

Event Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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28th Annual Flyway Festival Celebrates Return of Millions of Migrating Birds to San Francisco Bay Area

Unique 3-day birding and wildlife festival at Mare Island draws
an estimated 3,000 people each year

[VALLEJO], CA – Both birds and people will be flocking to Vallejo's Mare Island, and regional wetlands to celebrate what has become a special annual ritual each winter: the [San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival](#). The 3-day event celebrates the return of over one million shorebirds and hundreds of thousands of ducks, geese, hawks, songbirds and even monarch butterflies which migrate through or winter in the San Francisco Bay Area.

This year the Festival will be held Friday, Feb. 10th through Sunday, February 12th featuring guided nature walks including outings suitable for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers, and families and adults of all ages, throughout the region. Guided historical and nature outings are scheduled on the Mare Island San Pablo Bay Trail, in the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and in the historical Naval Shipyard area. Regional guided outings include guided and self-guided access on Units of the San Pablo Bay and Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuges, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Areas and on regional non-profit organization managed properties such as the Sonoma Land Trust and the Solano Land Trust.

Non-profit and Agency Exhibitors and commercial vendors, presenters and guides are invited to participate in and contribute to the Flyway Festival weekend. Attached (and on Facebook sites) is an Application which also includes a Sponsor Invitation. For the first time in a number of years, Flyway Festival organizers have issued a Call for Art (attached and on Facebook sites) for the always popular, "Bay Area Wetlands to Ridgetops" Art Show.

The Family Wildlife Exploration and Birding Expo, traditionally a weekend-long event headquartered on Mare Island, will return as an In-Person event for the first time in 3 years, following Hybrid/Virtual Flyway Festivals during the pandemic. This popular gathering showcases the efforts of more than 40 regional environmental organizations

and agencies and commercial vendors and artists, birding and wild bird demonstrations, and art and photography exhibits. Admission is free.

The full schedule for the Flyway Festival will be posted online by late January, 2023. It will include a listings of all presentations at the Wildlife Expo and outings on Mare Island and throughout the region. The February 10, Opening Reception will kickoff the Festival Art Show “Bay Area Wetlands to Ridgetops”, from 5:00-7:00pm followed by the Saturday, February 11, 9:30am-4:00pm and Sunday, February 12, 9:30am-3:00pm Flyway Festival Wildlife Expo. The specific location on Mare Island will be announced soon. It is being finalized with the Master Developer, the Mare Island Co.

Presentations

For the Flyway Festival’s 28th anniversary, organizers welcome returning presenters [Native Bird Connections](#), a wild bird rehab and education center based in Martinez, CA will once again give its “standing-room-only” live bird show, “Raptprs Up Close”, Saturday, February 11 and Sunday, February 12 at the Wildlife Expo from 11:30am-12:30pm. Enthusiastic turnout for this live bird visit is assured as Jenny Papka, Director of Native Bird Connections, once again invites Festival attendees to, “Journey into the world of Raptors or birds of prey. Live non releasable raptors will accompany this lively, informative and always new program. Bring your camera and your questions!"

Past digital presentations have included information about how to identify birds in the field and use binoculars, the history of the Mare Island Naval Hospital, the surprising nesting of osprey in San Francisco Bay, not known to have occurred in the 20th or 21st centuries until about the year 2000 on Mare Island. As presenters notify Festival organizers, updates to the program will be made.

Host Non-profit Land Trust

Once again, Mare Island Heritage Trust is the nonprofit Mare Island-based land trust whose President, Myrna Hayes, is the Flyway Festival Co-founder and Director. She wrote in her Flyway Festival welcome letter attached, of her own childhood memories of time spent growing up in the wilds of Paradise, CA, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, and how those vivid memories keep her passion for introducing others to the the wilderness of the “north shores” of the San Francisco Bay, alive.

Regional guided and self-guided outings scheduled in Contra Costa, Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties

The annual migration celebration offers a range of guided and self-guided outings throughout the “north shore” region of the San Francisco Bay Area including birdwatching, natural history and recreational hikes led on Mare Island. Many of the hikes and outings are oriented to beginning and intermediate birders. Mare Island hikes this year, will focus on the San Pablo Bay Trail with its up to 4-mile round trip leveetop trail along the San Pablo Bay. The Trail is open daily for self-guided walks, but there will be ample guided walks and birdwatching opportunities on the San Pablo Bay Trail over all three days. Guided history and nature oriented hikes will take place in the historic shipyard area and James Alden Park and Chapel Park.

Hawk watching outings led by experienced hawk specialists will return. These are very popular outings, with two led by Larry Broderick, West County Hawk Watch, consistently drawing from 80 to 100 participants during his Lynch Canyon, Solano Land Trust hosted guided outing, as well as his Sunday, outing hosted by Sonoma Land Trust. Hawk and Raptor expert, Larry Broderick will guide a Birds of Prey hike Saturday, February 11, 10:00am-1:30pm at Lynch Canyon Open Space Park. Visit the [Solano Land Trust](#) website for details. Larry Broderick will guide a Birds of Prey hike, Sunday, February 12 from 10:00am-1:30pm at Sears Point Wetlands Bay Trail. Visit the [Sonoma Land Trust](#) website for details and to register.

Napa Solano Audubon Society field guide led outings are expected to enjoy enthusiastic turnouts. Skaggs Island, the former US Navy communications facility and now a part of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge, are not normally open to the public. The public can likely expect a return of escorted outings to these properties during the Flyway Festival.

One of the most popular attractions again this year, is the self-guided and very easy to access San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge's 1200 acres of restored tidal wetlands at Cullinan Ranch, opened to the Bay's waters for the first time in more than 150 years in the first part of January 2015. Located north of Hwy 37 just west of Vallejo, self-guided birdwatching, walking and even kayak and canoe access to the marshland is allowed without permit or reservation. Self-guided access is offered to a number of other National Refuge lands adjacent to Highway 37 for birdwatching and hiking. Self-guided hiking and birdwatching can be done on California Department of Fish and Wildlife property in southern Napa County at the Green Island Unit. American Canyon's Wetlands Edge Trail at the west end of Eucalyptus Dr. is a popular Flyway Festival self-guided destination for avid birdwatchers of all skill levels.

Mare Island Nature, Birding, Historic, Cultural, Recreational and Scenic Outings

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve represents 44% of Vallejo's open space and is a magnet for Flyway Festival attendees with its self-guided access and many guided birdwatching, nature, history and recreational outings led by Preserve volunteers. Mare Island outings will include guided walks Friday, Saturday and Sunday by local Audubon Society birdwatching leaders and Mare Island Heritage Trust field guides. Hikes and driving birding outings on the Island include a guided "birding hot spots" driving tour. Digiscoping with phones and cameras should be good on the San Pablo Bay Trail's wetland pond. Beginning birding walks on the San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail will be offered all three days.

The WWII-era Landing Craft Gunboat, LCS-102, located at the corner of Nimitz Ave. at A St. on Mare Island will be open for tours Saturday, February 11th 9:30am-3:30pm.

Flyway Festival Opening Reception and Art Show, "Bay Area Wetlands to Ridgetops"

The “Bay Area Wetlands to Ridgetops”, Flyway Festival Art Show has been a traditional favorite. In 2023 Festival organizers have once again issued a Call for Art(attached) for the Flyway Festival, after In-Person Festival cancellation due to the pandemic. The Flyway Festival’s opening reception will take place Friday evening, February 10, 5:00pm-7:00pm.

Most Festival activities are free. Some require pre-registration. For more information and directions, call Myrna Hayes 707-249-9633 or visit our Facebook page, [San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival](#) and [2023 Hybrid/Virtual Flyway Festival Group](#) site.

Digital photos available prior to and during the event. Call or text Myrna Hayes at 707-249-9633 cell or e-mail myrnahayes@mac.com

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