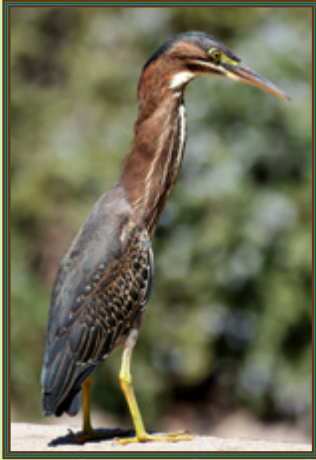


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PARTING SHOT



# Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

## Jim Frandeen, Hummingbird photographer

- By Robin Abu-Shumays

For the last couple years I have been atlasing for the SCBBA in a block in the Soquel Hills. I tried to be polite when birding in residential areas and as it turned out the neighbors were lovely. This year was the last to complete the data collection and lucky for me Lisa Larson also birded the block. Neighbors often asked us if we knew about “the Hummingbird man” up the road, Jim Frandeen. Lisa introduced herself to Jim and he kindly allowed us to atlas in his gardens that were designed specifically to attract hummingbirds.

Jim is a hummingbird photographer who has participated in Santa Cruz Open Studios showing his photographs taken in Soquel, Costa Rica and Ecuador. He also publishes a hummingbird calendar. We asked Jim when his interest began, and to share a bit about his current methods for taking pictures of these challenging subjects. Here is what he had to say:

I fell in love with photographing hummingbirds on April 12, 2011. I know this because my wife took a picture of me up on a ladder with my camera. Barbara came out to see what I was doing up on a ladder. I said, “honey, there are hummingbirds in this tree, and they are amazing!” My first pictures were pathetic, but I have improved my technique over the years.

The day before I shoot, I set up a hummingbird feeder where I plan to set up my ‘studio’. I always begin my shoot by selecting a flower; often it's a flower from the garden that the hummingbirds are used to feeding on; sometimes I pick up a potted plant at the nursery; sometimes I arrange a bouquet. I set up the flower next to the feeder. I set up three flashes around the flower. It takes some time to adjust the height and angle of the flower and the height and distance of each flash from the flower to get the illumination just right. I set up my camera on a tripod about twelve feet from the flower. I use patio umbrellas to keep the sun off the setup so that



highly technical. I want the highest f-stop possible ( $f/22$  is good) to get the greatest depth of field; I want the maximum amount of the flower and the bird to be in focus. I want a low ISO setting (100 – 200) for minimum noise. The shutter speed is low (250), and the flash duration fast (at least  $1/5000$ ). Due to the inverse square law, the flashes must be very close to the subject – less than a foot.

I learned the basics of multiple flash photography from Ralph Paonessa on a hummingbird photography workshop tour to Ecuador in 2013. Most of the 300-

ambient light does not interfere with the flashes. When I'm finally ready to shoot, I use a syringe to spike the flowers with sugar water. Then I take the feeder away. When the hummingbirds come back to where the feeder was, they usually fly off in a huff to find another feeder, but they are curious creatures, and sometimes they stick around to check out the flower. When they discover the 'nectar' they



plus species of hummingbirds live within 15 degrees of the equator. Since then, I have made two more trips to Ecuador with Ralph and three trips to Costa Rica to photograph hummingbirds. I'm planning to organize a hummingbird photography workshop here in Soquel for interested photographers. I will supply the flash equipment and the hummingbirds.

come back to it. During a shoot, I am constantly refreshing the sugar water and adjusting the camera settings and position of the flashes and the flower.

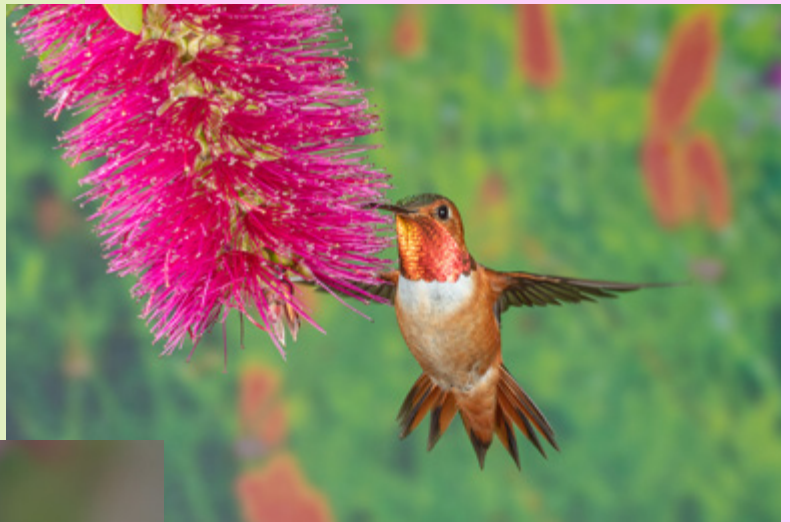
I can shoot at any time of day or weather conditions. The best time is in the evening as it starts to get dark because this is when they tank up. My flashes have modeling lights to keep the flower illuminated when it would otherwise be too dark to focus.

The settings on the camera and the flashes are

*Hummer photos: All Jim's All hummers with orange gorget and copper on the body are Allen's - the rest Anna's.*



When I go through my pictures at the end of a shoot, it is always exciting to see what I have. Most of the pictures are discarded. So many things can go wrong – an eye is partly closed, the wings hide the head, the head is too far into the flower, too light, too dark, or perfect but boring. I keep about one out of a hundred shots, and some of those go into the calendar. For me, shooting hummingbirds is like panning for gold; most of it worthless, but occasionally there is something that glitters.



The shooting process is a lot of work; it is tiring and stressful. Action is fast. It demands my full attention to focus each shot. The process of developing the pictures is rewarding and fun. I use Adobe Lightroom to edit my photos. I always shoot in raw mode because this gives the most dynamic range and color and finer control and adjustment potential. The pictures look plain until I adjust the color and lighting. Finally, I crop and center the picture. My 50-megapixel Canon 5DSR allows me to crop and still have enough pixels for a good print. The calendar requires square pictures. The camera has a rectangular aspect ratio, so some pictures can't be cropped to a square format without losing part of the picture.

The hummingbirds don't pose for free. I fill the garden with flowers that attract them. I have five feeders to keep cleaned and filled daily. When we go away, I hire a hummer

sitter. I usually go through seven quarts of sugar water every day. I buy 50-100 pounds of sugar at a time. The hummingbirds know who the sugar daddy is.

Calendars will be available from Jim's website [hummingbirdsasart.com](http://hummingbirdsasart.com).

### **The Gardens**

The Frandeen's garden is chock full of many varieties of salvias, Penstemon, Firecracker bush and more. It's like a botanical garden, complete with buzzing bees, chipmunks, and surrounded by trees. We had a great time and confirmed many species-not only Allen's and Anna's Hummingbirds. We, (well let's get



*Right: A small section of the garden - Lisa Larson*

real, mainly Lisa), confirmed breeding for Purple Finch, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Hooded Orioles, Pygmy Nuthatches, Black-headed grosbeak, Black-throated Gray Warblers, Northern Flicker, California Scrub Jays, California Quail, Nuttall's Woodpecker and Spotted Towhee.

We enjoyed watching the hummers in the bird baths. These baths were also enjoyed by a juvenile Raven and thirsty bobcat - both beautifully captured by Jim!



*Background photo: Lisa Larson*

# Breeding Bird Atlas

## Last Chance to Submit Observations

The six years of fieldwork for the Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas II is nearing the end! As observations in the atlas database are reviewed and finalized in these last few months of fieldwork, I want to give everybody one more opportunity to submit observations that may have slipped through the cracks.

**I am soliciting any and all breeding confirmations between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2022 that have not already been directly submitted to me.**

1. I welcome you to submit observations even if you were not previously involved with the project.
2. See the atlas breeding codes for what qualifies as a breeding confirmation.
3. Each observation will need the following information: date, species, breeding code, location (coordinates or block number).
4. Breeding confirmations in adjacent counties can also be submitted as these areas fall within the atlas project area. Some key locations in adjacent counties include the following.
  - Monterey—Zmudowski, McClusky Slough, northern Jetty Road
  - San Mateo—Año Nuevo, eastern Butano, Long Ridge
  - Santa Clara—Skyline, Loma Prieta, Lexington, Sanborn
  - San Benito—Aromas

Please get in touch if you have observations to submit, and we can coordinate on how best to do that.

Thanks,  
Alex Rinkert  
Project Director  
arinkert12@comcast.net



Young Black-crowned Night Herons - Margaret Perham

## MY FRIEND EARL ~ Clay Kempf

Earl arrived in Santa Cruz in the mid 1980's, and immediately became a Santa Cruz Bird Club regular. Earl loved his New York roots but was thrilled to be in California. During winter months, updates on the temperature were a daily, sometimes hourly routine, with Earl running up long distance charges to excitedly tell his friends and family that it was 50 degrees warmer at his new home.

Santa Cruz birders quickly became aware of Earl's birding passion, and he soaked up information about how to identify California birds and where to find them from a variety of SCBC sources, including Bruce Labar, Milly Rose, The Scharf (Barbara Scharfenstein), Steve Allison, and Debi Shearwater. Dashing around the county and the state in his red Jeep Wrangler, birders learned of his willingness and eagerness to serve as the driver in seeking out SC birds. Earl was equally happy to share his NY City approach to driving, and after a few hair-raising rides, many of us made sure WE drove on future trips, using the excuse that "Earl drove last time".



*Clay Kempf & Earl Lebow*

Santa Cruz was undergoing a bit of a birding renaissance at the time, and Earl became one of our key members, joining me, David Suddjian, Bob Merrill, Isaac Field, Randy Morgan, Bob Hargis and others in regular excursions around the county and central coast. At the time Earl was a serious lister, passionately pursuing a lifetime goal of 700 species in North America. He came close to reaching that goal in the lower 48, and pushed his way over the top with a trip to Alaska.

Once he hit the 700 mark, Earl focused even more on local birds, on the second incarnation of the Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas, and on his County List. Earl, Rick Fournier and I formed "The Three Amigos", including t-shirts that Rick got for all of us.

Birds were our main focus, of course, but every outing was filled with good will, friendly debates and hijinks. "Where are we going for lunch" became Earl's favorite topic from about 10 a.m. onward.

Earl loved sharing his knowledge with other birders, and led trips for the Santa Cruz Bird Club and the Monterey Bay Birding Festival on a regular basis. He formed a new birding group of local psychologists and other behavioral health professionals and arranged special outings for them. Tom Helman





benefitted from his birding tuteledge, and Norm Uyeda and Earl were a dedicated team of breeding bird atlassers. Sharon Hull and Earl were a CBC team; Lois and Wally Goldfrank shared plans and stories of trips abroad, etc., etc.

This article would be incomplete without mentioning how much Earl loved his wife Jean Doverspike; his family, his friends, and birding.

Earl and I shared our passion not only for birding but also pro sports, and often combined those endeavors, sometimes dragging other victims...err...FRIENDS with us, including Bob Ramer, Tom H., and Wally Goldfrank. I remember participating in Watsonville Wetlands Surveys with Earl and Bob Ramer, and while we often found some interesting birds, they took a back seat to the three of us laughing, having some mud-related challenge by car or by foot, and rushing to finish so Earl could have lunch.

Above all else, Earl was my friend, my confidant, and ALWAYS there if the chips



were down. He was as eccentric as they get, but at the same time, full of heart and good will. Laughter was the one common denominator that could be counted upon, even in the most challenging of times.

The Santa Cruz Birding community won't ever be the same without him. But I like to think that we're all a bit better because of his having been part of us.

We miss you. Three Amigos forever~



*Top:  
Earl in  
Peruvian  
Mud*

# GIVING A HOOT ABOUT OWL SAFETY

By Nanci Adams



Many of us have thrilled to the blood-curdling, drawn-out shriek of a hunting Barn Owl at night and been thankful that we're not voles! Barn Owls and Great Horned Owls are well equipped for hunting at night, particularly with their excellent hearing. But there's one enemy that owls find hard to combat, sports nets, especially soccer nets.

Soccer is, understandably, very popular throughout the country, as is basketball, another sport involving a net. However, a quick internet search visually shows just how destructive and even deadly sports nets can be to owls. There is a multitude of videos which show extended rescue attempts that involve cutting away netting from terrified, entangled birds. One can also view documentation of the considerable effort made to rehabilitate injured birds. It's a heartbreaking eye-opener.

Brandee Tolleson is a local wildlife rehabber who works closely with Native Animal Rescue to try to save and rehabilitate wildlife. As such, she works primarily with birds, especially since she has the essential flight barn, a key component of successful releases, particularly for raptors.

Tolleson says that the three most likely owl species she receives are Great Horned Owls, followed by Barn Owls and the Western Screech-Owls. In considering reasons for the birds' rescue, approximately 60 percent are divided evenly between birds hit by cars and birds "abandoned." This means the "rescue" by well-meaning humans of young birds, often on the ground, who should have been left in place to be tended by nearby parents, a natural process. The other 40 percent of rescued owls are caught in nets, almost always soccer nets. Most collisions with vehicles result in head trauma, whereas most net injuries involve broken wings and soft tissue trauma.

*Above: Barn Owl nestling - John Hickok  
Below: Great Horned Owl - Lee Jaffe*







Much is involved in rehabbing owls, and they must pass hunting and flying tests before being released. Brandee's success rate, over 95 percent, is the result of several factors. These include: proper medical care by Native Animal Rescue on initial intake; hours spent observing movements and behavior, including making sure that the birds continue to be leery of humans and don't become imprinted on them; and devotion to meticulous record-keeping on pellets, feces, and number of rats and other prey consumed. Not a job for the squeamish!

It's important to note that owls and other birds are only placed with Brandee when there's a reasonable chance of rehabilitation and release. Regardless

of how hard she works, though, there will always be birds that just don't make it, whether due to wings that don't heal or neurological damage from a car strike. Those losses are hard to accept. However, one of her most rewarding success stories involved a Great Horned Owl that was heavily entangled in a soccer net. It had extensive damage to both wings and wasn't expected to make it. Patience and diligent care paid off, however, and five months later it was successfully released!

Tolleeson has had two owls to rehabilitate that got caught in aviary netting. The netting hole size wasn't the issue. The netting wasn't drawn tight, and that's how owls get wings entangled. Brandee has only one case of an owl trapped in a driving



range golf net. The owl was tangled in the bottom of the net where it was loose. Unlike soccer nets, driving range nets have a tighter weave; therefore, wings are far less likely to become entangled.

Soccer is a much beloved sport, and with education, brainstorming, and follow-up on solutions in the extensive soccer community, we should be able to save many owls from needless suffering. Taking down nets nightly or covering more stationary ones with tarps are easier solutions. There may be others. Please help spread the word to promote and implement protection for these priceless avian treasures.



*Photos:*

*Barn Owl top & bottom - Louise West  
Screech Owl center - John Fox*

66th  
Santa  
Cruz  
Christmas  
Bird Count  
Saturday,  
December 17, 2022



Wood Ducks Hen - Louise West



Wood Drake - Louise West

The 66th Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 17, 2022.

Last year we had a record 109 birders participate and 31,570 birds of 168 species were tallied. While rare birds often steal the show, the Christmas Bird Count has always had an important role in monitoring the population trends of wintering birds both locally and across their range in North America.

Last year the count documented the continued increase in Western Bluebird, Canada Goose, and Wild Turkey. We also turned up a few nice species including Eurasian Wigeon, Lucy's Warbler, Parasitic Jaeger, and Bald Eagle. What will we find this year?

Come spend the day counting birds to help us find out! Please sign up as soon as possible so we can begin making assignments for count day: <https://forms.gle/5vstemBpSrSq1LV7>



Nick Levendosky  
Phil Brown  
Alex Rinkert  
Compilers

*The Moss Landing CBC*

The Moss Landing CBC will take place on January 1st, 2023! Please contact Kat Bailey at [kitkatbailey@gmail.com](mailto:kitkatbailey@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to the Moss Landing CBC email list.



Sanderlings - Jeff Bleam



Welcome to our new  
Program Director

**REEF COMER!**

→ **THANK YOU** to Reef for stepping up to take this much-needed position!

↪ *Stay tuned*  
for announcements of upcoming  
SCBC meetings & presentations ↪

← Here is Reef in Maine - overjoyed at seeing a life bird - the Razorbill



**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

- |                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Carol Polhamus     | May 2022 |
| Shawn McMurdo      | May 2022 |
| Frank Kremski      | May 2022 |
| Megan Reilly       | May 2022 |
| Susan Campbell     | May 2022 |
| Huve Rivas         | May 2022 |
| Catherine Burgess  | May 2022 |
| Susan Brackenbury  | May 2022 |
| Heidi Brancatelli  |          |
| Lawrence Seeberger |          |
| James Kimball      |          |
| Constance Greene   |          |
| Mark Nash          |          |
| Ondrej Prasil      |          |
| Elizabeth Malmberg |          |
| Carol Polhamus     |          |

**Santa Cruz Bird Club**

**OFFICER POSITION NEEDED:**

**EDITOR**

PLEASE SEE

**[santacruzbirdclub.org/club-information/club-officers-2/](http://santacruzbirdclub.org/club-information/club-officers-2/)  
for a description of officer duties.**

**CONTACT: [scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com](mailto:scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com)**

# Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from June 1 to August 31, 2022

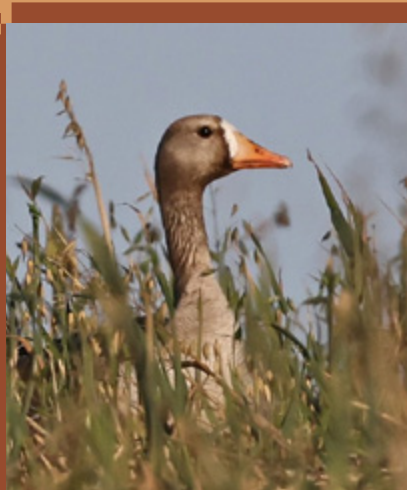
This summer and early fall brought a few exciting rarities to the county including a Neotropic Cormorant, Short-tailed Albatross, and Phainopepla, but otherwise rare birds were few and far between other than some lingering from earlier in spring. Several noteworthy breeding records for some of the rarer breeding species in the county were nice to obtain in the final year of the breeding bird atlas including Yellow-breasted Chat, Vaux's Swift, and a new breeding site for Purple Martins.

Good numbers of Pink-footed and Buller's Shearwaters and seabirds in general in the Monterey Bay in August was a welcome sight after several years of relatively slow pelagic trips. On land, shorebird habitat was again scarce but even then, it seemed to be an especially poor season for shorebirds. One Baird's Sandpiper and one Wilson's Phalarope, and zero Pectoral and Solitary Sandpipers was a paltry showing for these annually occurring species in the county.



An "Aleutian" Cackling Goose at West Beach Street on June 5 was rare for summer (KG, KK), as was a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Sand Hill Bluff on June 20 (GT). A male and female **Bufflehead** at Pajaro Dunes from June 9 through July 10 were also aseasonal but at a likely spot for them to spend the summer (NS). A female **Common Goldeneye** continued at Wilder Beach through June 2 but apparently did not spend the summer locally (v.ob.). **Wild Turkeys**, a rapidly expanding and introduced species, were reported in all areas of the county this summer (v.ob.). A summering **Eared Grebe** was at Pajaro Dunes from June 9 through July 19 (NS, v.ob.).

Two breeding confirmations of **Vaux's Swift**, one of the rarest breeding species in the county, were reported this summer. An adult was carrying a food bolus at Henry Cowell Redwoods SP on June 27, and a nest site in a broken top redwood at Big Basin Redwoods SP was visited by an adult on July 7 (AR). An adult male and a female/immature **Black-chinned Hummingbird** visiting a feeder in Larkin Valley were the only ones reported in August (BK).



A paltry total of one **Baird's Sandpiper** (AB), one **Wilson's Phalarope** (GM), and zero **Pectoral** and **Solitary Sandpipers** were reported in August. Numbers of **Red Phalaropes** offshore in late July and August seemed to be more than are usually encountered at that time of year (v.ob.). An adult **Black-legged Kittiwake** at the San Lorenzo River mouth and vicinity continued through July 10 (v.ob.). There are a handful of June records in the county, but very few in July; this adult summering at the San Lorenzo was the first July record in the county since 1977, when late spring and even summer occurrences were less unusual. The **Little Gull** at the San Lorenzo River mouth remained there until July 1 (v.ob.), and then turned up at Moss Landing on July 19 where it remained until August 1. This was one of the very few Little Gulls to spend the summer in California. Rounding out the rare gulls continuing from spring, the first-cycle **Short-billed Gull** remained at the San Lorenzo River

*Photos from top:*

*Greater White-fronted Goose - Glen Tepke*

*Baird's Sandpiper - Aidan Brubaker*

*Wilson's Phalarope - Gary Martindale*



Above: *Short-billed Gull* - Garrett Lau  
 Right: *Caspian Tern & Least Tern* - Sharon Hull



mouth until August 1 (v.ob.). A juvenile **Least Tern** at Corcoran Lagoon on August 28 was the first in the county in a few years (AF, v.ob.).

A young **Short-tailed Albatross** photographed on the Monterey Bay on July 9 was one of several that have been seen in the region within the last year (CO). This particular individual was found on July 17, 2021 and had been seen off and on in the bay since then. A **Brown Booby** continued to roost at Wilder Ranch through at least June 4 (v.ob.). A **Neotropic Cormorant** was photographed flying with two **Double-crested Cormorants** over Seabright and out to sea on August 24 (AR). This was the second record for the county after the first record at Pinto Lake the previous winter. There are an increasing number of northern California records of this species from all seasons; most of the records in the Monterey Bay have now been in late summer and early fall.

**Bald Eagles** were reported at a variety of places—Rancho del Oso, Castle Rock, the San Lorenzo Valley, and Chittenden to name a few—in what has become somewhat

expected each season (v.ob.). The older immature pair on the mid-county coast continued to frequent favorite haunts at Schwan Lake and Capitola, while the resident pair in the Watsonville sloughs remained there after a failed breeding attempt earlier this year. A noteworthy breeding record was a **Belted Kingfisher** nest found on the lower San Lorenzo River this summer (fide ES). An adult was apparently seen entering a burrow near Riverside Avenue with a fish in June. A pair of kingfishers are almost always on this stretch of the river, but the whereabouts of their nest had remained mysterious despite concerted efforts by atlasers to locate it in the past few years.

Only one **Willow Flycatcher** was reported in August (AR, v.ob.), but more were found later in September and October. A **Least Flycatcher** at Lighthouse Community Garden from August 29–September 3 was the earliest fall record of this species



Left:  
*Least Flycatcher*  
 - David Sidle

Right:  
*Willow Flycatcher*  
 - Alex Rinkert



in the county (AF, v.ob.). At least two pairs of **Western Kingbirds** bred at Chittenden this summer (v.ob.).

A **Purple Martin** nest in the burned Eucalyptus grove at Gray Whale Ranch on June 24 was a new breeding location for this recovering species (JS, PS). Purple Martins were also confirmed breeding at Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve and in the San Vicente watershed, and presumed to be breeding at Loma Prieta where they were continuously present through the summer. Breeding was also strongly suspected at Big Basin Redwoods SP near Gazos Creek Road where a few martins have been present the past two summers, but no breeding evidence materialized there this year. A **Bank Swallow** was at Struve Slough on August 25 (BK).



Mountains, so it may have been a summering bird from more northern breeding populations or perhaps a local post-breeding dispersant.

Unfortunately, several visits to the location this summer did not turn up any subsequent sightings. Varied Thrushes have previously bred in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but there have been no breeding confirmations for many years. Even breeding season sightings have been very few and far between with just two or three reported in the last ten years. The CZU Lightning Complex Fire in 2020

burned most of the known breeding sites for this species in the Santa Cruz Mountains so their future as a breeding species in this region is unknown.

At least two **Cedar Waxwings** were present on the lower Pajaro River, but no breeding evidence was observed this year (BM, SR). A male **Phainopepla** flying



There were about 20 reports of **White-breasted Nuthatches** this summer (v.ob.). The influx of apparent post-breeding dispersals has only become expected in the past few years and it remains unclear why their status in the county has suddenly changed. The many fires in California the past few years may have created more favorable conditions for nesting and facilitated an increase in their population, or perhaps drought conditions are forcing them to disperse further or to different areas.

An exciting find this summer was a male **Varied Thrush** at Castle Rock State Park on June 23 (CF). This male at Castle Rock was not singing and in atypical habitat compared to other known breeding locations in the Santa Cruz

over Loma Prieta on June 8 was very unexpected for spring (LM). This summer **Pine Siskins** were unusually numerous at Big Basin Redwoods SP where they are not known to breed (AR). Small flocks were seen throughout June and July, and some especially large flocks of 60 and 120 were noted near park headquarters on June 2. These flocks were foraging in small patches of light to moderately burned forest. The CZU fire severely burned much of the breeding habitat of this species on the north coast so these flocks at Big Basin



*Clockwise from top:*  
 Western Kingbirds - Pete Solè  
 Cedar Waxwing - Pete Solè  
 Varied Thrush - Craig Fosdick  
 White-breasted Nuthatch - Cooper Smith

may be local breeders displaced by the CZU fire.

At least one **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** continued at Loma Prieta through July 9 (v.ob.). While several were singing on territory this spring and summer, breeding remained unconfirmed. A pair of **Yellow-breasted Chats** were seen carrying food on the Pajaro River near Coward Creek on June 9–10 (GK). This was the first breeding confirmation in the county since 2003, and one of the few modern breeding records. There is extensive suitable habitat for this

species on the Pajaro River between Watsonville and Pescadero Creek, but much of the river corridor remains inaccessible so breeding may be more frequently occurring in the county than the few recent breeding records suggest. One or two pairs of

**Great-tailed Grackles** continued their breeding effort at Westlake Pond this summer (v.ob.). A flock of six grackles at Corcoran Lagoon on July 25 may have been dispersing from the Pajaro Valley (GM). The species is almost never encountered in the county away from the Pajaro Valley breeding sites in July.

A **Northern Waterthrush** was recorded singing at Corralitos Lagoon on June 12 (NU). The first arrival of this species in fall was marked by three (!) waterthrushes at Natural Bridges SB on August 26 with some remaining there into September (LFL et al., v.ob.). The only other rare fall warblers to be found in August were two **American Redstarts** (JS, PS, AR, v.ob.).

**Western Tanagers** were confirmed breeding at Big Basin Redwoods SP for the first time this summer (AR). A female was seen carrying food at Sempervirens Campground on June 29, and recently fledged young were seen the following day and later that week. Male **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were at feeders in Santa Cruz on June 26 (BW)



*From Top:*

*Rufous-crowned Sparrow - Earl Lebow*

*Yellow-breasted Chat - Gary Kittleson*

*Rose-breasted Grosbeak - Randy Wardle*

*Western Tanager - Gary Kittleson*

and in Aptos beginning on July 22 (RW). A few small flocks of **Scaly-breasted Munias** were noted in the Pajaro Valley, and at least eight continued at Neary Lagoon (v.ob.).

#### **Cited Observers:**

Aidan Brubaker, Abram

Fleishman, Craig Fosdick, Kim

Glinka, Bryan Kett, Kevin Kilpatrick,

Gary Kittleson, Lisa Fay Larson, Gary

Martindale, Bryan Mori, Liam Murphy,

Chris Overington, Samuel Rawlins, Alex

Rinkert, Nico Schnack, Elena Scott,

Jonah Svensson, Peter Svensson, Glen

Tepke, Norman Uyeda, Branwyn

Wagman, Randy Wardle, “v.ob.”

means various observers. *Please enter*

*interesting observations into eBird*

*or report them to Alex Rinkert at*

*[arinkert12@comcast.net](mailto:arinkert12@comcast.net).*

# Birder's Notebook

## The Lady Who Loves Birds

Alexandra Sanders

[etsy.com/shop/LadyWhoLovesBirds](https://etsy.com/shop/LadyWhoLovesBirds)

I have lived in my Victorian home for over 40 years, and have been unable to identify the little bird that sings so sweetly. For all these years I have yet to see the little bird, just hear it. I have never been able to repeat its song to get help identifying it... anyway, a few weeks ago, I used a new app, a free app called Merlin, and it can identify birds BY SOUND. It is very sensitive and picks up some pretty far-away birds. So I found out that the little bird that sings so sweetly is a HOUSE FINCH. I NEVER see this little bird. And the song, it is just very melodic and quite perfect. He has been added to the sweet collection of birds known as the BIMBY.

The BIMBY are an acronym for the Birds-In-My-Back-Yard, and they are the players in my many illustrations. Almost ALL of my little birds were their own watercolor initially. They are then put onto the computer, where they become their own file. One of the most enjoyable things that I do, is to move them all around: all on a branch, all in a margarita glass, a pair together, several in a teacup....

Discovering my BIMBY collective, which grows larger with each new discovery, has connected me with MY nature, MY surroundings. There is something very relaxing just sitting outside and taking in whatever is around me. Since using this app over the last few weeks, I have discovered these birds are in my yard: a Phoebe, a hermit thrush, a Cooper's hawk, a great horned owl, the house finch, a Bewick's wren. These were all identified by their sounds, so cool!

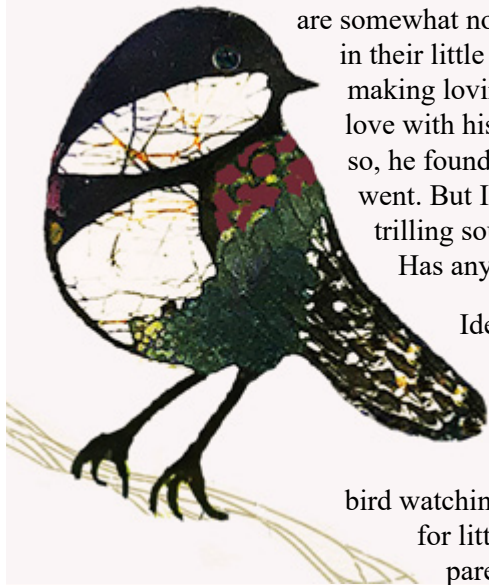
So apparently there are many birds that are visiting. I am driven to find out more about them.

Looking out my window right now are some very tiny birds, my favorites I think, the little bushtits. They



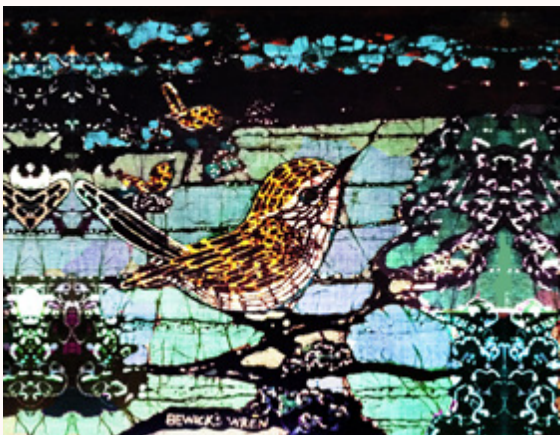


are somewhat non-descript except that they exude sweetness. They flit about in their little group, going from tree to tree. One year I had a sweet male, making loving sounds to a mirror I had attached to my house. He was in love with his reflection. After a week or so, he found a mate, and off they went. But I'll never forget the trilling sound he would make.  
Has anyone else heard this?



Identifying one's BIMBY is an excellent way to introduce anyone to bird watching, especially beneficial for little children, or aging parents, or to be uplifting. Connecting to nature helps us to leave the tough stuff behind for a few hours. It is exciting and fun to identify the birds in your back yard.

Who are YOUR BIMBY?



*Earl Lebow*



*300 Club photo  
- 384 species in SCCO*



*A life well-lived*



*8-6-22  
Earl showing Jean,  
Lois, and Sharon a  
photo of Orange-  
breasted Bunting in  
Mexico*



*Earl at Machu Picchu*



*Obsessive Birding Disorder  
- Earl loved this shirt*

I birded with Earl in the Breeding Bird Atlas program for four and a half years. I told Alex during his orientation meeting that I was a new birder (two years experience) so he paired me up with Earl who had been active in the previous BBA program thirty years prior. Over the years we covered most of the blocks from Sunset SB to Pescadero Cr. We were really Yin and Yang: his eyes were starting to go but he could hear every chip and would tell me what the birds were saying. My ears were shot and I have trouble understanding conversation even using hearing aids but I could pick out birds very well.

When it came to property access Earl was the undisputed champion. I grew up with many of the landowner families in the Pajaro Valley but Earl had a gift for chatting up owners and becoming in closer contact with them than I ever could. The photo of Earl climbing this gate epitomizes his eagerness to explore privileged property. (This gate is owned by the Basor family on Paulsen Rd whose daughter went to school with mine.)

- Norman Uyeda



Earl & Norm Uyeda - Pinto Lake County Park after seeing Neotropic Cormorant. I was birding from the park above the lake.  
- Lisa Larson

Earl at Pinto Lake County Park 12-10-20, after viewing Summer Tanager  
- Lisa Larson



Earl & Lisa Sheridan - Pelagic Trip 9-30-17  
- Lisa Larson

# DEADLINE

submissions for

**JAN/FEB**

**DEC 1, 2022**



*South Polar Skua - Pete Solé*



*Northern Flicker intergrade, Pinto Lake County Park  
- Kathleen Bailey*

# Submission to the *ALBATROSS*

## Guidelines

In addition to regular features—*Events Calendar*, photos for *Santa Cruz Birds*, *Birders Notebook* and *Parting Shot*—the newsletter can include almost anything related to birding in general and to local birding in particular. Depending on space, submissions of any of the following are **needed**:

- **Feature articles**
- Birding event announcements
- **Stories about birds, birding, or birders**
- Reviews of birding literature or guides
- Conservation & outreach reports/stories
- Birding tips, descriptions of local sites
- Poetry, quotes, field sketches, artwork or photos
- Photos of BIRDS or people at our events (jpg, tif)

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

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

~ Lisa Fay Larson, Editor

*Lesser Goldfinch - Lisa Larson*

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*Ginko Leaves - Lisa Larson*

*Townsend's Warbler  
- Lisa Larson*

## ALBATROSS



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***santacruzbirdclub.org***

### **PARTING SHOT: "I'M A GRAY FISH BUCKET"** BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON - MARGARET PERHAM



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