



Winter 2018

Point Blue Quarterly

Conservation science for a healthy planet.

Our Public Lands and Waters Living Laboratories for a Healthy Future





Ellie M. Cohen,
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF POINT
BLUE CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Visit Ellie's blog at
pointblue.org/blog/sciencenews

The Point Blue Quarterly is published quarterly by the Board of Directors of Point Blue Conservation Science (founded as Point Reyes Bird Observatory). Edited by Stacey Atchley-Manzer with assistance from Point Blue staff.

Printed on recycled paper (100% post-consumer waste), using agri-based inks.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Left: Ellie M. Cohen. Photo: Miki Goralsky.

A New Threat to 50 Years of Continuous Stewardship and Science on the Farallones

This issue of the Quarterly celebrates the vital role of public lands and waters in conservation and as natural laboratories, especially urgent in light of accelerating climate change and habitat loss.

One of Point Blue's most unique and enduring public partnerships is with the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. This "Galapagos of California" hosts seals, sea lions, and over 350,000 seabirds, the largest breeding colony in the continental US. Point Blue scientists have studied and protected Farallones wildlife for an extraordinary 50 years, continuously, 365, 24/7!


Unfortunately, our vital Farallones science, which scores of government agencies and nonprofits rely on to advance ocean conservation, is now at risk. New actions out of Washington, D.C., seriously threaten the collaborative progress we've made.

In early January, the administration proposed allowing oil and gas exploration in federal waters while also opening the door to shrinking NOAA's West Coast National Marine Sanctuaries. These protected areas, which Point Blue's science helped establish and expand, specifically protect some of the most biologically productive ocean regions on Earth from the devastating risks of oil drilling.

On top of that, the Department of Interior (DOI) recently froze its discretionary grants and cooperative agreements to "better align with the Secretary's priorities," directly threatening the continuation of Point Blue's urgent studies and stewardship at the refuge.

Thanks to your generosity over the years, we have matched every federal dollar allocated to our Farallones work with private funds by as much as 3:1. DOI actions now threaten the remaining "1," and we need your support.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Please contact Nancy Gamble, Director of Philanthropy, at 707.781.2554 or visit pointblue.org/donate to help ensure Point Blue's invaluable conservation partnerships with federal agencies—including at the Farallones, in National Forests, on rangelands, and at-sea—continue strong. You can also help by reaching out to your Representative and Senators. Ask them to urge the DOI to release the conservation funds that are on hold in support of "collaborative wildlife recovery efforts" and "public-private partnerships," among other DOI priorities.

During this time of increasing threats to the health of our planet, Point Blue's powerful conservation science on public lands and waters is more urgently needed than ever before. Thank you for standing with us! 

Contents



4

NATURE'S LABORATORY: Point Blue at Work on Public Lands and Waters

Above: Point Blue intern Jennifer Aragon weighs and measures a Rhinoceros Auklet chick on Southeast Farallon Island, the location of our research station within the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. **Photo:** Annie Schmidt/Point Blue.



7

Protection Flows
from Point Blue
Research



9

Fire Ecology
on Public Lands



16

Conservation
is All in the Family

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 From the President
- 4 Nature's Laboratory
- 10 The Promise of Public Lands
- 12 Conservation on a Landscape Scale
- 14 Congratulations and Thank You, Gary Page
- 16 Preserving Our Planet
- 17 News Bites
- 17 Calendar
- 18 Focus

On The Cover:

(L to R) Vitek Jirinec, Jay Wright, Elizabeth Ames, Jim Tietz, and Alissa Fogg monitor bird populations as indicators of ecosystem health from Whitebark Vista, Sierra National Forest. **Photo:** Point Blue.

Left: Mother humpback whale and calf. **Photo:** NOAA.

Center: Shrub skeletons stand out above the understory regrowth the first spring after the 2013 Rim Fire. **Photo:** Jane Braxton Little.

Right: The Monson family: three generations making a difference for our planet. **Photo:** courtesy John Monson.



NATURE'S LABORATORY:

Point Blue at Work on Public Lands and Waters

Although you might not know it, you're part owner of 850 million acres of land and 3.5 million square miles of ocean. America's public lands and waters are an incredibly diverse collection of forests, parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, wilderness areas, and more. They sustain an equally rich variety of birds, mammals, and marine life. And as the challenges facing our biosphere accelerate, they will play an ever more critical role in securing a healthy planet for all who depend on it.

Properly conserved and managed public lands and waters provide important ecosystem services for wildlife and human communities on a large scale, including regulating climate, sequestering carbon, and recharging groundwater. They offer some of the most intact ecosystems available for scientists to study, and the diversity and size of these wild places allow us to test nature-based strategies for a better future. In short, they are a living laboratory for studying the effects of—and solutions to—climate change, habitat loss, and other threats.

Point Blue works across many different types of public lands and waters, from expansive national seashores to small county parks. We use on-the-ground science and strategic collaboration with numerous government agencies and other partners to understand, protect, and restore our planet. Read on to learn about some of the ways our work on public lands and waters is helping Point Blue secure a healthier future for us all.

facts:

Point Blue at Work on Public Lands and Waters

- 50** Number of at-sea research cruises in partnership with NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries; 2018 marks our 15th year.
- 85** Number of local, state, and federal government agencies in the US that Point Blue partners with to study and protect birds, other wildlife, and ecosystems on public lands.
- 5,000** Number of birds banded annually at our Palomarin Field Station within the Point Reyes National Seashore.
- 18,250** As of this spring, the number of consecutive days (50 years!) Point Blue scientists have operated our field station on the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge.
- 800,000** Since 2013, the number of acres of post-fire habitat Point Blue science has helped protect for birds and other wildlife by working with our partners at the US Forest Service.



Right: Point Blue interns band a Hermit Warbler (left) and a Townsend's Warbler (right) at our Palomarin Field Station. **Photo:** Point Blue.

Below: A young visitor assists a Palomarin intern in releasing a banded Fox Sparrow. **Photo:** Lonnie Bowling.

Point Reyes National Seashore and Beyond: Taking Nature's Pulse at The Palomarin Field Station

Thanks to the vision shared by Point Blue's founders and the National Park Service, as well as our continued partnership and shared values of conservation and outreach that persist today, Point Blue's Palomarin Field Station has thrived for more than half a century as a living laboratory, training center, and visitor destination within the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Wildlife and their habitats face pressures, even within protected lands. From Point Reyes to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and from Marin County's water district and open space preserves to Pinnacles National Park, public land managers throughout the region rely on the expertise of Point Blue staff and interns from

Palomarin to help them keep the pulse on birds in their parks. Through long-term monitoring in these areas—some of our data sets go back more than 50 years!—we use birds to demonstrate the impact of environmental change. Then we're able to help management agencies determine if, when, and what management actions might be implemented to keep birds, other

wildlife, and ecological systems healthy and thriving in this era of unprecedented change.

At a more personal level, Palomarin's visitor center contributes to public appreciation of birds, science, natural history, and conservation science in our national parks and beyond. It helps guests learn about personal choices they can make to effect conservation—especially in the face of climate change. Our bird-banding demonstrations provide a special window into all of these things for visitors and students. Getting to see a wild bird up close reflects the root of why many users visit their national parks and other public lands: to enjoy and connect with wildlife, to explore and to learn, and, especially, to marvel.

Diana Humple
Palomarin Field Station Program Lead





Left: Blue whale with cargo ship in distance. **Photo:** Sebastiaan Bedaux.

Public Waters: Protection Flows from Point Blue Research

If you have ever been blessed by the majestic sight of a breaching whale or witnessed the graceful glide of an albatross across the waves, you know what a treasure our oceans and their denizens can be. Beyond the awe and delight they evoke, healthy seas serve as a vital buffer for rapidly rising CO₂ levels and temperatures, generate almost one-fifth of the protein in human diets, support the transport of more than 90% of the world's goods, and—thanks to oxygen-producing microscopic marine plants—provide about 70% of the earth's atmospheric oxygen.

Here on the West Coast, southward upwelling winds bring cold, nutrient-laden water to the surface where it drives one of the most vibrant and productive ecosystems in the world. The living and non-living resources of these public waters are managed under a variety of government agencies, from

state to federal, out to 200 miles from the coast.

Our public waters serve as sentinels to change, and Point Blue is passionate about providing quality science and guidance for effective management and protection of the marine realm. In the 1980s, Point Blue played a crucial role in helping to establish three marine sanctuaries in Northern California. Since 2004 we have partnered with two of these—the Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries—to conduct seasonal research cruises each year and catalogue the state of ocean ecosystems. Often tossed about by rough seas, our team of scientists braves the elements to take measurements of water characteristics while classifying and counting marine life ranging from tiny krill to the giants of our planet: blue whales. When important deviations occur—such as changes in

the timing of arrival and departure of migratory baleen whales—Point Blue is the first to know through our scientific observations, which we readily share to reduce threats from crab lines and other human uses of the ocean.

Our scientists are also working to curtail the tragic deaths of whales struck by the large ships that increasingly ply the waters along the US West Coast. By identifying whale hotspots and mapping the likelihood of ship collisions, we have helped relocate shipping lanes to safer waters. We are now helping to set goals for vessel cooperation that can avoid these tragic incidents altogether. Point Blue is working to ensure sustainable ocean uses so that our precious ocean wildlife and the public waters they call home remain healthy and productive for generations to come.

Cotton Rockwood
Senior Marine Ecologist

County Parks: Data for Management in an Era of Environmental Change

On Friday, October 6, 2017, I joined a group of Sonoma County Regional Parks staff at a workshop and field trip to Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve, one of Sonoma County's newest public parks. The purpose of this workshop was to share ecological monitoring data Point Blue had helped collect, and to identify how that information could help guide the management of the county's parks in an era of rapid environmental change.

We presented findings from our initial year of monitoring and discussed the diverse plant and bird communities that the park currently supports. This included observations of Grasshopper Sparrows, a grassland bird species of special concern. We also presented the results of soil sampling, and discussed how these data can be used to identify areas where soil can be improved through management. Proper stewardship of soil is a major strategy in our response to tackling climate change. Healthy soils store more water naturally, reduce flooding and drought impacts, and hold more carbon out of the atmosphere to reduce warming, among other benefits.

As we concluded the workshop and left the parking lot, we had no way of



knowing that in just a little more than 48 hours the surrounding hills would be ablaze, and much of the county would be in the grips of one of the worst fires in California's history.

Taylor Park itself was spared by the recent fires, and because it was spared, it likely played a crucial role as a refuge for wildlife displaced by the fires. Other parks in Sonoma County did burn.

The Sonoma fires illustrate the value of Point Blue's data collection in helping us understand the impacts of severe disturbances—especially urgent as fire events are expected to become increasingly frequent in the future. As stated in a recent County report on living in a fire-adapted landscape,

ecological data "allow us to rapidly identify problem areas and places on the landscape most likely to pose threats to agricultural lands, native habitats, ecosystems and wildlife, as well as human health and safety." Point Blue is helping Sonoma County agencies respond to fire recovery needs, but continued and further investment in expanded ecological monitoring will make the recovery process even more efficient.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with Sonoma County Regional Parks in support of their hard work to protect and steward the county's public lands for our communities to enjoy.

Ryan DiGaudio
Ecologist, California Partners in Flight
Coordinator

Above: Soil samples help gauge ecosystem health.
Photo: Ryan DiGaudio/Point Blue.

Right: Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve, Santa Rosa, CA.

Photo: Harminder Dhesi.



Sierra Public Lands: Fire and Forest Ecology

As human communities push further into wildlands and we continue to suppress most natural fires, the ability to allow fire to play its important ecological role without devastating effects on people is reduced. Across the vast tracts of public land that dominate the Sierra Nevada ecosystem, fire is a fundamental driver of ecological function and integrity. These public lands in the Sierra Nevada are managed by the USDA Forest Service and National Park Service. They provide a unique opportunity to understand the effects of fire on montane ecosystems, and to develop and test strategies for using fire to restore these systems and prepare them for the consequences of climate change.


Over the past decade Point Blue has worked closely with our National Forest partners to better understand the effects of fire on vegetation and bird

communities, as well as the effects of forest thinning treatments to prepare these lands for the reintroduction of fire. Our science has been a key tool for natural resource managers, helping to guide the debate over how to best manage fire prone landscapes with an eye towards the future.

For example, we recently completed an analysis which found that mixed severity fire is important for avian diversity. Many species reach their

greatest abundance in areas affected by high severity fire more than a decade after the burn. Our results illustrate that the avian community in these fires is quite diverse and changes rapidly in the decades following fire.

Along these lines, we recently developed Fire Bird, a tool that allows land

managers to easily predict high quality nesting habitat for the woodpecker species closely tied to burned forest. This tool allows managers to more effectively meet wildlife habitat objectives while addressing other resource issues such as fuel reduction and reforestation. Using our applied scientific approach, we are helping our public land partners manage fire-affected landscapes across the Sierra Nevada to sustain biodiversity and manage with fire, instead of against it. 

Ryan Burnett
Sierra Nevada Group Director



Above: Ryan Burnett discusses post-fire management with US Forest Service partners at a Rim Fire burn site. **Photo:** Alissa Fogg/Point Blue.

Left: Lupine carpet the forest floor the first spring after the 2013 Rim Fire in the Stanislaus National Forest. **Photo:** Jane Braxton Little.

The Promise of Public Lands

In 1978 my family packed up our pickup truck and traveled, four across the bench seat, from our home in Washington State to the American Southwest. Waiting there was a marvelous place I excitedly anticipated from my snug position: Dinosaur National Monument. Dinosaur fossils are rare, and when they are found they are often quickly excavated and moved to museums or private collections. But at Dinosaur National Monument, anyone—including the aspiring young naturalist I was that summer—can touch fossils still embedded in the rock where they have been preserved for 150 million years.

Many years later, from my vantage point as research director of Point Blue's Pacific Coast and Central Valley Group, I now appreciate Dinosaur National Monument

on another level. It illustrates the promise of our public lands and waters: making natural resources that could be locked away behind gates available to the American people.

Point Blue's work with public lands and waters lies at the intersection of place and people. On the "place" side of the equation, we count birds, we measure carbon, and we prioritize nature-based solutions to climate change. And on the "people" side, we do this in order to help public employees responsibly steward resources for the American people. Our science—and these partnerships—is even more critical in a time of rapid change, including politically-driven changes in Washington, as well as ongoing environmental threats to land, water, and climate.

Given the iconic images associated with many public lands—the imposing granite edifices of Yosemite, Yellowstone's gushing geysers—one could easily overlook the fact that public lands are more than just a scenic backdrop for our summer vacation photos. Public lands and waters provide multiple benefits. Our National Parks protect culturally important sites that celebrate our diverse heritage. In addition to providing a backbone of protected land for the migratory bird flyways of North America, our National Wildlife Refuges protect wetlands that help preserve and enhance water quality. And, on top of providing timber products that contribute to our economy, our National Forests sequester huge amounts of carbon, contributing to climate stability.

One might also forget that the professional community of local, state, and federal employees that supports our public lands is diverse and multi-talented. And like our public lands, many of these employees do double duty. During the fires in Sonoma County last fall, Sonoma County Regional Parks staff helped protect people and property, not only in the county parks, but also in the heavily damaged Santa Rosa neighborhood of Coffey Park.

We also recognize that public lands are not self-sufficient islands. They are surrounded by private lands, and their value can be enhanced when managers recognize they are part of a single, larger landscape. Our science

facts:

Benefits of Public Lands and Waters

66 million

Number of people who receive water sourced from national forests in the United States each year.

\$4,360

Increase in per capita income for each 100,000 acres of public land in a county.

293,000

Number of jobs created annually by United States National Parks.

6%

Average drop in heart rate after a 15 minute stroll in a nationally protected public forest.

and recommendations are critical in helping government agencies manage the natural resources that are crucial to ecological health—on a scale that can make a big difference.

I'm happy I live in a country that includes public land. I'm proud that public lands employees are my friends and colleagues, and all of us at Point Blue are grateful for the dedication and perseverance they bring to managing these complex resources for multiple uses. And I'm excited about the urgent work that Point Blue is engaged in. We face an era of unprecedented climate change. We do so with a rapidly evolving understanding of how our conservation science can contribute to preserving the natural resources that belong to, and that help sustain, all of us. Our success will be measured by the ability of future generations of young naturalists, and citizens in general, to benefit from our public lands. 🌍

*Nathaniel E. Seavy, Ph.D.
Research Director*



Above: Nat Seavy exploring beaver ponds and enjoying fall colors in Lundy Canyon, located in Inyo National Forest on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada. **Photo:** Jenny Tamayo.



CONSERVATION ON A LANDSCAPE SCALE:

Point Blue's Essential Connections to Public Lands and Waters



The landscape in which Point Blue's life story is written echoes that of a bird, which begins life in a small locale—a nest—and thrives over time in a larger geography. While our nest site was Point Reyes National Seashore, our current geographic scope shows just how far from the nest we've flown. We now work with partners throughout California as well across the Americas!

The conservation movement of the mid-20th century was the context both for Point Blue's founding in 1965 and for the establishment of Point Reyes National Seashore in 1962. When both entities were mere fledglings, Point Blue

shorebird biologists surveyed Estero de Limantour and found that enormous numbers of shorebirds and waterbirds depend on the estuary in winter. Our findings helped obtain the highest level of protection for Limantour, as a State Marine Reserve and Marine Protected Area. This is just one early example of Point Blue science influencing public lands management.

Point Blue scientists ventured out to the Southeast Farallon Island starting in 1967 and by 1969, the South Farallon Islands were added to the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).



Point Blue came into being thanks to a set of synchronous events that gave rise to our strengths today. A couple years after Point Reyes National Seashore was founded in 1962, members of the Western Bird Banding Association recognized Point Reyes as a key location for studying birds. Led by Cal State Hayward Professor Dr. Richard Mewaldt and his student, C.J. Ralph, they asked the National Park Service for a facility to band birds in order to learn more about them and their migratory patterns. Point Blue (then Point Reyes Bird Observatory) was officially founded in spring 1965 and took up

residence in a remote ranch bunkhouse in Point Reyes. It soon relocated to a former schoolhouse near the Park's southern entrance—Palomar. One of the original biologists was a teen-aged Rich Stallcup, then emerging as a visionary and phenomenally prolific birder. He and others avidly documented songbird diversity on outer Point Reyes. They dreamed of studying the Farallon Islands, visible on the horizon. By 1968, Point Blue began year-round research on Southeast Farallon Island—our second residential field station, in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thanks to the quality of these lasting partnerships, Point Blue's home facilities laid the foundation for decades of extraordinary conservation science, guiding ecological stewardship, on public and private lands, and the ocean.


A unique, long term relationship between Point Blue and the USFWS was born to understand and protect the largest seabird breeding colony in contiguous United States.

A bird provides ecological services in the landscape where it thrives, and reciprocity is likewise at the core of Point Blue's lifelong work in public lands. As our organization took flight, relationships with public lands agencies expanded. A primary shared goal, expressed by dozens of our public agency partners, is scientific understanding and guidance that helps protect the ecological health of our commons into the future.

Today our "territory" is vast. Run your own mental calculation regarding this: Point Blue works in National Parks and Recreation Areas, National Wildlife

Refuges, National Marine Sanctuaries, Marine Protected Areas, National Forests, Bureau of Land Management lands, Department of Defense bases and other military preserves, and California State Parks, as well as county and local parks. This means that in California, our work now stretches from Pacific Coast beaches to the Sierra Nevada. And further afield, we manage scientific observations and provide analyses that enable on-the-ground conservation on public and private lands across the US. We integrate data on birds and ecosystems to improve conservation outcomes through the Avian Knowledge Network, we work with partners in 12 countries from Alaska to Chile through our Migratory Shorebird Project, we study penguins and climate change at the Ross Sea in Antarctica, and we are now an official Observer

organization at the United Nations on global climate change.

Essential connections with public lands and with the agencies that steward these resources have always been a fundamental part of Point Blue's work. Our public lands partners strengthen our communities, our economy, and America's natural legacy, and Point Blue is honored to support their management through our climate-smart conservation science. Today this seems a given, but it's also extraordinary. Strong, enduring relationships with the public agencies responsible for great expanses of land and waters in the United States give Point Blue a unique role in ecological stewardship. 

Claire Peaslee

Opposite, top: Point Blue science helped protect Estero de Limantour, now a State Marine Reserve and Marine Protected Area (MPA) within the Point Reyes National Seashore. **Photo:** NPS/Jessica Weinberg McClosky.

Opposite, bottom: Estero de Limantour teems with wildlife. It serves as a nursery to Dungeness crab, provides pupping and haul-out sites for marine mammals, and is a major foraging area for sharks, rays, and bird species like the Great Blue Heron. **Photo:** Rinus Baak/USFWS.

This page: Point Blue's Palomar Field Station, circa 1970. **Photo:** Point Blue.

Congratulations and Thank You, Gary Page!



This page, right: Gary, working in mudflats, circa 1974. **Photo:** Point Blue.

Opposite page: Gary Page, 2015. **Photo:** Claire Peaslee/Point Blue.

Below: Western Snowy Plover chicks with their band tags, which help biologists monitor them. **Photo:** Santa Barbara Zoo.



In the early 1970s, a young biologist with a passion for science and conservation joined our team. Thus began a career that would span more than four-and-a-half decades with Point Blue. Gary Page retired in the spring of 2017, but he remains on our team today as a valued research associate and volunteer.

Much of Gary's work centered on improving how public lands are managed and restored for birds. Gary also pioneered our early efforts to connect private farmers to conservation and engage citizen scientists. The following highlights merely scratch the surface of Gary's considerable accomplishments.

Oil Spill Response

In 1971, Gary collected, cleaned, and saved oiled wildlife from a tanker collision that spilled 840,000 gallons

of crude oil outside the Golden Gate. He and others recognized the need to rigorously document the loss of wildlife, something no one else was doing. The result: along the San Mateo coast, US Fish and Wildlife Service reestablished a nesting colony of Common Murres and acquired old-growth forest as nesting habitat for federally threatened Marbled Murrelets.

Snowy Plover and Beach Conservation

Gary and Point Blue Avian Ecologist Lynne Stenzel (also Gary's wife) provided more than 40 years of conservation leadership to protect the threatened Snowy Plover along the California Coast. They initiated some of the first hands-on habitat restoration projects at Point Blue, developing protocols and designing restoration plans for dunes and estuaries.



Today, ongoing recovery efforts for the plovers draw from the foundational work of Gary and Lynne.

Water for Wetlands and Agriculture

The threatened Long-billed Curlew and Mountain Plover depend on primarily privately owned alfalfa and grass crops in the Central Valley, as revealed by Gary and Dave Shuford's research. This early work with conservation and agriculture continues today in our focus on protecting water and wildlife habitat on working farms and ranches across the state.

A Connected Network

Which wetlands in western North America are most important for shorebirds? In the 1980's, Gary and a team of citizen scientists embarked

to find the answer. Over several years, they counted shorebirds in a large portion of wetlands across the western US. The result: They documented the importance of a connected network of healthy wetlands across the entire Pacific Flyway to secure the survival of migratory shorebirds and other waterbirds. Today, this flyway conservation work continues through our multi-partner Migratory Shorebird Project, engaging scientists and volunteers from 12 countries in climate-smart wetland conservation.

Gary brought his passion for discovery and conservation biology to everything he did at Point Blue, creating a lasting impact for birds, habitats, and ecosystems. Thank you, Gary! We are thrilled you are still part of our team. 🌍

Melissa Pitkin
Outreach and Education Group Director



Year of the Bird

2018 marks the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the most important bird-protection laws ever passed. In honor of this milestone, Point Blue is joining National Geographic, nature lovers, and other partners around the world to celebrate the "Year of the Bird." Studying birds is a significant part of Point Blue's toolbox for climate-smart conservation. Our long term data sets and bird observations—some going back more than 50 years—are critical tools that reveal the impacts of changes to the environment. We're proud to be a leader in making a big difference for bird and human communities through Joint Ventures, Partners in Flight, Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, Migratory Shorebird Project, and other collaborations. Visit pointblue.org to learn more and become a champion of science for the birds! And spread the word using **#BirdYourWorld** to inspire others to join in.

Above: A Greater Sage-Grouse male struts at a lek (dancing or mating ground) near Bridgeport, CA to attract a mate. **Photo:** Jeannie Stafford/USFWS.

PRESERVING OUR PLANET:

It's a Family Affair

When you think of family traditions, festive holiday observances, lovingly prepared meals, or boisterous annual reunions may come to mind. For the Monsons, family tradition means nothing short of protecting our planet, and the animals and ecosystems that depend on it. Supporting conservation science is a family activity that is now embodied in the hearts of three generations: Tern Society members John and Susie, John's parents and longtime donors Jim and Julie, and ten-year-old son Eddie—already an accomplished birder and impressive fundraiser for conservation science. Their collective appreciation of, respect for, and connection with wildlife and nature makes Point Blue a natural partner in making the Monson family's conservation legacy three times as nice.

Below: The Monson family birding in the Point Reyes National Seashore. Left to right: John, Eddie, Jim, Julie, and Susie. **Photo:** courtesy John Monson.



Sowing the Seeds of Conservation

John and Susie: "We dropped in on Point Blue's Palomarin Field Station when Eddie was seven and were treated to a tour of the mist nets and banding. Eddie was given his first opportunity to hold a bird when he released a Wrentit. You get this intensely deep connection with the ecology when you are so close to it. Take advantage of every opportunity to interact with the Point Blue scientists and staff, especially in the field. They are incredibly knowledgeable and impressive."

Eddie: "I'll never forget going for a walk in Lassen Volcanic National Park with Point Blue scientist Ryan Burnett, seeing him pull out invasive thistles, and hearing how he brought the community together to save an old barn and surrounding meadow. All of the people we've gone on walks with who work for Point Blue are really great and they are making a difference in the world."

Why Conservation Science Matters

Jim and Julie: "We have yet so much to learn about nature and ecosystems. If we don't preserve the 'laboratory,' we can't do the science. Point Blue provides the science to inform decisions and policies for a wide range of resource managers and an increased understanding of how to achieve a sustainable earth."


John and Susie: "Conservation creates more for everyone and everything. Ecology is not a zero sum game. Humans thrive when the ecology thrives, but humans are far too inclined to try to exploit nature for individual benefit, so conservation needs to be fought for and legislated."

Eddie: "When there is a disturbance in nature, humans can help restore the balance. Point Blue will help nature win!"

Creating a Conservation Legacy

John and Susie: "Preserving our planet so that it can sustain life as we know it is the critical issue of our time. Point Blue is the leader in developing sustainable systems driven by crucial data collection and pragmatic ecology programs. And, we have been so impressed with all of our engagements with the people at Point Blue. They are an amazing team which we are enthusiastic to support through a planned gift."

Like John and Susie, you can make a lasting difference for birds, wildlife, and human communities by making a bequest to Point Blue in your will or trust. When you let us know about your gift, you'll become a member of the Tern Society, our community of visionary legacy donors who are committed to securing a healthy blue planet for future generations.

To learn more, please contact Nancy Gamble, Director of Philanthropy, at 707.781.2555, ext. 324 or at legacy@pointblue.org. 

news bites



Point Blue recently published innovative science that's helping to protect whales and inform policy. Our work to prevent ship strikes prompted Rep. Alan Lowenthal to introduce a congressional bill called 'The Blue Whales and Blue Skies Act' (H.R. 3682), which directs NOAA to continue and expand a program that slows ships to protect whales and reduce pollution in Southern California. Read this and other publication and report briefs at pointblue.org.

Point Blue became an official Observer organization to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). President and CEO Ellie Cohen represented Point Blue in Bonn in November for the 23rd global climate conference, joining other committed leaders from all over the world who are working toward our common goal of a safe climate and healthy planet.

Welcome to Marian Vernon who joined the Point Blue team in November as Sierra Meadow Adaptation Leader. Marian is working on engaging land trusts in climate smart conservation, catalyzing climate smart meadow restoration in the Sierra Nevada, and launching our new STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) expansion pilot in the Feather River watershed.

Above: Point Blue President and CEO Ellie Cohen at COP23 (the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) in Bonn, Germany. **Photo:** Ellie Cohen/Point Blue.

POINT BLUE CALENDAR

SUPPORTER EVENTS

BIRD AND CONSERVATION WALKS

Point Blue offers visits to our field sites where supporters can learn about our cutting-edge studies. Explore online at pointblue.org/walks. To sign up, contact Lishka Arata, Communications Co-ordinator, at 707.781.2555, ext. 354 or larata@pointblue.org.

FRIENDS OF POINT BLUE RECEPTION MARCH 14, 2018

This invitation-only event is held annually to thank our Friends of Point Blue (donors who give \$500+ annually). Contact us to learn more about becoming a Friend.

WHALES & WILDNESS: SPRING IN THE SEA OF CORTEZ APRIL 14-21, 2018



Guests will experience an unparalleled opportunity to explore and engage with scientists during this international trip highlighting Point Blue's work. Contact Lindblad Expeditions at 888-773-9007 to sign up.

SCIENCE EVENTS

2018 CALIFORNIA LAND & WATER CONSERVATION CONFERENCE MARCH 6-8, 2018 McCLELLAN PARK, CA

Point Blue and Sierra Foothill Conservancy will lead a workshop on The Power of Partnership: Working Together to Improve Stewardship Decisions.

ADVANCES IN THE USE OF CITIZEN SCIENCE DATA FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT APRIL 9-14, 2018 TUCSON, AZ

Point Blue will present on Soundscapes to Landscapes, a NASA-led project designed to monitor the rapid changes that are happening across the landscape through geophysical data and citizen scientist-identified species sounds.

2018 CALIFORNIA ADAPTATION FORUM AUGUST 27-29, 2018 SACRAMENTO, CA

This biennial event fosters knowledge exchange, innovation, and mutual support to create resilient communities throughout the state. Ellie Cohen serves on the Advisory Committee and several Point Blue scientists are likely to present.



focus:

Good News 2000



At the start of the new millennium, Rich Stallcup surveyed the conservation landscape in the US and called for us to be encouraged—and to keep working! After nearly twenty years of progress and challenges to the protection of public lands, Rich's words remain equally true today. The entire Focus 53 (from which the following is excerpted) can be found at pointblue.org.

The conservation challenges ahead of us are huge, but there is also cause for optimism in the positive turnarounds and victories of the past 100 years.

The last half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th were terrible times for wildlife in North America north of Mexico. Early in that period, animal life seemed inexhaustible, but then wild things were wantonly slaughtered for food, fur, fashion ornamentation, sport, fun, and out of fear. Many Americans were armed, ornery, and ignorant. There were no rules or regulations, and words like conservation and preservation were rarely thought of and spoken.

The first bright spot was the passage in 1900 of the Lacey Act, prohibiting


interstate transport of dead birds for feathers to decorate ladies' hats, the fashion rage of the 1880s. It was women who caused Congress to pass the Lacey, by forming 'Audubon' clubs, then uniting them to speak in favor of wildlife.

The Theodore Roosevelt presidency (1901-09) was 'bully' for wildlife preservation. TR's vision, with wise counsel from John Muir, brought about the establishment of national forests and national monuments. By 1909, nearly 200 million acres became federally regulated forests. Along with our early national parks, Yellowstone and Yosemite, these were some of the first preservations of public lands in the Americas.

In 1918, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was ratified between the US and Canada (Mexico teamed up in 1936). Waterfowl hunting became regulated, and nearly all other species groups gained full protection. The International Whaling Commission was established in 1946, and by the end of the 1950s, worldwide whaling was nearly stopped and populations began to recover. Probably the most important wildlife legislation

ever, anywhere, was the Endangered Species Act passed in 1973.

For many of us who were wringing our hands in despair (but also fighting for change), conditions today seem miraculous. Sightings of such back-from-the-grave species as White-tailed Kite and Aleutian Canada Goose are now routine. Marshes that were drained or filled have been rehydrated, and cottonwoods and willows again line streams that were clear-cut and ripped by our predecessors. There are huge parcels of land and sea where peace prevails—no shotgun fire and no harpoons.

Sure there are lots of environmental challenges, but think about previous accomplishments, and be proud of what you do to help—like supporting Point Blue and other conservation organizations—and sharing the beauty and spiritual value of fauna and flora with anyone who will listen. 

Rich Stallcup (1944–2012) was a Point Blue co-founder and our naturalist extraordinaire. His knowledge continues to deepen our appreciation of all things wild.

Point Blue Board and Staff

Point Blue is deeply grateful to Point Reyes National Seashore, the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries, and Tomkat Ranch Educational Foundation for providing facilities and field stations where we work.

We gratefully acknowledge all our generous donors on our website. Please see www.pointblue.org/supporters. Thank you!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Megan G. Colwell, Chair
Ellie M. Cohen, President and CEO
Ivan Samuels, 1st Vice Chair
Jeffrey Kimball, 2nd Vice Chair
Geoffrey Gordon-Creed, Secretary
Ed Sarti, Immediate Past Chair
Martha Ehmann Conte, Advancement Chair
Ana Galutera, Finance Chair
Nadine Peterson, Policy Chair
Robert S. Shwartz, J.D., Human Resources Chair
David Ackerly, PhD, Science Advisory Committee Chair
Clinton Moloney, Strategic Planning Chair
Julie Baldocchi
Anne Chadwick
Rob Faucett
Ellen Hines, PhD
Stuart Jacobson
David Myles
Peter Norvig, PhD

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Ted Eliot
Bill Foss
Carolyn Johnson
Jack W. Ladd
Anne Stone
Steve Thal

SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

David Ackerly, PhD, Chair
Grant Ballard, PhD, Co-Chair
Ellen M. Hines, PhD
Adina Merenlender, PhD
Peter Moyle, PhD
David Myles, PhD
Peter Norvig, PhD
James F. Quinn, PhD
Hugh Safford, PhD
Rebecca Shaw, PhD

PRESIDENT AND CEO

Ellie M. Cohen

CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER

Grant Ballard, PhD

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

Michael Fitzgibbon

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Padmini Srinivasan

CALIFORNIA CURRENT

Jaime Jahncke, PhD, Director
Russell Bradley
Garret Duncan
Meredith Elliott
Doug George
Lynne Hargett
Julie Howar
Jaime Miller
Emily Rice
Dan Robinette
Cotton Rockwood
Peter Warzybok

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Sam Veloz, PhD, Director
Nathan Elliott
Megan Elrod
Maya Hayden, PhD
Dennis Jongsomjit
Nadav Nur, PhD
Leo Salas, PhD
Annie Schmidt, PhD
Julian Wood

EMERGING PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Geoffrey R. Geupel, Director
Ryan DiGaudio
Bonnie Eyestone
Kelly Garbach, PhD
Wendell Gilbert
Katie Guntly
Alicia Herrera
Kate Howard
Kyle Marsh

Breanna Owens
Luke Petersen
Nathaniel Reese
Tiffany Russell
Briana Schnelle
Corey Shake
Jim Tietz
Kelly Weintraub
Carrie Wendt
Suzie Winkquist

INFORMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY

Michael Fitzgibbon, Chief Technology Officer
Noah Eiger
Martin Magaña
Douglas Moody
Brad Sechelski
Robert Serafini

PACIFIC COAST AND CENTRAL VALLEY

Tom Gardali, Director
Hilary Allen
Blake Barbaree
Chelsea Carey, PhD
Erin Conlisk, PhD
Renée Cormier
Mark Dettling
Dave Dixon
Kristy Dybala, PhD
Carleton Eyster
Grant Halstrom
Catherine Hickey

Diana Humple
Kristina Neuman
Elizabeth Porzig, PhD
Mel Preston
Matt Reiter, PhD
Rya Rubenthaler
Nat Seavy, PhD
Kristin Sesser
W. David Shuford
Lynne E. Stenzel
Ryan Swanson
Jacob Weverka

SIERRA NEVADA

Ryan Burnett, Director
Brent Campos
Alissa Fogg
Kristie Nelson
L. Jay Roberts, PhD
Marian Vernon

ADVANCEMENT

Jennifer Niedermeyer, Director of Advancement
Liz Chamberlain
Nancy Gamble, Director of Philanthropy
June Lang, Director of Philanthropy
Jaime Lily
Peter McCormick

COMMUNICATIONS

Zachary Warnow, Director
Lishka Arata
Stacey Atchley-Manzer

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Padmini Srinivasan, Chief Financial Officer
Lee Callero
Karen Carlson
Marilyn Kihara
Todd Greenley
Robyn Hettrich, Director of Human Resources
Jeffrey Holton
Jennifer Menicucci
Laurel Schuyler

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Melissa Pitkin, Director
Emily Allen
Jennifer Benson
Leia Giambastiani
Gina Graziano
Andrew Mealar
Josh Nuzzo
John Parodi
Alison Pollack
Laura Robison
Laurette Rogers
Isaiah Thalmayer
Lara White

STRAW FACULTY

Kathleen Brown
Janet Clover
Paula Fogarty
Marcia Gunnarson
Ruth Hicks

Blythe Shelley
Meryl Sundove
Nick Tipton
Patti Vance

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Ryan Anderson
Fadwa Boudhedda
Helen Chmura
Carina Fish
Kathleen Grady
Kaylin Ingman
Rachael Olliff
Hannah Palmer
Zack Steel
Paul Taillie
Mike Valainis
Jonathan Vargas

INTERNS

(As of February 1, 2018)
Steven Byrd
Krista Fanucchi
Paige Fernandez
Kelly Franson
Nicole Gaudenti
Kimberly Guo
Meredith Heather
Chelsye Knight
Sarah Labberton
Michael Mahoney
Elizabeth Max
Alessandra Moyer
Brittany Panox
Sarayu Ramnath
Shayla Ramos

Laura Robison
Ian Souza-Cole
Gregory Taylor
Suzanne Winkquist
Elise Zarri

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

David G. Ainley, PhD
Sarah Allen, PhD
Frances Bidstrup
Jules G. Evens
Mark Herzog, PhD
Ellen Hines, PhD
Aaron Holmes, PhD
Steve N. G. Howell
David Hyrenbach, PhD
John P. Kelly, PhD
Borja Mila, PhD
Mark Rauzon
Stacy Small, PhD
Jane C. Warriner
Sophie Webb
John Wiens, PhD
David W. Winkler, PhD
Steve Zack, PhD

Below: STRAW & Marine Lab Interns at the 2107 March for Science. Photo: Lishka Arata/Point Blue.



Point Blue Conservation Science
3820 Cypress Drive, Suite 11
Petaluma, CA 94954
t. 707.781.2555 f. 707.765.1685
e. pointblue@pointblue.org
pointblue.org

The federally endangered California Least Tern. Photo: Mark Pavelka/USFWS.



Support Point Blue's Work on Public Lands and Beyond

Point Blue has studied seabirds at Vandenberg Air Force Base, a space launch and landing facility along the central California coast, since 1999. The largely-undeveloped 99,579-acre installation provides habitat for 18 federally threatened or endangered species. This remarkable area is a natural laboratory for our scientists to investigate nature in the absence of human activity, helping us understand the effectiveness of restoration and protection efforts on species like the federally threatened Western Snowy Plover and the endangered California Least Tern. The techniques we've developed at Vandenberg are now used to monitor coastal habitats throughout California.

You can help secure a healthy future for seabirds, other wildlife, and human communities with a planned gift to Point Blue. Contact us to learn how to create your personal legacy of conservation.

707.781.2554 ➤ legacy@pointblue.org ➤ pointblue.plannedgiving.org