

Event Advisory
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CONTACT: Myrna Hayes, Festival Director
CELL: 707-656-7852
EM: myrnalhayes@icloud.com
FACEBOOK: [San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival](#)
Website: www.sfbayflywayfestival.com

29th Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Celebrates Return of
Millions of Migrating Birds to San Francisco Bay Area

Unique 3-day birding and wildlife festival in Vallejo and nearby draws crowds of people from throughout the Bay Area and beyond each year

[VALLEJO], CA – Both birds and people will be flocking to Vallejo, Mare Island and regional wetlands to celebrate what has become a special annual ritual each winter. Find details on the website: [San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival](#) and Facebook: [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.

After taking the 2024 winter Flyway Festival season off to regroup and recoup and due to some surprising local government actions related to the long-running event, Flyway Festival Co-founder and Director, Myrna Hayes, says she and her team have decided to take a different tact for this year's Flyway Festival. Similar to when she led the shift from an in-person, traditional on-the-ground festival to a virtual festival during the pandemic, her organization is prepared to pivot to a new format for the Flyway Festival, again this year. Because of their many decades of moving from building to building on Mare Island, as some were occupied through new leases, or not available for a number of reasons, Myrna and her team are nimble and their followers have learned to trust that the next adventure is just ahead.

Beginning this season, Myrna will offer a more personalized version of the annual birdwatching and Mare Island history-oriented Flyway Festival. The 'Go Wildly Live Outdoors San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival', theme, has already been taking place every weekend day in January with great turnouts and viewing on Facebook. The traditional weekend of guided Mare Island and regional birding outings will take place. Meanwhile, a new format will be offered with a Flyway Festival Pop Up planned at Moschetti Coffee's Roasting facility located at 11 6th St. in Vallejo, CA, near the intersection of I-80 and I-780 both Saturday, February 8 and Sunday, February 9, 2025. The Pop Up will be a fusion of the Community Coffee cupping event held at Moschetti Coffee each Saturday for more than a decade and the "retro" Flyway Festival, reminiscent of the early years of the event co-hosted by the US Navy and Save the Bay in January 1996. The Flyway Festival Pop Up will open up each day at 9:00am with guest presentations beginning at 11:30am and continuing through the mid afternoon. It will include a wild bird show by Native Bird Connections, a presentation on selecting birding equipment and how to use them for Bird ID by Birding Enthusiast Michelle Elikier and a poetry reading in a nearby marsh by James E. Lewis of Fairfield, and some food, art and book vendors and informational exhibits.

To get a head start on this shift in format, Myrna kicked-off a series of weekend walks which she personally guided, beginning on the first weekend of January 2025. She has teamed up

with experienced birdwatching guides to co-lead the bird walks. Myrna handles the Mare Island history and nature hikes and tours throughout Mare Island on her own. She has coupled these “Go Wildly Live Outdoors” walks with Facebook Live posts and videos of the guided outings on Facebook over the month, racking up what she says, “Is an astonishing 133,000 views on Facebook so far in the month of January 2025”, beginning with that first January sunset hike on Mare Island San Pablo Bay Trail. People who join her for these hikes and tours have been expressing their appreciation for this format which they say fits their personal schedule better than a single event. Many who have attended live or online-live have asked her to continue the personalized guided outings even after the mid-February Flyway Festival. Online interest is significant, possibly due to the especially cold weather or the shift in the way people connect.

Myrna hopes that a more personalized and intimate Flyway Festival will resonate with her long-time audience. There will be fewer exhibitors and vendors and more focus on gathering together with like-minded people who love nature and local wilderness(wild near us) to share their enthusiasm with others. That’s what the community of coffee lovers has found in the Saturday morning free coffee cuppings, and pairing of coffee drinks and French themed food with music and vendors. These Saturday morning affairs have been a Vallejo vibe for a decade or more at Moschetti Coffee.

“We are so excited to have been invited to pair our Flyway Festival Pop Up with Moschetti Coffee’s regular Saturday community coffee event in a fusion of coffee and nature.”, Myrna Hayes, noted. She continued, “I’m so grateful to my long-time friend, Fabrice Moschetti. When he readily invited and welcomed us to hold our Flyway Festival at his place, I was delighted. It feels like we are coming home.” In a response to a recent Facebook post introducing the new venue, a commenter, wrote, “I love the idea of two great Vallejo community institutions joining together.”

“Go Wildly Live Outdoors” 2025 San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival invites you to join us for our Flyway Festival Pop-Up at Moschetti Coffee 11 6th St, Vallejo, CA. Come in from the great outdoors to our Flyway Festival Pop-Up Saturday, February 8, 9:00am to 4:00pm and Sunday, February 9, 9:00am to 3:00pm at Moschetti Artisan Coffee Roasters in Vallejo. We’ll be joining the typical Saturday morning Community coffee event at Moschetti’s with a free coffee cupping, made to order coffee and other hot/cold drinks, French themed food, fresh roasted coffee from around the world for purchase and music, all hosted by Fabrice Moschetti.

For the Flyway Festival, Coffee Roaster Fabrice Moschetti, has acquired coffee beans grown in Columbia and supplied through the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center’s Bird Friendly® Coffee Program, which “Protects Migratory Birds and Supports Shade-Grown Coffee Farms” for a custom coffee with a portion of the sales donated to our 2025 Flyway Festival. Moschetti Coffee is proud to offer an exclusively roasted coffee, and to have named it, San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival roast with its own custom label. This special coffee is available at Moschetti Coffee during regular hours, Mon-Fri 9:00am-4:00pm and Sat 9:00am-2:00pm, as well as through the Flyway Festival Pop Up weekend.

Guided Nearby and Regional Outings

This year the Flyway Festival will be held Friday, Feb. 7th, Saturday, February 8th and Sunday, February 9th featuring guided nature walks including outings suitable for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers, and families and adults of all ages, throughout the “north shore” region of San Francisco Bay. Guided historical and nature outings are scheduled on the Mare Island at it’s San Pablo Bay Trail, in the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve. Regional

outings include a listing of self-guided year round access on Units of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 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.

The full schedule for the Flyway Festival is posted online sfbayflywayfestival.com. It included a listings of all presentations at the Flyway Festival Pop Up at Moschetti Coffee and outings on Mare Island and throughout the region. A Presenter/Exhibitor Application which also includes a Sponsor Invitation, is posted on the Flyway Festival website. Admission is free.

Flyway Festival Pop Up Presentations

For the Flyway Festival's 29th anniversary, organizers welcome returning presenters **Native Bird Connections**, a wild bird rehab and education center based in Martinez, CA, who will once again give its "standing-room-only" live bird show, Sunday, February 9 at the Flyway Festival Pop Up at Moschetti Coffee 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!"

Immediately following the Sunday midday Live Raptor Show, Michelle Eliker, a Birding Enthusiast, will give a two part in-depth presentation about how to select birdwatching gear that works best for you and how to identify birds in the field and use binoculars.

Saturday presentations are listed in the online schedule at sfbayflywayfestival.com

Our Flyway Festival Pop-Up at Moschetti Coffee features presenters, exhibitors and vendors. Some space is still available for vendors with nature, recreation and birding oriented wares and and nature-based art. So far, two artists have assured their attendance at the Flyway Festival Pop Up. Rene C. Reyes is a bird artist living with his wife Pamela in Lodi, CA. Together, they have attended and shown his art for purchase for decades at the Flyway Festival. Here's the link to Rene C. Reyes' Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ReyesPaintings/>

And, here's the link to his Etsy shop:

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/reyespaintings>

James E. Lewis is a resident of Fairfield where he lives with his wife Karlyn. They are both avid outdoor enthusiasts which had led Jim to write and present poetry of his "wild times" and has recently published a book of his photography. He will read poetry in a marsh nearby to the Flyway Festival Pop Up hosted by Myrna Hayes, Saturday afternoon 1:00pm-2:00pm. Jim's books will be available for purchase at the Pop Up on Saturday, February 8, 2025. Jim's books of poetry and newly published photography book

can be found on his website www.jlewisweb.com/books.asp

Amazon link to "all these things..." www.amazon.com/dp/1680730843

Amazon link to "Birds, Beasts, Bugs, and Blossoms"
www.amazon.com/dp/B0DT9QT5D6

Host Non-profit Land Trust

Once again, Mare Island Heritage Trust is the nonprofit Vallejo and Mare Island-based land trust whose President, Myrna Hayes, is the Flyway Festival Co-founder and Director. Coming up in April 2025, she will celebrate her 31st anniversary of first coming to Mare Island to serve on the Mare Island Naval Shipyard Restoration Advisory Board, serving as Community Co-Chair for 29 years. That role gave her access to and an understanding of Mare Island in a way most people cannot comprehend. It is certainly her passion to share the former naval base with the public.

Regional guided and some self-guided outings scheduled in 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. Two Sunday morning guided events overlap but are quite different.

Sunday, February 9, 2025, 9:00am-11:00am join a Free guided Birding and Exploring Walk in Benicia State Recreation Area with Marcia Grefsrud, Mare Island Heritage Trust field guide. Marcia has a lovely and friendly personality. She’s fun and factual, interesting and engaging. Here’s how she describes her guided outing at the only CA State Park in Solano County, “In February we should see egrets, herons, maybe osprey, cormorants, harriers, turkey vultures, red-tailed hawks, Cooper’s hawk, white-tailed kites, grebes, blue birds, robins, and lots of little brown birds. The downside is there is a gate fee of \$6/car.” NOTE: If you CAN pay, the \$6 parking/entry fee, that’s great. If you just can’t pay the \$6, check in with Marcia. The Go Wildly Live Outdoors San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival 2025 is founded on FREE. We will ensure you can join in Marcia’s walk.

9:00am-11:00am, Sunday, February 9, 2025 Dolphin Charters will guide a bird watching and Mare Island history boat cruise aboard River Dolphin. We’ve certainly offered many boat trips over the decades we have partnered with Dolphin Charters. Due to timing, we were never able to offer a boat outing during our San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival. This boat trip is a first during the Flyway Festival, as we explore the Napa River and Mare Island Strait on a 2-hour timeless adventure with your guides Flyway Festival Co-founder and Director, and River Guide, Myrna Hayes and Dolphin Charters’ Barbara Fitzgerald.

Pre-registration is required. \$40 per person. Rain or shine! Only heavy rain cancels. To reserve one of the limited seats, call 1-510-527-9622. Questions? Call 707-656-7852. When you arrive at Guest Dock ‘K’ at the Vallejo Marina, prior to our 9:00am departure, you will receive safety and boarding instructions. We’ll be serving coffee and have hot water available for tea and hot cocoa. Bring your own breakfast food.

A free hawk watching outing will be given Saturday, February 8, 2025, 10:00am-2:00pm led by experienced hawk specialists. For a good long run, Larry Broderick, Hawk and Raptor Expert and Director of West County Hawk Watch, consistently drew crowds of 80 to 100 participants during his Lynch Canyon, Solano Land Trust hosted guided outings. Larry passed away December 31, 2024. I have dedicated this season’s Flyway Festival in his honor. His team of trained and devoted guides will give a free Birds of Prey hike for the Flyway Festival, Saturday, February 8, 10:00am-2:00pm at Lynch Canyon Open Space Park in his honor. Visit Solano Land Trust website for details. (<https://solanolandtrust.org/event/bird-of-prey-hike-2-2>)

One of the most interesting wildlife habitats in the region, 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. All of these sites are extensively described in the Regional Outings section of the schedule.

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

Guided outings on Mare Island, include birdwatching, natural history and recreational hikes. 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 and the seasonal wetland pond attractive to waterfowl, over all three days. Guided history and nature oriented hikes will take place in the historic shipyard area and the Alden Park Forest and St. Peter's Chapel Park.

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 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. Some outings will introduce you to the use of the Merlin Bird ID App to identify birds by sound or by photo.

The Flyway Festival's opening reception will take place Friday evening, February 7, 2025 5:00pm-7:00pm at Elephant Thai Cuisine in Vallejo (<https://elephantthaivallejo.com/>) It is a lovely setting with delicious food and the most gracious hosts on earth. You will see. The cost is \$25 per person paid directly to the Mare Island Heritage Trust on their 2025 Flyway Festival GoFundme (<https://gofund.me/54ab36fb0> or in cash or check. No one will be turned away because they cannot pay their way.

Most Festival activities are free. Some require pre-registration. For more information and directions, call Myrna Hayes 707-656-7852 or visit our website, sfbayflywayfestival.com Facebook page, [San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival](#) and [2023 Hybrid/Virtual Flyway Festival Group](#) site where we will post some virtual Flyway Festival programming.

Digital photos available prior to and during the event. Call or text Myrna Hayes at 707-656-7852 cell or e-mail myrnahayes@icloud.com

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