



# THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAS is saddened by the untimely death of Rich Stallcup. We will have a tribute to him in next month's newsletter. His last Birdlog appears on page 7.

**SPEAKER SERIES**

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center  
376 Greenwood Beach Road  
Tiburon, California 94920  
Information: 415/789-0703

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 10 7:30 PM**

**Central and Coastal Alaska:**

Birds, Wildlife and Natural History  
With David Wimpfheimer



Photo courtesy of David Wimpfheimer

**Arctic Tern**

Alaska is a huge state with a wonderful assortment of dramatic landforms and fantastic wildlife not seen anywhere else in the country. Many of our wintering shorebirds, waterfowl and other birds breed there. This program will focus on coastal and interior habitats that are easy to travel to. Birds of Denali, Glacier Bay and Kenai Fjords National Parks including White-winged Crossbill, Long-tailed Jaeger, Tufted and Horned Puffin, Willow Ptarmigan and mammals such as Grizzly Bear, Moose, Caribou and Wolf will be the main focus of this program.

David has had a love affair with Alaska since 1969 when as an impressionable teenager he first visited the state. Its wildlife and landscapes shaped his career as a naturalist. He has been leading birding and natural history tours in the state for the last twenty years. In the summer of 2013 he will be leading an Alaska birding tour for Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

## Hooray! Drakes Estero Established as a Wilderness



Photo courtesy of David Wimpfheimer

On November 29, 2012, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced his decision to allow the operating permit for Drakes Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) to expire thereby establishing Drakes Estero as a Federally designated wilderness. With publication of the notice in the Federal Register on December 4, 2012, the action became final. It's a victory for native wildlife, for the environment and for future generations.

Vacating the use permit allows nature to restore the Estero ecosystem. The decision brings an end to motor boat traffic in harbor seal haul-out areas thereby eliminating disturbances and protecting eelgrass beds that provide foraging and resting habitat for native Black Brant. Getting rid of the racks and bags used to grow non-native oysters will return the intertidal habitat to fish and shorebirds as well as limit the places where *Didemnum* can grow. *Didemnum* is a highly-invasive tunicate (sea squirt) that grows embedded in a gelatinous membrane and attaches to hard surfaces including oyster shells. *Didemnum*

was likely introduced through the non-native oysters. With the oyster operation removed, attention can be given to stopping the spread of *Didemnum* (see article in the December *Clapper Rail*).

Point Reyes National Seashore was formally established in 1972. The enabling legislation authorizes ranching, but not mariculture. Also in 1972, Charles Johnson who had been operating an oyster farm on land the Federal government purchased at Drakes Estero, conveyed fee title to his property to the United States and was granted a permit to continue to use the site for 40 years. The reservation of use included a possibility of a new permit after the 40-year expiration but did not suggest that one would definitely be issued. Kevin Lunny purchased the property from the Johnsons in 2004,

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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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Property Management	Ed Nute 457-9241
Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
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.

7:30 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.studioacl.com). Deadline is the first of each month.

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

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

Marin Audubon is saddened by the death of Rich Stallcup on December 15 from complications of leukemia. Rich was an extraordinary birder, field trip leader and a fun person to be around. His last Birdlog appears in this issue. We will miss him greatly.

The holidays are always a busy time of year, but this year they are extra busy for those of us at MAS. We are occupied with planting, scheduling contractors and organizing work days to plant, and there are Christmas Bird Counts and development projects that need to be dealt with. We would welcome your help on our work days or let us know if you can do another time, and we will try to accommodate your schedule.

Thank you, thank you to our members who have made a contribution in response to our holiday appeal. You are truly our heroes, making it possible for us to continue our programs and work to bring you field trips that are instructive and enjoyable. As you have heard from us before, the funds we get from National Audubon are a minor part of the costs of the programs we bring to you and the conservation advocacy and environmental restorations that we accomplish.

We say good-bye to Cindy Fatura who has resigned from our Board due to work demands.

Cindy has made important volunteer contacts for us and helped us get more plugged in to electronic communications. Thank you, Cindy, for your input and help.

We now need a volunteer coordinator. If you like to connect with people this may be the job for you. It would also help, but it is not necessary, for you to have computer skills. Call me at 924-6057 if you are interested.

We express our special appreciation for the bequest from the Lubersky Trust, left by one of our members; the final distribution was received this month. Remembering Marin Audubon in your will is another important way you can further the work of your local chapter.

We have some exciting field trips coming up, so please join us to take advantage of the opportunities to learn about and how to identify our migratory water birds while they are overwintering in the Bay Area.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, our Christmas Bird Counts will likely be over. We hope to bring you a comprehensive report of all three counts in the next newsletter.

The Marin Audubon Board wishes you a happy and healthy New Year.

## DECEMBER 8 FIELD TRIP

# Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project, Novato

By Vicky Van Meter

Thirty of us met on a foggy morning at the Skateboard Park at Hamilton where Barbara Salzman gave us an overview of the massive 78-acre sports project proposed for the area on land owned by the Army and the City of Novato. The complex would include an array of lighted playing fields, several buildings including a 130,000 square-foot lodge and bunkhouse, a 40,000 square-foot club facility, and 1,700 parking spaces. Several of those in attendance were residents who are concerned about the impact of this huge project on their neighborhood and were interested in learning more about the impacts on the wetlands being restored.

Eric Jolliffe, Biologist and Environmental Planner with the US Army Corps of Engineers, then explained about the Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project, one of the largest such undertakings on the West Coast. The project covers 2600 acres of the former airfield and includes a complex system of both freshwater and saltwater habitats. Seven million tons of dredge material were pumped into the area to create the wetlands and S-shaped berms. The area is home to five pairs of Clapper Rails, the

Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse and Black Rails, among other important species. The marsh should be fully developed in about 30 years but is already attracting wildlife.

Eric then took us on a backstage tour of areas usually closed to the public. We proceeded to the native plant nursery where volunteers help to grow tens of thousands of plants, many of which are being planted along a levee wildlife corridor. We then convoyed up to Ammo Hill where we could look over the wetlands. Eric pointed out additional roads and runway remnants that will be removed and levees that will be breached in the next year or two. From



Rough-legged Hawk

Photo courtesy of Richard Peneck

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## 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, January 3, 2013  
9 AM to 12 noon  
With Susan Kelly and friends

Beginner birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds near McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and over 100 species have been reported over the course of a year. Winter is a busy time at the ponds and provides an opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is a great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other groups, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Highway 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit; go east toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and go to the end of the road to the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot. 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.

### GRAY LODGE & SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Saturday & Sunday  
January 5-6, 2013  
With Bruce Deuel

The Gray Lodge trip planned for December 1st and 2nd was rained out so we have rescheduled for the first weekend in January. This will be Bruce's 40th year leading this trip for Marin Audubon so this will be a special occasion! We'll spend most of Saturday at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. About half a million birds use this area in winter and favorable breeding years can bring more. We will walk a 2-mile loop observing birds until lunch, then hike out to the viewing platform to look for additional species. Time permitting we will take a drive around part of the Sutter Buttes and then return for the evening fly-out.

Saturday night we will have an optional group dinner at Luceddies ([www.luceddies.com](http://www.luceddies.com)) in historic downtown Oroville. Sunday we will take an early morning walk along the Feather River in Oroville, where there will be a completely new cast of birds. From there we will caravan to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, arriving around noon for lunch near the visitor center. After a brief tour, we will drive around the ponds and fields that usually have new species missed elsewhere.

**DIRECTIONS:** Contact Vicky Van Meter at [Vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com](mailto:Vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com) or 415/299-2514 (e-mail preferred) for directions and to RSVP for the group dinner on Saturday.

### WINTER BIRDS OF BODEGA BAY

Monday, January 14, 2013  
9:30 AM – 4 PM  
With David Wimpfheimer

We meet at 9:30 AM at the Tides Restaurant in Bodega Bay. This can be a good vantage point to look over the bay for various ducks, loons and grebes. Numerous Brant are never far away and their nasal music is a reminder of wild coastal haunts. From here we will caravan to Bodega Head, a famous vantage point to scan for seabirds. We may see fulmar, kittiwake, murre, guillemots or other alcids, or Gray Whales or just a lot of wind and salt air, but it's always a dramatic site. The rocks here are typically good for Surfbird, Black Oystercatcher and certain other shorebirds. At high tide we look over the shorebird roost on the bay for godwits, Willets and other birds, perhaps finding a Red Knot. There are many sites to bird here that will give us an excellent variety of waterfowl, raptors, shore and land birds. Time permitting we'll include a stop at the mouth of Salmon Creek or the town of Bodega. Significant rain or winds about 25 knots will cancel, as Bodega Bay gets nasty during a storm.

**DIRECTIONS:** Look at Google maps or a plain old paper one, as there are several options; here's one of them. Take 101 to East Washington exit in Petaluma. Go left (west) on East Washington. This becomes Bodega Ave. At Tomales Road, bear to the right on Valley Ford Road; this will take you to Highway 1. Continue on Highway 1 north to the town of Bodega Bay. The Tides Restaurant is on the left at the only real stop sign in the middle of the commercial area.

### COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE & SUNSET CRANE "FLY-IN"

Saturday, January 19, 2013  
8:45 AM to 6 PM  
With Terry Colborn

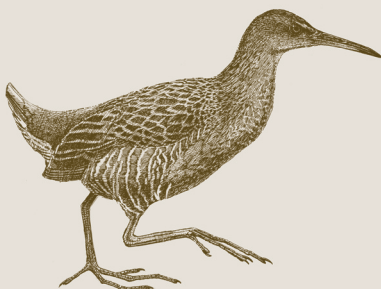
The Cosumnes River Preserve, managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is one of the last remnants of a once vast riparian habitat in the Sacramento Valley. This is the only river from the Sierra flowing into the Delta that isn't dammed. Situated on the eastern edge of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, this 1,500 acre preserve of mixed oak woodlands, grasslands and wetlands hosts a nice array of wintering passerines and waterfowl, including numerous species of ducks, geese and Tundra Swan. The surrounding wetlands and flooded fields provide excellent refuge for many waterfowl, waders, and Sandhill Cranes. The lush oak woodlands can often yield a number of passerines and wintering raptors. Past visits have even afforded rare views of river otters.

After a morning walk of about one mile on a flat trail, we'll eat lunch on the deck at the Visitor's Center. Afterwards we'll spend some time scoping the nearby impoundments that host a significant number of waterfowl. We'll also look for shorebirds, waterfowl and the resident Peregrine Falcon. Late afternoon we'll head to Staten Island Road, a renowned area that is an evening roost to Sandhill Cranes, sometimes reaching over one thousand birds! They feed in the nearby recently harvested rice and cornfields, and "fly-in" to roost in the wetlands by late afternoon or early evening. The area often has a nice variety of ducks and shorebirds and may even hold a surprise or two. The sight and sound of hundreds of Sandhill Cranes coming to roost at sunset is a sight to behold.

Meet Terry at 8:45 AM at Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor's Center lower parking lot.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Marin Co: From Hwy 101, in Novato take Hwy 37 east to I-80 east; at Fairfield/Suisun City turn onto Hwy 12 (southeast) and continue to Hwy I-5, near Lodi. Go north on Hwy I-5 approximately 13 miles to the Twin Cities Road exit. Travel 1 mile east; turn right (south) on Franklin Blvd and drive 1.7 miles to the Cosumnes Preserve Visitor's Center on your left. Travel time from Marin County is approximately 2 hrs.

Bring binoculars and scope, lunch, snacks and liquids; wear comfortable footwear and dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels. For more information contact Terry at 916/705-8991, or at [www.TLCBirding.com](http://www.TLCBirding.com).



Field Trips continued on page 7

## CONSERVATION

### SAN RAFAEL AIRPORT

At a marathon, standing-room-only hearing that lasted for almost seven hours, the San Rafael City Council heard testimony for and against building an 86,000-square-foot indoor sports facility with dance and restaurant space, several outdoor fields and a parking lot on diked historic baylands adjacent to the airport in San Rafael.

Astonishingly, the EIR consultant asserted that he was “certain” that the endangered clapper rails would acclimate to the many thousands of people, increased noise, trash, and degraded water quality. As our biologist from Avocet Research Associates pointed out, there is no research or valid evidence to support this assertion.

Many members of the public opposed the project based on impacts to Clapper Rails, safety issues associated with a facility that will attract children and families to a bowl that exposes them to risks from flooding and sea level rise and to accidents from airplane crashes. Many soccer parents supported the project, apparently not hearing or believing the risks to them and their children. Others did not.

MAS’s position is that this is the wrong location for such a massive project.

At their December 16 meeting, the City Council deliberated for several hours and finally approved the project on a 3-1 vote, with Councilman Damon Connelly dissenting. Prior to the vote, the council considered several options including requiring a conservation easement on the remaining undeveloped portions of the property and enacting a moratorium to study a specific issue, such as sea level rise. The staff conveyed the belief that there was not much development potential on the rest of the site anyway because there is no more traffic, sewer or water capacity.

We will be evaluating our options during the coming weeks.

### CEQA AT RISK

Development interests on both sides of the political aisle are lining up to present

### Field Trip Report

*continued from page 2*

the hill we also could see areas of wetlands that would be filled for the proposed sports complex.

From there we drove out on old roads that will soon be removed and out to the bay. The size of the wetland ponds is truly impressive, as were the birds. By then the fog had cleared and we all enjoyed the vistas. Several of the Hamilton residents, who had never been birding, joined us and we tried to get them hooked. In all, 72 species were seen or heard. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors were well represented. Highlights included large flocks of **American**

a significant threat to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Governor Brown, Senator President Pro Tem Darrel Steinberg (D-Sacramento), frequent CEQA critic Senator Michael Rubio (D-Bakersfield) and Silicon Valley business interests and a construction labor lobby hope to weaken this landmark environmental law.

Among the ideas floating around are: limiting the circumstances when a CEQA challenge can be filed; requiring CEQA litigants to name the sources of their finances; shifting litigation costs to plaintiffs; and restricting impact analyses to standards set by other laws like the Clean Air Act. Other laws, however, often address just a limited number of impacts and they do not consider local circumstances that may be unique.

The environmental community and several noted environmental law firms are mounting a Campaign to Protect CEQA. The Sacramento-based organization, the Planning and Conservation League, is leading the campaign, and Shute Mihaley and Weinberger, an environmental law firm that MAS frequently calls upon, is actively involved.

CEQA is the law of the people. It is a public disclosure document that ensures individuals, neighbors and environmental groups can ask questions about impacts of a project on their neighborhood, the quality of their air, loss of wetlands and other habitats and have them addressed. The CEQA provides for preparation of different levels of environmental documents with an Environmental Impact Report being the most comprehensive. CEQA has already been weakened by past efforts. It is vital that it be retained as a strong law.

**What You Can Do:** Write State Senator Noreen Evens, 1303 10th Street, Sacramento, CA 95614 and State Assemblyman Mark Levine, PO Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0100. Send a contribution to: Planning and Conservation League, 1107 Ninth Street, Suite 901, Sacramento, CA 95814 and be sure to note that the donation is for the CEQA Campaign.

**Avocets** in the water and flying, **Ruddy Ducks, Dunlins, Ring-billed Gulls,** and **White Pelicans.**

A **Rough-legged Hawk** came in for a close look and Eric said it was the first he had seen in the area. Other raptors included several **Northern Harriers, Red-shouldered** and **Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels,** and **White-tailed Kite.** The highlight for most was close views of three **Burrowing Owls** that frequent piles of old logs along the pickleweed edge of the Bay.

Eventually the Bay Trail will run along part of the property and bayside access may be connected to the St. Vincent’s and Las Gallinas trails to the south. If so, this will become an important destination for birders.



### MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 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



# Petition Circulated to Stop Hunting on Tomales Bay

A petition to end hunting on parts of Tomales Bay, including the Tomales Bay Ecological Reserve, is being circulated by Action Tomales Bay. The Tomales Bay Ecological Reserve is a section of Tomales Bay that is owned and managed by the State of California. Concerns have been raised by nearby residents and others about the number of hunters and the number of birds being taken as well as shotgun noise and safety. Marin Audubon's Conservation Committee and Board of Directors have discussed the issue and at this point in time have taken no position. The primary reason for our neutrality is that there is no actual evidence that the hunting is adversely affecting the waterfowl population, that the hunters are behaving badly, or that there is something that makes hunting in this area so problematic as to warrant taking on the California Department of Fish and Game (soon to be known as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife).

The fact is hunting goes on all around us. Every year Marin Audubon gets calls from residents at Bahia complaining about gunshot noises. The entire North Bay waters, including both the US Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge

and Department of Fish and Game properties, are open to hunting. The only reason the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve and most of the other wetlands along the San Pablo Bay and are not hunted is because they are all in cities. It is illegal to discharge firearms within a city limit.

While most of our members probably do not and would not hunt, Audubon is not an anti-hunting organization. Hunting has a long heritage in the US and while we are aware of few Marin Audubon members who hunt, there are lots of hunters throughout the Audubon organization. Hunting organizations such as Ducks Unlimited have been responsible for saving and restoring many wetlands, although they are not the only ones doing that now.

Hunting is regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game. Hunting regulations can be found on their Web site. If you see or hear hunters behaving in an illegal manner, contact the Department of Fish and Game warden; CAL-TIP alert number is 1-888-334-2258.

If you wish to sign on to the petition asking to end the hunting, you may do so by visiting [www.actiontomalesbay.org](http://www.actiontomalesbay.org).

## Youth Winter Bird Count in Marin

**Saturday, January 12, 2013**

**8:30 AM to 12:30 PM**

Families with children of all ages  
Groups led in both English and Spanish  
FREE but participants *must* register

Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and WildCare are co-hosting our third Youth Winter Bird Count (YWBC). This event will give 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 will work in small teams with experienced birders. Bird data collected during the YWBC will ultimately be entered into eBird, an international database of bird sightings. Students of all ages and their families are invited to participate in this fun and educational event.

Participants will meet at the Albert J. Boro Community Center in Pickleweed Park, San Rafael, CA. Event space has generously been donated by the

Community Center to support this program. Participants will 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 will also work with their teams to enter their data into a shared database and present it to the other participating teams as part of a celebration at the end of the event.

### Spread the word!

Registration forms are available on our Web site at:

[www.richardsonbay.audubon.org](http://www.richardsonbay.audubon.org), or  
[www.wildcarebayarea.org/ywbc](http://www.wildcarebayarea.org/ywbc).

### For more information:

Contact Wendy Dalia at:  
415/388-2524 x111, or  
[wdalia@audubon.org](mailto:wdalia@audubon.org).

### Are you an experienced birder?

Volunteer to lead a group of students and their families!

Contact Wendy Dalia at:  
415/388-2524 x111, or  
[wdalia@audubon.org](mailto:wdalia@audubon.org).

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mindy & Tim Ariowitsch, Lynn Arsanis, Charles Bailey, Jennifer Bank, Robin Beck, Jaden Blake, Christopher Brand, Dale Bredesen, Jason Bridge, Carole A. Burnett, Stephanie Buscemi, Henry & Glenda Corning, David Cullinan, Dennis Dougherty, Jaye Flynn, Jane Garsson, Nadine Greenwood, Jarmilla Havlena, John Hill, Morgan Hoburg, Frannie Hohman, Don Jesberg, Emily Kelley, Matthew Klein, Cynthia Koehn, Denise Landucci, Sally Low, Sharon Mansfield, Dorothy Marschell, David May, Shelagh McBae, Marilyn Murphy, Cynthia Pillsbury, Carlos Plasman, Susan Potter, Amy Rabe, Burt Richardson, Michelle Riggle, Deborah L. Rinta, Barbara Roberts, Devon Rothwell, Suzanne Saxe-Roux, Bernard Schlotman, Linda Scott, A. J. Shepard, Emily Shibata, Inez Skog, Marvin Slavid, Ben Stephens, Sara Tamer, Mimi Towle, Anne Wooster, Candace Yates

### MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS

Deborah Ablin, Phyllis V. Akers, Juliette Anthony, Elise & Francis Ardourel, Mariah Baird, Dr. & Mrs. Donald Barbour, Robert & Jessica Batha, Nance Becker, LaVonne Blasche, Kimberly Blue, Andrew Bollen, Gennady & Yelena Borinshteyn, Dewitt Bowman, Neil Brandt, Cahill Family Fund, Becky Carlucci, Beverly Cherner, Robert Cline, Ann Cognato, Frank Cox, John Crawford, Genevieve & Rudolph De May, Audrey Earl, Helen Fauss, Margaret Fawcett, Margaret Feldstein, Lee & Kent Fitzgerald, Mark H. Forney, Ellen & Joe Majer Frank, Donna Franzblau, Lewis Fredrickson, Rodger & Pauline Gerhardt, Kay Gillis, L. Martin Griffin, Maureen Groper, H. Phil Gross, Jeannette Gustafson, Joan Halverson, Michael & Valerie Hancock, Douglas Hanford, Frederick & Patricia Holden, Martha & Gerry Jarocki, Richard Jenkins, Ervin & Denise Jindrich MD, Thomas & Karyn Kennedy, Janet & Damon Kerby, Nancy Williams Koors, Josephine Kreider, Ellis & Harriet Lapin, William Lary, Barbara & Warren Levinson, Mark Lindberg, Patricia Lowrie, Albert R. Lubersky Trust, Ron & Amanda Mallory, Robert & Sandra Mauceli, Barbara Merino, Nancy C. Merritt, Nancy Murphy, Eileen Murray, Claire & George Nadeau, Hilda Namm, Russell Nelson, Robert Newcomer, Philip Nonneman, Warren & Marcia Nute, John & Karen Nygren, Ronn Patterson, Carol Peltz, Charles Phillips, Jeanne Price, Reliance Fund, Walter & Joan Rentsch, Elizabeth Richardson, Susan & John Ristow, Georg Roth, Donald Samson, Faun Sheridan, Mark St. John, Jean Starkweather, Susan & Brian Stompe, Idalia Sullivan, Meryl Sundove & Roger Harris, Constance Vandament, Arlin Weinberger, Sandy Williams, Robert Wilson, Dorothy Jane Wood, Periann Woo

### THANKS TO OUR MAS VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Cristine Albert, Bradley Anaya, Sharon Donovan, Bob Hinz, Susan Ives, Chelsea Lynes, George McNal, Ed Nute, Demetrius Rauck, Flinn Rauck, Jude Stalker, Idalia Sullivan, Lowell Sykes, Ponsford Bakery in San Rafael for December workday pastries

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

At Triangle Marsh plants will go into the ground this month and volunteers will do it all. Help us replace radishes and Harding grass with rushes and roses. There was extensive planting already at Bahia in December and volunteers will continue to add more native vegetation in January. For the first time in several years abundant early rains and early planting will allow our new plants to establish themselves before the dry summer. Join us on a workday. We are making progress. 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: January 5, February 2

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

#### Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturday: January 12

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 rbthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

### SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP FEBRUARY 3, 2013

Complete the coupon, enclose check made out to "MAS," write "Delta Trip" on the envelope and the check and mail to:

Marin Audubon Society  
Box 599  
Mill Valley, CA, 94942

#### Name(s) of participants:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Amount Enclosed:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address to receive directions and details:

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number in case of last-minute cancellation:

( ) \_\_\_\_\_

### BAHIA SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT

The extensive rains in November and early December have been a blessing and a curse. For the first time since we have owned property, we have had extensive rain in late November and much of December. We began removal of ice plant for the SEP but it was too heavy to carry and by December 2 the levee was too wet to drive on. We hired the Conservation Corps North Bay to plant at the Bahia Pond to implement the Supplemental Environmental Project by the Novato Sanitary District and the Regional Waster Quality Control Board

### EAST & WEST PENINSULA PLANTING


By the second week in December, The Watershed Nursery planted in the east and west peninsulas 110 plants they have grown

### Drakes Estero

*continued from page 1*

knowing full well that the right of occupancy would expire in 2012.

In his announcement, Secretary Salazar directly addressed several criticisms that have been leveled at his decision. The announcement recognized the importance of sustainable agriculture in the park and directed the National Park Service (NPS) to pursue extending the ranching permits for 20-year terms. The Secretary also directed the NPS to "use all legal authorization at (its) disposal to help DBOC workers who might be affected by this decision, including assisting with relocation, employment opportunities and training for the 30 people that were employed by DBOC."

 We note that the DBOC operators themselves, knowing that closure was a possibility, could have made provision for their workers. They still could as Kevin Lunny also owns and operates a ranch in the park.

The NPS prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze potential impacts and alternatives related to the decision whether or not to permit DBOC's continued commercial operations. The public had ample opportunity to comment on the project during the three-year review period. The review included public scoping meetings, a 1,000-page-long Draft EIS that assessed four alternatives, a written comment period, and publication of the Final EIS that addressed the public comments on the Draft document.

MAS reviewed and submitted comments on the Draft EIS. While the Final EIS expresses some scientific uncertainty regarding the nature and scope of the impacts, it supports the position that removal of the commercial

for us in their nursery. We have had a difficult time particularly on the eastern peninsula because of the heavily compacted clay soils. The Watershed Nursery staff has designed a special treatment for use on this peninsula.

### ENHANCEMENT PROJECT AT SIMMONS

In the meantime, the enhancement project that excavated shallow ponds and seeded native wetland plants on our Simmons property is looking just great. Rainwater is ponding in the shallow areas and already attracting flocks of birds. We are scheduled to plant more coyote bush along Atherton Avenue on this property.

### MORE PLANTINGS PLANNED

Please join us on work days (See sidebar). We will be planting at Triangle the first Saturday in January and at Bahia the second Saturday.

operations would have "long-term beneficial impacts to the Estero's natural environment." We actually have never seen an EIR or EIS in which there is scientific certainty.

Another important reason to allow the oyster farm lease to expire is that renewing the lease would set a nationwide precedent, opening the door for commercial enterprises to be approved on potential wilderness areas around the country. The Wilderness Act does not allow commercial enterprises in wilderness areas.

The NPS received more than 52,000 public comments on this issue and more than 92% of them supported wilderness designation over oyster farming.

Yet criticism of the Secretary's decision continues. A Washington DC non-profit advocacy group, Cause of Action, took up the oyster company's cause *pro bono* and, on December 4, filed against the NPS. The suit claims that the environmental review was inadequate and that not renewing the oyster company's lease amounted to an "illegal taking" of his property. Lunny does not own the property on which the oyster operation was operating or any other land in the park.

Secretary Salazar concluded his announcement with an apt quote from Lyndon Johnson as he signed the landmark Wilderness Preservation Act in 1964: "If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them with something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."

**What You Can Do:** Write Secretary Salazar, Secretary of Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington D.C. 20240. Thank him for his decision that will benefit our wildlife populations and future generations.



# MARIN BIRDLOG – NOVEMBER 2012 (RICH'S LAST)

By Rich Stallcup

For Marin County birders, November is usually a quiet month. Usually fall migration ends at the beginning or middle of October and Christmas Counts loom beginning in mid-December. Usually November is a good time to talk about the arrival of Ferruginous Hawks or Rough-legged Hawks or to take a trip to the central valley refuges for an annual goose fix.

November 2012 was different and several very rare birds were found in Marin.

On 11/3, Marin County's first **Field Sparrow** appeared at the Nunes Ranch on the O.P. (KH +) and stayed put through 11/5 (m.ob). Finding a bird species unrecorded in the county is nearly impossible!

Also on 11/3, a **Japonicus "American" Pipit** (MB, MR, RS, HC) was studied at the Mendoza Ranch on the O.P. This pink legged form from Siberia is a probable future split.

A late **Tennessee Warbler** 11/11 through 11/14 at the Nunes Ranch (BB, HC) and the Fish Docks (m.ob.) was a good find but was overshadowed in the rare category by Marin's third **White-rumped Sandpiper** 11/11 (GP, LS, PRBO) on private property at Bolinas.

On 11/12, an (eastern) **Winter Wren** was reported in the Pine Gulch riparian (EE) but could not be refound. Also on 11/12 Marin's 3rd or 4th **Painted Redstart** was found at the



Photo courtesy of Glen Tepke, pbax.com/gepke

## Painted Redstart

Mendoza Ranch, O.P. (DS) and stayed through 11/14 (m.ob). This bird was missing several left-side rectrices that seriously affected its navigation and was the reason it got to Point Reyes.

November 17 brought an unseasonal **Black Tern** to Rodeo Lagoon (WL) and on 11/19 a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** was at the RCA Station, inner Point Reyes (DS, JM). That was the fourth for Marin County.

From a locally distributional point of view a female **White-winged Scoter** on Nicasio Reservoir 11/22 (BB) was as astonishing as any of the vagrants here this November. It scooted on out-of-there after the initial sighting.

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was admired and carefully identified on 11/22 in Corte Madera (B+PL). Pure examples occur in Marin about once in five years.

Observers Len + Patti Blumin, Mark Butler + Mary Anne Rotella, Adam and Devon Donkin, Heather Cameron, Kate Carolan, Todd Easterla, Erick Enbody, Keith Hansen, William Legge, Bill + Paget Lenarz, m.ob – many observers, Jeff Miller, O.P. – Outer Point Reyes, Gary Page + Lynn Stenzel, PRBO – PRBO Conservation Science, Don Reinberg, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, Amy Trainer

## MAS FIELD TRIPS *Continued from page 3*

### SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP

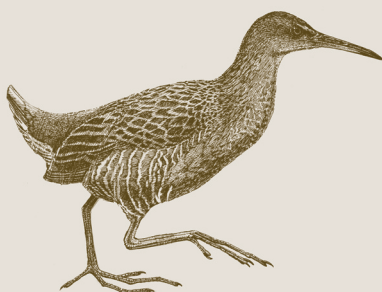
Boat leaves and returns to the Antioch Marina Sunday, February 3, 2013 (FYI, Super Bowl Sunday) 8:15 AM to 4:30 PM With David Wimpfheimer

Join us aboard Dolphin Charters' *Delphinus* for a wonderful day of exploring the richness of the California Delta with naturalist David Wimpfheimer as our guide. Ronn Patterson, a Bay Area historian and naturalist, is captain of the *Delphinus* and owner of Dolphin Charters. The boat is very comfortable and the outer decks provide views over the levees of the amazing array of birds found in the Delta during the winter. This rich area hosts a wide variety of raptors including uncommon species such as Swainson's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and Great Horned Owl. Large numbers of shorebirds, Sandhill Crane, Tundra Swan, Snow, Canada and White-fronted Geese, ducks, as well as gulls, terns, bitterns and passerines make the cruise a highlight for birders. Uncommon mammals such as beaver, river otter, coyote and mink often add interest to the cruise. We also will learn about the history, ecology and politics of the levees and the Delta as we travel through its meandering channels.

The trip is limited to 25 participants and the cost is \$95. Deadline for reserving space and making payment is January 20, 2013. To register, please send the coupon on page 6 and a check for \$95 per person to Marin Audubon at Box 599, Mill Valley, CA, 94942. Please write "Delta Trip" on the envelope and check.

**Please include the name, e-mail address and phone number of each participant.**

**DIRECTIONS:** Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions



## RICH STALLCUP, 1944 – 2012

With great sadness we write that this is Rich Stallcup's last Birdlog. Rich died December 15. The birding world will miss him greatly for his birding skills, for his knowledge of birds and for his friendship. We will have more about this extraordinary man next month.

## 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 (NAS). When NAS discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor, conducting the program in classrooms at several elementary schools. If you would like more information, please visit "Junior Birdwatchers" under the "Birds" tab on our web site at [marinaudubon.org](http://marinaudubon.org), or contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.



**Cooper** is a first grader at St. Rita School. He would love to see a Peregrine Falcon some day. He would also like to see "his" hawk — Cooper's Hawk!



**Jonathan** is a first grader at St. Rita School. He would like to see an American Coot. He'd especially like to see the feet, which he has learned are not webbed.



# THE Clapper Rail

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## SAVE THE DATE

- January 5     **Stewardship Day**  
Triangle Marsh
- January 12    **Stewardship Day**  
Bahia
- January 14    **Field Trip:** Bodega Bay  
With David Wimpfheimer
- January 19    **Field Trip:** Cosumnes Preserve  
With Terry Colborn
- Jan. 24-27    **Snow Goose Festival**  
www.snowgoosefestival.org  
Chico
- February 3    **Field Trip:** Delta Boat Trip  
With David Wimpfheimer

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## SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

## JOINT NAS-MAS MEMBERSHIP

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.

## 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**. For more information, please contact Ruth Pratt, Membership Chair at 415/453-2989.

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