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Western Bluebird - Arthur Maemillian

SANTA CRUZ BIRDS



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Birder's Notebook

PARTING SHOT



Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Charm and Enterprise in Ecuadorian Conservation-

By Shantanu Phukan

I had drooled over South American birds for a full three decades until last year I finally took the plunge and flew to Ecuador for two weeks of birding in the Andes. I was expecting to be both overwhelmed and charmed by the sheer number of colorful birds belonging to families unknown in the temperate north. And so I was. But Ecuador offered delights deeper than those of a longer life list. I was left equally charmed by working-class Ecuadorians pioneering a new movement to enhance the habitat in their landholdings. Wherever I went in the state of Pichincha or Napo—the two provinces closest to Quito—I kept hearing stories of community conservation spurred by the boom in bird tourism. What follows are vignettes of orchardists, dairymen, and truck drivers in the vanguard of this change in the ethics of land use.

Victor Manobito used to be a truck driver ferrying crude oil from Amazonian oil fields, and he augmented his income with dairy farming. To create more pastures he, like his neighbors, had cut down the forest on the 13 acres he owned at the foot of a forested mountain. Until his wife urged him to look into creating a bird feeding station to see if birders could be enticed to visit for a fee of \$20. Victor went a step further and created a reserve called *Concierto de las Aves*, centered on a concrete hut that used to be Victor's home before he moved into the town of Rio Quijos. As I and my guide Alex Toapanta approached the reserve and got hopelessly lost in a maze of unpaved roads, Victor biked out of town to lead us down an unnamed road winding through pastures studded with torsos of mutilated trees. It was a ghoulish drive, with only Southern Lapwings foraging the bleak pastures. The road ended at the hut where a trail zigged up a hill dense with chest-high trees.

"I first went to nurseries to buy saplings to reforest this hill, but that was too expensive," he explained. "So I just started collecting seeds in the forest on the mountain behind us. The saplings you see are now three years old." On the edge of the clearing where we had just spotted a Magpie Tanager were rows of tiny plastic pots with pin-pricks of green shoots.



Lurking in the new growth was a Cock-of-the-Rock with a lavish red pompadour arching over an orange eye that I peered straight into from about 15 feet away. I had glimpsed these birds before on leks, but always from a distance as they displayed in the gritty half-light of dawn. You would see them crashing and flying for brief seconds as their dawn display winded down with the rising sun and the birds disappeared into the undergrowth. But here Victor had habituated the bird so that it perched languidly, sizing me up with his glinting pearl of an eye. I asked Victor if he had named it, and when he said no, I ventured that we christen it Victorino (Little Victor). Gales of laughter from both Victor and Alex.

But here is what charmed me even more than that confiding bird. As Alex and I prepared to head off to lunch, Victor invited himself to come along. “I’ll only have some soup,” he said apologetically. I was delighted to have him join us because I sensed in him a desire to prolong our encounter. Why? Could it be that for him, as for me, the pleasure lay in encountering a stranger from another culture? I was the novelty for him, much as he was for me. But there was something more— he wanted to impress me with his new venture.

“I used to make about \$250 a month with milk; with birders, I can make about \$700” he proudly explained. And then he added, “I hated truck driving, and the reserve has allowed me to give it up altogether.”

This story of pride and opportunity was repeated in farmstead after humble farmstead. Vinicio Pizarro, an indigenous Kichwa speaker, is a mushroom farmer who had the same realization with the 7 steep acres he owns right on the Equator. Marcelo Jumbo grows passion fruit and salak (An Indonesian palm) on a ranch eccentrically named Frutty Tours Trails. Both have dreams of attracting birders to their homesteads.

A restless and, despite his last name, diminutive man, Marcelo insisted that I lounge on the hammocks strung up on his porch before leaving. We may have been ready to leave, but he had not yet plied us with enough fruit from his orchards. And so he bustled about hauling in entire branches of fruit as we lolled in the hammocks celebrating the sighting of a rare hummingbird at his feeders. The feast done, he beckoned us to follow him out into the orchard where we stopped at a nasty-looking

palm with clusters of thorns cradling the brown fruits safely within. And then, with all the flourish of a magician about to pull a rabbit out of a hat, he reached bare-handed into the thorns, pulled out a fruit, and held it up with proud abandon—“See, no blood.” At least not today; for I noticed several partly healed scars on his wrists—the signature of machismo on a smiling elf of a man.

At Vinicio’s reserve, you don’t just get to see the Andean Guans and a host of tanagers—you enjoy a breakfast that you will never have anywhere else in the world—a large

bowl of fresh mushroom ceviche with homemade bread to sop it up. All of this as flower-piercers flit among the flowering vines trained on a trellis. How did he start his venture?

“Two years ago a strange man appeared on the mountain across the valley; he was dressed funny and was moving very slowly,” explained Vinicio. “We immediately got together a band of neighbors to intercept him, for we’ve had problems with cattle rustlers,” continued Vinicio, cradling a pet quail in his lap. “The man was from Quito and was very excited about seeing some rare birds.” Vinicio initially

did not believe him and followed him closely till the man started showing them birds through his binoculars. He also advised Vinicio about setting up a reserve. “And soon we will plant this slope under the feeding stations so that there is a direct corridor from the mountain to our house with its feeders.” But that wasn’t the end of the story for the contagion spread from Vinicio to his neighbor who had



Crimson Rumped Toucanet at Mashpi



Marcelo Jumbo - Salak growing behind us

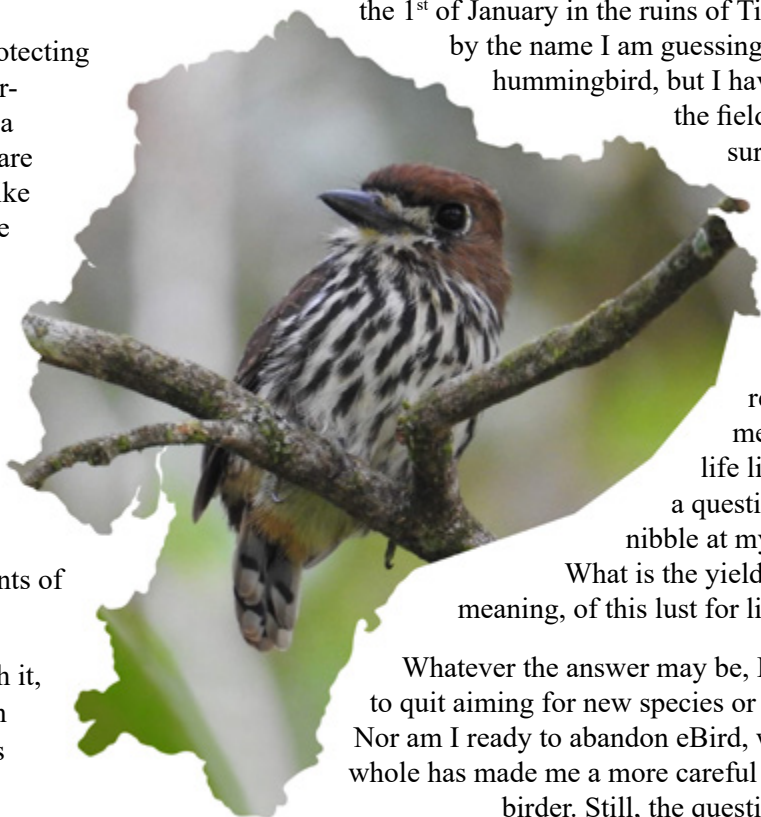


Vinicio Pizarro-and-Anita Cajas

inherited the forested mountain from his wealthy father. The neighbor, based in Quito, asked Vinicio to become the caretaker of the mountain and gave him a free hand to plant native trees on it. Thus was born Marak-Sacha, Kichwa for Mountain Toucan.

In place after place, I met Ecuadorians protecting and enhancing their land to entice us color-deprived Nortenos eager for a glimpse of a striking tanager. To be sure, the reserves are minuscule—too small to benefit species like Harpy Eagles or macaws that rely on large stretches of undisturbed forest. And they have no official standing since there is no government support, especially from an administration that recently approved oil drilling in Yasuni National Park, by far the largest protected area in Ecuador. And, finally, the haphazard nature of local reserves lacks the connectivity that is essential for the movement of wildlife. All valid assessments of the limitations of home-grown ventures.

And yet... the word is spreading; and with it, significantly, a pride in the immense avian treasure that is Ecuador's heritage. And as the word spreads a new ethic is dawning in the Ecuadorian psyche: "I was brought up by my grandparents to hunt anything that moved," said Alex as he recounted a childhood tale of treeing a cougar with his hounds. "If I didn't hunt I would get a scuff on the neck. But now, as you can see, there is no question of hunting."



Lanceolated Monklet at Finca San Pedro

Even as I was charmed and ennobled by these encounters I was aware of another dawn—this in my own consciousness. I have birded in tropical locales now for several decades, and as I look back on my trips to Mexico, India, and Guatemala I discern a pattern. The trip begins with the ambition to see more and list more. And in this game of listing the new apps, like eBird—which tracks your sightings by site, county, state, and country, and displays them in seconds for a comparative scrutiny with other birders—both facilitate and fuel the craving for more.

Then comes the prize: a whirlwind of birding in the field that yields many triumphs, countless rare species, and a burgeoning list. But, as I have been discovering with mounting dismay, the game yields relatively few lasting memories—even when one earnestly studies the birds before the trip. The mind simply cannot absorb the 300 new species that I saw, for example, in just 11 days of birding in Ecuador, to say nothing of the roughly 1300 that I did not see but aspired to. As I glance over an old list from Guatemala I quickly reach a dead-end: What on earth was the Canivet's Emerald that I have listed for the 1st of January in the ruins of Tikal? Judging by the name I am guessing it was a hummingbird, but I have to consult the field guide to be

sure. Three years after being glimpsed the bird has become less than a blur; it has been reduced to a mere tick on my life list. And so, a question begins to nibble at my conscience: What is the yield, indeed the meaning, of this lust for listing?

Whatever the answer may be, I am not about to quit aiming for new species or listing them. Nor am I ready to abandon eBird, which on the whole has made me a more careful (if avaricious) birder. Still, the question nags, defying a facile answer.

One obvious answer, suggested to me by a friend struggling with *his* conscience, is to study the birds both before and *after* the sighting—to learn their life histories so that the bird becomes more than a nodding acquaintance, and

a personality emerges to match the sighting. My trip to Ecuador suggests another answer: how much richer the sometimes austere game of listing becomes when it is enhanced with human stories. And how essential those stories—and those dreams—are to conserving the natural world. On this trip to Ecuador, the quality of the sighting emerged not just from the bird's striking plumage or its striking habitat, but in large part from the human landscape that embraces the bird. The delight of this trip—indeed what made this trip outstanding—was to bear witness to this growing enterprise of community conservation that is run with charm, pride, and, occasionally, exceptional homemade cooking.

But all my efforts at eliciting stories and foregoing the next bird by lingering in hammocks would have amounted to nothing if Marcelo had not offered me the hammock in the first place. The openness of Ecuadorians I met was not just the result of the natural warmth of Latin culture. It was also the peculiar product of a very specific moment in the evolution of community conservation in that country. All three of the men who charmed me in their homesteads were at the beginning of their ventures. Their first faltering steps on the path of attracting bird-crazed gringos were growing stronger, and given the boom in eco-tourism they are more likely than not to succeed—perhaps even spectacularly.

But what price will success exact from them? Would Marcelo have hustled about with not just fistfuls but entire branches of fruit for me to sample if I had been the fortieth, and not the fourth, visitor to Frutty Tours? Would Victor have dropped his chores to linger at lunch, his eyes brightening as I launched into the story of how we saved the California Condors, a bird he is unlikely ever to see in his life? Would Vinicio's wife Anita have elaborately spelled out the recipe for the mushroom ceviche and then led me to her kitchen to show me the ingredients for which I did not know the Spanish word?

I did not have to imagine the answer. It was manifest



Alex, Vinicio, and Me reaching 294!

in every eco-lodge I visited. They were all beautiful—the feeders thronged with birds, the grounds carefully manicured and not lined with cut-off milk cartons containing saplings; they all hummed with efficiency, and



Rose faced parrots at Mashpi Amagusa

the workers hustled about doing the guests' bidding. But it was a bustle without Marcelo's irrepressible charm, or Victor's bubbling enthusiasm to join us in our lunch. And the dreams and aspirations of these workers? They were inaccessible. And I am sure they were not centered on the



Pearled Tree Runner at Boca Del Pescado

success or the failure of the business that employed them.

So where does this leave me who enjoyed the trip to Ecuador more than any other birding trip? It leaves me with a wish for Marcelo's success- but also a caution: "Succeed, caro Marcelo," I want to whisper in his ear, "But not too much." It leaves me with the realization that the warmth and charm that make me crave a return to Ecuador may be as fleeting as some rare and threatened bird biding its time in a preserve. Fleeting, and so all the more to be cherished.

Natural Bridges Migration Festival Saturday, May 20

Please help us introduce bird watching and the joys of birding at Natural Bridges Migration Festival!
The festival is Saturday, May 20, and we need and would LOVE help with:

- Leading walks for beginners
- Spending a few hours at a informational table with topics like: building bird houses, gardening for birds, hows and whys of migration, how to help keep birds safe during migration, Merlin app "how to use" demo, Amazing migration stories, how buying shade-grown coffee helps birds, etc.
- Staffing a spotting scope on breeding cormorants
- Nest cams

If you can help, even for 1 hour, please contact Carol at carol.wmbd@gmail.com



Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from January 1 to February 28, 2023

The rain in late December turned into unrelenting storms in January and February, with widespread damage to infrastructure from floods, wind, and rain on the coast and in the mountains. The storms this winter could reshape the distribution of a few breeding species. The cement ship, S. S. Palo Alto, anchored at Seacliff State Beach nearly succumbed to the seas this winter, and the pier leading out to the cement ship was demolished due to unreparable damage. Whether the hundreds of Brandt's Cormorants that nested on the cement ship and more recently at the end of the pier return to breed there remains to be seen. On a lesser note, one of the largest colonies of Rock Pigeons in the county nests underneath the pier, so these breeders will need to find a new home this spring.

Surprisingly, the heavy rain and strong winds throughout this period turned up hardly any interesting seabirds, aside from two Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels seen from land and one of the largest wreckings of Red Phalaropes in recent memory. Perhaps the inclement weather kept birders indoors more than usual, as this column reports fewer rarities than in the past few winters.

Significant avian events this period included the aforementioned wrecking of Red Phalaropes, breeding activity by the pair of Bald Eagles in Santa Cruz, the continuing Red-flanked Bluetail at Lighthouse Field State Beach, and a first county record Slaty-backed Gull, which brought the total number of species seen in Santa Cruz County to 467.



At least 100 **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Sand Hill Bluff on January 13 was unusually many for the north coast in winter (AR, ES, v.ob.), while large numbers of **Canada Geese** (at least 142 at Laguna Creek on January 15; MMK, EMK) are still beating records, but becoming more expected. Male **Eurasian Wigeons** were at Drew Lake on January 2 (SG, v.ob.) and Shorebirds Pond on January 12 (GM, v.ob.). Two **Wild Turkeys** wandering through Tyrrell Park at Seabright on February 22 were away from their normal range (fide CS).

A major wrecking of **Red Phalaropes** lasting for about ten days in mid-January brought many to the nearshore waters and coastal waterbodies, and smaller numbers to waterbodies

further inland. Notable among those further inland were singles at a pond at Spring Lakes Mobile Home Park in Scotts Valley



Slaty-backed Gull - Alex Rinkert

(JW, JL), at College Lake (NU), and at standing water in playing fields in Interlaken (NU) and an ephemeral marsh in San Andreas (PH). The high count on the coast was forty-four at Seacliff State Beach on January 22 (AR).

Two alternate plumaged **Pigeon Guillemots**, presumably spring arrivals, at West Cliff Drive on February 20 were a bit earlier than usual (SNS, v.ob.).

Only 9 **Black-legged Kittiwakes**

were reported, which seemed to be a low total considering how prone they are to being blown to shore during storms. Despite intensive observation at some of the larger gull roosts in the county, no **Glaucous Gulls** were found this period.

A second-cycle **Slaty-backed Gull** at the San Lorenzo River mouth on February 13 was the first county record (AR). This species was long overdue in the county, as San Mateo and Monterey counties have at



Red Phalarope individuals - Andrew Kenny





Black Skimmer - Michael Bolte

least 50 records combined, and most of those records have come in the last 20 years. Santa Cruz was the last coastal county in northern

California to add this

species to its list. The Slaty-backed at the San Lorenzo had especially pale brown primaries and secondaries that could suggest hybridization with Glaucous-winged Gull, although that hybrid is apparently quite rare and other paler winged Slaty-backed seen in Japan don't show any other indication of hybrid ancestry to suggest this is instead variation within Slaty-backed.

A **Black Skimmer** at the San Lorenzo River mouth on January 16 stayed in the vicinity through February (PH, v.ob.). **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels** blown in by a storm were seen on February 27 flying by West Cliff Drive (EE, v.ob.) and beached but alive at Palm State Beach (BM).

The pair of **Bald Eagles**, one now in Basic IV and the other in Basic V or Basic VI plumage, showed increased interest in nesting early in the year, often being seen together and courting. This pair had been observed carrying nest material at the Santa Cruz Harbor earlier last year in April and October, and they resumed building a nest somewhere by at least early February, although there were rumors of them building well before then. The pair was later found to be building two nests, one at Schwan Lake and the other in an old Great Blue Heron nest at the Santa Cruz Harbor. Their activity at the harbor forced the herons to vacate their normal colony and establish a new one near Frederick Street Park. Meanwhile, the pair of Bald Eagles nesting in the



Bald Eagle pair - Cindy Cummings

Watsonville Slough system had a setback when their nest tree fell during a storm in the first half of January, although they began building a new nest in the same grove later in February (GK).

Only two reports of **Ferruginous Hawks** from

Swanton Pond and Soda Lake were considerably fewer than in recent winters (PH, TT). A **Short-eared Owl** was seen at dusk at Terrace Point on February 6 (CS). A **Belted Kingfisher** landing on a muddy path at Schwan Lake and snatching up a mouthful of worms was noteworthy behavior (ES), as our local kingfishers prey predominately upon fish and crustations. A female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**

visited a pepper tree at westside Santa Cruz from January 18 through the end of February (CC, v.ob.). A **Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker** at Pajaro Dunes on January 21 was quite rare (IL, BR), as most flickers showing Yellow-shafted traits in the county are intergrades.

Presumably wintering "**Western**" **Flycatchers** were at Gallighan Slough on January 18 (GK) and Drew Lake on February 1 (NU). At least four **Tropical Kingbirds** wintered in the county, with at least one in Santa Cruz and three in the Watsonville slough system (v.ob.). Four **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found this period (v.ob.). **Horned Larks** were once again present in good numbers near San Andreas Road this winter; a flock of 68 was seen there on January 10 (GK). One flying



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - Lisa Larson



Black Skimmer - Paul Heady



Gray Catbird
- Lisa Larson

over Loma Prieta on January 26, after a period of strong winds, was unexpected in the mountains (AR, NL).

Barn

Swallows were quite numerous this winter, with dozens of reports involving perhaps 10–20 individuals (v.ob.).

About 21 **White-breasted Nuthatches** reported this period was many, but now somewhat expected given their increasing regularity in the county (v.ob.). A **Townsend's Solitaire** at Castle Rock State Park on January 21 was perhaps continuing from earlier this winter (AL).

The Red-flanked Bluetail

found at Lighthouse Field State Beach in late December was seen almost every day in January and February (v.ob.). While still somewhat difficult to locate and follow, it became much more confiding as its daily circuit around the park became better known.

The Gray Catbird

continued in brambles at Lighthouse Field State Beach through the end of February (v.ob.), as did the **Sage Thrasher** at the San Lorenzo River mouth (v.ob.). Single **Lark Sparrows** at feeders in Glenwood on January 27 (GK) and at Santa Cruz beginning on January 29 (SP) were unexpected. There are only a handful of recent winter records

of this species away from areas where they formerly or presently breed.

A “**Red**” **Fox Sparrow** continued at a feeder in Soquel (LS), while “**Slate-colored**”



Bullock's Oriole
- Abram Fleishman

Fox Sparrows were at Lighthouse Field State Beach (continuing individual, v.ob.) and the Homeless Garden on January 6 (KS).

White-

throated Sparrows remained particularly abundant this period, with at least 72 individuals reported!

A count of two is considered a normal high count for one location, so it is especially notable that six locations had 3–5 individuals this winter. Two backyards—one at westside Santa Cruz and another at Aptos—jointly claimed the crown for this winter with the high counts of five individuals (AF, RW). Nine **Swamp Sparrows** was a much better showing than in the past few winters (v.ob.).



Lark Sparrow - Sharon Hull

Two Bullock's Orioles

wintered at westside Santa Cruz (AK, AF). Up to seven **Great-tailed Grackles** were seen in Santa Cruz this period, while a male continued in urban areas on Mount Hermon Road in Scotts Valley (v.ob.).

A Black-and-white Warbler

at Neary Lagoon on January 31

(CS) was probably the same that was there in mid-December. A **Tennessee Warbler** sipped nectar from flowering red hot pokers at Swanton Pond from January 17–February 21 (AM, v.ob.). Three wintering **Nashville Warblers** were reported, two at westside Santa Cruz (KB, JG) and one at Salsipuedes Creek (PB). A **Common Yellowthroat** at Roaring Camp from January 8–February 17 (JW, v.ob.) was rare for the mountains especially in winter, and could be the same one that was there earlier



Bullock's Oriole
- Alex Keitt



Swamp Sparrow
- Norm Uyeda

in November. Just two **Palm Warblers** were found this period, both in Santa Cruz (JB, GM, v.ob.), while five **Hermit Warblers** was a nice total compared to recent winters (DS, GW, LL, JS, PS, GS).

Male **Summer Tanagers**—an adult and an immature—were near Corralitos Creek at Interlaken on January 25 (PH, GM), and the wintering female in the Natural Bridges area was last seen on January 7 (v.ob.). A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** visited a feeder at westside Santa Cruz from February 17–19 (SK), while **Black-headed Grosbeaks** frequented feeders in Capitola on January 16 (GK) and Interlaken from January 1–23 (NU). Small flocks of **Scaly-breasted Munias** were reported at scattered locations in the Pajaro Valley, westside Santa Cruz, and Soquel, and a larger flock of over forty birds continued at a feeder in Interlaken.

Cited Observers:

Jasper Barnes, Phil Brown, Karen Burnson, Cindy Cummings, Cindy Cummings, Erik Enbody, Abram Fleishman, Jake Gifford, Sierra Glassman, Paul Heady, Alex Keitt, Surrey Kent, Gary Kittleson, June Langhoff, Lisa Larson, Nick Levendosky, Alex Loucks, Irby Lovette, Aaron Maizlish, Gary Martindale, Elias McKown, Matthew McKown, Greg Meyer, Bryan Mori, Sally NeSmith, Kirk Swenson, Shantanu Phukan, Alex Rinkert, Bryce Robinson, Grace Sanchez, Elena Scott, Christa Seidl, David Sidle, Lisa Sheridan, Christopher Soriano, Jonah Svensson, Peter Svensson, Tim Thompson, Norman Uyeda, Jonny Wahl, Randy Wardle, Nat Weber, Gabriel Wiltse. “v.ob.” means various observers. **Please enter interesting observations into [eBird](#) or report them to Alex Rinkert at arinkert12@comcast.net.**



Summer Tanager - Gary Martindale



Loggerhead Shrike - Kathy DeVoy



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - Lisa Larson



Summer Tanager - D Kim Glinka

Birder's Notebook

Suzy Radonsky

painter of NAR (Native Animal Rescue) birds & more!

www.suzyradarts.com/birds



I'm a self-taught acrylic painter and am hooked on painting animals and pet commissions. After serving in the USAF, I followed a dream and moved overseas, as an event planner, but lost my job to the 2010 economic crisis. Someone said, "Take a hike." I trekked 522 miles, along the GR-11 in Spain. While hiking I had an epiphany, #1 become an artist, #2 work in the outdoors and #3 work for a brewery. I knocked #2 and #3 as a whitewater raft guide which opened the brewery door as a tour guide. Now it's #1's turn. I am an American-Czech who was raised in the United States and a mother of two very

active boys. A couple years ago, I had a unique family journey discovering that my older son was on the autistic spectrum. Along this journey I therapeutically found my way back to art which created a deeper understanding of self and discovery of my son's point of view. When I'm not chasing around two kiddos, you can



Western Meadowlark

"Ever make mistakes in life? Let's make them birds. Yeah, they're birds now."

Thank you, Bob Ross. I create a new feather or fur wisp as I "forage" for the personality of the animal. I'm a self-taught acrylic painter, creating pet and animal "paw-triats" by mixing pop art with realism. The portrait always begins with a very modern feel which is meticulously layered one "paw-some" fur stroke at a time. Once the viewer sees their finished fur or feather baby piece, my aim is that they are flooded with warm fuzzy feels and hopefully no tears.

find me painting at The Tannery Art Complex in Studio #123. In my works I seek the lightness of being by finding the brilliance of pigments. My paintings range from botanicals, landscapes, and animals - bringing hued genuineness, exaggerated brightness, and illuminated existence to the things that I love.

COME and SEE some RAD art: [The Art of Nature](#) at Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History through May 14 2023 [BIRD QUEST](#) public art installation at Tannery until June 2023

Tagging preferences for social media:
[@suzyrad](#) [#suzyrad](#) [#suzyradonsky](#)
[#petportraits](#) [#animalartist](#)

*From upper left:
NAR Rescue Birds:
Mallard Duckling
Snowy Plover
Green Heron*

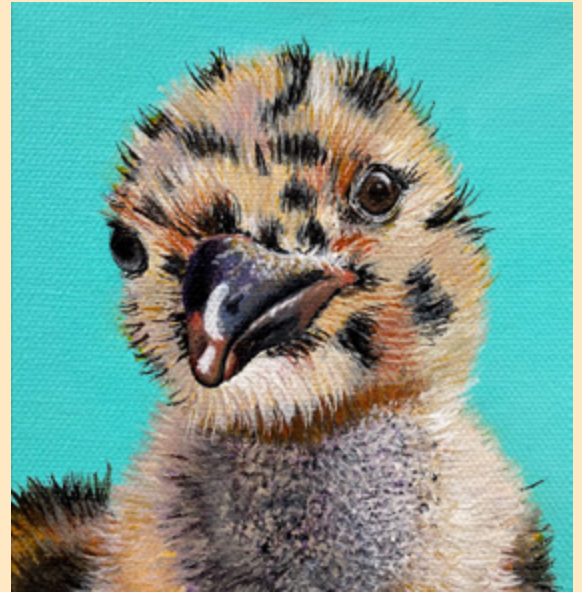


Birder's Notebook cont'd - Suzy's Story



American Robin juvenile (NAR)

In 2019, I had a unique family journey discovering that my older son was on the autistic spectrum. Along this journey I therapeutically found my way back to art which created a deeper understanding of self and discovery of my son's point of view. I decided



Western Gull Chick (NAR)

it was time to go after #1 (becoming an artist), which had been lingering in my brain for far too long. At the time my family and I lived in San Jose and after meeting some artists during at The Alameda Artworks Open Studio event, I befriended an amazing fibre artist, Stephanie Metz, who recommended me for a studio space rental interview. I loved painting there but I wasn't quite



Surf Scoter (NAR)

sure what direction to go, however, it felt so freeing to have some time on my own after caring full time for my son(s). I painted landscapes, florals and created a small series of portraits/figurative paintings called "Faces of Autism" based on how I viewed my son. Unfortunately, it was causing depression for me. My studio mate at the time, Sara Cole said, "Why don't you paint your RAD dog? He's your shadow and makes you glow." So I said, why not? I painted a three part Max series, with each picture representing a letter of his name. Sara told me, "I think you discovered a hidden talent." After this I painted for free a few friends dogs to practice. I posted these on social media and a friend of mine on the east coast saw it and hired me to paint their dog, Hope as a surprise Chanukah present for her husband. That was the Hope I needed and Suzy Rad Arts | Pet Pawtrait Artist was born.

Peregrine Falcon juvenile (NAR)



Birder's Notebook cont'd - Suzy's Story

I started painting birds when the Covid iron curtain hit. We had no choice but to join the ranks of Zoom users and schooled that way. My eldest son who was a first grader had an assignment to watch the 40th Anniversary video from the Native Animal Rescue (Santa Cruz). He timed out about 10 minutes in, but I was amazed that such an organization existed. I watched the entire 40 minute video and immediately afterwards perused their website. I found so many beautiful shots of birds and other animals. I started trying to find



Common Raven juvenile (NAR)

some peace in the chaos that we were all engulfed in and sat in my backyard to finally pay attention. I would see California Scrub Jays, finches and gulls. These were some of my first bird paintings. After painting those I got the courage to contact the NAR for permission to use their images for painting reference. I told them that if I sell any originals that I'll donate back %15, and from that day on we have a beautiful collaboration. I have worked with NAR, **Santa Cruz Bird Club** photographers, and the Bird School project to highlight a native birds in flight from the San Lorenzo riverbed. The



Steller's Jay juvenile (NAR)

installation BIRD QUEST is currently up until June at The Tannery Art Complex.

www.suzyradarts.com/bird-quest



Western Grebe (NAR)



Hummingbird chick (NAR)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Nancy Manning | Feb 2023 |
| Jane Cohen | Feb 2023 |
| Sarah Steiger Family | Feb 2023 |
| Mary Allen | Feb 2023 |
| Seth Greene | Feb 2023 |
| Warren Rider | Feb 2023 |
| Judith Gonzales Family | Feb 2023 |
| Branwyn Wagman Family | Feb 2023 |
| Anne Lindberg | Feb 2023 |
| Lori Elling | Feb 2023 |
| Kathleen Bailey | Feb 2023 |
| Nicholas Irsfeld Family | Mar 2023 |
| Douglas Potter Family | Mar 2023 |
| Tom Hambleton | Mar 2023 |
| Tasha Kowalski | Mar 2023 |
| Andrea Ratto -- Welcome Back! | Mar 2023 |
| Sanjiv Garg Family | Apr 2023 |
| Christine Young and | Apr 2023 |
| Dan Kambitsch Family | |
| Michael Rhodes | Apr 2023 |
| Max Ferrero | Apr 2023 |
| Suzanne Flanders Family | Apr 2023 |

*Double-crested Cormorant
- David Lewit*



Impressive list!



**welcome
to
Jane OrBuch –
SCBC's new
conservation
Director!**

RECENT DONOR
Jane Orbuch

Thank you!

Western Meadowlark - Cathy Summa-Wolfe

ATTENTION

Help our your SCBC!
We need a community

OUTREACH OFFICER



DEADLINE

submissions for

SEP/OCT

AUG 1, 2023

ALBATROSS DEADLINES

AUG 1 for SEP/OCT issue
OCT 1 for NOV/DEC issue
DEC 1 for JAN/FEB issue
FEB 1 for MAR/APR issue
APR 1 for JUNE/AUG issue



Red-tailed Hawk - Tony Britton

From left: Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe - Elena Scott



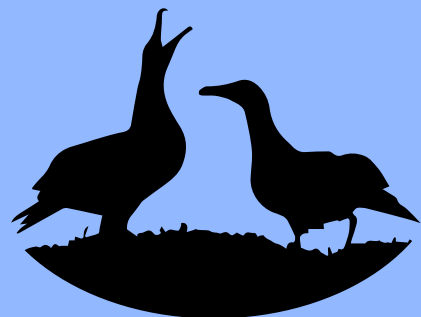
Submission to the

ALBATROSS

Guidelines

In addition to "Alby" regular features—*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. 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 SCBC MEMBERS (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

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PARTING SHOT:

"FISHY FEET? SUCH A DRAG!"

OSPREY - DAVID LEWIT

Do YOU have a parting shot you would like to see featured? Please email the editor!



Song Sparrow - Cathy Summa-Wolfe

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*is published five times a year
by the Santa Cruz Bird Club.
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