River Otter

River otters are charismatic carnivores, wonderful ambassadors for river and wetland restoration and conservation efforts. Yet, little is known about their population, range and seasonal eating habits in the Bay Area. The River Otter Ecology Project has taken on the challenge of discovering and documenting their ecological niche. You'll be shown slides and videos from their ottercams, and they'll discuss the approach which is a systematic method of controlling pests using the most effective economically feasible methods that are the least harmful to people, property and the environment. For example, begin with hand weeding and mechanical removal, and if these are unsuccessful, follow up with minimal use of herbicides, sometimes in combination with other methods.

We are familiar with the problem from our experience on our own properties. Manual removal methods can be ineffective because some species simply cannot be controlled in this way. Pulling, cutting, and digging, for example, only make pepperweed (Lepidium latifolium) more vigorous; cutting increases the complexity of broom root cutting, and digging, for example, only make pepperweed (Lepidium latifolium) more vigorous; cutting increases the complexity of broom root systems making it more difficult to remove later; and invasive cordgrass (Spartina sp.) grows in bay mud making it impossible to remove by digging or cutting.

Furthermore, there simply aren't enough volunteers to manage large acreages. The OSD had a work day on Ring Mountain several weeks after the Supervisors decision. Only four people showed up. This is similar to our experience at Triangle Marsh. It is clear that there are simply not enough volunteers to make manual or mechanical removal effective with volunteers.

MAS has hired professionals to treat pepperweed with herbicides on several of our properties. We made this choice after other methods failed and after consulting professional experts about studies and experiences elsewhere. Using a limited amount of an herbicide applied with a tiny wand to individual plants was the only answer to eradicate pepperweed. We had a similar experience with invasive cordgrass. We will not stand by while the marshes and transition habitats we worked so hard to purchase and restore are destroyed by nonnatives.

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(continue on page 6)
**President's Message**
*By Barbara Salzman*

The summer has been busy with purchasing the Corte Madera property and with protecting native habitats and spotted owls from increasing impacts (see page 1). We're ready to meet these and other challenges and also to create and take advantage of opportunities the coming year will bring. We need support and help from all of our members.

As you can see from our Annual Report, we've been busy this year. In particular, we're thrilled to be closing escrow on the Corte Madera property which we expect to do on August 28.

If you live in the Camino Alto vicinity or the golf course area of Mill Valley, we need your voice speaking for the owls (see story on page 6). Please contact either Bob Hinz or me for more information.

We welcome Jane Medley to our Board of Directors. Jane grew up in San Rafael and became interested in birds while exploring Pt. Reyes during her college years. In the 1970s she went backpacking in Yosemite and ended up staying in the park and the Sierra Nevada foothills for almost four decades. During that time she worked for the National Park Service, taught reading, married and raised three sons. Now retired, Jane has been helping with Marin Audubon activities for several years now, and we are looking forward to working with her more closely as a member of our Board.

With this exciting new (fiscal) year underway, we hope members will become more involved with Marin Audubon. We invite you to join in Marin Audubon activities in the coming year.

We have interesting field trips and programs planned as well as volunteer opportunities. We encourage you to participate in our Habitat Stewardship Days at Bahia and Triangle Marsh where you will help restore habitat as well as learn about habitat restoration, the wildlife that depend on these habitats and the invasive and native plants.

We also welcome members to join our Conservation Committee where we address current issues and environmental threats, and you can participate in formulating our positions and actions to address the threats.

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**Volunteer of the Year – Susan Ristow**

The Marin Audubon Board is pleased to announce our 2014-2015 Volunteer of the Year: Susan Ristow.

Susan has a long history with MAS, serving on our Board from 2000 to 2003 and continuing as an off-board volunteer, advising and actively working on many of our conservation projects in North and Central Marin.

She does much of her volunteer work behind the scenes and so may be rarely seen by MAS members, but she is present, providing support and advice, and acting to further our mission and goals. She approaches tasks with wit, insight and thoughtfulness.

Susan is an excellent editor, and volunteers many hours reviewing documents. She also is a splendid organizer and takes on responsibilities, often unasked, with enthusiasm and always follows through.

Susan is active with MAS’s partner in protecting baylands, Marin Baylands Advocates, where she organizes meetings, maintains the website, and helps in many other ways that further protection of Marin’s baylands.

Susan has a deep appreciation of native wildlife and of the importance of protecting their native habitats. She serves on the Marin County Fishery and Wildlife Commission. We’re sure they also find her a valuable asset.

Susan grew up in Philadelphia, and came to California with her husband John in the 1980s. They live in Novato with their pets.

Susan is a true unsung hero and a valuable contributor to our work. Thank you, Susan, from all of us at Marin Audubon.
LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS, San Rafael
Thursday, September 3, 2015
9 AM to Noon
With Susan Kelly and friends
Susan has graciously agreed to lead our Thursday walks again this year, continuing a tradition started years ago by Bruce Bajema. Len Blumin will join us on the September walk. Birders of all levels are welcome. This is a great way to start learning the raptores, waterfowl, and other bird families, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette. Bring a pair of binoculars, as well as some water. We’ll be walking about two miles on the levees around the ponds.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy. 101 take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit, and go east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward Bodega Head. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch Rd. Go about 0.5 mi to the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 9 AM but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.

BODEGA BAY
Saturday, September 12, 2015
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM
With Lisa Hug
Spend a day at Bodega Bay during the fall migration when just about anything can happen. After meeting at the Rail Ponds at 8:30 AM, we’ll make some stops for shorebirds and move and on to Owl Canyon, Sonoma County’s premier vagrant trap, and then to a sea watch at Bodega Head. From the Head we’ll return clockwise around Bodega Harbor with likely stops at Campbell Cove, Owl Canyon again, Porto Bello, and Winter Station. Turn left on Drakes Beach west to Olema, go north on Hwy. 1 and turn left onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. (just after the Marin Sun Farms shop and just before you get to Point Reyes and Hwy. 101). Alternatively, take Point Reyes–Petaluma Rd. to Hwy. 1. Turn left, go through downtown Point Reyes Station, and then turn right after the bridge onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Drive through Inverness to Point Reyes National Seashore. At Drakes Beach Rd., bear left, Expect about a 35-minute drive from Point Reyes Station to Drakes Beach.

VAUX’S SWIFTS AT MCNEAR BRICK AND BLOCK, San Rafael
Wednesday, September 23, 2015
6:30 to 7:30 PM
With Bob Hinz
Join leader Bob Hinz at McNear Brick and Block (formerly McNear’s Brick Yard) for a brief talk before witnessing the remarkable Vaux’s Swift migration that passes through Marin in September and October.

Smokestacks no longer in use at the brickyard provide an important communal roosting spot for the Vaux’s Swifts during their seasonal migrations. We will have the opportunity to watch thousands of swifts as they descend into the stacks just before nightfall. Raptors, too, are attracted to the large flocks of birds. Sunset on the evening of our visit will be before 7 PM so we will meet at 6:30 to be ready. Bring scopes, binoculars, and, if desired, folding chairs for your seating comfort. It can be chilly at dusk.

Birding experts seeking greater understanding and appreciation of this phenomenon have been counting and monitoring the movement of these swifts since 2010. Citizen scientists are helping with this fascinating project. Ask Bob for details about this opportunity.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy. 101 take the Central San Rafael exit. Turn east on Second St., go by Montecito Plaza on your right and continue on Point San Pedro Rd. for about 3 miles. The brickyard will be on your right. The address is 1 McNear Brickyard Rd. Park along the road to the brickyard.

RODEO LAGOON, Marin Headlands
Saturday, September 26, 2015
8 AM – Noon
With William Legge and David Wiechers
Join William and David for a morning of birding at Rodeo Lagoon. This is their “patch” and we should see over 60 species, targeting Parasitic Jaeger and migrating shore birds, warblers and other passerines. We will begin the morning with a sea watch at 8 AM, and follow with a circuit of the Lagoon beginning about 8:45 AM.

DIRECTIONS: Take the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right onto the freeway, then follow the road down to the left. Within 300 feet you see a left turn signposted to the “Marin Headlands” (this is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito). Go to the tunnel with a five-minute light. Proceed through the tunnel and take to Fisherman Rd. Follow Fisherman Rd. to the parking lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach. If the tunnel is closed, use Conzelman Rd. Take the last Sausalito exit off Hwy. 101. At the exit stop sign, turn left and then immediately right onto Conzelman Rd. (up the hill). After one mile at a traffic roundabout, take the first turn-off to the right. This is McCullough Rd., which goes down the hill to Bunker Rd. Turn left onto Bunker Rd. and go to the parking lot.

DRAKES BEACH AND THE FISH DOCKS
No. 5, Birding in Marin Series
Saturday, September 19, 2015
8:30 AM – mid-afternoon
With Jim White and Bob Battaglin
September is the most surprising month of birding here as many juvenile birds make their first migration south and west without the aid of Google. Some western migrants such as Vaux’s Swifts, Parasitic Jaeger and migrating shore birds, warblers and other passerines. We will see over 60 species, targeting Parasitic Jaeger and migrating shore birds, warblers and other passerines. We will begin the morning with a sea watch at 8 AM, and follow with a circuit of the Lagoon beginning about 8:45 AM.

DIRECTIONS: Take the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right onto the freeway, then follow the road down to the left. Within 300 feet you see a left turn signposted to the “Marin Headlands” (this is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito). Go to the tunnel with a five-minute light. Proceed through the tunnel and take to Fisherman Rd. Follow Fisherman Rd. to the parking lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach. If the tunnel is closed, use Conzelman Rd. Take the last Sausalito exit off Hwy. 101. At the exit stop sign, turn left and then immediately right onto Conzelman Rd. (up the hill). After one mile at a traffic roundabout, take the first turn-off to the right. This is McCullough Rd., which goes down the hill to Bunker Rd. Turn left onto Bunker Rd. and go to the parking lot.

NIVEN PARK, Corte Madera Creek
Saturday, October 3, 2015
8:30 to Noon
With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle
Join Rich and Janet for a walk along Corte Madera Creek. Rich has been birding in California for over 40 years and leads tours throughout the county and Alaska. Rich and Janet live on Corte Madera Creek and bird the area daily. The trip is planned to take advantage of the tides in the creek and we will look for ducks, waders, peeps, sparrows and fall visitors.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at 300 Drakes Landing Rd. in Greenbrae. From Hwy. 101 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. going west and turn at the first left onto Barry Way (before the Bon Air Shopping Center) and then onto Drakes Landing Rd. From the parking lot, walk under the arch of the 300 building onto the deck by the water.

FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP FROM CLIPPER YACHT HARBOR, Sausalito
Sunday, October 4, 2015
7:30 AM to 4 PM
With David Wimpfheimer
Join us for our annual day of seabird and marine mammal watching as we head to the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. The outing will be led by naturalist David Wimpfheimer aboard Jim Robertson’s power catamaran Outer Limits. On past trips we have sighted more than fourteen pelagic bird species, including albatrosses, shearwaters and auks, as well as many sea lions, porpoises, dolphins and whales. We will get an up-close look at the islands and learn about their interesting natural and human history. This is a trip that both experienced and first-time birders and nature lovers will enjoy.

The cost will be $120 per person. Your year you can register online at www.marinaudubon.org. Online registration is preferred, but to register by mail, send a check to Marin Audubon at Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942; write “Farallons” on the envelope and check. Include the name, e-mail address and contact phone number of each participant. Because the trip is subject to sea conditions, we need to be able to reach participants at the last minute. We also will send an e-mail to participants a few days before the trip.

Please sign up early, as we will limit the number of participants. Be prepared for any kind of weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. If you get seasick easily, this is not the trip for you. We will be on the boat all day. Bring lunch, snacks, water and sunscreen.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy. 101 to the Marin City/ Sausalito exit and head south on Bridge Way. Take a left on Harbor Dr. and go into the parking area at the end. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot to check in before boarding.
PROTECTING HABITAT
Our major accomplishment is the purchase of the Corte Madera property. Escrow is planned to close on August 28. We raised the necessary $1.075 million, from many generous agencies, governments and individual donors including the California Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Marin County Open Space District. The acquisition process required applying for grants, negotiating easements, attending hearings, and completing many forms and reports. We also worked on other possible acquisitions in Novato and Sausalito.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS
Petaluma River Bridge Swallow Colony We continued our participation with Madrone Audubon’s legal effort to protect this colony from Caltrans’ seismic retrofitting of the bridge. About 150 young fledged on July 12. As of this writing, nesting continues and Madrone Audubon’s volunteers continue to observe Caltrans’ construction crews and report apparent permit violations.

North-South Greenway Trail South from East Sir Francis Drake Blvd Attended workshops on this proposal which has now morphed into two redundant trails one along Highway 101 south of Corte Madera Creek and the other along the Ecological Reserve Marsh.

MMWD Water Supply Project Attended scoping hearing and submitted issues to be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this water storage project. If built as proposed, it would destroy native oak woodland, grassland and spotted owl habitat.

Corte Madera Inn Submitted comments on the Draft EIR in opposition to filling the pond for expansion of the inn and asked for another alternative that would not fill the pond. The Town did require another alternative to be prepared (see page 6).

Marin County Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan and EIR Urged in our comments that stressors on wildlife and habitat, such as bikers and off-leash dogs, in addition to fire and invasive species, be better addressed; that wildlife be recognized and discussed as an essential part of biodiversity; and that the use of herbicides be more fully discussed.

Marin County Road and Trails Plan Objected that needed studies were not completed, which means readers must trust that the studies will be produced in the future; and that trail impacts, enforcement, and wildlife impacts were not adequately addressed.

Pt. Reyes Comprehensive Ranch Management Plan Submitted recommendations for issues to be addressed in the plan including damage

EDUCATION/FIELD TRIPS/SPEAKER SERIES
We sponsored ten Speaker Series programs focused on birds and other natural history topics and 44 field trips to local and distant places including the Gulf of the Farallones and the Delta. Special thanks to Len Blumin and Susan Kelly who led monthly field trips at the Las Gallinas ponds and to Jim White and Bob Battagin for their excellent series Birding in Marin. We published ten issues of The Rail (changed the name from The Clapper Rail after the AOU changed the species’ name), sponsored the Spring Bird Song class given by Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris and the Junior Birdwatchers conducted by Wendy Dreskin. Martha Jarocki maintained our website.

CITIZEN SCIENCE
MAS sponsored three Christmas Bird Counts: Southern Marin, Cheep Thrills in Northern Marin and Point Reyes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES
• Represented MAS on other organizations, committees including the Audubon Canyon Ranch, Lagunitas Creek Technical Advisory Committee, San Francisco Estuary Partnership, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture representing the Bay Area Audubon Council. MAS also has representatives on the Community Marin Action Committee, a follow up group on the Community Marin Vision document.
• Continued to serve as fiscal agent for Marin Baylands Advocates, our partner in purchasing properties.
• Presented the Annual Mother’s Day Picnic to benefit Audubon Canyon Ranch and MAS.
caused by tule elk, and the importance of elk to the ecosystem and the public. The impacts of elk on ranching operations are a major focus of this plan.

**Whaler’s Point** Submitted a letter and testified at Supervisors’ hearing on the J. Krystal proposal for a large hotel on this Richardson Bay site repeating our long-held position—that the building is too large for the site and exceptions should not be granted.

**Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)** Submitted comments to the State Water Board and US Fish & Wildlife Service on sections of the Plan and the environmental document questioning many of the assumptions and the adequacy of the information in BDCP and Draft EIR/EIS.

**Goat Grazing at Canalways (San Rafael)** Supported use of goats to remove the invasive pampas grass, but later objected when we learned the goats were allowed to graze wetland vegetation.

**Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District** We continue along with MBA, urging the Bridge District to restore tidal marsh on the 72-acre diked baylands as agreed upon more than 10 years ago.

**Maintenance Dredging Permits** Commented to Army Corps of Engineers on public notices for two maintenance dredging proposals—Paradise Cay and the Larkspur Marina.

**Lagunitas Creek Bridge** Submitted potential impacts to the creek habitat to be addressed in the EIR that Caltrans will prepare for a seismic upgrading project of this bridge. We asked for an alternative that would not damage the creek.

**Larkspur Bridges** Commented to the Army Corps and Water Board on upgrades proposed for these bridges asking for mitigation close to the respective bridges, and to BCDC regarding improvements to the Bon Air Bridge.

**Pt. Reyes Dune Restoration** Commented to Pt. Reyes National Seashore in support of a restoration project to eliminate invasive plants and restore natives on the dunes, while questioning about specific restoration activities.

**Santa Venetia Community Plan** Commented at a County Planning Commission hearing that the Draft Plan did not address issues of concern to this neighborhood. It simply repeated provisions that already exist in the Countywide Plan.

**Marin County Parks** Attended a workshop and submitted recommendations for revisions to the plans for Stafford Lake and Paradise Parks. For both we recommended improving native habitat. For Stafford we recommended protecting water quality by vegetating the lake edges and protecting existing habitat by locating any new trails away from habitats.

**Richardson Bay Anchor-outs** Testified at a Richardson Bay Regional Agency (Sausalito, Mill Valley, Tiburon, Belvedere and Marin County) meeting about the history of anchor-outs and the adverse impacts of anchor-outs, including covering the Bay and habitat, and questioning the effectiveness of a mooring field to remove anchor-outs from the Bay, in view of the previous effort which took the same approach, except that the mooring was in marinas.

**Highway 37** Attended stakeholder meetings for the UC Davis-Caltrans Planning effort to develop design alternatives for Highway 37 that will improve traffic conditions and address sea level rise. A rebuilt levee and several causeway designs are currently being considered.

**SB 718 (Leno)** Supported this state bill which would have provided a source of funds for non-oil spills in San Francisco Bay. Currently, oil companies are responsible to fund oil spills but there is no funding for spills of other damaging substances, as occurred last year.

**Herbicide Use on Marin County Preserves and MMWD Lands** Testified at several hearings and submitted written comments in support of limited use of herbicides to protect native habitats on public lands following an Integrated Pest Management approach.

**Bailesteri House** Submitted comments encouraging planting of native plants and expressed concern about runoff from the single family residence proposed for this site, which our Simmons Slough property surrounds.

**Marin County’s Applications for Climate Change Grants** Supported Marin County’s grant applications for public outreach and a vulnerability analysis for climate change/sea level rise.

**Novato General Plan** Submitted comments on the biological resources section for the General Plan requesting improved protections for wetlands resources.

**Hamilton Athletic Complex Proposal** Attended workshop and had numerous communications with residents about this massive proposal for multiple athletic fields and possible impacts on wetland habitats.

**Local Coastal Plan** Submitted several comment letters in support of better protections for wetlands and upland habitats.

**SMART Train Across Gallinas Creek** Advocated for redesign of the segment of the bike path over and through Gallinas Creek.

**GGNRA Traffic Plan for Muir Woods** Supported establishing a reservation system and limiting visitor use to address the traffic congestion and better protect natural resources.

**Gross Field Runway Expansion** Attended a visioning session and testified at a Supervisor hearing about impacts of the runway expansion plan and supported saving the wetlands.

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**Marin Audubon Society Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2015**

**ASSETS**

- **Current Assets – Checking Accounts**
  - Unrestricted Accounts $51,542
  - Restricted Accounts $249,687
  - Total Current Assets $301,229

- **Fixed Assets – Real Estate** $3,425,950

- **Other Assets**
  - Endowment $1,189,435
  - Refundable Deposits (Land Acquisition) $-74,600

- **TOTAL ASSETS** $4,842,013

**Marin Audubon Society Statement of Financial Income and Expense**

**July 2014 through June 2015**

**INCOME**

- Donations (cash) $134,515
- Events & Activities $10,713
- Interest Earned $135
- Marin Baylands Advocates Income $4,170
- Membership $32,413
- Income for Operations $181,946

- Grant Income for Restoration $122,901
- Endowment Investment Earnings $35,248
- **TOTAL INCOME** $340,095

**EXPENSE**

- Copy & Printing Services $30,712
- Insurance $9,753
- Marin Baylands Advocates Expense $4,087
- Miscellaneous $2,948
- Office Supplies & Expenses $1,122
- Permits & Fees $1,000
- Postage & Shipping $5,831
- Professional Services $15,813
- Program Expenses $9,700
- Property Management Expenses $4,006
- Property & Sales Taxes $10,043
- Rent $199
- Website $2,711

- **Expenses for Operations** $97,923

- **Wetlands Restoration** $69,880
- **Endowment Advisory Fees** $6,676

- **TOTAL EXPENSE** $246,679

- **NET INCOME** $93,417
Marin’s Native Habitats (continued from page 1)

Manual removal using volunteers may work on small acreages but it is impossible to remove broom and Harding grass on the thousands of acres owned by the OSD and MMWD with volunteers alone. We have been fairly successful moving broom where it existed on about 15 of Marin Audubon’s properties but it is a different story with Harding grass. Harding grass is threatening several of our upland properties, one of which is Triangle Marsh, right across the street from Ring Mountain.

Invasive plants do not stay on one property—the problem spreads. At completion of the habitat restoration at Triangle, we had a barren upland area created with the material we had excavated. We planted many native plants, but seeds came in from the forest of Harding grass on Ring Mountain. We have been trying to remove the resultant plants manually ever since. The OSD has applied glyphosate for the last three years on Ring Mountain’s Harding grass, and that greatly diminished the population. Now that the supervisors have stopped the glyphosate treatment on the remaining plants, the gains of the last few years will be wiped out along with our hopes of eliminating Harding grass on our property any time soon.

A recent report from the World Health Organization (WHO) listed glyphosate as a probable carcinogen, along with alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and working the night shift because it interrupts one’s circadian rhythm. WHO has not yet released the studies it used to classify glyphosate.

Marin Audubon considers the minimal use of herbicides a critical tool in the war to protect native vegetation and to ensure our native bird and other wildlife populations survive. Friends of Corte Madera Creek, the Native Plant Society, the Marin Conservation League and The Nature Conservancy all support following an IPM approach including retaining the ability for limited use of herbicides.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
Write the Supervisors supporting minimal use of herbicides to protect native plants and wildlife under an IPM approach. Attend workshops, which we expect to be scheduled for fall. Check MAS website for future meetings.

Conservation

Marin Audubon Conservation Committee reviews critical issues related to wildlife habitats and comments to cities, agencies, and other jurisdictions. To attend, phone Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057.

MARIN’S SPOTTED OWLS AT RISK

Marin County has several small populations of the endangered Northern Spotted Owl. While spotted owls seem to be expanding into other forest habitats in Marin, they are also under increased pressure from people. One such example was a troubling incident at one of the several spotted owl nests in Larkspur. Two San Francisco photographers disturbed an owl family — by using a recording to call the birds in, came too close and used camera flashes at the recently fledged young, causing the young to scatter up the mountain. Such behavior not only completely disregards impacts on the birds, it constitutes harassment which is a violation of the federal and state endangered species laws. The other Larkspur nest failed for unknown reasons.

The impacts of this kind of self-centered behavior must be considered together with all of the other impacts on this special status species: the loud and disruptive noises from nearby homes and gardens; off-trail cyclists and dogs often off-leash (dogs can kill or injure young that have not yet mastered flying and often land on the ground where they are vulnerable); off-trail use which fragments and destroys habitats and threatens wildlife; natural predators such as great horned and barred owls. These impacts also adversely affect the owls’ food, which is primarily wood rats and other rodents. If their food supply is diminished, so will be the owl population. Clearly, the cumulative impacts on the owls are significant.

There also is ongoing pressure to authorize new trails near spotted owl nests which would bring more walkers and bikers. Right now, the Marin County Open Space District (OSD) is considering approving the Fairway Trail in Mill Valley in the Camino Alto Open Space Preserve that goes right by a spotted owl nest site. The OSD is now funding a biological assessment for the purpose of authorizing the Fairway Trail for bike use.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
We want to hear from folks who are interested in spotted owls and/or in the Fairway Trail Camino Alto Open Space, in Mill Valley so that we can work together to increase protections for these owls as the county proceeds with its trail review process. Call or email Barbara Salzman or Bob Hinz.

CORTE MADERA INN

The Town of Corte Madera has released an addendum to the Draft Recirculated Environmental Impact Report for the Corte Madera Inn Expansion project. The DEIR consultants were asked by the Town to address just two issues, traffic and the pond, and to prepare a design that retains the pond. They did so by creating Alternative 4 which eliminates the restaurant and puts the additional rooms, to make up the developer-desired 187 rooms, in the restaurant space and along Tamal Vista Blvd.

The “Retain the Pond” alternative includes measures to improve the pond as habitat: establishing a 20-foot wide buffer, grading the side slopes, planting wetland vegetation along the edges, and improving water quality by using two existing culverts to allow more tidal water into the pond, and aerating with a mechanical device during summer months when the temperatures and the threat of algae blooms are high.

In our view, a preferred alternative should retain the pond and reduce the number of rooms if the height of the structure along Tamal Vista is objectionable. Freeway noise could be mitigated by erecting a sound wall of some sort as exists along many other sections of Highway 101.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
Submit comments to the Draft document (which can be found on the Town’s website) by August 31 to Adam Wolf, Planning Director, Town of Corte Madera, Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera 94925 and/or attend the Planning Commission meeting. Public hearing will be scheduled on the merits of the project after the Recirculated EIR is reviewed and finalized.
Habitat Stewardship

Stewardship work has continued during the summer. As of this writing, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, most of our plants seem to be surviving the dry summer.

At Bahia we’ve had four volunteer Work Days, in June, July and August. Volunteers cut seed heads off Harding grass plants inside the Bahia gate, removed *Dittrichia*, fennel, yellow star thistle, Russian thistle, and ice plant on the Western Peninsula. We had a special Work Day in June for PG&E—seven volunteers removed Harding grass seed heads on the Western Peninsula.

We’ve also had three Work Days at Triangle during which volunteers removed mustard and Harding grass plants and seed heads. And at our Petaluma Marsh site, five members of our Board pulled *Dittrichia* and watered plants we planted last year.

At Bahia, volunteer Lowell Sykes has been watering and weeding along the eastern peninsula where most of the *Baccharis pilularis* and aster are doing well. As required by our agency permits, Year-Five physical monitoring of the marsh elevations to determine the progress of the restoration is being conducted by engineer Dan Gillenwater, with help from our volunteers Jude Stalker and Katy Zaremba who are conducting photo documentation and ground-truthing invasive marsh plants.

At the Bahia Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) sites, MAS’s tidal pond uplands were watered and Driveway tubes filled. We hired Shelterbelt Builders to remove cocklebur from Simmons. Their small crews spent four days removing the cocklebur by hand pulling and mowing. Overall, there appears to be less cocklebur indicating that the wetland plants we planted are beginning to outcompete the cocklebur.

Marin Birdlog: May - July 2015

By Josiah Clark

Since we last checked in, the days have gotten longer and now they are getting shorter once again. By early August the frenzied pace of the breeding season has all but passed. Nest building and food gathering activities have been replaced by final forays of family groups before they disperse across the lands near and far. The fruit of Red Elderberries, invaluable to breeding birds on the coast has reached their peak abundance.

Way back in June, the vagrant season was still pumping out rarities to the Outer Point. The highlight was surely the shy and difficult to see Kentucky Warbler at the Fish Docks found on 5/28 (DS). At Las Gallinas on 6/4, eight regulars put together their own “off season” bird walk and were rewarded by views of a bright Least Bittern (PC). This species appears to have bred again this year.

One species we know is breeding now in record numbers in the county is Mute Swan. Though adored and dotted over by many local and newbie birders, this species is on the cusp of a local population explosion and is becoming a major pest as they have in other regions. Large and aggressive towards smaller waterfowl, this species has already begun to displace smaller, less common local breeding waterfowl as it takes the prime nest spots and foraging areas. On 7/20 (WL) four males of this species made their first ever showing at Rodeo Lagoon.

On the flip side of an avian invasion, introduced Wild Turkeys at last seem to be getting under control in the Marin Headlands. The population of this species has been growing in the county unchecked for over a decade and resulted in plummeting quail populations. Wild Turkeys eat not only quail chicks but also rare and declining reptiles including Rubber Boa, Ring-necked Snakes and California King Snake. Large, gregarious and bold, Wild Turkeys have few predators so it is good to finally see their numbers being kept in check. For the first time in years the absence of Wild Turkeys around the stables and native plant nursery yielded at least 50 young California Quail on 7/15 (JTC). These are similar to the numbers recorded a decade ago before Wild Turkeys reached their peak abundance.

For a more complete Birdlog, see http://marinaudubon.org/birds-birdlog.php

Observers and Acronyms  
**DS**: Dan Singer, **JTC**: Josiah Clark, **PC**: Peter Colasanti, **WL**: William Legge

### Marin Birdlog: May - July 2015

*By Josiah Clark*

Since we last checked in, the days have gotten longer and now they are getting shorter once again. By early August the frenzied pace of the breeding season has all but passed. Nest building and food gathering activities have been replaced by final forays of family groups before they disperse across the lands near and far. The fruit of Red Elderberries, invaluable to breeding birds on the coast has reached their peak abundance.

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