

## 28. COASTAL RIPARIAN AND CATTAIL-BULRUSH MARSH

ANIGADO DE ENEAS-"BULRUSH" COSTANERO RIVEREÑO

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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. **Size:** 17.5 ha. **Description of Plot:** Approximately 75% brackish to fresh water marsh; 25% riparian thicket at the confluence of Bear Valley Creek and Lagunitas Creek. The vegetation of the study plot is estimated as percent cover: *Typha latifolia/Scirpus* sp. 56%; *Salix* sp./*Alnus* sp. 20%; open water 9%; upland grassland 9%; salt marsh 6%. **Water:** A slow-running stream (Bear Valley Creek) borders the W side of the marsh, separating it from the riparian thicket. The stream joins Lagunitas Creek only after passing through a 1.2 x 2.4 m culvert. During extreme high tides or winter rain, the fresh marsh "backs up" flooding ca 75% of the area. **Edge:** The plot is bounded to the W by evergreen forest of Coast Live Oak and Douglas fir; to the E by short, grazed, annual grassland, and to the N by a road which serves to block the free flow of water between the site and Lagunitas Creek. **Topography and Elevation:** Low-lying marsh bordered to the E by a low (2-3 m elevation) berm, a slip fault that defines the San Andreas Fault. **Weather:** Mean temperature 10°C (range -3.8-18.3°C). Generally cold and dry with the onset of winter rains, which normally begin in Nov., delayed until Jan. Early morning cold may have contributed to low detection rate for smaller passerines, especially Marsh Wren. **Coverage:** 22.7 h; 8 visits (mornings): 7, 16, 30 Dec.; 10, 23 Jan.; 2, 15, 23 Feb.; 3 evening visits to estimate blackbirds and owls. **Count:** Red-winged Blackbird, 5000 ind./visit (8 visits); Brewer's Blackbird, 500 (8); Pine Siskin, 39.4 (7); Song Sparrow, 37.1 (8); Purple Finch, 25.9 (8); American Robin, 25.8 (8); Virginia Rail, 20.1 (8); Golden-crowned Sparrow, 17.0 (8); Marsh Wren, 13.3 (8); Bushtit, 12.6 (6); Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 9.8 (8); California Quail, 9.1 (6); Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8.8 (8); Fox Sparrow, 8.1 (8); Yellow-rumped Warbler, 6.9 (8); House Finch, 6.6 (4); Scrub Jay, 6.4 (8); Hermit Thrush, 5.6 (8); Swamp Sparrow, 5.6 (8); White-crowned Sparrow, 5.4 (6); Acorn Woodpecker, 5.0 (8); Varied Thrush, 4.0 (7); California Towhee, 3.9 (7); American Coot, 3.7 (6); Rufous-sided Towhee, 3.4 (7); European Starling, 3.0 (5); Wren-tit, 2.7 (7); Common Yellowthroat, 2.7 (7); Sora, 2.6 (7); Tree Swallow, 2.5 (2); Mallard, 2.2 (2); Northern Flicker, 2.1 (6); Dark-eyed Junco, 2.1 (2); Bewick's Wren, 2.0 (7); Steller's Jay, 1.9 (5); Downy Woodpecker, 1.8 (7); Winter Wren, 1.8 (7); Plain Titmouse, 1.5 (7); Nuttall's Woodpecker, 1.4, (8); Black Phoebe, 1.4 (8); Hutton's Vireo, 1.4 (7); Red-shouldered Hawk, 1.2 (8); Mourning Dove, 1.1 (4); Anna's Hummingbird, 0.9 (6); Cinnamon Teal, 0.9 (2); Gadwall, 0.9 (1); Lincoln Sparrow, 0.8 (6); Green-winged Teal, 0.8 (3); Hairy Woodpecker, 0.8 (3); Great Blue Heron, 0.6 (5); Sharp-shinned Hawk, 0.6 (5); White-throated Sparrow, 0.6 (5); House Sparrow, 0.6 (3); Pied-billed Grebe, 0.5 (4); Red-tailed Hawk, 0.5 (2); American Kestrel, 0.5 (4); Townsend's Warbler, 0.5 (3); Cooper's Hawk, 0.4 (3); Black-crowned Night-Heron, 0.4 (1); American Wigeon, 0.4 (1); Common Snipe, 0.4 (1); Green-backed Heron, 0.2 (2);

American Bittern, 0.2 (2); Allen's Hummingbird, 0.2 (2); Brown Creeper, 0.2 (2); Wood Duck, 0.2 (1); Lesser Goldfinch, 0.2 (1); Bufflehead, 0.1 (1); Ruddy Duck, 0.1 (1); Osprey, 0.1 (1); Long-eared Owl, 0.1 (1); Northern Saw-whet Owl, 0.1 (1); Belted Kingfisher, 0.1 (1); Red-breasted Sapsucker, 0.1 (1); Least Flycatcher, 0.1 (1); Orange-crowned Warbler, 0.1 (1); American Goldfinch, 0.1 (1). **Total:** 77 species; 5,832.5 ind./visit (13,331 ind./40 ha). **Remarks:** The Least Flycatcher is an extremely rare visitor to this region. Details are on file with the regional editors of *Am. Birds*. Blackbirds use the marsh as a night roost. Because of the vast flocks, numbers were estimated by hundreds as the flocks arrived or departed at dawn. Tricolored Blackbirds may have been overlooked in the flocks. Approximately 12 male Red-winged Blackbirds were present on territories throughout the census period. As the marshy area is colonized by willows we expect an increase in riparian species and a decrease in marsh dependent species, particularly Marsh Wrens. Marsh Wren population levels have decreased progressively over the five yr of the study, though this may be due to drought as well as changes in habitat. Other marsh dependent species Virginia Rail, Song Sparrow (*M. melodia gouldii*) remain at constant levels, while Red-winged Blackbirds apparently are on the increase. **Acknowledgments:** This work was supported by Chevron, U.S.A., Inc., San Francisco, California, and Audubon Canyon Ranch, Inc. Phyllis Faber for help with plant transects and analysis, John Kelly for design and statistical help, and Skip Schwartz, general manager of ACR for ongoing support.