

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13 7:00 PM

Hummingbirds of California and Beyond

By: Bob Lewis



Costa's Hummingbird

Register for the September Speaker Series Zoom program on the MAS website *Speaker Series* page.

The story of hummingbird evolution starts about 50 million years ago, far from the lands they currently inhabit. We'll trace the history of their evolution and then briefly discuss relationships between the nine tribes of living species. After reviewing California's seven most common species, we'll look at other North American species, and then examine representatives of the other tribes. Finally, we'll consider some conservation issues and end with a few words on hummingbird photography.

Bob trained as a chemist and worked in the energy field for 33 years. He's taught birding classes in the Bay Area for more than 25 years and served as the chair of Golden Gate Audubon's Adult Education Committee. Bob was honored with American Birding Association's Chandler Robbins Award for Education and Conservation in 2016. He loves to travel and has photographed and chased birds in over 40 countries. His life list is over 5,000 species.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10 7:00 PM

Anacapa Seabird Restoration

By Annie Little

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Point Reyes National Seashore Ranches On Way to Not Polluting

At its September 8 meeting, the California Coastal Commissioners reluctantly approved a Water Quality Strategy submitted by the National Park Service (NPS) to correct pollution of streams and waterways from ranches at Point Reyes National Seashore. All of the Commissioners expressed strong feelings, from dissatisfaction to outrage, about the deplorable conditions on some ranches and the way this public land is being cared for. None of the Commissioners expressed support for the Strategy as written. Some objected to private ranches being on public parklands at all. The six to five vote to approve the Water Quality Strategy with conditions came after a five-hour hearing that included four hours of testimony from more than 60 members of the public and more than an hour of deliberation among commissioners. Only two of the public speakers supported the Strategy – both from Cattlemen's Associations.

The final vote affirmed that Commissioners want to ensure coastal resources are protected, and they want to work with the NPS toward that end. The majority of six was concerned that if they voted to reject the Strategy the NPS would walk away and do what they want. The successful motion to approve the Strategy avoided this risk. The legal opinion is that the NPS is not bound by the Commission's decision. The conditions that were part of the motion, and that the NPS Assistant Superintendent, who represented the NPS at the hearing, agreed to include: that the NPS return to the Commission annually for a public hearing on the results of the Strategy and NPS actions to protect resources; the NPS submit a budget for funding the needed actions,



Abbots Lagoon, one of the aquatic resources in the path of runoff from ranches.

an enforcement report enumerating actions taken by jurisdictions, BMPs required of, and implemented by, lease holders; and present the Climate Action Plan.

The background of this decision is that at its April 2021 meeting, the Commission required the NPS to submit the Water Quality Strategy and Climate Action Plan as part of its conditional concurrence with the consistency determination for the Seashore Management Plan. The Strategy and Plan were to be submitted within 12 months of the April 2021 meeting. In March, the NPS requested an extension, which the Commission denied. At its April 2022 hearing, the Commission, after review, required the NPS to make changes in the Strategy and return in September 2022 with a revised document.

The failure of the regulatory systems to protect the sensitive resources of the Seashore was eminently clear at this hearing. Numerous reports of pollution entering streams and ponds were presented from many sources. Last year, water testing by the Western Watershed Alliance documented high levels of bacteria. Investigations by Marin County Environmental Health identified seven ranches with septic systems in need of extensive repair. Instances reported in the Marin Independent Journal include a blockage causing sewage water to

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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.

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BAAC Reps	Barbara Salzman 924-605 Doug Waterman 506-4675
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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

Our Board has adopted a budget for the coming year. It has a significant increased amount for maintenance and enhancement of our properties. We are still in the process of reviewing and updating our Policies and Procedures to guide us for the coming year and we are discussing our Annual Plan that will include our goals for 2022-23.

Our new Speaker Series Chair, James Raives, has resigned, unfortunately for us. There was a change in circumstance in his long-term plan to travel around the country, and he is leaving sooner than expected. We will miss him. He has been very helpful with our property transactions in particular, with his background with the County Open Space District and the Coastal Commission. We wish him much enjoyment on his adventure around the country.

With James' leaving we need someone to take charge of our Speaker Series Programs. Until someone volunteers, our Board members will be dividing up the months to schedule speakers in our effort to provide programs each month as we have always done. While Doug Waterman will continue to coordinate the Speaker Series, you are likely to see different folks introducing each meeting. We welcome volunteers to help us present interesting programs. Let me know if you would like to help.

Next year we will bring two exciting programs presented jointly with other Bay Area Audubon chapters. Golden Gate Audubon Society has arranged for two special speakers and graciously offered other Bay Area Chapters the opportunity to join them in the first Bay Area-wide speaker programs. Presenters will be Doug Tallamy, who will talk on native plants and birds, and Scott Weidensaul, whose field of expertise is bird migration. The dates for the meetings are Wednesday, January 11, 2023 and Thursday, February 16, 2023. Mark your calendars!

We will also be presenting a program of another kind – the fifth public meeting about our Tiscornia Marsh project. The program will be held on Wednesday October 19th at 5:30 on Zoom. Our engineers will present the current plan for our project, and how it will interface with the City's adjacent park improvement, parking, trash capture projects, and public access improvements. Public input will be encouraged. We will include a link for the program on our website closer to the date.

Now that it's fall, it's time for a reminder that **fall is the time to do yard work**, your tree cutting and limbing, shrub trimming and weed removal. Nesting season is over so there is no risk of inadvertently destroying a nest because you can't see it. While we're cautioned

these days to leave a defensible space of 10 feet around our houses, think of the birds beyond that. As I've reminded in other years, birds like it messy (fire agencies allow three inches of leaf litter on the ground). They like leaf cover that can harbor insects they can feed on, brush piles they can hide in and shrubs they can rest and forage in.

Wildlife have really taken a beating this summer with the pollution at the Point Reyes National Seashore, fish kills in the Bay, and extreme heat everywhere, affecting wildlife and people. A primary driver of two of these calamities is climate change. The extreme heat with records broken across the state, was intimately connected to climate change. Heat related to climate change is also implicated in the algae bloom responsible for the fish kills. Nowadays climate change is an integral part of our lives and I'm pleased that much of what Marin Audubon does addresses climate change. Our habitat acquisition, enhancement and restoration work, all help to moderate climate in addition to habitat goals. The native trees and other vegetation we plant absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. We'll continue to work to protect the habitats and advocate for improving habitats and not losing any more. Marin Audubon Society is committed to continuing our local work that address climate change. We hope you'll join us in our efforts.

Stay well.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Paul Baskin, Carol J. Beck, Justin Bucktrout, Craig Cheevers, Conner Cimmiyotti, Nancy Curvinio, Leslie S Dawley, Tom P Dorris, Alison Fuller, Colleen Giovana, Alberta S. Hare, Bruce Heller, Karina Hughes, Eva Johnson, Joanna Jones, Donna Kelleher, Jerry Ludeke, Dieter Meyerhoff, Rich Panter, C Ross, Patricia Scales, Heather Selick, Cindy Triffo, Antonia Warden, Keith Wedmore, Patricia Wilson, Elisabeth Wright

THANK YOU, DONORS

Susan Andrews, DeWitt Bowman, Sharon Bozic, William Clarke, Frank Davis, Charles Gardiner, Paul Gelburd and Diane Parish, Caroline Gibbs, Thomas Heinz, Elizabeth Jameson, Mark Lindbergh, Sarah Martin, Sharon McCloskey, Jeannette Price, William Richardson, Marianne Riser, Georgia and Jim Strusaker, RHE Charitable Foundation

In memoriam

Leslie Doughty in memory of Len Blumin
Jill Simpson in memory of Walter Rentsch

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

MAS is mounting a full schedule of field trips for the 2022-2023 season. While most trips are limited and require registration to allow for social distancing due to Covid-19, we have one open trip this month and are planning to schedule others.

POINT REYES LIGHTHOUSE TO DRAKES BEACH

Birding in Marin, Season 7 – Trip 10

Saturday, October 1, 2022

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Limit of 15 fully vaccinated participants for this trip. Registration opens September 20 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page. There will not be a waiting list. No drop-ins, please.

This is the place to be for fall birding. Many migrants – like hawks, jaegers, shorebirds and loons – follow the coast south. Many songbirds migrate at night and seem to have a compass bearing in mind, momma said to fly “15 degrees east of due south for 4 days.” Millions of recently fledged birds undertake a journey of 2,000 to 4,000 miles without a Google assistant and many without further parental guidance. Some get lost.

Imagine that you are a dyslexic **Connecticut Warbler** hatched in early June in the boreal forest of north central Canada. It is your second night flight, you are flying west instead of east or south, you crossed some mountains so that you are flying sort of high, morning is approaching so you descend through the clouds and there is nothing but water. A fog shrouded coast was not in your flight plan. You reverse directions, trying to avoid the gulls and jaegers pursuing you, when you see trees miles away on a point sticking above the fog. Relief, a place to land, to rest, and to find something to eat. These vagrant warblers and other eastern songbirds are the reasons that the tree islands of the Point Reyes peninsula are so popular with birders.

We intend to visit the nearby Fish Docks after the lighthouse then work our way back to Drake's Beach for lunch and more birding.

DIRECTIONS: Meet at 8:30 at the Point Reyes Lighthouse parking area. The parking area is at the west end of Sir Francis Drake. Going north through Inverness follow Sir Francis Drake to the lighthouse. Allow 30 minutes from Inverness or 1.5 hour from San Rafael.

RODEO LAGOON Marin Headlands

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Limit of 15 fully vaccinated participants for this trip. Registration opens on September 25 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page. There will not be a waiting list. No drop-ins, please.

With large numbers of birds moving through the area this time of year, it's sure to be an interesting outing with unusual

sightings a definite possibility. We'll start with a 30-40 minute visible migration and sea watch from Rodeo Beach hoping for Parasitic Jaegers as well as other passing goodies before undertaking an extended circuit of Rodeo Lagoon in the search for scarce migrants including early winter wildfowl, shorebirds and fall passerines. More than 60 species should be possible at this time of year. The morning will begin with a sea watch at 7:30 AM.

DIRECTIONS: Head south on Hwy 101 and take the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right and go under the freeway, then follow the road down to the left. Within 300 feet turn left at the sign to the Marin Headlands (This is the only available left turn before you begin the descent into Sausalito). You should see the tunnel with the five-minute light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Rd to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end. Meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

THE PONDS AT THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT (LGVSD)

San Rafael

Thursday, October 6, 2022

8:30 to 11:30 AM

With Sande and Bob Chilvers

All fully vaccinated participants are welcome to join this trip. No registration required.

Join old friends and meet new ones as we resume our regularly scheduled walks on the first Thursday of the month at Las Gallinas. Special thanks to Bob and Sande Chilvers for volunteering once again to lead our monthly walks in search of waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. With fall migration underway, we are likely to spot some interesting species, so come assist in our search.

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels. We all help each other to find and identify the birds, and there are usually several experienced birders to assist. You don't even have to arrive on time because we spend the first 30-60 minutes studying the birds around the first pond, and our group is easy to find.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101, exit at Smith Ranch Rd. Drive east on Smith Ranch Rd toward McInnis Park. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and drive about 0.5 mile through the LGVSD gates and into the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. There is an outhouse in the parking area for public use or you can use the bathrooms at nearby McInnis Park.

OLIMPALI STATE HISTORIC PARK, Novato

Saturday, October 22, 2022

9 AM to noon

With Rich Cimino

Registration will open on October 12 at 8 AM on the Field Trips page on the MAS website. There is a limit of 15 participants for this trip. There will not be a waiting list. No drop-ins, please.

It's always an exciting time to birdwatch at Olompali State Historic Park! October can bring fall surprises. This year, with the fires in the northern part of the state, Olompali Park may become home to species typically not seen in the park. Beginning and experienced birders are invited to join leaders Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle to bird the park. We will walk the old ranch road to the park's reservoir. We hope to see a wide variety of species that thrive in the park's oak savanna and open grasslands. The field trip will start at 9 AM meeting in the front of the visitor center.

DIRECTIONS: Exit Hwy 101 at Atherton Ave/ San Marin Dr in Novato. Follow the signs to Olompali State Historic Park. A right turn onto the Old Redwood Hwy frontage road will take you to the park. There is an \$8 cash only parking fee. Recently, the park gates have been opening by 8:30 AM.

THE PONDS AT THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT (LGVSD)

San Rafael

Thursday, November 3, 2022

8:30 to 11:30 AM

With Sande and Bob Chilvers

All fully vaccinated participants are welcome to join this trip. No registration required.

Join old friends and meet new ones as we resume our regularly scheduled walks on the first Thursday of the month at Las Gallinas. Special thanks to Bob and Sande Chilvers for volunteering once again to lead our monthly walks in search of waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. With fall migration underway, we are likely to spot some interesting species, so come assist in our search.

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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.

TRAGEDY OF THE RECENT FISH DEATHS

During the almost two-month period, from the end of July through much of September, many thousands of dead fish were found around the bay. More than 10,000 fish are estimated to have died at Oakland's Lake Merritt alone. Species found dead included: sharks, bat rays, smelt, anchovies, white sturgeon, hundreds of the introduced striped bass, approximately 10,000 yellowfin gobies, and a small number of the endangered green sturgeon. The loss of Green Sturgeon is especially sad. They are a large (growing to approximately 256-270 centimeters, with females growing larger than males), anadromous, long-lived fish. They live as long as 60 years.

The massive fish kill is linked to a bloom of algae (*Heterosigma Akashiwo*) responsible for red tide; named because it turns the water a red color. Algae blooms can be harmful to fish in two ways: at the time of high-water temperatures, algae grows rapidly and when it dies its decomposition uses up oxygen in the water and that suffocates fish. Also, algae secrete a toxin that can harm the gills of fish.

Red tide was first observed near Alameda, then it extended through Central Bay, into South Bay, San Pablo Bay. As we go to press, the deaths, fortunately, appears to have ended. Marin largely escaped the calamity with a few fish washing up on Sausalito and Tiburon shorelines. A seven-foot-long white sturgeon and some striped bass washed up at the mouth of Corte Madera Creek. Why Marin seems to have escaped a large fish kill is not known. We won't escape forever, however. Higher water temperature related to climate change is likely to make algae blooms more likely and more widespread in the future.

Experts say that the algae bloom is likely to have been caused by a combination of very low oxygen levels, warm water, and high concentrations of phosphorous and nitrogen – runoff from urban and agricultural sources including sewage treatment plants. Treatment plants (37) line the bay providing lots of nutrients (primarily nitrogen and phosphorus) to feed the algae. Nitrogen and phosphorus are not removed by the treatment process.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, the Regional Water Quality Control Board has told sewage treatment agencies that it will probably require caps on nutrients in wastewater when their regional permit comes up for renewal

in 2024. The 1972 Clean Water Act required wastewater to be treated instead of being dumped directly into the bay as it had been. The Water Board regulates sewage treatment plant discharges, but not much has happened to reduce nutrient discharges since then.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Tell the Regional Water Quality Control Board that it's time to protect fish by requiring sewage treatment plants to upgrade so that they reduce levels of nitrogen and phosphorus and cap nutrients discharged to the bay as soon as possible. Contact: Executive Officer, Eileen White, Eileen.white@waterboards.ca.gov or 1515 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612.

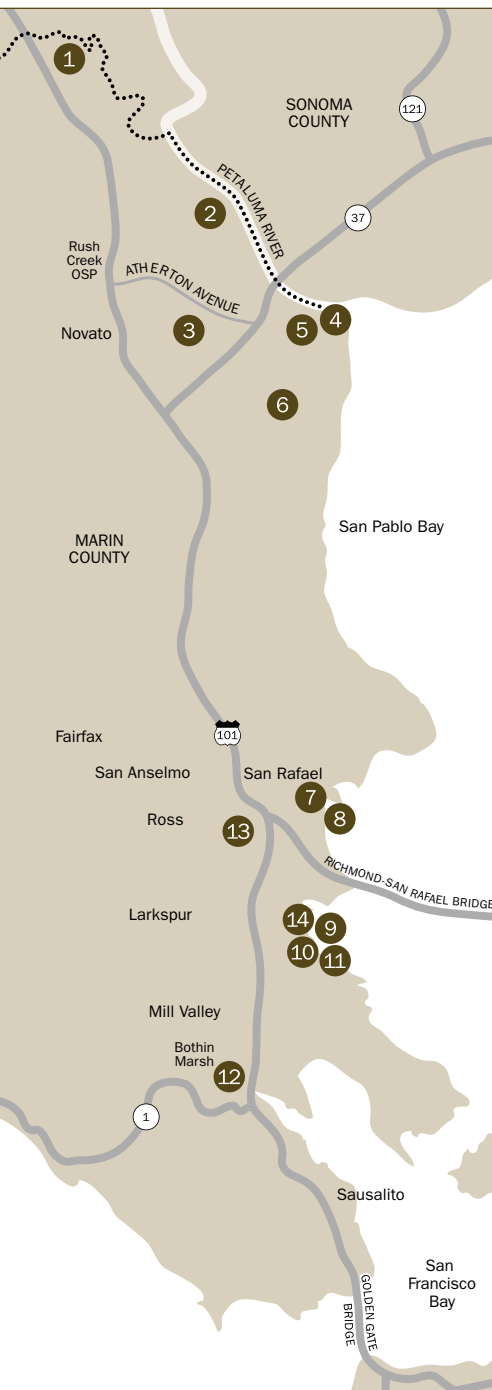
If you see dead fish, Google "California Department of Fish and Wildlife Mortality Reporting" and fill out their Reporting Form. The Department warns not to touch the fish.

MUTE SWANS — BEAUTIFUL BUT DESTRUCTIVE NON-NATIVES

Some admire the beauty of the Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) at Las Gallinas Wildlife Pond and other ponds in west Marin, at Shollenberger Park and elsewhere. They may be beautiful, but Mute Swans are an introduced species that damage native habitats and ecosystems. Mute Swans were introduced to northeastern states in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for ornamental ponds and lakes, zoos and aviculture collections. Since then, they have expanded their range to the western states and Canada.

Mute Swans compete with native waterfowl for habitat and food. They forage on native plants reducing food and habitat on which our native birds depend. Mute Swans forage primarily on submerged aquatic vegetation and are voracious eaters. Each swan consumes four to eight pounds of vegetation per day. Mute Swans use their feet to expose plant shoots and roots, and to help dislodge food for their young (cygnets). This damages aquatic substrates and vegetation surrounding their preferred food plants, further degrading ecosystems. Mute Swans are territorial especially during the breeding season, and they are known to be aggressive towards other birds and people.

The Mute Swans are detrimental to our native wildlife as are other introduced species. Because of their size and behavior, they are more harmful than many other non-native species.



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

MORE ON TROPICAL MILKWEED PROHIBITED

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has designated tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) a B-rated weed, as we reported in last month's *The Rail*. Noxious weeds that are B-rated are **prohibited from nurseries and sale by nurseries**, and can be prohibited and eradicated at the county level at the discretion of the County Agricultural Commissioner. That is exactly what Marin's Agricultural Commissioner did: prohibited tropical milkweed from being sold in Marin County. The action was taken to protect Monarch butterflies.

Tropical milkweed (orange flowers) is a non-native species that is contributing to the decline of Monarch butterflies. Milkweed is the host plant for Monarchs, the only plant on which they lay their eggs. Once caterpillars emerge they eat the leaves. Unlike the native milkweed,

tropical milkweed does not die back in winter. The presence of milkweed in the winter encourages monarchs to stay, breed, and deplete themselves by laying eggs when they should be in diapause (period of physiologically enforced dormancy between periods of activity) and overwintering on the coast. Also as the Monarch caterpillars munch their way through the tropical milkweed, they may ingest the protozoan parasite, *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE), that persist on the evergreen leaves. Narrow leaf milkweed, our native milkweed, dies back in winter so there is no host plant to encourage the monarchs to stay and breed, or to retain the OE protozoan.

In coastal California, overwintering Monarch butterflies have declined precipitously since the 1980s and 1990s, due in part to OE and lack of appropriate milkweed plants away from the coast. Climate change, pesticides and habitat loss are other reasons for this decline.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

PLANT MILKWEED! If you are away from the coast, planting milkweed in your garden will benefit monarchs. If you live near the coast, plant native nectar plants that will provide nourishment for overwintering monarchs. Choose the species of milkweed best suited to Marin County. These are Narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), Showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), and California milkweed (*Asclepias californica*). Make sure the milkweed is not treated with pesticides, particularly systemic ones like neonicotinoids. Plants treated with pesticides can kill Monarchs and other pollinators using the plants. Also don't plant single plants, plant them in clumps or patches of say five to ten.

More information about planting milkweed is provided by the Xerces Society, **Xerces.org**.



An Abbotts Lagoon channel habitat potentially impacted by polluted runoff.

Point Reyes National Seashore

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pond in two places on Neiman Ranch; broken pipe resulting in sewage ponding under worker housing on B Ranch; and sewage from worker housing directed to a manure pond on L Ranch with no evidence of leach field.

Recent water quality testing done by Turtle Island Restoration Network, revealed water pollution levels dangerous to public health and the environment. The report, produced by independent Geoenvironmental Engineer Douglas Lovell, documents significant water pollution with bacteria concentrations exceeding state standards

at Drakes Bay, Drakes Estero, Kehoe, and Abbotts watersheds. Some bacteria concentrations were more than 170 times the health-based standards for fecal coliform.

Members of the public also testified about environmentally damaging conditions they observed. One presented photos of Tule Elk stuck in mud trying to drink from a degraded shoreline of a pond. Commissioner Hart described the grazed landscape at the Seashore as looking like a moonscape.

It is evident that the regulatory systems failed the Seashore's natural resources.

For unexplained reasons, water quality testing was discontinued around 2012. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) admitted that its focus was on Tomales Bay, which is defined as an impaired water body, so they were not paying attention. Clearly the NPS was not paying much attention either, or the attention they did pay was not effective. Nobody seems to have been minding the store.

One positive outcome of this process, even though it has been fraught with frustration, is that regulators are now paying attention. The Water Board representative explained that they have broad enforcement powers and even the head of enforcement

for the Coastal Commission reported that the Commission too has enforcement power. The Assistant Superintendent reported that the NPS has authority which is exerted through leases and Ranch Operation Agreements. The Marin County Environmental Health representative reported that the county will not be taking enforcement action. Environmental Health is responsible for overseeing sewage systems in the county.

Commissioner Mike Wilson took the issue of allowing cows on public land a step further. He said that this experience, along with others, has made him question whether dairy ranches should be allowed along the coast at all. That's a good question.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

It's important for monitoring by the public to continue. The agencies have not committed to actually taking enforcement action.

Mark your calendar for the next hearing on the Water Quality Strategy and Climate Action Plan for the Seashore which will be on the Coastal Commission's agenda next September 2023.

Tell Representative Jared Huffman that you support restoring Seashore lands to habitat. Rep. Huffman supports ranching at the Seashore.

If you see environmentally damaging conditions on ranches when you visit the Seashore take photos to document conditions on ranches.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

We will water the newer plantings again although, with less sunshine, longer nights and a growing season that is near the end, their water requirements are lower. We have practically eradicated invasive *Dittrichia graveolens* at both Triangle Marsh and the Corte Madera Marsh expansion site.

Another invasive, *Salsola soda*, still needs attention at the latter site. We will continue to remove Harding grass and bristly ox-tongue from strategic locations.

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: October 1, November 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: October 8, November 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, VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Bob Hinz, Ed Nute, Lowell Sykes

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>.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

TISCORNIA MARSH RESTORATION

It's been a busy summer for our Tiscornia Marsh Project. We're aiming for submitting our applications for regulatory permits the beginning of October. There is a lot of work yet to do to get the applications together by that time. Our work since April is being performed with a grant from the Ocean Protection Council (OPC).

Our team, the Multicultural Center of Marin (MCM), Environmental Science Associates (ESA), and Marin Audubon Society, is planning our fifth public meeting and our first under this OPC grant. The purpose of the meeting is to bring the community up to date on the project and encourage comments from community members particularly on public access components. The meeting is planned for October 19 on Zoom. We will have a link on our website closer to the meeting date.

MAS and ESA have met with the Bay Regional Restoration Integration Team (BRRIT) that is made up of representatives of all agencies that have to issue permits for the Tiscornia Restoration Project. Our meeting covered issues related to protection of endangered species, loss of marsh, interface between the soccer field improvement project and the adjacent levee and marsh that are part of our project, the trash capture structure, public access improvements such as where to put benches and signs along the trail, and the design for the western end of the levee.

We also met with the State Lands Commission staff and learned that we will have to lease the small part of the bay on which a small portion of the containment berm/cobble beach will be constructed. The small parcel owned by State Lands is at the north east corner of the project site.

We've had multiple meetings with the city of San Rafael about the project, the city's trash capture facility at the north west corner of the project site, and the interface between the city's multiple projects in the area (park improvements, trash capture structure and on-street parking) and communicating with the neighbor.

In addition, I met with the new Public Works director about the city's maintenance crew removing grasses, forbs and low branches of large shrubs that were planted along the levees by students from the nearby Bahia Vista School as part of the STRAW program some years ago. It is still unclear whether the

vegetation was removed for fire prevention or to open up views to people who might be hiding under the bushes. The vegetation that was removed provided cover habitat for the endangered Ridgway Rails.

CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE RESTORATION

At our Ecological Reserve property, our volunteers have been working to remove invasive plants, mostly Harding grass, and there is a lot of it. Now we're taking a more focused look and planning specific actions to remove the Harding grass using some new techniques that have been recommended by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The techniques involve cutting and placing cardboard and thicker mulch and compost in a form resembling a sandwich. We are also trying this technique at our Simmons property where Harding grass has been removed and we are planting pollinator plants for Monarchs.

BAHIA

Through the summer, a crew from Hanford ARC has watered the plants on the levee we've installed over the last four years. The shrubs that were planted are looking good. And STRAW staff has been tending the plants they passed last year and getting ready for the coming year's planting with students.

We're also thrilled to have received a \$10,000 grant from the RHE Charitable Foundation for revegetation at Bahia. This grant was approved about six months ago and we are happy to have received the payment. It will be a big help supporting the next phase of our levee revegetation the coming year.

Junior Birdwatchers

There are six different levels in the Junior Birdwatcher program for a youngster to complete to get their certificate. There are pictures and information about each bird on the list that teach about the birds in our local area. After studying the birds listed for each level the "junior birder" can take a quiz on identifying the birds and will receive a Junior Birder Certificate.

The program details are found at www.marinaudubon.org/birds/junior-bird-watchers.

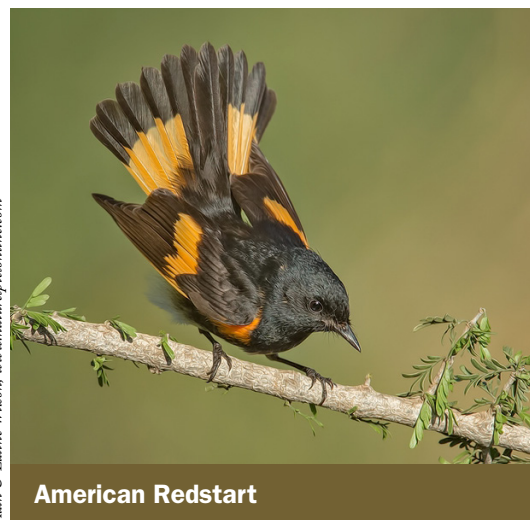
MARIN BIRDLOG: AUGUST 2022

By Noah Arthur

August is traditionally shorebird month in Marin, and though our shorebird season this year was diminished by the drought, that was more than made up for by a massive early push of passerine vagrants toward the end of the month.

The month started out with a **Ruddy Turnstone** at Abbotts Lagoon on the 3rd (JC), rare in coastal Marin despite being much more regular farther south and east in the Bay.

An exceptionally early **American Redstart** was at Cypress Grove (Tomaes Bay) on the 8th (NW), an adult male and likely a migrant from the sparse westernmost breeding populations in Oregon or northwest California. Also on the 8th, a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at the Mendoza Ranch pond on outer Pt. Reyes (LC). Another nice *Tringa* sandpiper came on the 9th, a **Solitary Sandpiper** at Abbotts Lagoon (BB).



American Redstart

Especially unusual at this season were two

Black Scoters flying by Pt. Bonita on the 12th (EF).

On the 18th, the resident Bay Area **Northern Gannet** was seen in Marin waters on a pelagic trip (MP). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the Mendoza pond on the 20th (DS) was almost certainly a new individual.

A prolonged and exceptional early wave of eastern rarities began on the 20th, with a **Prairie Warbler** at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse.

A pelagic trip on the 21st turned up a **Brown Booby** and a **Hawaiian Petrel** well offshore in Marin waters, and also on the 21st a **Prairie Falcon** was harassing shorebirds at Drakes Estero

(MS, LS, & RC). A few subsequent **Prairie Falcon** sightings around Point Reyes over the next week were likely the same bird.

The eastern warbler floodgates opened on the 26th, with a **Northern Waterthrush** at the Pt. Reyes New Willows, **American Redstart** at Drakes Beach, and **Magnolia Warbler** at Mendoza Ranch (AM). Also on the 26th, two **Lesser Yellowlegs** were on a stock pond near Drakes Beach (EC).

An exceptionally early **Greater White-fronted Goose** was with Canadas in a Corte Madera soccer field on the 27th (DL), and a **Ruddy Turnstone** was at Marta's Marsh in Corte Madera (AM). Rapidly becoming more regular in northern California waters in recent years, but still exceptionally rare and perhaps the best bird of the month, a **Nazca Booby** was seen roosting on Sugar Loaf from a pelagic boat on the 27th. Also on the 27th, yet another early **American Redstart** was at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse (EC), and another very early **Prairie Warbler** came in off the ocean at the Lighthouse (EM, ZP, & BW).

Very rare in West Marin despite being a common breeder in much of interior California, a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was by the Inverness Tennis Club on the 28th (LS). Also on the 28th a **Northern Waterthrush** was caught by the Palomarin banding team, and another one was at Drakes Beach (no info on who found it available on eBird – all observations say “continuing”).

The 29th was another excellent day on the Outer Point, with the best bird being a **Grey Flycatcher** at the Fish Docks (MB), and other nice new finds including an **Eastern Kingbird** at Spaletta Ranch (NA), **Tennessee Warblers** at the Lighthouse and Mendoza Ranch (LC & EM), **American Redstart** at New Willows (LC & EM), and **Red-eyed Vireos** at the Lighthouse and the other at Nunes Ranch (both JC). A **Bank Swallow** was with lots of other migrant swallows at Las Gallinas on the 30th (SE).

Probably the rarest bird of the month came on the 30th, a female **Painted Bunting** at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse (LN), one of several Bay Area records during late August and early September this year. Also on the Outer Point on the 30th, a **Swainson's Hawk** flew over the New Willows (AP), a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was at the Fish Docks (AP), **Chipping Sparrow** at Nunes Ranch (AP). Elsewhere on the 30th, a male **Summer Tanager** was at Muddy Hollow (NB & CT).

Observers and Acronyms **JC:** Jim Crumpler, **NW:** Nils Warnock, **LC:** Lucas Corneliussen, **BB:** Brian Browne, **EF:** Evan Farese, **MP:** Michael Pierson, **DS:** David Sexton, **MW:** Mark Wilson, **EH:** Eugene Hunn, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **RC:** Reef Comer, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **EC:** Everett Clark, **AM:** Alex Merritt, **EM:** Ethan Monk, **ZP:** Zane Pickus, **BW:** Bart Wickel, **MB:** Mark Butler, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **SE:** Sam Eberhard, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **AP:** Adam Panto, **NB:** Naomi Burns, **CT:** Cameron Tescher

FIELD TRIPS (continued from page 3)

LAS GALLINAS AND HAMILTON WETLANDS

Birding in Marin, Season 7 – Trip 11

Saturday, November 5, 2022

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration will be open starting on October 27 at 8 AM on the Field Trips page on the MAS website. There is a limit of 15 participants for this trip. There will not be a waiting list. No drop-ins, please.

Join Jim and Bob on an easy, birdy walk of 1.5 miles around the Las Gallinas ponds where we are likely to see 10 species of ducks, five of herons, five of raptors, five of sparrows and some rails like **Ridgway's**, **Sora**, and **Virginia** with **Gallinules**, coots and geese! Shall we try to identify the duck species by females? I wonder if the **Merlin** will be back.

After lunch we are going to visit the Hamilton Wetlands, restored by the Army Corp of Engineers in the recent 5 to 10 years to the San Francisco Bay ecosystem, which have become the winter home of some 10,000 birds. It is remarkable that through the World War II and the Cold War years the U.S. Air Force stayed on alert and could launch jet fighter planes in minutes from an airport here to defend the Bay Area. We will try to find 10 species of shorebirds here while staying alert to many other possibilities.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 north San Rafael take the Lucas Valley/Smith Ranch Road exit east. In about 0.5 mile, immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, left turn and follow the road another 0.5 mile to the Las Gallinas parking at the end.

To the Hamilton Wetlands return to Hwy 101 north, take the second exit, Nave Dr toward Hamilton. Stay on Nave Dr, heading north, to Main Gate Dr and turn right. Go east to Hanger Ave and park along the levee behind Hanger 7.



Summer Tanager



The Rail

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

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

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

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

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

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

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