



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920
Information: 415/789-0703

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2 7:30 PM

**Isla Partida Norte: Encounters
With the Mexican Fishing Bat**
With Tom Stewart



Photo courtesy of Tom Stewart

Mexican fishing bat (*Myotis vivesi*)

In May of 2009, and again in July 2010, Tom spent five days on Isla Partida Norte, a desert island in the Sea of Cortez. He was there with a research group, collecting data on the endangered Mexican fishing bat, *Myotis vivesi*, and on the least storm petrel. In 2002, Tom started banding birds with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, at the Coyote Creek Field Station. He will describe his journey from a bird banding station in California to the bats of this Baja island, along with some of the wildlife he encountered, including a brief visit to the breeding colony of 95% of the world's Heermann's gulls.

Come at 7:15 pm to socialize and have some refreshments before the program!

LATE BREAKING NEWS

Lawson's Landing hearing scheduled for California Coastal Commission on December 16, 2010.
Board of Supervisor's Chamber, Room 250, San Francisco City Hall, Carlton Goodlett Place, San Francisco. Tentative time 9 AM. Check MAS website for more information later.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2010

Christmas Bird Count – Citizen Scientists Make a Difference



Photo courtesy of Roger Harris

Did you know that Marin Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count is one of the top counts in the country? Last year we placed 25th in the number of participants, with 126 individuals in the field and 7 at feeder watches. Among counts with 150 or more species recorded, we tied for 13th place by counting 186 species.

More importantly, the data we collect is having a major impact on conservation efforts. As explained in a letter from David Yarnold, the President of National Audubon, "The dedicated efforts of CBC participants like you enabled Audubon to compile one of the world's most extensive databases of bird population trends. Thanks to you, we were able to document the alarming decline of some of America's most popular common birds and to contribute to the collaborative development of a periodic Watch List that monitors the status of rare and seriously imperiled species."

Concerning the use of California CBC data to document climate change, Mr. Yarnold explained that "In California, CBC findings enabled Audubon to predict the future impact of climate change on both bird's ranges and

habitat health, and to begin planning to help birds adapt. This vital research and response will soon be expanded nationwide. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is now using CBC data as one of 24 major indicators of climate impacts. And together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, we are continuing to evolve Audubon's original CBC-based State of the Birds Reports to a multi-group effort that garners attention at the highest levels of government and enhances the opportunities for the latest information on bird population trends drive important changes in national conservation policy."

NOT SURE YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH?

If you'd like to participate but aren't sure you're a good enough birder (a concern we hear often) talk to us about it! Either call Mark or Susan (phone numbers below) or attend an informal discussion

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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.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
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Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members.

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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Website: 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

Although results of the national election leave great questions about how environmental problems will be addressed and resources protected, statewide we did fine and locally we did well with approval of Measure S and election of Marin Municipal Water District directors who have displayed a concern for protection of the environment. The big disappointment, of course, was the rejection of Proposition 21 which would have provided consistent funding for state parks. The general view is that California's weak economy and the election dominated by negative campaigns were too much to overcome in this election. The impressive coalition of more than 700 organizations, including public health, labor and religious groups in addition to environmental groups, that supported Prop 21 is not giving up, however. "The fight to protect our state parks will continue, and we will be looking to the new Governor and the Legislature to stand with us in that fight," said Elizabeth Goldstein, president of the California State Parks Foundation.

Join us for the 2010 Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count. Detailed information about how to sign up and to reserve a space for the compilation dinner is on page 3. We will also be trying something new this year – counting mammals. See Roger Harris's article on page 5.

This is the first year in many that we've had early rain in Marin. So we are taking advantage of the early opportunity to plant additional

creeping wild rye and other native plants in December. We will be planting at both Bahia and the newly restored Olive property. Do join us – see our schedule on page 4.

You will be receiving our End-of Year solicitation letter soon. It's been a busy year. We have taken on more responsibility, and we need your support more than ever. We thank you in advance for your generosity.

Please note that we've changed the membership information on the back of the newsletter. For new Joint memberships in National and Marin Audubon, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail them to Marin Audubon Society. We will forward the checks to National Audubon. This would be a chapter-generated membership in both NAS and MAS. In this way, MAS would get a small percentage of the dues for memberships for the first year. If you mail a check directly to National, MAS does not get any portion of the membership dues. We only receive a specified amount based on the number of members MAS had in 2001. This is why our local chapter memberships are so important to MAS's success.

Isn't it fabulous having all of the ducks and shorebirds back! Our Bay seems so empty during the summer. We have some great trips coming up so do join us.

Don't forget a holiday gift for the birds. A gift membership in Marin Audubon will support our wildlife by protecting their habitat.

Have a wonderful and healthy holiday!

CONSERVATION

URGENT – SUPPORT NEEDED FOR BCDC CLIMATE CHANGES POLICY

Over the last two years, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) has prepared amendments to the San Francisco Bay Plan, BCDC's policy document, to address climate change impacts on the Bay. Unless steps are taken now to protect lands where marshes can move inland as tidal waters advance, there will be no habitat to support endangered and migratory birds and fish. Scientists predict the sea will rise to a level that will cover tidal marshes as we know them today as well as low lying adjacent transition zones.

BCDC is the only regulatory agency that is addressing the potential adverse impacts of climate change. There has been intense last-minute lobbying to weaken the proposed policies by allowing continued shoreline development.

You Can Help! Express your support for BCDC's proposed policies, particularly those that would protect the shoreline from further

development. Also, consider addressing one or more of the following proposed policies:

- Projects should include a "... buffer, where feasible, between shoreline development and habitats to protect wildlife and provide space for marsh migration as sea level rises;" (Tidal Marsh Policy 6)
- "Undeveloped, vulnerable shoreline areas that currently sustain diverse habitats and species or possess conditions that make the areas especially suitable for ecosystem enhancement should be preserved, enhanced or permanently protected to allow for the inland migration of bay habitat as sea level rises" (Climate Change Policy 3).
- "... identifying priority conservation areas that should be considered for acquisition, preservation or enhancement ... and maintaining sufficient transitional habitat

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MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

Bring lunch, field guide, and binoculars. For information, weather check and accessibility: Vicki Van Meter at 415/299-2514

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

December 2

8:30 AM to 12 noon

With Len Blumin

All are welcome to join Len Blumin on the first Thursday of each month for a walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds at McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and this walk is great for all levels of birders. Winter is prime time for waterfowl and a dozen or more species can be expected.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 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 Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot at the end of the road. 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.

BAHIA BIRD WALK, NOVATO

Sunday, December 5, 2010

9:30 – 11:30 AM

With Lowell Sykes

Join Lowell for an easy walk to see the many birds in the newly restored lagoons, marshes and uplands of Marin Audubon's 60 acre Bahia property in Novato. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn about the work being done to restore this important area.

DIRECTIONS: Take either Hwy 101 north or Hwy 37 east to Atherton Ave in Novato. From 101 turn east on Atherton. After about 1 mile turn left onto Bugeia Lane. From Hwy 37, take the Atherton exit and go left under the highway. Proceed about 2.3 miles on Atherton then turn right on Bugeia. After about 0.5 mile Bugeia becomes Bahia Drive. Continue straight over the hill toward the marshes. Park in the cul-de-sac at the end of Bahia. The gates will be open. For questions, contact Lowell at 415/388-2821.



BIRDING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE, TOMALES BAY AND CHILENO VALLEY

Sunday, December 12, 2010

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

This field trip will focus on some of the less familiar habitats near the town of Tomales. After meeting at the Tomales Bakery we will caravan to Lawson's Landing, a private resort near the mouth of Tomales Bay. Loons, grebes, possibly including Red-necked, ducks and Brant can be quite numerous here. Shorebirds are diverse here as well. After birding the coast, the rest of the day will be spent covering the open grasslands, wetlands and forests of this part of Marin. Chileno Valley can have Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, amongst the more common raptors.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Tomales Bakery on Highway 1 in downtown Tomales. Plan on arriving earlier to sample the delicious pastries. Light rain will not cancel this trip, but a heavy storm will.

Native Oysters of Drake's Estero

By Rick Johnson

As mentioned last month, we'll continue a column on environmental impacts of mariculture in Drakes Estero so that our members are informed about issues of concern to Marin Audubon Society (MAS). In this issue, we consider mariculture effects on a native invertebrate, the Olympia oyster.

The oysters cultivated in Drakes Estero are Pacific Oysters, a species originally from Japan; they are not native to the Estero. Pacific Oysters grow faster and to a larger size than the Olympia Oysters which are native to the west coast of the

US. Scientists have wondered why native oysters do not thrive in bays where Pacific Oysters are cultivated and some answers are becoming clear; the cultivated non-native oysters are a "recruitment sink" for native oysters.

Oysters, like many marine invertebrates, live a sedentary adult life attached to a hard surface. Oysters have small planktonic larvae that travel in water currents until the young animal settles and undergoes metamorphosis to grow into the adult form. The settlement of larvae is called

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Christmas Bird Count

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we'll hold in early December (details are not available as of the deadline, but will be posted on the MAS website: marinaudubon.org).

SIGN UP NOW!

This year the count occurs on Sunday, December 26, rain or shine. You can sign up by email or the website form, or by contacting one of the compilers:

Email: cbc@marinaudubon.org

Web: www.marinaudubon.org/cbc_form.php

Phone: Mark Forney

415/847-2837 or

Susan Kelly 415/497-4240

CBC COMPILATION DINNER

\$12 per person. Reservations and payment required by December 20.

Important:

This year you will not be able to purchase a dinner at the door. Instead, you must pay by check in advance.

The dinner will be held from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the Strawberry Recreation Center, at 118 East Strawberry Drive in Mill Valley. For directions and a map, visit marinaudubon.org and click the link in the first paragraph to "Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count". We encourage you to attend even if you aren't purchasing a dinner. Also, please bring a dessert to share.

HOW TO RESERVE A DINNER

Make your check payable to "Marin Audubon Society" and mail it to:

Mary Anne Cowperthwaite
141 Oak Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Please include the following information: Name(s) of the individuals you are paying for, a contact email and mailing address, and phone number.

BE GREEN

In order to minimize waste, please bring your own plate, cup, cutlery and napkin. Thank you!

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

PLANTING TIME – WE NEED YOUR HELP! The rain has arrived, and has arrived early, so that we can begin to plant!

In December, we will begin a major effort to take creeping wild rye rhizomes from our propagation beds and plant them into the habitats on the Eastern, Western and Central Peninsulas at Bahia. We need as much help as we can get. Do join us for our work days!!

Bahia, Novato:

Wednesday, December 1

Thursday, December 9

Saturday, December 11

Wednesday, December 15

Thursday, January 6

We will meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Drive near Bolero Court and the tennis courts.

Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturday, December 4

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

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

THANKS TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS:

Debbie Ablin, Elizabeth Bandy, Kyla Burke-Lazarus, Robert Hinz, Jeanice McGee, Flinn Moore Rauck, Robert C. Morena, Linda Nicoletto, Barbara Salzman, Lowell Sykes

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Robert Akins, Rosemary Ames, Joan R. Bergsund, Shelly Coe, Jan Diamond, Judith Dunham, Robert Engel, Lyn D. Genelli, Eric G. Haun, Victoria L. Jackson, Linda Kenton, Margaret Lee, Al Lizak, Anne Menke, Vivienne E. Miller, Leona Pedersen, Anne & Gerry Pelletier, Patricia Rouzer, Gary Spratt, Edda Stickle, Matthew Tierney, Carolyn T. Zwicker

MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

LaVonne Blasche, Earth Share, Ervin and Denise Jindrich, Russell Nelson, Reliance Fund

BCDC Climate Changes Policy

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and upland buffer areas around tidal wetlands.” (Climate Change Policy 5.b.)

Send comments to Chairman Sean Randolph, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 50 California St., Ste. 2600, San Francisco CA 94111, or use the comment form at BCDC’s website under “Bay Plan Amendment” (which is right on top).

You can view the proposed amendments in their entirety on BCDC’s website. The public comment period will be open at least until December 2 and may be extended. Check the BCDC website for an update.

680 TRAIL UPDATE

Early in November, the Marin County Open Space District held a workshop on the 680 Trail conducted by representatives of the District and LSA, the consulting firm that prepared the environmental documents, i.e., an Initial Study and Negative Declaration and responses to comments. Responses to the many issues raised by environmental organizations and others were dismissive and self-serving. A repeated claim in the responses was that the commenters would have had to provide additional information that would lead to any other conclusions than those made in the Initial Study.

The District basically took a “trust me” approach. Interestingly, they requested further input on options and mitigations, which seemed in conflict with their insistence that no changes in the project were needed because they had evaluated many alternatives in deciding on this one. MAS continues to recommend using existing trails and/or attempting to renegotiate the alignment.

One thing is clear – this project is on a fast track. The supervisors directed that it be considered separately from the Countywide Trail Plan for which environmental review will begin soon. One question is – what’s the rush?

COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION UPHOLDS ENVIRONMENTAL APPEAL OF TOWERS

The Marin County Planning Commission has reversed a decision by the zoning administrator that would permit installation of two meteorological (met) towers in West Marin. The reversal came as a result of an appeal by Marin Audubon Society, Marin Conservation League, the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin and six private citizens that was based on environmental concerns. The commissioners agreed with us that additional information was needed to adequately evaluate the environmental impacts of the towers, and it required that an Initial Study be prepared to provide that additional information.

The zoning administrator had granted

permission to NextEra to install the towers on the Norton and Colburn ranches to test local wind conditions for suitability for wind turbines. NextEra, the nation’s largest wind energy company, operates more than a thousand wind turbines at Altamont Pass.

The met towers (which are not turbines) would be 197.7 feet tall with 12 guy wires extending as far as 157 feet from each tower. Guy wires are used to stabilize the towers. The towers could be in place for up to three years.

MAS’s decision to appeal was based on the potential for impact of the towers on birds. Potential impacts of the met towers on birds were virtually ignored in the planning staff report, which recommended approval of the towers with basically no environmental review. We identified numerous issues that had not been adequately addressed.

Guy wires are deadly to birds during foggy and inclement weather when birds’ vision is diminished. Many species migrate at night. Guy wires are especially lethal to birds during migration when large flocks are passing through and they collide with the guy wires. As we know, fog is a frequent occurrence in West Marin. There have been as many as 4,000 recorded deaths of migrating birds in one night from guy wires and towers.

So we are anxious to make sure that the decision to place towers in this sensitive year-round raptor habitat, located near Stemple Creek and on the Pacific Flyway, is based on adequate information. To correct inadequacies in the staff report, we recommended that an Initial Study provide certain basic information: (1) a complete description of the project setting that includes its location on the Pacific Flyway, in the Coastal Zone, near Stemple Creek and near groves of trees that could serve as refuge habitat for migrants; (2) a discussion of alternatives to using guy wires (e.g., placing the towers on a foundation or using lattice support); (3) an independent review of the effectiveness of Firefly™, the bird deterrent devices proposed to be placed on the guy wires; (4) information on the protocols that would be used for bird surveys on bird use of the area, and finally (5) adequate descriptions of construction methods for guyed and unguyed towers.

On November 1, NextEra submitted an appeal of the Planning Commission’s approval of our appeal. NextEra’s appeal will be heard by the Marin County Board of Supervisors on December 14. **We need your support!** Check our website or call Barbara Salzman for information.

MINING SAND FROM THE BAY

From time to time people along the Belvedere/Tiburon Peninsula may see a gigantic barge in the bay near Angel Island. It is likely to be mining sand from the bay.

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Mammals of the Christmas Bird Count

By Roger D. Harris

Some of my best friends are mammals, and this year for the first time mammals will be officially counted on the Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on December 26.

As a conservation organization, the Marin Audubon Society has an interest in the status of our native mammals and the impacts of introduced mammals. Incidental to your birding on the CBC, we are inviting you to record numbers of individuals of mammals seen as well. We are not asking anyone to specifically search out mammals; the CBC will still be a *bird* count. But as you are birding and secondarily see a mammal, count it. Each area leader will be given a list of potentially present mammals.

The protocols for counting mammals will be the same as for birds. A valid observation is a physical sighting. Finding “sign,” such as a woodrat’s nest, a gopher’s burrow, or the scent of a skunk, is not a valid observation. A distinctive vocalization is also a valid detection, but only if you are unambiguously sure that the identification of the vocalization is correct.

As with birds, identify each mammal to species. If not completely sure of the species identity, record to the nearest higher classification. In other words, if you were to see a bat but could not definitively identify it to species, then you would record “bat sp.” The abbreviation “sp.” indicates that the species identity is in question, but the animal was clearly some species of bat. (Some birders do the same with gulls, recording “gull sp.”)

Or if you see a tree squirrel, but cannot ID it precisely to species, just record “tree squirrel sp.” Our native tree squirrel is the Western Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*). In the winter, it has a luxuriant silvery gray pelage above and is white below with a big gray brush tail. They can be distinguished from the non-native Eastern Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), which are browner gray above and creamier yellow below, and the Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), which has a slightly browner pelage than its western cousin. Both the Eastern Fox and the Eastern Gray Squirrels were introduced from the eastern US.

Throughout California, our native Western Gray Squirrel is being replaced by the introduced squirrels, so the status and distribution of these species are of conservation



Photo courtesy of Roger Harris

Eastern Gray Squirrel

interest. The native tree squirrel is threatened by disease, fragmentation and loss of its forested habitat, and by disturbance from humans and their pets. Western Gray Squirrels are especially prone to become road-kill victims. Competition with introduced squirrels and Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*), all non-native species, has been identified as a contributor to the statewide decline of Gray Squirrel populations.

The non-native squirrels have become well established in San Mateo County, have made their way into San Francisco, and have crossed the Golden Gate to here in Marin County. They are tamer, spend more time on the ground, and more readily adapt as commensals with humans.

At one time, both Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) and California Ground Squirrels (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) were hunted out from much of Marin County, because they were considered pest species. The Coyote is clearly coming back, and the CBC will document their return.

As for domestic mammals, do not count domestic dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). But we will count domestic cats (*Felis catus*) that are found greater than 100 feet from a building. Outdoor pet cats and abandoned feral cats are predators of native birds and other wildlife and are of major conservation concern.

And when scanning the Bay and ocean for jaegers, keep your eyes open for Harbor Seals (*Phoca vitulina*), Harbor Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*), and perhaps even a countable whale.

Mining Sand From the Bay

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Commercial sand mining has been taking place the Bay for 70 years. Over the last 10 years, 11.6 million cubic yards of sand has been removed from the Central Bay alone. Several other areas in the estuary are mined, in Suisun and another in the western Delta.

Until now, sand mining has either received no environmental review because it predated CEQA or has been approved with a Negative Declaration. Finally, the State Lands Commission, the agency that owns the property from which the sand is being mined, prepared an environmental impact report (EIR) to address applications by two sand mining companies (Jerico and Hanson Marine) to continue mining for another 10 years. In addition to the lease extension, the companies have requested an increase of 60% in the quantity of sand removed. MAS has submitted comments on the Draft EIR (DEIR).

The impacts of the 70+ years of mining are not considered in the *continued on page 6*

eBIRD.ORG

Do you tell your friends about the birds you saw? Tell the world. Report your bird observations at eBird.org



HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES

Our Board made our annual field trip to our properties. We have been doing this for the past five years to check on conditions on our properties, to ensure our Board members know the location and habitat conditions on the properties we own, and to discuss their status. We now own more than 500 acres.

This year we found that we need a major effort to remove stinkwort (*Dictyocelia*) from the levee at our Petaluma Marsh site. At Bahia we decided on a location where we will put a

container to hold our equipment and evaluated our propagation beds. Some of the beds had lots of growth on the surface while others did not. As we learned last year, it's hard to tell what's going on underground by looking at the surface. Last season we discovered a wealth of rhizomes when we dug into the soil. At Tiscornia we discussed various alternatives for enhancing the upland adjacent to the marsh. We also visited Black Point and admired Norton Pond, where two parcels were recently donated, and other scattered parcels we own in that area.

Native Oysters of Drake's Estero *continued from page 3*

recruitment, as the next generation settles in to live in habitat preferred by adults.

Trimble, et al. (2009) published a paper on factors preventing the recovery of the native oyster. That article reports on research showing that cultivation of non-native oysters in west coast bays prevents the recovery of the native oyster. Native oysters settle preferentially on cultivated oysters and die. "Our results suggest that intertidal Pacific oysters are a recruitment sink." The native oyster is a species of concern and there are small populations remaining in Drakes Estero. Since some aspects of Drakes Estero match conditions in the bays where research was done, this study suggests that oyster farming over the past 75 years in Drakes Estero may have prevented the recovery of the native oyster to whatever level existed 100 to 200 years ago.

Cultivated oysters and mariculture racks, plastics, and bags are foreign, novel structures that do not replace the habitat for native organisms provided by a native oyster reef. Also the mariculture shellfish and gear host abundant populations of an invasive tunicate that can grow over and kill newly settling native larvae. Hanging oysters do not mimic natural, native oyster habitat, nor do oysters in bags. And, any native organism that settles and attaches on a cultivated oyster is harvested.

Trimble et al. (2009) state: "Unfortunately, we show evidence that the commercial species introduced to replace *O. lurida* [the native oyster], in addition to hitchhiking species, may in fact be contributing to the inability of the native oyster to return to its former abundance in west coast bays."

If mariculture gear is removed from the Estero and wilderness protection goes into effect as planned in 2012, the "recruitment sink" for native oysters will be removed. It will be then possible for the native species to grow in a natural system free of that threat.

Mining Sand From the Bay *continued from page 4*

DEIR, however, because case law has defined baseline condition as being the time of the notice of preparation for an EIR, which was 2007. The EIR acknowledges that 95% of the material removed from the Bay is not replenished. Mining leaves gigantic pits in the Bay floor.

The DEIR primarily views bay sand as a resource for the mining industry, not as a resource important for the Bay ecosystem. There is no discussion of the impacts of sand mining on areas of the bay and coast that depend on sand replenishment. These areas include shoals, Ocean Beach, Crissy Field, and areas of historic beaches in the South Bay. Ocean currents actually carry sediments/sand from the bay long distances along the coast.

The DEIR evaluates most of the impacts as localized and minimizes the adverse impacts on fish and invertebrate species that are entrained (captured along with the sand and water) in the mining process. Equipment similar to a giant vacuum is used to suck up sand and water, mobilize the sand in slurry and allow it to be pumped into barges. The water is returned to the bay along with smaller grained material and creatures that have been entrained and which, of course, do not survive. Some sand mining equipment creates sufficient suction to capture larger and faster swimming species, such as Chinook salmon smolts. Impacts on Dungeness crab are a particular concern as they move along the floor of the Bay. Impacts to only one species, the endangered Longfin Smelt, were found to be significant. The return water increases turbidity of the bay waters.

MAS expressed concern about the definition of baseline condition and the minimization of impacts. We recommended that the quantity of sand mined be significantly reduced and that a greatly increased monitoring program and oversight of mining activities be required to inform all future permitting decisions.

MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	2 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

MARIN BIRDLOG – OCTOBER 2010

By Rich Stallcup

A pelagic trip to Cordell Bank 10/3 recorded the following species with careful estimates (RS,m.ob) – **Black-footed Albatross** (11); **Northern Fulmar** (20); **Flesh-footed** (4), **Pink-footed** (300), **Buller's** (430), **Sooty** (35) and **Short-tailed** (5) **Shearwaters**; **Ashy** (50), **Black** (10), **Fork-tailed** (2) and **Wilson's** (1) **Storm-Petrels**; **Pomarine** (22), **Parasitic** (11), and **Long-tailed** (2) **Jaegers**; **South Polar Skua** (3); **Sabine's Gull** (2200!); **Artic** (6) and **Common** (2) **Terns**; **Rhinoceros** (95) and **Cassin's** (20) **Auklets**, and **Marbled Murrelet** (4). By the 25th a now-predictable die-off of newly arrived **fulmars** began and by the end of the month corpses littered ocean beaches.

The pair of **Harlequin Ducks** near the Fish Docks since May continued to dazzle many birders through the end of the month.

Even with limited access to Hawk Hill in the Marin Headlands GGRO counters recorded 1,816 **Sharp-shinned** and 1,690 **Cooper's Hawks**; 4,093 **Red-tailed**, 135 **Red-shouldered**, 21 **Ferruginous**, 5 **Swainson's** and 94 **Broad-winged Hawks**; 12 **Golden** and 1 **Bald Eagles**; 100 **Merlins**, 101 **Peregrines** and 2 **Prairie**

Falcons plus four other diurnal raptor species. These totals are for the whole season (AF). There are still many birds on the way. Four young **Broad-winged Hawks** were on the O.P. 10/6 (RS,NB).

An **Eastern Phoebe** at the end of Point Reyes 10/27 (S<) was in the calendar window for this late-season vagrant. I know of only four previous O.P. records. **Gray Catbird** at Nunes 10/18 (IS) was about the sixth ever on the O.P. One male **Mountain Bluebird** Tomales Point 10/16 (CB) was a nice find and a bit early. Late was a calling **Swainson's Thrush** along the Earthquake Trail in Point Reyes National Seashore 10/28 (JO, m.ob).

Very few species of vagrant wood-warblers were found in October and surprisingly Tennessees and Prairies went missing all fall. A **Blackpoll Warbler** was at the Fish Docks on the O.P. 10/8 (MB,MR) and a young **Blackburnian** was there the same day (MB,MR). This bird stayed until 10/13 (m.ob). On 10/19 a ♀ **Blackburnian** was in the same pines 10/19 (RS) through 10/22 (m.ob). **Palm Warblers** always show up here and there in October regardless of weather conditions and at least twelve were reported in 2010: Las Gallinas 10/4 (ES), Upper Green Gulch 10/5 (JM), Muir Beach 10/5 (DMc), Abbott's Lagoon 10/10 (MD), Bolinas 10/13 (DH) and seven or so on the O.P. (m.ob). In October 1998 sixteen Palm Warblers were conservatively counted on the O.P. in one day!

A migrant **Nashville Warbler** that had joined a mixed flock of insectivores at Inverness Park 10/15 (MB,MR) was as rare here as any of the wood-warblers noted above.

The **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** 9/28 to at least 10/4 (SS) was in Mill Valley not San Rafael – my mistake. Two **Evening Grosbeaks** in the pines at the Fish Docks, O.P. 10/18 (RR) were part of a widespread incursion to the coast but only the third report of this species on the Point Reyes Peninsula – ever. A male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was with the two other goldfinch species on a thistle feeder in east Novato 10/10/10 (HC). Lawrence's Goldfinch is enigmatic over much of its range. In Marin a few pairs nest irregularly on "chamise" shrouded ridges of Mount Tamalpais but single pairs have fledged young at the French Cheese Factory and at the "F" ranch, inner Point Reyes. Migrants are rare and erratic.

Because there is no more farming on the O.P. there will be no more plowed fields and thus larks, pipits and longspurs will be elusive. Six **Lapland Longspurs** on the Spaletta Plateau, O.P. 10/8 (MD) built to 16 on 10/19 (NB) and a single was on the Chimney Rock Trail 10/16 (MB,MR). A **Bobolink** was briefly present (as usual) at Bolinas mid-month (KH) and a **Rusty Blackbird** was loosely with a group of 3000 **Tricolored Blackbirds** (and the usual few other *Icterid* species) 10/19 (RS).

Observers and Acronyms Bob Battagin, **CB:** Courtney Buechert, **MB:** Mark Butler, **HC:** Heather Cameron, Mark Dertling, **MD** Mathew Dodder, **JE** Jules Evens, **AF:** Allen Fish, Deborah Fitzpatrick, Mary Anne Flett, Kathy Francone, Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, **KH:** Keith Hansen, Jill Harley, **DH:** Diana Humple, William Legge, **M.OB:** many observers, **DMc:** Dave McKenzie, **JM:** Jeff Miller, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **NB:** Native Birds Group, David Nelson, **JO:** Jack Obedzinski, **OP:** Outer Point Reyes, Melissa Pitkin, PRBO Conservation Science, Lina Jane Prairie, Pam Reber, **MR:** Mary Anne Rotella, **RR:** Ruth Rudesill, Maggie Rufo, Barbara Salzman, **IS:** Ivan Samuels, Dan Singer, **SS:** Sandy Slichter, **RS:** Rich Stallcup, **ES:** Emilie Strauss, **S+LT:** Scott & Linda Terrill, Nick Whelan.

Photo courtesy of www.naturepicsonline.com



Red-tailed Hawk

Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

Junior Bird Watchers is an in-school program designed to teach elementary school children to identify birds in their neighborhoods. The program was developed by National Audubon Society (NAS). When NAS discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor, conducting the program in classrooms at several elementary schools. If you would like more information, please visit "Junior Birdwatchers" under the "Birds" tab on our website at marinaudubon.org, or contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.



Avi Singh is a second grader at Bacich Elementary School in Kentfield. He passed the first grade Junior Bird Watcher test. He likes the Eurasian wigeon "because I'm from Asia!" and hopes to see one someday.



Parker Leopold, a second grader at Bacich Elementary School in Kentfield, celebrated getting 50 life birds he can identify by himself with an ice cream cake! On his final day of birding to reach that landmark Parker identified a black-bellied plover in breeding plumage and Caspian terns at the wetlands east of 101 in Corte Madera.



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