



Ruthie Rudesill

Swainson's Hawk

Most birders visit the famous spots: Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Bodega Bay; Golden Gate Park; Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area; Klamath, Tule Lake, and Sacramento NWRs; Monterey Bay; Arcata Marsh; etc. But there is a growing number of lesser known spots, hidden gems for birding and scenery. Ruthie Rudesill will share birding stories and discuss a few special places for those who want to travel to new exciting areas of Northern California.

Ruthie is Past President of Redwood Regional Ornithological Society. She has a Wildlife degree from Humboldt State University. She has led and participated in many Christmas Bird Counts, surveys and field trips for over 30 years. Ruthie maintains the records for rare birds in Sonoma County and sends quarterly reports to North American Birds (part of the American Birding Association).

See page 3 for details on the January 9 follow-up field trip to this presentation.

Next month's speaker:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 7:30 PM

**Iconic Tower, Iconic Bird –
Peregrines on the Campanile**

With Alan Fish



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Deadly Competition Between Owl Species

By Elyse Omernick

You may have been lucky enough to come across a Northern Spotted Owl while hiking through a forest in Marin County. To be in the presence of this species is a true gift, and a reminder that a healthy ecosystem is a delicate matter. The Northern Spotted Owl is a threatened species, protected by both the state and federal governments under the Endangered Species Act. More importantly, Marin County, the Northern Spotted Owl's southernmost range, supports one of their last stable populations in the world.



Barred Owl



Northern Spotted Owl

Barred owl, Ken Shults; Northern Spotted Owl, Elyse Omernick

Why are Northern Spotted Owls drastically

declining all over the Pacific Northwest, and why has Marin been able to maintain a stable population until now? Although habitat loss

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MAS Endorses TPL Campaign for San Geronimo Valley

The purpose of the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) campaign for the former golf course lands in San Geronimo Valley is to defeat Measure D that will be on the March ballot and would require that the entire county vote on changes to the San Geronimo Community Plan. The ballot measure, sponsored by a narrow special interest group, seeks to require that the entire county vote to change the San Geronimo Community Plan to make golf the only allowable use. The owner of the property, TPL, does not want to operate a golf course and recent history shows there is no buyer wanting to do so either. If Measure D passes, it would put at risk any other community that has a community plan as opponents would use the same approach to get what they want.

Defeating the measure will have several benefits:

- It will ensure TPL, the current owner of the 157-acre property, will be able to proceed with planning to restore important habitats including instream habitat to benefit endangered Coho salmon.
- It will preserve the right of communities to control their general plans and the character of their communities. Not all communities have general plans but residents of those that do, including San Geronimo, Santa Venetia, and Strawberry, should control the vision and character of their community—not people from elsewhere in the county. TPL is engaged in a community process

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Most 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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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 LETTER

By Barbara Salzman

To those who have already donated to MAS's winter appeal we thank you, but it's not too late if you haven't. We especially need your financial support this year because we have a new ongoing expense to hire a contract bookkeeper, because no volunteer came forward to do all of the work required to manage our finances. This is an expense we have not had previously, and until we have some experience with the new procedures, we're not quite sure how much it will cost. Our great appreciation to Susan Winston for her three years as Treasurer, doing the work of Treasurer and bookkeeper.

We're fortunate to have Board members who came forward and volunteered to meet our needs. Barbara Demeter has volunteered to move from Membership Chair to Treasurer, and Ann Thomas has agreed to take over Membership Chair in addition to her job as Secretary. Barbara has long experience in the banking industry and Ann is an expert recorder and has extensive experience with non-profits in many capacities. Both are well-equipped

to take over these positions, and we greatly appreciate their willingness.

Now our Board needs a person to manage our website. The update of the website is almost finished, and the completed update will simplify the process of adding text material to the website. So, if you are interested in websites and keeping on top of current happenings, let me know. This is a Board position that also includes sending out occasional action alerts to our members. Also, see page 6 for the Mother's Day Picnic need for a chairperson.

I hope everyone is having a wonderful holiday season! Get out and enjoy our overwintering waterfowl, shorebirds and upland species. Our field trip chair, Jane Medley, has arranged an array of field trips that will take you to the best sites to see birds and increase your bird identification skills. Or go out and see birds on your own.

Happy New Year from all of us at Marin Audubon!

Owls *continued from page 1*

from logging old growth forests remains one of the owl's two primary threats, the second is the invasion of the Barred Owl, which has become a complex threat to the Northern Spotted Owl.

Originally found only in eastern North America, the Barred Owl has made its way to the west coast due to changes in habitat and climate. The first known sighting of a Barred Owl in Marin was recorded in 2002, and sadly, the sightings are rising. The Barred Owl is larger, more aggressive, more adaptable, and an opportunistic hunter. Because of these traits, they are competing with the Spotted Owl's food source, disrupt nesting, and are pushing the Spotted Owls out of their territory. The Northern Pygmy Owl and Western Screech Owl are also losing habitat to, or being killed and eaten by the Barred Owl.

While Marin County does not have to worry about the threat of logging, we do need to worry about Barred Owls, and what their growing presence means to the long-term survival of the Northern Spotted Owl. The National Park Service (NPS), Point Blue, Marin County Open Space, and Marin Municipal Water District have begun efforts to monitor Barred Owl activity in Marin, but we also need your help!

Should you come across what you believe is a Northern Spotted Owl or a Barred Owl, we ask that you report it to the appropriate agency ASAP:

On federal lands

Bill Merkle
National Parks Service Wildlife Biologist
bill_merkle@nps.gov

On county lands

Serena Hubert
Marin County Parks
SHubert@marincounty.org

On other lands

Renée Cormier
Point Blue Avian Biologist
rcormier@pointblue.org

Provide the size, eye color, ear tufts, markings, behavior and location. If possible, also provide photo and/or recording. Although the two owl species look quite similar, the easiest way to differentiate the two is the feather pattern on their chest. The Spotted Owl will have a spotted brown and white pattern, while the Barred has a barred brown and white pattern. Please note the photos that illustrate these differences clearly.

It is said that Marin County is one of the last defensible populations of the Northern Spotted Owl. It is time we step up as a community to make sure we help protect this threatened species before they are gone forever. A diverse ecosystem is a healthy ecosystem, and when we start to see the diversity disappear, we will start to see our ecosystem change in unhealthy ways. Thank you for helping us protect our beloved Northern Spotted Owl!

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.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Vernalis, Stanislaus County

Saturday, January 11, 2020
9 AM to 3 PM

With Ruthie Rudesill

Ruthie Rudesill of Redwood Regional Ornithological Society (RROS) fame will lead this trip as a follow-up to her presentation at our Speaker Series on January 9 entitled "Little Known Great Birding Locations in Northern California." See the complete description in last month's *Rail* or at <http://marinaudubon.org/events-field-trips.phps>.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 580 southbound after Altamont Pass, take the Maze Blvd exit onto Hwy 132 (east towards Modesto). The NWR is at the San Joaquin River. Turn left on North Gates Rd from Hwy 132. Travel northbound on Gates Rd for approximately 3 miles. Turn left on Beckwith Rd. Travel westbound on Beckwith Rd for 2 miles to the refuge parking lot on the left side of the road. Our first stop will be at the Migratory Bird Viewing Platform on Beckwith Rd.

BIRDING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Tomales, Lawson's Landing, and Chileno Valley

Thursday, January 16, 2020
9 AM to 3:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

This annual winter trip repeats David's popular guided explorations of the less familiar habitats in Marin near the town of Tomales. We will meet at the Tomales Bakery, and our itinerary for the day will cover coastal and interior habitats. Our first destination will be Lawson's Landing, a resort near the mouth of Tomales Bay. Loons, grebes (including **Red-necked Grebe**), ducks, and **Brant** can be quite numerous here. Shorebirds are diverse here as well. The rest of the day may be spent covering the open grasslands, wetlands, and forests of this part of Marin. Raptor sightings may include **Ferruginous** and **Rough-legged Hawk**, **Golden Eagle**, and **Merlin**, and, if we are lucky, we may spot the now uncommon-in-Marin **Loggerhead Shrike**.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Tomales Bakery, 27000 Hwy 1, Tomales, at 9 AM. If the bakery is closed, the deli nearby has a nice variety of food and beverages. Check your map for your best route to Tomales. You can head west from Hwy 101 at Old Redwood Hwy in Petaluma or from Novato at San Marin Dr. Allow about an hour from Marin. Light rain will not cancel this trip, but a heavy storm will.

BOLINAS LAGOON

No. 1, Birding in Marin Series

Saturday, January 18, 2020
8:30 AM to mid-afternoon

NEW THIS YEAR: 7:30 AM Early Birds meet at Stinson Beach (see below)
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join us as we begin our 7th (no typo, yes

"seventh"! season of Birding in Marin with Jim and Bob. We have an annual goal of identifying 200 species of birds and make an effort to share each sighting with participants. In 2019 we found 186 species. Not discouraged, we now invite you to help us forge a new record for 2020 by participating in our monthly trips to twelve of Marin's most productive birding hot spots. For more information about our Birding in Marin series in 2020, see the accompanying article in this issue of *The Rail*.

Bolinas Lagoon, one of Marin's Important Bird Areas (IBA), is home to many resident bird species and also serves as a wintering ground for thousands of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. We will scan the lagoon from our meeting area and from pullouts along our route. After a 3-mile drive to Duxbury Reef to see what is happening on and over the ocean, we'll then visit the Bolinas Mesa oxidation ponds which often are a good place to see birds. We will look for shorebirds near the Pine Gulch Creek delta at lower tide after lunch.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at 8:30 AM on Hwy 1 at the Stinson/Bolinas Primary School, which is 1.5 miles north of the central Stinson Beach stop sign. Early Birds will meet for a beach watch at 7:30 AM in the area of the Stinson Beach Parking Lot. The National Park Service parking lot does not open until 9 AM, so our group will need to find nearby street parking. Heavy rain cancels.

LOCH LOMOND MARINA

San Rafael

Monday, January 20, 2020
9 AM to noon

With Jim White

Join Jim for an easy stroll around the Loch Lomond Marina breakwater recently refortified and made wheelchair accessible with a paved path out to the end. The path provides panoramic views of the surrounding bay and gives you the feeling of actually being out on the bay in close proximity to the Marin Islands. Winter birds here include **Black-bellied Plover**, **Black Turnstone**, **Least** and **Western Sandpipers**, **Black Oystercatcher**, and a variety of ducks on the bay. We may stop by the local bait shop where various egrets and herons hang out as well as check out the new Andy's Market for coffee and/or snacks.

DIRECTIONS: Head east on Second Street in San Rafael, which turns into Point San Pedro Road. Continue approximately 2 miles past the Montecito Shopping Center to a red light at the intersection of Point San Pedro Road and Loch Lomond Drive. Turn right here, then turn left in front of Andy's Market where the road comes to a "T" at the waterfront. **Continue all the way to the end of the road** where you will find ample parking and a public restroom. Dress warmly as some winter days here are cold and windy. Heavy rain cancels.

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Corte Madera

Wednesday, January 22, 2020
9:30 AM to noon

With Rich Cimino

Purchased in 2016 by Marin Audubon, this important bayland property has undergone extensive restoration work in subsequent years thanks to the hard work of Marin Audubon Society board members, hired restoration specialists, and volunteers. The area is now a restored marsh that supports an important population of Ridgway's Rails and other special status species and includes a newly created high tide refuge habitat where hired crews have planted 16,200 native upland plants.

Regularly scheduled workdays are held here for those who might like to help with the continuing restoration work, but on this particular day, we will join Rich for a tour of the area with a focus on BIRDS! Recently Rich began visiting the area regularly and will share his discoveries with us. Species we may see are ducks, long-legged waders, shorebirds, rails, plovers, **White-tailed kites**, **Osprey**, sparrows and **Western Meadowlarks**.

No restrooms are available here. Bring binoculars, scopes, layers, water, and snacks. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Corte Madera Ecological Reserve is located behind Trader Joe's at the eastern end of Industrial Way in Corte Madera. Meet and park behind Trader Joe's.

BIRDING WESTERN YOLO COUNTY

Beginning in Winters

Saturday, January 25, 2020
8 AM to 3 PM

With John Klobas and Sarah Brooks

Located within a one and one-half hour drive of many North Bay locations, Yolo County offers diverse habitats ranging from Coast Range mountains to near sea level agricultural lands of the Sacramento Valley. This one-day trip will visit prime birding sites in western Yolo County during the height of winter bird diversity and numbers.

We will meet in Winters where we will introduce our itinerary for the day and our target birds for the morning at Lake Solano Park. This park straddles both Yolo and Solano counties along Putah Creek at the base of the Coast Range. We will bird both outside and inside the park (\$5/car day use fee) and, weather permitting, have lunch there, as well. Specialties here include **Hooded Merganser**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Phainopepla**, **Wood Duck**, various raptors, perhaps even **Pileated** and **Lewis's Woodpecker**. After lunch we will walk along Putah Creek watching for both water and land birds. The day will conclude with a stop at a raptor hot spot near Woodland where overwintering specialties may include **Ferruginous Hawk** among several raptor species.

The companion trip to this day features eastern Yolo County and is scheduled for Saturday, February 22, 2020 from Davis.

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CONSERVATION

San Geronimo Valley

continued from page 1

to determine future uses that will benefit not only local residents but the entire county. Development of a fire house has been mentioned. We have endorsed the campaign based on the expectation that all or most of the property will be restored to natural habitats to benefit salmon and Northern Spotted Owl; the owls are known nesters on adjacent properties.

MAS's primary interest is to restore natural habitats, specifically stream habitat for endangered Coho Salmon and steelhead, and also upland habitat for the threatened Northern Spotted Owl. Any public access trails should be sited to protect the habitats.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Visit www.sangeronimoforall.com to learn more about the campaign or to volunteer.

Vote NO on Measure D in the election on Tuesday, March 3, 2020.

ANCHOR-OUT PROCEEDINGS

There's been lots of activity on the anchor-out issue over the last few months. The final Ecology-based Mooring Feasibility Assessment and Planning Study by Merkel & Associates was released, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Enforcement Committee issued directives to the Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA), and the RBRA met and heard strong opposition from residents of Belvedere at their November meeting.

The Merkel report emphasizes that it is not recommending that any of the sites identified in the study be developed for a mooring field, but that the locations and the designs for moorings he describes would avoid or minimize damage to natural resources. Five sites were identified as suitable for mooring field. Two large areas are 600 feet offshore of Belvedere Island. A third is in Belvedere Cove. The two others are in Sausalito; one is an open area along the Sausalito waterfront and the other is at Marinship. While the suggested areas may minimize environmental impacts, each one of them has issues that make them improbable choices. Members of our conservation committee viewed all of the Merkel sites, the Belvedere sites from afar. Each site has major issues that would adversely affect its use as a mooring field. None of them have shoreline access or on-shore facilities to

serve boaters coming ashore, e.g., bathrooms, showers, grocery stores, etc. People in the Belvedere mooring areas would have to travel one mile across the bay to come ashore in Sausalito. Most of the areas have more wave action than the current mooring locations which would be more dangerous for moored vessels and increase the risk of boats washing ashore on shoreline properties. The Sausalito areas are unlikely choices because the city has been working diligently to remove anchor-outs from their waters. Why would they approve a mooring field in their city? Merkel reports that the Marinship area has eelgrass but justifies it as a location because it is a transition area that is needed for temporary mooring. This location is in conflict with one of the stated purposes of the report, namely, to avoid impacts to eelgrass.

The Merkel study includes extensive analysis of eelgrass impacts and acknowledges that there is insufficient information on bird use to identify impacts to birds. Merkel found an impact to the bay bottom that was not previously identified: a greater radius of some mooring scars that cannot be explained by dragging of current chains.

Mooring fields (places where multiple boats can be moored) are believed by some to be a solution to the anchor-out issue that would ensure the anchor-outs can be managed and eelgrass protected. Marin Audubon's position is that anchor-outs do not belong on the Bay, neither in eelgrass areas nor in non-eelgrass areas.

Belvedere residents responded to the Merkel study, by showing up at the RBRA meeting and expressing their strong opposition to the potential-mooring sites off of their shoreline. The RBRA members put off making any decisions.

Finally, BCDC's Enforcement Committee met and staff presented a series of requirements to the RBRA:

- By March 31, 2020 initiate appropriate actions to remove marine debris including unoccupied vessels, unregistered vessels, and vessels occupied by persons who are unable to control the vessels during storm events, or vessels that are endangered or threatening to endanger others.
- By March 31, 2020 submit a plan with timelines to transition other vessels off the water within a reasonable time period.
- By the second Thursday of each month, commencing on December 12, 2019 and monthly thereafter, provide BCDC

with a short, written report that contains anchorage statistics relating to the scope of the problem and progress made toward resolution, including how RBRA will resolve the damage to natural habitat in Richardson Bay.

- In February 2020 update BCDC's Enforcement Committee on the status of implementing each of these actions at a regularly scheduled Committee meeting. For the first time these new requirements mention mitigation being required for impacts to eelgrass habitat.

BCDC's requirements are welcome and long overdue. They are forcing the RBRA to take action now and stop delays. Finally, after almost 30 years, there is movement to change the pattern of neglect and remove anchor-outs from Richardson Bay. BCDC classifies anchor-outs as fill because they permanently cover the bay and they are contrary to the public trust because they are a purely personal use of public navigable waters.

MAS is concerned about impacts to eelgrass habitat, to foraging birds, and to other marine species due to coverage and other impacts to bay resources. In an effort to fill the data gaps for birds and better ensure birds and their habitats are protected, MAS has signed a contract with Pt. Blue Conservation Science to do bird surveys of the five areas identified as possible mooring field sites.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Express your support for BCDC's requirements and for removing the anchor-outs from the Bay. Send your comments to:

Adrienne Klein, Enforcement,
adrienne.klein@bcdc.ca.gov.

Also urge the RBRA to comply with the BCDC requirements, <http://rbra.ca.gov/contacts>.

BRESCIA PROJECT BACK AGAIN

The applicant has resubmitted an application for these projects originally for two houses on adjoining lots adjacent to Marin Audubon parcels at Black Point. The only information we have received so far is additional detail on the retaining wall. Information on the road accesses, trees and other issues of concern will apparently have to wait until the staff report, which is not due until shortly before the scheduled meeting.

The hearing has been scheduled at the Marin County Planning Commission for January 13, 2020. We will try to get out an Action Alert.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at Rotary Park located at Main and Railroad Streets in Winters. From Marin take Hwy 101 North to Hwy 37. Then exit onto Hwy I-80 East. In approximately 22 miles, take Exit 56 at Vacaville to merge onto I-505 North toward Redding. Take the Hwy 128 exit (west toward Lake Berryessa) from I-505. Take a left over the freeway, then stay on Hwy 128 until the light at Railroad Ave. Turn left (south), travel 2 blocks to the intersection of Railroad and Main. Rotary Park (5 E. Main St.) is at the south side of this intersection. We will meet at the gazebo in the park.

RODEO LAGOON, Marin Headlands

Sunday, January 26, 2020
7:30 AM to Noon

With Joseph Zeno and William Legge

This month's trip will be led by youth birder Joseph Zeno and Rodeo Lagoon veteran William Legge. Joseph is a student at Terra Linda High School and an active member of the Bay Area Chapter of the California Young Birders Club. He is skilled at both identifying and photographing birds. We know from previous trips, that William is an expert at this location. We will be targeting migrant ducks, grebes, loons, gulls, and wintering passerines such as **Fox Sparrow**, **Hermit Thrush**, and **Say's Phoebe**. Join us for a Sea Watch at 7:30 AM or arrive later at 8:30 AM for a circuit of the lagoon.

DIRECTIONS: Head south on Hwy 101 and 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 turn left at the sign to the Marin Headlands (This is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito). You should see the tunnel with the five-minute signal light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Road to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

SKAGGS ISLAND AND HUDEMAN SLOUGH

SIGN-UP REQUIRED

Sonoma County

Tuesday, January 28, 2020
9:15 AM to 2 PM

With Murray Berner

Skaggs Island is part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The area is not open to the general public and requires special permission for access, which will be granted with our guide, Murray Berner.

Advance registration for this trip began on Monday, December 23, 2019.

Due to the popularity of this trip, we have scheduled an additional visit to Skaggs Island this winter and are **requiring advance sign-ups for both trips**. The second trip will be led by Daniel Edelstein on Monday, February 10. The second trip will not include a visit to Hudeman Slough. If you would like to participate in one of these trips, please contact Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net. Be sure to specify whether you wish to participate in the January 28 or February 10 field trip and include the names of people who will be attending with you.

Our leader, Murray Berner, is a longtime field trip leader for Napa Solano Audubon and author of the *Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas*. In previous years our group

has spotted **Golden Eagle**, **Rough-legged Hawk**, **Prairie Falcon**, and **Burrowing Owl**, plus dozens of kites and harriers. Songbirds flock in the former residential area, harassed by Merlin and Accipiters.

Please arrive promptly at the south entrance to Skaggs Island off of Hwy 37. Those arriving late may find themselves locked out! We will travel by car across the island, stopping to bird along the way, and **depart through the north gate at approximately 1 PM**. From this point interested birders may continue with the group to Hudeman Slough where we will bird on foot. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: Head south on Hwy 101 north to Hwy 37 East. At the intersection with SR 121 (Sonoma Raceway), continue straight on Hwy 37 for 3.8 miles and turn left at Skaggs Island Rd. No restrooms available.

SACRAMENTO DELTA BOAT TRIP

TRIP FULL – WAIT LIST OPEN

Sunday, February 2, 2020

(Super Bowl Sunday)

8:15 AM to 4:30 PM

Boat leaves from and returns to the Antioch Marina

With David Wimpfheimer

All available spaces on this boat trip have been sold. However, there are often cancellations. If you wish to be included on a waiting list for this trip, contact Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net. Be sure to include the name, email address, and phone number for each possible passenger.

Those confirmed on this trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions a week prior to the trip.

For a complete description of this trip, consult our December *Rail*, available at www.marinaudubon.org.

DEER ISLAND PRESERVE AND SIMMONS SLOUGH, Novato

Thursday, February 6, 2020

8:30 AM to noon

With Sande and Bob Chilvers

We've chosen the oak woodland at Deer Island Preserve again this month for our "First Thursday" walk. With views of the surrounding marshland visible from parts of the trail, we'll be watching for **Red-shouldered Hawk**, **White-tailed Kite**, and other resident and winter raptors. The woodlands are home to woodpeckers, owls, juncos, and towhees, and we'll also watch for egrets and herons.

As usual, birding enthusiasts of all levels are invited to join our group. We always help each other find and identify the birds. We will be walking approximately 1.5 miles on a dirt trail with some gradual up and down slopes. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, scopes, and water. There are no restrooms at this location. Heavy rain cancels.

The recent abundant rainfall may make it worthwhile to add a short visit to Simmons Slough, a diked-off tributary of Novato Creek and one of Marin Audubon's properties, to look for wintering waterfowl. This property is part of what Marin Audubon envisions as a Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor consisting of wetlands and adjacent uplands associated with the watershed. The area is popular with ducks when the seasonal marsh is flooded.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 in Novato, take the exit for Atherton Ave east 1.7 miles. Turn right onto Olive Ave and left onto Deer Island Lane. The gate is on your right with a nearby dirt parking lot.

BEACHES OF NORTHWEST MARIN

Point Reyes

Saturday, February 8, 2020

9 AM to 2 PM

With Derek Lecy and Bob Atwood

Start the day with Derek and Bob at Kehoe Beach followed by a midday caravan to McClures Beach. The coastal California subspecies of **White-crowned Sparrow** (*Z. l. nuttalli*) start to sing more vigorously in January, so we expect to hear them well as we walk through the coastal scrub habitat to these beaches. Other species on our way to the beaches include **Wrentit**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and other raptors such as **Northern Harrier**, **Red-tailed Hawk**, and with luck, a **Bald Eagle**.

On the beaches, a search of the gull flocks will be fun, and a good variety of wintering gulls is expected. We will take a long look out at sea as well in an attempt to try and find all three species of scoter: **Black Scoter**, **White-winged Scoter**, and **Surf Scoter**. Both beaches can be one of the more reliable places in the county to encounter **Black Scoter**. We will keep our eyes open for a **Harlequin Duck** or any alcids flying over the ocean as well.

Participants should wear sturdy, water-proof shoes and warm clothing. Light rain or fog is a strong possibility. Expect to walk a quarter mile to each beach with a total of 2 miles of hiking on this trip. Bring lunch as we will take a break between locations. High tide looks to be around 11 AM, which may impact our beach access at McClures, but we can scope from above the beach or figure something out. Bring a scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at the Kehoe Beach Parking area. From San Anselmo, take Sir Francis Drake Blvd to Olema. From Olema, continue north on Hwy 1 (SFDB), take the second left turn (SFDB west), and continue through Inverness. Turn right (north) onto Pierce Point Rd and drive approximately 4.6 miles to Kehoe Beach.

SKAGGS ISLAND

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Sonoma County

Monday, February 10, 2020

10 AM to 2 PM

With Daniel Edelstein

Join Avian Biologist and Birding Guide Daniel Edelstein for our second visit to Skaggs Island this winter (see the field trip description for January 28). This second trip will not include a visit to Hudeman Slough. See Daniel's complete description at www.marinaudubon.org. Heavy rain cancels.

To participate in one of these trips, please contact Jeanine Starritt at jeanineis@comcast.net. Be sure to specify whether you wish to participate in the January 28 or February 10 field trip and include the names of the people who will be attending with you.

DIRECTIONS: See January 28 trip.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

It's winter, time to plant. At Triangle Marsh a hired crew will plant the bulk of the purple needlegrass and some of the western goldentop in a block near the overlook. Volunteers will plant the remainder in other locations at Triangle. Planting the newer Corte Madera restoration was finished last winter. After the rains the usual invasive perennials are easier to dig up, but they also are starting to grow larger. Rain cancels our volunteer days.

Is one of our project areas in your neighborhood? Our volunteer days are particularly good opportunities for students who need a community service project. Act locally and join us on a workday. We all make a difference.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: January 4, February 1

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Dr directly across from the Ring Mountain trailhead near the Montessori School.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: January 11, February 8

Meet at the end of Industrial Way (near Cost Plus Plaza).

Contact Martha Jarocki, marthajarocki@gmail.com or phone 415/461-3592.

Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Dave Chenoweth, Vicky Ge, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Hannah Xiaohan Ma, Lucienne O'Keefe, Roger Stoll, Lowell Sykes

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

George Borghi, Glenn Harcourt, Jim Hargrove, Joel Hedgpath, Paul & Barbara Makuh, Nan Parks, Shilpa Tilwalli

THANK YOU, DONORS

Donald & Renate Bixby, William A. Clarke, Jane W. Evans, Charles C. Gardiner, Ron & Belle Guelden, Jim Hargrove, Robert Hinz & Barbara Benson, Richard Jennings, Jeffrey Lopic, Lawrence Smith (Grace Rogers Fund), Sarah Martin, Judith & John Obedzinski, PG&E Corporation Foundation (donation match), Jeanne Price, Flinn & John Rauck, Marianna Riser, Joanne Shaw, Carla & Charles Stedwell, Stephen & Britt Thal, M. Douglas Woodring

Our Property Committee folks are working to get contractors scheduled to plant on our properties now that the rains have arrived.

We have plants ordered for Bahia and Triangle as well as for Simmons. We have a grant through Marin County Public Works to enhance seasonal wetland habitat at our Simmons property.

CORTE MADERA

Under a cool sun and in some wind, five volunteers weeded in the northern portion of the restoration site on the December workday. The onset of the rains has encouraged lots of new grasses. Bristly ox-tongue and Harding

grass, that were especially thick in the northern section last year, were the focus. Earlier, volunteers from San Domenico School worked to dig birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Harding grass.

TRIANGLE MARSH

The First Saturday Workday for December was rained out—not such a bad thing after dry weather in October and November. The purple needlegrass planted over the last three years grew impressively immediately after the first heavy rain. More purple needlegrass and more western goldentop (*Euthamia occidentalis*) will be planted in January.

Birding in Marin Launches 7th Season

By Jim White

We, Bob Battagin and I, are happy to start Season 7 of our Birding in Marin field trips, birding spectacular natural areas in Marin County. These field trips begin at 8:30 AM on the third Saturday of each month, celebrate nature with an emphasis on birds, and are free. We have a goal each year of identifying 200 species and make an effort to share each sighting with all participants. Throughout the first six years we observed 246 species, but in

2019 we found only 184, falling well short of our goal and our average.

In order to provide better coverage of the areas we visit, we are adding a second field trip in September and instituting an early bird opportunity at 7:30 AM on each field trip day near the trip location. A corollary of the proverb, “the early bird gets the worm,” is “the early birder sees the bird.” Our schedule for 2020 is included below:

TRIP LOCATIONS		7:30 AM STARTING LOCATIONS
January 18	Bolinas, Duxbury Reef	Stinson Beach
February 15	Nicasio	Roy's Redwoods
March 21	Mt. Tam, Corte Madera Marsh	Mt. Tam Summit
April 18	Mt. Burdell	North of San Marin Drive
May 16	Muir Beach	Miwok Trail
June 20	Big Rock, Las Gallinas	Big Rock
July 18	Bear Valley, Five Brooks	Olema Marsh
August 15	Limantour	Sky Trail head, Limantour Road
September 5	Abbotts Lagoon	Inverness Tennis Courts
September 19	Drakes Beach, Fish Docks	Drakes Corner
October 17	Rodeo Lagoon, Hawk Hill	Rodeo Beach
November 21	Las Gallinas, Hamilton	Civic Center Pond
December 5	Bahia, Rush Creek, Deer Island	Cemetery Marsh

Future of Mother's Day Picnic in Doubt

Perhaps you've enjoyed our Mother's Day Picnic at sometime during the last 50 years we've been holding the event. We may not be able to continue this tradition because we don't have a chair for the Mother's Day Picnic this year. Unless we find someone to head up the Picnic, we will not be able to continue to hold the event. We have dependable volunteers for most of the needed tasks but need a chair.

If you want to help or find out more about what is involved, call Barbara Salzman.

MARIN BIRDLOG: NOVEMBER 2019

By Noah Arthur

November is early winter in Marin, with most fall migrants gone and wintering birds settling in as the leaves turn red and the weather turns cold and wet. It is always a productive time for rare birds, and this time it was especially good with several big-deal rarities and an incursion of **Evening Grosbeaks**.

The first new rarity of the month was one of our semi-regular winter vagrants, a pair of **Tundra Swans** on Abbotts Lagoon on the 2nd (JC). Very unusual for the Outer Point past Drakes Beach was a **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** at the Fish Docks on the 2nd (AM). Two **'Harlan's' Hawks** flew over Hawk Hill on the 3rd (EG), along with a large flight of 188 Red-tails. Hawk Hill continued its good run with a late juvenile **Broad-winged Hawk** on the 4th (KG).



William Legge

Tricolored Heron

(AH). Also present were a **Swamp Sparrow** and a **Bullock's Oriole**, (AH), making this one of the most productive single visits to an Outer Point site by any birder in recent years. Also on the 8th, and very unusual for the Outer Point, were two **Band-tailed Pigeons** at the Lighthouse (MF).

The **Black Vulture** put in an appearance over Stinson Beach on the 9th (SW), and another along Olema-Bolinas Rd. on the 16th (MD).

Perhaps the rarest vagrant of November was a **Tricolored Heron** found at Rodeo Lagoon on the 10th (WL) and subsequently enjoyed by many other birders over the following weeks.

Also on the 10th, a very late **Swainson's Thrush** was banded at the Palomarin banding station, and single **Clay-colored Sparrows** were found at Mendoza and Nunes Ranches (LS).

On the 13th, another lone **Evening Grosbeak** flew over Lucas Corneliusen's house in Novato, a well-deserved reward for his long hours of targeted skywatching for exactly this species during the preceding week (LC). A very dark **'Rufina-group' Song Sparrow**, one of the Pacific Northwestern subspecies and quite rare in our area, was at Cypress Grove on the 13th (DL).

On the 14th, yet another **American Tree Sparrow** was in a private yard in Sausalito (AT). This has been a good year for the species on the California Coast.

On the 16th, lone **Evening Grosbeaks** were in Muir Beach and Stinson Beach, a **Thick-billed Fox Sparrow** was in Stinson Beach, an **Orchard Oriole** was in the Mesa neighborhood of Bolinas (MS, LS, LC), and another **'Rufina-group' Song Sparrow** was found at Rodeo Lagoon (WL). A flock of four **Evening Grosbeaks** was in North Novato on the 19th (DH).

Very rare in northern California, and part of an apparent northward irruption of the species this fall, two juvenile **Scaly-breasted Munias** were at Rodeo Lagoon on the 21st (WL, DW). Extremely rare as late as this, another **Swainson's Thrush** was at Nicasio Reservoir on the 22nd (BB, AL).

On the 29th a **Cattle Egret** was at the Smith Ranch Rd. ball fields in San Rafael (DS).

Observers and Acronyms **AH:** Adrian Hinkle, **AL:** Ann Linder, **AM:** Alex Merritt, **AT:** Amy Tan, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **DH:** Daphne Hatch, **DL:** David Lumpkin, **DS:** David Sexton, **DW:** David Wiechers, **EG:** Eli Gross, **JC:** Jim Chiropoulos, **JS:** Josh Snead, **KG:** Keith Gress, **KS:** Kim Stevens, **LS:** Lucas Corneliusen, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **MF:** Mark Forney, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **SW:** Shelby Witherby, **WL:** William Legge

Rodeo Lagoon 2020 Field Trips

We are pleased to announce a new program of eight field trips in 2020 to eBird 'hot spot' Rodeo Lagoon in the Marin Headlands led by William Legge and David Wiechers. The focus of these field trips will be on migration with four monthly field trips planned for the spring migration and four for the autumn migration. Rodeo Lagoon's unique geography at the southwest tip of Marin and varied habitats within a short walk offer participants the opportunity to encounter the full spectrum of migrant species as the seasons unfold. Mark your calendar now:

Spring Migration Trips

- February 26
- March 25
- April 29
- May 27

Autumn Migration Trips

- August 26
- September 27
- October 25
- November 30

In spring the hope is to encounter winter ducks, grebes, loons and gulls in February and March as they work their way north, late winter and spring passerine migrants in March and April, and late spring migrants (including Pacific Loon) and wandering summer migrants in late May. Fall's field trips have been timed for the peaks in summer passerine migrants and shorebirds in late August, warblers and other passerine migrants at the end of September, the full gambit of migrants in late October and rounding out the fall with migrant ducks, grebes, loons, and gulls at the end of November.

Participants of all eight field trips should expect to log between 120 – 130 cumulative species throughout the year including a few Marin scarcities. The location is a rarity hot spot and hosted a White Wagtail in September 2015, Eastern Yellow Wagtail and Yellow-green Vireo in September 2018, and a Tricolored Heron in November 2019. Full details of these field trips, including directions, meeting time, and expected duration will be posted on the MAS website and in *The Rail*. We hope you will join us for this new field trip program.



William Legge

Scaly-breasted Munia



The Rail

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- Feb. 13 – 16 **Winter Wings Festival**
Klamath Falls, OR
- Feb. 14 – 17 **Great Backyard Bird Count**
<https://gbbc.birdcount.org>
- Feb. 15 **Field Trip: Nicasio & Tomales Bay**
With *Jim White & Bob Battagin*
- Feb. 22 **Field Trip: Eastern Yolo County**
With *John Klobas & Sarah Brooks*
- Feb. 26 **Field Trip: Rodeo Lagoon**
With *William Legge & David Wiechers*

Check website for updates and details

♻️ Printed on 100% recycled paper

SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

We invite you to become a Chapter-supporting member of Marin Audubon Society (MAS) to support our important habitat protection and restoration work, conservation advocacy, our full calendar of birding field trips and speakers and our newsletter, *The Rail*. Marin Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon (NAS). However, becoming a **Chapter-Supporting Member** of MAS is separate and distinct from a membership in NAS. While MAS works with NAS on issues of mutual concern, we are a separate non-profit Section 501(c)(3) all-volunteer organization. Marin-based NAS members do receive this MAS newsletter, *The Rail*, however we encourage all NAS members to also become Chapter-supporting members of MAS to support our local work. Very little of our funding comes from NAS, and we rely on our MAS Chapter-supporting members and donors to help us fund our land acquisitions, restorations, habitat protection, conservation advocacy, this newsletter and our local programs.

If you're not already a Chapter-supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors and relatives to join us, too.

You can join MAS or make a donation on our website using your credit card or PayPal by going to www.marinaudubon.org. Alternatively, you can join by filling out this form and sending us your payment by mail.

ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO JOIN NATIONAL AUDUBON FOR THE FIRST TIME.

MAS will receive 100% of your initial membership if you enter **MAS's chapter code C04** on your application. To join, go to www.audubon.org/join.

The best option for the birds: Join MAS **and** 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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