

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE BIRD ALLIANCE // VOL. 110 NO. 3 FALL 2026



BUILDING OUT OUR BIRD-SAFE BUILDING ORDINANCES

BY STEVE LOMBARDI

Buildings kill birds. Studies estimate that bird strikes kill more than 1 billion birds per year in the U.S. But some cities are wising up. In March, Palo Alto adopted an ordinance requiring that new buildings and remodels use bird-friendly glass. This, along with other measures, should significantly reduce the number of bird strikes.

CONTINUED on page 3





Swainson's Thrush at Point Reyes.

Tara McIntire

THE BIRD-FRIENDLY VIEW STARTS AT HOME

BY GLENN PHILLIPS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A few years ago, I walked into my backyard and found a dead Swainson's Thrush beneath the window of my garden shed. This small bird had probably traveled thousands of miles between its breeding grounds in the north and its wintering grounds in Mexico or Central America. It had survived storms, predators, habitat loss, only to encounter a reflection of sky and vegetation in a window at my home.

On another occasion, I found the ghostly imprint of a Mourning Dove on our sliding glass door. The bird had left behind a nearly perfect outline of its body and wings. I don't know whether it survived.

Both incidents were unsettling, but they

gave me something practical to do. I treated the shed window with ABC BirdTape and the sliding door with Feather Friendly markers. The patterns break up reflections and help birds recognize glass as a solid surface. We haven't found another dead bird at either window.

People often think of bird collisions as a skyscraper problem. Tall buildings can certainly kill many birds, especially migrating birds drawn toward lights at night. But there are far fewer skyscrapers than houses. Taken together, the millions of homes and other low-rise buildings across the country account for an enormous share of collision deaths.

The good news is that we know how to prevent most of these deaths. Screens, properly spaced exterior markers, patterned glass, films, and other treatments make windows visible to birds. The fix is inexpensive and relatively simple. Patterns should be placed on the outside surface of glass and spaced closely enough that a bird won't try to fly between them.

Golden Gate Bird Alliance has led the way in turning these practical solutions into public policy. We helped establish San Francisco's bird-safe building ordinance, one of the first municipal ordinances of its kind, and subsequently advocated for requirements in Oakland, Alameda, Richmond, Emeryville, and Berkeley. These ordinances will prevent countless collisions as new buildings are constructed and older ones are renovated. They also help architects, developers, window suppliers, and homeowners understand that bird-safe design can be attractive, effective, and affordable.

Ordinances alone, however, won't address the millions of windows already reflecting trees, gardens, and open sky. That part of the solution belongs to all of us.

This fall, as millions of birds migrate through the Bay Area, look at your home from a bird's perspective. Pay attention to places where plants or sky are reflected, and spots where birds can see through one window to another. The Swainson's Thrush beneath my shed window was a painful reminder that creating a bird-friendly home involves more than planting native plants, avoiding pesticides, and keeping cats indoors. Sometimes it means looking closely at the glass between us and the birds, then helping them see it too.

NEWS BRIEFS

Elsie Roemer and Paul Covel Awards

Lydia Bruno, our SF Conservation Committee co-chair, was recognized with the Paul Covel Award for her work protecting Snowy Plovers in SF and engaging new birders. Erin Diehm, our Bird-Safe Building Coordinator, was recognized with the Elsie Roemer Award for her advocacy work to make the Bay Area bird-friendly.

Diablo Range: A California Conservation Priority

Last year we sent a letter of support for ACR 107, asking the state to list the Diablo Range as a conservation priority. In August, the California Senate voted to recognize it as such, positioning this 205-mile long wildlife corridor within the framework of California's 30x30 initiative.

Elected Board Members

At our Annual Member Meeting in August our members helped vote in our newest members to the Board including: Rory Reid, Danny Grossman, and Cheryl Foster, as well as re-electing our current Board member Steve Powell for his second term. With these new additions, GGBA now has 14 board members.

BIRD-SAFE BUILDINGS from page 1

The ordinance was backed by the Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance (SCVBA), the Sierra Club, and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC). According to the SCVBA, “This is a meaningful step toward a built environment that is safer for birds and more responsive to the ecological values we share.”

Over the last decade or so, Golden Gate Bird Alliance helped pass the San Francisco, Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley bird-safe building ordinances, with San Francisco being the first mandatory ordinance implemented in the country back in 2011.

“We’re proud of this work,” GGBA Director of Conservation Whitney Grover said. “But there’s more to do in making sure they are as strong as possible to protect our birds.”

Including Palo Alto, a total of 11 cities in the Bay Area have adopted mandatory bird-friendly building ordinances. Unfortunately, most of the other 10 are pretty weak. And only one of the ten—Mountain View—is “recommended” by the ABC, which analyzes ordinances nationwide. Mountain View’s ordinance requires that 90% of the glass on buildings in the regulated area be bird-friendly, which is the main reason for the ABC’s recommendation.

The ABC rates ordinances as an aid to organizations that wish to use them as models for creating new regulations. Only three cities in the Bay Area received “recommended with reservations” ratings from the ABC, with the most recent being Berkeley back in 2023.

While GGBA worked long and hard to get the city to adopt more effective, comprehensive regulations, the city ultimately adopted a weakened ordinance which only governs relatively large buildings.

The Cupertino ordinance is good for commercial buildings but weak for residential, only affecting bird-sensitive areas. And Emeryville governs only relatively large windows (greater than 12 square feet).

The other six cities with mandatory ordinances all received “not recommended” ratings from the ABC, mainly for loopholes built into the regulations that make them



Elegant terns.

Tara McIntire

Over the last decade or so, Golden Gate Bird Alliance helped pass the San Francisco, Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley bird-safe building ordinances.

less effective. Those six cities are Alameda, Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and San Jose. Their ordinances mainly get knocked for two reasons: They don’t apply to windows smaller than 12 sq. ft. and/or they apply to a very limited set of geographic areas (adjacent to natural areas). Still, according to the ABC, even “not recommended” ordinances are much better than nothing.

Palo Alto’s ordinance has yet to be rated by the ABC.

Making any building bird-safe, be it a high rise or a house, is pretty easy. Birds run into windows because they can’t see regular window glass. To the bird, the window looks like a clear opening. Windows that reflect nearby landscaping, like the plants in your backyard, are particularly lethal because the bird sees the reflected plants as a continuous path through the (reflected, illusory) vegetation.

The solution: make it obvious to the bird that the window is a window, and not an opening, by applying visual cues on it. Builders do this by using glazing that is fritted or etched; some use a UV coating. Homeowners can add visual cues easily and

cheaply without having to replace glass.

Bird strikes on high rises get a lot of press, with stories about dead birds raining down from the sky. But the reality is that high rises cause fewer than 1% of those 1 billion deaths a year. In fact, 44% are caused by single-family homes and 56% are caused by relatively smaller buildings—shorter than 12 stories. It’s nice that the Land’s End visitors center is bird-safe, but the 27,000 houses in the adjacent neighborhood are probably not. Almost none of the current ordinances address this issue.

Plenty of work remains to be done. As homeowners, we can easily make our homes bird-safe and encourage our neighbors to do the same. As concerned citizens, we can work with GGBA and other organizations to strengthen the existing regulations and expand them to other cities. GGBA is not resting; the SF Conservation Committee is now working to strengthen San Francisco’s ordinance.

Thanks to Erin Diehm, GGBA volunteer Bird-safe Building Coordinator, who helped greatly with this article and is leading the effort to make buildings bird-safe in the Bay Area.

HELP TRACK BAY AREA BIRD AND BUILDING COLLISIONS

BY SUSAN SOBELOFF

In January 2026, Golden Gate Bird Alliance joined over one hundred North American conservation groups partnering with NYC Bird Alliance's web-project dBird to help track local bird mortality caused by building collisions.

Katherine Chen, Senior Manager of Community Science and Collision Reduction at New York City Bird Alliance, describes dBird as, "a crowd sourced database, where anyone can report a dead or injured bird that they found". Primarily used to track collision records, dBird allows conservationists to identify specific buildings causing multiple collisions.

The tool allows community members to upload photos of deceased birds they find, drop a location pin mapping where they were found, and add any additional observations.

Chen, from NYC Bird Alliance, recommends selecting a photo, "that has a good angle where you can see the wings, chest, a bit of the back end, and the crown at the head."

Bird collisions with buildings are challenging to track. Often bird carcasses are scavenged or cleaned up before being seen.

Whitney Grover, GGBA Director of Conservation, points out that even finding one bird carcass at the foot of a building indicates additional collisions may be occurring. However, dead birds aren't always found at the base of the building they struck.

Birds colliding with windows "can strike at full speed, twenty, thirty miles an hour. They literally can ricochet off to the other side of the street," shared Erin Diehm, Volunteer Bird Safe Coordinator for GGBA.



"The Final Act (1)" by Michael Lynch, 12" by 14" (life size of a pigeon) white gouache on black field. This painting is based on a photo taken by the artist at Jack London Train Station in Oakland, CA. The original image was created by the transfer of oil and keratin from the powder down feathers of a pigeon.

Reflections in windows and artificial lighting at night, create collision hazards for both local and migrating birds. Windows reflecting shrubbery are seen by birds as more open space.

According to Diehm, over a billion birds a year die from colliding with buildings and, at the same time, window retrofits could successfully reduce collision rates by 95%. GGBA's website shares instructions for window retrofit strategies and ways to modify artificial lights at goldengatebirdalliance.org/lightsoutforbirds.

Erin Diehm and Whitney Grover, encourage Bay Area birders, early morning walkers, and community members interested in conservation to contribute their observations of deceased birds.

"We need your help to get a better understanding of bird collisions here, so we can be most effective at reducing this major source of bird mortality," Grover said.

Robust locally crowd-sourced data improves conservation efforts including: ongoing advocacy for bird safe municipal building codes, targeting communication about retrofits with building owners of collision hotspots, and planning specific locations for future on the ground monitoring.

GGBA hopes to use data from throughout the Bay Area to better understand locally specific bird collision patterns, species impacted, and how improving bird safe building practices reduces bird mortality over time.

Sharing your observations on dbird.org contributes to Bay Area bird conservation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Berkeley Bird Festival Sunday, October 18

Your favorite bird festival in the Bay Area is back this fall at the David Brower Center with a theme of "Myth and Memory". From 12-5pm you can expect a mix of family friendly activities, presentations, art performances, and a whole host of exhibitors celebrating our local birdlife.

Christmas Bird Count December - Jan

This year you have the opportunity to help us count birds and contribute critical bird conservation data through three separate Christmas Bird Count events—Oakland on Sunday, December 13; SF on Monday, December 28; and Richmond on Saturday, January 2. Learn more at goldengatebirdalliance.org/cbc.

Birding For Everyone Fellowship Friday, October 16 Deadline

The Birding For Everyone Fellowship application deadline is Friday, October 16. This fellowship program offers 10 individuals with marginalized identities a year's worth of free classes, membership, and a community cohort experience. You can learn more at goldengatebirdalliance.org/fellowship.



At left: Big Break Lagoon. Above: Black Phoebe.

BIG BREAK REGIONAL SHORELINE

BY GEORGANNE BENESCH

LOCATION

69 Big Break Road
Oakley, CA 94561

*Big Break
sits right
along the
Pacific
Flyway.*

Who would imagine that an asparagus farm could turn into a vibrant wetland habitat? When a California Delta levee broke in 1928 that's exactly what happened, transforming flooded farmland into what would become today's Big Break Regional Shoreline. Located in Oakley, this rare gem of a park is home to 70 species of year-round and migratory birds, mammals such as river otters and beavers, and a variety of amphibians.

From the moment you arrive, you'll see marshlands, cottonwood, willow, and oak trees, and the Big Break estuary off in the distance. You'll smell the Delta and feel its breeze.

Make the Visitor Center your first stop. With its green design and floor-to-ceiling windows, the spacious building is filled with interactive exhibits and informative resources. A short, accessible path winds its way past reed-lined marshes to picnic tables and play areas.

The family-friendly park offers a host of free fun and educational programs for children. A highlight of the park is the Delta Discovery Experience, a 1,200 square-foot interactive map showing how water flows into and through the region.

Located where the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta narrows and drains into Suisun Bay, Big Break sits right along the Pacific Flyway. The park sees hundreds of thousands of migratory birds pass by, with many stopping over along the way as a food break, resting area, or winter home.

Big Break is an ideal location for birding any time of the year. You don't have to go far to see and hear shorebirds, raptors, sparrows, and flycatchers. You might spot Great Blue and Green Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets, Belted Kingfishers, Ospreys, Pied-billed Grebes, and of course ever-present Mallards. Big Break is also home to a number of protected species including Black Rail, Northern Harrier, Swainson's Hawk, White-tailed Kite, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

But birds have faced a serious risk at Big Break. While the visitor center windows offer a wide-ranging view of the park, they also put birds in jeopardy of collisions. GGBA and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) teamed up to overcome this problem, enlisting a group of volunteers for a Giving Tuesday event to apply Feather Friendly dot-patterned coverings to the Visitor Center windows.

"The results have been wonderful," Wyatt Moore, Supervising Naturalist at Big Break said. "We immediately noticed a significant reduction of bird strikes. In fact, we haven't seen any since the installation."

Are your backyard birds at risk? Consider bird-friendly decals for your windows. Stop by Big Break and see for yourself how they're applied and how they look. And while you're at it, treat yourself to a one-of-a-kind outdoor experience. Don't forget your binoculars.

Big Break Regional Shoreline (part of the EBRPD) has no parking or entry fees. Visit www.ebparks.org/parks/big-break.

Have a favorite birding site you'd like to share? Contact rnakano@goldengatebirds.org.

DONATIONS

Thank you for being a part of our donor and member community. We are deeply appreciative of every individual, business and organization that supports Golden Gate Bird Alliance. In this issue we recognize our new members from September 2025–August 2026 and all of our major donors from the past year.

Major Donors

\$10,000+

Randall and Katherine Erickson; Kenneth Hillan; Liz and Larry Kuo; Karen Rosenbaum and Ben McClinton; Estate of Susan Diridoni and Satoru Fujii; Estate of Richard Green; Chris Witt

\$5,000-\$9,999

Linda Agerter and Richard Judd; Maria Baird and George Cotsirilos, Jr.; Mary Betlach; Jennifer Braun and Raymond J. Ryan; Susan Mary Consey; Pat Kirkpatrick and Sid Wolinsky; John and Hortensia Nelson; Eric Schroeder and Susan Palo; Chris Swarth; Edward and Ellen Vine

\$2,500-\$4,999

David Mostardi and Arlene Baxter; Penny and Bill Barron; Mary Betlach; Margaret Groening; Patricia Greene; Robert Gomez; Amanda Hamilton; Marian Hallet; Derek and Cristina Heins; Deborah Hurst Senter; Jane Freeman; Helen McKenna & Allan Ridley; Susan MacWhorter; Miles and Mel McKey; Terry Pederson; Mary Wand

\$1,000-\$2,499

SSusan Abby; Jan Ambrosini and Tim Strohane; Carol Baird & Alan Harper; Chris and Gary Bard; The Bluebird Fund; Donna Fortier Borden; Deborah Brown; Andrea Burhoe; John Callaway and Trisha Cruse; Michelle Carney; Rich Chambers and Bonnie McGregor; Char Household; Minder Cheng; Phil and Bo Cotty; Laura Cremin and Mark Gallivan; Betty DeLuco and Bob McNamara; Kate Hoffman and Blake Edgar; Gretchen and Dick Evans; William Freeman and Tiffany Treece; Angie Geiger and David Monedero; Danny Grossman and Linda Gerard; Marjorie Powell; D & J Hodgson Family Foundation; Jeremy Johnstone; Marcy Kates; Tim Kingston; Sally and Phillip Kipper; Pansy Kwong; Maureen Lahiff; Patricia Langenhahn and Douglas and Jeffrey Hendricks; Robert Lawrence; Dawn and Jacquelyn Lemoine; Nancy Lemon and Blaine

Devine; Anne Leong; Marie and Barry Lipman; Christiana and Charles MacFarlane; Wendy Niles and Alexander Brennan; Barbara North; Denny and Merrily Parker; Jean Perata and Dennis Davison; George S Peyton; Thomas Phillips; Mary Porter; Megan and Rick Prelinger; Laurel Przybylski; Kathy and Corey Raffel; Maryann Rainey and Wendy Pelton; Lyn J Reese; Michael Reyes; James and Nita Roethe; Leslie Rose and Alan Ramo; Pepi Ross; Linda Selph; Jacqueline Smalley; Elizabeth Sojourner; Tan Suwannukul; Chris Tarr & Kevin Donahue; Kay Taylor; Susan Tenney; Linda Thurston; Ruth Tobey; Varnhagen Household; KF Vollmayer; Viviana Wolinsky and Steven Hunter; Ed Yong; Sam Zuckerman

New Members

Juliet Ablaza; Deborah Abraham and Janet Cole; Michael Abraham; Karen Allanson; Christine Alonso; Sergio Alvarez; Elsa Alvear; Laurie Amaro; Dolores Apton; Julie Ashworth and Morgan Price; Boon'tianga Athj; Lauren Atkinson; EKela Autry; Rose Babcock; Cathy Baker; Elizabeth Baldwin; Catherine Baron; Virgil Basas; Elizabeth Becker; Seth Bertenthal; Aylin Beyce; Carol Blackledge; Arcturus Blethen; Jeané Blunt; Michel Bochow; Martin Bogetz; Bohling Household; Carol Bohnenkamp; Jenny Bowman; Yvette Bozzini; Diane Brevis; Lee Brennan; David Brossard; Lindsay Brown; Michael Ann Brown; Katherine Buckley; Alisa Budiansky; Alexis Bullock; Mikko Burkett; Catherine Burns; Helen Burrows; Lisa Campbell; Carim Household; Kate Carroll; Alvaro Casanova; Erica Cerles; Varun Chadha; Dan Chafets; Audrey Chang; Emily Chao; Kendra and Gerald Char; Char Household; Meng-Yunn Chen; Loretta Cheung; Annie Chien; Rucha Chitnis; Jessie Cho; Lina Chung; Patrick Chye; Daniel Clendenning; Peter Cocotas; Ann Conner; Contaxis Family;

Arjuna Costa; Molly Coye; Mac Cregan; Linda Cronin; Christine Cullens; Allison Dang; Barbara G Davis; Brigitte de La Valliere; Mario and Barbara De Pinto; alli decker; Jlgnes Desai; Jill Detweiler; Lori Dieterle; Evelyn Dilworth; Alan Dixon and Alison Simon; William Dodge; Esme and Adrian Douglas; Asha, Kavi and Erik Dreher; Daja Dubois; Ami DuCre; Caroline Ebinger; Grant and Keilani Einhorn; Kerry Ellis; Karen Elwood; Mahal Enalen; Karl Engle; Phyllis and Roger Erickson; Sue Estey; Adele Failes-Carpenter; Audrey Fan; Lenn Fechter Gotlib; Sam Fielding; Chinue Fields; Fields Household; Renna Fischer; FitzGerald Household; Nancy Floccchini; Mariena Foley; Tré Frane; Gage Household; Linda Garcia; Garcia Alcaraz Household; Alec and Stella Garza-Galindo; Lind and Mark Murray; Sally George; Ryan Gilbert; Amy Gilgan; Karen and Jeff Gill; Kelly Gillease; Regina Gilligan; Shana Golden; Hilary Goldstine; Judy Greenwald; Terri Griffin; Margaret Groening; Jackie Gross; Alexander Grossman; Mark & Melanie Grover; Jan Hagstrom; Marian Hallet; Mackenzie Halter; Jeanne Hammond; Xu Han; Carlina Hansen; June Harding; Katherine Hardy; Kathy Harris and Joseph Diandra; Omar Harris; Will Harris; Jennifer and Mike Hartigan; Jack Hayden; Apryl Haynes; Kathryn Heintz; Lubabah Helwani; Stuart Henderson; Heather Hernandez; Jocelyn Hickcox; Edward Hill Jr.; Susan Hoagland; Max Hollenback; Christopher Holmes and Smita Jain; John and Nancy Hornor; Manuel Hotz; Christina and Eric Hsia; Maija Hunter; Russell Hutto; Lucero Irizarry; Noor Irshad; Bryan Jackisch; Gail Jackson; Lior Jacober; Samina Jain; Martha Jarocki; Chris Jenks; Renate Johnson; Christine Johnston; Julie and Vince Jorgensen; Dirk Julander; Kaizer Household; Sara Keith; Ronna and Rob Kelly; Lee Kempf; Jenny Kennedy and Ed Pike;

William Kennedy; Helen Kent; Kristina Kessel; Noor Khashe Brody; Violet Kimzey; Robert and Linda Klett; Sophie Klimcak; Jenny Kline; Jane and Mark Knowles; Vimal Konduri; Krause Household; John Kua; Kuchangi Household; Lori Kuwabara; Jillian Kwan-Jacobs; Mary F Kyle; Lachman Household; Margaret Langham; Curtis Lawler; LEBARES Household; Rose LeCount; Becca Lieber; Stephen and Carla Lieske; Guadalupe Llamas; Ann Lo; Denise Loomis; Jennifer Arden, and Emery Love; Love Household; Wendy Lukas; Lutz Household; Karen Lyons; Veronique M Richard and Christine Bois; Edward Smyth and Ellen Smyth Staples; Ian MacFarland; Mack Household; Bonnie MacRaith; Grant Magruder; Nirmala Mahadevan; Richard Mansfield; Kathleen Mantha; Tania M Mantua; Ileana Mar; Marcus Household; Teah Markstone; Natalie Matias; Linda Mcallister; Claire McHale; Andrew McKay; Pat Michaud; Igal Milchtaich; Todd Miller; Mary Ann Moore; Sabella Moreno; Morgan Household; Dr. Brandon Morgan and Mary Combs; Tamara Morrish; Connie Moyle; Daria Mt; Munro Household; Murphy Household; Hannah Murray; Sydney Musumeci; Mala Nagarajan and Vega Subramaniam; Betty Nelson; Hannah Nelson and Harriet Caplin; Ross Nelson; Richard Nicoll; Nordahl Household; Veronica Norio-Tomasino; Jen Norris; Marietta Nunez; Elizabeth O'Brien; Andrea and Amanda Oberto; Andres Olavarrieta; Ming Ong; Shulee Ong; Madeline Ormbrek; Hilleary Osherooff; Christy Osorio; Elizabeth Ozol and Andy Steckel; David Padilla; Jennie Pakradooni; Jesyka Palmer; Edeline Panetti; Alicia Parrish; Andrew Pastor; Dina Pecceu;

Devon Pennycooke; Claire Penzel-McNamara; Kelly Pepper; Susan Perlman-Chavez; Hazel Peters; Jeffrey Peterson; Priya Pharate; Robin Phipps; Sue Pilipauskas; Laura Pitts; Pitts Household; Sheila Powers Converse; Prasad Household; Shannon Prasad; Nancy Price; Susan Prion; Dorrice Pyle; Olivia Qian; Shauna Rabinowitz; Carly Rachocki; Nancy Ramos; Amy Rasmussen; Krishnamurthi Ravishankar and Lee Bell; Stacy Readal; Adelina and Victoria Mbise; Madhuri Ream; Stephen Reidy; Eleanor Reiff; Lori Korleski and Jim Richardson; Kristin Richmond; Margaret Ricker; Leisel Rivera; Amy Roberts; Eric Robertson; Max Rodel; Marguerite Roemer and Wesley Leung; Joe Rogers; Laura Rogers; Rogers Household; Asa Romerberger and Laura Wolz; Catalina Ruiz-Healy; Sarah Elise Rund; Rupal Household; Laura Russell; Nancy Ryan; Mark Ryle; Nancy Salcedo; Lorin Salem; Canyon Sam; Diana Sanchez; Heidi Sanders; Lola Santos; Aniesha Sapp; Teo Saragi; Ron Saunders; Donatella Scabini; Kyle Scheuring; Ivy Schlegel; Alison Schmidt; Connor Schmidt; Patti Schock; Karin Schwartz; Christine Schwinn; Schwinn Household; Saibal and Beethi Sen; Kenneth Shaw; Marianne Shiffar; Ross Simkover; Christine Sinn; Claudia Skelton; Allison Smith; Alex Smith and Arianna Sifuentes; Barbara T Smith; Daniel Smith; Karen Smith; Monica and Sammy Smith; Nancy and Rod Smith; Susan Sobeloff; Heidi Sokolowsky; Gary Soto; Kasey Soto; Alec Steinhilber; Stewart Household; Chloe Stewart; Richard Stone; YB Suen; Raye "Lars" Tagami; Jesse Taggart; Karan Takhtani; Elisabeth Teel; Cassandra Telenko and Mikko Pankala; Rodney and Marybeth Temples; Mary Tennes; Annette Thomas; Carrie Thomas; Theresa Thomas;

Arlin Timberlake; Celine Torrano; Rhiannon Trubuly; Lillyanne "Lilly" Tran; Madhvi Trivedi-pathak; Jessie Trost and Erik Billings; Christian Trujillo; Shin Yi Tsai; Judith Turgeon; George and April Uhara; Liz Urban Tilth; Josie Valderrama; Valdez Household; Naomi Velasco; Erica Villegas Padilla; Dana Wade; John Walsh; Linda Walton; Sarah Wang; Tammy Wang; Catherin Warner; Sophia Warnock; Michael Waters; Travis Watts; Beverly Webster; Jill and Phillip Weinstein, MD; Lindsey Weiskopf; Zari Weiss; Nick Welch; Anne Werth; Laetitia Wilcox; Meredith Williams; Zelena Williams; Steven Winfield; Astar Winoto; Daniel Won; Eric Wong; Owen Woo; Ann Wu; Jerry Yanowitz; Clarissa, Jason and Justin Yeo; Joshua Yangou; Ed Yong; John Young; Joyce Zhang; Avery Zheng

Memorial Contribution

Carol Burns

In Honor Of Contribution

Leah Kaizer; Gus Day; Michael Mittman; Linda Cutler; Owen Woo; Robert Hirt; Gary Soto

Corporate Contributions

Cat Topia; Christ Episcopal Church; Grassi and Associates Inc.; Ocean Awareness Project DBA Blue Frontier; Piedmont Garden Club

Grants

California Academy of Sciences; City of Berkeley; Contra Costa County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Justice Outside; Maynard P. and Katherine Z. Buehler Foundation Fund; National Audubon Society; Society for Community Work of First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco; SPRAWLDEF; State Coastal Conservancy; University of California, San Francisco; YES Nature to Neighborhoods

Please know that we work hard to ensure the accuracy of this list. If your name has been omitted or misspelled, let us know at 510.843.2222.

ALL ABOUT ADVOCATES: ANDY KREYCHE

For this issue, Alyse Lightfoot interviewed Andy Kreyche, a Santa Cruz Dark Skies Advocate since 2016. Andy was a presenter at De Anza College planetarium, Planetarium Coordinator for Hartnell College Planetarium from 2005–2015 and 2022–2023. He still gives shows at the Kvanne Planetarium and is a board member of the Live Interactive Planetarium Symposium (LIPS).

How would you describe yourself?

I'm an informal educator. I like to get people thinking about collective responsibility to the Earth, showing people how you can change behavior with lighting and how to change consciousness with lighting too.

What is your preferred habitat?

I like variety and transitions. When I walk to the park the noise of the freeway falls away and you can hear the birds. That transition is precious. I love living in a place where I can do that.

Describe your migratory journey for us.

I was born in Indiana. Moved to Tucson in kindergarten. I don't have a lot of memories of Indiana, but Tucson was like another planet. Dark Skies is headquartered in Tucson. There was a lot to explore — Colorado River Toads, Gila Monsters. I saw all the stars and it sparked my mind. I took out all the astronomy books from the library. College in Flagstaff then found work in California.

What do you do to help birds?

I give a monthly talk in Pinnacles National Park on light pollution and do outreach at the Natural Bridges Migration Festival. The story of bird migration is so inspiring. My cousin in Cape May works to close the beach during the Red Knot migration. The whole thing is a carefully choreographed dance, the birds need to land just as the crabs arrive, and the beach needs to be free of people to



Andy Kreyche.

ensure the birds get enough rest to complete their journey. Sometimes the birds are so exhausted they will land right on him. We explain to people that not visiting the beach is a human inconvenience, but for the bird it's an absolute necessity. Most people are understanding.

Describe one challenge that's on your mind at the moment.

The president of the Santa Cruz Dark Skies Chapter is stepping down. It's going to be a challenge to fill his role. Open call to anyone with executive skills, maybe a lighting background. Also, there is no Dark Skies Chapter in the Bay Area.

What is something you wish everyone knew?

The consciousness and collective power of people. I once saw a cartoon of a guy on the freeway thinking "I don't contribute much to air pollution" but then it zoomed out and he's one of many cars in traffic all contributing to heavy smog. Jevon's Paradox. More efficiency leads to more usage not less. More driving, more lights. We have cheaper, efficient lighting now, but lighting that goes up on a building is not good. I hope people realize they can do something about that.

MASTHEAD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Christina Tarr

Vice President

Mary Wand

Secretary

Chris Okon

Treasurer

Derek Heins

Cathy Bleier, John Callaway, Blake Edgar, Angie Geiger, Kenneth Hillan, Rachel Lawrence, Susan MacWhorter, Jeff Manker, Rory Reid, Laurie Sample, Steve Powell

STAFF

Executive Director

Glenn Phillips, 510.221.4102
gphillips@goldengatebirds.org

Conservation Director

Whitney Grover, 510.319.7137
wgrover@goldengatebirds.org

Volunteer and Conservation Advocacy Manager

Janet Carpinelli, 510.319.7135
jcarpinelli@goldengatebirds.org

Communications Director

Ryan Nakano, 510.227.6190
rnakano@goldengatebirds.org

Youth Education and Outreach Manager

Clay Anderson, 510.319.7138
canderson@goldengatebirds.org

Development Officer

George Marschall, 510.319.7136
gmarschall@goldengatebirds.org

Office Manager

Makayla Pearce, 510.227.6563
mpearce@goldengatebirds.org

Digital Communications Assistant

Jeni Schmedding
jschmedding@goldengatebirds.org

VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

Adult Education Chair

Maureen Lahiff, mlahiff@goldengatebirds.org

Field Trip Coordinator

Christina Tarr, fieldtrips@goldengatebirds.org

Travel with GGBA Coordinators

Dawn Lemoine and Eric Schroeder
travelprogram@goldengatebirds.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Golden Gate Bird Alliance's mission is to inspire people to protect Bay Area birds and our shared natural environment.

ABOUT GOLDEN GATE BIRD ALLIANCE

The Golden Gate Bird Alliance was founded January 25, 1917.

The Gull is published four times per year. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to the office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

Golden Gate Bird Alliance

2150 Allston Way, Suite 210
Berkeley, CA 94704
Office hours: Monday through Thursday,
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Telephone: 510.843.2222
goldengatebirdalliance.org

This issue of *The Gull* was published Sept. 2026.

SPEAKER SERIES

Join us on Thursday, October 22 on Zoom just in time for spooky season to hear from researcher Seira Adams about those fuzzy eight-legged friends we call spiders! Please visit us online for more Speaker Series dates and information at goldengatebirdalliance.org/education/speaker-series.

www.goldengatebirdalliance.org

 The Gull is printed on chlorine free and acid free FSC Certified paper with 10% recycled fiber.

**Calling
all bird
advocates!**

With habitat loss being the number one cause for bird population declines in the world, it is essential that we work to build back habitat in every place we can, including our own yards and common spaces. Take our backyard habitat pledge today at goldengatebirdalliance.org/habitatathome.



SPECIES IN SIGHT



Brandon Morgan

Northern Yellow Warbler.

SPECIES IN SIGHT: NORTHERN YELLOW WARBLER

BY ANNA SOJOURNER

Abite of sunshine falls through the treetops. At first it appears as a leaf, but keep looking. There's a dark eye amidst a plain face, maybe even a necklace of rusty streaks if you're lucky and it's male. Sometimes, a dull gray-yellow juvenile or female sows doubt as to whether it's an Orange-crowned Warbler giving you the slip.

But get a glimpse of the face. If there are no light lines around the eyes, you know it's the Northern Yellow Warbler.

These insectivores forage among the smaller, higher branches of creekside willows, or in the vegetation around a pond or lake. Cattle grazing can degrade riparian habitat, reducing willows and other vegetation where they make their living. Like many species, Yellow Warbler numbers have been declining over the last half-century.

In May, the Northern Yellow Warbler found in the Bay Area is often on its migration path to as far north as Canada. From late August to mid-October, prepare to see a "stream," "sweetness," or "trepidation" of Yellow Warblers returning to their winter grounds. In both directions, Northern Yellow Warblers begin the migratory push a few weeks ahead of their warbler cousins.

Like many other warblers, the Northern Yellow Warbler completes the work of migration night by night, resting and feeding on insects during the day, as they cover the distance to the Gulf of Mexico. There, they rest and load up on insects before making a single great push across the ocean. Making landfall between southern Mexico to Colombia and Venezuela, they spread out to spend the winter.

An unfortunately significant percentage of Northern Yellow Warblers won't make it all the way. Take a pre-dawn walk through the business district of any city on the flyway and you may find a lifeless Northern Yellow Warbler at your feet, having tangled with a well-lit building the night before. Audubon explorer shows significant challenges for Yellow Warblers migrating through urban areas, including cities on the west coast of California.