



Photo courtesy of Dmitry Azarkov

River Otter

River otters are charismatic carnivores, wonderful ambassadors for river and wetland restoration and conservation efforts. Yet, little is known about their population, range and seasonal eating habits in the Bay Area. The River Otter Ecology Project has taken on the challenge of discovering and documenting their ecological niche. You'll be shown slides and videos from their ottercams, and they'll discuss the project and the role that citizen science plays in this "otterly" exciting work!

Megan Isadore is a naturalist, wildlife rehabilitator and writer. She graduated with a degree in English, never suspecting she would spend her entire career in one kind of science or another. In 1998, Megan turned her attention to watershed ecology in service to the critically endangered coho salmon of Lagunitas Creek and became Lead Naturalist for SPAWN.

The River Otter Ecology Project grew out of Megan's fascination with these remarkable semi-aquatic mammals that are a keystone species in our coastal ecosystems, not only ecologically, but in their ability to inspire an interest in conservation and restoration of the watersheds upon which we all depend.

Megan is a gold medal winner of the Environmental Leader of Marin Award in 2014 and the John Muir Association Conservation Award in 2014.

Come at 7:15 PM for refreshments. Meeting begins at 7:30 PM.



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAS 2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT Check out this year's annual report on pages 4 and 5.

Save Marin's Native Habitats

The future of Marin's native wildlife and native habitats took a turn for the worse this summer with the actions of two of Marin's major habitat managers: the Marin County Supervisors stopped the Open Space District (OSD) from treating the highly invasive Harding grass at Ring Mountain with herbicide (glyphosate) and Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) removed the option of using herbicides as a tool to treat highly invasive plants. It is especially troubling that these decisions were made without any public discussion. Instead, decision-makers responded to a crowd many of whom espoused uninformed and incorrect information.

Marin Audubon Society (MAS) advocates for wildlife and the native habitats that support them. Our ultimate goal is to use no herbicides, but at this time, native habitats are under siege from invasions of non-native species. This impact is compounded by others including recreational activities and climate change.

Native wildlife has evolved to eat and nest on native plants, some very specific native plant species. Invasive plants provide no such support. Without limited use of herbicides, we can look forward to losing vegetative habitats and the native birds and other wildlife that depend on them. One need only look at MMWD lands on which 60 acres of native habitat have been lost to broom each year for the last 10 years. During that time no herbicides were used. The current approach of not allowing even minimal use will only increase the losses.

We should also expect fire danger to increase as stands of the highly flammable broom, thistle, Harding grass, pampas grass and others, expand unchecked.

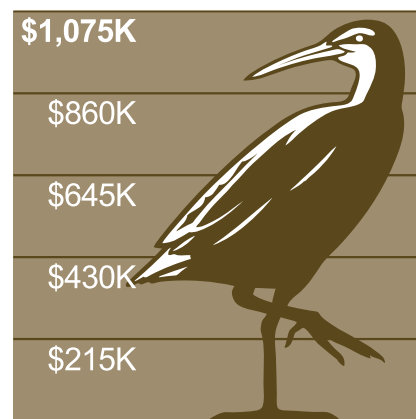
MCOSD uses, and MMWD used until 10 years ago, an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach which is a systematic method of controlling pests using the most effective economically feasible methods that are the least harmful to people, property and the environment. For example, begin with hand weeding and mechanical removal, and if these are unsuccessful, follow up with by minimal use of herbicides, sometimes in combination with other methods.

We are familiar with the problem from our experience on our own properties. Manual removal methods can be ineffective because some species simply cannot be controlled in this way. Pulling, cutting, and digging, for example, only make pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) more vigorous; cutting increases the complexity of broom root

systems making it more difficult to remove later; and invasive cordgrass (*Spartina sp.*) grows in bay mud making it impossible to remove by digging or cutting.

Furthermore, there simply aren't enough volunteers to manage large acreages. The OSD had a work day on Ring Mountain several weeks after the Supervisors decision. Only four people showed up. This is similar to our experience at Triangle Marsh. It is clear that there are simply not enough volunteers to make manual or mechanical removal effective with volunteers.

MAS has hired professionals to treat pepperweed with herbicides on several of our properties. We made this choice after other methods failed and after consulting professional experts about studies and experiences elsewhere. Using a limited amount of an herbicide applied with a tiny wand to individual plants was the only answer to eradicate pepperweed. We had a similar experience with invasive cordgrass. We will not stand by while the marshes and transition habitats we worked so hard to purchase and restore are destroyed by nonnatives. (con'td on page 6)



The Gap is Closed!

Hooray for us all!

After more than a year of fund raising, negotiating and deliberating, we have closed the gap—raised sufficient funds to purchase the Corte Madera property—and we are scheduled to close as this newsletter is going to press.

We couldn't have done it without our generous donors whom we will list in next month's *The Rail*.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

- President Barbara Salzman 924-6057
- Vice President Lowell Sykes 388-2821
- Secretary Mariah Baird 456-3355
- Treasurer Josephine Kreider 707/230-3553
- Finance Chair Greg Block 479-8254
- Conservation Phil Peterson 828-4780
Barbara Salzman 924-6057
- Field Trips Vicky Van Meter 299-2514
- Membership Periann Wood 388-1516
- Fundraising Flinn Moore Rauck 892-7554
- Speaker Series/Programs Board Members
- Special Projects Jude Stalker 668-1242
- Nominating Phil Peterson 828-4780
- Editor, *The Rail* Bob Hinz, 383-8688
- Volunteer Coordinator Katy Zaremba, 847-9933
- Property Management Ed Nute 669-7710
- 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

The summer has been busy with purchasing the Corte Madera property and with protecting native habitats and spotted owls from increasing impacts (see page 1). We're ready to meet these and other challenges and also to create and take advantage of opportunities the coming year will bring. We need support and help from all of our members.

As you can see from our Annual Report, we've been busy this year. In particular, we're thrilled to be closing escrow on the Corte Madera property which we expect to do on August 28.

If you live in the Camino Alto vicinity or the golf course area of Mill Valley, we need your voice speaking for the owls (see story on page 6). Please contact either Bob Hinz or me for more information.

We welcome Jane Medley to our Board of Directors. Jane grew up in San Rafael and became interested in birds while exploring Pt. Reyes during her college years. In the 1970s she went backpacking in Yosemite and ended up staying in the park and the Sierra Nevada

foothills for almost four decades. During that time she worked for the National Park Service, taught reading, married and raised three sons. Now retired, Jane has been helping with Marin Audubon activities for several years now, and we are looking forward to working with her more closely as a member of our Board.

With this exciting new (fiscal) year underway, we hope members will become more involved with Marin Audubon. We invite you to join in Marin Audubon activities in the coming year.

We have interesting field trips and programs planned as well as volunteer opportunities. We encourage you to participate in our Habitat Stewardship Days at Bahia and Triangle Marsh where you will help restore habitat as well as learn about habitat restoration, the wildlife that depend on these habitats and the invasive and native plants.

We also welcome members to join our Conservation Committee where we address current issues and environmental threats, and you can participate in formulating our positions and actions to address the threats.

Volunteer of the Year – Susan Ristow



Photo courtesy of Joy Salzman

Susan Ristow

The Marin Audubon Board is pleased to announce our 2014-2015 Volunteer of the Year: Susan Ristow.

Susan has a long history with MAS, serving on our Board from 2000 to 2003 and continuing as an off-board volunteer, advising and

actively working on many of our conservation projects in North and Central Marin.

She does much of her volunteer work behind the scenes and so may be rarely seen by MAS members, but she is present, providing support and advice, and acting to further our mission and goals. She approaches tasks with wit, insight and thoughtfulness.

Susan is an excellent editor, and volunteers many hours reviewing documents. She also is a splendid organizer and takes on responsibilities, often unasked, with enthusiasm and always follows through.

Susan is active with MAS's partner in protecting baylands, Marin Baylands Advocates, where she organizes meetings, maintains the website, and helps in many other ways that further protection of Marin's baylands.

Susan has a deep appreciation of native wildlife and of the importance of protecting

their native habitats. She serves on the Marin County Fishery and Wildlife Commission. We're sure they also find her a valuable asset.

Susan grew up in Philadelphia, and came to California with her husband John in the 1980s. They live in Novato with their pets.

Susan is a true unsung hero and a valuable contributor to our work. Thank you, Susan, from all of us at Marin Audubon.

REPORT VIOLATIONS ON PUBLIC LANDS

It is important to report violations you witness on public lands but it is difficult to know how to do that. Below is a short contact list that can help you. Violations can be: dogs off leash, dogs or people harassing wildlife; bikers riding off trails, on unauthorized trails or threatening the safety of others. All numbers are in the 415 area code unless otherwise noted.

- GGNRA 561-5656
- Pt. Reyes Nat'l Seashore . . . 464-5137
- Marin County Open Space . . . 473-2816
- Marin Municipal Water 945-1187
- State Parks (China Camp, Mt. Tamalpais, Olompali) 388-2952 or ranger 388-3653

For a more complete list please visit www.marinaudubon.org

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 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, September 3, 2015
9 AM to Noon

With Susan Kelly and friends

Susan has graciously agreed to lead our Thursday walks again this year, continuing a tradition started years ago by Bruce Bajema. Len Blumin will join us on the September walk. Birders of all levels are welcome. This is a great way to start learning the raptors, waterfowl, and other bird families, as well as getting tips on optics, birding books, and birding etiquette. Bring a pair of binoculars, as well as some water. We'll be walking about two miles on the levees around the ponds.

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

BODEGA BAY

Saturday, September 12, 2015
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

With Lisa Hug

Spend a day at Bodega Bay during the fall migration when just about anything can happen. After meeting at the Rail Ponds at 8:30 AM, we'll make some stops for shorebirds and move on to Owl Canyon, Sonoma County's premier vagrant trap, and then to a sea watch at Bodega Head. From the Head we'll return clockwise around Bodega Harbor with likely stops at Campbell Cove, Owl Canyon again, Porto Bodega and wind up at Doran Park (entrance fee) where we sometimes find Snowy Plovers.

DIRECTIONS: For the Rail Ponds take the East Washington exit from Hwy. 101 in Petaluma. East Washington becomes Bodega Ave.; follow it to Bodega Bay. Drive through town past Diekmann's and the Boat House. Turn left on Eastshore Rd., and right at the bottom of the hill on Bayflat Rd. Drive to the harbor shore where you'll find the horse trailer (Rail Ponds) parking lot on the right. Seeing horse trailers there by then will let you know you are at the right place. The GPS address is 1600 Bayflat Rd. Google "Rail Ponds Bodega Bay" to see photo maps.

DRAKES BEACH AND THE FISH DOCKS

No. 5, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, September 19, 2015
8:30 AM – mid-afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

September is the most surprising month of birding here as many juvenile birds make their first migration south and west without the aid of Google. Some western migrants such as Nashville, Hermit and Black-throated Gray Warblers may be in the Point Reyes tree islands, and we sometimes see more unusual Eastern species. Drakes Bay also begins to harbor wintering species like Red-necked Grebes, Marbled Murrelets and Loons. We will picnic early and then go to the Fish Docks and/or the Point Reyes Light House.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Drakes Beach parking lot near the monument. Take Sir Francis

Drake west to Olema, go north on Hwy. 1 and turn left onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. (just after the Marin Sun Farms shop and just before you get to Point Reyes Station).

Alternatively, take Point Reyes–Petaluma Rd. to Hwy. 1. Turn left, go through downtown Point Reyes Station, and then turn right after the bridge onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Drive through Inverness to Point Reyes National Seashore. At Drakes Beach Rd., bear left. Expect about a 35-minute drive from Point Reyes Station to Drakes Beach.

VAUX'S SWIFTS AT MCNEAR BRICK AND BLOCK, San Rafael

Wednesday, September 23, 2015
6:30 to 7:30 PM

With Bob Hinz

Join leader Bob Hinz at McNear Brick and Block (formerly McNear's Brick Yard) for a brief talk before witnessing the remarkable Vaux's Swift migration that passes through Marin in September and October.

Smoke stacks no longer in use at the brickyard provide an important communal roosting spot for the Vaux's Swifts during their seasonal migrations. We will have the opportunity to watch thousands of swifts as they descend into the stacks just before nightfall. Raptors, too, are attracted to the large flocks of birds. Sunset on the evening of our visit will be about 7 PM so we will meet at 6:30 to be ready. Bring scopes, binoculars, and, if desired, folding chairs for your seating comfort. It can be chilly at dusk.

Birding experts seeking greater understanding and appreciation of this phenomenon have been counting and monitoring the movement of these swifts since 2010. Citizen scientists are helping with this fascinating project. Ask Bob for details about this opportunity.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy. 101 take the Central San Rafael exit. Turn east on Second St., go by Montecito Plaza on your right and continue on Point San Pedro Rd. for about 3 miles. The brickyard will be on the right. The address is 1 McNear Brickyard Rd. Park along the road to the brickyard.

RODEO LAGOON, Marin Headlands

Saturday, September 26, 2015
8 AM – Noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Join William and David for a morning of birding at Rodeo Lagoon. This is their "patch" and we should see over 60 species, targeting Parasitic Jaeger and migrating shore birds, warblers and other passerines. We will begin the morning with a sea watch at 8 AM, and follow with a circuit of the Lagoon beginning about 8:45 AM.

DIRECTIONS: Take the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right and go under the freeway; then follow the road down to the left. Within 300 feet you see a left turn signposted to the "Marin Headlands" (this is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito). Go to the tunnel with a five-minute light. Proceed through the tunnel onto Bunker Rd. Follow Bunker Rd. to the parking lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

If the tunnel is closed, use Conzelman Rd. Take the last Sausalito exit off Hwy. 101. At the

exit stop sign, turn left and then immediately right onto Conzelman Rd. (up the hill). After one mile at a traffic roundabout, take the first turn-off to the right. This is McCullough Rd., which goes down the hill to Bunker Rd. Turn left onto Bunker Rd. and go to the parking lot.

NIVEN PARK, Corte Madera Creek

Saturday, October 3, 2015
8:30 to Noon

With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle

Join Rich and Janet for a walk along Corte Madera Creek. Rich has been birding in California for over 40 years and leads tours throughout the west and Alaska. Rich and Janet live on Corte Madera Creek and bird the area daily. The trip is planned to take advantage of the tides in the creek and we will look for ducks, waders, peeps, sparrows and fall visitors.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at 300 Drakes Landing Rd. in Greenbrae. From Hwy. 101 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. going west and turn at the first left onto Barry Way (before the Bon Air Shopping Center). Then go left again onto Drakes Landing Rd. From the parking lot, walk under the arch of the 300 building onto the deck by the water.

FARALLON ISLANDS BOAT TRIP FROM CLIPPER YACHT HARBOR, Sausalito

Sunday, October 4, 2015
7:30 AM to 4 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join us for our annual day of seabird and marine mammal watching as we head to the Farallon Islands and offshore waters. The outing will be led by naturalist David Wimpfheimer aboard Jim Robertson's power catamaran *Outer Limits*. On past trips we have sighted more than fourteen pelagic bird species, including albatrosses, shearwaters and auklets, as well as many sea lions, porpoises, dolphins and whales. We will get an up-close look at the islands and learn about their interesting natural and human history. This is a trip that both experienced and first-time birders and nature lovers will enjoy.

The cost will be \$120 per person. **This year you can register online at www.marinaudubon.org.** Online registration is preferred, but to register by mail, send a check to Marin Audubon at Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942; write "Farallons" on the envelope and check. Include the name, e-mail address and contact phone number of each participant. Because the trip is subject to sea conditions, we need to be able to reach participants at the last minute. We also will send an e-mail to participants a few days before the trip.

Please sign up early, as we will limit the number of participants. Be prepared for any kind of weather with layered clothing. A rain jacket and pants are essential no matter what the weather on shore. Take seasick medication if needed. If you get seasick easily, this is not the trip for you. We will be on the boat all day. Bring lunch, snacks, water and sunscreen.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy. 101 to the Marin City/Sausalito exit and head south on Bridgeway. Take a left on Harbor Dr. and go into the parking area at the end. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot to check in before boarding.

Annual Report for 2014-2015

PROTECTING HABITAT

Our major accomplishment is the purchase of the Corte Madera property. Escrow is planned to close on August 28. We raised the necessary \$1.075 million, from many generous agencies, governments and individual donors including the California Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Marin County Open Space District. The acquisition process required applying for grants, negotiating easements, attending hearings, and completing many forms and reports. We also worked on other possible acquisitions in Novato and Sausalito.

RESTORING/ENHANCING HABITAT

Many volunteers helped with the restorations. They maintained the habitat at our Triangle Marsh, Bahia, Simmons Slough and Petaluma properties. We hired crews to remove invasives to supplement the work of our volunteers, particularly Lowell Sykes, at Bahia and Simmons. Native plants were planted and non-natives were removed on the Supplemental Environmental Project sites at Bahia and Simmons Slough. Our Work Day crews were led by Jude Stalker at Bahia and Bob Hinz at Triangle Marsh.

EDUCATION/FIELD TRIPS/SPEAKER SERIES

We sponsored ten Speaker Series programs focused on birds and other natural history topics and 44 field trips to local and distant places including the Gulf of the Farallones and the Delta. Special thanks to Len Blumin and Susan Kelly who led monthly field trips at the Las Gallinas ponds and to Jim White and Bob Battagin for their excellent series Birding in Marin. We published ten issues of *The Rail* (changed the name from *The Clapper Rail* after the AOU changed the species' name), sponsored the Spring Bird Song class given by Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris and the Junior Birdwatchers conducted by Wendy Dreskin. Martha Jarocki maintained our website.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

MAS sponsored three Christmas Bird Counts: Southern Marin, Cheep Thrills in Northern Marin and Point Reyes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Continued to serve as fiscal agent for Marin Baylands Advocates, our partner in purchasing properties.
- Presented the Annual Mother's Day Picnic to benefit Audubon Canyon Ranch and MAS.

- Represented MAS on other organizations, committees including the Audubon Canyon Ranch, Lagunitas Creek Technical Advisory Committee, San Francisco Estuary Partnership, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture representing the Bay Area Audubon Council. MAS also has representatives on the Community Marin Action Committee, a follow up group on the *Community Marin Vision* document.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Petaluma River Bridge Swallow Colony We continued our participation with Madrone Audubon's legal effort to protect this colony from Caltrans' seismic retrofitting of the bridge. About 150 young fledged on July 12. As of this writing, nesting continues and Madrone Audubon's volunteers continue to observe Caltrans' construction crews and report apparent permit violations.

North-South Greenway Trail South from East Sir Francis Drake Blvd Attended workshops on this proposal which has now morphed into two redundant trails one along Highway 101 south of Corte Madera Creek and the other along the Ecological Reserve Marsh.

MMWD Water Supply Project Attended scoping hearing and submitted issues to be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this water storage project. If built as proposed, it would destroy native oak woodland, grassland and spotted owl habitat.

Corte Madera Inn Submitted comments on the Draft EIR in opposition to filling the pond for expansion of the inn and asked for another alternative that would not fill the pond. The Town did require another alternative to be prepared (see page 6).

Marin County Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan and EIR Urged in our comments that stressors on wildlife and habitat, such as bikers and off-leash dogs, in addition to fire and invasive species, be better addressed; that wildlife be recognized and discussed as an essential part of biodiversity; and that the use of herbicides be more fully discussed.

Marin County Road and Trails Plan Objected that needed studies were not completed, which means readers must trust that the studies will be produced in the future; and that trail impacts, enforcement, and wildlife impacts were not adequately addressed.

Pt. Reyes Comprehensive Ranch Management Plan Submitted recommendations for issues to be addressed in the plan including damage



Photo courtesy of Jude Stalker

PG&E volunteers removing Harding grass at Bahia.

caused by tule elk, and the importance of elk to the ecosystem and the public. The impacts of elk on ranching operations are a major focus of this plan.

Whaler's Point Submitted a letter and testified at Supervisors' hearing on the J. Krystal proposal for a large hotel on this Richardson Bay site repeating our long-held position—that the building is too large for the site and exceptions should not be granted.

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Submitted comments to the State Water Board and US Fish & Wildlife Service on sections of the Plan and the environmental document questioning many of the assumptions and the adequacy of the information in BDCP and Draft EIR/EIS.

Goat Grazing at Canalways (San Rafael) Supported use of goats to remove the invasive pampas grass, but later objected when we learned the goats were allowed to graze wetland vegetation.

Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District We continue along with MBA, urging the Bridge District to restore tidal marsh on the 72-acre diked baylands as agreed upon more than 10 years ago.

Maintenance Dredging Permits Commented to Army Corps of Engineers on public notices for two maintenance dredging proposals—Paradise Cay and the Larkspur Marina.

Lagunitas Creek Bridge Submitted potential impacts to the creek habitat to be addressed in the EIR that Caltrans will prepare for a seismic upgrading project of this bridge. We asked for an alternative that would not damage the creek.

Larkspur Bridges Commented to the Army Corps and Water Board on upgrades proposed for these bridges asking for mitigation close to the respective bridges, and to BCDC regarding improvements to the Bon Air Bridge.

Pt. Reyes Dune Restoration Commented to Pt. Reyes National Seashore in support of a restoration project to eliminate invasive plants and restore natives on the dunes, while questioning about specific restoration activities.

Santa Venetia Community Plan Commented at a County Planning Commission hearing that the Draft Plan did not address issues of concern to this neighborhood. It simply repeated provisions that already exist in the Countywide Plan.

Marin County Parks Attended a workshop and submitted recommendations for revisions to the plans for Stafford Lake and Paradise Parks. For both we recommended improving native habitat. For Stafford we recommended protecting water quality by vegetating the lake edges and protecting existing habitat by locating any new trails away from habitats.

Richardson Bay Anchor-outs Testified at a

Richardson Bay Regional Agency (Sausalito, Mill Valley, Tiburon, Belvedere and Marin County) meeting about the history of anchor-outs and the adverse impacts of anchor-outs, including covering the Bay and habitat, and questioning the effectiveness of a mooring field to remove anchor-outs from the Bay, in view of the previous effort which took the same approach, except that the mooring was in marinas.

Highway 37 Attended stakeholder meetings for the UC Davis-Caltrans Planning effort to develop design alternatives for Highway 37 that will improve traffic conditions and address sea level rise. A rebuilt levee and several causeway designs are currently being considered.

SB 718 (Leno) Supported this state bill which would have provided a source of funds for non-oil spills in San Francisco Bay. Currently, oil companies are responsible to fund oil spills but there is no funding for spills of other damaging substances, as occurred last year.

Herbicide Use on Marin County Preserves and MMWD Lands Testified at several hearings and submitted written comments in support of limited use of herbicides to protect native habitats on public lands following an Integrated Pest Management approach.

Balestreri House Submitted comments encouraging planting of native plants and expressed concern about runoff from the single family residence proposed for this site, which our Simmons Slough property surrounds.

Marin County's Applications for Climate Change Grants Supported Marin County's grant applications for public outreach and a vulnerability analysis for climate change/sea level rise.

Novato General Plan Submitted comments on the biological resources section for the General Plan requesting improved protections for wetlands resources.

Hamilton Athletic Complex Proposal Attended workshop and had numerous communications with residents about this massive proposal for multiple athletic fields and possible impacts on wetland habitats.

Local Coastal Plan Submitted several comment letters in support of better protections for wetlands and upland habitats.

SMART Train Across Gallinas Creek Advocated for redesign of the segment of the bike path over and through Gallinas Creek.

GGNRA Traffic Plan for Muir Woods Supported establishing a reservation system and limiting visitor use to address the traffic congestion and better protect natural resources.

Gross Field Runway Expansion Attended a visioning session and testified at a Supervisor hearing about impacts of the runway expansion plan and supported saving the wetlands.

Marin Audubon Society Statement
of Financial Position as of June 30, 2015

ASSETS

Current Assets – Checking Accounts	
Unrestricted Accounts	51,542
Restricted Accounts	249,687
Total Current Assets	301,229
Fixed Assets – Real Estate	3,425,950
Other Assets	
Endowment	1,189,435
Refundable Deposits (Land Acquisition)	-74,600
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,842,013

Marin Audubon Society Statement
of Financial Income and Expense
July 2014 through June 2015

INCOME

Donations (cash)	134,515
Events & Activities	10,713
Interest Earned	135
Marin Baylands Advocates Income	4,170
Membership	32,413
Income for Operations	\$181,946
Grant Income for Restoration	122,901
Endowment Investment Earnings	35,248
TOTAL INCOME	\$340,095

EXPENSE

Copy & Printing Services	30,712
Insurance	9,753
Marin Baylands Advocates Expense	4,087
Miscellaneous	2,948
Office Supplies & Expenses	1,122
Permits & Fees	1,000
Postage & Shipping	5,831
Professional Services	15,813
Program Expenses	9,700
Property Management Expenses	4,006
Property & Sales Taxes	10,043
Rent	199
Website	2,711
Expenses for Operations	97,923
Wetlands Restoration	69,880
Endowment Advisory Fees	6,676
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$246,679
NET INCOME	\$93,417

Marin's Native Habitats

(continued from page 1)

Manual removal using volunteers may work on small acreages but it is impossible to remove broom and Harding grass on the thousands of acres owned by the OSD and MMWD with volunteers alone. We have been fairly successful removing broom where it existed on about 15 of Marin Audubon's properties but it is a different story with Harding grass. Harding grass is threatening several of our upland properties, one of which is Triangle Marsh, right across the street from Ring Mountain.

Invasive plants do not stay on one property—the problem spreads. At completion of the habitat restoration at Triangle, we had a barren upland area created with the material we had excavated. We planted many native plants, but seeds came in from the forest of Harding grass on Ring Mountain. We have been trying to remove the resultant plants manually ever since. The OSD has applied glyphosate for the last three years on Ring Mountain's Harding grass, and that greatly diminished the population. Now that the supervisors have stopped the glyphosate treatment on the remaining plants, the gains of the last few years will be wiped out along with our hopes of eliminating Harding grass on our property any time soon.

A recent report from the World Health Organization (WHO) listed glyphosate as a probable carcinogen, along with alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and working the night shift because it interrupts one's circadian rhythm. WHO has not yet released the studies it used to classify glyphosate.

Marin Audubon considers the minimal use of herbicides a critical tool in the war to protect native vegetation and to ensure our native bird and other wildlife populations survive. Friends of Corte Madera Creek, the Native Plant Society, the Marin Conservation League and The Nature Conservancy all support following an IPM approach including retaining the ability for limited use of herbicides.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write the Supervisors supporting minimal use of herbicides to protect native plants and wildlife under an IPM approach. Attend workshops, which we expect to be scheduled for fall. Check MAS website for future meetings.

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'S SPOTTED OWLS AT RISK

Marin County has several small populations of the endangered Northern Spotted Owl. While spotted owls seem to be expanding into other forest habitats in Marin, they are also under increased pressure from people. One such example was a troubling incident at one of the several spotted owl nests in Larkspur. Two San Francisco photographers disturbed an owl family – by using a recording to call the birds in, came too close and used camera flashes at the recently fledged young, causing the young



Photo courtesy of Len Blumstein

Spotted Owl

to scatter up the mountain. Such behavior not only completely disregards impacts on the birds, it constitutes harassment which is a violation of the federal and state endangered species laws. The other Larkspur nest failed for unknown reasons.

The impacts of this kind of self-centered behavior must be considered together with all of the other impacts on this special status species: the loud and disruptive noises from nearby homes and gardens; off-trail cyclists and dogs often off-leash (dogs can kill or injure young that have not yet mastered flying and often land on the ground where they are vulnerable); off-trail use which fragments and destroys habitats and threatens wildlife; natural predators such as great horned and barred owls. These impacts also adversely affect the owls' food, which is primarily wood rats and other rodents. If their food supply is diminished, so will be the owl population. Clearly, the cumulative impacts on the owls are significant.

There also is ongoing pressure to authorize new trails near spotted owl nests which would bring more walkers and bikers. Right now, the Marin County Open Space District (OSD) is considering approving the Fairway Trail in Mill Valley in the Camino Alto Open Space Preserve that goes right by a spotted owl nest site. The

OSD is now funding a biological assessment for the purpose of authorizing the Fairway Trail for bike use.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

We want to hear from folks who are interested in spotted owls and/or in the Fairway Trail Camino Alto Open Space, in Mill Valley so that we can work together to increase protections for these owls as the county proceeds with its trail review process. Call or email Barbara Salzman or Bob Hinz.

CORTE MADERA INN

The Town of Corte Madera has released an addendum to the Draft Recirculated Environmental Impact Report for the Corte Madera Inn Expansion project. The DEIR consultants were asked by the Town to address just two issues, traffic and the pond, and to prepare a design that retains the pond. They did so by creating Alternative 4 which eliminates the restaurant and puts the additional rooms, to make up the developer-desired 187 rooms, in the restaurant space and along Tamal Vista Blvd.

The "Retain the Pond" alternative includes measures to improve the pond as habitat: establishing a 20-foot wide buffer, grading the side slopes, planting wetland vegetation along the edges, and improving water quality by using two existing culverts to allow more tidal water into the pond, and aerating with a mechanical device during summer months when the temperatures and the threat of algae blooms are high.

In our view, a preferred alternative should retain the pond and reduce the number of rooms if the height of the structure along Tamal Vista is objectionable. Freeway noise could be mitigated by erecting a sound wall of some sort as exists along many other sections of Highway 101.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Submit comments to the Draft document (which can be found on the Town's website) by August 31 to Adam Wolf, Planning Director, Town of Corte Madera, Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera 94925 and/or attend the Planning Commission meeting. Public hearing will be scheduled on the merits of the project after the Recirculated EIR is reviewed and finalized.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship work has continued during the summer. As of this writing, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, most of our plants seem to be surviving the dry summer.

At Bahia we've had four volunteer Work Days, in June, July and August. Volunteers cut seed heads off Harding grass plants inside the Bahia gate, removed *Dittrichia*, fennel, yellow star thistle, Russian thistle, and ice plant on the Western Peninsula. We had a special Work Day in June for PG&E—seven volunteers removed Harding grass seed heads on the Western Peninsula.

We've also had three Work Days at Triangle during which volunteers removed mustard and Harding grass plants and seed heads. And at our Petaluma Marsh site, five members of our Board pulled *Dittrichia* and watered plants we planted last year.

At Bahia, volunteer Lowell Sykes has been

watering and weeding along the eastern peninsula where most of the *Baccharis pilularis* and aster are doing well. As required by our agency permits, Year-Five physical monitoring of the marsh elevations to determine the progress of the restoration is being conducted by engineer Dan Gillenwater, with help from our volunteers Jude Stalker and Katy Zaremba who are conducting photo documentation and ground-truthing invasive marsh plants.

At the Bahia Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) sites, MAS's tidal pond uplands were watered and Driwater tubes filled. We hired Shelterbelt Builders to remove cocklebur from Simmons. Their small crews spent four days removing the cocklebur by hand pulling and mowing. Overall, there appears to be less cocklebur indicating that the wetland plants we planted are beginning to outcompete the cocklebur.

MARIN BIRDLOG: MAY - JULY 2015

By Josiah Clark

Since we last checked in, the days have gotten longer and now they are getting shorter once again. By early August the frenzied pace of the breeding season has all but passed. Nest building and food gathering activities have been replaced by final forays of family groups before they disperse across the lands near and far. The fruit of Red Elderberries, invaluable to breeding birds on the coast has come and gone, while the more interior Blue Elderberry has ripened more recently and will remain for a month yet, attracting fledglings and south-bound migrants alike.

Way back in June, the vagrant season was still pumping out rarities to the Outer Point. The highlight was surely the shy and difficult to see **Kentucky Warbler** at the Fish Docks found on 5/28 (DS). At Las Gallinas on 6/4, eight regulars put together their own "off season" bird walk and were

rewarded by views of a bright **Least Bittern** (PC). This species appears to have bred again this year.

One species we know is breeding now in record numbers in the county is **Mute Swan**. Though adored and doted over by many local and newbie birders, this species is on the cusp of a local population explosion and is becoming a major pest as they have in other regions. Large and aggressive towards smaller waterfowl, this species has already begun to displace smaller, less common local breeding waterfowl as it takes the prime nest spots and foraging

areas. On 7/20 (WL) four males of this species made their first ever showing at Rodeo Lagoon.

On the flip side of an avian invasion, introduced **Wild Turkeys** at last seem to be getting under control in the Marin Headlands. The population of this species has been growing in the county unchecked for over a decade and resulted in plummeting quail populations. Wild Turkeys eat not only quail chicks but also rare and declining reptiles including Rubber Boa, Ring-necked Snakes and California King Snake. Large, gregarious and bold, Wild Turkeys have few predators so it is good to finally see their numbers being kept in check. For the first time in years the absence of Wild Turkeys around the stables and native plant nursery yielded at least 50 young California Quail on 7/15 (JTC). These are similar to the numbers recorded a decade ago before Wild Turkeys reached their peak abundance.

For a more complete Birdlog, see <http://marinaudubon.org/birds-birdlog.php>

Observers and Acronyms **DS:** Dan Singer, **JTC:** Josiah Clark, **PC:** Peter Colasanti, **WL:** William Legge

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

By the end of summer most of the nonnative invasive plants have flowered, run their course and turned brown. *Dittrichia* and *Salsola* are late bloomers which are still worth pulling. There are some perennial survivors like bristly ox-tongue and fennel still producing seeds. Harding grass is mostly dormant, not dead, and might be our biggest target for removal. The newest natives still need our watering help.

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: Sept. 5, Oct. 3

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

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturdays: Sept. 12, Oct. 10

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

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

THANK YOU TO OUR

STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Deborah Ablin; Jaimie Baxter; Lukas & Zofie Haulena; Alex Heyman; Bob Hinz; Martha Jarocki; Sharon McCloskey; Ed Nute; Alison Owings; PG&E volunteers (Brian Ambresini; Dave, Ariel & Eden Canny; Kristin Charipar; Lindsey Knaebel; Chung Nguyen); Flinn & Genna Rauck; Claudia & Sophia Rocha; Barbara Salzman, Jude Stalker; Lowell Sykes; Katy Zaremba

THANK YOU TO CORTE MADERA PROPERTY ACQUISITION DONORS

Mary E. Burton, California Alpine Club Foundation, Corte Madera Beautification Committee, Corte Madera Community Foundation, Sallie Griffith, Gardner Kent, Marin Open Space Trust, Robert & Sandra Maucelli

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MARIN AUDUBON'S STEWARDSHIP

Helen Bacon, Christopher J. Catchpool, Henry Chaikin, Henry & Glenda Corning, The Endurance Fund, Carl & Donna Gowan, John Harrington & Ida Baugh, Susan Hayes, Elizabeth Huning, Richard Jennings, John Kane, Candace Key, Michael H. Linvill, Barbara and Gerald Meral, Nancy & Tim Muller, Nancy Murphy, Eileen Murray, Warren & Marcia Nute, PG&E Corporation Foundation (donor match), Patricia Raven, Jordan Rinker, Susan & Robert Spofford, Charles & Jean Stewart, Stolyavitch Fund, Meryl Sundove, JoLynn Taylor

Photo courtesy of Len Blamire



Least Bittern



The Rail

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SAVE THE DATE

- September 5 **Stewardship Day**,
Triangle Marsh
- September 12 **Stewardship Day**, Bahia
- October 1 **Field Trip: Las Gallinas**
With Susan Kelly
- October 4 **Field Trip: Gulf of the Farallones**
Signups begin September 1
- October 8 **Speaker Series: Kerry Wilcox**,
Manager of Audubon California's
Waterbird Program
- October 17 **Field Trip: Marin Headlands**
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

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SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

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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