

## A Banner Year for the Great Blues!

Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director



We finished Heron Watch season with five successful nests and fourteen Great Blue Heron chicks! As we go to press, two of the four heron chicks in the last nest are still learning to fly. If all goes well, a total of 193 chicks will have fledged at Stow Lake since we started counting in 1993!

Looking back at the heron chronology of Stow Lake, our best season was 2006, with 16 chicks from six nests. This year was the second best, tied with 2007, with a total of 14 chicks. This was the fifth time in 25 seasons that a single nest produced four chicks!

The Great Blues seem to have adjusted to their current nesting site. The birds moved there from a different Stow Lake island in 2015, and started with only two nests. We look forward to another banner year in 2018!



Nancy DeStefanis

Above: Parent heron prepares to feed chicks. Below: Fighting for food; last nest of the season.



Frank Marino

Frank Marino



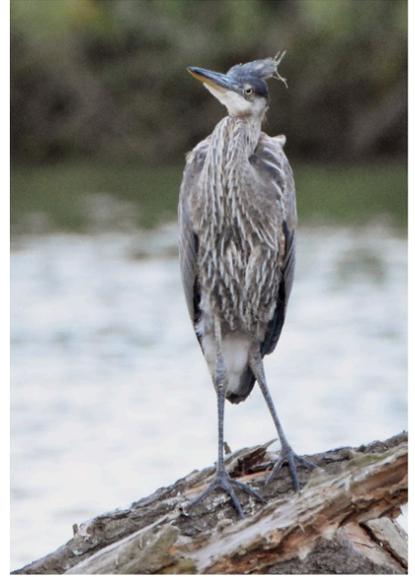
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## Great Blue Heron Chicks Grow Up!



Frank Marino



Frank Marino

Above: chicks in this late-season nest grow up. Above right: on its own and alone.  
Below: four chicks are fully grown at six weeks.



Nancy Destefanis

## Four Red-tailed Hawk Chicks Fledged in June at Stow Lake



Photos by Frank Marino



We were fortunate to observe the four Red-tailed Hawk chicks in their nest, and then see them stretching their wings and flying.

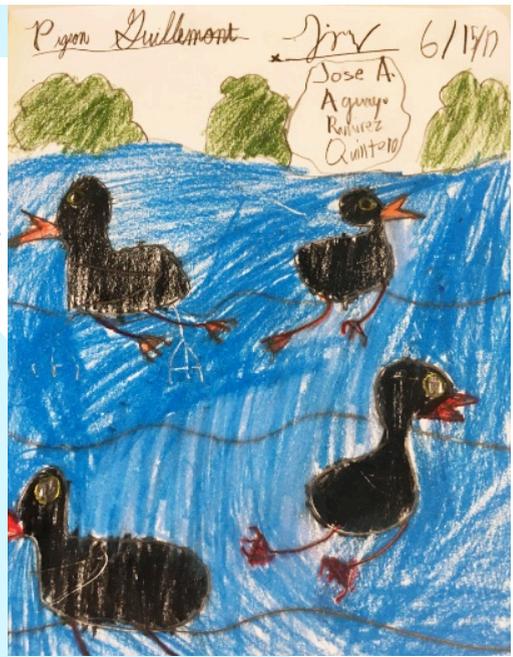
## SFNE Students Visit Alcatraz Island

As a docent for the National Park Service on Alcatraz Island I brought some of SF Nature Education's students and their parents to see nesting birds and chicks in June. We were joined by Jeanne Crawford, a fellow NPS docent; Alan Hopkins, a renowned birder; and Chris Giorni, founder of Tree Frog Treks.



SFNE

Students José and David draw their favorite Alcatraz birds.



Above: Pigeon Guillemots by José.

Below: Snowy Egrets by David.

## Docents Wanted for Alcatraz Island Bird Program!

Alcatraz Island is the site of a very large and important breeding colony for several different egret, heron, and seabird species. If you are interested in becoming an Alcatraz Waterbird Docent, please contact Ed Ryken, Docent Coordinator, [edwbear@earthlink.net](mailto:edwbear@earthlink.net), or Victoria Seher, Alcatraz Biologist, [Victoria\\_seher@nps.gov](mailto:Victoria_seher@nps.gov). More information is online at <https://www.nps.gov/alca/learn/nature/index.htm>. No phone calls, please.



Above: Snowy Egret chick. Below: Western Gull chicks.



Alcatraz Island Bird Photos by Alan Hopkins



Brandt's Cormorant.

## Birding for Everyone, June 3rd

Megan Prelinger, Naturalist

June 3rd started cool and foggy as we circled the Botanical Garden. **American Robins** were abundant on the lawn, and the southeast quarter of the garden was noisy with songs and calls from **California Towhees**, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, **White-crowned** and **Song Sparrows**. Our first of four singing **Pacific Wrens** was found along the south perimeter of the garden.

In the California Garden we found a fledgling—an **American Crow**, begging and gaping in the top of a narrow pine, finally silenced by the arrival of a parent with food. Our only warbler of the day was nearby: a bright male **Wilson's** flitting from tree to tree. Another singing wren was near the greenhouses.

In the Succulent Garden we observed **Pygmy Nuthatches** coming and going from Century Plants, and found the typical abundance of hummingbirds, **Anna's** and **Allen's**,

with the latter being the more numerous among the Yucca and other flowering plants.

A highlight was the sight of a fledgling **Red-shouldered Hawk** awkwardly working to maintain its balance while being observed by an adult in an adjacent tree. The juvenile was identifiable by its chocolate brown spotted body and brown wings, with the spots on its lower front forming a bar-like pattern.

**Red-legged Frogs** in the pond in the Children's Garden were another highlight. Flyover sightings included a **Western Gull** and two **Great Blue Herons** from the direction of Stow Lake. The **Cooper's Hawk** nest site near the Waterfowl Pond did not offer any confirmation of its occupants. On our way back to the Main Gate we had the opportunity to compare the songs of a **Purple Finch** and **House Finch**.



Jeff Harter



Jeff Harter

Clockwise from above: abandoned White-crowned Sparrow nest (with empty egg shells); Allen's Hummingbird; Song Sparrow; one of the dozens of Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars observed.



Jeff Harter



Judy Harter



### Feeding Time in Golden Gate Park

Above and right: American Robin and hungry nestlings near Stow Lake. Below: Black Phoebe feeding its young at Lloyd Lake.

Photos by Sandi Wong





On July 11th, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors honored Nancy DeStefanis for her service to the community. Left to right: Jason Chommanard (former fourth-grade bird-caller); Susie Geran, fourth-grade teacher at Sunnyside Elementary; Supervisor Sandy Fewer; Nancy; Renate and Terry Kenaston.

## Executive Director's Corner

Dear Friends,

Looking forward to winter 2017, we are planning our regular series of field trips to Heron's Head Park and Crissy Field. Stay tuned for dates and locations.

Prospective interns may apply for the year-long program: winter studies at Heron's Head Park and Crissy Field, and spring studies at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park. Applications are now available on [our website](#).

Our Birding for Everyone walks return on Saturday, September 2nd, with our intrepid leaders, Megan Prelinger and Sarah Barsness.

Best regards,

Nancy DeStefanis

This issue of our newsletter is being published in a new vertical format. Please let us know what you think of it: [info@sfnature.org](mailto:info@sfnature.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SF Nature Walks:** From 10 am to noon; rain cancels all walks. Members free, non-members \$10, children always free. Please bring binoculars if you can, and a pencil. For directions see our [events calendar](#).

**Birding for Everyone:** First Saturdays from 10 am to noon in the SF Botanical Garden. Next: Sept. 2, Oct. 7. Meet at SF Botanical Garden bookstore, 9th Ave. near Lincoln.

**SF Botanical Garden:** Free to SF residents with proof of residency; non-residents pay a fee.

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San Francisco Nature Education is in its 17th year of delivering comprehensive environmental education programs to students from schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.