



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon
Information: 415/789-0703

Speaker Series is a week early

THURSDAY, JUNE 6 7:30 PM

Birding Sites Along Our Freeways
With Harry Fuller



Photo courtesy of Len Blumin

Lewis's Woodpecker

Harry Fuller's new book, *Freeway Birding*, covers birding sites between San Francisco and Seattle. In addition to the Interstate 5 corridor it covers US 101 north of the Golden Gate Bridge and the area between Novato and Vallejo where drivers pick up I-80. The program will discuss hard-to-find birds along the way and where to find them: the rest stop with nesting Lewis's Woodpeckers, where to find Trumpeter Swan, White-winged Scoter, White-headed Woodpecker, American Dipper and other interesting species. The one "secret" national wildlife refuge that gets no signs along the freeway but is only one mile from an I-5 exit will be revealed!

Harry Fuller was a long-time Bay Area resident, now living in Ashland, Oregon. He is a professional birding guide who leads trips in California, Oregon and Washington. He is president-elect of the Klamath Bird Observatory Board of Directors. His birding blog can be found at www.atowhee.wordpress.com.

The Speaker Series will resume in the fall after a summer break

MAS Volunteer of the Year – Mariah Baird



Photo courtesy of Jude Stalker

We're happy to honor Mariah Baird as Marin Audubon's Volunteer of the Year. Mariah, an attorney, has served as Secretary of the Board of Directors for many years. She always provides a concise, accurate record of our Board meetings and helps keep our discussions on track and moving along.

Mariah joined the Board at a challenging time. She has been a thoughtful, wise, and steady voice for conserving wildlife and their habitats. Her background in the law serves us well on legal matters. She also volunteers in the kitchen for the Mother's Day Barbecue and on restoration projects as her busy schedule permits.

Mariah is a knowledgeable birder and enjoys hiking, camping and traveling with her husband, Oudi.

We greatly appreciate Mariah's participation as a member of our Board and her support in making the Marin Audubon Society a more effective organization.

MAS Joins Madrone Audubon in Saving Cliff Swallows

North of the Marin-Sonoma county line, along Highway 101, nets installed by the CC Myers Construction Company, to discourage nesting cliff swallows under the Petaluma River Bridge, have been killing the birds. Marin Audubon has joined Madrone Audubon Society, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Animal Legal Defense Fund, Native Songbird Care and Conservation and Golden Gate Audubon Society in a federal lawsuit against Caltrans for failing to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the National

Environmental Quality Act.

After weeks of watching the company kill hundreds of cliff swallows and destroy their nests, and trying to work with Caltrans and wildlife agencies to stop the destruction, Madrone Audubon Society sought legal help. They were fortunate to have San Francisco attorney Brian Gaffney, who offered early advice. Ultimately, the Washington D.C.-based public interest law firm Myer, Glitzenstein and Crystal and the Animal Legal Defense Fund from Cotati agreed to take the case which will be heard in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Good work, Madrone Audubon, for taking action to stop this disgraceful disregard of federal law protecting wildlife. We look forward to a successful outcome.

CALIFORNIA ALPINE CLUB INVITATION

The California Alpine Club invites MAS members to its Open House celebrating 100 years. Families welcome! Please RSVP.

Sunday, June 23, 2013 from 1 to 4 PM
Alpine Lodge
730 Panoramic Highway, Mill Valley
RSVP: gene.kendrick2013@comcast.net

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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.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Vice President	Lowell Sykes 388-2821
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Special Projects	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Nominating	Phil Peterson 828-4780
Editor, <i>The Clapper Rail</i>	Bob Hinz, 383-8688
Volunteer Coordinator	Shele Jessee, 530/519-1291
Property Management	Ed Nute 457-9241
Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members. If you wish to attend please call 924-6057.

7:30 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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Web site: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
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Members can receive *The Clapper Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by e-mailing joandbijou@sbcglobal.net

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

A hearty welcome to our new Board member Shele Jessee who will be assuming the duties of Volunteer Coordinator. She comes fresh from a permaculture class and is anxious to begin working on our lands and getting us volunteers. She currently lives in West Marin.

And welcome back, as well, to our returning Board members, Vicky Van Meter, Flinn Moore Rauck and Martha Jarocki; we look forward to continuing to work with them.

We would also like to welcome Josiah Clark who has stepped up to the challenging and exciting task of serving as compiler of the monthly Bird Log originated by Rich Stallcup years ago. Rich, in fact, was Josiah's mentor. Josiah, an expert birder with 20 years experience under his belt, owns a consulting firm that interprets preserves and creates wildlife habitats in human settings. We look forward to having his reports to inform our members about birds that are in our area.

We had a wonderful Mother's Day Barbecue. The food was delicious and the weather could not have been more perfect. A very special

thank you to Martha Jarocki, chair person of the event, who oversaw the activities in her calm manner even though she was hobbling around with a broken foot. Thank you, too, to the wonderful crew of kitchen workers, servers and setup/cleanup folks. We could not have done it without you all. And Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon also thank you, the attendees, for your support of this annual event.

By now you should have received our appeal letter. We appreciate your generous gift to help support, enhance and expand the habitats MAS owns. Our properties are owned by all MAS members and we depend on your support to make them as productive as we can.

The Clapper Rail and our contributors take a two-month break during the summer months coincident to when the bird populations are low and quiet. The next issue will be the September issue which will be published at the end of August. Please join us for our habitat stewardship days which will continue (see page 6), and have a wonderful and healthy summer.

MAY 2 FIELD TRIP

Las Gallinas Ponds With Len Blumin

By Sande Chilvers

May 2, one of the season's hottest days, found Len Blumin and about 20 friends scoping the Las Gallinas ponds for resident and late-lingering migratory birds. In the parking lot a **Lesser Goldfinch** was one of the first birds sighted. On the first pond probing the muddy edges roamed a small flock of **dowitchers**, probably Long-billed but their silence made positive identification uncertain. Swimming in the pond were a few pairs of **Gadwalls** joined by some **Cinnamon Teals** and two mother **Mallards** with fuzzy ducklings all in a row. A few **Northern Shovelers** were taking their time migrating north. A **Green Heron** streaked across the water, giving nice views to all. Near the far island the bright red shield of a **Common Gallinule** (once known as the Common Moorhen) stood out as it bobbed along. Soon we spied a **Pied-billed Grebe** diving behind the gallinule. One of the **Red-winged Blackbirds** appeared to have a small, dull epaulet, but when he flew it was vividly red. Len explained that he probably had been partially covering his epaulets to keep a low profile among the more dominant males. **Marsh Wrens** were in full chorus in the reeds and a nest was visible. **Canada Geese** were afloat with goslings. Above the pathway between ponds 1 and 2 we witnessed two **White-tailed Kites** in a leg-dangling raptor courtship display. Overhead an **Osprey** flapped by sans fish. **Barn**

Swallows

perching on the old docks gleamed with technicolor feathers.



Lesser Goldfinch

The female **Northern Harrier** swooped low as **Red-winged Blackbirds** harassed her from above. Len pointed out the **River Otter's** trail crossing the pathway between the ponds. A **Northern Mockingbird** perched on a post was uncharacteristically silent, but a **Brown-headed Cowbird** atop a tree wasn't. A **Forster's Tern** crisscrossed pond 2 and the **Double-crested Cormorants** were at their usual hang-out on the pipe. We checked to see if the cormorants still sported their fancy breeding plumes.

In consideration of the weather, we scoped, but didn't walk, pond 3 and were rewarded with three **Common Mergansers** on the far shore. The one male seemed to have two female admirers. Heading back we saw a **Cooper's Hawk** circling overhead and noted the rounded tail and bigger head that distinguish it from a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**.

This was the last Marin Audubon-sponsored walk at Las Gallinas until September, when the walks will resume on the first Thursday of the month at 9 a.m. Be sure to check the Marin Audubon Web site to verify the September date.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility and weather check: Vicky Van Meter, 415/299-2514, vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com

MARIN HEADLANDS MARIN HEADLANDS VISITOR CENTER

Thursday, June 6, 2013

9 AM to 1 PM

With Dan Singer

Dan Singer is a well-known ornithologist who serves on the Board of Directors of the Western Field Ornithologists, is Vice-Chair of the California Bird Records Committee, and is an eBird editor and reviewer for California. He has been birding since he was nine. We will meet Dan at the Marin Headlands Visitor Center where there are parking and bathrooms. We will then carpool to some of Dan's favorite birding spots in the Headlands, including several of the historic Batteries and tree groves. We will study the local breeding species as well as hunt for late spring migrants. With some luck perhaps we'll even find a vagrant.

Bring water, lunch, hat and sunscreen. Dress in layers because the weather can be unpredictable.

DIRECTIONS: From the North Bay – Follow 101 south through the Waldo tunnel. Take the last “Sausalito” exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. Turn right at the end of the exit ramp. Pass under 101; at the stop sign go straight onto Alexander Avenue. Turn left on Bunker Road – a brown sign saying “Marin Headlands Visitor Center” marks the intersection. Go through the one-way tunnel and drive about 2 miles. Turn left onto Field Road. The visitor center will be on the right side of the road. The address is Fort Barry, Bldg. 948, Sausalito.

TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK PETALUMA

Saturday, June 22, 2013

8:30 AM – mid-afternoon

With Gene Hunn

This 1,700-acre park, located between the Petaluma River and Sonoma Valley, includes pristine farm and grasslands, ridges, a seasonal freshwater lake, ponds, wetlands, and many other natural resources. Except on guided hikes this area is not open to the general public without permits. Gene Hunn will be our guide.

Those of you who follow North Bay Birds will know Gene as someone who is always out and about birding. Gene says he started birding in earnest at PRBO in 1967 and fell in with the “young turks” of that era, including Rich Stallcup and others, while a grad student in anthropology at UC Berkeley.

We will meet at 8:30 at the boat launch parking lot next to Papa's Taverna (restaurant currently closed) on Lakeville Hwy and then carpool up to Cannon Drive to the Tolay Lake Regional Park. There is a \$7/day vehicle use fee at the park. We will hike several miles to check all the available habitats at the park: grassland, oak woodland, riparian corridors, ponds, ridge lines, and ranch buildings. At this season we hope to see Barn and Great Horned Owls, resident raptors including Golden Eagle, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, woodpeckers, flycatchers, Loggerhead Shrikes, maybe Horned Larks, wrens, Lark and perhaps Rufous-crowned and Grasshopper Sparrows, and Lazuli Buntings. For those who wish to continue birding after lunch, we 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.

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. The entrance to the boat ramp will be on your left, the first drive just south of the Papa's entrance.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC BIRDING WEEKEND

September 14-15, 2013

With Terry Colborn

There is still room on Terry's weekend birding trip to the Monterey Bay area, September 14-15, 2013, for Marin and Mt. Diablo Audubon Societies. If you are thinking of going, please let Terry know soon.

This annual two-day trip to the beautiful Monterey Peninsula will feature a pelagic trip on Saturday with Monterey Seabirds (www.montereyseabirds.com) and land birding on Sunday. This trip is planned to coincide with the start of the fall seabird migration. The cost for the two days is \$95 per person.

See www.marinaudubon.org or the May issue of *The Clapper Rail* for the complete trip description or contact Terry at tlcgdc@aol.com or by phone: 530/758-0689

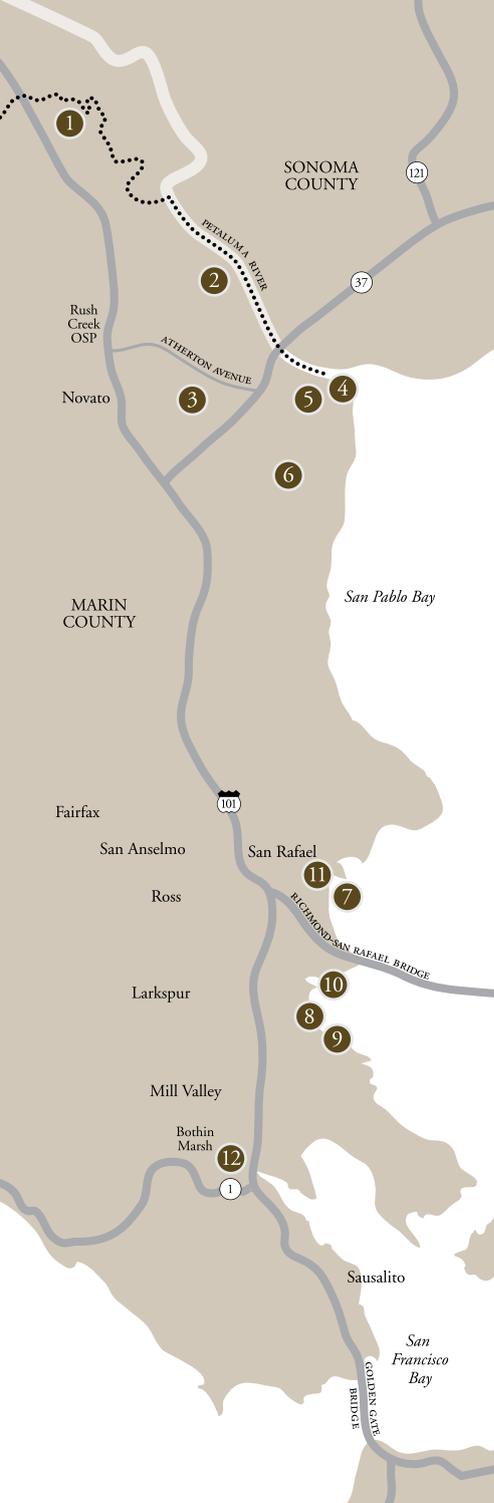
FARALLON ISLANDS

Sunday, October 6, 2013

Marin Audubon Society Annual Trip. Check the September issue of *The Clapper Rail* and our Web site for details and sign-up information

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.



HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION TAKING TOLL ON LOCAL HABITAT

If you have driven to the Marin-Sonoma county line lately, you have seen the Novato Narrows project being laid out. Orange construction fencing on the east side of Highway 101 just south of the landfill road demarcates where road construction will encroach on diked baylands. These lands were once subject to tidal action and still would be if not for a levee and tide gate placed there by the property owner. It is in this remaining wildlife habitat that Caltrans will be building an access road serving three properties to the south, Mira Monte, Silveira, and another privately-owned parcel.

Orange fencing has also been installed on the west side of Highway 101, and Caltrans has already begun to cut down old oak trees that are within the fenced area.

SMART also appears to be working to gain access to the baylands. The commuter train agency has been telling landowners, some who have owned the land for more than a century, that they must pay a half million dollars to construct railroad crossings on their properties.

FAILINGS OF PLAN BAY AREA EIR

Because MAS's main focus is on natural habitats we don't often take positions on urban development. Originally, Highway 101 and much of the cities along the Bay were actually built on tidal marshes. Development here can impact the tidal marshes, diked baylands and the wildlife that depend on them.

This is the case with the Plan Bay Area, a 25-year plan of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Several of the specific Planned Development Areas (PDAs) in Marin are along the 101 corridor: Tam Junction, San Rafael Civic Center, and the entire 101 Corridor are included. Our concern is that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts on the Bay and does not adequately address natural resources.

Among the problems we find with the DEIR:

- The Plan defines the PDAs as areas where housing is encouraged. However, these areas are not specifically defined. A case in point is around the Larkspur Ferry Terminal. While this may be a logical place for a PDA, it was not suggested by the City of Larkspur nor approved by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). Yet, grant funding from ABAG was given to Larkspur to study development. The impacts of development here could be

significant, given that the nearby tidal marsh supports endangered Clapper Rails.

- Because the PDAs aren't accurately identified, we don't know the overall impacts of the plan on other baylands. They could be significantly greater than described in the DEIR.
- The DEIR also fails to discuss the global importance of San Francisco Bay as habitat for resident and migratory birds. The plan discusses individual habitats, but the overall importance of the Bay to fish, migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and resident wildlife is not addressed at all. Because the plan does not discuss the habitat needs of endangered and special status species such as the Clapper Rail and Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse, essential components of the habitats could be lost.
- The DEIR minimizes the significance of development in PDAs in urban areas, but the Plan's DEIR claims impacts could be even worse if the development is in rural areas. So development along the Bay, they conclude, is protecting rural habitats. In our view, development in rural areas would impact different species and habitat types. Also, the DEIR relies on existing laws and regulations to reduce impacts, which cannot be assured.
- The plan doesn't adequately address climate change. In fact, some of the PDAs are in the path of sea level rise.

With the huge public outcry about the intensity of the proposed development and the potential impacts of the plan on natural resources, we hope ABAG and MTC will take another look at the Plan.

UPDATES

GREENBRAE INTERCHANGE

Following strong public opposition to the plan to reconfigure the Greenbrae interchange at Highway 101, the County appointed a Work Group to take a fresh look at alternatives. Work group members include elected officials from Ross Valley cities, Marin County, Tiburon and San Rafael.

So far there have been two meetings of the Work Group, and TAM staff have presented the alternatives they and Caltrans had considered leading up to their choice of the preferred alternative.

Members of the public have been invited to present alternative plans at the next Work Group meeting scheduled for June 10 at 4:30 p.m. at 750 Lindaro Street, San Rafael, first floor large meeting room. At least four community groups will be presenting their plans.

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

MARIN COUNTY STREAM ORDINANCE

On May 13, the Planning Commission finished its review and recommended the draft ordinance to the Supervisors for approval. Few of the requests we made at that hearing were adopted. The Commission did not add any mention of endangered species, left in the vague term “unavoidable” referring to vegetation removal (we had asked for an explanation of how that would be defined and by whom) and allowed areas that are simply cleared of vegetation to be eligible for less rigorous evaluation.

On the positive side, the ordinance is better than what we have now, which is nothing. The Commission strengthened protection for riparian vegetation by adding the need to mitigate for the removal of heritage trees. And, the Commission did not yield to the many speakers, largely from San Geronimo Valley and Sleepy Hollow, who were opposed to the ordinance largely because they feared they would lose property values or some of their property. They actually would still have use of all of their property but they just could not build within the riparian zone/setback areas.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: The next step for the ordinance is a hearing before the Board of Supervisors scheduled for June 18 in the Supervisors’ chambers. Attend or write in support of the ordinance.

MARIN WETLANDS NAMED TO INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

On May 20, elected officials, public agencies, and local nonprofits came to Richardson Bay Audubon Sanctuary to celebrate the designation of San Francisco Bay as a Ramsar site.

Ramsar is the city in Iran where in 1971 the international treaty was signed establishing a special designation for wetlands of international importance.

Guest speakers included Congressman Jared Huffman, Audubon Vice President Mike Sutton and Assistant Director Rowan Gould of the US Fish and Wildlife Service who came in from the Washington D.C. office. All acknowledged the ecological importance of San Francisco Bay and of partnerships to protecting the bay for wildlife.

Awards were made to those entities whose properties are now included within the Ramsar boundaries. In Marin, properties belonging to the Marin Audubon Society, National Audubon Society, the City of San Rafael, the State Coastal Conservancy, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are now included in the Ramsar designation. We hope other agencies will apply to have the wetlands they own awarded this important distinction.

Our thanks go to California Audubon and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture for their extensive work preparing the application materials that resulted in the Ramsar designation.



Congressman Jared Huffman addresses the crowd at the Ramsar Celebration

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOARD MEMBER ED NUTE

Our own Ed Nute has been awarded the California Water Environment Association Quarter Century Recognition award. This award recognizes water professionals for their commitment to improving the quality of life and protection of the environment.

Following his father who founded Nute Engineering in 1945, Ed has worked for forty years in the field of Civil and Sanitary Engineering. His accomplishments include the Las Gallinas Valley Wastewater Treatment project, which provides ecological, agricultural, recreational, and economic benefits including tidal marsh restoration and the popular public access path.

Of course, we have known for sometime that Ed is deserving of this recognition. For many years he has been a vital part of our habitat stewardship program as a member of the MAS Board. Ed has worked on virtually all of MAS’s marsh and habitat restoration projects. In fact, the very reason that he came on the Board was because we purchase, protect, and restore habitat.

BINFORD ROAD STORAGE FACILITY

After three public notices and some positive changes in the project design, the county has issued a temporary use permit for a vehicle storage facility at 8190 Binford Rd. The project has been moved to along Binford Rd. which is a less environmentally damaging location than along peninsulas that extend into tidal marsh. It still does not comply with the county’s wetlands setbacks for a property of its size. The permit was issued for a period of five years.

MARIN BIRDLOG – SPRING 2012

By Josiah Clark

Tree Swallows are seen in small numbers all winter, but in spring the **Violet-green, Barn** and **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** are among the first migrants to arrive. For many birders, however, spring begins with the arrival of the first **Wilson’s Warbler** singing on territory.



Pacific Brant

Mature oaks tall enough to be out of deer browsing range provide a spring buffet for birds and insects. The larvae of moths and beetles form a vital part of the food chain for arriving migrant songbirds. One bird that appears particularly tied to Valley Oaks in the county is the **White-breasted Nuthatch**. An individual observed at Bear Valley’s Kule Loklo on April 27(RC) was a noteworthy sighting for a part of the county lacking deciduous oaks.

For migrant songbirds and the people who look for them, a willow is often the place to be in spring. And for a willow, the place to be is by fresh water. Tender young willow leaves, buds and catkins are also favored by insects and the birds that eat them. **Swainson’s Thrushes** have a preference for willow riparian thickets in Marin and appear to arrive all at once in the county. This

year some of the first individuals were observed calling from willows on April 20 (JE).

The coastal spring winds this year seemed milder than last, but when it was blowing hundreds of northbound **Brant** and thousands of **Pacific Loons** could be seen flying into the headwind (as they prefer to do) from most coastal locations. Offshore upwelling sufficiently stirred the pot for krill, Dungeness crab larvae and other plankton, providing food for Gray Whales and King Salmon. On the surface **Bonaparte’s Gulls** and **Red-necked Phalaropes** joined the feast alongside resident **Common Murres** and less common **Rhinoceros Auklets**, as observed off the tip of Tomales Point on April 25 (SA).

OBSERVERS: Scott Anderson, Rich Cimino, Jules Evens

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

It's too late this year to do much more with radishes and thistles, so for much of the summer we'll turn to controlling Harding grass. It's a big tough perennial that can take over the upland, but we're beating it. It's beginning to flower now so we'll get the seed heads first and dig up what we can. We might be able to do some watering for last winter's plantings. 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: June 1, July 6, August 3

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: June 8, July 13, August 10

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

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Emil F. Bendy, Ronald C. Brown, Linda Burkhardt, Patty Damen-Gilpin, Raymond Erlach, Andrade Family, Bonnie Feld, Carl Holmes, Susan Keel, J. Meill, Elizabeth Small, Chris Wager, Jordan Wellwood, David Wiechers, Amory & Reese Willis

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

Julie Allecta, Lloyd Crenna, Jim & Drusie Davis, Judith Frost & Ted Steiner, John Harrington & Ida Baugh, Marcine Johnson, Ellis & Harriet Lapin, Jill Perkins, Jean V. Rhodes, Ronald L. Vestal, Amy & Bruce Wilcer

THANKS TO OUR MAS VOLUNTEERS:

Marin Country Day School second grade, San Marin High School seniors, Debbie Ablin, Cristine Albert, Lyla Albert, Jeffery Black, Stephen Brown, Bob Bundy, Deandre Hill-Wright, Bob Hinz, Charles Lewis, Mike Linvill, Flinn Moore Rauck, Linda Nicoletto, Lowell Sykes

We thank students from San Marin High School for their work in May removing wild radish from our Bahia property. Our supervising volunteer, Lowell Sykes, reports that senior class students and their teacher, Nicholas Busselman did an absolutely fantastic job removing virtually all the radish on the long levee near MAS's pond and then on the levee along the lagoon. According to Lowell, the students were energetic, fast and thorough as well as a delight to be with. We greatly appreciate their dedication and their

contribution as stewards of native habitats. We also appreciate the help of second graders from Marin Country Day School pulling radishes at Triangle Marsh.

Special recognition is due this month to Lowell Sykes, who worked diligently replacing gel packs (DriWater) around the pond at Bahia and supervising the work of the students and other volunteers during work days at Bahia.

Our workdays will continue through the summer. For more information, see the side-bar.

MAS SPRING BIRD SONG CLASS FIELD TRIP

Pre-Dawn Chorus at Tennessee Valley

By Roger Harris and Meryl Sundove



Photo courtesy of Roger Harris

Meryl Sundove points out the "Big Mac."

We gathered at o'dark 4:45 in the Tennessee Valley parking lot, silently walked down the trail part way to the sea, and then sat or stood in a circle like a strange occult group.

Presently, the silent night was punctuated by the "maids-maids-maids, put on your tea kettle -ettle, -ettle" morning greeting of the **Song Sparrow**. Then the **American Robin** sensing the coming glimmer of first light started its melodic measured "cheer-up, cheer-ee."

Like a symphony orchestra tuning up, the pre-dawn spring bird chorus was joined by the "water drop" call of the **Swainson's Thrush** section soon to break out into their full ethereal spiraling song. The **Bewick's Wren** section was at least four strong counter-singing birds. **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** chattered away. The staccato gobble of the turkeys grew ever more frequent.

Soon the bird song orchestra was in full swing, reaching a crescendo as day emerged from night. In the far distance, the muted bass of two fog horns provided rhythm, supplemented by the occasional hoot of a **Great Horned Owl**.

In the early morning light, our leader Meryl Sundove broke our silence and identified the various calls and songs, which were now winding down. After some birding around the lower stables, an opportunity for a rest stop, and snacks, we continued down the trail.

A bright male **Western Bluebird** knocked our eyes out. A **Black-headed Grosbeak**,

who apparently slept-in, finally began his fully operatic song. A **Common Yellowthroat** sang an uncommon dialectic from a Poison Hemlock patch down the trail. A precision flying flock of **Cedar Waxwings** flitted in and out of the willows, Toyons, and oaks, giving their high pitched flight calls.

A **MacGillivray's Warbler** sang its heart out from an oak tree above the trail. Uncommon for Marin County, this is the bird that Rich Stallcup used to affectionately call the Big Mac. Another Big Mac counter-sung from across the trail along with some similar sounding **Wilson's Warblers**.

A Coyote, teats heavy with milk, foraged through the chaparral on the ridge above. A second Coyote followed, likely her mate judging by his *cojones*. Cute little Brush Rabbits scattered along the trail as we advanced, peering at us through their big brown eyes from the dewy vegetation.

At the pond right before the beach, a male **Marsh Wren** was energetically building a nest in the cattails and loudly advertising to attract a mate. Out in the ocean, three **Black Oystercatchers** yelled, and **Pelagic Cormorants** with their nuptial white flanks flew by.

The spectacular spring coastal prairie wildflower show on the cliff slopes above was fading into the summer. White and yellow Tidy tips, purple Sky Lupines, pink Nude Buckwheats, and blue Seaside Daisies provided lingering splashes of color.

On the way back, the loud calls of a **Western Scrub-Jay**, a **California Towhee**, and two incredibly bold and pugnacious **Anna's Hummingbirds** attracted our attention. A beleaguered **Great Horned Owl** was being mobbed in the eucalyptus grove.

Brunch at a local café ended the class, taught by Meryl Sundove and assisted by Roger Harris and Jean Shultz. Earlier we had a classroom session on bird song and a field trip to Santa Rosa Creek. This annual fund raiser for MAS nets over \$1000 ... and it's fun besides.

Another Great Mother's Day BBQ

By Martha Jarocki

We had a capacity crowd on Sunday, May 12th for what may have been our 50th Mother's Day BBQ at Audubon Canyon Ranch. We have no doubt about the number of years. The issue is that the first few events were closer to potluck picnics and were not on Mother's Day, but the purpose has endured: to celebrate the acquisition and preservation of a truly spectacular wildlife habitat.

This year the weather was nearly perfect, the food plentiful, the company engaging. Marty Griffin, prime instigator not only for Audubon Canyon Ranch but many other important regional wildlife preserves, was joined under the trees by at least two succeeding generations of wildlife enthusiasts. Many thanks to all who attended this fundraiser that supports the education and conservation work of Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon Society.

This year the event's success is really due to the many volunteers. Special thanks go to Barbara Salzman who, in addition to everything else, made all of the quiches and to Mary Anne

Cowperthwaite who kept track of ticket-holders and even had to turn some away. Here are the MAS volunteers who worked behind the scenes: Oudi Baavour, Mariah Baird, Linda Cassidy, John Cherone, Wendy Dreskin, Jane Gorski, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Jo Kreider, Mardi Leland, Eileen Murray, Ed Nute, Ruth Pratt, Flinn and John Moore Rauck, Jay Salzman, Robin Sharp, Andy Shaw, Lowell Sykes, Mindy and Vicky Van Meter, Rona Weintraub.

Each year, local businesses donate supplies and services for the event. Please thank them for us next time you visit these establishments: Bovine Bakery, Brickmaiden Breads, Burdell Properties, Clover Stornetta Dairy, Lagunitas Brewing Co., Don Sebastiani Winery, Judy's Breadsticks, Moylan's Brewery & Restaurant, Ravenswood Winery, Redwood Empire Disposal/North Bay Corp., Safeway, Saintsbury Winery, Sloat Garden Center, Sunnyside Nursery, Trader Joe's, United Markets, West Marin Community Services & Whole Foods Markets.

We hope to see you next year.



Photo courtesy of Bob Hinz

Marin Atlas Online

By Dave Shuford

The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas, published 20 years ago and long out of print, sprang back to life in March 2013 thanks to the foresight of Susan Kelly, who arranged for her copy to be scanned and digitized. The book is now available in various searchable formats at the Internet Archive (<http://archive.org/details/marincountybreed00shuf>).

Fieldwork for the atlas was started in 1976 by Bob Stewart, then a biologist with Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and completed in 1982. As with other bird atlases, the county was divided into equal-sized blocks, and observers searched each one to find as many species of breeding birds as possible. Species distributions were then mapped, using symbols for three categories of breeding evidence.

Introductory chapters describe the county's topography, climate, and plant communities. The heart of the book, though, is the set of detailed accounts on the status, distribution, habitat needs, and biology of 163 species of breeding birds. The book is also graced by drawings by Keith Hansen and Ane Roveta, maps by Dewey Livingston, and photos by Ian Tait.

It has been a long time since the completion of the Marin atlas, and much has changed since then. Some of it obvious, such as the spread of introduced species, like the Wild Turkey and Eurasian Collared-Dove, or the addition of new native breeders, such as the Bald Eagle and Forster's Tern. Likely most of the changes are subtler and will only be revealed by a second full-fledged atlas project, which is in fact the *raison d'être* of such work. Who among you will rise to the challenge and start the second atlas in Marin (as is currently happening in Sonoma County to the north)?

eBIRD.ORG

It's for travelers, too. Check the eBird records to see where to find your target birds when you are going out of town or even out of the country. Of course, submit your observations, too.



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

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

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

JOINT NAS-MAS MEMBERSHIP

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

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