



Bill Keener

Harbor porpoises

Bill Keener, a biologist with Golden Gate Cetacean Research, will present the results of the latest studies on the cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) of San Francisco Bay. This is a good news story about the health of our local marine ecosystem and how three species have begun to use the Bay: harbor porpoises, bottlenose dolphins, and humpback whales.

The porpoises returned to San Francisco Bay after an absence of 65 years. Bill will discuss the porpoises' abundance and life history, including their social behavior and interactions with another cetacean found in the Bay, the bottlenose dolphin. The dolphins have been expanding their range north from Southern California, and are now resident along the shores of Marin County and inside the Bay. Bill will also share his observations about the unexpected influx of humpbacks feeding locally over the past two summers.

Bill co-founded the non-profit Golden Gate Cetacean Research in 2010 to focus scientific effort on the porpoises, dolphins and whales in San Francisco Bay and along the Northern California coast. His work with marine mammals began thirty years ago when he was Executive Director of The Marine Mammal Center in the Marin Headlands.



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Corte Madera Marsh Restoration Begins and Progresses Quickly



Barbara Salzman

Excavators and trucks rapidly returned tidal action to MAS's latest marsh restoration project in Corte Madera and within two hours of the last breach Least Sandpipers found the new tidelands.

After more than 30 years trying to protect the property, two years raising funds for the purchase, and two years planning and getting permits, our Corte Madera Marsh restoration is, as we go to press, almost finished.

The work has proceeded at a fast pace. Hanford, our construction company, has assigned a large crew that is working diligently and the weather has been dry. Good for our project but bad for most everything else. The work is expected to be substantially complete by the end of December, and no significant rain is predicted during that time.

The excavators and trucks have removed fill from half of the site to lower the elevations and have excavated channels so that now seeds of marsh plants will be carried in by the tides along with sediments and be deposited as the tidal waters slow. The seeds will grow and revegetate the marsh naturally. We've also

created a habitat island. Ridgway's Rail and Salt Marsh Harvest Mice biological monitors are on-site to ensure no endangered species are impacted by the excavation.

The major problem with the excavation has been the debris buried by Holtzinger Construction Company 40 to 50 years ago. Lumber, sticks, and some massive logs were unearthed at the location of the channel at the north end. The excavated debris was buried in the large berm that will be converted to transition zone habitat and in the two much smaller mounds on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife property. Silt fences were put in place to stop debris from entering the bay.

All of the marsh plain is now lowered, the channels excavated, and three breaches were cut in the outer berm on December 22. No more than two hours had passed after the last channel was opened, when a small flock of Least

continued on page 5

IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| President's Message | 2 |
| Field Trips | 3, 6 and 7 |
| Conservation Report | 4 |
| Habitat Stewardship | 6 |
| Birdlog | 7 |

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| President | Barbara Salzman 924-6057 |
| Vice President | Lowell Sykes 388-2821 |
| Secretary | Everett Clark 789-9224 |
| Treasurer | Susan Winston 949/632-0908 |
| Conservation | Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057 |
| Field Trips | Jane Medley 559/760-1551 |
| Membership | William Legge 388-7883 |
| Fundraising | Everett Clark 789-9224 |
| Speaker Series/Programs | Susan Kelly 883-9505 |
| Special Projects | Jude Stalker 680-6291 |
| Nominating | Phil Peterson 828-4780 |
| Editor, <i>The Rail</i> | Bob Hinz, 383-8688 |
| Website | |
| Property Management | Ed Nute 669-7710 |
| Publicity | Barbara Freitas 924-7477 |
| 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.

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

©2018 Marin Audubon Society

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 MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

Winter is always an exciting time of year in the Bay Area. We have thousands of overwintering waterfowl and shorebirds that will leave us in spring to nest further north. So you need to see and learn about them now. It's been an exciting month for Marin Audubon in particular. We have begun our tidal marsh restoration after so many years of trying to protect this site. We have saved and will have restored the property to tidal marsh—with the help of many generous volunteers and donors—certainly by the end of January. In the coming month, we look forward to finishing the construction work and then watching it gradually evolve into a thriving marsh and taking an active part in creating transition zone habitat by planting and tending the native plants that we will install.

In the new year, we also look forward to settling our lawsuits with the Marin County Open Space District, continuing to work to enhance habitats owned by all Marin Audubon members, purchasing new baylands properties, as well as continuing to acquire habitats that are at risk, and continuing our educational field trips and Speaker Series. We hope you will join us.

One way you can help during the coming year is to volunteer with Marin Audubon activities. Why not make a New Year's resolution to volunteer with MAS several hours a month? We always need help with planting and weed removal, particularly at Bahia and Triangle Marsh, and soon at our Corte Madera Ecological Reserve restoration site. In addition, we need help attracting and coordinating volunteers. A background in habitat enhancement would be helpful, but no experience is necessary. We still need a Membership Secretary to keep our membership list current so that we can best communicate with our members.

After many years on our Board Martha Jarocki will be taking a break. We'll miss her thoughtful input at Board meetings and willingness to help. But she's not going away, fortunately. She has agreed to stay on as Chair of the Mother's Day Picnic, help with publicity and with stewardship at the Corte Madera restoration site. We look forward to continuing to seeing you often, Martha.

We are in the midst of our Christmas Bird Count season as this newsletter goes to press. Our counts are going well. I want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to John



Some of the Hicks Valley team counting birds on the Soulajoule Reservoir and adjacent ranchlands during the Cheep Thrills Christmas Bird Count on December 14

Longstreth and Tom Gaman, who retired last year, for their years of service as compilers of the Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count. And a special thank you also to this year's compilers Susan Kelly and David Sexton for Cheep Thrills, Ed Nute and Bob Hinz for Southern Marin, and Todd Plummer, George and Sandy Curth, Robin Blaney and Susan Ives for Point Reyes. Compiling the counts is complicated involving finding and assigning volunteers, arranging and managing the compilation dinners and afterwards entering all of the data into the National Audubon data base.

At this traditional time of giving, we thank those who have already donated and remind those who have not, that it is not too late to give a generous gift to Marin Audubon this year. You will be rewarded by knowing that you have made a real difference locally by helping us continue our efforts and programs. We have some major expenses with the two lawsuits against the Open Space District, possible new acquisitions in the Black Point area and increased field trips and workshops, which you may have noticed. If you haven't given yet, it is not too late. Thank you again for your generosity that enables us to continue our programs and efforts for wildlife.

Have a wonderful new year everyone!

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.

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

Thursday, January 4, 2018

8:30 AM to noon – **NOTE EARLY START**
With Sande and Bob Chilvers

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. Join our skilled leaders as we search for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. December trip participants were rewarded with multiple views of the American Bittern in Pond 1 as well as ample time to study a solo female Redhead still hanging out in Pond 2.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, so come assist in our search. 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.

BIRDING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE Tomales, Lawson's Landing, Chileno Valley

Thursday, January 11, 2018

9 AM to 3:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

This field trip is a repeat of last year's popular exploration of the less familiar habitats in Marin near the town of Tomales. We will meet at the Tomales Bakery, and our itinerary for the day will cover coastal and interior habitats. Our first destination will be Lawson's Landing, a private resort near the mouth of Tomales Bay. Loons, grebes (including Red-necked Grebe), ducks, and Brant can be quite numerous here. Shorebirds are diverse here as well. After birding the coast, the rest of the day may be spent covering the open grasslands, wetlands, and forests of this part of Marin. Raptor sightings may include Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, and Merlin, and, if we are lucky, we may spot the now uncommon-in-Marin Loggerhead Shrike.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Tomales Bakery at 9 AM. Plan on arriving early to sample the delicious pastries. If the bakery is

closed, the deli nearby has a nice variety of food and beverages. Check your map for your best route to Tomales. You can head west from Hwy 101 at Old Redwood Hwy in Petaluma or from Novato at San Marin Dr. The address of the bakery is 27000 Hwy 1, Tomales. Allow about an hour from Marin. Light rain will not cancel this trip, but a heavy storm will.

LOCH LOMOND YACHT HARBOR San Rafael

Monday, January 15, 2018

9 AM to noon

With Jim White

Join Jim for an easy stroll around the Loch Lomond Yacht Harbor breakwater recently refortified and made wheelchair accessible with a paved path out to the end. The path provides panoramic views of the surrounding bay and gives you the feeling of actually being out on the bay in close proximity to the Marin Islands. Winter birds here include Black-bellied Plover, Black Turnstone, Least & Western Sandpipers, Black Oystercatcher, and a variety of ducks on the bay. We may stop by the local bait shop where various egrets and herons hang out as well as check out the new Andy's Market for coffee and/or snacks. If time allows, we may follow Point San Pedro Road further along the bayshore in search of additional shorebirds and wintering waterfowl.

DIRECTIONS: Head east on Second Street in San Rafael, which merges with Third St. and then becomes Point San Pedro Rd. Continue approximately 2 miles past the Montecito Shopping Center to a traffic light at the intersection of Pt. San Pedro Rd. and Loch Lomond Dr. Turn right here, then turn left at the new Andy's Market (75 Loch Lomond Dr.), and continue to the end of the road where you will find ample parking and a public restroom. Dress warmly as some winter days here are cold and windy. Heavy rain cancels.

BOLINAS LAGOON

No. 1, Birding in Marin (BIM) Series

Saturday, January 20, 2018

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join us as we begin our fifth season of Birding in Marin with Jim and Bob. Last year for the second time, our group exceeded Jim's goal of spotting 200 bird species during our monthly field trips and ended the year with a total of 205 species. Not too shabby! We now invite you to help us forge a new record for 2018 by participating in our monthly trips to twelve of Marin's most

productive birding hot spots.

Bolinas Lagoon, one of Marin's Important Bird Areas (IBA), is home to many resident bird species and also serves as a wintering ground for thousands of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. We will scan the lagoon from our meeting area and from two or three other pullouts along our route. Then we will drive 3 miles to the Duxbury Reef overlook to see what is happening on and over the ocean. The Bolinas Mesa oxidation ponds often provide another good place to look for birds. We will then take a lunch break in downtown Bolinas. After lunch with the lower tide we will look for shorebirds near the Pine Gulch Creek delta.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at 8:30 AM on Hwy 1 at the Stinson/Bolinas Primary School, which is 1.5 miles north of the central Stinson Beach stop sign. Heavy rain cancels.

CYPRESS GROVE RESEARCH CENTER Marshall

Thursday, January 25, 2018

9:30 AM to 2:00 PM

With John Kelly

John Kelly, longtime friend of Marin Audubon and soon-to-be-retiring Director of Conservation Science for Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR), will lead our trip to see winter waterbirds and shorebirds on Tomales Bay. This excursion will feature a visit to the Cypress Grove Research Center of ACR, with field observations and discussions about the identification, conservation and ecology of Tomales Bay birds. We will view waterbirds and shorebirds along the east shore of the bay, then carpool to ACR's remote Tom's Point Preserve at the northern end of the bay where we will end our day. We have appreciated John's willingness to lead this annual field trip for our members and wish him the best with his retirement plans.

DIRECTIONS: The Cypress Grove Research Center is on State Highway 1, about 1/2 mile north of the town of Marshall. (Marshall is 9 miles north of Point Reyes Station or 7 miles south of Tomales.) The entry gate is on the bay side of the road and marked with the address "20545." Look for a small sign with ACR's green and white egret logo mounted on the gate pole. Enter through the gate, continue in on the entry road and take the left-hand fork to the parking area. Walk down the trail at the northwest corner of the parking area to the main buildings in the lawn area. The main office is in Cabin #2. Heavy rain cancels.

MORE FIELD TRIPS ON PAGES 2 AND 7

CONSERVATION

Marin Audubon Conservation Committee reviews critical issues related to wildlife habitats and comments to cities, agencies, and other jurisdictions. To attend, phone Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057.

UPDATE ON RICHARDSON BAY ANCHOR-OUTS

Hats off to the City of Sausalito and Richardson Bay Regional Agency for their actions to clean up debris, derelict boats, and illegal buoys from Richardson Bay. We support and encourage these efforts to protect Richardson Bay from impacts of anchor-outs living on the Bay. Such efforts are supported by all Richardson Bay jurisdictions to avoid the floating debris being carried about in storms and damaging shoreline properties. We also applaud bringing in the County Health and Human Services to help the anchor-out occupants with housing and other services.

Among the stated goals of the effort was “to make sure vessels comply with Sausalito’s and Richardson’s Bay Regional Agency laws.” Sausalito’s recently revised codes providing for a 10-hour limit on vessels in city waters and a 72-hour rule that if violated could lead to impoundment. This means that all of the anchor-outs in Sausalito waters are in violation.

It is not only Sausalito that has codes and regulations limiting stays on the bay, ALL jurisdictions have similar, but not identical ordinances. No governmental jurisdiction allows permanent living on the bay outside of legal marinas that provide services, oversight and control.

We continue to urge Sausalito and RBRA to work together on removing debris, illegal buoys and the like. This is the relatively easy part. Dealing with the complex and very difficult matter of removing the anchor-out vessels and people is much harder.

The RBRA has hired a new Executive Director, Beth Pollard. Ms. Pollard has long experience with local governments in Fairfax and more recently Albany. After getting to know the local community and conditions through January, Beth plans to prepare a range of options, opportunities and challenges for changes in policies, ordinances, plans or actions and to continue to work with the RBRA Board and community members toward adopting a Work Plan. The Plan is scheduled for approval by the Board in November/December 2018.

It is unclear when, or if, an effort will be made to address removing the occupied vessels. We’ve repeatedly suggested that an effort be made to look into the slips in existing marinas that were committed to take some anchor-outs at the time of the establishment of the Richardson Bay Special Area Plan as a place to start along with Human Service help. We

will continue to urge that the RBRA move in a timely manner to remove the permanent residential use from the Bay.

Another new person addressing the anchor-out problem is Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, a Coastal Policy Solutions consultant hired by Audubon California to focus on protecting the eelgrass in Richardson Bay. Rebecca will be working on getting the anchor-outs away from the eelgrass.

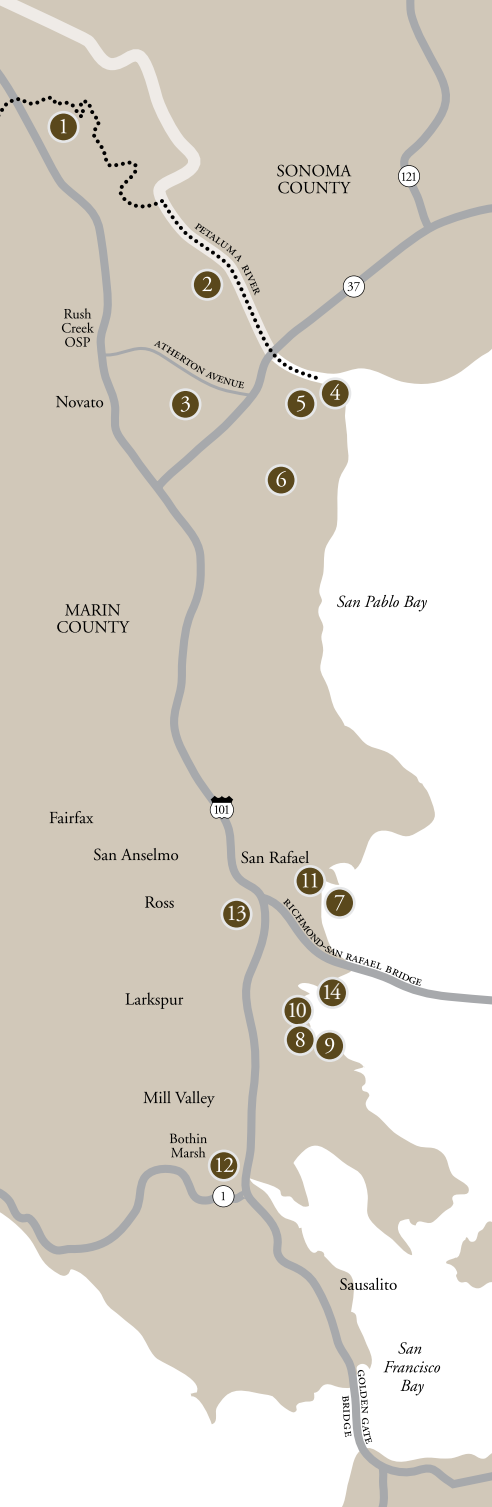
RESTORATION HARDWARE

On December 5, the Corte Madera Town Council approved a series of resolutions changing the zoning and land use designation for the ‘gravel lot’ site and a new 46,000-square-foot building in the current parking lot of The Village Shopping Center. These approvals came after only one planning commission meeting and one council meeting—an unusual occurrence in Marin. The Town is also giving a 99-year lease to the shopping center owners, Macerich Corp., for the gravel lot.

MAS concerns rested with potential impacts on the Shorebird Marsh which is an important habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and other species including White Pelican and Forster’s Tern. The Bay Trail wanted to reroute the trail from along the street to between the gravel lot and Shorebird Marsh. Fortunately, the Council did not go along with that request. The council required fencing and directed staff to work with Marin Audubon on the design. Apparently, there was some discussion on possible designs.

SAN GERONIMO GOLF COURSE ACQUISITION

The Board of Supervisors held yet another hearing on the purchase of the San Geronimo Golf Course on December 13, because it had been brought to their attention that they were a few days off scheduling the required number of days to make such decisions. This time many fewer people attended, eleven spoke and all but two supported the acquisition. The Supervisors voted 4-1 to pursue the acquisition with Supervisor Arnold dissenting saying that there may be other important matters to spend county money on. She might have been thinking of projects that were to be funded by the flood control ballot measure that was recently rejected by Novato voters.



MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

| | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Petaluma Marsh | 180 acres |
| 2. Bahia | 60 acres |
| 3. Simmons Slough | 144 acres |
| 4. Norton Avenue Pond | 4 parcels |
| 5. Black Point Parcels | 2 parcels |
| 6. Arroyo San Jose | 2 parcels |
| 7. Tidelands at Murphy's Rock | 34 acres |
| 8. Corte Madera Marsh | 1.8 acres |
| 9. Triangle Marsh | 31 acres |
| 10. San Clemente Creek | 4.34 acres |
| 11. Tiscornia Marsh | 20 acres |
| 12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio | 2 acres |
| 13. Cal Park | <1 acre |
| 14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site | 5.2 acres |

CDFW EXPANDS LAND PASS PROGRAM

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is expanding its Lands Pass Program to require a CDFW lands pass for all visitors 16 or older on 43 wildlife areas and ecological reserves.

CDFW's Land Pass Program began in 1988 as a way to broaden the funding base beyond hunters and anglers to pay for the management and operation of some wildlife areas and ecological reserves. In 2012, the California Legislature directed CDFW to expand the program so that all visitors contribute to the management of the places they enjoy and appreciate. No CDFW lands in Marin County or nearby Sonoma County are in the program, but passes will be required for these other units you might visit: Napa-Sonoma Marshes (Green Island Unit Only), Grizzly Island, Los Banos, Gray Lodge and Elkhorn Slough Wildlife Areas. Most are in more distant parts of the state. A list of the properties where the Lands Passes will be required, plus additional information, is available at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/lands-pass.

A daily lands pass costs \$4.32 and an annual lands pass \$25.10. School groups (defined as preschool through graduate school and environmental education clubs) are exempt, along with youth groups, volunteers and researchers while they are working on land pass properties.

Passes can be used on any site but are not sold on sites. They can be purchased online at www.ca.wildlifelicense.com/internetsales, by phone at (800) 565-1458, and in-person wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold (locations at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing). Many wildlife areas and ecological reserves are in remote locations with limited or no cell service or Wi-Fi availability, so passes should be purchased in advance.

All Land Pass revenue will go to managing California's native species and habitats on CDFW lands. Providing the name of the property you plan to visit is not required during the purchase process, but it would assist CDFW with directing funds to that property. For additional information about the Lands Pass Program, contact Julie Horenstein at julie.horenstein@wildlife.ca.gov.

eBIRD LAUNCHES SENSITIVE SPECIES INITIATIVE

For some species that are threatened with extinction eBird will no longer reveal site-specific data on its popular bird observations website. This important initiative will correct disturbance problems that have occurred in Marin with Northern Spotted Owl and other

species. According to Birdlife International 13% of the bird species worldwide are threatened with extinction.

In launching its new Sensitive Species initiative (<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/sensitive-species-in-ebird>), eBird explained, "We cannot protect the species we care about without knowing where and when they occur. However, these site-level data can also put certain species at incredible risk. Fine-scale site information can be used by hunters and trappers to target certain species. eBird has a responsibility to protect the specific locations of these species so that the data are not used to exploit these birds."

Throughout the world, birds are hunted and killed for sport, trapped for the caged-bird market in many countries, sold into pet and falconry trades and disturbed in other ways. The Helmeted Hornbill, for example, is hunted and killed so its bill can be carved like ivory. Parrots have long been exploited for the pet trade resulting in some species now being extinct. In some areas, owls are becoming increasingly popular for the pet trade. In Marin, impacts come from photographers, birders, and interested public who may gather near birds, perhaps not knowing or caring that their presence can be impacting nesting birds and/or fledglings. Northern Spotted Owl fledglings, for example, are disturbed by photographers, loose dogs, birders playing tapes or going too close to nests or other sensitive bird areas, and groups of viewers. Young learning to fly can end up on the ground where they are particularly vulnerable to unleashed dogs.

Species included in Marin as sensitive species include the Northern Spotted Owl and Ridgway's Rail.

To learn more on this massive problem, please watch a short (12 minutes) documentary (<https://vimeo.com/240355799>) and visit the Silent Forest website, www.silentforest.eu.

Anyone may use eBird, <http://ebird.org/content/ebird>, to record their observations of birds anywhere in the world. You must register (free) with a username and password. Your data will need to include the type of observation (e.g., were you at a fixed location or did you travel a fixed distance), the location where you made the observations, and the date and time. For help in getting started, visit <http://help.ebird.org>.

Corte Madera Inn

We've heard that the owner of the Corte Madera Inn has hired a new architect to design his rebuild project. Let's hope the process of redesigning the building includes keeping the pond and trees for the roosting Black-crowned Night-Herons.

Northern Spotted Owls



Bureau of Land Management

In Marin County Northern Spotted Owls are one of eBird's "sensitive species." Juveniles are particularly at risk by disturbance.

Marsh Restoration *continued from page 1*

Sandpipers were spotted roosting on one of the exposed higher areas in the marsh plain. This is the first time this area has been habitat for shorebirds in more than 50 years.

Our Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse monitor, Rachel Spadafore, found no Salt Marsh Harvest Mice, but our Ridgway's Rail monitor, Mary Anne Flett, was more fortunate. This endangered species was heard many times throughout the project, and seen a number of times also. One very special sighting occurred as the main channel was being excavated. To the delight of the about seven folks who were standing by, a Ridgway's Rail walked right by in the channel we were connecting to. Work was stopped, it looked at us and kept on walking. What a special experience for us all.

Some of the bay mud excavated from the marsh in order to connect the new with an existing channel was trucked up Corte Madera Creek to Marin County Parks' Hal Brown Park. It will be reused in a culvert replacement project to restore tidal marsh.

The purpose of the Corte Madera restoration project is to restore tidal marsh and transition zone habitat on a six-acre site that includes both Marin Audubon and California Department of Fish and Wildlife lands that were filled during the last half century. The project benefits endangered Ridgway's Rails and many resident and migratory species.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Hired crews have done most of our planting for the season, but volunteers will be finishing it in January. Some of that will involve removing an invasive perennial and putting a native grass in its place. The troublesome invasive annuals are still either too small to deal with or haven't even appeared. Radish, for example, one of the earliest, is only a couple of inches tall.

Act locally and join us on a workday. Witness restoration firsthand 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, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: January 6, February 3

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

Bahia, Novato:

Monthly workdays are continuing but on a more irregular schedule. If you would like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Bundy, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Hinz, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

We'd like to enhance our volunteer program. If you enjoy working with people and support what Marin Audubon does, please contact Barbara Salzman to find out more about this volunteer opportunity.

BENEFIT MAS

Make your next 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/94-6076664>.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

We are in the season for planting—our winter rainy season. So far we haven't had so much rain, but we are hoping for a change, preferably one that does not interfere too much with our excavation work at Corte Madera.

BAHIA

We have about 450 creeping wildrye grass (*Elymus triticoides*) plugs that will be planted during December and January by our volunteers and a crew to finish the job.

TRIANGLE MARSH

The situation is similar for Triangle, but there it is a different grass, *Stipa pulchra*, grown by The Watershed Nursery for us, that needs planting. We anticipate volunteers planting about fifty and hiring a crew to plant the rest. Volunteers planted fifty *Achillea* (yarrow) earlier in December.

PETALUMA MARSH

Several of us visited our Petaluma Marsh property on the Cheep Thrills Count and we were very pleased to see much more vegetation coming in on the bench; it has taken 10 years to come in as a result of high levels of sulfides in the soil.

MAS PROPERTY TOUR

Every year, our Board tours most of our properties to introduce new Board members to them, check on how the properties are doing, identify problems, and congratulate ourselves on having done an admirable job protecting them. This year we visited Triangle Marsh, the Corte Madera project site, Tiscornia Marsh, Simmons

Slough, Bahia and properties we own and are anticipating owning at Black Point. Due to time restraints, we did not get to all of Bahia and to our other properties.

All was well on most of the properties. We did identify junk that has again accumulated at Bahia and lumber someone deposited on one of our sites in Black Point.

Proposition 1 Grant for Burdell Properties

The state's Wildlife Conservation Board has approved \$39.7 million of Proposition 1 (from 2014) funds for 39 Ecosystem and Marsh Restoration and Protection projects throughout the state. One is in Marin County at Burdell Ranch.

Ducks Unlimited has been approved for a grant of \$394,452 to prepare a Tidal Marsh Feasibility study of CDFW property known as Burdell Ranch. This is the diked marsh property south of Mira Monte and surrounding the Gness Field Airport. While it would be wonderful to have the property restored to wetlands and restore a continuous band of tidal marsh along this section of the Petaluma River, the property is constrained by the airport and the need to maintain levees around that property in order to protect the runway. FEMA's policy of not allowing wetlands within a certain distance of runways, and the Burdell Wetland Mitigation Bank are also constraints.

MAS FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 3)

SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP

Boat leaves from and returns to the Antioch Marina

Sunday, February 4, 2018 (Super Bowl Sunday)
8:15 AM to 4:30 PM
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, naturalist, and owner of Dolphin Charters, will be our captain. 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 the 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.

Given that our boat is limited to just 25 participants, this trip is limited to Marin Audubon Society (MAS) members only at a cost of \$105. Our "Members Only" field trips are limited to chapter-supporting members of MAS. A membership with National Audubon Society does not qualify for participation in MAS "Members Only" field trips. Our "Members Only" field trips are a benefit we provide to MAS chapter-supporting members for their support of Marin Audubon and the work MAS undertakes in protecting and managing local habitats for the benefit of Marin's resident and migratory birds. **Registration and payment for the trip began on December 11, 2017 and will continue until all spaces are filled.** Register at www.marinaudubon.org. (For Non-MAS members, we invite you to join MAS at www.marinaudubon.org to participate in this trip.) Include the name, email address, and contact phone number of each participant. Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions prior to the trip.



MARIN BIRDLOG: NOVEMBER 2017

By Noah Arthur



Marin Raphael

Marbled Murrelet



Eric Ellington

Ancient Murrelet

As usual for this time of year, a number of more common rarities showed up during the month, including a **Golden Eagle** over Larkspur on the 27th and a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at a small pond next to Gateway Shopping Center in Marin City, accompanied by several **Greater Yellowlegs** sidekicks (DE). This is an interesting occurrence as it seems to suggest a pattern of Lesser Yellowlegs showing up in random little suburban ponds. I had a similar sighting on the San Jose CBC last winter.

Observers and Acronyms **DH:** Derek Heins, **JC:** Jim Chiropolos, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **EN:** Ed Nute, **RC:** Rich Cimino, **RD:** Ryan DiGaudio, **DE:** Daniel Edelstein

November—the most beautiful month of the year on the California coast in my opinion—often produces an interesting mix of rare birds in Marin, with occasional late fall warblers or early winter gulls and waterfowl, as well as a few species that are late fall specialties, such as the **Lapland Longspur** found at Abbotts Lagoon on the 4th of this November (DH, JC).

Another group of birds that seem to show up often in their largest numbers and diversity at this time of year is the murrelets, and on the 6th, many **Marbled** and a few **Ancient Murrelets** were spotted from a boat on Bolinas Bay (PP).

An unusual inland sighting on the 10th was two **Red Phalaropes** at Las Gallinas (EN).

A very nice bird, and another classic late fall/early winter rarity in coastal California, was a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Piper Park in Larkspur on the 14th (RC). An even more unusual, though less pleasing, discovery was a mummified dead **Dickcissel** found lying in the parking lot at Stinson Beach on the 23rd (RD). It is very possible that it was carried there from elsewhere on the grill of a car.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



Dominic Sberony

Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs



Len Blumkin

MAS FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 6)

YOLO COUNTY WINTER BIRDING

Starting in Winters

Saturday, January 27, 2018

8 AM to mid-afternoon

With John Klobas & Sarah Brooks

Yolo County offers birders diverse habitats ranging from Coast Range mountains to near sea level agricultural lands of the Sacramento Valley. Our one-day winter transect will visit many prime birding sites during the height of winter bird diversity and numbers.

We will meet in the community of Winters where we will introduce our itinerary for the day and our target birds for the morning at Lake Solano Park. The park straddles Yolo and Solano Counties along Putah Creek at the base of the Coast Range. Specialties here include Hooded Merganser, Barrow's Goldeneye, Phainopepla, Wood Duck, and raptors—perhaps even Lewis's Woodpecker. We will bird both outside and inside the park (\$5/car entry fee) and probably have lunch there.

Next, we will visit two raptor hot spots in the area around Davis, one for Ferruginous Hawks and one for Burrowing Owls. We will finish the day at the West Sacramento

ponds, still in Yolo County. The afternoon light can be extraordinary, and the larger Bridgeway pond can give us the unusual birds that are hard to find in that part of the valley: Blue-winged Teal, Canvasback, Sora, and others. Our last stop will be just minutes away at the Wood Duck ponds. This can be a jaw dropper because the ducks are close and not at all shy or restive as they are near any hunting area. Anyway, it is a great way to end the day, be within minutes of I-80, and be homeward bound before dusk.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at Rotary Park located at Main St. and Railroad Ave. in Winters. From Marin take Hwy 101 to Hwy 37 and then Hwy I-80 East. In approximately 22 miles, take Exit 56 to merge onto I-505 North toward Redding. Turn left onto Allendale Rd at Exit 6. Go under the freeway and turn right onto Winters Rd. After about 4.6 miles turn right onto Putah Creek Rd, and left onto Railroad Ave. Allow 1 hour and 40 minutes for this drive. Bring a lunch, snacks, and drinks for the day. Also pack clothing options suitable for a variety of weather conditions. Heavy rain cancels.

JEAN AND JOHN STARKWEATHER

SHORELINE PARK

San Rafael

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

10 AM to 1 PM

With Rich Cimino

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

DIRECTIONS: From the north, take Hwy 101 to the Bellam Blvd exit. Turn left on Bellam then right on East Francisco Blvd. Head east (toward the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge) for about 1-1/2 miles. Turn left at the Bay Café toward Public Shore Parking then right to the trailhead parking area. From the south take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. toward the San Rafael Bridge. Take the San Quentin exit, and then turn left to E. Francisco Blvd. For GPS, use the Bay Café address, 2165 Francisco Blvd, San Rafael.



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN RAFAEL, CA
PERMIT NO. 87

Box 599 | MILL VALLEY, CA 94942-0599

Return Service Requested

Time Value

SAVE THE DATE

- January 27 Waterbird Festival
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
 - February 1 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas
With Sande & Bob Chilvers
 - February 4 **Boat Trip:** Sacramento Delta
With David Wimpfheimer
 - February 10 **Class:** eBird Workshop
With Dan Singer
 - February 15-18 Winter Wings Festival
<http://winterwingsfest.org>
 - February 17 **Field Trip:** Nicasio/Tomaes Bay
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - February 24 **Field Trip:** Skaggs Island
With Murray Berner
- Check website for updates and details

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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.

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.

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 Basic
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$500 Patron
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$1,000 Benefactor
- Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ TELEPHONE _____

This is a Gift Membership from: _____

Please send me *The Rail* by email only.

- Master Card
- Visa

PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD:

NAME ON CREDIT CARD _____

CREDIT CARD NO. _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

Fill out form and mail to:
Membership Secretary
Marin Audubon Society
P.O. Box 599
Mill Valley, CA 94942