Newsletter of the Marin Audubon Society. Vol. 69, No. 03 **November 2026**

The Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12 7:00 PM

Acorn Woodpeckers: Cooperation, Conflict, and Family

With Walt Koenig



Megan Nagel/USFWS

Acorn Woodpecker at Granary

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

Acorn Woodpeckers, best known for their unique habit of storing acorns by the thousands in special structures known as 'granaries,' are cooperative breeders that exhibit one of the most complex social systems of any bird. Based on a long-term study of this species at Hastings Natural History Reservation in Monterey County, Walt will explain some of the strikingly cooperative and diabolically competitive behaviors of this species that he and his colleagues have discovered during their 50+ year field study.

Walt studied Acorn Woodpeckers as a Ph.D. student and Research Zoologist at UC Berkeley from 1974 to 2008. He was subsequently a Senior Scientist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York, from 2008 to 2016. He retired in 2016 and returned to upper Carmel Valley, where he studies acorn production by California oaks, continues to try to figure out Acorn Woodpecker behavior and perfects his sparkling wine palate.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10 7:00 PM

What Birds Can Teach Us About Energy

With Martin Ogle

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Field Trips	3
Habitat Stewardship	6
Birdlog	7

Save CEQA, Save Our Environment, Vote No on Proposition 45

During the last 50-plus years, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has enabled Californians to save our wetlands, woodlands, chaparral habitats, air quality, shorelines, and many other environmental features that are important to our health, safety, well-being, and lives.

Prop 45 would make it difficult for communities to protect themselves from polluting and environmentally damaging development projects. It would limit analysis of a project's potential impacts, limit the number of alternatives that would be less impactful, restrict timelines and interagency coordination, reduce public participation, and suppress the very purpose of CEQA. It would impede the public's ability to access information on the impacts and alternatives of a given project.

Failure to identify adverse impacts and implement mitigation measures would mean that payment of the costs of those unaddressed impacts would fall on local governments; in other words, on the public. For example, if industry is not required to clean up on-site contamination, that cleanup eventually falls on the shoulders of the public.

Furthermore, Prop 45, once passed, could only be changed by a vote of the public or a two-thirds vote of the legislature. However, the legislature would have limited ability to correct any problematic sections, because any amendment must further the purposes of the measure.

The independent Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that the measure would cost local governments more than $100 million annually.

According to premier environmental attorneys Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger, "Proposition 45 would represent the most significant change to the California Environmental Quality Act since the statute's adoption in 1970." In essence, Prop 45 would render CEQA meaningless.

Join the more than 300 organizations (environmental, public health, good government, labor, and others) in **VOTING NO ON PROPOSITION 45.**

Vaux's Swifts Overwhelm Counters at McNear's Chimneys

The Vaux's Swift migratory roost at McNear Brickyard was monitored for the 16th season this Fall. The pattern of the last six seasons continues: a very heavy and protracted migration. Nightly counts were already in the low thousands by the end of August; by early September estimates vacillated between 10,000 to 35,000. In mid-September, we had evenings when the team was simply overwhelmed, and frankly, our protocol is probably not up to the task. Often all three chimneys were used and estimates were just astronomical.

Have they lost a major roost site we never discovered? That is certainly plausible. A lost roost of comparable size could double our numbers. Other major roost sites have been lost in Oregon and Los Angeles.

Are the birds staying longer and accumulating to much larger numbers? Perhaps the birds arrive depleted and need longer to build their strength for the next big push.

Whatever the explanation, it is highly unlikely that the actual world population is increasing. Environmental challenges on their nesting grounds are certainly not improving.

continued on page 4

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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At-large Director	Lowell Sykes 388-2821
BAAC Reps	Barbara Salzman 924-6057 Doug Waterman newsletter@marinaudubon.org

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 has been a busy month, with work plans and budgets for the OPC and EPA grants needing to be finalized, and then the problems that have already come with the El Niño. On Saturday, October 9, I observed that most of the marsh plants were covered with tidal water at the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve, Muzzi and Heerdt Marsh, and the Eastside Outfall Channel was no longer visible as a channel. In San Rafael the following day, tidal waters were coming up from the storm drains on Third Street, where tidal marsh extended historically. This was on days when the predicted tides were 6.4 feet – the tides were 1.5 feet above that. At Corte Madera, the birds were huddled on a few small dry areas that were not inundated. What will our wetlands and shorelines look like when the King Tides are here?

It's important to keep dogs on-leash, especially during times of extreme tides. With no place to hide and few, if any, places to stand, the birds are most vulnerable to predation. Do not try to get close to the birds. These are stressful times for marsh-dependent wildlife. Make sure you do not add to their stress.

We've been having trouble with our website – it has been going offline from time to time. If you have found the Marin Audubon website to be inaccessible, we first want to apologize for any inconvenience and/or frustration it has caused. Our webmaster reports that it's likely the result of massive DDOS attacks generating hundreds of thousands of requests per day. Our webmaster and his hosting company are working on the problem. We still don't have a clear answer, unfortunately. If you have problems accessing our website, please leave a message for our Website Coordinator at outreach@marinaudubon.org.

We are still looking for a secretary to take minutes at our Board meeting. This is an officer position on the Board.

You will soon be receiving MAS's Winter Appeal letter. All donations to the Winter Appeal go toward keeping our organization in operation and maintaining and expanding our programs. The Spring Appeal is dedicated to supporting our properties. We greatly appreciate your support.

Election time is upon us. As a nonprofit organization, we are prohibited from endorsing political candidates, but we can recommend voting with the environment and birds in mind. And **VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 45**.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving. Do get out and enjoy the overwintering birds, including shorebirds and waterfowl. They have all returned by now, and you will be rewarded by the delight of seeing their diversity and the challenge of identifying them.

Southern Marin CBC Needs Volunteers

The Marin Audubon Society launched the first Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count in 1978. The counts are conducted within designated circles that are 15 miles (24 kilometers) in diameter. Each circle is divided into areas. The Southern Marin count circle is divided into 24 Areas from Rodeo Beach to Terra Linda.

This year's Southern Marin CBC will be held on Saturday, December 26. We are asking for volunteers to help in areas that need more counters. Some birding experience is preferred but we also have opportunities for beginning birders and feeder watchers if you would like to participate from home. Volunteers will be assigned to an area team and count every bird they see or hear while participating. If you are an experienced birder, we need leaders in a couple of count areas. Every bird counted contributes to our understanding of how bird populations are changing and what actions we need to take to protect them. CBC data don't just sit in a database – they drive real-world conservation action and policy decisions.

A compilation dinner will be held after the count.

If you're interested in participating, contact Alison Pence at smcbc.marinaudubon@gmail.com or register at https://marinaudubon.org/birds/southern-marin-christmas-bird-count-2026.

2026 MARIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Three Christmas Bird Counts will be held in Marin this December. Dinner plans after the SMCBC will be announced soon!

Thursday, 12/17/26 Cheep Thrills CBC
Covering north Marin and extending into southern Sonoma County. Contact Susan Kelly, cheepthrills@icloud.com.

Saturday, 12/19/26 Point Reyes CBC
Covering west Marin, including Tomales Bay and Point Reyes National Seashore. Registration is closed.

Saturday, 12/26/26 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.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

Trips with participant limits require registration on MAS website's Field trips page. If a trip is full, check back, even on the night before the trip, as cancellations will open new spots. If you 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, November 5, 2026
Thursday, December 3, 2026
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. 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: *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.*

PALOMARIN FIELD STATION Bolinas

Wednesday, November 18, 2026
8 to 11 AM
With Hilary Allen

Registration required. Registration opens on November 8 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 20.

Point Blue Conservation Science has been continuously running a songbird banding project at the Palomarin Field Station since 1966. Come visit one of the foremost, long-term banding operations in North America and see the work in action. Point Blue biologists will host a bird banding demonstration, explaining how birds are captured, what information is collected, and how that information is used in conservation. There is an optional 1/4 mile hike to view our mist nets that does include some stairs and steep sections. Of course, we will be bird watching the entire time and talking about bird identification and life history. This field trip will be capped at 20 participants.

DIRECTIONS: *Coming from the north on Hwy 1, turn right (from the south on Hwy 1, turn left) onto Olema Bolinas Rd. After 1.2 miles, turn left to stay on Olema Bolinas Rd for 0.5 miles to Mesa Rd and turn right to 999 Mesa Rd.*

RODEO LAGOON AND MARIN HEADLANDS

Wednesday, November 18, 2026
7:30/8 AM to noon
With William Legge and David Wiechers

Registration required. Registration opens on November 8 at 8 AM on the MAS website's Field Trips page. Trip limit is 15.

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 8:00 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: *From Hwy 101, 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.*

Marin Audubon Needs a Secretary

If you like what we do, are interested in being a part of what we do, like birds and other wildlife, and can take notes of our Board meetings, MAS needs you.

Contact Barbara Salzman at 425/924-6057 for more information.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Barbara Ayoubpour, Rosemary Benson, Ann Brice, Tracy Corbin, Annette Gardner, Diana Granat, Cricket Halsey, Gerrod Herndon, Michael Kamerick, Roberta Kemp, Sherrill Miller, Harmony Montessori, David Morley, David Sandri, James Morris Shubin, Michael Sillman, Jedediah Smith, Elizabeth Touchette, Connie Turner, Steven Wasserman, William West

THANK YOU, DONORS

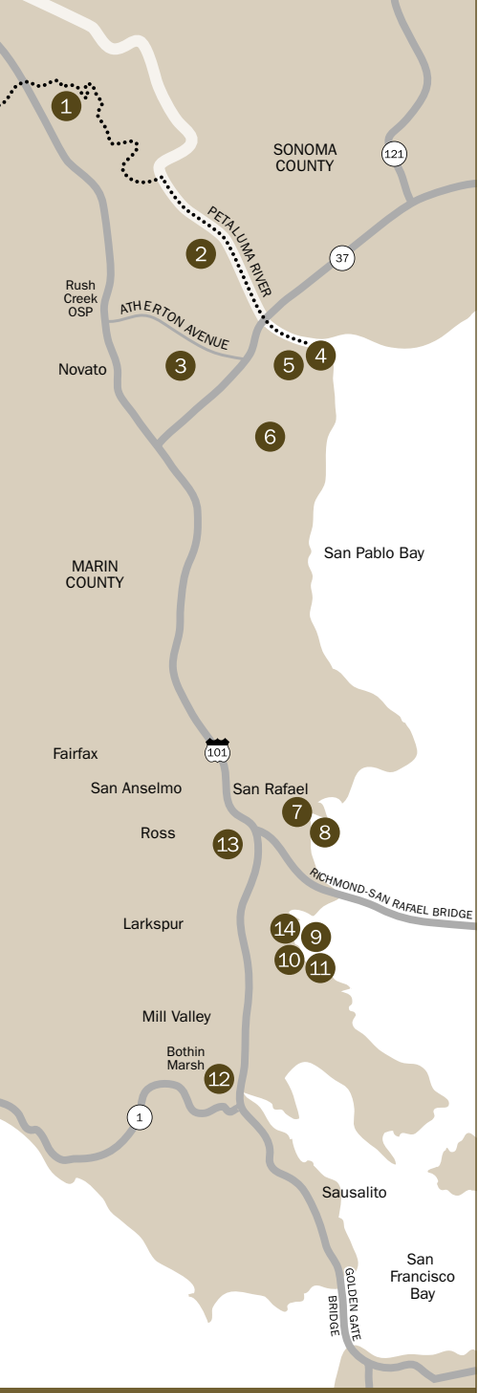
Annette Anzalone, Paul Barnett, Donald Bartling, Andria Benner, Ann Brice, Faith Brown, Lizabeth Gluck, Sarah Goelet, Raya Hanlon, Alicia Inza, Christine Jaqua, Lauren Lee, Gillian Ludwig, Rick Misuraca, Greg & Hanna Ostroff, Brian Rulli, Jedediah Smith, Kandice Strako, Steven Wasserman, Carleen Wong, Jerald Young

Are You a Chapter-supporting Member?

If you are a National Audubon Society (NAS) member, you are thereby also a member of the Marin Audubon Society (MAS), the local chapter of NAS, and you might expect that your NAS membership dues are shared with our chapter. Although chapters do receive a base amount from NAS, it is based on the membership dues collected by each chapter more than 20 years ago. It has no relationship with current dues paid or collected.

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 urge NAS members to join MAS as a Chapter-supporting member to support what MAS does right here in Marin.



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

Report From Northern Spotted Owl Docents

By Elyse Omernick

In the area where nesting owls are monitored, members of the Northern Spotted Owl docent program were able to observe a nesting pair that successfully fledged two young in mid-June, though they were not seen after these early sightings. Adult Northern Spotted Owls were heard throughout the area all season, and community reports throughout Marin, especially those prompted by our annual advisory mailing, continue to be invaluable in helping Marin Open Space and Point Blue monitor and verify owl activity. We also received an early-season report of a Barred Owl in Mill Valley.



Elyse Omernick

Northern Spotted Owl Adult with Chick

Our docent team continues to see challenges from large groups of photographers loitering near owls for long periods of time, as well as off-leash dogs on posted trails. Please help these sensitive and protected birds by not sharing owl locations, keeping dogs leashed where required, and reporting concerning behavior to our docent team.

Sadly, an adult Northern Spotted Owl found on the ground in late July was euthanized after testing positive for highly infectious trichomoniasis. Regularly cleaning and disinfecting bird feeders and baths can help limit the spread of this disease.

Thank you for helping protect Marin's Northern Spotted Owl population!

Vaux's Swift

continued from page 1

Loss of old growth forests and mandatory spark guards on residential chimneys are only worsening. At the Brickyard, swifts usually 'zero out' during the last week of October or when rain begins. At that point, entry times become wildly unpredictable, making estimates impractical. The past two seasons greatly surprised us when a small cohort actually stayed for the winter! The 2024 South Marin CBC had 19, the 2025 CBC had 230! Small numbers have wintered in Los Angeles and San Diego, but we believe this is unprecedented at our latitude.



PierylPublic Domain

Vaux's Swift

New Audio Monitor May Help Count Accuracy

Using our new audio monitoring this spring, we were able to determine that the over-wintering birds finally disappeared and the population cleanly changed over to seasonal migrants about April 1. Audio monitoring is giving us additional insights into the behavior of the Vaux's flocks (and other birds) at this site. In addition to helping us monitor bird presence in the elusive and irregular spring migratory season, we are starting to learn more about the birds' use of sounds while gathering for the mass roost. This major finding is significant since highly variable daytime activity by the birds was largely unknown to us before. The monitoring program is based on devices using BirdNET (a sibling of the Merlin app) and we are considering how to improve the sensitivity of what we use, and go beyond what BirdNET can do. And as a bonus we have a full-year census of birds heard at this site, not just the Vaux's Swifts.

Fall Atlas Update

We hope you are enjoying this fall season and the movement of birds that comes with it. Perhaps some of you have encountered the flocks of montane species that have invaded our skies or are enjoying the return of our beloved winter residents. Meanwhile, we're continuing to work on the Atlas, and thought you might be wondering: *what's the latest?*

The Atlas team (Point Blue Conservation Science project managers and the Atlas project coordinators) continues to work on vetting five years of data – including over 91,000 Atlas survey records, over 2,200 incidental records, and external researcher data from at least 15 institutions and 30 projects. As we finalize the data vetting, we are also starting to populate our species accounts – an exciting step!

The latest round of data vetting involves assessing the correct use of breeding codes by species. This includes scrutinizing species that are migrating through Marin and may even be singing while doing so (more on this below). We are also reviewing the GPS coordinates of nest locations to ensure they match the specified block. Some of you may have heard from us with questions on your records – thanks for your responses!

This data vetting process has resulted in an updated list of species (167) that we identified as possible, probable, or confirmed breeders during the second Atlas. If you want to learn more about what this entailed, how these changes are reflected in our *Data Explorer* (https://marinaudubon.org/birds/marin-county-breeding-bird-atlas), and what to do if you notice something that doesn't match your knowledge in the Data Explorer: keep reading!

Extra time is being devoted to *40 or so species that are uncommon or geographically restricted breeders in Marin*. While they also occur here as breeders, some of our records may be just of non-breeding migrants. These include species such as the Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Purple Martin, and Western Tanager. For example, let's look at the Yellow-rumped Warbler, which is relatively ubiquitous throughout Marin during fall and winter months. While this species occurs in the county year-round, only a small population breeds here, predominantly in the coniferous forests on Mount Tamalpais. The Yellow-rumped Warbler's breeding population in Marin is quite small, with probable or confirmed breeding recorded in just 10 blocks. However, we reviewed many records from throughout the county, a number of which we deemed appropriate to downgrade to the "Excluded" category as – based on habitat (e.g., suburbs), behavior (flocking), and timing (early spring) – we concluded they were overwinterers or passage migrants. After this process, it appears their distribution is mostly consistent with that of the first Atlas, with a few interesting differences. Go to the *Data Explorer* and check it out for yourself.

As we update the Atlas data set, changes in species distribution are reflected in the Data Explorer maps. However, until this Atlas is finalized (expected end of 2027), the data should be considered preliminary, as we will continue to evaluate the data, incorporate feedback from our volunteers, and consult with external biologists on some of the rare and special status species. In the interim, *if you have any questions about the data you see in a block you led or spent substantial time surveying in or know well*, please send us an email.



Ron Brown

Pygmy Nuthatch

The Data Explorer also hosts an impressive photo gallery of Marin's breeding birds taken by volunteers that you can access via the Story Maps found under More Resources > Additional Resources tab, where the photos are organized by year.

Despite their preliminary status, these maps are insightful and instructive as long as users remember they are subject to change. We wanted to share the experience of one of our many committed volunteers who returned to the Atlas Data Explorer maps recently after an encounter with Pygmy Nuthatches in his neighborhood. Fascinated by the habits of our cavity-nesting birds, Ron Brown, a veteran Atlas volunteer, enjoyed following the boisterous banter of Pygmy Nuthatches on daily walks with his devoted pup BamBam during the Atlas period. When he revisited the Atlas Data Explorer website after a recent encounter with Pygmy Nuthatches, with his Atlas memories in mind, he was impressed with their expanded distribution throughout Marin since the first Atlas. It is not entirely clear yet why this mostly sedentary species has expanded its range (check out the preliminary map yourself on the Data Explorer and click on the red Species Explorer tab), but it seems to be nesting in the Monterey cypress and other introduced pine trees throughout Marin's landscapes.

We are excited to be poring through the data that so many of you contributed to so that we can ultimately explore questions like this. We will continue to share updates on the development of the Atlas products on our web page, through emails, and in Marin Audubon's newsletter, *The Rail*.

With gratitude for your continued support,

Project Coordinators Daphne Hatch, Liz Lewis, and Rusty Scalf; and Point Blue Project Managers Hilary Allen and Diana Humple

PREPARING FOR EL NIÑO

Like many property owners along ocean and bay shorelines, we have been preparing for the heavy storms and high tides predicted for the coming El Niño winter. The following are situations we face and steps we've taken to address flooding risks.

The County of Marin has requested permission to enter MAS's property at the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve, at the end of Industrial Way, to help prevent high tides from flooding Highway 101, as occurred last year. The County plans to place sandbags at several low points on California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Marin Audubon properties. A right-of-entry agreement is needed to use our property.

A pump on one of our new Novato properties needs repair and management. Under previous ownership, pumps on each property removed rainwater to allow grazing and prevent flooding on Binford Road. There were two pumps on the northern property. The larger is controlled by the adjacent property owner. We disconnected power to the smaller pump because the drier conditions needed for grazing are no longer necessary. However, the southern property must remain drained to protect Binford Road. We've had its pump evaluated and will contract for repairs and management during the winter rainy season. We expect to continue managing it until the site is restored to marsh.

Farther south, at Tiscornia, rodents have burrowed into the levee, leaving large holes. We're consulting experts about closing the holes and making temporary repairs to protect adjacent structures until we construct a new levee next spring. We're also addressing a section of levee farther south along the shoreline that we may own. A survey will verify ownership.

Finally, at Norton Pond in Black Point, we'll share costs with the adjacent property owner to clean out a section of culvert under the road, although it appears to be functioning well. Property ownership on either side extends to the center of this non-county-maintained road. Residents are considering other ways to manage tidal water in the channel behind their properties. Their proposed approach concerns us because it could affect our pond and the tidal channel through which water enters it. They are interested in blocking tidal water from entering the channel, which would trap rainwater and runoff behind the blocked culvert.

EL NIÑO

In some winters, predicted severe weather never materializes; winds are weaker or storms less intense than expected. This time, however, the threat is real. Evidence already points to major flooding this rainy season. Tides predicted to reach 5.8 feet on October 10 actually reached 7.8 feet. We are in uncharted territory.

At 6 degrees Celsius, the ocean temperature is higher than during the 2023 El Niño, when it was 5 degrees Celsius. Hot water expands, raising water levels by half a foot to a foot or more above normal.

Experts say there is a 70 percent chance this El Niño will exceed all previous ones on record, with data going back to 1950. Tides will be higher, with more rain and coastal flooding. The Climate Prediction Center reports that El Niño continues to strengthen and is expected to remain very strong throughout winter. The highest tides are expected in November, December, and January, but they're already here.

Local press reports describe extensive preparations by the County and Marin cities for significant storms, including an inflatable barrier, pumps, and storm-drain maintenance.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the federal wetlands regulatory program, has established an Emergency Regulatory Program to Address El Niño Emergency Activities. Recognizing that emergency work may be needed in waterways, navigable waters, or wetlands under Sections 10 and 404, the public notice outlines several options:

1. Activities that do not involve work in navigable water and/or involve a discharge of dredge and fill material into US waters do not need a permit.
2. A maintenance exemption from the need to obtain a permit for certain types of activities, including reconstruction of serviceable structures like dams, levees, dikes, and riprap.
3. Regional General Permit 5, for Emergency Repair and Protection Activities of existing facilities during emergencies.
4. Nationwide Permit 3, authorizing maintenance activities of existing permitted structures.
5. Emergency procedures, for activities not authorized by the exemptions above.

It's a difficult place to be: considerable environmental damage, including loss of wetlands, could occur from both the El Niño and the activities to protect communities. The County urges everyone to sign up for Marin Alert for urgent communications about public safety. There is no protection for the wetlands and no safe place for the birds.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

With a few native plants to put in the ground after the rains begin, we will clear the areas for planting. Bristly oxtongue is still blooming, so it is one easy-to-find weed that we will be cutting off below ground before rain spurs its growth. Most Salsola was pulled in September and October and will be mature in November, but we might find that it isn't too late to remove some plants. Harding grass that we dig now won't be rerooting unless there is rain.

Most plants are practically dormant, but even without significant rain the longer, cooler nights allow a few perennial species to begin to grow. The native purple needlegrass is showing new leaves, and so is the nonnative Harding grass.

Even late-blooming native species are wrapping up their seasons, but gumplant, aster, western goldentop (*Euthamia occidentalis*), and hayfield tarweed (*Hemizonia congesta*) might have a few flowers.

If you appreciate our birds or native plants, volunteer on a workday to give them a boost. It is your environment, too. Please help improve it.

Everyone is welcome. We have the tools and gloves.

Volunteer Workdays

Triangle Marsh, East Corte Madera:
First Saturdays: November 7, December postponed

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 14, December 12

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, Beatrice Buell, Bob Hinz, Martha Jarocki, Eli Maltz, Christina Melgares, Alison Pence, Lowell Sykes

REPORT BARRED OWL SIGHTINGS

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

Marin Birdlog: September 2026

By Noah Arthur

(Regular rarities are summarized in the last paragraph)

September is the month Marin birders wait for all year long, the peak season for rare birds on Point Reyes and throughout our county. The first rare find of the month was a **White-winged Dove** at Pt. Reyes Nunes Ranch on the 2nd (CC). Rodeo Lagoon was a hotbed of rare warblers early in the month, with a **Mourning Warbler** arriving on the 3rd (LK), joined by a **Virginia's Warbler** (CM) and **'sordida' Orange-crowned Warbler** (CC) on the 5th. Rarities started coming thick and fast on the 5th, including a **Pacific Golden Plover** and **Green-tailed Towhee** at Spaletta Ranch (CC), and a **Brewer's Sparrow** at Nunes Ranch (BB).

The Super El Niño brought us a gift on the 6th in the form of a **Cocos Booby** off McNears Beach (SN). Surprisingly rare on the Outer Point, a **Forster's Tern** turned up at Fish Docks on the 7th, plus a **Magnolia Warbler** at Fish Docks and a **Prairie Warbler** at Nunes Ranch (CC). Elsewhere on the 7th, a **Least Flycatcher** was with a big mixed flock in Inverness (CC). On the 8th a **Bobolink** stopped in at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse (LN & MD), and the banded female **Black-and-white Warbler** that has spent at least two winters at Muir Beach turned up again (JP).

The rarest find of the month came to Pt. Reyes on the 9th, a **Northern Wheatear** on roadside fenceposts along Sir Francis Drake near South Beach (TM), well-photographed but never seen again after the initial sighting.

The 9th also produced **2 Blue-winged Teal** at Drakes Beach (LN), an **Ovenbird** at Nunes (CC), and a **Hooded Oriole** at Spaletta (CC). On the 10th, another **Mourning Warbler** sulked in the willows at Drakes Beach (LN), and an exceptional **5 Bobolinks** were at Pt. Reyes Lupine Gulch (CC). What would become an epic finch irruption began on the 10th with **2 Evening Grosbeaks** over Hawk Hill (MB).

Very rare but increasing in recent years, a **Bar-tailed Godwit** was with Marbleds at Hamilton Wetlands on the 11th (MK). This was followed up by a **Hudsonian Godwit** at Abbotts Lagoon the very next day (DH & TF), along with a **Franklin's Gull** (MK).

Elsewhere on the 11th, a **Sage Thrasher** showed up at Las Gallinas (NO). On the 12th, a **Green-tailed Towhee** popped into a Muir Beach backyard (JP). The rarest warbler of the month was a briefly-seen **Pine Warbler** at the Lighthouse on the 12th (group checklist). On the 14th a calling **Dickcissel** flew over at Abbotts (ED & CC). Rarer in fall than spring, an **Indigo Bunting** was at Fish Docks on the 15th (CC).

On the 16th, the continuing **Hudsonian Godwit** at Abbotts was joined by an even rarer **White-rumped Sandpiper**, plus a **Ruddy Turnstone** and a **Bobolink** (OM & LS). A single **Evening Grosbeak** also flew over Blithedale Ridge on the 16th (AS).

A major incursion of rarities came on the 17th, including **2 Burrowing Owls** at Lupine Gulch (BC), a **Brewer's Sparrow** in Pt. Reyes Station (OJ), a **Vesper Sparrow** at Nunes (LS), a **Blackburnian Warbler** at Mendoza Ranch (LS & CD), and a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Fish Docks (LS & CD). The 18th yielded a **Least Flycatcher** in Inverness (MK) and a **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Fish Docks (MK) plus a **Prairie Warbler** at Fish Docks (ST). On the 19th a **Yellow-shafted Flicker** and **Vesper Sparrow** flew over Mt. Tam (LS & CC).

An epic irruption of inland rarities on Mt. Tam began on the 19th and went on for several days. Total counts across 12 days from the 19th through the end of the month were: **207 Evening Grosbeaks**, **21 Lawrence's Goldfinches**, **29 Cassin's Finches**, **16 Townsend's Solitaires**, **2 Lewis's Woodpeckers**, **1 Vesper Sparrow**, **1 Yellow-shafted Flicker**, and **104 Clark's Nutcrackers** – 45 of the latter being in one flock (JP).

Elsewhere, on the 21st a **Yellow-green Vireo** showed up at Mendoza Ranch (EI). **26 Evening Grosbeaks** flew by Mt. Vision Rd. on the 23rd (CC), and 47 on the 26th (group checklist). On the 24th a juvenile **Ruff** was along Marsh Dr. in Novato (LS). On the 26th an **Orchard Oriole** showed up at Stinson Beach (MK). The 27th brought a **Northern Parula** at Rodeo Lagoon (CC), a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Nunes (CD & EH), and a **Prairie Warbler** at Drakes (CD & EH).

The 27th brought another big vagrant wave, including a **Least Flycatcher** at New Willows (CD & EH) and a **Mockingbird** at Fish Docks (MKi & TM). **2 Clark's Nutcrackers** flew over Bolinas on the 28th (NC). Also on the 28th a **Hammond's Flycatcher** turned up at Spaletta (AP), and on the 30th a **Vesper Sparrow** was with a mixed sparrow flock at Rodeo Lagoon (WL & DW).

Regular rarities included **Tennessee Warblers** at New Willows on the 7th (CC), Muir Beach on the 7th (LC), Rodeo Lagoon on the 10th (CC), Stinson Beach on the 15th (NA), Lupine Gulch on the 17th (BC), Fish Docks on the 17th (LS & CD), Nunes on the 20th (CC), Stinson Beach on the 20th (EG), 2 at Fish Docks on the 21st (group checklist), Bolinas on the 22nd (EI), New Willows on the 23rd (CC), and Stinson Beach on the 25th (MS, LS, & CC); **Chestnut-sided Warblers** at Inverness on the 14th (CC), Abbotts Lagoon on the 14th (JL), Fish Docks on the 19th (GG), Rodeo Lagoon on the 20th (WL), Fish Docks on the 22nd (group checklist), Stinson Beach on the 25th (MS, LS, & CC), and Inverness on the 29th (MF); **American Redstarts** at Muir Beach on the 7th (LC), Fish Docks on the 20th (CM), 2 at Fish Docks on the 26th (group checklist), and Rodeo Lagoon on the 26th (CC); **Channel Islands Orange-crowned Warblers** at Rodeo Lagoon on the 5th (CC), Pt. Reyes Barries Bay on the 14th (DM), and Stinson Gulch Trail on the 19th (CC); **Blackpolls** at Rodeo Lagoon on the 21st (CC), Lighthouse on the 21st (TB & CK), and Muir Beach on the 24th (CC); **Black-and-white Warblers** at Nunes on the 14th (DM), Lupine Gulch on the 17th (BC), and Rodeo Lagoon on the 29th (CC); **Northern Waterthrushes** at Cypress Grove on the 9th (DL), New Willows on the 15th (CC), and Rodeo Lagoon on the 26th (CC); **Clay-colored Sparrows** at New Willows on the 8th (PB), Mendoza on the 27th (OM), and Cypress Grove on the 29th (group checklist); **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** at Lighthouse on the 17th (LS), Drakes on the 27th (CD & EH), and Bolinas on the 28th (DMc).

OBSERVERS AND ACRONYMS: CC: Connor Cochrane, **LK:** Logan Kahle, **BB:** Brian Browne, **CM:** Colin Meusel, **SN:** Sophia Noda, **PB:** Peyton Bounds, **LN:** Larry Nigro, **MD:** Molly Donahue, **JP:** John Paul, **LC:** Lucas Corneliussen, **TM:** Tom Nemeth, **DL:** David Lumpkin, **MB:** Marc Blumberg, **MK:** Matt Keller, **NO:** Nadine Ondera, **DH:** Derek Heins, **TF:** Teale Fristoe, **DM:** Dominik Mosur, **JL:** John Luther, **OM:** Oscar Moss, **LS:** Lucas Stephenson, **AS:** Alex Sundvall, **ED:** Ezekiel Dobson, **NA:** Noah Arthur, **BC:** Brent Campos, **OJ:** Oliver James, **CD:** Cedric Duhalde, **DL:** Derek Lecy, **ST:** Sam Talarigo, **GG:** George Griffeth, **WL:** William Legge, **EG:** Elke Glendenning, **EI:** Emmett Iverson, **TB:** Tim Bray, **CK:** Catherine Keegan, **MS:** Mark Stephenson, **EH:** Eric Heisey, **MKI:** Melani King, **TM:** Tara McIntire, **NC:** Natalie Clark, **DM:** Dan McNaughton, **AP:** Adam Panto, **MF:** Marty Freeland, **DW:** David Wiechers



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