



# Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

## THE SANTA CRUZ BIRD BREEDING ATLAS PROJECT

By Alex Rinkert

**H**ave you ever wondered where a particular bird species breeds in Santa Cruz County, or how large its breeding population is? Or what its nest is constructed of, and when its young fledge in the county? And have you ever wondered how breeding bird populations in the county have changed over the last few decades? For some species, the answers are out there. Although overall the summarized, published information available is diminutive. Having a current, comprehensive resource would be beneficial to all who have an interest in the county's breeding birds and those involved in management and conservation of their populations.

A common approach to creating such a resource is to publish a breeding bird atlas. A breeding bird atlas is a compendium of information about the breeding birds in a region, usually a state or county. Many California counties have breeding bird atlases, including neighboring Monterey, Santa Clara, and San Mateo County. An atlas describes the breeding distribution and abundance, breeding phenology (timing of breeding events), and local life history of each breeding species found in the region of interest.

These monumental projects call on the expertise of birders to find breeding evidence for all birds breeding in the region. Birders record breeding evidence using a standardized set of breeding codes, much like those found in eBird. After several years of collecting data, the results are summarized and discussed in a publication. From start to finish, collecting enough data and publishing an atlas takes several years and countless hours of work, yet an atlas is an indispensable resource that can be used for establishing conservation priorities and for fostering a stronger birding community.

*American Kestrels,  
Schwan Lake  
- John Ellis*

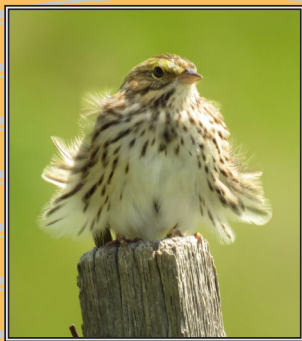


In 1987,  
David Suddjian  
and the Santa  
Cruz birding

### INSIDE

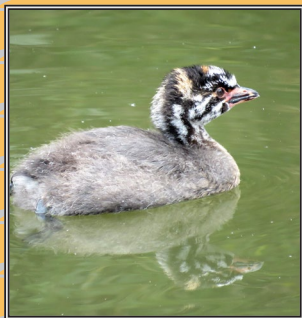
#### Calendar of Events

#### WHAT TIME IS IT?



#### Santa Cruz Birds

#### Seabirding Trips



#### Birder's Notebook

#### PARTING SHOT

Savannah Sparrow,  
Pied-billed Grebe juvenile - Lisa Larson

community embarked on Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas. Many exciting and important discoveries resulted from the seven year project.

Now, 30 years later, the Santa Cruz Bird Club will sponsor the pilot year of the Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas II. The project will strive to:

1. Create a current, comprehensive resource that summarizes the distribution, abundance, breeding phenology, and life histories of all Santa Cruz County breeding birds for birders, conservationists, land planners, government agencies and others.

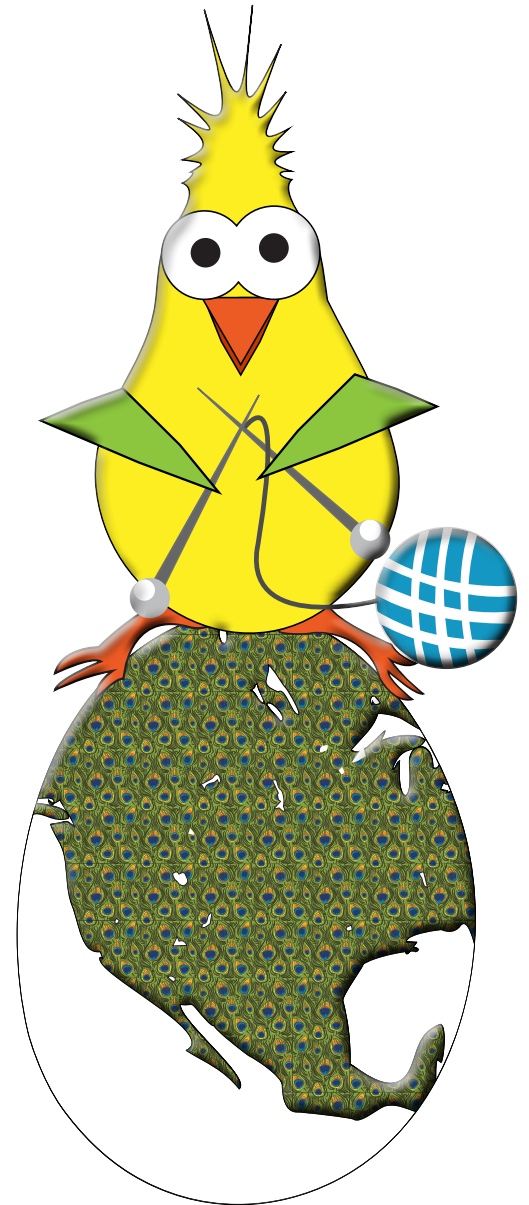
2. Establish a second benchmark of data on our breeding bird populations so changes in the past 30 years can be described.

3. Identify vulnerable breeding bird species and bird communities so that informed conservation priorities can be established.

4. Invigorate the birding community through enrichment and purposeful birding.

2017 will serve as the pilot year for this multi-year project, and field work has already begun! We are looking for birders interested in helping with field work for the atlas. Birders of all skill levels are invited to join the effort. This spring and summer Alex Rinkert will lead biweekly field trips to train birders how to find and record breeding evidence. If you wish to participate in field work during the pilot year, it is highly recommended that you attend at least one atlas field trip.

If you have questions about the project or wish to participate in something other than field work, please write to one of the following:  
**Alex Rinkert (Project Coordinator):** arinkert12@comcast.net  
**Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas Steering Committee:** santacruzbbba@gmail.com



Illustration, "Expecting"  
- Lisa Fay Larson

*American Bitterns, Pinto Lake*

*Frame 1 (left) - male is "booming"*

*Other frames left to right - male displays his "epaulets" and advances to copulate with female.*

*- Lisa Fay Larson*





# SANTA CRUZ BIRD BREEDING ATLAS PROJECT FIELD TRIPS

MAY	JUNE	JULY
<p><b>May 5</b>  <b>Struve Slough</b>  <b>7:30-11:00 AM</b>            Meet at the corner of Harkins Slough Road and Lee Road across from Pajaro Valley High School.</p>	<p><b>June 2</b>  <b>Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park</b>  <b>7:30-11:00 AM</b>            Meet at the main entrance to the park on Highway 9 in Felton.</p>	<p><b>July 7</b>  <b>Wilder Ranch State Park</b>  <b>7:30-11:00 AM</b>            Meet at the main parking lot. Free parking is located along Highway 1 east of the main entrance.</p>
<p><b>May 20</b>  <b>Baldwin Creek</b>  <b>7:30-11:00 AM</b>            Meet at the Four Mile Beach parking area on Highway 1, approximately four miles up the coast from Western Drive x Mission Street.</p>	<p><b>June 17</b>  <b>Pajaro Dunes</b>  <b>7:30-11:00 AM</b>            Meet at the coastal end of West Beach Road outside the Palm Beach parking lot and Pajaro Dunes gate.</p>	<p><b>July 15</b>  <b>Neary Lagoon</b>  <b>7:30-11:00 AM</b>            Meet at the California Street entrance near Bay Avenue.</p>



*Osprey, Harkins Slough  
 - Andy Knorr*



*American Avocets  
 - Lisa Fay Larson*



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SANTA CRUZ BIRD CLUB PRESIDENT

Dear Santa Cruz Bird Club Members,

It's been an honor to serve as President of the Board this 2016-2017 year. I've had the privilege to work with a particularly committed, informed and creative group of Board Members who have all shown great passion and done hard work for their individual positions as officers.

My hope for the Santa Cruz Bird Club has been to become both a resource link for and from our birding community. Providing an information channel to our members for updates and even a resource for our city and county agencies has taken us some time, but I believe we have made some great strides this year.

I wanted to give you all a sense of what we have been up to, so below is a short list of some of our accomplishments:

- Instituted a new system for membership renewal and donations through an online PayPal account
- Incorporated an online email system to reach our bird club members using Mail Chimp
- Incorporated a new "Conservation" page into our website which allows our members to see our board letters sent to City, County or State Agencies as they relate to birds and bird habitat concerns
- Added a page to our website which lists a calendar for conservation-related events to inform interested Santa Cruz Bird Club members

And currently we are:

- Revising the SCBC website design
- Updating and revising Santa Cruz Bird Club Bylaws and job descriptions of all board members
- Beginning the "Pilot Year" of a long-awaited Breeding Bird Atlas for Santa Cruz County via collection of data in the field

As our membership year comes to a close in May, our existing board is already making plans to continue in our same capacities for another year. We do look forward to having you all renew your memberships and look forward to seeing you all at the next bird club event.

In order to maintain the highest level of participation we need to encourage memberships.

Please join me in asking at least one person to join the club this year so we can continue our goals of community outreach, social activities and conservation goals.

Please, contact me anytime if you have ideas you want to share about how to improve any aspect of our club!

Thank you for allowing me to serve as President of the Santa Cruz Bird Club.

Best Regards,

*Lisa Sheridan*  
trotrider@aol.com

*Osprey - Jeff Roisman*



## THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT IS CREATING A STRATEGIC PLAN!

PLEASE, ATTEND ONE OF THE COUNTY PARK PLANNING MEETINGS BELOW AND ADVOCATE FOR THE BIRDS!

PLEASE GO TO THE PARK WEBSITE AND TAKE THE SURVEY! NOW IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO RANK PRIORITIES: [scparks.com/Home/Parks/StrategicPlan](http://scparks.com/Home/Parks/StrategicPlan)

WE HIGHLY ENCOURAGE THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES:

1. ADD "BIRDING" AS AN ACTIVITY IN OUR PARKS IN THE "COMMENTS" SECTIONS.
2. RANK "IMPROVING MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES" AS A **HIGH PRIORITY**.
3. ADD YOUR CONCERNS IN "COMMENTS" ABOUT EROSION AND SAFETY ISSUES FROM OFF-ROAD BIKES AND OTHER "ACTIVE SPORTS IN OPEN SPACE AND SENSITIVE BIRD AREAS".

*If attending a meeting is not possible, a personal email or letter to Will Fourt would be very important.* (Please see information below.)

### PUBLIC MEETINGS:

Community Meeting Day and Time	Location
Wednesday, April 26, 6:30 PM	Ben Lomond: Highlands County Park
Thursday, April 27, 6:30 PM	Watsonville: Civic Center Community Room
Tuesday, May 2, 6:30 PM	Davenport: Pacific Elementary School
Saturday, May 6, 10:00 AM	Aptos: Aptos Village Park
Thursday, May 11, 6:30 PM	Live Oak: Community Room, Simpkins Family Swim Center

Visit [www.surveymonkey.com/r/SCParksStratPlan](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SCParksStratPlan) for updates throughout the process.

**Contact our Park Planner, Will Fourt:** [will.fourt@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:will.fourt@santacruzcounty.us) or 831-454-7910 with any questions or comments.

For an overview of the County Parks system, please see the [map](#) on our website.

*We look forward to your collaboration and thank you for your efforts in the community!*  
*Regards, Jeff Gaffney, Director, POSC, SC County*

**THIS IS REALLY  
IMPORTANT!**  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ONLY  
REVISES PLANS EVERY  
10-15 YEARS!

*Pinto Lake County Park  
- Lisa Fay Larson*



# EVENTS CALENDAR

May–August 2017



**Sunday, May 7**  
**Loma Prieta**

We will bird the chaparral ridge that divides Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County. Specialties we might see include Bell's and Black-chinned Sparrow, Purple Martin, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and other higher elevation montane breeders. We will look for hummingbirds, warblers, other land birds migrating over the ridge, and may encounter other types of migrants passing over. Weather here can be cold, hot, and windy all in one morning, so come prepared for changing conditions. Plan for 2-3 miles of mostly level walking

**Directions:** \*\*Soquel-San Jose Rd remains closed\*\* If heading north on Highway 17, take a right onto Summit Road. Continue on Summit Road (which turns into Highland Way past Soquel-San Jose Road) and turn left onto Mt. Bache Road. Follow Mt. Bache Road for about a mile to the Loma Prieta Way intersection; keep right here and continue heading uphill for three more miles. We will meet at the very wide pullout at the intersection of Loma Prieta Way and Summit/Mt. Madonna Road. Meet at 7:00 AM.

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



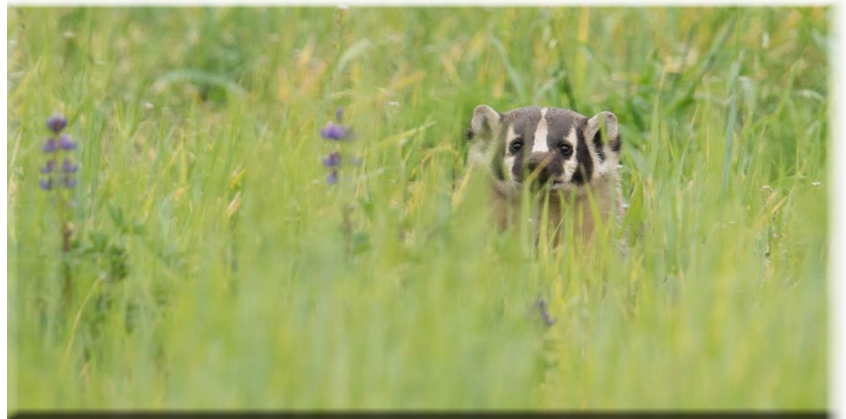
*Ash-throated Flycatcher, Loma Prieta -Randy Wardle*



**Saturday, May 13**  
**Backroads of San Benito County**

Bird the back roads of San Benito County including: Santa Anita, Quien Sabe, Panoche, and Brown's Valley Roads. This is a unique look at open grasslands, oak savannah, and the contiguous micro habitats. Possible species are Lark Sparrow, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Golden and Bald Eagles, Burrowing Owl, Phainopepla, Greater Roadrunner, as well as mammals such as badger, coyote, and bobcat. The wildflowers could be spectacular depending on the rain.

*Badger - San Benito County Backroads -Michael Bolte*



**Directions:** Meet in Tres Pinos, across the street from the US Post office on Hwy 25 next to Flapjacks Restaurant at 8:30 AM. Bring water and a snack. Scopes are useful at times. For those interested there is a chance for lunch on the outdoor terrace after birding at Flapjacks.

**Leader:** Nelson Samuels, samnelo@razzolink.com or 831-566-9026

*San Benito County Backroads -John Fox*





**Sunday, May 21**  
**Watsonville Care Park Nests**

Let's explore this great little riparian park along the Pajaro River while looking for a variety of bird nests including warblers, orioles, wrens, and other breeding birds. Who knows what may turn up this time of year?

**Directions:** Meet at Care Park in Watsonville off West Beach Road at 7:30 AM.

**Leader:** Nicholas Levendosky, [n.levendosky@gmail.com](mailto:n.levendosky@gmail.com)



*Tree Swallow, CARE Park*  
*-Michael Bolte*



**Thursday,**  
**SCBC Meeting @ 7:30 PM**  
**Speaker: Darrow Feldstein**  
**Topic: The Bird School Project**

The young birder revolution is upon us! Imagine a world where young people are engaged with our local birds and habitats, where more community members are informed citizen scientists, where schoolyards are birding hotspots.

Join local birder and environmental educator Darrow Feldstein for a look into his new and exciting schoolyard bird education program, The Bird School Project. Darrow studied natural history and education in the environmental studies department at UC Santa Cruz and since then, has set out on a mission to share the joys of birding with students all over the Monterey Bay area and beyond.

Along with co-founder Kevin Condon, Darrow and The Bird School Project team have taught birding workshops to over 4,000 students in less than 3 years. Hear inspiring stories, have a good laugh, and learn more about the birds we've been seeing locally. Learn about our plans for the future, some tips for engaging young people, and how to get involved with educating the next generation of birdwatchers, scientists, and environmental stewards.

Visit [birdschooleproject.org](http://birdschooleproject.org) and [facebook.com/birdschooleproject](https://facebook.com/birdschooleproject)

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



**Sunday, May 28**  
**Zayante Creek Trail**

We will visit the norther portion of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park along the Zayante Creek Trail. The riparian forest along the San Lorenzo River in the Felton area can be very productive, with Nuttall's Woodpecker, Western Wood Pewee, Swainson's Thrush, and Yellow Warbler among the regular breeding species. If time and energy allows, we might also look at the pine/oak/chaparral mix near the Henry Cowell campground, where Hermit Thrush and Black-throated Gray Warblers are some of the expected birds.

**Directions:** Meet at 7:30 AM the parking lot at Felton Faire shopping center, at the intersection of Graham Hill Road and Mt. Hermon Road, on the side of the lot closest to Graham Hill.

**Leader:** Phil Brown, 831-334-4249, [pdpbrown@gmail.com](mailto:pdpbrown@gmail.com)



*Western Wood Pewee - Lisa Fay Larson*



**Sunday, June 11**  
**Beginning Birding 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 8:00 AM at the Delaware road entrance to Natural Bridges.

**Leader:** Phil Brown, 831-334-4249, [pdpbrown@gmail.com](mailto:pdpbrown@gmail.com)



**Sunday, July 9**  
**Quail Hollow**

This park supports a unique assemblage of species for the Santa Cruz Mountains in part due to its diversity of habitats. We will seek birds of all kinds in grassland, oak woodland, redwood forest, the endemic sandhills, and riparian forest at the pond.

**Directions:** Meet at the main parking lot at 8:00 AM.

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



*Great Horned Owl, juvenile - Lee Jaffe*



**Sunday, July 23**  
**Meder Canyon**

A mixture birds toward the end of their breeding season, and maybe some early migrants.

**Directions:** Meet at 7:30 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.

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



**Sunday, August 13**  
**Beginning Birding 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 8:00 AM at the Delaware road entrance to Natural Bridges.

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

*Black-headed Grosbeak - Ron Wolf*

*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.*



**GO BIRDING AT THE LIVE OAK LIBRARY!  
PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT JUNE-JULY 2017  
LIVE OAK LIBRARY**

*Sponsored By Friends Of Corcoran Lagoon Beach*

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

The photo record taken by FOCLB member **Keith Angell** establishes the importance of Corcoran Lagoon Beach as a resting and feeding site for migratory species.

The photographs document the adaptability of the permanent lagoon and beach birds that feed, rest, and nest there throughout the year.

There will be a special display of photographs of the resident Killdeer family and its nesting story in the children's room of the library.

The windows of the Live Oak Library look out onto Corcoran Lagoon and the beach beyond.

Bring your binoculars! Follow up your visit with a walk outside the library!

For more photographs and information visit:  
**[foclb.weebly.com](http://foclb.weebly.com)**



*Killdeer chicks - Keith Angell*

*From top: Sanderlings,  
Marbled Godwit, & Willet - Keith Angell*



*Snowy Egrets - Keith Angell*





## DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?



Long-eared Owl - Andy Knorr

### It may be TIME to RENEW your Santa Cruz Bird Club MEMBERSHIP

Is now the time to renew your Bird Club membership? **Check the expiration date on this issue** to be sure. **Note:** \*\*the membership year runs from June to May.\*\*

A Bird Club membership is still a great value—dues have been at the same low level since **2007!**

For your convenience, a remittance envelope is enclosed in this issue—or you can pay online, using PayPal. Just go to the website and follow the links: [santacruzbirdclub.org](http://santacruzbirdclub.org).

Why not take a moment now, so you won't miss the next great issue of the ALBATROSS?

#### ***A Gift of Birds and Birding?***

Do you have a friend or know a child who is interested in birds? An SBSC membership would be a thoughtful—and perhaps inspiring—gift. Fill in the information for the giftee, and send in the payment.



## SANTA CRUZ BIRD CLUB SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2017-2018

At the April 27, 2017 meeting held at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, club members were presented with the slate of officers for review for the coming 2017-2018 SCBC season. According to the club's bylaws officers shall be elected by a majority of the members present at the May 25 meeting to be held in the same location. Voting takes place prior to the program presentation of the evening, which begins at 7:30 PM.

The current officers, all of whom were elected at a special meeting in October 2016, have volunteered to continue to serve for another year, having now fledged into their respective positions.

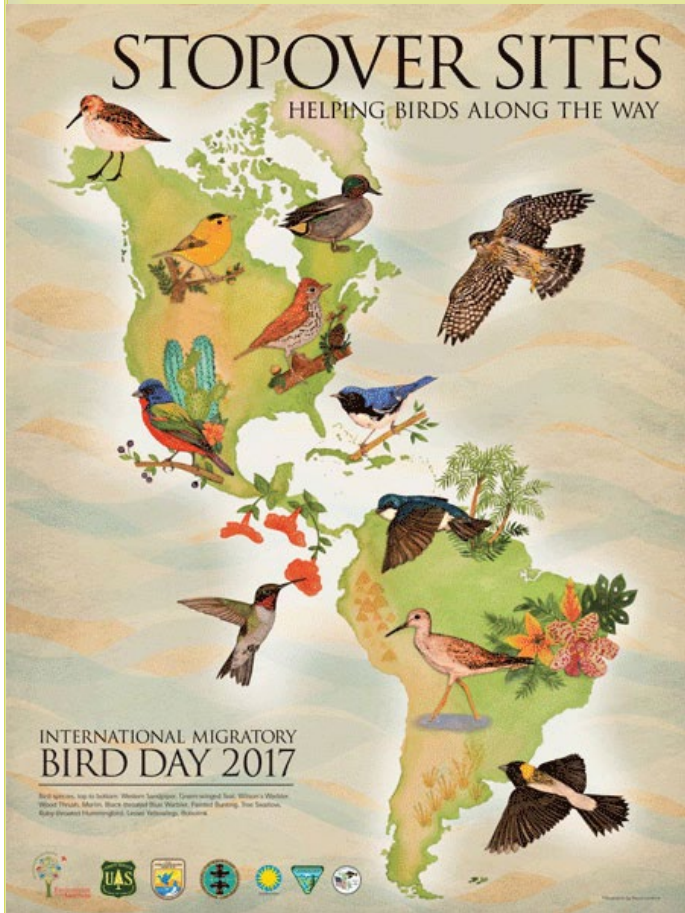
One of the governing board's major tasks has been to update the descriptions of the officers' duties in the manual posted on the web site under "Club Information". While the update is nearing completion for publication, the 1995 version of the manual remains on line for referencing.

Please see the last page of this edition of this *Albatross* for a listing of the officers respectfully available for your consideration.

Georgette Neal,  
Programs Officer



# Watsonville Wetlands Watch Celebrates International Migratory Bird Day 2017



Join the *Watsonville Wetlands Watch* on Saturday, May 13th, when we celebrate International Migratory Bird Day 2017!

When birds migrate between nesting and wintering sites, they don't just stop anywhere; they rely on a handful of resource-rich and strategically located sites where they may double their body weight as they acquire the energy-rich fat stores needed to fly thousands of kilometers across continents and oceans. These places are known as stopover sites. The wetlands along the Central Coast, including Watsonville Wetlands, provide crucial habitat for migrating and resident birds.

We will be hosting two bird watching walks on Saturday, May 13th, from 8 AM. to 10 AM. Nanci Adams will lead a walk along the paved East Struve Slough trail which is wheelchair accessible, and will see some of our restoration work in progress. Hugo Ceja's walk is bi-lingual and will take us across Department of Fish and Wildlife lands to West Struve Slough. Hugo's tour requires walking over some uneven terrain and is a great venture out into one of the more wild areas of the Watsonville Slough System. Both trips meet at Fitz Wetlands Education Resource Center located at Pajaro Valley High School at 500 Harkins Slough Road, Watsonville: **Get Map/Directions**. Wear layers, bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, and water.

The walks are free and open to beginners and more advanced birding enthusiasts alike, but you must register:

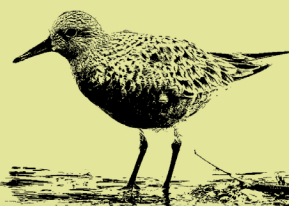
## **International-migratory-bird-day-celebration-tickets.**

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), which is celebrated in May, was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. From 1995 to 2006, the program was under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of its consistent growth, IMBD is now the premier education project of Environment for the Americas.

The *Watsonville Wetlands Watch* is an environmental organization with a mission to protect, restore, and foster appreciation of the wetlands of the Pajaro Valley. To learn more go to [watsonvillewetlandswatch.org](http://watsonvillewetlandswatch.org).

### *DID YOU KNOW...*

*Red Knots are some of the longest-migrating birds in the world, flying more than 9,300 miles in spring and again in fall!*



# Santa Cruz Birds

By Steve Gerow

Including reports from December 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017

**A** wet winter with near-record rainfall was the big news this period, limiting birding in January and February, but setting the stage for a spring that will likely be worth watching. Nevertheless, there were more than enough noteworthy observations to keep it interesting this period.



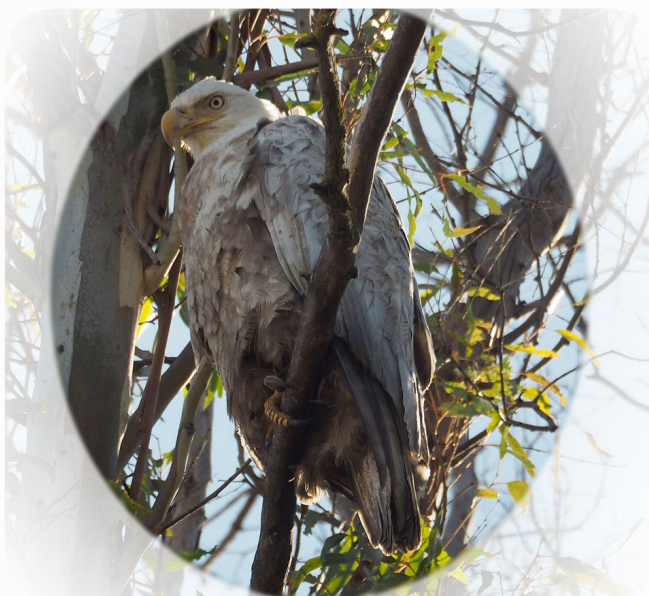
It was not a great period for migrant and wintering geese in Santa Cruz County, though we did find all the expected species. Just a couple of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported, a poor winter for that species, but **Snow Goose** numbers were above-average, including up to ten at College Lake in early December. There were also 3-4 **Ross's Geese** noted. No Brant showed up until late February, with a flock of 24 off Seabright Beach (AK), probably representing the first spring migrants of the year. **Cackling Geese** were surprisingly sparse, with four at College Lake on December 10 (NU) being the only report of more than one bird. We did have some **Tundra Swans**, though, to supplement our rather sparse geese, with a couple of flocks of migrants stopping at College Lake in early December—the high count was nine on December 3 (NU), and a wintering bird seen mostly in the Pajaro Dunes area through at least February 25 (AK, NU, v.ob.)

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** visited Pinto Lake from December 27 to January 5 (NU, v.ob.).



*Tundra Swan*  
- Lisa Sheridan

*Leucistic Bald Eagle*  
- James Maughn



There was also a male **Eurasian X American Wigeon** hybrid in College Lake from December 11-18 (AR, RCo), with perhaps the same duck turning up among the wigeon at Pinto Lake December 27 to January 3 (NU, v.ob.) A pair of Redheads were in Struve Slough starting February 18 (AR, BR, HC, v.ob.) A male **Harlequin Duck** was off the north coast just barely inside Santa Cruz County at the

San Mateo County border on January 28 (AR). **White-winged Scoters** included five flying off West Cliff Drive on January 21 (ARG), and four off Waddell Creek Beach on January 28 (AR). **Black Scoter** reports included a couple of sightings of probably the same female off Natural Bridges December 17 to January 11 (NL), and a female off La Selva Beach on December 29 (TB, BOC).

About six **Red-necked Grebes** were found along the county coast this period (v.ob.). **American Bittern** is one of those species that is expected in the Pajaro Valley, but rare elsewhere in the county. One wintered at Antonelli Pond this season

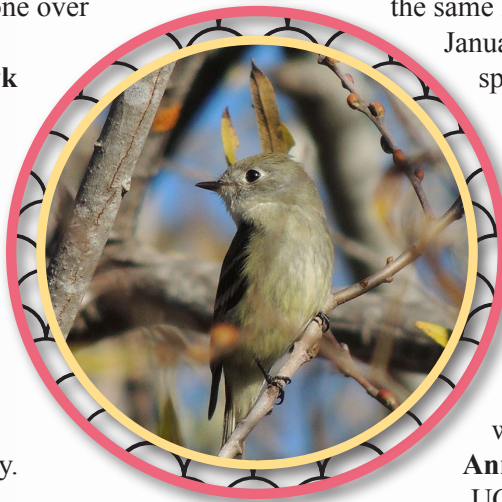
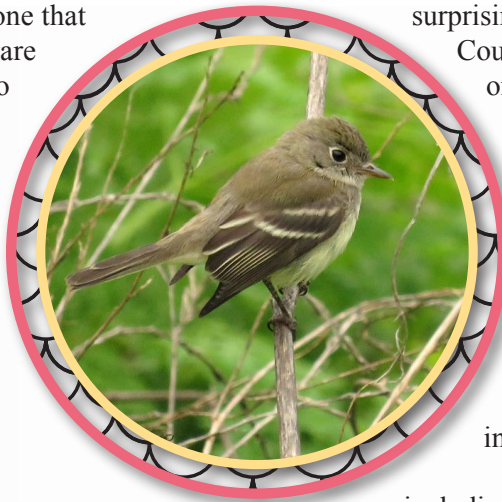


(ZS, AF, v.ob.)—probably the same one that was there last year. A **Cattle Egret**, rare anywhere in the county, was at Pajaro Dunes on December 16 (NU).

The pair of adult **Bald Eagles** frequented the lower Watsonville Slough System through the period. Nesting was underway by February 18 (GK), at a site on private land near Watsonville that had been used before in 2014 and 2015. (One member of the original pair died in 2016, so there was no nesting last year, but presumably the remaining member of that pair and its new mate are trying it again this season.) In other Bald Eagle news, a spectacular leucistic adult Bald Eagle was photographed making a brief visit to Natural Bridges State Beach on January 9 (NU). This eagle has shown a definite tendency to wander, and has been observed recently at various spots in the San Francisco Bay Area and in San Benito County, and is also very likely the same bird that visited College Lake last January. Other Bald Eagle reports included one at Loch Lomond on December 17 (EF), and one over Henry Cowell on February 27 (NU).

An immature **Swainson's Hawk** was a surprise at College Lake on February 15 (GK). It was a bit early for a spring migrant, so it may have represented a very rare wintering record for the area. Various reports of **Ferruginous Hawks** this period probably involved about 3-4 wintering in the county this season.

**Common Gallinules** are another “rare away from the Pajaro Valley” species for Santa Cruz County. This winter, single gallinules were noted at four mid-county and north coast sites (BH, GM, AR, LL, LG, v.ob.) **Semipalmated Plovers** can be



From top:  
Least Flycatcher - Lisa Larson  
Ferruginous Hawk - Lee Jaffe  
Hammond's Flycatcher - Randy Wardle

surprisingly hard to find within Santa Cruz County in winter, so two at Pajaro Dunes on December 30 (DW) and seven along Watsonville Slough on January 1 (DS, v.ob.) were of some note. It was a good year for **Wilson's Snipe** in the county. The high count was an impressive 46 in the Pajaro Dunes area on February 25 (RW). A **Wandering Tattler** along West Cliff Drive through the period (PB, v.ob.) was the only wintering individual that was reported.

Gull variety was good this season, including about five **Glaucous Gulls** and several onshore reports of Black-legged Kittiwakes. Rarer than these was a **Laughing Gull** at Pinto Lake City Park from January 19-27 (NU, v.ob.), with perhaps the same individual showing up at Sunset State Beach on February 10 (NU). The best gull find of the winter was an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** seen in Harkins Slough and adjacent Buena Vista Landfill from December 27 to January 1 (AR, RW, JL, SG, STe, LT). This is very likely the same gull that appeared at the same location in 3rd-cycle plumage last January, which was the first record of the species for Santa Cruz County. There were about a dozen reports of 1-2 **Caspian Terns** along the coast from December 14-February 22 (v.ob.), suggesting perhaps 3-5 wintering in the area. Any Caspians in the winter are quite unexpected in Santa Cruz County.

About three **Burrowing Owls** were reported, all from expected wintering locations. The leucistic **Anna's Hummingbird** continued at the UCSC Arboretum through the period, though a developing bill deformity and some apparent eye problems suggested some developing illness or injury. A

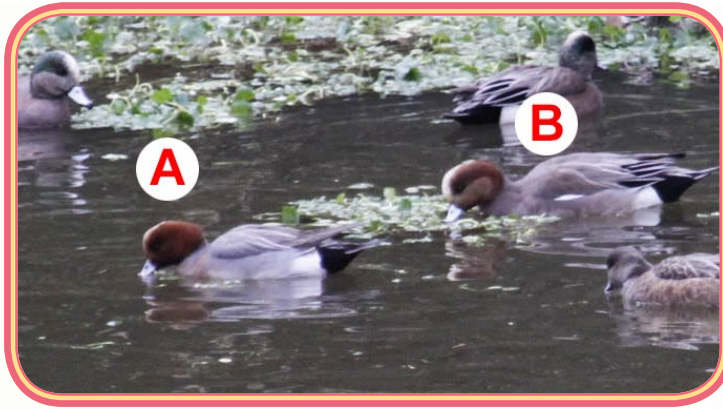
### Least Flycatcher

was well studied and photographed by many at Antonelli Pond from December 10-20 (AK, SG, RW, DR, RCa, DS, v.ob.), for a rare December record.

It may have been a late fall migrant, or perhaps attempting to winter. Further

Empid study was provided for local observers by a wintering **Hammond's Flycatcher**, near Ellicott Slough from December

27- January 16 (AR, RW, STh, LL, v.ob.) Both the Least



*A: Eurasian Wigeon*

*B: Eurasian X American Wigeon hybrid*  
- David Wilhelm

and the Hammond's were just the second winter-period records for the county. A **Tropical Kingbird** was reported several times from the Watsonville Slough System through the winter (NU, NZ, v.ob.) Another Tropical Kingbird wintered along the west Santa Cruz Coast (BN, LG, DS, v.ob.), making appearances around Neary Lagoon, Lighthouse Field, and West Cliff Drive.

Wintering **Loggerhead Shrikes** included around three in the Pajaro Dunes to Harkins Slough area, and one

or two more from Davenport and near Swanton Pond (v.ob.). **Barn Swallows** have become regular in the winter season in recent years, but this year they seemed unusually numerous and widespread. High counts included nine at Swanton Pond on January 14 (MB, FB), fourteen at Pinto Lake on January 21 (AR, NL), and twelve over Watsonville Slough on February 18 (AR, BR, HC). **Black-and-white Warblers** included one wintering at Bethany Curve (v.ob.), and one near Harkins Slough on February 18 (GK). A rare **Lucy's Warbler** visited Natural Bridges on December 3 (AK, PS). Three **Nashville Warblers** were discovered this period (v.ob.). A **Magnolia Warbler** was another rarity at Natural Bridges on December 3 (AK, PS), probably representing a small movement of late fall migrants. A **Yellow Warbler** foraged along Struve Slough on



*Magnolia Warbler - Beth Hamel*

*Black-legged Kittiwake, Rio del Mar -Randy Wardle*



February 16 (NU, AH). **Five Palm Warblers** turned up this period (v.ob.) A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was at Neary Lagoon on December 17 (AK).

The only Lark Sparrow reported was in Moore Creek Preserve on December 2 (CS). A **“Thick-billed” Fox Sparrow** was near Loma Prieta on December 4 (AK); that form has proved to be regular in that area of the mountains in winter. About 20 **White-throated Sparrows** were noted through the period, and there were nine **Swamp Sparrows** (v.ob.). A male **Summer Tanager** visited a Rodeo Gulch area feeder on occasion from January 4-February 27 (KS). Another good yard bird was a wintering female **Hooded Oriole** that visited a Watsonville feeder through at least February 17 (AS). Surprising in a non-irruption year was a flock of 12+ **Evening Grosbeaks** in Aptos on February 18 (RCo). In general it was a very poor winter for northern and montane irruptive and irregular species, with many observers noting **Varied Thrush** and **Pine Siskins** to be especially sparse.

Cited Observers: Tom Benson, Frances Bolte, Michael Bolte, Phil Brown, Rita Carratello (RCa), Hugo Ceja, Reef Comer (RCo), Eric Feuss, Abram Fleischman, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Bradley Hacker, Ann



*Swamp Sparrow - Pinto Lake, Lisa Fay Larson*

Havestock, Anna Kopitov, Gary Kittleson, Lisa Larson, Nick Levendosky, John Luther, Gary Martindale, Barbara Novelli, Brittany O'Connor, Bernadette Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Don Roberson, Adam Romswinkel-Guisse, Christian Schwarz, David Sidle, Pete Solé, Anne Spence, Kitty Stein, Zeke Smith, Linda Terrill, Scott Terrill (STe), Simon Thornhill (STh), Norman Uyeda, Randy Wardle, David Wilhelm, Nickie Zavinski.

*Costa's Hummingbird - Lisa Fay Larson*



## Keep Your Primaries on the Pulse of Bird Sightings in Our Area!

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

To subscribe to this group, send an email to [mbbirds+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:mbbirds+subscribe@googlegroups.com) with the message "subscribe."



## California Condor, Marbled Murrelet and Western Snowy Plover—need our help!

These are just 3 of the endangered species in California which will benefit from **SB49**. SB49 is a new state bill which would assure that important protections for endangered species, air quality & water quality will continue in California even if federal law changes (which seems likely).

The provisions of SB49, Article 4 would strengthen the California Endangered Species Act so that it includes all of the provisions in the federal ESA, which is currently more stringent than the state Act. Without these protections, the condor, Murrelet, plover and other species may become extinct in our region.

A quick email to your California state senator in support of SB49 would go a long way to getting these protections passed. It takes less than 5 minutes, a very short length of time. Extinction is forever.

Thank you for any help you can give!

For most of Santa Cruz County, Bill Monning is the state senator: [sd17.senate.ca.gov/send-e-mail](mailto:sd17.senate.ca.gov/send-e-mail)  
If you're not sure of your rep, go to: [findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov](http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov)

*For more details on the bill:*

[leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180SB49](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB49)

Read the letter to Senator Monning from the club on the Conservation page of our website: [santacruzbirdclub.org](http://santacruzbirdclub.org). SB49 is also called the California Environmental, Public Health, and Workers Defense Act of 2017. It is co-sponsored by Senators de Leon and Stern.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND ...

Now through September is when fledgling **Marbled Murrelets** take their first flight to the ocean from their nest in old-growth trees. Sometimes they have a mishap and end up on the forest floor, often in a state park. Even if uninjured they seem reluctant to take to flight from the ground.

If you find one – it will be in its black and white juvenal plumage, which closely resembles the adult winter plumage – here's how you can help:

- (1) Collect it in a towel or shirt and avoid handling it with your bare hands.
- (2) Take it immediately to a park ranger or docent. If you can't find one, call Portia Halbert of State


Parks at 831-251-2883. If you can't reach her, call Laird Henkel of the Department of Fish and Wildlife at 831-212-7665.

(3) Make some notes on when and exactly where the bird was found, including your name and contact number.

(4) Until the bird can be collected from you, keep it in a box with the top closed, but not airtight. First line the bottom of the box with a clean dry towel.

**\*\*Do not attempt to give it water or food\*\***

Each bird will be given a brief physical exam and rehabilitated if necessary. Once ready it will be released into the ocean. With a current population size of probably less than 700 birds in the Santa Cruz Mountains, ***the life of every single bird is important.***



*Marbled Murrelets in front of the Boardwalk - Alex Rinkert*





# 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](http://www.montereyseabirds.com). (831) 375-4658  
If you have questions, contact Tim Amaral at: [montereyseabirds@gmail.com](mailto:montereyseabirds@gmail.com).

### **2017 MONTEREY SEABIRD TRIPS 8-hour trips (7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.)**

JUN 10, Sat. (8 hr),

AUG 20, Sat. (8 hr)

SEP 5, Tues. (8 hr)

*Black-footed Albatross*  
- Jeff Bleam

**Additional dates may be added. Please check [montereybayseabirds.com](http://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 join us on offered pelagic trips along the central coast of California! Excellent and friendly leaders with worldwide seabirding experience will be on board. 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. Discounts are available for all trips.

#### **August 2017**

AUG. 4, Fri.: Monterey Bay: Albatrosses & Early Fall Seabirds

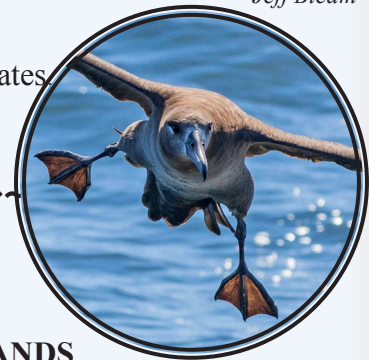
AUG. 6, Sun.: Farallon Islands: Tufted Puffins & Breeding Seabirds

AUG. 12, Sat.: Half Moon Bay: Albatrosses & Early Fall Seabirds

AUG. 13, Sun.: Farallon Islands: Tufted Puffins & Breeding Seabirds

AUG. 25, Fri: Monterey Bay: Albatrosses & Early Fall Seabirds

**Please see our web site:** [shearwaterjourneys.com](http://shearwaterjourneys.com) and blog: [shearwaterjourneys.blogspot.com](http://shearwaterjourneys.blogspot.com) for details.  
Contact Debi, a Life Member of the Santa Cruz Bird Club: [debi@shearwaterjourneys.com](mailto:debi@shearwaterjourneys.com).



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## Birder's Notebook

### DEMANDS

Aingkhkh, ainghkk—somewhere between a creak and a whine—I'd not heard from gulls before. A juvenile, is begging, its noise off-beat, persistent as the clanging of a flag's chain against its pole on a windy day.

It hops along the roof ridge until pausing to adorn the tiles with gray-white splotches; the scent of half-digested fish drifts down. Such visits must infuriate the owners, vainly having fixed an owl sculpture there.

Is the complaint needling its parent as it pierces my ears? At least I am free of expectations. I remembered when my baby kept on screaming in his cuddle-sack as we shuffled in the line to deplane.

"It's his poor little ears I expect," someone sympathized. "No – it's his character," I snapped. Hours with one's crying child can do that to us. I wonder: how does the mother gull bear it and when will she simply fly away?

–Susan Giddings



*Western Gull, juvenile begging - David Sidle*



## *Elkhorn Slough in Springtime*

Fingers of earth rest on the estuary  
and, edging the mudflats, pickleweed  
grows, sucking salt clear to its tips.

There's a spot by a freshwater  
pond where periwinkles announce the blue  
morning, while silversides leap the channel

in hot pursuit of flies. In the tops of three  
tall pines, egrets nest, scratching and scrambling,  
they strip the boughs bare, as nearby

ghost trees stand, guano-slathered,  
past seasons' sacrifice to the birthing  
rites. I return to the rookery in spring, watch

the great white bird shake loose his plumage,  
shivering a fan dance for his mate, and,  
though I've seen it before, my breath catches.

This is how the chick must feel, high  
in those treetops, when aqua eggshell  
cracks, opening curtains on the world.

—Barbara Leon



*Elkhorn Slough - Lisa Fay Larson  
Great Egret displaying - Lee Jaffe*

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## The Hummingbird's Message

The iridescent green Hummingbird  
has a beak stained yellow  
from pollen — swooping down  
from under the influential Jasmine  
face to face  
he gallantly informs  
we humans:  
Summertime is here



Hummingbird has no song  
to sing—instead he  
impatiently clicks his  
message into our ears,  
colonizing our thoughts  
"it is our choice to act or not"

- *Tru Dillon*

*Pollen-adorned Anna's  
Hummingbird  
- Lisa Fay Larson*



Black-chinned Hummingbird Nest  
Small etching

by Stephanie Martin  
[stephaniemartinfineart.com](http://stephaniemartinfineart.com)

ONE MORN I WENT OUT TO THE BOONIES  
'MID CATTAILS WRENS SPLUTTERED LIKE LOONIES  
IN MINI BASKETS EGGS RESTED  
WOVE' BY MARSH WRENS WHO NESTED  
'TILL CHICKS FLEDGED LIKE WINGED ANDY ROONEYS!

- LISA FAY LARSON



*Fledgling Marsh Wren  
- Lisa Fay Larson*



**Marsh Wren Nest, Marsh Wren  
Small etchings  
by Stephanie Martin  
[stephaniemartinfineart.com](http://stephaniemartinfineart.com)**



**SCBC PURPOSE  
STATEMENT**

*The goals of the Santa Cruz  
Bird Club are to unite those  
with a common interest in  
wild birds, in order to study  
and conserve them; and to  
promote good fellowship  
among bird lovers*

**New SCBC Members  
Welcome!**

Candace Brown	Feb 2017
Susan Martinez & Fred Geiger	Feb 2017
Yonat Michaelov	March 2017
Virginia Howard	March 2017
Anna Kopitov	March 2017
Stephen Shapiro	April 2017
Anne Marie Hutchison	April 2017

***Message from Jennifer Rycenga, President  
Sequoia Audubon Society***

Working together, we've made Sequoia Audubon Society one of the premier local Audubon chapters in the region. As I resume a higher level of activity as Sequoia's president in 2017, there are a few areas of concentration I wanted to share with you: First, with threats from development and global climate change, we need to do more to protect our local habitats and bird life here in San Mateo County. Let's grow the Conservation Committee, and enhance environmental activism in our chapter. Second, we can be a stronger voice for conservation and birding if we have more members. Help us grow our rank. If everyone recruits one new member, we double our numbers! Share the news of all we are doing, and how much more we could do with more birders in the field and more Sequoia Audubon advocates attending local planning meetings. Third, we will advance our commitment to twenty-first century Citizen Science, with targeted field trips, eBird participation, bio-blitzes around the region, improved electronic resources for birding, and provocative programming at our monthly meetings. Make Sequoia strong as we approach our 70th anniversary in 2019! Thanks to the folks who started the ball rolling back in 1949. If we all pitch in, we can create a proud legacy too! There is no time like the present to donate, become a volunteer, get involved or take action. Please email [office@sequoia-audubon.org](mailto:office@sequoia-audubon.org) for more information.



Submissions NEEDED



**DEADLINE**

for Sep/Oct issue

**AUG 1, 2017**



*Leucistic Cooper's Hawk, Sunset State Beach  
- Kitty Stein*



Assembling Your

**ALBATROSS**

Newsletter

## Submission to the Albatross **Guidelines**

In addition to regular features—*Events Calendar*, photos for *Santa Cruz Birds*, *Birders Notebook* and *Parting Shot*—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 birds or birders, serious or comic
- Reviews of birding literature or guides
- Conservation & outreach reports/stories
- Birding tips, descriptions of local sites
- Poetry, quotes, field sketches, artwork or photos
- Photos of BIRDS or people at our events (jpg, tif)

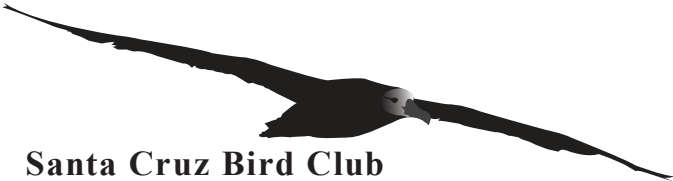
If you wish to submit an article, please contact the editor about it **AT LEAST 2 weeks before** the submission deadline.

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

*~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor*

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PARTING SHOT: "FEED ME BEFORE THE REST GET HERE!"  
TITMOUSE HATCHLINGS & EGGS - JOHN ELLIS



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See the online version and past  
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[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, *Albatross*. Santa Cruz Bird Club memberships run June-May. Dues are \$20 Individual, \$25 Family, \$5 Youth, \$400 Life. **To pay with PayPal:** [santacruzbirdclub.org/join-or-renew-online](http://santacruzbirdclub.org/join-or-renew-online). Or make checks payable to Santa Cruz Bird Club and mail to: Box 1304, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, Attention: Membership.