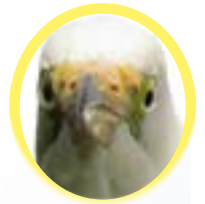




Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES



Through New Eyes

- By Lisa Fay Larson



I admit I was a bit trepidatious when I volunteered to lead two walks for the Monterey Bay Birding Festival 2018 at Pajaro Dunes (and I included Shorebirds Pond). I had lead a number of walks for the Santa Cruz Bird Club, but none for a nationally recognized event! I admit I am not a gull, peep, or sea-watching expert by any stretch. But I decided if any laurophiles were present they would help out with gulls. That's the way the vast majority of birders are and why I love them as a whole. I was also hoping for—and concerned about—identifying rare sandpipers along the mudflats of the slough or on the beach. Being September, I had hoped for a boon of sandpiper rarities as in the year before; Stilt Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpipers, (which had been a nemesis for me) American Golden Plover, a number of Wilson's Phalaropes and, amazingly, a Ruff!

On Friday, September 28, my group was at capacity. We managed to cat-herd ourselves over to the check-in station at the Pajaro Dunes complex and sign in. A heavy marine layer prevailed. Then we crawled along Boca Road in our cars while I scanned for birds along the Watsonville Slough. The capacious mud flats at low tide didn't yield birds! It was painfully quiet! We parked at the end and people enjoyed looking over the slough and Pajaro River confluence. We were able to observe some Mallards, a Greater Yellowlegs, Pied-billed Grebes, a couple of Black-bellied Plovers, American Kestrel, and later, a Belted Kingfisher. There was a mass of Brown Pelicans on a sandbar in the Pajaro River and I caught a Caspian Tern feeding it's chick, although I don't think others did.

People seemed happy, but I was hoping to really impress!

On the beach—great success! There was a huge congregation of shorebirds up the beach rather than toward the river mouth. So we headed toward the mass for a better



Top: Great Egret face
Bottom: Pajaro Dunes
- Lisa Larson

INSIDE
CALENDAR OF
EVENTS

CHRISTMAS
BIRD COUNT



SCBC WINS AWARD

Santa Cruz
Birds



PARTING SHOT

Townsend's Warbler - Lee Jaffe
Green-tailed Towhee - John Hickok

look. There were hundreds of shorebirds including Long-billed Curlews, Marbled Godwits, Willets, Sanderlings, and some handsome Ring-billed Gulls. One dark peep stood out among the Sanderlings and through discussion with a very sharp young birder (I won't name-names, but it begins with Lo and ends with gan), we decided it was a lone Dunlin.

Heading the other way, I pointed out the always loved Snowy Plovers on the dry flats, running around like little mice. Most were not banded. The aforementioned sharp young birder spotted Common Loons in the gloom as I talked plover. We got enough good looks at Ring-billed, Western and California Gulls that we were sated and headed back to the cars.

Again crawling along Boca Road, the mud flats were still quiet. I did spot something and motioned to turn cars around and park. Because we had made the effort to turn back, I unthinkingly said, "Oh, it's just a Killdeer." Someone said, "It's not *just* a Killdeer" and I had an instant attitude readjustment. Every bird is exciting to a new birder! So, I pointed out the bright red eye ring and explained the broken wing feigning behavior it will display to distract a potential threat from the nest. I saw fascination on some faces. Hopefully, I was redeemed!

My lesson was learned and I will not forget it. I have never, ever called a common bird a "trash bird" but I will never again say any bird is "just" a (bird) when leading a group! Because of the "new eyes" of others, my own eyes were renewed. I like



to tell people that birding is like a treasure hunt, and the species are unique jewels.

At Shorebirds Pond, we signed in and had a great time observing crowned sparrows, 5 species of warbler, yellowlegs, woodpeckers, egrets, ducks (Cinnamon Teal a favorite) and many more. Cooperative mature and immature White-crowned Sparrows perched side-by-side on a shrub were a helpful teaching opportunity. Our young birder spotted a Lincoln's Sparrow. We watched an

audacious pair of American Kestrels harass a Red-Shouldered Hawk and American Crow. The brilliant Townsend's Warblers elicited ohhs and ahhs. And, as I had hoped, on the grassy knoll further redemption was proffered by close looks at a pair of Killdeer.

I will tell you about three highlights from the walk the next day. The day was entirely different—bright and sunny. It was a smaller group of mostly beginners and there was eagerness to learn how to tell the difference between the shorebirds. For Marbled Godwits and Long-billed Curlews, I gestured with a curved arm; up (skyward) for godwit and down for curlew. I reveled in the joy of unanimous amazement as we watched a large flock of sanderlings make turns on a knife edge in perfect synchronicity.

Differences between Snowy Plovers and Sanderlings were more challenging for some to discern. I explained about behaviors, beak size/shape differences, and body shape/size. Then, luckily, a lone Sanderling paused next to a Snowy Plover long enough for a side-by-side comparison. A woman exclaimed, "Now I've got it!" By jove, she's got it!

Suddenly, a Parasitic Jaeger was viciously on the attack on a Western Gull just past the waterline!

Now, normally, I am a quiet person, but I immediately pointed and yelled, "JAEJER!"



From top:
Ring-billed Gull & sandcrab
Dunlin
Cinnamon Teal
Killdeer
Left: Snowy Plover
Right:
Sanderling &
sandcrab
-Lisa Larson

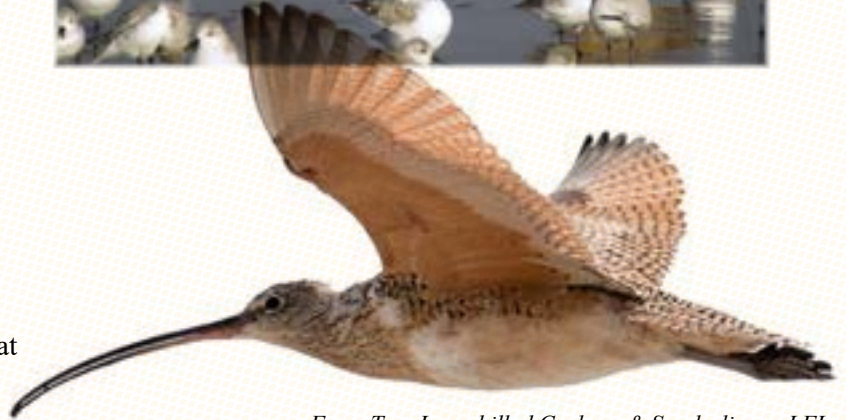


Everybody saw it! I was totally satisfied with the impressive drama of this powerful pelagic “pirate bird” seen from shore!

Inspired by these trip-leading experiences I wrote this poem. I hope you'll enjoy.

Ocean Rhythms

The sea's magnetic breath
 Lures sanderlings to dare
 The inhale and exhale of waves.
 A notch in sand distracts
 Sandcrab prize withdrawn
 (A confident ant conveys leaf, scurries)
 But our tiny thief drops her jewel –
 Long curlew tongs retrieve
 Endless keep-away game,
 Older than memory.
 Now swallow attempts preposterous, droll
 Deep maw persists and wins
 This time...
 Again sanderling troops advance, retreat, repeat
 Whimbrel, curlew, willet, godwit,
 Sea foam puffs of snowy plover
 Countless shorebird footprints
 Even those of strapping gulls
 Erased by Etch A Sketch of shore –
 The birds unwitting artists
 Of ocean's harsh critique



*From Top: Long-billed Curlews & Sanderlings - LFL
 Long-billed Curlew in flight - Lee Jaffe
 Sanderlings running from the waves - LFL
 At Shorebirds Pond: Greater Yellowlegs - LFL
 Snowy Plovers & Sanderlings - David Sidle*



*The first group
 9-28-18*





Moss Landing Christmas Bird Count Tuesday, January 1, 2019

The Moss Landing CBC will take place on New Year's Day, January 1, 2019 . 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



White-tailed Kite, Jetty Road - Lisa Larson


Central Valley Birding Symposium 2018

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 22nd annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 15-18, 2018, at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA.

This year's keynote program, "The Trade Off" will be presented by **John Kricher**.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday field trips always turn up exciting birds! The symposium features speakers, workshops, field trips, and the Birder's Mart. There's something for everyone!

To look over the schedule of events, visit cvbirds.org/events/symposium.



Sandhill Cranes, Merced NWR - Lee Jaffe

Annual Christmas Bird Count December 15, 2018

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for Santa Cruz County will be held on Saturday, December 15, 2018. Please mark your calendars 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.

Last year, we had 174 species on count day and 181 species during count week, putting count over the current 10-year average (170) by four species. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated (and desired)! Last year, we had 92 observers in the field, logging 300.8 total party hours, higher hours than the current ten-year average of 234.5 hours. **Please contact Eric Feuss at ericfeuss@sbcglobal.net or at 831-477-0280.**

Dowitchers - Lee Jaffe



Saturday Evening December 15 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.

Green-winged Teal - Andy Knorr

2017 Santa Cruz County CBC Summary - Eric Feuss, Compiler

Our **61st** annual Santa Cruz County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on December 16, 2017. Outside of localized geographical influences, the count day across the count circle started with clear skies and chilly air. Except for some protected sections, both coastal and inland sections experienced a windy start. The wind diminished inland and increased in coastal sections. The day's temperature variance was an average 17 degrees, in line with last year differential and down from the ten-year average of 24 degrees. A low temperature of 38 degrees (early owling)



and a high temperature of 67 degrees was recorded, but the low/high average was 42/65 degrees.

We had 92 observers in the field, logging 300.8 total party hours, higher hours than the current ten-year average of 234.5 hours. The count day tally was 175 species, but later revised down to 174 (one species not accepted), four species above the current ten-year average of 170. The count week period tally came to 182 species. The total abundance count came to 31118 versus the current ten-year average of 44458, a result that is not surprising given the windy conditions during most of the day.

“Off-list” species observed count day were Greater White-fronted Goose [2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017], Snow Goose [2009, 2014(CW), 2017], Dark Shearwater Species [2007, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017], Bald Eagle [2009, 2015, 2016, 2017], Pacific Golden Plover [2017], Parasitic Jaeger [2017], Cassin's Auklet [2013, 2014, 2015, 2017], Long-eared Owl [2007, 2008, 2012, 2013, 2017], Barn Swallow [2017], and Tree Swallow [2008, 2016, 2017]. Only the last ten years of data is cited here. The Black-chinned Hummingbird record (adult male) was not accepted. I hope it returns this year.

Count week observed species were Northern Pintail (missed 2007, 2011, 2012), Common Gallinule (missed 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013; CW 2014, 2015), Willet (missed 2010; CW 2013); Pomarine Jaeger (missed 207, 2008, 2011-2014); Marbled Murrelet (missed 2013; single counts 2015 and 2016), American Dipper (missed 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016), Black-and-White Warbler ("off-list" species), Black-throated Gray Warbler ("off-list" species). Only the last ten years of data is cited here. High counts for this year, based upon the ratio of count to 10-year average, were obtained for Brown Pelican (1191 vs. 671) and American Crow (1625 vs 667).

Some low counts for this year, based upon the same ratio of count to 10-year average,

were obtained for Pacific Loon (105 vs. 1109), Brandt's Cormorant (554 vs. 1078), Common Murre (140 vs. 1064), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (182 vs. 354), and American Robin and Pine Siskin, for which statistics are shown in next section.

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 (3 vs. 8.0), American Robin (547 vs. 1945.3), Varied Thrush (51 vs. 187.0), Cedar Waxwing (133 vs. 445.9), and PINE SISKIN (370 vs. 876.2). Red Crossbill was missed with statistic shown in next section.

“On-list” species missed on count day and count week are: Green-winged Teal (CW 2010; missed 2012); White-winged Scoter (missed 2008, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016); Black Scoter (missed 2007, 2008, 2010-2013, 2015); Forster's Tern (CW 2011, missed 2013); Red Crossbill (missed 2007-2011, 2014, 2016). Only the last ten years of data is cited here.

Eric Feuss, Compiler

Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron -Jeff Roisman





Northern Flicker - Cathy Summa-Wolfe



Heartfelt thanks to the growing numbers of people who have graciously and generously donated to the Bird Club! 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 —

BREAKING NEWS:

The *Breeding Bird Atlas Project* has received the 2018 “**Be the Difference Award**” recognizing the top 50 people, groups and businesses who do the most to transform Santa Cruz County through volunteerism! KUDOS to all who have taken part in making the atlas happen!



Hairy Woodpecker - Pete Solè

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- Debbie Goodell
- Surrey Kent
- Ann Rogers
- Carolyn Watanabe
- Susan Giddings

Santa Cruz Bird Club needs your help to complete the Breeding Bird Atlas Project!

The Atlas is a multi-year, multi-phase undertaking, and it would be great if everyone in the club participated in some way. You can help by actual atlasing, or with behind-the-scenes work like research or fundraising, or by monetary donations. So far, 36% of membership has participated.

Please help us meet our goal of 100%



Red-naped Sapsucker - Andy Knorr

Please send check to:
Santa Cruz Bird Club
Box 1304
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
Attention: Breeding Bird Atlas

EVENTS CALENDAR

November–December 2018

Please see SCBC website Calendar for event details! Changes to event times/ place are sometimes necessary after publication. We suggest checking our Facebook page or our website Calendar for the latest information. Time permitting, we also send out a member-wide email notification. If you haven't been receiving these, please check your spam filter & let us know at: scbirdclub@gmail.com.

DATE	LOCATION	LEADER
Friday, November 2	Anna Jean Cummings Park	Lisa Sheridan & Lisa Larson
Friday, November 9	Swanton Pond	Alex Rinkert
Sunday, November 11	Baldwin Creek	Phil Brown
Friday, November 16	Schwan Lake	Lisa Larson
Sunday, November 18	Santa Cruz County Open	Eric Feuss
Tuesday, November 20	Porter Sesnon	Lisa Larson
Sunday, November 25	Westcliff & Vicinity	Phil Brown
Sat-Sun, Dec. 1 & 2	Sacramento Valley	Clay Kempf
Sunday, December 9	Wilder Ranch	Phil Brown
Friday, December 14	Count Week Scout	Nicholas Levendosky
Saturday, December 15	Christmas Bird Count	Everybody
Sunday, December 30	Loma Prieta	Nicholas Levendosky

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.

SCBC Meeting Thursday, November 15th 7:30 PM

Speaker: Cara Thow, PhD Student

Topic: Conspecific brood parasitism in Wood Ducks

Cara is broadly interested in conspecific brood parasitism and social selection. She is currently studying brood parasitism in Wood Ducks in a collaboration between the Lyon lab and John Eadie at UC Davis.



Wood Ducks - Pete Sole




SCBC received an AWARD!!!

Santa Cruz Volunteer Center's *Be the Difference Awards* recognize the Top 50 People, Groups and Businesses who do the most to transform Santa Cruz County through volunteerism.

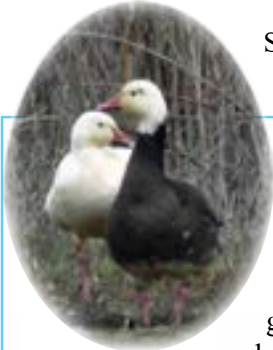
Stories are shared of volunteers, businesses, and non-profits who make our community a happier, healthier place to live through volunteerism. The **Santa Cruz Breeding Bird Atlas** project earned the SCBC this honor!

For more information please see: scvolunteercenter.org/events-2/be-the-difference-awards.

Heerman's Gull - Lisa Larson

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex and the Sutter Buttes Saturday & Sunday, December 1 & 2



Snow Geese, "Blue Goose" right - Lisa Larson

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. **More details are available on the club's online Events Calendar.** Participant **number is limited**; please reserve a space by e-mailing the leader: Clay Kempf, ltjaeger@att.net.



*White-faced Ibis - Jeff Roisman
Mixed Geese & Ducks - Lisa Larson*

SANTA CRUZ BIRDS

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from June 1 to August 31, 2018

Black Swift
- Alex Rinkert



This summer was full of lingering winter birds and rare breeding records. Fifteen duck species reported may be a record for June, and Red-breasted Merganser, expected in small numbers in June, was somehow missed. Highlights from the breeding season include Black Swifts confirmed breeding on the north coast for the first time in decades and Cedar Waxwings breeding again in the Pajaro Valley.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** flying over Shorebirds Pond on June 2 was a rare late spring find (RW). **Canada Geese** were present on the north coast in good numbers through their breeding season (v.ob.). **Wood Ducks** were confirmed breeding at a private pond in Corralitos, the first breeding record in that area (NU, EL). The only other location they are known to breed at in south county is along the Pajaro River between CARE Park and Pescadero Creek near the Santa Clara County line. A male Wood Duck at south Harkins Slough on June 24 was unexpected. Elsewhere in the Pajaro Valley, single Wood Ducks were found at Shorebirds Pond and Harkins Slough on August 6, where they are rare (JR, VN).

A pair of **Blue-winged Teal** was at Shorebirds Pond on June 10 (NU, v.ob.) and a male was at Watsonville Slough on July 1 (NU). A **Northern Shoveler**, perhaps summering, was at Watsonville Slough between July 3-13 (HSt, NU). A male **American Wigeon** at Pinto Lake from June 10-29 was only the second summer record for the county (LL, RW, NU). Only one report of **Redheads** surfaced this period after several persisted in the Watsonville Slough system into late May; two males and a female were at Struve Slough on June 15 (RM). Numerous "winter" waterfowl at College Lake lingered into late spring. The most notable ducks there were seen on June 4: a male **Ring-necked Duck**, the third summer record for the county, and a **Hooded Merganser**, the second June record for the county (GK). A female **White-winged Scoter** turned up at Seacliff State Beach on August 6 (KK,

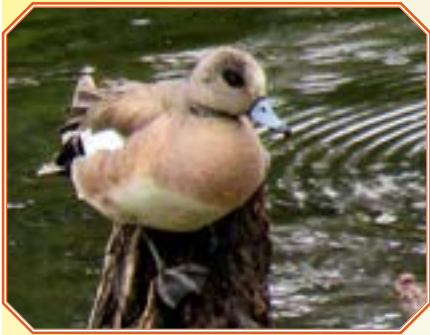


From top:
Horned Grebe - Simon Thornhill
Long-tailed Duck - Gary Kittleson
Horned Grebe - Norm Uyeda

RW). A summering **Long-tailed Duck** was seen on the lower San Lorenzo River from June 30 to August 5 (JMg, v.ob.). A female **Common Goldeneye**, first seen June 30, also summered on the lower San Lorenzo River (JMj, v.ob.). **Common Mergansers** are becoming more regular on the lower Pajaro River; a flock of eight was there on August 18 (CF). Unusually, no **Red-breasted Mergansers** were found summering at coastal river and creek mouths this period. A male **Ruddy Duck** at the Quail Hollow Ranch pond was exceptional for the Santa Cruz Mountains in summer (DE, CV, SM).

A **Horned Grebe** continued at College Lake through June 4, representing the second summer record for the county (GK). An **Eared Grebe** photographed at the Santa Cruz Wharf from July 2-6 was one of very few summer records for the county (NU, KC, ST, GW).

Black Swifts were reported from coastal Wilder Ranch State Park and Sand Hill Bluff (v.ob.), and more notably six were at CARE Park in the Pajaro Valley, where they are rarely seen (NL et al.). An exciting find was evidence of Black Swifts breeding on the north coast this season, the first such evidence found since 1994. On July 19 a Black Swift was seen entering and exiting a sea cave at Sand Hill Bluff on a schedule and manner consistent with the presence of an active nest (AR). In the past four years Black Swifts have been observed courting and visiting possible nest sites at this location, however this was the first of such observations to confirm breeding was occurring. Black



American Wigeon - Norm Uyeda

Swifts once bred in sea caves and wet bluff faces on the coast from Santa Cruz to San Mateo County, as well as at several waterfalls further inland in the Santa Cruz Mountains. By the late 1990s most

breeding locations were found to be inactive, and the species was likely extirpated by the early 2000s.

Observations of recently fledged **Vaux's Swifts** at Huckleberry Campground in Big Basin Redwoods State Park was noteworthy given how few breeding records of this species there have been recently (AR). **White-throated Swifts** once again bred in the Highway 1 overpass at San Andreas Road; begging young were heard in weep holes on August 5 (RW). Begging White-throated Swifts were also heard on a remote cliff up East Fork Waddell Creek on July 17 (BD). One or two **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** were reported at a feeder in Soquel between August 17-

20 (AG). Observation of a male **Anna's Hummingbird** feeding nestlings in Santa Cruz nestling was highly unusual for the species (KS). Typically, after copulation, male Anna's play no role in raising young. I could only find one published instance of a male Anna's partaking in the raising of young: an account from 1970 of a male feeding nestlings in Napa County (Clyde 1972).

An unseasonal **Common Gallinule** was at Neary Lagoon from June 6-10 (KA, JA, MB, TP). A **Black-necked Stilt**, rare on the north coast, turned up at Scott Creek mouth on August 25 (NU, AR, JM). A pair of **American Avocets** tended an active nest at College Lake from June 1-4 but the nest was ultimately depredated (GK). A **Black Oystercatcher** at 21st Beach in Live Oak on June 6 was further away from their typical haunts in early June (LM); those breeding in the county seem to rarely venture east of West Cliff Drive during the breeding season. An adult **Ruddy Turnstone** was photographed at Wilder Beach on July 22 (JS, PS). In

Black Oystercatcher - Peter Svensson



Santa Cruz County, the middle of June is the downtime between northbound spring migration and southbound fall migration for sandpipers. A **Dunlin** at Pajaro Dunes on June 19 was notable in that respect, being very late for a spring migrant and quite early for a fall migrant (RW). The Dunlin apparently had a leg injury, which may have prevented it from reaching its breeding grounds. Eleven **Baird's Sandpipers** were reported between August 20-27; all were from the mid-county and north coast (AR, GM, et al.). An exceptional nine at Scott Creek mouth on August 25 was a record high count for the county (AR). Two **Wilson's Phalaropes** were reported in June: one at Shorebirds Pond on June 12 (RW, NU, LG, SH) and one at Younger Lagoon on June 26 (GM). At least four were reported at Shorebirds Pond between July 20-29 (RW, v.ob.). Seven **Red Phalaropes** were reported from

shore between August 5-20, where they are somewhat rare (JS, HS, PS, MB, DS, LG). Four **Greater Yellowlegs** at College Lake on June 4 were late (GK). Two at Shorebirds Pond on June 12, then three the following day, and four the day after and onward were probably very early fall migrants (RW, NU, LG, SH, MB, FB, LJ, LC).

Two reports of completely dark hypermelanistic **Common Murres**, one off Greyhound Rock on June 26 (AR) and another (or the same?) off

Wilder Ranch State Park on July 4 (KJ), may be the first murre(s) reported in the county with this rare plumage abnormality. **Bonaparte's Gulls** were present at College Lake in impressive numbers in early June, with 56 there on June 1 and 47 still present June 4 (GK). An **Elegant Tern** at Struve Slough on August 11, and then two there on August 25 were notable inland (DSt). Three **Black Skimmers** were at Pajaro Dunes on June 17 (CF, AG, NU). **Northern Fulmars**

were somewhat more abundant this summer than usual, especially in nearshore waters on the north coast (AR, v.ob.). A **Short-tailed Shearwater** photographed from a boat on the Monterey Bay on August 31 was

Ruddy Turnstone - Peter Svensson



a record early arrival for the county (AR, CS, SJ). An unidentified **Frigatebird** reported flying past the Capitola bluffs on August 31 was a surprise (GT).

Once again **American Bitterns** put on a show at Pinto Lake. Many observers reported recently fledged young and various interesting interactions among adults. An impressive high count of eleven—five adults and six juveniles—on June 15 (RW) was only topped by an amazing fourteen—six adults and eight juveniles—on June 19 (LL), a record high count for the county.

The **Osprey** nest at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park apparently failed sometime between June 11-14, however an adult continued to visit the nest for some time after (JW, AR). The nest was last active on June 10 (CF). **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were heard begging in the upper San Lorenzo River watershed at Castle Rock State Park on July 28 (AR). An adult or near adult **Bald Eagle** circling over Neary Lagoon on June 8 was unseasonal there (CB). Another was at Loch Lomond on August 12 (ARG). The pair of Bald Eagles breeding in the Watsonville Slough system had another successful year; their one nestling was noted to have fledged by June 29 (RW, GK). This breeding pair seems to stay within the sloughs, sometimes wandering north to Pinto Lake or College Lake. Sightings at Pajaro Dunes on June 10 (LK) and 11 (MB, FB) were presumably of the breeding pair away from their usual haunts. The pair of **Red-tailed Hawks**, one adult a dark-morph, at Arana Gulch tended a nest with three young on June 15 (VO). This breeding pair is one of only a few pairs in the county where one adult is a dark-morph. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was being mobbed by small birds in broad daylight at the Henry Cowell campground on June 4 (SJ, v.ob.).



American Bitterns

Big chick - poor Mom! - Lisa Larson



*Northern Saw-whet Owl
- Simon Thornhill*



*Cedar Waxwing, juvenile
- Lisa Sheridan*

Three **Willow Flycatchers** were reported between August 28-31 (AR, SP, JT, v.ob.). A Dusky Flycatcher was photographed at Loma Prieta on August 18 (PSo). Given the date and habitat, this bird could have either been a very early fall migrant or summering locally. Late migrant **Western Kingbirds** were found at the Homeless Garden on June 10 (LS) and Loma Prieta on June 12 (MB, FB).

Purple Martins were confirmed breeding at Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve again with an active nest found on June 9 (JSm). The high count this year was six on July 18 (SH, LG). At Loma Prieta martins were also confirmed breeding at the colony in Santa Clara County (RP). Up to two martins were present southeast of Loma Prieta, where a few were observed prospecting earlier in the season, through at least July 8 (NL). Elsewhere, martins were found at Boulder Creek on June 12 (AR), Soquel on June 22 (AG), Glenwood on July 29 (JG), and Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park on July 31 (JS, HS). **Tree Swallows** used a nest box near the UCSC Arboretum, an area with little precedence of them breeding (CB).

White-breasted Nuthatches were found on upper Empire Grade on July 11 and 14 (AR), Pinto Lake on July 17 (GM) and August 25 (LSO, CH), and where more expected on the Pajaro River near Pescadero Creek on July 10 (NU). Two **Hermit Thrushes** at Pinto Lake on August 13, and then another at Chittenden on August 16 were likely post-breeding dispersants from the population breeding in the Santa Cruz Mountains rather than fall migrants from elsewhere (NU).

Cedar Waxwings were found breeding again in the Pajaro Valley. A pair was first seen building a nest in a cypress near where Shell Road crosses Watsonville Slough on June 2 (RW). The nest



was apparently abandoned soon after its discovery. Soon after on June 9, two waxwings were seen collecting nest material nearby at Shorebirds Pond (MB, FB, HSt). Further observations of this pair through late July suggested they continued nest building and raised young in cypresses near the pickleball courts north of Shorebirds Pond, but the nest was never found (AR, RW). Meanwhile, on June 14 a pair of waxwings was seen building a nest in a willow at CARE Park on the Pajaro River, but the nest was soon abandoned (RW). Yet another nest, the fourth this season (!), was found on June 30 in a cypress close to where the first nest of this season was found (AR, RW). The nest contained three or four recently

hatched nestlings estimated to be a few days old. Large, fully feathered nestlings were seen on July 14 and by July 16 the nest was empty, the young presumably fledging successfully (RW). This nest was the fourth active nest found in the county, and one of very few to be found in central coastal California. The last report of waxwings in this area was of one on July 20 (AR), however two reports from CARE Park of an adult on August 3 (NU) and two juveniles on August 5 (RW) were probably dispersing local breeders rather than exceptionally early fall migrants.

A rare yellow-variant **Purple Finch** was photographed at Shorebirds Pond on June 30 (AR, RW), and again on July 12 (RW). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were reported at numerous places. Many reports from Loma Prieta included one of recently fledged young on July 8 (BT). While Lawrence's are present in small numbers in most years at Loma Prieta, breeding has not been confirmed there since 1987. Shorebirds Pond and the Pajaro Dunes area hosted at least one pair this season, and breeding was confirmed there by June 30 (NU). While Lawrence's irregularly nest just north at the Sunset State Beach campground, this was the first breeding record for Pajaro Dunes. A surprising flock of 15 Lawrence's was at the Manresa State Beach campground on July 15 (JE). Single Lawrence's at Crest

Ranch Christmas Tree Farm on June 2 and July 5 (AR), and a pair at Chittenden on June 8 (NU) were perhaps also breeding. Elsewhere, Lawrence's were reported at Scotts Valley on June 6 and July 25 (JS), Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park on August 6 (JS, HS), Soquel on July 4 (AG), and Pinto Lake on July 20 (AR).

Due to their secretive nature and limited birding coverage of preferred habitat, **Grasshopper Sparrows** are rarely found during migration so one at Struve Slough on August 10 was noteworthy (NU). A juvenile **Chipping Sparrow** at Litchfield Lane on June 16-17 probably hatched locally (LG, SH, NU). Chipping Sparrows were confirmed breeding at another new location in the northern Pajaro Valley, this time at Hazel Dell Road. Recently fledged young were seen there on June 16 (NU, EL). A Chipping Sparrow singing on Olive Springs Road north of Soquel on June 9 was probably a prospective breeder (STe). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** photographed at Natural Bridges State Beach on August 29 was the earliest record for the county by nearly two weeks (LJ). Up



Purple Finch, variant- Randy Wardle
Tri-colored Blackbird - Sharon Hull

to two **Black-chinned Sparrows** were found at Loma Prieta beginning June 1, and breeding was confirmed again at this location when an adult was seen feeding a fledgling on July 8 (BT). A **Lark Sparrow** showed up at Arana Gulch on August 27 (MM). A **White-throated Sparrow** continued visiting a feeder in Rio Del Mar through July 18, which was only the second summer record for the county (LP, KKe). **Bell's Sparrows**, one of the most secretive species that regularly occurs in the county, were unusually confiding at Loma Prieta this period. There were at least thirteen reports of up to three individuals between June 1 and August 18 (v.ob.). The continued presence of a few individuals suggested they were breeding, but no confirming evidence of breeding materialized.

An active **Hooded Oriole** nest in a palm near Sand Hill Bluff on July 19 was one of few breeding confirmations of this species on the north coast (AR). The state of breeding **Tricolored Blackbirds** in Santa Cruz County has felt increasingly dire the past few years.

Hardly any were reported on the north coast this breeding season, although there was one breeding confirmation on upper Swanton Road on July 4 (SH), close to Laguna de las Trancas—the most consistently used colony in the county in recent years. The high count on the north coast this period was four at Waddell State Beach on June 3 (SH)! The only other report in June or July was of two at Chittenden on June 15 (SH, LG). Three **Great-tailed Grackles** continued at Swanton Pond through June 3 (MB, FB, WBT).

An **Ovenbird** showed up in a Santa Cruz backyard on June 4, appearing exhausted (CS). This was the first Ovenbird reported in the county in eight years. A **MacGillivray's Warbler** was singing from lush coastal scrub at lower Liddell Creek on June 19 (AR). MacGillivray's breed in this habitat somewhat irregularly and in small numbers at various drainages on the north coast, but Liddell Creek is one much less used than others. A singing **Northern Parula** caught the attention of a jogging birder at Neary Lagoon on June 6 (DA). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was found at Bethany Curve on August 29 (SS, JMi).

A **Summer Tanager** was at Pinto Lake on August 12 (CF). Male **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were seen visiting feeders in Felton on July 3 (DE, CV), Santa Cruz from June 18-July 1 (SK), Aptos from July 23-August 3 (RW), and elsewhere in Aptos on August 7 (GH). Another was found at Shorebirds Pond on June 13 (LJ) for a good showing this summer. A male **Blue Grosbeak** was at Chittenden on June 28 (NU).

Cited Observers:

David Apgar, Julian Arul, Kumaran Arul, Clive Bagshaw, Frances Bolte, Michael Bolte, Karen Carbiener, Larry Corridon, Ben Dudek, David Ekdahl, John Ellis, Craig Fosdick, Aaron Gabbe, John Garrett, Lois Goldfrank, Cole Heim, Sharon Hull, Lee Jaffe, Kent Johnson, Shearwater Journeys, Logan Kahle, Ken Kellman (KKe), Gary Kittleson, Kathy Kleinsteiber, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Michael Martin, Gary Martindale, Jim Maughn (JMg), Jeff Maw, Susan Myers, Jane Mio

(JMi), Robert Mitchell, Liam Murphy, Valerie Neer, Vivienne Orgel, Sergey Pavlov, Lise Peterson, TK Pham, Alex Rinkert, Jeff Roisman, Adam Romswinkel-Guise, Christian Schwarz, Lisa Sheridan, David Sidle, Stephanie Singer, Jeff Smith (JSm), Pete Solé (PSo), Logan Southall (LSo), Kitty Stein, David Styer (DSt), Howard Stephenson (HSt), Hanna Svensson, Jonah Svensson, Peter Svensson, Scott Terrill (STe), Giancarlo Thomae, Jim Thomas, Simon Thornhill, Bob Toleno, W. Breck Tyler, Norman Uyeda, Connie Vigno, Randy



Black Grosbeak (rt), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (left) - Randy Wardle

Wardle, Gabriel Wiltse, “v.ob.” means various observers. **Please enter interesting observations into eBird or report them to**

Alex Rinkert at arinkert12@comcast.net.

Literature Cited:

Clyde, D. P. 1972. Anna's Hummingbird in adult male plumage feeds nestling. Condor 74:102.

New Members

WELCOME!

Laura Terrazas	Aug 2018
Jean Shirk	Aug 2018
Carolyn Watanabe	Aug 2018
Robin Abu-Shumays	Sept 2018
Lea Cox	Sept 2018
Jane Harper	Sept 2018
Jennifer McNulty Family	Sept 2018
Peter Caldwell Family	Oct 2018
Nancy Pola	Oct 2018
Laura Paulson	Oct 2018
Erika Perloff Family	Oct 2018

DEADLINE

submissions for
JAN/FEB Issue

DEC 1, 2018

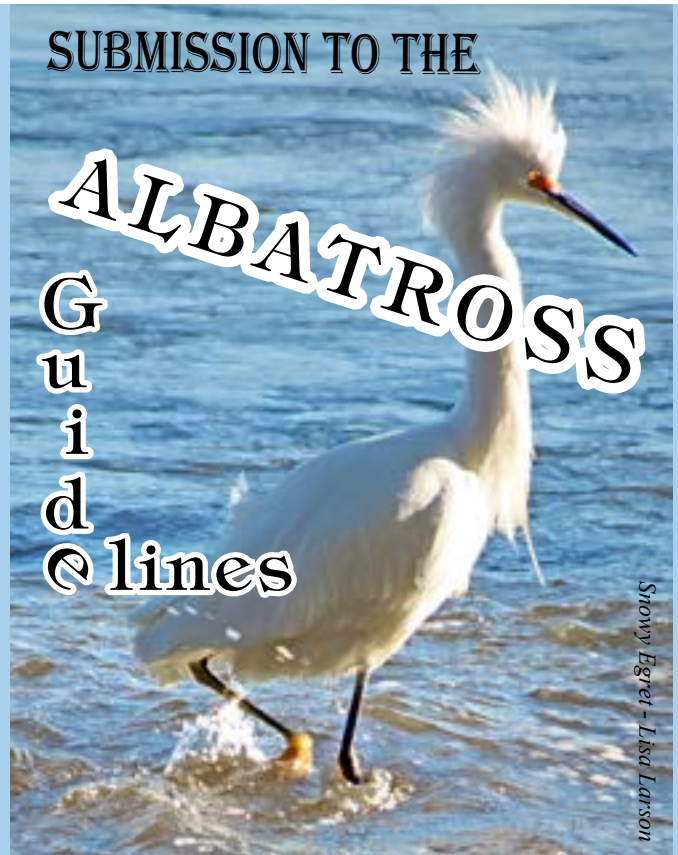


Great Horned Owl - Randy Wardle

SUBMISSION TO THE

ALBATROSS

Guidelines



Snowy Egret - Lisa Larson

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

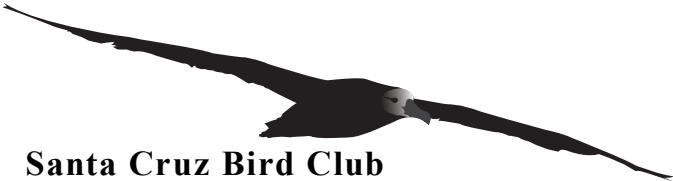
~Lisa Fay Larson, Editor



European Starling - Michael Bolte

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CALIFORNIA SCRUB JAY - KATHLEEN WALDRON



Elegant Terns - John Hickok



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