



*Eduardo Inigo Elias*

**Greg Budney**

This presentation explains the basics of how and why birds vocalize (as well as other animals) and features many interesting and astonishing examples (including a humorous Common Loon recording) and explores a range of behaviors from courtship to warning signals.

Greg is the retired former Audio Curator of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, the world's largest collection of wildlife sound recordings. He is also an experienced bird sound recordist and has produced numerous audio guides to sounds of birds of the Americas. He has trained hundreds of biologists and citizen scientists in techniques for capturing the sounds of wildlife for research, conservation, and education.

**Next month's speaker:**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9 7:30 PM**

**Discovering Wood Warblers in  
Marin County: When Nesters  
Arrive and Where to Find Them**

*With Daniel Edelstein*



# The Rail

**MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY**

## Vote in the March 3 Election



*Roger Harris*

**Current view of one fairway of the 157-acre former San Geronimo golf course. Under the Trust for Public Lands care, the non-native grasses of the manicured fairways will be restored to habitat.**

In addition to the critically important presidential primary, at the March election Marin voters will be deciding on some important measures that will affect all residents. Our position on Measure D, the former San Geronimo Golf Course, is clear: **vote NO**. Some members are asking about our positions on Measures C and I. For the reasons stated below, we have decided to take no position on Measures C, the Wildfire Prevention Measure, and Measure I, extension of the existing Marin-Sonoma Area Rail Transit District's (SMART) one-quarter of one percent sales tax.

Measure C would fund the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority by levying a special parcel tax. How these funds would be used, and whether decisions and programs made possible by these funds would follow sound environmental principles depend on how the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) would function and the decisions it would make. There is no clear assurance that the JPA would follow

sound environmental principles including not removing native plants without scientific basis. Without clarification and assurances, we are not comfortable supporting or opposing this measure.

Measure I would extend the existing SMART tax for 39 years. The funds raised could only be spent on transportation projects in Marin and Sonoma Counties. Extending the rail line to Cloverdale is among the objectives. SMART does some good things: the train is taking some cars off the road, and has permanently protected and restored the Mira Monte property between Novato and Petaluma. We know little about the natural resources along the way to Cloverdale and hence the environmental impacts that would result from this extension. We do know that Measure I would allow the construction of the rest of the bicycle/pedestrian pathways, which is the most environmentally damaging aspect of the

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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.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Vice President	Lowell Sykes 388-2821
Secretary	Ann Thomas 914-9559
Treasurer	Barbara Demeter 707/479-1124
Conservation	Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Field Trips	Jane Medley 559/760-1551
Membership Secretary	Elyse Omernick 694-2320
Contact Elyse for membership problems or questions.	
Membership Chair	Ann Thomas 914-9559
Outreach, Social Media	Elyse Omernick 694-2320
Speaker Series	
	Doug Waterman 415/506-4675
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 680-6291
Nominating	Doug Waterman 415/506-4675
Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Bob Hinz 383-8688
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](http://www.marinaudubon.org)

Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing [membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org](mailto: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

Thank you to all who donated to Marin Audubon in response to this year's winter appeal. Your generous donations are making it possible for us to hire a bookkeeper and consider expanded, science-based, educational and habitat improvement projects. We'll keep you informed as we consider alternatives. We also want to apologize for getting our thank you letters out late. We were slowed by Board and volunteer changes.

Welcome to our new bookkeeper, Sabra Drohan, who will be doing basic bookkeeping tasks to assist our new Treasurer, Barbara Demeter, and assure our finances are handled responsibly and efficiently. Sabra Drohan is an independent bookkeeper who has been working with a variety of clients in the Bay Area for over 25 years. Sabra came on board in early January. Barbara reports: "Sabra is an asset to MAS and has exceeded expectations of a part-time bookkeeper." Our treasurer's job is now so big that we could not find a volunteer to do the entire job. So, with Sabra's help, Barbara is functioning efficiently and we are back on track managing our finances.

Douglas Mundo, Executive Director of the Multicultural Center of Marin, and I filmed a session with TV journalist and environmentalist, Doug McConnell, on our Tiscornia Marsh project for Doug's Open Road TV series on NBC. In coordination with

the Coastal Conservancy, Doug is producing a series of programs demonstrating how our Measure AA tax dollars are being spent. The series will feature various projects around the Bay that are being funded by Measure AA. The session on Tiscornia will air in April. We'll let you know when we have a definite date.

As we all are aware, election day is coming up on March 3. As we have discussed in previous newsletters, we recommend a **NO vote on D**. Also see pages 1 and 4 for an explanation of our position on other local measures. Whatever your views on D and other measures before us, please **VOTE**.

In our troubled world with the national situation and climate change, one of the ways that can help you to feel better is to get involved, volunteer and take an active part in working to improve conditions. Marin Audubon has many wonderful volunteers, and we are grateful for your involvement, but we need more to increase our effectiveness and accomplish our goals: restoring and enhancing habitats on our properties and enhancing our education programs. As a volunteer organization, we need volunteers to perform tasks necessary for our functioning. Consider volunteering for a position on the Marin Audubon Board. See below for more information on Board positions available.

## Mother's Day Picnic 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 will not be able to continue this tradition because we do not have a chairperson for the picnic this year. Unless we find someone to oversee it, we cannot continue to hold the event. We have dependable volunteers for most of the needed tasks but need a chairperson.

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

## Join the MAS Board!

Marin Audubon's mission "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems" has made and continues to make a lasting positive impact on Marin County's wetlands and open space. Now the MAS Board of Directors invites others who share in the commitment to the health of local habitats to join its efforts. Currently the Board has two open positions. If you are interested in becoming more actively involved in Marin Audubon Society and its mission, we ask you to consider a position on the Board.

To learn more about becoming a board member, please contact Doug Waterman at 415/506-4675.

## 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.

### RIVERFRONT REGIONAL PARK

#### Healdsburg

Saturday, March 14, 2020

8:30 AM to 12:00 PM

With Lisa Hug

Join our continuing explorations in Sonoma County with this visit to Riverfront Regional Park where we will take a leisurely walk around two old quarry ponds. Starting at the parking lot, we will take 3 to 3.5 hours to walk around two ponds. This walk includes a variety of habitats including red-wood forest, riparian forest, and a view of the Russian River.

There are picnic tables and restrooms if you want to linger after the walk. The trail may be VERY muddy. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope, if you are willing to carry it, layered clothing, and waterproof shoes or boots. Include water, snacks, and field guides. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Riverside Regional Park is at 7821 Eastside Rd, Healdsburg. There is a \$7 entrance fee per car unless you have a Sonoma County Regional Park annual pass.

### DRAKES BEACH AND ESTERO

#### Point Reyes National Seashore

Monday, March 16, 2020

9:30 AM to 3 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join David as we hike from the Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center to the mouth of Drakes Estero and return. We will be hiking approximately four miles on a moderately rough trail and along the beach with a total elevation gain of about 300 feet. Come prepared with comfortable hiking shoes, layered clothing, and plenty to eat and drink.

This early spring hike will give us marine mammals, wildflowers, and, of course, land and water birds. Elephant Seals are the most dramatic pinnipeds we'll see, but cetaceans are always possible. Waterbirds, including loons, grebes, cormorants, and scoters are plentiful along with **Brant** and both pelicans. The beach has dramatic scenery and also **Willet**, **Sanderling**, and other shorebirds. **Red-tailed Hawks** and **Northern Harriers** will show courtship behaviors and, with any luck, we may find an owl or two in the barn or conifers.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Inverness out to Point Reyes National Seashore. At Drakes Beach Rd keep to the left and continue to the parking lot. Expect about a 35-minute drive from Point Reyes Station to Drakes Beach.

### TWILIGHT IN TENNESSEE VALLEY

#### Marin Headlands

Friday, March 20, 2020

6:45 PM to 8:45 PM

With Jim White

Join our second annual search for creatures of the night in the Tennessee Valley. Last year we had the good fortune of seeing

**Common Poorwill** along the trail near the beach, and with any luck, that might happen again. We also heard **Great Horned Owl**. Be adventurous and join our group.

We will be walking on flat roads in the dark. Dress warmly and wear a headlamp if you have one. Jim says headlamps are preferable to flashlights due to the angle of light projected. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101, take the Stinson Beach exit. Turn left on Shoreline Hwy in 0.1 mile. In 0.3 mile turn left onto Tennessee Valley Rd. Stay on Tennessee Valley Rd to its end. We will meet at the parking lot.

### MT. TAMALPAIS/CORTE MADERA MARSH

#### No. 3, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, March 21, 2020

8:30 AM to 3 PM

**NEW THIS YEAR:** 7:30 AM Early Birds meet at Mt. Tam Summit

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join us for an enjoyable morning hike on Mt. Tam where we hope to both hear and spot a **Pileated Woodpecker**. We also hope to find **Red Crossbills**, **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, and a couple of early spring migrants like **Western Tanager**, **Cassin's Vireo**, and **Black-throated Gray** or **Hermit Warbler**. It's hard not to notice the wildflowers this time of year, so we'll also be checking out the spring blooms. Our plan is to picnic on the mountain then visit the lowland marshes in Corte Madera.

Early Birds will meet at the Mt. Tam Summit parking lot. There is an \$8 parking fee here (\$7 seniors). We will be looking for resident species as well as newly arriving migrants.

**DIRECTIONS:** We will meet at Rock Springs, which is located on East Ridgecrest Blvd. in Mount Tamalpais State Park. From Hwy 101 take Hwy 1 toward Stinson Beach and Muir Woods. Turn right on Panoramic Hwy. In approximately 5 miles, turn right on Pan Toll Rd. In 1 mile turn right on Ridgecrest Blvd. The Rock Springs parking lot will be on your right. Heavy rain cancels.

### RODEO LAGOON

#### Marin Headlands

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

7:30 AM to Noon

With William Legge & David Wiechers

This will be the second in our sequence of eight field trips to Rodeo Lagoon. Our new series is focusing on migration with four monthly field trips planned for the spring migration and four for the autumn migration. On this date William and David will help us search for late winter and early spring migrants. As per usual during migration times, there is the possibility of something completely unexpected showing up. 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 traffic 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. Heavy rain cancels.

### OLOMPALI STATE HISTORIC PARK

#### Novato

Saturday, March 28, 2020

9 AM to 12 PM

With Rich Cimino & Janet Bodle

It's always an exciting time to birdwatch at Olompali State Historic Park! Some think spring is the best time. Beginning and experienced birders are invited to join leaders Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle to bird the park. Early spring arrivals should be on hand as we walk the old ranch road to the park's reservoir. We hope to see a wide variety of species that thrive in the park's oak savanna and open grasslands: raptors, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, woodpeckers, nuthatches, thrushes, and **Hooded Oriole**. The field trip will start at 9 AM in the parking lot. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Exit Hwy 101 at Atherton Ave/San Marin Dr in Novato. Follow the signs to Olompali State Historic Park. A right turn onto the Old Redwood Hwy frontage road will take you to the park. There is an \$8 parking fee.

### TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK

#### Petaluma

Sunday, March 29, 2020

8:45 AM to 3 PM

With Peter Colasanti

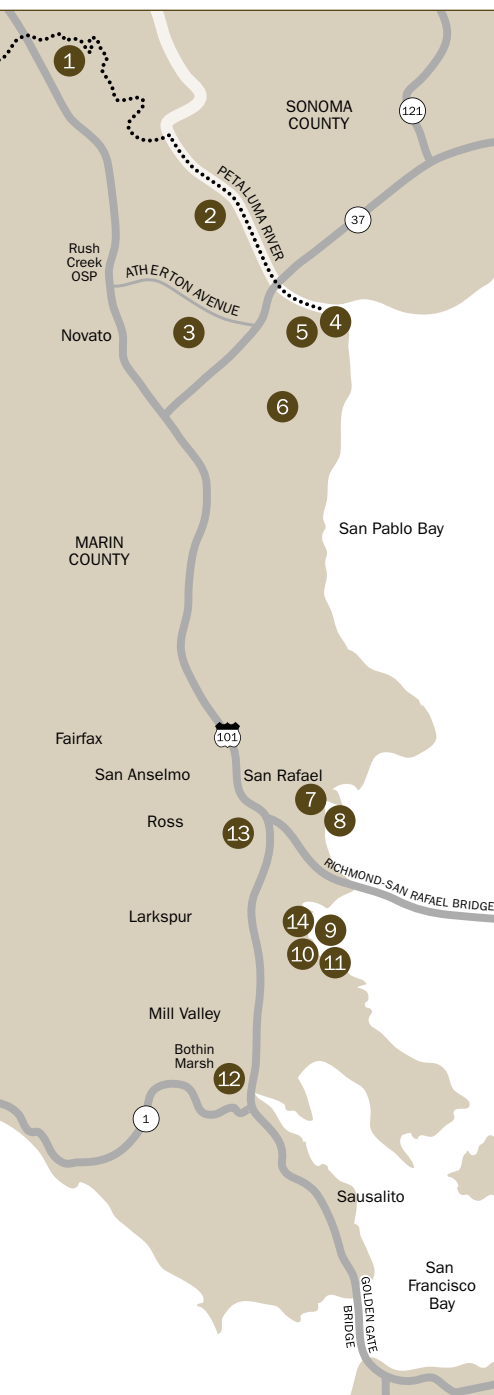
This 3,400-acre park, located between the Petaluma River and Sonoma Valley, is the largest Sonoma County Park. Numerous habitats provide homes and refuge for a large number of bird species with the area list now totaling 185 species. Last year we were treated to the distinctive *oonk-a-lunk* call of the **American Bittern**. Our guide, Peter Colasanti, has been participating in surveys at this location for 14 years.

We will hike several miles to check all the available habitats at the park: grassland, oak woodland, riparian corridors, ponds, wetlands, ridgelines, and ranch buildings. This is one of the best areas in Sonoma County for raptors including **Golden Eagle**. Other somewhat unusual birds are possible here including **Lewis's Woodpecker**. We will eat lunch back near the parking lot, 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.



## March 3 Election

*continued from page 1*

SMART project and a major concern. The path would fill wetlands and other habitat areas and would bring people, domestic animals, and noise into important habitats.

Our recommendation on Measure D is to vote NO. This measure would prevent the County from changing the primary land use designation of the former Golf Course property from golf course without voter approval. It would require the property to be held for a golf course even though the county has tried without success to find an operator, and golf is declining throughout the country. A No vote on Measure D would allow for expansion and enhancement of habitat for special status fish and birds including Northern Spotted Owl.

The property is already showing benefits of being allowed to return to nature. On our recent field trip to the property, at least 8 exquisite over-wintering Hooded Mergansers were observed on one of the ponds; a Northern Harrier foraged over the former fairways, and a flock of Western Bluebirds perched in the budding willows along the creek.

As a 501(c)3 designated non-profit, Marin Audubon is prohibited from taking positions on candidates for political offices. We urge everyone to consider the environment in deciding for whom to vote. For the presidential election, you should check the environmental records of some of the candidates. We recommend that your preparation for voting include reading the Center for Biological Diversity Action Fund evaluation of the candidates on four key environmental issue areas: saving wildlife, protecting public lands, ensuring environmental justice, and ending the climate crisis (<https://votesmart.org/interest-group/2859/rating/10991#.XkHflyN7mUI>). As we write, we do not know who the final candidates will be.

## RETAINING LAS GALLINAS WILDLIFE POND HABITAT

The Las Gallinas Sanitary District has removed approximately 85% of the cattails around the pond in an effort to reduce or eliminate the mosquito population. The District is concerned about the threat to the public of mosquito-borne diseases.

Responding to concerns from members, Barbara Salzman and author and ornithologist,

Joe Morlan, recently met with Las Gallinas and Marin/Sonoma Mosquito Abatement District staff to try to avoid this happening again. Our interest is in maintaining, to the extent possible, the pond as habitat for wildlife as the Regional Water Quality Control Board permitted many years ago.

The Las Gallinas Wildlife Pond has an extraordinary diversity and a richness of bird species that attracts birders from throughout the region. The pond supports a robust population of bird species, including special status species, Least Bittern, San Francisco Common Yellowthroat, Samuels Song Sparrow, Common Gallinule, and Marsh Wren. This is the only known Least Bittern breeding site in the Bay Area. The cattails removed by the District included the area where the Least Bittern nested. Cattails are a native plant that Las Gallinas staff reports have been allowed to grow unchecked for 20 years.

The Las Gallinas District agreed with our recommendation to retain a five-foot wide border of cattails around the pond. This would provide minimum habitat for the many species that depend on the pond. It is a width that will also allow the Marin Sonoma Mosquito Abatement District to control mosquito larvae.

Expansion of the cattails could be managed by controlling water levels, as cattails grow at shallow depths of less than 5 feet, or by periodic removal of plants that expand beyond the five-foot limit. The center of the pond currently is cattail-free because the center is deep enough to prevent their growth. Invasive plants including *Ludwigia*, *Ruppia* and Star Thistle should be removed without using herbicides.

We recommended against replacing the cattails with willows as has been suggested. Willows would not provide habitat for the species that currently depend on the pond, would grow tall and block views, and eventually would need management to stop them from expanding.

Las Gallinas staff tells us that preparing a management plan for the pond is not currently a priority. The pond planning is part of the overall facility enhancement, but they will not be focusing on the pond for another year. We will have to keep close touch to ensure we don't miss the critical period.

*continued on page 5*

### 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                             | many 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    |

those who wish to continue birding afterwards can visit the Ellis Creek ponds a few miles north at the south edge of Petaluma.

Wear sturdy hiking shoes and be prepared to hike for several miles. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, hat and dress in layers. There is a \$7 parking fee. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** The address of Papa's Taverna is 5688 Lakeville Hwy, Petaluma. From Marin take Hwy 101 north to CA-37 E toward Napa/Vallejo. Continue about 6 miles on Hwy 37 to Lakeville Hwy. Take a left on Lakeville and continue for another 6 miles. Turn right onto Cannon Ln as Papa's comes into view on the left. Enter through the park gate and meet our group in the parking lot below.

**DEER ISLAND PRESERVE**

Novato

Thursday, April 2, 2020

8:30 AM to 12 PM

With Peter Colasanti

We've chosen the oak woodland at Deer Island Preserve again this month for our "First Thursday" walk. With views of the surrounding marshland visible from parts of the trail, we'll be watching for **Red-shouldered Hawk, White-tailed Kite**, and additional resident raptors. The woodlands are home to woodpeckers, owls, juncos and towhees, and we'll also watch for egrets and herons in the adjacent marshes.

As usual, birding enthusiasts of all levels are invited to join our group. We always help each other find and identify the birds. We will be walking approximately 2 miles on a dirt trail with some gradual up and down slopes. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, scopes, and water. There are no restrooms at this location. Heavy rain cancels.

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

**BOGGS LAKE ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE**

North of Middletown, Lake County

Sunday, April 19, 2020

10 AM to 2 PM

With Kurt Rademacher

Mark your calendar now for this special trip to Boggs Lake, a large "vernal pool" surrounded by Ponderosa Pine forests among the volcanic mountains south of Clear Lake. With no outlet or incoming streams, this 90-acre shallow lake fills with rainwater each winter and slowly evaporates to a 20-acre tule marsh in its deeper center.

In these unusual conditions, several plant species have evolved which are endemic or unique here. These extremely rare plants are what led to the Reserve being protected, much to the benefit of numerous birds of forest, meadow, marsh, and open water. Among the 139 species observed here, we hope to see various dabbling ducks, **Pied-billed Grebe, California Quail, Marsh Wren, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Pygmy Nuthatch**, and **Pileated Woodpecker**, as well as several species of raptors.

Join us on a virtually flat, 2-mile walk among pines, madrones, and meadows around the lake's margin. Sturdy shoes or boots are advised, as it's rocky in places. Elevation is 3,200 feet. Dress for variable weather and bring your lunch and drink for a picnic along the trail. No restroom facilities.

**DIRECTIONS:** Boggs Lake is about a 2.25 hour drive from San Rafael. (Type "Boggs Lake" into GPS or Google Maps.). Take Hwy 101 north past Santa Rosa to Mark West Springs Rd. Follow it and Petrified Forest Rd eastward about 16 miles to Calistoga. Then follow Hwy 29 northward 18 miles to Middletown. At Main Street, turn left onto Hwy 175 up to Whispering Pines and Forest Lake at 8 miles. Shortly after Forest Lake, turn left onto Bottle Rock Rd and drive 7 miles to Harrington Flat Rd. Turn right and drive 0.5 mile to the Preserve kiosk. Nearest lodging is at Kelseyville (8 miles) or Lakeport (15 miles); there is camping at Clear Lake State Park (11 miles).

**SIERRA VALLEY OVERNIGHT TRIP**

Registration opens March 2, 2020

**Highway 89 North of Truckee**

June 26 – 27, 2020

Arrive on June 25th, ends June 27

at noon

With Rich Cimino

The valley floor of this popular Sierra birding destination is covered with sagebrush scrub, broken by freshwater marshes, grasslands and riparian woodland. On Friday we will bird the valley floor and western portion of Sierra Valley where the headwaters of the Feather River support freshwater marshes. The western edge of the valley is made up of coniferous forest and chaparral. On Saturday morning we will bird the Yuba Pass area, which is high Alpine habitat. This portion of the trip requires walking for three hours while we bird. For a list of birds seen in this Important Bird Area (IBA), check out both Plumas and Sierra County checklists at <https://tinyurl.com/w374qlh> and <https://tinyurl.com/t5e7vea>. Many of the birds on these lists will be present at the time of our visit.

This popular trip will fill quickly, so sign up right away if you are interested in joining our group. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. When reserving your lodging, be mindful of the distance you'll need to travel to meet the group each morning in Sierraville. Although there is no charge, you must be a Chapter-Supporting Member of Marin Audubon to participate. To sign up for the trip, email Jeanine Starritt at [jeanineis@comcast.net](mailto:jeanineis@comcast.net). Be sure to provide your name(s), email address and phone number. If you are not yet a Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Member, please sign up at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org) prior to registering for this trip.

Participants will be responsible for their own lodging or camping arrangements in the Sierraville, Truckee or Portola areas. Plan to arrive in the area on the evening of June 25. Those confirmed on the trip will receive additional information and instructions prior to the trip.



**ALERT**

**Report Barred Owl Spottings**

Barred Owls have extended their range to the west coast and have been seen in Marin. There is increasing concern about their impact on Marin's Northern Spotted Owl population. Barred Owls are larger, more aggressive and occupy the same habitat type as Spotted Owls. See contact list on MAS website.

**BENEFIT MAS**

Make your next Amazon order through AmazonSmile and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to MAS. For information, visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-6076664>.

**Conservation**

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**BRESCIA APPEAL**

Marin Audubon, Marin Baylands Advocates and Black Point Neighbors, decided to appeal the Planning Commission's approval of the house, the extension of San Rafael Avenue, the 9.7-foot-tall retaining wall, fire truck turnaround, and the removal of 16 trees, all of which were approved by the Planning Commission. Our appeal hearing before the Supervisors is scheduled for March 10.

The project would block access to three MAS properties and would cause its own impacts because it surrounds one MAS property on three sides and borders the others on one or two sides. Marin Audubon purchased most of these Black Point properties on tax default sales under a state program that obliges to keep them as open space. To us, this means we are required to make every effort to protect our properties as habitat and open space.

As we go to press, we and the neighbors are working to ensure our properties are protected and continue in a natural state in order to provide habitat. We are looking into experts to help us. The house, road, fire truck turnaround and the retaining wall all threaten our properties.

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### CORTE MADERA

Martha Jarocki again led the Second Saturday Workday at Corte Madera. February's volunteers dug out small Harding grass clumps. Some string was again installed. The purpose of the string is to discourage Canada Geese from landing and eating the new native grasses as they have done on restoration sites in the South Bay.

An alarming finding was that dogs are entering the habitat through a hole in the fence and running after jackrabbits. They could also be disturbing birds including Ridgway's Rails. We will have the fence repaired soon.

### SIMMONS SLOUGH

Under the direction of STRAW, (Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed), 300 native plants were planted at our Simmons property by 60 3rd and 4th graders followed up by staff planting an additional 500 plants. The STRAW program includes an interactive presentation by STRAW staff on how to plant and supervision of the students while they plant. Teachers and parents are also involved in overseeing the student's planting. We have contracted with STRAW for their staff to maintain over the next two summers all of the plants installed this spring. On Point Land Management (OPLM) contractors planted 1,880 additional native plants.

This month we also did a site visit with the North Marin Sanitary District (NMSD), owner of adjacent property, to further investigate locations for culverts/weirs, a bridge and short access roads to them. Access facilities are needed to manage the flashboards on the new culverts to allow water to be held on our property. Two such structures have been proposed, but upon further review it appears that one of the locations would be difficult to reach through the NMSD property, would have potential conflicts with NMSD use, and constructing it would require filling wetlands. There is interest in constructing only one access structure, and the preferred location is from Atherton Avenue. This is also the least environmentally damaging location. We are continuing to work with Public Works to clarify the project design.

A very special thank you to the Marin Sonoma Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control District for fixing a gate post and fencing that had been damaged by a vehicle that went off the road. This is a not infrequent occurrence along Atherton Avenue where people drive too fast. We greatly appreciate the District's assistance repairing this damage. It is a great help.

### TISCORNIA MARSH

Our team this month met with the BRRIT (San Francisco Bay Restoration Regulatory

Integration Team) made up of representatives of all of the agencies that will need to issue permits or have input on MAS's Tiscornia restoration project: the Regional Water Quality Control Board, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Army Corps of Engineers, and NOAA. The BRRIT was established and is funded for the specific purpose of assisting Measure AA-funded projects to go through permitting.

One of our questions was whether we needed permits to do borings to collect geotechnical data needed to inform design of the new levee adjacent to the soccer field, and the sediment containment structures for the new marsh. The answer was that we need to have a biological monitor present when the engineers do the borings, but do not need permits. It's fortunate because filling our applications and waiting for responses would have caused a delay and we are pretty certain there would be no impacts.

### TRIANGLE MARSH

An experienced hired crew from OPLM planted more purple needlegrass and fifteen western goldentop in a sheet-mulched area near the overlook. That completes a stretch of about 300 feet where native species have replaced Harding grass and fennel.

Volunteers planted small patches of purple needlegrass, western goldentop and western ragweed in other areas.

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

After days of warmer weather and more sunshine some of the invasive annuals, such as Italian thistle and mustard, might be large enough to attract our attention this month. Two of the troublesome perennials, Harding grass and bristly ox-tongue, are always targets especially in areas planted with native species that are becoming established.

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: March 7, April 4

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

##### Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: March 14, April 11

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

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

##### Bahia, Novato:

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

### THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Trystan Church, Bob Hinz, Gerry Jarocki, Martha Jarocki, Ed Nute, Lucienne O'Keefe, Lowell Sykes

### THANK YOU, DONORS

Citlalli Aquino, T.S. & A.P. Arthur, Janice Bass, Benevity Community Impact Fund, Mary E. Burton (bequest), Richard S. Cimino & Janet Bodle, William A. Clarke, John H. Crawford (In memory of Will Hynes), James H. Forsell, Betty Gandel, Raven Gray, Karen Guasco, Valerie Hetherington, Robert Hinz & Barbara Benson, Julia Javrotsky, Robert A. Johnston, Robert & Karen Kustel, John & Nancy MacPherson, Carol Maddison & Don Higgins, Michael Mallamo, Sarah Martin, Jane R. Medley, Nancy C. Merritt, Martha Nelson, Network for Good, Mary Erin O'Leary, Anne F. Owen, David Peterson, Charles Phillips, Ruth Pratt, Patricia Raven, Diane Rosenberger, Carla Ruff, Elizabeth A. Schriock, David & Nadine Sexton, Michael Whitt

## WFO Essay Contest for High School Students

The Western Field Ornithologists is holding an essay contest in 2020 for students in grades 9 through 12. Applicants must be a current WFO member or they may join at the \$10 annual student rate when the essay is submitted.

The theme of the essay contest is the impact of climate change on bird populations.

For complete details, go to [https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/docs/2020/WFO\\_2020\\_HS\\_Student\\_Essay\\_Contest.pdf](https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/docs/2020/WFO_2020_HS_Student_Essay_Contest.pdf)

The student who submits the winning essay will win a pair of either Zeiss 8X42 "Terra ED" binoculars or Nikon 8X42 "Monarch 7" binoculars.

# MARIN BIRDLOG: JANUARY 2020

By Noah Arthur

January remains generally cold, wet, and wintery in Marin, despite a few signs of spring by the end of the month, and most of the rare birds this month were typical of midwinter. The first new rarity of the month, however, was an exotic visitor from the south, a female **Painted Bunting** at Mendoza Ranch on outer Pt. Reyes on the 4th (DS).

Rare but expected at this location in winter, two **Thick-billed Fox Sparrows** were at Pine Mountain Fire Rd. on the 5th (DL). An **Evening Grosbeak** at the Miller Creek riparian area on the 7th (DL), and three more over the Larkspur Bike Path on the 10th (BB), added to the growing pile of reports of the species this winter.

Possibly the first of the 'spring' arrivals, three **Barn Swallows** were hawking over the Drakes Beach bluffs on the 8th (DS).

Very rarely seen in Marin but perhaps under-reported, a **Yellow Rail** was pushed out of hiding by the king tide on the 10th (MS, LS, LC).

Possibly continuing from earlier in the winter, but more likely a new individual, was a 'montana/merillii' group **Song Sparrow** in the Tomales Bay marshes on the 11th (NA, JB).

Continuing for several years now with occasional appearances around West Marin, the **Black Vulture** floated over White House Pool on the 12th (RC).

Rarer than the 'montana/merillii', a 'rufina' group **Song Sparrow** from the Pacific Northwest was along Middle Rd. on the 19th (DM).

A huge immature **Glaucous Gull** ("The Snowy Owl of the Sea," as I like to call them), was along Tomales Bay at Bivalve on the 20th (PC). This conspicuous rarity was sighted by a few other birders up and down Tomales Bay through the end of the month. A **Common Teal** was in the Corte Madera marshes on the 22nd (PD), and another 'rufina' group **Song Sparrow** was found at Rodeo Lagoon on the 23rd (WL).

Quite rare on outer Pt. Reyes, a flock of six **American Crows** mobbed a **Turkey Vulture** at Drakes Beach on the 24th (KD). Another **Barn Swallow** was at Las Gallinas on the 25th (CIC, CnC). One of the rarest birds of the month came on the 26th in the form of a female **Tufted Duck** on Tomales Bay at Marshall (MS, LS, LC).

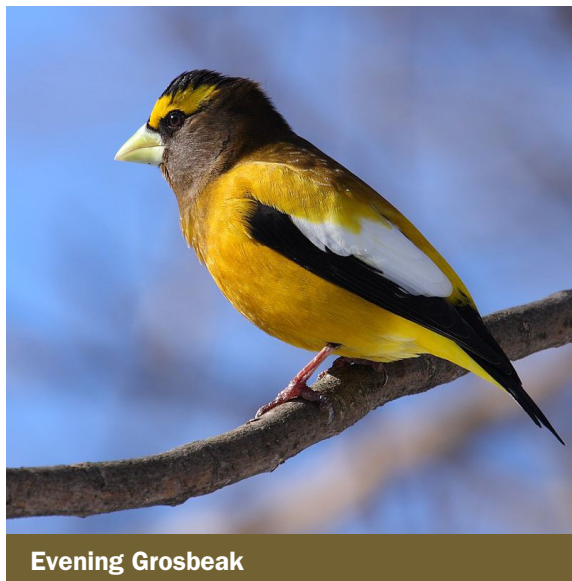
On the 27th a new **Cattle Egret** was along Corte Madera Creek at Piper Park (RC), and no less than five **Thick-billed Fox Sparrows** were along Pine Mountain. Fire Rd. (DM).

Observers and Acronyms **BB:** Brian Browne, **CIC:** Collin Cochrane, **CnC:** Connor Cochrane, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **DS:** Dan Singer, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **JB:** Jonah Benningfield, **KD:** Kevin Dursol, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **LC:** Lucas Corneliusen, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **PC:** Peter Colasanti, **PD:** Patricia DiLuzio, **RC:** Richard Cimino, **RCo:** Reef Comer, **WL:** William Legge



Painted Bunting, female

Dan Pancamo, CCA 2.0



Evening Grosbeak

CT3 Cephus, CCA 3.0



Tufted Duck

Len Blamin

## Planting Season and Monarch Rescue



Eric Hunt, CC BY-SA 3.0

### Narrowleaf milkweed

Planting of milkweed for the monarch butterfly rescue demonstration project continued for the second year on MAS's Simmons Slough property near Deer Island. This year the Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society donated 160 narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) seedlings and twelve volunteers transplanted them in January. Later this winter, other native flowering plants will be planted in the vicinity to provide nectar for the migrating butterflies.

This spring the milkweed and nectar plants will be weeded to prevent them from being crowded out. As the weather gets hot, they will be watered on a regular basis until they become established. After a couple of years, the plants are expected to have a good enough root system and be vigorous enough to maintain themselves.

Monarch butterflies are greatly reduced in number due to pesticides and loss of their host plant, the milkweed ([www.fws.gov/savethe-monarch](http://www.fws.gov/savethe-monarch)). The western population of monarchs overwinters in eucalyptus and other trees along the coast in places such as Bolinas, Muir Beach and Pacific Grove. When the weather warms, they migrate inland as far as Oregon and Idaho. Milkweed, toxic to most animals, is the monarch's only host plant where they lay eggs and the larvae grow and become adults. In the autumn, after three or four generations, the descendants of the monarchs, which left the coast in the spring, migrate to the coast to overwinter and start their life cycle over again.



# The Rail

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- April 18 **Field Trip:** Mt. Burdell  
*With Jim White & Bob Battagin*
- April 23–26 Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival  
[www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org)
- April 29 **Field Trip:** Rodeo Lagoon  
*With William Legge & David Wiechers*
- May 2 **Field Trip:** Mitchell Canyon  
*With Bruce Mast*
- May 7 **Class:** Bird Songs at Five Brooks  
*With Lisa Hug*
- May 9 **Field Trip:** American Canyon  
*With Lucas & Mark Stephenson*
- May 14 **Class:** Bird Songs at Big Rock  
*With Lisa Hug*
- May 21 **Class:** Bird Songs at Mt. Burdell  
*With Lisa Hug*

Check website for updates and details

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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](http://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](http://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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