



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, OCTOBER 9 7:30 PM

Birds of the Mono Lake Basin

With Marie Read



Photo courtesy of Marie Read

California Gull

Nationally known bird photographer, Marie Read, takes us on a journey exploring the birdlife of the Mono Lake Basin. Marie's stunning photography, now featured in her book, *Sierra Wings: Birds of the Mono Lake Basin*, reveals the fascinating lives of the birds that breed in or migrate through this spectacular hotspot.

Mono Lake in California's Eastern Sierra is famous for bizarre tufa towers rising from its surface and for highly saline and alkaline water. Teeming brine shrimp and alkali flies attract huge numbers of breeding and migrating birds, including California Gulls, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, and Eared Grebes. The surrounding forests and sagebrush scrub support many other species.

Delve into the hidden lives of birds such as Pinyon Jay, Violet-green Swallow and Black-backed Woodpecker, enjoy Marie's stories from the field and learn how she obtained some of the behavior and action shots in the book.

Marie's images and articles have appeared in magazines, books, calendars and websites. She has authored two previous books: *Secret Lives of Common Birds: Enjoying Bird Behavior Through the Seasons* and *Common Birds & Their Songs* (coauthored with Lang Elliott). You can see Marie's work at www.marieread.com.

Come at 7:15 PM for refreshments. Meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

Close the Gap in the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve



Photo courtesy of Robert Hinz

MAS's restoration at Triangle Marsh produced a new tidal channel in an area, once filled and dry, now dominated by pickleweed and an adjacent upland covered with many California natives such as creeping wildrye and coyote brush.

The only privately-owned property between the Greenbrae Boardwalk and San Clemente Creek is the 5.2-acre property MAS is in contract to purchase. We need you to help remove the continued degradation and the threat of development so that we can return this keystone parcel to tidal marsh and expand the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve habitat.

The original tidal marsh on this site has been filled twice over the last 50 years, covering tidal marsh that once thrived here. The parcel now looks like many ruderal lands—uneven land surface invaded by non-native grasses, dumped chunks of concrete and other debris,

dog droppings all over the place, and use by unknowing people for inappropriate activities. In fact, the uses are adversely affecting the adjacent Reserve habitats.

After purchase, MAS will restore tidal marsh by lowering the elevation of half of the site and creating high tide refugia, an essential habitat component for the endangered Ridgway's Rail (formerly called Clapper Rail), on the other half. During extreme high tides when their marsh habitat is completely covered by water, the rails must leave the marsh and find cover by hiding under vegetation on adjacent uplands.

The first essential step in closing this gap and restoring tidal marsh habitat is to purchase the property from its current owners. Now that we are in contract to purchase the property, we need to raise funds to complete the purchase.

To see what this parcel could become, visit our Triangle Marsh, at the south *continued on page 2*

Newsletter-Naming Contest

We'd like to hear from you!

What do you think should be done, now that the name of the endangered Clapper Rail has been changed to Ridgway's Rail? Should we change our newsletter name to Ridgway's Rail? Change it to another name? Do send us your creative ideas.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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Nominating	Phil Peterson 828-4780
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Volunteer Coordinator	
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
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.

6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

Marin Audubon Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All memberships and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Website: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
(Provided by Golden Gate AS)

Members can receive *The Clapper Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by e-mailing joandbijou@sbcglobal.net

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

To comply with requirements to be an Audubon Chapter, each chapter is required to complete a form reporting on our activities/accomplishments during the past year, our membership, our volunteers, the members reached with our activities as well as our goals for the coming year. This year we have had 785 people attending our 31 field trips and are pleased to have had 466 volunteers working on one or more activities giving a total of 9,318 hours to provide the activities and benefits, field trips, classes, bird counts and on-the-ground work to enhance habitats. We invite you to join us on one or more of our activities.

At this month's meeting, our Board decided that our number one goal for the coming year is to get the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion parcel acquired and the restoration initiated.

We are saddened to learn of the death of Jack Walker on July 18 of this year. Longtime members may remember Jack and his wife Janet as dedicated MAS members and community volunteers. Jack was on the Tam

District Board and Janet was Membership Chair for MAS. They moved to Oregon some years ago where both continued to be active with their new community.

Do let us hear from you about what we should do with the name of our newsletter now that the name Clapper Rail applies only to rails on the East Coast.

In Spring and Summer I often include advice that tree and brush trimming not be done because it is nesting season. With the nesting season over, NOW is the time for you to trim your trees and shrubs. Happy trimming!

It is also time for winter migrants to be returning en masse. Although all are not back until November, you will be seeing more waterfowl arriving or just stopping over on their way further south. The shorebird migration is ending with young finding their way on their own, amazingly. Adult shorebirds leave their northern breeding grounds shortly after young are hatched usually arriving in mid-to late-summer.



Photos courtesy of Jude Stalker

A group at the Marin Baylands Advocates fundraising event toured the property which will be added to the adjacent Corte Madera Ecological Reserve after marsh habitat is restored.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve *continued from page 1*

end of Corte Madera Bay across from the Ring Mountain Preserve along Paradise Drive. MAS created target tidal marsh and high tide refugia, vegetated with native shrubs and grasses, there barely 10 years ago. It is now flourishing habitat. The first Ridgway's Rail was seen at Triangle several years ago.

We need your donation to close the gap in the Ecological Reserve and restore thriving tidal marsh habitat, protect the Ridgway's Rail population and provide the habitat that will allow the Rail population to increase.

Thank you to the Corte Madera Beautification Committee for the major donation of \$5,000 and to everyone who has contributed so far.

What You Can Do

To contribute:

- Send a check, payable to "Marin Audubon Society," to:
Marin Audubon Society
P.O. Box 599
Mill Valley CA 94942

or, use PayPal through
www.marinaudubon.org/donations.php#donate_now

To volunteer:

- If you would like to volunteer to help, send us a message at MAS's website at www.marinaudubon.org

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

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, October 2 and
November 6, 2014
9 AM to 12 PM

With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin
and friends

Birders of all levels are welcome on this first Thursday walk. Each month the avian cast of characters will change, and we'll try to keep track of newly arriving species. This is a great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl and other bird families, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books and birding etiquette. Try to bring a pair of binoculars, as well as some water. We'll be walking about 2 miles on the levees that surround the ponds.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then go east on Smith Ranch Road toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, stay on Smith Ranch Road and go about .5 mile to the end of the road at the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC BIRDING WEEKEND

October 11 – 12, 2014
With Terry Colborn

Terry is leading a weekend birding trip in the Monterey Bay area, October 11-12, for Marin and Yolo Audubon Societies. This two-day trip to the beautiful Monterey Peninsula will feature a pelagic trip on Saturday with Monterey Seabirds (www.montereyseabirds.com) and land birding on Sunday. Monterey Seabirds uses a local skipper with over 30 years' experience. Leaders and spotters include Roger Wolfe, Dan Singer, Blake Matheson and Todd Easterla. All four are seasoned, life-long birders and have exceptional knowledge of the status and distribution of California birds. The whale watching is exceptional, too.

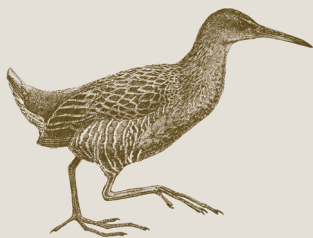
Please contact Terry to sign up for this trip at TLCBirding@gmail.com or by phone at 530/312-9947. The cost for two days is \$110. Visit www.marinaudubon.org for the full trip description and sign-up details.

MARIN HEADLANDS

No. 6, Birding In Marin Series

Saturday, October 18, 2014
8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin



Join Jim and Bob for the sixth trip in their year-long series to visit the seasonal Marin birding hotspots. Please meet at the pedestrian bridge to Cronkite Beach over the ocean-side neck of Rodeo Lagoon. There are restrooms nearby and ample parking. We are going to search the shores and waters of the lagoon, scan the ocean, and look in the trees around the old military buildings. We expect to see some ducks, shorebirds and gulls and some migrating passerines. Then we intend to drive (please carpool) to the Point Bonita area to look for rocky shore birds before driving up to Hawk Hill for lunch and raptor viewing. Experts on the hill will help us spot and identify passing raptors, like **Sharp-shinned** and **Broad-winged Hawks** and perhaps a **Merlin**.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 just west of the Golden Gate Bridge take the Sausalito exit about a 1/4 mile, then left on Bunker Road through the one-way tunnel road to the end at Cronkite Beach.

FALL VAGRANTS AT BODEGA BAY

Wednesday, October 29, 2014
9 AM to 3:30 PM

With Peter Colasanti

Spend a day at Bodega Bay in prime vagrant season when just about anything can happen. We'll meet at the Rail Ponds at 9 AM; from there we'll make some stops for shorebirds before the tide gets too low. By then there should be good activity at Owl Canyon, Sonoma County's premier vagrant trap, where we'll stop en route to a seawatch at Bodega Head before the wind awakens and with the sun at our backs. From the Head we'll return clockwise around Bodega Harbor with likely stops at Campbell Cove, Owl Canyon again, Porto Bodega and finally at Doran Park where there's always an entrance fee and sometimes **Snowy Plovers**.

DIRECTIONS: Take 101 North and exit on East Washington, the third Petaluma exit. East Washington becomes Bodega Avenue; follow it through Two Rock and Valley Ford to Bodega Bay. Drive through town past Diekman's and the Boat House. Take the left on Eastshore Road, turn right at the bottom of the hill on Bayflat Road and drive to the harbor shore where you'll find the horse trailer (Rail Ponds) parking lot on the right, just shy of the northern-most part of the harbor. There should be some horse trailers there by 9:00 AM to let you know you are at the right place.

If this is confusing, the GPS address is 1600 Bayflat Road or you can Google "Rail Ponds Bodega Bay" to see photo maps.

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 COUNTY ROAD AND TRAILS PLAN

The Marin County Road and Trails Plan (Plan) and the *Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report* (DPEIR) evaluating the Plan were released in August. Unfortunately, the public comment period ended before this newsletter was published. These documents are revisions of the Plan and DEIR that were released last year.

We found in our review that, while the revised DPEIR and Plan contain new information, they are still deficient and the EIR falls short of providing thorough and adequate analysis. New information includes a literature review of studies that address impacts of activities (mountain bikes, hikers and dogs) including night lighting on wildlife and trails. Generally the studies cited found that impacts of cycles and hikers were about the same although the impacts of increased intensity and off-trail uses do not appear to have been considered in any of the studies. Studies found that ground-dwelling birds were most affected by dogs and that native carnivore use, indicated by scat, was reduced in areas used by humans and dogs.

Only the eleven endangered, special status species along with the colonial nesting species (herons and egrets) are addressed, but not in a thorough way. Common resident native species are virtually ignored. There is only one policy that calls for minimizing intrusions into larger contiguous habitat areas and wildlife corridors. There no discussion of where these habitats are and how the policy would be accomplished. Raptors, including eagles, woodpeckers or even species with very limited ranges, such as wrentits, also are not even discussed.

Because most of the Open Space District (a special district under Marin County Parks) Preserve lands were acquired because of their high resource value, it has been our continued recommendation that all native wildlife and their habitats be protected. It is not just special status and sensitive habitats, which are never actually defined, that should be protected. Protecting wildlife habitat seems to have been given little attention in designating areas to be protected from trail impacts. The Preserves called out for the most protective designation (Bollinas Lagoon, and parts of Giacomini and Cascade Canyon) seem to be so designated for ease of management, because they have large areas not crossed by trails. For example, the

threatened Spotted Owl habitat in Larkspur is not given a high level of protection.

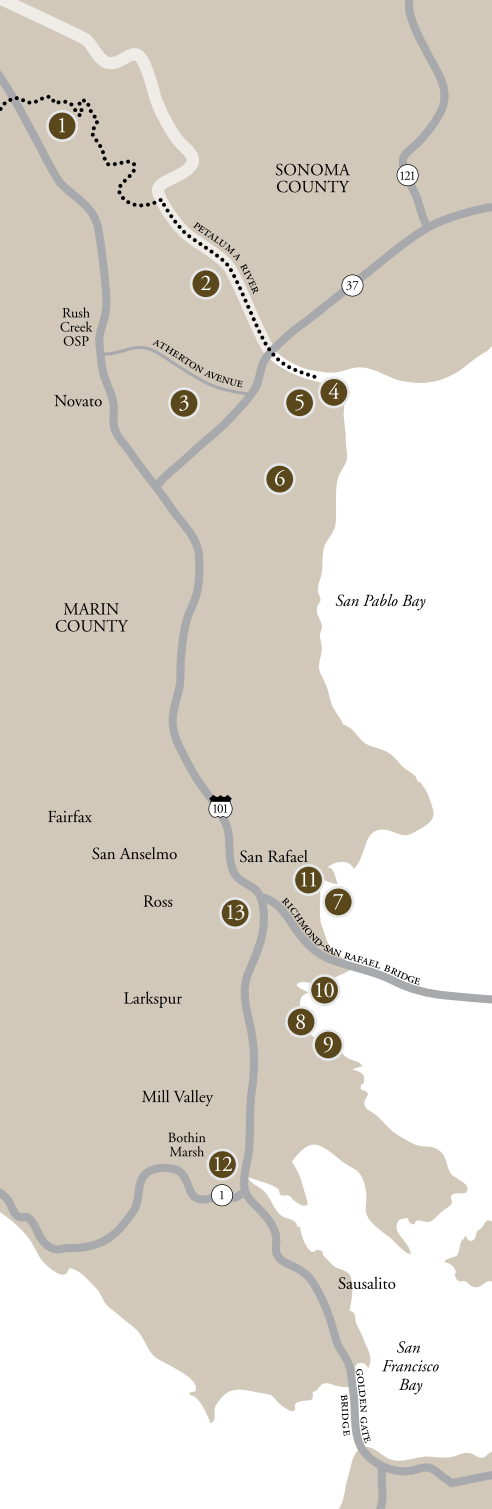
Much of the Plan is devoted to trail design and maintenance, and in these areas County Parks does a great job. To address the impacts of human activities on resources, the Plan relies on policies, most of which exist in other documents such as the Marin Countywide Plan and Vegetation Management Plan. There is a listing of Open Space policies which would provide some protections for natural resources, such as policies requiring dogs to be on-leash on most trails, directing visitors away from high-value vegetation, and zero tolerance for unauthorized trail construction.

However, the effectiveness of these policies in

It has been our continued recommendation that all native wildlife and their habitats, not only special status species and sensitive habitat, which incidentally are not defined, be protected.

avoiding or even reducing adverse impacts is far from certain, because of the long history of non-compliant behavior in many preserves and lack of enforcement. (See Vandalism article page 5) Many users have publicly announced at hearings their intent, and state that it is their right, to go off trails, riding their bikes, or walking as they please. Neither the Plan nor the DPEIR address how the policies would be enforced. Without an adequate enforcement program, the effectiveness of the policies cannot be relied upon to reduce adverse impacts of the many trail users.

One disappointing change is the deletion of the requirement that for each new trail constructed a segment of existing trail would be decommissioned. In our opinion, this would have assured there would be no increase in impacting trails. Instead, the Plan relies on a goal of “overall reduction of road, trail and visitor impacts.” How such a vague promise would be measured and assured is not clear. A procedure system that would allow the public to submit trail projects is included, however, how the reduction in impacts would be



MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	144 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
13. Cal Park	<1 acre

determined and measured and how the public would be informed about trail projects under consideration is unclear.

In summary, there are some improvements in the Plan and the DPEIR, but there is still a way to go.

VANDALISM ON MAS AND OPEN SPACE LANDS

Some examples of the public's misuse and abuse of public lands is the recent destruction of the split rail fence installed by a County crew at the Bahia trailhead at the end of Bahia Drive. County staff did their usual good job constructing an attractive, rustic fence that was intended to discourage access (one could climb over or under it) and, together with signs, to inform people of the fact that the top of the berm around the seasonal wetland is habitat, not a public access trail. The berm was always planned to be part of the habitat allowing wildlife to pass freely between the tidal and diked marshes without disturbance from people, dogs and horses in between. The sign that had accompanied the fence was destroyed some time ago.

This is not the first time members of the public, acting in only their own self-interest, have undermined efforts to restore habitat. Since the Bahia restoration was completed in 2008, people have trampled and ripped out native plants, repeatedly destroyed signs, and even sprayed herbicides to open up the trail they want to use around the seasonal wetland. It apparently is not enough that there are five miles of trails that are open to the public at this Open Space Preserve.

Similar destruction has occurred at other locations. At our Triangle Marsh property a sign marking the overlook was stolen sometime ago. And recently, one of the signs erected at our Corte Madera Expansion site to invite people to our September 14 celebration, was also stolen. It's disheartening.

COMING UP

WHALER'S POINT

The next hearing on this project proposed by Jack Krystal for his property on Richardson Bay between the seaplane facility and Shoreline Office Center, is scheduled for the supervisors meeting on October 21. The county's position, as expressed by the Supervisors at the last hearing on this 72-room hotel development, was not supportive of such a massive structure that would not comply with the Tam Junction

Community Plan or the Marin Countywide Plan. MAS continues to oppose this huge development on this small bayfront parcel that consists of inter-tidal parcels, tidal marsh, and filled historic tidal marsh.

HIGHWAY 37 AND SEA LEVEL ANALYSIS

This broad stakeholder process, is being initiated for the purpose of contributing to the environmental design and planning for the highway and associated lands that are highly vulnerable to sea level rise. The process is a joint effort with Caltrans and UC Davis enabled with federal funds. The first meeting was held on September 3.

MMWD PLANS FOR NEW WATER STORAGE PROJECT

The Marin Municipal Water District is soliciting input on issues to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Report for its proposed water storage project. The primary goal of the project is "to provide adequate, reliable, treated water transmission both for operations and emergency needs."

The project consists of constructing two 1.95 million gallon potable water storage tanks at Ross Valley site #1 near Alpine Lake and a 3.9 million gallon tank at a site near Deer Park Road (commonly known as Five Corners). As designed, the project would require extensive grading to construct 1,185 feet of new road and other road improvements, install pipes, construct retaining walls at several locations, repair several landslides, and decommission the Ross Reservoir. According to the public notice, 198 trees would have to be removed. Such an extensive project would undoubtedly have to cross and adversely impact many streams.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Submit comments by the deadline of October 8, to:

Dain Anderson

Environmental Services Coordinator

Marin Municipal Water District

220 Nellen Avenue

Corte Madera, CA 94925

Comments providing less environmentally damaging alternatives and effects would be particularly useful as well as measures to mitigate adverse impacts.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mitra Alberni, Daniel Altman, Elizabeth Anderson, Susan Andrews, Francesca Applegarth, Joanne Arauzo, Charles Auerbach, Jessica Beattie, Kirsten & Michael Beckwith, Jane Bell, Christine Bent, Stacy Besenty, Nancy Bloch, Colin Bly, Donald Bowden, Vicki Breazeale, Nathan Brown, Pam Calahorro, R. S. Callender, Cary J. Carrillo, Mary Childs, Heather Clapp, Mrs. Sharon Clark, William Clements, Kevin Corsiglia, John Coyle, Judith D. Creasy, Dorene Curtis, Laura Daly, Lenore Daris, Lee Debarros, Barbara Dittmann, Arlayne Donnan, Dennis M. Donnell, John Duncan, George & Carole Eade, Frank Elias, Sharon Elser, Henry Fernandez, Gary Fiedel, Poppy Finston, John Fletcher, Leigh Fonseca, Marjorie Forman, Jacqualine Forrest, Misty Forsman, Keith & Gloria Fraser, Richard Fregulia, Suzanne Gibson, Stefanie Glassner, Carol Gold, Roger Gold, Lawrence Goldberg, Marly Goldblatt, Richard R. Goldman, Patricia Goodman, Stephen Gordon, Elio Gramajo, Carl Hanken, Whitney Hanley, Dawn Harris, John Harris, Kate Healy, Mr. & Mrs. William Held, Steven Hendricks, Richard Hicks, Thomas D. Hicks, Wanda M. Hosford, David Ilderton, Seth Jaffe, Elizabeth Jameson, Dianne Janney, Constance Judson, Erica & Jeremy Kelly, Margaret F. Kennedy, Amy Keroes, Sara M. Kinnon, Iva Koberg, William Koehler, Jon Krabbenschmidt, Cori Ladd, Jeffrey Lopic, Shirley C. Larkins, L. R. Larson, Wolfgang Lederer, Maria Ledesma, Andrew Leshner, Elizabeth Lewis, Aaron Lewis, Robert P. Liburdy, Alexandra Liebster, Donna Look, Aimee MacAitis, Jessica Madani, Jean Magistrale, Davida P. Marsh, Mary A. Martin, Kirstie Martinelli, Joe Masters, Maria Matan, Valerie May, Katie McCarthy, Isabel McComish, Barbara McCrum, Michael C. McInerney, Michelle McKechnie, Kevin McPeck, Kathleen Merrifield, Angela Miller, Stacy Money, Janet Morgan, Roy Nee, Stephen Negoesco, Mary Neumann, Andra Nirenberski, Ms. Sherrill Nolder, Garrett O'Doherty, Suzanne Oberlin, Evy Packer, Gertrud Parker, Matt Partain, Meo T. Patrick, Christine I. Peters, Angelo Pirri, Margot Plant, Petra Pless, Stephanie Plexico, Robert Portnoy, Kate Powers, Colette Pratt, Maura Prendiville, Eileen M. Prendiville, Sara M. Purcell, Cheryl Rabin, Linda Repola, Alicia Retes, Caitlin Robinson, Maria Rodriguez, Karen Rosenquist, Scott Rowitz, Richard & Michelle Ruff, Lori & Jeff Runfeldt, Sara Sakai, Ginny Sandell, Jennifer Scarce, Steve Schow, Eldon D. Schriock, Ruth Schuler, Douglas Secor, Armine Shamiryan, Karen Shopfner, Rodney Siegel, Stella Smith, Diana Soms, Lida Soofer, Sherry Stanton, Jennifer Sterling, Charles Stewart, Shirley Sullivan, Chloe Sundara, Muriel Tarrant, Carrie Taylor, Annette Terkaly, Teresa Trotter, Natu Tuatagaloa, Mary Van Voorhees, Kathryn A. Vandyke, Margaret Ward, Kenneth M. Weare, Warren Wertheimer, Dayna West, Molly West, M. D. Woodring, Palma You, Jerald Young, Taji Za

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Poison oak, that tough California native, is providing fall color at Triangle Marsh although its leaves are rapidly falling. Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and native aster are blooming. Some Harding grass that was cut back in early summer is now flowering, and Harding grass is also getting a running start on the rainy season by beginning to send up new leaves. Mustard seems never to stop flowering, but we can still stop some of its seed production. It will be our last chance to eradicate stinkwort, *Dittrichia graveolens*, before its seeds mature. Act locally and join us on a workday. 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.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: October 4, November 1
Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Drive directly across from the main Ring Mountain trailhead.

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: October 11, November 8
Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Dr. near Bolero Ct. and the tennis courts.

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Richard M. Dennes, Gary Gonsel, Richard Jennings, Clifford Lardinois, Russell Nelson, PG&E Corporation Foundation (donor match)

GOOD NEWS

The Obama administration has announced a major expansion of the Remote Pacific Islands National Monument by about six times its current size by adding countless sea mounts, islands and atolls. The expansion will prevent oil drilling, help reverse the decline of fish, and protect coral reefs and many other marine species.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

The August Habitat Restoration Stewardship day at Bahia brought out a great and lively group of San Rafael Rotary Club members, recruited by the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership (CVNL), and some of our faithful Marin Audubon volunteers.

We removed many bags full of the highly invasive plants, stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*), yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*).

Invasive plants, including those that we removed, can pose a huge threat to the native plants that Marin Audubon has planted along the levees at Bahia by taking needed space, water and nutrients. Because the native plants support a much higher diversity of native insects and other animals, Marin Audubon remains diligent in fighting the battle against the invasive plants.

We could not win this battle without the very generous support that we receive from so many community volunteers and are very grateful for



Photo courtesy of Jude Stalker

September volunteers at Bahia watered the more recent plantings.

this help and for the volunteer recruiting efforts made by CVNL and other MAS partners.

It is amazing how much work we accomplish in just a few hours while having such a nice time in a beautiful place!

SEPTEMBER 13 FIELD TRIP

Corte Madera Creek With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle

By Vicky Van Meter



Glen Topke, gtopke@pbnc.com

Yellow Warbler

We met Rich and Janet along the waterfront west of the Marin Rowing boathouse and Rich showed us historical pictures of the area in a new book, *In the Heart of Marin* by Dewey Livingston. Nivens Park and the area of surrounding homes were once marshland and the mudflat was once deep enough to support a yacht club. Today the shoreline walk is busy with joggers and dog walkers, and rowing sculls move up and down the creek. Corte Madera Creek may be only a remnant of the vast marsh that once extended up to the hills, but there were still plenty of birds. Rich and Janet live along the creek and know the area well. Fly

fishermen under the Hwy 101 bridge fish for striped bass and report steelhead moving up the creek. **Ospreys** and **Double-crested Cormorants** feed when the fish are running and river otters are seen regularly. Rich reported that large numbers of **Canada Geese** lifted off the creek shortly before the earthquake last month.

Moving on to the birds, a juvenile **Black Phoebe** showed its salmon-colored wingbars. We moved along to a large mudflat to scope the shorebirds. Rich said the mudflat had silted in considerably after a storm last March. Large drainage culverts channel runoff from the surrounding area. We got good looks at **California, Western** and **Ring-billed Gulls, Willets, Black-necked Stilts, Black-bellied Plovers**, and a large flock of **Least Sandpipers**. We were able to see **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** next to each other and see the differences in body and bill size. A **Song Sparrow** sparked a discussion of local races of this species. Meryl Sundove gave us a lovely mnemonic aid to remember its call – “Maids, maids, maids put on the tea kettle, ettle, ettle.” Moving along to a large fennel patch, some of us saw an **Orange-crowned** and a **Yellow Warbler**. A small flock of **Forster’s Tern** was seen on the far bank. It was an enjoyable morning. We will revisit the area in January when a variety of sparrows can be found.

MARIN BIRDLOG: AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2014

By Josiah Clark

Glen Tepke, gtepket@hazco.com



Ovenbird

By September the breeding and birdsong of summer become memories. Native fruits like Blue Elderberry, currants and Coffeeberry set their fruit to fuel bird movements, which carry away the seed to places near and far. The land is drier than it has been all year, making the few remaining moist spots all the more precious. Just offshore baitfish and squid concentrate, creating the biggest feeding frenzies of seabirds that are seen all year.

The days are noticeably shorter to humans and birds alike. For birds it means the biggest migration month of the year. A steady stream of western migrants moving south is

punctuated by pulses and fallouts of songbirds. These lulls in bird movement allow detection of the odd vagrant, which brings outer Pt. Reyes squarely into the spotlight.

On 8/13 an **Eastern Kingbird** at Drake's kicked off the vagrant season with a few early western migrants (DS). On 8/30 a **Prairie Warbler** began its stay of at least two weeks at the Fish Docks (JCh). On 9/5 a **Laughing Gull** was sleuthed out and well studied at the beach there (ST). That same day the Fish Docks had an **Ovenbird** and an **American Redstart**, and the lighthouse had a continuing **Acorn Woodpecker**, which is very rare for the Outer Point (RH). On 9/6 a **Cape May Warbler** was seen at the Nunes Ranch (EH, IS).

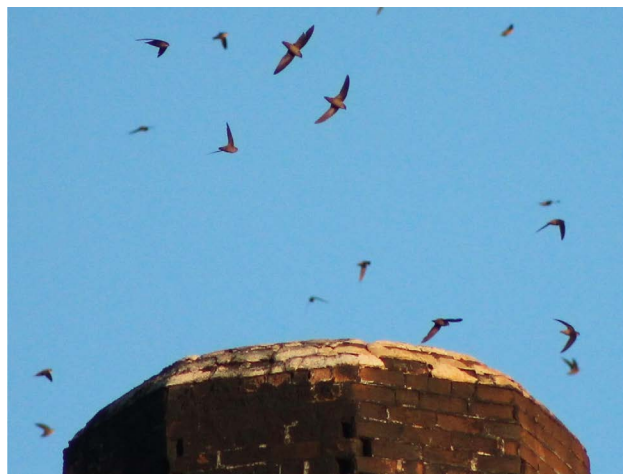
Out to the northeast at the opposite end of the county on 9/2, Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds had a first-of-season **Say's Phoebe**, **Cackling Goose** and one of the first good showings of southbound **Yellow Warblers** (DE).

With blossoms rapidly drying up, more vagrant hummingbirds show up during this period than any other. On 9/4, the 14th **Black-chinned Hummingbird** for the Bolinas Wildlife Gallery worked the feeders there for a few days before moving on (KH).

Observers and Acronyms **DS:** Dan Singer **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **EH:** Eugene Hunn, **IS:** Ivan Samuels, **JCH:** Jim Chiropoulos, **KH:** Keith Hansen, **RH:** Roger Harshaw, **ST:** Steve Tucker

Vaux's Swift Migration Exceeding 10,000 Birds Per Night

This has been the most spectacular season for the migration of **Vaux's Swifts** since the roost at McNear Brick and Block on North San Pedro Road became known to birders thanks to the observation of Rusty Scalf in 2010. This September the numbers of Vaux's Swifts counted entering the stacks have exceeded ten thousand birds/night for at least nine days. On September 19 the count was just shy of twenty thousand. The swifts roost in the unused old brick chimneys at the brickyard during their southward journey from the northern Pacific coast to Central America and northern South America. A few chimneys such as these have replaced hollow trees as nighttime roosts. Depending upon the number of swifts in the area, their entry usually begins in the hour before sunset and continues for 15-20 minutes after sunset. More drama is sometimes provided by predators such as a **Barn Owl** and a **Peregrine Falcon**. After several



Vaux's Swifts at the McNear Brick and Block stacks

Photos courtesy of Robert Hinz

unsuccessful appearances this year when it only interrupted the swifts entry, an **American Kestrel** finally was seen to have captured one of the thousands. The largest numbers of swifts are seen in mid-September, but there may still be a few thousands in mid-October. There is more information at www.vauxhappening.org.

Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

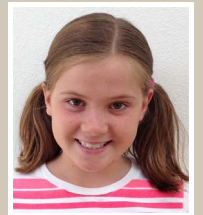
Junior Bird Watchers is an in-school program designed to teach elementary school children to identify birds in their neighborhoods. The program was developed by National Audubon Society (NAS). When NAS discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor, 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 www.marinaudubon.org, or contact Wendy at 415/457-3949.

This month's Junior Birders were all fourth grade students at Ross School last year.



Romeo Torresi would like to see an osprey because "it's really cool how it catches a fish and turns it around to face forward to carry it!"

Katherine Berkowitz would like to see a Violet-Green Swallow.



Lily Taube likes Dark-Eyed Juncos because "it's cool how you can see the white feathers in the tail when it flies!"

Ellie Sutro "I saw a Chestnut-Backed Chickadee and it was so close and it sang its name and it was so cool to see it!"



Skylar Solle's favorite bird is the Dark-Eyed Junco. She thinks a pair nested in her yard last spring because she saw them every day.

Gabrielle Riechel-Cook has seen Barn Swallows, but would like to see a Violet-Green Swallow because of its colors.



THE Clapper Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- Oct. 4 **Stewardship Day**, Triangle Marsh
- Oct. 11 **Stewardship Day**, Bahia
- Nov. 7-9 **Sandhill Crane Festival**, Lodi
www.cranefestival.com
- Nov. 8-9 **California Swan Festival**
www.caswanfestival.com
- Nov. 15 **Field Trip: Limantour Beach/
Sky Trail**
With Jim White and Bob Battagin
- Nov. 17 **Field Trip: Keith Hansen Big Day**
Details at www.marinaudubon.org
- Nov. 20-23 **Central Valley Bird Symposium**
www.2013cvbs.org
- Nov. 22 **Field Trip: Abbott's Lagoon**
With Carolyn & John Longstreth

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The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter supporting members. We work collaboratively with the National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. MAS relies on local support for our habitat protection efforts, conservation advocacy, birding field trips, educational speakers series, and publication of *The Clapper Rail*, which you will receive as a MAS member. To better ensure we can continue our programs on the local level, MAS offers a separate chapter membership. Your membership in MAS will help us protect local habitats, resident and migratory birds and provide you with educational and enjoyable programs as well.

If you are not already a chapter supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

You can also join or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to www.marinaudubon.org.

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A National Audubon Society Membership is a joint membership with National and the chapter. With this joint membership, you will receive our newsletter and other chapter benefits, however, MAS receives no portion of your National Audubon Membership dues. We receive a fixed amount based on our 2001 membership. We will receive, however, a portion of any new memberships that are generated by MAS, the local chapter. So we request that you send all checks for new National memberships to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

For NAS membership renewals, send your check directly to NAS.

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