

THURSDAY, MARCH 12 7:00 PM

Bluebirds in the 21st Century
By Georgette Howington and Mike Azevedo



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Western Bluebird

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

Throughout history, the bluebird has been iconic in many cultures, inspiring art, music, poetry, songs and mythology. Tonight, we invite you to learn about bluebirds and how they are an indicator of ecosystem health, as well as their important place in the ecosystem, where they are incredibly effective at controlling insect populations. Also, we will discuss how conservation efforts such as nest box programs have stabilized their populations in North America.

Georgette Howington is State co-director of the California Bluebird Recovery Program and has been a nest box monitor for 25 nesting seasons. She is a certified Horticulturist and UC Davis Naturalist of the Mt. Diablo Region. Her affiliation as a conservationist includes membership in Mt. Diablo Bird Alliance.

Mike Azevedo is co-director for the California Bluebird Recovery Program. Mike has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management and has been a wildlife enthusiast for four decades, serving as a naturalist and park ranger. He works with several Audubon Societies in the South Bay.

THURSDAY, APRIL 9 7:00 PM

Antarctica
By Grant Ballard

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The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Funding Approved for Acquisition of Properties Near Bahia

We're so pleased and honored to be able to announce that the State Coastal Conservancy Board of Directors, at its February 19 meeting, approved a grant to the Marin Audubon Society for the purchase of two parcels owned by the Leveroni family. The two parcels, totaling 323.28 acres, are located just north of the Rush Creek marsh and west of the western edge of the Bahia marshes. We expect to close escrow in the next few months. We are still resolving an item on the list of contingencies. Our acquisition will enable MAS to restore some or



James Raites

Greater Bahia Expansion Parcel to be acquired by MAS.

all of the properties to tidal marsh and ensure an uninterrupted corridor of protected habitat along the Petaluma River.

Conservation

MAS OPPOSES OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION

Marin Audubon Society has commented in opposition to the Department of the Interior Order for the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, based on the potential for significant environmental damage. The waters in the proposed West Coast lease sale areas lie within the California Current Ecosystem and are among the richest, most biologically important waters on the planet. Centered off the San Francisco Bay Area and extending north to Point Arena and south to Cambria lie three contiguous National Marine Sanctuaries: Cordell Bank, Greater Farallones, and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries designated by Congress to safeguard their biological and economic importance. Marine sanctuary regulations explicitly

prohibit "Exploring for, developing, or producing oil, gas or minerals... constructing any structure other than a navigation aid on or in the submerged lands of the Sanctuary; or drilling into, dredging, or otherwise altering the submerged lands of the Sanctuary in any way...." Other federal laws, such as the Marine Mammal Protection, Endangered Species and Migratory Bird Treaty Acts, safeguard these waters indirectly by protecting the species that depend on their extraordinary ocean productivity. State legislation and local ordinances also prohibit new leases for oil infrastructure, including pipelines, refineries, and port improvements.

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The waters off north-central California and the Bay Area are of global importance, providing *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.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
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Membership Chair	Bob Hinz 383-8688 Contact Bob for membership problems or questions.
Outreach, Media	Open
Outreach, Website	Cary Sparks cary@holotropic.com
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Nominating	Doug Waterman dglswtrmn@gmail.com Ellena Ochoa volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.org Cary Sparks cary@holotropic.com
Newsletter Editors, <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

It's a busy time. We have two major grants, due in early March, that we are seeking to fund construction of Phase 2 of the Tiscornia project. Phase 2 consists of constructing the marsh restoration. The diked marsh will be restored to tidal marsh, the cobble beaches will be constructed to protect the marsh from eroding. Other features, including levee improvements, the paved trail, signs, and benches, will also be constructed. Getting out one major application is stressful enough, but two is doubly problematic. To make matters worse the federal grant requires many steps, like signing up for passwords, accesses, etc., in advance of even getting to the application. All very stressful.

We have had a wonderful response to our winter appeal this year. It's such an important appeal for support of our programs, and we're so grateful that it has been such a success. We're grateful to each and every donor who has made the appeal a success. The success has also meant a lot of "thank you" letters to express our appreciation. It has taken us far too long to get them out to our fantastic donors. For that we feel bad and apologize. With an all-volunteer staff, it's not easy to be as efficient and prompt as we would like to be. We want you to know that we're reviewing our process and intend to modify it to be more efficient and timely in following up and thanking you.

Growing season has begun, and this is a time when many folks look to trimming their vegetation and clearing their property after the winter rainy season. It's also the beginning of nesting season. Remember that many species nest in shrubs and low-growing branches, and others on the ground itself. This is the worse time to trim your plants. Nests are usually very difficult to see—purposely, to avoid predators. Resist your urges to prune and cut your vegetation until late summer and fall, when nesting season is over. This will save both nests and nest sites and reduce a stressor on wildlife.

A reminder that we are looking for members to fill spaces on our Board to help us continue our activities and programs. Our volunteer work helps protect and/or enhance habitats, provides opportunities to learn more about birds and their habitats, and gives you the experience and satisfaction of making a difference for wildlife. Contact a member of the Nominating Committee: Doug Waterman, Cary Sparks, or Ellena Ochoa.

Birds are flocking up as nesting season begins. From Canada geese and blackbirds to bufflehead, birds are gathering together to begin their migration to other habitats and nest. Do get out and see our over-wintering birds before they leave for their breeding

grounds and/or migrating birds that may stop over for a rest and refueling. Our field trips are a good way to learn more about those difficult- and easy-to-identify species that share our world.

Like What MAS Does? Consider Joining the MAS Board

NOW is your chance to find out how you can help continue our activities or start new ones, use your skills, or learn new skills, to further enjoyment of birds and support enhancing habitats.

We have several openings. If you have some accounting experience or just like working with numbers we especially need you.

Contact our Nominating Committee: Doug Waterman at dglswtrmn@gmail.com, Cary Sparks at cary@holotropic.com or Ellena Ochoa at volunteercoordinator@marinaudubon.com or, to learn about MAS's needs and opportunities for you with MAS.

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 2026 season.

Trips with participant limits require registration on MAS website's Field trips page. If you wish to be added to a waitlist or want to cancel a trip you registered for, contact newsletter@marinaudubon.org.

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, March 5, 2026

Thursday, April 2, 2006

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 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: From Hwy 101, exit at Smith Ranch Rd. Drive east on Smith Ranch Rd toward McInnis Park. Turn left 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.

RODEO LAGOON

Marin Headlands

Wednesday, March 25, 2026,

7:30 AM to noon

With William Legge & David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens on March 15 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page. Limit of 15 participants for this trip.

With early spring migration underway, we'll be looking out for migrant wildfowl, grebes, loons, gulls, and 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 late winter and early summer passerine migrants. Join us for a Sea Watch at 7:30 AM or arrive later at 8 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 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.

PLANTS AND BIRDS OF MOUNT BURDELL

Thursday April 2, 2026

With David Edelson and Michelle Muir

This trip will require registration.

Details, times and location of this trip will be announced on our website and our monthly events email within the next two weeks. If you don't already receive it, sign up for our events email on our website's homepage.

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

San Rafael

Wednesday April 15, 2026

8:30 AM TO 11:30 AM

With Rich Cimino and Janet Bodle

Registration is required. Registration opens on April 5 at 8 AM on MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 12.

Spring migration birding on the Dominican University grounds will take us to riparian, sycamore and oak habitat.

Species we hope to see might be **Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cassin's Vireo** as well resident birds.

DIRECTIONS: Address for Dominican University is 50 Acacia Ave in San Rafael - meet at the free visitors parking lot at the intersection of Grand and Acacia avenues (the Conlan Center lot).

Golden Gate Bird Alliance Classes Offered to MAS at a 20% Discount

EXPLORING BREEDING BIRD BEHAVIORS

Instructors: Liz Lewis (elewis227@gmail.com) and, with Dom Mosur on field trips

Through a combination of classes and hands-on field trips, you'll deepen your understanding of breeding bird behaviors. This class is tailored for intermediate birders.

Four Thursday evening lectures (Zoom)

April 2, 9, 30, and May 7, 2026

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Zoom link provided when you register.

Two Field trips

El Polin Springs and Inspiration Point

San Francisco

Saturday, April 4, 2026

9 AM to noon

Mount Burdell Preserve

San Andreas Trailhead

Marin County

Sunday, May 17, 2026

9 AM to noon

Price is \$260 (\$208 for GGBA and MAS members). MAS members should contact newsletter@marinaudubon.org to obtain a discount code to register at the GGBA website. Registration opens February 4. Limit of 20 participants for this class.

BAY AREA BIRD VOCALIZATIONS

Instructor: Lynn Perry (lperry@perryip.com)

Whether you are a beginner or intermediate, this class will power up your skills to identify the birds you are likely to encounter in the field.

Two Tuesday evening classes (Zoom)

May 7 and 12, 2026

7 to 9 PM

Zoom link provided when you register.

Two Field trips

Tennessee Valley Trail, Mill Valley

Sunday, May 10, 2026

8:30 to 11:30 AM

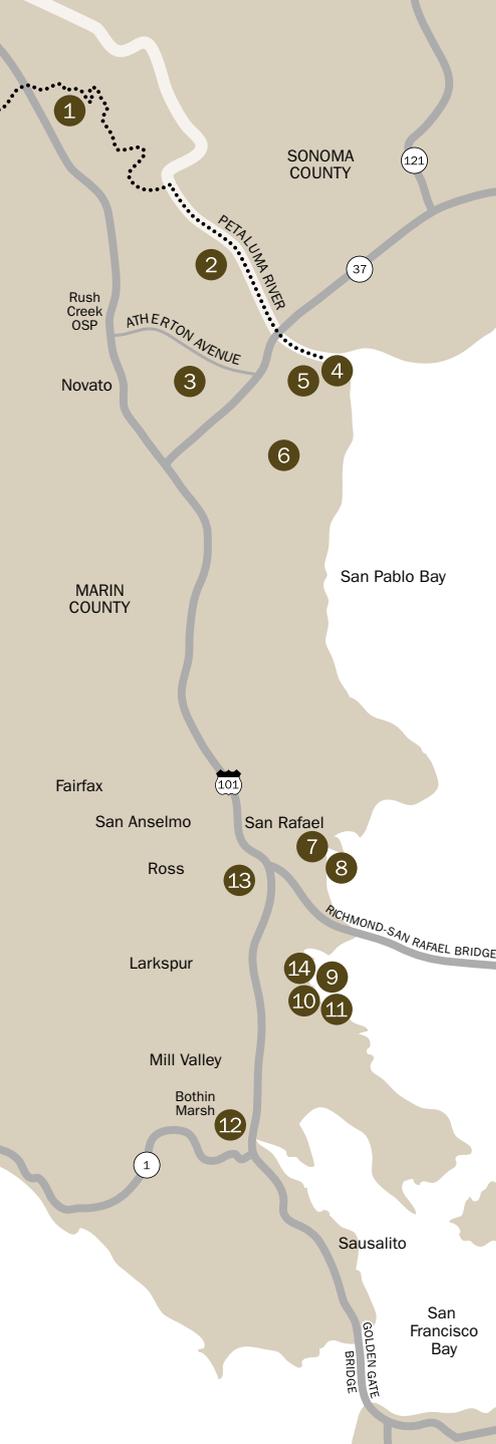
Escalon Trailhead, Camino Alto

Open Space Preserve

Sunday, May 17, 2026

8:30 to 11:30 AM

Price is \$130 (\$104 for GGBA and MAS members). MAS members should contact newsletter@marinaudubon.org to obtain a discount code to register at the GGBA website. Registration opens February 4. Limit of 16 participants for this class.



Conservation

continued from page 1

sustenance for roughly a half-million seabirds of 13 species that breed on the Farallon Islands off San Francisco. The Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge is the largest seabird rookery in the contiguous United States. In addition, migratory birds target these waters to feed in. Species include the sooty shearwater, which breeds in New Zealand and travels here en masse to forage; the federally endangered short-tailed albatross, which breeds off Japan; and the black-footed albatross, which leaves active nests on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to fly foraging runs of over 6,000 miles round trip. Other threatened or endangered species at risk from oil spills include the marbled murrelet and ash storm petrel.

Marine fish and invertebrates that form the food web base for upper-order marine life would also be threatened by a new oil lease. For example, krill, a small, shrimp-like crustacean that is a keystone species in the marine food web and the primary food source for several whale species, would also be vulnerable to oil spills.

THREATS TO SEABIRDS

“Some major ways in which such oils can affect birds include feather contamination, resulting in the loss of critically important insulation; flight capability; water repellency, resulting in death from hypothermia; starvation; drowning; and oil ingestion. Birds ingest toxic oil when preening oiled plumage or ingesting oiled prey. Reproductive impairment can include lowered fertility or abandonment of reproductive effort. Avian embryos are highly sensitive to the smallest contamination of eggshells and often fail to develop normally. Severe oxidant damage to red blood cells is an additive stressor in already compromised conditions.”

THREATS TO MARINE MAMMALS:

Marine mammals are also vulnerable. This region sustains 37 species of marine mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, including whales, porpoises, dolphins, seals, fur seals, sea lions, and sea otters, several of which are listed as Threatened or Endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Blue, fin, sei, northern right, and sperm whales are also endangered, and two ESA-listed humpback whale Distinct Population Segments, southern sea otters, Guadalupe fur seals are Threatened or Endangered. Northern fur seals have only recently resumed breeding on the Farallon Islands after a 160 year absence.

Deep toxic oil fume inhalation by whales and dolphins, which have rapid, high-intensity respiratory exchange, can result in fatal

pneumonia and emphysema. Mammals are also susceptible to chemical burns on their skin and eyes. Ingestion of oil-contaminated prey can lead to adrenal dysfunction, weakened immune systems, and reproductive failure. Fur seals and sea otters lack thick blubber and rely only on dense fur to insulate them in the cold Pacific waters. Oil-matted fur leaves them vulnerable to death from hypothermia directly, or, when weakened, reduces their ability to forage and avoid predators.

For all the above reasons, MAS opposes the Department of the Interior Order for the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, based on the reality that oil exploration and development off California, and especially in north-central offshore waters, would most certainly result in significant environmental impacts to ocean resources. Furthermore, there is no economic justification for opening vast swaths of our oceans to leasing when two-thirds of the existing leases remain largely unused. The Department of Interior stated that in its “Report on Unused Oil and Gas Leases,” the “Review shows that more than two-thirds of offshore and half of onshore leases lie idle” (03/29/2011, last edited 09/29/2021), further illustrating the redundancy of this new lease proposal.

Information taken from letter written by MJ Schramm.

SAN RAFAEL FEASIBILITY STUDY FINALIZED

The results of San Rafael’s two-year-long Feasibility Study were presented on January 26 by the City’s consultants to a zoom audience of the interested public. In it are the same three alternatives that were described in the draft Feasibility Study: 1) repair of low areas along the creek shoreline, 2) installation of a gate across the canal tied via levees to the shorelines, and 3) elevation of the entire shoreline. The Feasibility Study does not recommend an alternative but points out that alternative three would be the most protective in the long term. It would also be the most expensive.

We’re pleased that the final report supports the Tiscornia Marsh project. The figure for the design (gate across the creek) shows the levee connecting the gate to the south shoreline in the same place as our project levee. In this location, the current diked (but soon to be restored to tidal marsh by the Tiscornia project) and current tidal marsh are on the outside of the levee. This design recognizes and provides for the Tiscornia Marsh project.

Costs are presented in the report and were mentioned, but not discussed, at the meeting. The Study shows the gate alternative with lower

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

costs than the shoreline-lifting alternative; however, the report does not show the full costs of the gate alternative. Although it states that the upstream features shown in alternative one (low-area repair) could also have to be constructed with alternative two, the report does not include the costs for that construction or for the operation and maintenance that would be required. These additions would double the cost.

The City is not near a decision on which alternative to pursue. There will need to be lots of discussion with the community and, most likely, consultants. And probably lots more studies will be needed.

MASSIVE TREE LOSSES PROPOSED

The 75 trees proposed for removal in Corte Madera, (as reported in the November issue of *The Rail*), and the 42 trees to be removed for the Auburn Grove Project in unincorporated San Rafael, also reported earlier, are now joined by other proposals to remove large numbers of native trees.

In the unincorporated area of Black Point, on the north side of Atherton Avenue across from MAS's property, a total of 76 trees are proposed to be removed to accommodate the development of 45 houses. Of the trees proposed for removal, 53 are classified as protected and 11 are classified as heritage. In its tree ordinance, Marin County classifies most native trees six inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) as being protected and native trees 18 inches DBH as being heritage. The removals would occur primarily along the periphery of the 6.24-acre development area, mostly at its southern boundary, with additional limited removals within its interior. The tree-removal activities would also include 12 additional trees that do not meet the criteria for a "heritage" or "protected" designation; therefore, they will not need a tree-removal permit. MAS believes that all native trees should be protected.

Within the same two-week period, a proposal to remove another 32 native trees, at the end of Alta Way near Tam Junction, an unincorporated area, was released. Twelve are heritage trees per the Marin County ordinance. No development project is proposed, just a tree-removal permit is requested. Also in Southern Marin, North Coast Land Holdings has applied to develop the former Golden Gate Baptist seminary property with housing. The project would destroy 41 native trees, with mitigation proposed.

The removal of large numbers of native trees is emerging as an alarming trend. The value of trees is being ignored, and the many

services they provide for us—habitat for many species of wildlife, climate moderation, soil stabilization, carbon sequestration, and beauty—are being disregarded.

In discussion with the County, it was revealed that the procedure is to evaluate housing first. Then, after the housing plan is approved, the environmental impacts are considered. That's backwards, and it's too late to save the trees or any other natural resources that may be in the way of the building of houses.

CAL VEGETATION TREATMENT PROJECT SCOPING COMMENTS

At the direction of the governor, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is planning to increase the acreage it is able to treat by 15.2 million acres, expanding it from 20 to 35.5 million acres. CAL FIRE is preparing a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR) to address environmental issues related to the revision of the California Vegetation Management Plan (CalVTP), the plan guiding treatment. The SPEIR will address environmental issues that could result from the expansion of the treatable areas and address deficiencies in the current programmatic EIR, as identified by a court judgment in settlement of a lawsuit.

As we go to press, we are preparing scoping comments. Scoping is an opportunity to put forward issues and questions to be addressed in the SPEIR. We'll be telling CAL FIRE not to expand but to diminish treatable areas in Marin County in order to protect the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) population. We'll point out that Marin is the southern-most habitat for the NSO and is important as habitat for the only stable population within its range, which extends up into Washington. Expanding the clearing of vegetation is a significant concern because the removal of understory also removes cover for the NSO's favored prey, dusky-footed woodrats. Without vegetative cover, habitat for woodrats will degrade, ultimately leading to reduced populations of both the woodrat and the NSO.

Removing understory vegetation also removes nesting, foraging and movement habitat for other species. Nesting and foraging habitat for many species of birds is eliminated with removal of native shrub, forbs and grasses. Wildlife moving between habitats, having to pass through barren areas in search of food, are more vulnerable to predation.

We'll also ask for a full review of current practices and ways to protect wildlife during pile burning. Small birds and even larger-size

mammals seek cover/refuge in stick piles (we found a skunk in one at Black Point). When understory is removed, small animals have nowhere else to go for cover but the stick piles, which are created by piling up removed vegetation. Hiding in the piles, these animals are in danger of being burned when the piles are set on fire. The methods currently used is to clear wildlife from a pile, begin burning at one end of it to give any hiding animals a chance to leave from the other end, or dismantling the pile, and then restoring it for the burn. We want other possible methods to be considered and evaluated as to which one would be the most effective and protective. The SPEIR should set forth the most protective method to be required practice.

At a recent webinar, staff reported that they want to expand the acreage that CAL FIRE can treat while minimizing environmental impacts. We don't see how that is possible. Treating the huge number of treatable acres, plus the increased acreage, will risk significant decline of populations of many ground-dwelling species. It is unfortunate that decisions on the fate of our native species and habitats are being made on the political stage instead of on the patterns of fire movement and ignition, ensuring that our native wildlife species do not become threatened or extinct.

LAS GALLINAS CATTAIL REMOVAL—LAST REPORT

As we enter nesting season, Las Gallinas has ended cattail removal work at their Wildlife Pond as of the end of January. Too much vegetation was removed from most of the pond's edges, particularly the edge next to the second pond where the Least Bittern has been regularly seen and that was pointed out as being the most important edge to retain vegetation. Fortunately most of the cattails remain around the islands as very little removal occurred around them. The Black-crowned Night Heron roosting areas remain and, hopefully, the area will be suitable for nesting of the Least Bittern and other species that breed in freshwater marsh vegetation.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Our new plantings are doing nicely, and we will continue to mulch them. By removing the weeds near them, we give the native plants room to grow, spread and become established. Italian thistle and mustard are two annual weeds that will bloom soon. Removing them now before they produce seeds has benefits that extend into next year.

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.

Rain cancels our workdays. We have the tools and gloves.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: March 7, April 4

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

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve:

Second Saturdays: March 14, April 11

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

Debbie Ablin, Ellie Elbaz, Brooke Frescos, Iouna Ghimus, Katrina Hanley, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Simon Kolek, Alison Pence, Jaden Selvig, Hilde Simon, Lowell Sykes, Sienna Yang

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

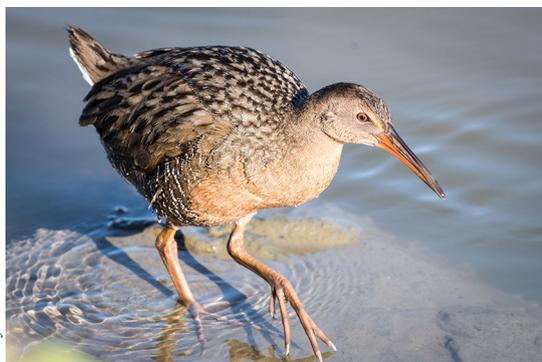
Thomas and Johanna Baruch, Beverly Birnbaum, Robin Burgess, Elizabeth Cooper, Robert J. David, Katherine De Mattei, David Edelson, Gerda Engelbart, Robert L Hollis, Barbara Janis, Lucy Johnson, Nina Katz, Evelyn Keeler, James Kloetzly, The Kurtz family, Vivian Lambert, Victoria Lang, Geoffrey Leland, Susan Lobedan, Douglas Main, Patrick Mullin, Daniel Olavarrieta, Crima Pogge, Lynn Reid, Karen Rowley, Miguel Ruelas, Douglas Sanders, Elizabeth Sanguinetti, Marlowe Shaeffer, Gretel Schlagel, Robert Solem, Laurel Morris Spolter, Gilda Turitz, Edmund Vasper Jr., Kate Vogt, Ann Walbridge

Habitat Stewardship

TWO DAYS OF LEARNING AND RESTORATION WITH MARIN MONTESSORI

By Ellena Ochoa

Among the many rewards of habitat restoration work is the opportunity to connect local students to the bayside wetlands that sit hidden among the more visible built environment. In late January and early February, Marin Audubon welcomed a group of middle schoolers from Marin Montessori to learn about and help with restoration tasks at our Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve Expansion site (CMMERE) and Triangle Marsh. The tasks ranged from mulching tender, new native plants and pulling



Becky Matsubara

The Ridgway's Rail is one of the endangered species found at the CMMERE site and Triangle Marsh.

out the emerging rosettes of Italian thistle, an aggressive, thorny invasive weed that can grow to heights of six feet if left to mature.

The students are part of a science class, where they are learning about the formation of the Bay, the role of the marsh, and endangered species, including Ridgway's Rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse. Building on these topics, MAS board member Alison Pence started each event describing key aspects of the importance of wetland habitats, how birds utilize the resources of healthy wetland habitats, and the unique characteristics that allow birds to navigate and find food. Alison demonstrated the difference in nutrient value between clear and brackish water—containing suspended algae and small invertebrates—which provides food for filter feeders. The students also observed Stilts, Egrets, Avocets, and Dabbling Ducks foraging out in the mud. We discussed how the shape and size of beaks correspond to the type of food each species needs.

With every school group we seek to create a



Rebecca Culbreth

Volunteers Mulching new Plants at Corte Madera Ecological Reserve

lasting impression and, hopefully, inspiration for further stewardship. Whether the students' takeaways are a new understanding of wetlands and endangered birds, the role of native plants, or just the simple joy of being in nature while pulling a few weeds, all experiences are worthwhile. At CMMERE we closed the event by asking each student to say one word about what they felt or experienced that day. "Important," "hopeful," "creative," "valuable," and "joyful" were just a few of the responses. Seems our habitat restoration efforts left a positive impression, and we look forward to future plans to have Marin Montessori back out to our sites.

THANK YOU, DONORS

Thomas & Annina Arthur, Thomas & Johanna Baruch, Tom & Sherry Baty, Andrew Bollen, Robin Burgess, John Campbell, Child Family Trust, Judith Ciani, Lois Connady, Greg Costopoulos and Teri Hollowell, Mary Currie, Nona Dennis, David Edelson, Phoebe Fielding, Kathleen Foster, Wendy Friefeld, Karthik Ganapathi, Donald German, Judith Hanks, James Harrison, Sharlene Hassler, Elizabeth Hunning, Larkspur RE, Inc., Alicia Inza, Susan Ives, Eliza Jewett-Hall, Janice Johnson, Sarah Kass, Jeffrey Kimball & Pamela Hogan, Kenneth Kitlas, Kurtz Family Charitable Fund, Lelia Lanctot, David Long, Mary Love, Ron & Amanda Mallory, John Kirk McDonough, Gerald Meral, Robert Morton, Biran & Michelle Muir, Patrick Mullin, Martha Nelson, Colin & Lisa Nicholls, Phillip Peterson, Jessie Powell, Kurt Rademacher, Charlotte Reiter, Georg Roth, Carla Ruff, Cynthia Samson & Alan Cowan, Douglas Sanders, Ann Shaw, Ann Sheldon & Niccolo Caldararo, Suzanne Shelhart, Michael Stone, Meryl Sundove, Lowell Sykes, Elizabeth Theiss, Shilpa Tilwalli, Ernest Torigoe, Inta Vodopals, Christine Wood, John Yee.

Marin Birdlog: January 2026

By Noah Arthur

January is a month of change in Marin, beginning in the coldest weeks of winter and ending with the first few signs of spring, like blooming manzanita and newly arrived Allen's Hummingbirds settling in to breed. The first new rarity this January was an unseasonable **Elegant Tern** driven to shore at Muir Beach by a storm on the 4th (TS).

With king tides on the 6th, 4 **Nelson's Sparrows** were observed simultaneously at Pine Gulch in Bolinas (EMn & EMk). Also on the 6th, 2 **Nashville Warblers** were seen together in the town of Tomales (EMk), and on the 7th 2 **Lapland Longspurs** (rarer in winter than fall) were with pipits at Abbotts Lagoon (LN). A **Winter Wren** was calling in the willows at the intersection of Bolinas-Fairfax Rd and Hwy 1 on the 8th (CC). On the 9th, a **Lewis's Woodpecker** landed on a snag near Bald Knob on Mt. Tam (SeG & SaG), and a **Myrtle X Audubon's Warbler hybrid** was at Valley Ford Wetlands (CC).



Lapland Longspur

©2014, Alan D. Wilson, naturispiconline.com



Lesser Yellowlegs

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On the 10th, the **Lapland Longspur** count at Abbotts increased to at least 6 (TF), and a **Black-throated Grey Warbler** was with a Townsend's flock near Bear Valley Visitor Centre (LN & MD). The first **Allen's Hummingbirds** returned on the 11th and 12th, with sightings at several locations. Uncommon in fall, rare in winter, a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was on Corte Madera Creek in Larkspur on the 13th (BB).

The parade of off-season passerines continued on the 13th with a **Nashville Warbler** at Railroad Marsh, and on the 14th with a **Western Flycatcher** at Stafford Lake (CC).

On the 15th, a **Ruff** turned up on the Sonoma side of Valley Ford Wetlands (SM), but in subsequent days moved over to the Marin side. On the 17th a male **Common Teal** showed up at Giacomini Wetlands (BB), and a **Tennessee Warbler** and **Winter Wren** in a riparian patch in town in Bolinas (LS). 7 **Lapland Longspurs** were counted at Abbotts on the 18th (RR & AR).

Rare on the Outer Point but likely to increase in coming years, 3 **Wild Turkeys** were seen at the Fish Docks on the 24th (BR). Formerly more common but sadly declining, a **Loggerhead Shrike** was on Carmody Rd on the 24th (DL). On the 25th, a **Tundra Swan** was seen flying across Tomales Bay with a cormorant flock (TP).

Carmody Rd yielded a **montana/merrillii Song Sparrow** on the 27th (CC). 2 male **Common Teals** were found on the 27th, one at Hamilton Wetlands (CS) and another on Bolinas Lagoon (NA). Rare for the Outer Point, an **American Crow** at Drakes Beach was the last new rarity of the month on the 30th (MF).



Loggerhead Shrike

Dick Daniels, thewonderbird.org

OBSERVERS AND ACRONYMS: TS: Tyson Smith, EMN: Eddie Monson, EMK: Ethan Monk, LN: Larry Nigro, CC: Connor Cochrane, SEG: Seth Greene, SAG: Sam Greene, TF: Teale Fristoe, MD: Molly Donahue, BB: Brian Browne, SM: Scott Morrill, BB: Bob Battagin, LS: Lucas Stephenson, RR: Rajan Rao, AR: Adi Rao, BR: Brett Reeves, DL: David Lumpkin, TP: Todd Plummer, CS: Cary Sparks, NA: Noah Arthur, MF: Martha Frost

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Barred Owls have extended their range to the west coast and have been seen in Marin. There is increasing concern about their impact on Marin's Northern Spotted Owl population. Barred Owls are larger, more aggressive and occupy the same habitat type as Spotted Owls. See contact list at marinaudubon.org/2020/09/01/alert-report-barred-owl-spotting.

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7 PM *With Grant Ballard*
- April 22 **Field Trip:** Rodeo Lagoon
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Check website for updates and details



SCAN QR CODE on left with your phone camera to connect to MAS's website.

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

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

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

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