



Clockwise from top: Black Turnstones; Eco-San Francisco students at Pier 94; Bay Area wetlands.

Far left: Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org; top right: Anthony DeCicco; bottom: Judith Dunham

The Energy for Achievement



David Yarnold

As we head into our 95th year of working to protect birds and their habitat, Golden Gate Audubon plans to continue to expand our work as one of the Bay Area's most effective conservation organizations. We have always been powered by passionate people who love birds and other wildlife, and for most of our history that energy came from volunteers.

Today we run on hybrid power, combining an impressive army of more than a thousand committed volunteers with a talented professional staff of seven. Throughout this report, you will see examples of our achievements, some led entirely by staff, others entirely by

volunteers, and still others by both working side by side. Overall in 2010–2011, we conservatively estimate that Golden Gate Audubon's volunteers contributed more than 4,500 hours to our programs.

Collaborations between volunteers and staff have enabled some of our most effective work. For example, the Western Snowy Plover monitoring report for San Francisco's Crissy Field is produced each year by a long-time conservation committee volunteer with assistance from GGAS's conservation director. Volunteers count plovers and monitor their behavior, collecting valuable data for National Park Service managers responsible for protecting this threatened species.

In this report, you will see that, in spite of the continued tough economy, 2010–2011 was another year of significant achievements.

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Conservation: A Record of Achievement

San Francisco Bay's shoreline and open water provide habitat for more than 500 species of fish, birds, mammals, and other wildlife, as well as serving as important open space that benefits 7 million human inhabitants. Yet, since 1850, urban and industrial development has resulted in a loss of more than 90 percent of the bay's wetlands and approximately 40 percent of its open water.

While many Bay Area residents are just beginning to recognize the impact of these changes and the importance of protecting

the remaining habitat, Golden Gate Audubon has a consistent record of achievement in protecting the bay for resident and migratory birds and for the people who live here (see page 4). Here are some of our 2010–2011 conservation victories.

REDUCING RISKS TO BIRDS IN ALTAMONT PASS

In December 2010, Golden Gate Audubon took the lead, along with four other local Audubon chapters and the California attor-

ney general, in an agreement with NextEra Inc., operator of approximately half of the wind turbines in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area. The agreement calls for NextEra to remove and replace approximately 2,000 old-generation turbines in the Altamont Pass with fewer modern turbines—a process known as repowering—which should significantly reduce risks to birds. Studies at nearby repowered sites indicate that mortality for some bird

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Expanding Eco-Education to New Communities

Golden Gate Audubon firmly believes that environmental education is an essential component of wildlife conservation. Since their inception, the Eco-Education Programs in Oakland and Richmond have served more than 15,000 students and family members, providing experiential opportunities that increase academic achievement, foster ecological literacy, and enhance community and environmental stewardship.

We developed our award-winning Eco-Education Programs after conducting thorough needs assessments in East Oakland and North Richmond communities. We found that engaging families, as well as students, reinforces learning and helps turn behavior and attitude changes into environmental stewardship and community empowerment. During 2010–2011, we expanded our Eco-Education Program to two new schools, reaching a total of more than 750 students and 1,500 community members.

Golden Gate Audubon is thrilled to replicate the success of our East Bay programs by launching the new Eco–San Francisco Program, which coincides with our ongoing restoration at Pier 94 on the southern waterfront. While San Francisco has more than 40 Title I (federally sup-

ported) schools, existing environmental education programs reach only a fraction of the students and their family members in the communities surrounding Pier 94. After a successful pilot program in 2010–2011, Paul Revere Elementary School and Leonard Flynn Elementary School, which share the Islais Creek watershed with Pier 94, have welcomed the Eco–San Francisco Program for the 2011–2012 academic year. Students and family members will work side by side to plant native wetland plants, conduct bird censuses, monitor water quality in Glen Canyon Park, and discover the biodiversity that surrounds them.

Our Eco-Education Program high school interns work on weekends to lead stewardship-building activities and assist with habitat restoration events. This past year, we have been committed to building our high school internship program by providing an array of opportunities. Interns made a presentation at the California Audubon Assembly in San Diego, and one intern also participated in the 5th International Marine Debris Conference in Honolulu, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United Nations Environment Program. We will continue to build our internship pro-



Anthony DeCicco

An Eco-Education student and his mother plant native vegetation.

gram as our high school interns represent Golden Gate Audubon in each of our three Eco-Education communities.

With funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we created a video about the Eco-Education Program that will serve as an instrumental tool to garner additional support and to sustain the program for years to come. It can be viewed at www.goldengateaudubon.org/education/eco-education-programs.



Anthony DeCicco

An Eco-Education student at the Pier 94 wetlands on San Francisco's southern waterfront.

Citizen Science Projects

During 2010–2011, Golden Gate Audubon staff, members, and volunteers continued our long tradition of citizen science. As the Cornell Lab of Ornithology notes, citizen science typically involves “research collaborations between scientists and volunteers, particularly to expand opportunities for scientific data collection and to provide access to scientific information for community members.”

Our largest ongoing efforts are the annual San Francisco and Oakland Christmas Bird Counts. Last year thousands of volunteers counted more than 60 million individual birds across the U.S. Oakland’s CBC, the 75th annual, drew 150 counters who tallied 170 species. In San Francisco’s CBC, 90 counters observed 160 species. Each of these surveys is among the top 25 nationwide in species counted.

In addition, Golden Gate Audubon members dedicated hundreds of hours to monitoring Western Snowy Plovers at Crissy Field and Ocean Beach in San Francisco, California Least Terns at the former Alameda Naval Air Station (the most productive breeding colony on the West Coast), and Western Burrowing Owls overwintering at Berkeley’s Cesar Chavez Park. Our members and staff also participated in regional monitoring with the San Francisco Winter Shorebird Survey and Audubon California’s statewide Black Oystercatcher Survey.



A volunteer removing invasives at Pier 94.

“We had a great time planting native vegetation in a unique San Francisco wetland. Personally, I really valued the opportunity to restore some of city’s shoreline to something approaching its natural condition. I’m excited to come back to check on the progress of the plants.”

—Daniel Kling, Pier 94 volunteer

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species may decline by as much as 80 percent. The NextEra agreement has laid the groundwork for similar repowering projects throughout Altamont Pass, and is being watched closely by government officials, energy companies, and environmentalists across the country.

Golden Gate Audubon will continue our leadership at Altamont Pass, working with the other wind power companies and monitoring the results of repowering and the risk to birds.

PROTECTING AND CREATING HABITAT IN SAN FRANCISCO

In December 2010, after more than a year of advocacy work and litigation, Golden Gate Audubon joined the Sierra Club to reach a settlement of our lawsuit challenging the Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Lennar development at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. The settlement secured protections for Yosemite Slough, the largest wetland restoration site in San Francisco, and \$2.5 million for the creation of a wholly new wetland along the nearby shoreline. Together, these two restoration sites on the city’s southern waterfront represent a significant increase of bird habitat in a largely industrialized area.

STANDARDS FOR BIRD SAFE BUILDINGS

After almost two years of working with Golden Gate Audubon, the city of San Francisco developed and unanimously passed a local ordinance mandating that new and renovated buildings incorporate design features to reduce risks of collisions for birds. The Standards for Bird Safe Buildings focus on building facades that use plate glass

near sensitive wildlife areas, such as the bay or parks, and recommend several economical measures to make the urban environment less dangerous for birds. Collisions with plate glass windows kill approximately 1 billion birds in North America each year. San Francisco joins Chicago, New York, and Toronto in leading the way to make the urban environment safer for local and migratory birds.

RESTORATION SUCCESSES IN 2010–2011

With the assistance of hundreds of volunteers who contributed thousands of hours, Golden Gate Audubon continued our ongoing work to restore habitats across the Bay Area, including projects at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland and Pier 94 in San Francisco.

At the MLK Jr. Shoreline, over 300 volunteers removed more than 50 bags of weeds and 50 bags of trash and added at least 350 native plants. This successful project was funded through a three-year grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy focusing on restoration along Arrowhead Marsh and initial sections of Elmhurst Creek spit, a popular bird-roosting area. We are now working with the East Bay Regional Park District to expand our restoration at Arrowhead Marsh along the southwestern boundary of the park.

At Pier 94, 193 volunteers removed more than 100 bags of exotic, invasive weeds and planted 201 natives in the wetland and upland habitat. This completed our third year working through the National Audubon Society’s Together Green grant program at Pier 94. Of note is our planting of the federally endangered *Sueda californica*, commonly known as California sea-blite, which has since successfully reproduced at Pier 94.

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Golden Gate Audubon advocated for and won important legal battles for the protection of bird habitat, we educated more young students while reaching out to their parents and communities, we continued our highly valued adult education classes, and we increased critical wetland habitat through hands-on restoration work.

Perhaps most importantly, we see how our work could be even more effective by growing our programs. All we need is more hybrid power.

This year, please add your energy, and support Golden Gate Audubon’s volunteers and staff as we continue our work to monitor and protect birds. As always, we will be in the lead, opposing ill-advised development, holding public officials accountable, and educating people young and old about the importance of birds and the ecosystem we all depend upon.

—Diane Ross-Leech, President, and Mark Welther, Executive Director

Golden Gate Audubon Functional Expenses FY 11 Audit



Historical Spotlight on Our Conservation Achievements

1917–20 Golden Gate Audubon stops three major oil companies from dumping crude oil into the Pacific Ocean unhindered.

1962 Golden Gate and Marin Audubon join in raising funds to purchase Audubon Canyon Ranch.

1971–73 GGAS and allies help acquire Point Pinole shoreline as a park.

1975 Golden Gate Audubon wins protection of Emeryville Crescent and its designation as critical open space.

1980 Golden Gate Audubon begins studying the endangered California Least Tern and working to protect habitat at Alameda Naval Air Station.

1986–95 Golden Gate Audubon stops illegal filling of wetlands at Arrowhead Marsh and wins a settlement requiring Port of Oakland to restore 70 acres of seasonal wetlands at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline.

1994 A GGAS California Least Tern symposium results in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designating 579 acres of land and 400 acres of water for a proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.



California Least Tern.

1993–99 Golden Gate Audubon convinces the Port of San Francisco to create Heron's Head Park.

2004 Golden Gate Audubon wins protection for Gateway Valley in Orinda, the only land bridge for wildlife between north and south Contra Costa County. It garners funds to restore the degraded Yosemite Slough wetlands in Hunters Point and to begin a restoration project at nearby Pier 94. GGAS also settles major legal case against wind companies at Altamont Pass Wind

Resource Area, requiring them to substantially reduce bird deaths.

2007 Golden Gate Audubon leads in organizing more than 250 volunteers for spill response after the November *Cosco Busan* oil spill.

2008 The Eco-Oakland Environmental Education Program receives the Governor's Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership.

2009 The North American Association of Environmental Education recognizes the Eco-Oakland Program for Outstanding Service in Environmental Education.

2010 GGAS leads four Audubon chapters in negotiations with the state attorney general and the largest Altamont Pass wind turbine company, resulting in an agreement to replace nearly half of the old turbines with modern turbines and using science to site them for bird safety.

2011 At Candlestick Point in San Francisco, Golden Gate Audubon settles with a developer over the Yosemite Slough bridge, resulting in funds for additional wetlands at Hunters Point.

Join Today and Protect Bay Area Wildlife!

Golden Gate Audubon owes our success to people like you—our members and supporters. If you are not yet a GGAS member, we invite you to join us today. For as little as \$35, you can become part of our visionary work. Join online at www.goldengateaudubon.org, call 510.843.2222, or mail your check to Golden Gate Audubon, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702.

Although we are a National Audubon chapter, we are an independent organization that relies almost entirely on *local contributions* to support our work. Every dollar goes to support our *local* conservation, education, and birding programs.

Leave a Legacy for Wildlife

Have you ever considered leaving a gift for Golden Gate Audubon in your will? Some of our most effective programs have been made possible by bequests and other estate-planning gifts—from acquiring swaths of habitat to bolstering our advocacy, restoration, and education programs. Gifts of any size can make a huge difference for our work. Most importantly, legacy gifts enable you to connect with a cause you care about for years to come. For more information, please contact Lisa Owens Viani, Development Director, 510.843.7295 or lowensvi@goldengateaudubon.org.

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