

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



© Glenn Nevill/www.raptor-gallery.com

In this prey exchange, Diamond Lil, below, has taken a dove from Dapper Dan. She then flew to the nest to feed the eyases.

Conservation Success Story: The Peregrine Falcon

Today, we are able to celebrate a conservation milestone that was inspired by hope and dedicated action. August 20, 2009, was the 10th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act delisting of the American Peregrine Falcon. The falcon had been removed from California's list of endangered species on August 6, 2009.

The story of the Peregrine Falcon population recovery is a shining example of how hope, coupled with thoughtful and dedicated action, made a difference. For proof, we need only scan the skies above San Francisco's Financial District for Peregrine Falcons that live there year-round.

In the early 1960s, British biologist Derek Ratcliffe described the damaging effects of organochlorine compounds and linked the use of DDT to declining Peregrine Falcon populations.

If you reached adulthood during or before 1970, you remember how challenging those times were for our environment. The Peregrine Falcon was extinct as a breeding species east of the Mississippi River, and just two pairs remained in California. William Ruckelshaus, director of the Environmental Protection Agency, courageously banned most uses of DDT in 1972 when many argued that a connection between DDT and environmental harm had not yet been proven. A year later, the Endangered

CONSERVATION SUCCESS continued on page 4

Winter Birding at Bay Area Hot Spots

As part of the Pacific Flyway and as a vital overwintering ground for shorebirds and waterbirds, San Francisco Bay provides habitat for millions of birds during the fall and winter. The sheer abundance and diversity create unique birding opportunities every year. Here is a small selection of the great places to visit this winter. A more extended list, complete with links to maps for each destination, will be posted on our website.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. REGIONAL SHORELINE, OAKLAND

The shoreline offers excellent views of shorebirds, waders, and dabblers. During very high tides, Virginia Rail, Clapper Rail, and Sora are often observable in the shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh. Large rafts of Common Goldeneye and scaup float just offshore. Recent rarities include Yellow Rail, Black Rail, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. We recommend that you include a visit to the end of Edgewater Drive, where it meets Damon Slough; the seasonal pond on the eastern side of Edgewater may contain all three teal species (Green-winged, Blue-winged, Cinnamon) as well as other dabblers and shorebirds. To reach Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, take the Hegenberger Road exit from I-880 and head west; turn right on Doolittle Drive and then right on Swan Way, and make the first left into the park.

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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 mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Linda Coffee 510.843.7295
lcoffee@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).

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

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

Design and layout: e.g. communications

Eco-Education Receives NOAA Grant

Many of you have followed the growth of Golden Gate Audubon's award-winning Eco-Oakland Program since its creation in 1999. In that time, we have introduced nearly 15,000 East Oakland students and their families to wetland ecosystems, the direct relevance of the environment to their health, and the need to preserve nearby natural habitats.

The latest development for Eco-Oakland is a very exciting one: a \$120,000 grant from NOAA (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) through the Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (B-WET). NOAA's B-WET is an environmental education program that supports locally relevant experiential learning for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. One of B-WET's priorities is to create "meaningful watershed educational experiences," defined as those that weave together classroom learning with field experiences in a sustained activity—rather than a one-time class or nature walk—and are aligned with recognized standards of learning.

This description perfectly fits Golden Gate Audubon's year-round, watershed-wide environmental education program for East Oakland third, fourth, and fifth grade students, their families, and community members. In a step-by-step process, students learn hands-on how their lives connect with and rely upon local habitats and ecosystems, starting with their most familiar environments and extending throughout the San Francisco Bay watershed to the Pacific Ocean. Step one consists of classroom lessons on the effects of garbage on wildlife, safe disposal of oil and other pollutants, how pollution travels down neighborhood storm drains into the bay (using a scale model of a watershed), and the harmful impacts of toxins on food chains.

In the second step, we take students out into their own schoolyard, where they assess the yard as a suitable habitat for plants and wildlife, locate individual storm drains, and learn that their community is connected to the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean through extended storm drain systems. They also collect and recycle schoolyard trash.

Next is a series of field trips to the wider ecosystem. Students undertake restoration projects at Oakland's Lion Creek and Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, where they collect trash, remove invasive plants, and replace them with natives. Students also engage in bird censusing, invertebrate studies, and water quality assessments. The final step is a field trip for the students and their families, led by high school mentors and our staff, to the bay (Alcatraz Island and Aquarium of the Bay) or the ocean (Muir Beach). Involvement of the whole family is critical: not only do we reach more people, but we provide the support students need to integrate what they learn in school with their family and community life.

Designed to bolster student academic achievement, Eco-Oakland meets established state and district academic benchmarks for science, math, and literature.

The ultimate goal of Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Education is to provide meaningful experiences that inspire participants, both young and old, to explore and protect their surrounding environment and to understand how their everyday actions affect the health of the natural systems on which we all depend. Kudos to Anthony DeCicco, Rubén Guzmán, and all the Eco-Education staff and volunteers—we are very proud of your pioneering work.

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

New Golden Gate Audubon Board Member

We are pleased to introduce a new member of our board of directors, Dr. Karim Al-Khafaji. Dr. Al-Khafaji earned his PhD from Stanford University's Department of Biological Sciences with a dissertation on demographic population modeling. His background includes a variety of scientific and engineering projects with Engineers for a Sustainable World, Las Cruces Biological Station, and the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. He is currently employed with The Bridgespan Group, a strategic consulting firm serving philanthropic and nonprofit organizations.



BIRDING THE BAY TRAIL DOCENT PROGRAM

For the second year of the TogetherGreen grant (an alliance of the National Audubon Society and Toyota), Golden Gate Audubon received support for a new program that will train volunteers to be docents on the portion of the San Francisco Bay Trail between the Albany mudflats and the Richmond Marina. Walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and dog owners, as well as birders, frequent this part of the trail. With scopes in hand, GGA docents will show trail users the resident and migratory shorebirds, share information about the various species, and inspire people about the wildlife and the bayside habitat. As part of the docent training, representatives from local organizations will talk about their work along the Bay Trail and about local and natural history and other topics that GGA docents will then be able to share with the public.

The goals of TogetherGreen are to build conservation leadership, engage millions of people in conservation action, and achieve lasting conservation results. If you are interested in getting involved in this new docent program, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.9374.

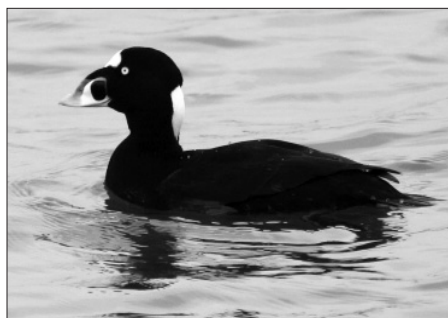
SAVE STRAWBERRY CANYON WINS VICTORY IN COURT

In late August, the U.S. District Court ruled that UC Berkeley violated federal law when it did not conduct a review of the environmental impact of a \$113 million research center planned for the hills above the university. Save Strawberry Canyon (SSC), a group formed to oppose the project, brought the lawsuit in mid-2008, asserting that the 125,000-square-foot center would harm the local watershed and wildlife and that it should not be located on a site susceptible to earthquakes and fires. Attorneys for UC Berkeley unsuccessfully argued that the university-owned center was a state rather than a federal project, although it receives federal funding and may house the Department of Energy's supercomputers. As a

result of the ruling, construction of the center, initially slated to start this past spring, cannot proceed until the appropriate environmental review is complete.

BREUNER MARSH RESTORATION TAKES FIRST STEP

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) will use \$3 million from a variety of sources to begin restoration of 218-acre Breuner Marsh in North Richmond, which the district acquired in 2008. According to the tentative agreement, EBRPD will embark on the project's initial phase, including the restoration of up to 45 acres of tidal wetlands. The complete project calls for restoring approximately 100 acres of wetland and grassland habitat, as well



Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

Surf Scoter, one of many species most affected by the November 2007 Cosco Busan oil spill. Large flocks of scoters amass in San Francisco Bay by winter.

as Rheem Creek, and providing enhanced public access. Golden Gate Audubon was among the environmental groups that advocated protecting Breuner Marsh, and North Richmond schools are the newest additions to GGA's Eco-Education Program.

COSCO BUSAN BIRD SURVEY REPORT IS AVAILABLE

LSA Associates has completed its analysis and report of Golden Gate Audubon's bird surveys conducted during the 2007 *Cosco Busan* oil spill. The full report is now available at www.goldengateaudubon.org/pubs/GGAS_CoscoBusan_Survey.pdf. Our volunteers conducted surveys for weeks after the spill, recording 2,207 oiled birds, 102 dead birds, and at least 70 different species and/or groups of species, such

as grebes and scaup. Approximately 60 percent of all oiled birds observed were diving birds, 25 percent were gulls, 12 percent were waders, and 3 percent were dabbling ducks. We are using the findings from the report to revise and implement our new Wildlife Emergency Response Plan, which will include an improved protocol to standardize data collection during an oil spill and greater coordination with Audubon California and the Oiled Wildlife Care Network partners during a spill event.

BECOME A DOCENT FOR WINTERING BURROWING OWLS

In 2008–2009, four Western Burrowing Owls spent the winter at Cesar Chavez Park near the marina in Berkeley. Golden Gate Audubon volunteers, working with the city of Berkeley, installed temporary fencing to help protect the owls. The project was successful, as all four owls sought refuge in the area behind the fence. GGA volunteers also regularly visited the site to hand out brochures about the species and show the owls to park users.

This year, we want to start the program earlier by putting up the fencing before the owls arrive. We also plan to prepare new educational materials and establish a regular monitoring and docent program. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.9374.

Join a Conservation Committee

Get together with other birders and wildlife enthusiasts on your side of the bay and find out about projects in your community. The East Bay Conservation Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m.; call the GGA office (510.843.2222) for the location. The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way (go to www.randallmuseum.org).

Species Act passed through both houses of Congress without controversy. Its passage was a simple decision; society demanded that human-caused extinctions must stop.

At about the same time, biologists on both coasts were developing strategies to prevent the Peregrine Falcon's extinction, while liberally applied persistent pesticides dissipated. Tom Cade led efforts at Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, and Brian Walton initiated collaborative work at UC Santa Cruz.

Most simply shrugged that "it couldn't be done." Federal biologists had already tried and failed to produce Peregrine Falcons in captivity. But Cade, Walton, and others began what is now regarded as the most successful wildlife conservation project ever attempted.

Now the Peregrine Falcon recovery story is well known. The falcons were hatched and reared in captivity on a grand scale. UC Santa Cruz biologists cooperated with local bird-watchers to monitor nests in the wild and record onset of incubation dates so that climber/biologist teams could successfully manipulate the nests by swapping thin-shelled eggs for dummy eggs, and then dummy eggs for babies. More than 1,000 baby falcons were fostered into wild nests or released at hack sites.

The appearance of Peregrine Falcons in downtown San Francisco provided early evidence that a recovery was under way. They were often seen perching on an upper ledge of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's office building at 77 Beale Street. With PG&E's permission and encouragement, Brian Walton placed a gravel-filled nest tray on the 33rd-floor balcony in 1987. Sixteen years later, Peregrine Falcons used that nest tray for the first time in 2003. And they have nested in the neighborhood every year since then, providing downtown birders with an extraordinary opportunity to live inside a Peregrine Falcon nest territory.

Cameras on urban nests make the nesting behaviors of Peregrine Falcons available to a world hungry for a connection with nature. We now have cameras at three Bay Area locations: PG&E, Oracle headquarters in Redwood Shores, and San Jose City Hall. People watch them at our website and



© Glenn Nevill/www.raptor-gallery.com

The Peregrine Falcon eyases on May 12, 2009, the day that Glenn Stewart, of the UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, banded them.

come out to see the birds in person, and many who did not previously identify themselves as bird-watchers bought binoculars and field guides.

In April of this year, I gave a talk about the San Francisco Peregrine Falcons as part of the Golden Gate Audubon Speaker Series. We discussed forming a Falcon Fledge Watch, which was later implemented as a chance for people to learn about nesting chronology and use the same observation protocol that we followed at nest territories for decades. Observers this spring exclaimed, "Does it get any better than this?" as falcons overhead pursued pigeons and delivered food to wailing youngsters. An associated discussion group and photographs provided by Glenn Nevill enhanced the experience.

Peregrine Falcons are back in the Bay Area, in California, and across the nation, to the acclaim and excitement of many.

People from all walks of life made it possible. Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a few thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." In the same way that we saved the Peregrine Falcon, we can address current environmental challenges. It is a simple matter of hope coupled with thoughtful and dedicated action.

—Glenn R. Stewart

Glenn R. Stewart is director of the UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group (www.scpbrg.org). He has worked in the conservation field, primarily with birds of prey, for 30 years. Glenn Nevill has thoroughly documented San Francisco's Peregrine Falcons since 2005. His many photographs of the falcons, as well as other birds, including many raptors, appear on his website: www.raptor-gallery.com.

Double Your Support for Golden Gate Audubon

One of the easiest ways to increase your support of Golden Gate Audubon is through your employer's matching gift program. Some companies also match gifts from retirees and even the value of your volunteer time. To participate, contact your employer's human resources office to determine if your company matches employee contributions and obtain the appropriate form. Some employers will match up to double the gift amount! For more information, please contact Linda Coffee, Development Manager, lcoffee@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.7295.



SPEAKER SERIES

JENNIFER ROBINSON MADDOX, COORDINATOR

Sights and Sounds of Peru

Nancy DeStefanis

San Francisco: Thursday, October 15

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

In 2008 Nancy DeStefanis embarked on a month-long adventure in South America, immersing herself in the ecology and culture of Peru. Through slides and stories, she will take you to the most pristine area of the Peruvian Amazon, where monkeys, river otters, and caiman, as well as many birds, thrive. She and her fellow travelers observed more than a hundred species as they crossed the Andes by van, canoed down the Madre de Dios River, and hiked



Bob Clement

Hoatzin, a large bird, about two feet in length, found in the Amazon rain forest.

at Manu Wildlife Center, including the Hoatzin, Cock-of-the-Rock, and Scarlet Macaw. At storied Machu Picchu, they saw Spectacled Bears and Magnificent Hummingbirds. At the ancient village of Paucartambo, high up in the Andes, DeStefanis witnessed Peru's oldest dance festival, at the annual Festival of the Virgen del Carmen, where 50 groups performed in the town's tiny plaza. As part of her presentation, she will also talk about the impacts of ecotourism and new plans for mining and oil exploration.

Nancy DeStefanis is the founder and executive director of San Francisco Nature Education, a nonprofit organization that provides environmental education programs for both youth and adults. She has studied and traveled throughout most of South America.

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.

SHOP FOR GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON'S CAUSES

Since 2006, Macy's has held a special shopping day that has helped raise more than \$28 million for nonprofits. This year, Golden Gate Audubon is one of the participants in the program, called Shop for a Cause. You can help GGA by shopping at Macy's stores in San Francisco and Richmond on October 17. At each store, you purchase a \$5 ticket and designate Golden Gate Audubon as the recipient. When you buy a ticket, not only do we receive the entire amount, but you are eligible for savings on store merchandise that day. You can also purchase tickets in advance at the GGA office.

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. The space is perfect for a private law or consulting business, and includes shared wireless Internet. For more information, please contact Kevin E. Consey at 510.843.2222.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON'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.

Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Saturday, October 3,

10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Wildlife Conservation Network Expo with keynote speaker Dr. Jane Goodall. We will have an information table at the expo, located at the Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco.

Sunday, October 11, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Come help us prepare habitat for California Least Terns. Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of the former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

Saturday, October 17,

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline workday at Arrowhead Marsh. Enter the park from Swan Way and follow the road to the end parking lot. We will meet near the wooden observation platform adjacent to marsh.

Sunday, October 18, 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 work on sheet mulching our upland area to plant in the spring. Come join us and see what birds have come back to the wetland! Refreshments provided.

Saturday, October 24, 9 a.m. – noon

Join us for monthly workdays at Harding Park for TogetherGreen Volunteer Days. We will be preparing to plant natives later in the fall. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd. at the statue.

For more information or directions to any of the sites, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, Golden Gate Audubon's 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.

Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

Friday, October 2, 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 parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile, 2-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Winter birds should be arriving, and maybe an early shower will have refreshed the lake. October is a dynamic month at Jewel Lake.

Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturday, October 3, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden docent, 415.387.9160; www.sfnature.org

Meet at front gate of garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way, for a bird walk for adults and another for families (children must be accompanied by an adult). Adults \$10; children free. Reservations required for groups of 10 or more. Cosponsored by Botanical Garden, SF Nature Education, and GGA.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sunday, October 4, 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.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, October 16, 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 resident and migrant birds, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline

Oakland

Saturday, October 17, 9 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net,
510.666.9936

At the shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh, you can find shorebirds, raptors, and an occasional Clapper Rail just minutes from your doorstep.

From I-880 south, exit at Hegenberger Rd. Turn right onto Hegenberger, continue .7 mile across a small bridge over a channel, and turn right on Pardee Dr. Continue to Swan Way and turn left, then turn right into the park. Meet at parking lot at end of road.



Charles Denson

White-throated Sparrow. Small numbers of White-throats show up every fall and winter and are often found among flocks of other sparrows.

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Fremont

Sunday October 18, 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 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 stop at kiosk to pay entry fee. \$

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, October 28,

9:30 a.m. – noon

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

Meet at large spherical cage near 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. Early winter migrants should be making an appearance.

Take the 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 free on weekdays.

Mark Your Calendars for the San Francisco and Oakland Christmas Bird Counts

You don't want to miss participating in the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts, so note these dates in your calendar! The Oakland Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 20. The San Francisco count is scheduled for Tuesday, December 29. Details about the counts and how to sign up for both the counts and the celebratory dinners will appear in the November *Gull*.

Study Bird Biology with Golden Gate Audubon

Have you ever thought about taking the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Home Study Course online, but found the idea too daunting to conquer alone? Golden Gate Audubon is offering an opportunity to share the experience in a comfortable environment with a group of like-minded birders. Participants in GGA's monthly class will follow the course syllabus together, and the sessions will be paced to complete the entire course in one year. Lectures and discussions will reinforce individual learning, which is accomplished through self-study at home, possible study groups (organized by the participants), and occasional field trips. The instructors are Bob Lewis and Rusty Scalf.

The class will start on January 11, 2020, and meet from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Golden Gate Audubon office in Berkeley. To take advantage of this exceptional opportunity, you must register and pay the required fee by October 31. Cost is \$350, and you must be a member of both Golden Gate Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Covering bird biology, behavior, ecology, conservation, and many other subjects, the comprehensive course was written by 12 leading ornithologists and edited by Lab of Ornithology staff. Written at the introductory college level, it is suitable for anyone with an inquiring mind and a serious interest in birds.

Course material includes a generously illustrated 1,300-page textbook, an audio CD of bird sounds, and online exams. After



Juvenile Brown Pelican.

Lee Karney

successfully completing all online exams, participants will receive a certificate of completion signed by the director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The course, including 12 sections, covers some of the following topics:

- A Guide to Bird-watching
- Form and Function: The External Bird
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Birds on the Move: Flight and Migration
- Evolution of Birds and Avian Flight

- Understanding Bird Behavior
- Vocal Behavior
- Breeding Biology of Birds
- Individuals, Populations, and Communities: The Ecology of Birds
- Bird Conservation

Please contact Golden Gate Audubon to become a member and to sign up for this course. Go to www.goldengateaudubon.org or call 510.843.2222. Membership in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology can be done online: www.birds.cornell.edu.

San Francisco Bay with Dolphin Charters

**Saturday, November 21,
9:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Pamela Llewellyn, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Spaces may still be available for this boat trip on San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay. Participants meet at the Berkeley Marina by 9:45 a.m. for departure at 10 a.m. on board Dolphin Charters, joined by GGA field trip leader Pamela Llewellyn. The largest and one of the most important

estuaries along the Pacific Flyway is home to thousands of wintering birds. The boat will skirt Alcatraz and head toward Point Bonita for a tour of the southern edge of the Marin Headlands. Weather permitting, the boat will travel under the Golden Gate Bridge to the point. The itinerary continues to the shore of Angel Island, under the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge, past the Marin Islands and the Brothers and Sisters Islands, to Red Rock, and back down along the Richmond shoreline. Many of these areas can be seen only by boat. In addition to the numerous winter-

ing ducks, loons, grebes, and gulls, we expect to see resident cormorants, pelicans, and murrelets. We'll find seals and sea lions feeding and basking and, with luck, an occasional porpoise. Dress in layers. Bring binoculars, liquids, and lunch.

Trip is limited to 32 people. Cost is \$85 for Golden Gate Audubon members, \$95 for nonmembers. Reserve your space by contacting Stephanie Strait, GGA Office Manager, 510.843.2222 or ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Payment must be received by October 17. Directions to the marina and boat dock will be provided.



CLASSES

MEG PAULETICH

ALBANY ADULT SCHOOL

The following four classes are held in the East Bay at the Albany Adult School. Class fees are noted in the AAS website, www.albany.k12.ca.us/adult.

Birds and Butterflies: Easy Garden Enchantment

Corinne Greenberg,

www.thegardenisateacher.com

Tuesdays, October 6 – 27, 7 – 9 p.m., plus one Saturday field trip, October 31, 8:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Welcome birds and other beneficial creatures to your yard. Learn about native plants, water-saving gardening, and creating wildlife habitat. Class includes excellent slide presentation. A \$5 materials fee is payable to instructor.

Bay Area Birds

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net; Bob Lewis, bob@wingbeats.org

Wednesdays, October 7 – November 18, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus five Saturday or Sunday morning field trips, and one weekend trip following the last class

It's fall, and the shorebirds are back. Waterfowl crowd refuges and reservoirs, and raptors ply the air. It's a great time to get to know local birds. Go to www.wingbeats.org for more details, including field trip locations.

Beginning Birding

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Wednesdays, October 14 – November 4,

7 – 8:30 p.m., plus five Saturday field trips, October 17 – November 14, 9 – 11:30 a.m. (no class on November 11)

This introduction covers identification, habitats, and use of equipment. Learn to recognize the common fall birds of the Bay Area and where to find them. Lots of color photos.

Birding by Ear

Denise Wight, blkittiwake@yahoo.com

Thursdays, October 22 – November 19, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, October 24 – November 14, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Continue learning or refining your birding by ear skills for late fall and winter. We will listen for songs and calls on the four field trips.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

The following class is offered by Golden Gate Audubon and held at the GGA office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. Fee is \$80. To register, call 510.843.2222.

North American Owls

Dave Quady, davequady@att.net

November 3, 4, 10, and 11, 7 – 8:30 p.m. plus three weekend evening field trips (dates to be determined)

Learn what makes an owl different from other birds and how to identify owls by sight and sound, and learn more about their habits and habitats. Classes will be illustrated with slides. Field trips will attempt to hear and see local species.

North American Birds with Joe Morlan

The second sessions of Joe Morlan's fall classes, endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, start in early November. All classes meet 7–9:15 p.m. at Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street (free parking is available in the school lot).

Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text is the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to Birds of North America*, fifth edition. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* is recommended as an adjunct text for Ornithology II and III. Participants should bring binoculars to class. Optional field trips may be arranged for weekends.

Field Ornithology I (EA105), an introduction to birds and birding, combines basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior. It meets on Tuesdays, November 3–December 15. Fee is \$140.

Field Ornithology II (EA115) is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of land birds including hummingbirds, woodpeckers, and flycatchers. It meets Wednesdays, November 4–December 16. Fee is \$125.

Field Ornithology III (EA125) covers various North American birds, including ducks, grouse, and quail. It meets Thursdays, November 5–December 17. Fee is \$125.

Register online at www.evolveww.com/ce.ccsf. Participants registering a week early receive a \$10 discount. For additional information, call 415.561.1860 or go to Joe Morlan's website: <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/fall09.htm>.

Donations

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

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EMPLOYEE GIFT MATCHES

PG&E



With pelagic rarities swarming off the coast, can terrestrial rarities be far behind?

LOONS TO DUCKS

Five pelagic trips went to sea this month: to SM waters on the 2nd (DSh; mob); Farallon Islands (SF), also on the 2nd (AH; mob); Bodega Bay (SON) on the 12th (DSh; mob); Cordell Bank (MRN) on the 17th (RS; mob); and the SM coast again on the 23rd (Roger Wolfe, fide JR; mob). The buzz was all about the Cook's Petrel invasion—138 had been tallied off MTY on July 31. Birders were not disappointed. Every boat except the Farallon trip found at least 1 Cook's Petrel, with high counts of 9 and 11 from SM (Aug. 2) and Bodega Bay. SF added a Cook's Petrel sighting for the collective list on Aug. 20 from a barge 17 miles offshore (AH). More remarkably, Bodega Bay and Cordell Bank trips got great looks and photos of a **Hawaiian Petrel** (*Pterodroma sandwichensis*), and a few birders on the Aug. 2 SM trip got looks at a **Dark-rumped Petrel** (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*).

Overshadowed by the petrel hoopla, the Bodega Bay trip located a Laysan Albatross.

Ashy Storm-Petrel flocks were encountered on four trips, with a high count of 500 from the Farallones. Mixed in were scattered Wilson's, Fork-tailed, and Black Storm-petrels.

Back on land, the Bodega Harbor (SON) **Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*), first noted June 26, was last reported on Aug. 3, nearing the end of its molt cycle (RR). The ALA Cr. Little Blue Heron remained in Fremont, ALA, through the 10th (mob).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

Beginning Aug. 20, Solitary Sandpipers wandered through, pausing at Etheldore ponds in Moss Beach, SM (RT, LB; mob); Tunitas Cr., SM (DW; GH); and Nicasio Res., MRN (RM). The FOS Pectoral Sandpiper arrived Aug. 2 at New Chicago Marsh in Alviso, SCL (CW). Two more followed on the 15th near SON Mountain Rd., SON



Noah Strycker/www.noahstrycker.com

Hawaiian Petrel, photographed by Noah Strycker on the August 12 pelagic trip out of Bodega Bay.

(HK, BD), and on the 25th at 25 Doran Park in Bodega Harbor, SON (MP, DH, DF). A juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper made a brief appearance on the 24th in Half Moon Bay, SM (ADM). Three Black Terns lingered Aug. 22–26 at NAP-SON Marsh Wildlife Area, SOL (KP; CDL, PC, RR), and a single bird scouted Foster City, SM, on the 25th (GC). Aug. 2. Boats to the Farallones and SM coast were treated to Xantus's Murrelet, as was the Bodega Bay boat (AH, DSh; mob).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A couple White-winged Doves were spotted in SM this month: on Aug. 9 near San Gre-

gorio SB (KO) and on the 29th over a Half Moon Bay yard (AJ). On the 11th, PRBO banders netted a Yellow-billed Cuckoo near Bolinas, MRN (NS; oob). PRBO also reported a Long-eared Owl from SE Farallon Island, SF, on Aug. 3 (fide MB). A Butano SP (SM) bird survey logged a Lesser Nighthawk on the 4th (DSu).

Black Swifts apparently nested this year at Año Nuevo SR, SM, and as many as 8 were sighted there Aug. 8–16 (BR; mob). A Black Swift soloed south over Hawk Hill, MRN Headlands, on the 27th (SB). A Morgan Hill (SCL) feeder attracted as many as 11 Black-chinned Hummingbirds Aug. 16–23 (SR), while a 12th bird opted for great art at the Wildlife Gallery in Bolinas, MRN (KH). A Calliope Hummingbird was noted on Outer PRNS, MRN, on the 25th (RS).

A pair of Tropical Kingbirds cavorted over the Petaluma River near Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON, on the 27th (DN, MR). A Red-eyed Vireo may have been weeping at Skylawn Cemetery, SM, on the 24th (ADM). On Aug. 1, several Purple Martins repeatedly strafed Lagunitas Cr. at White House Pool, near Pt. Reyes Station, MRN (JE). Hawk watchers reported a pair from the MRN Headlands on the 27th (SB).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

A late-month trickle of eastern vagrants portended more hijinks to come: American Redstart, Prairie Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Waterthrush (banded), 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and an Indigo Bunting.

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: AC, Alice Cavette; ADM, Al DeMartini; AH, Alan Hopkins; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; AMD, Amy McDonald; BD, Bill Doyle; BR, Bob Reiling; CDL, Calvin D Lou; CW, Christine Wolfe; DF, Dea Freid; DH, Dave Hofmann; DN, Dan Noreen; DSh, Debra Shearwater; DSu, David Suddjian; DW, Dave Weber; GC, George Chrisman; GH, Garth Harwood; HK, Helen Kochenderfer; JE, Jules Evens; JR, Jennifer Rycenga; KH, Keith Hansen; KO, Kris Olson; KP, Kathy Parker; LB, Leonie Batkin; MB, Matt Brady; MP, Mike Parmeter; MR, Mary Rooney; NS, Noah Stryker; PC, Peter Colasanti; PK, Pat Kenny; RC, Rigdon Currie; RK, Roland Kenner; RM, Rene Masadi; RR, Ruth Rudesill; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; RW, Roger Wolfe; SB, Steve Bauer; SR, Steve Rottenborn

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; 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; MTY, Monterey; 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

Travel with Golden Gate Audubon

If you're thinking about birding outside the Bay Area, consider one of the trips designed especially for Golden Gate Audubon members. The first trip in the schedule is to Oaxaca, Mexico, in December of this year, followed in 2010 by a second trip to Oaxaca and trips to Southeast Arizona, Oregon, and Veracruz, Mexico. For applications and detailed information on these trips, please contact Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093 or ruthobey@gmail.com.

Mark Pretti, an enthusiastic all-around naturalist, will lead two trips to Oaxaca, Mexico: December 1–11, 2009 and January 5–15, 2010. Each is limited to eight participants. Knowledgeable about birds, flowers, trees, and butterflies, he has a special gift for sharing his extensive interest in flora and fauna. Mark has led other trips for Golden Gate Audubon, and his excellent organizational skills will ensure smoothly functioning trips.

Exploring a variety of habitats, we expect to see many of the 330-plus species of birds found on previous trips. We'll also visit the

Zapotec ruins of Monte Alban and spend a day with Susana Trilling as we tour the Mercado Abastos, enjoy her superb lecture on regional culture and cuisine, and savor a delicious lunch at her cooking school. Cost is projected to be \$2,500 per person based on double occupancy in four comfortable small hotels and includes all lodging, meals, admissions, 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.

From April 26 to May 2, 2010, Mark Pretti will lead a trip to Southeast Arizona, where species from the Rocky Mountains and Mexico's Sierra Madre come together. The trip encompasses many of Southeast Arizona's hotspots: Madera Canyon, the Patagonia area, Ramsey and Garden canyons in the Huachuca Mountains, and the San Pedro River. The cost of \$1,450 per person includes a \$150 tax-deductible contribution to GGA.

In late August or early September 2010, Harry Fuller will lead a trip to Malheur

Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. At this major birding hot spot, fall migration brings enormous concentrations of shorebirds and thousands of Greater Sandhill Cranes. Our group, limited to 10, will spend two or three days also looking for Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Short-eared Owl, Evening Grosbeak, Common Nighthawk, Wilson's Snipe, and other species. Price for this trip, still to be determined, will include a \$50 donation to GGA.

In October 2010 we offer a trip to Veracruz for the "River of Raptors" migration, in partnership with ProNatura, a Mexican conservation group. During fall migration, on a good day, over 100,000 migrant vultures and raptors are seen; on a Big Day, over 500,000 have been counted. An estimated 10 million passerines and waterbirds pass by each day. We will have the option of a basic 9-day tour for \$2,100 (with 8–10 participants) or an extended 12-day tour to include Los Tuxtlas rain forest (if 6 participants elect to stay) for \$2,650. A \$150 donation to GGA is part of the price.

Golden Gate Raptor Observatory Celebrates Anniversary

Twenty-five years ago this fall, various hawk-watching, bird-banding, and environmental educational activities were melded together in the Marin Headlands to create the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO). A half-million hawks and 875,000 volunteer-hours later, GGRO, sponsored by the National Park Service, marks its quarter-century birthday with Raptor Fest and Open House, held at Fort Cronkhite in the headlands, Saturday and Sunday, October 24 and 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Both days' activities will include crafts for kids, a show of raptor art, and a chance to see live, nonreleasable raptors up close courtesy of Native Bird Connections. On Sunday, also from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., speakers from GGRO and area universities will appear at a drop-in symposium to talk about 25 years of scientific results in layperson's terms. Both days should produce great raptor flights atop Hawk Hill, where talks and



Kim Meyer

GGRO intern Lynn Schofield with an adult Harlan's Red-Tailed Hawk, prior to the bird's release.

banding demonstrations start at noon.

Go to www.ggro.org or www.parksconservancy.org for more details on the GGRO Raptor Fest and Open House, or to get

daily updates on the 2009 migration. Or call 415.331.0730 for more information. The daily GGRO Hawkwatch Hotline is 415.561.3030 x2500.

EMERYVILLE CRESCENT TO BERKELEY MARINA

The Emeryville Crescent (accessed from I-80 by taking the Powell Street exit and heading west on Powell) is a dense little salt marsh that attracts overwintering shorebirds. Large rafts scattered with goldeneyes and Surf Scoters float just offshore. In early fall, Elegant Terns flock to the area before heading south. Head north on the frontage road to Emery Point (just south of the Ashby Avenue I-80 overpass), a good place for rocky shoreline birds like Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird, turnstones, and even Wandering Tattler. Continue north to University Avenue, turn left, and follow the road to the Berkeley Marina and Cesar Chavez Park, where you may spot Burrowing Owls among the grasslands while surveying the rafting birds offshore. GGA's checklist for the Eastshore State Park is available at the office and online.

ALBANY MUDFLATS AND ALBANY BULB

The mudflats and the nearby bulb are shorebird havens in the winter months. The mudflats are best during an ebbing tide, when the mud is exposed and birds are close to the shoreline. To reach the area, take the Buchanan exit from I-80 and head west; parking is along the right side of the road, along the mudflats. From an observation platform, you can scope the many shorebirds, including Long-billed Curlew, Whimbrel, dowitchers, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Western and Least Sandpipers, and Sanderling. Then continue along Buchanan to the end of the road, with parking on the left. From there, walk west along any of the trails until you see a lagoon at the end, surrounded by a breakwater. At high tide, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird, turnstones, and other birds that prefer rocky shorelines flock to the area.

NORTH RICHMOND SHORELINE

From September 2007 through August 2008, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers surveyed the North Richmond Shoreline between Point San Pablo and Point Pinole and observed tens of thousands of shorebirds, waterbirds, raptors, and passerines.



Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

Marbled Godwits leaving their high-tide roost.

We highly recommend that you visit Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, where trails offer views across Breuner Marsh (recently acquired by the East Bay Regional Park District), which can be densely packed with foraging shorebirds, including Semipalmated Plover, Red Knot, Lesser Yellowlegs, Black Oystercatcher, and Wilson's Snipe. To reach Point Pinole, from I-80 in Richmond, exit at the Richmond Parkway; turn right onto Giant Highway and proceed to the park entrance. You may also want to visit the West County Landfill Loop trail, where our survey teams recorded Clapper Rail, Spotted Sandpiper, and Peregrine Falcon, as well as tens of thousands of other shorebirds, ducks, and seabirds. To reach the Landfill Loop, take Richmond Parkway west from I-80, turn right on Parr Boulevard, and follow signs for the Bay Trail, until you see a sign for the Landfill Loop staging area.

LANDS END AND SUTRO HEIGHTS, SAN FRANCISCO

More than 200 species have been recorded at this magnificent coastal birding spot in San Francisco, where Geary Boulevard meets Camino del Mar. With Seal Rock in the Pacific Ocean to the west, Ocean Beach to the south, Marin Headlands to the north, and the city to the east, birders enjoy a dramatic backdrop and excellent views from the coastal trail while spot-

ting pelagic birds, shorebirds, divers, gulls, terns, waders, and waterbirds. Woodpeckers, hummingbirds, hawks, and passerines can be seen at Sutro Heights and along the Camino del Mar trail. A wheelchair-accessible trail can be accessed from the Merrie Way parking lot. An illustrated brochure with a checklist for the area is available on the GGA website.

HERON'S HEAD PARK, SAN FRANCISCO

Birders at this 24-acre bayside park have reported observing over 100 species, including both scaup, five species of grebe, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, and Great and Snowy Egrets. Along the shore, check for Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Black Oystercatcher, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Black Turnstone, and a variety of sandpipers, dowitchers, and yellowlegs. This is also a good spot to look for gulls: Mew, Ring-billed, California, Herring, Thayer's, Western, and Glaucous-winged. Check the grasses for Black and Say's Phoebes, Savannah Sparrow, White and Golden-crowned Sparrows, and Western Meadowlark. Yellow-billed Magpie and Eurasian Wigeon are among the rarities reported in recent years. We recommend that you time your visit with the outgoing

WINTER BIRDING continued on page 12

WINTER BIRDING from page 11

tide, for better viewing opportunities of shorebirds, and, when possible, go in the afternoon, so the sun will be at your back. To get to the park, take Third Street to Cargo Way and turn toward the bay; the parking lot is on Jennings Street.

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Golden Gate Park offers many excellent birding opportunities, including the Chain of Lakes west of Crossover Drive, Lloyd Lake, and the Buffalo Paddock. Here, we're recommending a trip to the San Francisco Botanical Garden, on Ninth Avenue near Lincoln Way. Join Golden Gate Audubon for a field trip held the first Sunday of the month from 8 to 10:30 a.m. In winter, look high and low to check the wide variety of trees and plants and the ponds for migrants, residents, and possibly a vagrant species. In the California section, you might spot one of the last California Quail remaining in the wild within San Francisco's city limits. A wheelchair-accessible trail was recently improved. Public transportation is encouraged since street parking is limited. The

garden is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

LAKE MERCED, SAN FRANCISCO

The city's largest freshwater lake lies within close proximity to the ocean, which makes it attractive to both birds and birders. The park's 600-plus acres has freshwater, riparian, and coastal scrub upland habitats for over 200 species of birds and 50 breeding bird species recorded. Clark's, Western, and hybrid grebes and Ruddy Ducks can be found on the lake. Look overhead for Osprey and Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. Survey the tule reeds for Green Heron, Sora, Marsh Wren, and Common Yellowthroat. There have been reports of Virginia Rail and American Bittern. Wintering warblers and woodpeckers forage in the upland trees. Three parking lots serve the park: off Skyline Boulevard at Harding Park Road, where the boathouse is located; on John Muir Drive, where there is access to a concrete bridge; and at Sunset Boulevard, which has trails leading to a wooden bridge and across to Harding Park Golf Course and a habitat restoration site. A 4.4-mile paved path encircles the entire park.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to Birding Resources on the Golden Gate Audubon website (www.goldengate-audubon.org) to download our checklist for the birds of the Eastshore State Park. You'll also find a checklist for the birds of Lands End. Interested in rare bird sightings? Listen to recent reports on GGA's Northern California Bird Box (415.681.7422). Bob Lewis's website (www.wingbeats.org) and Joe Morlan's website (<http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmorlan>) are filled with invaluable information on local birding.



Black-necked Stilt.

Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.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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