



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- January 2018

JOSH ENGEL PRESENTS
**BIRDING WITH BUDDHA:
BIRDS AND NATURAL HISTORY OF THE
KINGDOM OF BHUTAN**

MONDAY, JANUARY 15 AT 7 P.M.
CASPAR COMMUNITY CENTER



Satyr Tragopan by Josh Engel

There is an air of mystery about the Kingdom of Bhutan, nestled in the rugged Himalayas, where legends of dragons and yetis abound. Despite being sandwiched between the world's two most populous countries, it has maintained a fierce independence for centuries with a unique culture deeply rooted in its Buddhist heritage. It is also a country with a strong conservation ethic

and an extensive system of national parks that protects the many birds and mammals that are unique to the eastern Himalayas. Searching for hornbills, wren-babblers, laughing thrushes, rose finches, pheasants, and other Asian avian delights with a backdrop of snow-capped mountains and spectacular traditional architecture makes birding in Bhutan like no other trip on earth. Josh presents a lavishly illustrated talk from the standpoint of a virtual tour, taking you clear across the tiny country from the lowland forests at the Indian border to the high mountain passes strewn with prayer flags. Josh is the founder of Red Hill Birding and has guided trips on four continents and conducted bird research on a fifth. When he's not working on Red Hill Birding, he's an ornithologist at The Field Museum in Chicago. Join us for what promises to be a fascinating evening.



Blood Pheasant photo by Josh Engel

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California gull photo by Ron LeValley

Join us for the gull identification field trip next month. See page 5.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER**Dave Jensen**

Welcome to 2018 – The Year of the Bird.

2018 also marks the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the first environmental protection laws enacted anywhere in the world - essentially an Avian Bill of Rights. One hundred years ago, the nascent Audubon Society worked hard to pass a law to save decimated species from excessive market hunting and the feather trade. One hundred years later, we find ourselves again in a battle to save decimated species from habitat loss and environmental degradation.

During the past 100 years, we have learned that great challenges are best faced in concert with like-minded allies. As I have stated before, conservation is a team sport. Four of the most respected organizations in the environmental field – Audubon, National Geographic, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and BirdLife International – have joined forces to declare 2018 The Year of the Bird. More than fifty other groups such as Ducks Unlimited, American Bird Conservancy, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and many other governmental agencies, zoological gardens and research organizations have agreed to participate.

In Chinese culture every year is the year of something – the ox, the rat, the rooster. How is this any different? It seems that our society – our entire world – is being pulled apart like some unraveling sweater. Religion, political philosophies, mass media, even the touted neutrality of the internet only exacerbate the chaos and the noise. Amidst this rancor, our innate human attraction to birds is one of the few threads that runs throughout our society – through all mankind through all history.

One goal of The Year of the Bird is to remind our nation that birds matter. Through photographs, scientific studies and personal stories we will rekindle that appreciation of the winged world. We will celebrate the stories of how we have worked together to avert disaster. We will show how climatic changes are already affecting birds. We will use that innate human attraction to birds to help focus our social discourse and political decisions.

Another important goal of The Year of the Bird is to empower individuals. The dual impacts of global warming and social discord have overwhelmed many of us. What can one person do to make a difference? Actually, there is a lot we can do and should be doing. During the coming year we will explore the ways that we can all be part of the solution rather than the problem.

Please, as you make your resolutions for the new year, include the pledge: “In 2018 I will help build a better world for birds.” Perhaps it will be something simple like putting a reflective sticker on a window to prevent collisions. Perhaps you can plant bird-friendly shrubs or flowers in your yard. Maybe a brush pile for refuge. Or a bird bath. Your backyard is a wildlife refuge, and you are the game warden. You have the authority and the obligation to make it a better bird refuge.

Resolve to speak out for birds. It seems that every week another ill-conceived proposal threatens the health and welfare of our planet. Even the recent tax revision, which should have simply addressed

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monetary concerns, mandated the opening of North America's most sensitive breeding grounds to oil drilling. If you care for birds, if you care for the welfare of future generations, you cannot sit silently and watch these events unfold as if this were a bad movie. Resolve to raise your voice in 2018.

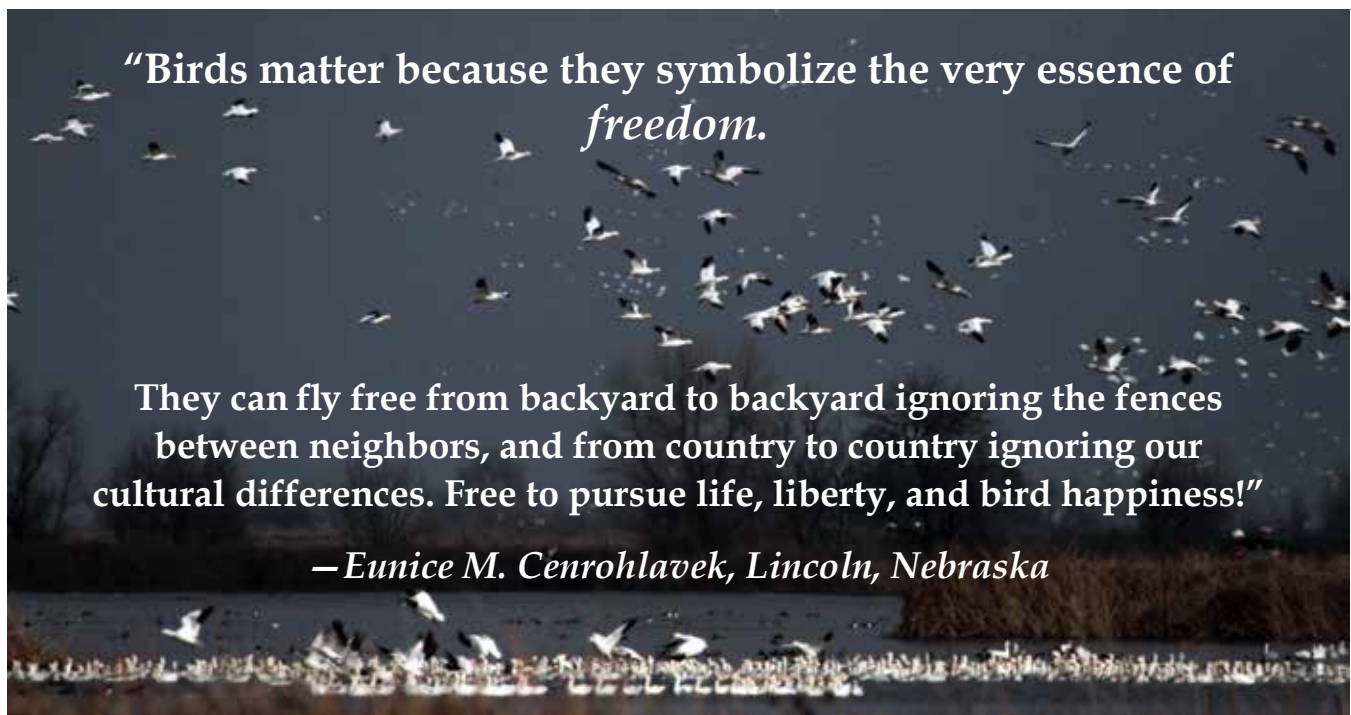
But also, resolve to do something for yourself. Resolve to enjoy birds and birding. Resolve to come on a bird walk, or start a yard list, or watch a nest cam on the internet, or join the Save Our Shorebirds surveys, or simply resolve to sit quietly and listen to their voices. The blessing of the birds is that they have the power to lift our spirits and give us hope. That is why we resolve to build a better world for them.

Finally, I encourage you to visit National Geographic's website birdyourworld.org to learn more about The Year of the Bird. You will find articles from the four lead organizations with ideas on how you can make a difference. Ultimately, it's about more than the birds. They will be the first to suffer, in fact many have already succumbed, but you and I and all who follow will drink from the same glass.

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?"

What would your answer be?



**"Birds matter because they symbolize the very essence of
*freedom.***

**They can fly free from backyard to backyard ignoring the fences
between neighbors, and from country to country ignoring our
cultural differences. Free to pursue life, liberty, and bird happiness!"**

—Eunice M. Cenrohlavek, Lincoln, Nebraska

Snow Geese landing during thunderstorm, photo by Tim Bray

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen

FINDING KINDRED SPIRITS WITH SIMPATICO MISSIONS IN A SMALL WORLD



Masked Lapwings were recorded on the 2017 Wader Conservation World Watch. The bird shown here was photographed in Centennial Park, Cairns, Queensland, Australia. Photograph by Elis Simpson-Wader Quest

When friends at Audubon California put Save Our Shorebirds in touch with Wader Quest, it was a perfect fit.

Rick and Elis Simpson founded the international charitable organization in 2012. Shorebirds are called waders in most countries. Wader Quest headquarters are in Buckinghamshire, England, but their mission has taken Rick and Elis to every corner of the world. Their message: 48 per cent of global wader populations are in decline. Since mankind is the cause of decline (primarily through loss of critical habitat and disturbance), it's time for all of us to make it right. Their mission is to save waders. It's a labor of love performed by volunteers. No wages or expenses

are taken—100 per cent of donations and membership subscriptions go to wader conservation around the world.

This global commitment led to several conservation projects and educational outreach efforts, including the annual Wader Quest Wader Conservation World Watch. Birders spend one or two days in early November watching their local waders, then report what they see. The 2017 event was held November 4-5. A total of 327 participants from 35 countries and 6 continents recorded 131 wader species on the world's nine major flyways. Here is a special newsletter edition with final results:

<http://eaaflyway.net/wordpress/documents/newsletter/WCWW4%20Special.pdf>

Participation in this world watch is free, easy, and fun to be part of a count that includes everything from thick-knees to the very rare Spoon-billed Sandpiper—and you are invited. Here on the Mendocino Coast, Save Our Shorebirds volunteers complete a regular SOS survey, submit survey observations (as usual) to Cornell University's international eBird database, and e-mail a copy of their wader observations to Wader Quest. We care deeply about shorebirds and learn something every year we join in this watch. And one thing sticks with us: we may be a small group in a remote corner of the world, but we are not isolated—and we surely are not alone.

SOS is an ongoing Mendocino Coast Audubon Society citizen science program in partnership with California State Parks. To participate with SOS in the next Wader Conservation World Watch November 3-4, 2018, contact B. Bowen at (707) 962-1602 casparbeck@comcast.net and please visit us at www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds

MCAS FIELD TRIPS JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2018

JANUARY 13-15, 2018 (SAT.-MON.) CENTRAL VALLEY MULTI-DAY TRIP

Multi-day, multi-part tour through the Sacramento Valley National Wildlife Refuges, agricultural backroads, and western foothills. Spectacular views of wintering waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans, and many other species.

We will divide the trip into 4 or 5 discrete tours and you can join us at any time. Carpooling will be necessary for some of the tours. Our preliminary plans take us to the Colusa, Sacramento, and Llano Seco units; Gray Lodge; and into the western hills.

Sign up in advance to receive details and notifications if weather forces us to change plans: tbray@mcn.org or text (707) 734-0791



*Greater Roadrunner, Leesville Road
photo by Catherine Keegan*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2018 "GULLING" with Ron LeValley

9 AM

Meet at Laguna Point, MacKerricher State Park.

Ron LeValley will lead us on a field workshop to identify the various species of Gulls that winter here: Western, California, Glaucous-winged, Herring, Mew, Heermann's, possibly Iceland, and maybe a Bonaparte's if we're really lucky.

In case that isn't exciting enough for you, Laguna Point is also a great spot for rocky shorebirds, seabirds, and marine mammals.

Dress warmly, bring binoculars and scope if you have one.



California gulls by Ron LeValley

SACRAMENTO VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGES AND NEARBY AREAS JANUARY 13-15, 2018 Leaders Dave Jensen and Tim Bray

Millions of waterfowl, and many other birds as well, congregate in the wildlife refuges and flooded agricultural fields of the Sacramento Valley every winter. It's one of the most amazing spectacles of the West. Last year on this field trip we found 112 species of birds in just two days. This year we are extending the trip by another half-day, taking advantage of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday while still allowing time for everyone to return in time for the Monday meeting in Caspar.

This trip will be divided into several segments and you can choose to join any or all of them depending on your schedule. Note that weather and road conditions in the Valley can force last-minute changes to our plans, so it is essential that you sign up in advance and provide contact information.

Our planned itinerary is as follows:

Saturday morning - Colusa unit of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR)

Saturday afternoon - Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge main unit

Sunday morning - Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area

Sunday afternoon - back roads east of the Sacramento River, north to the Llano Seco unit

Monday morning - western foothills along Leesville Road



*Bald Eagle, Gray Lodge SWA
photo by Catherine Keegan*



Sandhill Cranes, Z Road, photo by Catherine Keegan

You will be responsible for your own lodgings. There are a number of motels in Williams, where Highway 20 meets I-5, about 10 miles from the Colusa NWR. Information, including phone numbers and links, can be found on the MCAS Website. We will arrange sandwich lunches each day, to be consumed in the field. You will be responsible for your own dinner.

Please sign up in advance for this trip, by e-mail to tbray@mcn.org or phone or text message to (707) 734-0791. We need to know which modules you plan to attend and how to reach you if plans change at the last minute. Heavy rain or tule fog may force us to cancel.

CALENDAR

JANUARY 2018

Tuesday 2 Christmas Bird Count - Manchester Circle 9AM-Noon

Saturday 6 Beginner Bird Walk Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 9AM-Noon* Leader: Dave Jensen

Saturday 13 - Monday 15 Central Valley Refuges Field Trip

Multi-day, multi-part tour through the Sacramento Valley National Wildlife Refuges, agricultural backroads, and western foothills. Sign up in advance to receive details and notifications if weather forces us to change plans. Leader: Tim Bray
tbray@mcn.org or text (707) 734-0791

Monday 15 Meeting - Caspar Community Center 7PM

Wednesday 17 Bird Walk Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 8:30 AM-Noon* Leader: Tim Bray

Sunday 28 Coastal Trail Bird Walk - North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg 10AM-Noon,
Meet near restroom at east end of parking lot at foot of Elm Street, Fort Bragg.
Bring water, wear comfortable walking shoes, binoculars available, rain cancels.
Leader: Dave Jensen

FEBRUARY 2018

Saturday 3 Beginner Bird Walk Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 9AM-Noon* Leader: Dave Jensen

Saturday 10 - Gulling Laguna Point, MacKerricher State Park Fort Bragg, CA
9:00 AM-Noon Leader: Ron LeValley

Join us on a field workshop to identify the various species of gulls that winter here.

Monday 19 Meeting - Caspar Community Center 7PM

Wednesday 21 Bird Walk Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 8:30 AM-Noon* Leader: Tim Bray

Sunday 25 Coastal Trail Bird Walk - North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg 10AM-Noon,
Meet near restroom at east end of parking lot at foot of Elm Street, Fort Bragg.
Bring water, wear comfortable walking shoes, binoculars available, rain cancels.
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
And please visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon**

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2016-2017

President	David Jensen	djensen@mcn.org	(707) 964-8163
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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
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