

North Richmond Shoreline Census

The North Richmond Shoreline is an important shorebird and waterfowl wintering area. The shoreline's 500 acres of tidal marshes and 800 acres of mudflats provide critical habitat for millions of migrating birds every year and for resident threatened and endangered species. The shoreline is one of only three areas along the entire Pacific Coast that hosts large numbers of Red Knots, birds designated by the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan as "Species of High Concern," which migrate from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America every year. The shoreline also supports one of San Francisco Bay's few nesting pairs of Osprey.

The shoreline's wetlands perform a critical function by filtering stormwater runoff from the heavily urbanized East Bay before it reaches San Pablo Bay and its sensitive mudflat and eelgrass habitats. This eelgrass bed is the largest in the San Francisco Bay—two-thirds of all of the bay's eelgrass, important habitat for salmon and Pacific herring, is located just off the North Richmond Shoreline. Eelgrass also provides important food and shelter for the small crustaceans and arthropods that serve as food for migrating birds.

For the census, we will need three teams running four times per month, for a total of 12 census teams working each month. We will also need at least six people willing to be site leaders (with spotting scopes) since there are always folks on vacation or otherwise unable to participate.

The census teams will consist of a leader, a person taking data on datasheets that will be supplied, and additional people to help with counting flocks and identifying birds. The leader should be an experienced birder with a spotting scope; we can teach the other folks how to count and identify birds. One of the objectives of the census is to familiarize people with birdlife in the census area, so education is a part of the program. See below for team responsibilities.

Jennifer Robinson will be responsible for linking leaders and teams with areas for each census date. We will try to do this about two weeks to a month before each census date. Jennifer can be contacted at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.919.5873.

There are four locations for the census. One team will cover both Wildcat Creek and the Water Treatment Plant. *NOTE: Please use one census sheet for Wildcat Creek and another for the Water Treatment Plant.*

Wildcat Creek Park: This small area is reached from Richmond Parkway. There is an East Bay Regional Parks District parking lot, and a trail that ends at an observation deck. For the census, walk the trail, and census the birds visible from the trail. Pay special attention to the creek for shorebirds and waterbirds. To get to this site, take I-580 to the Richmond Parkway/Castro Street exit and head north along the parkway to Pittsburg Avenue. Make a u-turn and head back south on the parkway to Wildcat Creek Park and the EBRPD parking lot on the right. The census will probably take about an hour.

West County Wastewater District: The district has been very accommodating in allowing us access to their facility. We need to follow some rules, however, to ensure everyone's safety and to inform the operators of our presence on the site. The plant is accessed at 2377 Garden Tract

Road. From Wildcat Creek Park, take the Richmond Parkway north toward I-80 to Pittsburg Avenue. Turn left on Pittsburg Avenue and then make a right on Garden Tract Road. There is a gate at the turn, which is open on weekdays but will be closed on weekends. On weekdays, continue north on Garden Tract Road to the office, and sign in. Note: NO MORE THAN TWO VEHICLES should go beyond the office, so please carpool from Wildcat Creek Park! We can drive on asphalt roads around all the facility, obeying the speed limit of 15 mph. There are a series of ponds toward Richmond Parkway, which should be examined. There is another set of ponds that is reached by going back toward the gate from the office, and then turning right. Check the ponds, as well as the area west of the ponds into the salt marsh. You will have to go along a short gravel road to reach the asphalt roads around the southern-most ponds. The water content will vary with season. Don't drive on dirt roads. Don't climb on dirt banks (and fall in!). You can use the restrooms at the office when you leave to wash up, and please return to sign out. The census may take an hour, depending on birds present.

On Saturdays, the gate will be locked, so the group leader should call the shift supervisor (bring a cell phone!) about five minutes before arriving at the gate and inform him that you are coming to do the Golden Gate Audubon census. Phone number is 510.812.8275. He will open the gate for you. Follow his instructions regarding signing in and out.

Point Pinole: The meeting point is the Point Pinole parking lot. We will take the shuttle provided by the park service from the parking lot out to the fishing pier and then census the birds from the pier south-west. Each census team will take the Bay View Trail back to the parking lot, counting birds along the coastline (from the high water mark out about 100 yards into the water). This is the most critical census area, since it provides the only real view of the bay between Point Pinole and Point Molate. Make note of birds that are visible on the water between the two points, and try to record rough numbers. This will probably take about two hours. To get to Point Pinole, take I-580 to Richmond and exit at Richmond Parkway/Castro Street. Go north five miles on Richmond Parkway and exit at Giant Highway. Turn right. The park entrance is ahead on the left, past the railroad tracks. A map of Point Pinole is available online from East Bay Regional Parks: http://www.ebparks.org/files/EBRPD_files/brochure/pt_pinole_map.pdf.

West County Landfill Loop Trail: Only Stage 1 of the trail is complete, so that is what we will use for the census. The meeting place is the parking lot at the end of Parr Boulevard (which is between Pittsburg Avenue and Goodrick Avenue), just west of the Richmond Parkway. We will census birds in the water and flying over the area visible from the trail. Note that there are a lot of gulls here. The census of this area will also take about two hours. To get to this site, take I-580 to the Richmond Parkway/Castro Street exit and head north along the parkway. Continue to Parr Boulevard and then turn left (west) and head toward the bay. The road makes a series of turns, but just keep following the signs for the Bay Trail to the Landfill Loop at the end of Parr Boulevard. Map: <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/NorthernShoreline/LandfillTrail.jpg>.

Stipends

Thanks to generous funding from CALFED, we have stipends available for all census team leaders, recorders, and members. We will provide stipends of \$15 per hour to any census participant who chooses to receive them. Stipends will be paid once per month near the

beginning of the month, sent in the form of a check to participants' homes. **If you choose to receive the stipend, it is your responsibility to:** 1) send Michael Martin your contact information, including mailing address, by August 31, and 2) send Michael an invoice (preferably by email) by the last day of each month detailing your census work over the previous month (e.g., invoices for September census work are due by September 30). A sample invoice is below; please use this form for throughout the census. *Note: Stipends will also be paid for the August training sessions. If you choose to receive these, please send Michael your invoice by August 31.*

The following pages show a sample data sheet and a sample invoice.

Team Responsibilities

Team Leader: Notify team members of meeting point. Assign recorder job. Bring spotting scope. Assure counts of species are as accurate as possible. Confirm identifications where possible. Assist team members in reaching correct ID conclusions.

Recorder: Enter data on data table. Sum results at end of count. Make sure all participants' names are included on the data sheets. Mail, email, or deliver the data sheets to Golden Gate Audubon, Attn: Michael Martin, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, California 94702. Bring binoculars.

Team Members: Spot birds, identify species, assist Recorder in getting correct count entered. Bring binoculars. If you are a new birder, also practice bird identification at times other than during the census to build your skills. Acquire a field guide. Make sure Michael Martin has your correct email, phone number, and address.

Shorebirds			Generic		
Black-bellied Plover			duck sp		
Semipalmated Plover			scaup sp		
Killdeer			loon sp		
Black Oystercatcher			Aechmoph. grebe		
Black-necked Stilt			cormorant		
American Avocet			Small shorebird		
Greater Yellowlegs			Large shorebird		
Willet			dowitcher sp.		
Spotted Sandpiper			gull		
Whimbrel			tern		
LB Curlew					
Marbled Godwit					
Ruddy Turnstone					
Black Turnstone					
Red Knot					
Western Sandpiper					
Least Sandpiper					
Dunlin					
SB Dowitcher					
LB Dowitcher					
Gulls & Terns					
Mew Gull					
Ring-billed Gull					
California Gull					
Western Gull					
Glaucous-w Gull					
Caspian Tern					
Forster's Tern					

We are only counting ducks and geese, shorebirds, loons and grebes, other birds associated with the water (cormorants, pelicans, etc) and raptors. We are not counting passerines (sparrows, warblers, thrushes, crows, ravens, etc.). If you are unsure whether a bird should be included, please note it and we will make the decision. Please return forms to Michael Martin at the Golden Gate Audubon office for entering in the database.

SAMPLE INVOICE

Date: August 2, 2007

Billed To: Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, California 94702

Subject: Invoice for North Richmond Shoreline bird census

Total amount of this billing: \$112.50 (7.5 hours at \$15 per hour). Billing details are below:

Date	Description	Hours
08/04/07	Point Pinole training session	2.0
08/06/07	Landfill Loop training session	2.0
08/23/07	Wildcat Creek training session	1.5
08/26/07	Point Pinole training session	2.0
TOTAL HOURS:		7.5

Please make check payable to:

Michael Martin
123 Any Street
Berkeley, California 94702

Invoice Submitted By:

Michael Martin

Date Signed