



# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Marin County Open Space District's *Road and Trails, and Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Work Plans Released*



Bob Hinz

**Trails can have a significant impact on special status species. This is the Contour Trail in the Gary Giacomini Open Space Preserve.**



Library of Congress

### **Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps**

The only public lands system in the US exclusively devoted to wildlife conservation started small, without a master plan. On March 14, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an executive order making Pelican Island the first federal bird reservation. By the time his presidency ended, he had added 54 more bird and game reservations, laying the foundation for the 150-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System we enjoy today. But it was his cousin, FDR, himself a birder, who during the New Deal greatly expanded and enhanced the refuge system, thanks to the work of thousands of CCC "boys" who brought back to life lands that had been abandoned to the Dust Bowl. What is the story behind today's extensive system of National wildlife refuges? How did the refuges get built?

Susan Ives, a 40-year resident of Marin County, is a writer, photographer and a lover of public lands. Previously, Susan was Vice President for the Trust for Public Land. Before that, she was Deputy to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Media Officer at the National Sierra Club. Susan is involved with numerous Marin environmental organizations.

**M**arin County Open Space District (OSD) has released the *Road and Trails Work Plan* for 2017–18 which lists trails they have chosen to be improved and added to the system. The list includes trails that have been of concern to MAS and to other environmental organizations as well as neighbors. Of particular concern is the proposed work on the Hunt Camp Trail, a portion of which is the former Juniper Trail. The name Juniper has now been dropped and the two trails are combined under the one name. Improving and adopting the Juniper Trail segment has long been opposed by environmentalists groups because of the environmental damage improvements would cause and their subsequent use would bring. The Juniper segment is an unauthorized trail. It was created and used by bicyclists over the years. It is narrow and steep and traverses a variety of habitats including woodland and dense chaparral. There are also a Northern Spotted Owl nest site and endangered plants near the trail. In our view it should be closed.

Other trail projects that are on the Work Plan are conversion of the Bob Middaugh Trail (Alto Bowl) to multiuse, extension of the Horse Hill Trail (opposed by many from the nearby community as well as the Foot People), and improvements to the Alto Bowl, Irving and

Cobblestone Fire Roads.

The Work Plan does not include descriptions of the actual work to be done except for decommissioning the Gasline Trail nor does it explain where trail closures would be. It contains general statements such as "adopt multiuse policy," "improve trail," "restore grassland" and "decommission social trail." They don't say that the improvements to the trails are to make them usable by bikers, hikers and horses nor do they give the locations of most of the trails proposed for decommissioning. With the improvements, the use can be expected to increase for most of the trails.

Over recent months, the OSD staff has promised they would increase communication with the public on trail projects. It seems apparent, however, that while they might be having more meetings and providing information, they are listening to the bikers – not the environmental community. Most of the trail projects have been opposed by either environmental groups or the general public, but they have been vigorously pursued by cyclists. More importantly, they are paying little attention to special status species.

In early March, the OSD also released the *Vegetation & Biodiversity Management Report*  
*continued on page 4*

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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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Volunteer Coordinator	Vacant
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Publicity	Barbara Demeter
BAAC Repts	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

## DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

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

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

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**Website:** [www.marinaudubon.org](http://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 [membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org](mailto:membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org)

## DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Marin Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor or memory of someone. Gifts may be directed to any MAS project. Unspecified gifts of more than \$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

As time goes by, concerns turn to alarm about the new administration's actions and disregard for the environment. It also is increasingly clear that telling our federal legislators our positions is more important than ever and so is becoming engaged with others in efforts to improve our world. The word from National Audubon President David Yarnold in a recent email message is that "Audubon's leadership chooses to engage with this administration as we have with 28 that preceded it" "and work harder than ever before with our elected representatives on both sides of the political aisle to make sure they protect clean air, clean water, and a stable climate birds and people need to thrive." He promises that "in the coming months they will offer opportunities to raise the powerful voice of members at crucial points when it matters most." I think that time is right now.

The administration budget proposes 100% reduction in the grant programs for the San Francisco district office of the EPA, which administers for the states of California, Nevada and Arizona. The budget also proposes cuts to more than 40 specific grant programs. The EPA administers grants to improve air and water quality and other aspects of the environment including climate change, endocrine disruptors, leaking underground storage tanks, marine pollution, wetland restoration, and other vital needs. We are advised by the Acting Regional Administrator, Alexis Strauss, to watch the process carefully as the House and Senate debate the appropriations over the summer. It is important that Congressional representatives hear from us. Our Representative, Jared Huffman, in a recent email, encourages his constituents to show up, speak out and become engaged. There is also a website called "5 Calls", <https://5calls.org>, through which you can easily call your legislators on issues of your concern. They advise that calling is the most effective way to influence your representative.

We welcome you to become engaged with Marin Audubon! We have many volunteer opportunities for folks who are concerned about our environmental future and who want to help preserve it. You can help by writing letters for MAS on federal, state and local issues, by working with our conservation committee (attend hearings, write, speak and/or report on local issues, such as protecting Northern Spotted Owl, public lands, wetlands and waters of the Bay). This work will help ensure they are managed to protect wildlife and benefit us all. We are all volunteers at Marin Audubon, and we need more of us.

Some of our other ongoing needs include

helping to maintain and enhance vegetative habitats on our properties (we have our new Corte Madera Reserve property and the Tiscornia Marsh in San Rafael with new grant funding that will need more attention), helping with messaging, doing computer work, surveying birds, and media outreach. We also have a Board position open. (See below)

Our annual Mother's Day Picnic is coming up. The picnic is fun with great food prepared by our volunteers using tried and true recipes, great places to hike at Volunteer Canyon, and a children's corner. After lunch you can hike along a wonderful stream and/or over a hill to Griffin Canyon and its hillside trail. Or you can just sit and enjoy the day in the charming canyon. Volunteers are also needed to help prepare the lunch items on the Saturday before the event and to serve, set up and clean up on Mother's Day. You will be benefitting both Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon Society at the same time. See the enclosed flyer about how to reserve your place.

Also on our calendar is Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris' Bird Song Class that begins April 20; see page 5 for sign up information. Tickets are on sale for the Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival April 28-30, 2017, [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org).

A warm and hearty thank you to donors to our end-of-year appeal. You have been most generous this year and you are helping to fund our work to protect the Northern Spotted Owl, and to deal with threats to our environment. We also thank United Market for selecting MAS as a recipient of their Nickels for Bags program in March.

It's now April, and I offer my usual reminder: **Do not risk destroying a bird nest by doing your tree work now.** Postpone any tree or shrub removal or trimming until nesting season is over in late July.

## MAS Board Alerts

This year's nominees for the MAS Board are: Susan Kelly, Susan Winston, Lowell Sykes, and Bob Hinz.

**Board Member Wanted:** If you love wildlife and want to help protect them and their habitat, you need to be involved with Marin Audubon. We need a Board Member with computer skills to help us communicate with our membership. Contact Phil Peterson at 415/828-4780 or [philco222@gmail.com](mailto:philco222@gmail.com).

## MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one-day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, snacks, water, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility and weather check: Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

### HALL RANCH TO HORSESHOE BAY

(rescheduled from March)

#### Point Reyes National Seashore

Sunday, April 2, 2017

9:30 AM to 3 PM

With Kerry Wilcox

Join Kerry as we hike his Christmas Bird Count territory in our quest for birds, mammals, and some vigorous exercise. We will be hiking approximately four miles on relatively rough trails with a total elevation gain of some 500 feet, so come prepared with comfortable hiking shoes, layered clothing, and plenty to eat and drink.

We'll start our hike at the Hall Ranch (Barn Owl, Say's Phoebe, and American Kestrel possible), walk towards Horseshoe Bay (Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Burrowing Owl possible), bird at Horseshoe Bay and Beach (Surf Scoter, Brant, various grebes and loons all likely), and hike up towards Drake's Estero Overlook (varied shorebirds, cormorants, ducks, gulls, and American White Pelican probable). As you can surmise, our hike through these rich coastal habitats is likely to be pretty amazing!

**DIRECTIONS:** We will meet near the monument at the Drake's Beach parking area at 9:30 AM, and then carpool up the hill to our starting point. Follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd through Inverness out to Point Reyes National Seashore. Keep going until you get to the Drakes Beach Road where you'll bear left. Expect about a 35-minute drive from Point Reyes Station to Drakes Beach. Heavy rain cancels.

### THE PONDS AT THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT (LGVSD) San Rafael

Thursday, April 6, 2017

9 AM to noon

Susan Kelly & Peter Colasanti

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. The area includes two treated wastewater storage ponds, a freshwater pond with islands for nesting habitat, and several miles of flat levee trails. It attracts thousands of birds, including waterfowl such as ducks, geese; waders such as herons and egrets; songbirds; as well as varied raptors. A group of Forster's Terns did much circling and diving above Pond 2 presenting great views for our March field trip participants. The group also spotted the previously seen Red-necked Grebe, not usually occurring in this location. Each month seems to yield an interesting, and often unexpected, species, so come assist us in our search.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, and there are usually several experienced birders to assist. You don't even have to arrive on time because we spend the first 30-60 minutes studying the birds around the first pond and the group is easy to find. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101, exit at Smith Ranch Rd. Drive east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward McInnis Park. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and drive about .5 mile through the LGVSD gates and into the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the

parking lot. There is an outhouse in the parking area for public use or you can use the bathrooms at nearby McInnis Park.

### ABBOTTS LAGOON

#### Point Reyes Station National Seashore

Monday, April 10, 2017

9:30 AM to 2 PM

With Carolyn and John Longstreth

Abbotts Lagoon is well-known as a birding hotspot due to the variety of habitats including coastal scrub, freshwater ponds and wetlands, brackish lagoon, dunes, sandy shoreline, and open ocean. We can expect to see waterfowl, herons, raptors, wintering shorebirds, loons, grebes and possibly a few early migrating landbirds. With luck, we might find Virginia Rail or Sora on the upper pond, river otters on the lower lagoon or alcids beyond the surf. If the adjacent farm field is freshly plowed, there could be some interesting species there as well. We'll walk the 1.5 easy miles to the lower lagoon and another 0.3 mile to the ocean beach.

John, who ran an Audubon Center in Connecticut, has been the compiler of the Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count for the last eight years and is a skilled nature photographer. Carolyn helped organize the Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival and created two CDs on local birdsong. Carolyn will also tell us about the plants of the area.

Dress in layers; bring hat, sunscreen, lunch and water. Bathrooms are available at the Abbotts Lagoon parking lot. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** From San Anselmo, take Sir Francis Drake Blvd (SFDB) to Olema. From Olema continue north on Hwy 1 (SFDB), take the second left turn (SFDB west), continue through Inverness, turn right (north) onto Pierce Point Road and keep driving until you come to the Abbotts Lagoon parking lot on the left (west) where our group will gather.

### PETALUMA RIVER BOAT TRIP

MARIN AUDUBON MEMBERS ONLY

TRIP FULL – WAIT LIST ONLY

#### Leaves from and returns to Petaluma Turning Basin

Wednesday, April 13, 2017

8:15 AM to 1:30 PM

All available spaces on this boat trip quickly filled. Those confirmed on this trip will receive directions to the Turning Basin and other instructions the week before the trip. If you wish to be included on the wait list for this outing, contact Jane Medley at janermedley@gmail.com. Be sure to include the name, email address, and phone number for each possible passenger.

For a complete description of this trip, consult the March issue of *The Rail*, available at [marinaudubon.org](http://marinaudubon.org)

### MOUNT BURDELL

#### No. 4, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, April 15, 2017

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob for a field trip to the gentle slopes of Mt. Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of songbirds that make this area their springtime home. Species we might see include Lark Sparrow, Ash-throated

Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole, Lazuli Bunting, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

This will be a moderate hike with many opportunities to look at birds and spring wildflowers. Wear comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing. Bring water and snacks. We will meet at the end of San Andreas Dr in Novato. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 101 to Novato. Take the San Marin Drive/Atherton Ave exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn west on San Marin Dr. Go approximately 2 miles and turn right on San Andreas Dr. Drive nearly to the end of the road and park on the street. No restrooms available.

### LOWER MINES ROAD AND DEL VALLE RESERVOIR

Alameda County

April 19, 2017

7:30 AM to 3 PM

With Rich Cimino & Janet Bodle

This field trip is timed to maximize our opportunities to see returning migrants such as Lawrence's Goldfinch, Western Kingbird, Phainopepla, plus Yellow-billed Magpie. We will bird along Lower Mines Road in the morning, then go to Del Valle Reservoir (\$6 parking/entrance fee) for lunch and additional birding.

Mines Road is a narrow road with limited places for parking, so we will limit our group size to 12 participants and carpool. Be prepared to ride with others or be a driver. Birders with a van will be appreciated, and riders should consider fuel cost sharing. For further information about this trip or to sign up, contact Rich or Janet at [yellowbilledtours@gmail.com](mailto:yellowbilledtours@gmail.com). Please provide your name and phone number. After signing up, details will be shared about where to meet. Heavy rain cancels. Bring lunch, drinks, scopes, and a smile.

### LITTLE CARSON FALLS

Mount Tamalpais

Friday, April 21, 2017

9 AM to 2 PM

With Todd Plummer

Join guide Todd Plummer for a day of birding and botanizing around Carson Ridge and Falls. We will meet at the Azalea Hill parking lot on Bolinas-Fairfax Road, then hike along Carson Ridge on the Pine Mountain Road and make our way down to Little Carson Falls. The serpentine landscape and dwarf forests provide great views into chaparral and Douglas fir canyons. Birding along the green-tinted soil, we will look for Lazuli Bunting, Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, California Thrasher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Bald Eagle from Kent Lake. The flower bloom can be spectacular with rarities the norm. We will descend several hundred feet into Carson Canyon to cool our faces in the mists of Little Carson Falls, home of the rare Foothill Yellow-legged Frog. Bring a lunch, water, and sunscreen. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Broadway in Fairfax, follow Bolinas Rd going (south)west and drive 2.5 miles. Continue along Bolinas-Fairfax Rd for 1.3 miles to reach a parking lot for Azalea Hill on the left. **Note: the Bolinas-Fairfax road is closed between Azalea Hill and Hwy 1. You must approach Azalea Hill from the Fairfax side.**

## ROAD AND TRAILS PLAN

*continued from page 1*

Report which lists 18 priority invasive plant species and discusses their Integrated Pest Management approach. The methods used to remove the non-native plants include: manual (pulling), mechanical, cultural (grazing, prescribed burns, rapid response to early identification of new invaders), biological predators and products such as salt or clove oil that inhibit plant growth. Herbicides are being contemplated for use on 17 of the 85 sites listed. Species to be treated include pepperweed, a wetland plant that is impossible to remove without herbicides, and broom.

The Report is a science-based approach to maintaining plant diversity on District habitats. We agree with the premise that biodiversity strengthens wildlands so they can endure environmental changes and continue to support wildlife.

The most disturbing aspect about both plans is that there is absolutely no mention of wildlife—not even Northern Spotted Owl or any other special status species—in either document. Spotted Owls are present in several of the preserves where trails are proposed to be made part of the system.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The comment period on the Hunt Camp Trail will begin in early April and will run for 30 days. Watch the Open Space District website for the date. We will send a notice to our email list.

Also, let the Open Space District General Manager Max Korten and your Supervisor know you are not pleased with wildlife being ignored in their Road and Trails and their Vegetation and Biodiversity Work Plans, and that special status species should be the primary concern for the Open Space District. All of the supervisors and Max Korten as well can be reached by emailing their first initial and name, followed by @marincounty.org.

## NOVATO GENERAL PLAN REVISIONS

The Novato City Council voted unanimously to place renewal of the Urban Growth Boundary on the November ballot for residents to vote on, instead of approving it at the council level. This is a welcomed action as it will guard against future councils' changing the boundary. If enacted by the voters, it can only be changed by the voters. If approved by Novato voters, the boundary will only be

able to be changed by a vote of the people. The exact language of the ballot measure has not yet been decided. MAS has asked that exceptions that are in the current UGB, specifically that developed uses, schools and buildings in parks, not be included this time.

At Marin Audubon's request, the Novato Community Development Director will be recommending a language change in the definition of the Open Space Land zoning designation that will accommodate Marin Audubon's properties. The current zoning language allows only properties owned by public agencies to be designated as Open Space. This will be addressed by the City Council at their meeting on April 11 when they will be addressing the Natural Resources section of the General Plan. Other recommendations we made for changes in policies to strengthen protections for wetlands and baylands were generally not supported by planning staff.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Attend the hearing on April 11 and speak or write in support of stronger protections for wetlands and baylands and in support of protective zoning designation for Marin Audubon Society properties. The draft General Plan can be found on Novato's website.

## TIBURON ISSUES

The Tiburon Peninsula Club submitted an application to expand their facility by building new tennis courts, new parking areas, a structure and installing lighting. The purpose of the project is to expand the junior tennis program. The plans showed the new tennis courts between the existing parking and Railroad Marsh, which was a concern to MAS. When the applicants learned the Town would require that an Environmental Impact Report be prepared because of the size and potential impacts of the project, they withdrew the project. It is expected that they will be returning with a reduced-size project that will at least include lighting.

MAS submitted a comment letter on the project in which we expressed concern about the adverse impact of extending development further toward Railroad Marsh. The Marsh, which is maintained as a pond with narrow marsh fringe, is an important open water and marsh habitat for migratory waterfowl and other waterbirds at all times of the year, particularly migration. As it was proposed, the project would direct more people near this already impacted

marsh/pond, which would bring more disturbance from the noise and lighting as well as possible water quality degradation. We will be looking for the new submittal and reviewing it for possible impacts to the marsh and its wildlife.

In addition, members of our Conservation Committee have met with Town staff and requested input into future management of the marsh/pond. MAS members have expressed alarm about the extensive removal of cattails and the effect of that removal on rails and other resident and migratory species that use the pond. We were advised that over the last few years the town cut cattails and followed up with herbicides. They do so to maintain capacity for runoff and for water quality. The Town does not plan further management actions for the next year or so. MAS will be sending a letter requesting that we be included in future management planning.

## DOMESTIC CATS AS SUBSTITUTES FOR RODENTICIDES?

A recent article about rodenticides in the Master Gardener's column in the Marin Independent Journal had a surprising caption to an accompanying photo of a domestic cat with a rodent in its mouth. The caption advised readers to use "nature's" control for rodents implying that the cat is a natural predator.

While domestic or feral cats are predators, they are in **no way** natural to our environment in Marin County or on this continent. Domestic cats were introduced from Europe centuries ago. Our only native cats are mountain lions and bobcats (and lynxes on the continent). Domestic cats are in significantly greater numbers than our native cats. They also are well fed by humans so they have lots of energy to follow their instinct and pounce on unwary birds and anything else that moves. Young inexperienced birds are particularly vulnerable. Studies going back decades have found that roaming cats (domestic or feral) are a significant threat to native birds. Every year, millions of native birds are killed or left injured to die in our country, and more throughout the world.

If you care about birds and other native wildlife, and about domestic cats as well, keep your cats indoors. They are not nature's way of controlling rodents. If hawks and owls do not do the job for you, use traps, and protect your house by covering or filling all of the cracks and spaces where rodents can enter. Rats can squeeze through amazingly small spaces.

## ONE TAM

Representatives of Marin environmental organizations recently had an update on the activities of One Tam—a partnership between the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the four landowner agencies that own and manage property on Mt. Tamalpais (MMWD, National Park Service, Marin County Parks, and California State Parks). One Tam seems to be making some significant progress in better understanding the biological resources of the mountain in many ways and has exciting plans for the future both to learn about, protect and restore the ecology of Mt. Tam and to involve and educate the public. Projects this summer include beginning a study of pollinators with San Francisco State, undertaking a seeps and springs inventory on MMWD and State Parks lands, and initiating a bat inventory across the mountain's landscapes.

Early weed detection programs have the goal of surveying all trails—that's right, walk up or down every ravine—to identify high priority invasive species and remove incipient populations that are smaller than 100 square feet. This is based on the assumptions that each site will be revisited until the population is removed and that these small areas can be recolonized by adjacent native species. They plan to return annually for 3-5 years to assess the status. Rare plant monitoring will focus on serpentine barrens and maritime chaparral. The Wildlife Photo Index project will continue and expand into Redwood Creek Watershed by June. The project has motion-triggered cameras set up in grids and focuses on small mammals.

Monitoring also includes native grassland assessments to identify areas for restoration work. Grasslands are shrinking, and, nationally, more grasslands are being lost than any other habitat type. The program includes trying to

keep expansion of Douglas fir forests at bay by removing some saplings in grassland habitat. One major project being planned is the Bolinas Lagoon restoration—specifically the north end project, which involves developing alternatives and having public review over the next 18 months to restore this important resource. Another major project, restoration at Roy's Redwoods, will be studying how to ensure resource protection by guiding public access so people don't walk helter-skelter and destroy habitat. This is a particular concern for us because there are resident spotted owls.

The West Peak, which has been so degraded by past military occupation, is another focus of planning effort over the next year. The goals will be to assess the habitat restoration potential, to preserve some historic features, and to develop three alternatives. Another facility being studied is the Log Cabin at Lake Lagunitas, which is being considered for restoration and reuse.

One Tam has an active stewardship program which recruits and trains volunteers, conducts volunteer workdays, and is developing a pilot high school science program. Field trips are also planned.

One Tam will also be working with the agency partners to further expand MMWD's very successful Project Restore program—which closes and restores unofficial trails that are adding sediment to the reservoirs, disturbing sensitive plant and animal species, and fragmenting habitats. The goal is to engage multiple user groups in restoring these areas, and increase public awareness and education about Mt. Tam's ecological resources and sustainable trail use.

Learn more about One Tam and the opportunities it offers at [www.onetam.org](http://www.onetam.org).

## Spring Birds and Their Songs, April 20, 22 & May 6



Led by naturalist Meryl Sundove and wildlife biologist Roger Harris, and assisted by Jean Schultz, this class is aimed at beginning and intermediate birders who want to learn calls and

songs to help identify birds. The class includes an evening classroom presentation on April 20 at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and early morning field trips on April 22 and May 6 to practice what you've learned.

For information, contact Meryl Sundove at 415/927-4115 or [msundove@comcast.net](mailto:msundove@comcast.net).

**FEE:** \$75 non-Audubon members  
\$65 MAS chapter members  
\$120 two MAS chapter members from same household

**TO REGISTER:** Send this form and a check made out to "Marin Audubon Society" to:

Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599  
Mill Valley, CA 94942

*All proceeds go to MAS to support their conservation work. Thank you and happy birding.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Audubon member? Yes  No

## Bioblitz at Homestead Valley

Saturday, April 29, 2017

9 AM to 3 PM

Hosted by the National Park Service and One Tam

Join the National Park Service and One Tam at scenic Homestead Valley to explore coastal prairie and forested ridges to document every living species. This is also an opportunity to hone your naturalist skills. Bring your smartphone with the free iNaturalist app downloaded, learn how to use it and contribute valuable data about Mt. Tam's biodiversity at the same time. If you don't have a smartphone, you can be paired with another person, and there will also be extra computer tablets for teams to use.

Field observations will begin at 9 AM and go to noon when participants move to a nearby wifi-enabled location to eat lunch and discuss observations.

Volunteers ages 8 and up are welcome. Participants under age 16 will need a parent or guardian present. Volunteers under 18 must have the parent/guardian approval section signed.

**RSVP required:** Please visit [www.onetam.org/bioblitz-homestead-valley-hosted-national-park-service-and-one-tam](http://www.onetam.org/bioblitz-homestead-valley-hosted-national-park-service-and-one-tam) to register. Information on parking and getting started in iNaturalist will be emailed to participants.

If you're interested in carpooling, please email Rosa Schneider at [rschneider@onetam.org](mailto:rschneider@onetam.org) with "Bioblitz carpool" in the subject line or phone at 415/484-3164.

[www.inaturalist.org/projects/one-tam-homestead-valley-bioblitz](http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/one-tam-homestead-valley-bioblitz)

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Julie Allecta, Kay Blackwill, Kate & Jeffrey Colin, Susan Cumming, Daniel & Lee Drake, Anne Libbin, Michael & Alina Manley, Michelle & Robert Friend Foundation, Sandy Neumann & John Huster, William & Catherine Parrish, Deborah Wells

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Scott Goldberg, Blythe Harris, Carol Houck, Courtney Leary, Michael Lloyd, Scott Sherman, Eleanor Sluis, Shirley Sugawara, Patricia Wells, Robert Wolfson

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

So many weeds; so little time. Thistles, radish, mustard, Harding grass—all are on the verge of blooming or have begun to bloom. We'll do what we can. Each year we have more native plants in the ground, but it takes a while, sometimes several years, for them to expand enough to really reduce the area covered by invasive non-natives. It is happening, though, and this season's rain will be beneficial for that future.

Do you know anyone who needs to earn community service hours? Our restoration projects would fit the bill. Act locally and join us on a workday. Witness restoration first-hand and be a part of it.

We have the tools, gloves and snacks. We generally work until about 1 PM, but even an hour is valuable help. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

### VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

#### Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturday: April 1, May 6

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

#### Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: April 8, May 13

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

If you would like to help, please contact Jude, [volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org) or 415/680-6291 for more information.

### THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Cub Scout Pack 59, Deborah Ablin, Katherine Cagney, Bob Hinz, Lucas Metzger, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Thomas Ullman

### eBIRD.ORG

Do you or did you record bird observations in a series of notebooks? Can you find all those notebooks? Make it easy on yourself and at the same time share your sightings with science. Submit observations to [www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org).

### BENEFIT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Make your next Amazon order through AmazonSmile. For information, visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-6076664>.

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP



Jude Stalker

**Cub Scout Pack 59 working to sheet mulch Harding grass at Triangle Marsh.**

### CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE RESTORATION

Our thanks to the Corte Madera Town Council for their unanimous vote of approval and to staff for their assistance getting our restoration project through the environmental review process. We still have to get a grading permit from the Town and get Larkspur's approval because Industrial Way, the only access street to the site, is actually in Larkspur. We also have completed the preliminary design and submitted permit applications to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

In February, the State Coastal Conservancy Board approved a grant of the amount remaining (\$524,117) in our National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant to fund implementation of the project. The Conservancy Board must approve the funding because the Conservancy staff is administering the grant for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Wildlife Conservation Board, the agency that administers state grants for fish and wildlife, also approved their grant of \$250,000 to cover costs of restoring one acre of filled land on the Ecological Reserve that is now included in our restoration project. We will be removing fill and restoring the acre to tidal marsh on the Reserve.

### SIMMONS SLOUGH

Through the winter and early spring the water levels have been high on our property at Simmons Slough. The upside is that it has become a hot spot for wildfowl who are loving the flood conditions in safety. Board Member William Legge estimated the following birds busily feeding or roosting as the minimum number on the reserve in late February: 20+ American Wigeon, 35+ Mallard, 280+ Northern Pintail, 350+ Northern Shoveler, 6 Gadwall, 40+ Green-winged Teal, 4 Cinnamon Teal, 20 American Coot, plus a Greater Yellowlegs.

Thanks William. We'd love to have regular surveys done of our properties. Anyone interested

give us a call. By March the water subsided and all that is left are a few shallow areas of puddles.

### TRIANGLE MARSH

We were pleased to have 16 scouts and 14 adults help this month at the Triangle Marsh Work Day.

The crew worked to sheet mulch Harding grass on the flat area between the berm and the road. That is, an area was covered with cardboard and then wood chip mulch was layered over the cardboard to keep the grass in the dark and unable to grow or survive.

### BAHIA PROBLEMS CONTINUE

People damaging our fence and allowing their dogs off leash are ongoing problems. We have arranged with the Humane Society to add Bahia to their regular patrols for off-leash dogs in Novato and have met with the Novato Police Chief for advice and to discuss enforcement. Having come from Truckee where there are also trail problems, Chief McGill had some fresh ideas about measures to encourage people to stay on approved paths. The police department staff will be stopping at Bahia from time to time within their ability depending on other enforcement needs. On the Chief's advice we will be looking into options for repairing and making the fence more secure and improving messaging on the signs.

In the meantime, any members who see dogs off-leash anywhere on our Bahia property should call the Humane Society (415/883-4621). If you see people vandalizing our fences or walking either on the eastern-most peninsula or on top of the berm on the western-most peninsula, they are trespassing. Notify the Novato Police at 415/897-4361. And let Marin Audubon know as well: call Barbara Salzman 415/924-6057 or Ed Nute 415/298-2671. We cannot take any enforcement action because we do not have police power, but we need to keep informed of what happens on our property.

# MAS's Invasive Sea Lavender Removal Project

By Jude Stalker



**Left: One of the invasive species of *Limonium* in bloom in Sausalito. Above: Volunteers pulling invasive *Limonium* in flower in Strawberry.**

Springtime brings the many various colorful flowers that give the tidal marshes along the Marin shoreline their beautiful appearance. Unfortunately, not all of them are beneficial to the natural ecosystem of the marsh and if left to grow and reproduce can cause quite a bit of harm.

Over the past decade, two species of a non-native invasive sea lavender have colonized portions of the shoreline in Marin County and beyond.

One species, European sea lavender (*Limonium duriusculum*) was discovered in 2007 at Strawberry Marsh on Seminary Drive in Strawberry. The following year Algerian sea lavender (*Limonium ramossimum* ssp. *provincial*) was discovered in marshes along the western shoreline of the central San Francisco Bay. This species was also found growing in relatively small patches at a few Marin County shoreline locations.

The discovery of these species raised alarm and concern for the health of the salt marshes in the San Francisco Bay because each plant is able to produce hundreds of seeds each year that eventually carpet the surrounding area with new seedlings and make vast areas of the upper tidal marsh zone inhospitable to native plants. Species that would be adversely affected include sea lavender (*Limonium californicum*), salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*), alkali heath (*Frankenia salina*) and others. The seeds of the invasive plants travel with the tides and quickly colonize new shoreline areas.

Marin Audubon has worked with volunteers to remove much of this marsh invader from the known infested locations along the Marin County shoreline for the past six years.

The Marin County Open Space District removes the invasive sea lavender plants from

their shoreline properties, and classes from San Francisco State University have held removal projects at Strawberry Marsh. Together, we have been able keep the Marin County infestations managed (without the use of herbicides) but not completely eliminated.

Last year, the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) secured funding to implement the initial phase of a Bay-wide effort to remove this highly invasive plant from the San Francisco Bay tidal marshes. This effort is primarily focused on controlling the large infestations in the central and south Bay, but last year began including the manual removal of invasive sea lavender from larger areas of infestation in Marin County.

With a collaboration between Marin Audubon, the Marin County Open Space District and Cal-IPC, the goal in Marin County this year is to remove all known infestations of invasive sea lavender in Marin.

We can reach this goal but need the help of local volunteers.

Marin Audubon is hosting volunteer invasive sea lavender removal work groups every Sunday morning through April and we would love to have you join us.

Please e-mail Jude Stalker volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org to learn more about the project and to sign up to help us reach our goal.

## DON'T MISS OUT Get MAS Email Alerts

Go to the upper right corner of our website home page to sign up or call Martha Jarocki 415/461-3593

MARCH 18, 2017 FIELD TRIP

## Corte Madera and Mount Tam Marshes

With Jim White

BIRD SPECIES COUNT: 70  
PEOPLE COUNT: 20  
including 5 bright youth who contributed much to our enjoyment of the day

The Birding in Marin group had a fine March day, cloudy and almost spring-like, as we climbed native serpentine stone steps set some 80 years ago by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Bootjack Campground. We heard **Pileated** and **Hairy Woodpecker**, "**Red Nuts**" (**Red-breasted Nuthatch**), and FOS (First of Season) **Warbling Vireo**. Early spring blooming Indian Warriors, Calypso Orchids, and Hound's Tongue were also noticed and appreciated. We explored the Bootjack, Rock Springs, and Mountain Theatre areas, then embarked on a hike/climb that proved challenging to most of us over the serpentine ridge on the Simmons Trail. Most of the stone steps along this trail have washed away, but the trail led us to the only place in Marin where one can see a **Townsend's Solitaire**, and *we did!*

Down at Triangle Marsh, pristine thanks to MAS, Bob Hinz, and his volunteers, we saw 6 **Blue-winged Teal** enjoying their winter vacation with **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Black-necked Stilts**, **Northern Shovelers**, **American Wigeons**, **Gadwalls**, and **Green-winged Teal**. In Marta's Marsh, also preserved by MAS, we saw 3 endangered **Ridgway's Rails**, 8 **Snowy Egrets**, 1 **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Dowitchers**, **Canvasbacks**, many **Green-winged Teal**, 3 **Clark's Grebes**, 2 **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Long-billed Curlews**, **Marbled Godwits**, and **Avocets**. *Thank You Marin Audubon!* Ending our field trip over in the Shorebird Marsh, **Ruddy Ducks**, **Bufflehead**, and **Northern Pintail** were lingering, and a swirling flock of 300-400 **Dunlin** entertained us.



# The Rail

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## SAVE THE DATE

- May 4 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas  
*Susan Kelly & Greg Haskins*
- May 5 **Field Trip:** Pine Flat Road  
*With Lisa Hug*
- May 11 **Field Trip:** Birdsongs at Five Brooks  
*With Lisa Hug & Susan Kelly*
- May 12–14 **Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest**  
[www.ycic.org/yakima-river-canyon-bird-fest](http://www.ycic.org/yakima-river-canyon-bird-fest)
- May 13 **Field Trip:** Muir Beach and Woods  
*With Jim White & Bob Battagin*  
NOTE: Birding in Marin for May only is the second Saturday
- May 14 MAS Mother's Day Picnic  
at Audubon Canyon Ranch
- May 18 **Field Trip:** Birdsongs at Big Rock  
*With Lisa Hug & Susan Kelly*

Check website for updates and details

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## SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter-supporting members. We work collaboratively with the National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. We receive a fixed amount based on our 2001 membership. MAS relies on local support for our habitat protection efforts, conservation advocacy, birding field trips, educational speakers series, and publication of *The Rail*. To better ensure we can continue our programs on the local level, MAS offers a separate chapter membership. Your membership in MAS will help us protect local habitats, resident and migratory birds and provide you with educational and enjoyable programs because all of your chapter-supporting dues stay with MAS.

If you're not already a chapter-supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

You can also join or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org).

## JOINT NAS-MAS MEMBERSHIP

A National Audubon Society Membership is a joint membership with National and chapters. With this joint membership, you receive our newsletter and other chapter benefits. However, MAS receives no portion of your National Audubon Membership dues.

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Please fill in this form and mail to the address below. If you are paying by check, please make it payable to **Marin Audubon Society**.

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