

VOLUME 58 December/January 2025 Number 3

Black Oystercatcher Research Published

That visibly remarkable shorebird – black in color with a bright orange beak and light pink legs – seen in rocky intertidal zones at the Sonoma County coast – is the subject of a 10 years-long study along the California coast and up to Oregon. Study results are published in a research paper in *Marine Ornithology.* With overall coordination by Audubon California, local data collection was conducted by Madrone Audubon's Coastal Stewardship Task Force, led by Diane Hichwa (and the late Bryant Hichwa). Additional regional data collectors were Mendocino Coast Audubon, Golden Gate Bird Alliance and Marin Audubon.



Black Oystercatchers

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

The research paper is entitled Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*) productivity in California and Oregon and the effects of nest site and environmental covariates. Authors include Anna Weinstein, Joe Liebezeit, Daniel Orr, Timothy Meehan, and Ryan Carle.

From the article abstract: "...Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani* is a species of conservation concern due to its small global population, reliance on somewhat restricted intertidal habitat, and vulnerability to climate change impacts. Concern for this species, along with a lack of demographic information from the southern portion of its range, gave rise to a community science project to monitor pair productivity, nest characteristics, and nest disturbance from 2012 through

2022 across three study regions in Oregon and California. A clear spatial gradient existed in productivity, with relatively low values in the southern region (0.37 fledged young per pair per year, 95% confidence interval [CI] = 0.32–0.43; Southern California) compared to central (0.46, 0.41–0.51; Northern California and southern Oregon) and northern (0.60, 0.47–0.77; northern Oregon) regions.

While productivity varied systematically across space, there was no general trend over time. Pair productivity was slightly higher at mainland nests than island nests when nest position above high tide was low, but it was highest at island nests when nest position was high. Productivity was negatively related to observed human disturbance but not consistently

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GENERAL MEETING

Monday, January 20, 2025 6:30 - 7:45 PM

Join us on Zoom

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81458171984?pwd=EzARNAV ea2jRM9a9qd5yaauIwbiSp7.1

Western Snowy Plovers at Pt. Reyes National Seashore & Travels in Asia

Presented by Matt Lau

Wildlife biologist Matt Lau has worked on Western Snowy Plover conservation for 12 years, in Humboldt County and at Point Reyes

National Seashore. He will present on snowy plover natural history and breeding biology, and provide an update on the status of the breeding population at Point Reyes relative to the range-wide Pacific coast subpopulation. Then, we'll take a fun detour where Matt will talk about his month-long honeymoon travels to Japan, Taiwan, Laos, and Thailand, and all the diversity of habitats and birds they observe.



Matt Lau, Pt. Reyes National Seashore



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2024 125TH NATIONAL AUDUBON CBC

Christmas Bird Count – Madrone Audubon's West County 2024

Join our 58th annual West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 29, 2024!

The annual Cheistmas Bird Count of National Audubon is the longest-in-community science project for collecting data on birds and more important than ever in planning and decisions for support of birds and habitat in the climate crisis. To join one of our teams and participate, please contact John Lundblad (johnlunchbag@gmail.com) or Chris Grabill (cgrabill@gmail.com).

Post Count Gathering and Dinner December 29 at 4:30 p.m.

This year, we'll meet at the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, 870 Morris Street, in Sebastopol, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m. Bring a dessert to share if you like. A \$5-10 donation is requested, but not required. Members are welcomed.

VOLUNTEER to help with the dinner, please. Contact Susan Kirks, 707-241-5548 or susankirks333@gmail. com for more info and to help support the count and the teams.



Pileated Woodpecker

pecker by Tom Reynolds

Other Area Christmas Bird Counts for 2024

Santa Rosa – sponsored by Redwood Regional Ornithological Society (RROS) is limited to members and scheduled for Sunday, December 15. Contact elewis 227@gmail.com.



Common Raven

by Tom Reynolds

Cheep Thrills, Tuesday, December 19. (https://cheepthrillscbc.blogspot.com)

Sonoma Valley – sponsored by Sonoma Ecology Center (and RROS), scheduled for Friday, December 27. Contact ssbordugor;@gmail.com.

Napa Solano Audubon – Angwin - Wednesday, January 1.vireocity@hotmail.com.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER

Continued from page I

related to non-human disturbance or food availability, represented by estimates of mussel bed cover and depth near nests. We discuss our results in light of known and anticipated impacts of ocean and climate change on intertidal habitats of the coastal northeast Pacific region. We provide management recommendations and suggest avenues of new research to help in the conservation of this vulnerable species."

Data collection will continue on a more limited basis for long-term monitoring and additional understanding.

We appreciate the dedication and consistency of data collection and analysis to better understand and enact best conservation efforts for the charismatic Black Oystercatcher.



Black Oystercatchers - Nest exchange

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds



NEWS UPDATES

Monarch Butterfly proposed for Endangered Species Act Listing

In December, the US Fish and Wildlife Service published the decision to support listing the Monarch Butterfly as Threatened in the United States. This is wonderful news in support of the Monarch whose population has dramatically decreased due to habitat loss, pesticides and climate change impacts. Following the public comment period, if the Threatened status becomes official, habitat of the Monarch Butterfly would be protected in California and nationwide. Habitat enhancement plantings and monitoring have been underway in Sonoma County by the Xerces Society, Hallberg Butterfly Garden, Native Songbird Care & Conservation, and our members who plant native Milkweed (Narrowleaf Milkweed – Asclepias fascicularis, and Showy Milkweed – Asclepias speciosa. These 2 Milkweed species grow in the widest range of conditions.

(Resources: Xerces Society, UC Davis, US Fish and Wildlife Service)

Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Update

The Update was approved in November 2024 by the California Coastal Commission. The Commission, chaired by Caryl Hart, in a unanimous vote. The Local Coastal Plan (LCP) is a framework for land use decisions and coastal resources protection in the Sonoma County coastal zone. All LCP updates in California now include considerations of climate change impacts such as sea level rise, limiting and eliminating use of pesticdes, and guidelines for considering renewable energy sources. The united group of many stakeholders, including conservationists, worked on this Update for ten years. We deeply appreciate the dedication and also the ability to provide input.



NPS began fence removal in 12/2024 at Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Cattlemen's Association filed lawsuit in effort to stop. Next court hearing 02/25.

Our National Future

In early December National Audubon staff net via Zoom with representatives from about 300 Chapters in the US. We discussed updated procedures for the Chapters' submission of our annual reports. We received a small stipend each year from National Audubon following submission and acceptance of our annual report. The report includes a summary of our activities, programs and financial statements.

During the recent meeting, we also reviewed the four main areas of National 's strategic plan, Flight Plan:

- Habitat Conservation
- Climate Action
- Driving Policy
- Building Community

The webinar was very informative and uplifting. National Audubon is engaged in many positive changes, including some super caring and efficient staff members

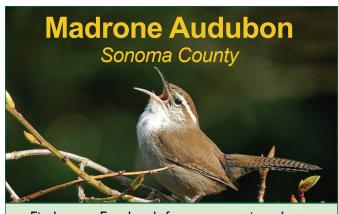
3 billion birds have been lost since 1970 in the northern hemisphere. This is as a result of habitat loss and, more recently, climate change

From National Audubon:

"Flight Plan, our 2023–2028 strategic plan, represents a new era that builds on the strengths and lessons from our past. With it, we can meaningfully align our work as we attempt to "bend the bird curve," meaning that we are working to halt, and ultimately reverse, the decline of birds across the Americas. This work requires us to work

efficiently across habitats and national borders, with partners and governments and local communities sharing the same resources as their local birds.

The urgency of the moment demands much of us. This is a turning point for our planet and our organization, and Audubon is ready to meet the challenge. Flight Plan positions us to achieve meaningful and lasting impact—protecting birds, people, and our planet."



Find us on Facebook for conservation alerts, outings, special announcements and more.



HABITAT GARDENING

Wildlife Friendly Fences

by Trish Welsh Taylor

"Wildlife in MY suburban neighborhood?" one may ask doubtfully.

You are wrong if you think that your area doesn't have wildlife. Not seeing it doesn't mean it is not there, or tries to be. Our yard, which is in town, has been visited by a partridge looking to nest, a green heron inspecting the small pond, nesting vultures under the big rock. When wildlife visits here, it has come from some other nearby yard or corridor. And after their visit here these creatures go on to other yards and corridors. There is wildlife in our neighborhoods, and it needs our assistance. Animals need to move, sometimes suddenly, to survive. They need to pursue and flee, pounce and escape. One big problem: fences. There are so many fences in their way.

Naturally, we don't want people walking through our yards. Plus, we have pets and kids to keep safe from wandering. So, we fence. Nowadays, though, with wildlife conservation in mind, the question, "How strong of a barrier to build?" is changing to "How wildlife-friendly can the fence be?" The questions we ask determine the solutions we find. "What is the purpose of the fencing? How can that purpose be served and also give wildlife the best chance."

When making a safe place for our kids, we think like a kid. We can do the same for wildlife. What does a predator need so as to hunt? What does the prey need to save its life? What does a mating pair need? A new mother?

Simply put, creatures need to see, to hide, to run fast. They need escape routes and resting places. They need to find each other, watch each other, call to and hear each other. They need food and water.

Animals are smart. If we provide corridors for their travel, they will find them. In our neighborhood, some homes are well fenced, but enough yards are open so that we who see each other also get to enjoy the drama of wildlife. Sometimes the neighbor's dog or cat walks through, but rarely, and everyone knows each other just a little bit.

Questions worth asking:

Is the fence so high that wildlife can't get over it? Could wildlife get stuck trying to wriggle through it? Is there space for easily crawling under without injury? Are there barbs that will cut into an animal? Is the fence highly visible so that animals are not surprised by it? Is the top of the fence smooth (without barbs or points) to protect animals that try to climb or jump over?

Trending now are hedges of native shrubs and trees chosen for their berries. Such hedges provide two- and four-footed wildlife happy homes and safe haven. Insects and spiders flourish in hedges also.

We often tell ourselves, "My place is suburb. There is no wildlife here." But there is. And, if we act like wildlife belongs here, amongst us, there will soon be even more.

Help Our Chapter - Board Openings

Our Board of Directors meets monthly via Zoom. The Officer opening of Corresponding Secretary would be great to fill! If you have a computer, Microsoft Word, and a printer, and can help with preparing acknowledgment letters and other correspondence, you would collaborate with our President and also participate in our Board decisions to support our membership. Please contact Susan Kirks, 707-241-5548 or susankirks333@gmail.com for more info.

Similarly, we have Committee Chair openings for Publicity Chair, and we would love to have members join our Habitat Gardening Committee. Please reach out to Susan (as above) for more information.



River Otters

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

Share your stories and experience with birds and habitat gardening.

We suggest 300-word stories with a photo.

Please submit to
susankirks333@gmail.com

For planting and habitat consideration, see our Tree & Vegetation Planting Guide

https://madroneaudubon.org/pdf/ Tree and Plant List.pdf



EAST COAST BIRDS

Courtesy of Jan Casavant



Northern Cardinal



Eastern Phoebe



Black-capped Chickadee

New Members

Kenwood
Ian Momson

Santa Rosa Nell Praetzel Marc Sylvester Sebastopol

Elaine Tassel



Donations

In memory of Bill Bevans

by Mookie Fudemberg

In memory of
Gary Haag

by Teresita Salter-Haag

In memory of Gilbert

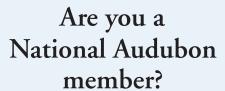
by Elizabeth O'Donnell

In memory of Carl Zeidman

by Phil Zeidman

In appreciation to Terri Clark

for a lifetime donation to Madrone Audubon



Please consider joining our local chapter, Madrone Audubon.

(see membership form, back page)



Our Board and Conservation Committee meetings are held virtually. For Board meeting information, contact President Susan Kirks, 707-241-5548, susankirks333@gmail.com. For Conservation Committee meetings and information, please contact Diane Hichwa, 707-785-1922, dhichwa@earthlink.net. Also, please visit our website, www.madroneaudubon.org for updates.

December 2024 – January 2025

Bring binoculars and wear outdoor clothing suitable for the weather forecast. Our outings are free for members and the public. (We may have binoculars to loan for your outing.)

Thursday, December 12, 2024

8:30-10:30 AM

Ragle Ranch Regional Park

500 Ragle Road, Sebastopol Leader: Janet Bosshard

Parking permit is required. We will meet back by the restrooms and dog park. Watch the weather, dress accordingly. Could be foggy or cold, Sonoma County weather is variable. Moderate to heavy rain, the walk will be cancelled. Info: (707) 480-3432.



Ferruginous Hawk

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds

Sunday, December 29, 2024

All Day

West Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count

For info: cgrabill@gmail.com or johnlunchbag@gmail. com 4:30-7:30 p.m. – Post CBC simple, nutritious dinner & gathering, Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, 390 Morris Street, Sebastopol. \$5-10 donation requested, not required. All members welcomed. Teams will report highlights of their day. Volunteers to help with dinner needed. Text or call 707-241-5548 (4 p.m. to 8 p.m. latest).

Thursday, January 9, 2025

8:30-10:30 AM

Ellis Creek Ponds

3890 Cypress Drive, Petaluma

Leader: Janet Bosshard

From Hwy 101 south, get off at Hwy 116, left on Lakeville Hwy. Turn right on S. McDowell Blvd. Ext, right on Cypress Drive and follow to end through the gates. Park near the restrooms. Watch the weather. Be prepared for chilly, breezy conditions. Rain will cancel. Info: (707) 480-3432.

Saturday, January 18, 2025

8:30-10:30 AM

Ellis Creek Ponds

3890 Cypress Drive, Petaluma

Leader: Linda Fraley

Take Highway 101 to Petaluma. Go East on 116 (Lakeville Highway). Turn right (south) on S. McDowell Blvd ext. Turn right on Cypress Drive. Go to the end of the road and through gates. Meet near restrooms. Info: (559) 779-5211. Rain cancels.

Thursday, January 23, 2025

8:30-10:30 AM

Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail

Leader: Janet Bosshard

Meet in the parking lot off Hwy #12, before the gas station coming from the east. Dress for Sonoma County weather conditions. We will follow the paved trail and possibly the dirt channel trail, weather and muddy dependent.



Elephant Seals

Courtesy of Tom Reynolds



Observations	Summer - Fall 2024	• Dan Nelson • 479-2918 • bis	rdsurf64@sbcglobal.net		
Cackling Goose (1500+)	10/5	Bodega Dunes CG fly-overs; 4 large flocks	DN, et al		
Red-necked Grebe (2)	9/29	Bodega Head/ off Jetty area	RROS boat trip: GH, SH, et al		
Rhinoceros Auklet (5)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	GH, AW, DN, RR et al		
Nazca Booby (1 ad. 1 imm)	8/31	Offshore Half Moon Bay, San Mateo Co.	AJ, et al		
Cocos Booby (2-3)	OctNov	S.E. Farallon Island	M.Ob		
Sabine's Gull (30-40)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M. Ob		
Pomarine Jaeger (2-3)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
Long-tailed Jaeger (1)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
South Polar Skua (1-2)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
Laysan Albatross (1-2)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma Co; leg band from Guadalupe Island	RROS, M.Ob		
Black-footed Albatross (25-30)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
Buller's Shearwater (40-50)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
Ashy Storm-Petrel (8-10)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel (1-2)	9/29	Offshore Sonoma County	RROS, M.Ob		
Broad-winged Hawk (13)	9/23	Kettling over Nunes Ranch upper fields, Pt. Reyes	DM, MC		
Broad-winged Hawk (100+)	9/23	Daily registration tally from Marin Headlands	DE, M.Ob		
Bald Eagle (4)	11/10	Bodega Bay Oyster Co. E. of Valley Ford	DN		
Cattle Egret (1)	9/8	Just N. of Pt. Reyes Station	MM, DM		
Least Bittern	8/25	Ellis Creek Treatment ponds	DN		
Least Bittern	10/21	Las Gallinas Treatment ponds, Marin Co.	DE		
Sora	10/5	Campbell Cove	DN		
Semipalmated Sandpiper	9/5	Abbott's Lagoon	SH, JW		
Pectoral Sandpiper (2)	9/5	Abbott's Lagoon	SH, JW		
Baird's Sandpiper (2)	9/5	Abbott's Lagoon	SH, JW		
Pectoral Sandpiper (3)	9/23	Drake's Beach restoration area pond	DM, MC		
Pectoral Sandpiper (1)	9/23	Abbott's Lagoon	LHe		
Lesser Yellowlegs (1)	9/8	Drake's Beach restoration area pond	DM, MM		
Common Ringed-Plover	9/5	Abbott's Lagoon	SH, JW et al		
Burrowing Owl (1)	9/23	Pt. Reyes; Rd. to Lighthouse W. of Nunes	DM, MC		
Burrowing Owl (1)	9/29	15+ mi. Offshore Sonoma County	SH, DN, et al		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (1)	9/23	Owl Canyon	EL, PC, CW et al		
Lewis' Woodpecker (40+)	10/21	Eticuera Cr. / Eastside Rd. Lake Berryessa	RF, DHa & DHa		
White-throated Swift	10/31	Paula Lane, Petaluma; new Yard-bird	DN DS EM LV		
Eastern Kingbird Eastern Wood-Pewee	9/10 9/10	Nunes Ranch, Pt. Reyes	DS, EM, LK		
Hammond's Flycatcher	9/10	Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes	DS, EM, LK, MFr DS, EM, LK, MFr		
Alder Flycatcher	9/10	Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes	LK, EM, DS		
Tropical Kingbird	10/25	Westside Park, Bodega Bay	SC, MFu, DHe		
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	9/26-10/8	South Ely Blvd, Petaluma	RL, AW, MB, M.Ob		
White Wagtail	9/29	NE corner Rodeo Lagoon, Marin Co. (photos)	Dani Christensen		
Prothonotary Warbler	10/2-5	Rail Ponds / Bodega Dunes CG (photos)	RO'D, DK, DN, M.Ob		
Tennessee Warbler	9/23	Pt. Reyes R.C.A. Station trees	DM, MC		
Nashville Warbler	11/7	Diekmann's Store trees, Bodega Bay	DN, et al		
Blackpoll Warbler	9/10	Nunes Ranch trees	LK, EM, DS		
Blackpoll Warbler	9/15	W. side Spring Lake, just N. of boat ramp	RR		
Black-and-White Warbler	9/10	Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes	MFr, LK, EM, DS		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9/9	S. of Owl Canyon toward Campbell Cove	DN		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9/10-26	Campbell Cove	DN, M.Ob		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	10/13	Spud Point	PC		
Blackburnian Warbler	9/21	Bodega Bay Marine Lab entrance trees	DN		
Northern Waterthrush	9/22	Campbell Cove	DN, et al		
American Redstart	9/8	Nunes Ranch – New Willows, Pt. Reyes	DM		
Summer Tanager (male)	9/24	Santa Rosa - S.R.J.C. neighborhood	D Barry, et al		
Great-tailed Grackle	11/7	Jenner; Downtown Visitor Center LF			
Hooded Oriole (fem.)	9/8	Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes in swale DM			
Clay-colored Sparrow	11/11	Jenner Overlook CM			
Painted Bunting	9/29	Campbell Cove, Bodega Bay. (imm. fem; photos) SC			
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9/22	Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay (fem.)	DN		

CONTRIBUTORS: Alvaro's Adventures, Dave Barry, Daniel Edelstein, Scott Carey, Michael Carozza, Dani Christensen, Peter Colasanti, Marty Freeland, Mookie Fudemburg, Linda Fraley, Robert Frescura, Denise & David Hamilton, Luanna Helfman, Denise Herzberg, Lisa Hug, Gene Hunn, Steve Howell, Alvaro Jaramillo, Logan Kayle, Don Kirker, Rick Lebadour, Elizabeth Lewis, Many Observers, Colin Meusel, Ethan Monk, Dominik Mosur, Megan Mosur, Dan Nelson, Rob O'Donnell, Redwood Region Ornithological Society, Ruth Rudesill, Dessi Sieburth, Jim White, Alan Wight, and Corinne Williams.



December/January 2025

Madrone *Leaves* is published bimonthly from October through May, plus one issue each in June and September.

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY
PLEASE DELIVER ENCLOSED
CALENDAR ENCLOSED

RECYCLED PAPER

MADRONE LEAVES



Madrone Audubon Society meets on the third Monday of each month, except in June, July, August, and December. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. All membership meetings and walks are open to the public. Information: e-mail - info@madroneaudubon.org.

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Bird Walks – Saturday: Linda Farley (and various)	Northern California Rare Bird Alert
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	National Audubon Society: 225 Varick Street, NY, NY 10014

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