

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

Sanderlings, one of many species that rely on the Emeryville Crescent during winter and migration.

City Council Votes to Protect Emeryville Crescent

On October 6, the Emeryville City Council voted 4-1 to remove provisions in the proposed Emeryville General Plan that called for the construction of a portion of the San Francisco Bay Trail along the Emeryville Crescent. Golden Gate Audubon and other organizations and agencies became concerned about the plan in August after learning that it included plans for a Bay Trail spur but lacked an adequate assessment of potential environmental impacts from the plan.

After reviewing the draft General Plan and the associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR), we submitted comments and public testimony urging that the Bay Trail provisions be removed from the General Plan. Other organizations and agencies, such as the Sierra Club, Citizens for East Shore Parks, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), and California Department of State Parks also submitted comments opposing the Bay Trail spur along the crescent.

Concern for the project was so great because the Emeryville Crescent has long been recognized as an important area for wildlife. The crescent provides critical habitat for Bay Area birds, particularly shorebirds and waterfowl, throughout the year. It has also been recognized as potential habitat for the endangered California Clapper Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse. In the Eastshore State Park General Plan,

EMERYVILLE CRESCENT continued on page 10

Sign Up for the Christmas Count

Join your friends—or meet new ones—by taking part in Golden Gate Audubon's 2009 Christmas Bird Counts: in Oakland on Sunday, December 20, and in San Francisco on Tuesday, December 29. Not only will you have an enjoyable day of birding, but you can cap it off with a delicious dinner where area leaders report results from the field, including the whereabouts of unusual species found that day.

Invitations to both counts have been sent to everyone who participated recently in either count. San Francisco co-compiler Dan Murphy urges prompt replies. "Christmas season is a busy time for all of us, so it really helps if you sign up online, and do it early," he says. "Remember, we welcome birders of every experience level."

This season marks the 110th year of Christmas Bird Counts. Each count attempts to identify and tally the birds within a defined 15-mile-diameter circle during one calendar day. Last year, thousands of volunteers counted nearly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. The National Audubon Society has made the results of all counts since 1900 accessible to everyone at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html. Researchers and bird-watchers alike use the data to study changes in resident bird populations.

The Oakland count circle extends from Treasure Island northeast to the San Pablo Reservoir

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX
415.681.7422

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mark Welther 510.843.9912
mwelther@goldengateaudubon.org

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Kevin E. Consey kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org

CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Mike Lynes mlynnes@goldengateaudubon.org

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT

Rue Mapp 510.843.7295
rmapp@goldengateaudubon.org

ECO-EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER

Anthony DeCicco 510.635.5533
adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org

ECO-EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Rubén Guzmán 510.635.5533
rguzman@goldengateaudubon.org

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Jennifer Robinson Maddox 510.919.5873

OFFICE MANAGER

Stephanie Strait 510.843.2222

GULL MANAGING EDITOR

Judith Dunham jldunham@earthlink.net

FIELD TRIPS

Pam Belchamber 510.549.2839

OBSERVATIONS

Bruce Mast observe@goldengateaudubon.org

WEB EDITOR

webeditor@goldengateaudubon.org

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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Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702
TEL 510.843.2222 FAX 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org
ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

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Migrations at Golden Gate Audubon

In this season of migration and change, we bid farewell to four valued members of our board of directors and a member of our staff while welcoming new board members.

Many thanks to the following board members and staff member for their invaluable contributions.

After joining the board in 2002, **Marjorie Blackwell** became editor of the *Gull* and chair of the Publications and Publicity Committee and then served as president and vice president from 2004 until October of this year. She helped redesign the Golden Gate Audubon website, served on numerous committees, and worked with staff and volunteers on Golden Gate Audubon's highly successful 90th anniversary celebration in 2007. She will continue to do hands-on volunteer work, as well as serve on the Publications and East Bay Conservation Committees.

During most of his tenure on the board, which began in 2006, **Berry Brosi** was a post-doctoral fellow at Stanford University's Center for Conservation Biology. Drawing on his background and expertise in the field, he provided valuable scientific input on key conservation initiatives. With board members Sarah Reed and Carey Knecht, he helped initiate and shape our new Science Advisory Council.

One of Golden Gate Audubon's most avid birders and popular class instructors and field trip leaders, **Bob Lewis** joined the board in 2005. During his term, he served as chair of the Education Committee and helped expand our class offerings in both the East Bay and San Francisco. Bob will remain involved with Golden Gate Audubon as a member of the Education Committee. He also continues to serve as co-compiler (with Dave Quady) of the Oakland Christmas Bird Count. At this month's Speaker Series, Bob is giving a photographic tour of Brazil (see page 5).

Prior to joining the board in 2006, **Sarah Reed** was coordinator of our Speaker Series. Continuing in the position, she helped increase attendance at our monthly programs. Because her PhD work at UC Berkeley emphasized human impacts on wildlife, Sarah provided expert advice that helped Golden Gate Audubon respond to various local conservation issues. Sarah also worked with Berry Brosi and Carey Knecht to organize our new Science Advisory Council.

In June of 2008, **Linda Coffee** joined Golden Gate Audubon as development manager. In this position, she initiated new grant applications, managed membership renewal and donor communications, and laid the groundwork for a planned giving program. In October of this year, Linda accepted a position with the Pacific Forest Trust. We're sorry to lose her, but wish her great success in her new job.

We welcome two new members of our board of directors.

Holding a PhD in zoology from the University of Washington, **Alan Harper** is a founder of Terra Peninsular, AC, a Mexican nonprofit dedicated to the conservation of land in Baja California. He was a partner in AppMagic, a software development firm. Alan serves on the boards of Terra Peninsular, the California Institute for Biodiversity, and the JiJi Foundation. A photographer with a strong interest in the landscapes of Baja California, he is working on a book about the area. Alan and his wife reside in Oakland.

Since 1987, **Jay Pierrepont** has been with Pantheon Ventures, a global fund that invests in private equity and infrastructure. As a managing partner, he now oversees all U.S. activities in addition to directing business development and client service for North America. Jay received his master of management degree from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. He lives in San Francisco with his wife and two children and calls himself "a competent birder."

Golden Gate Audubon greatly appreciates the talented people who generously give their time and support to further our programs. We couldn't thrive without them.

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

Share Your Patch

For decades, field trips have been one of Golden Gate Audubon's most popular activities, welcoming birders of all ages and experience levels and introducing newcomers to the wonderful world of birds. Since January 2008, our field trip leaders have volunteered nearly 1,800 hours to lead more than 200 field trips. We are grateful to all the leaders for their dedication and enthusiasm.

GGA field trips range from a two-hour walk through the San Francisco Botanical Garden to a multiday trip to Yosemite National Park. What enables us to offer such diverse choices? The efforts of people just like you. Prompted by their fondness for a particular birding spot—a local park, a favorite hiking trail, a swath of shoreline—volunteers decide to share their favorite “patch” with other birders and anyone else who might be interested.

After reading a post on the East Bay Birders listserv, Hilary Powers, who now leads a regular Lake Merritt field trip, responded to the GGA field trip coordinator: “I wrote and said I’d been birding only a couple years and didn’t know much of anything, but I lived a couple blocks from the lake and would be happy to provide a contact point for the trip. People could figure out what they were seeing from books.” Shortly thereafter, Ruth Tobey and another volunteer decided to join Hilary and lead the trips together. “We thought if we had a regular monthly trip there,” Ruth adds, “that we might attract new people to birding. I got involved as a trip leader because I had a spotting scope—it was not that I was an ace birder!”

Hilary and Ruth agree that, for a regular trip like theirs, having more than one leader is very useful, just in case either of them is unable to make it. Little did they know that they would still be leading the Lake Merritt trips four years later and would be considered experts on the lake’s birds. Hilary and Ruth’s trips at Lake Merritt are held the fourth Wednesday of the month (see Field Trips, page 7).

There are many birding areas to explore in the East Bay, San Francisco, and beyond,



Ruth Tobey (center) and Hilary Powers (right) at Lake Merritt in Oakland with a field trip participant.

Jennifer Robinson Maddox

and we are sure that our members and volunteers for other projects know the hot spots worth visiting. Have you ever been out birding when someone asks you what you’re looking at? And you proceed to tell the person what the bird is and point out a visual characteristic or comment about the bird’s behavior or its habitat? Being a field trip leader might seem intimidating, but it’s as simple as allowing people to join you for your morning or evening of birding and

sharing what you have learned about the place and its inhabitants.

Do you have a place you like to frequent and can share with others? Or maybe a birding friend who’d like to lead trips with you? Our field trips coordinator would like to hear from you. Please contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839 or call me at 510.843.5873. And let’s go birding!

—Jennifer Robinson Maddox,
Volunteer Coordinator

Special Thanks to Our Office Volunteers

You’ve probably been on a Golden Gate Audubon field trip, or attended a Speaker Series program, or come out to help at one of our restoration sites. You may not know that what goes on behind the scenes, in the office, makes these projects and activities, and many others, possible.

Over the months, many volunteers have come to the Golden Gate Audubon office and generously donated their time to assist with data entry, photocopying, posting, inventorying, mailings, organizing, and even preparing craft projects for our many outreach events.

We thank Mel McKey, Anica Odell-Smedley, Harry McPhaul, Curtis Fong, Emile Strauss, Jane Dang, Randy Grimm, Kit Duane, and Shiva Rashedi for their hard work. We appreciate every minute you gave us.

—Jennifer Robinson Maddox, Volunteer Coordinator



SAN FRANCISCO CONTINUES CONVERTING GRASS FIELDS TO ARTIFICIAL TURF

Golden Gate Audubon staff recently met with representatives from Nature in the City, San Francisco's Recreation and Parks Department, and the City Fields Foundation to discuss concerns about the environmental impacts of the city's program for converting grass playing fields to artificial turf. A 2004 report found that San Francisco had 30 to 35 fewer soccer/football and lacrosse fields than needed and 35 fewer baseball fields than needed. The city and City Fields Foundation have already converted six playfields and are planning conversions at Kimball Park, Mission Park, and the fields in Golden Gate Park near the Beach Chalet. The Beach Chalet playing field project will convert four soccer fields to artificial turf, install seating and lighting (to remain illuminated until 10 p.m.), and include facilities for some concessions. The

city of San Francisco has asserted that the projects are exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), but Golden Gate Audubon is not convinced that the claimed exemptions are proper. We will continue to investigate the issue in partnership with Nature in the City to ensure that adequate environmental review is completed and impact mitigation measures are implemented.

2008–2009 NORTH RICHMOND SHORELINE CENSUS

In October, Golden Gate Audubon released a report summarizing the results of the year-long bird census of the North Richmond shoreline, from September 2007 through August 2008. Observers counted over 138,000 birds of 93 species, including 25 species of shorebirds, 22 species of waterfowl, 17 near-shore species (excluding gulls and waterfowl), 13 species of raptors, 8 species of gulls, and 6 species of marsh-

associated birds (such as egrets and coots). Birds were most abundant in the fall and winter months. Data also show that tides affected the birds' site selection; some areas were used more heavily during low tides, and others were favored as high-tide roosting sites. The study is already being used to advocate for protection of the North Richmond shoreline, and our data are being included in restoration plans. We are deeply grateful to our census team leaders and volunteers, the Natural Heritage Institute, and CalFed, which provided funding for the project.

URBAN WIND TURBINES PICK UP SPEED

Golden Gate Audubon was a member of the San Francisco Urban Wind Task Force and participated in a September 29, 2009, press conference with Mayor Gavin Newsom, small wind generators, architects, businesses, and city agencies. When the task force convened, small turbine manufacturers stated that none of their new small wind generators had been evaluated for biological impacts. The task force's final recommendations include working closely with Golden Gate Audubon or other advocacy groups to monitor the research and mitigate the potential impacts of small wind generators on birds and bats. Since the task force completed its work, we developed a monitoring protocol for use at the San Francisco Zoo and on Treasure Island. The zoo's turbine has been operating for two months with no observed impacts on birds or bats. We will continue to monitor new urban wind turbine installations and report back as data are made available.

2008 SOUTHERN WATERFRONT REPORT

Data from the 2008 San Francisco southern waterfront survey has been posted to the Golden Gate Audubon website. The report documents bird species nesting and roosting at eight dilapidated piers and wharves along the waterfront. Observers recorded

Festival Draws Richmond Community

At this year's North Richmond Shoreline Festival, Golden Gate Audubon staff and volunteers worked with East Bay Regional Park District naturalist Bethany Facendini and Martha Berthelsen, programs manager at the Watershed Project, to create games for children and their families, such as a shorebird maze and art projects made from shotgun shells collected on Eco-Education beach cleanups. GGA volunteers Bob Lewis and Sheila Dickie led festival-goers on bird walks along the shoreline. The event included a ceremony honoring the late Ethel Dotson, a community activist. Attendees participated in a procession to a special bench looking out on the shoreline that she worked hard to protect. GGA's involvement was made possible by a grant from TogetherGreen, a National Audubon and Toyota program.



Patrick Maddox



SPEAKER SERIES

JENNIFER ROBINSON MADDOX, COORDINATOR

A Photographic Tour of Brazil's Threatened Atlantic Forest

Bob Lewis

Berkeley: Thursday, November 19

7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program

Bob Lewis's presentation on Brazil's threatened Atlantic forest is based on a four-person tour he took in August 2008, led by Brazilian birder and photographer Edson Endrigo. This forested, mountainous area west of Rio and São Paulo, originally 1.2 million square kilometers, is now only about 100,000 square kilometers, or 7 percent of its former size. Nevertheless, the area harbors over 900 bird species, including 144 endemics; 20,000 plant species, including 8,000 endemics; and numerous mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fish.

Bob, a retired chemist, recently retired from the Golden Gate Audubon board of directors after many years but remains involved with GGA as a member of the Education Committee. He is also the co-compiler, with Dave Quady, of the Oakland Christmas Bird Count, and is president of the Farallon Islands Foundation, which focuses on preserving the islands' birdlife. Together with his wife, Hanno, he is a perpetual traveler in search of new birds to watch and photograph, and has accumulated a life list of more than 3,700. Bob has taught birding classes since 1993, when friend Rusty Scalf took him on as junior assistant to the field trip leader, and enjoys showing his photographic efforts in classes and lectures.



Golden-chevroned Tanager.



Saffron Toucanet.

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

Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Saturday, November 7, 9 a.m. – noon

Pier 94 wetlands restoration workday. As part of our ongoing efforts to restore wetlands along San Francisco's southern waterfront, we will continue weeding the Pier 94 wetlands and working on the new upland plots. Join us and see what birds have come to use this habitat. Refreshments provided.

Sunday, November 8, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Help us prepare habitat for the breeding colony of endangered California Least Terns. Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of the former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda. Take the Webster Tube into Alameda. From Webster St., turn right onto Atlantic Ave. and then right onto Orion St. Turn left onto W. Tower Ave., which dead-ends at Monarch St. Turn right, and look left for a large beige building (Coach Specialties). Turn left at the end of the building. The refuge entrance is in the back of the parking lot.

Saturday, November 14, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Help improve the coastal dune and bluff habitat at Lands End in San Francisco and see Willow Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, and other birds found here. Take Clement St. to 34th Ave., enter Lincoln Park Golf Course, and go up

the hill to the Palace of the Legion of Honor. Meet the intersection with El Camino del Mar for the walk down the access road to East Wash. Tools, water, and snacks provided. Sponsored by Parks Conservancy and Golden Gate Audubon.

Saturday, November 21, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland. Join us in planting more native grasses and gumplant along the shoreline. From the Hegenberger exit off I-880, go toward the Oakland airport. Turn right on Pardee, left on Swan, and right into the park. Follow the road to the last parking lot and meet at the observation platform adjacent to Arrowhead Marsh. Refreshments provided.

Saturday, December 5, 9 a.m. – noon

Harding Park, San Francisco. Come out for our monthly workdays at Harding Park, part of our TogetherGreen Volunteer Days. This is our only planting day at the park, so don't miss out! Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd. at the statue. Refreshments provided.

For more information on any of these activities, or for details on locations, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, Volunteer Coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Lincoln Park and Lands End

San Francisco

Sunday, November 1, 1–4 p.m.

Dominik Mosur, polksatata@yahoo.com, 415.786.2768

Join local birder Dominik Mosur for an afternoon of birding his favorite spots. Some notable birds found here in the past couple years during this season include vagrant warblers such as Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, and Palm; Tropical Kingbird; and Townsend's Solitaire, along with most of the commonly expected western migrants. Depending on the weather, this is also a great place to see raptors flying in from Hawk Hill. The trails have some brief, semi-strenuous uphill sections, so bring comfortable shoes and drinking water. Trip is limited to 15 participants; contact Dominik in advance to reserve a spot. Meet in the parking lot at Fort Miley in the Presidio.

Take Geary St. west until it becomes Point Lobos. Turn right on El Camino del Mar and follow it to Fort Miley west parking lot. If coming from the Great Highway, go past the Cliff House and Merrie Way, then turn left onto El Camino del Mar.

Jewel Lake

Berkeley

Friday, November 6, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156, philajane6@yahoo.com

We continue our monthly first Friday trips at Tilden Regional Park. Meet at the park-

ing lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile, 2-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Winter birds are in residence now, along with a few waterbirds on the lake. Come prepared for a possibly muddy trail. Rain cancels.

Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline

Oakland

Saturday, November 7, 9 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net, 510.666.9936

At the MLK shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh, you can find shorebirds, raptors, and an occasional Clapper Rail. Join Rusty for a morning at this popular birding location.

Take I-880 toward the Oakland airport. Exit at Hegenberger Rd., turn right, and go .7 mile across a small bridge to Pardee Dr. and turn right. Continue to Swan Way and turn left. Shortly thereafter, turn right into the shoreline. Meet at the parking lot at the end of the road.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturday, November 7, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, San Francisco Nature Education, 415-387-9160; www.sfnature.org

Meet at front gate of garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way, for a guided bird walk for adults and students 13 and up. Adults \$10; students free. Reservations required for groups of 10 or more. Sponsored by garden and GGA.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sunday, November 8, 8 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall

Meet at front gate of 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.

Hayward Shoreline

Alameda County

Saturday, November 14, 8 a.m.

Kathy Jarrett, 510.409.6984, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

The Hayward Regional Shoreline is always a great spot to bird. We will meet at 8 a.m. at San Leandro BART station following 7:55 arrival of train from Richmond and ride 2.5 miles to trailhead via Williams St. bike lane. Or meet at 8:30 a.m. at end of Monarch Bay Dr. adjacent to trailhead. We will go south on the SF Bay Trail from the San Leandro Marina to Hayward Regional Shoreline and the Interpretive Center, making about a 20-mile round-trip. High tide is at 10 a.m., and shorebirds should be flushed in by the tide. Some parts of the trails are paved; others are easily negotiable. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Trip lasts into the afternoon.

Car: From I-880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. exit (west). After 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 the San Leandro station, go south about 1 block to Williams and turn right; go about 3 miles to the end and turn left, continuing onto Monarch Bay Dr.

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Alameda County

Sunday, November 15, 9 a.m. – noon

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Coyote Hills, a park with several habitats, has lots of birds in the fall. We'll see raptors, wintering waterfowl, resident

The Southern Marin Christmas Bird Count

If you have time for an extra Christmas Bird Count, Dominik Mosur and Harrison Karr, co-compilers of the Southern Marin CBC, are looking for birders to help count their area. The circle ranges from Terra Linda to Sausalito and the Golden Gate Bridge, and Bolinas to San Pablo Bay. This year's count is on Saturday, December 26, which does not conflict with the December 20 Oakland CBC or the December 29 San Francisco CBC. Like many other counts, this one concludes the day with a compilation dinner, to which everyone is invited. Go to www.marinaudubon.org for more information.

passerines, and more. Meet at the visitor's center at end of park entrance road. Heavy rain cancels. Email leader for more information.

Take I-880 south to Hwy. 84 and head west on Hwy. 84 toward Dumbarton Bridge. Exit at Paseo Padre, turn right (north) onto Paseo Padre, and go 1.1 miles to Patterson Ranch Rd., the entrance to the park. Turn left and enter park, stopping at kiosk to pay entry fee. \$

Berkeley Fishing Pier

Thursday, November 19, 8 – 10 a.m.

Emilie Strauss, 510.540.8749

Meet at the Berkeley pier for a leisurely half-mile walk (one-way) in search of Surf Scoters, scaup, loons, grebes, and gulls. With luck, we may see a Long-tailed Duck or a Black Scoter. If the birding is slow, we may relocate to a nearby location. Bring a scope if you have one. Rain cancels.

Take the University Ave. exit from I-80 and backtrack west. At the Y intersection after freeway, stay left on University until it dead-ends at the pier. Lots of parking is available. An AC transit bus also services the marina area.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, November 20, 8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at 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 the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, November 25,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Meet at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. The fall and winter are great at Lake Merritt, but November is apt to be the peak:



Female Common Goldeneye.

Charles Denson

almost all the seasonal migrants should have arrived, and even the Barrows Goldeneyes won't have left yet.

Take the 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into the park on Perkins. Best parking is at the boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.



Redwood Shores

Sunday, November 29,

10:15 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Kathy Jarrett, 510.409.6984, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 10:15 at trailhead at Oracle Parkway and Shoreway Rd. in Belmont. This circuit of Redwood Shores is a flat 11-mile loop on the SF Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved, and parts on bike lanes on city streets. The highlight is the sewer ponds at Radio Rd. Dress for variable weather. High tide is at 9:15

a.m. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. If you can offer a ride or would like a ride, please call well in advance. Field trip ends in early afternoon.

Transit: Caltrain arrives in Belmont at 9:58 a.m. (Caltrain departure from SF at 9:15, Millbrae at 9:39, BART through MacArthur at 8:35 arriving Millbrae 9:29). From the Belmont station, head east on Masonic to the end at Hiller, turn right, and cross to opposite side of Marine Pkwy. Continue east over freeway interchange, using caution at the entrances and exits. Upon reaching last exit, go down pedestrian/bike path to Shoreway Rd., then turn left to light and cross to north side Marine Pkwy. Continue one block on Oracle Pkwy. and turn left to parking area. Caltrain operates hourly on weekends. Return from San Carlos station north toward Millbrae and SF at 1:45 p.m. Ticket machines in stations take cash and credit cards. Car: From Hwy. 101 in Belmont, exit at Ralston/Marine Pkwy. Go east toward bay .4 mile, turn left at first light east of freeway onto Oracle Pkwy. and then left at next intersection (stop sign) and immediately into a parking area.

Donations

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

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Mary E. Martin

LEAST TERN (\$200 TO \$499)

Rebecca Eisen, Robert T. Howard, Anne K. Kelley

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IN MEMORY OF

Patricia L. McConnell: in memory of Sue Brooks

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Della Dash (books)

GRANTS

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration B-WET (Bay Watershed Education and Training Program) for the Eco-Oakland Program, TogetherGreen Innovation Grant (a National Audubon and Toyota alliance)

GGA Volunteers Turn Out for Coastal Cleanup

For the 25th anniversary of California Coastal Cleanup on September 19, teams of Golden Gate Audubon volunteers, including staff and board members, plied the shoreline at Pier 94 in San Francisco and Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland.

At Pier 94, 18 volunteers picked up trash at the four-acre site of Golden Gate Audubon's tidal marsh restoration. About 150 cigarette butts, yards and yards of fishing line (some with rusted hooks), large chunks of Styrofoam, tire tubes, and sinuous cable that had to be pulled forcibly out of the ground were among the 500 pounds of debris removed from the shoreline.

In the East Bay, along the eastern shore of San Leandro Bay, a couple dozen Golden Gate Audubon volunteers joined crews from other organizations in gathering bag after bag of plastic, glass, and other debris. The East Bay Regional Park District, which manages the MLK shoreline, brought along its mobile fish exhibit, a large tank that provides a fish eye's view of local aquatic life.

We thank the 12 employees from Environmental Science Associates and their family members who came out to Pier 94 and the other dedicated volunteers who worked at Pier 94 and the MLK shoreline.



Charles Denson



Lee Karney



Lee Karney

Big Trips for 2010

If you want to go birding outside the Bay Area, consider one of next year's trips designed especially for Golden Gate Audubon members. For applications and detailed information, please contact Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093 or ruth Tobey@gmail.com.

Mark Pretti will lead two trips to Oaxaca, Mexico, to explore a variety of habitats between Oaxaca and Puerto Escondido on the Pacific Coast. The December trip has filled, but spaces may still be available on the trip scheduled for January 5–15, 2010. Cost is projected to be \$2,500 per person based on double occupancy and includes all lodging, meals, and transportation from

Oaxaca City. Part of the cost is a \$150 tax-deductible donation to GGA. A deposit of \$100 per person is required.

In May 2010, Harry Fuller will lead a Memorial Day weekend trip to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. At this major birding hot spot, spring brings a diverse nesting species, including Sandhill Crane, Wilson's Phalarope, Swainson's Hawk, Sage Grouse, and 15 species of waterfowl. Our group, limited to 10, will also look for Sage Thrasher, Sage Sparrow, Short-eared Owl, Least Bittern, and possibly Bobolink and other eastern species. Price for this trip, still to be determined,

will include a \$50 donation to GGA.

In partnership with ProNatura, a Mexican conservation group, we will offer a trip to Veracruz for the "River of Raptors" migration, October 2–10, 2010. The 540 species in central Veracruz include 25 endemics. During fall migration, on a good day, more than 100,000 migrant vultures and raptors are seen; on a big day, over 500,000 have been counted. We will have the option of a basic 9-day tour for \$2,100 (with 8–10 participants) or an extended tour, through October 13, to include Los Tuxtlas rain forest (if 6 participants elect to stay) for \$2,650. Prices include a \$150 donation to GGA.



September marks the beginning of passerine migration and peak season for CA rarities. It is fitting, then, that Sept. 26 and 27 marked the Luke Cole Memorial Challenge, a statewide birdathon to honor a great birder, rare bird expert, dedicated humanitarian and environmental justice advocate, and all-around good guy.

LOONS TO DUCKS

The warm ocean current retreated offshore this month, taking its tropical rarities with it. Instead, the Sept. 16 pelagic trip to Cordell Bank, MRN, located a cooperative **Short-tailed Albatross** (*Phoebastria albatrus*) (SH, DeS). This species is apparently recovering from near extinction but still numbers in the low 1,000s. It was formerly common off California waters; 8 of the 12 sightings since 1900 have been in the last decade.

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

Fall hawk migration brought a handful of Broad-winged Hawks over the Golden Gate, SF/MRN, starting the 7th, with a high count of 5 on the 20th (SB, KW; oob).

An **American Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis dominica*) forsook its usual central U.S. migration route to visit the mudflats of Bodega Harbor, SON, starting the 18th (RS; mob). On the 8th, a Solitary Sandpiper checked out the progress of wetland restoration at the Tomasini Triangle Marsh at Tomales Bay, MRN (JE). A Solitary also lingered Sept. 24–25 in Novato, MRN (Dave Herma; RR). Shorebird migration brought scattered Baird's Sandpiper sightings, along with 40-plus Pectoral Sandpipers at 16 locations. On the 10th, a Stilt Sandpiper waded the shallows of CCFS Waterbird Pond, SCL (SR; FV, BR).

A Sabine's Gull made landfall at Stowe L., GGP, SF, on the 26th (AR, PMC, DM). Ancient Murrelets were noted on the 10th off Año Nuevo SR, SM (GS), and on the 22nd off Bodega Head, SON (PW, PH).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

On the 5th, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo flew out of Pescadero Cr. at Phipp's County Store, SM (RT, LB). On the 19th, a Chimney



Short-tailed Albatross, observed at Cordell Bank on September 16.

Thomas A. Blackman/www.obeach.smugmug.com

Swift was picked out of a Violet-green Swallow flock over Searsville L., SM (RT, LB). A young male **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** (*Archilochus colubris*) paid a Sept. 30 visit to the famous feeders at the Wildlife Gallery, 48 Wharf Rd., Bolinas, MRN (KH). The same feeders hosted a Broad-tailed Hummingbird Sept. 1–6 (DM; mob).

A Least Flycatcher passed through East Wash in Lincoln Park, SF, on the 17th (BF). On the 27th, Drakes Bay Oyster Company at PRNS offered Tropical Kingbird on the half shell (DW, oob). An Eastern Kingbird was spotted near the rock quarry on outer PRNS on the 8th (EM, JD), and another loitered at Fort Mason Community Garden, SF, on the 25th (AG). A Plumbeous Vireo, discovered Sept. 30 along Tunitas Cr. Rd., is just the 5th county record for SM (RT, LB; RC, KO). A Gray Catbird skulked in the

willows around Campbell Cove in Bodega Bay, SON, on the 1st (DN).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Despite NW winds and coastal fog, fall warbler migration got under way in earnest with 2 Tennessee and 2 Virginia's Warblers; 3 Northern Parulas; 3 Chestnut-sided, 2 Magnolia, a Cape May, a Black-throated Blue, 3 Prairie, a Palm, 5 Blackpoll, and 2 Black-and-white Warblers; 9 American Redstarts; 3 Northern Waterthrush; a Hooded and 2 Canada Warblers. Beginning the 8th, Summer Tanagers turned up Glen Cyn. Park, SF (JRB; mob); Inverness, MRN (LW); NAP River Ecological Reserve, NAP (Mbe; KP, DoS); Middle L., GGP, SF (mob); and S. Windmill, GGP, SF (mob).

A Green-tailed Towhee visited PRNS Lighthouse, MRN, on the 13th (JC). A Vesper Sparrow made it to the PRNS Fish-docks, MRN, on the 27th (RR). On Sept. 17–18, a Yellow-headed Blackbird joined the Red-wingeds around Shoreline Park in Mountain View, SCL (JM; PD). NW SF hosted 1–3 Orchard Orioles: at El Polin Spring, Presidio, on the 6th (ME); along Simonds Loop in the Presidio on the 25th (AH); and at Fort Mason Community Garden on the 26th (fide HC). In SM, an Orchard Oriole was noted on the 17th at Coyote Pt. (RT). Baltimore Orioles were reported on the 9th from SE Farallon Island, SF (MBr), and on the 25th from S. L. Merced Concrete Bridge, SF (HC, PS). Finally, a Cassin's Finch came down the mountain to N. L. in GGP, SF, on the 25th (HC, PS).

See [Birding Resources at www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org), for complete sightings data.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Rod Thornton for helping compile Observations data.

Abbreviations for Observers: AF, Allen Fish; AG, Angie Geiger; AH, Alan Hopkins; AR, Andrew Rush; BF, Brian Fitch; BR, Bob Reiling; DH, Dave Herma; DM, Dominik Mosur; DN, Dan Nelson; DR, Don Reinberg; DeS, Debi Shearwater; DoS, Doug Shaw; DW, David Wimpfheimer; EB, Eddie Bartley; EM, Ellie Mulkey; FV, Frank Vanslager; GS, Gary Strachan; HC, Hugh Cotter; JC, Josiah Clark; JD, Jane Dang; JE, Jules Evens; JM, Jeff Miller; JRB, J.R. Blair; KH, Keith Hansen; KO, Kris Olson; KP, Kathy Parker; KW, Ken Wilson; LB, Leonie Batkin; LW, Lindsay Wahlberg; MBr, Matt Brady; Mbe, Murray Berner; ME, Mark Eaton; MP, Mike Parmeter; PD, Peggy Don; PH, Phil Henderson; PMC, Pat McCulloch; PS, Paul Saraceni; PW, Pete White; RC, Roy Carlson; RR, Ruth Rudesill; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; SB, Steven Bauer; SH, Steve Howell; SR, Steve Rottenborn.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBRC, CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; FOS, first of season; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRBO, Pt Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

the Emeryville Crescent was a Preservation Area and Marine Preserve, with limited public access to protect the habitat values of the area.

In response to our concerns, the city of Emeryville's planning staff proposed changes to the General Plan clarifying that the trail would not be built within the Emeryville Crescent, but rather adjacent to it on already developed land. City staff also emphasized that the trail would not be constructed without additional environmental assessment for potential impacts. Finally, proponents of the planned trail argued that a similar trail was constructed adjacent to the Albany mudflats, another Preservation Area and Marine Reserve.

Despite these changes, Golden Gate Audubon and others remained opposed

to the trail provisions in the General Plan because of language in the city's EIR indicating that the filling of wetlands, destruction of nesting bird habitat, and projects that would affect sensitive species' habitats would have a "less than significant environmental impact" and not require mitigation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. While city staff asserted that these findings would be subject to further scrutiny on a project-by-project basis, we remained concerned that the EIR language would be used as an excuse not to conduct the necessary environmental review in the future.

Golden Gate Audubon supports the creation of the Bay Trail and believes that a spur of the trail adjacent to—but not within—the Emeryville Crescent may be possible, but only after a comprehensive environmental

review and the development of a clear plan to avoid any impacts to the area and its wildlife. Thankfully, the city council agreed to remove plans for constructing the Bay Trail along the Emeryville Crescent and instead adopted a statement of intent to study the feasibility of the project in consultation with other stakeholders, such as the California Department of Fish and Game, EBRPD, California Department of State Parks, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

With input from the right stakeholders, including Golden Gate Audubon members, a Bay Trail spur through Emeryville may be developed in a way that promotes outdoor recreation and wildlife viewing without inflicting further negative impacts on the birds and other wildlife that rely on the Emeryville Crescent.

—Mike Lynes, Conservation Director

CONSERVATION CORNER from page 4

25 species, including nesting Western Gulls and Caspian Terns at dilapidated piers near Agua Vista Park. Based on our data, the report offers alternatives for future nesting habitat for the Caspian Terns to replace the piers on which they now rely. The survey would not have been possible without the participation of volunteers from Golden

Gate Audubon, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, and Baykeeper. The Port of San Francisco sponsored the Urban Waterfront Challenge, providing funds to observe the birds from the water.

GGA COMMENTS ON PROPOSED TRUCKING TERMINAL

On September 21, 2009, Golden Gate Audubon submitted comments to the Port of Oakland on the port's draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) regarding a proposed trucking terminal to be constructed and operated by R&L Carriers, Inc., near the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline. We are primarily concerned about the potential impacts of noise, lights, and polluted storm water leaving the facility on the birds that live in the adjacent habitat. Although the project is not expected to directly threaten the endangered California Clapper Rails in the shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh, we believe that the EIR fails to adequately assess all the impacts to other bird species. We are urging that additional mitigation measures be included in the EIR.

BURROWING OWLS RETURN TO CESAR CHAVEZ PARK

In early October, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers installed fencing at Berkeley's Cesar Chavez Park to protect the area

where several Western Burrowing Owls have wintered over the past few years. Afterward, they participated in a docent-training program in preparation for sharing information about the owls with the public. Just days after the installation, docents observed two Burrowing Owls at the site. The owls, which migrate south from the northwest U.S. or Canada, spend the winter in the abandoned California Ground Squirrel burrows in the park's northeast corner. Efforts to ensure the owls' safety began last winter, when Golden Gate Audubon's East Bay Conservation Committee worked with the city of Berkeley to create an enclosure in the same area of the heavily used park. The temporary fencing is removed when the owls depart in spring.

JOIN A CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Meet other birders and wildlife enthusiasts on your side of the bay and find out about projects in your community. For the time and location of the East Bay Conservation Committee meeting, contact chair Phil Price (phil@creekcats.com) or Mike Lynes (mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org). The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way (www.randallmuseum.org).

East Bay Office for Rent

Golden Gate Audubon is seeking a compatible tenant for a 200-square-foot space within its own offices in Berkeley. The rent is \$400 per month. Perfect for private law or consulting business. Shared wireless Internet. For more information, please contact Kevin E. Consey at 510.843.2222.

GGA's Wish List

Golden Gate Audubon is soliciting generous donations of the following items: video and still cameras, binoculars, telescopes, and a vehicle to transport tools and equipment to restoration sites. To donate any of these items or for information related to these items, contact Kevin E. Consey at kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org.

New at the Nature Store

If you haven't visited Golden Gate Audubon's Nature Store recently, you may be surprised at everything we offer. From an array of field guides and other books (including birdsong CDs) to birdseed and birdfeeders, to bird-themed puzzles and clocks, we pack a lot into a small space.

One of the exciting new items in the store is the Golden Gate Audubon fleece vest in dark blue with two zipper pockets, available in small, medium, and large. Also in stock now are notecards with beautiful bird photographs by local photographer Eleanor Briccetti and two recently released books of interest to Bay Area birders: *The Sibley Guide to Trees*, compact enough to carry in the field, and the *Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County*. The 260-page atlas, by Steve Glover, has more than 160

species accounts, accompanied by Rusty Scalf's range maps and Dana Gardner's illustrations.

The Nature Store carries select books used in Golden Gate Audubon classes, such as *The Shorebird Guide* (with an abundance of color photos) and *The Field Guide to Owls of California and the West*. Even if you are not taking the related class, you will want to consider adding these titles to your birding library.

The Nature Store is located at the GGA office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. Select merchandise is also available at our Berkeley Speaker Series and Christmas Bird Count events. Golden Gate members get a 10 percent discount on all purchases—and remember that all proceeds go directly to support GGA programs.



GGA's new fleece vest.

CHRISTMAS COUNT from page 1

in Contra Costa County and south to St. Mary's College in Moraga and the Oakland International Airport. With its wide variety of habitats, the Oakland count typically records more than 170 species.

The San Francisco count circle includes the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge and all of San Francisco, and extends down the peninsula to San Bruno Mountain and the wetlands north of San Francisco International Airport. Also blessed with a wide variety of habitats, the San Francisco count generally tops 160 species. Both counts have ranked among the top 25 nationwide in terms of numbers of species found.

"We want a good number of participants, so that we can do a good job of covering every area in our count circle," says Dan. "You can search for birds from dawn to dusk—or longer if you look for owls, as some of us do. We'll do our best to assign you to an area that suits your interests, your abilities, and your specific requests, such as to count with friends. Wherever you're assigned, you'll work with an experienced area leader. If your time is limited, you can still help by spending a few hours looking for birds around your workplace or in a park nearby. We want yard watchers, too. Some

species, such as Pine Siskin, are often found mostly at feeders."

Golden Gate Audubon's two Christmas Bird Counts are a popular tradition: Oakland usually attracts 150-plus field observers, and San Francisco more than 90.

Both bird counts end the day with a festive group dinner. Everyone is invited: field counters, yard watchers, and anyone else who wants to join the fun. "The dinner is a great event in its own right," Dan says. "There's good, healthy food, it's affordable, and the dinner is a great way to conclude the day. People tell about their day in the field, hear from the other count areas, and

figure out how many species we recorded. We also learn what rare birds were found, like last year's Worm-eating Warbler, and where they were found."

Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Robinson Maddox will plan the dinners this year. She promises plenty of nutritious food, including irresistible desserts, so that everyone can go home full of good food as well as memories of a good day of birding. "Even if you're unable to participate in the count, especially in San Francisco on a workday," Jennifer says, "join us at the dinner to visit with the counters and hear the results."

Are You Ready to Count?

If so, visit the Golden Gate Audubon home page at www.goldengateaudubon.org. Then scroll down below the Get Involved banner, and click on the Christmas Bird Count link to sign up. Don't wait—act now! Sign-up deadline for the Oakland count is November 30; for the San Francisco count, it's December 7. For further information on the Oakland count, call Dave Quady at 510.704.9353 or Bob Lewis at 510.845.5001. For the San Francisco count, email sfbirdcount@yahoo.com. Call the GGA office (510.843.2222) if you need assistance or want more information.

Can You Help at the CBC Dinners?

Volunteers willing to help decorate, set up, serve, and clean up at dinners are greatly appreciated. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Robinson Maddox at 510.919.5873 or jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.

Give a Holiday Gift that Helps Local Wildlife

This holiday season, present your nature-loving friends and family members with a Supporting Membership in Golden Gate Audubon—a gift they will enjoy the whole year. If the recipient is already a member, consider making a donation in his or her name.

PLEASE SELECT A MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- ☐ **Individual**
\$35
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To complete your gift, send in the form, contact us at 510.843.2222, or go to our website www.goldengateaudubon.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Gull is the newsletter of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The Gull*, a 10 percent discount on items purchased at our Nature Store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

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