



The Black Oystercatcher

Photograph by Ron LeValley

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter, October 2014

Inside this issue:

freygardens.com photograph



<i>Climate Change</i>	2
<i>Joleen Ossello</i>	
<i>Killdeer</i>	3
<i>Pam Huntley</i>	
<i>SOS</i>	4
<i>Becky Bowen</i>	
<i>BLOY Workshop</i>	5
<i>Joleen Ossello</i>	
<i>Bald Eagle</i>	5
<i>Jeff Petit</i>	
<i>Great Egret</i>	6
<i>Donald Shephard</i>	
<i>Coast Cleanup,</i>	8
<i>Field Trip Notes</i>	
<i>Pelagic Trip Notes</i>	
<i>MCAS Calendar</i>	9
<i>Board Members</i>	10

Habitat gardens are flower-filled gardens that make us happy and sustain many organisms. Flowers produce nectar and pollen for pollinating insects. The resulting berries and seeds sustain birds. More than 90% of birds feed insects to their young, so where there are insects, there often are thriving birds. This talk will focus on what to plant in your habitat garden as well as choices in garden design.

HABITAT GARDENS

WITH KATE FREY

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014

7PM

CASPAR COMMUNITY CENTER

Kate designed the edible and biodiverse gardens at Fetzer Vineyards in Hopland and managed them for 20 years. In May 2003, her garden at the Chelsea Flower Show in London won a silver/gilt medal. In 2005 and 2007, her gardens which illustrated biodiversity and sustainability, won gold medals, and were visited by the Queen. In 2009, she competed in the World Garden Competition in Hamamatsu, Japan. She also participated in the Floria Garden Show in Putrajaya, Malaysia, in 2011. She consulted for two years in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on a prince's organic farm. She currently works as a consultant, designer, and freelance writer specializing in the subject of sustainable gardens. Since 2009, Kate has been coordinator of the Sonoma State University Department of Extended Education Sustainable Landscape Program. Kate earned a bachelor of arts degree in 2006 from Sonoma State University where she graduated summa cum laude with Distinction in English.



B. Bowen Photo

Two banded Caspian Terns show up on Ten Mile Beach SOS survey. Story on page 4

SAVING OUR SONGS

Joleen Ossello

There are no secrets about our environment and its increasing climatic shifts.

From my corner of the earth even I can feel the not-so-distant presence of erratic weather patterns. Rising seas and shifting continents were accepted as “givens” by our ancient ancestors, but now we worry about hundreds of bird species not previously considered at risk.

While our ancient ancestors experienced climate change as a slowly-evolving cycle, Mother Earth seems to be in a hurry now, and many birds may not survive in a climate-changed future.



September witnessed the rollout of the Audubon Society’s Climate Initiative with a call to action on a national and state level. Startling findings showed climate change is the number one threat to North American birds. At our chapter meeting, we viewed a three-minute video, *Birds and Climate Change*, which can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN2-a82_3mg&feature=youtu.be

The video illustrates how human activity hurts the birds we so admire. Chief Audubon Scientist Garry Langham and a team of ornithologists analyzed forty years of Christmas Bird Counts and historical North American climate data. Their findings provide new and powerful evidence that global warming impacts where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them. Nearly 60% of the 305 widely distributed bird species found in North America in winter are on the move, shifting ranges northward by an average of 35 miles. Audubon has focused on eight climate-threatened California species that we may be able to help: Western and Clark’s Grebes, Long-billed Curlew, Black Oystercatcher, Allen’s Hummingbird, Yellow-billed Magpie, Tricolored Blackbird and Western Snowy Plover.

Audubon’s Climate Initiative seeks to reach 500,000 people who love birds and inspire them to take some action. Share the science with others in your community by starting conversations. Join or start an advocacy campaign with your elected officials who have the power to express your voice for the birds. Many of you already have shown us how to take the first steps – by creating bird-friendly yards and by volunteering on programs in our Important Bird Area (IBA). Please share your ideas with us so we can turn this advocacy into action.

Pease join me and Conservation Chair Linda Perkins to fight and advocate for local birds. Help us by supporting actions that lower greenhouse gas emissions and support clean energy.

To learn more about the initiative and which California’s species are shifting their seasonal territories, visit www.audubon.org/climate.

PAM HUNTLEY ON KZYX FM 88.3, 90.7, AND 91.5



From left: Chick at Ten Mile Beach, broken wing display at Virgin Creek Beach and nearby nest.

The Killdeer is named for what its call sounds like: “Kill-dee, Kill-dee, Kill-deer!” In fact, the Latin name, *Charadrius vociferus*, means “loudly vocal plover.”

The Killdeer is different from some members of its plover family because it has two breast bands and often is found far from water in a variety of open habitats – fields, lawns, gravel roads, streambeds, lakeshores, farmlands or ballparks.

The Killdeer is 9-11 inches long. It is brown on top and white underneath with medium-long pinkish legs. Besides the two black breast bands, it has a black band across its white forehead and a white eyebrow. White wing stripes and rusty-colored tails are visible in flight. Both sexes look alike. The downy chicks resemble some of their *Charadrius* family cousins and have just one dark breast band.

Killdeers eat mostly insects. They forage by running, then stopping, then quickly stabbing at the ground with their beaks. Their diet includes beetles, weevils, grasshoppers, caterpillars, ants, and dragonflies.

Killdeer nests are made in shallow depressions scraped out of sand, dirt, or gravel. Usually, four speckled and well-camouflaged eggs are laid and incubated for 24 days. A few days before they hatch, chicks communicate with their parents by peeping from inside the egg. A few hours after they hatch, they can run and forage on their own. Chicks look like mottled brown puffballs on toothpicks. They will fledge in about a month.

MCAS Board Member Tim Bray and Dr. Robert Spies host *Ecology Hour – Science Edition* on our local public radio station. Their guest on September 23 was shorebird and conservation biologist Stan Senner. To hear an archived recording, visit: <http://ecologyhour.wordpress.com/>

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen



SHOREBIRD SURVEYOR HAS CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH CASPIAN TERNS ON TEN MILE BEACH

Dr. Yasuko Suzuki

Thursday, July 10, was a gray day with poor visibility on Ten Mile Beach. But the birds were there in big numbers, especially Western Sandpipers (400) and Whimbrels (106). Near the mouth of Inglenook Creek, four Caspian Terns emerged from a large flock of Heermann's Gulls preening near the water's edge.

Two of the terns were banded. This gave the SOS team an opportunity to touch base once again (the first time was 2007) with Dr. Yasuko Suzuki at Oregon State University. Dr. Suzuki currently evaluates demography and inter-colony movements of Caspian Terns and Double-crested Cormorants in the Pacific Northwest. She is the go-to person for information about Caspian Tern bands in the Columbia River basin and along the Oregon coastline, described on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website as the location of the largest Caspian Tern breeding colonies in North America.

Within a few minutes of receiving an e-mail from SOS Director Angela Liebenberg, Dr. Suzuki identified one of the Ten Mile terns as a bird banded in 2012 (as an adult) at Crescent Island in the middle of the Columbia River near Pasco, WA. The island was made with dredged soil as part of a mitigation for wildlife habitat lost during construction of a paper mill. It is a little more than 7 acres and the shoreline provides perfect breeding grounds for Caspian Terns and California Gulls. Crescent Island is part of the McNary National Wildlife Refuge southeast of the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers. U.S. Fish and Wildlife manages the refuge, which is on the migration route of juvenile salmonids (fish that are important in a Caspian Tern's diet). Researchers and wildlife biologists are part of a cooperative effort managing endangered fish and monitoring birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Because the second tern observed at Ten Mile had lost two tags from its right leg, Dr. Suzuki was not able to pinpoint the banding site, but narrowed it down to a period between 2001-2005 in Washington, Oregon or California. U.S. Fish and Wildlife literature says the longest recorded lifespan for a Caspian Tern is 29 years, 6 months.* "We also color-band Double-crested Cormorants, Brandt's Cormorants and American White Pelicans," Dr. Suzuki says. "If you see any of them, please let me know. Thank you!"

*Klimkiewicz, M. K. 2002. *Longevity Record of North American Birds*. Version 2002.1. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Bird Banding Laboratory. Laurel MD

Save Our Shorebirds is an ongoing long-term MCAS citizen science program in partnership with State Parks. To volunteer, contact Angela Liebenberg at liebenbergs@mcn.org and please visit us at: www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds

WORKSHOP TO REVIEW BLACK OYSTERCATCHER CONSERVATION EFFORT

By Joleen Ossello— This summer, bird enthusiasts studied the breeding behavior of our well-known “Rock Stars,” the Black Oystercatchers. Eighteen volunteers and two State Park employees monitored nests at ten coastal sites from May through September. In its fourth year, Black Oystercatcher Conservation was made possible with the help of MCAS chapter volunteers, a chapter grant from Audubon California, California State Parks and the Bureau of Land Management’s California Coastal National Monument program. A summary of this year’s study will appear in our newsletter, and a final report will be posted on the MCAS website by November 1. All interested persons are invited to attend the end-of-year workshop to discuss nesting results, events, and protocol. The workshop is 10 a.m. – noon, Sunday, October 5, at the Russian Gulch Recreation Hall. Please RSVP by October 4 to 962-0142 or j_ossello@earthlink.net Light lunch and beverages provided.



Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Volunteer Donald Shephard took this rare photo of a Black Oystercatcher parent and chick on the coastal rocks near Point Cabrillo Light Station. The photo was picked up by Audubon California’s facebook page and “liked” by hundreds of viewers.

This project was carried out by: David Jensen, Dan Knowles, Marcia Riwney, Linda Perkins, Bill Heil, Don and Colleen Shephard, Judy Steele, Louise Mariana, Art Morley, Jean Mann, Ron LeValley, Charlene McAllister, Randy Farris, Deb Elufson, Rose O’Malley, Boyd Poulson, and Jesse Yeomans. Thank you to California State Parks Environmental Scientist Terra Fuller and Environmental Science Intern Alison Cebula.



Photo by Jeff Petit

“LIBERTY” HAS LANDED IN POINT ARENA

By Beth and Jeff Petit— Alerted by Loran Station caretaker Mike Weaver, we identified a juvenile Bald Eagle Tuesday, August 26. Former Fish and Wildlife biologist Doug Forsell put us in touch with Maria Dominguez, Wildlife Biologist at the Institute for Wildlife Studies in Avalon, CA. She confirmed A-92, male, hatched from a Pelican Harbor nest on Santa Cruz Channel Island and fledged in July. One of the institute members named him “Liberty.” His father is K-10, age 13, and mother is K-26, age 12. The parents began nesting on the island in 2005.

GREAT EGRET**Donald Shephard**

When I worked as a wage slave for the state of California, I commuted on an express bus from Lodi to Sacramento, watching the expansive valley for wildlife as the driver concerned herself with the traffic on Highway 99. When a threatening storm blackened the sky, I'd marvel at a Great Egret, its white feathers in stark contrast to the dark clouds. It flew slowly but powerfully, a 31-ounce bird against the elements. This elegant creature, its neck bowed and feet stretching well beyond its tail, bore me away from the tedium of travel. With just two beats per second, Great Egrets cruise at 25 miles an hour. As I sat on the bus, I would muse about the other places I had seen this species.



Great Egret photo by Ron LeValley
LeValleyphoto.com

I came across them in the wetlands of Thailand; among water buffalo and millions of Magpie Geese in Fogg Dam in the Northern Territories of Australia where the unwary birder may confuse them with Intermediate Egrets, Little Egrets, or the white morph of the Eastern Reef Egret; but, as far as I remember (a short distance these days) I never saw them in England although recent reports show a breeding pair in Somerset. They have a worldwide range and are especially prevalent in the southern hemisphere. Taxonomists divide the world population of Great Egrets *Ardea alba* into four subspecies: *A. alba alba* in Europe, *A. alba egretta* in the Americas, *A. alba melanorhynchos* in Africa, and *A. alba modesta* in India, Southeast Asia and Oceania.

The pristinely white Great Egret gets even more dressed up for the breeding season. A patch of skin on its face turns neon green, and long plumes, called *aigrettes*, grow from its back. The bird's abundance and easily seen white plumage nearly caused its downfall. This extremely widespread heron suffered greatly in the late 19th Century from the demands of the millinery trade. Estimates suggest hunters killed over 200,000 of these birds for their plumage in a single year. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in Britain and the Audubon Society in America formed in response to the outcry caused by the carnage of this and other birds for their plumage. Today, land drainage and habitat destruction are the chief threats to the bird's well-being.

Great Egrets gather in numbers only where prey is abundant, such as on the wet meadows along Garcia Creek north of Point Arena. They forage in shallow water or grassy marshes, moving slowly with neck extended in search of fish and other aquatic prey. Note the all-white plumage, large size, and very long neck. If you spot the unique combination of long narrow bill and black legs of this heron, then you have the identification. Nor will you soon forget the unmelodic croaking voice.

Here on the coast, we sometimes see them standing on floating kelp pads, stabbing at small fish

continued

and invertebrates with their dagger-like beaks propelled by the powerful muscles of their S-shaped necks.

If you want to see a breeding colony, go to Point Reyes and watch their courting and parenting behavior from across a small canyon. Great Egrets breed in low trees or reed beds, usually in small colonies. Early in the breeding season adults grow long plumes on their backs, which they raise in courtship displays. Males perform most of the displays, which can involve preening the wings, ducking the head, holding and shaking twigs in the bill, and stretching the neck. Each male establishes a small territory around his chosen nest site and begins



Great Egret and chicks at Morrow Bay
Photo by "Mike" Michel L. Baird



Great Egret breeding plumage
Photo by Ron LeValley
LeValleyphoto.com

nest construction, building a platform of twigs or reeds on which he displays to the female. Both sexes then finish the nest ready for eggs, although some building work will continue until the young have fledged. The nest measures up to 3 feet across and 1 foot deep, lined with pliable plant material that dries to form a cup structure. They don't typically reuse nests from year to year. Not all young that hatch survive the nestling period because large chicks frequently kill their smaller siblings. This siblicide also occurs in hawks, owls, and herons when poor breeding conditions occur in a given year.

The Great Egret eats mainly small fish but also consumes amphibians, reptiles, birds, small mammals and invertebrates. It hunts in belly-deep or shallower water in marine, brackish, and freshwater wetlands, alone or in groups. It wades as it searches for prey, or simply stands still to wait for prey to approach. Though it mainly hunts while wading, the Great Egret occasionally swims to capture prey or hovers (somewhat laboriously) over the water and dips for fish.

I do not miss my laborious commute to work, but I shall long remember that dazzling flash of white contrasted with the brooding sky, a single candle against the night.



MCAS was responsible for the north end of Ten Mile Beach on California Coastal Cleanup Day September 20. The annual event is sponsored by the California Coastal Conservancy. The Mendocino Land Trust organizes cleanup teams along the county coastline. More than 400 volunteers picked up 5,000 pounds of trash at 30 sites along beaches and rivers, according to MLT Operations Manager Megan Smithyman. More than 54,000 volunteers removed 343 tons of trash in the entire state. Our local team picked up several interesting items thrown away or washed up at Ten Mile Beach, including various items of clothing, fishing gear, and a maple sausage military Meal Ready to Eat package (empty). Art Morey (kneeling) was team leader. Next to Art is MCAS Vice President Dave Jensen. Middle Row: Joel Franks, Carolyn Kinet and Jenny Heckerth. Back row: Linwood Gill, Becky Bowen, Peggy Martin, Jim Havlena, Matt Liebenberg and MCAS Treasurer Angela Liebenberg. *Photograph by Linwood Gill*

VIRGIN CREEK FIELD TRIP NOTES

By B. Bowen—Dorothy Tobkin and Becky Bowen led the Saturday, September 13 field trip to Virgin Creek Beach where the group observed a dramatically loud territorial dispute by three Black Oystercatchers at the water's edge. Shorebirds included Whimbrel, Willet, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, dowitcher sp., Black Turnstone, Sanderlings, Western Sandpiper, and one Western Snowy Plover. A Great Egret was at the mouth of the creek. Included in the list of 45 species identified were at least 2 Brown Creepers and a female Western Tanager on the Enchanted Trail that leads from Highway 1 to the beach.

MCAS Pelagic Trip Report-Karen Havlena

By Karen Havlena—Sunday, September 14, aboard the *TELSTAR*, at sea 10-12 miles, generally in the area of Noyo Canyon: 1 Puffin, 1 Sabine's Gull, 1 Common Tern, 1 Parasitic Jaeger, 2 Northern Fulmars, 2 Cassin's Auklets, 1 Mew Gull (first of season), 2 Ring-billed Gulls, and 1 off-course Townsend's Warbler transported back to land. Numbers of Black-footed Albatross, Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters, Red-necked Phalaropes, Rhinoceros Auklets, Common Loons, assorted gulls and cormorants. Thanks to Leaders Dave Jensen and Jerry White, Capt. Randy Thornton and crew member Casey.

CALENDAR, BIRD WALKS, FIELD TRIPS

October 2014

Saturday 4 Beginner Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 9AM*

Saturday 11 Field Trip 9 AM Mouth of Caspar Creek, Caspar Beach, Cemetery, and Caspar Pond. Meet in the parking area at the mouth of Doyle Creek, on the west side of the road, just south of the campground. Leader: Dave Jensen

Wednesday 15 Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 8AM*

Monday 20 Meeting [Caspar Community Center](#) 7PM Speaker: Kate Frey, Landscaping for Birds and Insects

November 2014

Saturday 1 Beginner Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 9AM*

Saturday 8 Field Trip South Coast Raptors (Elk to Point Arena) 9AM Leaders: Tim Bray, Dave Jensen

Saturday 8-9 California Swan Festival Marysville

Monday 17 Meeting [Caspar Community Center](#) 7PM Speaker: Sara Guerrero, on Bees

Wednesday 19 Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 8:30AM*

Thursday 20-23 Bird Walk [Central Valley Birding Symposium](#) Stockton

December 2014

Saturday 6 Beginner Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 9AM*

Saturday 13 Field Trip [Rose Memorial Park & Pudding Creek](#) 9AM

Sunday 14 Ukiah Christmas Bird Count

Monday 15 Meeting [Caspar Community Center](#) 7PM Topic: Christmas Bird Count

Wednesday 17 Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 8:30AM*

Saturday 20 [Fort Bragg Christmas Bird Count](#)

January 2015

Saturday 3 [Manchester Christmas Bird Count](#)

Saturday 3 Beginner Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) **Cancelled due to CBC**

Saturday 10 Field Trip Ten Mile River 9AM

Monday 19 Meeting [Caspar Community Center](#) 7PM Speakers Guisti/Keiffer, on Turkey Vultures

Wednesday 21 Bird Walk [Botanical Gardens](#) 8:30AM*

Wednesday 21-25 [Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway](#) Chico

**These walks are free, but there is an entry charge for participants who are not members of the Gardens.*

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 2013-2014

President	Joleen Ossello	391-7019	j_ossello@earthlink.net
Vice President	David Jensen	964-8163	djensen@mcn.org
Secretary	Diane Rubin	(413) 658-7105	dianerubin12@gmail.com
Treasurer	Angela Liebenberg	962-9267	liebenbergs@mcn.org
SOS Program	Angela Liebenberg	962-9267	liebenbergs@mcn.org
Webmaster	Catherine Keegan	937-4422	keegan@wildblue.net
Membership	Marybeth Arago	962-0724	mbarago@mcn.org
Programs	Charlene McAllister	937-4463	charmac@mcn.org
Conservation	Linda Perkins	937-0903	lperkins@mcn.org
Education	Sarah Grimes	937-4322	zewa@mcn.org
Newsletter	Charlene McAllister	937-4463	charmac@mcn.org
Field Trips	Tim Bray	937-4422	tbray@wildblue.net

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

