



The Black Oystercatcher

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- September 2022

RECENT SIGHTINGS

by Roger Adamson



Semipalmated Sandpiper, Aug 4, 2022, at Virgin Creek. Note short blunt bill, gray and black checked scapulars, and a "capped" look.

Summer brought several interesting birds to the Mendocino Coast. On Jul 29 Solitary Sandpipers were reported at the Hopland Extension Research Center (CV) and at Virgin Creek in Fort Bragg (FH). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks used a seed feeder on Aug 3 and 7 in Ukiah (DB). On Aug 4 not one, but two Semipalmated Sandpipers were feeding along Virgin Creek (RA). These eastern sandpipers visit California regularly but are often difficult to identify. A juvenile Short-billed Gull (previously known as Mew Gull) was reported Aug 17 from the beach near Ward Avenue in Cleone (CV). These gulls usually don't arrive in good numbers until October. Also on the 17th, hundreds of shearwaters (no doubt mostly Sooty Shearwater) were seen from shore perhaps due to offshore fog (LWR). An early Merlin made a fly-by in Fort Bragg on Aug 19 (FH). On Aug 20 we had two good reports.

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Saturday September 17, 2022
9:00 AM - Noon
Learn more on page 6.

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An American Avocet was seen in the morning at Virgin Creek Beach (LWR). While a common bird inland and in the large marshes, we get very few avocets here on the coast. In the afternoon a juvenile Ruff was sighted along the Ten Mile River not far upstream from the Highway 1 bridge (SU). The Ruff, a eurasian breeder, is a regular vagrant in North America and it is always fun to see.

Thanks to the following for their reports: Chuck Vaughn (CV), Frank Hall (FH), Dave Bengston (DB), Roger Adamson (RA), Lisa Walker-Roseman (LWR), and Shannon Underhill (SU).

AFTERNOON PELAGICS

By Tim Bray



Pomarine Jaeger by Roger Adamson

On July 31 we assembled sixteen people for an afternoon pelagic seabirding trip on the Krak- en. It was a pleasant ride, with seas around 4 feet and no wind, but persistent fog reduced visibility to around a mile or so. That did not keep us from finding many birds, including at least 24 Black-footed Albatross, several of which came in close for excellent views and photo opportunities. The best bird was a big Pomarine Jaeger that was harassing Western Gulls. The deckhands threw out some fish carcasses to get the gulls moving around and that brought the Jaeger in close for great looks and photos.

The most abundant birds were Red-necked Phalaropes. Small flocks flying south were encountered almost continuously. Red Phalaropes were also present, though distinguishing them in flight was difficult. Roger alerted us to them by examining his photos. Both species were mostly in nonbreeding plumage already, though still retaining some of their colored feathers. They were almost certainly all females returning from the Alaskan breeding grounds, where the males were still attending to the nests.

The second-most abundant bird was Common Murre. Near shore we encountered a couple of

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males with chicks, and there were flocks of probable females everywhere.

Other interesting sightings included an Osprey several miles out and a lone Black Turnstone flying around, apparently lost in the fog, about six miles offshore. Out at the edge of the canyon we found a number of Cassin's Auklets.

Marine mammals were sparse, but we did see some Northern Fur Seals "jug-handling" in the calm water. The best non-bird sighting was a Salmon Shark that came up to the boat and swam around just under the surface; with polarizing sunglasses it could be seen fairly well.



light-morph Northern Fulmar by Roger Adamson

We have another afternoon trip scheduled for Sunday September 18 on the Kraken, departing at 1:00 PM and returning around 6:00 PM. Weather permitting we plan to get out over the deepwater Noyo Canyon, 8-10 miles offshore, where we have often found many seabirds and marine mammals. Cost is \$100 per person. There is limited space available so contact me soon if you want to go. If you can't make this one but want to be notified of future trips, email me: tbray@mcn.org

PARADE WIN

By Tim Bray



Photo by Janet Thielen

Our entry in the Mendocino July 4 Parade, the "Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Precision Spotting Scope Drill Squad" (MCASPSSDS) won first place in the "Animal" category! This year's MCASPSSDS included Victoria Ridenour in the Black Oystercatcher costume (which she made), Erica Fielder and Karin Uphoff carrying our banner, with Tim Bray, David Jensen, Larry Knowles, Janet Thielen, and Ken Thielen.



Photos by Catherine Keegan.

SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS*By Becky Bowen***3 Favorite SOS Survey Sightings from 2022 Spring Migration on Virgin Creek***American x Black Oystercatcher (hybrid)**May 2, 2022**Brant**May 22, 2022**Red Knot**May 2, 2022*

SOS is an MCAS Conservation Program in cooperation with California State Parks.

To learn more, please visit us at www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds

AVIAN INFLUENZA ALERT*By Tim Bray*

Bald Eagle by Megan Smithyman

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has recently been detected in wild birds in California, and more cases may be expected as migratory birds congregate in fall and winter. It arose in Europe in 2021, spread across the north Atlantic region in the summer of this year, and is now appearing across the US mainland. This disease most often spreads among waterfowl (geese and ducks) and the raptors that prey on them (especially Bald Eagles, also Red-tailed Hawks and Peregrine Falcons) or scavengers (Turkey Vultures, Ravens). It is of greatest concern to poultry producers as it can rapidly spread through a flock and cause high mortality.

This particular strain is unusual in that it spread through breeding colonies of seabirds in the north Atlantic, causing very high mortality. Something like 60% of breeding Northern Gannets perished from it, and it wiped out entire colonies of Caspian Terns in Lake Michigan. There is great concern for the health of waterfowl in the Central Valley this fall if the disease persists.

At present the risk to other kinds of birds appears to be low and it is not known to spread among songbird flocks. If you have feeders out, continue to follow recommended sanitation practices: empty the feeder and clean it at least once a week, sanitize it by soaking in a solution of 10% household bleach in water, and let it dry completely before refilling. Remember that even the birds you see coming to your feeder all the time are only getting a fraction of their food that way, and they will easily find enough food on their own. We feed wild birds for our own enjoyment, not because they need the help.

If you also have domestic poultry, do everything you can to exclude wild birds from the poultry yard. Domestic and wild birds can transmit a number of diseases to each other. Some strains of HPAI can also infect mammals, including humans who handle infected birds, and there has been one such case reported in the US. If you find a dead bird, handle it with gloves or pick it up with an inside-out bag, and then wash your hands thoroughly. You can report the finding to CDFW using this online form:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Monitoring/Mortality-Report>

More information can be found online:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-in-birds.htm>

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/avian-influenza-outbreak-should-you-take-down-your-bird-feeders/>

[https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal Health/Avian Influenza.html](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Avian_Influenza.html)

EVENTS

Mike Azevedo & Georgette Howington Present:

BLUEBIRDS: NEST BOXES AND HABITAT RESTORATION

Monday, September 19th at 7:00 PM

Via Zoom www.mendocinocoastaudubon.org



Western Bluebird by Rajesh Ramani

Humans have a tremendous impact on our environment. One of those impacts is the removal of natural nesting and roost sites for all manner of critters, from bluebirds and barn owls to bats and bumblebees. Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington have been studying cavity-nesting birds and monitoring nest boxes of birds for decades now, leading to extensive experience with nest boxes of nearly twenty local bird species. Nest boxes for birds aren't a hobby, but a critical component of habitat. Humans have a tendency to remove, deliberately or accidentally, the places many birds nest. Find out about the organization for which Mike and Georgette volunteer, the [California Bluebird Recovery Program](#) and learn why the work of replacing the homes we've destroyed is so important.

FIELD TRIP TO VIRGIN BEACH AND WARD AVENUE

Saturday Sept. 10, 7:30 AM / 9:00 AM - Noon

For the early birders we'll meet at 7:30 AM at the parking lot to the Enchanted Forest Trail. 9 AM at parking area at the end of Ward Ave. if you feel like sleeping in.

We'll spend an hour and a half at Virgin Beach before the crowds get there, and then drive to Ward Ave. to spend the rest of the morning. Some of the walking is on the paved Haul Road, the rest is on sandy beach. We should find a nice selection of shorebirds and interesting gulls, as well as loons, grebes and terns out on the water. Contact Tess at tmcguire9130@gmail.com for more.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

Saturday September 17, 2022 9:00 AM - Noon

Art Morley will lead an Audubon team for Coastal Cleanup Day. Meet at the parking lot south of the Ten Mile Bridge at 9 AM. Bring gloves and a trash bag or other receptacle.

Learn more at: www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html

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.

SEPTEMBER 2022

Saturday 3 - Beginner's Bird Walk* 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Saturday 10 - Field Trip to Virgin Beach/Ward Avenue 7:30 AM / 9:00 AM - Noon

See page 6 for more details.

Saturday 17 - Coastal Cleanup Day 9:00 AM - Noon

Meet at the Ten Mile parking lot. Bring work gloves and a garbage receptacle.

Sunday 18 - Field Trip: Pelagic Seabirding 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Reservations required. Contact Tim Bray for details. See page 3 for more details.

Monday 19 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Presentaion by Mike Azvedo & Georgette Howington from the California Bluebird Recovery Program. <https://www.cbrp.org> See more on page 6.

Wednesday 21 - Early Bird Walk 8:00 PM - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

OCTOBER 2022

Saturday 1 - Beginner's Bird Walk* 9:00 AM - Noon

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Saturday 8 - October Big Day 5:30 AM - Noon

Go to <https://ebird.org/octoberbigday> to learn more.

Wednesday 12 - Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00 PM

Contact Tim Bray for more information.

Monday 17 - Audubon Society Meeting 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Wednesday 19 - Early Bird Walk 8:00 AM - Noon**

Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 Highway 1, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

****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

www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2021-2022

President	Tim Bray	tbray@mcn.org	(707) 734-0791
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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

P.O. BOX 2297

FORT BRAGG, CA, 95437

