



Annual Report

2011 — 2012



Restored habitat at Pier 94, San Francisco.

Pier 94 photo by Cris Benton; Avocet photo by Eric Rosenberg; Heron photo by Bob Lewis; volunteer photo by Lee Karney.

Golden Gate Audubon: A Bird's Eye View

Winging south along the eastern shoreline of San Francisco, an American Avocet passes the unforgiving glass towers of downtown...the bumper-to-bumper traffic at AT&T Park...the blocky warehouses and steel cranes of Hunter's Point...

And then comes to a small, welcome oasis of mud and marsh and salt grass.

Pier 94.

A five-acre wetlands restoration site owned by the Port of San Francisco but tended by Golden Gate Audubon Society, Pier 94 provides a tiny glimpse of what the San Francisco Bay was like 150 years ago, before 90 percent of its wetlands were lost to urban development.



American Avocet.

We had the good fortune to work with kite aerial photographer Cris Benton recently to get the above view of how our Pier 94 restoration work might appear to that passing Avocet.

In this report, we provide a similar bird's-eye-view of all our activities in 2011-12, our 95th year of operations.

Pushing to create a refuge for endangered California Least Terns in Alameda. Negotiating with San Francisco city officials to protect seabirds on the bay during the America's Cup. Helping 700 inner-city schoolchildren explore the ecosystems in their neighborhoods...

These are just a few of the conservation and education initiatives powered by the combined energy of our volunteers and staff. You can see more of them on the map on pages 2-3.

In other highlights of the year:

- GGAS volunteers led over 100 free birding [field trips](#).
- Our [birding classes](#) drew more than 350 beginning and experienced birders.

- Our monthly [Speaker Series](#) featuring renowned naturalists drew more than 600 people in the first eight months of 2012, up from 400 in all of 2011.

- The 2011 [Christmas Bird Counts](#) continued a decades-long tradition of citizen science. In San Francisco, 123 volunteers counted 60,704 birds and 176 species. In Oakland, 205 volunteers found 87,391 birds and 183 species.



Pier 94 volunteer.

- Our third annual [Birdathon](#) raised \$30,000 for GGAS conservation and education programs, up from \$28,000 in 2011. One of our Birdathon teams set a new Big Day record for Alameda County of 172 species.

We leveraged our efforts through strategically partnering with other groups such as the Sierra Club and California Academy of Sciences.

Meanwhile, we fostered future environmental leaders through our new Conservation and Restoration internships. And we awarded our second annual Miles T. McKey Environmental Education Scholarship to Steven Saefong, an Oakland High graduate who helped lead more than 25 Eco-Education field trips.

None of this could have happened without the generous support of Golden Gate Audubon members and donors. To all who contributed in 2011-12—thank you.

Your support is making a difference not just for that Avocet at Pier 94, but for birds and wildlife throughout our beautiful San Francisco and East Bay.



Great Blue Heron.

Golden Gate Audubon Highlights in 2011-12



All map photos courtesy Bob Lewis, except for Burrowing Owl by Doug Donaldson, and Eco-Ed photos by Anthony DeCicco.

Urban Bird Protection

 Working with the San Francisco Planning Department, we won adoption in October 2011 of [Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings](#) that will help minimize collisions with windows and walls. San Francisco became the first U.S. city to enact such standards into law. As many as 1 billion birds die in collisions in North America each year.

In partnership with the S.F. Department of the Environment, we won Board of Supervisors approval of a resolution asking retailers to stop carrying anti-coagulant [rodenticides](#) that cause secondary poisoning of raptors. Inspired by San Francisco's example, East Bay cities like Berkeley and El Cerrito passed similar resolutions in 2012.

Pier 94

 Over 200 volunteers removed 32 cubic yards of trash and weeds, and planted over 100 native marsh plants. We started restoration of the site's uplands by compiling baseline data on plant and bird species.

Southeast San Francisco

 Over 130 students and 300 family members from two low-income elementary schools took part in our Eco-Education program. Like Eco-Ed students in Oakland and Richmond, they explored the ecology of local watersheds in classroom sessions and in three field trips to a creek, wetland and ocean.

International Migratory Bird Day

 We partnered with California Academy of Sciences in a weeklong celebration of migratory birds that drew 400 attendees. Volunteers made and premiered a video on the S.F. Bird-Safe Building Standards.

Beach Chalet

 GGAS challenged the proposed installation of 150,000 watts of stadium lights in western Golden Gate Park—an area along migration routes that the park's Master Plan says should remain natural and less developed. With neighborhood groups, we appealed to the state Coastal Commission, which should issue a ruling in 2013.

Presidio and Crissy Field



We co-sponsored fall and spring Family Bird Counts with the Presidio Trust. Over 100 GGAS volunteers joined quarterly habitat restoration work days co-sponsored with the Parks Conservancy at the East Wash, a birding hot spot.

For the 7th consecutive year, volunteers monitored and reported on endangered Snowy Plovers at their wintering grounds at Crissy Field and Ocean Beach.

Alcatraz



Our Eco-Education program brought 540 low-income elementary school children and family members on field trips to Muir Beach and Alcatraz. They observed nesting bird colonies and learned how to foster healthy watersheds and oceans. For roughly half, the Muir Beach trip was their first visit to an ocean.

America's Cup



GGAS monitored the planning process to ensure safety of bird populations. With allied community groups, we reached a settlement in which the city of San Francisco is paying for a \$150,000 study of the effects of marine traffic on rafting birds on the Bay. Data will help protect birds during future special events, routine maritime traffic and disasters such as oil spills.

Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline Park



More than 430 GGAS volunteers took part in work days removing trash and weeds, and installing native plants as cover for the endangered California Clapper Rail and other wetland birds.

Alameda Wildlife Refuge



Thanks to years of advocacy by GGAS and its Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge committee, federal and local government agencies reached a compromise agreement that could protect the nesting colony of endangered California Least Terns on the old naval airstrip. The compromise shows promise but is still undergoing environmental review. Meanwhile,

GGAS volunteers continue monitoring the terns and maintaining their habitat.

East Oakland



In its 13th year in Oakland, our award-winning Eco-Education program served 227 students and 550 family members at five elementary schools. Endangered Clapper Rails were reported sheltering among native ground cover planted by Eco-Ed students at MLK Jr. Shoreline.

Lake Merritt



In partnership with SF Nature Education, GGAS docents shared spotting-scope views of waterfowl during spring nesting season. We held our first-ever Winter Bird Count for Kids, co-sponsored with the Rotary Nature Center.

Cesar Chavez Park



A dozen volunteer docents spent 125 hours helping passersby spot and learn about the Burrowing Owls that winter at the Berkeley Marina. Docents recorded the location of as many as five owls in the park at one time.

Bay Trail



GGAS docents shared spotting scopes and bird information with users of the Bay Trail in Richmond from fall through late winter.

Richmond



Our Eco-Education program served 330 students and 650 family members at four elementary schools near the North Richmond shoreline. On field trips that combined nature education and service, students removed invasive iceplant and trash from wetlands at Point Pinole.

Altamont Wind Power Resources Area



Wind companies are starting to replace old raptor-killing turbines with new, less harmful ones in the wake of our settlement agreement with the largest wind firm and the state. GGAS continues to monitor wind company compliance and review the latest data on bird populations.



Sharing the Wonder of Birds

Golden Gate Audubon laid the foundation for future growth in 2011-12, even as we continued climbing out of recession-driven financial challenges. We hired a new Development Director and our first Communications Director. Our Board of Directors drafted a new Strategic Plan that will serve as a blueprint for growth over the next three years and prepare us for a visionary 100th anniversary in 2017.

As part of the Strategic Plan, we adopted an updated Mission Statement:

Golden Gate Audubon Society engages people to

- Experience the wonder of birds and translate that wonder into action, and
- Protect native bird populations and their habitats.

This report makes clear how GGAS fulfills its mission, even in challenging times. We're proud of the broad impact of this grassroots organization. Our volunteers put in more than 4,730 hours in 2011-12. At an average value of \$21.79/hour (as estimated by Independent Sector), that comes to \$96,000 worth of donated labor.

As outgoing Board President, I'm delighted to pass the torch to new President Carey Knecht. We both look forward to working with Carey, our board, staff, volunteers and supporters in continuing to share the wonder of birds with our San Francisco and East Bay communities.

—Diane Ross-Leech, Past President, and Mark Welther, Executive Director

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ALL THE BIRDS?

Test your birding skills! How many of the birds on the highlights map can you identify? Answers are below, in the order in which the birds appear in the text.

Peregrine Falcon; American Avocet; Townsend's Warbler; Downy Woodpecker; Snowy Plover; Double-crested Cormorant; Black Scoter; Long-billed Curlew; California Least Tern; Great Egret; Burrowing Owl; Belted Kingfisher; Red-tailed Hawk.

2011–2012 Financials

Statement of Revenues and Expenses Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012

Revenue

Foundation grants	\$ 270,685
Individual gifts	217,511
Membership fees	94,381
Programs and events	69,846
Other	81,384
Total Revenue	733,807

Expenses

Conservation	188,468
Education	235,956
Member services	235,549
Administrative/general	91,429
Fundraising	101,838
Total Expenses	853,240

Change in Net Assets (119,433)

Net Assets at Start of Year 564,947

Net Assets at End of Year \$ 445,514

Statement of Financial Position As of June 30, 2012

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 158,005
Accounts receivable	95,505
Inventory	1,317
Investments	235,615
Deposits/prepaid expenses	21,222
Total Revenue	511,664

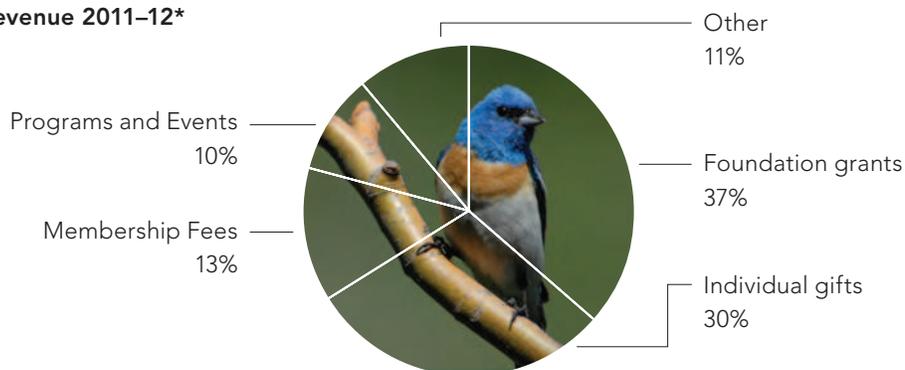
Liabilities

Accounts payable	61,517
Taxes payable	626
Deferred revenue	4,007
Total Liabilities	66,150

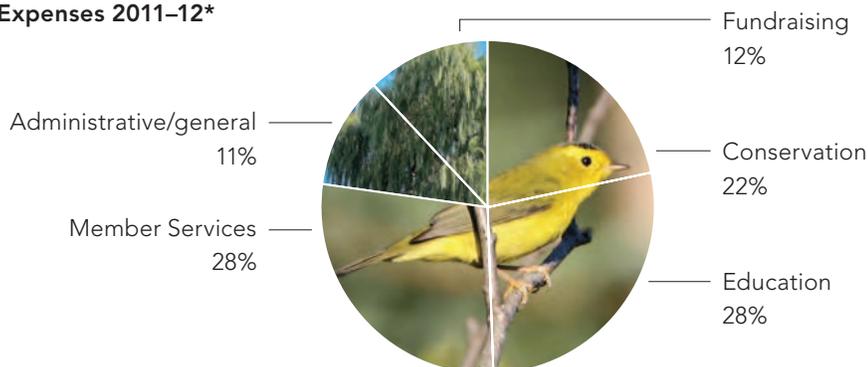
Net Assets 445,514

Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$ 511,664

Revenue 2011–12*



Expenses 2011–12*



*Charts do not add up to 100% due to rounding. Please contact GGAS for a complete financial report audited by Kirby and Forbes, Certified Public Accountants.

Join Today and Protect Bay Area Wildlife!

Golden Gate Audubon owes our success to people like you. If you are not yet a GGAS member, please join us. For as little as \$35, you can become part of our visionary work. Join at www.goldengateaudubon.org, call 510.843.2222, or mail your check to GGAS, 2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite G, Berkeley CA 94702.

Although we are a National Audubon chapter, we are an independent organization that relies almost entirely on local contributions to support our work. Every dollar goes to support our local Bay Area conservation, education and birding programs. Golden Gate Audubon is a 501c3 nonprofit, and donations are tax-deductible.

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STAFF

Mark Welther, Executive Director
mwelther@goldengateaudubon.org
Ilana DeBare, Communications Director
idebare@goldengateaudubon.org
Anthony DeCicco, Education Director
adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org
Mike Lynes, Conservation Director
mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org
Marissa Ortega-Welch,
Eco-Education Program Coordinator
mortegawelch@goldengateaudubon.org
Lisa Owens Viani, Development Director
lowensvi@goldengateaudubon.org
John Trubina, Office Manager
jtrubina@goldengateaudubon.org
Noreen Weeden, Volunteer Coordinator
nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702
TEL 510.843.2222 FAX 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org