

San Francisco
Nature Education



www.sfnature.org

Welcome to the July issue of San Francisco Nature Education's e-mail Newsletter!

The eNewsletter of San Francisco Nature Education – July 2006

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1 – Volunteer Positions Available on our Board of Directors

San Francisco Nature Education (SFNE) is looking for new members for our Board of Directors.

SFNE offers interactive environmental education programs that develop leadership and stewardship in youth and adults. Our school programs focus primarily on students from underserved communities. We use parks and open spaces as natural classrooms to observe local and migratory birds and their habitats.

Our programs include:

- Elementary school classroom visits and field trips,
- Birding for Everyone: Year-round monthly weekend birding and nature walks at the San Francisco Botanical Gardens
- Heron Watch: A six-week spring program at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park that educates children and adults about the lake's fascinating heron colony.

Make a difference with underserved children and the environment. Please consider joining this exciting and dynamic non-profit organization!

If you are interested in applying to join our board, please e-mail a letter of interest to Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director, nancyd@sfnature.org.

2 – Heron Watch Wrap-Up: Record Number of Birds in 2006



Eight week old chick posing for a portrait.



Bill-dueling adults strengthen their pair bond.

Another exciting Heron Watch season ended with our final program at Stow Lake on May 20th.

The 2006 season surpasses any other year in our 13 year study. Six nests on Heron Island accounted for a record 16 chicks so far. Ten chicks from the first four nests have already fledged. Two late nests have produced three chicks each. These chicks are approximately six-weeks old, and will fledge sometime between the end of July and mid-August.

2005 resulted in four nests and ten fledglings.

91 chicks have fledged at Stow Lake since 1993. If the remaining six chicks fledge, our grand total for the colony will be 97!

You still have a chance to view these magnificent birds and watch them learn to fly.

3 – Fifth Annual Bird Calling Contest



Allen's Hummingbirds from Jose Ortega Elem. School preparing to present their call.



Black Phoebes from John Yehall Chin Elem. School showing off their first-place trophy

Ten teams of students from Jose Ortega and John Yehall Chin elementary schools participated in SF Nature Education's Fifth Annual Bird Calling Contest this year. Third grade students from these schools dressed as local birds and produced skits showcasing their bird's call and movements and cool facts about their bird.

The Black Phoebes from John Yehall Chin and the Common Ravens from Jose Ortega took home first prize trophies, but all of the participants showed out in fine feather with impressive calls and dramatic displays.

For more pictures from the 2006 Bird Calling Contest, check out our website:
<http://www.sfnature.org/>

4 – Birding for Everyone: Dates and Highlights



A California Quail at the Strybing Arboretum.

Upcoming dates: August 5, September 2, and October 7.

Highlights of our sunny and satisfying June *Birding for Everyone* program included:

- six Mallard ducklings swimming with their mother in the main pond,
- a Black Phoebe swooping in and out of the birding group to feed its fledgling, dramatically catching a dragonfly in full view of the group,
- a large number of Hummingbirds, both Allen's and Anna's, many of them doing display flights and/or singing, and
- the first clutch of Quail chicks! (One of the quail chicks appears to be a dwarf: Angie Geiger, our intrepid *Birding for Everyone* guide, describes it as having "the same plumage but one half the size of the others. The difference is dramatic now that the birds are full-grown.")

Also seen recently at the arboretum:

- A noisy Belted Kingfisher catching a fish
- A juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk catching a mouse
- A very insistent Cowbird chick pestering an exhausted Song Sparrow parent half its size that was trying valiantly to stuff it full of food.

Come with our naturalists to look for these and other varied and vibrant birds!

Walks are held the first Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Meet at the bookstore kiosk near the main gate of the San Francisco Botanical Gardens at Strybing Arboretum, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way.

Please bring a pencil and binoculars if you have them.

Nature walks are organized by San Francisco Nature Education and sponsored by the San Francisco Botanical Garden and the Golden Gate Audubon Society.

The program is free to the public—donations are always appreciated.

5 – Chronicle Reports Birds in Peril

The San Francisco Chronicle reported on July 4, 2006 that 12% of existing bird species (about 1,250 species in all) may be extinct by 2100. A new study estimates that 500 bird species have faced extinction since the year 1500.

Conservation is more important than ever in the face of this impending crisis.

Access the full article at: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/07/04/MNGAHJORP61.DTL&hw=Bird+Extinction&sn=001&sc=1000>

6 – Many Thanks to our Volunteers!

A big thank you to our dedicated volunteers. The 2005-06 programs were a huge success! We celebrate and honor the volunteers who make our programs sing:

Alaen Averill
Steve Bauer
Arthur Bedikian
Scott Chapek
Zoey Cumings
Darin Dawson
Jim Elliot
Angie Geiger
Lorraine Grassano
Jim Herd
Joe Kinyon
Andy Kleinhesselink
Jack Laws
Sharon Pretti
Jim Sullivan
Sharon Walters
Nathan Wirth
Matt Zlatunich

7 – Volunteers Wanted

San Francisco Nature Education is looking for Volunteers who enjoy spending time with children and being outdoors and who want to learn more about local birds and the natural history of Golden Gate Park.

Volunteer Naturalists:

- Lead San Francisco 3rd Graders in classroom visits and/or field trips,
- Lead hands-on bird walks for groups of six children (all groups have chaperones),
- Learn about San Francisco birds and the natural world of Golden Gate Park,
- Encourage future environmental stewards, and
- Are great role models for dozens of children!

We ask that volunteers commit at least two mornings a month.

Naturalist training is provided over four mornings for a small fee. *Some scholarships are available.*

We are also looking for **Tech Savvy Volunteers** to help produce photo collages and program materials. Volunteering in our office is a great way to use your expertise to serve children and the environment!

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact San Francisco Nature Education for an application:

Phone: (415) 387-9160

E-mail: volunteer@sfnature.org

Mail: San Francisco Nature Education
3450 Geary Boulevard, Suite 208
San Francisco, CA 94118

8 – Supporting San Francisco Nature Education

We serve over 1,000 children every year from underserved San Francisco public schools. Our engaging public and school programs couldn't exist without the generous contributions of our supporters.

Would you please send a contribution today?

Please send tax-deductible contributions to:

San Francisco Nature Education
3450 Geary Boulevard, Suite 208
San Francisco, CA 94118

Make all checks payable to "San Francisco Nature Education."

For more information and to view our photo galleries, please visit our website at www.sfnature.org.

We hope this e-newsletter has piqued your interest in our upcoming events. Please consider a contribution to help us continue our school and public programs. Your contributions are vital to continuing our bird and environmental education programs in San Francisco. Thank you to our current contributors for your continued support. For another way to support San Francisco Nature Education, consider enrolling in the eScrip program, <http://www.escrip.com>.

Please forward this e-newsletter to your friends. They can sign up to receive it by visiting the following web page: <http://www.sfnature.org/newsletter.html>.

SFNE privacy policy: SFNE does not trade, give away, or sell your information to any group, organization, and/or individual.

To stop receiving our eNewsletter, please send an e-mail with the subject UNSUBSCRIBE E-NEWS to admin@sfnature.org. Thank you.

Photos of great blue herons and bird callers © 2006 James Sullivan; photo of California Quail © 2005 Jim Herd.

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