



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon
Information: 415/789-0703

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 7:30 PM

Wildlife of South Georgia Island

With Bob Lewis



Photo courtesy of Bob Lewis

Black-browed Albatross

Come with Bob Lewis to South Georgia Island, a four-day voyage by sea east of the southernmost city in the world. There, you will be introduced to the island's abundant wildlife: hundreds of thousands of penguins, thousands of albatross, uncountable fur and elephant seals, giant petrels, sheathbills, and skuas. We'll consider why colonial breeding birds behave as they do, look at some spectacular scenery, and discuss the impact of rats on islands in the Great Southern Ocean. We'll also touch on the history of the islands, including the voyage of Ernest Shackleton, and will make a stop at the Falkland Islands to experience additional fascinating species.

Bob Lewis is a board member of Golden Gate Audubon, chair of the GGAS Adult Education Committee and longtime GGAS instructor and field trip leader. He's known for his portfolio of wildlife photography reflecting his travels to birding hotspots around the world, having visited over 35 countries in search of feathered wonders, and having seen over 4200 species of birds. Bob is also co-compiler of the Oakland Christmas Bird Count.

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

Debris Removed From Corte Madera Ecological Reserve



Photo courtesy of Jude Stalker



Photo courtesy of Barbara Salzman

A grant from HRE Foundation enabled MAS to remove 188 cubic yards of debris from the reserve and to purchase native plants to improve the high tide refugia.

On October 24 and 25, with grant funding from the HRE Foundation in Marin, Hanford ARC under contract with the Marin Audubon Society removed 480 tons of broken concrete and asphalt. This debris had been dumped along with dirt and other debris into the tidal marsh forty years ago by the Holtzinger Construction Company. It took 18 truckloads to remove the concrete, which will be crushed and recycled as road base. One hundred eighty-eight cubic yards were removed. Our thanks to Joe Garbarino who accepted several truck loads for free at Marin Recycling and to Redwood Landfill, which accepted the concrete at a reduced rate. The HRE grant has also enabled us to purchase native plants to improve the high tide refugia on the Reserve. The plants

are on order and we will be planting them in December, assuming the rain continues.

In a related effort, local resident and MAS member Bob Bundy, with assistance from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) wardens, removed more than a dozen outdoor chairs, a wooden day bed, a shredded tent, over 200 square feet of carpet, and a large tractor tire from what appeared to be an encampment in the tidal marsh of the Reserve. It took four trips in the DFW Boston Whaler. Mill Valley Refuse donated a debris box.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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

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Web site: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
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Members can receive *The Clapper Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by e-mailing 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 Clapper 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

Winter is a busy season. The holidays are upon us and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds are back in full force in December. Our three Christmas Counts need your participation. See elsewhere in this newsletter for dates and information on how to sign up. Participating in Christmas Counts is one way individual citizens can contribute to science by tracking population trends.

In addition, the Richardson Bay Audubon Center is conducting a Youth Bird Count on January 11. If you have youngsters in the family who would be interested in participating, see the information on the Youth Count on page 6.

This is also a time for planting native plants for habitat restoration. When the rainy season comes and the soils are saturated, it is planting time here in the West. Our habitats will benefit from many hands to help. Do check our Stewardship column on page 6 and our Web site for volunteer opportunities.

This is also the time for year-end appeals from non-profits. You should be receiving Marin Audubon's appeal in late November or early December. We also use the appeal to

catch you up on our activities and goals for the coming year. Please give generously because, as discussed in our letter, we get no return on NAS-MAS joint membership—only an annual flat amount of \$4,583, which does not cover even our newsletter expenses. Your generous contributions enable us to keep providing you with educational and fun activities, and help us to maintain our properties and protect other Marin habitats.

The waterfowl, shorebirds and other water birds that are overwintering in the Bay Area are back from their breeding grounds. These are the birds that are easiest to see because they stay relatively still, are large, and don't flit around among tree branches. So if you are not a birder, this is a good time to begin learning to identify birds. If you are a birder, you probably already know how impressive and diverse our winter waterfowl and other water birds are. Do join us on a field trip or see on your own in Richardson Bay or other Marin locations.

The Marin Audubon Board wishes you all a happy and healthy holiday season!

NOVEMBER 2 FIELD TRIP

Left of the Fault – Big Day with Keith Hansen

By Len Blumin

On a blustery day Keith Hansen led 18 intrepid birders to Point Reyes' "Outer Point," where they searched the sea, shores, ponds, hills and trees for all things avian. We stayed "left of the fault," limiting our birding to Point Reyes National Seashore. Spots visited included the Fish Docks (**Long-tailed Duck** and **White-winged Scoter!**), Mendoza Ranch (**Great Horned Owl**), Drakes Beach and stops along the way. On leaving Drakes Beach we started to watch a flock of 30 **Black-bellied Plovers** but were distracted by a **Ferruginous Hawk**. Other raptors of note were **Merlin**, **American Kestrel**, and **Peregrine Falcons**.

Returning from the Outer Point we headed to Heart's Desire Beach, a section of Tomales Bay State Park. Walking the entrance road we spotted a good selection of woodpeckers and passerines, and another **Merlin**, which obliged the group by perching! Highlights of the day not mentioned above included **Red-throated Loon**, all six species of grebes (Red-necked is always the hardest), eye-popping views of the **Golden-crowned Kinglet** (Fish Docks), great looks at **Tricolored Blackbirds** (always near the cows), plus **Brown Creeper**, **Downy**, **Hairy**, and **Acorn**



Long-tailed Duck

Woodpeckers, **Northern Flicker** and seven sparrow species, including a **White-throated Sparrow**. Wood-warblers included the **Hermit**, **Orange-crowned**, **Townsend's** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. We ended the day behind Inverness Market, where about 11 **Black-crowned Night-Herons** blasted off to salute our arrival. Total for the 8 am to 5 pm outing was 102 species. Rich Cimino helped immeasurably with the spotting and scorekeeping, and a good day was had by all. Keith is not only a superb leader, but a masterful jokester to boot.

Photo courtesy of Bob Matucci

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

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, December 5, 2013

9 AM to 12 PM

With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

Continuing a tradition started years ago by Bruce Bajema, on the first Thursday of each month we meet for a birding walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds just north of McInnis Park. Birders of all levels are welcome. Each month the avian cast of characters will change, and we'll try to keep track of newly arriving species. The ponds provide an opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other bird families, as well as getting 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 2 miles on the levees that surround the ponds.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then go east on Smith Ranch Road toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch Road, and go about 0.5 mi to the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot at end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 9:00 but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. Rest room facilities are only at the parking area.

SKAGGS ISLAND AND HUICHICA CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

HWY 37, SONOMA COUNTY

Saturday, December 7, 2013

9 AM to 1 PM

With Daniel Edelstein

Daniel is a Consulting Biologist, teaching ornithologist at Merritt College, and long-time bird tour leader (www.warblerwatch.com). Join Daniel as we visit Skaggs Island along Highway 37 in southeastern Sonoma County. Here, the vast wetlands and open area often attract uncommon visiting, non-breeding season raptors such as Rough-legged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, and Merlin, along with sightings of White-tailed Kite and other raptors. In addition we will see diverse shorebirds, waders, and ducks—many visiting us only for our “winter” pleasure. Afterward, we'll carpool to the Huichica Creek Wildlife Area (HCWA), immediately north of Skaggs Island. We will meet on Skaggs Island Road off of Highway 37 where we can safely park away from traffic before carpooling to HCWA. Bring lunch and water; be prepared for any kind of weather. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 101 north to Hwy 37. At the 121 junction (Sears Point), continue straight on Hwy 37 for about 4 miles to Skaggs Island Road. We will meet about 200 feet from Hwy 37 on Skaggs Island Road.

CYPRESS GROVE/TOM'S POINT ON TOMALES BAY CYPRESS GROVE RESEARCH CENTER

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

9:30 AM to 2 PM

With John Kelly

John Kelly, the Director of Conservation Science for Audubon Canyon Ranch, will lead our trip to see winter waterbirds and shorebirds on Tomales Bay. This excursion will highlight a visit to the Cypress Grove Research Center of Audubon Canyon Ranch, with field observations and discussions about the identification, conservation, and ecology of Tomales Bay birds. We will view waterbirds and shorebirds along the east shore of the bay, then carpool to ACR's remote Tom's Point preserve at the northern end of the bay where we will end our day.

DIRECTIONS: The Cypress Grove Research Center is on State Highway One, about ½ mile north of the town of Marshall. (Marshall is 9 miles north of Point Reyes Station, or 7 miles south of Tomales.) The entry gate is on the bay side of the road and marked with the address “20545”. Look for a small sign with ACR's green-and-white egret logo mounted on the gate pole. Enter the gate, continue on the entry road and take the left-hand fork to the parking area. Walk down the trail at the northwest corner of the parking area to the main buildings in the lawn area. The main office is in Cabin #2.

2013 Christmas Bird Counts

Everyone is encouraged to participate in one or more of Marin's Christmas Bird Counts.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 CHEEP THRILLS CBC

This count is centered on Mount Burdell and includes areas in northern San Rafael, all of Novato, a section of western Marin, and some areas of Petaluma.

To sign up, contact compiler Susan Kelly at: cheepthrillscbc@yahoo.com. The deadline is December 15.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21 POINT REYES CBC

The Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count includes a wide variety of habitats in the Point Reyes National Seashore and other areas of western Marin.

To sign up online, please visit www.forestdata.com/cbc by December 14.

You can contact the compilers, John Longstreth and Tom Gaman, at ptreyescbc@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28 SOUTHERN MARIN CBC

This count covers areas from Bolinas Lagoon and Tennessee Valley to Tiburon and San Rafael including Mt. Tam.

Sign up online by December 21 by completing the registration form at www.marinaudubon.org/cbc_form.php or contact compilers Ed Nute and Bob Hinz at smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEER!

If you'd like to contribute to the Christmas Bird Count, but will not be participating in the actual count, please consider volunteering for the Christmas Bird Count Compilation Dinner on Saturday, December 28. We need several volunteers after-noon (4:30 pm) through evening to help oversee, set up, check people in, and clean up.

CBC UPDATES

For more information and updates including details of the post-count dinners, see MAS's CBC Web page at www.marinaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count.php

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.

COUNTY ROAD AND TRAIL PLAN DEIR OUT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Marin County Parks has released for public comment the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP). The plan itself was also released, but comments on the Plan are not being sought. According to the California Environmental Quality Act, the purpose of an EIR is to disclose to the public and decision makers information about impacts of a project. Unfortunately, this DEIR fails as a public disclosure document. In our view, it places at great risk the natural resources, habitat, and wildlife that depend on Marin County Open Space lands as well as the public that uses these County lands.

The Plan allows for closing some trails for environmental or other reasons, and the assumption is that the number of trails would be reduced. The baseline, however, is defined as the trails existing as of January 2011. This means that trails that were formed by bikers or other users up to that date would be authorized and that many more miles of trails that were not built or acquired by the County would be legalized.

The DEIR does a decent job of evaluating the physical aspects of trails, i.e., construction techniques and ways to avoid trail degradation, erosion, and sedimentation of streams. The DEIR, however, does not adequately identify, describe or adequately assess the significance of many adverse impacts. It does not discuss impacts of unleashed dogs going off trails, running after wildlife, or bikers and hikers going off trails damaging vegetation, or the impacts of the increased people using the trails. All impacts are evaluated as being “less-than-significant” (the standard for requiring mitigation in CEQA guidelines). Therefore, the DEIR determines that no mitigation measures are necessary or required.

The evaluation that there would be no significant impacts is based on inclusion of various policies and the apparent assumption that people would comply with the policies, for example, that people should stay on designated roads and trails and that dogs be leashed. It is assumed that these policies would reduce the impacts, but of course many people do not follow policies or rules. Off-leash dogs and bikes off trails are not uncommon occurrences. It cannot be assumed that these impacts would be reduced. Enforcement of the policies and rules is not discussed in the DEIR.

The plan also fails to address impacts to native wildlife. Only endangered and special-

status species are discussed. Even though Open Space District owns more than a thousand acres of vegetated upland and wetland habitat, there is no acknowledgment of its responsibility to protect non-endangered native species. Protecting wildlife corridors is briefly addressed but there is nothing about protecting the habitats that the corridors connect.

The RTMP defines four Visitor Use Zones ranging from 1, the highest level of protection to 4, which anticipates high public use. There are only three County preserves in Zone 1 areas. These are not likely to be controversial because they have minimal access trails now—Bolinas Lagoon, Giacomini Preserve and parts of Cascade Canyon. There do not appear to be any use limits to protect endangered species, such as Spotted Owl habitat. The designations of some areas are problematic. For example, the hills at Bahia, which we worked so hard to protect, inexplicably are in two different zones (zone 2 and 3) for habitats that are the same.

All trails would be open to mountain bikes, leashed dogs and unleashed dogs under voice control in all Visitor Zones except Zone 1. This is inviting impacts to habitat and wildlife. Zone 4 even allows for people to go off trails.

Finally, the RTMP is really not a plan at all. Rather, it is a description of a vague process with policies for managing County roads and trails. It provides only minimal protection for habitats and these deficiencies are not addressed in the DEIR.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Locate the Road and Trails Plan DEIR on Marin County Park’s Web site (www.marincounty.org/depts/pk/our-work/os-main-projects/rtmp) and comment before the December 2 deadline. Direct Comments to: James Raives, Marin County Parks, 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903

STREAM ORDINANCE ADOPTED

After years of delay, Marin County has adopted an “interim” countywide Streamside Conservation Area (SCA) ordinance intended to protect streams and riparian habitats by protecting land and vegetation adjacent to streams. The Board of Supervisors adopted the ordinance that the County Planning Commission previously recommended. The final ordinance included language requiring that each SCA development permit issued by the County provides for “net habitat improvement.”



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

In October, the state Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) found that Marin Supervisors Adams, Kinsey and Rice had a “presumed conflict of interest” because their residences are within 500 feet of streams. A vote on the ordinance was postponed while the County determined how to address this dilemma. The FPPC ultimately decided that Supervisor Adams did not have a conflict because her home is one of many in a condominium complex. Supervisors Adams, Arnold, and Sears, voted unanimously to approve the interim countywide ordinance. Supervisors Kinsey and Rice were not present.

About 70 people attended the hearing held on October 29 in the Supervisors chambers. Thirty-eight testified. Many spoke in support of a countywide ordinance. Others wanted a San Geronimo Valley-only ordinance. Testimonies ranged from the ordinance being not strong enough to being too strong, to those who wanted no regulation and those who supported the ordinance that was ultimately adopted. Some people said they weren’t fairly represented because their supervisor had been disqualified from voting, and the Supervisors also expressed regret.

One controversial component of the ordinance is a so-called “poison pill” provision stating that if a lawsuit is filed, the county won’t enforce the ordinance. Basically, the County wants to avoid being sued. As this issue goes to press, we learned that the Center for Biological Diversity and SPAWN have sued the county, as they had threatened.

MAS supported the countywide ordinance that was adopted. We and several other organizations urged inclusion of the “net habitat improvement” language. MAS had recommended other changes to strengthen the ordinance but most were not taken. In the end, we believe the ordinance, while not as strong as it could be, is better than no ordinance. In our judgment, the Supervisors would not adopt a stronger ordinance at this time. The “interim” ordinance presumably lifts the court-imposed development moratorium in San Geronimo Valley.

Having now been sued, the County, as called for in the resolution, has suspended implementation of the ordinance. The ordinance was planned to go into effect on December 28 and remain in effect for up to 30 months. It would have provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the ordinance and the public education, outreach, and watershed assistance programs County staff plans to implement. It also gives the County time to update stream maps and study the definition and standards for ephemeral streams.

The ordinance covers conventionally

zoned properties, i.e., properties that are not in Planned Districts and are on streams throughout unincorporated Marin County except in the Coastal Zone. The Coastal Zone is regulated by the Local Coastal Plan and is in the jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission. The Countywide Plan will not be amended, as the Supervisors had previously considered.

ASSEMBLYMAN LEVINE HOLDS HEARING ON COASTAL COMMISSION

This public hearing was motivated by San Rafael Assemblyman Marc Levine’s decision to change his mind and not support AB 976, a bill which, had it passed, would have given the Coastal Commission the ability to levy administrative fines for violators. Speakers on the four panels as well as public speakers brought up other matters related to the coast and the Commission, including agriculture, opposition to elk at Pt. Reyes, and Drakes Bay Oyster Farm.

In our comments, MAS strongly supported AB 976 and urged Assemblyman Levine to be an active partner in moving it through the legislature next year. Twenty other public agencies have the ability to levy administrative fines for violators, while the Coastal Commission must go through an expensive and laborious process of using the state attorney general’s office to enforce its regulations. We also spoke against allowing accused violators to have private communications with commissioners which Assemblyman Levine wanted added to SB 976. Other agencies do not permit such backdoor communications and allowing them is not in the public interest.

TIDAL MARSH RECOVERY PLAN FINALLY FINISHED!

Years in preparation, the Recovery Plan for Tidal Marsh Ecosystems of Northern and Central California has been released by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The plan will guide decisions impacting federally listed endangered species in these ecosystems from California’s northern border to Santa Barbara. This multi-species plan is especially important for MAS because it covers species on which we focus, including the California Clapper Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse as well as plants associated with coastal salt marsh ecosystems.

We have not had a chance to review the Plan yet. It was released on November 14 at a USFWS-held event celebrating its release. We will report after reviewing it. We are hopeful that our recommendations for strengthening the Plan are included.

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!

Did you know that many employers will match the charitable donations made by their employees? If your employer has a Matching Charitable Gift Program, your donation to Marin Audubon Society can do twice as much good at no extra cost to you. Wouldn’t it be great to have your employer help Marin Audubon Society do the work that is so important to you? To direct an employer matching donation to Marin Audubon Society, follow these steps:

1. Contact your Human Resources or Benefits department to ask if the company has a Matching Charitable Donation Program
2. Obtain and complete the company’s matching donation form, which can be sent to us if verification of your donation is required
3. Make your personal donation to Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942-0599
4. Submit the matching donation verification form to your company

Your employer may want to know that Marin Audubon Society is a Non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our tax identification number is 94-6076664. We are a volunteer organization with no paid employees, which helps us maximize every dollar that is donated.

If you have questions about matching charitable donation programs, or how to request your employer send a matching donation to Marin Audubon Society, please call our Finance Chairman, Greg Block, at 415/717-6453.

MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS

Natalie Apple, Henry Barner, Louis & Margaret Bartolini, Chandler & Jyotsna Basha, Barbara Benson, Greg & Giselle Block, James Cleaves, Marshall & Francesca Donig, Wendy & William Dreskin, Hans & Leo Eide, The Endurance Fund, Hans & Maria Grillmeyer, Peter Hargreaves, Glen & Judy Harrington, Mark Lindberg, Susanna Louise Mahoney, Russell Nelson, Olive Ridge Maintenance Assn., PG&E Corporation Foundation (matching donations), Anne Roughton, Rosalie Webb

JOIN MAS E-GRAM

We are creating an e-mail notification list for important Conservation Action Alerts, Restoration Workdays and schedule changes for Field Trips, Speaker Series, and other activities. To receive our notices, visit www.marinaudubon.org and click on the E-Gram button.

As always, we promise not to share your e-mail address. You may unsubscribe from our list at any time.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

As of mid-November there still hasn't been significant rain. On the bright side, the annual invasives like radish and Italian thistle are getting a late start, but for last year's plantings to survive if not thrive, we still need to supply the water. Our work on this year's late-season annuals like cocklebur is wrapping up. The perennial invasives such as fennel and Harding grass aren't making much growth, and we will go after them. 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: December 7, January 4

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: December 14, January 11

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

If you would like to help, please contact Bob Hinz at rbhrthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Bundy, Jia Cheng, Jim & Darius Collins, Kimberly DesRosiers, Garbo Gan, Lein Harper, Camille Harris, Louis Henry, Bob Hinz, Sharon McCloskey, James Muller, Ed Nute, Phil Peterson, Michael Pierson, Flinn & Demetrius Rauck, Barbara Salzman, Charlie & Mimi Schonwasser, Jude Stalker & Lowell Sykes, Barbara Yupit

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Natalie Apple, Henry Barner, Louis & Margaret Bartolini, Chandler & Jyotsna Basho, Carl Blom, Dana Brown, Reta G. Bugay, Debra Callahan, Paul A. Chasnoff, Marshall & Francesca Donig, Hans & Leo Eide, Howard Foote, Barbara Graves, Hans & Maria Grillmeyer, Glen & Judy Harrington, Roger A. Humphrey, Cathy Jetzorreck, K. Kalmach, Janet Kopieck, Doris Lesneski, Margaret Lindsay, Heather R. Lugassy, Susan Mac Rae, Susanna Louise Mahoney, Mischa McCormick, Melanie Moran, Hans Mueller, Maya Papaya, Paula Riley, Jack Robbins, Allan Schreiber, Glenn Silverman, George Nick Stamoulis

MYOPORUM REMOVAL AT BAHIA

Twelve volunteers worked most of the day on November 2 to remove the huge myoporum bushes growing on an area that was used for parking recreational vehicles prior to MAS's purchasing Bahia. These bushes are non-native and often planted in urban areas because they grow rapidly. They have minimal habitat value for native wildlife. In addition, the plants were infected with Thrips, an insect that is attacking myoporum plants throughout Marin County.

The volunteers removed the plants with chain saws and dragged branches to a rented chipper. In all, 28 were removed the first day, leaving 24 to be removed.

Removing these huge shrubs will improve the views of the marsh for Bahia residents. It also will allow native plants to flourish. Many Coast Live Oak seedlings were found under the myoporum, undoubtedly planted by Jays or squirrels. Now these oaks will have a much better chance of survival. Special thanks to all those volunteers.

We will have one more work day to remove the remainder of the myoporum.

Lowell has also been tending plants along our tidal pond at Bahia where we implemented a restoration project last winter, funded by the Novato Sanitary District through a program of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. We revegetated the pond edges and also used DriWater, this time one tube per plant. DriWater has to be checked and the gel-like inserts replaced when they dry out, but they are making a real difference in the survival of our plants.

WORK DAY REPORTS

Triangle Marsh During the November work day we watered some of last year's winter plantings because it is still extremely dry. Volunteers also removed Harding grass and fennel.

Bahia Twelve volunteers removed many invasive cocklebur plants from the seasonal swale along the Eastern Peninsula in November. Removal of the cocklebur from this area will allow the native meadow barley that was planted in 2011 to flourish.

PETALUMA MARSH POSTING

Our volunteers (Phil Peterson, Jude Stalker and Ed Nute) erected No Hunting signs on our property north of Redwood Landfill. There was evidence that hunting was going on last year and that it had begun this year as well. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will patrol the area.

QUARTERLY REPORTS SUBMITTED

Our monitoring for the Bahia East Peninsula found a high survival of the thicket species. A special treatment was designed in an attempt to increase the survival of the plants we planted. Until now, the clay soils, which during the summer dry out, become hard pans and crack, have contributed to lots of our plants dying. The protocol included three DriWater tubes for each plant, filling the cracks in the soil (common in dry bay mud) with soil and mulching. This special treatment seems to be working quite well. The thickets are groups of native plants designed to provide high tide refugia for marsh species. This project is funded by the US EPA through grant from the San Francisco Estuary Program.

At the Bahia pond, survival was high for the species that had one DriWater gel per plant, but not for the *Baccharis douglasii* or the *Grindelia* that were planted further down toward the water. We thought they would be close enough to the water not to need DriWater, but apparently we were incorrect. This project was funded through the Regional Water Quality Control Board program with funds from the Novato Sanitary District.

Fourth Annual Youth Bird Count

Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary, WildCare and MAS are co-hosting their fourth annual Youth Winter Bird Count.

WHEN: Saturday, January 11th, 2014, 9 AM to 12 PM

WHERE: Albert J. Boro Community Center, Pickleweed Park, 50 Canal Street, San Rafael

It's for families with children of all ages | Groups will be led in English and Spanish
Participants must register but participation is **FREE!**

This event gives aspiring young birders and outdoor enthusiasts an opportunity to contribute to conservation while they learn in both Spanish and English aided by WildCare's bilingual naturalists and volunteer birders. Participants work in small teams with experienced birders. Students of all ages and their families are invited to participate in this fun and educational event.

Participants learn to use binoculars and scopes, record scientific data and, with the help of expert birders, become familiar with and identify a variety of local birds. Participants also work with their teams to summarize their data and present it to the other participating teams as part of a celebration at the end of the event.

All bird data collected during the event will be entered into eBird, an internationally used database of bird sightings.

MARIN BIRDLOG – NOVEMBER 2013

By Josiah Clark

With the onset of November the days are obviously shorter but the traces of migration become more subtle. The winter pattern should be firmly in place. Now in the midst of California's driest period on record even the hardiest native plants are parched, lakes are low and indeed we should all begin to practice our rain dance

A **Northern Gannet** spotted on Gull Rock 10/25 constitutes yet another new Marin county record (RC). This is presumably the same individual that first took up residence on SE Farallon some 19 months ago. Incidentally, the presence of this first ever stray to Pacific waters is speculated by many to be a sign of global warming.

The one and sometimes two juvenile **Blue-footed Boobies** retain intermittent roosting rights at Gull Rock (at least until 11/10) and remain extraordinary for Marin, even if you missed the Gannet (SC, JW, RR, RB).

Late October brought waves of grassland birds to fields and open country throughout Marin. The wide open pastures around Abbotts Lagoon proved a good hunting ground for birders on 10/27 turning up **Pacific Golden-Plover**, **Lapland Longspurs**, **Ferruginous Hawks** and a rumored **Red-throated Pipit** (TP, EC).

In a year with few vagrant warblers, Pine Gulch Creek and Bolinas birders continued to squeeze them out, with a **Blackburnian Warbler** on 10/13 (RB). Also in the tantalizing vagrant songbird category was an **American Tree Sparrow** sorted out of the vast sparrow flocks at the edge of Pt. Reyes Station (DSd). Sparrows were also on the agenda in outer Pt. Reyes where on 11/11, a **Clay-colored** and an apparent subspecies *morphna* **Song Sparrow** were chilling out at the Nunes trees after a long journey that likely took them out to sea (DSi).

American Coots are not what most people would consider a rare bird in Marin. That is unless you really know your patch. On 10/26 an astute birder noticed the first returns of this species since the *Cosco Busan* oil spill to Strawberry Cove in Richardson Bay (MS). Also over on the under-celebrated Bayside was a locally rare **Red-necked Grebe**, targeting pipefish in the flood channel of Corte Madera creek 10/23 (BL).

Not to be outdone in the southernmost part of the county patch birders continued to pull down birds of note. On 11/3 Rodeo Lagoon had a smattering of waterfowl including a **Blue-winged Teal**, 12 **White-fronted Geese** and an **American Bittern**, which is very cool for the Marin Headlands (WL).

Bring on the CBCs!

BL: Bill Lenarz, **DSi:** Dan Singer, **DSH:** Dave Shuford, **EC:** Everett Clark, **RC:** Robert Clark, **SC:** Scott Carey, **JW:** Jim White, **RB:** Rob and Robyn Blaney, **RR:** Ruth Rudesill, **TP:** Todd Plummer, **MS:** Marjorie Siegel, **WL:** William Legge.

OCTOBER 20 FIELD TRIP

Marta's Marsh with Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris

By Meryl Sundove

Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris led an enthusiastic group of about two dozen birders to Marta's Marsh on October 20th. The marsh is owned by the Town of Corte Madera and named after former Town council member and Marin Audubon Society member Marta Sullivan, who was among the activists who fought to preserve this parcel between San Clemente Creek and Muzzi Marsh.

Our visit was timed to catch the in-coming tide as the mudflats on the adjacent San Francisco Bay were being flooded, forcing wave after wave of water birds onto this refuge, which receives muted tidal action through a culvert and two breaches in the peripheral levees. Since the levees to this former diked marsh and grazing land have been breached, pickleweed and cordgrass have re-colonized the flats where the reintroduced tides have cut sinuous channels.

Besides the tides, an ocean of fog enveloped the marsh lending a particular atmospheric



Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin

Blue-winged Teal

quality to the morning. Synchronous flights of **Least Sandpipers** and other "peeps" swooped in, joined by larger waders and ducks, including a handful of **Blue-wing Teal**. Along with watching the birds and noting their behaviors, we discussed marsh processes and vegetation aided by botanist Clint Kellner. Seasoned veteran birders generously shared their knowledge and scopes.

Red-necked Grebe



Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin

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. The program was developed by National Audubon Society. When National Audubon discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor. Wendy conducts the program in elementary school classrooms in several schools. For more information about the program please visit "Junior Birdwatchers" under the "Birds" tab on our Web site at www.marinaudubon.org or contact Wendy at 415/457-3949.



These Junior Bird Watchers are in the 4th grade at Ross School. Left: Melia Chendo; Bottom left: Matthew Robinson; Below right: Jack Skinner





THE Clapper Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- December 7 **Stewardship Day**
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- December 14 **Stewardship Day**
Bahia
- December 19 **Cheep Thrills CBC**
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cheepthrillscbc@yahoo.com
- December 21 **Point Reyes CBC**
ptreyescbc@gmail.com
- December 28 **Southern Marin CBC**
smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com
- January 8 **Field Trip: Cosumnes River Preserve**
With Terry Colborn

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The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter supporting members. We work collaboratively with the National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. MAS relies on local support for our habitat protection efforts, conservation advocacy, birding field trips, educational speakers series, and publication of *The Clapper Rail*, which you will receive as a MAS member. 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 as well.

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 Web site using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to www.marinaudubon.org.

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A National Audubon Society Membership is a joint membership with National and the chapter. With this joint membership, you will 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: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

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

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