



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- May 2022

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

by Roger Adamson



Warbling Vireo by Roger Adamson

Spring migration accelerated into full effect since the last report. A Black-headed Grosbeak (RT) was seen on March 29 in Gualala and a Hermit Warbler (CV) arrived on March 31 near Hopland. Since then, we had the return of Bullock’s Orioles, Cassin’s and Warbling Vireos, Vaux’s Swifts, Cliff Swallows, and Purple Martins, among several other species. One of the most interesting finds was a Lapland Longspur (SU) at Noyo Headlands Park on April 2. We have had a handful of Spring sightings of this species over the years, but more often it is found during Fall migration. On the 6th a Pectoral Sandpiper (RA) was seen with Greater Yellowlegs on Ten Mile River. Pectorals are regularly seen in Fall but this was the first Spring record for this species in Mendocino County. A Swainson’s Hawk (CV & DB) was an excellent sighting in Redwood Valley on the 7th.

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### SHARE THE BEACH DOCENT OUTREACH PROGRAM



Do you love parks?  
Do you enjoy meeting people and sharing information about our unique plants and wildlife and beautiful coastal areas?

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 April, followed by educational field visits to our local state parks.

Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the summer at both MacKerricher State Park and Manchester State Park.

#### INTERESTED?

For more information, please contact Alison Cebula  
707-937-9176  
Alison.Cebula@parks.ca.gov

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One of the biggest surprises of the last month was the high number of Calliope Hummingbirds that were reported. The first was on March 25th (CW) at the south edge of Ukiah. Since then, at least fifteen individual birds were sighted (Kent L, Keith L, CV, GC, GG). Our eBird editor, Chuck Vaughn, tells us that there have been a few other years with a similar number of Calliope sightings, but that occurs infrequently. A more typical year would see a handful of sightings in the county. Nearly all the sightings in this county are in the Ukiah-Redwood Valley corridor with a few in the Potter Valley area. The Calliope is the smallest hummingbird breeding in North America. It is a *Selasphorus* genus member like the Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds. So the female, although small, can be difficult to identify in the field. The male with his striking magenta gorget is relatively easy to ID. However, Calliopes are much less aggressive than Rufous and so are not as often seen at feeders. They apparently migrate with a pattern like Rufous in that they move north along the coast in Spring, and in Fall they head east before flying south to Mexico. Therefore, we see them almost exclusively in the Spring.

Thanks to the following for their reports. Rich Trissel (RT), Chuck Vaughn (CV), Shannon Underhill (SU), Roger Adamson (RA), Dave Bengtson (DB), Cheryl Watson (CW), Kent Leland (Kent L), Keith Leland (Keith L), George Chaniot (GC), and George Gibbs (GG).



*Calliope Hummingbird Photo by Kent Leland*

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## FOS AND LOS

*By Tim Bray*

Spring seems late, cold, and windy this year - as it does nearly every year on the Mendocino coast. The weather may be variable but many migratory birds have their own timetables, migrating and breeding according to a schedule developed over many generations. Birders tend to notice the first arrivals, often announcing the "FOS" (First of Spring, or First of Season) of a noteworthy species. For some birds these records indicate a remarkable fidelity to the calendar; the "Swallows of Capistrano" are a famous example. Other species are more variable, suggesting a variety of different factors that influence the timing of migration. Many birders keep detailed records of the first-arrival dates for certain species and over time, these records can provide valuable scientific insights.

Less commonly noted are the "LOS" observations - the Last of Season. It is much more difficult to notice and record the last date on which you see a familiar bird, especially as our attention is drawn to the new arrivals at the same time. Only after a few days do we realize we haven't seen a particular bird. Yet these departure dates are just as significant as the arrival dates. This is where regular birding and careful record-keeping can help provide the data scientists are using to assess how birds are responding to climate change and other environmental alterations.

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I missed the departure date for Ruby-crowned Kinglet, for example, even though they were ubiquitous all winter. Perhaps I was distracted by the sudden arrival of Rufous Hummingbirds (FOS March 9), Pacific-slope Flycatchers (March 31) or Wilson’s Warblers (April 6). At this writing I am still seeing an occasional Golden-crowned Sparrow in my yard, and hearing their plaintive songs, but any day now they will be gone. I might not notice if I am distracted by the first Olive-sided Flycatcher (April 28) or Swainson’s Thrush (still waiting for that one).



*Rufous Hummingbird Photo by Tim Bray*

What’s happening in your yard, or your favorite birding patch? Keeping records of your observations, either with eBird or the old-fashioned pencil and paper, can add a new dimension to your enjoyment of the birds around us.

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## AUDUBON BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

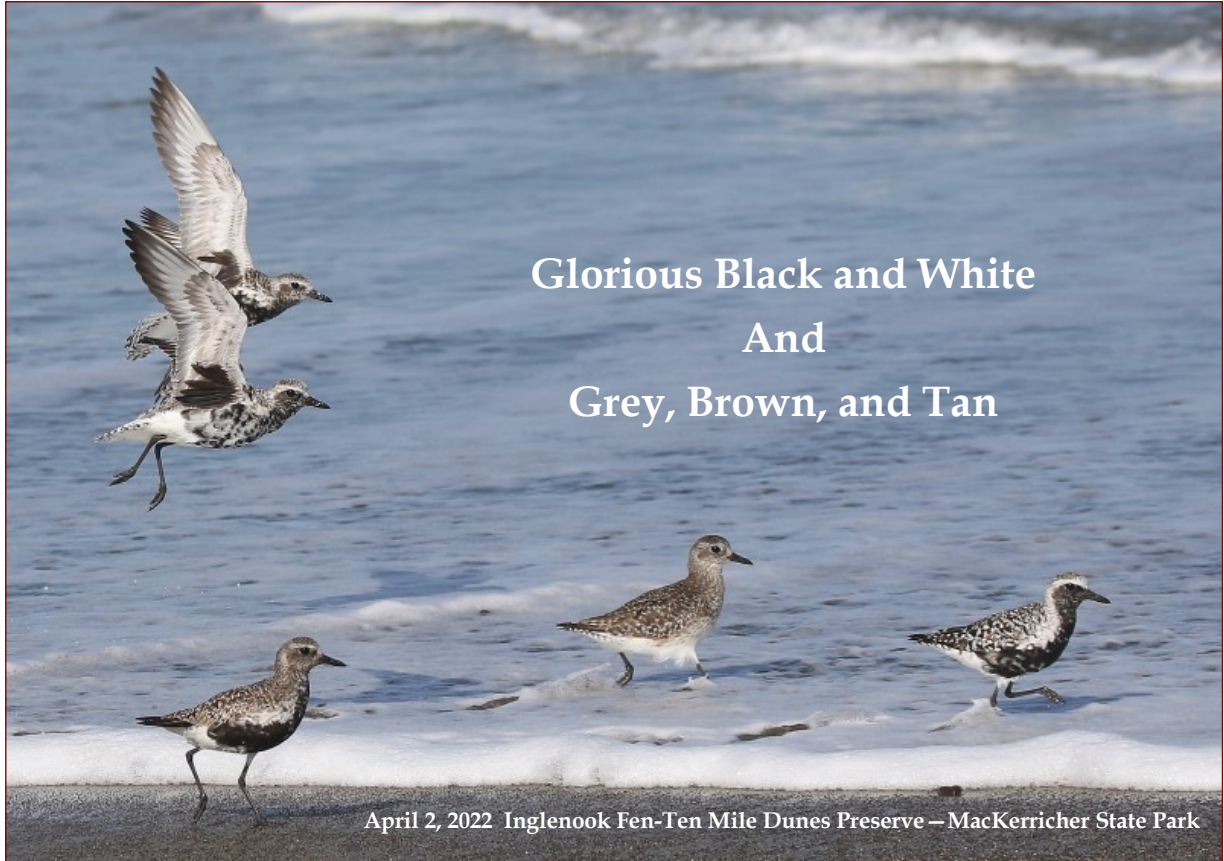
*By Pam Huntley*



Teachers and children alike are so excited for MCAS to return to the classroom to teach about birds. This spring 16 classes, from Point Arena, Anderson Valley, and Fort Bragg, will be visited twice: once to introduce birds and MCAS, and the second to go birding with binoculars. Local teachers and 265 students are so appreciative of the time given to share the wonders of birds. Thank you for your support!

## SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen



Glorious Black and White  
And  
Grey, Brown, and Tan

April 2, 2022 Inglenook Fen-Ten Mile Dunes Preserve – MacKerricher State Park

For those of us who dream—and think—in color, springtime is the ultimate experience in nature. Birds know this. During spring and summer, their breeding behavior is punctuated by splendid colors of love. So how does a colorless bird find romance during the breeding season when so many shorebirds and seabirds are turned out in an excess of reds, yellows, oranges, pinks, and blues?

Consider the Black-bellied Plover. How does this shorebird exchange dull winter feathers for a triumph in colorless glory? The photo above is one of our favorites from last month. It was taken April 2 on Ten Mile Beach when spring migration was well into its second week. These birds are on a journey to Arctic summer grounds and they are in various stages of breeding plumage. Females and males have similar breeding plumage. By the time they arrive on Arctic breeding grounds, they will be in full breeding wardrobe. There is no time to waste to produce chicks before starting the return trip to southern wintering grounds.



May 3, 2013 Virgin Creek

The plover in the center above is in an early stage of the transformation; others are developing the dark bellies that will give them striking good looks suitable enough to attract any plover partner. The dark underwing axillaries of the birds at left shown in flight are visible all year. They are excellent field marks to identify the plover and tell it apart from Pacific, American, and European Golden-Plovers.

Photographs by B. Bowen

Save Our Shorebirds is an ongoing MCAS conservation program in cooperation with California State Parks. To see coverage of the current spring and summer migration on local beaches, please visit [www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds](https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)

## MC FOUNDATION, FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE COASTAL FIELD STATION ANNOUNCE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2022 MCAS AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIPS

### MC Biology Student Shyann Rivera to Receive 2022 Brandon Pill Award



Scholarships funded by the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society will be awarded to two science students at Mendocino College in May.

The MCAS Brandon Pill Memorial Scholarship for \$2,200 will be awarded to biology student Shyann Rivera, of Kelseyville, whose passion for working with animals includes field work and knowledge of tracking. Shyann's interests are in wildlife rehabilitation and ecosystem conservation.

Shyann learned important wilderness field skills through work with the Lake County Sheriff's Department on missing persons cases which included obtaining emergency medical responder certification and CPR training.

Shyann writes, "I had been interested in a career in biology prior to attending Mendocino College, though my botany class this semester really set this in stone as I got to finally work hands-on in the lab in my first hybrid class....I would like to eventually attend a four-year university, preferably UC Davis...I would love a career that involves rescuing and studying wildlife."

The annual Mendocino Coast Audubon Society scholarships are awarded to science students at Mendocino College by Friends of the Mendocino College Coastal Field Station and Natural Sciences. The Field Station is located on the south Mendocino Coast, and the Friends organization is affiliated with the Mendocino College Foundation. MCAS supports the Field Station and provides funding for scholarships for science students who participate in laboratory studies at the Field Station. MCAS also receives scholarship donations from members of the society and our local community.

### Zachariah Linville to Receive 2022 Greg Grantham Scholarship Award

Zachariah Linville, who will receive the \$2,550 MCAS Greg Grantham Memorial Scholarship this month, is on a mission to "work as an educator, teaching others about the fascinating diversity of life on our planet and the importance of conservation. I have always had a love for science, especially the fields that revolve around living organisms. It's been my dream to pursue a scientific career for as long as I can remember, and attending college for my biology degree has been a monumental first step in achieving that dream."

Zachariah helps fellow students as a MESA tutor at Mendocino College, and plans to transfer to a four-year school to earn a Bachelor's degree in wildlife biology. MESA is an association of students pursuing a four-year degree in mathematics, science, or engineering. Zachariah grew up in Ukiah, where he was home-schooled.

Zachariah writes, "Zoology is definitely my favorite scientific field, with paleontology coming in at a close second." In lieu of a self photograph, Zachariah asked to share an image of a favorite bird, the Lammergeier (or Bearded Vulture). To learn more about the vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) visit: [audubon.org/news/the-lammergeier-0](https://audubon.org/news/the-lammergeier-0)



The Lammergeier or Bearded Vulture, by Richard Bartz, Munich aka Makro Freak (at Alpenzoo, Innsbruck, Austria) is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>

## EVENTS

*Cynthia Powell Presents:*  
**NEW CALFLORA TOOLS FOR YOUR NATIVE PLANT  
VENTURES AND ADVENTURES**  
**Monday, May 16 at 7:00 PM**

Via Zoom [www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org](http://www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org)



Please join us to learn from Calflora's Executive Director Cynthia Powell about new Calflora tools for CNPS native plant professionals, gardeners, and enthusiasts! Calflora aggregates millions of plant observations across the state from dozens of sources and serves them to the public free of charge. These data sources include CCH2 (a worldwide plant information portal from the California Consortium of Herbaria), iNaturalist, and CNPS plant checklists from around the state. How can you better use this incredible resource to learn more about regional plants?

At this presentation, Cynthia will cover Calflora's planning your garden tool, specimen and other plant observations used in this tool, detailed plant ranges now available on Calflora's species pages (for example, *Grindelia stricta*), population monitoring tools, and email alerts. She will also go over the important role CNPS members play in submitting and commenting on Calflora observations and checklists. Hike! Following the presentation, Cynthia will lead a *Stornetta* hike Sunday May 29th to demonstrate use of these tools in the field. Due to COVID, we must limit the number of participants on the hike. Attending the presentation is a prerequisite to attending the plant hike. Sign up here to receive hike details.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP PICNIC

**Sunday June 12, 2022**

**1:00 PM - 4:00 PM at Greenwood Community Center, Elk**

For many years, coast-based environmental organizations (California Native Plant Society, Dorothy King Young Chapter; Mendocino Land Trust; MendoParks; and MCAS) have taken turns hosting an annual meeting and potluck dinner. It is normally held indoors in March, but this year we delayed it out of concern for COVID, and moved it to an outdoor setting. This year MCAS is hosting the event and we have invited the Noyo Marine Science Center to join us.

We will meet at the Greenwood Community Center in Elk for a potluck picnic outside by the community bread oven. (If the weather is against us, we can move inside.) Bring a dish to share with the other participants, and whatever you wish to drink. Please also bring your own plates and utensils. There is no charge for this event.

The meeting begins with brief presentations from each organization summarizing their goals and achievements for the year. Additional presentations may be made to describe major projects that one or more of the participating organizations are involved with. After that, we present the Matt Coleman Memorial Award to a recipient whose efforts on behalf of the environment have made a difference to our community. This year's recipient will be someone well known to many MCAS members, so I hope you will join us for a great party in celebration.

## CALENDAR

Our field trips and birdwalks are open to anyone who is fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The Beginner's Birdwalk and the Early Birdwalk at the Gardens are continuing on the regular schedule. Our monthly Chapter presentations continue via Zoom. As always, check our website for the most up-to-date information, and keep up with the postings on our Facebook page.

### MAY 2022

**Saturday 7 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

**Saturday 14 - Navarro Beach Field Trip 8:30 a.m. - Noon**

Meet at the top of Navarro Beach Road, south of the Navarro River, right after you cross over the Hwy. 1 bridge. We will walk down the road to the beach and back, about one mile each way and scope the bay for any ducks and loons. Spring migrants have arrived and we're hoping to find Wilson's warbler, Warbling vireo, Pacific-slope flycatcher and a variety of swallows, and possibly a Bald eagle or two.

**Monday 16 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

Presentation by Cynthia Powell of Calflora. See page 6 for more information.

**Wednesday 18 - Early Bird Walk\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

### JUNE 2022

**Saturday 4 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

**Saturday 11 - Kayaking the Albion River 9:00 a.m. @ Albion River Campground**

Bring your own kayak or call the campground (707-937-0606) to arrange for a rental. We'll paddle about three miles upstream. The Albion is flat water paddling at its best and suitable for all levels of ability. We expect to find mergansers, Spotted sandpipers, Belted kingfishers, and with a little bit of luck Wood ducks and Purple martins. The day use fee is \$7.00.

**Sunday 12 - Partnership Potluck Picnic 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m** See page 6 for more.

**Wednesday 15 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

### JULY 2022

**Saturday 2 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

**Wednesday 20 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

### AUGUST 2022

**Saturday 6 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

**Wednesday 10 - Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 p.m. in-person, location TBD.**

**Wednesday 17 - Early Bird Walk\*\* 8:00 a.m. - Noon @ Mendocino Coast Botanical 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.
- 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 2021-2022**

President	Tim Bray	tbray@mcn.org	(707) 734-0791
Vice President	David Jensen	djensen@mcn.org	(707) 964-8163
Secretary	Roger Adamson	radamson@mcn.org	
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	havlenas@fix.net	
Education	Pam Huntley	pjhuntley@hotmail.com	
Membership	Adam Hutchins	raptorous@me.com	(707) 734-3470
Zoom Czar	Nicolet Houtz	nicolethoutz@gmail.com	
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	
SOS Coordinator	Becky Bowen	casparbeck@comcast.net	(707) 962-1602
Field Trips	Tess McGuire	tmcguire9130@gmail.com	
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

