



Executive Director's Corner

Dear Friends,

Here's an update on the Heron Cam and fall programs:

The Heron Cam cable was chewed up by rodents—probably squirrels. We have found a new cable that is critter-proof and affordable, and it will be installed this week. We hope that by the time you read this our Heron Cam will be live again so you can watch the action as our chicks learn to fly.

Our blog and photos continue on www.sfnature.org—just click on the “Great Blue Herons LIVE” button and scroll to the bottom of that page.

I am pleased to announce that Bob Hirt, president of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, will lead the September 6 *Birding for Everyone* walk in the SF Botanical Garden. Megan Prelinger will return for the October field trip. Our leisurely *Birding for Everyone* walks are led by highly qualified leaders. Groups are typically 10-12 adults. Chris Malfatti will lead the *Birding for Kids* walk, also on Sept. 6.

We will be at Stow Lake for the extended *Heron Watch* on Saturdays, Sept. 13, 20, and 27, with our volunteers and spotting scopes. Please come by and enjoy the zany activities of the three chicks!

If you would like to support our programs and help underwrite our new expenses for the Heron Cam (about \$3,000) please donate now or send a check. I look forward to seeing you on the trails.

Best,

Nancy

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Three Heron Chicks Arrive Late!

Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director



At Stow Lake on July 5th, I spotted three chicks in the late-season nest built by the same adult heron pair that built this spring's nest no. 1, which failed. We know it's the same pair because the male has a tongue injury, and the tongue protrudes like a pencil just below his beak. The adults had built a new nest (now called 1A) directly on top of the old nest, and they had been incubating the eggs in June.

Our original trepidation—that the adults might stop feeding chicks in August because they start breeding again in January—was misplaced. Our observations show that all three chicks are being fed regularly and are now branch hopping outside the nest!

As many of you will recall from our June Newsletter, we spotted the pair in nest no. 1 adding sticks to their nest in mid-May. We didn't realize they had built



a new nest on top of their old nest until the chicks hatched and we could see them.

We extended Heron Watch, and have shown off the chicks at our Stow Lake observation site on three Saturdays in August. Volunteers Trace Kannel, Christine Malfatti, and Mike Smylie have pitched in.

We estimate that the chicks hatched around June 25th. They are approaching seven weeks old, and should be visible at Stow Lake until the end of September. Our staff and volunteers will be there too, showing the activities through our spotting scopes on Saturdays, September 13th, 20th, and 27th from 10 am to noon.

Please continue to check our [heron blog](#) while we get the Heron Cam back online.



Left: Early in July, heron chicks are very small. Above: Three chicks spotted on July 5th.

On the pages ahead:

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Late-Arriving Heron Chicks at Stow Lake



Photo: Mike Smylie



Photo: Grace Ruth



Photo: Grace Ruth

Clockwise from above: Growing by leaps and bounds: one month old; adult and three chicks at six weeks; three chicks after feeding. Below: Chick takes a giant jump out of the nest; growing chicks await adult's return; two chicks have hopped out of the nest—August 16th.



Photo: Grace Ruth



Photo: Grace Ruth



Photo: Jack Shim

Mike Smylie, New President of San Francisco Nature Education

Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director

Longtime Heron Watch volunteer Mike Smylie joined the board of directors of San Francisco Nature Education and was elected president in August. He replaces Bill Milestone as board president.

Mike is a partner with ERM, the world's leading sustainability consultancy, and has over 35 years of experience working with a broad range of companies to address environmental and safety issues. With a technical background in air quality, he contributes to negotiations of complex technical agreements and permits with federal and state regulatory agencies; assists facilities with compliance programs; and provides technical expertise in the development of strategic programs and policies.

Mike is currently chairman of ERM's US Low Carbon Enterprise Fund (LCEF). The LCEF was established in 2008 to provide financial and technical support for small, low carbon ventures in developing countries.

Mike and his wife Beth have three sons, and have lived in the Bay Area for more than 30 years. He has been involved with San Francisco Nature Education since 2007, during which time he has worked in the Heron Watch program at Stow Lake, and helped to staff that program with volunteers from ERM.

Mike's goals for SFNE include increased fundraising from major donors, recruitment of volunteers for

Saturday public programs, and an increased presence on social media.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with Nancy and the other volunteers on Heron Watch. With ERM's focus on climate change and sustainability, I am very interested in using my time on the board to see what connections might exist between changes in the climate and nesting patterns of the Great Blue Herons."

Mike received the San Francisco Nature Education Award for Outstanding Heron Watch Volunteer in 2013.



Photo: SFNE

Above: New board president Mike Smylie at Stow Lake.

Below left: Christine Malfatti, in cap, shows heron chicks to young Leo and his mom Betsy. Below: Nancy DeStefanis, in blue, shows a visiting family the chicks.

ERM Foundation Funds Heron Cam

The ERM Foundation recently awarded San Francisco Nature Education \$5,000 to help fund its new Heron Cam.

Mike Smylie, recently-elected president of SFNE, wrote the successful proposal in March of this year.

"The Heron Cam has been a great way to expand the reach of the Saturday morning Heron Watch program, especially as we've continued into September. Now we have a unique opportunity to work with local schools to help educate students about the Great Blue Heron. Youth education is an important focus of the ERM Foundation."

Phil Ginsburg of SF Park and Rec approved the installation of the Heron Cam at Stow Lake, and Dave Simpson, manager of the Stow Lake Boathouse, helped make the installation possible.

The ERM Foundation awards grants in the environmental education field. This is the third award SFNE has received in the past nine years. Nancy DeStefanis, its executive director, said: "We greatly appreciate ERM's support for our environmental education programs for underserved youth."

In addition, the ERM Foundation encourages employees to volunteer for their grantees' programs. SFNE has been fortunate to work with seven ERM volunteers from the Walnut Creek office who graciously gave their time to Heron Watch this spring and summer. They are: Ariane Burwell, Kendra Carter, Ian Holm, Tanner Houston, Mark Levin, Mike Smylie, Andrew Sundling, and Jacob Zollinger, ERM volunteer coordinator.



Photos to left: Mike Smylie.



Photo: SFNE

Volunteer Trace Kannell with a satisfied customer.



1972: Filipino farm workers gather to plan the construction of Agbayani Village in Delano, California.



1974: The anchor construction crew at Agbayani Village. Volunteers came largely unskilled and learned on-site. Nancy DeStefanis is kneeling at far left.



June 2014: Nancy receives her award. From left: Arturo Rodriguez, president of UFW; Dolores Huerta, former UFW vice president; Nancy; Paul Chavez, president of the Cesar Chavez Foundation.

40th Anniversary Celebration of Agbayani Village for UFW Filipino Farm Workers in Delano

Judy Harter, Editor

On June 21, a 40th anniversary celebration of the opening of Agbayani Village, a retirement home for Filipino farm workers, was held in Delano, CA. Nancy DeStefanis and fellow former volunteers were honored for their work on the Village's construction crew in 1973 and '74. At the ceremony, United Farm Worker Union leaders unveiled a bronze plaque celebrating the contributions of Manongs, as the Filipino workers were known.

The Manongs immigrated to California in large numbers in the 1920s and 30s to work in the fields. At that time California's anti-miscegenation laws forbade them to marry white women, and as there was a scarcity of Filipino women in their communities, many never married.

It was the Filipinos who had called the historic 1965 grape strike in California, prompting Cesar Chavez and his union of predominantly Hispanic workers to strike soon after.

Together the groups won a landmark union contract for farm laborers and a revered place in the annals of the American labor struggle. The United Farm Workers Union organized the construction of Agbayani Village in the early '70s as a place where these men, elderly and still without families or resources, could live out their final years.

By 1971, Nancy had started volunteering with the UFWU in San Francisco. In '72, she joined full-time to urge voters to "Vote No

on 22," a statewide proposition supported by growers to ban collective bargaining for farm workers. After training by Fred Ross, Sr., who trained Cesar Chavez, Nancy became a community organizer in San Francisco. Proposition 22 was overwhelmingly defeated.

In 1973, Nancy was working for the *Bay Guardian* newspaper, and spent weekends volunteering at the Agbayani Village site. While at the paper, she designed the first advertising campaign for the UFW, urging consumers not to buy iceberg lettuce, since the Teamsters were trying to take over the lettuce fields. The full-page ad was carried nationwide. "We're standing up to them in the fields, will you stand up to them in the stores?" generated thousands of dollars and countless volunteers for the union. UFW leadership realized the value of this campaign and continued to use print for outreach.

In 1974, after a four-month stint as business manager of the UFW union newspaper, Nancy returned to Delano to help finish construction of Agbayani Village. While there, she applied to law school and was accepted. Looking back, she said, "Those days were among the happiest of my life, getting to know the Manongs and working hard with other young people to create a home for them."

More information about the Manongs, the UFW, and the construction of Agbayani Village can be found on the web site of the Walter P. Reuther Library and in the archives of Philip Vera Cruz (1904-1994) at Wayne State University in Detroit: <https://www.reuther.wayne.edu/node/10180>

Birding for Everyone, August 2nd

Megan Prelinger, Naturalist



In keeping with San Francisco's summer weather pattern, August was the coldest and foggiest month of the year for our walk. An intrepid, bundled-up group of eight made the rounds of the Botanical Garden. We were rewarded by encounters with nearly 30 species, more than we expected in this summer "quiet" period. We noticed that many species that had been singing earlier in the year were "quiet," restricting themselves to less colorful late-season vocalizations such as chipping.

The day was hawk-intensive. The first hawk we saw was a **Red-shouldered Hawk** perched above the main lawn. **American Robins** were numerous on the lawn, as were a flock of **Canada Geese**.

Black Phoebes, **Anna's Hummingbirds**, and **Allen's Hummingbirds** were abundant throughout the garden.

One highlight of the day was the sheer proliferation of **Pygmy Nuthatches**.



Anna's Hummingbird

Photo: Judy Harter

Unlike in other years, the melodious chatter of this species accompanied us from the beginning to the end of our walk.

Song Sparrows were visible in low brush but were notably quiet. **California Towhees** were also widely visible in low brush, though they made scant vocalizations. At the Waterfowl Pond a **Western Gull** circled and displayed. As it landed on the bridge in front of us we had a good view of its "gap-toothed" set of worn, late summer primaries, evidence that many large birds molt by dropping feathers in an intermittent, scattershot pattern.

Other highlights of the walk include the birds that we heard singing: flocks of **Lesser Goldfinches** were noisily visible in the New Zealand Garden and



Lesser Goldfinch

Photo: Judy Harter

Cooper's Hawk family offered some dramatic viewing. We had clear sights of two different juveniles who were skillfully flying and perching, but still easy to identify in their speckled juvenile plumage. A few minutes later we saw two different adults, likely the parent birds, hanging out in trees near the reservoir.



Dark-eyed Junco

Photo: Jeff Harter

We wrapped up the walk with a traipse through the California Garden, noticing **House Finches**, **Dark-eyed Juncos**, **Tree Swallows**, and **Barn Swallows**. Next walk: Sept. 6th.

New Ducklings in San Francisco!

Photos by Sandi Wong



Birding for Everyone, July 5th

Megan Prelinger, Naturalist

The local marine layer “air conditioning” was on full blast on the first Saturday in July, but it didn’t stop the wildlife from offering us a terrific day of birding. It was a day of hawk-watching, as many hawk families with juveniles were exploring the world and practicing flying.

As we circled the garden we observed juveniles and adults from three different species: **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Red-tailed Hawks**, and **Cooper’s Hawks**.



Red-shouldered Hawk

Photo: Len Blumin

We saw the **Red-shouldered** at a distance, as they were flying high in the direction of Stow Lake. The **Red-tailed Hawks** wheeled through the sky in big loops, juveniles chasing adults, until one of the adults landed quite near us in the Children’s Garden.

The **Cooper’s Hawk** family was one of the day’s highlights, with four “teenage” fledglings perched within a few yards of the nest and two adults in active parenting mode. We saw one of the adults fly in with prey (a bird), first feed themselves and then feed their young.



Cooper’s Hawk

Photo: Rick Lechre

Other mixed-age groups clearly visible included

three species of finches: **House** and **Purple Finches**, a large flock of **Lesser Goldfinches**, and the same **Black Phoebes** that we’ve seen before near the Waterfowl Pond.



Photo: Matt Knoth

California Quail

above the Succulent Garden, and an ear-only ID of an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and **Pacific Wren**. The summer contingent of **Allen’s Hummingbirds** seemed to be at a seasonal peak.

The garden was full of the usual suspects: **Corvids**, **Robins**, and **California Towhees**, **Mallards** in the pond, and **Pygmy Nuthatches** and **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** dotting the treetops in every corner.



Photo: Jerry Oldenettel

Downy Woodpecker



Photo: Jeff Harter

Common Raven with juvenile

Upcoming Events*

SF Nature fees for all walks: Adults \$10, children free. Please bring binoculars if you can, and a pencil.

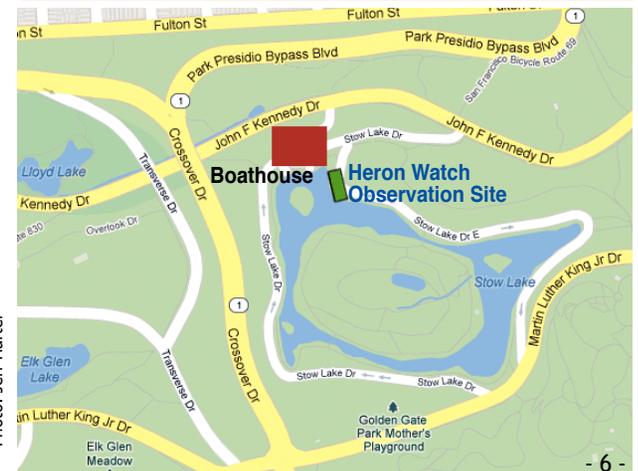
***Birding for Everyone: first Saturday of every month.** Walks are from 10 am to noon. Sept. 6: Guest leaders Bob Hirt, President, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and Missi Gavic (née Hirt) of SF Nature Education. Meet at SF Botanical Garden bookstore, 9th Ave. near Lincoln. Adults \$10, children free.

***Birding for Kids and Families:** Saturday, Sept. 6, with leader Christine Malfatti. SF Botanical Garden, 10–11:30 am. Meet at the Garden Bookstore, 9th Ave. near Lincoln. Adults \$10 each, children free.

Summer Heron Watch at Stow Lake: Saturdays, Sept. 13, 20, and 27, 10 am–noon. Free; donations welcome. Staff and volunteers will show the three chicks with high-powered spotting scopes.

Note: Our observation site is located on the grass with signs posted. From the Stow Lake Boathouse, facing the water; walk or drive to the left. We are on the grass just around the corner (see map below)

***SF Botanical Garden Admission:** FREE for all SF residents with proof of residency; non-residents pay varying fees. See the [garden’s website](#) for details. ***Please see our online events calendar.**



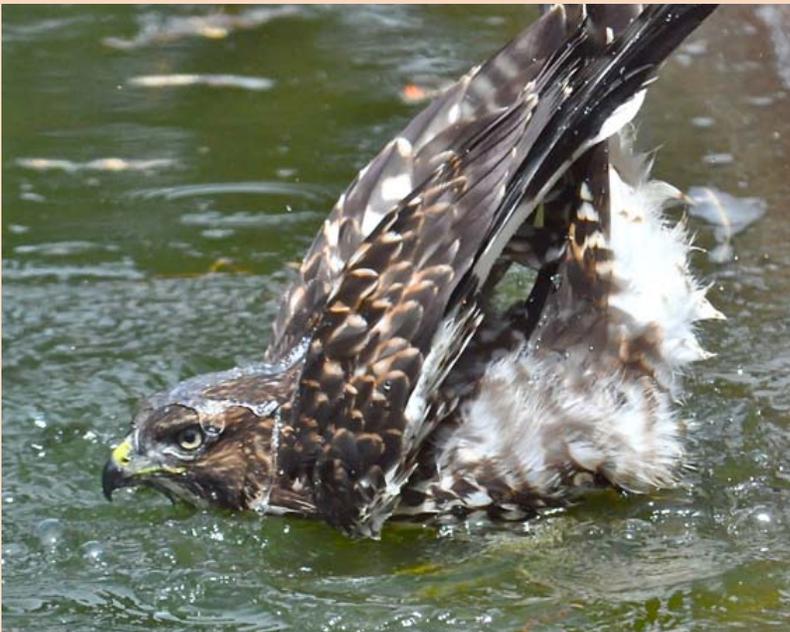


Photos: Sandi Wong

A Young Red-Tailed Hawk Takes Off



Sandi Wong captured this juvenile Red-tailed Hawk on Strawberry Hill recently. Could it be one of the three Red-tails that hatched on the island in April?



Support San Francisco Nature Education:

Adult membership	\$35	e-mail: info@sfnature.org
Dual membership	\$50	telephone: 415-387-9160
Senior membership	\$30	www.sfnature.org

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