

Save Our Shorebirds Project Final Report

2011 Audubon California – State Parks Endowment Grant Program



February 1, 2012

Prepared by:

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Project Goals and Background

The long term goal of the Save Our Shorebirds (SOS) project is to increase the number of WatchListed shorebirds that rest and nest on three MacKerricher State Park beaches. We aim to accomplish this increase through a combination of outreach and education focused on reducing detrimental interactions between people and shorebirds. We measure our success through shorebird monitoring.

SOS is an ongoing collaborative project between the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) and California State Parks, Mendocino District. Since the project's start in 2007, MCAS volunteers have continually worked with State Parks Environmental Scientists, Natural Resource Interpreters, Park Rangers, District managers and others to successfully implement the project. In 2011, SOS participants spent nearly 1100 hours in the field, monitoring shorebirds. Since the project began in 2007, volunteers have spent more than 4,100 hours conducting shorebird surveys, reaching out to the public, educating children, coordinating with Parks staff, and managing project data.

2011 Audubon California and State Parks Endowment Grant Program - Project Timeline and Accomplishments

- In February 2011, the MCAS Board approved the selection of Joleen Ossello as the SOS Director. Ossello served as the SOS Director in 2009, and her excellent performance made her the top choice for the position in 2011. She accepted the position and fulfilled the terms of her independent contract from July to September, 2011.
- On March 25, 2011, A. Liebenberg and B. Bowen were invited to tell the SOS story to some 50 members of the Mendocino Study Club, a local organization that has studied the social, economic, intellectual, historical and political dynamics of the community for more than 100 years.
- In May and October 2011, SOS was given an unexpected opportunity to speak to "Road Scholar" (previously "Elderhostel") groups visiting the area. The presentations about local habitats and the Save Our Shorebirds project earned the goodwill of a friendly group of people, and \$200 for the SOS coffers.
- Ron LeValley of Mad River Biologists (MRB) was contracted to conduct a shorebird training session for State Park staff and volunteers. The training occurred on May 19, 2011. Eighteen participants attended, and learned about shorebirds commonly seen on surveys, how to identify them, and ways to avoid impacts.
- Experienced SOS volunteers led several refresher field shorebird training walks at Virgin Creek Beach to help participants brush up on birding skills and survey protocol.
- From January through September 2011, SOS volunteers and Director spent over 800 hours monitoring shorebirds and conducting visitor outreach on MacKerricher State Park beaches.
- Lead Volunteer Becky Bowen continued to train and work with Community Service volunteers, who conducted surveys on Glass Beach and Ten Mile beach. (Since the SOS community service program began in late 2009, over 950 in-field survey hours have been completed by community service clients cited for non-violent or non-sex crimes and the program has grown into a major adult outreach and education effort.)

- SOS Director Joleen Ossello led weekly Junior Ranger Programs at MacKerricher State Park (with early assistance from Teresa Hurray, Mendocino Area Parks Association interpreter) from June 22 – August 31, 2011.
- Progress reports were submitted in June and December, 2011.
- Coordination between State Parks, the MCAS Board, and SOS Lead Volunteer are ongoing.
- Western snowy plover surveys conducted by California State Parks staff, a portion of the State Parks in-kind match, are ongoing.

Observations

SOS volunteers have expressed their enjoyment of their time in the field, and have made many valuable observations and interesting discoveries over the years.

Lead Volunteer Becky Bowen has maintained SOS observation records during winter survey periods and at other times when SOS has not had a funded Director, has faithfully pored over the numbers, and uses Excel charts to make visual sense of all those spreadsheet entries. Attached as Appendixes to this report are her charts, created using the information collected and submitted by dozens of volunteers. The summarized information includes high counts, and average number observed per survey, of many Watchlisted and non-Watchlisted shorebirds observed on the three subject beaches. In addition, fluctuation in the number of certain migratory species observed from June through September are clearly illustrated. It is interesting to note that known resident species (such as black oystercatcher and killdeer) do not show noticeable seasonal fluctuation, giving credence to the accuracy of this citizen science project, especially over time. The data reflected in the charts also give a good idea of the relative abundance of species; some species are very commonly observed – or are observed in large numbers – as compared to others.

One of the most interesting developments is the incremental increase over the years of the number of wintering snowy plovers observed at Ten Mile Beach. SOS was inspired by and grew out of the connection between MCAS and State Parks conducting snowy plover protection – so it seems fitting to end the fifth season of SOS with positive news on the plover population.

Tracking and analyzing this data will become increasingly valuable over time, as trends will become more apparent, and this first five years of baseline data will provide solid information against which to compare future observations.

Expenditures

The entire \$7,605 in grant funds has been expended (for details see December 2011 Progress Report). In addition, \$600 in donations to SOS through a restricted fund maintained by MCAS were used in order to complete the project.

Appendix A - Watchlisted Shorebirds

Save Our Shorebirds
An On-going Citizen Science Project
Mendocino Coast Audubon Society in partnership with
California State Parks
College of the Redwoods
FLOCKworks



A Study of Watchlisted and Non-Watchlisted Shorebirds 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile Beaches
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA
Mendocino North Coast CA Audubon Important Bird Area

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*American Golden-Plover not observed 2007-2011, Rock Sandpiper not observed on SOS surveys 2007-2011, but observed in other areas of MacKerricher State Park

Save Our Shorebirds

Angela M. Liebenberg, Environmental Scientist, CA State Parks and Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Volunteer Supervisor

Nathan M. Cooley, Director, Summers 2007, 2008

Joleen Ossello, Director, Summers 2009, 2011

Becky Bowen, Volunteer Compiler

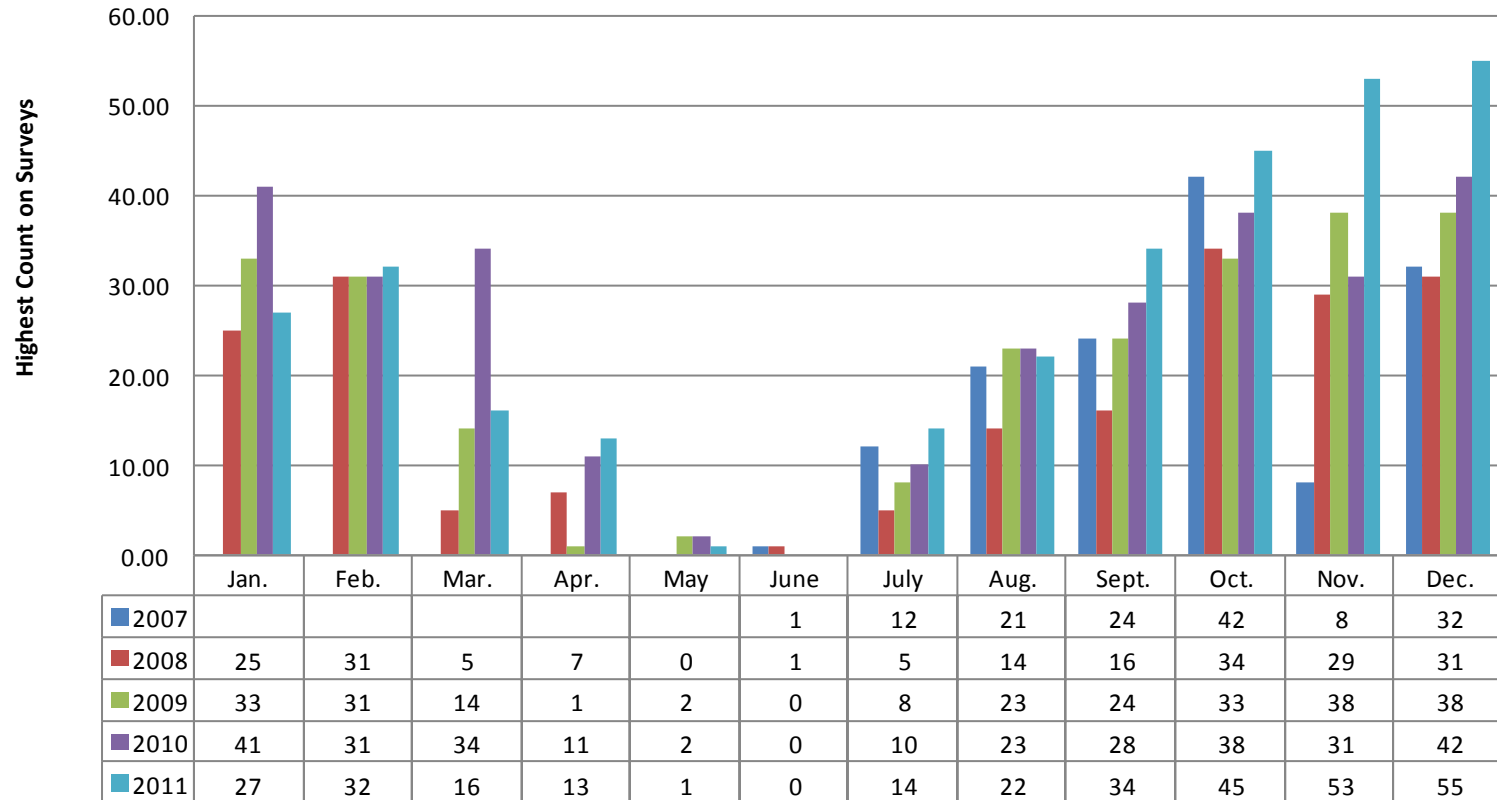
Save Our Shorebirds Surveyors:

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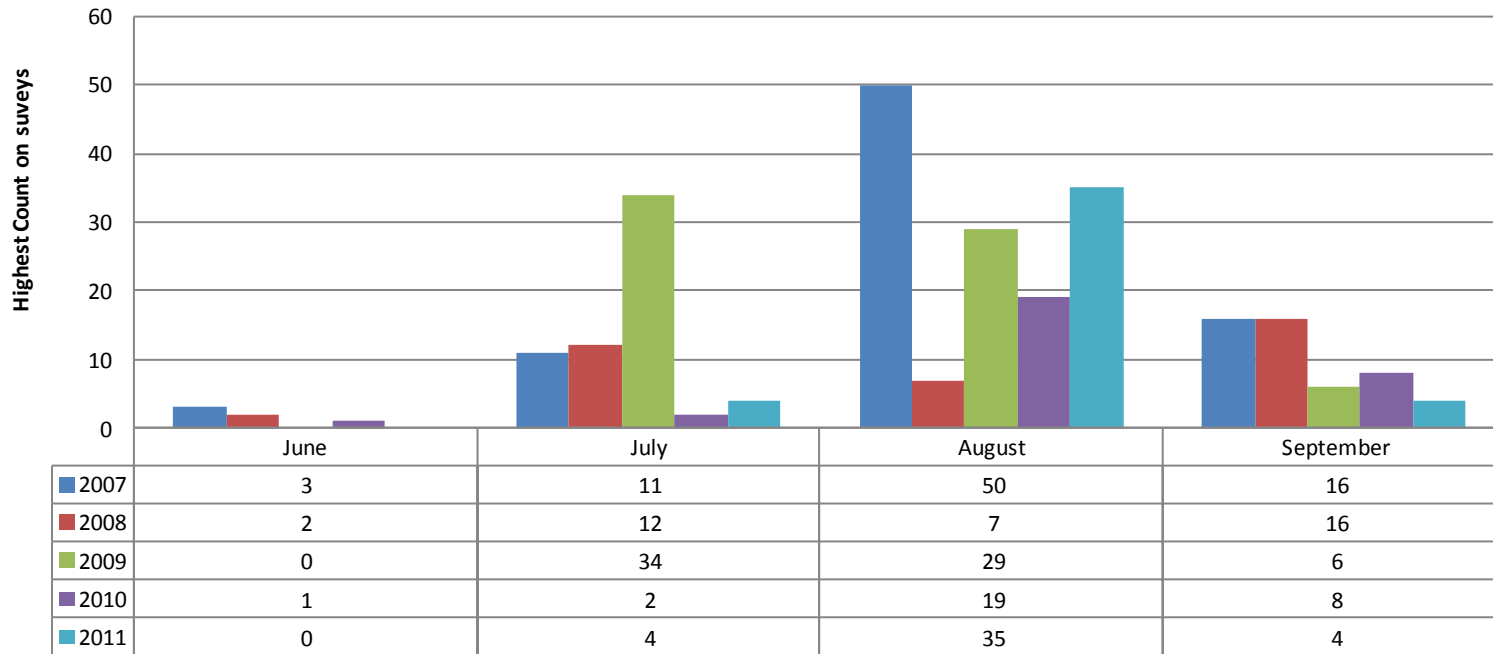
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Ron LeValley
Ginny Wade
Warren Wade
Mark Wasserman
John Wilder
David Wolf
Chuck Worden
Molly Worden**

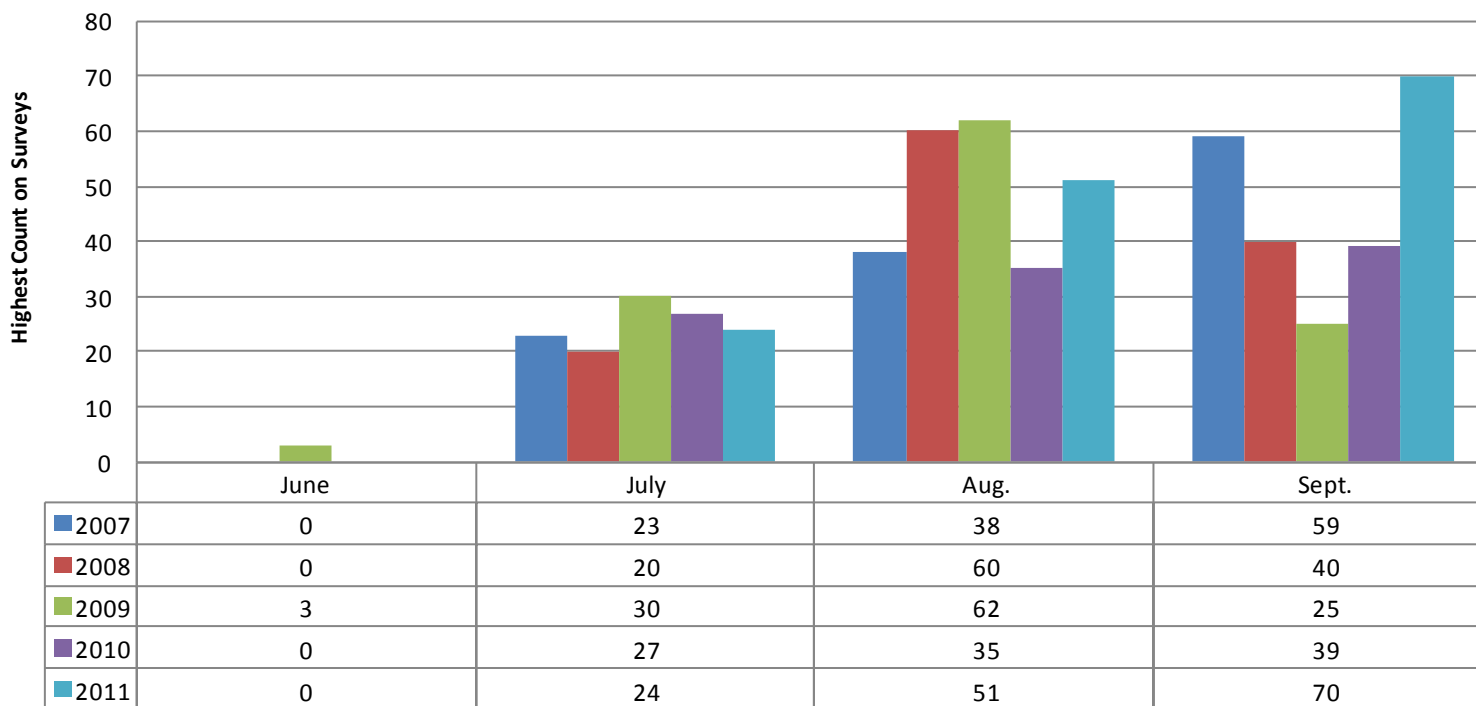
**Save Our Shorebirds Western Snowy Plover Sightings (High Counts)
June, 2007-December, 2011, Virgin Creek and Ten Mile Beach (combined)
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA**



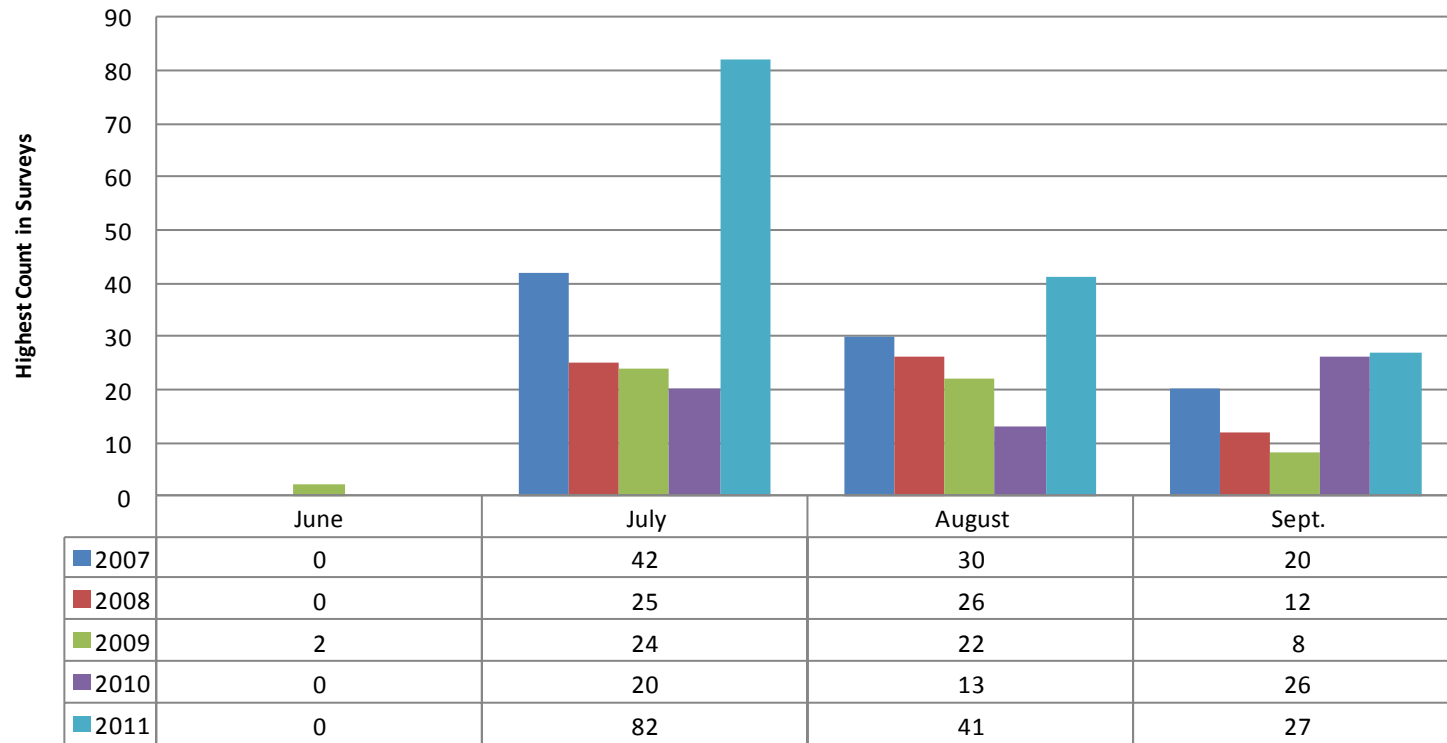
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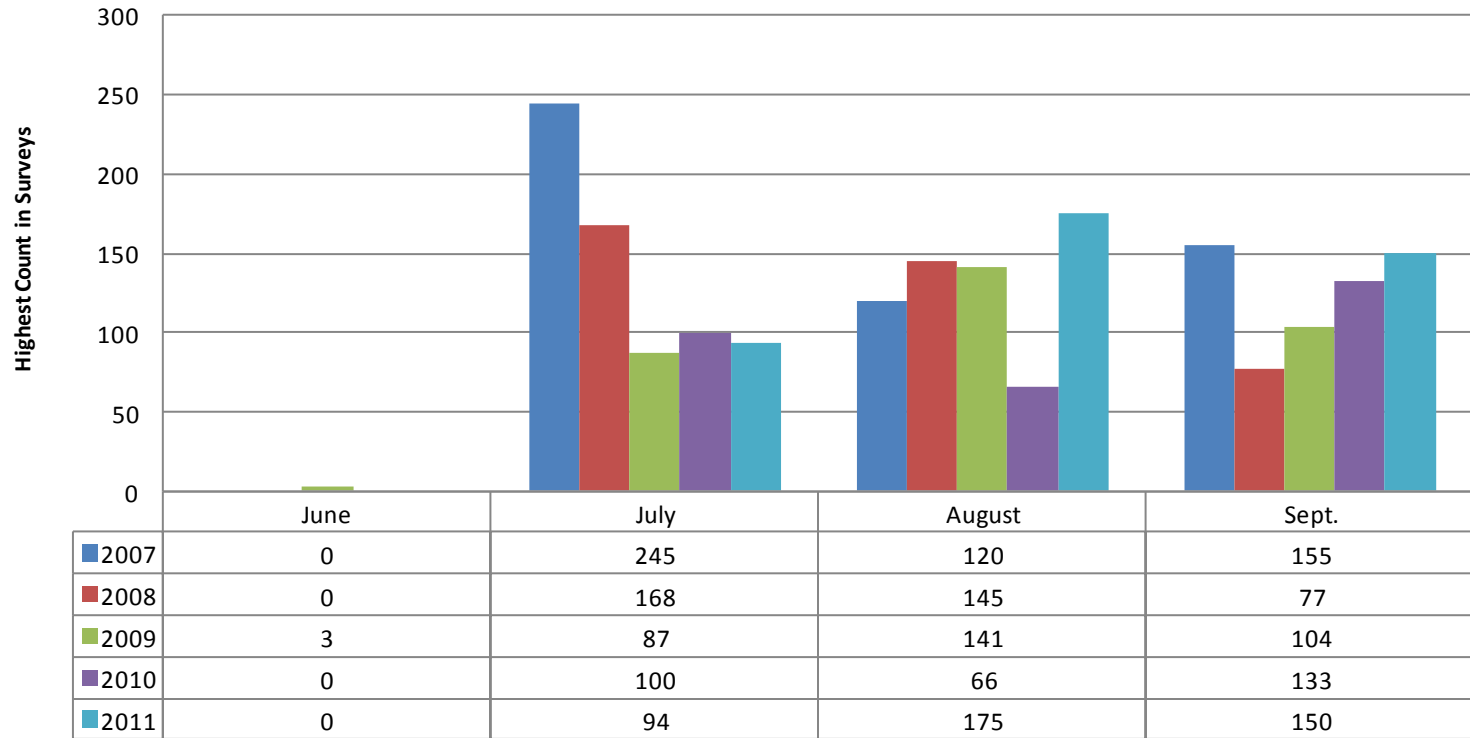
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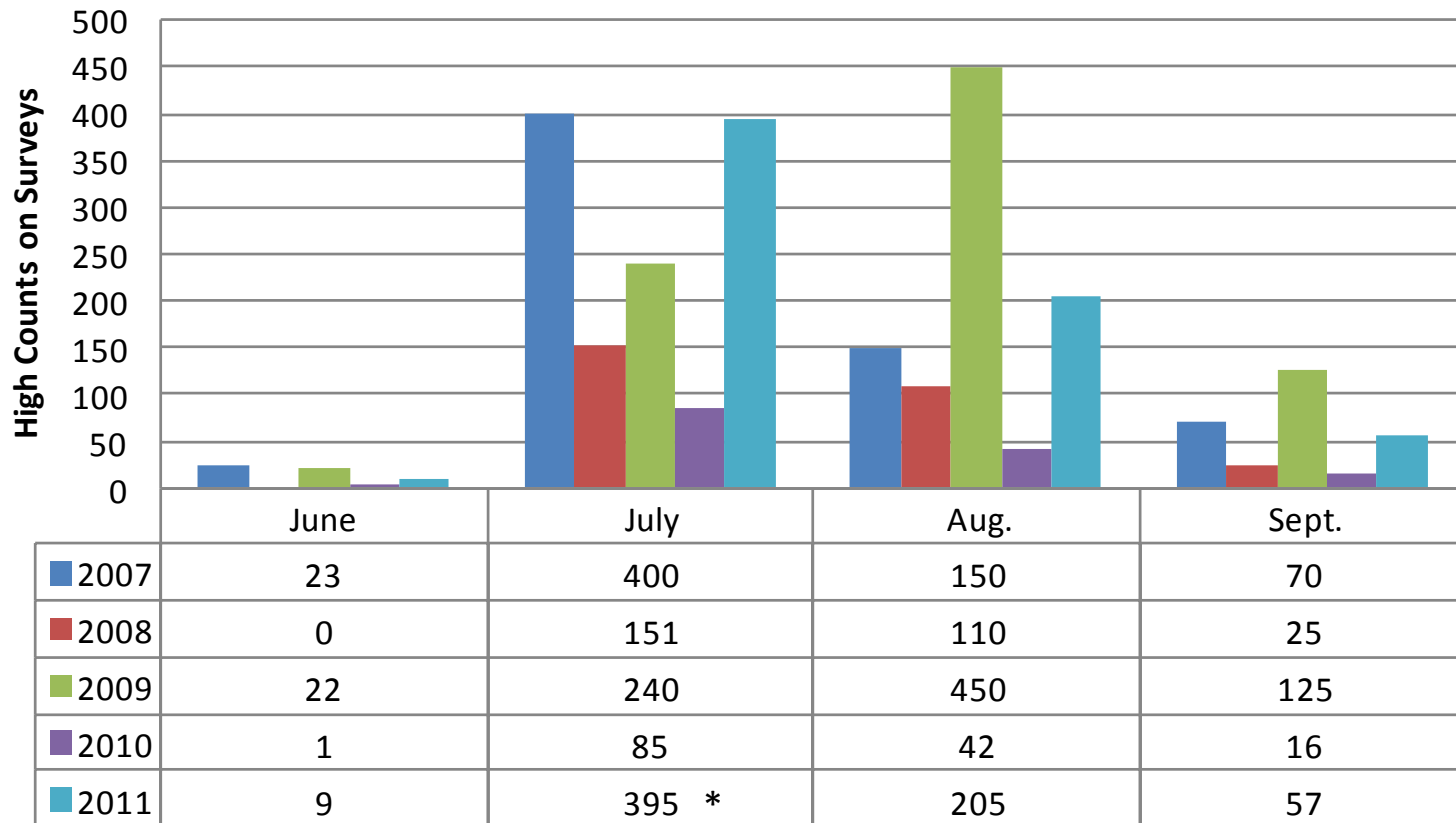
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MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA



Save Our Shorebirds Sanderling High Counts June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA



**Save Our Shorebirds Western Sandpiper High Counts June-September 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA**



*Does not include extraordinary sighting on Ten Mile Beach of 3,850 WESA July 18, 2011, therefore high count sighting for July, 2011, is 3,850

**Shorebirds Seldom Observed on Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile Beaches
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA
Number of High Count Sightings
June-September 2007-2011**

Wandering Tattler High Counts 2007-2011 (Summers)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	2	1	2	0	3
August	2	1	1	4	2
September	0	0	1	1	2

Buff-breasted Sandpiper High Counts 2007-2011 (Summers)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	2	0	0	0	0
September	2	0	0	0	0

Long-billed Curlew High Counts 2007-2011 (Summers)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	2	0
July	1	1	1	1	0
August	0	x	23	2	0
September	1	1	0	7	1

Semi-palmated Sandpiper High Counts 2007-2011 (Summers)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	1	0	0	0	1
August	0	1	0	0	1
September	0	0	0	0	0

Red Knot High Counts 2007-2011 (Summers)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	1	0	1
August	1	0	1	0	1
September	2	0	1	0	2

Hudsonian Godwit High Counts 2007-2011 (Summers)

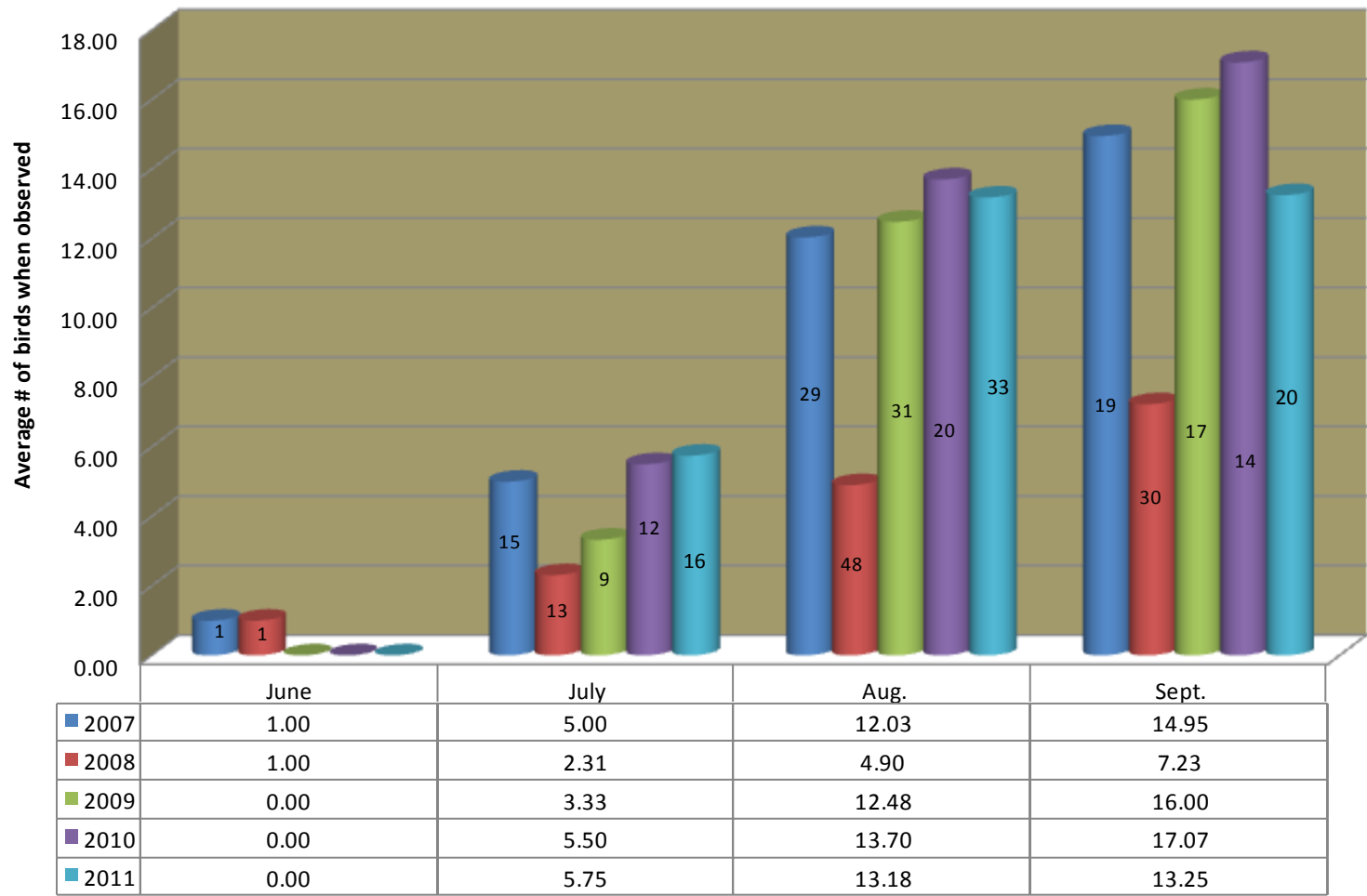
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	2	0	0
September	0	0	3	0	0

Note—no SOS sightings of Rock Sandpiper, but Rock Sandpipers observed on non-SOS surveys in MacKerricher State Park (especially Laguna Point)

Note—no American Golden-Plovers observed on SOS surveys

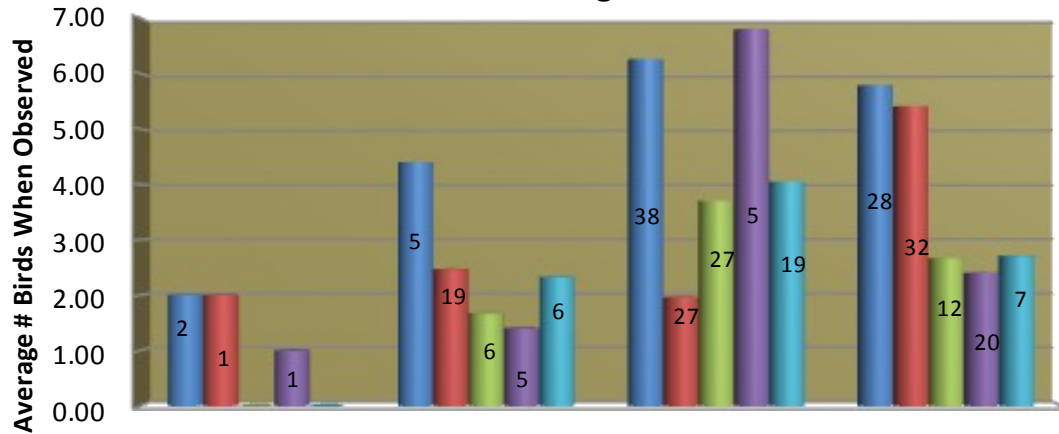
Angela M. Liebenberg, Environmental Scientist, CA State Parks ALIEBENBERG@parks.ca.gov
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**SOS Western Snowy Plover Average Counts
June-September 2007-2011
Virgin Creek, Ten Mile Beach--MacKerricher State Park***



*Color columns contain number of suveys where WSP observed

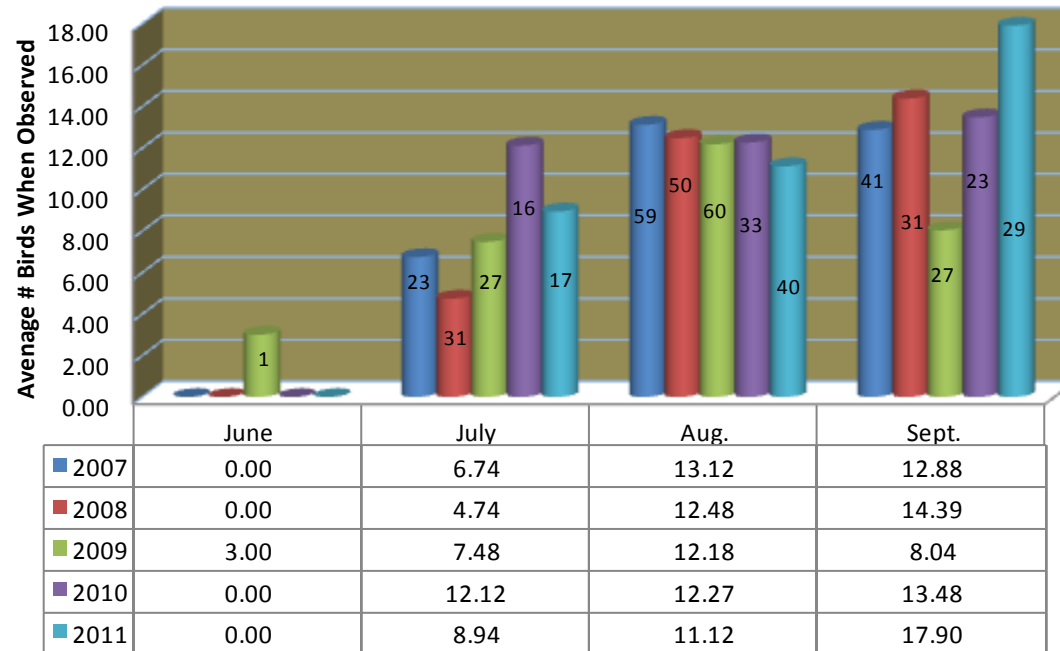
**SOS Marbled Godwit Average Count June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile***



	June	July	Aug.	Sept.
■ 2007	2.00	4.40	6.26	5.79
■ 2008	2.00	2.47	1.96	5.41
■ 2009	0.00	1.67	3.70	2.67
■ 2010	1.00	1.40	6.80	2.40
■ 2011	0.00	2.33	4.05	2.71

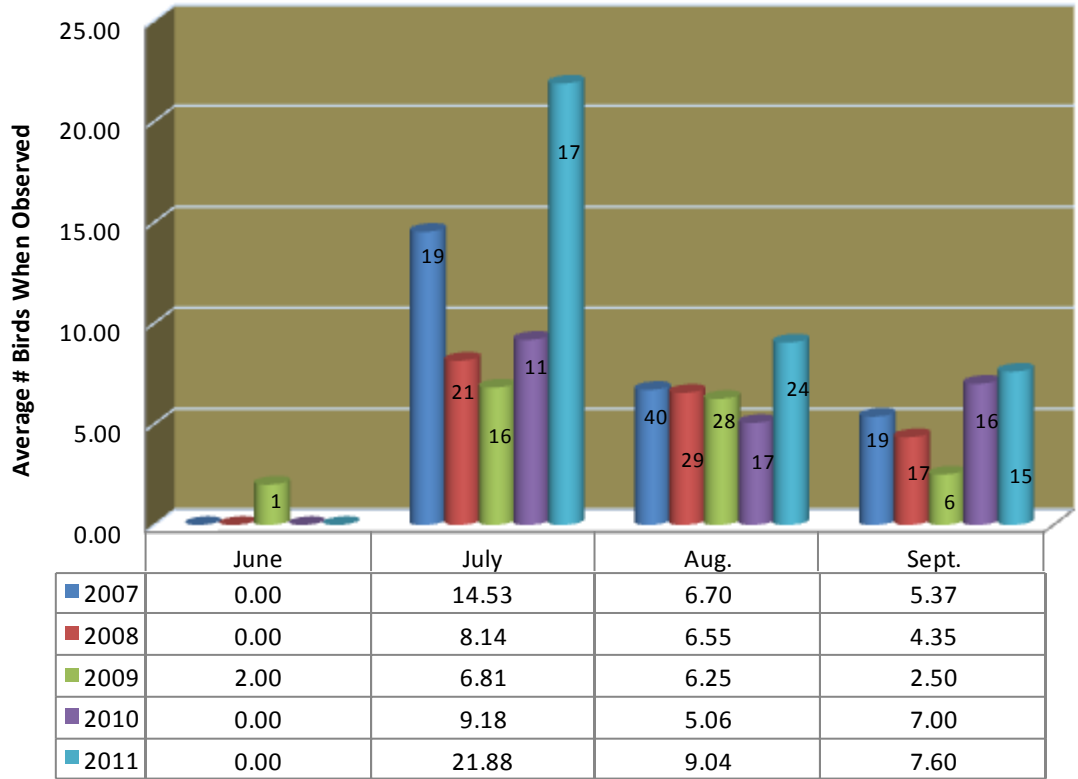
***Columns contain # of surveys (samples) when MAGO observed**

**SOS Black Turnstone Average Count June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile***



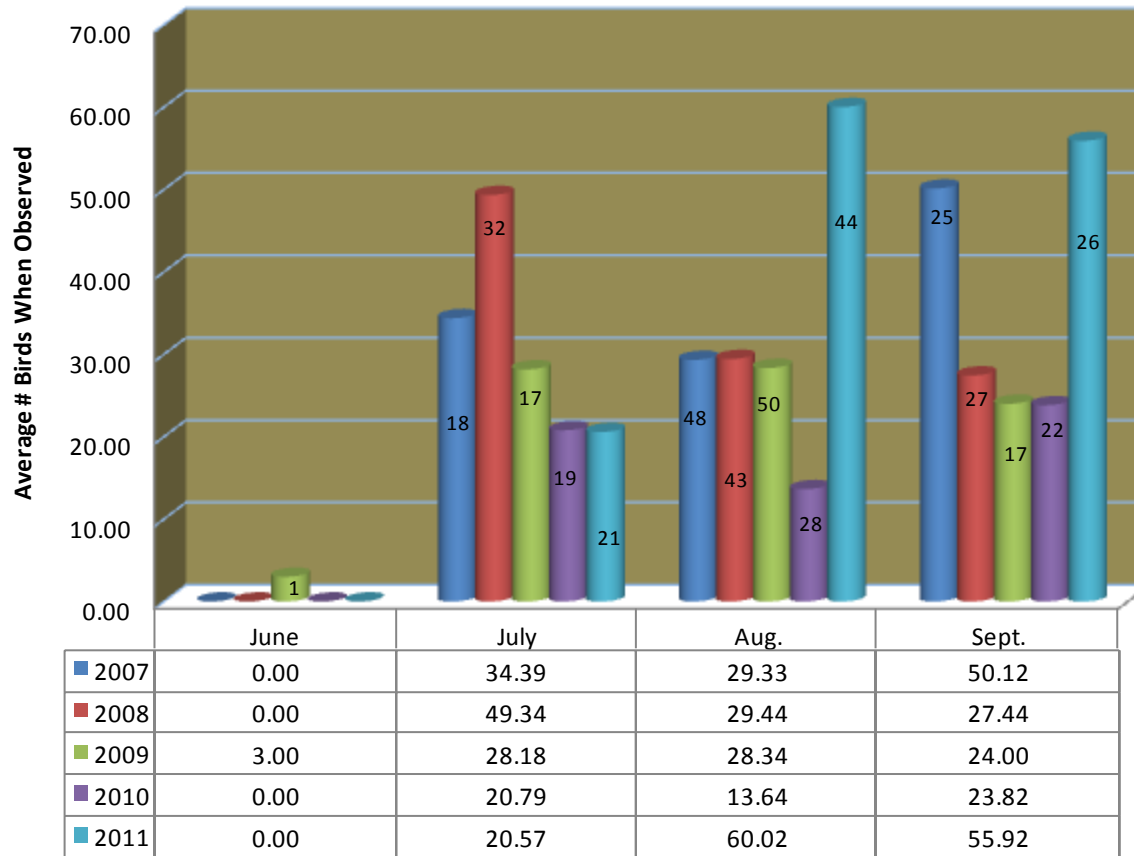
* Columns contain # of surveys (samples) when Black Turnstones observed

**SOS Surfbird Average Count June-September 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile***



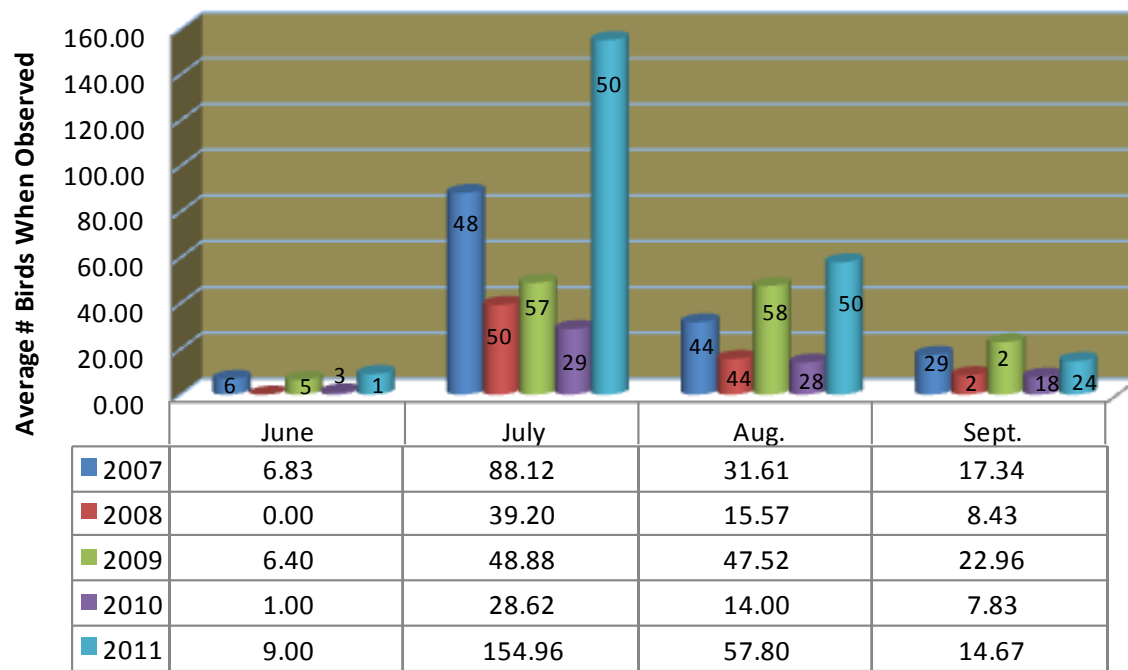
*Columns contain # of surveys (samples) when Surfbirds observed

**SOS Sanderling Average Count June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile***



*Columns contain # of surveys (samples) when Sanderlings observed

**SOS Western Sandpiper Average Count June-September 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile***



***Columns contain # of surveys (samples) when WESA observed**

Appendix B - Non-Watchlisted Shorebirds

Save Our Shorebirds
An On-going Citizen Science Project
Mendocino Coast Audubon Society in partnership with
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College of the Redwoods
FLOCKworks

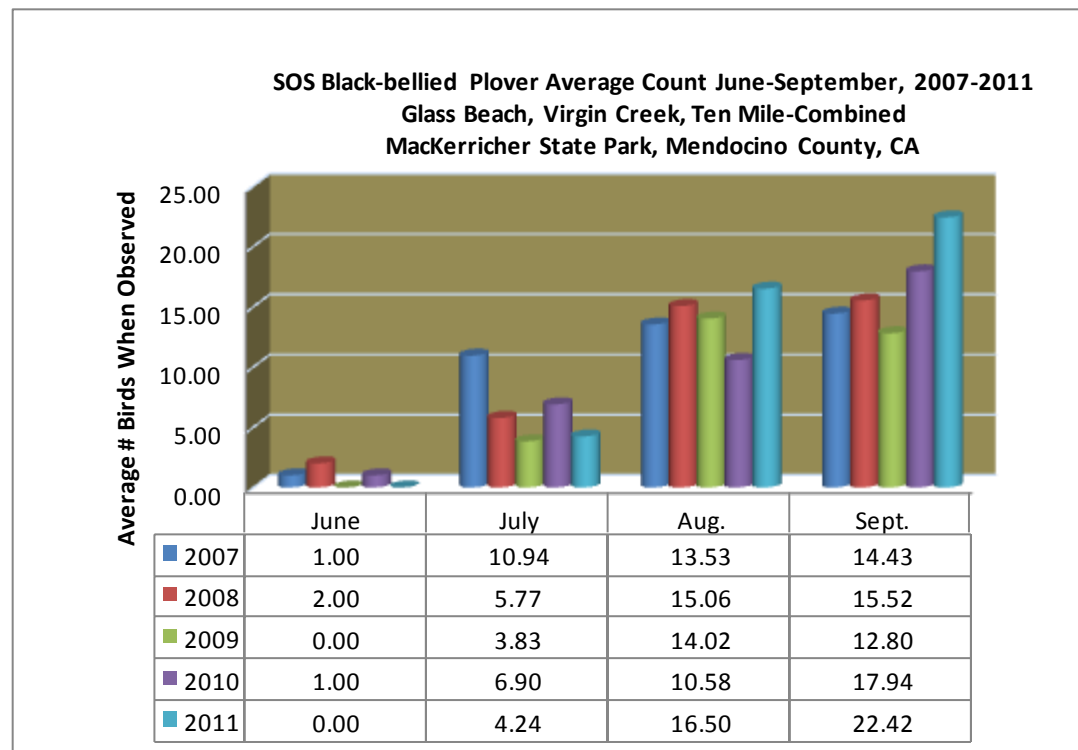
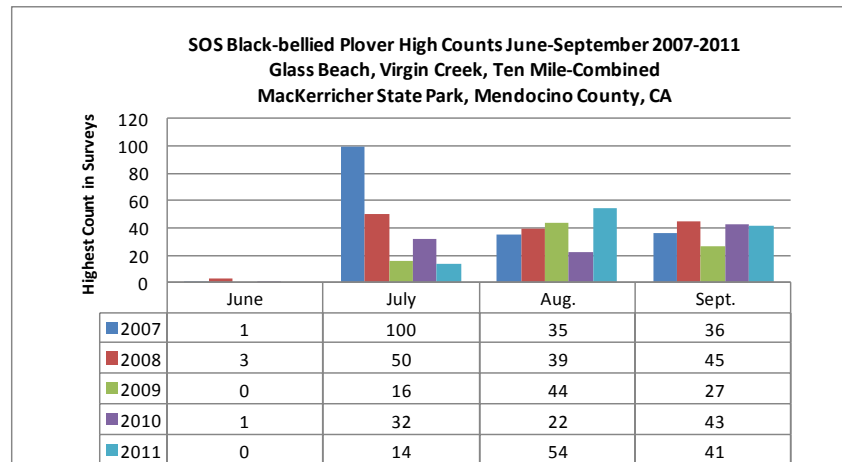


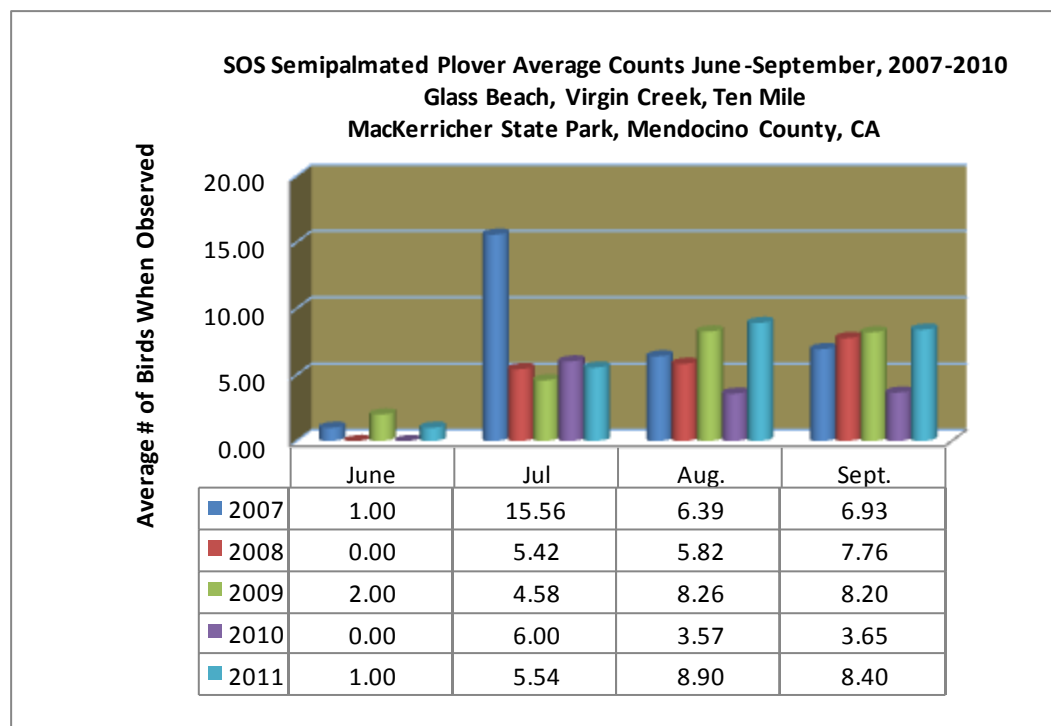
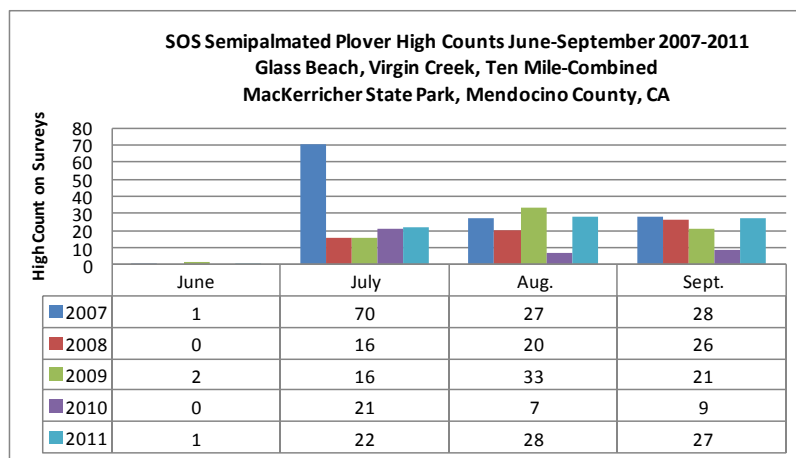
A Study of Watchlisted and Non-Watchlisted Shorebirds 2007-2011
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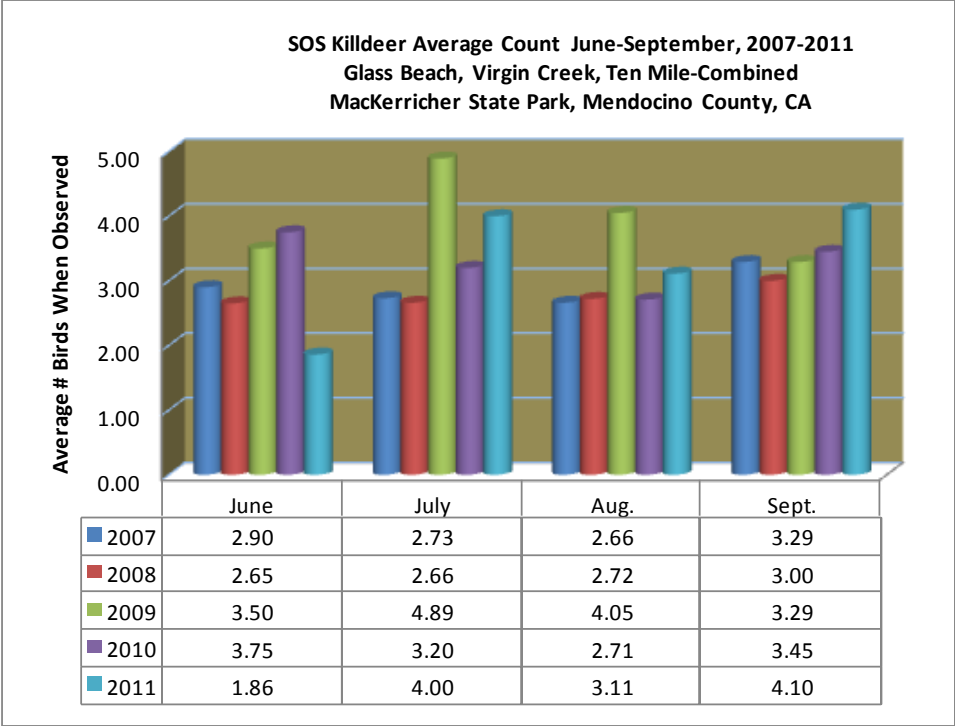
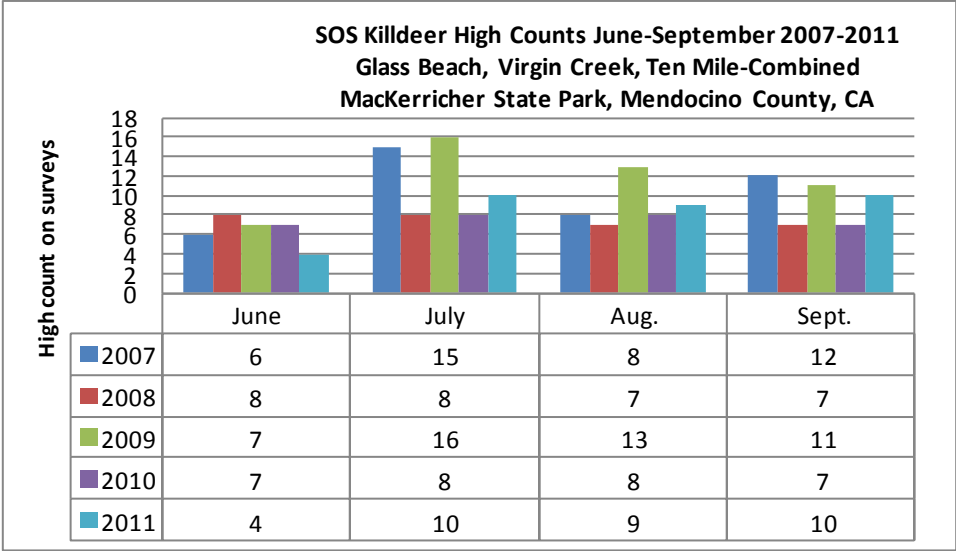
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High Counts and Average Counts

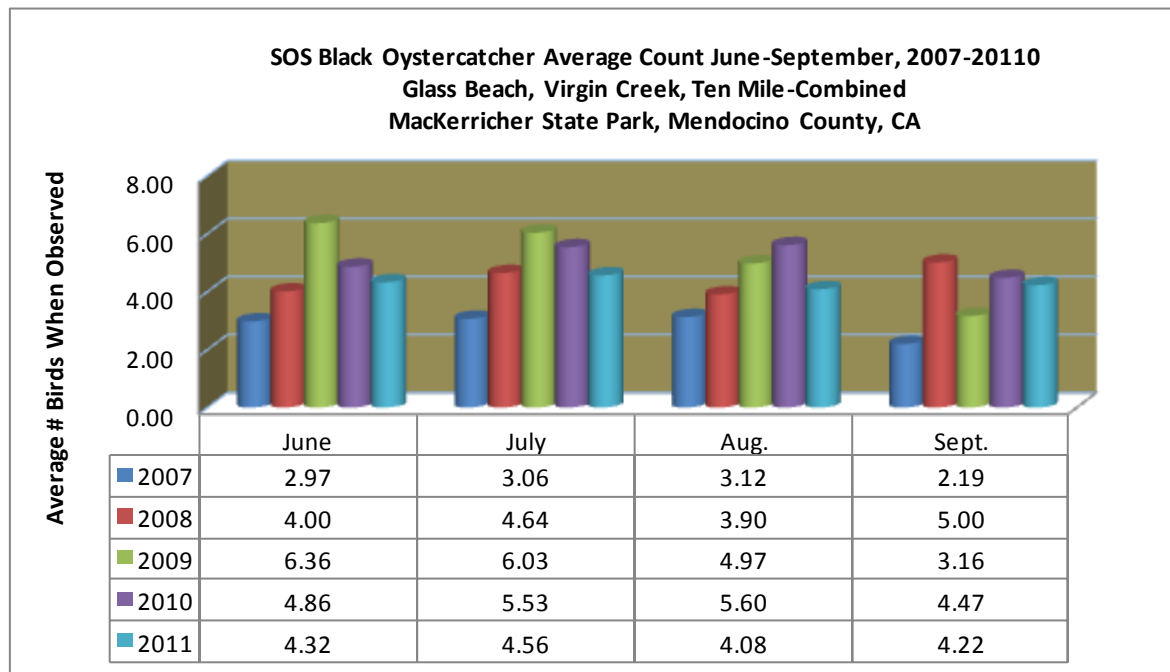
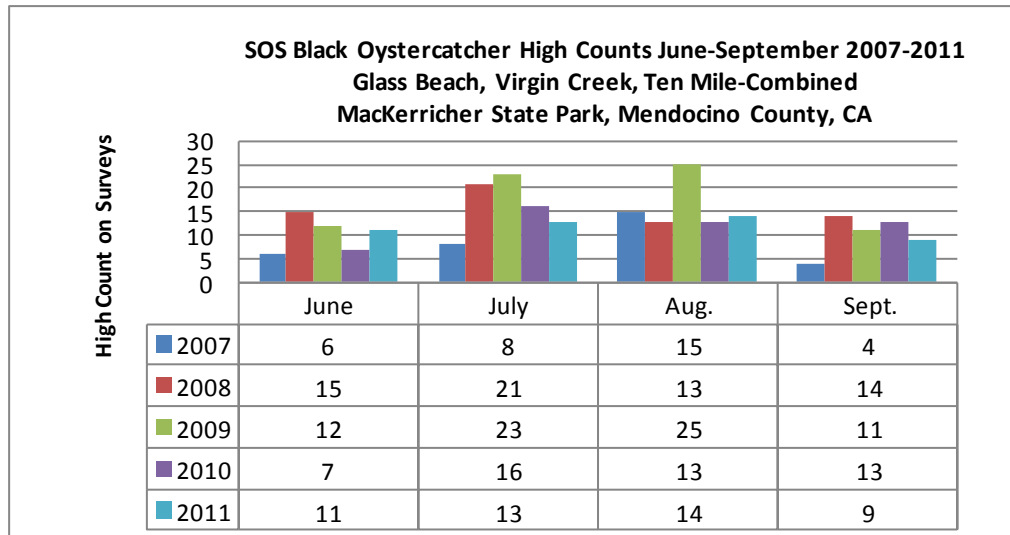
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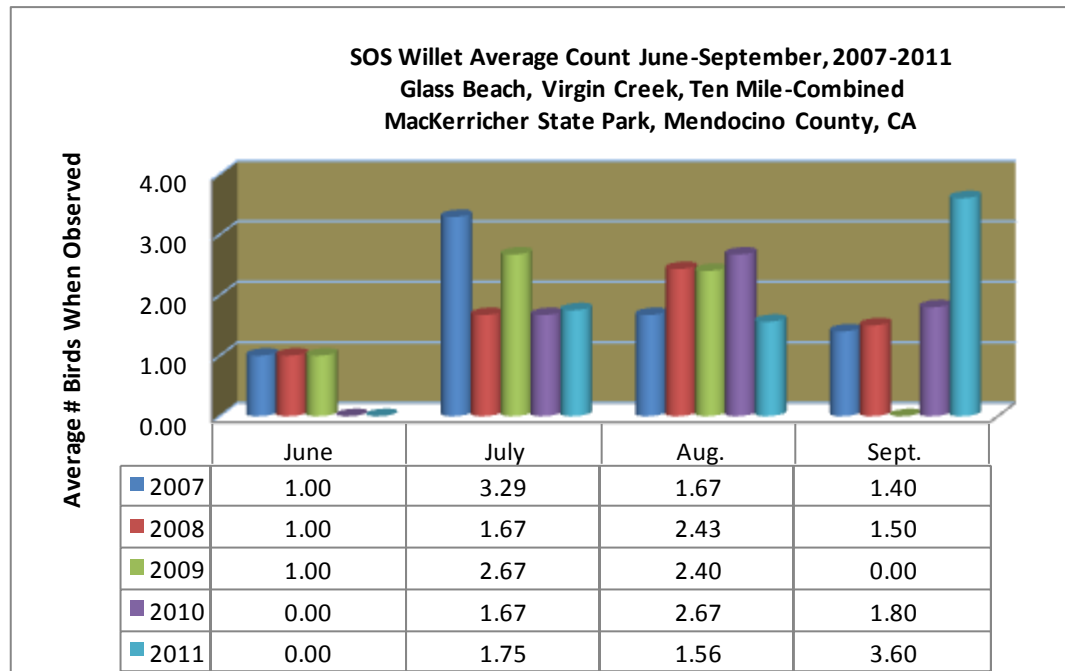
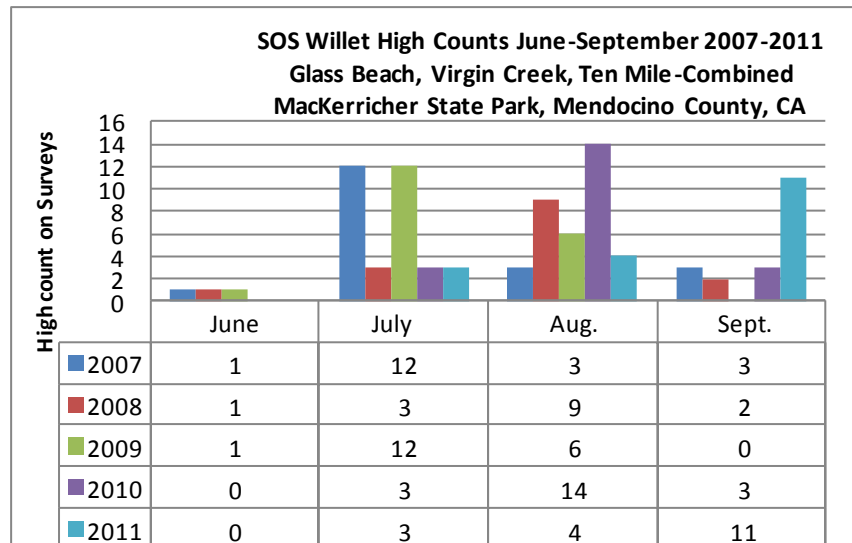
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Becky Bowen, Mendocino Coast Audubon Society casparbeck@comcast.net

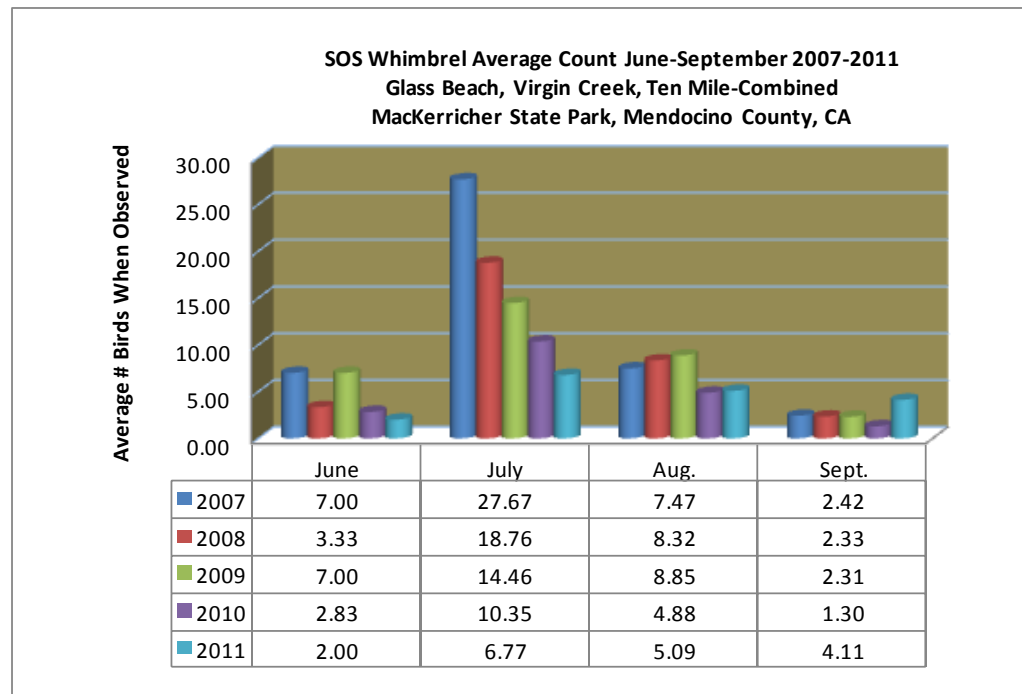
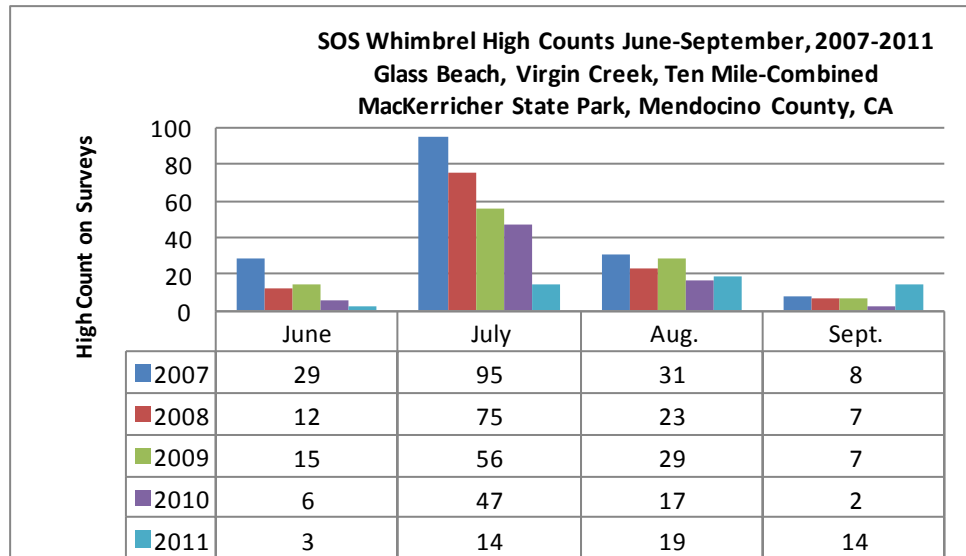




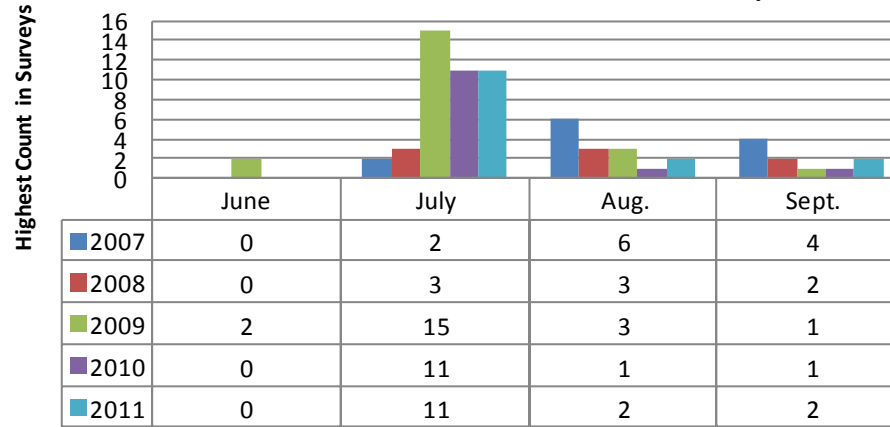




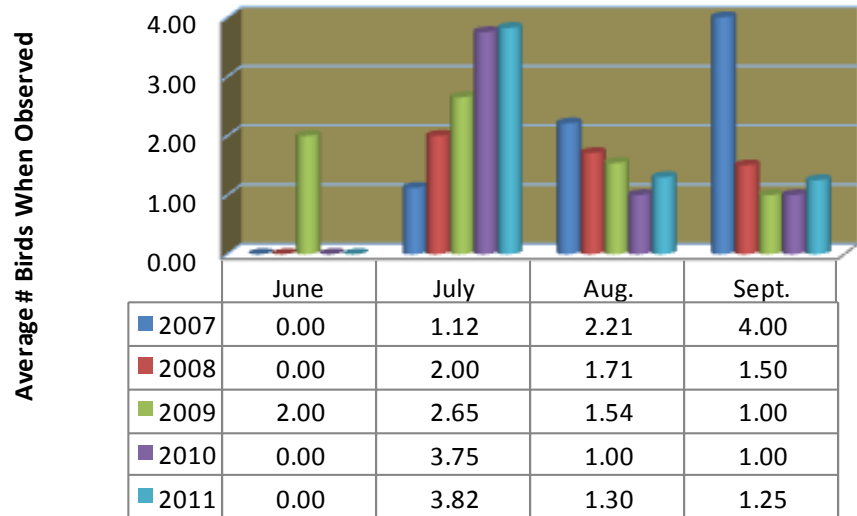


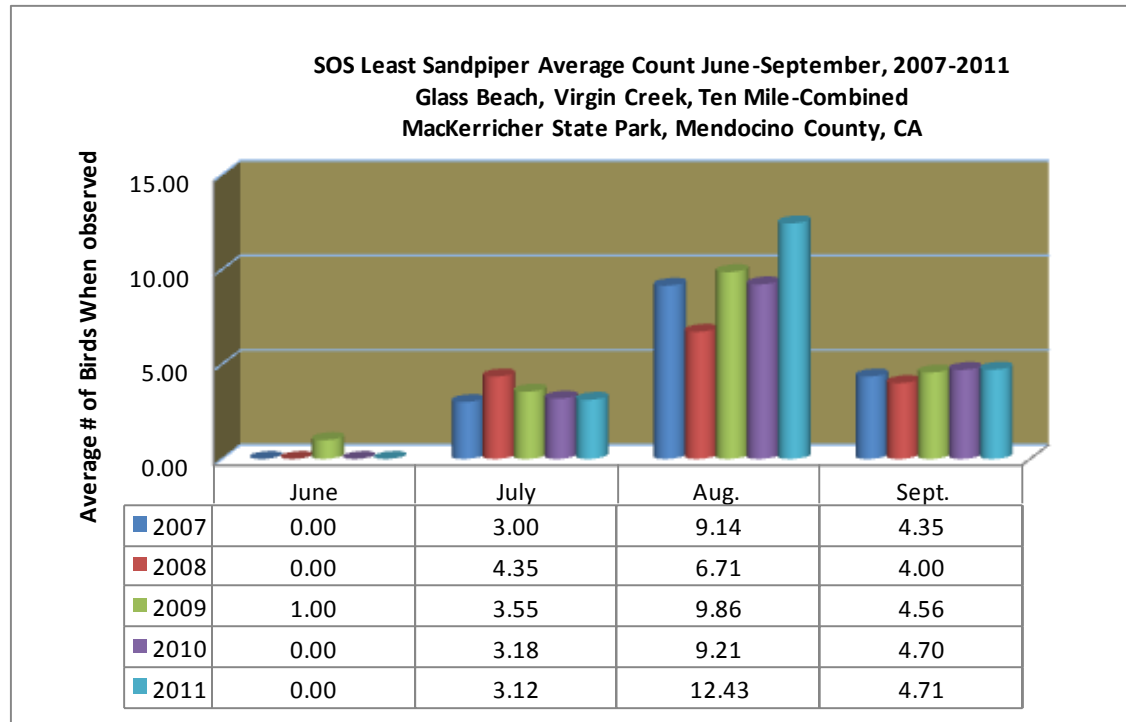
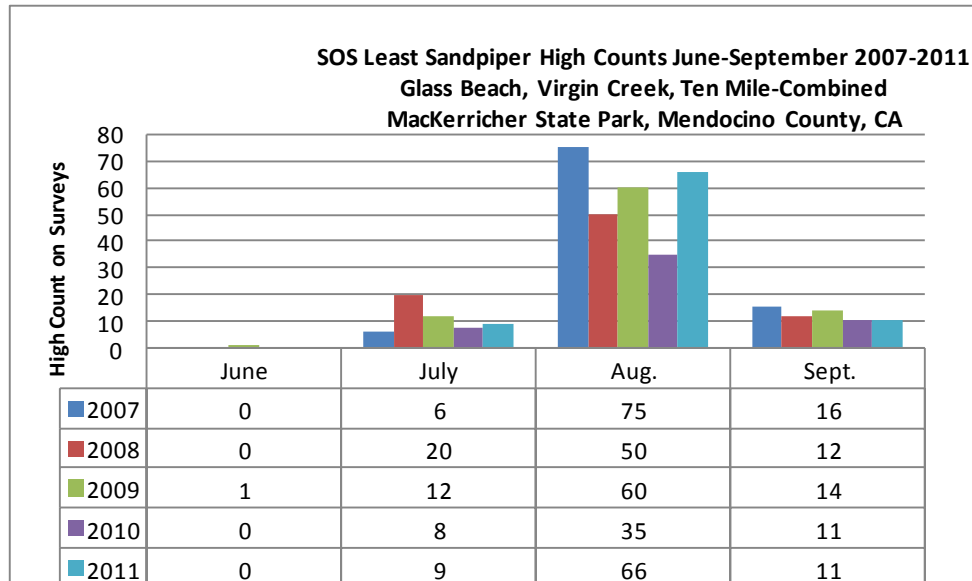


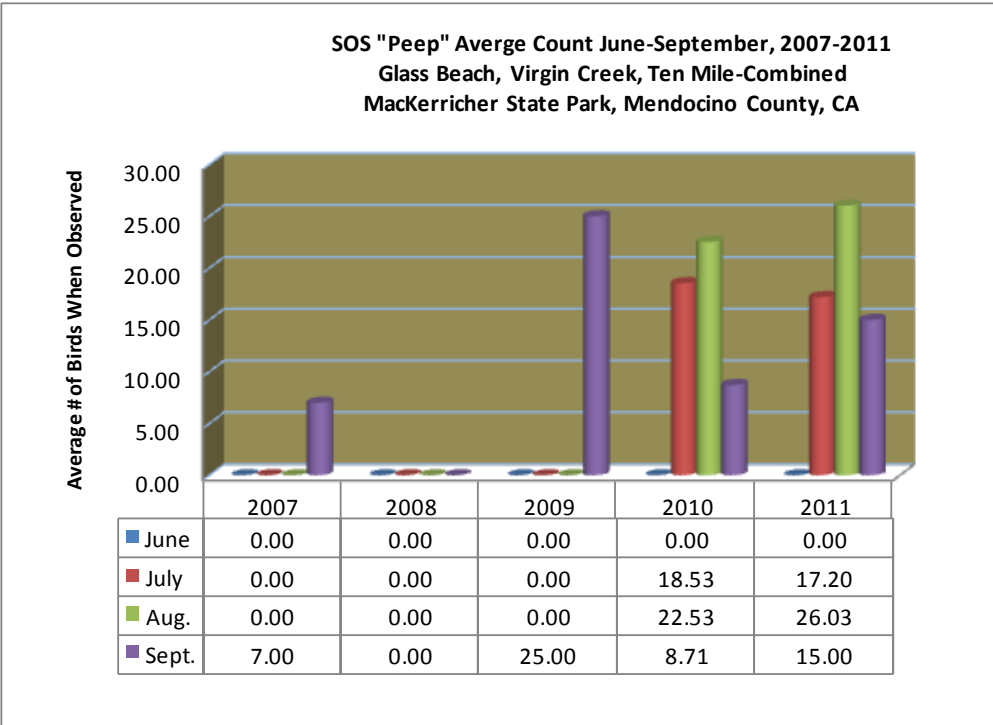
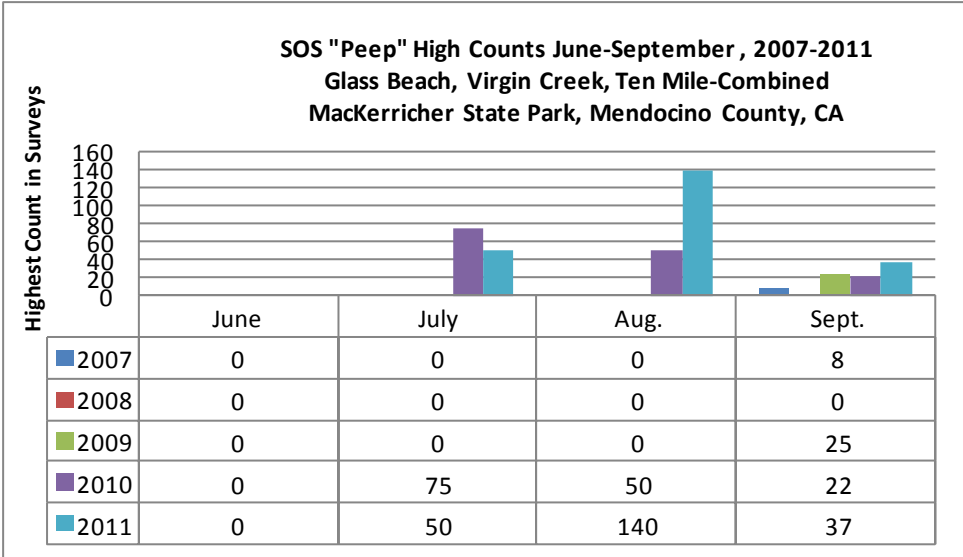
SOS Ruddy Turnstone High Counts June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA

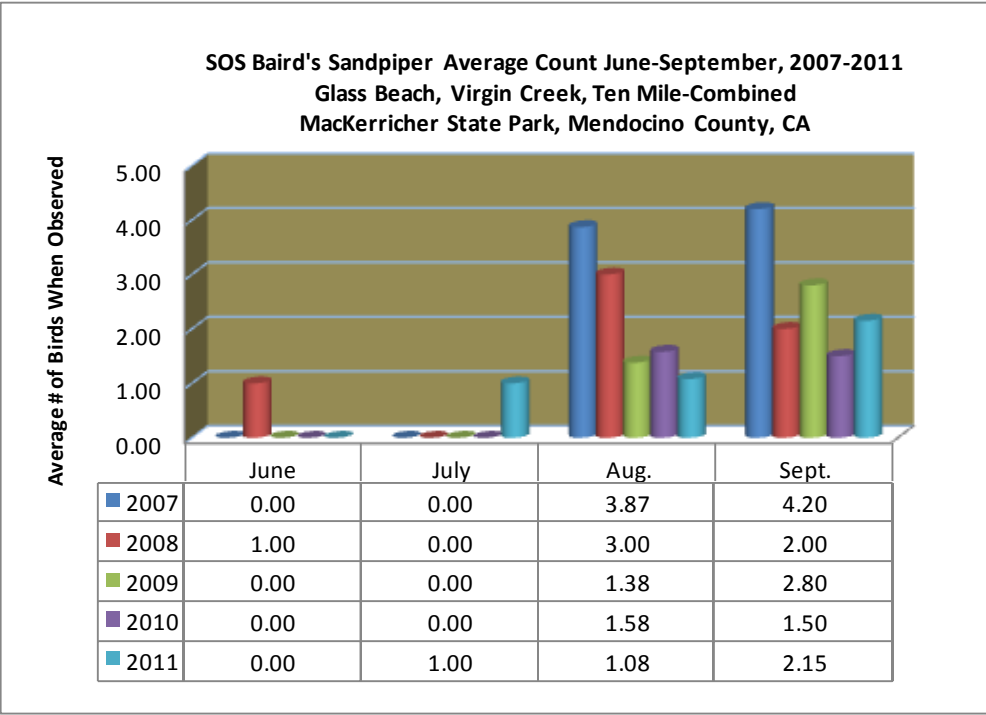
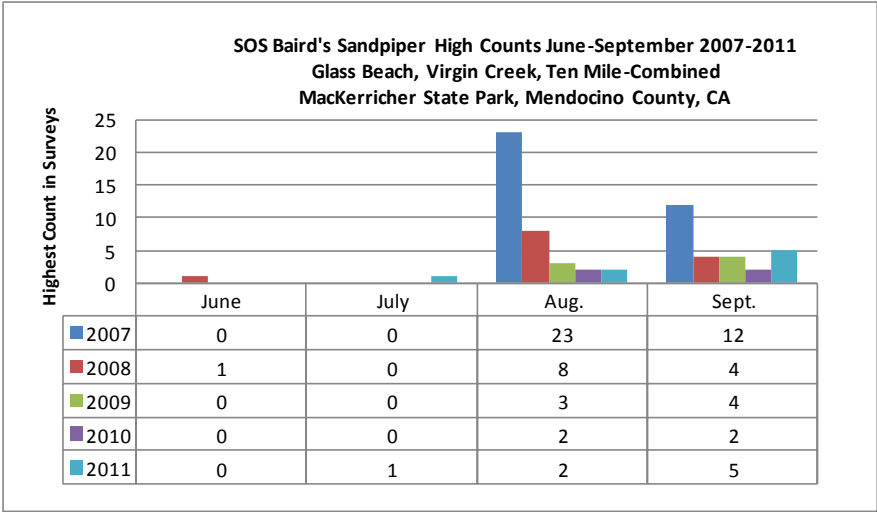


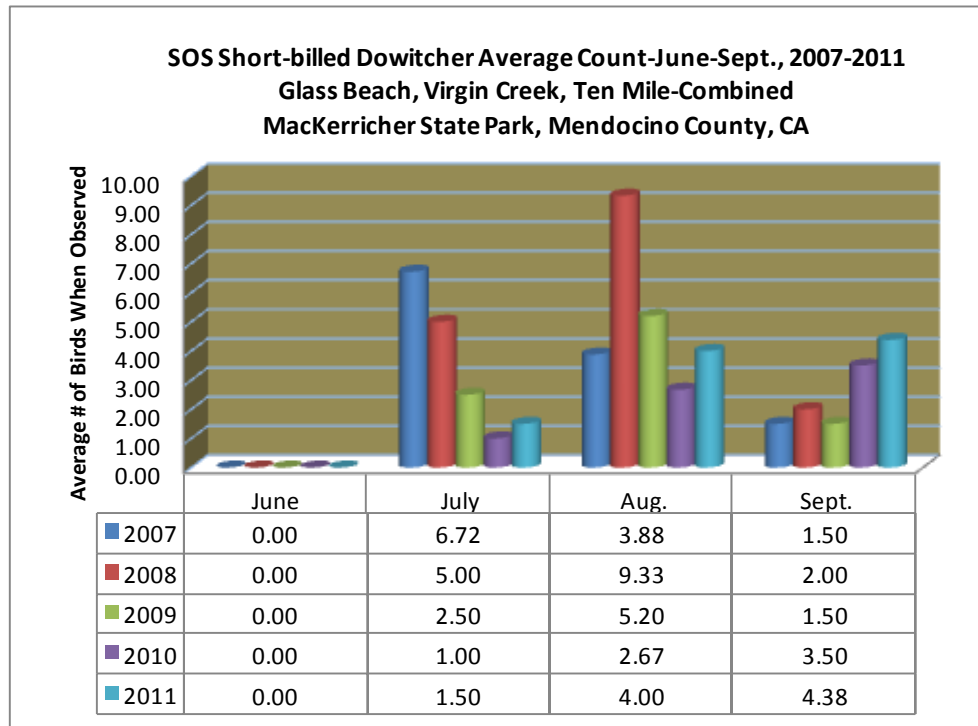
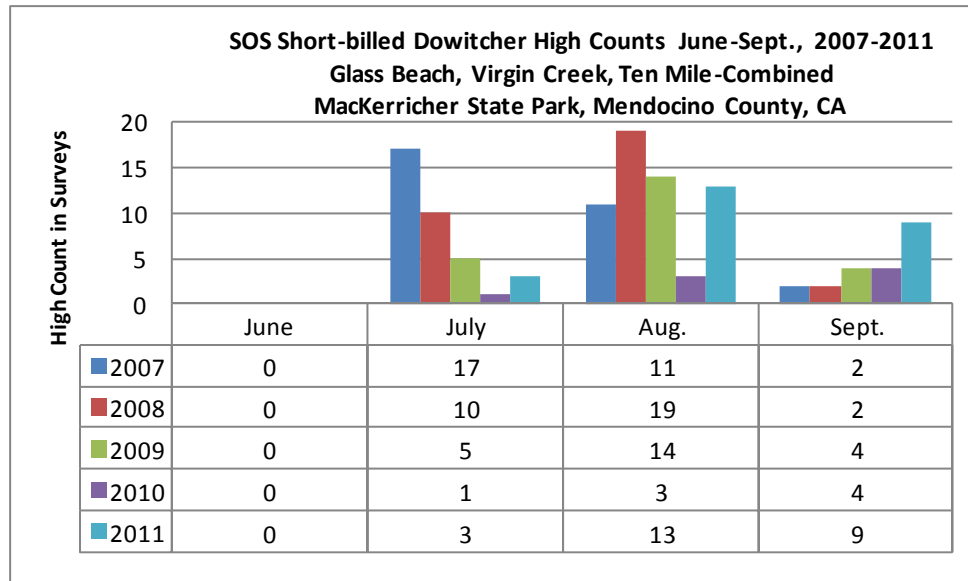
SOS Ruddy Turnstone Average Count June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA

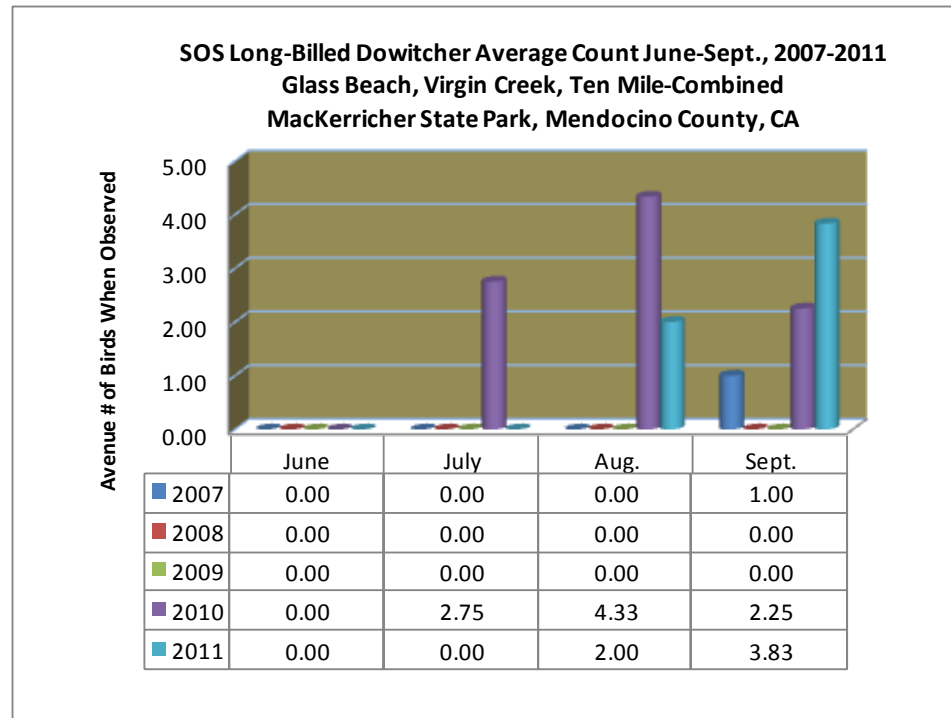
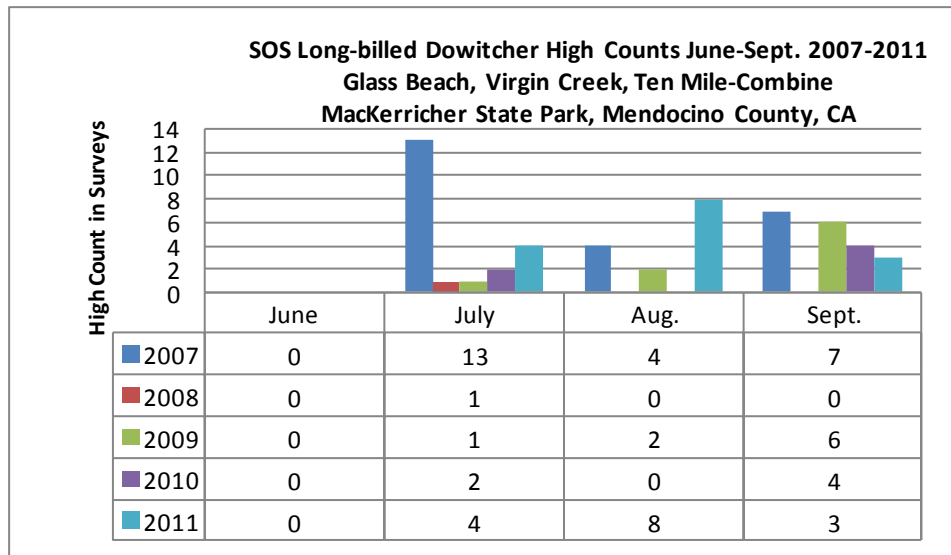




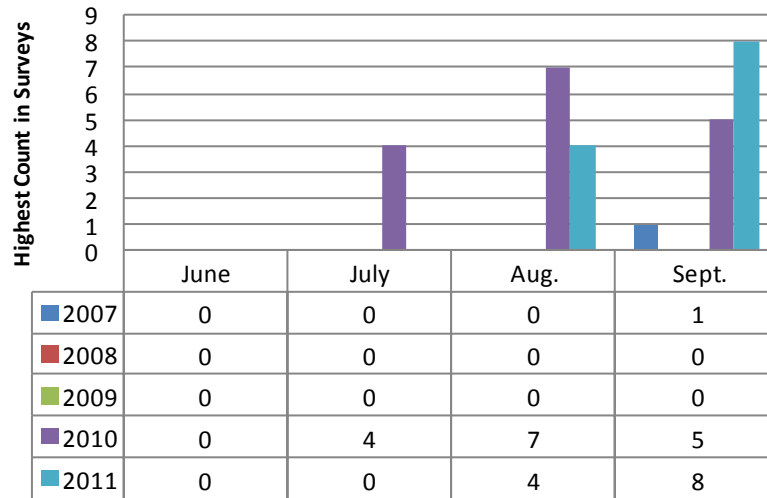




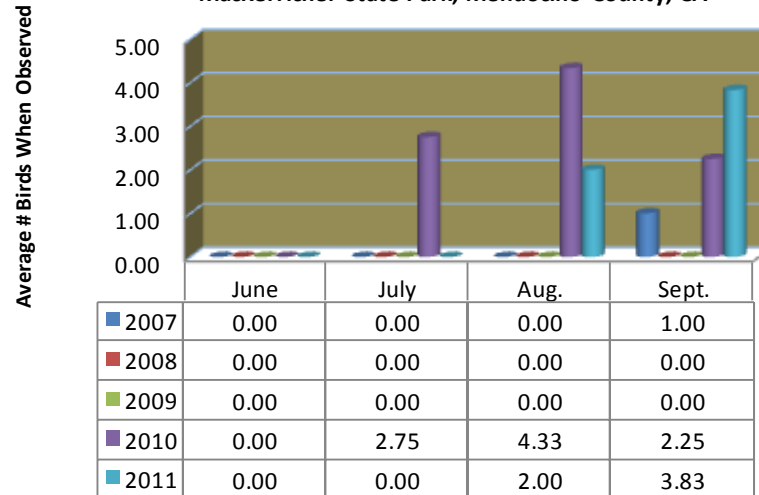


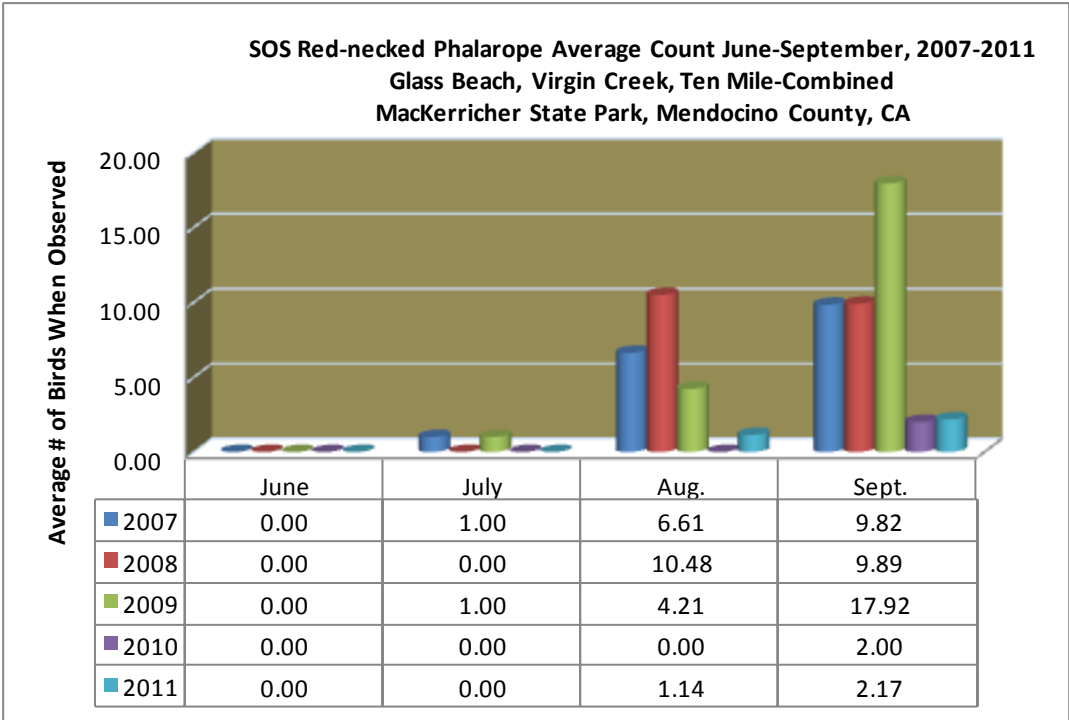
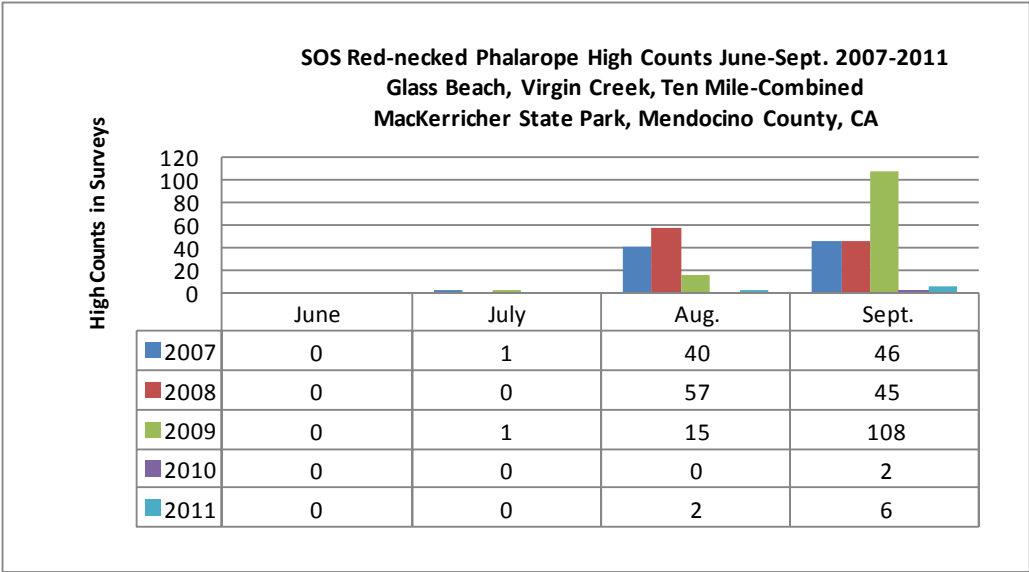


SOS Dowitcher sp. High Count June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA



SOS Dowitcher sp. Average Count June-Sept., 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
MacKerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA





Total Miscellaneous Non-Watchlisted Shorebird Sightings 2007-2011 (Note-Total Number of Sightings)

Pacific

Golden-Plover	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	1	0	0	0
August	0	0	2	11	1
September	0	0	0	2	0
Total	0	1	2	13	1

Greater

Yellowlegs	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	3	2	1	0	0
July	10	2	8	0	1
August	6	1	5	0	2
September	1	1	3	0	1
Total	20	6	17	0	4

Lesser

Yellowlegs	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	5	0	1	0	0
August	2	0	7	0	1
September	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7	0	8	0	1

Yellowlegs

Unidentified	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	3	0	0	0
August	1	0	0	0	0
September	3	0	0	0	0
Total	4	3	0	0	0

Dunlin

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	*30	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	3	0	0
Total	*30	0	3	0	0

*low confidence

Wilson's

Snipe	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	1	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	0	0

Red

Phalarope	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	1	0	0	0	0
August	6	0	0	0	2
September	0	0	23	0	2
Total	7	0	23	0	4

Spotted

Sandpiper	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	1	0	0	0	0
July	1	2	1	2	1
August	5	6	0	7	0
September	0	5	0	0	0
Total	7	13	1	9	1

Wilson's

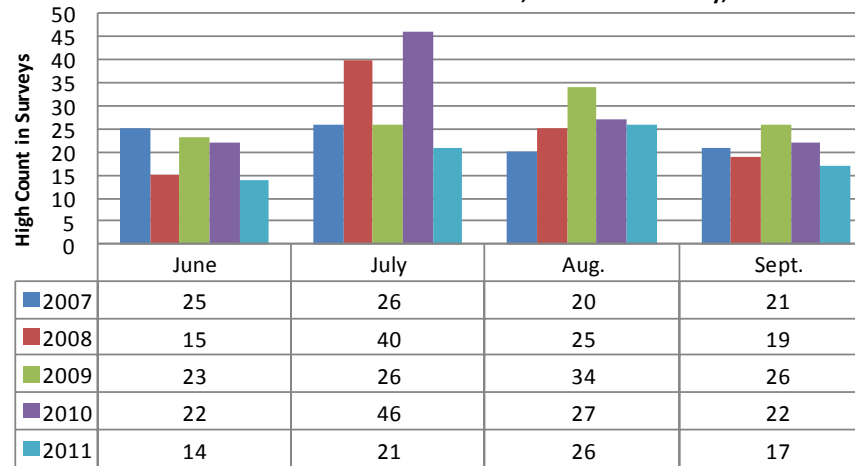
Phalarope	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	1	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	0	0

Pectoral

Sandpiper	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	2	1	0	4	2
September	0	0	0	4	2
Total	2	1	0	8	4

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SOS Common Raven High Counts June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
Mackerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA



SOS Common Raven Average Count June-September, 2007-2011
Glass Beach, Virgin Creek, Ten Mile-Combined
Mackerricher State Park, Mendocino County, CA

