San Francisco Nature Education

The Blue Heron

News from San Francisco Nature Education · January 2021

Executive Director's Corner

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous end-of-year donations. We met our goal and then some!

The past year has been the biggest challenge for all of us. We hope to resume field trips as soon as it is safe to do so. When we get the go-ahead from the city we will announce upcoming field trips by email immediately.

We are now recruiting interns for our spring 2021 Heron Watch program. We also need adult Heron Watch volunteers. Application links are on page 5.

I would like to thank our newsletter editor Judy Harter, webmaster Peter Shen, technology/data specialist Cole Hershkowitz, and our volunteers in the field.

A new art installation called ***Entwined*** is transforming Golden Gate Park's Peacock Meadow (between McLaren Lodge and the Conservatory of Flowers) into an enchanted "forest," ending the festivities celebrating the park's 150th anniversary. It runs from now through Feb. 29. The LED lighting effects range from 12 to 20 feet tall, with illuminated canopies as large as 30 feet, filling the meadow with changing light.

All of us at San Francisco Nature Education wish you and yours a very happy New Year!

Thanks again for your support!

Best regards,

Nancy

Nancy H. DeStefanis

P.S. If you haven't donated or renewed your membership, please donate now online or send via mail. All contributions support our school and Saturday field trips, and are tax-deductible. Our tax ID no. is 54-2111941.

Paul Dixon

Great Blue Heron at Ambleside Park; Snowy Egret, Coot at Stow Lake.

Helene Sobol

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Please donate online—Network for Good portal is secure—
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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.

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Eastern Golden Gate Park and the Old Growth Forest

Alan Hopkins

As Golden Gate Park celebrates its 150th anniversary it is important to consider what was there before the park was created. When the park was conceived it was decided that 50 acres of the park's eastern edge would be conserved as wilderness. The great attraction of the area was the abundance of native oaks. The oaks are still there, some dating back hundreds of years. The trees were recognized by the Old Growth Network in 2015. A wonderful way to explore the oaks is along the recently opened Phil Arnold Trail.

Before I hit the Phil Arnold Trail I like to start at the path leading to the handball courts and Big Rec Field across from the Cal Academy, along Nancy Pelosi Drive. The first of the oaks and the beginning of the path are in back of the handball courts.

Clockwise from above: AIDS Dell trail; map of Oak Woodlands trails; Hutton's Vireo.

At the top of the hill is the southern end of the DeLavega Dell and the AIDS Memorial Grove.

As the trail heads into the grove you will find a small waterfall at the Fern Grotto. A stream runs down the hill and is a wonderful quiet place for bathing birds. After passing through the Redwoods Grove the path ends at Bowling Green Drive. Cross the street and walk east around the tennis courts to Sharon Meadow. At the western edge of the meadow is Hippie Hill. At the top of the hill there is a Banksia tree that is great for sapsuckers and other birds looking for nectar.

Photos: Alan Hopkins

Go down the hill to John F. Kennedy Drive. Just across the street to the northeast you find the trailhead for the Phil Arnold Trail at JFK Dr. and Conservatory Dr. East. On the map the trail follows the orange and yellow path with black lines just past the card shack.

The well-marked trail winds up through the old growth oaks. When the oaks flower in the spring they attract an abundance of insects for birds to feed on. Along the trail a great effort has been made to restore the native understory. The trail crosses the paths that lead to Hayes and Fulton Streets, and eventually crosses Arguello Blvd. at Conservatory Dr.

The oaks across the drive by the conservatory are worth checking. Across

continued on next page

Eastern Golden Gate Park and the Old Growth Forest **Alan Hopkins**

Photos: Alan Hopkins

Clockwise from above: Yellow-rumped Warbler; Red-breasted Sapsucker; Swainson's Thrush.

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Arguello Blvd. the Oak Trail goes down into a delightful area known as Raccoon Hollow.

After you emerge from the hollow there is a convergence of paths. I cross past the Card Shack game tables to the paved path that parallels the lawn at Bunny Meadow, and follow it back to JFK Dr.

Across the street to the west is the John McLaren Rhododendron Dell. There is a maze of trails here; if you follow the westernmost trail it will lead around to the back of the Academy of Sciences and Pelosi Dr. To add to your day list, check the Lily Pond by going up the hill and heading north back through the oaks toward JFK Dr. The path along the pond will go back to Pelosi Dr.

This trip is about 2.5 miles. There are bathrooms located near the handball courts, and west of the Conservatory of Flowers. Currently JFK Dr. and Pelosi Dr. north of Bowling Green Dr. are closed to vehicular traffic.

Andrew Bland

Corrected 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. This link replaces an incorrect one from our November newsletter.

Birds of Golden Gate Park **Ian Reid**

Bushtit near the de Young Museum

Orange-crowned Warbler, Botanical Garden

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Wilson's Warbler in the Botanical Garden

Red-tailed Hawk above Mallard Lake

Steller's Jay, Stow Lake

Heron Watch Scheduled to Start April 10th—Volunteers and Interns Welcome!

Ian Reid

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Information and applications for **interns** and **volunteers** are online.

See our planned 2021 Heron Watch program schedule on our **website**.

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Clockwise from top left: Heron chicks in the nest; Heron Watch interns Ian, David, Jose, and Joy participate in habitat restoration on Strawberry Island as part of their internship; Ann Galjour, volunteer at Heron Watch, answers questions. Photos were taken in spring, 2019.

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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.

Las Gallinas Sewer Ponds, San Rafael **Photos by Sandi Wong**

Clockwise from top left: American Avocet and Snowy Egret; Common Goldeneye; Killdeer; White Pelicans; Cinnamon Teals male and female and Green Winged Teal.