



P-22, Los Angeles' Mountain Lion

Did you know that a family of foxes thrives on the Facebook campus in Silicon Valley? Or that a mountain lion lives in the middle of Los Angeles? Or that Google's campus houses one of the largest egret rookeries in the Bay Area? Beth Pratt-Bergstrom, California Director for the National Wildlife Federation and author of the upcoming book, *When Mountain Lions are Neighbors: People and Wildlife Working It Out in California*, will tell some stories of "wild wonder" and how—sometimes in the most unlikely of places—people are being good neighbors for wildlife in the Golden State. She'll also talk about how these stories illustrate an important new model for conservation that incorporates coexistence with wild animals. The need to expand our view and realize that our shared spaces are as essential to conservation as our traditional protected lands.

Beth has worked in environmental leadership roles for over twenty-five years and in two of the country's largest national parks: Yosemite and Yellowstone. "I have the best job in the world," she says. "I get to travel around California and spend time with condors, mountain lions, porpoises, pika, and foxes, and work with some amazing people who help wildlife thrive." Beth serves on the board of the non-profits Outdoor Afro and Save the Frogs, and she has trained with Vice President Al Gore as a member of his Climate Reality Project Leadership Corps.



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

GGNRA Dog Management Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) has come out in favor of natural resource preservation in the recently released Proposed Rule for Dog Management in GGNRA. In Marin County, the proposed rule allows on-leash dog walking on 22 sites and off-leash on Rodeo Beach. Off-leash is also allowed at Fort Funston, Fort Mason, Ocean Beach and Crissy Field in San Francisco. The rule provides for places where visitors can enjoy the park with dogs, both on- and off-leash, as well as natural habitat and wildlife without dogs around.

The NPS action is generating substantial opposition from dog advocacy folks because dog walking locations will be limited. It is clearly the NPS's attempt at balancing needs. We applaud the rule which will assure better protection for natural resources but at the same time are very concerned that designating off-leash areas will have repercussions nationwide. GGNRA will be the only park in the NPS system that will have areas designated for off-leash dogs. Wildlife that depend on Ocean and Rodeo Beaches and Crissy Field will have their habitat permanently reduced.

All GGNRA lands in Marin County are closed to dog walking except on parking lots, paved roads and sidewalks, and in the following locations:

- **Stinson Beach** On-leash dogs are allowed on the north and central picnic areas and on the trail to Upton Beach. The south picnic area is dog free.
- **Muir Beach** Leashes are required for all areas—the beach, parking lot and trail—except on-leash dog walking is allowed at the north end of the beach only when the creek is not connected to the ocean.
- **Homestead Valley** Leashes are required on



An off-leash dog chasing shorebirds on Ocean Beach

Eagle Trail, Homestead Trail, Homestead Summit Trail, and Homestead Fire Road.

- **Oakwood Valley** Leashed dogs are allowed on Oakwood Valley Trail, Alta Trail, Pacheco Trail, Orchard Trail, and Rodeo Avenue Trail.
- **Rodeo Beach and Vicinity** Leashed dogs are allowed on the Lagoon Trail on the north side of the Lagoon, Mitchell Road to Fort Cronkhite Trail, Old Bunker Road and south on Coastal Trail to Mitchell Road to provide a loop, and on the pedestrian bridge and steps to the beach. On the beach, dogs under voice and sight control are allowed. Voice and sight control access on the steps is allowed only when the lagoon surface water is not connected to the ocean. On-leash dogs are allowed on the Batteries Loop Trail from the Battery Alexander parking lot.
- **Rodeo Valley** On-leash dogs are allowed on the continuation of Alta Trail to Morning Sun Trail (No dogs on Morning Sun Trail) and Rodeo Avenue Trail, from the Smith Rd. parking lot on the Smith Trail, the Miwok Trail, sections of the Coastal Trail, and Rodeo Valley Trail to McCullough Road.
- **Fort Baker** Leashed dogs are allowed on the Parade Ground, around the Cavallo Point Lodge, the Baker Bay Trail, East Road, and Battery Yates Trail.

Federal NPS regulations require all pets to be
continued on page 4

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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
At Large Board Member	Jane Medley 559/760-1551
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

Marin Audubon Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All memberships and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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

Dogs seem to be the topic of the month—GGNRA's Proposed Rule has been released and dog problems on our properties persist. I love dogs as much or more than everybody else, but they don't belong everywhere. They don't belong in sensitive wildlife habitat and certainly not running free in these habitats. We commend the National Park Service for producing a rule that is designed to protect natural resources. At the same time, they have provided many miles of trails for on-leash dog walking and even an area for unleashed dogs.

MAS has had our own share of dog problems. On- and off-leash dog walking continues on our properties. At Bahia, the eastern peninsula and the top of the levee of the western peninsula were planned, since the beginning of our restoration project, to be reserved for wildlife. Now to protect that habitat for wildlife, we're installing fences (See page 6). These peninsulas were originally constructed as building sites for houses. We restored half the width of the western and eastern peninsulas to marsh as part of our restoration. The problems at our Corte Madera project are becoming more obvious. People are walking through our property and out to the marsh with unleashed dogs. One recent encounter I had was with a woman who was allowing her Jack Russell terrier to run loose on our property and the adjacent Ecological Reserve where the Ridgway's Rail live and a Burrowing Owl has been observed. Jack Russell Terriers were bred to chase prey down holes.

Being able to identify birds is a special and useful skill that can be invaluable to protect species and their habitats. It's been seven years since Brown Pelican was removed from the endangered species list. Audubon California now reports that Brown Pelicans are suffering poor breeding success and unusual mortality, raising question about its status. The reasons

for the breeding problems are not known, but Audubon is trying to find out. You can be a part of the effort to track their distribution, abundance and population structure, as their ocean and coastal environment changes. You can help by participating in the California Brown Pelican Roost and Coastal Access Survey on May 7. For more information, go to ca.audubon.org/news/audubon-network-helping-pacific-brown-pelicans. To volunteer contact Ariana Rickard, arickard@audubon.org.

Nesting season is upon us. Please be careful with, or preferably avoid, tree and brush trimming, and during other garden work, be sure you do not disturb or destroy any nests. Many species nest in low shrubs or low-hanging branches and others nest on the ground. You don't want to be responsible for disruption of breeding activity or young. Also please protect nesting birds, particularly special status species, from being disturbed by crowds of people by not listing locations for your sightings on North Bay Birds (see below).

We are fortunate this year to have three qualified and enthusiastic candidates for our Board positions. See page 5 to find out about them. MAS members will be voting for the new Board members at our Annual Meeting which is our Speakers Program meeting on the second Thursday in May.

It's time to think of attending our Mother's Day Picnic, a benefit for Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon Society. It also is an opportunity for a special day in a special place. Sign up early as this event sometimes fills up. Directions are on the enclosed flyer and at marinaudubon.org/events-mothers-day-picnic.php.

I will be away for a while before the May *Rail*, so you will see less chat and fewer articles from me until June.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A Message to eBird and North Bay Birds Users

PLEASE DO NOT LIST EXACT locations for sensitive species nests on North Bay Birds or on neighborhood chat sites. We know spotters want to spread the word about their special sightings, but in your enthusiasm you may contribute, even though unknowingly, to nest failure and death of chicks. You don't want this on your conscience.

There are more and more reports of photographers and other curious folks visiting nests and disturbing the birds simply by their numbers or by their behavior. Some people are completely insensitive or unaware of the effects their presence, noise, photography, etc. have on the birds.

We ask you not to be a part of this phenomenon.

We need everyone who cares about birds to be a part of protecting them, not causing adverse impacts, either directly or indirectly. Birds have enough impediments (habitat loss, predators, windows, off-leash dogs and climate change to name just a few) to their breeding and their very survival, without having to contend with crowds of people disturbing their caring for their young.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one-day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, snacks, water, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility and weather check: Vicky Van Meter, 415/299-2514, vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com or co-host, Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

San Rafael

Thursday, April 7, 2016

9 AM to Noon

With Susan Kelly, Len Blumin and friends

Join Susan and Len for a walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds. Birders of all levels are welcome. Early spring 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. Dress for all weather and bring water. We'll be walking about 2 miles on the flat levees that surround the ponds. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit, then go east on Smith Ranch Road toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, stay on Smith Ranch Road, and go about 0.5 miles to the end of the road at the Las Gallinas Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. Late arrivals should easily be able to find the group. There are rest room facilities only at the parking area.

PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK

San Benito County

Saturday, April 9, 2016

9 AM to mid-afternoon

With Rusty Scalf

We will begin our day of birding with Rusty at the Pinnacles Visitor Center (east side of the park) with an hour of birding in the chaparral, riparian and gray pine woodland habitats. The group will then travel to Bear Gulch (possibly by NPS shuttle) where we will hike 1.7 miles one-way up the Condor Gulch Trail to the observation area for condor watching and lunch. We cannot guarantee a condor sighting, but the likelihood of seeing one is good, possibly with the assistance of a condor tracker present in the observation area. We will be hiking through distinctive geological terrain formed by rhyolite volcanism. Geologists as well as birders are invited to join us to help interpret this unique park feature.

You must be in good hiking shape to participate in this trip. The Condor Gulch Trail is quite steep and involves an elevation gain of approximately 1,100 feet. We will hike approximately 4-5 miles total during the day. **Each person in the group must carry plenty of water.** Also, bring sunscreen, a hat, a lunch, and dress in layers.

DIRECTIONS: Driving time to the Pinnacles from Marin is approximately 2.5 to 3 hours. Hwy 25 South from Hollister is recommended. Go through the town of

Hollister and continue about 30 miles to Hwy 146. Turn right on Hwy 146. Turn left into the Pinnacles Campground to check in at the Pinnacles Visitor Center where we will meet. The park entrance fee is \$15. Some people may wish to stay overnight in Gilroy or Hollister the night before. Contact Jane Medley at 559/760-1551 or janermedley@gmail.com for further information.

THURSDAY MORNING BIRD SONGS

Five Brooks

Thursday, April 14, 2016

7:30 AM to Noon

With Lisa Hug and Susan Kelly

Spring is the best time of year to hear and learn bird songs. Males are full of hormones and bursting with song. Many neo-tropical migrants are returning and vying for mates and territories. It is a very exciting time of year. This walk will require participants to stay quiet to enable us to listen to the myriad of bird sounds. Bring comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water, binoculars, field guides and snacks.

This trip is limited to 15 participants. To sign up, go to Activities on the MAS website at www.marinaudubon.org.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Five Brooks parking area, which is 0.25 mile west of Hwy 1, 5 miles north of Stinson, or 4 miles south of Olema. From Hwy 101 take Sir Francis Drake for about 20 miles. Turn left onto Hwy 1 and drive about 3 miles to the signed entrance on the right side of the road.

MOUNT BURDELL

No. 12, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, April 16, 2016

8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob for a field trip to the gentle slopes of Mt. Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of songbirds that make this area their springtime home. Species we might see include Lark Sparrow, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole and Grasshopper Sparrow, among many other possibilities. This should be a fairly easy walk, with some uphill. Bring comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water and snacks. We will meet at the end of San Andreas Drive in Novato.

DIRECTIONS: Take 101 to Novato. Take the San Marin Drive/Atherton Avenue exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left (west) on San Marin Drive. Go roughly 2 miles down the road and turn right on San Andreas Drive. Drive to nearly the end of the road and park on the street. No restrooms available.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS

Niven Park, Greenbrae

Sunday, April 24, 2016

9 AM to 11:30 AM

With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle

Are you curious about our local birds but don't know quite where or how to start learning about them? This first in a series of field trips for beginning birders will introduce you to the use of binoculars, scopes and field guides. Participants will learn how to identify local resident birds of Eastern Marin County. We will view and discuss local water birds and songbirds while walking leisurely for approximately 0.5 mile along the bike path. The Corte Madera Marsh area is Rich and Janet's home territory where they bird regularly. Come with your questions for them and enjoy the company of other novice birders.

DIRECTIONS: To reach Niven Park from the north or the south, take Hwy 101 and exit at Sir Francis Drake Blvd going west toward San Anselmo. Turn left on Barry Way toward Bon Air Center, then go left again on Drakes Landing Road. Turn right on Drakes View Circle. Park just past Jason's Restaurant.

HAMILTON WETLANDS FOR

YOUNG BIRDERS

Saturday, April 30, 2016

8:30 AM to 10 AM

With Mark Forney

Join Mark at Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project in Novato for a morning of bird watching geared towards children younger than 16 accompanied by a parent or grandparent. Hamilton Wetlands itself is young, tidal function having only been returned to the site in April 2014. The ongoing vegetation restoration and the connection to San Pablo Bay have begun to create a great place to see a diversity of shorebirds, waterfowl, and upland birds; over 160 species of birds have been observed in the past couple of years. There is a wide, level, gravel, walking trail that follows the west edge of the wetlands. The trail allows for easy and sometimes quite close observation of birds. The walk will focus on general attentiveness to the surrounding bird life, as well as development of observational skills, and identification of birds, depending upon the interest level of the attendee. Bring binoculars if you have them.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at South Hamilton Park playground at Hamilton Field in Novato. From the south on Hwy 101 take the Nave Dr./Hamilton exit, and from the north use the Ignacio Blvd exit. The South Hamilton Park parking lot is at the intersection of Hangar Ave. and Maybeck St. From the parking lot, walk along Hangar Ave. south to its end. The playground is ahead on the right.

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.

GGNRA DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN

continued from page 1

on-leash or under physical restrictive control (36 CFR 2.15, promulgated in 1983). This includes dog walking off-trail, in campgrounds, on designated swimming beaches, on informal trails (“social” trails made by people without authorization), in public buildings and in any area not designated by the proposed rule as open to dogs.

The proposed rule is based on the NPS’s fundamental purpose and mandate “to conserve park resources and values, provide for visitor enjoyment of these resources and values.” This purpose is supported by a statutory prohibition on the impairment of park resources and values. Where there are conflicts between conserving resources and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be the overriding goal. The GGNRA’s enabling legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the NPS, to “preserve the recreation area as far as possible, in its natural setting, and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area.” There is no provision directing the NPS to provide for walking dogs, or for any other special interest users for that matter – parks are to be preserved for all of the people.

Currently there are 37 federally-listed threatened and endangered species (the third highest number in the park system), 19 ecosystems and seven distinct watersheds in GGNRA boundaries.

Other provisions of the proposed rule include:

- Dog walkers are limited to walking no more than 6 dogs at a time and must obtain a permit from the NPS when walking between 4 and 6 at any one time. Dogs cannot be left tied up or unattended in vehicles. Walking of 4 to 6 dogs is authorized only Monday to Friday between 8 AM and 5 PM.
 - Evidence of a current rabies vaccination must be provided and dogs must be licensed and tagged with the owner’s name, address and phone number.
 - To prevent unsolicited contact or unwanted contact, dog walkers are advised to ask any person whom they wish to approach whether it is acceptable for their dog to approach the other person or that person’s dog. Uninvited or uncontrolled behavior includes threatening behavior toward people or other animals.
 - A dog walker must immediately pick up a dog’s excrement and place it in a designated garbage container or remove it from the park.
- Non-compliant behavior will be monitored

and if the level of compliance is approaching “unacceptable,” based on issues such as number or types of violations or dog-related impacts to resources, visitors, park staff, health and safety, or is burdening administrative resources, the superintendent must act to prevent those impacts by taking management actions. Possible actions include: increased outreach and education, increased enforcement of regulations, increased fines, additional fencing, barriers, or specific use permit restrictions, and temporary or permanent closure of areas to dog walking.

MAS’s recommendations on the Management Plan and EIR were very similar to the proposed rule. To be fully protective of wildlife, the rule should limit use on the beaches, but it does provide greater protections for non-beach-dependent species. At the same time it provides opportunities for off-leash dogs under voice control.

National parks belong to all of us. We hope dog walkers understand the NPS mandate and the importance of protecting wildlife and other important natural resources.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

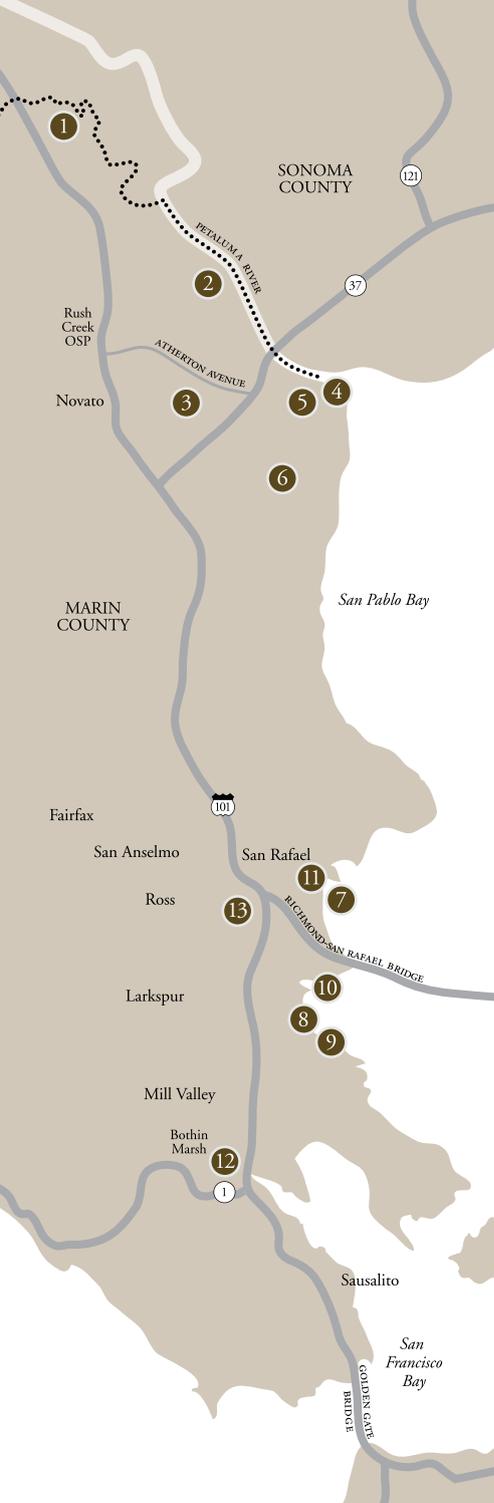
Submit comments in favor of the plan before the deadline of April 25. Comments will only be accepted at www.regulations.gov (search RIN:1024-AE16) or via letter to Superintendent, GGNRA, Dog Management Proposed Rule, Building 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123. Marin public hearings will be held on March 30, 6 to 8 PM at the Bay Model, 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito.

You can access the proposed rule at www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection (search Golden Gate Dog Management).

Off-leash advocates have launched a lobbying campaign to influence federal legislators to oppose the rule. **Take a few minutes to email** Bay Area legislators expressing your support for the rule: U.S. Reps Nancy Pelosi (pelosi.house.gov/contact-me/email-me) and Jared Huffman (huffman.house.gov/contact/email-me); and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-me).

SPOTTED OWLS AT RISK

As reported in an earlier issue of our newsletter, MAS sent several communications to the Open Space District, one sent on January 7 to close the Fairway Trail in Mill Valley and another objecting to opening various trails in



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

the Giacomini Preserves. We've finally received a response and the response is unsatisfactory.

We were informed that the District does not intend to implement our proposal to close the Fairway Trail, which goes right by a Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) nest site. They intend to adopt trails in this area as system trails later this summer. This means they intend to turn it into a systemwide trail. They intend that the designation of these trails as system trails is "part of a regional strategy to provide multiple use trails to many communities in Marin rather than concentrating use, for example in Sensitive Resource Areas." If the Fairway Trail isn't a sensitive resource area, I don't know what is. It is NSO habitat, has drainage ways and ancient redwood trees.

The response fails to acknowledge that the trails were all constructed illegally. They claim only "minor" modification will be made for environmental and safety reasons. According to the Road and Trail Management Plan the so called "minor" modifications could include rerouting segments, constructing and upgrading drainage structures, removing exposed roots (which could adversely impact the trees), installing rolling dips, constructing new turns, decommissioning and replacing segments, constructing a climbing turn, and constructing stream crossing structures or alternative routes. Not so minor!

It is also claimed the OSD will be decommissioning illegal trails that run through Legacy Zones and that they are preserving "the balance in their road and trail system ... and restoring habitat for NSO." No information is provided about what trails would be proposed for decommissioning in the Legacy zones of the Giacomini Preserve so there is no way to evaluate the validity of this statement.

So far, we've seen no evidence that their actions are in line with the goals for Region 2, which includes the Giacomini, Loma Alta, Maurice Thoner, French Ranch and Roy's Redwoods Preserves, although that claim is made. Their actions appear to be clearly aligned with biking interests. Commitments made in the Vegetation Management Plan are violated, and the District's plans are certainly not in the interest of the public or special status species.

ANCHOR-OUTS

We are very pleased the City of Sausalito has decided to enforce ordinances limiting moorings in their jurisdiction of Richardson Bay for more than 72 hours. These regulations have been on the books for more than 20 years and their enforcement is long-overdue. We commend the City of Sausalito for taking this step.

If the illegal mooring of boats is to be ended, as it has been in the rest of the bay, the other jurisdictions must also come forward and exercise their authority to ensure that many of

the boats do not just move somewhere else. A united effort is needed.

BLACK POINT/GREEN POINT COMMUNITY PLAN

The Marin County Board of Supervisors March 8 hearing on this draft Community Plan attracted an audience of about 50. The major issue was the desire by some Green Point residents to separate Green Point, which is north of Highway 37, from Black Point, which is south of Highway 37. The major complaints were about house size, setbacks and lack of notification for the planning process.

Twenty-six people testified and, according to the calculation of Supervisor Connolly, the testimony was fairly evenly divided with 14 in favor of having separate plans for the two communities, and 12 against. The supervisors, nevertheless, went along with Supervisor Arnold and allowed there to be separate plans.

We are concerned that separating the plans would delay changing the zoning and land use designation on our properties from agriculture to open area. In particular the 144 acres MAS owns along Atherton Avenue, which is in Green Point, would have to wait until the Green Point plan is approved. It is unclear how long it will take for the Green Point Plan to be ready for approval because there are many other community plans that are in line for review and they would be at the end.

PETALUMA RIVER BRIDGE SWALLOW NESTING

At a March 17 news conference along the Petaluma River, Caltrans presented an update on the swallow nesting during the last two years and for the remainder of the project. Caltrans is operating under a settlement agreement in the 2013 law suit brought by environmental organizations to protect the swallows during Caltrans' bridge widening project.

The Caltrans spokesperson described their efforts to exclude nesting and protect the birds. Fortunately it was corrected by Susan Kirks spokesperson for Madrone Audubon Society which took the lead in the suit. Actually, it has been a long struggle with Caltrans first placing netting that entrapped swallows, and then finally installing smooth material to which swallows cannot affix nest material. However, Caltrans did not attach the material correctly so swallows were able to attach nests.

The conference was moderated by Assemblyman Mark Levine and, in addition to Caltrans, was attended by his staff, and representatives of, and legal counsel for, the four environmental organizations that brought suit against Caltrans for failing to provide adequate protections to prevent entrapment and deaths of swallows attempting to nest on the bridge.

BOARD MEMBERS' SLATE

MAS's Annual Meeting in May will be the election of new board members. We are pleased to be able to present these four talented individuals to our membership for a vote. Each will serve a three-year term beginning in June 2016.

Our Nominating Committee has presented the following slate:

WILLIAM LEGGE

William hails from Hampshire in the UK and has been an avid birder since his early teens. William adopted the English passion of "patch birding" and is known locally for his bird updates from Rodeo Lagoon, where he has logged an impressive 257 species. Formerly an International Director with real estate consultants Jones Lang LaSalle, William now lives with his wife and 12-year old son in Mill Valley.

EVERETT CLARK

Formerly a weekend golfer, Everett replaced his golf clubs with binoculars and a spotting scope in the late 1990s after taking some Audubon field trips. He spends much of his free time birding in Marin and last year observed over 300 species in the county. Everett has a BA in English and Sociology and is currently on the staff of a San Francisco law firm.

MATTHEW PERRY

Matthew has been actively birding in Marin since he moved here from Michigan in 2007. He has degrees in Anthropology and Law but makes his living these days teaching, tutoring and writing. He currently notes every bird species he sees every month and every raptor he sees every day and keeps a "backyard" list of all birds seen from his Sausalito houseboat.

MARTHA JAROCKI

Martha has been our Publicity Chair in recent years. She will be returning to the Board.

The organizations bringing suit were Madrone, Golden Gate and Marin Audubon Societies, Native Songbird Care and Conservation, and the Center for Biological Diversity.

Until the construction project, this bridge supported a stable nesting colony of about 3,000 adult Cliff Swallows. These swallows travel 6,000 miles from South America to reach this nesting site.

Environmental representatives expressed the hope that Caltrans would not harm the swallows this year.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Both of our Saturday workdays in March were cancelled due to the wet weather, but the rain was probably better for the habitat than anything we might have done to remove the invasive plants. Although some of our natives get taller than most of the competition, some shorter species multiply to cover a wider area. For plants of the latter type, for example, yarrow and Pacific aster, we might be wise to weed and mulch the area immediately around them so that they will spread more rapidly. Italian thistle will be blooming soon and we can save some future trouble by pulling them now. Although they are a bit prickly, they pull relatively easily especially in the moist soil.

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: April 2, May 7

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: April 9, May 14

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

If you would like to help, contact Katy Zaremba at 415/847-9933 or volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org for more information.

Sunday April 17, 10 AM

As a part of California Native Plant Week, volunteers from the Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society will be helping us care for native plants at Bahia (www.cnpsmarin.org/events/events-calendar).

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Mother Nature, Bob Hinz, Lowell Sykes

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

BAHIA

A group of 13 volunteers on our February work day managed to get lots of Harding grass removed from the eastern peninsula and placed mulch around some other recently planted *Ambrosia* plants. In March the work day was cancelled because of wet weather.

Fence

For years we have been working to have a fence installed to block off the eastern peninsula, i.e., the peninsula closest to the Petaluma River. Recreational use of the peninsulas has been a problem since our restoration project was constructed. It was planned and permitted to be protected as wildlife habitat, with walkers and on-leash dogs allowed only on the western and central peninsulas. Unfortunately, visitors ignore signs, have damaged and/or removed some, and walk on the levee some with dogs. Dogs are a particular problem—they are often unleashed and allowed to run into the marsh that is habitat for endangered Ridgway's Rail. So, as a last resort after years of non-compliance, we will be installing a fence. At the south end there will be a sign on the fence explaining the reason, and at the north end, where we cannot fully block passage because of the topography, another sign will tell visitors access is blocked at the south end. The levee path on the central peninsula and the lower path along the lagoon on the western peninsula will still be open to walkers and on-leash dogs.

SIMMONS SLOUGH

We are pleased to report that, finally, we have had enough rain for Simmons Slough to have some substantial ponded water. We hope the birds enjoy it.

Shelterbelt Builders dug out more Harding grass from the north section of our Simmons Slough property just off Atherton Avenue, and they returned to place more mulch.

Fence

We have obtained three cost estimates for repairing our fence along Olive and Atherton Avenues. It is an old farm fence that was on the property when we acquired it 14 years ago. A closer look revealed that actually 530 feet of fencing is missing or damaged; most is along Atherton Avenue, but one section is along Olive. We have applied for a grant from the Marin County Fish and Wildlife Commission to help pay for the repair work. We don't want to leave the fence in a broken down condition. It would send a message that people are free to enter the property and possibly harass



Simmons Slough in Novato finally has substantial ponded water.

Diana Benner of The Watershed Nursery

wildlife, vandal the habitat, litter, set up encampments and/or set fires, as have occurred in San Rafael and Corte Madera.

TRIANGLE MARSH

Plans for a Corte Madera Boy Scout group to spend a work day at Triangle Marsh had to be put on hold because of a predicted heavy rain storm. In anticipation of their help, we had a load of mulch delivered. We plan to have them place cardboard and wood chip mulch on top of mowed fennel and Harding grass at our upland property at the end of Cay Passage and along Paradise Drive. We hope to reschedule the scouts in the near future.



© Frank Schulenburg

BROWN PELICAN SURVEY NEEDS YOU

Audubon is organizing a Citizen Science Survey in an effort to find out why the Brown Pelican productivity has been declining across its range in recent years. One known problem is the collapse of the key foraging species anchovy and sardine. The surveys will help define the distribution and abundance in the non-breeding season and track shifts in population.

The survey will take place on May 7 from 5 to 7 PM. Protocol for entering data will be provided, and you will be asked to take a few photos. Several observers would be helpful. The roost locations are Bird Rock at Point Bonita, near Rodeo Beach; two in West Marin off of MM10 on Hwy 1; and one on Tomales Bay.

USE YOUR BIRDING SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE BIRDS, VOLUNTEER NOW!

Contact Ariana Rickard, arickard@audubon.org. For more information visit ca.audubon.org/news/audubon-network-helping-pacific-brown-pelicans.

Reserve Now for the Mother's Day Picnic

See the Mother's Day Picnic flyer inserted with this newsletter or go to marinaudubon.org/events-mothers-day-picnic.php for more information about making your reservations.

Sign up early as this event sometimes fills up.

MARIN BIRDLOG: MARCH 2016

By Josiah Clark

With the arrival of March, so do arrive a handful of “First of Season” migrants. Coming from southern wintering grounds, these songbirds are the first to take advantage of all that spring has to offer. Longer days, tender foliage, the onset of blooming and the appearance of insects set the stage for the peak of the breeding season. Meanwhile winter residents here are also taking their cues from the landscape. As the days get warmer and the land gets drier those oh so common sparrows and kinglets will become only memories in just one month from now. With the best part of the wildflower season also upon us, March is definitely a month to keep your eyes open.

A distinctly winter associated sighting was a **Glaucous Gull** at Bolinas Lagoon on 2/17, likely taking a break from rough ocean conditions (PP). More recently at Bolinas Lagoon on 3/10, a **Red-necked Grebe** was another uncommon visitor (KH). Down south in Richardson Bay **Bald Eagles** continue to change the game for breeding herons and gulls amassing at herring runs 2/26 (KW).

The rarest bird in the county for the period was surely the **Black Vulture** at Abbotts Lagoon, which is most likely the same individual from last year (DH, SB).

Over in the eastern part of the county a **Tufted Duck** at Stafford Lake has been attracting birders since at least 2/26, who also observed **Eurasian Wigeon** and **Cackling Geese** there (MS, TP, RR). A field trip to Las Gallinas on 2/27 was treated to many noteworthy species including an unseasonal **Barn Swallow** (RROS).

First of season arrival dates include **Warbling Vireo** near Nicasio on March 1 (JY), **Caspian Tern** Richardson Bay on 3/10 (KW) and **House Wren** on Mt. Burdell on 3/15 (DE).

Observers and Acronyms **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **DH:** David Herlocker, **JY:** Jim Yurchenco, **KH:** Keith Hansen, **KW:** Kerry Wilcox, **MS:** Mark Stevenson, **PP:** Peter Pyle, **RR:** Ruthie Rudesill, **RROS:** Redwood Regional Ornithological Society, **SB:** Shannon Burke, **TP:** Todd Plummer

MARCH 19 FIELD TRIP

Red Crossbills Seen on Mount Tamalpais

By Jane Medley



Bill Chibbers

Red Crossbills

Thirty-five eager birders turned out for our popular Birding in Marin field trip, this month a beautiful spring-day tour of the Rock Springs and East Peak areas of Mount Tam on March 19. Our initial search for an earlier reported **Burrowing Owl** did not produce the owl, however, Kevin Minkoff made the day for all of us with his skillful spotting of a flock of **Red Crossbills** near the Mountain Theatre. These crossbills didn't just fly over our group—they stayed in close range

feeding on Douglas fir cones and drinking from a small creek where everyone watched and admired them for an extended time. The other birding highlight of the day was the repeated loud calling of **Pileated Woodpeckers**, two of which were seen in flight. Thanks to all the fine folks who add so much to our Marin Audubon field trips.



Spring Birds and Their Songs Class

At press time there are a few spaces left in Meryl and Roger's three-session class on the identification and appreciation of local bird songs, April 28, 30 and May 7. For more information, contact Meryl Sundove at 415/927-4115, msundove@comcast.net, or see your March issue of *The Rail* which is also available at marinaudubon.org/newsletter.php. Sign up now.



Len Blamin

Cackling Geese and one Canada Goose

THANK YOU \$1000+ DONORS FOR THE CORTE MADERA PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The list below includes donors to both Marin Audubon and Marin Baylands Advocates.

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SAVE THE DATE

- May 5 **Field Trip:** Las Gallinas
With Susan Kelly & Len Blumin
- May 7 **Stewardship Day:** Triangle Marsh
- May 8 **Mother's Day Picnic**
Audubon Canyon Ranch
- May 12 **Field Trip:** Birdsong at Big Rock
With Lisa Hug & Susan Kelly
- May 14 **Stewardship Day:** Bahia
- May 14 **International Migratory Bird Day**
Global Big Day
- May 21 **Field Trip:** Muir Woods/Muir Beach
With Jim White & Bob Battagin

Check website for updates and details

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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 Rail*. 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 because all of your chapter-supporting dues stay with MAS.

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.

JOINT NAS-MAS MEMBERSHIP

A National Audubon Society Membership is a joint membership with National and chapters. With this joint membership, you 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: MAS, 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**.

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