



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

MY NAME IS NIJI



By Susan Schalbe

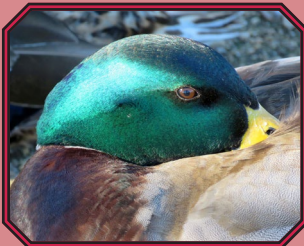
INSIDE Calendar of Events



The Bird School
Project

Seabirding Trips

Santa Cruz
Birds



Birder's
Notebook

PARTING SHOT

"My name is Niji. My eyes shine. My beads are becoming to me and my coat is very black. I raise my children in a hole in a tree. My young like to live there. They feed upon grasshoppers and flies. I live with my children. My red breast is becoming to me. I shout every summer and the people like to hear me. They all know my voice. I do not eat much pitch but I like acorns." So goes the description of Lewis's woodpeckers as described in an old Apache folk tale.


The Anglo-Saxon world first learned about these interesting woodpeckers from a report sent back from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Merriweather Lewis first described them in May 1806 when he found them what is now the vicinity of Kamiah, Idaho on the Clearwater River. His discovery led to the bird being named for him.

More recently, scientists discovered fossil evidence of Lewis's woodpeckers in the La Brea Tar Pits, dating their presence in the area back to at least the Pleistocene Era and showing that these birds were once resident in Southern California. It is believed that their habitat at that time was coastal live oak.

Lewis's Woodpeckers are the fourth largest North American woodpecker and are closely related to the more familiar Acorn Woodpecker. A beautiful bird, the Lewis's is on a list of concern by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as their numbers seem to be declining. Much of this decline is attributed to habitat loss as well as competition with other species for nesting sites.



Lewis' Woodpecker - Susan Schalbe



Because Lewis's Woodpeckers nest in cavities and because their beaks are not made for excavating in hard wood, they typically must rely on natural or abandoned tree cavities. They can make their own nesting cavities in trees with soft wood, such as a decaying tree, burned conifer or cottonwood trees. In addition these trees must be in an area that provides a ready source of insects that make up the main diet of these birds.

As those of you who have had the privilege of observing Lewis's Woodpeckers, these colorful avians do not probe for insects like other woodpeckers but rather act as flycatchers, chasing after airborne arthropods such as bees, wasps and beetles. They also capture ants and grasshoppers. These birds have also been seen catching and hoarding flies by putting them in crevices of pine trees. During the winter when fewer insects are available, they also find and store acorns as well as feed on commercially grown crops such as nuts, fruit and corn. About one third of their diet consists of acorns.

Lewis's Woodpeckers are monogamous and nest during the months of May through August. It is believed that their breeding coincides more with insect availability than with the traditional spring breeding season. Prior to mating, the male Lewis's may give wing-out displays and make chattering calls to attract a female. Frequently before mating begins, the female will briefly mount the male, a behavior that scientists believe is thought to signal to the male that she is ready to mate.

Both parents incubate their young and both develop brood patches. Males usually incubate at night with both parents taking turns during the day.



Lewis' Woodpecker - Beth Hamel



Lewis' Woodpecker - Andy Knorr

Once the chicks are hatched, the adults take turns feeding them by bringing them insects they have foraged. Young birds usually leave the nest after 4-5 weeks. The adults continue to feed the young for at least ten more days.

In the fall, loose flocks of adults and juveniles will form but little is known about the composition of these flocks. They are considered migratory and they frequently move from place to place during fall and winter as they search for food.

Though Lewis's Woodpeckers are found in California, they are not as

common as they once were. They prefer old growth woodlands, habitat that has been rapidly declining due to human interference. It is believed that their population has also been reduced by the arrival of European Starlings, which compete for nest sites. In the state of Washington, they were once fairly common but with development and fire suppression, they have been extirpated as a breeding species in the western part of the state. Their current range is from Northern California to western Washington to northwestern Montana and the mountains of Colorado.

Lewis' Woodpecker - Ron Wolf



SAVE THIS DATE
SEPTEMBER 23-24-25, 2016

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Fall migration promises birding at its best with over 250 species on the spectacular Central California Coast.

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*photo courtesy:
Chris Hartzell*

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Our Area!**



To find the latest information about birds in the Santa Cruz area, you may want to join the Monterey Bay Birders' Listserv: MBBIRDS.

To subscribe to this group, send an email to mbbirds+subscribe@googlegroups.com with the message "subscribe."

Turkey Vulture - Lisa Fay Larson

Events Calendar

March - April 2016



Friday, March 4
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 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: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Quail Hollow Bobcat - Michael Bolte



Sunday, March 6
Quail Hollow Ranch County Park

A leisurely hike through diverse habitats. No previous birding experience is necessary. The walk will be a short two to three hours.

Directions: Meet in the park's visitor center parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Leader: Eric Feuss, 831-477-0280



Friday, March 11
San Lorenzo River

We should find sparrows, diving ducks, and a mix of gulls, among other things. The trees around San Lorenzo Park and the County Building sometimes hold lingering wintering species so surprises are possible.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at San Lorenzo Park by the duck pond.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Nice grouping on the SLR: Snowy Egret/Common Mergansers - Lee Jaffe



Friday, March 18
Branciforte Creek

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

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

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280

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, March 19
San Mateo Bayfront and Coast

We'll visit Redwood Shores and Radio Road areas/ponds in the morning (2.1 ft. low tide at 5:17 AM and 7.7 ft. high tide 10:40 AM) and Half Moon Bay/Princeton Harbor in the afternoon. Itinerary may vary as we'll attempt to find any recent sightings provided on the SF Peninsula birding list server (peninsula-birding: digest.sialia.com) appropriate to these locations. Bring lunch for a full day's birding. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Meet at the County Government Center at 7:00 a.m. (near sign at Ocean Street parking entrance) for carpooling possibilities.

Leader: Eric Feuss, 831-477-0280 (h); 408-717-0421 (m). For alternate meeting arrangements, please call home phone and call ahead; mobile for day of trip only.



Violet-green Swallows, Quail Hollow - Jeff Bleam



Sunday, March 20
Pogonip

This walk should offer a mix of grassland and forest species, and some early spring migrants are a good possibility by this date. Expect a few miles of walking with some hills.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the north end of Spring Street, off High Street in Santa Cruz.

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



Pogonip Coyotes - Jeff Bleam



Friday, March 25
Neary Lagoon

We should find some spring migrants, in addition to the usual resident riparian and marsh birds, Wood Ducks, and others.

Directions: Meet at the west entrance (off Bay and California) at 8:00 AM. Note that parking is fairly limited in the immediate area.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Neary Lagoon - Lisa Sheridan



Saturday, March 26
Birding and Photography at Antonelli Pond

Join local birder and photographer Jeff Bleam for a casual walk with your camera and binoculars. Our focus for the day will be capturing photos of birds, plants, flowers, whatever your fancy—as we try and build a comfortable and carefree environment to take photos. Although this will not be a structured workshop, Jeff will be available for guidance and education.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM along Delaware Avenue at Antonelli Pond.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Friday, April 1
Arana Gulch

The grassland, oaks, riparian, and larger cypresses and eucalyptus here often have a good mix of bird species. Portions of the park will likely be inaccessible due to construction of new pathways, but so far it has been possible to bird here without too much disruption or noise, so we will give it a try.

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 and Hagemann).

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Red-tailed Hawk, dark-morph, Arana Gulch - Lisa Fay Larson



Sunday, April 3
Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch
County Park

This park is a little over one hour from Santa Cruz. Paired and courting Western Grebes can be seen, along with American White Pelicans, and Common Mergansers. The dam can have Canyon Wren and White-throated Swift. The oak grasslands can have Lewis's Woodpecker, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Bald Eagle (nesting), Golden Eagle, and quite a few Western Bluebird pairs. The trip will begin with a few car stops along the reservoir prior to ending with an approximate five mile easy-to-moderate hike, at a birder's pace, starting at the dam.

Directions: Meet at 6:45 AM at the Aptos Wells Fargo Bank for carpooling or at 8:00 AM at the Mendoza entrance (directions at sccgov.org/sites/parks/parkfinder/Pages/CoyoteLake). There will be a \$6 entrance fee once we enter the main entrance (not the Mendoza entrance).

Leader: Eric Feuss 831-477-0280 (h); 408-717-0421 (m). For alternate meeting arrangements, please call home phone and call ahead; mobile for day of trip only.



Friday, April 8
DeLaveaga Park

In addition to resident forest species (probably several types of woodpeckers, lots of Pygmy Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, etc.), summer residents may just be arriving, including Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers and others, and maybe some interesting spring migrants. Expect a couple of miles of walking with some hills.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the trail head at the north end of Park Way (the section to the north of Highway 1), off Prospect Heights. Note that parking is limited in this area. There are a few parking spaces in a dirt lot by the park entrance, but these can be difficult (or prohibitive!) for low-clearance vehicles. There is usually some on-street parking along Prospect Heights and on nearby side streets. Carpooling is suggested.

Leader: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280

Steller's Jay - Christian Schwarz





Friday, April 15
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: Jeff Bleam, 831-477-0280



Western Kingbird - Lisa Sheridan



Saturday, April 16
Beginning Birding at Natural Bridges State Park

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



Sunday, April 17
Mount Hamilton/San Antonio Valley (Road)/ Mines Road

Targeted species include Lewis's Woodpecker; Costa and Black-chinned Hummingbirds; Greater Roadrunner; Western Kingbirds and possibly Cassin's Kingbird; Western Bluebirds; Phainopepla; Rufous-crowned, Bell's and Lark Sparrows; and more. There will also be many wildflowers. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day of birding. The morning portion will involve some hiking at a birding pace. If temperatures are warm, we may attempt Mines Road (narrow canyon) in the afternoon from San Antonio Valley down into Livermore.

Directions: Meet at the Santa Cruz Government Center, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, at 6:30 AM for carpooling. Meet near the center's sign, when entering parking lot from Ocean Street. Otherwise, please meet at the Twin Gates parking area of Joseph D. Grant County Park, right before the Smith Creek Cal-Fire Station at 8:00 AM.

Leader: Eric Feuss, 831-477-0280 (h); 408-717-0421 (m). For alternate meeting arrangements, please call home phone and call ahead; mobile for day of trip only.



Friday, April 22
West Branch 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.

Directions: Meet at the intersection of Harkins Slough Road and Lee Road at 8:00 AM. Parking is limited.

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



Common Goldeneye - Jeff Bleam



Saturday, April 23
Seacliff State Beach

This trip will start by scoping the sea and shore above the cement ship for a variety of species. Then depending on activity we might take a stroll out to Aptos Creek mouth along the beach, or if conditions are poor along the coast, we can check out the Porter-Sesnon area.

Directions: Meet at 7:30 AM in the parking lot above the cliff at Seacliff State Beach. From Highway 1 take the State Park Drive exit, make a right and continue to the State Park kiosk. The day use fee is \$10.

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



Friday, April 15
Natural Bridges State Park

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

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

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



American Kestrel, overlook at Seacliff State Beach - Lisa Fay Larson

Catio Tour (cat-ē-ō)

Thursday, April 7th: Tai Moses will read from her great book *Zooburbia*: taimoses.com/zooburbia/ and there will be a short presentation by Rebecca Dmytryk, President and CEO of Wildlife Emergency Services!

Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, 2200 7th Ave., Santa Cruz

Saturday, April 9th: *At catios all around the county!*

A catio is an enclosed space for domestic cats to enjoy fresh air and sunlight, without negatively impacting the surrounding environment. Catio can range from a screened window box all the way up to a catwalk from an attic window out to a screened gazebo. Catios keep birds safe from cats and cats safe from predators and other wildlife encounters!

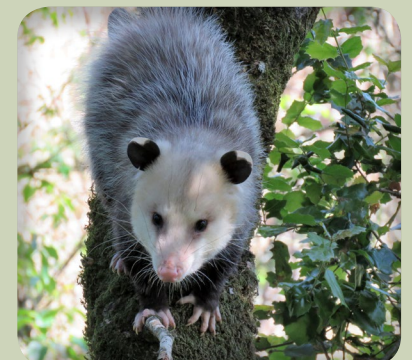


Coyote, Bobcat, Opossum
- Lisa Fay Larson



Native Animal Rescue and the **Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter**, with support from the **Santa Cruz Bird Club**, will be hosting an informational evening of the domestic/wildlife interface and a Saturday tour of local catios.

Watch for more events at scanimalshelter.org or join our e-news lists and have shelter news delivered monthly right to your inbox!





The Bird School Project

The Bird School Project is an experiential environmental education organization based in Santa Cruz, CA. Our goal is to provide students and the community at large with meaningful and informative lessons about birds and conservation science in order to help people gain an understanding and appreciation of their local avifauna. We believe that students and teachers can develop a scientific understanding and appreciation for their local environment through training in natural history field methods and outdoor experiential learning focused on birds. We are confident that such learning can take place just outside the doors of our places of school, work, and home.

Our Story

Started in the Fall of 2014 as an educational bike tour of the California coast, The Bird School Project has been dedicated to providing meaningful bird education to California students on a large scale. The founders, Kevin Condon and Darrow Feldstein are graduates of the UCSC Environmental Studies program and through their studies, developed a

deep appreciation for studying the natural world. Along with interns from UCSC, Kevin and Darrow offer 5-week life science units to 5th-8th graders.

How is this program different from other environmental education programs?

We have found there to be a wealth of environmental education programs here in California. There are countless outdoor science schools and environmentally-focused curricula for teachers is developing each year. However, we believe there is a lack of work being done to get students learning basic observation and identification skills and further, a lack of focus on local ecology. BSP brings naturalists into classrooms to teach these important skills and knowledge without having to organize transportation to far-flung parks and preserves. This is where nature study begins. And it is our hope that we can build continuity with other environmental organizations that do get students out into those more wild places.



Future Birders!

Please find more information about our program at: birdschoolproject.com.



SCBC OFFICERS NEEDED!

Web Master for santacruzbirdclub.org

The Bird Club is looking for someone to take over the position of **Web Master**. If you are interested, please contact Barry McLaughlin at barry@coincidence.net.



Membership & Circulation Officer

Our current officer, David Ekdahl, is stepping down and we need a new **Membership & Circulation Officer**. David has been the SCBC Membership Officer for a little over 27 years! If you are interested in filling this office, please contact David at dek Dahl49@comcast.net

Condor-sized thanks to Barry and David for devoting their time in service to the Santa Cruz Bird Club!

The Santa Cruz Bird Club and Museum of Natural History would like to **THANK** the *San Lorenzo River Walk Series* guides: Nanci Adams, Bernadette and Bob Ramer, Eric Feuss, Sharon Hull, Bonnie Bedzin, and Shantanu Phukan!

We are also very grateful to the **California Department Of Fish And Wildlife, Santa Cruz** for its generous grant to the Museum of Natural History so that it may continue to promote this series!

Remember to check the SCBC website for announcements, calendar events/updates, and meetings



The Albatross Needs YOUR Contribution!

Please help to keep your SCBC newsletter running along!
Your stories, photos, book reviews, tips, quotes, poems,
artwork—all things bird-related are NEEDED!



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.

2016 MONTEREY SEABIRD TRIPS

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

Saturday March 19th through Sunday October 23rd

Additional dates may be added. Please check montereybayseabirds.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 invites members and friends of the Santa Cruz Bird Club to help us celebrate our 41st year of pelagic trips along the central coast of California! Excellent and friendly leaders with worldwide seabirding experience will be on board. On offer this fall we have some 24 pelagic trips departing from Monterey (14 trips), Half Moon Bay (8 trips) and Sausalito to the Farallon Islands (2 trips), spanning July 29th through October 9th. If you have never visited the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, you owe it to yourself to see this

fabulous breeding seabird colony—the largest on the West coast, south of Alaska. Enjoy a unique view of the Golden Gate Bridge as we sail underneath it. Discounts are available for all trips. **Please see our web site:** shearwaterjourneys.com and blog: shearwaterjourneys.blogspot.com for more details. Contact Debi, a Life Member of the Santa Cruz Bird Club: debi@shearwaterjourneys.com.



Pink-footed Shearwater - Beth Hamel



Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

Including reports from November 1 to December 31, 2015

Rarity highlights this period included the first Royal Tern in the county in many years, and an apparently late migrant Virginia's Warbler. Irruptive movements brought good numbers of Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins to Santa Cruz County, plus just a few Evening Grosbeaks. Other irregular species including Varied Thrush and American Goldfinch were noted to be relatively sparse through early winter. Somewhat above-average rainfall in November and December brought some improvement to the drought-diminished wetland habitats in the Pajaro Valley and elsewhere by late in the period.



Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** commuted between Aptos Creek mouth and nearby Polo Grounds Park through the period (RW, JE). There were also up to five in Struve Slough November 29-30 (SG, EFe, DSt), and one at College Lake on December 27 (AR). Up to 5 **Snow Geese** visited



*Greater White-fronted Geese
Gadwall x Mallard Duck
- John Ellis*

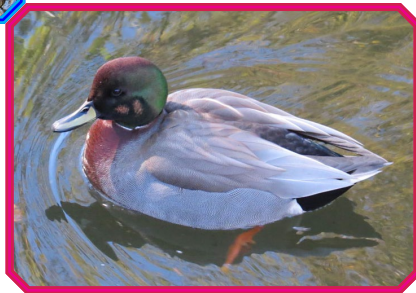
Struve Slough from November 28-December 5 (DSt, v.ob.), and two were in north coast fields near Davenport on November 30 (MWE). Among several **Cackling Goose** reports, the largest number found was 19 in fields west of Watsonville on December 27 (AR). A **Brant** flying up the coast off Wilder Ranch on November 17 was the only one reported this period (JB). A female **Eurasian Wigeon** was carefully studied in Struve Slough on November 29 (JG, AR, KG). A male **Gadwall X Mallard hybrid**, assumed to be the same individual that has wintered in the mid-county area since 2012 (details in photos appear to match), was back for a fourth winter. It visited Aptos Creek mouth from December 1-3 (JE), then Baldwin Creek mouth on December 19 (AR).

Canvasbacks are fairly rare in Santa Cruz County away from the Pajaro Valley, so one female moving between Scott Creek mouth and Swanton Pond starting November 12 was relatively noteworthy (KJ, SP, v.ob.) A

Redhead on Shorebirds Pond at Pajaro Dunes was noted on December 1 (JB). A female **Black Scoter** was on the ocean off Aptos Creek mouth on November 18 (NL), and one was there again on December 27 (PS). A **Long-tailed Duck** was along the coast between La Selva and Manresa State Beach on November 26 (AR). **Red-necked Grebe** numbers were somewhat above average this period, with multiple reports involving probably 7-8 individuals starting November 28 (v.ob.) One in Struve Slough on November 21 (DSt), and one in Schwan Lake December 5-25 (AR, SH, v.ob.) were out of their usual saltwater habitat.

Single **Laysan Albatross** were noted from repositioning cruises crossing the far offshore portion of the county waters on November 11 (BC, JoS, et al.) and December 1 (JuS). The boat party for the Santa Cruz County CBC (Christmas Bird Count) found a **Flesh-footed Shearwater** on December 19 (AR, NL), though outside of the count circle. A **Fork-tailed Storm Petrel** was spotted from a whale watching boat on November 27 (LSm, NS). A flock of fourteen **American**

White Pelicans flying off West Cliff Drive on November 28 (JW) were a rare sight away from the Pajaro Valley.



*Cattle Egrets: Left, Pajaro Dunes
- Lisa Larson
Right, Jade Street Park - David Sidle*



Antonelli Pond's **American Bittern** continued until at least December 19 (LG, MD, EL, v.ob.). Up to two **Cattle Egrets** were noted at Pajaro Dunes December 15-18 (DN, SH, v.ob.), then two turned up at Jade Street Park in Capitola on December 19 (PFe, v.ob.), with one staying around until December 24. A flock of 14 **White-faced Ibis** flying over Lighthouse Field on November 21 were presumably very late fall migrants (AIG). Others were present in usual spots in the Pajaro Valley through the period.

Oddly out of habitat was a **Northern Harrier** flying over redwoods and chaparral in Bonny Doon on November 29 (BB). At least two adult and one juvenile **Bald Eagle** continued in the Pajaro Valley through November (v.ob.). Sadly, one adult was found dead near Struve Slough on December 6 (fide GK), but one adult continued in that area through the period. Three Bald Eagles (2 adults, 1 immature) were found at Loch Lomond during coverage for the Santa Cruz County CBC on December 19 (EFe, Efo, et al.). **Ferruginous Hawks** included at least two different birds seen off and on in north coast grassland (LSh, AG, v.ob.), plus one at Pajaro Dunes on November 29 (AR, JG, KG). **Common Gallinules** away from their usual Pajaro Valley sites were along the San Lorenzo River on November 11 (GK), and at Neary Lagoon on November 26 (SG, MC).

Wandering Tattlers have been rare or absent in winter in recent years in the county, so one along West Cliff Drive on December 31 (PC) was of note. A **Red Knot** continued to be seen off and on along the Wilder Ranch coast through the period (STh, KA, v.ob.), and presumably the same individual also wandering further down the coast in December, with reports as far as Twin Lakes Beach and Black Point. A **Pigeon Guillemot**, rare in the county in winter, was off the Live Oak

coast on December 19 (CK). A **Parasitic Jaeger** off West Cliff Drive on November 15 was later than most for the county (SG, BR, RR). Single **Black-legged Kittiwakes** were picked out of gull flocks at the San Lorenzo River mouth on December 2 (BR, LG, NL), and on Twin Lakes State Beach on December 22 (AR). Among the best finds this winter was a **Royal Tern**, photographed as it was with the gull flock at Twin Lakes State Beach on December 21 (RT), the first recorded in the county since the late 1980s.

Perhaps as a result of warm water conditions, Royal Terns have been seen at a number of Northern California spots, where they are unexpected, this winter. **Elegant Terns**, which normally leave in November, stayed rather late this season, with moderate numbers still around in early December. The last report was one at Seabright Beach on December 13 (AR).

Henry Cowell's **Red-naped Sapsucker** continued through the period (AW, JW, v.ob.). At least two **Tropical Kingbirds** continued to wander the Watsonville Slough system through the period, with reports ranging from Pajaro Dunes to the upper reaches of Struve Slough (GM, NA, RH, MH, v.ob.) **Loggerhead Shrikes** included two in the Soda Lake area on December 12 (AR), and one at Pajaro Dunes from December 18-29 (KJ, SP, RW, v.ob.).

Barn Swallows, rare but regular in early winter in recent years, included one at Swanton Pond on December 5 (PS), 3 over College Lake on December 12 (AR), and one at Struve Slough on December 28 (AB). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was a highlight on the summit of Santa Rosalia Mountain in the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park on November 28 (AR).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** was in Bethany Curve Park on December 17 (MS). A wintering **Nashville Warbler** visited west Santa Cruz yards near Meder



*Juvenile Bald Eagle, Struve Slough
- Lee Jaffe*



Red Knot - Beth Hamel



Black & White Warbler - Jeff Bleam

Canyon off and on through the period (STh, KA), and one was at Schwan Lake on December 31 (SG, MC). The rarest warbler for this period was a well-described **Virginia's Warbler** that visited a Watsonville suet feeder November 30-December 1 (HS). A few more **Palm Warblers** turned up in November (v.ob.), bringing the fall migrant total to 7-8, still a low fall total for this species. In December, Palm Warblers



Field on November 29 (JG, AR). A **Lark Sparrow** visited Moore Creek Preserve on November 2 (STh). **Fox Sparrows** of the Slate-colored form were in the summit area on November 29 (STe, LT), and two were near Loma Prieta on December 6 (AaG). A **Thick-billed Fox Sparrow** was near Loma Prieta on November 27 (AR). Both these forms seem to be at least locally regular as wintering birds in some higher parts of the Santa Cruz Mountains. **Slate-colored**

Juncos turned up at Natural Bridges on December 12 (Shirley Murphy), and

in the summit area on December 20 (STe, LT, RT). **White-throated Sparrow** reports in November and December totaled about 26 different individuals. A **Green-tailed Towhee** had returned for its second winter to the UCSC Farm by December 18 (JB, v.ob.)

A pair of **Great-tailed Grackles**, rare in the county away from the Pajaro Valley, visited downtown Santa Cruz on November 3 (GK, CS), and a lone male (perhaps the male of that pair) turned up outside a bakery a bit farther east in Santa Cruz on November 7 (JE). A late (or wintering) female/immature **Bullock's Oriole** visited a west Santa Cruz yard on November 15 (MS). An unseen oriole chattering near DeLaveaga Park

on December 7 was most likely also a Bullock's (SG). A fairly substantial irruption of **Red Crossbills** was evident by early November. A high count of about 80 along the San Lorenzo River on November 5 (SG, MC) seemed to represent a convergence of migrant flocks, probably seeking water. Good numbers of crossbills continued through the period, though by late November a majority of reports were

turned up at Wilder Ranch on December 9 (BK), Natural Bridges on December 14 (SG, MC), and in another part of Wilder Ranch on December 20 (AR). **Hermit Warblers** were noted along the Capitola coast on November 28 (DK), in the Ben Lomond/



Boulder Creek area on December 19, and at Anna Jean Cummings Park, also on December 19 (LSh).

Late fall **Chipping Sparrows** included two at Antonelli Pond on November 1 (PFO), and one near Lighthouse



Lark Sparrow top center - Jeff Bleam

Pine Siskins:

Above left - Lisa Fay Larson

Center - Jeff Bleam

Right - One of these Pine Siskins is leucistic - Pete Solé



from inland and mountain areas. Evidence from recordings and spectrograms indicated that almost all seemed to be the small-billed “Type 3” or “Western Hemlock Red Crossbills” (AR), and many were noted feeding largely on this season’s good crop of redwood seeds. There was also a strong influx of **Pine Siskins**, with a high count of at least 250 in Henry Cowell State Park on November 29 (JW). Single **Evening Grosbeaks** turned up in Soquel on November 6 (AaG), near Loma Prieta on November 23 and December 6 (GZ, AaG), and in Soquel on December 20 (AaG).

Cited Observers: Nanci Adams, Kumaran Arul, Bonnie Bedzin, Jeff Bleam, Abe Borker, Barbara Carlson, Paul Clapham, Mary Crouser, Matthew Dodder, John Ellis, Eric Feuss (EFe), Paul Fenwick (PFe), Park Forman (PFo), Elisabeth Forrest (EFo), Aaron Gabbe (AaG), Alexander Gaguine (AlG), John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Kaleb Goff, Lois Goldfrank, Mary Horn, Robert Horn, Sharon Hull, Kent Johnson, Clay Kempf, Bryan Kett, Gary Kittleson, David Kodl, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Gary Martindale, Shirley Murphy, Dave Nickerson, Shantanu Phukan, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Christian Schwarz, Michelle Scott, David Sidle (DSi), Lisa Sheridan (LSh), Logan Smith (LSm), Nick Smith, Pete Sole’, Justin Stahl (JuS), Howard Stephenson, John Sterling (JoS), David Styer (DSt), Linda Terrill, Ryan Terrill, Scott Terrill (STe), Simon Thornhill (STh), Randy Wardle, Megan Werdmuller von Elgg (MWE), Anne Williams, Jim Williams, Gena Zolotar, v.ob. = various observers

Green-tailed Towhee - Lisa Fay Larson
Cattle Egret - Jeff Bleam



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Birder's Notebook

Haiku Corner - Seasonal Musings

Searching the garden
Sparrows pick up seeds as rain
Tumbles off their backs.

-Jerry Busch

Somehow the singing
Turns me around: the titmouse
Shining eye on me.

-Jerry Busch

Dusk dims the wet canyon
Owl calls from sentinel pine
Mate swoops in: duet

-Suzanne (Surrey) Kent

Heavy limbs brush sky
Mother Redwood, the old soul—
Birds embraced within.

-Lisa Fay Larson



Great-horned Owl at dusk - Andy Knorr





Green Bough

(a capella song)

Keep a green bough in your heart
and a songbird will come
She will sing a song of morning
long before the night is done
She will come, have faith, she'll come

And tho' that bough is young and tender
it will hold that bird on high
and when your heart surrenders
she will teach you how to fly
She will come, have faith, she'll come

This bird doesn't have a message
tho' each note is pure and strong
and in her elegant abandon
She sings her simple song

And tho' that bough is young and tender
it will hold that bird on high
and when your heart surrenders
she will teach you how to fly
She will come, have faith, she'll come
She will come, have faith, she'll come

-LWmson



Remembering Janet Linthicum

- By Susan Stirling

Janet Linthicum, a long time member of the Santa Cruz birding community, recently passed away at the young age of 55 after a seven year battle with early onset Alzheimer's disease.

In November she was honored with the 2015 Raptor Research Foundation Tom Cade Award which recognizes an individual who has made significant advances in the area of captive propagation and reintroduction of raptors (raptorresearchfoundation.org).

Janet thought it a privilege to be a participant under the leadership of the late Brian J. Walton as part of the science-based section of the highly respected UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group for twenty years. She was one of the early pioneers in the captive propagation of raptors and with her colleagues developed innovative techniques to hatch hundreds if not thousands of thin-shelled Peregrine Falcon eggs for the release of the chicks into the wild.

The SCPBRG was key to the work which led to the recovery of the Peregrine Falcon population from near extinction due to DDE-induced (Dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene) eggshell thinning which had nearly decimated the wild population. During those critical years SCPBRG released many hundreds of young Peregrine Falcons to the wild, from both captive and wild-laid eggs which had been safely hatched in their laboratory. In the lab Janet cared for the captive population of endangered raptors and their offspring, largely Peregrine Falcons, and maintained behavioral observations and breeding management where the young captive and wild endangered birds were incubated, hatched, and cared for. The propagation and release program also included Harris's Hawks, Aplomado Falcons, and Elf Owls, among other species. Careful incubation techniques were devised in the SCPBRG propagation lab which are still employed by others in wildlife recovery today.

The Peregrine Falcon was removed from the endangered list on August 29, 1999. An ironic bookend is that many years later Janet oversaw a post-delisting survey of Peregrine Falcons in California for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Janet's fieldwork included pioneering studies in Peregrine Falcon nesting behavior and Peregrine Falcon manipulations and re-introductions. She also participated in projects involving other endangered or threatened species; Bald Eagle ecology in California and Arizona, and California Condor tracking and provisioning through Audubon.

In her career Janet authored, edited and collaborated with colleagues on dozens of scholarly documents and publications. She was also a contributing author in *Return of the Peregrine: A North American Saga of Tenacity and Teamwork*.

Janet was a natural teacher and often shared wonderful, often entertaining stories about birds and the wilderness. Our local birding community and her colleagues, institutions and researchers around the world will remember this unique, intelligent and wickedly witty woman.



Peregrine Falcons - Lisa Fay Larson





Submission for the Albatross—Guidelines



NEEDED
Recent photos of Santa Cruz Bird Sightings!!!



ALBATROSS

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

New SCBC Members Welcome!

Brandon Diniz	Dec 2015
Laura Elling	Dec 2015
Susan Giddings	Dec 2015
John Click	Jan 2016
Dorothy Franks	Jan 2016
Dona Elliott	Feb 2016



Heerman's Gull - Lisa Fay Larson

Submissions NEEDED!

DEADLINE for
May-Aug issue

April 1 2016

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P.O. Box 1304
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Bird Club website
santacruzbirdclub.org

OFFICERS

President

Phil Brown (831) 334-4249
pdpbrown@gmail.com

Bird Records

Steve Gerow
stephengerow@aol.com

Programs - Vacant

Field Trips

Nick Levendosky
n.levendosky@gmail.com

Conservation

Lisa Sheridan
trotrider@aol.com

Treasurer

Kent Johnson
kentjohnson@hotmail.com

Hospitality

Nickie Zavinsky
nickiezee@yahoo.com

Outreach

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

Membership & Circulation

David Ekdahl (831) 335-5742
dek Dahl49@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: "SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED"
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PHOTO BIG DAY, APRIL 19 2015 - GLEN TEPKE



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



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