



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

What Are We Looking For?

By Steve Gerow

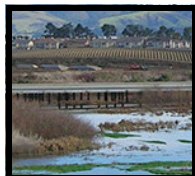
One of the most frequent questions I hear from interested passers-by who see me staring into a willow patch, searching the coastal rocks, or apparently aimlessly scanning an area is, "What are you looking for?" Occasionally I'll have an easy answer, "Oh, there was a report of a White-eyed Vireo, a very rare bird in this area, and I'm trying to find it", etc. More often, though, it is difficult to come up with a reply beyond "uh...birds...whatever I can find", or something similar. Reflecting further on the question, though, it seems that we approach birding at various times with two basically different modes of focus.

Sometimes we are looking for *something*, and other times we are just *looking*—and listening. (For the purposes of this article I'll temporarily expand the definition of "looking" to include searching by sound as well as sight.) When we go out looking for something, there is a specific goal. Maybe we are searching for a reported rare bird or some species that is known to be at a that location, or perhaps it is getting close to the time for a certain migrant to arrive. There is a goal, a challenge, and we either find that goal or we don't—our quest either succeeds or fails. Sometimes there is a "compensation prize", which occasionally is better than the original goal (like looking for a Tropical Kingbird and finding a Common Cuckoo instead). Usually, though, what we are "looking for" remains primary, and we either win or lose.

While I sometimes enjoy the challenge of a search, more of my birding seems to be of the second sort—I just go out looking. I go someplace, start noting what birds are around and what they are doing and let it go from there. Whether it be at one of my most regular birding spots, or some place that is completely unfamiliar, it is almost inevitable that birding with this approach will result in one or more interesting discoveries. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that even after many years of birding, I learn something almost every time I go out. Sometimes it will be a bird out of place or out of season. There are interesting variations on behavior and habitat usage. Not all birds of a given species look alike, and no

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WHAT TIME ?

books show all the variations, so there is much to be learned by studying what different individuals look like. And even familiar species that I have been hearing for years sometimes will make a sound that is unfamiliar. Many of our local species really have quite large “vocabularies”, far beyond what is stored in any set of recordings or described in any field guide. (I sometimes wonder if anyone has managed to catalogue all the sounds uttered by Bewick's Wrens.) Plus, those rarities do show up from time to time, just to keep it even more interesting. (And there are endless interesting discoveries to be found in the natural world beyond birds...but that's another article.)

One of the things that keeps birding interesting is that birds are particularly dynamic subjects for study. They fly, they move around with changing conditions, some migrate long distances, some wander irregularly. Beyond seasonal migrations and beyond movements searching for the best berry crop or source of seeds, there are also long term changes in where birds live and what they do there. Some species decline, some increase, some leave an area, and others will move in. With these changes come new adaptations to the environmental conditions that they encounter.

Oak Titmice, for example, are a common and familiar bird throughout almost all of the city of Santa Cruz, and anyone who has just been birding here the last four or five years would likely conclude that this resident species has always been common here. Until around 2002 or so, though, they were rather uncommon and localized. Some were resident in some neighborhoods, mostly in the more inland parts of the city, but they were absent over wide areas. There were none in Natural Bridges, or Neary Lagoon, or many other places where they are now easy to find. Then a few showed up in some places where they hadn't been before. I found a couple of nests, not in oak trees but in cypresses (at Garfield Park and Lighthouse Field, places without oaks). Then there were nests in a box elder by Neary Lagoon and a large planted acacia on Errett Circle. Obviously these birds didn't read the chapters in the books about where they are supposed to nest. A few years later California Thrashers moved into some coastal lowland areas on the west side of Santa Cruz where they did not occur before. Nuttall's Woodpeckers now nest over a much larger area of Santa Cruz County than they did fifteen years ago, and Cooper's Hawks seem to be nesting more frequently in

residential areas. Exactly when, where, and how these changes happen are rather unpredictable, and they have generally been discovered first, not by birders looking *for* them, but by those who are just looking.

Other species have declined and no longer nest in many areas where they were once regular. Yellow Warblers, for example, used to nest in many riparian areas in the county (and in the region in general), but now they are absent in many spots and scarce in others where they formerly occurred. Western Bluebirds declined dramatically, but the past few years their populations have been coming back. Some of the areas they are re-colonizing may be different in some ways than they used to be. All of these things raise various questions, lots of hows and whys and whethers, that may be answered with enough careful looking. (And remember that your observations are valuable, so don't forget to report the really interesting stuff on MBB. Also, eBird is a great way to keep complete lists of whatever you find each time you go birding and to keep notes on anything interesting or important.)

This looking becomes a habit after a while and sometimes leads to surprising observations when one is not really, formally, birding. I remember a few years ago, right after a strong but brief rainstorm had ended, I decided to walk a few blocks to a corner market near where I lived at the time. I did throw a pair of binoculars in my backpack (another habit), and on the way I noticed a lot of gulls circling, as they often do after a storm. One looked wrong, so I took out my binoculars and discovered that it was actually an adult Pomarine Jaeger, with the full “spoons” at the tail tip, circling with gulls over a residential neighborhood seven or eight blocks inland! One never knows...



Pomarine Jaeger, with “spoons”. Photo: Jeff Poklen

Events Calendar

May - August 2013



Friday, May 3 San Lorenzo River

Migrant landbirds and shorebirds are possible here this time of year.

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

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



Prairie Falcon



Saturday, May 4 Santa Ana Valley

We'll begin on Quien Sabe Road and maybe backtrack to John Smith Road, then on to Santa Anita, Brown's Valley, and Panoche Roads in search of Cassin's Kingbirds, Burrowing Owls, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagles, and (if lucky) Bald Eagle. We'll find many other oak savannah grassland birds. Last year we finished with around 60 species and a pair of badgers.

Directions: Carpooling is recommended to keep the number of cars as low as possible. Meet at 8:30 AM across the street from the Tres Pinos post office. From SC take Hwy 1 South to Riverside Exit, to Main St, Rt over bridge to L on San Juan to 101, North on 101 to 156 to Union Rd, to Rt on Hwy 25 (Airline Hwy) two or three miles to Tres Pinos. The Post Office is just past the Flap Jacks Restaurant and shares the same parking lot.

Leader: Nelson Samuels, (831) 566-9026, samnelo@razzolink.com



Friday, May 10 Schwan Lake

We'll explore the live oaks, riparian, grassland, and other habitats of the upland portion of Twin Lakes State Beach.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot of the Simpkins Family Swim Center, 979 17th Avenue.

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



Sunday, May 12 Loma Prieta

Last spring, Loma Prieta hosted Purple Martin, Black-chinned, and Sage Sparrow. We will take a 3-mile walk skirting the recently burned chaparral to see if history repeats itself. Other species we might encounter include Cassin's Vireo, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Western Bluebird.

Directions: This trip will be from about 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Because of limited parking, carpooling is encouraged. If interested in participating, contact the leader for exact time and directions.

Leader: Alex Rinkert, (831) 431-0830, arinkert12@comcast.net



Friday, May 17 Antonelli Pond

We'll look for "the regulars" and possibly some interesting spring migrants at this favorite local spot.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM on the west side of the pond at Delaware Avenue.

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

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.



Sunday, May 19
Parks of Santa Clara County—
Ed Levin, Hellyer, & Alum Rock

We'll be moving around to see if we can get target birds, but look for everything. Target birds will include Rufous-crowned Sparrows at Ed Levin County Park, Costa's Hummingbirds along Coyote Creek, and Canyon Wrens at Alum Rock Park—all at key locations. We may stop off at Loma Prieta on the way back to Santa Cruz. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day of birding and prepare for some hiking, birding style.

Directions: Meet at the Santa Cruz Government Center, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, at 7:00 AM for carpooling—near the center's sign, when entering parking lot from Ocean Street. Or meet at Sandy Wool Lake parking area at Ed Levin Park at 8:00 AM.

Leader: Eric Feuss (831) 477-0280. Email is not a good way to reach leader; for alternate arrangements, please call ahead. Mobile for day of trip only: (408) 717-0421



Thursday, May 23
SCBC Meeting @7:30 PM
Speaker: Scott Smithson

Topic: Cuckoos & Carbon

In late September 2012, a wayward Common Cuckoo was discovered in the Watsonville Wetlands, and hundreds of birders flocked to the area during the course of the next two weeks, hoping for a glimpse of this elusive Old World bird. Thousands of miles were driven or flown by birders in pursuit of the now famous cuckoo, and the carbon footprint generated by the rare sighting was enormous. Join us as local birder Scott Smithson recounts the amazing appearance of the cuckoo and speaks about a new generation of "greenbirders" who are leaving their cars at home or carbon offsetting their obsession by supporting habitat restoration efforts.

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



Cuckoo watchers - Photo: Barbara Banfield



Friday, May 24
Delaveaga Park (western)

The west side of this big Santa Cruz city park has extensive redwood and mixed evergreen forests, plus some riparian habitat. Expect a couple of miles of walking, with a few hills.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot at the main picnic area. To get here, go north on Market Street to Branciforte Drive, to the entrance (about a mile north of where Market Street goes under Hwy 1).

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



Sunday, May 26
Beginning Bird Walk
at Natural Bridges

Our local birding hotspot is a great place to get an introduction to the birds of Santa Cruz County. Take a relaxed walk with a local birder at a beautiful local park. A nice variety of habitat should yield a fair number of species. We may visit nearby Moore Creek Preserve for more habitat variety.

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

Leader: Phil Brown, pdpbrown@gmail.com



Wednesday, May 29
Pinto Lake County Park

Breeding season should be in full swing so we'll check the lake, marshes, and hillsides to see what's around.

Directions: Meet at the County Park at the north end of Pinto Lake at 8:00 AM. We'll assemble in the first parking lot area and then walk down the path to the lakeshore and boardwalk.

Leaders: Bob and Bernadette Ramer (831) 426-7342 rjrramer@sbcglobal.net



Friday, May 31
Lighthouse Field

Some spring migrants are still possible, and we'll also check parts of West Cliff Drive.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM on the inland side of the field near the intersection of Pelton and Laguna.

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



Sunday, June 2
Quail Hollow Ranch County Park
Beginner (and up) Birding Walk

Quail Hollow is a beautiful Santa Cruz Park with a good variety of species and habitats. Join us for a relaxed morning of birding.

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

Leader: Eric Feuss, (831) 477-0280



Friday, June 7
Neary Lagoon

Riparian and marsh habitat in the middle of Santa Cruz.

Directions: Meet at the west entrance (off Bay and California) at 8:00 AM.

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



Friday, June 14
Natural Bridges area

There is always a nice variety here and often something unusual.

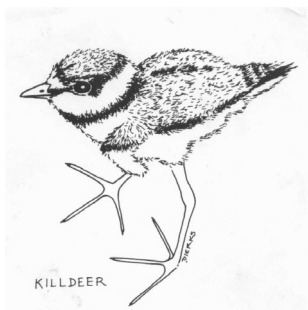
Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the Delaware Avenue entrance to Natural Bridges State Beach.

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



Sunday, June, 16
Fathers Day at Elkhorn Slough

All birds, even if ovulating, are males for the morning. And special cheers for the most outrageously cute fledglings. We will search Jetty Rd and environs and then Moon Glow Dairy, possibly finishing at the Elkhorn Reserve HQ.



Directions: Meet to carpool at Aptos Wells Fargo (Soquel & State Park Dr.) at 7AM (sun rose before 6). Latecomers: we will regroup at 8 AM on the Sea Harvest Restaurant lot (on right just before Rte 1 bridge, Moss Landing) before going on to Jetty Rd (if open).
Leader: Todd Newberry, (831) 426-8741



Friday, June 21
Arana Gulch

We should find a good selection of birds in the mix of grassland, live oaks, riparian, and cypress and eucalyptus groves in this area.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the entrance on Agnes Street, by the end of Mentel Avenue (off the south side of Soquel Avenue, two blocks east of Trevethan and Hagemann)

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



Savannah Sparrow



Grasshopper Sparrow



Friday, July 5
Moore Creek Preserve

Flocks of swallows and sometimes swifts often forage over the grasslands here in the afternoon. In past years, this field trip has often found a Black Swift or two. We should also find grassland specialties like Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows and a variety of other species. Expect a few miles of walking and some hills. Weather here on summer afternoons can be hot or sometimes cool and foggy. Be prepared for either.

Directions: Meet at 3:00 PM on Shaffer Road, across from the end of Mission Street

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



Saturday, July 20
Pogonip

A mid-summer walk through the forests and grasslands of this park

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the north end of Spring Street, off High Street in Santa Cruz.

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



Friday, August 2
West Cliff Drive

We should see some rocky shore specialists, including some early migrant shorebirds, and we'll also check Bethany Curve Park and/or Lighthouse Field.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the intersection of West Cliff Drive and Woodrow Avenue.

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



Friday, August 9
Watsonville Slough

This part of Watsonville Slough offers a variety of waterbirds and species of riparian habitats. Depending on time, etc., we may also visit another spot or two in the south county area.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the Watsonville Wetlands Nature Center, 30 Harkins Slough Road (the south side of Ramsay Park) in Watsonville.

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



Sunday, August 11
Beginning Bird Walk
Natural Bridges

Our local birding hotspot is a great place to get an introduction to the birds of Santa Cruz County. Take a relaxed walk with a local birder at a beautiful local park. A nice variety of habitat should yield a fair number of species.

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

Leader: Phil Brown, pdpbrown@gmail.com



Friday, August 16
Arana Gulch

We should find a good selection of birds in the mix of grassland, live oaks, riparian, and cypress and eucalyptus groves in this area.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the entrance on Agnes Street, by the end of Mentel Avenue (off the south side of Soquel Avenue two blocks east of Trevelyan and Hagemann).

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



Saturday, August 17
Watsonville Sloughs

This midday foray will seek waterbirds and others in the sloughs of Watsonville with a theme of helping beginning birders and enjoying some great telescopic views of some of the birds that have become our old friends. Rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at 10:00 AM at parking lot behind the West Marine building along Struve slough, off Harkins Slough Road. After we walk along that path, we can decide which other areas in the slough to cover, depending on what we find. The trips will end between 1 and 2 PM, so bring some trail snacks and drinks. We won't be away from the cars for very long at a time. Bring a scope if you have one, and I will have mine along for us to share as usual.

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



West Struve Slough, Watsonville, CA



Friday, August 23
Schwann Lake

We'll explore the live oaks, riparian, grassland, and other habitats of the upland portion of Twin Lakes State Beach.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot of the Simpkins Family Swim Center, 979 17th Avenue.

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



Friday, August 30
Natural Bridges area

There is always a nice variety here, and often something unusual.

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

Santa Cruz Birds

By *David Suddjian & Steve Gerow*
Including reports
from January 1 to February 28, 2013

A flock of 65 **Snow Geese** and 22 **Ross's Geese** flew over eastern Santa Cruz on January 14 (DSu), and 15 Snows flew over near Scotts Valley on February 1 (BM). **Tundra Swans** in the Pajaro Valley included one at Harkins Slough on January 3 (AR, NL), one at Struve Slough January 5 to February 24 (DSt, v.ob.), and seven flying north over the Pajaro River on January 7 (DSu). Three male **Eurasian Wigeon** were found in the Pajaro Valley from January 1 to February 24 (DSu, RC, JG et al.). A male **Redhead** was at College Lake from January 1 to the end of February (DSu, v.ob.). A count of 56 **Lesser Scaup** at College on February 25 provided a nice tally for recent years, although the species was formerly more numerous (DSu).

Long-tailed Ducks were at Palm Beach on January 7 (DSu), Seascape on January 9 (KP) and Rio Del Mar on February 3 (KK). Low numbers of **White-winged Scoters** were reported from Capitola to Sunset State Beach, but three at Waddell Creek Beach on January 12 were notable for the north coast, as the species has been fairly rare there in recent winters (JG, AR, NL). A **Black Scoter** was at Monterey Bay Academy on January 5 (AR, JG). Four **Common Mergansers** were at the lower Pajaro River on January 1, where they are rare (AR). Significant late winter counts of **Red-throated Loons** included 580 at Seacliff to New Brighton on February 16 and 338 at New Brighton on February 25 (DSu). Three **Red-necked Grebes** were reported in January (JG, AR, NL, DSu).

The **Black-vented Shearwater** incursion petered out after December, with just a single bird reported in January (JG). The winter's only **Cattle Egret** was at Monte Vista Christian School from January 27 to February 1 (SSm et al.). A tally of 110 **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at a roost at Ramsay Park, Watsonville Slough, on February 24 provided a record number for the county (LG, WG). Six **White-faced Ibis** at Struve Slough on January 7 were the only ones reported this period (DSu). Eleven **Turkey Vultures** passing over Noble Gulch on January 28 was an exceptional number for Capitola (DSu). One or both of the **Bald Eagles**

were reported frequently at College and Pinto lakes and the sloughs west of Watsonville. Courtship and carrying nest material was observed, but no clear evidence of a nest was reported as of the end of February (v.ob.). A **Ferruginous Hawk** was at Scott Creek on January 7-11 (v.ob.).



This Ferruginous Hawk was soaring near Swanton Road on January 11, 2013. Photo by Jeff Bleam

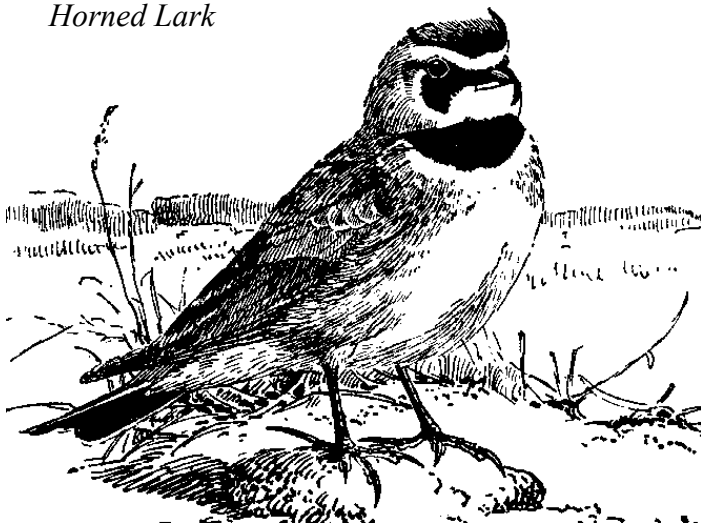
Seventy-three **Black Oystercatchers** gathered in the lee of Greyhound Rock at high tide on January 27 (BR, RR). Twenty-four **Least Sandpipers** at College Lake on February 25 was the high count for the winter, and two **Dunlin** at the Pajaro River mouth on January 7 was the only report in the county this winter (DSu). Four **Glaucous Gulls** included a 3rd cycle bird at the San Lorenzo River and Black Point on February 2-24 that was thought to be a returning bird from the previous year (AR, JG, NL). The boat covering the offshore area of the Moss Landing CBC found impressive numbers of two alcids in nearshore waters from Pajaro Dunes to La Selva: 23 **Marbled Murrelets** and 69 **Ancient Murrelets**, plus 11 left unidentified (JG).

A pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** building a nest in Capitola on January 19 showed how early the nesting season can start for that rapidly-increasing species (DSu). A **Burrowing Owl** was near Harkins Slough on February 25 (HS, RS). A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was in the Bean Creek area on February 9 (DSu). Among various reports of **Merlin** in January and February were two showing features of the rare "Prairie" subspecies—

one at Natural Bridges on February 6 (SG) and another by Struve Slough on February 9 (SP, SH). **Eastern Phoebes** were found near Hanson Slough January 1-14 (CK, EL, v.ob.) and along the San Lorenzo River at Sycamore Grove January 15-21 (ER, NL). A **Say's Phoebe**, seen mostly around the Mid-County Senior Center from December 14-January 17, was quite unusual for Capitola (KK, SH, DSu). **Loggerhead Shrikes** continued to be quite rare in Santa Cruz County, with just seven reports of wintering birds. The **Plumbeous Vireo** stayed around San Lorenzo Park through February 4 (AR, LG, JG, SG, v.ob.).

American Crows continued to use the Arana Gulch site as their primary roost in the county through mid-February, reaching a peak of 2675 on January 4 (DSu, SSu), then gradually decreasing. By late February, though, those crows still making the morning commute were almost all coming from the direction of College Lake, for an interesting late-season switch. **Horned Larks** continued their presence in an area near Watsonville and Harkins Sloughs, the only known area of residency in Santa Cruz County, with at least 3-4 pairs there on February 24 (MS, SG). Six or more **Violet-green Swallows** over Eagle Rock on January 4 were unexpected for the mountain area of Santa Cruz County in winter (LB). A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at Struve Slough on February 25 (LG, BR) marked a somewhat earlier first-arrival date than we have seen in the last few years, though not unusually early compared to the long-term average. A dozen **Barn Swallows**, found in two areas along Watsonville Slough on February 24-25 (DSu, CK, RR),

Horned Lark



may have been wintering birds, as most had just barely started their molt into breeding plumage. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued in good numbers through the winter, though numbers decreased by late winter in some areas.



A Red-breasted Nuthatch was photographed in Scotts Valley on January 6, 2013, by David Sidle.

A wintering **Black-and-white Warbler** continued in Bethany Curve Park in Santa Cruz through the period (SG, v.ob.), and others crept through the trees at Schwan Lake on January 14 (DSu), Pinto Lake on January 23 (PF), and Soquel Creek on January 28 (DSu). Schwan Lake also had a **Tennessee Warbler** on January 14 (DSu). Three **Nashville Warblers** turned up during the period (v.ob.). The wintering **MacGillivray's Warbler** stayed around Bethany Curve Park until at least February 1 (SG, JG, NL, v.ob.) Five new **Palm Warblers** were located between January 5 and February 24 (DSu, KJ, AR, JG), while the cooperative bird at San Lorenzo Park continued to be viewed until February 17 (v.ob.). A wintering **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in Soquel was last seen January 14 (DSu), and one was in downtown Santa Cruz near the San Lorenzo River February 16-17 (LG, v.ob.). Two **Hermit Warblers** first found in December continued into January, and five more were discovered in January and February (v.ob.), continuing a good winter for these. **Wilson's Warblers** were along Swanton Road on January 8 (AB), and at Porter-Sesnon on February 16 (DSu)

A **Chipping Sparrow** continued at the UCSC Farm into early March (JG, v.ob.) Additional **Swamp Sparrows** found in January and February brought the December-February total up to at least 24, for a very good winter for that species. **White-throated Sparrows** were also well-represented this winter, with 46 or so noted from December through February. A **Summer Tanager** was near Jose Street Park in Live Oak on January 25 (DSu), and a **Western Tanager** visited Noble Gulch Park in Capitola on January 5 (DSu). A notably high count of 109 **Great-tailed Grackles** was tallied along Watsonville Slough near Ford Street on February 25 (DSu). A **Bullock's Oriole** chattered in the eucalyptus of Meder Canyon on February 14 (SG), and an **Orchard Oriole** visited a Santa Cruz yard on January 2 (CS, CL).

Irrupting **Red Crossbills** continued to be found in various spots through the period. Some diversified their conifer seed diet a bit in the later part of the season, with a flock of 24 noted feeding on willow buds at Quail Hollow starting February 16 (JW, v.ob.) Pine

Siskins continued in high numbers through the period (v.ob.). Twelve **Evening Grosbeaks** flew over Porter-Sesnon on January 14 (DSu), and one was in the box elders in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park on February 7 (DE, CV).

* * *

Cited Observers: Abe Borker, Linda Brodman, Ryan Carle, David Ekdahl, Paul Fenwick, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Jennifer Green, Sharon Hull, Kent Johnson, Clay Kempf, Kathy Kuyper, Chris Lay, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Barbara Monahan, Kathy Parker, Shantanu Phukan, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Eric Rogers, Heidi Sandkuhle, Richard Sandkuhle, Christian Schwarz, Michelle Scott, Scott Smithson (SSm), Howard Stephenson, David Styer (DSt), David Suddjian (DSu), Stephen Suddjian (SSu), Connie Vigno. Jeff Wall (JWa), Jim Williams (JWi).

Please report unusual or interesting observations to dsuddjian@gmail.com

Updates re: “Birds or Birdies?”

Pinto Lake

Concerned people have started a campaign to stop and reverse environmental damage at the Pinto Lake disc golf course. June 10th is the next Parks Commission hearing when discussion of Pinto Lake is likely. Again, SCBC encourages birders to write to the Parks Commissioners before that date.

If you used to enjoy Pinto Lake before the disc golf course was installed, tell them your observations of how the course has changed or impacted the habitat and bird watching. First hand experiences are critical. Do not assume the decision makers know what you know. (The disc golf community claims that there was no bird watching in the back areas of Pinto until the trails were opened up and the disc course was put in!)

Let the officials know what you think:

- Parks Director Betsey Lynberg:
dpw149@co.santa-cruz.ca.us 454-2200
- County Parks Commissioners:
prcweb@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

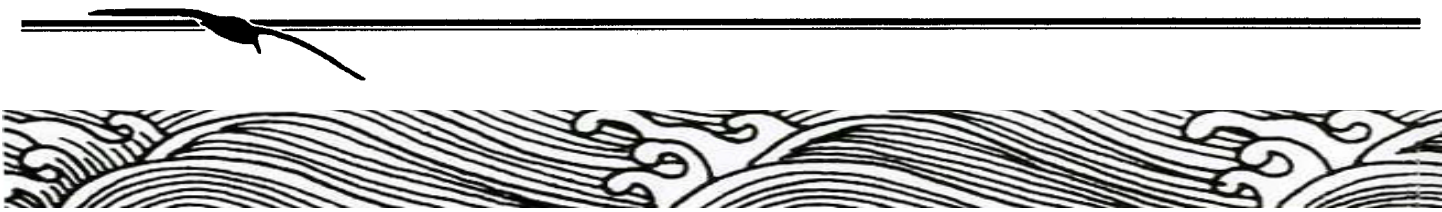
Anna Jean Cummings Park

The outcome of appeals to the Parks Commission regarding a disc golf course at Anna Jean Cummings (AJC) is unknown as this issue goes to press because the public meeting is on the same day—April 15. Here is the information that we have to date.

At the February 5 meeting with the commission, a majority of attendees spoke against allowing the disc golf course at AJC. The Friends of AJC petition has over 600 signatures.

On a hopeful note, Friends of AJC reports that a group of Soquel High School parents has approached the school's site council with a proposal for a disc golf course to be built on the high school campus. This would be an alternative to the course that the high school disc golf club is proposing at AJC.

Watch the AJC web site for meeting announcements on the issues at both parks:
<http://www.friendsofannajcummingspark.org/>
and continue to write letters to the same people (addresses at left).



Seabirding trips

Monterey Seabirds

Enjoy the friendliest pelagic trips on the West Coast! Monterey Seabirds offers a discount rate to all SCBC members and Monterey Audubon Society members—\$105 on our trips (reg. \$130). You can register online at: www.montereyseabirds.com

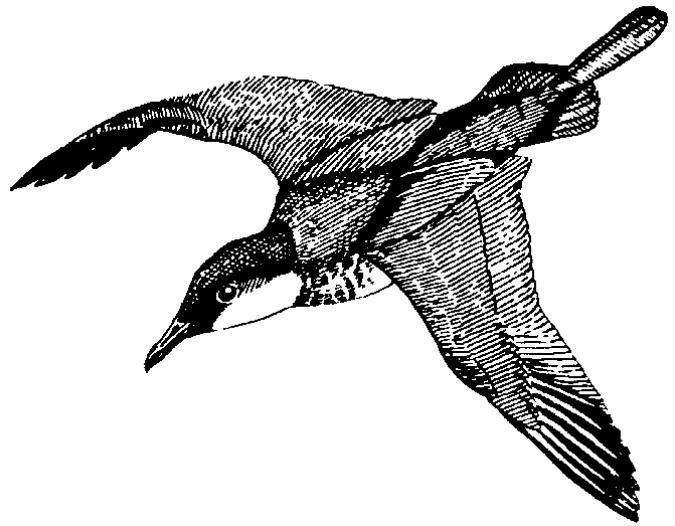
If you have questions, contact Tim Amaral at: montereyseabirds@gmail.com. or call Monterey Seabirds (831) 375-4658

2013 Monterey Seabird Trips

8-hour trips (all on Sundays except Saturday, Aug. 24 and Saturday, Oct. 12)

7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., \$105 for SCBC & MPAS members, \$130 for others)

May 19, Aug. 24, Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Sept. 29, Oct. 6 and Sat. Oct. 12



Shearwater Journeys

Shearwater Journeys offers more pelagic trips than anyone else on the West Coast. Trips depart from Monterey, Half Moon Bay, Sausalito and Bodega Bay with expert leaders.

See the schedule of trips here: <http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com/schedule.shtml>

SCBC members can enjoy a \$35 discount on any trip, if booked by June 1, 2013.

To make a reservation, please send a check to: Shearwater Journeys,

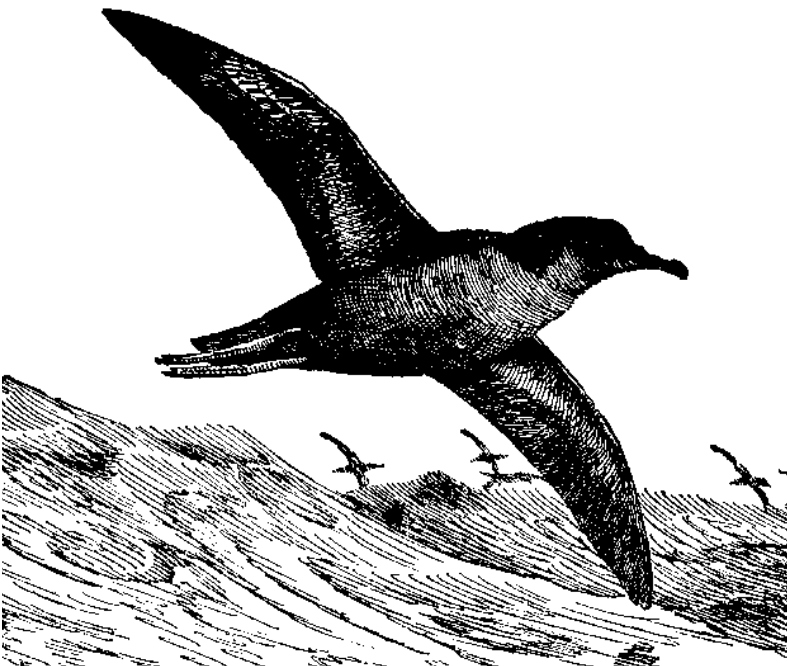
POB 190

Hollister, CA 95014

Include the name, address, email and cell phone for each person.

Discounted trips are NON-REFUNDABLE for ANY REASON. Discount does not apply on previously booked trips.

You will receive a return confirmation letter by snail mail.



**New SCBC
Members**

Welcome!

Georgina Joy Monahan	Mar 2013
Connie Unsicker	Mar 2013
Tony Britton	April 2013

**New Albatross
Editor!**

Good news! We have found a new Editor for the Albatross! Lisa Fay Larson will be taking over from me as of the next issue—September/October 2013. **WELCOME** to Lisa. I'm sure she will continue to keep "Alby" flying in fine form.

Judy Donaldson

**Submission for the
Albatross—Guidelines**

Assembling



In addition to regular features—calendar, Santa Cruz Birds, photos—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 an article, please contact the editor about it **a couple of weeks before** the submission deadline.

We accept plain text, Word, or PDF files. Send items by email to:

Judy Donaldson (outgoing editor)
calqua@sbcglobal.net

or

Lisa Fay Larson (incoming editor)
lisafaylarson@gmail.com



Peregrine Falcon - Photo by Jeff Poklen

**Input deadline for
Sep/Oct issue
of the Albatross
August 1, 2013**

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Santa Cruz, CA 95061

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Printed on partially recycled paper 

Spring is sprung, the grass is riz'...
Do you know what time it is?

It's TIME to RENEW your
Santa Cruz Bird Club
MEMBERSHIP!



For easy dues-paying, a remittance envelope is enclosed in this issue. To send in a renewal (or a donation), fill in the relevant information, put in your check, add postage, and mail.

Please pay the dues now, while the envelope is in hand, so you won't miss the September/October issue of the *ALBATROSS* in the fall.

A Gift of Birds and Birding?

Do you have a friend who is interested in birds? An SCBC membership would be a thoughtful—and perhaps inspiring—gift. Fill in the information for the giftee, and send in the payment. Additional envelopes are usually available from club officers and trip leaders.

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.