



# The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- October 2018

## GEORGE WUERTHNER PRESENTS HEALTHY FORESTS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15  
7 P.M.

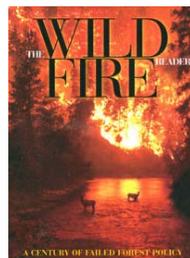
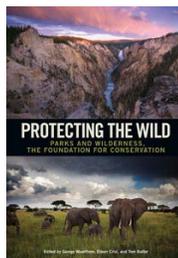
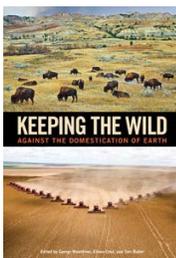
CASPAR COMMUNITY CENTER



George Wuerthner, an ecologist from Bend, Oregon, has published books on wildfire ecology, the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite National Park. A photographer, ecologist, and writer, he has visited hundreds of mountain ranges around the West, more than 380 wilderness areas, more than 180 national park units, and every national

forest west of the Mississippi. He has published 38 books, including "Wildfire: A Century of Failed Forest Policy".

He will be discussing the latest science regarding fire and forest health issues, particularly as they relate to federal land management policies. Is what we have been doing sustainable? George will be discussing these and other ecological issues. As a knowledgeable and experienced speaker, his program promises to be very interesting and timely.

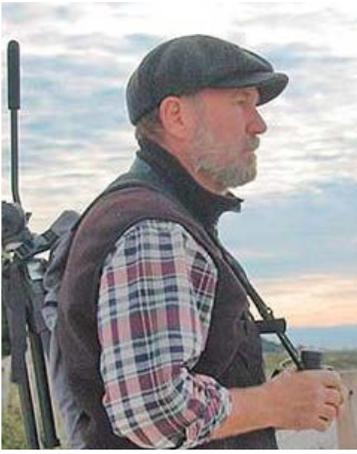


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Tufted puffin photographed by Roger Abramson on September's pelagic trip. See page 4.

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER****Dave Jensen**

A child of November, fall has always been my favorite season. The brisk air, the quality of the light, the shortening days, they always tinge my reverie with a bit of nostalgia. This year that nostalgia has been heightened by the arrival of my final meeting as a member of the Audubon California Board of Directors.

My relationship with Audubon California began in the fall of 2004 when I attended a three-day meeting of California chapter representatives. Those were hard and often contentious discussions. Many chapters were still hurt and angry over what they perceived had been disrespectful treatment by National Audubon. In the end, both sides affirmed that we can gain greater victories for the birds if we support one another. Time has proven that we made the right decision that week.

My next interaction with Audubon California came soon after that. Thanks to the hard work of Becky Bowen, Angela Liebenberg and Dorothy Tobkin, Audubon California helped acquire grant funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Toyota's Together Green project, California State Parks, and the Community Foundation of Mendocino County to establish and sustain our highly successful Save Our Shorebirds program. SOS was established in 2007. The grant funds and efforts of SOS volunteer surveyors elevated this chapter to a new level of effectiveness and brought our program state and national recognition. In 2012 with Audubon California's organizational and financial support we completed our first Black Oystercatcher survey report. Audubon California had indeed delivered on their 2004 promise to support the work of the chapters.

In 2009, Audubon staff members Garry George and Anna Weinstein persuaded me to become one of the stakeholder members in the North Coast Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, something I never would have done without their support. Those meetings made the 2004 gathering seem like a Golden Gate Park love-in. In the end, we earned significant protections for breeding seabirds. I was then invited to speak before a meeting of California chapter leaders in San Diego and to the National Audubon Board of Directors when they met in Menlo Park. In the fall of 2012 I was elected to serve on the Audubon California Board.

My six years on the Audubon California board were more rewarding than I can explain. Briefly, my personal highlights were: The bold decision to partner with the Humane Society to go up against the gun lobby in our successful attempt to ban the use of lead shot in California; The decision to engage with key players to seek a workable solution to the looming environmental and public health problems at the Salton Sea; The decision to file a law suit to protect valuable eel grass beds in Humboldt Bay, an effort that was successful. I am also proud that the board has demonstrated a commitment to steadily improving their communication with and support for the local chapters.

During the past years, with my busy work and volunteer schedules, I hadn't really thought back on those days. But as I prepared for my final board meeting, I clearly recognized my path of deepening commitment to Audubon. It's not something I can just turn off. In November I will be leading a discussion among chapter presidents at the Audubon Assembly. Next June I will again attend the Advocacy Day in Sacramento. My greatest desire is to actively improve chapter-to-chapter communication along the Pacific Flyway. And maybe do a little birding along the way.

## 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?"

*Photos by Ron LeValley*

Birds are everywhere and provide one of the most exciting ways to connect with the natural world. There are so many questions that emerge once we start looking.



Why is the goldfinch at my feeder?  
Where did it come from?  
Where is it going?



And everyone in the world can help answer these questions by taking part in citizen-science efforts like Christmas Bird Count and eBird. Bringing together millions of records from around the world is providing us with new insights and understanding and raising even more questions.

— Chris Wood,  
*eBird Director*



**PELAGIC SEABIRD FIELD TRIP REPORT****Tim Bray**

The long-awaited full-day pelagic trip on September 16 turned out to be extraordinary in every way. The weather and ocean conditions were stunning - flat seas, no wind, and balmy temperatures. We headed straight out toward Vizcaino Knoll, 40 miles to the west, and began encountering Shearwaters within a few miles. Rob Fowler and Todd Easterla were kept busy identifying the many birds on the wing and on the water, occasionally directing the boat to slow down for a closer look and giving the photographers great opportunities.

*Guadalupe Murrelet by Roger Adamson*

The high point for many of the veteran birders came when Rob spotted a couple of tiny black-and-white birds on the water. Captain Richard Thornton eased the boat up close enough for everyone to get great looks (and many spectacular photos) of the first Mendocino County record for Guadalupe Murrelet - a life bird for many on the boat.

*Northern Fulmar by Roger Adamson*

Bird diversity was good, with 30 species tallied outside the harbor. It was a particularly good day for Jaegers, which for a while seemed to be almost constantly in view. On the other hand, Storm-petrels were represented by only a single Fork-tailed, and no Pterodroma petrels appeared.

Marine mammals were abundant as well, including a pair of Fin Whales (or maybe Sei or Bryde's, the experts are still poring over photos) along with a pod of 40+ Short-finned Pilot Whales; we also saw at least

one Humpback and a distant Blue, and a possible Minke Whale. Pods of Pacific White-sided Dolphin, Northern Right-whale Dolphin, and Dall's Porpoise; several Northern Fur-seals, one Elephant Seal, and on the buoy a big Steller's with the usual California Sea Lions.

Water temperatures were generally moderate, from 56 to 58 degrees. The ocean was full of bait (probably anchovies), showing on the fish-finder and often jumping out of the water. The abundance of Cassin's Auklets and their apparent inability to fly suggests a lot of copepods as well. These are indications of a healthy upwelling ecosystem. It was, in short, epic. Many thanks to Rob and Todd for guiding us, and to Richard for obliging all our whims.

**Bird list, compiled from eBird checklists provided by Rob Fowler:**

Western Grebe	Common Murre	California Gull	Sooty Shearwater
hummingbird sp.	Scripps's Murrelet	Common Tern	Manx Shearwater
Red-necked Phalarope	Guadalupe Murrelet	Arctic Tern	Brandt's Cormorant
Red Phalarope	Cassin's Auklet	Black-footed Albatross	Pelagic Cormorant
South Polar Skua	Rhinoceros Auklet	Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel	Double-crested Cormorant
Pomarine Jaeger	Tufted Puffin	Northern Fulmar	Brown Pelican
Parasitic Jaeger	Sabine's Gull	Pink-footed Shearwater	
Long-tailed Jaeger	Western Gull	Buller's Shearwater	

**SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS**

**Becky Bowen**

**A WONDEROUS SHOREBIRD THIS WAY COMES**



*Roger Adamson*

Every once in a blue moon, a magical rare bird finds its way, by accident or natural disaster, to the Mendocino Coast – like this juvenile Ruff photographed by Roger Adamson September 5, 2018, at Virgin Creek Beach north of Fort Bragg.

Roger went to the beach when he was alerted by photographer Lisa D. Walker-Roseman, who had spotted a sandpiper she could not at first identify. There was good reason for confusion. According to records, this was only the seventh sighting of a Ruff in Mendocino County. The bird was young and gregarious, at least with other shorebirds. It hung around with Semipalmated Plovers, Western Sandpipers, and Least Sandpipers for a few days, then flew north to Ten Mile Beach where it joined Western Snowy Plovers, Baird’s Sandpipers, Black Oystercatchers, Sanderlings, and more Western Sandpipers. When it was spotted on the SOS Ten Mile Beach survey September 9, it was sound asleep on open sand next to four napping Western Sandpipers.

It was no wonder the bird needed rest. Ruffs breed in Northern Eurasia and winter principally in Africa. Like many shorebirds, the juvenile was making the trip on its own. It’s one of the great mysteries of migration: How do you migrate for the first time up to 19,000 miles without somebody to show you the way? How do you know where to go? How did it get here so far off-course? The Ruff was gone after seven days of rest and refueling, and we were left wishing the bird could tell us its story. By its presence, it really was talking to us. We only hope we humans are smart enough to listen – and learn.

*Save Our Shorebirds is an ongoing Mendocino Coast Audubon conservation program founded in 2007 in partnership with California State Parks. To learn more or to volunteer for surveys in Mackerricher State Park, contact B. Bowen at [casparbeck@comcast.net](mailto:casparbeck@comcast.net) And please visit us at [ww.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds](http://ww.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds)*

## MCAS FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

### NOVEMBER 3 & 4 WADER WORLD WATCH

Did you know 48 percent of all known shorebird species (called waders by people outside of the U.S.) are in decline? Please join us in a global count of shorebirds on our local beaches, November 3 and/or 4, 2018.

This is a free event sponsored by Water Quest, an international charitable organization and long-time friend of our MCAS Save Our Shorebirds conservation program. Last year, we participated in the count along with 327 surveyors from 35 countries, 6 continents and 9 global flyways. Please join us. It's fun and an easy way to participate in shorebird protection.

Contact Becky Bowen to choose a beach and receive more information:  
casparbeck@comcast.net or (707) 962-1602



**WADER CONSERVATION**

**WADER QUEST**

**WORLD WATCH**

**3rd & 4th NOVEMBER 2018**

**A** Go out and see waders wherever you are in the world.

**B** Send us an email telling us what you have seen and where.

**C** Find your sightings on the species list and roll of honour.

STAND UP FOR WADER CONSERVATION AND SAY:

**I CARE**

THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS  
WADERS NEED LOVE TOO!

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10 9:00 A.M. SOUTH COAST RAPTORS with David, Tim, and Adam

Meet at 9 AM Greenwood Beach State Park parking lot in Elk to carpool. Carpooling is required for this trip, as the areas we pull out to view hawks are small and only a few cars can fit.

This is an all-day trip; bring lunch. We drive along Highway 1 and stop at a number of pullouts to scan the fields between Elk and Point Arena. These are wintering grounds for a large number of raptors, including Ferruginous Hawk.



*Coopers Hawk by Catherine Keegan*

## CALENDAR

### OCTOBER 2018

**Monday 1 - Hawk Hill Field Trip** Day trip to Marin Headlands

**Friday 5 - C.O.A.S.S.T Training 10:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m.** Caspar Community Center  
Beached bird survey training, learn more at <https://depts.washington.edu/coasst>

**Saturday 6 - Beginner's Bird Walk\* 9:00 a.m. - Noon** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens  
18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA  
Meet in the parking lot. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a hat and water.

**Monday 15 - Meeting 7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.** Caspar Community Center  
George Wuerthner will be discussing the latest science regarding fire and forest health issues, particularly as they relate to federal land management policies.

**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.

**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.

### NOVEMBER 2018

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

**Saturday and/or Sunday 3 & 4 - Wader Conservation World Watch**  
Contact Becky Bowen to receive more information: [casparbeck@comcast.net](mailto:casparbeck@comcast.net)

**Saturday 10 - South Coast Raptor Field Trip** All-day trip to from Elk to Point Arena  
Meet at 9 AM Greenwood Beach State Park parking lot in Elk, carpooling is required.

**Monday 12 - Meeting 7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.** Caspar Community Center  
Daniel Poleschook, Jr. and Ginger Poleschook on Status and Conservation of Common Loons in Washington.

**Wednesday 21 - 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 25 - 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: [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 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  
FORT BRAGG, CA, 95437

