

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10 7:00 PM

**Anacapa Seabird Restoration**

By Annie Little



Sarah Thomson

**Scripps's Murrelet**

Register for the November Speaker Series program on the MAS website [Speaker Series page](#).

The removal of invasive species from islands is a powerful tool for conserving and protecting unique island species. Island eradication projects often face formidable biological, logistical, and social challenges. This presentation will highlight the eradication of black rats from Anacapa Island. This project was the first rodent eradication from an island where an endemic rodent was present and the first aerial application of a rodenticide in North America. Now, 20 years after the successful implementation of the project, monitoring shows significant positive benefits to seabirds.

Annie Little is the Supervisory Natural Resource Manager for Channel Islands National Park. Prior to joining the National Park Service in 2019, she worked 23 years for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Annie's focus is the conservation of unique island ecosystems, including eradication and control of invasive species and habitat restoration. Annie is the U.S. coordinator for the Trilateral Island Initiative which promotes island conservation in Canada, U.S., and Mexico.

**NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8 7:00 PM

**Domestic Cat Management: Challenges and Opportunities**

By Grant Sizemore

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# The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Monarch Larvae Observed at the Simmons Property

On October 10th the weekly monitoring found 12 monarch larvae in various instar stages on the narrow leaf milkweed at Marin Audubon's Simmons property near Deer Island. The week before a very beat up female monarch was observed laying eggs on the milkweed. Due to the advanced age of the larvae observed there must have been other female monarchs visiting the milkweed earlier. Hopefully these larvae are from monarchs returning from their long migration as far as the Rocky Mountains.

These monarch sightings are being reported in the Monarch Larvae Monitoring Project, **MLMP.org**. If you have milkweed in your garden you are encouraged to report monarch larvae sightings on this website.

Now that it is October observers are reporting monarch butterflies starting to gather at overwintering sites at coastal locations in Marin including in Bolinas, Stinson Beach and Muir Beach. It is hoped that this year will be better than last in which very few monarchs overwintered in coastal Marin.

This winter Marin Audubon is planning to plant additional milkweed and pollinator plants at the Simmons property. Plants are on order



Ed Niere

**Monarch caterpillar on narrow leaf milkweed at Marin Audubon's Simmons property near Deer Island.**

from the Home Ground Habitat nursery and planting will be done by volunteers as well as by the Gardner's Guild, which has been hired to do maintenance work at Marin Audubon properties on a two week basis.

## What's Up With Marin's New Breeding Bird Atlas?

A lot. We've been busy completing year 2 of the first re-study of the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas conducted around 40 years ago. This summer, 80 dedicated volunteers completed their 2022 breeding bird surveys on July 15th. Since then, the Steering Committee has been vetting the many thousands of observations for accuracy, in preparation for our annual report.

So how are breeding birds doing in Marin County, where can they be found, and how has their diversity and distribution changed since the 1st breeding bird atlas? What breeding species, present previously, have yet to be found

or perhaps no longer breed here? What breeding bird species are new to Marin since the 1st atlas? How many volunteer hours have contributed to this current effort so far?

Stay tuned for our second annual report of preliminary results, to be published later this month and posted at <https://marinaudubon.org/birds/marin-county-breeding-bird-atlas>.

It will include some preliminary maps that show historic and current breeding distributions, and direct you to where you can find more maps of your favorite species online.

*continued on page 6*

## 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
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Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Doug Waterman 506-4675
Property Management	Ed Nute 669-7710 Clint Kellner (on leave)
Volunteer Coordinator	Ellena Ochoa
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

A warm welcome to our newest board member, Ellena Ochoa. Ellena has an extensive background in open space real estate and land transactions with various organizations, including several land trusts and park conservancies. She also has experience with environmental education and restoration organizations on both the east and west coasts and has worked with volunteers in various capacities. She holds degrees in public policy and business administration and her early work experience was in finance. Ellena came to Marin Audubon because our property ownership meshes with her interest in protecting land and habitats. We're enthusiastic about her joining us. She will be assuming the position of Volunteer Coordinator and will be working on our properties as well. Ellena has recently returned to Marin from the east coast and now lives in Larkspur with her family.

Election day is fast approaching on November 8. Get out and vote, if you haven't already. And keep the environment in mind with your vote. Voters will have an opportunity to cast votes for candidates who can make a difference for the environment. Three seats are open for the MMWD board of Directors. MMWD owns significant acres of watershed habitat lands. The State Assembly seat is open, the winner of which will be voting on a wide range of environmental issues.

Members may have seen a letter from Susan Kirks, the president of Madrone Audubon, in which she called out Marin Audubon, National Audubon, Point Blue Conservation Science, and even the Coastal Commissioner/assembly candidate who voted, along with the majority of commissioners, in favor of restoring the island ecosystem. Position differences on issues among chapters and/or with National Audubon can occur because we are all separately incorporated non-profits, but such differences are rare. Usually, the different positions are voiced to the decision-making bodies (agencies, regulators, and jurisdictions) and other non-profits. I have never known a chapter to take their difference of opinion to the press. The USFWS plan to restore the Farallones is supported by most scientists and scientific organizations working in the marine environment as well as most ocean conservation organizations. Four Bay Area Audubon chapters including Marin Audubon, as well as Audubon California, and National Audubon Society all

support the USFWS plan. Ms. Kirks should be directing her opposition to rodenticide use on the mainland where it is used indiscriminately, instead of onto the Farallon Islands' where it will be applied in a tightly controlled program and in a formula approved by the EPA and State of California specifically for island ecosystem restoration. We and Point Blue Conservation Science have provided decades of data demonstrating the extreme unlikelihood that it will be transported by seabirds or raptors to the mainland food web.

We've begun to plan for Christmas Bird Counts. The Southern Marin Count will be held as will the Cheep Thrills in north Marin and the Pt. Reyes Counts. West Marin and Cheep Thrills compilers have decided not to hold a dinner, and we are still deciding on the Southern Marin Count dinner.

Have an enjoyable Thanksgiving. And as always, stay well and join us for a field trip, work day and program.

## Chairperson Needed for Speaker Series

We still need a Speaker Series Chair. We have most of the speakers scheduled for this season, except for three months from April through June, so taking over should not be difficult. Helping with Speaker Series could be a Board position (we have a short-term board position open) or does not need to be. We can help with training for this position, including suggestions for locating and contacting both local and out of area speakers. For more information, contact Doug Waterman 415/506-4675.

## Martha Company Property in Hands of Voters

Measure M will tax voters on the Tiburon Peninsula to provide funding to purchase and permanently protect natural habitats on this 110-acre property on the Tiburon Peninsula. The acquisition will protect two endangered plants, water quality for endangered red-legged frog that inhabit a downstream pond, and many native plant species including grassland and oak-woodland habitats, thereby continuing to address climate change. **Vote YES** to protect this important property.



## 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.

### THE PONDS AT THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT (LGVSD), San Rafael

Thursday, November 3, 2022 and  
Thursday, December 1, 2022  
8:30 to 11:30 AM

With Sande and Bob Chilvers

All 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. With fall migration just about over, we might see more waterfowl and spot 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.

**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.

### 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 for this trip. 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, swans, ducks and geese!

After lunch we are going to visit the Hamilton Wetlands, restored by the Army Corps of Engineers in the recent 5 – 10 years to the San Francisco Bay ecosystem, which have become the winter home of some ten thousand birds.

**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.

### RODEO LAGOON, Marin Headlands

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration opens October 31 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page. Limit of 15 for this trip. No drop-ins, please.

Early-November is a surprisingly active time for migrants at this Marin Headlands location, as we search for scarcer late fall migrants including winter wildfowl, loons, grebes and passerine migrants. As always, the weather will determine the focus of our search on the day. This "hotspot" has produced some memorable Marin rarities in recent Novembers, including **Tricolored Heron, Scaly-breasted Munia** and **Rusty Blackbird**. We will begin the morning with a sea watch and/or visible migration watch at 7:30 AM. Those arriving later may join us at 8:15 AM for a circuit of the lagoon.

**DIRECTIONS:** Head south on Hwy 101, taking the last Sausalito exit just before the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exit stop sign, turn right. Go under the freeway, following the road to the left. Within 300 feet turn left at the sign to the Marin Headlands. You should see the tunnel with the five-minute light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Rd to the Rodeo Lagoon parking lot. Meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

### SAN FRANCISCO AND SAN PABLO BAYS BOAT TRIP

Saturday, November 12, 2022

9 AM to 4 PM

With Roger Harris

San Francisco Bay, the largest and one of the most important estuaries along the Pacific Flyway, is right in our own backyard. Join us as we cruise from Berkeley toward the Golden Gate Bridge and north into San Pablo Bay, hugging the shorelines and waters that are home to thousands of wintering birds. This trip offers bird and marine mammal viewing in stunning locations, many of which can only be seen by boat.

The trip costs \$125 and is limited to 25 participants. A waitlist will open if the trip sells out. You may cancel your ticket for a refund, up to 48 hours before the date and time of the event. Sign up on Marin Audubon's website on the Field Trips page. Dress in layers. Bring liquids and lunch. Please bring a mask for any time spent inside the cabin.

Registered participants will receive directions to the Berkeley Marina and other instructions prior to the trip.

Inclement weather will reschedule the trip to the next Saturday, November 19.

### BAHIA, HORSESHOE POND & RUSH CREEK Birding in Marin, Season 7 – Trip 12

Saturday, December 3, 2022

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration opens November 24 at 8 AM

on MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 15. No drop-ins, please.

MAS acquired and restored to tidal action the diked bay lands around the residential Bahia neighborhood. As the ebbing tide exposes the mudflats to thousands of shorebirds, while on the flood tide hundreds of ducks and some gulls float, forage and loaf about. The oak-wooded ridge stretching from Hwy 101 to Bahia, also saved from development by MAS, holds **Oak Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hutton's Vireo**, at least four woodpecker species and many sparrows in the winter.

Horseshoe Pond (Homeowners Lagoon) at the southeast end of Topaz is a great place to look for wintering ducks. **Goldeneyes, Scaup, Canvasbacks, Buffleheads**, and **Mergansers** seem to like it and it has been Marin's best place for **Barrow's Goldeneyes** the last few years.

After lunch we plan to look at the nearby Rush Creek area from the Airport Rd which parallels Hwy 101 north of Atherton.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101 in north Novato take Atherton Avenue east, take the Y left onto Bugeia which becomes Bahia Dr, near the end at the bottom of the hill take a right onto Topaz, follow Topaz to its end and park.

### CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE Corte Madera

Sunday, December 4, 2022 and  
Saturday, December 10, 2022

9 AM to noon

With Bryan Flaig

Registration opens November 24 at 8 AM on MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 20. No drop-ins, please.

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. Corte Madera Ecological Reserve contains a variety of birding habitats, like tidal ponds, pickleweed marshes and a high tide refuge purchased by Marin Audubon in 2016. Much of the area has undergone extensive restoration for rare and endangered saltmarsh species.

On this field trip, we will hike a short distance to explore the marsh at high tide, searching for elusive **Ridgway's Rails** and winter residents. We'll walk along the east side of Shorebird Marsh (pond), observing the wide variety of ducks, gulls, and wading shorebirds that frequent the area this time of year.

Restrooms are available at nearby stores (Trader Joe's), 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.

**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.

## 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.

### MARIN WATER RECREATION STUDY

Cyclists were present in-force at the October MMWD (now Marin Water) public meeting on their Recreation Plan. The focus of the hearing was on how to accommodate multi-recreational uses. Most of the public who spoke represented biking interests in what appeared to be an organized effort. Some examples of what bikers want: separate trails, equal access (some considered themselves as disadvantaged), more trails, trails that are more enjoyable (out of the sun was one example), and trail closures. The Mt. Tam Watershed is at risk. While a few people spoke in support of the environment, no one spoke for walkers, hikers or people who just want to quietly enjoy. Marin Water staff did not remind the public that their primary responsibility is to protect the watershed.

### FARALLON THREAT CONTINUES

Last month we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the National Marine Sanctuary System (NMSS), which protects the waters of exceptional biological richness and diversity, and the marine life they support. Three such sanctuaries lie just off our Bay Area shores: Greater Farallones, Cordell Bank, and Monterey Bay NMSS. They host endangered and protected species such as blue whales and white sharks, and provide sustenance for the largest seabird colony in the contiguous United States. Together they remind us of the importance of Marin's coastal waters to our marine ecosystem and to the planet.

Equally important are National Wildlife Refuges, a different protective designation that includes the Farallon Islands, The Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, an archipelago about 30 miles off San Francisco and Marin. These Refuges are surrounded by, but distinct from, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary whose food-rich waters support the many migratory and resident marine species that breed and roost on the Farallon Islands. Sadly, the islands are suffering from roughly 50,000 non-native house mice that are causing the decline and deaths of several native island species, some found nowhere else in the world.

A recent IJ op-ed, misstated that the US Fish and Wildlife's Service plans to drop "poison within the Greater Farallon's National Marine Sanctuary" to eradicate the mice from the Farallon Islands. The statement is false. In fact, the plan has been meticulously developed precisely to avoid that. No brodifacoum will

be dropped within the waters of the marine sanctuary. (Brodifacoum is the EPA and state-approved selective pesticide formulated for use on islands to restore native habitats). Treatment will take place solely where the mice are – on the land, but not in sanctuary waters.

To suggest that Marin waters would be unsafe as a result of the USFWS treatment is speculative and irresponsible. Not only would there be no drop made into the ocean, the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Farallones House Mice Eradication Plan will employ multiple safeguards to protect the Sanctuary waters from being adversely affected: avoiding air drops near the water's edge or in windy conditions, hand-placement of bait in sensitive areas, scheduling the application at a time when minimal wildlife are on the islands. Any pellets accidentally entering the ocean will dissolve quickly in the surf zone, and the toxin will drop to the ocean floor where it would bind to the substrate and become unavailable to most marine species.

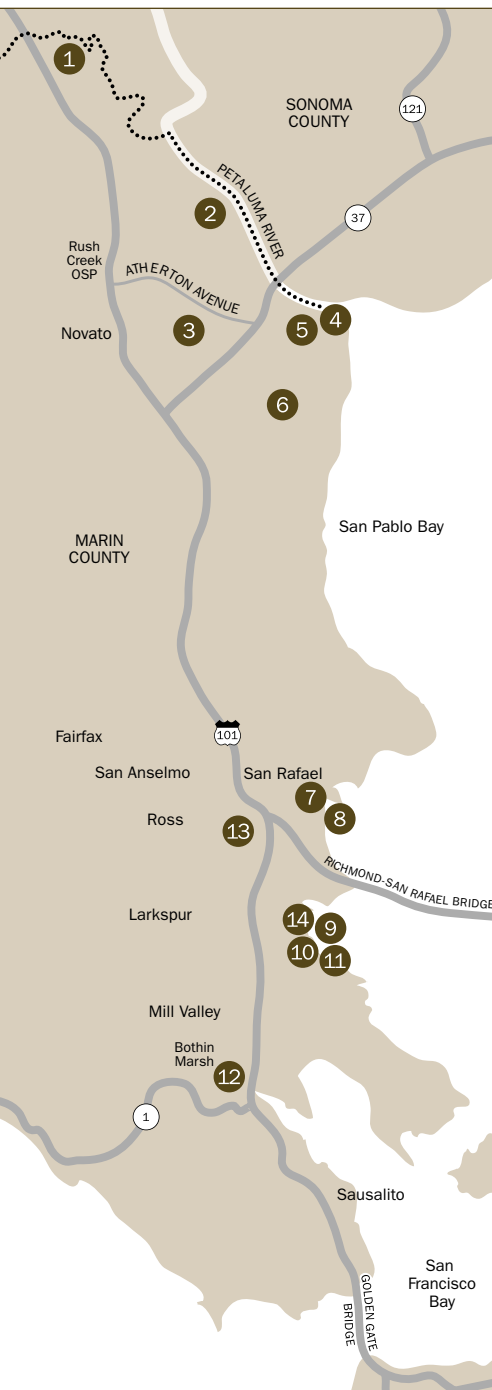
This method has been used in nearly 700 island eradications worldwide, and its techniques have been constantly refined to reduce accidental bykill of non-target wildlife. It is the only proven effective way of restoring island ecosystems, and this specific plan is broadly endorsed by scientists to save species from threat of extinction, and restore unique island ecosystems throughout the world.

Proposed alternatives such as contraceptive-laden bait, are unproven and incomplete. Even its developer concedes that it is not designed for full eradication. Administering the repeat doses required to even reduce births would require year-round, years-long, devastating lethal disturbances to non-target wildlife, especially during breeding seasons when seal pups and seabird chicks are highly vulnerable. Wildlife experts agree that the entire mouse population must be eliminated.

A follow-up letter in the IJ from the President of the Audubon Chapter in Sonoma County pursues the contraceptive approach, calling it "low to no risk".

Contraception may be no risk, it is also not effective. The mouse population needs to be eradicated not controlled. She also promotes removal and relocation of six to eight overwintering burrowing owls. This approach would also produce no results. There would still be 50,000 mice on the islands and the owls could simply fly back the same year or different owls could fly in in subsequent years.

What an ironic tragedy it would be to



#### 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

leave this impaired Island ecosystem in a state of disastrous decline due to unwarranted fears of contaminating nearby ocean waters, ignoring extensive evidence that both the refuge's and the sanctuary's unique marine life and sustainability will benefit greatly, and permanently, from the USFWS Plan.

## MAS OPPOSES BATTERY STORAGE ON BAYLANDS

Developers are proposing to locate a battery storage facility on 20-acres (although the figure provided by the developer looks like more) of one of the few remaining undeveloped diked baylands on private ownership in Marin. The project site is a 134-acre diked bayland at the southeast corner of the Highway 101 and State Route 37 intersection. The project would permanently fill former baylands and require trucking in 300,000 cubic yards of fill and 20,000 additional cubic yards of aggregate to create a raised pad on which the facility would be built. The project would prevent restoration of the diked baylands to more productive marsh habitat as part of the Novato Creek watershed and San Pablo Bay and would change the current grazing use. Because the project would permanently cover and convert diked baylands to industrial uses, Marin Audubon opposes the project.

Marin Audubon has been committed to protecting Marin's diked baylands for more than 30 years. Our commitment to bayland protection was formalized with the establishment of the Campaign to Protect Marin Baylands in partnership with Marin Baylands Advocates. Since then, we have acquired, or assisted with the acquisition, of more than 10,000 acres of diked baylands and adjacent uplands resulting in their permanent protection and restoration where needed.

Marin Audubon supports the protection of all current and historic undeveloped baylands and adjacent uplands which are an essential part of the wetland/bayland habitats.

The proposed project is a lithium-ion battery storage facility that the developer, Terra-Gen, reports would provide power for 240,000 households for four hours, during a reliability event. It would consist of multi-level battery modules stored in racks. When batteries wear out, they would be replaced. When the project has outlived its usefulness, the 300,000 cubic yards of fill would not be removed. Terra-Gen claims the proposed location is the only feasible site in Marin County to locate such a facility because the Ignacio substation, located proximate to the site, is the largest substation in the county. It is described as a hub for the local electrical system capable of storing

and delivering approximately 300 megawatts of electric energy and associated ancillary services to the California electric grid. Terra-Gen describes that it would help achieve a zero-carbon future which they report as the state's energy goal.

To support their claim that the Ignacio substation is the only feasible location for their project, Terra-Gen produced a review of other substations in the county and rejected all of them as being unsuitable. The reasons included nearby commercial, residential or open space uses, physically isolated, and too small to support a large-scale battery storage project. Interestingly, some of the conditions cited for rejecting other sites also exist on the Ignacio site, including nearby commercial and open space uses and lack of access. We wonder if several smaller battery storage projects, at smaller sub-stations, could not be just as, or more profitable, because infrastructure costs could be lower (importing 300,000 cubic yards of fill, if it could be found, would not be cheap).

The proposed site is surrounded by agricultural and commercial development, with the Bel Marin Keys residential development and Pacheco Pond nearby. It is within the 100-year floodplain, is currently used for grazing and is at a low elevation, hence the need for levees along vulnerable boundaries. The entire eastern boundary borders Novato Creek, reflecting its importance as floodplain. The levee along the northern boundary has been breached several times, causing the flooding and closure of State Route 37 twice over the last 10 years. What would happen to the rest of the site is unclear. The developers report the project would cause the loss of a small area of jurisdictional wetlands.

We consider the entire site a valuable wetland resource that should be protected. Terra-Gen has indicated a desire to protect the undeveloped portion of the site as open space and possibly for wetland restoration. However, written material provided by Terra-Gen clearly indicates that Terra-Gen is considering a mitigation bank for the rest of the property, perhaps holding this out as an enticement for wetland-bank developers. In our discussion, they did not acknowledge that intent, but indicated a willingness to have the rest somehow improved as habitat. They alluded to a possibility of the site going to MAS.

Another issue that has been raised is that the batteries are lithium-ion batteries. Lithium is a highly toxic substance. Many lithium mines are located in remote areas of South America and result in negative impacts to indigenous cultures, including poor water quality, destruction of local rivers and fragile ecosystems. There is currently only one lithium mine operating

in the U.S., likely due to the negative impacts of lithium mining techniques, such as open pit mining.

The entirety of the property is in the Baylands Corridor and Bayfront Conservation Zone, both protective planning designations in the County-wide plan that recognizes the importance of protecting baylands because of their valuable environmental resources. The project does not comply with provisions of either designation.

Marin Audubon Society's long-time position continues to be that undeveloped lands that were once part of San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay must be protected because they are still part of the bay ecosystem. They are the only areas that can be restored that can continue to reclaim the resource values of the bay ecosystem. In addition to significant restoration potential, currently the diked seasonally flooded baylands provide protection from sea level rise and flooding, important habitat for local wildlife and overwintering waterfowl, and even agricultural uses.

We support the need to take action to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. However, destroying the environment is no way to go about saving our increasingly fragile planet. Our long-held position to protect the remaining baylands that are at risk of being lost to development of any kind, should not be compromised.

## Register Complaints About PG&E Tree Work

There have been many complaints about PG&E tree removal and trimming. The latest is that they have been importing workers from other states who know nothing about our vegetation. For example, they have been cutting down buckeye thinking they are dead.

Recently Bay Area Audubon Chapters heard presentations from PG&E staff, Jeff McDougal, Senior Vegetation Manager, and Brian Bancardi, Senior Manager for the North Bay, about its Vegetation Management Program. They believe they are doing a good job, or trying to anyway. They recommend calling 1-800-PGE-5000 to register your complaint about PG&E work on your property or neighborhood. You should get a ticket number that can be tracked until resolution.



## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

It's a quiet time in our restoration uplands. We will reduce a few invasive perennial species in locations nearest our native plants. Some of the annual *Salsola soda* remains at the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve expansion site, and this is the end of the period for pulling that invasive. We have already eliminated stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) at Triangle Marsh and the Corte Madera site. Most of our perennials are dormant or nearly so and not in need of water.

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

### Volunteer Workdays

#### Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: November 5, December 3

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: November 12, December 10

Meet at the end of Industrial Way near Trader Joe's in Greenbrae.

For up-to-date information, contact Martha Jarocki, [marthajarocki@gmail.com](mailto:marthajarocki@gmail.com) or phone 415/461-3592.

#### Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at [judestalker@gmail.com](mailto:judestalker@gmail.com).

### THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS

Debbie Ablin, Annette Anzalone, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Ed Nute, Lowell Sykes

### WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Annemarie Clark, Brendan Clifford, Maria Donat, Robert Graham, Jim Kautz, Elayne Miller, T. J. Neff, Ellena Ochoa, Chris Shaheen, Jean Sprague, Rebecca Stewart, Francoise Stone, Sandra Tasca, Wenchin Yu

### THANK YOU, DONORS

Bud Alderson, Brevity Fund, Blackbaud Giving Fund, Imok Cha, William Clarke, Jill and Collin Cochrane, Andrea English and Tom Whitman, Mary Anne Flett, Francine Goodman, James Harrison, Thomas Heinz, Daphne Markham, Sarah Martin, Kent McDonald, Gerald Meral, William, Richardson, Marianne Riser, Anne Roughton, Richard Scott, Roger Stoll

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

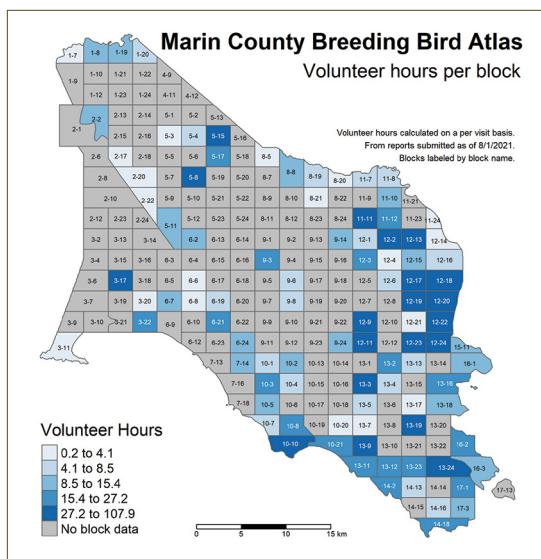
### BAHIA

The Hanford crew has been finishing up watering after skipping a month because of our unexpected heavy rain mid-September. The irrigation has kept alive most of our plants that were planted last year along the central peninsula.

STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) staff has also been hard at work during the summer tending the plants students from Marin elementary schools planted last winter on the eastern peninsula. They've scheduled 16 classes from ten different schools to install native plants from October through December. The goal of the planting is to provide high tide refuge habitat for endangered California Ridgway's Rails, and special status species that inhabit the tidal marshes along Bahia and the Petaluma River. We welcome the students to our habitats.

### Breeding Bird Atlas

*continued from page 1*



**Want to help out? We need volunteers to sign up for the gray unclaimed blocks.**

During 2021-2022 we've covered just over half of the 221 blocks in the county. *We need you*, experienced birders! Help us cover the remaining blocks over the next two years. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Daphne Hatch at [daphnehatch@gmail.com](mailto:daphnehatch@gmail.com).

We are also seeking donations to help fund Atlas activities next season. You can donate via PayPal at [www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=JCFVSES7L3Q4W](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=JCFVSES7L3Q4W), or see our webpage for how to donate by check. Heartfelt thanks to our donors to date.

Please stay tuned for continued progress as this project unfolds!

The three peninsulas (what we call the eastern peninsula, central peninsula and western peninsula) that surround the Homeowners Association lagoon, were originally constructed by developers as building pads for houses in what was intended to be a waterfront development with boat access to the Petaluma River. We've been working to create habitat on these peninsulas since we acquired the Bahia property. It's been difficult because the quality of the imported soil is poor and it was heavily compacted to support houses. But we're making progress, with STRAW's help on the eastern peninsula, and our work planting on the central peninsula and along the levees on all of the peninsulas. Sea level rise and subsidence seems to be doing a good job on the western peninsula where tidal marsh is expanding along a wide border adjacent to the homeowners channel.

### TISCORNIA MARSH RESTORATION

It's been another busy month for our Tiscornia project. Our consultants have been working diligently to complete the necessary studies and plans to complete our applications for permits from regulatory agencies. During the past month we've been meeting weekly with ESA engineers and we also met with PG&E and had some encouraging input about alternative access to service their towers; several times with the city discussing the trash capture facility and the soccer field, other planned park improvements, and the parking project along Canal Street; with new city and county sea level rise staff; with CDFW staff and with BCDC staff in a site visit.

We've submitted our quarterly report to the Open Space Council staff and it's been accepted. We're currently working on compiling the invoices from ESA and MCM for submission. We've also been planning for our community meeting.

### 2022 MARIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Three Christmas Bird Counts will be held in Marin this December.

**Thursday, December 15** – Cheep Thrills CBC covering North Marin and extending into Southern Sonoma County. Contact Susan Kelly at [s.kelly@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s.kelly@sbcglobal.net).

**Saturday, December 17** – Point Reyes CBC covering West Marin including Tomales Bay and the Point Reyes National Seashore. Contact George Curth at [george@hogislandoysters.com](mailto:george@hogislandoysters.com).

**Saturday, December 31** – South Marin CBC covering much of East Marin and extending west as far as Bolinas and Stinson Beach. Contact Ed Nute at [smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com).

# MARIN BIRDLOG: SEPTEMBER 2022

By Noah Arthur

Simply put, fall 2022 has been one for the ages. This September was one of the best in recent memory on Point Reyes and elsewhere in Marin, the rarities coming thick and fast. As usual for September – and especially necessary this year – I’m putting the many regular eastern rarities in a single paragraph at the end to save space.

The first good bird was a flyover **White-winged Dove** at Las Gallinas on the 1st (RC). A **Prairie Warbler** was Drakes Beach the same day (DF). And a Semipalmated Sandpiper was with Westerns at Rodeo Lagoon on the 2nd (WL).

A Prairie Falcon kicked around Pt. Reyes on the 3rd, first identified by RC & JW at Abbotts Lagoon and seen elsewhere by others. The inland raptor theme continued the next day with a Swainson’s Hawk over Drakes (BB). Also on the 4th an Eastern Kingbird was at Spaletta Ranch (RR), and another **Eastern Kingbird** was at Pt. Bonita on the 5th (AM).

A **Painted Bunting** turned up on the 8th at Palomarin, adding to a historic season for this species in the Bay Area. Three very early **Greater**



Alan & Elaine Wilson, www.naturepicsonline.com

**White-fronted Geese** also flew over Palomarin on the 8th (CT). On the 10th a **Solitary Sandpiper** was in the tiny 12-foot-wide pond north of the Drake/Pierce Point intersection on the (EM), a **Least Flycatcher** was at New Willows (BB), and a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at Nunes Ranch (BB). Also on the 10th, a female **Ring-necked Pheasant** surfaced at Stinson Beach (NA) – a species whose status in Marin is uncertain at best. The 11th produced two rare icterids on the Outer Point, a **Bobolink** moving around with blackbirds by the New Willows (EM & BB), and a **Baltimore Oriole** at Drakes (MM).

On the 17th a **Vesper Sparrow** was along Chimney Rock Rd. on the Outer Point (MD), and another **Bobolink** was at the Bolinas Sewage Ponds (MD).

The lid really blew off the Outer Point on the 20th, with rarities scattered everywhere including a **Lark Bunting** at Nunes Ranch (MB) and an **Ovenbird** at Mendoza Ranch (NA). The next day was even better, including one of the rarer warblers of the month, a female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** that briefly stopped in at the Lighthouse near sunrise (NA). Many regular vagrants were found all over the Point on both these days (see below).

Another female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** showed up at the Fish Docks on the 23rd (KN). Two **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were in Outer Point blackbird flocks on the

23rd (DM). The first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season touched down at the Lighthouse on the 24th (BV), and one of the few rare shorebirds of the month, a **Ruff** was at the seal haulout on Bolinas Lagoon on the 24th (IS). Also on the 24th, a **Prairie Warbler** was at Fish Docks on the 24th (MS), adding another record to what has been a good season for the species in Marin.

One of the very best birds of the month was a **Blue-headed Vireo** at the Pt. Reyes RCA Station trees on the 25th (CC), the 8th Marin record of this subtle vagrant that can be very difficult to separate from our western Cassin’s Vireo.

Another early **White-throated Sparrow** was at Fish Docks on the 25th (JZ & CC). Also on the 25th, a female **Summer Tanager** was with Westerns along the Pt. Reyes Earthquake Trail (SA & KS). The 26th produced a female **Orchard Oriole** in Muir Beach (AM). A **Blackburnian Warbler** showed up at the warbler-infested Fish Docks on the 27th (AH), and much rarer for the Outer Point, a **Burrowing Owl** was at Spaletta Ranch on the 27th (AH).

An exceptional flock of 2 **Rose-breasted** and 1 late **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were foraging together at Stinson Beach on the 28th (NA). The first **Swamp Sparrow** of the season in the Tomales Bay marshes showed up on the 29th (JE).

The second **Blackburnian Warbler** of the season was at Drakes Beach on the 30th (BT, JC, JT, & GL).

Regular vagrants included **Tennessee Warblers** at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on the 6th (BC), Fish Docks on the 18th (CC), Fish Docks on the 20th (LB), Mendoza on the 20th (NA), Lighthouse on the 21st (LN), New Willows on the 24th (MS), Lighthouse on the 25th (BB), Drakes on the 25th (RB), and Stinson Beach post office on the 28th (NA). **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were at the Lighthouse on the 21st (NA), Lighthouse on the 24th (MS), Fish Docks on the 24th (LP), Pine Gulch on the 25th (LN & MD), RCA Station on the 26th (MSt & LS), and Lighthouse on the 26th. **Blackpolls** were at Rodeo Lagoon on the 7th (WL), Bolinas on the 22nd, Rodeo Lagoon on the 24th (WL & DW), Mendoza on the 25th (CC), and Lighthouse on the 30th (BT, JC, JT, & GL). **American Redstarts** were at Spaletta Ranch on the 11th (EM), Junior Mendoza on the 20th (NA), Fish Docks on the 25th, and Lighthouse on the 26th (BB). **Magnolia Warblers** were at Fish Docks on the 22nd (WB), Fish Docks on the 26th (NW & DK), and Spaletta on the 26th (BB). **Tropical Kingbirds** were at Spaletta Ranch on the 10th (LN & MD), Drakes Beach on the 19th (CT, ZP, FF, & SE), and Hall Ranch on the 27th (AH & EM). **Northern Waterthrushes** were at Cypress Grove on the 5th (NW) and Mendoza Ranch on the 21st (JH). Rare on the Outer Point though abundant just inland, **American Crows** were at Fish Docks on the 21st (DT) and Nunes Ranch on the 24th (JM). A **Palm Warbler** was at Bolinas Sewage Ponds on the 20th (CP), a **Clay-colored Sparrows** was at the Lighthouse on the 20th (SH), and a **Black-and-white Warbler** was at Fish Docks on the 25th.

Observers and Acronyms **RC:** Rich Cimino, **DF:** Dea Freid, **WL:** William Legge, **JW:** Jim White, **BB:** Bob Battagin, **RR:** Ruth Rudesill, **AM:** Alex Merritt, **NW:** Nils Warnock, **CT:** Cameron Tescher, **BC:** Brent Campos, **EM:** Eddie Monson, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **MD:** Molly Donahue, **BB:** Brian Browne, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **MD:** Mark Dettling, **CC:** Connor Cochrane, **ZP:** Zane Pickus, **FF:** Frank Fabbro, **SE:** Sam Eberhard, **MB:** Mark Butler, **LB:** Larissa Babicz, **CP:** Cody Pham, **SH:** Steve Hunter, **JH:** Jim Holmes, **WB:** Wendy Beers, **BV:** Bradley Voelker, **MS:** Mark Sawyer, **DW:** David Wiechers, **IS:** Ivan Samuels, **JM:** Jeff Manker, **JZ:** Joseph Zeno, **SA:** Stuart Angerer, **KS:** Kenneth Sobon, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **AM:** Alex Merritt, **RB:** Ralph Baker, **DK:** Durrell Kapan, **MSt:** Mark Stephenson, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **KN:** Kurt Niznik, **AH:** Adrian Hinkle, **JE:** Jules Evens, **BT:** Bob Toleno, **JC:** Juli Chamberlain, **JT:** Jerry Ting, **GL:** Garrett Lau



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- Dec. 4 **Field Trip:** Corte Madera Ecological  
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*With Bryan Flaig*
- Dec. 10 **Field Trip:** Corte Madera Ecological  
Reserve  
*With Bryan Flaig*
- Dec. 15 **Cheep Thrills Christmas Bird Count**
- Dec. 17 **Point Reyes Christmas Bird Count**
- Dec. 31 **Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count**
- Check website for updates and details

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## SUPPORT MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY — BECOME A CHAPTER-SUPPORTING MEMBER

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

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

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

## 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](http://www.audubon.org/join).

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

## Join or Donate to the Marin Audubon Society

Please fill in this form and mail to the address below. If you are paying by check, please make it payable to **Marin Audubon Society**.

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