

THURSDAY, MAY 12

7:00 PM

**Northern Spotted Owl Monitoring  
in Marin County**

By Renée Cormier



Maggie Brown/Point Blue

**Adult Northern Spotted Owl**

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

Please join us for a presentation by Point Blue Conservation Science's Renée Cormier to learn about Northern Spotted Owl natural history, conservation of this iconic species, and the long-term monitoring of this species in Marin County. Northern Spotted Owls are federally Threatened and state Threatened in California, but Marin County – at the southernmost extent of their range – is a stronghold for this subspecies. Renée is an avian ecologist at Point Blue, where she started as an intern in 2002. In addition to her work with Spotted Owls in Marin County since 2006, Renée has been working on long-term landbird studies at the Palomarin Field Station, and migration studies of songbirds.

**NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:**

THURSDAY, JUNE 9

7:00 PM

**Tricolored Blackbirds in the  
Sierra Foothills**

By Dan Airola

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# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Join Us for Our Annual Meeting and Election of Board Members

As is tradition, the election of MAS's Board Members will take place at our Annual Meeting which is always scheduled for our May Speaker Series Program. We invite you to exercise your right as an MAS member by attending on Thursday, May 9 at 7 PM, and cast your vote to elect our next Board Members.

The program will include a brief report of our accomplishments followed by the election of Board members conducted by Nominating Committee Chair, Bob Hinz, and then

our Speaker Series Program described on this page. The meeting and election will be held on Zoom, as were last year's elections.

Nominees will be elected for three-year terms that run from July 1 through June 31, our fiscal year. As reported last month, this year's nominees are:

**Jude Stalker**

Jude has been on our Board for some time serving as Special Projects Chair. As such she

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## Public Input Sought for Tomales Point Elk Reserve Plan at Point Reyes Nat'l Seashore

The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking public input to inform planning for the 2,900-acre Tomales Point Elk Reserve at Point Reyes National Seashore. The motivation for the planning, as reported by the NPS, is the impact on the Tule Elk and other natural resources of the drought that has been occurring over the last eight years. We expect the law suit brought by some environmental groups may have been part of the impetus.

After being extirpated from the area since the 19th century, the NPS successfully reintroduced Tule Elk to Tomales Point in 1978 confining them behind an 8-foot high fence. Some elk were moved to the Limintour area and eventually two free ranging herds have established themselves. The NPS is managing the free-roaming herds by culling. The Tomales Point herd was reduced by 72 animals from about 450 to 295 elk in the



NPS, Tim Bernat

**Tule Elk at Point Reyes National Seashore**

recent drought, even with the water the NPS trucked in. In the 2013-15 drought the decline was even greater – 250 animals died. Point Reyes is the only National Park where Tule Elk are found.

The planning process will include preparation of a draft plan and alternatives

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## 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	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Secretary	Lelia Lancot 924-6138
Treasurer	Ann Thomas 924-9559 Martha Jarocki 461-3592
Conservation	Roger Harris 510/710-9120 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Field Trips	Doug Waterman 506-4675
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	Bob Hinz 383-8688
Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710 Clint Kellner 895-8591
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.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

I am reminded this month how fragile protection of habitats really are, even of those lands we consider to be protected. Just this month it came to light that lands at Point Reyes National Seashore are being degraded by discharge of human sewage from ranch housing, and these impacts have only been exposed by members of the public. While a habitat, species or other natural resource on private, federal, state, county or local protective ownership, may mean there will not be a housing development or shopping center built on them, it does not mean the habitats are safe from damage. Riparian habitats, also thought to be protected in federal ownership, have been destroyed and degraded at the Seashore by lease-holders dumping vehicles and other debris. Tule Elk, the reintroduction of which has long been celebrated as a success, are now viewed as a threat to domestic cows at the Seashore. On public lands, in the name of fire protection, understory habitats and trees well away from buildings, are being destroyed by fire agencies. We once thought of zoning and land use designations as offering some protection to individual properties and communities. Now they are at risk from directives from Sacramento, called Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) requirements. And habitats on Open Space lands are destroyed by trampling by walkers and bikers. We can never

depend on lands being fully protected. They are never really totally safe. Management decisions, political decisions and lack of enforcement enable degradation and destruction. Eyes, ears and voices of caring people are vital to ensure enforcement, so that impacts to wildlife and habitats on protected lands are kept to a minimum. People need to speak out for protection and against damaging activities. Pay attention, observe and report problems on publicly owned lands. Join MAS or another group to fight for our habitats and wildlife.

It's nesting season so be on guard! It is NOT time to cut or trim your trees and shrubbery. You might unknowingly destroy a nest. Some nests are tiny and well hidden, so even if you look you might not see them. To ensure birds nesting in your yard are safe, delay your tree and shrub cutting and removal until nesting season is over, mid-August and fall.

You should be receiving our Spring appeal letter soon. Contributions to this appeal are dedicated to support and enhance habitats on our properties. Our needs are great this summer, although we've had April rains, we've planted twice as many plants as last year and they'll need to be watered. We hope you will give generously.

Please join us for our Annual meeting on May 12 at 7 PM.

## Board Members Elections

*continued from page 1*

takes on tasks where there is a need, often involving volunteers and our properties. Jude works for a consulting firm as a biologist.

### Douglas Waterman

This will be Doug's second term. He is currently doing multiple jobs for MAS – Vice President, Field Trips, Programs and Newsletter editor – in addition to holding a position as a TV producer.

### Ann Thomas

This will be Ann's second term on our Board, as well. Ann has held the positions of Secretary and Membership Chair. She is currently is serving as our Treasurer, a job as big as two or three.

### Clint Kellner

Clint joined our Board four months ago, filling a partial term as Property Management Co-chair. He is up for election to a full term. Clint has a Ph.D. in biology and is retired from a

biological consulting firm.

### James Raives

James, a retired planner for the Marin County Open Space District, will be our newest Board Member. Since retiring, James has recuperated from knee replacement surgery and is now ready to join us in protecting and educating our members about the environment.

## 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>.



## 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.

### MOUNT BURDELL/STAFFORD LAKE OR RUSH CREEK, Novato

#### Birding in Marin, Season 7, Trip 5

Saturday, May 7, 2022

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob for a field trip to the gentle slopes of Mount Burdell where we'll listen to and observe the impressive variety of songbirds that make this area their springtime home. Species we might see include **Lark Sparrow**, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Bullock's Oriole**, **Lazuli Bunting**, and **Grasshopper Sparrow**, among many other possibilities. In the afternoon we plan to continue birding at Stafford Lake or Rush Creek.

This will be a moderate hike with many opportunities to look at birds and spring wildflowers. Wear comfortable walking shoes and layered clothing. Bring water and snacks. We will meet at the end of San Andreas Drive in Novato.

Limit of 15 fully vaccinated participants for this trip. Registration for the Mount Burdell trip will be open starting on April 27 at 8 AM on the MAS website Field Trips page. There will not be a waiting list. No drop-ins please.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 101 to Novato. Take the San Marin Dr/Atherton Ave exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn west (left) on San Marin Dr. Go approximately two miles and turn right on San Andreas Dr. Drive nearly to the end of the road and park on the street. No restrooms available.

### BEAR VALLEY & FIVE BROOKS

#### Birding in Marin, Season 7, Trip 6

Saturday, June 4, 2022

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Join Jim and Bob on this trip as part of their yearly series of Marin walks. We will start our day at Bear Valley in search of nesting birds. Next, we'll travel to Olema Marsh and Whitehouse Pool for a look at some different habitats. Our final stop of the day will be Five Brooks where we have a chance of finding **Wood Duck** at the retired logging pond. We will also look for birds in the Douglas Fir forest.

Limit of 15 fully vaccinated participants for this trip. Registration for the Bear Valley/Five Brooks trip will be open starting on May 25 at 8:00 AM on the MAS website Field Trips page. There will not be a waiting list.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd toward Point Reyes for about 20 miles. At Olema turn right onto Hwy 1. In 600 feet, turn left onto Bear Valley Rd. In approximately 0.5 mile, turn left at the entrance to Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters at Bear Valley. We will meet at the picnic tables near the parking lot.

### BIG ROCK & LAS GALLINAS

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

Saturday, July 2, 2022

8:30 AM to 3 PM

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Trails at Big Rock, rather steep, allow us to view some of the expansive grasslands and forested ravines in Marin. Some of the grassland nesting birds we will be looking for include **Lazuli Bunting**, **Grasshopper Sparrow**, **Horned Lark**, and **Ash-throated Flycatcher**. We will also have a vast amount of sky visible so swallows, swifts, and raptors may appear with a chance for a **Golden Eagle**.

At midday we expect to drive Lucas Valley Road to Las Gallinas where we will be looking for **American** and **Least Bitterns**, **Green Heron**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Common Gallinule**, and **Great-tailed Grackle**.

Fully vaccinated people can register for the Big Rock/Las Gallinas trip starting on June 22 at 8 AM on the MAS website Field Trips page.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 in San Rafael, exit on Lucas Valley Rd and go west approximately 5.5 miles (look for the big rock). We will be walking approximately 3 miles. Because this area can get quite hot this time of year, be sure to wear a hat and use sunscreen as well as carry plenty of water.

## Junior Birdwatchers

### Announcing the first Junior Birdwatcher to take advantage of our new program!

Our first new Junior Birdwatcher candidate is 8 year old Luther Smith, a 3rd grader at Tam Valley Elementary School. His "supervisor" is his father – Tyson Smith.

Luther passed the Level 1 quiz successfully and is working on the next level.

He is known as the "Bird Guy" at his school, as he is an avid birdwatcher!

We encourage other students to follow Luther's lead by participating in Marin Audubon's Junior Birdwatchers Program!

To learn about Junior Birdwatchers, go to [marin-audubon.org](http://marin-audubon.org) on the web. Click on "Birds" at the top of the Welcome Page, then scroll down to "Junior Birdwatchers" and your child can start learning about the birds we see and hear each day! For questions, email Lelia Lancot at [leliaannlancot@gmail.com](mailto:leliaannlancot@gmail.com) or call Lelia at 415/515-1476.

## Donate Your Car to Marin Audubon Society

Our thanks to Christine Weiss for naming Marin Audubon Society as the recipient of the sale of her auto through the CARS program, as others have done in past years.

It's easy, just contact CARS, they will pick up your car, sell it, and after paying their costs, give the rest to Marin Audubon Society.

If you would like to donate your car, follow this Marin Audubon Society link <https://careasy.org/nonprofit/Marin-Audubon-Society> to the CARS website where you can start the vehicle donation process or call 855/500-7433.

## CONSERVATION

Marin Audubon Conservation Committee reviews critical issues related to wildlife habitats and comments to cities, agencies, and other jurisdictions. To attend, phone Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057.

### Tule Elk

*continued from page 1*

that will be evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Various alternatives will be developed and evaluated for their potential impacts on the elk and other resources. The EIS analyses will be used to decide how the Tomales Point wilderness, and the Tule Elk herd that is confined within it, will be managed, and, if appropriate, to update the Park's General Management Plan. Issues, concerns and options submitted by the public will be addressed in the EIS.

The NPS has already identified some issues:

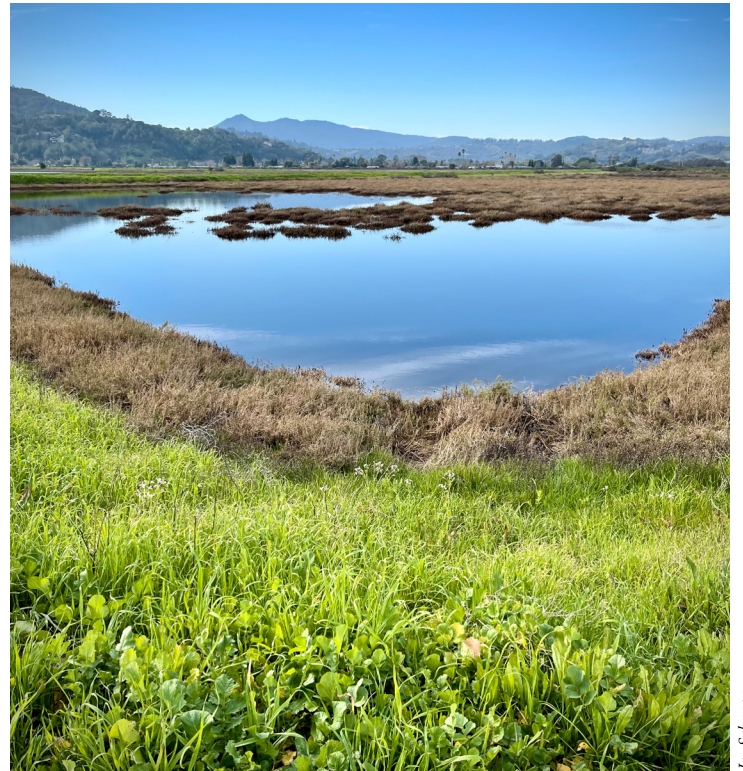
- Maintenance or removal of the fence that confines the Tule Elk
- Population management of the Tomales Point herd
- Providing supplemental water for the Tule Elk herd in times of need
- Wilderness management
- Visitor use and management of Pierce Point Ranch.

Some of our thoughts on additional issues to be addressed:

- Why NPS thinks the fence is needed
- Impacts on other wild animals that are confined by the elk fence.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Submit your comments by May 2, the end of the 30-day comment period. Comments will not be accepted by email or fax. The preferred method to submit comments is online through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment site at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/tpap> or via USPS to Tomales point Area Plan, Superintendent Point Reyes National Seashore, 1 Bear Valley Road, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956.



Jay Salzman

**Water ponded in diked section at McInnis Park. Although the ponds provide habitat, if restored to tidal marsh they would be more productive habitat for more species, including endangered Ridgway Rails.**

### GRANT DECLINED FOR FOR McINNIS MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT

Unfortunately, after years of planning, Marin County Parks has declined the opportunity to receive a large grant to restore 180 acres of currently diked marsh to tidal action at McGinnis Park. Reasons given are the presence of a Gallinas Sanitary District forcemain in the path of a proposed levee and lack of staffing to manage the project.

Planning for this restoration has been underway for 10 years. Commitments to restore the diked areas have existed for many more years. There have been at least two dredgings of Gallinas Creek over probably 30 years. The sediments they dredged were placed in the diked lands at McInnis with a commitment that they would be restored to tidal marsh. Obviously, neither of those restorations ever happened. Now the goal of tidal marsh is again thwarted.

The Gallinas Creek tidal marshes support the largest population of endangered Ridgway Rails in the county. The County's tidal marsh restoration project would have significantly expanded tidal marsh habitat allowing the Ridgway Rail population to significantly expand as well.

#### 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



## PT. REYES SEASHORE HEARING AT COASTAL COMMISSION

Point Reyes Seashore Superintendent Kenkel appeared before the Coastal Commission for a hearing to evaluate the NPS's progress meeting requirements of the Conditional Consistency Determination action of the Commission one year ago. After requesting an extension one month earlier, the NPS submitted a Water Quality Strategy and a Climate Change Strategy, the adequacy of which was the subject of the hearing. Public testimony from many individuals and representatives from local (including MAS) and national organizations went on for more than an hour. All speakers found the Strategies deficient in a variety of ways and urged the Commission to retain oversight over the NPS.

Some of the many issues with the Strategies identified by the public and discussed by the Commission are that they:

- Contained few specifics
- Included an inadequate water quality testing program
- Failed to identify management actions, objections, timelines
- Failed to identify priority areas on which to focus remedial actions
- Contained inadequate standards for Ranch Operating Agreements
- Failed to include NPS and Dept. of Interior climate policies and goals
- Inadequate GHG emissions reduction goals
- Failed to protect the Seashore's natural resources in compliance with NPS responsibilities and with the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Questions about whether the NPS could be trusted or had the ability to manage park resources particularly in the face of insufficient funding, were also raised.

Commissioners were unanimous in the view, sometimes expressed with strong emotion, that the submitted Strategies were insufficient to ensure adequate protection of the Seashore's natural resources and that the Commission needs to maintain oversight. However, they discussed for over an hour how to maintain that oversight and a working relationship with the NPS in order to protect the Seashore's coastal resources. The vote was also a unanimous NO on the staff presented motion, that would have found the Strategies to be consistent with the Coastal Zone Management Program. The Commission expressed their interest in continuing to work with the NPS and requested that Superintendent Kenkel return in September with more complete and consistent Strategies.

The story in the Marin Independent Journal about the human sewage overflowing into a cow pond and pooling under worker housing on the Mendoza and McClelland ranches at the Seashore was published one day before the Commission hearing.

## REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

State laws SB 35 and SB9 have placed specific requirements on local governments to generate significantly more housing throughout California. State law requires each jurisdiction to identify adequate sites to accommodate the locality's share of regional housing needs for all income levels (low, moderate and high). These are referred to as RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) numbers. Local governments are scrambling to identify sites where housing could be built. The sites could be undeveloped, or what they determine are underdeveloped sites, where more housing could be fit. Jurisdictions will have to revise the Housing Elements of their General Plans to show the RHNA numbers by December 31, 2022. Questions and concerns are being raised by residents at the many hearings the county has been holding to address potential RHNA sites.

It must be emphasized that just because a property is on a RHNA list for a specified number of units, does not mean it will be developed with that number. That will only happen if the property owner proposes a development with the designated numbers and types (income levels) of houses. The county cannot require a property owner to build them.

SB 35 provides that some natural resource lands and other sites that pose a safety risk are exempted: lands in the coastal zone, prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance; wetlands; lands within a designated earthquake fault zone; lands within a very high fire hazard severity zone; lands within a delineated earthquake fault zone; hazardous waste sites lands identified for conservation in an adopted natural community conservation plan or other adopted natural resource protection plan; habitat for protected species identified as candidate, sensitive, or species of special status by state or federal agencies; fully protected species, or species protected by the federal Endangered Species Act, the California Endangered Species Act, or the Native Plant Protection Act; and lands under conservation easement.

If your property fits into any of the categories above, it probably has already been disqualified from the constraints list by your local government. But in case not, you need to bring it to their attention. The best chance to have a site removed is to make the case for removal to your supervisor, councilperson or at a public meeting. Check with your city to find out their schedule for making RHNA decisions.

Marin Audubon and Marin Baylands advocates have objected to including certain properties with bayland resources that appear to have not been recognized:

**St. Vincent's lands**, designated for 680, is

wetlands, floodplain, oak woodland and adjacent upland habitat. Our organizations have been working to protect these lands for more than 20 years. We are concerned that there is insufficient space in the area unconstrained by habitat, to build that many houses.

**300 Olive Avenue**, unincorporated Novato, identified for 58 units, is a parcel we have been trying to purchase since 2003 because it includes a seasonal stream that is the headwaters of Simmons Slough, an historic tidal slough that forms salt marsh and flows into MAS property.

**Greenpoint Nursery**, corner of Olive and Atherton Avenues, unincorporated Novato, designated for 53 units. The land where the nursery is located has been filled, and because of its higher elevation can probably accommodate some units but 53 is questionable. The remainder of the property is diked historic baylands, and flood basin, the same as MAS's adjacent 144 acres.

**Cal Park**, unincorporated San Rafael, once part of the Bay, much of the property is seasonal wetland. We are concerned that the housing units would be located in the areas of seasonal wetland.

**Jack Krystal Property** on Richardson Bay proposed for 10 units is historic tidal marsh and in the direct path of sea level rise and supports tidal marsh near the bay.

At its meeting on April 12 the Supervisors and Planning Commission met together to consider where to designate housing per the state's directive to plan for low, moderate and high income housing. Of our sites of concern described above, only St. Vincent's was discussed, with Supervisor Connolly supporting protecting its resources and Supervisor Arnold speaking for its serving a regional housing need so that it would lower housing numbers on other properties. Supervisor Rice questioned the location of wetlands on the Cal Park property.

The county will be preparing an Environmental Impact Report on the site list of RHNA sites which will have public review period, offering other opportunities to comment on housing designated throughout unincorporated Marin county.

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## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Native grasses and shrubs are doing well, and we will continue to help them by removing or mowing Harding grass, thistle and bristly ox-tongue. Those are the main early season competitors. Most of the newest plants will probably need to be watered.

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

### Volunteer Workdays

#### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: May 7, June 4

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 14, June 11

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, Rich Cimino, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Linda Nicoletto, Lowell Sykes

### THANK YOU, DONORS

William Clarke, Rosalind Colver, Mary Abbott, Annette Anzalone, Klaus & Margaret Beyer, William Clarke, Tom & Barbara Gaman, Patrick & Ute Goggins, Bonnie Gosliner, Dolores Hansen, James Harrison, Eric Haun, Thomas Heinz, Clifford Lardinois, Jr, Mary Love, Kathleen Lowrey, Daniel Mardesich, Sarah Martin, Doyleen McMurtry, George Mills, Colin & Lisa Nicholls, Marian Parmenter, William Richardson, Marianne Riser, David Sexton, Sharon Solomon, Suzanne Sopko, Peter & Marie Sullivan, Gary Thompson, Christine Weiss

### 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>.



Sign illustrating the “before restoration” and “after restoration” of Tiscornia Marsh

contract that ended on March 31, and completing the paper work necessary to begin work with the Ocean Protection Council grant. A request for a grant in the amount of \$3,084,000 is scheduled to be heard before the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Board on April 22.

### TISCORNIA MARSH RESTORATION

Last month we showed you an image of the sign. This month we're showing you the sign in place. It shows the current configuration of the wetlands and how they will look after our marsh restoration and levee improvement project is completed. The interpretive sign is located along the bayfront levee just beyond the community center parking lot, parallel with the street. It was installed on March 31. Do stop by and see it.

Through March we've been working on finishing tasks and reports due to close up our San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

### BAHIA

The April rains are allowing us to delay regular watering until sometime in May. We had already contracted with Hanford ARC for two waterings in March. They began the second week in April to water the plants Hanford planted this past January. We expect they'll be watering every two weeks as they did last year.

Planting at Bahia by students from local schools through STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) has finished for the season. Watering and weeding around the young plants by STRAW staff will continue through the summer.

## HGH Nursery Donates Plants to Monarch Rescue

Marin Audubon Society's Monarch Rescue project started on a cold January day in 2019 with the planting of 60 narrow leaf milkweed seedlings on the Simmons property near Deer Island. In 2020, this planting was expanded with another 100 milkweed plants together with some nectar plants. Volunteers did the planting and watered the plants during the hot dry summers. All plants were donated by Charlotte Torgovitsky's Home Ground Habitat (HGH) nursery.

This winter the planting of milkweed and nectar plants on the Simmons property was expanded to the north side of the property adjacent to Atherton Ave. Approximately 700 milkweed seedlings were ordered through HGH, which gave Marin Audubon a highly discounted price and HGH also donated 56 native pollinator plants for this project. As with the previous Monarch rescue projects these



Charlotte Torgovitsky at HGH Nursery

plants were planted by volunteers and will need to be maintained and watered throughout the summer to get them established.

This cooperation between Marin Audubon and HGH is an example of how committed non profit organizations can work together to enhance Marin's natural habitat as well as the overall environment.



# MARIN BIRDLOG: MARCH 2022

By Noah Arthur

March is generally our slowest month for rarities, instead highlighted by newly-arrived migrants and breeding birds, familiar faces we welcome back as spring comes into full force. The first **Hooded Oriole** of the season showed up in Bolinas on the 10th (GG). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was in Inverness on the 13th, giving a nice side-by-side comparison with its Greater sidekick (ZY). A few **Sooty Shearwaters** were off Chimney Rock on the 13th (ZY), unusually early but not unprecedented for our coast. A classic March rarity on the coast, though common well offshore, two **Black-legged Kittiwakes** sat on rocks below the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on the 14th (PC).

A male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was in a Lagunitas yard on the 17th (TW). The first **Least Bittern** of the season was found at Las Gallinas, the species' one and only Marin breeding outpost, on the 18th (DA). Rare away from a few traditional wintering areas on our highest ridges, a **Thick-billed Fox Sparrow** was at Bald Hill in San Anselmo on the 20th (JK & JZ).

**Sooty Shearwater** numbers off the tip of Pt. Reyes burgeoned to at least 20 birds on the 21st, an impressive count for March (DT).

A **Myrtle X Audubon's Warbler hybrid**, surprisingly rare despite the parent species' abundance, was banded at Pine Gulch on the 24th (MD, HC, & NB). Two **White-faced Ibis** flew over Las Gallinas on the 28th (AF).

The first **Purple Martin** of the year was singing in the sky above Audubon Canyon Ranch on the 29th (DL). The best rarity of the month was also the last, a flock of 10 **'Sitka Spruce' Red Crossbills** identified by the banding team at Palomarin based on their distinctive calls. If accepted this may be the first record of this Pacific Northwestern call type south of Humboldt County.

**Observers and Acronyms** **GG:** Geoffrey Geupel, **ZY:** Zachary Yeates, **PC:** Peter Colasanti, **TW:** Tim Waters, **DA:** David Assmann, **JK:** John King, **JZ:** Joseph Zeno, **DT:** Dena Turner, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **HP:** Hope Calindo, **NB:** Naomi Burns, **AF:** Anise Feldman, **DL:** David Lumpkin

## Regional Housing Needs Assessment

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To find out how to participate in the site identification process or comment on specific sites if you live in one of the ten Marin cities, contact your planning department to find out about the process they are using to identify sites for RHNA housing units.

Some change in the RHNA requirements may be coming. In March, the California Auditor issued what has been described as a "blistering critique" of the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and its RHNA. The Auditor found problems with the methodology which may have inflated the housing unit requirements by hundreds of thousands of units. Various analyses indicate that the overcount may be as much as 900,000. The Departments of Finance will review its population projections and HCD will clarify and publish the assumptions that led to the high RHNA requirements by February 2023.

Note that MAS does not comment on development but on the need to protect natural resources, such as wetlands, streams, oak woodlands when a development is proposed.

## RBRA PROGRESS

The Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) is beginning work to design a mooring field for the anchor-outs. Three options, developed by consultants and staff, fit 20 moorings into the area

that had been identified as not having eelgrass and, therefore, suitable for a mooring field.

The Interim Executive Director recommended that the number of moorings be reduced to 15, spacing between mooring balls be reduced to 125 feet which he considered adequate to reduce the risk of vessels colliding with each other, and that the mooring area only be available to vessels that meet the "safe and seaworthy" program.

Each option has pros and cons. Alternative #1 has moorings clustered in northwest corner, #2 spread out in double along longest border with seven of the moorings within Belvedere's jurisdiction but is the least visible, and #3, clustered in the southwest corner closest to Turney Street pier, is the anticipated access to shore. Monitoring moorings in #3 would result in more disturbance out onto the bay. The agency board voted a preference for a hybrid option that combines Alternatives 1 and 3. Vessels would be clustered along the west side. Staff will return at the May meeting with a further analysis and a review of costs of each alternative.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Review the staff report and submit your comments until the May meeting. The staff report "Mooring Field Development Options" is on the RBRA website, which can be reached by Googling the RBRA part of the agenda packet.

Alan & Elaine Wilson, www.naturespionline.com



Hooded Oriole

Alan & Elaine Wilson, www.naturespionline.com



"Sitka Spruce" Red Crossbill

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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.

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