



Established 1949

SAN MATEO COUNTY BIRD ALLIANCE

Volume 77, No. 4
October - December 2026

President's Message

Be on the lookout for our annual appeal letter. Our chapter's primary source of funds is the annual donations by members, so this is critical to maintaining our chapter's good work. The amount local chapters receive from National Audubon is minimal, and we have not done special fundraising drives throughout the year, so the end-of-year donations are particularly important. This year, we have expanded our field trips, including to Alcatraz Island and Angel Island, continued our monthly meetings with interesting speakers, added three new people to the Board of Directors, and continued the important work of the Conservation Committee in monitoring the county's development planning to provide input on impacts to birds. We greatly appreciate any support you can provide to help us keep this great work going! - *John Epperson*

Meet SMCBA Board Member Maximilian (Max) Hollenback

Continuing our series "Meet the San Mateo County Bird Alliance Board Members," I'm delighted to introduce Max Hollenback.

Q: Would you tell us a little about your birding background?

Max: I started birding in 2020 around the start of the pandemic, like many, many others. I was 14, just entering the 8th grade, when my now great friend and mentor, Kimberlie, who knew my mother, took me on several bird walks in my area. I was soon hooked, exploring the Peninsula on bird walks.

In high school, I joined the Alcatraz Water Bird Docent Program and taught visitors from around the world about birds and ecology. I also created my first data science project, using my monitoring data to analyze species behaviors, kickstarting my interest in avian academia.

That year, I was one of two Students to be given a scholarship to the Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton. This was my first time attending with the SMCBA and I met Nelle, who is now one of my fellow board members and a friend. The Symposium was amazing; I learned more about birds in 3 days than I had in 3 years. The following year, I was fortunate to be sponsored again, and I reached a 200-bird life count! I've led field trips for the Chapter for about a year. Along with my biological studies I have been able to spend more time with birds. It's fun to spend several days a week with birds! Now I am getting ready to go to Hog Island Audubon Camp mid-September. Thanks to support from National Audubon and SMCBA, I'm extremely excited about going.

Q: What brought you to the SMCBA board?

Max: I attended several SMCBA events in the past year and learned of open board positions. This is an opportunity for me to repay all the goodwill the Bird Alliance has shown me. My ideas and experience as a young birder can help make this community even more inclusive.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for people just starting?

Max: Don't be afraid to ask for help! Our outings are all about learning together, everyone has something to teach and learn.

Q: Do you have a favorite bird story to share?

Max: Yes, recently I was walking to school and exiting the BART station. I noticed a hummingbird on my left, reminding me of the last time I saw an Allen's. I looked at the off chance it was, and I saw a small green puff. It WAS an Allen's, my first in four years; I was so excited that morning. While not a major ornithological discovery, little joys like these are what keep me birding!

Q: Are there any projects or goals that you would like to focus on?

Max: Working with young birders to make the Bird Alliance a more diverse group of people of all ages and backgrounds. I have been working to get more walks in underserved areas, especially the northern area of the county where I live.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say to prospective members or volunteers?

Max: Welcome! We are all so happy to see more Birders here in the area. I hope that together we can continue our conservation work and build a strong community!

Thank you, Max, for your great energy and dedication! Please consider volunteering. Everyone, regardless of background or experience, is welcome! Your unique perspective and skills can contribute to our mission of bird conservation. Remember to get out, enjoy nature, and look up! - *Nancy Salcedo, Member and Volunteer*

Meeting Programs

2nd Thursdays at 7:00 pm

October 8 - Zoom

Alvaro Jaramillo

November 12 - Zoom

**Why We Love Birds:
52 Birders on Birds**
Scott Harris

December 10 - Zoom

**The Mystical & Bountiful
Farallon Islands**
Gerry McChesney

MEETING PROGRAMS

October 8 – Zoom

Alvaro Jaramillo

Topic to be determined - Guaranteed to be engaging!

November 12 – Zoom

Why We Love Birds: 52 Birders on Birding, Scott Harris

Scott became an avid birder when he and his wife Randi retired to South Carolina in March 2020. He never imagined participating in the hobby, but now can't imagine living without it.

His first birding book, *RaptorQuest: Chasing America's Raptors*, followed a 17-month journey across 34 states as he attempted to see all 53 species of raptors found in the Lower 48—a birder's version of a Big Year. The book chronicled the adventures, misadventures, successes, failures, and remarkable people he encountered along the way.

His newest book—and the one he'll be discussing—is *Why We Love Birds: 52 Birders on Birding*. Scott interviewed 52 of the most prominent and interesting birders in the country and asked each of them the same five questions: Spark Bird, Naming Bird, Favorite Bird, First Field Guide, and Favorite Birding Day.



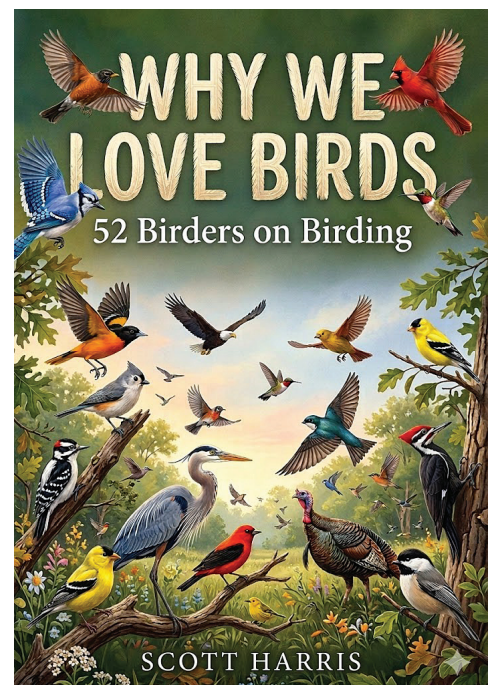
December 10- Zoom

The Mystical & Bountiful Farallon Islands, Gerry McChesney

The archipelago of small islands known as the Farallon Islands (or Farallones) sits about 30 miles west of San Francisco. Rugged and remote despite their proximity to The City, the islands have a storied history dating to the early 19th century and beyond; including seal hunters, commercial egg collectors, lightkeepers, and a naval station.

These uses gave way to the islands' protection as the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The islands now host the largest seabird nesting colony in the lower 48 United States, with nearly 500,000 breeding birds, plus thousands of seals and sea lions and other unique species found nowhere else. A natural biological laboratory, the islands have been studied by biologists from partner Point Blue Conservation Science since the late 1960s. Gerry's talk will touch on all these topics with a focus on the wildlife and management of the Farallon Islands.

Gerry earned a B.A. in Biology (Marine Sciences) from U.C. Santa Cruz and an M.S. in Biological Conservation from Sacramento State University. As an undergraduate, he spent two summers studying seabirds on the Farallon Islands, sparking interest in seabirds and island ecology. After completing his Bachelor's, he worked 14 years as a contract biologist for Cal Poly Humboldt, studying seabirds along the California coast and marine mammal distribution. In 2002, Gerry joined the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to manage a Common Murre restoration project. In 2008, he returned to the Farallones, where he's now the manager.





SMCBA Field Trips



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

Saturday October 3 Coyote Point Recreational Area, San Mateo (8:30 – 11:00) The diversity of habitats at Coyote Point offers the chance to see a number of species. Directions: Exit Peninsula Ave. from US 101 and follow the signs 1701 Coyote Point Drive—\$6.00 admission fee. Meet near the Yacht Club. **Leader:** Doug Brown **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4gZtYBR>

Friday October 9 Hayward Regional Shoreline, Hayward (8:00 – 11:30) Hayward Regional Shoreline comprises five miles of mostly flat graveled shoreline public trails within a complex ecosystem of shallow water and mud flats, salt marshes, freshwater ponds, dry diked areas, and grassy uplands. A haven for migrating birds, supporting over 200 avian species. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4xuDYJq>

Saturday October 10 Colma Creek, South San Francisco (9:00 – 11:00) Good for beginners, this is an easy walk along the Bay Trail. This loop will take us to Colma Creek and back. Meet in the Public Shore Parking lot behind 310 Utah Ave. **Leader:** Max Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4wSxL8P>

Sunday October 11 “Big Sit” Pescadero Marsh (8:00 – 2:00) The Big Sit! is an all-day event where birders count as many species as possible from a single spot. Birders count species seen from within a 17.5-foot diameter circle. All skill levels are welcome. You can help spot birds, pledge a set amount per species, and/or help collect pledges. Enthusiastic participation supports our birds, and all funds raised stay in San Mateo County to support local bird conservation, education, advocacy, and programs. Use the Central lot for parking. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4gsgTKp>

Thursday October 15 Filoli, California Trail, Woodside (9:30 – 12:00) A 2–2.5 mile moderate walk. Habitats include mixed oak, redwood, madrone woodlands, riparian corridor, and historic horse pastures offering a diversity of species. Admission fee. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4qJCjNn>

Sunday October 18, Natural Bridges, Santa Cruz (8:30 – 11:30) Meet at the walk in entrance to the park at the intersection of Natural Bridges Drive and Delaware Avenue. We will look for a variety of species in the trees and scrub. We will look for nesting Brandt's Cormorants and other shorebirds. There is a fee for parking inside the park, and free street parking at the entrance. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4chx8ON>

Saturday October 24 Bair Island, Redwood City (9:00 – 11:30) A level out and back dirt trail make this an easy outing. Curiosity-seekers and those interested in learning more about birds should join this outing. We should see a variety of ducks, shorebirds, and smaller songbirds. Directions: From US 101, exit Whipple Ave. Heading east, it winds for 0.5 mile, becoming E. Bayshore Rd, then Bair Island Rd. Meet at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge Bair Island Trail parking lot. We'll have loaner binoculars. In collaboration with Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). **Leader:** J.R. Blair **Register:** <https://bit.ly/46MFwCx>

Thursday October 29 Skyline Watershed Ridge Trail (8:30 – 10:30) This is a newly opened portion of the Bay Ridge Trail that extends 6 miles paralleling Skyline/Hwy 35 from Hwy 92 to the Phleger Estate. We'll travel between 1 and 1 1/2 miles before turning around. The path is hard pack gravel and accessible to hikers, mountain bikes and horses (no dogs or motorized vehicles of any kind including e-bikes) We will climb a gentle but steady 300 feet elevation before turning back. There are no bathrooms. The views are spectacular! Parking is available at the trail head for 22 cars/ carpooling is advised. The parking lot is just south of the Hwy 35/Hwy 92 intersection. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4qI32tT>

Saturday October 31 Cypress Lawn Cemetery, Colma (8:30 – 11:00) Established in 1892, Cypress Lawn is a historic garden cemetery and arboretum occupying over 200 acres. This eBird Hotspot is great for fall migrants. 1370 El Camino Real, meet at the large stone gate. SamTrans stop. **Leader:** Max Hollenback **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4ya7hAD>

Thursday November 5 San Bruno Mountain Bog Trail, Daly City (8:30 – 11:00) The Bog Trail loop winding through San Bruno Mountain Park is a wet, riparian area. The trail runs through a low canopy of scrub oaks as well as under trees and some grassland. The Pacific fog keeps the area moist most of the year. The beginning of the trail is near the beginning of Colma creek that goes to the bay. An easy 0.80 mile gravel and dirt trail with benches. We'll meet at the Crocker Ave entrance. **Leader:** Tera Freeman **Register:** <https://bit.ly/46t8OWL>

Thursday November 5 Filoli; Spring Creek Trail, Woodside (9:30 – 12:00) Join us for a 3 mile hike. This trail gains 100' elevation in ¼ mile on a dirt path - not recommended if you have mobility issues. We will spend most of the morning on the California Trail in the Oak and Madrone forest and the Spring Creek Trail through the Redwoods. The California Trail is over dirt paths with a slight incline and is one mile long. The Spring Creek Trail is ½ mile on a narrow dirt track with a 100' elevation gain. Admission Fee **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/45Vj3mI>



Monday November 16 Devil's Slide, Pacifica (8:30 – 10:30) This trail, a former segment of Highway 1, is an easy 1.3-mile out-and-back walk along a paved road that's accessible for all. The first segment takes you through a canyon rich in coastal plants, songbirds, and woodpeckers. As you turn the corner heading south, you join the cliffside path that is made of granite and sandstone layers that have been twisted by time and fault activity. On a clear day, the ocean view is spectacular, and many shorebirds can be seen in the water as well as on Egg Rock. There are bathrooms at the start of the trail and several benches. Directions: Devils Slide Trail Northern Overlook – Parking on the right just north of the entrance to the Lantos Tunnel. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4gFjZQX>

Friday November 20 Palo Alto Baylands (9:00 – 12:00) Meet in the parking lot for the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center, 2775 Embarcadero Rd. for a leisurely walk on level gravel trails where we will explore this San Francisco Bay treasure trove of waterfowl and shorebirds. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4xsc1Se>

Sunday November 22 Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont (10:00 – 12:00) This park comprises 1,266 acres of marshland and rolling, grassland-covered hills along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. Paved and dirt paths and boardwalks through the marsh. \$5.00 vehicle admission fee, 8000 Patterson Ranch Road. Meet in the parking lot in front of the Visitor Center. **Leader:** J.R. Blair **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4hXIzPi>

Saturday November 28 Pescadero Marsh, Pescadero (8:30 – 12:00) Meet at the middle of three parking lots for Pescadero State Beach (the sign specifies Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve); the lot is on the west side of Highway 1 approximately 1/4 mile north of Pescadero Creek Road. We will view birds from the bluffs overlooking the ocean. We will choose a trail into the marsh depending on conditions. We should have opportunities for shore/ocean birds and marsh birds. **Leader:** Nelle Lyons **Register:** <https://bit.ly/3T5NEee>

Thursday December 3 San Pedro Valley Park, Pacifica (8:30 – 10:30) This 1,052-acre park has three fresh-water creeks, which flow year round through lush valleys, the south and middle forks of the San Pedro Creek and Brooks Creek. They are of particular significance because they provide some of the few remaining spawning areas for migratory Steelhead in the county. We'll explore the riparian areas over several trails. The dirt trail has a 150 feet elevation climb through the redwood and eucalyptus forests. \$6.00 admission fee or check out a County Parks Pass at your local library. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/45Wqry8>

Saturday December 5 Wilder Ranch State Park, Santa Cruz (8:30 – 12:30) We'll take the Old Cove Landing Trail, which is mostly flat and loops out 2.5 miles to ocean views through a variety of habitats, including Douglas Fir and coast redwoods, while coastal prairie covers much of the flatter terrain. Drier areas include oak woodland, knobcone pines, and manzanitas. Directions: Wilder Ranch SP is located west of SR 1, north of Santa Cruz, 1842 Coast Road. State Parks Pass or \$10 fee (Check out a State Parks Pass at your local library.) **Leader:** Nelle Lyons **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4wTpxgH>

Sunday December 6 Wavecrest, Half Moon Bay (9:30 – 11:30) See Saturday November 14 description This outing is in collaboration with POST. **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4xHHmR3>

Thursday December 10 Pillar Pt Harbor, Half Moon Bay (9:00 – 12:00) Pillar Point is a hot spot for birding. Walking will be on a mostly level dirt trail and some sand. Scopes will be helpful here. Directions: meet at "West Shoreline Access," popularly known as the parking lot to Mavericks, just below the radar station "golf ball". **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Register:** <https://bit.ly/3Uflazb>

Saturday December 12 Palo Alto Baylands, Palo Alto (10:00 – 12:00) See Friday November 20 description. This outing is perfect for beginners and families. Loaner binoculars available. **Leader:** J.R. Blair **Register:** <https://bit.ly/3UI2MyU>

Tuesday December 15 Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Moss Beach (8:30 – 10:30) This outing takes place at the low tide when the tidal pools will be exposed, and shore birds will be in abundance. We will travel a small part of the 3 mile coastal marine park, walking around 1 mile. We start at the free parking lot on the corner of California Ave and North Lake St. We'll explore a mix of habitats that host passerines, raptors and shore birds. The eBird species count for this park is 285. Bring a scope if you have one. The trail is packed dirt with the possibility of sand and some tide pools. **Leader:** Kimberlie Moutoux **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4zMfGMk>

Sunday December 27 Wavecrest, Half Moon Bay (9:00 – 12:00) See Saturday November 14 description. Scopes are useful on this outing. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall **Register:** <https://bit.ly/4y7LlpM>

Conservation Corner

Proposition 45, on your ballot in November, will significantly weaken the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and greatly reduce the ability of individuals, and organizations such as ours to review and respond to proposed developments, and to be able to have improved environmental protections included. Please learn about this proposition.

Redwood City: The City Council approved one of two alternatives for the FEMA-required levee. We commented that nature-based solutions should be included. We will follow this as plans become more concrete (sorry) and the “amenities” mapped out.

Also in **Redwood City:** the Planning Commission continues to work on its design standards: city staff has been responsive to requests by SMCBA for improvements to bird-safety aspects. The commission will review this again in September. If approved, it will go to city council.

Redwood City: (again). At Bair Island, Cliff Swallow nesting sites were threatened again this year along the waterfront. Destruction of active nests is a federal offense under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. An educational push in the Bair Island community is being planned. Volunteers will identify other colonies in San Mateo county in order to ensure their protection during the next nesting season. A committee is being formed to identify local successes in neighboring counties in their efforts to protect swallow colonies.

Brisbane: SMCBA, along with other organizations, is following the Guadalupe Quarry (aka San Bruno Quarry) development adjacent to the San Bruno Mountain Ecological Preserve. The development would include an 894,718 square foot, two-story building (reduced from 1.3 million sq.ft.) parking structure, a sub-station and switching station. SMCBA and other organizations, are concerned about noise, lighting, pollution and other effects on the flora and fauna of this ecologically unique mountain.

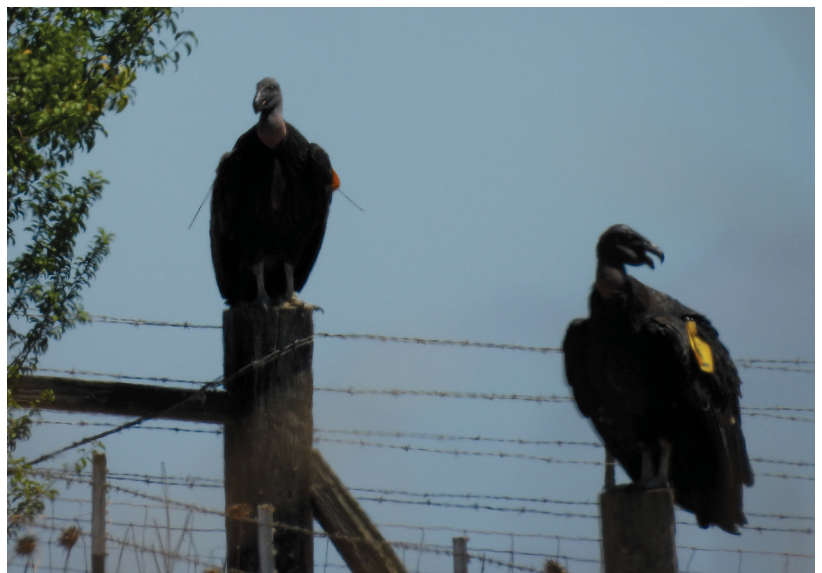
If any topic is of interest to you and you’d like to help or learn more, please contact your Conservation Committee at conservation@smcbirdalliance.org. You can see that we have a lot going on, and to have someone spend some time walking around the site and noting concerns, or follow city council meetings when a topic affecting wildlife is on the agenda, can be an immense help.

Reporting Banded/Tagged Birds

Please report banded and tagged birds because it helps scientists track bird populations, migration patterns and lifespans. Note the exact number on the band, the date you found the bird, and the specific location. Is the band metal or colored? Tell the agency whether the bird was found dead, hunted, or seen alive with a color marker.

To report a bird with a federal band or color marker, please visit the USGS site at reportband.gov

To report Condors in Central California: Call the Pinnacles Condor Program at 831-389-4486 (ext. 4276) or report via: <https://www.nps.gov/pinn/learn/nature/condor.htm>



Condors at Harvey Bear Ranch County Park, 9/7/26 photo credit: Judi Blaine Eichler

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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P.O. Box 620292
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Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

For more than 125 years, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) has brought people together to count birds and contribute to one of the world's longest-running community science projects. Watch for the registration link - all levels of experience are welcome. Join in the fun!



Crystal Springs CBC - Saturday, December 19, 2026

Año Nuevo CBC - Saturday, January 2, 2027

San Mateo County Bird Alliance Membership

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

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _____

Newsletter Preference:

_____ Mail and / or _____ E-mail

E-mail address _____

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Contact us: office@smcbirdalliance.org

Visit our website: www.smcbirdalliance.org

Check out our Online Birding Guide:

www.birding.smcbirdalliance.org

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

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