

33rd Annual Meeting of the Western Field Ornithologists
San Mateo, California • 9–12 October 2008

Information on Workshops, Panels, and the Keynote Address
San Mateo Marriott

Workshop Information

South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

Date: Friday, October 10, 2008

Time: 7:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Meet in the Inspire Ballroom at 6:45 a.m.

Leader: Caitlin Robinson, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

We will visit restoration sites planned as part of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project of San Francisco Bay, the largest wetland restoration project on the west coast of the United States. South Bay salt ponds currently support large numbers of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, and nesting shorebirds, terns, and gulls. The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project will restore a number of South Bay ponds to tidal action and will manage others for waterbirds and other species. We will discuss the Project's habitat goals, its potential impact on birds currently using the ponds, and current and future research that will inform adaptive management. We will be spending part of the morning at the California Department of Fish and Game's Eden Landing Ecological Reserve in Hayward. We will visit ponds at Eden Landing that will be restored by the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project as well as stopping to look at some of the amazing birds using the ponds. The tide will be coming in during our field trip so it should be the perfect time to bird the salt ponds.

NOTE: The San Francisco Bay can be surprisingly cold and windy in October so please bring lots of layers! We will be walking short distances on uneven levees so please wear closed-toed shoes. Other things to bring: water, snacks, sunscreen, and binoculars.

Caitlin Robinson is the waterbird program supervisor at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. She has done extensive research on western snowy plovers nesting in the South San Francisco Bay salt evaporation ponds. She currently oversees research on waterbirds in the south bay, including projects on bird occurrence in active salt evaporation ponds and California gulls use of landfills. She is co-chair of the Western Snowy Plover Recovery Unit 3 Working Group.

Sketching Birds

Dates: Friday, October 10, and Saturday, October 11, 2008

Time: 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Inspire Ballroom

Leader: John Muir Laws

Learn the basic anatomy and tricks to quickly draw birds in the field and avoid anatomical pitfalls that creep into many bird drawings. Learn which critical details to check and master the one minute gesture sketch as well as sketching birds in flight. Learn tricks for detailed drawings

of heads, wings, and feet even after the bird has flown. This hands-on workshop teaches you tricks to get down the shape and proportion of land birds in a quick sketch and then fill in details with an improved understanding of bird anatomy. Wildlife artist John Muir Laws will include proportion basics, drawing wings, and feather tricks of the head.

NOTE: Bring pencil and a small sketch book.

John (Jack) Muir Laws is a naturalist, educator and artist and delights in exploring the natural world and sharing this love with others. For six years, John Muir Laws backpacked the Sierra Nevada to research and illustrate *The Laws Guide to the Sierra Nevada*, a pocket-size field guide to over 1,700 species found in the Sierra Nevada. The guide includes 2,710 original watercolor paintings, was reviewed by educators, naturalists, and scientists throughout the country, and was intensively field tested by adults and youth. This guide helps visitors or residents of the Sierra understand and appreciate the biodiversity of the region. This comprehensive and easy to use guide allows botanists to identify the insects that come to their flowers, birders to identify the trees in which the birds perch, or hikers to identify the stars overhead at night. Laws is deeply committed to stewardship of nature and collaborates with organizations throughout the state to this end. He is currently coordinating efforts to create a standards based, sixth through eighth grade curriculum to help teachers convey a love of nature and an understanding of biodiversity to their students through field studies and nature sketching. As a part of this project, he is working to secure funding to donate sets of field guides to every middle and high school in the Sierra Nevada. Laws has worked as an environmental educator for over 25 years in California, Wyoming, and Alaska. He teaches classes on natural history, conservation biology, scientific illustration, and field sketching. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Sciences. His illustrations capture the feeling of the living plant or animal, while also including details critical for identification. In the summer of 2004, Laws also published *Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide*. He is a regular contributor to *Bay Nature* magazine with his "Naturalists Notebook" column.

GPS in Field Biology

Date: Friday, October 10, 2008

Time: 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Synergy 4

Leader: Steve Wood, REI Outdoor School

Steve will lead you through the basics of GPS navigation. Learn how to use your pocket-sized navigator to pinpoint your location, mark and navigate to waypoints, then find your way back again. You will learn how to use these features in field biology activities like nest marking, determining territory size, and mapping habitat features. Learn about using online maps and transferring track and waypoint information to and from the GPS.

NOTE: If you own a GPS unit, please bring it to the class. Be prepared for a short walk outdoors. Some demo GPS units will be available.

Steve Wood is a supervisor and navigation instructor for the REI Outdoor School, a long time GPS user and co-founder of Geocachers of the Bay Area.

An Ecological Transect of the San Mateo Peninsula

Date: Saturday, October 11, 2008

Time: 6:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Meet in the Marriott Lobby at 6:15 a.m.; Look for someone with a sign reading “San Mateo Transect”; Transportation will be provided.

Leader: Alvaro Jaramillo, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

There may be nowhere else in North America where one can encounter as wide a range of habitats within a single morning's drive. Al will lead us from the Pacific Coast, over the Santa Cruz Mountains, through the eastern foothills and down to the bay. We will learn about the complex interactions of climate, geology and topography that allow such variety and the ecological principles that produce a wealth of avian diversity.

NOTE: The coast and the San Francisco Bay can be quite cold and windy in October so please bring lots of layers! We will be walking short distances so please wear closed-toed shoes. We will carpool to the off-site location. Bring binoculars but **DO NOT BRING SCOPES**. Bring water and snacks if you need them.

Alvaro (Al) Jaramillo was born in Chile but began birding in Toronto, where he lived as a youth. He studied ecology and evolution, attempting to understand co-evolution in Argentine cowbirds. Research forays and backpacking trips introduced Al to the riches of the Neotropics, where he has traveled extensively. His recent *Birds of Chile* is now the standard field guide for Chile. His *New World Blackbirds: The Icterids* deals with the biology and identification of this fascinating group of birds. He has also contributed both popular and scientific articles in various publications, and wrote the icterid chapter to *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*. Most recently Al finished co-editing a Spanish translation of *A Neotropical Companion* for Birder's Exchange. Al is a member of the California Bird Records Committee, and the AOU's South American Classification Committee. He lives with his family in the cozy coastal town of Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County.

Hands-on with eBird

Date: Saturday, October 11, 2008

Time: 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Synergy 4

Leader: Brian Sullivan, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

eBird is a free internet-based tool for collecting and managing bird observations. eBird gathers data from birders across the Western Hemisphere, organizes those records into a unified database and then makes them available to scientists working to protect birds and their habitats. You'll learn how to collect and enter field data and how to explore the results. We'll take a short walk to collect a sample checklist, then have a step-by-step tutorial through the eBird data entry process. eBird has evolved rapidly in recent years to provide dramatically expanded capabilities and higher quality data. You will get a hands-on opportunity to learn about the new gadgets and the new tools for data storage and data mining now available. We will learn about the growing capability of eBird to assist birders to find birds and keep track of their lists and to provide real-time information about status and distribution.

NOTE: Bring your wireless-capable laptop, if you have one. Bring binoculars and a notepad or notebook. Be prepared for a short walk outdoors.

Brian Sullivan has conducted fieldwork on birds throughout North America for the past 15 years. Birding travels, photography and field projects have taken him to Central and South America, to the Arctic and across North America. He has written and consulted on various books, popular, and scientific literature on North American birds. Research interests include closing the gap between conservation science and birding. He is currently project leader for eBird (www.ebird.org) and the Avian Knowledge Network (www.avianknowledge.net), photographic editor of Birds of North America Online (<http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/>) at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and photographic editor for the journal *North American Birds* (<http://www.americanbirding.org/pubs/nab/index.html>).

Panel Information

Bird Records Committees Panel

Date: Friday, October 10, 2008

Time: 4:45 – 5:45 p.m.

Location: Inspire Ballroom

Moderator: Dave Compton

Members of bird records committees will provide a window into how their particular BRC functions, review interesting and challenging records, and answer questions from the audience. WFO has long supported the work of BRCs, and this panel will provide an excellent opportunity to learn more about their valuable work! Panelists will include Dan Gibson (Alaska), Jon Dunn (California), Martin Meyers (Nevada), and Dave Krueper (New Mexico).

Dave Compton is the chairman of the California Bird Records Committee and a member of the committee since 2006. He is a consulting biologist and copy editor living and working in the Santa Barbara, California, area.

Expert Panel: Slides

Date: Friday, October 10, 2008

Time: 8:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Location: Inspire Ballroom

Moderator: Ed Harper

In this ever popular annual event, a panel of identification experts will be confronted with photographs of challenging birds. Panelists will analyze each image and discuss relevant identification issues. Can they be stumped?

Ed Harper is one of the finest bird photographers in the country, and his programs are always highly informative and full of humor. An educator at heart, he retired as a teacher from American River College in Sacramento. He now spends almost every free moment in the field and leads wildlife tours all over of the world with his wife Susan.

Expert Panel: Sounds

Date: Saturday, October 11, 2008

Time: 4:15 – 5:30 p.m.

Location: Inspire Ballroom

Moderator: Nathan Pieplow

Nathan Pieplow returns to challenge panel participants with the amazing sounds that birds make. Is it a chorus of ten different species, each of which the panelists must identify, or is it simply a European Starling with an overdeveloped talent for mimicry? Come see what the experts think!

Nathan Pieplow see Presenter Biographies.

Keynote Address

The Grinnell Resurvey Project: A Century of Change in California

Date: Saturday, October 11, 2008

Time: At the Banquet

Location: Inspire Ballroom

Speaker: Dr. Carla Cicero

Joseph Grinnell (1877-1939), first Director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (MVZ), was the leading authority on birds of western North America during his lifetime. Grinnell realized in the early 1900s that California was facing serious threats to ecological communities, and had a vision that "...the student of the future will have access to the original record of faunal conditions in California and the west, wherever we now work." To realize this vision, he and his colleagues began to meticulously document the faunal communities across ecologically diverse transects throughout California. Their work, which was published in several major treatises, resulted in a lasting legacy of over 46000 bird specimens, 13000 fieldnote pages, and 2000 images in the MVZ collections. These records provide a remarkable snapshot of early 20th Century biodiversity, and provide a baseline for studying temporal changes in species distributions associated with natural or human-induced factors. As the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology celebrates its centennial anniversary in 2008, it has embarked on a systematic project to resurvey the sites visited by Grinnell and colleagues a century ago. The Grinnell Resurvey Project began in 2003 with the "Yosemite Transect," expanded in 2006 to the "Lassen Transect," and will continue in 2008 with the "Whitney Transect" in the southern Sierras. Additional resurveys are planned for other ecologically diverse areas in California. Resurveys also have been conducted on a smaller scale, such as the University of California, Berkeley, campus. The goal of these studies is to compare historical versus modern communities to assess changes in species distributions, and to associate those differences with changes in land-use and/or climate. I will discuss the Grinnell Resurvey Project at various scales, and emphasize its importance both as view into past changes but also as a baseline for future studies.

Dr. Carla Cicero received her B.S. and Ph.D from the University of California, Berkeley, where she currently holds a position as Staff Curator of Birds at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. Her dissertation focused on geographic variation in the "Plain Titmouse" complex, and included data on morphologic and genetic variation that were used to split this complex into two species, the Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) and the Juniper Titmouse (*B. ridgwayi*). Her current

research integrates field work with museum specimens and GIS analyses to understand patterns and processes of phenotypic, genetic, and/or vocal variation among populations of bird species in western North America. For more information, visit her website:
<http://carlagic.googlepages.com/home>.