

**Flycatchers: Identification
Demystified**

Cin-Ty Lee & Andy Birch, Rice University



Western Kingbird

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

Flycatchers are a difficult group of birds to identify. Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch will guide you through the basics of flycatcher identification using a holistic approach. In this tutorial, you will learn how to use relative field marks, such as proportional lengths of tail and primaries, plumage contrasts, bill shape and size, and more. We will also discuss the importance of migration timing and vocalizations in identification.

Cin-Ty Lee is a Professor of Geology, Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences at Rice University. Andy Birch is a professional illustrator who has illustrated numerous articles and front covers for major bird journals worldwide. Both Cin-Ty and Andy have a lifelong passion in tackling challenging bird identifications. Together, they have produced the two-volume *Princeton Field Guide to North American Flycatchers*. They are currently working on volume 3, which will include photographs and more of Andy's illustrations.

**San Francisco Bay Living
Shorelines Project**

Marilyn Latta, Coastal Conservancy

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Marin Audubon Annual Elections

Join other MAS members and exercise your right as a member of MAS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to elect MAS Board members for full terms of three years. The election will take place at our Annual Meeting, which will take place at our Speaker Series meeting on Thursday, May 8, at 7 p.m. The slate put forward by our Nominating Committee and approved by the MAS Board consists of returning Board members who have served us well and a new nominee:

Jude Stalker

Jude has been in charge of Special Projects, which has involved scheduling and organizing tabling and other events, organizing and working on enhancement projects, particularly removing invasive Limonium along the Bay.

Ellena Ochoa

Ellena is our Volunteer Coordinator. Ellena works to find us volunteers to help with habitat enhancement activities on our properties; she volunteers on our properties herself and also manages our Dropbox files.

Doug Waterman

Doug is our Vice President, as well as editor of our newsletter, *The Rail*, and Field Trip Co-chair.

James Raives

James is responsible for our Real Property, guiding our actions on boundary, assessment, and acquisitions. With all of our properties and restoration and acquisition activities, he is busy.

Jim Davenport

Jim will be new to the Board but has been editing articles for *The Rail* for almost two years, so we know him well. Jim will be co-editing our newsletter.

A major part of Marin Audubon's success comes from the work of our Board members and other volunteers. As you can see from the above, many of our Directors hold multiple jobs and also volunteer in many ways outside of their lanes.

Thank you to our Nominating Committee: Michael Anderson, Lelia Lancot, and Alison Pence, who have also been working on filling other open positions.

Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas Update

The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas just kicked off its fifth and final field season. We encourage any Marin Audubon members that have volunteered for the second Atlas to send an email to mcbreedingbirdatlas@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out with surveys for target species this season. To learn more about this project and the distribution of Marin's breeding birds, we encourage you to visit our Atlas web page: <https://marinaudubon.org/birds/marin-county-breeding-bird-atlas>.

Perhaps you are new to the Atlas but have noticed nesting birds in your yard, other breeding bird observations, or hear owls in your yard or on hikes across Marin. You can submit these types of breeding bird observations to the

Atlas by using the incidental observation form located on the Atlas web page. Thanks to those of you who have been submitting observations!

We are grateful to all our donors who contributed funds to support this final field season. Thanks to your generosity, we retained our part-time project manager, Hilary Allen, and our part-time contractor, GIS Specialist, Will Wiskes. This year the Atlas received a generous donation of \$20,000 that was matched by the Marin Audubon Society. We continue to fundraise for our final product (our website provides more detail). Thank you to all of our donors and the Marin Audubon Society for their considerable support of the second Atlas!

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 Lancot 924-6138
Treasurer	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
Conservation	Barbara Salzman 924-6057 MJ Schramm maryjane.schramm@gmail.com
Field Trips	Doug Waterman newsletter@marinaudubon.org Alison Pence 254-4451
Membership Chair	Bob Hinz 383-8688 Contact Bob for membership problems or questions.
Outreach, Media	Michele Miller lavocat14@gmail.com
Outreach, Website	Cary Sparks cary@holotropic.com
Speaker Series	Mike Anderson 990-9784
Project Management	Jude Stalker 680-6291
Nominating	Michael Anderson mdander65@gmail.com Alison Pence alipence9@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor, <i>The Rail</i>	Doug Waterman newsletter@marinaudubon.org
Property Real Estate	James Raives 497-4492
Volunteer Coordinator	Ellena Ochoa volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org
BAAC Reps	Barbara Salzman 924-6057 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

Amidst the turmoil, the depressing firings, government closures, tariffs, deportations, and threats to our environment, there are some rays of hope. We are beginning to see some hopeful signs, congressman standing up for what is right, for human rights and our environment and citizens demonstrating locally and throughout the nation for our institutions and way of life. Locally, while there are continued pressures on our resources, there is some good news also.

We're excited to report that we're working on an agreement to purchase 320 acres of diked baylands in the Rush Creek Marsh area of northern Marin County. We're in the early stages of negotiations and should have more information next month. We also expect to be signing an agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy to manage the Regionally Advancing Living Shorelines projects in Marin as well as a contract with Terri Thomas, who will be managing the project for MAS. We'll provide a more complete description of this project next month.

Welcome to MJ Schramm, who has recently been elected to our Board to complete the final year of an unexpired Board term. Since 1982, Mary Jane ("MJ") has specialized in marine conservation. In 2021, after 20 years, she retired from NOAA's Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary as media liaison/outreach specialist, occasionally assisting in whale and other marine life monitoring. From 1982 through 1991, MJ was public relations director and on the wildlife rescue/care team at the Marine Mammal Center. From 1988 through 2000, she was the Oceanic Society's public information officer and expedition manager. Past board memberships include the American Cetacean Society, SF Bay Chapter, and the Tamalpais Conservation Club. MJ is currently a screening committee jurist for the International Ocean Film Festival. She has been a member of MAS's Conservation Committee since 2001.

Exercise your right as a member of Marin Audubon, a nonprofit membership organization, to vote for our directors, who will be serving full three-year terms beginning in June. See information about our Annual Meeting, which will take place at our Speaker Series in May (see article on page 1).

We're saddened by the death of former Marin Audubon Board member, Jim Gonsman. Jim was a self-employed engineer as well as Marin Audubon Treasurer from 2003 to 2007, the early years of our acquiring habitats, until moving to Sonoma County. In his Sonoma County home, Jim worked tirelessly converting his five-acre property from a mass of non-native species to native habitat. In his spare time, he volunteered on

the Bodega Marine Reserve, where he worked to enhance the upland habitat on the Reserve's uplands. According to his wife, Carol Burgoa, "Jim always valued Marin Audubon's work enhancing and protecting habitat." Jim showed his appreciation by leaving MAS a bequest of his IRA, which we will use to enhance habitats. We'll remember Jim as warm, steady, outgoing, and dedicated to protecting habitat. Jim died in November.

As of press time, Point Blue Conservation Science is still in need of funding to maintain their research on the Farallon Islands. Donations can be made through Marin Audubon Society (mailed to our PO box). As we go to press the time for the Estuary and Ocean Science Center to continue is running out.

We're very pleased to announce that we've decided to use the bequest from long-time MAS member and Corte Madera resident, Joan Vaughn, to benefit the habitat on our Corte Madera property. Joan died last year. She was a leading member of the Corte Madera Beautification Committee and contributed to our property enhancement through that organization.

Migratory birds are moving through, some stopping along their route to rest and forage. Some baby mallards are also showing themselves. As always, join one of our field trips or get out on your own. Also, join our work days to help with our spring habitat enhancement. We'll be sending our Spring Appeal letter soon. We hope you'll give generously to support our habitats.

Are You a Chapter-supporting Member?

Let's suppose you are one of our members who is a member of the National Audubon Society (NAS). You are, thereby, also a member of the Marin Audubon Society (MAS), the local chapter of NAS. You might expect that your membership dues for NAS are shared with our chapter. Although MAS does receive a share of the dues, the shared amount was fixed more than 20 years ago and, excluding major projects funded primarily by agency grants, accounts for less than 2% of our budget.

MAS depends heavily on Chapter-supporting Memberships and donations to fund our local activities, *The Rail*, habitat improvement on our properties, monthly speakers, legal expenses and more.

So, we encourage NAS members to join MAS, also, as a Chapter-supporting member. Please support what MAS does right here in Marin.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

MAS is providing a full schedule of free field trips for the 2024–2025 season.

Registration is required for our trips with size limits, which are used 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 A FEW MINUTES LATER.

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

San Rafael

Thursday, May 1, 2025

Thursday, June 5, 2025

8:30 AM to noon

With Mark Clark

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 first Thursday walk around the ponds at Las Gallinas. On our search we'll be looking for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, raptors, rails and swallows. 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.

MOUNT BURDELL/STAFFORD LAKE OR RUSH CREEK, Novato

Birding in Marin, Season 10 – Trip 5

Saturday, May 3, 2025

8:30 to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens April 23 at 8:00 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 lunch and drinks. 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 Andreas Dr. Drive nearly to the end of the road and park on the street. No restrooms available.

Our Birding the Napa River Boat Trip scheduled for May 5 has been cancelled. We will schedule it again on a future weekend date.

RODEO LAGOON Marin Headlands

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens at 8 AM on May 11, 2025 on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

With spring migration coming to an end, we'll 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. A brief mid-morning 'coffee-stop' is planned at Headlands Center for the Arts. Your contribution to the coffee 'tip-jar' would be appreciated. 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 Rd to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end and meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach.

DE SILVA ISLAND AND RICHARDSON BAY AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY Strawberry

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

10 AM to 2:30 PM

With Ron Brown

Registration required. Registration opens on May 17 at 8 AM on the MAS Field Trips page.

De Silva Island is home to a long-established colony of Great Blue Herons, residing in a grove of eucalyptus trees on the banks of Belloch's Lagoon (Strawberry Cove) in Richardson Bay. In recent years Great Egrets and Double Crested Cormorants (colonial nesting species) have moved into this fine breeding site.

Although the start of the breeding season is somewhat variable, we should see late-stage Heron and Egret chicks and early-stage Cormorant chicks. The colony is best seen by a scope from across Belloch's Lagoon (Strawberry Cove). One scope will be available, but others would be welcome.

After noon, we will drive from Seminary Drive to the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary for more birding. We'll take a break for something to eat before we start. Bring drinks and lunch.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 South – exit 446 toward Seminary Drive, turn left on Redwood Hwy Frontage Road for approximately 0.9 miles and right on Seminary Drive to the Fitness outdoor workout at 107 Seminary Drive and find street parking. From 101 north – exit 446 toward Seminary Drive, turn left at Redwood Frontage Road for approximately 0.5 miles, and right on Seminary Drive, to the Fitness outdoor workout at 107 Seminary and find street parking.

We will meet on Seminary Drive near the outdoor workout area at 10 AM. It's a short walk on the somewhat uneven public footpath around the marsh to a set of stairs that lead to the view of the colony.

BIG ROCK AND LAS GALLINAS PONDS Birding in Marin, Season 10 – Trip 6

Saturday, June 7, 2025

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

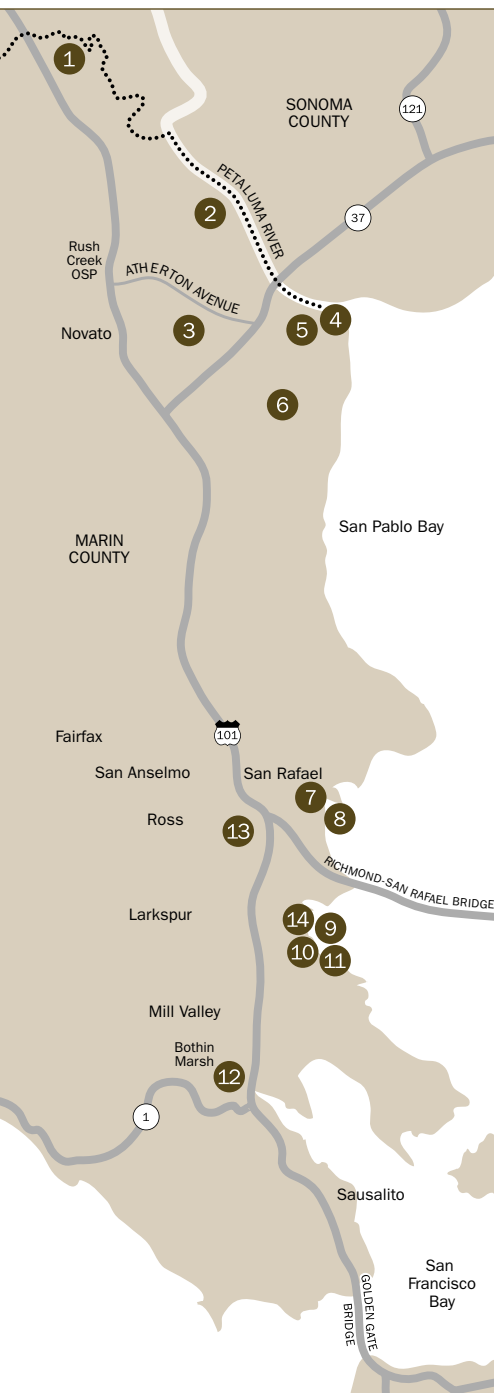
With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens on May 27 at 8 AM on the MAS 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'll stop to eat. Bring lunch and drinks. Here we'll look for **American** and **Least Bitterns, Green Heron, Cinnamon Teal, Common Gallinule**, and **Great-tailed Grackle**.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 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.



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.

TOWN OF CORTE MADERA CONSIDERS DECK ORDINANCE

Corte Madera is considering changes to the Town's zoning ordinance related to the construction of decks attached to waterfront homes along San Clemente Creek and Golden Hind Passage, in the Mariner Cove neighborhood. Why is this of interest to MAS?

This ordinance is of concern because San Clemente Creek is lined with tidal marshes, in the backyards of the homes along Golden Hind Passage. These marshes are habitat for endangered Ridgway's Rails.

Corte Madera adopted an ordinance allowing houses to be raised above base flood elevation in compliance with FEMA regulations. Under these regulations, many homeowners who elevate their homes are unable to raise their existing rear yard decks as part of the project. Also, decks raised above three feet count towards lot coverage maximums and face more strict setback requirements than decks under three feet.

To ensure the tidal marsh and Ridgway's Rails are protected, it is important that the ordinance changes not allow any expansion of the deck footprints, including access stairways, toward the San Clemente Creek. No expansion or increased coverage into the marsh and adjacent uplands should be permitted.

The Town is looking to ordinance changes to provide greater flexibility for property owners who raise their homes to avoid being flooded. Town staff will prepare a draft ordinance with input from the public from the meeting held in April. The issue is complicated by the town's limits on floor area lot coverage and setbacks from property boundaries that come into play when decks are of different heights. An option that came up at the meeting was allowing decks to be closer to the property boundaries, which could adversely affect Ridgway's Rails and their tidal marsh habitat if allowed to be extended further toward San Clemente Creek.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Tell the Town of Corte Madera not to allow decks or stairs to be closer to the marsh. There will be opportunities to comment at future planning commission and town council meetings or you can send your comments to publiccomment@cortemadera.gov. Watch the Corte Madera town website for dates of future meetings for opportunities to comment.

UPDATES

In-Lieu Fee Program for Wetland Mitigation

In last month's Rail, we discussed our concern about a wetland in-lieu fee program to mitigate for the loss of wetlands in the Bay Area. Since then we've reviewed the Enabling Instrument for the San Francisco Bay In-Lieu Fee Program, which is now fully executed between the project's sponsor, Ducks Unlimited (DU), the Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fishery Service. The Program will be used for compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands and waters of the US that result from projects permitted by the agencies, and completed enforcement actions.

An in-lieu fee program allows an applicant who wishes to fill wetlands to be relieved of the responsibility to implement mitigation measures by paying a fee to purchase credits (a unit of measure representing the aquatic resource function), thereby transferring responsibility to another entity, in this case DU, which will carry out the mitigation measures.

The Instrument describes the structure of the program, the framework, service area, legal responsibilities, methodology for determining credits, credit accounting procedures, procedure for authoring credits, default and closure, and reporting requirements. An interagency review team (IRT) of agency staff will oversee the program. All of this is designed to ensure the program is carried out responsibly, that wetlands loss is mitigated, with a clear record.

While the structure of the program appears sound, other aspects are of concern:

- Service area (the area within which a loss can be mitigated) is "one geographic area, which covers most of the San Francisco Bay watershed ...," including San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay, and Suisun Marsh (except for the area protected by the Suisun Marsh Protection Act). Such an extensive area means that a wetland loss could be mitigated many miles away from the site of the loss; e.g., the filling of a wetland in San Jose could be mitigated in Suisun Marsh.
- Final owner/manager of the wetland is

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

unclear. The Instrument provides that the sponsor (DU) transfer long-term ownership to an entity (government, nonprofit, or private party) with experience managing in the IRT community and willing to own the site. It is not clear that there is such an entity. It is expensive and can be labor intensive to own and manage habitats.

Questions not addressed in the Instrument:

- How will it be assured that permits are not issued for filling wetlands because in-lieu fee mitigation is readily available?
- What is the ecological evaluation process for approving a wetland loss to be mitigated by the In Lieu program? How will the value of the wetland, to be filled in its current location, and the impact of its loss, be evaluated and considered? Is it part of a larger wetland? Is it a connective link in a corridor that species use to move between larger habitats? Is the Program contributing to the concentration of wetlands in certain areas while reducing wetlands in others, such as urban areas where most wetlands have already been filled?
- What opportunities will there be for the public to comment, and how will public comment be considered?

We will be seeking answers to our questions from the signatory agencies.

Assembly Bill 303

This bill would prevent a lithium-ion battery storage facility on the baylands at the southeast corner of the Hwy 101 and SR37 intersection, near Bel Marin Keys. It would limit such facilities on environmentally sensitive sites, including wetlands, within earthquake and flood hazard zones.

AB 303 is proposed as an “urgency statute,” meaning it will take effect immediately upon passage if it receives the necessary two-thirds vote. The bill aims to add a new chapter to the Government Code and amend the Public Resources Code relating to energy.

AB 303 is currently in the legislative process, with a hearing pending in the State Assembly by the Committee on Utilities and Energy, but has been postponed.

Larkspur Off-Lease Dog Pilot Program

As we go to press, there is really no update on the plan for a pilot program to allow dogs to be off-leash in Piper Park from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. As reported the city has tabled this matter until a future date until they determine the potential for litigation.



Ellye Omerick

Northern Spotted Owl

Northern Spotted Owl Protection Program

As the lawsuits brought by animal rights groups make their way through the Oregon and Washington courts, 19 Republican and Democratic representatives have authored a letter to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum asking him to scuttle the US Fish and Wildlife Services’ (USFWS) Barred Owl Management Plan, the purpose of which is to protect the Northern Spotted Owls. The letter claims that the cost of the program is too high, there is no precedent for success, that Barred Owls are naturally expanding their range and are already protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The letter expressed no interest in the decline of the endangered Northern Spotted Owl, which began to disappear when Barred Owls arrived, and the fact that Northern Spotted Owls are known to return if there is not too long a time between Spotted Owl nesting and Barred Owl removal. The congress members, estimated a cost of \$1.3 billion over 30 years. The accuracy of this figure is unknown. The Barred Owl Management Plan did not address costs.

Not surprisingly, none of the signers of the letter are from the Washington, Oregon or California areas that support Northern Spotted Owl, so it is unlikely they know anything about the issue. The three signers from California are from Los Angeles and the Central Valley. The letter was organized by two Washington, D.C.-based animal rights organizations: Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy.

MAS reviewed and commented on the Draft Barred Owl Management Plan, supported it, and is one of six plaintiffs in the amicus brief brought in support of the Management Plan in the suits brought by the animal rights organizations against the USFWS in Oregon and Washington.

OPPOSE SENATE BILL 607

We are writing to urge you to oppose SB 607. Described as a housing bill, in reality SB 607 would gut CEQA. Although much maligned, CEQA is actually the only process we have to ensure environmental impacts of a project are revealed to the public that provides for public comment and to decision-makers, for analysis and evaluation.

Oppose SB 607 (Weiner)

CEQA is under attack by this bill that is making its way through the state legislature. If it weren’t for CEQA, Bahia, Triangle Marsh and MAS wetlands at the end of Industrial Way in Corte Madera would now be developed. The most significant ways 607 would change CEQA:

- An EIR need not be prepared if there is evidence in the record that a project would not have significant environmental impacts. This means even if there is substantial evidence that there would be adverse environmental impacts, an EIR would not be prepared as long as there are comments saying there would be no impact. All proponents would need to do is get a bunch of letters for the project into the record.
- Correspondence sent electronically (the most common way of communicating these days) would not be considered.
- Rezoning that is consistent with Housing Element would be exempted from review. There are zoning districts other than housing (e.g. industrial, agriculture) and reasons for not allowing rezoning that have nothing to do with housing.

Other problem aspects: 607 eliminates the exclusion for projects that would have significant impacts due to unusual circumstances; changes the way projects are considered under statutory exemption and categorical exemptions; and changes the way infill is defined.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Write to Senator Mick McGuire and urge him to oppose SB 607
1021 O Street, Suite 8518,
Sacramento, CA 95814

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Invasive plant species are now rushing to produce seeds while there is enough moisture in the soil. Italian thistle is at its peak of bloom, and we will pull or cut as much as possible. Harding grass is starting to bloom, and we will mow it and cut it off in other ways before its seeds ripen. Foragers, come to our workdays for your organic mustard and fennel!

On a positive note, we saw in April that two native perennial grasses, purple needlegrass and meadow barley, were flowering and their seeds are also maturing. Sticky monkey flower at Triangle Marsh was blooming, too.

Act locally. Earn community service hours or just get satisfaction by leaving the area better than you found it. If you like our birds or native plants, volunteer on a workday to give them a boost. It is also an opportunity to learn more about a native habitat of your county and be a part of improving it.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: May 3, June 7

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 10, June 14

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

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

Bahia, Novato:

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

Thank You, Stewardship Volunteers

Annette Anzalone, Ron and Belle Guelden, Katrina Hanley, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Alison Pence, Lowell Sykes

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Thomas Ackerman, Peter D. Bland, Deborah A. Bonner, Arthur Bruce, Judy Cavey, Michele Chouinard, Brenda J. Derin, Mary Lou Drux, Jim Dunn, Gretchen Ellis, Joanna Gadd, Sarah Goelet, Leslee Hackenson, Victoria S. Hughes, Joanne Lawlor, Bryce Lensing, Gloria A. Mc Goran, Chloe Soroquere, Eden Stiffman, Martha VanSteenberghe, Eric V. Vonderwerth

Habitat Stewardship

CORTE MADERA MARSH ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Our efforts to control the highly invasive harding grass are proceeding. We've had a crew from Hanford ARC begin to dig out large plants, and they've done a great job. Volunteers on our Second Saturday Work Day removed highly invasive vetch that is suddenly proliferating in sections of the upland.

We are disappointed that someone has broken the lock on the inside gate to our property adjacent to the Reserve. Our volunteer, Lowell Sykes, replaced the lock and it was vandalized for a second time. The fence was erected at the time we restored the marsh for the purpose of protecting the marsh and adjacent uplands from walkers, dogs, campers, model airplane flyers, and all of the other people who used this patch of upland before our marsh restoration project six years ago. This is the first vandalism that has taken place. Although we have found no damage to the habitat, an open gate invites activity we don't want and increases the potential for damage to the habitat and wildlife. If anyone witnesses any vandalism to our property, please notify the police right away.

TRIANGLE MARSH

Our April work day attracted four volunteers in addition to our Board member Bob Hinz who is in charge of our Volunteer Work Days

at Triangle Marsh. The crew spent most of their time removing the invasive Italian thistle and also a bit of time removing invasive mustard.

Paradise Drive Complete Streets Project

The Town of Corte Madera has been planning this project for about a year. After several public meetings, the Town has decided to construct an 8-foot multi-use path along the south side of Paradise Drive, extending from the Town's eastern boundary and connecting with an existing path just west of Westward Way. Marked parking will be along Marin County's Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve.

In order to accommodate the path and parking, Paradise Drive will be shifted to the north, i.e. closer to our berm. That means the street paving will be closer to our berm and there will be no space for public parking. All work will be done within the right-of-way which means the city has a right to do it.

The final design for the interface between our property and the relocated Paradise is still under discussion between MAS and the Town engineers. We want to ensure there will be access to the path to our overlook, that our berm and the native vegetation on it and along the base will be protected, and that there will be at least a few parking spaces to allow easy access for our volunteers bringing in equipment needed for our stewardship work. But it will limit parking for access to our property as well as for the public visiting Ring Mountain.

Volunteer Opportunity on Marin Islands

The USFWS San Pablo Bay Refuge is seeking volunteers to help with stewardship activities on the Marin Islands. They are looking both for folks who are interested in committing an occasional workday as well as more committed volunteers willing to volunteer on a regular basis to restore and maintain the natural communities in a healthy condition. The volunteer program will include training covering the goals and management actions needed on the Refuge.

The current plan is for Volunteer days to be hosted once or twice a month for groups of 4-5 people at a time. They are hoping to work up to hosting multiple workdays every month. Access will likely be via kayak or canoe, as the Refuge does not have a usable boat. If a volunteer owns a boat and wants to transport others to the Island in a boat, they would be excited to talk to that volunteer about the potential!

Contact Meg Marriott, Refuge Manager to find out more and express your interest: 510/391-3144 or meg_marriott@fws.gov.

History: Marin Audubon Society was instrumental in the permanent protection

of the Marin Islands in 1992 and their designation as a Wildlife Refuge. The islands were purchased from the Crowley family (Crowley Marine) who used West Marin Island as a private retreat. A portion of the acreage is owned by the State of California, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The 339-acre Refuge consists of the two islands and tidelands and submerged lands off the San Rafael shoreline. They can be viewed from the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Trail and as well as from points along San Pedro Road. The Islands themselves are 10.5 acres in size. The property was purchased to protect the migratory birds, particularly nesting and egret colony on West Marin Island and to protect the tidal mudflats and subtidal habitats and unique island ecosystem.

During the winter, large rafts of diving ducks are commonly seen in the Refuge waters along with grebes, along with brown pelicans, terns, and black oystercatchers on the shoreline of the islands. The islands themselves support mixed evergreen forest, coastal prairie, coastal salt marsh and northern coastal scrub habitats.

Marin Birdlog: March 2025

By Noah Arthur

Straddling the border between the seasons for winter and spring rarities, March often produces a random grab-bag of vagrants and rare migrants typical of both seasons. This time around, a **Western Cattle-egret** was at Las Gallinas on the 2nd (KS), and a huge immature **Glaucous Gull** was loafing with Westerns on the rocks below the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on the 9th (EC). Rare for the Outer Point – especially to see perched rather than a flyover – an **American Crow** – was calling from cypress tops at the Fish Docks (EC), and another or the same later on calling in cypresses at Drakes (JR & AJ). On the 10th, a **Common X Green-winged Teal hybrid** was on Schooner Bay (BB).

Especially large numbers of **Cackling Geese** have been at Las Gallinas this season, such as

a count of 500 on the 13th (NR). On the 15th another **American Crow** was at the Fish Docks, this one a flyover (CC). Also on the 15th, a **Red-naped X Red-breasted Sapsucker hybrid** was in a Novato yard (BM). A flock of 4 **Black Skimmers** were skimming off Marin City in the northwest arm of Richardson Bay on the 17th, likely including birds that had already been kicking around the East Marin shoreline this winter (DK). An unseasonable **Elegant Tern** also turned up in the northwest arm of Richardson Bay on the 20th (RH).



Brewer's Sparrow

This month's exceptional crow incursion on the Outer Point continued on the 21st with 3 **American Crows** cawing on fence posts at Mendoza Ranch (DS). On the 24th, 3 **Elegant Terns** flew south by Rodeo Beach (WL). The season's first **Hermit Warbler** turned up at the Fish Docks on the 24th (RC), the first **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Mt. Burdell on the 25th (DE), and the first **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Muddy Hollow on the 27th (BB).

Especially rare in West Marin in the spring, a **Swainson's Hawk** floated over Kirby Cove (near Hawk Hill) on the 25th (HT). Also on the 25th, a **Golden Eagle** was on a pole along the road to the Lighthouse (JT).

A spectacular incursion of **Elegant Terns** hit Marin very suddenly on the 28th, with 16 at Rodeo Lagoon (WL) and a shocking 60 at Hamilton Wetlands (JC). Also on the 28th, a rare and unseasonable **Brewer's Sparrow** showed up at Abbotts Lagoon (JCh). On the 29th, an additional 2 **Elegant Terns** were in Bolinas Lagoon (JW), and another 4 **American Crows** at the Fish Docks (GR).

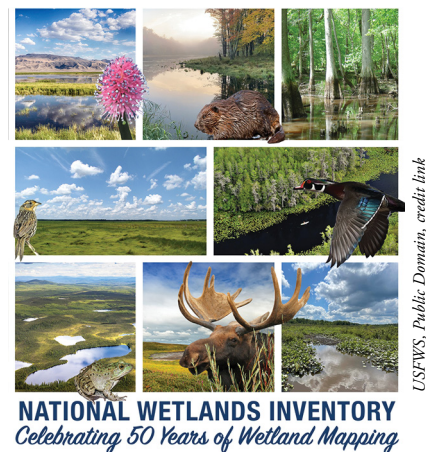


MacGillivray's Warbler



Golden Eagle

OBSERVERS AND ACRONYMS: KS: Kris Shanks, EC: Everett Clark, JR: Jason Riggio, AJ: Andrew Jacobson, BB: Bob Battagin, NR: Nereus Rankin, CC: Connor Cochrane, BM: Brandon Madsen, DK: Durrell Kapan, RH: Robert Hinz, DS: Dan Singer, WL: William Legge, RC: Richard Cimino, DE: Daniel Edelstein, JC: Jim Crumpler, JCH: Jim Chiropoulos, JW: Jim White, JT: John Toren, GR: Genevieve Rozhon



May is American Wetlands Month

A time to celebrate one of nature's most productive ecosystems!

This year, as part of American Wetlands Month, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is celebrating the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Program's 50th Anniversary. NWI has "led the collection of scientific information necessary to strategically manage America's wetland habitats and their associated ecosystem benefits — from detailed wetland maps to information on how wetlands are changing."

You can join in the celebration by visiting a wetland near you and going to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's website at www.fws.gov/wetlands-month to learn about these vital habitats, how they are changing, and how we can work together to better conserve wetlands and their benefits.

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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**.

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