



# The Sandpiper

MARCH/APRIL 2011



REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.rras.org

## FIELD TRIPS

**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.

**Sunday, February 27: Trinidad Head/Bay.** Kerry Ross (707/839-4365) and Rachel Smith lead this 2- to 3-hour trip. It will start with walking the slightly strenuous mile-long trail around Trinidad Head looking for resident songbirds and migrant hummingbirds. A brief sea watch looking for seabirds from the western side of the head will take place (hope for a shearwater!). The trip will finish with scoping Trinidad Bay looking for sea ducks, gulls, and various other seabirds (like Marbled Murrelet) from various points. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the base of Trinidad Head. Steady rain cancels.

**Saturday, March 12: eBird Site Survey--Shay Park.** See Feb. 19.

**Sunday, March 13: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.** This is a wonderful 2- to 3-hour trip for people wanting to learn the birds of the Humboldt Bay area. It takes a leisurely pace with emphasis on enjoying the birds! Beginners are more than welcome. Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center at 9:00 a.m. Call Jude Power or David Fix (707/822-3613) for more information.

**Sunday, March 20: Southern Humboldt Community Park.** See February 20.

**Saturday, March 26: California Thrasher Trip.** Daryl Coldren (916/384-8089) and Rob Fowler will lead this species-specific trip to look for California Thrashers around the Shelter Cove area in Southern Humboldt. Please contact Rob (see Shay Park listing) to confirm trip, meeting time and place, what to bring, etc. We will be leaving northern Humboldt early in the morning to get down to Shelter Cove by around 8:00 a.m. Four-wheel drive vehicles preferred. Rain cancels.

**Sunday, April 10: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.** See March 13.

**Sunday, April 17: Southern Humboldt Community Park.** See February 20.

**Saturday, April 2: eBird Site Survey--Shay Park.** See Feb. 19.

**Saturday, April 30: Willow Creek/Trinity River.** Ken Burton (707/825-1124) will lead this all-day trip. There should be numerous migrants and singing breeders around; we'll look and listen for flycatchers, warblers, vireos, orioles, grosbeaks, tanagers, and more. Gray Flycatcher is a strong possibility, and the area has had Oak Titmouse. Meet on Valley West Blvd. in front of Espresso 101 at 6:30 a.m. or at the Willow Creek-China Flat Museum at 7:30 a.m.



## GREAT BIRDS AND PROJECTS AT HUMBOLDT BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

By Josée Rousseau, HBBO Program Director

Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory (HBBO) ran its year-round constant-effort banding stations for the 29th consecutive year at 2 locations on the Mad River Slough, 6 miles west of Arcata. Thanks to our many volunteers, the support of C.J. Ralph, and the work of Project Leader Kim Hollinger, we captured over 2,500 birds. We were treated to some unexpected visitors such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Waterthrush, and Cerulean Warbler!

Education is an important part of our program, and again this year we gave group demonstrations for Humboldt State University classes, Audubon and Godwit Days groups, trained several biologists, and certified many banders under the North American Banding Council standards.

We also had the opportunity to participate and assist in a few new research projects including studies of Barn Swallow isotopes and a project looking at molt and migration of one of our long distance migrants, the Swainson's Thrush. Our participation in the Klamath Bird Monitoring Network's Small Owl monitoring and research project got off to a great start with the banding of 10 new Northern Saw-whet Owls migrating through Humboldt County.

HBBO, in partnership with the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory, was involved in 2 other major projects. For the PG&E WaveConnect Project, we compiled and analyzed 20 years of offshore bird data from boat surveys conducted from the Oregon border south to Shelter Cove. As part of the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas, we also succeeded in formatting and compiling more than 700,000 bird banding records from 1978 to 2009 from more than 75 banding stations in Oregon

continued on next page



## IMMINENT CHANGE IN DISTRIBUTION OF THE SANDPIPER

To reduce paper use and printing and mailing costs, and to be able to return to a monthly publication schedule, we are planning in the next few months to cease printing The Sandpiper in Econews and greatly reduce the number of print copies. Members for whom we have an e-mail address will receive a link to the online version of each issue when it's published. If we don't currently have your e-mail address, please send it to norton@humboldt1.com or join the RRAS Yahoo! group. There will be the option to receive printed copies by mail at cost; that cost is being determined and will be announced in the next issue, with signup instructions. Thank you for your understanding and assistance through this transition.

## MARCH PROGRAM



## Ice Birds and Icebergs

Chet Ogan and Jude Power will present images and vivid descriptions of their January 2010 trip to



Antarctica at the Audubon monthly program. The lecture will cover their 18-day voyage among albatrosses, penguins, flightless ducks, big bad giant petrels, toothy leopard seals, whales, and icebergs, with the jovial camaraderie of 50 other adventurers. Their ship called on the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, mainland Antarctica, and the Erebus & Terror Gulf, and they survived to tell about it.

photos © Chet Ogan

The program will be held at the Humboldt County Office of Education at Myrtle and West Avenues in Eureka, on March 11, starting at 7:30 p.m.

Bring a mug to enjoy shade-grown coffee and come fragrance free.

## CHAPTER LEADERS

### OFFICERS

President— Jim Clark ..... 445-8311  
 Vice President - Chet Ogan .....442-9353  
 Immediate Past-President— Kerry Ross.....496-0764  
 Secretary—Adam Brown.....826-0319  
 Treasurer—Susan Calla.....465-6191

### DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Jan Andersen.....616-3888  
 Rob Fowler ..... 839-3493  
 Lew & Judie Norton.....445-1791  
 C.J. Ralph .....822-2015

### OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS

Conservation—Chet Ogan .....442-9353  
 Education - .....Vacant .....  
 eBird Liaison — Rob Fowler ..... 839-3493  
 Field Trips—Rob Fowler ..... 839-3493  
 Historian—John Hewston .....822-5288  
 Membership—Lew & Judie Norton.....445-1791  
 NEC Representative— .....Ken Burton.....825-1124  
 Field Notes—Sean McAllister .....268-0592  
 Programs—C.J. Ralph.....822-2015  
 Project Manager – Ken Burton.....825-1124  
 Publicity—Sue Leskiw.....442-5444  
 Sandpiper—David Schumaker.....530-227-5192  
 —Gary Bloomfield.....822-0210  
 Volunteer Coordinator—Kate Rowe.. (715) 554-0498  
 Webmaster—Sean McAllister .....268-0592  
 Lake Earl Branch—Sue Calla.....465-6191  
 RRAS Web Page.....www.rras.org  
 Arcata Bird Alert .....822-LOON (822-5666)

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 P.O. Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502.

## 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)

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Local Chapter Code: C1ZC240Z

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**

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, 19 JANUARY 2011

Chet Ogan

Attendees: Chet Ogan, chair; Ken Burton, Jim Clark, Mel McKinney, Grant Roden, and Gil Saliba.

Chet reported on an upcoming Humboldt Bay region Spartina control environmental impact report that California Coastal Conservancy is preparing. In addition to a No Project alternative, alternatives may include manual and mechanical alternatives as well as chemical control methods using 2 chemicals approved for wetland application, Imazapyr and glyphosate.

At the RRAS board of directors meeting, Sandra Jerabek was selected to receive the Conservation Award for her tireless efforts to protect areas around Smith River Bottoms and Lake Earl.

US Fish and Wildlife Service outlined at our January general program the reasons why Barred Owl removal will be necessary to protect Northern Spotted Owls. They will be soliciting public input. Our chapter is in support of the principle, but we are awaiting the document itself.

Grant Roden, Director of Redwood Adventures, is asking for input on the wildlife plan for a redwood lodge development for tourists.

## Bird Observatory; continued from previous page

and California, a great achievement for the conservation of birds through science.

All of this would not have been possible without the help of our many volunteers: Caroline Allander, Armando Aispuro, Stephen Barlow, Curt Barnes, Adam Beeler, Emma Blackburn, Ken Burton, Kevin Creely, Minh Dao, Sarah Dewees, Jasmine Giroux, Megan Healy, Tara Hohoff, Kate Howard, Vitek Jirinec, Amy Leigh Trost, Daniel Lee, Adrienne Levoy, Maia Lipschutz, Jeff Moker, Lauren-Morgan Outhisack, Alisa Muniz, Chris Murray, Stephanie Nefas, Marisa Parish, Tim Pendexter, Brian Robinson, Christina Rockwell, Kate Rowe, Lucy Rowe, Chris Smith, McKenzie Trainor, Leslie Tucci, Aaron Spidal, Shannon Wadham, and Jared Wolfe. We are grateful to Lane DeVries of Sun Valley Floral for providing housing for some of our volunteers at wonderful quarters in Samoa! A great big thank you to all of you . . . we love you!

We are pleased to announce that HBBO is now affiliated with the Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO). Our partnership is good news for the conservation of birds and habitat in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. To become a member of HBBO/KBO, please contact me, Josée Rousseau, at jsr@klamathbird.org or go to [www.klamathbird.org/contribute.html](http://www.klamathbird.org/contribute.html). To volunteer for HBBO, please contact Kim Hollinger at krh@klamathbird.org or me.

## STUDENT NATURE WRITING CONTEST DEADLINE 3/21

For the sixth year, RRAS is sponsoring a student nature writing contest. Up to 3 cash prizes will be awarded for the best essay(s) or poem(s) by a Humboldt or Del Norte County student in grades 4-12 on the topic, "What nature means to me." The first-place winner will be published in the June/July 2011 children's issue of The Sandpiper, with any others appearing on the RRAS website.

Entries should be up to 300 words in length; one entry per person. Topics suitable for exploration include, but are not limited to, bird feeding, duck hunting, animal rescue, and observations of the natural world.

Include student's name, home address, phone number and/or e-mail, teacher name, grade, and school. Deadline for receipt: Monday, March 21. Send submissions as text within the body of an e-mail to [tomleskiw@suddenlink.net](mailto:tomleskiw@suddenlink.net) or mail a printout to Tom Leskiw, 5440 Cummings Rd, Eureka 95503. Award(s) will be presented in mid-April at the Godwit Days Festival in Arcata.

## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

International Migratory Bird Day will be celebrated in Orleans on April 29 and 30. The local event, "Tony Hacking Memorial Bigfoot Birding Day," will kick off Friday evening with a free slideshow featuring photos and recordings of local birds and possibly a potluck dinner. Saturday at 7:30 a.m., Tom Leskiw, Bob Claypole, and possibly others will lead a bird walk to 2 locations in Orleans. Both events will be held at the Panamnik Building, 38150 Hwy 96, Orleans. Local entries in the Student Bird Art Contest cosponsored by RRAS will be posted. For more information, contact Hope Woodward at [hdwoodward@fs.fed.us](mailto:hdwoodward@fs.fed.us).

## NEW MEMBERS

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

**Arcata** – Betsy Foben & Andy Rogens, David Mouton, Donald Clancy, Eileen Bolz, Irith Shalmony, Jessica E. Lilley, John McNeely, John Stokes III, Mary Freedlund, Meghan Still, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Stuart, Murphy Family, Shannon Frischknecht, Violet Hales  
**Bayside** – Nancy Cook

**Blue Lake** – Sandy & Flora Harper

**Burnt Ranch** – Naomi Hunt

**Crescent City** – Edward Craven, Farah Carter, Gudrun & William Gilbert, Patricia Dahlhoff, Ronald Calabretta, Scott Scherer, T. Merritt, Wendy Crocco

**Eureka** – Ann M. Seemann, Beatrice Avcollie, Celeste Waddell, Dorothy Axsmith, Dr. & Mrs. J Russell Little, Elaine Grosso, Jane Good, John Thomas, Laura Rosenthal, Lauren Vucci, Lee Montgomery, Loralee Dulme-Malone, Marsa Jordan, Melanie Pizzini, Michael & Kari Love, Misty Love, Patric Lewis, Ryan Baumbusck, Sophie Vyborny, The Evans

**Fortuna** – Bob & Sena Gillenwater, Jeralee Woychak  
**Garberville** – Linda Lyons

**Klamath** – Doris Timm

**Kneeland** – Kay Olsen, Sandy Andersen

**Loleta** – Hope Wynecoop, Jim & Linda Carr

**McKinleyville** – Carol Harrison, Jenny Kinsey, Linda Jamal Wren, Robert McAllister, Ron Coffman, Viola Chriswell

**Orleans** – Becky Goodman

**Trinidad** – Carolyn Christenson, Ellen Schaumann, Kimberlea Thorpe, Marvin & Kirsten Trump, Oceana Madrone

**Whitethorn** – Catherine Kidwell, Joe J. Lopes

**Willow Creek** – Ann Elias

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



© Sue Leskiw

## REMINDER: MARCH 25 STUDENT BIRD ART CONTEST DEADLINE

The deadline is fast approaching to enter the 8th Annual Student Bird Art Contest, cosponsored by RRAS and Friends of Arcata Marsh (FOAM). Some \$550 in prizes will be awarded to Humboldt County K-12 students who submit artwork of 40 suggested species or another common local bird. Prize(s) will be given for the best rendition of a bird in its natural habitat.

Artwork may be color or black and white. Any media may be used (e.g., crayons, pastels, paint, pencil, collage). Maximum size is 8.5 x 11 inches. Artwork must be light enough to be push-pinned to a wall for display. One entry per person. Flyers with complete rules are available at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center and Strictly for the Birds in Eureka or by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to Louise Bacon-Ogden, 2337 B Street, Eureka 95501.

Artwork may be dropped off at Strictly for the Birds, 123 F Street, Eureka, or the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, 569 South G Street, Arcata, or mailed to Sue Leskiw, 5440 Cummings Road, Eureka 95503. Entries must be received by Friday, March 25, to be considered.

Select a species from this list (or another common local bird) when creating your artwork entry: American Avocet, American Goldfinch, American Robin, American Wigeon, Anna's Hummingbird, Bald Eagle, Belted Kingfisher, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Bufflehead, California Quail, Cedar Waxwing, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Cinnamon Teal, Cliff Swallow, Common Loon, Common Yellowthroat, Forster's Tern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Marbled Godwit, Marbled Murrelet, Marsh Wren, Northern Flicker, Northern Harrier, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Pileated Woodpecker, Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-shouldered Hawk, Snowy Plover, Spotted Owl, Spotted Towhee, Steller's Jay, Tufted Puffin, Varied Thrush, Western Grebe, Western Meadowlark, White-tailed Kite, or Wood Duck.

## HAVE HAMMER, WILL TRAVEL?

Get an advance look at Student Bird Art Contest entries and interact with a fun crew by helping to hang the hundreds of entries in the Arcata Community Center. Bring a lightweight hammer and something to hold pushpins (such as a fanny pack) on Friday, April 15, starting at 10 a.m. Please contact Sue at [sueleskiw@suddenlink.com](mailto:sueleskiw@suddenlink.com) or 442-5444 if you could help for an hour or 2. Many hands make light work for this volunteer task.

## RRAS SUPPORTS COUNTY SCIENCE FAIR

For the 9th year, RRAS is underwriting an award for the best project related to birds or their habitat at the Humboldt County Science Fair. A prize of \$50 will be given at the event, to be held at Humboldt State University the week of March 14.

## GODWIT DAYS CELEBRATES 16 YEARS

Extraordinary birding awaits at the **16th Annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival**, held April 15-17 at the Arcata Community Center. See the **Godwit Days** Page in *this* issue of *ECONews* for more information, or go to: [www.godwitdays.com](http://www.godwitdays.com).

## BIRDING IN COLOMBIA— A RETROSPECTIVE

by Jude Claire Power

I recently returned from a 12-day birding tour of southwestern Colombia promoted to RRAS members by Ken Burton and organized and led by Chris Calonje. A native Colombian with an American mother, Chris lives in Klamath Falls and owns Colombia Birdwatch (<http://www.colombiabirdwatch.com>). He is also involved with Mapalina (<http://www.mapalina.com>), an organization dedicated to training Colombian youths to become birding guides, thus providing them an employable skill while supporting and enhancing a growing ecotourism industry. Colombia is emerging from isolating decades of drug cartel intimidation and is now largely under control, thanks to the current and previous presidents. It is a country awakening to a renewed national identity and pride and an awareness that ecotourism could help move it back into the global mainstream of travel destinations. As many birders know, Colombia has recorded more bird species than any other nation on the planet. Its perfect location, straddling Central and South America and the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, has resulted in a neotropical avifauna of almost unfathomable variety. In addition, a number of our North American breeders spend the winter months in Colombia's extraordinarily rich birding milieu.

Chris took us first to his family farm and planted us on the spreading veranda overlooking a garden backed up to dense, unmanaged tropical vegetation, and Colombia began her seduction. Cecropias and other large trees enticed a procession of jewel-like tanagers, hummingbirds, and other compatriots such as brush-finch, spinetail, euphonia, and wood-wren. What had been a tightly wound spring in my mind began to uncoil almost imperceptibly. I didn't take in much of anything until I found myself wandering off, down the steps and around the back of the house to get a better view of a bamboo thicket concealing a Slaty Spinetail beckoning in its throaty, rhythmic voice. I stood still, listening to its "I am here!" refrain, beginning to notice the minute explosions of mist droplets on my cheeks and eyelids and the play of shape and color in the green wall of the woods. My shoulders inched downward. Furled 2-meter leaves like elongated spear tips thrust upward alongside drooping Cecropia leaves 2 feet across, spreading open like beseeching hands. Nearby, a tall tangled tree with broad, rounded leaves was reminiscent of glossy magnolias. Next to it, an even taller one, festooned with clusters of long seed-swollen pods, promised another generation of this generous plant that harbors birds and the fruits they require to live. We were definitely not in Humboldt anymore.

Our first day of organized birding was spent walking a dirt track twisting upward toward Cali's hilltop communication towers in El Bosque de San Antonio. Here we shared the lush forest and its beautiful birds with a group of Mapalina guide trainees. They were obviously pleased with our appreciation of "their" birds and our curiosity about the abundant, exotic plant forms spilling down the hillside. We practiced our Spanish, and they practiced their English. Perhaps the most beautiful bird seen that day was the ruby- and emerald-feathered Collared Trogon, though tanagers continually dazzled us. Among them, we spotted an elegant Blue-necked Tanager with its deep cobalt head offset by black body feathers and a buff wing.

Two subsequent days were spent in steamy lowland jungle along the old highway to the coast, clinging to the San Juan River canyon sides where waterfalls, landslides, and collapsing roadbeds are routine. One enormous waterfall cascaded directly onto the highway. We began to orient to unfamiliar landscapes and bird genera as the San Juan rushed below us toward the sea. Riots of Mealy Parrots squawked and gorged themselves among downslope treetops at eye level as we wound along the river canyon. A Fasciated Tiger-Heron fished from a midstream boulder, fine barring rippling down its breast. A perched Laughing Falcon watched our procession of umbrellas ricochet from one singing bird to another along the road margins. Young boys eyed us, approaching in hopes of a peek through our binoculars.

We also explored the valley between the Cordillera Occidental and Cordillera Central, including an enormous flooded agricultural area where we walked levees separating ponds, wet meadows, and open woodland as we identified Striated and Cooi Herons, Limpkin, Blue-headed Parrot, Yellow-backed Oriole, Dwarf Cuckoo, and the formidable Ringed Kingfisher, similar to our Belted but much larger. (The official "wetland" on our itinerary was inaccessible because the access road was flooded. Although we were scheduled to be there during a dry season, the rains had not yet abated, and we birded in rain every day of the tour. It was the wettest rainy season there in over 30 years!)

Most of our time in Colombia was spent in the cool, high-elevation rainforest of the Andes. We climbed the cordilleras' flanks to probe rainforest edges for their secrets: new and unfamiliar birds with wild names such as sunangel, sylph, xenops, hemispingus, and flowerpiercer. We really did get to watch flowerpiercers pierce flowers! Over time, our leisurely explorations turned to memories, collected visions of glowing trogons in dappled light, flashing hummingbirds, frustrating tapaculos singing under cover, serene motmots, ever more sparkling tanagers ranging through the canopy, remote lodges, and delicious Colombian meals. I especially liked the Brown-banded Antpittas that had learned to go to a feeding station supplied with worms by our host in the mountains outside Manizales. My favorite I named Fast Food because he'd sneak to the edge of the small clearing in his upright, long-legged posture; slowly look around at his observers, who were staying very still and holding their breaths; then dash over, grab a worm, and run back under cover really fast. He was so cute! And the rain and leaf-drip didn't phase him.

The finale of our tour was a visit to the 13,600-foot Parque Nacional Natural Los Nevados in search of an oddly appointed hummingbird, the Bearded Helmetcrest, and several other high-altitude specialties, most of which we found—along with a gigantic bumblebee—with the expert guidance of Daniel Restrepo, our guide the last 4 days. Acclimation to the extreme elevation involved several stops and short walks as we climbed into the clouds and patronage of the obligatory purveyors of coca tea, a legitimate reason to partake of a notorious local product.

Many of the North American migrants we saw in Colombia are also seen annually, or almost annually, in Humboldt County: Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Spotted Sandpiper, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and Black-and-white Warbler. It is almost disorienting to be in such an exotic locale and happen upon a familiar species from home. Have I seen this individual before? It served to remind us that "home" to a bird can include more than 1 country, more than 1 hemisphere, more than 1 precious patch of food- and shelter-providing habitat. These birds are shared by everyone and know no political borders.

We recorded about 250 species in total. Our tour had the usual elements of neotropical birding adventures: zany hummingbird displays at feeders, shy singers who ultimately remained unseen, intimate encounters with individual birds, dripping canopies and pounding rain, stretches of road weaving through sinuous sunlit valleys, friendly people, and the unexpected charm of city sculpture gardens and fountains. It also had the surprise of Colombia, a beautiful country that is reentering the mainstream from behind a cloud of fear and disenfranchisement. Today Colombia beckons to those with an appreciation of neotropical birds, verdant landscapes, and welcoming people.

Incidentally, Ken is trying to arrange a 2- to 3-week tour for this fall or winter. If you're interested, tell him what dates would work best for you ([shrikethree@gmail.com](mailto:shrikethree@gmail.com) or 707/825-1124). I highly recommend the experience and will do it again if I can! Chris will have a booth at Godwit Days, and I urge you to stop by and chat with him or one of the tour participants.

## THE ADVENTURES OF DOCTOR DEATH

Recently I was reminded of a nickname that once attached itself to me, Doctor Death. It's not what you think, though. I've never "Kevorked" anyone...

Last night I found myself sleepless in the wee hours, so I returned to reading *Mariposa Highway*, Robert Michael Pyle's tale of his butterfly Big Year. "Butterfly roadkill is a sad aspect of this work, but it seems inevitable. I braked for butterflies a thousand times. But the trucks slaughter them wholesale, and even the most devoted optics-only watchers smack objects of their affection on the way to the habitat. Recovering them as museum-bound, well-labeled specimens is a way of honoring their lives, and maybe redeeming their downfall."

During the period 1981-99, I commuted from Trinidad—actually, Westhaven—to the Forest Service office in Willow Creek on a near-daily basis. Getting an early start over that length of time ensured encounters with a wide variety of phenomena: fires, mudslides, blizzards... and wildlife that included coyote, bobcat, elk, mountain lion, Bald Eagle, and Osprey. Unfortunately, not all the wildlife I saw was alive. For some reason, the mid-1990s were a veritable zenith for road-killed birds. One morning while driving the carpool on Hwy 299 about 2 miles east of Redwood Creek, I spied the carcass of a large bird on the road shoulder. With no warning, I pulled over and skidded to a stop. It should be noted that, while not exactly enthusiastic about their non-elective association with Dr. Death, members of said carpool granted my quirky behavior as much leeway as humanly possible.

The bird was a Ruffed Grouse, the first road kill of this species I'd ever encountered. I hefted the bulky grouse into my trunk and continued to work. "Hey, Doc," asked carpool member Carolyn Cook, "What are you going to do with *this* patient?" "I'm sure Humboldt State University (HSU) will want it for its study skin collection," I responded. "In our area, Ruffed Grouse are restricted to stream corridors, or, to a lesser degree, dense alder regrowth that colonizes old clear-cuts. Because most roads are mid or upper slope, they rarely penetrate streamside habitat. No roads, so little chance for being struck by vehicles."

Arriving in Willow Creek, I found a plastic bag and placed my specimen in the freezer section of the lunch room refrigerator. Over the years, biologists from both the Lower Trinity Ranger District and Redwood Sciences Laboratory

had occasionally deposited wildlife carcasses, er... specimens, in said freezer—much to the chagrin of other fridge users. In this case, I couldn't foresee any objections. After all, it was a game species. Furthermore, might not one man's grouse be another's Lean Cuisine Chicken Parmesan? At break time, I called Tamar Danufsky, curator of HSU's wildlife collection. "Sure, we'd be happy to receive the grouse," she responded.

Another day, another commute. While ascending the west flank of Berry Summit in February 1992, I came across a recently killed Long-eared Owl. This was an exciting discovery, as we still have much to learn about both the wintering and nesting status of this species on the North Coast.

Epilog: Ruffed Grouse. Usually Chuck Glasgow was a member of my carpool to Willow Creek. However, the summer that I retrieved the Ruffed Grouse carcass, he had a time-consuming road-decommissioning project south of Grouse Mountain that required a daily O-dark 30 departure from the coast. As a result, he didn't have the pleasure of our company that field season. A year or so after I salvaged the grouse, several of us were discussing the rigors of the commute:

"You never know what you're gonna encounter," Chuck opined. Turning to me, he said, "Oh, you should find this interesting. One morning, just as I'm pulling the grade toward Berry Summit, this big old chunky bird flies from out of nowhere and commits hari-kari on my windshield. It was good-sized, definitely not your average sparrow-type." The light of comprehension flickered on. "Hmm, a large bird, you say? Maybe kinda like a chicken?" I asked. "Yeah, that's it. Like a big chicken. But how did you know?" I burst out laughing. "Because I picked it up, dude. The Ruffed Grouse's passing wasn't in vain. It's now at HSU, specimen #8401."

Carcasses can yield some startling data. In 1997, I came across a freshly killed Spotted Owl. The events of the day provided the most-convincing evidence to date that Barred Owls prey on Spotted Owls. See [www.tomleskiw.com](http://www.tomleskiw.com); essays, Encounter at Skunk Cabbage Creek and Google SORA, then search on Tom Leskiw.

Tom Leskiw  
February 1, 2011

## eBird TIP №2



### ONLINE PROGRAMS FOR CALCULATING DISTANCE AND AREA

By Rob Fowler

As many eBird users probably already know, there's been a push from the eBird coordinators to persuade eBird users to not use the "casual/incidental" observation type when entering checklists unless birding was not your primary purpose or for entering historical data with no effort data attached to it. Using the "traveling count" or "area count" observation types is by far much more useful data to scientists that are using, or will use, eBird data to monitor and map bird populations since the eBirder must keep track of time spent for that specific checklist, the distance traveled, and/or the size of the area covered. Keeping track of time is easy to do with a watch or a cell phone, of course, but what about keeping track of distance traveled or the size of the area covered for a specific eBird checklist? It is pretty easy to keep track of distance covered while birding from a car with a travel odometer or on foot with a GPS unit using the route-tracking function. But what if you don't have those options and don't feel confident that you can accurately estimate your distance traveled or the size of the area you covered? This second eBird tip will talk about 2 online programs with regard to traveling and area count protocols: Runningmap.com and Google planimeter. Using these programs can help you easily calculate distance traveled and the size of area covered, taking the guesswork away when entering eBird data for these observation types.

Runningmap.com is a website for runners, cyclists, hikers, and now, eBirders who would like to plan, save, and share their routes. This website is an easy means for figuring out the distance you traveled while birding at your favorite location. Runningmap.com is easy to navigate and takes little time to figure out how to begin calculating your distance when you go

birding somewhere like the Arcata Marsh and you want to accurately calculate your distance from walking around the Butcher Slough log pond and then to Brackish ("McKay") Pond and back. If you register with the website (which is free), you can save all your routes and even publicly share them so that others can easily use them.

Google planimeter ([www.acme.com/planimeter](http://www.acme.com/planimeter)) is a useful website if you use the "area count" observation type when eBirding. The website uses Google maps, and as on the normal Google maps website, you can select different views like the generic-looking map, satellite images, the popular hybrid map version, and a couple of other sometimes-useful map-viewing options. This website is basic since—unlike googlemaps—you can't type in a city and state and have it zoom right to it, which saves valuable search time. If it's your first time visiting the site, it will zoom into a general location based on your Internet address. For first-time users in coastal Humboldt County, it will probably take you to a general map of the Humboldt Bay area. This site is relatively easy to use and will greatly help eBirders easily calculate the size of the area surveyed. So now that you know about these useful websites, go out and do some eBird traveling and area counts!

*The Sandpiper eBird tip is a new column that hopes to inspire increased eBird use in Northwestern California. If you have suggestions for an eBird tip or any other eBird-related questions, contact RRAS eBird liaison Rob Fowler at [migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com](mailto:migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com). Rob reviews eBird records for Humboldt, Trinity, and Siskiyou Counties and openly admits to his eBird addiction.*

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Field Notes is a compilation of bird sighting reports for Del Norte, Humboldt, northern Mendocino, Trinity, and western Siskiyou counties. Sources include the RRAS bird alert (707/822-LOON), the online northwestern California birding and information exchange ([nwcalbird@yahoo.com](mailto:nwcalbird@yahoo.com)), the Mendocino County birders' listserv ([mendobirds@yahoo.com](mailto:mendobirds@yahoo.com)), eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/klamath-siskiyou>), and reports submitted directly to the compiler. Future reports may be submitted to any of the sources mentioned above or to Daryl Coldren: 916/384-8089; QuiAvisPetit@aol.com; 7333 Humboldt Hill Rd, Eureka, CA 95503. MOB = many observers, NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, SP = State Park

**Snow Goose:** reports of 1-8, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 17 Nov-1 Feb (TK, LP, SMC, DC, LT, MB, JP, DF, MOB) • **Ross's Goose:** reports of 1-12 individuals, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 8 Dec-15 Jan (MOB) • **Brant:** 4,300, *Humboldt Bay*, 30 Dec (MW) • **Tundra Swan:** 2, Bald Hills Rd, n of Fort Bragg (unusual loc.), 21 Dec (DT) • **Eurasian Wigeon:** 1, *Hiller Park*, 17 Nov (RF); 3, *King Salmon*, 28 Nov (MW); 2, *Alexandre Dairy*, 6-16 Dec (AB, LB, JLu); 1, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 9-20 Jan (JP, DF, TK, KR, RSm) • **"Eurasian" Green-winged Teal:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 17-31 Jan (BB, RH, JO, JSa) • **Redhead:** 100-300, *King Salmon*, 28 Nov-30 Dec (MW) • **Tufted Duck:** 1, *Stone Lagoon*, 24 Nov (JA) • **Harlequin Duck:** 1-2, *Humboldt Bay*, 30 Nov-22 Jan (MOB) • **Black Scoter:** 1, *Eureka Channel*, 30 Dec (RF) • **Long-tailed Duck:** 1, *Smith River Mouth*, 14 Dec (TK); 1-3, *King Salmon*, 10-29 Jan (TK, MW, DC, JOI, MOB); 1, *Eureka Slough*, 18 Dec-11 Jan (RH, KH, KB, HV); 1, *MacKerricher SP*, 18 Dec (DT) • **Common Goldeneye:** 30, *King Salmon*, 28 Nov (MW) • **Barrow's Goldeneye:** 1-2, *Smith River*, 19 Dec-8 Jan (AB, LB, JS, JLo, FO, DC, MB, OJ, LT, MOB) • **Hooded Merganser:** 1-3, *Bear River Ridge*, 3 Dec-17 Jan (SMC, DC, FO, et al.) • **Red-necked Grebe:** 30, *King Salmon*, 31 Jan (MW) • **Cattle Egret:** 1, *Arcata Bottoms*, 7 Nov-1 Feb (RF, MOB) • **Cattle Egret:** 1, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 15 Jan (TK, JSa, FO, et al.) • **Green Heron:** 1, *Willow Creek*, 26 Dec (KB, GB) • **Ferruginous Hawk:** 8 reports of 1-3 birds, *Smith River Bottoms*, *Bear River Ridge*, *Arcata Bottoms*, *Kneeland*, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 1 Dec-28 Jan (MOB) • **Rough-legged Hawk:** 6 reports of single birds, *Bear River Ridge*, *Arcata Bottoms*, *Bald Hills Rd*, 3 Dec-29 Jan (SMC, KR, RSm, TK, DS, DC) • **Golden Eagle:** 1, *Kneeland*, 28 Jan (DC, TK, DS) • **Crested Caracara:** 1, *Smith River Bottoms*, Nov-1 Feb (AB, MOB) • **GYRFALCON:** 1, *Crescent City Harbor*, 6 Dec (LB); 1 (possible), *Crab Park*, 8 Dec (MB, DC, LT, TK, SMC) • **Prairie Falcon:** 1, *Kneeland*, 28 Jan (DC, TK, DS)



Sandhill Crane, © Daryl Coldren  
Ferndale Bottoms, Humboldt County

• **SANDHILL CRANE:** 1, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 15-31 Jan (JSa, TK, DC, RH, MOB) • **American Golden-Plover:** 1, *Cannibal Island Rd*, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 8-12 Dec (DC, MB, TK, LT) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 14-21, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 8 Dec-9 Jan (DC, LT, MB, TK, JP, DF, MOB) • **MOUNTAIN PLOVER:** 1, *Clam Beach*, 23 Jan-1 Feb (RR, MOB) • **Rock Sandpiper:** many reports of 1-6 individuals, *Humboldt Bay North Jetty*, 9 Dec-1 Feb (MOB); 1, *Laguna Pt-MacKerricher SP*, 21 Nov-23 Dec (DT) • **Black Oystercatcher:** 1, *South Jetty*, 18 Jan (MW) • **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** 1 first cycle, *Alexandre Dairy*, 3 Dec (LB); 1 (likely same bird), *Ft Dick*, 30 Jan (LB) • **Glaucous Gull:** 1, *Crescent City Harbor*, 1 Dec (DB); 1, *lower Smith River*, 6 Dec (LB); 1-2, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 15 Jan (TK, DC, RF, RH, CO, MOB); 1 ad, *North Jetty*, 16 Jan (JLa) • **Caspian Tern:** 1, *Crab Park*, 13 Dec (TK, DC); 1, *Eureka Slough*, 30 Dec (RF) • **Rhinoceros Auklet:** 1, *Big Lagoon*, 17 Nov (JA) • **White-winged Dove:** 1, *Crescent City*, 10 Dec (JG) • **Burrowing Owl:** 1, *Centerville Beach*, 2 Dec (GL) • **Long-eared Owl:** 2-4, *Salt River*, 2-3 Jan (GB,



Mountain Plover, © Tony Kurz  
Clam Beach, Humboldt County

DC, RH) • **Short-eared Owl:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 21 Jan (DF) • **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** 1, *McKinleyville*, 18 Dec-22 Jan (GL, MOB); 1, *Fort Bragg*, 4 Feb (JW) • **Red-naped Sapsucker:** 1, *Smith River*, 13-18 Jan (AB, SL, MOB) • **Yellow-shafted Flicker:** 1, *McKinleyville*, 7 Jan (CW) • **NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER:** 1, *Little Valley*, 2 Jan (Fort Bragg CBC) • **Say's Phoebe:** 1, *Cock Robin Island*, 8 Dec (SMC, DC, LT, MB, TK); 1, *Fortuna*, 2 Jan (RH); 1, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 8 Dec-19 Jan (SMC, DC, OH, LT, MB, TK); 1, *Arcata Bottoms*, 23 Jan (JP, DF) • **DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER:**



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, © Daryl Coldren  
McKinleyville, Humboldt County

1, *HSU Marine Lab, Trinidad*, 1-3 Dec (WL, DC, LT, DS, TK) • **Tropical Kingbird:** 1, *Crescent City*, 21 Nov (SL, AB) • **BROWN SHRIKE:** 1, *S Clam Beach*, 21 Nov-1 Feb (GL, LL, DC, MOB) • **Northern Shrike:** 1, *Bald Hills Rd*, 17 Nov (DC, LT) • **Solitary Vireo:** 1, *Shay Park*, 4 Dec-4 Jan (RF, RH, KS) • **Violet-green Swallow:** 7, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 27 Jan (DS) • **Barn Swallow:** 1-5, *Arcata Marsh*, 26 Dec-23 Jan (EE, BB, JO) • **Oak Titmouse:** 1, *Crescent City*, 17 Nov-30 Jan (SL, AB, MOB); 1, *Willow Creek*, 26 Dec (KB, GB); 1, *Salyer*, 26 Dec (KB, GB); 1, *Little Valley*, 2 Jan (Fort Bragg CBC) • **White-breasted Nuthatch:** 1, *Mts E of Smith River*, 19 Dec (GL); 6, *Bald Hills Rd*, 29 Jan (DC, TK, DS) • **House Wren:** 1, *Shay Park*, 11 Dec-29 Jan (RF, MOB) • **Western Bluebird:** 14, *Blue Lake*, 14 Jan (RH); 1, *McKinleyville*, 26 Jan (GL); 4, *Kneeland*, 28 Jan (DC, TK, DS) • **Townsend's Solitaire:** 1, *Eureka*, 17 Dec-18 Dec (BS) • **Swainson's Thrush:** 1 (a late date), *Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory*, 5 Dec (LT) • **Northern Mockingbird:** 1, *Foster Rd, Arcata Bottoms*, 18 Nov (TK, DS); 1, *Salyer*, 26 Dec (KB, GB); 1, *McKinleyville*, 18 Dec-1 Jan (GF, KS, DC, RH, LT) • **Tennessee Warbler:** 1, *Eureka*, 4 Jan (BS) • **Nashville Warbler:** 2, *Clendenden's Cider Works, Fortuna*, 3 Jan (DC, RH, LT); 1, *Ten-Mile River*, 19-23 Jan (KHv); 1,



Dusky-capped Flycatcher, © Leslie Tucci  
Trinidad, Humboldt County

*Arcata Marsh*, 24 Jan (RW, EH) • **Black-throated Gray Warbler:** 1, *S Fork Mt Rd/299*, 26 Dec (RH, CO); 1, *Blue Lake*, 11 Jan (RH) • **Palm Warbler:** 2, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 8 Dec (TK, SMC, DC, LT, MB); 1, *Shay Park*, 11 Dec (RF); 1 (each), *McKinleyville*, 11-12 Dec, 8 Jan (KS, RF); 5, *Alexandre Dairy*, 16 Dec (AB, JLu); 1, *Smith River Bottoms*, 1 Jan (EE); 1, *Crescent City*, 8 Jan (DC, MB, OJ, LT, et al.); 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 3-29 Jan (GZ, BR, JO, MOB); 1-3, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 2-15 Jan (SC, DC, LT, MW); 1, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 15-28 Jan (DC, KR, RS, JSa); 1, *Orick Levee*, 6 Dec (DC, MB, LT) • **Black-and-white Warbler:** 1, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 15-24 Jan-1 Feb (RSh, DC, RH, TK, KB) • **Northern Waterthrush:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 3 Dec-23 Jan (RF, DC, RH, LT, GZ, MOB) • **Wilson's Warbler:** 1, *Crescent City*, 19 Dec (OH) • **Western Tanager:** 1, *Crescent City*, 21 Nov (SL, AB) • **Clay-colored Sparrow:** 1, *McKinleyville*, 11-27 Dec (KS) • **Vesper Sparrow:** 1, *Arcata Airport, McKinleyville*, 19 Nov (KR, RSm) • **Lark Sparrow:** 1, *Centerville Beach*, 2 Jan (GL) • **"Red" Fox Sparrow:** 1, *Crescent City*, 18-21 Nov (AB) • **Swamp Sparrow:** many reports of 1-3 individuals, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, *S. Clam Beach*, *Arcata Marsh*, *Jacoby Creek*, *Fay Slough*, *Eureka Slough*, 11 Nov-1 Feb (MOB) • **White-throated Sparrow:** 1, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 17 Nov (TK); 1-3, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 2-15 Jan (SC, DC, LT, MW) • **Harris's Sparrow:** 1, *Crescent City*, 29 Nov (SL, GM) • **Lapland Longspur:** 13, *Arcata Airport, McKinleyville*, 19 Nov (KR, RSm); 4, *Cannibal Island Rd, Ferndale Bottoms*, 8 Dec (SMC, DC, LT, MB, TK); 14, *Arcata Bottoms*, 1 Jan (TK) • **Snow Bunting:** 1, *Bald Hills Rd*, 16 Nov (DC, LT) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 1, *Bayside*, 15-16 Dec (BH); 1, *Eureka*, 29 Dec-1 Feb (KaR, DC, RH) • **Tricolored Blackbird:** 2, *Ft Dick*, 10 Dec-7 Jan (AB, JSt, JLo, FO); 1-4, *Arcata Bottoms*, 18-23 Jan (RF, KB, et al.) • **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1-2, *Arcata Bottoms*, 16 Jan-1 Feb (TK, DS, JOL); 1, *Fort Bragg*, 28 Jan (KHv) • **Orchard Oriole:** 1, *Crescent City*, 17-30 Nov (AB, SL); 1-2, *McKinleyville*, 11-27 Dec (KS); 2, *Smith River*, 6-18 Jan (AB, SL, LB, MB, DC, OJ, LT, MOB) • **Hooded Oriole:** 1, *Crescent City*, 29-31 Dec (SL, AB); 1-2, *Smith River*, 19 Dec-8 Jan (AB, SL, LB, MB, DC, OJ, LT, MOB); 1, *Clendenden's Cider Works, Fortuna*, 2-8 Jan (AD, DC, RH, LT, RF) • **Bullock's Oriole:** 3, *Crescent City*, 24 Nov-1 Feb (SL, AB); 1, *Smith River*, 23 Dec (AB, EC); 2-3, *Fort Bragg*, 26 Dec-4 Feb (DJ, KHv, CV, JW, RLeV); 1, *McKinleyville*, 27 Dec-1 Jan (KS, KB, DC, RF, RH, LT); 1, *McKinleyville*, 27 Dec-1 Jan (KS, KB, DC, RF, RH, LT) • **Evening Grosbeak:** 7-17, *Arcata*, 15-17 Jan (SW); 27, *Shay Park*, 29 Jan (RF, KB, et al.)



Brown Shrike, © Mary Freeman  
Clam Beach, Humboldt County

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