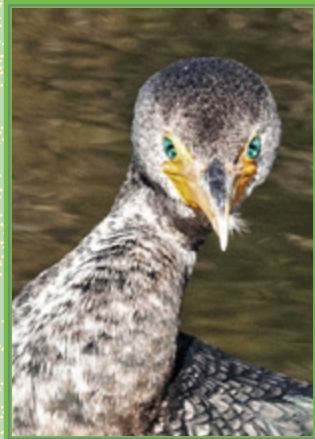


INSIDE

BBA UPDATE/YEAR 6 BEGINS!



Double-crested Cormorant
- David Lewit

Santa Cruz Birds 2021 CBC Results

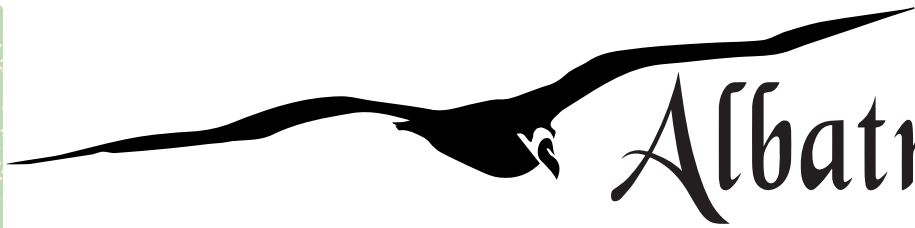


Allen's Hummer - Lee Jaffe

SCBC VIRTUAL TRIVIA NIGHT

Birder's
Notebook

PARTING SHOT



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Water



Stories

Mount Hermon American Dippers

- By Paul Miller



Back in 1997, I was hired as a science camp asst. director for Mount Hermon.

In 1999 or maybe 2000, I was stationed at "Redwood Camp," which is the Mount Hermon-owned property which includes the confluence of Bean and Zayante Creeks.

'Round about late May maybe I noticed these little fuzzballs hopping around the rocks in the water. I knew they were chicks of some sort, but didn't have a clue about what they were exactly.

I remember asking around and doing some research, and figured out they were dipper chicks. Sounds like a fun band. Anyway, I did some more reading, and located the adults.

Ferndell Falls - Lisa Larson

Over the next few years, I would see and hear them right around Ferndell Falls, as they call it.

One year, I decided to figure out where their nest was, and tromped up and down looking for a big nest under one of the bridges, or maybe in a crevice somewhere. No luck. I wasn't savvy enough to follow the birds and watch their behavior.

In perhaps 2014 Randy Wardle emailed that he'd observed the adults entering a crevice behind the waterfall—maybe 15 feet up—and that it looked like they were feeding young. I don't know if he heard young, or saw food items being taken in to the nest. I don't recall seeing young that year, but they may have fledged without my knowledge.





*American Dippers,
Ferndell Falls 3-18-18
-Randy Wardle*

Over the next few years, the American Dipper(s) made appearances, sang, did courtship displays, and could be seen one and two at a time.

I was happy to show others the location, and encourage photography and other observation.

My favorite story was with Elisabeth Foster. She tried 14 times or so before getting stellar looks at a close-up dipper one evening.

One or two still show up here and there, but it seems as if they haven't nested there for quite some time.

I did have one for the CBC in 2020 (or was it '19? Alex would know), but I didn't have any for 2021.

I travel over that little wooden bridge consistently—maybe 2 or 3 times a week. I know Brian Scanlon is also there consistently, and he reported one calling recently.

I haven't seen or heard anything in over a year.

What amazes me is that they're very tolerant of people. That beach area by the confluence is used by redwood camp—staff, kids, etc., by Mount Hermon groups in general, by the residents, and just about anyone who wants to use it. Dogs jump into the water and swim around, and people hike up and down the creek.

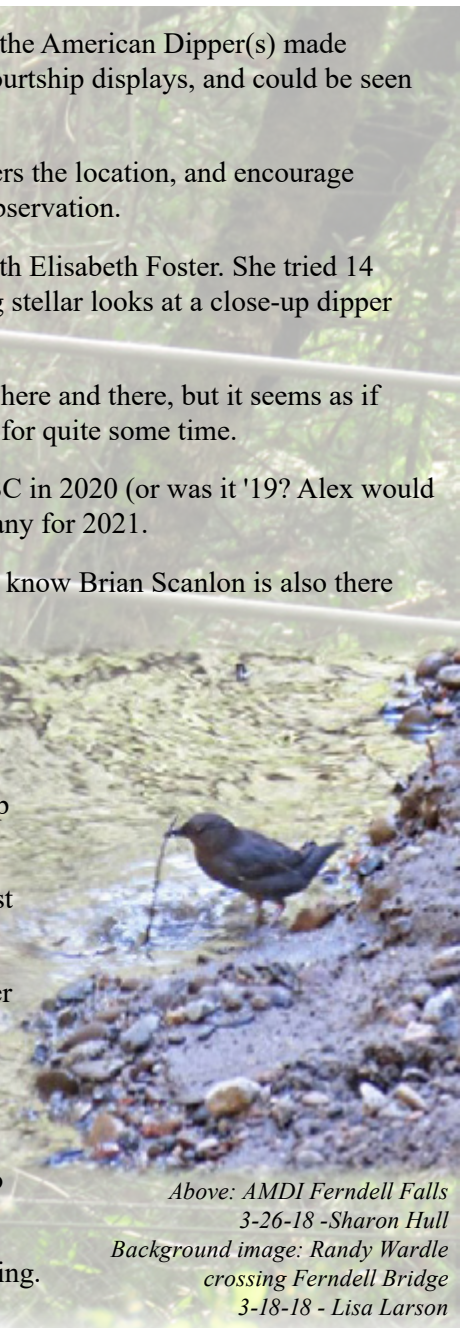
During Covid, they put up a "closed" sign right there at that beach, and people just kept coming.

It's a great cool spot on a hot summer day—almost always 10 or 15 degrees cooler than elsewhere.

Despite all that, they've returned consistently to that spot to nest and forage, up until a few years ago.

I'd be really curious to find out what happened to the dippers that used to come so consistently. Are their numbers declining?

I'll stay vigilant and report any dipper calls or sightings I detect . . . maybe this spring. You never know.



*Above: AMDI Ferndell Falls
3-26-18 -Sharon Hull*

*Background image: Randy Wardle
crossing Ferndell Bridge
3-18-18 - Lisa Larson*

A Love Of Dippers

- By Elisabeth Foster

My love of dippers began far away from the Santa Cruz Mountains. Actually, it began far from the range of the American Dipper altogether. I was on vacation with my husband in a small town in the Czech Republic. I got up at dawn, determined to get in a few hours of birding before we started our day of non-birder sight-seeing. My husband is used to the vacation routine at this point: he wakes up at a normal non-birder time to find I have slipped out of the hotel room, leaving a note and a promise to return with coffee.

This particular morning, I headed for a park I had spotted on eBird. I was very new to birding and excited to see what I might find in a new region. The fact that I was without a guide in a small park did not deter me in the least. I was delighted by a European Robin (so different than our robins!) and amazed by a Eurasian Nutcracker (so weird!). I saw a shallow, fast paced stream and headed toward it.

I heard the dipper before I saw it. It was standing not far from me in the stream, singing with what I can only describe as joy. Then it blinked its white eyelids and proceeded to dip and dash in the rapid water. I later identified the bird as the White-throated Dipper, but at the moment I was too spellbound to worry about the identification. The existence of a singing, dipping bird was beyond my imagination and I was transfixed. I stood there watching the dipper for what seemed like an hour. It was still singing blissfully as I headed back to the hotel. As I recounted the story to my husband, I became overwhelmed with emotion. Something about that dipper, the unexpectedness of it, and the wonder and peace I felt watching it was something I will never forget.



American Dipper - Pete Solè

Not surprisingly, I became captivated with dippers. I learned that there were several species, including one that could be found right in Santa Cruz! Of course, I set off looking for it as soon as I got home. I tried a few places, but didn't have any luck. For the next several years, I actively sought dippers anywhere I traveled. I dragged my husband on a morning of guided birding near Kyoto, Japan to find the Brown Dipper. I found the White-capped Dipper in Mindo, Ecuador with my mom. I watched videos of American Dippers, listened to their songs, and read up on their history. But I was not able to find a single Water Ouzel back at home.

Finally, I saw a post from Paul Miller on MBB. It said there was a pair of American Dippers on private property in Felton, and that if anyone was interested, he would be willing to show where they were spotted. I contacted him immediately and before long we were in Felton near a waterfall where finally, at last, I would be able to see an American Dipper. Unfortunately, the dippers were nowhere to be seen. I tried again, and Paul informed me they had just been there 10 minutes before I arrived. Another time, I arrived five minutes too late. Another time, I arrived at the same time a family decided to take a dip in the river. Another handful of times I just plain "dipped," pun intended. I went back somewhere around 12 or 14 times; I lost the exact count.

I knew that eventually I would see a dipper if I just kept going back. I was with two friends one morning after finishing a nest box check at Quail Hollow, and we had planned to meet up with Paul again. We were all amused at this point at the ridiculousness of my misfortune. This time, finally, my luck had changed. There was a dipper near the waterfall! We got not just a glimpse but a full show. The dipper was there as if it had been there all along, casually dipping, bathing, and feeding in the river. All four of us took the time to soak in the moment.

"The Dip" - Michelle Lamberson



Even though my friends had all seen dippers before, we were all equally excited. Maybe that is what makes those birding moments so special. It feels like we are getting a view of something secret, something vanishing, something wild.



American Dipper, Ferndell Falls 3-18-18

Previous page background image:

Randy Wardle crossing bridge at Ferndell Falls 3-18-18

- Lisa Larson

American Dipper Nest on Big Creek Property - April 15, 2012

- By Sharon Hull



ack in 2012, Shantanu Phukan, my daughter Anne Seales and I got permission (by visiting the Big Creek Lumber headquarters to obtain a one-day pass) to walk up the gated private road through Big Creek property as far as the old fish hatchery. We had heard that an active

American Dipper nest was located under a wooden bridge near the hatchery. Mr. Bud McCrary, one of the legendary owners of the lumber company, was in the office at the time; he gave us the pass, confirmed the existence of a nest and told us exactly where to find the birds. He said that he'd been watching dippers on the creek since he was a child. Since by that time, Mr. McCrary was well over 80, his account let us know that dippers had been in residence on Big Creek for a lot of years.

The road took us through beautiful woods with enormous ancient trees, often along Big Creek's tumbling waters and past a few homes, most of them set well back from the road and constructed from the lumber milled by the family business. I don't remember how long the walk was but when we reached the bridge, almost immediately we saw an adult dipper fly under it and we could hear the begging cries of the nestlings which were audible even above the loud noise of the stream. Success!

Access to look under the old wooden bridge was challenging but we managed to find a vantage point upstream where we could see the nest with our binoculars. We couldn't see much detail because very little light penetrated under the bridge's heavy logs and we couldn't determine how many youngsters were in the nest but we could see that it was located on one of the support beams and that it was shaped like a doughnut set on its edge, with the nestlings in the "hole." The raucous voices of the nestlings made up for our limited views anyway because the minute an adult would appear with an insect, the babies would make piercing cries. They were by far the loudest youngsters in a nest that I've ever heard – I'm guessing that nature gave them such raucous voices so that they could easily be heard above the loud noises made by the rushing streams that the birds prefer. We watched the parents come and go with food for quite some time. It was an awesome experience.

Since then, as we all know, the CZU fire roared through the land in and around the Big Creek compound, destroying homes, trees and property, including some that belongs to the McCrary family. I do not know if the fires changed the habitat so drastically that the dippers have abandoned their stream, or even if visitors would still be welcome there because of the devastation. Sadly, Mr. McCrary died at age 93 in 2020. I had heard, though don't know if it is true, that the history of the property that Mr. McCrary was writing was lost in the fire. The three of us will certainly treasure the memory of our visit to that dipper nest and will remember with gratitude the welcome that Mr. McCrary gave us and his enthusiasm about sharing with us the experience of seeing the birds that he obviously loved.

*American Dipper carrying nesting, Big Basin
- Craig Fosdick 2-28-16*



Some Breeding History of American Dippers in Santa Cruz County

- By Alex Rinkert

American Dippers were reportedly common throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains at the turn of the 20th century.

Eggs collected from a dipper nest on April 6, 1888 near the present-day Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park represents the earliest breeding record in the county.

An albino dipper was on Scott Creek for a few years in the mid-1970s.

Breeding was confirmed in only one location (Mount Hermon) during the Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas II, a dramatic decrease compared to the ten locations where they were confirmed breeding during the first atlas (1987-1993). They have become especially scarce in recent years, with only irregular sightings at places where they formerly bred such as Boulder Creek, Rincon Gorge on the San Lorenzo River, and Corralitos Creek.

Nests in Santa Cruz County have been found behind waterfalls and under bridges crossing perennial streams.



Above & left: Early 1970s postcard with a photo of a dipper nest along Eureka Canyon Road. The photo was taken by Henry Washburn, who was married to Viola Washburn. Viola was a founding member of the club and active through at least the 1980s.

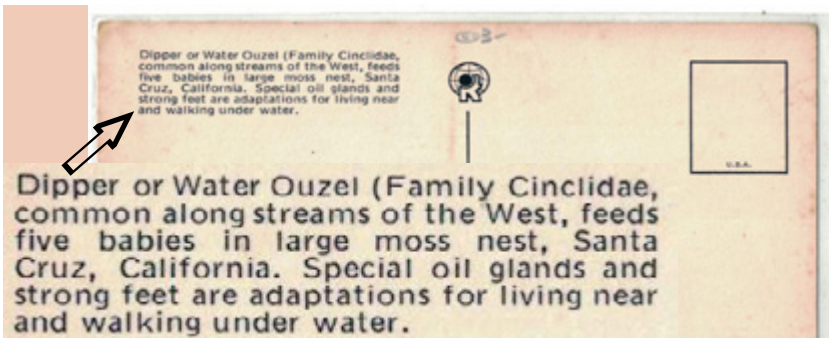
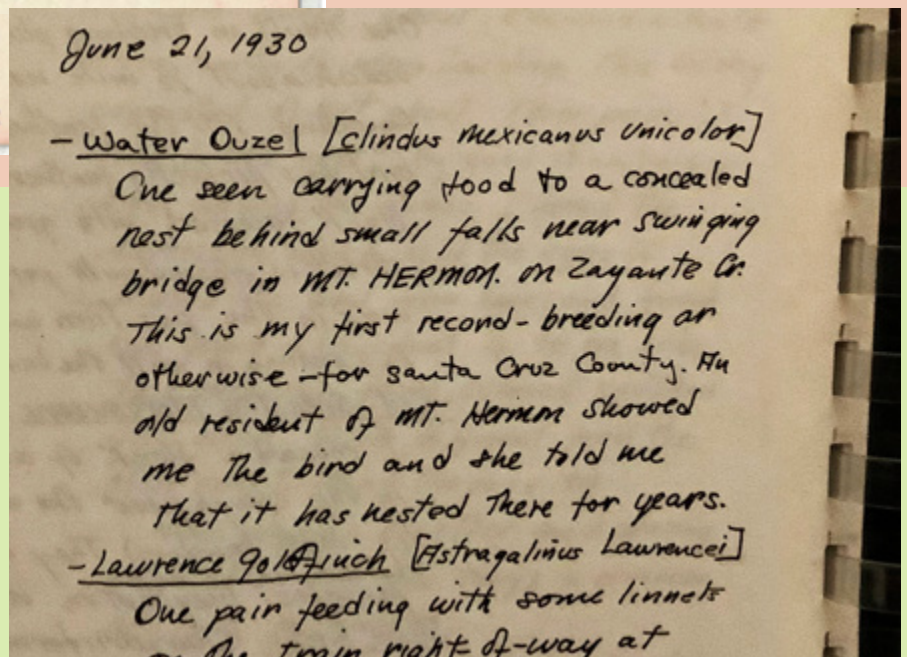


Photo right: Water Ouzel notes from Les Hawkins' journal of his stay in Santa Cruz in the 1930s. Note that the breeding location he describes is the same that a pair used during Santa Cruz Breeding Bird Atlas II, no less than 90 years later!



Breeding Bird Atlas Publication Update and Year 6 Atlasing

This has been a busier than usual winter for the breeding bird atlas. In the last few months I have prepared a detailed publication plan that envisions the layout and content of the atlas, as well as the steps to publishing the book. This document will be the guiding blueprint over the next few years as the atlas is written. In fact, writing has already begun!

In addition to writing this winter, I've have been collating breeding bird observations from other sources that will be drawn upon extensively when writing the atlas. These observations have come from the county bird records, bird banding stations and nest box programs within the county, iNaturalist, and natural history collections just to name a few. The latter source has proven to be a gold mine—nearly 1,200 egg and nest specimens collected in the county during the 1800s and early 1900s are cataloged in natural history collections across the country. Many of these specimens are of species that are extirpated or whose distribution in the county has changed dramatically. Just a few of the more exciting records include a Ridgway's Rail nest at Neary Lagoon in 1905, a Greater Roadrunner nest at Watsonville in 1894, and a California Condor egg from 1879! These historical specimens and the associated habitat and locality notes will be used to describe avifaunal changes that have taken place in the county over the past 150 years.



While work on the publication is well underway, atlasing will continue into 2022. This year the focus will be on finishing incomplete blocks, filling in any gaps in coverage, and taking advantage of another year to gather more observations. At the end of this atlasing season we will be closing this chapter of the project and devoting our full attention to publishing the book.

Sign up here to get started with atlasing in Year 6: <https://forms.gle/vHi5Pj3YanCxTMax7>

Alex Rinkert
Project Director
arinkert12@comcast.net

Greater Roadrunner Eggs



Palm Warbler - Arthur Macmillian



Art by Linda Lewit

ATTENTION !

Santa Cruz Bird Club

OFFICER POSITIONS NEEDED:

Editor

Program Director

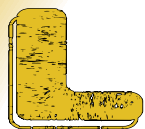
Please see:

santacruzbirdclub.org/club-information/club-officers-2/
for a description of officer duties.

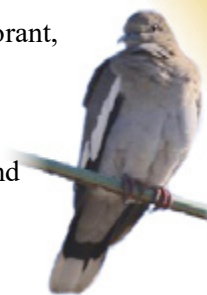
Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from November 1 to December 31, 2021



Late fall and early winter birding was highlighted by the county's first Neotropic Cormorant, bringing the number of bird species seen in Santa Cruz County to 461. Irrupective birds were largely missing in the lowlands, and while coverage is always limited in the mountains, the irruptives seemed to be scarce there as well. Pine Siskins, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Red Crossbills were all scarce throughout the county, while Varied Thrush and Red-breasted Nuthatch went unreported in the lowlands. Once again there was a late fall influx of Scaly-breasted Munias which brought them to several new locations, and nest building was seen for the first time.



White-winged Dove - Jasper Barnes

Nineteen reports of **Snow Geese**, some in large flocks, flying over the county in mid-November was far more than are usually encountered. A skein of 90–100 over the Santa Cruz Harbor (MC) and 100 passing over Corralitos (RC) both on November 12 were especially high counts. Large flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were also seen during this time; one especially large flock of 230 was seen over Wilder Ranch State Park on November 11 (ST). Three **Tundra Swans** were seen at College Lake from November 28–December 1 (NU, v.ob.). A **Blue-winged Teal** at the Quail Hollow Ranch pond from November 6–8 was quite rare for the mountains (AR, BS). A male **Redhead** at Antonelli Pond and Younger Lagoon, and then at Four Mile Beach, from December 8 through the end of the month was rare away from the Pajaro Valley (SBB, v.ob.). Even rarer away from the Pajaro Valley was a first-year male **Eurasian Wigeon** seen at Swanton Pond on November 22 (BT) and then found at Younger Lagoon and Antonelli Pond the following day (LG, PH), where it remained through December (LG, PH) except for a jaunt up to Four Mile Beach on November 29 (LJ). A male **American x Eurasian Wigeon** hybrid at Pinto Lake



Blue-winged Teal - Alex Rinkert



Redhead - Michael Bolte



Circle: Semipalmated Plover - Simon Thornhill
Oval: Pacific Golden Plover & Killdeer
- Bernadette Ramer

on November 26 was perhaps a returning bird that has wintered there in previous years (AR, ES).

A large rafter of 75 **Wild Turkeys** near Moore Creek Preserve on November 18 would have raised eyebrows a few years ago, but their population is growing so quickly that these large numbers have become the new normal (JE, SE). A **White-winged Dove** was

photographed at Swanton Pond on November 26 (JB). A **Vaux's Swift** feeding with White-throated Swifts and swallows at Waddell State Beach on December 10 (AR et al.) and then presumably the same individual at Scott Creek on December 12 (KA) was the first winter record in the county since 2007.

A **Pacific Golden-Plover** frequented the agricultural fields surrounding Swanton Pond from December 7–15 (JM). A **Semipalmated Plover** at Laguna Creek Beach on December 29 was at an unusual location for winter; this species is only found in small numbers in the Pajaro Valley in winter, and can even be absent there in years when there are no mudflats (ST). A juvenile **Red-necked Phalarope** at Younger Lagoon from November 4–7 was late for a fall migrant (KS, PH). After a strong storm a **Red Phalarope** was found in a planter box at the Twin



*Neotropic
Cormorant
- David Eckdahl*

Lakes on December 28 (fide BR). A **Caspian Tern** at Seacliff State Beach on December 22 was rare in winter (GM, EM). During a stormy period on December 12, a juvenile **Brown Booby** was seen flying off the Davenport bluffs (AR, ES), and then another or the same was seen from there on December 26 (JH). An older immature was seen from a boat on the Monterey Bay on December 17 (BS).

An adult **Neotropic Cormorant** was with a flock of Double-crested Cormorants at Pinto Lake from December 9–11 representing the first record for the county (AR, v.ob.). This species is becoming more frequently encountered in northern

California. Neighboring Monterey County has had four records since 2017, and in the last few years there have been over a dozen records in the Central Valley as far north as Lake and Yuba counties. Two **Cattle Egrets** at Swanton Pond on November 21 fit the timing of fall migration for this rare species in the county (PB et al.).

Several **Bald Eagles** reported this period included an immature on the north coast beginning November 11 (JR, v.ob.), two adults at Loch Lomond on December 18 (CS, JS), an immature along the San Lorenzo River in Felton on November 21 (fide LFL), and a near adult at coastal spots between the Santa Cruz Harbor and Rio del Mar between November 30–December 10 (DF, v.ob.). A few other reports may have involved additional individuals. The resident adult pair continued in the Pajaro Valley (v.ob.). **Ferruginous Hawks** returned to Soda Lake by November 13 (JW) and Swanton Pond by November 23 (MH, AG). **Light-morph Rough-legged Hawks** were nicely photographed at both Four Mile Beach on November 21 (CC, RK) and at Soda Lake on December 6 (MB, FB). Five **Burrowing Owls** were reported this period—one on the north coast and four in the Pajaro Valley—but disappointingly and concerningly none wintered at UC Santa Cruz for the second or third consecutive year (v.ob.). A **Short-eared Owl** emerged at dusk near the Pajaro River mouth from November 21–24 (AR, ES, v.ob.), but apparently did not winter there.

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** visited an apple tree in an Aptos backyard from November 29–30 (PH, v.ob.). A brilliantly colored Red-breasted Sapsucker at Quail Hollow



*Left: Rough-legged Hawk
- Michael Bolte
Right: Pete Solè gets a 2-fer;
Prairie Falcon rear,
Ferruginous Hawk front*

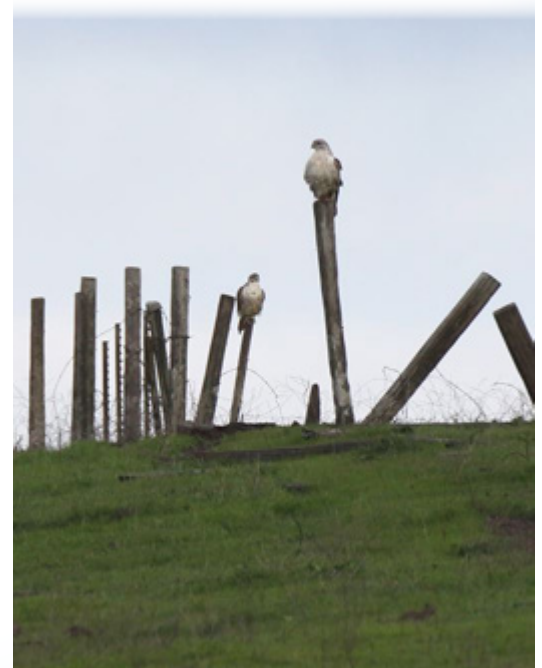


*Prairie Falcon
- Simon Thornhill*



*Neotropic Cormorant
- Jonny Wahl*

*Neotropic Cormorant
braced by Double-crested
Cormorants
- Phil Brown*



Ranch from November 7 through the end of December showed characteristics of the subspecies *S. r. ruber*, which is rarely encountered in the county (LFL). A **Prairie Falcon** at Soda Lake on November 13 continued through the end of December (JW, v.ob.). Four **Tropical Kingbirds** were reported on the mid-county coast and in the Pajaro Valley (v.ob.). A **Rock Wren** was in riprap near the Pajaro River mouth from November 7–20 (AR, ES, v.ob.).



A **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Swanton Pond on November 11 was a rather late migrant (PB). A striking “**Red**” **Fox Sparrow**, likely of the *P. i. zaboria* subspecies breeding in Alaska and western Canada, visited a backyard feeder in Soquel beginning December 16 (LS). Only two Swamp Sparrows were reported this period (NU, KA). A late migrant or wintering **Hooded Oriole** visited a hummingbird feeder in Watsonville on November 23 (AS), while a **Bullock’s Oriole** wintered in a Soquel backyard from November 7–December 29 (PS). A **Great-tailed Grackle** continued at Westlake Pond through December 18 (RAS, v.ob.) giving it the distinction of being the first grackle to winter in the county away from the Pajaro Valley. Could this be the beginning of a mid-county population for this synanthropic species?



A **Tennessee Warbler** was at Corcoran Lagoon on December 31 (BK, GG). Three **Orange-crowned Warblers** identified to the subspecies *L. c. sordida* were found on the north coast, westside Santa Cruz, and Pajaro Valley (AR, ES). A **Lucy’s Warbler** at Tyrrell Park in Seabright on November 16 was seen through December (AR, v.ob.), while another was at Corcoran Lagoon from December 30–31 (BK, GG, v.ob.). The two were confirmed to be different individuals by



From top:
Red-breasted Sapsucker S. r. ruber - Lisa Larson
Lucy’s Warbler- Mark Stephenson
Burrowing Owl - Jasper Barnes
Brown Booby - Brian Scanlon

the extent of eucalypt gum stains at the base of their bills. A **Nashville Warbler** was attracted to a westside Santa Cruz backyard birdbath from November 16 through the end of December (KB). A male **Summer Tanager** was at Meder Canyon on November 13 (PB et al.) and then perhaps the same individual was seen in a nearby backyard beginning on December 26 (SK).



Scaly-breasted Munias made another push into the county in late fall, as has happened the past few years. This influx brought the first records to the north coast with seven at Rancho del Oso on November 19 (BT et al.) and five at Swanton Pond on November 23 (BK, GG). On the mid-county coast, flocks of up to seventeen were seen in two backyards, Neary Lagoon, and at Corcoran Lagoon, while up to nine continued at a backyard in Larkin Valley (v.ob.). Flocks numbering up to 55 were at Pinto Lake and 44 at College Lake were the first for that location (GK), with these larger flocks perhaps being some of the same birds that continue to visit a feeder in Interlaken (NU).

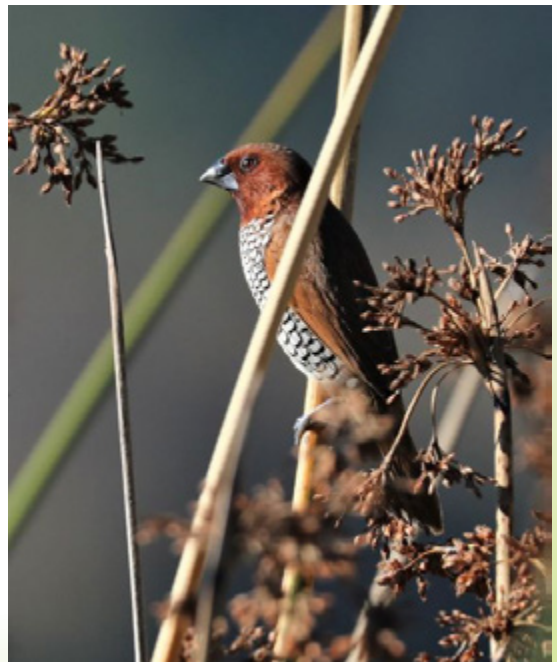
On October 20, two adult munias were seen bringing pampas grass flowers to a globular nest structure in a pine at Pinto Lake City Park (NU). This was the first evidence of nest building behavior observed since the species first arrived in the county in 2018. The pair continued nest building for at least the following few days but no activity at the nest was subsequently noted until November 26, when a pair was seen coming and going from the same nest in a manner suggesting there were eggs or nestlings inside (AR, ES). However, again, no other activity was noted at the nest over the next few weeks. Scaly-breasted Munias build roost nests which are not used for breeding, and this nest may have been used for that purpose. Three other munia nest structures were found in the same pine and other pines nearby. No activity was ever noted at these nests, but they indicate nest building had been happening before the observations in October.

Cited Observers:

Robin Abu-Shumays, Kumaran Arul, Jasper Barnes, Sam Baxter-Bray, Frances Bolte, Michael Bolte, Phil Brown, Karen Burnson, Matthew Coale, Cindy Cummings, James Earles, Sam Eberhard, David Fickel, Gabriel Gartner, Lois Goldfrank, Alane Gray, Marion Hadden, Paul Heady, Jim Holmes, Lee Jaffe, Brooke Keeney, Ruth Kerr, Bryan Kett, Surrey Kent, Gary Kittleson, Lisa Fay Larson, Greg Meyer, Eileen Murphy, Bernadette Ramer, Alex Rinkert, Jane Rudebusch, Richard Sandkuhle, Brian Scanlon, Elena Scott, Lisa Sheridan, David Sidle, Cooper Smith, Jeff Smith, Anne Spence, Pete Solé, Kitty Stein, Simon Thornhill, Breck Tyler, Norman Uyeda, Jonny Wahl, “v.ob.” means various observers. “v. ob.” means various observers. ***Please enter interesting observations into eBird or report them to Alex Rinkert at arinkert12@comcast.net.***



*From top: Lucy's Warbler - Alex Rinkert
"Red" Fox Sparrow - Lisa Sheridan
Scaly-breasted Munia & Scaly-breasted Munia nest (lower left)
- David Eckdahl*



The 65th Annual Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count

December 18, 2021

The 65th Santa Cruz CBC was held on Saturday, December 18, 2021. Weather conditions on count day were cold but clear and calm, which afforded a pleasant day for participants throughout the count circle.

The 168 species found on count day was a hair above the recent (10-year) average of 167, but the 31,570 total birds and 103 birds counted per hour were considerably lower than the recent averages of 41,818 total birds and 170 birds/hour, respectively. This is in accordance with the long-term decline of birds tallied on this count. Participation in the count, however, continues to grow. This year a record 109 birders participated while collectively logging 305 field hours—the third highest total in the count’s history.



Dark-eyed Junco - Jeff Roisman

Highlights on count day included two species seen for the first time on the count: two Scaly-breasted Munias at Live Oak and a Great-tailed Grackle at Westlake Pond. Both these species have recently expanded their distribution in the region. Some rarely found species on the count included Eurasian Wigeon and Lucy’s Warbler (3rd records), Parasitic Jaeger (5th record), Barn Swallow (6th record), and Blue-winged Teal and Bald Eagle (7th records). A Fox Sparrow belonging to the “Red” subspecies group was quite rare, as was a Redhead which was the first one seen on the count since 2004. Species expected on the count that were missed included Golden-crowned Kinglet (first miss since 1972), Red-breasted Nuthatch and Marbled Godwit (missed 12 of last 15 years), and Least Sandpiper and Loggerhead Shrike (missed 11 of last 15 years).

A staggering 270 Wild Turkeys was by far the highest ever on count day for this rapidly increasing species; the previous high count was 184! A few flocks of White-throated Swifts totaling 69 individuals was the second-highest total for the count. Large flocks of swifts were noted at other places on count day in coastal



Barn Owl - Michael Bolte

San Mateo County, so perhaps there was a coastal concentration of food that was drawing them seaward. Totals of 148 Western Bluebirds and 87 Canada Geese were both the second-highest tallies on the count of these two increasingly abundant species. Winter irruptive species showed poorly on the count. Only 198 Pine Siskins were found compared to the recent average of 1,149, and other irruptive species were extremely scarce or missing: Red Crossbill (4), Varied Thrush (2), and Red-breasted Nuthatch (0).

A sincere thanks is due to the section leaders for coordinating thorough coverage within their section by the many participants this year, and to my co-compilers Nick Levendosky and Phil Brown for making the initial section assignments and handling logistics leading up to count day.

Alex Rinkert

CBC Participants (section leaders in **bold**):

Robin Abu-Shumays, RJ Adams, Jenny Anderson, David Apgar, **Kumaran Arul**, Emma Arul, Carolyn Bailey, Ellen Baker, Eileen Balian, Jasper Barnes, **Bonnie Bedzin**, Keffi Bell, Cliff Bixler, Jessie Boucher, Linda Brodman, **Phil Brown**, Max Burns, Matthew Coale, Barb Cordes, Larry Corridon, Dana Cox, Cindy Cummings, Kathy DeVoy, Judy Donaldson, **David Ekdahl**, John Ellis, Trinity Esola, Vivian Fenner-Evans, Nicholas Filannino, Christina Floyd, Elisabeth Foster, Alexander Gaguine, Gabriel Gartner, Chandra Go, **Lois Goldfrank**, Richard Griffith, Paul Havlak, Paul Heady, Tom Helman, **Sharon Hull**, Lee Jaffe, Kent Johnson, Michael Jones, Kevin Kaos, Brooke Keeney, Ken Kellman, Surrey Kent, Ruth Kerr, Gary Kittleson, Storey LaMontagne, **Lisa Larson**, Dave Lavorando, **Nicholas Levendosky**, Lynda Lewit, Emily Maddox, Stephanie Martin, Gary Martindale, Melinda Martindale, James Maughn, Bobbie Mayer, Katherine McCamant, Brian McElroy, Barry McLaughlin, Jennifer McNulty, Fred Menge, Greg Meyer, Yonat Michaelov, **Paul Miller**, Eileen Murphy, Shirley Murphy, Liam Murphy, Jane Orbuch, Vivienne Orgel, Kevin Padgett, Carol Panofsky, Magaret Perham, Lise Peterson, David Philleo, Shantanu Phukan, Steven Pousty, **Bob Ramer**, **Bernadette Ramer**, Betsy Riker, Alex Rinkert, Tanya Rogers, Ally Romanow, Carey Ruwe, Nicolas Schnack, Lisa Sheridan, Suzie Shook, **David Sidle**, Stephanie Singer, **Jeff Smith**, Cooper Smith, **Pete Solè**, David Somerton, Logan Southall, Mandy Spitzer, Louisa Squires, Linda St John, Kitty Stein, Tim Thompson, **Simon Thornhill**, John Thornhill, Matthew Timmer, Mari Tustin, Norman Uyeda, Jonny Wahl, James Williams



Black Oystercatchers - Gail West

The 65th Annual Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count December 18, 2021

*Red-breasted Sapsucker
- Lisa Larson*

Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-Year Avg	Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-Year Avg
Snow Goose	1	0	0	1	0	0.2	Rock Pigeon	913	1197	1095	876	556	1387.0
Greater White-fronted Goose	3	0	0	1	1	0.8	Band-tailed Pigeon	1160	575	531	152	325	1030.7
Brant	1	0	1	0	0	0.6	Eurasian Collared-Dove	26	46	30	48	28	70.3
Cackling Goose	4	3	2	50	13	9.4	Mourning Dove	170	141	150	157	190	207.9
Canada Goose	31	63	48	82	87	38.0	White-throated Swift	1	0	0	CW	69	14.5
goose sp.	0	0	0	0	5	0.6	Anna's Hummingbird	353	437	345	590	437	408.8
Wood Duck	63	21	55	26	36	36.0	Virginia Rail	2	6	4	3	2	4.6
Blue-winged Teal	4	0	0	0	2	1.5	Sora	1	2	0	1	1	1.5
Cinnamon Teal	4	0	0	CW	4	1.1	Common Gallinule	CW	CW	0		0	0.2
Northern Shoveler	1	25	3	20	6	14.8	American Coot	904	549	262	0	566	797.8
Gadwall	5	0	0	0	0	1.2	Black Oystercatcher	14	28	18	849	32	22.6
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	1	0.1	Black-bellied Plover	26	63	CW	28	3	29.0
American Wigeon	18	50	1	34	43	22.5	Pacific Golden-Plover	1	0	0	12	0	0.1
Mallard	441	604	469	493	715	550.6	Snowy Plover	46	77	3	0	21	79.8
Northern Pintail	CW	1	21	0	50	45.2	Killdeer	60	152	1	CW	7	85.1
Green-winged Teal	0	8	2	9	7	10.2	Whimbrel	0	29	13	137	5	41.7
Canvasback	1	1	4	0	0	0.8	Long-billed Curlew	6	12	0	75	0	8.1
Redhead	0	CW	0	0	1	0.1	Marbled Godwit	10	23	4	26	0	11.0
Ring-necked Duck	102	142	55	44	65	76.7	Black Turnstone	27	225	70	13	69	107.5
Greater Scaup	4	0	0	4	0	2.3	Surfbird	39	52	16	82	23	61.2
Lesser Scaup	13	0	0	1	2	2.8	Sanderling	309	513	263	57	380	507.7
Greater/Lesser Scaup	0	CW	0	9	0	1.2	Least Sandpiper	5	5	1	590	0	3.7
Surf Scoter	657	464	277	854	685	861.1	Wilson's Snipe	4	1	1	5	2	3.6
White-winged Scoter	0	0	0	1	1	0.4	Red Phalarope	0	4	0	2	0	3.1
Black Scoter	0	0	0	CW	0	0.2	Spotted Sandpiper	7	7	4	6	8	7.1
Bufflehead	106	47	44	97	65	90.7	Greater Yellowlegs	1	0	0	7	0	0.7
Common Goldeneye	40	40	24	65	71	52.7	Willet	CW	0	0	1	0	9.9
Hooded Merganser	16	14	2	11	10	11.0	Pomarine Jaeger	0	1	1	0	0	0.6
Common Merganser	25	8	32	11	28	20.6	Parasitic Jaeger	1	0	0	0	1	0.2
Red-breasted Merganser	14	11	7	27	8	17.1	Common Murre	34	196	357	0	198	649.1
Ruddy Duck	49	65	36	110	82	66.4	Pigeon Guillemot	0	0	0	371	0	0.2
duck sp.	0	0	1	0	0	0.1	Marbled Murrelet	CW	5	7	1	21	6.9
California Quail	258	188	68	183	167	207.4	Ancient Murrelet	3	10	3	6	2	4.5
Wild Turkey	50	127	96	184	270	89.9	murrelet sp.	0	0	5	0	1	0.6
Pied-billed Grebe	73	48	32	44	42	61.1	Cassin's Auklet	3	1	0	0	0	4.9
Horned Grebe	9	5	7	7	4	12.0	Rhinoceros Auklet	2	85	114	0	69	53.8
Red-necked Grebe	2	1	CW	8	6	3.7	Bonaparte's Gull	3	3	116	110	2	16.5
Eared Grebe	130	13	12	62	26	44.4	Heermann's Gull	266	109	202	7	270	261.8
Western Grebe	412	393	367	571	273	441.8	Short-billed Gull	136	111	167	132	81	168.4
Clark's Grebe	6	2	6	10	1	15.8	Ring-billed Gull	32	44	18	26	9	25.0
Western/Clark's Grebe	668	638	45	339	68	402.8	Western Gull	963	1547	1737	31	1470	2453.1

Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-Year Avg	Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-Year Avg
California Gull	498	1085	1219	1199	838	76.4	Belted Kingfisher	17	16	12	16	15	12.7
Herring Gull	28	85	120	886	8	13.6	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0	1	0	0	0	0.2
Iceland Gull	9	14	18	118	3	839.5	Red-breasted Sapsucker	2	16	11	6	10	9.6
Glaucous-winged Gull	225	441	644	23	387	0.4	sapsucker sp.	0	1	1	0	0	0.2
Glaucous Gull	0	0	0	764	0	54.7	Acorn Woodpecker	178	418	320	462	501	360.0
Western x Gl.-winged Gull (hybrid)	23	21	5	1	4	12.7	Downy Woodpecker	17	39	16	34	34	29.8
Herring x Gl.-winged Gull (hybrid)	15	6	52	6	2	0.1	Nuttall's Woodpecker	12	34	18	26	25	22.8
Gl.-winged x Glaucous Gull (hybrid)	0	0	0	25	0	1632.8	Hairy Woodpecker	28	54	27	80	39	47.1
gull sp.	1632	1272	2765	1	3268	3115.1	Downy/Hairy Woodpecker	0	3	3	0	0	0.6
Forster's Tern	0	0	60	2198	6	11.6	Pileated Woodpecker	2	8	3	9	6	6.0
Red-throated Loon	80	106	121	0	177	216.4	Northern Flicker	37	110	64	100	68	90.0
Pacific Loon	80	133	267	294	206	1043.7	Red-shafted	29	39	8	18	21	31.2
Common Loon	30	35	46	191	45	40.2	intergrade	0	0	1	0	2	0.9
loon sp.	108	133	837	54	232	317.0	American Kestrel	30	46	19	42	36	34.9
Northern Fulmar	1	0	3	424	237	31.7	Merlin	6	12	9	8	6	8.1
Sooty Shearwater	0	0	0	35	1	0.1	Peregrine Falcon	6	9	5	3	6	6.8
Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwater	1	0	0	0	0	0.7	"Western" Flycatcher	0	0	1	0	0	0.1
Black-vented Shearwater	0	2	0	0	135	596.0	Black Phoebe	255	285	205	333	274	258.9
shearwater sp.	0	0	0	0	1	2.6	Say's Phoebe	44	49	23	41	36	34.9
Brandt's Cormorant	501	762	305	0	1163	1101.5	Tropical Kingbird	0	1	1	CW	0	0.3
Pelagic Cormorant	54	60	23	570	54	70.9	Hutton's Vireo	37	81	33	55	25	46.8
Double-crested Cormorant	340	386	168	73	331	281.1	Loggerhead Shrike	2	3	1	2	0	1.3
cormorant sp.	0	0	0	220	0	34.8	Steller's Jay	80	223	213	266	210	253.0
Brown Pelican	879	843	429	43	679	752.0	California Scrub-Jay	183	383	207	440	333	337.3
Great Blue Heron	19	26	16	379	19	20.4	American Crow	1630	968	1012	1427	1314	1150.5
Great Egret	31	27	20	25	28	22.8	Common Raven	463	484	374	725	380	433.3
Snowy Egret	41	104	57	15	96	64.8	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	492	640	521	955	742	734.7
Green Heron	2	5	1	68	5	4.8	Oak Titmouse	56	89	85	175	113	95.7
Black-crowned Night-Heron	16	39	15	4	23	23.2	Tree Swallow	4	0	0	0	1	0.6
Turkey Vulture	22	23	82	24	49	36.6	Violet-green Swallow	0	23	0	0	6	3.6
Osprey	7	6	2	79	1	3.4	Barn Swallow	2	1	3	0	1	0.7
White-tailed Kite	15	26	16	2	9	14.5	swallow sp.	4	0	0	0	5	0.9
Golden Eagle	2	1	2	22	1	1.3	Bushtit	631	1004	578	1192	666	855.1
Northern Harrier	13	42	12	2	27	19.2	Wrentit	65	91	50	95	87	73.5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10	5	8	35	3	9.1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	25	8	9	0	15.1
Cooper's Hawk	13	19	17	11	18	14.9	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	185	429	282	515	282	359.3
Cooper's/Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	4	0	23	7	3.0	Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	0	36	3	0	9.0
Bald Eagle	3	1	1	5	2	1.1	White-breasted Nuthatch	2	0	1	2	CW	0.7
Red-shouldered Hawk	39	90	66	0	93	68.3	Pygmy Nuthatch	136	179	141	292	219	207.3
Red-tailed Hawk	119	112	120	84	150	103.9	Brown Creeper	83	80	50	99	35	78.1
Ferruginous Hawk	0	1	1	137	0	0.6	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	5	13	14	9	7	9.0
hawk sp.	0	0	1	2	0	0.2	House Wren	7	13	12	6	4	8.7
Barn Owl	2	2	1	1	4	2.3	Pacific Wren	15	14	11	19	7	11.1
Western Screech-Owl	6	4	2	3	4	8.3	Marsh Wren	12	19	15	15	11	15.4
Great Horned Owl	7	20	9	2	27	20.1	Bewick's Wren	89	163	136	139	135	130.7
Northern Pygmy-Owl	3	2	0	64	1	1.7	American Dipper	CW	1	1	1	0	0.8
Burrowing Owl	2	2	0	3	CW	0.8	European Starling	1313	1044	385	653	655	961.6
Long-eared Owl	2	0	0	0	0	0.4	California Thrasher	2	29	11	21	12	14.0
Northern Saw-whet Owl	4	3	0	0	2	6.1	Northern Mockingbird	16	19	23	31	25	30.0



CBC 12-18-21

Mallard speculum
- Lisa Larson



The 65th Annual Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count
December 18, 2021

Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-Year Avg
Western Bluebird	86	113	80	202	148	83.1
Varied Thrush	51	25	56	58	2	156.5
Hermit Thrush	72	146	129	235	119	157.8
American Robin	567	2515	850	648	945	1817.3
Cedar Waxwing	133	909	446	388	369	494.3
Scaly-breasted Munia	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
House Sparrow	36	18	22	26	29	50.7
White Wagtail	0	0	0	1	0	0.1
American Pipit	34	527	148	372	62	148.4
House Finch	299	603	375	1015	615	597.4
Purple Finch	23	143	38	89	91	86.7
Red Crossbill	0	0	44	0	4	20.7
Pine Siskin	365	2	293	3085	198	1149.3
Lesser Goldfinch	70	165	63	542	509	265.5
American Goldfinch	108	147	54	97	185	192.8
Chipping Sparrow	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Fox Sparrow	76	70	58	112	33	83.8
Slate-colored	0	0	0	1	0	0.1
Red	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Dark-eyed Junco	1026	904	662	1050	597	819.6
Slate-colored	0	0	0	1	0	0.9
White-crowned Sparrow	604	745	586	1783	737	970.8
pugetensis	0	0	13	60	0	7.3
nuttalli	0	0	1	0	0	0.1
Gambel's	0	0	2	7	0	0.9
Golden-crowned Sparrow	1161	741	539	2240	979	1166.6
Zonotrichia sp.	0	0	5	0	40	4.5
White-throated Sparrow	5	3	1	9	8	6.4
Savannah Sparrow	29	28	18	60	35	45.4
Song Sparrow	200	270	218	301	318	236.2
Lincoln's Sparrow	37	52	38	42	40	66.6
Swamp Sparrow	1	2	1	1	1	1.5
California Towhee	176	270	215	285	231	293.3
Spotted Towhee	81	174	118	174	152	146.1
Western Meadowlark	192	197	75	500	102	216.1
Red-winged Blackbird	48	382	175	410	981	452.5
Tricolored Blackbird	30	153	158	184	76	303.1
Brown-headed Cowbird	19	35	1	17	48	18.3
Brewer's Blackbird	121	333	178	334	286	451.0
Great-tailed Grackle	0	0	0	0	1	0.1

Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-Year Avg
blackbird sp.	0	35	0	280	123	171.4
Black-and-white Warbler	CW	1	1	0	0	0.5
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	14	4	5	8	6.5
Lucy's Warbler	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Nashville Warbler	0	0	0	CW	0	0.0
Common Yellowthroat	5	41	42	49	46	31.0
Palm Warbler	0	0	0	2	0	1.2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	330	337	237	643	695	437.4
Audubon's	181	213	131	231	194	246.0
Myrtle	98	21	12	15	34	68.3
Black-throated Gray Warbler	CW	0	0	2	0	0.4
Townsend's Warbler	83	152	158	173	131	190.2
Hermit Warbler	0	0	0	1	1	0.8
Summer Tanager	0	0	2	1	0	0.3

# Individuals	26154	32831	25984	39934	31570	41012.0
# Species	170	165	162	167	168	166.8
# Participants	92	98	92	100	109	87.4
# Field Hours	290.3	343.6	250.2	221.7	304.5	267.2

Birder's Notebook

THE SEA ELEPHANT, THE LAUGHING GULL, AND A TSUNAMI

- By John Perry



After work, on my way down to Santa Cruz, I spotted a male elephant seal resting on Waddell State Beach. On the previous Friday I had seen a juvenile bald eagle perched above the beach. Waddell Beach had been good to me.

This weekend, on Saturday morning, I returned to Waddell Beach to see if the elephant seal was still there and if so, I intended to sketch it. But I found so much more!

I pulled into the dirt parking lot at about 7:30 AM. And there was the male elephant seal on the beach looking like a massive piece of driftwood. The seal's stern was pointing toward the tide and it bulbous snout, facing east. This is only the second elephant seal I have seen on Waddell State Beach.

I planned to search the gull flock that usually rests and bathes in Waddell Creek on the beach near the creek mouth. At the end of the beach I could see the flock of about 100 gulls. I was hoping to find a black-legged kittiwake, a gull that I have been wanted to add to my county list for a while. But before I got to the flock, there were a few gulls foraging around the elephant seal. Indeed, they seemed to be in orbit around the massive mammal.

The dark gulls were juvenile Heermann's gulls but there was one daintier gull that was actively foraging in the surfline. This gull really stood out. And that's always a good thing when you're gulling. The first thing that called out to me was the shape, size, and color of the beak. Now where had I seen that beak before?

This gull was smaller than the nearby Heermann's gulls. I checked off the fieldmarks: dark bill, darkish smudge behind the eye (clearly one of the hooded gulls), dark eye with a white broken ring, grey back, brownish wing coverts, white undertail coverts (seen when in flight), dark wing tips,



My field sketch of the male elephant seal at Waddell Beach.



*The first winter laughing gull of Waddell Beach. What a great find!
A Santa Cruz County lifer!*

Birder's Notebook cont'd

and dark legs. This could be only one gull, a gull I had seen on the Texas coast; even taking a dip in a hotel's swimming pool. This was a first winter laughing gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)! A rare gull on the west coast of California.

After taking some photos of the very active laughing gull, I pulled out my Stillman and Birn Beta hardcover panoramic journal, picked a position, and started sketching the elephant seal. He was very accommodating by just doing his driftwood impression. I looked north towards the parking lot and I noticed that a park ranger's truck had just pulled in.

The ranger got out of his truck and he began walking towards me. Here I was, about to get a lecture about being too close to the elephant seal, when I was keeping a 25 foot buffer from the pinniped. Or so I thought. When the ranger came within hailing distance, (when masked this seems to be about eight feet), he told me there was a tsunami warning and the surge was predicted to hit the coast right about now. I looked at my watch and it was just after 8 AM. He recommended that I leave the beach, which I did. I asked him if there had been an earthquake and he told me that an underwater volcano had erupted!

The undersea volcano Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, 40 miles from the island of Tonga in the South Pacific, had erupted. A tsunami warning had been issued along the entire west coast of the United States as well as across the Pacific in Japan. The only evidence of the tsunami I witnessed was a swell running up Waddell Creek which caused the mallards to take to the air. At the time I really thought nothing of it. Winter waves I thought. (I later found out that the surge damaged boats in Santa Cruz Harbor).

When I made it back to the parking lot I encountered two local birders who were looking for the recently reported black scoters. It is always great to have fellow witnesses when you find a rare bird. I showed them where the gull was, just to the right of the elephant seal and further down the beach. They got on it and then put word out on Monterey Birds of its presence. The more witnesses the better! Birders in Santa Cruz County love to share.

Thank you Lois, for getting the word out. And thank you for the very uncommon cuckoo in Watsonville!

One of the birders was Lois, the finder of the common cuckoo in Watsonville in the fall of 2012. That was an extremely rare bird that brought birders from across the United States to see it. I was glad to partially repay the favor with this humble, wayward, hooded gull. We seemed to be almost even.

Well, almost.



A pinniped piece of driftwood. A battle-scarred male elephant seal, master of Waddell Beach.

<https://corvidsketcher.com/tag/santa-cruz-county/>



Cooper's Hawk in the Rain - Lisa Larson

SCBC Virtual Trivia Night

Because of the surge in Omicron cases during the start of the year, SCBC paused field trips so we could keep each other and our community safe. Despite this hurdle, we still found a way to gather safely and share our love of birds. Eleven teams, thirty participants—composed of SCBC members and their bird-loving friends and family—showed off their bird trivia knowledge during the SCBC Virtual Trivia Night on Saturday, January 22, 2022.

The event was hosted on Zoom where teams had breakout rooms to rack their bird brains :) together to come up with the answers in each of the four categories: General Bird Trivia, Flock Together, Birds in Literature, and Birds in Pop Culture. The questions ranged from scientific terminology, to an aptly named NFL mascot, to a classic detective novel, and even included a short audio clip of a birdy pop song.

Teams kept track of their own scores (honor system!), including opportunities for bonus points and sometimes petitioning for half points. The teams were extremely closely matched and it came down to the bonus round to determine the winner. BONUS ROUND! What seven states have the Northern Cardinal as their official state bird? At the end of the event, by a slim margin of just 0.5 points...

Hopefully all of the SCBC members had a blast during the virtual trivia night and learned a few new fun facts about birds to wow their family and friends with in the future.

* BONUS ROUND! Answers: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia

And the winning team is ... **THE DAFFY DUCKS!**

- Emily Maddox



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Stephanie Rousseau	Jan 2022
Nancy Hodges	Jan 2022
Kelly Kersten Family	Jan 2022
Steve Pousty Family	Jan 2022
Karen von Bargaen	Jan 2022
Karen Warren	Jan 2022
Kathleen McCoy	Jan 2022
Richard Williams	Jan 2022
Marie Young	Jan 2022
Cameron Jackson	Jan 2022
Ralph Berman Family	Jan 2022

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Karen Laing

Thank You!

"Duck-ter Evil" - Lisa Larson

DEADLINE

submissions for

MAY/AUG issue

MAY 1, 2022



Great Egrets - David Lewit



White-breasted Nuthatch - Simon Thornhill

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

~ Lisa Fay Larson, Editor

Golden-crowned Sparrow going for poison oak berries - Lisa Larson

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Cracked Mud - Lisa Larson

Anna's Hummingbird - Michael Bolte

ALBATROSS



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PARTING SHOT: "MISMATCH"

BALD EAGLE CHASING GREAT EGRET - SERAPHINA LANDGREBE



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