



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- March 2024

RECENT SIGHTINGS

By Roger Adamson



Harris' Sparrow, 2/13/2024, near Hopland, Roger Adamson.

Mendocino County had a moderate number of unexpected sightings in February. We started with a Barn Swallow on 02/01 in Ukiah (GG). These are becoming more frequent during winter, either over-wintering birds or very early returning migrants. A Long-tailed Duck was recorded on the Garcia River on 02/02 (TF). A Red-necked Grebe was found on Lake Mendocino on 02/05—unusual for the inland location (MB). A very unusual winter sighting of a Costa's Hummingbird was reported 02/11 in Fort Bragg (MB & DM). Costa's winter from Santa Barbara south through Baja and to near Puerto Vallarta. The Harris's Sparrow reported in January near Hopland continued into February, apparently content to forage with a large group of crown sparrows (CV). While enjoying the Harris's Sparrow, a group of birders spotted an early Chipping Sparrow on 02/13 (GG, RA, CV, DB, MC). An early Western Flycatcher was seen on 02/15, also near Hopland (CV). A small group of returning

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Spotted Sandpiper in winter plumage, at the dock. Read about the impromptu whale and bird cruise on page 3. Photo by Tim Bray.

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Cliff Swallows was reported near Willits on 02/24 (MB). This record was not unexpected; Cliff Swallows, which winter primarily in Argentina and Brazil, start arriving in Central California in early February. And finally, a group of local birders joined a brief whale-watching trip on 02/24 and spotted two Pigeon Guillemots (CK, TB, MF, others). These are common breeders here in summer but are infrequently found in winter when they are primarily foraging well offshore.



*Chipping Sparrow, 4/9/2018, Ten Mile River,
Roger Adamson*



*Costa's Humingbird, 3/7/2011, Riverside,
Roger Adamson*

Thanks to the following for their reports: George Gibbs (GG), Teale Fristoe (TF), Matt Brady (MB), Dan Maxwell (DM), Chuck Vaughn (CV), Roger Adamson (RA), Dave Bengston (DB), Mike Curry (MC), Catherine Keegan (CK), Tim Bray (TB), Matt Franks (MF).



Black-bellied Plover by Becky Bowen

SHOREBIRD ALERT FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH By Becky Bowen

It's never too early to watch for the start of the spring shorebird migration beginning in early March. Most of the migrating shorebirds will be getting into breeding plumage like this Black-bellied Plover (at right) photographed on March 26, 2022 on Inglenook Fen-Ten Mile Dunes Preserve in MacKerricher State Park. The only shorebirds that breed and nest on the Mendocino Coast are Western Snowy Plovers, Killdeer, Black Oystercatchers, and Spotted Sandpipers.

TRIP REPORT - IMPROMPTU WHALE & BIRD CRUISE**By Tim Bray**

Osprey in pine tree above Noyo River by Tim Bray.

A rare window of calm weather inspired several birders to join a whale-watching cruise on the Kraken, Saturday February 24. The ocean was calm and blue, the air was warm and still, and we enjoyed a nice trip out. Whales were difficult to find and birds were scattered, but we did see a lot of Common Murres and a fair number of Rhinoceros Auklets. Interestingly the Auklets were in breeding plumage, sporting impressive plumes and the “horn” for which they were named, while the Murres were in both winter and summer plumages. We also saw two Pigeon Guillemots, unusual this early in the year, both in summer plumage. Before we even got out of the harbor we saw an Osprey perched in a pine tree, also unusual for this time of year.

eBird Trip Report here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/208073>

This month we have a four-hour trip scheduled for Friday March 8 - see the notice for the Feathers & Flukes trip on page 8 of this Newsletter.



*Rhinoceros Auklet in breeding plumage
by Tim Bray*



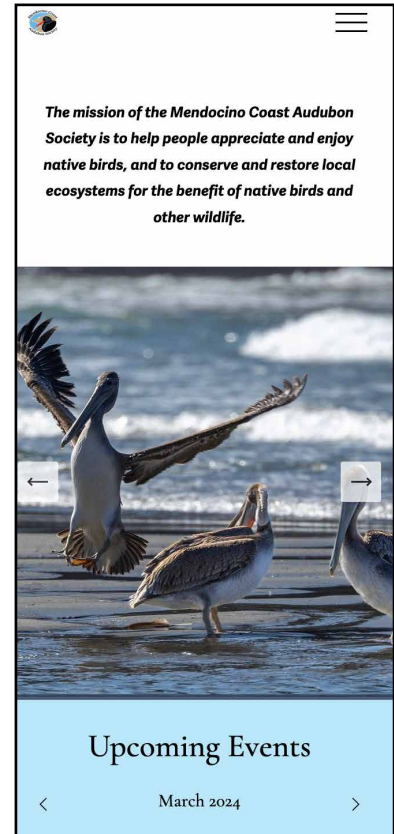
*Common Murre in winter plumage
by Tim Bray*

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS



UPDATED MCAS WEBSITE LAUNCHING SOON

We have been working on a refresh to the website for many months and we can't wait to share it with you. The new website will have all the same great content, but will now be more compatible with mobile devices. All the events, news, and information you love, now with more pictures to share! If you would like to send some pictures along to populate the new site, please send them to Mendobirding@gmail.com



ELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In accordance with the chapter's bylaws, we are pleased to announce the slate of newly nominated board members. Megan Smithyman, Mary Glanville and Matt Franks have accepted their nomination to serve on the board. The formal election will be held at our regular membership meeting on the evening of May 20. We are excited to have them join us and appreciate their willingness to serve. A brief bio of each candidate will appear in April's newsletter.

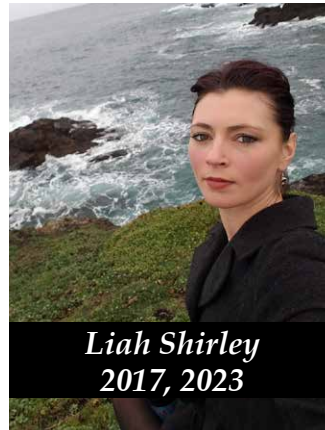
GIVING THANKS TO MCAS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDERS



Cian Murty 2012



*Angelica Rosa
Patyten 2010*



*Liah Shirley
2017, 2023*



Missael Barosa 2021

In May, Mendocino College will announce recipients of the 2024 Brandon Pill and Prof. Greg Grantham scholarships. We thank our generous donors: Mendocino Coast Audubon Society, Jeanette Boyer, Amy Murphy, Sarah Quentin, Ginny Rorby, and an anonymous donor. Since 2004, the program has supported students from College of the Redwoods and Mendocino College, and we have enjoyed bringing you their stories. Here are photos from our archives of a few of the 19 recipients.



Erin Orth 2021



Brandon Pill 2013



Jenevie Chan 2023

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society supports funding for annual science scholarships at Mendocino College. Recipients are selected by science faculty staff based on academic achievement and financial need, and have participated 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 and community members. We welcome donations which can be made to the MCAS Brandon Pill Memorial Scholarship Fund and/or the MCAS Greg Grantham Memorial Scholarship Fund. Please contact MCAS Scholarship Chair Judy Steele for more information judys@mcn.org

MENDOCINO ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS POTLUCK DINNER

Sunday, April 14 from Noon - 2:30 p.m.

Noyo Center Marine Field Station | 32430 N. Harbor Drive, Fort Bragg

You are invited to the Annual Potluck Dinner of the Mendocino Environmental Partners, hosted by the Noyo Center for Marine Science at their Marine Field Station in the Noyo Harbor. The potluck begins at noon, followed by annual updates from each organization at 1:00 p.m. and the presentation of the Matthew Coleman Environmental Service Award, which goes to the person or persons whose efforts on behalf of the environment have made a difference in our community.



This year's recipient is Sue Coulter. In addition to being the Noyo Center's Education Program Coordinator, Sue has taught and inspired the region about environmental education for over 25 years. She's been a teacher aide at the Green School, a camp leader for Nature Day, led Point Cabrillo field trips, worked with home school families, and taught at Montessori del Mar and led their after-school program. Her own business, Our Healing Nature, offered its first camp in summer 2023.

Sue has a deep love of nature and insatiable curiosity that is present in her conversations and connections with everyone she meets.

One of Sue's biggest influences was her former partner, Matt Coleman, the remarkable being for whom this award is in honor of. Please join us to honor Sue and learn about the incredible work being done by all the environmental partner organizations.

What To Bring

Please bring your own plate, utensils, preferred beverage, and a potluck dish to serve eight.

Parking is limited in Noyo Harbor, so carpooling is strongly suggested. There are a few spaces in front of the Marine Field Station. You can also use the large, dirt parking lot that is about 100 yards down North Harbor Drive from the Field Station and on the right-hand side.

Environmental Partners

Noyo Center for Marine Science Mendocino Land Trust Mendocino Area Parks Association
Mendocino Coast Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, Dorothy King Young
Chapter, Mendocino Botanical Gardens

Questions? Contact Michael Hicks at michael@noyocenter.org

MARCH PRESENTATION*Marisela de Santa Anna Presents:***AN OVERVIEW OF THE WILLITS BYPASS MITIGATION
PROJECT INCLUDING BIRD DIVERSITY****Monday, March 18 via Zoom****Register in advance for this meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEKce6prD0qG9UacPdFe29UJsaeUDhAaEJt>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Marisela de Santa Anna works as an interpreter for the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD). Her focus is primarily on the Willits Bypass Mitigation Project, observing and recording data for all wildlife present on mitigation lands (nearly 2000 acres). She is tracking how our diverse community of migratory and resident birds and animals interact with habitats, infrastructure, and grazing activities throughout the seasons.

Marisela assists in wildlife monitoring during construction activities, facilitates outreach to the community, and is a conduit for bringing interested individuals and groups onto mitigation lands for tours and workshops. Marisela has lived in Willits for 43 years and spent 20 of those years working as a teacher in the Willits Unified School District. She holds a degree in both biology and botany and is an active member of the Audubon Society and California Native Plant Society; she has been involved with teaching environmental education and has led bird and wildflower hikes to thousands of adults and kids over the years. You can follow Marisela on the MCRCD blog "Willits Bypass Mitigation blog - "Observations and Ruminations" on the MCRCD website at <https://mcrcd.org/project/willits-bypass-mitigation>

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEATHERS AND FLUKES

Friday, March 8 8:00 AM - Noon

We have a half-day trip on the Kraken booked for **Friday March 8**, hoping to catch Gray Whales and then head farther offshore to find seabirds. The plan is to depart at 8 AM and return around noon. That should allow enough time to get out to the canyon and find Albatrosses and whatever else might be out there.

Catherine Keegan is taking signups for this trip - please contact her to confirm you will be going, and provide contact information so she can reach you if there is a change in plans. keegan@mcn.org Twelve people are confirmed already so don't wait too long to sign up, this trip may fill up! It is of course weather dependent and we will be watching the forecast as the date approaches.



Common Murre (in summer plumage) enveloped in water as it landed on the sea by Tim Bray

MARCH FIELD TRIP: OWLING IN ELK with Mike Stephens and Tim Bray Saturday, March 16. Meet at 6:45 PM

This year's owl safari will be held on Saturday, March 16. Meet in Elk at the parking lot across from the store at 6:45 PM. We will carpool and head up the ridge, returning around 9.30 pm. The variety of habitats along Philo-Greenwood Road hold several species of owls, and in March they can be quite vocal. Carpooling is necessary for this trip because the turnouts on the road are small and only a few cars will fit. Heavy rain cancels.



Northern Pygmy-Owl by Roger Adamson

Our programs are brought to you with the support of The Wharf, offering discount lodging for Mendocino Coast Audubon Society guest presenters.

www.TheWharfFortBragg.com

The Wharf
RESTAURANT, LOUNGE & LODGING

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.

MARCH 2024

Saturday 2 - *Beginner's Bird Walk* 9:00 AM - Noon

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

Friday 8 - *Feathers and Flukes* 8:00 AM - Noon

Catherine Keegan is taking signups for this trip - please contact her: keegan@mcn.org
More information on page 8.

Monday 18 - *Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Chapter Meeting* 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us for Marisela de Santa Anna's presentation on 'An overview of the Willits Bypass Mitigation Project Including Bird Diversity' Via zoom. See page 7 for more.

Wednesday 20 - *Early Bird Walk* 8:30 AM - Noon

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

APRIL 2024

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

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

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

Sunday 14 - *Environmental Potluck*

Hosted by Noyo Center for Marine Science at the Marine Field Station in Noyo Harbor

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

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

If you would like to help the Board maintain and expand the activities of our Chapter, please contact any of the Board members. You don't have to be a Board member to make a significant contribution to our Chapter.

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

www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org

www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2023-2024

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	Mary Glanville	rxdoc@cal.berkeley.edu	
Newsletter/Website	Megan Smithyman	mendobirding@gmail.com	
Off-Board Chairs:			
Scholarship Chair	Judy Steele	judys@mcn.org	
Social Media	Catherine Keegan	keegan@mcn.org	
Programs	Terra Fuller	terrafuller74@gmail.com	(707) 964-4675
Programs	Hayley Ross	hayleyhross@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

