



The Black Oystercatcher

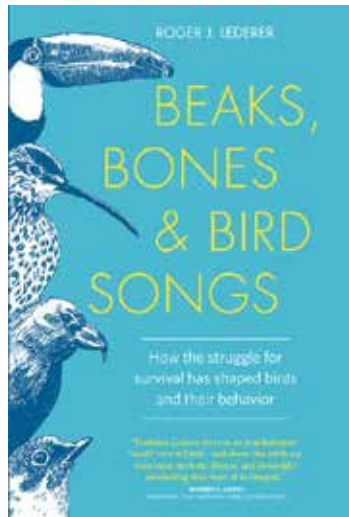
Mendocino Coast Audubon Society Newsletter- September 2018

ROGER LEDERER PRESENTS

Beaks, Bones & Bird Songs How the Struggles for Survival has Shaped Birds and Their Behavior

Monday, September 17 at 7 P.M.
Caspar Community Center

Birds may seem not to have a care in the world, but they face arduous challenges every moment of every day. Using senses and instincts and their physical and physiological adaptations honed by evolution, birds have to find food, migrate long distances, withstand the vagaries of the weather, and avoid predators, all the while competing with each other and countless other species for survival. Today, after surviving for more than 200 million years, birds are challenged by a new set of obstacles brought about by humans. How do they make their way in the face of these trials? Avoiding collisions with cars, changing their songs in noisy cities and using street lights to increase their foraging times are just a few of the remarkable ways birds cope with a changing planet. We marvel at their resilience while we bemoan the increasing challenges we pose to birds. Dr. Roger Lederer is Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences at California State University, Chico, whose expertise is ecology, science education, and ornithology. He has published over thirty scientific research papers and seven books, including *Ecology and Field Biology*, *Amazing Birds* (in seven languages), *Birds of Bidwell Park*, and *Latin for Bird Lovers*, and *Beaks, Bones, and Bird songs*.



Inside This Issue

<i>President's Corner & Why Birds Matter</i> By Dave Jensen	2-3
<i>Educational Programs</i> By Sarah Grimes	4
<i>Save Our Shorebirds</i> By Becky Bowen	5
<i>Citizen Science Events</i> <i>September / October</i>	6
<i>Audubon Assembly</i> By California Audubon	7
<i>September / October</i> <i>MCAS Field Trips</i>	8
<i>September / October</i> <i>MCAS Calendar</i>	9
<i>MCAS Board</i> <i>of Directors</i>	10



MCAS Educational Programs bring birds and children together. See page 4.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER**Dave Jensen**

Welcome back! Although there have been no programs or newsletters for the past few months, many of our volunteers have been quite busy. Our education team completed their visits to all the elementary schools in our region. Save Our Shorebirds members have logged many hours patrolling our beaches. Others have monitored the breeding success (or failure) of Pelagic Cormorants and Black Oystercatchers. We have led many bird walks, hosting coast residents and visitors alike. Most recently, your board of directors met to reaffirm their commitment to the chapter and set their goals for the coming year.

I would like to share two personal highlights from this summer. On a local scale, Judy Steele and I discovered a pale, or leucistic, Black Oystercatcher chick during our surveys along the Mendocino headlands. This anomalous chick had a normally colored dark sibling. Salt and pepper. Several members of this chapter have photographed the pair, and Roger Adamson has shared a video of the pale chick clamoring atop its rocky roost. Judy and I observed a similar pale chick at this nest site several years ago, but it disappeared soon after hatching. We hope that this year's chick will successfully fledge, but the lack of camouflage puts it at great risk.

On a larger scale, the greatest highlight of my summer was a trip to Sacramento to participate in Audubon California's Advocacy Day. I was one of nearly 70 Audubon members and staff who met with elected representatives to lobby for the protection of migratory birds, greater safeguards for our coasts and public lands from oil spills, opportunities for environmental education, and the protection of important habitat for birds and people. We met with members of the Assembly to lobby for passage of bills that had been approved by the Senate, and vice versa.


Two pieces of legislation were of primary importance to us. The first was AB2627 (Kalra), which will maintain in California the protections for migratory birds that were provided by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act prior to changes by the current administration. The second was SB 834 (Jackson), co-authored by local senator Mike McGuire. This legislation promises to prevent threats from new oil drilling in state waters by barring the State Lands Commission from entering into any new lease or other conveyance that authorizes or supports the exploration, development, or production of oil or natural gas on state lands.

We also lobbied for the passage of bills that would improve the response to oil spills, improve opportunities for outdoor education, and accelerate the state's response to the invasive shot hole borer beetle that is causing great damage to a wide variety of trees in southern California. My easiest encounters were with local Assemblyman Jim Wood and Senator Mike McGuire. I also met with Republican legislators from the Central Valley and Sierra counties. They were cordial and respectful, but it was quite clear that party politics currently rule in Sacramento.

The legislative process is a slow grind. Each of these bills is still being debated, and I encourage you to voice your support. Go to Audubon California's website - ca.audubon.org - and sign up for their action alerts. Protect the things you love. Maybe you can join me next summer?

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?"



Why do birds matter?
It's a funny question.

Imagine asking a cardinal,
"Why do humans matter?"

He would sing if he could,
from the top of a telephone pole,
"They don't! Not at all! Look at me!"

Every species basically thinks
"we're the real one"
and all others are food,
or set decoration.

If you could step back
and register all our noise at once,
you might get a glimpse of the real deal:

Life on earth.

— Barbara Kingsolver
Author, *Flight Behavior*

Savannah Sparrow by Ron LeValley

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

www.HarborLiteLodge.com

Harbor Lite
LODGE



120 North Harbor Drive
Fort Bragg, California 95437

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*SONAR students at Big River*

MCAS EDUCATION PROGRAMS Sarah Grimes and Pam Huntley

Each spring the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society education team visits coastal and inland schools to share their passion for birding and to introduce students to birding basics.

The first one hour visit introduces the legacy of John James Audubon, the local Mendocino Coast Audubon Society chapter, the importance of conservation, and bird adaptations and identification. The second one hour visit is an outdoor birding adventure with MCAS binoculars and bird books around a school campus or near by habitat.

This year Second graders in Mendocino school had the rewarding experience of identifying a White-crowned Sparrow by it's field marks and song and watching a Black Phoebe whacking the wings off bugs.

Montessori Del Mar students silently watched as Pygmy Nuthatches, Tree Swallows, and European Starlings fed their young in the holes of dead trees. Later, they were awed by an excellent view of a male Wood duck at Virgin Creek. Mendocino High School SONAR (School of Natural Resources) students have compiled a spring bird list after their lower Big River Haul road field trip.

Perhaps now more than ever, it is critically important to foster the connection between youth and the birds that live around them. Students in Point Arena know the birds of the Stornetta Lands and students in Anderson Valley know the familiar bird songs of Hendy Woods.

The MCAS education program reaches over 300 students each year and it is truly an honor to be known as the "Bird Ladies" who bring this important program into the schools.

Thank you MCAS members!



SAVE OUR SHOREBIRDS

Becky Bowen



Photos by Becky Bowen

WESTERN SANDPIPERS ON OUR BEACHES AND ON OUR MINDS

Save Our Shorebirds surveyors have recorded sightings of thousands of shorebirds during the 2018 spring, summer, and fall migration. Our most popular “bird of the day” postings on facebook have been the Western Sandpiper photographed here in MacKerricher State Park.

Western Sandpipers breed on the tundra in far north and west Alaska. Fall migration takes the tiny shorebird from Alaska across the West Coast, plains states, Central Flyway, and East Coast. The most common destination is Mexico with some wintering birds on the West Coast from British Columbia south to Baja California and Mexico. Other wintering grounds are the Gulf Coast and Caribbean Islands.



by Ron LeValley

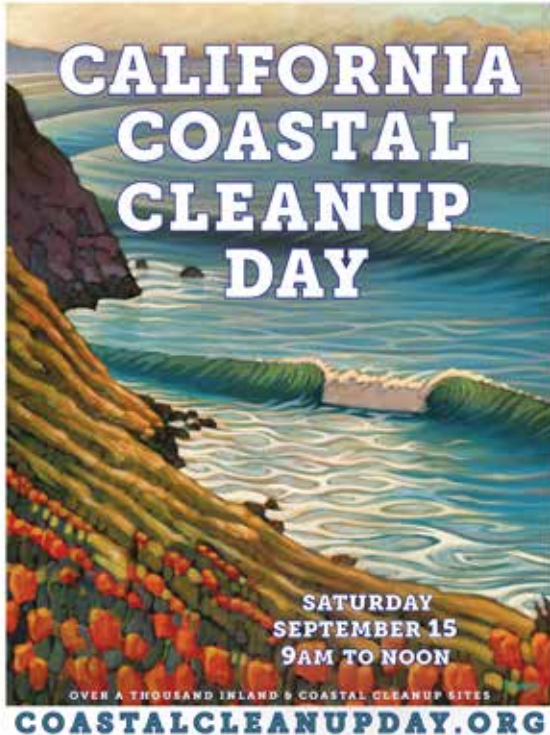
Top left photo is one of the two banded Western Sandpipers we have recorded since the beginning of SOS in 2007. This bird was spotted at Ten Mile Beach on July 7. The national bird banding lab tells us the bird was banded by a researcher in Mexico and we’ve reached out to her for details.

Center and right top photos are of our favorite summer shorebird: the leaping sandpiper was seen May 4 and the sandpipers in flight were seen July 2. Both photos were taken at Virgin Creek Beach in MacKerricher State Park.

Save Our Shorebirds is an ongoing year-round Mendocino Coast Audubon conservation program in partnership with California State Parks. We will keep posting “bird of the day” photos from our summer surveys through September 15 on facebook.

Please visit us: www.facebook.com/SaveOurShorebirds

UPCOMING CITIZEN SCIENCE EVENTS



COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Join fellow Audubon members as we participate in citizen science while cleaning up our beaches and recording what we find. The group will meet at the Northern section of Mackerricher at the Ten Mile Parking Lot. Please bring your own gloves and garbage receptacle to reduce waste. For more information visit:

<http://www.mendocinolandtrust.org/connect/volunteer/coastal-cleanup-day/>

C.O.A.S.S.T. BEACHED BIRD SURVEY TRAINING

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5

Do you enjoy walking on the beach? Want to play an active role in marine conservation? Become a COASST participant!

The COASST program will provide you with all the supplies needed to get started with surveys. Partners are encouraged.

Ready to get involved? Join us at the Caspar Community Center on Friday October 5 for a comprehensive training session. Visit:

<https://depts.washington.edu/coasst>

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Join the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) and help make a difference for the environment! COASST participants collect data on beach-cast carcasses of marine birds on a monthly basis to establish the baseline pattern of bird mortality on North Pacific beaches. Data collected helps address important marine conservation issues and protect marine resources. Beach surveys are best conducted in groups of 2 or more—please come with a survey partner in mind or plan to join a team.



Chapter leaders, members, and friends are invited to join Audubon California November 2nd through 4th in Long Beach for the 2018 Audubon Assembly!

The theme of the 2018 Assembly is Look Up. The weekend will be an opportunity to look outside our local programs and learn from each other.

This will be an exciting opportunity for you to meet with chapter leaders, members, and partners from all over the state to enjoy birding coastal wetlands and other unique areas, explore conservation opportunities and practices, share stories with leaders from various regions, and establish peer-to-peer collaborations and partnerships. This program will offer multiple interactive presentations and breakout sessions that focus on topics from advocacy, fundraising and communications to SoCal conservation and coalition building.



Great Egret photo by Mick Thompson

The last Audubon Assembly, held in Yosemite in 2016, offered chapter members a chance to connect with other conservationists from all over California. One chapter leader said: Feeling part of something larger was my first 'ah ha' moment. I was also humbled by the education, experience, accomplishments and skills of some of the chapter leaders. Many were inspiring to be around."

Please visit the Audubon California website:

<http://ca.audubon.org/about/chapters/audubon-california-assembly>

to register, reserve lodging, and see the agenda. If you have any questions, please email the Chapter Network Team at chapternetworkca@audubon.org.

Hope to see you in Long Beach this fall!

MCAS FIELD TRIPS SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2018**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 7:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
PELAGIC SEABIRDING TRIP with David Jensen and Ron LeValley**

The marine ecosystem off the Mendocino coast, fed by upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water, attracts a large number and variety of seabirds including Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, several species of Shearwater, Storm-petrels, Skuas, and Jaegers. Deep marine canyons just offshore bring many of these birds close enough to find with a short boat ride.

On Sunday September 23, Mendocino Coast Audubon Society will run a half-day Pelagic Seabirding trip from 7 AM to noon. This trip normally goes out 10-12 miles offshore, over the submarine Noyo Canyon. It is a great introduction to pelagic birding, and we often encounter several kinds of marine mammals as well - from Northern Fur Seals to Blue Whales.

Cost will be \$65 per person. Advance reservations are required. Vessel charter will depend on the number of people who want to go, so contact Tim Bray, tbray@mcn.org or (707) 734-0791 soon if you are interested. These trips are very popular and often fill up well in advance.

MCAS is offering to sponsor students for this trip. Contact Tim for more information.



Black-footed Albatross by Ron LeValley

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 1
HAWK HILL FIELD TRIP with Hayley Ross**

Battery Point on the Marin Headlands is one of the premier hawk-watching sites in North America. Every fall, tens of thousands of raptors fly past this spot, many at eye level. It's a spectacle every west-coast birder should experience, and we are going to make it easy for you by arranging van transportation down and back in one day.

Cost is \$40 and includes lunch.
Space is limited, reservations required by September 16.

Contact Hayley Ross, hayleyhross@gmail.com to reserve your seat.



Ferruginous Hawk by Ron LeValley

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2018

Saturday 15 - Coastal Cleanup Day 9:00 a.m. - Noon Meet at the Ten Mile parking lot.
Bring work gloves and a garbage receptacle.

Monday 17 - Meeting 7:00 p.m. Caspar Community Center
Roger Lederer Presents Beaks, Bones & Bird Songs, How the Struggles for Survival
has Shaped Birds and Their Behavior.

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 - Half Day Pelagic Trip 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. out of Noyo Harbor.
Advance reservations are required. Contact Tim Bray, tbray@mcn.org

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.
Bring binoculars and water, wear comfortable walking shoes, binoculars available.

OCTOBER 2018

Monday 1 - Hawk Hill Field Trip Day trip to Marin Headlands
Cost is \$40 and includes lunch. Space is limited, so reservations will be required.
Contact Hayley Ross, hayleyhross@gmail.com to reserve your seat by September 16.

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/coast>

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.

**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
And please visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/mendocinocoastaudubon**

MCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND PROGRAM CHAIRS 2018-2019

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Webmaster	Catherine Keegan	keegan@mcn.org	
Newsletter Editor	Megan Smithyman	mesmithy@gmail.com	

Mendocino Coast Audubon Society e-mail address: 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

