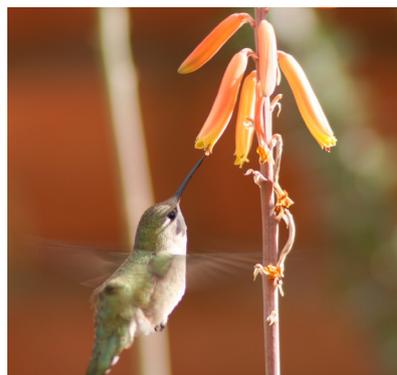


Our June Speaker Series will be on the **FIRST THURSDAY**. Turn to page 2 for more information.

THURSDAY, MAY 14 7:30 PM

Mutualism: A Lesson In Perspective

With Joe Mueller



Joe Mueller

Anna's Hummingbird

Our world, in every aspect, is interconnected. Mutualism is everywhere—from the foundation of coral reefs to the very cells that compose us—but few would know it. Even biologists rarely discuss the underlying significance of this type of symbiosis. Join us for an intriguing discussion on evidence for why mutualism is so foundational for ecological systems, how it can be applied to human systems, and why following this type of natural philosophy would solve the human predicament.

Joe Mueller has been teaching biology at the College of Marin for 25 years. Of the 15 different courses he has taught, subjects of particular interest include ecology, marine biology, ornithology and environmental science. Taking a holistic approach to science, Joe emphasizes the interconnective approach to understanding biology. Always fun and light-hearted you're sure to enjoy your time while learning. Joe is the recipient of the 2008 Terwilliger Environmental Award.

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAS Annual Meeting, May 12

You are invited to join us for Marin Audubon Society's Annual Meeting at which Board members will be elected. This year our Annual Meeting is on Thursday, May 12. The election will take place just before our Speaker Series program (see adjacent column for details on our Speaker program for that date).

As a non-profit membership 501(c)(3) organization, members of Marin Audubon Board of Directors are elected by our members. At the meeting we will also have a brief overview of the past year's activities. MAS's fiscal year is July 1 through June 30.

This year our Nominating Committee presents the following nominees who will be new to our Board: **Matthew Perry, William**

Legge, and Everett Clark. Brief bio's for William, Everett and Matthew were presented in the April issue of *The Rail*. **Martha Jarocki** is also up for reelection. As a current member of our Board, Martha is already a familiar face and has been serving us well as Publicity Chair and Chair of our Mother's Day Picnic at Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Thank you to our 2016 Nominating Committee for their diligence and success: Chair **Jane Medley, Ed Nute and Phil Peterson.**

We hope you will exercise your right as a Marin Audubon member and join us to elect Board members for the coming year, and to see what we are sure will be a spectacular program by College of Marin ornithology Professor **Joe Mueller.**

SF Bay Habitat Restoration Measure AA

Measure AA on the June 2016 ballot will impose a \$12 parcel tax on properties in the nine Bay Area counties for the next 20 years to restore wetlands. The ballot language describes the purpose of the tax as "to protect and restore San Francisco Bay to benefit future generations by reducing trash and harmful toxins, improving water quality, restoring habitat for fish, birds and wildlife, protecting communities from flooding, and increasing shoreline public access and recreation areas."

A two-thirds majority of all voters in the Bay Area is needed for Measure AA to pass. It is expected to generate \$500 million. The tax "... may fund projects along the Bay shorelines within the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Solano, Sonoma and San Francisco ..." to benefit water quality, habitat, flood control and recreation.

According to the Measure, 50% of the total new revenue will be allocated to the four Bay Area regions, the North Bay, which includes Marin, the East Bay, West Bay and South Bay, in proportion to population, and that no more than 5% may be used for administrative

costs. The North Bay's share would be 9% and Marin's would likely be 2-3%. The Measure provides that the remaining 45% "shall be allocated consistent with provisions of this Measure."

Measure AA includes criteria that will guide decisions on approving projects. The #1 priority for evaluating projects is having the "greatest positive benefit to the Bay as a whole," and priority #2 is that a project will have the greatest long-term impact. Additional criteria include: benefit to future generations and economically disadvantaged communities; geographic distribution, i.e., ensure projects in each of the nine counties; engage youth; prevent pollution; provide clean water, vital fish and wildlife habitat and shoreline public access; provide flood protection including addressing climate change; and is consistent with the Bay Conservation and Development's Coastal Zone Management Program and San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Implementation Strategy.

The Restoration Authority, which has already been established and consists of a governing

continued on page 4

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	Vicky Van Meter 299-2514
Fundraising	Flinn Moore Rauck 892-7554
Speaker Series/Programs	Board Members
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
At Large Board Member	Jane Medley 559/760-1551
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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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 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

At its April meeting, the Marin Audubon Board voted to endorse Measure AA (see article on page 1) which will be on the June ballot. We urge a "yes" vote to continue the much-needed restoration work of Bay wetlands and endorsed a resolution, with a few modifications, suggested by Audubon California. We also voted to contribute \$500 to support the measure and to co-sponsor a campaign event at Larkspur Landing.

We apologize for not getting our April issue of *The Rail* out to you more promptly. Unfortunately it did not reach members until well after the last hearing on GGNRA's dog management plan. We hope you had a chance to comment online or via US mail. You still can comment to local legislators (see page 5).

We have several important events coming up. Our Annual Meeting is on May 12 at which you will vote for directors for the coming year and hear a great program by College of Marin's Professor Joe Mueller. Our Mother's Day Picnic is also coming up on, of course, Mother's Day May 8. This is always a fun event in a special place, Volunteer Canyon, and we hope you will join us. Griffin Canyon will be open again for you to visit, although the herons have not

returned to nest.

Marin Audubon has registered for Amazon-Smile, which is an easy way to donate to Marin Audubon every time you shop at Amazon. If you identify Marin Audubon Society as your selected charity, 0.5% of your purchase price will be donated to MAS. The cost of the items is the same and thousands of products are eligible. Visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-6076664> for more information.

We've begun to plan for an event to celebrate Marin Audubon's 60th Birthday—it is tentatively scheduled for a weekend in mid-October. Save the dates.

Thanks to volunteers who signed up for the Brown Pelican survey and especially to William Legge who reached out to the volunteers. We are pleased to be able to participate in this important study that aims to find out why the Brown Pelican population is declining.

And finally, don't miss the last of our migratory shorebirds and waterfowl as most head north to breed, and do get out and enjoy the landbirds that are breeding here. Don't forget that there may be small birds nesting in your plants. Do your tree cutting and brush trimming after nesting season wherever possible.

SPEAKER SERIES: THURSDAY, JUNE 2

7:30 PM

FIRST THURSDAY!

Herons and Egrets – Ecology and Regional Status and Trends

With John Kelly



Len Blomin

Great Egret

There are no better iconic symbols of Audubon than the majestic herons and egrets that are so commonly seen feeding in the tidal marshes of the San Francisco Bay. The successful campaign to save these beautiful 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 from development 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.

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.

In his presentation, John will provide a solid look at heron and egret ecology and conservation, with anecdotes and natural history, report on regional status and trends, describe disturbance patterns, climate effects, wetland values and more.

At ACR John develops and oversees programs in conservation research, ecological restoration and natural resources management on ACR lands and associated systems, such as Tomales Bay. Before coming to ACR in 1988, John worked as a biologist and educator for several public and private organizations. He holds a doctorate in ecology from the University of California, Davis, and a master's degree in wildlife from Humboldt State University.

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: Vicky Van Meter, 415/299-2514, vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com or co-host, Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

San Rafael

Thursday, May 5, 2016, 9 AM to Noon
With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

Join Susan and Len for a walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds. Birders of all levels are welcome. Spring is a busy time at the ponds with opportunities to view a variety of nesting birds including Marsh Wrens, Common Gallinules, several colorful duck species, as well as the non-native Mute Swans, which successfully fledged nine cygnets in 2015. Dress for all weather and bring water. We'll be walking about 2 miles on the flat levees that surround the ponds. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then go east on Smith Ranch Road toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, stay on Smith Ranch Road, and go about 0.5 miles to the end of the road at the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. Late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.

BIG ROCK TRAILHEAD TO LOMA ALTA TRAIL

Thursday Morning Bird Songs

Thursday, May 12, 2016, 7:30 AM to Noon
With Lisa Hug and Susan Kelly

Spring is the best time of year to hear and learn bird songs. Males are full of hormones and bursting with song. Many neo-tropical migrants are returning and vying for mates and territories. It is a very exciting time of year. This walk will require participants to stay quiet to enable us to listen to the myriad of bird sounds. Bring comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water, binoculars, field guides and snacks.

This trip is limited to 15 participants. To sign up, email Jane Medley at janermedley@gmail.com. Please include your phone number. Participants will be contacted prior to the trip to confirm registration. A wait list will be created if registration exceeds available spaces.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in San Rafael, take the exit for Lucas Valley Road west approximately 5.5 miles (look for the big rock). The trailhead is on the north side of Lucas Valley Road.

MUIR WOODS, REDWOOD CREEK AND MUIR BEACH

No. 5, Birding in Marin (BIM) Series

Saturday, May 21, 2016

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

May is the height of the breeding season in Marin. Join Jim and Bob as we visit Muir Woods, Redwood Creek and Muir Beach. We will start the morning in Muir Woods where we will bird along Redwood Creek and hear the beautiful songs of Swainson's Thrushes, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Pacific Wrens, along with Warbling Vireos, Wilson's and Orange-crowned (perhaps MacGillivray's) Warblers. We may or may not go into the Park but bring your Senior Pass if you have one. Entrance fee is \$10/adult. We will then

check out the restored riparian area at Muir Beach and picnic there. Scanning the ocean, we usually find Pigeon Guillemots, Common Murres, Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants, grebes, loons and Black Oystercatchers. We plan to walk several miles. Bring bins, scopes and lunch; dress in layers. Carpool if possible.

DIRECTIONS: Meet in the lower parking lot (sign says "Additional Parking") at Muir Woods. From Hwy 101 take the Mill Valley/Hwy 1/Stinson Beach Exit. Follow the signs to Hwy 1 and then to Muir Woods. The address is 1 Muir Woods Road, Mill Valley.

HAMILTON WETLANDS FOR YOUNG BIRDERS, Novato

Saturday, May 28, 2016, 8:30 to 10 AM

With Mark Forney

Do you know a child who might enjoy learning about birds and the natural world in the company of other children? Help Marin Audubon build a young generation of bird lovers and nature stewards by sharing the joys of birding with a young person (15 and under invited). Parents, grandparents, and friends are invited to accompany the special children in their lives for a morning of bird watching with Mark. We hope this field trip becomes an important monthly offering and request your help in recruiting participants and getting this program established. Bring binoculars if you have them.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at South Hamilton Park playground at Hamilton Field. From the south on Hwy 101 take the Nave Drive/Hamilton exit, and from the north use the Ignacio Blvd. exit. Follow Main Gate Road, go right on South Palm, and then turn right on Hangar Avenue. The South Hamilton Park parking lot is at the intersection of Hangar Avenue and Maybeck Street. From the parking lot, walk along Hangar Avenue south to its end, and you will see the playground ahead on the right.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS

OLOMPALI STATE PARK, Novato

Sunday, May 29, 2016, 9 to 11:30 AM

With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle

Are you curious about our local birds and want to learn more about them but need some guidance to deepen your appreciation? This second in a series of field trips for beginners will help you become more confident and skilled in bird identification with the use of binoculars, scopes and field guides. Participants will learn how to identify local resident birds of Eastern Marin County with this trip focusing on species found in the oak woodland/oak savannah habitats at Olompali. Resident species as well as recently arrived spring migrants will be busy singing and nesting, so there should be a variety of birds to hear and see.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 101 to the Atherton Avenue/San Marin Drive Exit in Novato. Head west, crossing over Hwy 101, then turn north onto Redwood Boulevard to the park entrance on the west side of the highway. We will meet in the large parking lot. There is an \$8 registration fee paid through self-registration. There is a portable toilet in the parking lot.

FORT MASON AND CRISSY FIELD

San Francisco

Tuesday, May 31, 2016, 8 AM to Noon

With David Assmann

Bird two of San Francisco's hotspots with David. Fort Mason has a variety of habitats in a very compact area at the northeast corner of San Francisco and has an eBird list of 97 species for May. We'll look for late migrants, including flycatchers and warblers, and scan Aquatic Park for water birds. We'll also look for nesting birds such as Downy Woodpeckers, Hooded Orioles, and Pygmy Nuthatches. Then we'll travel to Crissy Field, our second hotspot on the northern shore of San Francisco, where we'll look for loons, terns, ducks, and shorebirds.

DIRECTIONS: Enter Fort Mason at Bay and Franklin (It's at the very end of Franklin Street). There should be ample free parking. Make sure you do not park in reserved spots. We will meet at the gate on the east side of the Community Garden at 8 AM.

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!

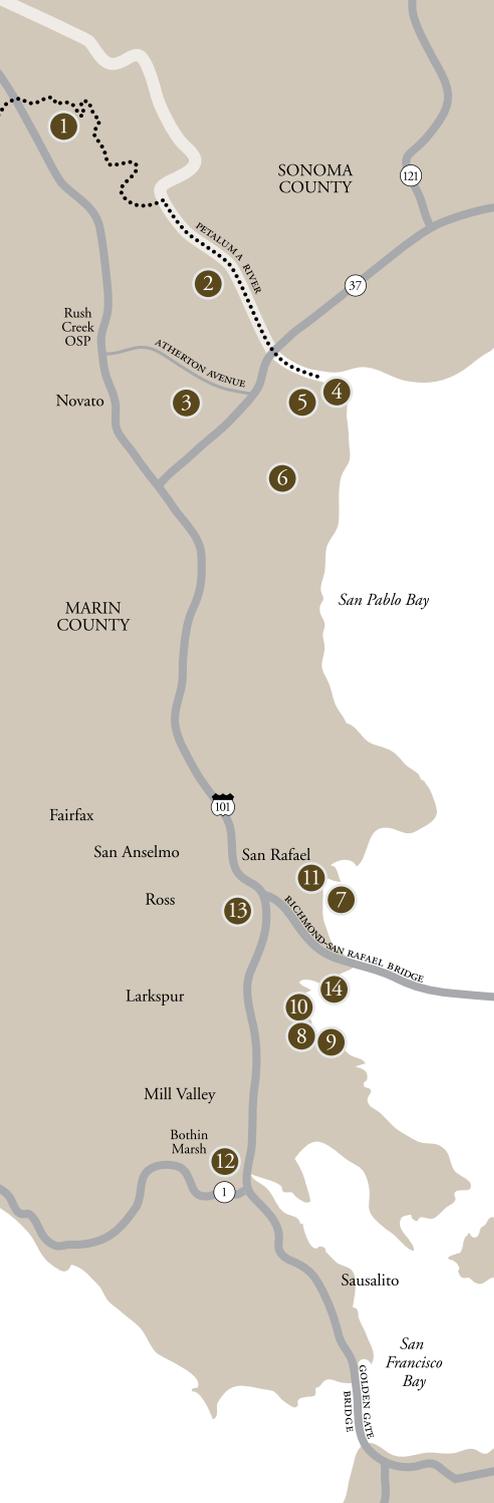
The second half of the tour will focus on the island's natural history and bird life with opportunities to view breeding colonies of Western Gulls, Brandt's Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemots, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and Snowy Egrets. Our guide, Karen Vandergrift, leads tours as a Waterbird Docent and 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.

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.



Measure AA

continued from page 1

body of elected officials from around the Bay, would manage the tax revenue and approve projects to be funded. This governing body can amend Measure AA by a majority vote of its members to further purposes of the Measure. An Advisory Committee will advise the Authority about implementation and will make recommendations about expenditure priorities. An independent Citizen's Oversight Committee, consisting of six members appointed by the Authority, will review conformance with the Measure and advise the Governing Body on the allocation of funds.

Benefits for the Bay and Wildlife

The funds generated by Measure AA would unquestionably benefit San Francisco Bay and the resident and migratory wildlife that overwinter, move through or reside here permanently. Most of the waterfowl and shorebirds of the Pacific Flyway depend on this estuary for some part of their life cycle.

Measure AA will enable the significant restorations that have taken place around the Bay to continue, primarily by restoring significant properties that have already been acquired. The priority criteria list and explanations make it clear that Measure AA is focused on restoring large properties that are already in protective ownership. These are primarily owned by government agencies. The largest example is the South Bay Salt Ponds which were acquired from Cargill about 10 years ago. While a thousand acres of the South Bay Salt Ponds have been restored, there are still about 15,000 acres that need restoring. One large site in Marin that would be a likely priority is the 1,600-acre Bel Marin Keys property that is owned by the Coastal Conservancy and is awaiting restoration.

Bay wildlife would also benefit from projects that provide flood protection, particularly if natural systems such as marshes are used, and through projects that prevent pollution and reduce toxins.

Benefits for Marin County Baylands

Marin Audubon will certainly apply for Measure AA funds for acquisition, restoration and monitoring. We would be eligible for grants, but how we would fare in evaluations with larger properties that would likely be viewed as having a greater benefit is uncertain.

Supporters of the measure compiled a list of Examples of Projects Anticipated to be Eligible

for Grants from Measure AA funds. Marin County has fifteen parcels on the list and of these six are Marin Audubon projects. Several years ago, we were asked to provide our project funding needs for inclusion on the list. Among the MAS projects are monitoring of restoration projects we have already implemented. The full list includes 55 projects that are from all of the Bay Area counties as well as Bay Area-wide projects, such as the Invasive Spartina Project.

Although spending Measure AA funds for acquisitions is not explicitly prohibited, it is clearly not a priority. According to the publicity "acquisition simply won't be a priority because there is plenty of work to do on land already acquired." As long-time MAS members know, our approach is different. We want to acquire properties so they are in protective ownership. Habitat restoration can follow later. In our view, if properties are not acquired when the opportunity arises, they may be developed and lost forever.

Because this is a parcel tax, the question has been raised whether MAS would have to pay it. As mentioned above, the measure specifically provides that "Properties that are exempt from paying ad valorem property taxes in any given year would also be exempt from this parcel tax in that year." This would exempt Marin Audubon from paying this parcel tax on the 30 parcels we own, because as a 501(c)(3) organization, we are exempt from property taxes.

The tax will undoubtedly have overall benefits for the Bay and our wildlife, even if we are unable to get grants for smaller Marin County properties that may be available for purchase.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Much is yet to be done to restore baylands and protect the Bay wildlife and habitats. VOTE FOR MEASURE AA on the June ballot.

UPDATES

GGNRA Dog Management Plan Progress

GGNRA staff has held two meetings in Marin County on the subject of the Dog Management Plan. Both were heavily attended by folks who wanted more places to walk their dogs off-leash. The speakers seemed to be largely from the Oakwood Valley/Sausalito area who are angry about losing the ability to walk off-leash dogs on neighboring GGNRA lands.

Acting on the direction of a now defunct Citizen's Advisory Committee, GGNRA unfortunately allowed off-leash dog walking for

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

many years. As a result, some nearby residents came to consider GGNRA lands as their backyard with the right to walk their dogs off-leash there.

Two speakers spoke in support of the Plan at the first hearing and six at the second. One was a father who spoke of his son having been bitten by an off-leash dog. Superintendent Lehnert and other staff conducted an informative presentation about the National Park Service's responsibility to protect natural resources and responded to questions. Opponents of the Plan were clearly not interested in the responses.

Of course, GGNRA lands belong to all of us and the Park Service's primary responsibility is to ensure protection of its resources, both natural and cultural. Dogs, particularly off-leash, threaten resources in many ways. Dogs trample vegetation, spook and run after wildlife, and are unnatural predators in the GGNRA habitats. Who hasn't seen dogs on beaches running after birds, dispersing flocks of shorebirds. Dog droppings (sometimes wrapped in plastic bags which only make it worse) and urine leave foreign odors and further disrupt the natural habitats. Although perhaps unusual, dogs do sometimes catch wildlife—just last week we had a report of an off-leash dog that caught and killed a duck on Corte Madera Creek. Studies have shown that wildlife use near trails frequented by dogs is less than away from trails. Wildlife have even less habitat available to them when they need to avoid areas with dogs running loose. And, of course, off-leash dogs disturb human visitors. Some people are afraid of dogs, don't like dogs or just want to enjoy the natural habitats without dogs.

Thank you to all who wrote GGNRA in support of species and habitat protection. It will undoubtedly be too late to write by the time this newsletter is published, but it will not be too late to contact legislators (see below).

A law suit by a dog advocacy group seeking to obtain GGNRA records on dog incidents has just been announced. Apparently they don't believe that many people have complained.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

There is still time to follow up on the information from Golden Gate Audubon Society that a campaign is underway to influence federal elected officials to pressure the Park Service to weaken the Management Plan. The congressional representatives need to hear from supporters. Send your email in support of the GGNRA Management Plan to:

Congressman Jared Huffman (huffman.house.gov/contact/email-me);

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (pelosi.house.gov/contact-me/email-me) and

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-me).

Saga of the Corte Madera Inn

At its March meeting, the Corte Madera Planning Commission voted to support the applicant's project which is slightly reduced from 187 to 174 rooms/suites and includes destroying the pond. Most of the speakers' comments included support for keeping the pond. Those in support of the project felt the Town needed more motel space and that the owner is a nice person, a good citizen – as if a person's personality should have anything to do with approving a development project.

Several prominent residents specifically advocated to destroy the pond. One stated that the pond could be filled because Corte Madera has already saved enough wetlands. Several others wanted the pond gone because they think it smells and is ugly. I felt like I was in another place and time 100 years ago when we lost 90% of our wetlands because people didn't know their value and wanted to fill them for financial gain. Having some wetlands left does not justify filling any of those remaining, it means we should hold on to what we have.

All natural habitats have odors. Some smell like roses, some smell like soil, others have less pleasant odors. Natural systems and processes smell as organic matter decomposes. Some systems smell because they are poorly managed. One of the speakers raved about Corte Madera's lagoon #1. She did not seem to realize that it, too, is a completely managed system, carved out of tidal marsh just as is the Corte Madera Inn Pond. It differs in that it is larger, deeper and apparently more responsibly managed by the Town.

The Commissioners did not seem to care about or question the biological consultant's evasions, conflicting, incomplete and inadequate reports and biases. It didn't matter that they claim to have surveyed the pond in one report for two years and in another for four years, but they never reported seeing the Black-crowned Night-Heron roosting colony, until we and a few other members of the public did, nor that they mention seeing any waterfowl, shorebirds or other water birds, which we see regularly during our winter visits. Nor did the Commission notice or care that the project did not comply with several of the natural resource protection policies and programs of the General Plan.

It was surprising to me to see the city manager, who has not appeared at other hearings, present and respond to what appeared to be a set up question by the Commission Chair about the value of the pond for flood control. He repeated his view that the pond has no value for flood control and that it is difficult to manage for the Town employees. Developments should benefit communities, and this can happen in

many ways but it doesn't usually cover making employee work easier. I don't think I can recall any time when a prominent staff person spoke at a hearing sending the clear message, although he did not say it directly, that they should vote for destroying a natural resource because it would make work easier for employees.

Let's hope the Council can see the broader picture.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The Planning Commission is expected to take a final vote on the project in mid-May and then it will go to the Town Council. Email or write your comments to the Commission and Town Council: 400 Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera, CA 94925.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth Arnold, Tom Bates, G. Belsky, Mary Berger, Anne Bernhard, Jeffrey Anderson & Bonnie Bompert, Stephen M Braitman, Michael Brown, Jacklyn J Cato, Dr. Ronald Cavanagh, Leah D Chelemedos, Sheila Codoner, Jon Cosner, John Dahl, Michele Dillard, Pamela T Dixon, Jennifer Dorsey Browne, Daniel Dunn, Bonnie Edwards, Hans J Fallant, Janelle Fazackerley, Rachel Fierberg, Cecil Finch, Dechen Fitzhugh, Joan Franc, Millie Froeb, Rachel Ginis, Stephen Hahn, Lisa Hauck-Loy, Micheal Ina, Kitty Jacobson, Jim Kaneko, Oleksandr Kovalchuk, Linda Krause, Sali Kriegstein, David E Kurland, Karen Lavsa, Donald Leonard, Jane Lesh, Austin Lowery, Thomas W Lundy, Tom Maloney, Eliezer T Margolis, Bob & Karen Martin, Alice C Martin, George Mc Neil, Joan Mickle, Jennifer L Miller, Norman Miller, Jerry Miller, Gayle & George Mills, Ted Murray, Sarah Nolen, Alexander J Piccinini, Susan Plotnick, Melissa Polick, S R Politzer, Bernice Rehnen, Sophia Reinders, Marjorie Reynolds, Linda Roberts, J M Rosales, Delrae Roth, Thelma Rubin, Joan W Sadler, Mary L Sammis, Kerilyn Sappington, Morri Schiesel-Manning, Nan Schow, Sharon Sherrard, Joanne Sidwell, Jay Smalridge, Margaret Thayer, Sarah Tiederman, James G Tipton, Anita Torres, Gary Von Wittenmeier, Steve Voss, Miranda Wagner, Williamson Travel LLC, David Wimpfheimer, Vennie Yancy, Eric Yunker, David Zoellner, Joey Zwillinger

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The seed season is well underway. Radish, Italian thistle, various nonnative annual grasses and purple needlegrass, a native grass, are blooming and forming seeds. Harding grass will be producing seed heads soon. May will be the last chance to stop radish and Italian thistle before their seeds mature. Harding grass, a perennial, can always be dug out of the ground but, because there is too much to remove it all in one (or several) seasons, we will be cutting it back to stop seed production.

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: May 7, June 4

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: May 14, June 11

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 Zaremba at 415/847-9933 or volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Bundy, Johnnie Chamberlin, Dave Chenoweth, Andrew Fisher, Fred Goff, Bob Hinz, Theo Lesser, Will Metz, Flinn and Demetrius Rauck, Alec Sievers, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Timothée Walters

Presentation by State Water Board Member

Join us at the Larkspur-Corte Madera Police Department on Thursday, May 25 to hear Marin's own member of the State Water Resources Control Board, Steve Moore, talk about:

- What the State Water Board does
- The state of California's water
- Will the Bay get more water

This presentation is co-sponsored by MAS and the Marin Conservation League Water Committee.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP



Another clump of Harding grass is uprooted along the Eastern Peninsula at Bahia.

BAHIA

Despite or perhaps because of the rain, we had a delightful day at Bahia this month. Seven volunteers removed many big Harding grass clumps along the Eastern Peninsula before they had time to send up their seed heads and spread.

Harding grass is a tall very invasive perennial bunch grass that can spread quickly by seed and threaten the native plants established there. The work done on Saturday was a huge help to the native plantings and very much appreciated.

Thanks to the students from the Branson School and San Marin High School as well as our MAS members. Also, thank you to the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership for their part in recruiting some of the volunteers.

The fence to protect the Eastern Peninsula for wildlife was installed on April 14-15.

CORTE MADERA

Planning for restoration projects is always a long and tedious task that extends usually for years—considerably longer than the actual construction work. For our newest property, we've begun working on the applications for Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and Bay Conservation and Development Commission permits, finalizing our Initial Study in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and developing engineering plans for the project design. Also we have ordered signs to alert people that our restoration will change the property and their ability to use it, as well as to inform them that the property is for wildlife and urge them to keep their dogs on-leash and pick up after them.

It's looking more and more like we may not be able to construct the restoration project

until fall of 2017 instead of 2016 primarily because of requirements of the federal grant. We have to have an updated appraisal prepared, and go to the California Coastal Conservancy's Board twice for release of the grant funds. You may recall that the grant was awarded to the Conservancy to be passed on to us.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the regular first Saturday volunteer work day a good group of volunteers spent most of the day pulling and digging Italian thistles with the aim of getting every last one in the area we were able to cover. Because it is an annual, there will be no more thistles in that area next spring except from a few seeds that come in on the wind. That strategy has already worked with radish, which is also an annual. The Corte Madera Boy Scout troop has been rescheduled for a day of sheet mulching in late April. That work will eliminate non-natives of all kinds in preparation for planting in a subsequent rainy season.

Thank you to the Corte Madera Public Works Department for the pickup and proper disposal of a television that apparently floated into Triangle Marsh on a high tide.



BROWN PELICAN SURVEY NEEDS YOU

Audubon is organizing a Citizen Science Survey in an effort to find out why the Brown Pelican productivity has been declining across its range in recent years. One known problem is the collapse of the key foraging species anchovy and sardine. The surveys will help define the distribution and abundance in the non-breeding season and track shifts in population.

The survey will take place on May 7 from 5 to 7 PM. Protocol for entering data will be provided, and you will be asked to take a few photos. Several observers would be helpful. The roost locations are Bird Rock at Point Bonita, near Rodeo Beach; two in West Marin off of MM10 on Hwy 1; and one on Tomales Bay.

USE YOUR BIRDING SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE BIRDS, VOLUNTEER NOW!

Contact Ariana Rickard, arickard@audubon.org. For more information visit ca.audubon.org/news/audubon-network-helping-pacific-brown-pelicans.

MARIN BIRDLOG: MARCH – APRIL 2016

By Josiah Clark

March rains have yielded April flowers, and as luck would have it the continuing rains are making for a prolonged spring. The hills are still green, oaks are putting out lots of new growth, and resident birds are in peak breeding mode with some birds already raising a second clutch of young. Insects and larvae are reaching their peak abundance for the year, and incoming migrant birds make haste to set up nesting. The whole journey of songbird migration is timed to correspond to the foods needed to raise songbird young.



Kevin Cole

Bullock's Oriole

On March 25 the first returning **Bullock's Oriole** for the county was reported from a usual "FOS" location, Stafford Lake (TP). The **Tufted Duck** was still there, reported last on 3/31 (RO). One has to wonder, does it go back to Asia to breed?

Also, over in the east side of the county, **Cliff Swallows** were back building nests at Las Gallinas on 3/31 (DE). The recent population explosion of non-native **Mute Swans** in the North Bay continues to move south, with birds now also nesting at Las Gallinas.

Surely among the 'rarest birds' in the county this period were species observed in the Marin Headlands. Incidentally both of these species are from areas far to the south, and just a year or so ago would have been huge news in the county. These species have now been seen by hundreds of birders in the county and are likely a sign of trends to come.

One of several continuing **Brown Boobies** was showing well for the patch birders off of Rodeo Beach on 4/5 (WL), where it sometimes roosts on offshore rocks. "The" **Black Vulture** that has been in the area for a couple years now drifted into the view of hawk watchers on two separate occasions, adding a new a raptor species to the hawk watch list (GGRO).

Observers and Acronyms **GGRO**: Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, **RO**: Rob O'Donnell, **TP**: Todd Plummer, **DE**: Daniel Edelstein, **WL**: William Legge

APRIL 19 FIELD TRIP

Pinnacles Trip No Disappointment

By Jane Medley



John Dahl

California Condors

Despite predicted heavy rainstorms, seven participants traveled to Pinnacles National Park for our April 9 field trip. Upon arrival at the Pinnacles Visitor Center, Leader Rusty Scalf immediately focused his scope on four condors roosting on the distant ridgeline. While waiting for more optimum flying conditions to develop for these giant scavengers, our group walked through the Park's newly acquired Bacon Ranch, with chaparral and other habitats, then

went on to check out a riparian habitat adjacent to the campground.

On the nearby slopes what were assumed at first glance to be four roosting Turkey Vultures were soon re-identified as **California Condors!** We watched them resting, preening, and flying for a long period of time and were grateful for this opportunity to see these spectacular, rare birds at such incredibly close range. After that success, we could have just packed up and gone home, but this was no lazy group! We took the steep hike up Condor Gulch where we lunched in a favorable viewing area but saw no additional condors. However, we all enjoyed the hike with chaparral birds heard more than seen including a singing **Canyon Wren** and abundant wildflowers.

Special thanks to Rusty who shared many details about condor biology, the decline of the species, and recent conservation efforts at Pinnacles National Park. Also, thanks to John Dahl and Bob Flynn for sharing many fine photos from the trip.

THANK YOU \$1000+ DONORS FOR THE CORTE MADERA PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The list below includes donors to both MAS and Marin Baylands Advocates.

Anonymous, Barbara Benson, Richard Bergmann & Denise Filakosky, Susan & Howard Blair, Linda Brune, Michael & Priscilla Bull, California Alpine Club Foundation, California Coastal Conservancy, Corte Madera Beautification Committee, Corte Madera Community Foundation, John Crawford, Jim & Drusie Davis, David Eiseman, Michelle & Robert Friend Foundation, Barbara Ford, Anki & Larry Gelb, Greenbrae Improvement Club Inc., Sallie Griffith, Maureen Groper, Estate of Ken Howard, Joan & Eugene Jacks, Gardner Kent & Sarahy Williamson, Nancy Kittle, KLS Fund, Harriet Lapin, LEF Foundation, Lincoln Financial Foundation Inc., Love Family Trust, Kathy Lowrey, Diane & Leslie Lynch, Maria Mangold, Marin Conservation League and its members, Marin County Fish & Wildlife Commission, Marin County Board of Supervisors/Open Space District, Marin Open Space Trust, Robert & Sandra Mauceli, Michelle & Robert Friend Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Russel Nelson, Warren & Marcia Nute, Pasadena Community Foundation, Thomas Peacock, Richard Plant, Joanne K. Powell, RHE Charitable Foundation, Harry Richards, Pamela Rickert & Brian Hertz, Lori H. Runnfeldt, Barbara & Jay Salzman, Mary Kent Schardt, E. C. & Shari Shute Jr., Dr. Jill Sideman, Springcreek Foundation/Glenda & Henry Corning, Charles & Jean Stewart, Town of Corte Madera, Rosemary Wakeham, Jay J. & Sigrid E. Wimberly Foundation through Audubon California

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SAVE THE DATE

- June 4 **Stewardship Day:** Triangle Marsh
- June 11 **Stewardship Day:** Bahia
- June 11 **Lake Tahoe Bird Festival**
www.tinsweb.org/lake-tahoe-bird-festival
- June 17-19 **Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua**
Lee Vining
www.birdchautauqua.org
- June 18 **Field Trip:** Five Brooks and Bear Valley
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
- June 21 **Field Trip:** Alcatraz
With Ranger John Cantwell and Karen Vandergrift

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.**

For NAS membership renewals, send your check directly to NAS.

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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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