It’d be so easy to take them for granted. Winter shorebirds just seem so abundant. Sandpipers swarm in protean clouds over mudflats; troops of Avocets scythe the biofilm like medieval farmers harvesting wheat; plovers dart to and fro with laser focus; thousands of diverse shorebirds form somnolent gatherings at high tide. Our lucky eyes see so much, so often, that it’s difficult to retain perspective on these riches; difficult, because our experience in San Francisco Bay is unique.

CONTINUED on page 5
In this issue, you’ll rediscover an important reason why Golden Gate Audubon is passionate about striving to educate and engage the people of our local communities in bird conservation.

Our metro area hosts significant proportions of the entire hemisphere’s population of multiple bird species. We can’t afford to be slackers when it comes to protecting habitats, especially not habitats that so many shorebirds, waterfowl, and songbirds need for their survival. Our local birds include nearly 500 species, who rely on the Bay Area as a breeding, wintering, or migratory staging area. With an estimated 250 species migrating in, out, or through, it’s incumbent on our region to ensure they have sufficient opportunities to refuel—and to rest—while they linger in a metro area landscape that’s human-dominated.

Golden Gate Audubon helps in several ways. Each month we offer public habitat restoration days at 8 different sites on the Bay (we provide habitat workdays for private groups, too). In this past year, our agency marshaled more than 2,300 volunteers to clean up shorelines, remove non-native vegetation, and place native plants that sustain resident and migratory wildlife species.

GGAS maintains three distinct conservation committees: San Francisco Conservation Committee (SFCC), East Bay Conservation Committee (EBCC), and the Friends of Alameda Wildlife Reserve Committee (FAWR). These devoted volunteers help GGAS address threats to birds, by analyzing challenges, speaking up, drafting science-based comments, and formulating feasible recommendations, which will protect birds and their habitats even as our cities grow and our climate changes.

When I think of a peep flying from Arctic tundra to Tierra del Fuego, I marvel at the individual bird’s finesse and fortitude. Then, I remember that those capable of going the greatest distances almost never journey alone. They are buoyed by the presence of a flock—a team—that adjusts perpetually to changing conditions while staying on course.

GGAS is not unlike such a flock. We've been going strong for 100+ years, endur- ing tenaciously in the face of ever-changing political climates, persevering in our mission, even as the landscape perpetually shifts and is reshaped beneath us.

The smallest of avian migrants puts all Olympian achievements to shame. Sandpipers embody astounding grit, adaptation, determination, and grace. Finely tuned to our planet’s seasons, they navigate by distant stars with their biology in rhythm with each tide’s ebb and flow. Yet, to endure, they remain sociable and work with others...just like our flock at GGAS.
Endangered Ridgway’s Rail to Burrowing Owls, MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline birding is best fall through spring. During the cooler months migrating and overwintering waterfowl and shorebirds converge in its habitats, along with the resident avian species. This East Bay Regional Park in Oakland, attracts over 189 species of birds.

MLK Shoreline has four habitats, each attracting its own cadre of birds: salt marsh, open bay, seasonal wetlands, and landscaped turf and trees. An accessible seven miles of flat, paved trails surrounds the bay. Here’s a snapshot of species found in each habitat type.

Sea ducks, Brown Pelicans, four species of grebes, and three species of terns ply the deeper waters of the bay where benthic habitat composed of eel grass beds, oyster beds, and mudflats allow fish to thrive. Rafts of Ruddy Ducks, Greater and Lesser Scaup, and Surf Scoter, along with plentiful gulls rest on the water.

Seasonal wetlands appear at the southern edge of the New Marsh and near the Park Headquarters parking lot after the rains start. The wetlands attract dabbling ducks such as American Widgeon, graceful Northern Pintail, Northern Shovelers, Gadwall, and three species of teal. It’s “butts up” for everyone as they search for algae and plant roots in the muck. Strutting along the edge, resident Black-necked Stilt, American Avocets, Snowy and Greater Egrets, and overwintering shorebirds hunt or rest in the shallows.

Arrowhead Marsh is a vital remnant salt marsh habitat. San Francisco Bay shorelines were once thick with salt marshes. But 90% of historic marshlands were lost by the mid-1900s. Restoration efforts over the last 20 years by GGAS volunteers has helped this habitat and the animals that rely on it. The endangered Ridgway’s Rail, makes its home here. Their chattering calls echo from the New Marsh to Arrowhead Marsh during mating season. Don’t miss the Burrowing Owl habitat near the access road off Swann Way in the New Marsh. The New Marsh only exists because of the efforts by GGAS and other environmental advocates in preventing development of this area. Eco-education classes led by GGAS staff and volunteers have created new bonds between the students from under-resourced schools, their families in the neighborhood, and the birds in the park: empowering future advocates for preserving these important natural places.

Even the ubiquitous Canada geese are joined by the Snow Goose, Cackling Goose, and Greater-white Fronted Goose species on the landscaped turf areas. Check eBird to see recent sightings and enjoy a wonderful walk!

(From left) Damon Slough at MLK Shoreline by Verne Nelson; Ridgway’s Rail by Jerry Ting.
FEATURES

YEAR OF THE BIRD AND BEYOND

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). To commemorate this milestone, GGAS joined other conservation organizations to inspire everyone to take actions to improve our world for birds. It’s an important time to consider some of the ways that we can all help our feathered friends.

Lights Out for Fall Migration – Every fall more than 250 species of birds move through the Bay Area. Many species navigate at night, using the moon and stars as guides, so bright lights can easily disorient birds. Lights can also draw birds off course and into a collision with buildings or rooftop structures. In some cases, birds may circle lighted buildings—trying to get reoriented—until they drop from exhaustion. We can save the lives of birds. It’s as simple as turning off unnecessary lights or closing window coverings from dusk to dawn, August 15 – November 30.

Plan a Bird Friendly Garden – Did you know that you can turn your yard into a haven for native birds? By placing an appropriate assortment of native plants, you’ll create a drought-resistant landscape that becomes a welcoming sustainable habitat for birds. GGAS’s brochure, Inviting Wildlife into Your Backyard, can get you started. There are editions for San Francisco and the East Bay and a Spanish language version, too. All can be downloaded from our website, or request a free print copy from our office.

Protect Our Native Birds from your Pets – It is much safer for cats and birds when cats stay indoors. Outdoor cats kill an estimated 3.7 billion birds each year in the US alone. Consider installing a catio that benefits both your pet’s health and the survival of wild birds. Indoor-only cats are safe from cars, disease, and roaming animals like coyotes and raccoons. Meanwhile, wild native birds can thrive without the threat of additional invasive predators.

Off-leash dogs also threaten birds. GGAS volunteers monitoring Snowy Plovers in San Francisco recorded that dog owners complied with dog-leashing requirements in plover areas less than 30% of the time. Please, always leash your dog in sensitive areas to prevent needless stress or risk for birds.

Just Say No to Plastics – Plastic garbage is a growing threat to aquatic birds. According to a recent UC Davis study, 90% of seabirds have plastic in their guts. We can all be part of the solution by declining straws, eliminating single-use plastics, and advocating for plastic bag and straw bans. You can do even more by joining GGAS for a shoreline cleanup/restoration event.

Take Political Action – Remind your legislators in Congress and in Sacramento that it’s the 100th Anniversary of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Demand that they be steadfast in protecting wildlife from attempts to abolish or weaken laws like the MBTA and the Endangered Species Act.

UPCOMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax-Advantaged Giving Seminar</td>
<td>Northbrae Church Berkeley</td>
<td>October 18, 6:30–7 pm</td>
<td>Want to learn about tax-advantaged philanthropy? Join GGAS and a presenter from Merrill Lynch, before our October Speaker Series, to explore your giving goals and to learn easy ways that your charitable giving can benefit you, your family, and the organizations you love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Native Plant Sale</td>
<td>Miraloma Park Improvement Club San Francisco</td>
<td>Saturday, October 27, 11 am – 4 pm</td>
<td>Purchase plants that will turn your yard into a haven for native birds and visit with GGAS volunteers at the Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society fall plant sale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon California Assembly</td>
<td>Long Beach, California</td>
<td>November 2 – 4, 2018</td>
<td>Chapter leaders, members, and friends are invited to the Audubon CA Assembly, Nov. 2 - 4 in Long Beach. The weekend offers an opportunity to look outside our local programs and learn from each other. Go to <a href="http://ca.audubon.org/about/chapters/audubon-california-assembly">http://ca.audubon.org/about/chapters/audubon-california-assembly</a> to register and reserve lodging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Christmas Bird Counts</td>
<td>Oakland - December 16 San Francisco - December 27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mark your calendars now! Both counts will be followed by a festive dinner. We welcome all skill levels, beginner to advanced birder. Or count from the comfort of your home as a Feeder Watcher. Registration opens late October. Check our website later this month for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For many species, the place they rely on to rest and refuel is our San Francisco Bay.

Pacific coast states. This is hard to imagine, especially when one considers all of the many estuaries and wetlands from Willapa Bay in Washington State south through Mission Bay in San Diego. We have, in our wetland back yard, over half the wintering and migratory shorebirds along 1,500 miles of Pacific Flyway! What can one feel but awe…and perhaps commensurate responsibility?

We have resident shorebirds; a good fraction of the Snowy Plovers, Avocets and Stilts stay and nest here. That Snowy Plover on the beach in Alameda might have hatched in Great Salt Lake, Mono Lake or in Hayward. We have passers-by like Red Knot and Red-necked Phalarope which nest far to the north and winter to the south, who need our tidal zones and salt ponds for refueling along the way. We have pioneers like Black Oystercatcher that have been moving deeper into the Bay for years. And then sadly, Ruddy Turnstone that has done a mysterious disappearing act.

This is not just a diversity of species; it's a diversity of stories. Even closely related birds that seem so similar can have dramatically different natural histories. Western Sandpipers can filter substrate like little pumps (like tiny baleen whales), but not Least Sandpipers which hunt for invertebrates along stands of Pickleweed. Curlews hunt visually, searching for bubbles in the mud. Dowitchers are tactile probers. Black-bellied Plover are largely nocturnal and have superb night vision. Whimbrels stalk crabs among rocks; Godwits stalk polychaete worms in the mud; Black Turnstones chisel limipds off rip-rap. Wintering shorebirds come to us from places as diverse as the Arctic tundra, mountain tops in Alaska, bogs in Canada's boreal forests, grasslands of Montana, salt flats of Utah and rocky stream courses in the Sierra Nevada.

This diversity is almost too much to take in at once.

And our wetlands are vital. There is no Plan B for these creatures, and there is far too much at stake to not be attentive.

Thank you for joining our donor community.

Donations from May 1, 2018 – August 31, 2018

With gratitude to every individual, business, and organization who made a recent donation. Large or small, the gifts you send support our conservation, education and member programs, and directly benefit the birds you love.

GOLDEN EAGLE ($1000 and above)
Carol Baird & Alan Harper, Mary Bethach, Linda & Bob Carlini, Jane Freeman & March Conservation Fund, Bruce Mast, NerdWallet, Inc., Juan Carlos Solis, Patricia Weeden

PEREGRINE FALCON ($500 to $999)
Robert & Barbara Brandriff, Jacqueline Craig, Pauline Fong, Douglas Hendricks, Robert Lewis, Marie Lipman

LEAST TERN ($250 to $499)
Sue Adler, Johanna Baruch, Anne Cahill Hansen, Robert Coon, Jan Elvee, Nan Graham, Dan Harris, Diane Ichiyasu, Peg Janosch, Diane Luders, Patrick Owens, Denny Parker, Linda Vallee, Pam Young

GOLDEN EAGLE
($1000 and above)
Carol Baird & Alan Harper, Mary Bethach, Linda & Bob Carlini, Jane Freeman & March Conservation Fund, Bruce Mast, NerdWallet, Inc., Juan Carlos Solis, Patricia Weeden

GIFTS
($To $999)

GIFTS IN HONOR OF
Wendy Beers, in honor of Dave Quady
Bonnie Bell, in honor of Belle & E.T. & WWOC
Judith Bernhard, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Melissa and Ken Brenner, in honor of Grant Meadors & Ethan Severson
Christine Hayamizu, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Alan Hopkins, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Don & Ann Hughes, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Hilma and Mark Jones, in honor of Vera May Harris
Ramesh Kapadia, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Gail MacDonald, in honor of Craig & Jeff Grieve
Gail MacDonald, in honor of The Matrix Master, Craig Grieve
Jeffery Martin, in honor of Dan Harris
Dan and Joan Murphy, in honor of Dan Harris
Nancy Pendergast, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Joanne Rollin, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Frieda Sion, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Ruth Vose, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy
Kevin Walsh, in honor of Dan & Joan Murphy

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF
Amanda Hamilton, in memory of James Hodgson
Anonymous, in memory of my mother, Bea Thora Harrison, in memory of Whirley & Momo
Gail MacDonald, in memory of Oregon Lilly
Gail MacDonald, in memory of Whirley Ospreygirl
Jerry Murphy, in memory of Nancy Marquez
Dan Roth, in memory of Al Haas
Judith Smith, in memory of Leslie Smith
Caz Springer, in memory of Myra Springer

REQUESTS
Edward McComb Trust
Dorothy Quate Trust

IN-KIND GIFTS
Carol Bach, Robin Banks, Jacqueline Craig, Roy Creekmore, Diane Ichiyasu, Carol Lewis, Port of San Francisco, Riggers Loft Wine Company, Stephanie Trimble, Mary Sue Wallace

EMPLOYEE GIFT MATCHES
Clorox Company Foundation (Rachel Watson-Clark)
Clorox Company Foundation (Charles Conrad)
IBM Corporation (Joyce Mercado)
Judith Smith, in memory of Leslie Smith
Caz Springer, in memory of Myra Springer

GRANTS
Alameda Fish and Game Commissioners
East Bay Community Foundation (Agerter Judd Fund)
Flora Family Foundation
Salesforce Foundation
Taylor Unity Foundation
The Bathin Foundation
The San Francisco Foundation
Urban Tilth

Please know that we work hard to ensure the accuracy of this list. If your name has been omitted or misspelled, let us know at 510.843.2222.

---

THE GULL FALL 2018

6
INTERNATIONAL BIRD RESCUE: WHEN WATERBIRDS ARE IN CRISIS

JD BERGERON

International Bird Rescue (IBR) has become a global leader in responding to man-made disasters affecting wildlife, including oil spills. To date, their response teams have led wildlife rescue efforts in more than 225 spills across six continents. Bird-Rescue’s mission is to inspire people to act toward balance with the natural world by rescuing waterbirds in crisis. IBR runs two world-class wildlife centers in California where their team cares for an average of 4,500 animals each year, including pelicans, herons, shorebirds, and other aquatic species. Avian patients are brought in for many reasons, and may be emaciated, dehydrated, ill, injured, and/or orphaned when they arrive. International Bird Rescue believes that ‘every bird matters’ and rehabilitation is geared to ensure as many birds as possible can be returned to the wild with a viable second chance to survive.

JD brings to his leadership a birder’s passion, a childlike delight in Nature, and a deep commitment to solving world challenges in unconventional ways. He has more than 20 years of experience in not-for-profit leadership, international development, and organizational change.

HABITAT POTENTIAL BIRDING TACTICS

Josiah Clark

When it comes to making every moment count in birding, how one looks is at least as important as where one looks. Drawing on strategies developed for birding Big Days and Christmas Bird Counts, this presentation aims to reveal tactics that will help birders and naturalists improve their methods of coverage and ultimately find more species. We will explore the anatomy of a route, comparing and contrasting different birding methods and styles including skimming vs. digging, and how to allocate time in various habitats when trying to maximize ones species count. This presentation will also focus on important resources that provide for local birds and wildlife and share conservation related information on the limiting factors of vulnerable and declining groups. Josiah aims to help naturalists both find more species and become more informed conservation advocates.

Josiah Clark grew up steeped in the natural history of the Bay Area, where he has been birding for more than 20 years. Josiah owns Natures Acres Nursery and Habitat Potential Consulting. Both are dedicated to interpreting, preserving, and creating productive wildlife habitats in the human landscape.
Bay Area HotSpot
Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline
Fall migration is a great time to see waterfowl and shorebirds in this East Bay shoreline.

Year of the Bird and Beyond
Lights Out for Fall Migration and other tips on what you can do to protect wild birds this year and every year.

Speaker Series
This October, learn about waterbird rescue, rehabilitation, and release efforts by International Bird Rescue.

THE BAY IS OUR BACKYARD
BY MAUREEN LAHIFF

Sanderlings are prominent among the shorebirds in our “backyard” in fall and winter. These gregarious, sociable shorebirds are often characterized as “wave chasers” because of their feeding behavior. Their name comes from Old English for “sand ploughman.” Their scientific name Calidris alba ends in the Latin adjective for white.

Sanderlings are the palest of our winter “peeps,” with pale gray backs and clear white undersides. Their black carpal “shoulder” patch, when they have it, is distinctive. Their overall patterning, black legs and bill are similar to those of slightly smaller Western Sandpipers. So at a distance, or in difficult light, Sanderlings’ foraging behavior is very helpful in identifying them. When they take off, Sanderlings’ flight feathers are black and they have a narrow but prominent white wing stripe.

In the summer, Sanderlings are circumpolar, nesting on the high-arctic tundra. In North America, they nest in the archipelago islands of Nunavit and the Northwest Territories. In the winter, Sanderlings can be found on sandy beaches on every continent: in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, in tropical and temperate regions. In the winter, Sanderlings are also found on coastal mudflats, such as those of the Bay.

Wintering Sanderlings roost and feed in flocks. Although they will feed alongside other shorebirds, Sanderlings are known to aggressively defend waterline feeding areas.

Sanderlings are fast runners and fast flyers. When a Merlin or a Peregrine Falcon flies overhead, they take off in a compact low-flying flock.

Sanderlings feed both by sight and touch. At the beach, waves loosen the sand so that they can more easily probe for crustaceans that have come near the surface to feed. Their winter diet leads Sanderlings to cast pellets composed of compressed sand and bits of shell. (Bet you thought only raptors cast pellets!)

Sanderlings pair up in the breeding grounds. Pairs often cooperate in incubating 3 to 4 eggs and caring for the young. Some female Sanderlings are polyandrous. They leave their first clutch of eggs for the father to incubate and raise and mate with another male. The female incubates and raises the second brood.

As winter beach dwellers, these global travelers and long-distance migrants need our protection as well as our appreciation.