

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Alan Hopkins

Off-leash dog chasing Western Snowy Plovers at Crissy Field in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco.

Making the GGNRA Safe for Wildlife, People, and Dogs

Golden Gate Audubon members have until May 29 to provide input on the National Park Service’s draft Dog Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The new plan would supersede the 1979 dog management rule that has allowed dogs to mostly roam free throughout the GGNRA lands in San Francisco for nearly 30 years.

The new plan is the largest accommodation of dogs in parklands of any national park in the United States. Usually, dogs are required to be on leash and kept only in parking lots or a few paved trails. The current plan continues to allow dogs to be on nearly every trail in the GGNRA in San Francisco and creates several large off-leash dog areas on local beaches.

A new plan is necessary to protect park users, wildlife, habitats, and even dogs in the GGNRA. Dog advocates argue that the area has historically been used for dog walking and that dogs do not have a significant negative impact on the ecology of the park. However, impacts from dogs on wildlife and habitat have been well documented in scientific studies and reports.

Golden Gate Audubon members and many other park visitors have also been

GGNRA continued on page 12

GGA Interns at Audubon Assembly

In March, three Oakland high school interns from Golden Gate Audubon’s Eco-Education Program had the opportunity to attend the Audubon California Assembly in San Diego. Steven Saefong, Chan Saelee, and Ezekiel Perez gave a presentation as part of the Birds & Youth: Future of Conservation workshop, along with youth from California Audubon at Debs Park and the Los Angeles Audubon chapter. The interns were accompanied by Eco-Education Program Manager Anthony DeCicco and Program Coordinator Marissa Ortega-Welch.

In their presentation, “What Conservation Means to Me,” the interns reflected on the work they have done during their GGA internship and elsewhere. They shared what compels them to engage in conservation and their hopes for the future of our environment. All three emphasized the important role of education as part of conservation work and their own efforts to share what they have learned about the environment with others. As Ezekiel said, “We can’t protect what we don’t understand.”

Before their presentation, the interns were able to attend two days of the conference and birding festival in San Diego. Friday’s field trip took them to Lake Hodges, a globally important bird area in northern San Diego, where they were treated to a large diversity of species, including Western Grebes with young on their backs. Steven, a student in the Environmental

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

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Do You Have a Label?

I hope you enjoyed the Birdathon season and observing the spring migration as much as I did. Thank you for supporting Golden Gate Audubon's vital conservation and education programs at the same time. Many species at risk, such as the Western Snowy Plover, Western Burrowing Owl, California Clapper Rail, and California Least Tern, are better off because of our collective efforts to preserve urban habitat for them.

On the cover of this edition of the *Gull*, you will see that we tackle one of the Bay Area's most contentious issues, a proposal to accommodate dogs and dog walking in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). This controversial issue has divided many, even within Golden Gate Audubon, for decades and is all too often cast as a "birds vs. dogs" issue. Of course, the truth is a lot more complicated than that.

It's very unfortunate that some have labeled those who support better management of dogs in the GGNRA as "dog haters." Oversimplistic invective often prevents a real discussion and exchange of ideas. As the rhetoric rises, partisans on both sides stop seeing clearly and often cling only to those convenient facts that support their preconceptions.

Our members can correctly be labeled many things: teachers, parents, dog owners, cat owners, soccer coaches, business owners, students. Almost all are bird lovers and conservationists.

Conservationists face these "us vs. them" attitudes all the time. When Golden Gate Audubon fought for the removal of destructive old wind turbines at Altamont Pass and their replacement with next-generation turbines, a move that could dramatically reduce raptor mortality (March-April 2011 *Gull*), critics claimed that we were putting birds before renewable power (and people). At other times, we have been accused of being antijob—for opposing the construction of a 900-foot bridge across a restored wetland at Yosemite Slough in San Francisco (September-October 2010 *Gull*)—or against youth recreation—for demanding an environmental review of a project to pave western Golden Gate Park soccer fields with artificial turf and install 60-foot light towers.

So what are the real issues? First, that Bay Area natural habitats are under constant pressure for development and are in diminishing supply. Second, that much wildlife in the area, including many important bird species, is declining in numbers. And, finally, that we all share the same limited urban real estate. Without well-thought-out rules, it is inevitable that some users will drive out other users, wildlife, and native plants.

I hope you will carefully consider your position on conservation issues like the dog management rules and get involved in the debate. Whether you label yourself as a bird-watcher, a dog walker, or nothing at all, your input has an impact on the future of our scenic open spaces, native plants, and wildlife. If you love birds and the Bay Area's natural legacy, talk with your friends about the real issues, join one of Golden Gate Audubon's conservation committees, write a letter of support, or attend a public hearing to let your opinion be known.



—Mark Welther, Executive Director

Golden Gate Audubon Board Elections

The 2011 GGA board of directors elections will take place in the following ways:

- On the Golden Gate Audubon website (www.goldengateaudubon.org)
- By written ballot at both the May and June Speakers Series presentations
- By written ballot at the May 12 Birdathon Celebration Dinner (opposite)
- By completing and signing the ballot form and returning it to Golden Gate Audubon, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702

Ballots will be available by May 12. The deadline for voting is June 30, 2011.

Don't Miss the Birdathon Awards Dinner and Celebration

If you haven't sent in your reservations yet, get them in right away! The Birdathon awards celebration dinner on May 12 is likely to be sold out, and you don't want to miss the fun.

This festive and enjoyable event, held 6 to 9 p.m. at the Brazilian Room in Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley, includes our Birdathon and special conservation awards and a great silent auction with bargains on optics, private tastings, getaways, and much more. Tickets are only \$35 per person. Any additional contributions go to support Golden Gate Audubon's programs.

Our celebrity chair is Nell Newman, daughter of actor Paul Newman and founder of Newman's Own Organics. Nell has spoken out on our behalf to help us win this year's victory that reduces raptor fatalities at Altamont Pass and is a lifelong champion of protecting these remarkable birds.

The evening includes birding on the Brazilian Room terrace starting at 6 p.m., wine and hors d'oeuvres, and fabulous food catered by 369 The Arlington. Be sure to come ready to bid on a wide array of silent

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And a special thank-you to our friend Kyoko Tago, graphic designer, who designed our Birdathon logo.

auction items, including optics from Scope City, Pentax, and Steiner, a private tour and tasting donated by Anchor Brewing Company, jewelry from Melissa Joy Manning, an overnight stay at the Captain's Inn near

Monterey, and an eight-day birding trip to Panama (airfare included).

Note: If you are competing for a Birdathon Award, all forms must be in our office by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 5.

INTERNS from page 1

Science Academy at Oakland High School, has been birding many times with school, but as he said, "This is the first time I've had fun." On Friday night, the conference keynote speaker, pelagic bird expert Peter Harrison, wowed the interns with his lecture on the life history of the albatross and got them excited about their pelagic trip the next day.

Out on the boat, though Steven and Chan fought off the drowsiness of Dramamine and Ezekiel struggled with sea sickness, they sighted gray whales, a Northern Fulmar resting in the water, and Brown Boobies nesting on Los Coronado Islands, as well as murrelets, shearwaters, and auklets. When hundreds of dolphins surrounded the boat, Ezekiel, an aspiring marine biologist, was so excited that he lost his breakfast, but Peter Harrison assured him that after a few more boat trips, he would gain his sea legs.

As interns in the Eco-Education Pro-

gram, the high school students help lead the weekend family field trips that culminate the year-long education program for elementary school students in Oakland, Richmond, and San Francisco. At Muir Beach, the interns teach the families about the massive marine debris problem affecting our oceans and the importance of ocean ecosystems. At Alcatraz, they guide the families to see the nesting bird colonies on this rocky island. The interns receive naturalist training about birds, native plants, and the interconnection of ecosystems. They also assist at Golden Gate Audubon's monthly workdays at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland.

Shortly after everyone returned from San Diego, Ezekiel Perez and Anthony DeCicco headed to Hawaii for the NOAA International Conference on Marine Debris. All the interns will be going to the Richardson Bay Audubon Center in Marin to participate in bird banding.

The interns' trip to San Diego was made possible thanks to the Miles T. McKey Memorial Fund. Many thanks to the McKey family for providing the interns with this very special opportunity.

—Marissa Ortega-Welch,
 Eco-Education Program Coordinator



Oakland high school interns Steven Saefong and Chan Saelee (from left) with Peter Harrison.

Marissa Ortega-Welch

Nesting Birds of Lake Merritt

In 2010, San Francisco Nature Education initiated a new program at Lake Merritt, Nesting Birds of the Lake, modeled after our successful 10-year-old program, Great Blue Herons of Golden Gate Park. For four Saturdays in April and May, our dedicated volunteers set up spotting scopes at the Rotary Nature Center and the children's playground. We believed that people would like to learn more about the birds that inhabit the lake.

Sure enough, adults and children flocked to the scopes to view the nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons, Snowy Egrets,

and Double-crested Cormorants. Our volunteers answered questions, handed out Rotary Nature Center brochures about the local birds, and encouraged everyone to come back and bring their children and friends. "I've been coming to Lake Merritt every week for 20 years," one person remarked, "and I have never noticed these birds nesting over there on those islands before! It's amazing!"

We spotted a total of 29 species, including Green Heron, Common Merganser, Bufflehead, and Great Blue Heron. Many birds were a surprise to lake users, who

were unaware of the area's natural treasures. Bringing nature education to Lake Merritt was special for the SFNE volunteers as well as for lake visitors.

This year, San Francisco Nature Education is pleased to pass the program over to Golden Gate Audubon, under the capable leadership of Noreen Weeden. We will continue as a cosponsor, providing volunteers, publicity, and advice as necessary. We look forward to our new collaboration with Golden Gate Audubon.

—Nancy DeStefanis, Director,
San Francisco Nature Education

Travel with Golden Gate Audubon

To obtain itineraries for these trips or to sign up for a trip, contact Chris Bard, chrisbard@earthlink.net or 510.522.5699.

ENDEMIC AND MORE ON THE SLOPES OF THE ANDES

Ecuador boasts the highest biodiversity in the world, relative to the size of the country. It holds the record, with 9.2 species per square kilometer. The richness of Ecuador lies in its diversity in four unique regions: the Amazon rain forest, the Andean Mountains, the coastal lowlands, and the Galápagos Islands. Although Ecuador is a small country, it has more than 1,600 species of birds and is noted for excellent birding opportunities. From the high mountains of Yanacocha Reserve at 11,482 feet to the lowlands of Silanche Reserve at 984 feet, this trip will explore a variety of habitats hosting a plethora of endemic bird species on both the east and west slopes of the Andes.

Guide for this trip will be Edison Bueñano with Sword Billed Expeditions. Born in Riobamba, Edison has worked as a bird guide for Mindo Bird Tours, Bird Holidays, and Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve, as well as other eco-tour-friendly outfits for 12 years. His passion is birding, and his knowledge of bird vocalizations is second to none.

Dates: October 14–28. Cost (excluding airfare): \$3,050 per person (including a \$150 donation to GGA).

CASCADES AND SISKIYOU IN OREGON

Harry Fuller, a popular Golden Gate Audubon field trip leader who now lives in Ashland, Oregon, will lead a trip to the Cascade Range and Siskiyou Mountains in search of montane species, as well as birds found in the region's arid habitats. If you have never been on a trip with Harry, you can get a glimpse of his extensive knowledge of and enthusiasm for birds and birding on his blog at <http://atowhee.wordpress.com>.

In spring, many birds of the Cascades and Siskiyou will be singing on their nesting territories. Participants can expect to see Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds, Green-tailed Towhee, Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Vesper Sparrow, Dusky Flycatcher, Hermit Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, and Mountain Chickadee. For photo and video opportunities, the group will observe Clark's and Western Grebes do their mating dance across Klamath Lake, where Black Tern, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Redhead will also be present. More elusive birds include

Mountain Quail, Dusky Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, Great Gray Owl, and Northern Goshawk. Dates: June 2–5, 2011, with an extension on June 6 for Black Swift at Burney Falls in California. Cost: \$350–475 per person (double occupancy), depending on number of participants (including a \$50 donation to GGA).

HIGHWAY 395 FIELD TRIP TO THE ARIZONA WFO CONFERENCE

Bird your way to the August Western Field Ornithologists conference (see page 10) with Yellowbilled Tours and experienced field guide Rich Cimino. The trip leaves from Pleasanton, California, at 7 a.m. on Sunday, August 14. Planned stops include such hotspots as Sonora Pass and Mono Lake. The trip arrives in Sierra Vista, Arizona, at the Windemere Hotel on Tuesday, August 15, in time for the conference, which begins on August 17. The return trip leaves August 21 at noon, with a planned stop at Inyokern, California, to search for Le Conte's Thrasher and another at Yosemite National Park, reaching Pleasanton on Tuesday, August 23. Space is limited. Contact Rich Cimino at 925.353.0266 to reserve. Cost (excluding lodging and meals): \$700 per person (including a \$50 donation to GGA).



SPEAKER SERIES

Life Beyond the Edge: Seabirds and Marine Mammals of the Northeast Pacific

Glen Tepke

Berkeley: Thursday, May 19—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Seabirds and marine mammals are some of the planet's least-known but most threatened species. Drawing on photographs from more than 80 pelagic birding and whale-watching trips, Glen Tepke's presentation will highlight the mystery and beauty of the denizens of the offshore deep-water zone—albatrosses, shearwaters, storm-petrels, murrelets, auklets, puffins, dolphins, and whales—focusing on species of the northeast Pacific. Glen will share identification tips and illustrate some of the unique adaptations required for saltwater life. He will also outline the threats facing marine life and share conservation success stories that have brought some species back from the brink of extinction.

While pelagic birding is an acquired taste for many birders, Glen's idea of bliss is a day spent 100 miles offshore in a small boat photographing rarely seen seabirds. A recreational birder and photographer living in Oakland, Glen is particularly interested in using his photos to promote conservation of endangered species. He has contributed images to the publications and websites of many organizations. Glen's photos have also appeared in field guides including the recent Stokes, Smithsonian, and National Wildlife Federation guides to North American birds.

Berkeley: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).

Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm.



Glen Tepke

Laysan Albatross photographed on May 10, 2010, in the Pacific 75–100 miles west of San Diego.

Crossing the Antarctic Convergence: the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica

Dave Hartley and Jeanine Lovett

Thursday, June 16—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

The Antarctic Convergence is a region where the cold waters from the Southern Ocean meet the warmer sub-Antarctic seas. This area is a nature lover's paradise with vast numbers of birds and seals that are unafraid of human visitors. Dave Hartley and Jeanine Lovett's presentation is based on several trips to the Falklands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula. Through photographs, they will show life among the albatross colonies (Black-browed and Wandering), the huge King Penguin colonies on South Georgia, and the Adelie, Gentoo, and Chinstrap Penguin colonies on the Antarctic Peninsula. Their images also include the stunning icebergs located close to the South Orkney Islands.

Dave was born and educated in England, then moved to New Zealand, and has lived in the Bay Area since 1997. A passionate photographer, he has visited all seven continents, including three trips to Antarctica. Jeanine was born and raised in San Diego, studied art and design in San Francisco, and works as a freelance graphic designer and photographer. Dave and Jeanine were married in Antarctica and live in Santa Cruz.

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



Jeanine Lovett

King Penguin.

Volunteer Appreciation Party—You're Invited!

In recognition of our dedicated volunteers, Golden Gate Audubon is holding our annual Volunteer Thank-You Party on Sunday, May 22, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at Heron's Head Park in San Francisco. We will gather near the picnic tables just beyond the EcoCenter for a delicious spring celebration. We hope to see volunteers and their guests from all around the bay for good food and good company, as well as to enjoy viewing the birds at the park and other activities.

The site has bicycle racks. If you drive, there is a parking lot, and we encourage carpooling. From Third Street, turn east on Cargo Way (toward the bay). Go to the end of the road, crossing Jennings Street, and you will see a green sign and a painting of a Great Blue Heron.


To reduce our environmental footprint, we are not mailing paper invitations, so accept this as your invitation. Please RSVP by May 10 and let us know if you have food allergies. Contact Noreen Weeden, nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.301.0570.

Changes to Speaker Series

The Speaker Series has always been free. Now, to cover the costs of speaker honoraria and other expenses, nonmembers will be asked to make a voluntary donation of \$5, beginning on May 19 in Berkeley. Nonmembers can also attend the programs free if they take advantage of our discounted six-month membership of \$15 for joining that evening. GGA members are still welcomed to attend presentations in Berkeley and San Francisco free of charge.



FIELD TRIPS

\$	Entrance fee
	Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. For updates to the field trips and new trips offered before the publication of the next newsletter, go www.goldengateaudubon.org/field-trips/field-trips.

Las Gallinas Ponds

Marin County

Tuesday, May 3, 8:30 – 11 a.m.

Emilie Strauss, 510.540.8749

Expect to walk 2–3 miles on level ground. Bring a scope if you have one. Some of the waterfowl may have left. We will study the remaining ducks, shorebirds, and hawks, as well as swallows. Rain cancels.

From Hwy. 101 north, take Lucas Valley/Smith Ranch Rd. exit. Go east on Smith Ranch about 1 mile. After railroad tracks, take the first left to Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary Water District. A large white sign for the LGVSD is on your right. Continue just over .5 mile to the parking lot and trails. Park in lot or, if full, along road before gate. For a map, go to www.lgvsd.org/directions.html.

Jewel Lake

Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley

Fridays, May 6, June 3, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, Coordinator, 510.848.9156, philajane6@yahoo.com

Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile walk through this lush riparian area. Expect breeding birds and lots of song.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, May 8, June 5, 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. Fee is \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring ID for residency and membership status.

Garin Regional Park

Hayward, Alameda County

Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8, 8 – 11:30 a.m.

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Garin hosts many very accessible birds in spring. We should find nests of at least five species and witness breeding behavior in several more. Among the highlights are orioles, wrens, bluebirds, and warblers. Habitats include riparian, grassy lawn and hillside, freshwater pond, and tall eucalyptus trees often hosting raptors. Heavy rain cancels.

Take I-880 to Tennyson Rd. exit in Hayward and go east. After 2 miles, turn right on Mission Blvd. and continue .8 mile to Garin Rd. Turn left and continue .9 mile uphill to park. Meet in first parking lot to your left after kiosk. Consult a map for alternate routes from your point of departure. The park may or may not be collecting fees (\$5). \$

Putah Creek South Fork Preserve

Yolo County

Monday, May 9, 7 – 10 a.m.

Aaron Haiman, anhaiman@ucdavis.edu

This wonderful riparian corridor that runs from Lake Berryessa to the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area offers opportunities to bird along the creek and out into the nearby open grasslands. In May, possible highlights include Wood Ducks, nesting Swainson's Hawks, Western Kingbirds and other flycatchers, and a variety of spring migrants. Participants will be walking on uneven trails and through often coarse or prickly grassland vegetation; sturdy hiking boots and long pants are strongly suggested. Weather can be unpredictable, so wear warm clothing. Rain cancels. Trip is limited to 10 participants. E-mail the leader to reserve space. Those signed up should meet at the preserve, on Mace Blvd. south of I-80. The entrance to the parking lot is on the left just after the bridge over Putah Creek. The preserve has free parking but no bathrooms.

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Contra Costa County

Sunday, May 15, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Malcolm Sproul, 925.376.8945

Meet by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Ave. in El Cerrito, next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Day Rd. We'll drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd., then walk a hilly transect of the canyon to bird the brush lands, oak woodlands, riparian areas, and grasslands. This 5-mile spring hike has been led by Malcolm Sproul for many years!

Upper San Leandro Reservoir

Moraga, Contra Costa County

Wednesday, May 18, 9 a.m. – noon

Steve and Carol Lombardi, hot-rock@sbcglobal.net, 925.785.0130 (cell)

Meet at the Valle Vista staging area. This EBMUD watershed features a nice variety of habitats: chaparral and scrub, grassland, pine-oak woodland, marsh, and open water, and an interesting assortment of residents and migrants, including raptors, thrasher, nuthatches, and waterfowl. Walking is mainly flat on unpaved trails.

Valle Vista parking lot is 1 mile south of Moraga on Canyon Rd. Going south into Moraga on Moraga Way, make a right on Canyon Rd. Drive through a residential area for about .5 mile. In another .5 mile, the parking lot is on your left.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Fridays, May 20, June 17, 8 – 10 a.m.

Brian Fitch (June only); Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will 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

Wednesdays, May 25, June 22,

9:30 a.m. – noon

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

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. The lake will be growing quieter as summer comes on, though a few migrants will still be here in May (and in their party clothes) and possibly in June.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking is at boat-house lot near spherical cage. Entry, via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland, is probably free on weekday mornings, but if the kiosk is occupied when you arrive, buy a \$2 (two-hour) ticket and park in the boat-house lot, where no one checks how long cars sit.

Tilden Park Evening Walk

Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley

Saturday, May 28, 6 – 9 p.m.

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936, rscalf@sonic.net
The Swainson's Thrush evening chorus is something everyone should hear, and we hope to be lucky. Because the gate at Central Park Dr. is closed after dark, we will meet at the parking lot at the base of Canyon Dr. Once convened, we'll walk past the gate toward the visitor's center. Sunset is at 8:23 p.m., but it may darken in the canyon well before. Birdsong in general will pick up as dusk approaches. Once it's dark, we'll listen for owls.

Hayward Shoreline

Alameda County

Saturday, May 28

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at San Leandro BART station following 7:56 arrival of train from MacArthur. We will ride 2.5 miles to the trailhead. Or, meet at 8:25 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 the Hayward Regional Shoreline and the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, making about a 20-mile round-trip. Nesting avocets, stilts, and swallows may be seen. Some parts of the trails are paved; others are easily negotiable. This trip lasts into

the afternoon. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary, but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Car: From I-880 in San Leandro, take Marina Blvd. exit west and in 1.4 miles turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. Go to end to last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park. **Transit:** From San Leandro BART, go south about 1 block to Williams St. (bike lanes) and turn right. Go about 3 miles to end and turn left, continuing onto Monarch Bay Dr.

Bolsa Chica

Orange County

Saturday – Sunday, June 4 – 5

Steve Lombardi, hot-rock@sbcglobal.net,
925.785.0130 (cell); Rusty Scalf,
rscalf@sonic.net

Space may still be available on this trip to coastal Orange County to visit several important breeding areas for rare and endangered species: Least Tern, Snowy Plover, Elegant Tern, and Black Skimmer at Bolsa Chica Marsh and vicinity; endangered California Gnatcatcher at Crystal Cove State Beach; and Least Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and other riparian breeders at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Participants make their own air and hotel reservations and share the cost of a rented vehicle. A list of flights and lodgings will be provided. Participants will stay near the Orange County airport on Friday night and on Saturday in Huntington, and will be taken to the airport on Sunday afternoon. Trip will be limited. Contact Steve to be placed on the sign-up list.

Mitchell Canyon

Contra Costa County

Saturday, June 11, 9 a.m. – noon

Steve and Carol Lombardi, hot-rock@sbcglobal.net, 925.785.0130 (cell)

This beautiful riparian area on the north flank of Mount Diablo should be very birdy this time of year. We'll walk out a couple of miles on the flat part of the road and return the same way. Hardier souls can continue up the steeper portion looking for California Thrasher and other scrub species. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Mitchell Canyon Rd. outside Clayton. For directions, search for "Mitchell Canyon Rd., Clayton" on Google maps, or contact the leaders. \$

Las Trampas Regional Wilderness

San Ramon, Contra Costa County

Sunday, June 12, 9 a.m. – noon

Steve and Carol Lombardi, hot-rock@sbcglobal.net, cell 925.785.0130

Meet at the parking lot at the extreme north end of Bollinger Canyon Rd. (the last lot in the park). Las Trampas is a mix of hillside grasslands and oak woodland. Grasshopper Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, and Lark Sparrow are pretty reliable on the upper parts. We'll walk up to the ridge and enjoy spectacular views of the bay as we catch our breath. Walking is 1 mile out on a steep paved road. It's mostly open, so could be hot.

For directions, see Carpooling and Other Field Trip Resources (below), or contact the leaders.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

Carpooling and Other Field Trip Resources

If you are going on a field trip, would you welcome company? Do you have room in your car to take other birders? To help find a ride or offer a ride, sign up with GGA's carpool group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>. When you sign up, you answer a few simple questions, then receive a confirming e-mail. Once you are a member, you post messages under "Need Ride" or "Offer Ride," along with the destination and date. The more birders who sign up, the more useful the group will be. Birders are encouraged to help the driver with expenses by contributing to the cost of fuel and bridge tolls.

East Bay Regional District:	www.ebparks.org/parks
SF Bay Trail:	http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov
Bay Area transit:	www.transitinfo.org
California state parks:	www.parks.ca.gov
National parks:	www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm
National wildlife refuges:	www.fws.gov/refuges

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Friday – Sunday, June 24 – 26

Dan and Joan Murphy, murphsf@comcast.net (e-mail preferred), 415.564.0074

Join Dan and Joan on their annual family camping excursion to seek out Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Townsend's Solitaire, Calliope Hummingbird, Mountain Bluebird, Osprey, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and many of the flycatchers, warblers, and finches that breed in the mountains.

Birders arriving on Thursday night, June 23, can join us for an hour or so to watch the goings-on at the Hat Lake beaver pond and Common Nighthawks over Manzanita Lake. On Friday, we'll meet at the Manzanita Lake Campground store at 6:30 a.m. and bird around the lake for 2–3 hours, then meet again at the store at 10:30 a.m. for a leisurely hike of 3–5 miles on one of Lassen's beautiful trails. On Saturday, we'll meet at the store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley, and Baum Lake for an all-day excursion of about 100 miles. On Sunday, we'll drive through the park, making frequent stops

for birding. The trip usually ends after lunch at Summit Lake Campground. For a more detailed itinerary and directions, go to Field Trips on the GGA website.

Please contact us by e-mail or phone to let us know if you are planning to attend. We may have to cut off attendance if the group is larger than in past years.

We will be staying at the Manzanita Lake Campground. Loops A and C are by reservation only; loops B and D are on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations: www.recreation.gov or 877.444.6777. Lodging is available north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station, 530.335.7121. Other information can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96063. Carpooling is encouraged. You can find a ride or offer a ride by signing up for the GGA carpool group on Yahoo (page 7). \$

Quarry Lakes, Alameda Creek, and Coyote Hills

Fremont, Alameda County

Saturday, June 25

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 8:20 a.m. on the east side of the

Fremont BART Station in the parking lot. Trip ends here at about 3 p.m. We'll see birds from the time we step off the BART train and will experience various habitats: riparian, marsh, and bayside. Total distance is about 24 miles mostly on paved bike trails, with almost no uphill. Midday, we'll have a picnic lunch at Coyote Hills Visitor Center. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary, but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Transit: Fremont BART train passes through MacArthur at 7:34 a.m. Car: Take I-880 to Fremont, then the Mowry Ave. exit east toward Central Fremont. Go 2.3 mi. on Mowry. Parking lot is on the east side of the station past Civic Center Dr.

Choose the Gull Online

Join other GGA members who are downloading our newsletter from our website rather than receiving it in the mail. You will help save paper and reduce our expenses for printing and mailing. As each newsletter is published, we will email you a link. To choose the Gull online, email ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or call 510.843.2222.

Summer Classes

ALBANY ADULT SCHOOL

The following classes are held in the East Bay at the Albany Adult School. To register, go to www.albanyadulthoodschool.org. Details about the classes, including fees, can also be found there, under Audubon/Nature Studies.

BIRDING BY EAR

Denise Wight, blkittiwake@yahoo.com

Session 1: Four Thursdays, April 7 – May 5, 7 – 8:30 p.m. (no class on April 14), plus four Saturday field trips, April 9 – May 7, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. (no field trip on April 16)

Session 2: Four Thursdays, May 12 – June 2, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, May 14 – June 4, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

With two sessions offered this spring, you can immerse yourself in birdsongs! Because birds are in full song, it's the perfect time to learn our local spring songsters. We will listen to birdsongs in class and on field trips visit various local habitats to get a full range of the types of songs we hear in the Bay Area. Go to the instructor's website for field trip locations.

BIRDING IN THE SIERRA

Spaces may still be available in GGA's late spring classes held annually in the Sierra. June is the time of year to see a wide variety of nesting birds: Black-backed, White-headed, and Hairy Woodpeckers; Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers; Mountain Chickadee; Cassin's Finch; Dusky, Hammond's, Gray, and Olive-sided Flycatchers; and a number of breeding warblers.

Two classes are held, each limited to 35 participants. Birds of the Sierra I, taught by Bob Lewis and Rusty Scalf, runs from Thursday, June 9, at 3 p.m., through Sunday, June 12, at noon. Birds of the Sierra II, taught by Bob Lewis and Eddie Bartley, runs from Thursday, June 16, at 3 p.m., through Sunday, June 19, at noon. Initial meeting place for both classes is the Yuba Pass parking lot on Highway 49 between Sierraville and Bassetts. Fee (not including lodging): \$100 for GGA members, \$110 for nonmembers, including one dinner at San Francisco State's campus in Bassetts. Register by calling the GGA office at 510.843.2222. Additional details will be provided upon registration, including a list of accommodations.



LOONS TO DUCKS

Late winter is not usually considered a prime season for pelagic trips, but land-based observers noted several interesting seabirds. A Laysan Albatross rode the wind near Sutro Baths, SF, on Feb. 23 (BF). From Pigeon Pt., SM, 3 Short-tailed Shearwaters were tallied on Feb. 20, and a Manx Shearwater was spotted on Mar. 5 (RT). A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel wandered into the bay as far as Pt. Isabel, CC, on Feb. 25 (ES). Noteworthy duck sightings around the region included 4 Tufted Ducks, 6–8 Harlequin Ducks, 8 Long-tailed Ducks, a scattering of Black Scoters, and a remarkable concentration of 276 White-winged Scoters, enumerated offshore from Ft. Funston, SF, on Mar. 4 (OJ, MBr, MM).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A hike up Black Mountain in SCL revealed the “quark” of calling Mountain Quail on Mar. 12 (JY). The L. Cunningham (SCL) Sandhill Crane was last reported Feb. 7 (PD). A Solitary Sandpiper in the same neighborhood lingered through at least Mar. 15 (mob). A basic plumaged Laughing Gull joined the Ring-billed Gull flock at Lagoon Park in San Rafael, MRN, Feb. 6–21 (DW, FH; mob).

A remarkable 6 **Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucooides*) reports were filed this period, starting with a 2nd cycle bird found bathing at Deniston Cr. mouth in Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM, on Feb. 4 (AJ, PA, DB); an adult, tentatively ID'd among the *Larid* throngs following the herring run at Miller Knox RS, CC, on Feb. 13 (BR; ES); probably a different 2nd cycle bird at Venice Beach, Half Moon Bay, SM, on Feb. 24 (AJ); an adult bird at a NAP Valley College duck pond, NAP, on Feb. 27 (MBe); a returning 2nd cycle bird at Ogier Ponds, SCL, Mar. 5–10 (SR); and finally a 1st cycle individual at Sutro Baths, SF, on Mar. 7 (BF). The number of reports is particularly noteworthy considering that the CBRC has reviewed only 21 reports and accepted only two state records, attributable to the notorious challenge of distinguishing Iceland from Thayer's Gull, which shows up regularly on the West Coast.



Harlequin Duck, photographed on February 13 at Point Richmond.

Harjeet Singh/www.flickr.com/photos/sarbhobh

Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) reports also spiked, with at least 1 adult feasting on herring eggs at Miller Knox RS on Feb. 11 (TE, LJ; fide JLu); a 1st cycle bird at Venice Beach, Half Moon Bay, SM, on Feb. 23 (AJ), followed by a 2nd cycle bird on Mar. 6 (DS) and an adult on Mar. 11 (AJ); another adult along Scally Rd. at Hwy 12, east of Fairfield, SOL, Feb. 25–Mar. 8 (RM); and finally a tentative report from Pomponio SB, SM, on Mar. 4 (OJ, fide AS). If that wasn't enough, gull watchers turned in reports of 16 Glaucous Gulls and more than 20 Black-legged Kittiwakes. Finally, a Horned Puffin wandered south to Pigeon Pt., SM, on Mar. 5 (RT).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

An owl hike on Feb. 5 at Monte Bello OSP, SCL, was rewarded with a Long-eared Owl (KDM, JH; oob). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were added to yard lists in Pescadero, SM, Feb. 18–25 (GH) and in San Anselmo, MRN, on Mar. 3 (AB). A Red-naped Sap-

sucker was found in Butano SP, SM, Feb. 23 (ADM). Townsend's Solitaires were located Hood Mountain RP, SON, on Feb. 2 (BD) and along Putah Cr. below Monticello Dam, SOL, Mar. 14 (SR).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Noteworthy warbler reports included 9 Palm Warblers and continuing Northern Waterthrush around the region, plus a Black-and-white Warbler Feb. 28–Mar. 2 at N. L. Merced, SF (mob). On Feb. 4, the Nelson's Sparrow count reached 4 at the William Page Shields Salt Marsh Study Area in Inverness, MRN (DF, JLa). A male Indigo Bunting began its molt into alternate plumage in a Saratoga (SCL) backyard, Feb. 13–Mar. 21 (GB). On Mar. 11, a couple of Yellow-headed Blackbirds joined the blackbird flocks at the feed lot between Sykes and Bulkley Rd., SOL (RM). The Evening Grosbeak invasion continued with flocks ranging from 3 to 38 birds reported from a dozen locales around the bay.

See **Birding Resources** at 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.

Abbreviations for Observers: AB, Allyn Bissell; ADM, Al DeMartini; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; AS, Adam Searcy; BD, Bill Doyle; BF, Brian Fitch; BR, Bob Richmond; DB, Davy Bosman; DF, Dea Freid; DS, Dan Singer; DW, Doug Weidemann; ES, Emilie Strauss; FH, Floyd Hayes; GB, Gordon Barrett; GH, Garth Harwood; JH, Jan Hintermeister; JLa, Jim Laughlin; JLu, John Luther; JY, James Yurchenco; KDM, Karen DeMello; LJ, Lisa Jorgensen; MBe, Murray Berner; MBr, Matt Brady; MM, Melanie Mancuso; OJ, Oscar Johnson; PA, Peter Adrians; PD, Peggy Don; RM, Roger Muskat; RT, Ron Thorn; SR, Rich Stallcup; SR, Steve Rottenborn; TE, Todd Easterla

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; 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; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

A Vision for the Bay Area's Future

Golden Gate Audubon's many victories since its founding in 1917 have protected and enhanced hundreds of acres of Bay Area bird habitat, including Audubon Canyon Ranch, Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Crissy Field, and Heron's Head Park, among scores of other sites. Our vision for the future includes more acres of protected marshland, shoreline, and hills. It also includes teaching an ever more urban and diverse population to live with, value, and protect birds and other wildlife.

If your vision of the future matches ours, consider making a bequest to Golden Gate Audubon in your will or living trust. Your legacy will help create the resources to ensure a spectacular Bay Area for future generations to enjoy.

To make sure that your bequest is directed correctly, you can use the following language: "After taking care of all expenses, debts, and other specific provisions, I give, devise, and bequeath _____ percent of the rest and residue [or \$ _____ for a bequest

of a specific amount] to Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc., Tax ID #94-6086896, currently having offices at 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Ste. G, Berkeley, CA 94702."

For more information or to receive our planned giving brochure, please contact Marsha Mather-Thrift, Development Director, 510.843.7295 or mmathert77@goldengateaudubon.org.



Great Blue Herons at nest.

Western Field Ornithologists Annual Conference

Southeast Arizona is the location of this year's meeting of the Western Field Ornithologists. Held August 17–21 in Sierra Vista, the conference offers a program of speakers and workshops, and a keynote address on molt migration by Peter Pyle. The schedule also includes field trips to the Chiricahua Mountains, California Gulch, and other hotspots to seek out such local specialties as Scaled and Montezuma Quail; Five-striped Sparrow; Gray, Short-tailed, and Zone-tailed Hawks; Elegant Trogon; Red-faced Warbler; and the extraordinary variety of hummingbirds for which the area is well known. To see full details about the conference program and to register (many workshops and field trips fill early), go to www.westernfieldornithologists.org. The conference schedule and other information download as pdfs.

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from January 20, 2011, to March 23, 2011.

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FOR FRIENDS OF THE ALAMEDA WILDLIFE REFUGE (FAWR)

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BIRD SURVEY MARKS MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 14, collecting data on the bird species at the Presidio in San Francisco. Since 2005, one morning each spring, volunteer birders have walked one of eight designated routes through the Presidio counting species of concern such as Wrentits, Wilson's Warblers, and Olive-sided Flycatchers. These estimates will help document springtime trends in bird populations in the Presidio and the effects that restoration and reforestation are having on the park's breeding habitat.

The data is only strengthened by continued monitoring—and your help is essential. For the survey, novice birders will be paired with experienced birders, so this is a great way to learn to identify common San Francisco birds both by sight and by their spring songs. After walking their routes, teams will reconvene at the old Crissy Field Center to share their highlights. The count runs from 8 a.m. to noon. For further information, contact Steve Phillips, 415.850.4677, sphillips@presidiotrust.gov.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER SOLSTICE BIRD COUNT AT THE PRESIDIO

Youth ages 8 to 15 and their families are invited to participate in the San Francisco Presidio's first annual Children's Summer Solstice Bird Count, Saturday, June 11, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the newly renovated Rob Hill Campground. Kids and their families will join birders from around the Bay Area and be trained in binocular use and bird identification basics. They will then depart

Employees from Scientific Certification Systems, based in the Bay Area, helped the 90 species of birds that can be seen at the Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline Park in Oakland by contributing to habitat restoration. On December 17, 2010, the 30 SCS volunteers heard a brief history of the site and then planted native shrubs and removed trash. The group enjoyed a bird walk led by Golden Gate Audubon before heading to their holiday party. This is the second year that Scientific Certification Systems employees have dedicated their time for local birds, and we appreciate their efforts. If the company you work for is interested in conducting a group volunteer event, please contact nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.



the campground in teams and follow different routes throughout the Presidio. After an easy two-hour walk counting observed birds, the groups will return to the campground to tally their numbers while eating lunch with their teammates. The day will be topped off with presentations of the numbers—by the kids.

Participants should dress in layers and bring a paper-bag lunch, snacks, and water, as well as binoculars if they have them. Binoculars will be available to borrow for the day. Space on this event is limited. RSVP to Pete Bidigare, pbidigare@presidiotrust.gov or 415.561.4449.

CALIFORNIA LEAST TERNS RETURN TO ALAMEDA

On June 18, the public has a rare opportunity to view the breeding California Least Terns at the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge. By mid-June, the colony of up to 400 pairs of terns will be courting, tending eggs, and feeding chicks and fledglings.

For the annual Return of the Terns event

on June 18, visitors board buses at the Crab Cove Visitor Center. Buses leave at 11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. for a tour of the colony. Cost is \$7 for residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, \$9 for out-of-county residents.

Reservations are required for the bus tours, which have sold out in the past. For reservations: 888.327.2757 or <https://online.activenetwork.com/EBParks/Start/Start.asp>. The tours are a collaboration of organizations including the East Bay Regional Park District, Golden Gate Audubon, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

RESTORE BIRD HABITAT AT GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SITES

We invite you to join us for our monthly workdays at our restoration sites. For site details and directions, please go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

- Pier 94, San Francisco: May 7 and June 4, 9 a.m. – noon.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland: May 21 and June 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Golden Gate Park Bison Paddock, San Francisco: May 21 and June 18, 9 a.m. – noon, with San Francisco Recreation and Parks.
- Lands End East Wash in the Presidio, San Francisco: May 21, 1 – 4 p.m., with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

Birding in Panama

Spaces are still available on the June trip to Panama, sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon and the Latin America Committee. Panama has more than 960 species of birds and such interesting nonavian wildlife as sloths and howler monkeys. Expert guide Guido Berguido and leader Steven Margolin will take participants to a variety of places in central and eastern Panama Province. Dates of the trip are June 4–12, with an optional extension June 12–16 to western Panama. Birders of all experience levels are welcome. For details on itinerary and cost, and to sign up for the trip, contact Steve Margolin, sgmpanama@digitalpath.net or 530.342.6476.

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GGNRA from page 1

frustrated as they have been driven out of once popular hiking and birding spots like Fort Funston and have watched off-leash dogs cavort through the wildlife protection areas at Crissy Field and in the Presidio. In fact, GGA volunteers have documented that two-thirds of dog walkers in the Crissy Field Wildlife Protection Area let their dogs off leash despite signs informing them that it is a special area designated to protect the threatened Western Snowy Plover and that leashes are required.

In implementing the plan, the National Park Service is required by law to ensure that the GGNRA's natural and historic resources are protected for all park users now and in the future. The GGNRA was created to provide visitors with a national park-caliber experience in the densely urban San Francisco Bay Area, which means that multiple uses must be balanced against each other and limited if they impair the park's ecology or historic values. The National Park Service is under no legal requirement to allow dogs, let alone off-leash dogs, in the GGNRA.

While we remain concerned about ongo-

ing impacts from dogs and dog-related recreation in the GGNRA, Golden Gate Audubon is generally supportive of the park service's draft plan for sites in San Francisco. We are focusing our comments on improving the proposed plan rather than opposing it. Golden Gate Audubon encourages each of our members to review the plan and provide comments—even if you disagree with us!

Please provide your comments to the National Park Service before May 29. Let the NPS know what your concerns are about dog management in the GGNRA and share your perspective on how dog-related recreation has changed your experiences in the park. Currently, our comments are focused on five main points:

1. *Off-leash areas should be fenced* or well marked to provide a clear boundary for off-leash activities.
2. The National Park Service's proposed requirement of 75 percent compliance is *too low*. The park service should require a minimum of 95 percent compliance or should initiate measures to improve compliance.
3. *Commercial dog-walking should not be permitted* in the GGNRA.
4. *At least some trails in San Francisco should be entirely closed to dogs*. Under the current plan, nearly every trail in San Francisco is open to at least on-leash dogs, meaning that no trails are available for people who prefer to enjoy the outdoors without interacting with dogs.
5. While they are important parts of our families and communities, *dogs are just one species that is having a significant negative impact on thousands of other animals and plants* that rely on the park to survive and on many human visitors. The parks should be maintained to be safe and accessible for all users and to protect their natural and cultural resources for future generations.

To submit comments, visit <http://park.planning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?documentID=38106> or submit comments in writing to Frank Dean, General Superintendent, GGNRA, Building 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123-0022.

—Mike Lynes, Conservation Director