Fall 2010

# BAY BIRD REVIEW

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION ON THE SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION OF BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS

SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY

*Director's Message*

At the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, our avian conservation research and monitoring programs inform scientists, land managers and the public, so that San Francisco Bay Area habitats can be restored, enhanced, and managed to promote healthy bird populations and protect the biodiversity of our region. From field work to writing reports and analyzing data, our biologists spend 12 months of the year working to make our science programs a success.

But for one special month each year, we pull out all the stops for an event we call the California Fall Challenge. During this month, our goal is to help our members celebrate the Bird Observatory's mission to conserve birds by getting outside

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE *continued on page 2*

PHOTO BY DAVID ASSMANN

GREAT EGRET

COME BIRDING *with us!*

PHOTO BY BILL HEPBURN

*September 11 – October 10, 2010*

## 14th Annual California Fall Challenge

It's time for some fun! The California Fall Challenge is our time to celebrate your passion for the birds and their environments. The work of San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is scientific research, performed by professional biologists and volunteer citizen scientists to conserve birds and their habitats. But the support for this important environmental research comes from you, the bird and conservation enthusiast!

Join us for some birding adventures with team leaders you've come to know and respect – **Chris Benesh, Jill Demers, Karen DeMello, Matthew Dodder, Alvaro Jaramillo, Lisa Myers, Kay Partelow, Ryan Phillips, Bob Power, Mike Rogers, Caitlin Robinson-Nilsen, Pati Rouzer, Scott Terrill, and Denise Wight**. These wonderful volunteers are some of the best birders in the Bay Area, and they are ready to lead you to some special places for bird watching this fall. Experienced birders are certain to add to their list. Beginning birders couldn't ask for better guides to follow.

This year, our leaders will take you birding in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. You'll visit great bird habitats like the wetlands and salt ponds along San Francisco Bay, the grasslands and oak forests that surround our communities, our riparian corridors, and in the vastness of the Pacific Ocean.

If you love a competition, then sign up for our Mewaldt Cup Bird-a-Thon, the Bird Observatory's signature contest! For the first time we're holding an all-state California Fall Challenge as teams may bird anywhere in the state of California during their Big Day. The team that sights the most birds wins the cup. We have prizes, too!

Everyone is encouraged to enter our Fundraising Competition. Ask your friends and colleagues to sponsor your participation in the California Fall Challenge, and you could win a birding trip to Panama, a luxury vacation in the Caribbean, or a really cool iPod with birdJams loaded up.

Turn to pages 5 through 9 of this issue for all the exciting details!

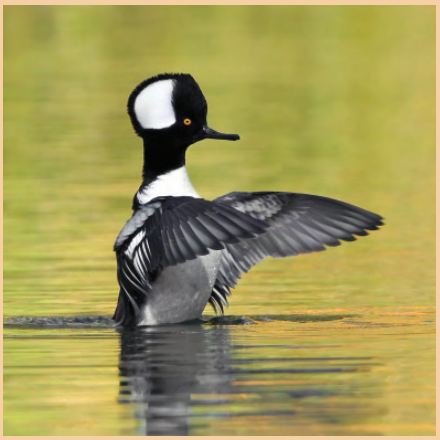

PHOTO BY STEVE ZAMEK

HOODED MERGANSER

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE *from cover*

and enjoying birds in their habitats. There are many ways to celebrate! We invite you to let us show some of our favorite birding spots in the San Francisco Bay Area with some of the best birders in the region. These talented folks have volunteered their time and expertise to lead guided trips in support of the Bird Observatory and help you learn about the most pressing conservation issues in our region. I also guarantee that you will see fantastic birds! For those competitive birders, we offer the Mewaldt Cup competition and prizes for those who see the most species in a 24-hour period. And we offer prizes for those of you who are competitive fundraisers too!

We close out our month of celebration with our Annual Membership Meeting and Silent Auction. Come enjoy a lovely day, learn about our programs, and meet the Bird Observatory staff and Board of Directors. The Annual Meeting will be held on October 17th, 2010 at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills, California and is an event not to be missed.

As a supporter of the Bird Observatory, you make our research possible with your membership dues and your donations, and we are grateful. Now come and celebrate all that you have helped us accomplish at one of our extraordinary California Fall Challenge events. I hope to see you there!

*By Jill Bluso Demers,*
*Executive Director*

*Waterbird Science Report*

# California Gulls at Alameda Point

In 30 years, the San Francisco Bay breeding population of California Gulls grew from less than 200 breeding gulls in 1980 to over 45,000 in 2010. Research conducted by San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory biologists has shown that the gulls impact breeding waterbirds through nest and chick predation. In 2007, a California Gull colony was established at the former Naval Air Station at Alameda Point, which is also home to the largest Northern California colony of the federally endangered California Least Tern. The California Gull colony is only 650 meters from the Least Tern colony and U.S. Fish and Wildlife managers became concerned that the increasing California Gull population would depredate a significant portion of Least Tern eggs and chicks. In 2010, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory teamed with U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists to study methods of reducing the number of eggs and chicks produced by California Gulls at Alameda Point.

Ornithologists have long debated what factors limit clutch size in birds. In gulls, research has indicated that clutch size may be limited by incubation capacity (i.e., the ability to efficiently warm eggs) rather than the ability of female gulls to lay more eggs. Therefore, we predicted that if incubation capacity limits clutch size in gulls, then adding artificial eggs to a California Gull nest before the female had completed the clutch would result in the pair producing one less egg. In that way, we may be able to artificially reduce the number of eggs and chicks produced by California Gulls at Alameda Point.

Bird Observatory biologists and volunteers produced 140 artificial eggs by filling plastic eggs with sand and painting them to resemble a gull egg. California Gulls generally lay one egg every other day until they complete their 2 to 3 egg clutch. In order to place artificial eggs in nests during the laying period, biologists visited the colony daily once California Gulls began to lay eggs. The goal was to locate each nest before it was completed and randomly assign each nest a treatment. Our treatments included placing a third of the artificial eggs in nests where only one egg had been laid and a third in nests where two eggs had been laid. Additionally, a third of the nests were control nests that we monitored but did not place artificial eggs. We monitored nests to determine 1) the number of eggs laid by gulls within the different treatment groups and 2) the number of eggs hatched per nest within the treatment groups.

PHOTO BY CAITLIN ROBINSON-NILSEN

A CALIFORNIA GULL *nest with an artificial egg (on the left).*

In 2010, biologists found and monitored 56 California Gull nests at Alameda Point. The colony was smaller in 2010 than in years past, down from a high of 135 nests in 2008. We monitored all 56 nests, but were unable to follow most nests to hatch as 54 of the 56 nests were depredated. All treatment nests were depredated, and we lacked the sample size to determine if the addition of artificial eggs reduced the number of eggs laid or hatched. Biologists observed Western Gulls, a larger gull species, depredating California Gull nests, and the Western Gulls were likely responsible for the decimation of the California Gull colony.

Although we were unable to address our study questions, we did observe interesting nest behaviors from California Gulls with artificial eggs placed in their nest. For example, all the gulls with artificial eggs placed in their nests incubated them along with their real eggs. We also observed adults at three separate nests incubating only the artificial egg after their real eggs were depredated. The presence of the artificial egg likely prevented those gulls from attempting to re-nest. Preventing re-nesting also reduces the number of California Gull eggs and chicks produced.

Although this study did not answer many of our questions regarding clutch size limitations and breeding success of California Gulls, Bird Observatory biologists continue to be committed to studying the impacts and expansion of California Gulls. In 2010, California Gulls continued to expand to new colonies. The first California Gull nest was found at Eden Landing Ecological Preserve in Hayward, CA, home to roughly 60% of the federally threatened Snowy Plovers in the Bay. Additionally, the first breeding record of California Gulls in the Central Valley was documented by Ed Whisler, the coordinator of the Yolo County Breeding Bird Atlas for the Yolo Audubon Society, when he found this species breeding at the Davis Waste Water Treatment Plant. The Bird Observatory and other scientists anticipate that more California Gull colonies will form in the Bay Area and beyond once the largest gull colony in the Bay, A6 in Alviso, is restored to tidal action as part of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project in 2011. To track California Gulls around the state, we are asking the public and birders to let us know if you suspect a new California Gull colony has formed. You will probably see Bird Observatory biologists and volunteers out in the field next spring, looking for new breeding colonies.

PHOTO BY CAITLIN ROBINSON-NILSEN

BREEDING CALIFORNIA GULLS *at the Alameda Point colony.*

We thank the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service for funding. These funds were matched by the labor of San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory volunteers and the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge Tern Watch volunteers. We also thank the members and donors of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory for their continued financial support of our California Gull Program.

*By Caitlin Robinson-Nilsen, Waterbird Program Director*

## Birding the Carquinez Strait Loop

Keep your eye out this fall for our newest birding brochure, Birding the Carquinez Strait Loop. We have embarked on a fantastic partnership with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and the San Francisco Bay Trail to produce a brochure highlighting the beauty and avian diversity of the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop.

The Carquinez Strait is an 8-mile channel that connects the North San Francisco and Suisun Bays. The Bay Area's two major regional trails, the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the San Francisco Bay Trail, converge at the Carquinez Strait and share alignments across both the Al Zampa and Benicia-Martinez Bridges as well as on the north side of the Strait. The two trail organizations worked collaboratively to create the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop.

Straddling Contra Costa and Solano Counties, the variety of habitats found on the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop offers many great birding opportunities. From the tidal marshes and open bay habitats to the grasslands and riparian woodlands, there are sure to be new birding adventures to be discovered. We can't wait to share our new favorite birding locations with you with our new brochure!

Interested in receiving a Birding the Carquinez Strait Loop brochure? Contact the Bird Observatory at outreach@sfbbo.org for more information.

*Field Log*

# Colonial Waterbird Monitoring at Shadow Cliffs

I have always loved birds but had never really studied them, so a few years ago I decided to learn more about them. I joined the Santa Clara County Audubon Society and through them learned about San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory's Landbird Program and Waterbird Program. Two years ago I began volunteering for the Colonial Waterbird Monitoring Program by monitoring a colony at Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreational Area in Pleasanton.

The site at Shadow Cliffs is a nesting colony for Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Double-crested Cormorants. It is a fairly easy site to monitor because the nests are all in a cluster of trees that are growing on one small island in the middle of the lake. We observe the colony from the levee, so we have a better view of the nests than we would if we had to observe from ground level. I monitor the site with Dolores Morrison, another Bird Observatory member and volunteer.

We began monitoring the colony in March of each year. We began by taking photos of the site and sketching it to note the location of the nests. The protocol dictates that we count the number of adult birds of each species in the area and the number of nests being constructed. During this first visit we will usually see Great Blue Herons actively building nests and Double-crested Cormorants in courtship mode. The Great Egrets have not usually arrived yet.

We usually attract a bit of attention due to our spotting scopes, clip boards, binoculars, and other tools. What I find interesting is that most of the people who stop to ask what we're doing are oblivious to the bird activity. When we point out the colony people are very interested. We always give them a chance to take a look through the spotting scopes.

During subsequent visits we continued to note the progress of the colony, such as number of birds nesting and later, the number of chicks visible in the nest.

Each time we came out the site was in a different phase. First, the Great Blue Herons arrive and begin their courtship. The males fly in with large twigs and the females accept and place them. A few weeks later, the Double-crested Cormorants begin building in earnest, bringing twigs, grasses, and other building materials. Last, but not least, the Great Egrets begin their courtship and nest building.

Because this was all new to me, I was fascinated by the interaction between the pairs. When a male had a particularly prime piece of nesting material it seemed as though he flew a few extra circuits above the colony before handing it off to his mate.

Watching the nesting is interesting, but the first time you spot a chick in the nest, it is incredible! Seeing that little fuzzy head on that wobbly neck is so exciting. On each subsequent visit we noted the development of the chicks: sitting in nest, perching on nest, or perching on a nearby branch. The best part is toward the end, when you see the fledglings taking off and realize that another mating season has been completed.

This was my third year monitoring at Shadow Cliffs, and I can't wait for next year. It never gets old!

*By Shannon McMahon, SFBBO volunteer*

PHOTO BY SHANNON MCMAHON

THE WATERBIRD *colony at Shadow Cliffs.*

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON

PHOTO BY EDWARD M. NGUYEN

# CALIFORNIA FALL CHALLENGE

Supporting Avian Conservation Science

## Accept the Challenge - Join the Fun

This is our 14th Annual California Fall Challenge, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory's biggest fundraising event. The funds raised help us continue to apply science and outreach to the conservation of birds and their habitats. Our goal this year is to raise $35,000. Your support is vital to helping the Bird Observatory reach this goal.

### Here Are a Few Ways You Can Participate

**SIGN UP FOR AN EXCITING GUIDED TRIP**

If you are a birder, a nature lover, a photographer, or someone interested in bird science, there is a California Fall Challenge Guided Trip for you! Experienced leaders are ready to take you out to see interesting places and incredible species.

Everyone who participates in a guided trip and/or donates $50 or more receives a special California Fall Challenge T-shirt designed by Allison Connor. See pages 6 and 7 for all the trips and the outstanding bios of our leaders. Sign up before spaces fill and bring a friend.

Join the fun!

**JOIN A BIRD-A-THON**

Get your fellow birders and friends together for bird science! Spend a relaxing morning birding locally or plan a big day competing in the **Mewaldt Cup** Bird-a-Thon. Just let us know that you are planning to compete. Please note, your birding trip must be held within the Fall Challenge period of September 11th to October 10th. See page 8 for all the details.

**FUNDRAISE FOR VALUABLE PRIZES**

You are our members and our supporters. You believe in our mission, and you give to help us perform the scientific research and monitoring needed to conserve birds in our ever-changing world. You are also our very best spokespeople!

Be a fundraiser for the Bird Observatory during the California Fall Challenge and you could win a fantastic prize. Share our story with your friends and colleagues, tell them why you support this mission, and ask them to do the same. The greatest reward you'll receive is knowing you've done everything you can to support avian conservation… but also check out the cool prizes and fundraising guidelines on Page 9!

**NOT A BIRDER?**

If going out and birding doesn't work for you, please consider supporting the Bird Observatory with a cash or in-kind gift to support this event. Contact our Development Director, Melanie Kimbel at mkimbel@sfbbo.org or 408.946.6548.

# California Fall Challenge Guided Trips

*Trip: Saturday, September 11 / 7 am-4 pm; Social: Thursday, September 9 / 6:30 - 9 pm*

## PELAGIC PIRATES

COST: $175 CAPACITY: 36 PEOPLE
COUNTY: SAN MATEO

Join us on our 2nd Pelagic Pirates trip. This expert-led pelagic trip leaves out of Pillar Point Harbor, near Half Moon Bay, and heads to deep water for the best seabird and whale viewing opportunities. Expect to see the local seabirds, and learn about the behaviors and lifestyles of these species from your expert birder and naturalist guides. This learning experience is complemented by the Pelagic Pirates Social, held the Thursday prior to the trip, at the Sobrato Center for Nonprofits, in Milpitas. While getting to know each other with refreshments and appetizers, trip leader Alvaro Jaramillo will give a presentation on the seabirds and whales in our backyard ocean.

**Alvaro (Al) Jaramillo** – Al is a biologist and teacher at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. He also travels widely as a birding guide for Field Guides Inc. He has published two books, The Birds of Chile, and New World Blackbirds. His expertise is in bird behavior and ecology, in addition to identification.

**Chris Benesh** – Chris grew up studying natural history in California, where he was inspired by his father to take up birding as a teenager. After earning a degree in zoology from UC Santa Barbara in 1987, Chris joined the Field Guides Inc. staff, and has traveled to many corners of the world and across both the Arctic and Antarctic circles. Chris currently serves on the Arizona Bird Committee. His passion for education has led to his ongoing work on a photo guide to North American flycatchers.

*Sunday, September 12 / 7 am – Noon*

## SNOWY PLOVER CONSERVATION

COST: $100 CAPACITY: 10
COUNTY: ALAMEDA/SANTA CLARA

Join Snowy Plover expert Caitlin Robinson-Nilsen for a one-of-a-kind field trip and educational experience focused on the federally threatened Western Snowy Plover and the ongoing conservation efforts in San Francisco Bay. Participants will go out in the field in the morning to look for Snowy Plovers at some of the Bird Observatory's study sites, followed by a short workshop where Caitlin will educate participants on the latest in plover conservation science. Come and learn about endangered species conservation in San Francisco Bay from the expert!

**Caitlin Robinson-Nilsen** – Caitlin is the Waterbird Program Director at San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and an authority on the Western Snowy Plover in San Francisco Bay. Caitlin has been researching Snowy Plovers in the Bay for 5 years and uses her expertise to help inform management and conservation of this species.

*Saturday, September 18 / 7 am – 5 pm*

## GALLINAGO GO GO'S

COST: $100 CAPACITY: 15
COUNTY: MARIN

This is the 7th year team "Gallinago Go Go's" will participate in the California Fall Challenge. The Go Go's will head off to Marin County to get our minimum 100 species! Marin County starts just as soon as you cross the Golden Gate Bridge and is home to incredible fall hot spots like Point Reyes and Hawk Hill. Point Reyes is a magnet for migrating birds and provides ideal habitat for birds to refuel and continue onward. We will stop at many different locations around Point Reyes and try for some hawk watching at Hawk Hill. We will also make sure to get some views of the Pacific Ocean for pelagic species.

**Lisa Myers** – Lisa has birded since her teens. Today she teaches and leads trips throughout Central California and Costa Rica. Through her own business, Let's Go Birding, Lisa's goal is to get more people into birding. She focuses on the beginning to intermediate birder, although all levels are welcome. She is also a member of Nikon Birding ProStaff and a former member of the Board of Directors at the Bird Observatory. Visit her website at www.letsgobirding.com.

*Sunday, September 19 / 7 am – 4 pm*

## WANDERING VAGRANTS

COST: $100 CAPACITY: 12
COUNTY: TO BE DETERMINED

This birding day is what fall birding is all about! During migration, rare birds can make their way off course on their migration south. Such vagrants are exciting and give birders the rare opportunity to add a new life bird to their list. To maximize the rare birds we see, the location for this Big Day will be determined by Scott one week before the trip and will be dependent on where the rare species are being reported. Scott's career has focused on avian migration, so take advantage of this opportunity to bird with a migration pro!

**Scott Terrill** – Scott is a specialist in avian ecology, having written over 30 scientific papers primarily on bird migration. Scott has served as a member of the California Bird Records Committee (12 years), Regional Editor for North American Birds, the Board President of SFBBO and Coyote Creek Riparian Station (15 years), Science Advisor to SFBBO, Vice President of H. T. Harvey and Associates, and primary author of the *Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*.

*Wednesday, September 22 / 5:30 - 7:30 pm*

## INTREPID A TO ZER'S

COST: $40 CAPACITY: 20
COUNTY: SANTA CLARA

Celebrate the autumn equinox on this leisurely "after work" evening bird walk. From Avocets to Zonotrichia (crowned sparrows), our goal will be 26 species (from A to Z) over 1-1/2 miles at Charleston Slough and Shoreline Lake. This is the perfect opportunity for beginning birders, or birders with limited time to support SFBBO's California Fall Challenge. Karen and Kay make a fantastic birding team and are excited to show you one of their favorite birding spots found right here in the Bay Area.

**Kay Partelow** – Kay has been birding ever since she was a youngster and is skilled at identifying birds by ear. She has co-led Sierra Club birding trips to Alaska, participates in local bird counts, and is a docent and Nature Center host

for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

**Karen Demello** – Karen is a docent at Big Basin Redwoods State Park and for Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. She enjoys the outdoors and has an enthusiastic approach to birding.

*Saturday, September 25 / 8 am - Noon*

### AVOSETS

COST: $50 CAPACITY: 11
COUNTY: SANTA CLARA

Join Bob on his four-hour-and-not-a-minute-more creek corridor blitz, searching for Osprey to Skimmers. You'll start at Stevens Creek Reservoir and end at Mountain View Shoreline, seeing a beautiful mix of habitats and bird species. Expect a fast-pace to find 80 species, birding 8am - Noon, and then relax while the score is tallied. This team is for birders of all levels.

**Bob Power** – Bob is currently the Executive Director at Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. He teaches Birding Topics and Techniques at Palo Alto Adult School and has been leading Audubon Field Seminars for SCVAS for the past 4 years.

*Saturday, September 25 / 8 am – 1 pm*

### VARIED TWITCHERS

COST: $50 CAPACITY: 15
COUNTY: SANTA CLARA

Mike is an expert birder and knows all of the great birding spots of Santa Clara County. This team will hit many of best Alviso birding locations then go to the Shoreline Lake area. Mike's goal is to see and hear 100 species while birding some of the most fantastic locations around the San Francisco Bay. Expect an exciting day full of great Santa Clara County birds!

**Mike Rogers** – Mike started birding when he was 10 years old and has since birded all over the U.S. and abroad. He is a former member of the California Bird Records Committee and is currently a Northern California regional editor for the journal North American Birds. When not birding, he works at NASA and spends time with his family.

*Saturday, September 25 / 8 am – 5 pm*

### CONTRA COSTA MINI-BIG DAY!

COST: $100 CAPACITY: 10
COUNTY: CONTRA COSTA

This abbreviated version of a Contra Costa County Big Day will give you a good idea of what habitats and birds this East Bay county has to offer. We will start birding in Tilden Park, then move down to Albany and the Richmond shoreline. Heading east, we will check out Martinez, then Mitchell Canyon on the north side of Mount Diablo. We will then take Marsh Creek Road to East Contra Costa, where we will have a chance to see some Central Valley birds. This will be a great day of great diversity in one of the most exciting counties to bird in our region.

**Denise Wight** – Denise is a Contra Costa County native and has led walks for both Mount Diablo Audubon and Golden Gate Audubon. Denise has taught East Bay birding classes since 1993 and is currently teaching a Birding by Ear class at Albany Adult School. Visit her website at www.blkittiwake.com.

*Sunday, September 26 / 8 am – noon*

### BIG SIT AT CHARLESTON SLOUGH

COST: $50 CAPACITY: 15
COUNTY: SANTA CLARA

Charleston Slough is an excellent place to bird, especially during fall migration. The proximity of several different habitats and expansive mudflats will make this an enjoyable and casual Big Sit. Expect to see South Bay shorebirds, waterfowl, passerines, and raptors during this relaxing event.

**Pati Rouzer** – Pati currently serves as Board President for the Bird Observatory. When not working in her chiropractic clinic she can be found hiking, biking, or otherwise chasing birds around the Bay Area and beyond. Her current interests are avian conservation and photography.

**Jill Demers** – Jill is the Executive Director of the Bird Observatory. Jill is a waterbird ecologist by training. Her extensive research has taken her from Mexico to Alaska to study migratory, wintering, and breeding ecology of shorebirds, waterfowl, and terns.

*Saturday, October 2 / 8 am – noon*

### REGAL EAGLES

COST: $50 CAPACITY: 15
COUNTY: SANTA CLARA

Come bird the beautiful and biologically important Coyote Valley with Ryan Phillips. Coyote Valley, located between San Jose and Morgan Hill, is one of the hottest locations in California for wintering raptors. We will have a good chance of seeing fourteen species of birds of prey including Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk, as well as many non-raptor species. Join the Regal Eagles and learn about raptors and why Coyote Valley is such critical habitat in need of protection.

**Ryan Phillips**- Ryan has been birding since the age of twelve. After living in Belize for three years studying the majestic Harpy Eagle, Ryan now teaches at De Anza College in the Environmental Studies Department and is the lead Field Studies instructor. Ryan resides

## Guided Trip – How Do I Sign Up?

1. Use the enclosed envelope or register online at www.sfbbo.org/support/fall_challenge.php. Some trips fill very quickly, so please don't wait to sign up! Register for as many Guided Trips as you want.
3. The Guided Trip fees range in price from $40 to $175 per person. Pay at the time of registration.
4. Receive each of your trip confirmations. You will receive all details to prepare you for a wonderful day of birding.
5. Also, consider participating in the Mewaldt Cup and/or the Fundraising Competition.
7. Invite your friends. Tell everyone you know about the mission of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory – the conservation of birds and their habitats through science and outreach.

in Belize part of the year, where he founded and directs a non-profit organization, the Belize Raptor Research Institute.

*Sunday, October 3 / 8 am – Noon*

**TEAM DEDUCKTIONS**

COST: $50 CAPACITY: 15

COUNTY: SANTA CLARA

Join Matthew on a visit to the famous Alviso salt ponds. Beginning at the Environmental Education Center, we will scan Pond A16 with scopes and circle New Chicago Marsh. If time allows we will visit the neighboring Alviso Marina County Park for additional birds. Special attention will be given to gull and shorebird identification with a constant eye out for possible rarities.

**Matthew Dodder** - Matthew began birding in the mid-70s and still hasn't gotten bored. After converting all his friends to birdwatchers, he sought a larger audience and began teaching bird classes at the Palo Alto Adult School in 1999. He continues to challenge students year after year with various bird ID mysteries. He sits on the board of directors at Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and is especially fond of Spizellas. Visit his website: www.birdguy.net.

## Sponsor a Guided Trip

There is one more way you can compete for prizes in the Fundraising Competition. You (or your company) can sponsor a guided trip.

**Donate $300 or more** to the California Fall Challenge and you can be a trip sponsor! Your name will be announced at the Annual Meeting. You (or your business) will be recognized in the next Bay Bird Review newsletter and on the Bird Observatory website with a hotlink.

Your tax-deductible donation supports the conservation of birds and their habitats in the San Francisco Bay Area! For more information, contact Development Director, Melanie Kimbel at mkimbel@sfbbo.org or 408.946.6548.

## The California Fall Challenge T-shirt

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is proud to unveil our newest California Fall Challenge T-shirt design, by local artist Allison Connor.

The Yellow-billed Magpies is a linoleum block print hand painted with watercolors. Allison learned printmaking as an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz and later received a Masters of Fine Arts in Costume Design from New York University. She has had a long career as a freelance costume designer in the Bay Area, most notably at Theatreworks in Palo Alto. Currently, Allison teaches Art History and Color at San Jose City College, and recently completed a mural with a large collective of people in Berkeley. As an artist, the natural world has always been Allison's primary inspiration; for the last few years her work has emphasized biodiversity conservation issues. Allison is also a volunteer bird bander at San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory's Coyote Creek Field Station.

We offer the t-shirt to California Fall Challenge participants that donate $50 dollars or more to the Bird Observatory during this fundraising event. This $50 donation can be made as participant fees for a Guided Trip or the Mewaldt Cup Competition, a donation in support of a fundraiser, or as a straight donation to the Bird Observatory.

We also want to thank Bird Observatory volunteer Bob Nass for his graphic design expertise!

## Compete in our Bird-a-thons!

*Win the Mewaldt Cup*

Are you a serious birder, an expert, a world-class competitor? Then this is your chance to prove it! Support the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory while competing for the chance to win the coveted Mewaldt Cup and great prizes!

The Mewaldt Cup is named for one of the Bird Observatory's founders, Dr. Richard Mewaldt. For 14 years, this competition has been the climax of the California Fall Challenge. The cup is awarded to the team that finds the most bird species during a single day between September 11th and October 10th, 2010. This year, we changed the rules to truly make the competition a "California Fall Challenge"—teams may bird anywhere in the state of California during their Big Day!

The Mewaldt Cup will be awarded to the winning team at the Bird Observatory's Annual Meeting on October 17th, 2010.

Registration for the Mewaldt Cup Competition requires a $50 donation per person. This donation also qualifies you for a California Fall Challenge T-shirt. Register for the Competition using the attached envelope or contact the Bird Observatory at outreach@sfbbo.org or 408.946.6548. For complete Mewaldt Cup Competition Guidelines, prize information, and to support the Bird Observatory, go to www.sfbbo.org/support/fall_challenge/birdathon.php. Good luck and happy birding!

*Introducing the Stilt Cup*

This year, we are hosting a Stilt Cup competition, designed especially for high school students. We want to encourage everyone to get in the Bird-a-Thon spirit! The goal for these teams is to find as many species as possible in a 4-hour period. The reward? Each student will receive a field guide, t-shirt, and a free family membership to the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Interested in sponsoring a team or getting your high school involved? Contact Melanie Kimbel at 408.946.6548 or mkimbel@sfbbo.org for more information.

# California Fall Challenge Prizes

PHOTOS BY RAÚL ARIAS DE PARA

CANOPY TOWER *in Panama.*

## *Grand Prize: 10 Days of Birding at Canopy Tower and Lodge in Panama*

Be the winner of the California Fall Challenge Fundraising contest and you'll go birding in Panama! Spend 5 nights at the Canopy Tower and another 5 nights at the Canopy Lodge. Inches from your bedroom window, the cloud forest canopy is riotous with early morning bird life. Awaken to a tropical chorus of motmots, toucans, and fruitcrows. Prize includes lodging, all meals, ground transportation, taxes, 2 tours per day and SO MUCH MORE!

Go to www.canopytower.com and www.canopylodge.com for all the details, including places you'll go, bird lists, and wonderful testimonies from world leaders in birding, conservation and diplomacy.

Win this Grand Prize by being our top fundraiser in the California Fall Challenge!

## *2nd Prize: 7 Days and Nights of Relaxing on a Caribbean Island with Elite Island Resorts*

You and 3 guests will spend 7 nights on Antigua, the Grenadines or Tortola (BVI). Choose a wildlife adventure with nature trails, snorkeling, deep-sea fishing and kayaking. Or a romantic hideaway for a spa and white sand beach retreat. Or a family vacation with memory-making children's activities in paradise. Prize includes 2 double occupancy rooms. Airfare, dining, taxes and activities are extra. Go to www.eliteislandresorts.com to see the incredible places you'll go, and contact mkimbel@sfbbo.org for all the details of this prize.

## *3rd Prize: Complete Mighty Jams Package*

Win an iPod Touch 32G loaded with birdJam Maker North America, Stokes East and West CDs, iMainGo2 speaker, and wall charger all completely ready to go in a carrying case!

Other fantastic prizes have been donated to inspire you to join our Fundraising Competition. Go to http://www.sfbbo.org/support/fall_challenge.php to see what we have for you. To donate a prize, contact mkimbel@sfbbo.org.

## Fundraising Contest Guidelines – How Do I Win?

You win by raising the most money! Here's how you do it:

1. Register for the Fundraising Contest. Use the enclosed envelope or register online at www.sfbbo.org/support/fall_challenge.php
2. Tell everyone you know about the mission of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory – the conservation of birds and their habitats through science and outreach. Spread the message to all your friends, family members, neighbors, and colleagues.
3. Ask for their sponsorship of SFBBO's California Fall Challenge. Ask them to donate $500, $200, $50, $25 or whatever they feel is the largest gift they can give to avian research in our beloved San Francisco Bay Area region.
4. As a special incentive, everyone who donates $50 or more receives a California Fall Challenge T-shirt!
5. Collect their tax-deductible donations. Donations can also be made through our website at www.sfbbo.org/support. Direct your sponsors to enter your name in the "dedication" window.
6. Be sure to add your own donation.
7. All donation forms can be downloaded from our website, or we'll send them to you by mail.
8. The people who collect the most dollars win incredible prizes!

CANOPY LODGE

# Silent Auction at 29th Annual Membership Meeting

*Sunday, October 17, 2010*
*Hidden Villa, Los Altos Hills*

Silent Auctions are amazing opportunities to add adventures, services and art to your life (sometimes at incredible bargain bids)! This auction is a very important source of funding towards the Bird Observatory's conservation science initiatives. Be inspired by this list! This is just a sample of SOME of the great items that will be featured on the Silent Auction tables. Be sure to attend our Annual Membership Meeting to pick up some fantastic items while supporting the Bird Observatory.

We thank these donors for their generous gifts.

*Hans Peeters Wildlife Art – Original Painting: Limpkin and Ibises*
*REI Saratoga – Luggage and travel gear*
*Patagonia Palo Alto – outdoor clothing*
*Los Gatos Birdwatcher – birding package with 10x42 Pentax HRc binoculars 9*
*Inn Above Tide, Sausalito*
*Inverness Valley Inn, Inverness*
*Thistle Creek Studios/J Panter Calligraphy – Original Painting*
*Oceanic Society Expeditions – Farallon Islands Nature Cruise*
*Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris – Pelagic Trip*
*Rude Designs – Fine Art Bird Print*
*Suzi Eszterhas Wildlife Photography – Fine Art Photography Print*
*Eagle Optics – Vortex Spitfire 8.5x32 binoculars*
*Jay House stay, Colusa*
*iFLY SF Bay – Indoor Skydiving*
*UC Press – Field Guides*
*Hallcrest Vineyards – Wine*
*Dale Wannen – Financial Check Up*
*Gerry Ellis – Handy Man for a Day*

Do you have an item of value to donate to our Silent Auction table? Contact our Development Director, Melanie Kimbel, to discuss your gift mkimbel@sfbbo.org or 408.946.6548.

# Click Off 2010 – Photography Contest

The 2010 Click Off photography contest has begun! It's time for you to register and compete for outstanding prizes! Go to www.sfbbo.org/support/clickoff to learn more, to register and to submit your photos. Share your best photos and support the mission of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory - the conservation of birds and their habitats through science and outreach.

Winners are selected from six categories: **Bird Portraits, Endangered Species, Birds in their Habitat, Bird Behavior, Human Interaction, and Birds of the World**. In addition, one People's Choice Award is selected from the Category Winners. All winners are announced at the Annual Meeting on October 17, 2010.

*When, How & How Much*

Images must be received before September 20th, 2010. A $25 registration fee entitles you to enter up to five images. See contest rules, including usage rights at www.sfbbo.org/support/clickoff/clickoff_rules.php.

*The Winners*

**Awards of Merit** – In each category, judges give special recognition awards.

**Category Winners** – In each category, one image is selected by the judges as the Category Winner.

**People's Choice Award** – Prints of each Category Winner will be displayed at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 17th, 2010. SFBBO members choose one People's Choice award.

*The Prizes*

Winning images will be featured on the Bird Observatory's web site and newsletters reaching over 3000 people, and will also be displayed for public enjoyment. Last year's images were displayed at the Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center.

*People's Choice Award:*

A day in the field with a Bird Observatory biologist! Spend a day in the field photographing with a biologist at one of our unique project sites, an exclusive chance to capture rare and dramatic images while spending one-on-one time with a scientist. Learn about the Bay Area's common, migratory and/or endangered species and habitats.

*Category Winners:*

Bird Blind Photography Workshop with Bruce Finocchio and Michael Kern, plus a weekend stay at the private Ramrod Ranch in Monterey County. Value: $475. View Bruce's work and images of his ranch at www.dreamcatcherimages.net.

*Awards of Merit:*

BorrowLenses Gift Certificates. Value: $25 each

Contact clickoff@sfbbo.org with questions regarding the Click Off 2010 Photo Contest.

# 29th Annual Membership Meeting: SAVE THE DATE! Sunday, October 17th

You are invited to our Annual Membership Meeting, which will be held at beautiful Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills on Sunday, October 17th, 9am – 2pm. Hidden Villa is the perfect location for the Bird Observatory to celebrate birds, conservation and the beautiful outdoors.

Our day includes a light breakfast and morning bird walk; membership meeting, including science presentations, photos from the Click Off Photo Contest, and the California Fall Challenge awards; Silent Auction; delicious catered lunch with local wines; and much more! Come celebrate the Bird Observatory and our contribution to avian science at this not-to-miss venue! Look for your invitation by mail and email. A response for your attendance will be required.

# Our thanks to these supporters of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory!

*Thank you new and returning members, and generous donors, April - June 2010.*

PARTNER $1,000+

Leonie Batkin, Bob and Irene Brown, JiJi Foundation, Patricia Rouzer, D.C.

SPONSOR $500 – $999

Ronald and Barbara McDow, David Presotto and Caryl Carr, Ed Temple, James Yurchenco and Amy Lauterbach

SUSTAINER $250 – $499

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FRIEND $60 – $99

Charles Bacon and Cynthia Dusel-Bacon, Beatrice Campione, Robert and Susan Christiansen, Michele Dennis, Alan Eisner, Janet Farmer, Alan Goggins and Patricia Lindsey, John Harris, Judy and Bill Hein, Susan Hunt, Helena Kirkwood, Dean Manley, Bruce Mast, Hugh McDevitt, Lisa Petrie and Nico Stuurman, Tina Pilliciotti, Edy and Bill Pounders, C.J. Ralph/Redwood Sciences Lab, Diana Root, Madeleine Stovel, Adam Winer

BASIC $40 – $59

David Ainley, Jean Barrett, Olive Bavins, Douglas and Maren Bell, Betty Berteaux, Patty Boyle, John Cant, Robin Carle, Chevron Humankind, Jack and Virginia Cole, Allison Connor, Anne Creevy, Rita Desmond, Marianne Dieckmann, Arthur Feinstein and Ruth Vose, Dave Fichtner, Raymond Fontaine, Eugene and Anna Gaenslen, Jeanne Gary, William Gottfried, M.D., Patricia Greene, Lynne Grob, Gabrielle Guinea, Elan Hahn, Jack and Lois Hanson, Nancy Hay, Katie Henry, Lee Hung and Mike Danzenbaker, Joyce Huston, Carole Hutchinson, Amy Hutzel, Chris and Cyndie Illes, Deborah Jamison and Steve Patt, Jane Jordan, Denise Kato, Eduardo Kneler, Marcia Leath, Deasy Lontoh, M. Kay Matthews, Theresa McGovern, Sylvia McLaughlin, Beverly Meinbress, Lawrence and Nora Monette, Dan and Joan Murphy, Clark Natwick, Manisse Newell, Paul and Madelyn Noble, Margaret and C.J. Panton, Courtenay Peddle, Jean Perata, Diane Piagneri, Patricia Polentz, Richard Rairden, John and Jane Reed, David Rice. Jean Rigden, James and Andrea Sandstrom, Susan Sandstrom, Larry Spivak, Emilie Strauss, Peter Sullins, Linda Sullivan, Nola Theobald, Francis Toldi, Suzanne Van Stee, Judith Wagner, Ph.D., Stephen Walker, George Wallace, Nancy Warner, Mark Weinberger, Tracy Wilk, Laura Willner, Diane Wilson, Christine Wolfe


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## Calendar

*Thursday, Aug 12th, 2010, 6:30-8:00pm*

### ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MEXICAN FISHING BAT

SITE: SOBRATO CENTER FOR NONPROFITS (MILPITAS)

Join Tom Stewart for a presentation about Isla Partida Norte, a desert island in the Sea of Cortez. Tom visited the Island in May 2009 and was part of a research group collecting data on the endangered Mexican fishing bat and Least Storm Petrels. Tom's presentation will also highlight some of the wildlife he encountered, including a visit to the colony where 95% of the world's Heermann's Gulls breed. RSVP requested, light refreshments will be served.

### CALIFORNIA FALL CHALLENGE

We are proud to offer a month of expert guided trips, a bird-a-thon, a fundraising contest, and more. Look inside for all of the information.

### 29TH ANNUAL MEETING

The 29th Annual Membership Meeting of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory will be held at beautiful Hidden Villa on Sunday, October 17th. Join us for a morning of birding, followed by science presentations, Silent Auction, voting for the Click Off Photo Contest, and more. Details inside.

## Workshops for the Birder and Naturalist – 2010

WITH: *Alvaro Jaramillo, SFBBO Senior Biologist* SITE: *Sobrato Center for Nonprofits*

*Tuesday, August 31st and Thursday, September 2nd (instruction), 6:30 – 9:00 pm*
*Sunday, September 5th (fieldtrip)*

### SHOREBIRDS IN FALL

We are fortunate to live by San Francisco Bay, one of the world's most important migration stop-over areas for shorebirds. Shorebirds can be difficult to identify, especially in fall, when duller juvenile and non-breeding plumages are seen. We will dig deep into shorebird behavior, physiology, ecology, and everything else that is relevant to this season and your enjoyment of migrating shorebirds. This is an opportunity for you to create depth to your shorebird identification skills, have a great time, and view many shorebird species. Birding Level: Intermediate and up.

*Tuesday, October 19th and Thursday, October 21st (instruction), 6:30 – 9:00 pm*
*Sunday, October 24th (fieldtrip)*

### SPARROWS — THE LITTLE BROWN JOBS

Well-camouflaged and perfectly adapted birds to living low and near the ground, sparrows are often categorized as "little brown jobs" by birders. Once you concentrate on more obvious differences such as shape, behavior, voice, and habitat, sparrows are not nearly as difficult to identify as you have been lead to believe. In addition, sparrows have afforded scientists important opportunities to learn about bird song, dialects, territoriality, and migration patterns. Come and learn how to simplify the identification of sparrows, gain an appreciation for this largely North American group of birds, and get a summary of their natural history and influence on ornithology. Birding Level: Beginner and up.

WALK: RSVP to outreach@sfbbo.org or 408.946.6548. Space is limited to 20 people. Free for members; $10 for non-members.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

SPECIAL EVENT

ACCESSIBLE: Please contact the Outreach Specialist so that we can coordinate with you.