

## Field Trip Report - Bolinas Area

April 7, 2010

Leader: Keith Hansen

On a spectacular only-in-Marine day 17 of us birders accompanied super birder/artist Keith Hansen to some of his favorite spots in and around Stinson Beach. At the Stinson Beach Overlook a flock of **Surfbirds** fed on rocks at the foot of the cliff with **Black Turnstones** not far away. As we stood searching for waterbirds a **Bewick's Wren** emerged from the bushes in front of us and took a dust bath. Offshore past the surf line floated a mixed raft of **Red-necked Loons** and **Western Grebes**. A lone **Whimbrel** probed the sand along the shore.

Back in Stinson Beach we patrolled the post office parking lot and environs adding **Pine Siskins**, **Orange-crowned Warblers**, **American Goldfinches**, **Northern Flickers** and newly arrived **Brown-headed Cowbirds** to our lists. **Cedar Waxwings** flashed into a eucalyptus. A **Downy Woodpecker** and a **Nuttall's Woodpecker** perching in the same tree offered a good field mark comparison.



Most unusual was an early-season juvenile **Song Sparrow** and his attentive parents. In Bolinas Lagoon adjoining the nursing Harbor Seal pups we spotted **Horned Grebes** in gaudy breeding plumage, **Surf Scoters**, a few **Red-breasted Mergansers** and **Black-bellied Plovers** and some late-lingering **Common Goldeneyes**. From another vantage point on the lagoon we spied **Green-winged Teals**, **American Wigeons**, a **Killdeer**, a **Spotted Sandpiper** and **Band-tailed Pigeons** pecking around in the mud.

At Stinson Gulch the special treats were several **Allen's Hummingbirds** going all metallic in good light, singing **Black-headed**

**Grosbeaks**, a spiffy male **Townsend's Warbler** fueling up for his trek north, and a striking **Spotted Towhee** posing atop a bush. Among the willows our Marin-version **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** flitted. All around us we heard **Purple Finches** and in one spot a **Warbling Vireo**. Those who stayed for lunch joined Keith on his deck over the water in Bolinas.



From this superb vantage point we watched a **Common Loon** and a **Pelagic Cormorant** diving for fish, **Barn and Cliff Swallows** zooming by at eye level, an **Osprey** with a fish onboard circling to gain altitude and **Western Gulls** squabbling below. A magnificent **Hooded Oriole** in a tree behind Keith's gallery capped the day. Total birds observed: 84.

A special treat was a quick visit to Keith's art gallery in Bolinas where his bird illustrations are not to be missed.

**By Sande Chilvers**  
**Photos by Bob Chilvers**