

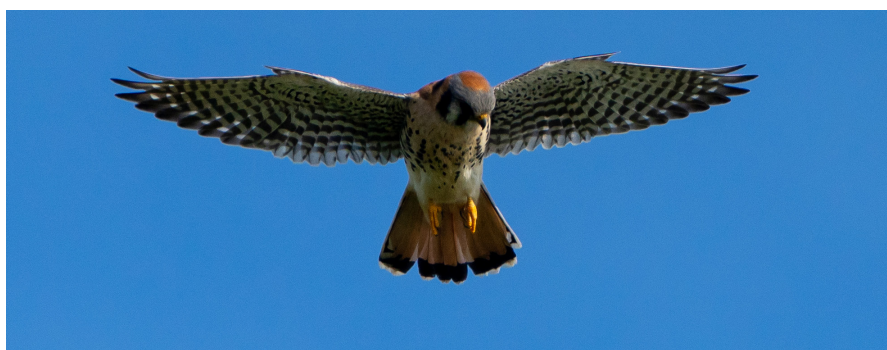


The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- April 2023

MIGRATION

by Tim Bray



American Kestrel. Photo by Shannon Underhill

Spring is, I must confess, my least favorite season here on the Mendocino coast. As I write this it is a classic spring day: beautiful to look at from inside, but cold and windy outside, unpleasant for gardening or birding. Such days are perfect for reading about birds, and I recommend "A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds" by Scott Weidensaul. It has raised my own awareness of the staggering scope and complexity of bird migration, and focused my attention on the sudden seasonal changes in birds in my own yard.

If you have been keeping track, you have probably already noticed some of these changes. The Yellow-rumped Warblers that were so abundant a few weeks ago are gone. We still have a few American Robins but the massive flocks of winter have slipped away. I miss the big dark-chocolate Fox Sparrows kicking away the mulch around the plants in my garden, though the Spotted Towhees valiantly carry on. Likewise the big-eyed Hermit Thrush that has been striking poses all winter seems to have departed, perhaps moving only a few hundred yards up the ridge. We still have Golden-crowned Sparrows, but soon they will depart as well, flying all the way up to Canada or even Alaska.

On the other hand, the Grevillea hedge is ringing with the sounds of

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Peregrine Falcon by Lisa D Walker-Roseman. More on page 4.

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Allen's Hummingbirds and an occasional Rufous, chasing each other around and making their spectacular display flights. Violet-green Swallows appeared just a few days ago, probably the advance scouting party. Orange-crowned Warblers just appeared in my yard, and Western Bluebirds have been checking out the nest boxes. Ospreys began returning a few weeks ago – in fact, a few never left – but just a few days ago I saw my first one carrying a fish up over Highway One, perhaps a courtship offering.

Despite the inconvenient weather, try to make time each day to observe and record which birds you are seeing in your yard or wherever you watch birds regularly. The phenomenon of bird migration is one of the great wonders of the natural world, and we are fortunate to see it happening right outside our windows.

On another note: a Purple Finch with symptoms of Avian Pox was recently found near Fort Bragg. Be sure to clean and sanitize your bird feeders once a week. Clean off all the crud and then soak the feeder for a few minutes in a solution of one part household bleach to nine parts water. Let it dry completely before refilling. Also remember to clean out and sanitize nest boxes, if you haven't already. Birds will be going in and out of them very soon.

THE 'BIRD CHANNEL'

by Megan Smithyman



Eastern Bluebird, Maine.

Every cold winter day in Maine, my mother will be out in her yard refilling the many tubes, containers, and suet cages that feed a beautiful abundance of birdlife. She has kept bird feeders for as long as I can remember, no matter where in the country we were living. After she was diagnosed with breast cancer at the end of last year, my sister and I bought her a bird feeder camera so she can watch them from her phone, no matter where she is. We have taken to calling it the 'Bird Channel' and it has been a daily source of joy during a very long winter.

The camera has a motion sensor and records a short video of the many birds that visit the feeder attachment. Every morning we text back and forth about the different visitors at 'the cafe', or comment on her favorite pair of Eastern Bluebirds who like to sit and dine together, mugging for the camera. It can also live stream, like a digital window right into the backyard, that we can all watch when we're away from home.

As the snow drifts finally give way to early green, I look forward to seeing all the new visitors on the 'Bird Channel'. In fact, there are plans to expand the network, as I have ordered one for myself specifically for hummingbirds. I know this new cast of characters will give us a lot to talk about in the months ahead.

RECENT SIGHTINGS

by Roger Adamson



*Palm Warbler, March 24, Noyo Harbor.
Photo by Roger Adamson.*

March has been a slow birding month for many of us with the, shall we say, difficult weather for birding. The first report of the season that I have seen of a Rufous Hummingbird was on the 1st in Ukiah (RC). A yellow-shafted Northern Flicker was reported at Virgin Creek on the 6th (MH, EK). These are often "intergrades," having characteristics of both the western red-shafted and eastern yellow-shafted Northern Flickers; they need to be checked carefully. Two Short-eared Owls were spotted at the Noyo Headlands Park on the 10th (AH). These owls were headed north and did not stay around. A group of inland birders participated in an outing to the Willits Water Treatment Plant on the 24th and reported seeing an American Bittern, always a treat (MF, ML, DB, CV). The same group encountered a White-throated Swift, a definite sign of the changing

seasons. I think the best report of the month was of a Harris's Sparrow visiting a home on the coast on the 9th (SF). This is about the tenth county record-an excellent find! And lastly, the Palm Warbler that has graced the Slack Tide Cafe since January was still present as of the 24th. It's beginning to get breeding plumage!

Harris's Sparrow is a heavy-billed, seed-eating, close relative of White-crowned and other Zonotrichia sparrows. It breeds in the far north of Canada in mixed tundra/spruce forest/scrub land. Harris's winters from Nebraska to central Texas and frequents open fields near shrubs, hedgerows, ravines, and other such cover. Christmas Bird Count data showed significant decline in observed birds from 1966 to 2006. No definite cause has been identified, but it could be related to the increasing removal of hedgerows in agricultural areas, i.e., habitat loss on the wintering grounds. By some estimates we have lost more than 50% of the population over the last 30 years.



Harris's Sparrow, March 9. Photo by Sarah Flaim

Thanks to these birders for their reports. Ronald Cox (RC), Eileen Kay (EK), Marilyn Hemmeter (MH), Angela Harvey (AH), Mookie Fudenberg (MF), Mary Lamke (ML), Dave Bengston (DB), Chuck Vaughn (CV), Sarah Flaim (SF).

PHOTO OF THE MONTH: SPRING!



Female Western Bluebird preening, by Lisa D Walker-Roseman (AKA Feather)

Calling all photographers: We would love to showcase your latest and greatest shots with a themed monthly photo contest. Next month's theme will be: Colors! Share your best and brightest plumage shots as spring will soon be in full swing. 3 entries per person, not to exceed 3MB in size per photo. Please include your name, bird identification, and a sentence or two about the entry or how it pertains to the theme. Contact information will be shared if requested.

Deadline for May's Newsletter will be Sunday, April 23.

Send your submissions for the theme of Colors! to: Mendobirding@gmail.com

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Notes from MCAS Scholarship Recipients **By Taylor Woodruff**

Editor's Note – Life was not fair and not easy in 2020 and 2021. The covid pandemic was especially hard on students at every level. The virtual classroom frequently was the only way to go forward. Achieving goals required determined persistence. But we had no doubt Taylor Woodruff would meet the challenges. She graduated with honors from Mendocino College in 2020 and was accepted at California State University Long Beach. She was the recipient of the 2020 MCAS Brandon Pill Memorial Scholarship. We recently re-connected with her and asked her to share her story – knowing her story is part of our story, too.

I'm so happy you reached out. Since receiving the Mendocino Coast Audubon Scholarship, I have graduated from Mendocino Community College with three Associate of Science Degrees: Allied Health, Health Sciences, and Biology for Transfer. I then transferred to CSU Long Beach and graduated with Departmental Honors for Biological Sciences—and received my Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology.

I worked and volunteered over 400 hours in the Shark Lab, a research lab on campus. I got to help out all of the grad students with data collection for their projects including working with teleosts, stingrays, and white sharks. I worked for 6 months with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a Scientific Aide through the Heritage Wild Trout and Trout in the Classroom programs. Lots of water quality and drought monitoring in Southern California creeks.

I am currently working for Big Valley Rancheria's Environmental Protection Department as the Fisheries Program Coordinator (Lake County). I am out doing surveys everyday monitoring the creeks. The Clear Lake Hitch have started their spawning migration and we've already spent all of yesterday and today (March 15 and 16, 2023) doing fish rescues and releasing them further downstream to prevent any fish die-offs of a listed species under the California Endangered Species Act. They have gotten stuck in places after all the rain and flooding, so we are trying to save as many as we can! We will continue this as the creeks start to dry up when the rain stops. I think that is everything I have been up to since receiving the scholarship. It has really helped me to succeed and further my education! I can't thank you guys enough and I hope you are all doing well.



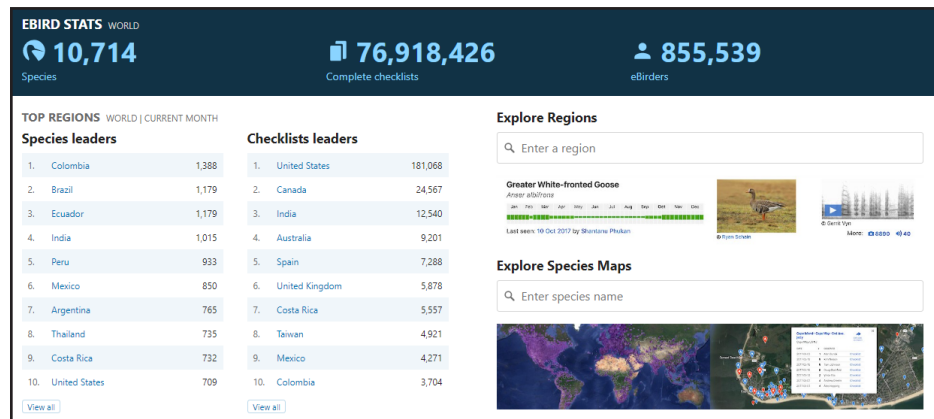
*Taylor Woodruff, Fisheries Program Coordinator at Big Valley EPA, with a Clear Lake Hitch, *Lavinia exilicauda chi*, as part of a carp and goldfish feasibility study on Clear Lake, CA. Photo by Alicia Castellanos, Environmental Assistant.*

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society supports funding for science scholarships at Mendocino College. Recipients are selected by science faculty members based on academic achievement, financial need, and participation in laboratory research at the college Field Station near Point Arena:

<https://www.mendocino.edu/about/mlccd/our-campus/mendocino-college-coastal-field-station>

Financial support comes from the society's scholarship program and donations from Audubon members as well as members of our community. Scholarships typically are awarded in the spring. To learn more or to donate to the Brandon Pill or the Prof. Greg Grantham Memorial scholarships, please contact Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Scholarship Chair Judy Steele judys@mcn.org

EVENTS

*Chuck Vaughn Presents:***eBIRDING****Monday, April 17 at 7:00 PM****Lions Club hall, 430 East Redwood Street, FB.**

Since it was launched by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in 2002, [eBird](#) has become an important tool for researchers. The data drawn from millions of eBird observations worldwide has provided critical information for studying overall population trends and migration timing. Apart from the role it plays in citizen science, eBird also appeals to birders for its ability to keep track of sightings in one easily accessible place. Add to that the endless information on thousands of species and the ability to find out about unusual observations of rare birds, and it's easy to see why eBird is among the world's largest biodiversity-related science projects. Starting out with eBird can be daunting, but with some patience, anyone can learn to use its features. This presentation will focus on the basics: creating an account and submitting checklists. We can also explore some of eBird's unique features such as the "Species Map" and "Explores Hotspots" pages.



My father was a birder, and so I have had an interest in birds really for as long as I can remember. That interest faded as commitments to my family and work occupied most of my time. I lost a book with many of my early birding notes, and more importantly, I lost touch with the pleasure that birding had provided me. Then, as my children were growing older and more independent, a birding co-worker of mine, Bob Keiffer, generously guided me around the county on various birding trips. His mentorship reinfected me with the birding virus which I believe is now terminal. I started using eBird in 2003 and have been a reviewer for some time. It has provided an enjoyable outlet in my retirement!

FIELD TRIPS

ANDERSON VALLEY BREWERY GROUNDS

Saturday, April 22 from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

17700 Boonville Rd, Boonville, CA 95415

Last year's trip to the Anderson Valley Brewing Company was so much fun, we are going to do it again. The 26-acre property includes huge old Liveoak trees, meadows, and riparian willows along Anderson Creek. It's a great place to find many of the oak-woodland birds, such as Bullock's Oriole, Chipping Sparrow, Oak Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch, that are rare on the coast. In April they will be singing and last year we watched as a female Oriole wove strands of grass into her nest.



We can wander about the grounds and then return to the Tasting Room for a picnic lunch. If there is time and inclination, we can carpool up Highway 253 to look for Golden Eagle, or bird other spots in the valley.

Anderson Valley Brewing is located at the junction of Highways 128 and 253. The entrance is from Highway 253 (the Boonville-Ukiah Road). Go through the gate and past the Tasting Room parking areas; continue straight ahead and park just off the pavement on the grassy area.

OFFSHORE PELAGIC TRIP

Sunday, May 7 from 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

32440 N Harbor Dr, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

We have scheduled an all-day offshore seabirding trip for Sunday May 7 out of Noyo Harbor, on the *Kraken*. Cost is \$175 per person, paid directly to Anchor Charters. Act quickly if you want to go with us; these trips usually sell out in advance.

To reserve a spot, contact Chuck Vaughn, cevaughn@pacific.net

May is an exciting time to go offshore as birds are moving through the region. Fewer pelagic trips have been run in Spring, so less is known about the species present, but Albatrosses are abundant and Petrels are possible. We can also expect Jaegers, Terns, Phalaropes (in breeding plumage), Auklets, Sabine's Gull, and likely a few Shearwaters as well. Grand prize would be Short-tailed Albatross, which has been seen on May trips in past years.

This trip will depart at 7 AM and return to the dock around 5 PM. Conditions permitting we may go 30 miles offshore. Even if it's rough we should be able to reach the Noyo Canyon area where seabirds often congregate only 10-12 miles out.

PROGRAMS

NATHAN PIELOW PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS



Mendocino Coast Audubon welcomes Nathan Pieplow, professor and author of the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*, published in two volumes, Eastern (2017) and Western (2019) to the Mendocino Coast for two workshops and programs in Caspar and Gualala.

Nathan, an avid bird sound recordist and videographer, is the author of the bird sound blog Earbirding.com, a board member of the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, an author of the Colorado Birding Trail, and former editor of the journal *Colorado Birds*. Nathan teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

WORKSHOP: A Shared Vocabulary for Bird Sounds

Workshop Fee: \$36. Registration is limited to 15 and is closed once filled!

South Coast - Saturday May 13, 2023, at 7:00AM

Mill Bend house, 46902 Old Stage Rd, Gualala 95445

Please contact Cheryl Harris cheryleharris@sbcglobal.net

North Coast - *FULL, WAITLIST ONLY*

Sunday May 14, 2023, at 7:00AM at Russian Gulch State Park CA-1, Mendocino

Please contact Hayley Ross hayleyhross@gmail.com

PROGRAM PRESENTATION: The Language of Birds

All around us, the birds are constantly telling us who they are and what they are doing. In this talk for any audience, Nathan Pieplow unlocks the secrets of their language. You'll listen in on the pillow talk of a pair of Red-winged Blackbirds and learn the secret signals that Cliff Swallows use when they have found food. You'll learn how one bird sound can have many meanings, and how one meaning can have many sounds—and how, sometimes, the meaning isn't in the sounds at all. This talk from the author of the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds* is an accessible, entertaining introduction to a fascinating topic.

Free and open to the public; donations welcomed.

South Coast - Friday May 12, 2023 at 7:00PM

Ohlson Ranch House, 37405 Shoreline Highway, The Sea Ranch 95497

Parking passes are required for this event, please contact Cheryl Harris cheryleharris@sbcglobal.net

North Coast - Monday May 15, 2023 at 7:00PM

Lions Club 430 East Redwood, Fort Bragg 95437

For more information about the presentation, please contact:

Terra Fuller at terrafuller74@gmail.com

CALENDAR

The Beginner's Birdwalk and the Early Birdwalk at the Gardens are continuing on the regular schedule. As always, check our website for the most up-to-date information, and keep up with the postings on our Facebook page.

APRIL 2023

Saturday 1 - Beginner's Bird Walk 9:00 AM - Noon

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

Tuesday 4 - Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 PM

Monday 17 - Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for an in-person presentation of eBird by Chuck Vaughn.

Wednesday 19 - Early Bird Walk 8:00 AM - Noon

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

Saturday 22 - Anderson Valley Brewery Grounds 9:00 AM - Noon

17700 Boonville Rd, Boonville, CA 95415. See page 7 for more information.

MAY 2023

Tuesday 2 - Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 PM

Saturday 6 - Beginner's Bird Walk 9:00 AM - Noon

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

Saturday 7 - Pelagic Trip 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM See page 7 for more information.

Friday 12 - The Language of Birds Presentation 7:00 PM

Ohlson Ranch House, 37405 Shoreline Highway, The Sea Ranch 95497

Saturday 13 - Workshop: Shared Vocabulary for Bird Sounds 7:00 AM

Mill Bend house, 46902 Old Stage Rd, Gualala 95445

Sunday 14 - Workshop: Shared Vocabulary for Bird Sounds 7:00 AM *FULL

Russian Gulch State Park CA-1, Mendocino

Monday 15 - The Language of Birds Presentation 7:00 PM

Lions Club 430 East Redwood, Fort Bragg 95437

Wednesday 17 - Early Bird Walk 8:00 AM - Noon

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

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

www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org

www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2022-2023

President	Tim Bray	tbray@mcn.org	(707) 734-0791
Vice President	David Jensen	djensen@mcn.org	(707) 964-8163
Secretary	Roger Adamson	radamson@mcn.org	
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	havlenas@fix.net	
Education	Pam Huntley	pjhuntley@hotmail.com	
Membership	Adam Hutchins	raptorous@me.com	(707) 734-3470
Zoom Czar	Nicolet Houtz	nicolethoutz@gmail.com	
Programs	Terra Fuller	terrafuller74@gmail.com	(707) 964-4675
Programs	Hayley Ross	hayleyhross@gmail.com	
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Scholarship Chair	Judy Steele	judys@mcn.org	
Field Trips	Tess McGuire	tmcguire9130@gmail.com	
Newsletter Editor	Megan Smithyman	mesmithy@gmail.com	
Social Media	Catherine Keegan	keegan@mcn.org	

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

