



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Days of the Kestrels

By John and Barbara Ellis

Inside:

Calendar of Events



Picnic!

Monterey Bay Birding Festival

Seabirding Trips

Santa Cruz Birds



Our son Andrew happened to be visiting when we decided to put a kestrel nesting box up in a tall pine tree by our garden gate, and he offered to do it for us. He put it 30 feet high, higher than we'd intended, and certainly too high to clean out, but kestrels were more likely to take it at 30 feet than 20. We didn't yet understand that something else about the way Andrew had set the box was going to give us the most fascinating bird watching we had ever experienced in over half a century of birding. It was facing a tall redwood about 60 yards away, and there was a clear line of sight from the box, over some lower trees, to the top of the redwood. We didn't know why that was so important, and to judge from all that we've read about kestrels, nor did anyone else.

We'd heard sporadic kestrel calls earlier, but on April 11 we first saw the impressive mating ceremony next to the box, with much fluttering and excited high-pitched calling. The male feeds the female for two weeks before egg-laying begins and this becomes part of the repeated mating ritual. But she doesn't eat by the nest. For her meals the pair fly off to a nearby perch, which books such as the Stokes Guide to Bird Behavior call their feeding perch. So as the initial mating display ended we watched to see where they would go, and were surprised to find that they went not to some secluded place but to the exposed topmost twigs of the redwood, and they stayed there. The female now spent much of her day there waiting for her mate to feed her. And he spent many hours of the day with her when he was not hunting. It dawned on us that this was more than a feeding perch—it was the reference point for everything they did. The box was only the



-baby kestrel Lisa Sheridan

(continued on page 8)

Events Calendar

September - October 2013

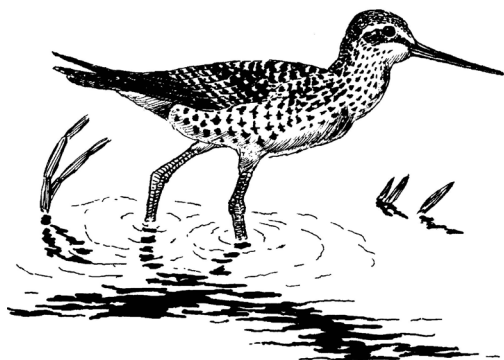


Sunday, September 1
Elkhorn Slough

Even with mediocre tides, birding is the best way to mark this crazy weekend. This trip usually ends about noon, but seeking shorebird or wetlands rarities might extend it informally into early afternoon.

Directions: We will meet in the SEA HARVEST parking lot (just north of the Elkhorn Slough Hwy 1 bridge) at 8AM, then work Jetty Rd, then go to Moonglow Dairy. (Note: NO early carpooling in Aptos.)

Leader: Todd Newberry (831) 426-8741.



Friday, September 6
Neary Lagoon

Fall migration should be well underway by now

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, September 8
Baldwin Creek to Pescadero

Itinerary will be determined based upon MBB and pen-bird sightings. Beyond Baldwin Creek, expect to spend time at Ano Nuevo, Pigeon Point, and Pescadero.

Directions: Meet at the Santa Cruz Government Center, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, at 6:30 AM for carpooling. Meet near the center's sign, when entering parking lot from Ocean Street. Otherwise, meet at Baldwin Creek at 7:00 AM; directions can be obtained from the on-line SC Birding Guide: <http://scbirdingguide.org/North/Coast/Baldwin.htm>.

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).



Friday, September 20
Lighthouse Field

This area is often good for fall migrants, and a variety of unusual species have been found here over the years. We may also check West Cliff Drive and Bethany Curve Park
Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM on the inland side of the field near the intersection of Pelton and Laguna.

Leader: Steve Gerow, 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.



Thursday, September 26
SBSC Meeting @7:30 PM
Speaker: Rebecca Dmytryk
Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, CA

Wildlife Emergency Services (WES), based out of Moss Landing, responds to hundreds of calls in the Santa Cruz area each year, many of them involving birds. Saving the life of an injured wild bird begins where and when it's first discovered. Learn what you can do should you discover an injured bird or a fallen baby bird. Dmytryk's presentation will also highlight some of the amazing rescues she and her volunteer responders have performed over the years, including their experiences in the Gulf Oil Spill.

Bio: Rebecca Dmytryk, founder and director of WES, has been involved in wildlife rescue for over 30 years. She is an expert in wildlife capture and has authored a book entitled "Wildlife Search and Rescue: A Guide for First Responders".



-Pacific Slope Flycatcher Pete Sole



Friday, September 27
Arana Gulch

This open space preserve has good habitat for sparrows, warblers, flycatchers and others. Who knows what might show up this time of year.

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, stephengerow@aol.com

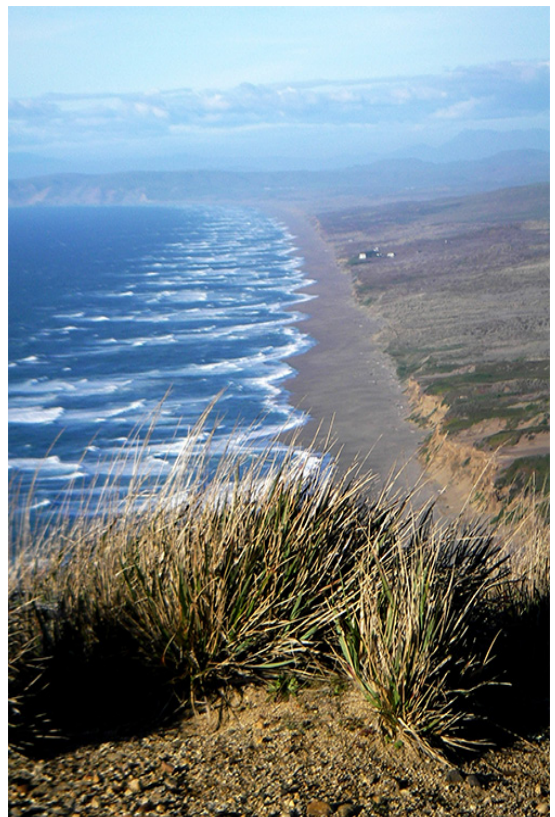


Sunday, September 29
Point Reyes National Seashore

Point Reyes is famous throughout the birding world as one of the places to search for migrating songbirds; it holds its own in the shorebird/waterfowl category as well. The anticipation of what might occur is often as exciting as the actual discovery of a vagrant. Even if no unusual birds are found, the beauty of the area alone is well worth the trip. Preceding weather patterns will determine the trips itinerary. We'll be birding the Point Reyes outer-point/lighthouse.

Directions: Meet at the Santa Cruz Government Center, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, at 5:15 AM for carpooling. Meet near the center's sign, when entering parking lot from Ocean Street. Otherwise, meet at the Point Reyes Lighthouse at 8:30 am. Bring lunch and liquids for a full-day trip. Call the leader if you need specific directions to the lighthouse.

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).





Friday, October 4
Antonelli Pond and vicinity

We should find fall migrants, and probably some arriving winter species, and there is a good chance for the unexpected.

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, October 6
SCBC Picnic at
DeLaveaga County Park

Picnic!

Bring a dish to share and a beverage of your choice (no alcohol allowed). We will have access to a BBQ pit so if you want to BBQ something, coals will be blazing! The club will provide paper plates and utensils, but we encourage you to bring your own place settings to limit our contribution to the local landfill. You may want to bring a beach chair. Birds should be singing, so come and enjoy the afternoon festivities with the birds and your bird-loving friends.

Time/Place: 1:00-4:00 PM at the picnic area, 850 N. Branciforte Drive, in the main portion of the park, adjacent to the creek, between the playground area and the baseball fields.

Contact: Nickie Zavinsky, nickiezee@yahoo.com



Friday, October 11
DeLaveaga Park (southeast)

The trails in this area pass through a variety of habitats that generally attract a good number and variety of birds. This area has not been extensively birded in fall migration; we might find something unexpected. Expect a couple of miles of walking with some hills.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the trail head at the north end of Park Way (the section to the north of Highway 1), off Prospect Heights. Note that parking is limited in this area. There are a few parking spaces in a dirt lot by the park entrance, but these can be difficult for low-clearance vehicles. There is usually some on-street parking on Prospect Heights and nearby side streets. Car pooling is suggested.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, October 13
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.

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

Leader: Phil Brown, pdpbrown@gmail.com



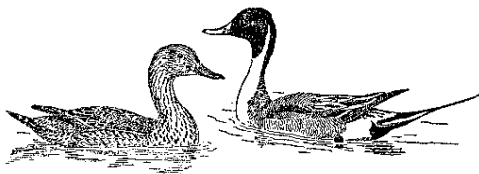


Friday, October 18
Watsonville Slough

We should find late fall migrant and wintering passerines, probably a variety of waterfowl and wading birds, some raptors, and who knows what else?

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, stephengerow@aol.com



Thursday, October 24
SBSC Meeting @7:30 PM
Speaker: Dr. Bruce Lyon, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, UCSC
Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, CA

The Black-headed Duck is a duck with the lifestyle of a cuckoo or a cowbird—they never raise their own offspring but depend entirely on other species to do so. This species is unique among the hundred species of professional brood parasitic birds in that their precocial chicks fend for themselves after hatching, so the parasites rely on their hosts only for incubation. This suggested that we might see a different type of relationship between the brood parasite and the host species they parasitize. I will discuss the results of our four-year study of Black-headed Ducks in wetlands near Buenos Aires. We investigated ecological and evolutionary aspects of their biology, including patterns of host use, the factors that influence the ducks' reproductive success, and the implications for conservation. The study wetlands, habitat that looks similar to North American wetlands, host an incredible diversity of breeding birds (60 species!). I will highlight some of this avian diversity with a feast of images and natural history vignettes, considering both the similarities and the differences between these Argentina wetlands and their North American counterparts.



Friday, October 25
Natural Bridges area

There is almost always something interesting here.

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com





Seabirding trips



Monterey Seabirding Fall Special

Monterey Seabirds

Monterey Seabirds offers a discount rate to all SCBC members and Monterey Audubon Society members. \$105 on our trips (reg. \$130). Folks can register online at: www.montereyseabirds.com. (831) 375-4658
If you have questions, contact Tim Amaral at: montereyseabirds@gmail.com.

2013 Monterey Seabird Trips - 8-hour trips 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

AUGUST 2, 9, 16, 23 (all Fridays)

SEPTEMBER 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 27

OCTOBER 5, 13, 25

The Albacore Grounds, heading offshore, is scheduled for Saturday, September 7th.
Spaces are available on all of these trips.



Enjoy the friendliest pelagic trips on the West Coast!



Shearwater Journeys

By popular request, Shearwater Journeys has a “special Santa Cruz County” pelagic trip scheduled for Tuesday, September 10. Departure: Fisherman’s Wharf Monterey at 7 am. Return at 3 pm. We will head straight out to Santa Cruz County waters! This is an excellent time of year to see seabirds at their peak of migration. We could see up to 6 species of shearwaters, 4 species of storm-petrels, common murre, rhinoceros auklet, pigeon guillemot, as well as pomarine, parasitic and long-tailed jaegers, South polar skua, red and red-necked phalaropes. So, bring your county lists and requests. Other trips available include many from Monterey and Half Moon Bay, either place easily reached from Santa Cruz.

See the schedule of trips here: <http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com/schedule.shtml> for more information, or email Debi Shearwater (Life member of SCBC) at: debi@shearwaterjourneys.com





Come to the 9th Annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival

September 12 -14, 2013



Designed for birders of all levels, as well as outdoor lovers, the festival offers a unique opportunity to explore and appreciate world-class habitats, including the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Elkhorn Slough NERR, and Pinnacles National Monument. There are outings in the mountains, shoreline, chaparral, sloughs, and grasslands. One special trip goes to Big Sur and the Ventana Wildlife Society to witness the return of the California Condors. Join a pelagic trip by Shearwater Journeys to one of the world's most productive regions for albatrosses, shearwaters, storm-petrels, and more. All field trips are led by friendly, expert leaders. There is even a field sketching workshop.

On Thursday evening, Cat Burns will discuss the “Western Snowy Plover Recovery”, studied for the past 10 years by the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO). Friday evening, Bob Power will speak on “**Field Identification of Raptors**”. The keynote speaker, Sophie Webb, co-author and illustrator of field guides, will share her experiences about NOAA research cruises that she participated in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) on Saturday evening.

Bird Club members will want to visit the many display booths present, representing all the major optics vendors plus a variety of tour companies and artists.

Participants can register for a mix of outings, workshops, and evening programs, according to personal interests. For details and registration information, see the festival web site:

<http://www.montereybaybirding.org>

Festival Headquarters is at the Watsonville Civic Plaza—the perfect central location for the four days of activities. Parking is FREE.

November 17-20, 2011—17th ANNUAL CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM Hosted at the Stockton Hilton, by the CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB

This year the Thursday night keynote is double-Ed, with speakers Ed and Ed (Harper and Pandolfino) discussing trends in bird populations in the Central Valley. Friday night's keynote program is by Kimball Garrett on non-native bird species called “Avian Invaders in California”. The Saturday night keynote program is “Birds of the Sierra Nevada” with Ted Beedy, Ed Pandolfino, and Keith Hansen. Also Saturday, Susan Schneider will present a fascinating program “No Birdbrains Here: The Latest on Learning Instinct and Intelligence in Birds” and Dawn Garcia will share data about the secretive Northern Saw-Whet Owls in her program, “Migration Patterns of Northern Saw-Whet Owls near Forest Ranch, CA”. To look over the line-up of speakers, workshops, and field trips and for registration information, check out the website at: www.2013cvbs.org/

Kestrels *(continued)*

nursery and the perch was where they lived. We saw now why it was so high and exposed. Because it was at least 50 feet higher than the box they could jump off the perch and drop to accelerate rapidly, reaching the box in a few seconds.

Luckily we had a clear line of sight from one room of our house to the high perch, so we set up a scope there to monitor it. As we watched their comings and goings we began to understand what they were doing and why they were doing it. It started with easy things. Sometimes the female would fly from the perch to the nest tree and back again a few times, probably just stretching her wings. A bit harder to interpret were the times she flew to a different tall tree, then to another and still another, always calling. But since we knew that her mate had not brought food to the perch for a few hours, we could see that she was looking for him, and letting him know that she was getting impatient.

When on April 26 she was uncharacteristically absent from the perch for several hours, it didn't matter that the box was too high for us to look into: we knew that she had begun incubating. And when half way through the incubation period the two started to show up at the perch



- devoted father Lisa Larson

one immediately after the other, we got the message that they were now changing the guard in the box.

New patterns at the perch always meant new stages in the family's development. With incubation a new habit appeared. The male would fly up to the perch early in the morning, calling softly as he went. She soon came out to meet him and they sat quietly side by side for about ten minutes before he left to begin the day's hunting, and she returned to the box. The other encounters of the day always had a practical purpose (food exchange or changing the guard), but this one was just to say good morning. We learned how much it mattered to them when one day he arrived at the perch in bright sunshine at 6:00 am, and dense cold fog immediately rolled in from the ocean. Weather determined the timing of their morning meeting—the colder and darker, the later—so today he was too early. The busy hunter waited for an hour and a half before she arrived—all for ten minutes to sit by his mate.



- good morning meeting John Ellis

This “good morning” meeting during incubation was the most predictable thing of their day, so when at 6:10 am on May 22 the female flew to the high perch by herself without waiting to be called by him we sensed immediately that something important had happened. As she reached the perch she swiveled and flew south to the area where he roosted at night, vanished into some dense foliage for about a minute, then flew straight back into the box. He began hunting right away without first going up to the perch—the first time he had ever done that. We didn't need to speak kestrelse to understand what she had said to him: no time to sit together this morning, get busy, there's another mouth to feed! Later that morning they flew round and round the

garden, both calling in an excited way we'd not heard since their early courtship days.

As they fed the young, there were a few days (day 12 to 18 after hatching began) when they barely used the perch at all. The female had started to hunt, but the chicks could not yet feed themselves. So when the male caught something he called at maximum volume, and she immediately flew to the nest to meet him and take the food into the box. And she called loudly whenever she changed the location she was hunting in, to let him know where she was. Their voices and close cooperation were temporarily replacing the focal point of the perch.



- mother feeding young Andy Knorr

At day 25 the female began to do most of the hunting, and we worried at first that something might have happened to the male. But it turned out that this was just astute planning: he was being rested to prepare for taking

on almost the entire burden of feeding the family again five days later, when his mate would be doing something else.

When at 6:00 am on day 30 she flew up to the perch chattering loudly, we knew again that something was up. As the male went back to hunting, she began to patrol the skies over the nest, calling all the time. She attacked and drove off the local Cooper's and red-tails if they came anywhere near the nest. She was announcing that fledging was near, and that potential marauders had better stay out of the way.

The constant aggressive chatter of the mother bird made it a noisy week before the first fledgling—a female—jumped out of the box on day 37, followed by three males on days 38, 40, and 42. The mother fed and watched over each fledgling as it appeared, while their father continued to feed those left in the box. The fledglings stayed a few days before their mother took them off in the direction of her favorite hunting ground. For two more days the parent birds relaxed for several hours on the perch, and then they were gone.



- fledglings John Ellis

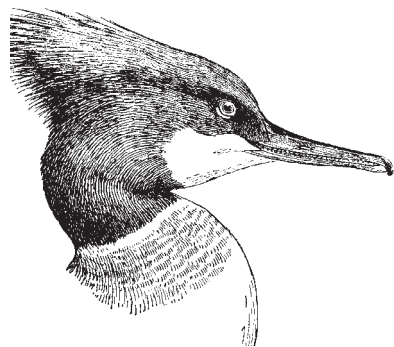
By finding and monitoring their perch we had got more deeply into the kestrels' world than we ever thought possible. There will be other summers and other kestrels, and we'll get to know them too. But nothing will come close to the thrill of getting so close to these elegant, clever little birds for the first time.



Santa Cruz Birds

By David Suddjian & Steve Gerow
Including reports from March 1 to May 31, 2013

The last reports of the season for **Greater White-fronted**, **Snow** and **Cackling Geese** were each April 30 at Shorebirds Pond (v.ob.). A pair of **Wood Ducks** at the confluence of the Pajaro River and Pescadero Creek on May 6 was rare for south county (DSu). Notably late ducks included 2 **American Wigeon** at Harkins Slough and 4 **Northern Shovelers** at Watsonville Slough through May 18 (CK, EL, BR, RR). A remarkable total of 168 **White-winged Scoters** along the coast from Rio Del Mar to Sunset State Beach on March 18 (DSu). The only others



reported all spring were two at Natural Bridges on March 21 (JG) and one at Seacliff on May 8 (DSu). Eight **Black Scoters** were noted from March 18-21, with another on April 30 (NL, LG, JL, DSu, JG). Although regular on most major

streams in the county, **Common Merganser** remains rarely noted in the Pajaro Valley. Thus two at the Pajaro on March 14 (NS) and one flying over Watsonville Slough (RR, BR) were of interest.

Two **Red-necked Grebes** were at Sunset SB on March 22 (NS). **Cattle Egrets** were at College Lake on April 23 (AB, TM) and on the cement ship at Seacliff on April 30 (DSu). Reports of **White-faced Ibis** from the Pajaro Valley included high counts of 20 at College Lake on April 24 (BR, RR) and 45 at Watsonville and Harkins sloughs on May 20 (BMo, MA). A pair of **Osprey** completed a nest for the first time at College Lake this spring, following last year's failed building effort there, but no evidence of eggs or young was observed (JB, DSu). The pair of **Bald Eagles** frequenting Pinto and College lakes was seen up to March 1, but then only singles were reported through April 27, with no evidence of nesting (v.ob). A third individual, thought to be a 3-year old, was at College Lake on March 1 (GK). An adult Bald was seen

over Summit Ridge near Loma Prieta on May 7 (AG). Nesting **Cooper's Hawks** continue to claim new territory in and near the county's urban zone: a nest at Neary Lagoon was the first in the urban area of the city of Santa Cruz (PW, MC, JW, SS, v.ob.), and one at Bush Creek was the first reported at Rio Del Mar (DSu). Three **Swainson's Hawks** were detected from April 10 to May 12 (DSu, JW, AR et al.).

Black Oystercatchers out of place included two probable migrants flying up the coast at Rio Del Mar on March 18 and one flying around at Capitola Beach on May 11 (DSu). College Lake again hosted **Solitary Sandpipers** from April 21 to May 6, with an impressive four noted on the first date (JG, NL, v.ob.). Rare spring reports of **Lesser Yellowlegs** were of one flying over Capitola with Greater on April 10 (DSu) and up to two at College Lake on April 20-21 (JG, NL, DSu). Rare **Ruddy Turnstones** were at the cement ship at Seacliff on April 1 (DSu) and at Wilder Ranch on April 3 (GM).

Bonaparte's Gull has declined markedly in its spring passage in Santa Cruz County. Flocks of 1000s were formerly common in April to early May, but not lately. But this year, a strong movement from April 15-17 brought counts of 900-2700 gulls at Santa Cruz (AR, HP, JG, SG), with the high of 2700 at Terrace Point on April 15 (AR). A 1st cycle **Laughing Gull** spent time at Shorebirds Pond April 21-29, moving to Aptos Creek mouth April 30 to May



-Laughing Gull at Aptos River mouth May 2nd Jeff Poklen

8 (KK, vo.b). Based on a unique plumage feature, it was determined to be the same as one seen at Moss Landing in Monterey County from April 6-13. Then, remarkably, two adult Laughing Gulls were at Aptos Creek mouth on April 29 (LT). The season brought just two **Franklin's Gulls**, both passing Capitola on May 1 (DSu). **Forster's Tern**, like Bonaparte's Gull, has also undergone a dramatic

reduction as a spring migrant in the county. This season they were remarkably scarce, with a high count of just 15 at the Pajaro River mouth on May 4 (JG, LV). None at all were reported from the Santa Cruz city coast all season.

Long-eared Owls were at Schwan Lake on March 2 (GK) and in Corralitos on April 3-4 (HS, RS). A **Short-eared Owl** in Capitola on March 8 (DSu) was the first for that city and quite unexpected in a residential neighborhood. By far the most unexpected bird of the spring was a calling **Eastern Whip-poor-will** on a private ranch near Valencia Creek in the hills east of Aptos from May 17 to June 19 (MW, AW, PBu, GB, JG, AR, DSu, LG, WG, v.ob.). The owners and residents of the property generously allowed birders access, and more than 200 people were able to hear, and sometimes see, this rarity. Though it still requires CBRC review, it is generally agreed that the multiple recordings of this bird's distinctive calls clearly identify it as the Eastern species (rather than Mexican Whip-poor-will, which is somewhat regular in parts of Southern California), thus establishing a first

record for Santa Cruz County, and only the second record of this species for California. Migrant **Black Swifts** were sparse this spring, with only six reports involving twelve birds from May 6-27 (v.ob.). **Vaux's Swifts** were also scarce, with just a handful of reports of 1-6 birds starting April 6.

A male **Costa's Hummingbird** was at the Pajaro River in the southeast corner of Santa Cruz County on April 29 (DSu). Late spring migrant male **Rufous Hummingbirds** were in Porter-Sesnon on May 4 (DSu) and at the Pajaro River in southeast Santa Cruz County

on May 9 (BMi). A female **Northern Flicker** showing features of a pure "**Yellow-shafted**" form was in Porter-Sesnon March 7 to April 10 (DSu, SG, MC). **Pileated Woodpeckers** continued their recent pattern of spring wandering away from usual areas and habitats. One along Bush Creek on March 18 was the first for Rio Del Mar (DSu). A pair was away from usual habitats and at the edge of suburban Santa Cruz in southern DeLaveaga Park



from April 21 into early June (SGe, v.ob), though not too far from their normal range. The most extreme wandering Pileated this season was along the Pajaro River near Aromas on April 29 (DSu). It flew from Santa Cruz County into Monterey County (where very rare) and San Benito County (the first for that county)!

A pair of **American Kestrels** nested in a nest box in Soquel this season, starting April 8 (JE). This is the first confirmed nesting from mid-county (away from a few sites in western Santa Cruz) in many years. Late **Merlins** were along the Pajaro River near Pescadero Creek on May 6 (DSu) and in the Watsonville Slough area on May 8 (RR, BR). A **Prairie Falcon** was near the Pajaro River close to the Santa Clara County border on March 1 (AR). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** visited the Pajaro River near Pescadero Creek on April 29 (DSu). There were 21 reports of **Western Kingbirds** from April 3 to May 27 (v.ob.). Three **Horned Larks** were near the Pajaro River close to the Santa Clara County line on March 1 (AR);

some were known to nest in this area until at least 1994, but there have been few reports since then. As they have for the last couple of years, a few **Purple Martins** regularly foraged within Santa Cruz County in the Summit Ridge area near

Loma Prieta starting April 20 (AR, JG, v.ob.); their actual breeding site was nearby in Santa Clara County, where they had arrived this year by April 7 (WB). A migrant visited Seacliff State Beach on May 18 (DSu). Single **Bank Swallows** turned up at Terrace Point on May 10 (JG), Antonelli Pond on May 22 (JG, v.ob.), and Seacliff State Beach on May 24 (DSu).

Fair numbers of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued from the winter's irruption into mid-April (especially in the mountains), but by May most were gone, away from the few areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains where the species is resident. There were several reports of up to three **White-breasted Nuthatches** along the Pajaro River near the southeast corner of Santa Cruz County between March 1 and April 7 (AR, v.ob.), but none were found after that date. A male **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** along

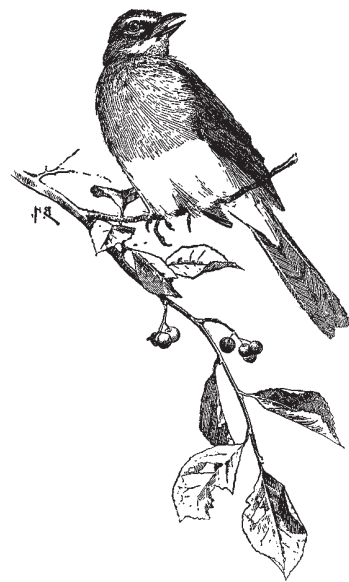
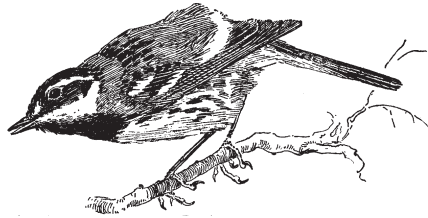


upper Old San Jose Road on May 26 was exceptionally late (NZ). **Western Bluebirds** continued to recover their numbers and range in Santa Cruz County. Sightings in areas lacking other recent reports included one to two along Canham Road north of Scotts Valley from March 2-27 (AR) and two to four at Eagle Rock March 23-April 23 (KK, MC). A **Hermit Thrush** at Schwan Lake on May 11 was late for the coastal lowlands (SG et al.)

Last dates for wintering **Black-and-white Warblers** were

March 16 at Pinto Lake (RW), March 18 along Soquel Creek in Capitola (DSu), and March 24 at Bethany Curve Park (SG). A **Nashville Warbler**

in Davenport on March 19 probably wintered locally (LSe). Six spring migrant Nashville Warblers were recorded from April 2-13 (v.ob.). Migrant **MacGillivray's Warblers** were at New Brighton State Beach on April 8 and Noble Gulch on April 13 (DSu). A recently restored riparian area along



a stretch of Watsonville Slough in Watsonville held six singing male **Yellow Warblers**, as well as a female carrying nesting material, on May 17 (DSu). This is an encouraging report for this species, which has declined significantly as a breeding bird in the county. Four or five **Palm Warblers** were reported from March 1-April 18, probably all lingering wintering birds (v.ob.). Three **Yellow-breasted Chats** turned up from April 29-May 4 (DSu, SG).

An exceptional total of eight **Chipping Sparrows** were in an orchard on Merk Road on March 11, with another one further up the road (JG). Given the early

date, they probably wintered in the area. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** that visited a west Santa Cruz feeder from March



18-April 25 (SD, DD) was almost certainly a wintering bird, and one at Arana Gulch on May 14 (BR, RR) was a rare spring migrant. Three or more **Black-chinned Sparrows** were regularly noted on Summit Ridge near Loma Prieta beginning April 23 (LL, NL, JBe, v.ob.), the second year in a row they have inhabited this area of recovering burnt chaparral. A migrant **Lark Sparrow** stopped at Quail Hollow

on April 13 (JWi), and a nesting pair was found along Pescadero Creek in the southeast corner of the county starting April 29 (DSu) for the first confirmed breeding in the county in over 16 years. **Sage Sparrows**, another very localized species in the county, were also found for a second year near Loma Prieta, with one or two seen off and on starting May 5 (PBa, GT, v.ob.).

A "Slate-colored" **Fox Sparrow** was a rare find near Loma Prieta on April 7 (AR, JG). **Swamp Sparrows** at Merk Pond on March 11 (JG) and Harkins Slough on March 15 (GM) were later than most for Santa Cruz County, with very few of our wintering birds staying past February. Around 16-17 **White-throated Sparrows** were found in

March and April (v.ob.). Later than usual migrant **White-crowned Sparrows** included one in Capitola on May 12 (DSu), and two at



Hanson Slough May 16-17 (SG, BR, HS, RS). A “Slate-colored” **Dark-eyed Junco** resided at the UCSC Farm until March 30 (JG, AR, ER).

A **Western Tanager** in Soquel on March 23 probably wintered locally (PS). An impressive eight **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were reported this period (v.ob.).



- Blue Grosbeak Arana Gulch Jeff Bleam

A pair of **Blue Grosbeaks**, first found on May 7, held a territory along the Pajaro River straddling the Santa Cruz/Santa Clara County line this spring. Nesting was confirmed on May 14 (AR), but the actual nest site was in Santa Clara County (as yet, there have been no confirmed breeding records in Santa Cruz County). A migrant immature male visited Arana Gulch from May 13-18 (SG, LG, LSh, JBl, v.ob.). A male **Indigo Bunting** was in Wilder Ranch State Park on May 24 (JG, NLv).

Tricolored Blackbirds were found nesting at Swanton Pond starting in mid-May (BL), a new breeding site for the county (and probably the only active one this year). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at College Lake on April 23 (AB, TM). A male **Bullock’s Oriole** photographed in Ben Lomond on March 6 (WN) probably represented a rare wintering record for the San Lorenzo



- Bullock's Oriole Ben Lomond Wendy Naruo

Valley. The winter irruption of **Red Crossbills** diminished somewhat after March, but some continued to be found here and there through the period, with both “Type 2” and “Type 3” crossbills noted. The large numbers of **Pine Siskins** that were here in fall and winter had declined to a few by late April. It was an above-average season for **Lawrence’s Goldfinches**, with eight reports this period involving twelve individuals, at widely scattered locations through the county. Last but not least among the finches were three **Evening Grosbeaks** along Corralitos Creek on March 4 (DSu).

Cited Observers: Mark Allaback, Patricia Bacchetti (PBa), Josh Beck (JBe), Jeff Bleam (JBl), Abe Borker, William Bousman, Graham Bubb, Patti Bubb (PBu), Mary Crouser, Dick Dumler, Sue Dumler, John Ellis, Alexander Gaguine, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Clay Kempf, Gary Kittleson, Kathy Kuyper, Lisa Larson, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Jim Lomax, Bruce Lyon, Gary Martindale, Brooke Miller (BMi), Tim Miller, Bryan Mori (BMo), Wendy Naruo, Hugh Powell, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Evelyn Rosas, Nelson Samuels, Heidi Sandkuhle, Richard Sandkuhle, Larry Selman (LSe), Lisa Sheridan (LSh), Susan Smith, Pete Sole’, David Suddjian (DSu), Glen Tepke, Linda Terrill, Jeff Wall, Peter Wampler, Randy Wardle, Jim Williams (JWi), Alan Wirtanen, Melanie Wirtanen, Nickie Zavinsky. Please report unusual or interesting observations to dsuddjian@gmail.com.



This Presentation is Free to Santa Cruz Bird Club Members!

**Monterey Bay Birding Festival, opening night presentation:
Cat Burns of San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory speaking on
Western Snowy Plover recovery**

**Thursday, September 12 - 7 PM
Location: Watsonville Civic Plaza**



Western Snowy Plover Lisa Larson

Pajaro Valley Native Plant and Backyard Habitat Festival

The Watsonville Wetlands Watch invites you to attend a milestone event!

Saturday, September 28th, 10 am -2 pm

Location: Wetlands Educational Resource Center behind Pajaro Valley High School

There will be a native plant sale, workshops with expert speakers, local wildlife displays and presentations, demonstration habitats, a wetlands wildlife photography exhibit, and more! For more information:
<http://www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/watsonvillewetlands.watch>



New SCBC Members *Welcome!*

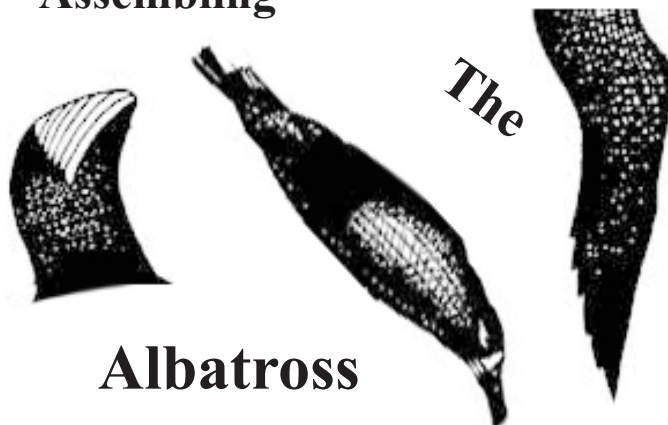
Rita Marie Lamendella	May 2013
Julie Morley	May 2013
Lawrence Gourley	June 2013
Todd Wills	June 2013
Ally Finkel & Gunnar Proppee	June 2013
Fred Messner	July 2013
Alyse & Jeff Gee	July 2013
Katrin Craig	July 2013
Lawrence Foard & Eric Bowman	Aug 2013
Kirsten Listen	Aug 2013



**Input deadline for
of the Albatross
Nov/Dec issue
October 1,
2013**

Submission for the Albatross—Guidelines

Assembling



Albatross


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 me about it **a couple of weeks before** the submission deadline.

I accept plain text, Word, or PDF files. Send items by email to: scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com

~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor



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Officers Needed

Are you interested in becoming an officer for the Santa Cruz Bird Club? A number of our volunteer officer positions are now (or soon will be) vacant, and we need to find a few dedicated members with the time and interest to take over these important jobs.

We especially need a new Programs Officer, whose responsibility it is to find and schedule the programs for our meetings. Scott Smithson and Breck Tyler have been ably sharing the duties of this position for the last couple of years, and we thank them for all the great presentations they have brought to our meetings! Unfortunately neither is able to continue this year, so it is important that we find a person or two who can take over this task soon.

We also need a new Conservation Officer (who keeps up with, and sometimes represents the bird club, on local conservation issues), as Matthew Strusis-Timmer is no longer able to continue. Thanks to Matthew for his hard work filling this job!

Finally, it would be great if someone could take over as President sometime in the next few months!

There may also be other positions that need filling in the near future, and volunteers may be needed at times to help in other ways with other Santa Cruz Bird Club activities. If you are interested in helping with any of this, please contact Steve Gerow at stephengerow@aol.com.

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.