



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- September 2020



Female Black-headed Grosbeak on a feeder in the rain. Photo by Catherine Keegan

CARRYING ON, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING

BY TIM BRAY

Every year in August, we get this question: Where did all the birds go? For weeks, our yards have been filled with birds and the air loud with their songs, but in late summer, it is quiet even in the mornings and few birds can be seen. What happened?

Birds that were making nests and defending territory in spring have raised their chicks, and the young birds are out trying to make their way in the world. The young are naive and vulnerable, so they often stay hidden in the brush and trees. Also, they are cryptically colored to help them escape notice. Their exhausted parents are now resting and molting, a process which leaves them vulnerable as well, so they tend to stay hidden. With no need to advertise for mates or territory, the males have mostly stopped singing.

Many species are preparing to migrate, expending as little energy as possible, so they can store it up for the journey. All of that adds up to greatly diminished activity, and therefore we have fewer chances to spot the birds moving about.

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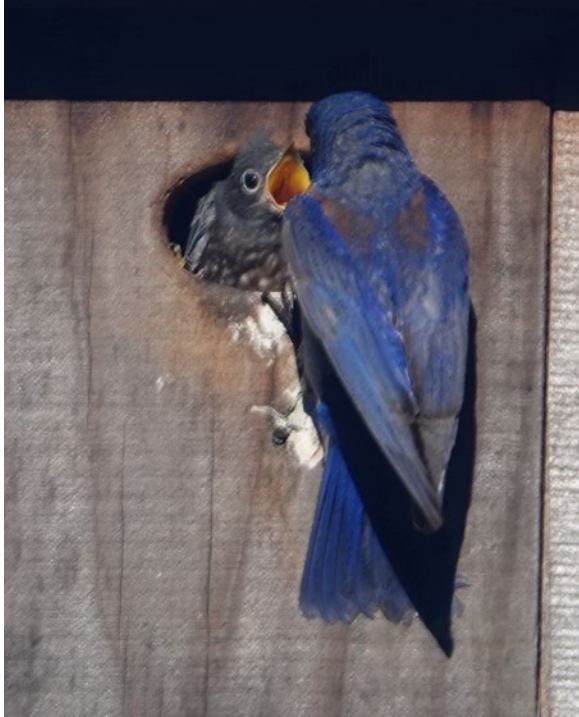


Photo by Becky Bowen

Be On the Lookout--We start to see Pectoral Sandpipers on our local beaches in September. It's a great bird to put on your list!

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This, however, is the pause before another big flurry of activity: migration season. Right now, we are seeing many migratory shorebirds and seabirds along the beaches and on the ocean. Some of those birds have just flown from Alaska. Songbirds have also begun to move about, and waves of warblers will soon be following the coastline south, along with many other birds. If you have a bird feeder or water feature in your yard, watch closely, as you never know what rarity might stop in to fuel up on the way. Try to keep track of your daily regular visitors and see if you can spot the first arrival of the winter birds.



Western Bluebird feeding young in nest box built during the February 2019 workshop. Photo by Catherine Keegan

Meanwhile, we humans have our own changing circumstances that require adaptation. The shelter-in-place orders have been relaxed and tourists have returned to the coast, yet the risk of contracting COVID-19 is now much greater than it was in spring when everything was shut down. Community transmission (cases where the source of infection cannot be determined) is occurring, and the number of Covid-19 cases continues to rise. The MCAS board of directors has been grappling with how to carry on with as much of our regular activity as possible, without exposing our members to excess risk. We have suspended all indoor meetings for the foreseeable future, as the risks are simply too great at this time. Our monthly programs at the Caspar Community Center will be replaced with virtual meetings via Zoom. (More details about that elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Outdoor activities are much less risky, though still complicated. We have restarted the “Early Bird” walks on the third Wednesday of each month at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, but only for those who are members of both MCBG and MCAS. This is to comply with the Gardens’ restrictions on early entry and to limit attendance to a manageable number. We are requiring masks and requesting everyone stay several feet apart. With these limitations we believe the risk of transmission is very low.

The Beginners Birdwalk remains suspended for now, while we work out how to manage a group in the Gardens on busy Saturdays.

Field trips are even more difficult, as many of our usual trips require carpooling. We have canceled the Pelagic Seabird trips planned for September, and the October trip to Hawk Hill. The November trip may still be possible. When we have these things worked out, we will notify members by e-mail and post information on our Facebook page. You will always find the latest information about MCAS activities, whatever the situation, at our website:

<https://mendocinocoastaudubon.org>

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen



Wandering Tattler August 18, 2020 MacKerricher State Park

Photograph by B. Bowen

THE TELL-ALL TALES OF THE TATTLERS WITH THE TEETERING TAILS

If a tattler could talk (and they do), just what would it tell us? Well, it turns out the bird would have plenty to say, that is, if you speak tattlerese.

Much to their delight, Save Our Shorebirds volunteers are finding the elusive birds fairly often during summer surveys. They are listed as uncommon here in the spring, summer, and fall (rare in winter). Finding the bird is all about location, location, location. Look for them along rocky sea stacks and bluffs (sometimes in shallow caves), and on pocket beaches. The first clue of their presence usually is the loud, repeated, staccato call (for which they are named). The other give-away is a rhythmic butt-bob, a behavior that is unmistakable when they forage in kelp debris alongside Black Turnstones, Surfbirds, and an occasional Spotted Sandpiper.

According to Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology, the global population is 10,000 to 25,000. Breeding grounds are in the mountains of Alaska and British Columbia. They winter along the central North American Pacific coast and points south—sometimes as far south as Australia. In the Fort Bragg area, look for them along the rocky bluffs of MacKerricher State Park from Virgin Creek north to the onshore rocks of the Ward Avenue beach.

The name for a group of Wandering Tattlers is a “whisper of tattlers.”

To view what volunteers are seeing on summer surveys, please visit facebook.com/saveourshorebirds

BRIANNA ZUBER PRESENTS:

INTERTIDAL MARINE LIFE: IT'S TOUGH BETWEEN THE TIDES



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 7:00 P.M.
VIA ZOOM

Learn about the wide diversity of marine life that inhabits the challenging ecosystem found between the tides with a focus on declining sea star populations along the west coast.

Brianna was born and raised in north Georgia. She stayed in Georgia to attend a small college where she earned a degree in Ecology and Field Biology. After that, she received a master's degree in Biology with a focus on ichthyology and finished her Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences in 2014. All along the way she studied fishes, ecology, and the environment. She moved to Ukiah in the fall of 2016 to work at Mendocino College where she is currently a Biology instructor and teaches courses in Marine Biology, Zoology, and Botany.



Click the [Zoom link here](#) at 6:45 p.m. on Monday night to attend the presentation.

Explained: What is Zoom?

Zoom is a video conferencing platform that can be used through a computer desktop or mobile app, and allows users to connect online for video conference meetings, webinars and live chat. During the Covid19 crisis, Zoom has seen a surge in popularity, with millions of people using it to stay in touch with others.

How does it work?

In order to join a Zoom meeting, a participant needs to have a meeting link, or a meeting ID and a password, and access to the internet or a phone. You do not need a Zoom account to access a meeting.

To join our [Zoom Meeting](#) via desktop, laptop, tablet, or smart phone:

At 6:45 PM, click the [Zoom link here](#). We are requesting that you to click on the link 15 minutes prior to the start of the event, so that you can make sure that your audio and video are working properly.

If you have never used Zoom before, you might need to download and install [the Zoom app](#). If there are still problems, check which release of Zoom you have installed. You may need to upgrade to the latest version.

If you cannot join by computer, tablet, or smart phone, you can dial the number below from any telephone and listen to the presentation:

1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose) or
1 253-215-8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 889 0452 0594
Passcode: 485752



TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ZOOM

BASICS

- Internet connection
- Speaker
- Microphone
- Camera or webcam

OPERATING SYSTEMS

- Mac OS X (MacOS10.6.8 or later)
- Windows 7,8,10
- Windows Vista SP1 or later
- Windows XP SP3 or later
- Ubuntu 12.04 or higher
- Mint 17.1 or higher
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.4 or higher
- Oracle Linux 6.4 or higher
- CentOS 6.4 or higher
- Fedora 21 or higher
- OpenSUSE 13.2 or higher
- ArchLinux (64-bit only)

TABLETS & MOBILE DEVICES

- iOS
- Android
- Blackberry
- Windows Surface Pro

BROWSERS

- IE7+
- Firefox
- Chrome
- Safari 5+

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL
CLEANUP 2020**

This year, [Coastal Cleanup Day](#) is every Saturday in September at your local happy place!

For safety reasons, **there are no large, centrally organized cleanup sites this year.** Instead, cleanups will be self-guided and close to home. Practice physical distancing, and strictly follow both local ordinances and this safety document.

Cleaning your neighborhoods, local parks, streets, and storm drains helps protect our coast. Trash travels through storm drains, creeks, and rivers to become beach and ocean pollution. Help clean the beach by picking up litter in your community.

You can clean up any day, any time. Report your cleanup by recording data on the [CleanSwell app](#) or by completing [this form](#). All cleanups in September will be included as part of Coastal Cleanup Month.

Thank you for staying safe, cleaning your neighborhoods, and protecting the coast!



A "grain" of Sanderlings at Ten Mile Beach, January 14, 2017. Photograph by B. Bowen

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT SHOREBIRDS?

Our October zoom program is about shorebirds and the MCAS Save Our Shorebirds Conservation Program. Ever wonder why some shorebirds have such big eyes? Ever wonder where you can find shorebirds in MacKerricher State Park and when to look for them? Ever seen a shorebird with bands on its legs? Ever wanted to know that bird's story? Send your questions to Becky Bowen at casparbeck@comcast.net and she will do her best to answer them--either on the air during the October 19 program or by e-mail.

CALENDAR

Although the strict Shelter-In-Place order has been relaxed to allow some group activities, the risk of contracting COVID-19 remains high and we remain extremely cautious. Field trips and the Beginner's Bird walks have been canceled. The Early Bird walks are continuing with restrictions. Our monthly Chapter meetings and presentations will be conducted remotely via Zoom. We will notify you of any changes via e-mail, our Facebook page and our website.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Wednesday 17 - Early Bird Walk 8:30 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 CA-1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Monday 21 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Join us for a presentation Intertidal Marine Life: It's Tough Between the Tides. See page 4.

OCTOBER 2020

Wednesday 14 - Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 p.m. Via Zoom

Will be conducted remotely on Zoom. Contact Tim Bray for more information.

Monday 19 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Join us for a presentation Confessions of a Shorebird Nut: The Ins and Outs and Ups and Downs Of Mendocino Coast Audubon's Save Our Shorebirds Program

Wednesday 21 - Early Bird Walk 8:30 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 CA-1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

****Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens (18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA)**

The Early Bird walks will continue starting before the Gardens are open to the public. MCBG has requested that we limit these walks to a small number of people, and only to those who are members of MCBG. The following safety precautions will be required::

- Leave 6 feet of space between you and others not in your party. If passing another visitor on a trail, please announce yourself and provide space for fellow guests to pass.
- All visitors must wear face masks that cover the nose and mouth in accordance with the Mendocino County Health Order at all times to protect yourself, other guests, and our staff.
- There will be limited access to restrooms. The interior Display House restrooms are the only available restroom facilities onsite.
- Bring your own water as all water fountains will be turned off.

For complete and current calendar, updates, and useful links, visit:

www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org

www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2018-2019

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Webmaster	Catherine Keegan	keegan@mcn.org
Newsletter Editor	Megan Smithyman	mesmithy@gmail.com

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society e-mail address: audubon@mcn.org

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society is to help people appreciate and enjoy native birds, and to conserve and restore local ecosystems for the benefit of native birds and other wildlife.

MENDOCINO COAST AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 2297

FORT BRAGG, CA, 95437

