmurs of other recent vagrants that didn't get reported.

The most unbelievable sighting however was a wounded apparent **Purple Sandpiper**, photographed at Kehoe Beach on 4/25 (ML) and not seen again. This was not only a first Marin County record, but also a first NorCal record. Some believe this to be the same bird recently present at the Salton Sea, which was California's first record for the species.



Swainson's Thrush

Observers and Acronyms **BA:** Bob Atwood, **CA:** Carlo Arreglo, **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **EC:** Everett Clark, **ES:** Emily Strauss, **LH:** Lisa Hug, **ME:** Megan Elrod, **MF:** Mark Forney, **ML:** Matt Lau, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **WL:** William Legge

MAS FIELD TRIPS *Continued from page 3*

FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP **From Clipper Yacht Harbor,** **Sausalito**

Sunday, October 2, 2016
7:30 AM to 4 PM
With David Wimpfheimer

Join us for our annual day of seabird and marine mammal watching as we head to the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. The outing will be led by Naturalist David Wimpfheimer aboard Jim Robertson's power catamaran *Outer Limits*. On past trips we have sighted more than 14 pelagic bird species, including albatrosses, shearwaters and auklets, as well as many sea lions, porpoises, dolphins and whales. We will get an

up close look at the islands and learn about their interesting natural and human history. This is a trip that both experienced and first-time birders and nature lovers will enjoy.

The cost will be \$120 per person. **Online registration for this trip will begin August 1, 2016**, so mark your calendar as a reminder to sign up then. **Register at www.marinaudubon.org. Include the name, email address and contact phone number of each participant.** There is always a chance the trip may need to be rescheduled at the last minute due to sea conditions, so we need to be able to reach participants. We will send an email to participants a few days before the trip.

Please sign up early, as we will limit the number of participants. Be prepared for any kind of weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. If you get seasick easily, this is not the trip for you. We will be on the boat all day. Bring lunch, snacks, water and plenty of sunscreen.

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

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SAVE THE DATE

- July 2, Aug. 6 **Stewardship Day:** Triangle Marsh
 - July 9, Aug. 13 **Stewardship Day:** Bahia
 - July 16 **Field Trip:** Big Rock
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - July 18 **World Listening Day**
www.worldlisteningproject.org
 - August 1 **Farallons Boat Trip sign-up begins**
www.marinaudubon.org
 - August 20 **Field Trip:** Limantour Beach and Estero
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - October 2 **Field Trip:** Farallon Islands
With David Wimpfheimer
- Check website for updates and details

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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.

JOINT NAS-MAS MEMBERSHIP

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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