

2023/24 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 9/29/24)

Tours: 11,460 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center (AMIC) between September 1, 2023 and August 31, 2024, an increase of 983 from the previous 12 months. Two hundred eighty-one of them participated in the 53 weekly Saturday 2 pm tours led by FOAM docents, an increase of 115 attendees and 16 tours. There were 88 special-request tours with 569 attendees, including a June Coastwalk group and six Road Scholar groups, handled by Elliott Dabill and Paul Johnson. This represented a whopping increase from just 15 special-request tours over the previous 12 months!

Education: In September, FOAM offered five special tours to celebrate California Biodiversity Day. Leaders were Paul Johnson (2), Ren Bunce (1), and Elliott Dabill (2).

Board members Maria Baron, Iva Iorizzo, Elliott Dabill, and Mark Wilson resurrected FOAM's monthly lecture series, beginning in February. Speakers were David Couch (wastewater system upgrade), Ken Burton (Marsh bird names), Jerry Rohde (historical changes around east Arcata Bay), David Loya (Arcata's sea level rise planning), David Couch (oysters), and Pete Haggard (Marsh insects, amphibians, and reptiles).

Public Events: FOAM presented its 10th Arcata Marsh Bird of the Year award at its September 24 annual meeting. The winner was Ovenbird, a second Marsh record, by an anonymous finder.

In October, FOAM participated in Pastels on the Plaza, a fundraiser for Northcoast Children's Services. Two multi-year Student Bird Art Contest winners--Thea McKnight and October Mintey--served as artists.

In November, FOAM sponsored its 23rd Thanksgiving tour, attended by over 30 people and led by Jenny Hanson, Lynn Jones, and Sharon Levy, with Tom Leskiw providing bird ID help and Ren Bunce sharing her knowledge of wastewater treatment.

In December, FOAM sponsored a Christmas tour attended by 13 people and led by Paul Wilson.

On New Year's Day, Lynn Jones, Barbara Reisman, and Paul Johnson led a tour for 20 people. On January 11, Elliott Dabill and Barbara Reisman led a King Tide tour, attended by 75 people.

In March, for the 18th year, FOAM sponsored awards at the Humboldt County Science Fair. Judges Sue Leskiw and Lynn Jones awarded three cash prizes. First place went to Kai McDonald, a 10th grader at Arcata High, for "Urchins for Dinner? Do Urchins from Polluted Waters Concentrate Heavy Metals, Making Them Unsafe to Eat?" Second prize went to "The Effects of Fertilizer Run-off on Freshwater Amphipods" by Aubrey Lloyd, an 8th grader at Freshwater School. Third place went to Nathan Bareilles, an 8th grader at Jacoby Creek School, for "Mycelium Remediation."

In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society, FOAM sponsored the 21st Student Bird Art Contest. Six hundred sixty entries were received from Humboldt County students in grades K-12. Forty-four cash prizes and 37 honorable mentions were given out at an April ceremony during Godwit Days, photographed by Paul Johnson. Five FOAM volunteers joined Audubon helpers to post all the art entries during the festival, while copies of the winners were displayed at AMIC in May and June.

For the second year, FOAM staffed the Friday opening reception at Godwit Days. Maria Baron recruited 12 volunteers to pour drinks and wash dishes. FOAM volunteers Mary Ann Madej, Sue Leskiw, and four female students from the Arcata High Eco Club hosted three tables of nature craft activities – bird/otter masks, Marsh critter ornaments, and miniature wooden birdhouses -- as part of a Sunday afternoon nature crafts "mega-palooza." Nine volunteers took shifts at FOAM's information and sales table. Elliott Dabill gave a 10-minute talk about wastewater treatment upgrades prior to the Friday keynote, while Mark Wilson led a kids' nature walk at the Marsh.

In April, Board member Andy Feinstein launched his monthly bicycling interpretive tours of the Marsh (every Second Sunday).

In May and July, FOAM provided a docent (Andy Feinstein, Lynn Jones) to accompany volunteers participating in dog poop and garbage cleanups sponsored by Humboldt Pet Supply.

In June, Andy Feinstein and Paul Johnson staffed a FOAM table at the Humboldt Crabs baseball game in Arcata.

Marsh and Wildlife Through the Eyes of Local Artists: Since December 1998, FOAM has sponsored art and photography shows at the Interpretive Center that are representative of the scenery, plants, birds, and animals that inhabit the Marsh and Humboldt Bay. Participating artists/photographers were Dana Utman, Aldaron Laird (with accompanying lecture), Tamara Wolski, Student Bird Art Contest winners, and a multi-artist show on flowers and plants at the Arcata Marsh.

Publicity & Communication: We would like to thank newspapers, radio and TV stations, and online websites for helping us get the message out about our weekly tours, art exhibits, and other special events at the Marsh. FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND.

City Relations: FOAM funded two “Volunteer of the Year” awards, presented to Susan Halpin for 52 weekend shifts staffing the welcome desk and to Robbin Kohn for covering 34 shifts.

The City hosted a volunteer mixer in February, where volunteers were asked to share concerns with staff while enjoying snacks and drinks.

In June, AMIC staffer Neysa Budzinski led an interpretive medicinal plant walk at the Marsh.

The FOAM Board approved contributing \$5000 to help fund a new City position, Marsh Groundkeeper, which will be responsible for vegetation management, trail maintenance, and organizing volunteer workdays.

Neysa Budzinski and Jayrlin Molina are the current weekday staffers at AMIC, as both Carmen Sahagun and George Ziminsky have left.

Miscellaneous: In September, long-time Board member Anne Weiss passed away. FOAM received a \$500 memorial donation in her name.

In December, Stuart Moskowitz took over DoggiPot collection duties on the South G Street route from Paul Johnson. Elliott Dabill continues on poop duty on the I Street route, with Maria Baron filling in when needed.

In January, FOAM mourned the passing of Alan Wolski, who was awarded Volunteer of the Year in FY2017 for the prodigious amount of time he spent staffing the AMIC welcome desk (and had been the runner-up in hours every year since). FOAM received memorial donations surpassing \$1000 in his name, which will be used on improvements to the native plant garden.

Membership: As of August 31, FOAM had 207 members (3 more than last year), 112 of whom are Life Members. [NOTE: 33 of the Life Members are either deceased or have an undeliverable address.]

Fiscal Accounts: As of August 31, FOAM had a checking account balance of \$29,608.28 (after having transferred \$30K to our Humboldt Area Foundation fund). As of 6/30/24, FOAM had a balance of \$49,896.85 at HAF.

Expenditures totaled \$11,408.65 and revenues totaled \$26,369.95. The largest expenditures incurred were for 1) insurance (\$1749), 2) UPWIND printing and mailing (\$1550; which includes \$206 for one late-billed issue from the previous fiscal year), 3) printing Marsh logo stickers and FOAM logo bike bells to give away (\$1309), 4) funding a Cal Poly research grant (\$1252); 5) purchasing a replacement touch-screen computer for AMIC (\$1050); and 6) purchasing equipment to record lectures (\$950). Major revenue sources were donations (\$19,994, including nearly \$12K from Humboldt Educare), membership dues (\$4262), and merchandise sales (\$1589). FOAM gained \$3875.57 on its HAF Fund between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24 (while paying management fees of \$387.73).

Board of Directors: Six current Board Members (Maria Baron, David Couch, Andy Feinstein, Ava Iorizzo, Paul Johnson, and Lynn Jones) are continuing. One current Board member (Elliott Dabill) is running for another term. Cindy Kuttner resigned and Mark Wilson declined to seek another term.

-- Elliott Dabill, *President*