



The Sandpiper

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2010



REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.rras.org

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, October 9: ebird site survey--Shay Park.

Do you have only an hour or two to get out over the weekend to "peep" some birds? Come assist Rob Fowler on his weekly ebird site-survey at this little gem-of-a-park in Arcata. Meet at 0800 at the Shay Park parking lot that is located at the eastern end of Foster Avenue. Average trip time is about 2 hours. For more info on the ebird site survey visit this link at ebird.org: http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/eBird_Site_Survey. Call emailRob(707-839-3493;migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com) for more information and other future survey dates.

Sunday, October 10: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

This is a wonderful, two-to-three hour trip for people wanting to learn the birds of the Humboldt Bay area. It takes a leisurely pace with emphasis on enjoying the birds! Beginners are more than welcome. Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center at 9:00 a.m. Call Jude Power or David Fix (707-822-3613) for more information.

Sunday, October 17: Pelagic Trip.

Join RRAS on a foray onto the open ocean aboard the Shenandoah in search of tubenoses, jaegers, alcids, cetaceans, and other pelagic specialties. Meet at the H Dock on Woodley Island at 7 am for a 7:30 leave time and plan to return around to the dock around 3:30 p.m. To claim 1 of 12 spaces call or email Rob Fowler (707.839.3493; migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com) to claim a space. Cost is \$75 per person

Sunday, October 17: Southern Humboldt Community Park.

Jay Sooter (707-444-8001), Robert Sutherland, and/or John Gaffin will be leading this monthly walk. All ages and experience levels are encouraged to participate and revel in the beauty of the park and its avian inhabitants on this easy, two- to three-hour walk. Binoculars are not provided and dogs are not allowed; field guides are usually available but please provide your own if possible. Steady rain cancels. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot on Kimtu Road in Garberville.

Saturday, October 30: Arcata Bottoms.

Ken Burton (707-825-1124) will lead a half-day foray around the Bottoms in search of the expected and the unexpected. This outing will be mostly driving with a little walking. Pack a lunch if you think you might want to stick around for some afternoon birding, perhaps on the Samoa Peninsula. Meet at the north end of the Arcata Marsh parking lot on South G Street at 8:30 a.m.

Saturday, November 6: ebird site survey--Shay Park.

See October 9.

Sunday, November 14: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

See October 10.

Sunday, November 21: Southern Humboldt Community Park.

See October 17.

Winter Raptor Surveys: If you are interested in participating in one or more of this winter's raptor surveys in Loleta and Ferndale, contact Ken Burton (707-825-1124 or shrikethree@gmail.com) for more information or to be put on the notification list.

Arcata Marsh Field Trips: Saturdays, 8:30 am, Klopp Lake parking lot. Leader names below.

- 10/9 – David Fix
- 10/16 -- Moe Morrisette
- 10/23 -- Carol Wilson
- 10/30 – Tony Kurz

Audubon's monthly conservation meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 21, at noon at Golden Harvest Café on G Street in Arcata. All are invited to discuss local and bigger-picture conservation topics with others interested in environmental issues. For more info, call Chet Ogan (707) 442-9353.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM



© Gary Bloomfield

What is a Bird Observatory? Adventures in capturing and observing birds in the State of Jefferson.

Join us in November for a delightful tour through the institution of bird observatories, from the very first in Europe to their establishment in California at Point Reyes in 1967 and on the Farallon Islands shortly thereafter. Some 30 years ago the Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory was established right here on the Mad River Slough, and ten years ago it joined with the vibrant Klamath Bird Observatory in Ashland to share programs in northern California and southern Oregon.

Speaker **Josée Rousseau**, the Program Director of HBBO, will highlight the efforts of hundreds of people focused on monitoring birds here. She will share the natural beauty of the banding stations along the coast and inland streams, in high-altitude meadows of the Siskiyou Mountains, and on the willow-cloaked shores of the lakes and rivers in the Klamath Basin and the excitement of capturing "vagrant" birds along the coast and in migrant "traps" along Upper Klamath Lake. She will show pictures of many of the rare and interesting birds of our bioregion. Most importantly, she will explain how the monitoring of our birds can contribute substantially towards important conservation efforts, based on the vital data taken on the health and movements of these birds during all seasons of the year.

Ms. Rousseau, a native of Quebec, has a Master's on her work on birds of Montreal, and will present many interesting insights into the exciting captures in mist nets of rare "vagrant" birds along the coast and in migrant "traps" along the shores of Upper Klamath Lake.

This program will be held on

Friday, November 12

starting at 7:30 p.m.,

at the Humboldt County Office of Education

near the Burre Center at Myrtle and West in Eureka.

Bring a mug and enjoy shade-grown coffee and cookies.

Thank you for ensuring that our meetings are fragrance-free.

CHAPTER LEADERS

OFFICERS

President— Kerry Ross 839-4365
 President-Elect — Jim Clark 445-8311
 Immediate Past-President— Ken Burton.....825-1124
 Secretary—Adam Brown.....abrown@prbo.org
 Treasurer—Susan Calla.....465-6191

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Jan Andersen.....616-3888
 Rob Fowler 839-3493
 Lew & Judie Norton.....445-1791
 Chet Ogan 442-9353
 C.J. Ralph822-2015
 Jay Sooter 444-8001

OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS

Conservation—Chet Ogan442-9353
 Education -- vacant
 eBird Liason — Rob Fowler 839-3493
 Field Trips—Rob Fowler 839-3493
 Historian—John Hewston822-5288
 Membership—Lew & Judie Norton.....445-1791
 NEC Representative—.....Ken Burton.....825-1124
 Field Notes—Sean McAllister268-0592
 Programs—C.J. Ralph.....822-2015
 Publicity—Sue Leskiw.....442-5444
 Sandpiper—David Schumaker.....530-227-5192
 —Gary Bloomfield.....822-0210
 Volunteer Coordinator—Kate Rowe.. (715) 554-0498
 Webmaster—Sean McAllister268-0592
 Lake Earl Branch—Sue Calla.....465-6191
 RRAS Web Page.....www.rras.org
 Arcata Bird Alert822-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.

My check for \$20 is enclosed. (Introductory offer)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

email _____

Local Chapter Code: **C0ZC240Z**

Please make checks to the National Audubon Society.

Send this application and your check to:

National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

-----LOCAL CHAPTER-----
REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1054
EUREKA, CA 95502

In order to help cover the cost of producing and distributing Econews, the Northcoast Environmental Center is going to begin charging us \$3/year for each RRAS member who is not also a NEC member. That will be a big expense for us. Please help us and NEC by becoming a NEC member now! Membership information is on the back page of every Econews.

KEEP UP-TO-DATE THROUGH RRAS LISTSERVE

Be reminded about field trips and programs and learn about upcoming meetings, public hearings, and symposia of interest to RRAS members and other concerned nature lovers. Subscribe in 1 of 2 ways: through a Web page link at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rras> or by e-mail to rras-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Postings should have complete information. This listserv is **not** for posting bird sightings.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT TOLOWA DUNES STATE PARK

California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) has pulled its proposal to change the designation of Tolowa Dunes SP as a State Recreation Area which would have allowed hunting on a portion of the park. Sandra Jarabek and Friends of Del Norte initiated a letter writing campaign, Jim Clark contacted Dan Taylor, California Audubon Director of Public Policy who informed Executive Director Graham Chisholm. Together they contacted Ruth Colman, director of CDPR. Scott Huber, our NorCal representative contacted other NorCal chapters. A great big THANKS should go out to all of the people involved. This is round two. Round one involved trying to turn over a major portion of TDSP to CDFG as a hunting area. There will be another round involving TDSP. Stay tuned.

Two other issues we need to address are the Marine Life Protective Areas and Southern Humboldt Community Park. Please send letters supporting protection of nearshore headlands and offshore rocks as pelagic bird roosting, nesting, and foraging sites. Trinidad Rock and offshore rocks from Little River to Patrick's Point may not be included as a MLPA, but it is one of our Important Bird Areas and important to pelagic species. Visit the website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/northcoast.asp>. Send your support of additional protected areas to Marine Life Protection Act Initiative c/o California Natural Resources Agency 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Southern Humboldt Community Park (SHCP) near Garberville is proposing to rezone the park from Agricultural Exclusive to mixed use allow loud outdoor concerts that may disturb a nesting colony of Grasshopper Sparrows and resident White-tailed Kites, both state species of special concern. In addition the SHCP board is proposing to plant the fields with wheat which would be harvested, further disturbing the sparrows.

Chet Ogan
 Conservation Chair



Spotted Towhee © Gary Bloomfield

JOIN A POWERFUL FORCE FOR NATURE! PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Ithaca, NY—One backyard at a time, participants in [Project FeederWatch](http://www.FeederWatch.org) are doing their part to unravel nature's mysteries—simply by sharing information about the birds that visit their feeders from November to April. The 24th season of Project FeederWatch begins November 13, although new participants can join at any time.

People of all ages and skill levels can be FeederWatchers and do their part to help researchers better understand trends in bird populations. Participants count the numbers and different species of birds at their feeders and enter their information on the FeederWatch website at www.FeederWatch.org.

By collecting information from all these feeders in all these backyards, scientists at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](http://www.CornellLabofOrnithology.org) are able to track patterns in bird populations and movement from year to year, all across North America.

Here are just a few key findings based on nearly a quarter-century of FeederWatch data:

- Populations of Evening Grosbeaks, once one of our most common backyard birds, continue to decline.
- Many species are expanding their ranges to the north, including Northern Cardinals and Anna's Hummingbirds.

- The nonnative Eurasian Collared-Dove is invading North America at an unprecedented rate – it is now found in backyards from Florida to Alaska.

"By engaging the public we are able to pick up fluctuations that could be the result of climate change, habitat destruction, disease, or other environmental factors," said project leader David Bonter. "These are large-scale changes that we would not be able to see without the massive amount of data we receive from our participants. Keeping an eye out in your own backyard can make a difference."

To learn more about joining Project FeederWatch and to sign up, visit www.FeederWatch.org or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at (866) 989-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds, a calendar, complete instructions, and Winter Bird Highlights, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings.

Some regional findings during the 2009-10 FeederWatch season:

- Southwestern U.S. & California: American Crows, Downy Woodpeckers, and Black-capped Chickadees were recorded at more FeederWatch locations than at any point since the project began in 1987. Golden-crowned Sparrow reports were the lowest on record for the project.

- Southeastern & south-central U.S.: Common Grackle reports dropped to the lowest level in the history of FeederWatch. Chipping Sparrows were reported by more participants than ever before; also near record-high reports for Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers.

- Pacific Northwest & northern Rocky Mountains: The Bushtit visited more FeederWatch locations last winter than at any point in project history, breaking into the regional Top 20 for the first time. Reports of American Goldfinches and Anna's Hummingbirds also reached record highs for the region.

- Northeast quarter of U.S. & southeastern Canada: Relatively few birds were seen at feeders last winter as there was a near-complete lack of irruptive winter finches and the most common feeder birds were seen in lower numbers than usual. The few species seen at or near record levels included Northern Flicker, Chipping Sparrow, and Eastern Bluebird.

- North and mid-central U.S. & central Canada: Counts of House Finches were down last winter, dropping to the lowest point since 1991. Two Red-bellied Woodpeckers were seen in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as this species continues to push the northern limits of its range.

- Alaska & northern Canada: Reports of Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls were down significantly in the region. A pair of Rustic Buntings, a Eurasian species rarely seen in North America, was reported in Ketchikan, Alaska, and an out-of-range White-throated Sparrow appeared in Seward, Alaska.

- Hawaii: For the first-time, FeederWatch received reports of two introduced species: Red-billed Leiothrix (a babbler from South Asia) and White-rumped Shama (a flycatcher from South and Southeast Asia).

JOIN BIRDING ON THE MADAKET TRIP FOR GODWIT DAYS ... DRINKS AND DUNLINS SATURDAY OCTOBER 23

The Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is holding a fundraiser on the Madaket, the oldest vessel in continuous service in the U.S., right here in Humboldt Bay. David Fix, renowned local birder and biologist will be our bird guide and a no-host bar will be available.

Tickets are \$25. Saturday, October 23rd, 5:30 pm - 6:45 pm, during a low tide which will expose mudflats and invite flocks of shorebirds into close viewing range from the boat. Call the Godwit Days office at 707-826-7050 or 1-800-908-WING to purchase tickets.

This will be one of the last cruises on the Madaket before it docks for the winter. Don't miss this quality birding experience and help support Godwit Days which is being held April 14 - 20, 2011. For more information on Godwit Days go to www.godwitdays.com. For more information on the Madaket, got to

www.humboldtbymaritimemuseum.com/madaketcruises

NEW MEMBERS

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

Arcata – Chris Bolz, Cindy Kuttner, Jane Blankenship, Jill Valentine, Juliana Willsen, Lee Lyda, Mary Alice & Burton Hoyle, Mary McNelis, Randi Johnson, Robert Hoggard
 Bayside – Scott Haaland, Tara Yess, Zoe Fukui
 Carlotta – Laurie King
 Crescent City – Adrien Nash, Al Daft, Candace Tinkler, Doug Rees, Kathleen Boivin, Leona Mattson, Mona Reich
 Cutten – David Hornbrook
 Eureka – Carol Sharp, Charles Sullivan, Claudia Israel, D. Horn, Florine Smith, Georgia Gordon, Harry McBee, Judith Geppert, Karen Angel, Karen Dimter, Kathy Polifroni, Marilyn Cottrell, Mira Schwab, Mrs. Ruth P. Anderson, Nancy Britt, Robert Lochtie, Sandra Lingle, Shirley Fullner
 Fortuna – Elenor Mahouski, Jeremy King, Joan Woodcock, Raisa Montero
 Garberville – Laura Sweet
 Hydesville – George Johnson
 Klamath – Reweti Wiki
 McKinleyville – Aaron Turner, Dorothy Walls, Helen Vatcher
 Rio Dell – Mrs. F. Labs
 Scotia – Andrea Wilson, Emma Close, Sandra Bartlett
 Trinidad – Ann Elsbach, Molly Leuthner
 Willow Creek – Jean Thomas

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

IF A TREE FALLS...

Patagonia, Arizona. Saturday, February 13, 2010. The Writer's Roundup is an annual fundraiser for the Patagonia Library where book aficionados have the opportunity to meet local authors selling their wares. Several workshops are held in conjunction with the Roundup, including one that provides tips on how authors might find a publisher. Since the event didn't start until 10 am, Sue and I had some time to kill. An (adult male!) Elegant Trogon was wintering along Sonoita Creek and a Black-capped Gnatcatcher—a species that I wanted another look at—had been reported there, so we headed to Patagonia Lake State Park.

We parked and set out on the trail that heads upstream along Sonoita Creek. Blessedly, rain had returned to southeastern Arizona following a lengthy drought. A resident of Patagonia had posted to the birding listserv that he'd received 5.37 inches of rain during January. The lake level reflected the recent weather; what Sue and I had previously experienced as straw-colored grassy flats along the shore were now inundated backwater coves. Flocks of American Coots, Northern Shovelers, Ruddy Ducks, Mallards, and Green-winged Teal paddled slowly through what is usually the rarest of desert attributes. Wearing shorts had been the right call, as the air warmed quickly—an early taste of spring. Scanning the brown, desiccated beds of last year's cattails, I could see tiny pockets of emerging green shoots. A light breeze came up, triggering a flurry of cattail-head down.

For birders—and others who remain attentive—this is a storied landscape. We followed a wash upstream, dubbed by birders as "Nutting's Wash," in honor of the Nutting's Flycatcher that spent the 1997-98 winter there. The wash's lower end is in the level "meadow" area alongside the lake, a location where the stream deposits material rather than eroding it away. Because of this, most people probably walk right past "Nutting's" without even realizing there's a wash there. I glimpsed bird movement in an alligator juniper tree, but was unable to get a good look. Moving a bit further upstream, so I'd have the sun at my back, I spied a *Myiarchus* flycatcher. The chances that the bird was a Nutting's were exceedingly slim, but as I'd had no experience with the species, I tried to recall the diagnostic field marks that separate it from Ash-throated.

For just a moment, I indulged myself with a fantasy: *No knowledgeable birder has hiked Nutting's Wash this winter. Maybe this bird is the same Nutting's that once wintered here... or another Nutting's entirely.* "Show me your orange mouth," I implored. Instead, the bird gave an Ash-throated call, a rough "prrrt." *Always good to confirm a bird's identity—one way or the other.*

After several more minutes of hiking, we found our progress blocked by a "trickle-fall" over bedrock.

A rough game trail skirted the obstruction by heading steeply upslope, but we'd seen enough of Nutting's Wash, so retraced our steps back down canyon. Somewhere along the trail, one leaves the State Park and enters State Trust lands—where grazing is allowed. Through dense vegetation, Sue glimpsed the outline of a large animal. Fortunately, the bull seemed more concerned with eating than acknowledging our presence. We hiked for several more minutes until we came to the place where the canyon pinched off—the location where hikers reported that the Elegant Trogon had made an appearance yesterday at 4 p.m. Here, our progress was again arrested by several bulls, so we decided to rest in the shade. "Maybe the trogon will come to us," I said.

Studying the warty, 3-D bark of a netleaf hackberry rekindled a memory that had lain dormant for some time. "Sue, do you remember? A number of years ago, we spent several hours here looking for my nemesis bird: a Rufous-backed Robin. I believe it was Vigil #79—and counting—for that rascally robin. What a relief to have finally seen one this year at another spot."

Down below us, along the floodplain of Sonoita Creek, we heard a crack. "What's that?" Sue asked. "Probably just those bulls," I answered. Once again, we heard a snapping sound. "What the...?" I peered downslope just in time to see and hear—Cra-a-a-ck—a good-sized Gooding's willow fall to the ground. I raised my binoculars and studied the tree; it was pretty big as willows go, about 14 inches in diameter. "How cool was that? A tree falls in the woods and we were here to see and hear it go. And it's not even windy. In all my years of fieldwork, I think I only *heard* one other tree fall."

We didn't detect either the gnatcatcher or the trogon that day. On our hike out, I ruminated on the central role that chance plays in some of our observations of the natural world. A knowledgeable birder walks a nameless, undistinguished wash—and presto: a Nutting's Flycatcher. Two trogon-seekers take a break and ... blooey—they get to see a tree fall in the woods.

There's something eventful, even grand, about being present at the moment that a tree succumbs to gravity. The willow was probably scarred from bedload abrading its bark during floods. That, and perhaps a crotch or stub left from a broken limb, provided an entry point for water, pathogens, bugs. To witness the moment tree becomes log—the continuation of its cycle, of furnishing nutrients and substrate for invertebrates and fungi, and its eventual impact on channel morphology—is special. Ralph Waldo Emerson had it right: "The inevitable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common."

Tom Leskiw
February 15, 2010



LOVE AMONG FINCHES: IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT LOOKS

From: *The New York Times* – Science Section 7/12/2010

by *Sindya N. Bhanoo*

Handsome men may turn the heads of women, but for those less attractive, sociability and friendliness also seem to seduce the fairer sex. The same is true for male house finches, according to a new study.

Female house finches prefer to mate with males with the reddest feathers, but dull-colored males make themselves more appealing by acting more social before mating season, according to a study in the September issue of the *American Naturalist*. The researchers found that the duller a male bird was in color, the more likely he was to engage with multiple social groups. Birds in a social group flock and forage together and any bird can belong to multiple groups.

Drab-looking male finches drifted from group to group in the winter, the researchers found. By mating season in the spring, the less attractive males tended to have the same level of mating success as the most colorful, attractive males.

"Females have limited options to choose from and this is a way for males to manipulate their chances to find mates, by placing themselves in certain settings," said Kevin Oh, an evolutionary biologist at Cornell University and the study's lead author. The least attractive, or most yellow, males were four times as likely to interact with multiple social groups than the most attractive, or reddest, males Oh said. House finches are found across North America, but Dr. Oh and his co-author, Alexander Badyaev of the University of Arizona, studied wild populations in Arizona.



Redwood Region Audubon Society Birding Field Trip to Smith River and Lake Earl, Del Norte County, September 11, 2010, led by Ken Burton.
Photo by Susan Calla



© Rob Fowler

Notes On The Cerulean Warbler

[Humboldt County's 2nd Cerulean Warbler captured at Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory.]

This morning [October 3, 2010] we captured a hatching-year (young) male at Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory on the Mad River Slough west of Arcata. Just before 11 a very large mixed-species flock passed through the area, and at the 11 o'clock net run I approached one of our nets and found this individual caught. Jaw-dropping ensued....

Good looking bird; distinct blue-green wash... many photos taken. People who were there or joined us later to see this amazing bird include Kim Hollinger, Vitek Jirinec, Daryl Coldren, Rob Fowler, Gary Lester, Tom Leskiw, Chet Ogan among others.

– *Leslie Tucci*

Highlights Of RRAS Pelagic Trip

The RRAS pelagic trip aboard "The Shenandoah" on September 11th, with intrepid leaders David Fix and Rob Fowler. Rob reports in nwcalbird@yahoo.com the following:

We left the Trinidad dock at 0730 and arrived to the eastern edge of Trinidad Canyon in thick fog around 1100, about 25 miles out. We laid a slick out which attracted birds pretty quickly, where we got a "skua slam" with all 4 species of jaegers seen very well by all on board, along with Sabine's Gulls and all the expected shearwater species. During this time the fog burned off with the sun peeking through nicely.

BIRDERS' GLEANINGS

SELECTED E-MISSIVES FROM THE NWCALBIRD LISTSERVE

We then headed further west to the 30 mile mark but decided to head south after that since the seas progressively got worse the farther west we went. We then headed back to the east edge of Trinidad Canyon where we laid another slick and attracted a few more birds. Best bird here was the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel that only Fowler got brief, unsatisfying views of, along with more great looks at jaegers. From there we headed back to Trinidad, arriving around 3:45 pm. Other animals seen include: Harbor Porpoise-10, Northern Fur Seal-1, Mola Mola (Ocean Sunfish)-1, California Sea Lion-5.

Birds seen: Number of species: 20. Loon sp.? 2; Black-footed Albatross 8; Northern Fulmar 25; Pink-footed Shearwater 80; Buller's Shearwater 26; Sooty Shearwater 50; Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel 1 (one seen only by Fowler at the east edge of Trinidad Canyon flying through the second slick we put out in the area); Brandt's Cormorant 5; Wandering Tattler 1 (Trinidad Head); peep sp.? 30; Red-necked Phalarope 45; Red Phalarope 21; Sabine's Gull 10; Western Gull 55; California Gull 35; South Polar Skua 2; Pomarine Jaeger 8; Parasitic Jaeger 6; Long-tailed Jaeger 10; jaeger sp.? 5 (too far to id); Common Murre 44; Cassin's Auklet 25; and Rhinoceros Auklet 22.

This report was generated automatically by eBird v2 (<http://ebird.org>)

– *Rob Fowler*

A Morning At The Marsh The Joys Of Empidonax Flycatchers

David Fix reports the following in nwcalbird@yahoo.com of some adventures in the Arcata marsh [September 8, 2010]. "I saw a bright, unworn and therefore juvenile Least Flycatcher along the

east side of the Butcher Slough log pond. It was about a hundred, 150 or so feet north of the southeast corner, where the alders are free of willows beneath and birding is pretty easy.

The bird is quite bright, with olive upperparts, sharp feather edges all over, a very pale yellow wash on much of the underparts—it does not have a white throat—and a dark wing panel with pale buffy wing bars (the exposed bases of the greater coverts looked nearly black), producing a contrast suggesting an American Goldfinch, though not so extreme. The bird's primary projection was quite short. The tail was jerked upward almost constantly, and there was minor wing-flicking. The bill was short, all pale below, not as thin as in Hammond's/Gray/Dusky, and not as wide as in Willow. The bird had a clear complete whitish eye-ring without the side expansion seen in "Western" and some Hammond's (or Hammond's, sometimes).

The flycatcher plainly "whitted," and was thus either Dusky, Gray, Willow, or Least. Dusky has no such highly contrasting wing panel, and a thinner-based bill. Gray Flycatcher in fresh plumage in the off-season can be really bright but this bird was too contrasty, the bill didn't match, the tail motion was wrong, and the whit note didn't have any mustard on it; Gray has a lively, appealing call-note. A Willow Flycatcher could have eaten this bird.

This is the third Least Flycatcher I have encountered at the Marsh. The others were one Jude and I saw along the east side of the sewage ponds one Sep and then a bird Kristie Nelson found also on the east side of the log pond and also in fall.

Two bitterns flew in together and landed in the low grassy area w. of Gearhart Marsh yesterday.

– *David Fix*

12 May – 15 September 2010

This extensive reporting period brackets portions of both northward and southward migratory movements, overlying the summer breeding season. With so much information to report on, we present only selected highlights in the sections below.

Abbreviations: AM: Arcata Marsh; HBBO: Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory; HBNWR: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge; MR: Mad River; SRB: Smith River Bottoms

Pelagic Trips

On 16 May, birders on a Mendocino Audubon-sponsored pelagic trip out of Fort Bragg boasted of two nice rarities: Xantus' Murrelets (2) and a Thick-billed Murre.

Redwood Region Audubon offshore birding trips departed from Trinidad on 21 Aug and 11 Sep, and enjoyed the following highlights (21-Aug/11-Sep; many observers)

Black-footed Albatross: 8/8 • **Northern Fulmar:** 5/25 • **Pink-footed Shearwater:** 20/80 • **Buller's Shearwater:** 150/26 • **Sooty Shearwater:** 400/50 • **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel:** 2/1 • **Leach's Storm-Petrel:** 3/0 • **Black Turnstone:** 1/0 • **Red-necked Phalarope:** 12/45 • **Red Phalarope:** 3/21 • **Sabine's Gull:** 15/10 • **Common+Arctic Tern:** 30/0 • **South Polar Skua:** 1/2 • **Pomarine Jaeger:** 2/8 • **Parasitic Jaeger:** 2/6 • **Long-tailed Jaeger:** 10/10 • **Cassin's Auklet:** 10/25 • **Rhinoceros Auklet:** 15/22 • **Orange-crowned Warbler:** 1/0 • **Brown-headed Cowbird:** 1/0.

Late Spring Migrants

Red Knot: 3, Vance Rd., 23 May (KGR) • **Western Sandpiper:** 4, Klopp Lake, 16 May (SCa) • **Dunlin:** 1, AM, 16 May (SCa) • **Short-billed Dowitcher:** 31, AM, 16 May (KGR) • **Long-billed Dowitcher:** 2, V street loop - Arcata Bottoms, 12 May (KGR) • **Red-necked Phalarope:** 1, V street loop, 14 May (KGR)



American Redstart, 18 July 2010, McKinleyville, © Kerry Ross

Interesting Breeding Occurrences

American Avocet: A pair w/ two young chicks, HBNWR, 3 Jun (KGR) • **White-throated Swift:** at least one pair nested and fledged young at the MR bridge in Blue Lake, 15 May-5 Jul (KBu, SWr, CWi, RFo, JBo, DLa, HBr, KIr); and 3 were entering drain (nest?) holes under the bridge at mile post 13.28 on Hwy 36 (TLc) • **Bank Swallow:** A new nesting colony was discovered on the banks of the Eel River at Fernbridge, with upward of 100 birds observed, 11 Jun- 9 Jul (BCa, KSe, SMC, KGR, KBu), while the 4-yr old colony at the Mad River bluffs had approximately 80 birds, 14 Jun (KGR) • **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** although nesting was not confirmed, 1-2 were observed at Cuckoo Island, 12-17 Jul (KGR, SMC, GFa, SAP); this is the 5th year of the last six in which at least one cuckoo has been observed during the breeding season along the lower Eel River • **Willow Flycatcher:** 1 territorial male, Salt River, 23 Jun- 29 Jul (GSL, LPL); 1 returned for 3rd summer at MR fish hatchery, 5-27 Jun (RHe, ALa, KGR) • **Northern Parula:** 1 female observed carrying food, Cuckoo Island, 17 Jul (GFa) • **Lincoln's Sparrow:** 1 male singing and 1 bird carrying food, 2 miles w. of Grouse Mountain, (DFx, RFo, et al) • **Hooded Oriole:** 2 adults & 2 young, Shay Park, 10 Jul (RFo)

First of Fall

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1, Arcata Bottoms, 31 Aug (DSp) • **Redhead:** 1, AM, 19 Aug (JOL) • **Black Scoter:** 1, Crescent City Harbor, 1 Aug (LPI) • **Hooded Merganser:** 1, AM, 7 Aug (JOL) • **Merlin:** 1, Ten-mile Beach, 2 Sep (KHv); 1, Bayshore Mall willows, 6 Sep (KBu) • **Rough-legged Hawk:** 1, Garberville,

19 Sep (JSO) • **Lesser Yellowlegs:** 2, Lake Earl, 12 Jul (LBr); 1, AM, 24 Jul (KBu) • **Elegant Tern:** 5, Trinidad Bay, 10 June (!) (MHa); 4, King Salmon, 9 Jul (MWa); 2, Inglecreek Creek mouth, 22 Jul (KHv); 75, Eureka Channel - Humboldt Bay, 26 Jul (RFo, KBu, JJa); 15, Klamath River Mouth, 29 Jul (ABa) • **Ruddy Turnstone:** 3, Ten-mile Beach, 20 Jul (KHv); 13, South Spit, 22 Jul (TLc) • **Red Knot:** 4, South Spit, 22 Jul (TLc) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 1, Alexandre Dairy, 16 Jul (LBr); 1, Lake Tolowa, 16 Jul (LBr); 1, AM, 24 Jul (JCP, DFX) • **Western Sandpiper:** #, AM, 3 Jul (KBu); 565, Lake Tolowa, 3 Jul (JBo) • **Least Sandpiper:** 1, Arcata Bottoms, 30 Jun (KIr); 15, Fernbridge, 9 Jul (KBu) • **Baird's Sandpiper:** 1, Lake Earl, 12 Jul (LBr); 1, MR Estuary, 31 Jul-1 Aug (KIr, RFo) • **Pectoral Sandpiper:** 2, AM, 31 Aug (DSp) • **Rock Sandpiper:** 1, Crescent Beach(!), 5 Aug(!) (ZWa) • **Dunlin:** 5, Vance Rd., 21 Aug (NNe); 1, Lake Earl, 11 Sep (COG) • **Short-billed Dowitcher:** #, AM, 3 Jul (KBu); "hundreds", Lake Earl, 12 Jul (LBr) • **Long-billed Dowitcher:** #, AM, 3 Jul (KBu); "a few", Lake Earl, 12 Jul (LBr) • **Wilson's Snipe:** 1, Alexandre Dairy, 10 Aug (JBo); 1, Ocean Ranch, 4 Sep (SMc) • **Red-necked Phalarope:** 10, Pacific Shores, 8 Jul (LBr) • **Mew Gull:** 1, MR Spit, 2 Sep (KBu) • **Say's Phoebe:** 1, Arcata airport, 25 Aug (RFo) • **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** 1, MR County Park, 12 Sep (DSp) • **American Pipit:** 2, MR mouth, 12 Sep (GSL) • **Townsend's Warbler:** 4, Kneeland, 19 Aug (RBU) • **Fox Sparrow:** 1, AM, 11 Sep (CMo) • **Lincoln's Sparrow:** 1, AM, 15 Sep (RFo) • **Golden-crowned Sparrow:** 1, Red Cap Creek, 13 Sep (CMu); 1, Elk River Wildlife Area, 15 Sep (SMcA)

Locally Unusual

Leach's Storm-Petrel: #, Lake Earl, 1 Jun (M&BHo) • **Ruffed Grouse:** 1, Horse Pasture willows - Fairhaven, 2 Sep (KIr) • **Common Nighthawk:** 1, Arcata, 17 Jun (RFo) • **Pectoral Sandpiper:** 1, Potter Valley, 4 Sep (GCh) • **White-throated Swift:** #, Dyer's Overlook, 19 May (KBu); 8, Ferndale Bottoms, 24 May (GSL, LPL); 1, Humboldt Redwoods SP, 5 Jul (KBu) • **Olive-sided Flycatcher:** 1, AM log pond, 31 Jul (RFo) • **Dusky Flycatcher:** 1, Blue Lake cottonwoods, 15 May (RBU); 3, SRB, 25 May (KGR); 1, Ocean Meadows n Fort Bragg, 5 Sep (KHv) • **Ash-throated Flycatcher:** 3, AM, 28 May (DFx) • **Western Kingbird:** 2, AM, 28 May (DFx) • **Bewick's Wren:** 1, Ocean Ranch, 8 Sep (SMc) • **Townsend's Solitaire:** 1, Elk Head, 20 May (RCi) • **MacGillivray's Warbler:** 1, Eureka Marsh, 1 Jun (TLc)

High Counts

Caspian Tern: 173, Eel River mouth, 21 Jun (TLc) • **Elegant Tern:** 300, Eureka Channel, 30 Aug (RBU) • **Ruddy Turnstone:** 10, MR estuary, 27 Jul (KSI) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 12, Lake Tolowa, 30 Jul (LBr); 19, Lake Earl, 3 Aug (LBr) • **Eurasian Collared-Dove:** 88, Trinidad, 28 Jun (MHa) • **Vaux's Swift:** 700, Kneeland, 28 Aug (RBU) • **Western Wood-Pewee:** 90, Pala Road - SRB, 25 May (KRo); 92, Pala Road, 26 May (ABa) • **Willow Flycatcher:** 7, Pala Road, 25 May (KRo); 7, Pala Road, 26 May (ABa) • **Western Kingbird:** 48, Pala Road, 26 May (ABa) • **Lazuli Bunting:** 39, Mosely Road - SRB, 26 May (ABa)

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

Del Norte

Crested Caracara: 1 continues, SRB, 11 Sep (KBu) • **American Golden-Plover:** 1, Pacific Shores, 29 Jun (LBr) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 2 to 4, SRB, 7-8 May (RFo, ABa); 1, Pacific Shores, 8 Jul (LBr); 3, Lake Tolowa, 30 Jul (LBr) • **Solitary Sandpiper:** 2-3, SRB, 7-8 May (RFo, ABa, et al) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 12, Lake Tolowa, 30 Jul (LBr); 19, Lake Earl, 3 Aug (LBr) • **Ruff (Reeve):** 1, Pacific Shores, 29 Jun (LBr) • **Wilson's Phalarope:** 1, Lake Earl, 3 Aug (LBr); #, Crescent City, 18 Aug (GRa) • **Common Tern:** 4, Lake Tolowa, 16 Jul (LBr) • **Ancient Murrelet:** 1, Pt. St. George, 17 May (KBu, CSt) • **Black Swift:** 2, Crescent City, 21 May (ABa); 3-10, Pala Road - SRB, 25-26 May (KGR, ABa) • **EASTERN PHOEBE:** 1, Pala Road - SRB, 21-27 May (ABa, JGar, LBr, KGR, JLu) • **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO:** 1, Smith River riparian, 13-26 Jun (ABa, LBr, DPe) • **Mountain Bluebird:** 1, Crescent City, 22 May (JGar) • **Sage Thrasher:** 1, Alexandre Dairy, 27 May (JLu) • **Tennessee Warbler:** 1, Bailey Road, 27 May (LBr) • **Blackpoll Warbler:** 1, SRB, 21 May (LBr) • **American Redstart:** 1, Ender's Beach Road, 18 Jun (ABa, ECo, LBr) • **CANADA WARBLER:** 1 heard, Klamath Glen, 29 May (LBr) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 1, Crescent City, 30 Jun (ABa) • **Hooded Oriole:** 1, Jed Smith SP, 2 Jun (M&BHo)

Western Siskiyou

Reports from this area are exceedingly rare, so we really appreciate these!

Northern Goshawk: 1, Poker Flat, 10 Jul (DFx) • **Lincoln's Sparrow:** #, Poker Flat, 9 Jul (DFx)

Humboldt

White-faced Ibis: 1, Arcata, 3 Sep (TKu) • **American Golden-Plover:** 1, Ocean Ranch, 5 Sep (SMc) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 2, Ocean Ranch, 5 Sep (SMc) • **Black-necked Stilt:** 2-3, HBNWR, 5 Jun (RBU) • **Solitary Sandpiper:** 1, Arcata Bottoms, 6-7 May (DFx, RFo) • **HUDSONIAN GODWIT:** 1, Ocean Ranch, 5 Sep (SMc); 1, AM, 6 Sep (DMa, RHe) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 1, MR Spit, 13 Aug (KBu); 2, MR estuary, 14 Aug (RFo); 1, AM, 28 Aug (DSp) • **Tufted Puffin:** 2, off Humboldt jetties, 9 Jul (JJa, JCP) • **Black Swift:** 2, Ferndale Bottoms, 25 May (GSL, LPL); 7, McKinleyville, 25 May (KRo); 12, Arcata, 25 May (RFo); 7, McKinleyville, 25 May (KGR); 2, McKinleyville, 10 Jun (KGR); 2, AM, 26 Jun (CCo) • **White-throated Swift:** 2, Garberville, 23 May (JSO); 20, Benbow, 6 Jun (RFo); 7, Garberville, 5 Jul



HUDSONIAN GODWIT: 1, Ocean Ranch, 5 Sep © Sean McAllister

(JSO) • **Black-chinned Hummingbird:** 1 belated report, Trinidad Head, 24 May (MHa) • **NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER:** 2 unconfirmed reports this period would be only the 3rd and 4th records for Humboldt!; 1, Eureka, 12 Jun (BSa); 1, Van Duzen River near Carlotta, 14 Jul (KGR) • **LEAST FLYCATCHER:** 1, AM, 8 Sep (DFx, TKu) • **Say's Phoebe:** 1, Shelter Cove, 12 Sep (RSu) • **Plumbeous Vireo:** 1, Blue Lake, 4 Sep (KIr) • **Red-eyed Vireo:** 1, MR Fish Hatchery, 25 Jun (RFo, JBo) • **Bank Swallow:** 2, Fay Slough, 16 May (SCa); 1, AM, 20 Aug (BDe) • **Nashville Warbler:** 1, AM, 31 Jul (SSa, RFo, RBU, et al); 1, King Salmon, 20 Aug (JOL) • **Northern Parula:** 1, HBBO, 6 Jun (LTu, KHo, SWa); 1, Salt River, 23 Jun (GSL, LPL); 1, Honeydew, 27 Jun (GSL); 1f carrying food, Cuckoo Island, 17 Jul (GFa) • **Black-and-white Warbler:** 1, North Bank Road, 20 Jun (KIr); 1, MR county park, 6-28 Aug (BCa, KIr) • **Blackpoll Warbler:** 1, Shay Park, 12 Sep (RFo) • **American Redstart:** 1m+1f (pair?), MR estuary, 9-18 Jul (KGR, RFo); 1, Blue Lake, 14 Jun (KIr); 1, AM log pond, 31 Jul - 20 Aug (RFo, KIr); 1, AM, 20 Aug (TLc, BCa, KIr) • **Northern Waterthrush:** 1, AM, 1 Sep (RFo); 1, HBBO, 10 Sep (AMu) • **Hooded Warbler:** 1, MR county park, 6-12 Sep (BCa, KSe, TLc) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 1, Humboldt Hill, 8 Jun (DWh); 1, Trinidad residence, 14 Jul (MHa); 1, Hammond Trail, 30 Jul (SSa); 1, HBBO, 7-10 Sep (CJR, AMu) • **Indigo Bunting:** 1, Blue Lake, 1 Jun (KIr); 1, Arcata, 20 Jun (KIr) • **Bobolink:** 1, Blue Lake, 4 Sep (KIr) • **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1, Arcata Airport, 7 Sep (SMc) • **Great-tailed Grackle:** 1, Fay Slough / Harper Motors, 27 May (SCa) • **Hooded Oriole:** 1, Eureka, 19 May (SCa)

Trinity

GREATER ROADRUNNER: 1, Ruth Lake, 6 Aug (fide JHu)

Northern Mendocino

American White Pelican: 5, Round Valley, 3 Jul (KPa) • **Common Moorhen:** 1, Ten-mile River, 5 Sep (DTO) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 1, Virgin Creek, 28 Jul (SSa, DTO) • **Black Swift:** 1, n. Fort Bragg, 3 Jun (KHv) • **Tennessee Warbler:** 1, Usal, 15 Sep (CVa, JWh) • **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 1, Usal, 15 Sep (CVa, JWh) • **Clay-colored Sparrow:** 1, Usal, 7 Sep (JWh) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 1, Glen Blair, 26 May (BSt) • **Orchard Oriole:** 1, Westport, 7-8 Sep (KHv)

Sources include "the bird box" (707-822-LOON), nwcabird@yahoo.com, mendobirds@yahoo.com, eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/klamath-siskiyou>), and reports submitted directly to the compiler. Please submit your observations to any of the sources mentioned above (preferably eBird), or to Sean McAllister: sean@madriverbio.com; 417 2nd St., Suite 201 Eureka, CA 95501; (707) 444-8131.

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