

**Field Trip Report: Humboldt County Weekend and Aleutian Goose Fly-off,
March 5-6, 2011
Trip Leader: Ken Burton**

Former MAS board member and professional biologist Ken Burton led us on a whirlwind birding trip in coastal Humboldt County. Numerous scenic locations yielded 117 species. At a small pond near the mouth of the Mad River, Ken relocated a Brown Shrike. This bird nests in Siberia and winters in SE Asia. Needless to say, (s)he took a wrong turn. Our MAS trip was joined by a top birder who came up from San Diego specifically to add this bird to his life list (it gets expensive if you get this serious about birding). Among eight gulls and terns at the river mouth were several Black-legged Kittiwakes, a species usually seen offshore.

The Aleutian Goose fly-out at Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge was a dawn highlight with tens of thousands of geese in the air. Google the species for a back-from-the-edge success story. Twenty-two species of waterfowl were recorded for the trip. Other notable observations: Rock Sandpiper (southern limit of range) at Samoa Jetty, Orchard Oriole (vagrant from the eastern US) in Eureka, several almost tame Gray Jays above Ferndale, and a close-up look at a Ferruginous Hawk high on Bear River Ridge over the Lost Coast Headlands. MAS sponsors several two-day field trips each year and you may want to add one to your travels. No experience is necessary (new birders are always welcome), we get to places that probably will be new to you, and we meet some interesting people.



By Dave Herrema
Photo by Dave Van Meter