



# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Save Marin's Natural Habitats



Marin County Parks

**French broom overtaking a trail at a Marin County Open Space District (OSD) Preserve. Do we really want habitats and trails on Preserves to look like this?**



Andrew A. Reding/Flickr Creative Commons

### Surf Scoter

Every winter, waterbirds arrive in the thousands to the California coast, estuaries and interior wetlands. They seem plentiful, but alarmingly nearly one-third of waterbird populations are declining, including the Surf Scoter and Lesser Scaup here in North America.

Audubon California recently initiated a Waterbird Program housed at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary in Tiburon with the goal to protect and enhance populations of waterbirds found on San Francisco Bay such as Surf Scoter, Greater and Lesser Scaup and Western and Clark's Grebes. Kerry Wilcox, who has been with Audubon since 2006, is the Waterbird Program Manager. He will discuss the new program, its accomplishments so far, and ideas for moving forward.

The Center's location on Richardson Bay, the annual closure of its Sanctuary waters to prevent boat disturbance, and a long history of educating the public and advocating for subtidal habitats such as eelgrass are essential to the program goals. Looking ahead, they would also like to scale conservation actions up to San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Flyway in order to positively affect these remarkable birds during their entire life cycle.

Prior to working for Audubon California, Kerry was a biologist with the Institute for Bird Populations in Point Reyes Station.

Come at 7:15 PM for refreshments. Meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

**Attend the Supervisors' Workshop on Tuesday, October 6, at 1:30 PM** in the Supervisors' chambers, third floor of the Civic Center and speak out for using all the tools of integrated pest management (IPM) to protect habitat and wildlife. For more information see the MAS website, and also [www.savemarinsnaturalhabitats.org](http://www.savemarinsnaturalhabitats.org).

At the workshop Dr. Susan Kegley from the Pesticide Action Network will give a presentation on the World Health Organization's new classification of glyphosate. OSD staff will discuss its integrated pest management program, current glyphosate use and possible uses in the future. There will be time for public comment.

*If you want to see our native habitats and wildlife species continue to exist, then you need to attend this workshop and speak up for the birds.*

Without a full range of tools to control non-native plants, highly invasive plants will expand and natural habitats will decline as will native wildlife populations. The highly invasive cordgrass (*Spartina densiflora*) and pepperweed (*Lepidium*) threaten wetlands, and French broom, Harding grass and other species present similar threats to upland habitats. Although the plants look nothing alike, (Harding grass is a large bunchgrass and broom a medium to large size shrub) they have common characteristics. Both infest sunny areas, grasslands, chaparral, open areas in mixed woodlands and disturbed areas along trails and roads. Both form dense practically impenetrable stands, displacing native plants, rapidly shading out seedlings of

other plants and producing copious quantities of seeds which contribute to their spread. Broom plants can produce more than 6,733 seeds that can persist in the soil for 50 years. Ecologically, stands of both species are almost equivalent to a barren area. Native animals have not evolved with these non-native plants and so are not adapted to eat, forage or nest in them.

Public land managers simply do not have the funds or volunteer resources to enable effective removal by manual or mechanical means. MMWD volunteers clock 7,000 hours per year but broom is still spreading at a rate of 50-60 acres per year and now covers more than 1,400 acres of watershed lands. For the OSD, the problem is compounded because, under pressure from fire agencies, it has had to cut more than 500 acres of fuel breaks through chaparral. Broom exploded into these newly opened bare areas.

With broom and Harding grass expanding into grasslands and chaparral at rapid rates, American kestrel and other raptors will be unable to hunt in the dense stands of broom and thickets of Harding grass. Other species, including Western Bluebird, Say's Phoebe, Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Burrowing Owl and Western Meadowlark will lose foraging and nesting habitat.

We turned to the 2014 State of the Birds Report to get a better understanding of what fewer grassland and chaparral birds in Marin

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

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## DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

**MAS telephone:** 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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**Website:** www.marinaudubon.org  
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

Marin Audubon is pleased to be a co-presenter at this year's Mill Valley Film Festival of the documentary film, *The Messenger*. The film focuses on songbirds, the perils they face and the people who try to help them. See more information about the event below. We hope you will all join us for this special film.

I was delighted to be recognized by Audubon California for MAS's achievements in purchasing habitats. At a recent Audubon California Board meeting, I was presented with a stunning print of a long-billed curlew. Thank you, Audubon California, which was also responsible for MAS obtaining a \$30,000 grant for our recent acquisition from the Wimberly Foundation.

This month our Board prepared for the coming year. We updated our Policies and Procedures and prepared our Annual Plan for this year. We also reviewed the Annual Plan we are expected to complete and submit to National Audubon (NAS) to retain our standing as an Audubon Chapter. NAS asks chapters to identify three goals and this year we chose: 1) complete the purchase of the Corte Madera property—which we've already accomplished—and make significant strides in preparing the restoration plan; 2) participate in a campaign

to protect native species on some public lands in Marin County through use of Integrated Pest Management; and 3) enter the digital world, which we're working on right now. We're working to get on Facebook and activate our email listing. If you're on our email list, you can expect to hear more from us about important issues. If you are not on our email list, do sign up at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org).

We are concerned about threats to Marin habitats, birds and other wildlife from attempts to close down the Open Space District's (OSD) integrated pest management program by eliminating one of the tools needed to maintain habitats and, in separate efforts, to open trails in spotted owl habitat in the OSD Preserves in Region 2. We urge members to attend the workshops planned by the county (see stories on pages 1 and 5). Your voice is needed to support wildlife and native habitats at the workshops on October 3 and October 6.

December is fast approaching which means the Christmas Bird Counts. Save the dates: Saturday December 26 for the Southern Marin Count, Thursday, December 17 for the Northern Marin Cheep Thrills Count, and Saturday, December 19 for the Pt. Reyes Count.



## Marin Audubon Society Co-presents Su Rynard's film *The Messenger* at Mill Valley Film Festival

The documentary film, *The Messenger*, has been described as a visually thrilling ode to the beauty and importance of the imperiled songbird and what it will mean to all of us on a global and human level if we lose them. We haven't seen the film yet, but a documentary that brings the plight of songbird populations to the public is one that we want to support.

According to John Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, *The Messenger* is "...riveting, emotionally engaging, and visually extravagant from the first frame to the last. Up-to-the-minute facts on how birds communicate about environmental change are interwoven with gripping stories about the perils faced every year by these amazing world travelers. This is a must-see movie for anybody

who values the natural world or wonders about its relationship to humans."

The festival is presenting this film in the context of Active Cinema, a program that highlights films with groundbreaking social, environmental, and human rights issues that inspire audiences to action.

### JOIN US FOR A VIEWING OF THE MESSENGER

FILM SHOWINGS AT THE SEQUOIA:

Sunday, October 11, at 8 PM

Monday, October 12, at 11:45 AM

The filmmaker, Su Rynard, and Marin Audubon Society President, Barbara Salzman, will be available for questions at the Sunday showing.

## MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, 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, October 1, 2015

9 AM to Noon

With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

Birders of all levels are welcome on this first Thursday walk. Each month the avian cast of characters will change, and we'll try to keep track of newly arriving species. This is great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other bird families, as well as to get tips on optics, birding books and birding etiquette. Try to bring a pair of binoculars, as well as some water. We'll be walking about two miles on the levees that surround the ponds.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy. 101 take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit, and go east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward McInnis Park. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch Rd. Go about 0.5 mi to the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 9 AM but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.

### NIVEN PARK

#### Corte Madera Creek

Saturday, October 3, 2015

8:30 to Noon

With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle

Join Rich and Janet for a walk along Corte Madera Creek. Rich has been birding in California for over 40 years and leads tours throughout the West and Alaska. Rich and Janet live on Corte Madera Creek and bird the area daily. The trip is planned to take advantage of the tides in the creek and we will look for ducks, waders, peeps, sparrows and fall visitors.

**DIRECTIONS:** We will meet at 300 Drakes Landing Rd. in Greenbrae. From Hwy. 101 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. going west and turn at the first left onto Barry Way (before the Bon Air Shopping Center). Then go left again onto Drakes Landing Rd. From the parking lot, walk under the arch of the 300 building onto the deck by the water. We will walk west from here.

### FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP FROM CLIPPER YACHT HARBOR, Sausalito

Sunday, October 4, 2015

7:30 AM to 4 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

**This trip is full.** The following information is for participants: Be prepared for any kind of weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. If you get seasick easily, this is not the trip for you. We will be on the boat all day. Bring lunch, snacks, water and plenty of sunscreen.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy. 101 to the Marin City/Sausalito exit and head south on Bridgeway. Take a left on Harbor Dr. and go into the parking area at the end. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot to check in before boarding. Be there at 7:30 AM.

### ELLIS CREEK WETLANDS WALK

#### Petaluma

Sunday, October 11, 2015

8:30 AM to 1 PM

With Peter Colasanti

The Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility (ECWRF) came online a few years ago and now much of the area is a wildlife sanctuary accessible via a 3-mile trail system. Good birding/nature-viewing places are around the polishing ponds/wetlands, seasonal wetlands, in the trees lining the edges of the property, and along the tidal marsh trail to the river. Bird sightings could include Blue-winged Teal, Great-tailed Grackle, White Pelican, moorhens, rails and good shorebirds like dowitchers. The walk may be extended over to Shollenberger Park.

**DIRECTIONS:** Going north on Hwy 101 from Marin, take the second Petaluma exit, which is Rte. 116 (Lakeville Hwy). Go east about one mile to South McDowell Blvd (4th traffic light) and turn right. At the curve turn right on Cypress and drive straight to east end. Meet in the parking lot just past the gate.

### MARIN HEADLANDS

#### NO. 6, BIRDING IN MARIN SERIES

Saturday, October 17, 2015

8:30 to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob for the sixth trip in their year-long series to visit the seasonal Marin birding hotspots. Please meet at the pedestrian bridge to Cronkite Beach over the ocean-side neck of Rodeo Lagoon. There are restrooms nearby and ample parking. We are going to search the shores

and waters of the lagoon, scan the ocean, and look in the trees around the old military buildings. We expect to see some ducks, shorebirds and gulls and some migrating passerines. Then we intend to drive (please carpool) to the Point Bonita area to look for rocky shore birds before driving up to Hawk Hill for lunch and raptor viewing. Experts on the hill will help us spot and identify passing raptors, like Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk and perhaps a Merlin.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 just west of the Golden Gate Bridge take the Sausalito exit for about a quarter mile. Then turn left on Bunker Road, go through the one-way tunnel road and continue on to the end at Cronkite Beach.

### LEFT OF THE FAULT: POINT REYES BIG DAY BLAST

#### Point Reyes Station

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

7:30 AM to 4 or 5 PM

With Keith Hansen

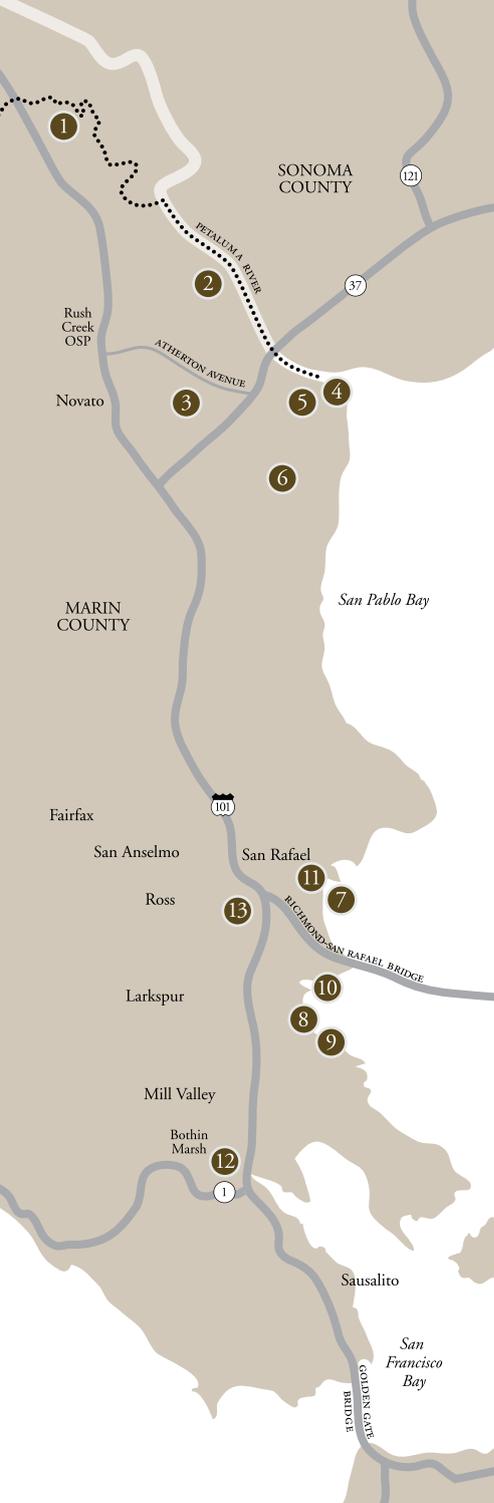
Join renowned bird artist Keith Hansen for a full, fine-feathered day of fall birding at Point Reyes. Sometimes thought of as "too late" for fall migrants, November is often an underappreciated time for finding rare birds. We will attempt to see at least 100 species "West of the San Andreas Fault"! We will meet at the Bovine Bakery on A Street in the town of Point Reyes Station at 7:30 AM, where folks can get coffee and a pastry and find rest rooms. From there, we'll carpool out to the Outer Point hitting as many of the migrant traps as is possible. Time permitting, we'll increase the list by hitting the Teal Ponds, Heart's Desire Beach, and maybe Bear Valley and Five Brooks.

This is an all-day trip that is not for the faint of heart or those just looking for a leisurely bird walk. Bring a lunch and plenty of liquids. Be dressed for good, to less than good weather. Feel free to bring a scope. Only a big storm will cause us to cancel.

There is no charge for this trip but *sign-up is required*, as the number of participants is limited. Contact Rich Cimino from 9 AM Monday, October 12 up to 5 PM on Friday October 16 if you wish to sign up. Email Rich at yellowbilledtours@gmail.com, or call him at 925/353-0266. After 5 PM October 16 the trip slots will be filled and the participants notified. Any vacant slots after that will be allotted on a first come, first served basis.

# 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.



## ATTEND REGION 2 ROAD AND TRAILS WORKSHOP ON OCTOBER 3

The second community workshop for the Road and Trails System Designation is scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd, 1 to 4 pm in the Lagunitas School Multipurpose Room. It will focus on roads and trails in Region 2, which includes the Gary Giacomini, Cascade Canyon, Loma Alta, White's Hill, French Ranch, Roy's Redwoods and Maurice Thorner Preserves.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive public input on roads and trails to be considered as part of the OSD system. Staff will explain the process they are initiating for the public to recommend projects to open new trails, modify or close existing trails. The application process, timelines, and how the applications from the public will be integrated into the OSD's yearly planning process will be described. This process is intended to lead to the designation of trails as system trails, i.e., trails approved by the OSD as part of their formal trail system.

It is critical that members of the public who want wildlife and habitat to be protected attend and speak for protecting these resources. It was clear at the first workshop held for Region 1 that decisions to consider trails through very sensitive habitats had been made in advance and that they had been proposed by cycling interests, not resource protection interests.

It is also important to emphasize that some OSD preserves in Region 2 are known to support nesting spotted owls and other sensitive species.

## CORTE MADERA PROPERTY ACQUIRED BUT JOURNEY NOT OVER

### How We Got Here

It's been a 30+-year journey, but we closed escrow on August 28 and finally MAS owns the 5.2-acre property on the Corte Madera bayfront. The story really began 30 years earlier when Holzinger Construction Company began to dump their construction debris on the tidal marsh after a day's work. They converted about 10 acres of the marsh to upland. Fortunately, a group of local citizens, including MAS, raised funds and generated the political clout to have five acres of the fill and the surrounding 95-acre marsh pass into the ownership of California Department of Fish and Wildlife (then Fish and Game) and designated as the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. The Reserve marsh is a rare resource because it is one of the few in the Bay that has never been diked and because it supports a large population of endangered Ridgway's Rails. Unfortunately, this 5.2-acre piece was not included in the Ecological Reserve boundary.

In 1982 then owner-investor Frank Greene, who had purchased the property from Holzinger, submitted plans for an office complex to the Town of Corte Madera. MAS recommended that a wide buffer be left along the Bay, but did not oppose the project under the mistaken notion that this was the best we could get. Since then, we've learned otherwise.

The Town approved the office project. Then the owner installed a drainage system and put on more fill, but ran into difficulty getting permits and access over the railroad tracks which were then owned by the Golden Gate Bridge District. The approval time ran out, and the Town tried to zone the property Open Space, but the owner sued. Access was eventually gained from the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD) with conditions, but with expensive conditions.

Other plans for office development and then for housing were produced. Mr. Greene donated an undivided interest to the Ecumenical Association for Housing (EAH) and efforts were made to develop affordable housing on the site. A new development company was brought in in an attempt to get a project approved. Six years ago the railroad right of way passed into SMART's ownership necessitating renewed

### 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  |

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Attend the workshop and speak for wildlife and protecting habitat. The workshop will be held at Lagunitas School, 1 Lagunitas School Road, Lagunitas. Attendees will be divided into small groups, so a lot of people will be needed to ensure there can be at least one voice at each table to support protecting spotted owl habitat. You can contact Carl Sommers at [csommers@marincounty.org](mailto:csommers@marincounty.org) or the District's website, [marincountyparks.org](http://marincountyparks.org).

**THANK YOU TO THESE CORTE MADERA  
PROPERTY ACQUISITION DONORS WHO  
CONTRIBUTED \$1000 OR MORE**

Barbara Benson, Richard Bergmann & Denise Filakosky, Susan & Howard Blair, California Alpine Club Foundation, California Coastal Conservancy, Henry & Glenda Corning, Corte Madera Beautification Committee, Corte Madera Community Foundation, John Crawford, Jim & Drusie Davis, Anki & Larry Gelb, Greenbrae Improvement Club Inc., Sallie Griffith, Estate of Ken Howard, Joan & Eugene Jacks, Gardner Kent, KLS Fund, Harriet Lapin, LEF Foundation, Lincoln Financial Foundation Inc., Love Family Trust, Diane & Leslie Lynch, Maria Mangold, Marin Conservation League, Marin County Supervisors, Marin Open Space Trust, Robert & Sandra Mauceli, Michelle & Robert Friend Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Warren & Marcia Nute, Pasadena Community Foundation, Thomas Peacock, Richard Plant, Joanne K. Powell, RHE Charitable Foundation, Lori H. Runnfeltdt, Barbara & Jay Salzman, Dr. Jill Sideman, Town of Corte Madera, Treasurer – County of Marin, Rosemary Wakeham, Wimberly Fund

arrangements to gain access.

We began talking with the owner about purchasing the property shortly after we purchased Triangle Marsh in 1999. At least four appraisals were prepared during that time, two obtained by MAS with funding from the county, and others by the owners. The owners' appraisals were for twice as much as ours. Finally, after 20 years of discussions, Mr. Greene got tired. He and EAH agreed to sell to us for our appraisal's value.

We could not have completed the purchase if it were not for our generous donors and grantors. It took us 19 months to raise the necessary funds. Marin Baylands Advocates, our partner in all of the properties we have purchased, and MAS appealed to our members and supporters, to local organizations and foundations large and small. Local organizations, Marin Conservation League, Corte Madera Community Foundation, Corte Madera Beautification Committee, and the Greenbrae Boardwalk Community Association, all donated and asked their members to contribute as well. We applied for major funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) grant program and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), a private foundation. We just missed the cutoff for NCWC but were awarded \$175,000 by NFWF. Audubon California made possible a \$30,000 grant from the Wimberly Foundation. Member Richard

Plant, the Marin County Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Town of Corte Madera and the RHE Foundation made important contributions. In all, contributions from 389 donors made the acquisition possible.

The final grants that enabled us to complete the purchase came from the Marin County Open Space District which contributed \$100,000 and the state Coastal Conservancy contributing \$400,000. Special thanks to the Marin County Supervisors, particularly Supervisor Steve Kinsey.

**What's Ahead?**

Now we need to turn our attention to restoring the site to tidal marsh and raising the necessary funds to accomplish that. Our conceptual plan includes excavating the fill, moving it to the other half of the property, grading a gradual slope and planting native plants to create a high tide refugia habitat for the endangered Ridgway's Rails and other species. We will be hiring consultants to prepare engineering plans for the restoration, obtaining permits from the Town, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Army Corps of Engineers.

After the habitat restoration is completed, we will donate the property to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for inclusion in the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, which has grown to over 300 acres. Approximately 200 acres that had been restored to tidal marsh by GGBHTD as mitigation for impacts of the Larkspur ferry was added maybe 35 years ago.

The journey will be over when the tidal marsh is restored and the property is in the protective ownership of the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

We welcome donations to help with the restoration planning. Please send donations to MAS, Box 599, Mill Valley 94942 or contribute through PayPal on our website. Note that it is for the Corte Madera restoration.

So far, we've received contributions for the restoration from Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed and the Marin County Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Coastal Conservancy has also reapplied to NCWC for a grant for planning and construction.

**THANK YOU TO CORTE MADERA  
PROPERTY ACQUISITION DONORS**

Ablin Family Fund, Deborah S. Ablin, Phyllis V. Akers, Bud Alderson, Judith K. Allen, Dean Anderson, Anonymous, Joyce & David Applen, Sara Arnaud, Helen Austin, Holly A. Bacuzzi, Jean & George Banning, J. Peter & Whitney Bardwick, Linda Bartera, Janath Berry-Kadrie, David L. Berry, Klaus & Margaret Beyer, Celeste N. Binnings, Jerry R. Binnings, Mark & Beverly Birnbaum, Donald & Renate Bixby, Ben & Frances Borok, Sarane Bowen, Leslie Brown, Ronald C. Brown, Stephen & Faith Brown, Mary E. Burton, Patricia Campbell, Lois Cannady, Steve Capper, Samuel & Ingrid Chase, Robert & Sandra Chilvers, Everett Clark, Carol Moeller Costa, MaryAnne Cowperthwaite, Christine Cuccia, Pam & Jim Day, Rudolph De May, Thomas Delebo, Janine DeMartini, David & Kristine Donadio, William Donahoe & Kristin Klein, Wendy & William Dreskin, Elaine & Robert Drude, Barbara L. Dunn, William T. Emerson The Endurance Fund, Neil Erickson, Jane W. Evans, Richard & Joyce Finley, Fischer Family Fund, Ann & Mason Flemming, Wilma & William Follette, Tara Fonseca, Mark H. Forney, Cathy Fox, Joann S. Gabel, Richard Gale, Roberta & Robert Geering, Kay Gillis, Lisa Glaser, Elizabeth Gluck, Elizabeth & Jon Goerke, Frederick W. Goff, Ron & Belle Guelden, Joan Halverson, Michael & Valerie Hancock, Nancy & Dean Hanson, Ayris Hatton, Eliot Henderson & Deborah Childress, Jennifer D. Hitchcock, Mary M. Hofmann, Gretchen Hoskins, Robert & Marion Huber, Victoria Jackson, Else-Marie Johnson, Rick Johnson & Maria Straatmann, Sarah Kass, Mary J. Kelley, Kelly Yamamoto Productions, Susan Kelly, Colin Kennedy, David C. Kimball, Josephine Kreider, Toni Littlejohn, Craig Love, Patricia Lowrie, Ewan MacDonald, Carol H. Machamer, Ron & Amanda Mallory, Pamela Manwaring & George Wimmer, Marin Community Foundation, Anthony J. Martin Jr., Peter Mason, Alexandra Matthews, Dean & Julia Mayberry, Linda McCann, Sharon McCloskey, Dr. James McCurdy, Pete McFarland, Doyleen McMurtry, Jane R. Medley, Barbara & Gerald Meral, Regina & John Milavec, Claudine Minchella, Lois & Bruce Moody, Michael Mooney, Inge Morrison, Mike Moser, Deirdre L. Moy, Robert & Dorothy Moy, Jessica Muller, Barbara Munden, Margurite Mary Murphy, Eileen Murray, Patrick Murray, Masaru & Marion Nagashima, Geraldine & James Nardi, Myra J. Natter, Russell Nelson, Linda Nicoletto, Lucienne O'Keefe, Judith & John Obedzinski, Anne Owen, Anne & Gerry Pelletier, Ruth & William Pratt, Shirley Pullan, Henry & Barbara Randall, Flinn & John Rauck, James & Abbie Ann Read, Alicia Retes, Pamela Rickard & Brian Hertz, Jordan Rinker, Susan & John Ristow, Dorothy C. Rosso, Georg Roth, Maggie Rufo, Andrina Ruzick, Barbara & Jay Salzman, Lorna Sass, Jennifer C. Schriber, Jessica Schroeder, Carol B. Schwartz, Eric Setterberg, David & Nadine Sexton, Ann Sheldon, E.C. & Sharie Shute Jr., Stuart Siegel, Dianne Sierra & Chris Pattillo, Joanne Sobel, Sharon M. Solomon, Virginia Soper, Jean Starkweather, Jeanine L. Starritt, Langdon R. Stevenson, Jane Stevick, Charles & Jean Stewart, Roger Stoll, Maria Straatmann & Rick Johnson, Kandice K. Strake, Peter & Marie Sullivan, Larry Sultan, Meryl Sundove, Lisa & Peter Tarantino, Dyanna Taylor, Dean Thomas, Suzanne Thornley, Natu Tuatagaloa, Mary Van Voorhees, Christopher Visher, Ruth M. Voorhees, Jett Walker, Michael Warren, Marion Weeks, Arlin Weinberger, Rona Weintraub, David Werdegard M.D., Jim White, Kerry W. Wilcox, Donna Williams, Stefan & Tess Williams, Chris & Teri Wills, M. Douglas Woodring, Elliott Zalta

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

With temperatures still warm and slim prospects for significant rain until after October's workdays, the newest natives still need our watering help. It will be our last chance to look for *Dittrichia* before it matures. Some bull thistles that were cut off in August have made a last gasp toward reproduction, regrown from the root and flowered again albeit on new very short stems.

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: Oct. 3, Nov. 7

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

#### Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: Oct. 10, Nov. 14

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Dr. near Bolero Ct. and the tennis courts.

If you would like to help, please contact Katy Zarembo at [volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org) or 415/847-9933 for more information.

### THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Deborah Ablin, Dave Chenoweth, Camille Harris, Bob Hinz, Sharon McCloskey, Danny Meza, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, John Troller

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth Agraz, Yvonne Akeson, Shubber Ali, Mary Anderson, Ciel Arcieri, Alice H. Beall, Sharon Boucher, Eric Brewer, Anke Bucher, Will Carr, Grace Carter, Beth Cederstrom, Jayne Cerny, Marvin Chaney, Angela Chang, Peggy Chapin, Laura Comyns, Douglas Cooper, Susan Cumming, Doreen Cusick, Michael Dimaggio, Marie Dobson, Helen Drake, Kirsty Ellis, Timothy Erdman, Jane W Evans, Everett Farey, Sharon Fertitta, Tessa Gaddis, Fay Gale, John Girton, Marilyn Gordon, Raylene Gorum, Lisa Halsted, Cara Harris, John Heisler, Joan Hess, Kirstin Hoefler, Bill Jackson, Sandy H. James, Robin Jenkins, Laura Kaplanis, April Kelly, Gardner Kent, Pat Kunstenaar, Estelle Leopold, Barbara Lutes, Nancy MacPherson, Carole Martin, Kathleen Martyn, William McCarten, Erika McGrath, Lois A. McLean, Maria C. Mezzetta, Francine Mitchell, Janeane Moody, Nancy Moyle, Kathleen Murphy, Hugh C. Mutch, Angela Nuckles, Chrisann Ohler, Jennifer Organ, Sheryl Ott, Murray B. Peterson, Virginia Philhower, Mary Plescia, Heather Preston, Doug Pringle, Bob Pritchard, Suzanne Ritchie, Nichole Rodich, Helen Rogers, Corina D. Rollins, Christian Romo, Sienna Rose, Sterling L. Ross, Marylyn Saucer, Alexandra Schwartz, Lawrence E. Serpa, Eric Setterberg, Leila Mahtab Sharifi, Rhett Smith, Helen Stanley, Lila Steinle, Tory Stephens, Buffy F. Stewart, Jodee Upjohn, Jana Vance, Roland Vandermeer, Stephen Yang

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### TREE REMOVAL AT THE REDWOODS

Marin Audubon owns the land between Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio and the paved path at The Redwoods in Mill Valley. We've been working away removing the highly invasive acacia trees along the creek. Last year we hired a tree service to cut down the trees, and this summer a crew of five Board members has made several visits to cut and pull new sprouts that have come up since the trees were cut. It is interesting that new plants sprout from the tree roots in the ground around the stumps, not just from the stumps themselves. Some of the sprouts can be removed fairly easily by pulling, but others have to be cut or chopped. We think we can get the remaining sprouts cut or pulled in one more visit.

### BAHIA (Novato)

There were seven volunteers on the August Work Day at Bahia. The crew replaced DriWater packets on the Western Peninsula. In September, six volunteers removed and bagged cocklebur from the Central Peninsula.

Throughout the summer, volunteer Lowell Sykes has diligently tended the plants we planted last winter around MAS's tidal pond, which we refer to as the SEP (for Supplemental

Environmental Project) pond. He has replaced DriWater Gel Pacs in the tubes, which are present at about one-third of the plants, watered the remaining plants three or four times during the summer, and mulched with additional straw and wood chips. Another factor is that these plants were planted higher on the berms around the pond than the first plantings, so they were less subject to inundation with salt water. The result of these activities is that plant survival is very high—Lowell estimates it at 80%.

### TRIANGLE MARSH (East Corte Madera)

This month we had a chance to show off Triangle Marsh to a group of visitors from the Coastal Conservancy and the US Fish and Wildlife Service who had come for a site visit related to the Conservancy's grant application to restore our newly-acquired property. Triangle is such a good example of a successful habitat restoration; we love to show it off.

On September's first Saturday, volunteers' biggest accomplishment was watering the newest plantings. When that was finished, they continued to remove the most problematic nonnative plant, Harding grass, that competes with all the native plants, especially the newest, smallest ones.

## Save Marin's Natural Habitat

*continued from page 1*

County means on a broader scale. This Report, produced annually by 23 government and organization scientists, reviews bird populations across the USA and Canada, discusses the status of habitats, identifies causes of species declines and makes recommendations for reducing bird mortality.

According to the Report findings, grassland and chaparral are among the habitats in decline globally. Species that have suffered steep population declines in the last four decades, although they may be common in Marin, are among those that depend on Marin's grasslands and chaparral habitats: Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark, Varied Thrush, Brewer's Blackbird, and Lark Bunting. Continued loss of Marin's grassland and chaparral habitats will contribute to the cumulative global losses of these species.

The Report advises that "keeping birds common, while we still can, is as important as preventing extinctions of rare species." This can only be accomplished by protecting and maintaining habitats in a condition that allows birds to survive and flourish.

The Report identifies habitat loss as the greatest cause of bird population declines. Habitats are lost not just by building buildings. Other causes include being overrun by invasive plants, presence of obstacles (windows, power lines, and communication towers) that birds collide with, and agricultural practices. The Report specifically recommends use of "integrated pest

management" (IPM) practices to reduce or eliminate chemical use in commercial agriculture. It does not recommend simply stopping chemical use, as is being demanded by some in Marin.

Birds and other species that lose vegetative habitat cannot simply change to another plant. Wildlife species have evolved over thousands of years to live in certain habitats, eat certain food and fill specific ecosystem niches. They cannot simply move to another plant or habitat type.

**Can an IPM approach really help?** There are places in Marin that demonstrate the success of IPM in eliminating highly invasive plants and returning broom-infested areas to natural habitats: the downhill slope from the Escalon Drive entrance to the Camino Alto Open Space and both sides of the unpaved section of Crown Road Fire Road in the Baltimore Canyon Preserve. There are plenty of examples of places that have been overtaken by broom (see photo on page 1) that neither are viable habitat for wildlife nor are they enjoyable places for people.

MAS would be negligent if we did not work to ensure agencies that manage open space/habitats carry out their mandate to protect natural areas. No one likes using herbicides, but we see no other way at this time except using a combination of tools (manual and mechanical removal and least toxic herbicides) as part of an IPM program, to restore natural habitats.

Tying the hands of land management agencies by prohibiting ANY use of herbicides to protect native habitats will only mean that our native wildlife that depend on them will end up being the victims.

# MARIN BIRDLOG: AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2015

By Josiah Clark

As August yields to September the Himalayan Blackberries seem to build up in number and turn from red to ripe as the days of Indian summer kick into gear. Acorns become green and abundant before they become scarce. Experienced birders know this is the time to expect the unexpected and are looking on land and sea anticipating the southbound tide of migrants.

On 8/31 sightings of the Pacific Ocean's one and only **Northern Gannet** were kicked off at the Fish Docks (ES) and continued on subsequent

days in Drakes Bay (DS) among the feeding frenzies on locally abundant baitfish. Many expected land bird vagrants have been at the outer point already this fall as well, but probably the most noteworthy was Marin's continuing **Black Vulture** on 8/21 (DS).

**Canada Warbler** is a rare vagrant that tends to make its appearances early in fall. One was banded on 9/7 at Muddy Hollow by Point Blue interns but escaped the eyes of birders.



Photos courtesy of Bob Hinze

**Golden-crowned Sparrow**

A breeding pair of **Cliff Swallows** on 8/30 (BD) at a house bordering the Olema Marsh seems worthy of note considering other swallows were done nearly a month earlier. Incidentally, the breeding population of this species has taken a notable dip in this and other counties this year. Also in noteworthy non-vagrant notes was the early return of **Townsend's Warblers** on 8/18 (JTC) and **Golden-crowned Sparrow** on 9/4 (DD).

In the south-most part of the county an **Eastern Kingbird** made a typically fleeting visit to Rodeo Lagoon 9/13 (JC). A **Northern Waterthrush** was a nice consolation prize for the local patch birders the next day (WL, DW, MP).

Out east at Las Gallinas a **Common Murre** was confused and out of sorts on 9/13, and a report of a very rare **Black Tern** passed by with little fanfare (MK). The **Least Bittern** continues there as well but none of these birds could be found on 9/14. Back on 9/6 a **Northern Waterthrush** was especially noteworthy for this non-coastal location (JK).



Glen Tepke, gtepk@phac.com

**Eastern Kingbird**

Observers and Acronyms **BD:** Barbara Deutch, **DD:** Debbie Drechsler, **DS:** Dan Singer, **DW:** David Wiechers, **ES:** Emilie Strauss, **JC:** Jim Chiropoulos, **JK:** Jeff Kimura, **JTC:** Josiah Clark, **MK:** Melani King, **MP:** Matt Perry, **WL:** William Legge

## Salvias: Drought-tolerant, bird-friendly California natives

Daniel Edelstein, [warblerwatch.com](http://warblerwatch.com)

Would you like to attract more hummingbirds to your yard with native plants—but without wasting water during our ongoing drought? If so, consider planting one or more varieties of sages in the genus *Salvia*. Several native *Salvia* thrive in California along coastal areas, including Marin County.

Many *Salvia* species are sold at local garden stores and nurseries. One of the most popular is the Musk Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*; also called Alpine Cleveland Sage) because it adapts to growing well in a wide spectrum of Marin micro-zones, from dry and hot elements to those regularly visited by cool and foggy conditions.

Adorned with large blue flowers, the drought-tolerant Musk Sage will attract our year-round resident Anna's Hummingbird, as well as, Allen's Hummingbird. This *Salvia* may also attract transient Rufous Hummingbirds that temporarily feed on nectar sources in Marin County while winging their way toward nesting areas from southern Oregon to as far north as Alaska.

Musk Sage is hardy to below 10°F, survives in soils that contain a predominance of clay or



Photo courtesy of Las Pilitas

**A Hummingbird on Musk Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*)**

sand particles, and produces multiple growths of flowers even when drought prevails. In addition, this species is one of the longest blooming sages for our area. During some years, its flowers may persist from May until December.

There are many excellent *Salvia* species to choose from, but the hardiest for our area is Autumn sage (*Salvia greggii*). All *Salvia* species should be planted in sunny locations. It is often best to avoid planting them in areas of Marin County where fog is common.

One local source of *Salvia* species including *greggii* is Ace Hardware, 180 Merrydale Road, San Rafael. Check your local nurseries.

## Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

Junior Bird Watchers is an in-school program designed to teach elementary school children to identify birds in their neighborhoods. If you would like more information, contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.



**Liam Shlager**, as a fourth grader at Ross School, saw a Tufted Puffin in an exhibit at Sea World in the penguin exhibit and it is now his favorite bird.

**Charlie Treen**, when he was Ross School fourth grader, said, "I would like to see a Tufted Puffin. It looks so cool!"



**Kaia Alpert** passed her exam as a Ross School fourth grader, "I really like Western Tanagers because they are so bright and colorful."

**Honor McFadden** was a fourth grader at Ross School when she said she would like to see a Cedar Waxwing getting drunk on fermented berries! She thinks they are really pretty!



**Sophia Buckholtz**, a fourth grader at Ross School last year, would like to see a Marbled Godwit.

**Jack Collet**, a fourth grader at Ross School last year, would like to see a Peregrine Falcon because they dive so fast.



# The Rail

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## SAVE THE DATE

- October 3 **Stewardship Day**, Triangle Marsh
- October 10 **Stewardship Day**, Bahia
- November 5 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas  
*With Susan Kelly*
- November 14 **Field Trip:** Children's walk at Las Gallinas ponds  
See [goldengateaudubon.org](http://goldengateaudubon.org)
- November 15 **Field Trip:** Abbotts Lagoon  
*With Carolyn and John Longstreth*
- November 21 **Field Trip:** Limantour & Sky Trail  
*With Jim White and Bob Battagin*

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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. 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](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. 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.

## 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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