



Bob Lewis

The Red-headed Barbet operates a chemical plant in its body to convert yellow carotenes to red pigments.

Many birds are brightly colored, others use patterned feathers for camouflage. How do these colors originate? What's the difference between colors from pigments and physical colors? From Yellow warblers to Anna's Hummingbirds, from Snow Geese to Brewer's Blackbirds, each species makes unique use of the feather colors it possesses. What do the colors indicate to other birds? And do birds see the same colors we do? Bob will unravel some of the mysteries of color in birds with a little chemistry, a bit of physics, and a lot of brightly colored slides.

Bob trained as a chemist and worked in the energy field for 33 years. He's taught birding classes in the Bay Area for over 25 years, and served as the chair of Golden Gate Audubon's Adult Education Committee. He loves to travel and photograph birds, and recently returned from chasing the brightly colored birds Namibia and passing 5,000 on his life list.

Next month's speaker:

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9 7:30 PM

Little Known Great Birding Locations in Northern California

With Ruthie Rudesill

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Christmas Bird Count Season is Here

Marin County is well covered with three Christmas Bird Counts, sponsored by the Marin Audubon Society, in North Marin, West Marin and South Marin. The National Audubon Society administers the CBCs, and this will be the 120th CBC season. The CBCs provide valuable information about the long-term status of bird populations across North America and elsewhere.

Each count area covers a 15-mile diameter circle in which teams of volunteers, from novice to expert, count every bird they encounter during the entire day. Everyone is encouraged to participate; there is probably one in your neighborhood. For more information about Christmas Bird Counts go to www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count.

POINT REYES, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

The 50th Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by MAS and Point Blue, will be held on Saturday, December 14, 2019. The Point Reyes count was started by Rich Stallcup, Jon Winter and others in 1970. Since then, the count is often among the top five in the U.S. for the number of species sighted, typically over

200. There are always some unexpected finds.

The 27 territories within the Point Reyes Count circle are centered around Tomales Bay, stretching from Drake's Bay and Abbotts Lagoon to Walker Creek and the Chileno Valley. The Point Reyes count welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels.

Bird counters are also invited to attend the compilation dinner held at the Dance Palace in Point Reyes Station starting at 5 PM. For complete information about the count and dinner and to register go to www.pointreyescbc.com.

CHEEP THRILLS, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

The resurrected Cheep Thrills CBC, will be conducted for the 9th year on December 19. This is a count mostly in north Marin, including Mt. Burdell, and extending from Hicks Valley and Nicasio Reservoir in West Marin to the Bahia area in the northeast corner of the county.

The Cheep Thrills count usually exceeds 160 species, which is not surprising as many of the leaders are professional biologists and ornithologists. While many of the count areas are already fully staffed there are still openings for

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MAS Project Receives Environmental Award

We're thrilled to have received this award from Friends of San Francisco Estuary. The award was presented for the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Restoration Project and was presented at the State of the Estuary Conference for restoring three acres of tidal marsh and three acres of adjacent upland transition zone habitat. After a 25-year effort to protect the site, the owner finally agreed to sell to us and we bought the property in 2015. We were able to raise the purchase amount from the Coastal Conservancy, Marin County and generous donors.

Thanks to additional grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Coastal Wetland

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Barbara Salzman

We apologize for the lateness of your late *Rail* last month. It was a casualty of the power blackout. Our printer was not able to repower and get internet service for 4-5 days, which meant a long delay in getting the printed copy out. We hope you checked our website on which we had an alert of the situation and an electronic version of *The Rail*. The power outage was an attempt to deal with the symptoms of climate change, intense weather and fires. The experience disrupted our lives and was both frustrating and humbling. Our hearts go out to those who lost their homes.

Be alert to email scams! Some of our Board members have twice received email messages supposedly from me asking them to purchase gift cards or other items. Our Board wants to alert members in case some of you might receive similar messages. First of all, I do not send emails to people asking them to purchase things for me. But, in case scammers may come up with another angle, either call or email me, compare the sender's email address with mine listed on our website. It may be similar, but won't be the same.

We're looking for residents or frequent birders along the shoreline of Richardson Bay to alert us to herring runs that are occurring during the coming season. We want **to document the location of any herring runs that take place within the areas** identified by the RBRA consultant, Keith Merkel, as being suitable for mooring fields for the anchor-outs, based on no eelgrass being in those locations. We have hired Point Blue to do waterbird surveys, but it is unlikely any survey will coincide with a herring run, so we want to ensure they are covered. If you can help us by watching for and alerting

us to a herring run as it is occurring, please call or email me or Bob Hinz to let us know of your willingness. This will help us prepare and organize folks to cover the runs.

Our Field Trips Chair, Jane Medley, has been **scheduling birding trips to some of our properties**. In October, field trip participants visited Bahia which we purchased in 2003. An early December trip with our Birding in Marin group, led by Jim White and Bob Battagin, will again visit Bahia in addition to the adjacent Rush Creek. Rich Cimino will lead a trip to the San Rafael's Jean and John Starkweather Trail and will visit Tiscornia Marsh. In early January, provided we get needed rain, our trip to the Deer Island Preserve, led by Sande and Bob Chilvers, is planning to stop at Simmons Slough which is a favorite spot for wintering waterfowl when the seasonal marsh has sufficient water. A January birding trip to the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, where Marin Audubon completed a marsh restoration in 2017, will be led by Rich Cimino. Join these trips to see the birds our properties are supporting.

We are saddened to learn of the death of Mimi Burton in September. Mimi was a long time Marin Audubon supporter and volunteer. She served as a member of our Board and for more than 20 years organized the Mother's Day Picnic. A celebration of her life will be held on January 11 at St. John's Episcopal Church in Ross.

December is the month for Christmas Bird Counts. Sign up to join one or more of the three counts in Marin and get out to enjoy the overwintering birds on one of our field trips, or on your own. And may you all enjoy the holiday season!

Christmas Bird Count *continued from page 1*
birders of all levels to participate and join us for a great Christmas Count experience.

After the count there will be a compilation dinner at Ghiringhelli's Pizzeria in Novato. The cost will be \$12 per person, payable in advance.

Go to <https://cheepthrillscbc.blogspot.com> for details and past years results or contact the compiler at cheepthrills@icloud.com.

Cheep Thrills is dedicated to the memory of our great friend and teacher, Rich Stallcup.

SOUTHERN MARIN, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28

The Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count circle extends from the ocean under the Golden Gate Bridge on the south to Terra Linda on the north, from Bolinas Lagoon on the west to San Francisco Bay and marshes on the east. This

count area was designed to include a wide variety of habitats and depending on weather usually produces over 175 different species of birds and over 70,000 individual birds.

The count will take place on Saturday, December 28th rain or shine. You can also participate in the count by doing a feeder watch at your home on that day and reporting the results.

The Christmas Bird Count Compilation Dinner will be held at the Tamalpais Community Center immediately following the count. To volunteer with the dinner setup and cleanup, email smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com.

Sign up online by December 26 by completing the registration form online at <http://marinaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count.php> or contact compilers Ed Nute and Bob Hinz at smcbc.marinaudubon@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.

PACHECO POND

Novato

Thursday, December 5, 2019

8:30 AM to noon

With Bob and Sande Chilvers

We'll repeat a trip to Pacheco Pond for our first Thursday of the month walk in December. It's hard to compete with Las Gallinas, but Pacheco Pond has provided a reasonable substitute location for our usual Las Gallinas walk. The area provides habitat for a variety of ducks, **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **Common Gallinule**, **Sora**, and **Virginia Rail**. The adjacent trees provide additional habitat for both songbirds, egrets, and a number of raptors including **Peregrine Falcon**.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels and help each other to find and identify the birds. The area around Pacheco Pond is mostly flat, but **we will be walking across some rocky, uneven surfaces**. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, scopes, and water. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Take the Bel Marin Keys Blvd. exit from Hwy 101. Travel east on Bel Marin Keys Blvd. for 1.4 miles passing through a commercial/industrial section until arriving at a small parking area on the right, which faces the pond. We will meet in the parking area and walk to the trail a short distance up the road.

BAHIA, RUSH CREEK AND ROWLAND AVE. WETLANDS

Novato

No. 12, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, December 7, 2019

(Note: Usual date has been changed to avoid Christmas Bird Counts.)

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White & Bob Battagin

Please meet at the foot (east end) of Bahia Drive in Novato where Marin Audubon has completed a large marsh restoration project. Shorebirds, ducks, herons, swallows, and rails will be reaping the benefits here for years to come. After viewing the birds and the restoration area, we intend to walk the trail along the edge of the mixed oak woodland.

We then plan to drive around to the end of Topaz Street to view the Horseshoe Pond where some diving ducks, including a few **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, like to winter. During the day we may practice some bird counting to help prepare for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count season. After lunch we will take a look at two nearby areas—Rush Creek and the Rowland Ave wetlands. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in North Novato, take the Atherton Ave exit east about 0.9 miles, then turn left onto Bugeia Lane, which becomes Bahia Dr. Follow it to the end where there is street parking. No restrooms available here.

MARTA'S MARSH

Corte Madera

Sunday, December 8, 2019

8 to 11 AM

With Derek Lecy

Marta's Marsh hosts a wide variety of bird species and provides great viewing opportunities. Typically, shorebirds, ducks, gulls, terns, and some of Marin's only endangered **Ridgway's Rails** can be seen at this Marin birding hotspot. We will take a short walk alongside San Clemente Creek to the creek mouth where it then enters the bay. Some other of our target birds include **Blue-winged Teal**, **Dunlin**, **Western** and **Least Sandpiper**, and possibly raptors such as **Osprey**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and **Northern Harrier**.

We have timed our walk to put us at the creek mouth a few hours after low tide, as the incoming tide causes sandpipers, gulls, and ducks to fly from the bay mudflats to the high tide refuge at Marta's Marsh. As we walk, we will listen for rails as well as any other migrants that we may run into. At the mouth of the creek we will scope the bay looking for ducks like **Lesser** and **Greater Scaup**, **Bufflehead**, **Wigeon**, and possibly **Canvasback** or **Redhead**.

Heavy rain cancels. Bring binoculars and, if you have one, a spotting scope. There are no restroom facilities in the marsh.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101, take Exit 449A at Tamalpais Dr in Corte Madera; go east 0.2 mile toward the bay; turn right on San Clemente Dr just beyond the Home Consignment Store and go 0.5 mile; make the first left onto Harbor Dr for 0.2 mile; turn right onto Yolo Street for 400 feet. Then turn left onto Channel Dr. We will meet where the road dead ends at 21 Channel Dr.

BEGINNING BIRDING AT MCINNIS PARK

San Rafael

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

8:30 AM to 11:30 AM

With Carol Oakes

Once again, Carol is leading her first trip as a birding field trip leader (She unfortunately had the flu last month and couldn't complete her official first trip.). She is enrolled in the San Francisco Master Birding Course offered by the California Academy of Sciences, which includes scientific training and at least 100 volunteer hours.

Any and all beginning birders are encouraged to join her on this very leisurely stroll around a soccer field at McInnis Park and along the path adjacent to Gallinas Creek. We can expect to see **Western Bluebird**, **Black Phoebe**, **Say's Phoebe**, **Chestnut-backed Chickadee**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, and more around the soccer field. On our stroll along the creek channel, we hope to see fall migratory waterfowl such as **Ring-necked Duck**, **Northern Pintail**, **Northern Shoveler**, and, of course, our usual residents such as **Great** and **Snowy Egret**, **Great Blue Heron**, and **Greater Yellowlegs**. We'll also look for sparrows foraging on the

ground and raptors soaring overhead.

Wear sturdy shoes, dress in layers, and bring water, binoculars, scopes, and your birding enthusiasm! Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at McInnis Park. From Hwy 101, take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit east toward McInnis Park. We will meet at the first parking lot to the right after you enter McInnis Park. There is plenty of parking available.

JEAN AND JOHN STARKWEATHER SHORELINE PARK

San Rafael

Thursday, December 12, 2019

9 AM to 12 PM

With Rich Cimino

Join Rich for an easy bird walk on level ground during a high tide. We will bird the shoreline of San Pablo Bay watching for shorebirds on the rocks and diving ducks, loons, and grebes on the bay. We will also look for the Puget Sound variety of White-crowned Sparrow. Bring your scope, water, and snacks. Restrooms are available at the bird walk halfway mark (Target Store). Meet in the parking lot for the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline trailhead. Heavy rain will cancel.

DIRECTIONS: From the north, take Hwy 101 to the Bellam Blvd. exit. Turn left on Bellam then right on East Francisco Blvd., which parallels I-580. Head east (toward the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge for about 1-1/2 miles. You will see a Bay Café sign at the Bay Park Center. Turn left on Pelican Way then right to the trailhead parking area. From the south you can take the exit to the San Rafael Bridge getting off at the last Marin exit, the San Quentin exit. For GPS, use the Bay Café address, 2165 Francisco Blvd., San Rafael.

DEER ISLAND PRESERVE AND SIMMONS SLOUGH

Novato

Thursday, January 2, 2020

8:30 AM to 12:00 PM

With Sande & Bob Chilvers

Join our "First Thursday" walk of the new year in the oak woodland at Deer Island Preserve with views of the surrounding marshland visible from parts of the trail. Red-shouldered Hawks and White-tailed Kites nest here with additional resident and winter raptor sightings possible during our visit. The woodlands are home to woodpeckers, owls, juncos, and towhees, and we'll also watch for egrets and **American White Pelicans**.

As usual, birding enthusiasts of all levels are invited to join our group. We always help each other find and identify the birds. We will be walking approximately 1.5 miles on a dirt trail with some gradual up and down slopes. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, scopes, and water. There are no restrooms at this location. Heavy rain cancels.

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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.

MAS Award *continued from page 1*

Grant program and the Wildlife Conservation Board we restored habitat on five acres of Marin Audubon property and one acre of filled land owned by California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Ecological Reserve. We have planted more than 16,000 native plants in the upland transition zone and installed an irrigation system. Our volunteers have been maintaining the uplands ever since. The Water Brigade watered the plants every three weeks over the summer, and Martha Jarocki leads a Volunteer Work Day monthly on the second Saturday.

NEW BLACK POINT ACQUISITION

We're so pleased to announce that we have closed escrow on another parcel in the Black Point area. Thank you to Marin Baylands Advocates whose outreach led to the acquisition and who provided the funds to purchase the property. County staff connected us with the property owner who had inherited the property from his father. The property consists of four of the tiny parcels (0.057 acres) that are classic at Black Point. They were subdivided about 100 years ago and offered as rewards for magazine subscriptions. Most of the property is seasonal wetland. MAS now owns 15 parcels at Black Point.

STATE OF THE ESTUARY

The 2019 State of the Estuary Report is produced from presentations at the State of the Estuary Conference. The conference is organized every two years by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership to review indicators of estuary health. Two issues have emerged as critical to assessing the health of the ecosystem: 1) The health of the estuary and people who live around it are inextricably linked. We need a healthy Bay and Delta to protect our shorelines from sea level rise, to keep our waters clean, to provide food and habitat for wildlife, and to give people natural areas to enjoy. 2) How the Bay and Delta will respond to climate change. How will people and wildlife be able to thrive as climate change progresses?

Indicators of ecological health were addressed at the Conference and the message is mixed: tidal marsh restoration is proceeding at a brisk pace in the Bay and is gearing up in the Delta; urban water

conservation continues to meet mandated benchmarks, even during the drought; flows through the estuary and across floodplains continue to be well below levels that would restore the estuary; fish communities in the saltier part of the estuary remain in good condition while those in the freshwater sections are in poor condition.

For the first time, the resilience of the estuary shore was evaluated through the lenses of subsidence and nature-based features. It is recognized that resilience is related to how much of the shoreline has a natural (not hardened) shoreline, and that elevations relative to sea level rise must be tracked. Only now has there been an attempt to evaluate how more- and less-advantaged communities have access to natural areas.

These indicators will help focus efforts to restore the estuary's health. The final messages: We need to continue our restoration efforts. We need more investment in creative ways to build and restore flows for environmental health, to build resilient shorelines and to weave social equity into environmental health.

FIRE TAX ON MARIN BALLOT

The March ballot will have a 10-year parcel tax measure to fund the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) that would oversee wildfire detection and evacuation system improvements, vegetation management, defensible space and home hardening evaluations, neighborhood preparedness, and local wildfire prevention efforts.

Seventeen fire-responsible agencies would make up the governing board along with a Technical Advisory Committee that would provide guidance and a Citizen's Oversight Committee responsible for overseeing finances. The amount of the tax for most property owners would be based on 10 cents per building square foot. Owners of 'unimproved' property would face a tax of \$25-150 per parcel. Low income seniors and, of special interest to MAS, non-profits would be exempted. With more than 30 parcels, mostly nonflammable wetlands, the tax could have been a high cost for us.

We've been concerned about potential impacts of the vegetation management component of the program on habitats and have partnered with the California Native Plant Society and Environmental Action

Committee of West Marin to communicate our concerns to the Supervisors and the Marin County Fire Chief, Jason Weber. Our organizations recommended that the WMPA adopt ecologically sound principles to guide their actions. Recommended top priorities include focusing on structures and actions other than vegetation removal (hardening structures, public education, ensuring adequate responders, clearing evacuation routes) and removing non-native vegetation. Other recommendations are to concentrate on vegetation management in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and not in intact ecosystems; avoid converting native plant communities to non-native communities; protect endangered and special status as well as common species by ensuring their habitats are protected; avoid the removal of native vegetation that is not fire prone (wetland, riparian and Coast Redwood trees); and ensure that benefits provided by vegetation (bank and hillside stabilization) are not lost.

Our organizations will be working with the WMPA to ensure the program can truly be managed with ecologically sound principles as is stated in the Joint Powers Agreement establishing the WMPA.

CLIMATE CHANGE CALL TO ACTION

National Audubon's recent report *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink* tells us that 389 of the 604 North American bird species studied may face unlivable climate conditions across most of their ranges by 2080 if global temperatures stay on track to increase by 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

As reported last month, the birds most at risk live on the Arctic tundra (16 species) and in boreal forests (48 species), that are warming rapidly and already undergoing dramatic transformation. The many species of waterfowl and shorebirds (85 waterbird species) that nest in these habitats are at risk as well. Seventy-three species of western forest birds that depend on higher mountain slopes also could see their cool climate disappear.

But the report also gives us the encouraging news that we can make a difference. It tells us that if global warming were limited to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, 290 bird species would be better off. That encouraging news also means that we have the power to change conditions for the better not only for the birds but for people, too.

So while climate change is here, there are many actions we as individuals can take that will help reduce greenhouse gasses. To augment suggestions made last month: lower your energy use; preserve and restore vegetative habitats, such as wetlands and trees, that sequester carbon; and invest in clean energy technologies, including battery energy capture and carbon capture. We can also tell our legislators to back legislation that would reduce electricity demand and emissions, incentivize clean energy sources that do not destroy habitat, improve fuel economy, expand public transit, and encourage the use of electric vehicles.

Volunteers Needed – Monarch Rescue Habitat

Volunteers are needed to plant and tend flowers beneficial to Monarch Butterflies. Marin Audubon will be planting milkweed and nectar plants on its Simmons Slough property in Novato. Milkweed is the host plant for Monarch Butterflies, which have been severely depleted in recent years. Spring- and late fall-blooming nectar plants provide them nourishment and fuel. The Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is donating the plants. As soon as it starts raining, we will select a work day when volunteers can do the planting. Then, in the spring we will need volunteers to weed, mulch and water. If you can volunteer, please contact Ed Nute at e.nute@nute-engr.com or call 415/669-7710.

FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 3)

If Marin has received any rain by the date of this field trip, we may stop by Simmons Slough, a diked off tributary of Novato Creek and one of Marin Audubon's properties, to look for wintering waterfowl. This property is part of what Marin Audubon envisions as a Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor consisting of wetlands and adjacent uplands associated with the watershed. The area is popular with ducks when the seasonal wetland becomes flooded.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in Novato, take the exit for Atherton Ave east 1.7 miles. Turn right onto Olive Ave and left onto Deer Island Lane. The gate is on your right with a nearby dirt parking lot.

SKAGGS ISLAND AND HUDEMAN SLOUGH Sonoma County

Registration Opens December 23, 2019

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

9:15 AM to 2 PM

With Murray Berner

Skaggs Island is part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The area is not open to the general public and requires special permission to access, which will be granted to Marin Audubon with our guide, Murray Berner. Because of the high level of interest in this area, we are requiring advance registration for this trip, which will begin on Monday, December 23, 2019. Registration will be limited to 25 people.

A second trip may be scheduled at a later date if there is considerable interest. To sign up for this January 28 trip, contact Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net. Be sure to include the names of the people who will be attending with you. Jeanine will confirm your registration via email.

Our leader, Murray Berner, has been a longtime field trip leader for Napa Solano Audubon and is the author of the Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas. Our visit will coincide with the peak season for raptors. In previous years our group has spotted **Golden Eagle, Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, and Burrowing Owl**, plus dozens of kites and harriers. Songbirds flock in the former residential area, harassed by **Merlin** and accipiters.

Please arrive promptly at the south entrance to Skaggs Island off of Hwy 37. Those arriving late may find themselves locked out! We will travel by car across the island, stopping to bird along the way, and depart through the north gate at

approximately 1 PM. From this point interested birders may continue with the group to Hudeman Slough where we will bird on foot. Dress in layers and sturdy shoes and bring lunch and water. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 101 north to Hwy 37 East. At the intersection with SR 121 (Sonoma Raceway), continue straight on Hwy 37 for 3.8 miles and turn left at Skaggs Island Rd. No restrooms available.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Vernalis, Stanislaus County

Saturday, January 11, 2020

9:00 AM to 3 PM

With Ruthie Rudesill

Ruthie Rudesill of Redwood Regional Ornithological Society (RROS) fame will lead this trip as a follow up to her presentation at our Speaker Series on January 9 entitled "Little Known Great Birding Locations in Northern California." The San Joaquin River NWR is situated where three major rivers (Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin) join in the San Joaquin Valley, creating a mix of habitats that provide ideal conditions for high wildlife and plant diversity.

The refuge was initially established primarily to protect and manage habitat for the **Aleutian Cackling Goose** but now provides important nesting habitat for **Swainson's Hawks**, herons, cormorants, as well as the endangered **Least Bell's Vireo**, which was absent from the area for five decades. The refuge is also home to the largest wild population of **Riparian Brush Rabbits** in the world that approached extinction in the 1990s.

Bring optics (scopes would be useful), lunch, and dress in layers. There is a restroom at the refuge headquarters. No fees are collected here. Heavy rain cancels.

This field trip is co-sponsored by RROS and Marin Audubon. Sonoma County folks who wish to carpool can meet at the Petaluma Park N' Ride at the junction of Hwys 101 and 116 at 7:15 AM. These Sonoma participants will meet up with Marinites who wish to join a carpool at the Smith Ranch Rd and Hwy 101 Park N' Ride at 7:35 AM. For more information about this trip, contact Ruthie at 707/833-6026 or 707/481-0768.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 580 southbound after Altamont Pass, take the Maze Blvd Exit onto Hwy 132 (east towards Modesto). The

NWR is at the San Joaquin River. Turn left on North Gates Rd from Hwy 132. Travel northbound on Gates Road for approximately 3 miles. Turn left on Beckwith Rd. Travel westbound on Beckwith Rd for 2 miles to the refuge parking lot on the left side of the road. Our first stop will be at the Migratory Bird Viewing Platform on Beckwith Rd. Later we will return to Hwy 132 and travel to the refuge headquarters at 2714 Dairy Rd, Vernalis.

SACRAMENTO DELTA BY BOAT

Online Signups Begin December 9, 2019

Sunday, February 2, 2020

(Super Bowl Sunday)

8:15 AM to 4:30 PM

Boat leaves from and returns to the Antioch Marina

With David Wimpfheimer

Join us aboard Dolphin Charters' *River Dolphin* 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 *River Dolphin* 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 **Swainson's Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, and Great Horned Owls**. Large numbers of shorebirds, **Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans, Snow, Canada and White-fronted Geese**, ducks, as well as gulls, terns, bitterns and passerines make this cruise a highlight for birders. Uncommon mammals such as beaver, river otter, 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 cost will be \$110 per person for Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members and \$145 for all others. If you are not yet a Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Member, please sign up now at www.marinaudubon.org to enjoy the reduced cost of this trip. Online registration will begin on December 9, 2019 at www.marinaudubon.org. Include the name, email address and phone number of each participant. **To assure a spot for yourself, we recommend booking your space asap as this is always a popular trip.** Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions the week before the trip.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

BOARD VISITS MAS PROPERTIES

On the first Sunday in November, the MAS Board visited most of our properties on our Annual Field Trip to assess conditions and show new Board members the sites. Generally, the properties looked good with some needing corrective measures. Petaluma Marsh looked great, but grasses and other weeds on the levee top and road need mowing; at Bahia, newly planted oaks are doing well but a post for one of the gates needs replacing. New fill is being brought in by a neighbor of Norton Pond. Plants and the new marsh are doing well at Corte Madera. The most shocking find was at Triangle Marsh where we saw a man at the overlook sitting on a camping chair on dry plant litter and plants, smoking a cigar. This dangerous behavior was reported to the fire department. The marsh and adjacent upland look great

TISCORNIA MARSH

The Tiscornia Marsh project is now fully underway. We've signed contracts with the Coastal Conservancy and our contractors, Environmental Science Associates (ESA) and Multicultural Center of Marin (MCM). We held a Kick Off Meeting with our project partners: San Rafael City Planning Director, Park Director, engineers, Restoration Authority Program Manager and city consultants working on the park facilities surrounding the Community Center. The next step is to obtain geotechnical data about the soils necessary for the levee improvements.

The plan is for the project to use natural methods, instead of rocks and concrete, to address sea level rise by restoring tidal marsh, opening a seasonal wetland to tidal action, providing transitional habitat, relocating one section of levee, and raising the height of Marin Audubon- and city-owned levee.

This \$968,916 grant was awarded from Measure AA, the clean and healthy bay measure, by the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority.

CORTE MADERA

Martha Jarocki's five volunteers worked diligently on November's Second Saturday Volunteer Day removing Harding grass and applying compost. In addition, four students from San Domenico School also came after school and removed birdsfoot trefoil, thistle and Harding grass. The site is looking great. The summer watering and weeding has worked, but we're worried about the lack of rain.

SIMMONS SLOUGH

We're in the process of choosing a contractor to install the wetland plants we've ordered with grant funding from the county. We've ordered 2,500 plants that need to be planted this rainy season. We will also be harvesting some *Elymus triticoides* from our own property and transplanting it along the creek.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the first Saturday of November volunteers dug out Harding grass and fennel near the street to the west from the overlook.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

If there is enough rain by the first week of December, there will be more plants to put in the ground at Triangle Marsh. Rain or not, at least some of the wood chips dumped illegally in August will have to be moved again. Planting on the newer Corte Madera restoration site was completed last winter so our attention there will continue to be on stopping smaller plants of the more troublesome invasive species.

Is one of our project areas in your neighborhood? Our volunteer days are particularly good opportunities for students who need a community service project. Act locally and join us on a workday. We all make a difference.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: December 7, January 4

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Dr directly across from the Ring Mountain trailhead near the Montessori School.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: December 14, January 11

Meet at the end of Industrial Way (near Cost Plus Plaza).

Contact Martha Jarocki, marthajarocki@gmail.com or phone 415/461-3592.

Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Kara Bhatt, Dave Chenoweth, Vicky Ge, Bob Hinz, Eric Zikang Huang, Martha & Gerry Jarocki, Megan Li, Hannah Xiaohan Ma, Lucienne O'Keefe, Yuxiao Qu, Lowell Sykes, Nhi Vuong, Jessica Zhou

BENEFIT MAS THIS HOLIDAY

Make your holiday Amazon order through AmazonSmile and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to MAS. For information, visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-676664>.

THANK YOU, DONORS

Ablin Family Fund, Donna Allen, Benevity Community Impact Fund, Nancy & Richard Bohnet, William A. Clarke, Heather English, Fehrenbacher Family Fund, Karen Halvorsen, Nancy & Dean Hanson, Bob Hinz, Lisa Holm, Stephanie Levin, Lincoln Financial Foundation, Inc. (donor match), Kathy Lowrey, Sarah Martin, Robert & Sandra Mauceli, Donald Reinberg, Marianna Riser, Barbara Salzman, Muriel & Jacques Ullman, Eliza Welch

What To Do If You Witness People Disturbing Wildlife

A recent wildlife disturbance conference panel of various federal enforcement agencies and investigators (e.g. NOAA, DOJ, USFWS) offered advice on reporting disturbances. If you believe you have witnessed disturbances to Northern Spotted Owl, or other special status species in particular, it is important to contact agencies to report the possible violation, so they can accurately and effectively capture these disturbances.

1. While there are very few law enforcement people on staff (e.g., NOAA has two people for all of California), it's always important to report everything even if no one responds. If a pattern is observed, they may be more able to take action.
2. Report the disturbance to someone in agency law enforcement (not local police), even if you aren't sure it's the correct agency. They said they all talk to each other, so they will send the information to the correct agency. So, if you contact USFWS about someone

disturbing seals, they will let NOAA know.

3. Proving wildlife disturbances is very difficult. Videos are better proof than photos. People can lie about the photo, but the video shows the actual behavior. Also get photos of people's license plates or other identification indicators.

Agencies implement the laws that govern their areas of responsibility. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) addresses disturbances to marine mammals and fish while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) focuses on disturbances to terrestrial species. Check the websites of the agencies for information on the laws that specific agencies are responsible to implement.

To Report a Wildlife Crime:

To the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, email fws_tips@fws.gov or call 844-397-8477

To NOAA for marine mammals or fish:

Call 800/853-1964

MARIN BIRDLOG: OCTOBER 2019

By Noah Arthur

Migration continues through October in Marin, with migrating vagrants still arriving from all points on the compass, along with a few early winter rarities. The first new rarity of this October was a **Northern Waterthrush** at the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks on the 4th (DS), joined by a female

Hooded Warbler on the 5th (GS), and a **Gray Flycatcher** on the 6th (DL).

Also on the 5th, an **Evening Grosbeak** flew calling over the Inverness Tennis Club (FM). Another nice flyover was a **Black Swift** on Hawk Hill on the 6th (EG).

One of the classic October rarities in Marin (and one which presumably arrives as “reverse” migrants from northern Mexico), a **Tropical Kingbird** was at Rodeo Lagoon on the 6th (WL, DW). A **Vesper Sparrow**, another regular October vagrant, was at the Lagoon on the 7th (WL, DW).

The first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season arrived in Corte Madera on the 9th (NW), and the first **Eurasian Wigeon** at Abbotts Lagoon on the 12th (DM).

Perhaps only the fourth record for Marin, a ‘**Gray-headed**’ **Dark-eyed Junco** was found at the Fish Docks on the 11th (DS). This subspecies, a



William Legge

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

potential future split, breeds in the interior West, occurring on the West Coast only as a very rare vagrant. Probably as rare for the Outer Point, though resident just inland, a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was at the Fish Docks on the 12th (AM). Also on the 12th a **Band-tailed Pigeon** was at Nunes Ranch (JM, RF, LSw), a **Vesper Sparrow** was at Nunes Plateau, and several **Lapland Longspurs** were at Nunes and Spaletta plateaus (OM, DM).

A small push of **Evening Grosbeaks** apparently hit the Marin coast on the 13th, with one bird at Bolinas (MD) and two flocks comprising a total of 10 birds at Pt. Reyes Coast Camp (JG). Also on the 13th, a **Tropical Kingbird** was at Las Gallinas (AM), a getting-late **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Drakes Beach (DM), and a **Costa's Hummingbird** was at a feeder in Bahia (MR). A **Blue-winged Teal** was in the pond at Drakes on the 14th (MD).

Another **Tropical Kingbird**, this one at the Fish Docks, showed up on the 18th (RC).

A **Pacific Golden-plover** and a **Red Knot** were at Drakes Corner on the 20th (MS, LSt, LC). Also on the 20th, a **Red-throated Pipit** was at Abbotts Lagoon (JB).

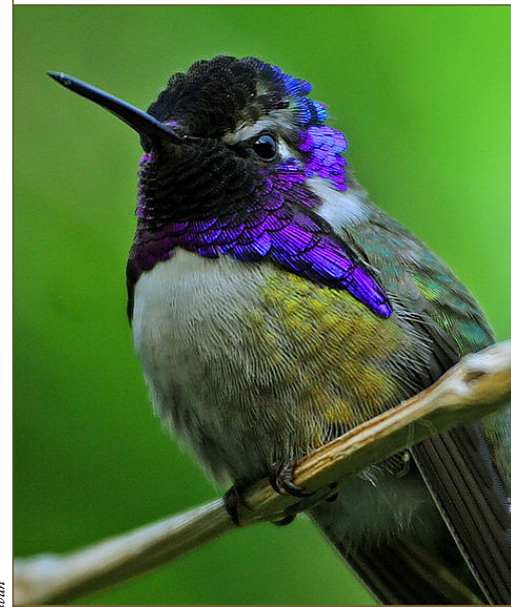
Yet another **Tropical Kingbird** was at Limantour Beach on the 21st (JW). On the 22nd, an immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was caught at the Palomarin banding station. Adding to the **Evening Grosbeak** irruption was a calling fly-over at Muir Beach on the 23rd (AH). Also at Muir Beach on the 23rd was a **Black-and-white Warbler** (AH). A **Green-tailed Towhee** was along the Palomarin Trail on the 25th (BeA, BoA).

Both very late and more typical of September or early October, a **Least Flycatcher** was at Pine Gulch in Bolinas on the 26th (MD), and a **Broad-winged Hawk** at the Fish Docks on the 29th (LN).

The rarest bird of the month came on the 28th as an adult **Yellow-crowned Night-heron** in Sausalito (TW), which was enjoyed by many birders in the following days.

Another **Tropical Kingbird** and a ‘**Yellow-shafted**’ **Northern Flicker** were along the Tomales Point Trail on the 29th (DM, CD).

Observers and Acronyms **AH:** Adrian Hinkle, **AM:** Alex Merritt, **BeA:** Bettina Arrigoni, **BoA:** Bob Arrigoni, **CD:** Cedric Duhalde, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **DS:** Dan Singer, **DW:** David Wiechers, **EG:** Eli Gross, **FM:** Frank Mantlik, **GS:** Gavin Stacey, **JB:** Jonah Benningfield, **JG:** Juan Garcia, **JM:** Joseph Morlan, **JW:** James Watts, **LC:** Lucas Corneliusen, **LSt:** Lucas Stephenson, **LSw:** Linda Swanson, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **MR:** Maggie Rufo, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **NW:** Nick Whelan, **OM:** Oscar Moss, **RC:** Richard Cimino, **RF:** Robbie Fischer, **TW:** T. Walter, **WL:** William Legge



Joy Sullivan

Costa's Hummingbird

IRA Charitable Rollover Gifts

If you are age 70½ or older, you can turn your required minimum distribution from a traditional or Roth IRA account into a tax-favored charitable gift. You can give up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as Marin Audubon without paying income tax on the withdrawal.

Because of recent changes in tax law, these qualified charitable distributions may now offer an additional benefit. Beginning in 2018, the standard deduction is nearly doubled and itemized deductions for state and local taxes are limited to \$10,000. As a result, many taxpayers who previously itemized deductions will now find it advantageous to take the standard deduction instead. These taxpayers will no longer deduct their charitable contributions, but they may still reduce their tax burden by reducing their taxable income with a qualified charitable distribution from an IRA.

To request a qualified charitable distribution from an IRA to Marin Audubon, please contact your IRA administrator or custodian (the bank or broker that holds your IRA) and request that they initiate the transfer and process a check to Marin Audubon Society.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Laura Closterhouse, Joy Fillman, Karen A. Halvorsen, Lisa Holm, Stephanie Levin, Marcia Morrissey, Stephanie Ricardo, Susan Schlosser, Eliza Welch



The Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- Jan. 11 **Field Trip:** San Joaquin
With *Ruthie Rudesill*
- Jan. 16 **Field Trip:** Birding the Northwest
Passage
With *David Wimpfheimer*
- Jan. 18 **Field Trip:** Bolinas
With *Jim White & Bob Battagin*
- Jan. 20 **Field Trip:** Loch Lomond Yacht Harbor
With *Jim White*
- Jan. 22 **Field Trip:** Corte Madera Ecological
Reserve
With *Rich Cimino*
- Jan. 28 **Field Trip:** Skaggs Island
Registration opens December 23, 2019
With *Murray Berner*
- Feb. 2 **Boat Trip:** Sacramento Delta
Registration opens December 9, 2019
With *David Wimpfheimer*

Check website for updates and details

♻️ Printed on 100% recycled paper

SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

We invite you to become a Chapter-supporting member of Marin Audubon Society (MAS) to support our important habitat protection and restoration work, conservation advocacy, our full calendar of birding field trips and speakers and our newsletter, *The Rail*. Marin Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon (NAS). However, becoming a **Chapter-Supporting Member** of MAS is separate and distinct from a membership in NAS. While MAS works with NAS on issues of mutual concern, we are a separate non-profit Section 501(c)(3) all-volunteer organization. Marin-based NAS members do receive this MAS newsletter, *The Rail*, however we encourage all NAS members to also become Chapter-supporting members of MAS to support our local work. Very little of our funding comes from NAS, and we rely on our MAS Chapter-supporting members and donors to help us fund our land acquisitions, restorations, habitat protection, conservation advocacy, this newsletter and our local programs.

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

You can join MAS or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal by going to www.marinaudubon.org. Alternatively, you can join by filling out this form and sending us your payment by mail.

ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO JOIN NATIONAL AUDUBON FOR THE FIRST TIME.

MAS will receive 100% of your initial membership if you enter **MAS's chapter code C04** on your application. To join, go to www.audubon.org/join.

The best option for the birds: Join MAS **and** 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**.

- Enroll me as a Chapter-Supporting Member
- Renewal
- New Member
- \$25 Annual rate for students (18 years and under) and seniors (65 and over)
- \$35 Basic
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$500 Patron
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$1,000 Benefactor
- Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ _____

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Fill out form and mail to:
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