

A Worldwide Collaboration to Track Bird Migration

Amie MacDonald



Cellular Tracking Technologies

Bird Tagged for Recording by Motus Tracking System

The May Speaker Series program will be a Zoom meeting. Visit the Speaker Series page on the MAS website for information on joining the Zoom meeting electronically.

This presentation will include an overview of the Motus Wildlife Tracking System (MWTS), an international collaborative research network that uses automated radio telemetry to track birds, bats, and insects. The system consists of receiving-towers placed around the world. When a tagged species passes within range of a tower, its presence is recorded and incorporated into a database accessible to interested investigators wherever they may be.

Amie MacDonald works as the Western Motus Coordinator for Birds Canada, and is currently working to expand the MWTS in British Columbia. Previously, she studied Red Knots during migratory stopover on the James Bay coast, and has also spent several years working as a field technician, primarily with shorebirds in James Bay and the Bay of Fundy, but also with seabirds, passerines, and small mammals on various projects. She loves being in the field and is interested in migration, population ecology, and the conservation of highly mobile species.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

7:30 PM

The Hummingbird Handbook

by John Shewey

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Speak Out to Protect Northern Spotted Owl Habitat

We reported in our February article on the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) about the Trump administration's rule that removed 3.4 million acres of Pacific Northwest old-growth forests from protection as critical habitat for the owl. This is about one-third of the NSO's formerly protected habitat. The Trump rule was the result of a legal settlement with the logging industry. It leaves the major Northern Spotted Owl population, which inhabits Northwest old growth forests, with significantly reduced habitat. Scientists predict this loss is likely to hasten the extinction of this beloved species.

Fortunately, there is now a path to reverse this terrible decision.

The Biden Administration has delayed implementation of this harmful rule and opened a public comment period to receive input. This is the last chance to eliminate the rule.



Elyse Omernick

Northern Spotted Owl Mother and Chick in Marin County

Our population in Marin is a small but a unique and important part of the total NSO population. The Marin population too is at risk, although not from logging interests, but from habitat loss, climate change, the Barred

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Annual Meeting and MAS Board Election

Marin Audubon's Annual Meeting, at which our Board elections take place, is coming up and will be held as usual, at our May Speaker Series program on the second Thursday of the month. Last year we had not quite figured out how to use Zoom and so we did a mail-in ballot. This year we are using zoom regularly and we feel comfortable we can make it work for members to vote on Zoom.

Join us for our election and our special program on Thursday, May 13, at our Speaker Series Program 7:30 p.m.

You'll be voting on this year's candidates:

Roger Harris

Roger is a Certified Wildlife Biologist, conservation activist and long-time MAS member. Roger has presented many programs and field trips for MAS over the years.

Lelia Lancot

Leila is a docent at the Fine Arts Museum, not the Museum of Natural History as stated last month. Lelia is a resident of Larkspur. She is a long-time MAS member, as well.

RETURNING MEMBERS

Ed Nute

Ed currently serves as chairman of our Property Management Committee, co-coordinator of the Christmas Bird Count and chair of the Marin Monarch Working Group.

Barbara Salzman

Barbara is currently president and Conservation co-chair and Bay Area Audubon Council representative. Early on she was Program chair.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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	Ann Thomas 924-9559
Treasurer	Ann Thomas 924-9559
Conservation	Phil Peterson 828-4780 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Field Trips	Jane Medley 559/760-1551
Membership Chair	Bob Hinz 383-8688 Contact Bob for membership problems or questions.
Outreach, Website	Elyse Omernick 694-2320
Speaker Series	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 680-6291
Nominating	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Volunteer Coordinator	Meghan Kehoe 209-769-8862
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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Website: www.marinaudubon.org

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

Another month of the pandemic brings us closer to opening, but as we go to press not quite yet. Amidst the successful vaccines and opening up, there is news about new variants.

We've just heard the Richardson Bay Sanctuary has reopened, but we've planned our Speaker Series on line and we'll continue with that plan. We're looking to fall to begin field trips outdoors and we're looking for a field trip chair.

We're pleased to have had a significant part in getting the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas up and running. We've provided funding and other support for the basics to enable the project to move forward and stand on its own. You will still find information about the Atlas on our website. Go to the Birds column and then to Breeding Bird Atlas. Contact Juan Garcia at for additional information jfgarcia@tutanota.de.

We'll be having significant challenges getting through the summer with the very low rainfall that we've had this winter. I'm remembering the last severe drought when we had to save water in buckets to flush our toilets. We're worried about our habitats with the drought conditions. We're at most risk of

losing the plants we planted at our Simmons and Bahia properties this past winter. We also planted smaller quantities at The Redwoods and Triangle Marsh. We'll be relying on reclaimed water to keep them alive. Usually we water newly planted plants at least through the first summer to best assure they survive, and sometimes we've irrigated into the second year. This summer, we'll have to start irrigating sooner than in normal years, perhaps water more frequently if it is a really hot summer. We don't want to lose the plants, nor do we want to use large amounts of potable water. We haven't figured out how we'll get the reclaimed water to our plants yet but we're working on it.

Look for our spring appeal letter to reach you probably mid to end of May. We depend on donations from this appeal to support and enhance habitats on our properties. We hope you will support our habitats with a generous gift this year when we have a great need.

Do join us on the second Tuesday evening for our Annual Meeting and election of Board members for the coming three years

Finally, I hope you're all getting the vaccine to keep you and everyone else safe, and remain careful.

Join Our Team!!

Marin Audubon Society has open seats on its Board of Directors for the coming year (begins in June) that offer a rare opportunity to benefit local wildlife while enjoying an interesting activity in the company of like-minded avid conservationists and birders. Here are some positions needing help.

Field Trips

Organize one or two field trips of your choosing each month September through May. A number of MAS field trips each year have been repeats, which eases the brain-storming. Great job to share with a friend.

Speaker Series Chair

Arrange and moderate once-a-month speaker programs, possibly some

in-person at the Audubon Sanctuary meeting room and some via Zoom. Up to you.

Education

Work with diverse communities and ages on fun activities that inspire a love of learning and of the natural world. Use your creativity.

Special Skills

Are you a whiz at a skill getting rusty? Please call and maybe there is a place for you. For example, high finance, weed-pulling, database management, social media, licking envelopes.

Questions, inquiries welcome. Contact Doug Waterman; phone 415/506-4675, email programs@marinaudubon.org.

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.

Northern Spotted Owls

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Owl, and urbanization.

Maintaining and restoring NSO habitat also benefits humans. The Northwest Forest Plan changed the Pacific Northwest forests from being a source of carbon emissions to a significant carbon pollution sink, as pointed out by the American Bird Conservancy.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Raise your voice to help ensure the Biden administration follows through to protect the Northwest forests and that our congressman supports our concerns:

- Tell Congressman Jared Huffman to advocate for reversal of this dangerous rule before it is too late for the Northern Spotted Owl. Google his website to send an email to Congressman Huffman or mail your comments to his Washington DC Office: 1527 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 or call 202/225-5161.
- Urge the Biden administration to reject the bad Trump rule and restore protection for the essential old growth forests, the threatened NSO and other species that depend on them. Send your comments to comments@whitehouse.gov.

ANCHOR-OUT UPDATE

The Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) was the main feature of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC) Enforcement Committee hearing on March 24. RBRA Harbor Master, Curtis Havel reported that there are currently 97 boats on the anchorage. About 18 anchor-outs enrolled in the Safe and Seaworthy program before the deadline. Sixty-five vessels have arrived since the August 2019 cutoff. Many were persuaded to leave or the boats were seized, but 21 remain.

BCDC Enforcement Committee Chair Scarf was perturbed about the 21 new arrivals, and asked if there were police to get them out. Havel said the Marin County Sheriff and US Coast Guard help, and they now also have ride-along help from local police, but they are not removing occupied vessels when the occupants have no place to go. He talked about the work of the Downtown Streets team, which now has two workers going out on a

separate boat. He said he would need guidance from the RBRA Board about action against the new arrivals.

The BCDC Enforcement Committee chair said it was not acceptable to not enforce the 72-hour rule against new arrivals. He also said that BCDC staff needs to calculate a set deadline date to clear the anchorage within the 5 years required about a year ago, and there needs to be an agreement with RBRA soon or else move to enforcement. Enforcement Committee members all agreed that there needs to be a set deadline date. One committee member said there also needs to be interim milestones with dates.

One member of the public commented about his concern that boats that are forced to leave Richardson Bay will return to other areas like the Oakland Estuary. He said he has marine debris vessels in his marina, and he won't let them go out to become a problem elsewhere. He asked that BCDC encourage the state to provide funding to recycle end-of-life vessels.

The main item on the April 7 RBRA agenda was a presentation on the Richardson Bay Eelgrass Protection and Management Plan (Plan) prepared by consultants, Coastal Policy Solutions. The Plan summarizes input from five stakeholder meetings conducted last year and proposes:

1. Eelgrass Protection Zones/No Anchoring Area. Alternative A would protect 90% of the eelgrass beds from damage from anchors, chains and ground tackle. The Plan points out that this is consistent with stakeholder feedback and complies with the stakeholder requests for simpler zones as compared to the Transition Plan zoning proposal of four zones. Note that this alternative is not consistent with feedback from members of my stakeholder group, who wanted all eelgrass protected.

Another alternative B would protect 100% of the current eelgrass, but was rejected as being too complicated to enforce. The explanation for not choosing this alternative is that "the logistics of conveying the boundaries was determined to be infeasible."

2. Annual monitoring of scour damage and eelgrass recovery for 10 years or until 80% of eelgrass has recovered; every three-year monitoring and mapping to document

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STRESSORS DISTURB NESTING NORTHERN SPOTTED OWLS

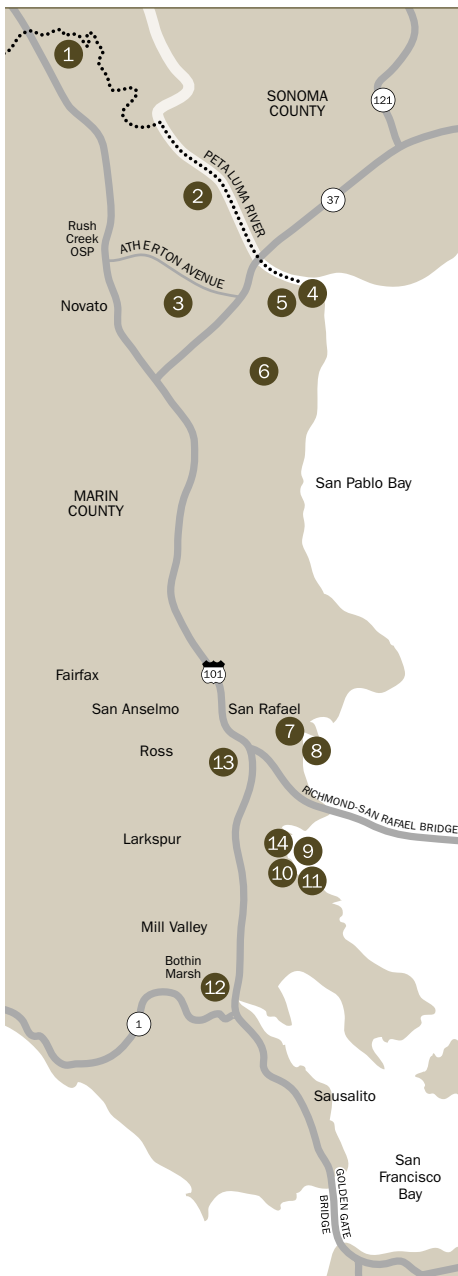
We have entered into a critical nesting timeframe for the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO), and are asking people to take special care if they come across an owl on the trail. Females are now on their nests, and the males are working overtime to feed their mates, themselves, and protect the nest from predators such as crows, ravens and hawks. When people loiter around an owl, especially in groups, it causes disturbances in their nesting behaviors, which can sadly lead to a nest failure.

As a reminder, the NSO is protected under the Endangered Species Act, which allows it special protections especially during nesting season. Loitering, using any sort of playback, making loud noises, etc. can be considered a state or federal offense if these actions directly disturb their nesting, or if they are harassing the owl.

If you are lucky enough to see a NSO, please keep your visit short, keep your voice to a whisper, and never tell others where you found an owl. Large numbers of visitors, particularly photographers, are sharing NSO location information, which is creating a constant bombardment of people in sensitive wildlife areas. This puts unneeded and a dangerous amount of stress on the owls during a very critical time of their nesting period. Marin Audubon is working closely with the Marin Open Space ranger team and MMWD to monitor these locations. If you've witnessed unethical behavior around a NSO, please call the jurisdiction in which you saw the owl. MCOSD Rangers can be contacted at www.marincountyparks.org/about-us/contact-us; for MMWD, Carl Sanders, cstanders@marin-water.org or Bill Merkle, National Park Service Wildlife Biologist, bill_merkle@nps.gov for owls seen at GGNRA for Point Reyes National Seashore. You can also contact Elyse Omernick or Barbara Salzman at conservation@marinaudubon.org for any Northern Spotted Owl concerns.

BENEFIT MAS

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



MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh Expansion Site	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	144 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	4 parcels
5. Black Point Parcels	many parcels
6. Arroyo San Jose	2 parcels
7. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
8. Tidelands and Murphy's Rock	34 acres
9. San Clemente Creek Tidelands	4.34 acres
10. End of Channel Drive	?? acres
11. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres
13. Cal Park	<1 acre
14. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Site	5.2 acres

Anchor-out Update

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eelgrass density and extent, reducing after 80% recovery; water quality monitoring twice yearly; and five-year adaptive management review to compare changes in the extent of the bed with the Plan.

3. A possible future-mooring program. A qualifier that states "Nothing in the EPMP should be considered as inconsistent with potential future implementation of a mooring program." Stating that no mooring program is proposed, the Plan goes on to identify benefits of a mooring field which would "allow a higher density of boaters to use the anchorage, thereby expanding recreational access to the Bay. It would enhance public safety by further reducing the instances of vehicles going adrift ...could be revenue generating... and further protect the bay floor from impacts of anchor scour." The Plan clearly conveys strong support for a mooring field and ends with the statement that "a mooring program is encouraged for future consideration."

Statements at the RBRA meeting indicated that the area identified for protection would be too small to accommodate the anticipated number of anchor outs, but another person stated that there are not many temporary travelers at one time, (around 5 -15 vessels) so there would seem to be plenty of space for them. The intent of the Plan seems clearly to accommodate the anchor out population, which is in direct violation of the BCDC directive.

Interestingly, there was no mention at the meeting of the BCDC Enforcement Committee directive that the RBRA set deadlines and remove the anchor outs from Richardson Bay in, now, four years. There is a 30-day comment period during which MAS will be submitting comments. The Plan is available on the RBRA website.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

To find the *Eelgrass Protection and Management Plan*, go to the Richardson Bay Regional Agency website, download the packet for the April 8 Board meeting, scroll down past the agenda and two sets of minutes and you will find the Plan. The comment deadline is soon after you will be receiving this letter—May 2. However, it is only 16 pages long so does not take long to read. Submit comments to: rebecca@coastalpolycysolutions.com and RBRA Board c/o chavel@marincounty.org.

FARALLON ISLANDS CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

The latest news is that the hearing date for the Consistency Determination for the Farallon Islands Mouse Eradication Plan has been changed to the June Coastal Commission meeting.

The Farallon Islands support the largest seabird-nesting colony in the contiguous United States—more than 350, 000-breeding seabirds of 12 species. Mouse densities are sometimes at plague-like levels of more than 1297 mice per hectare—this density estimate equates to a population of 60,500 mice on this small island and is possibly the highest reported mouse density for any island in the world. The mice are wreaking havoc on the island ecosystem.

House mice have been successfully removed from 64 islands worldwide using similar techniques as proposed here. There is no other method that is proven to work.

- The mice need to be removed to restore the ecosystem
- The only way to restore the ecosystem is the one-time (two episode) use of the rodenticide brodifacoum a product that has been designed specifically for conservation use on islands.
- The total amount of brodifacoum that will be used is 1.6 ounces dispersed through 2,500 lbs. of bait designed to attract the mice to eat it.
- There have been no population-level impacts of aquatic species from the use of this rodenticide. All of the fish species in the project area are either planktivores or predators of invertebrates or fish. They do not eat grain.
- Programs to keep non-target wildlife away from the islands as well as carcass removal programs have been developed and tested with successful results.

For more project information and a short video, go to <https://restorethefarallones.org>.

POINT REYES MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

The Coastal Commission Staff recommendation for the Point Reyes Ranch Management Plan Consistency Determination was that the Commission issue a conditional concurrence based on approval of a strategy designed to address degraded water quality and impacts to marine resources from the ranches that drain into coastal waters.

The staff report explains that federal lands are not subject to the Commission's

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jurisdiction except for spillover effects on coastal resources within the coastal zone from activities taking place on federal lands. The Management Plan applies to ranchlands that drain into the ocean and those in GGNRA boundaries that drain into Tomales Bay. Tomales Bay has been the focus of Regional Water Quality Control Board efforts to improve water quality, and as a result those ranches largely meet water quality standards.

Nearly all of the dairy and beef ranches of concern are outside of the Tomales watershed. Drakes Estero, Abbots Lagoon, Kehoe Creek and other ecologically important habitats are impacted by pollutants in ranch runoff. Between 1998 and 2005, water quality tests showed elevated levels of fecal indicator bacteria, nutrients and sediments; in 2013 sites in the Kehoe and Drakes Estero watersheds exceeded standards for coliform 50% of the time. Later testing found improvement

downstream of ranches that implemented management action. However, water quality testing done by the Western Watershed Alliance in 2021 showed fecal bacteria counts exceeded thresholds generally used by the RWQCB at all sites, with even higher levels at Abbots Lagoon.

For the conditional concurrence, staff recommended a strategy that included a timeline for assessing and improving water quality sampling methodology, measures to address identified issues, and annual reporting.

MAS supported adoption of a water quality strategy for ranches draining into the ocean. We also commented on inadequacies in the lease agreements and Ranch Operating Agreements between the National Park Service (NPS) and ranchers: that the required annual meetings and routine ranch visits (whatever that means) are insufficient to ensure compliance and there is no information about enforcement. We recommended that the four staff needed to implement the Plan be dedicated to natural resources and also expressed

concerns about adverse impacts to tule elk, to grassland nesting birds from mowing for forage and silage, and to other wildlife due to the raising of more farm animals.

After a nearly 12 hour zoom meeting on April 22, the Coastal Commission voted 5-4 to approve the conditional concurrence recommended by staff with three additional amendments, all of which were unanimously adopted. The amendments are: 1) Requires the NPS to provide the Commission with a water quality strategy within one year. The strategy will be subject to approval by the Commission at a public hearing before the NPS issues new leases. 2) Requires the NPS to report on the status of water quality within 5 years. Failure to show improvement could trigger further Commission intervention. 3) Commits the NPS to approve a Climate Action Strategy to be submitted to the Commission along with the water quality strategy.

Public testimony lasted for more than four hours and came from electeds, organizations, ranchers and concerned individuals.

Delay Spring Yard Work to Protect Nesting Birds

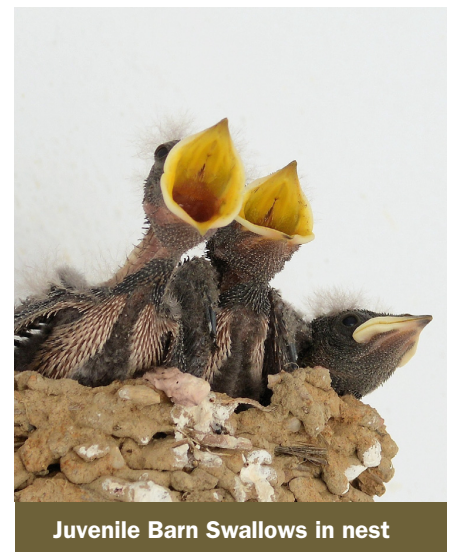
Delay your spring yard work—pruning and vegetation removal—until fall, after nesting season. Pruning and removing vegetation during the critical months of March through August can directly impact individual birds and their breeding success. Bird nesting season is considered to extend through these months in Marin. These months include only the peak of breeding season but not nesting that also commonly occurs before and after the peak, explains wildlife biologist Mary Anne Flett. A number of bird species nest from February through mid to late September, including our iconic state bird, **California Quail**, as well as **Barn Swallow**, **Spotted Towhees**, **raptors** and, although unlikely to be in back yards, **herons** and **egrets** in rookeries. Peak season for hatching/emergence and breeding activity among other species, including native pollinators, reptiles, amphibians, bats, and other small mammals, is also in the

spring and summer months.

Brush piles created from removed vegetation are attractive to nesting birds and small mammals because they provide protective cover. Moving or removing stockpiled vegetation during breeding season can secondarily impact wildlife.

Many jurisdictions in the county have scheduled curbside pickup for “Chipper Days” from April through July, and then a second pickup and from August through October. Scheduling Chipper Days in April, May-September will incentivize homeowners to prune, remove and stockpile vegetation during the spring and summer. Instead, vegetation removal should occur and Chipper Days should be scheduled in the fall and winter, between October and January, to avoid impacting most wildlife.

It is too late to change Chipper Days this season. Notices have already been received for collections in April or May. The Fire and Environmental Resilience



Juvenile Barn Swallows in nest

Joaquim Alves Gaspar, CC BY-SA 3.0

Network (FERN), of which MAS is a member, has requested fire departments to schedule future Chipper Days in late October and in January next year.

Thank you to Mary Ann Flett for providing information for this article.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

By May on our marsh restoration sites, Italian thistle, an annual, and Harding grass, a perennial, will be flowering, and it is important that we prevent them from producing mature seeds. They are among the more troublesome invasive species. Not as abundant, bull thistle might also have early flowers. Even by early April, these and all the other invasive species have pulled water from the soil and left it quite dry. Our native perennials will suffer.

It's a great time to get outdoors. You can make the outdoors better by volunteering to improve MAS's bayside restoration projects. Our volunteer days are good opportunities for students who need community service hours. A little physical activity is good for a person's mood, and, if it does good for the environment, it is doubly good.

Act locally and join us on a workday. We all make a difference.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: May 1, June 5

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

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: May 8, June 12

Meet at the end of Industrial Way.

For up-to-date information, contact Martha Jarocki, marthajarocki@gmail.com or phone 415/461-3592.

Bahia, Novato:

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

THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Hinz, Martha & Gerry Jarocki, Jack Raven, Lowell Sykes, Marilyn Wronsky



Italian thistle

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

BAHIA

This month we had On Point Land Management tend plants they planted this past winter. The crew weeded, watered and placed mulch to keep in moisture. The plants were already looking dry and stressed from lack of rain and it's only April.

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE RESTORATION SITE

We're in the process of working with ESA and The Watershed Nursery (TWN) to conduct engineering and vegetation surveys to determine progress of the evolution of the marsh. As tidal waters flow over newly constructed marsh, they erode the channels, so that they bring more tidal waters into the marsh, and allow sediment to deposit on the marsh plain enabling vegetation to establish. This maturing process will be evaluated in this third year after the marsh restoration project was completed. TWN will be evaluating the survival of the vegetation on the upland transition zone and on the restored tidal marsh. The marsh plain is covered with native plants and the tides appear to be covering the marsh, so we expect the report to be good.

TISCORNIA MARSH

MAS, Environmental Science Associates (ESA), and the Restoration Authority met again the end of March with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT). We heard the various agencies' concerns about impacts to fish and wildlife of the loss of four acres of mudflat. The loss of mudflat habitat for green sturgeon, shorebirds and Ridgway rails for foraging was mentioned in particular. Agencies supported our project but specified that they want us to address the species impacts. There are more than 50 acres of mudflat outboard of Tiscornia marsh and the four acres we are planning to restore to marsh.

SIMMONS SLOUGH

Marin County Public Works has finished the two weir structures designed to allow management of water from our Simmons Property. The structures house flashboards that will keep rainwater and runoff water on our property, and when they are removed water flows out. The water will be retained to provide habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds. The water level will also be regulated to avoid flooding



Ed Nure

Can you guess what this is? Read the Simmons Slough article to find out.

of Olive and of Atherton Avenues. We will be working with the county to establish the desired final water elevation, but that will have to wait for a future year when there is enough rainfall and runoff water to manage. Right now there are only puddles and moist ground.

We appreciate County including these weirs that are installed on the Novato Sanitary District Property to regulate water flows on MAS property, in their Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP) grant for Deer Island. Planting three acres of seasonal wetland/riparian vegetation on our property was also included in the Deer Island grant.

Scoping Hearing for Proposed Project on Former Golden Gate Baptist Seminary Site

Tuesday, May 18, 6 to 8 PM via Zoom

The proposal consists of a residential care facility for senior citizens, 336 residential units (including 50 below-market rate); daycare center and fitness center on the 127-acre site. Seventy percent of the site would be open space. Attend the Zoom meeting to learn about the project and ask questions to be addressed in the EIR. Comment deadline: Tuesday May 25 at 4 PM. Send to envplanning@marin-county.org, c/o Rachael Reid.

<https://zoom.us/j/94160826487?pwd=UWhFbk1wM2R2c0xRSy9JV3M0NHloQT09>

Meeting ID: 941 6082 6487

Meeting Passcode: 506440

Or by Telephone: (669) 900-6833

MARIN BIRDLOG: MARCH 2021

By Noah Arthur



Rock Sandpiper

Western Kingbird of the season showed up near the **Booby**, possibly one of the individuals seen recently on the Farallons, flew by Rodeo Beach on the 10 (WL).

Quite rare on the Outer Point despite its abundance just inland, an **American Crow** was at the Fish Docks on the 21st (EC & RM). A flyover **Sandhill Crane** at Abbotts Lagoon on the 23rd (RM) is similar to many records of the species on the Marin coast, which tend to be flyovers.

Probably the rarest bird of the month, an adult **Northern Goshawk** at the Mount Tamalpais Cemetery on the 26th was not photographed but was described well by the observer (LCi). The season's first **Swainson's Thrush** was singing along the Estero Trail on the 27th (RL).

The recently productive flyover finch watch spot on Blithedale Ridge yielded up four migrant **Lawrence's Goldfinches** on the 27th (BB). The first presumed migrant **Western Tanager** of the season showed up in San Rafael on the 27th (PR), and the first **Black-headed Grosbeak** along Palomarin Trail on the 28th (HR). Surprisingly rare in Marin even in good habitat, a **California Thrasher** was singing along Pine Mtn. Fire Road on the 29th (KB).



California Thrasher

March is generally a slow month for rarities in Marin, instead highlighted by the arrival of many of our common migrants and breeding birds. However this March started out with a bang in the form of a **Rock Sandpiper** on Pt. Reyes North Beach (ML). Despite some older books showing the species as a winter resident south to the Bay Area, they are exceedingly rare in Marin, as rare as many of our Eurasian vagrant shorebirds.

A very early **Hooded Oriole** in Inverness on the 7th may have been a spring arrival or a bird that wintered nearby (LS). The first



Hooded Oriole

The last rarity of the month was a good one for Marin, despite being regular at localized spots elsewhere around the Bay: an immature male **Barrow's Goldeneye** on Rodeo Lagoon on the 31st (WL).

A number of continuing birds from past months were seen into March, including the **Common Teals** at Las Gallinas and Hamilton Wetlands; **Black Vulture** around Bolinas; **Glaucous Gull** in Tomales Bay; **Yellow-bellied** and **Williamson's Sapsuckers** and **Winter Wren** at the Olema Campground; and **Mountain Bluebirds** at Drakes Corner on outer Pt. Reyes.

Observers and Acronyms **ML**: Matt Lau, **LS**: Lucas Stephenson, **KB**: Ken Burton, **WL**: William Legge, **EC**: Everett Clark, **RM**: Ron Mallory, **EN**: Erin Nickel, **LCi**: Luca Cinus, **RL**: Rachel Lawrence, **BB**: Brian Browne, **PR**: Peter Robertshaw, **HR**: Heidi Regier

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Caroline Ann Adams, Miriam Alfonso, Jackie Ashcroft, Paul Atkins, Leann Bloom, Lawrence Bohler, David Browne, Denise Capra, Karin Carrington, Sheila Chellgren, Karen Cleff, Karin Conn, Bridget Coyle, Beth D'Amato, Frank Davis, Teresa Eckton, Moises Elterman, Nancy Emerson, Roy Falk, Mary Farr, David Frey, John & Yolanda Gibson, Linda Green, Virginia Hanzel, Richard Holland, Lauren Howard, Arthur Intemann, Scott Jamieson, Alan Jones, Sharon Kahn, Catherine Karnitis, B. King, John King, Elisabeth Lampert, Pat Winfield & Marjorie Messa, Bruce Mitchell, Paula Pagano, Jessie Powell, Nancy Reeder, Kay Russell, Ed Ryken, Jacqueline Schauer, Donna Stravinski, Sarah M. Stuckey, Jeff Titus, Mary Wood, Karen Zimmerman

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ALERT

Report Barred Owl Spottings

Barred Owls have extended their range to the west coast and have been seen in Marin. There is increasing concern about their impact on Marin's Northern Spotted Owl population. Barred Owls are larger, more aggressive and occupy the same habitat type as Spotted Owls. See contact list at <https://marinaudubon.org/2020/09/01/alert-report-barred-owl-spottings>.



The Rail

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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.

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.

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