



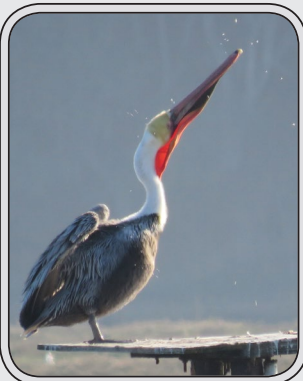
Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

THE MONTEREY BAY BIRDING FESTIVAL – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

By Debbie Diersch – Monterey Bay Birding Festival Board of Directors President

INSIDE Calendar of Events



Santa Cruz Birds

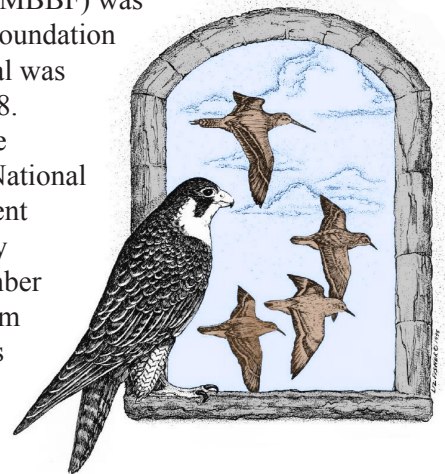


Birder's Notebook

PARTING SHOT

It is probably fair to say that most *Albatross* readers are familiar with the Monterey Bay Birding Festival. Many of you have attended the festival and/or volunteered to help organize it, lead field trips and workshops, or assisted in other capacities. However, you might not be aware of its long history and how it got started in the first place. So let's start with a short trip down memory lane...

Past: The Monterey Bay Birding Festival (MBBF) was launched and sponsored by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (ESF) for its first five years. The inaugural festival was held in Moss Landing on October 3rd & 4th, 1998. Many organizations collaborated in putting on the festival with ESF including the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, California Department of Fish & Game, Santa Cruz Bird Club, Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, Moss Landing Chamber of Commerce, Monterey County Travel & Tourism Alliance, and Elkhorn Slough Interpretive Guides Association. The tagline of the first festival was *A Window on the Pacific Flyway*. Twenty-two separate birding field trips were offered at that first event—on both land and sea—along with nine workshops. Proceeds were used



Original MBBF logo - Liz Fisher

to help fund coastal wetland education, research, conservation, and restoration.

Following several successful years of sponsorship by ESF, the birding festival moved to Watsonville where it is held to this day. Sponsored by the City of Watsonville and supported by many local organizations including Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, Santa Cruz Bird Club, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Santa Cruz County Conference & Visitors Council, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, and Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, the MBBF continued to grow and flourish.

In 2014 the Monterey Bay Birding Festival Association was incorporated as a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation. Managed primarily by volunteers with a passion for birds and birding, the association's mission is to increase public knowledge and interest in birding, promote local ecotourism, and promote conservation of natural resources with an emphasis on issues affecting local native bird species and their habitats.

Present: The year 2015 marked the eleventh year of the MBBF. Held September 24th through 26th, the festival featured twenty-six individual birding field trips on land, ranging from as far north as Rancho Del Oso all the way down the coast to Big Sur, and as far inland as Pinnacles National Park. Fun water adventures were hosted by Elkhorn Slough Safari, Kayak Connection, Shearwater Journeys, and Whisper Charters.



1999 MBBF official logo

A wide-range of workshops were presented on Birding Optics, Carbon Neutral Birding, Pelagic Birds Identification, Birding Photography Techniques (for beginners and those with more expertise), Field Sketching, and Cornell Labs eBird and Merlin applications use.

Fantastic evening presentations included Dr. Mike Murray, Monterey Bay Aquarium Director of Veterinary Services, with *A Glimpse Behind the Curtain: Birds at the Monterey Bay Aquarium*; *The Baja Connection* presented by Greg Meyers; and Keynote Speaker author Jon Young on *What the Robin Knows—How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World*.

Rounding out the festival were *Family Days* at the City of Watsonville Nature Center, a beautiful photo contest, a delicious reception featuring local restaurants' savory hors d'oeuvres, and the Birders' Marketplace.

Two hundred twenty one species of birds were seen during field trips both on land and sea—including some rarities. The final checklist of all of the birds that were seen during the 2015 Monterey Bay Birding Festival is available at montereybaybirding.org/birds.

Future: Mark your calendars with the 2016 festival dates—September 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 2016! There will be new and exciting field trips along with the current favorites—world-class speakers, workshops, and many other fun and rewarding activities. Please tell your friends, family, and colleagues and invite them to join you at the upcoming festival. Details will be forthcoming on the MBBF website at montereybaybirding.org early in 2016 so keep checking.

The Monterey Bay Birding Festival Facebook page was really ramped-up in 2015—with daily postings about the festival and other interesting items for our birding audience. We'll be posting updates for the 2016 festival regularly. Stay current by "Liking" the MBBF Facebook page then please feel free to post your photographs and other interesting information to share with other bird-loving readers.

Most importantly, the Monterey Bay Birding Festival is put on by a



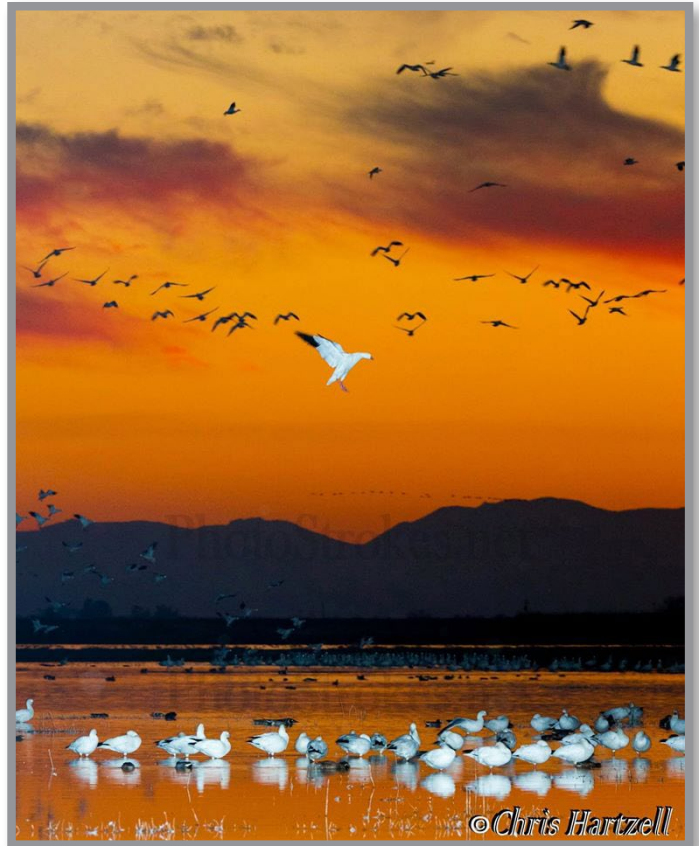
2015 Monterey Bay Birding Festival field trip at Struve Slough in Watsonville
- Dan Coyro, Santa Cruz Sentinel

tireless network of volunteers for the pleasure of birding enthusiasts and for the benefit of the birds we love to watch. By showcasing the birds and natural beauty of the Monterey Bay and surrounding communities we encourage people to protect our natural resources so that we and the birds can thrive here together for generations to come. For that reason, we invite all of our birding family and friends to join us as active participants in the festival.

We have a passionate and engaged group of birding enthusiasts starting the planning for the 2016 festival and would enjoy your fresh ideas and enthusiasm. If you are interested in learning more about the festival or have questions about getting involved please contact us at montereybaybirdingfestival@gmail.com.



*Current MBBF official logo
(sans color frame)*



*2015 MBBF Photo Contest Winner: "Sunset Fly-in"
- Chris Hartzell*

*2015 MBBF Photo Contest Honorable Mention shots:
left - Great Blue Heron
below - Allen's Hummingbird
- Cathy Summa-Wolfe*



Events Calendar

January - February 2016



Friday, January 8
Neary Lagoon

This is a great place within the city to find our wintering riparian and marsh birds, including Wood Ducks which are typically not found elsewhere in Santa Cruz.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the west entrance (off Bay and California).

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Sunday, January 17
Natural Bridges State Park

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

Directions: Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM at the Delaware Rd. entrance to Natural Bridges.

Leader: Phil Brown, 831-334-4249, pdpbrown@gmail.com



Friday, January 22
Arana Gulch

The grassland, oaks, riparian, and larger cypresses and eucalyptus here often have a good mix of bird species.

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

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280

Pygmy Nuthatch - Jeff Bleam



Friday, January 15
Porter-Sesnon area of New Brighton State Beach and Vicinity

We will walk the paths of Porter-Sesnon to see a variety of land birds in a beautiful, rarely-birded area next to New Brighton State Beach. Fees are not required.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM. From Highway 1 take Park Avenue in Capitola and turn south towards the ocean. Turn left onto McGregor Drive, the very first stop sign. Go about a half mile and turn right onto New Brighton Road. Park on the left side before crossing the railroad tracks.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Cedar Waxwings - Lee Jaffe

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.



Saturday, January 23
Waterfowl Bonanza

Winter is the best time to see ducks of all varieties in Santa Cruz County. We will bird around the sloughs and possibly College Lake looking for waterfowl of all kinds. A spotting scope is useful.

Directions: Directions: Meet at 8:30 AM 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. Please call if you have questions.

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



Hooded Merganser - Andy Knorr



Friday, January 29
Wilder Ranch State Park

The mixture of habitats here has potential for a large variety of species, including lots of winter sparrows and usually a good mix of raptors. We will probably concentrate on coastal areas, but might also go a short distance inland.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in the main parking area.

There is an entrance fee.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280

Mountain Bluebirds - Lisa Fay Larson



Sunday, January 31
Panoche Valley

This is 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.

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 and Golden Eagle, Mountain Plover, Chukar, Vesper Sparrow, and Bell's Sparrow. Viewing Long-eared Owls now includes a \$25 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, January 27th. Choices are Pastrami, Chicken Salad, Tuna Salad, Ham, or vegetarian. Include your choice of bread (wheat, rye, or sourdough); condiments (mayo, mustard, tomato, onion, lettuce), and cheese (jack, cheddar, or swiss).

Directions: Meet the leader at 8:00 AM 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 AM.

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



Cassin's Kingbird - Glen Tepke



**Friday, February 5
Points North**

Join us for an exploration of the North Coast of Santa Cruz County. Places we may visit (depending on conditions) include Swanton Rd, Swanton Pond and associated grasslands, and Greyhound Rock.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM in Davenport in the large dirt parking lot across the street from Whale City Bakery.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Marbled Godwit - Cathy Summa-Wolfe



**Saturday, February 6
Pajaro Dunes**

Palm Beach State Park 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. No fees.

Leader: Alex Rinkert, 831-431-0830, arinkert@comcast.net



**Friday, February 12
Schwann Lake**

Live Oak woodlands, some open meadows, plus willows, marshlands, and other habitats along the lake should yield a variety of birds.

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

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



**Friday, February 19
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: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



**Sunday, February 21
Beginning Birding 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.

Leader: Phil Brown, 831-334-4249, pdpbrown@gmail.com



**Friday, February 26
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: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280

White-tailed Kite, immature - Michael Bolte





Sunday, February 28
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 into the redwoods.

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

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



Yellow-rumped Warbler - Cathy Summa-Wolfe

OFFICER NEEDED!

The Santa Cruz Bird Club needs a new Membership & Circulation officer in 2016!

Our current officer, David Ekdahl, is stepping down February 1, 2016. David has been the SCBC Membership Officer for a little over 27 years! Before that he was President for 4 years; and before that Vice President/Programs for another 4 years!

BIG thanks to David for his many years of hard work and dedication and service to our club!

Welcome to Our New SCBC Treasurer!



Kent Johnson is our new SCBC Treasurer!

Steve Gerow continues to do a fantastic job as Bird Records Officer.

Thank you,
Gentlemen Birders!

CONTRIBUTE TO THE ALBATROSS



Artwork - LFL

Please Help

Keep your SCBC newsletter soaring strong!
 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!



Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

Including reports from September 1 to October 31, 2015

Fall migration never fails to be interesting. This period brought a number of significant rarities, including Santa Cruz County's second record of Hudsonian Godwit, as well as the second, and possibly the third records of Vermilion Flycatcher. Other notables included the fourth Williamson's Sapsucker for the county, and the fifth county records for Lark Bunting and Dickcissel. Adding to that was the usual richly varied fall mix of the rare, the uncommon, and the just plain interesting!



There were nine reports of **Greater White-fronted Geese** this period starting September 24 (v.ob.), with most from the Pajaro Valley, as usual. Larger counts included 28 at Struve Slough on September 26 (RW, LG), and 30 flying over Harkins Slough on October 20 (HC). A **Snow Goose** was along lower Watsonville Slough by Pajaro Dunes on October 31 (AR, RW). The only **Brant** noted this period were two at Pajaro Dunes on September 28 (JR). **Cackling Geese** included three at Struve Slough on September 26 (RW, LG), one at the Aptos Creek mouth on October 6 (JE), and 20 flying inland over Sunset State Beach on October 21 (AR).

Wood Ducks seem to have gotten a bit more regular in the Pajaro Valley in the last few years. This period, two were along the Pajaro River by CARE Park on September 20 (CK), and one was in Hanson Slough that same date (RR, EL, HC). A flock of eight Wood Ducks flying over coastal Wilder Ranch on October 22 (AR), and presumably the same eight in Younger Lagoon later that day (SM, LG), were in places where they are generally not expected. Blue-winged Teal were spotted at various sites from Baldwin Creek to the Pajaro River (v.ob.), with perhaps 9-10 individuals involved. Up to three **Redheads** visited

Shorebirds Pond in Pajaro Dunes from October 7-29 (ST, NA, v.ob). A total of 43 **Greater Scaup** in the Pajaro Dunes area on October 31 (AR) was a very good count for this species in Santa Cruz County.



Wood Duck - Lisa Sheridan

A **Laysan Albatross** was in Santa Cruz County waters on September 9 (ShJ). Pelagic trips on September 12 and 27 both found single **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** (ShJ). **Manx Shearwater** reports included one on a pelagic trip on September 9 (ShJ), and sightings from West Cliff Drive on September 21 (GMa) and October 11 (AR). **Black-vented Shearwaters** appeared in good numbers along the county coast for a second year in a row; a high count of 24,100 tallied off Wilder Ranch on October 22 (AR) seems to be a new record high count for the county. Following poor showings for storm-petrels the prior three fall seasons, it was nice to see an increase in both numbers and diversity this fall, though there was nothing like the swarms of some earlier years. The expected **Ashy** and **Black Storm-Petrels** were in larger numbers, and rare and/or irregular species included two reports each having two **Wilson's Storm-Petrels**, five reports involving up to four **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels**, and two reports of **Least Storm-Petrels** (all ShJ).

A **Brown Booby** was sighted in Santa Cruz County

*Black-vented Shearwaters
- James Maughn*



water on September 12 (ShJ). **American Bitterns** away from usual Pajaro Valley sites included one flying north over the Wilder Ranch coast on September 22 (CS), and one at Antonelli Pond from October 16 into early November (LG, MD et al., v.ob.) Two **Cattle Egrets** visited Pajaro Dunes on October 25 (DE, CV). After an apparent absence through August and September, **Bald Eagles** returned to the Watsonville Slough System in October, with immatures found October 10 and 16 (KK, DVP, LH), and an adult seen October 16-20 (GK). An immature Bald Eagle was also spotted on the north coast near Pelican Rock on October 12 (DVP, LH). Migrant **Broad-winged Hawks** included one juvenile over Bethany Curve Park on September 29 (AR), and two juveniles over Arana Gulch on October 2 (SG, MC). An adult **Ferruginous Hawk** at Moore Creek Preserve on September 17 was earlier than most for the county (AR). Additional Ferruginous reports included one near Swanton Pond on October 3 (JMa), and one flying by Younger Lagoon on October 5 (AR).

Two **American Avocets**, rather rare in the county away from the Pajaro Valley, stayed at Corcoran Lagoon from September 13-16 (GMa, SH, v.ob.) Two calling **Pacific Golden-Plovers** flew over Harkins Slough on September 19 (AR, BR), then likely the same two showed up in Struve Slough from September 22-24 (NA, v.ob.) **Lesser Yellowlegs** continued to be numerous at some Pajaro Valley sites, including high counts of 18 in the Pajaro Dunes area on September 1 (AR), and 15 in Struve Slough on September 17 (LG, BR). Numbers diminished after mid-September, but some continued into late October. The rarest find of the season was a **Hudsonian Godwit** that moved around between Harkins and Struve Sloughs from October 11-25 (AR, RR, BR, LH, DVP, GK, NL, v.ob.). This is just the second record for

Santa Cruz County, pending review by the California Bird Records Committee, and it is also the latest fall record for California.



Hudsonian Godwit - Gary Kittleson



Short-eared Owl - Michael Bolte



Tufted Puffin - Ron Wolf

A **Red Knot** stopped at West Cliff Drive on September 22 (GMe, DB), and one was along the Wilder Ranch coast from October 20 into November (AR, v.ob.). A **Stilt Sandpiper** was a good find at Struve Slough on September 16 (GMa). Three more **Baird's Sandpipers** from September 1-28 (v.ob.) brought the fall total up to eight. Multiple additional reports of **Pectoral Sandpipers** through October 17 (v.ob.) involved perhaps 7-8 individuals, for a total of perhaps 15 for this fall's migration period. Alcids of note in county waters included a **Scripps's/Guadalupe/Craveri's-type Murrelet** on September 12 (ShJ), and a **Tufted Puffin**, also on September 12 (ShJ). A **Black Tern** visited Pajaro Dunes on September 9-10 (LG, JWa, v.ob.),

White-winged Doves appeared at Antonelli Pond on October 16 (PF), and Sunset State Beach on October 21 (AR). **Burrowing Owls** turned up near lower Watsonville Slough on September 19 (RR, HC), near Hanson Slough starting September 30 (GMa), and there were up to two in the UCSC grasslands starting October 4 (MB). There were more **Short-eared Owl** reports than usual this season, with sightings at Harkins Slough on September 19 (AR, BR), near the UCSC Arboretum on October 3 (MB), by Pajaro Dunes on October 4 (JR), and at Struve Slough on October 10 (GQ). Three more **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** through September 13 (v.ob.) brought this season's late summer/fall total to eleven.

A female **Williamson's Sapsucker** was a good find near Loma Prieta on October 25 (AR), and just the fourth record for Santa Cruz County; it stayed into early November. Apparently back for its third winter was a male **Red-naped Sapsucker** along the San Lorenzo River in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, first spotted this season on October 17 (TJ).



Vermilion Flycatcher
- Gary Kittleson

male **Vermilion Flycatcher** was a surprising discovery on private land in the Watsonville Slough system from October 6-9 (GK, BM), for just the second Santa Cruz County record. Then a young male Vermilion Flycatcher turned up along the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz October 10-12 (JMi, BW)! It is possible that this was the same individual moving farther up the coast—photos from the two occurrences look similar, but it is probably not possible to determine this for sure.

An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Antonelli Pond on October 5 (GZ) was the only fall migrant reported this season, and on the late side. A **Tropical Kingbird** by Struve Slough on September 17 was one of the earlier records for the county (HC, BR, LG). Then there were various reports from different spots around the Watsonville Slough system starting October 14 (LC, SR, PS, GMa, v.ob.), probably involving two or maybe three individuals wandering the area. Tropical Kingbirds also turned up in Santa Cruz, including up to two in the vicinity of the San Lorenzo River October 1-16 (JMi, GK, v.ob.), and one at Antonelli Pond October 5-18 (NL, AR, LS). A **Western Kingbird** photographed near Antonelli Pond on October 10 (CF, AG) was very late.

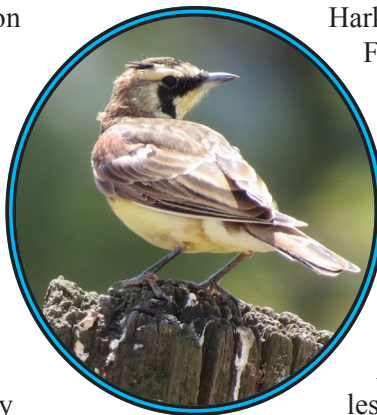
Loggerhead Shrike reports included one at Pajaro Dunes September 19-23 (TB, ZM, AS), one along the Pajaro River near the Santa Clara County line on October 6 (NL), and one in Davenport on October 30 (AR). Four migrant **Cassin's Vireos** were reported this period (v.ob.). A **Red-eyed Vireo** was a nice find at Neary Lagoon on

September 14 (CS, v.ob.). **Horned Lark** occurrences this period included three reports of 1-2 from lower Pajaro Valley spots, where a small number have been resident in recent years. More unusual was a flock of seven along the Wilder Ranch Coast on October 20, with probably the same flock again on October 30 (AR). A migrant **Purple Martin** foraged around Harkins Slough on September 19 (AR, BR). A **Bank Swallow** visited Pajaro Dunes on September 20 (AR, BR). A **Cliff Swallow** over Struve Slough on October 11 was late for the county (PS).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were somewhat more numerous and widespread than usual this fall, but it didn't seem like a large-scale irruption was developing, with no reports exceeding five at any given site. A swarm of 660 **American Pipits** in the Wilder Ranch fields on October 30 (AR) appears to be a new record high count for the county. **Northern Waterthrushes** included one at Natural Bridges from September 1-16 (KA, v.ob), and one at Harkins Slough on October 11 (AR, RR, BR).

Five **Black-and-white Warblers** turned up between September 6 and October 31 (v.ob), for a good fall showing. Four **Tennessee Warblers** from September 23 to October 4 (v.ob.) was also above average. **Nashville Warblers** were well-represented, with ten or so found from September 14-October 31 (v.ob). There were five reports of migrant **MacGillivray's Warblers** from August 13 -September 24 (v.ob.) Much less expected was a warbler at Neary Lagoon September 14-20 showing characteristics of a hybrid **MacGillivray's Warbler X Common Yellowthroat** (CS, DD).

Three **American Redstarts** were found between September 2-29 (RC, NL, BR, RR, AR, v.ob.) **Chestnut-sided Warblers** visited Aptos on September 11 (RW), and Baldwin Creek on September 21 (AR, NL). There were five **Blackpoll Warblers** from September 8-27 (v.ob), a little below the fall average for Santa Cruz County. However three at Pajaro Dunes on



Horned Lark - Lisa Fay Larson

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*MacGillivray's Warbler X
Common Yellowthroat*
- Christian Schwarz

September 23 (AS, CS) was a high total for one location and date. **Palm Warblers**, usually our most numerous "eastern" species in fall, were sparse this season. Just three were found from October 1-29, the lowest September-October total since 1997; between 10 and 20 (and sometimes more) is more usual for fall migration. About 40 **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were noted between August 13 and October 29, for one of our highest fall totals. Five **Hermit Warblers** were reported from August 13 to September 26 (v.ob.)

A migrating **Grasshopper Sparrow** stopped at the Henry Cowell State Park meadow on October 8 (JWi). **Chipping Sparrow** reports this period totalled a healthy 28 (v.ob.) Five **Clay-colored Sparrows** were found from September 21 to October 24 (AR, CS, GMa, LG, WG, v.ob.). Three **Brewer's Sparrows** from September 24 to October 2 (NL, AG, JB, PB, v.ob.) were more than usual for the county. **Lark Sparrow** sightings from September 25 to October 11 also totaled three (AR, PF, CS). The sparrow family highlight of the season was the county's fifth record of **Lark Bunting**, photographed near Antonelli Pond on October 9 (PF). Five **Vesper Sparrows** were discovered from September 11-25, for a good fall total (AR, AG, CS, LG). One in Quail Hollow Ranch on September 11 (AR) was a first for that park, and was quite notable for the San Lorenzo Valley/Santa Cruz Mountains area of the county.

Fox Sparrows of the **Thick-billed form** were again found on Summit Ridge near Loma Prieta, with observations of 1-3 at several locations starting September 17 (AR). This plus Alex's observations from last winter suggest this form is likely regular in winter in this higher-elevation, chaparral-dominated part of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A **Slate-colored Fox Sparrow** was also near Loma Prieta on September 22 (AR). Eight **White-throated**

Sparrows were reported starting October 4 (v.ob.) **Swamp Sparrows** turned up at the Homeless Garden on October 16, and in Wilder Ranch State Park on October 20 (AR). A colorful male **Summer Tanager** was in Live Oak on October 14 (GK). A **Dickcissel** by Antonelli Pond on October 10 was just the fifth record for Santa Cruz County (KJ, AF).

A **Bobolink** was noted at Younger Lagoon on September 21 (AR). Pajaro Dunes produced an **Orchard Oriole** on September 23 (AS, CS). A **Hooded Oriole** in Live Oak on September 25 was later than most for the county (SH). Five **Red Crossbills** near Loma Prieta on September 22 (AR) were the first in the county in almost a year; more appeared starting in late October. About a dozen **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were at various spots from September 17 to October 24 (v.ob.) Finishing out the sporadic finch reports, an **Evening Grosbeak** was near Loma Prieta on October 6 (AR), three flew over Glenwood Drive on October 7 (AR), and three flew over Lompico on October 8 (MY).

Cited Observers: Nanci Adams, Kumaran Arul, Jeff Blead, Theadora Block, Michael Bolte, Dawn Breese, Phil Brown, Hugo Ceja, Reef Corner, Larry Corridon, Mary Crouser, Matthew Dodder, Darren Dowell, David Ekdahl, John Ellis, Ally Finkel, Park Forman, Craig Fosdick, Aaron Gabbe, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Lauren Harter, Sharon Hull, Kent Johnson, Tim Jolly, Shearwater Journeys, Clay Kempf, Gary Kittleson, Kristen Kittleson, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Gary Martindale (GMa), James Maughn (JMa), Greg Meyer (GMe), Zack Mikalonis, Jane Mio (JMi), Bryan Mori, Shirley Murphy, Gallus Quigley, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Jeff Roisman, Steve Rovell, Christian Schwarz, Adam Searcy, Pete Sole', Louisa Squires, Simon Thornhill, David Vander Pluym, Connie Vigno, Jeff Wall (JWa), Randy Wardle, Blaize Wilkinson, Jim Williams (JWi), Matthew York, Gena Zolotar, v.ob. = various observers



Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Randy Wardle



American Redstart
- Lisa Sheridan



Brewer's Sparrow
- Christian Schwarz



Birders Needed!



Watsonville Wetlands Watch Docent Training Begins in January

The Watsonville Wetlands Watch 2016 Docent Training Program begins on January 20. Local experts will provide an inside look at the wetlands of Watsonville, with classes covering the cultural and natural history of the wetlands, including the birds and native plants. This fun and interesting 7-week program consists of Wednesday evening presentations and Saturday morning field trips, where students have the opportunity to visit little known areas of the wetlands.

The focus of docent training is to teach new docents how to facilitate student field trips and help connect kids to nature. Docents can also help with community events, work on art and other creative projects, propagate native plants, tend the native plant garden, perform water quality testing, bird counts, and more. There is a need for bilingual (Spanish/English) docents, but being bilingual is not a requirement. We can always use more birders on our docent team; there are lots of opportunities for birding docents.

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.

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Kathy Fieberling, at 831-345-1226 or email kathy@watsonvillewetlandswatch.com for details and to enroll.



Project Tierra: Help Us Survey Bird Populations

Project Tierra is a citizen science wetland biodiversity monitoring project in which students of all ages collect and record environmental data over the long-term to monitor the biodiversity and overall health of the Watsonville Wetlands. The overarching goal of Project Tierra is to provide ongoing data regarding water quality, plant populations, and bird populations to the scientific community that will inform wetland conservation and land management decisions in the Pajaro Valley. We are especially interested in using this data to evaluate the success of Watsonville Wetlands Watch restoration projects and guide the adaptive management of these lands.

We are looking for birders to help us conduct surveys around the Watsonville Sloughs. We have designed protocols and selected several locations in collaboration with members of the Santa Cruz Bird Club.

Volunteers are welcome to monitor on their own time or during organized Watsonville Wetlands Watch events. We offer bird monitoring orientations throughout the year that volunteers are welcome to attend as well as general support anytime.

Please contact Noëlle Antolin (Director of Education Programs, Watsonville Wetlands Watch) for more information: noelle@watsonvillewetlandswatch.org or 831-728-1156 ext. 5



Birds Return to the Live Oak Library!

Photography Exhibit January-February 2016

Sponsored By Friends Of Corcoran Lagoon Beach

The Friends of Corcoran Lagoon Beach invite adults and children to the Live Oak Library to enjoy photographs of the fantastic bird life at Corcoran Lagoon Beach.

The exhibit records a year of fascinating and sometimes unusual bird activity such as the enormous number of Snowy and Great Egrets that visited the lagoon this fall. For the second year, we will exhibit photographs at the Live Oak Library taken by one of our members, Keith Angell.

Egrets, White-faced Ibises, Common Mergansers - Keith Angell



The photographs will give viewers an amazing glimpse of the visiting species that feed and rest at the lagoon, the lagoon outflow, and the surf line.

The exhibit also tells the story of the permanent lagoon and beach residents that nest and raise their young right in our midst.

The windows of the Live Oak Library look out onto Corcoran Lagoon and the beach beyond—a perfect setting for library visitors to view the photographs and then to wander outside and discover the birds themselves!

For more information, please see foclb.weebly.com.

Egrets Hangout behind Library, Corcoran Lagoon - Lisa Larson





Birder's Notebook

The Silent Sailors of the Skies (Those Magnificent Pelicans)

I'll never forget the day I saw a miracle take place.
As I was walking along the bay,
I saw the beauty and grace of the
Silent Sailors of the Skies.
They made not a sound—and floated on by.
I stood very still just watching them,
with awe in my eyes.
The only thing that gave rhythm to my joy
was the beat of my heart.
They captured my soul as I became a part of them.
With angels' wings and smiling eyes—
they glided their way across the skies.
My mind became still as I entered
their world to fly among them.
They accepted me with their beauty and grace—
Our wing tips barely touched, just enough to say,
“You have a place here with us.”
We sailed on by—we didn't need need to make a sound.
When one of us was hurt and fell, we gathered 'round.
A broken wing—we couldn't mend it.
He couldn't fly—he couldn't bend it.
We stayed near him 'til someone attended.
I'll never forget that day—
I saw a miracle take place.
As I was walking along the bay,
I saw the beauty and grace of the
Silent Sailors of the Skies
With angels' wings and smiling eyes.
And they whispered to me as they drifted on by,
“We are many—we are one heart,
One mind, one nation—we fly as One Soul;
There is no separation.

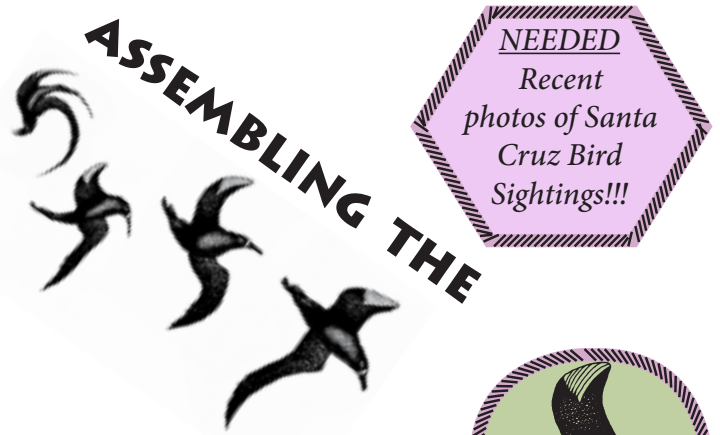
- *Callie*



New SCBC Members Welcome!

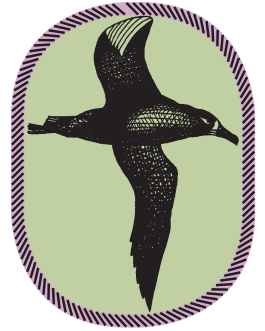
Nancy Richardson	Oct 2015
Desiree & David Mullian	Oct 2015
Janet Bryer	Nov 2015
Joan DeNeffe & Gary Silberstein	Dec 2015

Submission for the Albatross—Guidelines



ALBATROSS

Your participation is WELCOME!



White-faced Ibis, Shorebirds Pond - Lisa Fay Larson

SUBMISSIONS NEEDED!

**DEADLINE FOR
MAR-APR ISSUE**

**FEBRUARY 1,
2015**

In addition to regular features—calendar, Santa Cruz Birds, photos—the newsletter can include almost anything related to birding in general and to local birding in particular. Depending on space, submissions of any of the following are **needed**:

- Feature articles
- Birding event announcements
- Stories about birders, serious or comic
- Reviews of birding literature or guides
- Conservation & outreach reports/stories
- Birding tips, descriptions of local sites
- Filler tidbits: Quotes or images
- Photos of BIRDS or people at our events (jpg, tif)

If you wish to submit an article, please contact me about it **a couple of weeks before** the submission deadline.

I accept plain text, Word, or PDF files. Send items by email to: scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com

~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor

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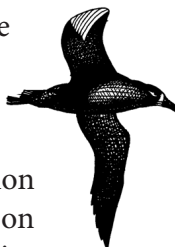


PARTING SHOT: "GOT YOUR NOSE!"
GREATER ROADRUNNER AND GROUND SQUIRREL - ANDY KNORR



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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.