



Volunteering at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO). We depend on our volunteers to fulfill our mission – in fact, volunteers are the primary means of data collection for several of our scientific research and monitoring projects. Because many of our volunteer positions require specific skills (accurate and precise data collection, bird identification, computer programs, etc), require a significant time commitment, and may require training by an SFBBO staff member, we ask potential volunteers to treat this application as a job application. We will do the same. Expect to have at least one phone interview with an SFBBO staff member and provide references. Please remember, this process may take several weeks. We appreciate your patience and interest!

Most potential volunteers are interested in volunteering for the Science Programs. However, we have needs for other volunteers to help with fundraising events, mailings and office work, outreach events, and more. Not sure what you are interested in doing? Please see <http://www.sfbbo.org/volunteer/opportunities.php> for the latest volunteer opportunities and visit <http://www.sfbbo.org/news/subscribe.php> to sign-up for our monthly Wingbeat e-newsletter for the latest postings. Still not sure? Kristin Butler is the SFBBO Outreach and Communications Director; please contact her at 408-946-6548 ext. 10 or kbutler@sfbbo.org if you have any questions!

Finally, volunteering is a benefit of membership. It is required that all ongoing volunteers become a member of SFBBO (single-day and group volunteers do not need to become members). An annual membership is \$40 and includes access to areas that are closed to the public, free SFBBO birding trips, banding demonstrations, science talks, and special events. You may learn more about becoming an SFBBO member here: <http://www.sfbbo.org/support/index.php>.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory: Organizational Overview

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats through science and outreach. Our goals include:

- Continue to gather long-term data to track the health of the Bay’s wild bird populations;
- Make results of our research available to government and private agencies, businesses, and the public for informed decisions on the preservation and restoration of habitat crucial to species survival;
- Educate the public about the importance of the Bay’s wetlands and tidal marshes to support species diversity;
- Encourage active volunteerism in order to assist in achieving our organization’s goals and mission.

For more than 35 years, SFBBO has been an authority on the shorebirds, waterbirds, and landbirds that rely on the San Francisco Bay and its surrounding habitats. Birds use the bay as a migration stopover point, wintering grounds, year-round home, or breeding grounds. The long-term studies of our science programs are crucial to our understanding of population trends and behaviors of these birds. Furthermore, through our outreach programs, we seek to educate and foster awareness among Bay Area residents regarding the sensitivity and importance of birds and their habitats to our local heritage.

What makes the Bay Area livable and unique is its rich diversity in species and natural environments. The largest threat to species diversity is loss of habitat. Ninety percent of the Bay’s original tidal marsh has been developed or converted into salt evaporator ponds. Despite these drastic changes, the San Francisco Bay Estuary has remained the largest of the three key resting and foraging (also known as “staging”) areas for migratory and wintering shorebirds on the Pacific Flyway.

Ongoing pressures on remaining habitat, including development, contamination, and disturbance, as well as ongoing restoration opportunities, create the need for continued monitoring of waterbird, shorebird, and landbird populations. Long-term data on population trends is instrumental in decisions affecting the preservation and restoration of important wetland and tidal marsh habitat. SFBBO provides that data through the following research and monitoring projects:

Volunteer Opportunities at SFBBO - Have Fun While Protecting Birds!

Colonial Waterbird Program

Since 1981, citizen science volunteers in this program have monitored herons, egrets, terns, gulls and cormorants during the nesting season at 70 locations throughout the Bay Area. Starting in 2017, they also enter their data online using CitSci.org and eventually will be able to analyze their data using this tool. Ambassadors in this program educate the community about their colonies through public “Birds in Your Neighborhood” events.

Coyote Creek Field Station

The Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) is located near Milpitas in the largest remaining riparian forest in Silicon Valley. Since 1982, SFBBO staff and citizen science volunteers have banded birds at the field station on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings year-round, allowing us to track avian response to restoration and to document long-term demographic trends. Some volunteers also help with data entry, and volunteer groups help with trail and deck maintenance. In addition, Ambassadors in this program lead bird-banding demonstrations at CCFS to educate the public.

Snowy Plover Recovery

The Western Snowy Plover is listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. Since 2004, citizen science volunteers in this program have helped biologists monitor Bay Area plovers and enhance plover habitat. Since 2016, volunteer docents in this program have been stationed at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve in Menlo Park and Eden Landing Ecological Reserve in Hayward to educate visitors about plover science and conservation.

Burrowing Owl Program

Burrowing Owls are a California Species of Special Concern. In 2014, SFBBO biologists and citizen science volunteers started conducting surveys on Burrowing Owls and enhancing owl habitat at the Warm Springs Unit of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National the South Bay in Fremont. In 2016, we began a similar study in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society to conserve Burrowing Owl habitat in Alviso.

Avian Disease Prevention Program

Since 1982, SFBBO biologists and volunteers have surveyed South Bay sloughs by boat to prevent an outbreak of avian botulism. Volunteers help capture sick or injured birds, which are taken to a rehabilitation center. Some volunteers also help with boat maintenance.

Annual Shorebird Survey

The Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey contributes data to the Migratory Shorebird Project, the largest coordinated survey of wintering shorebirds on the Pacific Coast spanning 10 countries from Canada to Peru. Each fall, SFBBO coordinates volunteers to spend a day counting shorebirds at various locations in the South Bay to contribute to this study.

Tidal Marsh Restoration

Since 2011, volunteers have helped ecologists in SFBBO’s Habitats Program restore tidal marsh transition zone habitat along the Bay to help marshes adapt to sea level rise. Activities include weeding, planting, and monitoring and volunteer corporate and university groups are especially welcome in this effort.

Community Outreach and Fundraising

In addition to the Ambassador and Docent positions listed above, SFBBO needs volunteers to lead bird walks; organize our annual Kids Bird Art Contest; lead hands-on avian science education activities at libraries, schools, and Boys and Girls Clubs; and represent SFBBO at information booths at community events throughout the Bay Area. We also need volunteers to enter information into our donation data base; produce thank you letters and monthly membership mailings; conduct surveys to help us better understand the interests of our volunteers and donors; and help with fundraising events.

Communications and Office Help

SFBBO has positions for volunteers to help spread the word about bird conservation through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media; take photos and videos of our team at work; and design websites, brochures, and annual reports; Volunteers also help in the SFBBO’s Milpitas office filing and scanning documents, organizing our library, and helping with other office tasks.



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please fill out the next four (4) pages and return to SFBBO, 524 Valley Way, Milpitas, CA 95035
or email to outreach@sfbbo.org

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Street

_____ City

_____ Zip Code

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ E-mail _____

Current Employer _____

Emergency Contact (Name, Phone Number, Relationship) _____

Court Referred Volunteer? Y/N
CPR Certification? Y/N

First Aid Certification? Y/N
Driver's License? Y/N

How much time would you like to devote to volunteer work with SFBBO?

Are you available weekdays? Y/N

Weekends? Y/N

When can you start?

Please tell us briefly why you would like to become a San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory volunteer.

Do you have prior experience as a volunteer? If yes, for which organization and what were your duties?

Are you a member of SFBBO? Y/N

How did you learn of SFBBO?

-Please return completed form to SFBBO-

VOLUNTEER INTEREST

Name: _____

List in order of preference the top 3 volunteer positions you're interested in (see volunteer opportunity descriptions at <http://www.sfbbo.org/volunteer/opportunities.php>). If you only have one or two preferences, just list those. However, if you interested and can manage the time, multiple positions are possible.

1	
2	
3	

Indicate to us certain skill areas and interests you might be interested in sharing with us. Please place a mark to the left to all that apply.

	Indoor Work		Fundraising and Donations
	Outdoor Work		GIS/GPS
	Physical Work (e.g. building and trail maintenance)		Grant Writing/Research
	Clerical, General Computer Work		Law (e.g. legal issues, contracts, etc.)
	Data Entry		Library Resources/Research
	Database/Data Management		Tabling and Events
	Desktop Publishing/Design/Graphics		Web Maintenance
	Environmental Education		Web Design
	Event Planning		Working with Kids
	Food (e.g. chef, baker, distributor, etc.)		Working with Adults
	Fieldwork/Surveys (data collection)		Other Languages (Please list):
	Finance		

What are your special skills, interests, or hobbies?

Which skills do you most enjoy using in your volunteer service?

Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team?

What birding abilities or experience to do you have?

How would you rate your bird identification skills on a scale of 1 – 10?

-Please return completed form to SFBB0-

References

Name: _____

Please provide us with three references (professional or personal) who can comment on your work ethic, ability to get along with others, or skills.

Reference 1 Name: _____

Reference 1 Phone: _____ Best time to Call: Morning,
Afternoon, Evening

Reference 1 Email: _____

Your Relationship to Reference 1?

Reference 2 Name: _____

Reference 2 Phone: _____ Best time to Call: Morning,
Afternoon, Evening

Reference 2 Email: _____

Your Relationship to Reference 2?

Reference 3 Name: _____

Reference 3 Phone: _____ Best time to Call: Morning,
Afternoon, Evening

Reference 3 Email: _____

Your Relationship to Reference 3?

-Please return completed form to SFBB0-



Volunteer Responsibilities and Release of Liability, Volunteer Bill of Rights, and Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreements

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitat through science and outreach, and to contributing to informed resource management decisions in the San Francisco Bay Area. Begun in 1981, we have years of experience in carrying out long-term projects using trained volunteer field assistants under the supervision of skilled biologists, as well as working with volunteers in other capacities. This approach enables us to conduct studies that would otherwise be too costly or logistically impossible to attempt, and increases public appreciation and support for wildlife of the Bay. SFBBO maintains longstanding relationships with the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Cargill, and other landowners, allowing us access to areas not open to the public.

The “Volunteer Responsibilities and Liability Release” is not all-inclusive. Any activities resulting in unintentional or willful disregard for the rights and safety of others and wildlife, or damage to the reputation and standing of SFBBO in the community may be cause for Board action and/or removal from volunteer status.

I have completely read the “Volunteer Responsibilities and Release of Liability,” “Volunteer Bill of Rights,” and “Volunteer Code of Conduct” included in pages 6 – 10 of this packet.

I understand that I am entitled to the rights listed in the “Volunteer Bill of Rights” and agree to maintain a professional code of conduct while carrying out SFBBO research and fieldwork by abiding to the “Volunteer Responsibilities” and “Volunteer Code of Conduct.”

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

-Please return completed form to SFBBO-

524 Valley Way
Milpitas, CA 95035
www.sfbbo.org

t 408.946.6548
f 408.946.9279



VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITY RELEASE

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitat through science and outreach. Begun in 1981, we have years of experience in carrying out long-term projects using trained volunteers under the supervision of skilled biologists, as well as working with volunteers in other capacities. This approach enables us to conduct studies that would otherwise be too costly or logistically impossible to attempt, and increases public appreciation and support for wildlife of the Bay. SFBBO maintains longstanding relationships with the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Cargill, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and other landowners, allowing us access to areas not open to the public.

We ask that our volunteers maintain a professional code of conduct while carrying out SFBBO research and fieldwork and abide by the following:

1. Make protection of wildlife and the environment top priority. No activity performed shall in any way adversely affect wildlife health and well-being or be destructive to the environment.
2. To ensure that data is accurate and complete, return all original datasheets as soon as possible. For applicable projects, such as the Colonial Waterbird Monitoring, please return datasheets within 48 hours of collection due to access agreement requirements.
3. Become a member of SFBBO.
4. Follow all instructions given by SFBBO. Participate in any mandatory training provided by SFBBO staff to ensure that you are properly prepared.
5. Respect all governing agencies' and landowners' rights.
6. Follow through on commitments once made. A missed survey can hamper our analysis of data and make reporting your findings more difficult.
7. SFBBO has rights to all data, photographs, and reports of any type pertaining to our established programs. Nearly all our studies are team efforts and for the results to be worthwhile, the data must be analyzed and reported as a whole.
8. While we encourage you to informally share news of your fieldwork, we prohibit the communication of site-specific data collected in closed areas (any area behind locked gates). This includes posting rare bird sightings to birding list serves; this action is expressly prohibited. These actions may jeopardize our access privileges, may inadvertently encourage trespassing, and compromises the quality of our data. If you would like to report the specific location of a rarity, please call us and we will work with you and the landowner toward some compromise.
9. Please remember that only SFBBO fieldwork has been approved by agencies or landowners. If you would like to collect data at the same time for another project, such as a breeding bird atlas, please seek permission directly from the landowner.

10. Access to private property has been granted only for the times specified for a specific project. Please do not use your key or knowledge of lock combinations to enter private property at any other time.
11. Please do not drive on wet levees. Even a moderate amount of rain renders the levee undrivable for at least 3 days. In addition, beware that foam created by high winds across the surface of the ponds is extremely slippery and dangerous to drive though, even in small amounts. You may get stuck or slip, and this may also damage the surface of the levee. Driving on wet levees also violates our access permits, and may result in our permits being revoked. If in doubt, please call SFBBO for new updates.
12. Do not present yourself as on SFBBO business to agencies, landowners, or the public if you are not actively conducting approved work for SFBBO.
13. While on SFBBO business, remember that you represent SFBBO and that your actions and conduct will reflect on the organization. **DO** present yourself and SFBBO as a steward of the birds and environment.
14. Remember that all activities that you undertake on behalf of SFBBO are at your own risk.

This list is not all-inclusive. Any activities resulting in unintentional or willful disregard for the rights and safety of others and wildlife, or damage to the reputation and standing of SFBBO in the community may be cause for Board action and/or removal from volunteer status.

Revised June 2002
Edited August 2011

-Volunteer Copy-



VOLUNTEER BILL OF RIGHTS

As a volunteer of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, I have the right to:

Be treated as a coworker: to be treated as an equal and not taken for granted.

Have my time used wisely: SFBBO recognizes that my time is a valuable donation and not to be wasted.

A suitable work assignment with as much consideration for personal preferences, temperament, life experience, education, and employment background as SFBBO is able to provide given limited resources.

Be informed about the organization, the people who manage SFBBO and the future plans of SFBBO.

Sound guidance and directions by someone who is experienced, well informed, patient, and thoughtful, and who has time to invest in giving guidance along with effectively presented training.

A place to work: an orderly, designated place conducive to work and worthy of the job to be done.

Be heard: to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, and to have respect shown for one's opinion.

Recognition in the form of promotion and awards, through day-to-day expressions of appreciation, and by being treated as a valuable member of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Review of my performance as a volunteer through feedback and an annual and formalized volunteer review process.

Promotion and a variety of experience through advancement to assignments of more responsibility, through transfer from one assignment to another or through special assignments.

Continuing education on the job as follow-up to my initial training, including information about new developments and training for greater responsibility.

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VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Be Sure: Look into your heart and know that you really want to dedicate significant time to birds and the environment.

Be Convinced: Don't offer your services unless you believe in the value of what you are doing.

Be Loyal: Offer suggestions, but don't "knock-down" the efforts of others or spread negative talk.

Speak Up: Ask about anything you don't understand. Don't coddle your doubts and frustrations until they drive you away or interfere with your role as a volunteer.

Accept the Rules: Ask for more detail if you don't understand and recognize that rules may be in place for a good reason.

Be Willing to Learn: Training is essential to any job well done.

Keep on Learning: Know all you can about SFBBO and your job.

Welcome Supervision: You will be a better volunteer and enjoy it more if you are doing what is expected of you.

Be Dependable: Your word is your bond. Do what you have agreed to do. Don't make promises you can't keep. If you find you can no longer volunteer, let us know. We understand that situations sometimes change. We just ask that you be upfront with us.

Be a Team Player: Find a place for yourself in the team by following the "Volunteer Code of Responsibility" and working cooperatively with staff and volunteers to carry out SFBBO's mission.

-Volunteer Copy-

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