



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- September 2019

JD Bergeron PRESENTS SECOND CHANCES FOR SEABIRDS

An introduction to aquatic bird rescue and rehabilitation, including a picture-filled tour of the species with which we work and the role that International Bird Rescue has played for nearly 50 years.



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

JD Bergeron was appointed Executive Director of International Bird Rescue in July 2015. JD brings a birder's knowledge, a childlike delight in nature, and a deep commitment to solving the world's challenges in unconventional ways. He has 20 years of experience in not-for-profit leadership, international development, and organizational change. JD is the Founder of Chooda, which puts on Bike Zambia, a week-long bicycle ride that raises funds and awareness for HIV/AIDS prevention and economic empowerment for girls and women in Zambia. He previously served in senior roles at Truelift, Kiva, Accion, and the U.S. Peace Corps. He is a graduate of Washington University in Saint Louis.



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Black-footed Albatross by Ron LeValley

Hurry! It's time to reserve your spot on the half-day pelagic trip next month. See page 5.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER**Tim Bray**

First, let me say what an honor it is to serve as your Chapter President. David Jensen has established a standard for leadership that will be difficult to meet, and I am humbled by the trust you have placed in me. I'll try to be worthy of it.

The Board of Directors of MCAS just held our annual Planning Meeting and as always, I came away filled with admiration for the energy and enthusiasm this group brings to its many tasks. This Chapter conducts and sponsors more projects than you would expect for a region with our population, a testament to the high level of environmental awareness here and to the dedication of our volunteer citizen-scientists. Our schedule is packed with birdwalks, field trips, Chapter meetings, presentations, breeding bird surveys, shorebird surveys, classroom visits, Christmas Bird Counts, parades, and newsletters! Join us as often as you can - it's your participation that makes all these things work.



I'd like to highlight one of the goals we have set for ourselves this year, as you might be able to help us achieve it. This Chapter has been supporting an educational outreach program to Mendocino County schools for several years, led by Sarah Grimes and Pam Huntley, and we intend to continue and expand that effort. We're looking for someone to help with the existing program and develop new ways of educating people about wild birds. With more people on the team, we could reach more kids and adults, laying the groundwork for the next generations of birders and conservationists.



We have some great field trips planned, including a return to Hawk Hill and another multi-day expedition to the Central Valley. New spots to visit include the Stornetta lands near Point Arena, and private land near Rockport. More people are getting involved in planning and leading these trips, and we're looking forward to your participation as well. Field trips are exciting opportunities to explore the region as well as learning about the birds.

Our Conservation Committee, led by Becky Bowen, is following a number of local developments, as well as State and Federal actions. We will take a public position whenever there is an identifiable potential effect on wild birds or their habitat. At present the Committee is continuing to monitor proposals and has no recommendations for the Board. The day may come, however, when we ask you to take up your pen and help us advocate for the birds.

The running theme here is your participation and your activity. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by all the dispiriting national news and ugly politics, but remember this mantra: Action is the Antidote to Despair. Audubon people tend to be active, both indoors and out. We go birding, then come home and write letters or make phone calls. Whatever kind of activity you choose, I hope you do it with energy, enthusiasm, and joy.

FIELD NOTES**Becky Bowen***Virgin Creek Field Trip Participants*

Our August 10 MCAS Field Trip to Virgin Creek Beach began in fog and ended with sunshine on a humid morning after a surprising overnight downpour on the North Coast. We hoped to see shorebirds and were rewarded with good looks at Black Oystercatchers (including one juvenile), Semipalmated Plovers, Black Turnstones, Western Sandpipers and one Least Sandpiper. Two shorebird species showed up that we seldom see at Virgin Creek: a Lesser Yellowlegs and two Red-necked Phalaropes, early arrivals of what became a Red-necked Phalarope stampede of the small open-ocean species during the last three weeks of August. Hundreds of Common Murres were observed in flight going south and we also counted Pigeon Guillemots, Pacific Loons, Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwaters, Brown Pelicans and two Osprey. Gulls included Western, California, a possible Glaucous-winged and a Heermann's Gull.

*Lesser Yellowlegs by B.Bowen*

The walk out to the beach along the Enchanted Trail brought looks at an Olive-sided and a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Pygmy Nuthatches, a Swainson's Thrush, a House Sparrow, an Orange-crowned Warbler, a Wilson's Warbler, and a Wrentit, along with numerous White-crowned Sparrows, Barn Swallows, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees.

Then, when we thought things couldn't get better, Tim Bray and two other participants spotted a Fin whale approximately 1/4 mile offshore.

Fallout of Red-necked Phalaropes**Tim Bray**

Red-necked Phalaropes migrating down the coast from their Arctic breeding grounds encountered headwinds when the coastal breeze swung around and blew from the south in late August. These are tiny birds and they don't have a lot of reserves to power through such conditions, so thousands of them dropped out of the sky to forage in the water. They migrate primarily over the ocean, fairly close to shore, and they showed up on almost every body of water within a mile of the beach. Thousands could be seen on the ocean, and scores in the estuaries of each river. They also landed on agricultural ponds and even backyard landscaping water features. Fortunately there are a lot of aquatic insects available at this time of year, and after a few days of refueling, most of them departed for the next leg of their journey.

*Red-necked Phalarope by Ron LeValley*

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

A WHISPER OF TATTLERS THIS WAY COMES

Becky Bowen



To locate four Wandering Tattlers, pretend this photo is the face of an old pocket watch. There is one at 12 o'clock, one at 5 o'clock and two at 9 o'clock. They are hard to spot on gray rocks, even in what any tattler would consider colorful breeding plumage (heavily barred chest and undertail).

These shorebirds are migrating through local beaches now, bound for coastal wintering grounds as far south as Australia. Breeding grounds are in the mountains of Alaska and British Columbia. It's an extraordinary sighting to find four in one location in Mendocino County, but it's possible to see one or two at a time now on coastal rocks. Don't look for the bird; look for motion. It's nearly impossible for these birds to stand still and when they move, they walk on rocks with a constant butt-bob. Other good field marks are bright yellow legs. The call is a repeating, loud, high one-note staccato. This photo was taken July 29, 2019, in MacKerricher State Park. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the estimated global population for Wandering Tattlers is 10,000-25,000.

The legend is that the bird was named because tattlers' alarms warned and scattered hunters' targets. The British apparently found humor in this and began to refer to a group of tattlers as a "whisper of tattlers."

Save Our Shorebirds is an ongoing year-round Mendocino Coast Audubon conservation program. To learn more or view what we currently are seeing on SOS surveys, please visit us at www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

Meet at 9:00 A.M. at the south end of Ten Mile Bridge to hike along Ten Mile Beach

Leader: Art Morley

Organized every year by the Ocean Conservancy, California Coastal Cleanup Day is the largest volunteer event in the US, and International Coastal Cleanup Day is the largest volunteer event on the planet.

The Mendocino Coast Audubon Society volunteers annually at Ten Mile Beach, with Art Morley as our team leader. Meet at the south end of Ten Mile Bridge at 9AM.

Trash and recycle bags are provided, as are latex gloves. It is recommended that you bring your own work gloves and items that make outdoor work more comfortable, such as water, a hat, and sunscreen.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6 HALF-DAY PELAGIC SEABIRD TRIP

Meet at 7:30 A.M. on the *Kraken*, located at the 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 nicolethoutz@gmail.com



Black-footed Albatross by Ron LeValley

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS



Hawk Hill photo by Hayley Ross

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14 DAY TRIP TO HAWK HILL, SAUSALITO

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 to 14 passengers, and we need at least 10 sign-ups by October 1 avoid cancellation, so advance reservations are essential.

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

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**

130 North Harbor Drive
Fort Bragg, California 95437

1-800-643-2700

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2019

Monday 16 - Meeting 7:00 p.m. Second Chances for Seabirds by JD Bergeron
Caspar Community Center 15051 Caspar Rd Box 84, Caspar, CA 95420

Wednesday 18 - Early Bird Walk* 8:30 a.m. - Noon Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA Leader: Tess McGuire
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

Saturday 21 - Coastal Cleanup Day 9:00 a.m. - Noon Meet at the Ten Mile parking lot.
Bring work gloves and a garbage receptacle.

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, nicoleshoutz@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 Leader: Tim Bray
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

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

**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 |

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

