



The Sandpiper

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 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.

Saturday, August 13: King Salmon. On this trip, we'll look for water-birds typical of the bay in late summer, including Brown Pelican, Parasitic Jaeger, Elegant Tern, and Marbled Murrelet. Note that some of these birds may be mere specks, even through a scope. Meet at 8 a.m. at the hairpin curve at the gate. Dress warmly. For more information, call Matt Wachs (707-476-9349).

Saturday, August 13: Waterdog Lake. Plant, Butterfly, and Bird Day Hike. Cosponsored by the North Coast Chapter of California Native Plant Society. Famous for their butterfly diversity, tiny Waterdog Lakes and adjacent North Trinity Mountain are our destination on a 2-mile trail through diverse mountain habitats: white fir and Sadler oak; shrubby regeneration from the 1999 Megram Fire; creekside mountain alder thicket; gravelly bald; wet, rocky hillside; red fir; and a small, sedgy meadow (with gentians) around the land-locked pond. The trail gains about 1,000 ft elevation, starting at 5,300 ft., but is not steep. Bring lunch, snack, at least 2 quarts water, and many layers of clothing. Meet at 8 a.m. at Pacific Union School (3001 Janes Rd., Arcata) on Saturday, or call to arrange another place. It's a 2-hour drive to the trailhead northeast of Hoopa. Return by 6 p.m., or join an optional camp-out near the trailhead Saturday (and Friday?) night. Call Carol Ralph (707-822-2015) or Gary (707-476-9238).

Sunday, August 14: 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 a.m. Call Jude Power (707-822-3613) or David Fix (707-825-1195) for more information.

Saturday, August 20: eBird Site Survey—Shay Park. This monthly trip sounds more formal than it really is! Join Rob Fowler (707-839-3493; migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com) to survey the extent of Shay Park in Arcata for 1-3 hours and count every species present. Rob does the counting, and you do the enjoying of some of the 130+ species that have been recorded at this small but bird-rich urban location! For more info on the eBird site survey, visit ebird.org/content/ebird/about/eBird_Site_Survey. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Shay Park parking lot at the eastern end of Foster Avenue.

Sunday, August 21: Southern Humboldt Community Park. Robert Sutherland (707-986-1112), Jay Sooter, and/or John Gaffin will lead 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 2- to 3-hour walk. Binoculars are not provided, and dogs are not allowed; field guides are usually available, but provide your own if possible. Steady rain cancels. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot on Kimtu Road in Garberville.

Saturday, August 27: Pelagic Trip. Rob Fowler and David Fix will head up a foray onto the open ocean to Trinidad canyon aboard the *Shenandoah* in search of tubenoses, jaegers, alcids, cetaceans, and other pelagic specialties. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Trinidad wharf to depart at 7:30 and return by 4:30 p.m. To reserve 1 of 12 spaces available, call or e-mail Rob (migratoriusfwlr@gmail.com). Cost is \$95.

Saturday, September 10: Pelagic Trip. Rob Fowler and Gary Lester will lead a foray onto the open ocean to Trinidad canyon aboard the *Shenandoah* in search of tubenoses, jaegers, alcids, cetaceans, and other pelagic specialties. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Trinidad wharf to depart at 7:30 and return by 4:30 p.m. To reserve 1 of 12 spaces available, call or e-mail Rob. Cost is \$95.

Sunday, September 11: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. See August 14 listing.

Sunday, September 18: Southern Humboldt Community Park. See August 21 listing.

Saturday, September 24: eBird Site Survey—Shay Park. See August 20 listing.



RRAS Field Trip to Horse Mountain, 18 June 2011
Photo by Nancy Spruance

DEL NORTE MEETING, POTLUCK, AND FIELD TRIP

RRAS is holding its once-a-year Del Norte County board meeting on Friday, September 16, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lake Earl Wildlife Area Information Center, 2591 Old Mill Road, Crescent City. All bird lovers who would like to learn about upcoming Audubon programs and conservation projects are welcome to attend. A potluck supper will precede the meeting, starting at 6 p.m. Those wishing to come early, meet other birders, and socialize are invited to bring a side dish, salad, drinks, or a dessert to share. Please RSVP to Sue Calla at (707) 465-6191.

The following morning (Saturday, September 17), all levels of birders are encouraged to join RRAS board members at 8:30 a.m. for a morning's excursion to scout Del Norte's migratory and resident birds. Meet at the Lake Earl Wildlife Area Information Center to form carpools to caravan to several locations; some walking required. Bring viewing optics, binoculars, snacks, and drinking water.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM



A
THOUSAND
TONGUES,
A
THOUSAND
BIRDS:



A NATURALIST IN NEW GUINEA

David Price, a New Zealand-born specialist in amphibians and bioacoustics, will give an overview of New Guinea's birds, geography, geology, and history. He will expound on the diversity of birds, peoples, languages, and cultures, including an account of how his family came to be there and work on sustainable development projects involving

coral reefs and mangrove forests. Come hear about the flora and fauna, including the incredible diversity of birds, such as 45 species of pigeons and doves, 46 of parrots, 22 of kingfishers, and, of course, birds of paradise. Price will show evocative images of the diversity of people and birds in New Guinea.

The program will be held at the Humboldt County Office of Education at Myrtle and West Avenues in Eureka, on Friday, September 9, starting at 7:30 p.m. Bring a mug to enjoy shade-grown coffee and come fragrance free.

PICNIC WITH THE SIERRA CLUB



Hungry picnickers enjoy a potluck meal at Patricks Point event in 2007. Photo by Sue Leskiw.

RRAS members are cordially invited to attend a picnic organized by the local Sierra Club entity, North Group. The event will be held on Saturday, August 27, at Patricks Point State Park in Trinidad. It will kick off at 10 a.m. with a bird walk led by Tom Leskiw, followed by a potluck picnic at noon. Bring a dish to share; North Group will provide place settings and drinks. The site rental includes 25 day-use entries to the park, so please rideshare to the event. Call Sue Leskiw at 707-442-5444 to obtain the information needed to get in at no charge. Sierra Club looks forward to networking with Audubon.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Positively Audubon

by Jim Clark

Conservation organizations often share their newsletters and journals. These items can be valuable reading for chapter leaders. Although each organization emphasizes different aspects of conservation, we tend to share many ideals.

I recently reviewed the journal of an organization that calls our region home. I started by reading an article about a regional subject and began to feel uncomfortable as I continued to peruse it. The author went on at great length not only about why various proposals and practices were wrong, but also to vilify those who were involved and the agencies responsible for regulating their implementation. The author even demonized the machinery used in some of the projects. The further I read, the more the informative article turned into a manifesto, pointing out malefactors and their conspiracies.

As I finished reading, I thought how sad it was that the author was compelled to tear down his adversaries in an attempt to build a case. Apparently he did not realize that such tactics demean his own position. The article represented page after page of negativity and probably hours of wasted effort, unless the purpose was to make new enemies. Another consequence of this kind of effort is polarization of the issue and making the "cause" appear desperate. Even worse, such negative manifestos have the potential to alienate those who believe in the cause but

can't accept the means. I am happy to report that my experience with Audubon over the last 36 years has been the opposite. When I connect with Audubon—from local members to national-level people—I don't recall ever finding the type of negativism described above. Apparently being positive works. Audubon chapters and state and national levels have achieved significant goals in bird habitat conservation and have stopped inappropriate projects.

While Audubon stresses the positive, we also know to hold our representatives and regulators' feet to the fire when required. In the 1980s, our chapter reached a settlement with Humboldt County as a result of litigation for illegal development of a wetland. The planning department's wetland review process was found to be inadequate. Under the terms of the settlement, the department was required to consult with our chapter on wetland reviews for 5 years, while money from the settlement has more than doubled to a sanctuary fund of over \$120,000. Our chapter made no enemies, gained respect, and has used the fund to assist other organizations and agencies in conservation. Cooperation and persuasion have produced long-term positive results.

By using the 3-legged stool of science, education, and law, we can implement new and cost-effective methods of bird conservation. Visit www.ca.audubon.org/ to discover how Audubon California and state chapters are making positive progress for bird conservation.

CHAPTER LEADERS

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

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 Rob Fowler 839-3493
 Lew & Judie Norton.....445-1791
 Syn-dee Noel442-8862
 Chet Ogan 442-9353
 C.J. Ralph822-2015
 Josée Rousseau.....839-5763

OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS

Conservation — Chet Ogan442-9353
 Education — Syn-dee Noel442-8862
 eBird Liaison — Rob Fowler 839-3493
 Field Notes — Daryl Coldren.....916-384-8089
 Field Trips— Rob Fowler 839-3493
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 Nominating — Kerry Ross.....496-0764
 Programs — C.J. Ralph.....822-2015
 Publications --- Vacant
 Publicity — Sue Leskiw.....442-5444
 Sandpiper (editorial) — Tom & Sue Leskiw.....442-5444
 — Jan Andersen616-3888
 Sandpiper (layout) — Gary Bloomfield.....822-0210
 Volunteer Coordinator — Josée Rousseau.....839-5763
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 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: **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

RRAS COSPONSORS ARCATA CAMP



Chet Ogan helps a camper find a species on the bird checklist. Photo by Sue Leskiw.

by Sue Leskiw

On June 29, RRAS joined with Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM) to host a day-long camp for children age 9-12 at the Arcata Marsh. The session was part of the Wildlife Biology Week of the Arcata Recreation Department's Natural Resources Science Camp. This is the fourth year that RRAS and FOAM have collaborated on the camp.

Seventeen kids arrived at the Interpretive Center to start with a low-tide critter collection "Mud Walk." Leaders were FOAM vice president Elliott Dabill and former board member Melinda

Bailey. Former board member Bob Rasmussen joined Elliott and Melinda to help the students operate the microscopes and identify what they had collected. A highlight was Elliott's dissection of a clam. FOAM board member George Ziminsky helped set up and clean up the



George Ziminsky birds the treatment ponds with campers. Photo by Sue Leskiw.

viewing stations, while FOAM president Sue Leskiw was responsible for putting together the schedule, lining up volunteers, making lunch, and taking photos.

The day was capped off by a bird walk led by RRAS volunteers Tom Leskiw and Chet Ogan, plus George. Highlights were an American Bittern that ran across vegetation, a female Mallard with 7 or 8 ducklings preening on a stream bank, 2 Peregrine Falcons, and close-up views of an American Robin feeding 2 nestlings.



George Ziminsky leads campers to view a Bullock's Oriole nest off South I Street. Photo by Sue Leskiw.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Arcata — Barney Bartelle, Jayme Bartz, Lilyan Haigh
Bayside — Christine Keil
Crescent City — Debra Myers
Eureka — Brenda Morgan, Lena Macan
Ferndale — Marybeth Volk
Garberville — Sue Thomas
Petrolia — Kathryn Radke
Redway — Kendra Akselsen
Trinidad — Susan Marelich

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

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS AT LANPHERE DUNES

by Josée Rousseau, Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory Program Director



Northern Saw-whet Owl. Photo by Adam Beeler.

Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory (HBBO) tentatively surveyed for small owls last fall to discover that numerous Northern Saw-whet Owls are using Humboldt County for their migration. This charismatic owl is well known and surveyed in the eastern US (<http://www.projectowl.net.org/>), but very little is known about its movement, habitat, and life history in the western states.

2010 HBBO Survey: Night 1

The small owls' audio lure can be faintly heard in the distance from the barn apartment. A team of 4

banders secure their head lamps and head outside, anxious to see if they caught an owl. It is their lucky day: a Northern Saw-whet Owl lay patiently in the mist net, waiting to be extracted. This will be the first saw-whet of the season.

Night 5

A saw-whet is heard up in the trees. Maybe next time it will be in the nets. An hour later, the team of 3 walk to the net lane to find 2 saw-whets: new individuals, both young females.

Night 10

The banders know to expect at least 1 owl again tonight; it has been the trend since the beginning of the fall season. Who knew they were migrating so close to the ocean? As with all other owls, this one will get a uniquely numbered aluminum band; its age, sex, weight, and other measurements will be meticulously recorded; and the owl will be released back into nature safe and sound.

This species is characterized by white streaks on its crown and nape and small size: measuring about 8 inches long and weighing around 2.8 oz. Young and adults are easily distinguished by looking at the molt limits—or lack of—on their wings. Molt limits in Northern Saw-whet Owls readily appear with the use of a black light under the wing. The dark pink feathers are newly grown feathers naturally filled with an organic compound called porphyrin. Older feathers lose the pink pigmentation,

appearing white under the black light. Birds without a molt limit are young birds born that summer; birds with a molt limit (with pink and whiter feathers, such as in photo) are at least 1 year old. Some males and females can be told apart by using a combination of wing length and weight information. With limited effort, HBBO captured 10 birds last fall: 9 young and 1 second-year bird, most of them females.

We would like to increase our survey effort this coming fall, opening our nets several times per week from mid-October to the end of November. We are looking for owl enthusiasts willing to stay up from sunset to the wee hours of the morning (1-2 a.m.). To volunteer, contact Kim Hollinger (krh@klamathbird.org, 707-616-4787) and/or Josée Rousseau (jsr@klamathbird.org, 707-825-2918). To become a member, e-mail HBBO@klamathbird.org or visit klamathbird.org/contribute.html and mention HBBO in the designation section.



Pink underwing molt limit. Photo by Vitek Jirinec.

PITFALLS TO COUNTING HEARD-ONLY BIRDS, PART II

"On the whole, sir, I can not help expressing a wish that every member would ... with me, on this occasion, doubt a little of his own infallibility."

--Ben Franklin, 1787

Surely you remember the first time you went birding with an accomplished ear birder whose knowledge of songs and calls blew the roof off your quaint notion of "bird watching?" You instantly realized that your companion cast a net of finer mesh than yours—one capable of seining in furtive squeaks, sibilant warbles. The experience engendered a paradigm shift in how you viewed the sport of birding. "Now I understand why the term 'birding' superseded bird watching," you thought. For the latter term implies a more passive search for birds, limited to what could be detected with the eye, whereas the knowledgeable ear birder is much more active in his quest.

"Heard-only" birds form the backbone of many data collection protocols that range from Breeding Bird Surveys (BBSs) and point counts to rooftop programs that record the nocturnal flight calls of migrants. The ability to detect birds without having to see them is a boon for data collection. However, some caution is in order. Although Franklin's words refer to the U.S. Constitution, they apply equally to our common practice of counting heard-only birds. A misidentified call or song is no big deal if the tallied bird is merely an addition to a day list. However, if the species would constitute a first county or state record or a grossly out-of-habitat bird, accumulating more convincing evidence is prudent.

In Part I of this essay (www.rras.org; Jan-Feb 2000; archive of my columns), I discussed the

hazards of counting heard-only birds at popular birding destinations. How can we be sure that the Chuck-will's-widow or other nocturnal bird we're hearing isn't just a song being broadcast by another person or group across the meadow/hillside/canyon? The short answer, based on my own experience and stories that many of us have heard, is that ... we can't.

Complicating matters further is the plethora of non-avian sources that are capable of sounding—when one *really* wants to hear a target bird—like the subject bird. The back-up buzzer of heavy equipment, mechanical or tree-limb squeaks, even the subtle tinkle of a windbreaker's metal zipper clasp can sound like a bird. It would be different if the sounds we heard in the field were laboratory-clean: just us listening to examples of bird song without wind, rippling waters, or the shush of tree needle or leaf. But they're not. And when we consider the number of bird species that are accomplished or occasional mimics, the waters turn very muddy indeed. The following is just a sampling of real-life, cautionary tales:

About six years ago, Sue and I had some business to attend to in Clear Lake. We decided to visit Rodman Slough, a migrant trap at the northwest corner of the lake that has hosted several noteworthy birds. The wind was howling and it was difficult to hear birds. We'd reached the lakeshore and were returning to our car when I first heard it: a distant, blowing-across-the-top-of-a-bottle sound like an Old World cuckoo. Although it really didn't sound like a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, I talked myself into thinking—and reporting—it as such. A day or two later, I received an e-mail from John Sterling, diplomatically inquiring if the subject bird might not have been a Least Bittern. Oops. After checking my CDs for examples of its song, I realized that John was right. Retracing my steps on the factors that led to my ID gaffe, I realized that, although I'd seen the species on several occasions, I'd probably never heard it sing. If only I'd heeded Ben...

Of course, birds don't play fair—their

ability to mimic other species should prompt us all to doubt a little of our own infallibility. Consider the following: at the mouth of Willow Creek, I saw and heard a Yellow-breasted Chat doing a perfect Steller's Jay "shaaack" call. While I was searching for Rock Wren east of Garberville with Gjon Hazard, Rob Hewitt, and John Hunter, we played a CD of a Rock Wren, receiving a response that all of us were certain was the wren. Nope. We subsequently viewed a Western Meadowlark on a power line giving the response. While leading a bird walk for school kids, a European Starling turned the tables, with a pitch-perfect imitation of a Western Meadowlark. And the 1994 BBS newsletter noted that one observer saw and heard a Nashville Warbler imitating a MacGillivray's.

The following is from Ken Burton via a 3/25/09 e-mail: "A year or more ago I reported hearing what I thought was a White-breasted Nuthatch call note in Cutten. Today in Blue Lake I heard/saw a Lesser Goldfinch incorporating such call notes into its song and think it's quite likely that's what I heard in Cutten. It's interesting to speculate on where our LEGOs might be picking up those notes."

ABA's *Birding* (Feb 1988) contained a letter to the editor from Mary Gustafson that discussed a female Common Yellowthroat mimicking a Prairie Warbler and a Chipping Sparrow. She added that she's seen a male Common Yellowthroat mimic Song Sparrow and Rufous-sided Towhee and a Louisiana Waterthrush singing Yellow-throated Warbler songs. Respondents to her letter (Oct 1988) relate stories of a Common Yellowthroat mimicking a Swamp Sparrow, a Fox Sparrow mimicking an Olive-sided Flycatcher, a Blackburnian Warbler imitating a Black-throated Green Warbler, and a Black-throated Blue Warbler imitating a Prairie Warbler. Whew! So many pitfalls... so little time.

Tom Leskiw
July 5, 2011

1 June-15 July 2011

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), the Mendocino County birders' listserv (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. FOS = first of season; LR = last report; HO = holdover from previous period; MOB = many observers; NC = not confirmed/documented; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 1-15 Jul (RH, MOB) • **Brant:** 6, *Elk River Mouth*, 10 Apr (TK, RH, JS, KR) • **Aleutian Cackling Goose:** 18, *Ferndale Bottoms*, 4 Jun (MW, LN, JN), 1, *Humboldt Bay NWR*, 15 Jul (RH) • **Blue-winged Teal:** 2, *Arcata Marsh*, 1 Jun (GC, RB, MOB) • **Harlequin Duck:** 1, *Luffenholtz Beach*, 9 Jun (TL) • **Black Scoter:** 1, *King Salmon*, 4 Jun (MW) • **Long-tailed Duck:** 1, *Crescent City*, 8 Jun (AB, JS) • **Green Heron:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 1 Jun (KR) • **Bald Eagle:** many reports of 1-2, *Arcata Marsh, Trinidad, Humboldt Bay NWR, Blue Lake, Big Lagoon, Willow Creek, Orleans*, Jun 1- Jul 15 • **Crested Caracara:** 1, *Smith River Bottoms*, HO-6 Jul (AB, MOB) • **American Golden-Plover:** 1, *Lake Tolowa*, 10 Jun (LB) • **Pacific Golden-Plover:** 1, *Lake Tolowa*, 10 Jun (LB) • **Ruddy Turnstone:** 1, *MacKerricher State Park*, 13 Jul (BB) • **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 1, *Lake Tolowa*, 24 Jun (LB); 1-3, *Alexandre Dairy*, 7-8 Jul (LB, RH MOB) •



Little Stint, 7 July 2011, © Alan D. Barron
Alexandre Dairy, Fort Dick, Del Norte County, CA

LITTLE STINT! (Del Norte's 1st): 1 adult, *Alexandre Dairy*, 7-8 Jul (LB, AB, MOB) • **Heermann's Gull:** 1 (FOS), *Lake Tolowa*, 16 Jun (TK) • **Mew Gull:** 1, *Mad River Mouth*, 4 Jul (KB) • **Common Tern:** 1, *Mad River Mouth*, 2 Jul (GL) • **Elegant Tern:** 263!, *Crescent City Harbor*, 6 Jul (AB); 80, *Elk River Mouth*, 13 Jul (RF) • **Pomarine Jaeger:** 1, *Mattole River Mouth*, 8 Jun (DCo) • **Marbled Murrelet:** many reports of 1-15, *Prairie Creek State Park, Patrick's Point State Park, Gold Bluffs Beach, Redwood Creek Mouth, Centerville Beach*, Jun 1-Jul 15 (MOB) • **Thick-billed Murre:** 1, *Crescent City Harbor*, 10 Jul (LB) • **Cassin's Auklet:** 2, *Turtle Rocks*, 1 Jul (DCz) • **Rhinoceros**

Auklet: 2, *Patrick's Point*, 3 Jun (TK); "several," *Crescent City*, 2 Jul (LB); 2, *North Jetty*, 26 Jun (KR); 2, *Turtle Rocks*, 30 Jun-1 Jul (DCz) • **Tufted Puffin:** 2, *Wedding Rock*, 29 Jun (DCz) • **Flammulated Owl:** 2, *Larabee Valley*, 7 Jun (RH); 5, *Dinsmore*, 15 Jun (RH) • **Common Nighthawk:** 1, *Mattole River Mouth*, 10 Jun (DCo); 1, *Blue Lake*, 15 Jun (PL); 1, *Korbel*, 21 Jun (RH) • **Black Swift:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 1 Jun (DF, JP); 2, *Arcata*, 2 Jun (GB), 2, *Capetown*, 24 Jun (DCo) • **White-throated Swift:** 2, *Blue Lake*, HO-13 Jul (MOB); several reports of 2-6, *Benbow Bridge*, HO-3 Jul (MOB), 2 reports of 2-4, *Southern Humboldt Community Park*, 19 Jun-3 Jul (JG, RH, TK) • **Costa's Hummingbird:** 1, *Shay Park*, 21-22 Jun (RF) • **Calliope Hummingbird:** 1, *Ant Point, Trinity Co*, 3 Jul (SM) • **White-headed Woodpecker:** 2, *Big Hill*, 26 Jun (JS, RH, TK); 3 reports of 1-2, *Titlow Hill Rd*, 18-24 Jun (RF, RB, CO) • **White-breasted Nuthatch:** 4, *Dyerville Loop*, 12 Jun (JG); 1, *Bald Hills Rd*, 3 Jul (DCz) • **Willow Flycatcher:** 1, *Shelter Cove*, 4 Jun (RH, TK, GC), 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 1-2 Jun (RF); 1, *Blue Lake Hatchery*, 17 Jun-13 Jul (RH, MOB); 3, *Blue Lake*, 1 Jun (PL); 1, *Blue Lake Cottonwoods*, 11-26 Jun (MM); 1, *Mad River*, 13-22 Jun (RH) • **Bank Swallow:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, 14 Jun (DF); new colony found!, *Smith River*, 10 Jun (CO) • **California Thrasher:** 1, *Red Mountain, Trinity Co*, 3 Jul (SM) • **Horned Lark:** 2, *Bear River Ridge*, 2 Jul (TK, RH) • **Northern Parula:** 1, *Fort Dick*, 14 Jun (LB) • **American Redstart:** 1, *Smith River*, 14 Jun (LB) • **Scarlet Tanager:** 1 (NC), *Eureka*, 2 Jun (BS) • **Green-tailed Towhee:** 1, *Big Hill Rd*, 26 Jun (RH, TK, JS); 5, *Titlow Hill Rd*, 18 Jun (RF, MOB); 2, *Titlow Hill Rd*, 23 Jun (RB) • **Black-chinned Sparrow:** 6, *Red Mountain, Trinity*, 3 Jul (SM) • **Lark Sparrow:** 12, *Dyerville Loop*, 12 Jun (JG); 9, *Dyerville Loop*, 27 Jun (JG) • **Grasshopper Sparrow:** 5, *Garberville*, 3 Jul (JSo); 3, *Southern Humboldt Community Park*, 19 Jun (JG) • **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 1, *Cutten*, 24 Jun (LK) • **Indigo Bunting:** 1, *Arcata Marsh*, HO-2 Jun (GZ, DF, JP, RF, MOB); 1, *Crescent City*, 27 Jun (AB) • **Bobolink:** 1, *Arcata Bottoms*, 5 Jun (CJR) • **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 1, *Shelter Cove*, 4 Jun (TK, RH, GC) • **Great-tailed Grackle:** 3, *Alexandre Dairy*, 28 Jun-8 Jul (AB, LB, MOB) • **Hooded Oriole:** 1, *Cooper Gulch*, 12 Jun (RF) • **Cassin's Finch:** 2, *Horse Mountain*, 18 Jun (CO, MOB); 3, *Titlow Hill Rd*, 24 Jun (CO); 2, *Titlow Hill Rd*, 9 Jul (CO); 1, *Long Ridge Rd*, 26 Jun (TK, RH, JS).

Thanks to all who have submitted sightings! Alan Barron, Gary Bloomfield, Becky Bowen, Lucas Brug, Ralph Bucher, Ken Burton, Greg Chapman, Daryl Coldren, Dave Czaplak, David Fix, Rob Fowler, John Gaffin, Rob Hewitt, Larry Karstedt, Tony Kurz, Tom Leskiw, Gary Lester, Paul Lohse, Mark Magnuson, Sean McAllister, Judie Norton, Lew Norton, Chet Ogan, Jude Power, C.J. Ralph, Kerry Ross, Jesse Sargent (JS), Barry Sauppe, Jay Sooter (JSo), Matt Wachs, George Ziminsky.



Leucistic Purple Finch,
5 July, 2011,
© Gary Bloomfield
Arcata, Humboldt County



Lapland Longspur at Lanphere Dunes.
Photo by Alan J. Ralph

LAPLAND LONGSPUR AT THE LANPHERE DUNES

By Alan J. Ralph

Editors' Note: This 14-year-old author from San Leandro, California, submitted this report last winter, but its publication was inadvertently delayed. According to Stan Harris' unpublished notes, this bird is not new to Lanphere Dunes, as a flock of five was detected there during December 1976 by Ken Irwin. We hope Alan also reported it to eBird (eBird.org) and that other young birders follow his example of careful description and reporting.

At about 12:30 p.m., November 24, 2010, while out for an afternoon walk, I spotted what is likely a new species to the Lanphere Dunes of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. We were walking through the foredunes about 50 yards inland from the beach. As I was lagging behind the group, taking pictures, I stopped for a moment and saw an unfamiliar bird. It looked out of place, being that it was alone and wasn't hopping but walking through the short dune mat vegetation. I quickly called to the others, and everything came to a halt.

As we all stood with our binoculars in hand, the bird was very tame, coming within 10 yards. I brought my camera up and took several shots while the bird was also being examined by my aunt and uncle (Carol and C.J.). I saw a long white streak down its back and a dark outline around the face. Its belly was white towards the back and buffy on the breast. There are also 2 broad rufous-edged wing feathers (greater coverts) and one narrower one that was harder to see. If you look even closer, you can spot broad rufous edges to the feathers in the middle of the wing. I compared my pictures with those in Sibley's *Birds of North America* and decided the new species for me was a Lapland Longspur. It was a nonbreeding adult and is an uncommon winter visitant in northwestern California, according to Harris' *Northwestern California Birds*.