

# THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Courtesy of Arc Ecology

Yosemite Slough with and without a bridge. California Clapper Rail (top) and American Avocet are two of the many species that depend on San Francisco's remaining bay wetlands.



Charles Denson



Lee Karney

## SF Supervisors Vote to Build Yosemite Slough Bridge

**O**n July 23, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 6-5 to defeat an amendment to the Candlestick Point–Hunters Point Phase II Redevelopment Project that would have removed the proposed 900-foot bridge that will span Yosemite Slough, San Francisco's largest wetland restoration site. The decision deals another blow to Bay Area wetlands and the animals that rely on them.

San Francisco Bay has lost more than 90 percent of its historic wetlands and mudflats and approximately 40 percent of its open-water habitat, primarily due to bay fill and development. With those habitat losses have come significant declines in native wildlife populations, particularly birds. The overwhelming consensus of wildlife biologists and managers is that more habi-

tat is necessary to protect already declining wildlife populations from the impacts of an expanding human population and habitat loss due to development, sea level rise, and other effects of climate change.

The Yosemite Slough Restoration Project, funded in part as mitigation for expansion of the San Francisco International Airport into bay wetlands, is part of a

baywide effort to create more wetland habitat and provide refuge for birds, mammals, fish, and invertebrates. The project would create or enhance more than 20 acres of wetlands and improve adjacent upland and open-water habitats. The restoration project is intended to provide habitat that will support large numbers of birds, including the endangered California Clapper Rail, which has recently been making use of the smaller restored wetlands at Heron's Head Park just north of Yosemite Slough.

The board's vote came two weeks after it rejected the appeal to the Environmental Impact Report filed by Golden Gate Audubon, the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and San Francisco Tomorrow. In their appeal, the environmental coalition argued that

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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# Changing with the Times

The Gulf of Mexico oil spill dominated the news all summer. As this issue of our newsletter goes to press, oil industry officials are holding their collective breath that the most recent cap will finally “kill” the leak. At the same time, right-wing commentators are blaming environmentalists for the spill and spreading stories about amazing vacuum cleaners that are sucking up 100 percent of the oil, leaving the ocean pristine again.

The reality is that habitats and livelihoods will be devastated for decades. You can be proud that the National Audubon Society alone has mobilized more than 13,000 volunteers in the gulf cleanup effort and that Golden Gate Audubon staff and volunteers remain on alert to assist in the gulf.

As Golden Gate Audubon enters our 93rd year, you can also be proud that our work here in the Bay Area has weathered change and difficult times before. Since our founding in 1917, we’ve seen seventeen presidents, two world wars, one or two great depressions, and the loss of countless birds and acres of habitat.

Golden Gate Audubon’s biggest challenge this year is to protect birds whose habitat is increasingly under attack from pollution and development while fighting for funding in a depressed economy. In spite of our successes, Golden Gate Audubon, like many non-profits (and many for-profit businesses), did not reach our budget goals for 2009–2010. One of the ways that we are navigating these tough economic times is by streamlining our communications.

With this issue of the *Gull*, we are changing how we communicate with you by publishing six editions of the *Gull* per year, or every other month. At the same time, we’re making our website (www.goldengateaudubon.org) easier to use and turning it into a hub of resources for your birding needs. You will find the most up-to-date information about field trips, classes, and other services online. We are also adding features such as online trip registration, blog/article posts, and links to other websites and resources.

Like many of you, I have always looked forward to receiving the print *Gull* in my mailbox, and this option will not change. Nowadays, however, this is one of the most expensive ways to reach members. So many of us are electing to receive the *Gull* online, where the magnificent photos are in color and live links send us to additional information.

These changes will make GGA stronger and enable us to focus on our core mission of protecting Bay Area birds and other wildlife and their habitats and connecting people of all ages and backgrounds with the natural world. As long as birds remain in peril, this commitment will never change. Your involvement also remains key to our success.

Here’s what you can do:

- If your membership is not current, please renew today and encourage your conservation-minded family and friends to join. You can renew in minutes online or by calling our office at 510.843.2222.
- Elect to receive the *Gull* online by going to our website or calling our office. Not only does this save us thousands of dollars in printing and postage, but on the website you can access everything that’s in the print edition plus the most current listing of trips, classes, events, and more.
- Continue to do what you’re already doing: volunteer, take a class, go on bird walks, or teach others about your passion for birds. And if you can stretch and increase your involvement, your extra efforts will especially make a difference this year.

I look forward to seeing you this fall where birders hang out, whether in a city park, on a trail, or in a public hearing room.



—Mark Welther, Executive Director

# Birdathon 2010 Comes Home to Roost

The teams had already trained and strategized, but instead of running a marathon, Golden Gate Audubon supporters signed up to trek the hills and scour the shorelines of the Bay Area, as well as destinations as far-flung as Tobago, during April and May. As they covered their many birding spots, they carefully recorded their sightings and enjoyed the companionship and the spring weather while raising funds for essential Golden Gate Audubon programs.

For the most part, Birdathon participants had no coaches getting them fit for the task, but those who found themselves a bit short of time or birding experience were able to join bird walks organized by veteran field trip leaders Bob Lewis and Dan Murphy. Other, more informal trip leaders invented their own trips for participants. Still others tallied birds in their backyards—a rewarding part of any day.

Golden Gate Audubon's Birdathon 2010 concluded with a celebratory dinner on June 2 at the Brazil Room in Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley. The evening event honored outstanding birders and fundraisers, and recognized those who chose to compete in various categories.

In all, Birdathon 2010 raised more than \$20,000 to support our Eco-Education and

conservation programs. Thank you to all the energetic people who made our Birdathon a success, including those who raised money and our sponsors. A special thank-you goes to Rue Mapp for working hard to get the fledgling Birdathon off the ground.

Corporate sponsors who made our Birdathon and dinner event possible include Lead Sponsor New Resource Bank, as well as LowePro, Chan Dentistry, Emergency Management and Safety Solutions, Lozeau Drury LLP, Scientific Certification Systems, and the Social Equity Group. Our premiere sponsor, Scope City, a mecca for fine optics in San Francisco, demonstrated high-quality scopes and binoculars throughout the evening.

Guests enjoyed a wonderful feast catered by The Arlington, along with Barefoot wines and bubbly, Rosenblum Cellars fine wine, and a variety of great beers from Lagunitas Brewing, Berkeley Bowl, Trader Joe's, and Whole Foods also supplied food, as did Sweet Adeline Bakery in Berkeley.

Numerous Birdathon prizes were awarded to a host of deserving winners. Bob Lewis won Most Money Raised by an Individual. The Leech family and Murphy's Mob tied for Most Money Raised by a Team. Annie Dustin took the Youngest Birder category.

Best Bird category drew three top winners: Chris Bard took Best Bird in the U.S. for a Kentucky Warbler seen in Patagonia, Arizona. Noreen Weeden won Best Bird World-Wide for sighting a Plumbeous Kite in Tobago (the second ever in that locale). Glen Tepke and the Dippers won the Best Bird in the GGA Region award for his Cattle Egret observed in Fremont.

Prizes also went to Mark Mushkat for Old Growth (oldest) Birder; to "Thelma and Louise Bird Arizona" as best team name; to Jeanette Leech for Best Fledgling Birder; to the Dustin family for Largest Age Range in a Team; and to Carey Knecht and her team for Highest Count by Car-Free Transportation. Bob's Birders and the Dippers tied for the highest bird count in the Golden Gate Audubon region. The Dippers also won a sweep of prizes in the Most Species Identified and Highest Counts categories.

This year's event was a terrific tune-up for future Birdathons. We plan to make next year's event even more exciting, and we expect that even more people will turn out. Start training now, and we will keep you posted as the fun is about to begin. April 2011 will be Birdathon month again!

—Marsha Mather-Thrift,  
Development Director

## Thank You to Our Generous Birdathon Sponsors



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# Volunteers Celebrated at Annual Party

On May 22, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers and staff gathered at the Richmond Marina to enjoy a picnic lunch and socializing at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Party. The event honored the hard work of our volunteers, as well as recognizing the many things to see and do at the Richmond shoreline. Activities began with a delicious lunch from Artisan Kitchen, a Richmond café, and continued with games and a raffle drawing of bird-related items, wine from Burning Hawk Wines, and a gift certificate to the Watershed Nursery. Concluding the party, Alan Kaplan, retired naturalist with the East Bay Regional Park District, led a walk along the marina to Meeker Slough and shared fascinating information about the area's natural and cultural history.

At the party and again at the June 2 Birdathon dinner, we announced the recipients of our education and conservation education volunteer awards.

## PAUL COVEL CONSERVATION EDUCATION AWARDEES

**Bob Lewis** has been a member of Golden Gate Audubon since 1993 and served on the board of directors from 2005 to 2010. For many years, he has taken on the huge task, with Dave Quady, of organizing the annual Oakland Christmas Bird Count and leading the postcount dinner. In 2005, Bob became chair of GGA's Education Committee, on which he continues to serve. Among his many activities for GGA, he is a long-standing field trip leader and trainer and has been a census leader and data evaluator for bird surveys at the Eastshore State Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, and North Richmond shoreline. A highly skilled birder, he is one of our most popular class instructors. For many members, Bob was the first person associated with GGA whom they got to know.

**Jeffry Wilkinson** is an Eco-Education Program manager's dream come true. He called Golden Gate Audubon one day and simply said, "I'm recently retired, I love kids, and I want to share my passion for birds." Since that day two and a half years



Recipients of GGA's volunteer awards (left to right): Jeffry Wilkinson, Bob Lewis, Della Dash, and Leora Feeney.

ago, Jeffry has come on almost every Eco-Education Program field trip. The kids, families, and teachers all love "Mr. Jeffry." When asked why he does it, Jeffry's classic comment is, "When a kid looks through my spotting scope and feels the same sense of amazement that I do, that's an incredible experience to share!" Jeffry's passionate commitment to our Eco-Education Program has helped Golden Gate Audubon achieve our goals of inspiring a new generation of birders and conservation leaders.

## ELSIE ROEMER CONSERVATION AWARDEES

**Leora Feeney** has been a leading member of Golden Gate Audubon for more than 35 years, including many years as a board member. As a GGA volunteer in the early 1970s, Leora helped organize Save Our Shoreline and counted shorebirds with another ardent GGA conservationist, Elsie Roemer, for whom this award is named. She has devoted the past 30 years to protecting Alameda's endangered California Least Terns. In 1994, Leora and Arthur Feinstein organized a symposium of top specialists to discuss the biological resources at the soon-to-be-closed Alameda Naval Air Station. As an outcome of the symposium, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requested that 565 acres of the base be set aside for a wildlife refuge. At the time, Arthur called Leora "the single most inspiring person in conservation I have ever known." In 1996, Leora helped found Friends of the Alameda

Wildlife Refuge. Since then, she has been tirelessly monitoring Alameda's Least Tern colony and advocating for its conservation. Christy Smith of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service thinks of Leora as the godmother of the terns and credits her with keeping the USFWS and the U.S. Navy focused on protecting these federally endangered birds.

**Della Dash** came to Golden Gate Audubon to assist with office duties, primarily helping to manage our Nature Store merchandise. Skillfully marketing GGA's offerings, she created the volunteer position of merchandise coordinator at our monthly Speaker Series programs and annual Christmas Bird Count dinners. More recently, motivated by an interest in Western Burrowing Owls and Berkeley's Cesar Chavez Park, Della joined the East Bay Conservation Committee and started a program to protect the park's overwintering owls by installing fencing and informational signage. She then turned her attention to working with the city of Berkeley on the selection of an art installation for the park and to creating GGA's successful Burrowing Owl Docent Program. Della took the lead on overseeing the docent program and working with the many volunteers as well as with our partners, the city of Berkeley and the Shorebird Nature Center.

Golden Gate Audubon thanks our award winners and all our volunteers for your hard work and dedication. We appreciate your contributions immensely.

—Jennifer Robinson Maddox



# SPEAKER SERIES

JENNIFER ROBINSON MADDOX, COORDINATOR



Alvaro Jaramillo

Anna's Hummingbird.

## Birding Outside the Box

Alvaro Jaramillo

**San Francisco: Thursday, September 16 – 7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program**

We are trapped in a box when it comes to bird identification. What we try to do is match the colors and patterns of what we see in the field to what is in a field guide. Yet many of us have heard that experienced birders “know” what a bird is, just as one recognizes friends or family members practically instantly. Getting to this point takes experience, but there are various tips, tricks, and voodoo that experienced birders use to recognize birds. There are also field marks and ways to identify birds that are not in the field guides yet or perhaps aren't given enough prominence. Alvaro Jaramillo will share a little bit of birding voodoo and introduce other features to concentrate on while you bird. His talk aims to be both fun and informative, and the hope is that you will come away aching to try out what you have learned and begin to claw yourself out of the birding box.

Alvaro (Al) Jaramillo, a staff guide for Field Guides, leads birding tours throughout the Americas. Research forays and backpacking trips introduced him to the riches of the neotropics, where he has traveled extensively. He is author of *Birds of Chile*, an authoritative yet portable field guide to Chile's birds, and *New World Blackbirds: The Icterids*. Al has also contributed both popular and scientific articles to various magazines and journals.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wood Stork.

## Foraging Behavior in Large Wading Birds

Jeffery Martin

**Berkeley: Thursday, October 21 – 7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program**

Jeff Martin's entertaining presentation features his close-up video photography illustrating numerous forms of foraging behavior in large wading birds. Ornithologists have identified as many as 30 or more different foraging strategies. These often curious, odd, surprising, and humorous behaviors are intriguing and fun to watch. Filmed across many locations and habitats in Florida and California, 17 species will be shown, including Wood Stork, American Bittern, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Anhinga, Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, and Tri-colored Heron. Jeff has recorded head tilting, neck swaying, tactile feeding, fish tossing, wing flicking, and many other strategies used by wading birds. His presentation will link these many behaviors to natural history and function.

Jeff Martin is a clinical psychologist in private practice and an associate clinical professor at UCSF School of Medicine. By avocation, he is a naturalist/photographer and nature educator. He has conducted interpretive talks, created literature, and produced photographic programs and an exhibit for Point Reyes National Seashore as well as a wildlife rehabilitation training film for interns at Wildcare in San Rafael. An avid birder, Jeff has devised and led programs for organizations and schools.

**Berkeley Speaker Series:** Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.htm](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.htm).

**San Francisco Speaker Series:** First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit [www.uusf.org/visitors\\_faq.html](http://www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html), and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.

## GGA Board Election Results

On June 30, Golden Gate Audubon concluded our annual board of directors elections. Members elected the following five candidates to three-

year board terms: Karim Al-Khafaji, Alan Harper, Michael Lozeau, Sarah Peterman, and Jay Pierrepont. We are very fortunate to have all five of these talented and

committed people serving on the GGA board. Please join us in congratulating them on their election and in offering them assistance in their work.



# FIELD TRIPS

JENNIFER ROBINSON MADDOX, COORDINATOR

\$	Entrance fee
	Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, email Jennifer Robinson Maddox, [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org). For updates to the field trips and new trips offered before the publication of the next newsletter, go [www.goldengateaudubon.org/field-trips/field-trips](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/field-trips/field-trips).

## Jewel Lake

Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley  
Fridays, September 3, October 1,  
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,  
[philajane6@yahoo.com](mailto:philajane6@yahoo.com)

We continue our monthly first Friday trips at Tilden. Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile, 2-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Please stay tuned for upcoming changes to this trip. Phila will lead the September trip, but a different leader will be on the October trip.

## San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, September 5, October 3,  
8 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, [allanrid@pacbell.net](mailto:allanrid@pacbell.net); Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall; Dominik Mosur, [polksatata@yahoo.com](mailto:polksatata@yahoo.com)

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of the park has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds.

## Mark Your Calendars for the SF and Oakland Christmas Bird Counts

You don't want to miss participating in the next Christmas Bird Counts, so note these dates in your calendar! The Oakland Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 19. The San Francisco count is scheduled for Tuesday, December 28. Details about the counts and how to sign up for both the counts and the celebratory dinners will appear in the November–December *Gull*.

## Coastal San Francisco

Saturday, September 11, 8 a.m.  
Dan Murphy, [murphsf@comcast.net](mailto:murphsf@comcast.net),  
415.564.0074

Meet in the parking lot between South Lake and Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park. It is just past the second stop sign on Chain of Lakes Dr. from the intersection of 41st and Lincoln. From Kennedy Dr., turn left at Chain of Lakes Dr., and drive just past the lake to the left. We will bird the Chain of Lakes, then drive to Lands End, Lake Merced, and other western San Francisco birding spots in a search of early fall migrants. In the past we have seen a large variety of migrating flycatchers, vireos, warblers, sparrows, and finches. We may see early hawk migration as well. We plan to end the day between 2 and 3 p.m. at Lake Merced. Wear layers for variable coastal weather. Bring lunch and liquids. Since we will not finish the trip where we start, it would be best to make carpool arrangements with that in mind.

## Half Moon Bay Pelagic Trips

September 13, 17, 18, 19, 28;  
October 2, 10, 11, 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Debi Shearwater and Shearwater Journeys leaders,  
[debi@shearwaterjourneys.com](mailto:debi@shearwaterjourneys.com)

These seabird trips offered by Shearwater Journeys are aboard the new *Captain Pete* and leave from the Huck Finn Center, Pillar Point, Half Moon Bay. Some excellent sightings were made in 2009, including a Short-tailed Albatross and White-chinned Petrel (second record for North America, first live sighting). It is expected that these trips will be very popular. Half Moon Bay is easy to reach from San Francisco, the East Bay, or Silicon Valley. We may be able to reach seabirds such as storm-petrel flocks more easily than from other ports. For general trip reports, go [www.shearwaterjourneys.com](http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com)

[shearwaterjourneys.com](http://shearwaterjourneys.com) and click on Trip Reports, or see the blog [www.shearwaterjourneys.blogspot.com](http://www.shearwaterjourneys.blogspot.com).

Cost is \$128 for GGA members (non-refundable), \$148 for nonmembers. To make reservations, please send payment to Debi Shearwater, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. \$

## Corona Heights

San Francisco  
Fridays, September 17, October 15,  
8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, [polksatata@yahoo.com](mailto:polksatata@yahoo.com) (leaders will vary by month)

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring hilltop scrub and south cliff.

## Hayward Regional Shoreline Alameda County

Saturday, September 18, 8 a.m.  
Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,  
[kathy\\_jarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com)

Meet at the San Leandro BART station following the 7:55 a.m. arrival of the train from Richmond. We'll ride 2.5 miles to the trailhead via Williams St. (bike lanes) or meet at 8:30 a.m. at the end of Monarch Bay Dr. adjacent to the trailhead. This trip lasts into the afternoon.

We will go south on the SF Bay Trail from the San Leandro Marina to the Hayward shoreline and the Interpretive Center, making about a 20-mile round-trip. High tide is 9:16 a.m., and shorebirds should be flushed in by the tide. Some parts of the trails are paved; others easily negotiable. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Reservations are not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated.

**Car:** From I-880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. exit west. In 1.4 miles, turn left onto Monarch

Bay Dr. Go to the end to the last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park.

**BART:** From San Leandro BART, go south about 1 block to Williams (bicycle lanes) and turn right; go about 3 miles to end and turn left, continuing onto Monarch Bay Dr. and to end. Allow time to get your BART ticket processed and your bicycle to the platform. BART schedules: [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org).

SF Bay Trail: <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>. East Bay Regional Park District: [www.ebparcs.org](http://www.ebparcs.org).

## Lincoln Park

San Francisco

**Sunday, September 19, 8 – 11 a.m.**

David Armstrong, [darmstrong99@yahoo.com](mailto:darmstrong99@yahoo.com)

Meet on Merrie Way, the parking lot up the hill from the Cliff House, for this walking tour of some of San Francisco's finest fall birding locations. We will cover about 3 miles of varied terrain (with some short climbs/stairs) in search of migrants and vagrants. Trip is limited to 20 people. Contact the leader via email to reserve your place.

## Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

**Wednesdays, September 22,**

**October 27, 9:30 a.m. – noon**

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,  
[hilary@powersedit.com](mailto:hilary@powersedit.com); Ruth Tobey,  
510.528.2093, [ruthobey@gmail.com](mailto:ruthobey@gmail.com)

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. The lake will be fairly quiet, but residents such as woodpeckers and herons should be out in force, and the earliest winter migrants should be making an appearance.

Take the 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into the park on Perkins. Best parking is at boat-house lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is probably free on weekday mornings, but will be \$3 if the kiosk is occupied when you arrive.

## Butterfly Walk

UC Botanical Garden, Berkeley

**Saturday, October 2, 3 p.m.**

Sal Levinson, [sal.levinson@gmail.com](mailto:sal.levinson@gmail.com)

Meet just inside the garden entrance. We will walk through the garden in search of

host plants to such butterflies as skippers, buckeyes, blues, pipevine swallowtail, and mylitta crescent. Bring binoculars (close focusing are best) and a field guide if you have one. Rain cancels. The garden charges a fee to nonmembers. Please RSVP to Sal if you plan to attend. \$

## Millbrae to Foster City

San Mateo County

**Saturday, October 23, 8:45 a.m.**

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,  
[kathy\\_jarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com)

Meet at Millbrae BART at 8:45 a.m., Rollins Rd. and Millbrae Ave. East Bay riders passing through MacArthur BART will take the 7:34 a.m. train for SFO/Millbrae. The trip will follow the SF Bay Trail from Millbrae to Foster City (about 7 miles) and continue around Foster City (about 6.5 miles). Return will be from Belmont Caltrain station. Caltrain is on an hourly schedule on weekends; it departs Belmont Station northbound at 1:48 p.m. and arrives at Millbrae at 2:08 p.m.

The mostly flat route is on the SF Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved, some on bike lanes and some on city streets. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Reservations are not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated.

**Car:** From San Francisco, take US 101 south about 12 miles. Take exit 420 for Millbrae Ave. and turn right at E. Millbrae Ave., then right at N. Rollins Rd. to parking lot for Millbrae BART.

## San Francisco Bay with Dolphin Charters

**Saturday, November 20, 9:45 – 4 p.m.**

GGA leader TBD

Meet at the Berkeley Marina by 9:45 a.m. for departure at 10 a.m. to see the San Francisco Bay by boat. The largest and one of the most important estuaries along the Pacific Flyway is right in our own backyard. We will cruise San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay waters, home to thousands of wintering birds. Passing Alcatraz, we'll head toward Point Bonita, where we will tour the southern edge of the Marin Headlands and, weather permitting, travel under the Golden Gate Bridge to the point. Then we'll head to the shore of Angel Island, under the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge, past the Marin Islands and the Brothers and Sisters islands, to Red Rock, and back down along the Richmond shoreline. Many of these areas can be seen only by boat. In addition to wintering ducks, loons, grebes, and gulls, we expect to see resident cormorants, pelicans, and murrelets, as well as seals and sea lions feeding and basking and, with luck, an occasional porpoise. Dress in layers. Bring binoculars, liquids, and lunch.

Trip is limited to 32 people. Cost is \$85 for GGA members, \$95 for nonmembers. Reserve by contacting Stephanie Strait, GGA Office Manager, 510.843.2222 or [ggas@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:ggas@goldengateaudubon.org). Payment must be received by October 15. \$

## Support Bird Protection While You Work

You can make a gift to Golden Gate Audubon through a payroll deduction and receive full membership benefits, including our newsletter and invitations to special events. Your donation helps sustain our outstanding conservation programs and our Eco-Education Program throughout the year.



You can sign up for a deduction and make your gift through your employer's workplace giving campaign. It's easy, and once you sign up, your employer does it for you.

Golden Gate Audubon participates in the Combined Federal Campaign through EarthShare, a network of the nation's leading environmental and conservation organizations. You can also write in "Golden Gate Audubon Society" to make a gift if your employer does not offer an EarthShare option. Contact your human resources department to see if your employer has a workplace giving campaign.

To find out how to start an EarthShare campaign at your company, go to EarthShare of California's website at [www.earthshareca.org](http://www.earthshareca.org). You can also email Marsha Mather-Thrift at [mmathert@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:mmathert@goldengateaudubon.org).



# CLASSES

## ALBANY ADULT SCHOOL

The following classes are held in the East Bay at the Albany Adult School. For fees and registration information, go to [www.alban-yadultschool.org](http://www.alban-yadultschool.org).

### Beginning Birding by Ear

Denise Wight, [blkittiwake@yahoo.com](mailto:blkittiwake@yahoo.com)

Thursdays, September 16 – October 21, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus three Saturday field trips, September 18 – October 2

Although the peak of birdsong production has passed, we still have plenty of opportunities to listen for bird sounds. Fall is a great time to start birding by ear and to learn some of the Bay Area birds that stay for the winter or are here all year long. We will listen to bird sounds in class and visit three different habitats on field trips.

### Birds of the Bay Area

Rusty Scalf, [rscalf@sonic.net](mailto:rscalf@sonic.net); Bob Lewis, [bob@wingbeats.org](mailto:bob@wingbeats.org)

Wednesdays, October 6 – November 10, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus five Saturday or Sunday field trips, and one weekend-long trip, November 14 – 15, following the last class

It's fall, and the shorebirds are back. Waterfowl crowd refuges and reservoirs, and raptors ply the air. This is a great time to get to know local birds—through illustrated lectures and interesting field trips. Join a congenial group of birders while building your birding skills. Go to [www.wingbeats.org](http://www.wingbeats.org) for more details, including field trip locations and bird lists from previous years.

### Beginning Birding

Anne Hoff, [Anne2210b@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Anne2210b@sbcglobal.net)

Wednesdays, October 27 – November 17, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, October 30 – November 20

Fall migrants arrive by the tens of thousands in the Bay Area. Start birding with the easiest-to-see species. The class covers identification and local habitats, as well as using binoculars and field guides. Go to [www.wingbeats.org](http://www.wingbeats.org) for more details, including field trip locations and bird lists from previous years.

## GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

The following class is held at the Golden Gate Audubon office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. The class size is limited to 20. The fee is \$80. Sign-ups begin on Monday, September 13, at noon. Call 510.843.2222 to register.

### North American Owls

Dave Quady, [davequady@att.net](mailto:davequady@att.net)

November 2, 3, 9, and 10, 7:30 – 8:30 p.m., plus three weekend evening field trips (dates and locations to be announced)

Owls fascinate most of us. Learn what makes an owl different from other birds, and how to identify owls by sight and sound, and understand more about their habits and habitats. Classes will be illustrated with slides, and with sounds of these birds of the night. Field trips will visit local owl habitats, where we'll hope to hear and see some owls. Dave Quady, a frequent GGA field trip leader, is the author of the owls section of National Geographic's *Complete Birds of North America*.

## JOE MORLAN'S SAN FRANCISCO CLASSES

The first sessions of Joe Morlan's fall classes on North American birds, endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, start in September. Joe is the coordinator of the GGA-sponsored Northern California Bird Box and coauthor of *Birds of Northern California* and *Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area*. Field Ornithology I, an introduction to birds and birding, meets Tuesdays, September 14 – October 26 (fee: \$140). Field Ornithology II, an in-depth study of waterbirds, meets Wednesdays, September 15 – October 27 (fee: \$125). Field Ornithology III, the study of land birds including flycatchers, shrikes, vireos, corvids, and swallows, meets Thursdays, September 16 – October 28 (fee: \$125).

All classes meet from 7 to 9:15 p.m. at the Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street, which has free parking. A \$10 discount is given for registering a week in advance of the first class. For information on books used in the class, field trips, and the second fall sessions, go to <http://fog.ccsf.edu/jmorlan> or call 415.561.1860. Register online at [www.evolve.com/ce.ccsf](http://www.evolve.com/ce.ccsf).

## Special Art Exhibit and GGA Events Focus on Birds at Risk

Western Snowy Plovers, Clapper Rails, Brown Pelicans, and Tri-colored Blackbirds are among the birds that Bay Area artist Rita Sklar depicts in her striking paintings. In her choice of species at risk and in emphasizing their beauty, Rita aims to remind us that the diminishing populations not only are a loss to bird-

ers but send an urgent warning about the health of our environment. A exhibit of her work, "Vanishing Birds of the Bay Area and Beyond," is on view beginning September 3 at the Thos. Moser San Francisco Showroom, 3395 Sacramento Street, San Francisco. You are invited to attend two receptions on Thursday,

September 23, and Wednesday, November 10, from 5 to 7 p.m., to meet Rita and to hear Golden Gate Audubon discuss our work to help reduce the decline of bird populations in the Bay Area. Join us to find out what Golden Gate Audubon is doing to help birds that rely on Bay Area habitats.





## GGA HELPS MARK COASTAL CLEANUP'S 26TH YEAR

Golden Gate Audubon will take part in the 26th California Coastal Cleanup on Saturday, September 25, 9 a.m. to noon. We will join other organizations to remove trash from the shoreline at two of our restoration sites: Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland and Pier 94 in San Francisco. These are drop-in programs, and all are welcome. For more information, go to [www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer).

## HABITAT RESTORATION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We hope you will join us for our monthly workdays at our restoration sites on both sides of the bay. During the fall and winter, we work on site preparation and then plant when the rains come.

- Pier 94, San Francisco: September 25, 9 a.m. to noon. No public workday in October.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland: September 25, 9 a.m. to noon; October 16, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Alameda Wildlife Refuge, Alameda: September 12, October 10, 9 a.m. to noon.

For site details and directions, please go to [www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer).

## BE A BURROWING OWL DOCENT

Western Burrowing Owls overwinter Cesar Chavez Park in Berkeley, arriving in the fall and leaving in the spring. While the owls are at the park, Golden Gate Audubon docents point the birds out to visitors and talk about the plight of the locally endangered birds and the need to protect them. If you are looking for a new and rewarding experience, this is the opportunity for you. Training for a new season of the Burrowing Owl Docent Program will be held on Saturday, September 18, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you are interested in attending, please contact Frances DuPont at [fdupont@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fdupont@sbcglobal.net) by September 10.



Jennifer Robinson Maddox

The Grush and Kwek-Lin families, as well as other families with home-schooled kids, have volunteered many hours helping to clean up the wetlands at the MLK Regional Shoreline in Oakland.

## JOIN GGA'S ECO-EDUCATION FIELD TRIPS

During the school year, our Eco-Education staff and volunteers visit third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classrooms in East Oakland and Richmond to teach kids about their local ecosystems. The staff of this award-winning program seeks volunteers to assist on field trips to the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland and the Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline in the fall and on field trips to local creeks in the spring. These class trips are scheduled during the school day. If you love working with kids and want to teach them about the environment, please contact Anthony de Cicco at [adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org).

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EXPO

Golden Gate Audubon will be one of many international and local conservation groups participating in the Wildlife Conservation Expo Day, Sunday, October 3, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., held at the Mission Bay Conference Center, 1675 Owens Street, in San Francisco. On Wildlife Conservation Expo Day, a lineup of world-renowned conservationists will share their stories of saving endangered species in some of the most remote and challenging places on earth. Look for the Golden Gate Audubon outreach table as you browse the expo between speakers. Tickets to the expo are \$60 per person, \$30 for students with ID. For more information, go to [www.wildnet.org](http://www.wildnet.org).

## Observations Online

Because of limited space in this issue of the *Gull*, Bruce Mast's Observations column is online only. Go to [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org) and select Observations under Birding Resources. Then read Bruce's summary of the notable sightings from May 1 to July 31, including Cook's Petrels on local pelagic trips and a White-eyed Vireo that lingered at Muir Beach in Marin.



Yellow-throated Warbler, found on June 7 by Dominik Mosur on Mount Davidson in San Francisco. Photo by Linda Swanson.

# Travel with GGA on Two Fabulous Trips

Are you thinking of traveling outside the Bay Area? Do you want to expand your life list while experiencing a different environment or a different culture? If so, consider these new offerings, both designed especially for GGA. For more information—and a detailed itinerary—contact Chris Bard, trip coordinator, at [chrisbard@earthlink.net](mailto:chrisbard@earthlink.net) or 510.522.5699.

## THE NATURAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF HONDURAS

Honduras is a country of stunning beauty and stark contrasts. It is a place where, in some aspects, time has stood still, where ancient civilizations once thrived and where

a traveler can still be immersed in large expanses of wilderness. The country's location on an ecological divide between North America and southern Central America makes it a naturalist's paradise. Honduras is the home of 740 species of birds, 800 species of orchids, and 1,000 species of butterflies.

This trip is designed to highlight the diverse habitats across parts of central and western Honduras. We will also visit the Mayan ruins at Copán, a large complex of temples and plazas surrounded by a lush jungle with abundant wildlife. Known as the "Paris of the Mayan World," the ruins are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Our guide will be Robert Gallardo, a naturalist who has resided in Honduras since 1993. He and his wife, Irma, operate a nature center and lodge at Copán and have produced a number of natural history books and CDs. Dates of the trip are February 22 to March 3, 2011. Cost excluding airfare is \$1,800 per person, which includes a \$150 tax-deductible donation to Golden Gate Audubon.

## BIG BEND AND THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

A land of grand vistas, majestic mountains, and spectacular cliffs above the Rio

TRAVEL WITH GGA continued on page 11

### Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

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Burning Hawk Wines and The Watershed Nursery for our 2010 Volunteer Appreciation Party; Recology for our Snowy Plover Cleanup

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## TRAVEL WITH GGA from page 10

Grande, the vast Big Bend National Park encompasses the Chisos Mountains, which rise like a wooded island from the Chihuahuan Desert. In spring, breeding birds return, and colorful eastern and western warblers and tanagers are in passage at lush oases. Regional specialties include Lucifer Hummingbird, Colima Warbler, Montezuma Quail, Zone-tailed Hawk, Black Hawk, Gray Hawk, Painted Bunting, Gray Vireo, and Black-chinned Sparrow.

To the east lies the Edwards Plateau, which hosts Black-capped Vireo, Golden-

cheeked Warbler, Cave Swallow, Olive Sparrow, Long-billed Thrasher, and Green Kingfisher. One evening, we will view the emergence of 10 million free-tailed bats, one of nature's spectacles. We'll also photograph and identify many of the Big Bend region's flowers, cacti, mammals, and reptiles.

The trip leader will be Mark Smith of Mark Smith Nature Tours. A keen student of nature since he was a small boy, he studied biology at Oregon State University. He has organized and led natural history tours for 25 years. Dates of the trip are April 17–27, 2011. Cost excluding airfare is \$2,235 per

person; this includes a \$150 tax-deductible donation to Golden Gate Audubon.

### Ideas Sought for Travel with Golden Gate Audubon

We're interested in hearing your ideas for the Travel with Golden Gate Audubon program. If you have been on an especially wonderful birding trip or experienced a terrific guide, or you want suggest an area to visit, please send your comments to Chris Bard, [chrisbard@earthlink.net](mailto:chrisbard@earthlink.net).

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**YOSEMITE SLOUGH** from page 1

the EIR inadequately described the impacts to the environment caused by the bridge, including significant levels of noise, lighting, trash, and other forms of pollution. The EIR concedes that the bridge will have a negative impact on local wildlife, but dismisses the impacts because they will occur only to “regionally common” species that can go elsewhere in the bay.

Construction of the bridge will create an 80-foot-wide, 900-foot-long span across the slough, which will be lit throughout every night, will serve as a route for loud rapid transit every two to five minutes during peak hours, and could potentially be used for vehicle traffic throughout the year. Opponents of the bridge have demonstrated that a viable alternative exists that would require only two additional minutes of transit time and avoid all the negative environmental impacts of the bridge. Opponents also demonstrated in a report to the board of supervisors that the San Francisco Planning Department relied on faulty calculations in demonstrating the transit need for the bridge.

In response, neither the city’s planning department nor the redevelopment agency has demonstrated on the record that the bridge is essential for the success of the overall project. Instead, they have publicly stated that the bridge was included under pressure from the NFL, which stated that a bridge was necessary for any new stadium that may

be built as a bid to keep the 49ers in San Francisco. As it has become more apparent that the 49ers will be leaving town, the project proponents have shifted their arguments to state that the bridge is preferable because it provides a transportation route that is more likely to attract commercial investors in the redevelopment project.

Concerned about the unnecessary impacts of the bridge, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi proposed an amendment to remove the bridge from the project altogether and was supported by Supervisors Eric Mar, David Campos, John Avalos, and Chris Daly. However, the amendment was defeated by six remaining supervisors, who chose to side with the project developer to construct the bridge, despite its impacts on wildlife and habitats. Board President David Chiu met with the coalition and proposed an amendment for a somewhat smaller bridge, but he ultimately supported the bridge. Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, in whose district the project would be built, has been an unfailing supporter of all aspects of the project, including the bridge. Supervisors Bevan Dufty, Carmen Chu, Michela Alioto-Pier, and Sean Elsbernd remained notably disengaged from the decision-making process, failing to ask any questions of the city or the appellants at the July 23 hearing.

With the board’s vote, the coalition of environmental groups has only two choices: letting an unnecessary bridge be built over San Francisco’s largest wetland restoration

site or challenging the EIR and all permits sought by the project developer and the city for the construction of the bridge. Golden Gate Audubon and its partners are conferring with legal counsel and considering all options to prevent construction of the bridge.

Golden Gate Audubon appreciates the complexity of this project and supports redevelopment in the Bayview–Hunters Point community. We also appreciate the effort of all the supervisors who met with the environmental coalition and demonstrated an interest in and concern about the environmental impacts. Unfortunately, Golden Gate Audubon and its allies have witnessed, once again, a decision driven by money, politics, and power that will contribute to the continued degradation of wetlands, uplands, and near-shore habitats in the bay. In these circumstances, the only recourse is often a legal challenge, which could prove extremely costly for both sides and delay the overall project for years.

Golden Gate Audubon still hopes that this matter will be resolved without further conflict or the need for litigation. Working with our coalition partners, we will continue the dialogue with city officials, the developer, and local residents in an attempt to reach a solution that will ensure a redevelopment project that meets the community’s needs while protecting the very few bayside resources remaining in San Francisco.

**–Mike Lynes, Conservation Director**