

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13 7:00 PM****Motus Wildlife Tracking System**

Kianna Leung



**White-throated Sparrow with transmitter**

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

The Motus Wildlife Tracking System ('Motus') is an international collaborative research network that uses automated radio telemetry to study the movements of birds, bats, and insects. Motus, meaning "movement" in Latin, uses coordinated arrays of receiver stations that detect animals carrying miniaturized radio transmitters, enabling researchers to simultaneously track hundreds of individuals at local to hemispheric scales. Developed as a program of Birds Canada, Motus provides key insights into animal movement and behavior that are fundamental to wildlife conservation and habitat management. This presentation will provide an overview of the Motus system and its research applications.

Kianna Leung is a Motus Technician with Birds Canada. She is currently working to support the growth of the Motus network in Western Canada and has assisted with the development and implementation of Motus-based research projects across northern British Columbia.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11 7:00 PM****Elephant Seals**

By Karen Allen

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# The Rail

**MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY**

## Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas II Reaches Major Milestone!

By Liz Lewis and Daphne Hatch

From late winter through summer 2025, 129 observers helped us complete the fifth and final season of field surveys for the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas II (MCBBA2). This effort began in 2021 to replicate the first Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas, the landmark effort completed forty years ago by Dave Shuford and Point Blue Conservation Science (then Point Reyes Bird Observatory), in order to understand the current composition and distribution of breeding birds in the county, and explore the changes that have occurred since the first Atlas (Shuford 1993).

We have a few things to share as we reach this major milestone.

**2025 Atlas Highlights**

Photos and a summary of this season's effort can be found in the 2025 Annual Report (Allen et al. 2025), available on our webpage at: <https://marinaudubon.org/birds/marin-county-breeding-bird-atlas/>. Note to the hard copy readers of *The Rail*; to access the 2025 report, click "Birds" at the top of MAS website's home page and from the dropdown menu, click "Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas 2."

We share a few sneak peaks with you here and encourage you to check out the report for more!

Bell's Sparrows were discovered for the first time during the MCBBA2 in 2025 on Pine Mountain and on the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais and were determined to be probable breeders at both locations. They had been confirmed on Pine Mountain during the first Atlas in areas of chamise-dominated chaparral on dry south-facing slopes of interior ridges that receive little fog (Shuford 1993).

Another 2025 surprise was the influx of Lawrence's Goldfinches that were documented breeding in two locations near Mt. Burdell, and one location in Tomales, and were observed in several other locations throughout the county. Such an unusual movement into



**Least Bittern documented as a new breeder in Marin County since the first Atlas**

Marin, a region where they are not usually found, is not atypical of this nomadic species and may be a result of the below normal rainfall in the interior Coast Range of southern California last year.

We were also able to upgrade two species – Ridgway's Rail and Northern Saw-whet Owl – to confirmed breeding status in 2025 that had not been confirmed in the first four years of MCBBA2.

Preliminary results include that **169** species across all three breeding categories (possible, probable, and confirmed) have been documented in the MCBBA2 from 2021 to 2025. You can search the Atlas website via our online Data Explorer, to view the preliminary status of each species observed during the second Atlas period and compare it to the first (however note that we are continuing to bring in external researcher data and proof Atlas data). Seven species detected as possible, probable or confirmed breeders in the first Atlas were not found during the current effort, including Ring-necked Pheasant, Tufted Puffin, Burrowing Owl, California Thrasher, *continued on page 6*

Becky Matsubara

## 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](http://www.marinaudubon.org)  
Members can receive *The Rail* electronically instead of a hard copy by emailing [membershipsecretary@marinaudubon.org](mailto: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

The Christmas holidays may seem a long way off, but we're gearing up for the Christmas Bird Count. It will soon be here. See the sign-up information on page 5. Contact Alison Pence for information on this fun, challenging, and important bird-finding event.

A warm welcome to Rusty Scalf, a new member of the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas 2 (BBA) Steering Committee. Rusty is a leader in the Vaux Swift surveys and has led field trips for MAS. He will be taking the place of Diana Humble, who is moving from a volunteer to an employee, as the BBA focus changes over to analyzing the survey data collected over the last four years. Our thanks to Diana for her years of volunteer work on the Atlas. We look forward to working with Rusty, and with Diana in a different capacity, for the rest of the project. We don't know how long that will be, but it will undoubtedly take some years to finish analyzing the data, write and publish the report. The Steering Committee consists of three representatives of MAS and three from the BBA. We meet regularly to discuss issues to further the project.

We're also pleased to have been a sponsor of the State of the San Francisco Estuary Conference by making a donation this year. The conference, hosted by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, takes place every other year. This year's event focused on ecological health, climate resilience, and environmental stewardship of the Estuary. Marin Audubon has won many awards from the Partnership through the years for its wetland restoration projects, and Arthur Feinstein and I were honored to share an Estuary Legacy Award in 2017.

We're also pleased to join other chapters and organizations in becoming a Founding Member of the California Breeding Bird Atlas (CBBA). Many states have statewide Breeding Bird Atlases, and producing a state atlas for California has long been hoped for by many. Producing the atlas will be complicated due to the size of the state and the many areas of the state where volunteer surveyors are not available. Early donations will be used to fund those surveyors, as well as the training and educational materials for volunteers to collect the data; a dedicated e-bird portal at Cornell; the core digital infrastructure, including web hosting; email services; and management tools. An application is also being made to the state for funding.

For a member who enjoys working with figures and loves wildlife and protecting their habitats, we have an opportunity to join our Board as Treasurer, or to help with our Treasurer position tasks and have a voice in what we do. We have other board members who are responsible for specified financial-related tasks as well as a bookkeeper who is an

independent contractor and prepares monthly reports. See notice on this page for how to get more information.

Our board has been working on updating and organizing our guidance materials. Last month, we adopted an Annual Plan with goals for the year: complete the acquisition of Leveroni properties and rename as the Bahia Expansion Project, begin construction of the Tiscornia levee, and manage the Regionally Advancing Living Shorelines (RALS) project. We've also been reviewing and updating our Policies and Procedures. We've just been advised by our tax accountant of the need to have an audit for 2024-25, due to the amount of money we received in grants and bequests. We'll also need an audit of the current year for the RALS grant we've received because a portion of the grant is from federal funds.

We expect the RALS project to begin work soon. We have all of our internal contracts, with Terri Thomas Consulting and the Coastal Conservancy, signed. We expect to go out for bids for consultant teams over the next month.

As you can see, we've been busy. One more thing we've done is add more field trips. We hope you'll join one or more of them and learn more about birds and nature from our many great leaders.

The happiest of Thanksgivings to everyone!

## MAS Needs You

MAS is looking for a Treasurer or a volunteer to help with treasurer tasks.

Accounting experience and/or familiarity with Excel spread sheets is desirable but not required.

If you like what MAS does and are interested in figures and finances, contact Mike Anderson at [mdander65@gmail.com](mailto:mdander65@gmail.com) or 415/990-9784 for more information.

## THANK YOU, DONORS

Sharon Bozic, Dianne Fowler, James de la Fuente, Darlene Hiatt, Lois Lane, Cynthia Meigs, Paul Parnett, Paula Riley, Jillian Robinson, Kandice Strako, David Swain, Cynthia Theobold, Ann Thomas, Dave Weichers, Nancy Lee Willet

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Cecilia Alighieri, Holly Beckner, Inez Erin Alley, Anita L. Bonneau, Deborah D. Dunleavy, Lois Errante, Elizabeth H. Flinn, Brenda C. Goeden, Virginia M. Goode, Jordie Hadfield, Frederick W. Isaacson, Rodger Jacobsen, Nina Kjellson, Kimberly Kolt, Kerrie Malone, Maria O'Brien, Jean P. Scimone, Karen Seal, Robin Sodo, Kristine J. Waters, John Zeiter

## 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, November 6, 2025

Thursday, December 4, 2025

8:30 AM to noon

With Mark Clark

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

On this trip we especially welcome beginning birders to join Mark Clark, along with bird enthusiasts of all levels, 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. Ducks have been arriving; **Pintails, Wigeons** and **Shovelers** with more on the way. 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. There is a portable restroom in the parking area for public use.

**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.

### BOTHIN MARSH PRESERVE

Mill Valley

Friday, November 21, 2025

8 to 11 AM

With Michelle Muir

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

Michelle Muir along with Rich Cimino welcome beginning birders, and bird enthusiasts of all levels, on a walk through the Bothin Marsh Preserve. Enjoy scenic bay views as we look for early winter waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds and an occasional raptor. Some that we hope to see include **American Wigeons**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Buffleheads**, **Black-necked Stilts**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Egrets** and a several species of gulls and sandpipers. This will be a 3 mile, relatively flat, and easy to navigate walk, primarily on the Mill Valley-Sausalito Multiuse Pathway with a few dirt path detours. We will meet at the entrance to the Mill Valley Community Center, 180 Camino Alto, near the flagpole circle. Restrooms are available at the Sewage Agency, about 15 minutes into our walk, and at the Community Center at the end of our walk.

Heavy rain cancels, with a rescheduled date of Friday, December 5, 2025. Participants will be notified of cancellation via email by 6:30 am the morning of the walk.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 101, take exit 447 toward Blithedale Ave. Continue on Blithedale for about .7 miles and turn left at Camino Alto to the Mill Valley Community Center.

### RODEO LAGOON AND MARIN HEADLAND

Wednesday, November 26, 2025

7:30/8:15 AM to noon

With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens on November 16 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page.

Join William and David for this fifth 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 come willing to contribute via the onsite 'tip-jar' as a thank you to the Headlands Center for the Arts 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 light. Proceed through the tunnel on Bunker Rd to the Rodeo Lagoon Parking Lot at the end. Meet by the bridge over the channel to the beach or join MAS birders with scopes along the nearby beach area.

### BAHIA, HORSESHOE POND & RUSH CREEK

**Birding in Marin, Season 10 – Trip 12**

Saturday, December 6, 2025

8:30 AM to mid afternoon

With Jim White and Bob Battagin

Registration required. Registration opens November 26 at 8 AM on MAS website's Field Trips page.

MAS acquired and restored to tidal action

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

Horseshoe Pond (Homeowners Lagoon) at the southeast end of Topaz is a great place to look for wintering ducks.

**Goldeneyes**, **Scaup**, **Canvasbacks**, **Buffleheads**, and **Mergansers** seem to like it and it has been Marin's best place for **Barrow's Goldeneyes** the last few years.

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

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

### Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve

Sunday, December 7, 2025

8:30 AM to noon

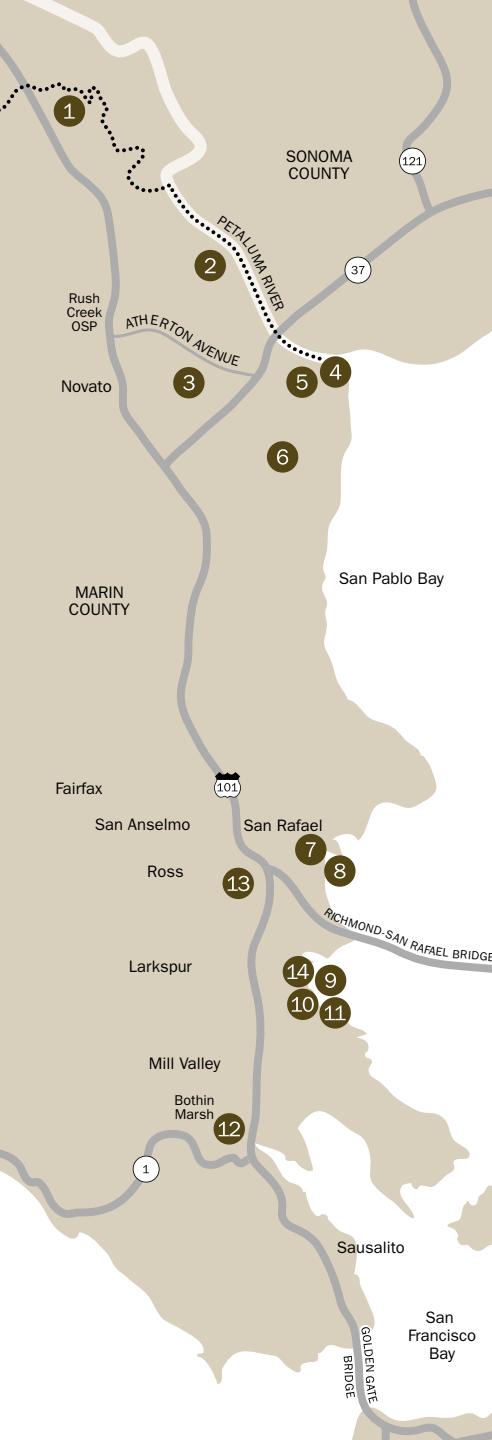
With Lisa Hug

Registration is required. Registration opens November 26 on MAS website's Field Trips page.

This field trip is an eBird workshop for those participating in the Christmas Bird Count in Southern Marin County. We will walk the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve starting at the Marin Audubon Society site Lookout. The walk is level and easy. We will be making observations using eBird. We will see waterfowl and shorebirds in the estuary as well as upland suburban residents. Experienced birders and Christmas Bird Count Leaders as well as eBird newbies can enjoy counting and compiling together in an informal and fun setting.

**DIRECTIONS:** From 101 North, take Lucky Drive Exit to Wornum, turn left on Tamal Vista Blvd and left on Madera Blvd. Go under freeway and take a left on Redwood Highway and turn right into the Trader Joe's /World Market mall. Stay to the right and park behind World Market.

From 101 South take the Corte Madera exit left over the freeway on Tamalpais Dr. Take a left on Redwood Blvd and right into the World Market Mall, staying right and parking behind. Meet in the parking lot.



## 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.

### GREATER BAHIA EXPANSION ACQUISITION UPDATE

We're working our way through the contingencies as provided in our Purchase Agreement, and so far, there are no hang ups. We've engaged the law firm of Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger to advise and assist us in matters related to the purchase. We've obtained an appraisal that confirmed a value of slightly less than the asking price. The owners agreed to a price of \$3,400,000. We're on our

way to raising that amount with the bequest from Maureen Groper to both MAS and Marin Baylands Advocates, our application to the State Coastal Conservancy, and requests for donations from members, MAS and donors to our partner organization in acquisitions, Marin Baylands Advocates.

Title reports have raised some questions and issues, primarily concerning easements and agreements for water management, drainage, levee maintenance, access and utilities, and an easement for air rights to the adjacent Marin County Airport, Gnoss Field. Most of the easements/agreements are with the County and concern the maintenance of the Airport. We're in the process of investigating the specifics and clarifying the various issues.

Our assessment of the environmental conditions of the property has included investigating the risk of flooding to adjacent properties. We've checked out the drainage facilities, which consist of levees around the perimeter of the properties, culverts, drainage ditches, and pumps for both the north and south parcels. The pump for the north parcel is managed together with the adjacent parcels. The levees, which were constructed to block the tides and allow the properties to be used for agriculture, are also in satisfactory shape. The requirement for a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment, which will investigate the potential for hazardous materials on the property, has yet to be conducted. There is no indication that there are any hazardous materials on the properties. A Phase 1



Greater Bahia Expansion map (property for acquisition outlined in yellow)

assessment is a requirement for grant funds and of responsible due diligence.

A major contingency is raising sufficient funds to purchase the properties. We've raised close to one-third of the funds thanks to the bequest from Maureen Groper (see last month's *Rail* for additional information), submitted an application to the State Coastal Conservancy for additional funds, and we're seeking funding from members.

We welcome your contribution to the purchase and permanent protection of these properties. To contribute, send your check to MAS, Box 599, Mill Valley CA 94942 with a note that it is for the property acquisition.

### CORTE MADERA CREEK RESTORATION

Stop by and take a look at the habitat restoration project underway on Corte Madera Creek. A segment of the environmentally damaging and ugly concrete channel at the College of Marin is being removed—finally. Thanks to the efforts of the Friends of Corte Madera Creek (Friends) and Marin County Department of Public Works (DPW) and funding from Ross Valley flood taxes, the Coastal Conservancy, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, DPW has undertaken the project to remove the south concrete wall and lay back the bank to restore a more natural shoreline.

Friends will be revegetating the bank. Most of the north bank is in private ownership and so will remain in place. The project is expected to go on for several more months.

### 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

## STATUS CHANGE FOR MUTE SWAN

Beginning January 1, 2026, the invasive Mute Swan “can be taken or possessed at any time by persons with a valid California hunting license.” AB 764 (Gonzalez, R-Indio), signed into law by Governor Newsom on October 6, adds Mute Swans to the list of non-game birds that may be taken. In other words, they can be hunted. The legislation was introduced and passed to address growing concerns about the adverse impacts of the spread of this destructive non-native species.

As pointed out by Senator Dave Cortese (D-San Jose) in advocating for the bill during the Senate hearing: “California is home to some of the most diverse ecosystems in the country. Protecting the biodiversity is essential not just for the environment but for our economy, public health, and quality of life. This bill addresses an urgent need to safeguard these valuable ecosystems. Mute swans are highly invasive resource competitors, and their population is rapidly growing. Current mute swan population estimates in California have increased to 6,912, 71 percent above the 2023 estimate just two years ago ... The bill represents a critical step in preserving the natural beauty and biodiversity of the state.”

Mute Swans were first detected in the Suisun and Napa Marshes during the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s annual Waterfowl Breeding Population Survey in 2007. As noted above, since then their population has expanded significantly both in numbers and in range.

Mute Swans feed primarily on submerged or semi-submerged aquatic vegetation in permanent or semi-permanent freshwater wetland or pond habitat, habitats that are limited in California and that are important for breeding and overwintering native species. Mute Swans negatively impact the structure and function of the aquatic habitats native species depend upon. They are voracious feeders; they reportedly can consume up to eight pounds of flora per day, destroying much more in the process.

Mute Swans can be aggressive towards other birds, as well as people. Mute Swan parents force their offspring from ponds when mature enough to survive. They then have to seek out their own ponds, so they gradually take over suitable habitats. In Marin, Mute Swans can be found at Las Gallinas Sanitary District Wildlife Pond, Scottsdale Pond, Novato Sanitary District Pond, Stafford Lake, the Rush Creek Cemetery Marsh wetlands and other pond areas.

Mute Swans are classified as a restricted and detrimental species that is unlawful to import

transport or possess under the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 671. The species now joins two others (the English Sparrow and European Starling) on a short list of invasive non-game birds, identified in Section 3801 of the Fish and Game Code, that can be taken at any time by licensed hunters. Landowners and lessees may also take or possess Mute Swans at any time without needing a hunting license or depredation permit. The bill will sunset in 2031.

Unquestionably, Mute Swans are beautiful birds, a quality that has generated public support in some locations around the country. Beauty, however, has nothing to do with ecological impact. These massive, aggressive birds, with no native predators and huge appetites, are a threat to our native bird populations. Although we are not advocates for hunting, we are relieved that this bill has passed and that there will now be a control on their population.

## Update on Cattail Removal at Las Gallinas

With two public meetings and an agreed-upon plan informed by public-input, we had high hopes that this round of cattail removal would go smoothly and be conducted in an environmentally sound manner. Unfortunately we were wrong. The plan was to leave a five feet minimum buffer of cattails along the pond edge, with wider areas left in a number of sections where important species, such as the Least Bittern, are observed.

For some reason, the consultant team allowed or directed the construction crew to remove all of the cattails which they did along the pond edge to the left of the entrance. They left no cattails along that shoreline; only a width of cattails in the water they at they will remove later with other equipment.

Fortunately, we caught them in time to prevent further complete removal along the shoreline. The District staff assured they are back on track. Indeed they have left a narrow band of cattails (three to five feet) in subsequent removal, however, they did this through the Least Bittern habitat area which as supposed to have a wider buffer than five feet.

As we go to press, this is an active project. The outcome so far has been most discouraging. We’ll be working to keep the crew to leaving five and more in some areas according to the plan, and seek mitigation for the damage done.

## 2025 Christmas Bird Counts

Three Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) will be held in Marin this December. Dinner plans after the Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count will be announced soon!

Note to readers of the hard copy issue of *The Rail*: The links for Southern Marin and Point Reyes CBC registration forms can be found on the Home page of Marin Audubon’s website. Under the Birds heading click on Christmas Bird Count.

### Thursday, December 18

#### Cheep Thrills CBC

Covering north Marin and extending into southern Sonoma County. Contact Susan Kelly, [cheepthrills@icloud.com](mailto:cheepthrills@icloud.com).

### Saturday, December 20

#### Point Reyes CBC

Covering west Marin, including Tomales Bay and Point Reyes National Seashore. Register and get more information on the count and dinner at [www.pointreescbc.com](http://www.pointreescbc.com).

### Saturday, December 27

#### Southern Marin CBC

Covering much of east Marin and extending west as far as Bolinas and Stinson Beach. Contact Alison Pence, [smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com).

Please fill out the form here: <https://bit.ly/48EjR1N> to volunteer for the Southern Marin Bird Count. Please email Alison Pence if you are willing to carpool.

## Volunteer for the Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are the longest-running community science project in the nation, started almost 125 years ago. The counts are conducted every year from mid-December to early January in approximately 2,100 count circles worldwide. Data from the counts are analyzed by the National Audubon Society. The analyses are critical for the identification of bird species in decline, as well as those expanding their ranges.

Volunteers are needed on Saturday, December 27, in the Southern Marin area. Some birding experience is preferred. Volunteers will be assigned to a count area team. If you are an experienced birder, we need leaders in a couple of count areas. It’s a great opportunity to get outside and see some interesting birds in beautiful locations. A compilation dinner will be held after the count. If you’re interested in participating, contact Alison Pence at [smcbc.audubon@gmail.com](mailto:smcbc.audubon@gmail.com) or fill out this form online: [marinaudubon.org/birds/southern-marin-christmas-bird-count-2025](http://marinaudubon.org/birds/southern-marin-christmas-bird-count-2025).

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

We found very little *Dittrichia* (stinkweed) last month. *Salsola* was more abundant but quickly cleaned up at Triangle; at CMMERE some persists. We'll do another sweep for them. Harding grass has been sending up new growth from the dry soil, and we will go after it and bristly oxtongue, especially where we expect to be planting native species in a month or two.

If you appreciate our birds or native plants, volunteer on a workday to give them a boost. The native plants are so much better for the insects that are food for the birds. Birds are declining in number and so are insects. 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: November 1, December 6

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

#### Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: November 8, December 13

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](mailto:marthajarocki@gmail.com).

#### Bahia, Novato:

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

#### Thank You, Stewardship Volunteers

Debbie Ablin, Annette Anzalone, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Linda Nicoletto, Ellena Ochoa, Alison Pence, Lowell Sykes, Archie Williams High School (Brooke Frescos, Simon Kolek, Jaden Selvig)

## MAS Participates in Marin Society of Artists Event

Marin Audubon Board Member Alison Pence will be a speaker at the Marin Society of Artists presentation "Wild California" on November 15 at 11 AM. The topic is The Christmas Bird Count. Address for the event is 1515 3rd Street, San Rafael.

The opening reception for the exhibit is November 14, 5 to 8 PM (during Artwalk San Rafael) and the Marin Audubon Society and the Marin County Watercolor Society have been invited to participate.

## Habitat Stewardship

### CORTE MADERA MARSH ECOLOGICAL RESERVE EXPANSION SITE (CMMERE)

Six years after initial restoration, which involved more than 18,000 plants — we are getting ready to install another 300 plants on the upland part of the reserve. The new plants, now being grown from seeds collected on site or nearby, will expand the food resources for pollinators and birds on the site. We will plant in December or once the rainy season is well established.

This is where **you** come in. We will need **many** volunteers to help us plant on one or two days most likely in December. We'll have the holes dug, your job will be to tuck each plant into place add mulch.

Please check the December *Rail* for planting dates, or our website. This is an opportunity to visit a site that is rarely open to visitors and to

experience the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve up close, the way the birds do! See you there!

### BAHIA

With our early rains, the summer maintenance activities are now ended at Bahia. Every other week, a crew from Hanford watered the plants we installed last January. Plants installed the year before were irrigated as well but less frequently. Maintenance also included removing weeds, not only around the plants but in areas that had been planted earlier.

We're approaching our seventh year of planting the levees at Bahia. The goal was to outcompete the highly invasive radish and create native habitat. The effort has been very successful. Native shrubs of various sizes and ages now grow on the levees surrounding the Homeowners' Lagoon at Bahia.

### Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas II

*continued from page 1*

Black-chinned Sparrow, Rhinoceros Auklet and Northern Pygmy-Owl. And 18 NEW species, including Wild Turkey and Least Bittern (check out Table 1 in this year's Annual Report on our website for the full list) have thus far been documented as potential or confirmed breeders during MCBBA2!

### \$10,000 Matching Challenge — Double Your Impact

To kick off the final phase of MCBBA2 we are announcing a \$10,000 matching challenge made possible by two \$5,000 lead gifts from generous Atlas volunteers. Double your impact by December 31 and help us to initiate data analysis, interpretation, and production of the final Atlas! This will be done over the next 2 years in continued partnership with Marin Audubon Society (our fiscal sponsor) and Point Blue Conservation Science. We are grateful to Marin Audubon and all of you who have supported us this far!

There are multiple ways for you to contribute to this Matching Challenge (and any amount helps!):

- Via Paypal on the Atlas webpage: [marinaudubon.org/birds/marin-county-breeding-bird-atlas/](http://marinaudubon.org/birds/marin-county-breeding-bird-atlas/)
- By check made payable to: *Breeding Bird Atlas* and send to: Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas c/o Daphne Hatch 67 Pinheiro Circle, Novato CA 94945
- Contact Daphne Hatch at [daphnehatch@gmail.com](mailto:daphnehatch@gmail.com) if you are considering a donation

through a DAF (donor-advised fund) or a QCD (Qualified Charitable Donation) from a retirement fund.

### What's Next?

Next month, one of the Atlas Project Coordinators, Diana Humple (an avian ecologist with Point Blue Conservation Science who has been volunteering on the project since 2021), will transition from her volunteer role and join our part-time Atlas Project Manager Hilary Allen (another Point Blue ecologist) to start developing the final Atlas products, through a contract between Point Blue and Marin Audubon Society. Initial work will include data management and developing a framework for the final products. We are extremely grateful to Diana for her leadership and dedication to the Atlas while serving as a Project Coordinator. We are likewise excited to have stalwart volunteer and Atlas veteran, Rusty Scalf, join Daphne Hatch and Liz Lewis as a new Project Coordinator; collectively they will guide development of the scope of work and review Atlas progress and products in development. The final Atlas is anticipated in late 2027. All of this has been possible thanks to the support and contributions of Marin Audubon Society and many of you!

### Literature Cited

Allen, H., D. Hatch, D. Humble, E. Lewis, and W. Wiskes. 2025. Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas: Annual Report for 2025.

Shuford, W. D. 1993. *The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas: A Distributional and Natural History of Coastal California Birds*. California Avian Series 1. Bushtit Books, Bolinas, CA

# Marin Birdlog: September 2025

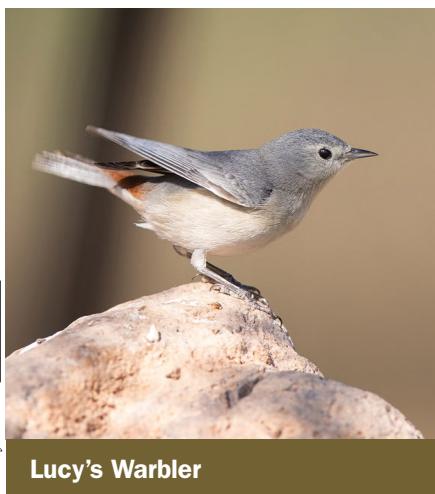
By Noah Arthur

September is the highlight of the year for Marin birders, when shorebird migration collides with the peak of fall passerine migration. Shorebirds kicked off this month with an exceptional incursion of **Solitary Sandpipers** on the 1st, with three at Valley Ford Wetlands (CC) and one at Bon Tempe Lake (LC), the latter a first record for the Mt. Tam watershed. A juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was with an impressive assortment of shorebirds at Abbotts Lagoon on the 2nd (LC). Rare warblers pushed into coastal Marin on the 3rd, with regularly-occurring rarities on the Outer Point (see last paragraph below), as well as a rarer **Hermit X Townsend's hybrid** banded at Palomarin. The rarest find on the 4th, however, was a **Stilt Sandpiper** at Abbotts Lagoon (large shared checklist). An influx of species regular on the "mainland" but very rare on the Outer Point came at the end of the first week, with a **Northern Mockingbird** at Fish Docks on the 6th (large shared checklist), and likely the same bird seen the next day at Lupine Gulch (CN); a **Hairy Woodpecker** at Mendoza Ranch on the 7th (KN); and a **Hooded Oriole** at Drakes Beach on the 7th (CN). From much farther afield came an immature **Painted Bunting** that appeared briefly at Nunes Ranch on the 7th (EM).

A 4-day lull followed, broken on the 11th by a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** and **pileolata Wilson's Warbler** at Muir Beach (CC).

An exceptionally rare bird in northern California, an immature **Royal Tern** was with the Elegant Tern flock at Drakes Beach on the 12th (DS), the third county record (and first immature) for Marin. Also on the 12th, an **Acorn Woodpecker** briefly dropped into the Fish Docks trees (DS).

Birders on a pelagic trip in Marin waters picked a **Short-tailed Shearwater** out of Sooty flocks on the 14th (reported by many in the group on a shared checklist).



Lucy's Warbler

which stayed for an exceptionally long two-week stay. Rare and early was a **rufina-group Song Sparrow** at Drakes on the 19th (MK). More rarities poured in on the 20th, including a **Blue-headed Vireo** at Fish Docks (MAR, MAF, HC), **Ovenbird** at the Lighthouse (EM), **Bobolink** and **Lark Bunting** at Nunes (ES & TS), and **Mourning Warbler** in the Drakes willows (EM). The 21st produced a **Bay-breasted Warbler** at the Fish Docks (BD) and a **Dickcissel** at Nunes (ES & TS).

Elsewhere on the 21st, a **Sage Thrasher** was in Mt. Tamalpais State Park (GL).

The next couple of days featured mostly continuing rarities, but also a flyover **Swainson's Hawk** at Nunes Ranch on the 22nd (MB), an **American Crow** at Nunes on the 22nd (large shared checklist), and a **Vesper Sparrow** at Lunny Ranch on the 23rd (CC). The 24th produced one more really good warbler, a **Black-throated Blue** at Fish Docks (found by large visiting group from Chico).

A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Nunes Ranch on the 25th (CW) added to the pile of recent rare icterids there. A **Laughing Gull** was briefly seen at Drakes on the 26th (MK). Extremely rare anywhere but far offshore, a juvenile **Arctic Tern** foraged over Rodeo Lagoon early on the 27th (WL). Also on the 27th a **Burrowing Owl** was briefly seen at Lupine Gulch (KS & BC). An exceptionally late **Rufous Hummingbird** was at Nunes on the 28th (JH).

Also on the 28th – which seems to be an oddly predictable date for this species in the Bay Area – a **Yellow-green Vireo** showed up along Bolinas Lagoon north of Pine Gulch (MF). And on the 30th, a **Lawrence's Goldfinch** turned up at the Pt. Reyes RCA Station (LN).

Regular rarities included **Chestnut-sided Warblers** at the Lighthouse on the 3rd, Fish Docks (2 birds) on the 3rd, Valley Ford Wetlands on the 7th (KK), Inverness Tennis Club on the 15th



Blue-headed Vireo

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(CC), Fish Docks on the 20th (ES), Muddy Hollow on the 25th (CC), White House Pool on the 25th (CC), Volunteer Canyon on the 28th (MF); **American Redstarts** at the Lighthouse on the 3rd (2 birds, one an adult male) (unclear who found them; large shared checklist), Nunes Ranch on the 6th (CM), Nunes Ranch on the 11th (NW), Muir Beach on the 11th (CC), Lupine Gulch on the 20th (LC & EM), Fish Docks on the 21st (2 birds) (JN); **Tennessee Warblers** at the Lighthouse on the 4th (LC), Rodeo Lagoon on the 11th (CC), New Willows on the 20th (LC & EM), Inverness Tennis Club on the 20th (LC), Fish Docks on the 21st (MB), Stinson Beach on the 28th (MF), Muir Beach on the 28th (MF, LC, CC), Nunes Ranch on the 29th (BB); **Blackpolls** at the Lighthouse on the 4th (CC) and Fish Docks on the 21st (JN); and **Clay-colored Sparrows** at Las Gallinas on the 14th (RA), joined by a second bird on the 15th (EM & CS), new one at Las Gallinas on the 26th (RP).

**OBSERVERS AND ACRONYMS:** **CC:** Connor Cochrane, **LC:** Lucas Corneliusen, **CM:** Chris McIntosh, **KK:** Kristopher Keetch, **EM:** Ethan Monk, **KN:** Kurt Niznik, **CN:** Christian Naventi, **NW:** Nils Warnock, **RA:** Richard Ackley, **EM:** Elton Morel, **CS:** Catherine Spaulding, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **BW:** Bob Battagin, **DE:** Daniel Edelstein, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **MK:** Melani King, **MB:** Mark Butler, **PR:** Pam Rotella, **MAR:** Mary Ann Rotella, **MAF:** Mary Ann Flett, **HC:** Heather Cameron, **ES:** Emilie Strauss, **JN:** Josephine Noah, **BD:** Bob Dunn, **ES:** Elliott Steinfels, **TS:** Townes Stanley, **GL:** Gregory Luckert, **MB:** Maggie Brown, **CW:** Corinne Williams, **MK:** Marcus Kazmierczak, **RP:** Rob Pavey, **WL:** William Legge, **KS:** Kristin Sesser, **BC:** Brent Campos, **JH:** Jack Hayden, **MF:** Marty Freeland



# The Rail

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December 6 **Field Trip:** Bahia, Horseshoe Pond and Rush Creek  
8:30 AM *With Jim White and Bob Battagin*

December 7 **Field Trip:** Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve CBC training  
8:30 AM *With Lisa Hug*

December 11 **Speaker Series:** Elephant Seals  
7 PM *With Karen Allen*

January 16 **Field Trip:** Skaggs Island Road  
10 AM *With Daniel Edelstein*

Check website for updates and details

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Join or Donate to the Marin Audubon Society

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

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