

**CANCELED**



Martin Meyers

**Wilson's Warbler**

Due to the shelter-at-home order, the Speaker Series is canceled until further notice.

## Invitation to Join MAS Board

Marin Audubon Society's accomplishments in preserving and restoring precious natural habitats have been prominently displayed in this newsletter and other environmentally concerned publications. But there is always more that needs to be done. For MAS, the impetus for creating new projects and confronting ongoing challenges starts with the Board of Directors. At this critical time when climate change and destructive development still threaten habitat, the stronger the Board is the more effective it can be. Our Board Members are all volunteers. We invite members seeking to deepen their involvement with our efforts and concerns to consider joining us.

**To learn more**, please contact  
Doug Waterman 415/506-4675.

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# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Barbara Salzman

## MAS COVID-19 Notice

To keep our members and others safe and in compliance with federal guidelines and the state stay-at-home order, we're canceling our April Speaker Series Program and Field Trips. We'll decide on the need to cancel our May events as COVID-19 progresses. We have our Annual Meeting, many field trips, and a special program on the Farallons coming up in May. We are hoping we'll be able to hold these activities, but we will have to wait to know when everyone will be safe. And for this and other reasons, we've decided it's best to cancel our Mother's Day Picnic this year.

To find out whether activities are continuing or canceled, go to our website and/or sign up for our email list. If you're not already on our email list, go to our website and sign up.

The coronavirus pandemic is overshadowing everything else on earth. It is changing our lives and our world. It is uncertain how long the

shelter-in-place order will be in place; how long we will be at risk; how long it will be before the virus is under control. It is hard and it is stressful. But we'll make it through.

As is widely advised, the activity most recommended to help us deal with shelter-in-place is to go outside. Nature calms us, lifts our spirits, and helps us to cope, but we do need to be thoughtful and considerate when outdoors. The urban-like visitor densities generated by the virus have resulted in the closing of federal, state and county parks due to the risk of coronavirus transmission among visitors.

Wildlife are also at more risk. In Corte Madera, for example, unleashed dogs are crawling under a fence to access and run after wildlife on our property and the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, threatening endangered species and the jackrabbit population. To avoid

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## Fire Safety With Environmental Conservation

Below is a condensed version of Marin Audubon Society's newly adopted Fire Safety policy. The full policy can be found on MAS's website.

The increasing frequency of fires due to climate change and human activity in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) risk converting natural forests and other wildlands from native plant assemblages to weedy wastelands. Certain well-intentioned fire prescriptions may have the effects of unintentionally encouraging invasive exotic vegetation and causing significant loss of wildlife habitat. While clearing understory, thinning, and opening forests may temporarily reduce fuel loads, the longer-term effect may be the encouragement of broom and weedy non-native shrubs, which ultimately increase fire hazards.

Marin County towns and agencies have developed programs designed to reduce wildfire risk using mechanical thinning or prescribed fire. Generally, these programs are planned by fire suppression professionals without sufficient input from ecologists and natural resources specialists.

Potential adverse impacts of treating fuels by vegetation removal include increased erosion, sedimentation of streams, and loss of habitat for ground-dwelling wildlife (e.g., birds, salamanders, lizards, snakes, and small mammals) that depend on low-growing vegetation for some portion of their life cycles (e.g., cover for nesting, protection from predators, and foraging habitat). Loss of cover for prey species increases their vulnerability and may result in reduced populations of predators such as Northern Spotted Owl. Likewise, dying, dead and downed wood in natural wildlands are critical habitat components for woodpeckers, other cavity nesting and foraging birds, as well as small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Native vegetation has the additional benefits of improving water quality, stabilizing shorelines, trapping sediment, preventing erosion, improving air quality, sequestering carbon, and increasing resiliency in the face of climate change.

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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.

## COVID-19

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or minimize impacts to people and wildlife, particularly during this perilous time, stay local within walking distance of your home, be considerate, stay six feet away from others and do not let your pets disturb wildlife.

We're trying to carry on with our work, and our responsibilities, with the unknown period of isolation ahead. We're conducting meetings via conference calls. It sounds like it may be at least a month and maybe more, before science advances remedies to address this virus. Even though our work is continuing, it is slower, less efficient and limited.

## MAS BOARD ELECTION

An election of members of the Marin Audubon Society Board of Directors is scheduled for the Society's annual meeting in May. Current nominees are Elyse Omernick, Lowell Sykes, Meghan Kehoe and Robert Hinz.

With the election past (it now seems years away) and once we can free ourselves of the worry of the coronavirus, we can celebrate the defeat of Measure D. We look forward to the restoration of both stream and upland habitats that will benefit endangered Coho Salmon, a special status fish, and other species including Northern Spotted Owl.

One issue Marin Audubon has been working on is fire safety. The Board has adopted a policy, developed by our Conservation Committee, that advocates protecting vegetative habitats while implementing science-based measures to address fire risk. We support protecting native ecosystems because of the

## SPECIAL MAS PROGRAM – SAVE THE DATE!

## Restoring the Farallones – Removing Introduced Mice

**Thursday, May 7, 2020 – 7:30 to 9 PM**  
**Bay Model Visitor Center,**  
**2100 Bridgeway Blvd, Sausalito**

The Farallon Islands, just off our Marin coast, host the largest seabird rookery in the lower 48 states and have unique biological value. Referred to by some as "California's Galapagos," the Farallones host 25% percent of California's breeding seabirds (more than 300,000 individuals of 13 species). After suffering its share of human-induced abuses, conservation successes on the islands include the recovery of the Northern Fur Seal, Northern Elephant Seal, Rhinoceros Auklet, etc.

However, introduced non-native house mice on the Farallones still threaten sensitive native species including seabirds, salamanders, crickets and native plants. The mice attract Burrowing Owls, but after the mouse population seasonally crashes, the owls prey on Ashy and Leach's Storm-Petrels, putting the storm-petrels on a population trajectory towards extinction.

multiple environmental benefits they provide. We will be advocating for the policy with the new Joint Powers Authority and other fire professionals. A condensed version of the MAS Fire Policy is on page 1 of this newsletter. See our website for the full policy.

We're initiating an outreach effort, headed by board member Elyse Omernick, to send informational letters to residents who live within the quarter-mile buffer recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service around Northern Spotted Owl nests. The message is intended to lower the impacts of noise and other human activities on nesting owls. It is particularly important to reduce human-caused impacts at this time of climate change and the range expansion of Barred Owls. We have been working with local jurisdictions, Larkspur, Corte Madera, Fairfax, San Rafael, MCOSED and MMWD, in this effort.

We've also been reviewing the 7,624 comments received by the National Park Service on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a General Management Plan Amendment for the Point Reyes National Seashore and will be providing a review in an upcoming issue of *The Rail*. The comments were submitted between August 8, 2019 and the September 23, 2019 deadline. They reveal a wide range of views, many strongly held feelings on a wide range of relevant issues, and extensive support for protecting elk and natural habitats. You can read the comments yourself at [www.nps.gov/pore/getinvolved/planning\\_gmp\\_amendment\\_deis\\_public\\_comments.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pore/getinvolved/planning_gmp_amendment_deis_public_comments.htm).

During this stressful time, enjoy the habitats and the birds in your neighborhood. Your neighborhood is also their neighborhood. Make the outdoors safe for the birds and for our other neighbors.

Yet, the restoration potential is great. To find out more, come to the Marin Audubon Society's May 7th special informational program on the proposed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Plan to eradicate mice from the island. Eliminating the mice will allow the ecosystem of the globally important Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge to recover and restore a more natural state.

The program panel consists of scientists with long experience with the Farallones:

- **Gerry McChesney**, Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge Manager;
- **Winston Vickers**, DVM, MPVM, University of California, Davis;
- **Peter Warzybok**, Farallones Program Leader, Point Blue Conservation Science;
- **Roger Harris**, Certified Wildlife Biologist, Oceanic Society.
- **Anna Weinstein**, Director of Ocean Resources, National Audubon Society, as Master of Ceremonies.

## 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.

### CYPRESS GROVE RESEARCH CENTER

Thursday, April 9, 2020

9 AM to 2 PM

With David Lumpkin

Join Avian Ecologist David Lumpkin as he hosts our tour of the Cypress Grove Research Center, a waterfront preserve along the Tomales Bay shoreline. In what has become an annual visit by Marin Audubon, we look forward to touring the property and hearing about the latest field observations, research projects underway, and overall status of the larger Tomales Bay ecosystem. We will view waterbirds and shorebirds along the east shore of the bay and picnic along the bayshore. This is a unique opportunity for Marin Audubon members to visit this extraordinary place for birds, not generally open to the public, while learning about the scope of work conducted at Cypress Grove and other ACR locations in the field of avian conservation biology.

This will be an easy walk on mostly flat ground with some sections along boardwalks, which can be slippery when wet. Wear comfortable walking shoes with good treads. Bring water, snacks and lunch.

**DIRECTIONS:** The Cypress Grove Research Center is on State Hwy 1, about 0.5 mile north of the town of Marshall. Marshall is 9 miles north of Point Reyes Station or 7 miles south of Tomales. The entry gate is on the bay side of the road and marked with the address "20545." Look for a small sign with ACR's green and white egret logo mounted on the gate pole. Enter the gate, continue in on the entry road and take the left-hand fork to the parking area. Walk down the trail at the northwest corner of the parking area to the main buildings in the lawn area. The main office is in Cabin #2. Heavy rain cancels.

### BOHEMIA ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE

Occidental

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

9 AM to 2 PM

With Miles & Teresa Tuffli

For updates: [www.landpaths.org/covid-19-update](http://www.landpaths.org/covid-19-update)

Head to Occidental in Sonoma County for a special birding trip to Bohemia Ecological Preserve (BEP)—not open to the general public and only accessible through docent-led hikes.

**Note:** This field trip involves hiking up steep gravel inclines and along unpaved trails, and all participants will be required to sign a LandPaths liability waiver. Due to the nature of the gated property, early departures cannot be accommodated, so we will stay as a group until the listed end time. Parking is limited.

BEP is a gorgeous 1,000-acre property, home to a variety of habitats, multiple creeks, and stunning views. We'll bird on foot, looking for raptors, woodpeckers, swallows, and many singing passerines. **Wilson's Warblers** and **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** should be back

in town. Perhaps we'll spot a cooperative **Pileated Woodpecker**, and maybe **Pygmy Nuthatches** will reveal themselves in the overstory. We'll eat lunch at picnic tables on the property.

For a peek at BEP, check out Miles' & Teresa's recap of birding the Preserve last January: <https://imbirdingrightnow.com/2019/01/30/bohemia-ecological-preserve>. Portable restroom available halfway through the hike. Heavy rain cancels. Bring binoculars, layers, sunscreen, water, lunch, and snacks. Given the steepness of some areas, you may also want to bring hiking poles.

**DIRECTIONS:** The entrance to BEP is located at 6773 Bohemian Hwy, Occidental, CA 95465—approximately 3.4 miles north of the town of Occidental. From Occidental town center, drive north on Bohemian Hwy for about 3.4 miles, and look for a straight stretch of road with a row of large boulders on your right. The entrance to the property is immediately before the row of boulders. If you pass an area that looks like a quarry on your right, you've just missed the property entrance. The property can also be found using standard GPS.

### MOUNT BURDELL/STAFFORD LAKE OR RUSH CREEK

Novato

No. 4, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, April 18, 2020

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

**NEW THIS YEAR:** 7:30 AM Early Birds meet at end of Simmons Lane

Join Jim and Bob for a field trip to the gentle slopes of Mt. Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of songbirds that make this area their spring-time home. Among the many species we might see are **Lark Sparrow**, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Bullock's Oriole**, **Lazuli Bunting**, and **Grasshopper Sparrow**. In the afternoon we plan to continue birding at Stafford Lake or Rush Creek.

This will be a moderate hike with many opportunities to look at birds and spring wildflowers. Wear comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing. Bring water and snacks. We will meet at the end of San Andreas Drive in Novato. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 101 to Novato and exit at the San Marin Drive/Atherton Ave exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn west on San Marin Dr. Go approximately 2 miles and turn right on San Andreas Dr. Drive nearly to the end of the road and park on the street. No restrooms available.

**Early Bird Directions:** From the San Marin Drive/Atherton Avenue exit, turn west on San Marin Dr for approximately 1.2 miles. Turn right on Simmons Ln. Park near the end of the road.

### BOGGS LAKE ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE

North of Middletown, Lake County

Sunday, April 19, 2020

10 AM to 2 PM

With Kurt Rademacher

See the March 2020 edition of *The Rail* or the MAS website for a full description of this unique field trip to a large vernal pool among the volcanic mountains south of Clear Lake. Information was provided earlier than usual to allow people ample time to plan ahead for this special opportunity.

### RODEO LAGOON

Marin Headlands

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge & David Wiechers

This will be the third 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 spring and summer migrants. During migration times, there is always the possibility of something exciting and 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.

On the February trip, our group covered 2.7 miles and saw 64 bird species in addition to sightings of the gorgeous blue, recently emerged **Pipevine Swallowtail Butterflies**. Our group was treated to a complete SURPRISE stop for coffee and biscotti at the recently opened (limited hours) Mess Hall at the Marin Headlands Center for the Arts. Special thanks to William for providing us with this special stop along our way.

**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 Rd to the Rodeo Lagoon parking lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach. Heavy rain cancels.

### PACHECO POND

Novato

Thursday, April 30 (Note Date Change)

8:30 AM to noon

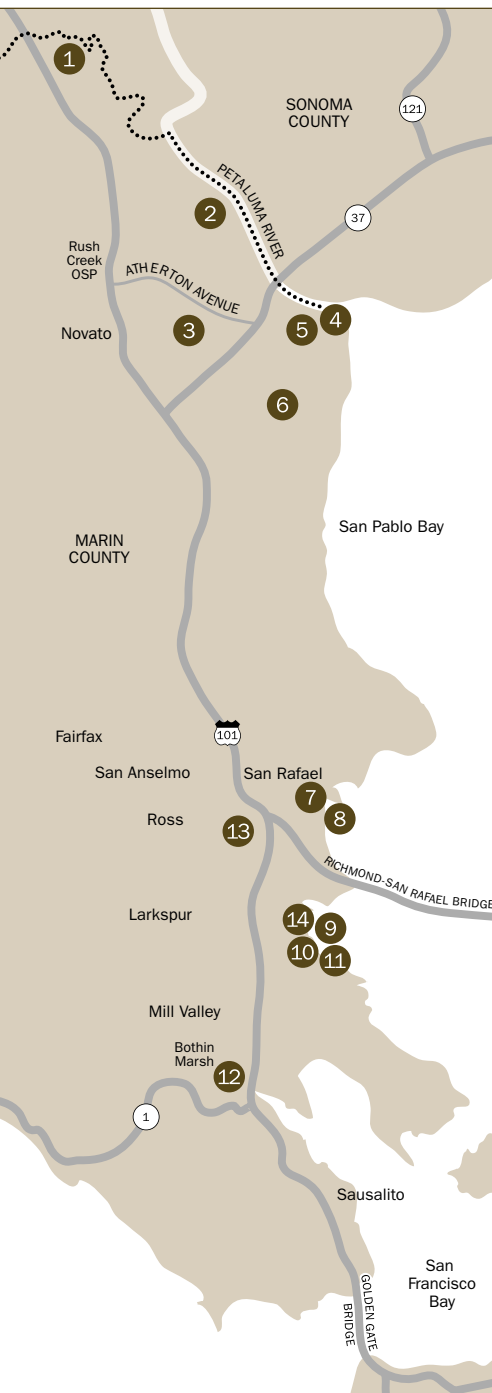
With Bob and Sande Chilvers

Join us again at Pacheco Pond where we'll be watching for signs of resident birds beginning the nesting season and the arrival of spring migrants. To avoid a scheduling conflict, **this trip will be on the last Thursday of April** rather than the first Thursday of May. We are sorry for any

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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.



Matthew McClain, CCA-SA 4.0

**With so much wildland adjacent to people's homes and businesses, we must learn to reduce the risk from wildfires and, at the same time, preserve the habitats and wild things that we love. (Pictured, Mt. Burdell)**

## Fire Safety

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Fire prescriptions need to be tailored to local conditions. Scientific research identifies fires in our region as being primarily wind-driven, not fuel-driven. Under extreme fire weather conditions (i.e., high winds and temperatures, low humidity, low vegetation moisture) vegetation removal and thinning has little bearing on the progression of major wind-driven wildfires.

For the above reasons, Marin Audubon advocates the following:

1. Protect native vegetation, ecosystems, and biodiversity.
2. Emphasize reducing ignition sources, such as undergrounding powerlines and promoting microgrids, which could have more fire reduction success than the emphasis on vegetation (fuel) removal. Once an ignition occurs, wind can pick embers up and carry the fire.
3. Avoid development in wildlands and in fire-prone/high-risk areas.
4. Focus fire suppression activities on structures, on areas immediately around structures and on saving people: (a) fire-proofing houses (e.g., external sprinklers, ember-resistant vents, non-flammable roofing), (b) reducing highly flammable landscaping next to structures, and (c) providing access for firefighters and evacuation routes for residents.
5. Justify fire suppression activities based on identification and analysis of areas that are particularly susceptible to fires (such as the wind corridor in the Santa Rosa fire).
6. Apply ecosystem approaches to fuel reduction and monitor both the efficacy of prescriptions for fire reduction and the effects on wildlands and habitat. Management efforts should then be adapted to have the least possible impact on habitats.

7. Conduct fuel reduction work outside of the nesting season, after wildlife surveys have been conducted and erosion control measures have been installed.

## BRESCIA APPEAL

As many of you know, we have been appealing the county's approvals of the development project in the Black Point area of Novato. We made every effort to protect six properties we own at Black Point from impacts of development proposed on adjacent properties owned by Mr. Brescia. The last step was appealing the Planning Commission's approval of the projects to the Board of Supervisors. Unfortunately for the wildlife and the woodland habitats, the Supervisors were persuaded by staff and the applicant, to approve the removal of native trees, including Blue Oak, for the house, road and turn-around for fire trucks.

The Black Point Neighbors and Marin Baylands Advocates joined Marin Audubon in appealing the Planning Commission's approval. The Neighbors did an excellent job presenting tree and wildlife impacts and concerns about impacts to their property. We focused on the blocking of access to our downhill parcels and impacts to wildlife and trees.

We purchased (a few were donated) all of the properties we own at Black Point and elsewhere to protect wildlife habitat.

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## Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival Canceled

The Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival scheduled for April 23-26 has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information visit ([www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org)).

## 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

confusion this may cause. Also, please note, this will be our last Thursday morning walk with Sande and Bob until September. We will be checking into possible resumed access for groups at Las Gallinas in the fall and will keep you posted on this matter.

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. In April of 2019 our group saw a total of 51 species, which included one male **Hooded Oriole** and 1 male **Bullock's Oriole**! 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 both songbirds, egrets, and a number of raptors including **Peregrine Falcon**.

Thank you, Bob and Sande, for continuing as our guides this past year. We appreciate your commitment to this monthly walk enjoyed by so many. We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels and help each other to find and 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.

### BEST OF MITCHELL CANYON

**Contra Costa County**  
Saturday, May 2, 2020  
8 AM to noon

With Bruce Mast

Mitchell Canyon, on Mount Diablo's northern flank is one of the best examples of mid-elevation riparian habitat in the East Bay. Along with numerous avian residents, spring brings an assortment of neotropical migrants including warblers, vireos, flycatchers, tanagers, grosbeaks and hummingbirds. The canyon is also famous for its spring butterflies and wildflowers, including the rare endemic Mount Diablo globe lily (also called fairy lantern).

Join us for a spring birding walk along Mitchell Canyon and Red Road trails. We will walk about 4 miles through oak savannah, mixed woodland, riparian habitats, and a little way up into chaparral/sage scrub. The route has some ups and downs and a total elevation increase of up to 500 feet, depending on how far up Red Road Trail we go.

Meet at the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center at 8 AM. We will bird until noon. You may wish to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy back at the Visitor Center. Please bring binoculars, water and a hat/sunscreen, as needed.

**DIRECTIONS:** The address for the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center is 96 Mitchell Canyon Road, Clayton, CA 94517. There are several possible routes to our

destination. Check your GPS app for the latest traffic conditions and allow plenty of time for your drive.

### SPRING BIRDS AND THEIR SONGS

**Marin Art & Garden Center, Ross**

**Registration Required**

Monday, May 4, 2020

8 to 11 AM for walk, 10:30 to 11 AM for tea  
With Meryl Sundove

Ever wonder which birds you hear singing in your yard, garden, and neighborhood? Join Marin Audubon Society's **Spring Birds and Their Songs in the Garden** walk and tune into the varied chorus of birds nesting in Marin. Once you cue into bird songs, the enjoyment of spring will be forever heightened.

This bird walk takes place in a beautiful local garden—the Marin Art and Garden Center. The paths slope gently, the plantings are beautiful and varied, attracting a diversity of birds, many you might find in your own garden or neighborhood.

This slow walk is geared to help beginners and others ready to attune their listening skills to hearing spring bird songs. Come find out what we know about bird song and why birds sing in the spring.

At 10:30, after the walk we can sit in the garden and enjoy tea and a treat as we continue our discussion about birds and their spring songs.

This walk is co-sponsored by Marin Audubon and the Marin Art & Garden Center. Registration will be limited to 16 people due to the nature of the trails. You may register for this walk at <https://magc.org>. Under **Events** scroll to our **May 4** trip name, select **Spring Birds & Their Songs**, then click on **Sign Up Here**. We will meet at the entrance by the parking lot. Heavy rain cancels.

The address for the Marin Art & Garden Center is 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Ross.

### SPRING BIRD SONGS – 3 Classes

**Five Brooks** – Thursday, May 7

**Big Rock** – Thursday, May 14

**Mount Burdell** – Thursday, May 21

**Registration Now Open**

7:30 AM to 11:30 AM

With Lisa Hug

Spring is the best time of year to hear and learn bird songs. Males are full of hormones and bursting with song. Many neotropical migrants are returning and vying for mates and territories. It is a very exciting time of year, so even if you dislike getting up early, it might be worth your while to join one or more of these classes. Participants will be asked to stay quiet to enable us to listen to the myriad of bird sounds. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring layered clothing, water, binoculars, field guides, and snacks.

There will be a \$10 fee for each class, or you may enroll at the first class for all three sessions at a discounted price of \$25. We will collect payment at the beginning of each class and request payment by check or exact amount of cash. Each class will be limited to 15 participants.

To sign up for one or more of these classes, email Jeanine Starritt at [jeanineis@comcast.net](mailto:jeanineis@comcast.net). Be sure to include the name(s) of the session(s) you wish to join and your phone number. Participants will be contacted to confirm registration, and a wait list will be created if registration exceeds available space. Please be sure to notify us if you are unable to attend as planned.

**DIRECTIONS: To Five Brooks:** From Fairfax, take Sir Francis Drake Blvd approximately 15 miles. Turn left on Hwy 1. Turn right at Five Brooks in 3.5 miles. We will meet at the Five Brooks parking area. Restrooms available.

**To Big Rock Trailhead and Loma Alta Trail:** From Hwy 101 in San Rafael, take the exit for Lucas Valley Road west approximately 5.5 miles (look for the big rock on the left). The trailhead is on the south side of Lucas Valley Road. No restrooms available.

**To Mount Burdell Preserve:** Exit from Hwy 101 at San Marin Drive/Atherton Avenue in Novato. At the end of the exit ramp, turn west (left) onto San Marin Drive. Go approximately 2 miles and turn right on San Andreas Drive. Park on the street near the end of the road. No restrooms available.

### AMERICAN CANYON WETLANDS

**Napa County**

Saturday, May 9, 2020

8:30 AM to 1:30 PM

With Lucas & Mark Stephenson

Youth Birder Lucas Stephenson will lead this fun trip to the American Canyon Wetlands that hosts species from the unique habitats found in American Canyon: Grassy Fields and Eucalyptus Groves, to the Tidal Mudflats and the Bay. The Wetlands are home to a diverse number of birds from **Merlins** and **Peregrine Falcons**, to **Burrowing Owls**, **Marsh Wrens**, **Sora** and **Virginia Rails**, migrating **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Long-billed Curlews**, **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, and possibly even a **Long-tailed Duck**! Last year with Lucas, our group spotted an impressive 88 species! As per usual with Lucas and his dad, we will be on the lookout for new local species of interest.

This trip will involve a 1.5 to 2-mile level, paved walk out to the Bay and back. For those wishing to find **Burrowing Owls**, we may hike an extra mile around the landfill where Lucas has spotted up to 4 owls at one time. Participants may wish to picnic afterward at tables near the parking lot. The trip will be canceled only in the event of heavy rain.

**DIRECTIONS:** From San Rafael, take Hwy 101 North to Hwy 37 East, and then 37 to Hwy 29 North. Turn left in about 2.5 miles at Rio Del Mar toward the 7-Eleven (29 Rio Del Mar) and opposite the Holiday Inn Express. Take an immediate right before the 7-Eleven onto Eucalyptus Dr and follow it to the end where there is a parking lot for American Canyon Wetlands and the Bay Trail.

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## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

After rained out work days in March, the next two months are most important for controlling the early invasive annual plants, such as radish and Italian thistle, before they produce seeds. The dry weather has been hard on the annual grasses which can grow so thick. They are too thick for their own good, competing with each other and not growing tall.

Mulching and weed control around our young native plants are particularly important strategies in a dry year like the current one.

Extra time on your hands? Help one of our properties from a healthy distance outdoors. 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: April 4, May 2

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

##### Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: April 11, May 9

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, DONORS

William A. Clarke, Rosalind Colver, Susan Ives, Rama Kumar, William W. Lary, Carolyn Longstreth, Sarah Martin, Richard Plant, Sallie Anne Rowe, Richard W. Scott, Natalie Shapiro, Jill Sideman, Jerald & Sharon Young

#### WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Lisa Cantor, Jennifer Cortright, Janice Di Natale, Christine Flaga, Mark Heath, Larry Kwong

#### 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>.



Ed Nute

**For our monarch butterfly project at Simmons Slough, a 1550-gallon tank filled with recycled water will be a great help in caring for 260 flowering plants put in the ground this winter.**

#### BAHIA

Huge thanks to our volunteer Lowell Sykes who has single-handedly watered our newly planted coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*). With the dry period we have experienced through February, it is most likely the native plants installed the end of January would not have survived. We installed the native plants on the levee to provide habitat, a buffer from the levee trail for the wildlife using the pond, and to convert areas of highly invasive radish to native plant habitat. Baltic Rush (*Juncus balticus*) and Field Sedge (*Carex praegracilis*) were planted in the seasonal wetland on the Central Peninsula. Radish has been growing on the levee sides. Our goal is to convert all of the invasive radish to native plants. We are planning to plant another section of 1,000 to 2,000 feet next year.

#### BLACK POINT

Thanks to Ed Nute for removing the old car body from the hillside of one of Marin Audubon's properties at Black Point. Ed and a helper cut it up and a neighbor hauled it off to the landfill. We're always pleased to have neighbors work with us on our properties

#### CORTE MADERA

Martha Jarocki's Second Saturday Work Day was rained out.

**Access limited:** The Town of Corte Madera has installed a fence and gate at the end of Industrial Way to block people from driving and parking along the levee trail. There is space for

walkers' and bicyclers' access. Only a few parking spaces are provided at the end of Industrial. The best place to park is behind Cost Plus.

**Off-leash dogs:** Unfortunately dogs are crawling under the fence along the levee at our Corte Madera property. We left a space to allow the jack rabbits and other small animals to enter and leave the habitat. In spite of signs clearly stating dogs on leash, many dogs are off leash and clearly out of control. The situation is even worse now with many more people out walking. We're considering measures to address the problem. Measures include putting up a sign explaining the importance of the habitat, attaching another length of fencing to close up all or part of the space, and/or notifying the Twin City police to enforce the leash laws.

#### SIMMONS SLOUGH

Ed Nute has arranged for the installation of a 1,550-gallon water tank on our Simmons property for the purpose of watering the milkweed garden that has been planted. The garden, containing native milkweed and native nectar plants, is located out of public view near the south boundary of our property with the storage facility. We are hoping to attract and sustain Monarch Butterflies along their migration route.

#### TRIANGLE MARSH

The monthly First Saturday workday was rained out at Triangle Marsh, but, later on a dry day, a volunteer weeded and added wood chip mulch around some of this winter's plantings. Nearly all of the new native plants are now mulched.

# MARIN BIRDLOG: FEBRUARY 2020

By Noah Arthur

In many ways February is early spring in Marin, with flowers and insects beginning to appear, along with often warmer, sunnier days than in December and January. Most February rarities are still winter birds, though, such as a **'rufina group' Song Sparrow** at Las Gallinas on the 1st (JaC, JoC). Also on the 1st, a potential very early spring arrival, a **Wilson's Warbler**, was seen at Pine Gulch in Bolinas (BoA, BeA).

A rare hybrid despite both parents being common in our area, a **Myrtle X Audubon's Warbler** was at Las Gallinas on the 8th (MP).

Continuing the month's theme of non-species rarities, a new **'montana/merilli group' Song Sparrow** was in the Inverness Park marshes on the 10th (LK), and another of these was at Rodeo Lagoon on the 12th (WL). These Song Sparrows seem unusually frequent in Marin this winter.

A flock of six **Evening Grosbeaks** flew over Love Field on the 17th (RC). A very early **Rufous Hummingbird** showed up at Nicasio Reservoir on the 18th (BB). Very rare in Marin, though perhaps not welcomed by most birders, two **Barred Owls** were duetting in Mill Valley on the 18th (RF).

A few rare warblers were found in the following week, starting with an elusive bird high in the trees at Pine Gulch in the 19th that was probably a **Prairie Warbler** (NW). As usual, Muir Beach yielded some good ones on the 23rd, with a probably wintering **Black-and-white Warbler** and a possibly early arriving **Wilson's Warbler** (AH). Also on the 23rd, a **Palm Warbler** was at Las Gallinas (AA), along with a male **Common Teal** (EC).

A **Chipping Sparrow** was at McInnis County Park on the 24th (RB), joined by a second on the following day (DH).

Another male **Common Teal** was at Hamilton Wetlands on the 28th (ES).

Observers and Acronyms **AA:** Anne Ardillo, **AH:** Adrian Hinkle, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **BoA:** Bob Arrigoni, **BeA:** Bettina Arrigoni, **DH:** Daphne Hatch, **DL:** Dean LaTray, **EC:** Everett Clark, **ES:** Emilie Strauss, **JaC:** Jaime Chaves, **JoC:** Josiah Clark, **LK:** Logan Kahle, **MP:** Michael Parker, **NW:** Nils Warnock, **RB:** Rebecca Matsubara, **RF:** Rob Furrow, **WL:** William Legge

## MAS FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 5)

### SIERRA VALLEY OVERNIGHT TRIP

#### Hwy 89 North of Truckee

June 26-27, 2020

Arrive on June 25th, ends June 27 at noon

Registration Now Open

With Rich Cimino

There are still several spaces available on this popular trip, 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.

For a complete description of this trip, see the March 2020 edition of *The Rail* or the current field trip listings on the MAS website.

MAS  
CHAPTER-  
SUPPORTERS  
ONLY



Black-and-white Warbler

Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren, CCA 2.0



Chipping Sparrow

CheepShot, CCA 2.0

## Conservation

continued from page 4

### NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL UPDATE

The results of Point Blue biologists' surveys this past nesting season are presented to the agencies in "Northern Spotted Owl Monitoring on Marin County Parks and Marin Municipal Water District Lands 2019 Report". Analysis of data on the 48 sites surveyed shows that the proportion of known sites occupied by Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) pairs was high (86%) but lower than both 2018 and the 1999-2019 Study average (91%). Pairs were documented at most known sites and individual owls were detected in two inventory areas (locations where management activities are being considered). Nesting rates, the proportion of successful nests, and fecundity (the total number of female young produced per territorial female) were similar to the study average.

Potential threats to NSO in Marin include urban development, noise and other disturbances from human activities (noises from construction, landscaping, road work), rodenticide poisoning, wildfires, climate change and genetic isolation.

Several Barred Owls, historically only an eastern species, were observed in these study areas, and three on National Park Service land. While the numbers of Barred Owl are low, an increase in this species would likely threaten the Marin NSO population due to competition for food and space. Barred Owls also have a more diverse diet, produce more young, and have a higher survival rate.

Breeding season monitoring of NSO is an essential component for evaluating their population health and ensuring that management activities do not negatively impact owls.



# The Rail

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## SAVE THE DATE

- May 9 **Presentation:** Restoring the Farrallones – Removing Introduced Mice, Sausalito
  - May 13 **Field Trip:** Miwok Meadows  
*With Jerry Coe*
  - May 14 **Class:** Bird Songs at Big Rock  
*With Lisa Hug*
  - May 16 **Field Trip:** Muir Beach/Overlook, Redwood Creek  
*With Jim White & Bob Battagin*
  - May 21 **Class:** Bird Songs at Mt. Burdell  
*With Lisa Hug*
  - May 27 **Field Trip:** Rodeo Lagoon  
*With William Legge & David Wiechers*
  - June 26-27 **Field Trip:** Sierra Valley  
*With Rich Cimino*
- Check website for updates and details

♻️ Printed on 100% recycled paper

## 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**.

- Enroll me as a Chapter-Supporting Member
- Renewal
- New Member
- \$25 Annual rate for students (18 years and under) and seniors (65 and over)
- \$35 Basic
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$500 Patron
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$1,000 Benefactor
- Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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