



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

2017 Christmas Bird Counts – Your Choice of Three in Marin



Peter Pyle

Bryan's Shearwater

In 2011 Peter Pyle and his colleagues at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute described a new species of bird, based on a misidentified specimen collected in 1963 in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands. It had been misidentified as a Little Shearwater (*P. assimilis*) but genetically appeared closer to the Newell's Shearwater (*P. newelli*) of the southeastern Hawaiian Islands.

Because he discovered the new species, Peter was able to name it, and so he did, after his grandfather, Edwin Bryan. In this presentation Peter will explain the discovery; provide updated information on its seasonality, breeding habitat requirements, and vocalizations; review potential at-sea records in the North Pacific; and present recent information on where breeding colonies exist. Peter will also include a biography of Edwin Bryan's life and career with Honolulu's Bishop Museum.

Peter has been a research scientist for the Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) since 1996. From 1985 until 2003 Peter was a biologist on the Farallon Islands. He is also a Research Associate at the California Academy of Sciences and the Bishop Museum, and has authored or co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed papers, four books, and a monograph on the birds of Hawaii.



Bob Hinz

The Ring Mountain/Strawberry team counting ducks, grebes, gulls and cormorants on Richardson Bay from the path along Egret Way.

or more of Marin's Christmas Bird Counts. If you're thinking about participating in one of Marin Audubon's CBCs but don't feel confident that you can help, know that your eyes and ears would be useful. You can bring attention to a bird in the bushes, high overhead or behind everyone else's back that might not have been noticed. Someone else

can make the identification. Each team also needs a person to record the data.

The following is basic information about our three local counts.

CHEEP THRILLS – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

Cheep Thrills is the north county Christmas

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Each year in late December and early January, thousands of volunteers around the world disperse to local bird "count circles" to count all the birds they observe throughout the day. This will be the 118th Christmas Bird Count season, which is administered by the National Audubon Society. CBCs bring together birders and conservationists in the longest-running citizen science program in the world. Its long history and wide scope (there are now over 2,300 individual count circles) provide valuable information about the long-term status of bird populations across North America and elsewhere. The Marin Audubon Society sponsors three counts in Marin County with hundreds of participants. Each covers a 15-mile diameter circle in which teams of volunteers, from novice to expert, count every bird they encounter during the entire day. For more information about Christmas Bird Counts go to www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in one

MAS Membership Secretary Needed!

Looking for a volunteer opportunity and have relational database experience? We would love to talk to you! Our current Membership Secretary will soon be retiring and we need a volunteer to take on the critical role of maintaining our membership list. If you would like to inquire about this role, please contact Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057, bsalzman@att.net; or William Legge at 415/307-2348, wgdlegge@aol.com.

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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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DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

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

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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Website: www.marinaudubon.org

Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Marin Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor or memory of someone. Gifts may be directed to any MAS project. Unspecified gifts of more than \$500 will be placed in the Endowment Fund for conservation, the protection of wildlife species, and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats. Since MAS is an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes to its projects. All gifts are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged in *The Rail*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society. Checks should be made out and mailed to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

Most of you have probably noticed that in recent months we have had a new author for our Birdlog column, Noah Arthur, and he is doing a stupendous job. Noah is a student at the University of Nebraska majoring in entomology. In addition to his interest in butterflies, he is an *excellent birder* both by sight and by ear, and he's also an artist. Those who bird with him report that in a few minutes he can put together an amazing likeness of birds from memory. He is also an exceptional writer as his Birdlog entries demonstrate. He creates timely observation lists with fascinating information about the birds that are reported. We are so pleased to have him as a contributor to our newsletter.

It's been depressing news for wildlife and habitats in GGNRA with the rejection of the GGNRA Dog Management Plan—a sad day for birds and other special status species in the Recreation Area. I suppose the lack of concern for native species is not entirely unexpected, but it is disturbing nonetheless.

Another sad local occurrence was the dog attack that killed three goats and maimed another goat the Bridge District had hired to eat the pampas grass that has overtaken their 72-acre property on the Corte Madera Bayfront. I wonder how many such attacks

take place on wildlife which would likely go unnoticed or unreported. The District has been so good about clearing invasive pampas grass and erecting signs notifying users that dogs are to remain on trails and not enter the 72 acres. The owner of the attacking dog probably did not expect her/his dog to attack and kill goats and maim another, but it did. This is one of the risks of dogs off-leash—their behavior is not always predictable, even though owners usually think it is. This is the reason all dogs should be controlled on a leash.

The busy holiday season is upon us. Do take time to get out and enjoy the waterfowl and shorebirds that have now returned to spend the winter in our Bay and marshes. One way is by participating in one or more of our Christmas Bird Counts—Southern Marin, West Marin and Cheep Thrills. CBCs are one of the most important ways non-scientists can make a difference in scientific knowledge. CBCs are one of if not the longest bird count, and they are an important means to identify changes and trends in bird populations. Another way to enjoy our overwintering birds is to come on one or more of our field trips

May all of our members have a wonderful holiday season.

Christmas Bird Counts

continued from page 1

Bird Count that was started in 1978, conducted for ten years, and then revived in 2011 by Marin Audubon and Rich Stallcup.

Last year's Cheep Thrills put the rain back into the CBC adage "Rain or Shine." On a day that saw frequent flash flood warnings, sixty volunteers counted all the birds they could find through the downpours. Despite the "pleasantly miserable" weather, we found a total of 133 species! On more typical years, we average about 160 species.

Interestingly, for the first ten years of this count, 1978 through 1987 (when the organizers discontinued it) the average number of species reported was 158. In the six years since it was revived, we've averaged 160. Maybe this year we can top the all-time high species count: 164 species observed in 2011.

As always, this count is dedicated to the memory of Rich, our great friend and teacher, who generously shared his astounding knowledge of birds, dragonflies, and all natural creatures and who also taught us the importance

of striving to be what he called "good humans."

For more information or to sign up for this count, visit the Cheep Thrills website at <http://cheepthrillscbc.blogspot.com>. Susan Kelly, the compiler, will gladly respond to all inquiries.

POINT REYES – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

The Point Reyes CBC, now in its 47th year, is one of the country's most popular counts, with more than 200 people covering 27 territories in West Marin, one of the most diverse and beautiful landscapes anywhere. Grasslands, wetlands, beaches, bays and open ocean account for the popularity, challenges, and number of species listed. The Point Reyes CBC is regularly in the top 5 nationally. Last year, 196 species were counted. Register asap to be part of the big day. With your participation, the cooperation of the birds, a bit of luck with the weather, and Pam Ferrari's wonderful dinner (this year at Toby's Feed Barn), we will have another fun day in the field and a record count!

For more information and to register, see <https://www.pointreyescbc.com>. Todd Plummer and George Curth are compilers.

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MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one-day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, snacks, water, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility, and weather check: Jane Medley, 559/760-1551, janermedley@gmail.com.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT UPDATES.

BAHIA, RUSH CREEK AND ROWLAND AVENUE WETLANDS

Novato

No. 12, Birding in Marin (BIM) Series

Saturday, December 2, 2017

NOTE: This is the 1st Saturday, not the 3rd, to avoid Christmas Bird Counts 8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Please meet at the east end of Bahia Drive in Novato where Marin Audubon has completed a large restoration project. Shorebirds, ducks, herons, swallows and rails will be reaping the benefits here for years to come. After viewing the birds and the restoration area, we will walk the trail along the edge of the mixed oak woodland. Next, we drive to the end of Topaz Drive to view the Horseshoe Pond where some diving ducks, including a few Barrow's Goldeneyes, like to winter. During the day we will practice some bird counting to help prepare for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count season. After lunch we will take a look at two nearby areas—Rush Creek and the Rowland Avenue wetlands. Heavy rain cancels.

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

THE PONDS AT THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT (LGVSD)

San Rafael

Thursday, December 7, 2017

8:30 AM to noon – **NOTE EARLY START**

With Sande and Bob Chilvers

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. Join our skilled leaders as we search for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. Wintering waterfowl have been arriving and provide interesting weekly sightings. Other uncommon species arrive unexpectedly such as the Loggerhead Shrike and Merlin observed by our November field trip participants.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, so come assist in our search. You don't even have to arrive on time because we spend the first 30-60 minutes studying the birds around the first

pond and the group is easy to find. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101, exit at Smith Ranch Rd. Drive east on Smith Ranch Rd. toward McInnis Park. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and drive about .5 mile through the LGVSD gates and into the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. There is an outhouse in the parking area for public use or you can use the bathrooms at nearby McInnis Park.

SHOLLENBERGER PARK

Petaluma

Saturday, December 9, 2017

8:30 AM to 1 PM

With Peter Colasanti

With over 230 species recorded, Shollenberger Park is one of the major birding hotspots in the North Bay. Over half those birds are possible in early December. Let's spend a morning watching winter birds before it turns cold. If time and interest permits, we may extend to Ellis Creek. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Going north on Hwy 101 from Marin, take the second Petaluma exit, which is Route 116 (Lakeville Hwy). Go east about one mile to South McDowell Blvd (4th traffic light) and turn right. Take the third right on Cader Lane and park in the lot at the end.

RICHARDSON BAY

Tiburon

Sunday, December 11, 2017

9 AM to noon

With Bob Hinz

We'll start with a walk through the Richardson Bay Audubon Center property to see the winter land birds. At the "back beach" with scopes we can see the eastern shores of the islands as well as the bay. Depending upon recent sightings, then it's off to either the shore at Blackie's Pasture or the cove at the end of the bay where we may get close looks at a number of shorebird and waterbird species. From the cove we will also walk along the path to Harbor Cove Way for a closer look at Pickleweed Island. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: The Richardson Bay Audubon Center is at 376 Greenwood Beach Rd. Take the Tiburon Blvd. exit from Hwy 101 and drive about 0.8 mile to Greenwood Cove Rd. Turn right at the traffic light toward the Audubon Center, which is about 0.5 mile farther.

SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP

Online Signups Begin December 11, 2017

Departure/return at the Antioch Marina

Sunday, February 4, 2018

(Super Bowl Sunday)

8:15 AM to 4:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer



Join us aboard Dolphin Charters' River Dolphin for a wonderful day of exploring the richness of the California Delta with naturalist David Wimpfheimer as our guide. Ronn Patterson, a Bay Area historian, naturalist, and owner of Dolphin Charters, will be our captain. The boat is very comfortable and the outer decks provide views over the levees of the amazing array of birds found in the Delta during the winter. This rich area hosts a wide variety of raptors including Swainson's Hawks, Peregrine Falcons and Great Horned Owls. Large numbers of shorebirds, Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans, Snow, Canada and White-fronted Geese, ducks, as well as gulls, terns, bitterns and passerines make the cruise a highlight for birders. Uncommon mammals such as beaver, river otter, and mink often add interest to the cruise. We also will learn about the history, ecology and politics of the levees and the Delta as we travel through its meandering channels.

Given that our boat trip is limited to just 25 participants, this trip is limited to only Marin Audubon Society's chapter-supporting members at a cost of \$105. A membership with National Audubon Society does not qualify for participation in MAS "Members Only" field trips. Our "Members Only" field trips are a specific benefit we provide to MAS chapter-supporting members for their support of Marin Audubon and the work MAS undertakes in protecting and managing local habitats for the benefit of Marin's resident and migratory birds.

Registration and payment for the trip will begin on December 11, 2017.

Register at www.marinaudubon.org. (For Non-MAS members: We invite you to join MAS at www.marinaudubon.org to participate in this trip.) **We recommend booking your space ASAP as our boat trips frequently sell out quickly.** Include the name, email address, and contact phone number of each participant. Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions prior to the trip.

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.

LAWSON'S LANDING PERMIT AMENDMENT DENIED

Good news! On November 8 the Coastal Commission voted 8 to 4 to deny a proposed amendment to the Coastal Permit for Lawson's Landing. The staff report supported granting the amendment because they viewed the proposed features as benefitting low-cost visitor use. They placed a higher value on visitor services. The majority of the Commission saw clearly that there was no basis for undoing the existing permit conditions that had been carefully deliberated by the commission and later subjected to mediation. They saw no changed circumstances that warrant changing the current permit and recognized that their primary responsibility was to protect natural resources.

The applicant's requested amendment to their coastal permit was to allow a visitor-serving development consisting of a store, gatehouse, rental facility, offices, parking, road access, photovoltaic or solar panels, and a wastewater treatment system. All of this development would have been in an environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA) that had been protected by conditions imposed by the commission, which then consisted of different commissioners, except for one, the current chair Dayna Bochco.

Chair Bochco reported that the previous commission discussion and decision had thoroughly addressed the issue as had the subsequent mediation which led to the current coastal zone permit conditions. The fact that the ESHA was fragmented, which was cited by staff as a reason to approve the amendment, should not justify its being further degraded. The wastewater system should go to the upper pasture. The majority of commissioners agreed, saw that their primary responsibility was to protect the natural resources, and did just.

PT. REYES GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS UNDERWAY

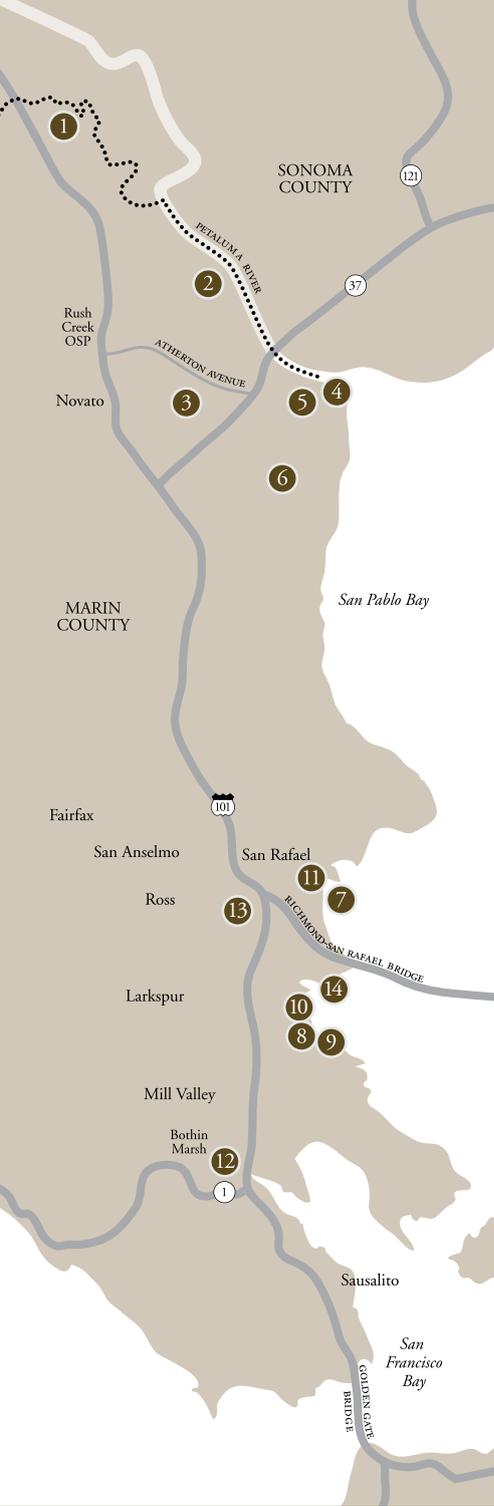
Six alternatives are projected to be studied by the National Park Service (NPS) for an amendment to the Point Reyes National Seashore Management Plan, in compliance with the settlement of the lawsuit brought by several environmental organizations. As part of the settlement, the NPS agreed to update management of the more than 28,000 acres of the NPS land on the Pt. Reyes Peninsula. The amendment will provide guidance for

preservation of natural and cultural resources, management of development and visitor use, and strategies for managing agricultural leases and tule elk.

The alternatives to be studied include (1) No Ranching and Limited Management of Tule Elk; (2) No Dairy Ranching and Management of Drakes Beach Tule Elk Herd; (3) Reduced Ranching and Management of the Drakes Beach Tule Elk Herd; (4) Continued Ranching and Management of the Drakes Beach Tule Elk Herd; (5) Continued Ranching and Removal of the Drakes Beach Tule Elk Herd; and (6) Continued Current Management, which is a No Action alternative. Each of the alternatives address, in different ways, measures to protect park resources, guidance for types and levels of public use, and visitor carrying capacities. Lands outside the planning area include wilderness and two ranches that have permanent occupancy. Most of the ranches in the study area raise beef cattle which are less damaging to the resources than dairy cows that have to be milked twice a day. Twenty-four families currently hold lease/permits or reservations of use and occupancy; eighteen ranches have residential use.

The expansion of the tule elk population and the resulting objections of the ranchers to the damage caused by the elk to their fences and the consumption of forage by elk were the motivations for the law suit. The tule elk are the focus of the management interest. However, they are not the only wildlife that depend on the Seashore habitats. The Point Reyes peninsula is a haven for vagrant birds that have lost their way during migration, and provides nesting and foraging habitat for many native birds and other species. Impact of the current, and possible change, in use must be addressed. Another observation is that there is no connection between the tule elk-occupied habitats and the wilderness areas. MAS asked that an alternative be included that focuses on all wildlife and habitat connectivity.

The short time frame for public comment did not allow us time to publish a call for member action in this newsletter. The NPS assures, however, that there will be more opportunities for public comment during the planning process. Once the NPS has refined the range of conceptual alternatives, a Notice of Intent to prepare a federal environmental review document under the National Environmental Quality Act, an Environmental



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
14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site	5.2 acres

Impact Statement, will be prepared and that will necessitate public comment.

GREENWAY GAP CLOSURE CONSTRAINTS STUDY

Commissioned by Marin County Public Works, Garcia and Associates has prepared a constraints analysis for the segment of the north-south old right of way—now owned by SMART—extending from Corte Madera Creek south to the narrow dirt path behind the Cost Plus Shopping Center between a trailer court and Shorebird Marsh to connect with Wornum Drive and the Sandra Marker Trail. A minimum of 14 feet (12 feet for the trail with a foot of freeboard on each side) would be required to accommodate the Bay Trail, which is pushing hard for this segment. SMART requires that enough space be reserved to accommodate a rail line in case they decide to extend south in the future. Unless they ignore the rising tides, the trail and the rail tracks would have to be constructed at a higher elevation than their current height. This would require widening the base of the levee. It has not been demonstrated that there is sufficient space in the 150-foot right of way to accommodate all of these uses without filling tidal marsh and removing some of the trailer-homes which are in the right of way.

The Garcia analysis is surprisingly inadequate. It fails to accurately describe the Ridgway's Rail population in the tidal marsh which has been documented to be consistently high for more than 30 years. Garcia reported few sightings in the last 20 years. There are many surveys and observations (Pt. Blue, the Invasive Spartina Project, MAS Christmas Counts and residents of the Boardwalk) dating back to the early 1980s identifying Ridgway's Rails (then Clapper Rails) on the section of marsh that would be impacted by this project. Garcia also fails to note that the rail population in this historic marsh (never been diked) is of significance.

Another major flaw in the Garcia Report is its failure to address the habitat needed by the endangered species, specifically the need for refugia habitat. While it mentions the lack of refugia for the rails to escape king tides, it fails to follow through with an analysis of whether there is sufficient space for this important habitat component to be provided while constructing a trail and reserving space for railroads. The recommendations do not mention the need for refugia habitat.

SAN GERONIMO GOLF COURSE ACQUISITION

After three hours of public testimony from, by my count, almost 70 speakers the Board of

Supervisors voted to approve purchase of the San Geronimo golf course. The vote had been delayed for three weeks in order to appease opponents who complained that the decision was being rushed through.

Most of the speakers supported the acquisition but it may have seemed like the opponents were more numerous because they made more noise, shouting and clapping. Supporters had varied ideas on what to do with the property, once acquired. Some wanted the site restored to habitat for the endangered salmon and other wildlife while others wanted agriculture, wastewater treatment facilities, and even housing. Opponents either wanted to retain a golf course or just opposed the purchase.

MAS supported acquisition of the property on the basis of its use for restoring habitat particularly for endangered Coho salmon and Northern Spotted Owls, the latter of which nest nearby. Larsen Creek runs through the property and flows into Lagunitas Creek, a known spawning creek for salmon and steelhead. The Coho have difficulty navigating the inadequate/defective dam. The creek habitat should be enhanced, its riparian corridor widened and improved, and the dam replaced.

The Supervisors put a condition on the purchase, that there be a public planning process to determine the uses of the property, so the public needs to stay involved. Ongoing public support will be needed to ensure natural habitat is restored. Funding is planned to come from the Wildlife Conservation Board and Marin County Measure A funds. Property purchased with these funds will have to be for natural resource or access uses. But funding is also planned from County general fund and uses of the land purchased with these funds will be less restricted, increasing the need for public involvement.

THE LITTLE-KNOWN WORLD OF DUSKY-FOOTED WOODRATS

The audience at the One Tam Symposium this year was delighted with presentations on the life and homes of this little-known rodent that is so central to our forest ecosystems. Dusky-footed woodrats are New World rats, nocturnal and arboreal. They are found near water and oak trees—in fact, they have an enzyme specific to digesting live oak. Woodrats have a strong behavioral drive to gather sticks which they use to build their homes. Some woodrat houses just look like piles of sticks on the forest floor, but they can be as high as four feet tall and sometimes lean against trees. Woodrats are even known to even decorate their house with foil from candy wrappers and flowers.

Woodrats build the most complex above-



© Ken Hickman

Dusky-footed Woodrat

ground house of any mammal. Generally each female has two houses perhaps to move between when one becomes infested with fleas. Population densities range from 15 to 38 per acre. The houses are well organized, well maintained, and consist of multiple rooms built around a central space. The houses also have multiple pantries in which they store different kinds of foods in individual rooms. One pantry is used to leach out toxins in some plants.

Woodrats are a keystone forest species. Their mounds/burrows provide habitat for many species including insects and snakes. They are known to block off rooms where snakes are present. They are primary prey for Northern Spotted Owl as well as other species that are active at night.

Considering the current call by some to clean the forest floor to prevent forest fires, woodrat houses could be at risk. It is a concern that folks thinking they were cleaning up sticks could destroy woodrat houses. This would have a devastating effect on the forest ecosystem.

THANKS FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Deborah & Arthur R. Ablin, Carl Blom, Ingrid K. Brennan, Dr. & Mrs. Charles Fischer, Francine Goodman, Roger Harris, Robert Portnoy, RHE Charitable Foundation, Jordan Rinker, United Way California Capital Region (employer match), Elizabeth A. Weisheit

BENEFIT MAS

Make your next Amazon order through AmazonSmile and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to MAS. For information, visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-6076664>.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Rain. That was the most beneficial activity during the last month. Planting has begun for the season. Removing the invasive nonnative species would be an endless task without replacing them with desirable native species. So, if hired crews haven't finished what is too big a job for our volunteers (we need you!), we will plant native grasses and some other species.

Act locally and join us on a workday. Witness restoration first-hand and be a part of it.

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

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: December 2, January 6

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

Bahia, Novato:

Monthly workdays are continuing but on a more irregular schedule. If you would like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Dominican University environmental science class (Vania Coelho, Bailey Ferguson, Alister Greenfield, Allison Kustic, Nick Stephens), Debbie Ablin, Dave Chenoweth, Bob Hinz, Jude Stalker, Lowell Sykes

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

We'd like to enhance our volunteer program. If you enjoy working with people and support what Marin Audubon does, please contact Barbara Salzman to find out more about this volunteer opportunity.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Evleen Anderson, Janice Bennett, Scott & Mary Buchanan, Kenneth Cherry, Marilyn Cornett, Ross Flewelling, Jane Ford, Carol Maddison & Don Higgins, Donald Kirker, Jocelyn Knight, Beth Leib, Katherine Look, Michael Mallamo, Christine Martin, Stephanie McAfee, Fred Payne, Robert Speckels, Carol G Wall, Kathleen Walsh

BAHIA

With the benefit of recent rain, volunteers from Dominican University planted creeping wildrye grass (*Elymus triticoides*). These early season plantings have more time to develop extensive root systems before summer and so have a higher survival rate than late winter plantings. Other volunteers continued to remove the cocklebur which had developed into such a thick stand.

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

The construction work on our marsh restoration project at the Ecological Reserve in Corte Madera is finally about to begin after a year of planning and permitting and twenty years of trying to purchase the property. It is planned to begin shortly after Thanksgiving. Hanford ARC will be doing the construction. Construction will consist of excavating fill material that had been placed by previous land owners either to get rid of their construction debris or to raise the elevation for an office development.

The excavated material will be sorted into piles. Soil without debris (rocks, bricks, pieces of wood) will be placed on the top of our three disposal mounds.



Jude Stalker

Student volunteers from Dominican University's Environmental Science class started the planting season at Bahia by transplanting creeping wildrye.

We expect the excavation work to be finished by early to mid-January, barring extensive storms. Wet weather is anticipated and planned into the schedule. Currently the preconstruction work of conducting surveys and finalizing agreements, plans and permits is underway.

TRIANGLE MARSH

On the first Saturday workday in November volunteers removed Harding grass, bristly ox-tongue and fennel between the berm and Paradise Drive. This area is still dominated by non-native annual grasses, but a native grass, purple needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*), will be planted in a big section in the next month.

Christmas Bird Counts

continued from page 2

SOUTHERN MARIN – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

The Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 30. The count circle covers a wide variety of habitats and includes from the Marin headlands on the south to Terra Linda on the north and from Bolinas Lagoon and the ocean on the west to San Francisco bay and marshes on the east. Areas covered include the Audubon Canyon Ranch, Stinson Beach, Muir Beach, Fort Cronkhite, Muir Woods, Tennessee Valley, Sausalito, Tiburon Peninsula, Ring Mountain, MMWD watershed and lakes as well as the towns of Mill Valley, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo and San Rafael. The 2016 count recorded 178 species.

Sign up by December 26 by completing the registration form at www.marinaudubon.org/cbc_form.php or contact compilers Ed

Nute and Bob Hinz at smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com. Even if you have indicated your participation to your area leader, please sign up on the website so that we get a count of both participants in the count and participants at the dinner.

If you'd like to be involved in the Christmas Bird Count, but will not be participating in the actual count, please consider volunteering for the Christmas Bird Count Compilation Dinner at the Tamalpais Valley Community Center immediately following the count. About 3:30 or 4 PM we will need volunteers to help set up the room at the Community Center and collect payment at the door for the dinner.

TIME TO TRIM TREES NOW!

Many folks trim trees in Spring which is the worst time for nesting birds. Instead, do your tree trimming or cutting during early winter months to avoid harming nests and young birds in their nests.

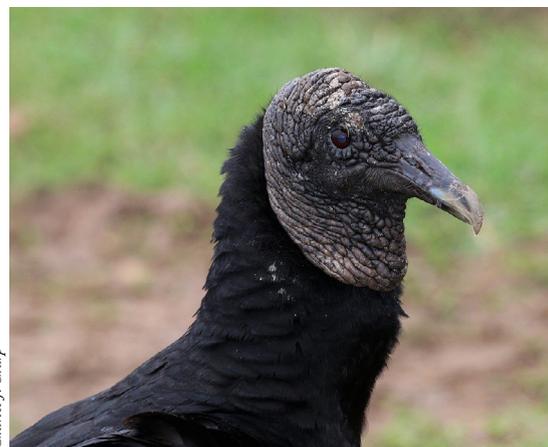
MARIN BIRDLOG: SEPTEMBER 2017

By Noah Arthur

October is mid-fall in Marin – the month for sparrows and a great variety of rarities – and this year it didn't disappoint. With more-regular sparrows such as Fox, Golden-crowned, Lincoln's, and White-throated arriving all over the California coast, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was a welcome back deck visitor in Forest Knolls on the 6th (BB). Meanwhile, the phenomenal warbler action of the past few weeks continued at Outer Point Reyes on the 6th, with a female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** and two **Palm Warblers** at Drakes Beach (RA). On the 8th, another of our familiar fall rarities appeared on the Outer Point in the form of a **Tropical Kingbird** at the Fish Docks (JM).

Two more **Clay-colored Sparrows** appeared in Larkspur on the 10th (RS), but much rarer was a female **Prothonotary Warbler** found at Rodeo Lagoon on the same day (WL).

Another very nice bird found on the 10th was a **Sage**



Charles J. Sharp

Black Vulture

18th, a flock of four **Lapland Longspurs** (JW). Interestingly, not one but *two* **Sage Thrashers** were present at Drakes Corner on the 19th, highlighting the occasional occurrence of very rare birds in twos, hinting at birds' apparent uncanny abilities to find each other in unfamiliar places (JE).

A previously-reported **Black Vulture**, perhaps the same one that's been wandering up and down the North Bay coast for several years, was soaring with **Turkey Vulture** kettle-mates over Pt. Reyes on the 22nd (MS). On the 23rd, a **White-winged Dove** also showed up at Drakes Beach (BB). More nice Pt. Reyes birds on the 23rd included a **Burrowing Owl** and an **Indigo Bunting** at the Lighthouse, and two **Palm Warblers** (DM).

A final good bird for the month was a much rarer longspur, a **Chestnut-collared Longspur**, found along the Tomales Bay Trail on the 30th (DM).



Mike's Birds

Palm Warbler

Thrasher at Drakes Corner on the outer point, along with a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was also present in the trees at Drakes Beach (MS). A **Black-and-white Warbler** was added to the month's burgeoning warbler list on the 12th at the Fish Docks, joined by another **Palm Warbler** (KF). Another **Tropical Kingbird** was at Rodeo Lagoon on the 14th (DW).

As late as the 17th, the continuing **Green-tailed Towhee** was still present at the Corte Madera Marshes (LG). Also on the 17th, banders captured a **Tennessee Warbler** at Pine Gulch along Bolinas Lagoon (RC).

Another classic North Bay fall rarity put in its annual appearance at Abbotts Lagoon on the



Andy Reago and Chris McClaren

Lapland Longspur

Observers and Acronyms **BB:** Bob Battagin, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **JE:** Jules Evens, **JM:** Joseph Morlan, **JW:** Jim White, **KF:** Katherine Francone, **LG:** Lorri Gong, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **RA:** Rick Ackley, **RC:** Renee Cormier, **RS:** Rich Cimino, **WL:** William Legge

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You can, however, turn your required minimum distribution from a traditional IRA into a tax-favored charitable gift. You can give up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as Marin Audubon without paying income taxes on the withdrawal.

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With Jim White
- January 20 **Field Trip:** Bolinas Lagoon
With Jim White & Bob Battagin
- January 27 **Field Trip:** Yolo County
With John Klobas

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. We receive a fixed amount based on our 2001 membership. 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're not already a chapter-supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

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