

Rich Cimino

**Gray-crowned Rosy Finch**

**Note new time!** Register for the January Speaker Series Zoom program on the MAS website Speaker Series page.

This month's zoom presentation will take us into northeastern New Mexico-the Land of Enchantment.

Currently eBird lists 556 bird species found in the state. From the Cottonwood Bosque Forest outside of Albuquerque to the aspen forests of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains surrounding Taos, it's many birding spots include a variety of colorful habitats and landscapes. Rich Cimino will take us on a virtual tour of the New Mexico Central Flyway hotspot habitats during spring migration. Just a few of the birds found along the way include three species of Tanager, three of the Grosbeaks and the Cordellian Flycatcher.

Rich leads field trips for the Marin Audubon Society and works with the Corte Madera Restoration property, Point Blue Conservation and Golden Gate Raptor Watch. Rich is the owner and field guide for Yellowbilled Tours, offering small group birding tours to Alaska, Belize, California, Arizona and New Mexico.

**IN THIS ISSUE**

President's Message	2
Field Trips	3
Conservation Report	4
Habitat Stewardship	6
Birdlog	7



# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Commission Votes to Approve on Farallon Islands Consistency

**H**ooray! We're thrilled that on December 16, the Coastal Commission found the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Plan to remove non-native house mice from the Farallon Islands to be conditionally consistent with the Coastal Zone Program. The hearing lasted seven hours. The Commission deliberation was intense and the testimony was extensive. The vote was mixed, five in support of the Service's Plan and three opposed.

Supporting testimony included two group presentations by scientists from universities who worked on the very successful rodent

removal at Anacapa Islands, and another group of scientists with broad experience with rodent eradication. It was hard to believe that all of the Commissioners were not convinced by these presentations. Many organizations, regional and national, testified in support of the Plan.

The Commission imposed four conditions that were recommended by staff: 1). Develop and implement a Plan for an independent monitor for the project, 2) Prepare a more robust Bait Spill Contingency Plan 3) Submit the final plans to the Executive Director and 4) Present the Plans to the Commission for review at a Commission hearing.

## Measure A – Up for Renewal

As discussed in last month's *Rail*, the County is planning to place the bond measure that has supported Marin County Parks and Open Space District for the last 10 years, Measure A, on the ballot for renewal in June. Although there is broad support for a ballot measure, there is not broad support for the proportions to be allocated to the various categories

Marin Audubon supports renewal of Measure A with different allocation of the tax dollars that would be collected. This is a Parks Measure and we support its renewal with funds fully committed to parks. We support:

1. The same percentage as currently (20%) for cities/towns to use for their parks;
2. Increased funding for Marin County Parks and Open Space to be used for maintenance of open space lands, restoration and enhancement (including by the Resource Conservation District) of habitat for endangered, migratory and native species, and including fire protection on Marin County Parks and Open Space (P&OS) lands. We want fire prevention funding

included in P&OS category (there isn't currently an allocation for fire prevention) because this would give the county flexibility to spend less or more money in any given year depending on needs. Even though it is not part of the Marin Wildlife Prevention Authority, the OSD does benefit from the \$19 million the Fire Prevention Measure (Measure C) generates annually for fire prevention. Right now, a defensible space project is being reviewed for OSD lands along Mill Valley's northern boundary.

3. Increased percentage to acquire properties to be protected as open space for their extensive habitat benefits and ecosystem services. The OSD protects biodiversity, ecosystems, endangered and migratory species, native plant communities, riparian habitats for native fish and many other diverse habitats essential for life: grasslands, woodlands, chaparral and wetlands. These diverse vegetative communities improve water quality and contribute clean air that

*continued on page 4*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710
Volunteer Coordinator	Open
BAAC Reps	Barbara Salzman 924-605 Doug Waterman 506-4675
At-large Director	Lowell Sykes 388-2821

## DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members. 6:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month. Meetings are currently held online via Zoom. If you wish to participate please call 924-6057.

**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.marinadubon.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

Our huge thank you to former MAS President, **Dave Herrema**, and his wife, **Vicki Van Meter**, who have maintained nest boxes on our Simmons Slough property for more than 13 years now (see below). Now that they have moved to Sonoma County, they want to pass on the task to another volunteer. Last year I spoke to a volunteer, but unfortunately, I lost his contact information.

This year things are a far sight better than they were last year. Our federal government is more stable, and the outlook for our natural resources is much improved. New variants of Covid are showing up but they are less lethal and the government is responding to the variants responsibly. We have a lot to be thankful for now and for the coming year.

Here in Marin I'm grateful for each one of our Board members who are working for MAS, our birds and other wildlife. One in particular stands out this year – **Doug Waterman** who is doing three jobs, volunteering for additional tasks and doing all of them well. And **Ann Thomas** who manages our complicated treasury along with many other tasks. I'm grateful to all of our Board members and other volunteers who keep our properties and habitats thriving

and to our Conservation Committee members who follow issues and help keep us on top of threats to our birds and matters of conservation concern. I am also thankful for other unsung volunteers like **Noah Arthur** who every month produces the engaging Marin Birdlog for our newsletter keeping us up to date on special county bird sightings. And **Paul Jensen** who is volunteering his time, now that he is retired from San Rafael, to help with reports on our Tiscornia project. I'm also grateful to our funders for supporting our habitat enhancement and restoration projects. And I'm grateful to everyone who has contributed to our winter appeal and to all of our members whose support keeps us going.

I look forward to the new year and Marin Audubon becoming an even more thriving and productive organization with the continued support of our members. I welcome and invite each of our members to become more involved. Volunteer and help to make us more effective protecting our wildlife and their habitats and providing more birding experiences.

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and happy and healthy New Year.

# Tree Swallow Nest Box Project in Simmons Slough

By Dave Herrema and Vicky Van Meter



## Opened bird box in Simmons Slough at the end of the nesting season

intended for bluebirds, the boxes were quickly claimed by tree swallows. Every year in late fall, the boxes need to be opened and cleaned to be ready for the spring nesters. It is always enjoyable to spend a day hiking around the slough, opening the nest boxes and observing the harriers, ducks, deer and other wildlife that frequent the marsh.

For the past 13 years we have kept records of what we find in the boxes at the end of the nesting season. We resupply a big handful of

As you pass Marin Audubon's Simmons Slough property in Novato at Atherton and Olive, look for the white bird boxes scattered throughout the marsh. Lowell Sykes began installing these boxes many years ago. Initially

cedar chips in the bottom of each cleaned box. The tree swallows add a thick layer of grasses and line the nest with duck feathers found in the marsh. Almost all the nest boxes are used every year and two percent (10) were used twice. An average of 37 boxes were examined each year. Of the 480 total examined, 80 were found with unhatched eggs (1-5 eggs, average 1.8). Ninety-six nests contained dead, mummified birds, almost evenly split between hatchlings and birds that looked big enough to fledge. Six nests contained a dead adult swallow.

Young fledge after 16-24 days and the parents stop removing fecal sacs after about day 14. Of the 480 nests examined, only 15 were abandoned, as indicated by lots of duck feathers but no fecal matter. If 4-7 eggs per nest (**Sialis.org**) hatch out, somewhere between 2000 and 3000 young swallows fledged over the 13 years. Certainly worth the effort.

We need a volunteer to carry on the nest box project next year and beyond. If anyone is interested in taking on this interesting and valuable project, please contact Dave Herrema email; [david.herrema@yahoo.com](mailto:david.herrema@yahoo.com). We would be happy to give a tour and explain the process.



## MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

In person field trips have resumed and are open to all **fully-vaccinated** participants. Trips are limited to allow social distancing. Register for trips on the MAS website Field Trips page. Registration is available on the date indicated in the trip announcements below.

### CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

#### Corte Madera

Saturday, January 8, 2022

9:00 AM to noon

With Bryan Flaig

This trip is perfect for beginning birders looking to learn how to identify waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as experienced birders interested in honing their skills.

The CA Department of Fish and Wildlife's Corte Madera Ecological Reserve contains a variety of birding habitats, primarily tidal marsh. MAS purchased its adjacent property in 2016 and restored it to tidal marsh and high tide refugia several years later to benefit the endangered **Ridgway's Rails**.

On this field trip, we will hike a short distance to explore the marsh at high tide, searching for elusive **Ridgway's Rails** and seasonal migrants. Later, we will walk to the shorebird overlook on the west side of the tidal pond, spending the majority of our time observing the wide variety of ducks, gulls, and wading shorebirds that frequent the area in winter. Expect high tide around 9 AM.

Bryan Flaig has been monitoring bird activity at Corte Madera Marsh nearly every week since 2019 and recently completed Golden Gate Audubon's Master Birding Program

Restrooms are available at nearby stores, but not on the marsh. Bring binoculars, scopes, layers, water, and snacks. Plan for a 1.5 to 2 mile walk on flat terrain. Light rain does not cancel the trip.

Registration opens on Wednesday, January 5 at 8 AM on MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 15 **fully-vaccinated** participants. There will not be a waiting list. No drop ins, please.

**DIRECTIONS:** Corte Madera Ecological Reserve is located behind Trader Joe's in Corte Madera. Meet

in the parking lot behind the store, accessed by the driveway on the southside of World Market.

### SAUSALITO/TIBURON

#### Birding in Marin, Season 7, Trip 2

Saturday, February 5, 2022

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

We are going to explore the bay from the Sausalito water front to the Golden Gate and Richardson's Bay around to Strawberry Point and on to Blacky's pasture in Tiburon. Many ducks, loons and grebes winter on the bay waters and we may find close comparative looks at similar specie pairs like **Eared** and **Horned** or **Clark's** and **Western Grebes**, of **Red-throated**, Pacific and **Common Loons** or **Greater** and **Lesser Scaup**. We are likely to find some shorebirds too, perhaps a **Spotted Sandpiper** or a rather rare **Wandering Tattler**.

Herring runs happen around this time of year and if we are lucky they will still be numerous. Herring deposit large numbers of eggs on eelgrass, which water birds, especially gulls, love to feast on. The roe are fancied by some diners and there is a purse seining fleet hungry for profit. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is trying to maintain a sustainable catch. Last year near this time I think that 10 specie of gulls were located. So brush up on your gull IDs and join Bob and I along the shore.

Registration opens Wednesday, January 26 at 8 AM on MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 15 **fully-vaccinated** participants. There is no waiting list. No drop-ins, please.

**DIRECTIONS:** Meet at the east end of Harbor Drive. Handicap Accessible. We will park where the birding is close, near level and smooth. Thanks to enlightened development

planning, Harbor Drive and the rather posh Strawberry spit have fine public shoreline paths.

### SACRAMENTO DELTA BY BOAT

#### Corte Madera

Sunday, February 6, 2022

(Super Bowl Sunday)

8:15 AM to 4:30 PM

With David Wimpfheimer

Join us aboard Dolphin Charters' *River Dolphin* for a wonderful day of exploring the richness of the California Delta with naturalist David Wimpfheimer as our guide. Ronn Patterson, a Bay Area historian and naturalist, is captain of the *River Dolphin* and owner of Dolphin Charters. The boat is very comfortable, and the outer decks provide views over the levees of the amazing array of birds found in the Delta during the winter.

This rich area hosts a wide variety of raptors including **Swainson's Hawks**, **Peregrine Falcons**, and **Great Horned Owls**. Large numbers of shorebirds, **Sandhill Cranes**, **Tundra Swans**, **Snow**, **Canada** and **White-fronted Geese**, ducks, as well as gulls, terns, bitterns and passerines make this cruise a highlight for birders. Uncommon mammals such as beaver, river otter, and mink often add interest to the cruise. We also will learn about the history, ecology and politics of the levees and the Delta as we travel through its meandering channels.

Online registration for this trip will begin on January 5, 2022. The cost will be \$125 per person. The trip limit is 25 **fully-vaccinated** participants. There will be a waiting list. **To assure a spot for yourself, we recommend booking your space asap as this is always a popular trip.** Those confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions the week before the trip.

## CONSERVATION

### Measure A

*continued from page 1*

we all benefit from, and they offer recreation opportunities for people. Tidal marsh habitats also stabilize shorelines and they, along with other vegetated habitats, sequester carbon, one of the many specific remedies needed to combat climate change. In short, acquiring lands for open space ensures biodiversity, protects native habitats, and the fish and wildlife that depend on them, including people.

The current Measure A includes a 20% allocation for agricultural easements that have been acquired by MALT. Marin's agricultural landscapes are inspiring and they do provide some habitat for wildlife, as has been pointed out by ranchers. The difference is that agriculture lands are managed for private, consumptive use – grazing or other ag operations. They may save some riparian habitats that are fenced to keep out cattle, trees that have not been cut down, or grasslands greatly modified by grazing animals. The habitat values are incidental to maintaining agriculture. Although some ranchers do a good job of maintaining riparian corridors, habitat protection will always take a backseat to the needs of the dairy or beef operation. OSD lands are managed to maintain biodiversity, sustain and enhance habitat, and to support wildlife populations that are part of the natural habitat systems.

Perhaps this distinction is most clear in cases of conflicts between farm animals and native predators, such as coyotes, that are attracted to ranch animals. Another example is the growing of silage that is harvested during nesting season chopping up nestlings that are too immature to leave the nests. Ranching is often to the detriment of native wildlife, both directly and through diminished native habitat. It is the OSD responsibility to maintain native wildlife species and much of their work is doing just that. There are even wildlife biologists on staff to advise on wildlife protection.

Regarding acquisitions, there are many properties, large and small, that do provide or could be restored to habitats, but are in private ownership and, therefore, are at risk of being lost due to development or misuse. It is critical that the county have the necessary funding



Barbara Salzman

**Correction:** Last month we showed a photo of the Bahia upland and reported that Measure A funds contributed to its acquisition. While the county did contribute to the Bahia purchase, the acquisition was before Measure A and so did not use those funds. However, Measure A funds were contributed to the purchase of our Corte Madera property shown here during the King Tide on December 5.

available to begin negotiations and to purchase suitable properties when they become available. Acquisition opportunities do not follow predictable timelines. Landowners change their minds for many reasons, as has happened to MAS with three acquisitions. Increasing the percentage for acquisitions would ensure the county is prepared with funding to take advantage of acquisition opportunities.

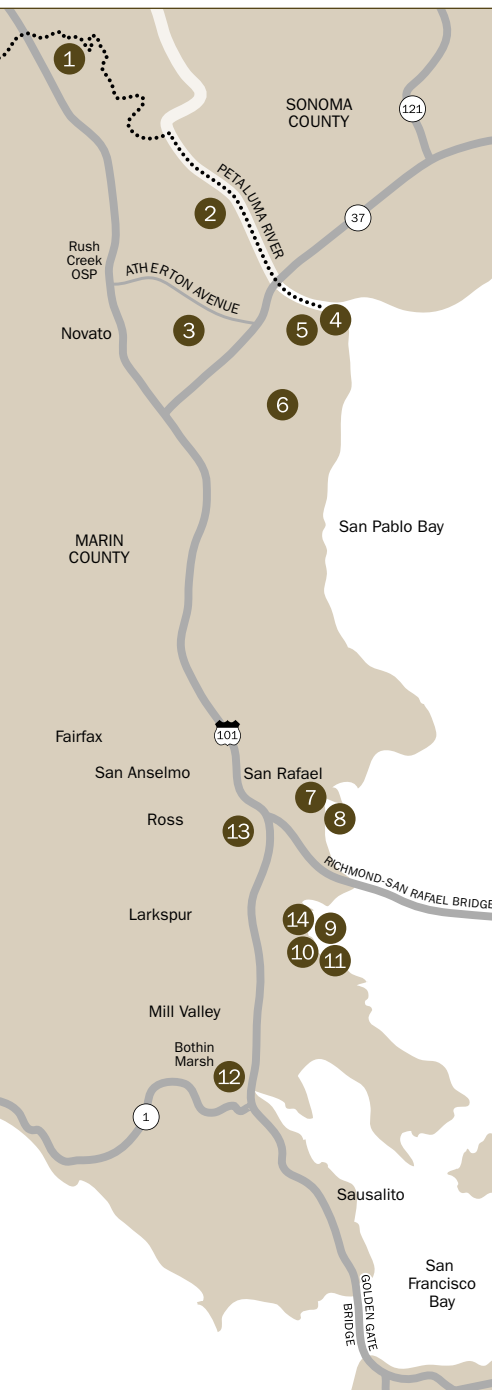
In addition to urging the county to increase the percentage of funding for acquisition we urged that they establish a program to educate the public about the essential value of open space lands. Many people may not be aware of the many benefits of open space lands and may see them only as a drain for funds to maintain the long-term.

In MAS's view, there is no other higher or more broadly beneficial purpose for using our tax dollars than purchasing and permanently protecting properties to be held in a natural state.

Judging from the Supervisor's discussion at the December 14 hearing, the Supervisors are headed toward restoring the 20% allocation for agriculture although with broader uses beyond MALT, and a dedicated percentage for fire. If you care about funding for acquisition and for Parks you need to let the Supervisors know.

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Tell the Supervisors you want the ballot percentages changed to more for acquisition and the Open Space District: [BOS@marincounty.org](mailto:BOS@marincounty.org).



#### 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	1 acre
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

## NOW RENAMED RESIDENCE INN

The Town of Corte Madera has released an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for this significantly revised project. We are pleased the new design retains the pond and that there will be habitat enhancement by planting native species around the pond shoreline. The Negative Declaration does not give much information about revegetation of the pond edges. We've just received the landscaping/habitat plans which show five of the trees being retained that Black-crowned Night Herons roost in. We will be reviewing the planting plans more thoroughly before the comment deadline.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Access the updated (IS/MND) here: [www.townofcortemadera.org/970/Corte-Madera-Residence-Inn](http://www.townofcortemadera.org/970/Corte-Madera-Residence-Inn). Public comments on the IS/MND are welcome until January 14, 2022 at 5 PM. A tentative public hearing date before the Planning Commission has been scheduled for January 25, 2022. You could ask for more information to be included in the IS/MND and generally support retention of the pond as well as the trees adjacent to the pond that support a Black-crowned Night Heron roost, as MAS will be.

## PARADISE DRIVE COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT

The Town of Corte Madera has now held two public hearings on a project for a bike path along Paradise Drive from Windward Way to Robin Drive. For more than 20 years we've been told that a path was planned to be located on the south side of Paradise; now the interest seems to be to put it on the north side – where it would be immediately adjacent to Triangle Marsh. It is not at all clear that filling of Triangle Marsh could be avoided if the path is on the north.

The western section of the Triangle Marsh property, the section that is already marsh and did not need to be restored, abuts Paradise Drive and has only a curb and a narrow, low berm between the street and the marsh. Unless the bike path is in the street through this section, it would have to be in the marsh, which we, of course would strongly oppose.

Although small, Triangle Marsh is a rare historic marsh, i.e., never been filled. The marsh also supports a tidal panne within the marsh that fills with water at high tides and provides foraging and resting habitat for

shorebirds and other species. Tidal pannes are features of historic marshes. Utility poles, limited right of way, BCDC jurisdiction, and the marsh as regulated by the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, were mentioned by the consultants as constraints. Actually, the marsh is regulated by other agencies.

At the recent public meeting, support for the path came from cyclists and residents, some interested in a way for children traveling to one of the three schools along the street. Several speakers want the path to match up with the new sidewalk on Paradise near Harbor Drive. Paradise Drive is well used by cyclists who largely ride in the middle of the street. It is unlikely they would use a sidewalk. Triangle marsh is even more at risk if there is a sidewalk and bike path.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Check out the project website: [www.townofcortemadera.org/1052/Paradise-Drive-Complete-Street-Project](http://www.townofcortemadera.org/1052/Paradise-Drive-Complete-Street-Project). And/or email Town staff: [pwcounter@tcmmail.org](mailto:pwcounter@tcmmail.org) and ask to be added to the project mailing list.

## CALTRANS SCOPING FOR STATE ROUTE 37 INTERIM PROJECT

Three processes are underway to address State Route 37 traffic congestions, flooding and sea level rise threat.

1. Under Caltrans leadership, the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process has been underway for about six months. PEL staff has established technical committees and a large Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) (which MAS is on) has been working to define the project purpose, identify criteria to evaluate alternatives, and to define and evaluate the alternatives for the entire length from Highway 101 to Highway 80. The seven alternatives they have developed are: four extending through undefined uplands north of the bay, in Sonoma, one of which ends on SR 116, a second on SR 121 and the third north of Redwood Landfill and another south of Redwood landfill at Mira Monte; the Current alignment on an Earthen Embankment; Current Alignment Elevated on a Causeway; Over the Bay; and through Bahia/Atherton. PEL also developed five evaluation criteria: Natural Resources, Transportation, Build Environment, which includes noise, hazardous materials, cultural resources, air quality, Social Equity and Fiscal. Using the criteria, the SWG evaluation found the elevated

causeway to be the preferable alternative by far. It scores highest in transportation and social benefits, and has the least environmental impacts.

For additional information on the PEL Study, the collaborative effort of Bay Area transportation agencies, and next steps in the process, visit the PEL website at <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-projects/d4-37-corridor-projects/37-planning-environmental-linkages>.

Attend the PEL zoom public meeting on January 25. The Zoom link and time for the public meeting will be on the website.

2. An Interim Project is being developed, also by Caltrans, for Segment A and Sonoma through Marin from Highway 101 to 121. One might think an interim project would be focused on repairing areas that have experienced flooding especially since two other projects (MTC and PEL) are studying an Ultimate Sea Level Rise Resilient Corridor project. However, the only alternative presented for the Interim Project is a major project, to raise 5 of the 7.5 miles of the roadway up to 12 to 14 feet on an embankment that is earth fill. This is one of the alternatives for the Ultimate Project in the PEL study. Such a project would require massive quantities of fill and would have extensive natural resource impacts on Baylands, potentially fish and hydrology, and endangered Ridgway Rails. If the proposed interim design were ever chosen, it would either be an incentive for choosing it as the preferred alternative through Marin and Sonoma for the Ultimate project, or be a very costly and environmentally damaging project to remove.

Staff says there is no preferred alternative and they are asking for public input to develop alternative choices in the Interim Project Draft EIR/EIS. We recommended that Caltrans consider more limited alternatives that would include low levee segments along the sections where there is risk of flooding.

For more information, see the project website.

3. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has been conducting planning level studies for both the western and eastern sections of the corridor since the summer of 2020. The project team has developed a preliminary range of alternatives and these are described in *The SR 37 Ultimate Sea*

*continued on page 6*



## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The planned planting for this year at Triangle Marsh and the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve has been done. There will be no First Saturday (January 1) workday at Triangle Marsh. The next step at the Ecological Reserve is to control weeds and add mulch around the new plantings of Marsh Baccharis and Narrow-leaf Milkweed. Invasive annuals among the older plantings are still too small to require our attention, but removing the perennial Harding grass is always a useful activity.

Rain cancels our workdays. Act locally and join us on a workday. Being there and being active would be good for your mood as well as the landscape and the habitats for the birds. California's wild plants and animals need your help. We all make a difference.

### Volunteer Workdays

#### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: February 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: January 8, February 12

Meet at the end of Industrial Way near Trader Joe's in Greenbrae. For up-to-date information, 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

Debbie Ablin, Annette Anzalone, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Linda Nicoletto, Jack Rabin, Lowell Sykes

## 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>.

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### BAHIA

We've signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) that will guide their on-the-ground activities on the Bahia property. Now STRAW is all set to go and they have scheduled their first school visit planting this month. We're also having Hanford work one more day. With the rain, the plants don't need watering any more so will have them sheet mulch Harding grass.

### CORTE MADERA

On the second Saturday in December, six volunteers planted Narrow-leaf Milkweed and

### CalTrans

*continued from page 5*

*Level Rise Resilience Design Alternatives Assessment US 101-SR121, DAA US101-SR121.* The DAA range of alternatives is the same as those being considered by the PEL process. MTC also undertook a similar process for the eastern end of the corridor, from SR 121 to Mare Island.

## TISCORNIA MARSH UPDATE – OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL GRANT APPROVED

We're thrilled to announce the Ocean Protection Council approved MAS's grant application for \$840,000. We will use these funds to finalize the project design and submit applications for permits from regulatory agencies. We need the same regulatory agency permits and other approvals as developers: BCD, Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We've been working with the Bay Regional Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) which consists of representatives of all of the above agencies and whose purpose it is to assist with permitting of marsh restoration projects. We had our fourth meeting with the BRRIT on December 1 and received recommendations on moving forward into permitting.

Also, in early December, soil borings were done on the mudflat by Hultgren Tillis Engineers. The purpose of the borings was to gather information on the underlying condition of the mudflat where the coarse beach will be constructed. We also needed permits from the Corps and RWQCB to do the borings, as well as additional funding, which the San Francisco Bay Regional

Marsh Baccharis: **Annette Anzalone, Jack Rabin, Kent McDdonald, Lowell Sykes, Bob Hines, Martha Jarocki and Ed Nute.** The team was working in the hours before several days of rain were due to arrive, scrambling to get 43 milkweed plants and six baccharis into three test locations on the site. Ed brought locally gathered California Poppy seeds that we mixed with compost and spread around the new plantings.

The Year 3 Monitoring Report has been completed for our Marsh restoration project. We've not had a chance to review it. We'll have a review next month.

Restoration Authority provided.

Coming up in early January, is our second public hearing before the San Rafael Planning Commission for the final review and certification of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) by the Commission. There were 14 comments on the EIR, 13 from the public and one from an agency. The EIR consultant from ESA is preparing responses to each of the comments and revising the EIR accordingly. Paul Jensen, former San Rafael Planning Director, is working on staff reports on the project for the Planning Commission hearing.

## Estuary Blueprint Released for Review

The Estuary Blueprint is a plan that maps out the regional actions needed for a healthy, vibrant, resilient and thriving San Francisco Estuary. Originally created in 1993 under the title "Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan," the document has undergone several updates, and will be updated every five years moving forward.

The Estuary Blueprint seeks to:

- Sustain and improve habitats and living resources.
- Improve water quality and increase water quantity
- Increase resiliency to climate change
- Champion the Estuary

To review the Plan and comment click here: [www.sfestuary.org/estuary-blueprint-public-comment](https://www.sfestuary.org/estuary-blueprint-public-comment). The Draft Actions for the 2022 Estuary Blueprint are now available for public input!

# MARIN BIRDLOG: NOVEMBER 2021

By Noah Arthur

November in Marin often brings fewer rare birds than mid-fall or mid-winter, but also can produce some unique late fall/early winter species. The first new good bird of the month was a fly-over **Lawrence's Goldfinch** at the Marin Headlands on the 5th (PP). A **Pink-footed Shearwater** flew by the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on the 6th (EC), and also on the 6th a very rare, Pacific Northwestern 'rufina-group' **Song Sparrow** was at Rodeo Lagoon (WL). Another very rare non-species came on the 8th in the form of a '**Brewer's Duck**' (**Gadwall X Mallard hybrid**) at Bahia Marsh (LN).

Another exceptional record came on the 10th, when the continuing **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in Novato was joined by a **second Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in the same tree (DE) – perhaps the first two-bird record of this species ever in Marin.

One of the most exotic-looking gulls we get in California and rarely seen from shore, an immature **Black-legged Kittiwake** flew by Pt. Reyes South Beach on the 11th (EMs & MSch).



Bmajeros, (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Black-legged Kittiwake

The rarest bird of the month came on the 12th in the form of a **Scarlet Tanager** at Pine Gulch in Bolinas (KH).

Mid-November is often when suburban towns near the coast start to get rarities, and the first came on the 13th in the form of a **Clay-colored Sparrow** in Inverness (RC, LS, & MS). The 13th was a nice raptor day with the long-staying **Black Vulture** in Bolinas (BB), plus a **Broad-winged Hawk** and **Swainson's Hawk** over Hawk Hill (seen by many hawkwatchers). 3 **Black-legged Kittiwakes** also flew by South Beach on the 13th (LS & MS), along with two late **Parasitic Jaegers** (LC).

Uncommon in fall, rare as late as November, a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Bothin Marsh on the 18th (AM). Possibly a returning bird, a male **Common Teal** was at Las Gallinas on the 21st (DL). A **Long-eared Owl** was chilling on a fencepost at Drakes Corner on the 23rd (Anonymous).

Two Outer Point rarities that are common just inland showed up on the 24th, a **Nuttall's Woodpecker** at Nunes Ranch and a **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** at Drakes Beach (DM, JB, EMk, & LK).

One of the best birds of the month was a **Winter Wren** photographed and recorded at Pine Gulch on the 25th (MM). And an exceptionally late **Broad-winged Hawk** flew over Hawk Hill on the 28th (JC).

Observers and Acronyms **PP:** Peter Pyle, **EC:** Everett Clark, **WL:** William Legge, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **EMS:** Eddie Monson, **MSch:** Mark Schulist, **KH:** Keith Hansen, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **RC:** Reef Comer, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **LC:** Lucas Corneliusen, **AM:** Alex Merritt, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **JB:** Jonah Benningfield, **EMk:** Ethan Monk, **LK:** Logan Kahle, **MM:** Mike Mahoney, **JC:** Jim Chiropolos



Yatin S Krishnapa, (CC BY-SA 3.0)



Broad-winged Hawk

Steve Guttman, (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

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