

## Shore View Project: A New Tool to Help Protect San Francisco Bay from Sea Level Rise

In recent months, the Baykeeper patrol boat has been cruising the San Francisco Bay shore, along with a smaller remote-controlled boat mounted with a Google Trekker camera. We're photographing the



Photo by Robb Most


**Baykeeper is photographing the San Francisco Bay shoreline, using a remote-controlled boat. We'll use the images to create an online set of "Street View" images of the Bay shoreline.**

San Francisco Bay shoreline to create San Francisco Bay Shore View, a set of "Street View" images of the Bay shoreline. The San Francisco Bay Shore View Project will be a new tool to help protect the Bay from sea level rise.

As global climate change causes sea levels to rise, the Bay's shorelines are at greater risk of flooding and increased risk of contamination due to water levels reaching more pollution sources.

The San Francisco Bay Shore View images, with added information on each area's vulnerability to rising water levels, will demonstrate threats to the ecosystem associated with sea level rise, industrialization, development, and habitat loss.

Baykeeper's Shore View Project is one of 25 projects selected for funding by Google to support innovative projects to improve the Bay Area. Google also loaned the camera and the remote-controlled boat manufactured by a local company, a Wave Adaptive Modular Vessel that keeps the camera steady on the Bay's waves.

Look for the online release of Baykeeper's San Francisco Bay Shore View later this year. 

## Baykeeper Sues San Jose to Stop Trash & Bacteria Pollution to the Bay

Baykeeper recently sued the city of San Jose for violating the Clean Water Act by failing to keep trash, fecal bacteria, and other pollution from washing into major creeks and tributaries to San Francisco Bay. Our two-year investigation shows that San Jose has some of the highest levels of polluted storm water runoff of any city in the Bay Area.

Runoff from San Jose carries pollution into Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek. Trash collects in large rafts in the river and creek and is carried to San Francisco Bay during storms. Seals, shorebirds, and other wildlife are at risk for eating smaller pieces or getting trapped in the debris.

San Jose's runoff also contains high levels of fecal bacteria, which can cause illness and infection in people who spend time in or on the water during wet weather. Additionally, high bacteria levels and trash harm fish that spawn and spend their early life in the river and creek—including Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout. San Jose city leaders have responded to the lawsuit

*(Continued on page 6)*



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Protecting the Bay  
for the next 25 years**



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# Letter from the Baykeeper Board Chair

Photo by Sejal Choksi-Chugh



I am so proud to share my appreciation of Deb Self, Baykeeper's long-time Executive Director, who stepped down this spring due to an illness in her family. During Deb's nine years at the helm, Baykeeper has been exceptionally effective at protecting San Francisco Bay from pollution and has burnished its reputation as one of the Bay Area's most effective nonprofit organizations. We could not have asked for a better leader.

Deb has been an outstanding and passionate advocate for San Francisco Bay. Wildlife on the Bay, Bay swimmers like me, and all who use the Bay for recreation are safer from pollution today than nine years ago. Deb Self is a big reason why. Over her tenure, she has exhibited a unique combination of tenacity and zeal in her defense of the Bay, and grace and warmth in her interactions with both allies and adversaries.

I'm happy to say that Deb will continue to be engaged with Baykeeper as a member of the Advisory Board, helping guide the future of the organization she has contributed so much to.

Baykeeper's Board of Directors is now conducting an executive search for a new Executive Director. While the search is underway, Sejal Choksi-Chugh, Baykeeper's Program Director, is serving as Interim Executive Director. Sejal has been on staff at Baykeeper since 2002, and she provides tremendous leadership and passion for the organization.

Everyone here at Baykeeper is dedicated to carrying on the great legacy Deb has left us—of effective action toward a San Francisco Bay where the ecosystem is healthy, recreation is safe, and wildlife thrives. You can read more about our vision for the Bay's future on page 4, where we've laid out Baykeeper's top priorities for the next 25 years of protecting the Bay. I can't wait to see how much we can achieve together. Thank you so much for supporting our critical work toward a healthy San Francisco Bay.



Photo by www.drewbirdphoto.com

Jeff Russell, J.D.  
Chair, Baykeeper Board of Directors

***Deb Self, long-time Baykeeper Executive Director, recently stepped down. At Baykeeper's Envisioning the Future of the Bay event, Deb was honored with an award for her nine years of outstanding leadership.***

## Baykeeper's Office Has Moved

**We're protecting San Francisco Bay from our great new downtown Oakland office, conveniently located near the 19th Street BART station.**

**1736 Franklin Street, Suite 800, Oakland, CA 94612**

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**www.baykeeper.org**

# Responding to Bay Birds Coated with a Toxic Substance

## *Baykeeper Advocates for Improved Cleanup of Toxic Spills in the Bay*

In late January, Baykeeper helped coordinate a search and rescue effort for hundreds of birds injured by a toxic sticky substance spilled or dumped into San Francisco Bay along the East Bay shoreline. Scientists have since identified the “mystery goo” as a synthetic oil, but no source has been located.


Because the spill was not petroleum, state-funded oil spill response agencies and wildlife rescuers could not be activated. Instead, Baykeeper put together teams of birders, many from Golden Gate Audubon Society and WildCare of Marin, to walk the affected shorelines, finding and reporting birds that needed rescuing. Wildlife Emergency Services sent unfunded teams of staff and expert volunteers to capture injured birds. Staff from East Bay Regional Parks also helped capture birds along park shorelines. International Bird Rescue, a nonprofit wildlife hospital in Cordelia, stepped in to wash, rehabilitate, and release coated birds.

This incident highlights the need to activate the state’s oil spill responders when non-petroleum spills happen. Now, Baykeeper is working with California Senator Mark Leno and Audubon California to sponsor state legislation to address this loophole. SB718 will enable funding for California government agencies to provide prevention, response, wildlife rescue, and cleanup



***Baykeeper helped coordinate a search and rescue effort for hundreds of birds injured by a toxic sticky substance spilled or dumped into San Francisco Bay. This surf scoter was rescued, cleaned, rehabilitated, and later released.***

*Photo by Cheryl Reynolds - International Bird Rescue*

measures for toxic spills into the Bay—just like they do for oil spills. Baykeeper will continue to advocate for the best possible protections from oil and chemical spills in the Bay. 

## **Baykeeper Fights to Keep New Oil Spill Protections in Place**

### ***Plus Action on Crude Oil Shipped in Unsafe Tank Cars***

The oil industry is pushing to transform the Bay Area into a major hub for crude oil shipped by train to refineries and ports. Now, the railway industry is trying to block a new state law that requires railroads to be prepared for an oil spill caused by a train accident.

The new law, which Baykeeper helped pass last year, provides California rivers, creeks, and lakes with oil spill protections previously given only to coastal waters. This will help protect the Bay’s watershed from oil spills and explosions that may result from the influx of crude oil being shipped into California by train.

But the railway industry doesn’t want to pay for the improved protections, and they don’t want California’s stronger standards to become law in other


states. The industry filed suit against the state of California to overturn the new requirements.

In December, Baykeeper led a coalition of nonprofits from throughout the state to file a legal brief in support of the new oil spill response requirements. Baykeeper fought hard for these new oil spill protections, and we’re insisting they be enforced.

As the amount of crude oil shipped by rail has skyrocketed across the US, spills, accidents, and explosions have also increased. Some of this oil is highly volatile, yet it is shipped in railroad tank cars not designed for flammable substances. Baykeeper recently joined with our fellow Waterkeeper organizations across the country to urge the federal

government to tighten lax regulations that would allow tens of thousands of the unsafe tank cars to keep rolling through our communities, full of crude oil, for as long as seven years.

Baykeeper and other members of Waterkeeper Alliance urged the federal government to require that the most protective types of tank cars be used to ship crude oil by train, plus additional commonsense safety measures, such as speed restrictions and automatic braking requirements for trains that carry crude oil.

Baykeeper will continue our advocacy to protect San Francisco Bay and its wildlife from the threat of increased shipping of crude oil by train in and out of the Bay Area. 

# *The Next* **25 YEARS** *of a Healthy San Francisco Bay*

*As Baykeeper launches our 26th year of protecting San Francisco Bay, we're moving toward our vision of a Bay where recreation is safe, the ecosystem is healthy, and wildlife thrives.*

**Baykeeper will work to make San Francisco Bay:**

## **Safe from Sewage Pollution**

- Stop all sewage spills from Bay Area sewer systems.
- Secure upgrades that significantly improve treatment of wastewater released into the Bay to protect fish, prevent unhealthy algae growth, and reduce contamination from personal care products.

## **Free from Toxics, Contaminants, Plastics, and Trash**

- Stop industrial contamination of the Bay by compelling hundreds more industrial facilities to control runoff containing plastic, heavy metals, and other toxic pollutants.
- Require Bay Area cities to keep trash and other contaminants out of the Bay.

## **Protected from Oil and Chemical Spills**

- Secure strong protections to prevent oil spills into the Bay from ships and train cars.
- Improve cleanup and response to oil and chemical spills in the Bay, including rescue and care of wildlife.

## **Resilient to Rising Tides**

- Reduce the impacts of rising seas and storm surges by strengthening protections for Bay wetlands and shoreline communities.
- Ensure that any shoreline development is properly planned and adapted to sea level rise.

## **Prepared for Future Drought**

- Ensure that wastewater treatment systems reduce the use of freshwater and recycle wastewater.
- Advocate for storm water systems that filter and reuse rainwater to replenish the landscape and groundwater supplies.

## **With Healthy Beaches and Wetlands**

- Prevent habitat destruction and the loss of sand at local beaches by protecting Bay sediment from excessive sand mining.
- Ensure that Bay sediment is sustainably dredged and that clean sediment is used to replenish Bay wetlands.

*Photo by Robb Most*

# 25 Victories to Protect the Bay from Industrial Pollution

## *Critical Win to Stop Contamination from Major Bay Polluter*

Baykeeper's multi-year Bay-Safe Industry Campaign is making steady progress reining in industrial contamination in the Bay. Since 2012, we have won cleanup of 25 industrial facilities that had been polluting the Bay with heavy metals and other toxic substances.

In a critical win for reducing toxic industrial pollution into the Bay, Baykeeper recently secured an agreement with the **Levin-Richmond Terminal Corporation** for the company to install an excellent set of controls to protect the Bay from toxic runoff. Levin-Richmond is a major shipping terminal that handles hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic materials, including metallurgical coke, petroleum coke, and coal, on the Richmond Channel, an inlet of San Francisco Bay.

Levin-Richmond's prior methods of storing materials in large piles along the shoreline and loading them onto ships were exposing the materials to wind and rain. This allowed toxic dust to be washed and blown into the Bay.

The company resisted pressure from Baykeeper to clean up the facility's runoff for more than two years. Baykeeper's legally-binding agreement with Levin-Richmond, signed in October, requires the company to immediately make extensive improvements to keep toxic substances from washing and blowing into the Bay.

Levin-Richmond has already made significant progress at reducing its pollution. But more still needs to be done, and if the required controls do not reduce the pollution to below EPA levels of concern, the company has agreed to install even more advanced controls.

Baykeeper's Bay-Safe Industry Campaign seeks to rein in the widespread problem of industrial runoff pollution to the Bay. Many Bay Area industrial facilities are not doing what's required to keep toxic pollution from being washed into the Bay by rain. Runoff from industrial facilities often contains high concentrations of dangerous pollutants such as heavy metals and petroleum hydrocarbons.

These contaminants harm wildlife and people who spend time in and around the Bay. Even during a drought this pollution is a threat—when rain is less frequent, the pollution can be more concentrated.

Since our last issue of *Baykeeper News*, in addition to our victory with Levin-Richmond, we have secured legally-binding agreements requiring cleanup by three more industrial polluters, bringing our total to 25.

**B2 Auto Dismantler**, a San Jose auto wrecking facility, had been allowing rain to wash heavy metals off the site and into storm drains that lead to Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek, which drain to the Bay. B2 Auto Dismantler has been extremely cooperative in working with Baykeeper to implement controls to

protect the Bay from its runoff pollution.

**Cole Brothers Auto Wrecking**, an Oakland auto dismantling facility, agreed to remove all old auto parts and scrap metal from the site. The company's cleanup will eliminate pollution from copper, zinc, and other heavy metals that were running off the facility into storm drains that flow directly into San Francisco Bay.

**Syar Industries Napa Quarry** agreed to keep contaminated storm water from running off its facility into Arroyo Creek, which flows to the Napa River, and then to San Francisco Bay. Syar Industries mines rock from an open-pit quarry and also manufactures and recycles concrete and asphalt. The company's legally-binding cleanup agreement with Baykeeper will protect the Bay from pollutants that include aluminum, lead, oil, grease, and nitrate.


Baykeeper monitors the pollution reduction progress at all the facilities where we have cleanup agreements. **Seven facilities** under our watch have brought their pollution levels below EPA levels of concern, and are no longer contaminating San Francisco Bay with excessive toxic runoff. Several others are making progress toward reaching this standard and have reduced pollution by 50 to 90%. 



Photo by Robb Most

## **JOIN THE BAY PARADE**

### **Sunday, May 31**

### **Swim, Paddle, SUP, or Sail for the Bay**

### **Finale on the Jumbotron at AT&T Park at the start of the Giants game!**

**If you can swim a mile or paddle two miles,  
you can join the Bay Parade!**

**Registration \$100, plus \$200 fundraising minimum**

**Bay Parade Party to follow**

**Register at [baykeeper.org/bayparade](http://baykeeper.org/bayparade)**

## How You Can Help Keep Plastics and Medications Out of the Bay

What happens when we use consumer products that can harm water quality and wildlife? Some of them end up in the Bay. Wastewater that goes down your toilet, sink, and shower drain is sent to a wastewater treatment plant that removes many toxic pollutants. But some contaminants are not removed, and enter the Bay via treated wastewater. Here are ways you can help reduce contamination from two types of these pollutants, microbeads and pharmaceuticals:

### **Avoid using consumer products that contain plastic**

**microbeads.** Microbeads are tiny particles of plastic used in facial scrubs, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, eyeliner, lip gloss, deodorant, and sunblock. When these products are washed down a sink or shower drain, they aren't removed by treatment at a wastewater plant—so they enter the Bay. These materials are being found in the tissues of birds and marine mammals, and open-water swimmers can swallow them.

To avoid microbeads, don't buy any product with an ingredient list that includes Polyethylene (PE), Polypropylene (PP), Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), or nylon. Safe alternative ingredients that provide scrubbing include ground apricot shells and cocoa beans.

**Don't flush unused or leftover medications down the toilet or sink drain.** Prescription drugs pass through sewage treatment plants and into waterways, where they keep fish and other wildlife from reproducing, interfere with their foraging, and reduce their ability to avoid predators. Eighteen pharmaceuticals have been found in the water of South San Francisco Bay. Drugs to treat hypertension, angina, arrhythmia, and migraine, as well as antihistamines, have been found in the tissues of San Francisco Bay mussels.

Take unused medications to a proper disposal facility like your local pharmacy, contact your city's wastewater treatment facility for specific disposal information, or use your county's drug disposal program.


**Support laws in your community requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers to develop, implement, and fund safe and convenient programs for drug disposal.** Alameda County is implementing a safe prescription drug disposal program, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed an expansion of a pilot program, and other Bay Area communities are considering similar options. Let your local leaders know you want safe drug disposal, funded by pharmaceutical companies.

## Stopping San Jose's Trash and Bacteria Pollution of the Bay *(Continued from page 1)*



***Trash pollution along the Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek in San Jose gets washed into the Bay. Seals, shorebirds, and other wildlife are in danger of eating small pieces or getting trapped in debris.***


by working cooperatively with Baykeeper to evaluate the sources of trash and bacteria in the city's runoff. We'll continue partnering with the city to help them develop new and effective pollution controls, some with the added benefit of increasing the use of storm water for landscaping, to make the best use of limited rainwater during drought.

Baykeeper's goal is for San Jose to implement a comprehensive approach to managing runoff. This will help reduce pollution, improve resistance to drought, and make San Jose a green and Bay-friendly city. 

## New Advocacy to Defend the Bay From Excessive Sand Mining

Baykeeper is pursuing a court appeal to overturn new state leases that will allow too much sand to be mined from San Francisco Bay. We also recently urged regulators to stop excessive Bay sand mining, which contributes to erosion at Ocean Beach and threatens important Bay species like Dungeness crab that migrate along the Bay floor through sand mining areas.

In February, Baykeeper petitioned the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board to revise its draft permit allowing a dramatic increase in the amount of sand that can be mined from the Bay. The Regional Board had originally planned to give a green light for the full amount of sand private companies wanted to mine. After Baykeeper highlighted recent science showing a direct connection between sand mining in the Bay and erosion at Ocean Beach, the board decreased the amount by 20%. But this is not enough; according to recent statements by the California Coastal Commission, an 85% reduction is needed to protect coastal beaches. In response, Baykeeper has appealed the Regional Board's decision to the State Board.

On another regulatory front, Baykeeper testified at a public hearing of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which also must issue permits before Bay sand mining can go forward. As with our advocacy with the Regional Water Board, we urged the commission to put sensible limits on the amount of sand that can be mined. Baykeeper will continue to lead the challenge to defend San Francisco Bay's wildlife and habitat from excessive sand mining. 

# Make Your Gift to Support a Healthy San Francisco Bay Today!

Photo by Joan Robins



For more than 25 years, Baykeeper has been San Francisco Bay's most determined and effective advocate. Baykeeper's vision for the next 25 years is a Bay ecosystem with the resilience to weather the

pressures of climate change, and the vitality to support thriving communities, safe recreation, and flourishing wildlife.

Please help make San Francisco Bay cleaner and healthier, with your gift to Baykeeper today.

## Donate now

It takes just a moment to send your gift by mail using the enclosed envelope, or make a gift online at [www.baykeeper.org](http://www.baykeeper.org).

## Become a Bay Steward—

### Make monthly or quarterly gifts to Baykeeper

Your monthly or quarterly donations provide steady support for our work to defend the Bay from pollution. Plus, recurring gifts help Baykeeper save money on administration fees and reduce mailings, so your gifts go further.

### Honor a friend or loved one with a gift to Baykeeper

A gift to Baykeeper in honor of your friend or loved one is a great way to share your commitment to the Bay you both cherish. Your honoree will receive a welcome packet and regular updates from Baykeeper.

Thank you for supporting a clean and healthy San Francisco Bay!

## Bay Species Spotlight: Pelicans, Brown and White

Soaring and gliding over the water, pelicans are a familiar sight around San Francisco Bay. Two types live here, the California brown pelican and the American white pelican. They arrive and depart at different times of year.

California brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) are most common around the central and northern Bay. Gray-brown, with seven-foot wingspans, they plunge-dive head first into the water from as high as 65 feet. Underwater, they open their bills and fill their huge throat pouches with up to three gallons of seawater and fish. Then, back on the surface, they strain the water out the sides of their mouths and swallow their catch.



Photo by John 'K', Flickr/CC

During the 1800s, brown pelicans were plentiful on the Bay. But by the early 1900s, most had been killed for their plumes. The population slowly recovered, and then, in the 1960s, the use of the pesticide DDT again led to the species' decline. DDT caused the shells of the birds' eggs to thin, preventing the embryos from maturing. In 1970, the brown pelican was listed as an endangered species. After DDT was banned in the 1970s, brown pelicans gradually made a second comeback, and the bird was removed from the Endangered Species List in 2009. There are now about 10,000 breeding pairs in California.


Brown pelicans spend summer and fall in San Francisco Bay, then they fly south to breed in Mexico and at the Channel Islands along the southern California coast. They are also seen occasionally around the South Bay during winter.

Much more common in the South Bay is the American white pelican (*pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). White pelicans are even larger than brown pelicans, with wingspans averaging nine feet. They are snowy white, with black flight feathers visible only when their wings are spread. These birds nest and breed at inland US lakes during spring and summer, then spend late fall and winter in the Bay Area.

White pelicans don't plunge-dive. While swimming, they catch fish by scooping water into their pouches, then strain out the water and swallow the fish. Sometimes, several white pelicans form a semi-circle, slap their wings against the water, and drive a school of fish closer to shore, where the fish are easier prey.



Photo by Joan Robins

Both white and brown pelicans are vulnerable to harm caused by eating fish that have been feeding in toxic pollution, and to injury or death if oil or chemicals are spilled into the Bay. For the safety and health of pelicans and all Bay wildlife, Baykeeper works to stop toxic industrial pollution in the Bay (see page 5), and for the Bay to have the strongest protections from oil spills and other toxic spills (see page 3). 



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## Spring/Summer 2015 Baykeeper News

# Baykeeper Around San Francisco Bay



Photo by Robb Most



Photo by : www.drewbirdphoto.com

Baykeeper is using a remote-controlled boat to photograph the San Francisco Bay shoreline for a new project to help protect the Bay from sea level rise. For more on **San Francisco Bay Shore View**, see page 1. Baykeeper's **Envisioning the Future of a Healthy San Francisco Bay** presentation and dinner on March 8 was a big success. At the historic Dolphin Club at Aquatic Park, overlooking the Bay, 200 guests joined Baykeeper for a delicious crab dinner and an exciting exploration of what can be achieved for the Bay with committed stewardship. Paddlers in Marin joined with Baykeeper for **two on-the-water trash cleanups**. In December, paddle boarders led by Jen Fuller Fitness removed 300 pounds of trash from the Bay and shoreline in Sausalito. In March, we partnered with Jen Fuller Fitness, Onboard SUP Yoga, SUP Currents, the Tamalpais Outrigger Canoe Club, and 101 Sports to get 700 pounds of trash out of the water and off the shore of the San Rafael Canal. To learn about future cleanups, sign up for Baykeeper's E-news at [baykeeper.org](http://baykeeper.org).



Photo by Robert McKinney



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