

Dear Friends,

San Francisco Nature Education now offers four Saturday programs to the public over the course of twenty-one Saturdays during the academic year.

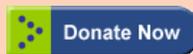
Our first *Birding for Kids* class and nature walk in the San Francisco Botanical Garden was a big hit, thanks to naturalist Linda Grant. Please spread the word to parents of children six to twelve years old.

We are now training students from Lowell High School to serve as interns and information providers for Saturday birding walks at Heron's Head Park in Hunter's Point.

It will be the second year of our exciting Heron's Head program. This year's birders might see Harlequin Ducks, White-tailed Kites, or Long-billed Curlews, among one hundred different species that have been spotted there.

The public tours will take place in January, February, and March 2010, when migratory birds stop for rest and sustenance. Stay tuned for dates and times.

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



We look forward to seeing you this fall!

Best regards,

**Nancy DeStefanis**  
Executive Director

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a lecture/slide show on October 15  
Snapping Turtle Snapshot



### Birding for Kids Report

Linda Grant, Naturalist

Our very first *Birding for Kids* walk at the SF Botanical Garden on Saturday, October 3rd, began sunny and clear. The group included a mother with her eight-year-old daughter from San Carlos, and a father with his two girls, ages six and nine, from San Francisco. We started in the Demonstration Garden by talking about tips for locating birds.

Then we continued our *Birding by Ear* lesson with five reasons that birds sing: protecting territory, attracting a mate, communicating location, warning of predators, and teaching language to young birds.



Linda Grant (in tan cap), and the *Birding for Kids* group at the Botanical Garden's Wildfowl Pond.

We made our way to the East Asia Garden, where we were stopped in our tracks by the loud rattling of a **Belted Kingfisher**. Continuing on, a special treat was individual walks through the bamboo forest, where each child used her senses to smell the earth, listen for birdsong and water sounds, view different shades of green in the trees, and touch the cool bamboo.

Once outside the forest we were greeted by the sounds of **Pygmy Nuthatches** and **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** in the nearby pines. Overhead a **Red-tailed Hawk** was



Photo: Judy Harter

Downy Woodpecker

soaring. We continued to the California Garden, where we sighted a **White-crowned** and a **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, a **Black Phoebe**, and a soaring **Common Raven**.

In the Succulent Garden we checked off in a journal the birds we had seen. A **Downy Woodpecker**, perched on a nearby century tree, was busily drumming away, so the three young visitors drew a picture of it.

Our next stop was the Wildfowl Pond, where a flock of **Canada Geese** were foraging in the grass. Two pairs of **Mallards** were on the pond with an **American Coot**. We spotted another raptor overhead—a **Red-shouldered Hawk**. A flock of **Rock Pigeons** flew by.

On the way back to the Great Meadow we stopped at the Fragrance Garden, where we were greeted by a **Song Sparrow**, an **American Robin**, and **Bushtits**. We enjoyed the acrobatics of an **Anna's Hummingbird**, and listened to the quick "chirp" the diving male made with its tail feathers at the bottom of his dive.

Our walk concluded in the Demonstration Garden, where *Birding by Ear* handouts, along with hugs and thanks, were cheerfully distributed.



Photo: Ernest Gaudreau

Bushtit

**Birding for Kids:** First Saturdays, November 7th & December 5th, 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.

## Elementary School Programs Begin

### Tina Lui, School Program Coordinator



Photo: SFNE

Tina Lui

We are happy to report that Bret Harte Elementary, in the Bayview District, and four other elementary schools have started our fall school program at the SF Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum.

On October 6th, Nancy DeStefanis, SFNE executive director, and I delivered a huge pumpkin

donated by the SF Botanical Garden to the kindergartners at Bret Harte.

Ms. Pat Scott's students were surprised and delighted. Later this month all forty kindergarten students will receive a short classroom visit and take a field trip to the Botanical Garden to look for birds.

Fourth and fifth graders will receive a classroom visit and take a field trip to Heron's Head Park in Hunter's Point, or to Crissy Field in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Volunteers are always needed. Please visit [Get Involved](#) on the SF Nature Education web site.

## Birding for Everyone Report

### Angie Geiger, Naturalist

Perfect autumn weather greeted the group of birdwatchers who gathered at the entrance to the SF Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum on Saturday, October 3rd. We quickly put some distance between us and the gardening fair at the entrance.



Photo: Judy Harter

Mallard

On the Wildfowl Pond we saw **Mallards** and a single **American Coot**, and nearby we observed a **Western Scrub Jay**, **Black Phoebe**, and the ubiquitous **Anna's Hummingbirds**.

From there we headed to the western end of the garden to

see which sparrows might turn up in the open grasslands there. Along the way we observed **Pygmy Nuthatches** and **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, year-round residents of Strybing. We paused on the path above the John Muir Pond to investigate the source of



Photo: Rick Lechte

Chestnut-backed Chickadee



Photo: Judy Harter

Golden-crowned Sparrow

some birdcalls we were hearing around us. A large flock of **Bushtits** flew in and flitted about in the shrubs next to us. We caught glimpses of **White-crowned Sparrows**, and were excited to see our first-of-season **Golden-crowned Sparrow**.

In the trees directly above the pond we spotted **American Goldfinches** and **House Finches**. Joining the other seed-eaters were **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **California Towhees**.

We next headed to the Redwood Trail, where a flash of yellow caught our



Photo: Len Blumin

Yellow-rumped Warbler



Photo: Jerry Oldenettel

Townsend's Warbler

attention. It was a bright male **Townsend's Warbler** foraging just above us and giving our entire group terrific views. The next stop was the California Garden, where we saw another species of warbler, the **Yellow-rumped**. A number of these were foraging around the reservoir, flying out from the branches to snap insects out of the air.

We could not miss the noisy arrival of two **Steller's Jays** who joined the **Scrub Jays** that reside in this section of the garden. By then it was time to head back to our starting point. On the way we saw **American Crows** and **Common Ravens**, **Brewer's Blackbirds** and **Rock Pigeons** flying overhead. It was a nice start to fall birding.

### Birding for Everyone

Saturdays, November 7th & December 5th, 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.

**Birds 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](#).



Ms. Pat Scott, teacher (far left), Nancy DeStefanis, and Tina Lui with some of Ms. Scott's kindergarten students (and pumpkin).



## 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)*

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.*

*Sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society*

While birdwatching keep an eye out for . . .



Photo: Judy Harter

a large snapping turtle seen in August at the Wildfowl Pond in the SF Botanical Garden.

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

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Education



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