



# Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

## A Decade with the Santa Cruz Bird Club Part Two (Years 2009–2013)

By Phil Brown

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One of the ways we kept track of progress during the 2009 Big Year was to enter data from the trips into eBird. To facilitate this I created an account for the club (which can be used as guide to see what species are likely on club trips). Also, around this time Roger Wolfe had started something he called the 300 Club. This was a list of people who had seen 300 or more

bird species within Santa Cruz County. Again eBird was helpful here, as I had an idea of how many species

I had seen in total (a life list), but I had no idea how many I had seen in Santa Cruz County. This data is all readily available

in eBird though, and after checking

progress from all the birding we had done over the Big Year I found

that I was now at 298 species for Santa Cruz County. That spring

Steve Gerow led his usual trip to Moore Creek Preserve looking for

Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland species, but right at the

start of the walk he found a Cassin's Kingbird perched on a wire near the

corner of Shaffer Road and Highway 1. That brought me to 299. A couple of

weeks later a Yellow-headed Blackbird was found at the corner of Delaware and Shaffer by

Alexander Gaguine, and luckily for me was chase-able. This brought my 300th Santa Cruz

bird, and although I was being cautious about

broadcasting the fact, my friend David Sidle announced it to the world on MBB (a resource for the latest information about bird sightings in the area by Listservers).

A couple of notes about citizen science seem appropriate here. Firstly, I have participated in the nestbox program at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park for many years now, and this program has been a great success. The aim of the project was to encourage



SCBC Trip to San Lorenzo River 10-1-10  
- David Sidle

Western Bluebird populations by putting up nest boxes in the park. In the first few years we had plenty of Chestnut-Backed Chickadees, Oak Titmice and Violet-Green Swallows nesting in the boxes, along with a few Ash-Throated Flycatchers. We then started to get a few Western Bluebirds, which are now regulars (often raising two clutches in a season). There is now an established Western Bluebird population at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park, and numbers of Western Bluebirds seem to be increasing in the county in many places.

Secondly I have participated in the Watsonville Wetlands Watch surveys at the Watsonville sloughs (this project is run by the Ramers—Bernadette and Bob). This project surveys the variety of species and numbers of birds at various locations in the sloughs, and is building an impressive database of bird populations for the area. Because these surveys are conducted at regular intervals, we will be able to track trends in bird populations and species diversity in the sloughs, which is an excellent way to monitor the health of the ecosystem. I would also like to encourage people to participate in eBird, which is now the largest and most successful citizen science project ever. I feel that the importance of eBird is not in tracking rarities, but rather in tracking the “usual suspects.” It is important because this is the data that can be used to monitor population trends and species distribution over time. There are some wonderful dynamic maps you can find on eBird that show the northern migration of species in the spring, and their return south in the fall; and this is all derived from data entered into the eBird system by people like us.

To return to the Big Year of 2009, in June I made a trip to Loma Prieta to see Purple Martins. This has become a popular location for birders in Santa Cruz to see Purple Martins. Since the 2008 Summit Fire, Black-chinned and Bell’s Sage Sparrows have also been found in the area. It is quite a drive into one of the more remote parts of the county, and I wasn’t entirely sure I was in the right place, but I clambered up a steep section of hillside amongst a big cloud of flies to find a good vantage point, and was rewarded by seeing the Purple Martins fly over from Santa Clara County into Santa Cruz County.

In August I was standing on the entrance road to Natural Bridges State Park thinking to myself that I wasn’t

having much luck finding birds worth reporting on MBB (as a Monterey Bay Birders' Listserver) when a Yellow-Billed Cuckoo flew across the road in front of me and lit on a willow so that I could study it briefly. For some strange reason a couple had already been seen in the county that year, but it was a nice find nonetheless. Later in the same month I chased a Hudsonian Godwit found by Roger Wolfe in Watsonville Slough—a great bird. At the end of the month there was a very rare occurrence: on a walk led by Steve on the San Lorenzo River levees we found a bird he couldn’t identify at first sight. Steve thought for a while and managed to work out that we had found a female Orange Bishop (perhaps more correctly a Northern Red Bishop). This is an African bird so it was almost certainly an escaped captive.

In December for the Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count, or CBC, I took over the San Lorenzo River section of the count. There is quite a variety of habitats in this section, as it covers the ocean at the end of the Santa Cruz Wharf and along the river to the end of Ocean Street extension which is in the redwoods. A flock of Greater White-Fronted Geese was a highlight of this count.

2010 brought a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found by Kathy Kuyper



*Yellow-headed Blackbird - David Sidle*





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on the Zayante Trail in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park in March, and in May David Sidle found a Pacific Golden Plover at Terrace Point. In December there were reports of Evening Grosbeaks from several locations in the county and a flock settled in on the River Trail at Henry Cowell State Park (reported by David Ekdahl). I think that they are amongst the most beautiful birds to be seen in North America, and you have to see them in real life, neither photographs nor illustrations do them justice.

The year 2011 started with a Green-tailed Towhee in Boulder Creek (found by Kent Johnson), and in May a Bald Eagle was found in the sloughs. After a fitful start, Bald Eagles have re-established themselves in the Watsonville sloughs area, even raising young. It is encouraging to see the return of an apex predator like the Bald Eagle to our area, hopefully this is a sign that the local environment is in a fairly healthy state. Fall brought a Painted Bunting and a Magnolia Warbler at Lighthouse Field. December was marked by the finding of the Plumbeous Vireo at the Ocean Street County Government offices. This bird has returned 4 years in a row, but is often very difficult to find. This area is now part of my Santa Cruz CBC patch and I have spent many fruitless hours searching for the bird on Count Day. This year was also the last year that Sylvester, our Rock Sandpiper, was seen. Easier to find than the vireo, but he could be surprisingly difficult to pick out from the Surfbirds and Black Turnstones that he associated with. Sylvester was fixture on Westcliff for many years.



*Evening Grosbeak - Ron Wolf*

The year 2012 started with a bang! Eric Feuss and I had a Prairie Falcon while conducting the Interlaken section of the Moss Landing CBC. Unfortunately for me this section of the count is not very productive in terms of rarer birds, but we do get an occasional gem. Most of the rarer birds I saw in 2012 were found in the sloughs, including a Black Tern and a Franklin's Gull. This culminated in the now legendary find by Lois Goldfrank of a Common Cuckoo. Fortunately for me I got a call the day it was found and rushed back over the hill to see it. That section of Watsonville Slough was very crowded with birders for the next few days, as people traveled from all over the US to see the bird. In May of that year I got a call from Cliff Bixler who wanted to go to look for a Northern Parula on the Zayante Trail in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. This had been my local nemesis bird for a while, often chased but never found. It was a beautiful sunny morning and we found the bird high in the cottonwoods along the trail; it was great to finally be able to add it to my county list.



*Northern Parula - David Sidle*

The year 2013 brought an Eastern Whip-poor-will on private property, and a Lesser Sand Plover at Pajaro Dunes. On a walk led by Steve Gerow at Antonelli's Pond. John Garrett put us all onto a Lewis's Woodpecker which was flying over us.

In these later years it has been harder and harder for me to attend club walks on the weekend, family commitments take too much of my time. The bright spot however has been the regular Friday walks led by Steve Gerow, which have become an important fixture on the Santa Cruz Bird Club calendar. Luckily my work schedule is flexible enough for me to be able to attend these walks for an hour or so, and it is great to see all the regulars as well as some birds.

We are very privileged to live in Santa Cruz County—the bird life diversity is wonderful because we have such a wide variety of habitats, and living on a migration path means that we see plenty of vagrants, too. The changes with the seasons are part of that richness; the birds we see in summer which have migrated from the south, and the birds we see in winter which have migrated from the north mean that there is an ever changing landscape around us. I look forward to the arrival of the Pigeon Guillemots and Wilson's Warblers in spring, and in fall I am waiting for the first Lincoln's Sparrows and Red-breasted Sapsuckers. We are also lucky to have such a great birding community here, being a part of it has certainly enhanced my life in many ways. I am looking forward to the next 10 years.

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## Events Calendar

September - October 2015



### Friday, September 4 Arana Gulch

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

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



### Friday, September 11 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 an entrance fee.



### Friday, September 18 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 Street 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 the 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 lot separate from the main parking area. The trail starts here.



Common Yellowthroat - Andy Knorr



Natural Bridges - Brown Pelicans - Lisa Fay Larson



### Sunday, September 6, 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 AM at the Delaware Road (north) entrance to Natural Bridges State Park.



*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 Nicholas Levendosky: nlevendosky@gmail.com. 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, October 2  
Antonelli Pond & Vicinity**

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

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



*Antonelli Pond SCBC Trip 9-19-14 - Jeff Bleam*



**Friday, October 9  
Meder Canyon**

An island of habitat within the west Santa Cruz residential area, featuring riparian and coastal scrub, plus extensive eucalyptus groves, which sometimes hold something unexpected.

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



**Sunday, October 11  
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 AM at the Delaware Road entrance to Natural Bridges.



**Friday, October 16  
DeLaveaga Park**

The west side of this big Santa Cruz city park has extensive redwood and mixed evergreen forests, plus some riparian habitat. Expect a couple of miles of walking, with a few hills.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot at the main picnic area. To get there, go north on Market Street, which turns into Branciforte Drive just a little ways after it passes under Highway 1. Continue on about a mile to the entrance of the picnic area.



**Thursday, October 22  
SCBC Meeting @7:30 PM  
Pending - please check our website.**



**Friday, October 23  
West Cliff Drive**

The full mix of rocky shore specialties should be present by now. We will also check Lighthouse Field and/or Bethany Curve Park for migrant land birds.

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



**Sunday, October 25  
North County Grasslands**

Join us for a half-day tour of our North coast grassland areas, where we will be scoping out raptors and returning wintering birds like Say's Phoebes and Loggerhead Shrikes.

**Directions:** Meet at Coffeetopia on Mission Street at 8:00 AM.



**Friday, October 30  
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.

**PLEASE CHECK SCBC WEBSITE FOR MORE CURRENT INFO! For any questions regarding field trips, please contact the Field Trip Officer:**

Nicholas Levendosky  
n.levendosky@gmail.com



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**Come to the  
11th Annual  
Monterey Bay Birding Festival**

**September 24-26, 2015**



Our 11th festival offers a unique opportunity to explore, learn, and appreciate world-class habitats in our beautiful Monterey Bay areas.

***Featured Speakers***

**Jon Young** We are honored to have author Jon Young as keynote speaker presenting, *What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World*.

**Kickoff Evening Presentation: Dr. Mike Murray**, Director of Veterinary Services at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, will present *A Glimpse Behind the Curtain: Birds at the Monterey Bay Aquarium*.

**Greg Meyer** will discuss the connection between birds of the Monterey Bay and Baja California in his presentation *The Baja Connection*.

***Workshops***

Gain practical skills and deepen your knowledge of birding optics; mitigating ecological costs of impromptu rarity birding trips; bird identification; photography gear and techniques; field sketching; bird photography basics, and exploration of birding digital resources.

***Field Trips***

The Monterey Bay Birding Festival field trips leaders are all extraordinary birders who delight in sharing their love of birds and favorite birding venues with you. Each year we have a stellar line-up of evening presentations and daily workshops to augment your birding festival experience.

***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](http://montereybaybirding.org)

Festival headquarters is at the Watsonville Civic Plaza—the perfect, central location for three days of extraordinary activities. For detailed information visit: [montereybaybirding.org](http://montereybaybirding.org) or contact us at 888-909-7829 or [montereybaybirding@gmail.com](mailto:montereybaybirding@gmail.com)

*We look forward to seeing you at the festival!*



Naturalist Night:  
**"The Social Lives of Sparrows"** - Bruce Lyon  
Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 15th

**TIME:** 7:00pm-8:30pm

**LOCATION:** 1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz

\$6 Museum Members | \$12 General

Register online: [santacruzmuseum.org](http://santacruzmuseum.org)

*Seating is limited. Advanced registration is highly encouraged.*

Join us for a discussion with UCSC professor **Bruce Lyon** as we explore the winter social ecology of migratory Golden-crowned Sparrows in the UCSC Arboretum. Bruce and his team have discovered unsuspected complex social patterns—individuals form close lifelong winter partnerships with other sparrows. Learn how social signals like plumage variation and winter singing (by both males and females) is connected to these striking patterns of social organization.

**About our Speaker:**

Bruce Lyon is a UCSC professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology who studies the evolution of social behavior in birds with a focus on understanding why particular behaviors might be adaptive in particular ecological contexts. Some of the major topics he has studied over the past three decades include brood parasitism (birds that lay eggs in nests that are not their own), adaptive parental strategies, plumage coloration as a signal to other birds, and variation in basic mating patterns.

**For More Information Contact:**

Elizabeth Evans

[elizabeth@santacruzmuseum.org](mailto:elizabeth@santacruzmuseum.org)

831-420-6115 x12



*Golden-crowned Sparrow - Lisa Fay Larson*



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## Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

*Including reports from March 1 to May 31, 2015*

It was an interesting spring, with highlights including a surprising first county record of Gull-billed Tern and a record-breaking spring migration for three hummingbird species. Early spring was quite warm, and drought conditions continued, although a modestly wet April and a cool and foggy May moderated things somewhat.



Two white geese (**Snow or Ross's**) flying over the Pajaro River on May 5 (LG, JWa) and a **Cackling Goose** at Laguna Creek mouth on May 5 (AR) were presumably late spring migrants. The last wintering **Eurasian Wigeon** reported was at College Lake on March 11 (GK). Several reports of 1-2 **Redheads** from Struve and Hanson Sloughs April 5 to May 15 may have all involved one lingering pair (DSty, JGa, GK). There were multiple reports of **White-winged Scoters** from various coastal spots, probably involving at least 10-12 birds. One **Black Scoter** was off Zils Road from March 3-12 (JGa). A **Long-tailed Duck** swam in the waters off Pajaro Dunes from May 6-9. **Red-necked Grebes** were noted off El Jarro Point on March 12 (AR), and Laguna Creek mouth on April 7 (AR). The strong fall/winter influx of **Black-vented Shearwaters** had mostly ended by mid-March; a lone bird off Bonny Doon Beach on April 22 (AR) was the only later report.

The **Bald Eagle** pair again nested successfully this year, using the same site as last year on private land near Gallighan Slough. This year they raised two eaglets, and both had fledged by early June, for just the second successful nesting in Santa Cruz County (GK, RW, v.ob.). Other Bald Eagle reports included immatures over Felton on March 1 (KC, MY), over Boulder Creek on April 19 (CF), and at College Lake on May 5 (GK). An adult **Broad-winged Hawk**, well-seen and photographed

near Loma Prieta on April 19, was one of very few spring records for the county (PS, AG, PB, v.ob.). A spring migrant **Swainson's Hawk** flew over Quail Hollow Ranch County Park on April 26 (AR), for an exceptional record for the San Lorenzo Valley, and the first report for that park. Another Swainson's over Harkin's Slough on May 15 was at a more expected location (AR, RR, BRa).

### Single Pacific

**Golden-Plovers** turned up at Black Point on April 20 (JGc), and Younger Lagoon on May 14 (AR). Three **American Avocet** nests found at College Lake from April 22 to May 6 were worthy of note (GK). Avocets seem to be irregular nesters in the county, and most recent nesting efforts have been from the lower parts of the Watsonville Slough System. However one nest was accidentally destroyed by farming activities, and the success of the other two is not known. College Lake also had a **Solitary Sandpiper** from April 18-26 (NL, JGa, AR, v.ob.) Around 8-10 **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found in spring migration (v.ob.). A **Ruddy Turnstone** at Pajaro Dunes on May 1-2 was the only one reported this period (RW, DW).

After a strong fall and winter showing, the only **Ancient Murrelets** reported this period were two off El Jarro Point on March 7 (AR, AG). Two **Tufted Puffins** were in county waters on April 4 (MY, KC). A **Franklin's Gull** visited the Pajaro River area near CARE Park on



*Franklin's Gull - Alex Rinkert*



*Black Skimmer - Christian Schwarz*



May 24-25 (AG, v.ob.) A late **Mew Gull** was at Corcoran Lagoon beach on May 8 (SG, LG, v.ob.). The most remarkable report this period was a brief visit by a **Gull-billed Tern** to the Pajaro River mouth on May 16, adding a new species to both the Santa Cruz and Monterey County lists (JGa, NK). It is also just the third record of this southern species for Northern California. **Black Skimmer** reports included up to two at the Pajaro River Mouth from May 20-30 (NK, PF), and one at the San Lorenzo River mouth on May 29 (JBle).

A **Long-eared Owl** was in Star Creek Ranch in the southeast corner of the county (an area with very limited access) on March 28 (AR). A **Black Swift** over Moore Creek Preserve on May 10 was the first this season, and the only report for May (NL). Although they are now regular in fall, **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** have remained rare in the county in spring migration, with no more than two reported in any past spring. This year was different, with at least six found at various Santa Cruz County sites from April 11-29 (AR, RW, JBle, JGa, NL), setting a new record. Northbound **Rufous Hummingbirds** had an unusually strong passage through the county, reaching unprecedented numbers in the Summit Ridge area near Loma Prieta. Particularly impressive was a total of 38 adult male Rufous Hummingbirds counted in this area on April 11 (JGa, AR, NK), with an additional 67 unidentified Rufous/Allen's types which were thought to be mostly Rufous! Finally, a wave of **Calliope Hummingbirds** brought multiple birds to the Summit Ridge/Loma Prieta area from April 17-27, with various reports of 2-5 birds (all previous records were of lone individuals), and the highest single count was seven on April 17 (JGa, NK), more than double

the previous record of three for an entire spring season! The Aptos **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was last reported on March 18 (RW). A **Willow Flycatcher** stopped at Antonelli Pond on May 26 (PB). **Hammond's**

**Flycatchers** appeared near Loma Prieta on April 30 (DN, GZ, JBla), and in Long Ridge Open Space Preserve on May 1 (AR). A **Say's Phoebe** photographed in the Terrace Point fields on May 16 was quite unexpected for late spring in Santa Cruz County (JBle); the bird was a juvenile, so undoubtedly dispersed here from some breeding site farther inland. The last **Tropical Kingbird** reports of the season were one at Watsonville Slough at Ford Street on April 7 (LJ), and Struve Slough at Lee Rd. on April 18 (JGa, AR, NL). These two reports could have involved the same bird, but two different individuals were known to be wintering in the general area of these two sites.

**Purple Martins** returned to the Loma Prieta area by April 10 (KJo, JGa, AR, v.ob.), with up to five or so regularly noted foraging within Santa Cruz County through the late spring and early summer. Purple Martins have been nesting regularly in this area for several years in a small colony just downhill in Santa Clara County. Three migrant Purple Martins flew over near Meder Canyon in Santa Cruz on May 13 (KA). Two at Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve on May 30 (AG) were the first reported this season at what later was confirmed as a new nesting site in Santa Cruz County—more on that next issue. A **Bank Swallow** visited Younger Lagoon on May 12 (AR). A **House Wren** nest with young found at Liddell Creek on May 17 (AR) confirms nesting at a new site in Santa Cruz County that is disjunct from other known nesting locations. After this winter's



From top:

*Calliope, Anna's, & Rufous Hummingbirds - John Garrett;  
Calliope Hummingbird - Alex Rinkert;  
Calliope, Anna's, & Rufous Hummingbirds - John Garrett;  
Calliope Hummingbird - John Garrett*

large irruption of **Varied Thrush**, many stayed later than usual into the spring, with regular reports into mid-April (most winterers are usually gone by the end of March.) The latest report was three near Loma Prieta on April 27 (AR).

Wintering **Black-and-white Warblers** were last seen at Corralitos Lagoon on March 15 (NK), and at Bethany Curve Park in Santa Cruz on April 15 (LG, JG). About eight spring migrant **Nashville Warblers** were reported from April 3-May 3 (v.ob.) Five **MacGillivray's Warblers** at Star Creek Ranch on March 28 set a new early record for spring arrivals in Santa Cruz County (AR). This site in the extreme southeast corner of Santa Cruz County had multiple territorial pairs last year, with several breeding confirmations in buckeye-dominated riparian habitat. A **Yellow Warbler** at Struve Slough on April 5 (DSty) was likely a continuing wintering bird. However the first presumed spring arrival, at CARE Park on the Pajaro River on April 10 (EL, JGa), was earlier than usual for the county. A wintering **Palm Warbler** was noted off and on near Harkins Slough through April 28 (SG). **Yellow-breasted Chats** were at Lighthouse Field on May 10 (JGa et al.), and in Ben Lomond on May 13 (AW, JWi).

A few **Chipping Sparrows** were present in the orchards of Litchfield Lane northeast of Watsonville from April 25 into June, with up to two apparently singing on territory (RW, AR, v.ob.), and a pair of Chipping Sparrows was also noted engaging in nesting activities in a rural residential area of Freedom starting around May 10 (NA). This area is not near any known recent breeding areas for Chipping Sparrows

in the county, and the habitat is not typical for nesting "Chippings", though they utilize orchards regularly in migration and occasionally in winter. **Black-**

**chinned Sparrows** returned to Summit Ridge for the fourth year of breeding season presence, with about 6-7 territorial males noted near Loma Prieta and a bit to the south starting April 4 (JGa, AR, v.ob.). A singing **Lark Sparrow** at Pescadero Creek in the southeast part of the county on March 29 (AR) was in a possible breeding area. A migrant Lark Sparrow stopped at Lighthouse Field on April 30 (LG). A singing **Bell's Sparrow** was noted near Loma Prieta April 18-19 (JSte, PB), but no others were reported within the county this season. Around 14-15 **White-throated Sparrows** were found through May 1 (v.ob.).

The **Summer Tanager** wintering near Western Drive in Santa Cruz was last reported April 11 (AG, v.ob.). A **Western Tanager** in Davenport on March 27 probably wintered locally (AR); the first report of definite spring migrants was not until April 12. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were along Smith Grade Road on May 27 (KJa), and in Aptos on May 30 (BR). A pair of **Blue Grosbeaks** along the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County line on May 8 were in an area where nesting is a possibility (AR); breeding has not been confirmed within Santa Cruz County, but they are known to nest very close to the county line in Santa Clara County. Further downstream along the Pajaro, a migrant turned up near Watsonville on May 11 (AR).

A surprising number of **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** settled into an area of livestock pastures and corrals near Struve and Hanson Sloughs from May 15-23 (GK, AR, RR, BRa, v.ob.),



*Yellow Warbler - James Maughn*



*Palm Warbler - Beth Hamel*



*White-throated Sparrow - Jeff Bleam*



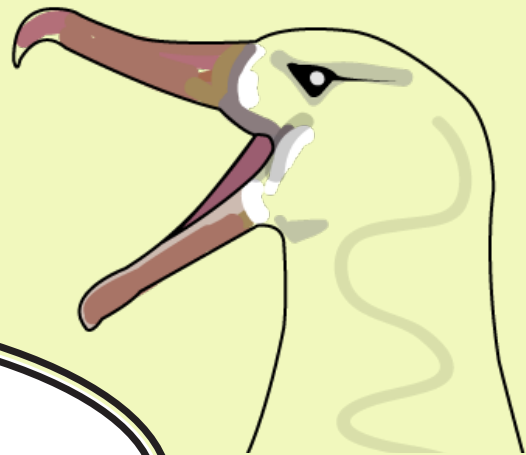
with a high count of 24 on May 15 (AR) being the largest total found in the county in many years. There were more reports than usual of **Great-tailed Grackles** away from their typical Pajaro Valley haunts this spring from April 3 to May 21 (JGa, KJa, SG, JE, v.ob.), with sightings ranging from Aptos Creek mouth to north of Davenport. All reports were of adult males, usually lone birds with just one report of two together, and it is possible that only 2-4 or so wandering individuals were involved in most or all of the reports. There were none reported in these areas after May. Among the rarer finds this spring was a singing male **Baltimore Oriole** in Capitola on April 8 (JD). **Lawrence's Goldfinch** observations included several reports from the Loma Prieta area (v.ob.), one along Merk Road on May 8 (RS), and four at Sunset State Beach on May 13 (LG), a site where they have been found nesting very close to the coast some years.



*Great-tailed Grackle- Pete Solé*

**Cited Observers:** Nanci Adams, Kumaran Arul, John Blakelock (JBlA), Jeff Bleam (JBle), Phil Brown, Kaia Colestock, Judy Donaldson, John Ellis (JE), Paul Fenwick, Craig Fosdick, Aaron Gabbe, Jeff Garcia (JGc), John Garrett (JGa), Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Lee Jaffe, Kimberly Jannarone (KJa), Kent Johnson (KJo), Gary Kittleson, Nicholas Kronick, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, David Nickerson, Michael Park, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Beth Re, Alex Rinkert, Richard Sandkuhle, Pete Solé, John Sterling (DSte), David Styer (DSty), Connie Vigno, Jeff Wall (JWa), Randy Wardle, David Wilhelm, Anne Williams, Jim Williams (JWi), Matthew York, Gena Zolotar, v.ob. = various observers

## The Albatross Needs Your Input



*Alby Face - LFL*



**Please  
Help**

Keep your SCBC newsletter gliding smoothly!  
Don't hesitate to contact the Editor with any questions! Your stories, photos, sketches, artwork, book reviews, tips, quotes— all things bird-related are NEEDED!





## SCBC Members Attend a Sold-out Inspirational Benefit Dinner on August 23rd

*A Fine Feathered Feast* was a wonderful coming-together of Santa Cruz Bird Club members and our bird-loving community to raise funds for the **San Lorenzo River Bird Walk Series**.

**Jozseph** of *India Joze Restaurant*, pulled out all the stops and served up a feast beyond the attendees' imaginations. Schmoozing, and sampling many innovative dishes while promoting bird conservation...could we have asked for more?

Guest speakers added inspiration concerning the importance of the San Lorenzo River. Former Santa Cruz Mayor **Bruce Van Allen**, shared his hopes and dreams for habitat awareness and conservation. City Councilwoman **Richelle Noroyan** encouraged us to stay connected and educated. She also urged that we continue our outreach to those who may not be aware of the wealth of birds and natural features at the river. **Jane Mio** shared her insights about birds of the river and its mysteries. **Lisa Sheridan**, SCBC Conservation Officer, Bird Walk Series Organizer, and bird photography exhibitor, shared details about how the bird walk series began. She described how the free walks offered by Santa Cruz Bird Club in partnership with the Museum of Natural History are being enjoyed by the community. **Jeff Caplan**, birder and artist, masterminded the event that featured **Jozseph Schultz'** delicious cuisine and partner **Sasha Childs'** artful hospitality.

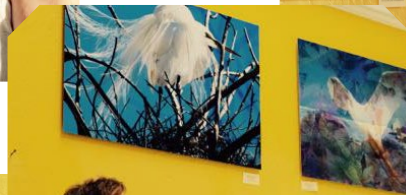
For more photos see: [waves.cc/Sc](http://waves.cc/Sc)  
Photos: Anna S. Hattis Photography.



Jane Mio & Lisa Sheridan



Bruce Van Allen speaks



Richelle Noroyan speaks



Lisa Sheridan speaks



Jane Mio speaks







*We still need your tax deductible donations, of any amount!*

Business donations of \$100 or more will receive advertisement spots in local radio, newspaper and internet promotions.  
Please contact Lisa Sheridan at [trotrider@aol.com](mailto:trotrider@aol.com) or [Elizabeth@santacruzmuseum.org](mailto:Elizabeth@santacruzmuseum.org)



*Jeff Canepa & Richelle Noroyan*



*Robert Orrizzi & Bernadette Ramer*



*Jeff Caplan*

*Sasha Childs, Jozseph & Staff*



*The Endless Spread*



*A Full House*



*India Joze' One & Only Jozseph Schultz*



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## OUT AND ABOUT

### Annual Coastal Cleanup Day - Saturday, September 19th 9am-12pm



You can help to save the habitat of our many precious birds and other wildlife! We are organizing cleanup sites as far North as Waddell Creek and as far South as Big Sur.

We will be cleaning the shorelines of beaches, rivers, school campuses and lakes. Please find more info on our website at [saveourshores.org/acc](http://saveourshores.org/acc)

Volunteers can pre-register for a specific site by visiting our online landing page. Additionally, if you know of folks who might be interested in helping lead a site, you can send them to Bronti Patterson, our Program Coordinator: [Bronti@saveourshores.org](mailto:Bronti@saveourshores.org).

### 19th ANNUAL CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM November 19-22 2015

Hosted at the Stockton Hilton, by the CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB

*Please come join us to bird, learn, and just have fun at the Central Valley Birding Symposium!*

- Thursday Night's Keynote speakers are Ed Harper and Ed Pandolfino presenting a program on "A Central Valley Year of Sights & Sounds." Both Eds are widely known, popular and highly sought-after speakers.
- Friday Night's keynote program is presented by Steve N.G. Howell on "Shift Happens: Rare {Vagrant} Birds in North America." Steve is an acclaimed field ornithologist and prolific writer.
- Saturday Night's keynote program is presented by Kate Marianchild on "Our Magnificent Valley Oaks; Hubs of their Habitats." Kate Marianchild is a naturalist, birder, and author of the best-selling *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals among California's Oaks*.

Workshops include: "Birding: the 12-step Program—Bird ID Explained" by Steve N.G. Howell, "Shorebird ID Workshop" by Jon Dunn, "A Mini Tricolored Blackbird Symposium" moderated by Dan Airola, a photo workshop by Bob Steele, and much more!

Our field trips always turn up exciting birds. Adding to the fun will be the always-entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful display of art and gifts at the Birder's Market, and the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks.

To look over the line-up of speakers, workshops, and fieldtrips, check out our website at: [www.cvbsreg.org](http://www.cvbsreg.org).  
For online registration: [www.regonline.com/centralvalleybirdingsymposium2015](http://www.regonline.com/centralvalleybirdingsymposium2015).





## Carrizo Plains - Cabrillo College Extension Class - History and Nature Saturday, December 5th, 9 am-6 pm

California's newest high desert reserve is nestled between the Temblor and Caliente mountain ranges of eastern San Luis Obispo County.

This quiet tableland of plains, rugged canyon, and sprawling Soda Lake hosts populations of recently reintroduced pronghorn antelope and Tule elk (absent from the area since the beginning of the century), as well as small mammals such as kit fox, jackrabbit, and the endangered kangaroo-rat and antelope squirrel. In the winter, the desert basin hosts thousands of birds, including waterfowl, sandhill cranes, mountain plovers, and ravens.

Please check the Class Resources web page for a location map: [cabrillo.edu/services/extension/](http://cabrillo.edu/services/extension/). Participants will meet in the California Valley just east of the Los Padres National Forest in San Luis Obispo County and form carpools for the day's activities.

**Bruce Elliott** is a retired senior Biologist Supervisor for the California Dept. of Fish and Game. Bruce has conducted dozens of natural history themed presentations at Cabrillo College over the last 30 years.

For more information, please contact us at (831) 479-6331 or [cabrillo.edu/services/extension/nature.html#carrizo](http://cabrillo.edu/services/extension/nature.html#carrizo).



*San Joaquin Kit Fox - Alex Rinkert*



*Mountain Plover - Glen Tepke*

*Pronghorn - Lisa Sheridan*



### Coming This Spring – A Way to Save Birds from Domestic Predation

The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, along with Heading Home Rescue, will be hosting a "Catio Tour" of Santa Cruz County this coming April (2016). Catios are enclosed spaces ranging from simple window box structures to extravagant porches and catwalks in gardens, all designed to keep cats safe from wildlife and wildlife safe from cats. Educational materials on native birds and animals, our delicate local ecosystems, and responsible pet care will be available along the tour. Both an in-person tour and a virtual one will be offered!



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## Birder's Notebook

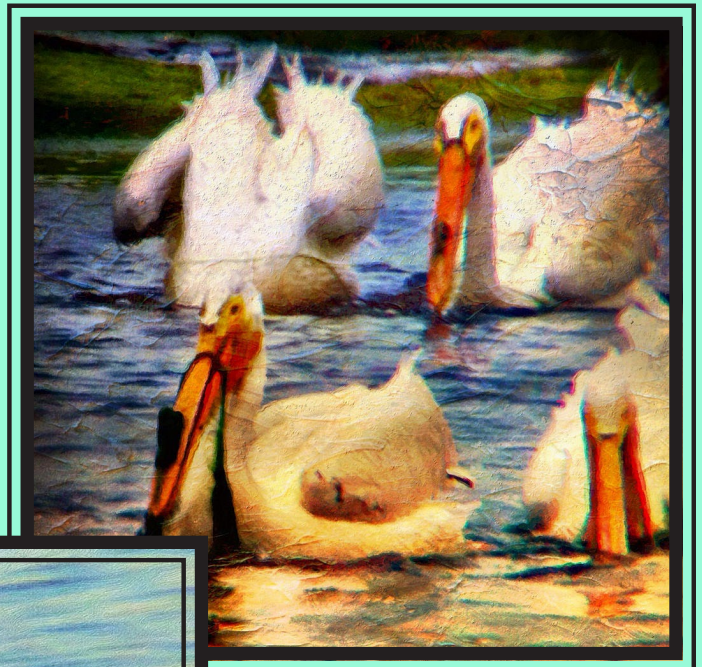
### Featured Artist - *Jeff Caplan*

As a beginning birder, my outings with all of you have inspired my creative work tremendously. I am very grateful. These photos are taken with my ancient iphone4, and a Barska (cheap) spotting scope. You may have seen me on club walks with this low-tech set up: the hand-held scope is bobbing, my muscles are creaking, and the bird is moving, so it is a lot like panning for gold to get a workable shot. By design, this non-Swarovski scope introduces prismatic color shifts and ring shaped frames that show up as I work to get these low-tech photos to shine.

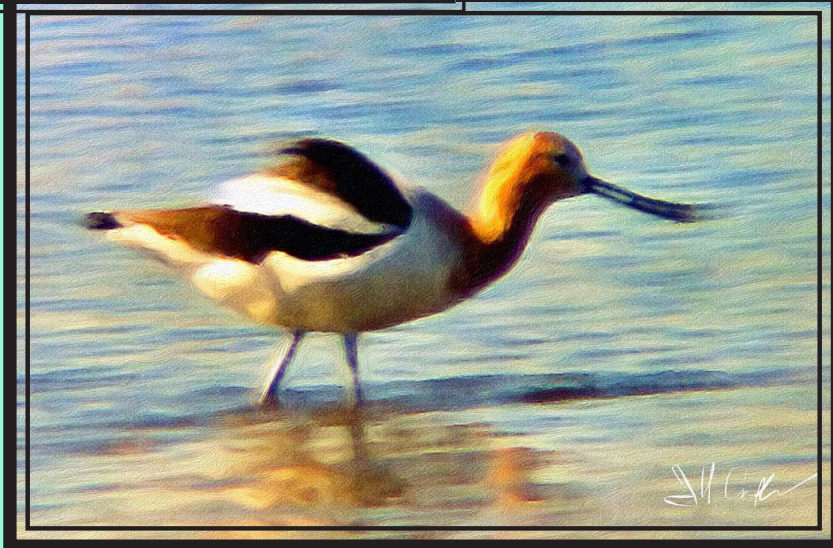
I took all of these photos at Elkhorn Slough and then "phon-o-shopped" them in my phone using several apps: Glaze, DistressedFX, Brushstroke and Camera+.

See more of my local bird inspired art on Flickr: [tinyurl.com/JeffCaplan-ArtBirds](http://tinyurl.com/JeffCaplan-ArtBirds). All are available for print on canvas, metal or leather.

*"God in the Details"*



*"Slurping hour at Elkhorn Slough"*

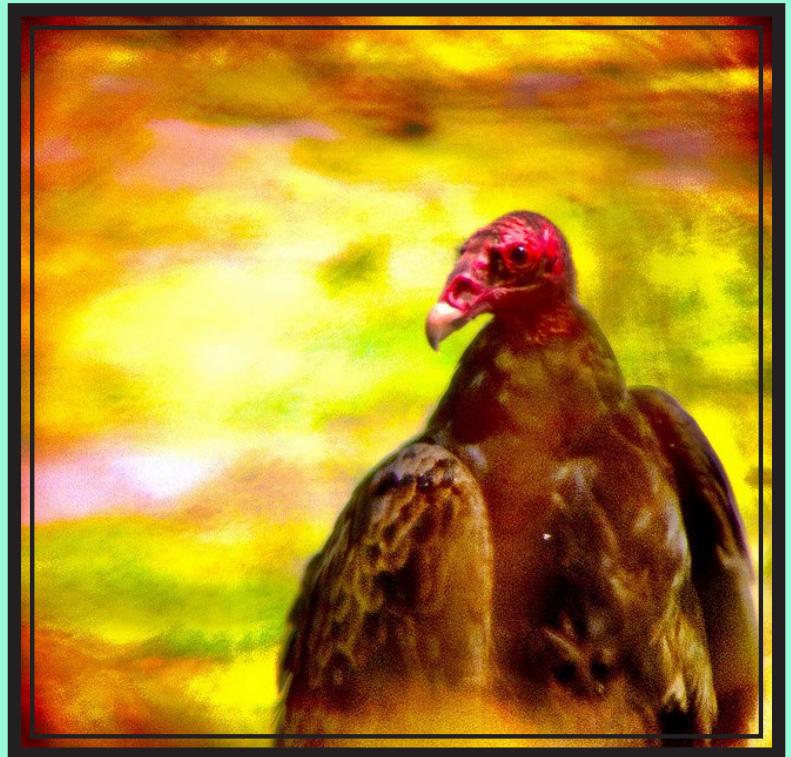


*"Avocet in Action"*

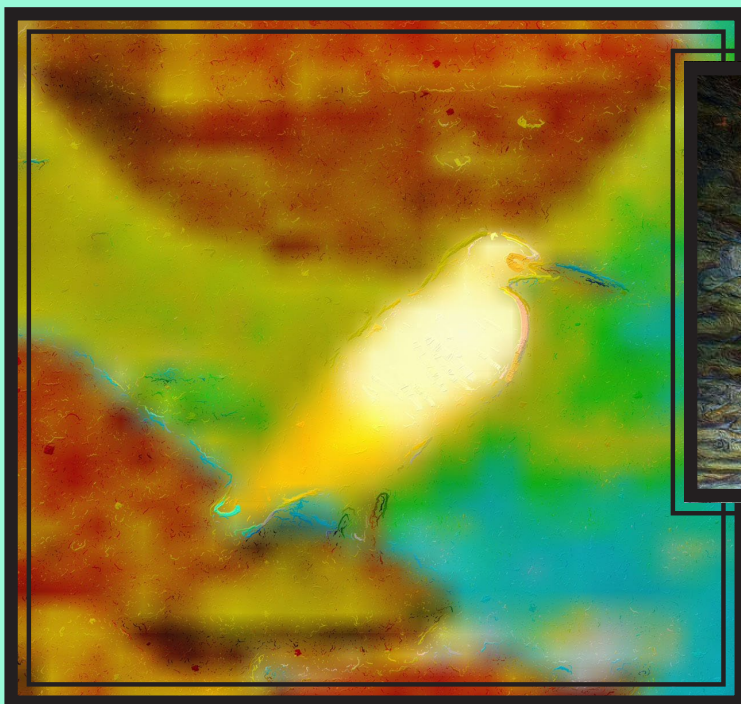




*"Red Stilts to the Sky"*



*"Turkey Vulture baby-sitting below the Rookery"*



*"Egret Ingress"*



*"Merganser Gaze"*





# 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. Monterey Seabirds specializes in pelagic seabirding trips out of Monterey only. Our leaders/ spotters will be fresh rather than exhausted from driving to Monterey the night before from other pelagic trips in Northern California. Most of our leaders are friendly residents familiar with local sightings and hotspots and willing to share this knowledge with our participants. Folks can register online at: [www.montereyseabirds.com](http://www.montereyseabirds.com). (831) 375-4658  
If you have questions, contact Tim Amaral at: [montereyseabirds@gmail.com](mailto:montereyseabirds@gmail.com).

### 2015 MONTEREY SEABIRD TRIPS

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

Saturday September 12, Saturday September 19

Saturday October 3, Saturday October 10

**Additional dates may be added.**

**Please check** [www.montereyseabirds.com](http://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**

Shearwater Journeys has offered quality pelagic trips off the coast of California since 1976. Many records, new to both North America and California, have been discovered on these fine pelagic trips. You will be accompanied by several outstanding leaders who have worldwide experience with seabirds and marine mammals. Whether you are a seasoned seabirder, or a beginner, we invite you to join us in the excitement of ocean birding which is unlike any other birding. Join us for a thrilling trip 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](mailto:debi@shearwaterjourneys.com).

For more information and to see the schedule of trips go to [shearwaterjourneys.com/schedule](http://shearwaterjourneys.com/schedule).



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## ***New SCBC Members Welcome!***

Wendy Illingworth	May 2015
Susan Reynolds	May 2015
Ginnie Mickelson	May 2015
Glen Tepke	May 2015
June Langhoff	May 2015
Marco Della Maggiore	May 2015
Kathleen McCreesh	May 2015
Jennifer Scott	June 2015
Bob Strong	June 2015
Jeff & Deb Roisman	June 2015
Barbara Schulties	June 2015
Cathy Summa-Wolfe	June 2015
Carol Stoneburner	June 2015
Janice & Guy Lasnier	June 2015
Rhea Giroux	June 2015
Alice & Marcus Gato	June 2015
Sharon & Robert Nunes	Aug 2015
Denise Eiseman	Aug 2015
Jackie Pascoe	Aug 2015
Betsy & George Cameron	Aug 2015

## **Submissions NEEDED!**

**DEADLINE for  
Nov-Dec issue  
October 1,  
2015**

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## **Submission for the Albatross—Guidelines**



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*



Santa Cruz Bird Club  
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Santa Cruz, CA 95061

Bird Club Website  
[santacruzbirdclub.org](http://santacruzbirdclub.org)

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Vacant

#### *Field Trips*

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#### *Treasurer & Bird Records*

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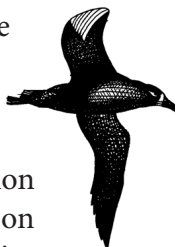


PARTING SHOT: "THE EIGHT-LEGGED AVOCET"  
-BETH HAMEL



### *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](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.