



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- December 2018

DAVID JENSEN AND TIM BRAY PRESENT

## WINTER BIRDING THE MENDOCINO COAST

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH AT 7 P.M.

GUALALA COMMUNITY CENTER

~ AND ~

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17TH AT 7 P.M.

CASPAR COMMUNITY CENTER



Dark-eyed Junco Photo: Ron LeValley

Our mild winters and varied habitats mean we get to enjoy a wide variety of birds all winter long. Some of them 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 they want you to find for the Christmas Bird Counts, focusing on those that can be difficult to distinguish or are easily missed. 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 Count season. This year we will offer a special program in Gualala to highlight the Manchester Circle, Mendocino County’s original Christmas Bird Count. This year will be the 44th survey, and David will share some of the population trends that have occurred in that area since the count began in 1976.

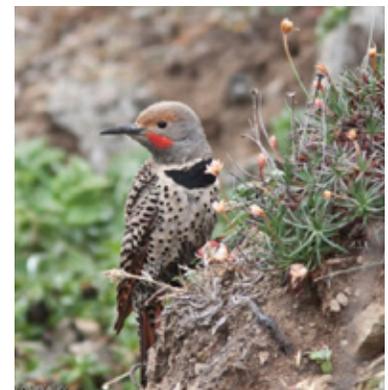
Please join us for either of these programs. Even if you don’t participate in the Counts, you are sure to learn something that will help you enjoy the birds around us.



Lincoln's Sparrow by Ron LeValley

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Northern Flicker Photo: Ron LeValley

Get ready for this year's Christmas Bird count. More on page 2.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS ON THE MENDOCINO COAST

**Tim Bray**

This will be the 119th annual Christmas Bird Count conducted by the National Audubon Society. There are now several thousand Count circles across the Western Hemisphere, and two of them are here on the Mendocino coast. Teams of birders go out and count every bird they can find and identify within a circle 15 miles in diameter, within a 24-hour period. In addition, we keep track of unusual sightings during "Count Week" - three days before and three days after the actual Count Day. If you see or hear any unusual birds during the Count Week periods, please report them on Mendobirds or on our Facebook page, or to one of the Count Leaders.



*Red Crossbills, occasionally found on the Manchester CBC.  
Photo by Roger Adamson*

### **The Fort Bragg Count will be held on Sunday, December 30.**

The circle can be seen at [http://mendocinocoastaudubon.org/mcas\\_xmas\\_fb.html](http://mendocinocoastaudubon.org/mcas_xmas_fb.html)  
To participate, contact Tim Bray: [tbray@mcn.org](mailto:tbray@mcn.org) or 734-0791.

There are opportunities for every kind of birding: by car, on foot, bicycle, kayak, boat, owling, or feeder-watching at home. Feeder-watching will be coordinated by Johanna Jensen; contact her directly for checklist and instructions: [johanna@mcn.org](mailto:johanna@mcn.org) or 964-8163.

If the seas permit, we will take a charter boat out in the afternoon to find pelagic seabirds (and probably whales). The charter fee will be \$40 per person, payable directly to the boat operator. Contact Tim to sign up. This trip is open to anyone.

Count Dinner for participants will be held at the Caspar Community Center, which will be open from 4:00 pm. Tim's homebrewed beer and cider will be on tap; bring anything else you want to drink. MCAS is providing lasagna (meat and vegetarian), salads and bread, starting at 5:00 pm. There is no fee for the Dinner, but please contact Tim if you're planning on attending so we know how much food to provide.

### **The Manchester Count will be held on Saturday, January 5, 2019.**

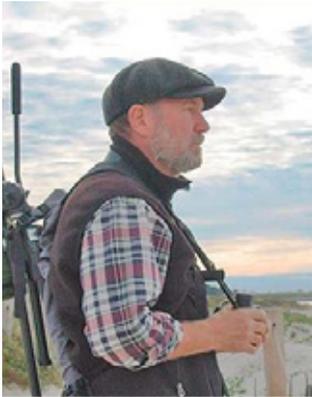
This circle includes areas from Elk to Point Arena.

To join, contact David Jensen: [djensen@mcn.org](mailto:djensen@mcn.org) or 964-8163. The catered Count Dinner will be at Druids Hall, Point Arena, open from 4:30 with dinner available after 5:00 pm. BYOB.

**You can find much more information about the coastal Counts - including slide shows of winter birds - at our website: [mendocinocoastaudubon.org](http://mendocinocoastaudubon.org)**

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

**Dave Jensen**



In early November I had the privilege to attend the Audubon California Assembly in Long Beach. Chapters members from across the state came to share their successes and challenges; to get advice on chapter governance and capacity building; to learn about Audubon California's efforts to conserve western water, promote renewable energy, and protect the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; and to help set Audubon California's conservation priorities. And, of course, there was some time devoted to birding.

This was my fifth Assembly. The first was in Stockton in 2004. As I shared in my October column, that gathering set the stage for the new era in chapter relationships within Audubon. During the intervening years, I have witnessed a stronger, more supportive relationship between the chapters and the state and national organizations.

Audubon President David Yarnold often reminds us that the true strength of Audubon is our chapter network. We have members of all political persuasions in all 50 states who are united in their dedication to the conservation of birds and the habitats that support them. For the past six years I have continued to remind David Yarnold and the other leaders of Audubon that the true strength of Audubon cannot flow vertically alone (i.e., from the chapters to the state and national organizations and back down again). For this alliance of independent 501.c.3 organizations to reach its full potential, that support must also flow horizontally from chapter to chapter.

So at this year's assembly we held a special session for peer-to-peer networking. Conservation Chairs, treasurers, education coordinators, and other important chapter functionaries met with their peers to discuss common interests. I had the opportunity to lead the group of chapter presidents. Unlike so many breakout sessions at these affairs, which tend to start slowly and soon lose all momentum, these peer sessions could have lasted into the evening.

The members of my group were eager to seek advice, often on issues that had divided their chapter leadership. The commitment of resources, especially planned giving bequests, was a real challenge for some. I was able to share how this chapter convened a "council of elders" in a similar situation, so that the present board of directors could be guided by those who had sustained the organization for years. We discussed the pros and cons of employees vs. contractors, how and where to obtain insurance for the chapter, and how to limit liability on field trips, how to develop and maintain by-laws and policies, how to recruit new board members, hard copy vs. electronic newsletters, how to increase the chapter's influence in the community, and how to entice members to be involved in conservation issues outside their community. Throughout this session, regardless of the challenges being discussed, I felt a glow of pride that our small chapter is happier, healthier, and more effective than some of the larger and wealthier chapters in the state.

Although this was the best assembly I have attended, I look forward to the next one. In the meantime, I will continue to work to improve communications between the chapters so that by learning from one another we strengthen each other.

## 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?

“No other creature can transcend earth,  
evoke beauty,  
inspire dreams,  
and ground us in nature,  
as does even the smallest bird.”



— Julie Sacco, Director, North Park Village Nature Center

Photo by David Kanigan

Our programs are brought to you with the support of Harbor Lite Lodge, offering discount lodging for Mendocino Coast Audubon Society guest presenters.

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## SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen

LOOK FOR WINTERING SHOREBIRDS DOWN BY THE WATER AND OVER ON THE ROCKS



Migration from Arctic breeding grounds to points south is just about done for shorebirds and to our great delight, some flocks choose to winter on local beaches. Here are photos of shorebirds we currently are seeing on SOS surveys from top: Black-bellied Plovers, Black Oystercatchers (here year-round), Black Turnstones (including a few Surfbirds) and Sanderlings. Please check out our local wintering shorebirds at [www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds](http://www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)



B. Bowen photos all taken in MacKerricher State Park

**MCAS FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 9:00 A.M.**  
**UKIAH WASTEWATER FIELD TRIP**  
**300 Plant Rd, Ukiah, CA 95482**  
**Leader: Ryan Keiffer**

To birds flying over a developed landscape with few remaining natural marshes or open-water areas, the wide shallow ponds used for advanced wastewater treatment look like beautiful habitat. Birders tend to seek such places because they often become hot spots - places where birds of many species gather, and where the unusual migrants or rare vagrants can often be found. The Ukiah WWTP has long been a favorite hot spot for inland birding, and the plant operators (as well as the birds) are accustomed to seeing birders wandering around the place.

Ryan Keiffer of the Peregrine Audubon Society will be our native guide, along with our own David Jensen. We expect to find a variety of waterfowl, as well as many species of songbirds (including Great-tailed Grackle) in the brushy areas around the ponds.



*White-winged Scoter from the 2015 Fort Bragg CBC; photo by Bob Keiffer*

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 12**  
**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT ROUNDUP**

- location, time, and leaders TBA

Every year the Christmas Bird Counts find some unusual or even rare birds, often in unexpected places. We will pick out the best sightings from the two coastal Counts and try to re-find as many birds as we can in one short day. This trip will probably start early, as the birds are most active in the morning at this time of year.

Further details will be available in the next Newsletter.



*"B5 Oriole" from the 2012 Fort Bragg CBC is the first Mendocino County record Baltimore Oriole. Found by Al DeMartini. photo by Richard Hubacek.*

**Please hold these dates for our Audubon Christmas Bird Counts:**  
**Sunday, December 30, 2018 - Fort Bragg Circle**  
**Saturday, January 5, 2019 - Manchester Circle**

## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2018

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

**Saturday 8 - Ukiah Wastewater Field Trip 9:00 a.m - 12:00 p.m.**  
Meet at 9 AM at the main building, 300 Plant Rd, Ukiah, CA 95482.

**Tuesday 11 - Audubon Board Meeting 7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.**  
Contact David Jensen for more information: [djensen@mcn.org](mailto:djensen@mcn.org) (707) 964-8163

**Wednesday 12 - South Coast Christmas Bird Count Meeting 7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.**  
Gualala Community Center, 47950 Center St, Gualala, CA 95445

**Monday 17 - Christmas Bird Count Meeting 7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.**  
Caspar Community Center, 15051 Caspar Rd, Caspar, CA 95420

**Wednesday 19 - 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.

**Sunday 23 - 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.

**Sunday 30 - Christmas Bird Count - Fort Bragg Circle 9AM-Noon,**  
Join fellow bird-watchers and nature enthusiasts from Little Valley Road to Big River as part of the 119th annual Christmas Bird Count.

### JANUARY 2019

**Saturday 5 - Christmas Bird Count - Manchester Circle 9AM-Noon,**  
Join fellow bird-watchers and nature enthusiasts from Elk to Point Arena.  
To join, contact David Jensen: [djensen@mcn.org](mailto:djensen@mcn.org) or 964-8163.

**Saturday 5 - ~~Beginner's Bird Walk~~\* Canceled,** please join us on the Manchester Count

**Saturday 12 - Christmas Bird Count Roundup** - location, time, and leaders TBA

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

**Monday 21 - Meeting 7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.** Caspar Community Center  
Presentation by Brian Smucker of the Peregrine Fund

**Sunday 27 - 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](http://www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org)  
And please visit us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon](http://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](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  
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