



## Eight New Heron Nests at Stow Lake!

It's been an exciting time at Stow Lake. We now have seven nests with at least 18 Great Blue Heron chicks! We have an eighth nest constructed by a new pair on May 11th! The female immediately began sitting on the nest to lay eggs. Last year's all-time record at Stow Lake was six nests and 17 chicks. Now we have exceeded our record, and our chick count may go even higher!

Meanwhile, the Red-tailed Hawk nest in a nearby tree has produced at least two chicks. People often ask if the hawks are predators of herons—the answer is no. The hawks may fly over the heron nests and buzz them and vice versa, but it is strictly an exercise in annoyance.

Our two high-school interns, Ian and Joy, graduated from the program on May 18th. Our two elementary-school interns, Jose and David, will graduate on June 15th. They all did an excellent job and have been invited back to Heron Watch next year.

Our volunteers were outstanding. Please see page 5 for a list of those who contributed so many hours to make Heron Watch a success.

A special thank-you to all who contributed to our successful matching grant campaign. We greatly appreciate your support!

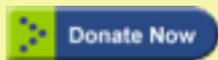
Heron Watch continues through June 15th. Please join us!

*Nancy*

Membership: Adults, \$35; Seniors 65+, \$30; Joint Membership for two seniors at same residence \$50; students 21 or under, \$20.

Renew or join by linking to Donate Now below, or send a check to: PO Box 210303, San Francisco CA 94121

e-mail: [info@sfnature.org](mailto:info@sfnature.org)  
telephone: 415-205-0776  
[www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org)



Clockwise from left: Adult heron in nest #1 with three chicks.

Feeding time for two heron chicks.

Two Red-tailed Hawks in nest—male, left, with gopher, female right.

Photos by David Sullivan.



### On the pages ahead:

- 2 Interns Graduate from Heron Watch Program
- 3 Adult Great Blue Heron Feeds Four Hungry Chicks!
- 4 Volunteers in Action, May 11th
- 5 Volunteers in Action, April 27th & May 4th; Director's Note of Thanks
- 6 Birds of Stow Lake, an Intern Photo Essay
- 7 Heron Watch Spring Internship: A Period of Learning
- 8 Upcoming Events; Birding for Everyone Report, May 4th
- 9 Great Horned Owlets Leave the Nest!

## Interns Graduate from Heron Watch Program

On May 18th, Joy Chang and Ian McNamara graduated from the Spring Heron Watch internship program and celebrated with a luncheon at a local restaurant. The interns were accompanied by their families and Executive Director Nancy DeStefanis.

Because of their hard work during the eight-week program, which included six Saturdays working with the public, each

intern was awarded new binoculars, field guides, and *Laws' Guide to Nature Journaling*.

These two interns were outstanding—they took initiative, showed up on time, and were excellent communicators—sharing information about the herons with the public. They also did a fine job of habitat restoration on Strawberry Hill with the staff of the SF Rec and Park Department.

—Nancy DeStefanis



SF Rec & Park



SFNE

Clockwise from above: Front row—interns Joy Chang, Ian McNamara, David and Jose Aguayo, with Andy Stone (in stripes), Stow Lake supervisor, and parent Jose Aguayo; Nancy DeStefanis with interns Ian and Joy and their families at a celebratory lunch; interns at work restoring habitat.



SFNE



Jose Aguayo



Jose Aguayo

**Adult Great Blue Heron Feeds Four Hungry Chicks!**  
Photos by Bill Hunnewell



# Heron Watch Volunteers in Action on May 11



Above: Diane O'Donahue at a scope; volunteer Martin Ernster. Below: Leader Megan Prelinger (center) with volunteers Steve Wolsford (far left) and Janel Schulenberg (far right); Bottom row: Suellen Sleamaker and visitor; Anne Galjour explains the program.



All photos SENE



## Volunteers in Action, April 27th and May 4th

Left to right below: Jennie Yoon with a family at Stow Lake. Middle row, from left: Joachim Gonzalez (with Nancy DeStefanis) was honored for the completion of his winter internship; Sharon Pretti (3rd from left) leads April 27th nature walk with Joy Chang, intern, Diane O'Donahue, and Kathleen Sullivan, far right. Bottom row: volunteers Kiyoko Bouey, far left, Martin Ernster, center, in cap, and Nancy DeStefanis (wearing nametag) on nature walk, May 4th.



Director's Note: We are very grateful to the 24 dedicated people who volunteered multiple Saturdays to share their knowledge and expertise with the public: Natasha Arnold, Kevin Biggerstaff, Kimiko Bouey, Claire Chow, Isabelle Chow, Kathleen Duffy, Martin Ernster, Anne Galjour, Missi Gavic, Jeff & Judy Harter, Bob Hirt, Alan Hopkins, Greg Lyon, Diane O'Donohue, Megan Prelinger, Sharon Pretti, Janel Schulenberg, Suellen Sleamaker, Kathleen Sullivan, Janet White, Steve Wolford, Natasha Yankoffski, and Jennie Yoon. Our interns have been outstanding: Jose and David Aguayo, Joy Chang, and Ian McNamara. Also thanks to Jeff Harter, Bill Hunnewell, Grace Ruth, David Sullivan, Sandi Wong, and all of our talented contributing photographers.



All photos SFNE



At Heron Watch I learned that I liked birds, that I'm good at talking to the public (although it was scary at first), and how to use the spotting scopes. I was hesitant to go to the program because I had seen a kid bullied for liking birds. But I thought about it, and realized that I wanted to try this program because it sounded fun—and it was.

What I enjoyed doing: the sketching, because it strengthened my artistic skills, and taking photographs. David Sullivan, a photographer for SF Nature Education, gave me a lot of help. He gave me a lens and explained all the bells and whistles so I understood each feature. He gave me the confidence to keep going.

Top: Great Blue Herons in their nests. Above: Double-crested Cormorant dries its wings. Below: Red-tailed Hawk steals a gopher from a startled Great Blue Heron.



## Heron Watch Spring Internship: A Period of Learning Joy Chang, Intern

I first met Ms. D. at a Heron's Head Park nature walk, and right away she convinced me to participate in the spring Heron Watch internship program. On the first day I was not sure what to expect, but over the past five weeks I have enjoyed myself immensely and have learned many valuable skills that I can use in the future.

My favorite part of the internship was attending the nature walks around Stow Lake. Not only is the scenery beautiful, but many kinds of birds are on the water, flying, and perching in trees. I learned to identify birds, a skill I had barely understood before the internship.

Now I can recognize almost 30 species. I love the male Bufflehead ducks with their bright white head patches, and the sleek Double-crested Cormorants. My favorite is the Steller's Jay because of its adorable head crest and radiant blue plumage.

When I was not attending nature walks I stayed at the observation site and watched the nesting Great Blue Herons through the spotting scopes. Setting up and using the scopes was another skill I learned. Throughout the



SFNE

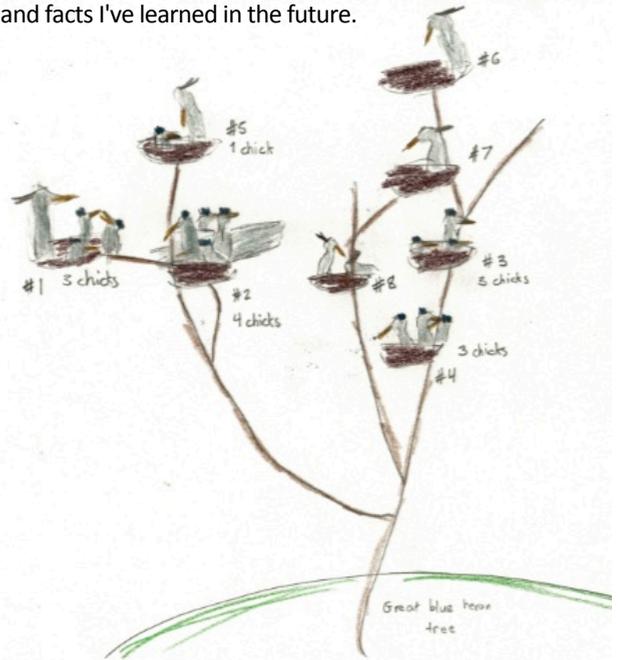
internship I practiced focusing, and am now very comfortable using them. I know that this will be an invaluable skill in my future as an ornithologist.

I learned to appreciate the magnificent Great Blue Herons of Stow Lake. I did not know that parents regurgitate food into the bottom of the nest rather than feeding beak-to-beak. By talking to the public I improved my speaking skills. I became better at drawing the eight nests in the tree.

Not everything I learned in the internship focused on birds! On May 11th, I climbed Strawberry Hill to work on habitat restoration. I discovered that many of the plants that commonly grow in the area are invasive, such as common ivy and wild radish.

While removing these plants I found a small paper wasp nest, only five centimeters in diameter, hanging from a California currant branch. The nest had three concentric paper layers, and in the center was a honeycomb structure with wasp larvae. I was not expecting to learn about insects that day!

This summer I plan to use the knowledge acquired during my internship. In July I will attend the four-day Conservation Science Intensive at Audubon Canyon Ranch, thanks to Ms. D., who wrote a recommendation. I will apply my knowledge of sketching, of using spotting scopes, and identifying birds. Not only was the Heron Watch internship memorable and enjoyable, but I will use the many skills and facts I've learned in the future.



Great Blue Heron with fish; the heron colony at Stow Lake. Drawings by Joy Chang.

# San Francisco Nature Education



Membership: Adults, \$35; Seniors 65+, \$30. Joint Membership for two seniors at same residence \$50; students 21 or under, \$20.

e-mail: [info@sfnature.org](mailto:info@sfnature.org)  
tel: 415-205-0776;  
PO Box 210303, SF CA 94121  
[www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org)



San Francisco Nature Education is in its 19th year of delivering comprehensive environmental education programs to students from schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.

## Please support our programs!

### Birding for Everyone, April 6th Megan Prelinger, Naturalist

Spring is nesting season! During our circuit around the Botanical Garden we had several opportunities to appreciate how important the garden is as breeding bird habitat. The garden is used by resident species and summer migrants to build nests and raise families.



Gary Larsen

In the Succulent Garden we found the century plant structures being utilized as apartments by **Nuttall's Woodpeckers** and **Pygmy Nuthatches**, both resident year-round, while nearby summer **Tree Swallows** courted and preened. The resident pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** were on a nest in the Children's Garden. At the other end of the size spectrum, an **Allen's Hummingbird** pair were tending fledglings outside their nest.

Spring courtship behavior is still in progress for some species. In the Redwood Grove two **Pacific Wrens** were singing as loudly as ever, as were many **Song Sparrows** and three **Wilson's Warblers**. We found birds in pairs carrying nesting material or engaging in pair-bonding behavior, including **Black Phoebes** courting, preening, and pairing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SF Nature Walks: No walks in July or August.**  
Adults \$10, children always free. RAIN CANCELS.

**Heron Watch:** Continuing on Saturdays, June 1, 8, and 15, 10 am–1 pm.

Nature walks will leave from observation site: June 1, with Nancy DeStefanis; June 8, with Megan Prelinger; June 15, family walk with Missi Gavic & Bob Hirt. See map below, or our **Heron Watch 2019 Flyer**.



The day started out cool and foggy, but by noon there was full sun, and with it many butterflies, including **Pipevine Swallowtail** and **Red Admiral**.

### SF Botanical Garden May 4th, 2019 Compiled by Megan Prelinger 30 species:

- Canada Goose — 2
- Mallard — 4
- Anna's Hummingbird — 2
- Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird — 4
- Western Gull — 3
- Double-crested Cormorant — 1
- Great Blue Heron — 2
- Red-shouldered Hawk — 2
- Red-tailed Hawk — 2
- Nuttall's Woodpecker — 2
- Black Phoebe — 2
- Hutton's Vireo — 2
- Steller's Jay — 2
- California Scrub-Jay — 2
- Common Raven — 2
- Tree Swallow — 2
- Chestnut-backed Chickadee — 2
- Pygmy Nuthatch — 2



Bill Hunnewell

At left: Allen's Hummingbird feeds chick. Above: House Finch.

- Pacific Wren — 3
- American Robin — 12
- Cedar Waxwing — 18
- House Finch — 4
- Dark-eyed Junco — 3
- Song Sparrow — 9
- California Towhee — 2
- Wilson's Warbler — 3



**Great Horned Owlets Leave the Nest!**  
Photos by Sandi Wong

