

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

Red-tailed Hawk, one of the species most impacted by the turbines at Altamont Pass.

Agreement Reached in Altamont Pass to Save Birds

For more than 30 years, wind turbines in the Altamont Pass east of Livermore have been killing thousands of birds annually. In December 2010, Golden Gate Audubon signed an agreement with the largest turbine operator in the Altamont Pass to facilitate the removal of more than 2,000 old-generation turbines and replace them with fewer than 300 new-generation turbines that have less impact on most bird species.

Golden Gate Audubon joined Santa Clara Valley Audubon, Marin Audubon, Mt. Diablo Audubon, and Ohlone Audubon in the agreement with the California Attorney General's Office and NextEra Energy Inc. that requires NextEra to remove and replace its wind turbines in three phases over the next several years. All of NextEra's old turbines will be shut down before the end of 2015.

NextEra will install new turbines only after completing a comprehensive study of bird use and density in the area and undertaking a verifiable effort to site the turbines in areas that pose fewer risks to birds. The settlement also provides \$1.25 million for on-the-ground conservation of habitat to benefit birds affected by turbine operations in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) and \$1.25 million for research to better understand and protect species affected by turbine operations.

ALTAMONT AGREEMENT continued on page 4

Don't Miss Birdathon 2011

This year's Birdathon takes place for the whole month of April, from April 1 through 30, so Golden Gate Audubon members and friends will have plenty of time to compete for top prizes and enjoy a variety of birding adventures.

Grand Prizes will be awarded to those who raise the most funds and will include wonderful birding getaways and vacations, and specialty birding equipment. Additional honors and prizes, including optics from our generous sponsor Scope City, will be awarded in other categories. All awards will take place at the Birdathon Awards and Celebration Dinner on Thursday, May 12, at the Brazilian Room in Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley.

Last year's Birdathon raised more than \$20,000. This year, with the help of our friends, we hope to top \$30,000! All funds will benefit Golden Gate Audubon's vital work to protect Bay Area habitats for birds and other wildlife as well as our award-winning Eco-Education Programs for children from underserved schools.

Taking part in Birdathon 2011 is easy. There are many ways to participate. You can:

- **Sign up for one of our Birdathon expert-led walks.** Simply make a donation to go on one of our special Birdathon walks dedicated to raise funds (see page 9). Even the busiest person can take part by joining one

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX

415.681.7422

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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For Nature Store hours, please call or check the website.

Design and layout: e.g. communications

Migrations at Golden Gate Audubon

Not all migrations occur overhead. Here are the recent comings and goings at Golden Gate Audubon. Over our 94-year history, this great organization has thrived because of many wonderful people.

You probably know that GGA Volunteer Coordinator **Jennifer Robinson Maddox** went on maternity leave this past fall. On October 20, her first child, daughter Adelaide, was born. Now, not surprisingly, Jennifer and husband, Patrick, have decided that she should trade her GGA position for the new and challenging role of full-time mother.

Since Jenn began as VC in 2007, volunteers and staff have come to know her as talented, dedicated, cheerful, and supportive. When hired, she knew little about birds, but said that “each volunteer was excited to teach me.” Jenn worked side-by-side with staff, interns, and the more than 1,500 volunteers on habitat restoration work parties, at the Speaker Series, on docent-led walks, on field trips, and at festivals and events. To our volunteers, Jennifer’s message is that “Golden Gate Audubon could not function without you. I hope every one of you knows just how fantastic and important you are.”

We will miss Jenn and wish her and her family the best health and happiness. But we have not seen the last of her—when possible, Jenn will continue to show up for Golden Gate Audubon activities.

Noreen Weeden filled in as Volunteer Coordinator during Jenn’s leave, and we are thrilled that she has now accepted the position.

Marissa Ortega-Welch is Golden Gate Audubon’s new Eco-Education Program Coordinator. She joined GGA in November, returning to the Bay Area after living in Washington state for four years. Marissa, a San Diego native, taught environmental education at the Olympic Park Institute, as well as conducted bird surveys in Northwest national parks for the Institute for Bird Populations. She is fluent in Spanish and has taught English as a second language. Prior to moving to Washington, Marissa taught bicycle-based environmental education for Cycles of Change here in the East Bay. She loves to share her passion for the outdoors and is committed to empowering youth to work toward positive change. Marissa holds a BS in environmental science and management from UC Berkeley. We welcome her and look forward to hearing about her work with the Eco-Education students.

Marissa was preceded in this position by **Rubén Guzmán**, who has decided to concentrate on his masters of fine arts degree. We will miss Rubén’s passion for teaching kids about the environment. We wish him success.

Golden Gate Audubon is pleased to announce **David Anderson**’s election as chair of the San Francisco Conservation Committee. David, who recently returned to the Bay Area, brings an extensive background in conservation to this important volunteer position. For more than five years, he served as vice president and executive director of the Florida Audubon Society, where he worked on collaborative efforts to stem development and initiated the Urban Oasis Project, a program that monitors and enhances habitat for migrating birds. When he last lived in the Bay Area, David was director of the San Francisco Zoo for 14 years and was responsible for shifting the zoo’s emphasis to conservation. “I’m delighted to be here working with such capable experts,” David says, “and hope that more GGA members will join the critical and fascinating work on the committee.”

We thank **Noreen Weeden** for her dedicated leadership as chair of the committee since 2006. She remains an active member of the committee.

Next time you are with GGA out in the field or in a classroom or at an event, take a second and look away from the birds long enough to notice the terrific people who share with you the love of birds, other wildlife, and their habitat. We are an inspiring group.



— Mark Welther, Executive Director



DOG MANAGEMENT IN THE GGNRA

The National Park Service released the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for its proposed Dog Management Plan. The Dog Management Plan will regulate on- and off-leash dog activities in the GGNRA and is likely to set a precedent for other national parks. While dogs are not allowed on trails at other national parks, the GGNRA has operated under a special rule since 1979, which has allowed off-leash dogs to roam freely throughout the GGNRA. Though some areas were supposed to be closed to dogs or require leashes, noncompliance has been rampant and had significant negative impacts on wildlife, plants, and other park visitors.

The Dog Management Plan strikes a balance between protecting the park's natural resources and allowing dog-related recreation. We need our members to review the DEIS and provide comments to the GGNRA by April 14. More information is available at www.nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/dog-management.htm. If you would like to get more involved in our effort to craft a fair and useful dog policy for the GGNRA, please contact Mike Lynes at mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF DOGS IN EAST BAY PARKS

Golden Gate Audubon's Dogs in Parks Working Group is pursuing its goal to reduce the impacts of dogs on wildlife in Berkeley's Cesar Chavez and Aquatic Parks, with the hope that an effective approach can be developed and applied to other areas, too. This effort coincides with proposed changes for managing dogs in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and at the city of Albany's waterfront.

Common to all proposals are the concept of adaptive management and the restriction of off-leash dogs to designated areas. Off-leash dogs have negative impacts on wildlife and on the recreational experience of other park visitors, and conflict with the

park managers' mission to protect natural resources. The GGA Dogs in Parks Working Group's model for managing dogs in parks includes education and outreach, effective signage, evidence-based management, enforcement of rules, and, possibly, enclosing off-leash areas. The group needs volunteers! To get involved, contact Pam Young, pamyoun2@mac.com.

BUILD A BOX FOR LOCAL NESTING BIRDS

Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Western Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and other cavity-nesting birds depend on holes in decaying trees for their nests. In towns and cities, however, decaying trees and wooden fence posts often pose a hazard and are cleared away. You can help cavity nesters by installing a nest box in your yard. And you can build it yourself at Golden Gate Audubon's nest box workshop on Saturday, March 26, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. The workshop will take place in the parking lot of the Berkeley REI, 1338 San Pablo Avenue.

Join us to assemble your own bird box from pre-cut kits. No experience necessary! We will provide all the materials and instructions for assembling the box, as well as recommendations on where to place your new nest box. Members can take one of these beauties home for a \$5 donation, nonmembers for \$15. At the event, partici-

pants will have an opportunity to become Golden Gate Audubon members. If you are interested in building a box, please contact Amy Richey, cavitynester@gmail.com.

GGA AND SIERRA CLUB SETTLE YOSEMITE SLOUGH LAWSUIT

On January 7, Golden Gate Audubon and Sierra Club signed a settlement with Lennar Development Inc., the developer for the Candlestick Point–Hunters Point redevelopment project, resolving our claims that the Environmental Impact Report for the project was inadequate. We were particularly concerned that a bridge proposed by Lennar over Yosemite Slough would have unnecessary impacts on the slough and adjacent wetlands, including the largest proposed wetland restoration project in San Francisco.

Under the settlement, Lennar will implement measures to reduce impacts from the bridge on adjacent wildlife and provide \$2.5 million for the creation of an entirely new wetland on nearby property. Lennar also agreed to make several improvements to native grasslands and perennial wetlands that were already part of its project and to monitor birds at the site for three years. The settlement will help enhance the natural environment of San Francisco's southern waterfront, improve the community's access

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 4

Are You Looking for These Features?

- San Francisco and Oakland 2010 Christmas Bird Count reports.
- Trips to Big Bend National Park in Texas in April, to the Cascade and Siskiyou mountains of Oregon in June, and to the Andean Mountains of Ecuador in fall.
- Bruce Mast's Observations.

You'll find them on the Golden Gate Audubon website, www.goldengateaudubon.org.



Mark J. Rauzion/<http://rauzion.zenfolio.com>

Least Bittern at Martinez Regional Shoreline.

CONSERVATION CORNER from page 3

to thriving natural areas, and remove one of the obstacles to the much-needed redevelopment effort at Hunters Point.

RESTORE BIRD HABITAT AT GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SITES

We invite you to join us for our workdays at GGA restoration sites on both sides of the bay. During the spring, we work on site preparation. For site details and directions, please go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/ volunteer.

- Alameda Wildlife Refuge: March 13, 9 a.m. – noon.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland: March 19 and April 16, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Pier 94, San Francisco: April 2, 9 a.m. – noon.

VOLUNTEER HOSTS NEEDED AT AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

Every year, thousands of visitors come to Audubon Canyon Ranch's Martin Griffin Preserve (formerly Bolinas Canyon Preserve) in western Marin County, which has one of the most studied Great Blue Heron and Great Egret nesting sites on the West Coast. Golden Gate Audubon, which helped establish the ACR, is responsible for providing hosts during the public season. These volunteers greet visitors and answer questions about the heronry. All information that hosts need is provided in advance. GGA is seeking hosts for the following dates: March 19 and 20; April 16 and 17; May 7, 8 (Mother's Day), 28, and 29; June 11 and 12; and July 4. If you are interested or want more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden, 510.843.9374, volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org.

LIGHTS OUT FOR BIRDS SAN FRANCISCO AND EAST BAY

Spring migration continues through May. This is the time to encourage businesses to participate in Lights Out for Birds. The program not only can save birds—it can also save natural resources and cut energy bills. Sign up or learn more by visiting us at www.goldengateaudubon.org/conservation or e-mail mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org

ALTAMONT AGREEMENT from page 1

The new agreement implements recommendations from the Alameda County Scientific Review Committee, an independent body of scientists. The committee has repeatedly stated that the only way to significantly reduce avian mortality in the Altamont Pass is to remove old turbines.

The agreement also builds on the 2006 settlement that Golden Gate Audubon and its partners signed after suing Alameda County to prevent the reissuance of permits in the APWRA without environmental review. Golden Gate Audubon settled that lawsuit after extracting promises from the wind companies to reduce avian mortality by 50 percent within three years. When the reduction in bird kills did not occur, Golden Gate Audubon prepared to take further legal action to protect birds in the APWRA.

Last summer, the California Attorney General's Office and NextEra Energy approached the Audubon chapters and proposed negotiations to explore new solutions for the problem. NextEra put forward an aggressive schedule for removing the old turbines and replacing them with new ones, a process called "repowering." The new turbines are much more efficient, with a single turbine capable of generating as

much power as 30 old-generation turbines.

The agreement is a significant step in the right direction in the APWRA. Studies in other repowered turbine fields in the APWRA indicate a reduction in mortality for most species of 60 to 80 percent. Yet, much work remains to be done. Golden Gate Audubon is working to persuade other turbine operators to repower and otherwise reduce environmental impacts from their operations. Also, where necessary, Golden Gate Audubon and its partners will challenge projects that fail to adequately protect local wildlife. We are also greatly concerned about impacts to other wildlife resulting from turbine operations, including the endangered California Tiger Salamander, the Red-legged Frog, and bats and are actively working with agencies such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service to address these impacts.

The progress we've made would not have been possible without the support of the other Audubon chapters, particularly Santa Clara Valley Audubon, and funders including the Weeden Foundation, Mary A. Crocker Trust, Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, Firedoll Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and Resources Legacy Fund.

—Mike Lynes, Conservation Director

Spring and Summer Classes

Albany Adult School. The spring quarter begins April 4. Golden Gate Audubon will sponsor two classes, Birding by Ear with Denise Wight and Beginning Birding with Anne Hoff. Registration is through the AAS website: www.albanyadultschool.org. More details on classes for the spring and summer quarters will be posted on the GGA website as they become available.

Birds of the Sierra. Again this year, Golden Gate Audubon is holding two classes in the Sierra, a wonderful place for birds in June—Birds of the Sierra I, with Bob Lewis and Rusty Scalf, June 9–12, and Birds of the Sierra II, with Bob Lewis and Eddie Bartley, June 16–19. Both classes begin at the Yuba Pass parking lot on Highway 49 between Sierraville and Bassetts. Each class is limited to 35 participants, so you'll want to plan ahead. Information about fees and meeting times and places will be posted on the GGA website.

Joe Morlan's Spring Classes. The second sessions of Joe's three ongoing classes, held Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings at the Marina Middle School in San Francisco, begin the first week of April. For details about each class, the textbooks used, and fees and registration, go to <http://fog.ccsf.edu/jmorlan/spring11.htm>. Preregistration is advised.



SPEAKER SERIES

California's Tricolored Blackbirds: Centennial Trends and Prospects for the Future

Dr. Robert Meese

Berkeley: Thursday, March 17—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program

A near-endemic California bird, the Tricolored Blackbird is a species of special concern that forms the largest breeding colonies of any songbird in North America. Through a multimedia presentation that includes still images, videos, and digital sound files, Dr. Robert Meese will explore the tricolor's natural history, field identification, history of research, and population trends. Drawing on his extensive work with the species, Bob will illustrate the tricolor's extraordinary breeding habits and the relationship between landscape changes and impacts on the species' populations in the Central Valley and Southern California.

Bob Meese has worked at the Information Center for the Environment in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at UC Davis for nearly 20 years. He has been conducting research on Tricolored Blackbirds for six years and banding them for four years. Through annual surveys, he helps to locate at-risk colonies in ephemeral habitats, principally grain fields, and then assists in efforts to conserve and monitor the productivity of these colonies. Bob's work has taken him from San Diego County to Butte County, with a focus on the Central Valley from Kern County to Glenn County.

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



Jennifer Isola, USFWS

Bob Meese banding a Tricolored Blackbird at Delevan National Wildlife Refuge.

The Top and Bottom of Central America

Bob Lewis

San Francisco: Thursday, April 21—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program

In 2009, Bob Lewis explored the wealth of birdlife in Central America on visits to Belize in the north and Panama in the south. As one would expect, some of the species in the north are similar to those found in the United States and Mexico. By contrast, bird families in the southern part of Central America seem strange and unusual to many US birders. Showing the extraordinary photographs taken on his trips, Bob will look at a number of bird families, both strange (puffbirds, antwrens, toucans) and familiar (kites, falcons, flycatchers), with a special focus on hummingbirds. He will also examine other wildlife that can be seen in Central America.

Bob is a long-time GGA birding instructor and field trip leader. He is addicted to birding travel and bird photography. He and his wife, Hanno, have explored parks and sewage ponds in more than 35 countries and anticipate adding to the list.

The GGA Latin America Committee is offering a trip to Panama, June 4–12. If you are considering this trip, you will not want to miss Bob's presentation. Steve Margolin, who has led five trips to Panama and will lead the upcoming trip, will be present on April 21 to talk about the trip.

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.



Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

Stripe-throated Hermit.

Margaret Atwood Film at SF Green Film Festival

A new documentary film about Margaret Atwood, *In the Wake of the Flood*, follows the intertwined threads of the acclaimed author's literary and environmental journeys, including birding interests she shares with her husband, Graeme Gibson. The film, by Ron Mann, will be screened Friday, March 4, at 4 p.m. at the Landmark Theatres Embarcadero Center Cinema in San Francisco as part of the San Francisco Green Film Festival. After the screening, Atwood will take questions via Skype from Canada. Golden Gate Audubon is proud to partner with the Green Film Festival as a presenting sponsor.

Atwood is the acclaimed author of more than 40 books of poetry, fiction, and prose. Among other avian-related accomplishments, Atwood and her husband were named honorary presidents of Bird Life's Rare Bird Club. For tickets (\$12.50 each) and other festival information, go to www.sfgreenfilmfest.org.

Changes to Speaker Series

The Speaker Series has always been free for all who attend. Now, in order to cover the costs of speaker honoraria and increasing expenses, we will request that nonmembers make a voluntary donation of \$5. This will begin with the March 17 Speaker Series 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. Of course, GGA members are welcomed to attend presentations in Berkeley and San Francisco free of charge. This is one of the many benefits of keeping your GGA membership current!



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.

Jewel Lake

Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley

Fridays, March 4, April 1,
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 stroll through this lush riparian area. Spring is coming, with budding willows and early-arriving breeding birds. The first singer will most likely be Orange-crowned Warbler. Heavy rain cancels.

Redwood Shores

San Mateo County

Saturday, March 5,
9:15 a.m. – midafternoon

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 9:15 a.m. at the trailhead, Oracle Parkway and Shoreway Rd., Belmont. This circuit is a flat, 11-mile loop on the SF Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved. A highlight is the sewer ponds at Radio Rd. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Call or e-mail for cell numbers. Leaders will drive; for transit directions, go Field Trips at GGA website. If you can offer a ride or would like a ride, call well in advance.

From Hwy. 101, exit at Ralston/Marine Parkway and go east toward the bay .4 mile, then left at first light east of the freeway (Oracle Parkway), and turn left at next intersection (stop sign) and immediately into parking area.

Heron's Head Park

San Francisco

Saturday, March 5, 10 a.m.

Lowell and Lincoln High Interns,
415.387.9160

Tours of the park leave every 30 minutes, with the last tour at 11:30 a.m. They will be led by interns from Lowell and Lincoln High Schools equipped with spotting

scopes. Come by and experience the thrill of observing and learning about the waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds that call the park home during the winter. Heron's Head is at Jennings St. and Cargo Way, two blocks south of Pier 96. Parking is available near the entrance. Sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon, SF Nature Education, Port of San Francisco, and Literacy for Environmental Justice.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, March 6, April 3, 8 –10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

Meet at front gate of garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. Fee is \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring ID for residency and membership status.

Putah Creek South Fork Preserve

Yolo County

Mondays, March 7, April 4, 7 – 9 a.m.

Aaron Haiman, anhaiman@ucdavis.edu

The preserve is a wonderful riparian corridor that runs from Lake Berryessa to Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. It offers opportunities to bird along the creek and into the nearby open grasslands. Possible highlights include unusual duck species, raptors, and early spring migrants. Participants will be walking on uneven trails and through often coarse or prickly vegetation; sturdy hiking boots and long pants are strongly suggested. Rain cancels. Trip is limited to 10 participants. E-mail leader to reserve space. Those signed up should meet at the preserve, on Mace Blvd. south of I-80. Entrance to parking

lot is on left just after bridge over Putah Creek. The preserve has free parking but no bathrooms.

Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area

Walnut Creek

Friday, March 11, 9 a.m. – noon

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

This is a lovely park alongside a creek in the shadow of Mount Diablo. The picnic areas are very birdy on weekdays, when visitors are scarce. We'll bird these areas, then walk out the Stage Road Trail looking for woodland species and raptors on the cliffs. There are many shallow creek crossings on the trail, so be prepared for wet feet. Meet in parking lot at end of Castle Rock Rd. The park has restrooms and water. Directions are at www.ebparks.org, or contact leaders.

Cesar Chavez Park

Berkeley

Saturday, March 12, 8 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net

Meet at the circular drive at the end of Spinnaker Way on the Berkeley waterfront immediately adjacent to the park. We will bird around the park. Dress warmly. Rain cancels.

Honey Lake

Lassen County

Saturday–Sunday, March 12–13

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,
davequady@att.net

Spaces may still be available on this trip to see Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. Contact the leader to sign up.

Seal Rocks and Sutro Park

San Francisco

Saturday, March 12, 9 a.m. – noon

Martha Wessitsh, 415.681.8059,
415.533.4470 (cell), martha@wessitsh.com

Meet at the parking lot above the old Sutro Baths. We'll scope birds on the offshore

rocks and in the catching pond formed by some of the ruins. Then we'll scope seabirds from the Cliff House. Across the street at Sutro Park, we'll look for land birds. Restrooms are available, and little walking is involved. Heavy rain cancels.

Lower Klamath/Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges

Siskiyou County

Sunday, March 13, 7:30 a.m.

Eddie Bartley and Noreen Weeden, eddie@naturetrip.com, 415.355.0450

In mid-March, Lower Klamath is one of the premier staging grounds for waterfowl preparing for a last leap north to their spring and summer breeding grounds. Expect to see waterfowl in the tens of thousands, as well as cranes and raptors, especially Bald Eagle and perhaps Golden Eagle, and Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks. Great Horned Owls are expected; Barn and Short-eared Owls are fairly common. Meet at the refuge Visitor Center. We'll bird most of the day with a break for lunch. You can join us for part or all of trip.

From I-5 at Weed, follow Hwy. 97 northeast for 45 miles toward the Oregon border. Take Stateline Rd. (Hwy. 161) east to Tulelake. Turn south on Hill Rd. and go 4 miles. Drive from SF is about 7 hours.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Fridays, March 18, April 15, 8 – 10 a.m.

Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Mitchell Canyon

Contra Costa County

Saturday, March 19, 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, with many residents and migrants in attendance. 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 parking lot at end of Mitchell Canyon Rd. Restrooms and water are available. There is a parking fee. For directions, search for "Mitchell Canyon Rd., Clayton," on Google maps, or contact leaders. \$

Richmond to Berkeley

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Saturday, March 19

Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet leader at 8:50 a.m. at El Cerrito Del Norte BART Station for ride to trail or at 9:20 at the end of S. 51st St. in Richmond. We will bird south along the SF Bay Trail, looking for shorebirds and ducks, and ending at University Ave. and I-80 in Berkeley. Bring bicycle lock and liquids. Bring lunch or purchase at the Seabreeze Market. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Reservations are unnecessary, but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Car: Take Bayview exit from I-580 north, turn left over freeway. Go left on Seaport and immediately left on S. 51st, then go to end and park on street. Entrance to a short spur to SF Bay Trail starts here. If you are concerned about security, park at Point Isabel and ride north on trail about .75 mile to meet group. Transit: Meet leader at the Del Norte BART station at 8:50 and ride to trail. If biking on your own, take Ohlone Greenway Trail south to Potrero Ave., turn right toward the bay, cross San Pablo Ave., and immediately turn left onto S. 55th St., then right onto Gately, left onto Ells, and right onto Bayview. Cross Carlson, then go over I-580, left onto Seaport, and left onto S. 51st St. and proceed to trail.

Southern Waterfront

San Francisco

Sunday, March 20, 8 a.m.

Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

We'll start at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area to look for shorebirds at Yosemite Slough at high tide (a site under threat of development). Then, we'll head to Heron's Head Park to seek out the Clapper Rail and Harlequin Duck seen there recently, plus other species. Trip ends before noon. Please contact the leader if meeting the group at Candlestick Point. Parking must be arranged in advance.

Butterfly Walk

UC Berkeley Botanical Garden

Tuesday, March 22, 3 – 4 p.m.

Sal Levinson, sal.levinson@gmail.com

Meet just inside the garden gate. We expect to see early-season butterflies such as Sara Orangetip and California Tortoiseshell. There are entrance and parking fees. Please register by calling 510.643.2755. E-mail leader with questions. \$

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesdays, March 23, April 27,

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 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. Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking is at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is probably free on weekday mornings, but will be \$3 if the kiosk is occupied.

Claremont Canyon

Oakland

Sunday, March 27, 9 – 11:30 a.m.

Erica Rutherford; Ande Bennett; John Colbert, eastbaybirding@gmail.com, 510.541.2100

Learn to locate and identify, by sight and sound, some common birds of the hills and canyons during this moderate walk for beginners. We will start at the top of Panoramic Way behind Memorial Stadium and bird along Panoramic Ridge in both Claremont and Strawberry Canyons. Sections of trail are somewhat steep and may be slippery when muddy or dusty. Meet at last intersection at top of Panoramic Way. E-mail for a map of meeting location and parking suggestions.

Bird Walk for Beginners and Children at Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sundays, April 3, April 10, 10 a.m.

Carol Kiser, Carol_Kiser@nps.gov

Park Ranger Carol Kiser will teach you

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how to locate and identify common waterbirds and land birds during this easy stroll. Bring binoculars and bird books if you have them. Wear sunblock and a hat, and dress in layers. There is free 4-hour parking at foot of Van Ness Ave. Parking garages are in Ghirardelli Square on Beach St. and at Anchorage Mall on Beach near Leavenworth.

Rodeo Lagoon

Marin County

Saturday, April 16, 9 a.m. to noon

Martha Wessitsh, 415.681.8059,

415.533.4470 (cell), martha@wessitsh.com

Meet at the parking lot of the Marin Headlands Visitor Center. We will scope birds on the lagoon and also find land birds. Restrooms are available, and not much walking is involved.

After Golden Gate Bridge, take second exit to Alexander Ave. Get in left lane, following signs for 101 San Francisco. Turn left at stop sign and cross under freeway. Turn right onto Conzelman Rd. and drive about a mile. Turn right on McCullough Rd. and go over the hill until you come to a T at Bunker Rd. Turn left on Bunker and drive to Field Rd. (look for signs saying "Visitor Center"). Turn left up hill and park in large lot adjacent to old church, now Visitor Center. If you cross the lagoon, you've gone too far.

San Pablo and Briones Reservoirs

Orinda

Saturday, April 16, 9 a.m. – noon

Kitty O'Neil, 925.787.6666,

kittoi@hotmail.com

Discover these hidden gems in our own backyard. We'll start at Briones (Bear Creek Staging Area) with its oaky hills and look for warblers, woodpeckers, and raptors. At the finger lagoons, we'll seek out Wood Ducks and Green Herons. Then we'll move down the road to San Pablo (Orinda Connector Trail). This rolling walk will take us along San Pablo Creek to

Great Blue Heron and Great Egret rookeries. We'll go on to the reservoir for terns, kingfishers, and eagles, which have figured out this lake is stocked. Meet at Bear Creek Staging Area on west side of Bear Creek Rd., 300 feet north of Happy Valley Rd. (west of Briones Regional Park). See www.BayAreaBirdWalks.com for directions and rain plan. Prepare for muddy conditions.

Quarry Lakes, Alameda Creek and Coyote Hills

Fremont, Alameda County

Saturday, April 30

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,

kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 8:20 a.m. on east side of Fremont BART Station in parking lot for this all-day trip ending at BART at about 3 pm. We will see birds from the time we step off the 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. Picnic lunch at Coyote Hills Visitor Center; bring lunch and liquids. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Reservations are unnecessary, but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

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

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.

Take I-880 to Tennyson Rd. exit in Hayward and go east on W. Tennyson Rd. After 2 miles, turn right on Mission Blvd. and continue .8 mile to Garin Rd. Turn left and continue .9 mile up hill 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). Heavy rain cancels. \$

Bolsa Chica

Orange County

Saturday – Sunday, June 4 – 5

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

rscalf@sonic.net

Coastal Orange County has several important breeding areas for rare and endangered species. Bolsa Chica, during breeding season, is an almost unbelievable experience. At Bolsa Chica Marsh (near Huntington Beach), Least Terns and Snowy Plovers breed almost at your feet, and large colonies of Elegant Terns and Black Skimmer nest nearby. The adjacent channels will be filled with feeding terns and skimmers, along with waterfowl and shorebirds. At Crystal Cove State Beach (home of the famous Ruby's Shake Shack and located between Newport Beach and Laguna Beach), we'll seek the endangered California Gnatcatcher and other coastal scrub species. San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, near Irvine, is where we will very likely see and hear Least Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and other riparian breeders.

Plan to stay near the Orange County airport on Friday night. On Saturday, we'll begin birding at 8 a.m. in the nearby San Joaquin marsh. That night, plan to stay at Huntington. On Sunday, we'll start early at Crystal Cove, then proceed to Bolsa Chica. We'll drop participants at the airport late Sunday afternoon. Plan to share the cost of a rented vehicle with the other attendees. Air and hotel reservations will be the responsibility of each participant. We will provide a list of recommended flights and lodgings. Trip will be limited. Contact Steve Lombardi to be placed on sign-up list.

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Join other GGA members who are downloading *The Gull* from our website. You will help save paper and reduce our expenses for printing and mailing. Best of all, the photographs in the online version of *The Gull* are in color. When the next newsletter is published, we will email you a link. To choose *The Gull* online, email ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or call 510.843.2222.

Birdathon Field Trips

These trips are offered to help you reach your goals for Birdathon 2011. You can also participate through any of our regularly scheduled trips to accumulate species and make a pledge. For more suggestions on how to raise pledges or participate in the Birdathon, see page 1 or go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Biking and Biodiversity— A Quest for 100 Species

Southern Marin County

Saturday, April 2, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Josiah Clark

Biking and birding go together, and there is no better place to combine the two and cash in on a carbon-free count than in southern Marin. This trip has only a few short hills, but in terms of birds, it has something for beginners and advanced birders alike. We'll meet at the base of Tennessee Valley Rd. at the fruit stand. Starting in Richardson Bay and ending at Tennessee Valley Beach, the route contains tidal and freshwater wetlands, various types of woodlands, grasslands, scrub, and ocean. In 2009, the combination of habitats on this transect produced a record-setting "big hour," with 88 species observed by bike.

On this trip, we'll take our time to explore the watersheds that flow into Richardson Bay, study shorebirds at their roosts, scan for bobcats on remote hillsides, identify native plants, and indeed smell their flowers. But make no mistake—we are in it for every last bird species. We will check dozens of birdy spots as we make our way through the varied upland habitats of Mill Valley, Tam Junction, Oakwood, and Tennessee Valley in hopes of observing 100 species by bike.

We will begin with some basic birding-cycling safety tips. The trip, covering 6 to 10 miles, is geared for beginning cyclists, with only a few small hills (that we can walk if we have to). Mountain-style bikes with wide tires are best for this terrain. Participants must be familiar with how to ride and operate a bicycle and have a bike helmet and binoculars. They should dress in layers and be prepared for the day's conditions, but bring only what

they will need. Extra items can be carried in a small backpack, fanny pack, or saddlebag. A good way to carry a spotting scope is to have the tripod on a rear rack and the scope in a backpack. A donation of \$25 is encouraged to support the Birdathon. To sign up for the trip (limited to 12 participants), e-mail ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or call 510.843.2222.

City of Alameda

Saturday, April 9, 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Chris Bard, 510.301.2987, chrisbard@earthlink.net

Let's see how many species we can find on the island of Alameda and in the Bay Farm area and raise funds for Golden Gate Audubon. We will meet near South Shore Beach and carpool to various locations. Drive to the south end of Park St. in Alameda, turn right on Shoreline Dr., then immediately turn right on the next street toward the shopping center. Meet on the left in the parking area across the street from the car wash. Please bring a scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels. A donation of \$25 is requested if you are not a registered Birdathon participant collecting donations on your own.

American River Trail

Saturday – Sunday, April 9 – 10
Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

This trip follows the fairly flat 23-mile American River Trail between Sacramento and Folsom. The route is rich in birdlife, and many birds also can be seen from the train, especially through Suisun Marsh. The trip starts Saturday at the Emeryville Amtrak Station, where we put our bikes on the train departing at 9:05 a.m. (train #724 originates in San Jose). We start biking upon arrival in Sacramento at about 10:55. The trail begins at Discovery Park,



about 2 miles from the station. Access is easy through Old Sacramento to the river and then on a connecting trail to the park. The plan is to overnight at the Larkspur Landing Hotel in Folsom and return the following morning. Participants must make their own hotel reservations. On Sunday, we will start from Iron Point Light Rail Station in Folsom at 8:30 a.m. and return via Amtrak from Sacramento at about 3:30 p.m. (train #743), arriving in Emeryville about 5:15 p.m.

You can also make a one-day trip by driving to Folsom and using the Sacramento Light Rail system. Allow 2.5 hours to drive from the East Bay. Recent riding experience is a must to ensure the stamina necessary for such a long ride. Trip is limited to 12 participants. Contact the leader to reserve a space. Participants are encouraged to donate to the Birdathon fundraiser and/or ask others to sponsor them.

Field Trips with the Rockin' TVs

April 10: We take flight in Alameda

April 17: We lift off from San Francisco
Eddie Bartley and Noreen Weeden
Team up with the Rocking TVs for a portion or all of two 24-hour GGA Benefit Bird-a-ganzas. We're going on a quest for the mostest and bestest birds we can find on two slightly insane, fun-filled trips. The buzz begins in Alameda County on April 10 and rocks San Francisco and then some on April 17.

You can contribute to our efforts to benefit Golden Gate Audubon in many ways: join for the whole enchilada; meet up with us at a specific location of the route for a

BIRDATHON FIELD TRIPS continued on page 10

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4-hour portion; or donate in our name to the organization that has done more than any other for bird conservation in our birdy region of the world! For those who participate in a field trip, we are asking a minimum donation of \$25 each. If you would like to donate to the GGA cause on behalf of the Rockin' TVs' efforts, no amount is too small (or too large) and is greatly appreciated—and we will carry that inspiration with us throughout our adventure. Those who contribute a minimum of \$50 receive a free TVs Rock! 100 percent cotton T-shirt designed by Eddie Bartley with the help of one Turkey Vulture and printed locally. Even if we don't see the most species or the best bird, we aim to have the most fun trying! Contact Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com, to sign up.

Murphy's MOB

Saturday, April, 16, 7:30 a.m. until we drop

Dan and Joan Murphy, murphsf@comcast.net, 415.564.0074

During last year's Birdathon, Murphy's Mob (Many Observers) saw 103 species between San Francisco and Mountain View on the Peninsula. Our goal again this year is to see more than 100 species during an all-day outing. We will meet at the Vista Point Parking Lot in the San Francisco Presidio about .25 mile inside Arguello Gate. From there we will drive to different spots in the city and on the peninsula, perhaps as far as Palo Alto. Carpooling is encouraged.

This trip is timed to catch the spring migration and early nesting season. We should miss some ducks and gulls, but we should pick up many migrating land birds and shorebirds. You are welcome to join us for all or part of the day. The suggested minimum pledge for individuals or families is 50 cents per bird. Needless to say, we encourage higher pledges. You can add to that by signing up family, friends, and colleagues to increase your pledge.

The trip is limited to 30 participants. Please sign up in advance with the leaders. The meeting place may change because of public events that restrict access, so we want to be able to get in touch at the last minute. We will send more details to participants in April.

Birding the East Bay

Saturday, April 16, 7 a.m. – dark

Mike Lynes and special guest expert birders

We will start in Tilden Regional Park at the parking lot for the Wildcat Creek Trail (near the Little Farm and the Environmental Center on Canon Dr.) and hike on nearby trails until 10 – 11 a.m. (depending on birdiness). The rest of the day will be more free-form, as we drive and walk to different spots in the Berkeley-Oakland area, including Eastshore State Park and Lake Merritt. Participants can join us for just the morning or tag along for the whole day.

Suggested minimum pledge is 50 cents per bird or \$25 in pledges. First-timers are welcome, and we will provide scopes and binoculars if necessary. We'll take a brief break for lunch, but it's recommended that you bring it with you. The group is limited to about 15 participants, so sign up early! Contact Mike Lynes, mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org, 510.847.9393, by April 9.

Eastshore State Park

Alameda County

Saturday, April 23, 7 a.m.

Bob Lewis

We'll meet along Buchanan St. west of I-80 and scan the Albany mudflats for shorebirds, then move on to the Berkeley Meadow. If time allows, we'll finish at the Emeryville mudflats. We'll be looking for migrating shorebirds as the tide goes out and anything else that shows up. This will be a first chance to see how the latest meadow restoration is impacting spring birds. The trip finishes before noon. A donation of \$25 is required to support the Birdathon.

Mt. Davidson

San Francisco

Sunday, April 24, 8 a.m. – noon

Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com
In a 4-hour blitz, we'll bird one of the city's premier traps for migrants and vagrants—and help raise funds for Golden Gate Audubon. Meet at the end of Myra Way at Dalewood Way, location of the #36 Muni bus shelter and turnaround. Call up the intersection on Google maps, or contact the leader for specifics. A donation of \$25 is required to support the Birdathon.

Sunol Regional Wilderness

Alameda County

Saturday, April 30, 8 a.m.

Bob Lewis

Meet at the first parking lot after the park entrance kiosk. We'll look for migrant passerines and residents, including swallows, vireos, warblers, woodpeckers, and raptors. The trip finishes a little after noon. A donation of \$25 is required to support the Birdathon.

Mines Road

Alameda County

Saturday, April 30

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353, davequady@att.net

The trip will begin in Livermore at 8 a.m. and end there in the early evening, with opportunities to end earlier, or bird later, if you wish. We hope to see Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopepla, and Bullock's Oriole. Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, and Golden Eagle are among other possibilities. The trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader, beginning at noon on Monday, March 21. Carpooling is encouraged to and from Livermore and is essential during the day because of limited parking along our route. The leader will provide directions and carpooling information to those confirmed on the trip. Participants are encouraged to donate to the Birdathon fundraiser and/or ask others to sponsor them.

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from November 20, 2010, through January 20, 2011.

GOLDEN EAGLE (\$1,000 OR MORE)

Anonymous (3), Mary Bachman & William Downing, Carson Cox and Deborah Haase, Katherine and Randall C. Erickson, Jeffrey A. Goodby and Jan L. Deming, Harold C. Kirker, Michael Lozeau, Mara K. and Don Melandry, Jay and Lisa Pierrepont, Carol A. Sughrue, Dr. William F. Weeden

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Chris and Gary Bard, Michael Green, Mary E. Martin, Mark Mushkat

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CLAPPER RAIL (\$100 TO \$199)

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Beau Bonneau Casting in honor of Michele Dennis, Susan Bogas in honor of Sharon Jacobs, Laurie Ludwig in honor of Mark Whisler, Mary Price in honor of Phil Price and Juliette Lamont.

IN-KIND GIFTS

Jon Harvey (spotting scope and case), Lee Karney (magazines).

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Melissa Vokey for Hayden Vokey, Teri Buchanan for Jane Zastro, Owen and Patricia Henery for Jack and Candace Van Der Meulen

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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.

BIRDATHON from page 1

- of our field trips. If you want to help more, you can ask friends to sponsor your outing by pledging a flat amount (\$5, \$10, etc.) or a certain amount per species sighted (such as 50 cents).
- **Put together your own birding day or trip.** Check out the prize categories listed on our website and think about what you might like to do. Perhaps it's a simple four-hour bird walk alone in your favorite local spot. Or it might be taking a long-distance trip during April that allows you to compete for Best Bird US or Best Bird International.
 - **Form a team and choose a special spot within the GGA region or elsewhere.** Hike a terrific trail or shoreline with a team of friends. Choose a great owl spot and go out at night to count. Or join any of our local field trips or long-distance trips and simply ask friends to sponsor your bird sightings.
 - **Have a good time.** You can sponsor a Big Sit and make it a picnic party with friends. For a Big Sit, birders select a productive spot and remain there for a

specified length of time to count the birds that fly by.

- **Introduce someone to birds and nature.** Go out with your child and compete for Youngest Birder. Or set up a team at your child's school and compete for Most Species Seen by a School Team.

There are many enjoyable ways to participate, and we hope you look at what we have to offer and join in, or get creative, think about how you can help, and make up your own Birdathon fun!

Don't be shy: it's not hard to ask friends and colleagues to help out. Golden Gate Audubon is doing important work to protect Bay Area open spaces and wildlife, and our work benefits everyone in our region. We also enable kids (who would otherwise not have the opportunity) to get out and learn about nature through our Eco-Education Programs.

To support these efforts, you can send an e-mail or printed letter to your friends, telling them what you are doing and why. We have sample letters on our website. You'll be surprised at how many people will commit

a donation just because you are doing something worthwhile. If they donate at least \$25, they receive an introductory membership and can enjoy our free field trips and events—so you are also doing them a favor.

HOW TO SIGN UP

Go to www.goldengateaudubon.org and click on Birdathon 2011. You can download and print all the needed information. This year, you can set up your own individual or team page on our Birdathon site. Your page allows you to e-mail friends, keep track of your pledges, put up amusing photos and postings, and generate momentum for your Birdathon efforts.

If you prefer print, call our office at 510.843.2222 and ask that a packet be sent to you. It has all the forms, deadlines for competition, checklists, and instructions to make your Birdathon a great success. We will also be at REI Berkeley on March 26 and 27 and at REI San Francisco on April 2 if you would like to sign up in person.

Even if you can't go birding, you can buy a ticket and come to the Birdathon dinner. Last year's dinner was fabulous. You won't want to miss this year's!