

# Tide Rising

(Interim Title)

Fall 2019

Volume 1, Issue 1



This newsletter issue is the result of a transition of ownership of the historic *Tideline* newsletter, published for many years jointly by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society. From now on, the quarterly newsletter will be published by San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society, with input from the same knowledgeable group of people who contributed in the past. Read on for more information on the transition and plans for the future.

Publisher & Editor: [San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society](#) (SFBWS).

SFBWS is a not-for-profit Friends Group for the San Francisco Bay NWR Complex, working along with many Refuge volunteers to keep our public lands available for you and wildlife.

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## Partnerships

by Ceal Craig, PhD, SFBWS BOD President

As the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society publishes its first newsletter, we reflect on **partnerships** and how important they are to us. For over 25 years, the Society has partnered with the *US Fish and Wildlife Service* (USFWS) to publish *Tideline*. Times have changed, and, while our commitment to the USFWS partnership remains strong, constraints have compelled us to split up the duties of communication. Going forward, we will share information from other partners as well as new ideas and opportunities for partnerships. Look for articles from our sister Friends organization, *Friends of the San Pablo Bay NWR*, highlighting volunteers and FWS staff, as well as providing advocacy info.

### In this issue:

- Learn about the San Pablo NWR from Meg Marriott, USFWS Wildlife Biologist
- Tracy Flor Figueroa will share news about the Salinas River NWR
- How to support the Refuge: Giving Tuesday!
- #OptOutside on Black Friday
- How volunteers make a difference.

### International Volunteer Day on December 5.

Let us know what you think! This is a work in progress. If you can help (editing, articles, etc.) reach out to **NEWSLETTER email** and enter "VOLUNTEER" in the subject.

Thanks for reading and enjoy the rest of our very first independent San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society Newsletter!

## Giving Tuesday

The Tuesday after Thanksgiving has become a day to support not-for-profit organizations. We hope you will consider the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex with a [donation to the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society](#) through PayPal (or you can send a check). A general donation is appreciated or you can select these key projects: Summer Camp 2020, FWS & SFBWS Volunteer Recognition efforts, Tai Chi at Don Edwards, Habitat Restoration & Research at Ellicott Slough and Salinas River Refuges.

## Fall Activities

See [USFWS Events](#) and [SFBWS Program pages](#) on websites

San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

Editor: Ceal Craig, PhD. Contributors:

Hope Presley, Francesca Demgen (Friends of San Pablo),  
Meg Marriott (USFWS), Tracy Flor Figueroa (USFWS)

## Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge

Formed in 1973, within 367 acres, this Refuge has six habitat types: Beach, dunes, salt marsh, saline ponds, Salinas River/lagoon, and grasslands. Located south of Moss Landing, it protects several threatened and endangered species, including Western snowy plover, Smith's blue butterfly, and Monterey spineflower.

## Partnerships with Neighboring Communities

*by Tracy Flor Figueroa, Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern, San Francisco Bay NWR Complex*

Take a car ride south of San Jose with me....As we approach the exit towards Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) leaving Highway One, we can already tell the community of wildlife here is far unlike anything seen around the Bay area. We see artichokes fields left and right, a hundred yards away from paved roadways. We have now stepped onto solid agricultural grounds; we will keep driving on the dirt road towards a gated path. Then, walking on that path, we experience a sense of quiet, away from all the urban noises, and all you can hear are shorebirds flying over the saline pond ahead and coyote brushes disturbed by brush rabbits. Every point of view is different, but one feature unique to the Salinas River NWR demands our full attention. Our shoes dig into sand. Before us is the most intact dune ecosystems in the Monterey Bay area.

Since 1973, this small Refuge has been particularly valuable, providing various habitats and being located in the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds. A community of shorebirds, saltmarsh wildlife, and upland creatures have another close by neighbor full of citizens of many cultures and backgrounds. Castroville is the closest town to Salinas River NWR, four miles north. Salinas is a bit east, but also nearby.

The Salinas and Castroville communities have known the Refuge for decades but have not had a proper introduction. Recently, Refuge staff and volunteers were excited to have the residents of Castroville and Salinas finally get to know their Wildlife Refuge neighbor. The introduction required Refuge staff and volunteers to learn about the community first. With the majority of the residents being primarily Spanish-speaking, communicating in Spanish was essential.

Besides a common language, getting to know community culture was another partnership building factor. My team was from different Latino backgrounds, including Ivette Lopez from the Sacramento regional office, Miguel Marquez Refuge Ranger, and a FWS volunteer Yeimy Cifuentes. Together we achieved a connection with Salinas youth by introducing them to Salinas in a different light. Our partner through the success of our *Take a Glimpse of Salinas* program was *Andy Ausonia Library* director, David Tavarez. Soon we will have programs with



Miguel Marquez with Castroville youth



Castroville residents. Miguel Marquez with Salinas youth



Refuge Staff leading a shorebird activity with Salinas Youth

Using shorebird classification and sand dune formation educational games, the children's interest and prior knowledge of Salinas was sparked. They could not get enough of the activities and getting to know the Refuge Ranger. We had a flood of excited questions in both English and Spanish. A proper introduction has finally happened and we look forward to growing this relationship with Salinas and Castroville to establish a sustainable environmental educational program for the Salinas River NWR. Our goal was simply to get to know each other, we have begun developing partnerships, and we will continue to enhance these in the future.

## San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Formed in 1974, San Pablo Bay Refuge provides 21,000 acres of tidal and seasonal wetlands habitat. These acres located in the North Bay included historically a military base and lands for agricultural and hunting.

### Best Management Practices for Phytophthora control

*by Meg Marriott, Wildlife Biologist, San Pablo Bay NWR and Marin Islands NWR;  
Josh Nuzzo, Nursery Manager, Point Blue; and Jax Vernacchia, SCA intern*

Most commonly known throughout the Bay Area for the species *Phytophthora ramorum* that causes Sudden Oak Death, Phytophthora is a genus of plant damaging oomycetes or water molds that spread in water, soil and host plants. Phytophthoras parasitize the tissue of plants, inoculating them with spores, weakening them and making them more susceptible to drought and disease, potentially causing plant die off. These water molds often spread due to human activity, including the transportation of infected soil and host plants to and from plant nurseries.

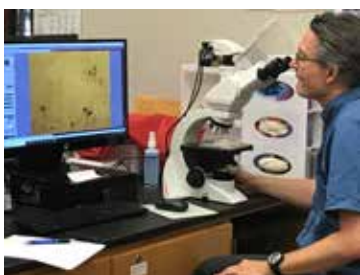
Since 2007, San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) has partnered with **Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW)** to annually propagate, grow and plant thousands of native plants per year on the Refuge. Over the past two years, nursery manager Josh Nuzzo of Point Blue/STRAW has brought the Refuge nursery into compliance with Phytosphere best management practices (BMPs) for Phytophthora control to assure that this pathogen does not spread through nursery grown plants into native restoration sites on the Refuge. Nursery facility BMPs include ensuring proper drainage throughout the nursery, placing plants only on metal tables 3ft or taller and installing mandatory foot cleaning stations for all nursery visitors at all entrance points. Other BMPs for preventing Phytophthora spread through soil and stock include (but are not limited to) baking all soil at 140-150°F for 30 minutes, bleaching or steaming all pots, prohibiting entrance of untested plant material into the nursery, and growing plants from seed.



Phytophthora prevention reminder at SPBNWR Nursery entrance  
*by M Marriott*

As part of the nursery BMPs Josh and Point Blue/STRAW are always seeking ways to improve on existing Phytophthora control practices. In November of 2018 Josh invited members of Phytosphere, CDFA and other native plant nurseries to inspect the Refuge nursery facilities and to suggest improvements for eventual Nursery Accreditation. As a result, Josh now tests plants for Phytophthora using one or more of several methods. All methods take a significant amount of time and a lot of pears! Pears are used as a “bait” for the Phytophthora zoospores and can lure them out of soil. Once the pears have had the time for inoculation, Josh then inspects for lesions that indicate positive Phytophthora presence. All material testing positive for Phytophthora is properly disposed of.

In June of 2019 Josh collaborated with Jax Vernacchia, a SCA intern for the Refuge, who facilitated a tour for Refuge and Point Blue/STRAW staff of the National Ornamentals Research Site at Dominican University of California. Dominican University, Jax’s alma mater, was one of the first research centers in California to begin study of Phytophthora control. We met with Wolfgang Schweigkofler, PhD to discuss Phytophthora BMPs, and to share ideas about control in a Refuge nursery environment. After the visit Jax recorded some ways in which all people can help prevent the spread of



Dr. Schweigkofler inspects Phytophthora spores  
*by M Marriott*

Phytophthora, namely; not leaving plants in standing water, asking the nursery you are buying from if the soil has been tested for the pathogen, only using clean soil for planting (most packaged soils are treated and do not have the pathogen), washing mud or dirt from your shoes before hiking, and not planting untested plants in natural spaces such as oak groves or grasslands.

In **summary**, practicing Phytophthora BMPs in and out of nursery settings helps to ensure that we are “doing no harm” when we are moving plants. On the Refuge these practices are especially important to preserve unique and limited habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and trust resources that we serve to protect.

# Friends Corner

## San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

by Cecilia (Ceal) D. Craig, PhD, President, Board of Directors

**TIDELINE 2.0:** For the first time, the Society is publishing a newsletter directly. For the past 25 years plus, the Tideline newsletter was a joint publishing effort of US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Society. If you were on that previous Tideline email distribution list, you will now receive monthly emails about programs and special **events** directly from the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

The Society's new newsletter will publish quarterly articles about animals, habitats, restoration efforts, people (volunteers and staff), research, and Society efforts. It will be sent using Constant Contact via email **if you have signed up for it** (we cannot use the USFWS distribution list). In addition, you will be able to download a printable Acrobat file from the Society website.

Submit your newsletter name idea: We need a new name! **Send ideas for a new name for this NEW quarterly publication to [newsletter@sfbws.com](mailto:newsletter@sfbws.com)**

**ON THE TRAIL:** In September, my husband and I, along with other docents and volunteers from other organizations, enjoyed a pontoon boat ride organized by Santa Clara County Parks, called **Alviso Marsh Safari**. The A6 "pond" at the north end of Alviso Slough where it joins Coyote Creek has been transformed by levee breaks. No longer a pond: More like groups of rushes and plants in the middle of a water expanse!



A6 Pond & Alviso Slough, by Ceal Craig

During the September Drawbridge tour, we experienced a very high tide; water was high up in the Triangle Marsh and other marsh areas. Coyote Creek west of the bridge was a river! We saw that migration season has begun. Ducks are arriving at Refuge ponds for the winter. Many shorebirds species are migrating here, some just passing through.

Gerry McChesney, *Farallon Islands* Refuge Manager, in his July report shared that the Farallons had a poor seabird breeding season overall, except perhaps Brandt's Cormorants, likely due to El Niño conditions. In June, an **Ancient Murrelet family group nearby was the first record of a chick seen in California**; known to breed only far north of us, the chick likely did not originate from the Farallones. Unfortunately the negative impact of humans was seen too. As Point Blue Conservation Science researchers, Mike Johns and Pete Warzybok, reported, "Two adult California sea lions were seen with monofilament embedded tightly around the neck, and a common murre was seen with ~ 50% of its breast feathers covered with black oil." **One encouraging note was the highest (recorded) Steller sea lion pup counts in decades -- a positive trend.**

**CRITICAL Volunteer NEED:** Please consider helping on the Society Board of Directors or a Committee.

**Interested in learning more?** Email [Ceal.Craig\[at\]SFBWS\[dot\]com](mailto:Ceal.Craig@SFBWS.com). We need you!

Volunteers are vital to assisting with nature store operations in Fremont and Alviso Refuge locations. Email Mary Deschene at [Mary.Deschene\[at\]SFBWS\[dot\]com](mailto:Mary.Deschene@SFBWS.com) or 510-792-0222 ext. 364 for more information or to find out what days volunteers are needed.

Check out [www.sfbws.com](http://www.sfbws.com). Visit the National Wildlife Refuge Association site [refugeassociation.org](http://refugeassociation.org) to understand challenges faced by Refuges today.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** USFWS will publish events monthly in their monthly email and on their [website](#). The Society website will continue to put these on our calendar tab. Notices for events that involve fund raising or advocacy will be highlighted in the Society newsletter and website.



North Drawbridge, Warm Springs Slough Bridge, by Ceal Craig

# Environmental Education & Science Corners

## Summer Camp, 39th Year!

by Hope Presley, SFBWS Interpretative Specialist

The Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge's Environmental Education Center in Alviso hosted the Marsh-In Summer Camp program for the 39th year, offering a free, fun-filled week with an animal themed day program for 65 lucky young campers. Presenters bring in live animals to engage and connect campers with different types of animals found on and around the Refuge. Our older campers are invited to spend an overnight Thursday where they experience sleeping under the stars and learning about nocturnal animals. Marsh-In Summer Camp represents a tradition of leadership and coming of age. Once campers reach 7th grade, they are eligible for the Habitat Heroes program, which trains them to become camper group leaders.

San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society sponsors the Marsh-In Summer Camp program with support for a Summer Camp Coordinator and materials. **Special thank you to Cargill for donating to this year's summer camp fund!**



Campers looking for birds in Refuge habitats

Photos by Hope Presley

Habitat Heroes put on a Trash-In Show to teach campers how pollution affects wildlife



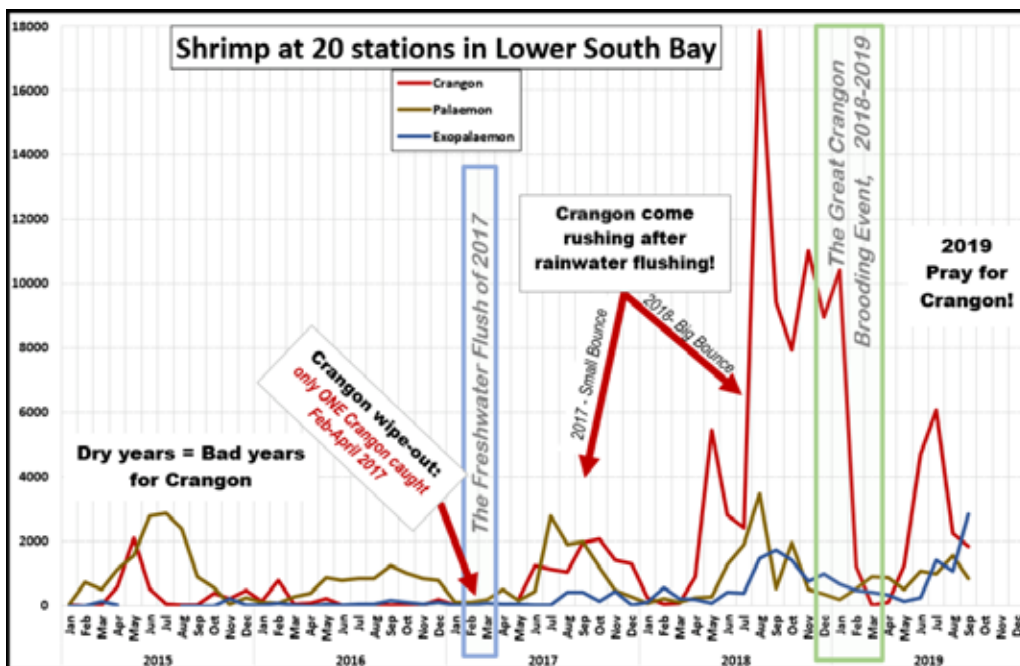
Campers hiking a levee exploring what uses the Refuge habitats

## Science News: Fish Trawls

by Jim Ervin, retired scientist

Each month UC Davis researchers do a fish trawl, recording levels of fish, shrimp, mollusks, and more in Coyote Creek and nearby sloughs. In September's trawl, a type of non-native shrimp, *Exopalaemon*, were the largest sample. However, Jim Ervin (retired scientist), is hoping for another strong year for *Crangon*. 2018 was a blow-out year for them

- over 67,000 were caught, compared to 10,000 in 2017.



**Why is all this important?**  
 Jim says "Because Crangon shrimp have always been important scavengers and carnivores in the Bay ecosystem. We must know our shrimp! Plus, shrimp are good food for anything big enough to eat a shrimp!" Scientific data gathering is critical to understand what is happening in our Refuges: is the habitat and food sources for the Refuge inhabitants improving, stable, or decreasing?

Shrimp Chart from UC Davis otter trawls in Lower South Bay (raw data) by Jim Ervin

# North Bay Notes

## Friends of San Pablo National Wildlife Refuge

by Francesca Demgen, BOD member

*North Bay Notes* is a new column highlighting the people, places and wildlife of the San Pablo Bay, Marin Islands, and Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). The more than 18,000 acres of San Pablo Bay NWR provide many opportunities for people to experience the solitude and the excitement of wild places.

Located along Highway 37, Cullinan Ranch is a highly visible example of habitat restoration and public access opportunities on San Pablo Bay NWR. Breached in 2015, rising and falling tides are transforming more than a thousand acres of former north bay agricultural lands to channels and marsh that support fish and fishers, ducks and hunters, scenic vistas and photographers. On September 15, a flotilla of 24 kayaks launched at Cullinan Ranch. The event was offered in partnership with Bike and Kayak Vallejo and the Visions of the Wild Festival, which is spearheaded by the U.S. Forest Service.

**Building partnerships** and integrating the refuge into the community have been the dual goal of the Friends of San Pablo Bay NWR and the Refuge. For nearly ten years, the man in charge has been Don Brubaker, San Pablo Bay Refuge manager. Don's ability to lead by listening to his talented, hard working team and partners has resulted in sweeping transformation for wildlife habitat and public access on the refuge. He has successfully balanced and blended the refuge's mission to conserve and restore wildlife habitat and increase the refuge's community visibility. He took advantage of every opportunity to moved the refuge forward by leaps and bounds.

With much to celebrate, Don has decided it's a perfect time to retire, he says "Although my federal career of a little over 21 years is considered short, I've managed to pack a lot into that time. Whether fixing army helicopters, restoring a meadow in a wilderness using pack horses, banding and counting birds, capturing and radio tracking deer, helping add 10,000 acres to refuges across the region, fighting wildland fire, or restoring nearly 4,000 acres to wetlands, I've most enjoyed my office peeps and the comradery with partners towards conservation of species and habitats."

Don's quick wit and congenial manner will be missed. We wish Don and Kathleen Brubaker well as they transition to retirement.



Kayakers at the Cullinan Ranch Unit of San Pablo Bay NWR benefited from a partnership between the Friends and Bike and Kayak Vallejo and the U.S. Forest Service's annual Visions of the Wild Festival. *Photo by Francesca Demgen*

### #OptOutside

What is it and when? [Conceived by REI](#), it is a day to experience our beautiful outdoors instead of going shopping! In 2015, REI closed its stores on Black Friday (the day after Thanksgiving) and paid their employees to take the day off and spend it outdoors. Each year, more and more companies and more people join REI *Outside*. REI asserts "**#OptOutside** isn't just about Black Friday. It is a mindset. It is about choosing life outdoors. And it has become a way for people to share who they are and what we believe in."

This year, after you spend time with family and friends on Thanksgiving, consider spending the following day outside, at our Refuges. What a way to relax, gain solace, and get away from the news cycle!

### Photography Corner

Fall photos over the years *by Ceal Craig*



**Avocets in winter plumage & Northern Shovelers**



**Brown Pelican in Artesian Slough**



**Rabbit**  
New Chicago marsh

## Volunteer to help San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuges!

This [link](#) brings you to the latest edition of the *Slough News!* This quarterly newsletter published by USFWS describes volunteer needs, some happenings for volunteers, and describes recognition activities too.

**FREMONT OPPORTUNITIES:** The Refuge needs volunteers to staff the Fremont Visitor Center (VC) information desk. Once trained, volunteers will work a minimum of two shifts a month for a minimum of four months. Training is six hours, broken up over three Saturdays: November 9, 16, and 23, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Walk the trails, discuss the history of the refuge and its mission, find out more about the wildlife that lives on the Refuge, learn about working at the VC desk, and go over standard visitor questions. To volunteer at the information desk, USFWS needs you to attend all of the sessions. More info: contact Paul\_Mueller@fws.gov or call 510-792-0222, ext. 361.

**ALVISO OPPORTUNITIES:** At the Environment Education Center (EEC) in Alviso.

Lead school field trips that educate children about water conservation, our local endangered species and habitats that surround the bay! Training includes a Field Trip Orientation and shadowing another leader on two field trips. Contact Genie at genie\_moore@fws.gov or 408-262-5513 ext. 100. Other opportunities include: Restoration Project volunteers help build the EEC's ecotone through restoration efforts, planting native plants and pulling various invasive species to ensure that the native plants have a chance to thrive. Weekend Restoration Work Days are available for students who need volunteer hours: December 14, January 18, and February 22. Be a Community Scientist by monitoring butterflies, birds, and other species at the EEC. Interested in these or other opportunities at the EEC? Join us for a Volunteer Orientation on Saturday, January 18th from 1:00 - 2:00pm. Contact Genie at genie\_moore@fws.gov or 408-262-5513 ext. 100.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:** Interested in volunteer opportunities at any of the other refuges in the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex? Contact Volunteer Coordinator Paul Mueller at paul\_mueller@fws.gov or call 510-792-0222, ext. 361

## In Memory....

Norton Bell, a long-term USFWS volunteer, passed away on June 15. Norton had volunteered hundreds of hours at the Don Edwards SFB NWR over many years. He won numerous awards, including being recognized as a Refuge Volunteer of the Year. Well-known for counting harbor seals, several newspapers featured his work. Norton was an avid lifelong bicyclist who kept a very good pace according to all. He retired from volunteering in 2018.

Alvin Dockter's life was remembered in a heart-touching memorial earlier this year. Alvin was a long-term USFWS volunteer over several decades, leading photography walks and building a manual of plants on the Don Edwards SFB NWR that is still in use today. He donated several photographs to the Society's book about Drawbridge: *Sinking Underwater, a ghost town's amazing legacy.*

We wanted to recognize the hours of efforts and passion that both of these volunteers shared with our volunteer community.

## People of Note: Volunteers

Tooky and Gene Campione have volunteered at the Refuge Complex for many years. Gene manages the Society donor and member database. Tooky has over 10,000 hours: that is the equivalent of almost five full-time work years! She attended a 1984 art show fund raiser and had always been interested in natural sciences. So, with a background in nursing, education, and history, Tooky began volunteering in 1988. She liked working with the staff: "Better than textbooks!" Her fondest memories were "refuge parties, fund raisers, and off-site reacting with the public." Her advice for volunteers: *Listen! Ask questions of staff so you know what is going on. Don't be afraid of saying, "I don't know"*

## SFBWS Nature Stores - Holiday Gift Giving

PLEASE REMEMBER to share your values with those you love. The Nature Stores at the Fremont Visitor Center and the Alviso Environmental Education Center are stocked with items to inspire and inform about the Refuges, with a local focus. Find pocket guides, books (including Drawbridge book), toys, T-shirts, hoodies, hats, and more – relevant and fun items – that you can proudly give to your family and friends this holiday season, to share your love of the Refuge. And you can also give the [gift of San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society membership](#)

Fremont Visitor Center 11-4:30 W-F, Saturday 10am-5pm,  
Environmental Education Center – Saturday 10am-5pm

# THANK YOU TO SFBWS SUPPORTERS!

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who have made gifts to the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society between July 1 and September 30, 2019.

## Senior/Student

Marilyn Bauriedel  
 Patricia Callaway  
 Carol Christensen  
 Ann Clemenza  
 Pat Gordon  
 Jinny Koehler  
 Joyce Lewis  
 Gladys McFarland  
 William Milestone  
 Ruth Mundy  
 Joanne Preston  
 Marian Sadowski  
 Connie Simone

## Individual

John Bowers  
 Katherine Kleinsteinber  
 Madeline Luthard  
 Marge Wood

## Family

Darlene Ceremello  
 John & Melanie McKenna  
 Sally Smyth  
 Tri-City Ecology Center  
 Phillip Vallejo

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Joyce Barlett  
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## Memorials/Honorariums

In honor of Victor McElhaney

## Donations

AmazonSmile  
 Pavel Jirousek  
 Kathy Kleinsteinber,  
 "Artists for Conservation"  
 Manjit Manukonda  
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## Help Us Protect Your San Francisco Bay Wetlands!

Mail your donation to: San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society,  
 P.O. Box 234, Newark, CA 94560.

You may also become a member at [www.sfbws.com](http://www.sfbws.com).  
 For a gift membership, call 510-792-0222 ext. 364.

[LINK here](#)

San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, a Friends group for the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

**YES! I want to support San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society and its programs.**

My membership will help the *San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex* and its south Bay and Outer Bay Refuges

(Don Edwards, Salinas River, Ellicott Slough, and the Farallon Islands)

Enclosed is my contribution of:

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**Thank you for your support!**

For more than 30 years, the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society has:

- Introduced the refuge to tens of thousands of students of all ages
- Helped fund the Bair Island restoration and Management Plan, restoration work at Antioch Dunes NWR, and uplands restoration at the Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- Provided Saturday staff in EEC through long-term partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program
- Provided funding for a new boardwalk at the New Chicago Marsh Trail at the EEC.
- Funded a new greenhouse
- Provided funds for a native plant nursery
- And much more....

**Help continue this tradition by becoming a Supporting Member of the Society.**

Benefits include:

- Free subscription to Tideline newsletter
- Tax deduction to the extent permitted by law
- Free book - Exploring Our Baylands
- 15% discount at Nature Stores
- The joy of helping protect this important environment

[www.sfbws.com](http://www.sfbws.com)

