

Doug Bell

Peregrine Falcon

As Peregrine Falcons have recovered from endangered status, they have often been found nesting on bridges and skyscrapers. A Peregrine Falcon pair has taken up residence on the UC Berkeley Campanile and fledged chicks twice. They are monitored by a team of citizen scientists, led by UC Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (MVZ) along with the East Bay Regional Park District and the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, (GGRO).

Peregrines are a reminder of the ornithologists of a generation ago who walked a tight-rope between science and conservation activism to bring this species back from the edge of extinction. One of their critical conservation tools? The well-kept and meticulously-labelled egg collections of natural history museums, including Berkeley's MVZ.

Founding director of the GGRO (ggro.org) since the mid-1980s, Allen Fish was honored in 2003 with the Maurice Broun Award for achievements in raptor biology, and in 2015 with the Bay Nature Environmental Educator Award.

Next month's speaker:

THURSDAY, MARCH 12 7:30 PM

Why Birds Sing and Other Wonders of Animal Communication

With Greg Budney



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Three Christmas Bird Counts – Mixed Results

POINT REYES

by George Kurth

The night before our December 14th count was heavy rain, but fortunately the weather cleared by early morning, and we had a full day of sunshine with the rain returning only in the evening after our traditional Compilation Dinner held at The Dance Palace in Point Reyes Station.

Within the official Point Reyes Count Circle there are 29 separate areas including virtually all of the habitats in the area from ocean to chaparral, marshes to ridge top forest, Tomales Bay and its estuarine protected headwaters, ranchland to riparian corridors.

With 140 counters led for the most part by returning leaders with hundreds, if not thousands, of cumulative hours of experience, the count total was 180 species. A **Prairie Falcon** was the only rare bird sighting.



Photos: Richard Plant

Two of the uncommon species from the Cheep Thrills CBC: Loggerhead Shrike on the left and Ferruginous Hawk, right

Thanks to all who participated, especially to David Wimpfheimer for his remarks about the history of the Point Reyes Count and to Dave Shuford for his 'species count-down,' both at the extremely convivial dinner.

We are also happy to report that in addition to a couple of very able new leaders, we had 15 or so birders between the ages of 25 and 30 and *continued on page 2*

Election Coming Up: Tuesday, March 3

Not only are we voting for presidential candidates on Tuesday, March 3rd, there are several important measures on the ballot as well. Based on impacts to birds and other natural resources, MAS recommends:

NO on Measure D

A "NO" vote on Measure D is a vote for the environment. It's a vote to restore this manicured former golf course property to natural habitat and open space that can support wildlife and be enjoyed by all of the public. It is also a vote to protect communities from the risk of having their community plan challenged by persons outside of the community and

subjecting it to a vote of the entire county.

Visit the Campaign for San Geronimo Valley website to find out more: www.sangeronimoforall.com. Click on "San Geronimo – A Park and Commons for All" for a brief video tribute (made by Valley locals) to the property.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The campaign is looking for people to help by making phone calls, tabling, distributing flyers and yard signs, sign waving, etc. Visit the website to review and sign up for volunteer opportunities. Look for your ballot to arrive in the mail soon. **Vote NO on D.**

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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Website	
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Volunteer Coordinator	
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members. If you wish to attend please call 924-6057.
6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Barbara Salzman

As we enter 2020, I feel so fortunate to be a part of Marin Audubon and part of our Board which has been willing to be courageous, purchase property, restore wetland habitats, and advocate for strong environmental protections. We are unusual among environmental organizations in that we both oppose development and negotiate with property owners to purchase, restore and permanently protect habitats on those same properties. And we, working together with Marin Baylands Advocates, have been successful in most cases. These approaches are often thought to be incompatible.

As I write, I am reading that a notice will be published in the Federal Register describing further weakening of the National Environmental Quality Act. We need to continue to fight for the environment against these and other threats, maintain our optimism and our determination to continue our conservation efforts, and build on our accomplishments. I hope you will join us. We are strongest together!

Your involvement is essential, so that

we can continue, grow and increase the effectiveness of our advocacy and extent of our habitat enhancements. Join our conservation committee or join us on a work day to directly improve habitats. We also have some positions on our Board for you to consider.

We have and have had many dedicated volunteers who are helping us now and have helped us through the years. Currently, we are grateful to the compilers, area leaders and the hundreds of counters who volunteered their time and skills to make our three citizen science bird counts a success. Also, we have been remembered in the will of one of our long-time volunteers, Mimi Burton, for which we are grateful. Mimi died in September. She was a member of our Board and chaired our Mother's Day Barbecue for 25 years. Mimi's dedication helped us then and her bequest of \$50,000 will continue to support our work now. It was heartwarming to hear from her family that her work as chair of our barbecue was as meaningful to Mimi as it was, and still is, to Marin Audubon Society.

Christmas Bird Count

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ten birders under the age of 16! We welcome the new blood to the PRCBC.

As usual we are grateful to Marin Audubon for their continued support.

Note: After February 1st a link will be available on our site for ordering the 50th Anniversary T-shirt previewed at the dinner.

CHEEP THRILLS

48,000 individual birds, 162 species

by David Sexton

The 2019 Cheep Thrills Christmas Bird Count, held in memory of Rich Stallcup, took place on December 19th. The gray day did not curb the enthusiasm of 90 volunteers who spread out over the 15-mile circle that's centered on Mt. Burdell and includes significant bird habitats in Black Point, Bahia, Indian Valley, Stafford Lake, Nicasio, Hicks Valley, and the southernmost areas of Sonoma County, including the Redwood Landfill and Lakeville.

The overall count was solid with two of every three species counted at above average totals. Our preliminary data indicates we observed nearly 48,000 individual birds, fewer than the 55,012 counted in 2018 but well above the eight-year average of 43,800.

The Bahia area, led by Heather Cameron had the highest species count of any area with 112. They were greatly assisted by Josiah Clark and Cédric Duhalde, who once

again bushwhacked through dense fields of coyotebrush and blackberry thickets. Their dedication paid off, as they counted over 1,000 sparrows of 7 species, including 37 **Lincoln's Sparrows** and the first **Yellow Warbler** seen on the count in the last nine years.

A big shout-out to Lisa Hug, a professional ornithologist and our favorite gull expert. For eight out of the nine years since we restarted Cheep Thrills, Lisa has helped Barbara Salzman and Lowell Sykes at the Redwood Landfill in Novato. This year she and Lowell observed 147 **California Gulls**, and 155 **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, with a total gull count of 437. At the compilation dinner Lowell told us that number was unusually low. Reviewing the historical data, we found that in 2015 they counted 2,779 gulls and in 2017 they found 2,464. Impressive!

The CBCs are the time when common birds are championed. Some of our most frequently seen birds were **Dunlin** (2,748), **Red-winged Blackbird** (2,673), **White-crowned Sparrow** (2,071), **European Starling** (1,991), and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** (1,739). Other exceptional totals were **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** (770), **Acorn Woodpecker** (367), and **Anna's Hummingbirds** (222). Dave Shuford's team observed 147 **Common Mergansers** on Stafford lake. Jim White's team carefully counted 897 **Northern Shovelers** at Rush Creek.

Two **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were seen on count day, one by Joyce and Doug

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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.

NICASIO RESERVOIR

No. 2, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, February 15, 2020

8:30 AM to 3 PM

NEW THIS YEAR: 7:30 AM Early Birds meet at Roy's Redwoods Preserve
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

We will meet at the backstop to the baseball field in the small West Marin hamlet of Nicasio. This is Bob's home "patch" where the riparian, open field, and wooded habitats are good for a nice variety of sparrows, gleaners, and woodpeckers. From town we'll head to nearby Nicasio Reservoir and make several stops along the shoreline. Many water bird species hang out there while raptors grace the sky, and who knows what will be flitting around in the willows and shrubs that line the shore? In the afternoon we are likely to explore along the northern shoreline of Tomales Bay. Heavy rain cancels.

Early Birds will meet at the entrance to Roy's Redwoods on Nicasio Valley Road (0.6 mile from San Geronimo) for a short walk through bay, redwood, oak, and madrone habitats in search of **Pileated Woodpecker** and other forest denizens.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 take the Lucas Valley Rd exit. Turn left on Lucas Valley Rd and continue approximately 10.3 miles. Keep right on Nicasio Valley Rd for 0.5 mile to the town of Nicasio. The baseball field is in the center of town. For GPS, use 1 Old Rancheria Rd, Nicasio, the address for the Rancho Nicasio Restaurants.

BIRDING EASTERN YOLO COUNTY

Beginning in Davis

Monday, February 17, 2020

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

With John Klobas & Sarah Brooks

The low-lying agricultural fields, ponds, and refuges of eastern Yolo County are the focus of this trip. In February, bird diversity and numbers are at their wintertime peak, and we will seek the spectacle of those numbers.

Burrowing owls are among the most threatened of California's owls. We will look for this small, ground-dwelling owl in the Davis area before heading to West Sacramento's Bridgeway Pond. Sandwiched between a suburb, mega warehouses, and the deep-water shipping channel, this pond is the winter home of **Blue-winged Teal** and **Cinnamon Teal**, **Sora**, raptors, and perhaps some diving ducks as well. This pond was the home for several months of last year's mega rarity, a male **Garganey** duck, which was seen by a few members of the trip last February, a week before it was positively identified. Next, we will seek habitat for **Wood Ducks** near the Sacramento River. Wood Ducks, usually a restive, shy species, are not as

skittish here as they are in hunting areas.

Our location for lunch is weather dependent, but the afternoon will find us heading back towards Davis, finishing our day at the Vic Fazio Wildlife Area (Yolo Bypass) where we will enjoy the waterfowl and water bird spectacle. In the event of flooding in the Bypass, we will bird other areas around Davis.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet in Davis in the El Macero Center (403 Mace Blvd) to organize the day and introduce the itinerary. Exit I-80 at Mace Blvd in Davis, turn left on the frontage road, then a quick right to Mace Blvd, then an immediate right into the El Macero parking lot. We'll be between Nugget Market and Starbucks. Please carpool if at all possible. A smaller number of cars allows us to be much more opportunistic and lessens our carbon footprint. Allow 2 hours for an early morning winter drive to Davis from most North Bay locations. Heavy rain cancels.

Dress in layers. Include rain gear. Binoculars are a must and bring a scope if you have one. This is a car-oriented trip with minimal walking. Wear shoes that can withstand muddy conditions. Bring lunch, snacks, and drinks. Nugget is a full-service market that opens at 7 AM. Let's go birding!

PRESIDIO AND CRISSY LAGOON

San Francisco

Saturday, February 22, 2020

8 AM to 3 PM

With Juan Garcia

Within the range of a moderate walk, several extensive habitat restorations can be seen up close; several more are works-in-progress. Here's an opportunity to celebrate these vital projects and contemplate their success.

Beginning at Inspiration Point, we'll slowly wind our way down Tennessee Hollow, with its carefully restored riparian and grassland habitat, and hold a sit-spot at El Polin Spring, looking for visiting warblers, among others. Next, we'll trace the path to lower Tennessee Hollow, which affords good views of slow-flowing and pooling sections.

We'll proceed to Crissy Lagoon via the now well-known Tunnel Tops, which will soon form an extension of the native plant corridor. The Lagoon itself offers habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as a good mixed gull flock. We'll walk the circuit of the Lagoon, stalking warblers in the willows and seed eaters foraging on Crissy Field. A small nature reserve on the beach side protects habitat for sparrows, phoebes, and a small wintering group of Snowy Plover. We'll end with telescopic views of San Francisco Bay, with its loons, grebes, cormorants, terns, scoters, and so on.

Meet at 8 AM at Inspiration Point on Arguello Boulevard in the Presidio:

www.presidio.gov/places/inspiration-point-overlook. Restrooms and drinking water will be accessible at several points, but you should bring snacks and/or lunch. As usual in the Bay Area, wear layered warmth and bring sun protection. A birding scope will be provided, but please bring binoculars.

RODEO LAGOON, Marin Headlands

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge & David Wiechers

This trip launches our new program featuring eight field trips to Rodeo Lagoon. These trips will focus on migration with four monthly field trips planned for the spring migration and four for the autumn migration. On this date William and David promise to assist with gull identification, which proves challenging for many birders. We will also be targeting migrant ducks, grebes, loons, gulls, and wintering passerines such as **Fox Sparrow**, **Hermit Thrush**, and **Say's Phoebe**. Join us for a Sea Watch at 7:30 AM or arrive later at 8:30 AM for a circuit of the lagoon.

DIRECTIONS: Head south on Hwy 101 and take the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right and go under the freeway, then follow the road down to the left. Within 300 feet turn left at the sign to the Marin Headlands; this is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito. You should see the tunnel with the five-minute signal light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Road to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

PACHECO POND, Novato

Thursday, March 5, 2020

8:30 AM to noon

With Bob and Sande Chilvers

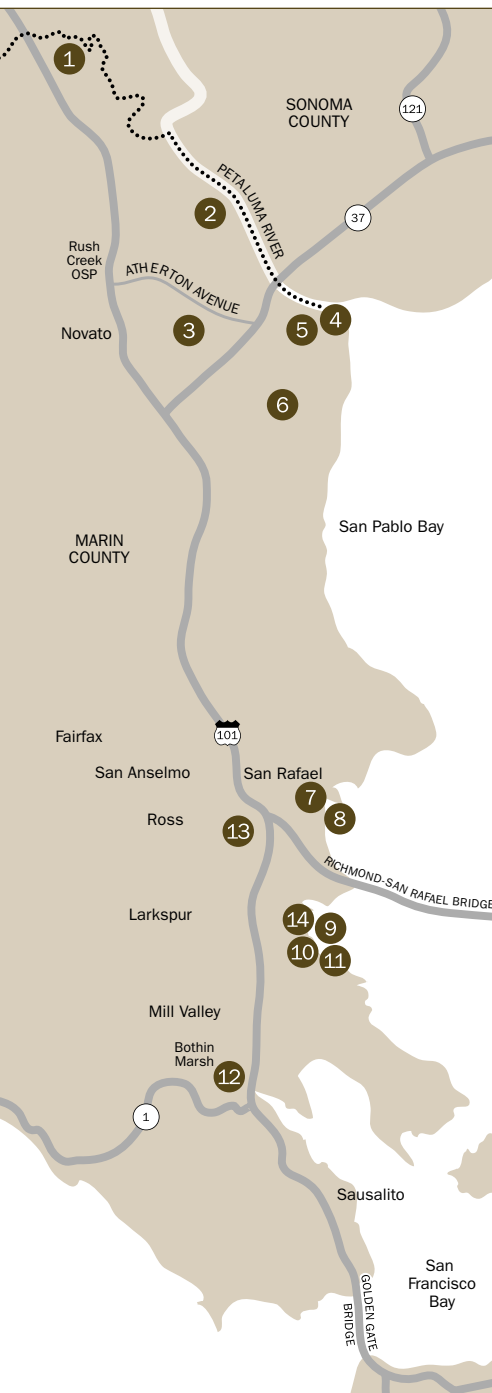
Join us again at Pacheco Pond where we'll be watching for signs of resident breeding birds beginning the nesting season. There aren't many eBird reports from Pacheco Pond for this time of year, so help us fill in the gaps in our knowledge and compile a day list to be shared online. Pacheco Pond doesn't have the glamour of many of our Marin birding locations, but it does have the distinction of being "the best publicly accessible freshwater-ish pond in Novato with adjacency to other bird-rich areas." The area provides habitat for a variety of ducks, **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **Common Gallinule**, **Sora**, and **Virginia Rail**. The adjacent trees provide additional habitat for songbirds, egrets, and a number of raptors including **Peregrine Falcon**.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels and help each other to find and

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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.



MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh Expansion Site	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. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
8. Tidelands and Murphy's Rock	34 acres
9. San Clemente Creek Tidelands	4.34 acres
10. End of Channel Drive	?? acres
11. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres
13. Cal Park	<1 acre
14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site	5.2 acres

ANCHOR-OUT PROCEEDINGS

The Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) is working on its response to BCDC's expectations. As stated in a recent letter, BCDC wants the RBRA to (1) enforce permitted time limits on vessels entering Richardson Bay; (2) in collaboration with other agencies, including Sausalito, initiate appropriate action to remove marine debris, unoccupied vessels, unregistered vessels and vessels occupied by persons who are not able to control the vessels or who are a danger to themselves or others; (3) submit a timeline to transition all vessels from the Bay; and (4) meet deadlines for reporting progress. While the staff report for the January RBRA meeting had some positive actions in response to these expectations, the outcome of the meeting was less than satisfactory.

Staff reported that the vessel population has declined from 184 in June 2019 to 140 in December 2019 and pointed out that RBRA resolution 03-19 identified enforcement priorities, including removing marine debris, and that RBRA has taken active steps to prevent the anchoring of new occupied vessels. A 72-hour time limit is now enforced for newly arriving vessels, but the RBRA has not identified occupied vessels as an enforcement priority. The RBRA would have to expand enforcement priorities to require all occupied vessels to comply with BCDC's expectations.

The majority of the remaining vessels are in the marine debris category. The RBRA staff reports 40 unoccupied and 100 occupied but staff does not actually know how many occupied vessels are seaworthy and registered. They have sufficient funds to remove only up to 50 vessels. One speaker, Andrew Hunning who has been running RBRA's outreach for transitioning persons off the water, reported, based on his research, that people leaving of their own volition would gradually result in a significant decline and eventually eliminate anchor-outs.

RBRA continues to explore establishing a mooring field, which would allow a specific number of vessels to be moored, with the ideas of reducing threats to eelgrass and reducing the risk of vessels breaking loose. They give no attention to bird impacts. Another guest speaker, the Morro Bay Harbor Director, spoke about operation of their mooring program, which consists of 100 moorings on public property. While problems with some people not paying were reported, a generally positive picture was painted. It was not recognized that

the situation is different here in SF Bay where there has been the extensive loss of bay to fill and development, and we have an agency that regulates bay fill. This agency, BCDC, considers anchor-outs to be bay fill.

It is eminently clear that the Board simply does not have the political will to enforce approaches that would eliminate the anchor-out population. Staff asked the RBRA Board to approve not allowing anchor-outs that leave or are removed from the bay, largely due to the poor condition of their vessels, to return in other vessels. The Board would not agree. Commissioner Kate Sears expressed sympathy and sought flexibility to allow some to come back, even though that is in clear violation of their ordinance. Instead, a workshop to discuss the issue was proposed; all Board members went along.

BRESCIA PROJECT

Only two minor aspects of these two Black Point projects (single houses on adjacent lots) changed as reported in the staff report for our appeal hearing. The only differences in the projects were that the retaining wall is three inches lower and the County corrected its miscount of the trees by increasing by three the number of trees to be cut down. All other aspects were the same.

MAS has major issues with the proposed projects: 1) staff report information is inadequate, 2) access to our downslope property would be blocked by the proposed 9.7-foot retaining wall, 3) several parcels owned by MAS would be surrounded on three sides, 4) native hillside habitat would be lost by the placement of a minimum of 766 cubic yards of fill, and 5) there are likely to be unidentified impacts on MAS properties that are surrounded by the proposed development properties.

At the January 13 hearing after 12 neighbors and representatives of MAS and MBA testified, the Planning Commission approved the house, the 9.7-foot tall retaining wall, the fire truck turnaround and the removal of more than 16 trees. The commission added a few conditions: it required a licensed surveyor to mark as our property the MAS parcel immediately adjacent to the proposed house, and it required an arborist to evaluate whether moving the road would save trees. As this *Rail* goes to press, we are deciding on whether to appeal to the Supervisors.

Christmas Bird Count

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Waterman at Pacheco Valley and one by David Wimpfheimer on McClay Rd. in Novato. Peter Colasanti's team contributed a **Prairie Falcon**, ensuring that we had all four species of falcons covered. The most uncommon sighting was a hybrid duck that Jeff Miller spotted in the Binford Road wetlands at Rush Creek, while working the area with Mark Forney. They identified the "odd duck" as a **Brewer's Duck**, a hybrid of a Mallard and Gadwall. Well done!

It was a great day for citizen science.

SOUTHERN MARIN

Another Low Year

by Ed Nute, Vicens Vila, Bob Hinz



Jonah Benningfield

Marbled Murrelet

December 29, a clear and cold day, saw over 130 bird count volunteers including 27 leaders cover 23 sub-areas of the 15-mile diameter count circle in South Marin. Counters reported about 49,200 total birds among an unconfirmed total of 176 different species. Except for the 2002 count in heavy rain, the 2019 count recorded the fewest birds in the count's 45 years. Moreover, the last four southern Marin counts recorded four of the circle's six lowest numbers of birds. This count has been conducted since 1975.

Baykeepers was again kind enough to provide a boat for Peter Colasanti to count the birds on the bay from San Rafael to Sausalito. This year, after a four-year hiatus, we were able

to secure a boat for the offshore count area outside the Golden Gate. Vicens Vila, a Redwood High graduate, currently majoring in evolutionary biology at Cornell University and working in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, led a group of seven birders including a couple of pelagic bird experts on the trip outside the Gate and reports as follows:

"As part of the S. Marin CBC, a team of seven birders journeyed outside the Golden Gate to survey the offshore area by boat. After crossing under the Golden Gate at sunrise, our counting began as we approached Point Bonita. As we moved north, we encountered good numbers of the typical nearshore species. Flying **Common** and **Pacific Loons** could be observed at eye level from the boat's upper deck. Hundreds of **Western Grebes** bobbed in the waves around us. **Common Murres** barreled by in threes and fours desperately flapping their wings. A steady flock of gulls stayed with our boat, making close passes in search of food. Mixed among the more common species, we were able to pick out two **Iceland (Thayer's) Gulls**, five **Herring Gulls**, and one out-of-place **Ring-billed Gull**. We were pleasantly surprised to encounter a small handful of dark morph **Northern Fulmars** arcing by the boat throughout the day. As we made our way back into the Golden Gate Channel, we began to notice pairs of small black-and-white birds passing across the bow. Soon it was impossible to look in any direction and not see **Marbled Murrelets**. In a span of only forty-five minutes, our murrelet number rose to a remarkable eighty-one individuals. Seeing such great numbers of a threatened species gave the trip a great sense of fulfillment. Our thanks go to Captain Jack Going, whose generosity and seafaring skill not only made this survey possible but also a great success."

MAS FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 3)

identify the birds. The area around Pacheco Pond is mostly flat, but we will be walking across some rocky, uneven surfaces. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, scopes, and water. Heavy rain cancels.

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

STAFFORD LAKE, Novato

Saturday, March 7, 2020

9:00 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 so 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 west 2.9 miles. Turn right onto Novato Blvd. and follow for 2.6 miles. The park is on the left. Turn left after the gatehouse and travel to the parking lot. Entrance fee is \$5 per vehicle. If you have a Marin County library card, you can check out a free library park pass from any Marin County Free Library.

THANK YOU, DONORS

Mary B. Abbott, Ablin Family Fund, Bud Alderson, Diane W. Aldrich, Michael D. Anderson, Thomas R. Anderson, T.S. & A.P. Arthur, Bob Atwood, Margot Avery, Holly A. Bacuzzi, Mariah Baird, Tom Balogh, Phyllis Barry, Robert L. Belichick, Benevity Community Impact Fund, Gordon Bennett, David L. Berry, Daniel & Betsy Bikle, Mark & Beverly Birnbaum, LaVonne Blasche, Carl Blom, Len Blumin, Kay Bolla, M. Madeleine Boshart, Sharon A. Bozic, Dorothy J. Bray, Marion Brennan, Girija Brilliant, Deborah Brown, Janet S. Brown, Leslie Brown, Stephen & Faith Brown, Emma Bruelhman-Senecal, Thomas & Carol Budzinski, Ann Buell, Patricia Campbell, Samuel & Ingrid Chase, Beverly Cherner, William A. Clarke, Clarence R. Clements, Collin & Jill Cochrane, Dayton Coles, Richard A. Colsky, Geri & Wayne Cooper, Mary Anne Cowperthwaite, Mark S. Cunningham, Ken and Ann Davis, Paula Dawson, Claudia De Domenico, Barb Demeter, Nona Dennis, William & Sarah Devlin, Laura Disterhoft, Lynne M. Dixon, David & Kristine Donadio, Deanne Donnellan, Deborah Dorosin, Ashley Dumbra, Brett R. Elebash, Kenneth C. Evans, Laurel Feigenbaum, Richard Felton, Zachary Finley, Marguerite Finney, Charles Fisher, Lee Fitzgerald, Mark H. Forney, Lewis FredHendricks, Tom and Fayerickson, Michael Freeman M.D., Dianne Fruin, Roberta & Robert Geering, Kay Gillis, Kymus Ginwala, Alice Joan Glasser, Doreen Gluckin, Jim Gonsman & Carol Burgoa, Sylvia J. Goodman, William R & Suzanne S. Gorenfeld, Bonnie & Terry Gosliner, Rosaline & Rod Gould, Carl & Donna Gowan, Pauline Grant, Marjorie Gregg, Gretchen Frantz Charitable Fund, Martin & Joyce Griffin MD, Maureen J. Groper, Jeannette Gustafson, Julia E. Haimowitz, Lawrence W. and Jan F. Haines, Maribeth Halloran, Joan M. Halverson, Susan Hamstra, Sister Raya Hanlon, Margaret Hannan, Mark Hansen, Glenn Harcourt, Margaret Harrington, Erika W. Harris, Mayme Harris, Roger Harris, John Harrison, Michael Hartman, John Michael Hartnett, Tom & Faye Hendricks, Harry & Elaine Hicks, Vivian Holley & Bryan Baker, Gretchen Hoskins, Suzanne D. Huang O.D., Elizabeth Huning, Mary Hynes, Victoria Jackson, Lee Jensen & Yvonne East, Reese & Margaret Jones, Daniel Kalb, Kathleen & James Kaneko, John Kay, Richard & Nancy Keaton, Robert H. Kennis, Cynthia Kenyon, M. Louise Kimbell, Charles W. & Valerie Kircher Jr., Nancy Kirkpatrick, Elizabeth Jane Knowles & Mark Oliver, Roberta Koss, Josephine Kreider, Dale Kuhn, Daniel & Sarah Kushner, Frank Lahorgue,

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HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE REPORT RELEASED

The Year 1 Monitoring Report for our Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Restoration Project prepared by Environmental Science Associates (ESA) has been released. The monitoring covered physical processes and vegetation. The report is set up to evaluate the evolution of the marsh process by evaluating its progress toward success criteria set forth in the Monitoring Plan.

The results of the monitoring for tidal water inundation indicates that both the filling and draining of the site are in alignment with tides in the adjacent tidal waterways. This satisfies success criteria for physical processes in the Monitoring Plan. The average marsh plain elevation is 4.99 feet NAVD (North American Vertical Datum) narrowly satisfying the performance criteria of 5 feet NAVD for excavation of the marsh plain.

There is evidence of channel erosion along the two larger channels as they begin to widen in response to the increased tidal prism within the site interior. This is an expected process resulting from the three breaches and new channels directing water into the site. A slump block within the upland and transition areas is resulting from erosion.

Native tidal marsh vegetation covers 0.2 acres within the tidal marsh portions of the site. This is 6.3% of the tidal marsh portion of the site. Forty-one percent of the upland and transition zones are covered with native vegetation. This is likely the result of planting so many plants — 18,201 in total. It should be noted that the field work for the monitoring was done in summer 2019. Since then there has been considerable growth of plants.

The overall review indicates that the project is progressing satisfactorily toward tidal marsh. ESA summarizes: “*Overall the site is progressing well as of Year 1 monitoring. Topographic surveys show the site was constructed as intended, meeting performance expectations for intertidal marsh elevations. No tidal muting is occurring inside the site and tidal range is in line with expectations. It is still too early to determine any sedimentation trends within the marsh as well as determine marsh vegetation success, although the outlook for vegetation succession appears positive.*”

BAHIA

On Point Land Management Inc. (formerly Shelterbelt Builders) has planted 2,120 native plants, California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) and coyotebrush (*Baccharis pilularis*) along several levees at Bahia during the first few weeks in January. The purposes of the planting are to out-compete the invasive radish growing on the levee and to provide



Cerry Jarocki

Volunteers planted *Frankenia salina* just above the tide line in MAS's Corte Madera Marsh expansion project.

better habitat. They also planted creeping wildrye (*Elymus triticoides*), field sedge (*Carex praegracilis*) and Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*) in seasonal wetlands of the Central peninsula. We would have preferred to use volunteers, but did not have enough volunteers to carry out this large planting project.

CORTE MADERA

Second Saturday volunteers had plenty of sun and were able to plant 61 alkali heath (*Frankenia salina*) from one-gallon containers donated by The Watershed Nursery, dug and pulled bristly ox-tongue, Harding grass, and a few small invasive sea lavender (*Limonium*) plants that Bob Hinz found along the northern shore.

NORTON POND

On January 10, Environmental Science Associates (ESA) engineers surveyed Norton Pond and will use that data to prepare a drainage assessment for the pond. The assessment will increase our understanding of the hydrology of the pond and will help inform future decisions about management of the pond.

SIMMONS SLOUGH

On Point Land Management Inc. has begun planting for our part of the Marin County grant for flood control in the Simmons Slough watershed. They will plant 1,880 wetland plants (*Carex praegracilis*, *Juncus balticus* and *Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and later this month, STRAW will plant 1,000 more.

The project, funded by the Coastal Conservancy, will replace an aging pump on Novato Creek and install water control structures on the slough so that the water levels can be managed to leave more water in our wetland for wildlife. The grant will also fund development of a plan for management of the water, using the new pump.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the monthly stewardship day volunteers dug mustard, bristly ox-tongue and Harding grass in and near past and upcoming purple needlegrass areas. A hired crew will be planting in February.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

This early in the growing season the annual plants that invade our restorations are still very small so we will continue to reduce the perennials that are so troublesome, especially Harding grass and bristly ox-tongue. At Triangle Marsh there may be a few native plants to put in the ground. Rain cancels our volunteer days.

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

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: February 1, March 7

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise

Dr directly across from the Ring Mountain trailhead near the Montessori School.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: February 8, March 14

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

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

Bahia, Novato:

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

THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Ed Nute, Lucienne O'Keefe, Alison Pence, Roger Stoll, Lowell Sykes

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Citlalli Aquino, T.S. & A.P. Arthur, Margot Avery, Kay Bolla, George Borghi, Madeleine Boshart, Sharon A. Bozic, Emma Bruehlman-Senecal, Robert Casady, Richard Colsky, Kenneth Evans, Gretchen Frantz, Ellen M. Fusco, Terry Gesulga, Kymus Ginwala, Doreen Gluckin, Jack Going, William & Suzanne Gorenfeld, Peter Granoff, Julia Haimowitz, Lawrence & Jan Haines, Glenn Harcourt, Jim Hargrove, John Michael Hartnett, Joel Hedgpath, M. Louise Kimbell, Frank Lahorgue, Lelia & Lawrence Lanctot, Richard & Dee Lawrence, Sharon E. Losee, Paul & Barbara Makuh, Gary & Irene Masada, Christy M. Newman, Melville Owen, Nan Parks, Susan E. Parrott, Allen S. Preger, Ralph & Leslie Purdy, John Roberts, Sallie Rowe, Morton Stein, Linda Sudduth, Shilpa Tilwalli, Randall Trigg, Nancy Weir

MARIN BIRDLOG: DECEMBER 2019

By Noah Arthur

December is deep winter in Marin, the coldest month on average throughout the Bay Area. It is an excellent, if cold and sometimes underrated, time for rare birds; this year I saw as many rarities around the Bay Area in December as in September (traditionally considered the best rarity month).

The first new rarity of the month was a **Caspian Tern** over Nicasio Reservoir on the 5th (BB), part of the last two years' increase in winter reports of the species in Marin. Supposedly regular off our shores in winter, but very rarely seen, a **Pomarine Jaeger** chased a gull at Pt. Reyes South Beach on the 8th (DL). On the 9th a juvenile **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, an annual winter rarity that we nearly always get one or more of in December, along with a **Bullock's Oriole**, were in Pt. Reyes Station (DM). Three calling **Lapland Longspurs** flew over Drakes Corner on the Outer Point on the 10th (DM).

The 14th was the date of the Pt. Reyes Christmas Bird Count, and as usual, a number of nice rare birds were found. A male **Common Teal** was in a marsh northeast of Pt. Reyes Station (EM & MB), and no less than three **Caspian Terns** were cruising over the south end of Tomales Bay (MS & EG). Another **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was in Inverness (MS), and a flock of 10 **Evening Grosbeaks** were along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. near Olema Marsh (ST). Last but not least, an apparent '*sordida*' **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a rare vagrant from the SoCal Channel Islands, was at Tom's Point.

On the 15th, yet another **Caspian Tern** was in the Petaluma Marshes near Novato (JC), and three **Townsend's Solitaires** were at Barth's Retreat on Mt. Tamalpais (DLu).

On the 20th, three more **Caspian Terns** were fishing on Stafford Lake (LN), and another **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found in Pacheco Valley (JW & DW). Also on the 20th a '*rufina*' **group Song Sparrow**, quite a rare visitor from the Pacific Northwest, was along Pine Hill Rd. in Mill Valley (WL).

Another or the same three **Lapland Longspurs** were at Spaletta Plateau on Outer Pt. Reyes on the 21st (DM). On the 22nd a '*montana/merillii*' **group Song Sparrow**, not regular in Marin but less rare than the '*rufina*', was in the Inverness Park marshes (NA).

Two **Barrow's Goldeneye** were on Bolinas Lagoon on the 24th (GM). In what has continued to be a good winter for the species in Marin, four **Evening Grosbeaks** were at China Camp State Park on Christmas day (AM). Also on the 25th, what may have been a second '*montana/merillii*' **group Song Sparrow** was in the Inverness Park marshes (CC).

A **Parasitic Jaeger** was off Agate Beach on the 27th (MD), even rarer than the Pomarine in midwinter. Six more **Evening Grosbeaks** were in Bolinas on the 28th (MS & LS), and another **Common Teal** was at Deer Island OSP on the 29th (AM).

Observers and Acronyms **AM:** Alex Merritt, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **CC:** Connor Cochrane, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **DLu:** David Lumpkin, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **DW:** Doug Waterman, **EG:** Elizabeth Gillogly, **EM:** Eddie Monson, **GM:** Gerald Meral, **JC:** Jim Crumpler, **JW:** Joyce Waterman, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **MB:** Max Benningfield, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **ST:** Scott Terrill, **WL:** William Legge

Future of Mother's Day Picnic in Doubt, Needs Organizer

Perhaps you've enjoyed our Mother's Day Picnic at sometime during the last 50 years we've been holding the event. We may not be able to continue this tradition because we don't have a chair for the Mother's Day Picnic this year. Unless we find someone to head up the Picnic, we will not be able to continue to hold the event. We have dependable volunteers for most of the needed tasks but need a chair.

If you like to work with people and like to organize, call Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057 to find out what is involved.



Greg Schechter, CCA 2.0

Continued from page 5

Lelia Ann & Lawrence Lanctot, Richard H. & Dee M. Lawrence, William Legge, Lori Leighton, Linda Levey & Mary Hanley, Anne Libbin, Judith Lichterman, Sharon E. Losee, Lawrence Lossing & Ann Elston, Kathleen T. Lowrey, Jim MacDonald, David MacKenzie, Ron & Amanda Mallory, Bruno & Pauline Marchon, Helene B. Marsh, Nancy Anne Marshall, Sarah Martin, Gary & Irene Masada, Sandra F. Massen, Vivian Mazur, Sharon McCloskey, Michael McCrea, John Kirk McDonough, Morton McMichael, Prem McMurdo, Doyleen McMurtry, Robert E. & Suzanne B. Mellor, Barbara & Gerald Meral, Patricia Merrill, Sarah A. Millus, Claudine Minchella, Susan, John & Eddie Monson, Lois & Bruce Moody, Karen K. Morgan, Robert Morton, Barbara Munden & Jerry Kenney, Julie Munro, Eileen Murray, Michael Muschell, Marianne Nannestad, Geraldine & James Nardi, Steve & Ruth Nash, Barbara E. Nathan, Myra J. Natter, Russell D. Nelson, Christy M. Newman, Linda Nicoletto, Larry & Maxine Nilsen, Philip M. Nonneman, Pam Nurse, Ed Nute, Lucienne O'Keefe, Jennifer D. Organ, Melville Owen, William & Catherine Parrish, Susan E. Parrott, Thomas Peacock, E. Lynn Perry, Phil Peterson, Nancy Philie, Joy Phoenix, Stephen Piattie, Mary Plescia, Robert Portnoy, Allen Preger, Jeannete H. Price, Douglas H. Pringle, Christine & Paul Prusiner, John H. and Peggy G. Pugh Jr, Ralph & Leslie Purdy, Deborah Quinn, Alison Quoyeser, Kurt Rademacher, Phil H. & Katherine M. Reilly, Marianna Riser, Susan Ristow, Lawrence Robbins, Billie J. Robertson, Mary & Max Rodel, Elizabeth F. Rodis-Jamero, Dennis & Judith Rodoni, Robert & Susan Rosenberg, Sterling L. Ross, Dorothy Rosso, Georg Roth, Sallie Anne Rowe, Barbara Salzman, Cynthia S. Samson & Alan H. Cowan, Charlotte J. Scherman, David & Julie Schnapf, Stuart Schneider, Virginia & William Schultz, Carol B. Schwartz, Linda Scott & Patricia Stein, David Sexton, Ann Sheldon & Niccolo Caldararo, Gretchen K. Sheridan, E. C. Shute, Steven Sicher, Madeleine & Donald Simborg, Virginia Soper, Robert Spatz, Helen L. Stoddard, Susan Stompe, Michael K. Stone, Georgia & Jim Struhsaker, Linda D. Sudduth, Sherry Sweet, Suzanne Thornley, Margaret Ann Todd, Lois M. Tolles, Randall Trigg, Jeanne & Peter Tymstra, Valorie Van Dahl, Victoria Van Meter, Joan L. Vaughan, Charles J. Vogelheim, Rose & Christopher Wager, Dr. Sandra J. Weiss, Jim White, Dawn Williamson, Kathryn Wilson, Robert J. Wilson, Christine Wood, Periann Wood, Charles & Lynne Worth, Diane Wrona, Catherine & John Yee, Linda Zercher, Carolyn Zwicker



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SAVE THE DATE

- March 14 **Field Trip:** River Front Park
With Lisa Hug
 - March 21 **Field Trip:** Corte Madera Marsh & Mt. Tam
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - March 25 **Field Trip:** Rodeo Lagoon
With William Legge & David Wiechers
 - March 28 **Field Trip:** Mines Road
With Rich Cimino
 - March 29 **Field Trip:** Lake Tolay
With Peter Colasanti
 - May 28–31 **Overnight Field Trip:** Yosemite & Nearby Foothills
No details available; if interested, email Jane Medley
 - June 19–21 **Overnight Field Trip:** Sierra Valley
With Rich Cimino
- Check website for updates and details

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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.

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