



Cheryl Reynolds

Beaver

No one invited the beavers to move into Martinez. The dam they built across Alhambra Creek made city officials worry about flooding and the animals were slated to be trapped until public outcry forced the city to install a flow device that would control water height instead.

Ten years later, the beaver-maintained pond has attracted new species of birds, fish and wildlife including Belted Kingfisher, Hooded Merganser, and Green Heron.

Beavers create wetlands for waterfowl, augment invertebrate, frog and fish populations and increase nesting habitat for birds. They recharge the aquifer, remove nitrogen and provide drowned trees for obligate nesters. In fact, beaver ponds often supply the only reliable water source during drought conditions.

Currently there is discussion of reintroducing beaver to Marin County, where they have been missing for over a century. Beaver benefits have been too long overlooked. It's time to re-visit this eco-hero Enos Mills once called "The original conservationist."

Heidi Perryman, Ph.D. is a child psychologist who became an "accidental" beaver advocate when beavers moved into her hometown in 2007. She founded the organization "Worth A Dam" to protect them and to teach other cities how and why to co-exist with this important keystone species.



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Workshop for Trails at Bahia, Rush Creek and Mt. Burdell Preserves

Marin County Parks and Open Space held another Workshop, this time on Region 4 which includes Mt. Burdell and Rush Creek. The upland hills of the Bahia property MAS purchased in 2005 is now in the Rush Creek Preserve, so MAS has a special interest in this planning process.

We are alarmed that the OSD proposes a new trail at the Bahia hills we purchased. It would extend down from the ridge along the steep and longest peninsula to the lower trail, and would be located midway between the east and west ends of the hills. The OSD says they are proposing it to get people away from the road when they come down from the ridge to the lower trail. We don't buy that explanation.

We are very pleased there is no proposal to open the trail on the levee that extends between the tidal marsh we restored and the diked marsh. MAS opposes constructing another trail on the Bahia hills. People using the eastern trail extending from the ridge to the lower trail are

well above the road so they should not be bothered by traffic on this lightly used road. Any concern about getting people away from the road can be addressed by constructing another trail a short distance to the west of the current trail near the road and decommissioning the current trail. A third trail on the Bahia hills would destroy and fragment grassland/woodland habitat and direct more cyclists—making noise and riding fast downhill—through the middle of the habitat.

Marin Audubon raised \$15.8 million to purchase this 632-acre property for habitat. The funds were donated by many individuals, foundations and agencies for the purpose of protecting the property for wildlife—not to provide a thrillway for bicyclists.

Open grasslands seem to attract people to walk all over the place. Such is the case at Mt. Burdell and the OSD is proposing to establish a trail system and close a number of social trails.

continued on page 4



Jude Smulter

Good food and beautiful weather made the Mother's Day Picnic at Audubon Canyon Ranch an enjoyable day for more than 200 attendees.

THANKS MOTHER'S DAY DONORS!

Each year we are gratified by the many people who help at our annual fundraiser, and especially by the generosity of these local businesses that donate. The next time you see them, thank them all. We encourage you to patronize their businesses.

- 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
- Three Twins Ice Cream**, Petaluma
- Trader Joe's**, San Rafael and Corte Madera
- United Markets**, San Anselmo and San Rafael

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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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BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month

Richardson Bay Audubon Center

376 Greenwood Beach Road

Tiburon, California 94920

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

The Rail is published ten times a year by the Marin Audubon Society on 100% recycled paper; edited by Bob Hinz rbrthnz@comcast.net, 383-8688; assisted by other members of MAS; and designed by Studio NaCl (www.studionacl.com). Deadline is the first of each month.

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Website: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
(Provided by Golden Gate AS)

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 \$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

This is the last issue of *The Rail* until our September issue which will arrive in late August. We take a few months break for the summer. But we'll still be busy during the summer. Although fewer, we'll be having field trips and will continue with stewardship work on our properties. We'll also be busy with conservation issues, including our Northern Spotted Owl suit, anchor-outs, proposed developments near our properties at Black Point, Highway 37 expansion, Corte Madera Inn, our grant projects at Tiscornia and Corte Madera and ABAG's Plan Bay Area, which we are in the process of digesting. As always, public input is a great help. See discussion on pages 4-5 for more information on what you can do and/or join our Conservation Committee to help.

A huge thank you to now-former Board member Greg Block. Greg has guided investment of our endowment fund monies for the last six years during which we have done quite well. We'll miss him and his sound investment advice, and input in many other areas.

We welcome new Board member Susan Kelly who will be taking over Speaker Series position. Susan has lots of fresh ideas, so look for more workshops and other education programs next year. And thanks to Lowell Sykes for stepping in to help with scheduling speakers and conducting the programs this year. We are also pleased to welcome back Board members Lowell Sykes, Bob Hinz and Susan Winston who will be returning for three-year terms.

The **Mother's Day Picnic** was again great fun and a huge success. The weather was perfect and the food delicious. **Thank you** to Martha Jarocki for again chairing this annual event with her upbeat, efficient, and smooth leadership. Thank

you, also, to volunteers who helped before, during, and after the event and contributed to its success: Greg Block, Maryanne Cowperthwaite, Leah Hasset, Dave Herrema and Vicky Van Meter; Garth Herrema, Bob Hinz, Gerry Jarocki, Jo Kreider, Jane Medley, Ed Nute, Barbara Salzman, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Steve Trivelpeace, Rona Weintraub, Jim White, Winston Vickers and Susan Winston.

Thanks to all who have donated to our Spring appeal for our habitats. As noted in the letter, we have a special need this time at Bahia. We need your donation more than ever to address these problems. We need signs and fence repair, along with plants and occasional crews to help us complete planting and weed removal at Bahia in addition to stewardship work at other of our properties. It's not too late—you can still donate.

A reminder to respect nesting birds by staying away from them and not playing recorded bird songs that make them react like there is a threat nearby. While it's enticing to call our birds or get close to nests to take photos or see the birds, your presence and artificial calls are a disruption and put the birds and their young at risk. You may be alerting predators to the presence of the nests, causing parents to stay away from nests too long, keeping young from being fed, or generally disrupting the hard work of parent birds tending their young. It is hard enough finding food and avoiding predators but dealing with gawking people, even though they may be well-meaning, may be just too much and contribute to failure of a nest.

We'll inform you of important events or comment periods via our website and email list over summer until *The Rail* returns again for September. Have a wonderful summer!

MARIN AUDUBON MEMBERS ONLY FIELD TRIP

BODEGA BAY TO CORDELL BANKS PELAGIC TRIP From Port O'Bodega, Bodega Bay

Sunday, October 1, 2017

7 AM to 5 PM

With Steve Howell & Friends

Join Steve Howell and his capable team of spotters including Lisa Hug, Keith Hansen, Mark Dettling, and Ryan DiGaudio as we sail to the Cordell Bank in search of seabirds, marine mammals, and other forms of sea life. We will travel on Rick Power's *Sea Angler*, a 65-foot fishing charter boat suitable for birding. Our plan is to navigate towards the Bodega Canyon and then travel south across the Cordell Bank—one of the best locations along the West Coast for finding seabirds and whales. Both experienced and beginning birders are likely to enjoy this trip.

The cost will be \$140 per person with the trip limited to Marin Audubon members only. If you are not already a member, you may join at the time you sign up. **Online registration will begin August 1, 2017, so mark this date on your calendar as a reminder to sign up. We expect all spaces to fill quickly.** You will register at www.marinaudubon.org. **Include the name, email address, and contact phone number of each participant.** There is always a chance the trip might need to be rescheduled at the last minute due to sea conditions, so we need to be able to reach participants. As the trip date approaches, we will email additional trip information.

Be prepared for all weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. You will be on the boat all day. Bring lunch, snacks, water, a hat, and plenty of sunscreen.

DIRECTIONS: Go north on Hwy 101 from the town of Bodega Bay. Continue past the fire station and the Tides' Wharf in Bodega Bay. Turn left on Eastshore Rd and head downhill to the port.

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 THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT (LGVSD)

San Rafael

Thursday, June 1, 2017

9 AM to noon

Susan Kelly & Bob Atwood

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. The area includes two treated wastewater storage ponds, a freshwater pond with islands for nesting habitat, and several miles of flat levee trails. It attracts thousands of birds, including waterfowl such as ducks and geese; waders such as herons and egrets; songbirds; and varied raptors. The ponds become a veritable nursery in spring, and participants in our May field trip were rewarded with views of young Common Gallinules, Gadwall, Mallards and nine Mute Swan cygnets. Each month seems to yield an interesting, and often unexpected, species, so come assist us in our search.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, and there are usually several experienced birders to assist. 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 .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.

MUDDY HOLLOW TRAIL

Point Reyes National Seashore

Sunday June 11, 2017

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Bob Atwood and Susan Kelly

Join Bob and Susan on this easy trail as we watch and listen for a variety of birds in Point Reyes. Our trek will start in open coastal scrub habitat with views of Drakes Estero and then transition into riparian woodland. This is a particularly good area for raptors, 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 8:30 AM in the big parking lot at Limantour Beach where bathrooms are available. We will bird 1.8 miles along the trail and then 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 and after crossing a steel bridge just south of town, head west on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. In about a mile turn left onto Bear Valley Rd. After approximately a half-mile, turn right onto Limantour Rd. Follow this road all the way out to the Limantour Beach Parking Lot at the end of the road.

BIRDING ON ALCATRAZ BOAT TRIP

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Boat leaves 8:45 AM – Trip ends early PM

Boat leaves from and returns to Pier 33

With Karen Vandergrift

Spaces are still available. On one of the most important waterbird nesting sites (nine species) in northern California, we will have an up close look at the natural history of the Alcatraz. For a complete description of this trip, see www.marinaudubon.org or the May 2017 *Rail*. To sign up, email janermedley@gmail.com.

FIVE BROOKS & BEAR VALLEY

No. 6, Birding in Marin (BIM)Series

Saturday, June 17, 2017

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob on this trip as part of their yearly 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 toward Point Reyes for about 20 miles. At Olema 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 miles west of Hwy 1.

BIG ROCK & LAS GALLINAS

No. 7, Birding in Marin (BIM)Series

Saturday, July 15, 2017

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. Some of the grassland nesting birds we will be looking for include Lazuli Buntings, Lark Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, Grasshopper Sparrows, Horned Larks, and Ash-throated Flycatchers. We will also have a vast amount of sky visible so that swallows, swifts, and raptors may appear with a chance for a Golden Eagle. Plus we will be looking for the rare, brilliantly hued Indigo Bunting, if the colorful male returns again to this area to attempt nesting.

At midday we expect to drive Lucas Valley Rd to Las Gallinas where we will be looking for American and Least Bitterns, Green Heron, Common Gallinule, and Great-tailed Grackle.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 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. Because 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

No. 8, Birding in Marin (BIM)Series

Saturday, August 19, 2017

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 Rd south of Inverness Park, then take Limantour Rd southwest to its end at the parking lot—about 7 miles.

FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP

From Clipper Yacht Harbor, Sausalito

Sunday, September 24, 2017

7:30 AM to 4 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join our annual day of seabird and marine mammal watching as we head out to the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. Naturalist David Wimpfheimer will lead the trip aboard Jim Robertson's power catamaran *Outer Limits*. On past trips we have sighted more than fourteen 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 with registration limited to Marin Audubon members. If you are not already a member, you may join at the time you sign up.

Online registration for this trip will begin August 1, 2017, so mark this date on your calendar as a reminder to sign up then; this is the last newsletter until September. You will register at www.marinaudubon.org. Include the name, email address and contact phone number of each participant. There is always a chance the trip might be rescheduled at the last minute due to sea conditions, so we need to be able to reach participants. We will email participants a few days before the trip.

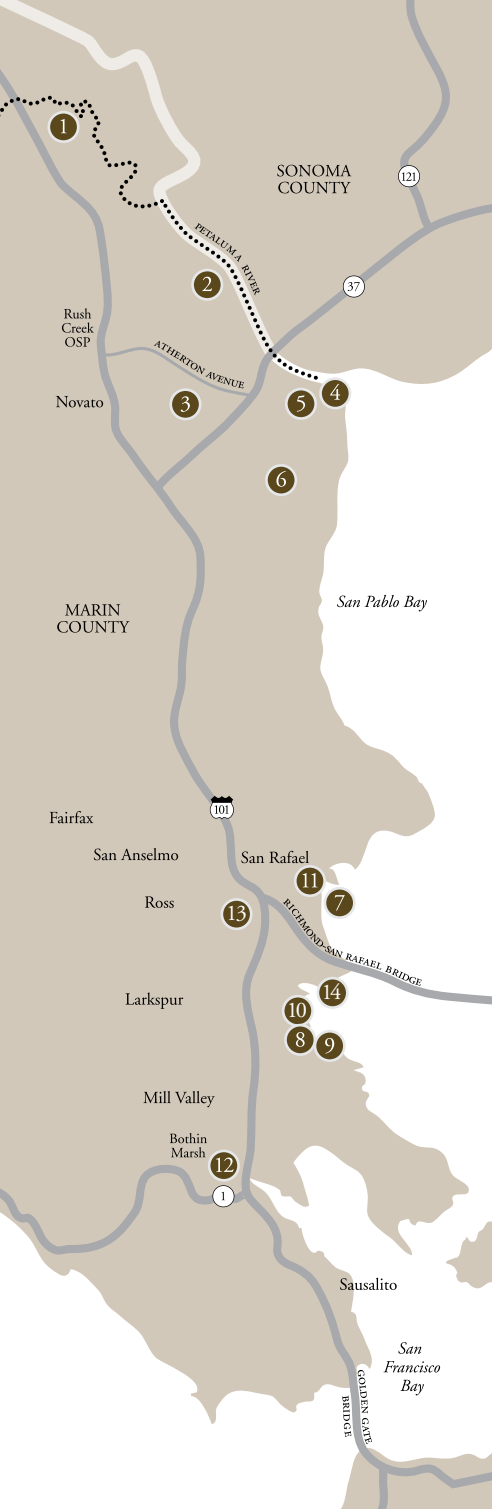
Please sign up early, as we will limit the number of participants. Be prepared for any kind of weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. If you get seasick easily, this is not the trip for you. We will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

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy. 101 to the Marin City/Sausalito exit, head south on Bridgeway, take a left on Harbor Dr. 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.

MAS MEMBERS ONLY

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.



WORKSHOP FOR TRAILS

continued from page 1

Mt. Burdell habitat supports a diverse and rich assemblage of wildlife including many bird and mammal species including bobcat, mountain lion, Spotted Owl, Acorn Woodpecker, Ash-throated and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Cassin's Vireo, Grasshopper and Lark Sparrows, Lazuli Bunting and White-tailed Kite. We're still evaluating the trails being considered for addition to the system at Burdell.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write or email Jon Campo at the Open Space District during the comment period on the project which ends on July 8. His email is jcampo@marincounty.org.

ANCHOR-OUT REPRINT FROM SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

In case you missed it, Marge Macris and I had an Opinion Article in the San Francisco Chronicle on May 2. The article, which addresses the wide range of issues, is reprinted below. Unfortunately, the subsequent first page article in the Chronicle addressed the circumstances of some residents but gave short shrift to the impacts of the anchor-outs on the Bay. As touched on in our article, the adverse effects of the anchor-outs extend not only to eelgrass but to all of Richardson Bay including covering and degrading Bay habitat and polluting Bay waters.

In 1985 the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA), consisting of the cities of Sausalito, Tiburon, Belvedere, and Mill Valley and the County of Marin, adopted the Richardson Bay Special Area Plan, which clarified that the entire Bay is subject to the public trust, that private residential use is not appropriate or legal, and that all anchor-outs should be removed from the Bay. The California State Lands Commission, which has jurisdiction over the Bay, also clarifies that residential use is not consistent with the requirements of the Public Trust Doctrine and is, therefore, not legal.

Although there was some enforcement in the 1980s and 1990s, the number of anchor-outs has increased by an estimated 20 percent since 2014. There are now more than 250 of these illegal vessels covering the Bay.

The April 6 opinion piece, "A right to live

anchor out," by an author publicizing her book, ignores the facts that living on boats in Richardson Bay violates local and state law and severely damages the environment of this priceless resource.

The plight of the anchor-outs calls for our understanding and compassion. That does not mean we should allow the severe environmental damage, resulting from their presence to continue unabated. Discharge of fuel, sewage, trash, and hazardous materials is cumulative and destructive to the fragile habitat of Richardson Bay. Heavy anchor chains drag the bottom with the tides, killing the eel grass important to the breeding of native fish, birds and invertebrates that depend on this rich aquatic resource for their survival. The presence of these illegal dwellings degrades the Bay's natural resources, and prevents use of the bay waters by wildlife and legitimate boat travelers. Many of the anchor-out vessels are unseaworthy and become floating debris compromising the health and safety of the anchor-outs as well as on-shore residents when this debris is washed ashore.

For everyone's benefit, it is essential that the RBRA enforce the laws. Specific enforcement actions that have already begun include removal of illegal mooring balls and debris, and we applaud these efforts. Removal of the anchor-outs themselves is the next vital step. The major enforcement burden falls on the County Sheriff's Department and the City of Sausalito with support from the other RBRA member Jurisdictions. The State should also support this effort through grants and other means.

This is a community need and responsibility. Drug and other illegal activities have been rampant, requiring police enforcement. While some living on the Bay can afford to live elsewhere, removing many of the anchor-outs will require major support services including mental health programs and social service help with affordable housing, followed by long-term enforcement.

Perhaps there was a time in the distant past when there were far fewer people in the world, fewer anchor-outs and the Bay was not damaged by pollution from many human activities. Those times are long past. Other cities have managed to remove these dangerous uses from their jurisdictional waters. It is time that the Richardson Bay Regional Agency with the help of support agencies and the state, do the

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

same. Those who love living on the water should do so in legal house boat communities that are connected to utilities.

Removal of the anchor-outs has been difficult and has been delayed far too long.

Contact your elected representative on the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency and tell them you support measures to protect the Bay, including removal of the anchor-outs.

TIBURON TREE REMOVAL PROPOSED

The Tiburon Park and Recreation Commission is considering a proposal, put forward by some neighbors, to remove 42 non-native trees (blue gum eucalyptus, Monterey pine and Italian stone pine) on the South Knoll of the Richardson Bay Linear Park. Unless there is important wildlife use, MAS supports the removal of invasive species and revegetation with native plants. Non-native trees usually provide minimal habitat for native wildlife compared with native trees, but occasionally a raptor or other native birds may nest in non-native trees. We do have a problem with the apparent lack of attention to the post-project condition and management of the area. We wrote the Commission with our recommendations:

- A Revegetation Plan should be prepared and implemented to ensure the bare ground left after the removal is not invaded by other invasives. Management activities to control, and hopefully eventually eliminate, invasive plants should begin immediately after the removal and continue until the natives are well established and cover the area.
- Native shrubs and tree seedlings currently growing in the area should remain.
- Adopt policies that ensure the native plant community is achieved and maintained in the long term. A major reason for the request to remove the trees is to provide views for some residents. Such a request could be made again by future residents should native trees grow to a height where they, too, block views. The cutting of any native species on this public land to provide views should be prohibited. Maintaining a native plant community indigenous to the Tiburon peninsula to benefit wildlife and all of the public should be the stated goal.

Native trees, shrub and grassland habitats are essential for wildlife and are valuable natural resources that contribute to clean air, climate moderation, and aesthetic

beauty of communities. As an example of their importance, native oaks provide habitat for more than 800 species of wildlife and insects. MAS supports replacing non-native plant species with natives, and we offered our assistance preparing the plan and policies.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write or email the Town of Tiburon Park and Recreation Commission, particularly residents of Tiburon, supporting restoration of native plant species.

CURRENT CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES CONTINUE INTO THE SUMMER

NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL LAW SUIT

We will be continuing negotiations with the Marin County Open Space District on our law suit over the summer. We seem to be making some progress, but as yet nothing definite.

OSD PROPOSED HUNT CAMP TRAIL

MAS has written in opposition to adopting the former Juniper section (renamed Hunt Camp Trail) as an OSD system trail. It is clear that improvements required to adopt the trail into system would result in extensive, significant and permanent adverse impacts to the habitats of this area both during construction and from post-construction uses.

We have no problem with retaining the Hunt Camp Fire Road for access, but the former Juniper Trail is steep and redundant, would fragment habitat, has significant special status plants and sensitive plant communities, has habitat types (redwoods and Douglas fir trees) that support NSO, would require extensive armoring and other improvements in aquatic habitats (nine creek crossings, 36 drainages, and rock armoring of an unknown number of springs/seeps), and passes through 11 or more areas with unstable soils that would be improved with rolling dips or out-sloping.

WOODACRE/SAN GERONIMO FLATS WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROJECT

MAS submitted issues and questions to be addressed in the EIR for a wastewater treatment plant to serve the Woodacre and/or San Geronimo Flats communities. The project is an effort to address degraded water quality and protect aquatic resources. Tests in San Geronimo Creek have traced water quality degradation to failing septic systems. San Geronimo Creek is a tributary

of Lagunitas Creek and both provide habitat for Coho salmon and steelhead populations. Alternatives range from a system that would serve just some residents of Woodacre to larger facility that would serve both communities. Not all residents are interested in participating. A Draft EIR will be prepared and is expected to be released in the fall.

HOUSES PROPOSED AT BLACK POINT

Plans have been submitted for two large houses on parcels adjacent to properties purchased by Marin Baylands Advocates and now owned by MAS. We have submitted letters of concern about the impact on our properties, loss of habitat (62 trees would be removed), impact on adjacent wetlands, access and sewage and water quality. The application is not complete. As soon as the applicants provide the required information, the Community Development Department will issue a notice to begin environmental review.

DRIVING RANGE PROPOSED FOR BAYLANDS AT STONE TREE GOLF COURSE

The golf course is proposing a temporary use permit for a driving range on baylands (i.e., former tidal marsh that is now diked) owned by the county. The facility would be at the end of the road that goes through the golf course. We will be visiting the site soon.

PLAN BAY AREA

This is ABAG's second edition of their Plan for the region. So far, we have found that the natural resources chapter discusses agricultural lands and forests but not wetlands. It addresses climate change and sea level rise, but so far we have not found much about protecting the Bay and Bay-related resources. The comment deadline is June 1. The Plan can be found on the ABAG website: <http://abag.org>.

CORTE MADERA INN

The Corte Madera Planning Commission held another hearing on May 23 at which the applicant presented his plan for a 174-room hotel that would fill the existing pond, excavate a new pond that would be 40% of the size of the current pond and be stuck in the northeast corner of the site. There would be essentially no buffer, all heron-roosting trees would be cut down and there would be a waterfall for aeration and gabion walls. We'll be submitting additional opposing comments after further review. Expect the Planning Commission to schedule another meeting to discuss clarifications of the pond design this summer, and this time around they, unfortunately, are looking favorably on the much reduced size pond. Watch our email alerts for when to write to retain the full-size pond.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Our monthly volunteer stewardship days at Triangle Marsh and Bahia will continue through the summer. *Dittrichia*, cocklebur and star thistle are annuals that will get our attention later in the summer, but many of the annual plants have practically finished their life cycle and are beyond our control for this season. We will continue to remove biennials (e.g., bull thistle) and perennials (Harding grass) throughout the summer.

Act locally and join us on a workday. Witness restoration first-hand and be a part of it.

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, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: June 3, July 1, August 5

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: June 10, July 8, August 12

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

If you would like to help, please contact Jude, volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org or 415/680-6291 for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Katharine Cagney, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Hinz, Sharon McCloskey, Flinn Moore Rauck, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes

THANK YOU TO OUR LIMONIUM REMOVAL VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin; Jeff Blumenthal; Katharine Cagney; Jerold Dwayne Gabayan; Bob Hinz; Khin, William & Ellie Min; Aldrich & Allen Pablo; Stephanie Saffouri; Jude Stalker; Jenny Stein; Riza Velero

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Helen Bacon, Benevity Community Impact Fund (UnitedHealth Group), Diane Parish & Paul Gelburd, Jane Lybecker, Shirley Trimble, United Markets, William Washauer, Donna Williams

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Christine Danscuk, Gina Farr, Louise Fay, David Fix, Greg Gabby, Charles C. Gardiner, Tricia George, David & Genevieve Law, Mitch Mccullough, Stan Moore, David Rollison, William Smartt, Daniel Sonkin, Louis Spiesberger, Linda Sudduth, Dean J. Thompson

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

We've had reports this month yielding information about two of our properties:

PETALUMA MARSH

The Year 10 Monitoring Report for our 102-acre tidal marsh expansion project was unveiled this past month. Produced by Siegel Environmental, the results of the survey monitoring show that the restoration is evolving well and meeting most success criteria that were identified for the project when it was planned. Over the last five months, engineers and vegetation ecologists have surveyed the progress of the tidal marsh and vegetation and then compared the survey results with performance criteria to measure success of the project.

New channels have formed naturally by the flow of tidal waters as anticipated. The tides in the project site exhibit the full tidal range which matches the range in the adjacent San Antonio Creek. Sediment is depositing and is raising up the level of the marsh plain as expected. Almost the entire marsh perimeter is now covered with 15 feet of native cordgrass (*Spartina foliosa*). Cordgrass colonization in the interior of the marsh meets 25% cover criteria although the projected five-acre patch has not formed. Instead there are multiple smaller patches that were evaluated as being of similar value. The average height of the vegetation at the project site matches the control site at Carl's Marsh. The area that is not doing well is the seasonal wetland between the constructed levee and the SMART tracks. During the ten years since this project was constructed, there have been two levee breaches and several drought years, so it is understandable that the seasonal wetland is lagging.

The report is not complete. Several areas still need to be addressed: the constructed levee along the western side of the property and the transition zone at the base of the constructed levee. We'll report again when the data and analysis is complete.

TISCORNIA MARSH

Last year, the MAS Board approved the use of our Tiscornia Marsh, located at the mouth of San Rafael Canal, by a Romberg Center graduate student to study the impact of the non-native green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) on the growth of native cordgrass. The problem that motivated the study arose with native cordgrass (*Spartina foliosa*) restoration efforts, primarily in the South Bay, where soil surrounding many of the new plantings is often found riddled with burrows from the non-native crab. This led to the hypothesis that burrows created by the non-native crab were impacting the newly planted native cordgrass plugs.

The study involved planting cordgrass in cages with crabs, in cages without crabs, in partial (two-sided) cages and without cages. Before the study, green crabs and the native yellow shore crab (*Hemigrapsus oregonensis*) were already found in the study area.

The study found that the average number of cordgrass shoots surviving in cages with green crabs was significantly lower than in cages without crabs, lower than in partial cages and lower than in uncaged plots. This finding suggests the presence of green crabs may slow growth of native cordgrass and thus impact establishment of newly planted plugs. In addition, cordgrass plants in the non-native crab areas seem to recover more slowly when crabs were removed.

INATURALIST WORKSHOP

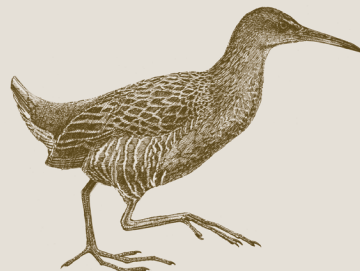
INATURALIST WORKSHOP Richardson Bay Audubon Center 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon

Saturday, June 10, 2017
10 AM to noon
With Todd Plummer

You are invited to a two-hour workshop to learn about iNaturalist—a species identification system and tool to record when and where you observe living things (birds, plants, fish, anything!). You can use it to record your own observations, get help with identifications, collaborate with others for a common purpose, or access the observational data collected by other users. Naturalist Todd Plummer will lead the workshop. He has been using and teaching workshops on iNaturalist since 2013, and he says it has changed his life. By using iNaturalist, you may find yourself paying more attention to biodiversity all around you while contributing valuable information for conservationists and researchers around the world. Read more here: www.inaturalist.org/pages/what+is+it.

This workshop is limited to the first 20 people to sign up. Contact Jane Medley at janermedley@gmail.com to register. Please include your name and phone number. Be sure to create your own iNaturalist account at www.inaturalist.org, and download the app on your mobile device (if you wish to use it) before arriving for the workshop.

The fee will be \$5 for Marin Audubon members and \$10 for non-members, payable at the door. If you are not already a MAS member, we invite you to join at this event.



MARIN BIRDLOG: APRIL 2017

By Noah Arthur

As breeding birds arrive and stake out their territories, and common migrants continue to stream northward, April can be a slow month for rare birds in the North Bay region. Nevertheless, a few nice ones were found this month by Marin's many determined birders. Early in the month, the very long-staying **Red-necked Grebe** and **Harris's Sparrow** were present at Las Gallinas through the 6th (RR).



William H. Majors

Black-and-white Warbler

deja-vu repeat of other sightings in recent months, a **Sandhill Crane** flew over at F Ranch on Pt. Reyes on the 22nd (EC, AM).

More uncommon migrants made appearances late in the month, including a **Pacific Golden-plover** at Abbotts Lagoon on the 25th (ML), and a **Black-chinned Sparrow** found at Pine Mountain Trailhead on the 27th BA. The sparrow lingered into May. Another **Purple Martin** was spotted at Pt. Reyes Horse Trail on the 29th (BP).

A final good bird—and April's rarest sighting—was a **Black Vulture** seen flying over Inverness (SA). This is probably the same long-staying vulture that has been cruising up and down the North Bay coast for several years.

Observers and Acronyms AM: Alex Merritt, BA: Bob Atwood, BP: Bob Power, DM: Dominik Mosur, EC: Everett Clark, LD: Langdon Stevenson, ML: Matt Lau, RR: Ruth Rudesill, SA: Scott Anderson, ST: Steve Tucker

Birding By Wheelchair: A Request for Ideas

Many MAS members have been birding, hiking, and backpacking for decades, and while their enthusiasm for these activities has not waned, their ability to walk may now be somehow limited.

If you or your friends are interested in connecting with others who are eager to continue birding in spite of walking disabilities, we hope you will let us know who you are and share your knowledge of locations in Marin that are both wheelchair accessible and good locations for birding. You may also wish to identify sites that you consider partially wheelchair accessible or suitable for those with limited walking ability.

We will compile a list that can be shared on our website and used as a resource by both Marin Audubon and its members for planning future outings. Many are already familiar with the wheelchair accessible areas at Las Gallinas and the Hamilton Wetlands, but there are likely to be a number of additional locations in the county of potential interest.

April is the month for less-common western migrants, such as the calling male **Purple Martin** that flew along Bolinas-Fairfax Rd. on the 9th (DM).

Yet another getting-late winter rarity was the continuing male **Common Teal** at Las Gallinas on the 12th (LD).

Five Brooks Pond has been haunted by at least one elusive **Black-and-white Warbler** this spring, and a/ the bird was seen again on the 14th (ST). This is almost certainly a locally-wintering bird, as our eastern migrants generally don't show up until mid-May and reach their peak in early June.

And in yet another



Dominic Sherry

Black-chinned Sparrow

If you have ideas to share about birding locations or how Marin Audubon might include people with walking disabilities in our field trips, please contact Jane Medley, our Field Trips Chair, at janermedley@gmail.com.

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH IS OPEN AND NEEDS YOUR HELP!

MAS helps support Audubon Canyon Ranch's (ACR) annual spring-summer public season by encouraging our members to volunteer to help greet weekend visitors at ACR's Martin Griffin Preserve on the Bolinas Lagoon.

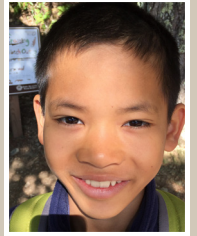
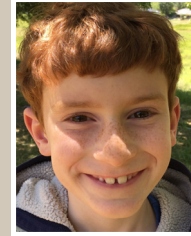
If you enjoy being in beautiful places with friendly people, please consider becoming an ACR weekend host (even one day is greatly appreciated). No training necessary. ACR's staff and Nature Guides will show you the ropes. The public season runs through July.

For more information or to sign up, email or call ACR Weekend Program Facilitator Claire Seda, claire.seda@egret.org, 415/868-9244 x122, or visit: www.signupgenius.com/go/5080f4eafa92eabf49-20171.

Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

Junior Bird Watchers is a program designed to teach elementary school children to identify birds in their neighborhoods.



Luke, a first-grader at Bacich Elementary School, would like to see a Great-Horned Owl.

Xander Mann is a home schooled fourth grader. He passed at fifth grade level and would like to see a Painted Bunting!



Tanvi Prithiviraj, a first-grader at Bacich Elementary School, passed the Junior Bird Watcher test at third grade level. She would like to see an American Avocet.

Charlotte Rohde is a first-grader at Bacich Elementary School. She would like to see a killdeer.



Rosie Siminoff a first grader at Bacich Elementary School, passed the Junior Bird Watcher test at second grade level. She would like to see a Red-Tailed Hawk.



The Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- July 15 **Field Trip:** Big Rock and Las Gallinas
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - August 1 Registrations open for Farallon Islands and Cordell Bank Trips at www.marinaudubon.org
 - August 19 **Field Trip:** Limantour Beach and Estero
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - September 24 **Boat Trip:** Farallon Islands
With David Wimpfheimer
 - October 1 **Boat Trip:** Cordell Bank
With Steve Howell
- Check website for updates and details

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SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

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. We receive a fixed amount based on our 2001 membership. 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're 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.

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**.

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