

THURSDAY, MAY 9 7:00 PM

Ethical Wildlife Photography

By Sarah Killingsworth



Sarah Killingsworth

Bobcat

Register for this month's program on the MAS website's *Speaker Series* page.

Wildlife photography is an increasingly popular hobby, and time in nature observing wildlife can bring great joy to a photographer. Wildlife images can be powerful tools for conservation and education. At the same time, our time with wildlife impacts the individual animal and potentially the entire ecosystem. Using her own photos to highlight the concepts, Sarah will discuss photography ethics and etiquette – what they are, and why they matter. She will also share tips for photographing our natural world in ways that create impactful images.

Sarah Killingsworth is an award-winning wildlife conservation photographer and filmmaker. She is curious about the intersection of humans and wildlife habitats, especially in the ways we can work to protect species before they become endangered. A certified California Naturalist, Sarah is a member of the Board of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin and the NANPA Ethics Committee. Her images have been published by a variety of publications, including National Wildlife Magazine, The Hill, bioGraphic, Bay Nature, and Audubon.

THURSDAY, JUNE 13 7:00 PM

Declining Shorebird Populations

By Nils Warnock

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Marin Audubon Annual Elections

The election of Marin Audubon Society Board members takes place at our May Speaker Series meeting, which is referred to as our Annual Meeting. Members have legal right to vote on Board members because Marin Audubon Society is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) membership organization under the nonprofit code. It is this designation that also enables donors to take a tax exemption for contributions that support our organization.

Join us for our Annual Meeting and help elect our slate of directors for three-year terms. As reported in April, here is our slate of nominees:

Allison Pence

Allison grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania. She was blessed with a curious, inspirational mother who loved nature. Allison has a BA in

Environmental Planning and Policy from U.C. Santa Cruz and is a retired bookkeeper. Currently, she is Ring Mountain docent. She also coordinated our 2023 Southern Marin Christmas Count. Allison looks forward to working with Marin Audubon to expand our field trips and continuing to use the communication skills she acquired during her years of employment.

Lelia Lanctot

Lelia, a longtime Marin Audubon member, has been our Board Secretary for the last three years. A former teacher, Lelia is a docent at the California Academy of Sciences. She has been an active and involved Board member, attending many committee meetings and helping with field trips.

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MAS Northern Spotted Owl Programs

By Elyse Omernick

We are a little over two months into this year's Northern Spotted Owl nesting season which runs from February 1 to July 31 each year. Marin Audubon Society has successfully completed our annual "Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) Advisory Letter" mailing to Marin residents that live within a quarter mile of an active NSO activity center. The letter and fact sheet educate our community on the special protections allocated to the NSO under the California and Federal Endangered Species Act, as well as teach residents how to be good neighbors to this threatened species.

If you are interested in reading this year's letter and fact sheet, you can find it on our website at: <https://marinaudubon.org/conservation/northern-spotted-owl>.



Elyse Omernick

Northern Spotted Owl

We are also happy to announce our third year of Marin Audubon's Northern Spotted Owl Docent Program which we are expanding this year to include tasks that will include

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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 newsletter@marinaudubon.org
Secretary	Lelia Lanctot 924-6138
Treasurer	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
Conservation	Roger Harris 510/710-9120 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Field Trips	Doug Waterman newsletter@marinaudubon.org
Membership Chair	Bob Hinz 383-8688 Contact Bob for membership problems or questions.
Outreach, Website	Elyse Omernick outreach@marinaudubon.org
Speaker Series	Mike Anderson 990-9784
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 680-6291
Nominating	Ellena Ochoa volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org
Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Doug Waterman newsletter@marinaudubon.org
Property Management	Clint Kellner 895-8591
Property Real Estate	James Raives 497-4492
Volunteer Coordinator	Ellena Ochoa volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org
BAAC Reps	Barbara Salzman 924-605 Doug Waterman newsletter@marinaudubon.org
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

Throughout the COVID years, we have seen an increase in the popularity of natural lands, of wildlands and wildlife. Wildlands are important now to many more people, who turn to nature to calm or lift their spirits. This is one of the many ways in which the natural world benefits us. Some of the benefits are: supplying clean air and water, stabilizing shorelines, moderating climate, offering recreational opportunities, and, of course, providing habitats for wildlife. Unfortunately, nature's popularity is contributing to conflicts, as reflected in the current differences of opinion over recreational use of the MMWD Watershed. Our properties and habitat enhancement work contribute to the many benefits of the natural world without the stressors of overuse.

Once again, it's time for our annual fund appeal – our second Spring Appeal dedicated to supporting enhancement and maintenance of our properties. Our habitat enhancement work includes planting native plants, weeding out the invasives, placing mulch, mowing,



Barbara Salzman
Habitat Potential crew at Bahia

sheet mulching, and other tasks. You will soon be receiving, if you haven't already, our Spring Appeal letter explaining how your donation from last year was used to benefit wildlife and wildlife habitats and why we need your

contributions for the coming year. We hope you will give generously. We own roughly 528 acres of habitat (acres for some of our properties are not precise) along the shoreline of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.

We are blessed to have received a number of bequests this past year from the estates of Yvonne Blache, Serane Bowen, Ellen Kipp and Nora Elliott Crawford.

We were chosen because these members respected our work and wanted to contribute to keep it going. Naming Marin Audubon in your will is an excellent way to support our work, be it advocacy, habitat protection, enhancement, restoration, field trips, or the Speaker Series, and ensure that it continues into the future. Your gift will be a lasting legacy, benefitting both wildlife and people.

Many members fondly recall our very popular Mother's Day Barbecue/Picnic. However, we want to ensure that everyone knows it will not take place again this year. For so many years this was a traditional event held at Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) that was enjoyed by both MAS and ACR supporters and that attracted many new folks. But COVID got in the way of it, and we have yet to be able to work out arrangements with ACR, which has new staff since the last time the event was held. The barbecue/picnic originated as MAS's way of contributing to the fledging ACR organization. All four Audubon chapters that support ACR were expected to contribute. Even though ACR no longer needs our financial support, and in fact has far surpassed us in financial resources, the event continued because it was fun and benefitted both ACR and MAS. We're hoping we can revive this very successful tradition in future years.

Do join us for our annual meeting at our May Speaker Series meeting and help elect our board members for the coming year.

Marin Audubon Annual Elections

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Martha Jarocki

Martha was on our Board from 2015 to 2022. She returned in 2022 as Treasurer for our Property Management account. In 2023, she took over as Treasurer. In addition, for years Martha has been in charge of enhancement of the upland habitat at MAS's marsh expansion project at the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. This has involved organizing and overseeing monthly volunteer work days, including on-the-ground management activities.

Roger Harris

Roger is a retired biologist, longtime MAS member, and former NAS employee. Roger has presented speaker programs and led many MAS field trips over the years, and has recently served as Conservation Co-chair.

Barbara Salzman

A longtime board member, Barbara has served as Conservation Chairperson and President in recent years. She is also Project Manager, overseeing our Tiscornia Marsh Sea Level Rise Restoration Project as well as all of our other marsh restoration projects.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

MAS is providing a full schedule of free field trips for the 2024 season.

Advance registration is required for most of our trips, nearly all which have size limits to prevent overcrowding.

Registration will open 10 days prior to the trip date on the Marin Audubon website's Field Trips page.

Trips can fill up quickly. If a trip is closed when you try to register, use the "contact organizer" and request to be put on the waiting list. **If you are unable to attend a trip you signed up for, use "Contact Organizer" to cancel so that someone on the waiting list will have an opportunity to attend.**

Recently Ticketbud has not opened for trip signups precisely at 8 AM. In some instances, trip signups aren't available precisely at 8 AM but it doesn't mean the trip is full. Please try to register again 2 or 3 minutes later.

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

San Rafael

Thursday, May 2, 2024

There will be no first Thursday Las Gallinas trips in June, July or August.

8:30 AM to noon

With Sande and Bob Chilvers

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

Beginning birders are especially welcome on the first Thursday of each month for a leisurely walk around the Las Gallinas ponds. Join our friendly leaders as we search for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds.

Bird enthusiasts of all levels 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 to 60 minutes studying the birds around the first pond and the group is easy to find. Heavy rain cancels.

DIRECTIONS: 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.

MOUNT BURDELL AND STAFFORD LAKE OR RUSH CREEK

Novato

Birding in Marin, Season 9 – Trip 5

Saturday, May 4, 2024

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens April 24 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

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.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 101 to Novato, exit at the San Marin Dr/Atherton Ave exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left (west) 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.

RODEO LAGOON, Marin Headlands

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens May 5 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

With spring migration coming to an end we will be looking out for late migrants including passing loons, shorebirds and scarcer passerines. As usual, the weather will dictate our focus with onshore northwest winds ideal for spring sea watches, while offshore easterly winds promise a good selection of passerine migrants even at this late date. Join us for a Sea Watch at 7:30 AM or arrive later at 8:15 AM for a circuit of the lagoon.

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 signal light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Road to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

BIG ROCK AND LAS GALLINAS

Birding in Marin, Season 9 – Trip 6

Saturday, June 1, 2024

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

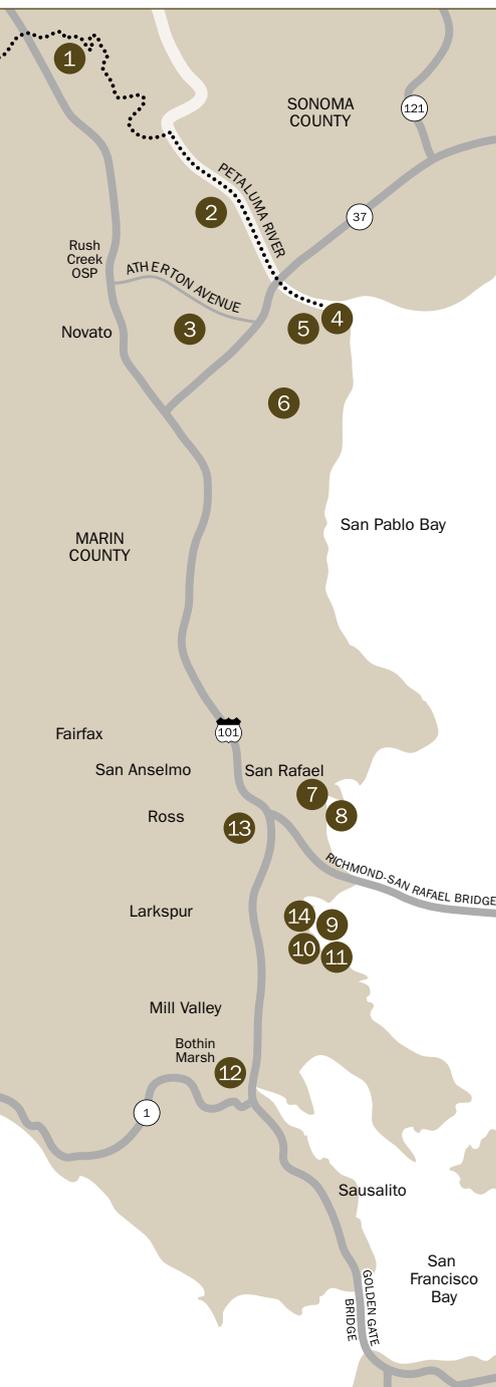
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens Wednesday, May 22 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

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**.

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, use sunscreen and carry plenty of water.



CALTRANS BEGINS PLANNING TO CORRECT MANZANITA FLOODING

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has begun the process of looking for ways to mitigate the flooding that has been occurring at the Manzanita Park and Ride Lot during winter storms and high-tide events. The impacts of the flooding on residents of Tam Valley, Mill Valley, and Marin City are expected to increase as sea-level-rise increases.

Caltrans proposes to enhance access and mobility, in addition to addressing recurrent flooding, through the US 101–State Route 1 (SR 1) project. The project area extends along Highway 101, from Donahue Street in Marin City north to the southern end of the Richardson Bay Bridge. The project is in the early planning phase, but two public hearings have been held already. According to Caltrans, the purpose of the meetings has been to learn from the community and share information, and eventually receive funding so the project can move to the environmental review stage.

Three adaptation strategies are being considered:

Protect This alternative would elevate the Mill Valley-Sausalito multiuse path on a levee, which would serve as a retaining wall that would safeguard the roadway. This raised path would commence at the Waldo U.C./Donahue interchange and end at Coyote Creek.

Accommodate SR 1, US 101, and the Manzanita Park & Ride Lot would be raised on a causeway to the designed sea-level rise elevation under this alternative. SR 1 and the Manzanita Park & Ride Lot would be put on fill protected by the 101 on-/off-ramp and by retaining walls.

Retreat The proposed northbound 101 off-ramp (flyover) would be realigned to the on-/off-ramp location across from the Buckeye restaurant. US 101 would remain at its current elevation while the frequently flooded portion of SR 1, under 101, would be elevated. The Caltrans website reports that the relocation of the Manzanita Park & Ride Lot is being studied as part of this alternative.

At the meeting, an alternate location for the Manzanita Park & Ride Lot was shown as being on the east side of 101. This change was likely the result of strong opposition from residents of Marin City to an earlier location near Marin City.

At the March meeting, Marin City residents also objected to directing of the bike path into Marin City, specifically to what they had calculated as being 600,000 bikers being directed to Marin City, with the proposed path ending at Donahue Street. Nineteen people commented, asking questions and making

suggestions. The answer to MAS’s question of which alternative would have minimum and maximum impacts on wetlands was that all of the alternatives would impact the wetlands. How much impact would be identified by environmental review?

Next steps, once funding is allocated, will be for Caltrans to move to environmental review, then project approval. A draft Environmental Impact Report is scheduled to be circulated in 2027, so funding appears to be relatively certain. Caltrans reports that the public will help them “determine which alternative they prefer.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Go to the project website at bit.ly/3JyarXT and find out more about the project and its status as it progresses.

Attend future meetings and express your views.

TOMALES BAY PUBLIC WORKS PLAN APPROVED

At the California Coastal Commission hearing on April 11, the Commission approved the Tomales Bay Fire Reduction Resilience Public Works Plan (PWP). The hearing had been delayed because the required consultation with the tribes had not taken place. New wording was added to the PWP because of the incomplete consultation with the Indians of Graton Rancheria, the legally recognized tribe in this area. The Commission voted unanimously to certify the PWP.

Fifteen people testified, most of whom objected to the PWP. Three people represented organizations supporting the project. The position of several speakers was unclear. Objections ranged from urging denial, wanting further environmental review, an EIR, to opposition to the proposed treatments as being destructive to species and forest habitats and other reasons. We expressed concern in our letter and testimony that the PWP did not have adequate provisions to protect the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO).

Both the State Parks staff and Commission staff promised the Forest Health and Resilience Plan would improve resilience and restore the forest community, natural fire regime, and the ecosystem, and that the VTP standard requirements would promote regeneration and protect threatened species, including the Marin manzanita and the NSO.

The Commission praised the consultation and coordination that had taken place between State Parks and Commission staff and promised that there would be public review for each phase over the length of the project,

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

which is the next 10 years. State Parks staff also assured that 10 years will allow them to restore diversity, protect NSO nesting, etc. We hope they are right.

MMWD PILOT PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

The Board of Directors of the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) unanimously approved moving forward with a pilot project that will allow for e-bike use and expanded opportunities for shared-trail bicycle use. The Director of Watershed Resources promised that for the pilot project there would be screening for biological resources, surveys of sensitive habitats, protection from soil erosion and terrain hazards, enactment of safety measures, such as slow zones, and enforcement. Background studies would be undertaken, and a zoning framework would be utilized to identify trails to be included in the pilot project. A “project restore list” would be created, and the Road and Trail Management Plan would be updated. Finally, there were promises that CEQA would be complied with, but in response to questions, more specific information on CEQA compliance and enforcement were put off until the next meeting.

Most of the comments from the Board members were positive. Matt Samson said they can't continue to exclude certain users – he's tired of hearing about winners and losers and said that everyone needs to have a seat at the table. Jed Smith wants to have impacts on biological resources measured, a full CEQA review, and increased penalties to serve as a deterrent. Monty Schmitt largely spoke about

access, wanted a vision for access, and more opportunities for recreation, particularly for low-income people and children. Larry Russell passed on making comments, and Ranjiv Khush supported enforcement regarding illegal trail use and increasing penalties for such use.

Sixteen attendees from both the in-person and Zoom audience testified. Five who expressed support of the plan identified themselves as bikers. Clearly, the bikers had not called out their peers to testify at the hearing. One notable speaker in opposition stated that the plan was ill-timed – the District should be focusing on supplying water and not spending money to expand access. MAS recommended that in initiating a pilot program the District should consult the 84 known papers in the recreation ecology literature to inform a study design that will ensure impacts are identified; expand the District's 20-year-long land bird survey protocol to identify impacts to birds from recreational use of the trails adjacent to their survey point sites, and commit to taking action to address impacts that are identified.

The Pilot Program will be discussed next at an MMWD Board meeting in June.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The Board of Directors needs to hear that their responsibility is to provide high quality water and the best way to do that is to protect the watershed, its plants and wildlife.

Please either attend the MMWD's Watershed Committee meeting in person or via Zoom on June 20 at 9:30 AM or send an email to SHorne@MarinWater.org.

Northern Spotted Owl Program

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observing and recording local avian species, educating visitors, and monitoring habitat. Docents will receive training to enrich their knowledge of the local flora and fauna, engage with visitors, help educate them about plant, animal and bird life in the region, and work with rangers and biologists to monitor habitat conditions, disturbances and threats to the Northern Spotted Owl, including the presence of Barred Owls, and disturbances that can result from recreational use of trails. They will also learn how to make community scientist observations in accordance with Audubon's ethical bird photography and videography code of conduct.

Docents will need to be familiar with basic computer tasks, and comfortable using

the Merlin app on their phone. Docents will occasionally need to confer with local rangers.

Training will begin sometime in mid to late May, and the program will run through August. Please contact Elyse Omernick at outreach@marinaudubon.org for more information or if you are interested in becoming a docent this summer.

REPORT BARRED OWL SIGHTINGS

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 marinaudubon.org/2020/09/01/alert-report-barred-owl-spottings.

Marin Audubon Hats are Back!

OUR BEAUTIFUL HATS AVAILABLE FOR SALE, AGAIN.

The hats are made in the USA of high quality materials. Each hat is tan with dark green contrast along the outer edge of the visor.

The front is embroidered with the Marin Audubon Ridgway's Rail logo designed by **local artist and birder Keith Hansen**.



“Marin Audubon Society” is embroidered on the back which has a tuck-in strap with a slide buckle.

We are offering these hats for \$30.00 each – by cash or check.

They will be available to purchase in person on most field trips or by arrangement.

If you would like to have a hat sent to you, there will be an additional **\$5.00 postage fee**.

To place an order, please contact Jude Stalker, judestalker@gmail.com.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Janet S. Becher Cunningham, Barbara G. Haim, Claudette Heisler, Amelia Hulse, Denis Jones, Ellen Karel, David Kendrick, Brenda Sherburn Labelle, Shai Lavie, Cathy Leather, Lynne Lewis, Dennis Miller, Lynn Morgan, Anne Shaver, Teresa Snyder, Greg Thomson, Hank Zucker

Habitat Stewardship

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Italian thistles are blooming and we will look for the last ones in areas where we have been working in the last couple of months. Harding grass will be blooming soon and, because we can't dig it all, we will cut some very short to retard and reduce seed production. Mulching now will conserve moisture for the summer and reduce the number of weeds that would crowd our natives next year.

Monkey flower is blooming already, and milkweed and Euthamia flowers are soon to follow. Birds are singing and nesting. Be aware of birds wherever you are working. It is a great time to be outdoors and helping. Bring a friend!

Join us on a workday. Earn community service hours. Help our native plants reclaim their home. It is an opportunity to learn more about a native habitat of your county and be a part of making it better. Make a difference. Rain cancels our workdays.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:
First Saturdays: May 4, June 1

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Drive between the Ring Mountain Phyllis Ellman trailhead and the Montessori School.

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:
Second Saturdays: May 11, June 8

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, Bob Hinz, Martha and Gerry Jarocki, Linda Nicoletto, Lowell Sykes

DONATE YOUR CAR TO MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Looking for deductions on your 2023 taxes? You may qualify for a write-off if you donate your unwanted car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat.

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.

TISCORNIA CONSTRUCTION DELAYED

Unfortunately, we've had to delay construction of the Tiscornia Marsh restoration project. Under the original schedule, the first phase of the project was to begin at the end of summer 2024. Phase 1 includes construction of the levee and ecotone habitat improvements. We have had to delay the work until fall 2025 in order to address issues raised by PG&E about potential effects on its nearby transmission tower. The footings for the tower are wood, making them less stable and more susceptible to soil movement than if they were made of concrete. Although our geotechnical engineers found the potential risk to be acceptable, PG&E wants us to investigate alternatives for the coarse beach, the structure that is needed to contain the dredged sediments that will be the foundation for the native plants and restore the tidal marsh. Our engineers will be developing models to evaluate potential impacts to the tower and evaluating alternative configurations for the coarse beach. Once a design is agreed upon, we may have to update our permit applications. This work is delaying construction until early fall 2025. In addition to the extra time needed to evaluate and possibly revise the design, we have only a few months in the fall when we can work in order to protect the endangered and special-status birds and fish. Since we can't work this fall, we will have to postpone for an entire year.

During the coming year, we will continue our agreement with the Multicultural Center of Marin to outreach to the Canal community at a reduced level.

Phase 1 of construction, as well as the ongoing planning, permitting, and redesigning, is being funded by a grant

from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. We are currently closing out our Ocean Protection Council grant, which has funded our current design work. We will need to continue to look for funds for Phase 2 construction of the coarse beach and the importing of sediments for the restoration of the tidal marsh. The State of California budget deficit is now adversely affecting the funding available for habitat restoration. The State has pulled uncommitted funds from the primary agencies that fund habitat restoration.

DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE

On the recent Board field trip to Tiscornia, we discovered to our dismay that someone is putting out food for rodents along the levee



Becky Matubana, CC by 2.0

Rats are a threat to endangered Ridgway's rails.

shoreline path. We saw a string of what looked like pieces of fruit balanced on a piece of concrete. Not only is feeding wildlife a bad idea because what we select for them to eat is usually not good for them but also because it causes an imbalance in their reproduction. With more food available, the animals produce more young.

In this case, providing foodstuff is doubly bad because it's feeding rats. We easily observed rats running out from a hole and grabbing pieces of the left-out food. Rats are a threat to the endangered Ridgway's rail and threatened California black rail. These birds nest in the marsh, and the rats will prey on the birds, their eggs and young.

Board Field Trip Report and Follow-Up

We had our third and last visit to our Southern Marin properties on March 25. At Tiscornia we were greeted by a distressing scene of a rat nibbling on food carefully arranged along a piece of concrete, lots of trash in the marsh (paper, plastic, etc.), and a small bridge someone had built over the main slough. Keeping in mind that the main foraging and nesting habitat for Ridgway's rails is along tidal sloughs, we will be putting up lawn signs in three languages telling

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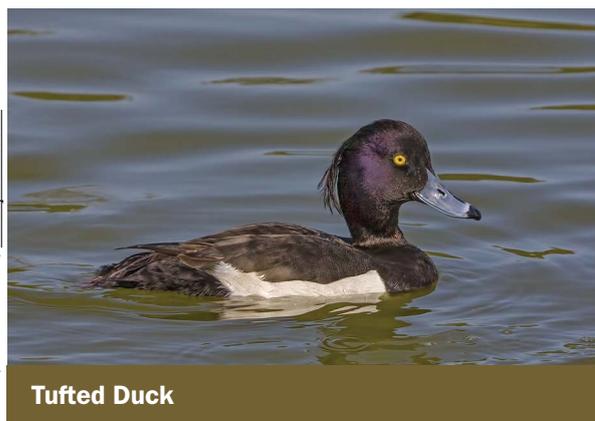


Barbara Slezman

Board Members Visit Marin Audubon Property

Marin Birdlog: March 2024

By Noah Arthur



Tufted Duck

The best bird of the month was a bright male **Tufted Duck** at Petaluma Marsh on the 11th (WL). Especially weird for March, a **Sage Thrasher** turned up at Las Gallinas on the 15th (MM). And another Asian duck, this time a male **Common Teal** (likely to be officially split from Green-winged this summer!) was found at Limantour Beach on the 16th (MS & LS).

In the gull department, a 1st-winter **Glaucous X Glaucous-winged hybrid** flew by Chimney Rock on the Outer Point on the 16th (DH) – distinguished from pure Glaucous by a black streak along the cutting edges of the bill, extending back from the black tip toward the base.

An exceptional early incursion of **Elegant Terns** began on the 21st, with 33 individuals seen flying north past Rodeo Beach (WL). Northward movements at Rodeo continued over the next several days, peaking at **86 birds** on the 23rd (WL), although these movements were likely the same birds returning daily to fishing areas, rather than actual northward migration. Small numbers of Elegants also showed up at several other locations around Marin in the last 10 days of the month.

On the 26th, at least two **Type 2 Red Crossbills** popped through the Rodeo Lagoon area (WL).

Lastly, a massive stranding event of Velella jellyfish occurred along the Bay Area coastline in the last few days of March, drawing migrant gulls in to the beaches, including a 1st-cycle pure **Glaucous Gull** at (yet again) Rodeo Beach (WL).

OBSERVERS AND ACRONYMS: GI: G Ivey, AF: Andrew Ford, CC: Connor Cochrane, WLE: William Legge, MM: Mike Mahoney, MS: Mark Stephenson, LS: Lucas Stephenson, DH: Douglas Hall

Board Field Trip

continued from page 6

people not to enter the marsh or feed the wildlife. We'll be working with Earth Day volunteers to remove the trash.

At the MAS site at the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, we planned work to be done by sixth graders from Marin Country Day School who are coming for a volunteer outing. There will be lots for them to do in removing invasive species, Bermuda buttercup and Harding grass, and sheet mulching (laying cardboard and mulch) to prevent the growth of Harding grass. At Triangle Marsh we contemplated removing the invasive trees, a dying Cypress and a young pine. Triangle

March is meh compared with fall, winter, and later spring in Marin, but a small assortment of rarities still always shows up. Three **Lesser Yellowlegs** were together at Bothin Marsh on the 3rd of this March, and elsewhere on the 3rd a **Belted Kingfisher** was at the Fish Docks, rare for Outer Pt. Reyes (GI). On the 8th, a male **Western Tanager** was singing in the Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery (AF), probably a bird that wintered locally. Two **Myrtle X Audubon's Warbler hybrids** were at Lupine Gulch on the Outer Point (CC).



Sage Thrasher

Marsh is our poster child for a successful restoration project. Now 20 years old, the restored tidal marsh is fully vegetated (by natural processes) as well as the adjacent upland, due to a lot of hard work and attention by MAS. Thanks, in particular, to the oversight of Bob Hinz.

At the Redwoods Retirement Community in Mill Valley (our property is a strip along the Arroyo Corte Madera), we looked at moving some brush piles so they will be out of view of the residents. We also planned for removing the highly invasive, non-native acacia that is growing along the creek. We had no recommendations for our piece of tidal marsh at the Larkspur Boardwalk or for our property at the end of the channel in Corte Madera.



Short-billed Gull

Name Change for Mew Gull

In the 2021 American Ornithological Society (AOS) Checklist, the Mew Gull was split into two species: the Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) and the Common Gull (*Larus canus*). The North American population, which is our bird, is now known as the Short-billed Gull; Eurasian populations are now classified as a separate species, the Common Gull. The name "Short-billed Gull" was chosen for *Larus brachyrhynchus* by the AOS due to the usage of "Mew Gull" in recent literature to denote all subspecies of this group, and the fact that "Short-billed Gull" was the name historically used for our birds when they were treated as a distinct species.

The Short-billed Gull breeds in colonies along coastal areas and inland wetlands, mainly in Alaska and Northwestern Canada. Most birds winter along the Pacific Coast down to the Sacramento Valley, and less frequently to Baja California. In our area, they are here in small numbers throughout the winter.*

*Adapted with permission from a write-up by Bill Hoppes, President of the Ohlone Audubon Society, in the April 2024 issue of their newsletter *The Kite Call*.

THANK YOU, DONORS

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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.

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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.

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