



UPWIND

from the Arcata Marsh
Interpretive Center
Vol 33, Issue 2, Spring 2026

Our Mission: To stimulate understanding of the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary, its relationship with Arcata's integrated wastewater treatment system, the surrounding watersheds and bay, and their link with the Earth's water cycle

In This Issue: Upcoming Lectures... Pints for Nonprofits Event... WWTP Ribbon Cutting... Free "Marsh Builders" Book... What's Happening at the Marsh?... FOAM Community Events... New Wastewater Display... Breeding Birds at Marsh... Zuri the Otter Statue... Science Fair Results... Thanks Godwit Volunteers... Student Bird Art Contest Results... Otters & Jeff Black... Upcoming Art Shows... Calendar of Events... Visitor Log... Supporters

Upcoming Lecture

FOAM's First Wednesday Lecture Series is on summer hiatus. It will return on September 2 with a presentation by wildlife biologist Rob Fowler on breeding bird surveys he is conducting at the Arcata Marsh.

Recordings of past FOAM lectures can be viewed at our YouTube channel [<https://www.youtube.com/@foamfriendsofthearcatamars3798>].



Redwood Curtain Brewery FOAM Fundraiser June 17

Come by to celebrate the Marsh District at Redwood Curtain Brewing Company, 550 South G Street, Suite 4 on Wednesday, June 17 from 4 to 8 pm. FOAM will be the recipient of the bar's Pints for Nonprofits event, as each pint sold equates to a \$1 donation. Test your knowledge of the Marsh during our trivia competition and enjoy the company!

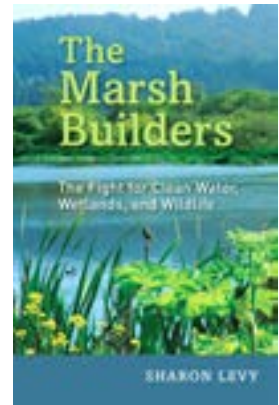
Wiyot Acknowledgment

The Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary is located on the unceded land of the Wiyot People, who continue to remain in relationship to these lands through ceremony, culture, and stewardship. They are important parts of the history of and continuing knowledge of this place.

June 10 Ribbon Cutting for Wastewater Treatment Plant

The public is invited to attend the celebration of the completion of Phase One of the Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvement Project. Meet at 4 pm at 600 South G Street to recognize the past 3+ years of work by City staff, consultants, and Wahlund Construction.

The project, which broke ground in December 2022, aims to improve and modernize Arcata's world-renowned water treatment plant. Improvements include replacing a chlorine gas disinfection system with a far more environmentally friendly ultraviolet one, upgrades to electrical systems for digital control and underground piping, and a complete renovation of the primary treatment headworks and clarifier.



Download Book on Arcata Marsh History for Free

By Sue Leskiw

FOAM is ecstatic to announce that as of May 25, "The Marsh Builders" book has been downloaded 114 times from our website! The availability of this important resource—published

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2025-26 Board of Directors & Officers

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by Oxford University Press in 2018 and now out of print—was made possible by Hugh and Maya Scanlon, the family of its author, the late local science writer Sharon Levy. The 230+-page book includes several chapters that detail the history of how the City of Arcata successfully fought to create one of the first U.S. wetlands designed to treat sewage.

FOAM made the book's availability the centerpiece of its booth at this April's Godwit Days bird festival and also has advertised it via a press release, a poster in the Interpretive Center lobby, and an e-mail sent to FOAM members and volunteers in early May.

Go to www.arcatamarshfriends.org, click on the "Marsh Builders" link at the upper right, then scroll to the bottom of the page to download. We suggest that you read the page first, to get an idea of the book's contents and how Sharon—a FOAM volunteer who shared her historical and ecological knowledge about the Marsh during many tours—came to write it. The file size is 9.8 MB.

What's Happening at the Arcata Marsh?

By Malcolm Ridings & Rob Fowler

It has certainly been an exciting spring so far! Many flowers are blooming (especially in the native plant garden) and we're seeing tons of new birds stop by. Cal Poly Humboldt wildlife professor Jeff Black recently retired, finishing his studies on river otters. Some highlights of the study showed that river otters or signs of them were observed nearly every day at the Arcata Marsh. They regularly switch what prey they hunt, depending on what water body they find themselves in. Dr. Black started studying the otters at the Marsh 27 years ago (see p. 9)!

March brought some AMIC staff transitions, with Evan Mercure leaving to work for the Wiyot tribe. Long-time Marsh birder Rob Fowler has taken his place. Rob already has started doing breeding bird surveys at the Marsh every other Thursday, continuing through August (see p.



City Recreation Supervisor Heather Schmidt and new AMIC staffer Rob Fowler. Photo by Sue Leskiw.

4). He loves being at the Marsh daily!

Arcata's annual Godwit Days bird festival was held April 16-19, with eight field trips led specifically at the Marsh, including dawn chorus, shorebird flyoffs, and even a river otter-specific trip. Almost every one of those trips sold out.

A major highlight of Godwit Days is the student bird art contest. As we write this column, we have 75 of the contest winners and honorable mentions art pieces on display at AMIC through June, so stop by and check them out. It's incredible how good some of these artworks by Humboldt County students in grades K through 12 are!

Since the winter issue of UP-WIND the new wastewater display has been installed (see p. 3). We've received a lot of compliments on it. Malcolm got an A+, as this was his senior project and he should be very proud of this contribution to AMIC!

We've had a few very interesting wildlife sightings and they aren't of birds! On April 18 a birder visiting here for Godwit Days spotted an American Mink (*Neogale vison*) and got a photo of it! This was the first photo-documented mink for the Arcata Marsh! Another rare sighting was a Western Pond Turtle found and photographed at Klopp Lake on May 13. It's likely not a good thing for this freshwater species to be found in a brackish environment like Klopp Lake. FOAM Board member David Couch had found dead pond turtles previously at Klopp Lake. Who knows how this native turtle

came here, since the closest known population is the pond in the Arcata Community Forest, right behind Cal Poly Humboldt.

As far as birds go, the 345th species recorded at the Arcata Marsh came in the form of a Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) on April 7 when some Cal Poly student birders spotted it from the Oxidation Ponds, foraging in the Bay. There's been an incredible influx of Elegant Terns into Humboldt County this spring due to warm ocean temperatures further south in their typical breeding range. The first spring record for the Marsh for that species happened on April 8. It's very likely that the Royal Tern also came this far north due to those warmer ocean temperatures. It's amazing that the Marsh bird list is still growing. Any guesses on the next species to be found here?



Board members Rhodes Paris and Lynn Jones at FOAM's Creek Days table. Photo by Rachael Aguirre.

FOAM Steppin' Out

By Lynn Jones

FOAM has had a busy spring! Starting with tabling at Godwit Days in mid-April, followed by late April's California City Nature Challenge, then Watershed Stewards' Creek Days in mid-May, and finally World Otter Day at the Sequoia Park Zoo in late May. What a time to notice the bounty of spring!

Godwit Days is always a grand event and FOAM relishes the opportunity to table with other local nonprofits, to introduce locals and visitors to our rich restored wetland and wildlife sanctuary, located right in Arcata's city limits. We see old friends and make new ones every year, while sharing news, updates, and discoveries. This year's booth



(Left) Children get ready to play the Otter Spraint Game. (Right) Gina Rogers and Rhodes Paris staff FOAM's table at the Sequoia Park Zoo's World Otter Day celebration. Photos by Lynn Jones.

promoted the availability to download the late Sharon Levy's out-of-print book, "The Marsh Builders," free from the FOAM website, courtesy of her family, Hugh and Maya Scanlon (see p. 1).

California Academy of Sciences and Los Angeles Natural History Museum have sponsored the City Nature Challenge (which started as a competition between LA and San Francisco) for years. It has grown into a worldwide, two-day collection of nature data via an iNaturalist project. This year was the first time Humboldt County participated. Promoted by Sequoia Park Zoo, Friends of the Dunes, and FOAM, we gathered 2901 observations, 961 distinct species were found, 435 people were identifiers, and 302 observed. Go to <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2026-humboldt-county> for all the observations. Humboldt County displayed a variety of species, from forests, prairies, woodlands, wetlands, dunes, and even underwater! We hope to increase participation next year.

The California Conservation Corps Watershed Stewards program, based in Fortuna, empowers youth to collect and analyze watershed data, help with restoration projects (often to increase survival of threatened salmonids), and teach watershed curriculum in public schools. Each May the Stewards plan a three-day takeover of Williamson Grove in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, inviting schools to the Creek Days educational event. This year FOAM Board members Lynn Jones and Rhodes Paris spent a day leading eight groups of kids through "The Estuary" activities, which focused on the importance of estuaries to freshwater and saltwater ecosystems. The children learned about common threats to estuaries and human habits and actions that mitigate or improve damage to these endangered systems.

Nestled in between the flamingos and the otter run, FOAM's World Otter Day table at Sequoia Park Zoo in late May was a hit! It helped to have the three male otters in residence wander through, pause to preen, take in some sun, or roll in the grass right behind our table. FOAM Board members Gina Rogers, Rhodes Paris, and Lynn Jones answered questions about river otters and the Arcata Marsh. In return we were offered a great collection of otter puns! We shared the word for "otter" in local native languages; had a board of factoids and photos of the Arcata Marsh otters; educated people about the differences between river and sea otters; and handed out otter stickers, FOAM logo stickers, and brochures. All our DIY otter masks were enthusiastically snapped up! Lots of kids (and several adults) played our game to identify what otters eat. We easily had over 150 visitors: some local, some outside California, and even a few from other countries. It was a fun day to share info about the Marsh's charismatic apex predators and to encourage people to document and share their sightings of river otters in Humboldt County.

[Editor's Note: A big shout out to Lynn Jones for organizing and staffing ALL these events!]

New Display in AMIC

By Suzanne Castiglione

It started in late 2024 when Alex Stillman*, FOAM's liaison with the Arcata City Council, suggested during a FOAM Board meeting that the displays and overall appearance in AMIC would benefit from an upgrade. The Board agreed and a committee was organized to work along with City representatives to undertake the task.

FOAM Board member Jenn Tarlton offered to connect the com-

mittee with some of her students working on their senior project for her Environmental Education and Interpretation Capstone class at Cal Poly Humboldt. At the beginning of the spring 2025 semester, four students—Malcolm Riding, Liz Hadden, Brock Roslie, and Sarah Rendon, aka the "Poop Troop"—met with FOAM Board members Maria Baron, Lynn Jones, and myself, plus Heather Schmidt from the City's Recreation Division, to plan an upgrade of the outdated display explaining how the Arcata wastewater

treatment plant works.

Over the semester, this team created a new display that illustrates and explains the flow of wastewater through the unique, natural cleansing system at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. As a result of the students' hard work and commitment—aided by City staff member Javi Nogueira, who built the support structure and erected the display in the Interpretive Center—we can all now enjoy a fascinating and up-to-date explanation of how our waste-

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water is currently turned into clean water. It is amazing!

Come visit AMIC to look out the window at the actual treatment plant while following the images that take you from wastewater to clean Humboldt Bay water. If you have questions about the display, or the process of creating it, speak to Poop Troop member Malcolm, who now works at AMIC.

*It should be noted that Alex was among the original group of local civic leaders who, along with Humboldt State professors who designed the systems, fought for and succeeded in creating Arcata's unique wastewater treatment plant and wildlife sanctuary during the 1970s. Her continued involvement with FOAM—as a Life Member, tour leader and desk volunteer, and former Board member—is greatly appreciated.

Help Document Breeding Birds of the Arcata Marsh

By Rob Fowler

As I sit here typing on the AMIC computer, I can hear the begging calls of Song Sparrows, either fledged or getting close to it. Yesterday at least two juvenile European Starlings were giving their grating, not-cute-at-all call, begging from their hard-working parents trying to fill their offsprings' unsatiable appetites. It's the third week of May and the breeding bird season is in full swing.

The breeding season starts early at the Marsh, with Anna's Hummingbirds traditionally being the first bird to be found nesting here. This year the first nest was found on March 7, with four or five other nests discovered around the Log Pond since. Bushtits usually are the second species to nest. I first noted a pair carrying nesting material on March 4. Amazing how such small birds can start breeding so early—it wasn't even officially spring!

By now Canada Geese have goslings almost a month old, many Mallard broods have popped out, the first Marsh Wren fledglings are ap-

pearing, and other resident species will be fledging their first young in the next weeks. In fact, just yesterday (May 19) I finally confirmed Chestnut-backed Chickadees were breeding at the Log Pond. One or both adults were carrying food to a cavity in a snag on the southern island, while a few fledglings that already had emerged from their nest were waiting for the parents to feed them, which I did eventually see.

Dead trees at the Marsh are both a rarity and a commodity, though in recent years, they have become a bit more prevalent as some of the older alders have died, especially around the Log Pond. These snags become extremely attractive to cavity-nesting birds, with one at the Log Pond currently boasting three species nesting in it at once: Northern Flicker, Tree Swallow, and Black-capped Chickadee! The Northern Flickers are the first to be documented breeding at the Arcata Marsh, so that's exciting!

Over the years 56 bird species have been confirmed to breed at the Arcata Marsh. Thirty-two are annual breeders, 12-13 are uncommon (possibly annual) breeders, and 13 are rare or one-time breeders.

On May 19 I was getting ready to leave work, with my trunk open and stuff packed away, when I noticed an Orange-crowned Warbler foraging in the coyote brush in front of my car. It was carrying a bill full of food: CONFIRMED! This may be the first confirmed breeding of Orange-crowned Warbler for the Marsh, but they likely breed here every year! Just one example of how there's still a lot we don't know about the breeding birds of the Arcata Marsh and that's where my bi-weekly breeding bird survey comes in.

Every other Thursday through August, meet me at 8 am at the south end of the South G Street parking lot. We'll bird for 2 to 3 hours to further document the Marsh's breeding birds, then submit the data through eBird to the California Bird Atlas project. Anyone can join, whether you're a beginning or advanced birder...and even if you aren't a birder! It's a fun way to go birding and you get to learn birds

much more intimately by watching individuals and trying to determine whether their behavior shows any breeding evidence or not. Upcoming dates are June 4 and 18; July 2, 16, and 30; and August 13 and 27.

So far, the survey has confirmed 12 breeding species. Sixteen overall species have been confirmed breeding at the Marsh this spring and it's only May! Hope to see you in the field.



Cooper Vought and Declan Richerson welcoming Zuri to the Interpretive Center. Photo by Gina Rogers.

Introducing Zuri, AMIC's River Otter Ambassador

By Gina Rogers

Have you noticed the new "resident" at the Interpretive Center? It's Zuri, one of 108 unique otter sculptures created as part of the North Coast Otters Public Arts Initiative. The fundraising project was developed by Cal Poly Humboldt (CPH) wildlife professor Jeff Black, with each statue sponsored by community members and businesses and local artists donating their time to create these uniquely decorated otters. They were auctioned off in September 2021, raising more than \$300,000 that was used to fund CPH students' watershed and otter research.

"Zuri in the River" was created by artist Marina Blancas, who was at the time an undergraduate student in CPH's Wildlife Department. She was sponsored by Mary Anne Rand, in memory of her daughter

Camille Rand, and originally hosted by Changing Tides Family Service. Zuri then moved among various City of Arcata departments. We are so excited to welcome her to AMIC.

The research projects funded by the Arts Initiative have added greatly to our understanding of the river otters that grace the Marsh. This includes Gina Cutler's work assessing how important water birds are to the otters' diet, especially in the winter months; Lily Olmo's detailing of which fish in what life stages and seasons are found in Klopp Lake and Brackish Pond; and assessments by both Whitney Vickers and Taylor Bell-Rogers of otter numbers (DNA samples from 16 different otters over a two-year period!), used to help identify otter crossings for locating our "Go Slowly" signage.

If you're interested in learning more about the otters at the Arcata Marsh, check out the new video featuring Professor Black giving a tour there (now.humboldt.edu/news/river-otters-arcata-marsh-they-eat-more-fish-video). Shot on location at the Marsh, it has clips showing the different paths otters use, their behaviors, and their favorite spots for catching fish and waterbirds. It was developed to mark the 27th and final year of Jeff's long-term otter research effort. The call for citizen science data collection of otter sightings will continue under the River Otter Ecology Project, which collects data on river otters for a growing number of watersheds across the country. Be an Otter Spotter! Submit your sighting data at riverotterecology.org/become-an-otter-spotter/.

FOAM Gives Out Three Science Fair Awards

By Sue Leskiw

The 2026 Humboldt County Science Fair was held in March at the Sequoia Conference Center in Eureka. This is the 20th year that FOAM has given out awards for the best projects related to wetlands. Judges were Lynn Jones and me.

The first-place award of \$100 (\$50 each) went to "Flood Fighters: Testing Flood Barrier Methods" by



First prize winners Olivia Brown and Brooke Webb display their award certificates. Submitted photo.

Olivia Brown and Brooke Webb, fifth-graders at Pacific Union School. The girls modeled different flood prevention techniques by creating three barrier prototypes: miniature stacked sandbags, a "green" barrier (constructed with seed starter flats, rocks, rooted grass and moss, soil), and a concrete wall.

They tested the prototypes by placing the barrier in the middle of a tub, placing a small wooden house on one side, and slowly pouring a gallon of water on the other side. They recorded the time it took for the water to first leak through the wall, then recorded how high the water level was on the house after both the water pour and 5 minutes later.

The time until first leak was fastest for the sandbags and slowest for the green barrier. Water level after completion of the pour was 1-1/8" for the concrete wall, 7/16" for the sandbags, and unmeasurable for the green barrier. Water levels 5 minutes later were 3/16" for the green barrier, 11/16" for the sandbags, and 1-1/8" for the concrete wall. There were some methodological problems that skewed some of the results (e.g., sandbag stacking had gaps, the cement wall pulled away from the plastic tub).

Olivia and Brooke opined that the sandbag method is the quickest to construct, so could be the best option in an emergency. The other two methods require a lot of time and

resources to build, so would need to be made well in advance of a flood. Although a properly constructed cement wall might be most effective, the two believe that most people would prefer the natural look of a green barrier in front of their home to a cement wall (not to mention that green barriers are the most environmentally friendly option).

The two girls also won an award from the Professional Engineers in California Government and a third-place ribbon for Grade 5. Olivia and Brooke sent FOAM a thank-you card, "We are honored that you chose Flood Fighters among so many wonderful and inspiring projects. We really appreciate the work FOAM does to protect and celebrate our wetlands. We are grateful for your recognition and support of our project."

The second-place award of \$50 went to "How Benthic Macroinvertebrates Are a Good Indicator of Stream Health" by Quetzal Heacock, an eighth-grader at Jacoby Creek School.

Quetzal sought to discover whether a storm drain discharging into Widow White Creek from a small community (RV park) could impact stream health. She hypothesized that three types of pollution-sensitive EPT macroinvertebrates (Ephemeroptera, Plecoptera, Trichoptera) would be more abundant and diverse above the storm drain than below it (along the Hammond Trail). She sampled the two locations three times in December 2025 and January 2026. The RV park had drastically more EPT individuals collected (403) than the Hammond Trail site (35). The RV park taxa richness was 6, compared to 4 for the Hammond Trail. Thus, Quetzal's hypothesis was correct. Her study has a real-world application because it demonstrates how a small community can negatively impact life in a stream.

Quetzal also won a first-place ribbon for Grade 8 and was one of six qualifiers from Humboldt County to compete in the California Science and Engineering Fair, where 725 projects from 356 schools across the state vied for in April.

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The third-place award of \$30 (\$10 each) went to “Killer Walnuts” by Ayla Dunn, Georgia Wilson, and Aidan Pryot, seventh-graders at Northcoast Preparatory Academy. The three hypothesized that black walnut husks, which produce toxins that can kill plants (especially from the nightshade family), could be placed around invasive plants to kill them naturally, without using pesticides. Peas and dandelions were the plants tested. Their results did not support their hypothesis, as the two species were not affected to a noticeable amount. One reason may have been that the plants weren’t exposed to the husks long enough or the toxin concentration was too low in the husks.

Thank You, FOAM Godwit Days Volunteers!

FOAM sends out a heartfelt thank you to the following people who volunteered to help with its activities associated with April’s Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival:

Suzanne Castiglione, Sue Leskiw, Carol McNeill, Nancy Reichard, Barbara Reisman, Gina Rogers, and Mary Severdia made up the FOAM team that hung 679 pieces of student bird art on Friday. Suzanne, Carol, Nancy, and Sue returned on Sunday to take down the art.

Maria Baron once again took the lead on lining up help for the Friday opening reception. FOAM-recruited volunteers who served drinks and washed dishes were Maria Baron, Elliott Dabill, Sharon Ferrett, Lee Mitchell-Brown, Barbara Reisman, Leslie Rodelandier, and Lynn Rouse.

Rachael Aguirre, Ren Bunce, Gail Coonen, Genia Garbaldi, Lynn Jones, Robbin Kohn, Sue Leskiw, Stephanie McCaleb, and Jane Rigan staffed the FOAM table in the Bird Fair.

Katy Allen, Sarah Borque, Eadie Eichelberger, Sharon Ferrett, Sue Leskiw, and Mary Ann Madej handled three tables of activities and picture taking during the Godwit Days free family nature crafts on Sunday. FOAM’s activities were



Student Bird Art hanging crew.



*(Top left) Robbin Kohn in FOAM booth.
(Top right) Maria and Sharon serve wine. Photos by Paul Johnson.
(Bottom left) Bird mask making isn’t just for kids. Photo by Sue Leskiw.*

decorating wooden mini-birdhouses, making bird and otter masks, and coloring Marsh critter ornaments.

Paul Johnson snapped photos of the winning bird art and nature writing students, as well as took pix during the opening reception.

Mark Wilson led a Saturday morning kids’ nature walk at the Arcata Marsh.



Student Bird Art Contest Results in 2026

By Sue Leskiw

Some 679 school kids entered the 23rd Annual Student Bird Art Contest. Cosponsors were FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society.

The contest was held in association with mid-April’s Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival in Arcata. All entries were displayed at the Arcata Community Center for public viewing during the festival.

Copies of 2026’s cash prize and honorable mention winning artwork are on display at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center during June. Winners were spread across 24 different schools, plus homeschooled. Public viewing is possible Tuesdays through Sundays between 10 am and 5 pm and Mondays from 1 to 5 pm.

A downloadable booklet containing the artwork and photos from the April 18 awards ceremony will be



posted in June at www.godwitdays.org, www.rras.org, and www.arcata-marshfriends.org.

Awards totaled \$660, with 42 cash prizes plus 33 honorable mentions. Depending on the number of entries per grade, some levels were combined and others received more than one set of awards, to even out the chances of winning. The winners were:

Kindergarten & Grade 1

► **First Place:** Lily Varzgah, Homeschooled, American Goldfinch; Lily Borque, Jacoby Creek, Common Loon

► **Second Place:** Lorelei Schenkelberg, Blue Lake Elementary, Anna's Hummingbird; Misa Gambrel-Mikolai, Union Street Charter, Spotted Owl

► **Third Place:** Harlow Fillmore, Union Street Charter, Western Grebe; Josie Hays, Northern United Charters, Black Oystercatcher

► **Honorable Mentions:** Caleb Redner, Blue Lake Elementary, Marsh Wren; Arrow Quinlan, Union Street Charter, Bald Eagle; Douglas Brner, Blue Lake Elementary, Western Meadowlark; Sophia Torres, Garfield Elementary, Anna's Hummingbird; Nolan Benzinger, Garfield Elementary, Osprey

Grade 2

► **First Place:** Asher Stein, Northern United Charters-Brice-land, Brown Pelican

► **Second Place:** Mason Ather-ton Friend, Redwood Coast Montessori, Anna's Hummingbird

► **Third Place:** Roman Zaragoza, Garfield Elementary, Spotted Owl; Eimilei Byrne, Fuente Nueva Charter, Red-breasted Nuthatch

► **Honorable Mentions:** Ember Freedlund, Mattole Elementary, White-tailed Kite; Dart Poitier, Northern United Charters, Bufflehead; Isaac Cookman, Freshwater Elementary, Mallard

Grade 3

► **First Place:** Helena Yang, Northern United Charters, Great-horned Owl; Skye Forest Queener, Mattole Elementary, Pileated Wood-pecker



► Second Place: Sage Farrell, Garfield Elementary, California Gull; Oscar Smith, Fuente Nueva Charter, Bald Eagle

► Third Place: Alder Antonio, Coastal Grove Charter, Spotted Owl; Avery Herrera, Fuente Nueva Charter, House Sparrow

► **Honorable Mentions:** Lyra Drake, Alder Grove Charter, Western Tanager; Solvei Arnold, Redwood Coast Montessori, Snowy Plover; Fiona Varzga, Home Schooled, Great Egret; Hazel Sperry, Northern United Charters, Black-capped Chickadee

Grade 4

► First Place: Sylvia Tout, Garfield Elementary, Spotted Owl; Vasili Tokarev, Arcata Christian, Belted Kingfisher

► Second Place: Olive Zevine, Union Street Charter, Anna's Hummingbird; Naiya Trees, Northern United Charters, Black-capped Chickadee

► Third Place: Nevaeh Ortega, Arcata Elementary, Barn Owl; Emory Thoreson-Veeh, Garfield Elementary, American Avocet

► **Honorable Mentions:** Etta Ray, Fuente Nueva Charter, Bald Eagle; Rowan Dunn, Union Street Charter, California Quail; Indy Wirthman, Union Street Charter, Anna's Hummingbird; Evelyn Kauffman, Garfield Elementary, Western Grebes; Lexi Roth, Union Street Charter, Steller's Jay; River Ott, Freshwater Elementary, Steller's Jay

Grade 5

► First Place: Jack Werner, Pacific View Charter, Peregrine Falcon; Lyon Williams, Northern United Charters-Briceland, Great Blue Heron

► Second Place: Shaina Bateman, Garfield Elementary, Mallard; Esa McGowan, Homeschooled, Bald Eagle

► Third Place: Brynn Thrash, Garfield Elementary, Snowy Plover; Eric Graybill, Fuente Nueva Charter, Western Bluebird

► **Honorable Mentions:** Iris Hernandez, Arcata Elementary, Wood Duck; Persephone Gradine, Arcata Elementary, Belted Kingfisher;



er; Priscilla Bumphus, Arcata Elementary, American Goldfinch; Malia Boudreaux, Arcata Elementary, Red-breasted Nuthatch; Sarafinn Clemans, Freshwater Elementary, Steller's Jay

Grades 6&7

► First Place: Adelaide Elkins, Freshwater Elementary, Great Blue Heron; Lorela Garcia, Zane Middle School, Western Meadowlark

► Second Place: Mia Hong-Novotney, Sunny Brae Middle School, Varied Thrush; Ivan Tokarev, Arcata Christian, American Kestrel

► Third Place: Margot Nims, Garfield Elementary, Northern Flicker; Penn Kerhoulas, Garfield Elementary, Marbled Godwit

► **Honorable Mentions:** Heidi Tout, Garfield Elementary, Belted Kingfisher; Mira Iversen, Winship Middle School, Wood Duck; Berna Queener, Mattole Elementary, Western Tanagers; Davida Bumphus, Sunny Brae Middle School, Tufted Puffin

Grades 8-12

► First Place: Jolie Micheal, Winship Middle School, American Kestrel

► Second Place: Evie Herrera, Arcata High, Marsh Wren

► Third Place: Aleah Allender, Casterlin School, Red-tailed Hawk

► **Honorable Mentions:** Cruz Girsback, Fortuna Middle School, Western Grebes; Irena Fugate, Northern United Charters, Snowy Plover; Dannika Bessett, Zane Middle School, Spotted Owl; Haylee Scotti, Academy of the Redwoods, Wood Duck; Alysiana Fouquette, Academy of the Redwoods, Least Sandpipers; October Mintey, Eureka High, California Quail

Best Bird in Habitat Awards

► Tristen Welsh, Grade 1, Union Street Charter, Pileated Woodpecker; Halo Lamb, Grade 5, Morris Elementary, Great Blue Heron; Madden McCall, Grade 6, Northern United Charters, Cinnamon Teal; Elena Cudahy, Grade 6, Jacoby Creek Elementary, Belted Kingfisher; Mahala Broussard, Grade 11, Academy of the Redwoods, Red-tailed Hawk



Farewell, Dr. Otter

By Sue Leskiw

As Gina Rogers and the AMIC staff noted in their articles (see p. 2 & 4), long-time Cal Poly Humboldt (CPH) wildlife professor Jeff Black is retiring. This prompted me to look back over the years, to share with you FOAM's interest in otters.

FOAM has funded three research grants to CPH students studying otters, first in 2011 (one on their diet, one on latrines), then in 2026 (otter terrestrial crossings).

The first mention of Jeff in UPWIND was in fall 2012, when he wrote an appeal for people to submit otter sighting data in Humboldt and Del Norte, a citizen science project he started in 2000, with another appeal published in 2016.

In September 2018, FOAM gave Jeff a lecture slot to unveil his new plan for otter outreach via an art initiative based on one he observed on a trip to England. In May 2021, Cal Poly graduate student Karlee Jewell gave an update on the project, whose merging of citizen science and art was the subject of her thesis.

FOAM paid \$500 to have one of the 108 otter statues—underwritten by Life Members Tom & Katy Allen—on display at AMIC.

The cover story of FOAM's spring 2023 UPWIND told the sad tale of the deaths of several otters by speeding vehicles on South I Street. (Approximately 20 deaths have been recorded in or near the Arcata Marsh.) We joined Jeff in urging the City to install speed bumps and otter crossing signs, which finally happened the following year (although white crosses marking places where otters had died were not allowed).

Finally, in February 2024, Jeff led a special FOAM otter tour.

JULY/AUGUST ARTIST DON BOWLUS

Don Bowlus had a life-long Pantheistic appreciation of nature. He spent much of his life sharing his observations on the elegance of nature with others. From childhood, he chose photography as a means to help him convey the intricate beauty of life forms and geological formations that are all around us and often go unnoticed.

Don taught psychology with an emphasis on statistics and research design but one of his favorite courses was "The Psychology of Creativity." Toward the end of his teaching career at Humboldt State, he took a series of classes in photography where he developed his skills in composition as well as learning both black-and-white and color darkroom techniques. As electronic technology advanced, Don expanded his abilities to include digital photography and print making.

Images in this exhibit are a mix of old-fashioned darkroom photographs and digital prints from shots that were taken over the years at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and around Humboldt Bay.

This exhibit was compiled by Don's wife, Suzanne Castiglione.

JUNE ARTISTS STUDENT BIRD ART WINNERS

Copies of cash prize winners and honorable mention avian art from the 23rd annual contest for Humboldt K-12 students is on display.

Calendar of Events

[Docent-led tours leave the Interpretive Center every Saturday at 2 pm]

June—Display of winning Student Bird Art (see p. 6-8)

June 4 and 18—Breeding Bird Survey, 8 am (see p. 4)

June 10—Ribbon cutting for Arcata wastewater treatment plant improvements, 4 pm (see p. 1)

June 11—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

June 14—Bicycle tour of the Marsh with Andy Feinstein, 2 pm

June 17—Pints for Nonprofits fundraiser at Redwood Curtain Brewing Co, 4-8 pm (see p. 1)

June 28—Nature journaling session with Lynn Jones, 10 am

July 2, 16, and 30—Breeding Bird Survey, 8 am (see p. 4)

July 9—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

July 12—Bicycle tour of the Marsh with Andy Feinstein, 2 pm

July 26—Nature journaling session with Lynn Jones, 10 am

Visitor Log

Since mid-February, AMIC has been graced with visitors who signed the logbook from the following states besides California: Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. Plus the Marsh attracted international visitors from Denmark, Italy, Japan, and Norway.

Thanks to Our Supporters, mid-February through May 2026

► **Best Friends (\$100+):** Brian & Ellen Cypher; Craig Gleason (Los Gatos)*; Glen & Deeanne Jones (NEW Life Members!)

► **Supporters (\$50-99):** Pamela Brown; Francis & Frances Ferguson; Lynn & Steve Jones

► **Friends (\$18-49):** Bill & Catherine Alexander; Donna & Jim Clark; Michelle Conover; Ann Diver-Stamnes & Steve Stamnes; Kathryn Donahue; Miriam Elizondo & Jennifer Baker; Andy Feinstein; George Inotowok*; Eva Janson; Peter Martin*; Carol McNeill; Joyce Hough & Fred Neighbor; Daphne Osell & David Soldavini; Charmayne Replogle; Jerry & Gisela Rohde; Cynthia Rudick (Canton, OH); Sandi Sommer; Joan Watanabe; Peggy Wilzbach*

► **Donation from Life Member:** Steven & Carol Pearson (Portland, OR), \$100

► **Other Donations:** Cal Poly Humboldt graduation group, in appreciation of tour leader Stuart Moskowitz, \$20; AMIC donation box, \$419

* = New member

FOAM
Friends of the Arcata Marsh
PO Box 410
Arcata CA 95518

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Mark Your Calendar for:

**Breeding Bird Surveys, 6/4, 6/18, 7/2,
7/16, 7/31, 8/13, 8/27**

Wastewater Plant Ribbon Cutting, 6/10

Pints for Nonprofits Fundraiser, 6/17

Bike Tours, 6/14, 7/12

Nature Journaling, 6/28, 7/26

FOAM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & DONATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please mark the appropriate category. Make any check payable to "FOAM."

☐ Individual \$25 ☐ Family \$35 ☐ Student/Senior \$18 ☐ Sponsor \$50

☐ Best Friend \$100 ☐ Life Member \$750 ☐ Donation of \$ _____

☐ Send me information about volunteering for Friends of the Arcata Marsh.



FOAM, PO Box 410, Arcata CA 95518 • www.arcatamarshfriends.org • info@arcatamarshfriends.org

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

The Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center street address (not for mail) is 569 South G Street, Arcata.

*FOAM's mailing address is PO Box 410, Arcata CA 95518. You can reach us by phone
from 1 to 5 pm on Monday and 10 am to 5 pm Tuesday through Sunday at 707-826-2359.*