



San Francisco Nature Education is in its tenth year of delivering comprehensive environmental education programs to students from underserved schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.

## Executive Director's Corner

Our **school program** now serves 1,200 students in underserved schools throughout the city.

Our **Saturday programs** have expanded too: *Birding for Kids* continues to draw families from all over the city. *Birding for Everyone* (adults) is now a regular monthly event for new and experienced birders.

Heron's Head Park internships have expanded to two high schools: Lowell and Lincoln, with an increase from nine to 14 students. Interns now training will conduct public tours from January through March, 2011.

*Heron Watch* will resume at Stow Lake for six Saturdays in spring, 2011. The number of chicks that have fledged since we started counting in 1993 is now 139!

*Nesting Birds of Lake Merritt* was an enormous success this year. As a result, Golden Gate Audubon will now run the program for East Bay residents. We will continue to list details in our monthly newsletter.

**Please join and support our activities throughout the city.** Our budget is less than \$100,000, and we need your generous contributions to carry on and expand. Each donor who contributes at any level will receive our newsletter, special mailings, and invitations to events exclusively for members. This year we have instituted membership categories:

\$30-Basic Membership; \$50-American Robin; \$100-Anna's Hummingbird; \$250-Chestnut-backed Chickadee; \$500-Brown Pelican; \$1,000-American Kestrel Award; \$2,000-Belted Kingfisher Award; \$3,000-Harlequin Duck Award; \$5,000-Great Blue Heron Award.

Thanks so much for your past support. Please give generously; your support is vital to educating and inspiring the next generation of environmental leaders.

Best regards,  
**Nancy DeStefanis**



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# Fall is for Field Trips

*Blue Heron Newsletter • November 2010*

## Sunnyside Second-Graders Visit SF Botanical Garden Angela Tremolada, Naturalist

On Thursday and Friday, October 14th and 15th, second-grade classes from Sunnyside Elementary School went to the SF Botanical Garden to look for birds.

Mrs. Tucker's and Ms. Raeder's classes went one day apart. The students arrived by MUNI with their teachers and were very enthusiastic and ready to point out birds. They had colored their field journals and were anxious to use their binoculars. Naturalists Jeanne Crawford, Nancy DeStefanis, Angela Tremolada, and Connie Armitage each led groups of six students.

At the start of the hike the students got up-close and personal views of a flock of **Canada Geese** grazing on the Great Meadow. They then spotted holes in a nearby tree made by a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**. Of course, they were thrilled at every sighting of the **Eastern Gray Squirrel**.



Ms. Raeder's group with a Dawn Redwood.

Photo: Angela Tremolada



Mrs. Tucker's second graders spy some birds overhead.

Photo: SFNE



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journals the birds they had spotted, and took time to sketch their favorites.

The students then observed **Anna's Hummingbirds**, **Song Sparrows**, **Dark-eyed Juncos**, and **Black Phoebes**. In and around the

Wildfowl Pond students observed **Mallards**, **Coots**, **Gulls**, and a **Belted Kingfisher**.

The students hiked over running streams, past the Succulent Garden, through the Redwood Forest, and experienced an "alone walk" in the Bamboo Grove. A good time was had by all!



Naturalist Jeanne Crawford and her students in the Botanical Garden.

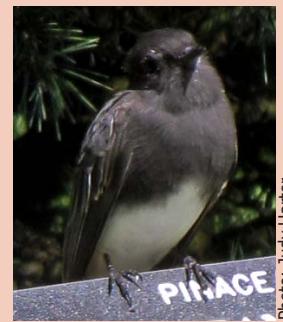


Chaperone with second-graders.



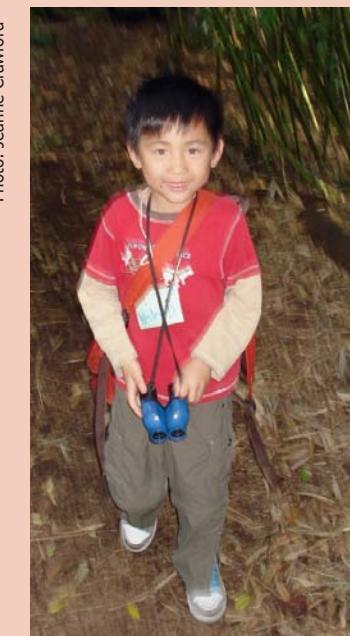
Song Sparrow

Photo: SFNE

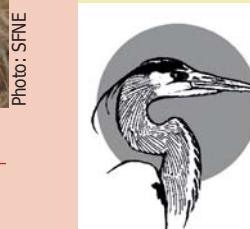


Black Phoebe

Photo: Judy Harter



Student finishes his "alone walk" through the Bamboo Grove.



### In the pages ahead:

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- 4 Birding for Everyone Report; Volunteers Needed!

## Upcoming Events

### Heron's Head Park Tours

**First Saturdays:** November 6 and December 4. No tour on January 1.

**Tours:** 10, 10:30, 11, 11:30, and last tour @ noon. Tours take approximately one hour.

**Location:** Jennings Street & Cargo Way, two blocks south of Pier 96.

**Donation:** Free, donations welcome

**Free Parking:** Available near entrance. Please visit [sfnature.org](http://sfnature.org) for more information, or plan your trip via public transit at [MUNI's web site](#).

### Birding for Everyone

**First Saturdays:** November 6 and December 4, 10 am–noon. No tour on January 1. Meet us 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; no one turned away due to lack of funds.

*Please note: for nonresidents of San Francisco there is now an entry fee to the SF Botanical Garden, with discounts for children, families, seniors, and students. You can see their fee schedule [here](#).*

### Birding for Kids

**First Saturdays:** November 6 and December 4, 10 am–noon. No tour on January 1. Meet us 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; no one turned away due to lack of funds.

### Volunteers Needed

Please visit [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org) for information about how to apply.

## Heron's Head Park Intern Report

Yvonne Chang, Intern



October 16th was the very first day of the 2010-2011 Heron's Head Park/Bayview birding season, and I was so excited to see Ms. DeStefanis and Nurse Rainey as I arrived at the HHP parking lot. A fellow returning birder, Arty, and I led a quick introductory tour of the park for Alex, Kat, and Kenneth while the rest of the interns were given an orientation.

This year Lincoln HS Students have joined students from Lowell. We were a little rusty at first, so we spotted close to nothing; then, all of a sudden, the brownish-grey rocks near the pickleweed started moving! They were **Willets**, **Whimbrels**, and **Black-bellied Plovers** sifting and poking through the water and mud for food. Soon after, we made quick introductions to each other to welcome new interns Kathleen Rebecca, Alexandria, Kelly, Lisa, Jenny, Kenneth, and Sivan!



Photo: SFNE

Interns with Nurse Maryann Rainey (right) at Heron's Head Park.

After everyone got acquainted with their fantastic SFNE loaner binoculars, we set out to find birds. Led by Ms. DeStefanis and Nurse Rainey, we soon spotted many species of shorebirds—a highly impressive number for the very first day. New intern Kathleen Rebecca spotted and correctly identified the Great Blue Heron, the magnificent iconic bird of Ms. DeStefanis.

As we progressed down the path, hearing the cheerful songs of the **White-crowned Sparrows**, our new interns got their first glimpses of beautiful **American Avocets** in white winter plumage. A pair of **Black-necked Stilts** and three

**Elegant Terns** graced us with their presence,

and I stared in awe, watching them feed. Then a **Brown Pelican** crashed into the water, stuffing his pouch with lots of fish.



Photo: Len Blumlin

Black-necked Stilt

day, I noticed that many interns chose to sketch the **Double-crested Cormorant**, and if I had not recently sketched it already, I would have sketched it again, for the first sight of a cormorant regally stretching out its wings to dry is a hard thing to forget. I have a feeling that this birding season will be the same: unforgettable.



Photo: © Jim Sullivan

Snowy Egret



Photo: Len Blumlin

American Avocet



Photo: © Jim Sullivan

Brown Pelican



Photo: © Jim Sullivan

Double-crested Cormorant



Photo: SFNE

### Katie Boehlein Joins Staff

We are pleased to introduce Katie Boehlein, a new staff member at SF Nature Education. Katie comes from Portland, Oregon, and brings knowledge and experience to her position as naturalist/program coordinator. She graduated from Seattle University last June, having received a degree in environmental studies and English.

Katie worked at the Washington Park Arboretum delivering educational programs about forest and wetland ecology, and also worked with the Environmental Science Center in Burien, WA. She volunteered to provide science enrichment to a local fourth-grade class, and was involved in outreach programs with Seattle University students, leading lobbying trips and coordinating restoration projects. Katie lived in San Francisco last summer while interning for Shinnyo-en Foundation, which funds youth programs to promote peace through service.

Katie is grateful for this opportunity to work with SF Nature Education. "I am excited to learn about San Francisco's diverse ecosystem and abundant bird life through this position," she says. "I have a passion for working with communities and learning from students." Katie's other interests include creative writing, singing, hiking, and reading.

## Birding for Everyone Report

Angie Geiger, Naturalist

The weather for the *Birding for Everyone* walk at the SF Botanical Garden on October 2nd was more typical of summer in San Francisco than fall: foggy and cold. That did not deter the fifteen folks who came to see birds at the Botanical Garden. Those arriving early were treated to a **Steller's Jay** at the front gate and a flock of **Brewer's Blackbirds** moving from the lawn to a Monterey cypress.

We headed toward the Demonstration Garden, but before we entered, movement in the "Monkey Hand" tree at the entrance drew our attention. A number of **Yellow Warblers** were foraging and drinking nectar from the cuplike blossoms. Although it was difficult to catch more than a glimpse of these flighty birds, the sheer number of warblers ensured everyone a look. In the garden we found an adult **White-crowned Sparrow**



Photo: Judy Harter

White-crowned Sparrow

low tree. The bird looked fluffy, it was very young. More likely the jay was trying to stay warm on a chilly morning by fluffing up, causing the grey feathers on the belly to cover the front of the wings. It is one more reason birds do not always look like the pictures in field guides.

In the sky we noticed a flock of **American Crows**, their "caw, caw, caws" clinching the identification.



Photo: Nick Chilli

Yellow Warbler

**Sparrow** perched atop a flower bed. Not terribly shy, this bird was much easier to observe at our leisure.

An insistent loud call drew us further into the garden to see a **Western Scrub Jay** perched in the bare branches of a



Photo: Rick Leche

Yellow-rumped Warbler

and someone asked if it was a **Chestnut-backed Chickadee**. Our next stop, the Succulent Garden, was unusually quiet, and one of our group, Deborah, discovered the reason as she called out "Hawk!" Perched in a tree across from us was a mature **Cooper's Hawk** with a rufous belly and long striped tail. It posed for only half a minute before it flew away. Soon after, we spotted a much larger **Red-tailed Hawk** soaring high above the trees.



Photo: Rick Leche

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

As we left the Demonstration Garden, someone spotted a male **Anna's Hummingbird**. Its dazzling neon fuchsia throat and head glittered in the sun, eliciting some delighted "ohs" and "ahs." Suddenly another male alighted three inches away from the first on the same twig. The original bird eyed the interloper intensely and, predictably, a loud and furious chase ensued.

We found our next group of birds in the bushes adjacent to the Fragrance Garden. Lurking in the underbrush were **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Song Sparrows**. Above them was a **Townsend's Warbler**, but, like



Photo: Judy Harter

Dark-eyed Junco

most warblers, this bird was difficult to follow as it flitted in the dense foliage. In the Wildfowl Pond there were a few **Mallards** in bright fresh plumage. A participant spotted two birds right next to one another at the edge of the pond, atop one of the palm-like plants. One was a

**Black Phoebe**, and the second was our FOF (first-of-fall) **Yellow-rumped Warbler**. It was facing away from us, its namesake rump gleaming.

In the Chilean Garden, we hopefully inspected the "sapsucker" trees. No sapsuckers yet, but we were rewarded with sightings of other birds, including **Brown Creeper**, **FOF Ruby-crowned Kinglet**,

The western end of the garden, near John Muir Pond, was home to a flock of **American Goldfinches** perched high above the pond. Heard but not seen were a **House Finch** that serenaded us with its song, **Pygmy Nuthatches** that flitted noisily among the Monterey pines, and a **Downy Woodpecker** that uttered a staccato call as it flew between branches.

At the bottom of the Salvia Garden a loudly chattering **Pacific Wren** (formerly called **Winter Wren**) was boldly eyeing us. As we left the California Garden, Deborah discovered a small flock of **Western Tanagers**, which appeared and disappeared among the foliage, providing an opportunity for binocular practice. It was a good ending to another fine morning of birdwatching.



Photo: Len Blumkin

Cooper's Hawk



Photo: Kevin Lin

Pacific (Winter) Wren

### Saturday Programs: Volunteers Needed!

San Francisco Nature Education needs volunteers for the following programs:

**Birding for Kids** (ages 6-12): first Saturdays at the SF Botanical Garden, 9:30 am–noon. Rain cancels.

**Heron Watch** (for adults and children): six Saturdays in April and May at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park, 9:30 am–1:30 pm. Rain cancels.

We provide training on local birds, including Great Blue Herons; how to use spotting scopes; and lots of support for nature enrichment field trips. If you are interested, please e-mail a short message that states in the subject line which program you are interested in. E-mail: [info@sfnature.org](mailto:info@sfnature.org)