



SONG SPARROW

Fall 2024 Vol. 54 No. 2
www.napasolanoaudubon.com
Digital Newsletter

FALL 2024 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Sep. 7 Sat. Weekly Bird Walk
John F. Kennedy Park
Sign up for eBlasts for
future walks & locations
- Sep. 12 Thu. Speaker Series:
The Albatross of Kaua'i
- Sep. 15 Sun. Beginner's Bird Walk
American Canyon
Wetlands
- Sep. 16 Mon. Monthly Field Trip:
Rodeo Lagoon
- Oct. 10 Thu. Speaker Series:
Northern California Bats
- Oct. 27 Sun. Monthly Field Trip:
Mangini Ranch
Educational Preserve
- Nov. 16 Sat. Monthly Field Trip 2-Day:
Klamath Falls Basin



NORTHERN PARULA / MARK STEPHENSON

The Bay Area's Extraordinary Fall Migration!

By Mark Stephenson

I wanted to write this article to alert our members of the incredible opportunity we have living in the Bay Area, and one of our Nation's extraordinary miracles in the birding world, fall migration.

We live on the Pacific Flyway, the route taken by the majority of Arctic Birds on their Journeys to warmer winter climates in Central and South America. This includes all Shorebirds, Seabirds, Thrushes, Flycatchers, and Warblers and everything in between. Our Bay Area is home to many phenomenal, birding hot spots that highlight migration. In the Napa-Solano area, beginning as early as July, shorebirds start to arrive. They flock to mudflats at the top of the Bay along highway 37 near Cullinan Ranch, Green Island, American Canyon and Huichica Wetlands. If you go further afield, the Yolo Bypass and Davis WTP often support wonderful rarities as does Point Reyes' Abbott's Lagoon and Bodega Bay's mudflats.

Head out toward Doran Beach or to Bodega Head and you might be surprised to find a Semipalmated Sandpiper hiding in flocks of Least and Western Sandpipers or a Black-bellied Plover or Red Knot mingling with Short-billed Dowitchers.

If you want to view Pelagic birds, take one of Redwood Regional Ornithological Societies' trips out of Bodega Bay or Alvaro's Adventures trips from Half Moon Bay, and various other locations including Monterey and Sausalito.

Continued on Page 7



Fall Bird Walks & Activities

Choose "Activity Signups"
on our NEW website for
more bird walks and activities.

napasolanobirds.org
<https://tinyurl.com/nsas-activities>

President's Corner

By Mark Stephenson, NSAS President



Greetings NSAS Members, Family & Friends!

It is always a pleasure to meet and speak with our wonderful community and share our love of birds, wildlife and the natural environment. Every newsletter we try to cover topics that we believe are of interest to you! Recently, our Board has been hard at work on a number of important Conservation Advocacy Projects: First, I am happy to report that the California Forever Initiative to build a Mega-City in the heart of Solano County's

Farmland has been removed from the November Ballot (see Solano Together article). This is just the beginning of this group of billionaire developers attempts to build-over Solano's heritage farmland and sensitive vernal pool habitats that support several of California's rare and endangered species including Tricolored Blackbirds, Swainson's Hawks, Burrowing Owls and Mountain Plovers. Stay informed about this issue to lend your support to preserve and protect Solano Counties' Farmland, Vernal Pools, and Open Space Habitats!

Second, the US Fish & Wildlife has announced they will no longer have the funds to support Point Blue Conservation Sciences' 65 years of sustained research on the Farallon Islands. The Farallon's are the home of the largest Common Murre Colony in the lower 48, along with a large Fur Seal Colony and smaller colonies of Tufted Puffins, Cormorants, and other Pelagic Birds including Cassin's Auklets. *(We will send you information on how you can help lobby for efforts to continue funding this critical research.)*

Finally, the Pomo Native Americans would like to build another Casino on Vallejo's Hunter Hill property. This land is home to nesting Golden Eagles and is an important winter foraging ground for endangered Burrowing Owls. We hope our members will stand up with us and help to preserve this natural grassland habitat for birds and other wildlife!

Pam Condos continues to write important articles that we hope you will enjoy! This year she is authoring a series on transforming your yards into Eco-Friendly Gardens! Don't miss out and consider ways you can support this national movement to provide bird and wildlife friendly habitat throughout our communities and across our nation!

Finally, we are excited to announce, we've designed a beautiful, new and updated website that we hope will be more user friendly and keep you better informed about all of our activities! We're developing some new sections we think will be helpful to many of you. If you are interested in improving your bird ID skills, visit the Bird Family Galleries. Our section on local birding hotspots is still under construction but will be a great place for you to learn about fun locations to bird. **Please visit and enjoy our new site: NapaSolanoBirds.org ! ▲**



Board of Directors

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Field Trips Carol Boykin (707) 252-6194	Director at Large Pam Condos (707) 738-2488
Education Coord. Tammy Sanders (419) 410-6283	

Board Meetings are open to all members

If you wish to attend, please call:
(707) 246-2795.

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Since NSAS consists of many volunteers and a few part-time staff who are working in the field, 100% of your donation goes to support our mission.

All donations are tax-deductible.



ANDREW TURNER

Adventure awaits when you **VOLUNTEER!** You'll meet all sorts of fine friends while making a big difference.



BECKY MATSUBARA

The Birds are Waiting for You

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Visit our website to **JOIN** a world of wonder and **RENEW** your love of the wild.

napasolanobirds.org

Calendar of Events

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

Note: Programs are held on the second Thursday of the month in location and via Zoom. We encourage everyone to attend. You will be sent the meeting details in our regular eBlasts.

THE ALBATROSS OF KAUA'I Their Style and Story

When: Thurs., Sept 12; 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Hob Osterlund

Location: Napa Valley Lutheran Church & Hybrid Zoom



LAYSAN ALBATROSS & CHICK
DAN CLARK / USFWS

Hob Osterlund will kick off our Fall programs with this intriguing presentation. Hob is a Safina Center Fellow and the founder of the Kaua'i Albatross Network. She lives on Kauai and has helped to protect the Laysan Albatross and preserve their nesting habitat. She can often be found near the Kilauea Lighthouse helping visitors observe these exciting birds of the sea!

About the Speaker: Hob Osterlund is the author of "Holy Mōli: Albatross and Other Ancestors" (Oregon State University Press, 2016 now in its fourth printing). In 2018 she produced a documentary called "Kalama's Journey", which won a Telly Award. An advanced-practice nurse who spent her career working in acute hospitals on Kaua'i and O'ahu, Hob performed a multi-ethnic pidgin-speaking comedy character called "Ivy Push RN" for national audiences. She now focuses her full time attention on advocacy for birds of Hawai'i, especially the magnificent Laysan Albatross. She is an engaging and entertaining speaker, so don't miss out on this exciting presentation.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BATS

When: Thurs., Oct 10; 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Corky Quirk, NorCal Bats

Location: TBA

Come learn all about the Bats that live in our area. Corky Quirk from NorCalBats and the Yolo Basin Foundation will provide an exciting presentation that will help you learn why she and her organizations are committed to the preservation of Bats and striving to educate the public on the many benefits that Bats provide to the environment.

Learn about these animals and their importance as insect control wonders. Inform others & help protect this incredible flying mammal! You can join her efforts to dispel any misconceptions others might have about these furry creatures, and help save these highly valuable mammals through community education and rescue work.

About the Speaker: Corky Quirk works with NorCalBats and Yolo Basin Foundations providing educational programs for schools and within the greater Sacramento Area community. She is dedicated to the preservation, rescue, rehabilitation and release of bats throughout Northern California. The Foundations are committed to public education to promote the environmental benefits of bats, dispelling fears and myths that lead to the death of roosts and colonies. These Foundations are located in the Sacramento Valley, with trained volunteers who care for injured and orphaned bats throughout the valley and surrounding foothills.

MONTHLY FIELD TRIPS

Our New Monthly Field Trip Sign-up System: Due to overwhelming interest in our Monthly Field Trips, which are often limited to 15-20 members, we are implementing a new sign-up registration system this Fall. **We hope this system will allow all members an equal opportunity to be selected to attend and expand member participation.**

New Registration Process:

Field Trip Information Notice: A detailed Monthly Field Trip announcement will be emailed to you, & posted on our website approximately 1 month before each trip is scheduled to take place. Trip details will include info about the trip, date & time the Sign-up Form will be emailed to you & when trip registration begins.

- 1. Registration Forms:** these will be emailed to you, approximately one week after you receive the Field Trip Notice, at the date and time described, and usually the following Saturday at 9:00 a.m. (*Remember to check your Spam/Junk Folder*)
- 2. Submit the Registration Form:** Complete the simple form and click on the Submit button to insure your place on the trip. Sign-ups will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Trips will be reserved for Members first, and only open for non-members if space permits.
- 3. Please Note:** If for any reason you need to cancel your participation, please inform the Field Trip Coordinator so an alternate member may take your place.

RODEO LAGOON

When: Mon., Sept 16; 7:30 a.m.

Leader: William Legge



BROWN PELICAN / RODEO LAGOON
BETTINA ARRIGONI

Rodeo Lagoon is one of Marin's largest brackish lagoons separated from the Pacific Ocean by a narrow sandy beach. It is surrounded by willow groves and provides aquatic and mudflat habitat that supports waterfowl, migrating shorebirds and passerines.

Regular visitors include: Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Goldeneye, Western & Pied-billed Grebes, Snowy & Great Egrets, Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons, Gulls, Cormorants, Pelicans and Murre. Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's, Yellow, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray and Common Yellow-throat Warblers and occasional Redstarts are found amongst the willow thickets. Rodeo Lagoon has

hosted numerous rarities from White and Yellow Wagtails, to a Vermillion Flycatcher and Eastern Phoebe, and even a Willow Warbler that visited in October 2022. The Lagoon is nestled under the shadow of Hawk Hill where migrating hawks regularly pass by. Northern Harriers, Red-tailed, Copper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are daily visitors that soar along the flanks of the hill and high overhead on thermals before crossing the Bay.

William Legge: has surveyed the birds of Rodeo Lagoon for a decade and will know all of the best places to find these exciting Fall migrants.

MANGINI RANCH EDUCATIONAL PRESERVE

When: Sun., Oct. 27; 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Mangini Ranch Staff



OAK SAVANNA / PETER J. CAPRIO

Save Mount Diablo's Mangini Ranch Educational Preserve is over 200 acres situated between the Crystyl Ranch residential development in Concord and Lime Ridge Open Space in Walnut Creek. The preserve includes grassland, stream canyons, blue oak woodland, chaparral, and oak savannas. It's home to rare species such as the northernmost stand of desert olive, rare Hospital Canyon Larkspur, and threatened Alameda Whipsnake. Deer, Coyote, Burrowing Owls, Kestrels, and lots of other wildlife live here too. The preserve's high ridge line provides spectacular views of central Contra Costa County to Marin, Sonoma, and Solano counties.

Save Mount Diablo's free public Mangini Ranch Educational Preserve's Mission is: "to afford opportunities for our community to connect with nature. By facilitating these experiences, we can help address the serious issue of the modern disconnection from nature that currently threatens our perpetual land conservation mission."

KLAMATH BASIN 2-Day Overnight Trip

When: November 16 & 17

Leader: Kevin Spencer



The Klamath Basin is located along the California/Oregon border. Both the Upper and Lower Klamath Wildlife Areas along with Tule Lake are stopovers for migrating waterfowl and numerous passerines. Most species of ducks, geese, swans along with raptors including resident Bald Eagles and Prairie Falcons are regularly seen in this area. The region also includes riparian habitat that hosts migrating thrush, flycatcher, bunting, & warbler species. *We will spend 2 days exploring this region with local bird guide, Kevin Spencer.*

WEEKLY BIRD WALKS

Open to everyone. NSAS sponsors weekly birding walks led by ornithologist Andrew Ford. Andrew is a wealth of information regarding birds, plants, and just about anything else you might happen to come across on these walks.

- Walks are usually from 8am – Noon, in Napa and Solano Counties local birding hotspots.
- Sign up for our Field Trip's eBlast by clicking on the green button entitled "Activity Sign Up" located at the top of our new site: napasolanobirds.org
- He will send out the weekly destination for each Bird Walk to those who are signed up.

JOHN F. KENNEDY PARK, NAPA

When: Sat., Sept. 07

Leader: Andrew Ford

For details as to how you can join us, see the bulleted list above.

BEGINNER BIRD WALKS

Open to everyone. These NSAS sponsored walks with Tom, Carol & Karina, are usually held at the American Canyon Wetlands or Benicia Community Parks. These leaders are citizen science volunteers who have participated in our weekly Bird Seasons Surveys at this location that began in 2016 and have a wealth of knowledge about the birds you might see. The Wetlands is a great birding spot as it has a wide variety of species, from waterfowl to raptors and every-thing in between.

AMERICAN CANYON WETLANDS

When: Sept. 15, 9:00am-Noon

If you miss this one, look on our website or eBlasts announcing future Beginner's Bird Walks.



JUNIOR AUDUBON BIRD WALKS

Our Education Coordinator, Tammy Saunders offers monthly Jr. Audubon Bird Walks for students, aged 7-15, who attend with their parents and want to learn more about birds. Be on the lookout for Tammy's eBlasts on Junior Audubon Walks at our local parks.



SAY NO TO THE MEGA-CITY "CALIFORNIA FOREVER" . JOIN "SOLANO TOGETHER".

Solano Together is a group of concerned residents, leaders, and organizations who came together to form a coalition that envisions a better future for our region, that focuses development into existing cities & strengthens our agricultural industry.

To learn more, visit their website: www.solanotogether.org

Conservation Advocacy

Keeping an Eye on Development Projects in Napa & Solano County

By Mark Stephenson, NSAS President

Breaking News on the Proposed Solano County Mega-City Development Project:

The People of Solano County Defeat the Billionaires' Development Plan!!!!



TRI-COLORED BLACKBIRD / MARK STEPHENSON

Congratulations to all!

A quote from Solano Together:

“Faced with the anticipation of overwhelming rejection by Solano County voters on the ballot, California Forever has pulled the plug on the East Solano Plan Initiative. The people have spoken and California Forever has been forced to withdraw their hastily drawn, poorly

designed initiative, given a surefire loss in November.

Let's be clear: California Forever knew their guarantees were not binding. They knew the negative impact of their proposal on traffic, Travis Air Force Base, the environment, agriculture, existing cities, and more. Instead of taking the time to deeply engage in a transparent process of what their proposal means to the county, they decided to deceive the public to try and get the initiative passed.

We thank the Board of Supervisors for initiating the impact study that showed the negative impacts a project of this magnitude would have on Solano families.

Solano Together looks forward to continuing our local, community-driven efforts to invest in the future of our county, including advocating for bringing more jobs and affordable homes to our existing communities while protecting farmland and open spaces through the renewal of the next Orderly Growth Initiative in 2028.”

To be sure, the investors and developers who have initiated this massive development have not gone away.

We need to remain vigilant in protecting Solano County's agricultural lands and the delicate Vernal Pool habitats that are home to threatened species including Tricolored Blackbirds, Burrowing Owls, Swainson's Hawks and an essential wintering habitat for critically endangered Mountain Plovers. Many thanks for everyone's continued attention to this potentially devastating development in Solano County! ▲



The Importance of Eco-Friendly Gardening

Part 1: Reducing or replacing your lawn

By Pam Condos



NATIVE GARDEN / JOETTE TIZZONE

Eco-friendly gardens play a vital role in preserving the biodiversity of our planet!

Traditional gardening practices often involve the use of synthetic chemicals and pesticides that can harm pollinators like bees, butterflies, and birds. By choosing eco-friendly, organic alternatives, you can create a habitat that supports various wildlife, from insects to birds, contributing to a healthier ecosystem.

Water scarcity is a growing concern in many regions. One way to support eco-friendly gardening is to reduce your lawn's size and replace it with native plants, ground covers, or a vegetable garden. Both Napa County and the Solano County Water Agencies are offering water customers an incentive to replace their water-thirsty lawns with water-efficient landscaping (see links at end of article).

Their goals are to promote landscape water-use efficiency and support the installation of healthy, sustainable landscapes that will promote healthy soils and support our local environment and watersheds by providing habitat for local wildlife, decreasing harmful runoff, and reducing water usage. Creating an eco-friendly garden is a meaningful step toward a sustainable future. Please consider supporting healthy landscapes by reducing or replacing your lawn. ▲

For more information on each county's program, their rebates and requirements:

Napa County: <https://www.cityofnapa.org/585/Cash-For-Grass>

Solano County: <https://scwa2.com/residential-rebates/>

2024 Solano County Scholarship Winners



HANNAH PATIN

Hannah attended school at Rio Vista High. She is a student who continuously goes above and beyond in both her academics and in her extracurricular activities. During her high school years, she excelled in a wide variety of activities and interests, however her love is for animals and science. In the fall she will begin to pursue a degree in Animal Biology at UC Davis with an expectation that in the future she will be leading programs to “improve and conserve the Earth’s wildlife and ecosystems.”



TREVOR deROSIER

Trevor attended Early College High School in Fairfield. Early College is a special program where 100 Fairfield 9th grade students are selected each year to do both their 4-year high school classes and attend college classes all of which are being taught at So-

lano City College. Trevor’s passion is nature and animals and his community activities have revolved around his focus on Scouting and being outdoors. Visiting the California Raptor Center at UC Davis, you will see the display of birds he created for his Eagle Scout project. He will attend UC Davis, pursuing a degree in Wildlife, Fish, & Conservation Biology. While at Davis he plans to continue his involvement with the Raptor Center and their rescue and rehabilitate efforts.



JAKE MOFFAT

Jake attended high school at Buckingham Colligate Charter Academy. He’s been aware of the effects of climate change from an early age and knew then that he wanted to make a difference. He’s been involved in a range of projects and activities in this area and was founder and president of his school’s Climate & Sustainability Club, which sponsors an annual Climate Awareness Week, to engage the entire student body in an effort to reduce the school’s waste and carbon footprint. He will attend UC Davis in the Fall, pursuing an Environmental Engineering degree and hopes to help reverse the global climate change crisis.

2024 Napa County Scholarship Winners



WILLIAM (LIAM) JOY

Liam attended St. Helena High School and volunteered extensively for the Future Farmers of America and the Sierra Service Project throughout high school. William is very interested in environmental sustainability and wants to become an agriculturally -based environmental engineer. He credits his grandfather for instilling a true love for nature. William is attending Harvard University for the Fall..



LUCAS STEPHENSON

Lucas attended Justin-Siena High School in Napa and has been watching and monitoring birds since he was nine. He has become an avid citizen scientist and is very concerned about preserving wild lands for bird habitat. His interest in data-based conservation has led him to pursue a major in Wildlife Biology at Cal Poly Humboldt in the Fall.



PAULINA ZAMBRANO

Paulina attended Vintage High School in Napa where her environmental protection journey started at the Napa Resource Conservation District as a sophomore. She has been involved with many environmental groups over the years and wants to continue to advocate for the natural environment and is planning to study Landscape Architecture and Environmental Science at Cal Poly Pomona for the Fall.



GO NATIVE

East Bay resident & bestselling author Doug Tallamy says, “When native plants disappear, the insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. Luckily, there is an important & simple step we can all take to help reverse this alarming trend: everyone with access to a patch of earth can make a significant contribution toward sustaining biodiversity by simply choosing native plants.”

Doug is a frequent contributor to the award-winning organization, **Bringing Back the Natives**.

You will find *tons* of resources, support & be inspired by yearly tours of East Bay native gardens.

Go native and get your Solano garden included in the tours!
bringingbackthenatives.net

The Bay Area's Extraordinary Fall Migration!

Continued from Page 1

RED KNOT / MARK STEPHENSON



Moving to passerines, the Napa Ecological Area, Lakes Hennessey and Berryessa, Skyline Park, along with Lagoon Valley, Putah Creek, and Lake Solano can turn up many unexpected marvels. Inland birding locations typically host Western breeders like Western Flycatchers (formerly Pacific-slope), Hutton's, Warbling, and Cassin's Vireos, Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Nashville, Yellow, Townsend's and Hermit Warblers along with Lazuli Buntings, and Western Tanagers.

On occasion, these locations can host Eastern rarities like an Indigo Bunting or Warblers including Black and White, American Redstart, Parula, Hooded, Blackpoll and Blackburnian. The coastal corridor is where Southern and Eastern passerine rarities visit annually on an unusually regular basis.

This year a Mexican Slate-throated Redstart has been hanging out in San Francisco's Pine Lake Park for nearly a month! The Peak of Warbler migration is typical a week or two each side of September 15th but can easily extend into October and early November. For the past 2-3 years, Point Reyes' Outer Point hosted more than 30 species of Warblers along with vireos like Red-eyed, Plumbeous, Philadelphia,

Blue-headed, and Yellow-throated as well as Swainson's, Hermit, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes.

Olive-sided, Willow, Dusky, Hammond's, Gray, and even Least Flycatchers are spotted most Falls, and sometimes even an Eastern Wood-Pewee will join it's Western cousin.

Warbler species including Black and White, Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, Palm, Northern Parula, Northern Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Prairie, Hooded, Lucy's, Black-throated Greens and Blues and even Cape May and Bay-breasted stop over, and rest in the pines and cypress trees or willow thickets that are confined to a few locations at the Light House, Chimney Rock and Drake's Beach.



OVENBIRD / MARK STEPHENSON

So let this article encourage you to get out and enjoy the wonders of the Bay Area's Fall Migration. We are almost at it's peak! I owe my passion to my son, Lucas, who has encouraged me to get up long before dawn (and occasionally dragged me out of bed) to bird any chance we could get! *I have never been disappointed.* ▲

WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN OR RENEW YOUR LOCAL NSAS CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP?

Because your Membership allows us to continue our important work. Membership benefits and support include:

- Be first in line for our popular Monthly Field Trips throughout the Bay Area and beyond
- Song Sparrow Newsletters mailed to your home
- Support for Weekly, Beginner, and Jr. Audubon Bird Walks
- Support for our Education programs that reached over 1,200 K-12 students last year
- Funding for our popular Monthly Speaker series
- Support for our Community Educational Tabling Events, such as: S.F. Bay Flyway Festival, Winged Migration Festival, Napa Earth Day, Earth Day Watershed Clean-up, Benicia Pacific Flyway Center's Migratory Bird Day, U.C. Master Gardener's Open House, Vallejo's Earth Daze, Benicia's Sustainability Fair, Napa and Vacaville's Parks & Rec Summer Camps

- Support for our many Citizen Science activities: Bluebird and Kestrel Nest Box Programs, Christmas Bird Counts, Bird Season's Surveys, Climate Research Surveys, Heron & Egret Colony Monitoring, Waterfowl and Shorebird Monitoring, Endangered Species Monitoring

Local Napa-Solano Members: If your membership expired earlier this year, please renew! **National Audubon Members:** Please join our local NSAS Chapter to receive these benefits and support our work.¹

We continue our low membership rates of \$25 for individuals and \$35 for Families to encourage your support.

¹As a courtesy, we mail out our first Fall newsletter to National members who do not have an email address, but Winter and Spring editions are only sent electronically to interested National members who send us their email address. *Everyone can always download our Song Sparrow Newsletters directly from our website.*



Act Now! Funding for the Farallon Islands is at Risk!

Letter of Support Template for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department to Maintain Current Funding for the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge Collaborative Research

by Point Blue Conservation Science

Greetings Napa Solano Audubon Members, Family and Friends: We are extremely concerned to learn that the year-long funding for critical scientific research on the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge is expected to be significantly reduced by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department budget cuts in 2025.

The Farallon Islands are an incredibly rich ecosystem for Sea Birds and Marine Mammals and a critical habitat for their breeding and survival. The research and data collection, that has been **ongoing for more than 50 years** by Point Blue Conservation Science, has been instrumental in a number of crucial legislative policies and habitat interventions that have helped preserve this ecosystem and its wildlife. As a result, **we are providing you with this Letter of Support Template** and encourage you to customize it to your liking, sign and email it to all the key Congressional Representatives and associated department leaders listed here.

The rationale for these particular recipients, is to encourage Congress to support the USFWS and National Wildlife

Refuge System at appropriate levels to achieve the Refuge System's Mission. **We've included their emails at the end of this article so you can easily copy/paste them into the recipient area of your composed email.**

- 1. Congressman Mike Simpson** (Chair) and **Congresswoman Chellie Pingree** (Ranking Member), lead the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies and are responsible for overseeing the budget that pertains to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- 2. Deb Haaland** is head of the Department of the Interior (DOI) and has authority to influence the allocation of

the department's budget, and significantly impact how resources are distributed within the DOI, including funds for environmental and wildlife conservation priorities.

To encourage the USFWS to find ways for the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge to allocate sufficient funding to maintain year-round monitoring, please send letters to:

3. Paul Souza is the Regional Director for the Pacific Southwest Region (Region 8) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) oversees the management and conservation efforts within this region, including the allocation of resources and budgeting for various projects and programs including the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex and the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

4. Matthew Brown is the Complex Manager for the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, he oversees

operations and resource allocation across several refuges within the complex and can influence funding allocation for the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

To reach Congressman Mike Simpson's office:

lindsey.parobek@mail.house.gov;

To reach Congresswoman Chellie Pingree's office:

lisa.pahel@mail.house.gov

rita.culp@mail.house.gov

kristin.richmond@mail.house.gov

To reach Deb Haaland's office:

secretary_of_the_interior@ios.doi.gov

To reach Paul Souza's office:

paul_souza@fws.gov

To reach Matthew Brown's office:

matthew_brown@fws.gov

SAMPLE LETTER

To The Office of [i.e. Mike Simpson]

I am writing to urge you to please:

1. Lobby Congress to support the USFWS and the National Wildlife Refuge System at appropriate levels to achieve the Refuge System's mission;
2. Encourage the USFWS to find ways for the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge to continue to allocate sufficient funding to Point Blue so we can maintain our year-round ecological monitoring program.

The loss of potential ecological data gathered by Point Blue will not just hinder sustainable management of the Refuge, but also will impact management of NOAA's Greater Farallons and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries, as well as various ecosystem assessments used to inform the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Strong scientific data is the backbone of management decisions and the data collected by Point Blue is critical for the ongoing sustainable management of the islands' wildlife as well as salmon, other fish of commercial value, sharks, whales, and many other species in central California.

BACKGROUND:

For over five decades, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Point Blue Conservation Science have partnered to study and protect the Farallon Islands, located 27 miles off San Francisco. This partnership has fostered a leading seabird breeding research program, crucial for managing the largest seabird colony in the contiguous U.S. and a significant pinniped population. However, due to budget cuts starting in 2025, USFWS will cease funding Point Blue's year-round research, threatening the continuity of vital ecological data and potentially impacting wider marine ecosystem management.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has maintained a unique and extremely effective partnership with Point Blue Conservation Science, a research-based nonprofit organization, to jointly study, conserve, and restore the Farallon Islands since 1968. Located 27 miles offshore from San Francisco, the islands are

closed to the public and are managed by the USFWS as the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The islands provide critical wildlife habitat, hosting the largest seabird breeding colony in the contiguous United States and 25% percent of California's breeding seabirds (more than 300,000 individuals of 13 species), as well as five breeding pinniped species. Wildlife populations on the islands have thrived as a result of this partnership.

Through decades of collaboration, this unique public-private partnership has evolved into the foremost seabird breeding research program in the continental United States. Since 1968, Point Blue has maintained a continuous presence on the islands: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing baseline monitoring of the islands' wildlife populations. Point Blue uses its expertise in biology, ecology, and conservation to provide rigorous science to the Service, helping them make decisions that will ensure a healthy ecosystem on the islands for generations to come. Point Blue has typically raised 2 to 3 dollars from philanthropy for every dollar contributed by the USFWS to maintain this effort.

Point Blue's ecological research on the Farallon Islands has precipitated pivotal environmental policy reforms. Notable among these are the 1987 prohibition of gill-netting to protect seabirds from drowning in these nets, the 1993 legal protection of white sharks, and the creation of three California Marine Protected Areas around the islands in 2010.

Due to budgetary constraints, the USFWS has notified Point Blue that it will no longer be able to provide its portion of the funding for Point Blue's research and monitoring efforts, beginning in 2025. Without this support, Point Blue will not be able to maintain a year-round presence on the islands, and the islands will be unattended for several months of the year. Several of the long-term datasets will be discontinued. A smaller number of research assistants and graduate students will be able to be trained. Protection of the islands' wildlife populations from human disturbance will be far more limited.

Thank you for your consideration,

[Insert your name and, if relevant, organizational affiliation.]

nepasolanandubon.com
Napa, CA 94581
P.O. Box 10006
Napa-Solano Audubon Society



Remembering David Takeuchi

by Robin Leong

David was a giant in NSAS during the '80s and '90s when he was Treasurer, and later as Field Trip Chair for many years.

I don't know how many current members remember David Takeuchi. As the treasurer, he worked on revising the bylaws to make sure we were doing things legally. Peggy Gross, Joanne Castro, and I, chased rarities in the outer peninsula of Point Reyes during migration and other places in CA using Golden Gate Audubon Society's (now Golden Gate Bird Alliance) phone-in rare bird alert system.

“He was such a creative person, and excellent birder. He would study every detail of a bird. He was a friend to many!”

Dave arranged field trips in the Central Valley Refuges, at Yuba Pass, Yosemite, and Mono Lake. One of his favorite trips of the year was a field trip that he led followed by a gourmet potluck lunch.

Joanne, Fran Scarlett and I, as well as many others, will miss him! Joanne's comment was that he was such a creative person and an excellent birder. He would study every detail of a bird. He was a friend to many!!!!

I have honored him with a donation to NSAS's Memorial Scholarship fund. For those that don't know, this fund was created in the 80s to provide two “biology type” student scholarships, one each for a student at Napa Valley and Solano Community Colleges. I laud NSAS members that choose the students for these awards, because it is not easy! ▲

