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PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Once in a Lifetime

- By Lisa Larson

On Wednesday, May 4th of this year, I received an email from fellow Santa Cruz Bird Club member, Lynda Lewit asking if one of the chicks in the Black Phoebe nest on her house was albino or leucistic. I looked at the attached photos and was very excited to see that it was an albino! I replied immediately saying, “Wow! How amazing! It is an albino! I'd love to see it!”

Lynda graciously replied that I could come by the next morning or on Friday. I wasn't able to come until 8:30 Friday morning, but knowing what I know now, I would have canceled anything to have a second opportunity to see this bird. You see, the nest fledged as Lynda and I watched that Friday. Unfortunately, David Lewit had to leave and he missed the event. I intuitively knew the albino baby would be last to fledge, and shortly after 10:08 am it was the last to leave the nest. As always, experiencing fledging is simultaneously a harrowing and joyous event.

Alex replied to the original email on May 8th with the following: *Wow this is an incredible bird!! These photos might be publishable in a journal.*

I knew albinism was *much* rarer than leucism in birds, but I proceeded to research to learn more.

First, the difference between albinistic and leucistic mutations is clear. Albinism is a total lack of melanin. The eyes are always red and the bare parts of the bird are colorless, but the beaks and legs sometimes are pink or yellow depending on the natural color of the species. Leucism is a pigment loss only in plumage, which can vary widely from a few feathers to pure white, but the eyes and skin are normal in color. (I did find photos taken 4-5-20 of a leucistic Yellow-rumped Warbler in our yard that has an atypically colored beak—pale at the base with a dark tip. Hmmm . . .) A bird cannot be partly albino, however, if an albino individual survives long enough to have a diet that includes carotenoids and other





organic pigments, it can gain some coloration in its feathers, although muted. But the preternatural red eyes are the easiest tell when determining if a bird is albino. If you happened to find an albino Black-crowned Night Heron, which has red eyes when mature, its pupils—if you could see them—would be a slightly darker red, not black. I could barely make out this phoebe's pupils in some of the photos I took since the contrast was so slight.



How rare is avian albinism compared to avian leucism? On avianreport.com I found the following:

“In a nutshell: Birds with abnormal plumages are very rare, and both leucism and albinism are easily recognized and more commonly reported than other abnormal plumages. According to survey data, leucism and albinism occur at a rough estimate of 1 in 30,000 birds. Leucism is more common than albinism. Survey data suggest that of 100 birds that show abnormal plumages, 82 are leucistic, and only three are albinistic. The rarity of albino birds in nature is attributed to detrimental physiological factors.”

This phoebe was incredibly special!

Unfortunately, the detrimental physiological factors mentioned above play a huge role in the likelihood that an albino bird can survive to adulthood. First, the bird has impaired vision and is very sensitive to the sun. The albino plumage deteriorates much faster than a bird with melanin in its feathers, and the bird has to expend more energy in flight and is more at risk of predation with its conspicuous appearance. If the bird reaches breeding age, it may lack the energy to do so, and weakened plumage could have a deleterious effect on courtship display.

Plus, the albino bird may just look weird to members of its own species.

I recall spending many days watching our famous leucistic male Anna's Hummingbird at the UCSC Arboretum. The other hummers seemed to ignore or avoid the little guy. I

watched as the youngster practiced his dive display over and over, trying unsuccessfully to achieve the “chirp” of the feathers at the bottom of the dive. I followed his decline for 11 months as Avian Pox (a contagious disease with no cure) advanced.

The last day I saw him was July 11, 2017. I had gone to investigate because an acquaintance had told me he was “all better”. I knew it couldn't be possible, and that was the day I found a beautiful leucistic male

Allen's Hummingbird. On an evening shortly thereafter I got a call from someone

at the Santa Cruz Sentinel who interviewed me briefly. An article appeared on the front page with this huge, bold title: *Twice in a Lifetime!* I have to admit the two beautifully leucistic hummers in was place was pretty



*All photos by Lisa Larson
Right: Leucistic Allen's Hummingbird, UCSC Arboretum*

extraordinary, but Linda's baby Black Phoebe may truly be my "Once in a Lifetime" albino bird.

I have been fortunate enough to have observed and photographed 17 mature leucistic birds, but extremely lucky to have spent such a special time with this one albino Black Phoebe chick. I was unable to photograph the albino phoebe after it fledged, but Lynda and I did spot it several times. Should such a rare bird have been taken and cared for in captivity so that it could have a longer life?

I went back to my research with more questions. I reached out to our neighbors— Monterey Audubon. I received a reply quickly. Amanda Preece, Environmental Advocate for Monterey Audubon Society, gave me a very thoughtful and detailed reply with many fascinating thoughts and considerations. But Amanda wanted to convey this essential point:

"Quality of life is paramount for any bird that is being considered for permanent captivity. Wild animals are not like domestic animals that may be fractious or aggressive initially but possibly be trained or improve over time. Some wild animals will just be in an elevated state of stress for their whole lives in captivity, and that's not humane. And albinism is such a unique situation, in that the bird is not physically injured, that consultation with the receiving facility and Fish and Wildlife would be necessary."

Amanda suggested asking CuriOdyssey in San Mateo, which does specifically exhibit native birds. They replied that they cannot take an animal just because it is albino. They said that a rehab center would take it, but if it couldn't be released into the wild or placed, it would have to be euthanized. Also, since the Black Phoebe species is not threatened or Endangered I was told it is best to just leave it in the wild.

I contacted Native Animal Rescue (NAR) here in Santa Cruz and asked if they would take an albino nestling/ fledgling if it could not eventually be released. I was pleased to hear that they have had albino "ambassadors" in the past that were successfully placed. Some do live a long time in the wild, even with albinism, but it would depend on the species. *They do not take healthy birds from the wild unless they are orphaned.* It is **illegal** for them to take a bird from the nest, even if it has albinism.

I realized that this issue is a moral, legal, political and financial quagmire!

I am sad and somewhat relieved to have been ignorant of the difficult options to consider for this most likely ill-fated bird. I asked Lynda several times if she ever saw it again, but she had not. Perhaps it was just too beautiful to stay.



Angel Phoebe

- By Linda Lewit



*Above: Young albino nestling and parent
Below: Dedicated parent*



The white-Black Phoebe was the last to leave the nest. I was overcome with emotion when it finally fledged because it appeared to be a small white angel as it flew into the nearby California Bay trees. We observed a parent feeding a sibling fledgling on the roof. I noticed the parents were busy flycatching for the next few weeks while they fed the juveniles in the trees. I have not seen the white-Black Phoebe (I named it Angel Phoebe) since that day.

All photos by David Lewit

Black Phoebes (*Sayornis nigricans*), have been nesting every year on the wall near the peak of the roof of our house. The nest looks like a mud cup with twigs. The same nest is used every year, but new twigs and mud are added. Usually there are three chicks born in two broods per year.

This year we noticed the Black Phoebe on the nest around April 5. It is hard to tell a male and female apart, but it was probably the female incubating the eggs. The eggs hatched around April 22nd. The parents were very busy catching insects and feeding the chicks. We saw them on the peak of the roof with insects doing their typical tail pumping motion and singing their buzzy chip or sisee call. It was hard to see inside because the nest is high up the wall. We noticed that there were four chicks and one was lighter than the other. David took some photos and confirmed that the white Phoebe had red eyes.

I invited local birding teacher, Nanci Adams and some of our classmates over to see the white-Black Phoebe. It was Nanci's Birthday that week and she considered seeing the chick a very special Birthday present.

Lisa Larson came over on May 8th and proclaimed that they would probably fledge that day. She decided to stay until they did. She patiently stood with her camera on a tripod and took photos of each chick fledging.



Breeding Bird Atlas The End of Fieldwork



After six long years of fieldwork for the breeding bird atlas, we have finally finished this phase of the project! This summer we finished atlasing in some incomplete blocks that now brings the project to about 99-100% complete (exact numbers to be determined this fall). Most of these incomplete blocks were at the far reaches of the county so a long drive and time commitment was necessary. I want to specifically thank Robin Abu-Shumays, RJ Adams, Phil Brown, Cindy Cummings, David Ekdahl, Lisa Larson, Nick Levendosky, Ally Romanow, Rusty Scaff, Elena Scott, and Scott Terrill for putting in the time and effort to complete the last few blocks this year.

In addition to finishing fieldwork, atlasers also contributed many observations from around the county. These observations will greatly improve the sample sizes we will have to work with when describing the phenology and habitat requirements of our breeding birds in the publication. Some exciting discoveries this summer included a new breeding colony of Purple Martins, Vaux's Swift and Golden Eagle nests, confirmations of Lawrence's Goldfinchs, some fantastic data on the Bank Swallow colony at Año Nuevo, and more breeding observations in the rapidly changing landscape that the CZU fire created in 2020.

The publication process slowed down this summer to allow one final year of fieldwork to be conducted, and is now picking back up again this fall. Thanks to the diligent work of Jonah Svensson, we have nearly finished digitizing records of breeding species in the Bird Files, a collection of handwritten bird records in the county originally compiled by Randy Morgan. Nearly 10,000 records spanning the early 1900s to the 1990s have been digitized! These digitized records will allow the historical occurrence of breeding species in the county to be more efficiently compiled and written about in the publication. The plan for this fall is to review and finalize observations in the atlas database and continue writing more species accounts.

Thanks again to all the atlasers who contributed observations in this final year of fieldwork.

Alex Rinkert
Project Director
arinkert12@comcast.net

THANK YOU RECENT DONORS:

Melanie Whirtanen
Teresa Green

Top: Chestnut-backed Chickadee fledgling
- Lisa Larson
Right: Wilson's Warbler female with food
for a nest near fledgling
- Lisa Larson



Raptor Day 2022

- Susan Leo

Have you ever been up close and personal with a Barn Owl? After Raptor Day at the UCSC Arboretum, a lot of folks have been. On July 30th, Kenny Elvin and Full Circle Falconry introduced hundreds of people to owls and kookaburras, hawks and falcons. Kenny talked about the science of flight and the habits of his birds and dazzled the crowds with aerial displays.



Raptor Day 2022 featured 5 bird walks led by local bird experts like Zeka Glucs of the UCSC Predatory Bird Research Group and Clive Bagshaw, longtime Arboretum volunteer. Jess Correa of the Bird School Project led a special kid-friendly bird walk that was particularly popular with families. Jeff Caplan stepped in at the last moment to lead a group and enthralled them with his bird language approach to birding.

Some might say that this year's Raptor Day was complicated by the impending bloom of the Corpse Flower. I like to think it was enriched by the Titan Arum's impressive inflorescence, which drew people to the Arboretum by the thousands over a 2-week period. While it waited another 2 days to bloom (surprising us all), it brought a lot of folks up to the Arboretum who were unexpectedly introduced to a whole new world of birds, which is really what Raptor Day is all about: connecting people with the plants of the Arboretum and with the amazing variety of winged wonders who visit and make their homes there.



Look for guided bird walks at the Arboretum now every Thursday morning at 9:15 – free to Arboretum members and complementary with the \$10 admission fee for non-members.

Close-up bird shots by *Louise West*.
Crowd shots by *Ferd Bergholz*.



First page shots counter-clockwise from top: *Barn Owl, Kenny Elvin holding Barn Owl, the crowd, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Harris's Hawk.*

This page counter-clockwise from top: *Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Kenny Elvin holding Kookaburra.*

Meanwhile, in the Big Meadow . . .

A pair of fledgling red-tails put on a nice show in the big meadow, and a bunch of people who had been to Raptor Day got to enjoy the interaction. One fledgling had a ground squirrel, presumably provided by a parent, and the second one really wanted a piece of the action. Eventually it could not wait any longer and the two birds threatened each other with wings spread and then the original owner of the prey relented and let its sibling grab the remains.

- Bruce Lyon



*Red-tailed Hawk siblings - Bruce Lyon
Big Meadow UCSC - Lee Jaffe*

Pacific Slope Flycatcher Successful Nest Documented June 2022 in Aptos - by Deborah Diersch

A pair of Pacific Slope Flycatchers have tried to build a nest on the top of our porch pillars the past couple of years and this year they were finally successful with a little help from my husband who added a plate to the top of a pillar to make the area large enough to hold the nest. They started trying to build the nest in May and it took them awhile to complete the nest - then the female started incubating. I'm not sure of the exact day the chicks hatched, but it might have been around June 8th or 9th because, a day or two after the female stopped sitting constantly on the nest, I got the first sight of the chicks. At first I could only see two small heads and then I saw three.



Both parents fed the chicks. We heard the parents calling to each other frequently as they took turns feeding the chicks, but we never heard a peep out of the chicks.

They didn't seem to grow much the first week, but then had a growth spurt the second week.

All three chicks fledged over the course of the day on June 21st. It was a great surprise when the first chick to fledge suddenly flew out



the nest following its parent! I was lucky to witness that exhilarating event. The photo on the left below was taken just minutes before it left the nest. The second chick (shown below with parent) fledged sometime in the afternoon, and the final chick fledged in the early evening. I haven't seen any of them since, but I heard Pacslopes calling to each other in the oaks a few days later.

It was a great experience to watch the successful nesting and fledging of the Pacslope chicks and hope to see it again next year. Note regarding photos: All photos were taken by me. With the exception of the first photo of the adult with



nesting material, all of the other photos were taken through my living room window so as not to disturb the birds so some of them are a bit blurry. We gave-up the porch to the Pacslopes for the entire nesting period.

Monterey Bay Festival Of Birds

September 30th - October 2nd, 2022



With the fall migration season, there is exciting news on the horizon for every birder! The Bird School Project, a local nonprofit outdoor education organization, will be taking over the *Monterey Bay Festival of Birds* starting this September 30th - October 2nd, 2022!

This year's Festival of Birds will feature field trips to amazing local destinations, workshops in writing, photography, and nature journaling, and community-oriented introductory birding. Be sure not to miss Saturday's Nature Extravaganza on October 1st, geared toward the whole family with performances, food and craft vendors, non-profit activity booths, and speakers.

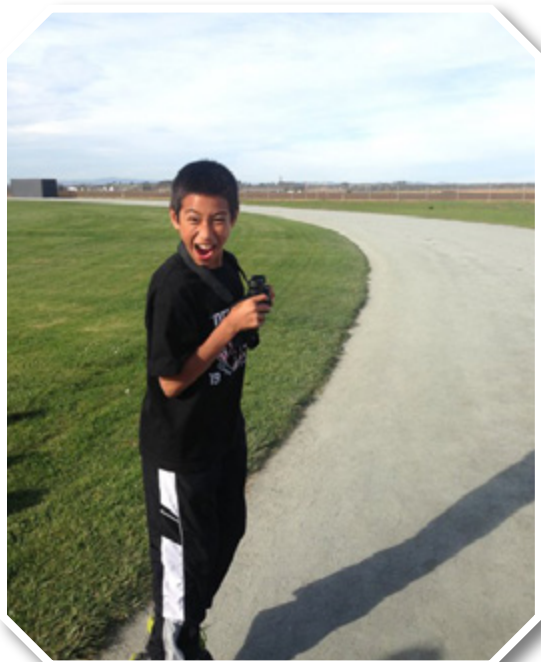
The Monterey Bay Birding Festival has been a keystone birding event for bird lovers in our local community and world-wide for the past sixteen years. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the leadership of the Monterey Bay Birding Festival canceled the 2020 and 2021

Festivals. **Then came along THE BIRD SCHOOL PROJECT.** Bird School is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire and equip both students and teachers to love, study, and steward their local environment. They have been delivering birding programs in schoolyards in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties for the past seven years and their board and staff are well positioned to continue the spirit of the festival going forward!

The Bird School Project is excited to revive a major birding festival in the central coast. This year's festival will feature mobility-minded



BSP instructors scout out the schoolyard at E.A. Hall Middle School to see what birds they might find with their classes.



birding field trips from Monterey Audubon's Amanda Preece and Paul Miller, electric catamaran tours on Elkhorn Slough with Monterey Bay Eco Tours, and free community pop-up hubs in select locations on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the festival.

Workshops include two separate nature journaling trips with John Muir Laws and Melinda Nakagawa, writing workshops with authors Emilie Lygren and Sarah Rabkin, and photography workshops with Seraphina Landgrebe. In addition to plenty of activities hosted by nonprofits from around the region, Saturday's Nature Extravaganza, in Watsonville, will also feature a keynote panel hosted by Jonathan Franzen, a poetry reading, an excerpt of the ballet, "The Legend of the Snowy Plover," as well as food vendors and more!

A 7th grade student at Gavilan View Middle School in Salinas shows exuberance after spotting a Horned Lark on the baseball diamond.



Teachers from Salinas Union High School District join the Bird School Project at Big Sur Land Trust's Carr Lake property for some professional learning and nature connection prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

Are you interested in nighttime celebrations? Look out for the Birds and Brews trivia night, or head over to Other Brother Brewery for a presentation about the Heerman's Gulls at Roberts Lake, hosted by Monterey Audubon.

Registration for this year's festival is up and running and you can buy a ticket today by visiting the Bird School Project's website: <https://birdschoolproject.org/festival/>!

If you want to stay in the loop about all upcoming festival details, we recommend that you join The Bird School Project's e-mail list by visiting <https://birdschoolproject.org/contact>.

For any questions about the festival, or if you'd like to help out, please contact Jessica Correa at jess@birdschoolproject.org.



See you there!

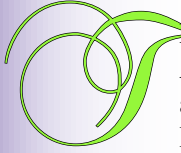


Greater Yellowlegs - Gail West

Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from March 1 to May 31, 2022



This spring anchovies were abundant in the nearshore waters, especially off Santa Cruz, beginning in late April and lasting several weeks. The abundance of food attracted large numbers of Sooty Shearwaters and Bonaparte's Gulls, a diversity of terns, and numerous rare gulls, of which many lingered into late May.

Other noteworthy events this spring included some especially early arrivals by migrant landbirds. Record early spring arrivals included Black-throated Gray Warbler (March 21, BS), Western Wood-Pewee (April 8, LM, WM), and Western Kingbird (March 6, AR), and some other species such as Ash-throated Flycatcher and Hooded Oriole, seemed to arrive somewhat earlier than usual this spring as well. Monterey County also had some record early arrivals this spring indicating this was more than just a local phenomenon.



A pair of **Wood Ducks** visiting an owl nest box in La Selva was intriguing as there are no breeding records or even regular breeding season presence in that area of the county (EB). A pair of **Common Mergansers** on the Pajaro River at Chittenden on March 21 (NU) were in an area of the county they are not known to breed at yet, however their increasingly frequent presence at the Pajaro River mouth may lead to a breeding attempt further upstream. The mature riparian along the Pajaro River upstream of Murphy Crossing seems similar to breeding habitats they use on the San Lorenzo River.

A decent showing of five male **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** turned up on the mid-county coast and Pajaro Valley between April 7—May 3 (SE, SH, RW, BK_n, BK) and a male **Calliope Hummingbird** was found at Pajaro Dunes on April 25 (NS). Both of these species were also seen at Loma Prieta where more expected. A **Common Gallinule** at Kalkar Quarry from at least April 11—May 5 may have been lingering from winter, or was perhaps a prospective breeder.

Flocks of three and eleven **Ruddy Turnstones** between Terrace Point and



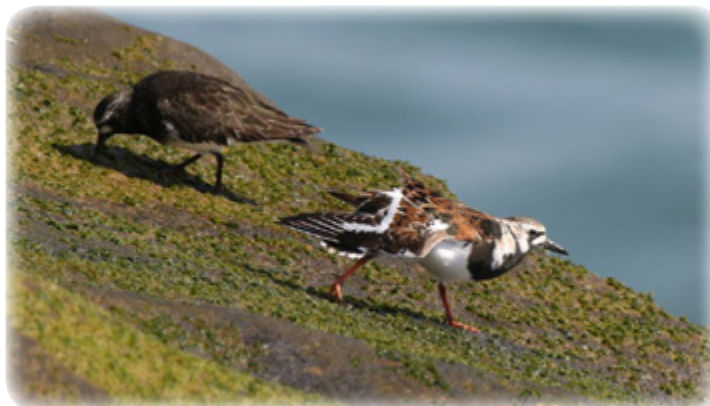
Unexpected mist net capture. Quickly untangled and released. Interesting to record a coastal migrating BCHU in spring.
- Sam Eberhard

West Cliff Drive on April 29 were where this scarce migrant has often appeared in spring (AF, v.ob.). A **Dunlin** photographed at the Santa Cruz Harbor on May 24 was quite late for a migrant; the dull plumage suggested it may be an immature summering in the area (RM).

Bonaparte's Gulls were particularly abundant on the mid-county coast from late April to mid-May, after which the flocks slowly petered out the rest of the month. A high count of 450 were off the Santa Cruz Harbor on May

3 (AR). A flock of 500 flying over Scotts Valley on May 17 were probably migrants using a transmountain flyway to the San Francisco Bay (JW). An adult **Black-legged Kittiwake** first seen roosting at West Cliff on May 18 lingered on the mid-county coast through the end of the month (AF, v.ob.). A **Sabine's Gull** flying by Waddell State Beach on May 2 was rare to see from

shore (CF). An immature **Little Gull** was found at the Santa Cruz Harbor on May 21 and stayed in the area through the end of the month (AR, v.ob.), representing the 6th record for the county.



Ruddy Turnstone & Black Turnstone
- Pete Solé



Left: *Black-legged Kittiwake*
(this lifer at last!)
-Lisa Larson
Right: *Little Gull*
- Alex Rinkert



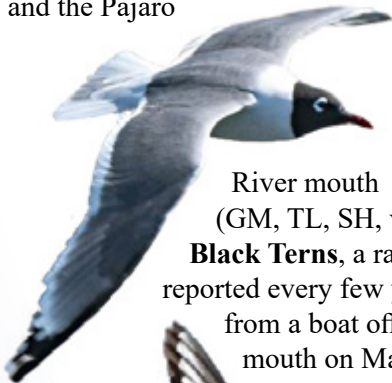
Four **Franklin's Gulls** found between May 2–24 was a good spring showing for this species in the county (AR, CF, ES, v.ob.). A 1st-cycle **Short-billed Gull** found at the lower San Lorenzo River on May 20 was among the numerous rare gulls to stay late into spring (AR, v.ob.).

Forster's Terns were numerous in the feeding frenzies off Santa Cruz in May; a count of 191 from the Santa Cruz Harbor on May 5 was the highest this spring (AR). Up to three **Black Skimmers** made several appearances between Santa Cruz and the Pajaro



Above: *Brown Booby* - Breck Tyler
Left: *Franklin's Gull*
- Michael Bolte
Right: *Forster's tern*
- Michael Bolte
3 Gulls below are all *Bonaparte's*
Left & right: Norm Uyeda
Center: Cindy Cummings

attracted by the abundance of anchovies. A concerted effort to count the masses of shearwaters yielded a tally of 336,700 on the evening of May 23, the highest count in the county since 1988 (AR). A **Manx Shearwater** photographed offshore on May 21 was the 3rd spring record for the county (AR, NU, PH, GM, DU). An adult **Brown Booby** was found roosting on a sea cliff at Wilder Ranch from May 4–8 (BT, v.ob.) and was refound at the same place from May 24 through the end of the month.



River mouth (GM, TL, SH, v.ob.). Two

Black Terns, a rare spring migrant reported every few years, were seen from a boat off the Pajaro River mouth on May 4 (AJ et al.).

Several **Cook's** and **Murphy's Petrels** were reported from a repositioning cruise passing through the far offshore waters of the county (v.ob.). While there are still few records of these species in the county, they are both known to regularly occur in the far offshore waters of



California in spring. **Sooty Shearwaters** were particularly abundant inside the Monterey Bay in May, undoubtedly



A Great Blue Heron

nest rumored to be north of Boulder Creek was confirmed this spring when an active nest was on April 17 (LG, SH, KS). The nest was in the crown of an old growth redwood and according to local residents, the nest has been active for “decades.”

As recently as the 1990s Great Blues formerly nested at

several locations in the mountains, but all nesting in recent years has occurred on the immediate coast and Pajaro Valley.

A Cattle Egret

hunted worms on the lawn at Garfield Park on April 29 and May 5–7 (KG, KK, v.ob.). A flock 18 **White-**



headed **Ibises** flying by Davenport on May 21 was unexpected (BME, JMN). Even more unexpected was earlier that same day, two adult ibises were photographed perching on a power line near Bonny Doon Beach (AB et al.).

Among the numerous **Bald Eagle** reports this spring, the two immatures wintering on the mid-county coast continued through May (v.ob.). One individual of this pair was even seen bringing sticks to a Eucalypt grove on the Capitola bluffs, but no further evidence of breeding materialized.



*Eagles at New Brighton State Beach/Campground
Above: Bald Eagle - Max Ferrero*

Left: Imm. Bald Eagle with Steller's Jay - Samuel Rawlins

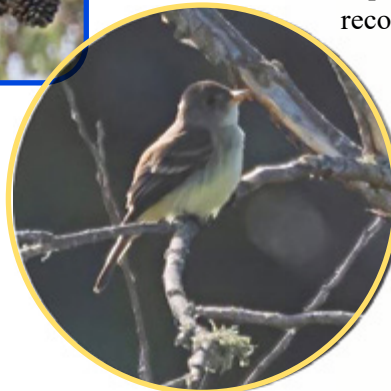


before any young were visible (GK).

A male **Red-breasted x Red-naped Sapsucker** hybrid continued at Natural Bridges State Beach through at least March 7 (LJ). A **Pileated Woodpecker** flying over Chittenden on March 18 fits the pattern of out-of-place county records in early spring (PS).

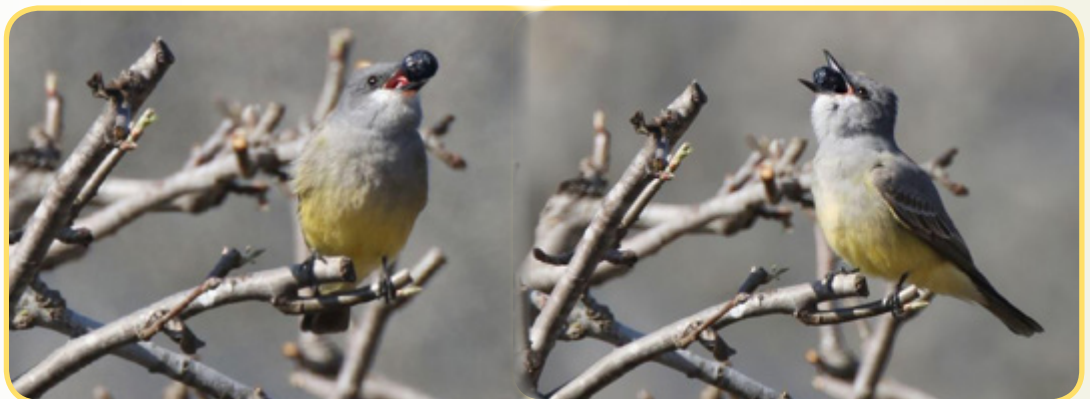
A **Willow Flycatcher** was singing at the Pajaro River on May 21 (SBB, SE). **Tropical Kingbirds** lingered in Santa Cruz until April 11 (AM) and Watsonville until May 3 (CC). An exciting find in early spring was a **Cassin's**

Bald Eagles can begin nesting before they reach full adult plumage, so a breeding attempt is not out of the question for this younger pair. The regional breeding population is expanding and it only seems to be a matter of time before there are multiple pairs breeding in the county. Earlier in the spring, the younger immature of the mid-county pair was seen depredating Great Blue Heron nests at the Santa Cruz Harbor on March 31 (AR)—exciting for the observer to watch but not so much for the adult heron who anxiously screeched from above the nest while the eagle ate its meal! In the Watsonville slough system, the one known breeding pair in the county made it through the early stages of nesting this spring but the nest apparently failed at some point



*Above Center: Willow Flycatcher
- Sam Eberhard*

*Above: Cassin's Kingbird
relishing fruit
- Pete Sole*



Kingbird at Chittenden on March 5 (JM, v.ob.). There are eleven previous records in the county, but none have



been seen in the county since 2012 and none of the previous individuals stuck around long enough to be enjoyed by many observers. Within two days of the kingbird being found at Chittenden, a second individual joined it and they both remained until March 13. A male **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, the 5th record for the county, was found just north of Davenport on May 14 where it dazzled birders with its long tail, scarlet axillaries, and graceful flight until May 21 (SH, AR, LG, KS). An albino nestling **Black Phoebe** successfully fledged from a nest in Soquel with its normally pigmented siblings this spring (LL, LFL).

A late **Townsend's Solitaire** flew over Loma Prieta on May 14 (ST). If the three **Phainopeplas** this past fall and winter were not enough, a female was photographed at Chittenden on May 13 (NU) to make it four in less than a year! **Lawrence's Goldfinches** with dependent fledglings were at Swanton Road on May 31 (SLM) for the first breeding record in that area of the county in some time. A pair was also seen collecting nest material at Chittenden on April 20 (SH).

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** in a westside Santa Cruz backyard



from March 27–30 was a nice surprise (EE). A late migrant or perhaps early dispersant **Lark Sparrow** was at Loma Prieta on May 26 (PB, PH). The "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** wintering in a Soquel backyard stayed until at least March 3 (LS). At least 28

White-throated Sparrows were reported this spring (v.ob.). **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** were found singing on territory at Loma Prieta this spring. First seen on May 4 (SE, SBB, DB), up to four were present in an area that burned during the 2016 Loma Fire (MR, v.ob.).

Seven **Yellow-breasted Chats** found between May 1–29 was more than usually encountered in spring (v.ob.). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Watsonville Slough on April 25 was the only one found this spring (NS). Frequent appearances by several **Great-tailed Grackles** in Santa Cruz, on the north coast, and even one at Scotts Valley offered more evidence of their expansion into previously unoccupied areas of the county. Breeding was again confirmed at Westlake Pond by a female carrying nest material on April 8 (RAS).

A male **Black-and-white Warbler** wintering at Pinto Lake continued through March 11 (NU), while wintering **Lucy's Warbler** at Tyrrell Park stayed until March

Clockwise from Upper Left:
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher - Arthur Macmillian
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher - Lisa Sheridan
Rufous-crowned Sparrow - Norm Uyeda
Clay-colored Sparrow - Erik Enbody
Yellow-breasted Chat - Gary Kittleson



Summer Tanager - Cindy Cummings

10 (AR). An immature male **Summer Tanager** was photographed near Davenport on May 28–29 (GS, v.ob.). Male **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** visited three feeders around the county from May 24–30 (PF, PH, SR). **Scaly-breasted Munias** were present all spring at various places on the mid-county coast and in the Pajaro Valley (v.ob.).

Cited Observers:

Robin Abu-Shumays, Ellen Baker, Sam Baxter-Bray, Phil Brown, Adam Burnett, Dana Cox, Cindy Cummings, Sam Eberhard, Erik Enbody, Patrick Fillner, Abram Fleishman, Craig Fosdick, Kim Glinka, Lois Goldfrank, Paul Heady, Sharon Hull,

Lee Jaffe, Alvaro Jaramillo, Brooke Keeney (BKn), Bryan Kett,

Kevin Kilpatrick, Gary Kittleson, Storey LaMontagne, Lisa Fay Larson, Lynda Lewit, Tom Lutz, Arthur Macmillan, Jeff Manker, Gary Martindale, Brian McElroy, Jennifer McNulty, R. Morgan, Liam Murphy, William Murphy, Alex Rinkert, Mike Rogers, Siobhan Ruck, Brian Scanlon, Nico Schnack, Elena Scott, Pete Solè, Lisa Sheridan, Kitty Stein, Gary Strachan, Scott Terrill, Breck Tyler, Darrell Uyeda, Norman Uyeda, Jonny Wahl, Randy Wardle, “v.ob.” means various observers. *Please enter interesting observations into eBird or report them to Alex Rinkert at arinkert12@comcast.net.*

SQUIRREL-PROOF DECK FEEDER

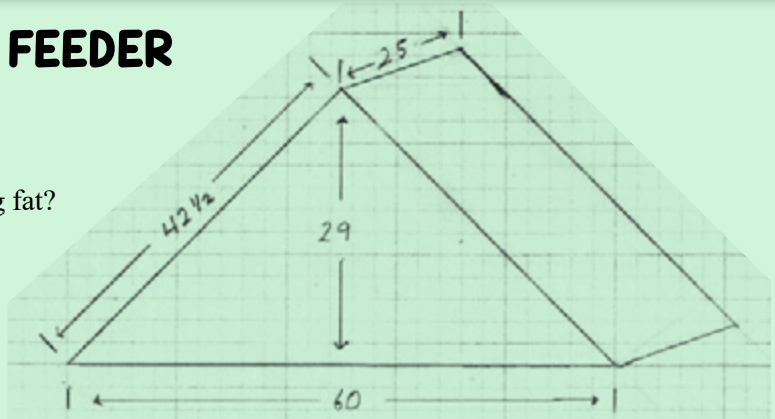
-by Larry Corridon

Are squirrels hanging off your feeders, getting fat?
Are Band-tailed Pigeons chasing your other birds away while they devour pounds of bird seed in a few minutes?

Here is an idea for a build-it-yourself deck feeder that keeps out pigeons and squirrels. It is basically an A-frame, wire mesh enclosure that sits on a piece of artificial grass. By using shelled sunflower hearts on the turf, it is virtually no mess. It is lightweight but sturdy enough to move around easily.

These are the 12 species that have used mine so far:

House Finch, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Lesser Goldfinch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Oak Titmouse, Dark-eyed Junco, Song Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Black-headed grosbeak, California Towhee, Scrub Jay. (The last 2 birds were a tight fit but they made it in...and out!)



THE MATERIALS:

1. The wood was all scrap lumber, a mix of 1/2" X 1", 1/2" X 2", and 2" X 2".
2. The wire was 24" x 50', 1.5 inch Hardware Cloth 16 Gauge Black Vinyl Coated Welded Fence Mesh which I got on Amazon for around \$60. (This gave me enough wire mesh to enclose 2 tube feeders also and I still have several feet of wire mesh leftover for future projects.)
3. The artificial grass came off a roll at Home Depot and could be bought by the foot.
4. I staple-gunned the wire to the frame with 1/2 inch staples.



My first attempt was trial and error. If I made another it would have these dimensions:

60 inches long X 25 inches deep by 29 inches high, with angled sides 42 1/2 inches long.

This gives the apex of the triangle a 90 degree angle and lines up the wire mesh for easy attachment. Here is a drawing with the dimensions:

I'm pretty happy with the result and can watch the birds from just a few feet from my window. Several species have fed inside the feeder at once with very little squabbling, although there is the occasional argument over a particular seed or spot on the "grass".

If you or another "handyperson" are interested in building one, feel free to contact me and I'll be happy to chat and pass on the details for putting one together.

larry961357@sbcglobal.net

In a future article, I'll discuss how to build a domed, enclosed, squirrel and pigeon-proof tube feeder!

Band-tailed Pigeon - Lisa Larson



Birder's Notebook

Tony Britton Poetry

tonybritton.smugmug.com

Dreamscapes

Eyes closed. Locked dream vaults open. Kaleidoscopic vignettes. Fragmented lessons.
Cogwheels groan. Reluctant. Strained. Irrational narratives. Montage editing.
Three cormorants in silhouette cleave the sky. Moving left to right. Swift. Silent. Shock of
lightning fractures all within its reach. Rude. Bullying.
Ground becoming agitated. Earth parting. Yawning wide. A castle grows out of the forest,
leaning in a curious manner. Stone staircases lead to redwood cathedrals. Corridors and
hobbit doors. Ramparts and rabbit holes.
Midnight hillside view. Ceiling of ancient fireballs. Lonely crickets cry.
An army of bullfrogs air riverbank grievances.
By a Corkscrew Willow, angels assemble. They know me by name. Distant chorus. Sweet
melodies draw me nearer their source. I float above the ground, casting two shadows.
Embraced by songbirds. They tell me the universe favors me. It leaves me breathless.
Dream vaults close. Eyes open.

Sunlight and Song

Memories, like a butterfly
Traverse a crimson, painted sky
Invite me by offering their hand

Sweetest songbird resting spots
Flowered mindscapes, spectral thoughts
Collect like fine, white hourglass sand

I pray that when my story ends
Fond memories thrive among my friends
Where thoughts of loving kindness blossom and belong
Please bring me forth from time's forgotten shadows
Please remember me in sunlight and in song

Lullaby Train Ride

Lullaby train ride. Chimney fire. Welcome mat.

I am homeward bound.

Hurling onward. Train moving with tremendous authority. Towns and thoughts passing by.

Swiftly out of sight and mind. Sudden. Fleeting. Final.

Onward still.

Train wheels and tracks in constant negotiation. Give and take. Rhythmic. Hypnotic. Historic.

Iron horse discourse. Piercing whistle-blow. Shrii. Discourteous. Train rumbling. Breathing.

Bones rattle, birds scatter.

Slideshow vistas impress. Distant cherry blossoms sing. Seasonal obedience. Pomp and pageantry. Above, a cumulus parade. Pachyderms and polar bears on sapphire canvas. Train

slowing. Slower still. Full stop.

Bags in hand. Feet on the ground. I walk to where those who love me are waiting.

I am expected. I am wanted. Flock of birds pass overhead. Feathers paint the sky. Brilliant works of living art. I share their heartbeat. I am spotted and called. Eyes alight. Warm embraces. Long

awaited. I am found in their presence.

Love. Acceptance.

Validation. Family.



Visit Tony Britton Photography!
tonybritton.smugmug.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Julia van der Wyk	April 2022
Mary Park	April 2022
Ileana Davis	April 2022
Samantha Roger	April 2022
Desiree Mulligan	April 2022
Cathy Herbert	April 2022
Vickie Assunto	May 2022
Jo Koumouitzes-Douvia	May 2022
Jessie Pabros-Kraus	May 2022
Barbara Rhoades	May 2022
Allison Adair Family	May 2022
William McCabe	May 2022
Christy Caldwell	May 2022
Mary Anne McKittrick	May 2022
Jody Lynn Harmon	June 2022
Karen Kreiger Family	July 2022
Cheryl Lynne Stoops Family	July 2022
Elizabeth Hammack	July 2022
Joe Moreno	July 2022



TAKE THE PLUNGE

Santa Cruz Bird Club

OFFICER POSITIONS NEEDED:



EDITOR !

and

Program Director

PLEASE SEE

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

Caspian Tern Dive - Lee Jaffe

Long-billed Curlew with Sandcrab - Lisa Larson

Rush Hour



Photo above: David Lewit

Sooty Shearwaters 6-10-22

Photo below: Arthur Macmillian



DEADLINE

submissions for
NOV/DEC issue

OCT 1, 2022



Crows - Michelle Lamberson



Western Gull chick - Margaret Perham

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

Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds - Lisa Larson

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Corpse Flower - Lisa Larson

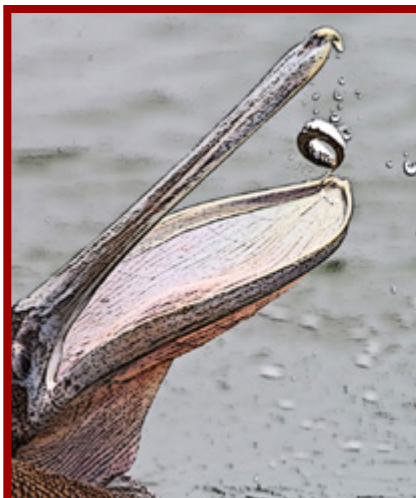
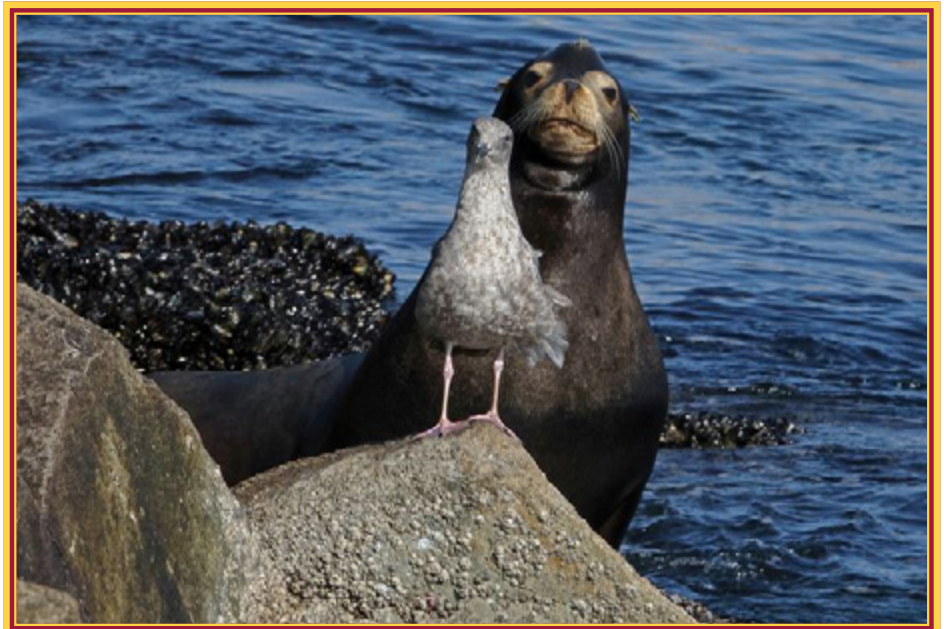
*Brown Pelican about to gulp
- Andy Knorr*

ALBATROSS



is published five times a year
by the Santa Cruz Bird Club.
Download the online version and
past issues on the SCBC website
santacruzbirdclub.org

PARTING SHOT: "HE'S RIGHT BEHIND ME ISN'T HE?" WESTERN GULL & SEA LION - TONY BRITTON



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Attention: Membership