



John Sterling

**Bald Eagle**

John will discuss the changes in bird distribution and populations in the Central Valley since 1944. Loss of habitats, creation of new habitats, reduction of ranges and other topics will be explored as we reconcile the fact that more species are detected now than prior to the 1940s.

John has been a hardcore birder since he was shown a Pileated Woodpecker in 5th grade camp. He is a professional ornithologist and has worked for the Smithsonian Institution and the US Forest Service among other organizations. He has traveled extensively throughout California learning about local bird distribution and is an authority on that state's avifauna. In 2015 he set the California's new big year record with 501 species. He has his own company, Sterling Wildlife Biology, specializing in tours, birding classes, research and environmental consulting.

**Next month's speaker:**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 7:30 PM**

**Re-establishing Laysan Albatross Colonies on Kaua'i**

By Hob Osterlund



# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Farallon Island Ecology in Peril



Cassin's Auklet, Duncan Wright CCA 3.0; Cassin's Auklet chick, Sabine's Seabird CCA 3.0



**Living in burrows and crevices, defenseless Cassin's Auklet chicks (pictured) and Ashy Storm-Petrel chicks become prey for house mice and Barn Owls when other food becomes scarce. Ashy Storm-Petrels are found almost exclusively in the waters off California, and half of its world population nests on the Farallon Islands. It is a species of special concern in California.**

**T**he need to protect the native wildlife populations and the ecosystems of the Farallon Islands is urgent.

The islands support the largest seabird breeding colony in the lower 48 states—13 species including the world's largest breeding colony of Ashy Storm-Petrels—and three endemic species, maritime goldfield, Farallon camel cricket and Farallon arboreal salamander. The presence of the introduced house mouse is adversely affecting all of these species and the ecosystem of the island. Unfortunately, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's plan to eradicate this non-native species has been put on hold because of opposition. The opponents' fear of rodenticides is causing them to ignore or misunderstand the scientific evidence supporting careful application to restore island habitats.

House mice were introduced years ago from ships. The mouse population booms in spring when plants are plentiful, including the goldfields. When the plants decline, mice eat the crickets, arboreal salamanders, Ashy Storm-Petrels, Leach's Storm-Petrels and Cassin's Auklets, as do Burrowing Owls that are attracted to overwinter on the island by the presence of the mice. Otherwise the owls would continue on migration as do other birds that stop on the Islands.

The Service's plan is science-based on successful rodent eradications on 692 islands in more than 50 countries as of 2016, resulting in species and ecosystem recoveries. Since 2007, 28 eradications, using Brodifacoum 25D-Conservation, the specifically formulated

*continued on page 4*

**IN THIS ISSUE**

President's Message	2
Field Trips	2, 3 and 5
Conservation Report	4
Habitat Stewardship	6
Birdlog	7

**MAS Needs A Treasurer**

Do you have accounting experience or an interest in figures? Would you like to join MAS in our habitat restoration and environmental education work? Then we'd like to talk to you! Please contact Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057 or bsalzman48@gmail.com

## 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
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Conservation	Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
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Website	Dave Chenoweth 381-7908
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Volunteer Coordinator	
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

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 LETTER

By Barbara Salzman

This month we had two appeals before the Marin County Planning Commission. It is an unusual occurrence for us to appeal any project, but these projects had inadequate information about their impacts and threatened baylands in one case and our properties in another. While the outcome of the Brescia houses is still up in the air, I do want to say a few words about the solar project. The proposal for 11,310 solar modules is on property between highway 101 and the lands owned by California Department of Fish and Wildlife surrounding Gness Field. Although disputed by one of the commissioners, the site is in the location of and has characteristics of diked historic baylands, and according to the map in the countywide plan it is a baylands. MAS and Marin Baylands Advocates have been committed to protecting current and diked historic baylands for almost 30 years for their habitat, open space and other values. The potential for these habitats to be covered with solar panels is contrary to our commitment and to the health of the baylands and adjacent habitat.

While solar energy has many community benefits, baylands also provide benefits to the community such as improving water and air quality, wildlife habitat, open space, and sequestering carbon. We consider it is unwise to gradually lose habitats to development, solar panels included, particularly with climate change upon us. Incremental losses risk losing species even before the impacts of climate change. We must protect and work to enhance all remaining habitats if we are to be resilient to climate change.

Some think that solar will save us because it will reduce greenhouse gases. Yes, it is one way to reduce greenhouse gases, but it is not the only

way. There are other less habitat-destructive ways that do not cover or intrude into habitats and result in lost habitat. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently pointed out that the largest producer of greenhouse gases is agriculture. The IPCC strongly recommended that the world population shift to a plant-based diet because meat production is the highest generator of the greenhouse gases and is destructive to the environment.

MAS policy supports and encourages solar as an important piece of the many ways we need to reduce greenhouse gases. Responsibly siting solar arrays in non-environmentally damaging places such as over parking lots or on rooftops where they will not destroy habitat is critical to ensuring their benefits are not at the cost of our greatly diminished baylands. We have already lost many thousands of acres to fill and levees. The other ways to benefit the environment and help moderate climate change: drive less, use less water, drive non-gas vehicles and change your diet—become a vegetarian or eat a mostly plant-based diet to start.

The State of the Estuary Conference, held every other year by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, will be held at the Scottish Rite Center in Oakland on October 21 – 22. This year the conference themes are: Habitats and Living Resources, Climate Resilience, Water Quality, and Human Dimensions. The award presentation is on Tuesday, October 22.

We are looking for a few of our many wonderful members to join our Board and fill open positions: Treasurer, Volunteer Coordinator and Fund-Raising. You will be helping us function more effectively and helping the wildlife and habitats we support. Call or email me to discuss.

## SAN FRANCISCO BAY BOAT TRIP

**Sunday, November 17, 2019**

**Registration Begins Monday, September 23**  
9 AM to 4 PM from/to Berkeley Marina  
With John Klobas and Sarah Brooks

Join John Klobas and his daughter, Sarah Brooks, for a memorable day as we cruise the bay with Ronn Patterson of Dolphin Charters.

We will pass ten islands, under two bridges, and up two creeks in four counties in search of migrating and resident waterfowl, shore-birds and marine mammals. Leaving from the Berkeley Marina, we'll cruise the Richmond shoreline, travel by Red Rock, go under the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, investigate the Brothers Islands, then head west to the Marin Islands and San Rafael Creek.

We then head south and into Corte Madera Creek, continue south along the Marin shoreline, then turn into Raccoon Strait, where we begin to search for Harbor Porpoise, which have only recently returned to the bay after being absent for more than six decades. We'll bird Alcatraz as we head toward San Francisco,

where we get a close look at WWII ships, sea lions, and the bustling waterfront. From there we turn toward Treasure Island, around Yerba Buena Island with its Harbor Seal haul outs, under the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge, and back to the Berkeley Marina.

The cost will be \$110 per person with registration limited to 25 people. Click on the sign-up link on the MAS website beginning Monday, September 23, to register. 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 to the Berkeley Marina and other instructions prior to the trip.

While there is no membership requirement to participate in this year's trip, we strongly encourage you to become a Chapter-Supporting Member of Marin Audubon if you have not yet taken this step. Please consider doing this now at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org).

## 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.

### SALMON PROTECTION & WATERSHED NETWORK (SPAWN)

#### 9255 Sir Francis Drake Blvd

Friday, October 11, 2019  
AM, time TBD— check MAS website  
With Rich Cimino

Rich has arranged this special opportunity to meet with staff of Turtle Island Restoration Network (of which SPAWN is a part) at their headquarters near Samuel P. Taylor State Park in West Marin. We'll visit the site of their restoration work along Lagunitas Creek, where they have been working to help save Coho Salmon and protect the surrounding forest and watershed. As we tour these remarkable Coastal Riparian Forest and Coast Redwood Forest habitats, we'll combine learning about the salmon with our usual watching for birds.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Sir Francis Drake Blvd through Fairfax and past Samuel P. Taylor State Park. After passing through the state park and the Devil's Gulch parking area, watch for the Turtle Island Restoration Network sign.

### SHOLLENBERGER PARK

#### 1400 Cader Lane, Petaluma

Saturday, October 12, 2019  
8:30 AM to 12:30 PM  
With Teresa and Miles Tuffi

Head to Petaluma to explore Shollenberger Park, one of the major hotspots in the North Bay. We'll walk the approximately 3-mile loop leisurely, looking for waterfowl, rails, shorebirds, waders, raptors, sparrows, and other wintering and year-round passerines. Perhaps we'll see a **White-tailed Kite** or a **Northern Harrier**. Maybe a cooperative **Virginia Rail** or **Marsh Wren** will give us a look—or at the very least—a listen! **Say's Phoebes** and **Lincoln Sparrows** might be back in town as well! Let's go find out!

Learn about the common birds, animals, and plants of Shollenberger in the newly published Petaluma Wetlands Field Guide: <https://petalumawetlands.org/field-guide>.

If you're a Shollenberger first-timer, check out Miles and Teresa's recap of an August 2019 bird survey here: <https://imbirdingrightnow.com/2019/08/22/pwa-bird-survey-shollenberger-8-20-19>

Bathrooms at parking lot. Heavy rain cancels. Bring binoculars, layers, sunscreen, water, lunch, or snacks.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Marin, head north on Hwy 101, take Exit 472B for CA-116 East (Lakeville Hwy). Head east approximately 1 mile to South McDowell Blvd and turn right. Turn right onto Cader Lane (tiny street) and park in the lot. We'll meet at the entrance.

### SANTA MARIA BEACH/COAST TRAIL

#### Point Reyes National Seashore

Sunday, October 13, 2019  
8:30 AM to 2:30 PM  
With Juan Garcia

Santa Maria Beach, immediately east of Limantour, will be the focal point of this moderate hike. We'll allow ourselves plenty

of time for a walk on the beach to look for sea ducks, gulls, shorebirds, and (with luck) seabirds. On the hike in and out, we'll look for newly-arrived wintering land birds, yet-to-depart birds of the spring and summer, adult and yearling residents, and, of course, straggling migrants. Chances to see **White-winged Scoter**, wintering loons, and **Red-necked Grebe** begin to improve around this date. Expect to walk 5 miles. Bring sturdy shoes and sun protection; dress in layers; bring water and at least some light snacks. If you have a scope, do bring it along. An optional visit to Muddy Hollow is possible after the official walk.

**DIRECTIONS:** At the Point Reyes National Seashore, from Bear Valley Rd follow Limantour Rd in the direction of Limantour Beach, but turn left on Limantour Spit Rd as if headed for the Point Reyes Hostel. Pass the Hostel driveway and park either at the large pull-out on the right or go over the bridge and stop near the park residences. We'll assemble near the bridge and inspect the riparian edges as we wait for latecomers.

### ABBOTTS LAGOON

#### No. 10, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, October 19, 2019  
8:30 AM to 3 PM  
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

This month Jim and Bob will explore Abbotts Lagoon in the Point Reyes National Seashore, one of Marin's premier birding locations. In fact, a cumulative eBird checklist for this area now totals 283 species! Fall migration south along the Pacific Coast brings many birds to this place: ducks and geese, shorebirds, raptors, even sparrows and pipits. **Tufted Duck**, **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Baird's Sandpiper**, **Ferruginous Hawk**, **Lapland Longspur**, **Clay-colored Sparrow**, and **American Pipit** are a few of the birds we might find. We will get a look at fall migrants and many of the birds that stay for the winter. This should be an excellent field trip promising to provide good exercise with a minimum of about 4 miles of walking.

For those interested in an earlier start on this day of birding, we invite you to join Jim White at 7:30 AM at the Inverness Tennis Courts for a quick tour of this birding hot spot before heading out to Abbotts Lagoon.

**DIRECTIONS:** Allow about an hour and a half travel time from San Rafael, follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd (SFDB) to Olema. From Olema continue north on Hwy 1, take the second left turn on SFDB, continue through Inverness, turn right (north) onto Pierce Point Rd and keep driving until you come to the Abbotts Lagoon parking lot on the left where our group will gather.

### MUIR BEACH/REDWOOD CREEK

#### Muir Beach

Tuesday, October 22, 2019  
8 to 11 AM

With Jim White and Mark Forney

Join Jim and Mark for a Muir Beach sea watch and a flat walk in a loop around the

restored riparian habitat at the mouth of Redwood Creek. After meeting at the Muir Beach Parking Lot, we will walk across the pedestrian bridge to an overlook at the southeast end of Muir Beach for a sea watch, to last about half an hour. There we will hope to observe gulls, pelicans, loons, scoters, murrelets, grebes, cormorants, and, if forage fish are present, perhaps there will be terns and jaegers in attendance as well.

From the sea watch we will walk on a wide gravel path in a counterclockwise loop around the restored riparian habitat at the mouth of Redwood Creek. Depending on bird activity, the walk will last about 2 hours. With riparian forest on one side of the path and coastal scrub on the other, we should encounter chickadees, finches, sparrows, thrushes, towhees, vireos, warblers, and wrens. The restored willow and alder habitat at this site is particularly attractive for all migrant warblers, and there is the possibility of sighting an uncommon vagrant species.

Restrooms available. Heavy rain cancels. Bring binoculars, scopes, layered clothing, water, lunch or snacks.

**DIRECTIONS:** We will meet at the Muir Beach Parking Lot. From Hwy 101 take the Mill Valley/Hwy 1/Stinson Beach Exit. Follow the signs to Hwy 1 and then to Muir Beach.

### BEGINNING BIRDING AT BAHIA, Novato

Thursday, October 24, 2019

8:30 AM to 11 AM

With Carol Oakes

Come show support for Carol's commitment to birds by joining her first offering as a birding field trip leader. Carol is currently enrolled in the San Francisco Master Birding Course offered by the California Academy of Sciences, an advanced birding course which combines traditional scientific training with field experience and at least 100 volunteer hours.

Beginning birders are welcome on this leisurely walk around the restored Bahia Marsh. We will search for waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and other birds in the surrounding habitats. Fall migration will be in full swing, so we can expect to see waterfowl such as **Northern Pintail**, **Northern Shoveler**, and **American Wigeon**. Shorebirds may include **American Avocet** and **Black-necked Stilt**. We should also see sparrows and perhaps migrating warblers.

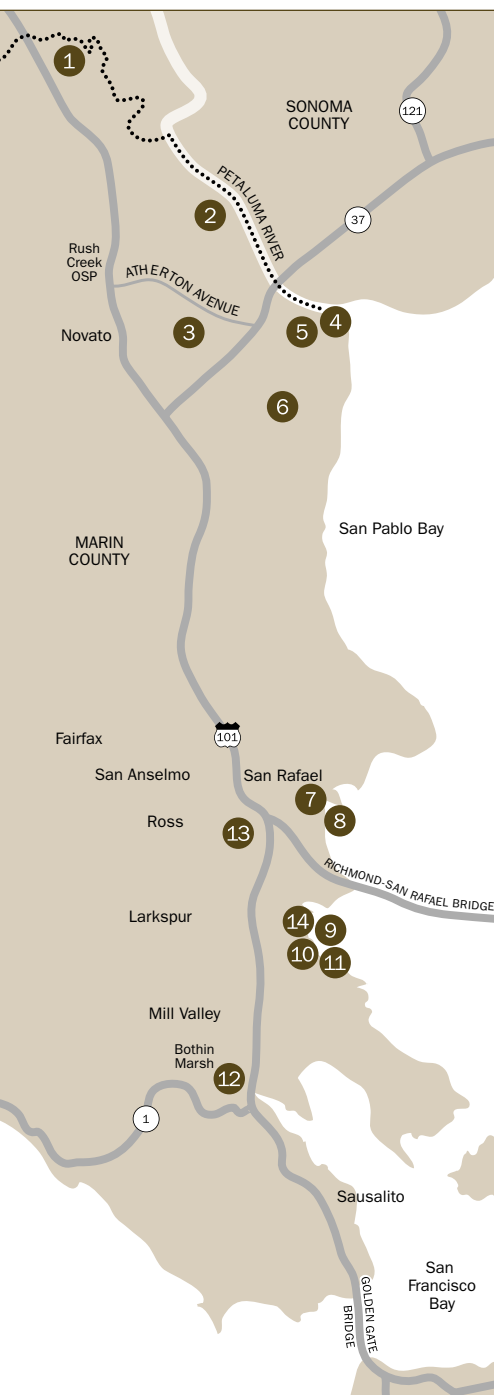
We'll all help each other to find and identify the birds, so please come and join us! Wear sturdy walking shoes, dress in layers, and bring water, binoculars, scopes, and your birding enthusiasm!

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 in North Novato, take the Atherton Ave exit east approximately 0.9 miles, then turn left onto Bugeia Lane, which becomes Bahia Dr. Follow it to the end where there is street parking. No restrooms available.

continued on page 5

# 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.



**Farallon Islands** *continued from page 1*  
rodenticide that the Service plans to use, have been successful, including on the Channel Islands and South Georgia in Antarctica. The plan involves dropping pellets from helicopters to distribute the pellets to remote places.

Many aspects of the plan will protect non-target species: Brodifacoum baits have a short life span, are formulated to disintegrate in rain and will, then, allow the Brodifacoum to decompose under sunlight; dropping the pellets in fall when there are fewer nesting birds on the islands; removing carcasses and uneaten pellets to avoid them being eaten; and implementing a hazing plan to protect gulls and other non-target species. Pt. Blue Conservation Science has tested hazing methods that have been shown to be effective in chasing gulls away and reducing their numbers. Further, mice typically retreat into burrows as they are dying so bioavailability to scavengers would be limited even before these measures. Populations of the non-target species that could be impacted on this island (the primary non-target species is the Western Gull) recover quickly.

There will still be losses in the non-target species, but if these proven eradication methods are not taken, the ultimate loss of nesting Ashy Storm-Petrels, a significant portion of the world population, and the endemic species will not just be troublesome, it will be tragic. The island habitat will continue to be decimated.

This proven technique has been successful in removing rodents from islands around the world; not using it to protect the unique Farallon Island habitat and species would be indefensible.

### Nest Failure

Now has come the terrible news of the complete collapse of the Farallon bird nesting this year. Pt. Blue biologists have been living on the islands tracking wildlife populations for 50 years. This year there was near failure for most breeding seabirds. The failure is attributed to last winter's El Niño.

Pt. Blue biologists are concerned that El Niño events may be more frequent with climate change which could mean a bleak future for Farallon seabirds.

Cassin's Auklets usually succeed in about 50% of their breeding attempts; this year the observed success rate was less than 10%. Typically around 150 Pelagic Cormorants nest on the islands. This year only one nest with eggs was found, and it was subsequently abandoned. A similar pattern was observed for other species including Rhinoceros Auklets, Common Murres, and Pigeon Guillemots.

El Niño generally brings warmer land and water temperatures, more rain, and extreme precipitation events, and reduced upwellings events, the process that brings cold, nutrient-rich waters to the ocean surface. These nutrient rich waters are productive for plankton and krill, the key organisms on which the rest of the ocean food web of life depends. It is this process that accounts for the richness of ocean life off our coast.

While seabirds are resilient to natural occurrences, climate models are forecasting more El Niños and more unpredictability which means more threats to seabirds. These conditions make it even more essential that man-caused threats to seabirds, such as plastics in ocean waters and non-native mice on the Farallons, be reduced and eliminated wherever possible. We should all be reducing our use of plastics and making sure plastics do not get into any stream, bay or ocean waters. Make every day a coastal cleanup day.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has delayed the hearing before the Coastal Commission on the plan to eradicate house mice that are adversely affecting Farallon breeding birds and rare plants. The hearing date is uncertain but will likely be in spring, perhaps March. You can take action to protect seabirds and the island's ecosystem by writing the Coastal Commission. We are also planning a program on this issue sometime after the first of the year.

Despite the nesting failure, the MAS field trip to the Farallons was, according to trip leader David Wimpfheimer, "a wonderful marine experience" with whales, dolphins and a good variety of birds. See his full report on page 7.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT MICE:

Support the Service's plan to protect the island's ecosystem by contacting project staff person, L. Simon, at the Coastal Commission now.

### SAN GERONIMO GOLF COURSE LEADS TO IMPORTANT LEGISLATION

Signed into law on August 30, AB 782 exempts public agencies from preparing a CEQA document before purchasing property for conservation purposes, even if reasonably foreseeable changes in the land use or environment are anticipated. The bill passed both the State Senate and Assembly with no opposition: 76-0 in the Assembly and 39-0 in the Senate. AB-782 was introduced by South Bay Assemblyman Marc Berman in reaction to the San Geronimo suit against Marin County requiring that a CEQA document be prepared

### 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  |

for the acquisition of the Golf Course. This was not the only such suit in the state. Similar lawsuits in southern California have delayed or thwarted other land acquisitions for public open space and conservation purposes. The bill is clearly in the public interest.

The former golf course property is now owned by the Trust for Public Land so the opportunity for this exemption to benefit a County purchase of the property has passed. However, it will be an important benefit for agencies, local governments and funding sources throughout California which have been reluctant to move forward with acquisitions due to concerns about being sued.

The legislation will have no effect on the ballot measure scheduled for March 2020 when residents will be voting on a measure that would require the entire county to vote on community plans whether or not they are residents of that community. If this measure passes, it would render community plans invalid and ineffective as they would not be a reflection of the interest of the members of a specific community, but of the entire county.

## FOLLOW UP ON APPEALS

The Marin County Planning Commission denied the appeals of Marin Audubon, Marin Bayland Advocates and Marin Conservation League of the approval for the **solar facility** on Silveira properties in favor of the applicant's project for a solar facility on diked historic baylands adjacent to Highway 101 and Redwood Landfill. A proposal for removing a small portion of the 11,310 solar panels that would be sited in the Baylands Corridor was rejected. The only positive actions were a requirement that the applicants move a fence so that it would not surround a pond and that they prepare a plan to monitor the modules for bird use over a two-year period. They are encouraged, but not required, to work with environmental groups. Unfortunately, there was lack of clarity about the Baylands Corridor and how the baylands county map was prepared. The potential for this approval to set a precedent that will bring increased applications for solar and possibly other development on baylands is a

significant concern. Marin Audubon noted that we would be most interested in working with the property owner to acquire and permanently protect the site or to put them in touch with a federal agency for wetland enhancement. We will be considering whether to appeal to the supervisors.

Regarding our appeal of the approval of a **Brescia** project at Black Point, after lengthy testimony from many neighbors, the commission delayed action to a date uncertain. Neighbors effectively conveyed their questions and concerns about impacts to their access, tree removal, leach field, water well, wildlife, roads, and other aspects of their lives. We spoke to potential impacts to our properties and access to our properties. The Commission ran out of time and lost a quorum and, so, with the applicant's approval, postponed a hearing on the appeal of the second project, that consists of the fire truck turnaround and removal of seven trees and a final decision on both projects. The large house and pool on this site had previously been denied.

## FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 3)

### RODEO LAGOON #3, Marin Headlands

Sunday, October 27, 2019

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Join William and David on their third field trip of fall birding at Rodeo Lagoon this year. This is their "patch" where we observed 62 species on our August walk. With large numbers of birds moving through the area this time of year, it's sure to be interesting with unusual sightings a definite possibility. As we watch for scarcer late fall migrants, perhaps we'll discover a rarity to add to the current eBird list of 303 species here. We will begin the morning with a sea watch at 7:30 AM. Those arriving later may join us at 8:30 AM for a circuit of the lagoon.

**DIRECTIONS:** Head south on Hwy 101 and take the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right and go under the freeway, then follow the road down to the left. Within 300 feet turn left at the sign to the Marin Headlands (This is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito). You should see the tunnel with the five-minute light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Road to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

### BIG DAY AT POINT REYES

For Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members Only

Sign-ups required beginning Wednesday,

October 9, 2019 after 8 AM

Friday, November 1, 2019

8 AM to 4 or 5 PM

With Peter Pyle

Improve your birding skills in the company of one of our renowned local birding experts, Peter Pyle, on this BIG DAY at Point Reyes. This will be a full day of fall birding with our

group attempting to see at least 100 species west of the San Andreas Fault! We will meet in Point Reyes Station and carpool to a variety of birding hotspots in Point Reyes throughout the day.

This trip is not for the faint of heart or those just looking for a leisurely bird walk. It may be tiring, but it will definitely be fun with Peter. Bring a lunch and plenty of liquids. Be dressed for good, to less than good weather. Feel free to bring a scope. Only a big storm will cause us to cancel.

Although there is no charge for this trip, participation is limited to Marin Audubon Chapter-Supporting Members. If you are not yet a Chapter-Supporting Member of Marin Audubon, you may become one now at [www.marinaudubon.org](http://www.marinaudubon.org). Sign-ups will begin on **Wednesday, October 9, after 8 AM** and will be limited to 15 people. Contact Jeanine Starritt at [jeanineis@comcast.net](mailto:jeanineis@comcast.net) for information and sign-ups. Should all spots fill up, a wait list will be started. Trip participants will be given further details at a later date.

### WILLOW CREEK ROAD, Jenner

Saturday, November 2, 2019

9 AM to 1 PM

With Miles and Teresa Tuffi

Head up the Sonoma County coast to bird Willow Creek Road in Jenner. We'll have the chance for multiple raptor species, including potential for **Ferruginous Hawk**, **American Kestrel**, and maybe even **Bald Eagle**. Many year-round passerines will be frequenting the willows, alders, and scrub. With a view of the Russian River, we'll look for some waterbirds as well.

We'll meet at the Russian House #1 restaurant and bird the road's entrance on foot. We'll then move all cars down the road to a large pullout. We'll bird the willows, creek area, and river view on foot before consolidating cars and continuing down the road,

stopping to bird various sections.

For a peek at the area, check out Miles and Teresa's recap of birding Willow Creek Road back in July: <https://imbirdingrightnow.com/2019/07/28/sonoma-county-birding-willow-creek-road>.

No bathrooms. Heavy rain cancels. Bring binoculars, layers, sunscreen, water, lunch, or snacks.

**DIRECTIONS:** Russian House #1 is at 9960 Hwy 1, Jenner, CA. It is 9 miles north of Bodega Bay (15-20 minutes), directly along Hwy 1, on the right just before the Russian River bridge.

### RUSH CREEK, Novato

Thursday, November 7, 2019

8:30 AM to noon

With Bob and Sande Chilvers

Due to continuing construction at Las Gallinas, Rush Creek has been selected for our first Thursday of the month walk in November. Known to provide wintering habitat for a variety of ducks including **Northern Shoveler** and **Common Goldeneye**, Rush Creek can also be a great place to see **American Avocet**, **Dunlin**, and a variety of other shorebirds. We'll also look for wintering passerines in the nearby trees.

Thank you, Bob and Sande, for continuing as our expert and friendly guides on this popular monthly walk. We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels and help each other to find and identify the birds. The area for our walk will be mostly flat. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, scopes, and water. Heavy rain cancels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Atherton Ave exit from Hwy 101. Turn right and make the first left onto Binford Rd. Go down the hill and meet at the trailhead on the right. Parking is available on both sides of the road. No restrooms available.

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Two invasive, non-native, annual plants, *Salsola soda* and *Dittrichia graveolens*, are blooming, but we can still remove them before their seeds escape. At Triangle a patch of *Salsola* was practically wiped out last year by San Domenico School students. Even in September tiny seedlings of each species grow just enough to be seen

Is one of our project areas in your neighborhood? Our volunteer days are particularly good opportunities for students who need a community service project. Act locally and join us on a workday. We all make a difference.

### Volunteer Workdays

#### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: October 5, November 2

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

#### Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: October 12, November 9

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

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

#### Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

## THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Bob Bundy, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Hinz, Martha and Gerry Jarocki, Phyllis Meyers, Ed Nute, John Perone, Barbara Salzman, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Doug and Joyce Waterman

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Douglas Brown, Anthony Campodonico, Kathie Dalessandri, Nancy Elliot, Diana Hammer, David Hargreaves, Maggie Keil, Cheryl Lentini, Paula McNamee, Mark & Kim Stevens, Linda Tiffany, Susan Tom, Karen Wilkinson

## BENEFIT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Make your next Amazon order through AmazonSmile. For information, visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-6076664>.

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### BAHIA

Lowell Sykes has watered 100 baby oak trees that volunteers and the Center for Social and Environmental Stewardship planted three months ago. We've lost some but most are doing well due to Lowell's diligence.

### CORTE MADERA RESTORATION SITE

We're pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant of \$2,583 by the Marin County Fish and Wildlife Commission to purchase tools for Corte Madera and our Southern Marin sites. This means we will not be transporting tools from Bahia to sites in southern Marin when work is being done there. This will be more efficient: saves time and effort of our volunteers, saves gas and wear and tear on vehicles.

The Water Brigade—John Perone, Dave Chenoweth, Gerry Jarocki, Ed Nute, Lowell Sykes—has done it again with another successful watering; the plants look great. Martha Jarocki's team continues to convene and work on the Second Saturday workday removing invasive plants that have benefited



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### Stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*)

from the watering to keep our plants alive. The watering needs will decrease after this year and will likely need to be very minimal next year.

### TRIANGLE MARSH

Volunteers pulled the few *Dittrichia graveolens* plants that were found and dug out some other weeds as well. *Dittrichia graveolens* is an annual and none of them had flowers so pulling those plants got the jump on next year's problem. Volunteers also watered some of last year's plantings including much of the purple needlegrass that had been buried by illegally dumped wood chips.

## Milkweed Is in Bloom

By Ed Nute

The Marin native narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) is now in bloom. Milkweed is the host plant for the beautiful monarch butterfly. Unfortunately, over the last three decades the monarchs have become increasingly rare particularly in their western US range; in coastal California the *decline* has been greater than 99%. The smoke from wild fires may have contributed to their decline over the last couple of years.

As of late August, people in Marin have observed a few male monarch butterflies patrolling patches of milkweed. (Male monarchs can be recognized by two small dots on their upper hind wings.) There is now a concerted effort by the Federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, State of California, Xerces Society (<https://xerces.org/monarchs>) and other organizations to greatly expand the milkweed plantings in hopes of rescuing this beautiful butterfly and reverse its decline.

Last winter Marin Audubon in cooperation with the Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) started a small patch of milkweed on its Simmons property near Deer Island. As soon as the winter rains begin this patch will be expanded with additional seeds and seedlings of milkweed and nectar plants donated by the CNPS. In future



Eric Hunt CCA 3.0

### Narrow Leaf Milkweed

years we hope that milkweed plantings can be expanded further on other MAS properties. If you are interested in volunteering for the winter planting for this project please contact Ed Nute at [e.nute@nute-engr.com](mailto:e.nute@nute-engr.com).

# MARIN BIRDLOG: AUGUST 2019

By Noah Arthur

August is shorebird month in Marin and elsewhere on the California coast, with birders braving the summer heat to scope the flocks in search of rare peeps, plovers, and others. Late summer is always one of the slowest parts of the year for rarities overall, but can yield some nice shorebirds that only show up at this time of year.

Very unexpected for late summer, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was near Audubon Canyon Ranch on the 1st (R).

The first rare shorebird of the month, and certainly one of the strangest rare bird encounters I've ever heard of, was a lone **Semipalmated Sandpiper** that landed on the concrete in the Drakes Beach parking lot at dusk on the 5th (DM). Also on the Outer Point on the 5th was a **Lesser Yellowlegs** on the Mendoza Ranch pond (DM).

Arriving earlier in the season than usual was a **Wilson's Snipe** at Nicasio Reservoir on the 14th (BB).

Two more **Lesser Yellowlegs** were in Corte Madera Marsh on the 22nd (JW), and another **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at the Hamilton Field Bay Trail on the 28th (JE).

Another classic August vagrant in this part of the world, a **Solitary Sandpiper** was found at Nicasio Reservoir on the 27th (BB).

The first eastern warbler of the fall arrived on the 27th, a **Tennessee Warbler** along Limantour Spit Road in the hinterlands of inner Pt. Reyes (JS). And the season's first **Broad-winged Hawk** floated over Hawk Hill on the 31st (Anonymous eBirder).

Observers and Acronyms **BB:** Bob Battagin, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **JE:** Jules Evens, **JS:** Josh Snead, **JW:** Jim White, **R:** Rowena (last name not given)

FIELD TRIP SEPTEMBER 7, 2019

## The Farallon Islands

With David Wimpfheimer

MAS's annual trip to the Gulf of the Farallons in early September was a wonderful marine experience. The winds were much gentler than forecast allowing us to enjoy a great day out on the ocean.

On the way out to the Southeast Farallon Island we saw several **Humpback Whales** which were exciting enough. Later in the day we were even more thrilled to see a group lunging up out of the water feeding aggressively on schooling anchovies.

There had been a fair amount of publicity regarding the poor reproductive success of seabirds at the Farallons this year. While that news is disturbing, it's not surprising. Point Blue Conservation Science researchers have been documenting high variability among seabirds for several decades.

When I started going out there in 1984 only about 40,000 **Common Murre** were breeding on the island. Now the total is about 260,000. Even if they have an occasional year when they fail to raise any chicks like the El Niño years of 1983 and 1998 the long-term trend has been positive.

We were thrilled to see several **Tufted Puffins** near the boat and perched on Sugarloaf, an isolated spire at the islands. These birds are at the southern end of their range. One bird



**Humpbacks Lunge Feeding**

that does not breed locally is the **Northern Gannet**. We saw this unusual seabird on the rock. It is the individual that wandered from the Atlantic to this part of the Pacific several years ago and now roams around the local coast.

The story of the Gulf of the Farallons is not just the local breeding birds. This rich upwelling zone concentrates marine mammals and seabirds, some of which have traveled thousands of miles to this area. We saw birds that breed in the southern hemisphere like the **Sooty** and **Pink-footed Shearwaters**. And we also saw species from northerly latitudes like **Sabine's Gull** and **Arctic Tern**. Everyone was especially happy when a **Black-footed Albatross**, a bird that breeds in the Hawaiian Islands, flew in and landed near the boat.

Other cetaceans we saw included **Pacific White-sided Dolphin** and **Northern Right Whale Dolphin** making this an especially rewarding day out on the Pacific.



**Lesser Yellowlegs**



**Tennessee Warbler**

### THANK YOU, DONORS

Anonymous, Jeanne Azen, Timothy Behr, Mary Bicknell, Greg & Giselle Block, Jon C. Carter, William A. Clarke, Kate & Jeffrey Colin, Susan Cumming, Daniel & Lee Drake, Elaine & Robert Drude, Earth Share of California, Fischer Family Fund, Richard Jennings, Sarah Martin, Paula McNamee, Native Communications (Black Point residents), Ruth T. Overton, PG&E Corporation Foundation (employer match), RHE Charitable Foundation, Roger & Dorothy Roberts, Susan Tom (In honor of Michelle & Peter Peacemaker), Shirley Trimble

### MAS EVENTS BY EMAIL

Subscribe to MAS'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.

### MAS NEEDS YOU

If you love birds and want to join in protecting them and their habitats, please volunteer. Help maintain our properties with planting and upkeep. Encourage your friends and family to volunteer. Become a Board Member.



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- Nov. 16 **Field Trip:** Hamilton Wetlands/  
Las Gallinas  
*With Jim White & Bob Battagin*
- Nov. 17 **Boat Trip:** San Francisco Bay  
*With John Klobas & Sarah Brooks*
- Nov. 21–24 **Central Valley Birding**  
[cvbirds-symposium.netlify.com](http://cvbirds-symposium.netlify.com)
- Nov. 23 **Field Trip:** Birds & Butterflies  
in Bolinas  
*With Juan Garcia & Mia Monroe*
- Nov. 25 **Field Trip:** A Central Valley NWR
- Dec. 14 **Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count**
- Dec. 19 **Cheep Thrills Christmas Bird Count**
- Dec. 28 **Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count**

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**.

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