

# THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Lee Karney

Western Snowy Plover at Crissy Field, one of the endangered species at the GGNRA.

## GGNRA Endangered Species Big Year Launches in 2008

**D**id you know that the Golden Gate National Recreation Area contains more federally protected endangered species than Yosemite, Yellowstone, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia national parks *combined*?

On January 6, 2008, at the San Francisco Zoo, Golden Gate Audubon, the Sierra Club's Wildlife and Endangered Species Committee, and other organizations will kick off an exciting campaign to reconnect people with the superlative resources of this great urban national park: the 2008 GGNRA Endangered Species Big Year.

The Endangered Species Big Year is a race against time to see—and save—each of the 33 listed species found within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Throughout 2008, participants will be encouraged to attend guided expeditions to see the park's rarest species and then to take 33 specific conservation actions that will help these imperiled species recover.

The Endangered Species Big Year is a competitive event: participants who see and help the most endangered species by the end of 2008 will win the Endangered Species Big Year. Each sighting must occur while you are within the GGNRA's legislative boundary, but the conservation action items may take you to different places around the Bay Area—sometimes even your congressional representative's office!

**BIG YEAR** continued on page 2

## San Francisco's Natural Treasures

**S**an Francisco is renowned for its great parks, which are wonderful places for birding and other recreation. We are fortunate to have so much access to urban recreation areas. The City of San Francisco manages 230 parks that total 3,500 acres. Natural areas—remnants of San Francisco's historic landscape—are found in 27 percent of city parks.

The Natural Areas Program (NAP), part of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD), was started in 1997. With a small staff and a shoestring budget, the NAP manages a large portion of San Francisco parks, which serves as important habitat and is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

Each year volunteers, including Golden Gate Audubon members, contribute thousands of hours to restore natural areas. About a fourth of all the park's volunteers participate, providing 13,000 hours of free labor. Golden Gate Audubon works with the NAP around the city to preserve and restore natural areas.

Unfortunately, our parks have not had the funds necessary to maintain and improve natural areas. The NAP in particular operates with only seven of RPD's 299 gardeners and a mere 2 percent of the department's overall budget. San Francisco spends only about \$1,000 per acre on protecting and restoring natural areas. By comparison, Chicago spends \$4,500 per acre.

**NATURAL TREASURES** continued on page 3



**INSIDE**

- 3** Altamont Pass Update
- 8** Winter Classes
- 10** Holiday Gifts at the GGA Nature Store

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the last Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

*The Gull* is published nine times per year by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

*The Gull* – ISSN 0164-971X

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

Design and layout: e.g. communications

**BIG YEAR** from page 1

You can sign up for the Endangered Species Big Year at [www.ggnrabityear.org](http://www.ggnrabityear.org) and download a checklist of the 33 species and each species' corresponding action item. There are 66 Endangered Species Big Year activities to complete, but you can do as many or as few as you like. Come out for one trip or one conservation action item, or try and do them all over the course of 2008.

At the January 6 kick-off celebration, we'll have on hand two Endangered Species Act success stories: the recovered Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We'll also have a San Francisco Garter Snake on display. The world's most beautiful serpent is still found within the GGNRA, but needs our help if we hope to have it around for future generations to enjoy. After a short presentation and some snacks, we'll take participants on their first guided expedition of the Big Year: we'll walk across the street and hike north on Ocean Beach until we see the threatened Western Snowy Plover.

Over two dozen other trips to see endangered species within the GGNRA are already scheduled for the Endangered Species Big Year. You are also encouraged to explore the park on your own, and the Big Year website can help you understand where the species are most likely to be found, as well as help you learn more about the mission of this urban national park, the importance of the Endangered Species Act, and the complex legislative boundary of the GGNRA.

The GGNRA's astounding array of imperiled biodiversity—in the midst of the Bay Area's vibrant civilization—is certainly cause for celebration, but it is also cause for concern and action. Come out and take part in the 2008 GGNRA Endangered Species Big Year, get to know your imperiled neighbors, and help them recover.

by Brent Plater, Director, GGNRA Endangered Species Big Year

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Sign up for the Endangered Species Big Year at [www.ggnrabityear.org](http://www.ggnrabityear.org). For more information, contact Brent Plater at [bplater@ggnrabityear.org](mailto:bplater@ggnrabityear.org) or 415.572.6989.

Come to the free Big Year kick-off on January 6, 1 p.m., at the San Francisco Zoo, 1 Zoo Road, San Francisco. For directions and a map, go to [www.sfzoo.org](http://www.sfzoo.org).

Watch upcoming issues of *The Gull* for announcements of Big Year field trips and events sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon.

## Golden Gate Audubon Expands Volunteer and Member Staff

To serve our growing volunteer and restoration program activities, Golden Gate Audubon has hired a new part-time volunteer coordinator, Jennifer Robinson. Jennifer now manages our volunteer programs and works with staff and committees to implement our many restoration projects. With a BS in environmental science and sociology from Carroll College in Wisconsin, Jennifer brings an impressive background in the environmental field and strong experience working with volunteers. She works part-time with the East Bay Regional Parks District, the Sonoma Overlook Trail, and the Watershed Project. Jennifer also served as a contract biological technician with the Presidio Trust, a position that included monitoring California Quail in the Presidio.

Michael Martin, former volunteer and membership development coordinator, has moved into a new position as development manager. He manages our membership base, develops membership communications, and lends critical support to our fundraising efforts.

We welcome Jennifer to Golden Gate Audubon and thank Michael for his dedicated work over the past year.