



# Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

## North Coast Birding

By Jay Todd

**INSIDE**

MEDITATIONS

CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS



**SANTA CRUZ  
BIRDS**



Birder's  
Notebook

PARTING SHOT

**F**irst, let me say that I'm a very casual birder. My heart is in the right place though. I know the birds are in for an unending battle with us just so they can exist. I feed and water a lot of the birds because I know they are going to need all the help they can get from us.

Thirty years ago, my wife and I got real lucky and bought a home out on Swanton Road where one can pretty much pretend the rest of mankind doesn't exist. We have the sound of the breakers day and night from Ano Nuevo.

I (almost daily) hear one or two pileated woodpeckers working their way through my place. They head back up into Scott Creek canyon and return up Big Creek canyon around dinner time.

The locals are all proud of our thirteen or so turkeys that wander around Swanton. It was interesting to see them back down a fox one day. It surprised me! I would have thought the opposite would be the case.

The high point of my bird watching was about a year ago. Two mornings in a row, I clearly (with binoculars and a tripod) saw an albino red tailed hawk from my front room. Its frontal view was snow white but I've been told that it has some black on the upper side of the wings. A lecturer of the evening thrilled me by saying that he has seen it in the county also.

In traveling the north coast daily, I've been very aware and worried about the raven's success rate as a universal predator—primarily them dogging the buzzards and hawks to the point of starvation. I've even seen a raven take a sparrow sized bird in mid-flight.

Well, suffice it to say, birds will always be in my heart and life. Someday, I'll actually get to see that pileated woodpecker working on the twenty pounds of suet I get at Shopper's Corner grocery store.



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# MEDITATIONS

*By Cliff Bixler*

As I endeavor to create purposeful space in my life for peaceful reflection birding by myself is the kind of zazen (walking meditation) activity that nourishes that peace.

When I feel the need for camaraderie I often find it in the field, sharing the enjoyment of nature and birding with my fellow birders.

When ever I am blue the cure that comes to mind is to go walking outdoors and watch birds. I take time to glass each and every bird that I see. They are all special. I watch their behavior as they hunt or play, skulk or show off, court or nest, or just persevere to make a living. They inspire and fascinate me. Soon I am more into them and less into my own head—and feeling gratitude for life. The following quote always comes to mind:

“I never saw a wild thing feel sorry for itself. A small bird will fall frozen from a bough without ever feeling sorry for itself”. *D. H. Lawrence.*

Being outdoors, in and part of nature, has the effect of putting humans in their proper place; as part of nature, not apart from it.

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"Favorite bird at the moment?  
The California Towhee. Why?  
Subtle. Charismatic. Not shy."

*-Jonathan Franzen*

*California Towhee photo - Susan Schalbe*

"...I got to know a pair of California towhees in the backyard of my girlfriend's house in California. Most people would look at those birds and say, "Oh, they're just anonymous brown birds." But when you get your binoculars out and look at them closely, they turn out to have all these subtle markings, and the grace with which they comport themselves has its own deeper beauty."

*-Jonathan Franzen*





## SAN LORENZO RIVER BIRD WALK SERIES NEEDS SPONSORS.

*Give your community a gift of birds!*

Last summer, the Santa Cruz Bird Club and the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History co-sponsored seven bird walks on the lower San Lorenzo River. The walks were free and over 150 people, mostly “first time birders”, were able to attend. The attendees all enjoyed the company of fellow nature and bird lovers, as well as having highly skilled bird guides from our own bird community.

Many of the participants expressed the excitement of being at a free event that gave them an opportunity to learn about birds and enjoy the beauty of the downtown river walk for the first time ever. It seems like a win-win for all!

The museum asked if the Santa Cruz Bird Club could participate again this year, as the participant feedback was so overwhelmingly positive. Unfortunately, the museum staff and funding is limited and they just cannot provide this program without charging participants. They asked if we might find sponsors to keep it going as a free event.

Please consider a sponsorship for this wonderful community bird event and the first of its kind in Santa Cruz. Each class will be \$200, which would allow up to twenty-five people to attend. Sponsors would be recognized on the Museum’s web site, as well as having acknowledgments and announcements on local radio stations such as KUSP, KZSC and KPIG. If you or your business prefers to donate a portion of this amount, your name will be added to the list of donors.

Please contact me for further information or how to become a sponsor.

Wishing you all a joyful winter bird season,  
Lisa Sheridan, trotrider@aol.com

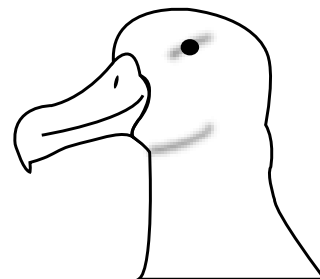


Common Mergansers, San Lorenzo River - LFL

***A warm welcome to our new Conservation Officer - Lisa Sheridan!***

## THE ALBATROSS NEEDS YOUR INPUT

***Please help*** to keep  
your SCBC newsletter flying strong!  
*Don't hesitate to contact the Editor with any questions!*  
Your stories, photos, sketches, book reviews, tips, quotes—  
all things bird-related are **NEEDED!**



Alby Face - LFL

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## Events Calendar

January - February 2015



### Friday, January 9 Natural Bridges State Beach

This reliable birding spot should have a good variety of birds to start out the New Year.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the Delaware Avenue entrance to the park, across from the south end of Natural Bridges Drive.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



### Sunday, January 8 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



### Friday, January 16 Schwan Lake

Live oak woodlands, some open meadows, plus willows, marshlands, and other habitats along the lake should yield a variety of birds. If rainfall is sufficient, this park also often features a colorful mix of mushrooms this time of year.

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

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



*Pintail, Rancho del Oso - Michael Bolte*



### Saturday, January 10 Rancho del Oso

A morning walk in search of wintering songsters along Waddell Creek valley. We will scan the ocean and the beach before walking the road along the west side of the marsh and onto the redwoods.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the Waddell Creek Beach parking lot.

**Leader:** Nicholas Levendosky, n.levendosky@gmail.com, and special guest star John Garrett



*Fox Sparrow - Lisa Foy Larson*

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

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

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

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

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



**Sunday, January 18  
Waterfowl Bonanza**

It is winter time, so the best time to see ducks of all varieties. We will bird around the sloughs and possibly College Lake looking for waterfowl of all kinds. A spotting scope is useful.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the back of West Marine where the parking lot overlooks the sloughs. You will need to drive all the way to the back of the lot to find the meeting place.

**Leader:** Phil Brown, (831) 334-4249



*Hooded Mergansers - Jeff Bleam*



**Friday, January 23  
Felton/Henry Cowell State Park**

We will definitely check the area along the San Lorenzo River in Henry Cowell, which may feature some winter irruptives, plus a chance for a Red-naped Sapsucker or other possible wintering rarities, and a nice mix of “regulars.” We may also check a few other spots around Felton, depending on timing, recent reports, etc.

**Directions:** We’ll meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot at Felton Faire shopping center, at the intersection of Graham Hill Road and Mt. Hermon Road, on the side of the lot closest to Graham Hill, then probably head for Henry



Cowell first. Note that an entrance fee or state park pass is required for Henry Cowell State Park.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



**Sunday, January 25  
Pajaro Dunes**

Palm State Beach at Pajaro Dunes is a good place to find shorebirds, scoters, gulls, and Red-necked Grebes. We will also check the cypress around the condos for land birds and if there is time, the Watsonville Sloughs as well. Plan for about a mile of walking on the beach, and three miles of walking total. A spotting scope is recommended.

**Directions:** Meet at 7:00 AM at the coastal end of West Beach Road outside the Palm Beach parking lot.

**Leader:** Alex Rinkert, arinkert12@comcast.net



*Long-billed Curlew - LFL*



**Thursday, January 29  
SCBC Meeting @7:30 PM  
Speaker: John Garret  
Topic: The CBRC—What’s it All About**

The California Bird Records Committee is responsible for reviewing records of the rarest and least expected birds to occur in California, as well as maintaining the official list of bird species that have occurred in the state. How does this committee function? What determines which bird records should be reviewed by the CBRC? And if you are lucky enough to find one of these really rare species, then what? CBRC member John Garrett (who is also a SCBC member and a UCSC student) will talk about all this and more.

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

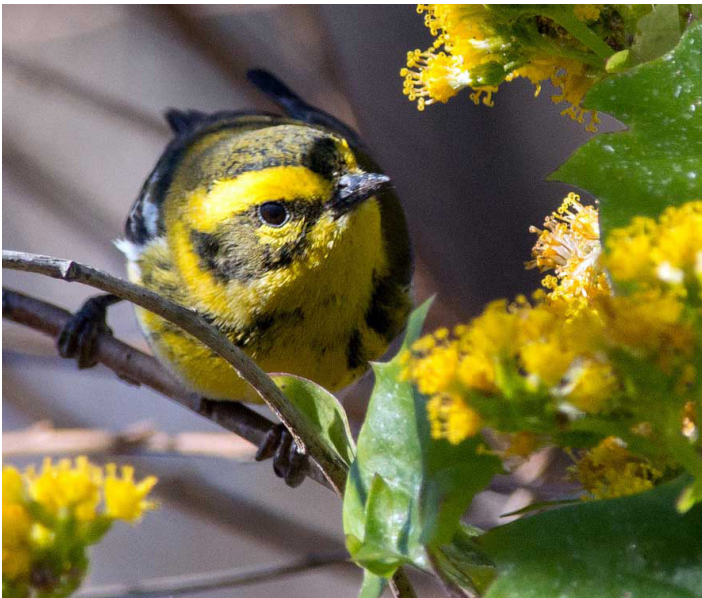


**Friday, January 30**  
**Branciforte Creek**

Despite the mostly urban setting and concrete channel along much of this stretch of creek, there is some habitat here and often a lot of birds, including occasional surprises. We'll work our way up to the confluence with Carbonera Creek, then back downstream, continuing south of River Street to near Ocean Street.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM where the path along the creek meets Market Street in Santa Cruz, at the bridge across the creek by the intersection of Market and Hubbard Streets (just south of the Senior Center).

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



*Townsend Warbler, Bethany Curve -Jeff Bleam*



**Friday, February 6**  
**West Cliff Drive & Bethany Curve Park**

West Cliff this time of year is good for rocky shore specialists, various swimming birds in the coves, and usually a mix of gulls. Bethany Curve will add some land birds, including the possibility of a wintering rarity or two.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM on West Cliff Drive at Woodrow Avenue

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



**Saturday, February 7**  
**Panoche Valley**

The first Saturday in February marks the long-standing traditional SCBC trip to Panoche Valley, an area first birded by SCBC members Carolyn Frederickson and Steve Allison before their untimely departures from our world. Panoche has since been designated as a globally important bird area by the National Audubon Society.



*Lewis' Woodpecker - LFL*

The birding trip will seek out all the regional specialties, including Phainopepla, Western and Mountain Bluebird, Lewis' Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, Ferruginous Hawk, Bald & Golden Eagle, Mountain Plover, Chukar, Vesper Sparrow, and Bell's Sparrow. Viewing Long-eared Owls now includes a \$10 per person entry fee, so that will be optional. Carpooling encouraged.

Participants wishing to order a lunch from the Panoche Inn (sandwich, soda and chips for \$7) should e-mail your sandwich of choice to the leader by midnight on Wednesday, February 4th. Choices are Pastrami, Chicken Salad, Tuna Salad, Ham, or vegetarian. Include your choice of bread (wheat, rye, sourdough); condiments (mayo, mustard, tomato, onion, lettuce), and cheese (jack, cheddar, swiss). of species.

**Directions:** Meet the leader at 8:00 a.m at the Paicines Store on Hwy 25, approximately 12 miles south of Hollister. Those coming from Santa Cruz who wish to carpool can meet at the Aptos Wells Fargo at 6:30 a.m.

**Leader:** Clay Kempf, (831) 761-8260 or ltjaeger@att.net



**Wednesday, February 11  
Pinto Lake County Park**

Always a good mix of water birds and land birds at this time of the year.

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

**Leader:** Bob Ramer, (831) 426-7342 or rjramer@sbcglobal.net



**Friday, February 13  
Upper Struve Slough**

We should find various freshwater marsh species and a mix of Passerines of several habitats, maybe some raptors, and some close views of various ducks if there is enough water.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM. To get to our starting point, go into the Watsonville Square Shopping Center, 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 (nearest Struve Slough), where there is a small parking lot separated from the main parking area. The trail starts here.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com

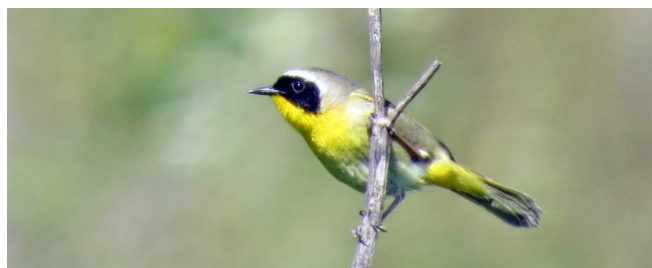


**Friday, February 20  
Arana Gulch**

Most of the path and bridge construction here should be completed by now, but in any case we'll see what's around for the late winter.

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

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



*Common Yellowthroat - LFL*



**Sunday, February 22  
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



*White-tailed Kite - Andy Knorr*



**Thursday, February 26  
SCBC Meeting @ 7:30 PM  
Speaker: Michael Bolte  
Wildlife at The UCSC Arboretum, by Day and by Night**

Michael Bolte has photographically documented the activities of some of the regular visitors to the Arboretum, including those active at night (among them Mountain Lions), using motion-activated cameras. Come and learn more about the activities and habits of the wildlife right at the edge of Santa Cruz. This program will also include photographs of birds and other animals active during the day at the Arboretum and elsewhere on the UCSC campus.

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



**Friday, February 27  
Neary Lagoon**

We should find a mix of residents and winter species, and maybe a swallow or two to start off the spring migration.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the west entrance, off Bay and California Streets.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com

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## Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

Including reports from September 1 to October 31, 2014

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There were multiple reports of **Greater White-fronted Geese** this fall, starting September 25. The largest group reported was 24 flying over Natural Bridges on September 30 (AR). A rather early juv. **Snow Goose** appeared at Pajaro Dunes on October 14 (NS), then perhaps the same bird was seen in a few spots around the Watsonville Sloughs from October 16-19 (AR, GM, v.ob.). **Cackling Geese** were found at several spots in the Pajaro Valley and along the coast starting October 16, with the highest count being a flock of 48 flying over the Younger Lagoon/Terrace Point area on the 16th (JG, AR). A scattering of **Blue-winged Teal** appeared starting September 25, around the Watsonville Slough System and near the coast from Santa Cruz to Laguna Creek (v.ob.). All reports involved just 1-3 birds. The rarest waterfowl find this period was a male **Harlequin Duck**, photographed on the rocks near Lighthouse Point on October 11 (LSi).

Three **Red-necked Grebes** were found along the coast from October 15-30 (DS, JG). Three more reports of **Manx Shearwaters** in county waters through October 5 added to an above-average year for this fairly rare species, including at least two among swarms of birds off West Cliff Drive on September 1 (AR). Numbers of **Black-vented Shearwaters** in Santa Cruz County waters continued to increase through the early fall, going from dozens in September to thousands in October, including several October counts of 3000 or more. Unusual numbers of both **Great and Snowy Egrets** continued into September, especially around Struve Slough. An especially large concentration of 62 Snowy Egrets was counted in Struve on September 27 (AR). A young **White-faced Ibis** turned up at Natural Bridges on September 3 (SG), and likely the same ibis was in Younger Lagoon September 6-7 (JB, SS &

SS, v.ob), for the only reports away from the Pajaro Valley this fall. The high count of from their normal Pajaro Valley haunts was 21 at Struve Slough on September 22 (SP).

One or two adult **Bald Eagles** continued in the Harkins Slough area through the period (v.ob.) More unusual was a migrating juvenile flying eastward over Western Drive on October 6 (AR). It was an exceptional fall passage for **Broad-winged Hawks** in Santa Cruz County, with five juveniles reported moving through from September 20 to October 18 (AR, MD, JW, SG, GM). A juv. **Swainson's Hawk** flew over Arana Gulch on October 19 (SG). A

**Ferruginous Hawk** was a highlight near Swanton Pond on October 30 (CB). The **Common Gallinule** continued along the lower San Lorenzo River through the end of the period (JMi, LSh, v.ob.), the only one found away from the Pajaro Valley this season.

A calling **Pacific Golden-Plover** flew over western Santa Cruz on October 12 (AR, NL). Much less

expected in Santa Cruz County was a **Mountain Plover** in fields near Liddell

Creek on October 30 (AR, v.ob.), for just the fifth county record. There were various reports of 1-3 **Wandering Tattlers** along the coast this fall through October 10, probably involving around 8-10 individuals altogether (v.ob). **Lesser Yellowlegs** were well reported from the Watsonville sloughs through October 25, including counts of up to nine in Struve Slough in late September (v.ob.) The only report away from the sloughs this period was four flying over Antonelli Pond on September 3 (SG). A juv. **Stilt Sandpiper** moved around the Struve Slough area from September 19-October 6 (AR, RW, SP, v.ob.); one seen at Pajaro Dunes September 20-22 (MD, v.ob.) was thought to be the same bird.

Four additional **Baird's Sandpipers** through October



*Great Egret - Andy Knorr*



16 (v.ob.) brought the total to seven for this fall migration. After the unusual movement of adult **Pectoral Sandpipers** in late July and early August (reported last issue), the normal movement of juveniles in September and October was indeed pretty normal in timing and numbers, with various reports of up to seven from September 19 to October 20, mostly from the Watsonville Slough System. Three **Wilson's Phalaropes** in Struve Slough on September 23 (AS) were getting on the late side for this early migrant. A tally of 121 **Marbled Murrelets** off the bluffs north of Waddell Creek on September 2 (GS) was a good concentration. Impressive numbers of **Cassin's Auklets** were off the coast starting in late October. An amazing total of 1830 were counted in three transect surveys in Santa Cruz County waters on October 27 (AR, AB). A **Tufted Puffin** flew down the coast off West Cliff Drive on August 30 (AK).



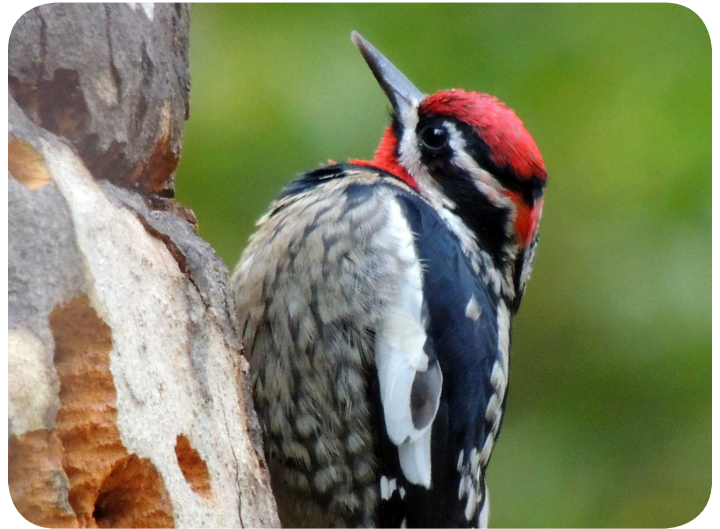
Sabine's Gull - Kitty Stein

A 1st cycle **Sabine's Gull** was photographed at Aptos Creek mouth on October 15 (KS). A migrant **Burrowing Owl** was a nice surprise on the back fence of an Aptos residence on September 13 (SB, RC). Other Burrowing Owl reports were from Hanson Slough starting October 2, with 2 by the 20th (GM), one in the UCSC fields on October 6, with two by the 18th (JG, v.ob.), and three along the Wilder Ranch coast on October 22 (AG). **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** made their now-usual early fall appearance, with at least seven found from August 30 to October 2 (AR, SG, v.ob.). Most were around Santa Cruz, but one at Pinto Lake on September 22 was at a less usual location (RR, BR). Three **Lewis's Woodpeckers** flew over

Burrowing Owl - Scott Bentall



the extreme southeast corner of Santa Cruz County on October 2 (AR, NL), heading into San Benito County. This may be a record count for the county—most occurrences here have been of single birds. An apparent influx of **Acorn Woodpeckers** brought some to locations that don't normally have them, for example 1-2 in the Natural Bridges/Antonelli Pond area from August 26 into late September (SG, v.ob.) Observers also noted larger than normal numbers in areas where they do normally reside, and unusual movements of these woodpeckers were also noted elsewhere around the state. A **Red-naped**



Red-naped Sapsucker - Randy Wardle

**Sapsucker** returned to the spot where it wintered last year along the San Lorenzo River in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park on October 14 (Tim Jolly, v.ob.), and continued into November. A **Pileated Woodpecker** stopped in Bethany Curve Park on September 11 (AR, LG), for the first report from that coastal Santa Cruz park. It seems that **Pileated Woodpeckers** have developed a pattern of wandering to unusual locations and habitats in both spring and fall.



About thirteen **Willow Flycatchers** were reported from August 24 to September 27 (v.ob.). Much rarer, and on the early side, was a **Dusky Flycatcher** at Natural Bridges on August 28 (KJ). It was a good

fall for **Tropical Kingbirds**, with numerous reports from September 28 through the period (v.ob.). Reports came from nine different sites, and while a few of these may represent birds wandering between nearby locations, there were clearly more than usual around. Two were seen together along Watsonville Slough at Ford Street on October 16 (NA). **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found in three sections of the county starting September 10 (v.ob.), with about five found in the southeast portion of the county, two from the Watsonville Slough System west of Highway 1, and 3-4 from north coast locations.

Only two **Cassin's Vireos** were reported this fall, from Davenport on September 4 (AR), and at CARE Park on the Pajaro River September 10-14 (AR, v.ob.). A rare **Blue-headed Vireo** was well-photographed at Bethany Curve Park on September 29 (AR). Only one prior record of this species has been accepted from the county by the CBRC. A Yellow-green Vireo was in the Carbonera Creek X Branciforte Creek confluence area on September 22 (SG, AR, LG, CS, AS), the fifth county record pending CBRC review. **White-breasted Nuthatches** continued in DeLaveaga Park, with several reports of 1-2 through the period (SG, LFL). Another White-breasted Nuthatch visited an Aptos feeder on September 1 (DR), and one was at Quail Hollow on September 2 (AR). A **Rock Wren** was a rare find at the Baldwin Creek mouth on October 28 (AR).

The Porter-Sesnon section of New Brighton State Beach had a **Townsend's Solitaire** on October 14 (DS). **Red-throated Pipits** were found in Santa Cruz County for the first time in about six years, with single birds identified along the Old Cove Landing Trail in Wilder Ranch on October 18 (JG), and at the Baldwin Creek mouth on October 21 (AR). A **Lapland Longspur** was another good find in the Wilder Ranch fields on October 18 (JG). Three or four **Northern**

**Waterthrush** were found from August 24 to September 25 (KA, AR, KVV, v.ob.). Three **Black-and-white Warblers** turned up this fall starting September 18 (GM, SM, AG, AR, v.ob.) A **Tennessee Warbler** was near Harkins Slough on September 17 (SG), bringing the fall total up to two. Seven **Nashville Warblers** were reported from September 20 to October 30 (v.ob.)



*Virginia's Warbler - Randy Wardle*

A **Virginia's Warbler** at the Homeless Garden October 7-8 (JG, JMa, v.ob) was one of the rarer finds this fall, the first in Santa Cruz County since 2007. Eight **MacGillivray's Warblers** from August 25 to September 30 was a good fall total for the county. There were three **American Redstarts** found from September 13-22 (CF, AP, LSh, AR, v.ob.). Liddell Creek featured a **Magnolia Warbler** on September 15 (AR).

A **Blackburnian Warbler** turned up along the West Baldwin Loop in Wilder Ranch on September 21 (AR). Two or three **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were noted from September 15 to October 30 (AR, KJ). **Blackpoll Warblers** near Corcoran Lagoon on September 13 (CS) and Neary Lagoon on September 29 (AR) were the only ones reported, a rather low total for this species in fall. About 13-14 **Palm Warblers** were found from October 3 to the end of that month.



*Blue-headed Vireo - Alex Rinkert*

The most notable warbler this fall was an elusive **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Natural Bridges (AK, AR), glimpsed on September 14, then positively identified on September 16, for the first record of this species in Santa Cruz County. On the

other hand, **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were not at all hard to find this fall, with around 40 reported from August through October. **Seven Hermit Warblers** were found through the period. The August 24 **Yellow-breasted Chat** reported last issue was the only one found this fall. A freshly cat-killed **Green-tailed Towhee** was found and photographed in Bonny Doon on September 25 (fide WBT).

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**Chipping Sparrows** were again numerous at the UCSC Farm in October, with 11 counted there on October 24 (JG). About ten single Chipping Sparrows were found at various other places starting September 10. Seven **Clay-colored Sparrows** turned up from September 10 through the end of October (v.ob.). A **Brewer's Sparrow** was photographed at Swanton Berry Farm on October 16 (TE). The three **Vesper Sparrows** for this fall were all found in the short window from October 12-15 (AR,



*Hooded Oriole - Lisa Fay Larson*

NL, JW, DS). Four **Lark Sparrows** turned up between October 13-25 (v.ob.). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** photographed in a weedy west Santa Cruz location on October 9 (AR) was the only fall migrant noted this season. Four **Swamp Sparrows** were discovered from October 7-28, and there were nine **White-throated Sparrows** from October 15-30.

A male **Summer Tanager** added some color to Rancho Del Oso on October 13 (DS). **Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were spotted from September 10-15 (AR, WBT). A female/immature type **Indigo Bunting** was east of Watsonville along Thompson Road on September 27 (AR). More surprising were two **Painted Buntings**—an immature at the Homeless Garden on October 1 (AR, JG, v.ob.), and another female/immature type at Porter-Sesnon on October 20 (DS). This is the first time more than one of these have been found in the county in one season. A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** visited Struve Slough on October 14 (DS).

Antonelli Pond had a female/immature **Orchard**

**Oriole** on September 16 (SG). A female **Hooded Oriole** visiting a Capitola feeder September 22-30 was very late for a fall migrant in Santa Cruz County (LFL), and another notably late Hooded was reported at New Brighton State Beach on September 28 (MST et al.) There were six reports of migrant **Lawrence's Goldfinches** at various spots from September 11- October 28, all single birds. A small movement of **Evening Grosbeaks** through the California lowlands brought two to Santa Cruz County in October, one at UCSC on October 9 (AR), and one in DeLaveaga Park on October 18 (SG).

**Cited Observers:** Nanci Adams, Kumaran Arul, Scott Bentall, Cliff Bixler, Jeff Bleam, Abe Borker, Robin Cummins, Matthew Dodder, Tom Edell, Craig Fosdick, Aaron Gabbe, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Kent Johnson, Tim Jolly, Anna Kopitov, Lisa Fay Larson, Nick Levendosky, Gary Martindale, Jack Mazza (JMa), Jane Mio (JMi), Shirley Murphy, Amy Patten, Shantanu Phukan, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, David Re, Alex Rinkert, Nelson Samuels, Christian Schwarz, Adam Searcy, Lisa Sheridan (LSh), Steve Singer, Stephanie Singer, Larry Sirvio (LSi), Ketury Stein, Gary Strachan, Matthew Strusis-Timmer, David Suddjian, W. Breck Tyler, Kent Van Vuren, Jeff Wall, Randy Wardle



*Tropical Kingbird, Harkins Slough - Randy Wardle*

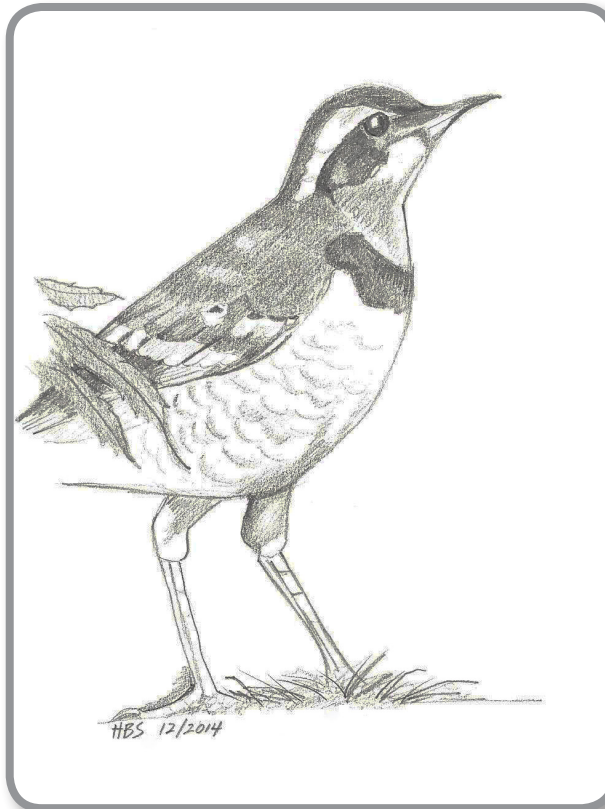
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# Birder's Notebook

Varied Thrush *Sketch Artwork by Heidi Sandkhule* and  
Yellow-throated Warbler *Sketch Artwork by Alex Rinkert*



## *The Varied Thrush*



- Heidi Sandhulke

Welcome back, sweet winter thrush!  
You look like a dressed-up robin  
Where's your secretive seed and berry party?  
How you brighten the dark understory  
With your glowing orange features  
And slaty blue-black cape  
Fastened smartly under your throat -  
Dazzling citrus aflame!  
Double wing bars make you  
Varied Sargeants of the forest  
Churring and took-tooking your orders  
To not be seen today  
But there you are!  
Wings looking like dappled sunlight  
On the cold, damp forest floor

- Lisa Fay Larson



## *Yellow-throated Warbler* *First Santa Cruz County Record!*

Yellow-throated Warbler  
*Setophaga dominica*



Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
Range data by NatureServe

One of the "southeastern" warblers, the Yellow-throated Warbler is a bird of tall trees. It nests and forages high in the canopy of swamp and pine forests.  
– Cornell Lab of Ornithology

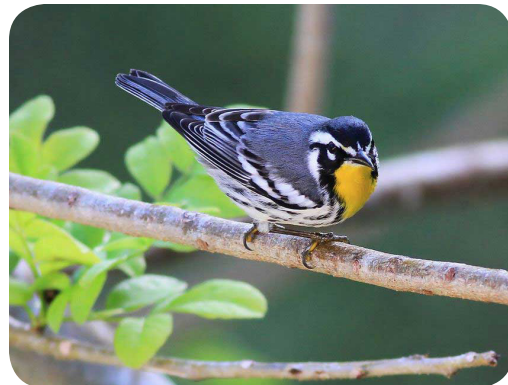
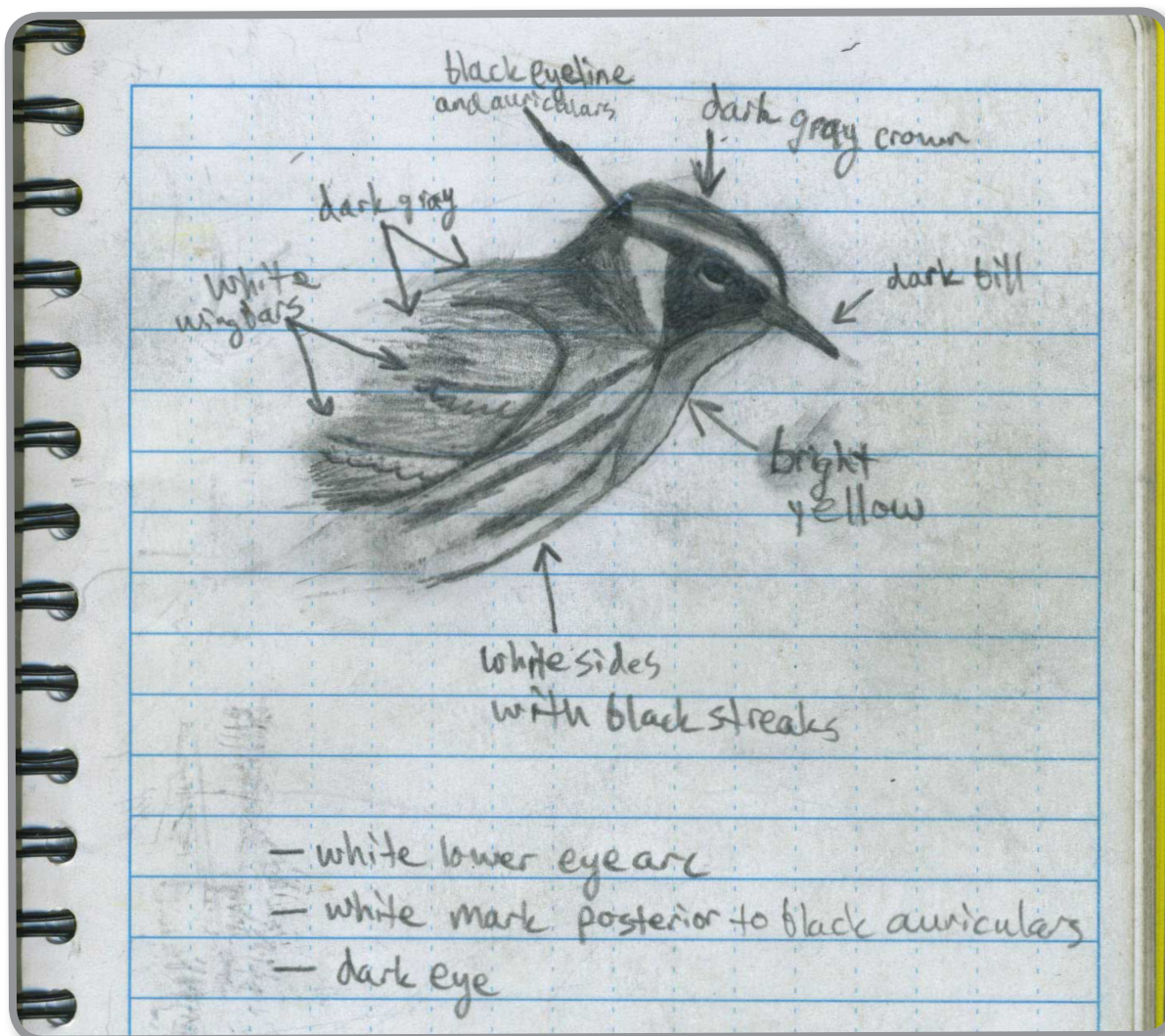


Photo - Beth Hamel

Sketch- Alex Rinkert



## Photography Exhibit Live Oak Public Library January-February 2015

Sponsored By Friends Of Corcoran Lagoon Beach [foclb.weebly.com](http://foclb.weebly.com)

A member of Friends of Corcoran Lagoon Beach photographed the successful nesting of two families of Killdeer on Corcoran Lagoon Beach last spring. Those photos together with photos of the diverse species of birds that visited Corcoran Lagoon, the lagoon outflow, and the surf and sand of Corcoran Lagoon Beach in 2014 will be exhibited at the Live Oak Public Library this coming January and February, 2015. The photos are very beautiful and informative.

The Live Oak Public Library is a perfect setting for a photography exhibit of Live Oak shorebirds. The windows of the library look out onto Corcoran Lagoon and the beach beyond. We will have photographs in the adults' reading room and in the children's section where we will tell the story in photographs of the Killdeer families.



Killdeer - Keith Angell

## Watsonville Wetlands Watch Docent Training Begins in January

The Watsonville Wetlands Watch 2015 Docent Training Program begins on January 21. Local experts will provide an inside look at the wetlands of Watsonville, with classes covering the cultural and natural history, including the native plants, birds and other wildlife of the wetlands. This 7-week program consists of Wednesday evening presentations and Saturday morning field trips, where students will visit little known areas of the wetlands.

New docents will be prepared to assist with field trips and lead walks, and we would like to add more birders for these activities. Docents also have the opportunity to help with community events, work in the library or greenhouse at the Fitz Wetlands Education Resource Center, work on special projects, and participate in wetlands restoration. There is a need for bilingual (Spanish/English) docents, but being bilingual is not a requirement.

In 2014, trained docent volunteers facilitated nature experiences for over 2500 young people during school field trips. Docents also helped with community events, propagated tens of thousands of native plants, worked on art and other creative projects, tended the native plant garden, performed water quality testing, and more.

The Watsonville Wetlands Watch is a nonprofit community-based organization whose mission is to protect, restore and foster appreciation of the

wetlands of the Pajaro Valley. For more information, visit the website at [watsonvillewetlandswatch.org](http://watsonvillewetlandswatch.org).

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Kathy Fieberling, at 831-345-1226 or email [kathy@watsonvillewetlandswatch.com](mailto:kathy@watsonvillewetlandswatch.com).



## New SCBC Members Welcome!

John Pritchard	Oct 2014
Jerry Busch	Oct 2014
Laurie Norton	Oct 2014
Pat Lordan	Oct 2014
Julia Jackson and David Turner	Nov 2014
Marilyn Brennan	Nov 2014
Richard Van Stolk	Nov 2014
Laura Smith	Nov 2014



White-crowned Sparrow - Lisa Sheridan

## Submissions NEEDED!

**DEADLINE** for  
**Mar/Apr** issue  
**February 1,  
2015**

## 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](mailto:scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com)

~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor

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PARTING SHOT: "HANDSOME FELLOW IN MY YARD"  
VARIED THRUSH - ANDY KNORR



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



[santacruzbirdclub.org](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. Santa Cruz Bird Club 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.