

THE TIDINGS



LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE

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AUGUST WAS SHARK MONTH AT LAKE MERRITT!



August 10th photo by K. Noonan,
iNaturalist

On August 10th, pedestrians were startled to see a sleek brown smoothhound shark (*Mustelus henlei*) gliding through the clear water by the Rotary Nature Center across from the bird islands. Local naturalist Peggy Rehm captured this beautiful [video](#) of the shark swimming. "Smoothies" are native to San Francisco Bay and favor shallow estuary lagoons like Lake Merritt. They eat fish. How privileged we are to see ocean life like this in the heart of the city!

Sadly, on August 14th, a smoothhound in distress was sighted by the Pergola and later by the boathouse. The Pelagic Shark Research Foundation, which monitors and sometimes rescues sharks in trouble, was called but the shark could not be located. The best option would be to remove the specimen immediately when seen ashore and transport it to bay shore waters in hopes it may recover or collect fresh dead to identify whether it had a pathogen infection, a hook injury or other problem related to high or low salinity, pollution etc. See [Lakeside Chat #8](#) for more discussion of shark strandings in the Bay and Lake Merritt.

*Call this hotline if
you see a fish in trouble =>*

 PELAGIC SHARK RESEARCH FOUNDATION

**STRANDED SHARKS AND FISH
HOTLINE**

Call **831 454 6567** to report distressed shark or ray **2021**

CODE RED for the Planet – The

International Panel on Climate Change 2021 issued a report this month confirming 1) unprecedented warming of the planet caused by human emissions and 2) resilience challenges for the future (<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>). Recent fires, hurricanes and floods bring the facts down to earth for the common man and woman. As President Biden said, "We need to be prepared. We need to act."¹ (Join LMI on September 24th in supporting a Climate Strike Event: <https://fridaysforfuture.org/september24/>).



What can YOU do to protect the environment at Lake Merritt for people and wildlife? YOU can join forces with other caring community members like you and become a member of **The Lake Merritt Institute (LMI)**. Volunteers for weekly lake clean-ups (email Executive Director James Robinson at lmi@netwiz.net) or make a tax-exempt charitable donation to LMI to support our work. Use the membership and donation form at the end of this newsletter or visit lakemerrittinstitute.org.

LMI in JULY: 4170 gallons of trash were removed from the lake by staff and volunteers in July. Twenty used hypodermic needles were removed. Total trash collected to date in 2021 is **33,620 gallons**.

LMI Director James Robinson hosted **91 volunteers**, attended 2 meetings and gave 1 presentation.

0.0 inches rain recorded recorded by LMI rain gauge

THANK YOU TO OUR JULY and AUGUST VOLUNTEERS! We appreciate your efforts and community spirit. Great Job! Volunteer groups: MudLab, LM Advocates' Summer of Sundays, YouthWorks, Alameda County IT, Head-Royce students, our U-Clean-It self-organized teams, and the LMI A-TEAM regulars. YOU can support the Lake Merritt Institute's important work. Go to our [website](#) to find out how. **LOVE YOUR LAKE!**



At left, LMI Staff: Alfredo Sanchez, Tiana Chang, Executive Director James Robinson, and Paris Organist.



Say "Hi" to us at the Farmer's Market! LMI volunteers will host a table at the Grand Lake Farmers' Market: September 18th, 25th, October 2nd, and October 9th. We would love to meet you and discuss lake issues with the public.



<= And look for up-to-date detailed information about LMI's Stewardship of Lake Merritt at our Bulletin Boards. This is one at the Pergola.

Mysteries at Lake Merritt – by Hilary Powers – Golden Gate Audubon



California Jay; Photo by John Kirkmire

So this American Coot – only our second since last April – is cheerfully minding its own business in the shallows between the islands and the shore, all plump and black, white beak shining, not even eating anything, when a mottled gray juvenile gull lands on its back. Not a calling card, the whole gull, sploosh. Gull swims off, looking over its shoulder, for all the world like a cat that meant to do that; coot shakes head – as puzzled as the human audience. What was that all about? Just another day at the lake.

The dozen or so birders gathered for the Golden Gate Audubon August 4th-Wednesday walk at Lake Merritt were already having a fine morning, with both Brown and American White Pelicans demonstrating their vastly different fishing styles (diving vs. fish-herding), a juvenile Belted Kingfisher clattering and rattling from perch to perch (the call sounds like hollow wood blocks clashing together, but with more volume behind it), and a Great Blue Heron failing to be inconspicuous in the dying pine on the island. We had the rest of the local herons too: a Green standing tall on the rip-rap, both Great and Snowy Egrets prowling after snacks, and both juvenile and adult Black-crowned Night-Herons waiting in sinister stillness for whatever might come within reach.

And all that was after the family of Western Bluebirds appeared among the rocks by the Boat House parking lot, picking something invisible to human eyes from the bare dust. Why there instead of on their usual lawn patrol? Who knows? The parking lot also offered two different woodpeckers to the keen-eared among us: the flight trill of the Nuttall's (sounding like a police whistle blown as softly as possible) and the rattle of the Downy (too high-pitched for my ear to capture). We saw two or three of the ladder-backed Nuttall's Woodpeckers later in the morning, but no Downies (recognizable by the white patch between the shoulder blades), which are much less common here.



Nuttall's Woodpecker; Photo by John Kirkmire

Over by the Garden Center we ran into the more usual sort of birding mystery: what bird is *that*? A flycatcher for sure, or at any rate, it was based at the top of a tree and darting out after something, then returning to a nearby perch. But it lacked the clearly defined vest of one species, lacked the eye rings of another, had wing bars way too bright for a third, was too big for this and too small for that, and generally defied definition. So it went onto the list as "Flycatcher (Sp.)" – meaning species-unknown – and we headed on across the street toward Children's Fairyland.

Which we didn't reach. The oaks along the path were dead quiet, so we turned around and headed for the garden. There we paused to rest in the blissful shade of the big oak by the composting demo bins, enjoying the flock of titmice and chickadees we'd expected to find across the street, which fluttered close enough for one birder to raise a hopeful finger as an offered perch. No takers, but it seemed possible....

By the end of the morning, the day had offered everything expected, even the surprisingly rarely seen American Robin and the California Jay, and just at the end a young Cooper's Hawk scouting through the trees. All told, we recorded 38 species – matching 2018's August record for the decade – and added yet another delightful trip to Lake Merritt's unbroken stream.

AUDUBON BIRDWALKS AT THE LAKE: Join bird expert Hilary Powers any fourth Wednesday of the month for a free “Bird walk” at the lake. Muster at the geodesic bird cage near the Nature Center at 9:30 a.m. for what are always fascinating introductions to lake birdlife.

Note from The Tidings Editor: The Birds of Lake Merritt by Alex Harris

If you don't have a copy of this slim, beautifully illustrated guide, by all means get one! Alex Harris's book joins classics like Covell's "People Are for the Birds" in capturing the unique relationship between the people of Oakland and the wildlife refuge - now in the 21st Century. The Introduction to fifteen species accounts with original paintings catches us up on the history of the landscape we call Lake Merritt.

“The Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) can be seen anywhere around Lake Merritt any time and in any season” and “When I was a kid growing up in the Bay Area, , the Great Blue Heron was one of the few birds I could recognize. I must have first learned about them on an elementary school field trip to visit the celebrated Marin County naturalist Mrs. Terwilliger, who had a taxidermied one,” (pg. 36).



Great Blue Heron; Photo by Carole Levenson

Alas, the nature center no longer displays its taxidermy collection.

Published by Heyday Books - you can order here: <https://www.birdsoflakemerritt.com/>

OCTOBER'S LAKESIDE CHAT #11- Marsh Restoration

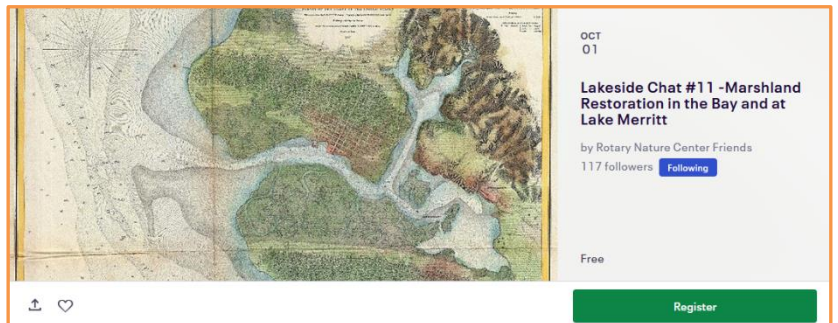
with SaveTheBay's Charlie Onorati - Friday, October 1st, 7- 8 pm. Free Online

Over 90% of historical wetlands surrounding San Francisco Bay have been lost since first encountered by Europeans. What can be done to conserve this important habitat?

In honor of Bay Month, our featured guest, Charlie Onorati, will share Save the Bay's successes and ongoing campaigns in the greater Bay Area. He will be joined by restoration experts and naturalists working in Oakland.

Register [HERE => https://lakesidechat11-baymonth-marshrestoration-bay-lake.eventbrite.com](https://lakesidechat11-baymonth-marshrestoration-bay-lake.eventbrite.com)

Lakeside Chats playlist [HERE => https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8zoh5C35Fbwo9s-czz1UXI7-L3wKIbEf](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8zoh5C35Fbwo9s-czz1UXI7-L3wKIbEf)



Community Water Quality Report

Water quality was measured at 2 p.m. on September 5th, 2021 at the Lake Merritt Boating Center dock by The Tidings editor Katie Noonan.

Depth 1.8 meters; Water Clarity >1.80 meters (Secchi Depth) CLEAR

Temperature: 22.5 DegC top/22.5 DegC bot (normal)

Dissolved Oxygen 6 parts per million (ppm) at the top/6 ppm at the bottom. (Meets the EPA minimum standard of 5 ppm)

Salinity 35.5 parts per thousand (ppt) top/35.5 ppt bottom (**Saline or salty for this time of year**).

pH: 7.5 at the top/7.5 at the bottom (normal)

CLIMATE CORNER: END GAME

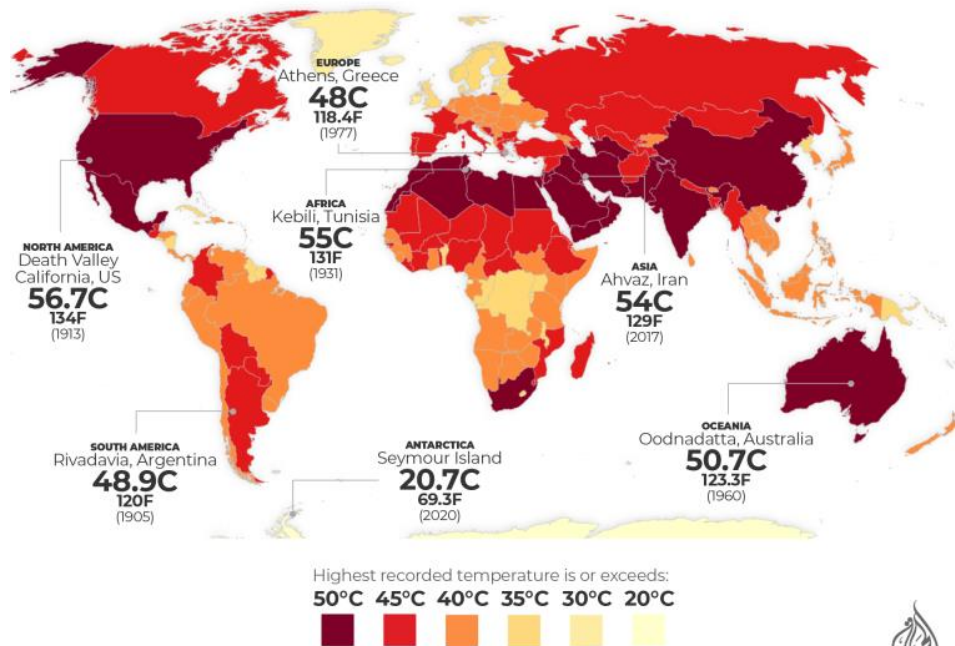
A guest editorial by Dr. Richard Bailey

A 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030; zero emissions by 2050: Such are the necessary, and lofty goals that scientists, governments (well some anyway) and enlightened businesses declare we need to achieve to only slow (not eliminate) the climate emergency. Models run on computers estimate conditions as far off as 2100, while individuals worry about the week or month to come, and cannot imagine planning that far ahead.

But what lies ahead? What lies far in the future? Given that carbon emissions, greenhouse gases and global temperatures are all higher than at any time since the dawn of civilization, and are increasing at accelerating rates, where is this all headed? How hot can it get?

Hottest temperatures ever recorded

At least **23 countries** have recorded maximum temperatures of **50°C (122°F) or above**. On June 29, 2021 Canada recorded its highest temperature ever at 49.6°C (121°F).



The just released



Temperatures may vary according to local sources
Sources: WeatherBase, Automated Surface Observing System, news agencies

@AJLabs ALJAZEERA

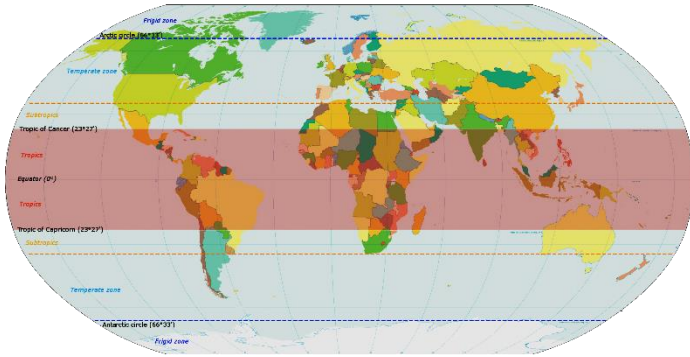


Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report* evaluates five shared socioeconomic pathways (SSPs) which are [scenarios](#) of projected [socioeconomic](#) global changes up to 2100. They are used to derive [greenhouse gas emissions](#) scenarios with different [climate policies](#). Because carbon emissions, greenhouse gases and global temperatures are all higher than at any time since the dawn of civilization, and are increasing at accelerating rates, I quote here from the SSP5: Fossil-Fueled Development**

... the push for economic and social development is coupled with the exploitation of abundant fossil fuel resources ...

Under this scenario (which we appear to be following) compared to 1850–1900, the global surface temperature averaged over 2081–2100 is very likely to be higher by 4.4°C or more, which is about 8°F warmer. Note that we have already increased it by a very substantial amount of about 2°F, which is causing our current climate disasters.

Consider that this predicted warming is about four times that which has already taken place. What are our children and theirs likely to experience? One can debate the extent of disruption, but it is clear that with four times the changes we are seeing now, large areas of the earth will become uninhabitable due to the combination of heat and humidity, which will prevent the human body from cooling off enough to survive. Some may survive in air conditions enclaves (if the electricity holds out) but less than a third of global households now own an air conditioner.*** Translated, that means much of the tropics and subtropics shown here would become uninhabitable.



(Wikipedia commons graphic)

And that is only up to 2200. Beyond that, continued warming would force shrinking numbers of people into smaller and smaller places, besieged by billions of climate refugees fighting over shrinking sources of food and water. This is already happening. Beyond that, end game. All because of our addiction to fossil fuels.

To break that addiction, a price must be placed on carbon and methane emissions. That is the conclusion of over 3,500 economists including 45 Nobel prize winning economists, former chairs of the [Federal Reserve](#), former chairs of the [CEA](#), and former secretaries of the [Treasury Department](#) in 2019.

They have told us what to do. Now, we need to act.

*(https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf)

**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared_Socioeconomic_Pathways#cite_note-2-7

***<https://www.iea.org/news/air-conditioning-use-emerges-as-one-of-the-key-drivers-of-global-electricity-demand-growth>

JOIN US! - THE CLEAN LAKE PROGRAM IS OPEN!

Do you want to help the community and get regular exercise? -- clean the lake! Contact LMI's Executive Director James Robinson at lmi@netwiz.net or call the LMI office at (510) 238-2290 and leave a message. James will arrange for your training in safety protocols by an experienced A-Team volunteer.

If you would like to bring a group of volunteers or use the U-Clean-It stations independently, contact James at lmi@netwiz.net and leave a message so that he can explain our public health policy for volunteering and assist you in proper training to participate in the Clean Lake Program.



TIME TO MAKE A CHARITABLE DONATION TO THE LAKE MERRITT

The Lake Merritt Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit charity, founded in 1992. We educate the public about urban runoff and involve them in solving the problem. Result: Volunteers remove [thousands of gallons](#) of trash each year that would otherwise increase the world ocean's plastics crisis *and* Oakland's regulatory liability for water quality.

LMI is funded by the City of Oakland and by donations from caring people like you. Help us preserve our beautiful and hard-working lake in the heart of downtown Oakland. You can pick up a membership application at our Farmer's Market table, or download it at lakemerrittinstitute.org.

Please direct questions and comments to The Tidings Editor, Katie Noonan, at ktnoon@aol.com.

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