



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Remembering John Warriner

By Bob and Bernadette Ramer

As I sit here writing these notes, this paraphrasing of Dion's words keeps echoing through my mind:

*Has anybody here seen my old friend John?
Can you tell me where he's gone?
'Cause I just looked around and he's gone.*

So who is John Warriner? Born and raised in Pennsylvania. Graduated from Princeton University with a degree in Geology. Worked in gold mines in Perron, Quebec and Grass Valley, California. Served in the infantry during World War II and awarded the Bronze Star for valor. Married Jane Cunningham (whom everyone calls "Ricky") in 1949. Married for 63 years and raised two daughters, Barbara and Sue. Lived in Portola Valley for several years then moved to Pajaro Dunes in 1977. Was a founding board member of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation and served on the board for 25 years. Also served on the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve Advisory Committee for 30 years and was instrumental in the acquisition of the Moss Landing Wildlife Area. Working with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, he and Ricky led the study of snowy plovers around Monterey Bay and published several papers detailing the results of their research.

Although these tidbits of information convey parts of John's legacy, to those who knew John on a more personal level, he was so much more. Nevertheless, because John and Ricky have played such an integral role in Bernadette's and my lives, it's hard to know where to begin.

I first met John on a field trip that he and Ricky were leading at Pajaro Dunes in the fall of 1975. I mentioned to John that some members of the Santa Cruz Bird Club were hoping to do an Audubon Christmas Bird Count around Watsonville, and John thought this was a wonderful idea. In fact, John said that if we could line up the volunteers, Ricky and he would host the countdown dinner. So, on January 2, 1976, 29 observers tallied 184 species and enjoyed the Warriners' hospitality for dinner. As co-compilers of the Moss Landing CBC, John and Ricky have continued that tradition for 39 years; and, on January 1, 2014, 102 observers tallied 200 species and were Ricky's guests for cocktails and dinner.

John liked collecting information: personal journals of his life, photo albums documenting bird trips to exotic places, a checklist of the birds seen at Pajaro Dunes. So when the Elkhorn Slough Foundation wanted to honor Bernice Porter for her efforts in protecting the farmland around Elkhorn Slough, John stepped to the forefront. John asked me to survey the birds on her ranch while he went to his dark room and developed photo-

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SANTA CRUZ BIRDS





graphs of the ranch's landscape and its bird life. John assembled everything into an album that the Elkhorn Slough Foundation presented to Mrs. Porter. At John's memorial service, Bernice's daughter, Diane Cooley, told me how much John's photo album meant to her mother. And the album helped instill her mother's love for Elkhorn Slough into her. It was one of the major factors in Diane and her husband's decision to deed the Porter Ranch to the Nature Conservancy. The checklist portion of that album also took on a life of its own, and it became the basis of the first comprehensive list of the birds seen around Elkhorn Slough. Co-authored by John, the Checklist of the Birds of Elkhorn Slough was published by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation in 1978.

About this same time, Bernadette was a graduate student at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and studying shorebird ecology in Elkhorn Slough. While monitoring sandpipers in the Moss Landing "salt ponds", Bernadette banded a snowy plover—not knowing that this event would intertwine her life with John and Ricky for the next several decades. Gary Page (one of Bernadette's advisors for her master's thesis) asked if John could accompany her to the salt ponds and look for snowy plovers. They would meet at the salt ponds and walk around the dikes and muddy edges of the ponds looking for evidence of snowy plover nesting. Bernadette's first impression was that John was a very confident man, strong in character, personable

with a wry sense of humor but also serious and professional. They continued that salt pond relationship for many years: trudging around in knee boots, getting muddy and sometimes stuck in the mud, intermittently laughing and taking notes.

Then John brought Bernadette and me together. Bernadette was organizing a day-long census of shorebirds along the shores of Elkhorn Slough, and she needed volunteers to help with the count. So John volunteered himself and me. Bernadette took John, me, and a few other volunteers up the slough in a Boston whaler—dropping us off on the shoreline with a clipboard of instructions and telling us she would be back in 3 hours to pick us up. John and I were surveying different locations; Bernadette was keeping busy dropping off and picking up volunteers along a 7 mile stretch of the slough. I don't remember if I saw any birds, but it was cold and foggy and the water kept rising. Bernadette was running late as I watched the water go over

the top of my boots and up to my knees. John was standing on higher ground but made the mistake of putting his thermos on top of a fence post and then watching the tide carry the thermos away. After we returned safely to harbor, I told John that I never wanted to see that crazy lady again. However, 5 years later when Bernadette and I were looking for a place to get married, John and Ricky hosted our wedding in the Cypress House at Pajaro Dunes and gave us their guest house for our honeymoon suite.

With his total involvement in the snowy plover project and with his acute attention to detail, John had prepared very meticulous data sheets with long lines of data on every observation of each color-banded snowy plover sighting. There were thousands of data points. So John and Ricky offered Bernadette a job to input 10 years of snowy plover data into the computer. Bernadette would enter data for hours and then go downstairs to have lunch with John and Ricky. They would sit and visit over lunch every



John and Ricky Warriner. Photo by Lynne Stenzel

day, with this going on for over a year. Bernadette remembers that the most fun John and she had was when they would get into these long discussions about the data as John always appreciated a lively debate.

After our first daughter was born, John and Bernadette would survey the salt ponds with Bernadette carrying Elaina in a backpack. John would help by feeding Elaina carrot sticks or pickleweed to keep her settled while they worked. Or, if there were chicks to be banded, John would watch Elaina while Bernadette chased down the fast-fleeing chicks. John was good at that—having someone else do the running so he could save his energy for the banding. In June, 1981, John asked me to help him band some chicks at Zmudowski State Beach. We had a small raft to forge the Pajaro River, and John had one foot in the raft and one foot on shore when the raft began to drift away. At the same time, two Black Skimmers were flying over the river heading north from Monterey County into Santa Cruz County. I was pretty sure this was a first record for Santa Cruz so I was tempted to let go of the raft and grab my binoculars for a better look. Fortunately, common sense prevailed; and John and I successfully crossed the river. Back at the Warriners' house, we had a celebratory drink; John being happy that he had banded the chicks; I being happy that I hadn't dunked John into the Pajaro River.

John was a connoisseur of good food and fine wines so we have many memories of some unforgettable meals. Two weeks after Elaina was born, we were exhausted parents, but the Warriners invited

us to their house for dinner as they felt we should be out and about. And, a couple of years later, when we were at their house for another dinner event, Elaina lurched back, hitting her head against the marble counter. Because her head required some stitches, we tried to excuse ourselves; but John wouldn't think of it. Rather, he said we should take her to the Urgent Care in Watsonville, get the stitches, and then come back. So, after a two-hour delay, we returned for dinner. I don't remember the menu that night, but the evening fare would frequently be lobster or crawdads, prime rib or leg of lamb, Cornish game hens or quail (or TV dinners for our daughters who didn't understand the "quail" thing). But always great food and many glasses of wine! And, to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary, we stayed at the Warriners' guest house at Pajaro Dunes and invited them, and our family and friends, over to enjoy a 5-gallon bucket of cioppino from Phil's Fish Market.

Besides the many meals that we've enjoyed at Pajaro Dunes, John and Ricky visited us several times to celebrate birthdays, graduations, and other special events. On one occasion, I decided to barbeque a turkey. Leaving the turkey on the cutting board, I went to get John's assistance in carving the bird. Upon returning to the kitchen, we discovered our English Setter sneaking out the dog door with the turkey in her mouth. Panicked, I told John I didn't know what to do. But John was a practical man. "Relax", he said. "Cut out the teeth marks, wash it, carve it, and serve it. Nobody will know the difference". So I did, and nobody noticed. Time passed, and the last time we had John and Ricky at our house was for a garden party to celebrate the marriage of Wyatt and Alyssa, our youngest daughter. That was in July, 2012. Then, in July, 2013, we looked around and John was gone.

John and Ricky became honorary life members of the Santa Cruz Bird Club in the 1970's. And, in the fall of 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service renamed the trail to the Salinas River mouth, the Warriner Beach Trail. These are fitting bookends to John's legacy. But they only delimit a small portion of time. For family and friends, our many fond memories of John will last forever.



Snowy Plover - Lisa Fay Larson

Events Calendar

March-April 2014



Sunday, March 2 Quail Hollow Ranch County Park

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

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

Leader: Eric Feuss, 831-477-0280

Directions: Meet in County Government Center parking lot near main sign (Ocean Street entrance near Water Street) at 7:00 AM. Participants are more than welcome to join later; please call leader to make arrangements and obtain his mobile number.

Leader: Eric Feuss, 831-477-0280.



Friday, March 7 Terrace Point & Antonelli Pond

We should encounter birds of a variety of habitats; including pond, marsh and riparian at Antonelli, weedy fields and coastal scrub, and the rocky shore of Terrace Point.

Directions: Meet at the west end of Delaware Avenue at 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Friday, March 21 Arana Gulch

Portions of the park will likely be inaccessible due to construction of new pathways, but so far it has been possible to bird here without too much disruption or noise, so we will give it a try.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the entrance on Agnes Street, by the end of Mentel Street (off the south side of Soquel Avenue 2 blocks east of Trevethan and Hagemann)

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Saturday, March 15 Pogonip

This walk should find a mix of grassland and forest species, and some early spring migrants are a good possibility by this date. Expect a few miles of walking with some hills.

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, March 23 Elkhorn 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-birds that have become our old friends. ** Rain cancels.**

Directions: Meet at 10:00 a.m. at parking lot behind the West Marine building along Struve slough, off Harkins Slough Road. You will need to drive all the way to the back of the lot to find the meeting place.

After we walk along that path, we can decide which other areas in the slough we want 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



Sunday, March 16 Long Ridge Open Space & Surrounding Areas within Santa Cruz County

Full day trip. We will be on the watch for early migrants. Trip may continue until dusk in the hopes of Short-eared Owl (dusk b/n 6:30 & 7:30 PM).

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, March 27
SCBC Meeting @ 7:30 PM
Speakers: Chris & Ame Hartzell

Topic: Travel & Photography

With over three decades of experience traveling and photographing in more than 25 countries, they will share tips and tricks for: choosing, planning, traveling, and photographing some of the best places on Earth. From Greater Roadrunner to Great White Shark, this 90 minute slide show combined with information and travel techniques is sure to get your travel juices flowing.

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



Male Bufflehead - Lisa Sheridan



Friday, March 28
New Brighton State Beach

We will explore the various habitats of this park—beach, riparian, planted pines, live oaks, etc., which sometimes hold a surprise or two.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the beach parking lot. There is a fee for driving in.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Friday, April 4
Neary Lagoon

We should find some spring migrants, in addition to the usual resident riparian and marsh birds, Wood Ducks, and others.

Directions: Meet at the west entrance (off Bay and California) at 8:00 AM. Note that parking is fairly limited in the immediate area.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, April 6
Beginning Bird Walk at
Natural Bridges State Beach

Join us for a relaxed pace Bird Walk at a local favorite spot. Spring should bring summer migrants and the winter birds will be molting into breeding plumage in preparation for their trip North. All Welcome.

Directions: Meet at the rear entrance to the Park on Delaware Avenue at 8:30 am.

Leader: Phil Brown (831) 334-4249



Friday, April 11
Moore Creek Preserve

Grasshopper Sparrows and Savannah Sparrows should both be on territory here this time of year, giving us an opportunity to compare their buzzy songs. We should also find other grassland species and some forest birds, plus plants, mammals, and other wildlife.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM on Shaffer Road near the intersection with Mission Street. Parking can sometimes be hard to find here, so this is another spot where car pooling may be a good idea.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Pelagic Cormorant
-Jeff Bleam



Sunday April 13
Mount Hamilton / San Antonio Valley (Road)

Targeted species include Lewis' Woodpecker; Costa and Black-chinned Hummingbirds; Greater Roadrunner; Western Kingbirds and possibly Cassin's Kingbird; Western Bluebirds; Phainopepla; Rufous-crowned, Bell's, and Lark Sparrows; and more. There will also be many wildflowers. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day of birding. The morning portion will involve some hiking, birding style.

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 form Ocean Street. Otherwise, please meet at the Twin Gates parking area of Joseph D. Grant County Park, right before the Smith Creek Cal-Fire Station at 8:00 AM.

Leader: Eric Feuss 831-477-0280 (for alternate arrangements, please call ahead; mobile for day of trip only (408-717-0421).



Cedar Waxwing - Pete Sole



Barn Owl, Santa Cruz Memorial Cemetery - Randy Wardle



Friday, April 18
Natural Bridges State Beach

A good place to observe spring migrants and various nesting species.

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, April 20
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 a.m. at parking lot behind the West Marine building along Struve slough, off Harkins Slough Road. You will need to drive all the way to the back of the lot to find the meeting place.

A fter we walk along that path, we can decide which other areas in the slough we want 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





Thursday, April 24

SCBC Meeting@ 7:30 PM

Speakers: Zach Michelson and Teague Scott

Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group

Topic: American Kestrels in Santa Cruz

Numbers of American Kestrels have clearly declined in recent years in Santa Cruz County (as well as elsewhere in California). How many still breed in this area? How have wintering populations changed? Are there detectable reasons for the population changes, and can anything be done to help the local population? Zach Michelson and Teague Scott have begun a study of American Kestrels in the Santa Cruz area to explore these and other questions, and possible strategies to help their recovery. They will describe their study and some of their findings thus far, and suggest ways that local birders can help add to what is known about the local kestrels.

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



Northern Flicker - Jeff Bleam



American Kestrel at Lighthouse Field - LFL



Female American Kestrel Tail



Friday, April 25

DeLaveaga Park (southeast)

In addition to resident forest species (probably several types of woodpeckers, lots of Pygmy Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, etc.) there should also be a mix of summer residents including Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers and others, and maybe some interesting spring migrants. 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

Santa Cruz County Christmas Bird Count Summary

December 14, 2013

-Eric Feuss, compiler

Our 57th annual Santa Cruz County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on December 14, 2013. I give a big “thanks!” of appreciation to all participants. I also extend a big “Thanks!” to Nickie Zavinsky for organizing the count-down dinner.

December 14 was a clear day, bringing a cold morning and warm afternoon and, therefore a much greater temperature difference (30 degrees) than the ten year average (25 degrees). This day was also in the early half of a long winter dry spell. Many water sources were dry or very, very low. I believe the count was lucky to find most of the duck species, even if in some unusual places.

We had 84 observers in the field, logging 253.25 total party hours, 24.45 hours over the recent 10-year average.

There were many beginning birders on this year’s count (15), which is good news for future counts. I will need to work with section leaders on ways to better incorporate these birders into section counts. We all have a year until next count and many planned club trips in which to educate, learn, and have fun. This year was the first in the last three years that we had a boat go out on the ocean, adding four species to the total species count.

The tally of 174 species for count day was near the recent 10-year average (one species above average). Notable finds for the count include: BLUE-WINGED TEAL (4th count record with one count being a count week bird), YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (3rd count record with one record being a count week bird), PRAIRIE FALCON (4th count record; prior years 2003-2005), PLUMBEOUS VIREO (2nd count record with the prior record, last year, being a count week bird), TOWNSEND’S SOLITAIRE (5th count record), and YELLOW WARBLER (6th record in for the count).

Other notable sightings included PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER (5 records in the last 15 years), Sooty /

Short-tailed “type” Shearwater (regular until 2002; 4th record since 2002), CASSIN’S AUKLET (regular until 1995; 2nd record in the last 15 years), and RED PHALAROPE (5 records in last 15 years).

Some uncommon sightings included GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (10 records in the last 15 years), CACKLING GOOSE (9 records in the last 15 years), BLACK SCOTER (7 records in the last 15 years), WANDERING TATTLER (5 records in last 15 years – this record being a count week sighting), LEAST SANDPIPER (8 records in the last 15 years), GLAUCOUS GULL (7 records in the last 15 years), LONG-EARED OWL (9 records in the last 15 years), RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (9 records in last 15 years), LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (12

records in the last 15 years), HERMIT WARBLER (12 records in last 15 years), and PALM WARBLER (9 records in last 15 years).

Based upon the ratio of count to 10-year average, the only high counts for this year were obtained for WESTERN GULL (5397 vs. 3443.9) and GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL (3552 vs. 992.7).

This year was not a year for irruptive winter landbirds. Based upon the same ratio of count to 10-year average, species with especially low counts were: RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (1 vs. 11.3), AMERICAN ROBIN (1273 vs. 2544.3), VARIED THRUSH (110 vs. 238.5), CEDAR WAXWING (446 vs. 570.9), RED

CROSSBILL (7 vs. 6.1), PINE SISKIN (41 vs. 696.2).

“Misses” for count day (defined as species found on count day in 10 or more of the last 15 years) were: OSPREY (13 – seen count week), GREATER YELLOW-LEGS (10), WILLET (14 – seen count week), LONG-BILLED CURLEW (12); FORSTER’S TERN (13), MARBLED MURRELET (14), ANCIENT MURRELET (11), BURROWING OWL (13 - 2nd miss on count day since 1978), and BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (11).



Townsend's Solitaire

White-throated Swift (9) has now dropped off of this list.

For next year, I plan to work on new maps, starting with a count circle map with clearly defined section boundaries and, then, moving to section maps, beginning with sections that no longer have the detailed graphical maps. I'll also work to build out section coverage details/notes, especially for sections for which there are sparse or missing notes. So, section leaders, expect the proverbial knock on your door.

Please stay tuned for species charts in the next issue of the Albatross!

Participants: Richard (RJ) Adams, Tina Arthur, Kumaran and Emma Arul, Joydip Battacharyan, Bonny Bedzin, Cliff Bixler, Eric Bowman, Linda Brodman, Phil Brown, Matthew Coale, Jane Orbuch & Bryan Cockel, Mary Crouser, Judy Donaldson, Patty Durkee, Ray Dyer, David Ekdhal,

John Ellis, Paul and Jim Fenwick, Eric Feuss, David Fickel, Larry Foard, Lorraine (Lori) Gaudin, Alexander Gaguine, Steve Gerow, Lois and Wally Goldfrank, Rich Griffith, Portia Halbert, Mike Hall, Howard Higley, Sharon Hull, Kent Johnson, William (Tim) Jolly, Kevin Kaos, Clay Kempf, Lisa Larson, Paul Lawton, Christopher Lay, Earl Lebow, Nick Levondosky, Patricia Mahoney, Susan Matulich, Barry McLaughlin, Paul Miller, Barbara and Kevin Monahan, Pam Myers, Wendy Naruo, Sydney Nash, Todd Newbury, Margaret Perham, David Pilleo, Shantanu Phukan, Ryan Price, Ally Finkel & Gunnar Proppe (couple), Bob and Bernadette Ramer, Michele Rheuby, Alex Rinkert, Linda St. John, Rusty Scalf, Barb Scharfenstein, Christian Schwarz, Lisa Sheridan, David Sidle, Jeff Smith, Mandy Spit, Glen Tepke, Scott and Linda Terrill, Jamie Tibbels, Matthew Strussis-Timmer, Kathy Toner, Randy Wardle, Jim Williams, Nickie Zavinsky.



OFFICERS STILL 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 Strussis-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 (the latest being Historian), 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.

-Steve Gerow

Santa Cruz Birds

By David Suddjian & Steve Gerow

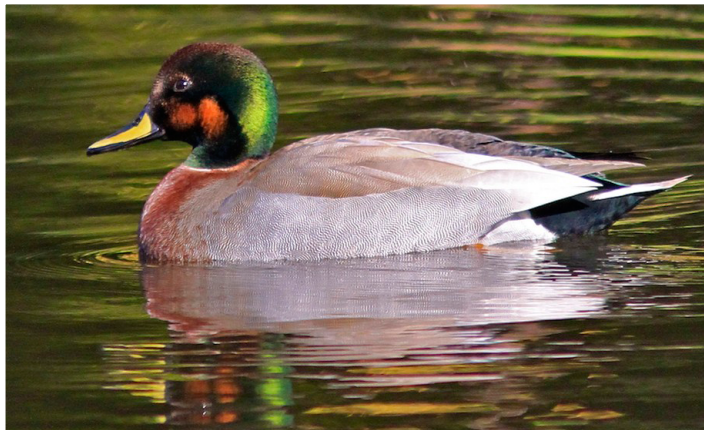
Including reports from November 1 to December 31, 2013

November added a few more notable species to this year's already impressive list of significant rarities, and the large seabird accumulations of early fall continued through late November, diminishing thereafter. The most important factor in terms of overall effects on bird populations, though, was this period's severe dryness. Following an exceptionally dry spring, the fall's rainfall was well below normal, then it stopped raining altogether after early December. Our most important freshwater habitats diminished rapidly, with very little water left over a large part of the Watsonville Slough system—Struve Slough went completely dry! College Lake—which in most years is probably Santa Cruz County's most important seasonal stronghold for waterfowl, waders, shorebirds, and others—never formed at all this year. The water birds that were around became concentrated into the handful of sites that still had water. If these drought conditions continue through late winter, the effects on all birds and other wildlife could be very significant.

Unlike most recent years, very few **Greater White-fronted Geese** remained in the county by early winter this season, with the only reports past December 1 being two at Pajaro Dunes on December 31 (NZ), and one staying with a Cackling Goose around San Lorenzo Park and the lower San Lorenzo River into early January (v.ob.) There were multiple reports of **Snow Goose** from November 6 to December 21, with most from the lower Pajaro Valley. A high count of about 50 flew over Harkins Slough on December 18 (JWa). **Ross's Geese** were also well reported from the Pajaro Valley, with 31 photographed in a field near Pajaro Dunes being the highest total noted (JB). A goose showing characteristics of a **Snow Goose X Ross's Goose** hybrid was at Struve Slough on November 26 (SG, PK), and two of these appar-

ent hybrids were seen around the sloughs on a few dates in early December (GK) among a mixed flock of Snow and Ross's Geese. **Brant** reports included two at Seacliff State Beach on November 1 (DSu), and one at Baldwin Creek Beach on December 22 (JB). The largest **Cackling Goose** count for this period was around 25, flying over Harkins Slough on December 18 (JWa).

The only **Eurasian Wigeon** reports were from Shorebirds Pond at Pajaro Dunes, with a female there on December 26 (AR, NA), and a male on December 28 (DE, CV). A striking male **Gadwall X Mallard** hybrid visited Neary Lagoon on December 13 (WN), and San Lorenzo Park from December 22-27 (AR, GM). This is probably the same duck that was at Schwan Lake on October 21. There were two reports of single **Blue-winged Teal** around the Watsonville Sloughs in November (NL, SG, PK), but all the other reports this period were from Baldwin Creek marsh, where up to five were present through November and December (JG, KA, AG, v.ob.). A female **Northern Pintail**, notable for the San Lorenzo Valley, was at Roaring Camp starting November 26 (PMi, v.ob.); it is presumably the same bird that wintered there the last two years, back for a third season. A **Canvasback** stayed at Westlake Pond starting November 13 (KA, v.ob.), a species rarely found in the county away from the Pajaro Valley in recent years. Up to four **Redheads** frequented Shorebirds Pond starting December 18 (SM, SH, AR, v.ob.) A White-winged Scoter was off Seacliff State Beach on November 15 (DSu), and two were off Zils Road on December 8 (JG, NL). A **Long-tailed Duck** flew down the coast off Capitola Beach on November 9 (DSu).



Gadwall X Mallard hybrid - Wendy Naruo

Various **Red-necked Grebe** reports along the Santa Cruz County coast in November and December probably involved 4-5 individuals. Above-average numbers of **Northern Fulmars** were seen from shore in December, with a high of 182 counted off Terrace Point on December 22 (AR). Seven **Pink-footed Shearwaters** tallied off of Terrace Point on

December 22 (AR) was a good count from shore, particularly for winter. Shantanu Phukan observed some interesting feeding behavior by five **Snowy Egrets** at the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf on December 16: *“They were hanging onto the barnacles on the pylons of the pier about two or three feet above the sea. From these perches they kept a lookout, and would fly out and land right in the water (with the sea up to their breasts), reach in even deeper with their necks, grab the fish out of the water and then ‘row’ their way out of the sea and fly back onto the pylons.”* Among the best finds of the season was an immature **Little Blue Heron** at Harkins Slough on November 17 (JWi, EF, NZ, v.ob.), for just the 2nd or 3rd record for the county.



Little Blue Heron - Jeff Poklen

Bald Eagles continued to be regularly seen in the Pajaro Valley, including reports of three adults seen together on December 7 from two spots in the Corralitos area (KN, RS). Elsewhere in the county, adults were reported from Loch Lomond on December 5 (SB), and Waddell Creek mouth on December 12 (EP). There were several reports of **Ferruginous Hawk** from near Davenport and further up the coast from November 5 – December 30 (GS, ZM, AJ, v.ob.), maybe all involving the same adult. Others included a juvenile near Soda Lake on November 6 (DSu), and an adult in the same area on December 30 (AR). **Common Gallinules** away from the Pajaro Valley were at Schwan Lake on November 1 (PB, JB, et al.), and Neary Lagoon on November 29 (PMA, SG, et al.).

A **Wandering Tattler**, rare in winter in recent years, was along West Cliff Drive on December 11 (LG, WG). The only nearshore **Red Phalarope** reported flew by off Terrace Point on December 11 (AR). Late or wintering **Pigeon Guillemots** were off Wilder Ranch on November 23 (JG, JM), and the San Lorenzo River mouth on December 7 (JG). Two **Cassin’s Auklets**, seldom seen from shore, were off Terrace Point on November 18 (AR). A **Tufted Puffin**

was off Seacliff State Beach November 28 (DSu). A young **Franklin’s Gull** followed a flock of **Bonaparte’s Gulls** down the Capitola coast on November 27 (DSu).

This fall’s amazing anchovy swarms were still creating spectacular bird accumulations through November, when some of the common gull species became especially abundant. An impressive 9000 **Heerman’s Gulls** viewed from Capitola Bluffs on November 19 (DSu) was an especially high total for that species that late in the season. The same day an estimated 12,000 **Western Gulls** visited Capitola Beach, and 8000 **California Gulls** were there on November 24 (DSu). A first-cycle gull showing features suggestive of a **“Kumlien’s” Iceland Gull** was photographed at Baldwin Creek Beach on December 27 (JPo). Santa Cruz County has had one record of this species accepted by the California Bird Records Committee, but the variability of and overlap in appearance among some similar-appearing gulls makes this an especially difficult form to identify conclusively. One or two **Glaucous Gulls** were regular at Baldwin Creek Beach starting December 3, and two were seen together December 14 – 17 (JPo, AG, v.ob.). Four **Elegant Terns** off Seabright Beach on December 2 (DSi) were the last of the season, and somewhat late.

A **White-winged Dove** visited a Watsonville yard on November 23 (LC). A **Long-eared Owl** was at Empire Grade near Alba Road on December 14 (EF). A **Burrowing Owl** near Pajaro Valley High School was the only one reported for this



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - Lisa Larson

period (GM). An immature male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was enjoyed by many at Scotts Valley from November 26 to January 5 (DW, v.ob.). **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were at Bonny Doon on December 1 (CB), and San Lorenzo Park in Santa Cruz from December 13 – January 17 (DSi, v.ob.). A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** at Neary Lagoon on November 29 showed characteristics of the Pacific Northwest form *S. r. ruber* (SG et al.), a form reported in the county only a few times. **Prairie Falcons** were noted at UCSC on

December 5 (SG, JK), Bonny Doon Ecological Preserve on December 14 (EF et al), and near Soda Lake on December 30 (AR).

An **Eastern Phoebe** was along the San Lorenzo River on December 6 (SG et al.). Four **Tropical Kingbirds** were found in November, with two continuing through December into the winter (v.ob.). A **Loggerhead Shrike** at Porter-Sesnon on November 1 was notable for the mid-county coast,



Red-breasted Sapsucker - Jeff Bleam

where there are few records (DSu). The **Plumbeous Vireo** returned to San Lorenzo Park for its third winter, first noted December 13 (AR, v.ob). **White-breasted Nuthatches** were at western Santa Cruz on December 14 (LSJ) and along the Pajaro River at Old Chittenden Lane on December 30 (AR). A **Rock Wren** found dead in a Capitola yard on November 10—the



Eastern Phoebe - Jeff Bleam

specimen now in the U.C.S.C. Environmental Studies Museum collection—was certainly one for the “*you never know what to expect*” file (DSu)! A **Townsend’s Solitaire** was at Bonny Doon on December 14 (RA et al.). Adding to the fall season’s showing of good rarities, a **Gray Catbird** enjoyed coffeeberries as it skulked in the shadows at Schwan Lake uplands from November 1-5 (SG et al, v.ob.), and a **Sage Thrasher** posed in the wide open at Terrace Point from November 4-9 (JPa et al., v.ob.).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** at New Brighton SB

on November 23 brought the fall total up to eight records (DSu), and one was at Pinto Lake on December 2 (JPa).

Yellow Warblers at San Andreas Road near Buena Vista on November 3 (AR, JG), Terrace Point on November 7 (ST, LT), and Wilder Ranch on December 14 (KA et al.) were all late. Five **Palm Warblers** in November boosted the fall total to 20 (v.ob.), and four more were added in December (SG, MC, KA). Tardy **Grasshopper Sparrows** were at Porter-Sesnon on November 9 (DSu) and Arana Gulch on November 12 (SG). There were reports of three **Swamp Sparrows** in November and seven more in December (v.ob.). Some 250 **Tricolored Blackbirds** at Hanson Slough on about December 3 (GK)



Rock Wren - David Suddjian

and 37 at Zils Road on December 26 (AR) are noteworthy, as Trikes have been rare in the Pajaro Valley in recent winters. A female **Rusty Blackbird** near Baldwin Creek on November 11-13 provided a rare opportunity for county birders to view this species, being our 4th county record and the first since 1999 (JG, v.ob.). There were three reports of **Lawrence’s Goldfinch** in November, continuing the fall season’s rather strong showing (DSu, JG).

Cited Observers: Nanci Adams, RJ Adams, Kumaran Arul, Cliff Bixler, Jeff Bleam, Susie Boyd, Phil Brown, Larry Corridon, Mary Crouser, David Ekdahl, Eric Feuss, Alexander Gaguine, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Sharon Hull, Alvaro Jaramillo, Pamela King, Jacob Kirkland, Gary Kittle-son, Lisa Larson, Nick Levendosky, Pat Mahoney (PMA), Gary Martindale, Jack Mazza, Zach Michelson, Paul Miller (PMi), Shirley Murphy, Wendy Naruo, Kriss Neumann, Janna Pauser (JPa), Erika Perloff, Jeff Poklen (JPo), Shantanu Phukan, Alex Rinkert, Richard Sandkuhle, David Sidle (DSi), Linda St. John, Gary Strachan, David Suddjian (DSu), Linda Terrill, Scott Terrill, Jeff Wall (JWa), David Wilhelm, Jim Williams (JWi), Connie Vigno, Nickie Zavinsky.



Plumbeous Vireo - Jeff Bleam



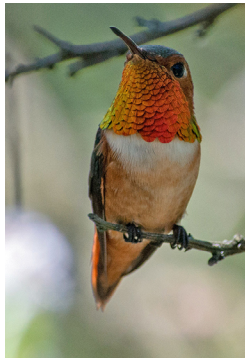
HUMMINGBIRD DAYS!

MARCH 1-2

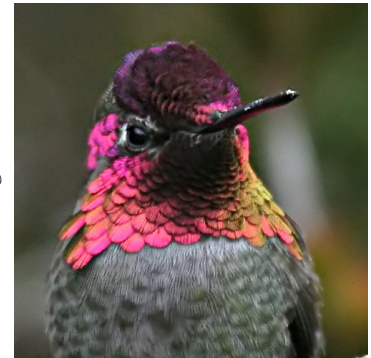
UC SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM



Rufous Hummingbird - Pete Sole



Allen's Hummingbird - Jeff Bleam



Anna's Hummingbird - Pete Sole

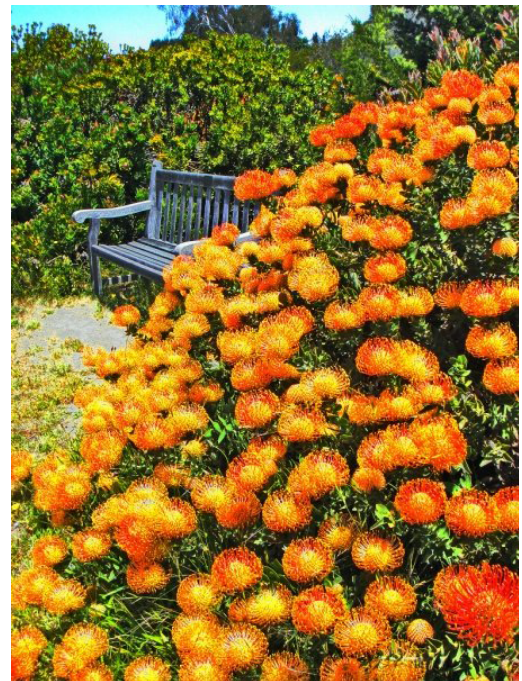
Learn all things hummingbird as the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum presents Hummingbird Days. The weekend includes children's craft activities, guided and self-guided tours, plants for sale that attract hummingbirds, and educational programs.

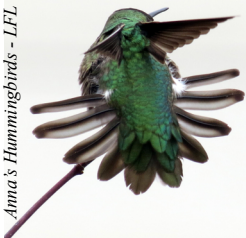
For more details: arboretum.ucsc.edu/calendar



Allen's Hummingbird, Female - Pete Sole

Arboretum Proteas - Lisa Larson





*What heavenly tints in mingling radiance fly!
 Each rapid movement gives a different dye;
 Like scales of burnished gold they dazzling show —
 Now sink to shade, now like a furnace glow!*



—Alexander Wilson, 1776-1813
 Early American Ornithologist



Anna's Hummingbird - Lisa Larson

“Iridescent hummingbird feathers are some of the most specialized of all bird feathers. On a hummingbird’s brilliant gorget, or throat patch, only the outer one-third of each feather is iridescent. This part of the feather contains layers of minute structures called platelets that are filled with tiny air bubbles. Partial reflection of light from platelets in these flat feathers cause the brilliant shining shades of reds, purples, and blues commonly seen. The iridescent parts of the feathers of the gorget are flat, and so reflect light in just one direction. Therefore, in order for you to see the iridescence of the gorget, the sun must be striking the feathers in just the right way. If not, then they will look dusky or even black. Feathers on a hummingbird’s back are also iridescent but concave. In contrast to the throat-patch feathers, which reflect light in only one direction, the back feathers reflect light in all directions.”

“This iridescent gorget color is not the product of color pigment in the feathers, but rather the structure of the feathers themselves.”

Bob Sargent.
 (excerpt from Netlines, the official poop sheet of the Hummer/Bird Study Group)

Stokes, Donald & Lillian – The Hummingbird Book, 1989
 Boston: LittleBrown and Company

Allen's Hummingbird - LFL



Allen's & Anna's Hummingbirds - Lisa Sheridan

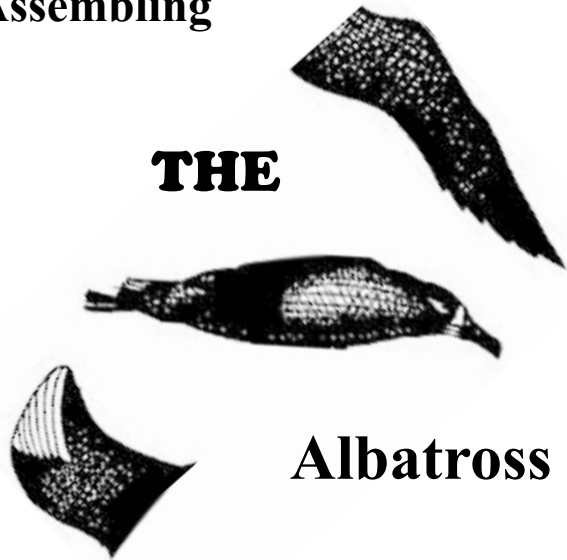




Submission for the Albatross—Guidelines

Assembling

THE



Albatross

New SBSC Members Welcome!

Gary & Diane Hintz	Dec 2013
Alyssa & Wyatt Jolliffe	Jan 2014
Nick Levendosky	Jan 2014
Danielle Wilcox	Jan 2014
Philip Talamini	Jan 2014
Mary Dalton	Jan 2014
Susan & Ian Hunter	Jan 2014
David Philleo	Jan 2014
Lynn Narlesky & Michael O'Malley	Jan 2014



**Input deadline for
of the Albatross
May/June issue
April 1, 2014**

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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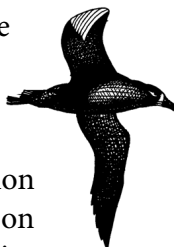


PARTING SHOT: "DINING BY THE SEA" – RANDY WARDLE
PEREGRINE FALCON, SEACLIFF SB



The ALBATROSS

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<http://santacruzbirdclub.org/>

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