



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Heermann's Gulls – A History of Challenges

By Susan Schalbe

INSIDE

Calendar of Events



SANTA CRUZ BIRDS

Birder's Notebook



BOOK Review

Seabirding Trips

PARTING SHOT

We know them by their bright red-colored beaks. One of the most distinctive gulls to grace our shores every winter is the Heermann's gull. Unlike many of the other gull species who rest and feed along the coast, these beautiful birds are considered Near Threatened by the IUCN because more than 90% of them breed in only one place in the world—the Gulf of California. On a small island called Isla Rasa, most of the world's Heermann's gulls and elegant terns gather each spring to nest. Only 150 acres in size with an elevation of merely 35 feet, this island is home to more than half a million birds in the spring.

Isla Rasa is protected by the government of Mexico as a seabird sanctuary, but it has not always been so. Beginning in 1868 guano mining began on the island. Rich in nitrates and other minerals, guano was a prized fertilizer. It is estimated that more than 10,000 tons of guano were mined on Isla Rasa each year and sent to Germany up until 1910 when the supply was exhausted.

Beginning in the late 1940s, Isla Rasa and its avian breeders faced further human threats. In 1946 an ornithologist named Lew Walker visited Isla Rasa. As a result of his visit, he sold his story and photographs of the island's birds to National Geographic.

Just one year later, Walker returned and was surprised to find very few nesting birds. Though not sure what had happened during that time, he did find human footprints. Finally in 1947, Walker met a Mexican fisherman who told him that many boats had visited Isla Rasa earlier that year and had removed thousands of eggs to be sold as food.

Though egg hunting had gone on from time to time in the past, it was the advent of better boats that led to a flood of fishermen descending on the island to steal eggs in huge quantities.

The situation in Isla Rasa deteriorated so much that when another scientist visited the island in 1964, he found 21 men camped on the island with many boats anchored nearby, ready to take nearly 400,000 eggs. There was not a single chick left on the island and the egg hunters took the eggs as quickly as they were being laid.

Due to the dire situation, the Audubon Society and a coalition of concerned scientists came together to bring the plight of these birds to the attention of the government of Mexico. As a result of their work, Mexico finally declared Isla Rasa a seabird sanctuary in 1964.

Heermann's gulls have made a strong comeback with an estimated 150,000 nesting pairs. However, because they breed almost exclusively on Isla Rasa they are

considered near threatened and like many birds coping with human encroachment and climate change, they will continue to face challenges.

There is also hope that they may choose to try breeding once again in California. Nesting pairs were found on Alcatraz Island in 1979 and on Shell Beach in 1980. These attempts ended in failure, but scientists believe they may one day try again.

Heermann's gulls are monogamous and normally lay 2-3 eggs. They prefer to feed on herring and are considered aggressive birds, as they particularly like to steal fish from the pouches of brown



*Heermann's Gull, basic plumage
- Susan Schalbe*



Heermann's Gulls - Susan Schalbe

pelicans. In addition to fish, they will eat lizards, carrion, and insects. Their numbers are highly dependent on the availability of prey and this is related to the ocean temperature changes brought about by El Niño.

Though we may see these birds every fall and winter, we should take time to appreciate the challenges these gulls have faced and be thankful that enough concerned citizens came to the rescue to bring these birds back from the brink.

Heermann's Gulls - Lisa Fay Larson





Monterey Bay Birding Festival is in Jeopardy!

Can You Help Make the 2015 Festival Happen?

After a hugely successful 10th anniversary festival in 2014, the Monterey Bay Birding Festival Steering Committee finds itself in crisis. We do not have enough members to host the 2015 event. We have lost key members to illness, family crisis, and prior commitments.

Following a lackluster 2013 festival, the committee set to work changing and improving almost every aspect of the festival. The result was overwhelmingly successful. We now have a blueprint for success and only require three or four committed and enthusiastic members to continue. Please give the festival your serious consideration.

We are seeking individuals to schedule field trips, workshops, and hire speakers for Evening Presentations. There is a vacancy in Marketing/Publicity and another in the Birder's Market. A secretary to write minutes for each meeting, and thank you notes would be a welcome addition.

You need not be an excellent birder or have prior experience for any of these positions. Job descriptions, spreadsheets, and personal guidance are all there to help you succeed. We require basic computer skills and a strong commitment to bringing the 2015 Monterey Bay Birding Festival to fruition.

We welcome any support you can offer. Those of us who remain on the committee share a belief in the value of birding festivals, and a commitment to bring this fun and educational opportunity to our local birders and birders everywhere. We meet the second Wednesday of every month, at 3:30pm at the Watsonville City Hall, 250 Main Street. You will be welcomed at our meetings or we will gladly speak with you in person at your convenience. You can also phone or email Sue Dumler at 831-423-8248 or sdumler@sbcglobal.net.



Alby Face - LFL

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!**

Events Calendar

March - April 2015



Friday, March 6 Meder Canyon

An interesting patch of habitat right in the middle of Santa Cruz's upper west side residential area.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the south end of the trail on Grandview Street, just past the Escalona intersection. To reach Grandview Street, turn north (inland) from Mission Street onto Swift Street. Swift Street makes a sharp left turn, and becomes Grandview.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Friday, March 13 New Brighton State Beach

Most of the winter birds will still be around, but we should also see a few early spring migrants, and the nesting season should be underway for some of the local resident species.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the beach parking lot. There is a day-use fee of \$10.00 for driving in.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Snowy Egret - Lisa Sheridan



Sunday March 15 Lone Ridge OSP and Bald Mountain

Long Ridge Open Space and Surrounding Areas within Santa Cruz County full day trip. We will bird Long Ridge OSP in the morning and check out Bald Mountain above Guadalupe Reservoir, possibly going into Almaden Quicksilver County Park. We will be on the watch for early migrants.

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



Northern Harrier - Andy Knorr



Friday, March 20 Natural Bridges State Beach

This spot always has a nice variety of birds, and surprises are more frequent here than in most places.

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

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 March 22
Wilder Ranch State Park**

The varied habitats of this park hold a good variety of birds and other wildlife. We may check coastal or inland parts of the park, or a little of both. Expect a few miles of mostly easy walking.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the main parking lot. There is a \$10.00 entrance fee.

Leader: Nicholas Levendosky, n.levendosky@gmail.com



**Thursday, March 26
SCBC Meeting @7:30 PM
Speaker: Glenn Stewart
Topic: Bald Eagles**

Glenn Stewart, director of the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, will be talking about the re-establishment of Bald Eagles as a breeding species in Central California.

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



**Friday, March 27
Watsonville Slough**

A mix of some open water, marshes, willows, eucalyptus, and a bordering city park and residential neighborhoods should produce an interesting mix of species this time of year.

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Bushitit at Natural Bridges - Michael Bolte



**Sunday, March 29
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 Avenue entrance to Natural Bridges.

Leader: Phil Brown, pdpbrown@gmail.com



Brown Pelicans - Andy Knorr



**Friday, April 3
Schwan Lake**

Spring migration and nesting activities should be picking up about now.

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



**Friday, April 10
Terrace Point**

This is one of the better local spots to watch coastal migration in spring. The coastal scrub and grassland areas also attract a good mix of passerines, and often a variety of raptors.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the west end of Delaware Avenue, near the intersection with Shaffer Road.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com





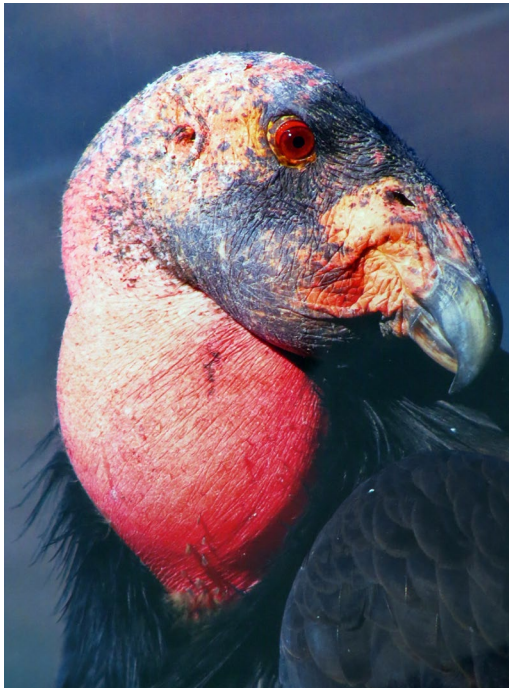
Sunday, April 12
Pinnacles National Park

A full day of hiking, birding for target birds, such as California Condor, Prairie Falcon, Cactus Wren, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and more. Bring lunch and liquids.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the main Visitor Center along HWY 146 outside of the east entrance to the park. I will be camping at the main campground and so will not be able to meet in Santa Cruz for carpooling. Call me to assist with connecting people for carpooling, if so desired.

References: www.nps.gov/pinn/index.htm
Participants are more than welcome to join later; please call me to make arrangements and obtain my mobile number.

Leader: Eric Feuss, 831-477-0280



CA Condor; courtesy of Visitors' Center

Pinnacles High Peaks - Lisa Fay Larson



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



Moore Creek Preserve Grasshopper Sparrow - Jeff Bleam



Friday, April 17
Moore Creek Preserve

This is one of the best local spots to find certain localized grassland breeders like Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows (and a great place to compare the buzzy songs of these two). Migrant Western Kingbirds are also a good possibility, plus Western Bluebirds and more.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM on Shaffer Road near the intersection with Mission Street. Parking spaces can sometimes be hard to find in this area, so this is one of those spots where carpooling may be a good idea.

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



Friday, April 17
El Jarro Point

This is a good time and place to see spring seabird migration. Loons, Brant, and scoters will be flying up the coast, and we may encounter Pomarine Jaeger, phalaropes, or even a Black-footed Albatross. Whether or not something unusual is seen, the number of seabirds passing by may be all that is needed to provide excitement. Plan to spend several hours in one place, possibly in blustery conditions. A spotting scope is highly recommended and there is the option of bringing a folding chair.

Directions: Meet at 7:00 AM at the Davenport Landing parking area. From Highway 1 at the bottom of Western Drive, travel north up the coast on the highway for 10 miles. Take a left onto Davenport Landing Road and continue down to the parking area and restrooms by the beach where we will meet.

Leader: Alex Rinkert, arinkert12@comcast.net



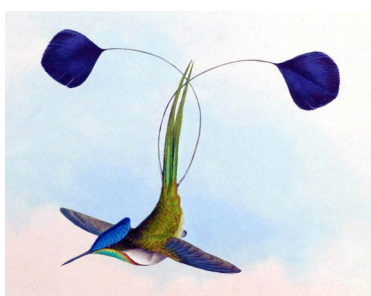
Wilson's Snipe - Lisa Sheridan



Thursday, April 23
SCBC Meeting @ 7:30 PM
Speakers: Don Roberson & Rita Carratello
Topic: A Search for Three Rare Birds in Northern Peru

Join Don Roberson & Rita Carratello as they present a combo photo and video show on their venture to remote corners of northern Peru in search of three of the world's rarest and most special birds.

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



Friday, April 24
DeLaveaga Park (southeast)

Most of the breeding species should be in by now (perhaps even our latest arrivals like Swainson's Thrush and Western Wood-Pewee), and many will be singing on territory. Migrants should also be passing through, maybe including something less expected..

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

Leader: Steve Gerow, stephengerow@aol.com



John Garrett - Lisa Fay Larson



Sunday, April 26
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 and shorebirds depending on water levels.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the parking lot behind the West Marine building along Struve Slough, off Harkins Slough Road.

Leader: Phil Brown, pdpbrown@gmail.com





Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

Including reports from November 1 to December 31, 2014

This period brought another interesting mix of avian occurrences. Various seabird movements drew the attention of birders, including continued large numbers of Black-vented Shearwaters, and a noteworthy influx of Ancient Murrelets and some other alcids. Irruptive movements of land birds included one of the biggest influxes of Varied Thrushes in some time, and also significant numbers of Band-tailed Pigeons, American Robins, Hermit Thrush, and Pine Siskins. On the other hand, some species normally associated with irruptive movements, such as Red-breasted Nuthatches and Red Crossbills, were almost entirely absent. Moderate fall rains and well above-average precipitation in December filled College Lake and the Watsonville Slough System, setting the stage for a better waterfowl winter than last.

★★★★★

Greater White-fronted Geese were well-reported this period, with numerous reports from the Pajaro Valley, but just a few lone birds in the Santa Cruz area. The largest group noted was 35 at Struve Slough on December 28 (AR). **Snow Goose** sightings included several observations of 5-8 from Moore Creek Preserve and Wilder Ranch November 16-24 (STh, GS, AR), up to eight at a few Pajaro Valley sites, and a flock of 20 that landed on the water off Rio Del Mar beach on December 23 (AR). About nine reports of **Ross's Geese** came from various sites from Wilder Ranch to the Pajaro Valley (v.ob.), all involving 1-3 individuals. There were eight sightings of **Brant** from several coastal spots starting November 13, with the highest count being 25 off Aptos Creek mouth on November 16 (NL). Among several **Cackling Goose** reports this period, the largest group noted was 21 near Watsonville on December 25 (AR).

A **Wood Duck** at College Lake on December 18 was somewhat notable for the location (JG, AR), though reports from there and elsewhere in the Pajaro Valley have become a bit more frequent in the last couple of years. One or more male **Eurasian Wigeon** were among College Lake's highlights starting December 18 (JG, AR, NA, v.ob.), with two seen there at least on December 28. Two to three **Blue-winged Teal** were in Pinto Lake from November 1-21 (RW), and one was at the Baldwin Creek mouth on December 14 (JG). A late movement of **Northern Pintails** was noted along the coast over a few days starting on December 20 (v.ob.); a tally of multiple

flocks off Rio Del Mar on December 23 yielded an exceptional 560 (AR). **Three Redheads** were in College Lake starting December 18 (JG, AR, NA, PS, v.ob.) Single **White-winged Scoters** were along the Wilder Ranch coast on November 8 (GM), and off the Santa Cruz Wharf on November 16 (JF). Three **Black Scoters** flew down the coast past Seabright Beach on November 13 (JB, JM), and two were along West Cliff Drive starting December 26 (MBo, BF, AR, v.ob.) A **Long-tailed Duck** was a good find off Wilder Beach, November 2-6 (AM, v.ob.).

Wild Turkeys have been expanding their range in Santa Cruz County in recent years.

Still, a female turkey walking on Sunny Cove Avenue on November 3, just a short distance from the beach in a Live Oak residential neighborhood, seemed very odd (JWa). Five **Red-necked Grebes** were found along the coast this period (v.ob.) **Black-vented Shearwaters** continued

in large numbers in the county's nearshore waters through the period, including some estimates in the 4000-5000 range in late December (MBr, AR). A flock of 24 **White-faced Ibis** flying over Pinto Lake County Park on December 9 was the largest group reported this period (SG, MC). One to two adult **Bald Eagles** continued

to be observed regularly from various Pajaro Valley sites (v.ob.); reports of immatures came from Harkins Slough on December 7 (DW), and College Lake on December 31 (PS). A juvenile **Ferruginous Hawk** was in Wilder Ranch on November 4 (SG, MC), and an adult was near Soda Lake on November 26 (AR).



*Redheads and Canvasback at College Lake
- Lisa Fay Larson;*

A **Common Gallinule**, fairly rare for the Santa Cruz area, continued to be seen along the San Lorenzo River through at least December 26 (BRi, SG, v.ob.), and another was at Schwan Lake on December 17 (LFL). An **American Avocet** at the mouth of Baldwin Creek on November 9 (AG, CF) was unexpected away from the Pajaro Valley. An aggregation of 27 **Black Oystercatchers** at Greyhound Rock on November 10 was a nice count (GS), though well below the record for this regular high-tide resting site. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** in Harkins Slough on November 17 (EL) was later than most. Also late was a **Red-necked Phalarope** at the mouth of Baldwin Creek on November 2 (TN, PB). **Parasitic Jaegers** also stayed past their typical departure time, apparently kept around by late-staying **Elegant Terns** which were kept around by numerous anchovies. At least three different individuals were noted regularly in November resting on Seabright Beach in between tern-chasing sessions, with one of these staying around until December 5 (SP, KC). A **Pomarine Jaeger**, more unusual onshore, was also photographed resting on Seabright Beach on November 11 (MP).

A nearshore **Scripp's Murrelet** was a surprise off Terrace Point on November 19 (AR). An unusually large movement of **Ancient Murrelets** along the California coast brought many to county waters starting November 8, with a high count of 17 off Terrace Point on November 11 (MR), but quite a few November counts in the 10-15 range, and smaller numbers continuing through December. Adding to the nearshore alcid show were about a dozen sightings of 1-3 **Cassin's Auklets** viewed from shore in November and December (v.ob.). A 1st cycle **Glaucous Gull** visited Harkins Slough on December 30 (AR, RW).

A **White-winged Dove** was photographed in Watsonville on

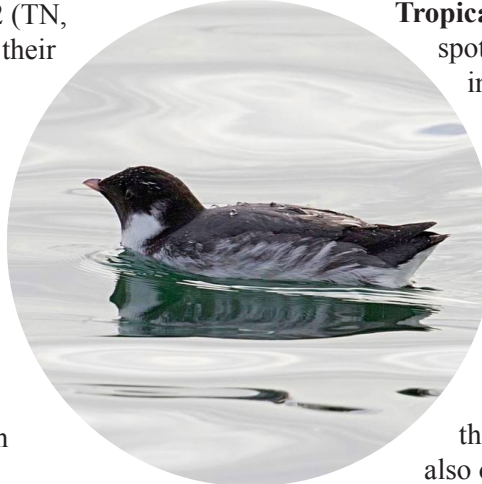
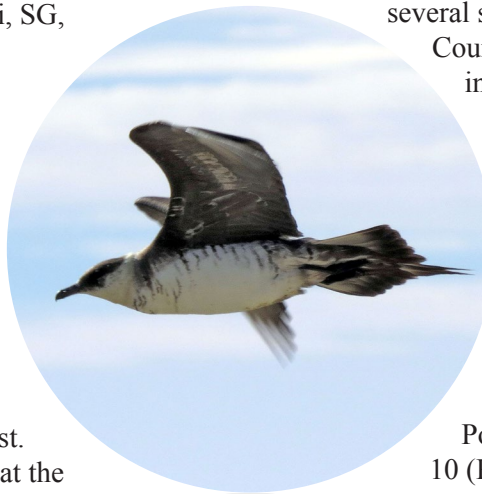
November 29 (HS). A significant influx of **Band-tailed Pigeons** peaked in the second half of December, with several sections on the December 20 Santa Cruz County CBC recording well over a thousand individuals. Four wintering **Burrowing Owls** were noted at three Pajaro Valley Sites, plus one report from UCSC. An immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Schwan Lake on November 9 (TB). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** in Henry Cowell continued through the period (TJ, JWi, v.ob.)

A "**Western**" (**Pacific-slope / Cordilleran**) **Flycatcher** appeared at Polo Grounds Park in Aptos on December 10 (RW). November and December **Tropical Kingbird** reports came from various spots along Struve and Watsonville Sloughs, involving perhaps two wintering birds. One was photographed near the Baldwin Creek mouth on December 1 (KS), and maybe that same bird was not far away at the Lombardi Creek mouth on December 20 (JG). Four **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found at three different sites in the southeast portion of Santa Cruz County on November 26 (AR), with two seen in that area on December 23 (NL); there was also one near Swanton Pond December 6-7 (JG, v.ob.).

The San Lorenzo Park **Plumbeous Vireo** was back for its fourth winter in the trees near the County Building by December 20 (CS, DSi, v.ob.). A **Horned Lark** flew by College Lake on December 6 (JG, NL).

A **Barn Swallow** at Natural Bridges on December 5 (SG et al.) was probably a very late migrant; one at Struve Slough on December 13 (JG, EB) may have been a wintering bird.

White-breasted Nuthatches continued in DeLaveaga Park, with two there on November 5 (SG), and single birds were noted along the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County line on November 26 (AR) and December 23 (NL). A **Rock Wren** turned up



From top: Parasitic Jaeger - Lisa Fay Larson;
Ancient Murrelet - Beth Hamel;
Pomarine Jaeger - Margaret Perham

in some rock piles north of the UCSC Farm on December 6 (JG, v.ob.) and decided to stay there for the winter, providing good studies for many birders of this quite rare species for Santa Cruz County. A significant irruption of **Varied Thrush** through much of California brought many more than usual to Santa Cruz County, with birds present in many places where they are rarely if ever seen, and numbers increasing through December until dozens were present in some favored locations. An **American Pipit** of the rare Asian subspecies *japonicus* was carefully studied in fields near Table Rock in Wilder Ranch on November 11 (AR). The second **Lapland Longspur** of the fall was photographed near Table Rock on November 4 (AR).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** stayed around Bethany Curve Park through the period (SM, v.ob.) A **Nashville Warbler** continued in the neighborhood above Meder Canyon in Santa Cruz through at least December 8 (STh, NL), and one was at the UCSC Farm on November 7 (JG, EW). A **Northern Parula** brought some color to lower Branciforte Creek from November 12-16 (SP, v.ob.) **Yellow Warbler** reports from the same area along Struve Slough on November 15 (DSt) and December 26 (PS) probably involved the same wintering individual. November and December **Palm Warbler** reports involved about seven individuals (v.ob.) A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** along Mission Street in Santa Cruz was the last of the fall (SP). Somewhat surprisingly, there were no early winter reports at all of this species. Four **Hermit Warblers** turned up this period (v.ob.), and a **Townsend's X Hermit Warbler** hybrid was in San Lorenzo Park on December 20 (CS, DSi).

The distinctive calls of a **Green-tailed Towhee** were identified near West Struve Slough on November 8 (JG, AR, et al.). Another **Green-tailed Towhee** was discovered at the

UCSC Farm on December 20 (JIM, RR, BRa, ER, v.ob.) and stayed around through January, for just the third winter record for Santa Cruz County. A number of **Chipping Sparrows** stayed at the UCSC Farm into early November, with six still there on November 8 (KJ), dwindling to one on November 15 (SP). One was along Litchfield Lane northeast of Watsonville on December 1 (LG, JWa). After noting some "probables" in November, on December 28 Alex Rinkert confirmed two wintering "**Thick-billed**" **Fox Sparrows** on high chaparral-covered ridges near Loma Prieta. Of the four main groups currently included in the species (which may be split into separate species at some point), the Thick-billed form has been the least-often reported in the Central Coast area of California. More were found in January in the higher Santa Cruz Mountains and also in the Santa Lucia Mountains in Monterey County. This appears to change our understanding of the winter status of this form in this part of the state, though further study is needed.

The only **Lark Sparrow** report this period was two in the Old Chittenden Road area on November 26 (AR). There were six **Swamp Sparrows** reported in November, and eight in December. Around a dozen **White-throated Sparrows** turned up in November, and 17 were found in December. Among uncommon **Dark-eyed Junco** forms, the UCSC Farm had up to three "regular" **Slate-colored** plus one "**Cassiar**" in November and December (JG, v.ob.), and at least two other Slate-coloreds were found elsewhere. A female **Summer Tanager** was near Watsonville Slough on November 21 (SG et al.), and an adult male moved around the upper Western Drive area in Santa Cruz from November 28 to December 20 (AR, NL, AG). Late or



From top: Rock Wren - Jeff Bleam;
Northern Parula - David Sidle;
Green-tailed Towhee - Pete Solé



wintering **Black-headed Grosbeaks** visited feeders at UCSC from December 7-12 (BL), and in Day Valley on December 26 (LC). Another winter Pheucticus grosbeak, along Salsipuedes Creek in Watsonville on December 28, was seen too briefly to confirm the identification, but was thought to be most likely a Black-headed (DSi).

There was just a single report of a single (!) **Red Crossbill**, in the Summit area on November 1 (STe). A **Lawrence's Goldfinch** flew over Liddell Creek on November 2 (AG). There were four reports of **Evening Grosbeaks** in November, including three lone birds (STe, SG, AR), and a group of three flying over the Summit area on November 26 (STe).

Cited Observers: Nanci Adams, Jeff Bleam, Theadora Block, Michael Bolte (MBo), Matt Brady (MBr), Phil Brown, Eric Brunschwiler, Lleni Carr, Kaia Colestock, Mary Crouser, John Facchini, Craig Fosdick, Bill Frey, Aaron Gabbe, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Kent Johnson, Tim Jolly, Lisa Fay Larson, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Bruce Lyon, J. J. Mack (JJM), Gary Martindale, James Maughn, Amy McDonald, Shirley Murphy, Todd Newberry, Margaret Perham, Shantanu Phukan, Bernadette Ramer (BRa), Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Barbara Riverwoman (BRi), Mike Rogers, Evelyn Rosas, Christian Schwarz, David Sidle (DSi), Pete Sole', Ketury Stein, Howard Stephenson, Gary Strachan, David Styer (DSt), Scott Terrill (STe), Simon Thornhill (STh), Jeff Wall (JWa), Randy Wardle, Emma Wheeler, David Wilhelm, Jim Williams (JWi)



Black-footed Albatross - Jeff Bleam

Signs of Spring!

Birds may see their reflections in windows or rear-view mirrors of cars and mistake them for rivals who will not go away—thus inciting repeated attacks. They may attack anything that creates a reflection, including yard art gazing balls. Such birds include California Towhees, Robins, Wrentits, Titmice, Scrub Jays, Bluebirds, Song Sparrows, and Cardinals. In species where both sexes defend territory—such as Cardinals—both may attack.



*C*alifornia Towhee - Beth Hamel

*W*rentit - Jeff Bleam



Birder's Notebook



BUSHTITS

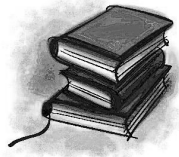


Here they come!
Tumbling naturally through the trees
A tiny flying circus
Of long-tailed acrobats
Dun-feathered dumpling bodies
Hang upside-down with ease
Sprites that never fail to bring a smile
To my eyes and face and heart
So lively, gentle, wondrous, mild-
Little works of avian art
They transform me mentally
I become a wide-eyed child
Then the whole troupe eagerly rotates
Minute splashes loop through the shallow bath
I lose count over and over
And I shake my head and laugh
While light and dark beaded eyes
Regard me as I fail the math
Then they tumble away, cherubic fireflies
Abruptly whence they came
Off to delight, entrance, enchant
Their next audience to their circus game

- Lisa Fay Larson



Bushtits
- Lisa Fay Larson



B O O K
R e v i e w

What the Robin Knows - How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World, by Jon Young

-Lisa Fay Larson

As birders and nature lovers, you are most likely aware that everything is connected. But are you cognizant of the avian patterns going on around us all the time?

Through “*What the Robin Knows*”, Jon Young teaches us how we can understand “deep bird language”, which will open a door for us to be able to come into contact with much more wildlife!

If put into continual practice, your heightened awareness not only can bring you a better understanding and appreciation of birds and other wildlife, but also help you to make your connection to the natural world not just second nature, but an innate state of being.

John teaches us that “there’s nothing random about birds’ awareness and behavior”. It is easy to understand, as humans, that random behavior is a luxury for those who do not have everything at stake as birds do—life and death.

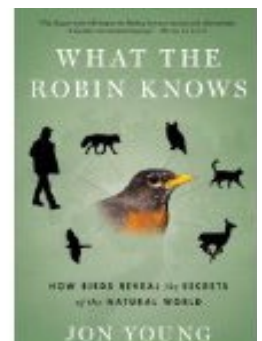
Many of us have our favorite “sit spot” where we can observe birds at length. Jon encourages us to spend as much time in our spots as possible, because through repetition and practice we gain knowledge and understanding.

Even I have told beginning birders who feel overwhelmed—who want to learn as much as possible as quickly as possible—that perhaps the gentlest and most gradual way is best. Spend time observing and listening to the birds they most commonly see, and gradually add one at a time. Then the mind has a much easier time retaining the knowledge. If you have desire, practice the fundamentals Jon elucidates through repetition, patience, and respect. That’s my nutshell take-away.

I wholeheartedly recommend you read this book and learn the fundamentals of “deep bird language” as Jon interprets them. You will not feel your time is wasted. I also recommend that if you get a chance to see him speak—by all means do so.

Jon Young lives in the Santa Cruz Mountains. He continues to educate people about bird language and the art of mentoring. He is a well-seasoned presenter and has helped many students (post and undergraduate) to attain their goals in subjects ranging from native education to wildlife tracking.

“Deep bird language is an ancient discipline, perfected by Native peoples the world over. Finally, science is catching up. . .”





Seabirding Trips



Monterey Seabirds

Monterey Seabirds features year-round pelagic trips enabling you to experience the seabirds of the Monterey Bay in their respective seasons. Folks can register online at: www.montereyseabirds.com. (831) 375-4658
If you have questions, contact Tim Amaral at: montereyseabirds@gmail.com.

2015 MONTEREY SEABIRD TRIPS

8-hour trips (7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. \$130)

Saturday March 21

Sunday July 26

Saturday August 8, Saturday August 22

Saturday September 12, Saturday September 19

Saturday October 3, Saturday October 10

Additional dates may be added. Please check www.montereyseabirds.com for updates.

Enjoy the friendliest pelagic trips on the West Coast!



Shearwater Journeys

MONTEREY BAY, HALF MOON BAY, BODEGA BAY & FARALLON ISLANDS

Offshore dedicated birding and wildlife pelagic trips with Shearwater Journeys run through November 5. Top rate leaders with worldwide sea birding experience. Sign up for any Monterey trip (except Feb. 22) before JULY 1, and take a \$40 per person, per trip discount. Sign up for any Half Moon Bay, Bodega Bay or Farallon Islands trip before JULY 1, and take a \$20 per person, per trip discount. Discounts must be deducted from payment at the time of booking. All discounted trips are NON-REFUNDALBE for any reason. Payment, in full by check or money order is required at the time of booking. Please include the name, address, phone/email of each person in your party as required by the USCG. **Send your reservation to** Debi Shearwater, POB 190, Hollister, CA 95024; debi@shearwaterjourneys.com, include name, address, email and phone for each person.

See the schedule of trips here: www.shearwaterjourneys.com/schedule.shtml for more information.



New SCBC Members Welcome!

Jane Mio	Dec 2014
Steve Lustgarden and Susan Kauffman	Jan 2015
Nala Rogers	Jan 2015
Elisabeth Forrest	Feb 2015
Bobbie Mayer	Feb 2015
Ken Kellman	Feb 2015
Margaret Hetherington	Feb 2015
Norman and Sue Uyeda	Feb 2015
Louise West	Feb 2015
Kirsten Liske	Feb 2015



Pacific Wren - Lisa FayLarson

SUBMISSIONS NEEDED!

**DEADLINE FOR
MAY-AUG ISSUE**

**APRIL 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

~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor

FIRST CLASS MAIL

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM SANTA CRUZ, CA
PERMIT NO. 74

Santa Cruz Bird Club
P.O. Box 1304
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

Bird Club website
santacruzbirdclub.org

Officers

President

Phil Brown (831) 420-1350
pdpbrown@gmail.com

Programs

Vacant

Field Trips

Nick Levendosky
n.levendosky@gmail.com

Conservation

Lisa Sheridan
trotrider@aol.com

Treasurer & Bird Records

Steve Gerow
stephengerow@aol.com

Hospitality

Nickie Zavinsky
nickiezee@yahoo.com

Outreach

Barbara Banfield (831) 427-2947
banfield@rattlebrain.com

Membership & Circulation

David Ekdahl (831) 335-5742
dekahl49@comcast.net

Secretary

Jeff Wall
jhwall@hotmail.com

Webmaster

Barry McLaughlin (831) 423-7103
barry@coincidence.net

Albatross Editor

Lisa Fay Larson
scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com

Printed on partially recycled paper



PARTING SHOT: "BIRDERS ON A WARBLER"
HOODED WARBLER - JOHN GARRETT



A special lingering winter visitor at Natural Bridges SP – a gorgeous male Hooded Warbler delights many passionate birders and photographers. Note the arrow bottom right.

The ALBATROSS

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



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.