



Autumn Arrives

Blue Heron Newsletter · October 2008

Executive Director's Corner

Nancy DeStefanis

We are pleased to announce two new programs:

- Bayview Birders in Heron's Head Park on first Saturdays of the month
- Fifth graders to study ocean birds at Ocean Beach

Please check our updated website at: www.sfnature.org to see all of the upcoming programs.

To learn more about us, please visit "About Us" at:

www.sfnature.org/about_us/index.html

I hope to see you soon at one of our walks or lectures!

Fall School Programs

- During the 2008-2009 school year, San Francisco Nature Education will serve over 1,200 students.
- Volunteers are needed for the school program. Please visit our website at www.sfnature.org for information and application. Training will be held in January, 2009.

Coming in January, 2009: Public Tours of Heron's Head Park

On first Saturdays January 3, February 7, and March 7, Lowell H.S. interns in conjunction with SF Nature Education will conduct tours of this little-known site near Pier 94 at Hunter's Point in San Francisco.



Lowell interns Rosanna, Aileen, Tina, and Ruby examine wings of hawks and owls.

"We're very excited about this pilot program at Lowell and hope it continues for years to come"

said Maryann Rainey, school district nurse and member of the Wellness Center.

Tours will start at 10 a.m. and leave every 30 minutes. Last tour starts at 11:30 a.m.

"We're thrilled to be working with



Ruby observes a Barn Owl wing held by instructor Allan Ridley.

Rosanna, Aileen, Raymond, Tina, Ruby, and coordinator Ms. Maryann Rainey. (Arianna not pictured.)



Lowell students and starting a whole new birding program at Heron's Head Park" said Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director of San Francisco Nature Education.

Come and experience the wonder of observing and learning about waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds that call Heron's Head Park home in the winter. Interns lead tours and are equipped with spotting scopes.



Killdeer

Photo: Ken Benjamin

Fifth-Grade Students Observe Ocean Birds at Ocean Beach

E.R. Taylor Elementary School fifth-grade students are studying ocean and coastal birds in preparation for a field trip to Ocean Beach at the beginning of November.

Mr. Nick Weisskopf, a fifth-grade teacher, is preparing the students for this trip in conjunction with San Francisco Nature Education and Golden Gate National Recreation Area Endangered Species Big Year.

Students will observe endangered birds and other birds which reside in or near the ocean at Sutro Baths. Each student will prepare an 8x10 flash card of one of the birds they expect to see. All students will learn about these birds.

"We've always wanted to take our students to the ocean, and this trip makes it all happen—birds, GGNRA endangered species, and a follow-up project focussed on the Brown Pelicans. We can't wait!" said Nancy DeStefanis, SFNE director.

Birding for Everyone

Angie Geiger, Trip Leader

Luckily for the group of about 20 people gathered for the *Birding for Everyone* walk on Oct. 4, the first rainstorm of autumn had already passed overnight, leaving the air fresh and crisp. We started in the Demonstration Garden, where we were greeted by mature and immature White-crowned Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, and Song Sparrows, often side-by-side for comparison.



Pygmy Nuthatch

Photo: Len Blumin

We moved on to the Great Meadow, which was occupied by a flock of Canada Geese. While we were observing those, we heard a distinctive chip note from a tree next to us. We looked up to discover a Yellow Warbler fluttering nearby.

Next we moved on to the Wildfowl Pond, where we found all of the expected regulars: Mallards, Western Gulls, American Coots, Black Phoebes, and one unexpected one—a Lincoln's Sparrow. For some in the group it was a "lifer," but for all of us it was a special treat. We made our way to the back of the Arboretum. Along the way, the loud calls of



Downy Woodpecker

Photo: Judy Harter

a Red-Shouldered Hawk drew our attention to the bird perched atop a Monterey Cypress.

We continued to the John Muir Pond, where we spotted a yellow bird at the top of a eucalyptus. When

we trained our binoculars on the bird, we discovered it was a Western Tanager. To our delight it then flew down from the tree-top and landed much closer to us, giving the entire group great views.



Western Tanager

Photo: Jerry R. Oldenettel

A loud chirping called us away to the back of the garden, where we discovered a mixed flock of birds, including Pygmy Nuthatches, House Finches, Dark-eyed Juncos, a Downy Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, and three Steller's Jays.

Topping things off, literally, we saw a Turkey Vulture soaring overhead. Then it was time for this very satisfied group of birdwatchers to head back to the front gate.

Upcoming *Birding for Everyone* dates: Saturdays, Nov. 1 and Dec. 6. Meet at 10 a.m. near the bookstore inside the main gate of the SF Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park (Martin Luther King Drive near 9th Avenue & Lincoln).

Upcoming Events

Heron's Head Park: Public Tours, 10 a.m.-noon

Location: Jennings Street and Evans Avenue, 2 blocks south of Pier 94

Dates: First Saturdays—January 3, February 7, March 7, 2009



Google Maps

Wish List

Day packs for students to use on field trips.

Supporting San Francisco Nature Education

We serve more than 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?

Online donations are particularly welcome, as they decrease our processing costs and allow us to spend more money where it counts. To make a donation online, click on the link on our website at <http://www.sfnature.org>.

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

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Many thanks for your continued support!

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