**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.

Saturday, April 11: Alderpoint. Enjoy the birds, plant life, and reptiles of the Eel River canyon on this full-day trip along Alderpoint Rd and south of the town of Alderpoint. We will bird select locations along Alderpoint road first and then walk the Alderpoint railroad tracks to Cain Rock Trestle to have lunch and look for Rufous-crowned Sparrows. In 2012 a washout along the railroad tracks took a bit of work to cross, and the same will go for this year. Other species like Oak Titmouse, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and similar birds of dry habitats in southeast Humboldt County can be expected, along with just-arrived summer residents. Diogenes’ lantern, interior live-oak, and birch-leaf mountain-mahogany will be seen as well. Take sun protection, layered clothing, and a small pack for carrying lunch and water. Meet in the Ray’s Food Place parking lot in Garberville at 8:30 a.m. We should return to the Humboldt Bay area late afternoon (~5 p.m.). Contact Tony Kurz (559-333-0893; tonyk_71220@hotmail.com) for more information.

Sunday, April 12: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This is a wonderful 2- to 3-hour trip for people wanting 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 9:00 a.m. Call Jude Power or David Fix (707-822-3613) for more information.

Saturday, April 18: Southern Humboldt Community Park. Jay Sooter (707-444-8001) and/or John Gaffin 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. Binoculars are not provided, and dogs are not allowed; field guides are usually available, but please provide your own if possible. Steady rain cancels. Meet at 9:00 a.m., parking by the kiosk near the farmhouse in the main entrance. Please note the day change.

Sunday, April 19: Eureka Waterfront. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the foot of Del Norte St where we will scope for birds off the public dock until everyone assembles. We will then drive to the base of the Hikshari’ Trail at Truesdale St and bird along the trail to the Elk River Wildlife Area. Leader: Ralph Bucher (707-499-1247; thebook@reninet.com).

Saturday, May 2: Dyerville Loop. Let’s get loopy! The seldom-birded Dyerville Loop Rd winds 29 miles through forest and prairie in southern Humboldt. We’ll explore its length, north to south, looking and listening for whatever we may find. This will be primarily a road-birding trip, but be prepared for some walking, to be out all day with no access to stores or restrooms, and to carpool. Meet leader Ken Burton (707-499-1146) at the Herrick Avenue Park & Ride, Eureka, at 7:30 a.m.; if you want to join the group farther south, call Ken in advance.

Saturday, May 9: Freshwater Farms Reserve. Meet at 9 a.m. at North Coast Regional Land Trust’s Freshwater Farm on Myrtle Avenue near Freshwater Corner. Michael Cipra will give a brief introduction to their current RRAS-supported salt marsh and future freshwater/backshish marsh restoration efforts before we explore the area and adjacent streamside riparian forest areas. Access to this area is currently by permission only, so this is a special trip to visit this site. For more information, contact trip leader Chet Ogan (707-442-9353) and leave a message.

Saturday, May 9: Nocturnal Storm-Petrels. Join Elias Elias (707-633-8833; call7076338833@gmail.com ) for an evening of land-based seabird watching. We will walk the dirt path to the tip of Tepona Point. We expect to get glimpses of Leach’s Storm-Petrel as they fly through our spotlight beams and around an offshore rock. We sometimes see them land and slip into the grass covering the top of the rock. Bring warm clothes, binoculars, scope, and a flashlight to walk out to the point. The more spotlights, the better. For this trip we will be granted a permit to park in the lot after hours. Meet at the Luffenholtz Beach County Park parking lot at 9 p.m. (https://goo.gl/maps/HIWx9) and plan to end around 11 p.m.

Sunday, May 10: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. See April 12.

Saturday, May 16: Southern Humboldt Community Park. See April 18.

Sunday, May 17: Eureka Waterfront. See April 19.

**APRIL PROGRAM: FRIDAY, APRIL 10**

**California Condor in the Pacific Northwest: A Return to the Heart of the Range**

This talk was postponed from January. Chris West, senior wildlife biologist for the Yurok Tribe, will briefly discuss the biology of condors and their history in the region. Condors have been culturally significant to regional native peoples, and it was only natural for the Yurok Tribe to get involved in recovery efforts. Chris will update us on what 6 years of habitat assessment by the tribe has revealed about conditions in our area and how work toward condor recovery here in the Pacific Northwest is progressing. He’ll also discuss next steps that it is hoped will lead to the shadows of these giant birds gracing our northern forests once again.

**MAY PROGRAM: FRIDAY, MAY 8**

**Environmental Challenges of Marijuana Cultivation in Northern California Forests**

Dr. Greta Wengert, assistant director and senior ecologist for Integral Ecology Research Center, a nonprofit research organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, will talk about the direct ecological effects of marijuana cultivation on forest wildlife and their ecosystems in California’s national forests. She will discuss the recent discoveries of more indirect and covert environmental effects of these activities, ranging from directly poisoned wildlife to contaminants in soil. She will highlight the opportunities for estimating effects across the landscape and the extent of this egregious problem and present some short-term solutions.

** Programs start at 7:30 p.m. at Eureka High School Lecture Hall at the corner of Humboldt and K Streets. Bring a mug to enjoy shade-grown coffee, and please come fragrance-free.**
CHAPTER LEADERS
OFFICERS
President — Hal Genger ....................... 707-499-0887
Vice President ................................. Vacant
Secretary — Adam Brown .................... 707-826-0319
Treasurer — Syn-dee Noel .................... 707-442-8862

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Joe Ceriani ................................... 707-476-9127
Jill Demers .................................... 707-667-6163
Harriet Hill .................................... 707-267-4055
Cindy Moyer ................................... 707-822-1806
Chet Ogan ...................................... 707-442-9353
Susan Penn .................................... 707-443-9660
C.J. Ralph ...................................... 707-822-2015

OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS
Conservation — Jim Clark ................. 707-445-8311
Educn/Scholarships — Denise Seeger .... 707-444-2399
eBird liaison — Rob Fowler ............... 707-839-3493
Field Notes — Daryl Coldren .............. 916-384-8089
Field Trips — Rob Fowler ................. 707-839-3493
Finance — Syn-dee Noel .................... 707-442-8862
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Arcata Bird Alert ......................... 707-822-LOON (707-822-5666)

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President’s Column
By Hal Genger

It’s spring again! The days are getting longer, flowers are blooming, and the birds are migrating and singing their breeding songs. This year around 120 people attended our annual banquet. I especially want to thank the following folks who planned and participated in our annual banquet: Jill Demers for planning and coordinating the banquet, Uniquely Yours for providing excellent food, violinist Cindy Moyer and Karen Davy for serenading us, Jared Wolf for securing Dr. Christopher Clark to visit. Dr. Clark for giving a phenomenal presentation about hummingbird flight, and all of you for soliciting donations and helping set up the event. Thank you!

As noted in Gary Friedrichsen’s article, RRAS is cosponsoring a Birdathon with the NEC this May, and I encourage all to join in. We will be advertising this again at Godwit Days, or you can check it out online at http://youremc.org/events/birdathon. Here are the possible prizes for participating: 1st prize: from Out of This World in Mendocino, a pair of 8X30 Opticron Savanna Binoculars; 2nd prize: from Paul Fitzgerald at Larrupin Café, a $50 gift certificate; 3rd prize: from Gary Friedrichsen, a Custom Pelagic Trip out of Eureka. These are among the great reasons to go birding and at the same time help RRAS and NEC raise funds. Good Luck!

RRAS CONTINUES TO SUPPORT GODWIT DAYS

The 20th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival will be held April 17-19 at the Arcata Community Center. During the festival, RRAS will be operating the Godwit Café (open Saturday and Sunday from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.) and selling RRAS merchandise. For the 12th year, RRAS is cosponsoring a Student Bird Art Contest. Last year a record 765 entries were received from K-12 students and posted in the Community Center lobby.

Godwit Days offers 85 field trips, workshops, lectures, and bait excursions. Free community events include an art show, vendor booths, opening reception and lectures, live raptors on display, several field trips and workshops, and family nature activities. For easy online registration and a complete list of events, visit www.godwitdays.org or call 707-826-7050.

Conservation Notes: Probability and Consequence

Probability is the likelihood that an event will occur over a given span of time, and consequence is the likely effect of the event. These factors are combined to come up with risk. When we deal with nature, probability and consequence have broad and often difficult-to-calculate values. Although imperfect, science is the best way we have to evaluate probability and consequence. Law is what we use to apply scientific findings, and education is used to inform the public, including elected representatives, of this thing we call risk.

The conservation committee strives to evaluate ways to minimize the probability and consequences of adverse effects and maximize potential positive effects. This is the case when considering a proposed project of any kind. While we have always used science in our decision making, we tend to emphasize the biological and earth-based sciences over sociology, economics, and political science. We also recognize that factors involving the social sciences must be considered in our positions on projects. As our interdisciplinary group discusses the often messy but interesting complexities of an array of projects and proposals, we learn more about our community and environment. We invite all who care about our environment and want to participate in our brain-stretching sessions to participate. You need not be a biologist to contribute.

Projects currently being considered are the expansion of mariculture in Humboldt (Arcata) Bay, rerouting of Hwy 101 around Last Chance Grade, and a nesting-bird protection program. These items were discussed at our March 11 meeting and will likely continue, along with new topics, at our April and May Meetings. Our goal is to provide the RRAS board recommendations for positions on the committee-evaluated projects. Our most recent position was on correction of environmental damage of marijuana-growing operations if marijuana becomes regulated by the state for recreational use. We are also working closely with Audubon California on Coast Oyster Company’s and the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District’s proposals to expand mariculture in Humboldt Bay.

The RRAS Conservation Committee meets every second Wednesday at noon at the Golden Harvest Restaurant in Arcata.

Volunteering at Godwit Days

Godwit Café Fundraiser: Get to hear about Godwit Days participants’ adventures while serving them drinks, breakfast snacks, and lunch. Shifts are at least 1 hour between 6 a.m. and 4 p.m. April 18-19 at the Arcata Community Center. Contact volunteer coordinator Susan Penn at susanpenn60@gmail.com or 707-443-9660.
Iʼm proud to announce this yearʼs Birdathon to benefit the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) and RRAS. For those of you who did not have the opportunity to know, or commune, court, or play poker with Tim McKay, a short introduction is in order. Susie Van Kirk, who was one of Timʼs many cohorts, put together an outstanding biography that is worth looking up and reading in its entirety. For now I quote the beginning of her essay:

A life-long Californian, Tim McKay—naturalist, writer, scholar, historian, environmental advocate—was executive director of the [NEC] in Arcata, California, from 1976 until his death in 2006. Under his leadership, the NEC became an influential organization in regional campaigns for Wilderness, ancient forests, and salmon, and locally as the umbrella for every grassroots, “friends of” group that took up the gauntlet as advocates for their home watersheds. He was a man of persistence and unswerving dedication to the ecological complexities and beauties of the natural world. McKay was gifted and had an insatiable drive for knowledge and a mind to match, allowing him to absorb, retain, and use information to successfully advocate for wild places, functioning ecosystems, and their associated fauna and flora. His ability with words, his scholarship, his passion, and an uncanny political savvy transformed a fledgling group of the early environmental movement into a force to be reckoned with, and one that has left its mark across the regional landscape. Often under personal attack, including threatening phone calls, McKay responded as a man confident in his position on the issues, always following his favorite rule-to-live-by: “Endless pressure, endlessly applied.”

Born in 1947, Tim gravitated to Humboldt State College and became deeply aware and heavily involved with the growing campaign to save the earth from overdevelopment and overexploitation of its resources. Joining the fledgling NEC was the springboard for his talents to manifest themselves.

Being a birder, Tim knew of Point Reyes Bird Observatory and was impressed by their Birdathon in 1977. He was taken with the idea of helping not only the NEC but also the local Audubon chapter raise much-needed and hard-to-find funding. To that end, he began organizing our first Birdathon in 1980, which was held in May 1981.

The term “Birdathon” was first used in 1976 by Bird Studies Canada to describe a fundraising event in which participants solicit pledges from individuals, families, and businesses for the bird species seen during a prescribed time period and in a predetermined area. An example solicitation might be “Hey Bob! Iʼm going birding with some friends this next Saturday, and Iʼm trying to raise money for my favorite nonprofit. Can I count on you to support me for, say, 30 cents a bird? We plan on staying in Humboldt County, and we can only tick off species in one 24-hour period. We might see about 125 species, so you would be donating about $37.50? What do you say?”

I had the good fortune to bird with Tim on at least 2 of these fundraising events during the 1980s. With 1 or 2 other birders, we would head up into the high country to camp the night before and maybe get in some owling during the evening. When the daylight and dawn chorus woke us up, we would be listening and looking to tally every new species we encountered. Then we would head down to the valley below, working feeding flocks as we encountered them. Eventually it was back to the coast and a decision as to go north or south first. We would select a direction depending on the tides. We would hit Trinidad for rocky shore and seabirds, then College Cove for more riparian viewing. At some point, we would get to Humboldt Bay for shorebirds, a kingfisher hanging from a power line, and maybe catch sight of an early Osprey hovering before the dive. Then on to King Salmon to get sea ducks, loons we might have missed earlier and other divers. No matter what route you take or how many birds you see, a Birdathon should be fun. Itʼs a great opportunity to spend an entire day with nature and in the process collect donations for a worthy cause.

It does not require a team as described above or even that much travel. One Birdathon participant used a bicycle and stayed right around the bay to do his count. If memory serves, he tallied about 100 species was able to donate around $300 for his efforts. You could also find a shady spot in your garden and dedicate an hour or 2 ticking off birds at your feeder. Itʼs mainly to get your family, friends, or local businesses to donate, have fun throughout the process, and appreciate the work that is being done for the community by these 2 outstanding organizations.

The following quote by fellow birder Rose Ann Rowlett captures a sentiment Tim embraced his whole life: “Only with love do folks in the human realm care deeply enough to act to protect the natural world. And love develops through increased awareness and education—one bird, one plant, one salamander, one worm, one behavioral ‘gee whiz’ at a time.”

Please go to http://your nec.org/events/birdathon for sign-up sheets and a list of prizes for the 3 individuals or teams that raise the most funds this coming May. Good birding to all!

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A Glut of Northern Cardinals; A Dearth of Neotrops

Enough is enough. Recently I sent the following letter.

April 1, 2015

Honorable Terry McAuliffe
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol, 3rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Sir,

I recently came across a collection of 20-cent stamps (circa 1982) that depict the state flower and bird for all 50 states. An avid birder, I was immediately struck by the popularity of the Northern Cardinal. Seven states (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia) have selected the cardinal as their state bird. I like cardinals as well as the next person. However, I do not make the following request lightly, and I hope that you will give it some serious consideration.

I might suggest that your great state change its state bird to Ruby-throated Hummingbird? I believe the following points can be made in its behalf:

- Although the selection of the Northern Cardinal might be attributed to the birdʼs popularity, others might well characterize its selection by 7 states in your region as a “creative black hole.” Regardless, I fail to see how your current selection enables citizens to appreciate the uniqueness of your great state.
- Only 5 states have selected migrant birds that exhibit a classic north-south annual migration to be their state bird. Currently, only 2 states—Oklahoma (Scissor-tailed Flycatcher) and Maryland (Baltimore Oriole)—have designated neotropical migrant birds as their state bird. Selecting the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is bound to encourage a host of insightful questions from curious schoolchildren. Namely, “Why donʼt we see the Ruby-throated in the winter? Where does it go?”
- The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the tragedy of 9/11 have shown us that we need to pay more attention to global events. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird winters from Mexico south to Panama. President Eisenhower started the “People to People (Sister City) Program” in 1956. Once the residents of your state better appreciate that they “share” the Ruby-throated with a number of other countries, it will result in a splendid opportunity for Virginiaʼs K-12 students—and other citizens—to engage in dialogue with the residents from, say, the Costa Rican city of San Jose.
- City and rural dweller alike can undertake hummingbird watching. More than a few cities host birding festivals that focus on “Neotrops.”
- Finally, hummingbird aficionados make a significant financial contribution to your stateʼs economy through their purchase of nectar, feeders, and landscape plants preferred by hummingbirds.

I can understand your position if, after having given the above matter due consideration, you elect to stay the course. If so, I wonder if you could use your considerable influence to discuss this matter with the governor of South Dakota? Although I personally would never sink so low, the “Mount Rushmore” state is sometimes the butt of jokes, poking fun at its (supposedly) monotonous landscapes. Given South Dakotaʼs diverse avifauna, I know its residents can do better than to designate the Ring-necked Pheasant—a Chinese import, a mere carpetbagger—as their winged totem.

Sincerely,

Tom Leskiw
Eureka, CA

Happy April Foolʼs Day!
Summary of Northwestern California Bird Reports

January 1 to February 28, 2015

Field Notes is a compilation of bird-sighting reports for Del Norte, Humboldt, and Trinity counties. Sources include the RRAS Bird Box (707-822-LOON), the online northwestern California birding and information exchange (nwcalbird@yahooogroups.com), eBird (http://ebird.org/content/klamathskisky), 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.

HO = Hold Over from previous period; MOB = many observers; NC = Not Confirmed by previous party/not photographed; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; Wildlife Area

Cattle Egret: 2, Alexandre Dairy, HO-14 Jan (AB, JD, EH); 1, Dyerville Loop Rd, 6-26 Jan (FG); 2-3, Bear River Ridge, 14-15 Jan (EF, AL); 1, Arcata Bottoms, 17 Jan (DM, ST); 1, McKinleyville, 8 Feb (ML); 1, Mad River Rd, 24 Feb (RF, RH); 1, Lapland Longspur: 1, Bear River Ridge, 14 Feb (JH); 2, Ferndale Bottoms-Goble Lane, 28 Feb (AL, MOB); 1, Chestnut-collared Longspur: 5-6, Bear River Ridge, 31 Jan-24 Feb (JH, BH, RH, MOB); 1, Northern Waterthrush: 1, Arcata Marsh, HO-18 Feb (MOB); 1, Black-and-white Warbler: 1, Crab Park, 4 Jan (DF, JP); 1, Humboldt Bay NWR-Salmon Creek Unit, 18 Jan (GCo); 1, Palm Warbler: many reports of 1-3, Arcata Marsh, Arcata Bottoms, Ferndale Bottoms, Humboldt Bay NWR, Eureka, McKinleyville, 1 Jan-28 Feb (MOB); 1, Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1 adult male, Smith River-Rimur Creek, 10 Jan-15 Feb (TA, AB, MOB); 1, Wilson's Warbler: 1, Salt River/Williams Creek, 4 Jan (GL); 1, Ferndale Bottoms-Salt River, 4 Jan (OH); 1, Arcata Marsh, 21 Feb (CO); 1, Clay-colored Sparrow: 2, Jolly Giant Creek, 9 Feb (RF); 1, Humboldt Marsh, HO-17 Feb (MOB); 1-2, Humboldt Bay NWR, HO-19 Feb (MOB); 1, Harris's Sparrow: 1, Willow Creek-Veterans Park, 8-9 Jan (KO); 1, Arcata-Zehnder Ave, 9 Jan-14 Feb (GB, MOB); 1, Orchard Oriole: 1-3, Smith River, HO-4 Feb (RF, CD, AB, MP, DC, MOB); 1, Tricolored Blackbird: 1-4, Arcata Bottoms, HO-25 Feb (DC, ToK, KB, MOB); 1, (Eastern) Purple Finch: 1, Arcata Marsh, HO-28 Feb (AL, MOB); 1, Brambling: 1, Sunny Brae, HO-19 Jan (GJ, MOB).

Harlequin Duck: 1, Humboldt Bay-King Salmon/Fld's Landing, 1 Jan-14 Feb (SM, CO, ML, EF, MOB); 3-12, Point St. George, 20 Jan-8 Feb (CD, DC, MOB); 1, North Jetty, 13-18 Jan (JD, DT, MOB); 1, Patrick’s Point, 15 Feb (BE); 1, Long-tailed Duck: 1, Humboldt Bay-King Salmon/Fld’s Landing, HO-10 Feb (BE, CO, EF, GC, RF, MOB); 1, Common Scoter! 1, mega! 1st N. American record outside of Greenland, Crescent City Harbor, 25 Jan-13 Feb (BB, MOB); 1, Black-vented Shearwater: 1, Table Bluff, 4 Jan (JS); 1, South Jetty, 4 Jan (RF); 3, North Jetty, 8 Jan (JB); 1, Klamath River Mouth, 10 Jan (LB); 1, Point St George, 14 Jan (AB); 1, Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel: 1 (NC), North Jetty, 27 Feb (CD); 1, American White-pelican: 1, Crab Park/Ocean Ranch/Humboldt Bay NWR, HO-16 Feb (AL, KS, RF, GC, OH, MOB); 1, Cattle Egret: 2, Alexandre Dairy, HO-14 Jan-23 (AB, JD, EH); 1, Ferndale Bottoms-Grizzly Bluff Rd, 18 Feb (EF); 1, Green Heron: 1, Mad River Fish Hatchery, 8 Jan-25 Feb (RB, EF, MOB); 1, Golden Eagle: 1, Alexandre Dairy, HO-14 Jan (AB, JD, EH); 1, Dyerville Loop Rd, 6-26 Jan (FG); 2-3, Bear River Ridge, 14-15 Jan (EF, AL); 1, Arcata Bottoms, 17 Jan (DM, ST); 1, Humboldt Bay NWR-Hookton Slough Unit, 16 Feb (CW, TW); 1, Kneeland Airport, 21 Feb (AD); 1, Ferruginous Hawk: many reports of 1-2, Arcata Bottoms, Bear River Ridge, Ferndale Bottoms, Bald Hills Rd (MOB); 1, Rough-legged Hawk: many reports of 1-2, Arcata Bottoms, Bear River Ridge, Ferndale Bottoms, Bald Hills Rd (MOB).