



PETALUMA WETLANDS ALLIANCE

(A COMMITTEE OF MADRONE AUDUBON)
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Providing Education in and Stewardship of Petaluma's Public Wetlands

Autumn 2008

What's Happening at PWA

by Gerald Moore

Annual Fundraising

Those of you who have joined PWA/Madrone Audubon in order to support PWA will receive a fundraising letter from Madrone in November. PWA is a part of this drive and your support would be appreciated. Just **write PWA on the memo line of your check** if you wish your contribution to go to our Petaluma wetlands. Thank you.

Petaluma Educational Foundation Partnership

PWA is pleased to announce that we have partnered with the Petaluma Educational Foundation, which is now sponsoring most of our grade school educational program to help us grow our program with the goal of being able to offer it to every third grade in Petaluma in the coming years. This funding allows us to focus some of our other educational funds on creative ways to reach out to the community for more docents. If you or anybody you know might be interested in taking **our next docent class**, please **contact us at 763-3577**.

Lakeville Business Park Partnerships in Restoration and Education

Restoring the habitat at Shollenberger is a long and slow process, with tons of invasive weeds to remove and thousands of native plants to get in the ground over the years. Recently, two companies in the business park have volunteered to help us with this challenge. **Athleta** has taken on the responsibility to help us plant and maintain a corner of Alman Marsh in front of their offices at 1450 Technology Lane. On top of this, they were generous enough to make financial donations to PWA and to the Casa Native Plant Nursery run by John Shribbs, who is our partner in restoration projects. A new company to the business park, **Camelbak**, has also donated time this summer to help us remove weeds along the east trail, which they can see from their new offices. Along with this came a case of excellent gloves made to military specifications, which are used by many of our volunteers. We hope to partner with more companies in the area to help improve the habitat in Shollenberger Park. Two other businesses, **RNM**

Properties and **ECONSCIOUS** have made generous financial donations to support our educational programs.

Sonoma Valley Christmas Bird Count

by Peter Colasanti

Are you one of those people who have mixed emotions about Christmas time? Of course it's nice to put on a few pounds eating the wrong things, and seeing and hearing from friends and family is swell, but sometimes all the purchasing and preparations can get to be a bit much. Wouldn't it be nice to just drop it all for a day or more and wander the great outdoors seeking true happiness? Well, here's your chance: On Friday, January 2, the 4th annual **Sonoma Valley Christmas Bird Count** takes place. Appropriately enough, Petaluma Wetlands Alliance folks lead the area in the southwest corner of the count circle. It includes everything from Alman Marsh (at the Sheraton) to Tolay Park and all the area in between. That's a lot of territory. The entire 15-mile diameter count circle is carved up into only eight areas and we could use your help in finding all the birds within it that day. Every level of field experience is useful, from neophyte to expert, and recorders too. If you think you'd like to help, or if you'd like to be talked into it, send me an email and I'll see what I can do—Peter Colasanti: peter_colasanti@yahoo.com.

REMINDER---PWA Annual Meeting

by Gerald Moore

The PWA Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, **November 1**, 9:30 AM to noon, at Lucchesi Community Center. The featured speaker will be **Patricia Winters**, who will present a program on Bay Area bats. We will also recognize people who have contributed to our educational and restorative programs and field questions and comments about our work in the wetlands. Please come to this free meeting and learn more about bats and the Petaluma Wetlands Alliance.

Date Change for the Next PWA Docent Training Course

by Gerald Moore

Due to the city downsizing to a four-day workweek, our training course for new docents will change from Fridays to Thursdays, starting on **January 8, 2009** and run for eight consecutive Thursday mornings. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested in becoming a wetlands docent, please contact us at **763-2934** or **778-6558** for more details. Join the fun by becoming part of this great group of people. Information is also available on our website: www.petalumawetlands.org.

Petaluma Wetlands Alliance Thanks Eagle Optics

by Mary Edith Moore

The Petaluma Wetlands Alliance recently purchased five pairs of Audubon binoculars from Eagle Optics for our school docent program. Eagle generously donated five more pairs through their Nonprofit Educational Matching Donation Program. Thank you, Eagle Optics, for helping us to introduce birding to third grade students.

Docent Enrichment Field Trip to PRBO's Palomarin Field Station

by Mary Edith Moore

In September, 12 PWA docents carpooled to the Palomarin Field Station where they were met by Missy Wipf, PRBO Educator Biologist. Missy talked about the origin, history, and evolution of bird banding. She and PRBO interns led the docents on a mist-net tour to show how songbirds are captured and released for bird banding. Back in the lab, as docents watched and asked questions, interns examined the birds and recorded the data. Later, Missy gave the docents a look at the interns' accommodations, followed by a short bird walk to a nearby creek where bird calls and songs were heard throughout the chaparral and riparian habitats. A brown-bag lunch on the deck ended the morning's activities.

Summer Training with the STRAW Project of the Bay Institute

by Helen Heal

On August 4, 5, and 6, 2008, I had the opportunity to participate in the STRAW training as a representative of the PWA. STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) is the cornerstone of the Watershed Education Program of the Bay Institute. I spent three days with about 45 others as we explored the history, geology, hydrology, aquatic life, and importance of the Bay to ocean life and the watersheds that empty into it. This was a lively and congenial group of local teachers and representatives of local environmental education programs (including PRBO). The highlight of the week was a ride on the train from Emeryville to Sacramento with narration of the geology and fish life from two of the Bay Institute's senior scientists. On the third day, we met at the Aquarium of the Bay on Pier 39 in San Francisco. Here, we were treated to a private tour and presentations from staff scientists that focused on their work relating to shark populations in the Bay and nearby ocean habitats. These three days provided opportunities for networking with other groups similar to PWA and a way to let others know of the work of PWA in the Petaluma River watershed. We will also be integrating some of the information and contacts made there into our training and educational activities.