

**SPEAKER SERIES**

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center  
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon

**THURSDAY, JUNE 13 7:30 PM**

**South Africa: Birds, Beasts, and Blooms**

By Roger Harris



Roger Harris

**Double-collared Sunbird, male, on Pincushion Protea**

The Cape region of South Africa is arguably one of the hottest of the world's biodiversity hot spots. It is one of only six floristic kingdoms in the planet and is also by far the smallest and richest per unit of area. Both the Cape region and California enjoy a Mediterranean climate making for interesting ecological similarities. Yet the two regions, a half a world apart, are like parallel biological universes. Instead of hummingbirds, South Africa has magnificent sunbirds. Instead of deer and elk, zebra and ostriches graze the veldt. Their fynbos, populated by fabulous proteas, is the equivalent of our chaparral. Our Common Murres are the ecological equivalent of their penguins.

Our speaker is Roger Harris, a Certified Wildlife Biologist and a longtime member of the Marin Audubon Society. He leads international eco-tours for the Oceanic Society.

**The Speaker Series will resume in September.**



# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## A Delicious Mother's Day Picnic



Jude Stalker

**In wonderful weather, 260 people of all ages enjoyed Marin Audubon's Mother's Day Picnic in Volunteer Canyon at Audubon Canyon Ranch.**

## MMWD Plan Draft EIR

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan addresses some of the concerns expressed in our last month's article, but there are many that are still not dealt with. There is still no definition of biodiversity or discussion of how the Plan and the actions it recommends support biodiversity. It does not discuss the kinds and intensities of fire that the actions are intended to address.

The purpose of the Plan is stated as being "in a large part, to identify the tools and actions the District can take to reduce fuel loads and fire risks and improve ecosystem health." Actions include 1) managing vegetation in existing fuel breaks to design specifications, 2) creating new fuel breaks, 3) reducing fuel loads in forests by removing understory, diseased and dying trees

to facilitate forest health, diversity and resiliency and 4) Controlled burns to reduce fuel loads. The DEIR does not really explain how these actions will improve ecosystem health or reduce fire risks on the District's 21,600 acres.

Expanding fuelbreaks by 117 acres, maintaining existing fuelbreaks frequently enough to maintain design standards, and reducing fuels on approximately 886 acres in woodlands and grasslands are the primary vegetation management strategies. There are location maps for fuelbreak expansions but not much description of the sites or of the design standards: why they are located where they are, and would new or expanded fuelbreaks remove native or invasive plants?

The stated purpose for fuel reduction zones *continued on page 4*

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| President               | Barbara Salzman 924-6057                           |
| Vice President          | Lowell Sykes 388-2821                              |
| Secretary               | Ann Thomas 914-9559                                |
| Treasurer               | Susan Winston 949/632-0908                         |
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| Membership              | Barbara Demeter 707/479-1124                       |
| Outreach, Social Media  | Elyse Omernick 694-2320                            |
| Fundraising             |  |
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| Special Projects        | Jude Stalker 680-6291                              |
| Nominating              |  |
| Editor, <i>The Rail</i> | Bob Hinz 383-8688                                  |
| Website                 | Dave Chenoweth 415/381-7908                        |
| Property Management     | Ed Nute 669-7710                                   |
| Publicity               |  |
| Volunteer Coordinator   | John Perone 279-6550                               |
| BAAC Reps               | Lowell Sykes 388-2821<br>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.

*The Rail* is published ten times a year by the Marin Audubon Society on 100% recycled paper; edited by Bob Hinz [rbthnz@comcast.net](mailto:rbthnz@comcast.net), 383-8688; assisted by other members of MAS; and designed by Studio NaCl ([www.studionacl.com](http://www.studionacl.com)). Deadline is the first of each month.

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**Website:** [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org)

Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing [membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org](mailto:membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org)

## DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Marin Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor or memory of someone. Gifts may be directed to any MAS project. Unspecified gifts of more than \$500 will be placed in the Endowment Fund for conservation, the protection of wildlife species, and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats. Since MAS is an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes to its projects. All gifts are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged in *The Rail*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society. Checks should be made out and mailed to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

Our warmest welcome to newly elected Board members. Barbara Demeter will be taking over membership. She is a former membership chair for another organization and business consultant. David Chenoweth is a retired chemical engineer who has been active with our stewardship work at Triangle Marsh and is a former board member of ACR. Doug Waterman comes to us from Santa Monica Audubon where he served as Speaker Series chair, a position he will be taking over for us. Ann Thomas has long been active with many environmental organizations and activities in Marin and is a seasoned minute taker. Ann will be taking over as Secretary. Current Board member Jude Stalker will be returning as Special Projects chair.

We say good-bye to retiring Board Members William Legge and Everett Clark who have served on our board for the last three years. As Membership Chair William communicated with our members, revised and updated our bird checklist, and took on distributing the lists as well. Everett was our Secretary and also served on our finance committee, served as Fundraising chair, tended our administrative materials, and connected us with his law firm for legal advice. Both have made significant contributions to Marin Audubon and we are grateful to them.

Our 2019 Mother's Day picnic was a huge success. The weather was perfect, warm and sunny, and the mood was the same. Food was delicious; we served 260 happy folks, and by

all appearances and reports, everyone had a wonderful time. Huge thanks to Jude Stalker who chaired the event and Barbara Freitas who organized all donations in advance of the event. Thank you to our donors—listed on page 7—whose donations were important to the success of the picnic. And huge thanks also to our volunteers who worked the day before and day of the event putting all of the menu items together, serving, setting up and finally cleaning up. Lastly, thank you to everyone who joined us for the event. We're happy you enjoyed the day. The Give Back Monday dinner at Iron Springs Pub was also fun. A small group of MAS folks enjoyed good conversation and food in this relaxed setting.

You have received Marin Audubon's spring appeal. This is one of only two appeals we send each year and this one is dedicated totally to our properties. All of your donation goes directly to supporting habitats on the properties Marin Audubon owns.

Thank you to Bob Mauceli who filled in last month as editor for *The Rail's* May issue while Bob Hinz was on vacation.

This is our last *Rail* for the summer. The next issue (September) should be out the end of August. We have one more Speaker Series program in June; field trips will continue through the summer. Check our website for August field trips. Activities will resume in September. Have a wonderful summer!

## MARIN BIRDLOG: APRIL 2019

By Noah Arthur

April is spring migration month in Marin, when we get our big push of western migrant warblers, flycatchers, thrushes, and hummingbirds, often including inland species that only rarely reach the coast. The first rare bird of this April, however, was a lingering mid-winter rarity, a **Rough-legged Hawk** at Toms Point on the 1st (DL).

Along with earlier migrant species that first arrived in March, the first-of-season **Yellow Warbler** was at Olompali on the 6th (JCr), **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Marin Headlands on the 7th (JBo), **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Palomarin Field Station on the 13th (MD), **Least Bittern** at Las Gallinas on the 14th (DSe), **Hooded Oriole** in Corte Madera on the 14th (DWI), **Swainson's Thrush** at Palomarin Field Station on the 17th (MD), **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Palomarin Field Station on the 18th (MD), **Lazuli Bunting** at the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks on the 18th (MF), **Black-throated Gray Warbler** along Bolinas-Fairfax Rd. on the 20th (DE), **Hermit Warbler** and **Purple Martin** along Bolinas-Fairfax Rd. on the 29th (JCl), and **Cassin's Vireo** and **Chipping Sparrow** near Dogtown on the 29th (JCl).

This month brought a very unseasonable set of Palm Warbler occurrences. A **Palm Warbler** found at the Fish Docks on the 8th (DM), which continued at least through the 26th, was likely the individual that wintered on the Outer Point rather than a very early spring vagrant. Another **Palm Warbler**, again most likely one that wintered locally or at least somewhere on the California coast, was caught by the Palomarin banding team on the 15th (MD). And up north of us in Sonoma Co., yet another one was at Kortum Trail on the 22nd (DWp).

A female **Lawrence's Goldfinch** at Mt. Burdell on the 7th (DE) is quite rare near the coast

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## MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one-day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, snacks, water, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility, and weather check: Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

### TOMALES BAY STATE PARK OR POINT REYES SPRING VAGRANT SEARCH

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

8 AM to 2 PM

With Peter Colasanti

The first half of June is usually the best for spring vagrants at Point Reyes, but it depends on atmospheric conditions which are hard to predict far in advance. So, let's meet at the Jepson Trailhead prepared to do a car shuttle and one-way hike to Heart's Desire Beach (\$8 per vehicle entrance fee or \$7 for 62 and older). However, if things look promising, we'll head to the Outer Point, instead, in search of lost birds. Be prepared for variable weather and bring a lunch and water.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Sir Francis Drake Blvd beyond Inverness, then take the fork right on Pierce Point Rd towards McClures Beach. In 0.9 mile where SFD curves to the left to descend the ridge, pull into the Jepson trailhead parking lot on the right.

### MUDDY HOLLOW TRAIL

#### Point Reyes National Seashore

Saturday, June 8, 2019

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Bob Atwood

Join Bob on this easy trail as we watch and listen for a variety of birds in Point Reyes. Our trek will start in open coastal scrub habitat with views of Drakes Estero and then will transition into riparian woodland. This is a particularly good area for raptors, **Wilson's Warblers**, and all three of our local *Picoides* woodpeckers — **Hairy, Downy, and Nuttall's**. We will watch for large **Dusky-footed Woodrat** lodges and hope for **Virginia Rails** in the marsh area.

We will meet at 8:30 AM in the big parking lot at Limantour Beach where bathrooms are available. We will bird 1.8 miles along the trail and then return along the same route. Be prepared for variable weather and bring a lunch and water.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Point Reyes Station go south on Hwy 1, and after crossing a steel bridge just south of town, head west on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. In about a mile turn left onto Bear Valley Rd. After approximately a half-mile, turn right onto Limantour Rd. Follow this road all the way out to the Limantour Beach Parking Lot at the end of the road.

### BIG ROCK & LAS GALLINAS No. 6, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, June 15, 2019

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Trails at Big Rock, rather steep, allow us to view some of the expansive grasslands and forested ravines in Marin. Some of the grassland nesting birds we will be looking for include **Lazuli Bunting, Grasshopper Sparrow, Horned Lark, and Ash-throated Flycatcher**. We will also have a vast amount of sky visible so swallows, swifts, and raptors may appear with a chance for a

### Golden Eagle.

At midday we expect to drive Lucas Valley Road to Las Gallinas where we will be looking for **American and Least Bitterns, Green Heron, Cinnamon Teal, Common Gallinule, and Great-tailed Grackle**.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Highway 101 in San Rafael, exit on Lucas Valley Rd and go west approximately 5.5 miles (look for the big rock). We will be walking approximately 3 miles. Because this area can get quite hot this time of year, be sure to wear a hat and use sunscreen as well as carry plenty of water.

### OSPREY ON THE BAY CRUISE

ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

#### Richmond

Ferry leaves from/returns to Marina Bay

Sunday, June 16, 2019

9 AM to 11 AM

With Tony Brake

Over a dozen **Osprey** pairs will be busy raising their young on the edge of the Bay, especially along Richmond's shoreline which is a notable hotspot for this species. Our cruise has been scheduled to optimize our views of nestlings, maybe even some that have fledged and are still hanging around the nests. Departing from Marina Bay in Richmond, we will also get good views of a **Caspian Tern** colony, nesting **California** and **Western Gulls**, and a small heron-egret rookery on the breakwater.

Farther out on the water will be views of the **Harbor Seal** rookery at Castro Rocks below the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and a large heron-egret rookery on Red Rock. We also hope to check out a couple of nests on the Marin shoreline near the San Rafael harbor and one at the Dutra quarry. We are fortunate to have Tony Brake, who has been monitoring the Bay's osprey population for several years, as our leader.

The cost for this 2-hour cruise will be \$65 per person. Online registration and payment via PayPal are available at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org). Include the name, email address, and phone number of each participant. We recommend that you sign up for this trip ASAP as our boat trips usually sell out quickly. Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions and other instructions prior to the trip. When the trip fills, a wait list will be maintained by Jeanine Starritt at [jeanineis@comcast.net](mailto:jeanineis@comcast.net).

### BIRDING ON ALCATRAZ

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

TRIP CANCELLED – SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU! Refunds will be issued to those who have already purchased tickets.

### SIERRA VALLEY OVERNIGHT TRIP

#### Highway 89 North of Truckee

ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

June 21-22, 2019

With Rich Cimino

The valley floor of this popular Sierra birding destination

is covered with sagebrush scrub, broken by freshwater marshes, grasslands and riparian woodland. The western portion of Sierra Valley supports unique vernal pools and the entire edge of the valley supports coniferous forest and chaparral, protecting the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Feather River. For a list of birds seen in this Important Bird Area (IBA), check out both Plumas and Sierra County checklists <https://ebird.org/printableList?regionCode=L1007569&yr=last10&m=5> and <https://ebird.org/printableList?regionCode=L109258&yr=last10&m=5>. Many of the birds on these lists will be present at the time of our visit.

This popular trip will fill quickly, so sign up right away if you want to join our group. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. Although there is no charge, you must be a Chapter-Supporting Member of Marin Audubon to participate. To sign up for the trip, email Jeanine Starritt at [jeanineis@comcast.net](mailto:jeanineis@comcast.net). Be sure to provide your name(s), email address and phone number. If you are not yet a Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Member, please sign up at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org) prior to registering for this trip. Participants will be responsible for their own lodging or camping arrangements in the Sierraville, Truckee or Portola areas. Plan to arrive in the area by the evening of June 20. Those confirmed on the trip will receive additional information and instructions prior to the trip.

### BARN OWL FAMILY VISIT

#### Muir Beach

#### Registration begins June 10

Friday, June 28, 2019

8 PM to 10 PM

With Jim White

Barnadette and Owliver are busy raising a family in the barn in the GGNRA at the stables at Muir Beach. For an update on their progress, check the Ocean Riders of Marin website at [www.oceanridersofmarin.org](http://www.oceanridersofmarin.org) (3 owlets and more eggs as we went to press). The owlets expect their parents to do everything for them for nearly two months, so we think that they will be hanging around the nest box and barn rafters on the evening of Friday, June 28. While we may not hear the spine-tingling screeches and hisses of the mating games, we hope to see some rodent control and flight training.

We will meet Jim at the Muir Beach parking lot for a sunset look over the Pacific and a walk to the stables. This trip will be limited to 12 participants. To sign up, contact Jeanine Starritt at [jeanineis@comcast.net](mailto:jeanineis@comcast.net) beginning on Monday, June 10. Bring headlamps to assist with night walking and warm clothing in case it is needed.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101, take the Mill Valley/Hwy 1/Stinson Beach Exit. Follow the signs to Hwy 1 and then to Muir Beach.

continued on page 7





## CONSERVATION

**MMWD** continued from page 1

is to reduce fuel loads by removing shrubs, forbs, grasses, downed limbs, dead trees and the like. It is unclear where they are located, how the locations are chosen, and what wildlife live in the habitats they will be removing. This activity is of concern because it would remove understory vegetation in forests. Again, if there is a scientific base for these activities, it is not presented. How removing understory, and diseased and dying trees would benefit the forest and wildlife is not explained.

There are references to treatment for trees infected with *Phytophthora* (Sudden Oak Death), but the only discussion we could find about treatment is about removing infected trees. Whether removing dead or infected trees would stop or reduce the disease is not addressed.

The discussion of birds and wildlife focuses on special status species. Although this may comply with CEQA, we expect the District to be more protective of species dependent on its watershed.

At least 400 species of vertebrates, both common and uncommon, are found on District land. Because of this diversity, District lands are part of UNESCO's Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve. The DEIR calls out two species that are in significant decline on District land (California Scrub-Jay and California Towhee) and two in marginal decline (Pileated Woodpecker and Steller's Jay). No attention is paid to ensuring that ground-nesting and foraging birds and mammals will continue to have habitat in the face of increasing impacts of expanding invasive broom and of removing understory habitat for fuel reduction. It is stated that species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would be protected, but there is no discussion of how.

Of the 1,167 acres of new fuelbreaks and fuel reduction areas, 58 are within 0.25 mile of a Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) nesting and foraging habitat. Surveys would be required within 0.25 mile of NSO activity center, and work would be avoided near nests during nesting season, but there are no provisions to protect the trees after nesting season. We ask why these core areas could not be avoided. On the positive side, it is recognized that woody debris and understory diversity is important to maintain the Dusky-footed Woodrat, the main prey item for NSO, and the DEIR commits to avoiding woodrat houses during clearing activities. If the vegetation is removed from around the houses, could woodrat populations decline because there is less vegetation for them to eat, or because they are more open to predation?

Other special status species, including

Western Pond Turtle and Red-legged Frog, are briefly discussed, but the basic mitigation is to do surveys and avoid work near nests during breeding season. Habitat would not be protected in the long term, e.g., work near occupied badger dens would be avoided during breeding season, but badgers could be relocated later.

The DEIR has excellent discussions about invasive plants, particularly the three broom species. They are recognized as ecosystem disruptors, transformer species or bioengineers, i.e., species that directly modify entire ecosystems resulting in cascading effects for resident biota. Broom, 80% of which is French broom, has infested 1,400 acres of the watershed. Broom makes regeneration of other species difficult or impossible thus decreasing foraging and nesting opportunities for wildlife; it alters soil chemistry; and its leaves are unpalatable and toxic to some wildlife. Dense broom stands are inaccessible to larger wildlife, change microclimate and are highly flammable.

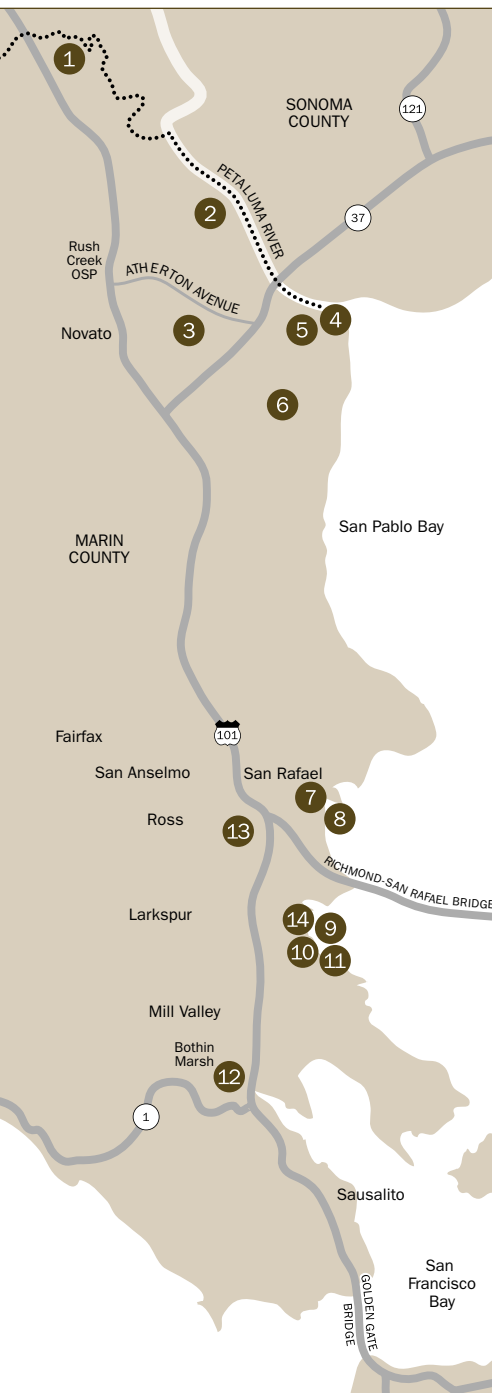
The importance of native shrubs for many species such as Cooper's Hawk and for avian seed eaters including quail, chipmunks, voles and deer mice is recognized in this broom discussion but the effect of understory removal is not considered here, either (see opposite paragraph).

The DEIR acknowledges that the District has been ineffective in controlling broom since herbicide use was stopped in 2005. Yet it fails to recommend even limited short-term use of herbicides, a known effective treatment, to reduce the broom infestations to levels where they could be managed with other methods. We note that many of the adverse impacts of broom would also occur with removal of understory shrubs and woody debris fuel reduction.

Four alternatives are presented:

1. No Project would continue current actions.
2. Refocused Effort Alternative would refocus work from forest to more broom removal.
3. No Broadcast Burning.
4. Limited Use of Herbicides would allow the use of conventional herbicides as an initial control tool, in combination with other methods, to stop expansion and reduce populations of high impact invasive plants. Specific management requirements would ensure safety of the environment, wildlife and people. We would add restrictions: avoiding nesting season and improved signage.

The discussion even recognizes that Alternative 4 could result in more effective reductions in fire risk and greater improvements for habitat but goes on to say that this alternative "has been shown to receive minimal community acceptance." In other words, the



### MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Petaluma Marsh Expansion Site                   | 180 acres  |
| 2. Bahia   | 60 acres   |
| 3. Simmons Slough                                  | 144 acres  |
| 4. Norton Avenue Pond                              | 4 parcels  |
| 5. Black Point Parcels                             | 2 parcels  |
| 6. Arroyo San Jose                                 | 2 parcels  |
| 7. Tiscornia Marsh                                 | 20 acres   |
| 8. Tidelands and Murphy's Rock                     | 34 acres   |
| 9. San Clemente Creek Tidelands                    | 4.34 acres |
| 10. End of Channel Drive                           | ?? acres   |
| 11. Triangle Marsh                                 | 31 acres   |
| 12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio               | 2 acres    |
| 13. Cal Park                                       | <1 acre    |
| 14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site | 5.2 acres  |

choice of the preferred alternative, which allows broom to increase at a rate of 56 acres per year, is political.

We think the Plan and the DEIR should describe the kinds of fires the actions would protect against and the scientific basis for proposed fuel reduction actions. The Plan should also assure protection for special status and common species through protecting their habitats. We're concerned that the native habitats, on which people and wildlife depend daily for clean water and clean air, be protected. We are still analyzing the DEIR, but at this time, combined Alternatives 2 and 4 appear to have the most benefits.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Check out the DEIR and the Plan on MMWD's website at [www.marinwater.org/455/Biodiversity-Fire-and-Fuels-Integrated-P](http://www.marinwater.org/455/Biodiversity-Fire-and-Fuels-Integrated-P). Provide your comments to Shaun Home, Natural Resources Manager, MMWD, 220 Nellen Avenue, Corte Madera, CA 94925 or email [bfifeir@marinwater.org](mailto:bfifeir@marinwater.org) by the deadline of June 19. The DEIR comment period is the time to ask questions to clarify the project and to enable you to evaluate the project and its potential impacts. Provide your own input and feel free to use any that we have provided.

## ANCHOR-OUTS AND AUDITOR'S REPORT

A Report issued by State Auditor, Elaine Howle, CPA, found the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) has failed to perform key responsibilities and thereby has allowed ongoing harm to San Francisco Bay. Much of the Report focused on deficiencies in BCDC's enforcement program. Featured prominently is the violation of the Richardson Bay Special Area Plan. The Report points out that the anchor-outs are illegally moored, and BCDC's failure to take enforcement action is resulting in damage to the resources of Richardson Bay including loss of eelgrass and the release of chemicals. The fact that the issue involves several governmental entities, special interests, and vulnerable communities, "does not absolve the commission of its statutory responsibilities" and that the commission is in the best position to deal with the concerns. The Report recognizes that the Richardson Bay Regional Agency has also failed to reduce the number of illegal vessels.

The Report's recommendations hold out hope that the commission may take action. However, the Report also addresses other shortcomings of the agency and makes a series of largely administrative

recommendations to address the failures. We hope BCDC is not too occupied with correcting its operational procedures to address the anchor-out violations that are crying out for attention.

## SAN GERONIMO GOLF COURSE

It looks like the golf course is on its way out. The Trust for Public Land (TPL), which now owns the property, held a press conference on May 17 to announce it is launching a community engagement process to develop a plan for conversion of the property. Guillermo Rodriguez, California State Director of TPL, announced that it has no intention of continuing golf, that it has stopped irrigating the grass and that it wants to "rewild" the creek. Participants in the conference spoke of a variety of uses that could take place on the 157-acre property. MAS spoke to the importance of restoring habitat lands for wildlife which also provide people with clean air, water and recreation opportunities. TPL has established a website, [www.ReimagineSanGeronimo.com](http://www.ReimagineSanGeronimo.com), where you will be able to check on opportunities for public input as they are planned.

## GGBHTD PRODUCES WETLAND MITIGATION PLAN

Thirty-five years after mitigation was required for loss of the Ecological Reserve's tidal marsh from the expanded ferry service, and ten years after MAS and Marin Baylands Advocates began advocating for completion of the mitigation, the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District has produced a mitigation plan. The mitigation requirement is to restore four acres of marsh to compensate for erosion of the marsh's outboard edge due to the ferry wake. While we are pleased that the mitigation is finally moving ahead, we have concerns about the design.

The proposed location is the northwest corner of the 72 acres the District owns along the Corte Madera bayfront, bound on the north by an access path, on the west by a short segment of tidal marsh that is part of Corte Madera's drainage, and on the east and south by filled lands where pampas grass has been growing. Fill would be excavated to create a rectangle-shaped marsh with a single channel through the middle. The fill would be placed on other parts of the 72 acres.

In this location, the marsh would be disconnected from the larger Ecological Reserve marsh. There would be a trail along the east and south sides, but the transition zone beside it is too narrow to provide adequate high tide refuge or to protect the marsh inhabitants from impacts of the

public use. A 4-foot high chain link fence would be erected to restrict dogs and people from the marsh, but it does not provide for wildlife to move through it.

We support constructing a fence around the marsh, but it should be positioned at least a half foot above the ground and be 100 feet from the marsh to provide enough transition habitat with native cover plants that it could be used by wildlife. There is no mention of planting native species in the transition zone to provide cover.

Unfortunately, the comment period was too short to allow us to provide the necessary information in *The Rail*.

## BRESCIA BACK WITH MASSIVE PROJECT AT BLACK POINT

The Brescia project is back with a similar design for two large houses on two properties that nearly surround three of MAS's parcels at Black Point. One proposal is for a 5,771-square-foot house, decks, pool and driveway with a fire truck turnaround (56,561 square feet total building area). The second house is 3,500 square feet with a 540-square-foot attached garage. For the reasons stated below, Marin Audubon is urging denial of the permits to construct the houses.

The project would completely destroy natural habitat by removing native vegetation, and constructing concrete structures and manicured landscaping. Together the projects would require cutting down 63 protected trees including two heritage trees as defined by the Marin county tree ordinance. A retaining wall more than 10 feet high would be needed for an access road down a very steep hillside and slope to serve the houses. There are no roads to the project sites. Massive quantities of fill would be moved on-site and more probably hauled in along the narrow twisting Black Point streets.

The project information does not state how far the structures would be from MAS's property boundaries. From the drawings it appears that one of the structures and other built features would be extremely close to several of our properties; that would greatly diminish their habitat values. Further the project does not comply with land use designations for the properties, and it would need variances and a tree removal permit.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Send an email to Megan Alton, the Marin County Planner, at [MAilton@marincounty.org](mailto:MAilton@marincounty.org) or a letter to Marin County Community Development Agency, 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903 by June 30, urging denial of the project as we will be doing.



## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Radish, mustard, Italian thistle, Harding grass, bristly ox-tongue. These are the invasive plants that we work to reduce at this time of year. It is a particularly good time to attack Harding grass because it is just beginning to flower. With minimal sweat we can cut the seed stalks now before there are viable seeds and uproot it later.

Is one of our project areas in your neighborhood? Act locally and join us on a workday. Witness restoration first-hand and be a part of it. We all make a difference.

## VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: June 1, July 6, August 3

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

### Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at [judestalker@gmail.com](mailto:judestalker@gmail.com).

### Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: June 8, July 13, August 10

Meet at the end of Industrial Way (near Cost Plus Plaza).

Contact Martha Jarocki, [marthajarocki@gmail.com](mailto:marthajarocki@gmail.com) or phone 415/461-3592.

## THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

### INVASIVE LIMONIUM REMOVAL:

Debbie Ablin, Jutta Burger, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Harlow, Bob Huttar, Dana Morawitz, Alison Pence, Nancy Raga, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Kenji Yamamoto

### MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTY:

Cub Scout Pack 59, Dave Chenoweth, Samuel Gu, Bob Hinz, Linda Nicoletto, John Perone, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Geraldine Brown, Sister Raya Hanlon, Laura Marx, Kate Merriman, Marti Phillips, Debbie Roycroft, Linda Votteri, Cherie Whitmore

## THANK YOU, DONORS

Mary B. Abbott, William A. Clarke, Margaret Duffy-Ward, Doreen Gluckin and Richard Kanter (in honor of Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris), Richard Jennings, Peter & Bonnie Jensen, Sarah Martin, Laura Marx, Helen McQueen, Russell Nelson, Terri Nevins, Christian & Carol Oakes, PG&E Corporation Foundation, Laura Phipps (in honor of Meryl and Roger's field trip), Marianna Riser, Maggie Rufo (in memory of Barbara Rozen), Peter & Lila Steinle, United Way California Capital Region

# HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

## BAHIA

We were pleased to have received a donation of approximately 200 coast live oak seedlings. We planted a few at Triangle and most of them at Bahia where there is more upland space. Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor, we were able to hire the Center for Social and Environmental Stewardship to do the planting as well as to remove invasive radish from the Central and Eastern Peninsulas. We plan to order native plants for planting next winter to try to out-compete the radish.

## CORTE MADERA

It was a small group on the Second Saturday Work Day at the Ecological Reserve marsh. The volunteers planted all the rest of the donated pickleweed in the marsh and weeded around the valves of the irrigation system in anticipation of watering this summer. Thanks to John Perone who subbed for Martha Jarocki while she helped with the Mother's Day Picnic food preparation.

## TRIANGLE MARSH

We were happy to have Cub Scout Pack 59 come to Triangle again on April 25. They sheet-mulched another long stretch between the berm and Paradise Drive. Sheet-mulching is a procedure to retard the growth of weeds



Jude Stalker

## Cub Scout Pack 59 shown here at Triangle Marsh sheet-mulching.

by covering the ground with cardboard and then wood chip mulch. And it really works! In addition, the scouts planted a few coast live oak seedlings along the eastern edge. Troop 59 has been coming to help us every year for the last three or four years. The scouts are enthusiastic workers and are a great help in improving habitat.

On the first Saturday of May, the regular workday, volunteers removed weeds from the purple needlegrass areas, and they also removed most of the Italian thistle from a wide area around the needlegrass.

## BIRDLOG *continued from page 2*

despite being resident in the inland Coast Ranges. Not quite as rare but still mostly an interior migrant, a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was at Roy's Redwoods Preserve on the 18th (DM), and another was at the Fish Docks on the 19th (DSi). Even rarer for the Outer Point was an **American Crow** at Mendoza Ranch on the 19th (DSi).

A **Thick-billed Fox Sparrow** was at Carson Ridge on the 20th (AM), and a **Yellow-breasted Chat** was caught by the Palomarin banding team on the 21st (SN). Rare in Marin at any season and getting late, a **Townsend's Solitaire** was at the Fish Docks on the 18th (MF).

Another rare migrant from the interior, a **Swainson's Hawk** soared over Estero Trail Rd. on the 26th (MS), and another was seen over Pt. San Pedro Rd. in San Rafael on the 27th (GD, JBe, OM).

Another uncommon winter bird getting very late was an **Aleutian Cackling Goose** at Rodeo Lagoon on the 29th (WL).



Emily Willoughby, CC Attribution Share Alike 3.0, detail

## Yellow-breasted Chat

Continuing birds from past months included the wintering **Little Blue Heron** in San Rafael, which was still present through most of April, and the **Black Vulture**, which has been in west Marin for years.

Observers and Acronyms **AM:** Alex Merritt, **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **DL:** David Lumpkin, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **DSe:** David Sexton, **DSi:** Dan Singer, **DWi:** Dawn Williamson, **DWp:** David Wimpfheimer, **GD:** Genna DeVries, **JB:** Jonah Benningfield, **JBo:** Janet Bodle, **JCi:** Josiah Clark, **JCr:** Jim Crumpler, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **MF:** Mark Forney, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **OM:** Oscar Moss, **SN:** Sophie Noda, **WL:** William Legge

**BEAR VALLEY & FIVE BROOKS**

**No. 7, Birding in Marin Series**

Saturday, July 20, 2019

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White & Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob on this trip as part of their yearly series of Marin walks. We will start our day at Bear Valley in search of nesting birds. Next, we'll travel to Olema Marsh and Whitehouse Pool for a look at some different habitats. Our final stop of the day will be Five Brooks where we have a chance of finding **Wood Duck** at the retired logging pond. We will also look for birds in the Douglas Fir forest.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd toward Point Reyes for about 20 miles. At Olema turn right onto Hwy 1. In 600 feet, turn left onto Bear Valley Rd. In approximately 0.5 mile, turn left at the entrance to Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters at Bear Valley. We will meet at the picnic tables near the parking lot.

**LIMANTOUR BEACH AND ESTERO  
POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE**

**No. 8, Birding in Marin Series**

Saturday, August 17, 2019

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White & Bob Battagin

August will find Jim and Bob exploring Limantour Beach and Estero. We will meet at the Limantour parking lot in the Point Reyes National Seashore where there are restrooms and ample parking. We intend to hike up the beach until we find **Snowy Plovers**. We will walk back on the Estero side expecting to see more shorebirds and ducks. After lunch (bring your own) we intend to walk a ways up the Sky Trail to look for fir forest birds.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 in Larkspur, take the exit for Sir Francis Drake Blvd west 20.4 miles to Olema. Turn right onto Hwy 1. Go 600 feet, turn left onto Bear Valley Rd, continue 1.8 miles, and turn left onto Limantour Rd. Drive 7.5 miles to the parking area.

**FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP**

**From Clipper Yacht Harbor, Sausalito**

REGISTRATION BEGINS JULY 1, 2019

Saturday, September 7, 2019

7:30 AM to 4 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join us for our annual day of seabird and marine mammal watching as we head out to the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. Naturalist David Wimpfheimer will be our guide once again aboard Jim Robertson's power catamaran *Outer Limits*. Last year's sightings included **Humpback Whales, Laysan** and **Black-footed Albatross, Tufted Puffin, Rhinoceros** and **Cassin's Auklets**, shearwaters and jaegers. We will get a close-up look at the islands and hear about their interesting natural and human history. This is a trip that both experienced and first-time birders and nature lovers enjoy.

The cost will be \$130 per person for Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members and \$165 for all others. If you are not yet a Chapter-Supporting Member, please sign up now at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org) to enjoy the reduced cost of this trip. **Online registration will begin on July 1, 2019, at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org). Include the name, email**



**address and contact phone number of each participant.** Rescheduling might be necessary at the last minute due to sea conditions, so we need to be able to reach participants. We will send an email to participants a week prior to the trip.

Please sign up early, as we will limit the number of participants. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. If you get seasick easily, this is not the trip for you. We will be on the boat all day.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Highway 101 to the Marin City/Sausalito exit, head south on Bridgeway. Turn left at Mollie Stone's onto Harbor Drive and proceed to the parking area at the end. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot to check in before boarding.

**CORDELL BANK PELAGIC TRIP**

**From Porto Bodega, Bodega Bay**

REGISTRATION BEGINS JULY 8, 2019

Sunday, September 22, 2019

7 AM to 5 PM

With Steve Howell & Friends

See Albatrosses, Shearwaters, Fulmars, Petrels, Skuas, Jaegers, Murrelets, Auklets, and a variety of marine mammal species all on the same day. That sounds like an opportunity you don't want to miss. Sign up for Marin Audubon's third annual pelagic trip to the Cordell Bank, a rocky undersea bank 22 miles west of the Point Reyes headlands. The combination of ocean conditions and undersea topography in this National Marine Sanctuary creates a rich and diverse marine community that you are able to visit for the day without an extensive, difficult expedition.

Our guide, Steve Howell, and his team of spotters are pelagic experts able to help participants identify whatever swims or flies by. We will travel on Rick Powers' *New Sea Angler*, a 65-foot fishing charter boat suitable for birding. Both experienced and beginning birders are invited to join this trip to one of the west coast's best locations for birds and whales.

The cost will be \$150 per person for Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members and \$185 for all others. If you are not yet a Chapter-Supporting Member, please sign up now at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org) to enjoy the reduced cost of this trip. **Online registration will begin on July 8, 2019, at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org). Include the name, email**

**address, and contact phone number of each participant.** Sea conditions might require rescheduling at the last minute, so we need to be able to reach participants. As the trip date approaches, we will send an email with additional trip information.

Be prepared. You will be on the boat all day.

**DIRECTIONS:** Head north on Hwy 101 from the town of Bodega Bay. Continue past the fire station and the Tides' Wharf in Bodega Bay. Turn left on Eastshore Rd and head downhill to the port.

**AUGUST 2019 FIELD TRIPS**

Check the Marin Audubon website ([www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org)) during July for listings of as yet unscheduled August field trips. As early returning migrants arrive in Marin and nearby counties, there are a number of interesting locations we may be exploring. Stay tuned!



**THANK YOU, MOTHER'S DAY PICNIC VOLUNTEERS!**

Amy Blackstone, Mary Anne Cowperthwaite, Wendy Coy, Barbara Freitas, Joyce Griffin, Dave Herrema, Garth Herrema, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki and Gerry Jarocki, Jo Kreider, Mardi Leland, Frankie Nielsen, Ed Nute, John Perone, Ruth Pratt, Masimino Raga, Barbara and Jay Salzman, Claire Seda, Jude Stalker, Carol Stalker, Brad, David and Elaina Stalker, Steve Trivelpiece, Vicky Van Meter, Rona Weintraub, Susan Winston

**THANK YOU, MOTHER'S DAY DONORS!**

- Bovine Bakery**  
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Pt. Reyes Station
  - Buehler Vineyards**  
St. Helena
  - Marin Independent Journal and Cpi Developers, Giving Marin Community Partnership**
  - Don Sebastiani & Sons**  
Napa
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Mill Valley
  - Judy's Breadsticks**  
Mill Valley
  - Lagunitas Brewing Company**  
Petaluma
  - Nugget Markets**  
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  - Recology Sonoma Marin**
  - Safeway Stores**  
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  - Sloat Garden Center**  
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  - Three Twins Ice Cream**  
Petaluma
  - Trader Joe's**  
Greenbrae and San Rafael
  - United Markets**  
San Anselmo
  - West Marin Community Services**
- PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

**MAS EVENTS BY EMAIL**

Subscribe to Marin Audubon's online mailing list to receive one email per month on the first day of the month listing field trips, workshops, and the speaker series presentation for the month. To subscribe, go to MAS's home page, [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org), click the SUBSCRIBE button on the right side.





# The Rail

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## SAVE THE DATE

- July 1 **Registration begins:**  
Farallon Islands  
[www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org)
  - July 8 **Registration begins:** Cordell Bank  
[www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org)
  - July 20 **Field Trip:** Bear Valley/Five Brooks  
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
  - August 17 **Field Trip:** Limantour Beach & Estero  
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
  - September 5 **Evening Class:**  
Shorebird Identification  
With Lisa Hug
  - September 7 **Boat Trip:** Farallon Islands  
With David Wimpfheimer
  - September 8 **Field Trip:**  
Bodega Bay Shorebirds  
With Lisa Hug
- Check website for updates and details

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## SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

We invite you to become a Chapter-supporting member of Marin Audubon Society (MAS) to support our important habitat protection and restoration work, conservation advocacy, our full calendar of birding field trips and speakers and our newsletter, *The Rail*. Marin Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon (NAS). However, becoming a **Chapter-Supporting Member** of MAS is separate and distinct from a membership in NAS. While MAS works with NAS on issues of mutual concern, we are a separate non-profit Section 501(c)(3) all-volunteer organization. Marin-based NAS members do receive this MAS newsletter, *The Rail*, however we encourage all NAS members to also become Chapter-supporting members of MAS to support our local work. Very little of our funding comes from NAS, and we rely on our MAS Chapter-supporting members and donors to help us fund our land acquisitions, restorations, habitat protection, conservation advocacy, this newsletter and our local programs.

If you're not already a Chapter-supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors and relatives to join us, too.

You can join MAS or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal by going to [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org). Alternatively, you can join by filling out this form and sending us your payment by mail.

## ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO JOIN NATIONAL AUDUBON FOR THE FIRST TIME.

MAS will receive 100% of your initial membership if you enter **MAS's chapter code C04** on your application. To join, go to [www.audubon.org/join](http://www.audubon.org/join).

The best option for the birds: Join MAS **and** NAS.

## Join or Donate to the Marin Audubon Society

Please fill in this form and mail to the address below. If you are paying by check, please make it payable to **Marin Audubon Society**.

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

- Master Card
- Visa

Fill out form and mail to:  
**Membership Secretary**  
**Marin Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 599**  
**Mill Valley, CA 94942**

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