



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- March 2018

Environmental Organization  
Potluck Dinner and Award Celebration  
hosted by Mendocino Area Parks Association



Monday, March 19 at 6 P.M.  
Russian Gulch State Park Lodge

For more than 20 years, Mendocino Coast Audubon has been proud to be part of the annual Environmental Organization Potluck Dinner and Award Celebration. On this special evening we join with members of the Mendocino Land Trust, the Dorothy King Young Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and the Mendocino Area Parks Association to share our achievements of the past year and to honor a special person for her hard work and dedication to our shared values. And, of course, to visit with one another over a wonderful array of food.

This year's event, hosted by Mendocino Area Parks association, will be held on Monday, March 19, at the Russian Gulch State Park clubhouse. The potluck dinner will start at 6:00 and the presentations should begin around 7:00.

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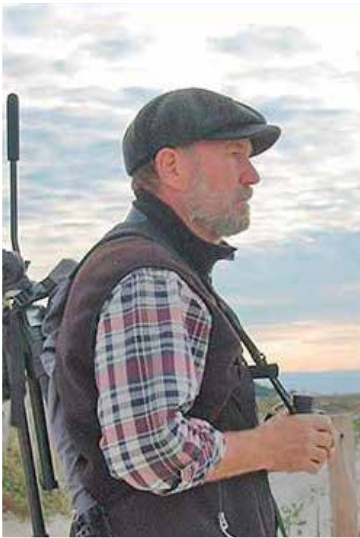


*Grey Whale tail fluke by Ron LeValley*

*Have you seen the whales?  
See page 5.*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dave Jensen

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This is always a lively and friendly affair, a chance to see old friends and make new ones. It should come as no surprise that in our coastal community, where volunteer organizations like ours rely heavily on STP (the same ten people), that many of us belong to two or more of the participating organizations. This evening organizational boundaries dissolve, ideas and support flow freely, and a spirit of community, of common ground, pervades.

This year the "Matt Coleman Environmental Achievement Award" will honor Rachel Binah for her tireless efforts in protecting our coast from offshore drilling - a threat that has once again become very real.

Please join us on Monday, March 19, at the Russian Gulch Clubhouse. Bring a dish to share and whatever you prefer to drink at such events. Please remember to bring a plate and utensils.



I hope that you have taken some time to visit the sites I mentioned last time- the chapter website at [mendocinocoastaudubon.org](http://mendocinocoastaudubon.org), the chapter's Facebook page, the Save Our Shorebirds Facebook page, and Mendobirds. This month I want to expand that circle of resources before we dive into on-line education, sound libraries and apps.

Some of you may occasionally have cause to leave this beautiful area, either on business or for pleasure. When I do, one of the first things I ask is what birds are in that area and where can I find them. I have found that the local Audubon chapters can be a valuable source of information. There are nearly 500 Audubon chapters, including 48 in California. At [audubon.org/about/audubon-near-you](http://audubon.org/about/audubon-near-you) you will find a map of the United States with colored dots marking the location of each chapter and center. Simply click on the dot in the area of interest to find the website address of that chapter or center.

Many of those websites have links to popular birding locations, often with maps. I like to read past newsletters for field trip reports and other helpful information. If I want to speak with a birder who lives in that area, I check for the phone number or email address of the chapter's board members.

Even if I intend to visit an area with which I am familiar, I check for unusual sightings by going to the Sialia website at [digest.sialia.com](http://digest.sialia.com). Sialia (named after the genus of Bluebirds) is a digest, or compilation, of all the birding listserv sites such as Mendobirds. It can be searched by

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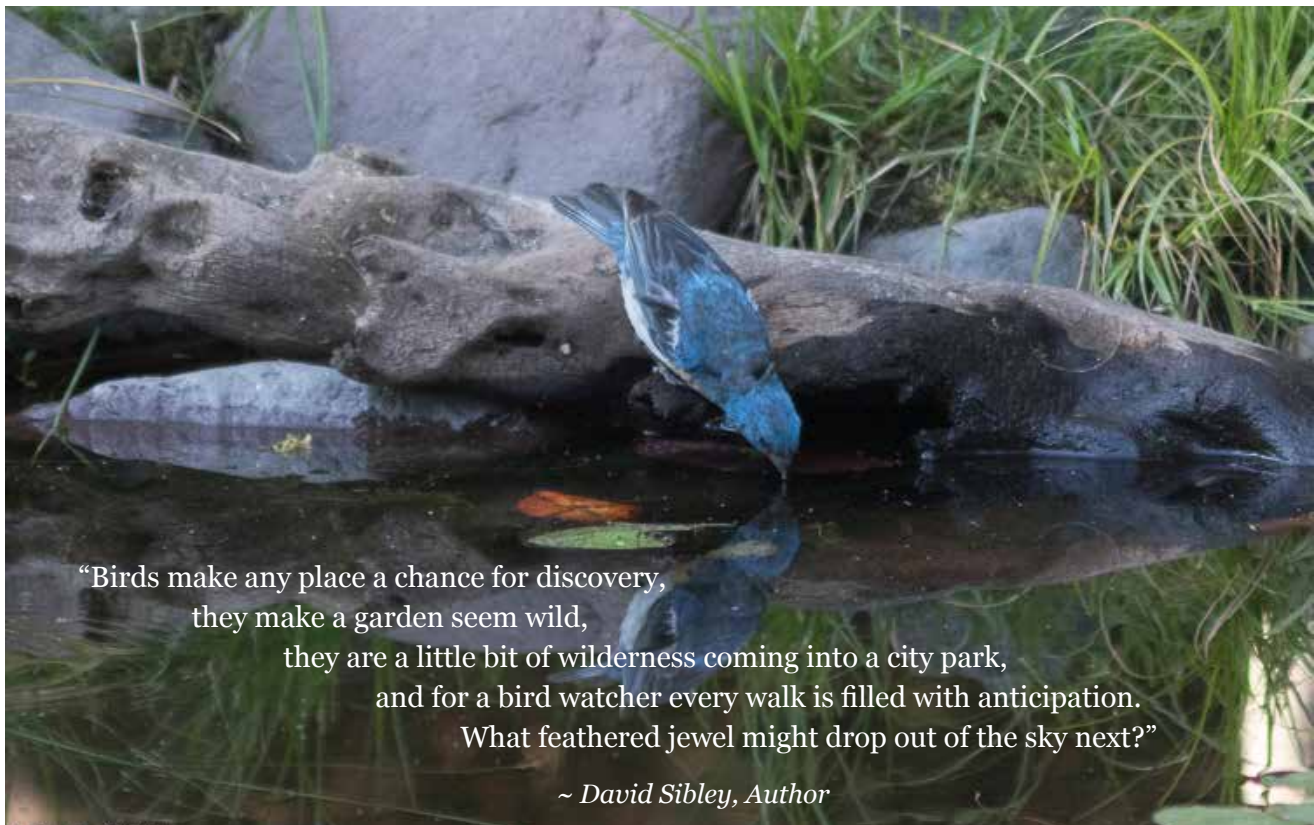
region (California, West, South, Midwest, Northeast) and then by the states in that region. Due to the number of daily postings, California is divided into Northern California and Southern California. When I travel to the Central Valley, I check Sialia to learn what bird sightings (typically of unusual birds) were posted recently.

A typical post from September 16 read: "Migration was solid at Babel Slough, Yolo Co., today, including 4 fly-over sandhill cranes (hundreds spent part of last winter here), a dozen Pacific slope type flycatchers, and about 15 chipping sparrows, joined by a Brewer's at the intersection of the abandoned railroad track and Babel Slough Road. The sparrows were feeding in the weeds and alfalfa field north of the road, and perching in the trees and shrubs along the roadside. There were also two phainopeplas, a species I haven't seen here in a while." I am going to visit this area on my next trip to Yolo.

I hope that this information will help you appreciate the movement of birds across the state, whether you have the opportunity to travel or not. Next month we will expand our horizons even further. Until then, happy birding and keep on clickin'.

## **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?"



"Birds make any place a chance for discovery,  
they make a garden seem wild,  
they are a little bit of wilderness coming into a city park,  
and for a bird watcher every walk is filled with anticipation.  
What feathered jewel might drop out of the sky next?"

*~ David Sibley, Author*

*Lazuli Bunting photo by Ron LeValley*



## SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS Becky Bowen

### LOOKING FOR BOB, THE COMMON LOON



*Photograph by Becky Bowen*

Have you seen this Common Loon? He popped up in the surf and was recorded on a Save Our Shorebirds survey June 30 on the Trestle Loop in MacKerricher State Park. The color bands are blue over white on the left leg and yellow over green on the right leg.

He hatched on Swan Lake near Republic, Okanogan County, Washington. The bander is listed as Dr. David C. Evers, Biodiversity Research Institute, Portland, Maine.

The bird's back story belongs to Ginger and Dan Poleschook, who were there for the banding. The couple has participated in Common Loon research in Washington State for more than two decades. Dan is a nature photographer and researcher with the biodiversity institute and Ginger, who was a nurse for 43 years, is his partner in Common Loon studies. Eastern Washington birders are as passionate about Common Loons as we are about plovers and turnstones and tattlers – and they want to keep in touch with us about Bob.

Bob was named to honor of the Poleschooks' close friend Bob Rozinski, legendary conservation photographer from Denver, who died in April, 2016, the year Bob the Common Loon hatched. The Poleschooks contacted us on their way to speak at Golden Gate Audubon's meeting on February 15. We're keeping in touch with them and will share more of Bob's story in upcoming newsletters.

Common Loons are long-lived but challenged by habitat degradation and disturbance. It turns out they are not common at all. Let us know if you see Bob on your coastal bird walks. If he is still here, he probably will be offshore. He's not old enough to breed, but he may have picked this spot to winter before his return to East Washington.

*Save Our Shorebirds is an ongoing MCAS citizen science project conducted by volunteer surveyors. To report a Bob sighting or learn more, please contact B. Bowen at [casparbeck@comcast.net](mailto:casparbeck@comcast.net) or (707) 962-1602. Please visit us at [www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds](http://www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)*

## GULLING TRIP REPORT

By Dave Jensen

Dawn broke cold and windy on the morning of February 10. Sixteen hardy birders met at Laguna Point in the hope of learning to better identify gulls that winter along our coast. Unfortunately, those same gulls used the stiff northwesterly winds to propel their flight in search of food. Recognizing that “Gulls in Flight” is a course for advanced larophiles, trip leader Ron LeValley decided it would be more productive to forego that morning’s planned activity. Instead, he will change the theme of his upcoming April 16 program from waterfowl to one about the life cycle of gulls. Certainly, conditions at the Caspar Community Center will be much more favorable for viewing.



*Gull feather by Ron LeValley*

## Audubon Goes to the Whale Festival



*photo by Frank Schulenburg*

For over ten years, Mendocino Coast Audubon has participated in the Whale Festival activities at the Point Cabrillo Light Station State Historic Park. This year we will again offer bird walks, but on a slightly altered schedule.

On **March 3** (the first Saturday of the month) we will host our regular Beginners Bird Walk at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens. On **Sunday, March 4**, we will host a bird walk at Point Cabrillo as part of their festivities.

We will host two more walks at Point Cabrillo on **Saturday, March 17**, and **Sunday, March 18**. The Whale Festival bird walks begin at 9:00 a.m. Participants should meet at the upper parking lot, located just off Point Cabrillo Drive.

Traditionally, these two weekends in March have marked the transition from winter to spring on our coast, with Osprey, Pigeon Guillemots and early swallows appearing on the second weekend. Walks end around noon, but participants are welcome to stay and enjoy the passage of Grey Whales from one of the most scenic viewpoints on our coast.

**MCAS FIELD TRIPS MARCH AND APRIL 2018****SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2018****"OWLING" with Mike Stephens**

7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. [note: DST begins March 11]  
Meet in Elk, at Greenwood Beach SP parking lot.

We will carpool up the Philo-Greenwood Road, stopping at selected turnouts to listen and call for owls. Seven species of owls have been seen and/or heard along this route, and on last year's field trip we heard six of them.

Owling involves standing very still in the darkness and listening intently. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight.



*Great grey owl by Ron LeValley*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2018****HENDY WOODS with Dave Jensen**

9:00 a.m.  
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.



*Black-headed Grosbeak by Ron LeValley*

## CALENDAR

### MARCH 2018

**Saturday 3 - Beginner Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Dave Jensen

**Sunday 4 - Whale Festival Bird Walk** Point Cabrillo Historic Park , upper parking lot. Caspar, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon. Leader: Dave Jensen

**Saturday 17 - Whale Festival Bird Walk** Point Cabrillo Historic Park , upper parking lot. Caspar, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon. Leader: Dave Jensen

**Saturday 17 - Owling** \*\*DATE CHANGE\*\* Greenwood Beach SP parking lot. Elk, CA 7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Leader: Mike Stephens

**Sunday 18 - Whale Festival Bird Walk** Point Cabrillo Historic Park , upper parking lot. Caspar, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon. Leader: Dave Jensen

**Monday 19 - Environmental Organization Potluck Dinner and Award Celebration** Russian Gulch State Park Lodge, dinner starts at 6:00 p.m., presentation at 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday 21 - Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 8:30 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Tim Bray

**Sunday 25 - Coastal Trail Bird Walk** North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg 10a.m.-Noon, Meet near restroom at east end of parking lot at foot of Elm Street, Fort Bragg. Bring water, wear comfortable walking shoes, binoculars available, rain cancels. Leader: Dave Jensen

### APRIL 2018

**Saturday 7 - Beginner Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Dave Jensen

**Friday April 13, 20 and 27 - In-field Training for Save Our Shorebirds** Virgin Creek Beach, Fort Bragg, CA 9:00 a.m.-10:30 Leader: Becky Bowen  
Contact B. Bowen for meeting place 707 962-1602 casparbeck@comcast.net

**Monday 16 - Meeting** Caspar Community Center 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday 18 - Bird Walk** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 8:30 a.m.-Noon\* Leader: Tim Bray

**Saturday 21 - Hendy Woods** Meet at the bridge on Philo-Greenwood Road. 18599 Philo Greenwood Rd. Philo, CA 9:00 a.m.-Noon Leader: Dave Jensen

**Sunday 22 - Coastal Trail Bird Walk** North Coastal Trail, Fort Bragg 10a.m.-Noon, Meet near restroom at east end of parking lot at foot of Elm Street, Fort Bragg. Bring water, wear comfortable walking shoes, binoculars available, rain cancels. Leader: Dave Jensen

*\*These walks are free, but there is an entry charge for participants who are not Garden members*

**For complete calendar, updates, and useful links, visit: [mendocinocoastaudubon.org](http://mendocinocoastaudubon.org)  
And please visit us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon)**

### MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2016-2017

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### 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  
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