



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- October 2019

ROBERT J. KEIFFER PRESENTS
**THE WILD PACIFIC-SIDE OF
COSTA RICA**



**MONDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 7 P.M.
CASPAR COMMUNITY CENTER**

Visit special places on the Pacific-side of Costa Rica with Robert J. Keiffer and see Basalisks at Corcovado National Park, Tent-making Bats at Manuel Antonio Park, sloths at Carara National Park, hummingbirds at Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, turquoise waters of the Rio Celeste, and crocodiles on the Tarcoles River. Discover spectacular sunset beaches and wild jungles. Find out that it does not take a huge, expensive camera and lens to capture memorable wildlife photos.

Robert J. Keiffer is a native of Mendocino County. He attended Humboldt State University from 1974 to 1979, where he graduated with a BS degree in Wildlife Management. Robert then went on to work for US Fish & Wildlife Service
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Sharp-shinned Hawk by Ron LeValley

Don't miss the Hawk Hill field trip October 14. See page 6.



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at Hart Mountain, Sheldon, and Modoc refuges; Bureau of Land Management in Colorado; Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, and ended his career with the University of California at the Hopland Research & Extension Center as the Principal Superintendent of Agriculture. After recently retiring last July, Bob has been busy shampooing cats.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Tim Bray

I've just returned from Brittany, where we spent most of September touring the countryside and visiting historic sites. Of course I spent some time birding as well, and it was a forceful reminder of how good we have things here on the Mendocino coast. Brittany has a lot of great bird habitat and is positioned directly in the fall migration route for passerines, shorebirds and waterfowl. Yet it is surprisingly difficult to bird there, because many of the best locations have limited or no public access. France has no equivalent to the State Park system we enjoy so much here, balancing environmental protection with public access. There are protected nature reserves, which are typically managed by semi-governmental organizations such as the Ligue pour Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) or the Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature (SNPN), but public access is not a primary goal and it is generally limited to the regional hiking trails (which are extensive and well-used). There also seems to be little public interest in birdwatching as we think of it. In three weeks of traveling and birding, I encountered only one other birder.



As fun as it is to travel and experience different cultures and feel the weight of their long histories, it's also great to be back home where we have easy access to many great birding patches. Audubon Chapters like ours don't just enjoy that access, we help to establish and maintain it through our work with governmental and non-governmental agencies. Here on the coast, your Chapter was instrumental in getting the ball rolling many years ago on the Stornetta lands that are now open to public access at Point Arena, a great conservation success story. With your help, we will continue to protect sensitive wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for all of us to enjoy the view.

AUDUBON DECLARES A 'BIRD EMERGENCY'

WASHINGTON (September 19, 2019) – Today, Science published a study by a joint team of conservation biologists describing a grim picture: within one human lifetime, North America lost more than one quarter of its avifauna.

"The connection between birds and humans is undeniable—we share the same fate. This is a bird emergency with a clear message: the natural world humans depend on is being paved, logged, eroded and polluted. You don't need to look hard for the metaphor: birds are the canaries in the coal mine that is the earth's future," said David Yarnold, president and CEO of National Audubon Society.

"Since the 1970's, we've lost three billion of America's birds. This is a full-blown crisis that requires political leadership as well as mass individual action."

The bird declines are due to varying causes, all of which are results of human activity. These include habitat loss via agricultural conversion and urban development, predation from outdoor cats, collisions with buildings and windows and widespread pesticide use.

What Can We Do About This?

In response to this report, Audubon will be mobilizing its 1.65 million members to urge lawmakers to act on the following bird conservation priorities:

- **Protect the Arctic in Alaska**, by restoring protections to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and protecting the Teshekpuk Lake wetlands.
- **Return the Great Lakes to their former glory** by passing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act.
- **Implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan**, which would provide a globally unique habitat with the right amount of freshwater at the right time.
- **Invest in water conservation efforts in the Colorado River Basin**, with a focus on riparian areas along the Colorado River and improving wetland habitat in the Delta.
- **Defend and reinforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)**, which is the most important bird conservation law in the United States, protecting nearly one thousand species of North American birds.

In addition to urging lawmakers to protect birds through legislation at the local, state and federal level, Audubon is encouraging people to take simple everyday actions to help birds, starting with growing native plants. Because habitat loss is a major threat to North American birds and climate change will only compound this threat and many others, growing native plants is an easy and effective way to provide food, shelter and safe passage for many of the birds in decline.

Audubon Has Been Here Before

At the turn of the 20th century, birds like the Great Egret, Snowy Egret and Roseate Spoonbill were being hunted for their decorative breeding plumes, which were all the rage in women's fashion at the time. These species were being pushed to the brink of extinction. However, the earliest Audubon members fought back against the plume trade and encouraged the creation and passing of the earliest conservation laws, resulting in the MBTA in 1918. In the decades to follow, these birds and many others began a major comeback, and it is not exaggeration to say that the MBTA prevented the extinction of several species.

"Birds are down but not out," says Dr. Nicole Michel, Audubon's senior quantitative ecologist, "When you give birds half a chance, they recover."

Read the full article [online here](#). Contact: Nicolas Gonzalez, nicolas.gonzalez@audubon.org

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS**Becky Bowen****FROM DAZZLING TO DULL – THE DUNLIN'S CHANGE OF PLUMAGE**

Before – April 29, 2017 Ten Mile Beach



After – October 26, 2018 Glass Beach

Yin yang, point counterpoint, sun and moon. No matter how you think of it, a Dunlin's plumage change is, well, like the difference between night and day. As early as February, these sandpipers begin an alternate plumage molt (above left). Males and females are in the last stages of this molt when we see them migrating along our local coasts in April and May.

Shortly after breeding on the Arctic tundra (along the Alaska and Arctic coasts east to the Hudson Bay) Dunlins begin a molt into basic plumage before migration to wintering spots on the West and East Coasts. In October and November, we look for Dunlins – the last Arctic breeding shorebirds to migrate along local beaches in fall. Now the plumage has changed dramatically to a mousy brown-gray that allows them to blend into the protective color of sand. This is a perfect time of year to practice good will and tolerance to all as we see in the December photo below of a get-together (from left) of a Western Snowy Plover, a Sanderling and two Dunlins. If we were smarter, we could all learn something from the birds.

SOS is an ongoing year-round Mendocino Coast Audubon Society conservation program. To enjoy what we are seeing on surveys along the MacKerricher State Park coast, please visit www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds



Inglenook Fen-Ten Mile Dunes Preserve. December 14, 2018

Photographs by B. Bowen

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS



Black-footed Albatross by Albert Michaud

HALF-DAY PELAGIC SEABIRD TRIP SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

Meet at 7:30 A.M. on the *Kraken*, first dock at the bottom of N. Harbor Drive.

Leaders: David Jensen and Ron LeValley

The marine ecosystem off the Mendocino coast is one of the wonders of the world, featuring a large number and variety of species rarely seen from shore, including Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, several species of Shearwater, Storm-petrels, Skuas, and Jaegers. Deep marine canyons just offshore bring many of these birds close enough to find with a short boat ride. Pelagic birding is an exciting adventure - you never know what might show up out there!

We have reserved the *Kraken*, currently the largest and fastest charter boat operating from Noyo Harbor. David Jensen and Ron LeValley will lead. The cost is \$65 per person, payable directly to Anchor Charters. These trips often sell out in advance, so reservations are recommended.

Contact Nikki Houtz to reserve your spot: (570) 765-1848 or nicoleshoutz@gmail.com

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

www.HarborLiteLodge.com

**Harbor Lite
LODGE** 

120 North Harbor Drive
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FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS



Hawk Hill photo by Hayley Ross

DAY TRIP TO HAWK HILL, SAUSALITO MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

Meet at 7:00 A.M. sharp in Fort Bragg, transportation to Hawk Hill included.

Leader: Hayley Ross

“Hawk Hill,” located in the Marin Headlands just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, is an essential birding destination for the fall migration season. At this pinch point on the Pacific Flyway, volunteer hawk watchers from the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) have been monitoring the fall raptor migration for over 30 years, identifying up to 19 species and tallying more than 20,000 sightings each year. Julie’s Trips and Tours will provide comfortable transportation and lunch, so participants can focus on birding rather than travel logistics and parking at this popular destination. If the fog inhibits the view from the hill, we’ll take advantage of other excellent birding that the Marin Headlands have to offer, including Rodeo Lagoon. A GGRO staff member will provide a brief educational program. We will meet in Fort Bragg at 7:00 AM sharp, and aim to return before dark.

MCAS is subsidizing this trip, so the cost is only \$40 per person. Space is limited.

Please RSVP soon to Hayley Ross at (707) 357-3281 or hayleyhross@gmail.com to get important details and reserve your spot!

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2019

Saturday 5 - Beginner's Bird Walk* 9:00 a.m. - Noon Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

Sunday 6 - Half Day Pelagic Trip 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Out of Noyo Harbor.
Advance reservations are required. Contact Nikki Houtz, nicolethoutz@gmail.com

Wednesday 9 - Audubon Board Meeting 6:00 p.m - 8:00 p.m.
Contact Tim Bray for more information: tbray@mcn.org (707) 734-0791

Monday 14 - Hawk Hill Field Trip Day trip to Marin Headlands
Cost is \$40 and includes lunch. Space is limited, so reservations will be required.
Contact Hayley Ross, hayleyhross@gmail.com to reserve your seat by October 1.

Wednesday 16 - Early Bird Walk* 8:30 a.m. - Noon Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

Monday 21 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 p.m. Caspar Community Center
Birds of the Wild Pacific-side of Costa Rica by Bob Kieffer

NOVEMBER 2019

Saturday 6 - Beginner's Bird Walk* 9:00 a.m. - Noon Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

Saturday 9- Stornetta Lands Trip 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Monday 16 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 p.m. Caspar Community Center
Marbled Murrelets and Conditioned Taste Aversion of their Predators:
Steller's Jays by Portia Halbert

Wednesday 20 - Early Bird Walk* 8:30 a.m. - Noon Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

**These walks are free, but there is an entry charge for participants who are not Garden members.
Those who are not MCBG members can request a "Guest of Audubon" discount.*

For complete calendar, updates, and useful links, visit: www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org
And please visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2018-2019

President	Tim Bray	tbray@mcn.org	(707) 734-0791
Vice President, Field Trips	David Jensen	djensen@mcn.org	(707) 964-8163
Secretary	Nicolet Houtz	nicolethoutz@gmail.com	
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	havlenas@fix.net	
SOS, Conservation	Becky Bowen	casparbeck@comcast.net	(707) 962-1602
Education	Sarah Grimes	zewa@mcn.org	
Membership	Adam Hutchins	raptorous@me.com	(707) 734-3470
Programs	Terra Fuller	fullerterra@hotmail.com	(707) 964-4675
Programs	Hayley Ross	hayleyhross@gmail.com	

Off-Board Chairs:

Webmaster	Catherine Keegan	keegan@mcn.org
Newsletter Editor	Megan Smithyman	mesmithy@gmail.com
Scholarship Committee	Judy Steele	judys@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

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