



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- April 2018

## RON LeVALLEY PRESENTS The Life Cycles and Identification of Gulls

MONDAY, APRIL 16 AT 7 P.M.  
CASPAR COMMUNITY CENTER



*California gull by Ron LeValley*

Join us for the April meeting where Ron LeValley will speak on the Life Cycles and Identification of Gulls. He will cover the common gulls in Mendocino and a few of the rarities, in addition to going over the plumage cycle and time of year that we see them. He will also review where they breed and where they winter. Ron is a well-known birder and professional wildlife photographer.

He obtained his Master's degree from Humboldt State studying the Yellow-Footed Gull and subsequently spent several years on the Farrallones doing research on seabirds.

### *Inside This Issue*

<i>President's Corner By Dave Jensen</i>	2
<i>Global Big Day</i>	3
<i>Audubon &amp; Prop 68</i>	4
<i>California Clean Water and Safe Parks Act</i>	5
<i>Save Our Shorebirds By Becky Bowen</i>	6
<i>Why Do Birds Matter? Big River Bird Surveys</i>	7
<i>April/May MCAS Field Trips</i>	8
<i>April/May MCAS Calendar</i>	9
<i>MCAS Board of Directors</i>	10



*Mew gull by Ron LeValley*

*Participate in this year's  
Global Big Day May 5, 2018.  
See page 3.*

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER****Dave Jensen**

In my honest opinion, clichés have been given a bum rap. They are like the New York Yankees or the New England Patriots; people denigrate them because they are so reliable. Consider the following: The more things change, the more they stay the same. What goes around comes around. You can win the battle but lose the war. Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. It ain't over 'til it's over.

I'm thinking about people and politics and pressures and persistence. And birds. Let's remember the past for a minute – Audubon's past, our past. There was a time when it seemed like this country's resources were inexhaustible. The Central Valley was teeming with elk. Passenger Pigeons blackened the sky in numbers that we cannot comprehend today. Seabird eggs and waterfowl were shipped to market in barrels. Egrets were as common on ladies' hats as they were in the swamps. Everything was there for the taking.

Those with vision could see the inevitable end to this excessive extraction. They fought hard to stop the destruction and protect those things that we hold so dear. Great victories were won. The Migratory Bird Act stopped the needless slaughter of birds. The Endangered Species Act was established to help slow the extinction of vulnerable species. A system of refuges was established to facilitate their recovery. DDT was banned, and the eagles and falcons thrived again. Limits were established to help protect birds and our coastline from oil spills.

But clichés become clichés because they are so true. It truly ain't over 'til it's over. Recent initiatives in Washington D.C. seem to have set the clock back about 150 years, back to a time when everything was there for the taking.

The federal government recently announced a plan to open vast areas of our oceans to new offshore oil drilling. We've seen the effects of this before. This proposal will put countless seabirds and shorebirds at risk, along with coastal communities whose economies depend on their shores. To make matters worse, this misguided attempt to unravel legal protections is not limited to our coastline.

Seven long years of negotiations between energy developers, recreation interests and conservation groups produced California's Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, which designated one half million acres of land where renewable energy projects can be sited without risk to sensitive species such as Burrowing Owls, Prairie Falcons, and Desert Tortoises. The same people who want to drill along our coast also want to dismantle this historic agreement.

The historic agreement to facilitate oil and gas drilling while protecting the Greater Sage Grouse is suffering a similar fate.

Those with vision can again see the inevitable end to this unfortunate course of action. Like those who stood fast one hundred years ago, we must again fight to protect those things that we hold so dear. Please join me and thousands of other Audubon members in speaking out for the protection of what we hold dear. It is our legacy, not only as Audubon members, but also as members of this community. Thank you for standing with us.



Global Big Day, 5 May 2018. Birding's biggest day, uniting birdwatchers worldwide across political boundaries and language barriers, all brought together by our shared passion for birds. In 2017, 20,500 people from 162 countries took part. **In 2018, will you join us?**

It's simple to contribute: go birding and then submit your data to eBird—how easy and fun is that? You don't need to do a full day of birding; even an hour or 10 minutes makes a real difference!

### How do I make my sightings count?

To have your sightings be included in the Global Big Day, they have to be entered in eBird as one or more checklists. Go to <http://eBird.org/globalbigday> to learn more. Don't forget, **every bird counts for the Global Big Day**. Whether it is a common bird at your favorite birding spot or a critically endangered species on some remote island, eBird and the world want to know.



### How can I follow the Global Big Day results?

<http://eBird.org/globalbigday>. This page will be updated throughout May 13th with sightings and photos from eBirders worldwide. Team eBird will also be posting updates here. Use **#GlobalBigDay** to join in and share on Facebook or Twitter, and to potentially be featured on the Global Big Day live results page!

### Global Big Day Tips—how to have the most fun

1. **Explore the Birding “Hotspots” in your area.** Find your new favorite birding spot and learn more about the birds in your area.  
<https://ebird.org/hotspots>
2. **Note sightings with eBird Mobile.** Record your sightings in the field with the free eBird Mobile app, available for iOS and Android.  
<http://tinyurl.com/ebirdmobile>
3. **Share your bird photos.** Take photos of birds you see on the day and then upload these images directly to your eBird checklist. These photos document your sightings, make your checklist a work of art, and become a part of the Macaulay Library. More info: <http://tinyurl.com/ebirdphotos>
4. **Get others excited about the Global Big Day!** Encourage two friends to take part in GBD! If everyone does that, how many people will join in the fun this year? 25,000? 30,000? It is in your hands. Different people enjoy GBD in different ways; we have some ideas for getting people excited here: <http://tinyurl.com/shareGBD>
5. **Learn more about what eBird has to offer.** Cutting edge migration visualizations. Over 380 million bird observations, freely available to all. Trip-planning and educational tools. <https://ebird.org/explore>



Of course, most importantly, get outside, see some birds, have fun, and contribute your sightings to global bird conservation! Thanks for being a part of the world's biggest day of birding.

## California Clean Water & Safe Parks Act



### Audubon California supports Proposition 68

Audubon California has long fought to protect California's birds and natural landscapes – and encourage more people to experience these treasures – and that is why our organization emphatically supports Proposition 68 -- the California Clean Water & Safe Parks Act. The measure will go before voters on June 5.

The passage of Prop. 68 will further Audubon California's conservation goals around water, Salton Sea, coastal habitat protection, working lands, and the conservation of priority birds species. It will also increase access for millions of Californians to the state's outdoors, particularly in urban park-poor areas.

#### Background

California is facing frequent and severe droughts, wildfires, the impacts of climate change, and a lack of support from the federal government to protect our water and natural areas. Now more than ever, we must take responsibility to protect our own unique natural resources and ensure every Californian has access to clean drinking water and safe places for kids to play.

Moreover, the cycle of drought and extreme weather is already taking a toll on California's natural treasures, and threatened our communities with flooding and ecological degradation. These same forces have also exposed our state's antiquated water infrastructure, bringing into doubt our ability to provide clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to our residents.

Lastly, with most of the bond funding for vital conservation programs running out in the last few years, it is time for Californians to make the next investment in the protection of the natural resources that have made us the envy of the world.

#### The opportunity

Audubon California was part of a broad coalition of organizations working closely with lawmakers to put the \$4 billion parks and water bond on the June 5 primary

ballot in California. The California Clean Water & Safe Parks Act will support parks, protect natural resources and wildlife, increase drought and flood protection, and supply safe, clean water throughout the state.

The parks and water bond includes funding for a broad array of conservation priorities:

#### \$2.83 billion for parks and natural resources funding

- Investments in park-poor neighborhoods
- Much-needed maintenance for state parks
- Trails and creek restoration
- Funding for critical restoration at the Salton Sea

#### \$1.27 billion for water reliability

- Clean drinking water projects
- Groundwater clean-up and sustainability
- Flood protection, including multi-benefit flood projects

#### \$767 million for state conservancies

- Vital landscape-scale conservation work
- Ocean, bay, and coastal protection

#### \$442 million for climate adaptation

- Projects to ensure habitat connectivity
- Collaborations on climate-smart farm practices
- Rivers and waterways restoration



# THE CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER & SAFE PARKS ACT

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS.  
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.



## Ensuring Clean Drinking Water

- + Cleans up and protects our drinking water supplies
- + Protects streams and rivers that provide drinking water from pollution



## Safe Parks for Every Child

- + Improves the safety of neighborhood parks throughout California
- + Helps ensure every California community has access to quality parks



## Preparing for the Next Drought

- + Smart, proven, efficient solutions to secure future water supplies
- + Restores groundwater, which was severely drained in the last drought



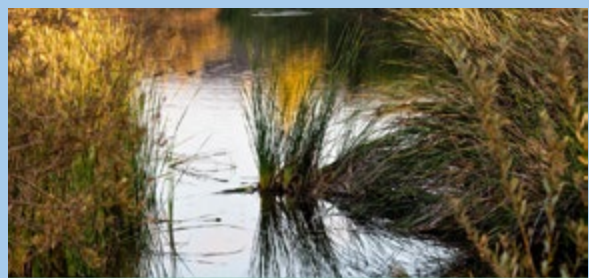
## Protecting Our Coastline and Natural Areas

- + Increases access to our coast and beaches
- + Restores and protects our natural areas and implements wildfire protection measures



## Helping Communities That Lack Clean Water

- + Keeps toxic pollution out of our drinking water
- + Provides safe drinking water to communities with contaminated water



## Increasing Local Water Supplies

- + Cleans up groundwater and funds water recycling projects
- + Captures more stormwater and prevents flooding

## **SOS TURNS TO POETRY TO CELEBRATE AND APPRECIATE CURLEWS**

Birdlife International and other shorebird groups will celebrate World Curlew Day April 21 to teach us all about the fragile status of the birds.

While many will celebrate with curlew walks, art shows, conventions, dances, or story-telling, we'll observe the day with haiku and photographs on our SOS facebook page. We'd love to lead a curlew walk, but the chances of spotting a curlew here on April 21 are slim. During the last 11 years, volunteers have recorded only 196 sightings of Long-billed Curlews on SOS surveys. The birds winter along the Western U.S. Coast, but sightings in the county are listed as rare.



*Photograph by Becky Bowen*

*Numenius americanus*, the Long-billed Curlew, is the only curlew we see in Mendocino County. It is the largest North American shorebird and almost all our SOS sightings have been in Inglenook Fen-Ten Mile Dunes Preserve or at Virgin Creek in MacKerricher State Park. Females are larger than males and have longer bills. At the end of summer, many like the one photographed above, still have a hint of orange/cinnamon-colored breeding plumage. Breeding grounds are inland California, Western plains states, and western Canada. Even though Long-billed Curlews are listed as species of least concern, U.S. breeding grounds shrank by some 30 per cent in the last century, according to a 2009 USFWS status assessment and conservation plan (the birds no longer breed in parts of the central states and south Atlantic States). There are many reasons, including loss of prairie grass habitat to agriculture, urban growth/development and use of pesticides.

There are eight curlew species in the world. Two are probably extinct: the Eskimo Curlew (breeding grounds in northern Alaska and Canada) and the Slender-billed Curlew (breeding grounds in Siberia). Three of the remaining six species – Eurasian, Far Eastern, and Bristle-thighed Curlews – are victims of severe habitat degradation on breeding and wintering grounds. Perhaps the most cruel scenario involves the endangered Far Eastern Curlew which breeds from East Russia south to Mongolia. Some 75 % of the birds migrate to Australia and according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, about 65 % of the intertidal habitat in the migration stop-over areas of the Yellow Sea has been lost during the last 50 years.

The chances are zero that we will see the other North American curlew here on the Mendocino Coast on April 21. The Bristle-thighed Curlew breeds in west Alaska and migrates to the South Pacific. According to the IUCN Redlist, a 2001 study estimated a breeding adult global population of 7,000. The bird currently is listed as vulnerable and the total population is decreasing for many reasons, including hunting.

If you would like to participate in World Curlew Day with your own curlew haiku or photographs, please send them to B. Bowen [casparbeck@comcast.net](mailto:casparbeck@comcast.net) and we'll post it on our SOS facebook page on April 21.

*SOS is an ongoing Mendocino Coast Audubon citizen science program in partnership with State Parks that gathers and publishes data about shorebirds along the entire coastline of MacKerricher State Park.*

*Please join us in celebrating Long-billed Curlews on our facebook page in April:*

*[www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds](http://www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)*

## WHY DO BIRDS MATTER?

In celebration of 2018 as the Year of the Bird, each issue of *The Black Oystercatcher* will reprint a response from one of the avian enthusiasts who were asked: "Why do birds matter?"



**"When we save birds from large-scale threats,  
we see that what's good for the birds  
is also good for us.**

**This is true about agriculture, fishing, climate change.  
As we solve their problems we solve ours.  
This is about everyone's quality of life."**

**~ Gary Langham,  
National Audubon Science Director**

photo by Becky Bowen

### BIG RIVER SPRING BREEDING BIRD SURVEY TRAINING

The Mendocino Land Trust invites all bird enthusiasts to join us at the Stanford Inn on **Sunday, April 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** for the spring bird survey training presentation by Ron LeValley. Together we will review and identify the songs of common spring nesting birds and afterwards volunteers can sign up to participate in the Big River spring bird surveys. Bring a notebook and a field guide. More information available at: [www.mendocinolandtrust.org/connect/volunteer/spring-bird-surveys](http://www.mendocinolandtrust.org/connect/volunteer/spring-bird-surveys)

Please RSVP to Garrett Linck [glinck@mendocinolandtrust.org](mailto:glinck@mendocinolandtrust.org)



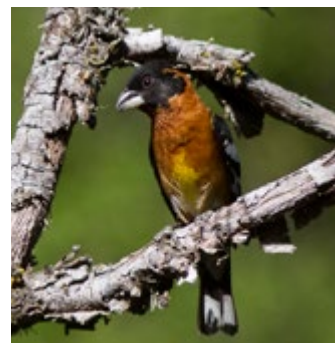
## MCAS FIELD TRIPS APRIL AND MAY 2018

**SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2018 - 9:00 A.M.**

**HENDY WOODS with Tim Bray**

Meet at the bridge on Philo-Greenwood Road.

We will bird from the bridge and nearby areas, then go into the park and walk a loop trail. Five or six species of Swallows can be seen here, including Purple Martins nesting in tall snags. Black-headed Grosbeaks and Black-throated Gray Warblers are regularly seen; sometimes Western Tanager, Hermit Warbler, and Green Heron.



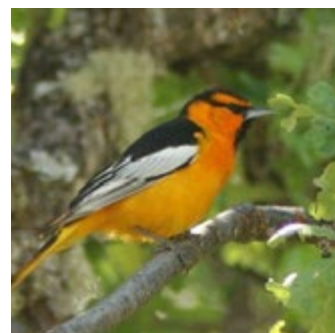
*Black-headed Grosbeak by Ron LeValley*

**SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2018 - 9:00 A.M.**

**NAVARRO RIVER with Dave Jensen**

Meet at the park-and-ride area just south of the bridge.

We usually bird the area around the bridge first, then go to the beach and work our way back, if the wind is blowing in. Good variety of waterfowl, gulls and seabirds from the beach, and songbirds along the road (Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers, Warbling Vireo, Black-headed Grosbeak and Bullock's Oriole).



*Bullock's Oriole by Ron LeValley*

**SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2018 7:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

**SPRING PELAGIC TRIP with Rob Fowler and Todd Easterla**

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society has scheduled an all-day pelagic seabird expedition aboard the Trek II out of Noyo Harbor, Fort Bragg. We plan to assemble at 7 AM and depart soon thereafter, spend about 9 hours at sea, and return around 5 PM.

The Trek II is the largest and fastest charter boat operating from Noyo Harbor, offering good views for up to 35 participants and getting us out to sea quickly. Ocean conditions permitting, we hope to go 30 to 40 miles offshore.

On past May trips we have seen Laysan and Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, several species of Shearwater and Storm-Petrel, 3 species of Jaeger, Tufted Puffin, Black-legged Kittiwake, Sabine's Gull, and Common and Arctic Tern. In addition, May trips have also turned up such rarities as Short-tailed Albatross; Murphy's, Manx, and Hawaiian Petrels; Thick-billed Murre, Black Tern, etc.

The cost will be \$150 per person and advance reservations are required. Contact Chuck Vaughn, [cevaughn@pacific.net](mailto:cevaughn@pacific.net) or Tim Bray, [tbray@mcn.org](mailto:tbray@mcn.org) for more information.



*Black-footed Albatross  
by Ron LeValley*



## CALENDAR

### APRIL 2018

**Saturday 7 - Beginner Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Tim Bray

**Friday April 13, 20 and 27 - In-field Training for Save Our Shorebirds**  
Virgin Creek Beach, Fort Bragg, CA 9:00 a.m.-10:30 Leader: Becky Bowen  
Contact B. Bowen for meeting place 707 962-1602 casparbeck@comcast.net

**Sunday 15 - Spring Bird Survey Training** The Stanford Inn 44850 Comptche Ukiah Rd.  
10:00 a.m.-Noon Training lead by Ron LeValley for nesting bird suveys at Big River  
with the Mendocino Land Trust. RSVP GLinck@mendocinolandtrust.org

**Monday 16 - Meeting** Caspar Community Center 7:00 p.m.  
Ron LeValley presents: The Life Cycles and Identification of Gulls

**Wednesday 18 - Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1,  
Fort Bragg, CA 8:30 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Tim Bray

**April 18 - 24 Godwit Days** Arcata, CA. More information at <http://godwitdays.org>

**Saturday 21 - Hendy Woods** Meet at the bridge on Philo-Greenwood Road.  
18599 Philo Greenwood Rd. Philo, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon Leader: Tim Bray

**Sunday 22 - Coastal Trail Bird Walk** North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg 10a.m.-Noon,  
Meet near restroom at foot of Elm Street, Fort Bragg. Leader: Dave Jensen

### MAY 2018

**Saturday 5 - Global Big Day and Beginner Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical  
Gardens 18220 Highway 1 Fort Bragg, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Dave Jensen

**Saturday 12 - Navarro River** Meet at the park-and-ride area just south of the bridge.  
9:00 a.m.-Noon Leader: Dave Jensen

**Sunday 13 - Pelagic Trip** Trek II out of Noyo Harbor. All day from 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Advance reservations are required. Contact Chuck Vaughn, [cevaughn@pacific.net](mailto:cevaughn@pacific.net)  
or Tim Bray, [tbray@mcn.org](mailto:tbray@mcn.org) for more information.

**Wednesday 16 - Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1,  
Fort Bragg, CA 8:30 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Tim Bray

**Monday 21 - Meeting** Caspar Community Center 7:00 p.m.  
Matt Johnson presents: Coffee & Wine: International Examples of How Birds and  
Farmers Can Mutually Help Each Other.

**Sunday 27 - Coastal Trail Bird Walk** North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg 10a.m.-Noon,  
Meet near restroom at foot of Elm Street, Fort Bragg. Leader: Dave Jensen

*\*These walks are free, but there is an entry charge for participants who are not Garden members*

**For complete calendar, updates, and useful links, visit: [mendocinocoastaudubon.org](http://mendocinocoastaudubon.org)**  
**And please visit us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon)**

**MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2016-2017**

President	David Jensen	djensen@mcn.org	(707) 964-8163
Vice President, Field Trips	Tim Bray	tbray@mcn.org	(707) 734-0791
Secretary	Nicolet Houtz	nicolethoutz@gmail.com	
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	havlenas@fix.net	(707) 964-1280
Conservation, SOS	Angela Liebenberg	liebenbergs@mcn.org	(707) 962-9267
Education	Sarah Grimes	zewa@mcn.org	
Member-at-large	Terra Fuller	fullerterra@hotmail.com	(707) 964-4675
Member-at-large	Hayley Ross	hayleyhross@gmail.com	
Member-at-large	Adam Hutchins	raptorous@me.com	(707) 734-3470
Member-at-large	Judy Steele	judys@mcn.org	(707) 937-2216
Off-Board Chairs:			
Programs, Membership	Charlene McAllister	charmac@mcn.org	(707) 937-4463
Webmaster	Catherine Keegan	keegan@mcn.org	
Newsletter Editor	Megan Smithyman	mesmithy@gmail.com	

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society e-mail address: [audubon@mcn.org](mailto: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

