



# UPWIND

from the Arcata Marsh

Interpretive Center

Vol 15, Issue 3, Summer 2008

*In This Issue:* Appeal for Board Members... Fall Docent Training... Annual Meeting September 28... Seed Collection & Work Day... Media Thanks... Birding Badge... Scope Donations... Slice of Life... Metals in the Marsh & Bay... Tour Kudos... Science Camp... Plant Column... Naturalist Column... Fun Facts... Poem... Board Nomination Form & Description of Duties... Computer Resources... Artist Statements... Visitor Log... Calendar of Upcoming Events... Thanks to Supporters

## Why Wouldn't YOU Make a Good FOAM Board Member?

We are looking for at least 1 FOAM member (or person willing to join the organization) who cares about the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary and would like to translate that feeling into action. If you've wondered about a new way that you can help the Marsh, here's your opportunity! Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings and serve on at least one committee (see details, pages 3&4).

FOAM has a small membership base on which to draw. Why not attend the August 14 Board meeting, to see what it's all about? You'd be working with a great group of people to improve a place we all love. Please call me at 442-5444 to find out more.

P.S. Board applications are due no later than August 26. *Sue Leskiw*

## Docent Training This Fall?

A week-end training for FOAM docents is tentatively scheduled for Saturday/Sunday, September 13-14. Get tips on how to lead an interpretive tour for various age groups, as well as go on tours focusing on Arcata Marsh history, wastewater treatment, birds, plants, invertebrates, and wetlands ecology. Call the Interpretive Center at 707-826-2351 if you are interested in signing up.



## Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

FOAM's 14th Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, September 28, at the Interpretive Center beginning at noon. Members and volunteers are invited to attend the lunch featuring barbecued albacore by Dave Couch and home-made salads from FOAM board members.

Following lunch, FOAM will hold its annual business meeting, where ballots will be counted and election results presented. The annual report will be presented, as well as Volunteer of the Year awards. We hope to see you there!

## 2007-08 Board of Directors

### Officers

**President:** Sue Leskiw (also UPWIND Editor; Mailing; Publicity; Exhibits; Scrapbook; Website) — 442-5444

**Vice-President:** Elliott Dabill (also Education; Computer) — 445-3836

**Secretary:** Janet Zich (also Membership; Website, Bylaws) — 822-4660

**Treasurer:** Art Barab (also Saturday Tour Coordinator; Exhibits) — 826-7017

### Other Board Members

Leslie Anderson (Design; Art Exhibits; Website) — 822-6444

Ken Burton (Habitat Concerns; Education) — 839-5179

David Couch (Special Events; Bylaws) — 825-1124

Lumei Hui (Education) — 677-3164

Robert Rasmussen (Education; Bylaws) — 822-5305

Lance Torgerson (Education) — 826-1525

## Summer Seed Collection & October 11 Work Day

For the second year, FOAM board member and habitat concerns chair Ken Burton is enlisting the aid of volunteers to collect seeds at the Arcata Marsh. During August and September, hairgrass, aster, and possibly other native plant seeds will be harvested for sowing in restoration areas at the Marsh. Volunteers are asked to call Ken at 707-825-1124 to schedule an on-site meeting to learn the collecting protocol.

On Saturday, October 11, FOAM is co-sponsoring a City of Arcata work day at the Marsh. While the exact location and tasks are to be determined, work will involve getting rid of invasive plants. Dress to get dirty and bring work gloves. The City will provide tools, bags, and snacks. If you can help, call Dennis at 707-825-2163.



## Local Media Aid Volunteer Recruitment

Front-page stories in the Eureka Times-Standard and Arcata Eye have helped fill the need for volunteers at the Arcata Marsh. City naturalist Denise Homer, long-time volunteer Alan Laurent, and FOAM president Sue Leskiw were interviewed for the articles. Several photos were used to catch the eye of readers.

More than 10 people have responded to the two newspaper articles, our plea in UPWIND, plus publicity from a local radio station. Most of the people have received training on staffing the Interpretive Center desk, and several are already signed up for a stint greeting visitors.



## FOAM to Sponsor Brownie Birding Badge

This fall and next spring, FOAM will be offering a 2-hour course on birds for girls in grades K-3. FOAM responded to a request from the director of the Girl Scouts Save the Bay program in Oakland to host a program in Humboldt.

FOAM president Sue Leskiw and her husband Tom are taking the lead on developing a curriculum for the sessions, based on content used by the Richardson Bay Audubon Center. Leslie Anderson and Louise Bacon-Ogden tentatively have agreed to serve as instructors.

Registration for the September 27, 2008 and April 4, 2009 sessions, which cost \$15 per Girl Scout, will be handled through [www.girlscoutsnorcal.org](http://www.girlscoutsnorcal.org). Information will be posted on the website in mid to late August.



## Sturdy Scopes Donated

FOAM extends a heart-felt "Thank you" to two local birders who responded to our need for a spotting scope to replace the one stolen earlier this year. Sharon Levy of Arcata and Bob Davis of Eureka donated heavy-duty scopes and tripods from the appeal in UPWIND and in Redwood Region Audubon's Sandpiper newsletter. One scope is already sited by the window, with the other available to tour leaders.

## Fresh Slice of Life

FOAM would like to thank Suk Choo Kim for constructing a new Plexiglass display for the Interpretive Center. The local resident had remarked on a visit to the marsh that the box displaying creatures found in Log Pond water was discolored. The tubing in the previous display had turned bright pink and the screwed-together design had been taken apart one too many times for cleaning.

Mr. Kim molded a larger, one-piece container for the display that City naturalist Denise Homer promptly hung up and filled. Be sure to look for it on your next visit.

## Humboldt Bay Heavy Metal

By Lance Torgerson & Sue Leskiw

Findings from an ongoing study of water samples from Humboldt Bay were presented by HSU chemistry professor Matt Hurst on July 9. Approximately 15 people attended the invitation-only talk at the Interpretive Center, including FOAM board members and representatives of Humboldt Baykeeper and the Redwood Science Project.

The data, which were collected from several sites within Humboldt Bay over the last 2 years, examined the seasonal variation in levels of what Hurst termed dissolved "macronutrients" (nitrogen, phosphorus, silicate), "micronutrients/contaminants" (zinc, copper, cobalt, cadmium, nickel, iron, manganese), and "contaminants" (lead). Every 2 weeks, samples were drawn from the Bay entrance (incoming tide), near Indian Island (mid-tide), and Mad River Slough (outgoing tide).

Several interesting facts emerged. The ocean, not land-based activities, is the main contributor of silicate and cadmium. Silicate is used by diatoms to build their shells. Spring upwelling stirs up cadmium in the ocean, and spring winds mix up sediment, resulting in higher levels of manganese.

Comparison with other bays — San Francisco, San Diego, Galveston, and Narragansett in Rhode Island — showed that for most of the metals measured, Humboldt Bay is the cleanest. Zinc, copper, and lead are very low; cadmium is high due to West Coast upwelling; and cobalt and nickel are also high. "Humboldt Bay has low dissolved nutrients and contaminating trace metal concentrations, compared to other well-studied estuaries," concluded Hurst.

Hurst also has been collecting samples at five sites in the Arcata Marsh every 2 weeks for 9 months, including the oxidation ponds, treatment marshes, and bay discharge point. Fall brings a release of phosphorus and spring sees its removal by plants. Most of the metals are settling out in the oxy ponds. Preliminary results have the Arcata Wastewater System receiving an excellent grade for percent removal of dissolved copper, zinc, cobalt, and cadmium, compared to traditional tertiary treatment. Lead removal is somewhat less than traditional systems, and copper is much lower. Final results are expected by April 2009.

Hurst is continuing the studies in cooperation with other scientists from Humboldt State, the University of California at Santa Cruz, and the Wiyot tribe.

## Kudos to Our Tour Leaders

Last winter, FOAM docents Leslie Anderson and Rich Ridenhour led a tour for Azalea Middle School students from Brookings, Oregon. The class members took the time to send thank-you notes to the leaders. Here are some of the things they said:

"I loved being able to tour the Arcata Marsh with such an experienced guide and birder... My favorite was the Purple Finches. I would not have known what it was if you had not identified it."

"It was the best birding hot spot I've been to. My life list went from 51 to 66!"

"You helped me identify 10, maybe 11 different birds. I had a blast."

"When I went there, I only had 21 lifers; now, I have 43. Thank you very much. You showed me that the Northern Harrier has red eyes."

"What I liked about Arcata Marsh was all the different kind of birds and habitat. Thank you for the time you spent with us."

"I hope you had a good time with all of us kids and I hope we can come back."

We're sure the leaders enjoyed it too, having such interested budding birders come to visit, and FOAM certainly welcomes you back!

## FUN FACTS ABOUT BIRDS IN THIS ISSUE

- The raven's scientific name is Greek for "croaker." Raven is Norse for "to clear one's throat." Ravens can count up to five or six.
- A baby robin can ingest 14 feet of earthworms in 1 day.
- A pelican's pouch can hold over 3 gallons of water. It scoops up water and fish together, ejects the water, and swallows the fish.
- The bald eagle makes the biggest nest of any bird — 2.5 meters across and 3.5 meters deep. They reuse the nest and enlarge it year after year.

**Godwit Days 2009**  
**April 16-22, Arcata**  
**[www.godwitdays.com](http://www.godwitdays.com)**  
**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Pete Dunne**





*(Left) FOAM board member Bob Rasmussen demonstrates how to focus a microscope.*

*(Right) Former FOAM board member Sean Craig, campers, and counselor display their Bay mud-covered treasures.*

## FOAM Cosponsors Arcata Rec's Natural Resources Science Camp

On July 24, FOAM joined with the Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) to host a day-long session for children age 9-12 at the Arcata Marsh. The session was part of the Wildlife Biology week of the Arcata Recreation Department's Natural Resources Science Camp.

Seventeen kids arrived at the Interpretive Center at 10:15 am, having walked from the HSU campus. RRAS volunteer Tom Leskiw gave a 40-minute talk imparting fun facts about birds and asking the kids questions. Then, former FOAM board member Sean Craig led the kids on a low-tide "Mud Walk" to the Bay to collect invertebrates.

After lunch, FOAM board member Bob Rasmussen and former board member Melinda Bailey joined Sean to help the students operate the microscopes and identify what they had collected, along with additional tiny critters Melinda dip netted from the Log Pond.

The day was capped off by a bird walk led by Tom Leskiw and docent Rich Ridenhour. The kids thoroughly enjoyed keeping track of the birds they saw and picking luscious blackberries along the trail.

FOAM president Sue Leskiw was responsible for pulling together the schedule and volunteers and made her famous "Hoot Owl cookies" as a special treat.

FOAM also provided \$300 and RRAS \$150 to sponsor three children to attend the camp. FOAM thanks all the volunteers for their contributions of knowledge and good spirits.



*(Left) FOAM docent Rich Ridenhour gets a camper onto seeing a bird through a spotting scope.*

*(Right) Former FOAM board member Melinda Bailey shows campers how to prepare slides. All photos by Sue Leskiw.*



## Plants of the Marsh

A series by Melinda Bailey

### PEARLY EVERLASTING

Given the mild year-round temperatures in coastal Humboldt, plants can have a long flowering season. Flowering plants drop their seeds at varying times, which can sprout, grow, and bloom in alternate seasons. For example, in 2008, many early spring wildflowers didn't really show themselves until early summer. However, one perennial tends to bloom late in the summer and lasts well into the fall, no matter how crazy the weather: Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*).

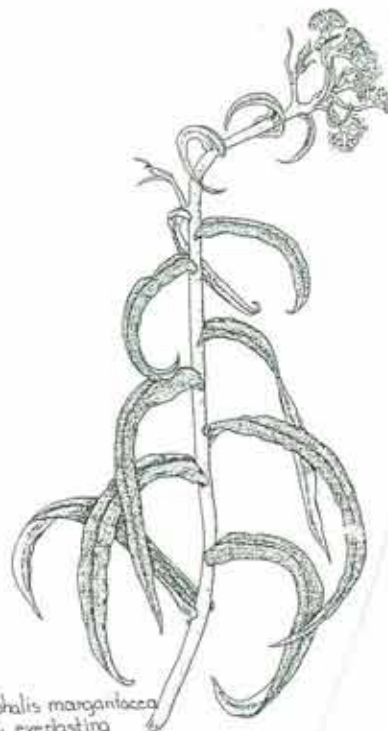
The common name of Pearly Everlasting has a nice ring. "Margarita" is Latin for "pearl"; the flowers are small, round, and creamy white, with a pearly luster. This plant is a native to California and can be found along dry edges. It competes nicely with non-native grasses, spreading naturally through underground rhizomes. At the Arcata Marsh, large patches can be found at the south end of Klopp Lake.

This plant is a member of the Asteraceae or sunflower family. What may seem like a single flower of this family actually is a composite flower. Although only one member of the genus *Anaphalis* occurs in California, there are nearly 100 species throughout Asia and North America. A synonymous name for this plant is *Anaphalis occidentalis*, and many variations or subspecies exist, depending on what reference you consult.

The leaves are 3-10 cm long, pale to olive green on top and whitish below, and lanceolate in shape. They are attached directly onto a rather tall stem (sessile). Each composite flower is tiny, but several dozen or more cluster together to make a showy display. The flower clusters appear papery and round and are sometimes referred to as wooly. They are packed full of stamens and pistils, with a yellow central disc and white outer disc. The flowers can make attractive dry bouquets. The nectar is food for many insects, including butterflies. Painted Lady larvae feed on the foliage, so Pearly Everlasting is a good plant to include in your butterfly garden.



*Anaphalis margaritacea*  
Pearly everlasting



### Seasons Around the Marsh — Summer

By Denise Homer

I didn't really start paying attention to ravens till the year I lived beside the Eel River. One sunny spring morning, I was in the backyard watching through my binoculars mergansers playing on the river. The whole time I watched them, I kept hearing snap...snap...snap...snap. I wondered, what is that sound? Putting down my binoculars, I looked around. There were two ravens breaking off the ends of the branches of a tree that hadn't leafed out yet. I stood watching this malevolent behavior, trying to make some sense out of it. While other birds scavenge nesting materials from the ground, these ravens were collecting theirs right off the tree. I noticed that not any branch would do. They were quite picky about eyeing and poking a branch with their bill, sometimes rejecting it and flying a few inches away to check out the next branch. They kept at it most of the day until they had enough for their platform nest. Later, they would lay 4-7 greenish eggs blotched with brown, while I was left with a tree pruned by ravens.

Across from the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, a Red Elderberry grows right at the edge of the log pond. This year, it was loaded with cone-shaped clusters of tiny, bright red berries. One hot day, I stepped out onto the porch to catch a breeze while talking on the phone. Movement caught my eye as I watched a

jet-black raven land in the Red Elderberry, pluck off a cluster of berries, and fly a short distance to a willow. The bird proceeded to pluck off every berry and eat it. I didn't know ravens ate elderberries. I began to watch the elderberry more closely. One day, I spotted two ravens sitting in the elderberry eating berries. After they flew away, I looked under the tree. There were several broken-off berry clusters on the ground. They were mostly eaten, but often a few berries remained. I looked up in the tree and could see clusters of berries, but also the spidery silhouettes of stems with no berries left. Within a month, all the berries were eaten and the Red Elderberry had blended back into green leafy obscurity.

Ravens belong to the Corvidae or crow family of birds. Members of this family live on all continents except Antarctica. Perhaps this explains these birds' presence in the stories, myth, and lore of numerous cultures throughout time.

Whoosh of raven wing  
Odin's eyes return bringing  
Thought and memory



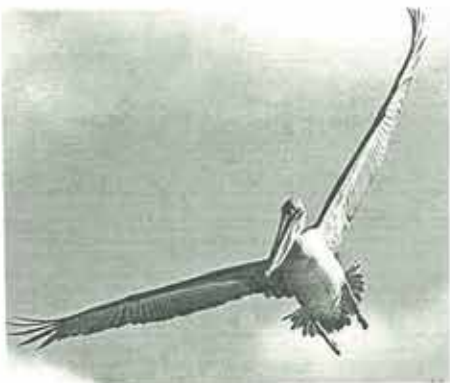
### Robins and Worms

By Lance Torgerson

Oh, on the fresh grass,  
Will that robin run?  
Looking for worms,  
Oh, that must be fun.  
Something I wondered,  
Over the years,  
When turning its head,  
Does that robin hear?  
Could it be

That bird is listening for worm?  
Do they make much noise?  
Does the Earth really churn?  
So much that it can detect,  
A big, juicy worm,  
Or a crunchy insect?





*Brown Pelican at Klopp Lake,  
by Hal Work*

## AUGUST ARTISTS EUREKA PHOTOSHOP USERS' GROUP

This show will feature Photoshop-enhanced pictures from around the Marsh. Many members spend a lot of time at the Marsh; all were scheduled to meet there on July 19 to capture images for the show.

More information about the group is available at [www.eurekaphotoshop.com](http://www.eurekaphotoshop.com), which includes galleries of photographs by members, reviews of books about Photoshop, rules and results from contests, and information about meetings. The group meeting, which is open to the general public, is usually from 1:30-3:30 pm on the third Saturday of each month at the Adorni Center in Eureka.

An artist reception with refreshments will be held on Sunday, August 3, from 2-4:30 pm at the Interpretive Center.

## Computer Resources

The computer in the Interpretive Center contains several valuable resources for Marsh visitors. First, Thayer software contains photos, maps, and songs of all 356 birds regularly found in California. A quick guide to using the features has been printed out and stored next to the monitor. The system also boasts photo galleries of plants and bees of the Humboldt Bay area, plus the old standbys from the previous system (marsh birds, wastewater system, and game). In upcoming months, FOAM hopes to add more bird, plant, insect, fish, and general Arcata Marsh photos. NOTE: The system is not connected to the Internet.



## SEPTEMBER ARTIST MIKE ANDERSON

This exhibit, titled "Volery Images," includes many photos of birds in flight. It focuses primarily on the Humboldt Bay area, and features hummingbirds, kinglets, swallows, finches, grosbeaks, pigeons, gulls, ducks, cormorants, egrets, herons, ospreys, and eagles.

By education and training, I am an engineer and teacher. I began birding and photographing birds in 2005 and had my first exhibit in February 2007, at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center. I have also had exhibits at the Clarke Historical Museum and Humboldt Baykeeper in Eureka and US Bank in Arcata.

Although there is a certain amount of technical and artistic skill involved in my photography, I don't think of myself so much as an artist, but rather more as an opportunist. I try to put myself in the right place at the right time with the right equipment and the right frame of mind to capture memorable photographs of images provided by nature. I especially enjoy capturing beautiful images of common birds, those birds we see every day that are all too easily taken for granted. I hope through viewing my photographs people will take a longer look the next time they see common birds, and observe their very special beauty.

You can contact Mike at [MikesBird-Photos@suddenlink.net](mailto:MikesBird-Photos@suddenlink.net).

## Visitor Log

The AMIC had 2534 walk-in visitors during May and 2473 in June.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

*[Docent tours leave the Interpretive Center each Saturday at 2 pm; wastewater tour last Saturday of each month]*

August — photographs by the Eureka Photoshop Users Group

August 14 — FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

August 26 — Deadline for Board of Director applications (see article, page 1)

September — bird photographs by Mike Anderson

September 11 — FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

September 13-14 — FOAM Docent Training (see article, page 1)

September 27 — Brownie Birding Badge session (see article, page 2)

September 28 — FOAM Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation Lunch, noon (see article, page 1)

October -- bird photos by Chuck Thisell

October 9 — FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

October 11 — Arcata Marsh Work Day (see article, page 1)

## Recognition & Thanks, June-July 2008

- Sponsors: Pamela & Bruce Kessler; Sue Leskiw
- Friends: Harvey & Jeannette Carroll; RC & Nancy Dedekam; Jane Fusek; Lance Hardie & Grace Marton; Fred Leissler; Susan O'Connor; Jean Plympton; Frank & Phyllis Schmidt; Florine & Bart Smith; Timothy Stewart; Gwen Thoele
- Donations: Sharon Levy, spotting scope and 2 tripods; Bob Davis, spotting scope and tripod; Suk Choo Kim, replacement Slice of Life exhibit box