

73. COASTAL RIPARIAN MARSH

ANEGADO RIVERENO COSTANERO

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Location: California; Marin Co.; Point Reyes Station; Olema Marsh; 38°4'N, 122°49'W; Point Reyes Quadrangle, USGS. **Continuity:** New. Data for the yr since 1985 are available from the authors. **Size:** 17.5 ha. **Description of Plot:** Approximately 75% brackish to freshwater marsh, 25% riparian thicket, at the confluence of Bear Valley Creek and Lagunitas Creek. Estimated as percent cover, the plot is comprised of *Typha latifolia/Scirpus* sp. 56%, *Salix* sp./*Alnus* sp. 20%, open water 9%, grassland 9%, salt marsh 9%. The marsh section of the study plot was dredged in 1984 to create open water and promote drainage. Since then, there has been a progressive increase in vegetative cover of willows, especially on the spoils around the ponds. **Weather:** Mean temperature 11°C (range 9–24°C). 1990 was the fourth straight yr in which rainfall was below average, although marsh showed no signs of desiccation. **Coverage:** 21.4 h; 8 visits (mornings); 26 March; 17, 25 April; 6, 16, 22 May; 1, 10 June. **Census:** Red-winged Blackbird, 239 territories (546/40 ha); Marsh Wren, 152 (347); Song Sparrow, 135 (309); Wilson's Warbler, 60.0 (137); Common Yellowthroat, 45.0 (103); Warbling Vireo, 39.0 (89); Virginia Rail, 37.0 (85); American Goldfinch, 37.0; Tree Swallow, 32.0 (73); Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 28.0 (64); Swainson's Thrush, 27.0 (62); Orange-crowned Warbler, 21.0 (48); Brown-headed Cowbird, 21.0; Pacific-slope Flycatcher, 18.0 (41); Acorn Woodpecker, 18.0; Western Wood-Pewee, 17.0 (39); Wrentit, 16.0 (37); Brown Towhee, 15.0 (34); Bewick's Wren, 14.0 (32); Purple Finch, 14.0; Bushtit, 13.0 (30); Allen's Hummingbird, 13.0; Downy Woodpecker, 13.0; American Coot, 12.0 (27); Black-headed Grosbeak, 12.0; Scrub Jay, 9.5 (22); Mallard, 9.0 (21); California Quail, 9.0; European Starling, 9.0; Pied-billed Grebe, 8.0 (18); Black Phoebe, 8.0; Barn Swallow, 8.0; American Robin, 7.0 (16); Black-crowned Night-Heron, 6.0 (14); Green-backed Heron, 5.0 (11); Nuttall's Woodpecker, 5.0; Steller's Jay, 5.0; Pine Siskin, 5.0; Great Blue Heron, 4.0 (9); Plain Titmouse, 4.0; Hutton's Vireo, 4.0; House Finch, 4.0; Mourning Dove, 3.5 (8); Red-shouldered Hawk, 3.0 (7); Anna's Hummingbird, 3.0; Cliff Swallow, 3.0; Rufous-sided Towhee, 3.0; Western Bluebird, 2.5; Northern Rough-winged Swallow, 2.0. **Total:** 49 species; 1177.5 territories (2691/40 ha). **Visitors:** Cinnamon Teal, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Band-tailed Pigeon, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Winter Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Phainopepla, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird. **Remarks:** Apparent declines in population levels of Virginia Rail, Marsh Wren, and Song Sparrow may be the result of the drought, now in its fourth

yr. The population of Red-winged Blackbirds is enigmatic. Territories increased steadily from 1985 to 1989, but declined by 22% from 1989 to 1990. We attribute the increase in Red-winged Blackbirds to an increase in the willow canopy within the marsh and possibly to the concurrent decline in Marsh Wrens. The subsequent decrease may be an effect of the drought. An independent, intensive survey of Common Yellowthroat territories revealed that the plot contained seven to eight territories versus the 5.5 delineated during the BBC. In the riparian area there has been a slight decrease in hole nesting species over the last two yr, concurrent with the loss of several dead alders. Use of the marsh by Black-crowned Night-Heron and Green-backed Heron apparently is increasing with the increase in willow cover around the pond shore. The successful nesting of Nuttall's Woodpecker is at the western edge of the species' local range. Phainopepla is an extremely rare vagrant in Marin County. **Acknowledgments:** This work was supported by Chevron, U.S.A., Inc., San Francisco, California and Audubon Canyon Ranch, Inc. Thanks to John Kelly for design and consultation, and Skip Schwartz, General Manager of ACR, for ongoing support.