



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- May 2021

KEN SOBON PRESENTS:

## NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS



MONDAY, MAY 17 AT 7:00 P.M.

VIA ZOOM LINK ON OUR WEBSITE:

[WWW.MENDOCINOCOASTAUDUBON.ORG](http://WWW.MENDOCINOCOASTAUDUBON.ORG)

What do you know about Saw-whet Owls? If you're like most of us, probably not much. But these little birds are all around us, year-round, fighting out their fierce lives in our forests and woodlands. Come learn about these neighbors from Ken Sobon, director of the Northern Saw-whet Owl Research and Education Project in Northern California.

Ken Sobon is an avid birder, field trip leader, Vice President of Altcal Audubon Society, and is now the Northern California representative on Audubon California board of directors. For the past five seasons he has been the Director of the Northern Saw-whet Owl fall migration monitoring project. In addition, Ken has been a science teacher to middle school students in Oroville since 1995. He has shared his love of science and birding with his students both in the classroom and in field.

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Presenter Ken Sobon with a Northern Saw-Whet Owl.



Thousands of shorebirds are migrating north over our beaches and May is the perfect time to see them. Most are heading for the Arctic tundra where they spend the month of June nesting and raising chicks.

On a dreary, dark, rainy day (April 24), during an SOS survey in MacKerricher State Park, we were stunned to see more than 500 vocalizing shorebirds fly low over the water's edge and drop down to the beach. Here, frantically feeding around us, were Whimbrels, dowitchers, Dunlins, Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers, Sanderlings, Western Sandpipers, and Black Turnstones. Out in the surf, 8 Red-necked Phalaropes rode the waves, perhaps caught up in the movement of so many birds around them. After a few moments of frenzied feeding and preening, the flock lifted off and flew north.

These birds are in a hurry. They have a lot of business to take care of up north and not much time to do it – therefore many of them are getting into breeding plumage so they don't waste any time when they arrive at their destination.

We beg so many questions. Where are they going? How do they find the perfect breeding and nesting spot? Why do they pick the Arctic? How do they navigate? Why do they migrate?

Author Scott Weidensaul examines bird migration in a book just published by W.W.Norton & Company: "A World on the Wing." The book was reviewed by Christian Cooper (board member of NYC Audubon) in the New York Times Book Review Sunday, April 25. Perhaps the most important question of all is on the author's mind: Why did nearly a third of all birds (three billion of them) vanish from North America in the last 30 years?



*In top photo, two Black-bellied Plovers and four dowitchers (all getting into breeding plumage) come ashore in MacKerricher State Park on April 17. Bottom photo is on the same date and these Black-bellied Plovers are very close to getting into full breeding plumage.*

## **TWO MENDOCINO COLLEGE STUDENTS TO RECEIVE MCAS SCHOLARSHIPS**

Mendocino College natural science students Missael Barosa and Erin Orth will receive scholarships this month, awarded by the Friends of the Mendocino College Coastal Field Station and Natural Sciences. The college Field Station is located on the south Mendocino Coast, and the Friends organization is an affiliate of the Mendocino College Foundation. The two scholarships are funded by Mendocino Coast Audubon Society.

Mr. Barosa was raised in the Anderson Valley. "Since I was small I have always loved wildlife and enjoyed being outside," he says. He has done field work in the local agricultural industry, including testing grape vines for harmful pests. He plans to attend Sonoma State or Chico State University to complete a bachelor of science degree. He is the recipient of the MCAS Brandon Pill Memorial Scholarship. The \$1,000 annual award is in memory of Brandon Pill, a science student who received an MCAS scholarship at College of the Redwoods in 2013.

Brandon Pill's CR teacher was Prof. Greg Grantham who died last fall. MCAS created the 2021 Greg Grantham Memorial Scholarship in his honor. The \$2,650 award was established by local author and community activist Ginny Rorby and funded by donations to MCAS.

The recipient is Erin Orth whose goal is to study environmental science at the graduate level. Ms. Orth has participated in farming projects with emphasis on organic agriculture, soil fertility, and biological diversity preservation. She has participated in several research projects including tracking animal migration and capturing data through native plant plots and collecting data for native bird and insect identification. "I believe that sustainable use of our forests and soil is imperative to the preservation of our future generations," she says.



*Missael Barosa*



*Erin Orth*

## SHARE THE BEACH DOCENT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT



Do you love parks? Do you enjoy meeting people and sharing information about birds, plants, wildlife, and our beautiful and unique coastal areas? If so, please consider joining State Parks as a Volunteer for the new Share the Beach docent program.

Learn about our coastal habitats and marine environment. Share your knowledge and enthusiasm with park visitors. Help State Parks protect our wonderful natural heritage. As a bonus, earn a State Park pass!

Training will take place in early May with an online session, followed by educational field visits in an outdoor setting. Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the summer at both MacKerricher State Park and Manchester State Park.

For more information, please contact our Natural Resources staff:

Alison Cebula (707) 937-9176 [Alison.Cebula@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Alison.Cebula@parks.ca.gov)



Audubon folks are for the birds, but many benefits are included in the birdwatching package. Rewards include looks at (and appreciation of) plants and wildlife, like this pair of harbor seals lounging in the shallow waters of Ten Mile River at low tide. They were the first wildlife recorded on an SOS shorebird survey Saturday, May 1. SOS Photograph

## CALENDAR

Outdoor activities are now regarded as safe and mask wearing is only necessary in larger groups or if distancing is not feasible. The Beginner's Birdwalk and the Early Birdwalk at the Gardens are continuing on the regular schedule. Our monthly Chapter presentations continue via Zoom. We may try to squeeze in a field trip in June if there is sufficient interest. As always, check our website for the most up-to-date information, and keep up with the postings on our Facebook page as well.

### MAY 2021

**Monday 17 - Saw-whet Owls 7:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**Wednesday 19 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

### JUNE 2021

**Saturday 5 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**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\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

### JULY 2021

**Saturday 3 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**Wednesday 21 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

### AUGUST 2021

**Saturday 7 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**Wednesday 11 - Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**

Are being conducted remotely on Zoom. Contact Tim Bray for more information.

**Wednesday 18 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**\*\*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.
- Bring your own water and binoculars.

**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
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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

