



The Blue Heron

News from San Francisco Nature Education • November 2020

Executive Director's Corner



Dear Friends,

I'm writing to ask you to contribute to our end of the year fundraising campaign.

Your support has helped SFNE establish and expand our public and school education programs in Golden Gate Park over the past 20 years.

Your contribution in this 20th anniversary year will help launch the third decade of our work at the Stow Lake Heron Colony—engaging and delighting Golden Gate Park visitors and fostering environmental awareness.

We are hopeful that we may be able to restart our field trips in January. Please continue to check our newsletter and calendar for the latest updates.

Scheduled upcoming field trips include: Chain of Lakes, Heron's Head Park, and Crissy Field, as well as our regular monthly walks at the SF Botanical Garden.

If your membership is about to expire, this is the perfect time to renew and send a gift to SFNE. Please be as generous as you can, and know that every tax-deductible donation will make a difference, whether it is \$1,000, \$500, \$250, or any other amount. We appreciate your support very much.

Our fundraising letters will go out next week. Of course, you can donate online instead. We look forward to seeing you at one of our programs. Please stay safe.

Best regards,

Nancy H. DeStefanis

SUPPORT OUR END-OF-YEAR CAMPAIGN!

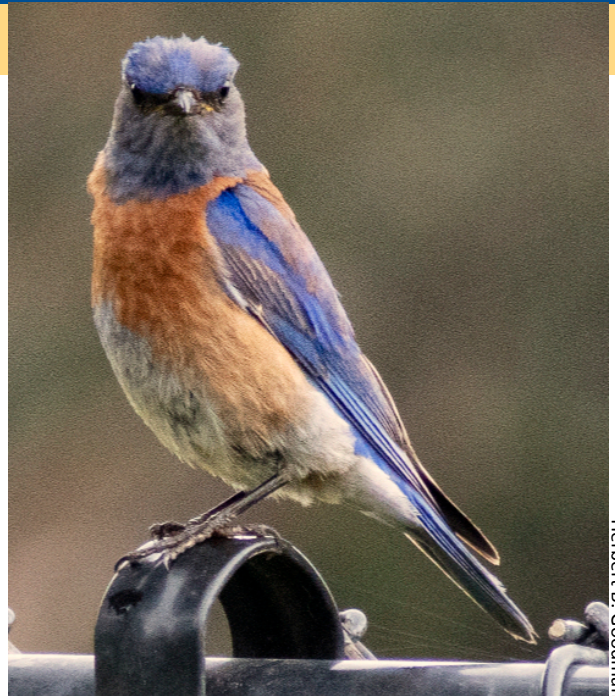
P.S. Highlights of the 2020 Great Blue Heron season featuring photographs by Helene Sobol and Ian Reid are posted [on our website](#).

Please donate online—Network for Good portal is secure—
or mail a check payable to SFNE: PO Box 210303, SF CA 94121

Our tax ID no. is 54-2111941. Membership: Adults, \$35; Seniors 65+, \$30.
Joint Membership for two seniors at same residence \$50; students 21 or under, \$25.

[Become a Member/](#)
[Donate Online](#)

e-mail: info@sfnature.org
telephone: 415-205-0776
www.sfnature.org



Herbert B. Goodman



Grace Ruth

Top: Western Bluebird; above: Pacific Slope Flycatcher.
Both photographed near the Chain of Lakes.

On the pages ahead:

- 2 Around Stow Lake and Chain of Lakes; Coyotes Video Link
- 3 Alan Hopkins: Hunters Point Hillside Park: Birds and Art
- 4 Hunters Point Hillside Park, cont.; Join or Donate to SF Nature Education
- 5 Ian Reid: Hummingbirds and Plants of the San Francisco Botanical Garden

Around Stow Lake and Chain of Lakes



Grace Ruth

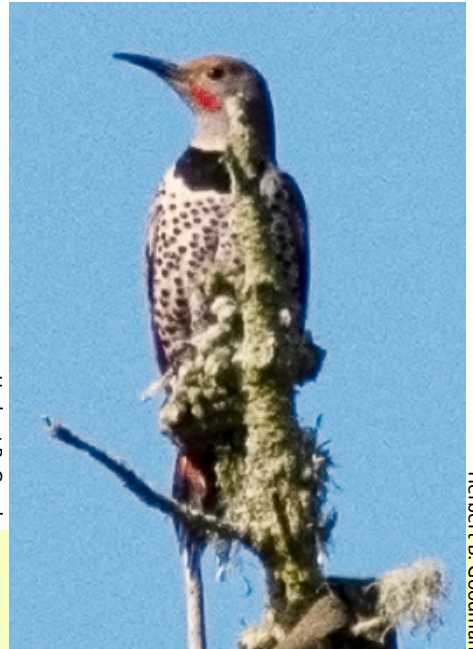


Herbert B. Goodman

Clockwise from top left: Snowy Egret; Red-shouldered Hawk; Northern Flicker; Hooded Merganser.



Herbert B. Goodman



Herbert B. Goodman



Andrew Bland

Video Link of the Month: [Coyotes](#)

Andrew Bland, a San Francisco native, shot a [video of howling coyotes](#) in San Francisco in February of 2018.



Hillpoint Park is located at the end of Innes Avenue on the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. The park alone may not be worth driving to, but 80 bird species have been seen here, and it can be a nice addition to a day at Heron's Head Park. It is best from fall to spring. Before the shipyard closed single family housing covered the hill, and now the hill is covered with modern housing units.



The park was created as part of the area's redevelopment and gentrification.

Rather than starting at the end of Innes Avenue I prefer to make a left onto Donahue Street, where the development begins, and then right on to Galves Ave. to the guard station. Visitors are not allowed beyond the station without a pass. Across from the guard you'll find the Storehouse, which has a coffee bar and small selection of goodies (closed at the moment). Lots of diagonal parking near the guard station. The park has a port-a-potty.



The park is located on the hill to the right, but before heading up the hill check the treetops for **American Kestrels** and **Merlins**. The trailhead is marked by *Refrain*, a site-specific sculpture by Walter Hood.



Clockwise from left:
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher;
Frame sculpture; Merlin.



By taking the ramp instead of the steps you can look beyond Marion Colman's installation, *Visions of the Past/ Visions of the Future*, to check the two feeders in the courtyards of building 101 below. You may see **sparrows**, **Rock Pigeons**, **Mourning Doves**, **Eurasian Collared-Doves**; these were joined by a **White-winged Dove** in 2019.

The open hillside can have **Meadowlarks** and **Say's Phoebes**. The hillside along the path has been planted with native plants attractive to birds. It is best seen when the berries are ripe. **Spotted Towhees** and a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** have wintered here. The area is also attractive to migrants; one day before it was a park I found the trees loaded with **Western Kingbirds** and **Western Tanagers**.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

The most productive area is near the *Frame* sculpture by Mildred Howard.

The top of the hill is a formal park with a lawn and picnic tables and fantastic views. Southward, the hillside is covered with agave, and when they are in flower watch for **hummingbirds** and **warblers** getting nectar.

In the distance, the 450-foot gantry crane was built to remove gun turrets from battleships, and later to test missiles. You'll want to check it for **Peregrine Falcons**. The lawn is used mostly as a dog run, but a **Black Phoebe** likes the area, and an **American Pipit** liked the grass as well. Heading north around the lawn you'll find *Nautical Swing*, a sculpture you can sit on by Matthew Geller. There is a fine view of India Basin and Heron's Head Park from the swing.

When doubling back I like to check the foliage behind the row of picnic tables. If it's slow it is fun to read the text on the *Stream of Consciousness* mural by Heidi Hardin and Colette Crutcher. At the end of the mural you'll find a concrete bench where you can view the slope. There are two oaks visible from here that are hard to see from the path below. The light is usually better heading back down past *Frame*, and new birds always seem to show up.



Photos: Alan Hopkins

Top: Picnic area at on the hill; view of the bay.

San Francisco Nature Education



Become a Member/Donate Online

Please donate online—Network for Good portal is secure—
or mail a check payable to SFNE: PO Box 210303, SF CA 94121

Membership: Adults, \$35; Seniors 65+, \$30; Joint Membership
for two seniors at same residence \$50; students 21 or under, \$25.

e-mail: info@sfnature.org telephone: 415-205-0776
www.sfnature.org. All contributions are tax-deductible.
Our tax ID no. is 54-2111941.

San Francisco Nature Education is in its 20th year of delivering comprehensive environmental education programs to students from schools in the San Francisco Unified School District and conducting Saturday field trips and programs for adults and children.

Hummingbirds and Plants of the San Francisco Botanical Garden Ian Reid



Anna's Hummingbird and Abutilon



Anna's Hummingbird and Salvia



Allen's Hummingbird and Cuphea "Cigar plant"



Allen's Hummingbird and Penstemon & Salvia



Anna's Hummingbird and Hebe



Allen's Hummingbird and Salvia