

# The Sandpiper

Redwood Region Audubon Society



December 2006

www.rras.org

## RRAS FIELD TRIPS

Carpooling to and on RRAS field trips is strongly encouraged. It's economical, it's fun, and it's the right thing to do! Carpools to trips will meet at the following Park & Ride lots at the times indicated in the trip announcements: Trinidad (Main Street exit, east side of 101), Eureka (Herrick Road exit), and Fortuna (Kenmar Road exit). Be there a few minutes early and see if anyone else is there for ridesharing.

**Every Saturday. Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary.** These are our famous rain-or-shine, docent-led field trips at the marsh; take your binocular(s) and have a great morning birding! Meet in the parking lot at the south end of I Street in Arcata at 8:30 a.m. Carpools: Trinidad 8:10 a.m., Eureka 8:05 a.m., Fortuna 7:45 a.m.

**Saturday, December 9. King Salmon/Field's Landing.** Learn to identify loons, grebes, and waterfowl. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in front of Gill's By The Bay Restaurant, 77 Halibut Avenue, King Salmon. Dress warmly; heavy rain cancels. For more information, call Matt Wachs (499-6018). Carpools: Trinidad 7:15 a.m., Fortuna 7:40 a.m.

**Sunday, December 10. Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.** This is a wonderful 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. From Highway 101, take the Hookton Road exit (between College of the Redwoods and Loleta) and follow the signs to the Refuge Visitor Center. Meet at 9 a.m. Call Jude Power or David Fix (822-3613) for more information. Carpools: Trinidad 8:10 a.m., Eureka 8:45 a.m., Fortuna 8:45 a.m.

**Sunday, December 17. Eureka Marsh.** This monthly walk offers some great birding in downtown Eureka. We will spend an hour or 2 on a flat loop that will take us through a variety of habitats from bay and mudflat to riparian and marshland. Meet in the parking lot at the foot of West

Del Norte Street at 8:30 a.m. Call Pablo Herrera (845-8166) for more information. Carpools: Trinidad 7:55 a.m., Fortuna 8:05 a.m.

**Sunday, December 17. Southern Humboldt Community Park.** Jay Sooter (444-8001), Robert Sutherland, and/or Doug Wallace (peregrination@asis.com) will be leading this monthly walk. All ages and experience levels are encouraged to participate and revel in the beauty of the Community 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. From Garberville, take Sprowel Creek Road 1.1 mile west and turn left onto Kimtu Road, immediately before the bridge over the south fork of the Eel. Proceed for about 1/2 mile down Kimtu Road and turn left into the parking lot by the lone oak. Steady rain cancels. Meet at 9 a.m. Carpools: Trinidad 7:00 a.m., Eureka 7:35 a.m., Fortuna 7:55 a.m.

**Monday, January 1. CBC rarities.** Ring in the new year right and get a great start to your year list by joining Ken Burton (839-5179) on a mission to track down some of the exciting birds found on the Centerville-to-King Salmon Christmas Bird Count the previous day. Meet in the Eureka Park & Ride lot (Herrick Road exit) at 8:00 a.m. Carpools: Trinidad 7:20 a.m., Fortuna 7:40 a.m.

## 107<sup>th</sup> CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Mark Your Calendars! Winter is on its way, and it's time to start thinking about participating in 1 or more Christmas Bird Counts, occurring this year from December 14 through January 5, 2007. Four of California's 117 count circles are covered in Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties. As we do every year, RRAS will sponsor a bird identification brush-up session on Friday, December 8, at 7:30 p.m., at the Humboldt County Office of Education in Eureka, preceded by a potluck dinner starting at 6:30 p.m. Bring a dish to share; we'll provide drinks and place settings.

## Ways to participate in a CBC:

- Give counters access to your property
- Count the birds that visit your feeder on the count day—check the circles for the date that applies to your residence
- Join a team and have a dawn-to-dusk fun-filled day in the fresh air (Note: inexperienced or new birders are welcome!)
- Attend the compilation dinner at the end of the day to learn initial results of the all-day effort

**ARCATA CBC, Saturday, December 16; contact Kerry Ross (kerry2@madriverbio.com).**

The count circle is centered on Arcata, stretching north to McKinleyville south of Murray Road, west to Samoa and Manila, east to Bayside up to the golf course, and south to Eureka along the waterfront to just south of Bayshore Mall. The compilation is held at the Golden Harvest Café at 1062 G St. in Arcata. [Note that this is different from the information given in last month's *Sandpiper*.]

**DEL NORTE CBC, Sunday, December 17; contact Alan Barron ([707]-465-8904) or Gary Lester (work 443-8326, home 839-3373, garylester@w-and-k.com).**

The count circle includes Crescent City, Smith River, Fort Dick, Lake Earl, Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park/Redwood National Park, and the western portion of the Smith River National Recreation Area. Participants meet at 7 a.m. at Denny's on Highway 101, Crescent City.

**WILLOW CREEK CBC, Saturday, December 23 (weather permitting; call Gary as date approaches); contact Gary Lester (work 443-8326, home 839-3373, garylester@w-and-k.com).**

The count circle, centered on Willow Creek, includes Salyer and the southern Hoopa Valley. The compilation is held at Cinnabar Sam's.

**CENTERVILLE BEACH TO KING SALMON CBC, Sunday, December 31; contact Rich Ridenhour ([707]-839-3300).**

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

## DECEMBER PROGRAM



## Christmas Bird Count Preview

Our annual Christmas Bird Count preview is a look at both the expected birds and some historical CBC rarities. Join David Fix and several local CBC organizers as they discuss bird identification and distribution in preparation for the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts. This preview is a popular event and is guaranteed to edify and entertain!

**Our annual December potluck dinner will precede the program, to be held on Friday, December 8, 2006. The potluck starts at 6:30 p.m., followed by the program at 7:30 p.m., in the Sequoia Room of Humboldt County Office of Education west of the Burre Center at Myrtle and West in Eureka. Bring a dish to share; drinks and place settings will be provided.**

**CHAPTER LEADERS  
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**Arcata Bird Alert** .....822-LOON (822-5666)

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**Thinking of Joining the  
National Audubon Society?**

If so, please use the coupon below. By sending in your membership on this form, rather than replying to solicitations from National Audubon, \$20 is sent directly to RRAS. This is how NAS rewards local chapters for recruiting national members. (Otherwise, the RRAS dues share per new member is only a couple of dollars.) Thank you.

**Chapter Membership Application**

**Yes, I'd like to join.**

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

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-----LOCAL CHAPTER-----

**REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
**P.O. BOX 1054**  
**EUREKA, CA 95502**



Ferruginous Hawk © Gary Bloomfield

**Hawks on Bear River Ridge**

*By Carol McNeill*

On a cloudy October Saturday, a group of us joined Pablo Herrera for this year's visit to Bear River Ridge in search of raptors and other prairie birds. Our trepidation concerning rain turned out to be unjustified; instead, the cloudy cover was the perfect backdrop for us to view the beautiful soaring birds. Our first sighting was a dark-morph Rough-legged Hawk that kited and glided at every angle to give us a 360-degree view. Next, we saw a large Cooper's Hawk chasing a frightened starling and an American Kestrel chasing Western Meadowlarks three-fourths its size!

As the day progressed, a Horned Lark and several Western Bluebirds perched long enough for us to get great views. A beautiful Golden Eagle flew overhead. Finally, we spotted two Ferruginous Hawks, a life sighting for 2 happy trip participants.

In addition, during the day we spotted several Northern Harriers, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawks, American Pipits, scrub and Steller's Jays (in the same tree), a Black Phoebe, Northern Flickers, and Killdeer. If you are looking for a delightful place to view our autumn visitation of raptors, don't miss this annual event!



McDaniel Slough, Arcata Marsh

© Gary Bloomfield

**RRAS Conservation Committee Meeting November 16, 2006**

Conservation Committee Meeting November 16, 2006  
*By Chet Ogan*

Attendance: Chet Ogan, chair; Jim Clark, Pablo Herrera, Sue Leskiw, Mel McKinney, C.J. Ralph, and Gil Saliba

At the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hearing November 16, everyone who spoke called for removal of all 4 lower Klamath River dams: Copco I, Copco II, Irongate, and J.C. Boyles. It is cheaper to shut down the dams than to reauthorize them for another 30 to 50 years. Algae buildup caused a 60,000-fish die-off in 2002 that has virtually shut down commercial salmon fishing [along the northern California coast] and has severely affected 4 indigenous tribes along the river, the Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, and Klamath. A plan to build fish ladders or to truck fish around the dams will likely fail; similar attempts failed in other northwestern North American river systems. Take down the four dams. **Truck silt, not salmon.** Comments on the draft environmental impact statement were due Dec. 1, 2006.

Jim mentioned that the Niles Ranch near the mouth of the Eel River has solid and hazardous waste issues. Because the owner was unable to pay costs for waste removal, mitigation was resolved by transferring some of the property to the Department of Fish and Game's Eel River Wildlife Area.

Sue reported that Sam Stanson has applied to Humboldt County for a local coastal plan amendment to rezone his property adjacent to Clam Beach to coastal recreation. The county recommends no change for this parcel.

Mel and Sue reported on the EcoSummit held November 13. Specifically, what issues are groups working on? And what issues are falling between the cracks? Several environmental and conservation organizations are

not represented on the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) board but are concerned that notes of the dialogue at the NEC board meetings are not being taken. The NEC members are not being told what is happening since Tim McKay is no longer around. The NEC board needs to follow the guidelines of their bylaws and probably revise the bylaws to include the relationships between the NEC and member organizations.

Mel reported that he had approached the City of Eureka about the illegal camping around the Elk River Wildlife Sanctuary. It has become a public health issue because trash and human wastes are accumulating. Ron Harpham of the Eureka Police Department is aware of the situation and plans a sweep of the area.

Mel reported that he spoke with Lisa Shikany of the Eureka city environmental department concerning lack of progress on building the culverts for the Eureka Marsh. Ms. Shikany applied November 6 for the permit, but it may be next autumn before any work can be done. Eureka Marsh was surveyed for tidewater gobies; none were found. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has concerns that the construction done to put in the larger culverts may cause sediments that could affect salmon habitat.

Pablo, Chet, and Shana Stearn attended the Northern California Audubon Council meeting November 11 and 12, 2006, at Kelseyville hosted by Redbud Audubon. Representatives from Audubon California and 7 northern California chapters met to discuss regional conservation issues. Claudia Eyzaguirre asked attendees to prioritize regional issues concerning their chapters. Our 2 most pressing regional issues are water issues involving the Klamath-Trinity River Basin and land use and invasive plant issues involving Waterfront Drive and Eureka Marsh.



## BIRD OF THE MONTH

### Horned Grebe

By David Fix

Horned Grebes (*Podiceps auritus*) are common small waterbirds that most birders get to know, at least superficially, fairly early on. They breed on marshes and lakes over a broad sweep of the northwestern portion of North America. They must migrate southward to escape Canadian winters, and so we see them on lagoons, ponds, and estuaries from September to April. Some resort to protected ocean waters.

As a group, grebes are highly adapted to a lifetime spent on, within, or near water. They are streamlined, with small rounded heads, thin necks, spindle-shaped bodies, and (usually) slim grasping mandibles designed to make their livelihood as fish- and bug-catchers as efficient as possible. Their legs are mounted so near their hind end that they are nearly helpless on land. With a comparatively high wing loading, they don't appear to fly for fun; yet, they make long journeys south and north each year.

When the ice has melted from northern marshes and lakeshores, Horned Grebes begin to breed. Both members of a pair construct a mat of old marsh vegetation on which the female lays 4 to 7 white eggs. The young emerge after 22 to 25 days of incubation and are presented food by both adults. They can fly in 1-1/2 to 2 months. Horned Grebes winter mostly along the coast, from Alaska and Nova Scotia southward, including the Gulf Coast.

During the colder months, beginning birders will see small monochrome diving birds on open waters of the redwood region. Wiping raindrops from their bins, they look again. They're certainly not loons, alcids, ducks, or phalaropes—and they're not Western, Clark's, or Red-necked Grebes. What are they?

Both the Horned Grebe and the Eared Grebe (*P. nigricollis*) are readily separable in their alternate, or breeding, plumage. However, for nearly all of the time they are with us, they are in their basic or nonbreeding plumage and look a bit more similar. But despite this close resemblance, there are ways to learn to tell them apart.

Adult Horned Grebes are more cleanly patterned than Eared Grebes, with a defined black cap and white face. The neck is mostly white. The bill looks straight and, at close range, has a dull white tip. Conversely, the black on the head of Eared Grebe extends down slightly below the eye, leaving a small but conspicuous pale area back between the face and the nape. The neck is mostly dark. The bill of Eared Grebe is thinner than that of Horned and is vaguely up-tilted or turnstone-like. Eared Grebe has a distinctly smaller, rounder, "doit" head and often swims with the neck slanted a few degrees forward. Horned Grebe swims with the neck held upright. Eared Grebes have a puffer, more rounded profile. Problem birds—"ornery" or "weird" grebes—often prove to be first-winter Horned Grebes, which have dusky faces and necks. When you encounter either or both of these birds in the field, look at the entire bird to get a feeling for their differences.

## Other Guided Trips

### Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Join Volunteer Naturalist Louise Bacon-Ogden on Wednesday, December 6, and Wednesday, December 20, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. for bird walks at the Salmon Creek Unit of Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the Richard J. Guadagno Visitor Center. The walks are free, and everyone is welcome. Take the Hookton Road Exit off Highway 101 and follow the brown signs to the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge Salmon Creek Unit Headquarters and Visitor Center. For more information or special accommodation, please call 733-5406.

Redwood Region Audubon Society welcomes the following new members and subscribers:

Arcata –	C Stenborg-Davies
Blue Lake –	Amy Kocourex
Brookings, OR –	Dian Mynal
Crescent City –	Jean Akers, Del Norte County Library, Onik Arian
Eureka –	Laurie Lawrence, Eileen Abel
Ferndale –	Kay Burdick
Fortuna –	John Boos
Garberville –	Justin Van Kleeck
McKinleyville –	Lynda Mather
Petrolia –	Doynetta Bruce

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

## Giving Thanks

Gypsy and I slipped through the guard rail at the end of the cul-de-sac. Immediately, her paw was impaled by a bur clover-like seed that had a razor sharp thorny projection. As I knelt to remove it, I couldn't help but reflect on the "thorn-in-the-side" saying. Numerous sharp thorns may never have penetrated her side, but they'd plagued her four paws from California to Utah to New Mexico on our current western states road trip. I came upon a small, nondescript bush with conspicuous cream-colored flowers. The plant's inflorescences were long past their prime; their wavy, paperlike texture reminded me of spent bougainvillea flowers.

It dawned on me that the plant was probably four-winged saltbush, a common denizen of the western U.S. where aridity and saline soils occur. I picked a flower and closely inspected it. Sure enough, it had four wings, its cross-section describing the letter "X." Despite the plant's commonplace, noncharismatic stature, it was satisfying to identify it. You see, I've read about four-winged saltbush and the plant community it occupies since grade school, yet never really paused long enough to make its acquaintance. I flung the winged flower in the air to gauge the likelihood of its seeds being dispersed by the wind. The flower plummeted clumsily to the ground, swiftly dispelling the dispersal-by-wind theory. Then I recalled that the seeds were a favorite food of quail and sparrows.

I picked a leaf and licked it: a distinctly salty flavor. The long dimension of the leaf was curled upward, no doubt an adaptation to minimize its exposure to the blazing summer sun. The leaf, also curled latitudinally, was reminiscent of a miniature dhow—a double-ended boat popular in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Gypsy signaled that it was time to move on. We followed the sandy track wending through the junipers. We'd seen a number of alligator junipers three days ago in Cave Creek Canyon, which drains the eastern flanks of Arizona's Chiricahua Mountains. I wasn't sure which juniper species this was, but the tree's furrowed bark sans latitudinal cracks ruled out alligator. The tree's silvery, blue-gray berries imparted a festive air to the otherwise-frozen landscape. On the ground beneath the tree was a mosaic of shed berries, "leaf" litter, luxuriant fresh green grass, and last year's nodding, straw-colored seed heads.

I picked berry from the juniper tree and split it open. Perhaps owing to its advanced age, the interior seed was hard, lacking the fleshy texture and fragrance associated with younger berries. We came to a pinyon pine, this year's pale cones contrasting with the previous year's darker spent ones. I picked a cone and examined its seeds: pinyon nuts. Seeing their oval, adobe-red shells reminded me of the autumn of 1976 when a companion and

I harvested pinyon nuts in northeastern Utah. By the end of the day, we'd lost any hint of dexterity, so coated were our gloves with fragrant, sticky sap. But on this morning, with the temperature hovering at 18 degrees, the sap was frozen. I placed the cones in my pocket and followed Gypsy onward toward the rim rock that overlooked Farmington, New Mexico.

I like to hit the trail early, before others are out and about. On this particular morning—Thanksgiving 2005—I had additional incentive. I look forward to the holidays: family, friends, and food. However, I also like to set aside moments for solitary reflection, the silence heightening my appreciation for the year's gifts and blessings. In my mind's eye, I scrolled through the 2005 calendar, reviewing its many highlights. The year had been as busy as it had been bountiful. I had my health, a talented, loving wife, and a loyal, headstrong terrier. I gave thanks for all the good things that had come my way. Given time, even the not-so-good-events had turned out to be either character builders or ushered in necessary changes. Later, I signaled to Gypsy that it was time to make our way back to Sue's sister's home—and our appointment with a very large bird.

Tom Leskiw  
November 24, 2005



# Field Notes

22 October - 22 November, 2006

Fall migration is about over, the rains seem to have returned in force, and we are moving rapidly toward the Christmas Bird Count season. Abbreviations used: **AB** = Arcata Bottoms; **ACF** = Arcata Community Forest; **A-EB** = Arcata-Eureka Bottoms; **AMP** = Arcata Marsh Project; **AOP** = Arcata Oxidation Pond; **BRR** = Bear River Ridge; **BSE** = Butcher Slough Estuary; **BSLP** = Butcher Slough Log Pond; **CRI** = Cock Robin Island; **EBHB** = Entrance Bite, Humboldt Bay; **FOP** = Ferndale Oxidation Pond; **GW** = Gee Whiz bird; **HBNWR** = Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge; **HO** = hold over from last period; **ID** = incomplete description; **KL** = Klopp Lake; **KS** = King Salmon; **LL** = Lewiston Lake; **MKSP** = MacKerricher State Park; **mo** = many observers; **NB** = North Humboldt Bay; **NC** = not confirmed; **ND** = no description or details; **NJ** = North Jetty, Humboldt Bay; **PSG** = Point St. George; **SRB** = Smith River Bottoms; **srl** = seldom-reported location; **TDAD** = Trinidad.

## Geese - Raptors

**White-fronted Goose:** Updates included an adult and 4 flybys, 15 Oct, 4 flocks of "about 40 each," 20 Oct, all at Lake Cleone (DT); and 15 at LL, 22 Oct (DK). Reports from AB included 17 on 24 Oct (SC) and 6 on 4-6 Nov (RF, SH). **Snow Goose:** A flock of 75 was reported flying NW (!) over BRR, 31 Oct (SMcA), and singles were on AB, 26, 31 Oct (SC, RF), and HBNWR, 11 Nov (SC). **Aleutian Cackling Goose:** 90-120, AB, 31 Oct-6 Nov (RF, SH, RR); 20±, HBNWR, 11 Nov (SC). **Western Canada Goose:** 25, LL, 29 Oct; 30, Douglas City, 30 Oct (both DK), were in seldom-reported but not-expected locations. **Swan sp.:** 1, AB, 26 Oct (BZy). **Wood Duck:** 12, near Whitethorn, 3 Nov (GL). **Eurasian Wigeon:** 1 female, AMP, 30 Oct, 3 Nov (RF, SH); 3 males, NB at Manila, 5 Nov (GL); 1 male, SRB, 20 Nov (AB). **Blue-winged Teal:** 1 male, 1 female, not obviously paired, Gearheart Marsh, 24 Oct (SH); single males at Eureka Sewage Pond, 23 Oct (TL), and AMP/AOP, 1, 8, 15 Nov (RF, SH). **Canvasback:** 1 male, AOP, 25 Oct (SH, JN); 1, FOP, 10 Nov (KR, DC). **Redhead:** 1, AOP, 28-31 Oct (GD, AL, SH). **Ring-necked Duck:** AOP held 3-21 birds most of the period (maximum of 21 on 25 Oct) (SH); 1 male, 2 females, LL, 11 Nov (DK). **Harlequin:** Update: 7 males, 4 females, Glass Beach, 13 Oct (DT); 1-2, KS, 31 Oct, 17 Nov (MW, DD). **Long-tailed Duck:** 1, KS, 31 Oct (MW). **Common Goldeneye:** 1 pair, KS, 17 Nov (DD). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** 4-5 males + 20± others, LL, 11, 17 Nov (DK). **Hooded Merganser:** 1 female, BSE/ AOP, 30-31 Oct (CR, photo; SH, AL); 2 males, 4 females, pond at Ossagon Creek, 9 Nov (HB). **Ruffed Grouse:** 1, Denny, 28 Sep (update), 10 Nov (both LM); 1, Bumner Lake Road, Del Norte Co, 31 Oct (CO). **Common Loon:** 207 settled in for the night? EBHB, 23 Oct (RF, MW). **Horned Grebe:** 1, LL, 29 Oct (DK). **Red-necked Grebe:** 9, MKSP, 10 Oct (update; DT); 1, AB, 29 Oct (GD, JW). **Northern Fulmar:** 1, seen from NJ, 14 Nov (SFB). **Brown Booby (GW, Wow!):** 1 flyby, PSG, 1 Nov (AB, JG) for the first Del Norte Co. record. **Double-crested Cormorant:** 1, mouth of Willow Creek, 17 Nov (TL), an srl. **American Bittern:** 1, BSLP, 23 Oct (JW). **Little Blue Heron (HO):** 1 adult plumage, SRB, 20 Nov (AB), presumably the same bird that was present there but in white plumage last Apr. **Cattle Egret:** 1-2 roosting on KL islands, 28, 31 Oct and 17 Nov (when 2 were reported) (SC, DC, AL); 1, AB, 8, 10 Nov (DC, KR, SFB); 2, SRB, 20 Nov (AB). **Green Heron:** 1, AMP, 25 Oct (JN). **Bald Eagle:** 8 reports of 1-2 at Smith River, mouth of Willow Creek, LL, A-EB, KS, Crab Park, 22 Oct-17 Nov (mo). During a stroll along 1 mile of North Dike of Humboldt Bay on 24 Oct, DF noted 2 **White-tailed Kites**, 10 **Northern Harriers**, 1 **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, 2 **Cooper's Hawks**, 1 **Red-shouldered Hawk**, 3 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 1 **Merlin**, and 2 **Peregrines**, emphasizing once again the importance of the prime raptor habitat provided by the tall perennial grassland on the Mad River Slough Wildlife Area, an area destined to be destroyed by a "salt marsh restoration" project of dubious value! **Broad-winged Hawk (NC, ID):** 1 reported,



American Golden Plover

© Kerry Ross

ACF, 25 Oct (OM). **Harlan's Hawk:** 1, Hwy 101 x Bayside Cutoff, 4, 9, 20, 22 Nov (SH, SC, SFB, JHum), at exactly the same location used a year ago. **Ferruginous Hawk:** 3 were among the many raptors recorded on a field trip to BRR, 4 Nov (PH, et al.); 4 (!), SRB, 20 Nov (AB). **Rough-legged Hawk:** 7 reports (11-12 birds) from AB, Lanphere Dunes, BRR/Cape Mendocino, False Klamath Cove, HBNWR, 26 Oct-15 Nov (mo). **Golden Eagle:** 1, BRR, 4 Nov (PH, et al.). **Merlin:** among the 9 reports from McKinleyville, AB, NB, AMP, Vigo St Marsh 23 Oct-8 Nov (mo) was one seen to catch and eat a dragonfly in north Arcata (SFB). **Peregrine:** 8 reports (12 birds) from MCKinleyville, AB, AMP, and HBNWR, 23 Oct-11 Nov (mo) included 1 "very large, dark bird" chasing Aleutian Cackling Geese at HBNWR (SC). **Prairie Falcon:** 1, BRR, 31 Oct (SMcA).

## Rails - Finches

**Virginia Rail:** heard calling, LL, an srl, 11, 17 Nov (DK). **Sora:** 1 heard calling, LL, 17 Nov (DK). **American Coot:** "thousands," LL, 11, 17 Nov (DK). **American Golden-Plover:** 1, Virgin Creek Beach, 2 Oct (update, DT, MaMa, superb photo); 1-4, AB, 1-8 Nov (mo, many photos). **Pacific Golden Plover:** 4-12, AB, 24 Oct-14 Nov (mo), 1 CRI, 10 Nov (KR, DC). **Greater Yellowlegs:** at least 40, along only 1 mile of North Dike, Humboldt Bay, 24 Oct (DF). **Pectoral Sandpiper:** 1, Loleta Pond, 10 Nov (KR, DC). **Rock Sandpiper:** 3, PSG, 11 Nov (RF, et al.); 2, NJ, 14 Nov (SFB). **Wilson's Snipe:** 22, pond along Hammond Trail, 23 Oct (KR); 1, on KL island (!), 28 Oct (DF, JP). **Franklin's Gull (HO):** 1 with an injured left leg, AOP/ Hiller Park, 23 Oct-14 Nov (mo), sometimes seen in both places on the same day! **Herring Gull:** 1 ad, TDAD, 17 Nov (MeH). **Black-legged Kittiwake:** 1 imm seen from NJ, 14 Nov (SFB). **Caspian Tern:** 4, Crab Park, 10 Nov (KR, DC). **Forster's Tern:** maximum number so far reported this fall, 14, KL, 28 Oct (DF, JP).

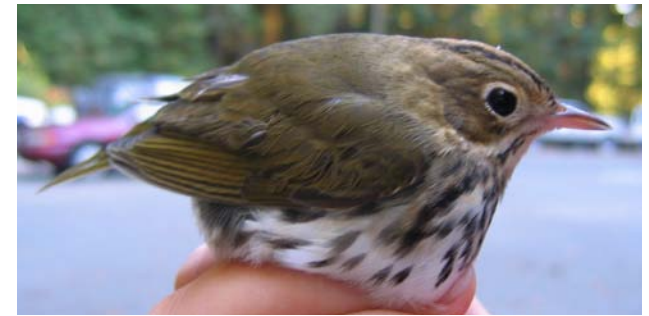


Franklin's Gull

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**Burrowing Owl:** 1, Bald Hill, near Ft. Bragg, 22 Oct (DT). **Short-eared Owl:** 1-6, AB, 26 Oct-6 Nov (SC); 1, PSG; 1, Smith River, both 11 Nov (RF et al.). **Selasphorus hummingbird (ND):** 1 reported, Denny, 15 Nov (LM). **Red-breasted Sapsucker;** **Northern Flicker:** both species seen eating Concord grapes(!), Douglas City, 26-28 Oct (sapsucker) and 14 Nov (flicker) (DK). **Yellow-shafted Flicker:** 1 male, Tall Trees Trail, 13 Oct (update, SFB); 1 female, ACF, 29 Oct (JW, GD). **Pileated Woodpecker:** singles at Denny, 9, 15 Nov (LM). **Say's Phoebe:** 1, Kneeland, 27-29 Oct (BB, DVZ); 1, CRI, 10 Nov (DR, DC). **Tropical Kingbird:** 1, Lanphere Dunes, 13-14 Nov (MR, JW). **Northern Shrike:** 1, Pacific Shores, 11 Nov (RF, et al.); 1, mouth of Janes Creek, 18 Nov (JP). **Cassin's Vireo:** 1, Arcata, 18 Nov (GB). **Horned Lark:** 12 ±, BRR, 4 Nov (PH et al.). **Black-capped Chickadee:** 1, mouth of Willow Creek, 17 Nov (TL), a first record for that location. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** 2, Bald Hills, near Schoolhouse Peak, 10 Nov (T&SL). **Marsh Wren:** 1, LL, srl, 17 Nov (DK). **Dipper:** 1, South Fork Lake, Carter Meadow Summit, Scott Mountains, 29 Oct (DK), not-expected but srl. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** 2, AMP, 28 Oct-17 Nov (CR, photos, et al.). **Western Bluebird:** 1-9 seen at Kneeland on 23 of 31 days in Oct (BB, DVZ); 16, BRR, 4 Nov (PH et al.); 25±, Bald Hills, near Schoolhouse Peak, 10 Nov (T&SL). **Varied Thrush:** 9 on 17 Oct (migrants?), 2 on 31 Oct, all at Kneeland (BB, DVZ). **American Robin:** 12-30 gathered to finish off the summer grape crop, Denny, 11-15 Nov (LM). **Mockingbird:** 1, Weaverville, 18 Oct (update), EE, fide JH; 1, Elk River Wildlife Area, 25 Oct (SMcA, HB); 1, Sunnybrae, 1-3 Nov (GH). **Brown Thrasher (WOW, GW):** 1, dead on the road (specimen recovered) near Patrick's Point State Park, 20 Nov (JA). **Starling:** 30, BRR, 4 Nov (PH et al.). **American Pipit:** only 3 reported on BRR, 4 Nov (PH et al.); 5, Douglas City, 12 Nov (DK). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** among the usual handful of wintering birds are some "eastern" birds with gray heads (subspecies *celata*?), 1 such described at Arcata, 2 Nov (RF). **Nashville Warbler:** 1 (HO), Bayshore Mall,

by Stan Harris



Ovenbird

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25 Oct-14 Nov (TL); 1, BSLP, 17 Nov (AB, EE); 1, Stagecoach Road, 19 Nov (MeH). **Yellow Warbler:** 1, Bayshore Mall, 9 Nov (TL); 1, Allen Marsh, 14 Nov (DC, MC). **Chestnut-sided Warbler (Update):** 1, Skunk Tracks at Ft. Bragg, 5 Oct (DT). **Black-throated Blue Warbler (Update):** 1 female, Skunk Tracks at Ft. Bragg, 5 Oct (DT). **Audubon Warbler:** all 10± Yellow-rumped Warblers seen at LL, 29 Oct (DK) were of this race. **Black-throated Gray Warbler:** 1, Elk Head, 17 Nov (MeH). **Palm Warbler:** our usual wintering population was represented by 12 reports of 1-2 from AB, south Arcata, AMP, North Dike of Humboldt Bay, Bayshore Mall, Mendocino Botanical Gardens, 21 Oct-20 Nov (mo). **Black-and-white Warbler:** 1, Bayshore Mall, 23 Oct-21 Nov (TL); 1, BSLP, 24 Oct (SS); 1, Elk Head, 17 Nov (MeH). **American Redstart:** 1 netted, banded, Hocker Flat near Junction City, 18 Oct (fide EE, JH); 1 juv or female, BSLP, 24 Oct (DF, JN). **Ovenbird:** 1, Redwood Science Lab, HSU campus, hit window, stunned, photographed, recovered, released, flew into ACF, 24 Oct (BZ et al.). **Common Yellowthroat:** 1, Stagecoach Road, 17 Nov (MeH). **American Tree Sparrow:** 1, near mouth of Janes Creek, 20 Nov (SC, photo), good phone description. **Chipping Sparrow:** 2 HO, TDAD, 17 Nov (MeH); 1, Lanphere Dunes, 27 Oct (PH); 1, Centerville Beach Road, 10 Nov (KR, DC). **Clay-colored Sparrow:** 2 imm near Laguna Point, 23 Oct (DT); 1, Vigo Street Marsh, 1, 21 Nov (TL); 1, V St. Loop, 5 Nov (RF, KR, DC); 1, TDAD, 19 Nov (MeH). **Vesper Sparrow:** 2, V St. Loop, 5 Nov (RF, DC, KR); 2 (same?), AMP, 9 Nov (SC). **Savannah Sparrow:** 6-10, Douglas City, 18-23 Oct; 2, LL, 17 Nov, both srl (DK). **Swamp Sparrow:** 1, HBNWR, 12 Nov (DF et al.); 3, mouth of Elk River, 26 Oct (SMcA); 9 reports of 1-3, AMP, 28 Oct-17 Nov (mo); 2, Lake Earl, 11 Nov (RF et al.). **White-throated Sparrow:** 18 reports (34 birds) from Ft. Bragg, Sunnybrae, AMP, AB, Azalea Hill (6 at one time), 4 Nov (GL), TDAD, 6 Oct-22 Nov (mo). **Harris's Sparrow:** 1, AMP, 28 Oct-8 Nov (mo; photos by SC). **Black-headed Grosbeak:** 1 female, Skunk Tracks, Ft. Bragg, 6 Oct (update), (DT); 1 imm, Azalea Hill, 4 Nov (GL). **Western Meadowlark:** 20 ±, BRR, 4 Nov (PH et al.). **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1 female, AB, 8 Nov (DC, KR); 1, Alexandre Dairy, 11 Nov (RF et al.). **Red Crossbill:** "flock," Azalea Hill, 22 Oct (GL). **Pine Siskin:** 12, Douglas City feeder, 18 Nov (DK). **Evening Grosbeak:** 1, Azalea Hill, 22 Oct (GL). **Lapland Longspur:** 2-4, Lake Tolowa, 27-28 Sep (RLeV, AB, JG); 1 MRC, 8 Oct (KI); 1, Big Lagoon, 22 Oct (RF); "some," AB, 16 Oct (KI, RF). **Chestnut-collared Longspur (SD, NC):** 1, MRC, 8 Oct (KI); 1, AB, 16 Oct (RF). **Snow Bunting:** 1, MRC, 19 Oct (KI), the earliest seasonal record ever! **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1 female, AB, 22 Sep, 12 Oct (BA, KrR).

## Contributors

Many thanks to the following who shared reports with us this month: Marge Adams, Jeff Allen, Stephen F. Bailey, Alan Barron, Gary Bloomfield, Heather Brown, Kristin Brown, Barbara Burek, Scott Carey, Joe Ceriani, Mary Chambers, Daryl Coldren, Eileen Cooper, Gary Crites, Gabriel David, Duke Diehl, Elias Elias, David Fix, Rob Fowler, Joe Gartland, Melody Hamilton, Stan Harris, Gisela Hennessy, Pablo Herrera, Joan Humphry, John Hunter, Bob Keiffer, Jhermie Kellermann, Dale Kuhn, Alexandra Lamb, Laurie Lawrence, Tom and Sue Leskiw, Gary Lester, Ron LeValley, Linda Long, Matthew Mattheissen, Sean McAllister, Jasen Meyer, Oliver Miano, Kathie Michaels, Linda Munk, Jerry Nusbaum, Chet Ogan, Jude Power, Morgan Ralph, Richard Ridenhour, Cameron Rognan, Kerry Ross, Keith Slauson, Shana Stearn, Dorothy Tobkin, Jennifer Tompkins, Lauren Tompkins, Matt Wachs, Adam Waehel, Jim Welsh, Dominick Wilkins, Jared Wolfe, Bill Zielinski, Dan Van Zile, Ben Zyla. Please call future reports to the Arcata Bird Box (707) 822-5666, to me at (707) 822-3802, send them to me at 1595 Charles Ct., Arcata, 95521, or write them on the observation board at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center.

**Birders desiring to help out on the Centerville Christmas Bird Count, 31 December, should contact Richard Ridenhour, 839-3300, who will fill in for me as compiler this year when I spend the holidays with my daughter in Texas.**