



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon
Information: 415/789-0703

THURSDAY, APRIL 12 7:30 PM

The Private Lives of Sandhill Cranes

With Paul Tebbel

Photo courtesy of Richard Panek



Sandhill Cranes

Big, noisy and easily identified, sandhill cranes are popular birds with the public and create a substantial amount of interest every winter when they are seen south of Sacramento. Their size and habit of using open fields makes them the perfect species for observing bird behavior. Join crane biologist Paul Tebbel to hear about the vocal and body language cranes use to communicate with one another. You'll learn to recognize juveniles and subspecies, distinguish between dancing and aggression and note many other details that will help you better understand and appreciate the behavior of sandhill cranes. You'll also learn about the threats to cranes and other wintering species as more farm land is converted to uses not compatible with birds.

Paul Tebbel has been working with cranes both professionally and as his personal passion since 1975. From 1995 to 2006, Paul was the manager of Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River where nearly 60,000 cranes roost during spring migration. He is now Executive Director of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center on the Lower American River.

Come at 7:15 PM for cookies and conversation.

THURSDAY, MAY 10 7:30 PM

Kenya's Birds and Other Wildlife

With Preston Mutinda

Norton Pond Properties Donated



Photo courtesy of Bob Hinz

Stilts and egrets on Norton Pond

MAS is pleased to announce the acquisition of three parcels associated with Norton Pond, so named because it is on Norton Avenue, in the Black Point area of Novato. One parcel is the pond itself. After deliberating with us for several years, the Williamson Family Trust donated the parcels to MAS.

Norton Pond is a one and one-half acre brackish water pond tucked away in the hills of Black Point near tidal marshes bordering the Petaluma River. The pond and lands in the vicinity were subdivided many years ago. Most of the parcels are too small to be developed. Some of them also have environmental constraints, specifically wetlands.

This brackish pond is fed by runoff and underground springs with some infiltration from the Petaluma River. It retains water throughout the year and as such is an unusual resource so close to the Bay. In winter, migratory waterfowl, Mallards, American Wigeon and Northern Pintail use the pond as do wading birds such as Yellowlegs, Egrets and Black-necked Stilts.

Over the last five years, MAS has purchased several parcels bordering Norton Pond and several others were donated to us last year. With the Williamson acquisition, MAS property now totals four parcels along Norton Avenue, including the pond and three tidal

marsh parcels nearby. We have had several parcels combined for tax purposes.

From time to time, property owners wishing to donate their land contact Marin Audubon. We welcome donations of wetland and associated upland parcels that are along San Francisco or San Pablo Bays, where MAS focuses on protecting habitats. A benefit of such donations to property owners is that the owner can take a tax write-off. Unfortunately, we cannot accept all donations, particularly if they are away from our focus area and/or would be a high management risk. We will always evaluate offers according to habitat value and our ability to manage the property. We have accepted three donations of property during the last nine years.

MAS began to actively acquire properties in 1999 as part of the Campaign for Marin Baylands initiated in partnership with Marin Baylands Advocates. We have been instrumental in the purchase of more than 1,000 acres along the Bay and own more than 500 acres. MAS set a goal of protecting Norton Pond after we purchased an adjacent parcel on a tax default sale in 2006.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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Property Management	Ed Nute 457-9241
Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
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.

7:30 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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Web site: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
(Provided by Golden Gate AS)

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 \$100 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 Clapper Rail*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society. Checks should be made out and mailed to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

Spring is almost here – It is hard to believe our overwintering waterfowl and shorebirds are leaving soon or have left already. We look forward to the breeding birds brightening our lives now. To ensure their success, do not do any tree trimming work during breeding season and keep your cats indoors. Young birds are particularly vulnerable to cats as they do not fly well and are not aware of the danger. Learn more about our breeding migrants and native birds by joining us on a field trip.

Our Mother's Day Barbecue is on May 13; the sign-up form is on our Web site, you may use the flier in last month's newsletter, or the information on page 5. Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris' class will be presented this month, but it is already full.

We understand that there have been some members who have come to volunteer on the second Saturday at Bahia and have not found our group. We are very sorry that happened, and will do our best to avoid that in the future. Bahia

is complicated with four different entrances and sometimes where we need to work is not in view of the entrances. We have tried to deal with this by asking people to call ahead so we can tell them where we are meeting, but that is clearly not working. Please see Habitat Stewardship on page 6 for further direction.

We are very pleased to announce our slate for a three-year term on our Board: Ed Nute, Helen Lindqvist, Phil Peterson, Barbara Salzman and our newest Board Member, Cindy Fatura. We are lucky to have such dedicated members of our Board. We depend greatly upon them to care for our properties and provide the many other activities and services MAS offers. Do plan to join us for the election at our Annual Meeting which is held at our regular Speaker Series day – this year on Thursday, May 10.

Thank you to this year's nominating committee: Martha Jarocki, Jude Stalker and Flinn Moore Rauck.

SIGN UP SOON

Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival With a Presentation from Barbara Salzman

Barbara Salzman, Marin Audubon's President, will be giving a presentation at the upcoming Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival that will be of great interest to all MAS members: **Effective Advocacy for the Environment**. Here are the details:

Date: Sunday, April 29 (2:30 – 3:30 pm)

Event location: West Marin School, Room 1, Point Reyes Station

Description: Marin Audubon Society has a 56-year history of saving habitat, from its beginning to the present. It is one of the few (if not the only) organizations that saves habitat both by advocating for protecting habitat during environmental review for projects (opposing landowners' proposals) and by acquiring land (often dealing with those very same landowners). During its history, MAS has permanently protected more than 3,000 acres and saved countless other habitats on properties, a portion of which have been developed. MAS also restores and enhances wetland habitats. This talk will focus on how they have done it, and answer questions that will help you do it, too.

Reservations: There is no charge for this

talk but due to space constraints only 25 can attend. To make reservations, visit: www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org/site/ or www.brownpapertickets.com/event/228767.

While you're at it, why not sign up for some of the other events? The Festival starts on Friday, April 27, continues through Monday, April 30 and features over 70 field trips and presentations. While most focus on birding, there are several about marine mammals, wildflowers, tide pools and butterflies. There will be birding-by-ear classes, two evening programs and informative indoor talks and workshops on a variety of topics such as drawing nature, bird research, wildlife photography and conservation issues. A live auction, raffle, and banquet featuring a keynote by John Muir Laws will round out the festivities.

The Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival is presented by the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin, a non-profit advocacy group that has been working to protect wildlife habitat, ecosystems and environmental quality in West Marin since 1971. Marin Audubon is one of the co-sponsors.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility and weather check: Vicky Van Meter, 415/299-2514, vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com

SILENTLY SEEKING SONGBIRDS: PRACTICING THE ART OF LISTENING MT. BURDELL, NOVATO

Tuesday, April 3
7:30 AM to 12 noon
With Susan Kelly and
Marian Porter

Join Susan Kelly and Marian Porter on Mt. Burdell to listen to spring bird songs. Serious birders know that silence is essential to locating and observing spring songbirds. This trip, limited to the first 15 who sign up, will take us up the gentle slopes of Mt. Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of nesting songbirds that make this area their summertime home. Birds we hope to find include Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Kingbird and Lark Sparrow. We'll visit with each other at the beginning of the trip, but otherwise we'll practice silence to better find and appreciate the birds we're seeing and hearing.

Marian is a professional biologist from Vancouver, Canada. She has worked on bird surveys for the Canadian government and waterfowl surveys for Ducks Unlimited. Marian was an area leader for our Southern Marin CBC last year and for many years was an area leader for CBCs in the Vancouver area. Susan has been birding for several years and is a co-compiler for Marin Audubon's two Christmas Bird Counts.

Wear comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing; bring water and snacks.

DIRECTIONS: To sign up and to receive directions, please contact Susan Kelly at S.Kelly@sbcglobal.net.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Thursdays, April 5
8:30 AM to 12 noon
With Susan Kelly and friends

Beginner birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds near McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and over 100 species have been reported over the course of a year. Late winter and spring are busy times at the ponds and provide an opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other groups, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy. 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit; go east toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and go to the end of the road to the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 8:30 AM but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group.

MINES ROAD/DEL PUERTO CANYON LIVERMORE

Saturday-Sunday, April 21-22
7:30 AM
With Terry Colborn

Long recognized as one of the premier birding areas in the Bay Area to observe an array of resident species and Neotropical migrants, the combination of Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyon provides easy access to a number of different habitats. The bird list is quite impressive for this popular destination, and ranges from Costa's Hummingbird to the elusive Greater Roadrunner. We'll also visit Del Valle Regional Park (fee) and Frank Raines Park. This weekend trek will start in Livermore on Saturday at 7:30 AM and will conclude on Sunday at 3 PM. Overnight hotel accommodations will be in Patterson, off of I-5, affording us an opportunity for an early Sunday morning start. There will be an optional group dinner on Saturday night.

This is a very popular weekend trip and often fills up very quickly. *Sign-ups are required, and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Carpooling is a must as there is very limited space for vehicles to park on Mines Road.* To sign up and receive further details, contact Terry: www.tlcbirding.com or 916/705-8991.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC BIRDING WEEKEND

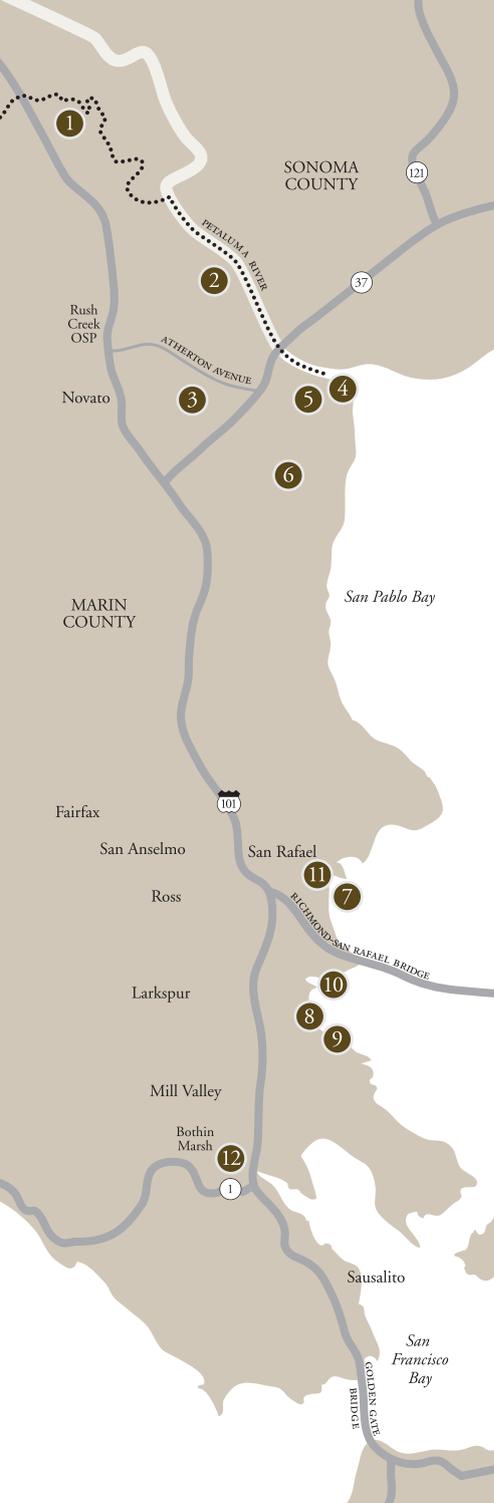
Saturday-Sunday, October 6-7
With Terry Colborn

Terry Colborn is leading a weekend birding trip for us to the Monterey Bay area, October 6-7, 2012, during the peak of fall migration. The weekend will feature a pelagic trip on Saturday with Monterey Seabirding (www.montereyseabirding.com), and land birding on Sunday. Monterey Seabirding uses a local skipper with 30 years experience. Leaders include Roger Wolfe, Dan Singer and Todd Easterla; all have exceptional knowledge of California birds. Past trips have produced all three jaegers; Common Tern; four species of shearwaters; Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklet and Black-footed Albatross. We often see dolphins, porpoises and a whale or two!

The pelagic trip is limited to 25 participants. The cost is only \$95 per person. There will be an optional group dinner on Saturday evening. Sign-ups will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis beginning March 1. This trip will fill up very quickly. Make your check payable to Terry Colborn and mail to: 1714 Magnolia Place, Davis, CA 95618. Include each participant's full name, address, cell phone number and e-mail. Your payment in full is your reservation. Your space will be confirmed upon receipt of your check. In the event the boat trip is cancelled by Monterey Seabirding, due to weather conditions, etc., participants will receive a full refund. Meeting details and accommodations information will be sent to all participants well in advance of the weekend. For questions, contact Terry: www.tlcbirding.com or 916/705-8991. More details about the trip can be found at www.marinaudubon.org.

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.



SAN RAFAEL AIRPORT SPORTS FACILITY UPDATE

A hearing on the merits of the Sports Facility project that was scheduled for the San Rafael Planning Commission in late March has been cancelled in order to allow staff and its environmental consultant to confer with Caltrans Division of Aeronautics regarding a change in the airport safety guidelines. There has apparently been a change in the 2011 Handbook regarding recreation facilities near airports. The city's notice states that the meeting will be rescheduled.

DRAKES ESTERO

Contrary to a recent column in the local press, there is extensive evidence that the oyster-growing operation of the Drake's Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) is damaging to the natural resources of Drake's Estero. Evidence of direct adverse impacts was revealed in a recent letter from the California Coastal Commission to DBOC. The letter cites DBOC for violating sections of its Special Use Permit that require the permittee to avoid disturbance to marine mammals and marine mammal haul-out sites, maintain a distance of at least 100 yards from hauled-out seals throughout the year, and close the main and lateral channels to boat traffic during the breeding season (March 1 – June 30). The Commission's letter reports that there are photographs of motorized boats, operating apparently in support of aquaculture operations, in the lateral channel on at least 20 different days during April and May of 2008 and 2009 and again in April 2011.

In addition, the Coastal Commission letter raises concern about extensive quantities of marine debris found in Drakes Estero and on Point Reyes beaches. A large portion of the debris consists of materials used in the DBOC operation. On ten days during a three week period, 700 pieces of plastic debris used by DBOC including poles, black spacer tubes, small-mesh grow-out bags, and polystyrene floating blocks, were retrieved. As advised by the Commission letter, the release of such materials is in violation of DBOC's permits and restrictions.

We note that, in addition to boat disturbance and debris impacts, other adverse impacts of the oyster operation that MAS discussed in our comment letter include: coverage of shorebird foraging habitat by the oyster racks, and escape from the oyster operation and colonization of the Estero by two non-native species (Manila clam and

Didemnum vexillum, an invasive tunicate).

The presence of these non-native species in the Estero ecosystem is a significant risk to native species including eelgrass and Black Brant. Several other non-native species associated with cultivated oysters also have the potential to escape and establish, compounding the threat to the Drakes Estero ecosystem.

Good News: The National Park Service has published a summary of comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the DBOC, operation. More than 90 percent of the 52,000 comments supported removing the oyster operation and restoring the area to its natural wilderness state. DBOC has complained that many comments are in the

Contrary to a recent column ... there is extensive evidence that the oyster-growing operation of the Drake's Bay Oyster Company is damaging to the natural resources of Drake's Estero.

form of standardized letters. That certainly does not render them invalid. I suppose they would require votes for our public officials to all be write-ins.

GGNRA DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area has recently announced its schedule and process for responding to the 4,713 comments received on the DEIS for the Dog Management Plan. The Park Service has decided to develop a Supplemental DEIS that it plans to release this summer. This will be an additional opportunity for the public to review the plan before the final rule is released.

Areas being studied include: (1) additional access for dog walking both on- and off-leash; (2) reevaluating fencing as a method to minimize dog walking impacts; (3) reevaluating impacts to adjacent park lands that could result from reducing GGNRA areas open to dogs; (4) removing automatic triggers and restrictions, and (5) incorporating additional education and enforcement.

For further information, including a summary of public comments, visit the GGNRA Dog

MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	4 parcels
5. Black Point Parcels	2 parcels
6. Arroyo San Jose	2 parcels
7. Tidelands at Murphy's Rock	34 acres
8. Corte Madera Marsh	1.8 acres
9. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
10. San Clemente Creek	4.34 acres
11. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres

Management Web page at www.nps.gov/goga/parkgmt/dog-management.htm or call the dog management information line 415/456-4728

WEAK LOCAL COASTAL PLAN (LCP) GOES TO SUPERVISORS

After a long period of review, the Marin County Planning Commission has approved many changes in the Local Coastal Plan and sent the Plan to the Board of Supervisors for further review and adoption. Two workshops were held on March 20 and 27—too soon to be included in *The Clapper Rail*—at which the staff described the revised plan. After hearing public testimony, the supervisors identified issues needing further review. Hearings will be held on May 22, August 7 and September 18 to address issues raised at the workshops.

MAS is concerned that the revised policies approved by the commission are weak and some are weaker even than the current plan: (1) A wetland protection policy allows grazing in new areas subject to a water quality plan and with vague oversight by agencies other than the county, and it is not at all clear that a water quality control plan would protect wetlands (BIO-14). (2) A wetland buffer policy (BIO-20) allows building in the 100-foot buffer if impacts are simply minimized (not avoided). (3) A stream buffer policy allows development within a 100/50-foot buffer for “access” which could be public access paths (BIO-25).

We will be working with the county to improve the weak policies. You can view the Revised LCP at www.marinlcp.org. The LCP dated February 2012 is the current version.

MAS CONSERVATION ACTIONS

Chevron's Long Wharf – MAS submitted a letter of support for a petition to the California State Supreme Court filed by Citizens for East Shore State Parks, *et al.*, seeking review of a lower court decision in Citizens for East Shore

Parks v. California State Lands Commission. We found two issues of law raised by the appellants to be of sufficient concern to warrant our support: the baseline environmental conditions for a CEQA analysis and upholding of the public trust. We believe these issues, in particular, are deserving of further review to ensure application consistent with existing case law including *National Audubon Society v. Superior Court*.

The 4,200-foot Long Wharf, just west of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, is part of Chevron's oil processing facility. Most of Long Wharf is on tidelands owned by the State Lands Commission and, therefore, by the people, yet the wharf is closed to the public, covers and prevents use of the bay and the shoreline by wildlife and people. Because the wharf has been in place for some time, State Lands environmental review for Chevron's lease renewal considered only current conditions as the baseline and, therefore, failed to consider the adverse impacts on public trust resources from the long-term and possible future presence of the wharf.

Grady Ranch – MAS submitted a comment letter that addresses the failure of the Draft Supplemental Impact Report to provide adequate information about the project, its potential impacts and the adequacy of the proposed mitigations. In spite of numerous concerns expressed by the environmental community and many neighbors, the Marin County Planning Commission approved the project with little change. The commission did provide for additional monitoring of the stream project if recommended after year five post-construction. The project will now go to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

FEBRUARY 5 FIELD TRIP

Sacramento Delta Boat Trip

With David Wimpfheimer

Twenty-five participants spent a clear and calm Super Bowl Sunday traveling up the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta on board the *Delphinus*. Captain Ronn Patterson provided interesting information on the history of the area, and David Wimpfheimer was our guide to the biology and natural



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American Bittern

history of the Delta's channels, islands, islets and hidden corners. Tens of thousands of shorebirds and hundreds of thousands of



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Tundra Swan

waterfowl occur in the Delta in winter and during migration. From the deck of the boat we could look over the levees to see large numbers of **Greater Sandhill Crane, Tundra Swan, Snow, Canada and White-fronted Geese** feeding and resting. More flew over in great, noisy flocks. Other highlights included many raptors, terns, **American Bittern** and passerines. We also enjoyed seeing river otters and a pair of beavers sunning themselves on their lodge.

RESERVE TODAY

MAS/ACR Mother's Day Barbecue

Sunday, May 13, 2012

Gates open: 11 am; Lunch: 12 noon – 2 pm

Volunteer Canyon

4800 Highway 1, Stinson Beach

We sold out last year so don't wait. Reserve today! This is the only time Volunteer Canyon is open to the public. For more information call Mary Anne at 415/453-2216.

Hope to see you there!

Reserve your spot by sending a check payable to *Marin Audubon Society* to:

Mary Anne Cowperthwaite
141 Oak Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960

\$25 for adults, \$12 for kids 12 and under
Indicate your choice of quiche or chicken for each person for whom you are paying.

Remember to bring utensils, cups, bowls and plates. Non-disposable preferred.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The March rains will benefit the native and non-native plants alike. In fact, the invasive annuals like radish just might produce a new flush of seedlings. On the other hand, the moister, softer soil might not be all to the weeds benefit. The weeds can be pulled so much more easily after rain. On the day after the first two inches of rain at Bahia I pulled French broom by hand, no weed wrench needed. One small patch is gone. That's satisfaction! Join us on a work day. You would make a difference.

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

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: April 7, May 5

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Drive directly across from the main Ring Mountain trailhead.

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturday: April 14

Thursdays, April 12, 26

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Drive near Bolero Court and the tennis courts.

If you would like to help, please contact Bob Hinz at rbrthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO OUR WORKDAY VOLUNTEERS

We understand that recently some members who came to volunteer at Bahia were not able to locate our working group. We apologize to anyone who has come to help and not been able to find us.

Our volunteer groups on Saturdays work in different places depending on what needs to be done at each of our sites. Bahia can be particularly puzzling because there are multiple entrances, and three potential meeting locations: (1) the end of Bahia Drive which leads to our propagation beds and tidal wetlands; (2) the end of Topaz Drive near Bolero Court, the swimming pool and tennis court (Bahia Community Center) which is the access to the Eastern and Central Peninsulas and where we usually meet at the beginning of a work day; and (3) the end of Bolero Court which leads to the Western Peninsula. There is also an access at the end of Albatross, but we rarely enter that way.

The safest way to ensure connecting with our working group, especially for first-time volunteers, is to call ahead to Bob Hinz, 415/383-8688, or e-mail rbrthnz@comcast.net.

You will be given information on where we will be working on the day you wish to volunteer and how to get to the specific area where we will be working. If we know you are coming and you do not get there on time, we

can be on the look-out for you as sometimes we are working out of sight from the road. Calling ahead also gives us an opportunity to inform you in advance if we need to cancel.

We understand that sometimes people cannot always call or may forget to call. We want you to come anyway. So, to better ensure you can find us we will be placing sandwich boards at the end of Topaz Drive. We will describe on the sandwich board the location where we are working. If you have any other ideas as to how we can communicate better, please let us know: call or send an e-mail to our web address.

Again, we are sorry for any inconvenience we have caused and we thank you for your continued support. Please join us at Bahia and/or Triangle.

SITE ACTIVITY

This month we removed weeds at Bahia and Triangle Marsh on our Saturday work days. Thanks to donations, we were able to hire the Conservation Corps North Bay to remove broom and acacia at our 20-acre property at Olive and Atherton and to plant creeping wildrye and remove invasive plants at Bahia.

We delayed further major planting until next year due to the extensive dry period during ideal planting months. This spring we will be focusing on removing harding grass and other non-natives at Triangle and Bahia.

FEBRUARY 18 FIELD TRIP

Capay Valley

By Terry Colborn

On a windy, but bright, crisp morning, twenty-two birders gathered in Esparto for this always popular annual field trip through idyllic Capay Valley in rural Yolo County. As we set off, we passed acres of almond orchards in full bloom. Historic Capay Cemetery was our first stop. A **White-tailed Kite** was actively hunting over a nearby field. We also saw **Western Bluebird** and an **Acorn Woodpecker** was spotted atop a snag; it was soon joined by several others. Several **Northern Flicker**, a pair of **Western Bluebird** and a **Nuttall's Woodpecker** announced their presence. Before departing we spotted a beautiful male **Red-breasted Sapsucker** working in the walnut orchard. Stopping at the Capay Bridge, we were able to pick out our first-of-season **Northern Rough-winged** and **Cliff Swallow** among the **Tree Swallow** zipping under the bridge below us. On the rocky islands of Cache Creek we found another FOS bird, a **Spotted Sandpiper**. Sorting through a handful

of ducks, we noted a female **Barrow's Goldeneye** swimming with several pair of **Common Goldeneye**; it was the first ever seen in 20+ years of this annual trip. A **Loggerhead Shrike** posed briefly before disappearing. At CR 81, we enjoyed seeing **Lesser Goldfinch**, two or three more **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, a **Downy Woodpecker**, **Northern Flicker**, **Acorn Woodpecker** and a **Nuttall's Woodpecker**. We also spotted a regal-looking adult **Golden Eagle**. A **Cooper's Hawk** flashed by, causing another bird to take wing – a **Lewis's Woodpecker**, a species we don't see every year on this trip! As we watched, two more Lewis's appeared, giving a couple of participants a life bird. We continued on to the Rumsey Bridge, where a pair of **Greater Yellowlegs** called from the creek below, a rather uncommon species in Cache Creek, and two **Yellow-billed Magpie** dropped in for a visit. We looked up to see a beautiful male **Merlin** perched close by. Sharp eyes spotted two adult **Bald Eagles** perched downstream. As we watched, one of the birds flew toward us and then directly over our heads! Camera shutters were popping! We tallied 65 species on this fantastic day.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Carol Abel, Richard Atkinson, Scott C. Blakey, Moira Brennan, Ann Cameron, Terry Cantrell, Sara W. Carrington, Deborah Coe, Judith Conley, Carol Costa, Jon Culbertson, Diane C. Dixon, Susan Feder, Nick Froehlich, Sydney Goodman, Theodore D. Graves, Virginia Havel, Kevin Johnston, Jessica Lopert, Sharon Losee, Jean Marks, Jon Martin, James R. McCurdy, Betty Molinelli, Dixie Monkhouse, Penny Palmer, Nicole Persson, Margaret Peterson, Demetrius Rauck, James Robertson, June T. Schwarcz, Andrew Shilling, Adrienne Sweeting, Marilyn Wada, Kiara Wade, Aaron Winkelman, Paul Zucconi, Dean Zucconi, Sam Zucconi

THANKS TO OUR MAS VOLUNTEERS:

Debbie Ablin, Martha Jarocki, Prem McMurdo, Flinn Moore Rauck, Barbara Salzman, Lowell Sykes

MARIN BIRDLOG – FEBRUARY 2012

By Rich Stallcup

Following a very welcome distraction of the highly ornamented and excellent male **Falcated Duck** (that dazzled hundreds of birders for several winter weeks at Colusa National Wildlife refuge), field ornithologists got busy again in Marin County and the big excitement of the month? Oh no ... gulls!

An unprecedented fourteen “species” of gulls were present in the county (very probably all on the same day).* Mew, Ring-billed, California, Western, Glaucous-winged, Herring, Thayer’s, Bonaparte’s and Heermann’s Gulls are normal overwinterers in Marin, though Bonaparte’s are sparse and Heermann’s some years are rare mid-winter.



Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin

Falcated Duck

L.g. glaucooides) was the main attraction (SH, m.ob.) BUT, on 2/4 one and perhaps two **Slaty-backed Gulls** were picked out of the fray (TE, JC). There were some low-hundreds of Thayer’s Gull, some showing characteristics of the other subspecies of Iceland Gull (*L.g. kumlienii*). A third-cycle **Slaty-backed Gull** was found by accident at Drake’s Beach, Point Reyes National Seashore 2/10 (RS, m.ob.) and 2/11 (TB, m.ob.).

Other unusual reports were 14 **Black Scoters** at the base of the north escarpment of outermost Point Reyes and 12 **Risso’s Dolphins** plowing southward not much farther offshore 2/10 (RS, DR, L+PB, m.ob). Astounding was the presence of a young **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in the “Lighthouse trees” the same morning. The adolescent male **Black-and-White Warbler** we found at White House Pool in October was less than 300 yards south 2/10 (RS, m.ob.).

...and here is a story worth reading: In October 2007 an adult **Orange-crowned Warbler** (*O. celata lutescens*) was banded at the Richardson’s Bay Audubon Center. It was recaptured in the winter of 2009 and then again on February 12th 2012 (KB,KW). At at least six, this is one old warbler—we can know that. What we do not know is whether this is a permanent resident and breeder (it is of the correct sub-species) or if it is a winter visitor (with loyal site-territory tenacity) from somewhere to the north, maybe as far as Alaska!

*Little, Common Black-headed, Franklin’s and Sabine’s Gulls are the four species on the all-time Marin County list that were not present in February 2012.

This February, to add to the usual were the long-resident **Laughing Gull**, alternately at Las Gallinas and the Marin Civic Center Pond (m.ob.), and **Black-legged Kittiwakes** at Drake’s Beach and “at sea” off the O.P.

From February second through the sixth, an amazing number of gulls were drawn to Horseshoe Cove at Fort Baker to gorge on Herring (fish) eggs. A **Glaucous Gull** was there 2/2 and 2/3 (DS, LH), then from 2/3 to 2/6 a first-cycle **Iceland Gull** (possibly



Photo courtesy of Kerry Wilcox

Orange-crowned Warbler

OBSERVERS: Bob Battagin, Len and Patti Blumin, Kathi Borgmann, Tony Briggs, Mark Butler, Heather Cameron, Kate Carolan, Josiah Clark, Todd Easterla, Deborah Fitzpatrick, Steve Hampton, Keith Hansen, Lisa Hug, m.ob.— many observers, Dominik Mosur, O.P. – outer Point Reyes, PRBO Conservation Science, Don Reinberg, Mary Anne Rotella, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, Kerry Wilcox

36TH ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE AND NURSERY GRAND OPENING

California Native Plant Society,
Marin Chapter

Saturday, April 14, 2012

10 am - 4 pm, Free Admission

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- Experts on hand to offer advice, including author Nancy Bauer on habitat gardening.
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- Learn more about the Marin Audubon Society's local habitat restoration projects, and the Novato Streetscape Maintenance Advisory Committee's native plantings in medians.
- Ongoing composting demonstrations, with a chance to win a free composting bin.
- Celebrate the start of Native Plant Week (April 15-21), and the new nursery space!

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