

Announcements and Happenings for December 2003

Audubon in the Community

RRAS recently cosponsored several free events for the general public. Approximately 30 people enjoyed the Klamath slide show and lecture at the Wharfinger building October 16, while about 50 spent the day learning about aquatic habitat conservation plans at the Arcata Community Center November 1.

Help Wanted

RRAS needs your help. With the Silent Auction in February, Godwit Café in April, booths at public events, etc., we need volunteers to work with the public and behind the scenes. If you are available to give as little as 2 hours a month to insure the success of these ventures, please contact Philip Smyser, your volunteer coordinator, at 442-5904 or philipmysyer@yahoo.com.

Help Wanted for Christmas Bird Counts

Ways you can participate:

1. Give counters access to your property
2. Keep a list of birds that you see in your yard on that day (be a "feederwatcher")
3. Join a team to cover a territory near your home. (New birders are paired with veterans, so you don't have to be an expert.)

All are welcome. If you've every heard yourself say, "Maybe it'd be fun to learn about birds," this is a great opportunity. Call the contacts listed below to participate at any level.

Del Norte, Sunday, December 14, contact Alan Barron (465-8904; flockfinder@aol.com) or Gary Lester (work 443-8326, home 839-3373; garylester@w-and-k.com)

Arcata, Saturday, December 20, contact Ron LeValley (839-0900; ron@madriverbio.com)

Willow Creek, Saturday, December 27, contact Gary Lester (work 443-8326, home 839-3373; garylester@w-and-k.com)

Lewiston, Sunday, December 28, contact Barbara Peck (bapeck@jeffnet.org)

Centerville Beach to King Salmon, Sunday, January 4, contact Stan Harris (822-3802)

Garden Tour Nomination Deadline Extended to December 15

If you haven't yet called Tom or Sue Leskiw (442-5444) to nominate your garden for inclusion on the 2004 Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour, you haven't missed your chance. The original deadline of November 24 has been extended to Monday, December 15. If your property showcases plants that attract wildlife (especially hummingbirds and butterflies) or emphasizes native species and is located between Fortuna and Trinidad, we want to hear from you!

Audubon Election Materials

Watch your mailbox the beginning of January for a ballot to select 2004 RRAS board members and officers, as well as a flyer with information about the February 14 banquet. Please take the time to vote!

Conservation Committee Report, By Jim Clark

The Conservation Committee met at the Golden Harvest Cafe at Noon on November 20, 2003. Sue Leskiw, Frank Andersen, Phil Smyser, Chet Ogan, Melvin McKinney, and Jim Clark attended.

The following items were discussed:

Sierra Pacific restoration funding: Jim reported on a meeting with Regional Water Quality Control Board and Department of Fish and Game staff regarding **Sierra Pacific settlement** funding for restoration and enhancement of habitat. The most bang for the buck would probably be from projects that are already permitted and under way, such as Arcata's Wetlands Project on Janes Creek. Enhancement on Mad River Slough across from the Sierra Pacific Mill would involve land purchase and permitting. Any project in the Arcata Bottom will probably benefit from the recently completed habitat mapping project completed for that region.

Eureka Marsh Enhancement: Mel reported that the City of Eureka was planning to start work on the Eureka Marsh enhancement by excavating *Fragmites* (common reed), contaminated soil, and treating the area with Glyphosate herbicide when new shoots emerge. A recent communication with Lisa Shikaney has revealed that current plans are to burn or mow the *Fragmites* stands instead of excavate, then treat with herbicide by hand application when new shoots emerge. It was determined that excavation would only stimulate rhizome growth and spread the evil weed; besides, costing a huge amount of money to transport and dispose of the weed contaminated soil.

The committee discussed the application of Glyphosate herbicide and supported it in this situation, provided that it is applied properly by an experienced applicator. The Glyphosate herbicide Rodeo® is not a regulated substance and does not require a permit from the County Agricultural Commissioner or application by a certified pesticide applicator. It is likely that up to six monthly applications will be required to eradicate the *Fragmites*. Lisa also indicated that the clumps of Pampas grass are also likely targets for eradication.

Headwaters Reserve Plan: Jim reported on his review of the Headwaters Plan and the general recommendation that mountain biking is essentially eliminated and horseback riding is very limited. The committee agreed that this was consistent with the purposes of the Headwaters Reserve.

Because of the author's incomplete recovery from a nasty G.I. virus parts of this meeting were a little fuzzy. Have a safe and healthy holiday season, and please wash your hands before serving or eating food!

Next-Meeting December 18, 2003 same time, same place.

Banquet Offers Flowers for Valentine's Day

Pam Flowers will be the featured speaker at the 2004 RRAS Annual Banquet, to be held at the North Coast Inn on Saturday, February 14. Flowers will talk about her 2500-mile solo trans-Arctic dogsled expedition, the longest such journey by a woman in recorded history. During her trip, she encountered an extremely stormy winter, melting sea ice, being marooned on an Arctic island for nearly 6 months, and polar bears.

The Banquet will feature a buffet dinner, Silent Auction, and awards presentations. A no-host social hour from 6-7 p.m. will be followed by dinner at 7 p.m. and the speaker at 8 p.m.

Tickets are on a sliding scale from \$30 to \$50 and must be purchased in advance. To encourage student attendance, full-time students may receive a below-cost rate of \$25. In appreciation of their part in the success of RRAS outreach, all field trip leaders for 2003 are offered the same \$5 discount.

Checks should be made payable to RRAS, with "Banquet" in the notation line, and mailed to P.O. Box 1054, Eureka 95502. Indicate the names of the persons attending for your payment. Checks must arrive no later than Monday, February 9. This is a firm date, so please plan ahead. Your tickets will be waiting at the door. You must purchase a ticket to attend the lecture.

The North Coast Inn is located at 4975 Valley West Boulevard, Arcata.

Donations of Goods & Services Sought for Silent Auction

For the fourth year, RRAS will be holding a Silent Auction at its Annual Banquet. This event has become the major fundraiser for our chapter.

If you work in a business, ask your employer to donate a gift certificate or merchandise. If you are an artist or photographer or needlecrafter, give a piece of your work. Offer to lead a birding trip or cook a dinner. Donate books or gently used optics or other field supplies. There are many types of services and objects on which people would be willing to bid, so don't be shy or uncreative!

If you'd like to have an item picked up, contact Elias at 826-2758 or C.J. at theralphs@humboldt1.com. Please contact Sue Leskiw at 442-5444 to make a donation or if you would be willing to contact businesses on our behalf. All donors will be recognized at the banquet on February 14 and in the Sandpiper as well as receive thank-you letters.

RRAS to Sponsor Educational Awards

A \$100 scholarship to a K-12 student/classroom and a \$150 grant for an HSU student to conduct a research project or attend and present the results of his/her research at a scientific meeting will be underwritten by RRAS. Applications for both awards are due on February 2, 2004, and winners will be presented their checks at the RRAS annual banquet on February 14.

Flyers advertising the K-12 scholarship -- for projects related to local habitats or species, conservation, or other environmental topics -- will be distributed to all Humboldt County schools in early January and mailed to teachers who attended the environmental education fair at College of the Redwoods.

Preference for the college award will be given to research conducted on birds in northern California, although projects related to local habitats or species, conservation, or other environmental topics will be accepted. The winner is expected to give a 45-minute presentation of his/her research, geared to the informed layperson, at an RRAS general meeting.

To receive an application form, contact Louise Bacon-Ogden, Scholarship Chair, 123 F St, Eureka, CA 95501; phone 445-8304 or 445-1822; e-mail sftb@juno.com.

RRAS Sponsors Science Fair Award

Again this year, RRAS will be sponsoring an award for the best project dealing with birds and their habitat at the annual Humboldt County Science Fair. The event will be held in mid-March at Humboldt State University. RRAS volunteer judges will evaluate exhibits created by elementary, middle, and high school students to choose a winner. The prize is a \$50 check and a 1-year local RRAS membership.

Children's Art Contest at Godwit Days

RRAS, in cooperation with Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM), will be sponsoring a children's art contest this April. Up to \$200 in prizes will be awarded, with winners announced during the Godwit Days Festival April 16-18. Entry rules are still being formulated, so watch future issues of the Sandpiper for details or contact Sue Leskiw at 442-5444.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Crescent City – Mona Reich, Rick Sermon

Trinidad – Dana Stevens

McKinleyville – Kim Hagans, Linda Parkinson, Richard Sherwood

Arcata – John Hunter, John Stokes III

Eureka – Susan Deyl, Penny Dunn, Lawronco Ford, Xandra Grube, Leona Harrington, Thomas Olson

Ferndale – Jim Streter

Fortuna – Jay Edelstein

Announcements and Happenings for November 2003

Thanksgiving Means More Birds Than Turkeys

A bird count method perfectly suited to a family holiday will take place on Thursday, November 27 – a 1-hour tally from the comfort of your own home! The count should be made during any 1-hour period on Thanksgiving within a 15-foot diameter circle, typically located around a feeder.

The Thanksgiving Bird Count was begun in 1966 in Lynchburg, Virginia by Dr Ernest Edwards. In 2003, nearly 500 counters took part in the western region, where Arcata resident John Hewston serves as coordinator/compiler. To receive a form and instructions on how to participate, contact him at 707-822-5288.

Wanted: Wildlife-Friendly or Native Plant Gardens

Have you created a haven for hummingbirds at your home? A buffet for butterflies in your backyard? A neighborhood niche for native plants and their pollinators? If so, we want to hear from you!

Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS), in partnership with the North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, is hoping to build on their successful 2003 Garden Tour with a follow-up event in May or July 2004.

We are searching for 8 to 10 gardens in the Fortuna-Trinidad area to showcase – places that have been specifically designed to attract wildlife or that feature native species. The event is intended to increase community awareness of backyard habitats and to raise funds for both organizations.

If you are the proud owner of such a garden – or would like to suggest someone who is – please send your name, address, phone, e-mail, and 1-paragraph description of your garden by Monday, November 24, to Tom Leskiw, 5440 Cummings Road, Eureka, CA 95503; phone 442-5444; e-mail tomleskiw@aol.com.

Reminder: Send In Those Bird-a-Thon Pledges

If you participated in this fall's Bird-a-Thon fundraiser for RRAS and the NEC, please finish collecting your pledges. Checks should be made payable to "RRAS" and mailed to PO Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502. If you're not birding or pledging to a specific birder but want to support the general fundraising effort, send a check to the same address.

Conservation Committee Report By Jim Clark

The October Conservation Committee meeting was held on October 16, 2003 at noon at the Golden Harvest Cafe in Arcata. Frank Anderson, Jim Clark, Mel McKinney and Chet Ogan attended.

The following items were discussed:

Illegal ORV use in the dunes and above the wave slope west of Lake Earl appears to be essentially unenforced. A letter to Patty Berg and Wes Chesbro is planned after other deadline dependent letters are written.

The Eureka Marsh continues to be a nuisance with litter and human waste, and illegal camping restricting public use. A letter is planned to be written (see above)

Eureka Greenways and Gulches. Jim reported on the Eureka Greenways and Gulches meeting that he attended with another organization (League of Woman Voters). The city is meeting with one group at a time to encourage each group to express itself freely. Key points in the meeting were the definitions of gulch and greenway, and whether lot coverage allowances for undevelopable gulch-side lots should apply to existing parcels only, or include newly created parcels. It was also brought out that gulches and greenways (trails) are not always compatible. Presumably RRAS representatives will be asked to attend such a meeting soon.

Arcata Bottom mapping project. Chet reported that the comprehensive mapping project is nearly complete. He will let us know when the next project is to be planned. The committee agreed that mapping the area between Arcata and Eureka could be important because of the proposed Highway 101 corridor upgrade and increasing development pressure.

Coast Seafoods mariculture permit. Jim reported that the Corps of Engineers public comment period for Coast Seafoods mariculture permit will end on October 24 (since extended). Although the application mentions many mitigation measures taken by Coast Seafoods in recent years, the most recent research on eel grass is not included. Preliminary results of the research indicate that the only line spacing for Pacific Long line oyster culture that shows no significant effect on eel grass is 10 feet. The permit proposes lines on a 2.5 foot spacing that is being shown to have a detrimental effect on eel grass. Going to a 10 foot line spacing could be the second most important mitigation measure after abandoning bottom culture. To grow the same amount of oysters on this line spacing as the 2.5 foot spacing would require 1200 acres instead of the proposed 300 acres.

Humboldt Bay shoreline erosion. Mel reported on some erosion of the Humboldt Bay shoreline that could be because of dredging. He will be meeting with a Corps of Engineers representative October 30 or 31.

SB 810. Jim commented on the passage of SB 810, giving water quality authority on timber sales back to the Regional Water Quality control Boards 15 years after they “voluntarily” relinquished it. Because of the State budget situation, there may be insufficient resources for the Regional Boards to enforce it.

Changing of the guard. Jim Clark has agreed to be appointed by the Audubon Board to be President-elect until February, when he will run for chapter President. Chet Ogan has agreed to take the Conservation Committee Chair.

Next meeting is November 20, 2003, same place, same time.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Eureka – Natalie Craig, Rebeca Pipper

Ft. Dick – Lorrie Mitchell

Garberville – Tim Austin, Sally Constantino, Rick Tomar

McKinleyville – Rebecca Leuck, Aida Parkinson, Beverly Shaw, Carol Wheelless

Announcements and Happenings for October 2003

Board Meeting on the Road

RRAS board members traveled to Crescent City on September 5-6 at the invitation of the Lake Earl Branch to hold their regular business meeting. On Saturday, Alan Barron led a field trip to Lake Earl.

Southern Humboldt & Northern Mendocino Birders and Birding by Doug Wallace

A group of southern Humboldt and northern Mendocino county birders gathered at Southern Humboldt Community Park on September 6th to enjoy a guided bird walk through the Park, discuss the possibility of forming a group to encourage, develop and coordinate recreational birding activities throughout the area, and explore the desire to contribute to bird conservation at the Park and beyond.

The September 6th walk at Southern Humboldt Community Park, SHCP, kicked off a month of weekend birding trips. Participants on this walk enjoyed a House Wren and Peregrine Falcon. The Park walk led by RRAS on September 14th afforded "lifers" for some with Says Phoebe, American Pipit, and Lark Sparrow.

The on-going Community Bird Census for the greater Park area, being conducted by volunteer area birders, was endorsed with everyone receiving the easy census form to begin their contribution to the final checklist. The culmination of this cooperative undertaking will be the production and distribution of a field checklist for both Southern Humboldt Community and Tooby Parks.

Anyone interested in participating in the census project or being on a birding activities email and phone list can contact Doug Wallace at PeregrineNation@asis.com, or 923-2521.

The SHCP is located west of Garberville along the south fork of the Eel River. It encompasses both banks of the South Fork, potentially including the headwaters of several large springs and provides diverse habitats including: riverine, riparian, grassland/farmland, and a mosaic of forest types.

The final size of this private, nonprofit Park will be determined by the availability of financial support. Generous contributions from community and other donors, and the constant work of the SHCP Board of Directors have resulted in the successful acquisition of 275 acres of this unique and diverse community treasure. The fundraising

drive continues towards the goal of purchasing up to 300 more acres, primarily of upslope mixed forest including residual ancient Douglas fir. The maximal Park could end up being five times the size of Garberville. There are SHCP accounts at the Garberville banks to enable continuing community donations.

Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan “Teach-in” November 1

RRAS is co-sponsoring a free public forum at the Arcata Community Center Senior Room on Saturday, November 1. Current plans would devote the morning (starting at 10 a.m.) to an overview of the aquatic HCP process by speakers from government agencies, at least one timber company, and nonprofit organizations. Following a lunch break (attendees are encouraged to brown bag it), the afternoon would be allocated to talks and panel discussions that use the Simpson Aquatic HCP as a case study.

Previously, RRAS co-sponsored two very well-attended and successful watershed “teach-ins” at the D Street Community Center and the Eureka Inn.

At press time, speakers had not been confirmed. Co-sponsoring organizations to date are CATS (Californians Against Toxic Substances), the North Group, Sierra Club, the Northcoast Environmental Center, and the Humboldt Watershed Council. For more information, call the NEC at 822-6918.

Conservation Committee Report By Jim Clark

The Conservation Committee met at the Golden Harvest Cafe at noon on September 18, 2003. Jim Clark, Chet Ogan, Melvin McKinney and Phil Smyser were present.

Items of discussion were as follows:

Jim reported on off Road Vehicle (ORV) use in Lake Earl Wildlife Management Area and Tolowa Dunes

State Park: He reported seeing clear signs of recent ORV trespass on a field trip with the Lake Earl Branch to Lake Earl and Tolowa Dunes and requested that the Committee support that the Chapter request the Department of Fish and Game enforce regulations restricting ORV use from these areas. All present agreed. Jim will coordinate with the Lake Earl Branch in making a formal request for such enforcement.

Solid waste exhumed along Eel. Jim reported that an illegal solid waste landfill was found near the mouth of the Eel River as a result a search warrant served by the Humboldt County Code Enforcement Unit. Buried waste, including the remains of two cows, was found in ten locations along the shoreline. More information will be available as the investigation continues.

Mel reported that several areas along the Humboldt Bay shoreline are eroding. Possible causes may be deposition of silt in some areas by the Elk River and dredging of the channel. The committee agreed that shoreline erosion can be caused by a complex set of conditions that require specific expertise. Mel is going to contact a geologist and look into it further.

The Salt River restoration: The committee looks forward to reviewing the results of the study that the Corps of Engineers has just started on restoration of the Salt River, a tributary of the Eel that was once navigable by steamships, but is now overgrown at the east end and has 25 feet of silt in it at the west end.

Eureka Marsh: The marsh will not incorporate a freshwater pond, as originally proposed. It does not appear that work that was scheduled to be completed by October 2003 will get done. The committee recommended that the

Coastal Conservancy be notified that RRAS wants all Coastal Conservancy funding withheld from the City of Eureka until the Eureka Marsh project is completed. Several present believe that the City is delaying progress on the Eureka Marsh Project in an attempt to make the proposed "Traffic Congestion Relief Bypass" appear more reasonable. The proposed road would be built between the bay and the marsh, significantly altering several aspects of the marsh.

It might appear more reasonable to put a road through a marsh that is a nuisance due to illegal camping and unsanitary conditions, than to put it through an accessible, safe and restored wildlife sanctuary.

Chet presented a map of the Alto property, near Bayside, as a possible parcel for acquisition. The Committee agreed that it had potential conservation value due to the possibility for riparian restoration and some continued grazing after excluding cattle from the riparian areas.

Chet reported that the Arcata Bottom land use project is nearly completed and will provide a comparison of land use from 1941 to the present. The next section could be the area from Bayside to Eureka. This would provide important information to projects between Arcata and Eureka, such as the Highway 101 corridor improvement.

Do you have a conservation issue that you think needs to be addressed? Come to the next meeting October 16, 2003 at the Golden Harvest Restaurant at noon. The Conservation Committee is here to serve all of the members of Redwood Region Audubon Society. The Conservation Committee invites your participation. Consider getting involved with just one issue or project. Can't make the meetings? No problem! We will continue to try to accommodate the schedules of most of the active participants.

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Klamath Slide Show & Forum, October 16

RRAS and the North Group, Sierra Club are co-sponsoring a slide show and speakers on the Klamath River on Thursday, October 16. This free public event will be held from 7-9 p.m. at the Wharfinger Building on Waterfront Drive in Eureka. Michael Hentz will show slides of his summer kayaking trip from the remote headwaters to the mouth of the Klamath. NEC director Tim McKay will review such issues as water allocation and fisheries on the river. Other speakers may be added closer to the date. For more information, call Diane Beck at 445-2690.

Christmas Is Coming, the Birds Are Getting Counted By Sue Leskiw

Did you know that by participating in the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), you:

- * Are joining more than 50,000 observers?
- * Are contributing to the longest-running database in ornithology?

* Are setting an example of citizen science in action?

* Don't even need to leave your house? (feeder observations count, too!)

Prior to the 20th century, people commonly engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages at the turn of the century and many observers were becoming concerned about the indiscriminate slaughter of wildlife and concurrent declines in bird populations.

On Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the Audubon Society, called for an end to the slaughter. He suggested that, rather than shooting birds, people count them. So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 CBCs were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California, with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied a total of 90 species (about 18,500 individual birds) on all the counts combined.

Modern-day CBCs are not limited to Christmas Day but are scheduled for a 24-hour period between December 14 and January 5. Celebrating the CBC's second century in 2000, 52,471 participants were involved in 1823 counts. In 2003, 73,137,878 birds (an increase of over 20 million individuals from the previous year!) were tallied in 1981 counts. The counts have expanded beyond the original United States and Canada to include locations as far south as Argentina, changing the focus from North America to the Western Hemisphere.

The CBC's primary objective is to monitor the status and distribution of populations across the Western Hemisphere through an all-day census of early winter bird numbers. When these data are combined with other surveys (e.g., Breeding Bird Surveys), we begin to see a clearer picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past century.

All are welcome to participate on any CBC. If you've every heard yourself say, "Maybe it'd be fun to learn birds," here's a great opportunity. Beginning birders are teamed with experienced ones. [Personal note: I make myself useful to my team by keeping track of how many of which birds are seen and exclaiming "There's a bird!" for others to ID.] Participants count within a designated 15-mile circle on the given day. At the end of the day, counters are invited to meet at a local restaurant for the 3 C's: compilation (of results), camaraderie, and (a bit of friendly) competition as to whom located the rarest bird!

Each December, RRAS holds a pre-CBC brush-up session on bird identification. A local expert shows slides of species that may be seen during the local counts. Mark your calendar for Friday, December 12, starting at 6:30 pm at the Humboldt County Office of Education, as we will continue last year's successful practice of leading off with a potluck dinner.

As long as there are birds to be counted, the Christmas Bird Count will go on being the most popular, fun, and rewarding bird census the world over. We look forward to welcoming YOU to our growing community of citizen scientists.

To access data from past counts, visit the National Audubon Society website at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Arcata – Katherine Clague

Crescent City – Joe Gillespie

Eureka – Donna Brown, Sherry Douglas

Fortuna – Lauralee Green, Michelle Morton Macham

Escondido – S.J. Morris

Announcements and Happenings for September 2003

All Members Invited to Fall Picnic

Here's an opportunity for RRAS members and their families to "meet and eat!" Whip up your favorite potluck item and come out to Freshwater Park on Sunday, October 5, starting at noon.

RRAS will provide beverages, place settings, and a cake. A grill will be available for those desiring to cook. We plan to eat around 1 p.m., then spend the afternoon enjoying a beautiful fall day. There's a large grassy area, so bring your frisbee, etc. Volleyball is also an option.

The event will be held in the "Reserved Area" of Freshwater Park. From Myrtle Avenue/Old Arcata Road, turn at the 3 Corners Store onto Freshwater Road. The park is 3 miles ahead on the righthand side. Tell the attendant that you are attending the Audubon picnic, to avoid paying an entry fee. The reserved area is to the right, across the bridge, at the end of the road. Electrical outlets and a cold water sink are available in a gazebo cook area.

Special Section: July 2003 Garden Tour Thanks

RRAS and the California Native Plant Society thank the following for contributing to the success of the first Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour, held July 26. Nearly 400 people purchased tickets.

- The Times-Standard, North Coast Journal, Arcata Eye, McKinleyville Press, NCC Radio Group, KHUM, KMUD, KHSU, and News Channel 3.
- Ticket outlets Strictly for the Birds, Miller Farms Nursery, Pierson's Garden Shop & Nursery, the Northcoast Environmental Center, Freshwater Farms, and Blake's Books.
- Ellen McCarthy and Andrea Lehrer, who made the trip from Santa Cruz to provide Celtic music at the refreshment stop.
- Rick, Larissa, and Cindy of Freshwater Farms.
- The garden selection committee.
- The 30 volunteers who staffed the check-in tables, served refreshments, or directed traffic [Jan Andersen, Kristen Brown, Berit Carlsen, Jim & Donna Clark, Peggy Dunavan, Marilyn Foresell, Marcy Foster, Dave Hardy, Debbie Harrison, Judie Hinman, Bernie Huston, Nancy Ihara, Laura Julian, Anita Leipper, Grace Marton, Carol Mone, Chet Ogan, Nancy Rehg, Gisela Rohde, Erich Schimps, Rhonda Smyser, Gwen Thoele, Vicky Turner, Sandy Waters, Berti Welty, Mary Wheatley, Donna Wildearth, Leon & Margaret Zlatkoff].
- The 9 garden owners who opened their properties to the public and were on hand for 6 hours to answer questions from attendees [Paul & Margaret Abels, Louise Bacon-Ogden & Dave Ogden, Chris & Richard Beresford, Rob & Robin Hewitt, Tom & Sue Leskiw, Tim McKay, Michael Morris, Jude Power & David Fix, Sabra Steinberg & Jeff Dunk].
- Sue Leskiw, who handled the logistics and publicity for the Tour and ensuing volunteer appreciation events.

--Tom Leskiw, Garden Tour Chair

Garden Tour a Huge Hit!

Nearly 400 tickets were sold for the inaugural Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour [see thank-you letter from chair Tom Leskiw]. Following are highlights of surveys of attendees, volunteers, and garden owners.

Attendees

- RRAS and CNPS reached a new audience through the event, as 55% of ticketbuyers responding to the survey belonged to neither organization.
- 79% had attended garden tours sponsored by other groups.
- When asked to rate the Garden Tour on a scale of 1 to 10, the responses were nearly equally divided between 8 and 9, with a few 10s and a couple lower scores.
- 76% were “very likely” to attend a future tour, with an additional 21% “somewhat likely.”

Comments from attendees:

“The plant lists were great. Thanks for doing the tour!”

“Liked the ‘naturalness’ of the gardens, great variety, gardeners to talk with.”

“Loved the more “natural” aspect of the tour. Liked gaining access to these beautiful hidden treasures.”

“Liked comparing new gardens with more established ones.”

“Liked the diversity in yards and personal tours.”

“The people were wonderfully friendly and informative.”

“Liked talking to gardeners, maps, plant labels.”

“Got so many ideas for ponds/natural plantings. We have a new home and will incorporate as many ideas as possible.”

“Well-organized, good directions, beautiful gardens.”

“We had a very pleasant day visiting the gardens.”

“Enjoyed learning about native plants and talking with the owners. It was great to learn about plants that attract birds.”

“The best garden tour I’ve ever been on. Great biodiversity; gardens avoided a palatial feel.”

Volunteers

100% of the volunteers returning the survey were “very likely” to help on future tours!

61% gave their experience a 10; only one said it was below an 8.

Comments from volunteers:

“All of the comments were positive and people happy. I’ve been involved in many activities of this type and was so impressed with the superb organization.”

“Many attendees thanked me and said they were enjoying the gardens. This event seems like a wonderful way to educate people about using native plants in landscapes plus create critter-friendly habitats.”

“Attendees enjoyed the variety and all comments were favorable.”

“Very positive comments. People liked seeing “real” gardens. Many said they had gotten good ideas for native planting and planting for wildlife.”

“Everyone was very enthusiastic. No negative feedback whatsoever.”

“Everyone really enjoyed seeing the gardens, only positive comments.”

Garden Owners

70% rated their experience a 10, with the rest scoring it as 9.

80% are “very likely” to open their garden for a future tour (the others were “somewhat likely.”)

Comments from garden owners:

“We enjoyed sharing our garden.”

“The attendees were fun and appreciative and relaxed. Received compliments that it was “lower key” and “less intense” than the HBGF tour.”

“Wonderful. Do it again! A “thank-you” sunflower plant was left anonymously on my porch.”

Will There Be a Garden Tour Next Year?

The attendees are calling for one, the volunteers are eager to help, and this year’s garden owners had a great experience and would be willing to show their properties again in the future. But the first step for planning a 2004 Tour is to locate new gardens to showcase next summer. A few suggestions have come from returned questionnaires but we need more locations to evaluate.

Does YOUR yard feature plants attractive to wildlife or emphasize native species? Do you know someone else who has such a property? Please contact Tom Leskiw at 442-5444 or tomleskiw@aol.com with a name and phone number.

We’d also like to hear from 2003 attendees who haven’t been surveyed about their Tour highlights and suggested improvements. E-mail Tom or drop a note c/o the RRAS PO Box (#1054, Eureka 95502).

Finally, two lost items were found by garden owners. If you’re missing a pair of reading glasses or a car key, call Sue Leskiw at 442-5444.

Butterfly Field trip a success

On July 12, 30 people participated in a Butterfly Field Trip co-sponsored by RRAS and the North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. The trip -- led by Pete Haggard, with assistance from Bill Rodstrom, Tom Leskiw, and Carol Ralph (native plants) -- traveled to US Forest Service Route 1 on Grouse Mountain, near Willow Creek. This trip was last held on July 10, 1993, nearly 10 years to the day!

The following butterflies, skippers, and moths were observed at three different locations: Western Tiger and Pale Swallowtails, Clodius Parnassian, Silvery Blue, Nelson’s Hairstreak, Lilac-bordered and Gorgon Coppers, Orange and Western Sulphurs, Painted Lady, Hydaspe (Fritillary), Buckeye, Lorquin’s Admiral, California Sister, Variable Checkerspot, Mylitta and Field Crescentspots, Duskywing sp., and the Sierran Pericopid moth, and the Sheep Moth Larvae (Wild Silk Moth).

RRAS Birdathon

Once again this fall, RRAS is sponsoring a Bird-a-Thon fundraiser to benefit RRAS and the Northcoast Environmental Center. The timeframe is September 21 through October 4. We need people to pledge as well as to bird. Pledge forms are available at the NEC, the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, and Strictly for the Birds.

If you decide to bird, the organization is completely up to you. You can grind out a “Big Day” or keep a list of birds viewed in your yard. Instead of receiving 20, 30, or 50 cents for every species spied, why not seek out flat-rate pledges of \$10, \$20, or more?

Please complete your birding by October 4 and finish collecting your pledges by October 24. Checks should be made payable to “RRAS” and mailed to PO Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502. Enclose a list all birders in your group and, if possible, the birds seen. If you're not birding or pledging to a specific birder but want to support the general fundraising effort, send a check to the same address by October 24.

For more information, contact Bird-a-Thon chair Luke George at 826-3430 or vthrush@aol.com

Conservation Committee Report By Jim Clark

Conservation notes for meeting of August 21, 2003

Diane Beck, Jim Clark, Barbara Kelly, Sue Leskiw, Melvin McKinney, Chet Ogan, and Phil Simpson attended the meeting. Welcome Phil!

Mel presented a copy of the Harbor District's tideland leases for review. This information is useful for determining when to comment on leases.

The Simpson Timber Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan forum will be held on November 1, 2003. Jim volunteered to act as go between to the League of Women Voters to see whether the sponsors wish to utilize their moderation services.

The Lake Earl final draft is out, and the Lake Earl Branch comments look thorough. So far, they have provided comments specific to the Western Snowy Plover and water birds. Jim will coordinate obtaining the consensus of the Board to endorse the comments. The Del Norte folks deserve great praise for the work they have done on the Lake Earl lagoon system. Comments are due on the plan by September 3, 2003.

The Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks Master Plan was commented on by Sue; Jim submitted the Chapter comments in the nick of time.

The City of Eureka has requested assistance in their Greenways and Gulches. Jim is meeting with the League of Women Voters and a city planner on Monday, August 25 to discuss preliminary organization for a joint effort.

Due to a low initial response to Jim's prioritization scheme for conservation issues to address, he proposed that the committee tackle this task and submit the prioritized list to the Board of Directors and membership for their consideration. All present agreed.

Sue reported on nuisance conditions at the Eureka Marsh. Illegal camping and the trash and filth that accompany it are worse than it has ever been. The consensus of the Committee was that the City of Eureka is negligent in allowing these conditions to occur and persist until citizens complain.

Jim initiated discussion on the proposed liquefied natural gas terminal. Several aspects of liquefied natural gas (LNG) were discussed, including:

- Environmentalists were not happy when the United States did not agree to restrict carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.
- Natural gas power plants emit about one-third the carbon per kilowatt of coal-burning power plants.
- There are environmental costs of natural gas production.

- The hazards and characteristics of LNG, a flammable cryogenic material, are not well understood by the public.

At the end of the discussion it was agreed that the environmental benefits of LNG importation need to be weighed against the potential hazards, and that a sound national energy policy needs to emphasize conservation as its objective. Energy conservation is the key to reducing the need for fossil fuel, hydropower, and other environmentally destructive sources of energy.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, September 18 at the Golden Harvest Cafe in Arcata at 12:00 noon.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Alderpoint – M Klein

Arcata – Winslow Condon, Carilyn Goldammer, Joseph Liebenzeit, Genevieve Ross, Michelle White

Bayside – Nina Potter

Bridgeville – Jana Maguire

Crescent City – Robert Deal, John Ging, Lorene West, C Winther

Eureka – Don Butler, Merle Cables, Connie Doyle, Audrey Kapitan, Mary Langley, Pat McNerney, Gail Popham,

Shana Stearn, Berti Welty

Fortuna – James Meade

Hydesville – George Criswell

Klamath – Peter Spaulding

Kneeland – Thomas Johnson

McKinleyville – John Burkett, Alyson Dorman, Michael Kelly, Richard Ridenhour

Myers Flat – Laurens Perry

Redway – Steve Kellar

Willow Creek – Susan Becker

Glen Cove, NY – Mary Normandia

Announcements and Happenings for June 2003

All Members Invited to Fall Picnic

Here's an opportunity for RRAS members and their families to "meet and eat!" Whip up your favorite potluck item and come out to Freshwater Park on Sunday, October 5, starting at noon.

RRAS will provide beverages, place settings, and a cake. A grill will be available for those desiring to cook. We plan to eat around 1 p.m., then spend the afternoon enjoying a beautiful fall day. There's a large grassy area, so bring your frisbee, etc. Volleyball is also an option.

The event will be held in the "Reserved Area" of Freshwater Park. From Myrtle Avenue/Old Arcata Road, turn at the 3 Corners Store onto Freshwater Road. The park is 3 miles ahead on the righthand side. Tell the attendant that you are attending the Audubon picnic, to avoid paying an entry fee. The reserved area is to the right, across the bridge, at the end of the road. Electrical outlets and a cold water sink are available in a gazebo cook area.

Member Forum Discussion Highlights

Following the May program, members were given free reign to praise, critique, and comment on RRAS activities. Following are some suggestions:

Include post-trip reports in the Sandpiper for particularly interesting field trips (e.g., joint CNPS trip to Alderpoint).

Sponsor quarterly potlucks.

Distribute nametags at monthly meetings. (Louise Bacon-Ogden offered to be greeter.) Allow 10 minutes at the start of each meeting for attendees to talk about bird sightings or relay other interesting information.

Designate a volunteer coordinator and make a list of projects that need help.

For Birdathon, collect pledges from the general public. Follow up by providing a journal of birds seen. Team experienced birders with beginners. Use the money raised to educate children.

Garden Tour Tickets Now on Sale!

The inaugural Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour showcase 9 gardens -- from downtown Eureka to Westhaven -- plus Freshwater Farms -- that have been specifically designed to attract wildlife or that feature native species.

The Tour will be held Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is partnering with Redwood Region Audubon Society to give you entry into these wonderful backyard habitats. The cost for a ticket to all 10 locations is only \$15. (Plus each ticket contains a coupon for 10% savings at Freshwater Farms and Strictly for the Birds!)

Thanks to Fundraising Appeal Donors

Over 40 members responded to our May fundraising letter, generously donating \$1580 to support RRAS conservation and education programs. The board would also like to thank California Audubon for underwriting half the cost of the mailing.

Godwit Café fattens festival-goers and RRAS!

RRAS raised \$625 from food sales at the Godwit Café during April's Godwit Days.

Conservation Committee Report - June 19 by Jim Clark

The Conservation Committee met at noon on June 19, 2003 at the golden Harvest Cafe in Arcata. Jan Andersen, Jim Clark, Hal Genger, Mel McKinney and Sue Leskiw attended. With the Humboldt Watershed Council (HWC) meeting Pat Higgins and Greg Smith also took part.

Pat and Greg requested that RRAS co-sponsor a public seminar on the Simpson Habitat Conservation Plan. According to Pat, Simpson Timber's HCP, if followed, would not provide a sustained yield of quality timber and would inflict damage to watersheds. Pat also pointed out the closing of the Simpson mill in Fort Bragg, Mendocino County as evidence of Simpson's cut and get out strategy.

The seminar is tentatively scheduled for September 27 at a yet to be announced Venue.

Mel reported that the approval portion of the freshwater pond portion of the Eureka Marsh restoration will be resolved in two weeks. It will either be approved as an existing project or possibly be changed to salt marsh restoration.

Jim Clark reported on the meeting with County Planning Director Kirk Girard regarding the residentially developable parcels available and partly funded by the Humboldt County Realtors and Northern California Builders. Mr. Girard said that a pilot study indicated that current estimates of land availability were over-estimated by 25% to 50% because of various constraints. Kirk also stated that cohesive and detailed input is needed from the environmental community.

We need at least one volunteer to be a liaison between the Conservation Committee and a group of environmental organizations representatives that are working on the County General Plan Amendment. Call or e-mail Jim Clark. And check out www.help Humboldt plan.org. Let's get Redwood Region Audubon Society on the list of participating organizations!

A list of conservation issues has been sent out to conservation committee members and the RRAS board of directors to prioritize increase awareness of the variety of issues that we need to address. This will be an ongoing project.

Next meeting will be at Noon on Thursday, July 17, at the Golden Harvest Cafe in Arcata.

Marsh Cleanup a Huge Success!

Fifty-two bags of trash – plus 2 bike frames, 5 sleeping bags, 5 carpets, 3 blankets, and a pillow – were collected during the April 26 cleanup at the Eureka Marsh. The event was organized by Pablo Herrera and Melvin McKinney (below). Thanks go to garbage collectors Danielle Creedon, Greg Frankfurter, Maggy Herbelin, Anne Hubbard, Sue Leskiw, Sandra Lingle, Xandra Manns, Pat Mc Nerney, Gretchen O'Brien, Chet Ogan, Jeanne Pendergast, and David Ploss.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Arcata – Barney Bartelle, Kaye Humphry

Eureka – Michael & Joan Watanabe

McKinleyville – Jay Peterson, Todd Tennyson

Announcements and Happenings for May 2003

Share the Beach Program May 7

Redwood Region Audubon is co-sponsoring a free public program on Wednesday, May 7, from 7-9 p.m., at Azalea Hall in McKinleyville. Ron LeValley and Heather Beeler from Mad River Biologists will present information about the Snowy Plover and other wildlife and plants that share the beach with us. Heather will offer information about how we can enjoy the beach **and** be respectful of these sensitive resources at the same time and how we can share this information with others. Other co-sponsors of the program, hosted by the Dunes Forum, are North Group -- Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club, Northcoast Environmental Center, Environmental Protection Information Center, Friends of the Dunes, the Humboldt Coastal Coalition, and Mad River Biologists.

Garden Tour Tickets Now on Sale

The inaugural Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour showcase 9 gardens -- from downtown Eureka to Westhaven -- plus Freshwater Farms -- that have been specifically designed to attract wildlife or that feature native species. Whether you have a small city lot or several acres in the woods, visiting these properties will give you plenty of ideas for your own landscaping.

The Tour will be held Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is partnering with Redwood Region Audubon Society to give you entry into these wonderful backyard habitats. The cost for a ticket to all 10 locations is only \$15. (Plus each ticket contains a coupon for 10% savings at Freshwater Farms and Strictly for the Birds!)

Tickets must be purchased in advance. You can order by mail using the form on the [Calendar web page](#) or buy tickets at the following locations: Strictly for the Birds, 123 F Street, Old Town Eureka; Freshwater Farms, 5851 Myrtle Avenue, Eureka; or the Northcoast Environmental Center, 575 H Street, Arcata. (Mail orders should be sent no later than July 11, to guarantee receiving your tickets before the event.)

Still Seeking Garden Tour Volunteers

The July 26 Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour needs a few more people to check tickets and distribute handouts at the gardens, direct traffic, and help at the refreshment stop. Shifts are 3 hours, either 10 a.m.-1 p.m. or 1-4 p.m. In appreciation, volunteers will receive a VIP tour of the gardens and picnic on Sunday, July 27. Please call Tom or Sue Leskiw at 442-5444.

Thank You, Godwit Café Donors & Volunteers

RRAS sends its appreciation to Los Bagels for donating the bagels and Ramone's Bakery for donating the french bread sold in the Café. Also, thanks to Sacred Grounds for giving us shade grown coffee to brew. A huge "chef hats off" to Troy Leopardo, who crafted the crepes, stew, and soup. The Café operated 18 hours during the Godwit Days Festival, a feat that required yeoman efforts from the following volunteers: Frank Anderson, Lina Carro, Donna Clark, Jim Clark, Tracy Cline, Elias Elias, Jessica Flayer, David Gillott, Chet Ogan, C.J. Ralph, Jay Sooter, and George Ziminsky.

Nest Box Project by Chet Ogan

April 11, 2003. Eureka High School. Recently arrived Pacific Slope Flycatchers and Yellow-rumped Warblers were singing in the redwoods. Townsend's Warblers, still lingering from their winter here, were flitting through the branches gleaning insects. Hutton's Vireos were singing in the tree canopies. Downy Woodpeckers were scouring the branches of a dead alder. Chestnut-backed Chickadees were checking out cavities in a dead alder and peeking in the nestboxes searching for possible nesting places.

Last Fall I donated redwood siding from the barn we tore down to Eureka High School for a nestbox program. Paul Kinsey's shop classes cut the pieces for 50 nest boxes and this winter Robert Child's Field Biology class placed the boxes on riparian areas around the campus, recording, aspect, tree species, height, and habitat. This spring the class will be observing the boxes, noting which bird species use the boxes.

Cornell Ornithology Lab is promoting a nestbox program around the United States to encourage people to put up nestboxes for cavity-nesting birds. As forests are cut, some logging practices allow removal of standing dead trees. These dead trees provide foraging and nesting habitat for many species of animals including bats, martens, flying squirrels, and cavity-nesting birds. The lack of suitable cavities is the limiting factor for many cavity-nesting species.

It is the hope that by providing nestboxes, cavity nesting species such as Violet-green Swallows and Tree Swallows will nest in the areas. Swallow are beneficial in consuming large quantities of flying nuisance insects such as mosquitoes.

Conservation Committee Report - April 18 by Jim Clark

The Conservation Committee met at 12 Noon at the Golden Harvest Cafe on April 18, 2003. Frank Anderson, Diane Beck, Jim Clark, Sue Leskiw, Chet Ogan, and Melvin McKinney attended.

Eureka Wildlife Areas renaming: Mel reported that the item to propose renaming the wildlife areas to Wildlife Sanctuaries is scheduled for the April 29 City Council meeting.

Eureka Greenways and Gulches: Mel and Chet think that requests for committee members are about to go out.

County Open Space Study letter: The committee discussed the request to sign on to a letter by Diane Ryerson of the Sierra Club expressing interest in meeting with Kirk Girard to discuss the possibility of environmental organizations contributing additional funds to the Humboldt County Association of Realtors and the Northern California Association of Homebuilders proposed \$6,000 to help pay for a \$9-10,000 survey to (1) verify the accuracy of the 2002 county survey and (2) craft the housing element update for the county's general plan.

The committee offers an alternative. Let the Humboldt County Association of Realtors and the Northern California Association of Homebuilders do an independent study. This would avoid the possible appearance of impropriety and allow the public to objectively compare the two studies.

Coast Seafoods mariculture permit: The meeting of Coast Seafoods with the permitting agencies reportedly resulted in Coast Seafoods claiming that if they had to monitor their mariculture activities in Humboldt Bay as requested by the Coastal Commission, they could not afford to operate. Another issue that is being considered is whether or not the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District is properly discharging their public trust by leasing tidelands to an unpermitted operator who is resisting compliance with state and federal environmental regulations.

Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District Commission: Mel attended the Commissioner Meeting and objected to the presented budget because it did not include grants or the lease amount from Coast Seafoods. Commissioner Fritzsche sustained a motion to re-hear the budget with the grants and leases included.

The committee briefly discussed the possibility of one or more oyster cultivators who might fill the gap if Coast Seafood were to be forced out of business by the cost of compliance and competitive lease payments.

Change in Meeting Day: Due to conflicting meetings for the chairman, meetings will be held on the **third Thursday of the month** instead of the third Friday. We hope that regular attendees and some of those not able to attend on Fridays will be able to make the Thursday meeting day.

Belize-RRAS Sistership

Chet Ogan and Jay Sooter, both of whom had visited Belize in the past couple of months, reported to the Latin-America Committee on the beauty of this small country RRAS has chosen to have a sister relationship with-- and how birdy it is. But as with many beautiful places, it's facing intense development pressures, much of it from Americans retiring there to live in gated communities. Belizeans are concerned, as well, especially the Audubon representatives Chet and Jay met with. They're fully aware of their priceless resources and of the need to develop plans to try to at least steer the development in less environmentally destructive directions.

Crooked Tree Wildlife Refuge has the largest nesting colony of Jabiru Storks in Central America, but this colony is steadily shrinking, and no one knows why. Speculation is that they face pressures on their wintering grounds, but where they go is yet unknown. The executive director of Belize Audubon, Valdemar Andrade, would like to get a banding program started to learn where the Jabirus migrate and they have requested RRAS to help train their people in banding techniques.

Meanwhile, it was suggested that we ask our RRAS membership to visit the Belize Audubon website, www.belizeaudubon.org, and, if possible, to consider joining that chapter. Rob Hewitt is planning a cost-sharing trip to Belize for RRAS members during President's week of 2004, and we encourage members to think about visiting this small but unique country in Central America. Look for more details in coming months.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Arcata – George Burtchett, Marylee Bytheriver, Phyllis Geller, Alex Stillman, Sandy Waters

Crescent City – Ross Schaefer

Eureka – Joseph Roberts

Fortuna – Debra Arivett

Loleta – Debra Nuttall

McKinleyville – Joe & Ann Friedman, Russell Namitz, Edith Smith

Announcements and Happenings for April 2003

Fly in for Godwit Days (and nights!), April 18-20, 2003

Arcata invites you to the 8th annual Godwit Days, the three-day spring migration festival celebrating the Marbled Godwit and all birds of the coastal redwoods, bays and marshes of Northern California! More than 75 birding field trips and workshops are offered in and around Arcata - in the heart of California's redwood coast. Amid our ancient redwood forests, marshes and the Pacific Ocean, 450 species of bird have been recorded visiting here annually. Won't you too?

Watch Marbled Murrelets arcing through towering redwoods at dawn, have face-to-face encounters with spotted owls, and take small boat tours of Humboldt Bay to view migrant shorebirds at their peak. For more information, call toll-free at 800-908-WING or log on to <http://www.godwitdays.com/>.

Potluck Planned for May Program

Come early to the May 9 RRAS program and bring your appetite! Since the potluck preceding the December CBC brush-up proved so popular, we are adding one to the last program before the summer hiatus. RRAS will provide drinks, paper goods, and utensils; you bring the food. The location is the main room at the County Office of Education; the time is 6:30 p.m. See you there!

New RRAS Logo Goods

Baseball caps and commuter mugs featuring Gary Bloomfield's Marbled Murrelet were unveiled at the RRAS Annual Banquet. The caps come in two styles – olive green oilskin and green/blue cotton – and cost \$15. The mugs are a beautiful metallic green with the logo on one side and a shade-grown coffee/songbird connection on the other. The price is \$10.

These items, as well as the remaining American Bittern T-shirts (\$10), can be purchased at the Godwit Café or at any monthly RRAS program.

RRAS-sponsored Science Fair Award Recipient

“Which species of wild backyard birds is more aggressive? Submissive?” by Chelsea Stewart-Fusek, a seventh-grader from Fieldbrook Elementary School, was selected as the best project dealing with birds and their habitat at the annual Humboldt County Science Fair held in mid-March.

Chelsea observed avian interactions at a small, elevated backyard platform feeder during January and February. She predicted that White-crowned Sparrows would show more aggression, “possibly because contrasting white stripes on his crest could make him appear superior,” and that Juncos would present more submission. Chelsea found that the sparrows were indeed more prone to keep other birds off the feeder but that juncos were submissive on an interspecies level yet both aggressive and submissive within their own species.

RRAS judges Louise Bacon-Ogden, Sue Leskiw, and Tom Leskiw evaluated exhibits created by students in grades 4 through 8 to choose a winner. The prize – a \$50 check and 1-year RRAS membership -- was awarded during a ceremony on March 21 at Humboldt State University.

Conservation Committee Report - March 21

The March conservation Committee Meeting was Held at the Golden Harvest Cafe on March 21, 2003. Attending were Jeanne Pendergass, Melvin McKinney, Barbara Kelly, Hal Genger and Jim Clark

Old business discussed included:

Mariculture Monitoring Committee: Coastal commission staff, resource agencies and Coast Seafoods have met in San Francisco in an attempt to resolve permit issues involving the Coastal Commissions perceived inadequacy of the studies that have taken place. If these issues cannot be resolved, Coast Seafood's permit process will probably be taking a different route than it has for the past four years. The committee voted to approve the Harbor District matching \$7,000 with Coast Seafood for a study on salmonid use of eelgrass in Humboldt Bay.

City of Eureka: Mel reported that the two year old proposal to re-name the city's wildlife management areas to sanctuaries is almost ready for the City Council and Urged your's truly to get off the dime and re-send the letter urging the name changes.

New Business included:

Letter supporting elimination of alien plants: Jim passed around a draft letter to the Coastal Conservancy supporting Grants totaling \$35,000 to the Conservation Corps and Fish and Wildlife Service for elimination of *Spartina* in salt marshes and English ivy in the spruce forest at the Lanphere dunes Unit. The letter was approved and sent.

Position against water export was approved and will be presented at the next Board Meeting.

Bay Stewards: Mel explained that a Bay Stewards group is starting to promote conservation and study of Humboldt Bay. Various organizational structures are being explored.

National Audubon Society's One and Five Year Plan is to stop returning dues to chapters and build 200 "Audubon Centers" nation-wide. Nothing was mentioned about directly supporting local conservation efforts.

CalPine's Proposal to ship in liquefied natural gas (LNG) was discussed and the main conservation concern appeared to be the effect of additional bay dredging required to get the 900-foot ships to the proposed terminal north of the existing deep channel. Tim McKay announced a presentation by a well known opponent of LNG at the NEC on April 5. Check the Econews for details.

MtBE: It was mentioned that the Canadian company that makes Methyl tertiary butyl Ether (MtBE) is suing the State of California for discontinuing its use. Actually, the company makes Methyl alcohol, the precursor to MtBE, and is suing the state for not adequately enforcing its underground storage tank regulations, allowing tanks to leak. Like so many things we hear, the real story becomes simplified and important detail is lost. Dig deep fellow conservationers. "Don't believe anything you hear, and only half of what you read," then you will get "the rest of the story."

Apologies to Mark Twain and Paul Harvey

-- Jim Clark

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Arcata – James & Isabel Gaasch, Gwen Thoele

Burnt Ranch – Gil Saliba

Crescent City – Del Norte County Library, Ray Schach

Eureka – Evelyn Giddings and David Lemm, Fara Kelly, Stuart Mair, Sharon Parrott, David Sperry, R.M. Zoah-Henderson

Ferndale – Nancy Roberts

McKinleyville – Colette Hestbeck

Announcements for March 2003

Election Results

The Board welcomes new member Frank Anderson and returning members Hal Genger, Tom Leskiw, Chet Ogan, and Jay Sooter. RRAS thanks retiring Board member Luke George. Sue Leskiw agreed to serve as President-Elect, based on write-in results.

Awards Presented at Annual Dinner

Approximately 90 people attended the RRAS banquet held February 15 at the North Coast Inn. Peter Pyle, Farallon biologist at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, delivered the keynote lecture on PRBO's white shark project.

Sue Leskiw was presented the RRAS Member of the Year Award for her contributions as chapter secretary, membership chair, publicity co-chair, and scholarship committee member, as well as organizing three annual banquets/silent auctions, the Godwit Café, member picnic, and potlucks.

Humboldt State University wildlife graduate student Christine Steele won the new \$150 travel grant award. She will attend the western section meeting of The Wildlife Society to present her work on transfer of pathogenic bacteria between humans and seabirds in rehabilitation centers. High school teacher Dan Equinoss accepted the \$100 K-12 scholarship on behalf of the Laurel Tree Habitat Restoration Project at the Bayside Grange. The students are removing invasive species and replanting with natives.

Luke George presented a \$930 check to Tim McKay, executive director of the Northcoast Environmental Center. The amount represented 75 percent of the proceeds from the October 2002 Bird-a-thon fundraiser chaired by George.

Thank You, Silent Auction Donors & Bidders!

A Silent Auction held in conjunction with the RRAS Annual Banquet once again proved to be our chapter's largest fundraiser. The Board would like to recognize Sue Leskiw for organizing the event, Tim McKay for serving as emcee of the live auction segment, and Dick Laursen, Jan Andersen, Hal Genger, Sue Leskiw, Tom Leskiw, and Jay Sooter for contacting potential donors. Special mention goes to Gary Bloomfield, Jeanne O'Neale, Linda Parkinson, CJ Ralph, Restaurant 301 at Carter's, Southport Landing Bed & Breakfast, and Jim Welsh for their donations of high-value items.

Following is a complete list of donors, arranged alphabetically: Abraxas (earrings), Adel's (gift certificate), Adorni Center (sports package), Adventure's Edge (kayak rental), Arcata MainStreet (two Godwit Days registrations), Louise Bacon-Ogden (picnic set), Gary Bloomfield (four pieces of original artwork), Elizabeth Bollinger (handmade craft items, calendar), Broadway Cinema (tickets), Bubbles (gift basket), Jeannette Carol (book, trivet), Lina Carro (books), Chalet House of Omelettes (gift certificate), Curley's Grill (gift certificate), Denny's (two gift certificates), Susan Deschenes (energy breathing sessions), Eureka Natural Foods (two gift baskets), Folie Douce (gift certificate), Freshwater Farms (gift certificate), Bob Frey (book and calendar), Gallery Dog (etched glasses), Gill's by the Bay (gift certificate), Hensel's Hardware (tote cooler), HomeTown Buffet (two gift certificates), Pat Larsen (books), Mary Larson (book), LBJ Enterprises (book and owling trip), Sue Leskiw (book), Ron LeValley (photograph), Los Bagels (t-shirt), Marie Callender's (pies), Marsha Mello (two etchings), Nilsen Company (gift certificates), North Coast Inn (gift certificate), Northtown Books (gift certificate), Jeanne O'Neale (many grooming items, cutting board, TripLink), Linda Parkinson (painting, print), Pet Nurturing Services (two night's petsitting),

Pierson Building Center (gift certificate), Pro Sport Center (daypack), CJ Ralph (artwork, tripod), Sjaak's (chocolate), Southport Landing B&B (one night B&B for two), Strictly for the Birds (three feeders, owl plaque), Sweet River Grill & Bar (gift certificate), Ten Speed Press (books), Three G's Hay & Grain (feeder), Tin Can Mailman (books), Catherine Walling (artwork, books), Jim Welsh (four pieces of original artwork), and Pinky Zalkin (potato latke party for 6).

New RRAS Logo Goods

Baseball caps and commuter mugs featuring Gary Bloomfield's Marbled Murrelet were unveiled at the RRAS Annual Banquet. The caps come in two styles – olive green oilskin and green/blue cotton – and cost \$15. The mugs are a beautiful metallic green with the logo on one side and a shade-grown coffee/songbird connection on the other. The price is \$10.

These items, as well as the remaining American Bittern T-shirts (\$10), can be purchased at the Godwit Café or at any monthly RRAS program.

RRAS to Sponsor Award at County Science Fair

The best project dealing with birds and their habitat at the Humboldt County Science Fair in March will be awarded \$50 and a local Audubon membership. Projects by elementary and secondary school students, on display at Humboldt State University, will be judged by a panel of RRAS representatives.

For more information, contact Education Chair Louise Bacon-Ogden at 445-8304 or 445-1822.

Conservation Committee Report - February 21

Attending the meeting were: Jan Andersen, Diane Beck, Jim Clark, Barbara Kelly, Melvin McKinney and Leila Raim.

Eureka marsh and wildlife areas: Mel continues to push Eureka to act on its promises and the city appears to be something less than an immovable object. Although slow to act, the City of Eureka is moving toward compliance with environmental commitments such as signage for access to the Eureka marsh.

Herbicide in the Bay: Jim will attend a presentation on use of an herbicide to kill *Zostera japonica*, which is the undesirable species of eel grass that lives at a higher tide level than the native species. It will be challenging to weigh the possible side effects of herbicides against the result of colonization by the exotic eel grass.

Eureka Gulches: The city council voted to form an ad hoc time-limited committee to address the problems associated with the gulches. The planning commission has had difficulties dealing with development near gulches because they are not specifically defined in the zoning ordinance, yet they need special protection.

Water export: Discussion continued on the "water bag" export proposal. Barbara Kelly and Diane Beck brought back valuable information from the water district meeting concerning this issue. The District has wisely decided to proceed with researching the legal issues on water export in general but did not take action to accept or reject the water bag barging concept. After further discussion of the issue, Barbara Kelly hit the nail on the head for Redwood Region Audubon Society by asking how we can support sustainable development by not opposing extreme measures to support non-sustainable development. The consensus was that we could not.

Want a chance to participate in another epiphanal event? Come to our next meeting at the Golden Harvest Cafe in Arcata on March 21, 2003 at noon.

- Jim Clark

Potluck Planned Before May Program

Come early to the May 9 RRAS program and bring your appetite! Since the potluck preceding the December CBC brush-up proved so popular, we are adding one to the last program before the summer hiatus. RRAS will provide drinks, paper goods, and utensils; you bring the food. The location is the main room at the County Office of Education; the time is 6:30 p.m. See you there!

Wildlife & Native Plant Garden Tour Update

Nine gardens -- from downtown Eureka to Trinidad -- plus Freshwater Farms have been selected for inclusion in the inaugural RRAS Garden Tour. The event, co-sponsored with the local chapter of the California Native Plants Society (CNPS), will be held from 10 am to 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 26.

The chosen gardens showcase plants that attract wildlife (especially hummingbirds and butterflies) or emphasize native species. The event is intended to increase community awareness of backyard habitats and to raise funds for RRAS and CNPS.

Tickets will go on sale in April and cost \$15. Ticket outlets are Strictly for the Birds in Old Town Eureka, Freshwater Farms on Myrtle Avenue, and the Northcoast Environmental Center in Arcata. Tickets also can also be ordered through RRAS and CNPS; order forms will be widely distributed through newsletters, mailings, and at public events.

Volunteers are needed for 3-hour shifts to check tickets at the gardens, distribute handouts, and help with traffic control. Volunteers will receive a free VIP tour of the gardens and a post-event picnic. If you want to help, call Tom or Sue Leskiw at 442.5444.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Arcata – David Cook, Kevin Dawson, Greg Frankfurter, Ranya Henson, Yben Lyell, Rusty Stooob

Crescent City – Diane Caldwell, Dorothy Round, Heidi Wendt

Eureka – Kim Bird, Betty Chadwick, Mark Frezta, G. Falxa & G. Garman, Marylee Nurrenbern, Donna & Charlie Pace, Raye Woodhouse, Derek & Kathy Zane

Fortuna – Jim & Necia Matheson

Kneeland – Lauren Tompkins

Loleta – Christian Crawford

McKinleyville – Sally Auerbach, Joan Brandon, Jack Munsee, Dolan Zachary

Redcrest – John Laboyteaux

Rio Dell – Laura & Mike Bradley

Trinidad – Carolyn Christenson, Anne Rodden

Announcements for January 2003

An Advance Peek at Silent Auction Offerings

A Potato Latke Party for 6 with Pinky Zalkin! Two Godwit Days registrations from Arcata MainStreet! Two night's pet-sitting from Pet Nurturing Services! These are just a few of the local businesses, artists, and other generous individuals who have already donated to the Silent Auction at our Annual Banquet. This effort has become our chapter's largest fundraiser.

Other bid items you will see at the North Coast Inn on February 15: books from Tin Can Mailman, Ten Speed Press, and numerous individuals; feeders from Strictly for the Birds; a framed wildlife photograph by Ron LeValley; gift baskets from Eureka Natural Foods and Bubbles; gift certificates from Freshwater Farms and Northtown Books; a T-shirt from Los Bagels, dinner for 2 at Curley's Grill, Restaurant 301 at Carter's, or the North Coast Inn; glasses from Gallery Dog; earrings from Abraxas, and a sports package from the Adorni Center.

If you would like to donate goods, services, or a gift certificate, please call Sue Leskiw at 442-5444 prior to the banquet. All donors will be acknowledged in *The Sandpiper* and receive a thank-you letter (with tax ID number).

Potluck Proves Popular

About 55 people attended the RRAS potluck dinner preceding the December program and a few more squeezed into the Humboldt Area Foundation to hear Dr. Stan Harris's Christmas Bird Count identification brush-up program.

RRAS would like to provide more social get-togethers for members, such as the picnic held at Freshwater Park in October. (How about a potluck before the May program at the Office of Education?) Please submit your ideas for future events to Elias Elias or Sue Leskiw.

Program Chair needed!

Most of our programs are planned through this May, but starting in the fall, we need someone to serve as Program Chair for RRAS. Call Elias at 826-2758.

RRAS Completes Successful Year of Field Trips -- Sue Leskiw

During 2002, RRAS volunteers led 40 special field trips in addition to the weekly walks at the Arcata Marsh. Some 411 attendees took advantage of the birding expertise of these dedicated field trip leaders. The most popular trip was a visit to southeastern Humboldt County last May, led by David Fix and Jude Power (35 participants).

RRAS expanded its presence at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge to monthly trips (second Sunday), while attendance at the Eureka Marsh walks (third Sunday, September-May) led by Pablo Herrera ranged from one to 18. Two Del Norte pelagic trips organized by John Hunter in September proved popular, as did a late-evening excursion to Luffenholtz Point with Elias Elias searching for storm-petrels.

RRAS would like to take this opportunity to send out a heartfelt "Thank you" to the special field trip leaders who were willing to share their expertise with local residents (and a few tourists) during 2002: Rob Hewitt, Tom Leskiw, David Fix & Jude Power, Chet Ogan, Gary Bloomfield, Stan Harris, Pablo Herrera, Matt Wachs, Michael Morris, Gary Lester, Elias Elias, John Hewston, Stan Harris, Gretchen O'Brien, Joan Loitz, John Hunter, Steve Tucker, Tristan McKee, Laura Nelson, and David Juliano.

And let's not forget those stalwarts who, during the past year, escorted birders through the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, rain or shine, every Saturday at 8:30 a.m.: Jim & Donna Clark, Brent Critch, Elias Elias, Gary Friedrichsen, Esther Gilchrist, Larry Karsteadt, Paul Lohse, Carl Meyers, Michael Morris, Chet Ogan, Bill Rodstrom, Paul & Virginia Springer, Pete & Nancy Spruance, and Jim Tietz.

CBC Update

Our Christmas Bird Count period started with a tornado on the Arcata Count and ended with Buffleheads swimming across the road during the Centerville Count. Rain was the order of the day, resulting in low species counts on all but the Willow Creek Count. The following hardy souls participated in all four local counts (Arcata, Del Norte, Willow Creek, Centerville): David Fix, Gary Lester, Paul Lohse, Chet Ogan, Jude Power, and Kerry Ross. Check out the results at the Audubon Web Site -- www.audubon.org/bird/cbc].

The Aleutian Goose Festival: A Celebration of Wildness, March 21-24, 2003

Come join us for our 5th annual Aleutian Goose Festival and celebrate the return of spring and the world's population of Aleutian Canada Geese. Once on the Endangered Species List with only 800 birds, this magnificent goose now numbers 40,000+ and has joined the elite group of species that have recovered enough to be taken off of the endangered list. Our festival guests are treated to the sight of tens of thousands of these birds lifting off Castle Rock at dawn filling the sky over the Pacific.

The 4-day festival, March 21-24, features 75 workshops and field trips led by the best leaders in our region. Programs include; near shore ocean trips, pelagic trip, drift boats on the Wild & Scenic Smith River for birding-geology-redwood ecology, spotted owl, marbled murrelet, ecology of the Biscuit Fire, birding by kayak on Lake Earl, Tolowa Native American Heritage, wildlife photography, optics by Swarovski, salmon and steelhead, children's activities and more.

Visit our web site www.redwoodlink.com/soar or call 707/465-0888 for a sampling of the programs and to let us know if you wish to receive a registration booklet

RRAS to Sponsor Award at County Science Fair

The best project dealing with birds and their habitat at the Humboldt County Science Fair in March will be awarded \$50 and a local Audubon membership. Projects by elementary and secondary school students, on display at Humboldt State University, will be judged by a panel of RRAS representatives.

This is the second year that RRAS has sponsored an award at the fair. Last year's winner was Cole Salmon, a fifth-grader from Scotia Elementary School, whose experiment tested what color feeder birds preferred.

For more information, contact Education Chair Louise Bacon-Ogden at 445-8304 or 445-1822.

Sixth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 14-17

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society are calling on birders of every age and skill level to help with this annual event. Participants are asked to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders during any or all of the four count days and enter their sightings online. This year's count will spotlight the nearly 200 species on Audubon's WatchList, an accounting of birds in decline or at conservation risk. Instructions for participating can be found at www.birdsource.org.

Reminder: Scholarship Applications Due January 30

Applications for a \$100 scholarship to a K-12 student or classroom and a \$150 travel grant to an HSU student must be received by Thursday, January 30. Both awards will be presented at the RRAS annual banquet on February 15.

Conservation Committee - December 20

The Conservation Committee met at the Golden Harvest Cafe at noon, December 20, 2002. Chet Ogan, Mel McKinney and Jim Clark were present.

Chet announced that Coastal Flight Photos are now available on line. Contact Chet for the URL.

South Spit, Snowy Plover: According to Mark Massara of the Sierra Club, the BLM will not support full Snowy Plover protection on the North Spit by restricting vehicles from the wave slope during the nesting season. It was alleged that a local politician persuaded the local office to allow vehicles on the wave slope. If this is true, it means that two agencies within the Department of the Interior have conflicting policies with regard to Snowy Plover protection.

Mariculture Monitoring Committee (MMC): Jim reported on the recent meeting of the MMC. The meeting lasted two hours longer than planned and revolved more around getting funding for studies than Coast Seafood's compliance with the mitigated negative declaration. According to Coast Seafood, the Coastal Commission is requiring too much information to be presented that would cost over a million dollars to comply with. Others commented that Coastal Commission staff did not read the reports before commenting—and did not know that a bat ray was not a flying mammal! The later part of the meeting degenerated into accusations without specifics. Coast Seafood stated that they would have to discontinue business in Humboldt County if they had to comply with the current permit requirements. In a December 17, 2002 letter from Coast Seafood's attorney Samuel W. Plauche to Coastal Commission Staff Counsel John Bowers, Mr. Plauche attempts to clarify Coast's expectations with regard to their claim for vested rights. Coast Seafood is threatening to make a Claim of Vested Rights (CVR) in the event of enforcement action or if negotiations do not go in Coast Seafood's favor. Although it is doubtful that Coast Seafoods would meet the conditions required for vested rights, a CVR and associated appeals would buy at least a couple of years of continued operation.

The committee agreed that it appears that Coast Seafood is not pursuing a permit, but attempting to coerce a negotiated settlement with the coastal commission.

An offer was made to the MMC by RRAS on behalf of Jim Clark to help sponsor mediation in an attempt to clearly resolve some of these issues. The only inquiry so far was by a member of the Coastal Commission staff.

Target, City of Eureka: EPIC has some concerns regarding the allowed setback requirements for the proposed Target store at the old Montgomery Ward site. The committee felt that the current plan is an improvement, but also recognizes that the setback issue may be important for future interpretations of the planning ordinance. We also recognize that although the public input for this project met the letter of the law, it could be improved.

National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR): Mel is looking into details of establishing a NERR for Humboldt Bay. We may need to provide some education to counteract years of "locking up" the bay.

The next meeting will be February 21, 2003 at the same time and place.

--Jim Clark

Latin America Committee Needs Members

RRAS is reaching out to another Audubon chapter beyond our North American borders and exploring a “sister” relationship with Belize Audubon Society (BAS). Being on the Pacific Flyway, we in Humboldt and Del Norte counties enjoy watching and protecting the habitat of birds that then wend their way to Central or South America. Belize enjoys the advantages of a wonderful diverse avifauna in a very small area—and it is an English-speaking country. The BAS chapter with the government of Belize manages 8 sanctuaries and forest preserves, totaling over 165,000 acres. Jay Sooter has already visited Belize, and in fall 2002, Chet Ogan met with the BAS executive director to learn how we can be of help to them and vice versa. We hope to organize a birding and nature trip for RRAS members. We need your help, your input, and your enthusiasm for this exciting adventure! If you’re interested in joining us or would like more information, contact Jan Andersen at (707) 444-3501 or jandersen1936@earthlink.net.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Bayside – Scott Bryon Cariss
Crescent City – Dorothy Round
Eureka – Donna Summerly
Klamath – Ken Zierenberg
McKinleyville – Dolan Zachary
Smith River – Cin Greyraven & Kathleen Kaut