

Tide Rising

Summer 2024 Volume V, Issue 4



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

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

Table of Contents

Exploration and Discovery

 Do You Know About the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge? (p. 2)

SFBWS & Watershed Watchers Corner

- <u>Springtime and Early Summer</u> <u>Happenings (p. 3)</u>
- <u>Watershed Watchers Spring Recap</u> (p. 4)

From the Field

- <u>On The Trail... (p. 5-6)</u>
- From the Ponds... (p. 7)

NEWS

- SFBWS Staff Changes (p. 8)
- Volunteer Corner (p. 9)
- Nature Store Opening (p. 9)
- <u>Upcoming Activities (p. 11-12)</u>

SFBWS INFO

- Volunteer Opportunities (p. 10)
- Membership Information (p. 13)
- Donors & Supporters (p. (13)

EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

 Exploration and Discovery
 SFBWS and others hoping to address lack of federal funding and sufficient staff for US Fish and Wildlife Service through congressional advocacy and asking for community support

SFBWS and Watershed Watchers Corner

- Hear about what SFBWS has been up to over the past months, including Earth Day, Nature Store updates, staff changes, need for volunteers, April SFBWS BOD meeting, and more
- SFBWS also led field trips at the Refuge for college classes, visited Boys & Girls Clubs and classrooms for activities, held several public programs and volunteer events, and hosted annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet; now planning Marsh-In Summer Camp

From the Field

- Sunset walk at Bair Island, trip to learn about weather and climate at Penn State, taking a restored train at Cuyahoga Valley National Park
- Unidentified and/or yellowfin Goby counts tend to surge around April; as of April 2024, the total baby fish count was 485

Enjoy the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society Summer Newsletter! Share your ideas for future articles! What interests you? <u>Tell Us!</u> Thanks for reading, and enjoy the rest of the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society's Quarterly Newsletter!

San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

Editors: Clayton Ou, Ceal Craig, PhD *Contributors*:

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Masthead: Earth Day Graphic (Olivia Poulos)



Left: Don Edwards with luminous yellow-green water under bright mid-day sun (Ambarish Goswami)

Upcoming Activities: pages 11-12

@ambarish.naturephotos
More photos of the Refuges

Tide Rising, Vol. V, Issue 4: Page 1

Exploration and Discovery

Do You Know About The Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge?

by Mary Deschene, Program Administrator, San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

Thirty miles out to sea, teeming with ocean wildlife, this Refuge is an impressive unit of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, and you can see it on <u>a live webcam</u>!



West End (Maintop) Island at sunset on the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge (Alyssa Clevenstine)

Marine Mammal and Seabird Breeding Grounds

<u>The live webcam</u> is a partnership of the Point Blue Conservation Science, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Academy of Sciences.

You can also read more about the science on the site:

"The Farallones host globally significant wildlife populations, including hundreds of thousands of seabirds and thousands of seals and sea lions. They are also a place of science where biologists from Point Blue Conservation Science study this complex ecosystem every day of the year, looking at the data to find ways to guide conservation and restoration of the islands in the face of climate change and other threats."

Underfunding and Cutbacks

Operations on the Islands, to study and support this vast variety of wildlife, is a large cooperative venture involving many organizations, and unfortunately, this necessary *daily* effort is impacted by the lack of federal funding for the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has announced that is no longer able to continue to fund year round full-time scientific research projects:

"The Service is adapting the way we manage the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. We are working with Point Blue Conservation Science on a plan that evaluates year-round activities and [will] focus on priority seasonal activities due to resource challenges."

These resource challenges are the result of continued underfunding of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the federal budget. With growing allocations of lands and waters to be protected, and inflation-eroded funding that puts the real level of staffing and maintenance back at least to 2017 levels, the Service has been doing everything possible to maintain its high standards of protecting wildlife but has to face the reality of too few dollars and too few staff. It is very unfortunate that this coincides with the increased need to protect biodiversity given our current climate situation.

The deferred maintenance on the *Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge* is estimated to be about \$8 million, for the buildings and equipment needed to operate scientific projects in this challenging ocean environment.

SFBWS and others are hoping to address this need through congressional advocacy, and we are asking for community support to help turn this situation around. If interested in learning how to help, please email: mary.deschene@sfbayws.org, with Farallon Island in the subject line.

Learn more in this Mercury News article.

Spring Time and Early Summer Happenings

by Cecilia (Ceal) D. Craig, BOD President, San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

Much has happened these past few months. Earth Day, Nature Store Updates & Need for Volunteers, April SFBWS BOD meeting. Read on!

Earth Day was a rousing success, thanks to the SFBWS and FWS Staff AND the many volunteers who made that event at the Environmental Education Center happen. The Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) renewed their support for the upcoming grant year (July – June). This partnership has spanned almost three decades. It funds one full-time specialist, and 1-2 associate positions that provide public programs, outreach programs to schools and other groups, supports Summer Camp efforts and plays a key role in the organization of special events, like Earth Day. Sirena Lao is the Watershed Watchers (WW) Interpretative Specialist and Program Coordinator, and Leila Inocentes (see another page in this newsletter), Watershed Watchers Associate, joined the WW program taking the place of Maddie Cline who joined another organization focused on her specialties, while continuing to support us on a part-time basis for other programs. We will miss Maddie very much and wish her all the best in her new role.

Since late last year, we have been working hard to have the Nature Store in the Fremont Visitor Contact Station open on Saturdays from 10am – 2pm and hope soon to ALSO have it open on Sundays, if we can get more volunteers. **Interested**? We do need help! Write Volunteer@SFBayWS.org and Neels (SFBWS Volunteer Coordinator, herself a volunteer, will answer your questions.

Our April Board of Directors meeting was held at the Environmental Education Center and Zoom (Hybrid). We discussed funding challenges for new staff positions, such as an Executive Director and a Volunteer Services Coordinator. Grant applications and explorations were discussed, as was work on fund development and in Watershed Watchers program. Our next Board meeting is July 17. We have two Board of Directors openings, if you would like to volunteer your time. Write me at <u>Ceal.Craig@SFBayWS.org</u> if you are interested in learning more.

EEC Construction continues! I was doing some pollinator photo upload to iNaturalist this week, sat on a boardwalk bench, and watched the construction for almost an hour. I can truly believe 200 trucks a day. WOW!



Shoreline Levee construction near the EEC: June 20, 2024 (Ceal Craig)

Watershed Watchers Corner

Watershed Watchers Spring Recap

by Sirena Lao, Interpretive Specialist & Watershed Watchers Program Coordinator, SFBWS

Spring has come and gone! The spring months are busy for environmental organizations, and the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society is no exception. We hosted Earth Day at the Refuge outside the Environmental Education Center (EEC), participated



Endangered species puppet show for Earth Day at the Refuge (Deepti Marella)

In this whirlwind of programs, we've learned that the majority of people we engage have never visited the Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge before attending our events. We are grateful to provide opportunities for people to experience this amazing ecosystem and share how to help through everyday actions that protect the watershed. in three Earth Day events in the community, led field trips at the Refuge for college classes, visited Boys & Girls Clubs and classrooms for activities, held several public programs and volunteer events, and hosted our annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. Phew!



TK class visit with students holding up salt marsh harvest mouse masks (Miguel Marquez)

With the arrival of summer, we still have plenty to look forward to. With some new staff onboard, we are hard at work planning the 45th annual Marsh-In Summer Camp. We are also excited to bring back some of our volunteer docent-led programs this summer to the EEC! Check out our upcoming events to learn about these events and more. Happy exploring!

"We are grateful to provide opportunities for people to experience this amazing ecosystem and share how to help through everyday actions that protect the watershed."

- Sirena Lao, Interpretive Specialist & Watershed Watchers Program Coordinator, San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

From the Field

On The Trail...

by Cecilia (Ceal) D. Craig, BOD President, San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society

On May 23, a pleasant evening with just a small threat of moisture, Aja Yee, SFBWS Peninsula Programs Coordinator, led a sunset walk at Bair Island. While walking the trail, I remembered the day many of us watched the "final" removal of a levee after a year or two of restoration in that area, and then the tide began to do its magic. Along with many folks from different parts of the Bay area, that evening we learned about the history of this unit, not frequently visited, of the *Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR*. A lovely trail, relatively accessible (I used a rolling walker), with many birds and views of the surrounding bay. I gained a sense of peace and positive vibes from visiting this special place. My photos don't do it justice. I'm hoping more photos will be shared soon. Sign up for one of the upcoming Sunset walks; you will enjoy it.



Aja Yee (Ceal Craig)

View of Bair Island (Ceal Craig)

An invasive crown daisy! SFBBO and POST have been working hard the past year to remove the daisies, along with other plants (Ceal Craig)

In June, I headed east for a Road's Scholar trip to learn about weather and climate, held at Penn State in central Pennsylvania. A bit of rain, lectures from meteorology professors and experts, visits to a major private weather station and a National Weather Services center, all brought home how much weather influences our daily lives and how it will affect our futures. As I drove and then trained back to the Bay area over the next week plus, I met many people who are moving to use more local native plants in their backyards, and how green spaces, like arboretums, give people information to help them learn about these critical plants. Discovering and learning new things can be a lifelong commitment. The Refuge restoration efforts use native species and help many animal species have better habitats and homes. We need to do our part in our own backyards, not just at the Refuge.

(Continued on next page)



Left: Jewelwing & beardtongues at Holden Arboretum, Ohio (Ceal Craig)

Tide Rising, Vol. V, Issue 4: Page 5

From the Field

On The Trail... (CONTINUED)

Later I visited the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and boarded a restored train, staffed and maintained by volunteers. As I walked back to the parking lot afterwards, by the Cuyahoga River, a double-crested cormorant was drying out a bit. Several people asked me what it was. While not rare in that area, it is not common. I explained how it can dive deep in the water



Double-crested cormorant, Cuyahoga River, Ohio (Ceal Craig)

(oceans and deep lakes) because of its denser bones, compared to typical birds, and how the feathers are not waterproof. Hence, these ungainly yet graceful birds, need to dry them!

Last, as summer takes hold, watching and **listening** to a house wren family lifted my spirits too!



Black-Necked Stilt, Don Edwards SFBNWR. May-25, 2024 (Ceal Craig)



House Wrens, Northeast Ohio (Ceal Craig)



Snowy Egret, Don Edwards SFBNWR. May-25, 2024 (Ceal Craig)



Brown Pelicans, Bair Island. May-23, 2024 (Ceal Craig)

Tide Rising, Vol. V, Issue 4: Page 6

From the Field

From the Ponds...

by James Ervin, Retired Scientist

I like to call April *Traditional Baby Fish Month* because of the hordes of baby unidentified/yellowfin Gobies we see in April and sometimes May. Gobies are described as "babies" when they are around 25 mm or less in length. Gobies are usually distinguishable from sculpins and *Clupeiforms* even at this small size.

Traditional Baby Fish Month was established in 2017. By that point, data showed that unidentified and/or yellowfin Goby counts tended to surge around April each year- give or take a month or so.

High baby goby years include 2017, 2021, and 2022. Their numbers were literally "off the charts" then! Meanwhile, low baby goby years included 2015, 2019, and 2020. (NOTE: Trawls were NOT performed in April 2020 due to the COVID safety shutdown. We may have entirely missed the baby goby surge that year.)

As of April 2024, the total baby fish count was 485 unidentified and 62 yellowfin gobies. (over 240 from Pond A19 alone!)



Baby Fishes, April 6, 2024 (Jim Ervin)

One might ask: "Why do baby fishes (and birds) hatch around April?" The answer: bugs! In a healthy marsh, bugs bloom in the springtime warmth after

abundant rain, for example <u>midges like ghost midges</u> and phantom midges. <u>Read more about swarming</u> <u>ghost midges here</u>.



Left: Swarms of Ghost Midges march across the landscape near Zanker Landfill, April 2024 (*Jim Ervin*)

Tide Rising, Vol. V, Issue 4: Page 7

NEWS SFBWS Staff Changes



Danielle McCormick (Danielle McCormick)

Danielle McCormick,

Summer Camp Associate for Summer 2024

Hello everyone! My name is Danielle McCormick, and I am very excited to be this year's Summer Camp Associate. After spending the majority of the last two decades working in the service industry, I decided to switch career trajectories in 2020. I recently graduated with a vocational degree in Forestry & Wildlife Conservation from Penn Foster College and I am looking forward to applying what I've learned to this year's camp!

I spent much of the past four years volunteering with the USFWS, as well as with California State Parks. In this time, I volunteered at the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex in the Central Valley, helped to reopen Big Basin Redwoods State Park after the CZU Fire in 2020, and I also became a Docent Naturalist at Año Nuevo State Park. I rounded out this experience by working for the East Bay Regional Park District last summer, and by transferring all of these skills to my current, simultaneously held position as an Animal Rescue & Control Assistant at the Peninsula Humane Society.

This year's camp, while being a bit shorter in length, will still be just as exciting and enriching for the wonderful kids who join us. I have been working closely with Don Edwards NWR staff in order to make this summer one to remember and it will be both equally educational and a lot of fun! With the help of other staff from SFBWS, USFWS environmental educators and biologists, as well as our wonderful volunteers, I am looking forward to providing an excellent summer program for our local communities.



Leila Inocentes (Leila Inocentes)

Leila Inocentes,

Interpretive Associate

Leilajoins us as our new Interpretive Associate. She recently graduated Cum Laude from San Jose State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Climate Change Strategies. Leila is also currently interning for Santa Clara County Parks and has been interning there for the past year in various departments, such as the Volunteer Program and Outdoor Recreation Department. She is very passionate about environmental education, environmental/habitat restoration, wetland/ coastal studies, and natural resource management. Leila grew up hiking and camping with her parents, which fostered her love of the outdoors and inspired her to major in environmental studies.

Outside of work, Leila has many hobbies including content creation, graphic design, and photography. She is very excited to be our new Interpretive Associate as the position combines several passions of hers: environmental studies, graphic design, and content creation. Leila is looking forward to connecting with staff, volunteers, and community members at events, tours, summer camp, and more!

NEWS (CONTINUED)

Volunteer Corner: Meet Ian McAndrews



Ian McAndrews (Ian McAndrews)

Ian is a recent volunteer who stepped up to be a consistent and frequent presence at our Nature Store, helping it be open every Saturday. He is interested in environmental issues and law enforcement. Eager to learn more about the Refuge and share it with visitors, we could not have kept the store open regularly without him!

Nature Store and Visitor Center Opening

The San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society Nature Store is open with regular hours at the Visitor Center, 2 Marshlands Road, Fremont, from 10am-2pm on Saturdays. We are recruiting and training new volunteers with the help of Neels Kulshrestha, Volunteer Coordinator for the Nature Store. If you would like to help us greet visitors, and expand to **Sundays**, check out the full description of the position at VolunteerMatch.org and search for Nature Store in Fremont, or see: https://www.volunteermatch.org/search/opp3717197.jsp



Items available in the Nature Store (SFBWS)

MISSION: The San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society seeks to nurture in the public a sense of understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuges, their natural and cultural history, and to conserve, preserve, and restore bay lands as essential wildlife habitat.

VISION: Working with partners, we envision wildlife and natural resources thriving in a healthier SF Bay region/area and a reinvigorated society supporting stewardship.

COMMITTEES

Looking for volunteers!

- Fund Development & Marketing Committee. Reach out to <u>Mary Deschene</u> if you are interested!
- Nature Store in Fremont Visitor Contact Station on weekends. We are beginning to expand to Sundays! Reach out to Neels at <u>volunteer@sfbayws.org</u> if you are interested!

FY24 SFBWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cecilia (Ceal) Craig, PhD, F. SWE, President Neil Butani, Vice-President Avleen Kohli, Secretary* Grace Koz, Treasurer Chris Kitting, PhD, Founding Director Ravi Kohli, Director* Deepak Nettem, Director Namit Saksena, Director

* no relation

SFBWS Staff

Mary Deschene, Program Administrator Sirena Lao, Watershed Watchers Coordinator Madison Cline, Interpretive, Restoration and Education Associate Aja Yee, Peninsula Programs & Restoration Education Danielle McCormick, Summer Camp and Programs Associate Leila Inocentes, Interpretive Associate Mando Valencia, Wildlife Biology Associate

Volunteer Positions Available With SFBWS



Fremont Visitors' Center Nature Store Volunteer

• Key activities: greet visitors, answer questions, ring up sales

• Skills: Friendly and outgoing. Interested in outdoor recreation and wildlife preservation

- This position is suitable for high school students on up to retirees. Regular commitment preferred
- Get to know the Refuge people and issues, spread the word
- Help people find what they need, and learn about wildlife in the process
- Duties: opening and closing shifts, especially weekends

See ongoing SFBWS Volunteer Positions at VolunteerMatch

Contact: volunteer@sfbayws.org

Call or leave a message: 505-417-2561

ACTIVITIES ON THE REFUGE

Join us for free public events at the Refuge! Check out the links to learn more and register.

JULY EVENTS

Twilight Marsh Walk - Fremont

Saturday, July 6, 6:45pm - 8:30pm Experience the salt marsh at twilight on an easy stroll along refuge trails (about 0.6 miles). https://TwilightMarshWalkJuly2024.eventbrite.com

Bair Island Sunset Walk - Redwood City Saturday, July 6, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Enjoy the sunset while learning about the fascinating history of Bair Island and its local wildlife species as we take an easy 0.8 mile stroll along the marsh. <u>https://BairSunsetJul.eventbrite.com</u>

Why Tides Matter - Alviso

Sunday, July 7, 10:30am - 12:00pm

Join us for an in-person presentation and guided tour to learn all about tides with docent Laurel Stell. <u>https://TidesJuly2024.eventbrite.com</u>

Twilight Tales at the Refuge - Alviso

Saturday, July 13, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Learn about the history of the Refuge and experience the salt marsh at twilight with docent Larry Rosenblum.

https://TwilightTales.eventbrite.com

Trail Maintenance Volunteer Work Day at the EEC - Alviso

Sunday, July 14, 9:30am - 12:00pm

Volunteer to help improve the trails around the EEC to keep them accessible. https://VolunteerWorkDay-July2024.eventbrite.com

Family Bird Walk - Fremont

Saturday, July 20, 12:00pm - 2:00pm

Recommended for families & children ages 5-10. Kids will create personal bird watching field guides, and then head out onto the trails to find those birds. https://FamilyBirdWalkJuly2024.eventbrite.com

AUGUST EVENTS

Family Story Walk - Alviso

Sunday, August 11, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Explore the trails around the Environmental Education Center while reading an interactive story. This story and its activities are fun for all ages. <u>https://StoryWalk-Aug2024.eventbrite.com</u>

Twilight Marsh Walk - Fremont

Saturday, August 17, 6:45pm - 8:30pm Experience the salt marsh at twilight on an easy stroll along refuge trails (about 0.6 miles). https://TwilightMarshWalkAug2024.eventbrite.com

Trail Maintenance Volunteer Work Day at the EEC - Alviso

Sunday, August 18, 9:30am - 12:00pm Volunteer to help improve trails around the EEC. https://VolunteerWorkDay-Aug2024.eventbrite.com

Stewardship Sunday: Volunteer Work Day -Fremont

Sunday, August 18, 10:00am - 1:00pm

Join this family-friendly volunteer stewardship event to help with habitat restoration at our HQ. <u>https://TwilightMarshWalk-May2024.eventbrite.com</u>

Bair Island Sunset Walk - Redwood City

Tuesday, August 20, 7:00pm - 8:00pm Enjoy the sunset while learning about the fascinat-

ing history of Bair Island and its local wildlife species as we take an easy 0.8 mile stroll along the marsh. As the days grow shorter, this will be the *last* Bair Island Sunset Walk for the year.

https://BairSunsetAug.eventbrite.com

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

World Shorebirds Day - Alviso OR Nearby Refuge Ponds

Sunday, September 8

In honor of World Shorebirds Day, join us for a guided nature outing to look for and learn about shorebirds.

Save the date - more information to come!

ACTIVITIES ON THE REFUGE (CONTINUED)

Twilight Marsh Walk - Fremont

Saturday, September 21, 6:15pm - 7:45pm Experience the salt marsh at twilight on an easy stroll along refuge trails (about 0.6 miles). https://TwilightMarshWalkAug2024.eventbrite.com

Coastal Cleanup Day at the EEC - Alviso

Sunday, September 22, 9:00am - 12:00pm Volunteer to help pick up litter at the EEC as part of Coastal Cleanup Day. https://CoastalCleanUpEEC2024.eventbrite.com

Bird Walk at Pond SF2 - Menlo Park

Saturday, September 28, 11:00am - 12:30pm Join on National Public Lands Day for a leisurely 1.4 mile stroll to learn about resident and migratory bird species and the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.

https://SF2BirdWalk-Sep.eventbrite.com

COMMUNITY PHOTO CORNER



Adult Stilt (Larry Rosenblum)



Juvenile Black-Necked Stilt (Larry Rosenblum)



Northern Mockingbird (Ravi Kohli)



Black Phoebe (Ravi Kohli)

SAN FRANCISCO BAY WILDLIFE SOCIETY: DONOR RECOGNITION

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who have made gifts to the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society from April 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024.

Senior/Student (\$20) Janet Ady Dr Mortazavi

Individual (\$35)

Family (\$50)

Supporter (\$75)

Participant (\$100)

Jessea Greenman and Darlene Ceremello Gerald and Connie Watanabe Kim Brink Mark Jackson Robert Kirby Jr (for Habitat Restoration and Education) Sponsor (\$250) Laurel Przybylski

Sustainer (\$500) Namit Saksena

Leader (\$1000)

Employer & Matching Gift Prog.

Abbot Labs (Pavel Jirousek) ServiceNow (Namit Saksena) Rajarshi Bhadury

Donations

Andrew Casteel American Online Giving Foundation Anonymous through PayPal Giving Fund

Memorials/Honorariums

The Sahara Family *in memory of* Calvin Sahara, *a dear and devoted member of our Refuge Family, who worked tirelessly and steadily in the background to keep our Refuges functioning. We miss him, and appreciate his legacy of support for all of us at the Refuge Complex.*

Company Donations & Grants

Our Refuges appreciate your support.

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 supporter at <u>https://sfbayws.org/</u> For a gift membership, call 510-792-0222 ext. 72004.

https://sfbayws.org/gift-membership

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.

My support 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:

 \$20 Student/Senior \$35 Individual \$50 Family \$75 Supporter \$100 Participant 	□ \$200 Corporation □ \$250 Sponsor □ \$500 Sustainer □ \$1,000 Leader
□ Check Enclosed	□ Credit card payment, use PayPal at www.sfbayws.org/donate

Name

Address

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Thank you for your support!

For more than 35 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 weekend EEC staff 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 Supporter of the Society.

Benefits include:

- Tax Deduction to the extent allowed by law
- Free book *Exploring Our Baylands*15% Discount on purchases in SFBWS
- Nature Stores
 The joy of helping protect this important
- The joy of helping protect this important environment.
- Free subscription to *Tide Rising* newsletter

https://sfbayws.org/



Tide Rising, Vol. V, Issue 4: Page 13