



PICKLEWEED POST

Friends of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Newsletter

VOLUME 13

FEBRUARY 2017

Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership with a “Sister Refuge”

by Heather Bartlett, Wildlife Refuge Specialist, Yukon Flats NWR and
Melisa Amato, Wildlife Refuge Specialist, San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge



Yukon Flats NWR – Photo by Nathan Hawkaluk

The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge will be hosting the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge during the week of February 6 through 12, 2017.

Yukon Flats NWR received a grant to initiate a “sister refuge” relationship with San Pablo Bay NWR due to our common missions of providing habitat for canvasbacks. Staff from the Yukon Flats NWR and a Native Athabascan and Yukon Flats resident (& former refuge employee) will be traveling to the San Pablo Bay NWR for a week of events to: 1) speak about the wildlife and human connections between the refuges; 2) share photos, videos, etc. to provide a “virtual tour” of Yukon Flats; 3) tell stories about living off the land and having a refuge be a home; and 4) demonstrate the importance of thinking “globally” to conserve Arctic waterfowl. The week will conclude with the staff from Yukon Flats NWR presenting at the 2017 San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival in Vallejo, California (<https://www.sfbayflywayfestival.com>).

The week will consist of acquainting the Yukon Flats NWR staff with San Pablo Bay and bringing local students onto the refuge to learn about Alaska’s Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge - the third largest Refuge in the nation. This incredible refuge serves as the breeding grounds for millions of waterfowl that spend summers in Alaska and winters in their “backyard!” Staff from Yukon Flats Refuge will take students on a virtual tour of the refuge through presentations filled with pictures and videos. They’ll explain the connection between Yukon Flats and San Pablo Bay Refuges and how bird banding efforts dating back to the 1960s established this vital conservation connection. Students will learn about how the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge is not just important for wildlife - it’s also vital for the native Alaskans who live within its borders. Native Athabascan and Yukon Flats resident, Julie Mahler, will tell stories and share pictures of what it’s like to live off the land in Alaska and how important these traditions are for sustaining her culture’s heritage.

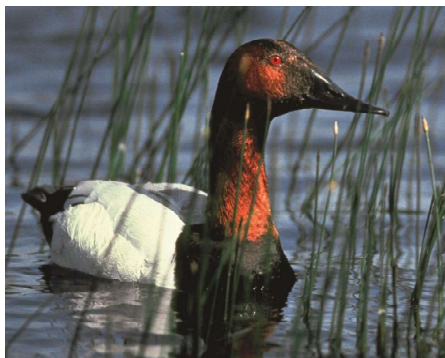
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The Yukon Flats NWR staff will also stick around for the 2017 San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival. They will be presenting to Flyway participants on Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. Attendees can learn about the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge that lies in the interior of Alaska, at the far northern end of the Pacific Flyway. Each autumn, millions of migratory birds that nest and raise their young on the Flats disperse, spreading across much of the globe to be shared and enjoyed by countless others who appreciate wildlife and wild places. This is the legacy of the Yukon Flats today – and tomorrow. Come learn from Refuge staff about how these migratory birds connect Alaska with California and the San Pablo Bay. Get a glimpse of what it's like to live, work, and be part of a community in the Far North and learn how Alaska's public lands support conservation in your backyard.

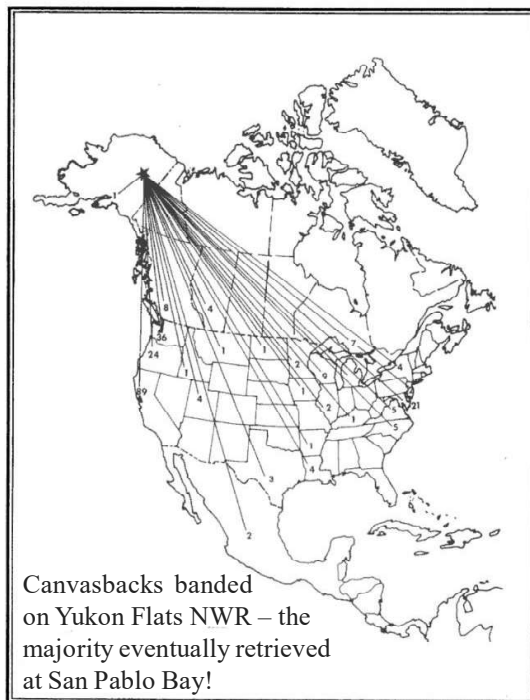
Refuge Connection

If one had to sum up the importance of Yukon Flats NWR in one word, it would be “waterfowl”. The Refuge's vast network of wetlands is critically important for *feeding the flyways*.

The Refuge's first purpose in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1980) is “to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity, including, but not limited to, canvasbacks and other migratory birds...” So where do the canvasbacks fly for the winter? San Pablo Bay! Yukon Flats Refuge has a direct connection through canvasbacks to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge.



Canvasback – Photo by Nathan Hawkaluk



Canvasbacks banded on Yukon Flats NWR – the majority eventually retrieved at San Pablo Bay!

2016 was a terrific year for endangered species on the San Pablo Bay NWR!

by Meg Marriott, Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, San Pablo Bay NWR and Marin Islands NWR

We detected 35 Ridgway's Rails within our survey areas; more rails detected on the Refuge since our surveys began in 2005! Habitat restoration projects and enhancements such as Sonoma Baylands Restoration (1996), Tolay Creek Restoration (1998), Tubbs Setback Restoration (2002) and Lower Tubbs Island Enhancement (2009), have created 100's of acres that have accreted sediment, raising elevation to mid marsh plain, and are now providing more suitable habitat for rails. This is a true illustration of “if you build it, they will come”!

We also saw a major and significant increase in both numbers and Capture Efficiencies (a parameter by which the USFWS measures population growth, for species recovery purposes) of Salt Marsh Harvest Mice within all restoration and enhancement units on the Refuge in 2016. We also discovered a new species, the California Mouse (*Peromyscus californicus*) in our Tubbs Setback restoration area. Restoration on the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge is working!!!



California Mouse -
web photo



Ridgway's Rail -
web photo



Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse
by Ivan Parr

Marin Islands

by Meg Marriott, Wildlife Biologist,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, San
Pablo Bay NWR and Marin Islands
NWR

This year Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge and State of California Ecological Reserve celebrates its 25th anniversary!

The Refuge was the 479th National Wildlife Refuge added to the National Wildlife Refuge System, and was established in April 1992 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds and nesting habitat for waterbirds.. West Marin Islands hosts one of the largest heron and egret rookeries in Northern California.

These tiny islands (East Marin approximately 10.28 acres, and West Marin approximately 2.8 acres) comprise six distinct habitat types and host over 92 species of native Marin County plants. Though no threatened or endangered plants occur on the islands, many rare and uncommon Marin County plants remain present on the islands, though they possibly no longer co-occur elsewhere in Marin County.

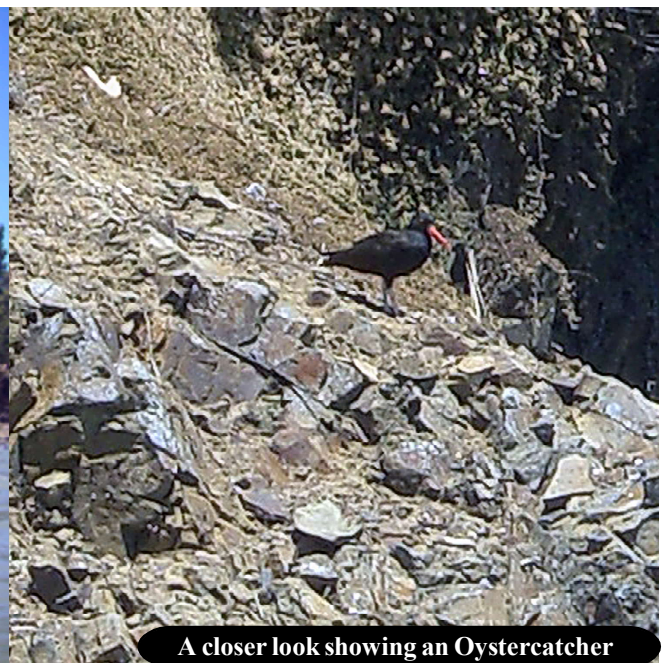
The San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex staff are excited to offer multiple “tour and picnic parties” to the Islands this year in celebration of the Refuge’s 25th Anniversary! If interested in joining us, please contact Meg Marriott, Refuge Wildlife Biologist (707-769-4200 x 104) for dates and times of upcoming tour dates.



Marin Islands - photo by Meg Marriott



Rookery on East Marin Island - photo by Phil Saroyan



A closer look showing an Oystercatcher

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Save the Date

Saturday, May 20 - Skaggs Island Bike Ride and Picnic

at the Refuge Headquarters, 2100 Sears Point Road,
Sonoma CA 95476

For more information, please follow us on Facebook:

Friends of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge

or

Contact our President, Francesca Demgen

707-315-1094



Thank You Hanford ARC

The Friends of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge would like to sincerely thank Hanford ARC for their continued support.

Hanford Applied Restoration & Conservation (ARC) is a licensed general engineering and landscape contractor specializing in wetland mitigation and restoration, stream construction, soil bioengineering, revegetation, park construction, and erosion control.



Yes, I would like to join the Friends and help protect the wildlife and support the Refuges.

Please fill out, enclose with
your donation and mail to:

**Friends of the San Pablo Bay NWR
Membership
7715 Lakeville Highway
Petaluma, CA 94954
707-769-4200**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pickleweed Pal | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Marsh Wren | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ridgway's Rail | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Harvest Mouse Helper | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Great Blue Heron Hero | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Saltmarsh Sponsor | \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White Pelican Patron | \$2,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tidal Marsh Mentor | \$5,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Great Egret Guardian | \$10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Baylands Benefactor | \$25,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | \$ _____ |

☐ **I am interested in becoming a
Friends Board Member**

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Thank You!
**Your membership contribution
is tax deductible.**