



# The Sandpiper

March 2021



Redwood Region Audubon Society

[www.rras.org](http://www.rras.org)

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## In the Eye of the Beholder

By Pia Gabriel

A flash of white and blue acuity tears a small maelstrom into the perfect golden sheet that the early morning haze conjures on the water's surface. At a distance, my senses catch the light dancing off the water drops, the strong, glistening beak, the rippling silver of a small fish speared at the end of it, and the edges of quivering primaries as they reach up like blue bejeweled fingers to gain back the sky. A successful morning hunt for this kingfisher.

I need to sneak much closer to find out whether this success belongs to a female or a male bird – the rust-colored pigment adorning the female chest does not catch the angled light the same way that the intricate geometry inside the white and blue feathers does, playing with the rays and throwing them back at my appreciating senses from across the water.



The energetic cost of strutting such a costume may serve as an honest signal to both competitors and potential mates of the individual's ability to invest in luxury, and thus, presumably, in its mate and offspring.

But look again – it turns out that we need to gaze through the kingfisher's eyes to realize who is dazzling whom, after all. Birds live in an entire dimension of vision that our human eyes are blind to: they see ultraviolet light. The two-tone male kingfisher is not dull at all in the bird's eye view – its chest brighter and its blue feathers "UV-bluer" than the female's. Similarly, the male Steller's Jay, told apart from the female only by birders practiced in their unique vocalizations, is much brighter and more UV-blue to his conspecific observers than his mate. We humans call these sex-specific coloration traits "cryptic dimorphisms," but they are not cryptic to the avian beholders at all. It's intriguing, and humbling, and a trip of discovery for both imagination and science when we manage, just for a short while, to shift our perspectives into those of the non-human creatures that live all around us but in different worlds nonetheless. Above and left photos: Female belted Kingfishers in Southern Humboldt by Ann Constantino.

That geometry is nature's way of creating structural color – in layers of brilliance and iridescent intricacy that outshine purely pigment-based plumage colors.

As she enjoys her breakfast high above me in a dew-bespangled alder, I finally catch a glimpse of this female kingfisher. Now clearly visible to me in her full glory – the fullness of glory my eyes can appreciate, that is: her rust-colored belt making her more boisterously colorful to me than her mate would be. Many theories have been advanced as to why the belted kingfisher bucks the rule that seems so familiar to us human observers: the female, instead of the male, appears to be investing in more elaborate plumage.

**RRAS FIELD TRIPS RESTART THIS MONTH!** See p. 3 for details.

## RRAS Virtual Program Presentation

Please join us on Friday, March 12th at 7 pm for "How to ID Those Raptorial Masters of the Sky – Eagles, Hawks and Falcons in Flight"

With practice, and experience, one can quickly separate different groups of raptors based on flight style, gestalt and plumage characteristics. Tune in to this Zoom presentation to learn some tips and tricks about raptor identification on the wing, raptors at a distance and some local raptor viewing spots to practice your skills.

Russ Namitz was born and raised in Lincoln City, Oregon. At age 9, he was captivated by the furtive Pacific Northwest denizen of dank woods, the Varied Thrush. With a few stepping stones along the way, Russ really began actively birding the summer after graduating from Pacific University in Forest Grove, OR. His first, of many seasonal biology field jobs to follow, was searching for nesting Northern Goshawks in the Okanogan National Forest in Washington. In 2002, Russ finally took an ornithology class, coincidentally from Humboldt State University. He enjoyed a year of birding in the area, meeting local celebrities, and rubbing elbows with the talented birders and other great people in the area. Russ is a pelagic bird guide for Oregon Pelagic Tours and currently holds the Oregon Big Year record of 381 species.



Above: Russ Namitz with a White-tailed Kite on the V Street Loop, Arcata, CA, by Chris Niemela.

**Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge** invites you to get up early and view the wetland habitats and wildlife of southern Humboldt Bay at sunrise. Watch hundreds of Aleutian Cackling Geese lift off their nighttime roosts! Every Saturday and Sunday in the month of March, the entrance gate will open ½ hour before sunrise at the Salmon Creek Unit: Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters and Visitor Center, 1020 Ranch Road in Loleta. For more information or special accommodation please call (707) 733-5406. Or visit: [fws.gov/refuge/humboldt\\_bay/](http://fws.gov/refuge/humboldt_bay/).

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## 18th Student Bird Art Contest Goes Digital

Due to the pandemic, there will be no in-person Godwit Days festival in 2021. However, the festival Board asked contest cosponsors RRAS and Friends of the Arcata Marsh to continue this important environmental education event. The two groups will fund up to \$550 in prizes. However, entries must be submitted digitally, rather than as hard copies. There will be no display of all entries at the Arcata Community Center, nor an awards ceremony. Winning artwork may be shown at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, depending on its reopening date.

## Audubon Nature Writing Contest

Redwood Region Audubon Society is sponsoring its 16th annual student nature writing contest. Up to six cash prizes will be awarded for the best essay(s) or poem(s) on “What Nature Means to Me” by Humboldt or Del Norte County students in grades 4 through 12.

First-place winners will be published in our newsletter, *The Sandpiper*. All winners will be published in a booklet posted on the RRAS website, [www.ras.org](http://www.ras.org), by mid-May. Because the Godwit Days Spring Migration Birding Festival will be virtual this year, there will be no in-person awards ceremony in mid-April.

*Please refer to the flyer with complete submission instructions that is posted at [www.ras.org](http://www.ras.org) and has also been e-mailed to schools.*

**Deadline for both contests must be received by Friday, March 26, 2021.**



## President's Column

By Gail Kenny

It was early morning and getting light outside when I heard the hard thump on the window. I hurried outside to see if the bird was able to fly away on its own. Twice in the last year the sparrows died. A third bird survived and flew off after I put it in a box for 30 minutes. Unfortunately, I learned later that I should have taken the bird to the Humboldt Wildlife Care Center ([www.birdallyx.net](http://www.birdallyx.net)), as birds who can't fly immediately after hitting a window are more likely to have injuries that can kill them later without proper care. See: [www.naturesvein.com/news/window-strikes/](http://www.naturesvein.com/news/window-strikes/)

In my experience, bird window strikes seem to happen more often on fall and winter mornings when the sun is low in the sky. Birds perceive reflections in windows as real and try to fly through them. Collision with building glass is a top reason for human-caused bird deaths, second to being killed by domestic cats. For many years I have had those ultraviolet stickers on both of my large living room windows. They cost \$24 for a package of 4, so I had only 4, four-inch stickers on each window. I didn't know I would need many more of these stickers spaced four inches apart to prevent bird strikes.

## The Aphrodisiac of Avocets

By Mark A Colwell, Wildlife Department,  
Humboldt State University

The American Avocet may be one of my favorite shorebirds. In part, this stems from my introduction to their breeding behavior amidst the prairie wetlands of Saskatchewan. I'd prepared to study them by reading papers, including a detailed ethogram (inventory). As I read the account of the stereotyped courtship, I must have looked an odd sight with my mouth agape. In shallow water, the female initiates courtship in a stationary, forward-leaning posture with body, head and bill held parallel to the water's surface. The male approaches and begins preening his breast feathers, often splashing water as the display becomes exaggerated. Eventually, he bends his legs to enable his tail to wrap around hers and juxtaposes their cloacae for sperm transfer. If you blink, you likely will miss the “cloacal kiss” that ensues. Almost instantly, he dismounts, they cross bills, he throws an embracing nearside wing over her, and they run a short distance through the water before parting ways. The description does not do justice to the beauty, elegance and grace of the display! Sometimes lucky observers report seeing these behaviors during spring, when avocets in breeding plumage near departure for Great Basin breeding locales.

Elaborate and stereotyped behaviors suggest a mechanism that precludes avocets from courting, and hybridizing with other species, notably their close relative, Black-necked Stilt. However, over the years, photos and scientific papers of hybrids (known as “avostilt” or “stavocet”) have been reported. Interestingly, the stilt courtship is remarkably similar to that of the avocet, which may account for these “mistakes.”

Avocet population size is ~450,000, patchily distributed at estuaries (e.g., San Francisco Bay), hypersaline lakes of the Great Basin (e.g., Great Salt Lake), and ephemeral interior wetlands. Avocets winter mostly along coasts. Humboldt Bay is the most northern estuary with a large wintering population. Why don't avocets occur north of our region? One guess relates to the specialized feeding behavior of avocets; scything the bill through fine sediments, which characterizes much of the bay's intertidal reaches. Not many estuaries north of us that have these habitats.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the National Audubon Society, its state programs, or its local chapters. As Editor, my goal is to print a variety of viewpoints, explore new avenues, and initiate healthy discussion.

Determined to do something that really worked, I found the easiest and cheapest solution was to make “Acopian Bird Savers” out of paracord I could get at the local hardware store for about \$15 per window. I cut a length of paracord a bit more than the width of my window, then tied paracords the length of my window four inches apart and hung it outside my window. If you have a lot of hummingbirds around it's recommended that the cords be two inches apart. It only took a little bit of time to get used to seeing the vertical lines when I look out my windows, and it's worth it to save the birds. The American Bird Conservancy has more resources for making glass safer for birds: [www.abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/stop-birds-hitting-windows/](http://www.abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/stop-birds-hitting-windows/).



Above: Window Bird-savers, by Gail Kenny.

Over the years, local avocet abundance has varied greatly. In 2001, I co-authored a paper with Tamar Danufsky (HSU Wildlife Museum), Ryan Mathis (former grad student; CDFW in Sacramento), and Dr. Stanley “Doc” Harris, which summarized the history of the bay's avocets. Field notes and HSU museum data indicated first records in the 1930s. When Stan arrived in 1959, small numbers (tens not hundreds) occurred in NE Arcata Bay. Numbers increased over the decades, especially after the City of Arcata developed oxidation ponds to treat sewage. Stan thought that this “freshwater” source may have encouraged the increase. By the early 1990s, bay-wide surveys indicated ~1,000 avocets. More recently, numbers have declined by ~50%. What accounts for this variation over the years? We don't know exactly. However, it is difficult to conclude with certainty the causes of population change without knowledge of the breeding success of “our” avocets elsewhere. Specifically, while the increases may arise from improved habitat associated with NE Arcata Bay (i.e., oxidation ponds), we cannot rule out the contributions of drought to subsequent reduction in local avocet numbers. •

Above photo: American Avocets mating, by Leslie Scopes Anderson.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to thank the many RRAS volunteers who over the years have made Humboldt County conservation so vital. Also, I would like to comment on two articles in the last “Sandpiper”:

Regarding cleaning bird feeders in Gail Kenny's President's Column: While the cleaning regimen that Ms. Kenny promotes is a great sentiment (idea), does RRAS really believe that most people will follow it? And even if a feeder is as clean as it should be, birds feeding at long plastic tubes on the feeder jostle for position on the feeder, allowing sick birds to share their diseases and parasites. The birds at the top of a feeder can defecate on the ones below them and on their feed.

Regarding Ms. Hobart's “Irruption” article: Again, her sentiments for caring for the pine siskins are appreciated, but her methods are questionable. To me the classic picture of pine siskins in the Arcata Bottoms is one of flocks feeding on mature seed heads of bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), in the late fall. We do not have bird feeders at our house, yet we get small to large flocks of both goldfinches and pine siskins during the winter. They usually land in unmowed, grassy areas around our house and in the fencerows where the seed heads of various plants are still standing. These flocks are relatively spread out as each individual seeks out seeds, and possible insects, from the stalks, so there is less close contact between individuals, and thereby less chance of spreading disease and parasites and also of being more exposed to predation.

Thanks for your time and thoughts.

– Pete Haggard



## Redwood Region Audubon Society Is Restarting Its Field Trips, And Volunteer Workday, This Month!

**Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary:**  
8:30-11 am (Info: Ken (707) 499-1146.)

Saturday, March 6 with leader:

Janelle Chojnacki.

Saturday, March 27 with leader:

Gary Friedrichsen.

Bring your binoculars!

**Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge (HBNWR) Field Trip:**

Sunday, March 14, at 9 am with  
Ralph Bucher. (Info: Ralph (707) 499-1247.)

HBNWR is a wonderful, 2-3 hour trip for people wanting to learn the birds of the Humboldt Bay area. It takes a leisurely pace with an emphasis on enjoying the scenery and the birds.

**Eureka Waterfront Field Trip:**

Sunday, March 21, at 9 am with leader:  
Ralph Bucher. (Info: Ralph (707) 499-1247.)  
Scope for birds at the fishing pier, then continue along the Waterfront Trail towards Elk River.

**Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday, in Eureka:**

Saturday, March 27, 9-11 am

Help create bird-friendly native habitat and restore a section of the bay trail. Tasks range from muscling large plants out of the ground to cutting flowers off of blooming invasives. There is plenty to do! We will provide hand sanitizer, wipes, and packaged snacks. Please bring your own water, gloves, and face mask.

Reservations are required for all events and space is limited due to Covid. COVID-19 protocol will be followed on all trips. Trips are rain or shine!

For more details, and to register, please go to our website at: [rras.org/home.aspx](http://rras.org/home.aspx).



## Treatment, Banding, and Consent – A Wildlife Rehabilitator’s Perspective

By Monte Merrick, Co-Director,

Humboldt Wildlife Care Center (HWCC)

When we treat injured wildlife, it’s only natural to want to know what happens to our patients after they are released. In many ways we can’t know how effectively we are doing our work without knowing how well our patients do, post-treatment. When your patient is wild, you can’t release them until you’re reasonably sure of their survival. And we can’t schedule check-ups.

As wildlife rehabilitators, obviously our most pressing allegiance is to each patient. Our right to hold them captive – if we have it at all – is built on our promise of relief from suffering, either through recovery or mercy. What drives our allegiance of course is a greater allegiance still, and that is to the rights of Mother Earth. In this work, we do not try to re-write the laws of nature to suit our passing views on how the world ought to be. We side with the wild. We see to their needs. No matter what our creed might be, in the end, as caregivers, we cannot take a religious view that humanity is at the top of creation, the science is clear: we are beings among beings in a world no beings made, and over which none can truly claim title or crown.

So, we proceed, but cautiously and always aware that at no point in the act of tending to an injured or orphaned wild animal have they given their consent. Under this condition everything we do with each orphaned robin or beached petrel has to be in each one’s best interest, or else our possession of them loses legitimacy. Laboratories, academies, and other institutions with animals held for education or research purposes routinely establish a review of their practices through what is known as an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). These committees are intended to ensure that animal welfare concerns are being met. But is such a committee for their work, and ours as care providers to wild patients, sufficient? With the absence of consent, our patients have rights more akin to a hospital patient as any of us would understand and which are available with a quick Google search under a patient’s bill of rights.

I say all of this as background to why we proceed very slowly on post-release study of our patients. At HWCC, and in our work at the Lower Klamath Refuge botulism response, our patients are often given a federal band (see [www.usgs.gov/](http://www.usgs.gov/)). Under various permits held by others, I’ve personally put hundreds, if not thousands, of bands on birds over the last 19 years, after I got my first job at International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBR) in Los Angeles. Previously I’d only worked at the Progressive Animal Welfare Society in Seattle, Washington which aligns its policies to err on the side of patient autonomy and nothing but the care that will lead to freedom is imposed on the patient – which would preclude a federal band.

Going from that environment and world view to putting bands on birds wasn’t the easiest transition, but I made it, and largely because I couldn’t stop the practice from happening. There exists a [Bander’s Code of Ethics](#), and I decided to always be certain that nothing go wrong during

the banding process, that band or ring fit well and nothing sharp or uncomfortable was left behind. During that time when I mentioned something about the invasiveness of the permanent band, I’d commonly hear horror stories about various post-release studies gone awry. One such story was about Brown Pelicans from the Huntingdon Beach oil spill in 1990, where backpacks of radio telemetry gear, strapped to the wings of the Brown Pelicans become tangled, and ended up killing those pelicans who’d been rehabilitated. Those Pelicans lost their freedom the moment they hit that oil, and the ones who got those backpacks and died from them never regained it. No suffering was eased. So, it was a rehabilitation failure. Failures happen, we make mistakes and hopefully we learn from our mistakes.



Above: Banded Snowy Plover courtesy of Audubon.

I continued to band birds, in oil spills and in day-to-day aquatic bird rehabilitation as long as I worked for IBR and even here in Humboldt, when for example, releasing the Brown Pelicans caught in fish waste up and down the coast. While working in the Bay Area though, I was on the response team for the oil spill in San Francisco Bay when the Cosco Busan hit the Bay Bridge in heavy fog, in November 2007. Nearly 1500 living victims of the oil were brought into care; Surf Scoters, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Western Grebes, American Coots, Common Loons, Bufflehead, Hooded Mergansers, and Common Goldeneye. With an incredible team of volunteers, we washed 800 birds in eleven days. In caring for large numbers of these birds, the field of aquatic bird rehabilitation has gained most of its body of knowledge.

As the Cosco Busan spill drew to a close, I was asked to stay and help provide husbandry care for a group of surf scoters who’d been chosen for a post-release study. As it turns out 20 scoters who’d been oiled in the spill were now going to have transmitters about the size of a matchbox, surgically implanted in their abdominal cavities, and antenna also would emerge through an incision in their back. Moreover, another 20 scoters in the wild would be captured and brought to the facility and treated as if they had been oil spill victims, also receiving a radio in the gut. Yet another group of 20, the control group, would be captured, have the telemetry device surgery, held a couple of hours, and then returned to the bay.

Out of the 40 non-injured birds in the study, about 13 died before the study was over. Would they have died

anyway? It’s hard to say. The Winter after the spill had been tough on aquatic birds in San Francisco Bay. The worst of it is that we had intentionally injured the oiled birds while they were in our care. Mortality in the 20 oiled birds post-release was higher than the other two groups – 15 of the 20 made it to release post-radio implant surgery, but of those only five survived until the waning days of survey-flights in early spring. But the numbers don’t matter. The lessons learned from the study are nearly insignificant, due to many variables that are difficult to account for. Even if they weren’t, the numbers are still obtained through means that can’t be justified as a care-giver.

Those oiled scoters had already survived being caught in an oil spill – the fact that they were among the last patients in care shows that they had been most impacted; not released until over a month after the spill. Who knows how they would have fared post-release had they not been subjected to two intense injuries, oiling and surgery? When we put those birds into surgery instead of releasing them, we ceased to be care providers and we broke the contract, shabby though it may be, that allowed us to hold them against their will in the first place.

About 12 years ago, soon after Cosco, I heard an anecdote from a local biologist about Snowy Plovers who’d been losing legs to band injuries in a study on the West Coast. The plovers had been banded with a federal band as well as multiple color-coded plastic leg bands so that individuals could be identified in the field. It turned out that sand could be impacted under the band against the plover’s leg, shutting off blood flow to their feet. It didn’t take long for the foot to die, and then of course, the bird. As a wildlife rehabilitator, what that story means to me is that banding has its limits. We have, and we will again, partner with agencies to rescue and release birds, and that will include federally banding them. Personally, I am ambivalent about the practice, because of the potential harm it can do. I’d be lying if I didn’t say that due to banding, it’s gratifying to discover a young duck really did get a second chance. However, it’s also painful to learn that the bird you raised as an orphan in Los Angeles survived only to be hunted and killed in the wilds of Alberta.



In a California and Nevada US Geological Survey, Sage Grouse outfitted with GPS tracking units had about a 40% reduction in survival compared to those wearing VHF tags. Though the GPS units are more precise, researchers are now looking at their potentially negative effects on birds. *Courtesy of Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and High Country News: [www.hcn.org/issues/51.17/birds-for-sage-grouse-science-can-be-fatal](http://www.hcn.org/issues/51.17/birds-for-sage-grouse-science-can-be-fatal).*

## A Pocket Full of Wild

By Jessie Bunkley, Seawood Cape Preserve Steward

The land forms a checkered pattern from above. Abstract ideas and boundaries turned real by the presence or absence of trees, snaking strips of asphalt-coated roads, and the footprints of houses. Stark visual signs of the human species' alteration of a landscape. For those flying at night, these signs are written in artificial illumination, at times creating confusion for those of us who navigate using celestial markers. If you are an Aleutian Cackling Goose or Ruddy Turnstone, Pine Siskin or Purple Finch, you might be beckoned by a pocket full of wild mixed into this patchwork. Tucked next to the rugged joining of land and sea is a strip of land, bisected and bordered by roads; *Seawood Cape Preserve*.

Although altered by human activity, this place still offers refuge.

The tall, regal forms of trees, known by humans as tewolew nee tepoo (**Yurok**), abeto de Sitka (**Spanish**), Sitka spruce (**English**), *Picea sitchensis* (**Latin**); plus keehl (**Yurok**), secoya

de la costa (**Spanish**), Coast Redwood (**English**), *Sequoia sempervirens* (**Latin**); and terperner' (**Yurok**), abeto de Douglas (**Spanish**), Douglas-fir (**English**), *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (**Latin**); reach tall into the sky with open arms. Their seed-laden cones and petticoats full of huckleberry and twinberry greet you. Green stands of 'wer'errgerch (**Yurok**), aliso rojo (**Spanish**), Red Alder (**English**), *Alnus rubra* (**Latin**); offer a feast for the travel weary. A quilt of mushrooms blankets the forest floor, giving life to slugs, flying squirrels, and mice, which themselves provide sustenance to those of us with feathers or fur.

If the sea is your home, you might be drawn to the mounts resting gracefully offshore or the boulders that irrupt through the ever-battering waves. At this place of persistent friction and tremendous energy, there is a flourishing of life – a banquet. Rainbows of algae bob and sway, supple enough to conform to the ceaseless change in direction with strength enough to hold fast in a continually moving world. They are good teachers, if we can listen. Worms, chitons, snails, nudibranchs, crabs, sea anemones, urchins, octopus, sculpin, all find their niches and assume their roles. The ancient interplay of predator and prey, chemical conversion of sun energy to sugars, decomposition of the dead – grazing, grinding, boring, diving – nutrients are constantly swirled, transformed, exchanged, stolen, shared, and assembled.

If you are a cormorant, oystercatcher, or pelican, this ecological pulse already lives in your heartbeat and, from your aerial view, the theme of the story unfolding below is clear, as is your role in it. For those of us restricted to terrestrial motion and a mammalian brain, this world is initially as foreign and intriguing as the most enthralling dramas of an alien civilization. How does one think like a chiton?

Although bruised by the assault of human noise, the roots and tendrils of invasive plants, and the relentless bombardment of trash, there is wildness left in this place. This pocket of residual wilderness, although rare, is not lonely. From your aerial view,

you can see other nearby strips of protected forest, rock, coast, and stream – Patrick's Point, Baker Beach, and Redwood National and State Parks, are some of the bastions of life that join *Seawood Cape Preserve*. These strongholds of intact and functioning ecosystems are islands in the surging sea of human development, beacons to those of us searching for a safe migratory stopover or a place to call home; where those complex relationships built over millennia can continue to thrive.

*Seawood Cape Preserve is a 128-acre parcel of land north of Seawood Drive in Trinidad, CA that is owned and managed by The Wildlands Conservancy. It is divided*

*by Patrick's Point Drive and bordered by Highway 101. To the west, the land is dominated by coyote brush and sweeps in a rugged arc to the sea, with Scotty Point jutting into the grip of the Pacific. To the east, the land slopes gently upward into forests of Sitka spruce, grand and Douglas-fir, and coast redwood. Currently, the western portion of the Preserve is open to the public for passive recreation. A trail meanders, at times precariously, to*



*an overlook near Scotty Point. It is narrow, slippery, and steep, requiring those who tread there to be gentle and cautious. Currently, the east side of the Preserve is not open to the public but will be made accessible through organized field trips and tours in collaboration with local organizations like the Redwood Region Audubon Society and Trinidad Coastal Land Trust.*

*The Wildlands Conservancy has established the largest non-profit nature preserve system in California. A diversity of habitats including desert, alpine, coastal, and riparian are represented across the state with 21 preserves protecting 156,000 acres. Through free access opportunities for passive recreation, free educational programming, and dedicated stewardship, we foster respect and wonder for life and land.*

*Tim Haywood and Jessie Bunkley are the stewards of Seawood Cape Preserve. Tim has been living on the Preserve for the last year and a half, helping with invasive species removal, illegal dumping cleanup, maintenance and security of the property. He has a great passion for environmental stewardship, hiking, photography, kayaking and standup paddleboarding. Jessie is a wildlife biologist with a deep respect for, and curiosity about the natural world. Originally from New Mexico, she is exploring this wet and green place with wide eyes and open ears. •*

**Above Photo: Scotty Point at Seawood Cape Preserve, by Tim Haywood.**

### In Memory of...

Submitted by Chet Ogan

Ruth Crane, of Ferndale, passed away Feb 3, 2021 in Portland, Oregon. She and her husband, Dr. Clarence Crane began the Centerville Christmas Bird Count many years ago. Ruth celebrated her 100th birthday last October. She met her husband in Boston, where CBCs were already being conducted as an alternative to people killing birds on Christmas day. She has asked, in lieu of flowers that donations be made to The Audubon Society or Nature Conservancy.



Left: Photo by Dan Barton of a rare Black Skimmer, spotted by Talitha Hodgson, at the foot of Depot Road, Fields Landing.



### The Wings & Wetlands Birding Festival is happening virtually, March 24-26

Explore birds, wetlands, and conservation messages through presentations by renowned experts, interactive socials, and on-demand web resources. Featuring several expert speakers including Kenn Kaufman, Sharon Stiteler (*The Bird Chick*) and several more well known birders, who will walk you through topics of bird watching, identification techniques, Kansas wetlands, and conservation. It cost \$20.00 to register at [www.wingsandwetlands.com/](http://www.wingsandwetlands.com/).