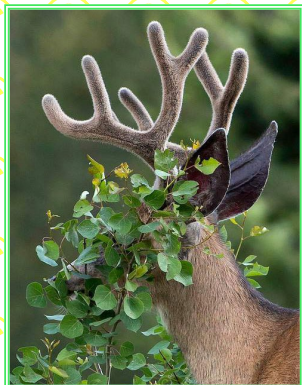




# Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

## Inside CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Christmas Bird Count

SANTA CRUZ BIRDS

the **BIG** sit



Birder's  
Notebook

PARTING SHOT

## A *Winter* Update on the Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas II

- By Alex Rinkert

A summary of the 2017 atlassing season is in the works. All data has been imported into the atlas database and, with the expertise of Simon Thornhill and Rusty Sclaf, we are crunching numbers and preparing maps to present in a summary that will be distributed this winter. The preliminary results are impressive: 3000+ total breeding records, 2000+ confirmed breeding records, and hundreds of hours of field work logged by nearly 40 atlassers!



While most species breed only in spring and summer, some also do so in fall and winter. Pied-billed Grebes, both towhees, Dark-eyed Juncos, and a few others often continue their breeding effort in September and October. Pigeons, doves, and Great Horned Owls can be tending active nests

Anna's Hummer - Lisa Larson, Above: Great Horned Owl - Andy Knorr



in the middle of winter, and by January, Anna's Hummingbirds and Bushtits are beginning to build nests. The official atlassing period, March 1 through August 31, does well to capture when most species breed in this region, but breeding confirmations at other times of the year are also of interest to the atlas.

If you confirm breeding for any species between September 1, 2017 and February 28, 2018, please send me the following information about your observation: date, exact location, species, and breeding evidence.

Thanks for your continued interest and participation in the atlas. I look forward to releasing the 2017 summary this winter.

Alex Rinkert  
Project Coordinator  
arinkert12@comcast.net



*PHOTOS FROM TOP:*

*Mourning Dove feeding her babies - Lisa Larson*

*Pied-billed Grebe on nest - Lee Jaffe*

*Dark-eyed Junco with food - Carole Rose*

*Bushtit nest - Lee Jaffe*

*Unwitting Villian, juvenile Cowbird - James P. Williams*

## SANTA CRUZ BIRD CLUB AUCTION A SUCCESS!

On Sept 21, 2017 the Bird Club opened its bird year with a "social" membership meeting focused (ahem) on bird photography in its various forms. Tempted with wonderful tasty snacks our members enjoyed a pleasant evening of talk and camaraderie. Concurrently, a silent auction was held featuring 24 items of bird art and photographic prints donated by Club members, including many local artists. The proceeds of the auction (\$597!) will be used to support the Club's on-going **Breeding Bird Atlas** project.

We'd like to thank the following donors of bird art: Sophie Webb, Elizabeth Van Dyke, Tim Jolly, Pete Sole, Cathy Gamble, Lisa Sheridan, Stephanie Martin, Larry Corridon, Sharon Hull, Nick Levendosky, Francis Honey, and Lisa Fay Larson.

Our many buyers included: Hannah Nevins, Lisa Larson, Tom Dietz, Sharon Hull, Pete Sole, Julia Jackson, Linda St. John, Mary Crouser, Larry Corridon, Elizabeth Foster, Kent Johnson, Lisa Sheridan, and Phil Brown.

THANK YOU ALL!

*See auctioned artwork on page 16!*



Thanks to the many people who have graciously and generously donated to the Bird Club since September! Many of these have been in honor and memory of Steve Gerow. In a tribute to him, all donations are being used to support the Breeding Bird Atlas II Project. He was very supportive in getting this project up and running.

*Thank you—*

<b>Aya Sakimoto</b>	<b>Alexander Gaguine</b>
<b>Lois Goldfrank</b>	<b>Caroline Rodgers</b>
<b>Harlan Talan</b>	<b>Sharon Hull</b>

*\*19% of club members have contributed to the BBA project with time &/or funding.*



*Mallard stretches his wing,  
Below: Feather - Lisa Larson*

## CONSERVATION NEWS

### Update: SB-49 Postponed in State Legislature

SB-49, the California Environmental, Public Health, and Workers Defense Act of 2017 did not come to a vote on the floor of the State Assembly, so was not passed on to the Governor for signature. Instead it was amended at the last minute and converted into a two-year bill, meaning it will be considered next year. Unfortunately the amendment also substantially weakened the provisions that provided protection for endangered species. However, this bill could still be salvaged and we will continue to track it next year.



# EVENTS CALENDAR

November–December 2017



## Sunday, November 5 Baldwin Creek

We will bird the marsh and coastal scrub where we may encounter late migrant land birds and waterfowl. There is usually a large gull flock to sort through on the beach and plowed agricultural fields in this area can pull in large numbers of sparrows and pipits. A spotting scope is recommended.



*Glaucous Gull - Lisa Larson*

**Directions:** Meet at 7:30 AM at the 4 Mile Beach parking area off Highway 1; the parking area is about 3.6 miles north of Western Drive in Santa Cruz.

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



## Friday, November 10 Sunset State Beach

This park offers a variety of habitats, giving us the opportunity for late migrants and winter arrivals. Plan for a moderate amount of walking, some on beach and uneven surfaces.



*Northern Harrier - Lee Jaffe*

### Directions:

Meet at 8:00 AM at the parking area near the entrance kiosk. If you have a state park pass, please bring it, otherwise bring \$10 for an entrance fee.

**Leader:** Reef Comer, [reefcomer@gmail.com](mailto:reefcomer@gmail.com)



## Saturday, November 11 Loma Prieta

We will bird a familiar location at an unfamiliar time of year. Who knows what will be seen on the ridge we visit each spring but neglect in other seasons. Irruptive species such as Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks may be around, and perhaps we will encounter a secretive Thick-billed Fox Sparrow.

**Directions:** 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 7:30 AM.

**Leader:** Alex Rinkert, [arinkert12@comcast.net](mailto:arinkert12@comcast.net)



*American Redstart - Beth Hamel*



## Sunday, November 12 Lighthouse Field

We will take a loop around the cypresses and willows at Lighthouse Field for winter holdouts including the potential for a variety of sparrows.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM on the inland side of the field near the intersection of Pelton Avenue and Laguna Avenue.

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





**Thursday, November 16, 2017**

**SCBC Meeting @ 7:30 PM**

**Speaker: David Ekdahl and Connie Vigno**

**Topic: Birds and Mammals of Queensland, Australia**



*Variegated Fairy-wren - David Ekdahl*

To a naturalist, Australia is the home of great birds and unique mammals, and Queensland has a good variety of both. In September and October of 2016, David and Connie traveled there.

They toured both the northern and southern regions of Queensland. In northern Queensland, their journey began in Cairns, and they completed a great loop which included the Atherton Tablelands and the Daintree area. They visited birding/eco-lodges including Chambers Wildlife Rainforest Lodge, Kingfisher Birding Lodge, Red Mill House, and Cassowary House. In southern Queensland, their birding loop began in Brisbane and included O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat among others. Come see photos of the birds and mammals they encountered, which include honeyeaters, fairy-wrens, doves, flycatchers, waders, riflebirds, bowerbirds, wattlebirds, parrots, lorikeets, frogmouths, emus, various marsupials, and platypuses.

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

*ACWO - Lisa Larson*



**Friday, November 17**

**Lower UCSC**

We'll explore a variety of habitats including grassland, patches of riparian, and evergreen forest; we may also visit the UCSC Farm and Arboretum.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the south side of the East Remote Parking Lot, off Hagar Drive on



the UCSC campus. Hagar Drive is a left turn off Coolidge Drive when coming from the main entrance at the north end of Bay St. The parking lot is on the right about 0.65 miles up Hagar.

**Leader:** Lisa Larson, [scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com](mailto:scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com)



**Sunday, November 26**

**Wilder Ranch State Park**

The varied habitats of this park hold a good variety of birds and other wildlife. We will check along the coast for returning loons, grebes, and scoters. Expect a few miles of mostly easy walking.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM in the main parking lot. If you have a state park pass, please bring it, otherwise bring \$10 for an entrance fee.

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



**Saturday & Sunday, December 2 and 3**

**Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex and the Sutter Buttes**



*Snow and Ross' Geese - Clay Kempf*

Join us for a potentially spectacular weekend in the Butte Sink Basin, where we'll be observing the tremendous numbers of southbound and wintering waterfowl that visit the numerous wildlife refuges and rice fields of the area. Raptors are also present in large numbers, and our target birds include Bald & Golden Eagles, Peregrine & Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, and maybe even a Rough-legged Hawk. Harlan's Hawks are seen occasionally, so we'll want to look closely at some of the Red-taileds we see. White-faced Ibis are numerous, and Sandhill Cranes,

Common Moorhen, Yellow-billed Magpies, and Ring-necked Pheasant are all expected. But the real attraction is the waterfowl; the sheer numbers of Ross' and Snow Geese make for a spectacular trip and will be our focal point. Five species of geese are likely, and we'll also see tremendous numbers and

varieties of ducks, including a high chance for Eurasian Wigeon. Tundra Swans are also likely. Exact itinerary will be decided as the trip



*Mixed Geese - Clay Kempf*

unfolds, but we'll include a drive through the scenic Sutter Buttes, with a chance for Lark Sparrow and Mountain Bluebird. Bring cameras if you have them, and be prepared for lunch in the field.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:30 AM on Saturday morning at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (about 20 miles north of Williams, exit 595 off of Interstate 5). There is a small parking lot at the pay station; that is NOT our meeting location. Pay your fee and proceed to the main parking lot near the visitor center. Bring hand held radios if you have them. The leader will have a few to share; please bring AAA batteries.

**Lodging:** Participants are recommended to arrive Friday evening and to stay in the town of Williams (about 175 miles north of Santa Cruz). Recommended hotels include the Granzella Inn (\$129/night); the Ramada Inn \$89/night; Travelers Inn (\$71/night); the Stage Stop Inn (\$58/night); or Motel 6 (\$45/night). Some of the refuges have an

entrance fee. Granzella's has a nearby restaurant & deli if you want to pick up a sandwich for lunch.

Trip limited to 20 participants; please reserve a space by e-mailing the leader

**Leader:** Clay Kempf, ltjaeger@att.net



**Saturday, December 9th**  
**Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park**

This is a favorite spot for Pileated Woodpeckers. We will be looking for other woodpeckers and Varied Thrush as well. Also hoping for Red Crossbills, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Hermit Warblers, but no guarantees.

**Directions:** Meet at 7:30 AM in the parking lot of the Sheriff station on Graham Hill Road and Zayante Road. We will carpool up to the fee area in the campground.

**Leader:** Bonnie Bedzin, bupsiesioux@gmail.com



*Red-breasted Sapsucker - John Ellis*

*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.*





**Sunday, December 10**  
**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 rare wintering species so surprises are possible.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at San Lorenzo Park by the footbridge.

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



**Saturday, December 30**  
**Points North**

Join us for an exploration of the North Coast of Santa Cruz County. Places we may visit depending on conditions include Swanton Road, 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:** Nicholas Levendosky, n.levendosky@gmail.com



**Monday, December 11**  
**Neary Lagoon**

This is an easy walk for a break from holiday activities with probable wood ducks, various normal winter passerines, and maybe a surprise or two.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the west entrance at the corner of California Street and Bay Avenue.

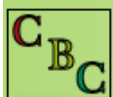
**Leader:** Lisa Larson, scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com



*White-throated Sparrow - Kathleen Waldron*



*Neary Lagoon stillness - Lisa Larson*



**Saturday 16 December**  
**Santa Cruz County CBC**

*PLEASE SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS!*



**Saturday Evening 16 December**  
**CBC Countdown Potluck Dinner**

*PLEASE SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS!*



# Christmas Bird Count

CBC

## Santa Cruz County CBC 2017 Saturday 16 December

The **61st** Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for Santa Cruz County will be held on Saturday, December 16, 2017. Please mark one's calendar now and prepare for a day of birding, fun and excitement for the experienced and new birders alike. Come and see what birds join us for December; a surprising vagrant is always fun. However, as always, diversity and abundances remain the focus of the count. Last year, we had 171 species on count day and 174 species during count week, putting count over the current 10-year average (169) by two counts. Everyone's help is greatly desired and appreciated. Last year, we had 75 observers in the field, logging 264.25 total party hours, higher hours than the current ten-year average of 229.8 hours. **Please contact Eric Feuss at [ericfeuss@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ericfeuss@sbcglobal.net) or at 831-477-0280.**



*"The Poser", Western Meadowlark - Michelle Lamberson*



## Saturday Evening 16 December CBC Countdown Potluck Dinner

This year the countdown dinner will continue at the Soquel Glen Mobile Home Park event center. There will be directional flyers provided to section leaders. However, for anyone cannot attend the count, but wishes to partake in the countdown with food and friends, the mobile home park is along Noble Creek and is located at **5470 Soquel Dr, Soquel, CA 95073**. The cross street is Soquel Drive and Pepperwood Way (not Silver Birch Lane). There is a Stop and Go Market on the other side of Soquel Drive, to mark vicinity. The event center is along Del Rio Circle - the first left from Pepperwood Way (all within park).

Come ready for the exciting "countdown" and a dish to share—main, vegetable, salad, dessert, bread, and a drink if you want something special. There will be paper plates, cups, and utensils, but bringing your own tableware will reduce waste and cost. Soft drinks and hot water for tea or hot chocolate will be available.

## 2016 Santa Cruz County Christmas Bird Count Summary - Eric Feuss, Compiler

Our **60th** annual Santa Cruz County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on December 17, 2016. Outside of localized geographical influences, the count day across the count circle started clear and chilly. The day's temperature variance was on average 17 degrees, in line with last year and down from the ten-year average of 24 degrees. However, unlike last year, which had morning overcast keeping the morning temperatures higher than otherwise would be encountered with clear skies, the day remained clear and cold, with high temperatures never climbing beyond 55 degrees.

We had 75 observers in the field, logging 264.25 total party hours, higher hours than the current ten-year average of 229.8 hours. The count day tally was 171 species, two counts above the current ten-year average of 169. The count week period tally came to 174 species. The total abundance count came to 36038 versus the current ten-year average of 45050.



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“Off-list” species observed count day were: BLUE-WINGED TEAL (6th count record – 1991, 1996, 2005 CW, 2013, 2015, 2016), AMERICAN BITTERN (counted 2 times in last 10 years), FERRUGINOUS HAWK (first count since 2002), BALD EAGLE (counted 3 times in last 10 years), WANDERING TATTLER (first count in last 10 years, plus a count week bird in 2013), **CASPIAN TERN** (first count record), GLAUCOUS GULL (counted 3 times in last 10 years), **LEAST FLYCATCHER** (first count record), TREE SWALLOW (first count in last 10 years; counted in 8 prior years), BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (counted 5 times in last 10 years), PALM WARBLER (counted 7 times in last 10 years). BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER (counted 3 times in last 10 years, plus 3 years as a count week bird).

Count week observed species were SNOWY PLOVER (“On-list”; first missed count since 1972), BARN OWL (“On-list”; second missed count since 1979), and **COSTA’S HUMMINGBIRD** (“Off-list”; only other count was a count week bird in 2001).

High counts for this year, based upon the ratio of count to 10-year average, were obtained for BROWN PELICAN (1584 vs. 562), LONG-BILLED CURLEW (27 vs 3.9), HEERMANN’S GULL (849 vs 196.7), HERRING GULL (109 vs 58.5), and AMERICAN CROW (1295 vs 773.1). The Brown Pelican and Heermann’s Gull relationship might be worth noting.

Numbers for our irruptive winter landbirds were low. Based upon the same ratio of count to 10-year average, ratios by

species were: RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (0 vs. 7.9), AMERICAN ROBIN (628 vs. 2052.8), VARIED THRUSH (15 vs. 182.7), CEDAR WAXWING (181 vs. 487.7), RED CROSSBILL (0 vs. 15.9), PINE SISKIN (7 vs. 852.6).

Some low counts for this year, based upon the same ratio of count to 10-year average, were obtained for KILLDEER (6 vs. 146.6); WILLET (1 vs. 26.8) and WHIMBREL (5 vs. 43.9); COMMON MURRE (180 vs. 1084.9), PINE SISKIN (7 vs 852.6), and LESSER GOLDFINCH (87 vs 251.3).

“Misses” for count day—defined as “on-list” species found on count day in 10 or more of the last 15 years or within last 5 years—are: CACKLING GOOSE (counted 9 of last 15 years); BRANT (counted 5 of last 15 years); GADWALL (counted 11 of last 15 years); CINNAMON TEAL (counted 6 of last 15 years); GREATER SCAUP (counted 11 of last 15 years); WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (counted 8 of last 15 years); NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (counted 12 of last 15 years, but missed last 3 years); RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (counted 14 of last 15 years), WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (counted 7 of last 15 years); AMERICAN DIPPER (counted 9 of last 15 years); and RED CROSSBILL (counted 6 of last 15 years).



*From left: Alex Rinkert, Nick Levendosky, Anna Kopitov*

## PRIZES

**Alex Rinkert** and **Nick Levendosky** won for sightings of **CASPIAN TERN**. There were three separate sightings of Caspian Tern on that day. The consensus was that each or at least two were separate individuals; that with all the reports across SF and Monterey Bay, there were quite a number of individual Caspians sticking around last winter. **Anna Kopitov** won for sighting the **LEAST FLYCATCHER**.

*Both were first time records for the 60th Christmas Bird Count for Santa Cruz County!*



# Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

*Including reports from June 1 to August 31, 2017*



The summer period was highlighted by numerous rare breeding records, with many produced from focused efforts for the Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas II. High water persisted in sloughs and lagoons through August, but there was still a good selection of rare shorebirds found, and more followed in September and October as water levels receded. Tricolored Blackbirds were largely absent at breeding locales, but juvenile Heermann's Gulls returned to our coastline after several years of absence.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** summered along the coastal bluffs between Younger Lagoon and Wilder Ranch SP from July 5 to August 20 (ST, v.ob.).

A male **Wood Duck** at Merk Pond June 2 was noteworthy for Corralitos (RR, BR). A **Blue-winged Teal** at Pajaro Dunes on July 21 was the only report this period (NU). Seven large, fully-feathered juvenile **Common Mergansers** along the Pajaro River at Pajaro Dunes on August 7 were intriguing (SH, SP); there are no breeding records for the Pajaro Valley.

Two **Eared Grebes** at Struve Slough on June 23 were exceptional for summer (TU). These may have been post-breeding dispersants from the new breeding colony at Moro Cojo slough in Monterey County.

A **Brandt's Cormorant** was incubating a nest on the vertical face of a sea cliff on July 7 at Wilder Ranch SP, providing only the third instance of them nesting on that type of substrate in the county (AR, ST). **American Bitterns** are one of the rarer and more difficult species to confirm breeding so observations of two dependent juveniles at Pinto Lake between August 10-18 was noteworthy (LL, RW). A



partially fledged **Osprey** near a nest at Loch Lomond on August 7 was the first breeding confirmation at that location in ten years (AR).

By June 23 the **Bald Eagle** chick had fledged from the nest in Watsonville (RW). A **Common Gallinule** was at Neary Lagoon on August 21 (DS). Presumably the same **Sandhill Crane** reported in late May continued to make appearances along the coast from June 13-20 with four reports from Santa Cruz and one from Watsonville (GK, BM, GM, LG).

A **Pacific Golden-Plover** stayed on Wilder Beach from July 29-August 10 (MB, SL, v.ob.). At least two **Ruddy Turnstones** frequented the coast between Younger Lagoon and Wilder Beach from August 2 through the end of the month (BA, RR, GF, NG, v.ob.). A **Red Knot** was near the Pajaro River mouth on August 27 (RW). Three **Baird's** (AR, NL, RW) and one

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** (AG) were reported

in August. At least one **Solitary Sandpiper** was seen at Struve Slough between August 15-26 (NU, v.ob.). At least six **Wilson's**

**Phalaropes** were

reported this period (v.ob.).

Behavioral observations of **Marbled Murrelets** on July 7 at



*From top:*

*Red Knot - Randy Wardle*

*Pacific Golden-Plover - Andy Knorr*



Redwood Meadow in Big Basin SP indicated there was an occupied nest nearby (fide SS). **Two Tufted Puffins** were seen on the Monterey Bay on August 6 (MS).

An immature **Laughing Gull** was at Pajaro Dunes from June 3-8 (NU, ST). Juvenile **Heermann's Gulls** were present in more normal numbers along the coast this summer than in the previous two years when they were virtually absent in the region (AR). A **Black Skimmer** was at Pajaro Dunes on June 2 (DH).

For the third consecutive summer **Black Swifts** were seen investigating seacaves and performing display flights at Sand Hill Bluff, but no strong evidence of breeding materialized (AR). Breeding in the county was last confirmed in 1994, and while other former haunts appear to be unoccupied, some swifts continue to show interest in seacaves at Sand Hill Bluff. A **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at Soquel on August 26-27 was the only reported this period (AG). The celebrity leucistic **Anna's Hummingbird** at the UCSC Arboretum continued through July 13 (DG), and was joined by an equally striking leucistic male **Allen's Hummingbird** on July 11 (LL).

A **Willow Flycatcher** at Soquel on June 3 was the only one reported this period (AG). A late migrant **Western Kingbird** was at the top of Empire Grade on June 4 (AR). A **Loggerhead Shrike** at Seacliff SB on July 30 was the second record for that area of the county (JE).

Several pairs of **Purple Martins** were present at Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve for the fourth consecutive year. Breeding was confirmed on June 24 (MST). Elsewhere in the county a martin at Boulder Creek Country Club on June 4 was away from known breeding locations (AR), a dispersant turned up at Manresa SB on July 1 (PS),

and martins were regularly seen at Loma Prieta (v.ob.).

**White-breasted Nuthatches** were north of Boulder Creek on July 8 (AR) and at Quail Hollow Ranch CP on August 26 (AR).

A **MacGillivray's Warbler** sang from lower Wilder Creek at Wilder Ranch SP

from June 7 to August 20 (JS, PS, v.ob.), an area in which they are not known to breed. A **Yellow Warbler** carrying food along Soquel Creek on June

10 was a welcomed breeding confirmation for

this species that is nearly extirpated as a breeder away from the Pajaro Valley (ST).

**Chipping Sparrows** were confirmed to breed in apple orchards at Litchfield Lane, the first instance of them breeding in that habitat, elevation, and region of the county (BR, RR, LG). All other breeding records in the county come from higher elevation grassland and Christmas tree farms in the Santa Cruz Mountains. **Golden-crowned Sparrow** at Anna Jean Cummings Park on June 4 was late (KA). **Savannah Sparrows** were confirmed to breed at Pajaro Dunes near the Pajaro River on June 17 (AR, JW), the first breeding confirmation from that area of the county.

There were no reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks this spring. Two **Blue Grosbeaks** were near the Pajaro River in the southeast corner of the county on June 30 (NU); one was still present July 8 (GL). A male **Indigo Bunting** was near Davenport on July 4 (BL). Very few **Tricolored Blackbirds** were found in the county this period but more concerning was no indication they were breeding at the wetlands they most regularly use in the county. The pair of **Lawrence's Goldfinches** at Shorebirds Pond and Sunset SB in late May were found to be building a nest at the later location on June 17 (AR, JW), but the nest



*From top:*

*Baird's Sandpipers - Randy Wardle  
Leucistic Allen's Hummingbird - Lisa Larson*

was apparently abandoned soon after its discovery (EL). Lawrence's Goldfinches were also found at Chittenden on July 10 (NU) and Loma Prieta on August 18 (AR).

**Cited Observers:** Kumaran Arul, Michael Bolte, John Ellis, Aaron Gabbe, Don Glasco, Lois Goldfrank, David Houle, Sharon Hull, Gary Kittleson, Lisa Larson, Garrett Lau, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Sara Lucatello, Bruce Lyon, Greg Meyer, Bryan Mori, Shantanu Phukan, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Monterey Seabirds, David Sidle, Steve Singer, Matthew Strusis-Timmer, Pete Solé, Jonah Svensson, Peter Svensson, Simon Thornhill, Tom Unsicker, Norman Uyeda, Randy Wardle, Jim Williams

*Cooper's Hawk - Pete Solé*



*American Bitterns at Pinto Lake; Mom & 2 juveniles  
- Lisa Larson*



## 2017 Monterey Bay Birding Festival Recap

The 13th Annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival re-convened with success on Saturday, September 23rd. About 150 people attended the event, including several local elected officials and birders from throughout the area and afar.

Highlights included a sold out workshop on *Adventures in Bird Molt* by Peter Pyle, a premier authority on the topic. Filmmaker Maya Khosla's documentary *Searching For The Gold Spot—The Wild After Wildfire*, emphasized the role fire has in bird distribution, and the importance of snags for species like Black-backed Woodpecker. Peter Pyle returned for his keynote presentation on the *Ecology And Conservation Of The Gulf Of The Farallones*, an area that he studied intensely for several decades.

No bird festival can be considered a success without the star of the show – birds! And we had great success at finding expected species and a few surprises during the array of trips offered. Some of the highlights included Greater White-fronted Geese, Clark's Grebes, Sora and Virginia Rails, White-faced Ibis, Pectoral Sandpiper, both species of Yellowlegs, Yellow-billed Magpie, Peregrine Falcon, Canyon Wren, Blackpoll Warbler, Palm Warbler, Tri-colored Blackbirds, and more. Birds seen by festival participants during pelagic trips that weekend included Black-footed Albatross, Pomarine, Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaeger, South Polar Skua, Buller's Shearwater, Sabine's Gull, and Tufted Puffin.

The event could never happen without the dedicated work of the Monterey Bay Birding Festival Board of Directors; the skills and expertise of our volunteer field trip leaders; and all the festival volunteers. Special thanks goes once again to the City of Watsonville for providing the venue.







We have a new SCBC  
Programs Officer!  
*Welcome to*  
**HANNAH NEVINS!**

## New SCBC Members


*Welcome!*

Joan Saia	Sep 2017
Susan Leo & Diane Syrcle	Sep 2017
Kimberly Horning	Sep 2017
Vivian Fenner-Evans	Sep 2017
Francis Honey	Sep 2017
Sharon Hull	Sep 2017
Gary Martindale Family	Sep 2017
Michele Sorenson	Sep 2017
Emily Maddox	Sep 2017
Valerie St. Denis	Sep 2017
Janis Nelson	Sep 2017



### 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.



*Bare Trees - Lisa Larson*

## the **BIG** sit 2017



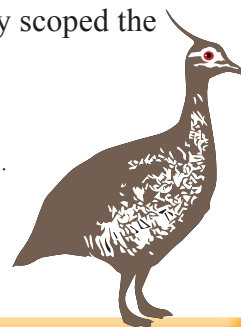
Santa Cruz County's first Big Sit was held on Saturday October 7 on the bluffs at New Brighton Beach. At the end of 11 hours of watching our team of 15 birders walked away with 73 species—not a bad start for a hastily clobbered together Sit. For comparison, the venerable Big Sit at Los Osos—had a 100, while our rivals to the north in San Mateo netted 84. **As of this writing our team, the Jaegers, stands sixth nationally out of 137 Big Sit Circles across the country!**

A Big Sit is an attempt to get as many species as possible from a site in a day. There are no limits on how many sitters can crowd the roughly 20 foot diameter circle—or for how long—you can come and go as you please. And, for those rare occasions when you think you hear a Tinamou calling from the thickets, you may leave the circle to track it down, but if you happen upon a Trogon while beating the bushes you may not count it. In other words, it's not as daunting as it sounds—but

you do have to like the company of other birders and the conversations that inevitably ensue. But then that is the second aim—to have fun chatting and sharing snacks with birders whom you may only have glimpsed as you scurry to your next lifer.

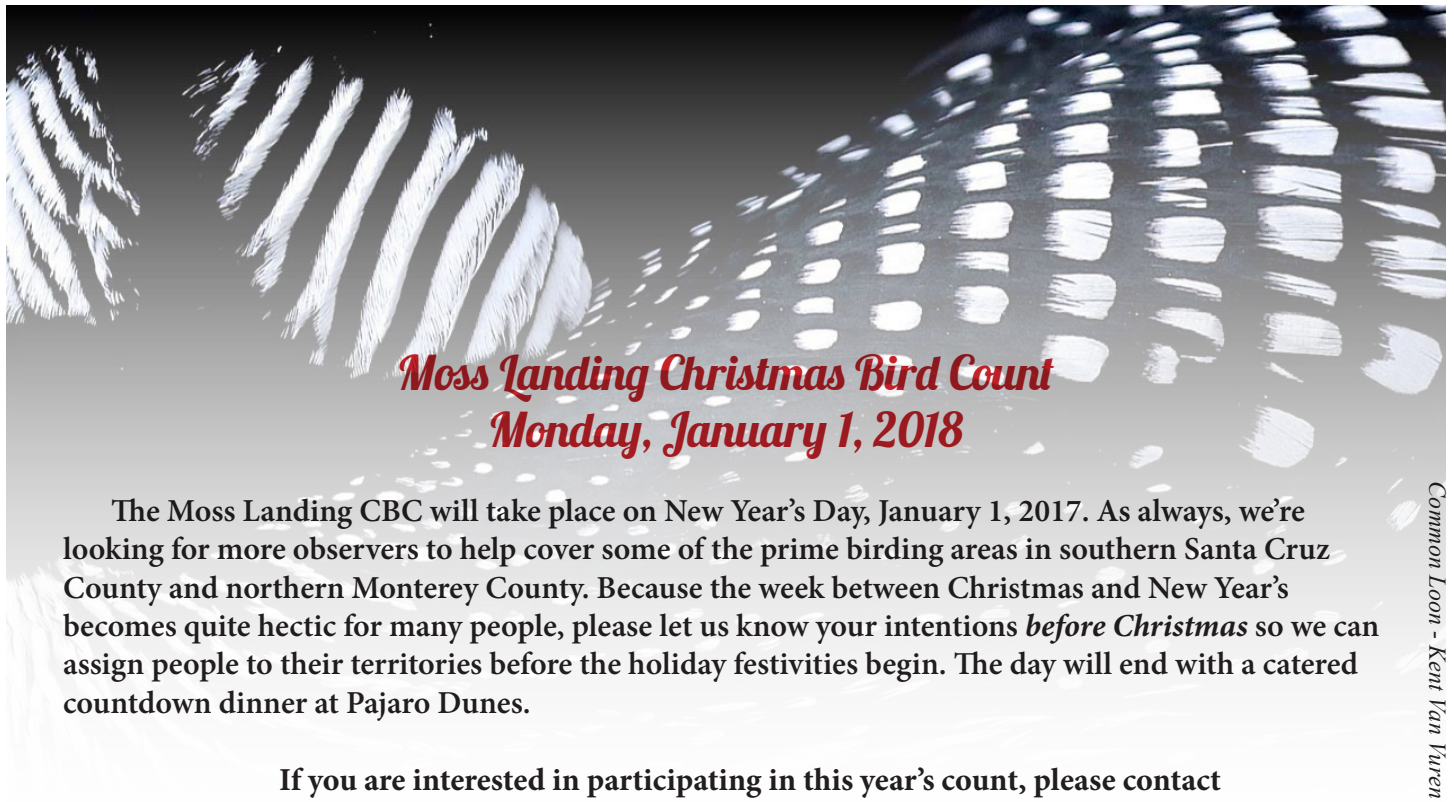
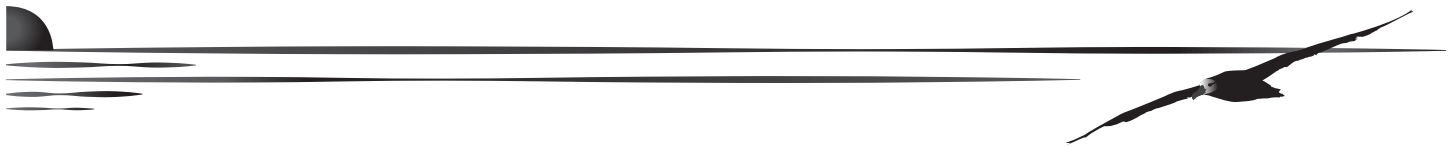
The highlight of the day, our sitters agreed, was not a single bird, but the near-constant show of Parasitic Jaegers chasing the terns. And in this tumult of Jaegers, Reef Comer was able to locate a single chesty Pomarine, which for many was a lifer. The other highlight was the constant flurry of Brown Creepers in the pines—hardly a moment without their high-pitched trills—and one chase when Acorn Woodpeckers chased a Brown Creeper around a trunk. There was a grand total of one forlorn Sooty Shearwater, and Pete Sole heroically scoped the dog-infested rocks below to find a speck of a Spotted Sandpiper.

*cont'd next page...*



*From Left: Lois Goldfrank, Pete Solé, Jeff Wall, Shantanu Phukan, Nickie Zavinski*





***Moss Landing Christmas Bird Count  
Monday, January 1, 2018***

Common Loon - Kent Van Yuren

The Moss Landing CBC will take place on New Year's Day, January 1, 2017. As always, we're looking for more observers to help cover some of the prime birding areas in southern Santa Cruz County and northern Monterey County. Because the week between Christmas and New Year's becomes quite hectic for many people, please let us know your intentions *before Christmas* so we can assign people to their territories before the holiday festivities begin. The day will end with a catered countdown dinner at Pajaro Dunes.

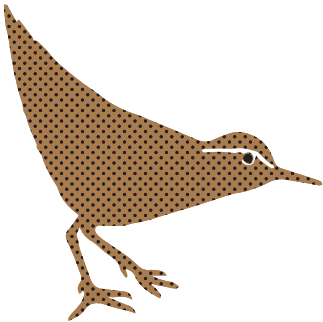
If you are interested in participating in this year's count, please contact  
Bob Ramer at 831-426-7342 or [rjramer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rjramer@sbcglobal.net)



*the BIG sit cont'd...*

Kumaran Arul, Alex Gauguine, Alex Rinkert, Kent Johnson, Lisa Sheridan and, distantly, David Suddjian all advised me on how to site this circle, though due to lack of lead time I was not able to scout out all locations and settled on New Brighton as the most accessible, pleasant and birdy. And, as promised, I did make my rice pudding to lure reluctant sitters, but in the hurry to get out into the field I left it on the kitchen counter (honest).

There seems to be some interest in doing this twice every year—once while the birds head north, and then again in October for the Big Sit Weekend. Let's discuss where best to site our circle so we can beat Los Osos. In addition to having a mosaic of habitats the site should be pleasant enough for us to want to linger there for most of the day.



*Illustrations: Sitting Bird,  
Elegant Crested-Tinamou,  
Pomarine Jaeger,  
Spotted Sandpiper  
- Lisa Fay Larson*

## Birder's Notebook

### SANTA CRUZ BIRD CLUB AUCTIONED ARTWORK 9-21-17



Above: **Booted Racquet-tails**: The original painting is acrylic on board (Masonite) a recent painting that has become a current favorite.

**SOPHIE WEBB**

Right:  
Field Guide,  
**Plate: Cotingas,  
Fruitcrows, and  
UmbrellaBird, Peru**  
Below: **Anna's  
Hummingbirds**:  
water and gouache, a  
field painting



### **Sandhill Cranes, Merced National Wildlife Refuge** **- ELIZABETH VAN DYKE**



The earliest Sandhill Crane fossil found was in Florida. It is estimated to be around 2.5 million years old. A Crowned Crane fossil, close relative to the Sandhill Crane, was found in Nebraska and is estimated to be around 10 million years old.

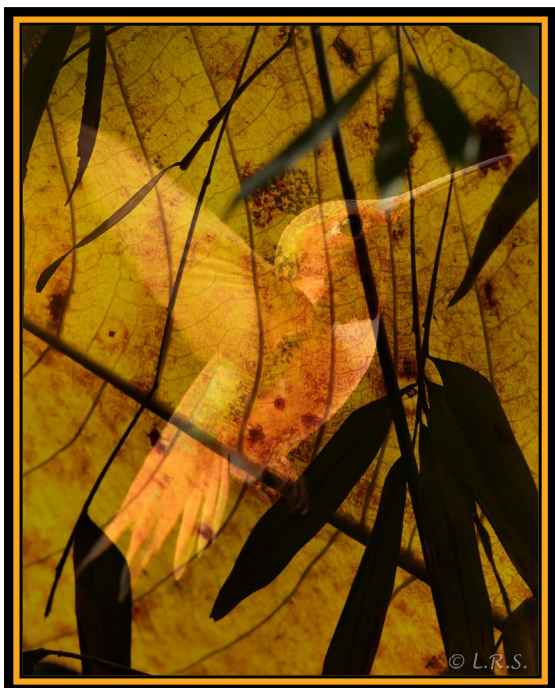
Some Lesser Sandhill Cranes have more rust brown color in their feathers than others. This can be a factor of how much iron is in their diet, or preening with a ferrous solution in mud.

Like many marsh birds when walking in water, they pick their feet up with their toes together to avoid getting tangled in vegetation. When they put their feet down, they open the foot to get a firm grasp on the bottom.

The short tail is covered by a "bustle" of drooping feathers. They mate for life and choose their partners in part from dancing displays. Juveniles can stay with their parents through the winter until they are 9-10 months old.

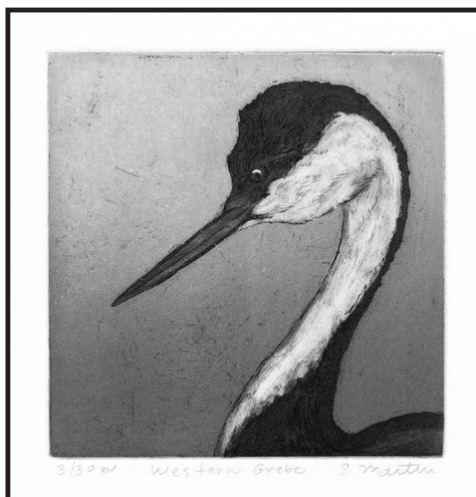
The North American breeding bird survey indicates their populations have risen 4.5% per year between 1966 and 2014.





*Anna's Hummingbird collage*  
- LISA SHERIDAN

*Young Anna's  
Hummingbird*  
- SHARON  
HULL



**STEPHANIE  
MARTIN**  
*Right:*  
**Western Grebe**  
*Below:*  
**Tropical Kingbird**



*Peregrine Falcon, 2016 Monterey  
Bay Birding Festival*  
- ELIZABETH VAN DYKE

This is a captive Peregrine Falcon. The word Peregrine originally meant foreign, then pilgrim falcon and now it means wandering or wanderer.

They may reach up to 238 miles per hour in a hunting stoop from heights of 300-3,000 feet above their prey. It is found on all continents except Antarctica.

Just like most raptors, the females are larger than the males. They mate for life.

Peregrine Falcons were nearly eradicated by pesticides in the mid 20th Century. Partners in Flight estimates the global population at 140,000 with 17% spending some time in the United States.

Peregrines are here year-round. Tundra-nesting falcons may move up to 15,500 miles per year from South America to Alaska and Northern Canada and back.



*Willet in Finery*  
- PETE SOLÉ

*Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in poison oak,  
Anna Jean Cummings Park*  
- LISA LARSON



## Central Valley Birding Symposium 2017

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 21st annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 16-19, 2017, at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA. Please join us as the CVBS again celebrates the best of birding in the Central Valley!

New this year, is a Thursday field trip with Jon Dunn, then the meet-and-greet Thursday night, followed by outstanding photographer and presenter, Ed Harper, with his program on *Wings over the Central Valley*.

Friday night's keynote program *Bank Swallow Colonies on the Upper Sacramento River* will be presented by Dawn Garcia.

Saturday night's keynote program, *Birding Without Borders: An Epic World Big Year* will be presented by Noah Strycker. This humorous and inspiring presentation about Strycker's epic World Big Year, in which he set a world record by seeing 6,042 birds in one calendar year, will give you a real appreciation for the birds and birders of the world.

Informative and entertaining workshops include: *Wintering Burrowing Owls in the Central Valley* with Lynne Trulio, *Neotropic Migrants* with Joe Morlan, *Winter Waterfowl in the Central Valley* by Jon Dunn, and an update on Central Valley bird conservation and research programs, and more.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday field trips always turn up exciting birds. CVBS also offers a Bird ID Panel and Birder's Market. There's something for everyone interested in birds. Come and join us!

**For more information see: [www.cvbirds.org](http://www.cvbirds.org).**

*Sandhill Cranes - Lisa Larson*



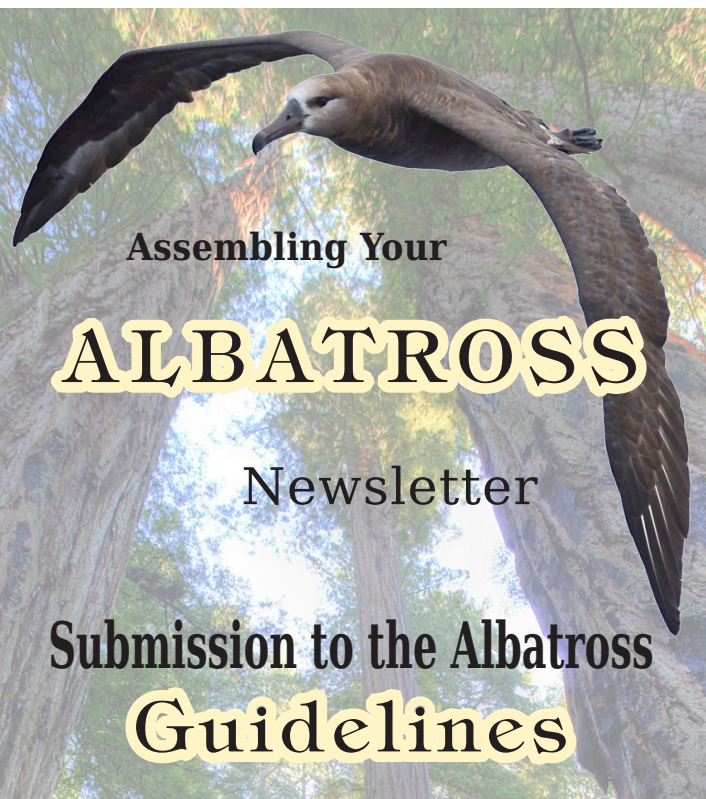
## Submissions NEEDED



for Jan/Feb Issue

**DEC 1, 2017**

*Yellow-rumped Warbler in the rain - Lisa Sheridan*



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, birding, or birders
- 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.

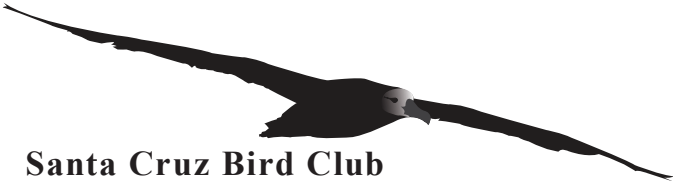
I accept plain text, Word, or PDF files. Send items by email to: [scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com](mailto:scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com)

~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor



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PARTING SHOT: "I'LL GET YOU, MY PRETTY!"  
HEERMAN'S GULL - DAVID SIDLE



## ALBATROSS

is published five times a year  
by the Santa Cruz Bird Club.  
See the online version and past  
issues on the SCBC website,  
**[santacruzbirdclub.org](http://santacruzbirdclub.org)**

## Join the Santa Cruz Bird Club

Enjoy walks in and around the County of Santa Cruz, discounted boat trips on Monterey Bay, summer picnics and annual dinners, meetings September through May featuring informative, illustrated talks on wild birds and related topics, and receive the bimonthly newsletter, *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).  
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