

## THE VILLAGE BIRDING LIFE

“Shorebirds”

by HSV Audubon

“Shorebird” is a generic term for a variety of families of birds, a few of which are, Plovers, Sandpipers, Woodcock and Snipe. Shorebirds range from small to medium in size and are characterized by thin bills and long legs which allows them to forage for the insects and other invertebrates that live in and around shorelines and mud flats.

Our HSV Audubon checklist includes 10 species of Shorebirds. The state checklist numbers over 40. None are year around residents in the Village and most are considered rare. Killdeer, a member of the Plover family, are the most common. These Robin sized, brown and white birds have a shrill “killdeer, killdeer” call. Killdeer, are one of several Shorebirds, that don’t follow the general characteristics. Even though they appreciate a nice mud flat, they are just as likely to be seen on a moist golf course fairway. Woodcock are another “pass through” shorebird that plays by its own rules. These camouflaged brown birds are secretive, most active in low light and seek thick cover. They are probably more common than we think in the Spring but not many of us like to hike where they hide. Spotted Sandpipers do follow the general Shorebird rules. In the spring and summer you’ll see them running and pecking along the shorelines our lakes. They are brown and white birds, slightly bigger than our Bluebirds. If you get a good look, dark spots on their white flanks make for an easy identification.

If you are lucky, in the spring or fall, you may see one of the most spectacular shorebirds of all-the American Avocet. The most recent reports of them have been from the NE end of the Balboa Beach, although, we wouldn’t be surprised if they visit our other, larger lakes. Avocets are Crow sized except they have very long legs and a distinctive, long, upturned bill. In the fall they are mostly black, buff and white. In the Spring, they show their breeding color includes a noticeably increased buff color.

As always HSVBIRDS.ORG has a lot of information on everything you’d like to know about birds and some of Nature’s other wonders. You will see on the website that HSV Audubon has available a Village birding checklist. It lists the over 200 species of birds that might be seen in the Village, when they might be seen and how common they are. It’s a great way to keep track of the birds at your feeder.

HSV Audubon meets the 2nd Friday of each month, except in the summer, at 10:00 at the Coronado Center. Guests are always welcome.

Photos by Vic Prislipsky