

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 7:00 PM

Raptor Quest: Chasing America's Raptors

By Scott Harris



The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY



Alan D. Wilson

Bald Eagle

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

Scott Harris will be discussing his book "Raptor Quest: Chasing America's Raptors," which documents his 17-month adventure tracking 53 raptor species across 34 states in the US, from the common (**Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles** and **Peregrine Falcons**) to the rare (**Bat Falcon, Steller's Sea Eagle** and **Eurasian Eagle Owl**). He will share photographs and stories of the many species he encountered; and relate stories of the places and various individuals he met along the way, including adventures, mid-adventures, successes and failures.

Scott is a wildlife photographer, author and speaker, who moved to South Carolina from southern California in 2020, when he first started birding, a hobby he never imagined himself participating in, but now can't imagine living without. While in California, he had a syndicated newspaper column and two weekly radio shows and has authored over fifty books, mostly Westerns and Children's books.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 7:00 PM

Christmas Bird Count

By Josiah Clark

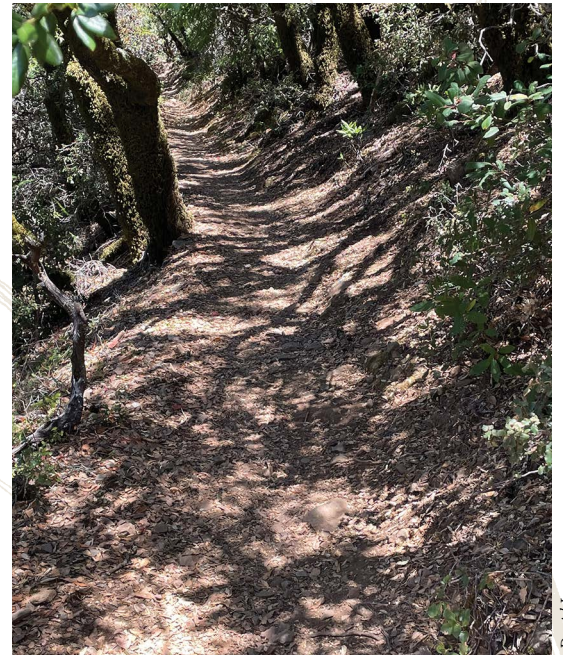
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MMWD Board Approves Pilot Project on Mt. Tam

The MMWD Board bowed to the interests of bicyclists and e-bikers, who urged support for a project that would allow them access to nine trails, and approved the staff-proposed pilot project, or actually two projects. One is intended to evaluate trail-sharing methods and the other is intended to evaluate e-bike use on trails where bikes are allowed. Specifics of the program, including changes that would be made to trails to accommodate the increased use, are not clear. Sixteen trails were originally proposed. The number was eventually reduced to nine: Sunnyside, Pumpkin Ridge, Upper Fish Gulch, Madrone, Concrete Pipe Fire Road, Mountain Top Trail, Arturo, Lakeview, and Grassy Slope Road. The study is planned to last two years; it was approved using a Categorical Exemption.

The staff report included the list of trails chosen, an inadequate description of the pilot project, and a justification for using a CEQA Categorical Exemption, and it was released on the Friday before the Labor Day weekend, allowing only the working day of the MMWD Board meeting the following Tuesday, when the Board approved the project.

The staff reports that they conducted environmental review, assessed biological resources, and that the "projects have been carefully designed to avoid causing impacts and are intended to inform future management decisions without requiring extensive physical alterations." The District claims the project would be carefully controlled and would cause only minor modifications to accommodate class 1 e-bikes. No information is provided about what the minor modifications are, nor is it recognized that class 1 e-bikes cannot be distinguished from class 2 and class 3 e-bikes, which can go faster and cause more impacts. They claim they will address any impacts with adaptive management, but there is no description of what impacts they anticipate and what an



David Long

Lakeview Trail, a Pilot Project trail. What would you do if you met bicyclists and e-bikers converging on this trail?

adaptive management program would consist of.

Without public review, the District determined that the project would cause no significant impacts to environmental resources, the trails are free of environmentally sensitive resources, that the Trail-Sharing Pilot Program and E-bike Class 1 pilot project are categorically exempt from CEQA, and then approved them. MMWD staff points to their e-bike citizen's advisory committee and the six community meetings and two workshops they conducted over the last two years as being "public review." These, however, do not satisfy CEQA requirements. The projects had not been defined when those meetings were held. How could members of the public submit appropriate comments when there were no projects to comment on?

Current conditions of many of the chosen *continued on page 4*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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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

It's been an active month for Marin Audubon. We've needed to oversee maintenance (weeding and irrigation) on our properties, outreach for volunteers to help with surveys of the Vaux's swift migration, conservation activities, and organizational needs.

We're searching for a member who is interested in the tech side of our outreach. Our current outreach chair has given notice that she will have to resign, so we need a new one. The tasks involve updating and overseeing our website (we have a webmaster); and sending monthly MailChimp and Ticketbud notices for our field trips. See page 7 for more information.

Again, a heartfelt apology to anyone who has had trouble trying to sign up for a membership or to make a donation. In spite of our repeated efforts to make repairs, including by our webmaster, the problems have continued. The fixes worked only for a short time. We finally determined we needed to close our current PayPal account and open a new PayPal account. We are also in the process of contracting with DonorSnap, a software company that serves non-profits such as ours. We expect this will assist with our membership and donor record keeping, and provide a smoother on-line membership/donor sign-up process as well.

The Vaux Swift migration as well as surveys are well underway as we go to press. The number of swifts continues to be massive. On September 13, 2023, 46,680 Vaux Swifts were counted and even more surprising, they all went into the same chimney. Usually when there are large numbers, swifts use all three of the chimneys. The migration should continue through October. Our workshops attracted counters to help but there is still more to do. If you are interested contact Rich Cimino at 925/353-0266 or rscimino@gmail.com for information.

Congratulations to the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas Steering Committee and all

of the volunteers for completing the fourth and final year of surveys. They reported that next year will be a year to fill in some blanks and to plan for completing the final report.

Most troubling this month has been the Marin Municipal Water District's approval of a pilot project designed to study and expand bicycle use on single-track trails and allow e-bikes on the Mt. Tam trails where bicycles are allowed. The District's staff had pushed along the expansion of both bike and e-bike use for several years. They repeatedly rejected the recommendations to describe biological resources at the public meetings. The entire two years of public meetings they've held and the Recreation Feasibility they've produced have been focused on increasing access for bikes and e-bikes. The critical ecosystem resources of Mt. Tam have been virtually ignored. Staff reported that they had reviewed the proposed nine trails for rare plants, wildlife, and biological resources. But they have not made their review available to the public. Other Bay Area water districts have taken a much more protective approach to managing their watersheds, ranging from disallowing recreational uses in sensitive areas to strictly managing access. One example is the Mid-Peninsula Open Space District's decision to disallow e-bikes as a result of a study it commissioned that identified and measured the adverse impacts on rare bat species of the high-frequency sounds emanating from e-bikes. The study was dismissed by MMWD staff. The District's board seems to be in the hands of the bike/e-bike community. The approach of the District is not in the interest of the watershed resources, birds, wildlife, other biological resources, or even the rate-paying public.

Finally, my annual reminder about yard cleanup. Now is the time for tree and shrub trimming and removal. Nesting season is past and so is the danger of destroying nests and baby birds. Happy gardening!

Vote "YES" on Proposition 4!

Proposition 4 is the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, on the November ballot.

Proposition 4 will authorize the State of California to issue up to \$10 billion in bonds to fund projects that will increase water supply reliability and create habitat and new parks, among other major projects across the state. California relies on issuing bonds to pay for big natural resource projects, such as habitat. With

so many competing needs for state resources and a shrinking state budget, Prop. 4 ensures the state will have funds to invest in environmental programs to conserve biodiversity and build climate resilience in the coming years.

Prop. 4 was crafted over four years by a coalition of 180 environmental justice organizations, including Audubon California. Bond measures are always a mix of interests

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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.**

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, October 3, 2024 and

Thursday, November 7, 2024

8:30 AM to noon

With Mark Clark

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

We welcome bird enthusiasts of all levels, especially beginning birders, to join leader Mark Clark on our monthly walk around the ponds at Las Gallinas. On our search we'll be looking for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, rails and swallows. With fall migration underway we are likely to spot some interesting species, so come assist in our search.

The packed dirt paths around the ponds are wide, flat and easy to navigate. 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 a portable restroom in the parking area for public use.

ABBOTTS LAGOON AND THE INVERNESS TENNIS AREA

Birding in Marin, Season 9 – Trip 10

Saturday, October 5, 2024

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens September 25 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

Abbotts Lagoon on the Pacific Coast in the Point Reyes National Seashore is one of Marin's premier birding locations, sporting an eBird sum of 283 species. Fall migration south along the coast brings many birds to this area; shorebirds, ducks and geese, raptors, even sparrows and pipits. The walk out and back is about 2 miles (some in sand). Pack a lunch for a picnic on the beach and bring a couple of layers for the fresh ocean air and help us spot a rarity.

After leaving Abbotts Lagoon, we plan to stop along Tomales Bay near the Inverness Tennis club to look for Pine and Alder woodland birds. A surprising number of species have been seen here and there is a nice little beach where we usually find several kinds of gull.

DIRECTIONS: From Point Reyes Station on Hwy 1 head south, right turn onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd, follow that through Inverness up over Inverness ridge into the Point Reyes National Seashore then go north on Pierce

Point Rd. The Abbotts Lagoon parking lot is on the left, in about 3 miles. Carpool if you can, allow 1.5 hours from San Rafael.

RODEO LAGOON AND MARIN HEADLANDS

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens September 29 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

Join William and David for this fourth fall migration field trip at Rodeo Lagoon. This is their long-time "patch," which never seems to disappoint birders with daily variations in species and a good chance of an unusual sighting. On this trip, our group will be targeting scarcer passerines and other mid-fall migrants. We will begin the morning with a Sea Watch from Rodeo Beach at 7:30 AM. Those arriving later may join us at 8:15 AM for a circuit of the lagoon. A brief mid-morning 'coffee-stop' is planned at Headlands Center for the Arts and it would be appreciated if participants contribute via the onsite 'tip-jar' as a thank you for accommodating our group. This field trip is less suitable for beginners.

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.

GRAY LODGE WILDLIFE AREA AND COLUSA NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESERVE

Overnight Trip

Tuesday, October 29, 2024 and

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

With Wildlife Naturalist, Lori Grieves

(Gray Lodge) and a member of Friends

of Sacramento National Wildlife Reserve

(Colusa)

Registration is required. Registration opens on October 19 at 8 AM on MAS website's Field Trips page. Participant limit is 15

This trip is Accessible! Gray Lodge Wildlife Area has paved trails and an auto trail. For mobile birders it has two blinds and 150 acres of hiking trails.

Gray Lodge is about an hour north of Sacramento and is known for its winter migratory waterfowl including **Sand Hill Cranes**, snow geese, and all manner of ducks.

We will meet at the Rail House Pub

in Gridley at 12 PM for a meal before travelling to Gray Lodge Wildlife Area in Parking Lot 14 for a tour at 2 PM. The tradition is to stay for the sunset and watch the migrators take off for another night of flight.

Then we will drive about half hour to our overnight at a local hotel in Colusa. Suggested lodging is the Riverside Inn or River Valley Lodge.

In the morning, we will explore Colusa NWR, part of the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge Complex. There is an auto trail and a short, level trail to viewing areas. In the afternoon, some birders may also want to explore Delevan NWR, about a 12 minute drive, or the Sacramento River NWR (25 minutes).

For further information, contact Field Trip Coordinator: Alison Pence, smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com.

LAS GALLINAS AND HAMILTON WETLANDS Birding in Marin, Season 9 – Trip 11

Saturday, November 2, 2024

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens October 23 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

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.

After lunch we are going to visit the Hamilton Wetlands which have become the winter home of some ten thousand birds. 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 Rd exit east. In about 0.5 miles, immediately after crossing the RR 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 AND MARIN HEADLANDS

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens October 27 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

This is the fifth fall migration field trip at Rodeo Lagoon.

For Trip Details, see announcement on this page for the October 9 trip to Rodeo Lagoon.

MMWD

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trails are surprisingly poor. They are narrow, single-rack trails, many of which are steep, rutted, and, in our view, unsafe for multiuse. With narrow trails, walkers have to step off-trail to avoid bumping into each other, much less avoid being hit by bikes, e-bikes, and horses. Going off-trail destroys vegetation by trampling and ultimately widens trails, destroying the vegetative habitat. Widening trails moves usage farther into habitats and, we fear, will allow cyclists to access other areas and trails that are currently remote. Some trail sections are so rutted that users are at risk of falling just by



Daniel Long

Madrone Trail is another narrow trail that will be open to walkers, bicyclists, e-bikers and perhaps equestrians

trying to walk on them, much less allow an e-bike to pass.

Little information is provided about the projects and how they will be set up and managed. The primary aspect described is a data collection, which they say is aimed at identifying the impacts of class 1 e-bikes and bicycles on people. Visitor experience and changes in physical conditions (trail width, tread, erosion, drainage) will be monitored. Compliance with district rules will also be measured, but there is no indication there will be increased enforcement. Two surveys will ask about the experience of and conflicts among visitors. There will apparently be no improvement in the process that allows visitors to make real-time complaints. Photo monitoring and trail counters are methods that will be used. The only biological monitoring

that is planned will be for invasive species. There will be no monitoring of northern spotted owls (NSO) or other special-status bird species or other wildlife. There will be no monitoring of rare plants, social-trails created, night riding, or adverse impacts to habitat, all of which could occur. There are no triggers for taking adaptive management actions.

The District claims to have evaluated the trails for the presence of sensitive resources, rare species and other natural resources of concern, and found none. Our research and that of other environmental organizations found rare plants, special-status bats, and Northern Spotted Owl nests (NSO) and activity centers near several of the trails. NSO activity centers overlap some trails, and all of Mt. Tam is considered NSO critical habitat by the USFWS. MMWD has contracted with Point Blue to conduct bird surveys every four years for approximately the last 20 years. Four of the trails monitored by Point Blue are part of the project. There is no indication that MMWD made any attempt to check bird use of these trails or that they will be monitoring for changes along the trails. Many animals avoid areas where there is human presence and activity, so wildlife use near the project trails is expected to decline. Slower-moving small animals are at particular risk of being run over, and the high-frequency noise emitted by e-bikes, according to a study commissioned by the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, adversely impacts bat species that also occur on Mt. Tam.

The record provided by MMWD does not justify use of a Categorical Exemption. It provides insufficient description of the project and its potential impacts. Ongoing data collection and monitoring will not ensure that any environmental impacts are “quickly identified and mitigated where needed,” as the staff report claims. Monitoring does not mitigate for impacts. Action is needed to mitigate or compensate for impacts identified by the monitoring. Furthermore, without a plan for evaluating the project at the end of the two years, it could go on forever with no real evaluation. There are no triggers to initiate mitigation or standards for evaluating how or whether the project would extend beyond the two years. There is not even an adequate description of current conditions so that changes in them can be identified. Finally, Categorical Exemptions can only be used for projects that do not require mitigation.

An initial study should have been

prepared to provide the public with an adequate description of the project, existing conditions, nearby natural resources, potential impacts, and mitigations. The MMWD Board moved too quickly, without understanding and thoughtfully considering the project and its potential impacts.

As we go to press, we’re working with the other organizations on our next step.

LARKSPUR FERRY AND PARKING LOT PROJECT SCOPING SESSION

The GGBHTD is considering a project that would increase ferry service to provide up to 42 ferry trips per day between Larkspur and San Francisco (up from the current 35) and increase parking capacity to address a potential shortfall in parking availability at the main and north overflow lots of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal. The District explains it had been providing that level of service in 2019 and early 2020, before COVID; although current demand is lower, the District expects it to increase. In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for environmental review, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared. This scoping meeting marks the beginning of the CEQA process.

Background: The GGBHTD has conducted various studies to inform the Larkspur Ferry Service and Parking Expansion Project. They include traffic, ridership and wave studies to accommodate more ferry riders and alleviate congestion on Highway 101.

Marin Audubon is particularly concerned about potential impacts of the operation of more ferries on Corte Madera Ecological Reserve marshes, the tidal marshes along the Corte Madera shoreline. The Ecological Reserve marsh, which is essential habitat for Ridgway’s rails, is eroding, and Triangle Marsh, Marin Audubon’s property at the south end of the Reserve marsh, is also impacted by wave erosion. Wave run-up along the face of marshes cause the soil to erode. Waves in the bay are natural processes caused by wind and other forces of nature, can also be generated by boat. To address the impacts the District is planning to use a new ferry design never used in this country. Potential impacts of a larger parking lot include subsidence due to the placing of more weight on bay mud and the visual impacts of a multistory structure.

Scoping is a legal requirement providing the public with an opportunity to have input into what will be addressed in the

EIR. This is your opportunity to raise issues and ask questions about aspects you want to be addressed. The purpose of the CEQA process is to disclose information about the project to the public and decision-makers. Take advantage of this opportunity to bring forward your concerns by attending the meeting. Your comments can also be provided via the information in the “What You Can Do” box below.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

To learn more about the project, visit: goldengate.org/larkspurferystudy

Attend the Scoping Session on October 15, 5 to 7 PM, Drakes Landing Community Room, 500 Drakes Landing Road, Greenbrae.

Submit comments via e-mail to the Larkspur Ferry Expansion Project mailbox at LFEP@goldengate.org during the scoping period which will run from October 1 to October 31, 2024. Comments should be received by October 31. Comments can also be submitted by mail to:

District Secretary
c/o Larkspur Ferry Service Expansion and Parking Study EIR Scoping
Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District
P.O. Box 9000, Presidio Station
San Francisco, CA 94129-0601.

COMMENT ON BCDC REGIONAL SHORELINE ADAPTATION PLAN

Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) is in the process of creating the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP), as required by the 2023 legislation, SB 272. Local governments along the San Francisco Bay shoreline are required to develop Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plans that meet guidelines established by BCDC. The RSAP will guide the creation of coordinated, locally-planned sea level rise adaptation actions that work together to meet regional goals.

The comment period on the RSAP is underway with a deadline of October 18. Unfortunately, the publication schedule of *The Rail* does not allow for us to review the document and provide a full analysis. From our initial review, we recommend focusing comments on prioritizing protection of tidal marsh and adjacent upland habitats. As you review the RSAP look for places where these habits can be emphasized or inserted.

Tidal ecosystems provide essential habitats to sustain endangered species, migratory and resident species but also essential services for people. Tidal marshes ecosystems also provide many services essential to people, including shoreline protection, clean air, and clean water. Protecting habitats should be woven

throughout the priority strategies that include transportation, public access, and land use.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Review the RSAP Draft here:

- Double page spreads (best layout view): <https://bit.ly/3XS23KS>
- Single page (ADA accessible): <https://bit.ly/4enLdJi>

Submit comments by the deadline of October 18:

- Fill out the RSAP comment form at <https://bit.ly/3XUBWmA>.
- Email a comment letter to publiccomment@bccdc.ca.gov with “RSAP” in the subject line.
- Mail comment letter with “RSAP” in the body to: San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 375 Beale St, Ste 510, San Francisco, CA 94105
- Attend a public hearing on October 17, 2024 at 1 PM in person at the Metro Center (365 Beale St, San Francisco) or virtually via the Zoom link found in the Public Hearing Notice, which will be emailed to interested parties and posted on the Commission’s website (<https://bccdc.ca.gov/event/october-17-2024-commission-meeting>) by October 4, 2024.

GLENWOOD MARSH ACQUISITION

Glenwood Marsh, a wetland on a 16-acre site, named after the adjacent public school, has been on our Potential Acquisition site list since it was prepared more than 30 years ago. When the San Rafael School District declared the site surplus, along with three other undeveloped properties it owns, we were hopeful we could acquire it. We submitted a letter to the District, per its instructions, declaring our interest in purchasing the property; we met its qualifications, except we did not offer a bid. As we explained, in order to purchase properties using state or federal sources, we would need to have an appraisal prepared. The District’s appraisal valued the property at \$14 million, almost a million dollars an acre, a value that was clearly based on development potential and far in excess of what we would be able to justify to funding agencies. It did not release its appraisal for our review.

We investigated funding from other sources, including nearby neighborhoods, and talked with other perspective buyers, but we just could not see our way to complete a purchase with the District’s financial expectation. So, we informed the District that we reluctantly had to pull out as a potential purchaser. At the same time, we informed the District that we would continue to be interested in purchasing and permanently protecting the property, particularly the wetlands, and asked that it let us know if its conditions or expectations change.

Proposition 4

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considered necessary to accumulate the numbers of votes required for passage. Prop. 4 will fund projects across the state in many critical areas, from water projects (safe drinking water, recycled wastewater, storing groundwater, and controlling flooding) to protecting the coast from sea-level rise, protecting and restoring wildlife and habitats, fighting air pollution, addressing extreme heat events, funding sustainable agriculture, and creating parks. Millions of dollars are allocated to specific funding agencies, such as the Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, and the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. The benefits of Prop. 4 vastly outweigh the concerns.

Locally, Prop. 4 is expected to be the source of essential funds for finishing our Tiscornia Marsh Restoration and Sea-Level Rise Adaptation projects, and for many other similar projects throughout the Bay Area. Historically Marin Audubon’s marsh restoration projects have benefitted by grant funding from previous bond measures. Our Tiscornia Marsh project will not just benefit endangered and migratory species, it will benefit the people of San Rafael, and the entire Bay Area.

To ensure that MAS and other restoration practitioners can continue to restore marshes, the Bay and many other habitats, we urge a YES vote on Prop 4.

DONATE YOUR CAR TO MAS

Looking for deductions on your 2024 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 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.

Habitat Stewardship

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

This is flowering time for *Salsola soda* and *Dittrichia* (stinkweed). *Dittrichia* might be gone from Triangle and the Corte Madera Marsh project, but a single overlooked plant can start a patch so we will watch for it. *Salsola* is not gone but much reduced and we'll go after it again. With longer nights and a lower sun angle, Harding grass is beginning to grow even before the first rain, and it is a target especially if it is near native plants.

On the other hand, two native species, coyote brush and *Euthamia occidentalis* (Western goldentop), are blooming and supporting native insects.

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.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:
First Saturdays: October 5,
November 2

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

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:
Second Saturdays: October 12,
November 9

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

For up-to-date information, contact Martha Jarocki, marthajarocki@gmail.com or phone 415/461-3592.

Bahia, Novato:

If you'd like to help, please contact Jude at judestalker@gmail.com.

Thank You, Stewardship Volunteers

Debbie Ablin, Annette Anzalone, Bob Hinz, Lisa and John Jackson, Martha Jarocki, Lowell Sykes

THANK YOU, DONORS

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CORTE MADERA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

There was a lot of volunteer activity at CMER over the summer. On June 27, 16 high school volunteers from Youth First, a community service program for teens through Jewish Family and Children's Services, cut shoulder-high fennel and harding grass and dug bristly oxtongue, which was in wild bloom. This group had returned, having volunteered at the site a few months earlier.

On July 27, 12 high school volunteers from LINC, a Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy program, volunteered their energy. Again, we cut harding grass and fennel and went for the bristly oxtongue, which was ready to drop seeds. At the end of our workday, we formed a line and walked across the thickest oxtongue patches, trying to get every last one. Students came across a small population of praying mantis, and we spent a wonderful few minutes watching them and reciting everything we knew about the natural

history of this spectacular insect.

Despite the youthful energy, there are still plenty of weeds to cut and pull, and plenty of mulch to spread on the site. Once the winter rains arrive, we will spread the seeds we have been collecting.

We have a volunteer workday the second Saturday of every month. No need to register, just show up between 10 AM and 1 PM. We have the tools and gloves, and we'll be glad to put you to work.

BAHIA

Watering of the most-recently installed plants by a Hanford crew is continuing. We've also had weeds removed from the area where Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) installed plants a year ago. The Hanford crew irrigated those plants also. In addition, we've finally had the wooden fence along Bolero and Topaz repaired. A Hanford crew also did this repair work and they did a super job. It looks great.

Enjoy the Beauty of our Restored Shoreline Habitats Through Volunteering

Every first and second Saturday of the month is an opportunity to enjoy restored shoreline with Marin Audubon and the devoted volunteers who manage these critical habitats. One of these habitats is our marsh restoration project at the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, a hidden gem located behind the busy Redwood Highway frontage businesses. It is a 5-acre site, half of which is restored tidal marsh and half is upland, that requires ongoing management to provide for the endangered Ridgway's Rail, shorebirds, waterfowl and other wildlife that live and forage there. Triangle Marsh is also managed on a monthly basis and is composed of ancient tidal marsh, restored tidal marsh, intertidal baylands, and uplands. Natural processes have restored the vegetation to the tidal marsh that is now fully vegetated.

The goal of our regular volunteer workdays is to control invasive plant species that can spread rapidly, and plant and maintain native plants we have installed over the years or have come in on their own. Through volunteer workdays, Marin Audubon also seeks to connect the community to these precious spaces. Once on site it is easy to forget about the hustle bustle nearby as you gaze out to the bay and take notice of the vibrant marsh and channels that are abundant with birds and



Ellena Ochoa

Marin Country Day School Volunteers at Triangle Marsh

other wildlife.

Monthly workdays happen at Triangle Marsh every first Saturday of the month, and every second Saturday at the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. Please contact Ellena Ochoa to be put on the volunteer email list, volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org. Please join us!

Marin Birdlog: August 2024

By Noah Arthur

Rare shorebirds often highlight August in Marin, but other species took center stage for most of this month. The shorebirding kicked off with a **Ruddy Turnstone** at Abbotts Lagoon on the 1st (EM), but was upstaged by an anomalous early push of rare passerines. A **Northern Parula** – in heavy moult and likely a bird that over-summered in California – was at Drakes Beach on the 1st (SH), along with a **Mockingbird** (CC), very rare for the Outer Point. There was also a push of **Purple Martins** on the Point, including 4 at Drakes and 1 at Fish Docks (CC), with continuing or new birds still being seen through the 7th, and one on the 17th (EM).

On the 3rd, a male **American Redstart** was at Cypress Grove (NW) – again likely a bird that over-summered nearby. Interestingly, another or the same redstart was there last August. The shorebirds stepped up their game on the 3rd with a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the Mendoza Ranch pond (DL).

A pelagic boat that moved into Marin waters on the 4th turned up **5 Hawaiian Petrels** (many observers). On the 6th, a sharp-looking male **White-winged Scoter** was with the scoter flock off Rodeo Beach (DG). Very rare on the Outer Point, a **White-throated Swift** flew by Fish Docks on the 7th (DS).

Rare shorebirds began to surface at Abbotts Lagoon mid-month, with 2 adult **Pacific Golden-plovers** there on the 11th (MD), a juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** on the 12th (LS), and a **Ruddy Turnstone** on the 13th (SE). Elsewhere on the 13th, another juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at Shorebird Marsh (BB). Back at Abbotts, a juvenile **Solitary Sandpiper** turned up on the 16th (AL).

Another **Hawaiian Petrel** was seen offshore on the 18th (many observers).

An unprecedentedly early movement of Eastern warblers through Marin began on the 19th with a female **American Redstart** at the Pt. Reyes Fish Docks (CC), followed a few days later by an even more anomalous early **Blackpoll** at the Lighthouse on the 23rd (BB). Also on the 23rd, a **White-winged Dove** showed up at the Mendoza Ranch calf pen area (BB), and a (rare for the

Point) **Pygmy Nuthatch** at the Fish Docks (DS). The rarest warbler of the month came on the 24th, a **Hooded Warbler** at Mesa Road in Pt. Reyes Station (EMk). Out on the Point on the 24th, a **Bank Swallow** flew by Mendoza Junior (EMk).

The rare warblers kept coming in the last few days of August, including a **Black-and-white Warbler** at Muir Beach on the 25th (EH), followed the next day a **Chipping Sparrow** at the Lighthouse (EH). On the 27th, a **Prairie Falcon** landed on a post near the Hawk Hill hawkwatch (multiple observers).

The big-ticket rarity of the month came on the 28th at Keith Hansen's Gallery in Bolinas: a female **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, complete with a single ruby feather in her throat (KH). Also on the 28th, **2 Bank Swallows** were at Rodeo Lagoon (many observers). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** flew over Abbotts Lagoon on the 29th (SH).

A classic end-of-August rarity, a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was at the Lighthouse on the 30th (SC). Also on the 30th, a **Northern Waterthrush** was at Pine Gulch (KO, EO, & MS).



Ruddy Turnstone

JJ Harrison, CC BY-SA 4.0



Blackpoll Warbler

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OBSERVERS AND ACRONYMS: EM: Eddie Monson, SH: Steve Howell, CC: Connor Cochrane, NW: Nils Warnock, DL: Derek Lecy, DG: Daniel Gillingwater, DS: Dan Singer, MD: Mark Dettling, LS: Lucas Stephenson, SE: Sam Eberhard, BB: Brian Browne, LN: Larry Nigro, MD: Molly Donahue, AL: Andrew Lee, EMK: Ethan Monk, EH: Eric Heisey, KH: Keith Hansen, SC: Scott Carey, KO: Kurt Ongman, EO: Eric Ongman, MS: Melissa Simon

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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.

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MAS Seeks Outreach Chair

Our Board is searching for a new Outreach Chair whose primary responsibilities are to maintain and update our website.

Basic computer knowledge is necessary, but we will provide training and assistance for the tasks needed.

For further information, please contact a Nominating Committee member: Ellena Ochoa, Chair, volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org; Doug Waterman, newsletter@marinaudubon.org; or Mike Anderson, mdander65@gmail.com.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Michele Chait, Christyne Davidian, Roiss Flewelling, Beverly Galloway, Sean Peisert, Jack Rabin, Madelyn Stone, Joshua Dimondstein, Roberta Floden, Elliott Gornall, JoAnn K. Intili, Tara Kean, Nancy Lamb, Ronald Lamson, Rachele Nyssen, Regín Rawner, Michael L. Reynolds, Johanna Sistek, Marcia Sprinkle



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8:30 AM Blackie's Pasture
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November 23 **CBC eBird Practice:**
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With Durell Kaplan

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. 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.

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**.

- Enroll me as a Chapter-Supporting Member
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