

2007/2008 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 9/28/08)

Tours: Some 20,858 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center between September 2007 and August 2008, up more than 2,000 from the previous 12-month period. Some participated in the weekly 2 pm tours offered rain or shine by FOAM docents. Tours of the wastewater treatment plant were given the last Saturday of each month by Alan Laurent. FOAM provided docents for about 100 special-request group tours, ranging from classrooms – preschool through college — to community groups.

Education: On July 24, FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society partnered to offer a day-long session for 17 children age 9-12 at the Arcata Marsh. The module was part of the Wildlife Biology week of the Arcata Recreation Department's Natural Resources Science Camp. The curriculum consisted of a bird walk and talk, a "Mud Walk," and viewing of invertebrates collected from the Bay and Log Pond through microscopes. Instructors were Tom Leskiw, Sean Craig, Bob Rasmussen, Melinda Bailey, and Rich Ridenhour. Sue Leskiw pulled together the schedule and baked "Hoot Owl" cookies as a special treat. FOAM also sponsored two children to attend the camp.

For the third year, FOAM funded an award at the Humboldt County Science Fair in March. The \$50 prize for the best project dealing with wetlands went to Piper Bazard, a 5th-grader at Freshwater School. Her project, entitled "Drains to the Bay," examined which areas of the community – residential, schools, or shopping areas – have the greatest percentage of permeable and impermeable surfaces. Sue and Tom Leskiw served as judges.

FOAM plans to collaborate with the Northern California Girl Scouts to offer a birding badge for Brownies (grades K-3). One session may be held in October and another in April 2009. Sue Leskiw is coordinating the curriculum development, modeled on the "In the Flyway" program by Richardson Bay Audubon Center, with instructors Leslie Anderson and Louise Bacon-Ogden. Modules on using binoculars, bird beaks, bird sounds, and Bird Bingo (incorporating migration, anatomy, habitat, threats, etc) will be offered.

Bob Rasmussen arranged for HSU chemistry professor Matt Hurst to present findings of his ongoing study of water samples from Humboldt Bay for the FOAM board and invited guests.

FOAM continues to add programs to the computer purchased last year for the Interpretive Center.

Design of a FOAM website nears completion. The URL will be www.arcatamarshfriends.org.

Training Opportunities: Finding volunteers to lead Saturday and weekday tours has been especially difficult this year. Docent training was offered twice: 8 people completed a 2-day training on March 8-9 and 12 attended a session on September 13-14, both organized by Elliott Dabill. Instructors were Art Barab, Bob Rasmussen, David Couch, Ken Burton, Melinda Bailey, Elliott Dabill, Lance Torgerson, and Sean Craig.

Public Events: In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society and a private donor, FOAM sponsored the fifth Student Bird Art Contest at Godwit Days. This was the biggest year ever, as over 550 entries were received from grades K-12 throughout Humboldt County! Forty cash prizes and 16 honorable mentions were awarded at the Godwit Days opening reception. The winning entries were displayed at the Interpretive Center during May and June. A new award category of "Best Depiction of a Bird in its Habitat" was added at the suggestion of Julie Neander, with 10 winners selected. Judges were Leslie Anderson, Louise Bacon-Ogden, Art Barab, Denise Homer, Sue Leskiw, Marsha Mello, and Sara Starr.

For the seventh consecutive year, FOAM will be the beneficiary of the California AAA Great Battery Roundup, again splitting the proceeds with the Manila Community Center. We have not yet received a report from AAA regarding how many batteries were turned in at Humboldt County locations during the April 2008 collection period.

In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's "Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a sidewalk square drawn by Leslie Anderson featuring five birds: Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, American Avocet, Long-billed Curlew, and Red Knot. In November, Art Barab led his eighth consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher."

FOAM raised over \$900 to support projects at the Marsh through offering a donated handmade wildlife quilt crafted by Open Heart Quilters. The winning ticket was drawn at Godwit Days.

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In April, FOAM continued its participation in the Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival. Approximately 70 children and their parents took part in FOAM's free 1-day family nature activities coordinated by Sue Leskiw and Darlene Marlow, ably assisted by volunteers Julie and Sylvie Neander and Veronica Vega. The kids made Arcata Marsh water cycle bracelets, peanut butter pinecone bird feeders, 3-D paper birds and butterflies, and fish prints. Two 90-minute tours — one on history and ecology led by Art Barab and a wastewater plant tour by David Couch — were offered as part of the festival schedule. FOAM volunteers staffed an information and sales table in the Bird Fair vendor area, coordinated by Janet Zich.

Marsh and Wildlife Through the Eyes of Local Artists: Since December 1998, FOAM has sponsored monthly art shows representative of the scenery, plants, birds, and animals that inhabit the Marsh and Humboldt Bay. Our goal has been to provide interpretive works that reflect the beauty, ecology, and history of the Marsh as well as serve as a sales venue for our many talented local artists. This past year, photographs, silkscreens, fiber art, and paintings by Ellen Land-Weber, Leslie Scopes Anderson, Richard "Red" Jioras, Jan Ramsey, Amanita Mollier, Yael Bentovim, Peter Haggard, Darlene Marlow, Mike Anderson, and the Eureka Photoshop Users Group were featured. Leslie Anderson organized receptions for many of the artists. Winners of the Godwit Days student bird art contest were displayed in May and June.

Publicity & Communication: We would like to thank newspapers, radio, and TV stations for helping us get the message out about our weekly tours, docent training, art receptions and exhibits, and other special events at the Marsh. Front-page stories in the Eureka Times-Standard and Arcata Eye helped fill the need for volunteers, as more than 10 people called in to help. FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND, which is mailed to an average of 225 addresses throughout the US. Anyone can receive a free issue by signing the guest book with a full address. Sue Leskiw marked 10 years of serving as its editor.

City Relations: FOAM began its partnership with the City of Arcata on Marsh work days to remove invasive plants. On December 8, Sue Leskiw and Janet Zich joined a dozen community members and students from the Academy of the Redwoods to pull teasel, wild radish, and poison hemlock near the Interpretive Center. Another work day is set for October 11. Ken Burton initiated a partnership with the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society to collect native grass hair seeds for reseeded sites after invasives are removed. In 2007, 11 people volunteered to collect seeds; the project will continue and expand to harvest other native seeds in fall 2008. FOAM funded two "Volunteer of the Year" awards, presented to Leslie Anderson and Darlene Marlow at the September 30 Annual Meeting. Appeals in UPWIND and the Audubon Society's Sandpiper resulted in donations of two new viewing scopes, to replace one stolen from the Interpretive Center.

Membership: As of September 11, FOAM had 123 members in good standing, down one from a year ago. Fifty-three of the 123 are Life Members, of which 5 are known to be deceased and 6 for which we have no current address.

Fiscal Accounts: FOAM began its fiscal year in September 2007 with a checking account balance of \$9,429, plus certificates of deposit and interest account investments totaling \$33,151. At the end of August 2008, FOAM had a checking account balance of \$10,104 plus a CD for \$34,500. The largest expenditures this year went toward the development of a website and prizes/expenses for the Student Bird Art Contest. FOAM's largest revenue source is membership dues, over \$2,000. FOAM has not yet received proceeds from the 2008 California AAA Battery Round-up.

Board of Directors: Eight current Board Members will be continuing: Leslie Anderson, Art Barab, Ken Burton, Elliott Dabill, Lumei Hui, and Sue Leskiw, Lance Torgerson, and Janet Zich. Robert Rasmussen is running to confirm his appointment, and one opening remains on the Board.

-- Sue Leskiw, President