



Executive Director's Corner

Dear Friends,

On Tuesday evening, October 8th, we will celebrate twenty years of monitoring the Stow Lake Great Blue Heron colony and teaching schoolchildren and the public about these charismatic birds. Invitations will be sent out after Labor Day. Please join us for a fun evening. See page three for more information.

As we prepare for the fall school season, we invite interested adults to apply for training as volunteer naturalists and helpers. Please see the information box on page four. Soon children will be out on the trails at Heron's Head Park or the San Francisco Botanical Garden to spot arriving migrant birds and learn about the plants they thrive on.

Birding for Kids and their Families, on first Saturdays this summer, has been a huge success. The program continues for one more Saturday: September 7th. Please join us for a fun-filled morning.

Birding for Everyone also resumes on Saturday, September 7th, and continues once a month with a volunteer naturalist leading the walk.

It's official: six Great Blue chicks fledged in three different nests this year. Our new total for the Stow Lake Great Blue Heron colony is 159!

Thanks again for your support. I hope to see you on the trails.

Best regards,

Nancy

Nancy DeStefanis



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Birding for Kids in August

Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director

Saturday, August 3rd, was a beautiful day in the SF Botanical Garden. Five adults and six children joined us for the nature walk. Ms. Chris Malfatti assisted. We gave out field journals and loaned small binoculars to the children.

First we embarked on an *Alone Walk* at the Bamboo Grove. The children held hands and walked through the grove two by two. They loved the stillness. Then we checked two nearby ponds for activity, but they were quiet. Not a single duck was to be found.

We continued to the Redwood Grove, where we were treated to the sight of **Anna's Hummingbirds** flying to and fro.

We spotted **American Robins** busily gathering worms on the grass as we approached the Wildfowl Pond. We stopped for a few minutes to let the children color some birds in their field journals.

At the Wildfowl Pond someone spotted a juvenile **Great Blue Heron** standing on a rock in the middle of the pond and catching small fish. Then

we noticed about a dozen **Canada Geese** grazing in the grass nearby. The **Red-eared Turtles** and big carp in the water generated a lot of excitement among the children.

Our next *Birding for Kids* and *Birding for Everyone* walks are on September 7th. Please join us!

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The *Birding for Kids* group in the SF Botanical Garden on August 3rd, with Christine Malfatti, far left.

Photo: SFNE

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A young American Robin



A Great Blue Heron at the Wildfowl Pond



Anna's Hummingbird

Bird photos: Judy Harter

Birding for Kids & Families in the SF Botanical Garden



Photos: SFNE

In the California Garden children color some of the birds they saw on the walk in their field journals. Parents enjoy the break.

You are invited to the
*20th Anniversary Celebration of the
Heron Watch Interpretive Program
in Golden Gate Park*

Honoring Nancy DeStefanis, Founder and
Executive Director, and Outstanding Volunteers

Tuesday, October 8, 2013, at 5:30 pm
Mercy High School, Rist Hall
3250 19th Avenue, San Francisco

Wine & Hors d'oeuvres • Music



PROGRAM

Welcome Bill Milestone, *President*

Silent Auction Belinda Head, *Secretary*

Presentation Nancy H. DeStefanis, *Honoree*

Awards for Outstanding Volunteers:

Logan Kahle, *Intern at SF Nature Education*

Megan Prelinger, *Birding for Everyone Naturalist*

Connie Armitage, Linda Grant, Missi Hirt,
Birding for Kids Naturalists

Mike Smylie, ERM Corporation,
Heron Watch Volunteer

Judy Harter, *Newsletter Editor*

Peter Shen, *Webmaster*

Sandi Wong, *Photographer*

This anniversary party is our way of thanking you
for being part of our programs all these years.

Nancy DeStefanis created Heron Watch so children
and adults could have an inspirational experience
observing the magnificent great blue herons and
their chicks nesting at Stow Lake.

To date, 10,000 low-income students have visited
on school field trips, and 15,000 adults and
children through our Heron Watch Saturdays.

You can help support our school and Saturday
programs by purchasing individual tickets or by
sponsoring at a higher level. All donations are
tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Through donors like you, San Francisco Nature
Education supports classroom education and
field trips for underserved students. Local students
are equipped with binoculars and field journals for
field trips to Stow Lake, Heron's Head Park, and
San Francisco Botanical Garden. Dedicated
volunteer naturalists lead all nature walks.

Some young people we work with have become
inspired to mentor others and to volunteer with
SFNE. Last year some of our first youth leaders
were accepted to colleges where they intend
to study wildlife biology and environmental
sciences. Success!



TICKETS

Hummingbird \$50
Red-tailed Hawk \$100
Great Horned Owl \$500
Great Blue Heron \$1,000

Total \$_____. Tickets will be held at the door.

I am unable to attend, but would like to make a
tax deductible contribution of \$_____.

NAME (Please print your name above as you would like it
to be listed in the program and newsletter.)

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

DAYTIME PHONE

E-MAIL

Payment of \$_____ is enclosed.
Please return to SF Nature Education, 3450 Geary,
Suite. 208, San Francisco, CA 94118

Please make all checks payable to SF Nature Education,
a registered 501©(3) nonprofit corporation in California.
Federal Tax ID number: 54-2111941. For more informa-
tion call 415 387-9160, or email info@sfnature.org.

You may purchase tickets or donate online at
<https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/1430160>

**Directions to Mercy High School
3250 19th Avenue, San Francisco**

From the north: Take 19th Avenue south
past Sloat Blvd. Continue *past* Mercy High School
(on your left). At the **Winston Drive** traffic signal
turn **right** into Stonestown Mall to turn around.

Make a **U-turn** at the next signal, 20th Avenue.
Go **left** on 19th Avenue. Proceed past Mercy HS
entrance. **Right** on Eucalyptus.

Right onto Junipero Serra. Park on street.
Walk back to Mercy HS through the back gate.

**PARKING IN FRONT FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES**

A Fierce Green Fire—Film Review

Bill Milestone, President, SFNE

Mark Kitchell has recently directed a remarkable film entitled *A Fierce Green Fire: The Battle for a Living Planet*. Some may recall the source of the title in author/activist Aldo Leopold's description (from *A Sand County Almanac*) of his transformative perception of a consciousness in the eyes of a wolf he had mortally shot. The film overflows with vivid images while it explains the history of the environmental movement over the last century.

When Robert Redford introduces the start of the environmental movement by announcing that, "At the beginning you could say it was all about ladies' hats," he is referring to the organizing efforts by early Boston socialites, horticulturalists, poets, and field ornithologist Mildred Bailey. San Francisco Nature Education supporters have special reason to be pleased, as the beginning of the narration is based on research conducted by our own executive director, Nancy DeStefanis, who is mentioned in the film's credits.

Many of the women were suffragists battling the millinery trade's use of feathers and plumes. The market for feathers had unleashed armies of hunters in the United States. Up to five million birds were killed each year—so many that herons and egrets were almost driven to extinction. When the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 was passed, many women continued to lobby for the right to vote for women, which was granted two years later when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified.

The film continues with John Muir's battle against the construction of a dam in Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite, and his founding of the Sierra Club. David Brower later led the Sierra Club's campaign to prevent damming the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Photos of Earth from space in 1969 and '70 added to the growing concern people were feeling about the environment—concern most clearly expressed on Earth Day in 1970, when some 20 million demonstrated.

The second section of the film tells of the great fight against pollution, starting with the work of Rachel Carson and recounting the sad story of Love Canal. Though awareness of the connection between deterioration of environmental conditions and their impact on minority communities took too many years to be recognized by a majority of the environmental community, the cause of environmental justice has since become a fundamental feature of the movement.

Children protest Love Canal pollution in *A Fierce Green Fire*.

Section three focuses on the growing recognition that negative environmental consequences can often be reduced by designing and selecting technologies that allow people to "live lightly." *The Whole Earth Catalog*, Buckminster Fuller, efficiency guru Amory Lovins, the founding of Greenpeace, whaling, media *mind bombs*, Sea Shepherd, and the fight against nuclear power are all covered in this section.

Going Global is the title of the fourth section. The tragic story of environmental martyr Chico Mendes is a poignant reflection of the growing worldwide struggle against privatization of the commons. Ms. Wangari Maathai in Kenya, women in the forests of India, and indigeneous people in other areas are held up as examples of fortitude in this struggle.

The final section of the film addresses the great crisis of global climate change, and reviews official efforts to respond to it. In learning that there are some two million environmental organizations addressing aspects of the problem we are given only a glimmer of hope in achieving agreement toward appropriate action. At the same time the problem is impossible to ignore.

The director has done a masterful job of presenting the history of the environmental movement. He gives examples of the pitfalls of political error and the possibility of victory. Viewers may enjoy recollections of their own participation in the events shown. No one who sees this film can fail to hear the clarion call for action to deal with the crisis of climate change.

A Fierce Green Fire was inspired by the book of the same name by Philip Shabecoff. It premiered at Sundance Film Festival 2012, and in 2013 has begun theatrical release and use by environmental groups and grassroots activists. It is not yet available on DVD for home use. The film is narrated by Robert Redford, Ashley Judd, Isabel Allende, Van Jones, and Meryl Streep. 105 minutes.

You can watch a trailer here: www.afiercegreenfire.com/trailer.html. Not to be confused with an earlier film (*Green Fire*) co-produced by the Aldo Leopold Foundation.



Upcoming Events*

Birding for Everyone: first Saturday of every month. Upcoming walks: Sep. 7, Oct. 5, from 10 am–noon. Meet in front of San Francisco Botanical Garden bookstore.

SF Nature fees: Adults \$10, children free. See additional Botanical Garden fees below. Please bring binoculars if you can, and a pencil for recording bird sightings.

Birding El Polin Spring: Sep. 21. Led by Logan Kahle.

Birding for Kids and their Families: first Saturdays. Sep. 7, Oct. 5, from 10–11:30 am. Meet at the garden bookstore, 9th Ave. near Lincoln. Adults \$10 each, children free.

SF Botanical Garden Admission Fees: FREE for children ages 4 and under; FREE for all San Francisco residents with proof of residency; nonresidents pay varying fees. See the [Garden's Web site](http://www.sfnature.org) for details.

San Francisco Nature Education's 20th Anniversary Celebration of Heron Watch. Tuesday, Oct. 8, 5:30 pm, at Mercy High School in SF. See page 3 for details.

*Please see our new online [events calendar](#).

Volunteers Needed for 2013–2014 School Program!

Please visit www.sfnature.org/get_involved for information.

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Nature
Education



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Egrets Tall and Small

Sandi Wong checked on the Snowy Egret colony in Redwood City this summer.

Note the aigrettes, the long feathers of the egret that gave the bird its name. Hunters killed large numbers of Snowy Egrets for these plumes to adorn ladies' hats in the feather trade.

The photos show the red lore that appears above the beak during the breeding season, and some typical juvenile behavior.



All photos - Sandi Wong



- 1 Note the red lore above the beak.
- 2 Snowy Egrets have black beaks and legs with gold feet.
- 3 The beautiful aigrettes hang from the body of the Snowy Egret.
- 4 Two chicks; the older one has more black on its beak.
- 5 In another nest a chick reaches for the beak of a parent to stimulate regurgitation.
- 6 Three younger chicks in a different nest.
- 7 A young chick tugs awkwardly on a parent's beak.



Here's Looking at You

Sandi Wong began photographing two-month-old barn owlets in July 2013, at Las Gallinas Wildlife Ponds in San Rafael. Note the leg band on the middle owl at right and below.



All photos: Sandi Wong