

# 30th year 2026 *Flyway Festival*

November 25,  
2025

Dear Flyway  
Festival Friends,  
Fans, Sponsors  
Exhibitors and  
Field Guides,

I am happy to invite you to join me for our 30th anniversary 2026 Flyway Festival. As is my tradition, I've written a few words of reflection and welcome.

I have been nudging myself to come out to the wilds of Mare Island to draft my annual Flyway Festival welcome letter. Today, I hope to share the happening of the year with you and wish you a marvelous holiday and wintering migration season.

Here at the Mare Island San Pablo Bay Trail in our magical little corner, I can focus on our wilderness (wild near us) and on you, my wildlands community from whom I receive my inspiration and who I cherish, so.

In the past, I have stayed the night at our Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve. Still in my sleeping bag with a hot cup of coffee, As I wrote, I've observed the beauty of the morning light in the woods and on the vast wildlands.



**Photo: Barn Owl on the Mare Island San Pablo Bay Trail, Zannah Delano**

My first experience of birds on Mare Island was while preparing for the first Flyway Festival, we found dead barn owls in Building 505. They are always in my heart, since. Black phoebes are, too. We found them inside, but alive.

I remember one evening after we were dismissed from the management of our beloved Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve, my letter writing was weighing on me with some urgency. Yet, the challenge of finding a sit spot to quietly reflect, was thwarting me. Finally, I drove over to the majestic and magnificent blue gum eucalyptus grove that lines the roadway to the Preserve. There, sitting in a camp chair with my laptop, and my legs wrapped in a hopefully mosquito-proof blanket and Nitro at my side, I drew inspiration from the Napa River/Mare Island Strait with its lights and boats, aglow in the late evening light. Perched on the low bluff amongst the trees, I crafted my message to you, that year.

Like today, more than once in the last few years, I have found a serene spot near the San Pablo Bay Trail where I settle in for my afternoon letter writing session, listening to flocks of birds, flitting and calling in the fennel and nearby trees. I've watched a northern harrier swoop and swoosh over the wetlands and a white-tailed kite hover over its' prey and even videoed it, till it disappears behind the palm trees.

Today is somewhat bleak, yet, when I glance toward the mountains, bright white clouds lounge against the darker clouds seeming to give them a place to rest in the sky above and the white-tailed kite hovering on the hunt, catches my eye, again.

A red floating crane towers over the "blue bridge" in the distance. At long last, the traditional bright blue paint is beginning to be renewed.

The vistas, even on a quite dreary day, are captivating to me. In the far view, shrouded in dense misty clouds, is the southern terminus of the Mayacamas Range in the Carneros in Sonoma County, where around the corner and 60 miles away, is my Camp Myrna at 2500-2700 ft on the southeast flank of Cobb Mountain in Lake County.

The Napa River Bridge arches high above the landscape to the northeast,



**Photo: Aboard River Dolphin, Bill George**

perched as if in a yoga pose, over the Napa River Valley and the Delta of San Pablo Bay. I see the outline of the Howell Mountain Range and it's southern terminus, also, this time serving as the eastern boundary of Vallejo. Maps identify this section of the Range as the Sulphur Mountains with its signature hill, Sulphur Mountain, most prominent.

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# Wilderness—wild near us...Go Wildly!

Over my shoulder, sits the historic headquarters of our Flyway Festival, founded 30 years ago inside the massive concrete walls of Building 505, the US Navy's radio transmission center for the Pacific before, during WWII and after, and later, a part of the Commissary complex.

Vast seasonal wetlands stretch in every direction, towards the narrow strip of developed Island along the Napa River/Mare Island Strait, to the western flank, a wild side of Mare Island, and to the San Pablo Bay Delta. Tonight, as ducks fly fast through the sky like small squadrons of fighter jets, and dozens of geese, coming at me, fly low, I am reminded that we are in the midst of the most abundant migration on the continent, along the Pacific Flyway. This is my Mare Island. And, the voices of hikers along the Trail, remind me that this is your Island, too. We share this common bond. This love of Mare Island.

I've been asked dozens of times over past years, why this place? What is so special about it? It is truly impossible to describe, convincingly, I admit. Yet, there is not one person of the most likely hundreds of thousands I have met in the past nearly 32 years of time spent here, or through our social media friendships, who will disagree with me.



Photo: Our treasured Building 505, the home of the Flyway Festival for a number of years, beginning in January 1996. What a travesty and tragedy. We had secured \$2.4 mil in the Federal budget for a permanent environmental center and Refuge Headquarters, in FY Years 2000-2003 after 7 long years of my trips to Washington, D.C. But, then, there's this. Sadness.

They all exude this passion for the place. Each one of you, expresses your love for Mare Island, in all its' quirkiness if not strangeness, beauty, and well, ugliness, ordinariness and uniqueness that as an assemblage, a collection, simply can't be found anywhere else in the world.

It has been my privilege and honor to be asked by the US Navy, initially, to introduce you to this Island, in collaboration with the last Shipyard Commander, Captain John Cavender, in January of 1996. Now, I am equally thrilled to invite you to our 30th anniversary in February of 2026.

And, again this year, like last year, you'll likely notice a pretty confusing situation related to our Flyway Festival. After the weirdest of occurrences, where a City of Vallejo City Manager and his staff, along with a

State Senator and his staff and an ambitious local business owner, literally stole our Flyway Festival headquartered on Mare Island for 29 years, out from under us, we have, as they say in Great Britain, "moved house".

I kid you not! The city of Vallejo scooped our Flyway Festival. Really?! Yes, they took part of our name, the building we had used for a number of years (although as you will recall, we've held our Flyway Festival in about a dozen different buildings on Mare Island and even off-Island), and made insistent phone calls, urging our past presenters and exhibitors to participate in their bird watching event, they scheduled the weekend before ours. Oh my goodness. Talk about stealing someone else's labor of love. Yet, how many businesses and non-

profits are experiencing this, now? Especially online. It is what it is.

So, here's how we are keeping the spirit of our original San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival thriving. You are invited to join us for a continued first-person experience of not only Mare Island, but nearby and regional wetlands and woodlands, guided birdwatching, historic sites and even quirky places, like we always have.

Beginning in January 2025, I initiated **San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors**. I Every weekend day that month, I personally hosted outings of all sorts, all over the San Pablo Bay region, as well as many on Mare Island, from early morning bird walks, to sunset hikes to historic Shipyard and Forest walks to a Pop Up Flyway Festival weekend at Moschetti Coffee Roasting in Vallejo. True to form, just mixing it up! And, it worked. Wildly.

The plan for our 30th anniversary is really an homage to our first Flyway Festival, held in Building 505, for 4 hours, with about a dozen agency and non-profit exhibitors and commercial vendors. The Navy was our co-host. They wanted to test whether there might be

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# Wilderness—wild near us...Go Wildly!

public interest in the lands they had protected for wildlife and support for a plan to set aside some of the Island for public access.

The Military Police at the main gate issued 1,000 passes to our birding festival on the still closed, Navy base. And, we were off and running and have never looked back.

Even with setbacks, as wildlands and wilderness (wild near us), always seem to experience, due to development interests with more money than god, who influence local and even national governments to abandon permanent protections and public access, here we are, today. I thank you and I welcome you to join me on My Mare Island and throughout the nearby 10's of thousands of acres of former farmlands, restored and natural marshlands, tidal and seasonal wetlands, woodlands, bays, rivers and creeks, mountains all around and every imaginable natural habitat.

Mare Island, with a rather brief 142-year US Navy presence, has been an important part of this region to Native Peoples and wildlife, from before the first visits of Spanish and Russian explorers to the Bay, till now.



Photo: Golden-crowned sparrow  
American Canyon Wetlands, Myrna Hayes

During our 30th Flyway Festival year, let's dive deeper into Mare Island, rooted in natural and cultural history, US Navy and national maritime history and geology.

Please join us February 13, 14 and 15, 2026 for our **San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors**, when we will once again celebrate the migration of as many as 1 million shorebirds, a quarter million waterfowl, ducks and geese, and likely tens of thousands of raptors, hawks and millions of songbirds, to and through San Francisco Bay.

Isn't it so magical that we live nearby to these gatherings on the waters and in the sky at our national wildlife refuges, state wildlife areas and local wildlands parks?!

Just this afternoon, as I wrote, my Merlin App was clocking these birds. Some might be regulars. Some

are very special. Black Phoebe, Savannah Sparrow, House Finch, American Crow, White-tailed Kite, American Pipit, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Short-eared Owl,

Mallard, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, Western Bluebird, Lesser Goldfinch, Hermit Thrush, Canada Goose, ring-necked pheasant and Common Yellowthroat. Whew!! Amazing.

This 30th annual Flyway Festival will be a version of the "original" Flyway Festival you have loved for almost three decades. As the weeks unfold, you will learn of plans for this year's **San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors**.

What do you think? Are you ready for our Pop Up Saturday and Sunday at Moschetti Coffee in Vallejo and our free outings full of surprises? To be clear, we'll host an exhibitor, vendor and presenter gathering in Vallejo, NOT at any of our traditional headquarters on Mare Island. Rest assured, there will be plenty of guided bird watching and hiking tours ON Mare Island, and around the "north shore" of San Francisco Bay.

We will Live air on our Facebook Group Page, "2023 Hybrid/Virtual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival" and Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Page.

Let's just call this year's Flyway Festival, "**Myrna's San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors**".

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Join us for our kickoff to the **San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors** with 6 weekends of local and regional outings hosted by Myrna Hayes and guest guides.

*"I'm looking forward to being your guide and host with some of my special friends for outings and gatherings to get you in the spirit of birdwatching and out into our winter wildness."*



Photo: Point Molate birding with Clay Anderson, Ornithologist , Point Molate Alliance

Come out in the weeks leading up to the Flyway Festival, beginning Thursday January 1, 2026 and every weekend day in January and early February, (and even a few requested weekdays) for the 6 weeks before **"Myrna's San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors"** February 13-15, 2026.

# Wilderness—wild near us...Go Wildly!

**Are you a birdwatching or hiking guide?** We'd love for you to join us. Please complete a short form, to lock you into the schedule. It can be over the Flyway Festival weekend or any of the 6 weeks leading up to our February 13-15, 2026 main event. Please text/call me [707-656-7852](tel:707-656-7852) or email me to confirm at [myrnalhayes@icloud.com](mailto:myrnalhayes@icloud.com)



A hike given by Adrian Phillip Johnson, West County Hawkwatch, at Rush Ranch, Solano Land Trust

Join Adrian for a Flyway Festival tradition, a Birds of Prey hike at Lynch Canyon Open Space Park, Saturday, February 14, 2026, 10:00am-2:00pm.

Adrian will also guide a Raptor hike at Sonoma Land Trust's Camp 4 Open Space, Sunday, February 15, 2026, 10:00am-1:00pm.

January outing prior to the Flyway Festival weekend: join Adrian Sunday, January 18, 2026, 10:00am-2:00pm at Patwino Open Space, Solano Land Trust, Overwintering Raptor Hike  
Registration details, directions and more outings. Visit: [westcountyhawkwatch.com](http://westcountyhawkwatch.com)



Photo: Birding Enthusiast, Michelle Eliker, will give her popular presentation on selecting birding equipment and share some of the tools she uses for identifying birds in the field. Sunday, February 15, 2026 1:00pm at the Flyway Festival PopUp at Moschetti Coffee. We are delighted that Michelle will guide a birdwatching walk suitable for all levels of birding on flat, easy walking trails at American Canyon Wetlands. Saturday, January 17, 2026, 9:00am-12noon

**Are you an exhibitor, vendor/artist or presenter? Our PopUp is perfect for you! [Full disclosure: This is a fully covered and somewhat protected outdoor space. See photo below left. The weather was kind to us last year, but we never know.]** We have limited space for your nature-themed offerings or your nonprofit organization's educational and interactive displays at no charge. You are encouraged to bring your own table and chairs, but let me know if that isn't possible for you. Please confirm your participation by completing and emailing our short application. Text/call me at [707-656-7852](tel:707-656-7852) or email: [myrnalhayes@icloud.com](mailto:myrnalhayes@icloud.com)

**Will you commit to support our Flyway Festival with your generous SPONSOR donation?** Visit our [GoFundMe site](https://gofund.me/ce3695ba) to donate or send a check. Details are found in the red box below.

**Will you personally help underwrite the Flyway Festival with a donation? This Flyway**

**Festival is still FREE because of your gift. We don't have the sources of sponsor funds of the past. Click [DONATE](https://gofund.me/ce3695ba)**

**OR VISIT: <https://gofund.me/ce3695ba>**

**Will you tell your friends, co-workers and family about the Flyway Festival in 2026 and attend?**

**Will you volunteer?** Call/text or email me at 707-656-7852 [[myrnalhayes@icloud.com](mailto:myrnalhayes@icloud.com)] with questions and ideas.

**Website:** [SFBayFlywayFestival.com](http://SFBayFlywayFestival.com)

Facebook Page: Check back, as our page was stolen!

Facebook Group:

[Facebook Group Link](#)

In any way you can, please help us ensure our 30th Flyway Festival is a great gathering. Together, we have forged a wildlands community of people bonded together to celebrate our "north shore" wilderness (wild near us).

I thank you for the difference you make. We are so grateful. And, may I mention that I am grateful, too, to celebrate my 70th birthday during our Flyway Festival, February 15, 2026.

Warmly,

Myrna Hayes  
San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Director/Co-founder. President, Mare Island Heritage Trust



If I'm mentioned you can be certain it is the authentic and original **Flyway Festival** you have come to love.

**MAKE YOUR DONATION NOW BY CREDIT CARD:**  
Click [DONATE](https://gofund.me/ce3695ba)  
<https://gofund.me/ce3695ba>

**TO DONATION BY CHECK:**

**Mare Island Heritage Trust**  
816 Branciforte St.  
Vallejo, CA 94590

We are a tax-exempt 501(c) (3) non-profit land trust

**30th Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival**  
**Go Wildly Live Outdoors**  
**SPONSORSHIP FORM**

**YES!** We are pleased to sponsor the 30th Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival “**Go Wildly Live Outdoors**” held in Vallejo and throughout the “north shore” region of San Francisco Bay, FEBRUARY 13, 14 and 15, 2026. We know our donation of cash or in-kind support helps

- **Educate the public about the importance of conservation around our Bay;**
- **Offer free no pre-registration required admission to the Flyway Festival Pop-Up gathering – beginning wildlife conservation education at an early age;**
- **Market to increasing numbers of people and spread the word about the value of the San Francisco Bay and the natural habitat it offers;**
- **Bring together outdoor enthusiasts, birders, and conservationists to enjoy the unique wetland opportunities during the migratory season;**
- **Showcase Mare Island’s rich historic past and kindle interest in its future.**

**We are enclosing:**

**\$100   \$150   \$250   \$500   \$750   \$1000      Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

We understand we will receive all appropriate recognition for our donation including:

- **A listing in the website sponsor listing (if our pledge arrives by FEBRUARY 5, 2026)**
- **A listing in the event online schedule (if our pledge arrives by FEBRUARY 5, 2026)**
- **A listing on Thank You signs throughout the Flyway Festival Pop-Up location in Vallejo**
- **An invitation to the Friday evening, February 13, 2026 Gathering to share together with members of the public who choose to join us, our love for local wilderness (wild near us)**

Please make your check payable to **Mare Island Heritage Trust**

Mail your check to **Mare Island Heritage Trust**, 816 Branciforte St, Vallejo, CA 94590

If you have questions please text or call (707) 656-7852 or email [myrnalhayes@icloud.com](mailto:myrnalhayes@icloud.com)

If you are making your contribution electronically, please visit <https://gofund.me/ce3695ba>

**Please provide all appropriate recognition for our donation to:**

[PRINT OR TYPE THE NAME YOU WISH TO SEE IN PRINT] \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact City: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Donations to The 2026 San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Go Wildly Live Outdoors, are also donations to our sponsoring agency, Mare Island Heritage Trust, a 501(c)3 tax-exempt corporation. Fed. ID # 27-1493661. Your donation may be tax deductible. Please check with your tax advisor.

**Return this form no later than FEBRUARY 5, 2026 to be included in web and  
Festival location recognition**  
**Scan/screenshot and Email this form to: [myrnalhayes@icloud.com](mailto:myrnalhayes@icloud.com)**