In 2015, Duck Day will be held on Saturday, February 28 from 10 am until 2 pm. This free drop-in event is targeted at ages 5-12; all children must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult.

Additionally, teachers and school staff are invited to attend and learn about field trips, in-class presentations, environment-themed curricula, and other opportunities for their students at each station. Meet representatives from local organizations offering environmental education resources inside the Interpretive Center and sample activities along the Log Pond Loop Trail.

This free community event is sponsored by the North Coast CREEC Network, Friends of the Arcata Marsh, Redwood Science Project, and Humboldt State Natural History Museum. To learn more, contact Allison Poklemba at (707) 826-4479 ext. 3 or Allison@creec.org.
March 20 Deadline for Student Bird Art Contest

For the twelfth year, FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society are co-sponsoring a Student Bird Art Contest in conjunction with Godwit Days. Some $550 in prizes will be awarded to Humboldt County students from kindergarten through high school who submit a drawing of one of 40 suggested species or another common local bird. Prize(s) also will be awarded for the best rendition of a bird in its natural habitat.

Entries will be judged by local wildlife artists and educators. Awards will be presented at the 20th Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival on Saturday, April 18 at 11 am. All entries will be displayed at the Arcata Community Center during the Festival and copies of winning artwork will be shown at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center during May.

A flyer with complete rules and a list of suggested birds is posted at www.rras.org/docs/2015SBAC.pdf or www.godwitdays.org/learning/activities-children/bird-art-contest or can be picked up at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, Strictly for the Birds, in Old Town Eureka, or by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Louise Bacon-Ogden, 2337 B Street, Eureka 95501. Flyers have been mailed to all schools in Humboldt County.

Artwork may be dropped off at Strictly for the Birds, 123 F Street, Eureka, or the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, 569 South G Street, Arcata, or mailed to Louise at the address listed above. Entries must be received by Friday, March 20 to be considered. Questions? E-mail sueleskiw@suddenlink.net.

Help Needed with FOAM’s Godwit Days Activities

The 20th Annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is just around the corner and FOAM will again be hosting free family nature craft activities. The drop-in session will be held in the Arts & Crafts room at the Arcata Community Center on Saturday, April 18 between noon and 2 pm.

Planned activities include fish prints, peanut butter pinecone birdfeeders, peanut hummingbird ornaments, rock ducks, bird calls, water cycle bracelets, and refrigerator magnets. All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. If you can spend a couple of hours helping kids discover the many wonders of our Marsh, contact Sue at sueleskiw@suddenlink.net.

Another volunteer opportunity is helping to hang the hundreds of entries received in the 12th Annual Student Bird Art Contest, co-sponsored by FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society. This will occur on Friday, April 17 starting at 1 pm. Bring a light-weight hammer and be prepared to push-pin artwork along the hallways and lobby of the Community Center. Contact Sue at sueleskiw@suddenlink.net.

For more information on the Festival, visit www.godwitdays.org.

Marsh Aquaculture Talk 2/6

On Friday, February 6 at 6 pm, David Couch will speak at the Interpretive Center on the initial fish aquaculture project at the Arcata Marsh. The lecture is part of the weeklong celebration of Humboldt Steelhead Days, sponsored by Mad River Alliance and California Trout. The PowerPoint presentation will be loaded with historical photos from David, Bob Gearheart, and others. This is a free event for the general public.

Godwit Days Turns Spotlight on FOAM

FOAM is proud to have been selected by the Godwit Days 2015 organizing committee as this year’s “spotlight organization.” FOAM was chosen because it is a local nonprofit organization that focuses its educational efforts on the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary—a primary birding spot on the Pacific Flyway that boasts well over 300 species of birds.

FOAM has supported Godwit Days from its inception, by offering tours and free family nature crafts at the festival, as well as co-sponsoring the Godwit Days Student Bird Art Contest for the last 12 years.

FOAM Board members Mary Burke and George Ziminsky will be giving a presentation about FOAM at the festival. The talk is free to the public and scheduled to start 7 pm on Friday, April 17. See you there!
Goodbye Mark, Hello Paul (& Alex & Ivan)

Paul Pitino, recently (re-)elected to the Arcata City Council, has replaced Mark Wheetley as FOAM liaison. The Board thanks Mark for his many good suggestions during his time with FOAM, and welcomes Paul, who is part of a group promoting an off-leash dog area adjoining the Marsh on South I Street. Paul tells FOAM that he has wanted to be involved with the Marsh since moving to the neighborhood in 1997. But until now, other neighborhood/city projects have kept him occupied. “I feel fortunate to be part of FOAM and plan to make it an integral part of my future neighborhood/City activism.”

After last fall’s FOAM election, two slots remained on the Board of Directors. Two of our volunteers stepped up and have been appointed to round out our roster. The first is long-time FOAM volunteer Alex Stillman, who leads tours, staffs the welcome desk, and is a stalwart at special events. Alex had served as FOAM’s City Council liaison prior to Mark Wheetley and once she retired from Council service, she was ready to step up her involvement with FOAM..

Our other new Board member is Ivan Soto. He introduces himself via the following statement: “It is an honor to serve as a FOAM Board member. I arrived in Humboldt as a transfer student to HSU shortly before the fall 2014 semester. Soon, I found myself volunteering at the Interpretive Center on weekends and grew quite fond of learning more about the local history, plants, and birds. While staffing the AMIC desk, I enjoyed greeting visitors and assisting them with questions, but wanted to get more involved—this is what led me to join the FOAM Board.”

“As a former environmental educator in Imperial Valley, CA, I feel that my experience will complement the work that FOAM participates in. In So-Cal, I worked with local school districts through an organization called IV-ROP–Environmental Education. This program allowed me to work alongside staff at the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge by leading weekly school field trips. I also helped organize annual Earth Day events, as well as create fun, hands-on activities for hundreds of classrooms. (My favorite classroom activities were dissecting owl pellets with 4th graders throughout Imperial County.) As a FOAM Board member, I look forward to recruiting more of my fellow classmates to get involved at the Marsh. I enjoy working with the public very much and am excited to share my creative skills with FOAM for the community.”

He’s No Couch Potato

Recently, David Couch led two special tours: FOAM’s inaugural Members-Only Tour, which visited the wastewater treatment plant, and a Hipboots & Headlamps Tour, an after-dark visit to the artificial oyster reef in Butcher’s Slough.

The first, held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, drew 12 participants, 4 of whom joined FOAM that day to come along. The second, on the first Saturday of 2015, attracted 15 participants and was featured on KIEM’s 11 o’clock news. Dave was thrilled to see so many native oysters in the Slough and brought some live critters back to AMIC as a temporary display.

Be on the lookout for more Members-Only events in 2015!
January 1 at the Marsh

By Jane Wilson

What a bright, sunny day it was to start the New Year! At our house, frost covered the ground and temperatures were below freezing. However, on South I Street at the Arcata Marsh, we were warm and had on our sun hats.

The Marsh map sign in the first parking lot at the end of the Log Pond is great for leading a walk, especially to illustrate the 360-acre changes that have been and are being made.

Nine people braved the frost at 9:30 am and then were so pleased to be in the sun. Six were from Humboldt—several of our friends, a photographer from Bayside, and a beautiful family with grown kids—while two hailed from Tucson. Tucson has many water treatment plants that have been made into bird sanctuaries, so the couple was right at home. The woman was really pleased when I spotted a bittern hiding in the rushes on the other side of the freshwater pond north of Brackish Pond, especially when it came out of hiding. There was a group of Least Sandpipers with yellow legs and some Marsh Wrens flitting about. All the birds we saw also are found in Tucson. We and the birds were happy on such a warm winter morning.

Because my hip was gimpy, my husband Richard continued leading participants around Brackish Pond, Gearhart Marsh, and on to the cut in the old dike that lets McDaniel Slough into the Bay and vice versa. Others were able to take a slower pace, stopping along the way to look at birds and focus on local ecology.

We all started out around the Log Pond, and since we’d had some recent rain, the burned area was a riot of green. Poison Hemlock and native blackberries are making a very strong comeback, while one blackened and apparently dead willow had a small sprout at its base that had already leafed out. Soon, only the blackened trees will remind us of the fire.

From the Log Pond, we walked through the “new” McDaniel Slough area, to see how the recent removal of a tide gate has allowed a large area of formerly freshwater marsh to be flooded by salt water. It was fascinating to see the color contrast between the green vegetation of the freshwater areas behind the set-back levees and the sad, dying browns of the areas newly opened to the tidal influx from the Bay.

The removal of this tide gate has been long anticipated and it was exciting and moving to see how quickly the tidal process has started to affect the immediate area. This new mix of salt- and freshwater marshes is the latest addition to the network of “managed marshes” that make up the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and will continue to be a work in progress worth watching.

[NOTE: Jane and Richard took over this tour when Jenny Hanson, who initiated the event 7 years ago, switched to leading the Thanksgiving Meander. FOAM thanks Jenny for her service and welcomes the Wilsons as the new leaders.]

Plenty to Give Thanks for on Thanksgiving Walk

By Jenny Hanson

Celebration of the vibrancy of the Marsh was in my mind as I led 18 Thanksgiving morning strollers to see two areas that have seen significant changes very recently. First, we visited the area that burned on August 31, then went on to explore the effect of the recent tide gate removal in the McDaniel Slough area.

With the help of co-leaders Jane and Richard Wilson, it was possible for our group to spread out, so that some of us made it around the Brackish Pond, along Gearhart Marsh, and then on to the new opening of McDaniel Slough into the Bay. Others were able to take a slower pace, stopping along the way to look at birds and focus on local ecology.

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[NOTE: Jenny Hanson took over this popular tour when Art Barab, who initiated the event 15 years ago, was no longer able to lead it. FOAM thanks Art for his service and welcomes Jenny as the new leader.]

Students Repair Nesting Boxes at the Marsh

Humboldt State students from the California Waterfowl Association Club removed three Wood Duck boxes from the Arcata Marsh to rebuild them. A donation from Pierson’s Building Center in Eureka allowed the students to construct six boxes to put up around Humboldt County. Thanks to James Allen, Taylor Norris, Matt Ruso, and Charlotte Weinmeyer for their work on this project.

FOAM Supports Science Fair

For the tenth year, FOAM will be offering a $50 prize at the Humboldt County Science Fair, to be held at Humboldt State University in mid-March. The award will go to the best project related to wetlands.
What’s New at AMIC

By Gretchen O’Brien

If you haven’t visited AMIC in the past month, you are in for a surprise! A large tree display now occupies the center of the exhibit hall and features real bird nests for visitors to get an up-close look at. These nests have been collected from around the Marsh after the nest builder abandoned them at the end of the breeding season. Bullock’s Oriole, Anna’s Hummingbird, and Red-winged Blackbird are just some of the species whose nests are currently displayed. The display base was built and donated by Brit O’Brien.

In November 2014, the AMIC facilitated 11 tours for over 160 visitors, led by City staff and FOAM volunteers. That is more November tours than ever before!

Bird Roundup 2014

The Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary added three bird species to its checklist in 2014. The first was a historical record of a Cassin’s Auklet found at Klopp Lake by Jerry Nusbaum during a very intense winter storm on December 31, 2005. The second was a Golden Eagle photographed by Andrew Smith flying above Mt Trashmore on June 7, 2014. The third was a Tricolored Blackbird found at the South I Street Stormwater Pond by Camden Bruner on November 8, 2014.

The bird list for the Arcata Marsh has reached 329 species. In terms of species diversity, the Marsh is now considered the best birding spot in Humboldt County (by over 100 species!), the 4th best spot in California, and the 24th best spot in the entire United States by the website eBird!

Other notable bird sightings this year included Ruff, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Black Tern, Common Tern, Northern Shrike, Northern Waterthrush, Tennessee Warbler, American Redstart, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, and Bobolink. Good numbers of Common Goldeneye, Cinnamon Teal, Hooded Merganser, Canvasback, and Redhead were reported.

2014 Birds at the Arcata Marsh

The winning season: fall! For number of species observed at the marsh, that is. Spring revealed 157 species, summer held 108, fall came in first with 192 and winter so far has brought 139 species of birds to the marsh. Seventy-eight species were recorded in every season in 2014. Some of the highlights include Ruff, American Redstart, Blue Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting. In total, 209 species of birds were recorded at the marsh in 2014. How many did you see?

Seeking Gently Used Kids’ Nature/Science Books

Plans are afoot to build a reading nook in the Interpretive Center, to serve as a comfortable place for children to read on their own or to schedule a group reading. If you have kids’ books about nature/science that are in good condition and would like to donate them to FOAM, bring them by AMIC. You will be recognized in UPWIND and receive an income tax receipt, if desired.

Errata

The fall issue of UPWIND contained two errors. First, the number of acres burned during the August 31 Marsh fire was between 1 and 2, not 3. Second, it was Judie Hinman, not Judy Haggard, who consulted on the proposed native plant garden.

New nest tree display. Photo by Gretchen O’Brien.
Ducks & Clocks

By Elliott Dabill

There is an archaic meaning for wigeon that means “a fool,” but that had nothing to do with our lecture on these birds in October. We learned a lot about wigeons from Brandon Leigh, as he summarized Master’s thesis from Humboldt State.

His study focused primarily on what the relative benefits were from eating at three of their common local hang-out sites. The birds do fairly well at the Marsh, eating duckweed and other plants. However, duckweed is not the best food for them, as they prefer to load up their fuel stores when the grass of lawns and fields are flooded by rain. I was left wondering why wigeons bother eating in the Bay, since they gain little nutrition. Perhaps the wigeons are wigeons.

Brandon showed beautiful photos of the birds in action, their subtle and beautiful feather patterns seeming to show off their fanciful sense of design. While struggling to get enough nutrition in the Bay, the birds eat eel grass, folding it up accordion-like to pack the material into their stomachs.

FOAM’s November lecture on phenology by Stassia Samuels and Elizabeth Wu struck me as a good perspective on measuring global warming. The field deals with plant and animal life cycle events and often measures the first time something happens in a year, such as swallows returning to Capistrano.

Stassia’s position as a plant ecologist for Redwood National and State Parks has her coordinating with park staff all over California to measure an agreed-upon suite of plants for first blooming in the year and other measurements. Her routine includes visiting specific plants marked by GPS several times over the year to record data. Since there are hundreds of plants over a wide area of Northern California, she needs help from volunteers and seeks people that can commit to ongoing data collection.

All the examples she gave, without exception, showed changes happening earlier in the year, even in lar still nest at the same annual cycle based on day length, so they miss this main food source, baby birds die of hunger, and bird populations decline dramatically.

Elizabeth Wu, an HSU graduate student, assisted Stassia. She showed an array of azaleas at different stages of blooming and quizzed attendees to name the stages, just for fun. Global warming deniers were not present at this meeting. (Perhaps they were busy running for Congress.)
Although my education is in science, I continue to expand my artistic knowledge and experience. I am actively involved in supporting local, national, and international wildlife and environmental organizations with donations of my artwork. I also volunteer for the Humboldt Wildlife Care Center as a member of its Education Team and Raptor Team. Linda and her family have resided for the past 33 years in their solar-powered home in the redwoods.

I work in several media, including watercolor, acrylic, and oil. My subjects include local to exotic birds and animals and their habitats. In 1999, the City of Arcata commissioned my artwork to advertise the third annual Godwit Days migratory bird festival.

A limited selection of my art is available as limited-edition giclee prints, with more art available as high-quality digital prints and on fine-art greeting cards. I can be contacted at lindapar@reninet.com or www.lindaparkinson.com.

APRIL ARTISTS
Two Decades of Godwit Posters

Thirteen different artists—nearly all of them from Humboldt County—have been tapped over the years to create their personal rendition of the festival's icon, the Marbled Godwit. From Joan Dunning in 1996 to Gary Bloomfield in 2015, these creative people have portrayed Limosa fedoa flying, standing, nesting or probing the mud for food; in numbers from one to a gaggle of 19; sometimes sharing the spotlight with other local shorebirds; even as an outline in black wire.

In the festival’s early days, designs were recycled to last 2 years, but beginning in 2002, poster art changed annually. Joan Dunning served a second stint with an illustration from her book, Secrets of the Nest, the only artwork to feature a baby godwit. 2015’s artist, Gary Bloomfield, is accomplishing a threepeat, which is to be expected from a multi-decade Godwit Days Board member and design contributor!

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of Godwit Days, FOAM has invited the festival to show its panoply of posters during April. FOAM will co-sponsor a free appetizer-and-dessert reception on Friday, April 3 from 6 to 8 pm.

Calendar of Events
[Docent tours leave the Interpretive Center every Saturday at 2 pm]

February—art by Sara Starr
February 6—Marsh aquaculture lecture, David Couch, 6 pm (see p. 2)
February 12—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm
February 28—Duck Day, 10 am-2 pm (see p. 1)
March—wildlife art by Linda Parkinson
March 12—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm
March 18—Pints for Nonprofits FOAM Fundraiser, 3 pm-midnight, Redwood Curtain Brewing Company (see p. 1)
March 20—Student Bird Art Contest deadline (see p. 2)
March 28—Take a Child Outside Day & Teacher Environmental Fair, 11 am-3 pm (see p. 1)
April—showing of 20 years of Godwit Days posters; reception April 3, 6-8 pm (see p. 7)
April 10—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm
April 17-19—Godwit Days, including FOAM Spotlight Organization lecture, April 17, 7 pm (see p. 2)
May—winners of 12th Annual Student Bird Art Contest

Thanks to Our Supporters, November 2014-mid-January 2015

► Sponsors ($100+): Melissa Bukosky & Khashayar Boodeh ($375)—NEW Life Member; Aldaron & Christy Laird ($100)—NEW Life Member
► Best Friends ($50-99): Ira Blatt*; Fred & Doris Ferguson (Granada Hills, CA); Elyse Kelly; Sharon Levy; Jean Santi & Whitney Buck
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► Donations from Life Members: Calista Sullivan & Richard Sanborn, $500; Steve & Carol Pearson (Portland, OR), $200 (IBM matching gift); Milt Boyd, $200 (“It’s that time of year to support our favorite tax-deductible organizations. Thanks for all the wonderful things you do to make the North Coast and Arcata Marsh special”); Barbara Barratt, $100; Chris Frolking & Margaret Nulsen, $100; Tom Inouye, $100 (“Stopped by in March and was impressed with the work accomplished by your organization”); Stuart Moskowitz, $100; Gena Pennington, $50
► Other: Chris & Kathy Lee, $50 in honor of Katy Allen’s birthday; Rick McAllister (Walnut Creek), $72 gift membership for Debbe Hartridge; Dawn & Brad Durbin, $50 gift membership for Garrison Tucker

* = New member [a whopping 14 over this time frame!]

Visitor Log

The Interpretive Center had 1462 visitors in October, 1253 in November, and in 816 December.

2015 Godwit Days artwork by Gary Bloomfield.
Mark Your Calendar for:

Marsh Aquaculture Lecture, 2/6
Duck Day, 2/28
Pints for Nonprofits Fundraiser, 3/18
Student Bird Art Contest Deadline, 3/20
TACO Day/Teacher Fair, 3/28
Art Reception, 4/3
Godwit Days, 4/17-19

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____________________________________________________________
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Please check the appropriate membership category:

___ Individual $25   ___ Family $35   ___ Student/Senior $18
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FRIENDS OF THE ARCATA MARSH, PO Box 410, Arcata CA 95518  arcatamarshfriends.org

A tax-exempt, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN #68-0232871. All donations are tax deductible.

If you are receiving a complimentary copy of this newsletter, please consider joining FOAM.
If you were a member, but have allowed your membership to lapse, please renew.
(See mailing label for your expiration date.)
Interpretive Center street address is 569 South G Street, Arcata.
FOAM mailing address is PO Box 410, Arcata CA 95518. You can reach us by phone from 9 am to 5 pm Tuesday through Sunday and 1 to 5 pm Monday at 707-826-2359.