



# The Blue Heron

News from San Francisco Nature Education · October 2018



## Winter Birding Trips Aplenty!

Nancy DeStefanis,  
Executive Director

Starting in November, we have special trips planned for Heron's Head Park, Chain of Lakes, Crissy Field, and a new location—the Buffalo Paddock—for a Great Horned Owl watch!

In addition, we have scheduled two exclusive Children's Nature Walks at the SF Botanical Garden, to be led by our acclaimed naturalists Missi Gavic and Bob Hirt.

Please check our Events page for upcoming programs.

Winter internships for middle school and high school students commence in November. Please help us spread the word to students interested in learning more about birds and nature. The deadline for students to apply is October 26th.

Best regards,

*Nancy*

Membership: Adults, \$35; Seniors 65+, \$30; students 21 or under, \$20.

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Photos: Sandi Wong

Black-throated Warbler at Stow Lake.

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## Birding for Everyone, September 8th Megan Prelinger, Naturalist

Our group was lucky, with a break in the summer fog, and a cornucopia of bird sightings in the SF Botanical Garden. Three **Red-masked Parakeets** flew overhead as we were gathering, and a **Lesser Goldfinch** was in a tree above the entrance. We headed for the Waterfowl Pond to find a reported **Belted Kingfisher**, and found it: identifiable as a female by the splash of rust on her breast. The Kingfisher was buzzed by a **Cooper's Hawk** and responded with counter-offensive flight.



Grace Ruth



Sarah Barsness

Clockwise from above left: Belted Kingfisher, Cooper's Hawk, Wild Turkey, Pygmy Nuthatch.

Our attention was diverted by a **Wild Turkey** on the lawn behind us, which was itself "buzzed" by the immature **Great Blue Heron** browsing the shoreline nearby.

The "whit, whit" of a flycatcher pulled us downhill toward the densely forested area where a **Willow Flycatcher** was clearly visible. We found **Townsend's Warblers** near the Japanese Garden, and two **Black-headed Grosbeaks**. These lacked the black heads that characterize them in breeding season, but were identifiable by their red breast, bill size and shape, and the streaks around their ears.



Grace Ruth

Overflying were a **Red-tailed Hawk** and a **Red-shouldered Hawk**. In the Children's Garden we found a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**, and then another **Cooper's Hawk**, this one with a fresh rodent meal in its talons; also in the vicinity, the sharp sounds of a Red-shouldered Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk turned out to be outstanding mimicry by a **Steller's Jay**.

On our return through the Succulent Garden we were arrested by the sheer number and variety of birds inhabiting the large monkey hand tree there: **Pine Siskins** and **House Finches** were the first to separate out.



Sarah Barsness

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Then two yellow birds had us puzzled: Oriole or Tanager? The **Hooded Oriole's** distinctive rapid and loud warble, together with a sighting of its decurved beak, clarified its identity, while the caramel-colored conical bill of the other yellow bird, and her duskier appearance and yellow wing bar, confirmed a **Western Tanager**.

In the horticulture library courtyard we found a first-of-season **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** and an **Orange-crowned Warbler**. Adding these memorable seasonal sightings to our communities of regular garden birds, we saw 36 species.

**SF Botanical Garden  
September 8, 2018**

**Compiled by  
Megan Prelinger**

**36 species:**

Wild Turkey  
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)  
Anna's Hummingbird  
Western Gull  
Great Blue Heron  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Belted Kingfisher  
Downy Woodpecker  
Red-masked Parakeet  
Willow Flycatcher  
Pacific-slope Flycatcher  
Black Phoebe  
Steller's Jay  
California Scrub-Jay

American Crow  
Common Raven  
Chestnut-backed Chickadee  
Pygmy Nuthatch  
Brown Creeper  
Pacific Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
American Robin  
House Finch  
Pine Siskin  
Lesser Goldfinch  
Dark-eyed Junco  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
California Towhee  
Hooded Oriole  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Townsend's Warbler  
Western Tanager  
Black-headed Grosbeak



Grace Ruth



Grace Ruth



Sarah Barsness

Clockwise from top: Western Tanager, Pacific Slope Flycatcher, Great Blue Heron.





**Parent and Juvenile  
Black-crowned Night Herons**  
Photos by Sandi Wong



## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

**Birding for Everyone:** First Saturdays from 10 am to noon in the SF Botanical Garden. Next walks: Oct. 6, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1, with Sarah Barsness or Megan Prelinger. 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.

**Heron's Head Park:** Saturday, Nov. 10, with Megan Prelinger. Meet at trailhead near parking lot at Cargo Way and Jennings Street. See map at right. Volunteers with spotting scopes accompany every walk.

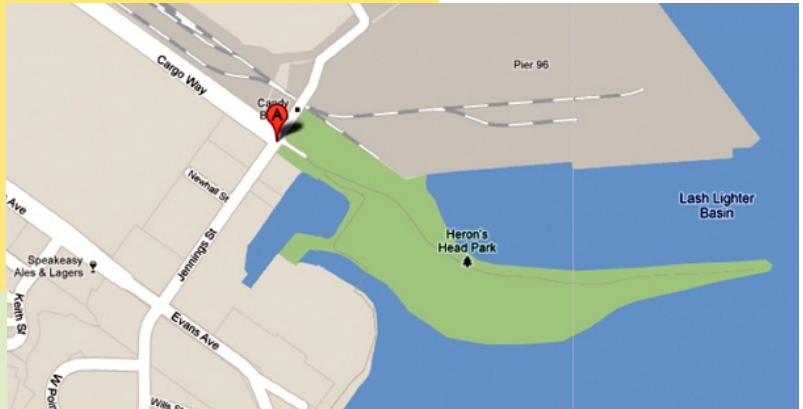
**Chain of Lakes in Golden Gate Park:** Saturday, Dec. 8, with Alan Hopkins. Details to come next month.

## Winter Student Internship Applications Now Online

Apply for a winter internship and learn about local wetland and shore birds at Heron's Head Park and Crissy Field. Deadline to apply: Oct. 26.

Training begins in November. Interns will learn to use spotting scopes and develop communication skills for talking to the public. Community service hours given.

[http://sfnature.org/get\\_involved/intern.html](http://sfnature.org/get_involved/intern.html). Internship fee; scholarships available.



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San Francisco Nature Education is in its 18th year of delivering comprehensive environmental education programs to students from schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.



Pacific Flycatcher and Yellow Warbler at Stow Lake Waterfall.

Photos: Sandi Wong



## Warblers and Vireos of Stow Lake

Photos by Sandi Wong

Clockwise from top left:  
Wilson's Warbler, Townsend's  
Warbler, Yellow Warblers,  
Warbling Vireo, Wilson's Warblers,  
Hermit Warbler, Hutton's Vireo  
(center).

