

Dear Friends,

Here at San Francisco Nature we're busy preparing for this year's students.

The teacher packets are ready and letters have gone out to teachers and principals.

Soon we'll be conducting classroom visits and field trips to Golden Gate Park, Crissy Field, and Heron's Head Park.

I'm pleased to announce a brand new Saturday program just for kids and their caretakers. *Birding for Kids* begins Saturday, October 3rd, at 10 am at the main gate of the San Francisco Botanical Garden.

The birding classes are designed for children six to twelve. This program, coordinated by our veteran naturalist Linda Grant, is the only one of its kind in San Francisco.

We hope to see you there on October 3rd.

Meanwhile, if you haven't contributed to SF Nature before, please consider making a donation online:



We look forward to seeing you this fall!

Best regards,

Nancy DeStefanis

Executive Director



Inside

2 *Birding for Everyone* Report

Upcoming Lecture:
Sights and Sounds of Peru

SFinBloom.com

Wish List

Introducing *Birding for Kids*

Linda Grant, Naturalist



Photo: SFNE

Linda Grant

On Saturday, October 3rd, we will be starting a new birding program strictly for children and their caretakers. *Birding for Kids* will be held at the San Francisco Botanical Garden (Strybing Arboretum) on the first Saturday

of each month from 10 am to noon. Rain cancels the event.

San Francisco Nature Education naturalists, including myself, will conduct mini-classes about birds for the first fifteen minutes of each meeting, and then we'll lead the group at a leisurely pace through the micro-habitats of the garden in search of birds.

The brief instruction period will include learning songs and calls of local birds, handling feathers to understand better how birds fly, observing close up the beaks of local species, talking about their diets, and the like.

Some of the birds we hope to observe are the Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, California Quail, Black Phoebe, American Robin, and various sparrows, jays, ducks, and gulls.



Photo: Judy Harter

Western Scrub Jay

Please bring binoculars for your child (if you have them), along with a pencil, water, and a snack. The book *Birds of San Francisco* (\$12.95 at the garden bookstore) is a good first field guide.

Every child, or group of children, must be accompanied by an adult. The classes are intended for children ages six to twelve. The suggested donation for each adult is



Photo: Judy Harter

White-crowned Sparrow

ten dollars. There is no charge for children, and no one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

Adults with more than five children in tow are asked to make a reservation in advance.

For more information, please visit our web site: www.sfnature.org; send a message to info@sfnature.org; or call us at 415-387-9160.



Photo: SFNE

Bird watching in Golden Gate Park

Birding for Kids

First Saturdays, October 3rd & November 7th, at 10 am near the bookstore inside the main gate of the SF Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park (MLK Drive near 9th Ave. at Lincoln). Adults \$10; children free.

San Francisco
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Education



Contact SFNE:

e-mail: info@sfnature.org

telephone: 415-387-9160

www.sfnature.org

Birding for Everyone Report

Angie Geiger, Naturalist



Angie Geiger (in vest) leading the Birding for Everyone walk.

Photo: SFNE

The first Saturday in September drew a number of enthusiastic birdwatchers to the SF Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum. Starting out on a typically overcast morning, we had hopes of spotting some early migrants.



Red-shouldered Hawk

Photo: Ernest Gaudreau

Rounding the path from the Library Garden we spotted a resident juvenile **Red-shouldered Hawk** in a cypress tree above us. It patiently posed while we observed it from all angles.

We continued toward the California Garden, where we found fruiting shrubs and blackberry bushes, sure draws for passing migrants. We were not disappointed. Flashes of

yellow alerted us to a flock of **Western Tanagers** flitting from tree to tree. We spotted a **Black-headed Grosbeak** and a **Warbling Vireo**. As we moved closer to the blackberry bushes near the reservoir there was more excitement as we spotted **Song Sparrows**, **California Towhees**, a **Yellow Warbler**, and an **Orange-crowned Warbler** among numerous **Western Tanagers**.

On our way out of the California Garden we heard soft cooing, and



Western Tanager

Photo: Ernest Gaudreau



Black-headed Grosbeak

Photo: Ernest Gaudreau

Our next stop was between the John Muir Pond and the Children's Garden. That area was also quite populated with tanagers, a group of six **Steller's Jays**, a flock of **Bushtits**, and three species of finches: **American** and **Lesser Goldfinches** and **House Finches**, plus two **Downy Woodpeckers**. We found resident **Dark-eyed Juncos**, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, **Pygmy Nuthatches**, and a **Black Phoebe**.

As we were leaving the area we spotted a large perched hawk, which we identified as a **Red-tailed Hawk** by its white breast with a darkly mottled band across it.



Bushtit

Photo: Ernest Gaudreau

Our final treat of the day was a **Cooper's Hawk** soaring overhead as we made our way past the Great Meadow. In total we saw a very satisfactory 35 species.

Birding for Everyone Saturdays, October 3rd & November 7th, at 10 am near the bookstore inside the main gate of the SF Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park (MLK Drive near 9th Ave. at Lincoln). Adults \$10.

soon we were treated to views of a lone female **California Quail** foraging in the underbrush.

We headed for the Succulent Garden, where we paused to look for hummingbirds. A cooperative **Anna's Hummingbird** landed nearby atop a flower spike ready to be admired.



Steller's Jay

Photo: Ernest Gaudreau



Hoatzin

Photo: Bob Clements

Sights and Sounds of Peru

Lecture and slide show by Nancy DeStefanis

Thursday, October 15, 2009, at 7:30 pm. First Unitarian Universalist Church & Center, 1187 Franklin St. (at Geary)

Sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society

Come along and experience a journey to a pristine area of the Peruvian Amazon, where monkeys, river otters, caiman, and exotic birds thrive. We observed more than 100 species as we crossed the Andes by van, canoed down the Madre de Dios river, and hiked at Manu Wildlife Center.

Some of the species we sighted were Hoatzin (the missing-link bird), Cock of the Rock, the fascinating Tiger-heron, and Scarlet Macaws, among others. We continued birding in the area around Machu Picchu, and observed Spectacled Bears and magnificent hummingbirds.

Finally, we visited the ancient village of Paucartambo, high in the Andes, for the annual Festival of the Virgen del Carmen. Twenty different dance groups performed during the dramatic two day festival.

The impacts of ecotourism, mining, and oil exploration on wildlife and indigenous people are a cause for concern and will be discussed.

Nancy DeStefanis is the founder/director of San Francisco Nature Education. She has studied Latin American history and politics and traveled through most of Central and South America.

Go Online! You can see many birds and plants of the SF Botanical Garden at a new web site: SFinBloom.com. Birds are featured first in the [photo galleries](#).

Wish List: Used or new binoculars and backpacks for our programs.



Red-tailed Hawk

Photo: Ernest Gaudreau