



Established 1949

SAN MATEO COUNTY BIRD ALLIANCE

*Volume 77, No. 3
July -September 2026*

The Williams Sisters Ranch Sanctuary: Biodiversity Garden Planting for Pollinators and People

The Williams Sisters Ranch Sanctuary has turned over a new leaf. Well, actually, a whole new garden at the ranch house that Joan Bordi lovingly tended for over 70 years. With the new chapter at the Sanctuary comes a new ranch garden focused on pollinators: birds, butterflies, and insects. We will use local, native plants supporting day pollinators and nighttime moths, forage and roosting/resting shrubs, twig piles, a muddying pond, and a little messiness for the critters to build their own nests. The new garden is for people too, with plots for the residents' kitchen, and will include local forage flora found on WSR that indigenous cultures have historically used for food and medicines.

Join us for a rewarding day in the garden! Sign up now to help with weeding, preparing the soil, tending to cuttings, harvesting, trimming, watering, or whatever needs to be done. Take breaks to enjoy the surrounding area or walk down to the creek on the trail. Bring good garden gloves and sturdy shoes—no experience necessary! Interested? Email [Pati Rouzer parouzer@yahoo.com](mailto:Pati_Rouzer@yahoo.com)

Meeting Programs

2nd Thursdays at 7:00 pm

July 9 - Zoom

**Birding New Zealand &
Australia's Subantarctic
*John Tsortos***

August 13 - Zoom

**Alcatraz Island - Breeding
Bird Sanctuary
*Kimberlie Moutoux***

September 9 - Zoom

TBD



Garden before



Garden planning



Bordi House and Garden

MEETING PROGRAMS

July 9 – Zoom

Birding New Zealand & Australia's Subantarctic, John Tsortos

As a recipient of the True Young Explorer scholarship, John will share highlights of a 16-day expedition to the subantarctic islands of New Zealand and Australia with Heritage Expeditions. This region encompasses multiple UNESCO World Heritage Sites and is known for its unparalleled diversity of nesting albatross and penguin species. It is also home to endemic landbirds, unique marine mammals, and undiscovered marine invertebrates—not to mention that this region is the primary breeding ground for Sooty Shearwaters and Cook's Petrels—two annual visitors to California waters. The talk will focus on seabirds through stunning photos and entertaining videos, but will also touch on the region's natural history, the other incredible wildlife that lives there, and the unprecedented conservation efforts that have allowed these islands to flourish. If you have any interest in seabirds, you don't want to miss it!



Tsortos snares crested penguins

John is a seabird photographer and volunteers both as a pelagic birding guide with Alvaro's Adventures and as an aquarium guide at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Although he spends much of his time along the coast, he lives in Los Gatos and leads field trips for the Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance.

August 13 - Zoom

Alcatraz Island- Breeding Bird Sanctuary, Kimberlie Moutoux

Kimberlie Moutoux has volunteered at Alcatraz as a Waterbird Docent with National Parks since 2019. She provides information to visitors about the breeding population during the breeding season, March to August, when the wintering population swells from 400 to 30,000 birds. In the winter, she co-leads the winter bird counts. This year, she is collaborating with a small team to monitor nesting behavior on the island and observe disturbance events involving Western Gulls. At Alcatraz, there are seven species of waterbirds—Western Gull, Pigeon Guillemot, Brandt's Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-heron, and Great Blue Heron. Kimberlie is also a practicing artist at the Sanchez Art Center, creating data -driven art quilts based on her research. Kimberlie will share stories from Alcatraz and some of her artwork.



Moutoux photographs Western Gulf chicks

September 10 – Zoom - TBD



SMCBA Field Trips



Please note that rain or Air Quality Index over 150 cancels unless otherwise stated. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and dress in layers as the weather can change.

Sunday July 5, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont (8:30 – 11:00) This park comprises 1,266 acres of marshland and rolling, grassland-covered hills along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. We'll do a 1.5-mile loop with a slight elevation change. \$5.00 vehicle admission fee, 8000 Patterson Ranch Road. Meet in the parking lot at the Visitor Center. **Leader:** Saatvika Despande **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4fB1X3r>

Saturday July 11, Sign Hill, South San Francisco (8:30 – 11:00) Sign Hill is a 30 acre hilltop preserve and a wonderful place to hike. This easy-paced 1 mile trail has a mild incline and features good views of South San Francisco. Notable species can be found here in the middle of the city from warblers to the Purple Finch. **Leader:** Max Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4oqpcj2>

Sunday July 19, Burleigh H Murray State Park, Half Moon Bay (8:00 – 12:00) This is a leisurely 3-4 hour walk of ~3 miles in this bird-rich gem on a mostly level, gravel road leading to the historic barn. Ginny will emphasize identifying by sound since most of the birds here are in the treetops! Directions: Take SR1 south from Half Moon Bay and then turn east at Higgins Canyon Rd. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4vJDxcW>

Saturday July 25, Cypress Lawn, Colma, (8:30 – 11:00) Established in 1892, Cypress Lawn is a historic garden cemetery and arboretum occupying over 200 acres and an eBird Hotspot! 1370 El Camino Real, meet at the large stone gate. SamTrans stop. **Leader:** Max Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4xpiEFs>

Saturday July 25, Twin Pines Park, Belmont (10:00 – 12:00) Beginning Nature Journaling Nature Journaling invites you to slow down and take notice of the world around you, where you'll learn about observing using the **I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of** framework, learn about and try your hand at it with birds and flowers right at the park. SMCBA will supply pens and small notebooks. Feel free to bring your own materials and a small, lightweight chair if you have one. **Leaders:** Stanton Chan and Inna Magner **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4vHT9xp>

Thursday July 30, Filoli; California Trail, Woodside (9:30 – 12:00) A 2–2.5 mile moderate walk. Habitats include mixed oak, redwood, madrone woodlands, riparian corridor, and historic horse pastures offering a diversity of species. Admission fee. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4uArVIj>

Saturday August 1, Oyster Point Bay/Marina Park, South San Francisco (8:30 – 10:30) This 33 acre bayside park offers many shore birds and terns, as well as some sparrows. There is little elevation and this roughly 2 mile walk will start at the marina park, then we will head towards the canal and turn back to the start. Easily mass transit accessible. **Leader:** Max Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4v8BFdR>

Saturday August 8, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont (8:30 – 11:00) See July 5 description. **Register:** <https://bit.ly/445q96W>

Sunday August 9, Bedwell Bayfront Park, Menlo Park (10:00 – 12:00) Good for beginners An easy walk along the slough and tidal pond to look for early arriving migrants as well as resident birds. Meet in the first, paved parking lot near the restrooms. **Leader:** J.R. Blair **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4eig3EG>

Tuesday August 11, Alcatraz, Pier 33 San Francisco (8:45 – 12:00) Seven species of waterbirds—Western Gull, Pigeon Guillemot, Brandt's Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-heron and Great Blue Heron—nest on Alcatraz Island, and it's easy to see them up close. Take a ferry ride to the island where Alcatraz docents Kimberlie and Max will take you to see these breeding colonies. Stay as long as you like after the tour to see the island, the beautiful historic gardens, and the prison (your ticket entitles you to take the audio tour of the grounds and prison) and take the ferry back when you are done. There is a tram to take you to the top if you are unable to cover the distance of 13 stories equivalent. Distance is less than 1 mile, but with a significant incline and some broken and irregular pavement trails. \$47.95 Ferry Ticket Fee. **Co-leaders** Kimberlie Moutoux and Mac Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4aDFPSv>



Friday August 14, San Bruno Mountain Bog Trail, San Bruno (8:30 – 11:00) The Bog Trail loop winding through San Bruno Mountain Park is a wet, riparian area. The trail runs through low canopy of scrubs as well as under trees and some grassland. The pacific fog keeps the area moist most of the year. The beginning of the trail is near the beginning of the Colma creek that goes to the bay. An easy 0.80 mile gravel and dirt trail with benches. We'll meet at the Crocker Ave entrance. **Leader:** Tera Freedman **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4v7VzWr>

Saturday August 15, Littlefield/Colma Creek, South San Francisco (9:00 – 11:00) An easy walk along the Bay Trail. This loop will take us to Colma Creek and back. **Leader:** Max Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4gdxJUj>

Saturday August 22, Coyote Pt Recreational Area, San Mateo (8:30 – 11:00) The diversity of habitats at Coyote Point offers the chance to see a number of species. With luck, we may see the resident Harlequin Duck. Directions: Exit Peninsula Ave. from US 101 and follow the signs 1701 Coyote Point Drive—\$6.00 admission fee. Meet near the yacht club. **Leader:** Doug Brown **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4e6hdUW>

Thursday August 27, Filoli; California Trail (9:30 – 12:00) See July 30 description. **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4v5Dhou>

Saturday August 29, Nob Hill Pond, Redwood Shores (10:00 – 12:00) Perfect for beginners, this eBird hotspot is a wonderful place to easily see many species and an excellent place if it's your first time joining us! Time permitting, we may check some other birding sites nearby. Restrooms are available in the nearby shopping center. Directions: From US 101, take the Redwood Shores Parkway east. Turn right at the second traffic signal on Twin Dolphin Dr. Follow the road to parking at 1050 Twin Dolphin Dr. **Leader:** J.R. Blair **Register:** <https://bit.ly/3S3XNYb>

Tuesday September 8, Filoli; Spring Creek (9:30 – 12:00) Join us for a 3 mile hike. This trail gains 100' elevation in ¼ mile on a dirt path - not recommended if you have mobility issues. We will spend most of the morning on the California Trail in the Oak and Madrone forest and the Spring Creek Trail through the Redwoods. The California Trail is over dirt paths with a slight incline and is one mile long. The Spring Creek Trail is ½ mile on a narrow dirt track with a 100' elevation gain. Admission Fee. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4e44RfV>

Thursday September 17, Filoli; California Trail (9:30 – 12:00) See July 30 description. **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4fHmPWU>

Saturday September 19, San Bruno Mountain, San Bruno (8:30 -11:30) San Bruno Mountain Park is a unique open-space island amid the peninsula's urbanization. It is home to a wealth of wildlife, hidden pockets of woodland, and sheltered canyons. We'll walk about 1 mile on most flat dirt and asphalt trails. \$6.00 Vehicle entry fee. Directions: Meet at 555 Guadalupe Canyon Parkway. **Leader:** Doug Brown **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4vK0Tz5>

Saturday September 19, Twin Pines Park, Belmont (10:00 – 12:00) Beginning Nature Journaling See July 25 description. **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4eoHtsB>

Monday September 21, Coyote Pt Recreational Area, San Mateo (8:00 – 11:00) See August 22 description. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4e6hSFU>

Saturday September 26, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont (8:30 – 11:00) See July 5 description. **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4vBFqbw>

SMCBA Conservation Update

San Mateo County: Planning Commission has approved proposed ordinance changes to “use bird-friendly treatment on windows, glass railings, and other transparent exterior surfaces (“glass”) to minimize bird strikes.” The next steps are the Board of Supervisors’ approval and adoption. We submitted a joint letter with American Bird Conservancy, Green Foothills, SCVBA, and Sierra Club.

Menlo Park, Belle Haven: Plans call for 2 large biotech buildings. We submitted a comment letter on the DEIR requesting that bird safety be included in the design, including glass, lighting, and the use of pesticides/herbicides.

Brisbane: Brisbane Baylands project will hold a Public Hearing on June 25 (in person and Zoom). This plan will develop the land west of Highway 101 and just north of Brisbane Pond.

Half Moon Bay. Coastside Land Trust is using a grant from SMCBA and Christmas Bird Count data to identify the increasing crow population at Wavecrest, which is detrimental to raptors and ground-nesting birds. They intend to enlist volunteers to collect follow up data on crow densities and use that data to request the city replace dumpsters with enclosed trash cans by end of 2026.

Foster City is working on its Canada Goose control measures, including finding nests and removing or adding eggs. At least one goose has been seen wearing a tracker.

If any topic interests you and you’d like to help or learn more, please contact your Conservation Committee at conservation@smcbirdalliance.org. We have a lot to follow in the county, and having someone review the site, describe concerns to us, or follow city council meetings when a topic affecting wildlife is on the agenda can be a tremendous help.

OFFICERS

Acting President: John Epperson

Vice President: Open

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Treasurer: Julie Dull

At Large: Doug Brown, Ed Ching,
Joyce Courtney, Marshall Dinowitz,
Nelle Lyons, Chris MacIntosh

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MISSION STATEMENT

San Mateo County Bird Alliance protects native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy and enjoyment.

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Mark Your Calendars - Save the Date

Saturday, June 20

11:30 am - 2:30 pm

**Annual General Meeting
San Mateo Garden Center**

Potluck registration: <https://bit.ly/4bzLbz2>



San Mateo County Bird Alliance Membership

Senior or Student membership	\$20.00
Individual membership	\$25.00
Family membership	\$45.00
Supporter	\$100.00
Donation to SMCBA	\$_____
	Total \$_____

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _____

Newsletter Preference:

_____ Mail and / or _____ E-mail

E-mail address _____

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Contact us: office@smcbirdalliance.org

Visit our website: www.smcbirdalliance.org

Check out our Online Birding Guide:

www.birding.smcbirdalliance.org

Join our Discussion Group:

General: <http://smcbirdalliance@groups.io>

Conservation: <http://conservation@smcbirdalliance.groups.io>

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