



Ron Dudley

American Badger is a native mammal to California's grassland ecosystems.

Marin County has a small sustaining badger population, but where are the badgers? The American Badger is rarely seen and usually misunderstood. In California, badgers have a special status since 1987, Species of Concern. Many believe with fragmented habitat, destruction of habitat and frequent vehicular strikes killing badgers, the species deserves a higher level of protection. A Threatened status would mandate consideration of protecting the badger's habitat. Badgers reside in our coastal and inland grassland ecosystems, the open spaces often utilized for agriculture and urban development.

Our speaker, Susan Kirks, is a Naturalist with 18 years of field study and observations of American Badger. She is recognized as California's leading naturalist expert on the species and also currently serves as President of Sonoma County's Madrone Audubon Society. Susan will share information with us about Marin County's badger population and how we can best understand and support conservation of this special wild creature.



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Black Point Acquisition in the Works



Ann Thomas

The acquisition property is a mix of oak wooded hillsides and low-lying diked baylands on Bayview and Hemlock Avenues, near Norton Pond, Days Island and the mouth of the Petaluma River. With the lack of rain, the baylands at the base of the hills are dry this year. Under normal rainfall years, water would be ponded in the baylands.

We are pleased to announce that we've just signed the Purchase Agreement to buy two undeveloped parcels, totaling 2.63 acres, at Hemlock and Bayview Avenues which are paper streets in an area known locally as the gridiron of Black Point in Novato. The property, located close to Norton Pond, supports diked seasonal wetlands, grasslands and oak-wooded hillside habitats. Historically, the area was a series of coves where the tides came up to meet oak-wooded hills. We have successfully breached the dikes at Bahia, restoring tidal flow to that habitat. A vision is that the outer levees that now block tidal waters from the Black Point baylands could be lowered as well.

We are now in the contingency period, during which a title search and an appraisal are being prepared. We have six months to remove contingencies, and raise the \$200,000 purchase price. If additional time is needed to complete the fundraising, we have the option to extend escrow for another six months. Our partner,

Marin Baylands Advocates, is contributing funding for the appraisal and MAS is providing funds for the deposit.

This purchase is part of the Campaign for Marin Baylands, the goal of which is to permanently protect all of the existing and diked baylands along San Francisco and San Pablo Bays in Marin County. More than 100 years ago, the gridiron area of Black Point was divided into postage stamp-sized lots that were given away, reportedly to folks who subscribed to either to the Chronicle or Reader's Digest. MAS and MBA have jointly protected nine properties in this area, so far.

Over the next six months, our organizations will be raising the funds necessary to complete the purchase. In addition to asking for our members' support, we will be applying to the Marin County Open Space District for Measure A funds and to other funding sources.

To make a donation now, send to MAS, Box 599, Mill Valley 94942. Note that the donation is for the Black Point acquisition.

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Field Trips	2 and 3
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.

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Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Bob Hinz, 383-8688
Website	Susan Kelly 883-9505
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Publicity	Barbara Freitas 924-7477
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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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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 MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

As we finish the marsh restoration at the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, my thoughts go back over our history of restoring baylands, and especially to one of our earlier efforts, the project just a few yards north of our current restoration. In 1989, we removed fill to create tidal marsh and isolate an area of fill to function as an island high tide refugia for the endangered California Clapper Rail (now Ridgway's Rail). This followed on our hiring Gary Page and Jules Evens to survey Clapper Rail use in the adjacent Heerdt Marsh. This study was the first to identify the importance of this marsh for this endangered species, and it launched the careers of Gary and Jules as experts on this species.

The event that led up to that project was a sewage spill by the City of Larkspur into Corte Madera Creek. I was asked by the then Executive Officer of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Steve Ritchie, to suggest a project to mitigate for the impacts of the spill, and when I did, we were encouraged to take on the construction. The MAS Board was as enthusiastic as I was about taking it on, and the rest is history. The channel has silted in over the years and is now a thriving marsh well-vegetated with native marsh species. It is an important part of Marin Audubon's legacy of marsh restorations.

That Ecological Reserve project wasn't actually our first restoration. Our first was in the late 1970s when a group of our volunteers removed water hyacinth from Smith Ranch Road Pond at Deer Valley Road. Later we removed non-native plants from an artificial pond at the Richardson Bay Sanitary District, and we dredged to deepen Remillard Pond in Larkspur to benefit the Western Pond Turtle. Other projects followed on properties

owned by various public agencies: (1) habitat enhancement of the muted tidal marsh at Redwood High School funded by the Coastal Conservancy; (2) improvements on properties owned by the Marin County Open Space District by removing debris and also excavating a channel to open up an area to tidal action at Bothin Marsh; (3) removing fill on State Lands property at the end of Mitchell Blvd. in San Rafael to restore tidal marsh along Gallinas Creek; and (4) replacing a culvert and enhancing Rush Creek Marsh owned by the Department of Fish and Game and the OSD. Most were funded by the Supplemental Environmental Project program that was administered by the Regional Water Board, but no longer exists. We were one of the first, if not the first, non-profit to receive funding from the Coastal Conservancy.

Without willingness of the Marin Audubon Board and my project management, none of this would have happened. In all approximately 500 acres were restored or enhanced prior to 1999 when we began to purchase properties. Since our first purchase, Triangle Marsh, we have confined our restoration work to properties that we purchased. More on our history in future issues.

We welcome Elyse Omernick who is taking over as Membership Secretary and joining the Board. Elyse's Board responsibility will be for Facebook and initiating us into Instagram. We have been wanting for some time to increase our social media presence. Elyse's enthusiasm and willingness to help is welcome.

Do you love birds and want to be involved in activities to protect them and improve their habitat? Contact Bob Hinz, our Nominating Committee Chair, to find out more about a

continued on page 7

PETALUMA RIVER BOAT TRIP

ONLINE SIGNUPS BEGIN FEBRUARY 26

Departure/return at Petaluma

Monday, April 9, 2018

9 AM to 2 PM

With Peter Colasanti

This unique excursion with Dolphin Charters will take us through a small salt water estuary off San Pablo Bay that runs about ten miles through some of the last mostly untouched salt water marshes in the Bay Area. Cruising down the Petaluma River, passengers enter a different world. We will meander past sloughs, oxbows, and marshes offering views not visible from adjacent lands. Our boat will continue into San Pablo Bay where grebes, ducks, and terns can be seen in the shallow water habitat. We will view the extensive mud flats along the edge of the bay, which often host large

numbers of shorebirds as well as the raptors that feed on them. Last year's participants raved about this unexpectedly delightful trip! Once again, we have scheduled the trip at low tide to enhance our birding opportunities.

The trip is limited to 25 people and costs \$95 for MAS Chapter-Supporting members and \$120 for non-members. (Non-member price includes a 2018 MAS Chapter-Supporting membership.) Registration and payment will begin on Monday, February 26, 2018. Register at www.marinaudubon.org. **Book your space ASAP as our boat trips often sell out quickly.** Include the name, email address, and contact phone number of each participant. Those confirmed will receive directions to the Petaluma Turning Basin and other instructions prior to the trip.

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, March 1, 2018

8:30 AM to noon

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 us as we search for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. February trip participants witnessed an American Kestrel chasing a Merlin. Other recent observers have reported a Eurasian Green-winged Teal in the area. This monthly Las Gallinas trip is consistently interesting!

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 0.5 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.

STAFFORD LAKE**Novato**

Saturday, March 3, 2018

9 AM to noon

With Bob Atwood

Located west of Novato, Stafford Lake is a beautiful but less birded area that is productive for waterfowl and raptors. Approximately 172 species of birds have been spotted at Stafford Lake throughout the years, and our group is likely to see a considerable variety of the resident as well as wintering birds. The county park has facilities and plenty of parking. The mostly level terrain and water views make for pleasant birding as we walk around a portion of the lake and the surrounding area. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in Novato, take the exit for San Marin Dr. Drive west 2.9 miles. Turn right onto Novato Blvd and follow for 2.6 miles. The park is on the left. Turn left after entering at the gatehouse and go to the parking lot. Our trip has been scheduled on a "Measure A" day of free entrance to Marin County Parks, so no fees will be required. Nice scheduling, Bob!

HALL RANCH TO HORSESHOE BAY**Point Reyes National Seashore**

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

9:30 AM to 3 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join David for a hike through several rich coastal habitats in a quest for birds, mammals, and some vigorous exercise. We will be hiking approximately four miles on relatively rough trails with a total elevation gain of some 500', so come prepared with comfortable hiking shoes, layered clothing, and plenty to eat and drink.

We'll start our hike at the Hall Ranch (Barn Owl, Say's Phoebe, and American Kestrel possible), walk towards Horseshoe Bay (Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Burrowing Owl possible), bird at Horseshoe Bay and Beach

(Surf Scoter, Brant, various grebes and loons all likely), and hike up towards Drake's Estero Overlook (varied shorebirds, cormorants, ducks, gulls, and American White Pelican probable). Last year we were lucky to come across a dozen Surfbirds feeding on a rock close to shore.

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

BODEGA BAY

Saturday, March 10, 2018

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

With Gene Hunn

We will begin birding at Doran Spit (\$7 permit required for the day, or carpool with a permit holder). Our first stop will be the Cypress Picnic Area (public restrooms available) opposite the Rich Stallcup viewing platform. The tide will be falling and about halfway out, so we might hope for a variety of shorebirds. We will then walk the outer beach in search of Snowy Plovers and "whatnot" before checking the jetties.

Next stop will be Diekmann's parking lot overlook (hummers, warblers) before heading around the west side of Bodega Harbor out to Bodega Head for a sea watch via Coleman Cove. We'll eat our picnic lunches at the Bodega Dunes Campground amongst the pines (or pick up a chowder to go at Spud Point). Time permitting, we may continue north up the coast to the lookouts at Duncan's Landing, Goat Rock, and Jenner.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at Bodega Harbor at the pullout on the west side of State Hwy 1 between the Doran/Bird Walk parking lot and Smith Brothers Rd. Pack warm clothing, hats, lunch and snacks. Also, bring scopes. Heavy rain cancels.

MOUNT TAMALPAIS/CORTE MADERA MARSH**No. 3, Birding in Marin (BIM) Series**

Saturday, March 17, 2018

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join us this date in celebration of spring and Jim White's 78th birthday! Mount Tamalpais is a good area for seeing Pileated Woodpecker. We also hope to find Red Crossbills, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and a couple of early spring migrants like Western Tanager, Cassin's Vireo, and Black-throated Gray or Hermit Warbler.

This year we will NOT be repeating the, might we say, "dicey" hike up the Simmons Trail, which proved challenging to a number of last year's participants.

We will picnic on the mountain then visit the lowland marshes in Corte Madera. Last year this was a particularly rewarding part of the day with sightings of 6 Blue-winged Teal, 3 Ridgway's Rails, and numerous other avian marsh denizens.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at Rock Springs, which is located on East Ridgecrest Blvd in Mount Tamalpais State Park. From Hwy 101 take Hwy 1 toward Stinson Beach and Muir Woods. Turn right on Panoramic Hwy. After approximately 5 miles, turn right on Pan Toll Rd. Then, after 1.2 miles turn left on Ridgecrest Blvd. Heavy rain cancels.

TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK**Petaluma**

Saturday, March 31, 2018

8:45 AM to mid-afternoon

With Peter Colasanti

This 1,700-acre park, located between the Petaluma River and Sonoma Valley, includes pristine farm and grasslands, ridges, a seasonal freshwater lake, ponds, wetlands, and many other natural resources. This area is not open to the general public without permits, but we will be allowed access with our guide, Peter Colasanti.

We will meet at 8:45 AM at the gate at the top of Cannon Lane, which is off Lakeville Highway just south of and across from Papa's Taverna (restaurant now closed). WE WILL DEPART FROM THE GATE PROMPTLY AT 9 AM. Peter's permit requires our group to enter and leave the park together, and anyone arriving late will not be allowed to enter. There is a \$7/day vehicle use fee at the Park. We will hike several miles to check all the available habitats at the park: grassland, oak woodland, riparian corridors, ponds, ridgelines, and ranch buildings. For those who wish to continue birding after lunch, we can visit the Ellis Creek ponds a few miles north at the south edge of Petaluma. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and be prepared to hike for several miles. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, hat and dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: The address of Papa's Taverna is 5688 Lakeville Hwy, Petaluma. From Marin take Hwy 101 north to CA-37 E toward Napa/Vallejo. Continue about 6 miles on Hwy 37 to Lakeville Hwy. Take a left on Lakeville and continue for another 6 miles. Turn right onto Cannon Lane as Papa's comes into view on the left.

RETURN OF THE TERNS**Crab Cove Visitor Center, Alameda**

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 27, 8:30 AM

Saturday, June 9, 2018

11 AM, 12:15 PM, or 1:30 PM (1 hour)

With East Bay Regional Parks District

Join Marin Audubon members for this special visit sponsored by the East Bay Regional Parks District to a nesting colony of the endangered California Least Terns in Alameda. We will meet at the Crab Cove Visitor Center for a slide show revealing the tern's long migration and fascinating behavior. Then we take a bus ride to the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge to view a nest site teeming with several hundred pairs of terns and their chicks. To avoid disturbing the endangered terns, visitors must stay on the bus to view activity. The site is accessible just once a year with limited space costing \$9 for Alameda County residents or \$11 for non-residents. Experts aboard the bus will interpret bird behavior.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED for the bus ride to the colony. Three bus tours will be offered on this date – at 11 AM, 12:15 PM and 1:30 PM. Marin Audubon members may wish to reserve spaces together on the 11 AM tour but are free to reserve space on any of the three tours. Arrive an hour before the bus ride to view the slide show, then board the bus for the visit to the tern colony. Gather after the tour for a picnic lunch near the visitor center. Reserve your space on this unique tour at: https://apm.activecommunities.com/ebparks/Activity_Search/return-of-the-terns/20818

MORE FIELD TRIPS ON PAGE 2

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.

ANCHOR OUT UPDATE — WORKSHOP AHEAD

The next step for the Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) is a workshop planned for March 8 at which they will discuss their recently approved Guiding Principles and current activities and invite public comment.

The RBRA, under the direction of their new Executive Director, Beth Pollard, has agreed on a list of Principles that will guide their decisions. The Principles address:

1. Relationships with stakeholders
2. Regard for specialized expertise and knowledge
3. Concern for impact on lives
4. Concern for environmental conditions
5. Communication between RBRA and the community
6. Collaboration
7. Fiscal responsibility
8. Deliberate speed in achieving results
9. Implementation, enforcement and maintenance
10. Meeting protocol.

See RBRA website, www.rbra.ca.gov/about-rbra/guiding-principles, for the complete Guiding Principles.

Of most concern to MAS are Principles 4 and 9. The explanation for Principle 4 recognizes that the RBRA are “stewards of the environment of the Bay and its water quality and natural resources” yet only promises to “bear in mind” the impacts of our decisions on the environment of the Bay. “Bearing in mind” is a first step, it is not stewardship. The RBRA should ensure protective stewardship of the Bay, its water, water quality, birds, eelgrass and other natural resources.

Principle 9 states “We will not adopt rules and regulations for which we will not establish credible and reliable means of operation, enforcement and maintenance.” This sounds like a way out. All they have to do is claim they cannot establish a reliable means of enforcement. This does not sound like much of a solution or protection for the Bay.

RBRA members need to hear that they are responsible for protecting the Bay, its waters, water quality, and eelgrass from ongoing degradation, and for ensuring that applicable laws and ordinances governing permanent residences on the Bay are enforced. This means that not only debris and derelict, unoccupied boats should be removed, but all boats that are permanent residences must be removed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Attend the workshop on March 8 at the Tiburon Town Hall and tell the RBRA they should protect Bay resources and by enforcing existing laws and ordinances limiting residential use on the Bay. Local ordinances and regional requirements limit stays on the bay to 72 hours. The RBRA is seeking input from community members about changes in policies, ordinances, plans and/or actions. If you cannot attend, send a letter or email to Beth Pollard, c/o Marin County Community Development Agency, Planning Division, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 308, San Rafael, CA 94903-4157, bethapollard@gmail.com.

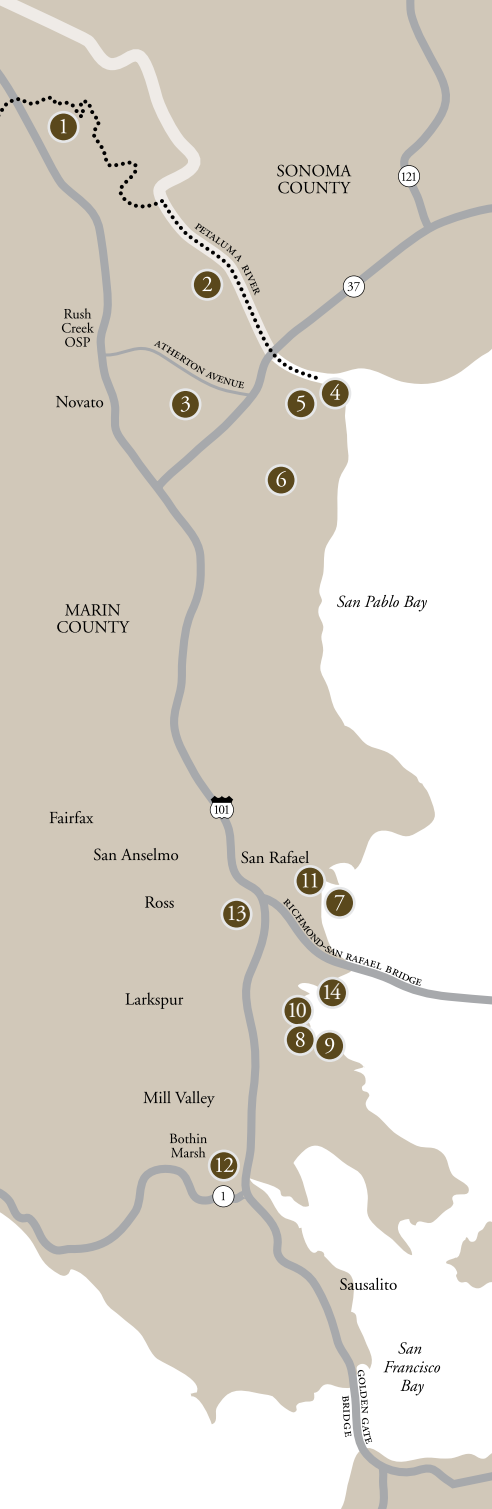
REPORT ON COMMUNITY MEETING ABOUT SEA LEVEL RISE AND TISCORNIA MARSH

In late January with arrangement by Shore Up Marin, we held the first of two community meetings as provided in our Nature-Based Adaptation to Sea level Rise grant from the Coastal Conservancy and Marin Community Foundation. Sixty members of the community filled the room to hear our consultants, Stuart Siegel, Siegel Environmental, and Deane Behrens, ESA Associates, explain how climate change is causing rising seas, what actions can be taken to help slow climate change and to adapt to sea level rise, and introduce the community to our Tiscornia Marsh project. Moderator and former Supervisor of the District, Steve Kinsey, provided comments from his experience as a supervisor.

The audience learned that climate change is the result of excess heat-trapping gasses being released from human activities. The gasses act as a blanket keeping heat in the atmosphere, resulting in higher temperatures that cause glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise.

Scientists are studying the rate of sea level rise and the projections vary widely. The 2017 California Ocean Protection Council prediction is that by 2030 a rise of 0.5 to 1 foot will occur, by 2050 between 1.1 foot and 2.7 feet is projected, and by 2100 at least 3 feet is expected.

The primary risk from the Bay is overtopping of levees. In addition to sea level rise, wind and wave action contribute to storm surges and overtopping of levees. Factors affecting local sea level rise include the amount of water in the ocean, temperature of the water,



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

climate patterns, slopes of shorelines, land subsidence and uplift, atmospheric pressure and wind and storms.

What do the projections mean for San Rafael's Canal area? FEMA flood zone maps show all of the Canal area subject to flooding with a 100-year flood event, with the Community Center, Bahia Vista School and neighborhoods being especially vulnerable because they are at a lower elevation.

While climate change is too far along to stop, we can help control or reduce it by lowering our carbon dioxide emissions and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. We can reduce emissions by reducing our consumption of fossil fuels by changing our traveling modes (walking, riding bikes, driving hybrid vehicles instead of driving gas-powered cars), using less water (water treatment uses power) and increasing recycling (using less packaging). Carbon can be taken out of the atmosphere and stored (sequestered) in plants. So, plant more plants, preferably natives that create habitat for native wildlife. MAS does this at our habitat restoration projects. Wetlands are among the most efficient natural systems for sequestering carbon.

Eventually we will have to adapt to sea level rise and we should be planning ahead. Ways to adapt include: 1) harden in place, build gigantic concrete structures that serve as walls holding back the tides, 2) retreat from floodable areas, i.e., do not build any more structures in flood risk areas and remove/relocate structures where possible, and/or 3) use nature-based adaptations such as protecting and restoring wetlands and creating living shorelines which include a range of methods that use natural methods such as vegetation. Shorelines that are fronted by marshes can have lower levees that can be built at lower cost.

Tidal marshes slow or dampen the movement of water, reducing wave height, storm surges and wave action, all of which could cause overtopping and weakening of levees. Other nature-based adaptations are beaches and gradual sloping transition zones. MAS has used gradually sloping transitions on our Bahia, Petaluma, and Corte Madera projects.

Tiscornia Marsh is eroding at a rate of one to two feet a year. We are looking to restore the marsh and stabilize the banks so that it can continue to provide habitat and help protect the people who live and work in the Canal area. Raising the already low section of levee will set the stage for future improvements to the rest of the shoreline levee. Ours is not the only low section of levee. The adjacent city-owned section that surrounds the diked marsh, the Albert J. Boro Community Center, Pickleweed Park, and the levee beside the Canalways parcel

further south along Shoreline Park are also low.

Our engineers are developing conceptual designs for the restoration of Tiscornia Marsh and improvement of our levee so that it can better protect the community and provide better habitat for wildlife that depend on the marsh. We will be holding another community meeting on Thursday April 21 during which we will present the conceptual alternatives developed by our engineers at ESA. This time we will have a bigger room.

ELECTRIC BIKES (eBIKES) ON MCOSD TRAILS

Marin Audubon has registered its opposition to the use of ebikes on Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) trails. Ebikes, or electric bicycles, are motorized two- or three-wheeled bicycles. Currently ebikes are not permitted on Open Space District MCOSD trails, but when the MCOSD attempted to clarify this to the public by adding electric bikes to an existing ordinance as prohibited uses, a crowd of opponents showed up at a supervisor's meeting to speak in support of allowing ebikes on OSD trails.

Reasons for our opposition are that ebikes would be yet another vehicle on natural trails and would contribute to changing the nature of open space preserves from quiet natural places to busy high-use areas with more activity, disturbances, noise, etc. Ebikes would contribute to making trails and open space habitats busier, increase dangers for wildlife, and increase instances of off-trail use which would damage vegetation adjacent to the trails. Risks for others would also increase as people would have to be more alert to increased traffic so they could move safely off trails.

Shouldn't the concept that MCOSD trails should be passive, quiet places bringing people closer to nature be upheld? Do all people need to be able to move through all places more easily and quickly? The nature of open space, its peace and quiet, needs to be respected and preserved. Last year the MCOSD developed an Inclusive Access Plan which identified and evaluated a mix of trails that represent the different kinds of habitat that the MCOSD manages and that are suitable for access by folks with limitations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Tell your Supervisor and the MCOSD that trails through natural habitats are not the place for motorized vehicles. They should continue the practice of not allowing ebikes on MCOSD trails. Board of Supervisors, 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903 or email address.

Yolo County Winter Birding

By John Klobas

Twenty-eight birders met on a cool, clear and dry winter morning in Winters. We spent the morning hours birding Putah Creek and the Lake Solano diversion dam looking for our target birds and found **Bald Eagle, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Osprey, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and Greater Yellowlegs**, among others.

Once inside the park, the day warmed and the sun's angle improved our viewing light even more as we picked up **Phainopepla, Cedar Waxwings, Acorn Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Brown Creepers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse**, and finally, close views in perfect light of a pair of **Pileated Woodpeckers**.

After a convivial lunch at the picnic area, we headed to east Davis for roadside **Burrowing Owls**. To my mind, these marginalized owls are among the state's most threatened species, bearing the brunt of suburban development, predation, and reduced habitat from agricultural development throughout most of California. They are not on the special concern list because of a population in the Imperial Valley that is considered stable. We saw as many as seven owls at the site that we have been monitoring closely for several years.

We finished up the day in West Sacramento at Bridgeway Pond where we found **Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged Teal, American Avocet, Sora, Green Heron, Pacific Turtle, and Killdeer**.

Thanks to all who participated in our trip.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Even the non-natives are going to be smaller than usual after this winter of low rainfall. Some of the non-native annuals, particularly radish and Italian thistle, are large enough to be removed now before there are flowers and seeds to spread. We could dig out the perennial Harding grass, but we have nothing to put in its place now that planting is finished. Those gaps seem to favor more thistles. It might be better to control the Harding grass and its seed production by repeatedly cutting it off close to the ground. We could cover a wider area. Water and mulch for the new plantings would, of course, be a good thing. There is something for everyone to do!

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: March 3, April 7

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 Hinz, Sharon McCloskey, Jude Stalker

GET A SCHEDULE OF MAS EVENTS BY EMAIL

Subscribe to Marin Audubon's online mailing list to receive one email per month on the first day of the month listing field trips, workshops, and the speaker series presentation for the month. To subscribe, go to MAS's home page, www.marinaudubon.org, click the SUBSCRIBE button on the right side.

Volunteer With MAS

Help with:

- membership mailings
- habitat stewardship activities



HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

This month all of the plants that have been grown for us have been planted and the last bits of clean up and repair have been completed. All that remains is to produce and install the signs.

We are, however, having a problem with our newly-planted grasses being grazed. Some critter(s) are munching on them. Both jackrabbits and Canada geese are in the area. We've installed stakes and string to deter the geese but the munching has continued. That factor combined with the cleanness of the nibbles indicates that jackrabbits are probably the culprits. We've yet to come up with a way to control them.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the first Saturday of February volunteers removed Harding grass, fennel and thistles from the area with newly planted purple needlegrass. It is doing well but here, too, there is a problem with animals, voles in this location, that are eating some of the new plants.

BAHIA

On the January work day volunteers pulled old, unneeded pin flags from the central and eastern peninsula planting areas. They also encountered members of the public walking in off-limits areas and explained to them why access was always required to be limited to certain other areas.

Workshop: Outsmarting Your Digital Camera

Mill Valley Library

Saturday, March 24, 2018

SIGNUPS OPEN NOW – SEE BELOW

1 to 5 PM

With *Dave Strauss*

Want to be smarter than your camera? This workshop will provide an exploration of the 4 fundamental variables in photography (aperture, shutter speed, ISO, and focus/depth-of-field) with workshop exercises that demonstrate the creative opportunities that arise from switching your smart digital camera into MANUAL mode.

The current generation of smart digital cameras has amazing capabilities, but they make many decisions for you about focus, aperture, shutter speed, and ISO based on algorithms that may or may not comport with your creative intentions. This workshop is intended for photographers who want to venture beyond the GREEN BOX and automatic scene modes and learn how MANUAL mode expands creative opportunities and improves your photographs in challenging situations. Participants should have a digital camera (DSLR or mirrorless) that provides for manual control of aperture, shutter speed, and ISO.

Participants should know how to switch their cameras into manual mode and how to make changes to aperture, shutter speed, and ISO on their respective cameras prior to the workshop.

THIS IS NOT A BEGINNING PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS. Participants should be familiar with their cameras and have some experience taking pictures with them. THINGS TO BRING: a digital camera that has a manual mode, plenty of room on its memory card, and a fully charged battery. If you have alternate lenses, consider bringing one or two of them. We strongly recommend bringing a second charged battery and a notebook.

Dave Strauss was born and raised in Marin County where he lived until graduation from high

school in 1966. Four years later, he graduated from U.C. Berkeley College of Environmental Design with a degree in Design and began a 43-year career in computer systems, industrial automation, and electronics, first as a computer programmer and later as an executive, working for high-tech startups as well as large corporations including Bank of America, Lucent Technologies, and Motorola.

Dave has been an enthusiastic photographer since his childhood. His first camera was a Kodak Brownie, which he received as a gift at age 7. While he has made tens of thousands of photographs throughout his life, he re-engaged seriously and professionally with photography when he retired from the electronics industry in early 2013. In recent years his photos have won awards, been shown in galleries and museums and have been published in many media, including magazines, books, websites, and scientific journals.

Today Dave operates from his studio in Oakland, specializing in wildlife, studio portraits, editorial and advertising photography for periodicals, biological/paleontological research specimen imaging, and fine art capture. Dave's website: www.dscomposition.com.

SIGNUPS: This workshop is a collaborative offering of the Marin Audubon Society and the Mill Valley Library. While there is technically no charge for the workshop, we strongly encourage all participants to become chapter-supporting members of Marin Audubon if they have not already done so. Membership information will be available at the workshop.

Signups have already opened on the Mill Valley Library website (www.millvalleylibrary.org). Click on the Library Event Calendar for detailed information and registration. Marin Audubon members interested in attending BE SURE TO SIGN UP RIGHT AWAY as registration is open to the general public, and the workshop is likely to fill quickly.

MARIN BIRDLOG: JANUARY 2018

By Noah Arthur



Mike Prince

Barrow's Goldeneye



Len Blumin

Greater White-fronted Goose

While much of the continent endures snow, ice, and frozen bodies of water in January, Marin and the California coast in general get some of its best birding. Deep winter is the time for our rare waterfowl, gulls, loons, and other waterbirds from up north. This January kicked off with a nice male **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Bahia in Novato on the 6th (DE) and a **Long-tailed Duck** at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on the 7th (ES).

One of the most interesting occurrences of January was a spectacular region-wide incursion of Central Valley geese into the Bay Area, including Marin, on the 13th and 14th, associated with a major tule fog event in the Valley. Specific sightings included **200 Cackling Geese** in flight over Bahia (GH); **28 Cackling Geese** and one each of **Snow** and **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Rodeo Lagoon (WL); and one each of **Snow**, **Ross's**, and **Greater White-fronted** at Abbotts Lagoon (MD). Later arrivals that were probably part of the same event were single **Ross's Geese** at Rodeo Lagoon (WL) and Nicasio Reservoir (BB) on the 17th. It apparently isn't fully understood why tule fog causes geese to leave their usual swampy winter quarters in the Valley, but it likely has to

do with the fog causing them to become disoriented. According to a Central Valley birder I queried about this, they don't like to descend through fog to land, and will fly until they reach openings in the fog to descend through (AD). Observations of tule fog as far west as the Marin Headlands during this event may indicate that many geese had to fly all the way to the coast before they found any gaps in the fog.

At Bahia on the 21st a **Lesser Yellowlegs** and a new **Barrow's Goldeneye** were nice finds, and two **Ross's Geese** seen in flight may or may not have been related to the earlier tule fog goose event (LC).

The waterfowl theme this month continued with a **Redhead** on the 27th (RS, JB).

Several herring spawns were reported around the Marin Bayshore during the month, but no rare gulls were reported. Rare gull records at herring runs have seemingly diminished in recent years; I'm not sure whether this is due to an actual lack of gulls or simply a lack of "gullers" looking at the gulls.

The last rare bird of the month was also the greatest. On the 30th, after many photographs were taken and discussed, an **Arctic Loon** was identified on Abbotts Lagoon (MD, RD). It was first seen on the 26th, but the observers were commendably cautious with such a subtle ID and it was not identified with certainty until the 30th. The elegant northern waterbird continued at least through Feb. 3rd.

Observers and Acronyms **AD:** Alan Duerson, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **ES:** Emilie Strauss, **GH:** Gene Hunn, **JB:** Janet Bodle, **LC:** Lucas Corneliussen, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **RD:** Ryan DiGaudio, **WL:** William Legge

President's Message *continued from page 2*

Board position.

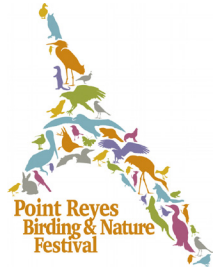
This month Marin Audubon joined more than 300 Audubon Chapters and 500 groups nationwide in signing onto a letter calling on Congress to defend and uphold the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The letter was

in response to Representative Liz Cheney's (R-WY) amendment to HR 4239 and the Department of Interior announcement that it would no longer enforce the MBTA in cases of incidental bird deaths. This effectively is a blank check to industry to no longer avoid preventable bird deaths. There has been no final vote on HR 4239. It's a sad state of affairs in this 100th Anniversary Year of the MBTA.

Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival, April 27-29

Grab your brood and flock to the ninth annual spring festival celebrating the Year of the Bird, the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Act, spring migration, and West Marin's unique biodiversity. The festival is a project of the West Marin Environmental Action Committee. Proceeds help the ongoing work to protect nesting birds in Marin and the unique biodiversity of West Marin. Headquartered in Point Reyes Station, the festival features over 50 field events and indoor workshops led by top Bay Area bird guides and naturalists, plus two early evening keynote speaker events and youth programming.

With over 54% of all North American birds sighted and recorded in the area, participants will have the opportunity to view migrating seabirds, waterfowl, resident and migrant land birds. In addition to the unique birding opportunities, there are stunning wildflower displays, tidepools, butterflies, and dragonflies, migrating whales, elephant seals, sea lions, and tule elk waiting to be discovered.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kathleen Agustin, Patricia Ahlbrandt, Miles Bradley, Kim Caffrey, Catherine Capper, Lisa Cassidy, Sidney Dowell, Ashley Dumbra, Ann Elston & Lawrence Lossing, Daphne Hatch, Vivian & Bryan Baker Holley, Durrell Kapan, Guy Lampard & Suzanne Badenhoop, Susan Landwirth, Elizabeth Leite, Richard McCombs, Laura McIntosh, Mary Menninger, Robert Morton, Mary Olund, Kristi Perani, Mary Pipersky, Jeanne Rowe, Alison Russell & George Brewster, Velma Schnoll, Donald & Genevieve Sullivan, Teresa & Miles Tuffli, Jacqueline Tulsy, Kristine Handwerk Wiskes, Pauline Yeckley

THANKS FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Anonymous, Andrew Bollen, Burkhard Braun, George Brewster & Alison Russell, John Crawford, Madelon & Gerald Halpern, William Kuhr, Carla Ruff, Maggie Rufo, Donald & Genevieve Sullivan



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SAVE THE DATE

- April 5 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas
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With Rich Cimino & Janet Bodle
 - April 9 **Field Trip:** Petaluma River
With Peter Colasanti
 - April 11 **Field Trip:** Piper Park
With Rich Cimino & Janet Bodle
 - April 14 **Field Trip:** Pinnacles National Park
With Rusty Scalf
 - April 18 – 24 Godwit Days, Arcata
<https://godwitdays.org>
 - April 27 – 29 Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival
www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org
- Check website for updates and details

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SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

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

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

You can also join or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to www.marinaudubon.org.

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**.

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Fill out form and mail to:
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