

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

7:30 PM

For the Love of Hummingbirds

by John Shewey



Rufous Hummingbird

The June 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.

Hummingbirds amaze and intrigue us. Their high-speed enigmatic lifestyles are a blur; their startling colors and exotic behaviors are delights. Hummingbirds also inspire us—they are like tiny ambassadors with the power to usher people into a deeper interest in and appreciation for the natural world. Author John Shewey taps into the intrigue in this program based on his new book, *The Hummingbird Handbook*. Join John for this fun-filled program and learn more about hummingbirds, how to attract them, how to cater to them, and how to be a great hummingbird host in your yard.

Lifelong birding enthusiast John Shewey is a veteran writer, editor, and professional outdoor photographer, with credits in *Birdwatching*, as well as dozens of other magazines, and is co-author of *Birds of the Pacific Northwest*, a Timber Land Press Field Guide. John has photographed birds from the mountains of Alaska to the jungles of Central America to the islands of the Caribbean, and his website chronicles many of these travels in rich photographic detail. Visit him at [birdingoregon.com](http://birdingoregon.com).

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Conservation Report	3
Habitat Stewardship	6
Birdlog	7



## The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Conservation Success: Bald Eagles Successfully Nest in Southern Marin

By Roger D. Harris

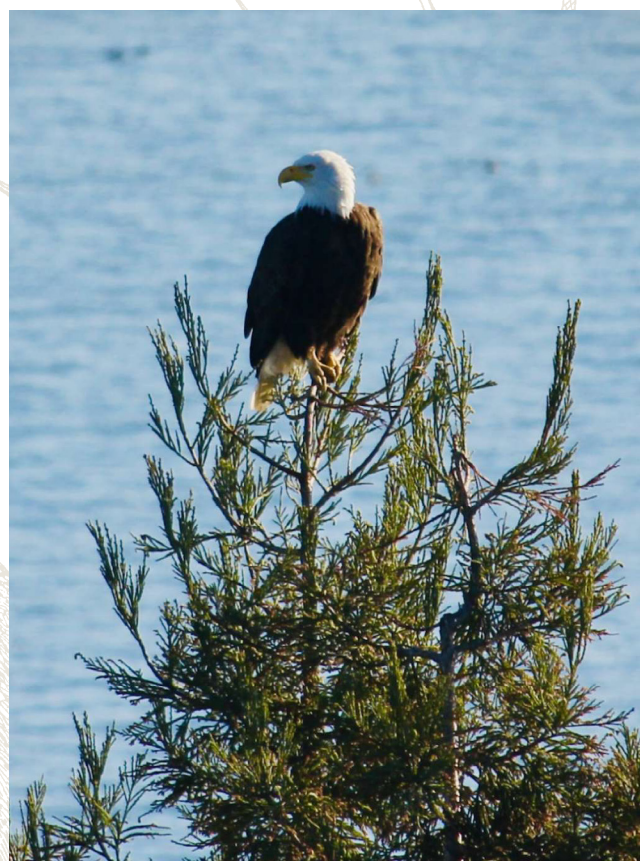
Until very recently, Bald Eagles were not known to have nested along the San Francisco Bay in Marin County. So, the hatching of two eaglets this spring in coastal southern Marin is a “momentous occasion” in the words of Allen Fish, Director, Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO), Parks Conservancy.

The nest was initiated in 2019 by a pair of Bald Eagles, according to a local biologist who observed from a long distance away while working out in the bay. One of the eagles was not yet in full adult plumage, and they had no young that year. Last year, with both birds in full adult plumage, they had a single chick.

Marin Audubon has been in touch with the various county, state, and federal authorities as well as the land owner alerting them of the eagles' presence. Bald Eagle nests are protected under the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the state Fish and Game Code. Audubon will be monitoring the situation closely.

Because these magnificent birds are sensitive to human disturbance, it is imperative that people not approach nests closely. GGRO eagle expert George Eade cautions that the birds require a significant buffer zone from human activity to breed successfully.

Bald Eagles are known to mate for life. The sexes have identical plumages with females about 25% larger than males. A spectacular aerial display, accompanied by vigorous vocalizations, involves the mating pair locking talons and precipitously plummeting toward the ground. Their nests are the largest of any North



Bald Eagle in Marin County.

American bird and may be used for years.

Although archeological remains in shell middens in Bay Area indicate Bald Eagles once nested along the San Francisco Bay, Dave Shuford's Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas reports no historic nesting records for Marin and none breeding in the 1979-83 atlas period.

A combination of factors had decimated Bald Eagles here and throughout North America. Shooting and habitat loss were major factors along with lethal powerline collisions and poisoning from eating ducks contaminated with lead shot. The widespread use of DDT after

*continued on page 3*

## 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
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Contact Bob for membership problems or questions.	
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Nominating	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Volunteer Coordinator	Open
BAAC Reps	Barbara Salzman 924-6057 Doug Waterman, 506-4675

## DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members. If you wish to attend please call 415/924-6057.  
6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month via Zoom.

**MAS telephone:** 721-4271 (for messages only)

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

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

## DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

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

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Barbara Salzman

This is our last newsletter for the summer. Our next issue will be the September issue, which will be out at the end of August. As we go to press, restaurants and public places are beginning to be opened up and masks need not be worn outside except in larger groups. We're considering when, how or whether to continue to meet on Zoom for our Board meetings. It's much easier to not have to drive to meetings, but we're missing seeing and talking with each other in person.

We're having the same discussion about meeting in person for our Speaker Series Programs. Many more people attend on Zoom, but speakers like the communication with a live audience and its fun meeting with each other. What do you think? Send us a message through our website.

One big change when we begin to meet in person is that we will be meeting at a new venue. Casey Arnt, Manager of the Richardson Bay Sanctuary, has advised us that the classroom is no longer available to us. It is now used full time and has been modified by a Montessori school. So we'll be looking for a new place to hold our meetings. Let us know if you can suggest any options.

We're hoping to begin outdoor field trips in the fall. Perhaps by that time we will be able to be free of masks. But we still need a field trip chair. We're looking for volunteers.

We wish a very fond farewell and huge thank you to two departing Board members, Phil Peterson and Jane Medley. Phil has been a stalwart through many conservation and habitat protection issues and opportunities, and through most of our important property acquisitions. As field trip chair, Jane greatly expanded the number of field trips we offered, and carried out many special trips and workshops on varied topics that introduced our members to new aspects of the natural world and brought them enjoyment. Our special thank you and great appreciation to you both for all you have given to Marin Audubon, to our birds, other wildlife, and to educating our members about our birds.

A warm welcome to our newly elected board members: Roger Harris and Lelia Lancot. Read more about them in the box on the right. We look forward to working with you both in the coming years.

A very special thank you to member LaVonne Blasche for her very special donation to Marin Audubon's work. LaVonne has made a very generous donation to MAS this year and over the last three years. Her gifts have been a tremendous help keeping us going and enabling us to continue our work through this difficult time. Thank you so much LaVonne.

We are in the process of acquiring a new property—a wetland parcel in San Rafael along

Las Gallinas Creek. Again, we will be partnering with Marin Baylands Advocates to acquire the property from the Veterans of Foreign Wars that is dissolving as an organization and must divest itself of its assets. I'll provide the details in the next issue of *The Rail* at which time the purchase will be completed.

Our habitat restoration opportunities will continue through the summer, on the first and second Saturdays at our Corte Madera properties. Consult our website and/or contact Bob Hinz and/or Martha Jarocki.

Getting through the summer will be difficult for plants, wildlife and for all of us. The reservoirs are lower than the 1970's drought. Water Districts have imposed water use restrictions, but they will have to be increased because conditions now are more dire than they were 40 years ago. We had to do more water conservation then than we are being asked to do now. We all need to join together to conserve water. We'll need to save our shower and pasta water, drastically cut garden watering—save and reuse every bit of water we can. We'll have to meet the challenge—find new ways to save water. We made it through last time, and with responsible conservation we can do it again.

Stay healthy over the summer. We'll see you in the fall.

## Welcome, New Board Members!

**Lelia Lancot** is a long-time Larkspur resident. She had served as a member of the Larkspur Park and Recreation Commission for many years and is now a member of the Heritage Preservation Board. Her work career centered around Early Childhood Education, working as a Teacher and Preschool Director. Lelia enjoys hiking, bird-watching, flyfishing and yoga. She became aware of the wonderful work of the Marin Audubon Society while hiking Marin and experiencing the many Audubon wildlife preserves.

After teaching political science at an Historically Black College in Mississippi, **Roger Harris** made a mid-career shift and went back to school to make his avocation his vocation. He became a Certified Wildlife Biologist, was the assistant director of the Richardson Bay Audubon Center for the National Audubon Society, and then a principal in an environmental consulting firm, where he specialized in endangered species, wetlands, and native habitat restoration. Now retired, Roger leads international trips for the Oceanic Society. Roger is a Marin County Parks Commissioner and on the boards Marin Conservation League and the Task Force on the Americas, a 36-year-old human rights organization.



## Bald eagles in Southern Marin

*continued from page 1*

World War II had the unintended consequence of causing eggshell thinning in birds. By the 1950s, only an estimated 412 nesting pairs remained in the contiguous U.S.

The Audubon movement, starting back in the 1890s, was a key component in a groundswell of public demand for conservation. This was reflected in passage of the federal Lacey Act of 1900, Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, and the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966. DDT use in the US was banned in 1972, and an amended Endangered Species Act passed in 1973.

Under protection, the Bald Eagle was delisted in 2007 after 40 years on the endangered species list. Our local Christmas Bird Counts began to record Bald Eagles in increasing numbers starting in 2006.

The first eagles began nesting in the more remote interior of west Marin in 2008. According to Jules Evens of Avocet Associates, they have successfully nested every year since. By 2013 another nest was established, and by 2020 three eagle pairs were nesting in the west county. Bald Eagles briefly nested in northeast Marin. A 2017 article by Lisa Krieger in the East Bay Times cites over eleven nests in the South Bay and Santa Cruz counties.

This significant conservation success story is still unfolding. From being an endangered species at the brink of extinction, Bald Eagles may soon become a common but still charismatic Marin bird.

## FARALLON ISLANDS UPDATE

The Coastal Commission consistency determination hearing for US Fish and Wildlife Service's restoration plan for the Farallones has been postponed again. There is no reschedule date as we go to press.

Half the world's population of Ashy Storm-Petrels nest on the Farallones. That's one of the reasons why this project is so critical. If the mice are not removed, a 63% decline in the Ashy Storm-Petrel population is expected over 20 years, putting it on a trajectory to extirpation. The Farallon Arboreal Salamander and the Farallon Camel Cricket, both found only on the Farallones, are also at risk. Native plants and their seeds are eaten by the mice, causing declines over time.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

This delay gives you more time to urge Commissioners to find the Plan consistent with the Coastal Zone Management Program. Long-term impacts will continue to occur the longer the mice remain on the Farallones. Just tell the California Coastal Commission to support the USFWS's plan or give some reasons they should—choose any of the points in articles that have appeared in this newsletter over the past year. You can find them on our website under Conservation, Farallon Islands.

Email comments to [farallonislands@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:farallonislands@coastal.ca.gov). Or by mail to Stephen Padilla, Chair, California Coastal Commission, 455 Market Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94105. Put Consistency Determination No. CD-0006-21 in the title.

It would be most helpful for you to sign up and speak to the Commission in support of the Service's plan to restore the islands. Open Time for public comment on items not on the agenda is scheduled for the first hour of each Commission hearing day beginning at 9 a.m. Google "California Coastal Commission" and follow prompts to sign up to speak on a specific date.

## BAHIA FIRE ROAD AND TRAIL PROJECT

The Marin County Open Space District (OSD) is planning changes to the trails on 100 acres on the hills just west of Bahia Drive. These lands were part of the Bahia 635 acres that MAS purchased almost 20 years ago. More than 300 acres of tidal marsh, that were restored to tidal action by MAS in 2008, are adjacent to the north. MAS donated approximately 200 acres of upland hills to the OSD and they are now part of the Rush Creek Preserve. The OSD defines the project purpose as "implement the county Road and Trails Plan to provide the public with a safe multi-use trail system to enhance visitor experience, reduce environmental impacts on sensitive resources, by reducing sedimentation and erosion, establish a sustainable system of roads and trails that meet design and management standards to provide safe access along the road alignment."

The project would decommission various social trails; modify the trail that now extends from the Bahia Ridge Fire Road north to the Bahia Trail along the base of the hills. This north-south trail would be replaced with a trail that follows the contours of the land and will not be so susceptible to erosion. Trails from the Horsemen's Association facility to the Fire Road would also be decommissioned and replaced with a longer trail that also follows the contours of the hill. The project would not change the alignment of the Bahia Trail along the base of the hills, or the road along the ridge (Fire Road). The trail on the hill paralleling Bahia Drive (Bahia Berm Trail) would remain and drainage would be improved. Trails not decommissioned will be adopted as system trails.

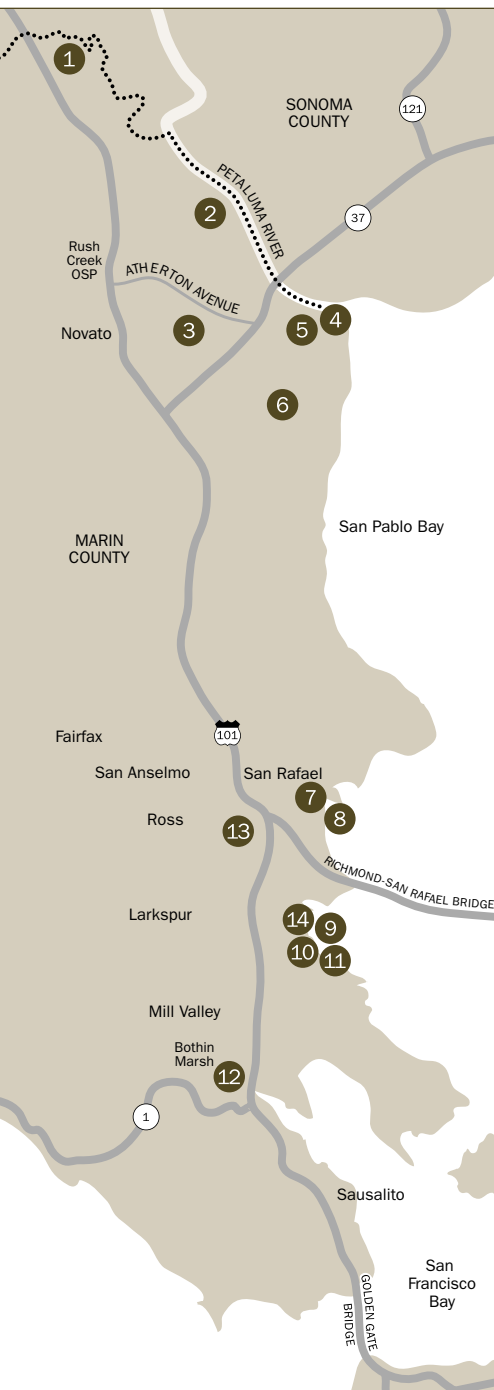
The county prepared an Initial Study (IS) that reports the site supports extensive native oak and bay woodland habitats interspersed with grasslands, and patches of coyote bush. Consultants evaluating the natural resources describe the woodland habitats as: "Intact woodlands provide important wildlife habitat for species moving from the upland to the bay." No fewer than 15 special status species were identified on or adjacent to the property.

The site contains all four vegetation zones described in the Marin County Vegetation Management Plan: Legacy Zone which is the most sensitive with undisturbed natural systems, Sustainable Natural Systems, Natural Landscape, and Highly Disturbed Zone. Portions of some trails seem to extend through the most sensitive zones: the Legacy and the Natural Landscape Zones, but the figures showing the zones do not show trails and the discussion does not address this potential impact.

In our comments, we asked whether the proposed trails would go through the Legacy and Natural Landscape Zones. If they do, we recommended they address relocating them to avoid impacting these important habitats. We also want a commitment to conduct the work during non-nesting season to protect the special status and many other species.

New trails to the Horsemen's facility and from the ridge to the Shoreline trail will be created and all system trails will be displayed on the OSD website, which raises concern that there will be an increase

*continued on page 4*



## Bahia

*continued from page 3*

in use. A monitoring program is proposed, but enforcement is unclear. Approximately 7,000 feet of existing social trails will be decommissioned and approximately 2,200 feet of new trails will be constructed. Habitat values should increase, if the OSD is successful keeping people off the decommissioned trails, which is difficult in grasslands. Best Management Practices and policies from the Road and Trail Management Plan are relied on to mitigate impacts.

**Additional Issues:** Although an existing condition and not part of the trail improvement project considered under the Initial Study/Negative Declaration, there appear to have been some recent changes in the Bahia Trail along the base of the hills and the marsh edge that raises concerns about management. Vegetation on the uphill side has been flattened, large swaths of vegetation have been cut down on the down hillside destroying shrub habitat, and the trail surface itself appears to have been flattened and widened. One trail we would like to see decommissioned, but is not mentioned, is the trail around the seasonal wetland. It is not on OSD property so they did not include it. We will discuss the possibility of with the owner of the marsh, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

By the time you receive this newsletter, the comment period will be over, however, if you have concerns or for additional information contact Jon Campo, Principal Natural Resource Planner, at 415/473-2686 or [jcampo@marincounty.org](mailto:jcampo@marincounty.org).

## MMWD LAUNCHES RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS

The first of two panels Marin Municipal Water District (its new name is Marin Water) is sponsoring to guide the direction of its Recreation Management Plan was held on May 21. Marin Water owns and manages much of Mount Tamalpais, its reservoirs and lands around them.

According to MMWD, the Recreation Plan will evaluate current conditions and recent outcomes that balance natural resource protection with goals for recreation and access. Marin Water reports it will consider opportunities consistent with its mandate to provide safe, clean, drinking water and its mission to steward natural resources.

The four speakers were engaging and

informative. They presented relevant information and ways to consider recreation: Historic Land Use in Marin by (Dewey Livingston, Historian Marin County), Balancing Natural Resource Protection and Recreation, (Ashley D'Antonio, Oregon State University), Developing Partnerships to Influence Recreation Culture (Kate Bickert from Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Outdoors (Jose Garcia, Latinos Outdoors).

Unfortunately, no information was provided on the natural resources Marin Water is committed to steward and that should be the basis for a Recreation Management Plan: the ecosystem, wildlife and vegetative habitats. This omission was recognized by the five public speakers after the presentations, including MAS. Let's hope they make up for this.

The concept of "balancing" recreation uses with the environment was mentioned frequently by speakers. In our view, the environment has already been degraded by past uses, many of which were reported by Dewey Livingston. Further "balancing" to accommodate interests that further stress watershed resources will move the natural resources further out of balance.

Marin Water states that stakeholder input will be a critical part of the process and there will be additional opportunities for stakeholders to weigh in as the Marin Water Plan is developed. Other than these two public meetings, however, the process Marin Water will use to prepare the Recreation Management Plan, has not been presented yet. We're not sure whether they will be appointing a committee of stakeholders, or whether the staff will be preparing the plan with public input along the way and/or at the end.

The next panel meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 25 from 2-4 via Zoom. It will be conducted with break out sessions that they consider will provide more time for smaller groups to discuss topics. **DO ATTEND.** See the Alert on MAS's website for how to sign in to Zoom.

## SEDIMENT FOR SURVIVAL:

**A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands in the Lower San Francisco Estuary Released by San Francisco Estuary Institute**

Last month, the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) released a major report, *Sediment for Survival*, that presents the science, strategy and policy options that are essential to sustain our wetlands and shorelines in the face

*continued on page 5*

### 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

## Sediment for Survival

*continued from page 4*

of sea level rise. The analysis is based on the broad scientific consensus that wetlands are the first line of defense against sea level rise, which is threatening to drown tidal marshes.

Wetlands provide the most effective protection from flooding for the infrastructure, the roads, bridges, and sanitary district facilities, etc. that support human communities.

Wetlands are more adaptive and resilient than levees and seawalls and they provide ecological services that benefit us all. They provide essential marsh and mudflat habitat for many species of wildlife, they absorb floodwaters and filter pollutants, while they are serving as natural barriers reducing wave action and buffering shorelines. We need to find a way for marshes to continue to provide these valuable services.

Wetlands can grow vertically, making them resilient and effective as sea level rises. However, they need sediment to grow, and they will need increasing amounts of sediment as the rate of sea level rise increases in the coming decades. The challenges are finding the sediments and getting them to the wetlands that need them. The *Strategy* reports that more than 455 million cubic yards of sediment will be needed by 2100 to keep pace with sea level rise.

To calculate the available sediment, scientists identified sediment sources from the Delta and representative creeks in each section of the Bay, and studied how sediments move through the estuary.

Much sediment is lost to the estuary because the flow is from Suisun Marsh through San Pablo Bay, Central Bay and out the gate. The evidence is that there is not sufficient supply to keep pace with the expected sea level rise.

There is a significant sediment deficit. Unless things change, some marshes and mudflats will shrink and others will disappear; we'll have more floods and need more levees. We need to find a way for marshes to continue to protect our shorelines and provide their other valuable services.

Sediment that could supply Bay Area wetlands is dredged from the estuary to maintain navigation channels and local channels for marinas and docks. Most is disposed of in the Bay and in the ocean and is not available to restore eroding and drowning wetlands. It was not too long ago that sediment was considered a waste product to be removed from the Bay. At that time, deep-water sites were identified as disposal sites: off Alcatraz Island, in San Pablo Bay near the mouth of

the Petaluma River and 50 miles offshore in the ocean. It was assumed they wouldn't fill up quickly, but the Alcatraz site has.

What are the impediments to using dredged sediments? There are many: finding suitable sediments is the main problem, transporting sediments to marshes that need them, coordinating timing of restoration and dredging projects, permitting of both restoration and dredging projects, and costs.

Where the more than 450 cubic yards of sediment needed to create/restore and maintain, tidal marsh and mudflats throughout the Bay will come from remains to be determined. The report identifies and assesses many potential sediment sources, some unconventional: navigation channels, creeks, trapped behind dams and in reservoirs, even construction debris, and bio solids. Lots of study and institutional change will be needed for material from some of these sources to be used. What does the SFEI *Strategy* recommend to meet the challenge of supplying sediments to protect and maintain shoreline habitats?

The *Strategy* highlights the need for policy changes, primarily at the federal level, to make sediment available for public benefit uses. The main in-bay source of large quantities of sediment is dredging done by the Army Corps of Engineers to maintain navigation channels throughout the estuary. The Corps dredges more sediment from the estuary than any other single entity and to maintain deep water shipping channels to the Ports of Sacramento, Stockton, and Oakland. The Corps currently dumps about two million cubic yards of material in the Bay and 50-miles out into the ocean.

The *Strategy* recommends changes in federal policy to emphasize the great value of sediment and the critical need to use it to benefit the Bay ecosystem and Bay communities:

- Change Corps policy to redefine sediment as a highly valuable public resource that is essential to restore wetlands, and to direct the Corps to use sediments dredged from federal navigation channels for wetland restoration. Today, federal policy virtually mandates that dredged material be considered a waste. The cheapest disposal site, surprisingly, is often the ocean where the material need only be dumped. Placement to create marsh on mudflat, upland or marsh is more complicated. It requires additional steps to offload the material to the site and then distribute it evenly

## Our Local Experience

MAS is having difficulties finding sediments needed right now for our Tiscornia Marsh project. One would think it would be easy and efficient to use the material the Corps will be dredging from the adjacent San Rafael Canal. Regulatory agency permits, however, specify the dredging method and the disposal location for that dredging which the Corps does fairly regularly. Permits would have to be amended to address the dredging method, as well as how and where the sediments would be placed. Timing and placement methods are also problems. Tiscornia is the first time we have faced this dilemma. With this project we aim to restore tidal marsh and improve levees to increase protection for the Canal community; buffer waves, enhance the marsh, and enrich habitat.

For our other projects: at Triangle marsh we used the fill that had been deposited on historic marsh to build a berm along Paradise Drive and the rest we took to Redwood Landfill for use as daily cover. Using sediments as landfill cover is now considered wasting the material. At Petaluma, we opened the levees around this 100-acre site and allowed it to restore naturally with sediment coming in with the tides. At Bahia, we breached the levees and that marsh also is restoring with natural sedimentation since 2008. For our most recent Corte Madera restoration, we removed fill material that had been placed on tidal marsh to lower the elevation to a level where tidal marsh will restore naturally. We placed the excavated material adjacent to the marsh where it is evolving as a transition zone habitat.

across the site, all of which takes equipment, time and money.

- Change Corps policy to accurately identify wetlands as essential infrastructure that provides critical public benefits.
- Appropriate funds to support the use of dredge sediments for beneficial reuse.
- Mandate that the Corps ensure dredged sediments are placed at shoreline restoration sites for beneficial reuse. Some of these sites exist today and others will come on board over time.

On the state level, leaders need to:

- Encourage multi-agency permitting, monitoring and financing programs to accelerate and incentivize the restoration of wetlands
- Support future resiliency-bond funding to promote the beneficial reuse of dredged sediments.



## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The monthly volunteer work days will continue through the summer. Bull thistle and bristly ox-tongue will continue to grow and flower, and we will continue to dig and cut those. The annual grasses have all died so there is nothing to do there, but we will work on Harding grass, a perennial, which will be producing seeds in June and then go mostly dormant. Near the water's edge *Salsola soda* will continue to grow – until we pull it from the ground!

Act locally and join us on a work-day. We all make a difference.

### Volunteer Workdays

#### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: June 5, July 3, August 7

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: June 12, July 10, August 14

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, Dave Chenoweth, Rich Cimino, James and Sophie Deglan, Bob Hinz, Martha & Gerry Jarocki, Carolyn Losee, Ed Nute, Debbie Pashilk, Alison Pence, Jack Rabin, Lowell Sykes

## SAN GERONIMO UPDATE

The Marin Open Space Trust (MOST) will hold a conservation easement on the former San Geronimo Golf Course property. The easement will be over 135 acres that includes meadows, woodlands, and San Geronimo and Larson Creeks, opening the way for future creek restoration to benefit salmonids. The conservation easement does not include the 22 acres where the former clubhouse is located.

Funding in the amount of \$3 million to purchase the easement came from Propositions 1 and 68 through the Wildlife Conservation Board and the California Natural Resources Agency.

The Trust for Public Land will continue to own and manage the property until a long-term owner and manager is found.

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### BAHIA

This has been a planning month—a time to plan to make sure the plants we installed last winter make it through the coming dry summer ahead. We've hired Hanford ARC to irrigate over the summer. They'll be using reclaimed water which is available near the site. We're also continuing talks with Student's and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) about coming to an agreement for planting one of the peninsulas as a transition zone habitat for Ridgway Rails.

### CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE RESTORATION SITE

During the monthly work day at the Ecological Reserve restoration site, a group of eight volunteers had one main objective: cut Harding grass before it flowers and produces seed. Harding grass is a tall perennial that grows in clumps of increasing size and is a tough competitor for the native forbs and grasses planted on MAS's restoration sites. Volunteers with shears, loppers and a string trimmer cut down a large amount of this nemesis and also some Italian thistle which is not so abundant here.

Despite the low rainfall, two native shrubs, coyote brush and California sagebrush, are doing well. The other native perennial plants show the effects of the dryness but they are still there. Meadow barley seemed to be doing surprisingly well. It was a very warm day with low humidity, and it was the nonnative annual plants that were really showing the effect of the drought. Most were dry and crisp; walking through them sounded like walking on Rice Krispies.

### TRIANGLE MARSH

Volunteers on the first Saturday of May focused on cutting Italian thistle which is more abundant here than at the Ecological Reserve site. It was blooming but there were relatively few mature seeds. It is hard to find every thistle plant, but a large area was largely cleared. In addition, a few native plants were watered, and mulch was added around a few others that were put in the ground during the recent winter.

The purple needlegrass, California's official state grass, looks fantastic. Yarrow and sticky monkey flower were blooming, and Pacific aster looked good but it wasn't yet flowering.

### TISCORNIA MARSH

This past month we've been in talks with the city of San Rafael and the county about possibly partnering on funding for a project intersecting with our project. As required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the city needs to construct a trash capture structure in the Canal

area and the city is preparing a feasibility study that will assess the various location options. One of the options is to locate it at the western end of our project site. MAS submitted a letter of intent for a grant from the Ocean Protection Council to fund permitting and restoration of the seasonal wetlands for our project. The letter allowed for partnering with the city for construction should the feasibility show that this location would work for both projects. As we go to press, we have received an invitation to submit a full application to the Ocean protection Council for our restoration project.

And, over the summer, ESA will be continuing its work on the Draft Environmental Impact Report, which is expected to be completed in fall.

## 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. 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.

**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 [dglswtrmn@gmail.com](mailto:dglswtrmn@gmail.com).

## Spring Appeal

By now, you've received our spring appeal letter. This appeal is dedicated to our properties, to funding the care and upkeep of the habitats we own and maintain. Contributions help fund the purchase of plants, the weeding and watering in excess of our volunteers' capacity, for the wetland, woodland, transition zone and other habitats we own. Donations to this appeal are particularly important this drought year with the hot, dry summer ahead of us.

# MARIN BIRDLOG: APRIL 2021

By Noah Arthur

April is mid-spring, generally one of the least productive times for rare birds in Marin, instead being our peak time for common Western migrants, but a few nice rarities always do turn up. A seasonally exceptional incursion of **Elegant Terns** occurred during the first few days of this April, with multiple reports of 10+ individuals and even a flock of 60 at Aramburu Island (KB).

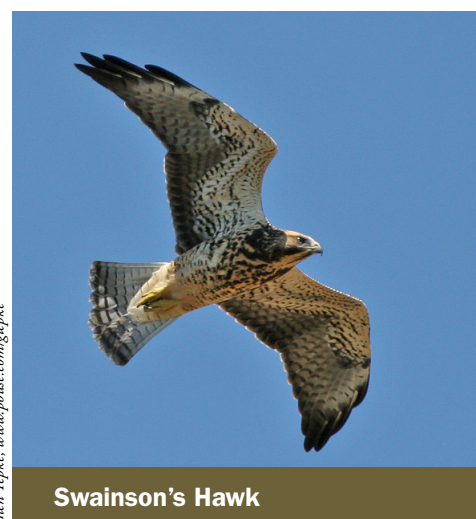
A **Sandhill Crane** flew over Abbotts Lagoon on the 8th (MM). Sandhills in Marin seem to be most often reported as fly-overs at Abbotts—an oddly specific pattern of occurrence for such a large and conspicuous bird that should be easily detected by birders anywhere it occurs.

Also on the 8th, a 1st-spring **Glaucous-winged X Glaucous Gull** hybrid turned up at Bolinas Lagoon, and was subsequently reported as a pure Glaucous Gull by a number of birders, providing a nice cautionary tale on this tricky ID. If the black bill tip is small and well-defined (like a match-head), it's a pure Glaucous. If the black tip extends towards the bill base in a messy streak, as on the Bolinas bird, it's a hybrid. This bird did look especially Glaucous-like overall and may have been a back-cross (more than half Glaucous).

Very rare on Outer Pt. Reyes, two **American Crows** were near the Fish Docks and another near Nunes Ranch on the 9th (GH). The first **Least Bittern** of the season returned to Las Gallinas on the 11th (DL). A seasonally late and very odd record, two **Cackling Geese** were sitting on a small sea stack near Chimney Rock on outer Pt. Reyes on the 17th (SJ). Also on the 17th, a male **Redhead** was on Bahia Marsh (HC).

A **Vesper Sparrow** was at Ring Mountain on the 18th (CD), even rarer in spring than in fall, and a **White-crowned X Golden-crowned Sparrow hybrid** was in Novato on the 20th (JH & WR).

The rarest bird of the month was an apparent **'Richardson's' Cackling Goose** at the Marin Civic Center on the 23rd (JC). This pale-breasted subspecies breeds in the central Canadian Arctic and winters mainly in the southern Great Plains, and is exceedingly rare on the West Coast. If accepted this will be a potential 2nd record for California.



Swainson's Hawk

(pure) **Glaucous Gull** on Tomales Bay, and the **Rock Sandpiper** and flock of 6 **Pacific Golden-plovers** at Pt. Reyes. Wintering **Thick-billed Fox Sparrows** remained on our higher peaks in the Mt. Tam area through the 22nd (CC).

Observers and Acronyms **AD:** Adam Donkin, **KB:** Ken Burton, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **AB:** Amaya Belcher, **MM:** Mike Mahoney, **GH:** Geoff Hill, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **SJ:** s j (eBird username), **HC:** Heather Cameron, **CD:** Cedric Duhalde, **JH:** Joel Hedgpeth, **WR:** Wayne Rapp, **JC:** Jon Curtis, **MB:** Mario Balitbit, **WL:** William Legge, **PY:** Pauline Yeckley, **CC:** Connor Cochrane



Bank Swallows

B. Van Valen, US Fish & Wildlife Service

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Pamela Akridge, Cynthia Andresen, Robert W. Arathoon, Brian Ayuso, Marianne Babal, Randy Block, Andrew Byars, Meghan Cochran, Lorna Cunkle, Sharon Edward, Marni Leis, Diane Morrison, Susan Piallat, Linda Samuels, Matthew Tripp, Scott Valentine

## THANK YOU, DONORS

Richard Bass, Leonard Charles, William Clarke, Richard Daly, Bonnie DeClark, Carl Duisberg and Laura Lindskog, Doreen Gluckin MD, Roger Harris and Meryl Sundove, Joan Haukom, Bob Johnston, Roy Kamalika, Jeffrey Kimball, Sarah Martin, Bruce Mast, Vivian Mazur, Brian and Dolly McCarthy, Frank Noonan, J Morrow Otis, Phil Peterson, Susan Piallat, Marianne Riser, Anne Roughton, Anne Ruben, Barbara Salzman, Elizabeth Schriock, Dr Jill Sideman, Springcreek Foundation, Charles Stanberry, Linda Sudduth, Margaret Todd, Douglas Wallace, Karen Young, and a special thank you to LaVonne Blasche.

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Thank you to Tara Hallgren, Gayle Hallgren-Rezac, and Mary Lufen for donations in memory of Diana Brown.

## 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>.

## 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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## 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](http://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](http://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**.

- ☐ Enroll me as a Chapter-Supporting Member
- ☐ Renewal
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**Marin Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 599**  
**Mill Valley, CA 94942**

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