



The Sandpiper



REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY www.rtas.org

October/November 2012

In This Issue: Field Trips... October Program... Volunteer Appreciation Event Nov 2... Mini-Godwit Days October 13-14... Christmas Bird Counts... President's Column... New Members & Subscribers... Pelagic Trip... Woodpecker Workshop... eBirder Kudos... Tom Leskiw's Essay... Shay Park... Project Feederwatch... RRAS Meetings... Field Notes... RRAS Contact List

FIELD TRIPS

Every Saturday: Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. These are 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 end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) in Arcata at 8:30 a.m. Trips end around 11 a.m. October leaders: 6, Gary Friedrichsen; 13, Joe Ceriani; 20, Jude Power; 27, Pat Bitton

Saturday, Oct 6: eBird Site Survey—Shay Park. Join Rob Fowler (707-839-3493) to survey Shay Park in Arcata for 1 to 3 hours, counting every species present. For more info on the eBird site survey, visit http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/eBird_Site_Survey. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot at east end of Foster Avenue. Waterproof shoes or boots are recommended, as we typically walk through a grassy field off-trail and up and down steep stairs that aren't maintained.

Sunday, October 14: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This is a wonderful 2- to 3-hour trip to learn the birds of the Humboldt Bay area. It takes a leisurely pace with emphasis on enjoying the birds! Beginners are more than welcome. Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center at 9 a.m. Call David Fix (707-825-1195) or Jude Power (707-822-3613) for more information.

Sunday, October 21: Southern Humboldt Community Park. Tom Leskiw will guest lead this monthly walk. All ages and experience levels are encouraged to revel in the beauty of the park and its avian inhabitants on this easy 2- to 3-hour walk. No dogs; steady rain cancels. Meet at 8:30 a.m.; park by the kiosk near the farmhouse in the main entrance. For more

information, contact Jay Sooter (707-444-8001).

Sunday, October 21: Eureka (aka Palco) Marsh. Join Ralph Bucher (707-499-1247; thebook@reninet.com) for some great birding in downtown Eureka. Spend an hour or 2 on a flat loop through a variety of habitats, from bay and mudflat to riparian and marshland. Meet in the parking lot at the foot of West Del Norte Street at 9 a.m.

Saturday, November 3: Bear River Ridge. Tour the open prairies and forest edges in search of Rough-legged Hawks, Golden Eagles, Horned Larks, and bluebirds. Dress in layers; expect to return between 1 and 2 p.m. Meet across from the Fernbridge Market at 8:30 a.m. Daryl Coldren (916-384-8089) will lead.

Sunday, November 11: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. See October 14.

MORE FIELD TRIPS ON PAGE 2!



OCTOBER PROGRAM

PHOTOBIRDING FROM HIDES IN HUNGARY & KENYA

Professional photographers Mike and Leslie Anderson will present a photo show of their recent trips to Hungary and Kenya that focuses on photographing birds from hides (aka blinds). Mike and Leslie spent 10 days in May 2011 photographing birds at a private farm “grandfathered” into a national park near Budapest and 17 days in February 2012 on a 700-mile birding safari north and east of Nairobi. Photos were taken from stationary, portable, and vehicular hides.

The talk will include insights into ecotravel, photo gear for foreign travel, and the pros and cons of using hides. Hungary photographs include bee-eaters, rollers, and hoopoes, which migrate from Africa to Hungary to breed, plus blackcaps, chaffinches, chiffchaffs, crows, goldfinches, gulls, herons, jays, kestrels, robins, tits, and woodpeckers. Kenya photographs include barbets, bee-eaters, darters, eagles, fiscals, flamingos, hammerkops, hawks, hornbills, jacanas, kingfishers, nightjars, owls, rollers, spoonbills, storks, sunbirds, turacos, weavers, and whydahs.

The program will be held at the Humboldt County Office of Education at Myrtle and West Avenues in Eureka, on **Friday, October 12, starting at 7:30 p.m.** Bring a mug to enjoy shade-grown coffee and come fragrance free.

Saturday, November 17: Shay Park.
See October 6.

Sunday, November 18: Southern Humboldt Community Park. See October 21, except that Jay Sooter or John Gaffin will lead.

Sunday, November 18: Eureka (aka Palco) Marsh. See October 21.

RRAS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT NOV 2

RRAS is hosting its second annual get-together to honor its volunteers on Friday, November 2, at the Humboldt Area Foundation. All who helped our chapter during the past year will be invited for food, drink, and fun with a Halloween twist. (Costumes encouraged, or for loan at the event!) There may be a lot of new faces this year, as the new volunteers recruited under Toyota's Together Green grant will be included. The event will likely start at 6:30 p.m. and go until 9:30. If you would like to volunteer to help set up or clean up, contact Sue Leskiw at 707-442-5444; sueleskiw@suddenlink.net.



*Godwit Days trips to HBNWR
(© Beth Deibert), Bear River Ridge
(© Tom Leskiw), and Arcata Marsh
(© Beth Deibert)*

GODWIT DAYS OFFERING FALL "MINI-FESTIVAL" OCT 13-14

By Sue Leskiw

The Godwit Days Spring Migration Birding Festival is expanding to offer a mini-Fall Migration Birding Festival in October. Join experienced leaders the weekend of October 13-14 on any of 10 trips selected to cover a range of the area's best birding locations.

Held at the end of the peak period for migrant birding, the Fall Preview is aimed to give registrants a taste of Humboldt and Del Norte counties during a time with high potential for rare bird sightings. There will be a maximum of 10 registrants on most of the trips.

On Saturday, you can take a trip on the open ocean looking for seabirds (leaders Tony Kurz and Daryl Coldren), travel north between the North Spit and Elk Head in search of vagrant warblers, visit the Arcata Marsh to view shorebirds (leader Gary Bloomfield), travel to the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Loleta and points south (leader Chet Ogan), or spend the day looking for raptors and grassland species on Bear River Ridge between Rio Dell and Ferndale (leader Tom Leskiw). On Sunday, you can carpool to Lake Earl and other Del Norte bird-rich spots (leader Rob Hewitt), travel south between the North Spit and Ferndale in search of vagrant warblers, visit the Arcata Marsh to view shorebirds, do a sea-watch from bluffs between Elk Head and Table Bluff, or look for lingering migrants between Centerville and Petrolia (leader Tony Kurz).

Pre-registration is required for the Fall Preview, which is a birding "e-event," a paperless festival (online or phone registration) where participants meet leaders at convenient locations to form carpools, rather than having trips start from a central location (such as the Arcata Community Center used in April). Trips vary from \$25 to \$100 for the pelagic, depending on length and distance. To register or to get more information on trip times, leaders, geographical areas, and expected species, visit www.godwitdays.org and click on the link in the right-hand "Special Events" column. If you have questions, e-mail info@godwitdays.org or call 707-826-7050.

HELP SOUGHT FOR AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

By Sue Leskiw

Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) is sponsoring 5 local Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) between December 15 and January 2. The counts are part of the 113th count that involves over 50,000 observers—most of them amateurs—throughout the U.S. and the world.

National Audubon has made two changes this year: first, the CBC is now a free program. Audubon will no longer charge the \$5 fee of field participants. Second, to minimize the effects of the loss of fee income, American Birds will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants, and Audubon will move to an on-line delivery of the summary results of the CBC.

Visit www.rras.org/cbc/cbc_full_extnt.htm to view maps of most of the local count circles imposed over major streets and roads. Such boundary delineations will let you know whether your property lies within a count area.

Ways you can participate:

- ☛ Give counters access to your property
- ☛ Keep a list of birds that you see in your yard on that day (be a "feeder watcher")
- ☛ 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. Call the contacts listed below to participate at any level.

Arcata—Saturday, Dec. 15, Daryl Coldren (916-384-8089; QuiAvisPetit@aol.com). The count circle is centered on Arcata, stretching north to McKinleyville south of Murray Road, west to Samoa and Manila, east to Bayside up to the Baywood Golf Course, and south including Freshwater and to Eureka along the waterfront to Bayshore Mall. Compilation at Rita's Mexican Restaurant on Highway 101, Eureka.

Del Norte—Sunday, Dec. 16, Alan Barron (707-465-8904; flockfinder@yahoo.com) or Gary Lester (707-839-3373; garys.lester@gmail.com). The count circle includes Crescent City, Smith River,

Ft Dick, Lake Earl, Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park/Redwood National Park, and the western portion of the Smith River National Recreation Area. Compilation at Pizza King in Crescent City beginning at 4:30–5 p.m.; morning start at Denny’s in Crescent City at 7 a.m.

Willow Creek—Saturday, Dec. 22, Gary Lester (see Del Norte). The count circle, centered on Willow Creek, includes Horse Mountain, portions of the South Fork & Main Stem of the Trinity River, the small community of Salyer, and the southern Hoopa Valley. Compilation site to be determined.

Centerville—Sunday, Dec. 30, Gary Lester (see Del Norte). The count circle is centered on Loleta, divided into geographic sectors of (1) Fields Landing, King Salmon, College of the Redwoods; (2) Table Bluff; (3) Loleta; (4) Fortuna; (5) Ferndale; (6) Centerville Road; (7) Port Kenyon Road; (8) Grizzly Bluff Road; (9) South Spit; (10) Centerville Beach; (11) Elk River Valley; (12) Humboldt Hill; and (13) Salt River. Compilation at Village Pantry on Broadway, Eureka.

Tall Trees—Wednesday, Jan. 2, Ken Burton (707-499-1146; shrikethree@gmail.com). The second year for this count circle between Big Lagoon and Orick. Compilation at Palm Cafe, Orick.

To help counters prepare for identifying the birds they see, RRAS is sponsoring a brush-up session on Friday, Dec. 14, featuring slides of winter birds. The evening may begin with a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. (see December Sandpiper for confirmation), followed by the lecture at 7:30 p.m. Bring a dish to share and mug; drinks and place settings provided. Location is the Humboldt County Office of Education at Myrtle and West Avenues in Eureka.



2006 Christmas Bird Count at Freshwater Farms © Sue Leskiw

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN: PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

By Jim Clark

No, this is not the title of a whiz-bang business seminar, but instead some history that might remind us how to excel as a chapter. Over a dozen past and current RRAS partners have included local conservation/environmental organizations, government entities from local to federal, and a variety of other nonprofits. These partnerships have produced everything from short-term fundraising to long-term preservation of land for bird habitat. Some are ongoing, while others have taken advantage of situations as they arise.

There is, however, only one RRAS partner—aside from National Audubon Society (NAS) and Audubon California—in which our chapter is a member. That is the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC). In fact, RRAS is a charter member. Despite this, less than 20% of RRAS members are also NEC members. Because of this, it was costing our chapter about \$2,100 per year to subsidize delivery of the former printed *Sandpiper* via *EcoNews*. This contributed to the decision to publish a web-only *Sandpiper*. As in nature, many things among nonprofit partners are connected in ways that not all of us are aware of.

Why such a low NEC membership by RRAS members? The Audubon demographic of educated, upper-middle-class members seems to point away from the \$35-50/year NEC dues contribution as being burdensome. What remains may be a misperception of differences in mission and methods between the organizations.

An important aspect of NAS is that chapters are autonomous. Chapters have often disagreed with NAS on issues and policy but remain in good standing. When the NEC takes a position, it is based on the consensus of its Board of Directors, on which RRAS has a seat. Although the NEC has taken positions that I did not totally agree with when I was an at-large NEC board member, the missions and methods of our 2 organizations have continued to be mutually supportive. As is the case with Audubon chapters, some member organizations differ from others in their approach to environmental issues. This diversity is an asset far more often than not.



The NEC is emerging from hard times; now is an opportunity to help develop it into a mutually supportive environmental center for its member organizations. NEC currently provides meeting space, a bulk mailing permit, a way to get our printed “Least Sandpiper” distributed, and a legal place of business for RRAS. This is a bargain at the organizational membership of \$200/year plus \$300 for publishing the “Least Sandpiper.” Sharing of paid staff time, grant management, and a physical place with a face for RRAS can help advance our mission. Strong support from RRAS through individual memberships helps both organizations. That is why I urge all RRAS members to support the NEC by becoming a member today.

RRAS WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS

Arcata—Mason Hill, Sharon Mehlman, William Nichols, James Sorter, Joan Walsh

Blue Lake—Barbara Lane

Cedar City (UT)—Hope Woodward

Crescent City—Gail Lee, Linda O’Neill, Mary Jean Watson

Eureka—Susan Bennett, Arden Bruduik, Ozella Gaskill, William Lunt, Eleanor Mazur, Tim Milton, Laurie Neville, Maggie Stimson, Jonathan Weber

Fortuna—Dick & Diana LaVen, Kris McCannless

Hydesville—Bobbie Drewry

Loleta—Edge Gerring

McKinleyville—MJ Cord & Lyon

Miranda—Gail Crosby

Redway—Ann Hammond

Smith River—Thomas Dobson, Peggy Kaestle

Trinidad—Matt Hinton

Ukiah—Dave Bengston

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

SEPTEMBER 8 PELAGIC TRIP

By Rob Fowler

Offshore pelagic trips are unpredictable. No matter how much planning is done beforehand, one can never know what is going to happen, despite predicted marine weather conditions or what's been seen in the area of interest. On September 8, the ocean was nearly guaranteed to be calm, with only 5- to 6-foot seas at 13 seconds and a 5-knot wind from the north. These numbers translate into glassy conditions, smooth enough to see one's reflection in the water.

Registrants met around 7 a.m. at the Trinidad dock and, following a brief intro on what to expect, what we hope to see, where to chum if you feel sick, and how to call out bird locations using clock positions, left by 7:30 on the *Shenandoah*. After getting under way, I checked my phone to note the time and learned that co-leader Gary Lester had called to say that he and his wife Lauren were running late and would arrive soon. They did! I believe this was Lauren's first pelagic trip in 17 years or so, and she ended up getting 2 new Humboldt County birds (Laysan Albatross and Long-tailed Jaeger). Lauren had already seen over 420 species in Humboldt!

RRAS has been organizing pelagic trips out of Trinidad since around 2009, and the trips usually take the same route: heading straight out to Trinidad Canyon, which is just over 20 miles west. We stopped around 6 miles out to watch a group of about 3 Humpback Whales that were blowing frequently and showing their flukes. Many Cassin's Auklets were present, a sign of abundant krill. After enjoying the whales and auklets for a while, we continued west toward the Trinidad Canyon. On the way, we lucked into a Tufted Puffin that was molting out of its adult alternate/breeding plumage, first spotted by chummer Daryl Coldren. Everyone on the boat got to see the puffin. Then Jude Power spotted a Laysan Albatross roosting on the water that, once again, everybody saw. After those exciting birds, though, bird numbers decreased the farther we went out.

We made it to about 22 miles offshore. Other than many distant jaegers flying around (probably mostly Long-taileds), it was so slow that we turned around and headed back. On the way, we reconnected



Pelagic trip participants (from front to back) Jared Hughey, Daryl Coldren, Annie Meyer, and Greg Chapman
© Rob Fowler

with some of the whales and auklets. We headed southeast until we intersected with Clam Beach, then went south on a mission to find Marbled Murrelets (MAMU). Gary Lester almost immediately found a pair of MAMUs that a few participants were able to see. Most impressive, however, was a huge flock of scoters that stretched along the coast from about the middle of Clam Beach to the mouth of the Little River. We estimated the flock to number about 5,000: 75% Surf Scoters and 25% White-wingeds.

Overall, it was a successful trip: *nobody* got seasick; a couple of decent, sometimes hard-to-get species (Tufted Puffin and Laysan Albatross) were found; some participants saw "lifer" birds; and some experienced their first pelagic out of Humboldt County. Thanks to Gary Lester for co-leading with me and to Daryl Coldren for his diligent chumming.

Here are links to the eBird lists (with pictures of the highlights) for the day:

[0-5 miles offshore](#)
[5 miles and beyond](#)



A WEALTH OF WOODPECKER WISDOM

By Cindy Moyer

On Saturday, September 15, Steve Shunk of Paradise Birding in Oregon led a dozen eager participants in a woodpecker workshop. We spent the bulk of the day on Horse Mountain, where everyone had excellent looks at 2 Red-breasted Sapsuckers. In the afternoon, we moved to Cooper Gulch, which proved to be positively swarming with Northern Flickers (at least 6, perhaps as many as 10), as well as a big mixed flock containing a nice variety of the usual suspects, plus about 100 Cedar Waxwings feeding on berries.

Although we did not see an overabundance of woodpeckers, we completely made up for absent birds with extensive education from Steve about woodpeckers. We learned about what type of habitat is likely to harbor which species and why it is essential to retain mixed-age forests with old snags. We learned what the different species eat. We learned about the implications of the shape and power of a woodpecker's bill for feeding and excavating nest and roost holes. In some cases, we can now identify what species of bird (woodpecker or nuthatch) probably made a particular nest hole, and we understand the importance of woodpeckers in creating nest holes for many other species. We learned how to recognize all sorts of "sign" in trees: sapsucker holes (both xylem and phloem), holes left by wood-boring beetles, sawdust left by carpenter ants, and giant holes (in a variety of shapes) made by Pileated Woodpeckers seeking carpenter ants. One participant was overheard saying, "I will never look at a tree trunk in the same way again."

When we did have birds to look at, we discussed behavior and pondered questions of age and sex. With the Red-breasted Sapsuckers, we also wrestled with questions of hybridization, while with the Flickers, we looked for indications that the birds were Red-shafted, Yellow-shafted, or some mixture of the 2.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable and informative day. Our local birders definitely appreciated Steve's expertise and leadership skills, and we express our thanks to those who invited him to Humboldt County.



KUDOS TO DEDICATED HUMBOLDT eBIRDERS

By Rob Fowler

This column usually is about giving tips to help improve eBirding skills. eBird has really taken off in Humboldt County, and many active birders use it regularly, if not *every* time they go birding! It's time to give shout-outs to local eBirders for the time they put into entering their birding outings in eBird.

Probably the most useful information that can be entered into eBird is from sites that are visited regularly. If you're not familiar with the eBird site survey or haven't attended my monthly Shay Park eBird site surveys, please take a moment to read about it [here](#). Not many people go out weekly—or even daily(!)—to survey the same site, so it's worth mentioning a couple that do.

The first dedicated eBird site surveyor is Ralph Bucher. He has taken an interest in the Vaux's Swift roosting site on Greenwood Heights Road in Kneeland. Since August 15 of this year, Ralph has surveyed this location every evening! Looking at his lists, it is interesting to see how swift numbers increased from a low of 2 on August 17 to a new high count for Humboldt County of 5,696 on September 16! That's some important data, Ralph. Thanks for taking it on to survey this location every day during August and September.

I would like to commend other eBirders that are taking the time to enter their birding outings. Some of these are Daryl Coldren, Annie Meyer, Tony Kurz, Rob Hewitt, Greg Chapman, Gary Bloomfield, Casey Ryan, Camden Bruner, Jacob Rhea, Meghan Still, Sean McAllister, John Oliver, John Gaffin, Ken Burton, Mark Magneson, Jesse Sargent, CJ Ralph, Rachel Smith, and Kerry Ross.

A few of these eBirders have entered more than 100 complete checklists this year (as of September 18): Rob Hewitt (189), Tony Kurz (160), John Gaffin (155), Ken Burton (154), and Mark Magneson (123). A couple of eBirders have entered 200 or more complete checklists this year: Chet Ogan (245), John Oliver (236), Ralph Bucher (222), and Camden Bruner, who has entered an impressive 356!

I also want to commend some eBirders for regularly entering comments and/or embedding photos for high counts and rare species that are flagged in eBird. I was going to list the names, but most of those mentioned above have been doing this. They really make my job easier as an eBird reviewer in Humboldt County!

Thanks are also in order to RRAS field trip leaders who have entered their trip lists into eBird. The RRAS eBird account has received 79 complete checklists this year and tallied 239 species.

We'll be back with another eBird tip or two in the next Sandpiper, but for now... go eBirding!

AS IF SCRIPTED

By Tom Leskiw

Arcata Bird Box, September 29, 2011: "This is Ken Irwin. Today, I watched a Gyrfalcon kill and eat a Western Gull that had been roosting with the gull flock on the spit at the mouth of Redwood Creek..." Ken added some details, the age and color phase of the bird—but I was so thoroughly shocked and awed that I had to replay the message several times before I could begin to process the information.

A September Gyr in California? Dining on gull? Sure, there were several previous records for the species in Humboldt, but only a handful of birders had seen one in the county. For the rest of us, Gyr had assumed near-mythic status, an elusive specter that a rarified few had glimpsed a time or three harassing waterfowl in the Eel or Mad River bottoms. Also, a falconer I knew said a Gyrfalcon had aggressed his Peregrine one winter day.

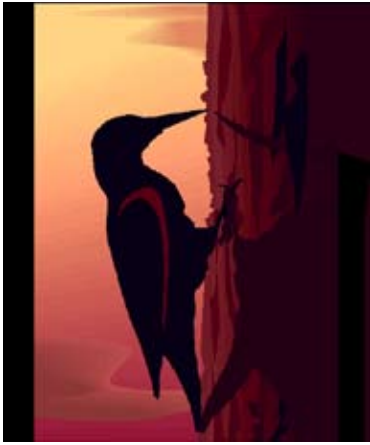
Ken's statement that the Gyr was eating a gull clinched it: I knew exactly where I was going to be early the next morning. Adult gulls are too big to be preyed upon by the Peregrine Falcons that frequently patrol our coastlines for shorebirds. Having few enemies, they loaf about with impunity, only occasionally—and reluctantly—raising a haughty eye to casually scan the sky for the source of shadows cast by soaring Turkey Vultures or hawks. I savored the mental image of a "death-from-above" Gyr wreaking havoc on the phalanx of ne'er-do-well *Larids* roosting on the spit—turning the tables on thuggy gulls.

So the next morning, Sue and I headed north toward Redwood Creek. We arrived at the appointed spot at 9:30 to find no gulls and no Gyrfalcon. "Ken encountered the Gyr yesterday at 2:25," I explained to Sue. "The movements of gulls tend to be fairly predictable. Let's head up Bald Hills Road in search of Lewis's Woodpeckers and return around 2 p.m."

After driving for a time, we broke out of the dark redwood forest into bright fall sunshine, amber prairies, groves of white oaks turning shades of auburn and yellow. Just south of Schoolhouse Peak, we got out of our vehicle to do a binocular scan to the north. I glimpsed two birds skimming over the tops of trees with a crow-like flight. Running back to the car for my

A group of Woodpecker Workshop participants
© Cindy Moyer





scope, I glanced over my shoulder to see the birds land. “Sweet! Scope views of two Lewis’s in an oak tree,” I said to Sue. “Check ‘em out while I call Daryl [Coldren].”

For those unfamiliar with the amazing bird-related events in Humboldt during 2011, I refer you to a post on [nwcaldbird](#) made by Rob Fowler one week earlier:

“Hi all, I just want to publicly congratulate Daryl Coldren for breaking the Humboldt County big year record today on 22 September 2011. Yup, that’s right, we’re still **ONLY** in September and Daryl is poised to raise the bar much higher with the 3 months that we have left in 2011. The old record was 311, and Daryl just got his 312th bird this year with finding a Prairie Warbler at Manila County Park a short time ago today.”

Lewis’s Woodpecker was not among the 312 species that Daryl had already tallied for the year. Daryl answered his phone, and I gave him the news. “I’m in pursuit,” came his response. About 10 minutes later, the two Lewis’s were joined by a third bird and flew off south. “No sense in telling him to hold off,” I mumbled. “They’re in season. Hopefully, he’ll find his own.”

We jumped in our vehicle and slalomed our way back down Bald Hills Road, bound for the mouth of Redwood Creek. We arrived at 2:35 to find a large flock of gulls lollygagging about on the spit and a Peregrine darting past. Then, like some kind of avian apparition, the Gyr flew in from the south. Its broad wings cleaved the air, moving from Point A to Point B with authority... yet it looked as though it was barely exerting. My mind grasped for words to describe the bird’s flight. Someone—me—uttered some gibberish aloud: *freight train, linebackeresque*.

To this day, the image is an indelible one: two-toned wings, with the tips seemingly doing all the work. Broad tail like an extension of its body, the gray-phase juvenile crossed the estuary effortlessly before landing in a tree. As I set up my scope to study the bird, I was thankful for the Peregrine’s brief appearance, as it furnished a nice size comparison to its steroid-infused cousin. Several minutes later, the Gyr took flight, disappearing around the headland to the north.

A little bit of background on Sue is in order: Despite being married to an avid birder, she’s not one herself. “It’s rarely this easy,” I told her. “Today was amazing: as if we’d scripted it ourselves.”

Epilog: Although Daryl would make a number of searches last fall for Lewis’s Woodpecker, as 2011 yielded to 2012, he had to admit that it was one species that had given him the slip. However, by crushing the old record and finishing with 330—with the exception of LEWO and a few select others—he, too, might admit that the year went just as he’d drawn it up. Incredibly, Tony Kurz and Rob Hewitt—the other two members of “The Three Amigos”—also broke the old Humboldt Big Year record during 2011, finishing with 315 and 314, respectively. Note: all bird totals cited here do not include the five species of birds introduced to Humboldt County that have self-sustaining populations (House Sparrow, Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, European Starling, Eurasian Collared-Dove).

SHAY PARK — WARBLER NIRVANA

By Rob Fowler

We had a great day on the Shay Park eBird site survey on September 15. We tallied 33 species, with the highlight being a continuing Blackburnian Warbler found 2 days earlier by Daryl Coldren and Rob Hewitt and a continuing McGillivray’s Warbler that was present since at least the day before. Somehow, we missed a Tennessee Warbler that had been present the previous day. There were lots of migrants spotted, with Yellow Warblers continuing their dominance and a total of 8 species of warbler. Here’s the full list with photos: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S11587993>



BECOME A FEEDER WATCHER

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is looking for participants for its citizen scientist Project FeederWatch, now in its 26th season. More than 50,000 people have taken part by reporting online the birds they see in their backyards. The information helps scientists track changes in the number and distribution of birds across the continent.

“By watching and keeping track of the birds in your own neighborhood, you really can make a difference,” says project leader David Bonter. “The more people watching, the more we can learn about the birds that brighten the winter landscape.” Join today and receive your kit before the new season begins on November 10. The \$15 fee includes a calendar, bird ID poster, and other information. For more information, go to www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw.



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 NEC office, 1385 Eighth Street, Suite 215, Arcata.

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RedwoodRegion
AudubonSociety](http://www.facebook.com/RedwoodRegionAudubonSociety)

FIELD NOTES

By Daryl Coldren

Summary of Northwestern California Bird Reports, 15 July-17 September, 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/klam-athsiskiyou>), 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; HBBO = Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory; HBNWR = Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge; HO = holdover from previous month; LOS = last of season; MOB = many observers; NC = not confirmed/documentated; Oxi = oxidation.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Laysan Albatross: 40+, ~ 60 miles SW of Eureka, 18 Aug (PR); 1, RRAS Pelagic Trip to Trinidad Canyon, 8 Sep (JP, GL, LL, RF, MOB) • **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel:** 1, North Jetty, 4 Aug (RF); 1,500+, Eel River Canyon (HSU Ornithology Pelagic), 8 Sep (MC, WL, CB, MS, MOB) • **White-faced Ibis:** 2, Arcata Marsh, 31 Jul-24 Aug (CO, DC, JO, MOB); 1, Arcata Bottoms Moxon Rd, 4 Aug (RF); 1, Arcata Bottoms Lanphere Rd, 29 Aug (CWe) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 1, Cock Robin Island, 16 Aug (KB, RB, JP, MOB); 2, Centerville Wetlands, 31 Aug-4 Sep (KS, TK, KB, MOB) • **Black-necked Stilt:** 1, Arcata Marsh-Brackish Pond, 14-16 Sep (CB, JP, DC, MOB) • **Solitary Sandpiper:** 1, Hiller Park, 10 Aug (CB); 1, Water Dog Lakes & Trail, 26 Aug (CWi); 1, Arcata Marsh-Brackish Pond, 28 Aug (BH) • **Little Stint:** 1, Elk River Wildlife Sanctuary, 24 Jul (KS); 1, Arcata Marsh, 29-30 Jul (RH, TK, MOB) • **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper:** 1, Centerville Wetlands, 4 Sep (KS, TK, MOB) • **Stilt Sandpiper:** 2, Ocean Ranch, 16 Jul (TK, MOB); 1, Centerville Wetlands, 31 Aug-4 Sep (KS, TK, MOB) • **Wilson's Phalarope:** 2, Arcata Marsh, 18 Jul (RF); 1, Ocean Ranch, 20-22 Jul (TK, RH, MOB);



Laysan Albatross © Jared Hughey



Little Stint © Tony Kurz

1, Arcata Marsh, 6 Aug (RF, MOB); 8, Arcata Marsh, 11 Aug (DC, SH, RB, MOB); 1, Arcata Marsh, 14 Aug (RB); 9, Centerville Wetlands, 16 Aug (KS) • **Red Phalarope:** 1, Ocean Ranch, 5 Aug (KR, RS); 1, Ocean Ranch, 25 Aug (TK, DC, MS, MOB) • **Sabine's Gull:** 22, offshore to Eel River Canyon, 5 Aug (KR, RS); 10, Eel River Canyon (HSU Ornithology Pelagic), 8 Sep (MC, WL, CB, MS, MOB); 4, RRAS Pelagic to Trinidad Canyon, 8 Sep (RF, GL, MOB) • **Franklin's Gull:** 1 (1st cycle), Little River State Beach, 5 Sep (TK) • **Herring Gull:** 1 (early), South Spit, 31 Aug (SM) • **Horned Puffin:** 1, offshore Patrick's Point, 26 Jul (MM, KB, MOB); 1 (dead), Little River State Beach, 17 Aug (GL, LL); 3, North Jetty, 1 Sep (TK, MS, MOB) • **Tufted Puffin:** 1, RRAS Pelagic to Trinidad Canyon, 8 Sep (DC, GL, RF, MOB) • **Long-eared Owl:** 1, Hunter Ranch, 27 Jul (MS, RH); 1 (juv), top of Humboldt Hill Rd, 10 Aug (DC) • **Merlin:** 1 (FOS), Blue Lake, 18 Aug (TL) • **Least Flycatcher:** 1, North Spit-Horse Pasture Patch, 7 Sep (TK, DC, RH) • **Eastern Kingbird:** 1, Ferndale Bottoms-Salt River, 10-17 Sep (DC, RH, TK, GB, GC, MOB); 1, Arcata Marsh, 17-21 Sep (RF, RB, MOB) • **Say's Phoebe:** 1, Bear River Ridge, 16 Sep (RH, MS) • **Blue-headed Vireo:** 1, Woodley Island,



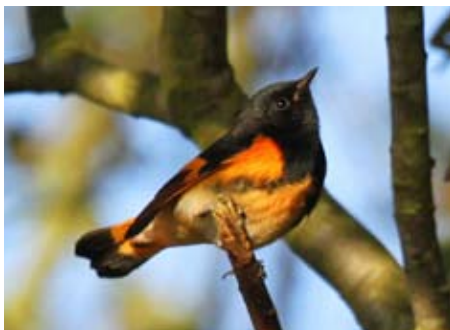
Franklin's Gull © Tony Kurz

14 Sep (KS) • **Red-eyed Vireo:** 1, North Spit, 1 Sep (TK, MS, JO, JS) • **Philadelphia Vireo:** 1, Little River Dr, 7 Sep (KI); 1, North Spit-Airport Satellite Patch, 17 Sep (TL, KI, RH); 1, Mad River County Park, 17 Sep (DC, TK); 1, Orick Dump, 16 Sep (KI) • **White-breasted Nuthatch:** 1, Eureka, 24 Jul (SM); 2-6, Dyerville Loop Rd, 28 Jul-11 Sep (JG); 1, Cock Robin Island, 6 Sep (DF); 1, HBNWR, 16 Sep (RH) • **House Wren:** 1, Little River Dr, 9 Sep (KI) • **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** 1, Little River Dr, 9 Sep (KI); 1, Cypress Patch, 12-13 Sep (KI, DC) • **Clark's Nutcracker:** 7!, Kneeland, 8 Sep (AD) • **Mountain Bluebird:** 1, Water Dog Lakes & Trail, 4 Aug (JuG) • **Northern Mockingbird:** 1, Loleta Bottoms, 25 Aug (DC, MS) • **Northern Waterthrush:** 1, Shay Park, 4 Sep (JH, BH); 1, Arcata Marsh, 14-16 Sep (DC, JG, MOB) • **Black-and-**



Tufted Puffin © Jared Hughey

white Warbler: 1, *Blue Lake Cottonwoods*, 2 Aug (RH); 1, *Across river from Mad River County Park*, 2 Sep (KS); 1, *North Spit-Horse Pasture Patch*, Sep 8 (KI) • **Tennessee Warbler:** 1, *North Spit-Airport Patch*, 8 Sep (TL); 1, *Elk River Wildlife Sanctuary*, 11 Sep (DC, RH); 1, *Shay Park*, 13-14 Sep (DC, RH, MOB); 1, *North Spit-Horse Pasture Patch*, 15 Sep (DC, TK, RH, KI, MOB); 1, *Mad River County Park*, 15 Sep (KI) • **Virginia's Warbler:** 1, *Arcata Marsh-Allen Marsh*, 7 Sep (DF) • **Mourning Warbler:** 1, *Mad River County Park*, 3 Sep (GB, MOB) • **American Redstart:** 1 (patchy male), *Orick-Oxbow Patch*, 4 Aug (TL, RH); 1 (adult male), *Mad River County Park*, 23 Aug (TK, JO); 1 (adult male), *Mad River County Park*, 2 Sep (AM, JH); 1, *North Spit-Horse Pasture Patch*, 31 Aug (MS, TK, RH, MOB); 1, *North Spit-Horse Pasture Patch*, 7-8 Sep (DC, TK, RH, TL, MOB) • **Magnolia Warbler:** 1, *North Spit-Cypress Patch*, 8-9 Sep (TL, DC, AM); 1, *North Spit-Cypress Patch*, 15-17 Sep (DC, TK); 1, *Mad River County Park*, 15-17 Sep (DC, TK) • **Prairie Warbler:** 1 (apparent adult female), *HBNWR*, 16-17 Sep (SM, GC, GB, TK, MOB) • **Blackburnian Warbler:** 1, *Shay Park*, 13-17 Sep (DC, RH, TK, MOB) • **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 1 (fall male), *North Spit-Boat Ramp Patch*, 7 Sep (DC, TK, RH, TL, MOB) • **Blackpoll Warbler:** 1, *Sunny Brae*, 30 Aug (AM); 1, *North Spit-Airport Patch*, 5-8 Sep (TL, TK, DC, MOB); 1, *Shay Park*, 6 Sep (JH, BH, JO); 1, *Palco Marsh*, 11 Sep (TK, MS); 1, *Mad River County Park*, 13 Sep (DC, RH); 1, *Mad River County Park*, 15-17 Sep (DC, TK, JH, RH); 1, *HBNWR*, 16 Sep (TK, RH, MS, SM) • **Clay-colored Sparrow:** 1, *V St Loop*, 16 Sep (DF) • **Brewer's Sparrow:** 1, *Ocean Ranch*, 25 Aug (TK, DC, AM, MOB) • **Lark Sparrow:** 1, *North Spit-Cypress Patch*, 1 Sep (TK, MS); 1, *Arcata Marsh Oxi Ponds*, 9 Sep (JO) •



American Redstart © Jared Hughey



Blackpoll Warbler © Tony Kurz



Brewer's Sparrow © Tony Kurz

SMITH'S LONGSPUR: 1, *Fay Slough Wildlife Area*, 9 Sep (PR, DC, RH, MS, KS, AP) • **Lark Bunting:** 1, *Fay Slough Wildlife Area*, 9-10 Sep (RH, DC, MS, KS, MOB) • **Indigo Bunting:** 1, *Loleta*, 25 Aug (TK, AM, AP, MOB); 1, *Loleta*, 2 Sep (RF, TK, JS) • **Bobolink:** 2 (flyover), *McKinleyville*, 11 Sep (RF) • **Lawrence's Goldfinch:** 3, *Dyerville Loop/Ft Seward Rd*, 28 Jul (JG).

DEL NORTE COUNTY

Crested Caracara: 1 (continuing bird), *Smith River Bottoms* (AB, MOB) • **American Golden-Plover:** 2, *Lake Tolowa*, 10 Sep (LB) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 3, *Lake Tolowa*, 10 Sep (LB) • **Dunlin:** 3, *Lake Tolowa*, 10 Sep (LB) • **Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** 1 (juv), *Lake Tolowa*, 10 Sep (LB); 2 (juv), *Lake Tolowa*, 11 Sep (LB) • **Wilson's Phalarope:** 1, *Alexandre Dairy*, 18 Jul (AB) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 3 (adults), *Alexandre Dairy*, 18 Jul (AB); 1, *Alexandre Dairy*, 16 Aug (LB); 1, *Lake Tolowa*, 16 Aug (LB) • **Red Knot:** 1, *Lake Tolowa*, 16 Aug (LB) • **Least Flycatcher:** 1, *Pt St George*, 7 Sep (AB) • **Rock Wren:** 1, ~ 15 miles up *G-O Rd*, 13 Aug (LB) • **Blue-Gray**



Smith's Longspur © Meghan Still

Gnatcatcher: 1, *Ender's Beach Rd*, 7 Sep (AB) • **Mountain Bluebird:** (nesting pair+2 fledglings) ~ 15 miles up *G-O Rd*, 16 Jul-13 Aug (LB) • **American Redstart:** 2, *Pt St George*, 7 Sep (AB) • **Northern Parula:** 1 (continuing), *Bailey Rd, Ft Dick*, 18 Jul (AB, LB, MOB) • **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1 (female), *Alexandre Dairy*, 16 Aug (LB).

MENDOCINO COUNTY

Merlin: 1, *Glass Beach*, 14 Aug (KH) • **Pacific Golden-plover:** 1, *Fen Creek*, 18 Aug (BB) • **Ruddy Turnstone:** 1, *Fen Creek*, 18 Aug (BB) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 1, *Virgin Creek Estuary*, 14 Aug (KS) • **Wilson's Phalarope:** 2, *Virgin Creek Estuary*, 24 Jul (DT) • **American Redstart:** 1 (HY female), *Lake Cleone*, 7 Sep (KH) • **Tennessee Warbler:** 1, *Ft Bragg*, 11 Sep (DT) • **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1, *Ocean Lake, Ft Bragg*, 2 Sep (Roger Foote); 1 (adult male), *W. Spruce St (Ft Bragg)*, 15 Sep (DT)

Cited observers: Alan Barron, Gary Bloomfield, Becky Bowen, Lucus Brug, Camden Bruner, Ralph Bucher, Ken Burton, Greg Chapman, Daryl Coldren, Mark Colwell, Anthony Desch, David Fix, Rob Fowler, Rpgger Foote, John Gaffin, Justin Garwood (JuG), Stan Harris, Karen Havlena, Rob Hewitt, Brandon Higgins, Jared Hughey, Ken Irwin, Tony Kurz, Will Lawton, Tom Leskiw, Gary Lester, Lauren Lester, Sean McAllister, Annie Meyer, Mark Morrisette, Chet Ogan, John Oliver, Amy Patten, Jude Power, Kerry Ross, Paul Roush, Jesse Sargent, Keith Slausen, Rachel Smith, Meghan Still, Dorothy "Toby" Tobkin, Chris Welsh (CWe), Carol Wilson (CWi)

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