



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- April 2019

LISA OWENS-VIANI PRESENTS

R.A.T.S.

RAPTORS ARE THE SOLUTION

A PROJECT OF EARTH ISLAND INSTITUTE



Photo Dave Harper

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

Lisa Owens Viani, a long time environmental writer and wildlife advocate, co-founded and directs Raptors Are The Solution, a project of Earth Island Institute. "R.A.T.S." educates people about the ecological role of raptors and the enormous danger to raptors and all wildlife, as well as pets and children, from the wide use and availability of rat poisons. RATS partners with other NGOs, agencies, scientists, municipalities, and others to work toward eliminating toxic rodenticides from the food web.

Is rat poison our "new DDT"? Lisa's talk describes the epidemic of wildlife mortality being caused by rat poison in

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Education Spotlight by Dave Jensen.
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RATS: RAPTORS ARE THE SOLUTION (cont.)

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in the food web. She will explain its impacts on birds of prey as well as on bobcats, mountain lions, foxes, and Pacific fishers, among many other animals.

Lisa will discuss regulatory changes affecting over-the-counter purchase of rodenticides, loopholes in the law, alternatives to rodenticides, and what individuals and municipalities can do to help beneficial predators thrive and continue to provide us with their free, natural, pest control services.

Join us for this month's presentation by Lisa Owens-Viani to learn more about how Raptors Are the Solution.

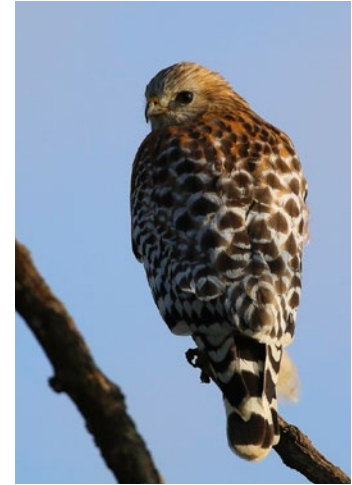


Photo Dave Harper



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

by Dave Jensen

The Mendocino Coast Audubon Society was founded, in part, to "help people appreciate and enjoy native birds . . ." To fulfill that mission we offer monthly programs and lead numerous bird walks and field trips. These activities are regularly reported in our newsletter, on our website, even in the local press and on the radio. What is not widely known or reported are the efforts of Pam Huntley and Sarah Grimes who bring the message of Audubon to the schoolchildren in this area.

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with Pam and Sarah to learn more about their work. Pam recollected that this chapter's childhood education program began nearly thirty years ago in the local schools. It has slowly expanded to include not only Fort Bragg and Mendocino, but Albion, Comptche, Elk, Point Arena, Anderson Valley, and Laytonville. They take their lesson plan to public schools, as well as to charter schools and Montessori schools. In the larger schools they visit every class in the second grade. In the smaller schools with combined grades they will meet with children from ages six through nine.

Sarah described a typical classroom session. "Pam begins by introducing the students to John James Audubon, who he was, that he had a hard time fitting in with others, and how he connected through his art. Then I tell them about how the Audubon Society started and about the book 'She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head.' We explain that a group of women worked together to stop the killing of egrets and other birds, that this effort spread across the country, and that is what our local group does. The Audubon Society continues to protect birds and the areas where they live." Pam said, "It is so important to give the

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER: EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT *(cont.)*

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students hope, to empower them. There is so much doom and gloom these days. So we tell them about the success stories – the egrets that were saved, the pelicans, the eagles, the whales. Success stories they can see and remember, that will inspire them and give them hope for their future. We show them copies of 'Pink Lady' the book that our chapter wrote about a Snowy Plover. We ask them, 'Who drew these pictures? It was children like you from your school. You did this! This is yours!'



Sarah continued, "When we ask them what do birds do that we can't do, they always say, 'Fly!' Why we can't fly? 'Because we're too heavy.' Then we introduce the concept of adaptation and demonstrate with some physical props like hollow bones, feathers, eggs, beaks with no teeth, all the things that make birds light so they can fly."

With the class divided into two groups, Pam leads the "beak adaptation game" to show how different types of beaks allow birds to feed on different types of foods. "We use different beak models, such as spoons and tweezers and eye droppers to show how birds are able to pick up different types of food, like checkers and marbles and liquids. Their favorite one is the chopsticks, which model the way that some shorebirds are able to poke through sand and mud to catch worms."

Meanwhile, Sarah works with other students to teach them the basics of bird identification. "I briefly show them a photograph of a bird, then have them describe what they saw. Was it big or small? What color was it? What type of a beak did it have? What else did you see? The goal is not to have them memorize the birds, but to teach them how to observe. To see nature and their world in a better way."

Pam added that the real star of their show is Sally the Surf Scoter. "Years ago, I stuffed Sally at a College of the Redwoods taxidermy class. I tell the children they can touch her if they are gentle. That physical contact with a real bird is such a memorable experience for them. When I later meet students, and even teachers, they often ask 'How's Sally?'"

On their return visit to the classroom, Pam and Sarah quickly go over some of the lessons learned in the previous session, then introduce the students to the use of binoculars. They break into two groups and walk around the school grounds. They not only focus on which birds are present, but also on how different birds use different habitats. Diversity and adaptation. Again, they ask "What do you see?" and "What do you hear?" When they finally return to the classroom, they create a list of the birds they saw. If they don't know the name of a bird, the students are asked to describe it. Then Pam and Sarah take them through the process of identifying the bird, just like we all do when we start birding.

Pam has led this program since it started, and Sarah joined her fourteen years ago. They both noted that they are warmly welcomed by the teachers as well as the students. Their lesson plan compliments the current science standards, and their animated delivery – as well as the charming but inanimate Sally Surf Scoter – leave a lasting impression on the students and teachers alike. Sarah said that they are often recognized as "the bird ladies" as they move through the community, and Pam said that some of her earlier students now

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER: EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT *(cont.)*

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have children of their own in her classes. Pam said, "When a grown adult with children of their own tells me how they still remember finding tracks in the sand, building shelters or watching birds as a child with me, it makes me feel that I've had a lasting impression." A few of her former students have even gone on to pursue careers in biology or environmental science.

Both Pam and Sarah recognize how important it is for adults to introduce children to the wonders of nature at an early age. Pam developed her love of nature while backpacking in the Sierras with her father, who was a youth minister. Sarah learned from her grandmother, who was a birder. Like so many of us, those childhood experiences have shaped their adult lives.

Pam confided that the following quote by Rachel Carson resonates with her and has inspired her to work in environmental education: "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in." Pam added, "This wonder is my inspiration for the beautiful world we live in, and then seeing it in a child's eyes has inspired me to teach for 35 years. I get so much back from the children I feel that they keep me young!"

Pam concluded: "It is this connecting with nature that I feel is missing from education. And that's my concern for the future, because without this connection I worry the passion won't be there to inspire protection and preservation. With so much of our time now given to 'screen time,' my hope is to inspire children to look, to observe the wondrous world around them. To teach them these skills is what Sarah and I feel we're here to do."

It is their hope that the children they touch will continue to see the world through open eyes, that they will continue to appreciate the beauty and wonder of birds, and that they will become the next generation of Audubon - just as we have.



MCAS Board Approves Slate for 2019 Elections

The Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Board of Directors has approved the following nominated slate of officers and board members to be approved by vote by the membership at a brief annual business meeting before the program Monday, May 20, 2019, at 7 p.m. at the Caspar Community Center. Board members are elected on staggered two-year terms per chapter by-laws. Members of the 2019 nominating committee were Jeanette Boyer, Angela Liebenberg, and chair Becky Bowen. Nominations also may be made from the floor at the May meeting, provided nominees receive advance notification by the nominators.

President – Tim Bray

Vice President – David Jensen

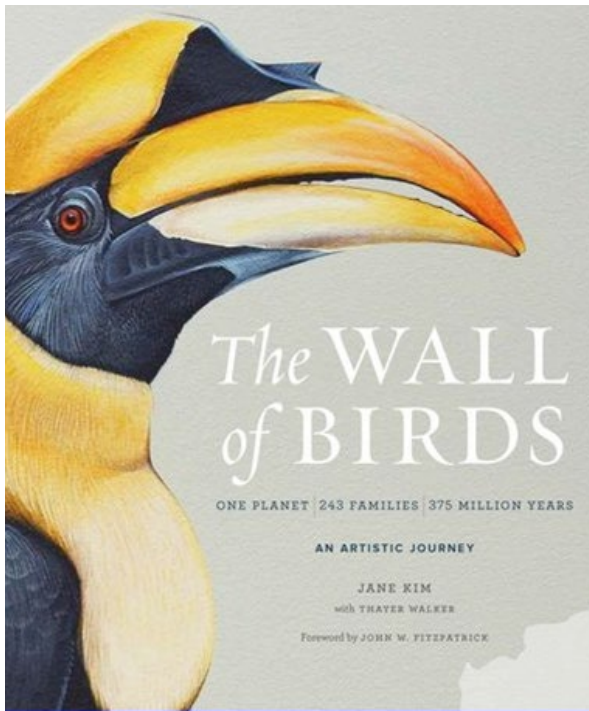
Secretary – Nicolet Holtz

Hayley Ross – Co-director, Programming

Adam Hutchins – Director, Membership

Becky Bowen – Director, Conservation, SOS (*appointed in August, 2018 to complete A. Liebenberg's term ending May, 2020*)

BOOK REVIEW



The Wall of Birds—An Artist's View of the Bird Families on the Planet

Who doesn't like a book that takes you places? That's what Jane Kim's and Thayer Walker's new book, *The Wall of Birds* (Harper Design/HarperCollins Publisher) does for a reader. The journey starts at Ithaca, New York, home of Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology. Ms. Kim, a science illustrator and mural artist from San Francisco, was commissioned to paint a mural in the school's new visitor's center that overlooks Sapsucker Woods. Architect Alan Chimacoff's design included an open three-story entry. The walls of that space—all 2,500 square feet of them—became Ms. Kim's canvas. Her mission, her design, and her work's title is, "From So Simple a Beginning: Celebrating the Evolution and Diversity of Birds." She completed the mural in 2016 after a year of research and 17 months at work on the site.

The couple visited the village of Mendocino in March and made a presentation about the book at Gallery Bookshop on Main Street as part of the shop's celebration of local Whale Festivals.

The book, written with her husband, naturalist Thayer Walker, is a story about creating a wall of birds illustrated by detailed life-sized paintings of one example from each of 243 current bird families, five bird families now extinct at the hands of humans, 21 prehistoric bird ancestors and a ten-foot caiman to "...remind people of the mind-bending reality that the crocodile family is more closely related to birds than it is to other reptiles."

Her canvas was the blank wall; her background was a map of the planet; her tools were paint, meticulous preliminary drawings, and a scissor-lift; her subjects were animals, including *Yutyrannus huali*, a dinosaur from the Early Cretaceous period that was 30 feet long from head to tail. The *Yutyrannus* is not directly linked to birds, she says, but it has been described as the largest feathered animal ever discovered. She says "my inner nine-year-old demanded that we take advantage of the rare opportunity to create a life-size painting of one of evolution's legendary carnivores." Her smallest painting is the Marvelous Spatuletail hummingbird, "which weighs about as much as a penny."

There is much more about the book, including links to interactive graphic displays at <https://www.audubon.org/news/cornells-enormous-new-mural-depicts-every-living-bird-family>

Is science art? Is art science? It might be worth a debate, but when you look at the structure of the tail feathers of the Asian Fairy-bluebird or the subtle yellow blend of the Great Hornbill's bill in Ms. Kim's paintings, you see clearly that science and art are exquisitely connected.

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen



Shorebird Identification 101
Western Snowy Plovers and Sanderlings

Here's the answer to a frequently-asked question. The photo above (taken March 10, 2019 on Ten Mile Beach) shows a Sanderling (left) next to a Western Snowy Plover. Take a look at the difference in leg color, head and body shape/size, beak length and eyes. The two small photos show the tell-tale field mark of a snowy plover in the top picture – the “broken necklace.” The bottom photo is a Sanderling coming into breeding plumage. This photo was taken in May, 2018 on Ten Mile Beach. You can see the dramatic change that occurs between winter feather color and the bright reddish spring/fall breeding plumage. Another difference is there are far fewer snowy plovers seen here. The Ten Mile Beach plover flock high count was 116 in 2015. Sanderling counts may be as high as 800. Both are watch-listed species. The plover is categorized as “threatened” on the Endangered Species List.



Western Snowy Plover breeding season is now. Some of the tiny birds travel to other West Coast beaches from March to mid-September. But for the past two years, some have chosen local beaches to nest and raise chicks. If you hike on local beaches during breeding season, please help by walking on pounded wet sand and by avoiding dry sand where the birds build nests. The same rule applies to equestrians. Don't approach the birds if you see them and please leave your dogs at home. Dogs, even on leashes, flush adult birds off nests and chicks can die. Ten Mile Beach, Virgin Creek Beach and Manchester State Park are county nesting locations and dogs are not allowed in posted areas. If you are lucky enough to spot a banded Snowy Plover, contact Alison Cebula at Sonoma-Mendocino District, CA State Parks.

Save Our Shorebirds
is a long term Mendocino Coast
Audubon Society conservation
program in cooperation with
California State Parks.

Contact: casparbeck@comcast.net

And please visit us at
[www.facebook.com/
SaveOurShorebirds](http://www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)

CITIZEN SCIENCE



BioBlitz 2019

Saturday, April 13
from 10:00am to 2:00pm

Join us at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens for our very first BioBlitz and learn more about our local ecology!
<https://www.gardenbythesea.org/calendar/bioblitz/>

BioBlitz, also known as a biological inventory or biological census, is an event where the community, local experts, and volunteers document as many species as possible at a defined place and time.

We invite you – our citizen scientists and nature lovers – to explore and help document our unique biodiversity. Team up with expert guides in a scientific survey of the plants and animals living at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens.

Fun for all ages, bring the whole family for a day of discovery!

Breeding Bird Surveys

The Mendocino Land Trust has been conducting yearly breeding bird surveys along the Big River estuary since 2003. With the help of a team of volunteer citizen scientists, three surveys are performed at 30 point stations along Big River, from the shoreline all the way up to the Laguna, nine miles inland.

If you already enjoy birding, or want to take the next step to learn more, you are encouraged to participate. You don't need to be an expert birder to sign up; in fact, Mendocino Land Trust will train you. Joining a survey team is a great way to learn how to identify birds in the field.

Volunteers are invited to sign up for one or all of the nine survey days between April 24 and June 5.

The survey training will take place on Saturday, April 13 at the Stanford Inn, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (see page 8)

If you would like to join a survey team or attend the survey training, please RSVP to:

Garrett Linck (707) 962-0470.

GLinck@MendocinoLandTrust.org

Learn more at: www.mendocinolandtrust.org



2019 surveying dates:

April - 24, 28 May - 5, 8, 17, 22, 26, 31 June - 5

An average survey day starts at 6 a.m. and ends around 9 a.m. Transportation from the Big River parking lot to the survey sites is provided.

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2019 HENDY WOODS STATE PARK

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

18599 Philo Greenwood Rd, Philo, CA 95466

Leader: Adam Hutchins

Meet at the bridge on Philo-Greenwood Road. We will bird from the bridge and nearby areas, then go into the park and walk a loop trail. Swallows and Purple Martins, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Black-throated Gray Warblers are regularly seen; sometimes Western Tanager, Hermit Warbler, and Green Heron. Barred Owls roost in the campground and are sometimes heard calling even in daytime. Please bring water and a picnic lunch.



Purple Martin by Ron LeValley

EARTH DAY 2019

SATURDAY APRIL 27TH

BIRDS OF PREY



WITH LARRY BRODERICK

DIRECTOR OF WEST COUNTY HAWKWATCH

9:00AM TO 11:00AM

LITTLE RIVER INN- ABALONE HALL

FREE EVENT INCLUDES PRESENTATION AND
SHORT HIKE TO OBSERVE RAPTORS

To reserve your seat please call: (707)937-5942

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2019 NAVARRO RIVER SP

9:00 AM meet up at the park-and-ride area just south of the bridge

Leader: Roger Adamson

We usually bird the area around the bridge first, then go to the beach and work our way back, depending on weather. Good variety of waterfowl and seabirds from the beach, and songbirds along the road (Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers, Warbling Vireo, Black-headed Grosbeak and Bullock's Oriole). On previous trips we have found Canada Jays and, once, Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Bald Eagles have been seen fairly regularly here in the last year.

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

APRIL 2019

Save Our Shorebirds training for summer surveys will be held in April and May.

Contact B. Bowen. (707) 962-1602 or casparbeck@comcast.net

Saturday 6- *Beginner's Bird Walk 9:00 a.m. - Noon** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA

Wednesday 10 - *Audubon Board Meeting* - 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

All members are welcome. Contact David Jensen for the location. (707) 964-8163

Saturday 13 - *BioBlitz 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
Join MCBG for our very first BioBlitz. Learn more at gardenbythesea.org

Monday 15 - *Audubon Society Meeting* - 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Caspar Community Center
Presentation by Lisa Owens-Viani, director of Raptors Are The Solution (RATS).

Wednesday 17 - *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.

Saturday 20 - *Hendy Woods Field Trip* 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Hendy Woods State Park
18599 Philo Greenwood Rd, Philo, CA 95466. See page 8 for more details.

Saturday 27 - *Birds of Prey with Larry Broderick* 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Little River Inn
Abalone Room. Free event. See more on page 8.

Sunday 28 - *Coastal Trail Bird Walk* 10a.m. - Noon North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg
Meet near the rest room at east end of parking lot at the foot of Elm Street.

MAY 2019

Saturday 6- *Beginner's Bird Walk 9:00 a.m. - Noon** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA

Saturday 11 - *Field Trip* 9:00 a.m. - Noon Navarro River SP - Leader: Roger Adamson
9:00 AM meet up at the park-and-ride area just south of the bridge

Wednesday 15 - *Early Bird Walk 8:30 a.m. - Noon** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA Leader: Tim Bray

Monday 20 - *Audubon Society Meeting* - 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Caspar Community Center
Presentation by Ron LeValley, local photographer and avid birder.

Sunday 26 - *Coastal Trail Bird Walk* 10a.m. - Noon North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg
Meet near the rest room at east end of parking lot at the foot of Elm Street.

**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	David Jensen	djensen@mcn.org	(707) 964-8163
Vice President, Field Trips	Tim Bray	tbray@mcn.org	(707) 734-0791
Secretary	Nicolet Houtz	nicolethoutz@gmail.com	
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	havlenas@fix.net	(707) 964-1280
SOS, Conservation Chair	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

