

Bird Conservation at the Backyard Level

By Jack Gedney



Stacie Kelly

Tree Swallows

Many issues in bird conservation impact birds at regional, national, or even global scales. But there are also many opportunities to safeguard and foster local bird populations around your own home. Birders often aim to help backyard birds with feeders, nest boxes, bird baths, and plantings. At the same time, humans often unintentionally harm birds when we are unaware of both our detrimental impacts and viable alternatives. In this presentation, Jack Gedney will touch on a variety of ways in which your own actions can support local birds and give you the knowledge to spread better practices among your neighborhood and community.

Jack Gedney is a co-owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Novato, leads walks and seminars on nature in Marin, and writes the local bird column *On the Wing* in the Marin Independent Journal. You can find more of Jack's writings and upcoming public events at his website, Nature In Novato.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:

THURSDAY, APRIL 11 7:30 PM

Rhino Conservation/Birds of South Africa and Botswana

By Jill Hedgecock

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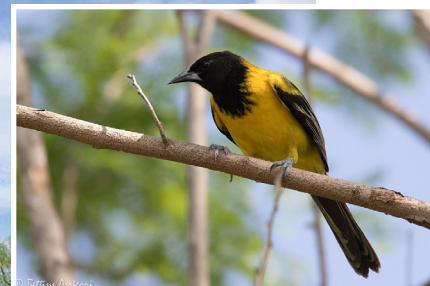
The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Biological Impacts of Border Wall



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Bill Bouton

The National Butterfly Center in Mission, Texas, a private nature preserve, lies in the path of the proposed border wall as do many state and national parks and wildlife refuges. The Center supports over 250 bird species such as the Audubon's Oriole as well as more than 200 butterfly species including the Blomfield's Beauty.

A major debate at the federal level has been over a border wall. In early February, National Audubon sent an alert announcing to chapters their opposition to a border wall. It notes that construction is about to begin on a section that would impact the National Butterfly Sanctuary in Mission, Texas, that threatens to close Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park in Texas, and part of the World Birding Center, which hosts more than 500 species of birds. They provided a long list of impacts, all of which clearly justify opposition to a wall. A somewhat condensed list is below. A wall would:

- **Damage habitat** for more than 500 species of birds and many species of mammals by direct destruction or dividing habitats;
- **Block migration corridors** for 111 endangered species and 108 species of migratory birds;
- **Destroy or fragment habitats** designated by National Audubon as "Important Bird

Habitat" including Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, iconic national wildlife refuges, Santa Ana NWR in Texas, National Parks, National Forests and protected wetlands;

- **Weaken environmental protection** provided by laws: Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act; Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.
- **Create or worsen environmental impacts** such as flooding that would adversely affect birds and people;
- **Adversely impact people** by dividing communities, tribes and landowners.

Ecosystems along the US-Mexican border are rich and diverse. They support the human as well as wildlife communities. The ecosystems will be dramatically changed if a wall along the border is built. For the birds and other wildlife that depend on the border habitats, this will be

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

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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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Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing 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

One of the benefits of being a part of a national organization is that chapters receive information that enables us to be more effective and efficient advocates. Such is the case with National Audubon's recent Chapter Alert announcing their position on the wall and providing facts about potential environmental impacts. Not being a resident of the border area or having any experience there, we rely on NAS for expertise on this issue that is of national interest.

While the coverage in the news has been focusing on impacts to the human communities with occasional mention that a physical wall will not be effective, the impacts to wildlife and ecosystems have been virtually ignored. Even when I was going back to lobby in Washington DC, the border problems were being debated, and tunnels dug under border crossings were being found. What makes anyone think such a structure would be effective now? Tunneling under it will just continue and probably expand. Never have I heard any mention in the press coverage of the impacts such a wall would have on bird and other wildlife populations and on natural habitats. These significant impacts should also be a major part of the discussion. I wish we had received the information from National earlier so that we could have been earlier, and possibly timelier and more effective with our comments. But it may not be too late. This is likely to drag on. See page 4 for what to do.

Some of us love the rain and we all know we need it, including wetlands and birds. But the flooding with the extensive rains we have had are forcing some birds to higher ground

where they are meeting a tragic end. One such accident was caught by a photographer recently along the section of the rail line as it passes Gallinas Creek. Forced to higher ground and knowing nothing about trains, a Great Egret, moved to the rail tracks and was hit by a train. How many other birds are meeting this fate is, of course, unknown.

We wish again to thank the many generous donors to our winter appeal. The donations will help us greatly to continue our programs and activities. You keep us going!

Our Nominating Committee is waiting to hear from you if you are interested in being a part of our Board. Terms are three years and our Board meets once a month. We are an all-volunteer organization, so each Board Member has responsibilities for tasks needed to keep us operating effectively. This year's Nominating Committee consists of Phil Peterson, Bob Hinz and Martha Jarocki. If you would like more information, contact one of them.

We are sorry, we have not yet been able to provide you with a report on the Pt. Reyes Christmas Count. We are working on it.

We have some get-together events coming up: Mother's Day Picnic — save the date for this event that has been a 40-year tradition in ACR's Volunteer Canyon, which is usually closed to the public. Put the picnic on your calendar and consider volunteering for a few hours to help. And there's a new event this year: an MAS evening at Iron Springs Public House in San Rafael — see invitation below.

IRON SPRINGS PUBLIC HOUSE

Give Back Monday

MAY 6, 2019 4 TO 9:30 PM
901 4TH STREET, SAN RAFAEL

Come meet your fellow MAS supporters and help us raise some money for birds and conservation!

We will be taking part in *Give Back Mondays* at Iron Springs Public House on Monday, May 6, 2019, when 10% of all food and beverage sales will be donated to MAS from 4 PM until closing. So, reserve the date, and we hope to see you there for a delicious meal and great fun! Vegetarian offerings, too.

[HTTPS://IRONSPRINGSPUB.COM/PUBLICHOUSE](https://ironspringspub.com/publichouse)

WE NEED YOU!

If you love birds and wildlife, the MAS Board needs you to join the MAS Team.

Be a part of helping Marin Audubon to save birds, their habitats and passing on information about the natural world to our members.

We have several Board positions open this year, including Secretary.

Contact: Bob Hinz, Phil Peterson, or Martha Jarocki if you are interested or would like more information.

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.

THE PONDS AT LAS GALLINAS, San Rafael

Thursday, March 7, 2019

8:30 AM to noon

With Sande & Bob Chilvers

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. Join our friendly leaders as we search for a wide variety of wintering species as well as residents. One recent eBird report from this location listed 59 species of waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. There's always something surprising such as the **Great Egret** capturing and swallowing a vole on our February trip.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, so come assist in our search. You don't even have to arrive on time because we spend the first 30 – 60 minutes studying the birds around the first pond and the group is easy to find. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101, exit at Smith Ranch Rd. Drive east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward McInnis Park. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and drive about 0.5 mile through the LGVSD gates and into the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. There is an outhouse in the parking area for public use or you can use the bathrooms at nearby McInnis Park.

CYPRESS GROVE RESEARCH CENTER AND TOM'S POINT

Saturday, March 9, 2019

9 AM to 2 PM

With Nils Warnock

Come meet Nils Warnock, the new Director of Conservation Science for ACR, as he hosts our special tour of the Cypress Grove Research Center at this waterfront preserve along the Tomales Bay shoreline. In what has become an annual visit by Marin Audubon, we look forward to touring the property and hearing about the latest field observations, research projects underway, and overall status of the larger Tomales Bay ecosystem. We will view waterbirds and shorebirds along the east shore of the bay, then carpool to ACR's remote Tom's Point Preserve at the northern end of the bay where we will end our day.

DIRECTIONS: The Cypress Grove Research Center is on State Hwy 1, about 0.5 mile north of the town of Marshall. (Marshall is 9 miles north of Point Reyes Station or 7 miles south of Tomales.) The entry gate is on the bay side of the road and marked with the address "20545." Look for a small sign with ACR's green and white egret logo mounted on the gate pole. Enter the gate,

continue in on the entry road and take the left-hand fork to the parking area. Walk down the trail at the northwest corner of the parking area to the main buildings in the lawn area. The main office is in Cabin #2. Heavy rain cancels.

THE PRESIDIO

San Francisco

Sunday, March 10, 2019

8 AM to noon

With Josiah Clark

The Presidio, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area since 1972, provides an excellent case study for the human and wildlife interface in San Francisco. Consulting Ecologist and San Francisco native, Josiah Clark, will share with us both the challenges and opportunities for wildlife and habitat preservation he has observed here. While the area has benefitted from the protection of the National Park Service and increased funding for special restoration projects, there have also been accompanying challenges brought about visitors, dogs, pathogens, and invasive plants that have all become more numerous as visitation to the area has dramatically increased.

We'll meet Josiah at the Baker Beach Parking Lot, then travel on foot to Logos Valley, Mountain Lake Park, and the Presidio Hills before returning to Baker Beach. We'll watch for signs of seasonal transitions in the area as wintering birds depart and the breeding season begins. A secondary focus for the trip will be habitat plants, some unique to the Franciscan scrub habitat, that Marin birders may not have seen. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Marin take Hwy 101 south to Merchant Rd. (Exit 439, first exit after the bridge) toward 25th Ave. in San Francisco. From Merchant Rd. turn right onto Lincoln Blvd. Next, turn right onto Bowley St. and right again onto Gibson Rd. Park in the Gibson Rd. parking lot. Parking is limited here, so ride with a friend if possible.

MOUNT TAMALPAIS/CORTE MADERA MARSH

No. 3, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, March 16, 2019

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join us for an enjoyable morning hike on Mt. Tam where we hope to hear and spot a **Pileated Woodpecker**. We also hope to find **Red Crossbills**, **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, and a couple of early spring migrants like **Western Tanager**, **Cassin's Vireo**, and **Black-throated Gray** or **Hermit Warbler**. It's hard not to notice the wildflowers this time of year, so we'll also be checking out the spring blooms. Our

plan is to picnic on the mountain then visit the lowland marshes in Corte Madera.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at Rock Springs, which is located on East Ridgecrest Blvd. in Mount Tamalpais State Park. From Hwy 101 take Hwy 1 toward Stinson Beach and Muir Woods. Turn right on Panoramic Hwy. In approximately 4.5 miles, turn right on Pan Toll Road. In 1.4 miles turn right on Ridgecrest Blvd. The Rock Springs parking lot will be on your right. Heavy rain cancels.

TWILIGHT IN TENNESSEE VALLEY

Marin Headlands

Monday, March 18, 2019

6:45 PM to 8:45 PM

With Jim White

Join our search for creatures of the night in the Tennessee Valley where we hope to hear and see a "Winged Tiger." That's the mostly likely owl species we'll encounter, but we can also hope for **Barn Owl**. And for those of us who dream big, we're going to be watching for **Common Poorwill** on the road or **Long-eared Owl** in the willows. Be adventurous and join our group.

We will be walking on flat roads in the dark. Dress warmly and wear a headlamp if you have one. Jim says headlamps are preferable to flashlights due to the angle of light projected. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101, take the Stinson Beach exit. Turn left on Shoreline Hwy in 0.1 mile. Turn left on Tennessee Valley Rd. in 0.3 mile. Take a slight right turn onto Tennessee Valley Rd. We will meet at the parking lot at the end of the road.

AMERICAN CANYON WETLANDS

Napa County

Sunday, March 24, 2019

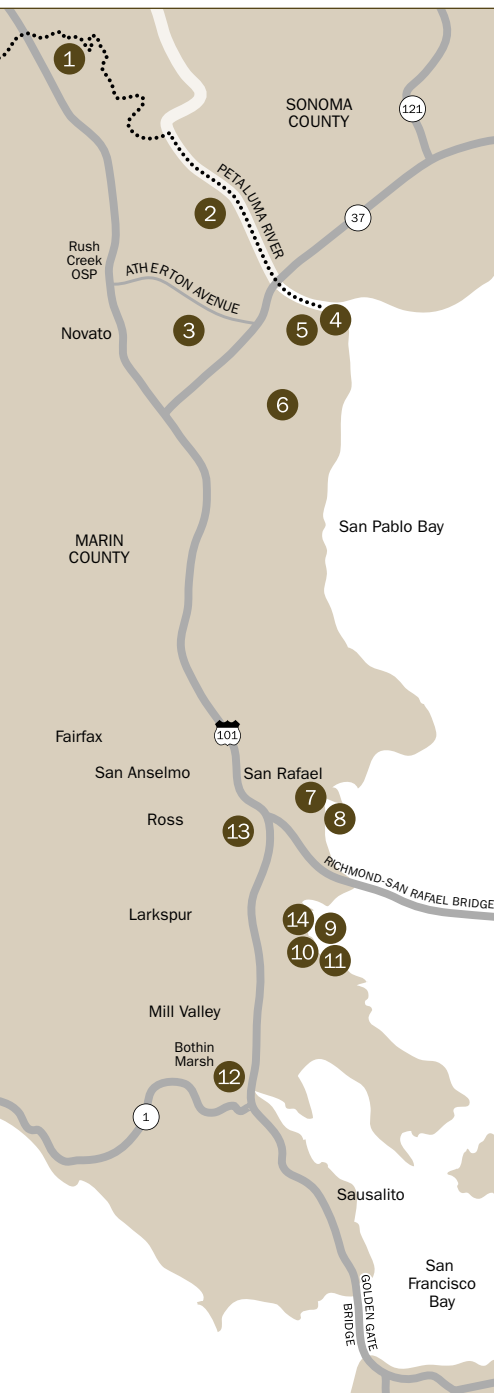
8:30 AM to noon

With Lucas & Mark Stephenson

Youth Birder Lucas Stephenson will lead this fun trip to the American Canyon Wetlands and its varied habitats: grassy fields, eucalyptus groves, tidal mudflats and the bay. The Wetlands is home to diverse birds from **Merlins** and **Peregrine Falcons**, to **Burrowing Owls**, **Marsh Wrens**, **Sora** and **Virginia Rails**, migrating **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Long-billed Curlews**, **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, and possibly even a **Long-tailed Duck**! As per usual with Lucas and his dad, we will be on the lookout for new local species of interest!

This trip will follow a 1.5 – 2-mile level, paved trail out to the Bay and back. For those wishing to find Burrowing Owls, we may hike an extra mile around the landfill where Lucas has spotted up to 4 owls at one time. The trip will be cancelled only in the event of heavy rain.

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CONSERVATION

BORDER WALL IMPACTS

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one more adversity, yet another loss of habitat that will further the decline in bird populations. Combined with climate change, a wall could lead to the extinction of some species that are already on the edge.

Damaging and destroying habitat with a border wall is unjustifiable. It will not even be effective in stopping people from moving across the border. People have been building tunnels across the border for many years, and a wall will not stop that.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Although an emergency declaration has been called, it is not over yet. Send a message to Rep. Jared Huffman (202/225-5161), Senators Diane Feinstein (202/224-3841) and Kamala Harris (202/224-3553) or via email through their websites. Address the unconscionable impacts to wildlife and native ecosystems a wall, that would not even be effective in stopping movement of people across the border, would cause. (See President's Message for more details.)

BRESCIA — TWO HOUSES PROPOSED AT BLACK POINT AGAIN

The second proposal for development of two houses on property adjacent to four of Marin Audubon's Black Point parcels, has been submitted to the Marin County Community Development Agency. For one home this proposal includes a 6,561-square-foot total development area along with decks, a pool, pool shed, pump house, driveways, fire truck turn around, septic system landscaping and the removal of 60 trees (2 heritage and 58 protected). The second house would have a 3,500-square-foot building area, a septic system and removal of five trees.

Four Marin Audubon parcels would be impacted. The proposed development surrounds two of the MAS parcels on three sides, another MAS parcel on two sides and a fourth MAS parcel on one side. Needless to say, we are concerned about protecting the habitat and open space functions and values should these houses be built.

We are asking the county to ensure the following issues are addressed: long-term protection of natural resources on Marin Audubon properties; impacts on adjacent wetlands; setbacks from our properties and from wetlands; how vehicular access will be provided because the streets in this area are not county maintained, and the terrain below the existing sub

of a street has a very steep drop off; the amount of fill that would have to be imported or moved on-site to construct the proposed houses; distance of the septic systems from wetlands and native trees; location of the 65 trees proposed for removal and mitigation for their removal.

Because of the size and potential impacts of the proposed development, we also requested that an Initial Study be prepared that at least addresses the issues raised above as well as compliance of the project with: the zoning designation (which is currently agriculture 2-acre minimum); relevant policies of the Countywide Plan particularly concerning wetland and tree protection; the Black Point Community Plan; and Marin County development code building height, floor area ratio and slope requirements.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Send an email to planner Megan Alton, malton@marincounty.org. Tell her you want the county to make sure the natural resources on this site, the trees and any wetlands, and particularly Marin Audubon's property are not impacted by this project. It seems an inappropriate place to develop.

LAGUNITAS CREEK FISH SPAWNING — SUCCESS!

This year's Coho Salmon run is officially the largest in 12 years as reported by MMWD Aquatic Ecologist Eric Ettlinger. It consisted of 324 redds (nests salmonids make for spawning) and 700 Coho as of February 1, making this the sixth largest Coho run since surveys began in 1996. This run was 10% larger than their parent's generation; 79% larger than their grandparents; and 400% larger than the run of their great-grandparents back in 2009-10. Coho runs extend from November through January so they are now ended.

Steelhead also are on track for a good year. Steelhead runs usually peak in February. Up to February 1, 65 Steelhead had been counted — a record for the end of January. Even though they are three feet long, their grey color makes them difficult to see. They prefer to spawn in fast moving water. Eric offers this advice: your best bet to catch a glimpse of them is as they jump or swim through shallow water. You might even see a Dipper along San Geronimo Creek.

ANCHOR-OUT HEARING

The hearing before the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC) Enforcement Committee clearly revealed the failure of the Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) to comply with the policies and recommendations of the Richardson Bay Special

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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

DIRECTIONS: From San Rafael, take Hwy 101 North to Hwy 37 East and then 37 to Hwy 29 North. Turn left in about 2.5 miles at Rio Del Mar toward the 7-Eleven (29 Rio Del Mar) and opposite the Holiday Inn Express. Take an immediate right before the 7-Eleven onto Eucalyptus Dr. and follow it to the end where there is a parking lot for American Canyon Wetlands and the Bay Trail.

TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK

Petaluma

Sunday, March 31, 2019
8:45 AM to 3 PM
With Peter Colasanti

This 3,400-acre park, located between the Petaluma River and Sonoma Valley, is the largest Sonoma County Park. Now open daily, visitor permits are no longer required, but there is a \$7 parking fee. Numerous habitats provide homes and refuge for a large number of bird species with the area list now totaling 185 species. Our guide, Peter Colasanti, has been participating in surveys at this location for 13 years.

We will hike several miles to check all the available habitats at the park: grassland, oak woodland, riparian corridors, ponds, wetlands, ridgelines, and ranch buildings. This is one of the best areas in Sonoma County for raptors including **Golden Eagle**. Other somewhat unusual birds are possible here including **Lewis's Woodpecker**. We will eat lunch back near the parking lot, and those who wish to continue birding afterwards can visit the Ellis Creek ponds a few miles north at the south edge of Petaluma.

Wear sturdy hiking shoes and be prepared to hike for several miles. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen and hat; dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: The address of Papa's Taverna is 5688 Lakeville Hwy, Petaluma. From Marin take Hwy 101 north to CA-37 E toward Napa/Vallejo. Continue about 6 miles on Hwy 37 to Lakeville Hwy. Take a left on Lakeville and continue for another 6 miles. Take a right on Cannon Lane as Papa's comes into view on the left. Enter through the park gate and meet our group in the parking lot below.

OLOMPALI STATE HISTORIC PARK

Novato

Wednesday, April 3, 2019
9 AM to noon
With Rich Cimino & Janet Bodle

It's always an exciting time to birdwatch at Olompali State Historic Park! Some think spring is the best time. Beginning and experienced birders are invited to join leaders Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle to bird the park. Early spring arrivals should be on hand as we walk the old ranch road to the park's reservoir. We hope to see a wide variety of species who thrive in the park's oak savanna and open grasslands: raptors, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, woodpeckers, nuthatches, thrushes, and — of course — many **Wild**

Turkeys. The field trip will start at 9 AM in the parking lot. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Exit Hwy 101 at Atherton Ave/San Marin Dr. in Novato. Follow the signs to Olompali State Historic Park. A right turn onto the Old Redwood Hwy frontage road will take you to the park. There is an \$8 parking fee. Payment must currently be made with exact cash only.

DYE CREEK & VINA PLAINS PRESERVE

>> Pre-trip sign ups required – Open now <<
Southeast of Red Bluff
Saturday & Sunday, April 6-7, 2019
9 AM Saturday to 1 PM Sunday
With Kurt Rademacher

Located in the Lassen Foothills just southeast of Red Bluff, The Nature Conservancy's 37,000-acre **Dye Creek Preserve** is an expansive landscape of blue oak woodlands, volcanic buttes, and rolling wildflower fields. The landscape is dissected dramatically by Dye Creek Canyon with its vertical cliffs, dashing creek and rich riparian forests. Join naturalist Kurt Rademacher for a 3-mile round-trip hike up Dye Creek Canyon. **Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Canyon Wren** are among the possibilities, and wildflowers should be abundant. The trail is narrow, rocky, and steep in some places, with a possible stream crossing for those wishing a longer hike option. Sturdy boots are a must.

About 15 miles north of Chico, the **Vina Plains Preserve** is another Nature Conservancy project totaling 4,600 acres of grasslands riddled with numerous vernal pools. This is great habitat for shorebirds, grassland birds and raptors; plus, the spring wildflower displays can be quite amazing! We will take a 1- to 2-mile walk on flat, potentially muddy, terrain.

We plan to meet at Dye Creek Preserve Saturday morning at 9 AM and finish there about 3 or 4 PM. On Sunday, we'll rendezvous at the Vina Plains Preserve at 9 AM and finish about 1 PM to allow for the return drive to Marin.

Pre-trip enrollment is required, with a limit of 20 participants. As both preserves are open only for guided tours, this is a special opportunity to explore these rather pristine, Early California landscapes. Please email Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net to reserve your spaces. Further directions and details regarding access will be provided following enrollment.

LODGING IN CORNING

Best Western Plus Corning Inn
866/599-6674

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites
855/799-6861

LODGING IN RED BLUFF:

Best Western Antelope Inn & Suites
866/599-6674

Hampton Inn & Suites
855/799-6860

ANCHOR-OUT HEARING

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Area Plan (RBSAP).

In her presentation, Beth Pollard, RBRA's Executive Director, clarified that the RBRA's interest is in establishing a mooring field as a means to address the anchor-out problem. Joan Cox, Councilwoman from Sausalito, described the city's significant accomplishments. In just 18 months since Sausalito left the RBRA, they have reduced the number of anchor-outs in Sausalito waters from 75 to 45. They have done that by providing social services for anchor-outs, establishing a GIS system that enables them to identify and track vessels, removing derelict vessels from the Bay and enforcing removal of unregistered and unoccupied boats. Sausalito wants space in existing marinas expanded to accommodate some anchor-outs. In contrast, during the last 35 years the RBRA has managed, with the financial assistance of many grants, to remove lots of debris and abandoned vessels, but has basically done no enforcement and has allowed the number of vessels to increase from 75 in 1984 to approximately 200 in 2019.

Seven audience members spoke. Two favored the anchor-outs remaining, while five wanted the anchor-outs removed from the Bay for varying reasons: hazard to navigation, public trust compliance, protection of eelgrass and other environmental resources. MAS addressed the eelgrass and need to protect all of the wildlife resources, as called for in the RBSAP, and called on BCDC to take over enforcement as recommended in the RBSAP since the local agency seems incapable of doing so.

The Commissioners took no position, but asked for another hearing to give them time to absorb the extensive information that was presented. One Commissioner commented that she did not see a justification for considering a mooring field when the RBRA is not complying with the law.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

After workday rainouts at Triangle and the new Corte Madera site, more weeds are growing large enough to be removed. Italian thistles are ready for pulling or cutting off; they're still small but it's time to get them. Harding grass is taking off but it is easier to dig it out of the wet soil than the dry soil of summer after it has grown larger. Oh, yes, our new native transplants are growing larger, too. Rain will cancel our workdays.

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: March 2, April 6

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.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: March 9, April 13

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

Contact Martha Jarocki, marthajarocki@gmail.com or phone 415/461-3592.

THANK YOU, DONORS

Ablin Family Fund, Donna Allen, Lynn Arsanis, Jane Bell, Andrew Bollen, Stephen & Faith Brown, Gay & Tim Cain, Judith & Robert Creasy, Barbara Dittmann, Marie Dobson, William Donahoe, David Donnenfield, Marguerite Finney, Betty Gandel, James Harrison, Suzanne D. Huang, O.D., Molly Hynes, Sally Karste, Jeffrey Kimball, Jeanne Kline, Dale Kuhn, Christine Lindner, Patrick Murray, Joy Phoenix, Prospect Patches, William Richardson, Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association, Dr. Jill Sideman, Sharon M. Solomon, Martha Wickliffe

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Donna Allen, Barbara Arbutich, Lynn Arsanis, Shirley & Andrew Bogardus, Carolyn Charlton, Ann Cognato, Robert & Judith Creasy, Richard Daly, Marie Dobson, David Donnenfield, Kellie Duckhorn, Alice Glasser, John Harrison, Sally Karste, Kent L. McDonald, Mary McLachlan, Mary McNamara, Marc Medoff, Karen K Morgan, Angela Nuckles, Kitty O'Neil, Nina Olney, William Pelletier, Prospect Patches c/o Angie Co, Alice Remer, Cheryl Riggins, Cynthia Samson & Alan Cowan, Chloe & Gordon Sundara, Sandra Swanson, Kristin Womack & Ted Bakkila, Gary Walter, Lisa Wilson, Eric N. Wong

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

In January we made the annual visit to MAS's properties to check on how they are doing, and to identify whether any changes or problems have occurred since last year and what actions may be needed to keep them functioning well as habitat. This year we visited all of our properties except Bahia, our Petaluma Marsh, and Murphy's Rock which is off the San Rafael Bayfront path.

Other than the two problem areas (Norton and Simmons) which are addressed below, litter brought in by high water levels was the major problem we observed. On Arroyo San Jose, the section of creek we own across Bel Marin Keys Blvd.

from the Humane Society, litter was trapped in trees and along the banks. At this site also, there was invasive ivy growing on several native trees. *Tiscornia* also had quite a bit of trash and debris, deposited by the king tides along the marsh edges. We should have a work day to address these issues. Our Mill Valley property, adjacent to the Redwoods, looked good with green grasses growing, but we need to watch here for invasive acacia. We've been pulling acacia sprouts for two years since the large trees were removed.

North Bay seasonal wetlands are very wet now, so wet that our newest property in Black Point is flooded, and the plants that were planted at Simmons by the Conservation Corps could not be seen. We're hoping they like the water!

CORTE MADERA

Two Wildlife Conservation Board (the agency that funded a large part of this restoration) staff visited our new restoration site in February for the final site visit that is necessary to sign off on our grant. They were impressed with our planting and with the extent of the wetlands plants that are colonizing the new excavated area. Plants have started on the marsh plain, and pickleweed, *Grindelia* and native *Limonium* are also colonizing the edge. Least Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, egrets and various waterfowl are regular users. We also have an osprey that regularly visits. Our upland plants are also doing well with the help of all of the rain. The staff members were very interested in our geese exclusion devices and were impressed with our work and the progress of the marsh.

The Second Saturday Work Day was rained out as was a potential make-up date. We'll have another in March.



William Legge

In this scene from February 17 the winter rains have filled MAS's large seasonal wetland at Simmons Slough and are providing habitat for at least 17 species of waterfowl.

SIMMONS EASEMENT

At the time the adjacent 90-acre property was donated to us by the developers of the Olive Ridge housing development in Novato, easements were also granted to MAS over the slope that extends from the backyards of houses down to our bayland property. The purpose of the easements is to ensure the slope area is protected as habitat, is vegetated and maintained with native plants as habitat and is not filled or otherwise compromised. While most of the easement area is being maintained as required, one resident has removed the vegetation, created a smooth straight slope, covered it with jute netting and built steps down to our property. We are working with the HOA on addressing this violation of our easement.

TRIANGLE MARSH

The first Saturday of February workday was cancelled by rain as was the January workday, but volunteers have managed to plant many of the one hundred Purple Needlegrass plugs that remained after December's planting session. All of the western goldentop (*Euthamia occidentalis*) and blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) are in the ground.

NORTON POND

This small pond along Norton Avenue in Black Point has grown in size recently due to the recent heavy rains and a possible blockage of a culvert that goes under the road. The road is not maintained by the county. The culvert was not installed by MAS nor is it on our property. It does not appear, however, that flooding is much of a risk for the neighboring houses because the water is spreading out onto low land to the

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MARIN BIRDLOG: JANUARY 2019

By Noah Arthur

A wet January in Marin began with a lot of continuing rarity sightings (as usual for just after Christmas Bird Count season), with the Loch Lomond **Little Blue Heron**, Chileno Valley **Caspian Terns**, Tomales Bay **Yellow-billed Loon**, Mt. Tam **Townsend's Solitaires**, Marshall **Red Fox Sparrow**, and Bolinas **Black Vulture** all reported in the first few days of the month. Several of these, including the Little Blue, stuck around throughout the month.

The first new rarity of the month was an immature male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at the Bear Valley Visitor Center on the 3rd (DS). Common in the Central Valley but quite rare in the coastal counties, a **Cattle Egret** was hanging around on fence-tops and streetlights by San Rafael High School on the 12th (EM).

Thick-billed Fox Sparrows make occasional appearances in winter on Pine Mountain Fire Road, and no less than five individuals were there on the 18th (BB).

Perhaps driven inland by stormy conditions were two **Red Phalaropes** at Las Gallinas on the 19th (CM). Another possible storm refugee was a **White-winged Scoter** on the ocean off Abbotts Lagoon on the 18th, which had moved in onto the lagoon itself the next day (WL).

Muir Beach held an impressive set of seasonal rarities on the 19th, including a **Hermit Warbler**, a **Hermit x Townsend's Warbler** hybrid, a **Nashville Warbler**, and — exceedingly rare in Northern California in midwinter — a **Swainson's Thrush** (AH). Also rare for winter were a **Western Tanager** at a feeder in Corte Madera on the 18th (SS), and a **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Inverness that was first reported on the 21st but had been present since the 2nd (RH), and which was joined by a second individual on the 22nd.

But this month saved the best for last. The rarest bird of the month, only the third or fourth for Marin, was a 2nd-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Blackie's Pasture in Tiburon (WL) on the 31st. This gull was apparently attending the herring spawn that had just occurred in the area, and was actively foraging on roe-encrusted rocks the following day. This is unusual for a Lesser Black-backed, which surprisingly seem to almost never visit herring spawns.

Observers and Acronyms **AH:** Adrian Hinkle, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **CM:** Colin Meusel, **DS:** Dan Singer, **EM:** Eddie Monson, **RH:** Roger Harshaw, **SS:** Sylvie Silverstein, **WL:** William Legge



Little Blue Heron

Len Blamin



Red Phalarope

Len Blamin



White-winged Scoter

Len Blamin



Lesser Black-backed Gull

William Legge

Habitat Stewardship

continued from page 6

east that is functioning as a floodplain and it is well below the houses. We have been in communication with some of the neighbors encouraging them to work together to address the blockage about which some have expressed concern. We have been advised that one of the residents has opened the blockage enough that some water is draining.

Another concern for MAS is that one of the residents has been removing iceplant from his property and dumping it onto pickleweed and into the pond. This is a concern because pieces of the iceplant floating around will increase chances of another blockage, and because some could take root along the shoreline resulting in a greater expansion of the iceplant.

BAHIA

Last month several of us also attended the Bahia Homeowners Association Board meeting for our annual meeting with them. We noted our usual problems of unleashed dogs and of people continuing to walk on the eastern peninsula in spite of the fact that it has been clearly signed and fenced. The fence has been cut in several places and pieces of fencing removed so that people can walk through. Our signs have been stolen. We also discussed having a work day in the future and inviting residents to participate; the Association will publish this in its newsletter. The meeting was cordial and they will be publishing our letter to residents in their upcoming newsletter.

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, click the SUBSCRIBE button on the right side.



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SAVE THE DATE

- April 4 **Field Trip: Las Gallinas**
With Bob & Sande Chilvers
 - April 6-7 **Overnight Field Trip: Dye Creek & Vina Plains Preserves**
With Kurt Rademacher
 - April 14 **Field Trip: Laguna de Santa Rosa**
With Lisa Hug
 - April 17-23 **Godwit Days, Arcata**
www.godwitdays.org
 - April 20 **Field Trip: Redwood Creek & Muir Beach**
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
 - April 26-28 **Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival**
www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org
 - June 21-22 **Overnight Field Trip: Sierra Valley**
With Rich Cimino
- Check website for updates and details

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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.

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