



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920
Information: 415/789-0703

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8 7:30 PM

Build it and they will come:

Marsh Restoration at Tomales Bay
With Jules Evens



Photo courtesy of Danika Tsao

Black Rail

In the early 2000s, the National Park Service embarked on a project to restore over 550 acres of tidal marshlands at the south end of Tomales Bay. In October of 2008 the breach of the levees on the Giacomini dairy returned tidal influence to the historic wetlands. Over the last four years, biologists from Avocet Research Associates (ARA) have been monitoring the waterbird populations as they reinhabited the site.

Jules Evens will present the results of the first four years of the post-restoration monitoring, compare these results with the pre-restoration monitoring, and discuss how waterbirds have responded and how the restoration has augmented the avian populations of Tomales Bay.

Jules Evens has been conducting avian population studies in the Greater Bay Area for nearly four decades. He is Principal at ARA, a long-time research associate of PRBO, a former board member of Marin Audubon, and an avid birder and naturalist. He is also a contributor to University of California Press California Natural History Guides: "An Introduction to California Birdlife," with Ian Tait (2005); "The Natural History of the Point Reyes Peninsula" (2008); and the soon to be published "Birds of Coastal Northern California" with Rich Stallcup.

Come for cookies and conversation at 7:15 pm.

Draft MMWD Vegetation Management Plan Released

The primary goals of the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) Draft Vegetation Management Plan are to minimize the risk of wildfires, preserve and enhance existing significant biological resources, restore degraded habitats, and maximize ecological health on its 22,000 acres of watershed lands. MMWD owns publicly accessible lands in the Mount Tamalpais, Nicasio and Soulajule Reservoir watersheds.

Developed over four years, the draft plan identifies weed control as the most essential action to achieve its goals of reducing wildfire hazard and preserving biodiversity.

Plants that have evolved in other geographic regions and have been transported to Marin in recent history have spread rapidly causing environmental harm by disrupting native ecosystems. While some non-native plants are not problematic because their populations do



Photo courtesy of Bob Heinz

Trailhead of the Azalea Hill Trail to MMWD's Bon Tempe Reservoir

not expand, 300 non-native species have been identified as problematic of which 28 pose a major threat to native flora and fauna. As the range of these non-native species expands, fuel loads increase as does fire danger, habitat value diminishes because there are no natural predators to keep the invasions in check, and biodiversity is threatened.

Consequently, eight of the 38 recommended actions deal directly with controlling highly invasive weed species, particularly French broom.

In Marin's Mediterranean climate (hot dry summers, wet winters), wildfires are a significant concern. The fire hazard on the Mount Tam watershed has increased due to accumulation of dead woody material left by the thousands of trees that have been killed by Sudden Oak Death since 1995. Years of fire suppression has also allowed fuel to accumulate.

'Yes' on Measure A!

When you receive this newsletter, there will be only a few more days remaining to Election Day. MAS **urges your support for Measure A.** Funds raised by Measure A's quarter cent sales tax are required to be used to acquire, protect, and maintain open space habitat and parklands, streams, baylands and other habitats, to benefit local parks and protect family farms.

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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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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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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

We apologize for the failure to include the remittance envelope in the last issue of *The Clapper Rail* as was indicated in the Measure A article. But we hope you received, and responded to, the special mailing which had the envelope enclosed. If you haven't, you still have time to send a check in the remittance envelope, but do so right away.

We again urge you to VOTE and to VOTE YES ON MEASURE A. Significant benefits for native wildlife and their habitats and for us all will come from the much needed funding this measure will provide.

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) time is coming up. Participating in a CBC is good way for non-scientists to contribute to the compilation of scientific information. Audubon CBCs are the longest known continuous bird surveys. As an added attraction, this year you do not have to pay the usual \$5 for a soft-cover report on the national findings. National Audubon is making the results available online. This season we are pleased to sponsor three counts: the Point Reyes Count in West Marin, the Cheep

Thrills Count in North Marin, and the Southern Marin Count. We hope you can join in one, two or all three counts. See page 6 for details on all counts.

Our Board has been busy updating our Policies and Procedures, completing the National Audubon forms for renewal of our chapter certification and developing our Annual Plan for next year. We have identified three goals for the coming year: (1) completing our restoration at Simmons Slough, (2) completing or making significant progress on projects at the Corte Madera Marshes, and (3) developing and implementing an a multi-faceted outreach plan that includes expanding our digital communication and major donor program.

With Fall here, the shorebirds are back, waterfowl are arriving, and we are anxiously anticipating the arrival of rain, as well, to water our plants. This is our busiest, most challenging and most enjoyable time for waterbirds and shorebirds. The Bay waters come alive with the great variety of species we are so fortunate to have with us for the Winter. Get out and enjoy!

SEPTEMBER 20, 2012 FIELD TRIP REPORT

Raptors of Patterson Pass with Rich Cimino

By Vicky Van Meter



Photo courtesy of Les Blumin

Loggerhead Shrike

Rich Cimino led us on an interesting exploration of the beautiful back roads of the Patterson Pass/Mountain House Roads area in eastern Alameda

County. This is an important area for raptors and also provides a lesson in the conservation issues surrounding wind and solar power development and the vast infrastructure of the California State Water Project. Six thousand wind turbines are spread over 50,000 acres of rolling hills, and a 2,200-acre solar development has been proposed on Mountain House Road. Rich explained how these alternative energy projects take such a toll on raptors and other wildlife and the long fight by conservation groups to protect the area.

In the rolling, wind-swept hills we saw **Golden Eagle, Swainson's Hawk, Kestrel**, an early arriving **Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon**, a

dark morph **Red-tailed Hawk**, and **Loggerhead Shrike**, to name a few. Rich is a knowledgeable, engaging leader and we enjoyed our day.



Photo courtesy of Richard Panek

Red-tailed Hawk, dark morph

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

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS SAN RAFAEL

Thursdays, November 1,
December 6
9 AM to 12 noon (please note
new time)
With Susan Kelly and friends

Beginner birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds at McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and over 100 species have been reported over the course of a year. Fall is a busy time at the ponds and provides an opportunity to study ducks and geese. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. This is a great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other groups, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit; go east toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and go to the end of the road to the Las Gallinas Storage 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.

CYPRESS GROVE/TOM'S POINT ON TOMALES BAY CYPRESS GROVE RESEARCH CENTER, MARSHALL

Wednesday, November 7, 2012
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 fall 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 will view waterbirds and shorebirds along the east shore of the bay, then carpool to ACR's remote Tom's Point Preserve at the northern end of the bay where we will end our day.

DIRECTIONS: The Cypress Grove Research Center is on State 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.

ABBOTT'S LAGOON POINT REYES

Sunday, November 11, 2012
9:30 AM to 2 PM
With Carolyn and John Longstreth

Abbott's Lagoon is well-known as a birding hotspot due to its variety of habitats, including coastal scrub, freshwater ponds and wetlands, brackish lagoon, dunes, sandy shoreline and open ocean. We can expect to see waterfowl, herons, raptors, wintering shorebirds, loons, grebes and possibly a few late migrating landbirds. With luck, we might find Virginia Rail, Sora or American Bittern on the upper pond, river otters on the lower lagoon or alcids beyond the surf. If the adjacent farm-field is freshly plowed, there could be some interesting species there as well. We'll walk the 1.5 easy miles to the lower lagoon and another 0.3 mile to the ocean beach.

John and Carolyn have been birding for over 30 years. John, who ran an Audubon Center in Connecticut, is the co-compiler of the Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count and a skilled nature photographer. Carolyn has helped organize the Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival for the past 3 years and created two CDs on local birdsong.

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

GRAY LODGE & SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Saturday & Sunday,
December 1-2, 2012
With Bruce Deuel

Join us for a winter weekend at the refuges. This will be Bruce's 40th year leading this trip for Marin Audubon so this will be a special occasion! We'll spend most of Saturday at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area managed by the California Department of Fish and Game. About half a million birds use this area in winter and favorable breeding years can bring more. We will walk a 2-mile loop observing birds until lunch, then hike out to the viewing platform to look for additional species. Time permitting, we will take a drive around part of the Sutter Buttes and then return for the evening fly-out.

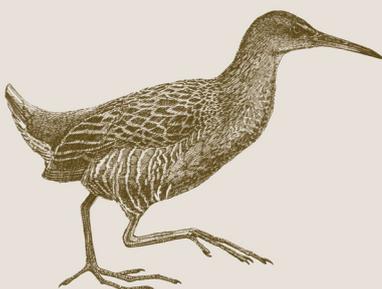
Ducks and Snow Geese abound, and perhaps Sandhill Cranes will arrive in the late afternoon. At dusk great clouds of birds leave the ponds to go to the rice fields to feed (dusk = no hunters!). Saturday night we will have an optional group dinner at Luceddies (www.luceddies.com) in historic downtown Oroville. Sunday we will take an early morning walk along the Feather River in Oroville, where there will be a completely new cast of birds. From there we will caravan over to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, arriving around noon for lunch near the visitor center. After a brief tour, we will drive around the ponds and fields that usually have new species missed elsewhere.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at 10:30 AM Saturday at the large parking lot just beyond the small museum, well within Gray Lodge. From Marin to Gray Lodge, take I-80 to Davis, Hwy 113 north to Tudor Road and then Hwy 99. Drive north on Hwy 99 through Yuba City to the town of Live Oak, and then west on Pennington Road to the Gray Lodge entrance. Allow 3.5 hours from Marin. There is a fee of about \$4.50 per person to enter Gray Lodge, and there is a small fee at the Sacramento Refuge.

Note: Most people stay in Oroville on Saturday night for an early start on Sunday for birding by the Feather River. A wide range of accommodations are available. Please be prepared for a bit of cold or rain. A forecast of heavy rain will cancel.

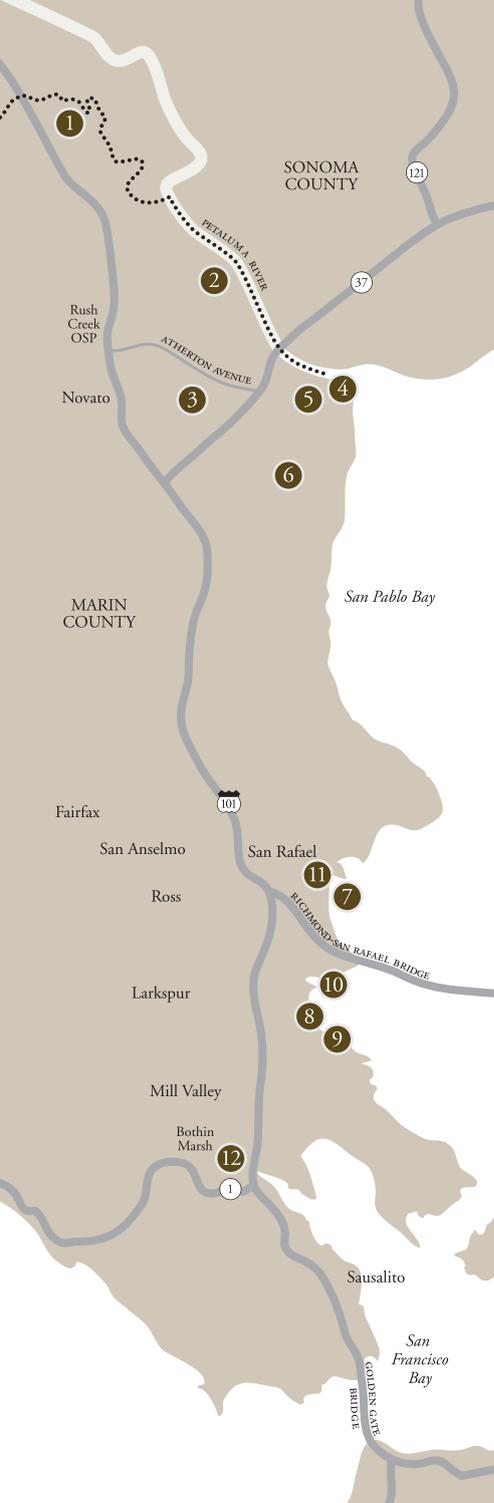
Please let me know by November 23 if you would like to attend the group dinner on Saturday by contacting Vicky Van Meter at vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com or 415/299-2514 (e-mail preferred).

Field Trips 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.



MARIN GENERAL PLANS EXPANSION

There are big plans to expand Marin General Hospital on the 19.7-acre site in Greenbrae. The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) states that the purpose of the project is to comply with the Hospital Facilities Seismic Safety Act which requires that acute care hospitals be designed and constructed to withstand a major earthquake.

The Health Care District, which owns and manages Marin General, proposes to construct a phased development of a 300,000-square-foot hospital replacement building, a 100,000-square-foot ambulatory services building, and two parking lots—one with a 412-space lot built into the hillside and a 507-space structure—on Bon Aire Road. Most of the existing buildings would remain and be used for non-acute care purposes. Only 15,500 square feet of existing ancillary buildings would be removed.

The adverse impacts of the huge new structures would include increased traffic (there would be 426 new employees), aesthetics, glare from nighttime lighting, and increased quantity and degraded quality of runoff from the additional impervious surfaces. Some 230 native heritage size trees as defined by the Marin County Heritage Tree Ordinance would be removed. The specific species, size and location of these trees to be removed are not provided, but most appear to be located in the wooded hills above the existing buildings. The mitigation for the tree loss is the planting of 264 trees in the landscaping around the buildings. Given that mature, native trees growing in a natural setting would be removed, this would not be adequate to compensate for the tree loss.

The DEIR identifies Alternative 2, Seismic Retrofit of the Existing Hospital Building as environmentally superior, because it would avoid removal of historical resources, portions of gardens designed by preeminent landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. Alternative 2 would remove an estimated 40 fewer trees.

We will be asking for additional clarifying information on the above impacts as well as alternatives that could reduce tree impacts.

UPDATES

SMART ACTIVITIES

Thanks to the eagle eyes of local residents, unauthorized SMART activities across Gallinas Creek have been stopped. SMART has had permission to do test borings in this area, but they have been undertaking much more extensive work with heavy equipment that

has resulted in risks of sedimentation of tidal marsh, air quality problems and noise impacts on the endangered Clapper Rails that inhabit the marshes. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and Regional Water Quality Control Board took quick action to ensure compliance with permits and environmental laws to protect these important resources.

GREENBRAE INTERCHANGE PROJECT

The Transportation Agency of Marin (TAM) unveiled its current plan for the Highway 101/Greenbrae Interchange at a meeting in late September. TAM proposes several raised sections that would increase the urban feeling of the areas and removing the existing trail that extends over the creek and along the Highway 101 off-ramp. The schematic drawings appear to show a trail on the former railroad right of way which has been our concern all along. The Madera exit would remain.

TAM is preparing a Negative Declaration (Neg. Dec.) and does not intend to prepare an EIR even though this is a large project with many potential impacts. We will address the environmental review deficiencies when the Neg. Dec. is released, which is expected to be sometime in October.

LOCAL COASTAL PLAN

The first in the recent series of hearings on the Local Coastal Plan (LCP) was held on October 3. After extensive public testimony from environmental and agricultural interests, the supervisors restored the current LCP policy allowing grazing that has been going on since 1981 to continue. Decisions on policies for buffers to protect wetlands and streams and on artificial wetlands were left for subsequent meetings. The next hearing is planned for November 18.

650 SAN PEDRO ROAD

At its October 16 meeting, with a 4-1 majority the Marin County Board of Supervisors approved a 10-unit residential subdivision on this 15-acre parcel. The approved plan was developed by staff after extensive discussions with the developer, Thompson Development Company, and the community. The developer wanted a minimum of 12 units and threatened to sue. Many neighbors, apparently weary of the protracted, deliberations, spoke in support of the 10 units.

Unfortunately, the plan has only a 20-foot-wide buffer around the fresh water pond which is an unusual resource around San Pablo Bay. It also allows for removal of a tree that supports a heron nesting colony, with mitigation off-site. How the herons will be directed to another location was not addressed.

MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 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

MMWD Vegetation Management

continued from page 1

MMWD, in recent years, has been concentrating its vegetation management activities on public safety. It has built fuel breaks to protect existing homes, worked with adjacent landowners to construct defensible space, and improved access for fire equipment.

Some management activities, constructing fuel breaks and prescribed burns, have been challenging to implement because of factors including more stringent air quality protection measures, concerns about the fire escaping, and uncertainties about environmental consequences. MAS and others have been concerned about the loss of vegetative habitat with fire suppression activities. We were relieved to learn that MMWD does not remove all vegetation when building fuel breaks. Rather, it creates spaces between trees and shrubs, by mowing grass, pruning lower tree branches and eliminating highly flammable vegetation that can ignite or burn easily.

The draft plan builds upon the current management practices and is based on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles, which call for utilizing methods for weed control that are least hazardous to people and the environment and for using chemicals as a last resort. Two alternatives are proposed for managing vegetation: 1) using only mechanical equipment, hand labor, herbicides approved for use in organic agriculture, and prescribed fire, and 2) using the tools described in Alternative 1 along with the limited use of three conventional herbicides.

Under Alternative 1, 89% of MMWD's fuel break system would be completed, but the total acreage of broom would likely increase by 300 acres due to inadequate control activities. Alternative 2 would enable management

activities to eliminate 100% of the broom and other weeds in the most problematic weed-infested areas.

As *The Clapper Rail* went to press, MMWD was changing the name from "Vegetation Management Plan" to "Wildfire Protection and Habitat Improvement Plan: Safeguard our Communities and Environment" or WPHIP for short.

MMWD does not have the funds to eliminate the invasives using hand labor alone. The use of herbicides is controversial and will undoubtedly be discussed at length in the environmental document.

The District will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the plan and will conduct scoping in October.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can comment during a 30-day period beginning with a scoping meeting, which, as this newsletter was going to press, was being planned for mid-November, and on the DEIR which is scheduled for release in the spring of 2013. Check the MMWD Web site for the specific date.

This is the public's opportunity to ask questions on issues of concern and these will be addressed in the DEIR. The draft plan and background documents are available on MMWD's Web site, www.marinwater.org, or google MMWD Vegetation Management Plan.

'Yes' on Measure A!

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The local press has printed views critical of Measure A that completely miss the point.

Some object because of misuse of funds by unrelated government agencies. Just because there have been problems other places, does not mean there would be with these funds. Measure A provides that decisions be made in public with full opportunity for public participation. The ballot language requires that the money be spent for identified uses – there is no "blank check".

Those who complain that Measure A benefits "special interests" apparently do not realize that those special interests are *us*. We may not use or even appreciate natural lands, space and habitats, but we benefit nevertheless. We all have cleaner water, cleaner air, plentiful wildlife and a much more beautiful place to live and enjoy because of our natural lands. These natural lands are an essential part of the healthy environment we all need and enjoy as Marin residents. They are not "extras."

A recent IJ editorial by Health and Human Services Director Larry Meredith said it well: "nature contributes to the health and well-being of the community." Nature contributes to the emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of children and adults.

Funds provided by Measure A will protect and enhance stream, bayland and wetland habitats, improve water quality, enhance opportunities to improve our health and well-being by walking, hiking, birding and other recreational pursuits.

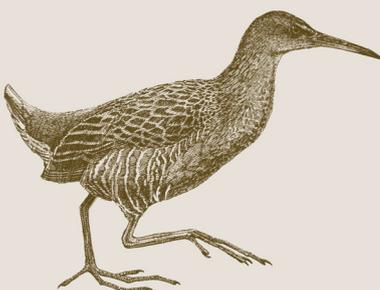
What better way to spend our money than ensuring natural areas are maintained and the critical habitats remaining are protected for us, our children and future generations.

VOTE YES ON MEASURE A!

MAS FIELD TRIPS *Continued from page 3*

HAMILTON FIELD WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT NOVATO

Saturday, December 8, 2012
9 AM to noon
With Eric Jolliffe



Eric Jolliffe, Biologist for the Army Corps of Engineers, will lead us on a tour of one of the largest wetlands restoration projects in the country. Eric will provide background on the wetlands restoration project and conservation issues. December will be a great time to see the waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and other species that are now making these new wetlands their home. We will learn about the new vegetation that will be part of the various zones in the wetlands and visit the nursery where native plants are being grown. Bring your binoculars, scopes and cameras!

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at the Skate Park parking lot at Hamilton. The address is 1200 N. Hamilton Parkway, located one block from Nave Drive. Nave Drive runs parallel to Hwy 101 on the east side. From the south on Hwy 101 take the Nave Drive/Hamilton exit and from the north use the Ignacio Blvd exit.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Those of you who regularly read these comments scarcely need telling: Harding grass and fennel will have our attention. *Dittrichia* (stinkwort) has practically finished its growing season and very little remains after our earlier efforts. Chances for significant rain are dwindling as October wanes, but it would soften the soil. Join us on a workday. We are making progress. 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: November 3, December 1

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturday: November 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 rbrthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

George Ballas, Brett Bankie, Marian Barozzi, Anne Baxter, Jenny Behan, Mr. & Mrs. John Bishop, Marylou Brooks, An Brown, Robert Candelaria, Doris Cardinal, Albert Carter, Alison Ewing, John Farnsworth, Phoebe Fielding, Ann Gubser, Pearl Y. Hanchett, Mary Hartman, Nancy Heinemann, Sara & Emma Hubbard, Elizabeth & Ray Jacques, Janice MacNichols, Ramona Mays, Cathi Mendle, Pat Mennucci, F. Moennighoff, Katy Molnar, Amy Morse, Maija Norstad, Judith Pallavicini, Ruth B. Parlan, Susan C. Peters, Lorraine Platt, Lorna Sass, Ken Smith, Roger Taylor, Anna Vanni, Andrew Wernick, Selina Wintersteen, Thomas Yarker

MARIN AUDUBON THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS

Neil Brandt, Theresa Fisher, Beatrice Jackson, Sondra & Ron Lanstein, Judith & Harold Lichterman, Marin Baylands Fund, PG&E Corporation Foundation (donor match), Hans Roenau, Harriet Stix, Doreen & Vernon Smith, Roger Stoll, Jett Walker, Stephen & Britt Thal

THANKS TO OUR MAS VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Ann Chandler, Bob Hinz, Mike Linville, Linda Nicoletto, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes

ANNUAL FIELD TRIP TO MAS PROPERTIES

The MAS Board made the annual trip to our properties in late September. We visited our Triangle Marsh, Bahia, Simmons Slough and Petaluma Marsh properties. In the overall, we were impressed with how well the habitats were maturing. Triangle Marsh, the first property we acquired and restored, was the most impressive with huge shrubs and lush creeping wildrye (*Leymus triticoides*) growing on the berm that just a short seven years ago was devoid of any vegetation. At the Bahia peninsulas that have such hard clay soils, oak trees under Lowell Sykes's care and creeping wildrye are surviving well, but poor soil seems to be impacting other species. At our Petaluma property the marsh was looking just wonderful. Whether the soil on the adjacent bench is fully improved is not yet clear

and will have to wait until the winter growing season. Lastly, we admired the new restoration work at our Simmons Slough property.

SIMMONS SLOUGH

With the Harding grass removed, four ponds excavated, upland mounds created and seeds and mulch placed on all impacted areas, the enhancement project on this property is nearing completion. When the rains come, we will complete the last phase, the planting of coyote bush (*Baccharis*) and willows along Atherton Avenue.

Help needed: It would really be helpful to have a neighbor or two keep an eye on our Simmons Slough property and help with maintenance and upkeep. If you are interested in helping, please let us know. Call Bob Hinz (388-8688) or e-mail our volunteer coordinator (volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org).

2012 Christmas Bird Counts

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2012 43RD ANNUAL POINT REYES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count includes a unique combination of habitats in the Point Reyes National Seashore, Tomales Bay, agricultural pasture land and adjacent villages. Habitats include forest, chaparral, grasslands, riparian areas, Tomales Bay, Drakes Bay, Abbott's Lagoon, various lakes and ponds, and the open ocean. As one of the biggest counts in North America, with usually over 200 participants, and with such varied habitats in the count circle the Point Reyes CBC regularly ranks in the top ten count areas for species of birds counted as well as participants.

Sign up by December 1 by completing the registration form online at www.forestdata.com/cbc. The post-count dinner will be held at the Dance Palace, 503 B Street, Point Reyes Station. Dinner is catered and the cost is \$16. You must sign up for the dinner in advance. Registration forms and checks should be sent to John Longstreth, PO Box 657, Inverness, CA 94937. Your assigned area leader will contact you by December 13. Rain does not cancel.

You can contact the compilers, John Longstreth and Tom Gaman, at ptreyescbc@gmail.com.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2012

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, 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.

To sign up, contact compilers Susan and Mark at: cbc@marinaudubon.org. The deadline is December 14.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2012

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. It covers these areas: Bolinas Lagoon, Audubon Canyon, 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, Rock Springs, Fairfax, and some sections of San Rafael, including Terra Linda.

Sign up by December 19 by completing the registration form online at www.marinaudubon.org/cbc_form.php or contact compilers Susan and Mark at cbc@marinaudubon.org.

If you'd like to contribute to the Christmas Bird Count, but will not be participating in the actual count, please consider volunteering for the Christmas Bird Count Compilation Dinner on Saturday, December 29. We need several volunteers afternoon (4 pm) through evening to help organize, oversee, set up, check people in, and clean up. If you are interested in helping, please contact volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org.

CBC UPDATES

For more information and updates, see MAS's CBC Web page at www.marinaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count.php.

MARIN BIRDLOG – SEPTEMBER 2012

By Rich Stallcup

For serious Marin County birders (and there are many of us) the landbird migration of September 2012 was as outrageously exciting as any since 1998. It is all about the wind! When the breeze velocity is low and comes from anywhere but northwest, it is likely that some small, brightly-colored, wild-eyed energy-balls from very far away may land in a tree near you.

Here is a list of rare birds (with numbers of individuals) that made landfall for refueling in Marin County last month: **White-winged Dove** (1); **Black-chinned Hummingbird** (3); **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** (1); **Tropical Kingbird** (1); **Eastern Kingbird** (2); **Philadelphia Vireo** (1); **Tennessee Warbler** (2); **Chestnut-sided Warbler** (7); **Magnolia Warbler** (3); **Black-throated Blue Warbler** (1); **Blackburnian Warbler** (2); **Prairie Warbler** (1); **Palm Warbler** (5); **Black and White Warbler** (2); **Ovenbird** (1); **Northern Waterthrush** (1); **American Redstart** (7); **Connecticut Warbler** (1); **Summer Tanager** (1); **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** (3); **Lark Bunting** (1); **Brewer's Sparrow** (1); **Clay-colored Sparrow** (1); **Vesper Sparrow** (2); **Yellow-headed Blackbird** (3 males); **Orchard Oriole** (1); **Red Crossbill** (15).



Red Crossbill

Photo courtesy of Glenn Tepke, gtepk@pbse.com

Except for **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, all of the listed species might be expected on Marin's outer coast during periods of "vagrant weather" in September.

As we would have to consider Muir and Stinson Beaches and Bolinas "outer coast", very few of these birds were found "inland". A **Northern Waterthrush** was found on a WFO field trip at White House Pool. The **Lark Bunting** spent 2 days on the driveway of PRBO's wetlands center at Hagmier



Black-and-White Warbler

Photo courtesy of Glenn Tepke, gtepk@pbse.com

Ranch and was replaced by a **Vesper Sparrow** there a couple of days later. Birding your "patch" away from the thoroughly trampled "hot spots" can be very satisfying because it is you who makes the discoveries.

At least six **Harlequin Ducks** summered on the Point Reyes Peninsula (m.ob) but two at the Fish Docks starred!

On 9/13 a **Loggerhead Shrike** was found at Spaletta Ranch (RS, AD) and was seen on-and-off through the month. This species is no longer of annual occurrence in West Marin.

Every five to eight years there is an irruption of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** on the coast during fall. This is an invasion year represented by more than 30 at the Fish Docks 9/29.

Fall is the season of **Broad-winged Hawks** with more than 100 counted by GGRO 9/27, and homogeneous flocks of up to 30 were spotted elsewhere.

There were hundreds of birders (most, well-behaved) on the O.P. some days, and I don't have all of their names—here are some.

Observers Liga Auzins, Bob Battagin, Tim Behr, Mark Butler, Heather Cameron, Everett Clark, Josiah Clark, Jack Dineen, Adam Donkin, Todd Easterla, Jules Evens, Mark Forney, Susan Kelly, Jeff Kimura, Keith Hansen, Phil Henderson, Diana Humple, William Legge, m.ob – many observers, Jeff Miller, O.P. – Outer Point Reyes, Desert Peach, PRBO Conservation Science, Peter Pyle, Mary Anne Rotella, Rich Stallcup, Dave Shuford, WFO – Western Field Ornithologists Conference, Nick Whelan, David Wimpfheimer, Jim White, Kerry Wilcox

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

December

14 Eastern Alameda County
South Lake Tahoe

15 Point Reyes
Crystal Springs

16 Oakland
San Jose
Big Sur
Putah Creek

17 Benicia
Palo Alto

18 Eastern Contra Costa County

20 Cheep Thrills (Northern Marin)

22 Central Contra Costa County
Fort Bragg

27 San Francisco
Monterey

28 Sonoma Valley

29 Southern Marin
Calero-Morgan Hill
South Coast (Manchester,
Mendocino County)

30 Western Sonoma County

January

2 Mount Hamilton
Tall Trees (Humboldt County)

For links and more CBCs, visit
www.natureali.org/cbcs.htm



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SAVE THE DATE

- November 15-18 **16th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium**
Stockton, www.cvbs.org
- December 1-2 **Field Trip: Gray Lodge**
With Bruce Deuel
- December 15 **Point Reyes CBC**
- December 20 **Cheep Thrills CBC (Northern Marin)**
- December 29 **Southern Marin CBC**

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SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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.

For NAS membership renewals, send your check directly to 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**. For more information, please contact Ruth Pratt, Membership Chair at 415/453-2989.

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