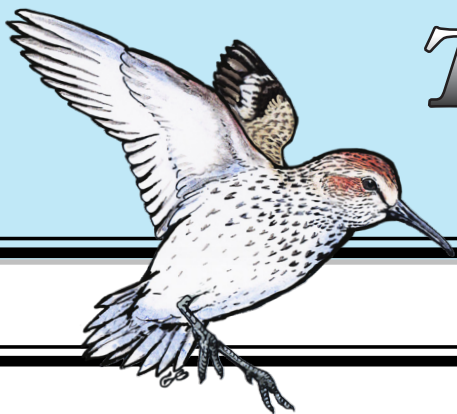




The Sandpiper

November 2025



Redwood Region Audubon Society

www.rras.org

River Health After Klamath Dam Removal: A Study of Downstream Salmonid Food Resources

Join us Thursday, November 20, at 7:00 p.m. for a presentation by **Cal Poly Professor Alison O'Dowd, Department of Environmental Science & Management**

The removal of four hydro-electric dams on the Klamath River—completed one year ago—was the largest dam removal in U.S. history. The result has been an improvement in water quality and salmonid access to habitat, but sediment fluxes associated with dam removal were predicted to have short-term negative impacts on habitat and water quality downstream of former dam sites. Dr. O'Dowd will explore food web responses to dam removal downstream of Iron Gate Dam during a critical period of juvenile salmonid growth and outmigration in the late spring. Results from this study are intended to inform future dam removals that may impact sensitive life stages of anadromous fish and their invertebrate prey.



Dr. O'Dowd's teaching and research interests include environmental science, ecological restoration, and aquatic ecology. Her research primarily involves the use of benthic macroinvertebrates and fish to explore topics related to stream and wetland restoration, invasive species, wildfire, dams, and step-pool sequences in steep, mountain streams. She has conducted research on California rivers for more than twenty years and has taught a two-week summer field course about Klamath Basin ecology, natural resource management, and restoration for the past four summers.

Programs are held on the third Thursday of the month, September through May, at Six Rivers Masonic Lodge, 251 Bayside Road, Arcata. Drinks and goodies are served at 7:00 p.m., the program begins at 7:30. You can also find it on Zoom—go to rras.org for the link.

“There’s fish jumping all over the place” After more than twenty years of Tribal-led advocacy with the support of a broad coalition of conservation and commercial fisheries organizations, four dams along the Klamath River have been removed, the largest river restoration and dam removal project in US history. Find out more here: <https://www.sustainablenorthwest.org/klamath-basin-dam-timeline>. Or just google Klamath Dam Removal.

RRAS FIELD TRIPS IN NOVEMBER

Every Saturday, 8:30-11am. Join RRAS at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary for a free guided field trip with an experienced birder. The meet-up spot is the parking area at the end of I St. (Klopp Lake). Bring binoculars and scopes if you have them. If not, come on out anyway!

Trip leaders for November: Nov 1, Jonny Sperling ~ Nov 8, Tylor Bell-Rogers ~ Nov 15, Dan Greaney ~ Nov 22, Ken Burton ~ Nov 29, Bill Rodstrom

Sunday, November 2, 8:30- 11:30am. Join trip leader Cedrik von Briel for some dynamic fall birding along Stone Lagoon. Standing along the spit where we can view the lagoon, the sand spit, and the ocean all at once will allow us to see a large variety of birds, from scoters to plovers. Meet at the Stone Lagoon Visitor’s Center on Highway 101. Dress in layers and be prepared for hiking on sand for 1-2 miles each way. Contact Cedrik at (650) 315-4968 or cedro.de.bryl@gmail.com.

Sunday, November 9, 9-11am. Join trip leader Ralph Bucher for a walk at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This easy two-mile walk is along a wide, flat, gravel-packed trail. Email Ralph to sign up at [thebook\[at\]reninet.com](mailto:thebook[at]reninet.com).

Sunday, November 9, 8-11 am. Cedrik von Briel will lead a trip along the North Jetty of Humboldt Bay, focusing on viewing birds in the entrance channel of the bay and open ocean. Aside from going out on a boat, this is perhaps the best local opportunity to view seabirds not generally visible from shore. Meet at the Cypress Patch at the end of New Navy Base Road. Bring binoculars and spotting scopes if you have them. Contact Cedrik at (650) 315-4968 or cedro.de.bryl@gmail.com.

Saturday, November 15, 7:30am-3pm. Meet at the Woodley Island marina for the **final offshore trip of the year**—a combined birding/crabbing trip in which participants will have the opportunity to take home a limit of Dungeness crab! To allow time to collect fresh crab, we will not go as far offshore as usual, but should get far enough out to observe shearwaters, albatross, jaegers, auklets, and more. Cost is only \$125 per person and limited to 12 spaces. *Note:* conditions could prevent the crabbing portion of this trip, but a standard pelagic birding trip will still take place. This unique trip, which is a real bargain, especially if you like to eat crab, will certainly fill up, so sign up soon! Call or text Sean McAllister at (707) 496-8790 for more information, or email whiteouters@gmail.com to register.

continued on back page

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SAVE THE DATE: The next Godwit Days Festival will take place April 16–19, 2026! As longtime partners, RRAS members will be actively involved—helping lead field trips and workshops, co-sponsoring the Student Bird Art Contest (with Friends of the Arcata Marsh), sponsoring the Student Nature Writing Contest, and hosting a vendor table during the festival.

We encourage all members to participate and experience this celebration of Humboldt's rich birdlife. To learn more or to sign up for their email announcements, visit godwitdays.org.

Note to North Coast Co-op members: RRAS is a candidate for the 2026 Seeds for Change, with voting taking place *only online*, Nov 3-16. Cast your vote for us at northcoast.coop/vote!

President's Column

By Kathryn Wendel

The beginning of the rainy season marks the beginning of Redwood Region Audubon's busy season. Besides our regularly occurring free guided bird walks and wetland restoration, we have the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) coming up next month as well as our Annual Banquet on February 21.

We will host a CBC Compilation Gathering again this year for volunteers who participate in the count. All are welcome to join; every birder counts whether you are a beginner doing a backyard bird count, or a seasoned birder who starts with predawn owls and goes all day. See the Christmas Bird Count article in this issue for more details about how to get involved.

Counting birds is crucial for conservation, and a new, exciting statewide project that plans to launch this month is the first-ever California Bird Atlas (CBA). This will be a five-year effort to survey the entire state to create a baseline map of breeding birds. Agencies and organizations joining in this effort include



California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cornell Lab eBird, Great Basin Bird Observatory, Klamath Bird Observatory, California Audubon, and Audubon chapters throughout the state. RRAS is considering joining the effort and possibly becoming a Founding Member, which means we will be fund-raising to help contribute to the project. The CBA will fill in many data gaps that eBird data is not able to cover, especially in remote, rural, and inland areas. In fact, eBird will create an entire web page dedicated to the atlas for data logging, tracking species, and mapping distribution. If you are inspired by this, please consider making a donation to help us support this crucial endeavor!

Thanks to everyone who contributed feedback on our September article detailing our long-term goals, especially about changing our name away from Audubon. Many people are in enthusiastic support of the change, but votes are mixed between Redwood Region Bird Alliance and Redwood Region Avian Society. If you are in favor of the change and have a suggestion for our name, we would love to hear from you! Email president@rras.org to give any feedback you have concerning your local chapter.

Birding on the Bay: A Beloved Humboldt Tradition

By Amy Fetz, *Godwit Days Coordinator*

This summer, the *Birding on the Madaket* boat tours returned with an expanded schedule, offering three sold-out trips on Humboldt Bay—July 20, August 24, and September 21—aboard California's oldest active passenger vessel.

Launched in 2010 and running annually (with a pause in 2020 and 2021), the tours resumed in 2022 and have remained a popular part of the summer birding calendar. Participants enjoy the opportunity to observe a diverse range of coastal bird species from the water, guided by local experts, while also supporting the annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Festival.

The July 20 tour, co-led by Rob Fowler and Kathryn Wendel, was greeted with calm conditions and golden evening light. In addition to peak fall migrants like Western and Least Sandpipers amongst other shorebirds, highlights included a White-winged Scoter spotted near King Salmon—a species not typically seen in Humboldt Bay—a juvenile Elegant Tern traveling with an adult (few had arrived in the area at that point), and Brandt's Cormorants on



several concrete platforms in the Eureka Channel, where they've begun breeding in recent years. Rob Fowler noted: "Seems like a great breeding year for Common Murres. We saw many dads with their chicks in the bay."

The August 24 and September 21 tours, led by Kathryn Wendel and Cedrik von Briel, president of the Cal Poly Humboldt Birding Club, turned up many target species, including Black-crowned Night-Herons, Common Terns, Double-crested Cormorants, Belted Kingfishers, and families of Osprey, some with several nearly full-grown chicks close to fledging.

One enthusiastic attendee shared: "Wow, that tour on the Madaket was magical! The birds, the lighting, the narration—it was the best time! Kathryn Wendel's ability to engage birders of all levels is truly a gift."

Besides offering valuable birding experiences and a chance for birders to connect, the tours help support the mission of Godwit Days, which promotes quality birding and environmental education in Humboldt County through its annual festival and year-round events.

Photos of Elegant Tern (left) and Common Murre and chick, by Rob Fowler

Christmas Bird Counts

Contact the compilers to help with the counts.

The Arcata count, on Saturday, December 16, was first organized by John Sterling in 1984 and has become one of the highest recording counts in our area. This circle comprises coastal habitat that includes ocean, bay, saltmarsh, and freshwater estuary. It also covers a good deal of pastureland, coastal forest (conifer/riparian), and urban habitat. Tony Kurz is the compiler and has been for the last seven years. Contact him at tonyk_71220@hotmail.com.

The Del Norte count, on Sunday, December 17, was begun in 1962 by Paul Rail, and Gary and Lauren Lester continued this very popular count. The count circle includes Point St. George, all of Crescent City,

and as far east as Gasquet. This circle allows for a generous amount of coastal habitat as well as a bit of offshore waters. Lucas Brug is the compiler. Contact him at lucas.hendrik@hotmail.com.

The Centerville count, on Sunday, December 31, is the oldest of our local counts. The origin of this CBC has been traced back to 1947, when Dr. Clarence Crane and his wife Ruth of Ferndale began the Humboldt County New Year's Bird Count with their children and extended family. Ruth always made Boston Baked Beans and coleslaw for the participants after the count. A very homey affair. The event was eventually adopted as one of the Audubon Society's annual CBCs, with formal record-keeping dating back to 1962. Gary Falxa is the compiler. Contact him at garyfalxa@gmail.com.

The Willow Creek count, TBA. This count was started by David Anderson and Roger Weiss in 1976 and may not happen this year, as it needs a compiler. Contact Gary Lester (garys.lester@gmail.com) if you want to volunteer to be the compiler and set a date.

The Tall Trees count, on Thursday, January 4, 2026, was started in 2012 by Ken Burton who remains the compiler. The count circle is centered on the Tall Trees Grove in Redwood National Park. A few species that are regular on this count, such as Ruffed Grouse and White-breasted Nuthatch, are not typically found on any of the other counts in the region. Contact Ken at shrikethree@gmail.com.

Results of the May 2025 Tim McKay Birdathon

By Gary Friedrichsen

This year's Birdathon was the ninth year honoring longtime Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) director Tim McKay. It took place this past May and was a success even though only three teams entered. The "Wandering Talliers" (Laurie Lawrence, Bill Rodstrom, Greg Chapman, and Gary Friedrichsen) were victorious in both numbers of birds listed and amount of funds raised, with 120 species and a total of \$6,013 added to the NEC and RRAS coffers.

The "Bushlist" team (Kathryn Wendel and John Palmer) put in a valiant effort and recorded 89 species and raised \$480 smackers for their eight-hour effort. They had two highlight birds that day—a rare coastal sighting of a Dusky Flycatcher located at the Humboldt Botanical Gardens and a very fortunate sighting of the stakeout Parakeet Auklet that graced Trinidad Harbor for over a month. NEC's team, "Queerious," led by Sable Odry, tallied 35 species with exciting finds highlighted by a White-tailed Kite, a Blue-winged Teal at Arcata Marsh, and a Swainson's Thrush at Ma-l'lél Dunes, bringing in \$360 for their afternoon's effort.

The First Birdathon

In 1979 longtime RRAS members Adrienne (Behrstock) Wolf-Lockett and Janet Morlan were the driving force to initiate what became a large fund-raiser for RRAS, with NEC joining the following year. When Tim McKay assumed the task of organizing the Birdathons, he mandated that all funds raised be divided equally between the two groups. I vividly recall Tim sitting in the NEC booth at the first Godwit Days stopping everyone that entered and cajoling them into a pledge. If his charm wasn't enough he was not above using guilt to get the patron to pony up. It was a treat to watch him in action since you knew his heart was into furthering the wheels of conservation and ecological good practice.

Onward to May 2025

The Wandering Talliers' full day in the field took place on May 18. It was a particularly fun day for me as I got to birdwatch all day on my 79th birthday. We met up on Buttermilk Lane, Bayside, at 5:45 a.m. A Yellow-breasted Chat was calling continuously from the alders, and Song Sparrows, Wrentits, and Wilson's Warblers joined in the morning choir. On our first stop at the Blue Lake Cottonwoods we had great views of Purple Martins on the wires over the Mad River bridge and ticked off more breeding songbirds. Then we moved on to the Mad River Fish Hatchery. This included Lazuli Buntings and Black-headed Grosbeaks making their presence known with loud territorial exclamations. We were also picking up a few quieter calls from



Swainson's Thrush and Cedar Waxwings.

It would have been entertaining to stay longer but Horse Mountain was calling, and during a "Big Day" time is of the essence. With the clock ticking we cruised up to Titlow Hill turnoff and enjoyed getting into the higher elevation species. Western Tanagers, Warbling Vireos, and Nashville, Hermit, and MacGillivray's Warblers were singing. As we drove higher we were fortunate to see Mountain Quail and hear a booming Sooty Grouse. Time was spent in good habitat for White-headed Woodpeckers but none were encountered. I was bummed as I had scouted this area the day before and had a female show up but not today. We had to take solace in the fact that we got to see most of the available flycatchers, with Dusky Flycatchers present in good numbers.

Friday Ridge Road was pretty damaged by last winter's weather so we backtracked down to Highway 299 and went into Willow Creek and then up Friday Ridge from that side. We missed out on Green-tailed Towhee and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher but added Ash-throated Flycatcher and Acorn Woodpeckers among others. A drive back through Willow Creek to Big Rock, and then it was back to the coast and up to Trinidad Head. The forecast winds were gusty and cold as we gazed out from the pier watching for alcids like Common Murres and Pigeon Guillemots. To our dismay, we would be alerted to the fact that just an hour or so later in the day a Parakeet Auklet would be located right here. GRRRR!

Our plan then took us to the mouth of Elk River where we hoped to see a few remaining shorebirds. Very few indeed. We all agreed this was too late in the season, as we only found two Black-bellied Plovers and a few Whimbrels. Our farthest stop south was King Salmon for bay specialties such as loons and scoters, then back north to cross over the Samoa Bridge (Peregrine Falcon on a light pole plucking feathers off its recent kill) and on to the V Street loop. A pair of Bald Eagles sitting atop one of the electric towers was a highlight along with a few species of ducks and one Greater Yellowleg. The Arcata Marsh always provides, and a stunning American Bittern held our attention while both rails were kind enough to call out their presence. With time running out, we drove back to Jackson Ranch Road for a cruise of the Arcata Bottoms and were rewarded with an early Western Kingbird. Stunning misses for us included American Coots and not one Red-tailed Hawk for our over twelve-hour effort.

Speaking for our team, we were thankful to rack up 120 species despite the lack of shorebirds.

Hermit Warbler photo by Jeff Todoroff

The Environmental Protection Information Center



After the Cut: Holding the Line on the Jess Project

By Kimberly Baker

The Jess project on the Klamath National Forest was planned over a decade ago, however the commercial logging just wrapped up this season. The purpose was to improve forest ecosystems, build resiliency to high-intensity fire and insect and disease infestation, improve defensibility of municipal watersheds and communities from wildfire as well as providing wood products, rural economic health and the beneficial uses of water. It included over 800 acres of commercial logging and roughly 1,000 acres of manual non-commercial treatments such as hand thinning, mastication and underburning.

After an initial round of monitoring, it is clear that one purpose was met- providing wood products. However, the forest appears more ravaged than restored or resilient. Quite the opposite. Now open forest canopies will see an explosion of flammable vegetation. Once intact wildlife habitat is now highly fragmented with major soil damage. There are excessive skid trails throughout the logged areas that leave the forest floor churned up, disturbing mycelium networks, spreading invasive plants and diminishing future tree regeneration. Shredded tree branches are strewn all over often in depths that make even walking a challenge. These fine fuels are what spreads fire quickly. The landings where trees are dragged to for cutting, stacking and loading onto log trucks are massive permanent scars on the landscape that never return to forest. Logging slash, piled with heavy machinery, creates massive burn piles that are often 35 feet wide and towers overhead.

Hundreds of mature trees, over 120 years old, with thick fire-resistant bark have been cut. Many of them



Jess Large Tree Saved From Logging

were not originally marked for cutting but instead, were marked during logging. This practice is called “add on”, which often accounts for over 10% of the timber volume. Traditionally cut trees are painted with blue and the add on trees are marked in a sea

foam color. The Jess project appears to have a very high amount of add on volume.

While EPIC was not able to stop the project, we were able to protect dozens of trees in Riparian Reserves. The reserves are either perennial of intermittent. These fragile ecosystems are nature's water filters and are often used as travel corridors by wildlife.

Though commercial operations on the Jess Project have concluded, the real work of accountability and ecological recovery is just beginning. EPIC will continue to monitor the impacted landscape through on-the-ground field assessments, photo documentation, GIS mapping, and comparison of project outcomes to the original environmental goals. Findings will inform advocacy for restoration, improved oversight, and stronger protections in future forest projects.

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Evening Program

Evening programs have moved to the D Street Neighborhood Center (1301 D St, Arcata). They are on second Wednesdays. Doors will open at 5:45, and the program will be called to order at 6:00. After the lecture, during a social hour, the people can mingle, chat with the speaker one on one, and maybe one or two poster presentations will have authors present to discuss their work.

Short slideshows

Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 6:00pm - 7:00pm
November's program will consist of a number of shorts given by various chapter members, including great photography of native plants, travel logs, perhaps a tour of a group of plants. Check out the photos on this page from a number of the presenters.

Potted Plants for Sale

The chapter's nursery has inventory that needs to get into people's yards a.s.a.p. Plants are for sale at good prices during our working days and hours: Wednesday, Friday and Sunday 10:00–1:00. Visit us at Freshwater Farms Reserve, 5851 Myrtle Ave. Email questions to northcoastcnps@gmail.com.



From the the Smith River field trip, golden inside-out flower (*Vancouveria chrysantha*). Credit: R. Zito



From a high sierra adventure, *Carex vernacula*. Credit: D. York

Outings

Native Plant Garden Tour

Saturday, November 1, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Native Plant Garden Tour at the Arcata Community Center Native Plant & Wildlife Garden with Pete Haggard. The garden is on the hillside to the left of Healthsport, Arcata (300 Community Park Way), opposite the Arcata Community Center. In case of rain, bring an umbrella. A first Saturday activity.

McKay Community Forest

Sunday Nov. 9, 9:00–12:30

Meet at the Harris St. entry gate, just west of Redwood Acres, at 9:00 a.m. Parking is along Harris St. We'll explore the north part of the Community Forest along designated trails, including Ryan Creek, focusing on various management concerns, such as invasive plants, forest ecology, and trail design and maintenance. Dress for weather; sections of trails might be wet. We'll conclude about 12:30 p.m. No need to register—just show up on time. Email Peter Warner for more information: phytopagan@sonic.net.

Rohner Park Restoration Work Party

Saturday, November 15, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Help preserve Fortuna's exceptionally old second-growth Redwood forest by removing invasive plants. Meet at the Fireman's Pavilion. Tools and gloves provided, or bring your own. Co-sponsored by the North Coast CNPS Chapter and the Fortuna Parks and Recreation Department. A third-Saturday activity.



Modoc plateau. Credit: D. Wildearth

Reproductive Strategies of Plants

David Duncan

Plants have evolved a variety of strategies for sexual reproduction, balancing reproductive success with genetic out-crossing.

A minority of plants have imperfect reproductive arrangements with separated male and female parts, promoting cross-pollination. With monoecious plants, male and female structures are on the same plant but at a distance from one another: on the same branch (*Alnus rubra*, red alder), or on distinct branches (*Sequoia sempervirens*, coast redwood). Dioecious plants bear their male and female structures on entirely separate plants (*Baccharis pilularis*, coyote bush).

However most flowering plants are hermaphroditic, with perfect flowers having both male and female parts. Other mating systems are found in these plants.

Some reduce selfing by staggering the maturation of their male and female structures—a temporal separation termed dichogamy. *Acer macrophyllum* (big leaf maple) bears imperfect flowers,

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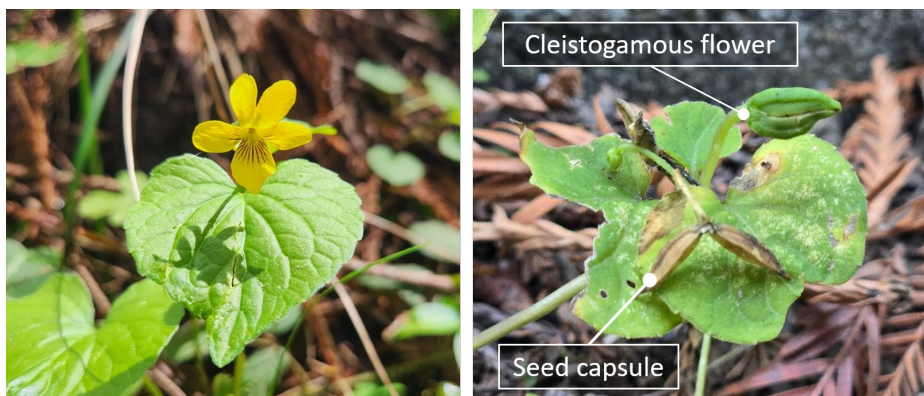
but they are in the same flower cluster, presenting the same risk for self-pollination as a perfect flower. However its flowers mature at different times, and the order of their maturation is staggered among trees. Male flowers on one tree may be releasing pollen while its female flowers are not yet mature; on a neighboring tree the female flowers have matured already. Measures of outcrossing in *A. macrophyllum* show this mechanism to be a remarkably effective driver of cross-pollination.

The structure within a perfect flower can impact pollination as well. The stigma-anther distance (SAD), a kind of herkogamy or spatial separation of male and female functions, has been shown to impact the level of outcrossing. For example when the style is longest and SAD is high, pollinators are more likely to deposit pollen from a previously-visited bloom on a blossom's stigma before encountering its anthers. The evolution of flower structure and function is driven by many factors, so multi-factor analyses are required to study this subtle effect. California is home to a complex of monkeyflowers that includes *Erythranthe guttata* (seep monkeyflower). A survey of eight members of the complex showed a range of SAD values correlating with their level of outcrossing, suggesting that changes in SAD may be among the adaptations favoring the selfing observed within the complex.

Another mechanism is self-incompatibility (SI), which blocks self-fertilization after pollination. The genetics and biochemistry of SI have been characterized in model plants in the laboratory, but in the field, SI is inferred from traits such as a reliance on outcrossing for seed production (and often the attribution is debated). *Cercis occidentalis* (California redbud), *Lupinus albifrons* (silver lupine), and some *Ceanothus* species (*C. cuneatus*, *C. oliganthus*, and *C. crassifolius*) are inferred to have SI. This can be a concern in restoration and management efforts, as SI plants require a genetically diverse population to propagate new individuals.

These adaptations are not mutually exclusive—a plant may show several. And some plants show none at all, but embrace selfing, especially in inhospitable environments, as alluded to above with certain *Erythranthe*. Cleistogamy is a striking adaptation where the flower bud never opens at all and self-pollinates while closed. *Danthonia californica* (California oatgrass) will form closed flowers under stress. Violets are well-known for their cleistogamous buds, apparently hedging their bets in the event of suboptimal pollination of their open flowers. Both *Viola sempervirens* and *V. glabella* (redwood violet and stream violet) can display cleistogamous buds in late season after the seed capsules from their seasonal blooms have opened. Look for them where the stalk of the leaf attaches to the stem.

Reproductive adaptations take time. Intriguingly, a recent study has seemingly captured a moment when an environmental change may be impacting the reproductive fitness of two plants in San Diego County. Despite the area's high diversity in native bees, the non-native honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, is the dominant pollinator of *Salvia mellifera* and *S. apiana* (black sage and white sage). Its methodical foraging behavior increases self-pollination and reduces offspring fitness in both species. Other native plants in the area that bloom less profusely attract fewer honeybees and are not affected. Will this reduce the abundance of the two shrubs? If so, will it promote plant diversity? Will it favor the spread of self-compatible invasive species? Only time will tell.



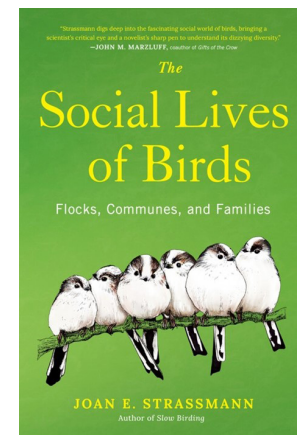
The flowers of a violet: a typical open flower accessible for pollination (left); and a cleistogamous (closed) self-pollinating flower (right). Seed capsule, likely produced by an open flower pollinated earlier in the season. Credit: D. Duncan

Bird News Round-Up

Compiled by Gina Rogers

Looking for something fun to watch? Check out **Listers: A Glimpse Into Extreme Birdwatching**, a documentary available on YouTube chronicling two brothers who started out as nonbirders and learned about competitive birdwatching by trying to complete a “Big Year.” Just note that it is not a family-friendly production, but it is an entertaining, slapstick take on competitive birding. You’ll be rewarded with some great bird videos and an unfiltered take on the birding community.

New to read: If you’re interested in learning more about birds as social creatures, check out evolutionary biologist Joan Strassmann’s new book **The Social Lives of Birds: Flocks, Communes, and Families**. Strassmann is also the author of **Slow Birding** (2022), which promoted strategies for enjoying birds in your own backyard. And the *New York Times* just published a fascinating look at the difficult future facing Marbled Murrelets in the Pacific Northwest. **A Tiny Seabird Faces Growing Threats in the Forest** provides insights on the birds’ natural history and status along with some gorgeous photos. (NYT, Sept. 23, 2025, often available for those without a subscription through library feeds.)



Wildlife care center update: The **Humboldt Wildlife Care Center** (aka Bird Ally X) wrapped up another busy summer season with releases of the many successfully rehabbed injured and orphaned birds. A Red-throated Loon got a second chance after time in the seabird pools, a Leach’s Storm-Petrel that arrived at the end of August after riding a fishing vessel back into port at Crescent City was released after a few days enjoying the Center’s saltwater pool, and the list goes on – over 30 swallows, a family of Wood Duck babies saved when the mother was run over, Brown Pelicans and Mallards galore. The final count of birds treated this season is not yet in, but it might well be a new record. Check out their web site for more stories from this season and their wish list of upgrades to their ICU, aviaries, and pools (<https://birdallyx.net>).

Did You Know?

Small Things Add Up

There are over 95 million pet cats in the U.S. Some cat owners claim their cat only kills “a few birds here and there.” Alas, the combined impact of so many introduced predators is massive: an estimated 2.4 *billion* birds every year. So please, keep your cat indoors, in a catio, on a leash, or otherwise contained. For the birds.



Source: American Bird Conservancy

Birds, Biodiversity, Sustainability, and the Economy of Our North Coast

By Jim Clark, Co-Chair of RRAS Conservation Committee

Our boom and bust history is a result of unsustainable capitalistic exploitation of natural resources without regard to damage to other businesses, people, or the environment. Our economy during the so-called glory days of logging was dependent on timber harvesting at an unsustainable rate, and we are still recovering from that era as demonstrated by the empty storefronts in Eureka. There have been many proposals that have claimed to reinvigorate the North Coast economy. Most would require significant inputs of energy and/or material and have potential negative effects on our environment.

There are, however, types of sustainable economic activity that benefit our local economy and have a positive effect on biodiversity. These activities depend on the North Coast's greatest asset: climate. Our cool, moist climate provides ideal conditions for growing forage. Just inland from the coastal redwood belt lies the best of California's most important biome: oak savannah grassland. Managed properly for grazing, this biome can support wildlife, including many



species of birds, and improve water quality and dry season flow that benefits salmon.

Livestock grazing can also provide economic benefits through production of food and fiber. Grass-fed beef has been produced here for over a decade. And wool production was once a major industry. Again, the cool, wet climate is ideal for producing high-quality wool. However, best management of these grasslands requires ranching to be economically viable.

In July 2024 the only FDA approved slaughtering and meat packing facility within 200 miles of Humboldt County closed, increasing the cost of processing all locally raised meat. This year a small wool-processing facility, The Spinnery (lostcoastspinnery.com/blog), opened in Fernbridge. Hopefully it will grow beyond a niche market. Wool could be the best nonplastic alternative to polyester fleece.

These are only two examples of how businesses based on sustainable practices require a viable value-added support system to succeed and contribute to our economy and environmental quality. This includes supporting robust bird habitat as part of a biodiverse environment and nature-based (birding) tourism. As we evaluate economic proposals for the North Coast we need to consider "sustainability" not as a tagline but as embracing the four concepts of environmental, social, economic, and human sustainability.

Kid's Corner WOWZA WILDLIFE!

By Leslie Scopes Anderson

GIMME
FOUR!



FUN FACTS

Western Cattle Egrets forage for insects in grassy fields, often around grazing cattle. The males perform elaborate courtship displays.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Western Cattle Egrets are sometimes seen in our area but are more common in southern locations. They nest in trees in colonies with other egrets & herons.

Research Grants Available for Cal Poly and CR Students!

RRAS is offering research grants of up to \$500 for studies on birds. This grant is available to undergraduate and graduate students at Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods. Its purpose is both to encourage learning about the birds in Humboldt, Trinity, Siskiyou, and Del Norte counties and to support projects that will advance knowledge about birds. **Applications are due on December 1, 2025.** Contact Hal Genger (hal.genger@humboldt.edu), or check rras.org, for application details.

Grants awarded in the last few years have gone to Cal Poly Humboldt students **Samantha Bacon** to study field use by shorebirds, especially Marbled Godwits, in the Arcata Bottoms; **Elizabeth Meisman** for work on Swainson's Hawks in Northern California; and **Alon Averbuj** for research on habitat selection of Common Ravens near Western Snowy Plover nesting sites.

New Bird(s) in Town

The Humboldt County Rare Bird Alert on eBird is hopping with sightings in October, from Snow Goose to Black-and-white Warbler. Noteworthy are American x Eurasian Wigeon hybrids—at least two, with different plumage—and the Great-tailed Grackle, which has been hanging out at Klopp Lake for a while now, often seen foraging around the parking lot area at the marsh. One was also spotted at the Sunday, October 19, Eureka Waterfront Trail walk.



Great-tailed Grackle,
by Jeff Todoroff

RRAS Field Trips, continued

Sunday, November 16, 9-11am. Ralph Bucher leads a walk on the Eureka Waterfront Trail, starting at the foot of Del Norte Street and continuing on a flat, paved trail that is *wheelchair accessible*. Shorebirds have arrived! Email Ralph to sign up at thebook[at]reninet.com.

Saturday, November 22, 9-11am. Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday. Join a fun group of volunteers to create bird-friendly habitat in a section of the bay trail behind Bayshore Mall. Bring water and gloves. We provide tools and snacks. Contact Susan Penn at susanpenn60@gmail.com for more information.

Saturday, November 22, 8:30-11am. *Southern Humboldt walks are back!* Meet leader Tess McGuire at Tooby Park, one mile west of Garberville on Sprowl Creek Road. Contact Tess (tmcguire9130@gmail.com) with questions and to sign up.



Redwood Region Audubon Society
PO Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502

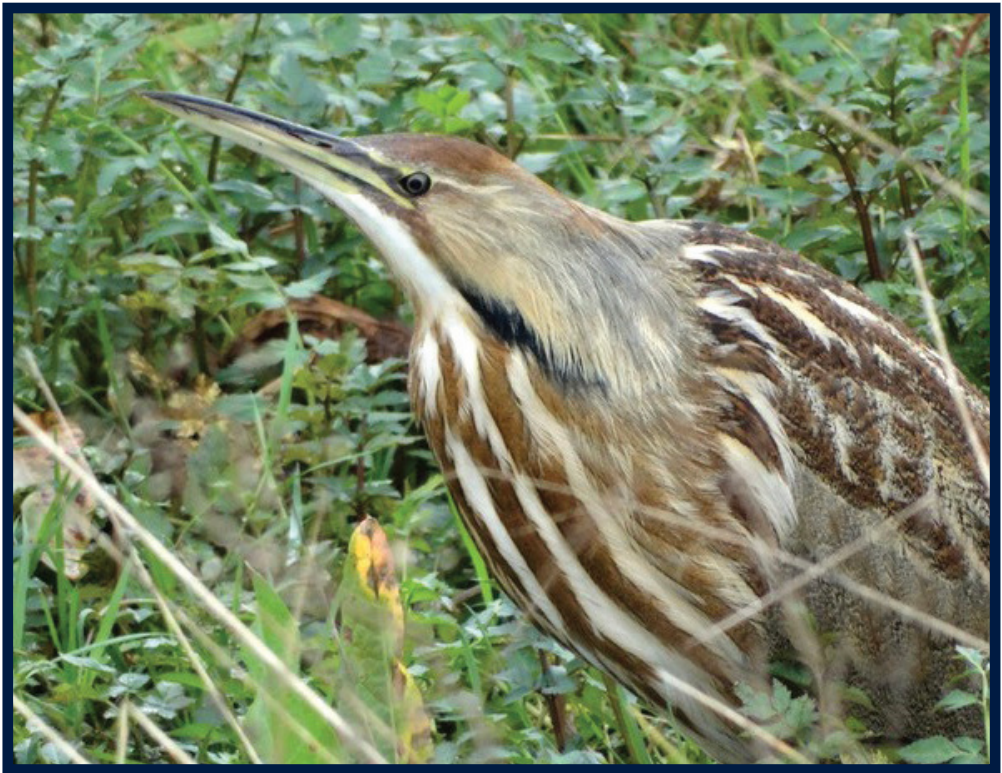
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Local membership For just \$15 a year you will receive *EcoNews*, with *The Sandpiper* inserted. To join locally mail a check for \$15 made out to RRAS with your name, address, and email address to:
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PO Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502

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American Bittern, by Gary Friedrichsen

2025 Tim McKay Birdathon
- story inside -