



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- December 2020

DAVE JENSEN & TIM BRAY PRESENT:

## WINTER BIRDING THE MENDOCINO COAST



Pine Siskins at a feeder. Photo by Catherine Keegan

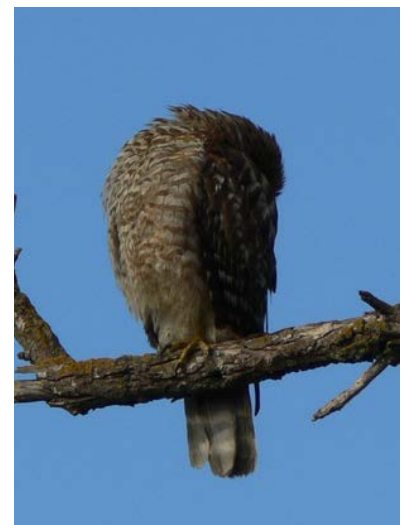
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 AT 7:00 P.M.  
VIA ZOOM

Our mild winters and varied habitats mean we get to enjoy a wide variety of birds all winter long. Some are familiar and obvious; others are furtive and tricky to identify. David and Tim will present a visual and audio guide to some of the birds that winter here, focusing on those that can be difficult to distinguish or are easily missed, and emphasizing the connection to habitat.

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**Bird Quiz:** Can you identify this 'headless' raptor? Check page 4 for the answer.

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Learn to identify those mysterious sounds in the treetops, how to quickly distinguish which “little brown job” is hopping through the bushes, and what to look for when a raptor flies past you. This is always a fun and informative presentation that helps us all get ready for the Christmas Bird Count season. Even if you don’t take part in the Counts, you are sure to learn something that will help you enjoy the birds around us.

David and Tim are the compilers of the Manchester and Fort Bragg Christmas Bird Counts, and also past and current Presidents of the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society.



## ZOOM MEETING LINKS: HOW TO CONNECT

**To join our Zoom Meeting via desktop, laptop, tablet, or smart phone:**

At 6:45 PM, go to the [MCAS website](#), click the zoom link there or enter:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81913453120?pwd=ZHFIVkpOZVFDbzJZVFZoQVVFkbVl5QT09>

We are requesting that you to click on the link 15 minutes prior to the start of the event, so that you can make sure that your audio and video are working properly.

If you have never used Zoom before, you might need to download and install [the Zoom app](#). If there are still problems, check which release of Zoom you have installed. You may need to upgrade to the latest version.

If you cannot join by computer, tablet, or smart phone, you can dial the number below from any telephone and listen to the presentation:

1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose) or  
1 253-215-8782 US (Tacoma)

**Meeting ID:** 819 1345 3120  
**Passcode:** 349761



**SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS**

**Becky Bowen**

**FEW AND FAR BETWEEN – RED KNOT VISITS GIVE US CAUSE TO CELEBRATE**

When our volunteers find a Red Knot on an SOS survey, we’ve been known to pop open a bottle of good old Mendocino County sparkling wine to celebrate. County sightings of the knots are rare in fall and extremely rare in spring and summer. There are no county records of a Red Knot sighting in winter.

So we were nearly ready to put the bubbly on ice when SOS surveyors reported sighting a solitary Red Knot on November 7 and 14 on Ten Mile Beach and November 10 near the Ward Avenue ramp in MacKerricher State Park.

There are six subspecies of Red Knots in the world with a total estimated population of 1 million. Red Knots we see on the north Mendocino County Coast most likely are members of the *Calidris canutus roselaari* subspecies – different from the *rufa* subspecies found along Atlantic Coast. All three subspecies found in North America are in decline primarily because of habitat loss, disturbance by humans, and compromised food sources in migrating stopover areas where the birds need to refuel on long migrations.

*Roselaari* knots breed on the northwestern Alaska tundra and winter along the Pacific Coast as far south as mainland northwest Mexico. A 2013 study published by the International Wader Study Group indicated there is a lot to learn about of this subspecies, the population of which is estimated at 17,000.

There are gaps in information about the *roselaari* migration stopover and overwintering sites according to the study. Citizen science surveyors can help fill those gaps by reporting sightings (especially during migration and winter months) to Cornell University’s international eBird database at <https://ebird.org>

A group of knots (the birds) sometimes is referred to as a “tangle of knots.” We look forward to untangling some mysteries about this colorful sandpiper – even if it’s only one bird at a time.

**High Count on SOS Surveys When Red Knots Observed**

|      | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. |
|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| 2007 |      |      |      |      |     | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2008 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2009 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 1    | 1    | 1     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2010 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2011 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 1    | 1    | 2     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2012 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2013 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2014 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2015 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1   | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0     | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| 2016 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 7    | 10  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2017 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2018 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1     | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| 2019 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 10  | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1     | 1    | 0    | 0    |



This Red Knot in non-breeding plumage was observed on three SOS surveys in November. Please visit us on facebook to see what we are observing on year-round surveys.

[www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds](https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)

## Christmas Bird Counts on the Mendocino Coast

Tim Bray



The Fort Bragg Count is scheduled for **Sunday, December 27** and covers the coast from Big River north to Little Valley Road. If you live anywhere within that region, you can participate simply by counting birds in your yard. Johanna Jensen is coordinating the yard/feeder watch again this year, so contact her for the checklist and information on how to count in your yard: [johanna@mcn.org](mailto:johanna@mcn.org)

Field team sizes will be smaller than in the past, and carpooling is out of the question. If you intend to join the same team you birded with last year, contact your Area Leader directly. If you aren't sure or would like to bird on your own, contact the Compiler: [tbray@mcn.org](mailto:tbray@mcn.org)

There will be no Count Dinner this year. Instead, we will conduct the tally-up via Zoom on **Monday evening, December 28 at 6:00 p.m.** That gives you extra time on Count Day, and leaves the evening free for Owling!

The Manchester count is on **Saturday January 2, 2021**. Contact David Jensen, [djensen@mcn.org](mailto:djensen@mcn.org) for details.



**Bird Quiz answer from page 1:** Red-shouldered Hawk

Do you have a fun or challenging bird identification photo? Submit it for next month's Bird Quiz. Email the editor at [Mesmithy@gmail.com](mailto:Mesmithy@gmail.com)

## Beginners' Bird Walks Are Starting Again

After an extended COVID delay, your chapter will host the Beginners' Bird Walks again on the first Saturdays of December. The Manchester Christmas Count will be held on Saturday, January 2, so watch the newsletter and MCAS website for the schedule of 2021 Beginners' Walks. The December walk will begin at 9:00 a.m., before the Gardens are open to the public. MCBG has requested that we limit these walks to a small number of people, and only to those who are members of the Gardens.

### **\*\*Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens (18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA )**

The following safety precautions will be required::

- Leave 6 feet of space between you and others not in your party. If passing another visitor on a trail, please announce yourself and provide space for fellow guests to pass.
- All visitors must wear face masks that cover the nose and mouth in accordance with the Mendocino County Health Order at all times to protect yourself, other guests, and our staff.
- There will be limited access to restrooms. The interior Display House restrooms are the only available restroom facilities onsite.
- Bring your own water and binoculars.

## CALENDAR

Although the strict Shelter-In-Place order has been relaxed to allow some group activities, the risk of contracting COVID-19 remains high and we remain extremely cautious. The Early Bird walks are continuing with restrictions. Our monthly Chapter meetings and presentations will be conducted remotely via Zoom. We will notify you of any changes via e-mail, our Facebook page and our website.

### DECEMBER 2020

**Saturday 5 - Beginners Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens  
You must be a member of the Gardens to go on this bird walk. Bring binoculars.

**Wednesday 9 - Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**  
Are being conducted remotely on Zoom. Contact Tim Bray for more information.

**Wednesday 16 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:30 a.m. - Noon**  
Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 CA-1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**Monday 21 - Winter Birds of the Mendocino Coast 7:00 p.m.** via Zoom meeting link below.  
See cover story and zoom meeting information on pages 1 and 2. Web URL:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81913453120?pwd=ZHFIVkpOZVFDbzJZVFZoQVFKbVl5QT09>

**Sunday 27 - Christmas Bird Count - Fort Bragg Circle**  
Count birds in your yard or neighborhood, from Little Valley to Big River. See page 4.

**Monday 28 - Christmas Bird Count Tally 6:00 p.m.** via Zoom meeting link below.  
There will be no Count Dinner this year. Instead, we will conduct the tally-up via Zoom on Monday evening. Details on page 4.  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83149292844?pwd=SGJuYlJteG0vVmVIL2VuZDlnQ2Mwdz09>

### JANUARY 2020

**Saturday 2 - Manchester CBC 9:00 a.m. - Noon** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens  
For more information contact David Jensen at 964-8163 [djensen@mcn.org](mailto:djensen@mcn.org)

**Wednesday 20 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:30 a.m. - Noon**  
Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 CA-1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**Monday 25 - Salmonid Monitoring 7:00 p.m.** - Zoom meeting

**For complete and current calendar, updates, and useful links, visit:**  
[www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org](http://www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org)  
[www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon](https://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 & Zoom Czar       | Nicolet Houtz | nicolethoutz@gmail.com  |                |
| Treasurer                   | Jim Havlena   | havlenas@fix.net        |                |
| SOS, Conservation           | Becky Bowen   | casparbeck@comcast.net  | (707) 962-1602 |
| Education                   | Pam Huntley   | pjhuntley@hotmail.com   |                |
| Membership                  | Adam Hutchins | raptorous@me.com        | (707) 734-3470 |
| Programs                    | Terra Fuller  | terrafuller74@gmail.com | (707) 964-4675 |
| Programs                    | Hayley Ross   | hayleyhross@gmail.com   |                |

Off-Board Chairs:

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

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society e-mail address: [audubon@mcn.org](mailto: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

