



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Nesting Eagles and Other Changes

By Steve Gerow

INSIDE Calendar of Events

Monterey Bay
Birding Festival



**A RIVER FLOWS
THROUGH
SANTA CRUZ**

**Santa Cruz
Birds**

*Seabirding
Trips*

Among the biggest bird news this breeding season was the successful nesting of a pair of Bald Eagles in the Watsonville Slough system, a first for Santa Cruz County. Bald Eagles have become increasingly regular in Santa Cruz County in recent years, probably mostly as a result of efforts to re-introduce the species as a breeding bird in the central coastal area of California. A pair made an attempt at nesting at Pinto Lake in 2012, but they did not manage to produce any young, and abandoned the effort fairly early on (for more on this, see the article by David Suddjian in the September-October 2012 issue of the Albatross: santacruzbirdclub.org/57_1.pdf).


What was probably the same pair tried again this year, finding a more secluded spot this time, on private land along Gallighan Slough. Biologist Gary Kittleson, who was conducting studies in that part of the slough system, first noticed the pair carrying nesting material in January, and eventually found a spot where he could observe the nest site. Gary kept tabs on the eagle pair as they started incubating in mid-February. An egg apparently hatched by March 21, and the eaglet was big enough to be seen over the edge of the nest on April 16. The young bird grew to full size and finally left the nest at the end of June, about three months after hatching. The juvenile eagle was hunting on its own but still staying near its parents as of early August.



Bald Eagle, eaglet - Gary Kittleson

Will this pair nest again next year? Will there be more nesting pairs in the future? If Bald Eagles continue to breed in the county, how will this affect other raptors, nesting waterbirds, etc.? Really, we will just have to wait and see...and good observations by birders will help figure this all out.

The first successful breeding in an area by a spectacular species like a Bald Eagle is the type of event that draws a lot of attention, as we look at it with a mix of surprise



and amazement. But it is interesting to reflect on how many other changes have occurred in the county's avifauna over the years—some of them surprisingly recent—including some that have been fairly drastic, and sometimes surprisingly rapid. It is also worthwhile to think about how easily we often accept the new status of things as the norm, and almost feel as if it has always been that way—even when we know that it hasn't.

Let's take a look at some of the eagles' associates in the Watsonville Slough system. Ospreys have been nesting nearby at Harkins Slough for a number of years now, and nests have been documented elsewhere in the county (north coast and San Lorenzo Valley watersheds) since the 1990s. Before that, though, there had been no Osprey breeding records since the

1930s. It seems normal now to find American White Pelicans around the sloughs, often in large numbers and present through much of the year, but they used to be considered a rare bird anywhere in the county, and it was not until the 1990s that they started to become more of a regular thing in the Pajaro Valley. Great-tailed Grackles are pretty much taken for granted in the sloughs now as a fairly common resident species, but it's only been twenty years since the first one appeared in the county, a wandering pioneer in Live Oak in 1994, and they didn't show up in their current Watsonville area stronghold until two years later. And while Double-crested Cormorants had been common enough in county for a long time, mostly as a transient and wintering species, they weren't known to nest here until the beginning of the 21st Century (first at Pinto Lake in 2001)! Just a glance at the Eucalyptus trees around Schwan Lake in the breeding season will show how different things are now.

In the 1970s when I was attending college at UCSC, it was a couple of years before I finally saw one Common Raven on the campus. Also in that era, American Crows were almost absent from the Santa Cruz area; the only ones I remember seeing in the county then were a few in Watsonville. It's different now... On the other hand, nesting Chipping Sparrows used to be fairly easy to find

on the UCSC campus, as well as Western Meadowlarks, and there were at least some Lark Sparrows. Now nesting Chipping Sparrows are rare and localized, and the Lark Sparrows and meadowlarks are either gone—or close to it—from the mid-county and north coast. It's not really clear why these declined so much, but they did.

Back around 2000, a few Eurasian Collared-Doves appeared in two localized areas; in Live Oak, and on the Santa Cruz westside around Garfield Park. These may have been locally escaped or released domestic birds. But wherever they came from, they persisted as small colonies, and nesting was first confirmed in Live Oak in 2001. A few years later, this quote from David Suddjian's "Santa Cruz Birds" article from the May-August 2005 Albatross



Osprey, Harkins Slough - Jeff Bleam

documented what may have been a turning point in their local status: "two Eurasian Collared-Doves along Smith Road east of Corralitos on Jan. 1 were considered to be the first county record of "wild" birds for the expanding population of this introduced species (DS)." And now, to understate things, the populations aren't small any more.

Changes also keep things interesting in more localized sections of the

county. California Thrashers used to be absent from Natural Bridges and adjacent areas. This is from "Santa Cruz Birds" from the May-August 2002 Albatross: "a California Thrasher at Natural Bridges on April 6-9 (SG, MB) was a novelty, as that species had not been recorded there previously." Now there are multiple pairs of resident thrashers through the Natural Bridges/Antonelli Pond/Terrace Point area. It was also in 2002 that a range expansion of Oak Titmice was first noticed, into many formerly unoccupied parts of Santa Cruz and other parts of the urban mid-county area, including some neighborhoods with few or no oaks (cypresses and other trees seem to meet their needs for nesting sites.) Northern Mockingbirds and Hooded Orioles, both familiar, normal-seeming species in our residential neighborhoods, were not always here--both spread from Southern California in the 1930s. Up in the mountain forests, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, and Varied



Things are never quite the same from year to year, and the random mix of examples listed here just provide a cursory glance at the overall picture. The reasons are varied, and in some cases we don't really know why these changes take place. But the more we keep track of our day to day observations, the more we learn, and all this is further reason why good observations are important. Keep watching and making note of what you see...the times they are a-changing!



Pileated Woodpecker parent, Forest of Nisene Marks - Kathleen McCreesh



Bald Eagle Fledgling - Andy Knorr

Thrush are examples of species that were not confirmed as breeders until recent decades, apparently colonizing the Santa Cruz Mountains (as nesting species) from the north. The Pileateds were the first of these (since the early 1970s) and the most successful.

Black and Vaux's Swifts, Yellow Warblers, and Tricolored Blackbirds have declined significantly in the county. On the other hand Nuttall's Woodpeckers have greatly expanded their local nesting range. Cooper's Hawks are becoming more and more noticeable as breeding birds within the cities and towns of the county. Western Bluebirds got to be very rare in the county a couple of decades ago, but then they recovered a lot of their lost ground in recent years. Ruddy Turnstone is an example of a formerly regular migrant and wintering species that has become rare. Royal Terns stopped being a regular post-breeding visitor in Monterey Bay in the 1930s, but Elegant Terns, which used to be very rare, became regular by the 1960s.



Nuttall's Woodpeckers - Lisa Fay Larson

Events Calendar

September - October 2014



Friday, September 5 Arana Gulch

This mix of grassland, oaks, riparian, cypresses and eucalyptus often offers a good variety of birds, and occasionally something unusual.

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 7 Baldwin Creek to Ano Nuevo

Itinerary will be determined based upon MBB and Pen-bird sightings. Beyond Baldwin Creek, expect to spend time at Ano Neuvo, Pigeon Point, and Ano Nuevo (possibly Pescadero too).

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: scbirdingguide.org/North/Coast/Baldwin.html.

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 12 Upper Struve Slough

We may check areas along the slough both north and south of Main Street. Some years the area south of Main has shorebird habitat, and extensive willows provide a chance for passerine migrants. North of Main there is good marsh habitat, some willows, extensive blackberry thickets and some weedy areas for seed-eating species.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM. To get to our starting point, go into the Watsonville Square Shopping Center (which includes Nob Hill Market, etc.), on the north side of Main Street southeast of the intersection with Green Valley Road. Turn right after entering the parking lot, and continue to the extreme southeast part of the shopping center, where there is a small parking area separated from the main parking lot. The trail starts here.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, September 14 Elkhorn Slough

We will be seeking shorebirds and wetland rarities along Jetty Road and Moonglow Dairy.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the SEA HARVEST parking lot (just north of the Elkhorn Slough Hwy 1 bridge).

Leader: Alex Rinkert, arinkert12@comcast.net



Elegant Terns - Lisa Sheridan

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.



**Friday, September 19
Antonelli Pond**

We'll check the immediate pond area, including the Homeless Garden Project, and maybe stray toward either Natural Bridges or Terrace Point depending on time and circumstances, as we get into what is often the most interesting part of fall migration.

Directions: Meet a 8:00 AM on the west side of Antonelli Pond, near the west end of Delaware Avenue.

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



**Friday, October 3
New Brighton State Beach**

The riparian areas, pines, and the coast here have yielded a number of surprises around this time of year. If nothing else, we should at least find a good mix of the "normal" birds, including some arriving winter species. and MBB).

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



**Sunday, 5 October
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. If no unusual birds are found within the morning, we will spend the afternoon at Hawk Hill in Marin. 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)



Bushiti, Bethany Curve - Jeff Bleam



**Friday, October 10
Lighthouse Field to Bethany Curve**

After a loop around the cypresses and willows at Lighthouse Field (which is often better in the earlier part of the morning), we'll bird along West Cliff, and try to get to Bethany Curve Park by 10:00 AM to take advantage of the peak of activity at that park.

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Sunday, October 12
Beginning Birding 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



Brandt's Cormorant, Natural Bridges - Jeff Bleam



Friday, October 17
Natural Bridges State Beach

Always a good mix of species here, and occasionally something unexpected.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the Delaware Avenue entrance to Natural Bridges State Beach, on the south side of Delaware across from the intersection with Natural Bridges Drive.

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



Thursday, October 23
SCBC Meeting @ 7:30 PM
Speaker: Lynn Overtree
Topic: The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

The single most important way to maintain the diversity of birds and other wildlife in our county is to preserve and enhance their habitats. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County has been doing just that, and so far has protected over 13,000 acres of significant wildlife habitats, watersheds, forests, and farmland by directly acquiring some of these areas, and by making conservation easement agreements with the owners of other properties. Lynn Overtree, Stewardship Manager for the Land Trust, will present an overview of some of the places they have protected, ranging from familiar birding destinations like Antonelli Pond to some of the unique habitats of Santa Cruz County. Come and learn about the histories and current status of these lands, their habitats, some of the birds and other wildlife that occur, and the Land Trust's long term goals for these important places.

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



*View of Corralitos and Watsonville from "AJ's Point of View"
 Byrne-Milliron Forest
 Below: SCBC birding Moore Creek Preserve
 -Lisa Fay Larson*





Friday, October 24
Corralitos area

We will start at Scott Park and Corralitos Lagoon (AKA Freedom Lake), then probably check a few other spots in the general area of Corralitos. This part of the county, at the north edge of the Pajaro Valley, is not extensively birded, and surprises are possible.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the parking area of Scott Park (3101 Freedom Blvd., just over a half mile north of the intersection of Freedom Blvd. and Corralitos Road, just past Sunflower Lane). Parking is limited, so carpooling is recommended.

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



Friday, October 31
Schwan Lake

Most of the winter birds should be here by now, and interesting fall migrants are still possible.

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



*Schwan Lake raptors:
Red-shouldered Hawk,
American Kestrel
female
- Lisa Fay Larson*

18th ANNUAL CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM November 20-23 2014
Hosted at the Stockton Hilton, by the CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB

This year Thursday night's keynote speaker is Ed Harper presenting a program on "*Appreciating the Birds of the Central Valley*". Friday night's keynote program is presented by Nat Seavey on "*From Flood to Drought: A Bird's-Eye View of Water Management in the Central Valley*". Nat Seavey, is the Research Director of the Pacific Coast and Central Valley Group at Point Blue Conservation Science (formerly PRBO). Saturday night's keynote program is presented by Joel Greenberg on "*The Echoes of their Wings: The Life and Legacy of the Passenger Pigeon*". Workshops include: "*Subspecies for Birders*" by Joe Morlan, "*What Birders should know about Taxonomy in Flux*" by Jon Dunn & Kimball Garrett, a photo workshop by Bob Steele, plus informative talks by Monica Iglesia, Sara Kross, and Bob Meese. Andy Engilis and his UCD Museum crew will present the very popular Specimen Workshop. Our field trips always turn up exciting birds. Add in the always entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, and the wonderful display of art and gifts at the Birder's Market.

To look over the line-up of speakers, workshops, and field trips or register, check out our website: 2013cvbs.org/

Registration: regonline.com/centralvalleybirdingsymposium2014

Come to the 10th Annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival

September 25 - 28, 2014



Take advantage of the opportunity to explore farther afield than usual with half-day and full-days trips to birding hotspots such as Andrew Molera State Park and Big Sur, Palo Corona, Pinnacles National Park, Pt. Pinos, Carmel River Mouth, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Be sure to join Sunday's Rarity Roundup, as we chase the unusual and the rare. This fast-paced trip is perfect for county and state "listers" who want to expand their bird lists, but it will be fun for anyone who loves the thrill of the chase.

Featured Speakers

Author, artist, naturalist, and conservationist **Kenn Kaufman** highlights this year's stellar lineup of presenters as keynote speaker! Kenn is a world-renowned bird expert and a highly sought-after public speaker. Kenn's Saturday evening presentation will delve into bird migration, exploring questions such as: *How does it feel to be a bird? What does it look like from a bird's point of view?*

Brian Sullivan of Cornell University's Ornithology Lab kicks off the evening presentations on Thursday with a discussion on eBird and how it is a vital tool for gathering real-time data on bird populations. **Santa Cruz Bird Club members get to attend this exciting event for free!** (*You'll still need to register and use this promotional code: workshop14.*)



Kenn Kaufman

On Friday evening, local expert **Don Roberson** will demystify the ten most misidentified birds in the Monterey Area.

Workshops

Gain practical skills and deepen your knowledge of birds and birding through the festival's new series of hands-on workshops! Learn how to identify pelagic birds, shorebirds, and raptors in the festival's bird identification workshops. Find out how to capture the essence of birds in a field-sketching workshop, test the waters of bird photography in a beginner's workshop, or take your workflow to the next level in the tactical field photography workshop.

Birder's Market

Browse the Birder's Market where you'll have opportunities to discover world-class domestic and international birding adventures, try out the ultimate in birding optics that fit your budget, and find that perfect gift for your favorite birder—or for yourself!

Registration is easy! Our new website and online registration process makes it a snap to sign up for a mix of outings, workshops, and evening programs, according to your personal interests. For details and registration information, go to the festival website: montereybaybirding.org

Festival headquarters is at the Watsonville Civic Plaza—the perfect, central location for four days of extraordinary activities.



A RIVER FLOWS THROUGH SANTA CRUZ

Despite being channelized in 1959 to prevent flooding downtown as well as being made to fit within levees to further keep it from meandering, (as rivers naturally do to deposit nutrients across floodplains), the San Lorenzo is making a comeback as a spot of beauty as well as very good wildlife habitat.

In 1991 a new Urban River Management plan was put into place—and with it restoration efforts began. Banks were restored with native plants, log structures were installed for fish habitat and shade canopy was allowed to grow. Today, significant wildlife species live in, on and around this river, its banks and some scattered islands, all of which function as breeding, nesting, feeding and resting places for birds.

With eBird listing over over 238 avian species that either live or migrate through the lower San Lorenzo River, it is clear that there is now quite a bit of biodiversity to celebrate here!

If more of us birders want to appreciate this diverse river gem and see its myriad inhabitants protected we should set the example as positive appreciators and be at the forefront of creating appropriate human use along the San Lorenzo River Walk. Let us be seen with our binoculars and cameras saying, “YES there are birds and fish and mammals here and it is a VERY nice place indeed!”

One way to get started—if you’d like to have a little company on your first visit—join any of the upcoming bird walks offered by the Santa Cruz Bird Club in partnership with the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History. Trips are free but require registration as numbers are limited: santacruzmuseum.org



See you out there soon on the San Lorenzo River!

-Lisa Sheridan, Sponsor of the San Lorenzo River Bird Series

*Counterclockwise: Black-crowned Night Heron,
Black Skimmer, Caspian Tern, San Lorenzo River
- Lisa Sheridan*





Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

Including reports from March 1 to May 31, 2014

Spring got off to an early start for a number of species this season. In addition to early influxes of some southern-breeding seabirds (Brown Pelicans, Heerman's Gulls, Elegant Terns), several of our regular breeding Passerine species also arrived significantly earlier than usual. Among those ahead of schedule:

<u>Species</u>	<u>First report this season</u>	<u>Average arrival date</u>
Western Wood-Pewee	April 14	April 23
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	March 12	March 16
Warbling Vireo	March 11	March 15
Swainson's Thrush	April 14	April 21
Black-throated Gray Warbler	March 23 (earliest ever)	April 2
Wilson's Warbler	March 9	March 17
Hooded Oriole	March 10	March 20

This season also featured some unusually late records (Canvasback, Wilson's Snipe, Tropical Kingbird, etc.), some notable nesting records, and a lot of interesting bits and pieces for tracking the changing status of birds in Santa Cruz County.

A late **Cackling Goose** flew over Lighthouse Field among a flock of Canada Geese on May 10 (AG). A few more **Wood Ducks** than usual were reported from the Pajaro Valley this season, where the species is generally rather rare. Among the more interesting reports were some observations of a pair on the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County border starting March 30, maybe suggesting nesting in that area (AR, CS). College Lake's male **Eurasian Wigeon** stayed until March 9 (PS). **Blue-winged Teal** reports included up to three continuing at the Baldwin Creek mouth, with two on March 25 being the last report (JG, AR), and various sightings of 1-2 Blue-wings in the Pajaro Valley through April 16 (DSt, NA, GK, JP, v.ob.)

Shorebirds Pond's four **Redheads** were last seen there March 4, but several reports of 1-2 from Struve Slough between March 22-April 2, may have involved some of the same birds. A pair at Struve on May 13 (JG, NL) might have been spring migrants. A **Canvasback** in Harkins Slough on April 24 (AR) was quite late for the county. **White-winged Scoters** were well-reported this

spring, with nine reports through May 11 of individuals or small groups. The highest count was 15 near Manresa State Beach on March 20 (NL, AR). A **Black Scoter** appeared off the Waddell Creek mouth on March 18 (DWe), one was off Natural Bridges on April 18 (PB), and maybe the same one was along West Cliff Drive on April 25 (NL). A lost female **Wild Turkey** showed up in an urban Santa Cruz yard on March 29 (MS, ML, SL), not far from busy Mission Street. The six reports of **Red-necked Grebes** between March 9 and April 21 (v.ob.) likely involved about 3-4 individuals.



Redhead - Upper Struve - Lisa Sheridan

Observers aboard a repositioning cruise passing through the outermost waters of Santa Cruz County on April 29 found some species rarely recorded in county waters, though probably fairly regular far offshore. This included seven **Murphy's Petrels**, for just the fourth record for the county, and five **Cook's Petrels**, the first to be found in spring in county waters (GS, PL). A concentration of 35 **Snowy Egrets** at Corcoran Lagoon on April 6 (AG, EB) was a substantial number for the mid-county area. **White-faced Ibis** were apparently absent in the county through early

spring, but then good numbers arrived in late April. A tally of 51 at College Lake on April 23 set a new record high count for Santa Cruz County (GKt BM).

For the third year in a row, a pair of **Ospreys** built a nest at College Lake, first noted March 15 (JBl, GK, v.ob.), but unlike the last two years, the pair stayed at the nest after the lake was drained, and successfully hatched young in early summer. A pair also successfully nested once again at their now-regular site on the platform in Harkins Slough. Bigger news from the sloughs was the county's first successful nesting of a pair of **Bald Eagles**, in a Eucalyptus grove along Gallighan Slough. This was second nesting effort in Santa Cruz County, after an unsuccessful attempt at Pinto Lake two years ago. Nest building was first observed this year in January, the first ever Bald Eaglet for the county had hatched by March 21, and it successfully fledged in late June (GK).



Heerman's Gull - Lisa Fay Larson

Wilson's Phalaropes reported this spring were 2-3 at Harkins Slough On April 30-May 1 (RR, v.ob.).

An **Ancient Murrelet** off Terrace Point on March 9 was the only one reported this season (AR). Two **Cassin's Auklets**, seldom seen from shore locally, flew down the coast off Terrace Point on March 24 (CS). An adult **Laughing Gull** at West Struve Slough on May 12 (GM) may have been the same one seen at Moss Landing before and after that date. **Heerman's Gulls** arrived in numbers unusually early, with 80 counted at Aptos Creek mouth on May 27, and 287 there on May 30 (RW). Most years, the spring influx of Heerman's does not happen until around mid-June. Harkins Slough's 1st-cycle **Glaucous Gull** was reported off and on until at least April 11 (JR, LG, JP, v.ob.), and maybe the same bird was there again May 9 (GM). Another 1st-cycle Glaucous turned up at Baldwin Creek mouth on April 13 (JP et al.). A few early **Elegant Terns** were along the Santa Cruz County coast between April 17 and May 2 (v.ob.), but then there were no more reports until mid-June. Three **Black Skimmers** visited Capitola Beach on May 4 (SP).

A wintering **Burrowing Owl** was last seen near Pajaro Valley High School on March 21 (GM). A **Long-eared Owl** was in the Summit area of the county on April 25 (ST, LT). The season's only **Black Swift** was over Natural Bridges on May 26 (AR, JG). Two additional **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were discovered in March—in Scotts Valley March 8-10 (AR, NZ, CS), and at Corralitos Lagoon on March 22 (RW, KW), bringing the October-March total for the county to a record-breaking *seven* individuals! A **Pileated Woodpecker** strayed to the coast at Natural Bridges on April 12 (AF, GP), for just the second record for that park.



Semi-palmated Plover and Killdeer - Pete Sole

A count of 117 **Semipalmated Plovers** at College Lake on April 23 was a good spring total for Santa Cruz County (GK, BM). **Black-necked Stilts** are fairly rare in the county away from the Pajaro Valley, so one at Corcoran Lagoon on April 4-5 was noteworthy (JBr). A **Solitary Sandpiper** visited College Lake on April 24 (NL, AR). A **Wandering Tattler** at Baldwin Creek mouth on March 14 (AR) probably wintered locally. Spring migrant tattlers were sparse this season, with only few reports from April 23-28, involving perhaps 4-5 individuals. About five **Lesser Yellowlegs** turned up in the Pajaro Valley from March 5 to May 4 (v.ob.). Quite rare in spring, a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was a good find at Harkins Slough on May 4 (NL, AR, JG). A **Wilson's Snipe** at Harkins on May 22 was a very late record for the county (AR, CS). The only



The only **Willow Flycatcher** for spring was along the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County line on May 18 (AR, CS). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** sang on Summit Ridge near Loma Prieta on May 17 (AR). Arana Gulch had a **Dusky Flycatcher** on April 21 (SG). A **Say's Phoebe** at Wilder Ranch on May 25 was exceptional for the county in late spring (MB); most of these leave the county by mid-March, and there are very few records past early April. There were more reports of **Tropical Kingbirds** from various parts of the Watsonville Slough system into early spring (v.ob.), probably still involving just two wandering wintering individuals; the last report was of two birds together at Struve Slough on April 20 (DSi, DW, et al.) More remarkable was a Tropical Kingbird at Neary Lagoon May 7-9 (CS, BL), a very rare apparent spring migrant, and the first May record for the county.

A **Purple Martin** appeared at Bonny Doon Ecological Preserve on April 6 (JM), three were present by May 12, and they continued into June. Some behavior suggested possible nesting (AR, KJ, v.ob), though this was not confirmed. Martins have not been confirmed nesting anywhere in this county in well over a decade. Some Purple Martins did nest again near Loma Prieta in Santa Clara County, as they have for the last several years, and regularly flew into Santa Cruz County to forage over nearby Summit Ridge. There were also two migrant Purple Martins at Pinto Lake on May 6 (RR, BR). Single **Bank Swallows** were at Struve Slough on May 9 (NAd), and at Antonelli Pond May 29-30 (SG, WG).



"Back 9" Western Bluebird - Bruce Barrett

Up to two **White-breasted Nuthatches** were along the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County border March 20-30 (AR, NL). **Western Bluebirds** continued to expand their current breeding range into areas not occupied in the recent past. New nesting locations this

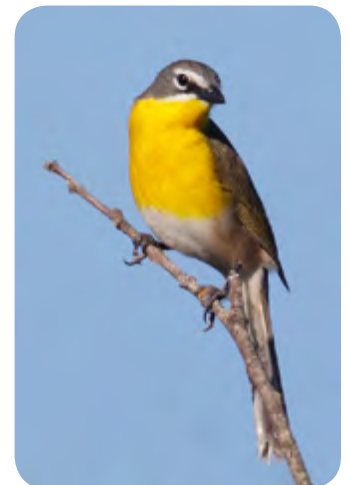


Nesting Material - Bay Heights - LFL

season included a nest in the Bay Heights area of Soquel (JE), and three nests in boxes on the Pasatiempo Golf Course (BB), both sites that had not been occupied by bluebirds for at least the past fifteen years. A **Northern Mockingbird** in Ben Lomond on March 3 (JW) was unusual for the San Lorenzo Valley upstream of Santa Cruz.

Migrant **Nashville Warblers** were in the Summit area on April 29 (ST, LT), and near Loma Prieta on May 3 (AR et al.). A **Yellow Warbler** at Pinto Lake on March 2 almost certainly wintered locally (ST, LT). Four **Palm Warblers** found at various spots from March 27 to April 20 (v.ob.) were also likely lingering winterers. Another Palm Warbler at Natural Bridges on May 2 was later than most, so perhaps a rare spring migrant. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Castle Rock on March 23 (RL) set a new record early spring arrival date for Santa Cruz County.

Hermit Warblers are rarely found in lowland riparian areas in spring migration in the county, so one along the Pajaro River on May 13 (RW) was noteworthy. It was a substantial spring for **Yellow-breasted Chats** in Santa Cruz County, with seven found from April 26 to May 31.



Yellow-breasted Chat - Tom Grey

Black-chinned Sparrows were again present (and presumably nesting) on the Santa Cruz County portion of Summit Ridge this spring, first noted on May 3 (AR, PS, CK, v.ob.)

Singing **Lark Sparrows** were found at two spots in the eastern Pajaro Valley April 26 and May 17 (AR), though it is not known if any nested in the county this season. Two

near Loma Prieta on May 17 (AR) were likely migrants. A **Swamp Sparrow** was at College Lake on April 24, for a rare record of a spring migrant (AR, NL). **White-throated Sparrow** reports from March 1 to April 26 included 24 different individuals, a good showing for late winter and spring. Seventeen of these were “new” birds, that had not been previously reported in the fall or winter. A male **Blue Grosbeak** was singing along the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County line on May 4, close to known nesting areas just outside of the county (EL). A migrant female visited Arana Gulch on May 27 (SG).

A new nesting colony of **Tricolored Blackbirds** was discovered in private quarry ponds within Wilder



Lawrence's Goldfinch

Pavlov, Jeff Poklen, Gunnar Proppe', Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Jennifer Rycenga, Richard Sandkuhle, Christian Schwarz, Greg Scyphers, David Sidle (DSi), Pete Sole', Madeline Spencer, David Styer (DSt), Linda Terill, Scott Terrill, Connie Vigno, Randy Wardle, Karen Watkins, David Weber (DWe), David Wilhelm (DWi), Jim Williams, Nickie Zavinsky



Purple Finch - Connie Vigno

Ranch State Park (AR). Harkins Slough's **Rusty Blackbird** was last seen March 20 (GK, v.ob.) An oddly pigmented male **Purple Finch**, with a mix of yellow and rose coloration, was photographed at a Felton feeder on April 16 (CV, DE). **Lawrence' Goldfinches** this period included a couple of reports of presumed migrants in March (JG, RS), plus a few May reports from Summit Ridge and hills east of Watsonville, (AR, v.ob), which might have been locally nesting birds.

Cited Observers: Nanci Adams, Eileen Balian, Bruce Barrett, Jeff Bleam (JBl), Michael Bolte, Jean Brocklebank (JBr), Phil Brown, David Ekdahl, John Ellis, Ally Finkel, Alexander Gaguine, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Kimberly Jannarone, Clay Kempf, Gary Kittleson, Bruce Labar, Sheri Laroche, Earl Lebow, Paul Lehman, Nick Levendosky, Raymond Liao, Marybelle Lukens, Gary Martindale, James Maughn, Bryan Mori, Sergey



"Chatting" Yellow-breasted Chat - Tom Grey



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Sunday Sept. 21, Sunday Sept. 28, Sunday Oct. 5, Saturday Oct. 11- Charter for TLC Birding
(Tickets may be purchased at TLC Birding), Sunday Oct. 12

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New SCBC Members Welcome!

Katherine Roach	May 2014
Family	
Thomas Marshall	May 2014
Dorothea Grimes-Farrow	May 2014
Julie Morley	May 2014
Phil Yule	June 2014
Sue Myers	June 2014
Gerda Endemann	July 2014
Gunnela Berger	July 2014
Belinda	July 2014
Byerly-Robins	



Submissions NEEDED!

DEADLINE for
Nov/Dec issue
**October 1,
2014**

Submission for the Albatross—Guidelines



Your participation is WELCOME!

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 **needed**:

- 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 BIRDS or 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: "WHERE'S MY MOMMA?"
BABY KILLDEER - ANDY KNORR



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santacruzbirdclub.org

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