

Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

A Better Way of Listing

by Steve Gerow

Often over the years, I have found myself mulling over questions—some arising for a specific reason, others just the result of random curiosity—that involve the occurrence, distribution, and timing of local birds. How many times have I seen Cinnamon Teal in Antonelli Pond? When did the first fall American Pipits arrive in Santa Cruz over the last few years? How widely distributed are breeding Hermit Warblers in the county? But where can one go to find out such things?

In the past I would look to my own notes and find them lacking. I knew there was relevant data, carefully recorded in that blue notebook that I subsequently lost, or maybe scribbled on the back of something that might have disappeared in a frenzy of house cleaning. Books, journals, and other published materials would have some parts of the answers, but so much information could be derived if all my notes from years of birding were in one place and easy to access. And what about the records of other people? There is so much information out there in the minds and notebooks of the nation's birders! Even thoroughly birded places have many gaps in what is known, and other areas have had very little data compiled at all, and everywhere things are constantly changing. On a broader level, determining the distribution and status of all bird species, not just those that become a focus of research projects, is an increasingly important part of environmental planning and researching conservation needs. Wouldn't it be a great if everyone's bird lists and notes could be permanently stored in one place and made available to researchers and others, in both detailed and summarized forms?

Well, that is happening. Advances in computers and the internet have made it possible to gather and summarize massive amounts of data on an ongoing basis.

eBird

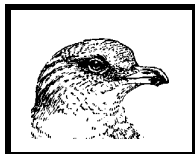


eBird, a project started in 2002 by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, was developed just for this purpose. Basically, you just enter your checklist and submit it on line, and all the information you submit becomes part of a nationwide store of data, available for research and general knowledge. You can keep it simple, or you can add all sorts of notes and additional information. *eBird* is designed to be flexible and easily adaptable to recording anything from the most casual general birding to very rigorous scientific surveys, and every bit that *(continued on page 8)*

Inside:

Calendar of SCBC Events

Get Gull-able

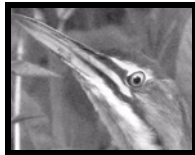


SCBC & eBird

Santa Cruz Birds



Trip Reports



New Quarters



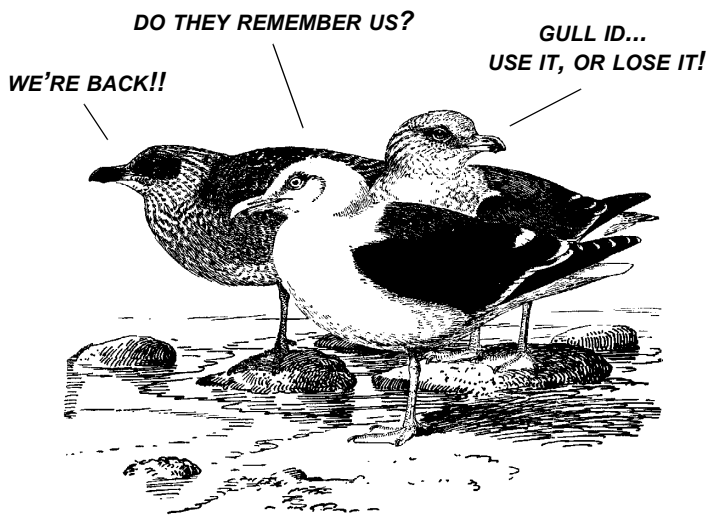
Moss Landing CBC

Events Calendar

September - October 2009

Check the online SCBC Calendar of Events for any recent updates.
<http://www.santacruzbirdclub.org>

Gulls... Yes we Can!



This fall and winter we offer a special opportunity to wade into the wonderful world of gull identification. David Suddjian will present an evening slide show introduction to gull identification for beginner and intermediate level birders on Monday, November 9, followed by a series of field trips (many short and focused) to allow us to build our skills in the field. Gull ID can be daunting and scary, so a method will be proposed to approach the challenge, and we will seek to employ it in a non-threatening manner as we gently climb the learning curve. It really can be fun! We promise to hardly even worry about hybrids and to ignore all Asian subspecies! Come on...be *gullable*. Because you know, there really is no such thing as a "seagull."



Sunday, November 1
Beginning Bird Walk
Natural Bridges

Our local birding hotspot is a great place to get an introduction to the birds of Santa Cruz County.

Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM at the Delaware road entrance to Natural Bridges.

Leader: Wally and Lois Goldfrank, loisg@cruzio.net



Wednesday, November 4
Porter-Sesnon area of
New Brighton SB and vicinity

We'll explore this part of New Brighton State Beach, located east of the campground and maybe visit another local spot afterwards. We'll look for a nice cross-section of upland birds in scrub, grassland, oak, and pine habitats. Plan for some easy walking over moderate distances. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM along New Brighton Road. From Highway 1 at Capitola, take Park Avenue toward the coast. Turn left (east) onto MacGregor Drive (frontage road). Go for about half a mile, turn right onto New Brighton Road, and park before the RR tracks.

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com

Yellow-rumped Warbler



Santa Cruz Bird Club programs and field trips are open to the public—non-members are welcome. People needing rides to field trip sites are advised to contact field trip leaders. Carpooling is encouraged. Dress in layers and bring liquids. Lunches are optional on half-day trips. Heavy rain cancels.

Field trips can pose hazards. Reluctantly, we have decided we must publish and implement this policy:

The Santa Cruz Bird Club or its field trip leaders cannot be responsible for damage, injury, or loss incurred by the acts or omissions of any member or visitor during Club field trips or during commutes to or from them.

Field trip participants must release the Club from any liability for such damage, injury, or loss.

Ordinarily, field trip participants sign a waiver releasing the Club from such liability, but in the absence of such a signed waiver, participation on a Club field trip in itself implies consent to and agreement with this waiver.



**Saturday, November 7
Mission Springs**

Come and learn the craft of identifying birds by sight and sound.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the Wild Oak portion of Mission Springs Conference Center in Scotts Valley. From Mt. Hermon Rd. just north of Scotts Valley, take Lockhart Gulch Road 0.5 miles, and veer right onto Nelson Rd. The entrance to Wild Oak is on the left after 1 mile. Park to the right before crossing the bridge.

Leader: Scott Smithson, scottndawn@sbcglobal.net



**Sunday, November 8
Quail Hollow County Park**

The Sunset Trail at Quail Hollow Ranch is a good place to find many of the common winter species. It also hosts a variety of unique habitats, such as the dwarf redwood forest and outstanding views of the ranch and surrounding area. Plan for about a three-mile roundtrip of hiking with some fairly steep slopes.

Directions: Meet in the Quail Hollow parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Leader: Alex Rinkert, arinkert12@comcast.net

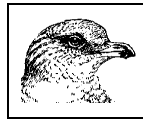


**Monday, November 9
Gull Identification Slide Show
7:00 PM**

Join David Suddjian for a friendly low-key introduction aimed at opening the doors to the fun world of gull identification for beginning and intermediate gull watchers. Come learn a basic approach to sorting out our gulls that will help you make sense out of the mystifying flocks. There is nothing to fear! And it will be fun! The evening program will be followed by a series of field opportunities that will let us put the approach into practice and grow in skill.

Directions: Meet at 7:00 PM at the parish hall at St. Joseph's Church, 435 Monterey Avenue in Capitola. From Highway 1, take Bay Street to Monterey Avenue. Go left on Monterey for just under 0.2 mile, and turn left into the parking lot for the church, across from Washburn Ave. Drive down to the lower parking lot to reach the parish hall.

Presenter: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com



**Wednesday, November 11
Gull Identification for Beginning and Intermediate Gull Watchers:
Morning at Capitola Beach**

A 2-3 hour morning outing to begin to learn how to identify our winter gulls. Come with questions, ready to look and learn. Yes, we'll look at other birds, too. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM at the Esplanade at Capitola Beach. From Highway 1, take Bay Avenue and follow it over the RR tracks and down into the village, turning left on Esplanade. Metered parking.

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com



**Friday, November 13
West Cliff Drive and Vicinity**

Winter birds and possibly a few late migrants. (Maybe the Rock Sandpiper will have returned for another winter?) We might check Bethany Curve Park and Lighthouse Field for landbirds.

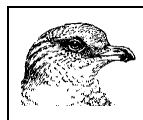
Directions: Meet at 7:30 AM at the corner of West Cliff Drive and Woodrow Avenue.

Leader: Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



Ring-billed Gull, first cycle

Photo: Jeff Poklen



**Friday, November 13
Gull Identification for Beginning and Intermediate Gull Watchers:
Afternoon at Rio Del Mar SB**

A two-hour afternoon outing to begin to learn how to identify our winter gulls. Come with questions, ready to look and learn. Yes, we'll look at other birds, too. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 3:00 PM at Rio Del Mar SB. From Highway 1, take Rio Del Mar Blvd toward the coast, all the way to its ending at the beach.

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com



Saturday, November 14
Seawatch with Rod

We will begin early in the morning at El Jarro Point near Davenport Landing to watch for seabirds (and marine mammals). The birding is often best close to sunrise, and we'll arrive a little more than an hour after sunrise. A spotting scope is helpful, but come even if you don't have one, as there are often several present and we all share. Dress warmly, gloves advised! After a couple hours of watching, pending weather, we may visit one or two other spots along the north coast. Rain cancels!

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at Davenport Landing. From Davenport go north on Highway 1, then turn left at the first road (Davenport Landing Road), go a short way and park at the beach access. We will walk directly out to the point from there. Late-comers can join us when they like, but after a couple hours we may go off to another site on the north coast. From the beach access parking area, go up the unmarked path on hill on the northwest side of the access (close to the road), then turn left at the top of the slope and walk along the old farm road for about 5 minutes to reach the point.

Leader: Rod Norden, norden.birds@gmail.com



Sunday, November 15
San Mateo Bayfront and Coast

We'll visit Coyote Point, Foster City, and Radio Road in the morning (high tide at Coyote Point: 8.4 at 10:25 AM) and Half Moon Bay/Princeton Harbor in the afternoon (low tide: -0.8 at 3:36 PM). Itinerary may vary as we'll attempt for any recent sightings provided on the peninsula birding list server (pen-bird) appropriate to these locations. Bring lunch for a full day's birding. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at the County Government Center on Ocean Street next to the Shell Gas Station at 7:00 AM. Plan to carpool, if possible. Please call leader to obtain mobile number should a later meeting time and location be desired.

Leader: Eric Feuss, (831) 477-0280



Wednesday, November 18
Jetty Road, Moss Landing
Wintering Shorebird Identification
and Counting Skills

Are you baffled by flocks of shorebirds seen on far-away mudflats in poor lighting conditions? Have you ever thrown up your hands and said there's no way that I'm counting those birds? If so, then this is the field workshop for you! We should see most of the wintering shorebirds of Monterey Bay and learn techniques for correctly identifying and counting them. Directions: Meet at the entrance to Jetty Rd. in Moss Landing at 8:00 AM. Ends approximately at noon. Rain cancels.

Leader: Bernadette Ramer, (831) 426-7342, baramer@sbcglobal.net

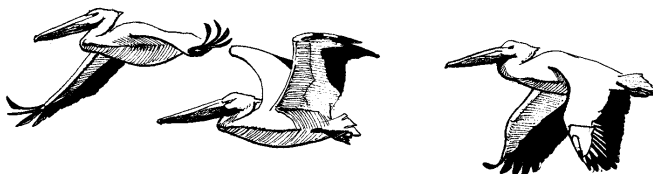


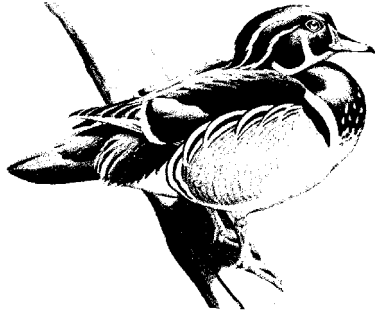
Thursday, November 19
SCBC Meeting @7:30 pm
Speaker: Ted Cheeseman

Topic: Penguins and Albatross:
The World Through the Eyes of a Seabird

Join naturalist and expedition leader Ted Cheeseman for a lecture exploring what it is to be a seabird in the vast unforgiving desert of the open ocean. How is it that albatross can fly 14,000 miles on a single feeding trip to bring home just one meal for a chick? How can penguins survive, thrive, and raise chicks in the world's harshest environments, but yet do not populate the mild tropics? Illustrated with images from Ted's travels with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris around the world, Ted will tell stories of the new views we are able to have into the lives of seabirds through GPS-telemetry. We are only now learning how truly magnificent penguins and albatross are—just as many species face sharp declines at the hands of industrial fishing and climate change. Through his expeditions with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, Ted frequently travels across the Southern Ocean and to its sub-Antarctic islands, the heart of prime penguin and albatross habitat. Ted will take you undersea with penguins and on the wing of an albatross, an entertaining and educational journey among the world's greatest mariners with beautiful photographs and the most recent bird science.

Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, CA





Wood Duck



Friday, November 20
Neary Lagoon

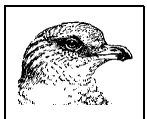
Probably we'll just find the usual winter mix, but surprises are possible.

Directions: Meet at the west entrance at 7:30 AM.

Leader: Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



Western Gull with young at Capitola beach
Photo by Jeff Poklen



Saturday, November 21
Gull Identification for Beginning and Intermediate Gull Watchers:
Afternoon at Pajaro Dunes

An afternoon outing to continue to learn how to identify our winter gulls, plus a chance to enjoy the other birds of the slough, marsh, and beach. Come with questions, ready to look and learn. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 2:00 PM at the end of West Beach Road. From Highway 1, at Watsonville take Riverside Drive toward the coast. Turn left at West Beach Road, and continue to its end. Meet along the road near the entrance to the Palm Beach Unit of Sunset SB.

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com



Sunday, November 22
Oceanview Park

We'll look around Ocean View Park where a Black-throated Gray Warbler spent last winter, then amble down to Branciforte Dip, through the newly-planted riparian area, and along the river or out to the ocean, as time permits and participants prefer. Rain cancels. Bring snacks, lunch, liquids, warm clothes, etc.

Directions: Meet at Oceanview Park at 8:30 AM

Leader: Kathy Kuyper, chswift@hotmail.com



Wednesday, November 25
O'Neill Ranch Open Space and Anna Jean Cummings Park

We'll walk the paths to find birds of grassland, scrub, and willows. Weather and time permitting, we may visit another nearby spot, too. Plan for some mostly easy walking over moderate distances and some short sections on slopes.

Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM at Anna Jean Cummings Park (a.k.a. "Blue Ball Park"). From Highway 1, take Porter Street north (inland). After crossing Soquel Drive, Porter St becomes Old San Jose Road. Follow it past Soquel High School, and turn left into Anna Jean Cummings Park. Continue up the entrance drive as far as there are open gates.

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com

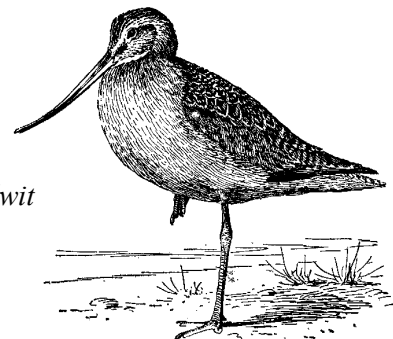


Friday, November 27
Day after Thanksgiving at Elkhorn Slough

Shorebirding is the best way for locals to spend this weekend. Bring lunch.

Directions: Meet at Aptos Wells Fargo at 7:00 AM sharp; by 8:00 AM we will be on Jetty Rd. Itinerary depends on mobs and imagination and may include Struve Slough on return leg.

Leader: Todd Newberry, (831) 426-8741



Marbled Godwit



Wednesday, December 2
Gull Identification for Beginning and Intermediate Gull Watchers:
Afternoon at Rio Del Mar SB

A two hour afternoon outing to begin to learn how to identify our winter gulls. Come with questions, ready to look and learn. Yes, we'll look at other birds, too. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 2:45 p.m. at Rio Del Mar SB. From Highway 1, take Rio Del Mar Blvd toward the coast, all the way to its ending at the beach.

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com



Heerman's and California Gulls in basic plumage.
 Photo by Jeff Poklen.



Saturday, December 5
Upper UCSC Campus

We should find a good sampling of winter species characteristic of Santa Cruz Mountain forest habitats. Most years Varied Thrush and Red-breasted Sapsucker are relatively easy to find, and some years Red Crossbills are in the mix. Rain or stormy weather may cancel. (Check with the leader the day before if there are predictions of adverse weather.)

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the North Remote Parking Lot, at the north end of Heller Drive.

Leader: Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, December 6
Beginning Bird Walk

Our local birding hotspot is a great place to get an introduction to the birds of Santa Cruz County.

Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM at the Delaware road entrance to Natural Bridges.

Leader: David Sidle, dsidle@hotmail.com



Wednesday, December 9
New Brighton SB

Explore the pine and oak woodland of the campground and the riparian along Tannery Gulch. We should find a nice variety of wintering landbirds, and maybe even something unexpected. Rain cancels. Plan for some easy walking over moderate distances.

Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM at the beach parking lot. From Highway 1, take Park Avenue toward the ocean. Turn left on MacGregor Drive, then right into New Brighton SB. Day use fee. You might avoid the day use fee by parking along Kennedy Ave (1st right off Park Ave) and walking kitty-corner into New Brighton Park, then bearing right toward the beach (allow an extra 10 min. for this).

Leader: David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com



Friday, December 11
San Lorenzo River

Featured are ducks, gulls, sparrows, and whatever else we can find.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at San Lorenzo Park by the duck pond.

Leader: Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



Saturday, December 12
Quail Hollow

In the winter seasons, Sora and Wilson's Snipe are frequently found at the pond. Unusual sparrows may also appear in the surrounding grassland areas.

Directions: Meet in the Quail Hollow parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Leader: Alex Rinkert, arinkert12@comcast.net



Wilson's Snipe



Sunday, December 13
Oceanview Park

We'll look around Ocean View Park where a Black-throated Gray Warbler spent last winter, then amble down to Branciforte Dip, through the newly-planted riparian area and then along the river or out to the ocean as time permits and participants prefer. Rain cancels. Bring snacks, lunch, liquids, warm clothes, etc.

Directions: Meet at Oceanview Park at 8:30 AM.
Leader: Kathy Kuyper, chswift@hotmail.com

Black-throated Gray Warbler



Friday, December 18
Natural Bridges and Vicinity

Just a short, relaxed walk and a bit of scouting the day before the Christmas Count.

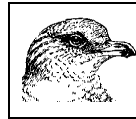
Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the Delaware Avenue entrance to Natural Bridges State Beach.
Leader: Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



Saturday, December 19
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



See the back page for details...



Tuesday, December 22
Santa Cruz Area—
Gulls and More!

The last minute shopping can wait a little longer! Give yourself a present and go birding instead. We'll continue our exploration into gull identification (aimed at beginning and intermediate students) and seek out some of the wonderful variety of birds that can be found in Santa Cruz in the winter. We may seek out some interesting rare birds that were found on the Santa Cruz CBC, or just check a handful of spots. This will be a half day trip, or maybe a bit longer. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at San Lorenzo Park by the duck pond...er, gull pond, that is.
Leader: David Suddjian dsuddjian@aol.com



Friday, January 1, 2010
Moss Landing
Christmas Bird Count

*Happy
New Year!*

Start 2010 with this special New Year's Day outing! The count circle covers some of the prime birding areas in southern Santa Cruz County and northern Monterey County. We are always in need of birders on this count, so please join us, and then enjoy the typically "exciting" countdown dinner at Pajaro Dunes. If you are interested in participating in the count, please contact Bob and Bernadette Ramer at (831) 426-7342, or email: baramer@sbcglobal.net

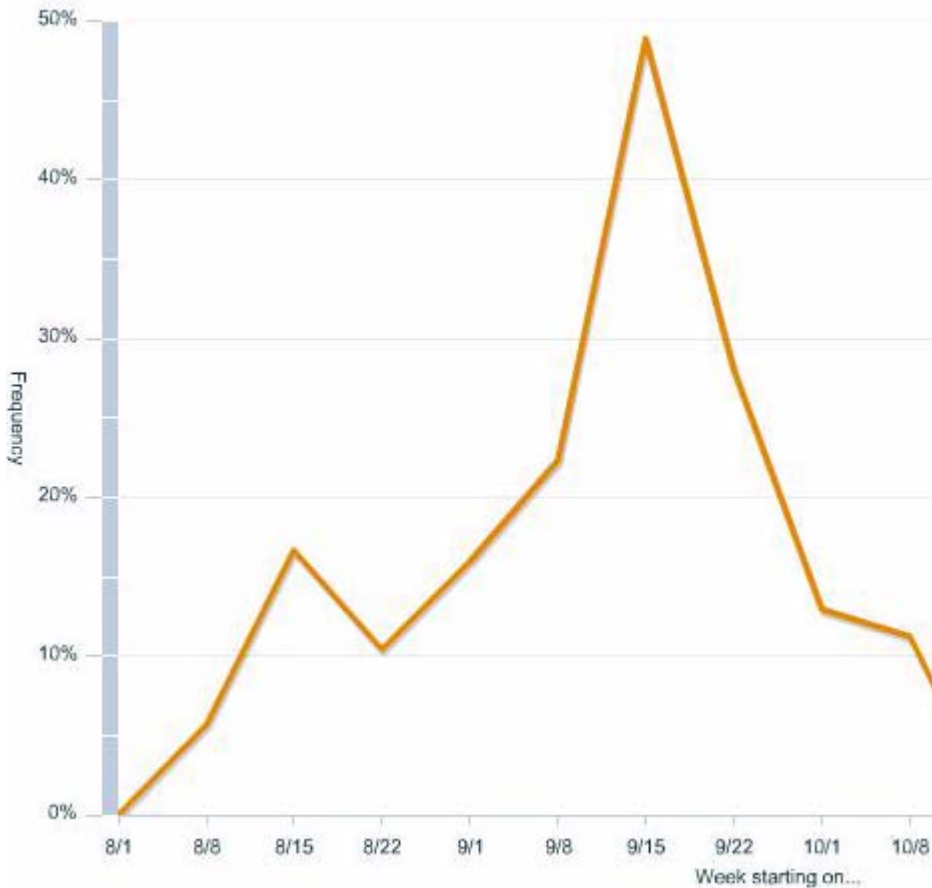
A Better Way (continued)

gets entered in eBird is valuable. If you notice an interesting bird while taking out the garbage and enter that as a “casual observation”, that is a useful addition to the data base! Complete lists that record all the species that you found are more valuable, especially when you record numbers (even rough estimates enhance the value of a bird list), but whatever you can do helps.

eBird makes it easy to keep track of your own records and automatically keeps various sorts of lists for you. You can create several types of charts and graphs analyzing aspects of your own observations, as well as maps, charts and graphs that summarize all the data submitted by everyone for a given species, certain area, etc.

Given the value of eBird as a data collecting tool and its even greater potential importance if it is more widely used, the Santa Cruz Bird Club officers have decided to focus this year on encouraging more local birders to use eBird to record their sightings. Among other things, we are planning field trips and other activities to help people get more comfortable with things like counting (and estimating) bird numbers and sorting out some confusing identifications. (An upcoming field trip, led by Bernadette Ramer, will focus on shorebird counting and identification skills, and a workshop and series of field trips on sorting out the gulls will be led by David Suddjian. Consult the club's calendar of events for these and others.) But you don't need to wait for these to get started, nor do you need to be a bird expert, computer expert, or master some complicated process. As a recent article on the site emphasized, “eBird is For Every Birder.”

Several SCBC members have been using eBird regularly for a number of years, recording almost all our birding efforts, and most of our field trips for the last couple of years are also recorded in eBird. Field trip coordinator, Phil Brown, has set up a specific Santa Cruz Bird Club account which had over 280 species recorded in Santa Cruz County alone, last time I checked. Others have started *eBirding* more recently. Kathy Kuyper, said “It really makes me feel like it's worth taking the time to list what I've seen if the ultimate goal is to...preserve habitat and/or otherwise benefit the birds I love seeing.” Kathy notes that she found eBird “easy to use, since it limits the



Sample graph:

The graph at left shows frequency of eBird checklists reporting Yellow Warbler in Santa Cruz County from August to mid-October, 2009, showing a strong migratory peak in late September.

choices to birds that you are likely to see, and then you can list any rare birds separately.” Santa Cruz County Bird Records Keeper and field biologist, David Suddjian, also just began using eBird fairly recently and quickly became one of the most frequent contributors. He said he initially thought “using it for my observations and field studies would be just another layer of effort. But when I began to give eBird a serious look last spring I found it was a very helpful way to record information...it was a big plus to have my bird information become a part of a larger database that would be useful for everyone.” David also noted that eBird makes it easy to record information on the common or regular species, “...information I wanted to have, but was otherwise tedious to keep track of. And best of all, I think eBird is a lot of fun!”

Bernadette Ramer, who has also started using eBird fairly recently, offers some advice to the new user. “Keep a notebook with you when you are birding! It helps to remember species and numbers and locations, especially when you are birding a number of places in one day.” Bernadette also suggests setting up some sites where you will bird frequently on your My Locations list right away to make it quicker and easier once you begin submitting observations.

David Sidle, who has been using eBird for the last five years or so, says that it has changed the way he approaches birding. “My early eBird lists were all Casual Observations and X for counts, but because eBird encourages better data, I have tried to use Traveling Counts and the like, and I don't use X anymore...using eBird has helped me pay more attention to the common species because of wanting to enter a count, not just a tick.” David mentions that counting in some circumstances, like large flocks, can be difficult, but “a skill to work on.” A particular challenge for him, but a worthwhile one, has been entering lists from a recent trip to Ecuador, with its very long Expected Species list, plus some changes in names and taxonomy from the field guide he was using.

When you begin using eBird, you might want to start simple—just entering a list or two from your yard or a familiar birding spot. The main thing is to get started. Go to <http://ebird.org/content/ebird>, and click on About eBird, then select eBird Tutorial from the list on the right. This will give you all the information you need to get started. The eBird website has all sorts of interesting articles to read on varied topics and much on how you can make your contributions even more valuable. If you visit the View and Explore Data features, you may find yourself spending hours doing just that. But first learn the basics, go out and bird, enter your data, bird some more, enter more lists, repeat, and continue the process. And yes, it is now easier for me to find answers to many of those random questions, and more importantly, more and more data is becoming available for all sorts of bird-related research.

Sample map:

At right is an eBird map (cropped) of Yellow Warbler sightings in Santa Cruz County from August to mid-October, 2009. (Yellow markers indicate the most recently reported sightings.)



SANTA CRUZ BIRD CLUB

eBird Action Steps

Keeping tabs on our bird populations is a critical element in our knowledge of the birds of our region. Being able to detect and understand changes is a key to the conservation of the birds we love. eBird has tremendous potential to help us track and learn about our birds, and it is a resource that all birders of all sorts can contribute to in a meaningful way. The Santa Cruz Bird Club will take steps to encourage the use of eBird in our region, so that we can make the most of this opportunity and help it to grow. Hopefully, the Bird Club's efforts can be a model for other organizations in our region. Here are some things we will do:

1. Encourage Bird Club members and the general birding community to use and contribute to eBird on a regular basis by increasing knowledge of eBird's benefits, values and resources.
2. Provide periodic articles in the Albatross to educate Club members and the general community about eBird, how to use it, and the resources it offers.
3. Add a link to the eBird home page on the Bird Club's home page.
4. Sponsor a program about eBird at a membership meeting.
5. Encourage leaders of all SCBC trips to submit a checklist (or checklists) to eBird for birds recorded on SCBC field trips or to designate another participant to submit lists.
6. Ask trip leaders to offer to "Share" their field trip checklists with any interested participants.
7. Facilitate use of eBird by local birders by making seasonal lists available on the SCBC webpage that can be downloaded and used in the field to record species and numbers of individuals and ease the process of submitting.
8. Provide field trips that provide insights on topics such as counting birds, birding by ear, and identification of challenging groups.
9. Ensure that any Bird Club study projects and projects sponsored by the Club will submit data to eBird whenever feasible.
10. Develop ways that coverage for our Christmas Bird Count will produce eBird checklists by arranging for coverage and reporting from areas in each section of the circle in a fashion that can be repeated each year.

A Word From the eBird Leadership Team

I'm really excited to hear that the Santa Cruz Bird Club is going to be using and promoting eBird to its members. It's really amazing to see how much you can make a difference by contributing your observations to such an effort. In just a short time we'll have more baseline data on all species in Santa Cruz County, including all the common birds and tomorrow's species of conservation concern. Each time a birder raises his or her binoculars, the opportunity to collect useful data exists. By adopting eBird in your day-to-day birding routine, you'll simultaneously be helping yourself by joining a family of birders that keep track of all their sightings online, while making your observations part of a collective database not only available to researchers in Santa Cruz County, but around the world. Santa Cruz birders, welcome to eBird!

Brian Sullivan, eBird Project Leader



September 16—SCBC birders at the Pajaro River mouth: Margaret Perham, Judy Donaldson, David Suddjian, Lois Goldfrank (hidden), Bernadette Ramer, Barbara Banfield, Rich Griffin. Photo: Wendy Naruo

Santa Cruz Birds

By David Suddjian & Steve Gerow
Including reports from
June 1 to August 31, 2009

A somewhat slow late spring and early summer transitioned to a rather interesting late summer, which has continued into an exciting fall. A remarkable three first county records were documented in late summer (pending review by the California Bird Records Committee): **Short-tailed Albatross**, **Hawaiian (or Dark-rumped) Petrel**, and **Hudsonian Godwit**. Records of **Cook's Petrels** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were also exceptional.

Flocks of **Canada Geese** were sporadic in the Pajaro Valley this summer and went unreported elsewhere. The high count for the period was 210 at Struve Slough on August 2 (AM). Summering **Brant** at the Pajaro River mouth reached a peak of 10 birds on July 9 (JW), but all were gone by August. The only **Wood Ducks** away from the San Lorenzo River or Neary Lagoon were very small numbers in the Waddell Creek watershed of Big Basin Redwoods State Park (DSu). The season's high counts of the post-breeding gathering at Neary were in the 20s (fide SG). Summer ducks rare outside the Pajaro Valley included a pair of **Gadwall** at Younger Lagoon on June 20 and a female **Cinnamon Teal** at Antonelli Pond on July 29 (SG). Three **Surf Scoters** at Sunset State Beach on July 29 were the only ones reported all summer (DSu); most summers there are a few off Santa Cruz and the north county coast.

A female **Bufflehead** at the lower San Lorenzo River on July 11 was the last reported (SG); summer lingerers seldom persist through the season. Among a smattering of summer loon reports, **Pacific Loons** seemed more plentiful than average. Twelve were reported in July (DSu, AG), and 13 along the north coast on August 3 included an impressive 11 off Yellow Bank Creek (DSu). **Western** and **Clark's Grebes** summered in unusually high numbers along parts of the county coast where they are normally scarce or absent during the season (DSu, SG). An immature **Short-tailed Albatross** photographed off Davenport on July 30 provided a long-awaited first county record for this recovering species (LE). The Short-tailed was undoubtedly a regular part of the county's avifauna into the 19th Century, before it was driven to near

extinction, but there were no specific historic records for Santa Cruz County.



The Short-tailed Albatross, photographed on July 30 by Lisa Etherington, is a first county record.

An amazing presence of *Pterodroma* petrels relatively near to shore along California this summer produced Santa Cruz County counts of 11 **Cook's Petrels** (v.ob., fide DSh) and one **Hawaiian Petrel** (JS, fide DSh) on August 2! There had been just one prior record of Cook's for the county (plus one unidentified *Cookilaria*), and this is the first county record of Hawaiian Petrel. Until identification criteria are further resolved, the Committee has treated all reports of Hawaiian-type petrels as "Dark-rumped Petrel," comprised of Hawaiian and Galapagos petrels, but it seems likely that California records pertain to Hawaiian. A **Buller's Shearwater** was seen from Capitola on August 26 (DSu); the species is seldom noted from shore in our county. A **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** was offshore on August 28 (fide DSh).



A Cook's Petrel, photographed by David Vander Pluym on August 2, is another county first.



Brandt's Cormorant nests at Natural Bridges were photographed by David Sidle on July 7.

Peak counts of **American White Pelicans** at Watsonville and Struve sloughs were 115 on July 3 (AM), 250 on August 13 (JW), and about 400 on August 26 (DSu). The count on the latter date set a record for a single area for the county. Young **Brown Pelicans** ranged inland to the sloughs, with one at Watsonville Slough on August 13 (JW) and two at Harkins on August 31 (DSu). **Brandt's Cormorants** had mixed nesting success at the county's three breeding colonies. Nearly all nesting efforts begun before mid-May were abandoned, but efforts rebounded in late spring with some eventual success at Seacliff and Davenport (DSu) but not at Natural Bridges (SG). Very large numbers of non-breeding Brandt's were present, e.g., 3000 estimated from four south coast vantage points on July 29 and 1,600 at Black Point on August 7. (DSu). **Double-crested Cormorants** continued to nest at three sites, with the county's population increasing. This season there were 142 nests at Schwan Lake (BMr, DSi), 66 at Pinto Lake (BR, RR, LG), and four at the San Lorenzo River mouth (SG). While we have carefully tracked our nesting Brandt's and Double-crested, we have rather little recent information on the county's nesting **Pelagic Cormorants**. **American Bitterns** were reported at Struve and Harkins sloughs (v.ob.). Pinto Lake was the season's only confirmed nesting site for **Great Blue Heron** (three nests) and **Great Egret** (11 nests) (BR, RR). An aggregation of 36 Great Egrets at Struve Slough on July 5 was good count for early summer, but a record 162 were tallied at

Struve Slough on August 26 (DSu). A **Cattle Egret** at Watsonville Slough near Lee Road on July 9 was just the 3rd summer record for the county (JW), where the species is now rare at all seasons.

Reports of **White-faced Ibis** at the Watsonville sloughs from the end of June into July suggested some over-summered again. A count of 10 at Struve Slough on July 1 set a new record for mid-summer (AR, WL, PD). A report of three at Watsonville Slough on August 13 was the only one for that month, despite good coverage and reporting (JW, DW). **Osprey** nested again at Harkins Slough, using a platform that had been provided for them (LG, JP, JW, SG, WN, HS, RS). They were successful for the first time this year, rearing two young which were near to fledging by July 9. This was the first successful nesting effort from the Pajaro Valley region in about 75 years. There were no reports from the other, more remote nest sites that have been active in the county in recent years, but 13 sightings from mid-county and the north county coast in June and July suggested other nesting may have occurred (v.ob.).



A Golden Eagle in flight was photographed at UCSC by Wendy Naruo.

Golden Eagle was sparsely reported; singles at UCSC on July 1 (KA) and Rancho Del Oso on July 25 (DSu) were the only ones mentioned. In addition to a few occupied territories in the Santa Cruz area, a family group of **American Kestrels** at Swanton Road on August 4 provided the only nesting evidence reported from the north coast this season (DM). A **Merlin** flying down the coast at Yellow Bank Creek on August 3 was exceptionally early (DSu). A **Pacific Golden-Plover** at Watsonville Slough on August 14 was the first

golden-plover identified to species in the county during fall migration since 2003 (RW). Breeding was confirmed for **American Avocet** at Watsonville Slough at the confluence with Struve Slough on July 9, when three chicks were seen along with eight adults (JW). This was the first breeding record for the county in several years, and avocets have even been missing in several recent nesting seasons. Some remained at Watsonville and Struve Slough up to August 27 but were absent afterward.

A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at Struve Slough on August 31 (DSu). A **Willet** was inland at Struve Slough on July 25 (BR), and two were there on August 19 (SG, BR). Some 8-15 **Lesser Yellowlegs** were reported from Struve and Watsonville sloughs from August 13-31 (v.ob.). Among reports of migrant **Long-billed Curlews**, one flying high over Big Basin on August 14 was notable over the Santa Cruz Mountains (DSu). The county's first record of **Hudsonian Godwit** was a juvenile found at Watsonville Slough on August 25 (RW), seen by many as it stayed until August 27 (v.ob.). A report of 35 **Marbled Godwits** at Watsonville Slough on August 16 was a high inland count for the county (BR); at least 22 remained to August 26 (DSu). **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were at Watsonville Slough on August 26 (DSu, DW), at Struve on August 27 (RW), and perhaps a different bird at Watsonville Slough again on August 31 (DSu).

Six to 10 **Baird's Sandpipers** were reported from August 14-31 (v.ob.). All were at Watsonville and Struve sloughs, except for three at Natural Bridges (KPa et al., RN). Notable among three **Pectoral Sandpipers** in late August was one adult studied at Natural Bridges State Beach on August 16, providing just the 2nd fall record of an adult for the county (SG). The county's 4th record of **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** appeared briefly at Watsonville Slough on August 28 (JS, TE). Some 15-20 **Wilson's Phalaropes** were reported at Watsonville and Struve sloughs from August 14 to September 1 (v.ob.). A small number of immature **Bonaparte's Gulls** summered at the Watsonville Sloughs, with a high count of six on August 26 (DSu).

A pair of **California Gulls** provided an unexpected nesting record when an adult on a nest was identified from aerial photographs of the roof of the Capitola Mall taken on June 9 (PC, LH, JD). Not only was this

a first nesting record for the county, but a rooftop nesting location was apparently also unprecedented for this species (fide JD). California Gulls exhibited an unusual northward migration through the county from late May to early July, a period when numbers are typically quite low without any indication of pronounced movement. Some representative unseasonable high counts were 615 and 486 at Scott Creek and Waddell Creek beaches on June 29, respectively, and 2,200 passing up the coast during two hours at Seacliff State Beach on July 5 (DSu). A juvenile **Black Tern** flew past New Brighton State Beach on August 27 (DSu).

Black Skimmer



Elegant Terns were scarcer along the county's coast than they had been for 30-40 years. While there were some moderate concentrations reported at the Pajaro River mouth (mostly in Monterey County), the species was nearly absent along most of the Santa Cruz County coast during June and July (not even recorded at Santa Cruz until July 19); numbers picked up slightly in late August (v.ob.). Two **Black Skimmers** were at Wilder Creek Beach on July 14 (JF), and three flew up the coast at West Cliff Drive on July 18 (SG). **South Polar Skuas** and **Long-tailed Jaegers** were both well-reported from several pelagic trips in August, with high counts of 13 and 38 on August 30, respectively (fide RW). **Marbled Murrelet** activity at Big Basin Redwoods SP, documented to have declined to a very low level over the last decade, reached a new nadir on long-term monitoring surveys conducted in June and July (DSu). Reports of **Xantus's Murrelets** included four of the subspecies *scripsii* on August 2, and one *hypoleucus* on August 7 (fide DSh).

An immature **Horned Puffin** was off Waddell Bluffs on June 9 (DSu). A **Tufted Puffin** was offshore on August 7 (fide DSh). A pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** nested at Rancho Del Oso this season, with the female nest-building on June 4 and a juvenile nearby on July 11 (DSu). This is the first breeding record from anywhere within Big Basin Redwoods State Park (DSu). One calling at Slippery Rock in Big Basin on August 8 was the first ever for the park interior (DSu) and was also unexpected in an extensively forested area. Very unexpected was a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** that hit a window (and survived) in a west Santa Cruz yard on June 14. The bird lost its tail in the collision, and was kept in captivity for recovery, then escaped on June 27 (MC, RM). This was only the fifth modern record in Santa Cruz County, and the first since 1996, so it was quite a surprise when another **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, this a fall migrant, turned up in the willows at Natural Bridges on August 11 (PB, OJ, WF)!



A locally rare Yellow-billed Cuckoo was photographed in captivity (in June), while recovering from the loss of its tail. Photo by Melani Clark.

Northern Pygmy-Owls seemed to have a successful nesting season this year. Four family groups with young were found in the Big Basin interior from July 13-18 and three families around Rancho Del Oso from July 11-August 2 (DSu). The only reports of **Black Swifts** this season came from Moore Creek Preserve and vicinity, where there were four sightings of 1-3 birds from June 6 to July 11 (SG et al., SH, PM, DSu). There has been a pattern of June and July reports of Black Swifts foraging over these grasslands in recent

years (mostly in the afternoons and evenings), but where do they come from? There were again no hints of nesting in the county this year, nor even any presence noted near likely nesting habitat. A rare spring migrant **Chimney Swift** turned up at Rancho Del Oso on June 8 (OJ, AS, AP), and a fall migrant was at Swanton Pond on August 12 (DSu).

The status of breeding **Vaux's Swifts** in the county was again puzzling. In Big Basin, they were very sparse early in the season, but in early July increased numbers were noted at the park's water supply reservoir, some behaving in ways that suggested they were nesting. They became less regular by mid-July, but some family groups with juveniles indicated at least some successful breeding in the area, unlike 2008 when there was no evidence that any nested successfully anywhere in the county (DSu). Elsewhere this summer, the Santa Cruz west side had only a few sightings of swifts and no indication of nesting (SG), and there were only a very few scattered observations at other places in the county. **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** continued their pattern of recent years, with at least five females or immature males reported from August 18-31 (SG, DSu), and more came in September. Most were along the mid-county coast, but one at Watsonville Slough on August 31 (DSu) was only the second report from Watsonville.

The only spring migrant **Willow Flycatcher** was at Neary Lagoon June 5 (PB, SG, et al.). Six fall migrants were found from August 23-31 (SG, DSu, SL). The **Dusky Flycatcher** at Ocean View Summit stayed until at least July 15 (DSu, BT, JB). A **Western Kingbird** at Moore Creek Preserve on June 6 was a little late (SG), but a very late migrant or dispersant at Quail Hollow on June 23 was much more unusual (AR). Western Kingbirds are rare anytime in the San Lorenzo Valley. Three kingbirds near Moore Creek Preserve on August 10 marked the beginning of the fall migration (SG). A fall migrant **Loggerhead Shrike** was at Moore Creek Preserve August 10 (SG). This species has become so scarce in the county in recent years that occurrences at any season are worth reporting.

Red-eyed Vireos sang by Laurel Creek in Santa Cruz on June 15 (OJ) and along Western Drive June 29-30 (SS, LG, BR, MS), bringing the total of spring migrants this year up to an impressive three. An early fall migrant was at Bethany Curve Park in Santa Cruz



Loggerhead Shrike



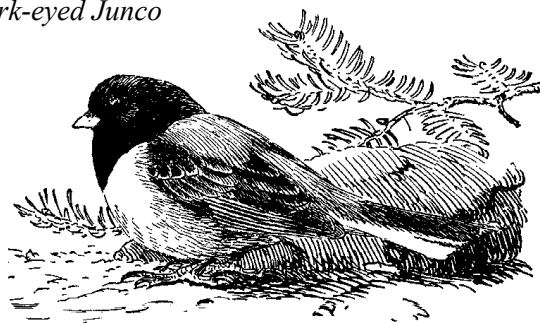
on August 29 (SG). For the first time in many years **Purple Martins** were present in the Loma Prieta area through the breeding season and may have nested. From June 6 through July, up to four martins were seen on multiple dates foraging on both the Santa Cruz and Santa Clara sides of the county line, and three times observers noticed them entering what seemed to be nesting holes (all in Santa Clara County) (BRe, FV, MR, WB, v.ob.). One was still in the area as late as August 1 (OJ). Then on August 6, a female Purple Martin with two fledglings appeared near Summit Road in the upper watershed of the West Branch of Soquel Creek (WA), about 5.6 miles from the area of martin activity near Loma Prieta. It's not certain where these nested, but it was the first nesting evidence in Santa Cruz County since 2001 (fide DSu); in Santa Clara County the last confirmed nesting was in 1995, though some martins were noted around breeding habitats as late as 2002 (fide WB).

A **Bank Swallow** joined a large mixed swallow flock over Watsonville Slough on August 31 (DSu). A **White-breasted Nuthatch** wandered to New Brighton State Beach on August 27 (DSu). Dispersing **House Wrens** arrived early this season, with single birds at three different spots well away from their breeding areas June 29-30 (DSu, LG); most years the first of these arrive sometime in mid-July. **Western Bluebirds** nested in at least ten locations in the county this season, mostly successfully and with some pairs producing second broods (v.ob.). In addition to nest sites noted in the last Albatross, pairs with nestlings or fledglings were found at two locations on Skyline Blvd and one on Summit Road on June 23, all places where nesting has occurred before (DSu). A singing male **Northern Parula** was at Rancho Del Oso on June 21, with presumably the same bird lingering to at least July 11 (DSu).

Eight **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were reported from July 30-August 29, all but two in the mountains (AR, DSu, SG, et. al.). One at Natural Bridges July 30 (AR) was quite early for a migrant/dispersant in a coastal lowland area. An immature **Hermit Warbler** at Quail Hollow July 30 was either a very early migrant or a local dispersant (WL, AR). A very early **Prairie Warbler** was at Rancho Del Oso August 3-5 (DSu), one day short of tying the record early date for a fall migrant in the county and exceptionally early for anywhere in California. A **MacGillivray's Warbler** was on the Pajaro River downstream from Watsonville on June 8 (BMr), probably a late spring migrant, although nesting has occurred farther upstream on the Pajaro. Fall migrant MacGillivray's were at Lighthouse Field (SG) and New Brighton State Beach (DSu), both on August 27.

A singing male **Hooded Warbler** was enjoyed by many at Rancho Del Oso June 7-10 (SP, v.ob.). Another adult male was northeast of Scotts Valley on August 19 (BMn, KM), presumably an early fall migrant. A **Chipping Sparrow** sang at a Christmas tree farm near the summit of Ben Lomond Mountain on June 6 (DSu). This is the first recent record of a possible breeding bird in this area, though there is adequate habitat, and there have been annual breeding bird surveys since 2002. Fall migrant Chipping Sparrows were at two spots in Santa Cruz August 28-29 (PB, SG). A **Lark Sparrow** was at Swanton Pond on August 12 (DSu). A family group of **Dark-eyed Juncos** at Seaciff State Beach on June 14 was the first breeding record for this park (DSu). Reflecting their recent breeding expansion into previously unoccupied coastal lowland areas, various riparian and wooded areas near the coast from Santa Cruz to Pajaro Dunes held junco flocks in the late summer, where in prior years none would be present until the arrival of fall migrants (DSu, v.ob.).

Dark-eyed Junco



A female **Summer Tanager** at Natural Bridges on July 6-15 provided a rare mid-summer record (LG, SH, PM, v.ob.). **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** had a fairly good showing this summer, with six reports from June 5 to July 25 (DSu, JH, KM, CR, BH, v.ob.). A female along the San Lorenzo River August 28 was likely a fall migrant (SG et al.). A singing male **Indigo Bunting** was in Long Ridge Open Space Preserve on June 23 (DSu). A **Western Meadowlark** near the Pogonip/UCSC border on July 28 (SG) was the only one reported in the county all summer. This is another species that has noticeably declined as a nesting species in the county in recent years, though some breeding habitat, especially in the southeast portion of the county, has rarely been surveyed and is largely inaccessible for birding. **Red Crossbill** reports included two near Antonelli Pond on July 31 (SG), two at Rancho Del Oso August 3 (DSu), and one at New Brighton State Beach on August 27 (DSu). An adult male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was at Long Ridge Open Space Preserve on June 23 (DSu), and dispersing female/immature Lawrence's turned up at the UCSC Arboretum on July 21 (SG) and at Rancho Del Oso on July 24 (DSu).

Cited Observers: Will Anderson, Kumaran Arul, Jeff Blean, William Bousman, Phil Brown, Phil Capitulo, Melani Clark, Jeff Davis, Patty Durkee, Todd Easterla, Lisa Etheridge (Sea Education Association), Jonathan Franzen, Wes Fritz, Alexander Gaguine, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Laird Henkel, Bob Hirt, Sharon Hull, Oscar Johnson, Sarah Lane, Will Lawton, Amy McDonald, Rob Moeller, Barbara Monahan (BMn), Kevin Monahan, Monterey Seabirds (fide RW), Bryan Mori (BMr), Dominic Mosur, Pam Myers, Wendy Naruo, Richard Norton, Kathy Parker (KPa), Amy Patten, Shantanu Phukan, Jeff Poklen, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Bob Reiling (BRe), Alex Rinkert, Mike Rogers, Chris Rummel, Heidi Sandkuhle, Richard Sandkuhle, Michelle Scott, Adam Searcy, Debra Shearwater (DSh), Shearwater Journeys (fide DSh). Scott Smithson, John Sterling, David Suddjian (DSu), Brent Thordarson, Frank Vanslager, Jeff Wall, David Weber, Roger Wolfe, Monterey Seabirds (fide RW), "v.ob." means various observers.

Please report interesting observations to David Suddjian, dsuddjian@aol.com or (831) 479-9603.



This trio of Buller's Shearwaters taking off was photographed by Jeff Poklen on Monterey Bay (in Santa Cruz County), August 23, 2009.

TRIP REPORTS

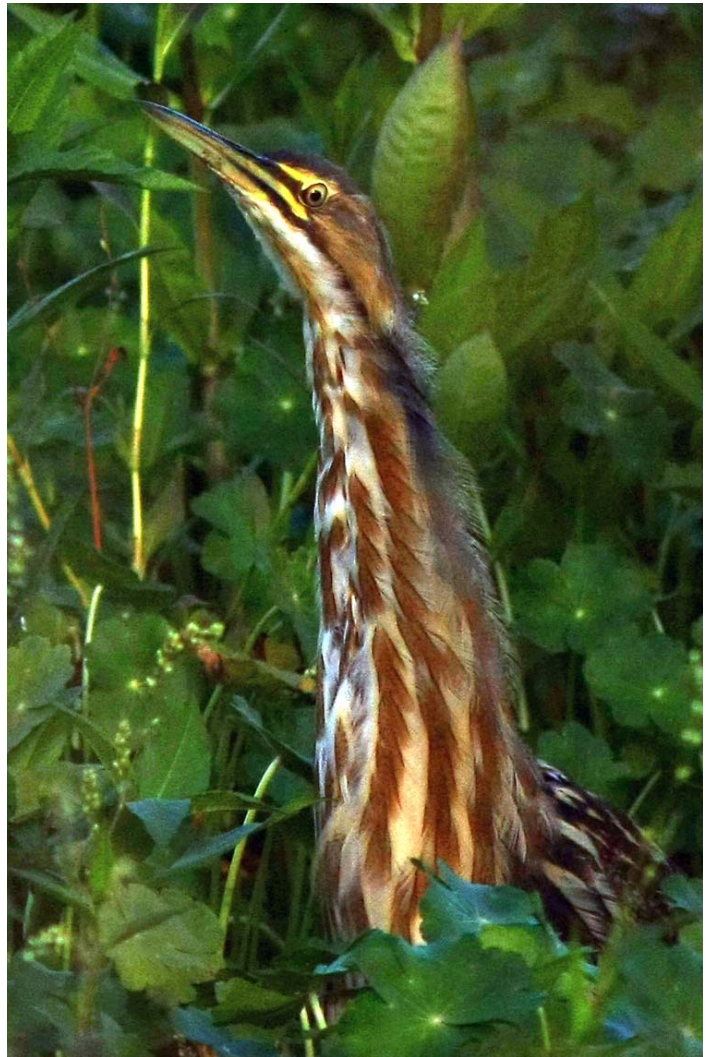
Saturday September 5, 2009

Monterey Seabirds, SCBC Group Charter

This charter for the Santa Cruz Bird Club was a real pleasure because there were so many friends from the bird club on board. Because we are familiar with one another from prior land-based field trips, club meetings, and carpools, there was a neat sense of camaraderie. The darned northwest winds had been persistent in previous weeks, but they abated and made for greasy calm conditions that were conducive to finding the storm-petrel flocks. We made a beeline for the county line and crossed over into Santa Cruz County around 9:00 a.m., in the vicinity of Soquel Canyon, then we headed for the Hump where we began seeing both Black and Ashy Storm-Petrels. In the vicinity of Cabrillo Canyon, we found the area where the Ashies were rafting up, and everyone got to see the flocks. Spotter Rod Norden recounted how the number of storm-petrels we were seeing was a mere fraction of what he recalled from the 1980s. We also had some gripping views of a Common Tern that circled the boat for several minutes. Interestingly the deluge of Long-tailed Jaegers seen in recent weeks was shut off. We did not see a single LTJA on the day. A marine mammal highlight was the pair of Blue Whales we crossed paths with off of Pt. Pinos on the way back to the dock. We also had some awesome looks at Northern Right Whale Dolphins riding our bow, and they had some awesome looks at us as well. As we passed Pt. Pinos, the top of the kelp canopy was covered with at least a thousand Elegant Terns. In all we covered 63.7 miles of water. Thanks to SCBC field trip leaders Steve Gerow, Bob Ramer, Rod Norden, and Phil Brown for spotting and to Alex Rinkert for chumming. Photos from the trip by SCBC member Wendy Naruo are at the Monterey Seabirds website:

<http://www.montereyseabirds.com/SeabirdTripReport090905.htm>

~Roger Wolfe

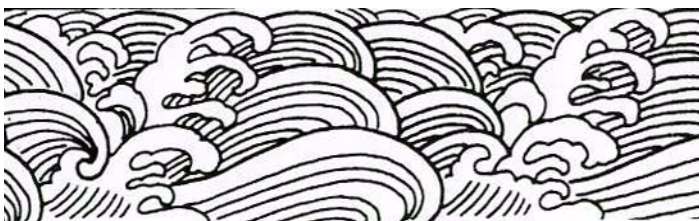


American Bittern

Photo by Wendy Naruo

September 9, Afternoon at Struve Slough

We gathered at Struve Slough for a few hours of late day birding, finding 52 species between Highway 1 and Harkins Slough Road. The afternoon light was lovely, letting us appreciate the understated beauty of Gadwalls, the red eyes of Cinnamon Teal, and the details of molting Northern Shovelers. A nice cross-section of shorebirds in the shallows of the drying slough kept us busy searching for a rarity, but we found none. The highlight of the trip was provided by two American Bitterns that appeared in the marsh near the pathway. They were hunting amid the wetland plants, with just their heads and the upper stretch of their necks exposed. Even though we were rather close, it was amazing how well they blended into the scene. We all enjoyed lovely scope views as they crept and stalked through the marsh. ~David Suddjian



Trip reports (continued)



Starlings evade a Cooper's Hawk near Sunset State Beach. Photo by Wendy Naruo.

September 16, Pajaro Valley

This was my birthday, and I found the morning well spent among Bird Club friends. We had nothing too rare, but found a broad cross section of species. Highlights at Struve Slough near Lee Road included six White-faced Ibis, a Wilson's Snipe, Spotted Sandpipers, American White Pelicans, and hundreds of Violet-green Swallows. Shorebirds Pond had Red-necked Phalaropes that permitted very close viewing, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, and churring House Wrens. A bird seen not well enough in the coastal scrub at Sunset State Beach permitted our fancies and fantasies to take hold, as its purported identify ranged from a rare Empidonax flycatcher to Bicknell's Thrush to Ovenbird. One has to find thrills as they come, after all. It was a joy to watch the reality of a passing Cooper's Hawk shape the lives of a flock of 150 Starlings as they floated over the soaring hawk in a predator-excluding ball. ~David Suddjian

September 19, Southern San Mateo County

The Santa Cruz Bird Club trip from Pescadero to Gazos Creek turned up some interesting birds, including several Blue-winged Teal and Northern Pintail in the North Pond at Pescadero, a juv. Pectoral Sandpiper at the Gazos Creek mouth, and a female type Chestnut-sided Warbler in a mixed flock at the Cloverdale/Gazos Creek junction. On the way back, in Santa Cruz County just south of Waddell Beach, a Peregrine Falcon flew over Hwy 1. Overall, numbers of passerine migrants and shorebirds seemed relatively low, but we enjoyed a great day. ~Scott Smithson

September 30, Gazos Creek Road

We found ourselves with the season's first really cool morning, after the passing of a storm front and a very windy day the day before. Fortunately the winds calmed for our trip, but we were chilled to the bone waiting for the sun to finally make it down slope to warm the roadway where we were. The passing front seemed to sweep most of the migrants along with it so our variety was not great. Once again a Northern Pygmy-Owl provided the highlight. One responded to my imitation from well up the slope, its exact position revealed by mobbing songbirds. Eventually I was able to draw it down to the alders beside the road, where we enjoyed repeated great looks as it glared at us from varied perches and zipped back and forth overhead. Always the retinue of Townsend's Warblers, Purple Finches, chickadees, Anna's Hummingbird, and Hutton's Vireos tagged along. A pygmy-owl exposed is perhaps never alone. ~David Suddjian

Birds on Quarters—New Issues



Readers of *The Albatross* may remember the article entitled "States' Flights," which remarked on the images of birds in the State Quarter series. Since that time, the Mint has decided to honor The District of Columbia and five U.S. Territories or Commonwealths with their quarters as well. I am happy to report that both the U.S. Virgin Islands and The Northern Mariana Islands include birds in their designs. The Virgin Islands quarter shows the Bananaquit, the Territory bird, as well as the Territory flower and tree, and the Marianas quarter shows two Fairy Terns flying above a picturesque island scene. Both coins are among the best designed of the whole series and should be in circulation soon after you read this notice.

~William Park

**New SCBC
Members
Welcome!**

Henry Cleveland	8/09
Ed & Michelle	
Maitoza Nadolski	9/09
Janna Pauser	9/09
Alicia & Irene Boronski	9/09
Sylvia Patience	10/09
Teresa Pusser	10/09
Dan W. Weeks	10/09
Pat Doughty	10/09
Audrey Adams & Clyde Nagakura	10/09

Alien encounter?



This staring contest between an Acorn Woodpecker and an escaped budgerigar was photographed by David Sidle in Scotts Valley last July.

**Input deadline for
Jan/Feb 2010 issue
of the Albatross
is Dec 1, 2009**

Assembling



Submission for The Albatross—Guidelines

In addition to regular features—calendar, Santa Cruz Birds, trip reports—the newsletter can include almost anything related to birding in general and to local birding in particular. Depending on space, submissions of any of the following are welcome:

- Feature articles
- Birding event announcements
- Stories about birders, serious or comic
- Reviews of birding literature or guides
- Conservation & outreach reports/stories
- Birding tips, descriptions of local sites
- Filler tidbits: Quotes or images
- Photos of people at our events (jpg, tif)

If you wish to submit a large article, please contact me about it before the submission deadline.

I accept plain text, Word, or PDF files. Send items by email to: calqua@sbcglobal.net

~Judy Donaldson, Editor

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It's time again...

53rd Annual Santa Cruz County CBC Saturday, December 19, 2009

Join our 53rd annual Christmas Bird Count and count-down dinner! The CBC helps us track the ups and downs of our local bird populations and is considered by many club members to be a highlight of the birding year! All birders are welcome to join this all-day event!

Please email or call the compiler David Suddjian—dsuddjian@aol.com, (831) 479-9603, to let him know you want to count. There is a \$5.00 fee for each participant.

Potluck count-down dinner to follow at St. Joseph's Church parish hall, 435 Monterey Avenue, Capitola. From Highway 1, take Bay Street to Monterey Avenue. Go left on Monterey for just under 0.2 mile, and turn left into the parking lot for the church, across from Washburn Ave. Drive down to the lower parking lot to reach the parish hall.

The ALBATROSS

is published five times a year by the Santa Cruz Bird Club. See the online version and past issues on the SCBC website,



<http://santacruzbirdclub.org/>

Join the Santa Cruz Bird Club

Enjoy walks in and around the County of Santa Cruz, discounted boat trips on Monterey Bay, summer picnics and annual dinners, meetings September through May featuring informative, illustrated talks on wild birds and related topics, and receive the bimonthly newsletter, The Albatross. Memberships run June-May. Dues are \$20 Individual, \$25 Family, \$5 Youth, \$400 Life. Make checks payable to Santa Cruz Bird Club and mail to Box 1304, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, Attention: Membership Chairman.