



# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## MAS Annual Meeting, May 11

Join us for Marin Audubon's Annual Meeting which will be held at our May Speaker Series Program on Thursday evening, May 10.

The purpose of our Annual Meeting is to elect members of our Board of Directors for the coming three years. The election will take place just before the speaker presentation. This year our speaker will be Snowy Plover Ecologist Matt Lau (see adjacent column for specifics on the speaker presentation). We will also have a brief overview of our accomplishments for the past year.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization, members of Marin Audubon elect its Board members. The term for Directors is three years.

This year our nominees are current Board Members who are up for reelection: Ed Nute who has been our Property Management Chair, Jane Medley our Field Trip Chair, Phil Peterson, Conservation Co-chair, and Barbara Salzman, President and Conservation Co-chair. All have served well in their capacities and play an important role in the functioning of our

organization. Our special thanks to nominating committee members Bob Hinz, Lowell Sykes and Susan Kelly. There is still an open position. We are looking for someone to help us engage volunteers. Anyone interested should contact Bob Hinz.

We urge you to exercise your right to vote for Board members who manage our organization by joining us on May 10 and, as well, to hear what we expect will be an interesting program.

TREAT MOM TO A WEST MARIN TRADITION

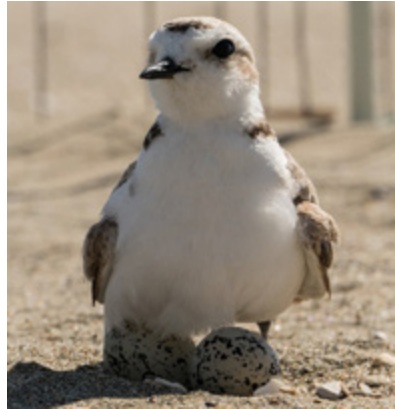
The Marin Audubon Society's

### Mother's Day Picnic

to benefit Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon Society

The Martin Griffin Preserve  
May 13, 2018, 11 AM – 3 PM

Tickets: [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org)



Matt Lau

### Western Snowy Plover

There are 40 species of plovers in the genus *Charadrius*, including six in the U.S. Nearly 98% of species in this genus face varying levels of extinction due to a variety of natural and anthropogenic factors.

The Western Snowy Plover is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN red list and Threatened on the U.S. Endangered Species List. This species is troubled by many of the same threats that its congeners face, including habitat loss, human disturbance, and nest predation. Breeding numbers have been steadily increasing over the last several years due to intensive management and monitoring by various federal and state agencies, nonprofits, and volunteer groups. We'll review challenges facing Snowy Plovers, discuss their natural history and breeding ecology, and look at their population status in Point Reyes.

Matt Lau is the Snowy Plover Ecologist for Point Reyes National Seashore. He received both his B.S. and Master's degrees from Humboldt State University, where he has previously worked with Snowy Plovers and developed a love for birding.

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## CONSERVATION

### Fund-raising for Black Point Acquisition Begins

Marin Audubon is now in contract to purchase the 2.3-acre property at Black Point and, together with our partner in acquisitions, Marin Baylands Advocates, MAS will be working to raise funds for the acquisition. To acquire the property which is bounded by Holly and Hemlock Streets, we need to raise \$115,000. We will also be seeking grant funds and appealing to members and previous donors.

The property consists of two parcels that support native oak-wooded hillside and diked baylands. The lowlands at the base of the hills were subject to the tides until dikes were constructed along the bay-edge of the marshes. During wet winters water still ponds in the lowlands. The property needs enhancing, mainly broom to be removed and a minor amount of debris (car body parts) to be hauled off.

This acquisition is part of our program to

acquire undeveloped baylands parcels in the Black Point Area. We hope someday to have enough to ensure a sizable landscape habitat is protected. We currently own five parcels in the Holly/Hemlock area as well as three around nearby Norton Pond and the pond itself. Our original acquisitions were of tiny parcels on which owners defaulted on their taxes. We have combined some of these parcels to reduce the parcel taxes we must pay.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Send a donation to Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, 94942. Include a message that you want the donation used for the Black Point property acquisition.

*Conservation 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	Everett Clark 789-9224
Treasurer	Susan Winston 949/632-0908
Conservation	Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Field Trips	Jane Medley 559/760-1551
Membership	William Legge 388-7883
Outreach	Elyse Omernick 694-2320
Fundraising	Everett Clark 789-9224
Speaker Series/Programs	Susan Kelly 883-9505
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 680-6291
Nominating	Bob Hinz, 383-8688
Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Bob Hinz, 383-8688
Website	Susan Kelly 883-9505
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Publicity	Barbara Freitas 924-7477
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

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

## DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Marin Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor or memory of someone. Gifts may be directed to any MAS project. Unspecified gifts of more than \$500 will be placed in the Endowment Fund for conservation, the protection of wildlife species, and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats. Since MAS is an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes to its projects. All gifts are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged in *The Rail*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society. Checks should be made out and mailed to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

National Audubon Society, National Geographic Society and other conservation and research organizations have designated 2018 the "Year of the Bird" in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed by Congress in 2018 and was approved by many other nations in an effort to protect birds that migrated between nations. The Act lists most of the bird species we see in Marin. The need for vigilance continues in the light of the administration's weakening of the Act so that companies may no longer be held accountable for harming birds. See article on page 5 for Marin County's resolution to protect birds.

The Marin County Superior Court found that the Open Space District (OSD) abused its discretion by failing to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when it did not prepare an Initial Study on the Bob Middagh Trail project. In the words of the court and CEQA, the OSD "in doing so subverted CEQA's fundamental purpose to provide agencies and the public in general with detailed information about the effect which proposed project is likely to have on the environment before deciding to approve the project." Failure to comply with CEQA has been a claim in both of our suits against the OSD. After four or five court decisions against the OSD, it and the Supervisors should be getting the message that their approach violates CEQA and is not in the interest of the public.

We invite and encourage members to attend our Annual Meeting on May 10. There is still a Board opening for a member who can help with volunteers and our properties.

Spring is here and a reminder about your yard work. Do not destroy any bird nests. Let your yard trimming and tree cutting wait until after nesting season in August or September. The birds will benefit and you will be happy with yourself knowing that you may have saved some baby birds. Some other tips to help wildlife in your garden: choose plant species that are native to your location (remember that Marin has sub-habitats from the dry north county to very moist areas around Mt. Tam and the coast), put out water and do not use chemicals.

Remember to reserve your place for the Mother's Day Picnic at Audubon Canyon Ranch. See the flyer in the April *Rail* or sign up at [marinaudubon.org](http://marinaudubon.org).

## Attend the Screening of *Albatross*

MILL VALLEY: Sequoia 2, May 5, 6:15 PM

SAN RAFAEL: Rafael 3, May 6, 7:30 PM

Shot on Midway, a remote North Pacific atoll and home to the world's largest albatross colony, *Albatross* captures extraordinarily intimate footage of the birds, and features a hauntingly beautiful score. Yet, as the birds feed their young, we learn of a hidden danger that implicates us all. Watch the trailer at <https://vimeo.com/260684528>

*MAS is a Community Partner in presenting this film.*

## MAS BOAT TRIP

ONLINE SIGNUPS BEGIN MONDAY, MAY 14, 2018

### BIRDING ON ALCATRAZ "The Rock"

Thursday, June 14, 2018

Boat leaves 8:45 AM – Trip ends early PM  
With Corry Foster & Pauline Yeckley

It's the best-kept birding secret in the Bay Area: Alcatraz is one of the most important waterbird nesting sites in northern California, with nine species breeding on the island, but **not** including pelicans.

On this trip, Alcatraz Waterbird Docents Corry Foster and Pauline Yeckley will share an informative look beyond the prison culture with a focus on the natural history of the island and the variety of birds and their life histories. We'll see the birds up close on their nests, parents feeding chicks, territorial displays, and discuss the general ecology of the region's waterbird populations. This is an excellent opportunity for photographers with many birds only a few feet away.

This will be an easy, slow-paced excursion. Dress in layers and comfortable walking shoes

(pavement is often uneven). Bring binoculars (scopes, too, if you wish) and water; on the island snacks are allowed only at the dock.

The trip will be limited to 25 participants with a cost of \$46 for adults and \$43.75 for seniors for the round-trip boat ride. Regrettably, the boat operator is no longer offering a discount for groups such as ours. 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 continue to explore the island and the prison returning on the boat of their choice. To sign up, register online at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org) starting on May 14. BOOK YOUR SPACE ON MAY 14 OR SOON THEREAFTER AS OUR BOAT TRIPS FREQUENTLY SELL OUT QUICKLY. Include the name, email address, and phone number of each participant. Those confirmed on the trip will be sent additional information as the trip date approaches. For more information or to be placed on a waiting list for this trip, contact Jane Medley at [janermedley@gmail.com](mailto:janermedley@gmail.com).



**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, May 3, 2018

8:30 AM to noon

*With Sande and Bob Chilvers*

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. We will be searching for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. Spring is now in full swing at the ponds with courting Common Mergansers, displaying Great-tailed Grackles, 12 busily swimming Mallard ducklings, and the season's first Mute Swan cygnet all seen on our April field trip. Our May trip should be equally captivating with even more sightings of young birds possible.

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

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

**MIWOK MEADOWS  
CHINA CAMP STATE PARK**
**San Rafael**

Friday, May 4, 2018

8:30 AM to 11:30 AM

*With Matt Perry*

Miwok Meadows, on the east side of China Camp State Park, is somewhat off the beaten path and under-birded, but it is one of Matt Perry's favorite regular birding spots. Consisting of a relatively short, easily hiked loop, it offers a range of habitats, including the bay, marsh, oak savannah, and denser woods. Frequent highlights include Osprey, many woodpeckers, turkeys, many swallow and swift species, and usual woodland birds. Less common finds on last year's trip included Pileated Woodpecker (2 heard), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and a flyover Bald Eagle. Rarer birds, but not unheard of, might include both Ridgway's Rail and Black Rail. In spring the trail should be filled with lovely birdsong and bustling activity—and great views of yet another beautiful Marin landscape.

Following our walk at Miwok Meadows, we may cross the street and hike the bay and marsh loop around Turtle Back Hill (.75 miles easy). We'll watch for wildlife along this trail, which juts out into the salt marsh habitat along San Pablo Bay.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Hwy 101 Exit onto North San Pedro Rd. Follow North San Pedro Rd approximately 2.5 miles to the Miwok Meadows Trailhead sign. On the right side of the road adjacent to the trailhead, there is a self-pay kiosk where you may purchase a Trail-Only Pass for \$3 per person. Exact change is needed at this pay station.

**KING RIDGE ROAD****Sonoma County**

Sunday, May 6, 2018

7 AM to 4 PM

*With Jeff Miller*

We will spend the day birding remote King Ridge Road in Sonoma County, north of the town of Cazadero. Bird species we will be looking for include American Dipper, Sooty Grouse, Mountain Quail, Golden Eagle, Cassin's Vireo, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Lark Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, and a variety of warblers.

This will be an all-day driving tour of a remote area, and participants will need to be prepared to carpool. Make sure you gas up your vehicle before the trip. We will meet at 7:00 a.m. in the town of Duncans Mills at the Gold Coast Coffee and Bakery, 23577 Steelhead Blvd (38.452908,-123.053056). We will depart for Cazadero at 7:30 a.m. sharp. Allow approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes driving time from Marin. You can get coffee and pastries at the bakery but will need to bring a lunch and water. There will be no bathrooms or cell service on much of this route. Expect to be back in Duncans Mills around 3-4 p.m.

For further information about our route, see Colin Talcroft's write-up of birding King Ridge Road: [http://colintalcroft.com/Sonoma\\_County\\_Bird\\_Watching\\_Spots/King\\_Ridge\\_Road.html](http://colintalcroft.com/Sonoma_County_Bird_Watching_Spots/King_Ridge_Road.html).

**THURSDAY MORNING BIRD SONGS  
FIVE BROOKS**
**Point Reyes National Seashore**

Thursday, May 10, 2018

7:30 AM to noon

*With Lisa Hug*

Spring is the best time of year to hear and learn bird songs. Males are full of hormones and bursting with song. Many Neotropical 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 the trip name and your phone number. Participants will be contacted prior to the trip to confirm registration. A wait list will be created if registration exceeds available space.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Fairfax, take Sir Francis Drake Blvd approximately 15 miles. Turn left on Hwy 1. Turn right at Five Brooks in 3.5 miles. We will meet at the Five Brooks parking area.

**PINE FLAT ROAD****Sonoma County**

Saturday, May 12, 2018

8 AM to 3 PM

(depending on weather and interest)

*With Lisa Hug*

Pine Flat Road is located northeast of Healdsburg and has long been a local birding

mecca. This road winds through open oak woodlands, gray pine forest, grasslands, and beautiful chaparral to an altitude of 2,279 feet. Bird specialties include Mountain Quail, Bell's Sparrow, California Thrasher, and Purple Martin. There are also possibilities of seeing Lazuli Buntings, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Western Tanagers and many more spring specialties. Last year our group saw 41 species including a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers at their nest hole and 12 Purple Martins! You may also want to bring some wildflower books.

Bring plenty of water, lunch, snacks, binoculars and a field guide or app. No restrooms available. However, the Jimtown Store is available at the end of the day. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 101 north past Healdsburg to the Lytton Springs Rd. Exit toward Alexander Valley. Turn right on Healdsburg Ave. for about 0.7 miles. Turn left on Alexander Valley Rd for 3.8 miles to Pine Flat Rd. Alexander Valley Rd is Hwy 128 at this point. Not far past the Jimtown Store, Hwy 128 makes a right angle turn to the south. Go straight ahead at this sharp curve to cross over to Pine Flat Rd, which continues east. Be very careful at this intersection. We will meet on the corner of Pine Flat Rd and Red Winery Rd at the bottom of the hill at 8:15 to arrange carpools to the Mayacamas. Allow at least 1½ hour from central Marin.

**SPRING BIRDS AND THEIR SONGS IN  
THE GARDEN**
**Marin Art & Garden Center****30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, Ross**

Saturday, May 14, 2018

8 to 10:30 AM walk, 10:30 to 11 AM tea

*With Meryl Sundove & Roger Harris*

Ever wonder which birds you hear singing in your yard, garden, and neighborhood? Join Marin Audubon Society's **Spring Birds and Their Songs in the Garden** walk and tune into the varied chorus of birds nesting in Marin. Once you cue into bird songs, the enjoyment of spring will be forever heightened.

This bird walk takes place in a beautiful local garden—the Marin Art and Garden Center. The paths slope gently, the plantings are beautiful and varied, attracting a diversity of birds, many you might find in your own garden or neighborhood.

This slow walk is geared to help beginners or others ready to tune their listening skills to hearing spring bird songs. Come find out what we know about bird song and why birds sing in the spring.

After the walk we can sit in the garden and enjoy tea and a treat as we continue our discussion about birds and their spring songs. Heavy rain cancels.

Registration for this walk will be limited to 16 people due to the nature of the trails. Register at <http://magc.org/calendar>. Scroll to May 14, click on the trip name, then click on the last sentence, "Please register for this free event!"

**MORE FIELD TRIPS ON PAGES 2 AND 7**

# 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.

*continued from page 1*

## VOTE YES ON PROPOSITION 68

Marin Audubon recommends a YES vote on Proposition 68, the California Clean Water and Safe Parks Act, that will be on the June 5 ballot. The legislature voted to put this measure (formerly SB 5) on the ballot to provide \$4 billion for water, park and environmental priorities. Past bond funding for conservation is running out. Additional funding is critical to maintain and protect our habitat.

The bond has something in it for everybody. There is substantial funding for (1) park improvements with an emphasis on parks in less wealthy communities, (2) state park maintenance and habitat improvement, (3) flood protection, (4) building trails, (5) improving delta levees, (6) water quality, water supply and watershed protection, and (7) multi-benefit projects that will improve resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Of special interest to Marin Audubon and our members is the funding that would go to wildlife and habitat improvement projects particularly in the Bay Area. Twenty million dollars will go to the State Coastal Conservancy specifically for San Francisco Bay restoration. Also available to the Conservancy would be \$175 million to enhance and protect coastal and ocean resources, including \$85 million for the protection of beaches, wetlands, and coastal watersheds resources; twenty-five percent of these Conservancy funds is dedicated to the Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Program; \$20 million for the protection, restoration, and improvement of coastal forest watersheds, including redwood and other forest types; and \$5 million for acquisition of parcels that will allow for protection and restoration of coastal dune, wetland, upland and forest habitats associated with estuarine lagoons and designated wildlife areas.

Other natural resource funding will go to the Department of Fish and Wildlife to reduce the backlog of much-needed habitat maintenance on their own properties, and to restore natural aquatic functions or wetlands habitat for birds and threatened species through voluntary agreements with governments and non-governmental agencies.

One-hundred thirty seven million dollars will be available to the Wildlife Conservation Board for projects to protect and restore wildlife corridors, promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve

and restore wildlife habitat including wetland habitat, to benefit fisheries particularly salmon and steelhead, improve river health, restore or enhance riparian habitat projects that improve streamflows and projects that restore floodplains, provide water for fish and wildlife, restore watersheds, and control invasive plants. Partnering with non-governmental organizations is encouraged. Nearly \$30 million is in the bond for the Salton Sea enhancement.

California Audubon, which was an early supporter of SB 5, points out: "The cycle of drought and extreme weather is already taking a toll on California's natural treasures, and threatens our communities with flooding and ecological degradation. With most of the bond funding for vital conservation programs running out in the last few years, it is time for Californians to make the next investment in the protection of the natural resources ..."

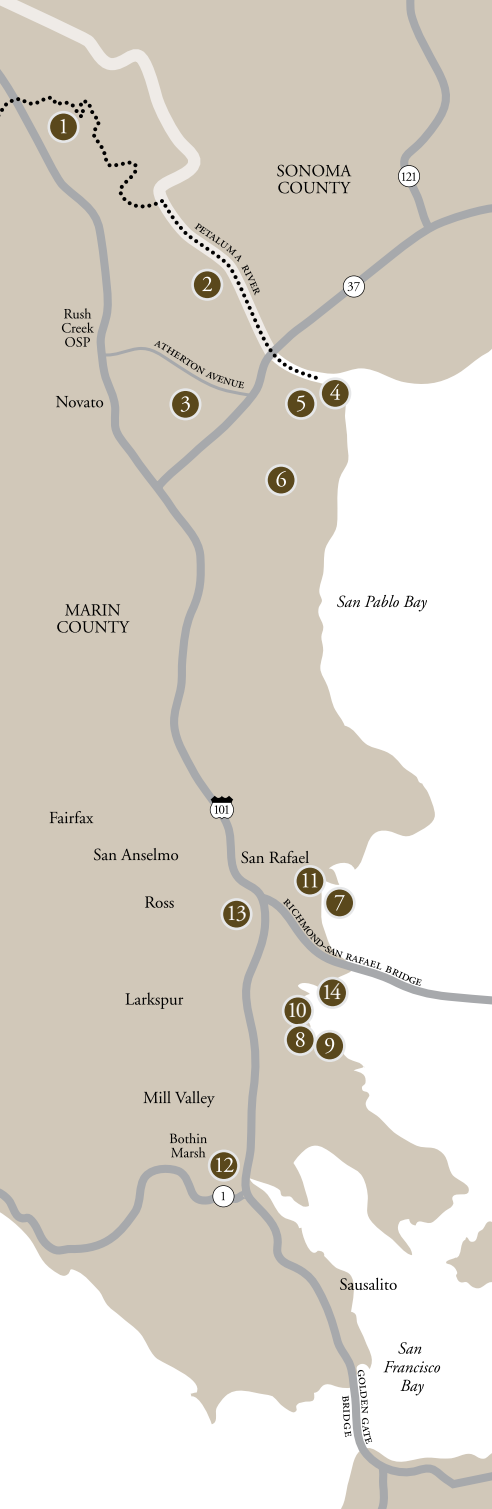
**Vote YES on Proposition 68.**

## ANCHOR-OUTS

At its March meeting, the Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) declared its intent to allow the anchor-outs to continue to live permanently on the Bay by voting unanimously for Option #3 of the four options for moving forward presented by RBRA Executive Director Beth Pollard. The motion was made by Supervisor Sears and it was quickly supported by the other three Agency members from Tiburon, Mill Valley and Belvedere. There was little discussion and there was no input from the anchor-outs, which probably indicates that everyone had made up their minds ahead of time. It was especially disturbing that the Board members congratulated themselves on their progress after the vote. This vote is in no way progress to ensure protection of Richardson Bay natural resources or abiding by existing ordinances and laws.

Option 3 includes requirements for vessels such as possessing a valid registration, registering with the harbor master, and mooring securely, which is intended to address concerns about safety and eelgrass by preventing vessels from breaking loose. Also included are criteria for monitoring to prevent damage from dragging of anchors and to prevent the release of debris, sewage and other polluting substances. None of these requirements are new. They are all called for in existing ordinances, policies and regulations.

Further demonstrating the intent to allow anchor-outs to stay, Option 3 suggests that



### 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

further actions could establish a maximum number of dinghies and vessels per owner and modify the length of stay in the Bay. The allowable length of stay is already established in ordinances.

A suggested action provides that amendments to RBRA ordinances and/or other plans and policies “may be required”. There is no doubt about it. If the RBRA sticks to pursuing only Option 3, they are out of compliance with existing laws. They will need to change their approach or change the laws.

The disadvantages to Option 3 noted in the staff report are the resources needed to draft, vet, modify, implement and enforce regulations and the impacts to inhabitants who are unwilling or unable to comply and, interestingly, “impacts on the bay and/or shore facilities from continued extended stay use.” The last point recognizes that adverse impacts to the Bay will result from this option.

It is further recognized that all of the options would require vetting and review with agencies having authority over Richardson Bay. They will also have to face legal review, which we may have to bring to bear.

Other options that were rejected are: Option 1, Enforcing Existing Time Limits – the option MAS supported; Option 2, Managing Vessels Arriving in Richardson Bay – the RBRA should be doing this now and should have been doing it for the last 30 years; and Option 4, Eliminating the Anchorage – this would require federal action.

## BOB MIDDAGH TRAIL SUIT WON BY COMMUNITY

A community group, Community Venture Partners, has won its law suit against the County for its approval of a project to improve the Bob Middagh Trail on multiple causes, one of which was a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) claim that was very similar to our case on the Contour Trail and on the current Hunt Camp Trail. The project included various improvements such as opening the trail to bikes and widening and straightening the trail.

Judge Haakenson required that the decision be set aside and ordered the Open Space District (OSD) to conduct a proper CEQA analysis. The court agreed with the Petitioner that the county violated CEQA by not conducting the required Initial Study *before* approving the project.

Although the details differ, the basic CEQA issue is the same as in our two suits, i.e., that the county failed to follow procedures required by CEQA, procedures that are intended to ensure decision-makers and the public are informed before projects are approved and construction begins. The OSD used the same approach as with the Hunt Camp Trail: producing a Consistency Assessment after it had already made its decision to proceed with the project without preparing an Initial Study.

Other claims supported by the court were that the county must evaluate the reasonably foreseeable social effects and

safety risks to non-bike users when making its initial study and other determinations because these are legitimate concerns arising from the planned improvements and the increased use of the trail that would occur with bikes using the trails. Further, the court found that the District improperly failed to score various proposals submitted by the public that did not conform to its own evaluation methodology and that this constitutes an abuse of discretion.

This judicial decision is further validation that the OSD needs to change its decision-making process and comply with state law and that the Supervisors need to direct them to do so.

## FIRST ROUND OF GRANTS FROM MEASURE AA ANNOUNCED

The first round of grants from Measure AA funds will distribute \$23.5 million to nine of the 23 applicants from around the Bay. For Marin, a \$650,000 grant will go to Marin County for flood control and habitat projects in North Marin around Deer Island and \$2.5 million for Bel Marin Keys. Other North Bay projects include \$150,000 to the Sonoma Land Trust for planning for Sonoma Creek and \$2.5 million to Point Blue for transition zone restoration, a portion of which will be spent in San Rafael near Tiscornia Marsh.

Measure AA, the regional measure for wetland restoration in the San Francisco Bay watershed, was approved by Bay Area voters last year.

## Marin County Celebrates Year of the Bird

On April 24, the Marin County Board of Supervisors gave a life-saving gift to Marin County nesting bird populations by adopting a resolution Recognizing “World Migratory Bird Day” on May 12. The Resolution celebrated both World Migratory Bird Day, which is held each year on the second Saturday in May, and the 100 year anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. And it does even more.

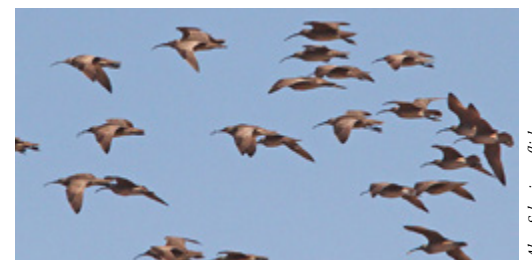
The Resolution recognizes the important functions birds play in our world and that their populations are declining. It not only urges citizens to celebrate the day by supporting efforts to protect migratory birds, their nests and their habitats, it also encourages all agencies to assure that their adopted policies, regulations and operating procedures avoid negative impacts to nesting birds and their habitats.

The Resolution commits the county

to adhering to all laws and regulation that protect the nation’s native birds including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, California Fish and Game Code, the Endangered Species Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The impetus for the Resolution came from concerns from citizens about agencies cutting roadside vegetation during nesting season, and the resulting destruction of active nests. The Environmental Action Committee of West Marin took up the issue with other organizations and Supervisor Dennis Rodoni who convened a meeting with county departments (Parks and Public Works) and other agencies that engage in vegetation clearing for various reasons, PG&E and Caltrans. The effort eventually led to formation and adoption of the Resolution.

MAS’s letter of support emphasizes many services birds provide for us including fertil-



**Whimbrels, one of the many migratory species in Marin**

izing and pollinating plants, distributing seeds, cleaning up carrion and controlling rodents and mosquitoes, and points out that bird populations are under tremendous threat from many sources. Birds are valuable for scientific study, are valuable indicators of the health of our environment, and, of course, Audubon members are aware of the enjoyment that can be gained from observing birds.

This Resolution will be an important tool to advocate for protection of birds and their habitats in the future.



## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Italian thistles will be maturing but it isn't too late to cut into their seed production. It also will be a good time to cut Harding grass before it produces seed. Later in the summer we can dig it out. Before the heat of summer we can mulch some of our new plants. All of these stewardship activities are opportunities for community service no matter how old or young you are.

Act locally and join us on a workday. Come out into the early spring air. Witness restoration firsthand and be a part of it. We all 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. Bring a friend.

### VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

#### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: May 5, June 10  
Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Drive directly across from the main Ring Mountain trailhead near the Montessori School.

#### Bahia, Novato:

Monthly workdays are continuing but on a more irregular schedule. If you would like to help, please contact Jude at [judestalker@gmail.com](mailto:judestalker@gmail.com).

#### Limonium Removal

At various locations in southern Marin Jude Stalker will be leading volunteers in pulling invasive, non-native *Limonium* (sea lavender) for several more weeks. For more information contact Jude at [judestalker@gmail.com](mailto:judestalker@gmail.com).

### THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Lance Carnes, Leif Clark, Bob Hinz, Sharon McCloskey, Linda Nicoletto, Lucienne O'Keefe, Nancy Raga, Maxwell Shearer, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Ann Thomas, Marla Ulrich, Kenji Yamamoto

### THANKS FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Autodesk Foundation (employee match), Janice Bennett, Leslie Brown, Daniel & Lee Drake, Robert and Michelle Friend, Roger Harris, Lorraine Johnson, William and Katherine Jones, PG&E Corporation Foundation (Richard Jennings), Catherine Plevin, Kenneth Smith & Lucia Christopher

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Janet Ekberg, Gena Galenski, Noah Pollaczek, Sonoma Country Antiques, Jerry & Ruth Ann Thacker

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP



Jude Stalker

### CORTE MADERA RESTORATION PROJECT

We had a successful visit by our major funding agencies, folks from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program that awarded us the funding to restore the endangered species habitat, the State Coastal Conservancy and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture. We toured the restored tidal area and adjacent transition zone that we have planted with grasses and shrubs that will grow to provide refugia habitat for the Ridgway's Rails.

We were very pleased to see that some of the native grass seeds we distributed by hydroseeding were now sprouting. After the long, dry period in February we feared everything had died. It seems that the rains at the end of March enabled the seeds to germinate. And, we were also pleased to see that, after being munched by jack rabbits, the native grass plugs were also growing back. The agency folks had no objection to the cyclone fence along our western boundary, recognizing its importance to protect the endangered species and the newly restored marsh plain and upland habitat in an area that has been used for many years for public access.

Until the habitats have had time to settle in and the plants have had time to grow, the land without a fence would be wide open for people to walk through the newly planted habitat which would destroy the very plants we are trying to grow and would continue to damage and destroy habitat and disturb wildlife as they did before our project. We cannot let that happen. As we go to press, Town, motivated by some of its residents, is pushing hard to have us reduce the height of the fence. We are concerned that a lower fence would allow more folks to access the property. Now the residents are complaining about our berm.

We're pleased that there are volunteers who have been working to remove the non-native sea lavender (*Limonium ramosissimum*) in the Ecological Reserve. Led by Jude Stalker, 12 volunteers worked the first and second Sundays of April to remove extensive patches of this

**Volunteers led by Jude Stalker removed all the invasive sea lavender that they could find in the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve**

highly invasive plant. On the second Sunday the volunteers managed to finish the last of the sea lavender. Thanks to all who helped.

### BAHIA

**We are intensifying our efforts to protect Bahia's eastern peninsula for wildlife.**

In the light of the damage to fencing we have installed to block access to the eastern peninsula, we will be increasing our efforts to more effectively protect this peninsula from visitors, many of whom have dogs—usually off-leash. We are planning to install more secure fencing and establish an outreach effort. For the educational outreach we will need volunteers. **If you can spare a few hours to help reach out to users to inform them of the purpose and need for keeping the eastern peninsula closed to recreational users, please email [bsalzman@att.net](mailto:bsalzman@att.net).** Note that restricting the eastern peninsula for wildlife is in our regulatory agency permits and our agreement with the Homeowners Association.

We're planning for the Conservation Corps North Bay to again help remove some of the invasive species on this large 62-acre property that we own at Bahia.

### TRIANGLE MARSH

On the first Saturday of April volunteers pulled and dug most of the Italian thistle and a few of the other non-native plants on the eastern half of the upland. With the apparent success of last year's sheet-mulching by Boy Scouts, the Scouts are coming again at press time to sheet-mulch another section where native plants will be started next winter.

## Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day – May 12 and 13

World Migratory Bird Day celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas—bird migration. Do your part to help conserve birds. Write a letter to support protection of bird habitat, plant a native plant, put out water, clean your bird feeders, keep cats indoors or make your windows more visible to prevent birds from colliding with them.

# MARIN BIRDLOG: MARCH 2018

By Noah Arthur



Dominic Sberony

Common Poorwill

While most of North America remains in winter's frozen grip, March is the month for spring migrant and breeding bird arrivals in Marin and elsewhere on the California coast. Some winter waterbirds are also around too, such as the **Northern Fulmar** that arced past Muir Beach heading north on the 4th of this March (JW). Just beyond our area, two Fulmars also flew by Bodega Head on the 5th, perhaps part of a small inshore incursion of the species (TB).

There were either few rare birds, few active birders, or both during the first half of the month, because the next good report doesn't come until the 15th, with a female

**Eurasian Wigeon** on Richardson Bay (JC). Females of this uncommon to rare duck are not only much more difficult to identify than males but are thought to be genuinely rarer than males on this continent, due to males' tendency to wander farther from their birthplaces.

Another nice winter duck sighting was three **Long-tailed Ducks**, two females and a male, off Rodeo Beach on the 20th (WL).

An uncommon to rare spring arrival was a **Least Bittern** at Las Gallinas on the 23rd (CL), perhaps a bird that will breed there this season. The first **Hooded Oriole** of the season in Marin visited a Novato backyard (near Bahia) on the 24th (ML). Another first-of-season were two calling **Common Poorwills** at Tennessee Valley on the 26th (CL).

The long-staying **Black Vulture** that has wandered the North Bay for the last several years floated over Inverness on the 26th (SA).

More spring migrants began to arrive toward the end of the month, with the season's first Marin reports of **Cassin's Vireo**, **Wilson's Warbler**, and **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** in San Geronimo Valley on the 30th (LH).



Glen Topke, gtopke@phases.com

Wilson's Warbler



Wikimedia, "Avenue"

Norther Fulmar

Observers and Acronyms **CL:** Calvin Lou, **JC:** Josiah Clark, **JW:** Jim White, **LH:** Luanna Helfman, **ML:** Margareta Luff, **SA:** Scott Anderson, **TB:** Tony Briggs, **WL:** William Legge

## MAS FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 3)

### THURSDAY MORNING BIRD SONGS Big Rock Trailhead to Loma Alta Trail

Thursday, May 17, 2018  
7:30 AM to noon  
With Lisa Hug

For a description of this trip, see the write up on page 3 for Thursday Morning Bird Songs at Five Brooks scheduled for May 10, 2018

This outing is also limited to 15 participants. To sign up, email Jane Medley at janermedley@gmail.com. Please include the trip name and 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 Rd west approximately 5.5 miles (look for the big rock). The trailhead is on the south side of Lucas Valley Rd.

### MOUNT BURDELL/STAFFORD LAKE OR RUSH CREEK

No. 5, Birding in Marin (BIM) Series  
Saturday, May 19, 2018  
8:30 AM to mid-afternoon  
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob for a field trip to the gentle slopes of Mr. Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of songbirds that make this area their springtime home. We might see Lark Sparrow, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole, Lazuli Bunting, and Grasshopper Sparrow, among many other possibilities. In the afternoon we plan to continue birding at either Stafford Lake or Rush Creek.

This will be a moderate hike with many

opportunities to look at birds and spring wildflowers. Wear comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing. Bring water and snacks. We will meet at the end of San Andreas Drive in Novato. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 in Novato take the San Marin Drive/Atherton Avenue exit. Go west on San Marin Drive for approximately 2 miles and then turn right on San Andreas Drive. Drive nearly to the end of the road. Park on the street. No restrooms available.

### TENNESSEE VALLEY

Marin Headlands  
Sunday, May 20, 2018  
8:30 AM to 1:30 PM  
With Vicens Vila & Jim White

Named after the S.S. Tennessee, a steamship that beached at the foot of the valley in 1853 while carrying hundreds of passengers and chests of gold, Tennessee Valley offers both a historically and ecologically rich walk to the Pacific Ocean.

Join youth birder, Vicens Vila, now a senior at Redwood High School, and Jim White for a leisurely walk along the Tennessee Valley trail at the height of the nesting season. As we walk down to the beach through both riparian and chaparral habitats, we hope to see a variety of passerines and possible migrants including Black-headed Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwings, Orange-crowned and, with some luck, MacGillivray's Warblers, Swainson's Thrushes, Warbling Vireos, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, and more. At the beach, Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants, Common Murres, and Pigeon Guillemots are likely. Afterwards,

we invite you to picnic with us at the tables located at the head of the trail.

Youth birders are encouraged to join our group. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101, take the Hwy. 1/ Stinson Beach exit. Turn left onto Shoreline Hwy at the traffic light. Turn left on Tennessee Valley Rd in 0.3 mile. We will meet at the parking lot at the end of the road.

### PHOENIX LAKE

#### San Anselmo

Friday, June 1, 2018  
9 AM to 1:30 PM  
With Kurt Rademacher

The Yolanda and Hidden Valley Trails offer a casual 3½-mile loop through a variety of habitats to observe late spring bird life. Our route explores Oak-Madrone woodlands, open grassy slopes and chaparral along the lower slopes of Bald Hill, and returns through Redwood forests, riparian woodlands and along the shores of Phoenix Lake. Join our group as we search this diverse landscape for resident and migratory birds. Bring lunch & fluids, and be prepared for sun and shade, plus a couple of moderately steep trail sections.

**DIRECTIONS:** As parking at the Phoenix Lake trailhead in Natalie Coffin Greene Park is extremely limited, we will meet 0.4 mile from there at the junction of Glenwood Ave. and Lagunitas Rd in Ross, outside the Lagunitas Country Club. From Hwy 101 drive westward on Sir Francis Drake Blvd about 2.5 miles. At the Marin Art & Garden Center turn left onto Lagunitas Rd at the traffic light. Proceed 0.75 mile to the junction with Glenwood.



# The Rail

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## SAVE THE DATE

- May 5-6 **Film:** *Albatross*  
See page 2
- June 1 **Field Trip:** Phoenix Lake  
With Kurt Rademacher
- June 7 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas  
With Sande & Bob Chilvers
- June 9 **Field Trip:** Return of the Terns in  
Alameda  
With East Bay Regional Parks
- June 10 **Field Trip:** Muddy Hollow  
With Bob Atwood
- June 14 **Boat Trip:** Nesting Birds on Alcatraz  
With Corny Foster & Pauline Yeckley
- June 15-17 Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua  
[www.birdchautauqua.org](http://www.birdchautauqua.org)
- June 16 **Field Trip:** Big Rock & Las Gallinas  
With Jim White & Bob Battagin

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](http://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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**Marin Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 599**  
**Mill Valley, CA 94942**

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