



Volunteering at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO). We depend on our volunteers to fulfill our mission – in fact, volunteers are the primary means of data collection for several of our scientific research and monitoring projects. Because many of our volunteer positions require specific skills (accurate and precise data collection, bird identification, computer programs, etc), require a significant time commitment, and may require training by an SFBBO staff member, we ask potential volunteers to treat this application as a job application. We will do the same. Expect to have at least one phone interview with an SFBBO staff member and provide references. Please remember, this process may take several weeks. We appreciate your patience and interest!

Most potential volunteers are interested in volunteering for the Science Programs. However, we have needs for other volunteers to help with fundraising events, mailings and office work, outreach events, and more. Not sure what you are interested in doing? Please see <http://www.sfbbo.org/volunteer/opportunities.php> for the latest volunteer opportunities and visit <http://www.sfbbo.org/news/subscribe.php> to sign-up for our monthly Wingbeat e-newsletter for the latest postings. Still not sure? Stephanie Ellis is the Outreach Director; please contact her at 408-946-6548 or sellis@sfbbo.org if you have any questions!

Finally, Volunteering is a benefit of membership. It is required that all volunteers become a member of SFBBO. An annual membership is \$40 and includes access to areas that are closed to the public, our quarterly Bay Bird Review newsletter, free birding trips, demonstrations and special SFBBO events. You may learn more about becoming an SFBBO member here: <http://www.sfbbo.org/support/index.php>.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory: Organizational Overview

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats through science and outreach. Our goals include:

- Continue to gather long-term data to track the health of the Bay's wild bird populations;
- Make results of our research available to government and private agencies, businesses, and the public for informed decisions on the preservation and restoration of habitat crucial to species survival;
- Educate the public about the importance of the Bay's wetlands and tidal marshes to support species diversity;
- Encourage active volunteerism in order to assist in achieving our organization's goals and mission.

Over the past thirty years, SFBBO has been an authority on the shorebirds, waterbirds, and landbirds that rely on the San Francisco Bay and its surrounding habitats. Birds use the bay as a migration stopover point, wintering grounds, year-round home, or breeding grounds. The long-term studies of our Science Programs are crucial to our understanding of population trends and behaviors of these birds. Furthermore, through the Outreach Program, we seek to educate and foster awareness among Bay Area residents regarding the sensitivity and importance of birds and their habitats to our local heritage.

What makes the Bay Area livable and unique is its rich diversity in species and natural environments. The largest threat to species diversity is loss of habitat. Ninety percent of the Bay's original tidal marsh has been developed or converted into salt evaporator ponds. Despite these drastic changes, the San Francisco Bay has remained the largest of the three key resting and foraging (also known as "staging") areas for migratory and wintering shorebirds on the Pacific Flyway.

Ongoing pressures on remaining habitat, including development, contamination, and disturbance, as well as ongoing restoration opportunities, create the need for continued monitoring of waterbird, shorebird, and landbird populations. Long-term data on population trends is instrumental in decisions affecting the preservation and restoration of important wetland and tidal marsh habitat. SFBBO provides that data through the following research and monitoring projects:

Science Program

Snowy Plover Recovery

The Western Snowy Plover is a federally threatened species and SFBBO has monitored populations and reproductive success since 2004. Biologists work directly with land managers and agencies to conserve this threatened species.

Coyote Creek Field Station

The Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) is located in the largest remaining riparian forest in the highly urbanized Silicon Valley. Since 1982, SFBBO staff and volunteers have banded birds, allowing us to track avian response to restoration and urbanization, and to document long-term demographic trends

California Gull Monitoring and Research

SFBBO biologists and volunteers monitor California Gull colonies, color band adults and chicks, assess impacts of gulls on other breeding waterbirds, and monitor gull use of local landfills.

Colonial Waterbird Monitoring

This is our oldest program, using our team of volunteers - citizen scientists - to monitor nesting herons, egrets, terns, gulls and cormorants since 1981.

Avian Use of Salt Ponds

SFBBO conducts bird surveys and water quality monitoring in 22 salt evaporation ponds owned by the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and managed for salt production by Cargill Salt. We share these data with the Refuge, Cargill Salt, USGS, and the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project to aid in pond management, restoration, and bird conservation.

Avian Response to Grassland Management

Grassland birds are declining, but relatively little is known about the distribution of those species or their response to grassland management. SFBBO conducts bird surveys at Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve and Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, owned and managed by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, to determine avian response to prescribed burns in these grasslands.

Avian Disease Prevention Program

In 1982, SFBBO biologists and volunteers started surveying the South Bay sloughs in an effort to prevent an outbreak of avian botulism. Today, we continue this work, monitoring three South Bay sloughs.

Outreach Program

Through various grants, membership donations, volunteer help, and creativity, SFBBO's Outreach Program informs Bay Area residents about the environment we share with our avian neighbors. Furthermore, we encourage an active and hands-on connection to the sensitive ecosystems that both birds and people depend on for survival through participation in SFBBO's research through citizen science. The Outreach Program also links interested people to volunteer opportunities in the Science Programs and thanks you for taking the next step to actively participate in scientific research in your community.



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please fill out the next four (4) pages and return to SFBBO, 524 Valley Way, Milpitas, CA 95035 or email to outreach@sfbbo.org

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____
Street City Zip Code

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ E-mail _____

Current Employer _____

Emergency Contact (Name, Phone Number, Relationship)

Court Referred Volunteer?	Y/N	First Aid Certification?	Y/N
CPR Certification?	Y/N	Driver's License?	Y/N

How much time would you like to devote to volunteer work with SFBBO?

Are you available weekdays?	Y/N	Weekends?	Y/N
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When can you start? _____

Please tell us briefly why you would like to become a San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory volunteer.

Do you have prior experience as a volunteer? If yes, for which organization and what were your duties?

Are you a member of SFBBO? Y/N

How did you learn of SFBBO? _____

- Please return completed form to SFBBO -

VOLUNTEER INTEREST

Name: _____

Please fill out this form in order to let us know about your interests for volunteer opportunities.

List in order of preference the top three volunteer positions in which you are interested (please see descriptions of available volunteer opportunities at <http://www.sfbbo.org/volunteer/opportunities.php>). Note that if you only have one or two preferences, merely list those. However, if you interested and can manage the time, multiple positions are possible.

1	
2	
3	

Indicate to us certain skill areas and interests you might be interested in sharing with us. Many are general and some require that you have specific skill or prior experience to be eligible. Please place a mark to the left to all that apply.

	Indoor Work		Fundraising and Donations
	Outdoor Work		GIS/GPS
	Physical Work (e.g. building and trail maintenance)		Grant Writing/Research
	Clerical, General Computer Work		Law (e.g. legal issues, contracts, etc.)
	Data Entry		Library Resources/Research
	Database/Data Management		Tabling and Events
	Desktop Publishing/Design/Graphics		Web Maintenance
	Environmental Education		Web Design
	Event Planning		Working with Kids
	Food (e.g. chef, baker, distributor, etc.)		Working with Adults
	Fieldwork/Surveys (data collection)		Other Languages (Please list):
	Finance		

What are your special skills, interests, or hobbies? _____

Which skills do you most enjoy using in your volunteer service? _____

Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team? _____

What birding abilities or experience do you have? _____

How would you rate your bird identification skills on a scale of 1 – 10? _____

-Please return completed form to SFBBO-

References

Name: _____

Please provide us with three references (professional or personal) who can comment on your work ethic, ability to get along with others, or skills.

Reference 1 Name: _____

Reference 1 Phone: _____ Best time to Call: Morning, Afternoon, Evening

Reference 1 Email: _____

Your Relationship to Reference 1? _____

Reference 2 Name: _____

Reference 2 Phone: _____ Best time to Call: Morning, Afternoon, Evening

Reference 2 Email: _____

Your Relationship to Reference 2? _____

Reference 3 Name: _____

Reference 3 Phone: _____ Best time to Call: Morning, Afternoon, Evening

Reference 3 Email: _____

Your Relationship to Reference 3? _____

-Please return completed form to SFBBO-



Volunteer Responsibilities and Release of Liability, Volunteer Bill of Rights, and Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreements

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitat through science and outreach, and to contributing to informed resource management decisions in the San Francisco Bay Area. Begun in 1981, we have years of experience in carrying out long-term projects using trained volunteer field assistants under the supervision of skilled biologists, as well as working with volunteers in other capacities. This approach enables us to conduct studies that would otherwise be too costly or logistically impossible to attempt, and increases public appreciation and support for wildlife of the Bay. SFBBO maintains longstanding relationships with the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Cargill Salt, and other landowners, allowing us access to areas not open to the public.

The “Volunteer Responsibilities and Liability Release” is not all-inclusive. Any activities resulting in unintentional or willful disregard for the rights and safety of others and wildlife, or damage to the reputation and standing of SFBBO in the community may be cause for Board action and/or removal from volunteer status.

I have completely read the “Volunteer Responsibilities and Release of Liability,” “Volunteer Bill of Rights,” and “Volunteer Code of Conduct” included in pages 6 – 10 of this packet.

I understand that I am entitled to the rights listed in the “Volunteer Bill of Rights” and agree to maintain a professional code of conduct while carrying out SFBBO research and fieldwork by abiding to the “Volunteer Responsibilities” and “Volunteer Code of Conduct.”

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

-Please return completed form to SFBBO-

524 Valley Way
Milpitas, CA 95035
www.sfbbo.org

t 408.946.6548
f 408.946.9279



VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITY RELEASE

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We ask that our volunteers maintain a professional code of conduct while carrying out SFBBO research and fieldwork and abide by the following:

1. Make protection of wildlife and the environment top priority. No activity performed shall in any way adversely affect wildlife health and well-being or be destructive to the environment.
2. To ensure that data is accurate and complete, return all original datasheets **as soon as possible**. For applicable projects, such as the Colonial Waterbird Monitoring and Snowy Plover Recovery, please return datasheets within 48 hours of collection due to access agreement requirements.
3. Become a member.
4. Follow all instructions given by SFBBO. Participate in any mandatory training provided by SFBBO staff to ensure that you are properly prepared.
5. Respect all governing agencies' and landowners' rights.
6. Follow through on commitments once made. A missed survey can hamper our analysis of data and make reporting your findings more difficult.
7. SFBBO has rights to all data, photographs, and reports of any type pertaining to our established programs. Nearly all our studies are team efforts and for the results to be worthwhile, the data must be analyzed and reported as a whole.
8. While we encourage you to informally share news of your fieldwork, we must prohibit the communication of site-specific data regarding "closed areas," that is, any area behind locked gates. Our access privileges may be jeopardized by the inadvertent encouragement of trespassing to view rare birds or by unauthorized release of data. If you would like to report the specific location of a rarity, please call us and we will work with you and the landowner toward some compromise.
9. Please remember that only SFBBO fieldwork has been approved by agencies or landowners. If you would like to collect data at the same time for another project, such as a breeding bird atlas, please seek permission directly from the landowner.

10. Access to private property has been granted only for the times specified for a specific project. Please do not use your key or knowledge of lock combinations to enter private property at any other time.
11. Please do not drive on wet levees. A moderate rain ,3 days or less, before a survey renders the surface undrivable. Foam created by high winds across the surface of the ponds is extremely slippery and dangerous to drive though, even in small amounts. You may get stuck or slip, and this may also damage the surface of the levee. Driving on wet levees also violates our access permits, and may result in our permits being revoked. If in doubt, please call SFBBO for new updates.
12. Do not present yourself as on SFBBO business to agencies, landowners, or the public if you are not.
13. While on SFBBO business, remember that you represent SFBBO and that your actions and conduct will reflect on the organization. DO present yourself and SFBBO as a steward of the birds and environment.
14. Remember that all activities that you undertake on behalf of SFBBO are at your own risk.

This list is not all-inclusive. Any activities resulting in unintentional or willful disregard for the rights and safety of others and wildlife, or damage to the reputation and standing of SFBBO in the community may be cause for Board action and/or removal from volunteer status.

Revised June 2002
Edited August 2011

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VOLUNTEER BILL OF RIGHTS

As a volunteer of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, I have the right to:

Be treated as a coworker: to be treated as an equal and not taken for granted.

Have my time used wisely: SFBBO recognizes that my time is a valuable donation and not to be wasted.

A suitable work assignment with as much consideration for personal preferences, temperament, life experience, education, and employment background as SFBBO is able to provide given limited resources.

Be informed about the organization, the people who manage SFBBO and the future plans of SFBBO.

Sound guidance and directions by someone who is experienced, well informed, patient, and thoughtful, and who has time to invest in giving guidance along with effectively presented training.

A place to work: an orderly, designated place conducive to work and worthy of the job to be done.

Be heard: to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, and to have respect shown for one's opinion.

Recognition in the form of promotion and awards, through day-to-day expressions of appreciation, and by being treated as a valuable member of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Review of my performance as a volunteer through feedback and an annual and formalized volunteer review process.

Promotion and a variety of experience through advancement to assignments of more responsibility, through transfer from one assignment to another or through special assignments.

Continuing education on the job as follow-up to my initial training, including information about new developments and training for greater responsibility.

--volunteer copy--



VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Be Sure: Look into your heart and know that you really want to dedicate significant time to birds and the environment.

Be Convinced: Don't offer your services unless you believe in the value of what you are doing.

Be Loyal: Offer suggestions, but don't "knock-down" the efforts of others or spread negative talk.

Speak Up: Ask about anything you don't understand. Don't coddle your doubts and frustrations until they drive you away or interfere with your role as a volunteer.

Accept the Rules: Don't criticize what you don't understand. There might be a good reason for it.

Be Willing to Learn: Training is essential to any job well done.

Keep on Learning: Know all you can about SFBBO and your job.

Welcome Supervision: You will be a better volunteer and enjoy it more if you are doing what is expected of you.

Be dependable: Your word is your bond. Do what you have agreed to do. Don't make promises you can't keep. If you find you can no longer volunteer, let us know. We understand that situations sometimes change. We just ask that you be upfront with us.

Be a Team Player: Find a place for yourself in the team by following the "Volunteer Code of Responsibility" and working cooperatively with staff and volunteers to carry out SFBBO's mission.

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