

The Sandpiper

October 2025



Redwood Region Audubon Society

www.rras.org

Birding Papua New Guinea

Join us Thursday, October 16, at 7:00 p.m. for a presentation by Ken Burton.

The tropical island of New Guinea is one of the biologically and culturally richest areas on the planet and also one of the least developed, and thus it ranks high on many travelers' bucket lists. Yet it also has a reputation for being among the world's most challenging and dangerous travel destinations, so relatively few tourists actually get it off their lists. Ken recently ventured to Papua New Guinea with two friends and lived to tell us about it! He'll share photos, videos, and audio recordings of some of the wildlife, people, and scenery they encountered, including representatives of the island's seven endemic bird families.

Note: This program will *not* be available on Zoom, but will be recorded and made available to view.

Programs are held on the third Thursday of the month, September through May, at Six Rivers Masonic Lodge, 251 Bayside Road, Arcata. Drinks and goodies are served at 7:00 p.m., the program begins at 7:30.

Photos by Ken Burton: Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise (top left); Brehm's Tiger-Parrot (top right); Masked Lapwing



Speaking Soulatluk

By Gina Rogers

Did you know... The Wiyot word for quail is *wouda' dishgiqagilh*, which literally means "the one who talks about dead people," and the quail's call is said to sound like *kuga daqh*, meaning "your mother lives." The phrases are connected to a traditional taboo against mentioning the dead directly; the quail's call sounding like your mother *lives* saves it from referring to someone's mother who had passed away, which would have been a major taboo. For pronunciations, search for "quail" at wiyot.us/267/NR-audio.

Learn more about the "Speaking Soulatluk" project, the Wiyot Tribe's ongoing efforts to revitalize the Soulatluk language and honor their ancestral territory, by visiting the Da Gou Rou Louwi' Cultural Center at 417 Second Street in Old Town, Eureka.



Student art by Camille Kerhoulas (top) and Veda Vance (left).

RRAS FIELD TRIPS IN OCTOBER

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

Trip leaders for October: Oct 4, Jonny Sperling ~ Oct 11, Tylor Bell-Rogers ~ Oct 18, Dan Greaney ~ Oct 25, Gary Friedrichsen

Sunday, October 5, 9am-1pm. Birding by bicycle along the Humboldt Bay Trail from the Arcata Marsh to Eureka and back. Join members of the CalPoly Humboldt Birding Club on this exciting

new trail. Begin (and end) at the region's #1 birding location, and also explore more of Humboldt Bay while biking the trail to Eureka and back. Meet at the Arcata Marsh Klopp Lake parking lot, at the foot of I Street. Must bring your own bike and helmet, and be experienced enough to use it safely on the trails. Contact Cedrik von Briel, 650-315-4968, with questions and to sign up.

Saturday October 11, 7am-4pm. Join our monthly *pelagic trip* out of Humboldt Bay aboard the *Stellar Sunrise*. Experienced guides will be on board and on the lookout for birds seldom seen from shore. Cost is \$150 per person, with student discounts available. To reserve a spot for this or future trips, contact Sean McAllister (707-496-8790 / whiteouters.com).

Sunday, October 12, 9-11am. Join Ralph Bucher for a walk at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This two-mile walk is along a wide, flat, gravel-packed trail easily accessible on foot. Email Ralph to sign up at [thebook\[at\]reninet.com](mailto:thebook[at]reninet.com).

Sunday, October 12, 8-10am. Cooper Gulch Join Cedrik von Briel to search for fall migrants at this popular birding site in Eureka. Meet in the parking lot. Contact Cedrik, 650-315-4968, with questions and to sign up.

Sunday, October 19, 9-11am. Ralph Bucher leads a walk on the Eureka Waterfront Trail, starting at the foot of Del Norte Street and continuing on a flat, continued on page 3

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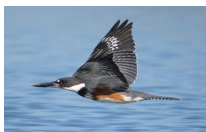
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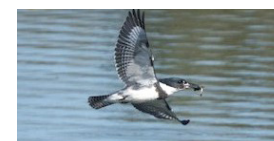
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NEWSFLASH Local birder **Cedrik von Briel** was the winner of the July 2025 eBirder of the Month Challenge! Cedrik is a Cal Poly Humboldt student working towards degrees in Wildlife Conservation and Communications. He is also among the group of students who formed the first birding club on campus (in 2022), a club that has become active in helping other students get out and enjoy birding. Read more about Cedrik's birding journey, the ZEISS binoculars he received as a prize, and the monthly contest's selection process at ebird.org/news/cedrik-von-briel-july-ebirder-of-the-month.



The Belted Kingfishers at Arcata Marsh have been super active, announcing their presence and flying in and out from the trees at a corner of Klopp Lake, where they have been hanging out. Daniil Suchkov, regular Saturday morning walk bird spotter and photographer, took these photos.



RRAS President Kathryn Wendel and Secretary Jolian Kangas tabling at the Arcata farmer's market. Photo by Jon Palmer.

President's Column, by Kathryn Wendel

Last time you were at the Arcata farmer's market, you may have noticed a little table on the grass draped with a Marbled Murrelet flying through the redwoods. Redwood Region Audubon is now on the plaza for select farmer's markets. Look for us there this October 25, swing by to say hi, take a sticker, and see what we have been up to recently!

Our September program featured Bridget Mulkerin discussing why California Audubon decided to support off-shore wind energy development. RRAS has been keeping up with the wind turbine project proposed for development off our coast, and the current federal pause will hopefully give us a chance to ensure that developers make every effort to minimize the impact on birds and wildlife.

Mark February 21, 2026 on your calendars for our annual banquet!

This important event is one of our main fund-raising opportunities. We will have a silent auction of local artwork, optical equipment, and various goods from community businesses as well as dozens of books. Renowned birder and podcaster *Ivan Phillipsen* will give the keynote lecture after a gourmet supper featuring seasonal foods generously provided by our local community of grocers and farmers. If you would like to make a donation for our banquet or silent auction, please contact me at president@rras.org.

Early registration for Godwit Days Bird Festival The Godwit Days team plans to open registration ahead of the holidays in December, so keep an eye on their website (godwitdays.org) for more details. Our local bird festival is traditionally held on the third weekend in April, and RRAS plans to continue its sponsorship of the Big Sit, a free all-day birding event held at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center. See you there!

What RRAS Has Been Up to Lately

Text and photo by Jude Power

Perhaps you've noticed the recently installed interpretive panel at Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary's I St parking lot. It's titled "Welcome to a Sanctuary for Humans and Wildlife," and is the product of a joint effort by Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) and Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM). The panel encourages visitors to the marsh to take a deep breath before entering the sanctuary, and to remember we're part of something larger than ourselves. It also educates visitors about the harmful effects cats and dogs can have on spaces we share with wild animals of all kinds.

As representatives of RRAS, Harriet Hill and Jude Power began meeting with FOAM's board of directors in 2019 in an effort to convince the City of Arcata to remove free-roaming cats from the marsh as specified in the city's municipal code. Although we were ultimately unable to reach this goal, we did create a beautiful panel that spells out the facts about off-leash cats and dogs, including the killing



Cindy Kuttner, Jude Power, and Harriet Hill admire their handiwork.

of birds and spreading of disease. The working group included Harriet and Jude, along with Heather Schmidt and Cindy Kuttner of FOAM. If you haven't already, please take a look at this newest interpretive panel at the marsh and know your involvement and membership in RRAS makes a difference for birds!

It's for the Birds – RRAS's Wigi Restoration Project

By Eric Nelson

Seven years ago, Redwood Region Audubon Society took on the responsibility of maintaining and managing the fifteen-acre Wigi Wetlands. This is a patch of primarily coastal wetland behind Bayshore Mall and immediately adjacent to Wigi, aka Humboldt Bay. It runs approximately from the large fuel tanks behind Kohl's to the area just west of Walmart. Like much of the land between the Herrick Avenue Park and Ride and Target, the property has many good qualities and some human-caused problems that are more challenging.

Among the good qualities are robust riparian patches of native willow and alder trees, wax myrtle, twinberry, and elderberry, which provide cover and food for migrating and wintering birds such as robins, waxwings, juncos, towhees, warblers, and sparrows. These native habitats exist beside the Bay Trail, which now runs along the edge of the bay all the way to the Arcata Marsh and beyond.

The primary challenges for Wigi are non-native invasive plants and trash/litter from illegal campers. The answer to dealing with both issues is consistent effort. Invasive plants such as pampas grass, English ivy, fennel, cotoneaster, and Himalayan blackberry can be handled with people power and the necessary equipment, be it shovels, weed trimmers, or a backhoe.

As invasive plants are removed from the site, they are slowly but surely being replaced by native plants, which will help reduce the need for long-term maintenance. The California Native Plant Society and Lost Foods Nursery have provided native plants to move this process along. RRAS is especially grateful to Monty Caid, owner of Lost Foods Nursery, for his generous donations of plants that grow locally in habitats similar to Wigi's, including twinberry, alder, ninebark, and cascara. His knowledge of local plants and interest in our project have been of great value. Over 100 trees and shrubs were planted this year, wildflower seeds have been scattered, with the heavy job of watering them just part of the maintenance plan.

The illegal camping, trash, and litter issue is frustrating for many reasons but is definitely improved of late, thanks in large part to the efforts of the Eureka Police Department's Community Safety Engagement Team (CSET). They have



Left to right, Joann Kerns, Eric Nelson, Mark Mauer, and Hal Genger, ivy eradicators



Trey Polesky and Mark Mauer dispose of non-native plants



Mark Mauer waters new native plants

brought a trailer, completely cleared many abandoned camp sites, and have been doing a great job of keeping people from camping in the area.

As with any civic asset, it “takes a village” to deal with the challenges of public land management. The support that RRAS and the City of Eureka have provided and received over the years to manage this property has been substantial. Key contributions have come from organizations including the Humboldt Trails Council, Humboldt County Association of Governments, the City of Eureka's Department of Public Works, the PacOut Green Team, Cloudburst Fishing Company, Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and the CA Coastal Conservancy.

Support from individual volunteers has been staggering. A special thank-you to Dennis Houghton for many volunteer hours spent using heavy equipment to dig out pampas grass and Scotch broom, and to Joann Kerns for providing and helping plant alders and other native plants in the north meadow. And to our steadfast monthly volunteers—we logged over 300 volunteer hours last year!! Thank you to all the people who help us do the many tasks required to make our vision a reality. We have work parties the fourth Saturday of every month, sponsored by RRAS in conjunction with the Volunteer Trail Stewards of the Humboldt Trails Council. Work takes place from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., with gloves, tools, and direction provided, as well as a variety of snacks to sustain your efforts.

Join us on one of our work days! Make it a family event or collect a group of friends...you (and the bay) will be glad you did. You can always walk or ride the Bay Trail afterward as a reward for improving the health of your bay. To be added to the email list announcing the projects to be tackled for a given month's Wigi Wetlands Work Day, email Susan Penn (susanpenn60@gmail.com) or Hal Genger (hal.genger@humboldt.edu).

October Field Trips, continued

paved trail that is **wheelchair accessible**. Shorebirds have arrived! Email Ralph to sign up at [thebook\[at\]reninet.com](mailto:thebook[at]reninet.com).

Sunday, October 19, 10am-noon. Lucas Stephenson and other members of the CalPoly Humboldt Birding Club will lead a walk at Lake Tolowa in Del Norte County. Explore this shorebird hotspot with some of the region's top young birders. Meet at the site at 10:00 am, or if coming from Eureka/Arcata, consider carpooling or caravan from the Arcata Community Center at **8:00 am**. Contact Cedrik von Briel for more information and to sign up, 650- 315-4968.

Saturday, October 25, 9-11am. Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday. Join a fun group of volunteers to create bird-friendly habitat in a section of the bay trail

behind Bayshore Mall. Bring water and gloves. We provide tools and snacks. Contact Susan Penn at susanpenn60@gmail.com for more information.

Saturday, October 25, 8:30-11am. Southern Humboldt walks are back! Meet leader Tess McGuire at Tooby Park, one mile west of Garberville on Sprowl Creek Road, for an easy walk through woodland and meadow. Contact Tess (tmcguire9130@gmail.com) with questions and to sign up.

Sunday, October 26, 8:30am-noon. Samoa Dunes Recreation Area This BLM-managed park has racked up an impressive array of birds thanks to its combination of dune vegetation, tree islands, and shoreline. Meet leader Ken Burton (shrikethree AT gmail DOT com) at the Bunker Road parking lot for this half-day trip; be prepared for a mile or so of walking, some of it on sand.



Deep into the Weedy Woods

By Jim Clark, Co-Chair of RRAS Conservation Committee

After reading about Redwood Invasive Plant Eradicators (RIPE)—a nonprofit in Humboldt County started by Carl Klamer and his wife—I contacted Carl about how the program might be compatible with our attempts to enhance environmental services at the county-owned parcel on Lucas Street between Harrison and Myrtle, just east of Eureka. The lack of a completed memorandum of understanding between RRAS and Humboldt County currently prevents the full participation of our organizations on the Lucas Street project; however, I was prompted to adopt 0.8 acre of undeveloped city property at the intersection of I and Madrone Streets for elimination of ivy in Sitka spruce and redwoods. This connection to Martin Slough is very steep. Were it not for the ivy infestation, it would make a nice calendar picture. There are about a dozen ivy-infested spruce and redwoods on the public land area, but it's hard to tell where property lines are.

Cutting four-inch ivy lianas with electric shears and pruning saw is fairly easy. The hard part is slogging through ground ivy and steep slopes to get to the bases of the trees. Working around an ivy-infested tree on a 100 percent (45 degree) slope, I became aware of how ivy traps and holds debris that would normally decompose due to better ground contact. There also seems to be more

fallen limbs around heavily infested trees. This ivy-entangled debris is as much as four feet deep on the downslope side of a tree.

Audio surveys of this area using the Merlin app revealed Swainson's Thrush and Brown Creeper, in addition to other birds. This started me thinking about how ivy alters habitat structure for these locally breeding birds that feed on insects and spiders in dense forest understory and in the bark of mature trees. I noticed that when the normal fern understory gets taken over by ivy, there is no clear path between ferns for a thrush to run after insects. When ivy covers 50 feet of a conifer trunk, 500 square feet of feeding area for Brown Creepers can be eliminated.

Swainson's Thrush and Brown Creeper are examples of locally breeding neotropical migrant and resident birds that can benefit from bird conservation in our neighborhood forests by ivy eradication. At ivy-free Mendocino Woodlands, Swainson's Thrush are easily observed singing, engaging in singing contests, and feeding. Restore their habitat and enjoy their music.

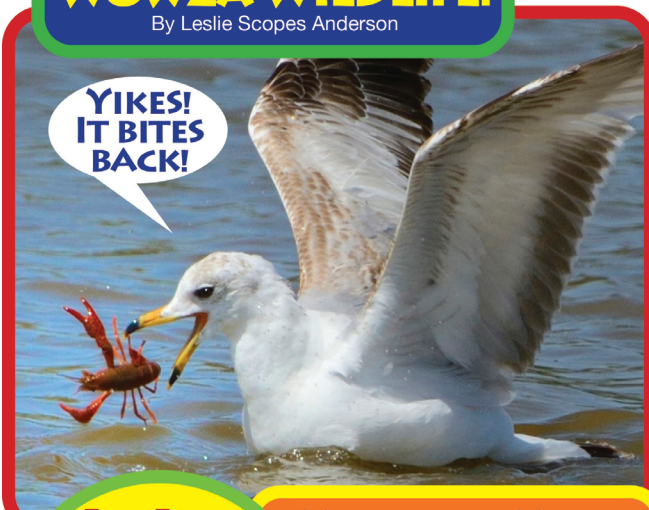


Thrush Path When the normal fern understory gets taken over by ivy, there is no clear path between ferns for a thrush to run after insects. Photo by Jim Clark

Kid's Corner WOWZA WILDLIFE!

By Leslie Scopes Anderson

YIKES!
IT BITES
BACK!



FUN FACTS

Ring-billed Gulls nest mainly in interior locations and eat most everything from garbage to worms & fish. You may see them hovering on the wind.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Ring-billed Gulls are common in our area near fresh and salt water. They apparently use a built-in compass to navigate for their annual migration to southern destinations.

Leslie Scopes Anderson is a graphic designer, photographer, and interpretive naturalist with a life-long love of the natural world. You might see her at the marsh, taking photographs or leading the Saturday afternoon walk sponsored by Friends of the Arcata Marsh.

Your membership in Redwood Region Audubon supports our field trips, programs, education, and conservation efforts. You may also join us online at rras.org and click the JOIN US button. We have two different types of memberships:

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

National membership Join National Audubon and receive *EcoNews* with *The Sandpiper* along with *Audubon* magazine. Please use our Chapter Code C24 so that we receive our share of your membership.

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