



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

2014 Christmas Bird Counts

Everyone is encouraged to participate in one or more of Marin's Christmas Bird Counts.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2014 CHEEP THRILLS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This count was conducted from 1978 to 1987 and we successfully re-started it in 2011. It includes the following important birding areas: Mount Burdell, Stafford Lake, Bahia, Rush Creek, Indian Valley, Hicks Valley and some of the Nicasio Reservoir. The southern edge of this circle is at the intersection of Nicasio Valley Road and Lucas Valley Road and the center is on Mount Burdell, so this circle includes areas in northern San Rafael, all of Novato, a section of western Marin, and some areas of Petaluma.

Last year 76 volunteers found 163 species and counted 37,747 individual birds. This included over 1,000 individuals of each of these species: Least Sandpiper (3,155), Greater Scaup (2,334), American Crow (1,851), Dunlin (1,567), Red-winged Blackbird (1,442), Canada Goose (1,334), Golden-crowned Sparrow (1,323), Brewer's Blackbird (1,272), White-crowned Sparrow (1,249), and Dark-eyed Junco (1,229). You can find complete results at <http://cheepthrillscbc.blogspot.com>.

The Cheep Thrills CBC is dedicated to the memory of Rich Stallcup, who generously shared his astounding knowledge of birds, dragonflies and all natural creatures.

To sign up, contact compiler Susan Kelly at: cheepthrillscbc@yahoo.com. The deadline is December 16.

The compilation dinner will be held in the banquet room at Ghiringhelli's Pizzeria at 1535 South Novato Blvd in Novato's Nave Shopping Center. Dinner will cost \$10 per person but you'll have to buy your own drinks.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 20, 2014 POINT REYES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 45th annual Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count includes 29 areas and a wide variety of habitats in the Point Reyes National Seashore and other areas of western Marin. Generally it ranks in the top 10 in North America for the number of species, logging around 200.



Barred Owl



Spotted Owl

Photos courtesy of USFWS Pacific Region

Over the last century, the eastern Barred Owl has made its way to the west coast and now appears to be a threat to the endangered Northern Spotted Owl. Barred Owls are fierce competitors, aggressive territory holders, and faster reproducers that have even been anecdotally reported to kill Spotted Owls.

Jack will explain the natural history and conservation concerns of both species and what is being proposed by various management agencies to reconcile this conflict.

Jack Dumbacher is curator of birds and mammals at the California Academy of Sciences and professor of biology at San Francisco State University. He has been working on California Barred Owls since 2006.

Come at 7:15 PM for refreshments. The meeting begins at 7:30 PM.



Photos courtesy of Cathrin Lora

Strawberry area leader Bob Hirt scans Richardson Bay during the 2013 Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count.

The count circle contains many different types of ecosystems: salt, brackish, and fresh water, towns, farms, evergreen forests, oak savanna, high hills and low lying countryside. This diversity leads to the high species count. And some of these habitats are incredibly rich. For example in the deeper parts of Tomales Bay, we count around 30,000 diving ducks, loons, grebes, cormorants, gulls, and others. This includes up to ten or twelve thousand Bufflehead, a significant percentage of the north American total. Down the Bay in Giacomini Marsh, thousands of dabbling ducks are totaled. Please sign up by December 14 so that consistent coverage of each area can be arranged by the compilers for each count territory.

The post-count compilation dinner with a fresh organic menu will be at the Dance Palace in Point Reyes Station. Please sign up and pay

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
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BAAC Repts	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.

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

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

Members can receive *The Clapper Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing joandbijou@sbcgjobal.net

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

Last month we announced a contest to rename our newsletter because of the name change for the Clapper Rail. No longer could we use that name because we would be promoting an East Coast bird which might be a wonderful species, but a bit removed for us. Our contest generated about 40 suggested new names. Special thank-you to member Patricia Campbell who submitted 15 very clever and original names. The winning name—as voted on at our recent board meeting is—*The Rail*. It allows us to keep our beloved logo, still conveys our focus on Ridgway's Rails, without the mouthful name of Ridgway's Rail, and conveys movement and transfer of information. I just hope people don't confuse us with the train.

We invite you to participate in one or more of our Christmas Counts. Although the counts are not focused on teaching about bird identification, they are a place to get some experience, participate in gathering scientific information and contribute. Help is needed to record sightings and you will be contributing to the scientific body of knowledge. Christmas count data has been essential to National Audubon's study on the effects of climate change on bird populations. See the article on page 1 and find out how to sign up.

Our winter appeal letters should be reaching you at about the time this newsletter is published. We usually send out just two appeals

—winter for our operations and spring for our properties, but as you know this is a special year with a special need to raise funds to purchase the property at the Ecological Reserve. Our need to fund raise for the purchase does not eliminate our need to raise money for our operations. We want to continue to provide all of the services we have been providing and we need you to help us do that. Membership dues do not cover all of our expenses. So we hope you will give generously to both of our needs.

We trust you are pleased that we are increasing the number of our field trips. We do this to accommodate the larger groups of people that our field trips are attracting. Thank you to Vicky Van Meter who, with her husband Dave Herrema, arranges all of our field trips. Obviously they are scheduling trips that have broad appeal. This change has also necessitated a change in the format of our field trip page in *The Rail*. We needed more space to list them all.

I was one of eight "Heroes" honored at the *Pacific Sun's* "Heroes of Marin" awards dinner on November 13. It was a very inspiring evening with Heroes having achieved impressive accomplishments over a broad range of areas including food banks, land mines, special needs kids and the environment (me). It was a great honor to have been so recognized.

I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving!

Christmas Bird Counts

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\$16 in advance with checks payable to John Longstreth and received by December 15. You must bring your own plate, utensils and glass.

For more information and to sign up online go to <http://tgaman.wix.com/prcbc-0726>.

You can contact the compilers, Tom Gaman or John Longstreth, at ptreyesCBC@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2014

SOUTHERN MARIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This is one of the top counts in the country, both in the number of species seen and in the number of participants. Last year 156 volunteers counted nearly 95,000 birds of 186 species. Each year turns up a different group of exciting rarities such as last year's Red-naped Sapsuckers and a Harris's Sparrow. A wide variety of habitats are covered and include Bolinas Lagoon, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Stinson Beach, Muir Beach, Fort Cronkhite, Muir Woods, Tennessee Valley, Sausalito, Tiburon, Ring Mountain, Mill Valley, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Alpine Lake, Bon Tempe,

Phoenix Lake, Mt. Tamalpais, Fairfax, San Rafael, and Terra Linda. Weather permitting boats are used to count in San Francisco Bay and in the ocean outside the gate within the count circle.

Sign up by December 21 by completing the registration form online at www.marinaudubon.org/cbc_form.php or contact compilers Ed Nute and Bob Hinz at smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com.

The post-count dinner of salad and pizza will be at the Tamalpais Community Center, 203 Marin Avenue near Tennessee Valley Road, where the doors will open about 4:30 pm. You will be asked in advance whether or not you plan to attend the dinner, but you will pay at the door. If you will not be participating in the actual count, please consider volunteering to help with the Christmas Bird Count Compilation Dinner after the count on Saturday, December 27.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 7 FOR A LIST OF OTHER BAY AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, December 4, 2014

9 AM to 12 PM

With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

On the first Thursday of each month we meet for a birding walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds just north of McInnis Park to continue a tradition started years ago by Bruce Bajema. Birders of all levels are welcome. Each month the avian cast of characters will change, and we'll try to keep track of newly arriving species. The ponds provide a good opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other bird families, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette. Try to bring a pair of binoculars, as well as some water. We'll be walking about 2 miles on the levees that surround the ponds.

DIRECTIONS: *From Highway 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit and go east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, staying on Smith Ranch Rd., and go about 0.5 mi. to the end of the road at the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 9:00 but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. There are rest room facilities at the parking area.*

BAHIA, RUSH CREEK AND ROWLAND AVENUE WETLANDS, NOVATO

No. 8, Birding In Marin Series

Saturday, December 6, 2014

(Note: this is the 1st Saturday in December, not the 3rd because of Christmas Bird Counts)

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Please meet at the east end of Bugeia Lane/Bahia Drive in Novato where Marin Audubon is continuing a large restoration project. Shorebirds, ducks, herons, swallows, and rails will be reaping the benefits here for years to come. After viewing the birds and the restoration area we intend to walk the trail along the edge

of the mixed oak woodland. Next we plan to drive around to the end of Topaz Street to view the Horseshoe Pond where some diving ducks, including a few Barrow's Goldeneyes, like to winter. During the day we will practice some bird counting to help prepare for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count season. After lunch we will take a look at two nearby areas—Rush Creek and the Rowland Ave wetlands.

DIRECTIONS: *From Hwy 101 in north Novato take the Atherton Avenue exit. Go east about 2 miles, then turn left onto Bugeia Lane, which becomes Bahia Drive, and follow it to the end where there is some street parking. No restrooms available here.*

CYPRESS GROVE/TOMS POINT ON TOMALES BAY

CYPRESS GROVE RESEARCH CENTER

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

9:30 AM to 2 PM

With John Kelly

John Kelly, the Director of Conservation Science for Audubon Canyon Ranch, will lead our trip to see winter waterbirds and shorebirds on Tomales Bay. This excursion will highlight a visit to the Cypress Grove Research Center of Audubon Canyon Ranch, with field observations and discussions about the identification, conservation, and ecology of Tomales Bay birds. We also will learn about the history of the lovely house and grounds now used by the research staff. We will view waterbirds and shorebirds along the east shore of the bay, then carpool to ACR's remote Toms Point preserve at the northern end of the bay where we will end our day.

DIRECTIONS: *The Cypress Grove Research Center is on State Highway One, about ½ 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.*

SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR

Friday, December 12, 2014

10 AM to mid-afternoon

With Dan Frisk

Join us as we take a behind the scenes tour of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Dan Frisk, the manager of the Sacramento Refuge, will be our guide. Breeding conditions in central Canada and the Dakotas were sensational this spring and record numbers of waterfowl are arriving at the refuges. Dan will explain how federal and state refuge managers are collaborating with conservation groups and rice farmers to provide waterfowl and shorebird habitat in the midst of drought. We will meet in the Refuge Visitor Center at 10 in the morning and tour the refuge in the afternoon. Dress in layers; bring lunch, snacks and water.

DIRECTIONS: *Allow about two hours travel time from Marin. Take Hwy 101 north to Hwy 37, go east to I-80 north. In 24 miles take I-505 north to I-5. Once you are on I-5, continue 41 miles north to the Road 68 exit. Turn right onto Road 68. Go north on county highway 99W (which parallels I-5 at this point) for 1.7 miles. Turn right into the Refuge and follow the signs to the parking area. The address is 752 County Road 99W, Willows, CA. There is a \$6 entrance fee. Bring your National Parks Senior Pass if you have one. We will meet at the Visitor Center where there are bathrooms.*

HERRING RUN FLASH MOB!

Sometime in January or February 2015
With leaders to be determined

We never know if or when the Pacific Herring run will happen but it is always an exciting event for birds and birders. Sometime in the winter the herring enter the Bay where they hold for several weeks in deep channels until ready to spawn in the shallow water. When spawning begins, the huge number of fish and the amount of eggs draw thousands of gulls and waterfowl for a feeding frenzy that lasts only a few days.

Sign up with your email address on our website and, if and when the run starts, you will receive an email as to the time and place we will meet.

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.

ANOTHER DEFEAT FOR WHALER'S POINT PROJECT

Another hearing on Jack Krystal's request for the county to vacate portions of Parepa, Pohono and Bolinas Streets in Sausalito/Mill Valley ended with the County Supervisors voting unanimously to deny the request. Krystal wants to be able to use parts of these streets so that he can justify sufficient land area for the 71-unit hotel he wants to build.

The size of the proposed hotel far exceeds the allowable size for a development on the site as allowed by the Countywide Plan and the Tam Community Plan.

The hearing took an interesting turn when Krystal's attorney, Riley Hurd, joining many other speakers from the audience, asked the supervisors to deny Krystal's application. According to Hurd the county does not have authority over the streets now because it did not accept the offer of dedication, which according to Mr. Hurd was made in 1869, within the 25-year required time period. The County's land use attorney disagreed. He pointed out, in addition, that county codes do not allow the use of streets in calculating density for a project.

It looks like this matter may be fought out in the court.

In our testimony, MAS again objected to the use of city streets to benefit a private developer. We also expressed interest, as we did in the previous hearing, in working with the property owner to purchase the property so that it can be permanently protected and restored to marsh habitat. Krystal did not address this possibility, although he had indicated a mild interest in this type of acquisition at the earlier hearing.

The hotel site is along Highway 101 between the seaplane property and the blue-roofed Shoreline Office Center. It is leased for storage of various types of construction equipment, junk, etc. Krystal keeps it in a pretty junky condition, an approach not uncommonly used by owners who want to develop so they can say the development will clean it up.

SANTA VENETIA COMMUNITY PLAN HITS SNAG

The first hearing on the new Santa Venetia Community Plan was held before the Marin County Planning commission in late October. The Santa Venetia community extends from the Marin Civic Center east, along the south side of Gallinas Creek and North San Pedro Road to China Camp. It includes lands along the bay and the north-facing hillsides. MAS is

particularly interested in Gallinas Creek because it has a high population of Ridgway's Rails.

The plan was prepared by the county planning staff with input from a steering committee of local citizens, who volunteered many hours to prepare this first plan for their community. Unfortunately the first draft turned out to be a rehash of policies that are already in the Countywide Plan with nice photos and background information. There are no new or stronger policies for this community. Our reaction is, why bother? The policies in the Countywide Plan already apply.

The planning commissioners unanimously voiced their objections and voted to send the draft plan to the Board of Supervisors to determine whether they really wanted a public relations document with pretty photos.

A community plan should reflect the conditions and interests of the community. It should focus and guide development and uses that are specific to the community.

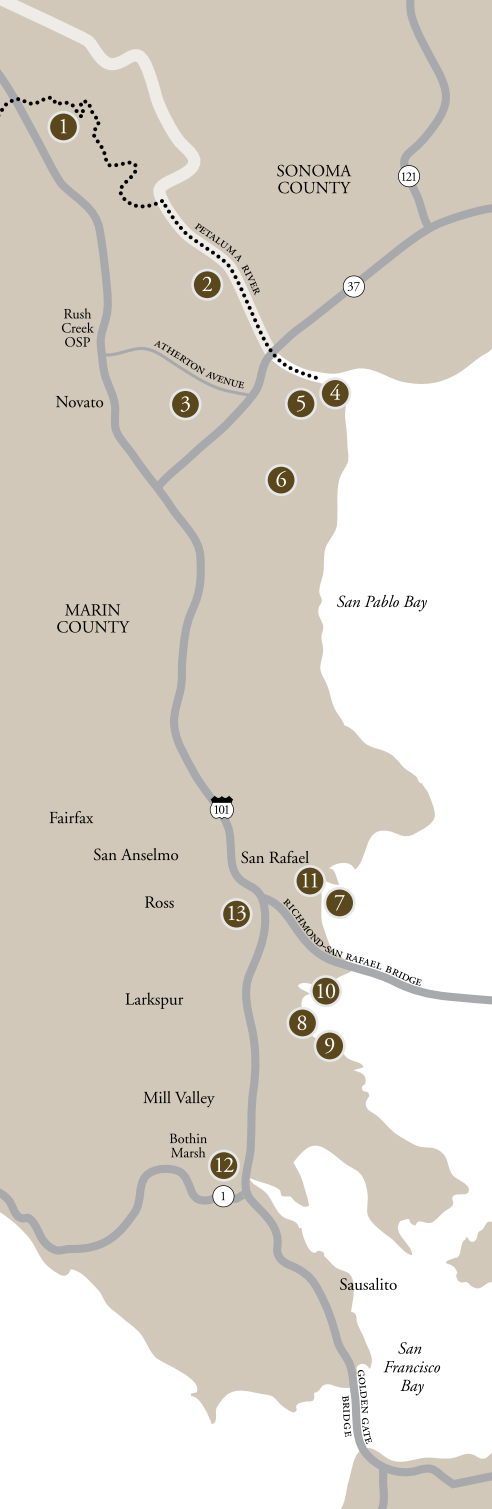
A community plan should reflect the conditions and interests of the community. It should focus and guide development and uses that are specific to the community. The policies of the Countywide Plan apply to all communities in the county's jurisdiction. They do not need to be restated.

Several commissioners raised concern that this Plan could be an example, and not a good one, for other community plans that are currently under review. We share this concern. One community plan, the Black Point Plan, is currently being reviewed by the community and revised.

LIVING WITH WATER

Supervisor Kate Sears recently held a community meeting focused on sea level rise in her jurisdiction, from Sausalito along Richardson Bay north to the Southern Sewage Agency facility. The meeting was attended by about 100 people. It provided some useful information, got the community thinking about their future under climate change and demonstrated an approach that could be used elsewhere.

After short films showing the potential and *continued on page 5*



MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

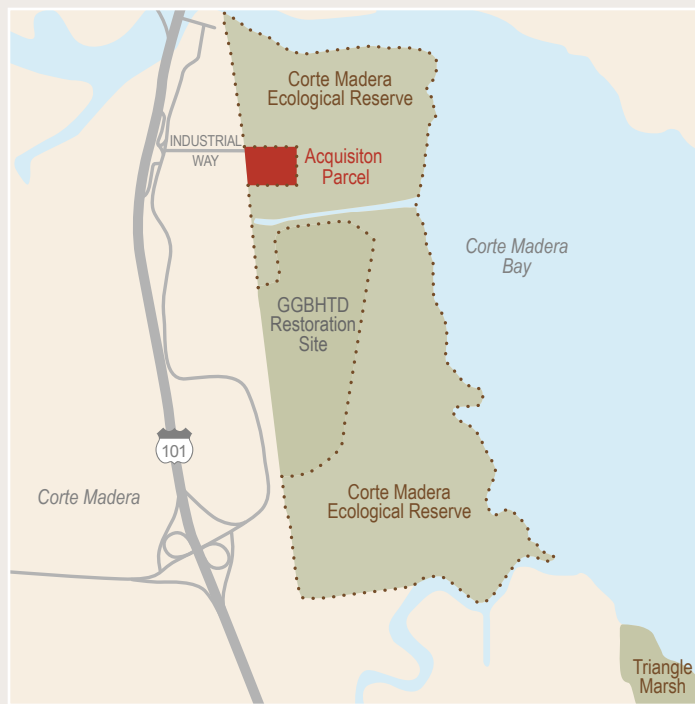
1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	144 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	4 parcels
5. Black Point Parcels	2 parcels
6. Arroyo San Jose	2 parcels
7. Tidelands at Murphy's Rock	34 acres
8. Corte Madera Marsh	1.8 acres
9. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
10. San Clemente Creek	4.34 acres
11. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres
13. Cal Park	<1 acre

“Close the Gap” Fundraising Campaign

We’re working hard to raise the funds to buy the 5.2-acre property at the end of Industrial Way. We have had generous donations that are moving further toward our goal. Thank you to all of our wonderful donors.

We are pleased to report that we have been awarded a grant of \$175,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, all of which will go toward the purchase. That foundation has the Ridgway’s rail as a focal species. This grant together with donations from individuals and small foundations brings us almost half way to the amount needed to purchase the property.

So continue to give generously to help us purchase this important property so that we can protect and restore a piece of the Ecological Reserve. Do check out



the new section about “Closing the Gap” on our website, www.marinaudubon.org.

\$1,075K

\$860K

\$645K

\$430K

\$215K

\$0K



Close the Gap!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS TO PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY

Phyllis V. Akers, Dean Anderson, Anonymous, Joyce & David Applen, Sara Arnaud, J. Peter & Whitney Bardwick, Richard Bergmann & Denise Filakosky, Janath Berry-Kadrie, David L. Berry, Klaus & Margaret Beyer, Celeste N. Binnings, Jerry R. Binnings, Mark & Beverly Birnbaum, Ben & Frances Borok, Steve Capper, Samuel & Ingrid Chase, Robert & Sandra Chilvers, Everett Clark, Carol Moeller Costa, Rudolph De May, Janine DeMartini, Barbara L. Dunn, William T. Emerson, Ann & Mason Flemming, Wilma & William Follette, Tara Fonseca, Joann S. Gabel, Anki & Larry Gelb, Frederick W. Goff, Mary J. Kelley, Kelly Yamamoto Productions, Harriet Lapin (In memory of Ellis Lapin), Mark Lindberg, Patricia Lowrie, Carol H. Machamer, Ron & Amanda Mallory, Dean & Julia Mayberry, Barbara & Gerald Meral, Deirdre L. Moy, Margurite Mary Murphy, Eileen Murray, Masaru & Marion Nagashima, Geraldine & James Nardi, Anne Owen, Anne & Gerry Pelletier, Shirley Pullan, Pamela Rickard & Brian Hertz, Georg Roth, Lori H. Runnfeldt, Andrina Ruzick, Lorna Sass, Jessica Schroeder, David & Nadine Sexton, Joanne Sobel, Charles & Jean Stewart, Michael Warren, Arlin Weinberger, Stefan & Tess Williams

UPDATES ON THE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE:

- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has found it necessary to close the Reserve parking lot at the end of Industrial Way because it is being used by people to abandon vehicles and from the neighboring businesses to park cars. Two vehicles have been abandoned. It is unfortunate that a few businesses are ruining it for the people the lot was intended to serve—visitors who want to enjoy the Reserve.
- A marsh restoration project soon will begin that will lower the elevations on about one quarter acre extending southward from the channel MAS excavated in 1990 and ending at the 5.2-acre parcel we want to buy. The project is mitigation for damage to the marsh by PG&E near the Greenbrae Boardwalk. The project will have the benefits of restoring marsh and limiting access to the high marsh that people now walk through.

LIVING WITH WATER

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real effects of high water (there were photos of the Manzanita parking lot) Marin County engineer Roger Levinthal, and UC Berkeley landscape architect Kristina Hill made presentations on a range of alternative ways of addressing sea level rise. Alternatives ranged from engineering solutions such as sea walls and solutions based on nature including horizontal levees and incorporating tidal marshes that serve both to reduce wave action and to provide habitat. It was interesting to learn that even Holland is getting away from huge dikes, is encouraging marshes seaward of their dikes and

is allowing some openings in the dikes.

During the second half of the meeting people were divided into groups to address what features (development, marshes, etc.) were of value to protect and how to protect them. It was rewarding that most of the groups expressed retaining marshes to be of important value for them.

Living with Water was a fitting title. We do it now and will be needing to do that more and more over time. The message was that the future will bring not just higher water levels, but higher waves and larger more frequent storms and the community needs to decide whether it wants to live with water or fight against it.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Barbara Benson, Wendy & William Dreskin, Earth Share of California, Anne Roughton, Carolyn Zwicker

SOME OTHER BAY AREA CBCs

Crystal Springs	12/14
Oakland	12/14
Santa Rosa	12/14
East Contra County	12/17
Eastern Alameda County	12/19
Contra Costa County	12/20
Sonoma Valley	12/26
Western Sonoma County	12/28
Mount Hamilton	12/29
San Francisco	12/30

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

BOARD PROPERTY FIELD TRIP

This was the month for our annual trip to our properties. We don't usually have enough time to get around to all 29 of our properties and we didn't this year either.

We visited Triangle Marsh, admired our new sign and how great the site looks, and identified plants to remove, particularly Monterey Pine and Harding grass at the Cay Passage end of the property. At Tiscornia Marsh, located at the mouth of San Rafael Canal, there is no shortage of plants to remove—fennel and *Lepidium* stand out, along with pieces of concrete and trash. At some point when we have the resources we would like to begin working on this site also. We appreciate Mariah Baird's offer to pick up trash on a regular basis.

At our Simmons SEP site adjacent to Deer Island, we were pleased to find that many of the rush and sedge plants planted for us by Shelterbelt Builders last year, have survived the dry summer and are spreading. There are many seeds of cocklebur on the ground although we had spent quite a bit of effort to remove the plants. At the Bahia SEP pond, we noted spotty plant survival and will try testing the soil to see why some tall plants have suddenly died. *Baccharis* (coyotebush) and sage are especially affected. We also looked at reorganizing our storage shed to put shelving along the sides, for easier access on volunteer workdays. In all a beautiful day and we are pleased with the progress in the habitats we are restoring.

BAHIA

Jude Stalker led two work days at Bahia last month. One was on her usual Second Saturday and another was the day before. On Friday a group of Advanced Placement biology students from Alson Montessori School in Fremont chose Marin Audubon to do a service learning



Photos courtesy of Jude Stalker

Pictured above are the biology students from Alson Montessori School in Fremont who helped remove invasive plants at Bahia

project as part of a weekend trip to Point Reyes National Seashore. The group searched for and removed invasive plants along the entire Western Peninsula. They pulled and filled five bags with stinkwort, ice plant, fennel and Russian thistle (*Salsola soda*). They were a very lively group and a pleasure to spend the day with.

The regular Second Saturday stewardship group removed two bags of invasive cocklebur and watered and mulched about 50 of the wetland plant patches in the Central Peninsula seasonal pond. — *Jude Stalker*

TRIANGLE MARSH

Bob Hinz had several volunteers on the First Saturday stewardship day at Triangle Marsh. They dug out Harding grass and fennel. We have some plants on order which Bob wants to plant during the workday in December.

PETALUMA MARSH EXPANSION MARSH

Our dedicated volunteer Lowell did it again. He removed all of the stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) on and adjacent to the levee on our Petaluma property—all by himself! When no one was signing up to help, he just decided to go himself ... and he managed to get it all out. Thank you, Lowell.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Winter rain brings the planting season. With relatively few plants to put into the ground at Triangle Marsh, even if the soil is still rather dry we can water the new plants as they are put into the soil. Early planting will give them a little extra time to develop their root system even if they don't appear to grow much in mid-winter. If we've had sufficient rain by the second Saturday, we may be planting at Bahia also. Otherwise we'll be removing non-native invasive vegetation. Act locally and join us on a workday. You would make a difference.

We have the tools, gloves and snacks. We generally work until about 1 PM, but even an hour is valuable help. Everyone is welcome.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: December 6, January 3

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: December 13, January 10

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Dr. near Bolero Ct. and the tennis courts.

If you would like to help on either of the volunteer days, please contact Bob Hinz at rbrthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Jennifer & Blake Benson, Nick Cauz, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Hinz, Chance Johnson, Mitra Mavaddat, Linda Nicoletto, Karen Santiago, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes, Alexis Teper

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Karen Atkins, Robin Blaney, Bill Blythe, Seymour Boorstein, Mary Breen, Jan Brougher, William L. Cope, Patricia DiLuzio, Peter Durham, Daniel Heagerty, Sylvia Hunt, Kelly+Yamamoto Productions, Emily Kiesel, Jane Knowles, William Kuhr, Paul Morrell, Robert Smithfield, George Nick Stamoulis, Cathy Summa-Wolfe, Martha Thompson, Patsy White, Summer Wilms, Josephine Zeitlin

Highway 37 Construction: What Are Those Huge White Blocks?

There have been lots of questions asking: what are the big, white foam blocks along Highway 37? They are called geofoam and are being used in combination with fill to create a gradual slope along the highway to prevent future settlement as tidal action is restored. An acceleration lane has also been constructed for safe egress and ingress to Pond 1 where people will soon be able to enjoy the new public access—possibly by the end of November. Next will come the breach of the levee and restoration of tidal waters.

The Cullinan Ranch site is part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge which is restoring the property to tidal marsh in partnership with Ducks Unlimited. The property was saved from a massive housing and marina development by Napa-Solano Audubon and others, and has functioned as diked seasonal wetlands for about the last 20 years. The intention was always to restore it to tidal marsh but it took many years to get the funding, the plans developed and the permits in hand.

MARIN BIRDLOG: OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2014

By Josiah Clark

By November the peak acorn season has passed, as have the salmon and the pulses of flashy migrants and vagrant songbirds that appear from near and far. With the winter pattern on its way all the sparrows are back in flocks, chasing down the easiest to get seeds, the last of which are still shaking out. The thick-skinned fruit of Toyon, Madrone and Wax Myrtle are among the only fruit wintering birds have to look forward to. With so many obvious signs of winter, at first glance migration would seem to be over. For the persistent birders of Marin the rare bird season seems to last as long as they look.

Picking up where we left off last month, we start with Outer Pt. Reyes, which often takes center stage when it comes to noteworthy sightings. On 10/17 a **Lesser Nighthawk** at the Fish Docks was one of the first ever records for the county (MP, RH). A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** found there that day would be the first of at least 3-4 for the period, showing the tendency for this vagrant to show up late in the season. On 10/17 a **Tennessee Warbler** and **Chestnut-sided Warbler** were surely among the last of their kind to be found on the Outer Point this season, while at sea over 300 **Black-vented Shearwaters** made a visit to the visible waters off the lighthouse (LK). A **Yellow-green Vireo** at the Lighthouse trees 10/29 rounded out the list for the Outer Point this year (DS).

A couple of especially great finds in Pt. Reyes that were not at the Outer Point included an **American Tree Sparrow** on Pierce Pt. Road on 10/27 (DS) and a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** at the remote and rarely birded Arch Rock area along the Bear Valley Trail (BA, BA).



Photo courtesy of Len Blamin

Tropical Kingbird

retrieve its cached pine nuts, is a bird whose memory is among the best in the entire country (CA, JM). This handsome vagrant corvid was accompanied by more expected pine nut connoisseurs, **Red Crossbills**. While raking in their county nutcracker on 11/9, birders produced another rarity from the mountains, a **Cassin's Finch**. Another or possibly the same **Clark's Nutcracker** was seen in Bolinas on November 4 and 5 (KH).

Observers and Acronyms **CA:** Chris Alderal, **BA, BA:** Bob and Bettina Arrigoni, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **MF:** Mark Forney, **KH:** Keith Hansen, **RH:** Roger Harshaw, **SH:** Steve Howell, **LK:** Logan Kahle, **BM:** Bruce Mast, **JMi:** Jeff Miller, **DM:** Dan Murphy, **JMu:** Joan Murphy, **MP:** Michael Park, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **DS:** Dan Singer



Glen Tepke, gtepk@phace.com

Clark's Nutcracker

Towards the center of the county a newly arrived **Prairie Falcon** at Nicasio Reservoir on 10/31 was accompanied by one of the local **Bald Eagles** (BB).

On 10/28 a **Tropical Kingbird** began its visit to Las Gallinas, where birders also studied a hybrid **Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal** and a few **Cackling Geese** (DM, JMu).

Out in Bolinas **Tropical Kingbirds** were also popular finds with ones on 10/15 at Agate Beach and the Wildlife Gallery on 10/22 (KH). A **Black-and-white Warbler** made quick visits on 10/28 to the Wildlife Gallery (PP, SH).

In the past, invasions of mountain birds have typically shown up after massive storms or periods of intense cold in the high country, but apparently the opposite conditions can also bring mountain birds. On 11/4 the vast and wild Inverness Ridge produced a **Clark's Nutcracker**, which, judged by the ability to

Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

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

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



Delphine Debruyne says she was born in Belgium and would "like to see a Bald Eagle because we don't have them there and I've never seen one."



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



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



THE Clapper Rail

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- Dec. 13 **Stewardship Day**, Bahia
- Dec. 6 **Field Trip: Bahia, Rush Creek, and Rowland Avenue Wetlands**
With Jim White and Bob Battagin
- Dec. 18 **Cheep Thrills CBC**
cheepthrillscbc@yahoo.com
- Dec. 20 **Point Reyes CBC**
<http://tgaman.wix.com/prcbc-0726>
- Dec. 27 **Southern Marin CBC**
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If you are not already a chapter supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

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

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