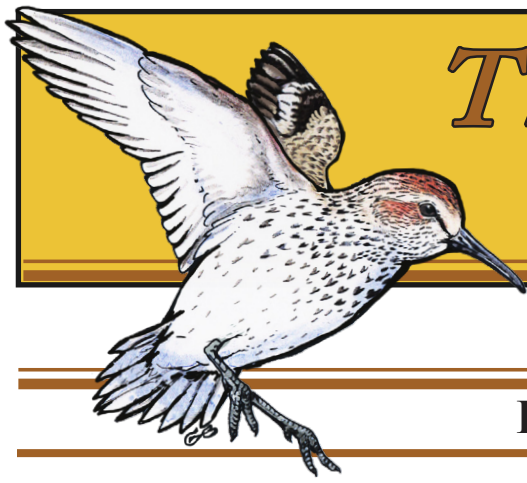




The Sandpiper



Redwood Region Audubon Society

www.rras.org

Fall Migration (September, October, November) 2026

RRAS FIELD TRIPS IN SEPTEMBER

RRAS Field Trips – Fall 2026

Join us at these regular weekly and monthly field trips throughout the fall. Check rras.org for details and additional, one-of-a-kind trips to birding hotspots scheduled each month by experienced volunteer guides.

Every Saturday, 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip with an experienced birder at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. Bring your binoculars and meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) for incredible views of Humboldt Bay, easy-to-walk trails, and a great diversity of birdlife. *Trip leaders for September:* Sept 5, Jonny Sperling ~ Sept 12, Dan Greaney ~ Sept 19, Mark Colwell ~ Sept 26, Kathryn West.

Every second Sunday of the month, 9-11am. Meet trip leader Ralph Bucher for a free guided birding tour at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the Visitor Center for this easy two-mile walk that offers a variety of tidally influenced habitats. Email Ralph to sign up at thebook@reninet.com.

Every third Sunday of the month, 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, paved trail that is **wheelchair accessible**. Shorebirds are back! Email Ralph to sign up at thebook@reninet.com.

Every fourth Saturday of the month, 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. Meet in the parking lot directly behind Walmart. We provide tools, gloves, and homemade cookies. Contact Eric Nelson, etn3115 (at) icloud.com with questions or for more information.

Fourth Saturday of the month beginning Oct 24 & Nov 28, 8:30-11am. Join RRAS in Southern Humboldt for a free guided bird walk. Meet leader Tess McGuire at Tooby Park, one mile west of Garberville on Sprowl Creek Road. Contact Tess (tmcguire9130@gmail.com) to confirm.

Saturday, Sept 5, Oct 10, & Nov 21, All day. Monthly pelagic trip. Join us as we go offshore in search of seabirds, whales, dolphins, and other wildlife rarely, if ever, seen from land. RRAS leaders will be on board to help spot and identify wildlife. Limited to 15 people; cost is \$150 per person, with discounts

available for students. To register, or for details, contact Sean McAllister at whiteouters@gmail.com / 707-496-8790.

Sunday, Sept 20, 8-11am. Fairhaven Join leader Ken Burton (shrikethree@gmail.com) for a morning exploring the willow patches, bay shoreline, and neighborhoods of this Samoa Peninsula community, mostly on foot. The peninsula is known as a fall migrant funnel, and vagrant songbirds might be found. The outing will conclude with a bay scan, so bring a scope if you have one. Meet at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and New Navy Base Road at 8 a.m.

FALL PROGRAMS

All are welcome to our programs, 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. They are available on Zoom unless otherwise noted. Go to rras.org for the link.

Join us Thursday, September 17, for a presentation by Jeff Jacobsen on:



Jeff came to Humboldt State University (now Cal Poly Humboldt) in 1973 to study oceanography. In 1977 a fellow oceanography student suggested they drive to northern Vancouver Island, launch his Zodiac, camp out, and maybe see killer whales. Jeff graduated in 1980 and kept going back, finished a masters degree on social associations among family groups in 1990. Kinda crazy how studying oceanography led to animal behavior... it all interrelates.

Photographic ID of individual whales started in the early 1970s and has grown to become a fundamental method in field research. Looking back on fifty years the most significant, astonishing, wonderful part has been getting to know the personalities of individual whales over many years, by their natural markings during that brief moment when they surface, foraging for air. A visual way of knowing an acoustic animal. Recording their vocalizations is our best way to understand their cultural lives, and humpback song, a study still in progress globally, as they live a long time!

From 2006 to 2020 Jeff worked with a small company, Bio-Waves Inc., run by Tom Norris, a fellow humpback song student. Jeff assembled hydrophone arrays that they towed on surveys all around the North Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico, localizing and tracking cetaceans via acoustics.

President's Column

By Kathryn West



Nesting bird season is near its end, and fall migration is in full swing as birds return to their wintering grounds. It is wonderful to report on our chapter's success in supporting the first year of the California Bird Atlas (CBA). As a Founding Member of the project, RRAS is deeply involved in both atlas-ing the Redwood Region and recruiting birders to the project. See the season highlights article in this issue for some early results, as well as the two accompanying breeding bird survey field trip reports, for more context on our activities. As a five-year project, we will continue to recruit more people to submit checklists and survey under-reported areas, especially when next year's breeding season starts.

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RRAS is actively working to set aside important urban wetland habitats, and recently we submitted a Memorandum of Understanding with Humboldt County regarding the Third Slough Parcel in Eureka, a marshy greenbelt located in Myrtle town. If you would like to help in this conservation project, we are seeking volunteers for anything from submitting eBird checklists of this hotspot to participating in the cleanup and restoration volunteer days. Email president[at]rras.org for more information.

Our annual Tim McKay Birdathon is in October, and several teams are already organizing for this important fund-raiser and friendly competition. I will be running the team “The Bushlists,” and if you would like to participate or support my team, please email me at president[at]rras.org. See “A Fall Birdathon” on page 4.

The Really Big Picture

By Jim Clark

“Tipping point” has become a popular catch phrase relating to climate change. It is that theoretical point at which our earth's climate will continue to irreversibly and rapidly change regardless of our efforts to stabilize it.

The concept of anthropogenic climate change was first documented in 1800 by Alexander von Humboldt in the area around Lake Valencia in Venezuela. There are plans to correct the problems caused by poor water management and agricultural practices but little action. Two hundred and twenty six years later, raw sewage and agricultural waste continue to pollute Lake Valencia while anthropogenic climate change has reached a planetary scale.

Although a small minority consisting of the willfully ignorant still don't believe that anthropogenic climate change is real, science says it is. National Audubon Society and our chapter believe in science, so we will continue on the premises that anthropogenic climate change is occurring on a planetary scale.

Part of our national (current administration excepted) effort to deal with climate change is the shift



Enjoy reading *The Sandpiper*? Our newsletter is directly supported by our membership dues, and is one of many ways your contributions enable us to fulfill our mission. All local chapter membership dues stay local and go directly back to the community through conservation efforts, student scholarships, sponsorships towards events like Godwit Days and the Christmas Bird Count, and so much more! Please look for the membership form in this issue of *The Sandpiper*, or subscribe online at rras.org. We love local pictures and encourage everyone to share your nature and bird photos online! We are on Facebook and Instagram, or submit photos through the “Contact Us!” page of our website. Thank you!

from hydrocarbon to carbon-free energy. One proposal is wind energy, including a major offshore wind energy project 20 miles west of our coastline. That brings us to another level of “tipping point” that we could already have reached. That is the point where there are no globally-effective solutions to accelerated climate change that will not have some significant negative environmental effects. We earthlings have never had to face this scale of decision making.

We will never stop climate change that is linked to our evolving planet, but we might be able to slow down the human contribution to the extent that life can more easily adapt. If we delay doing what we can to slow it down, we risk the major tipping point occurring sooner. Birds and other wildlife have adapted to natural climate change, but some won't be able to evolve at the current accelerating rate of climate change.

The big conservation question is: If local and regional negative environmental effects of climate change mitigation are only acceptable “somewhere else,” where will we be in the next two hundred and twenty six years? Successful climate change mitigation will require that we come to the realization that there are no more somewhere elses. Overcoming global NIMBYism and DoBuAAism (don't build anything anywhere) might be the biggest challenge of all.

The Sandpiper is the official newsletter of the Redwood Region Audubon Society. Field trip and program information will always be kept up-to-date on our Website rras.org and through our email

event notifications. They will also be included in the Northcoast Environmental Center's monthly digital *EcoNews* editions (rras.org).

Fall Programs, continued

On October 15, join us for a presentation by Ram Papish on:

The Best Birds in the World

The island of New Guinea is home to some of the most flamboyant and flashy birds in the world, including Birds of Paradise, Bowerbirds, Pittas, and Paradise Kingfishers. But is it really paradise for birders?

Ram Papish is a professional illustrator specializing in wildlife and historic depictions. His interests include flowering shrubs, birdwatching, wildlife photography, community theater, and world travel. His major achievements include finishing as second runner-up in the 2009 Aleutian Beard and Mustache contest and appearing in the 2024 “Chicken Daddies” calendar.

Vogelkop Superb Bird of Paradise



Lesser Bird of Paradise

Orientation for This Year's Christmas Bird Counts

Thursday, November 19 at 7:00 p.m.



Varied Thrush, © Gary Bloomfield

RRAS's November program is designed to get everyone ready for this year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). The program will focus especially on identification of local birds commonly seen on the Humboldt counts. The Christmas Counts in the

county date back to 1947, with the five circles here in Arcata, Centerville/Loleta, Del Norte/Crescent City, Orick/Tall Trees, and Willow Creek.

We are always looking for volunteers to participate, whether joining the leader's walk or just by contributing a quick thirty-minute backyard bird count on the day of your local circle's count. Come to the November meeting to learn how to join the fun. Volunteers are also needed to support hosting of the Compilation Gathering as well. More details on leaders and dates and how to register electronically will also be made available on our WEB site later into the fall.



White-tailed Kites, © Gary Bloomfield



DID YOU KNOW?

Keep Cats Happy Indoors

The dire revelations from Miranda's Rescue could result in a positive outcome in the

end. Our State Assemblymember Chris Rogers has stated that he plans to explore legislative options to remedy the lack of oversight on animal rescues. This will be an opportune time to press for even more impactful legislation addressing domestic animal management. For example, laws similar to those passed by other communities might include: prohibiting cats in public spaces; prohibiting cats from neighbors' yards; treating cats as we treat dogs (vaccinated for rabies annually and leashed or otherwise contained); mandating spay/neuter for all cats and dogs; and prohibiting release of cats to outdoor colonies with their devastating impacts on birds and other wildlife. Watch for opportunities to write to Assemblymember Rogers and State Senator McGuire to influence domestic animal legislation when the time comes. The birds thank you!

Source: Times-Standard (July 12, 2026)



A Fall Birdathon

Contributed by Gary Friedrichsen

The Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) and the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) are teaming up again to sponsor the Tenth Annual Tim McKay Memorial Birdathon! We're choosing to do this year's event in the fall (October 3-11) rather than the traditional spring migration season given how packed this spring's calendar was.

Why honor Tim McKay? Tim McKay was the director of the NEC for 35 years, and it was under his guidance and enthusiasm that the two organizations held this successful fund-raiser. As in previous years, the Birdathon will benefit the NEC and RRAS equally.

What is a Birdathon? A Birdathon is a fun way to help your community environmental groups raise needed funds. Anyone can participate! Teams (or an individual) (1) solicit donations of five cents to a dollar per bird species from friends, family, businesses, strangers; (2) pick a day during the "Count Week" to spend 24 hours identifying bird species; (3) contact their donors to arrange for payment; and (4) contribute the collected funds to the NEC/RRAS.

Why join us on the Birdathon? The NEC and RRAS work on a shoestring and succeed only with determination, devotion, and aid from great volunteers. For over 45 years, the NEC has served as a vital hub for information and programs that involve, inform, and inspire residents with regard to environmental issues that matter most on California's North Coast. From watershed awareness and climate action to beach cleanups and celebratory all-species parades, the NEC has been at the forefront for all of us.

RRAS is an all-volunteer organization that has served the community for decades. We lead weekly and monthly bird and nature walks, write and publish *The Sandpiper*, provide educational programs and scholarships for local teachers and students, host topical speakers once a month at our general meetings, and use reserve funds to help purchase at-risk properties for the improvement of habitat for birds and humans.

How to participate: You can register as a team or as an individual, with catchy team names a longstanding tradition. Print out copies of the pledge forms for your teammates and have every team member obtain pledge donations. Make sure to follow up to collect the funds. Contact Laurel McKay at laurelmckay@yournec.org or phone the NEC (707-822-6918) weekdays to register your team.

Student Research Grants Available

RRAS is offering research grants of up to \$500 for studies on birds. This grant is available to undergraduate and graduate students at Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods. Its purpose is to encourage learning about birds in Humboldt, Trinity, Siskiyou, and Del Norte counties and to support projects that will advance knowledge about birds.

Applications are due on December 1, 2026. Please contact Hal Genger (hal.genger@humboldt.edu) or check our website, rras.org, for application details.

Grants awarded in the last few years include those to Cal Poly Humboldt students **Samantha Bacon** to study field use by shorebirds, especially Marbled Godwits, in the Arcata Bottoms and **Alon Averbuj** for research on habitat selection of Common Ravens near Western Snowy Plover nesting sites. **Elizabeth Meisman** received two grants, one for work on Swainson's Hawks in Northern California and a more recent one for the North Coast Osprey Project.

Humboldt County Bird of the Year (2025)

By Tom Leskiw

Initiated in 2013, the Humboldt Bird of the Year seeks to 1) highlight contributions to ecotourism that noteworthy birds can bring and 2) recognize the efforts of those who avidly seek and find amazing birds. Current judges are Jude Power, Keith Slauson, and me. My wife Sue serves as "procurement-logistics chief," tallying votes, contacting finalists, making certificates, and more.

Beginning in 2025, Humboldt County entered what could be termed a pelagic birding Golden Age. The go-to charter boat *Steller Sunrise*, Cal Poly's *RV North Wind*, and Sean McAllister's *Autumn Wind* combined to explore the avian richness of offshore

Humboldt. So the judges decided to give out two awards: one for a land-based bird and one for a pelagic bird.

The two finalists in the Land Category were Blue-winged Warbler, a fourth county record found on January 19 by Nathan Trimble, a resident of the Ashland area. His discovery in Trinidad generated 34 eBird checklists. The other rare bird was Mourning Warbler, a fifth county record spotted on September 19 by Greg Gray, Sasha Cahill, and Owen Sinkus. Their find near Centerville's Russ Ranch Wetlands generated 18 eBird checklists. The winner was Blue-winged Warbler.



Blue-Winged Warbler Photo by Aidan Brubaker

The three finalists in the Pelagic Category were 1) Wilson's Storm-Petrel, a third county record discovered September 7 by those aboard the *Steller Sunrise* on a trip organized by Rob Fowler; 2) Red-footed Booby, a third county record found September 6 by those aboard *Autumn Wind*, with the same species also spotted on December 13 by *RV North Wind*; 3) Short-tailed Albatross, found twice by *Autumn Wind* for fourth and fifth county records on September 13 and December 7, respectively. The winner was Wilson's Storm-Petrel.



Wilson's Storm-Petrel Photo by Rob Fowler

Allotted space here precludes listing the amazing species found thus far in 2026. Join us at next year's Godwit Days to find out the winner(s).

California Bird Atlas First Year Results

By Rob Fowler

With August winding down, we are almost through the first breeding season of the California Bird Atlas (CBA) and Humboldt birders have been busy, already confirming 132 bird species as breeders in the county. Out of the 402 blocks found in Humboldt, 244 blocks have data submitted for them —60 percent just in the first year! And data has been contributed by 322 birders — that’s a lot of birders! [Note: data is as of August 11].

Here are a few fun facts from the first year’s eBird checklist submissions, with some comparisons to the last major Humboldt Breeding Bird Atlas published back in 2005:

- Chestnut-backed Chickadee is the most widely confirmed breeder so far, confirmed in 51 separate blocks. It was the third most widespread confirmed breeder for the 2005 atlas project.
- Two new species were confirmed as breeders in Humboldt County and amazingly both were found around Blake Mountain, which had a stand-replacing forest fire several years ago. Levi Ashe discovered a Common Poorwill nest (with babies still being brooded!) on July 5, and then Max Brodie confirmed Mountain Bluebird in the area on July 18. Technically, Mountain Bluebird has been confirmed as a breeder in Humboldt County from north Trinity Mountain, but not during either atlas project, so this is the first Atlas-confirmed breeder.
- The block with the most hours so far is Arcata South NW with 466.5 hours. What’s in the middle of the Arcata South NW? The Arcata Marsh of course!
- The earliest confirmed breeder was Anna’s Hummingbird, with a nest discovered at the Arcata Marsh on March 7.
- Cinnamon Teal was confirmed in numerous blocks during the 2005 atlas project, including the Arcata Marsh. That breeding status seems to have changed pretty drastically, with the only confirmation this year from the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge on June 7, confirmed by Alexandra Lamb.
- Both Northern Parula and American Redstart, rare but regular “vagrant” warblers that have been confirmed as breeders in the county before, were confirmed as breeders this year. American Redstarts were confirmed by Alexandra Lamb on June 26 and Sasha Cahill confirmed the parulas on July 28.



Bushtit,
Arcata Marsh,
© Rob Fowler

The two field trip reports by Ken Burton and Sean McCann in this issue offer more insights on local findings, and I will be presenting on the results from the Arcata Marsh at the September 2 Friends of the Arcata Marsh lecture (7-8:30 p.m. at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center).

The Atlas project is a five-year effort, and we’re hoping everyone will carry the excitement of this first year effort into even more data collection activities next year. In the meantime, you can always learn more about the CBA on their website, ebird.org/atlascalifornia, including the rich data page for Humboldt County (ebird.org/atlascalifornia/county/US-CA-023).



Anna's Hummingbird,
Arcata Marsh
© Rob Fowler



Song Sparrow,
Arcata Marsh,
© Rob Fowler



Green Heron Nest,
Arcata Marsh,
© Rob Fowler



Barn Swallow,
Arcata Marsh,
© Rob Fowler



Black Phoebe nest Photo by Ken Burton

A Tri-County Bird Atlas Canvas

By Ken Burton

Back in early May, I led a three-day RRAS field trip to the inner Coast Ranges of Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties. Our primary focus, in addition to looking for birds that don't occur here on the coast, was contributing data to the California Bird Atlas from areas that receive little birding coverage. The participants were Daniil Suchkov, Sonali Bera, and Terri Tinkham.

We spent the first day driving from Eureka to Williams, with a stop at the "best" birding site in each of the four counties on the route. On the second day, we made our way north to Red Bluff on back roads through Stonyford, Elk Creek, and Paskenta, birding from the car and stopping frequently. Our general approach was to bird the portion of every eBird hotspot within the atlas block containing its location pin so that we were contributing data to both hotspots and the atlas. We returned to Eureka on Rte. 36, again stopping to bird in each county.

We found almost all the targets for the trip, including American White Pelican, Swainson's Hawk, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-billed Magpie, Phainopepla, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Bell's Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak. Common Gallinule was also on the expected list, but ironically the one found at Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge the day we left was the only one we saw! We missed Black-chinned Hummingbird and Lewis's Woodpecker.



Red-tailed Hawk Photo by Daniil Suchkov



Oak Titmouse Photo by Ken Burton

Among the unexpected highlights of the trip were three Greater White-fronted Geese at Southern Humboldt Community Park (the park's first spring record), a Red-throated Loon at Lake Mendocino (only Mendocino County's tenth inland record), a Mountain Quail and two Rufous-crowned Sparrows near Leesville in Colusa County (both are rare there), two Say's Phoebe broods near Chrome (apparently only the second and third Glenn County breeding records, part of a recent northward range expansion), and a late White-throated Sparrow in Red Bluff.

In summary, we tallied 118 species on 38 checklists. We got about 46 breeding confirmations for 24 species and submitted the first atlas checklists for 12 blocks. The complete eBird trip report is at ebird.org/tripreport/512645.

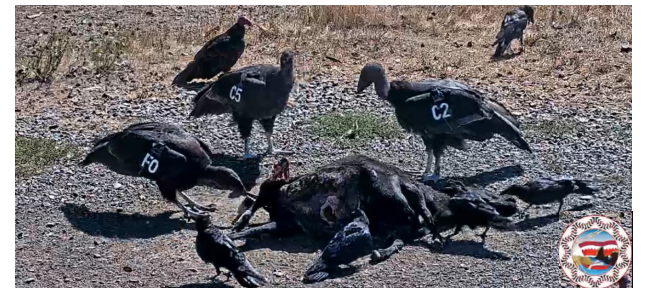
Local Bird News Stories

Wigi Wetlands Update: Fire! A wind-swept fire torched the leaves from a Himalayan blackberry thicket, burned dry grass, singed willow trees, and left behind 2 acres of black, ash-covered ground. Wigi Wetlands is the 16 acre parcel on the Eureka Waterfront behind the Bayshore Mall that RRAS has been restoring to create bird-friendly habitat. The fire was on July 30. It was restricted to the area between the trail and the bay, and fortunately did not impact areas where we have been working. We hope the blackberries will be easier to pull, and we plan to broadcast wildflower seeds when the rains return! Our next workdays are Saturday, September 26 and October 24, 9-11:00 a.m.

Condor News: Seven new condors were added to the Yurok Tribe's Northern California Condor Restoration Program (NCCRP) flock in mid-August. The new birds – three males and four females – came from the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. They join the NCCRP's existing flock of 24 free-flying condors. Plans called for releases of the new birds to start at the end of August.

eBird Rare Bird Alerts for California Condors in our area this past year have largely been concentrated in the Redwood Creek corridor to the northeast of Orick, with sightings all along Bald Hills Road especially at Redwood NP--Lyons Ranch Trail, Dolason Prairie Picnic Area, and the Redwood Creek Overlook. But in more good news, a condor from the NCCRP flock completed a monumental journey from Orick to an area near Medford, Oregon, becoming the

first condor to fly free in the state since 1904 (that's over 120 years!!). Condor B9 was released into the wild last year by the Yurok Tribe. The still-unnamed two-year-old soared over 380-miles in only four days. Good luck, B9!!



Newly released Condor F0 enjoying her freedom.

Image © Yurok Tribe; screen capture from: <https://www.yuroktribe.org/yurok-condor-live-feed>

Bird Atlas Big Weekend: Grove's Prairie and Denny

Story and photos by Sean McCann

As part of RRAS's drive to document breeding behavior in under-surveyed regions of Northern California, I led a field trip to the Denny area of Eastern Humboldt County, covering the Denny and Jim Jam Ridge quadrangles. Having been late to announce the trip, I was happy when one person, Abby DeBusk, was able to join me.

We arrived at Grove's Prairie on the morning of June 5 to the songs of numerous birds resounding from every direction. The burbling of the stream flowing around the prairie blended with the birdsong—conditions appeared promising. The high forest canopy and dense thickets of willows along the stream, however, made it difficult to get eyes on birds. Most ID was done by ear, which is fine for general birding but left us with very little breeding data. We left the site with probable codes for Canada Jay, Lazuli Bunting, and Dark-eyed Junco.

From there, we drove a few miles up the road to a burn site with much greater visibility. Birds could be seen flying every direction the minute we stepped out of the car. We obtained our first confirmed breeding evidence shortly thereafter when we observed an American Robin carrying food. In quick succession, we got probable codes for Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, and Dark-eyed Junco. The big thrill came when we walked up to the sunny area at the top of the hill, where we stumbled upon *two* groups of Mountain



Burn site near Grove's Prairie



Black-headed Grosbeak

Quail fledglings. In both cases, they were invisible until we were inches from them, then they fled from the little depressions in the sand in which they had been bedded down, the parents calling them urgently into the dense shrubs. We were both astonished at the effectiveness of their camouflage.

Abby had to leave the next morning, so I continued alone, making one more stop at the burn site before proceeding to the Denny area. This time,

I was lucky enough to observe Cassin's Vireo and Lazuli Bunting carrying food—two more confirmed breeding species on the books. From there, I continued to the East Fork New River Trail in Denny, encountering a full-grown mountain lion on the road en route! The parking lot at this location proved fruitful, as a Ruffed Grouse foraged in the vegetation just off the edge of the lot and a Willow Flycatcher could be heard singing off and on for quite a while. I spent about an hour trying to observe breeding behavior of either species but had no luck. There was, however, a Northern Mockingbird nest with young in the same area. The only new confirmed code along the trail was obtained when California Towhee juveniles could be heard giving begging calls continuously from one spot (FL-Recently Fledged Young).

The trip was a great learning experience. Looking back, I would have been wise to prioritize obtaining breeding codes for the Willow Flycatcher and Ruffed Grouse rather than searching out additional species along the trail, but having never birded that area before, I didn't know what else I would find. I later learned that there were no confirmed observations of breeding Willow Flycatchers anywhere in the state at that point, and there were only a few observations with probable codes. Obtaining a code there would have provided valuable data. This was a good lesson in atlas strategy and prioritization. On future trips, I plan to schedule more time in each location to allow for extended observation of species for the sake of breeding confirmation.

Local Bird News Stories, continued



Eurasian Whimbrel, Photo by Tony Kurz

Eurasian Whimbrel Occurrence in Del Norte County

"An Asian bird can teach us how resilient birds are and give us hope for the future."

By Tony Kurz

On June 2 of this year, Lucas Stephenson was scoping for birds off Point Saint George in Crescent City when he noticed a group of whimbrels flying by. One stood out having a white back stripe—a Eurasian Whimbrel! Lucas immediately got the word out. I happened to be north of him on the beach doing my Snowy Plover survey, and we re-found the bird foraging on the beach just north of the point. This was the start of a long-sustained summer presence—from June 2 to July 31—of this very rare Eurasian vagrant.

If one vagrant Eurasian Whimbrel is not enough, a second one was discovered on the same beach

in the same month. How did we know it was a second one? Lucas had discovered that the one seen on June 2 was *banded* and the other one was not. This is the first banded Eurasian Whimbrel documented in North America. The rare status of these birds brought many birders from out of the area. Using eBird, I counted a total of 88 reports by people who came to chase the whimbrels. Without a doubt, the presence of this whimbrel created stories and put smiles on people's faces.

Read the full story on rras.org: Discover how we were able to get the information off the band and chase the history of this bird, how splitting the Eurasian and Hudsonian Whimbrels into two species was a hook for birders, and how there is much to learn about bird migration, population trends, and habitats.

JOIN US! RRAS offers local chapter memberships at a yearly \$30 or more donation. Your membership includes an emailed and mailed copy of *The Sandpiper*.

To join, mail a check payable to RRAS with the notation, "Local Membership," your name, address, and email address to:

Redwood Region Audubon Society
PO Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502

Or join electronically through our secure PayPal platform on rras.org by clicking "Become a Member/Donate". All proceeds go to Redwood Region Audubon Society and are tax deductible.



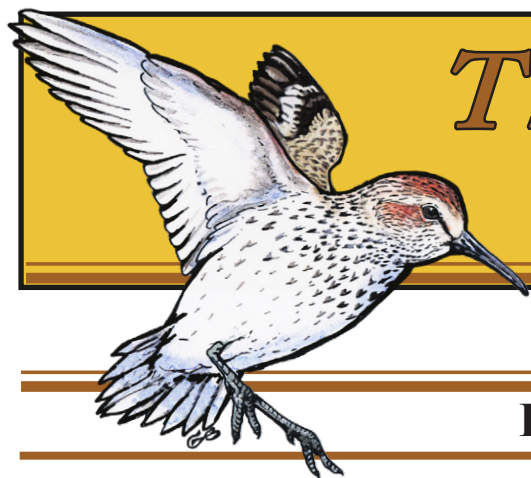
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Photo by Tony Kurz

Eurasian Whimbrel in Del Norte County! (See page 7)



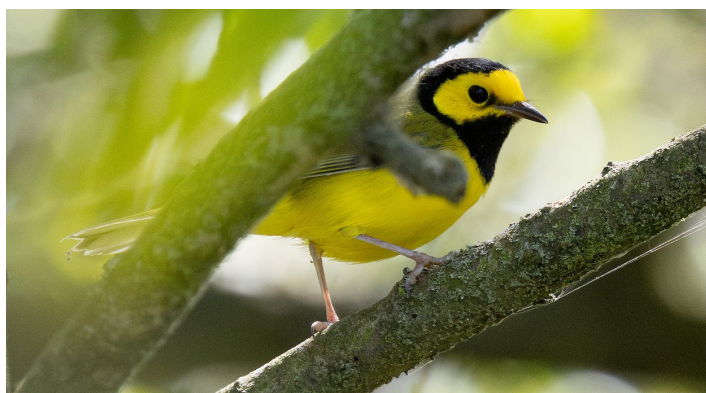
The Sandpiper



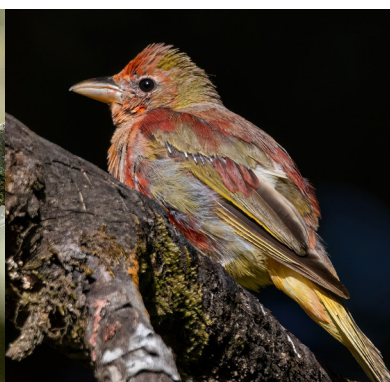
Redwood Region Audubon Society

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Fall Migration (September, October, November) 2026



Hooded Warbler, Eureka, 22 Aug, 2026, © Liam Hutcheson



Summer Tanager, Hum. Coc,
3 Aug, 2026, © Jeff Todoroff



Cook's Petrel, Hum. Co. Pelagic, 25 July, 2026, © Jeff Todoroff