



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

New Acquisition at Norton Pond



Bob Hinz

Black-crowned Night-Herons at Norton Pond in Black Point



Julia Kelly

Herring eggs and eelgrass

Seagrasses are one of the most productive ecosystems in the world, but human nearshore impacts have reduced their global distribution by >29% since the twentieth century. Common eelgrass (*Zostera marina*), a native seagrass found in San Francisco Bay, provides spawning habitat for fish in addition to food resources for birds that migrate along the Pacific Flyway. San Francisco Bay is home to the largest expanse of eelgrass beds in California, and is therefore a conservation priority for Audubon. This talk will discuss threats to eelgrass, herring, and waterbirds in San Francisco Bay and the opportunities for conservation. To highlight the need for eelgrass protection within Richardson Bay, a case study of eelgrass damage in Richardson Bay will be presented.

Julia Kelly, PhD, is the San Francisco Bay Conservation Program Manager for Audubon California. Julia specializes in avian ecology and leads Audubon's waterbird program and restoration projects in the estuary.

We're thrilled to announce that we are in the process of acquiring yet another parcel along Norton Pond, a small pond on Norton Avenue in Black Point. The parcel is being donated by owners Renee and Thomas Leech. They want only that we pay the property taxes owed currently.

We are grateful to the Leeches for their wonderful donation that, after the paper work is completed, will mean we own the whole pond and all of the surrounding parcels. It will probably take another month before the sale goes through. Our most recent purchase

of a parcel along Norton Pond as one of the six other tax defaulted Black Point parcels meant we owned all but one parcel - this one - to complete protection of the whole pond habitat.

Norton Pond holds water year-round. Birds seem always to be present in small numbers, because it is a small pond. Species often seen include: American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Greater Yellowlegs, Mallard, Northern Shoveler and Black-crowned Night-herons.

Any neighbors or others who would like to volunteer to help improve the vegetative habitat along its banks, please let us know.

CONSERVATION

HIGHWAY 37 UPDATE

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has submitted comments to Caltrans that, fortunately, mirror input they provided back in 1994. As stated in the EPA's 1994 letter, the purpose of the comments is to provide early feedback to assist in analyzing and designing alternatives that would both meet the

transportation needs and the environmental health of the region. As stated in the letter: "We recommend that Caltrans, as the lead agency for NEPA, consider the entirety of the SR (State Route) corridor, from US 101 to SR 29/interstate 80, when analyzing regional and local solutions for the SR 37 corridor. Focusing on a solution for only Segment B of SR37 may preclude the consideration of alternatives for

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

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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

During the coming month we plan to finish several projects we've had in the works for a long time. After more than a year of planning, we are about to complete revisions to our brochure. It will be the same format, but have new photos and updated text. We will also be revising the Junior Birdwatchers program which is a program for elementary school children to learn about birds. MAS took over more than eleven years ago when National Audubon decided not to continue it at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center. We will be having the software updated so that it will function properly on the computer, and will update some text and photos. How long this project will take will probably depend on how many photos we decide should be replaced because the current ones are not up to current standards, and we will have to find replacements. Generous donations from our members have made it possible for us to move forward with these updates.

Several major issues concerning the fate of various wildlife species in the County, Tule Elk and Coyotes, have come to the fore over the past month or so. Congressman Jared Huffman has introduced a bill to protect ranchers at Point Reyes National Seashore by requiring the elk to be fenced out of ranchlands. A small group of people spoke against coyotes September 11 at the Board of Supervisors meeting during open time and have generated some articles in the local press. Some speakers wanted their cats and dogs to roam free without risk from coyotes, and several people

expressed fear of being attacked by coyotes. These are emotional issues and the outcome could be positive or negative for the elk and coyotes. Our Conservation Committee will be taking up these and other issues at our September meeting.

Congrats to folks who have been able to sign up for the "Origin of Birds" lecture series which had great success for Golden Gate Audubon. There are still some spaces available. This is one among other workshops and lectures, that we hope members have noticed we are providing, thanks to Jane Medley who is arranging these special offerings.

Another special happening during September and October in Marin is the spectacle of the Vaux's Swifts at McNear Brick & Block along Point San Pedro Road. If you haven't seen it yet you are missing a real phenomenon. Thousands of birds funnel into the unused tall chimneys to rest for the night during migration. Usually the best time to go is the hour before sunset.

Our Fall Message: Now is the time to do trimming, pruning and clearing of vegetation in your garden. Nesting season is over and the risk to nestlings has passed. Be attentive to your low-growing, understory plants and shrubs away from your house. These plants are often targeted for removal for fire danger but they are important habitats for ground-feeding and nesting species. Away from the buffer for your house keep as much as you can.

BIRDS IN FLIGHT PHOTO WORKSHOP

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District Classroom, San Rafael

Wednesday, October 10, 2018
8:15 AM to noon
With Dave Strauss

This is a workshop for those who wish to improve their photographs of **BIRDS IN FLIGHT**. We'll begin the workshop in a classroom setting discussing equipment, camera settings and techniques—then move outside to shoot photos for awhile—and later return to the classroom to look at them and learn from our results.

This is not a beginning photography class. You should be comfortable with your camera and familiar with its controls, and have at least some previous experience photographing birds or other wildlife. You should be generally familiar with these terms: aperture, shutter speed, ISO, focus, and depth-of-field.

Please bring your digital camera and a zoom or prime lens of at least 300mm (or equivalent of 300mm on a crop frame camera). If you don't own such a lens, we recommend borrowing or renting one and experimenting with it prior to the workshop. Tripods are optional but very nice to have. We suggest

bringing a spare fully-charged camera battery and a notebook.

Our workshop leader will be MAS member and Marin native Dave Strauss, www.dscomposition.com. If you have questions about the workshop content, prerequisites, camera, lenses, etc., please contact Dave directly, dave@dscomposition.com or 510/612-6109.

The cost is \$20 for MAS Chapter-Supporting members and \$55 for all others. Please be prepared to pay with cash or a check at the workshop. Credit cards will not be accepted. If you are not a MAS Chapter-Supporting member, you may sign up now at www.marinaudubon.org or at the workshop in order to enjoy the reduced price.

Signups for this workshop will be limited to 15 participants. To sign up, please contact Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net. Include your name and phone number. We will confirm your registration, and if the workshop fills, we will accept names for a waiting list.

DIRECTIONS: See the directions for the October 4 Las Gallinas field trip. Our class will meet in the building by the bridge across from the parking lot.

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.

FALL MIGRANTS & VAGRANTS

Point Reyes National Seashore

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Peter Colasanti

We will meet Peter at White House Pool and bird the area as the group gathers. Our plan for the day will depend on what birds have been seen in the area. Point Reyes has proven to be one of the greatest migrant traps on our continent with more than half of all North American birds (at least 502 species) seen there. We will probably focus on birding at Chimney Rock, Drakes Beach, and the Mendoza and Nunes Ranches. Come help us find something rare and unexpected. Recent birders in these areas have not been disappointed. No pressure, Peter!

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in Larkspur, take the Sir Francis Drake exit 20.4 miles to Olema. Turn right onto Hwy 1 and go 2 miles. Before the green bridge, turn left (continuing on Sir Francis Drake Blvd.) and drive 0.7 mile. Look for the White House Pool sign and parking lot on the right.

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

San Rafael

Thursday, October 4, 2018

8:30 AM to noon – Note earlier starting time

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. With fall migration underway, we are likely to spot new arrivals and maybe even a rare, unexpected migrant. Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Yellow Warbler, and a large number (12) of White-tailed Kite were spotted on our September walk.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, so come assist in our search. We have been informed by the manager at the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District that construction work in the area will begin soon, necessitating a change in the meeting place and route for our monthly walks, probably beginning in November. Check the MAS website and our November newsletter for the latest information on this scheduled work.

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.

SHOLLENBERGER PARK, Petaluma

Sunday, October 14, 2018

8:30 AM to 1 PM

With Peter Colasanti

With over 230 species recorded, Shollenberger Park is one of the major birding hotspots in the North Bay. "It's like Las Gallinas without the sewage," says our leader, Peter. Thanks to last winter's ample rainfall there's still water in the central pond, a typical high tide roost for shorebirds with

18 species having been seen in Octobers past. Expect early waterfowl and maybe some late vagrants. If time and interest allow, we may extend to Ellis Creek.

DIRECTIONS: Going north on Hwy 101 from Marin, take the second Petaluma exit, which is Route 116 (Lakeville Hwy). Go east about one mile to South McDowell Blvd (4th traffic light) and turn right. Take the third right onto Cader Lane and park in the lot at the end.

ABBOTTS LAGOON

No. 10, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, October 20, 2018

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

This month Jim and Bob will explore Abbotts Lagoon in the Point Reyes National Seashore, one of Marin's premier birding locations. In fact, a cumulative eBird checklist for this area totals 282 species! Fall migration south along the Pacific Coast brings many birds to this place: ducks and geese, shorebirds, raptors, even sparrows and pipits. Tufted Duck, Greater White-fronted Goose, Baird's Sandpiper, Ferruginous Hawk, Clay-colored Sparrow, and American Pipit are a few of the birds we may find. We will get a look at this migration and many of the birds that stay for the winter. This should be an excellent field trip promising to provide good exercise with a minimum of about 4 miles of walking.

DIRECTIONS: Allow about an hour and a half travel time from San Rafael. Follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd (SFDB) to Olema. From Olema continue north on Hwy 1, take the second left turn onto SFDB, continue through Inverness, and turn right (north) onto Pierce Point Road. Drive 3.4 miles until you come to the Abbotts Lagoon parking lot on the left where our group will gather.

BODEGA BAY

Friday, October 26, 2018

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

With Lisa Hug

Join us at Bodega Bay during the fall migration when just about anything can happen. This area has been particularly action-packed with unusual sightings recently, so our trip will surely be interesting. We'll meet at Port O' Bodega at 8:30 AM. We will make some stops for shorebirds and then move on to Owl Canyon, Sonoma County's premier vagrant trap. Next will be a sea watch at Bodega Head. From the Head we'll return clockwise around Bodega Harbor with likely stops at Campbell Cove, Owl Canyon again, Porto Bodega and lastly at Doran Park (\$7 entrance fee) where we sometimes find Snowy Plovers.

DIRECTIONS: Head north on Highway 1 from the town of Bodega Bay. Continue past the fire station and the Tides' Wharf in Bodega Bay. Turn left on Eastshore Road and head downhill to the port.

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Golden Gate Park

Sunday, October 28, 2018

8 AM to 2 PM

With Scott Goldberg

Join us to explore some birding hot spots in eastern Golden Gate Park with Scott as

our guide. Scott is somewhat new to birding, but as a resident of the Inner Sunset for two years he has gotten to know his local patch well. We will meet in front of the San Francisco Botanical Garden at 8 AM (no charge for admission prior to 9 AM.) and explore its micro-habitats, which include an array of residents (e.g., the Red-shouldered Hawk), migrants (3-4 different species of warblers), and the occasional vagrant.

Around 10 AM we will walk about 0.5 miles to Stow Lake where we can expect to see similar species with the addition of waterfowl and gulls. This will be followed by a walk to the top of Strawberry Hill where we plan to eat lunch and take in the spectacular surrounding views. The total distance for our trip will be approximately 4 miles.

DIRECTIONS: The botanical garden is located in Golden Gate Park near the corner of 9th Ave. and Lincoln Way. We will meet at the Main Gate entrance near 9th Ave. Scott recommends parking on Lincoln Ave. (anywhere between 7th and 10th Aves.) since it is free all day on weekends. Be sure to lock your car and **don't leave any valuables in it.** For more detailed directions and parking options, consult the San Francisco Botanical Garden website at www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visit/directions.html.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY BOAT TRIP

Departs from Berkeley Marina

Sunday, November 18, 2018

9 AM to 4 PM

Registration begins October 1, 2018

With John Klobas and Sarah Brooks

The San Francisco Bay complex, one of the largest and most important estuaries along the Pacific Flyway, is located in our backyard but remains relatively unvisited. Our appreciation of the dynamics of the bay can change dramatically in the course of a day from a new perspective on the water. Join John Klobas and his daughter Sarah Brooks for a memorable day as we cruise the bay with Ronn Patterson of Dolphin Charters in search of natural and cultural history, birds, and marine mammals.

Fall is the season of mild weather and calm water on the bay as we cruise by ten islands, under two bridges, and up two creeks in four counties in search of migrating and resident waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, and marine mammals that call the bay's habitats home. For a complete description of all the bay landmarks we'll be cruising past, read the online trip description at www.marinaudubon.org.

The cost will be \$110 per person for Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members and \$145 for all others. Registration will be limited to 25 people. 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. Include the name, email address, and phone number of each participant. We recommend that you sign up for this trip ASAP as our boat trips usually sell out quickly. Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Berkeley Marina and other instructions prior to the trip.

THANKS FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Bud Alderson, Julia Althoff, Arntz Family Foundation, Janet Arrigotti, Robert Atwood, Holly A. Bacuzzi, Mark & Beverly Birnbaum, Judy & H. Spencer Bloch, Greg & Giselle Block, Carl Blom, Andrew Bollen, Dr. Benjamin Bonnlander, Barbara Boucke, John Bowers, Dewitt Bowman, Mary Lou Brown, Priscilla & Michael H. Bull, California Alpine Club Foundation, Steve Capper, Everett Clark, James Cleaves, Kate & Jeffrey Colin, Doug Cook, Carol Moeller Costa, Carroll Covey, John Crawford, Susan Cumming, Ann Donovan, Lillian B. Dreyer, Elaine & Robert Drude, Roger Duba, Timothy Erdman, Richard & Joyce Finley, Mary Anne Flett, Barbara Ford, Lewis Fredrickson, Richard & Luisiana Gale, Thomas Gaman, Lisa Glaser, Doreen Gluckin & Richard Kanter, Carl & Donna Gowan, Sallie Griffith, Margaret Harrington, Luanna Helfman, Douglas R. Howell, Elizabeth Huning, Molly Hynes, Robert Kennis, Candace Key, Joe & Barbara Kirkbride, Susan M. Landwirth, Joanne Lee, Margaret Lee, William Legge, Mark & Peggy Lehigh, Sandra Levitan, Rockwell Lowe, Marjorie Macris, Daniel Mardesich, Daphne Markham, Jeffery Martin, Peter Mason, Michael McCrea, Prem McMurdo, Jane R. Medley, Barbara & Gerald Meral, Mrs. E. W. Moews, Jean Moore, Richard Morrison, Eileen Murray, Patrick Murray, Russell Nelson, Linda Nicoletto, Jean O'Korn & Michael McDaniel, Michael Oldham, Robert and C. J. Peacock, Phil Peterson, PG&E Corporation Foundation (donor match), Robert Portnoy, Jeanne Price, Patricia Raven, Susan & John Ristow, Roger & Dorothy Roberts, Barbara & John Robeson, Rose Foundation, Richard & Anne Ruben, Andrina Ruzick, Susan M. Ryan, Julius Schindler, Barbara Searles, Kathy Sheridan, Madeleine & Donald Simborg, Sandra Slichter, Doris Solberg, Virginia Soper, Charles Stanberry, Charles & Jean Stewart, Roger Stoll, Meryl Sundove, John & Jill Templeton, Rex Thompson, Robert Timineri, Jeanne & Peter Tymstra, Mary S. Webster, Elizabeth A. Weisheit, David & Deborah Wiechers, Amy & Bruce Wilcer, Robert Wolfson, Jerald & Sharon Young

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.

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transportation solutions in the project area as it will dictate the beginning and endpoint of a future roadway design immediately to the east and west of Segment B. A programmatic analysis assessing broad regional alternatives and ultimately defining a corridor to focus on would help in assessing the benefits and adverse impacts of regional solutions.”

The August 31, 2018 letter supports this position by pointing out that more than \$100 million has been invested in restoring tidal baylands in the region, and advises coordination with three federal agencies on National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Water Act 404 permitting processes. Projects needing Section 404 permits must comply with the EPA's 404 (b)(1) Guidelines that call for an Alternatives Analysis that includes clear descriptions of the purpose of and need for the project with an analysis of alternatives and identifies the Least Environmentally Damaging Alternative that achieves the project purpose.

The EPA points out the benefits of early coordination including avoiding having to revisit decisions in the future, and recommends that early planning occur now and consider what NEPA and Section 404 will require in the future. Sufficient information on hydrologic, geomorphic and habitat designs must demonstrate that the project minimizes potential adverse impacts to sensitive aquatic ecosystems, incorporates flood plain designs and sea level rise models that further long-term resiliency, facilitates connections between habitats, incorporates stormwater treatment, considers sediment transport, and provides adequate transition zones.

The approach so far has not been on the whole of the Highway 37 corridor, but the focus has been on Segment B, which extends from Highway 121 to Mare Island.

SAN ANSELMO FLOOD RISK REDUCTION PROJECT FINAL EIR REVIEWED

At its September 18 meeting, the Marin county Board of Supervisors on unanimous vote, certified the EIR for the San Anselmo Flood Risk Reduction Project and approved the project. The purpose of the project is to reduce various flood risk elements, include a basin to detain floodwaters on the former Sunnyside Nursery site, and modify San Anselmo and

Fairfax Creeks by removing obstructions that attenuate flows, specifically by removing buildings along the creek in downtown San Anselmo to increase the capacity of the creek.

This project is the first phase of a larger project that includes improving several bridges and will include additional as-yet-undefined project(s) downstream. It is important because it is a beginning that would protect a large segment of the community that has suffered significant flooding in recent years.

Concerns MAS raised in our comments on the Draft EIR focused on natural resources. A summary of MAS's major concerns, the EIR responses and our ongoing issues is below:

Biological Resources

FISH ENTRAPMENT IN THE DETENTION BASIN: The response to concerns about fish entrapment raised by MAS and several agencies was that design features would allow fish to leave the basin along with diverted water as it flows back into Fairfax Creek. The basin would have shallow side slopes and bottom to facilitate fish passage, and the diversion basin would never be fully closed to fish passage. It would allow any fish that enter the basin during its use to leave along with detained water as it reenters Fairfax Creek. The design will allow unrestricted flow in the creek through the diversion and overflow structure most of the time. Also, fish entry into the diversion basin is expected to be infrequent because water diversion into the basin would only occur in large events.

NATIVE TREE IMPACTS: MAS and some agencies commented that the EIR does not adequately address tree impacts. Only a 1:1 replacement for lost trees is proposed. CDFW policy calls for 3:1 replacement for removal of native trees with 3-6-inch diameter; for larger they recommend 6:1 replacement. Marin County Countywide Plan policies call for 2:1. The EIR commits to complying with permit conditions.

Also, in defining mitigation for tree loss, the Final EIR relies heavily on a Revegetation and Monitoring Plan which would be prepared at a later time with input from regulatory agencies. We want the public to have the opportunity to review the Plan.

Response B2-8 suggests “payments to an

CONSERVATION

approved mitigation bank” as a possible riparian mitigation strategy. MAS has a long history of opposing mitigation banks for various reasons, two of which are that they are often unsuccessful and are located away from the site of loss. There is no wetland or riparian mitigation bank in the Ross Valley so a bank to be used would be some distance from the site of loss. It’s hard to believe a site for replacing lost trees cannot be found within this Corte Madera Creek watershed. If using a bank is a real possibility, at minimum information should be provided about the location(s) of the nearest bank for riparian habitat.

SEDIMENT DEPOSITION: Most of the sediment would be trapped in the creek and would be deposited in the stream an estimated 600 feet upstream from the diversion structure. A 25-year flood event could reduce capacity in the basin by 1-2 feet. Sediment would be removed from the basin as needed up to 2,100 cubic yards per event and in emergencies.

After residents of the Ross Valley approved funding to address the major flooding in that watershed, the Flood Control and Water Conservation District has put forward multiple proposals to reduce the risk of flooding. Some residents have opposed all alternatives that have yet been proposed. After years of investigation, it is time for action to be taken to address the issues. While the Flood Control District still has some environmental issues to address, this phase seems on the right track.

OPEN SPACE DISTRICT REGION 5 WORKSHOP

All went well at this Region 5 Workshop. Region 5 stretches across Central Marin and includes Santa Venetia Marsh, Santa Margarita Island, San Pedro Mountain including Heron Hill, Bald Hill, and the Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Divide. The purpose of the workshops is to solicit public comment on the roads and trails to be designated as system trails.

This workshop was more peaceful than earlier ones, and the turnout was more modest. One very positive change was the presentation by Senior Natural Resource Planner, Jon Campo, on the wildlife resources in Region 5 preserves. These include endangered Ridgway’s Rail, threatened Northern Spotted Owl, and Golden Eagle. None of the previous workshops have presented any information about natural resources.

Regarding trail alignments, no changes are being considered for Santa Margarita and Santa Venetia marshes, both of which have a single loop trail that skirts tidal marsh that supports

endangered Ridgway’s Rails. For San Pedro Mountain the existing trail, generally through the center of the Preserve, is proposed to be designated as a system trail and other social trails closed.

At Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow some of the existing hiking-only trails through Bald Hill and the main fire roads at Sky Ranch are proposed for adoption. Other possible changes in this area include proposals for two multi-use trails to connect to Manuel T. Freitas Parkway, one in the vicinity of Cherry Hill and Spring Hill in north Terra Linda and the other further south next to the existing Fox Lane Trail. A third proposed trail would connect Malone Ln. to the Ridgewood FR.

Although Open Space District staff put forward options, they emphasized that the alignments shown on their maps at the meeting are simply under consideration. No decisions have been made to move forward with specific plans in any preserve. The deadline for comments is October 20.

If you would like more information about trails considered for any of these preserves in Region 5 or to provide comments on any trail alignments, you are encouraged to contact Jon Campo at 415-473-2686.

ONE TAM MAPPING

ONE TAM is mapping Marin County’s vegetation, and we are pleased they are including Marin Audubon properties. So far, aerial imagery has been completed and a LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) flight is scheduled for September or October depending on flying conditions. Vegetation-focused staff from One Tam partners (MMWD, State Parks, Marin County OSD and GGNRA) convened to review and refine the field sampling scheme. A contract field crew has completed data collection at approximately 120 locations throughout the county this season. Field work will resume in spring.

One Tam is also undertaking a bat inventory project. Acoustic monitoring has detected nearly the full range of bat species expected on Mt. Tam lands. Many sites averaged five species. MMWD’s Kent Lake is a standout with 10 species detected at a single station. California Myotis, Yuma Myotis and Mexican Free-tailed Bats were detected at most sites. The telemetry effort was equally successful. Eleven bats were tagged including seven Yuma Myotis, three Pallids and two California Myotis. Six roost sites were identified including one maternal roost site supporting more than 300 Pallid Bats. The results of inventory will inform the vegetation best management practices now being developed.

The Evolution of Birds

NEW CLASS!

Six Classroom Sessions
and Two Field Trips
Beginning October 18, 2018

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
and Sanctuary
7 PM to 8:30 PM
With Bob Lewis & Bruce Mast of GGAS

Take your knowledge of birds beyond the usual identification skills. This fascinating in-depth introduction to Avian Evolution may be just the class for you. Fast-paced, never boring, the class will focus on the scientists whose work has led to the modern theory of evolution, the evolutionary processes that have resulted in over 10,000 species of birds today. This is an advanced class, but don’t worry, there won’t be any tests.

WEEK 1 – OCTOBER 18

Avian Evolution – Introduction and History of Science

WEEK 2 – OCTOBER 25

How Birds Evolve

WEEK 3 – NOVEMBER 1

Dinosaurs to Birds – Evolution of Birds from the Mesozoic Era to Today

WEEK 4 – NOVEMBER 15

Western Hemisphere – South America: Avian Evolution During the Paleogene & Beyond

WEEK 5 – NOVEMBER 29

Welcome to North America – Bird Arrival and Speciation

WEEK 6 – DECEMBER 6

An Island Called California – When and where did California’s birds originate and how did they get here?

ONLINE REGISTRATION IS OPEN

at www.marinaudubon.org. The cost is \$110 for Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members and \$145 for non-members (includes a one-year MAS chapter-supporting membership). Those registering for this class will receive lecture notes and additional information prior to the first meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Susanna Benningfield, Mary Bicknell, Jason Hassrick, Sarah Lynch, Kateri Murray, Diane Naydan, Donna & Joseph Terdiman

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Now, the end of the dry season, two nonnative invasive species are preparing to bloom: stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) and Russian thistle or saltwort (*Salsola soda*). Saltwort grows near the tide line, but stinkwort is found in much drier areas. We will pull these species, and continue to reduce Harding grass.

Is one of our project areas in your neighborhood? Act locally and join us on a workday. Witness restoration first-hand and be a part of it. We all make a difference.

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

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: October 6, November 3

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

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.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion:

A small group of volunteers from the Greenbrae Boardwalk has begun to work at Marin Audubon's new restoration site behind Cost Plus Plaza. We are trying to keep the native plants ahead of the invasive non-natives from year one. Please pitch in.

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

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Bob Harlow, Bob Hinz, Martha and Gerry Jarocki, Lowell Sykes, Marla Ulrich

BENEFIT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

There were lots of activities at Corte Madera this month. Lowell Sykes has watered the plants again with the help of Martha Jarocki. He also ordered and had trucked in three loads of compost from Redwood Landfill. Martha and her volunteers, in addition to removing invasive plants, helped Lowell distribute the mulch around the plants we planted last winter. More is yet to be done. Contact Martha at marthajarocki@comcast.net.

BAHIA

Problems at Bahia continue: folks along Bolero cut trees and then left cuttings, branches and leaves on our property for us to clean up. Irresponsible dog walkers continue—off-leash dogs threatening walkers. We are working to have the Humane Society help with enforcement.

As required by our regulatory permits, Year 10 Monitoring of the Bahia Tidal Marsh Restoration project is beginning. Field work will take place in mid-September and will include aerial photographs, topographic surveys to evaluate the progress of the marsh evolution, and vegetation surveys. The data will then be turned into a report for MAS and the regulatory agencies.

TISCORNIA

We presented our Nature-based Sea Level Rise Marsh Restoration project to the San Rafael Parks Commission in September and we are scheduled before the City Council on October 1. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend supporting our project to the City Council. We will be asking for support for our grant application for the next phase of our project.

Utilizing Our Christmas Bird Count Data

David Sexton

For those who wonder how bird count information, such as that gathered during the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, is utilized, the June 14, 2018 Marin Audubon Society Speaker Series, featuring speaker Gregg Verutes, had some very good answers.

Gregg is a Data Visualization Specialist with National Audubon. He gave a very informative talk called "*Visualizing an Accountable Conservation Organization: How our Christmas Bird Count data helps.*" Gregg was well prepared to give an update on the last 50 years of CBC data collection. He introduced an application, developed by National Audubon, that could quickly show the bird population trends of the CBC since 1966.

The CBC Trends program, which currently has population data on 528 species, will be available on the National Audubon website sometime this fall.

The program gives the population data in areas as large as country-wide, individual states, or localized into Bird Conservation Regions. This wealth of information fully engaged those who were attending the talk and the rest of the evening was spent looking at population trends of our favorite birds. We were informed that of the species profiled so far, overall, 59% are increasing and 41% are in decline. With the use of the program we were able to see a further breakdown of this

information and note where the increases and declines are taking place.

We were informed that grassland species were in decline, woodland species were increasing, and raptors as a group were increasing. Owls were mixed with some increases, such as **Barred Owl**, and some decreases, such as **Burrowing Owls**. We looked at the trends of many individual species in California, and found that **American Robin**, **Western Bluebird**, and **Black Oystercatcher** were increasing, while **California Quail**, **Western Sandpiper**, and **Wrentit** were decreasing.

Gregg pointed out how important this information would be to evaluate the effects of climate change.

Gregg also mentioned a new community science program called Climate Watch. This program enlists volunteer birders to count certain bluebirds and nuthatches in the same place, twice a year. They would be counted in six places within a 10km x 10km square area. These few hours of volunteer participation, extended across the country, could form the basis of an important scientific effort to detail the ongoing effects of climate change. For more information go to www.audubon.org/news/how-join-climate-watch-community-science-program-audubon.

MARIN BIRDLOG: AUGUST 2018

By Noah Arthur



Yellow-headed Blackbird

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August is usually shorebird month on the California coast. Rarity-seeking birders spend hours scanning distant mudflats in search of “something different,” and Marin usually turns up a few unusual shorebirds each year in late summer. However, August shorebirding was not as good as usual this year, and the shorebirds were eclipsed by a spectacular early push of eastern songbirds.

The first rare bird of the month was a female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Five Brooks Pond on August 8th (CM). Another wanderer from inland California was an adult **Swainson’s Hawk** that floated over the Pt. Reyes Chimney Rock Trail on the 15th (DW).

The first **Townsend’s Warbler** of the fall showed up at the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks on the 17th (DS), soon to be followed by many more warblers and other migrants in the latter half of the month.

A nice uncommon shorebird for Marin was a **Wilson’s Phalarope** on the Mendoza Ranch pond at Pt. Reyes on the 18th (MS, LS). Also rare along the outer coast were two **Purple Martins** flying over Mendoza Ranch—heading south and probably actively migrating—on the 20th (DS).

Marin’s longest-staying rarity also put in an appearance this month: the Inverness **Black Vulture**, seen on the 25th (JP).

A lot of migrants hit the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks on the 25th, including a **Cassin’s Vireo** (BA, DL) and the first eastern warbler of the fall, a **Northern Waterthrush** (MB). At least three **Willow Flycatchers** were also present (BA, DL), kicking off what would turn out to be an unusually good fall season for the species in Marin and elsewhere the Bay Area. Also on the 25th, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at Abbotts Lagoon (RS, RA)—an unexpected August record of this eastern migrant whose occurrence in our area peaks in October. By the 27th, it was clear that an early wave of eastern migrants was underway, with a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Drakes Beach and a **Least Flycatcher** at the Fish Docks (DS).

On the 28th, the Palomarin banding team caught one of the rarest warblers of the month, an immature **Canada Warbler** (MD).

More rarities had descended on Pt. Reyes by the 29th, with the best being not one but two **Eastern Kingbirds** near E Ranch (DS), subsequently seen by many happy birders. A **Prairie Warbler** (RH), a **Tennessee Warbler** (MF), the continuing Waterthrush, and an **American Redstart** (BB, EC) were all at the Fish Docks on the 29th and/or 30th. Probably even rarer than the Canada Warbler was a male **Cape May Warbler** at Abbotts Lagoon on the 31st (DE).

One of the big stories of this fall in the California birding world has been a surprising incursion of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, with far more reports than there are in most years. Marin got its piece of the action on the 31st, with a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at Abbotts Lagoon (DB).



Buff-breasted Sandpiper

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Observers and Acronyms BA: Bob Atwood, BB: Bob Battagin, CM: Colin Meusel, DB: Don Bartling, DE: Daniel Edelstein, DL: Derek Lecy, DS: Dan Singer, DW: Denise Wight, EC: Everett Clark, JP: John Perry, LS: Lucas Stephenson, MB: Mark Butler, MD: Mark Dettling, MF: Mark Forney, MS: Mark Stephenson, RA: Robert Aramayo, RH: Roger Harshaw, RS: Rusty Scalf

OPEN TO ALL!

eBIRD FOR BEGINNERS

Blue Classroom

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, CA

Saturday, October 13, 2018

8:45 AM to noon

With Bob Battagin

If you're interested in learning how to use eBird but not sure how to get started, this class is for you! eBird is a great way to keep track of your bird sightings, explore the latest bird observations in your area, research bird sightings in a different state, county, or country that you're planning to visit, and compete with your friends to find the most birds in your area. Perhaps most importantly, while having all this fun you'll also be making important contributions to science and conservation.

The class will consist of three 1-hour segments, with short breaks between each. From 9 to 9:55 AM Bob will provide an overview, explaining **What is eBird?** You'll also learn how to register as a new user, submit a checklist of your bird sightings, and access and manage your personal checklists and data. From 10 to 10:55 AM you'll learn how to set up yard and patch lists, receive eBird alerts, and explore the vast world of eBird data. From 11 AM until noon you'll learn how to use Cornell's eBird mobile app on your smartphone; how to enter your bird list as you bird in the field; and other features of the mobile eBird app.

The *eBird for Beginners* class is open to all. MAS membership is not required. To maximize your learning experience, we are limiting the class size to 15.

Registration: Sign up for this class by sending an email to Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net. Include the full name and email address for each person that you're registering. We will confirm your registration. Once the class is full, we'll add names to a waitlist.

Equipment you'll need to bring to class: Since eBird is accessed via the internet please bring your smartphone, tablet, and/or laptop computer. If you don't have a laptop or smartphone, we'll try to pair you up with the instructor or another participant.

Advanced preparation: To save class time, please download Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird Mobile app onto your smart phone before attending the class. It's free of charge from Apple's App Store or from Google Play. You'll learn how to use it in the third hour. For additional information about accessing the eBird Mobile app, please refer to the description for this class in the field trips section of the MAS website at www.marinaudubon.org.

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Canada Warbler



The Rail

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www.cranefestival.com/index.php
- Nov. 3 **Field Trip:** Rodeo Lagoon Encore
With William Legge & David Wiechers
- Nov. 11 **Field Trip:** Marta's Marsh
With Mark Schulist
- Nov. 17 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas/Hamilton Wetlands
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
- Nov. 18 **Boat Trip:** San Francisco Bay
Register now!
With John Klobas & Sarah Brooks
- Nov. 1, 15, & 29 **Class:** Evolution of Birds
Signups Required
With Bob Lewis & Bruce Mast

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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**.

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