

29th year 2025 *Flyway Festival*

December 19, 2025

Dear Flyway Festival
Friends, Fans, Sponsors
Exhibitors and Field Guides,

I am happy to invite you to join me for our 2025 Flyway Festival. As is my tradition, I've written a few words of reflection and welcome.

Today is the day that I have set aside to share with you, the happenings of the year and to wish you a marvelous holiday season and Wintertime. Here is what I thought I would do to get myself in the mood to chat about our upcoming Flyway Festival. I grabbed my computer and purse AND the dog and tripped out to the street to hop in my car and head into the local wilds like I have found works best for me to center on our wilderness (wild near us) and direct my thoughts to you my wildlands community from whom I receive my inspiration and who I cherish, so.

Life has other plans. The car will not start. I was going to switch to the good old Toyota pickup and when I turned the key, the new battery was completely dead. So, back into the house I traped to make a cup of coffee and regroup. Settled in the car with my Merlin Bird ID App scanning the nearby trees, for the voices of songbirds, the front seat pushed back with



Photo: Myrna Hayes, On a Ramble amongst the blue gum eucalyptus Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve

my computer propped on my steering wheel, I'm going to give a first draft of my love letter to you, a go.

First, let's review the last year and a half. You will recall that in February of 2023, we held a darling and triumphant Flyway Festival on our home turf in the heart of the historic shipbuilding area of Mare Island surrounding by drydocks and buildingways with cranes and gantries towering overhead. That was a fun weekend packed with fondest of memories of wild times shared together as we celebrated the return of migrating waterfowl,

shorebirds, hawks and songbirds who have visited, overwintered, refueled on our shores and Bay since the beginning of time.

Together, we have thrilled at the glimpses of nature viewed up close through a field guide's fancy scope or by holding binoculars to our faces, to see the flitting source of a song or sound, we had really not paid attention to, before.

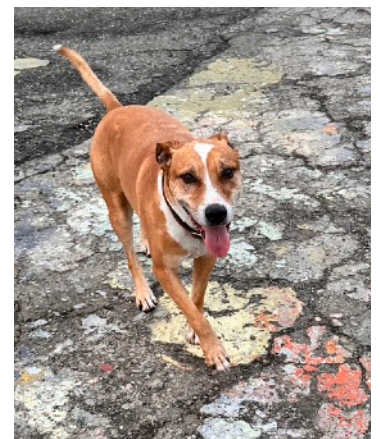
One time a year, we have set aside to gather and celebrate the beauty and bounty in which we live. This has become a treasured tradition. As we

gather to learn, to experience, to share and to rejuvenate our commitment to protecting what we hold most dear. Our wildlands and open spaces.

Fast forward. Things are inexplicably shifting in our lives. Like dozens of



earthquakes, some where we expected them, least. "Storm events" morphing into tornados. Tumultuous times in our communities that tumble us into despair, distress and yes, disbelief. I am going to tell you of one such 'storm event' in our lives. Before I do, I want to remind you and assure you that while all this tumult swirls around us, may we
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Nitro, our good dog friend at the BOO (1300) Building Mare Island photo, Myrna Hayes

Wilderness—wild near us...Go Wildly!

never forget to step outside, to look to the night sky saturated with stars, or the day sky of bluest blue, billowing with clouds. May we look to the earth beneath our feet. Not just watching as we place one foot in front of the other, but as we look ahead to the way before us, along a trail leading us to a distant hillside and soon, to a mountaintop and glorious vistas that transform us. May we go to the water's edge where our sorrows and sadnesses are always melted away and washed out with the tide and the ripples of fast flowing water. Nothing really changes about the great outdoors. It's our experience of it.

So, having reminded you that like today, when the blowing, piercing tule fog still blankets our town with chill, there is a sun right above, tussling with the fog, for a chance to warm us and remind us, as we come close to the shortest day, that **the light will return**. We can weather all that buffets us. I know it is so and I believe that you do, too.

And, like magic, right before my eyes, the wind shoves the fog clouds away and the blue sky appears with its shimmering veil of high clouds glinting in the midday sunshine.

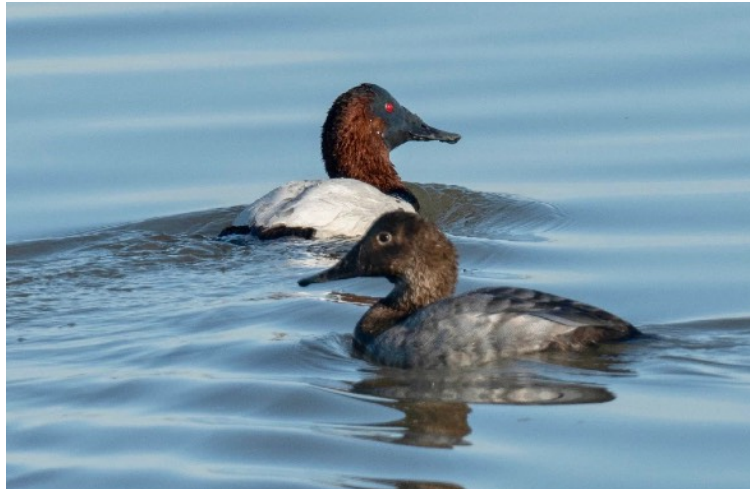


Photo: canvasback ducks along Highway 37, Pam Starr

So, having I hope, inspired you, I am, as promised, going to ask you to sit down with me so I can tell you about the changes we are experiencing.

First, my Nitro died on the night of November 1st. He has been our dog rock and joy mixed with a good dose of trouble, for 11.5 years. He convinced us to not take ourselves too seriously and that the bond between dogs and humans is as assured as migration. As I read the literally more than a thousand heartfelt tributes and condolences, it was clear that dogs are very much emissaries and ambassadors between all that is wild and us. I read stories of Nitro guiding people he did not know into the wilds of Mare Island. Dogs remind us that even we are wild and to dive on into the depths of that part of us. Its OK to be freely human.

Now, not only have we lost our mascot dog, we have

lost our San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival as we have known it for 28 years. A weird and almost inexplicable twist has occurred for our 2025 Flyway Festival. In 2023 it had been 3 years since we had held an In-Person Wildlife Expo traditionally headquartered on Mare Island and we were so excited to hold a LIVE EVENT that February.

Unbeknownst to us, BIZARRE things would begin to take place. Shortly after that fun 2023 Flyway Festival, a cabal of actors planned a stealth takeover of our traditional and beloved Flyway Festival. This is why as I planned the 2024 Flyway Festival, I was nonplussed about the lack of support I was receiving from the various partners which led me to cancel the 2024 Flyway Festival to regroup.

Imagine my shock upon learning that a group from the now former State

Senators office, the Vallejo City Managers office, and its Mare Island partner, with a contracted event company which the City of Vallejo City Manager entered into an agreement with in August 2023 to put on a number of events in Vallejo, were joined by representatives from agency and nonprofit organizations, all of whom began holding private meetings in January 2024 to create and produce a "NEW" birding event modeled after ours.

At first I was told they planned this "replacement" Birding Festival because I "quit". Clearly, this was NOT in response to my heartfelt letter canceling our 2024 event, but due to advanced planning to virtually steal our event headquartered on Mare Island for 28 years. They are making good on their plans. They have masterminded an event to take our Flyway Festival's place literally one week before ours, and enticed many organizations who were our partners to join them. WOW! Stealing a California Secretary of State registered non-profit business' key event! Unbelievable!

Yet, our friends are urging us to hold the San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival, anyway.

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Wilderness—wild near us...Go Wildly!

So, like the migration that never fails to take place, we will continue our migration celebration here on the north shore of San Francisco Bay, the way “we” do it. For our 29th season, we’ll just “wing it”! Let’s see what we will share together this year for our beloved Flyway Festival. I can tell you this.

We are a hardy lot. You come to the Flyway Festival with many expectations. We can assure that the Flyway Festival will take place regardless of the weather. Only heavy rain cancels our guided outings. This year will be in many ways like in the past. No heat, but lots of warmth!

Please join us February 7, 8 and 9, 2025 when we will once again celebrate the migration of as many as 1 million shorebirds, a quarter million waterfowl, ducks and geese, and likely tens of thousands of raptors, hawks and millions of songbirds, to and through San Francisco Bay. Isn’t it so magical that we live nearby to these gatherings on the waters and in the sky at our national wildlife refuges, state wildlife areas and local wildlands parks?!

As the weeks unfold, you will learn of plans we are making to host you in this year’s **Go Wildly Live Outdoors Flyway Festival**.



Photo: American kestrel, East Bay, Michael Warner

This will be a version of the “original” Flyway Festival you have loved for almost 3 decades. To reduce confusion, let’s just call this year’s Flyway Festival, **“Myrna’s San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival”!**

We’ll host an exhibitor gathering in Vallejo, NOT at our traditional headquarters on Mare Island. But, rest assured, there will be plenty of guided bird watching and hiking tours ON Mare Island, and around the “north shore” of San Francisco Bay. We will Live air on our “2023” Hybrid/Virtual Facebook Group page.

Are you a birdwatching or hiking guide? We’d love for you to join up with us.
Are you an exhibitor or vendor? We have limited space for your nature themed offerings or your nonprofit organization’s educational and interactive displays at no charge, but you are encouraged to bring your own table and

chairs. Drop me a note to confirm your participation.

In January, the month before **“Myrna’s San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival”** February 7-9, 2025 I’m looking forward to being your guide and host with some of

my special friends for outings and gatherings to get you in the spirit of birdwatching and in our winter wildness.

Will you commit to support our Flyway Festival with your generous SPONSOR donation? Visit our [GoFundMe site](#) to donate.

Will you personally help underwrite the Flyway Festival with a donation? This Flyway Festival is still FREE because of your gift. We don’t have the sources of sponsor funds of the past.

Click [DONATE](#)

OR VISIT: <https://gofund.me/ce3695ba>

Will you tell your friends, co-workers and family about the Flyway Festival in 2025 and attend?

Will you volunteer?

Call/text or email me at 707656-7852 [\[myrnahayes@icloud.com\]](mailto:myrnahayes@icloud.com) with questions and ideas.

In any way you can, please help us ensure our 29th Flyway Festival is a great gathering. Together, we have forged a wildlands community of people bonded together to celebrate our north shore wilderness (wild near us).



I thank you for the difference you make. We are so grateful.

Warmly,

Myrna Hayes
San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Director/Co-founder. President, Mare Island Heritage Trust

Website: SFBayFlywayFestival.com

Facebook Page: [Facebook Page Link](#)

Facebook Group: [Facebook Group Link](#)

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Click **DONATE**
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TO DONATION BY CHECK:

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