



The Sandpiper



REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY www.rras.org

August/September 2012

In This Issue: Field Trips... September Program... Facebook... September 29 Ivy Bash... Lassen Campout... Bouquets... Volunteer Needs... Salt Marsh Restoration... Wildlife Biology Camp... President's Column... Tom Leskiw's Essay... eBird Tips... RRAS Meetings... New Members & Subscribers... Field Notes... RRAS Contact List

FIELD TRIPS

Every Saturday: Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. Our famous rain-or-shine, docent-led field trips at the Marsh; bring your binocular(s) and have a great morning birding! Meet in the parking lot at the south end of I Street (Klopp Lake) in Arcata at **8:30 a.m.** Expected ending time is 11 a.m. August leaders: 4th, Chet Ogan; 11th, Ken Burton; 18th, Pat Bitton; 25th, Carol Wilson.

Friday-Monday, August 3-6: CalOdes 2012 Dragonfly Blitz (Del Norte County). Every year, the California Dragonfly group picks an under-surveyed county and conducts a blitz. Del Norte is so under-surveyed that common species such as flame skimmer have not been documented there. Sure to be fun and informative. Focus is documenting species presence of all Odes (dragonflies and damselflies). Beginners welcome. More info: Sandra Hunt-von Arb (707-845-5940).

Sunday, August 12: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. A wonderful 2- to 3-hour trip for people wanting to learn birds of the Humboldt Bay area. It takes a leisurely pace with emphasis on enjoying the birds. Beginners welcome. Meet at Refuge Visitor Center at **9 a.m.** Call leaders David Fix (707-825-1195) or Jude Power (707-822-3613) for more info.

Thursday, August 16: Shorebird Blitz. This will be a two-part trip to two of Humboldt's best shorebird sites. We'll visit Cock Robin Island on the rising tide and the Mad River estuary on the falling tide. Meet at Herrick Avenue Park & Ride lot in Eureka at **9 a.m.** for Cock Robin Island or at Village Pantry on Valley West Blvd. (Giuntoli exit off 101) in Arcata at **1 p.m.**

for Mad River. Be prepared for walking on muddy and rocky river bars. Contact leader Ken Burton (707-499-1146) with questions or to carpool or arrange alternate meeting locations.

Saturday, August 18: eBird Site Survey—Shay Park. Join leader Rob Fowler (707-839-3493) to survey the extent of Shay Park in Arcata for 1-3 hours and count every species present. For more info on the eBird site survey, visit this link at eBird.org: http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/eBird_Site_Survey. Meet at **8 a.m.**

in parking lot at east end of Foster Avenue. Waterproof footwear recommended to walk through a grassy field off-trail.

Sunday, August 19: Eureka Marsh. Join leader Ralph Bucher (707-499-1247; thebook@reninet.com) for some great birding in downtown Eureka. Spend 1-2 hours on a flat loop through a variety of habitats from bay and mudflat to riparian and marshland. Meet in parking lot at the foot of West Del Norte Street at **9 a.m.**

MORE FIELD TRIPS ON PAGE 2!



SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

THE INCREDIBLE WOODPECKERS OF THE STATE OF JEFFERSON

Stephen Shunk—naturalist, author, photographer, tour leader, and field biologist—will enlighten us about the complexities of our diverse woodpeckers. Eleven species, numbering in the many tens of thousands of birds, breed between Crater Lake and the Humboldt redwoods. The many cavities excavated by these carpenters position them as keystone species: critical ecological instruments in defining forest health. North American woodpecker specialist Shunk will share an entertaining adventure on the natural history, ecology, and conservation of Jefferson's woodpeckers. He will take you from the subalpine habitats of the Black-backed and American Three-toed woodpeckers to the lowland rainforests of the Red-breasted Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker. He will highlight each species' role within its respective range and discuss the amazing adaptations that make woodpeckers some of the most-specialized birds in the world. More info about the speaker can be found at www.paradisebirding.com.

The program will be held at the Humboldt County Office of Education at Myrtle and West Avenues in Eureka, on **Friday, September 14, starting at 7:30 p.m.** Bring a mug to enjoy shade-grown coffee and come fragrance free.

Sunday, August 19: Southern Humboldt Community Park. Jay Sooter (707-444-8001) and/or John Gaffin will lead this monthly walk. All ages and experience levels are encouraged to participate and revel in the beauty of the park and its avian inhabitants on this easy 2- to 3-hour walk. No dogs. Meet at **8 a.m.**, parking by the kiosk near the farmhouse in the main entrance, Kimtu Road, Garberville.

Sunday, August 26: Del Norte Shorebirds. Join Rob Fowler on a morning excursion in Del Norte County to search for shorebirds at well-known hotspots during the peak of fall migration. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the Lake Earl Wildlife Information Center at 2591 Old Mill Rd., Crescent City. There will be minimal walking. Attendees are encouraged to bring spotting scopes, binoculars, snacks, and water. Call Rob (707-839-3493) for carpooling information from Humboldt County.

Saturday, September 8: Pelagic Trip. Rob Fowler (707-839-3493) and another birder will lead a foray onto the open ocean to Trinidad canyon aboard the *Shenandoah* in search of tubenoses, jaegers, alcids, cetaceans, and other pelagic specialties. Meet at **7 a.m.** at Trinidad Pier to depart at 7:30 a.m. Return around 3:30 p.m. To claim 1 of 12 spaces available, call or e-mail Rob (migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com) to make a reservation. Cost is \$95; \$75 for students.

Sunday, September 9: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. See August 12.

Saturday, September 15: eBird Survey—Shay Park. See August 18.

Sunday, September 16: Eureka Marsh. See August 19.

Sunday, September 16: Southern Humboldt Community Park. See August 19, but note **new meeting time of 8:30 a.m.**



RRAS Co-SPONSORING TRINIDAD IVY BASH SEPTEMBER 29

The second (and final) volunteer recruitment event underwritten by Toyota's Together Green Program will be held Saturday, September 29, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. as part of National Public Lands Day. RRAS is teaming with the Bureau of Land Management's Arcata office, the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, and many other organizations to remove non-native plants from the Houda Point area.

Under a grant to recruit people who have not helped RRAS during the last 18 months, the first 25 new volunteers to sign up in advance and participate will receive a free pair of work gloves (courtesy of Pierson Building Center), a Together Green cap or bag, and a short-sleeved T-shirt or metal commuter mug.

This event is still in the planning stages; visit www.rras.org closer to September 29 or contact event coordinator Chet Ogan at 707-442-9353 or oganc@sbcglobal.net. Additional information is posted on the BLM webpage at www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/arcata/trinidad_gateway_to/ccnm_npld_2012.html.



Lassen trip attendees, 2010. Photo by Tom Leskiw.

LASSEN CAMPOUT, AUGUST 17-19

For the 4th year, Wintu Audubon Society (Shasta County) will host this trip in search of montane species such as Black-backed Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Bluebird, and Townsend's Solitaire. Altacal Audubon Society (Chico) will occupy the adjoining site, providing an excellent opportunity for northern California Audubon interaction. Meet Friday afternoon at Site 3 in Lost Creek Group Camp, about 4 miles inside park's west entrance (\$10/vehicle entry fee). Spend late afternoon/evening and following day (trip to Manzanita Lake, starting at campground at **8:30 a.m. Saturday**) birding the park. Trip will end around noon on Sunday; optional detour to McCumber Reservoir on return. Tent camping space for up to 25 is provided Friday and Saturday nights by Wintu (water and pit toilets); extremely limited space for pickup campers but no 5th wheels or large motor homes. Bring food and insect repellent. Inform Gary Stacey (530-241-5586; gbstacey70@gmail.com) if you are attending.

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RedwoodRegion
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BOUQUETS TO C.J. AND JOSÉE

RRAS would like to thank Dr. C.J. Ralph and Josée Rousseau for their tenure as Committee Chairs for the organization.

It was early in 2003 when C.J. took over the Program Chair position from Luke George. He's been responsible for recruiting a staggering number of scintillating speakers for our Friday night programs for nearly a decade. He now serves as RRAS Publications Chair.

In spring 2011, Josée infused energy into our organization when she became responsible for recruiting RRAS volunteers. She took the lead on initiating an annual Volunteer Appreciation Event, which was well-attended in November 2011. But adding applying for a PhD to an already busy work and family life has led her to step down, although she plans to continue helping out RRAS "as much as possible."

RRAS VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Please contact President Jim Clark (707-445-8311; dancebirds@suddenlink.net) if you are interested in filling these slots.

- **Program Committee Chair.** Tasks include lining up speakers for RRAS general meetings September through May; reserving venue (usually Humboldt County Office of Education in Eureka); fulfilling speaker AV needs; arranging for building access; and supervising room set up/clean up. Contact C.J. Ralph (707-822-2015; cjralph@humboldt1.com) for details.
- **Volunteer Coordinator.** Tasks include publicizing volunteer needs; organizing, with support of a subcommittee, annual volunteer appreciation event; and updating volunteer database (e.g., contact information, hours and tasks). Number of hours per month varies, with time concentrated in the fall (volunteer appreciation event), winter (election mailing, annual banquet), and early spring (Godwit Café). Contact Josée Rousseau (707-839-5763; jsr@klamathbird.org) for details.



FIRST TOGETHER GREEN EVENT A SUCCESS!

By Sue Leskiw

Some 40 people gathered on July 21 to remove non-native plants from the Arcata Marsh's new salt marsh area on South I Street. RRAS partnered with the City of Arcata and Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM), using a grant from Toyota's Together Green program to recruit new volunteers.

The salt marsh was created in summer 2010 as mitigation for the Klopp Lake dike repair. FOAM, the City, and various other partners had held 4 previous work days in the area, removing cordgrass (*Spartina*), European grasses, teasel, and other invasives that crowd out the tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia*) and pickleweed desirable in a high salt marsh.

Volunteers were enlisted via RRAS member e-mails, FOAM volunteers, AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards, and local media. Among the helpers was a Boy Scout accruing community service hours.

The crew worked for 3.5 hours, then enjoyed a gourmet pizza lunch. Those who had not volunteered for RRAS within the past 18 months were awarded a Together Green tote bag, a pair of work gloves (donated by Pierson Building Center), and several items of merchandise from RRAS and FOAM. Sue Leskiw served as coordinator for the event.

Audubon's second and final Together Green event will be part of National Public Lands Day on September 29. Volunteers will be bashing ivy at Houda Point in Trinidad (*see article, page 2*).



Together Green photos by Sue Leskiw (except top group photo by Bonnie Baty). Clockwise from upper left: Jim Clark, Gail Coonen, Carol McNeill, Betsy Elkinton, Linda Doerflinger, Susan Penn, Kristen Kovacs, Westin McHaney.



RRAS COSPONSORS CAMP

By Sue Leskiw

On July 10, RRAS joined with Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM) to host a day-long camp for children age 9-12 at the Arcata Marsh. The session was part of the Wildlife Biology week of Arcata Recreation Department's Natural Resources Science Camp. This is the fifth year that RRAS and FOAM have collaborated on the camp.

Eighteen kids arrived at the Interpretive Center for a bird walk led by RRAS volunteers Tom Leskiw and Chet Ogan, plus George Ziminsky from FOAM. Some 40 avian species were spotted, with highlights being a Green Heron, American Bittern, Yellow-breasted Chat, 2 Peregrine Falcons, and 2 Wilson's Phalaropes.

After the bird walk, the campers went on a low-tide critter-collecting "Mud Walk." Leaders were FOAM vice-president Elliott Dabill and former board member Melinda Bailey. Former FOAM board member Bob Rasmussen set up the microscope stations and computer FlexCam, and Emily Janzen helped clean up. FOAM president Sue Leskiw was responsible for pulling together the schedule and volunteers, bringing lunch, and taking photos.



Chet Ogan (top) and Tom Leskiw (bottom) help campers spot birds.
Photos by Sue Leskiw.

WOODPECKERS EAST OF THE RANGE OF LIGHT

By Jim Clark, RRAS President

It's been a fun day: a visit to the Mono Lake Scenic Area Visitor Center with family, including my 4-year-old nephew, a dip in Gull Lake, and a birthday party for my brother-in-law. Donna and I left June Lake not as early as I would have liked after dinner and made our way to a nearby recently burned Jeffrey pine forest in search of a Black-backed Woodpecker. A few miles of looping sandy roads through sagebrush got us to the edge of the burn, where we parked, hurriedly gathered our gear, and walked up the road toward the top of the hill.

Not 5 minutes later, I spotted a woodpecker-like silhouette flying up the hill and landing in a skeletal pine. Naturally, it was against the light and on the other side of the tree! I lost it (the male), then Donna spotted the female lower on the hill. We followed it carefully and were rewarded by several minutes of viewing in 2 trees in good but fading light. Then as if saying "good night," it swooped down to a broken snag and popped through its neatly carved nest hole.

A nice last bird of the day, with the high Sierras outlined in the dusk. We probably would have seen this bird and its mate if we had left half an hour earlier, but maybe not returning to their nest for the night. As it turned out, we had our (birthday) cake and ate it, too.

As the next 2 days of family and birding fun unfolded, I realized that our successful Black-backed Woodpecker adventure was a good analogy for a balance among birding and other aspects of our lives, including family, career, and involvement in Audubon. Sometimes, being flexible in one interest benefits the other. One nice thing about birding is that it can be practiced in conjunction with many outdoor activities.

As we try to achieve a good balance in our personal lives, so do we in Audubon advocate for a good balance of our human activities with the rest of the natural world on which we depend. I thank all those who participate in Redwood Region Audubon Society as part of their life's interests and encourage others to join us.

"I SAW THIS BIRD..."

By Tom Leskiw

You're feeling the first blush of (avian) love. We can relate, because we've been there. Maybe your watershed moment of illumination, that incredible rush of emotion, occurred during a solitary walk in the woods—or perhaps while you participated in an Audubon field trip. No matter, you're hooked, as surely as that designer sweater worn by Bill Cosby's character Cliff Huxtable would be if he hiked through a catclaw acacia brush field.

But before you leap, you might want to scan the horizon for warning signs. Do you really want to be known among your circle of friends as "that bird guy (or woman)"? From here on, you'll become the automatic go-to participant in the game I call "I Saw This Bird..." As innocent as the game appears, it isn't for neophytes or for intermediate or even expert birders. Your friends will ask you to identify a bird they've seen—usually briefly, in poor light, and without binoculars. In those rare instances where they did get a prolonged look at the bird from a reasonable distance in decent light, the description invariably tends to focus on color, like "Its back was blueish orange. No... sorta garnet..." or, alternately, "Kind of beige-ish."

When you respond by asking "What type of habitat was it in, what was it doing, and what was the shape of its bill?" they'll most likely stammer that they glimpsed the bird during the "7th-inning stretch" of their backyard 12th Annual Microbrew Taste-off, adding that the bird had "an impressive aura" or "skinny legs" or "a puffy appearance."

You think I'm kidding? No way I'm making this stuff up. Consider the phone conversation I had recently with my friend "Robert."

"Oh, Tom, while I've got you here, I saw this bird..."

OK, I'll bite. "What did it look like?"

"Well, it was blonde and had this puffy appearance."

"Blonde?" *From a bottle or naturally?* I wanted to ask, but held my tongue.

"Yeah."

"The puffy appearance sounds like it may have been a juvenile that had just fledged.



“Who you calling blonde and puffy?”

What did the bill look like? What time did you see it?” I asked.

“Around 2 in the afternoon. I was thinking that it may have been an owl, so I tried to get a look at its bill. Darn that neighbor who borrowed my binoculars years ago, never returned them, and later moved away. Anyway, without my binoculars, I couldn’t see much of the bill... but I still think it may have been an owl.”

“Relative to a robin, how big was it?”

“At least 6 times bigger.”

Ok, now we’re getting somewhere. “The only owl around here that should be out in the middle of the day—a Northern Pygmy Owl—is about the size of a robin. What kind of habitat was it in and what was it doing?”

“It wasn’t doing anything. It was just perched on a dead-top redwood.”

I would never use the word “blonde” to describe a Red-shouldered Hawk, but... “How about a Red-shouldered Hawk? Were the chest and upper belly orange, with a black-and-white checkerboard pattern on its wings?”

“I didn’t see any checkerboard and the chest looked blonde to me.”

I’m running out of possibilities. “A male Northern Harrier is pale gray and might be termed ‘blonde’ by some. However, it’s found only in extensive grasslands... or beach dunes.”

“I’ve got grass.”

“No, I mean *lots* of grass. Not just a lawn: acres and acres like that found in the Arcata Bottoms. Maybe it was a Cooper’s Hawk. I’ll show you the *Sibley Guide* the next time I see you.”

Several days later I pointed out to Robert the illustration of a Cooper’s Hawk in *Sibley*.

“Maybe. Naw. I don’t think so... It doesn’t look puffy enough. But this one here, now,” he said, pointing to another illustration. “*This* looked like him.”

“Robert, I just don’t see there being a Northern Goshawk in your redwood forest. Besides, even seasoned birders sometimes have a difficult time distinguishing between an immature female Cooper’s—which you’ve already ruled out—and an immature goshawk. Why was it the latter?”

“I dunno. It just *looked* like this one.”

I was running out of guesses. Tiring of the game, we changed topics.

The next day, Robert phoned. “After thinking it over, it was a Red-shouldered Hawk.”

I know what you’re thinking. *A lot of jaw-jacking in order to identify a single bird.* But maybe that’s the point. Each time a nonbirder takes note of an avian world he or she has always inhabited—yet little heeded—we should encourage their interest.

Personally, I’m terrible at playing the “I Saw This Bird...” game. Although I’d never try to dissuade you, oh newly smitten one, full disclosure as to what you’re getting into seems the best policy. Once you announce to your friends that you’re now a birder, there are expectations—you’re on the hook to play the game. It’s in our charter, somewhere...

Klamath-Siskiyou eBird



Because of space issues in the last 2 *Sandpipers*, I’ve held off on new eBird tips. But now that the *Sandpiper* is web-based and doesn’t have to fit into 4 printed pages, the “eBird Tip” is back in business. Time to play catch up!—*Rob Fowler*

eBIRD TIP № 7 HOTSPOT SELECTION: GENERAL OR MORE SPECIFIC?

If you’ve been using eBird, you’ve noticed that when trying to find a location to plot your checklist(s) by using the “Find It on the Map” option, there are *a lot* of hotspot locations (red markers on the eBird map), not to mention your own (blue markers) locations. Why are there so many locations, and what are the differences between a more general hotspot (“Arcata Bottoms”) and a seemingly more specific one (“Arcata Bottoms—V St. Loop”)? Some have complained that there are too many locations to choose from, but the greater the number of hotspot locations, the more options exist for eBirders to enter checklists for more precise areas. eBird thrives on location specificity; the more precisely you plot your checklists, the more useful the data are to scientists using eBird to better

understand bird status and distribution (for more information, go to http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/location_specificity). It is important, however, to understand the differences between more general hotspot locations and more specific ones.

As a Humboldt County birder, you are probably familiar with the Arcata Bottoms. So we’ll use that area as an example because it has 3 different types of hotspots, from general to specific: “large-scale,” “medium-scale,” and “fine-scale.” Most popular birding spots have only a general location and, if they are large enough to warrant them, often have subspecific locations within a general site. The Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary is another example of a location with one “large-scale” general hotspot and many specific fine-scale hotspots.

Because we are using the Arcata Bottoms area as our example, the large-scale hotspot would be the Arcata Bottoms point, which encompasses *all* of the Arcata Bottoms north to the Mad River, south to the levee that borders the north end of Humboldt Bay, west to Mad River Slough, and east to Arcata. The Arcata Bottoms hotspot is considered to be the most general

hotspot location for the area. All general large-scale locations like this usually are plotted in the center of the general area when zoomed out far enough to see the whole area in the mapping feature. The Arcata Bottoms hotspot can be useful for entering historical data that might not have either time or distance recorded. It is fine to use this hotspot if you are an eBird beginner used to making a traditional day list for a birding outing. As you may know, though, there are many miles of roads in the Arcata Bottoms. To keep traveling counts under 5 miles (anything more than 5 miles is less useful for data analysis), it might help to have the Arcata Bottoms split into at least 2 sections. This is where medium-scale hotspots come in: "Arcata Bottoms—s. of Lanphere Rd." and "Arcata Bottoms—n. of Lanphere Rd." (Because Lanphere Rd. is the dividing line, we'll come back to it in eBird Tip #8: How to Enter a New Hotspot.)

Most eBird checklists are entered using a traveling count protocol: you see birds, count them, and try to keep track of the time and mileage traveled while doing so. Because the Arcata Bottoms area is all roadside birding, it makes sense to do a traveling count. However, to keep traveling counts down to 5 miles or so, try using "Arcata Bottoms—s. of Lanphere Rd." and/or "Arcata Bottoms—n. of Lanphere Rd." if you know that you're going to be birding throughout the bottoms rather than making just a couple of stops.

If you are planning to stop at exact locations, such as to look for a reported rarity, very specific, fine-scale hotspots exist for most of the popular locations within the bottoms. For example, all of the dairy farms have their own hotspots: "Arcata Bottoms—Moxon Rd. Dairy," "Arcata Bottoms—Foster Ave. Dairy," etc. So if you were among the birders who saw the Lark Bunting at the Lanphere Rd. dairy, you would enter the bird under that dairy's location, rather than using the general Arcata Bottoms hotspot. Very specific hotspots should apply only to the general area of that named location. In my opinion, anything more than half a mile away from that specified hotspot warrants starting a new checklist.

Finally, re: selecting hotspot locations, it's important to understand the habitat covered by the hotspot. For example, a couple of hotspots have a specific habitat

bordered by another, like the hotspot "Mad River Slough—Lanphere Rd." This hotspot, because it starts with "Mad River Slough," is specific to the Slough. A location like this should be used only for birds detected while surveying Mad River Slough from Lanphere Rd. (although it's acceptable to count birds that you hear or see that might not be using the slough itself). A couple of checklists have used this hotspot to list the birds seen in the Arcata Bottoms pastures on Lanphere Rd. because it was the nearest hotspot. Rather than using the "Mad River Slough—Lanphere Rd." hotspot to enter Arcata Bottoms birds that were near Lanphere Rd., it might be better to create a new hotspot location for Lanphere Rd. itself, which brings us to our next eBird Tip.

E BIRD TIP № 8: ENTERING A NEW HOTSPOT LOCATION

Let's return to the Mad River Slough/Lanphere Rd. area discussed at the end of eBird Tip #7. Currently, no hotspot exists for Lanphere Rd.; maybe it's time to create one, since it's a popular road for birding the Arcata Bottoms and serves as the border between the south and north Arcata Bottoms hotspots. To do this, you need to have a checklist ready to enter for the location—so go out and count birds along Lanphere Rd. if you don't have a list ready. Select the "Find It on the Map" option on the first page of the checklist entry process. Zoom in to the Arcata Bottoms area. (You can also type in "Arcata Bottoms, CA," and it will zoom to the bottoms area.) Find Lanphere Rd. and zoom in as close as possible to where you can still see all of Lanphere Rd., then plot the new location in the middle section of the road. Note that all the Arcata Bottoms hotspots start with "Arcata Bottoms," so include that in the name. Add a couple of hyphens and you get "Arcata Bottoms—Lanphere Rd." Note that it's important to name new hotspots this way because if you want to look at bar charts in eBird using all of the Arcata Bottoms hotspots (or others), it's much easier to do when all the locations are listed next to each other, to efficiently select all of them.

E BIRD UPDATES

1. Birdlog app for iPhone or Android is now available: You can now enter your eBird checklists in the field. See [this article](#) on the eBird website for more info.

2. Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are now available in eBird output tools. Read about it [here](#): Check out the bar charts for the Humboldt Bay IBA [here](#) or the Humboldt Lagoons IBA [here](#).

3. Have you tried embedding photos in your checklists? Look at this [eBird article](#) to learn how. It makes your checklists look great and can be helpful for reviewers to vet records of the more rare or unusual species. Check out this [recent checklist](#) near Shelter Cove.

Now go eBirding!

The Sandpiper eBird Tip is a column that hopes to inspire increased eBird use in northwestern California. If you have suggestions for an eBird tip or any other eBird-related questions, contact RRAS eBird liaison Rob Fowler at migratorius-fwlr@gmail.com. Rob reviews eBird records for Humboldt and Trinity Counties and openly admits his eBird addiction.



RRAS MEETINGS

The RRAS Conservation Committee meets the third Thursday of every month at **noon** at the Golden Harvest Café in Arcata. Come discuss issues of interest. For more info: Chet Ogan, 707-442-9353.

The RRAS Board of Directors meets the third Thursday of every month from **5:30 to 8 p.m.** at the Northcoast Environmental Center office, 1385 Eighth Street, Suite 215, Arcata.

RRAS WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS

Arcata – Shelley Sloan

Bayside – Thomas Cairns

Crescent City – Andrea Hepburn

Eureka – Julie Alderson, Eli & Talia Mueller

McKinleyville – Rhonda Kaminski-Hanck

Brookings, OR – Don Scanlon

We look forward to seeing you on field trips and at our monthly programs.

FIELD NOTES

By Daryl Coldren

Summary of Northwestern California Bird Reports, 15 May-17 July, 2012

Field Notes is a compilation of bird sighting reports for Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, northern Mendocino, and western Siskiyou counties. Sources include the RRAS bird alert (707-822-LOON), the online northwestern California birding and information exchange (nwcalbird@yahoo.com), eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/klamath-siskiyou>), and reports submitted directly to the compiler. Reports may be submitted to any of the sources mentioned above or to Daryl Coldren: 916-384-8089; QuiAvisPetit@aol.com.

FOS = first of season; HBNWR = Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge; MOB = many observers; NSP = National & State Parks; Oxi = Oxidation; RCH = Repositioning Cruise 40+ miles offshore Humboldt; UO = unknown observer.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Aleutian Cackling Goose: 1 (apparently crippled), *HBNWR*, 18 May-2 Jun (DC, RH, MOB) • **Murphy's Petrel:** 3, *RCH*, 16 May (TH) • **Cook's Petrel:** 1, *RCH*, 16 May (TH) • **Green Heron:** 2, *HBNWR*, 19 May (DB); 2, *Arcata Bottoms*, 19 May (CB); 2, *Arcata Marsh*, 26 May-22 Jun (GZ, KB, MOB); 1, *Blue Lake*, 19 Jun (KS) • **White-faced Ibis:** 12, *HBNWR*, 16 May (UO); 1, *HBNWR*, 19 May (GC, DC, RH); 7, *Jackson Ranch Rd*, 20 May (GZ, DC, CO, MOB) • **Golden Eagle:** 1, *Horse Mt*, 9 Jun (RF, MOB) • **Sandhill Crane:** 2, *Whitlow*, 28 May (JG) • **Black-necked Stilt:** 1, *HBNWR*, 18-21 May (RH, MS, DC, GC, MOB) • **Ruddy Turnstone:** 2, *Eureka Palco Marsh*, 18 May (RB) • **Red Knot:** 39, *Jacoby Creek mouth*, 17 May (RH); 4, *Arcata Marsh Oxi Ponds*, 18 May (LE) • **Pectoral Sandpiper:** 1, *HBNWR*, 18 May (DC, TK) • **Wilson's Phalarope:** 2, *Arcata Marsh*, 7-9 Jul (KB, RF, MOB) • **Red Phalarope:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 19 May (RF) • **Mew Gull:** 1, *Mad River County Park*, 19 Jun (KS) • **Franklin's Gull:** 1, *HBNWR/Hookton Slough*, 17-21 May (DC, TK, RH, MOB) • **Western Gull:** 1 active nest, *Arcata Marsh-Klopp Lake*, 22 May (DF) • **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** 1, *Cock Robin Island*, 9 Jul (TL) • **Flammulated Owl:** 1, *Dinsmore*, 18 May (RH, MS); 3, *Pilot Rock*, 15 Jun (RH, MS); 1, *Groves Prairie*, 26 Jun (KO) • **Common Nighthawk:** 2, *Horse Mt Saddle*, 20 Jun (KS); 1 seen sporadically, *Blue Lake*, 4 Jun-early Jul (PL) • **Black Swift:** 6, *Cock Robin Island*, 27 May (DC, TK); 16, *McKinleyville*, 27 May (RF); 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 6 Jun (DC) • **White-throated Swift:** 2, *Humboldt Redwoods SP*, 19 May (MD); 1-4, *S. Humboldt Community Park*, 19 May-11 Jun (JG, MOB); 8, *Bull Creek Watershed*, 1 Jun (TK); 3, *Benbow SP*, 6



Red-eyed Vireo © Tony Kurz
Patrick's Point SP, Humboldt County

Jun (JSO); 1, *Edward Wagner Memorial Bridge*, 18 Jun (KS); 1-4, *Blue Lake*, 19-22 Jun (TL, MOB) • **White-headed Woodpecker:** 1-2, *Grouse Mt*, 27 May-23 Jun (RN, MMa, GC, RF, MOB); 2, *Salmon Summit*, 25 Jun (KB, CO, MOB); 1, *Blake Mt*, 3 Jun (RH, MS) • **Willow Flycatcher:** 2, *Hoopa*, 26 May (EF); 1, *Dyerville Loop*, 26 May (DC, TK, GC); 1-2 (on territory), *Mad River Fish Hatchery*, 29 May-15 Jun (RF, TL, MOB); 1, *base of Bald Hills Rd, Orick*, 7-11 Jul (GL) • **Eastern Phoebe:** 1, *top of Humboldt Hill*, 14 Jun (DC) • **Red-eyed Vireo:** 1, *Patrick's Pt.*, 23 Jun (KI, TK, GC) • **White-breasted Nuthatch:** 1-3, *Dyerville Loop*, 16 May-27 Jun (JG); 1, *Mad Hunter Coyote Creek*, 3 Jun (RH); 3, *Bald Hills Rd*, 10 Jun (GC) • **House Wren:** 1, *Blue Lake Cottonwoods*, 15 May (DC, CO); 1, *Friday Ridge Rd*, 15 May (SM); 1, *Redwood NSP-West Side Rd*, 28 May (CO, MOB); 1-3, *Titlow Hill Rd*, 8-17 Jun



California Thrasher © Tony Kurz
Saddle Mountain, Humboldt County

(MOB); 1, *Friday Ridge Rd*, 20 Jun (KS); 1, *Alton*, 23 Jun (KB) • **Northern Mockingbird:** 1, *Redwood NSP-Davison Rd*, 11 Jul (GL) • **California Thrasher:** 2, *Saddle Mt*, 25 May (TK, DC, GC) & 23 Jun (RF, RH) • **Black-and-white Warbler:** 1, *North Spit-Cypress Patch*, 14-15 May (TK, DC, MMa); 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 6 Jun (RF, DC, TK) • **American Redstart:** 1, *Mad River Fish Hatchery*, 3-4 Jun (BZ, DC, TK, MOB); 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 21 Jun (RF); 1, *Oxbow Patch, Orick*, 24 Jun (KI) • **Northern Parula:** 1, *N. Spit-Cypress Patch*, 14-15 May (TK, MOB); 1, *Blue Lake Bridge*, 17 May (KI); 1, *N. Spit-Air-*



American Redstart © Tony Kurz
Mad River Fish Hatchery, Humboldt Co

port Patch, 24 Jun (KI); 1, *Patrick's Pt. Dr*, 24 Jun (KI); 1, *Elk Head*, 24 Jun (TK); 1, *base of Bald Hills Rd, Orick*, 24 June-12 Jul (KI, GL); 1, *end of Lanphere Rd*, 25 Jun (RF); 1, *Prairie Creek SP*, 11 Jul (GL) • **Grasshopper Sparrow:** Relatively high numbers reported from suitable habitat this spring/summer, including reports of breeding near coast: 1 pair w/2 fledged young, *Sandy Prairie Bar (Eel River)*, 2 Jun (RH, MS); 1 adult w/juv, *top of Humboldt Hill*, 5-6 Jul (DC) • **Clay-colored Sparrow:** 1, *Lanphere Rd Dairy*, 22 May (TK); 1, *Sandy Prairie Bar (Eel River)*, 2-4 Jul (RH, MS) [a regular vagrant on the North Coast fall and winter, but this is 1st July record] • **Lark Sparrow:** 1, *Sandy*



Summer Tanager © Tony Kurz
Elk Head, Humboldt County

Prairie Bar (Eel River), 2 Jun (RH, MS)
 • **“Sooty” Fox Sparrow**: 1, *Blue Lake*, 21 May (PL) • **Black-throated Sparrow**: 1, *Orick*, 19 May (LB); 1, *Eel River up-river from Fernbridge*, 24 May (WL) • **White-throated Sparrow**: 1, *Eureka*, 15 May (MMo); 1, *Eureka*, 18 May (CO) • **Summer Tanager**: 1, *Elk Head*, 24 Jun (TK) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: 1, *Eureka*, 17-23 May (MH, TK, DC, MOB); 1, *McKinleyville*, 29 Jun (CW) • **Great-tailed Grackle**: 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 24-25 May (GC) • **Hooded Oriole**: 2 (nesting), *Ernest Way, Arcata*, 22-23 May (CO, SM) • **Lawrence’s Goldfinch**: An exceptional year for this species in the state, including the North Coast. Confirmed breeding from 1 site: 1 juv begging from adult male, *Dyerville*, 27 Jun (JG); 1-7, *Dyerville Loop*, 16 May-29 Jun (JG, TK); 1, *Hoopa Community Farm*, 17 May (DC); 8, *Big Rock Airstrip*, 17 May (DC, MG); 1, *Big Rock*, 28 May (MMa); 1, *Weitchpec*, 21 Jun (DF).



Rose-breasted Grosbeak © Tony Kurz
Eureka, Humboldt County



Hooded Oriole © Tony Kurz
Arcata, Humboldt County

DEL NORTE COUNTY

LITTLE STINT: 1, *Alexandre Dairy*, 10 Jul (KB, AB, JSt, MOB) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: 2, *Alexandre Dairy*, 6-10 Jul (LB, AB, KB, MOB) • **Stilt Sandpiper**: 1, *Lakeview Drive*, 8-9 Jul (LB) • **Wilson’s Phalarope**: 3, *Alexandre Dairy*, 20 May (AB) • **Tufted Puffin**: 2, *Castle Rock*, 28 May (CO, MOB) • **Elegant Tern**: FOS 3, *Crescent City Harbor*, 6 Jul (AB) • **Crested Caracara**: 1, *Hwy 101 near Ft. Dick* (present since 2005?) • **Least Flycatcher**: 1, *Bailey Rd*, 11-17 Jun (LB, AB, MOB) • **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: 1, *Knopki Creek Rd*, 11 Jun-16 Jul (LB) • **Eastern Kingbird**: 2, *Redwood NSP-Mill Creek Watershed*, 11 Jun (TK, DC, MOB)



Eastern Kingbird © Tony Kurz
Redwood NSP, Del Norte County

• **Mountain Bluebird**: a pair feeding young in a cavity in a burn area, *Doctor Rock Trail (off G-O Rd)*, 16 Jul (LB) [2nd breeding record for DN] • **Northern Parula**: 2 male, 1 female, *Bailey Rd*, 2 Jun-18 Jul (LB, AB, MOB) • **Black-throated Sparrow**: 1, *Pacific Shores*, 11-17 May (LB); 1, *Enderts Beach Road*, 20 May (SL); 1, *Water Treatment Plant off B St*, 23 May (SL) • **Clay-colored Sparrow**: 1, *Crescent City Harbor*, 16 May (AB); 1, *Pt. St. George*, 27 May (SL) • **Brewer’s Sparrow**: 1, *Pt. St. George*, 27 May-5 Jun (SL, AB, TK) • **Great-tailed Grackle**: 1 (accepting handouts from eclipse watchers), *Requa Hill Overlook*, 20 May (AJ); 1 (also took handouts), *Pt. St. George*, 27 May (AB, MOB); 1, *Crescent City*, 23-30 Jun (SL, AB) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: 1, *Redwood NSP-Mill Creek Watershed*, 11-27 Jun (TK, DC, MOB).

NORTHERN MENDOCINO COUNTY

SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS: 1 juv, *Mendo Coast Audubon pelagic trip out of Ft Bragg (< 5 mi out)*, 20 May (TE, MOB). This is the 2nd year in a row that the May pelagic trip has had a STAL! • **Flesh-footed Shearwater**: 1, *Mendo Coast Audubon pelagic trip*, 20 May (TE, RF, KH, MOB) • **Tufted Puffin**: 1, *Mendo Coast Audubon pelagic trip*, 20 May (TE, RF, KH, MOB)

SISKIYOU COUNTY

Eastern Phoebe: 1, *Iron Gate Fish Hatchery*, 10 Jun (MR, MOB)

Thanks to everyone who submitted sightings!

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The *Sandpiper* is published online at www.rras.org 6 times per year (February, April, June, August, October, and December) by Redwood Region Audubon Society, PO Box 1054, Eureka CA 95502.



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