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CBC 2023 Results

Santa Cruz Birds



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Birder's Notebook

PARTING SHOT



PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

On the Vine: Intersections Between Birds and Wine

- By Dana Cox

Do you ever wonder where birds and wine intersect? Well, fun fact, there are approximately 10,000 species of birds, and 10,000 varietals of grapes in the world. Unless you are starting a on working toward a Big Year world record, or working toward your Master Sommelier certification, most of us will need to contemplate the connections between birds and wine in other ways. I invite you to share mine.

Last weekend, I entertained my friends Holly and Mark. They brought a bottle of wine to share. We decanted the wine and then poured it into our new Italian-style wine glasses. It was a Big Basin Grizzly Grenache. The winemaker described it as “beguiling, with a heady and compelling nose, perfumed, fruit infused, and spicy”. Sipping it, I wouldn’t recognize it as a Grenache. Grenache isn’t all that common in the

US. It is not an easy grape to grow in the Santa Cruz Mountains. That said, it is one of the most widely planted grapes in the world. As we let it breathe, the quoted “seductive, unctuous and creamy texture, with layers of spicy fruit” started to express itself. Laughter ensued, and we shared tales of recent adventures, when Holly looked at me point blank and asked, “What else interests you these days besides BIRDS?”

I swirled the red wine in my fancy new stemware, appreciating the color and formation of the legs as the wine coated the glass. Why WINE of course, I answered with a smirk. Not that I don’t find a multitude of other interests to follow down “bunny holes.” But food and wine are one of my main obsessions besides those fascinating birds. So here we are, and why I want to unpack three of the many intersections between birding and wine tasting.



Let’s first look at what exactly birding is and what makes it distinctly different from bird watching, and, what makes wine tasting different then just wine drinking. Birders, tend to be a bit more obsessive about their bird watching, and besides looking for birds also listen for their calls, and songs, and observe details about the birds’ behavior. Birders also tend to keep lists, to help them better understand the various families and species of birds and build their “lifers,” a list of new birds they have seen. Birders also



(calls, and songs) and Space (both where you find the bird, and how it is behaving). In wine tasting, they also be organized into 7 Ss: See, Swirl, Smell, Sip, Swallow or Spit, Savor.

So, as you can see birding and wine tasting command being present, as well as paying attention to a range of perceived sensory differences. These differences, described in the acronym of Ss, allow you to conclude what you are seeing or tasting. This includes landing on the correct bird ID (identification) or wine varietal. For example, in wine tasting you start with, is this a red wine or a white wine and go from there. In birding you start with is this a songbird, a shore bird, or waterfowl and go from there. In other words, going from larger family groups to more discrete possibilities, such as a varietal or species.

plan their excursions and vacations in places one can find birds, which is just about everywhere in the world, even our own decks and backyards.

Wine tasting is also distinct from just drinking wine. It involves concentration, consideration, and contemplation. Wine tasting allows one to better appreciate and understand all aspects of the wine's production from farming the grapes to bottling and aging. It also permits one to learn about the different styles and varieties of wine from around the world. So besides signing up for Bird and Wine trips, which I have done in South Africa, and now Portugal, might you wonder what connects my allure for birds and wine together? I am fully aware of the privileges I hold, having the means to partake in both.

The Sensory Experience of Birding and Wine Tasting

Bird identification and wine tasting both use an organized and systematic approach using multiple our sensory systems. Both involve developing awareness and discriminating between often subtle similarities and differences. In birding these can be organized as 5 Ss: Shape, Shade, (color), Size, Sound

The Therapeutic Values of Birding and Wine

The health and therapeutic benefits of birding continue to roll in. During the pandemic many folks including myself who had a passion for the natural world, started or intensified their birding practice (possibly, their wine consumption, too.) I found a renewed sense of what is and has always been in my back yard. This makes each day one of new possibilities that may pay a visit to my deck, feeder, or bird bath.



We now have some foundational books written in the past several years that can guide us. For me these included:
1- *Ornithotherapy for Your Mind, Body, and Soul* by Holly Merker, Richard Crossley, and Sophie Crossley. This book “bridges the gaps” between the

typical birding practice

of using a learned procedure for bird identification, with its connection with birding as a practice that supports the wellbeing of mind, physical body, and spirit. It brings mindfulness together with observation in a way that will heighten your awareness and understanding of not

just birds but yourself; and 2- *Keep Looking Up: Your Guide to the Powerful Healing of Birdwatching*. This book written by Tammah Watts, a licensed psychotherapist, shares her journey of healing through birdwatching. Her book includes practices and tips that readers can use to find “alignment and acceptance with birds.”

While there is developing research supporting birding and mental health, birding gets you outside, moving, and into nature, which is also good for your physical health. It is also now well known in science that mental and physical health are interconnected. Two recent studies demonstrate the connection between the presence of birds and mental health. Bioscience found that “bird abundance in urban neighborhoods was associated with a lower prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress. Ecological Economics found a correlation between happiness and the number of bird species found where the research participants lived.

While wine, especially red wine has positive health benefits. Wine has been enjoyed throughout human history, as a beverage to enjoyment on its own, as well as an accompaniment that enhances a meal. This along with the health benefits it brings, supports a higher quality of life. The main documented benefit are improved cardiovascular health, especially related to its positive effect on blood pressure, and cholesterol. There are well documented negative health issues related to alcohol consumption. That said, this essay highlights wine tasting which can include both the pure aspect of tasting, as well as the consumption of wine for its gastronomic enjoyment.

Where Birding and the Vine Intersect

Birds and grape growing have intersected throughout



Birds reduce insect and rodent pests considerably, decreasing the need for harmful chemicals found in pesticides. What is promising is that the need for sustainable farming has changed many viticulturalist’s

toward what Bryony Angell calls “bird friendly” wine making. In my state of California, conventional grape growing can involve pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, excessive irrigation and land clearing. California’s oak savannas common to our state’s wine regions, are among one of the twenty most threatened habitats in the country. The good news is that emerging avian conservation efforts are strengthening practices that are both good for birds and grape growers. These include adding nesting boxes to vineyards and promoting “bird-friendly” certification on wines, like there is for coffee. Angell asks, “wouldn’t it be great if you could raise a glass of cabernet after a day of birding and know your libation’s producers care about birds as well as

grapes?” I am now pledging to pay more attention to the wine I both taste and purchase, because I cannot imagine a world without birds, nor will the Earth permit it.



human history. A detrimental area is the loss of habitat from human activity including agriculture, but this appears to be changing. Birds play a vital role in a healthy ecosystem, including supporting a thriving vineyard. Birds are natural recyclers, and their droppings support plants with the nitrogen and phosphorus they yield. My plants miss the extra fertilizer my chicken’s droppings provided.

Drink Recipe:

No article on birds and wine should be without a cocktail or mock-tail recipe. Though I started my wine experience by drinking white wine spritzers, I now tend to be a purest with my wine, not wanting to dilute or change a wine's flavor. There are exceptions like Sangria or Bellini, especially if you want to play with a more value-oriented wine. Remember that brandy, sherry, and vermouth come from distilled or fortified wine. Here is my bird themed cocktail, made from sparkling wine. It is from the book "Tequila Mockingbird- Cocktails with a Literary Twist" by Tim Federle. The drink is called the "Count of Monte Cristal." Quite simple it includes:

1. 1 ounce elderflower liqueur (like St-Germain) and
2. Champagne (like Cristal).

We have substituted what we had, using some inexpensive cava (one of my favorites is Segura Viudas), and elderberry syrup. For a mock-tail version you can substitute sparkling water or one of the non-alcoholic wines now available. On a side note, Lisa Shea, blogger, and writer, and a fan of Alexandre Dumas, the author of the Count of Monte Cristo, shares that there several bird images in the movie version that include a yellow Tanager, and small family of Quail. So there goes it, more connections between birds and wine.



About Dana:

I wrote this piece as an assignment for a Food Writing course through Orion magazine, Orion focuses on the connection between nature and culture. My goals as a writer and artist, are to develop my creative expression, my ability to be a better observer of the natural world, and to share a voice that highlights my identities of being a grandmother, nurse, educator, birder, nature sketcher, photographer, and lover of food and wine. I live in Santa Cruz, California and enjoy the bounties we have in both bird life, natural beauty, and wonderful wines.



Western Tanager female enjoying a grape

- John Fox

Mourning Dove Nest on Grapevine

- Lisa Larson



The 67th Annual Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count

December 16, 2023

The 67th Santa Cruz CBC was held on Saturday, December 16, 2023. Weather on count day had cold temperatures in the morning and evening, more balmy temperatures midday, and just a slight breeze on land. While the weather on land was generally pleasant, the choppy waters, stronger wind, and haze offshore hindered our pelagic results.

The count turned up 171 species, which was the highest total since 2013 and a few above the recent (10-year) average of 167.5 species. This year's species total is encouraging in light of a strong declining trend in species found on the count, but the total number of birds (33,810) and birds per hour (109.8) this year were both well below the recent averages of 39,283 birds and 149 birds per hour. This agrees with the impressions of a "slow" day that many counters had by dinner time. Participation on the count, however, continues to reach new highs. This year, a record 130 birders participated in the count, which shattered the previous record of 109 set in each of the last two years! The 308 field hours logged by these participants was the third-highest total in the count's history.

Rarity highlights on count day included two continuing Harlequin Ducks (first on the count since 2002), four Pacific Golden-Plovers (2nd record), Red-naped Sapsucker, multiple Summer and Western Tanagers, and Hooded and Bullock's Oriole. Also notable for the count were Scaly-breasted Munia (2nd record) and Great-tailed Grackle (3rd record); both are in the midst of expanding their range in the county and may become more regularly found on the count. Barrow's Goldeneye and Orchard Oriole were seen during count week, but were missed on count day. Although, the biggest miss on count day had to be White-tailed Kite, which had not been missed since 1981! Where were they? Last year there was only one seen as well. American Dipper and Loggerhead Shrike were also missed, but those are becoming increasingly difficult to find within the count circle at any time of the year.

A total of 2,948 American Crows set a new record for the count as their population continues to grow exponentially; the previous high count was 1,630. Also on the rise are Wild Turkeys, with a record 318 found on count day. Numbers of Western Bluebirds were 111% above the recent average, as were numbers of Canada Goose (226%). Shorebirds—namely Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Sanderling, and Black-bellied Plover—were all found in much higher numbers than their recent averages, perhaps reflecting locally good foraging conditions this year. Otherwise, sparrow numbers were low across the board and numbers of seabirds—especially gulls and alcids—were low, perhaps partially because of the difficult viewing conditions offshore.

Winter irruptive species were generally scarce on the count. Those whose numbers were below the recent average include Varied Thrush (-91%), American Goldfinch (-68%), Purple Finch (-61%), Cedar Waxwing (-57%), and



Count Day Harlequin Ducks
Left, female - Norm Uyeda Right, male - Gary Martindale

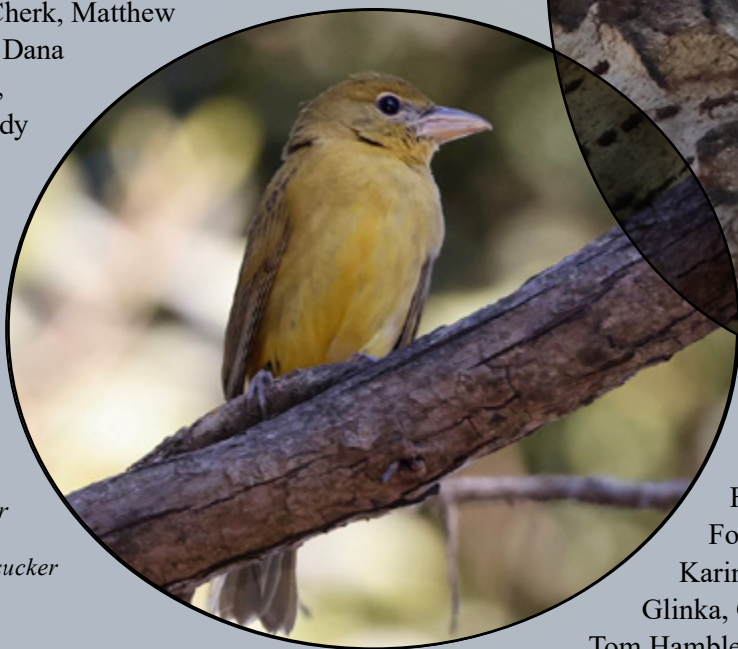
American Robin (-54%). Pine Siskins were in higher numbers than the recent average (57%), and the 47 Red-breasted Nuthatches tallied was the highest total since 1996.

Thanks to all the participants for their efforts in helping keep track of our winter bird populations, and especially to the section leaders for all the extra work they contribute to helping the count run smoothly. Thanks to the Santa Cruz Bird Club officers and Ally Romanow for organizing a lively countdown dinner, and my co-compilers, Nick Levendosky and Phil Brown, for making the initial section assignments and handling logistics leading up to count day.

Alex Rinkert

PARTICIPANTS (section leaders in bold):

Robin Abu-Shumays, **RJ Adams**, Mary Allen, Jennifer Anderson, Jamie Andres-Larsen, David Apgar, **Kumaran Arul**, Emma Arul, Carolyn Bailey, Eileen Balian, Barbara Banfield, Jasper Barnes, **Bonnie Bedzin**, Ronald Bourret, Linda Brodman, **Phil Brown**, Cathy Burgess, Ann Chandler, Sandra Cherk, Matthew Coale, Jolene Coe, Dana Cox, Kathy DeVoy, Debbie Diersch, Judy Donaldson, Ann Eater, Sam Eberhard, Kate Edwards, **David Ekdahl**, John Ellis, David Fickel, Abram



Count Day Birds
Left: Summer Tanager
- Alice Church
Right: Red-naped Sapsucker
- RJ Adams



Fleishman, Graham Floyd, Catherine Forest, Sue Jane Forrest, Craig Fosdick, Elisabeth Foster, Alexander Gaguine, Karin Gallagher, Jake Gifford, Kim Glinka, Chandra Go, Lois Goldfrank, Tom Hambleton, Elizabeth Hammack, Anne Hayes, Mark Haynes, Paul Heady, Diane Heckman,

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The 67th Annual Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count

December 16, 2023



Bald Eagle - David Lewit

Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-Year Avg	Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-Year Avg
Snow Goose	0	1	0	0	0	0.2	Eared Grebe	12	62	26	56	30	47.8
Greater White-fronted Goose	0	0	0	0	1	0.0	Western Grebe	367	571	273	1133	345	491.3
Ross's Goose	0	1	1	72	0	7.9	Clark's Grebe	6	10	1	11	5	10.6
Brant	1	0	0	0	1	0.2	Western/Clark's Grebe	45	339	68	71	122	353.1
Cackling Goose	2	50	13	0	28	7.5	Rock Pigeon	1095	876	556	885	1174	1370.8
Canada Goose	48	82	87	148	169	51.8	Band-tailed Pigeon	531	152	325	841	222	1056.2
goose sp.	0	0	5	0	0	0.6	Eurasian Collared-Dove	30	48	28	60	61	61.1
Wood Duck	55	26	36	26	54	34.8	Mourning Dove	150	157	190	202	173	191.3
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	2	0	0	1.5	White-throated Swift	0	CW	69	CW	0	14.5
Cinnamon Teal	0	CW	4	1	0	1.2	Anna's Hummingbird	345	590	437	584	637	423.9
Northern Shoveler	3	20	6	8	9	14.3	Virginia Rail	4	3	2	2	2	4.3
Gadwall	0	0	0	0	2	1.0	Sora	0	1	1	4	7	1.8
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	1	0	0	0.1	Common Gallinule	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
American Wigeon	1	34	43	28	33	23.4	American Coot	262	849	566	529	483	766.6
Mallard	469	493	715	625	1013	549.9	Black Oystercatcher	18	28	32	26	32	23.6
Mallard (Domestic)	0	0	0	8	2	0.8	Black-bellied Plover	CW	12	3	52	84	30.2
Northern Pintail	21	0	50	10	2	46.3	Pacific Golden-Plover	0	0	0	0	4	0.1
Green-winged Teal	2	9	7	31	13	13.3	Snowy Plover	3	CW	21	39	96	70.4
Canvasback	4	0	0	0	1	0.8	Killdeer	1	137	7	104	205	75.1
Redhead	0	0	1	1	0	0.2	Whimbrel	13	75	5	44	123	41.8
Ring-necked Duck	55	44	65	34	111	74.7	Long-billed Curlew	0	26	0	18	19	10.1
Greater Scaup	0	4	0	0	0	2.3	Marbled Godwit	4	13	0	32	55	14.2
Lesser Scaup	0	1	2	1	0	2.9	Black Turnstone	70	82	69	35	117	102.2
Greater/Lesser Scaup	0	9	0	0	0	1.0	Surfbird	16	57	23	32	85	57.1
Harlequin Duck	0	0	0	0	2	0.0	Sanderling	263	590	380	668	894	523.7
Surf Scoter	277	854	685	453	757	838.6	Least Sandpiper	1	5	0	7	4	3.8
White-winged Scoter	0	1	1	0	1	0.4	Western Sandpiper	0	0	0	CW	0	0.0
Black Scoter	0	CW	0	0	0	0.2	Long-billed Dowitcher	0	0	0	1	0	0.1
Bufflehead	44	97	65	60	54	82.1	Wilson's Snipe	1	2	2	50	8	7.8
Common Goldeneye	24	65	71	38	54	55.0	Red Phalarope	0	6	0	7	3	3.8
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	CW	0.0	Spotted Sandpiper	4	7	8	5	8	7.2
Hooded Merganser	2	11	10	18	24	10.5	Greater Yellowlegs	0	1	0	1	0	0.8
Common Merganser	32	11	28	13	15	19.2	Pomarine Jaeger	1	0	0	0	0	0.6
Red-breasted Merganser	7	27	8	16	20	17.0	Parasitic Jaeger	0	0	1	0	0	0.2
Ruddy Duck	36	110	82	69	51	69.4	Common Murre	357	371	198	192	200	607.6
duck sp.	1	0	0	0	0	0.1	Pigeon Guillemot	0	1	0	0	0	0.2
California Quail	68	183	167	207	303	212.6	Marbled Murrelet	7	6	21	9	4	7.2
Wild Turkey	96	184	270	250	318	113.5	Ancient Murrelet	3	0	2	0	CW	4.2
Pied-billed Grebe	32	44	42	60	41	57.0	murrelet sp.	5	0	1	0	0	0.6
Horned Grebe	7	7	4	36	26	13.8	Rhinoceros Auklet	114	110	69	99	29	63.3
Red-necked Grebe	CW	8	6	3	2	3.9	Bonaparte's Gull	116	7	2	4235	77	440.0

Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-Year Avg	Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-Year Avg
Heermann's Gull	202	132	270	491	275	289.3	hawk sp.	1	1	0	0	0	0.2
Short-billed Gull	167	26	81	134	34	170.6	Barn Owl	1	3	4	2	2	2.0
Ring-billed Gull	18	31	9	52	55	28.8	Western Screech-Owl	2	2	4	2	6	4.3
Western Gull	1737	1199	1470	871	1444	2230.4	Great Horned Owl	9	64	27	22	22	18.8
Yellow-footed Gull	0	0	0	1	0	0.1	Northern Pygmy-Owl	0	3	1	1	2	1.7
California Gull	1219	886	838	718	1154	1549.9	Burrowing Owl	0	0	CW	1	1	0.8
Herring Gull	120	118	8	66	41	77.0	Northern Saw-whet Owl	0	6	2	1	3	3.1
Iceland Gull	18	23	3	14	9	11.6	Belted Kingfisher	12	16	15	20	18	12.9
Glaucous-winged Gull	644	764	387	709	458	869.4	Red-naped Sapsucker	0	0	0	1	1	0.3
Glaucous Gull	0	1	0	1	0	0.5	Red-breasted Sapsucker	11	6	10	15	13	10.4
Western x Glaucous-winged Gull	5	6	4	14	32	43.9	sapsucker sp.	1	0	0	0	0	0.2
Herring x Glaucous-winged Gull	52	25	2	21	26	14.6	Acorn Woodpecker	320	462	501	571	282	395.0
Glaucous-winged x Glaucous Gull	0	1	0	0	0	0.1	Downy Woodpecker	16	34	34	41	28	31.7
gull sp.	2765	2198	3268	685	1225	2951.6	Nuttall's Woodpecker	18	26	25	20	26	22.9
Forster's Tern	60	0	6	55	44	17.0	Hairy Woodpecker	27	80	39	49	66	47.4
Red-throated Loon	121	294	177	218	323	146.1	Downy/Hairy Woodpecker	3	0	0	0	0	0.6
Pacific Loon	267	191	206	124	45	238.3	Pileated Woodpecker	3	9	6	8	8	6.1
Common Loon	46	54	45	20	43	37.5	Northern Flicker	64	100	68	135	75	95.5
loon sp.	837	424	232	99	301	291.1	Red-shafted intergrade	8	18	21	20	19	28.6
Northern Fulmar	3	35	237	4	1	31.3	American Kestrel	19	42	36	28	19	33.3
Sooty Shearwater	0	0	1	0	0	0.1	Merlin	9	8	6	9	5	7.8
Black-vented Shearwater	0	0	135	0	0	569.4	Peregrine Falcon	5	3	6	8	8	6.6
shearwater sp.	0	0	1	0	0	2.6	Western Flycatcher	1	0	0	0	0	0.1
Brandt's Cormorant	305	570	1163	1887	881	1141.6	Black Phoebe	205	333	274	310	308	266.8
Pelagic Cormorant	23	73	54	46	20	63.6	Say's Phoebe	23	41	36	54	41	37.9
Double-crested Cormorant	168	220	331	411	304	301.6	Tropical Kingbird	1	CW	0	CW	0	0.4
cormorant sp.	0	43	0	0	0	34.8	Hutton's Vireo	33	55	25	14	32	43.3
Brown Pelican	429	379	679	1317	1131	824.8	Loggerhead Shrike	1	2	0	1	0	1.3
Great Blue Heron	16	25	19	26	33	21.3	Steller's Jay	213	266	210	254	116	248.6
Great Egret	20	15	28	14	18	22.7	California Scrub-Jay	207	440	333	402	283	348.3
Snowy Egret	57	68	96	15	62	62.3	American Crow	1012	1427	1314	1227	2948	1124.8
Green Heron	1	4	5	4	5	4.4	Common Raven	374	725	380	514	538	439.9
Black-crowned Night-Heron	15	24	23	27	13	24.2	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	521	955	742	754	773	728.1
Turkey Vulture	82	79	49	61	74	41.9	Oak Titmouse	85	175	113	119	152	97.4
Osprey	2	2	1	3	3	3.7	Tree Swallow	0	0	1	0	0	0.6
White-tailed Kite	16	22	9	1	0	12.2	Violet-green Swallow	0	0	6	1	0	3.7
Golden Eagle	2	2	1	3	1	1.4	Barn Swallow	3	0	1	0	0	0.7
Northern Harrier	12	35	27	17	17	19.6	swallow sp.	0	0	5	5	0	1.4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	11	3	3	6	8.9	Bushtit	578	1192	666	783	483	841.9
Cooper's Hawk	17	23	18	14	23	14.8	Wrentit	50	95	87	77	107	74.7
Cooper's/Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	5	7	1	1	3.0	Golden-crowned Kinglet	8	9	0	1	7	8.5
Bald Eagle	1	0	2	2	1	1.3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	282	515	282	198	222	338.1
Red-shouldered Hawk	66	84	93	76	57	69.8	Red-breasted Nuthatch	36	3	0	0	47	4.5
Red-tailed Hawk	120	137	150	117	115	107.4	White-breasted Nuthatch	1	2	CW	6	3	1.3
Ferruginous Hawk	1	2	0	0	0	0.6							



CBC 12-16-23

Black-necked Stilts
- Lisa Larson

CBC 12-16-23



Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-Year Avg
Pygmy Nuthatch	141	292	219	177	256	197.1
Brown Creeper	50	99	35	58	37	71.6
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	14	9	7	4	12	8.4
House Wren	12	6	4	7	8	8.8
Pacific Wren	11	19	7	9	18	10.7
Marsh Wren	15	15	11	11	7	14.8
Bewick's Wren	136	139	135	128	149	135.3
American Dipper	1	1	0	0	0	0.8
European Starling	385	653	655	818	617	1051.1
California Thrasher	11	21	12	32	38	16.4
Sage Thrasher	0	0	0	1	0	0.1
Northern Mockingbird	23	31	25	19	21	28.5
Western Bluebird	80	202	148	247	222	104.9
Varied Thrush	56	58	2	2	13	148.9
Hermit Thrush	129	235	119	256	113	164.0
American Robin	850	648	945	650	608	1312.4
Cedar Waxwing	446	388	369	458	190	446.8
Scaly-breasted Munia	0	0	2	0	11	0.2
House Sparrow	22	26	29	146	12	57.5
White Wagtail	0	1	0	0	0	0.1
American Pipit	148	372	62	72	259	150.0
House Finch	375	1015	615	659	645	627.4
Purple Finch	38	89	91	52	33	85.2
Red Crossbill	44	0	4	0	27	16.2
Pine Siskin	293	3085	198	16	1088	690.9
Lesser Goldfinch	63	542	509	316	213	280.2
American Goldfinch	54	97	185	91	57	179.5
Chipping Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	0.1
Fox Sparrow	58	112	33	59	22	81.3
Slate-colored	0	1	0	0	0	0.1
Red	0	0	1	1	0	0.2
Dark-eyed Junco	662	1050	597	1536	827	992.8
Slate-colored	0	1	0	0	0	0.8
White-crowned Sparrow	602	1850	737	856	664	953.9
Golden-crowned Sparrow	539	2240	979	1257	705	1227.2
Zonotrichia sp.	5	0	40	0	0	4.5
White-throated Sparrow	1	9	8	20	6	7.1
Savannah Sparrow	18	60	35	34	21	42.3
Song Sparrow	218	301	318	303	301	247.5
Lincoln's Sparrow	38	42	40	15	20	64.7
Swamp Sparrow	1	1	1	CW	0	1.3

Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-Year Avg
California Towhee	215	285	231	296	249	288.1
Spotted Towhee	118	174	152	182	188	149.2
Western Meadowlark	75	500	102	353	569	241.1
Orchard Oriole	0	0	0	0	CW	0.0
Hooded Oriol	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Bullock's Oriole	0	0	0	CW	1	0.0
Red-winged Blackbird	175	410	981	328	487	449.9
Tricolored Blackbird	158	184	76	97	36	295.8
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	17			1	22
Brewer's Blackbird	178	334	48	72	316	387.5
Great-tailed Grackle	0	0	286	389	5	0.2
blackbird sp.	0	280	1	1	411	164.3
Black-and-white Warbler	1	0	123	529	CW	0.5
Tennessee Warbler	0	0	0	CW	0	0.1
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	5	0	1	16	6.5
Lucy's Warbler	0	0	8	9	0	0.1
Nashville Warbler	0	CW	1	0	0	0.1
Common Yellowthroat	42	49	0	1	30	31.7
Yellow Warbler	0	0	46	34	1	0.1
Palm Warbler	0	2	0	0	1	1.2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	237	643	0	CW	563	447.7
Audubon's	131	231	695	413	109	225.4
Myrtle	12	15	194	199	21	59.8
Black-throated Gray Warbler	0	2	34	76	0	0.3
Townsend's Warbler	158	173	0	0	226	166.0
Hermit Warbler	0	1	131	193	0	0.4
Summer Tanager	2	1	1	0	2	0.4
Western Tanager	0	0	0	CW	2	0.0
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	0	0	CW	0	0.1
Black-headed Grosbeak	0	0	0	1	CW	0.0

# Individuals	25,984	39,934	31,570	38,752	33,810	39,284
# Species	162	167	168	170	171	167.5
# Participants	92	100	109	109	130	91.7
# Field Hours	250	222	305	274	308	274.5

Great Blue Heron David Lewit



Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from September 1 to November 30, 2023

Another fantastic fall season of birding was punctuated by the first county record of Snow Bunting, bringing the total species of birds seen in Santa Cruz County to 468. A new call type of Red Crossbill (type 5) was also a first for the county. These did not overshadow a number of surprise finds, including second records of Zone-tailed Hawk, Grace's Warbler, and Great Crested Flycatcher, and the third record of Neotropic Cormorant. Two confiding Harlequin Ducks were enjoyed by many and an overabundance of both Orchard and Hooded Orioles brought both excitement and identification challenges. The good shorebirding in August continued through October to underscore a wonderful season of birding in the county.



The most exciting waterbird this season was a female **Harlequin Duck** at the Santa Cruz Harbor. While the bird was first photographed on October 30 (ArR), the news did not reach birders for a few weeks, so it was only seen widely beginning November 14 (v.ob.). The bird was often seen feasting on lined shore crabs, and this seemingly bottomless buffet enticed it to remain through the month. This was the first widely seen Harlequin Duck in the county in many years. Yet another Harlequin, this one an immature male, was seen off 21st Beach on November 22 (LM, WM, GD, MF), and also remained on the ocean there through the end of the month. An adult male **Black Scoter** was off Pajaro Dunes on November 10 (NS). An adult female **Barrow's Goldeneye** at the 21st Beach Lagoon on November 24 (LM, WM, GD, MF) was later seen at the San Lorenzo River mouth on November 25 (MFr, NS) where it remained through the rest of the month.

A **White-winged Dove** was at Swanton Pond on October 14 (NS, v.ob.). Aside from a few counts of 72 on



September 17 (MMK, EMK) and 145 on September 3 (PH, AF), **Vaux's Swifts** were extremely scarce this fall. Six **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** were reported from early September to mid-October (v.ob.). A flock of 23 **Sandhill Cranes** flew over CARE Park on the Pajaro River on a breezy October 4 (NL).

An **American Golden-Plover** at Younger Lagoon was the shorebird highlight of the season (MB, BS, AM, v.ob.). There are only a handful of records for the county, and one was last seen in 2017. Six or seven **Pacific Golden-Plovers** seen this fall was an excellent total for the county (v.ob.). Two or three

Ruddy Turnstones were at Pajaro Dunes from November 11–24 (LL, GC, JT, v.ob.). Yet another **Red Knot** at Waddell State Beach on on September 14–15 (GS, v.ob.) brought the season's total to an impressive eight individuals. Two more **Baird's** and six more



Clockwise from Top:

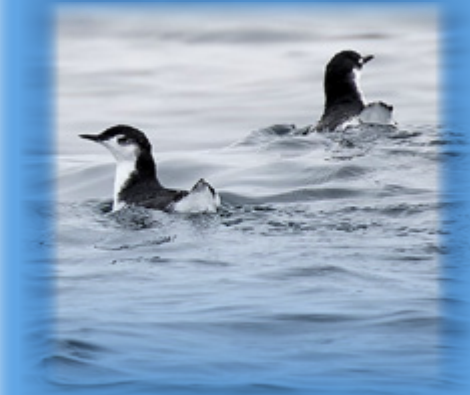
*Barrow's Goldeneye
- Liam Murphy*

*Harlequin Duck eating
crab - Lisa Larson*

*Ruddy Turnstones
- Randy Wardle*

*American Golden Plover
- Arthur Macmillian*





Clockwise: Guadalupe Murrelets - Robert Doster
Rough-legged Hawk (pursued by American Crow)
- Alex Keitt

Neotropic Cormorant - Carlos Mendoza
Cattle Egrets - Norm Uyeda

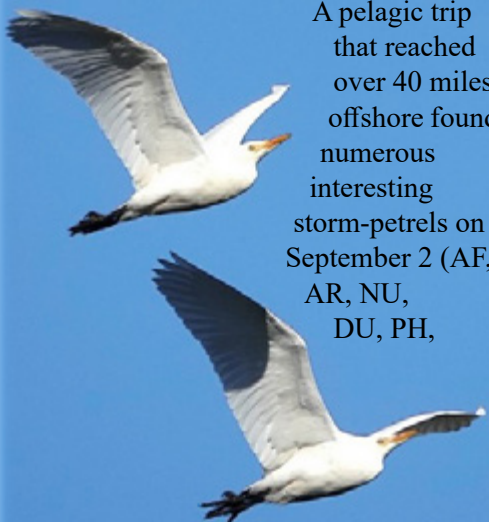
county, but is rarely encountered as pelagic trips usually do not travel that far. Among these Leach's was a darker-rumped subspecies, **H. l. chapmani** or a "Chapman's" Storm-Petrel, which apparently are exceptionally rare in county waters. Yet another interesting storm-petrel photographed here was a candidate for a white-rumped Townsend's Storm-Petrel, a species normally seen no further north than the Southern California Bight, although the photos taken could not conclusively identify this would-be 1st county record. In addition to these storm-petrels in the "Leach's" storm-petrel complex, a **Least Storm-Petrel** was also spotted in the same area, providing a rare recent record for the county. Two **Short-tailed Shearwaters** on the same September 2 pelagic trip—with one photographed—were quite early. A **Manx Shearwater** seen offshore on October 21 was the only reported this period (AR, AF, NU, NL, GM, DU).



Pectoral Sandpipers added to a decent fall for those species in the county. A total of 320 **Red Phalaropes** flying by West Cliff during a stormy seawatch on November 18 was a high count from land (AR). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at Younger Lagoon on September 28 (TH, DF, AK, BK, v.ob.).

Two **Guadalupe Murrelets** were photographed offshore on October 8 (MS); the status of this species is still unclear in the county, although it appears to be a less than annual visitor to the offshore waters in fall.

A pelagic trip that reached over 40 miles offshore found numerous interesting storm-petrels on September 2 (AF, AR, NU, DU, PH,



GM). At least six **Leach's Storm-Petrels** of the subspecies *H. l. leucorhous* were seen; this subspecies is apparently regular in the very far offshore waters of the

A **Neotropic Cormorant** photographed at Struve Slough on September 30 was found again at the same location and seen widely from October 13–25 (PH, BJS et al.). This is the 3rd record for the county, and falls within the period of time when this species is now occasionally appearing in the Monterey Bay. **Western Cattle Egrets** on the move in late fall included two at Struve Slough on October 30 (NU), up to two at the Aptos Creek mouth from November 7–9 (RW, JM), and one at Pajaro Dunes on November 12 (AF, PH, v.ob.).

A **Broad-winged Hawk** recorded calling in a Santa Cruz neighborhood on September 28 was quite unexpected (EG); migrant hawks, especially rare species, rarely seem to touch land in the county. A dark-morph adult **Swainson's Hawk** cruising over DeLaveaga Park on November 25 set a new late date for a migrant in the county (AR). A juvenile "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk** flying over at DeLaveaga that same day was one of very few records in the county (AR). A light-morph juvenile **Rough-legged Hawk** flying over the Homeless Garden on November 3 was a treat (AK, EMK). Last but certainly not least in the raptor department, an adult **Zone-tailed Hawk** flying over Quail Hollow Ranch on November 25 was a stellar find, being just the 2nd record



for the county, first since 2006, and one of relatively few for northern California (NS).

Just one **Burrowing Owl** was found in the county this fall (TH, DF, v.ob.). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** returned to its favored pepper trees in a westside Santa Cruz neighborhood by November 17 (CC). About ten more **Willow Flycatchers** in September and October added to the fall total (v.ob.). A **Great Crested Flycatcher** was heard calling at New Brighton State Beach on October 8, and then seen briefly the following day to mark the 2nd record of this species in the county and first since 2012 (NA, v.ob.). **Eastern Kingbirds** were



Lapland Longspur - Cindy Cummings

seen at Neary Lagoon on September 1 (WL), and Antonelli Pond and Terrace Point from September 14–22 (GK, v.ob.). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** staged a moderately strong irruption in the coastal lowlands and mountains this fall (v.ob.). A **Rock Wren** on the coastal bluffs at Yellow Bank Beach was present from September 16 through October 4 (RC, v.ob.). Small numbers of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were seen in the coastal lowlands for a light to moderate irruption this fall (v.ob.). A sky-blue male **Mountain Bluebird** was photographed at coastal Wilder Ranch State Park on November 27 (LON); this was just the 4th modern record for the county, and first since 2009. The four modern records include two records in fall, one in winter, and one in spring. A **Sage Thrasher** put in an appearance at New Brighton State Beach from September 29 through October 4 (JB, v.ob.).

Red Crossbills staged their biggest irruption in the county since winter 2019–



*Left: Mountain Bluebird - Leo Oneill
Right: Eastern Kingbird - Max Ferrero*

2020. At least four call types were involved: types 2, 3, 4, and 5 (v.ob.). As in some previous irruptions, type 2s comprised most of those that were identified to type, and were predominately found in stands of Ponderosa and Monterey pines. Among these type 2 flocks were a minute number of type 3s, which have been the dominate type in previous invasions, and type 4s, which were only first seen in the county earlier this year in June. A single type 5 individual was recorded and identified at Wilder Ranch State Park on September 16, providing the 1st record of this call type in the county (AR). A scattering of type 5 reports in San Mateo County this summer raises the question of whether this one in Santa Cruz County dispersed from that more northern population, as only a few other crossbills has been reported in the county up until that time.



*Great Crested Flycatcher
- Norm Uyeda*



Snow Bunting - Michael Bolte

Along with crossbills, **Pine Siskins** had a decent showing in the county this fall. A **Lapland Longspur** was at Yellow Bank Beach on October 1–2 (MD, v.ob.) and potentially up to four were at coastal Wilder Ranch State Park between November 2–24 (SE, EG, SBB, GC, JT).

A **Snow Bunting** happily foraging in the kelp wrack at Scott Creek Beach on November 23–25 was right where one was long ago predicted to appear (MT, v.ob.)! This was the 1st record for the county. Adjacent coastal counties both have a substantial number of records for this species (five in Monterey, six in San Mateo), so this





record is probably long overdue.

At least seven **Clay-colored Sparrows** were reported this fall (v.ob.), while one **Brewer's Sparrow** was found at Bethany Curve on September 16 (NS, v.ob.). At least 46 **White-throated Sparrows** was a good showing this fall (v.ob.), with five in one backyard being a high count (AF). Surprisingly, no **Vesper Sparrows** were found; one or a few are normally seen each fall. The fall total for **Swamp Sparrows** was five (v.ob.).

Two **Yellow-breasted Chats** were reported: one at Lighthouse Field State Beach on September 11–14 (MMK, EMK, v.ob.) and another in Corralitos on September 20 (GK). An exceptional showing of **Orchard Orioles** this fall brought at least eight to the county (AR, NL, MB, JAC, DG, ARu, AF, SBB, EG, v.ob.). Most were seen between October 11 and November 24, except for one earlier in the fall seen on September 15 (MB). Three together at Struve Slough on October 11 was a record count for one location (AR, NL). Along with Orchards, it was an exceptional fall for **Hooded Orioles**, with a staggering 36 being reported

(v.ob.)! Many of these orioles involved apparent family groups, with some being seen into mid-September and possibly later. The latest evidence of dependency was on September 9 when an adult was seen feeding praying mantises and spiders to fledglings near Lighthouse

Field State Beach (AR). Of particular note was an apparent family group of seven (!) visited a Watsonville backyard through September 15 (AS, SS).

In Santa Cruz County, Hooded Orioles normally have active nests as late as early August, but sometimes into mid-August; the latest dependent fledglings seen prior to this fall were in late August.

Warblers this fall were highlighted by a **Grace's Warbler** on Natural Bridges Drive on October 9, just the 2nd accepted record for the county (NA, v.ob.). As with so many other Grace's in California,

as well as the first record for the county, this bird was magnetized to a stand of non-native pines. Other rarer warblers this fall included a skulky **Ovenbird** in the willows at Lighthouse Field State Beach from October 4–8, the first seen in the county since 2020 (SBB, v.ob.). **Blackburnian Warblers** were found at coastal Wilder Ranch State Park on September 27 (JM, v.ob.) and in Live Oak on November 23 (NS). A female or immature **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was at CARE Park on the Pajaro River from October 14–19 (NA, v.ob.). A **Prairie Warbler** appeared in coastal scrub at Wilder Ranch State Park on September 23 and remained there through the next day (EE, v.ob.).



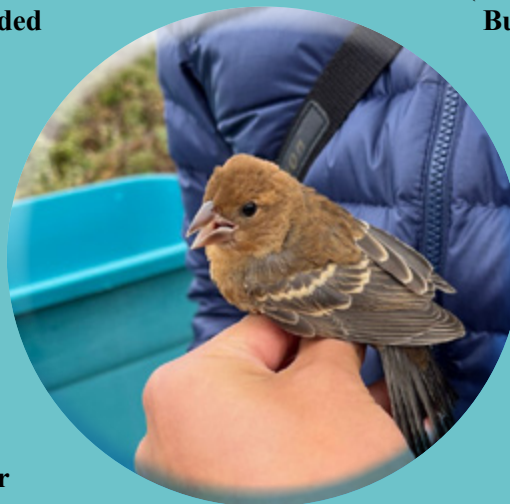
*Clockwise from top left:
Brewer's Sparrow - Max Ferrero
Grace's Warbler - Noah Arthur
Black-throated Blue Warbler - Pete Solè
Ovenbird - Abram Fleishman
Orchard Oriole - Lisa Larson*



Numbers of rare but annual fall warblers this period included the following: 9 **Black-and-white Warblers**, 9 **Blackpoll Warblers**, 7 **Tennessee Warblers**, 4 **Chestnut-sided Warblers**, 3 **American Redstarts**, 3 **Magnolia Warblers** (SBB, GS, NL, v.ob.), and 1 **Northern Parula**. About 19 **Palm Warblers** and 12 **Nashville Warblers** were decent totals for those scarce western migrants. Just two **Northern Waterthrushes**—including none at Natural Bridges or Antonelli Pond—was a meager total for this period (v.ob.).

A young male **Summer Tanager** was found at Pinto Lake on October 10 (KS). Four **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were reported this period (v.ob.). **Blue Grosbeaks** were caught at a banding station at Younger Lagoon on September 22 (BT et al.) and seen at Watsonville Slough on

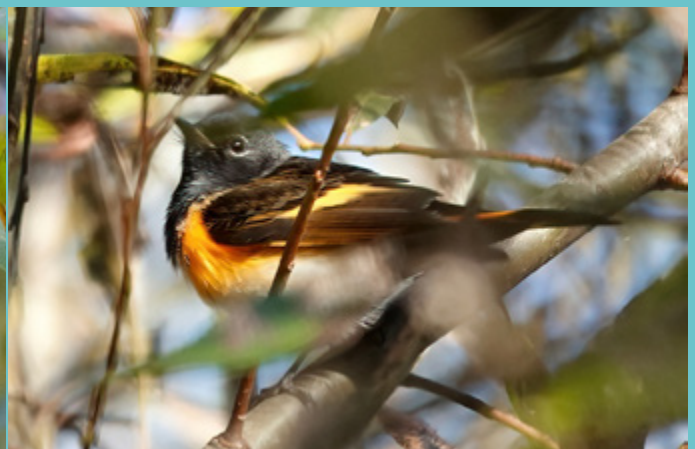
September 29 (NU). A female or immature **Indigo Bunting** was at the Homeless Garden on October 22 (AF). Female or immature **Painted Buntings** were at Lighthouse Field State Beach on September 9–11 (AF, v.ob.) and Neary Lagoon on November 16–19 (GK, v.ob.). A flock of **Scaly-breasted Munias** flying over Swanton Pond on November 10 was a rare record for the north coast (AR et al.), but aligned with an apparent movement happening in the region at this time.



Clockwise from top left:
Black -and-white Warbler - Garrett Lau
Magnolia Warbler - Michael Bolte
Blue Grosbeak - Breck Tyler
Painted Bunting - Abram Fleishman
American Redstart - Paul Heady

Cited Observers:

Noah Arthur, Jasper Barnes, Sam Baxter-Bray, Michael Bolte, Richard Callow, JoAnna Clayton, Cindy Cummings, George Cummins, Mike Danzenbaker, Giulia Donato, Sam Eberhard,





Erik Enbody, Mary Farr, David Fickel, Abram Fleishman, Marty Freeland (MFr), Ezra Garfield, David Goodwin, Tom Hambleton, Paul Heady, Benny Jacobs-Schwartz, Alex Keitt, Brad Keitt, Gary Kittleson, Lisa Larson, William Lawton, Nick Levendosky, Arthur Macmillan, Elias McKown, Matthew McKown, Gary Martindale, James Maughn, Liam Murphy, William Murphy, Leo O'Neill, Ariel R. (ArR), Alex Rinkert, Anne Ruben (ARu), Brian Scanlon, Nico Schnack, Monterey Seabirds, Anne Spence, Sharon Spence, Katharine Spencer, Gary Strachan, Mike Tidwell, Jaelyn Tolchin, Breck Tyler, Darrell Uyeda, Norman Uyeda, Randy Wardle. "v.ob." means various observers. **Please enter interesting observations into eBird or report them to Alex Rinkert at arinkert12@comcast.net.**

Above left: Sage Thrasher - Jasper "Sage Thrasher" Barnes
Above: Chestnut-sided Warbler - Arthur Macmillian



Above: Red-breasted Nuthatch - Michael Bolte
Left: Willow Flycatcher - Arthur Macmillian
Below: Eastern Kingbird - Max Ferrero



Randy Wardle's March-May Bird B.O.L.O. *



MARCH

March has arrived and so has the first big month of spring migration here in Santa Cruz County. While many of our Fall/Winter migrants start leaving this month, many of the Spring/Summer species will begin to arrive.

Among those departing this month are Say's Phoebe, usually among the earliest wintering birds to depart. Burrowing Owls will mostly be gone by month's end. Ducks and gulls will still be around, but many like American Wigeon start leaving soon, others as well by the end of the month.

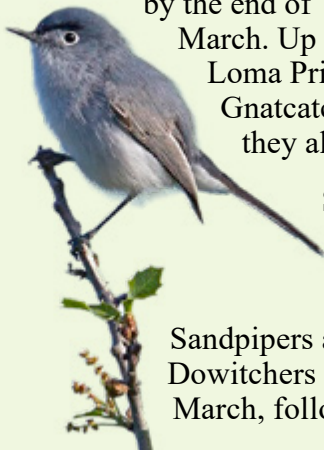
Among passerines, there will be more and more singing as the month goes on. Species like Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Hermit Thrush and Fox Sparrow will often sing on sunny days near the end of the month before they leave for the season.

Those species arriving by the middle of this month include Warbling Vireo, Western Flycatcher, Wilson's Warbler and Hooded Orioles, followed at the end of the month by Bullock Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Western Kingbirds, Grasshopper Sparrows and a few Chipping Sparrows. All 5 species of swallows

should also be here by the end of

March. Up at

Loma Prieta, watch for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and House Wrens as they also return.



Seabird migration increases significantly this month. Among shorebirds, Western Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers will be coming by mid-March, followed by Long-billed

Dowitchers. Along the coast, at places like Terrace Point and El Jarro Point in the mornings and evenings, watch for flocks of Brant, Bonaparte's and Short-billed Gulls flying up the coast. There are still a number of Short-billed Gulls now but by the end of the month there will only be a few. Surf Scoter migration north gets underway in March, sometimes in flocks of hundreds, while it is still possible to find Black and White-winged Scoters offshore in places like Waddell and Scott Creek beaches in the north county and Sunset Beach in south county. Continue to watch for Black-legged Kittiwakes at creek and river mouths and on the north coast, especially during and after storms. Also look for Pigeon Guillemots which should start appearing near their traditional nesting sites. Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants are sporting breeding plumes now and continuing to build their nests.

Breeding activity increases considerably compared to January and February. Many birds begin building nests in March. Some breeding behavior to watch for include Pygmy Nuthatches excavating holes, Bushtits busily constructing their nests, and Canada Geese forming pairs.



Center: Bushtit - Lisa Larson
Below: Western Flycatcher - Lee Jaffe
Left: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - Beth Hamel



*** Be On The Lookout**

B.O.L.O. (Be On The Lookout!)

March should be an exciting month to be birding in the county. I hope you have many opportunities to get out in the field to enjoy as many species as you can find.

APRIL

It's April, spring is in full bloom, and migrants are arriving every day to Santa Cruz County. During this month there will be a major migratory movement of many species, on land and at sea.

On land, Western Flycatchers have already made their appearance, and they will be followed this month by Western Wood-Pewees, Ash-throated and Olive-sided flycatchers. Swainson's Thrushes will also return in the next few weeks. Most swallow species have already arrived, but watch for Vaux's Swifts which will be arriving in April. Purple Martins, usually arriving in late March, should be at Loma Prieta and maybe Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve this month. Also be on the lookout for Bank Swallows at some of the coastal lagoons.

Among warblers, while Orange-crowned and Wilson's are present in greater numbers, be on the lookout this month for Yellow Warblers, and more Black-throated Gray and Hermit Warblers. Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers will remain with us in April, now sporting their vibrant breeding plumage.

As for sparrows, Grasshopper and Chipping Sparrows will be singing from grassland at Wilder Ranch State Park and UCSC, but by the end of the month most of the Lincoln's, Fox, White-throated and wintering "crowned" Sparrows will be gone for the summer.

One of the best places to watch migrating landbirds this month is at Loma Prieta. There you can often

find Lazuli Bunting, Western Tanagers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, large numbers of warblers and Rufous Hummingbirds migrating. Black-chinned Sparrows may return to breed in chaparral.

Scoping out to sea along the coast this month you can see thousands of migrating Pacific Loons as well as many Red-throated and Common Loons heading up the coast. Flocks of Brant, Surf Scoter, phalaropes, terns, shearwaters, Alcids, gulls (especially Bonaparte's), jaegers, and others will also be on the move. Some of the best places to seawatch are along the north coast at El Jarro Point and turnouts near Scott's Creek and Waddell Beach. In south county, scoping out to sea from Pelican Point at Pajaro Dunes can be productive as well. Due to an unfortunate event on January 27th, we are no longer allowed access there, but hopefully that will change in the future.

Migrating shorebirds such as Semipalmated Plover, Dunlin, and Western Sandpiper will be increasing this month. Look for them mostly in south county along lower Watsonville Slough and at College Lake. Along the rocky shoreline watch for Wandering Tattlers, larger groups of Black Turnstones and colorful Surfbirds in breeding plumage. Look for them at places



*Left: Grasshopper Sparrow - Gail West
Below: Surfbird - Michael Bolte*



B.O.L.O. (Be On The Lookout!)

like Black Point, along West Cliff Drive, Terrace Point and at Wilder Ranch. Overhead, Caspian Terns will become more numerous and at the end of the month there should be some Elegant Terns joining them. There is also a chance of finding a Franklin's Gull in some of the plowed fields along the north coast this month and at College Lake, if the water levels are favorable.

While most of our wintering duck and gulls will have left by the

end of April, you may start seeing Canada Geese with young goslings showing up in places of the county where they breed. Brandt's Cormorants already have eggs in some nests and now that Pigeon Guillemots have arrived, look for them to begin nesting along the rocky cliffs and under the Santa Cruz Wharf. In fact, April should find many species in the midst of breeding as spring continues. Watching for specific behaviors of breeding such as courtship rituals, carrying nesting material and nest building, and carrying food for a mate or young adds to the excitement of bird watching this time of year.

April is a very exciting month to be birding in the county with much to see every time out in the field. I wish you good birding!

MAY

In Santa Cruz County in May, most of our spring migrants have arrived by now, and nesting activity for most species has begun in earnest. Along the coast, many Western Gulls begin building nests this month, while Canada Geese, Mallards, and Pied-billed Grebes are already among those to be seen escorting small groups of young on the water. On land, other species from Bushtits to Crows are

Pigeon Guillemots - Lisa Larson

already working hard to feed their demanding chicks.

Seabird migration is still going strong during the first week or two of May. Offshore, loons will still be migrating north, mostly Pacific Loons now, and there will still be some flocks of Brant, Scoters, Common Murres and other alcids continuing to move up the coast. This is a good time to look for Red-necked Phalaropes as well as the possibility of Red Phalaropes offshore and near coastal lagoons in places like Younger and Corcoran Lagoons, and along the lower Watsonville Slough and Shorebirds Pond. Caspian and Elegant Terns are back now and there is a possibility for Common, Least, and Black Terns along the coast this month. Black Skimmers also remain a possibility in the county throughout May. While the last of our wintering gulls will be gone this month, there is a chance of finding an occasional

Franklin's Gull, especially in plowed fields on the north coast.

Along the shore, where birding should remain good for the first two weeks of May, you can still look for Wandering Tattlers, Surfbirds, and Black Turnstones, though they will almost all be gone by the end of May. And don't forget to check out College Lake with your scope this month as it continues to drain for many species of shorebirds.



*Caspian Tern
- Lee Jaffe*





Pied-billed Grebes - Tony Britton

Most Rufous Hummingbirds have migrated through the county by early May, but a few may still be found in the next week or two up at Loma Prieta. Early May is also the time when a migrating Black-chinned or Calliope Hummingbird could appear.

While our regularly occurring migrant flycatchers have arrived, such as Pacific-slope, Olive-sided, Ash-throated, and Western Wood Pewees, there are also records for some of the rare ones in May. Keep an eye out for Willow, Hammond's, Dusky, and Gray Flycatchers throughout the county and especially on the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains for the latter three this month. Although Tropical Kingbirds have already left, Western Kingbirds continue to move through the county. Warbling Vireos are numerous now in the county, and some Cassin's are scattered around, mostly in the mountains, and keep an eye out for the possibility of a Red-eyed Vireo which



*Left: MacGillivray's Warbler - Pete Solé
Right: Black-chinned Sparrow - Garrett Lau*

occasionally appear in May. Though less numerous than in years past, the first Black Swifts should return to the county this month. Look for them at places like Moore Creek Preserve and Wilder Ranch.

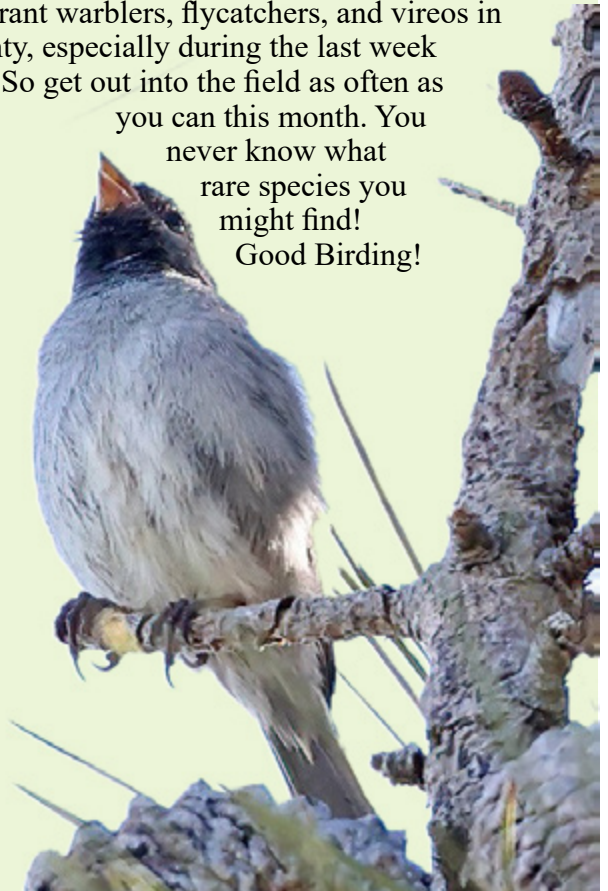
This month is a good time to look for breeding Yellow, Hermit, MacGillivray's, and Black-throated Gray Warblers. A few migrant Nashville are possible as well. Also look for the less common Yellow-breasted Chats this month in riparian areas.

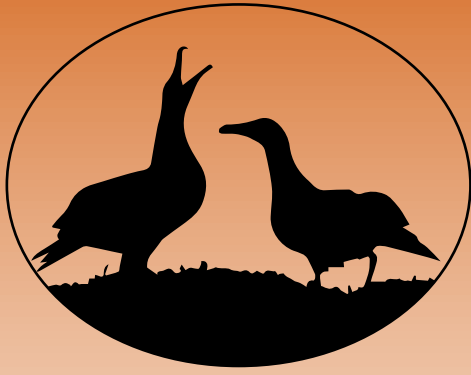
While most of our wintering sparrows have left by now, there are still sparrows to search for in May. Grasshopper Sparrows can be found at Moore Creek Preserve, Chipping Sparrows near Litchfield Lane, and Black-chinned Sparrows in burned areas near Loma Prieta are all possibilities.

Western Tanagers and Lazuli Buntings have arrived but should soon be seen in greater numbers and in more locations as the month progresses. May is a month when a few Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks turn up.

Although many of our wintering species have migrated away and most of our spring migrants have already arrived, there are still good chances to find vagrant warblers, flycatchers, and vireos in the county, especially during the last week of May. So get out into the field as often as

you can this month. You never know what rare species you might find!
Good Birding!





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

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

NEXT DUE DATE
MAY 1st

Black-footed Albatross - Alex Rinkert

Birder's Notebook

JUDY GITTELSON

I have been painting birds, always. Forever interpreting them loosely as symbols. Their flying impressed me. Untethered to and lifting off from the earth. I had chickens growing up and as an adult in Palo Alto. Chickens delighted and amused me with their urgent and dramatic response to anything, comic reactions, and frequent surprise.

Since moving to Watsonville in 2018, I am now in more open space and in the midst of our spectacular bird migratory flyway.



Forster's Tern

A few birder friends have led me to inspect and identify birds both in painting and while watching. Noticing their particular form, their unique and specific traits.

Now I am beholden to delve into birds and identify their features more accurately.

Describing birds with paint suits me. The currents, swirls, turns, twists – the flow of paint replicates nature and its movements. Birds move. Considering vitality and its emotions absorbs me.

*Round images:
Acrylic on ceramic plates*



About Judy Gittelsohn

Artist, teacher, and gallery owner Judy Gittelsohn lives and paints in Watsonville, California. Her large acrylic color studies of people, animals, places, and symbols are held in many private and public collections worldwide. She exhibits widely.

In her work, Gittelsohn marries a mixture of representational and abstract qualities, concerned with the continuum and the interruption of color. She approaches painting as an exploration of color and form, employing playful creativity to pursue a path of meaning and discovery.

Beginning with an armature or structure, she builds layers with swirling, arching, applications of paint, deepening and intensifying areas of the canvas. Shapes, planes, and layers intersect. Objects float, fly, disappear, and reveal,



taking us where physics cannot. The ensuing dimensional waves and transparent sweeps on the finished work can seem to gently shift when viewed.

STUDIO JUDY G

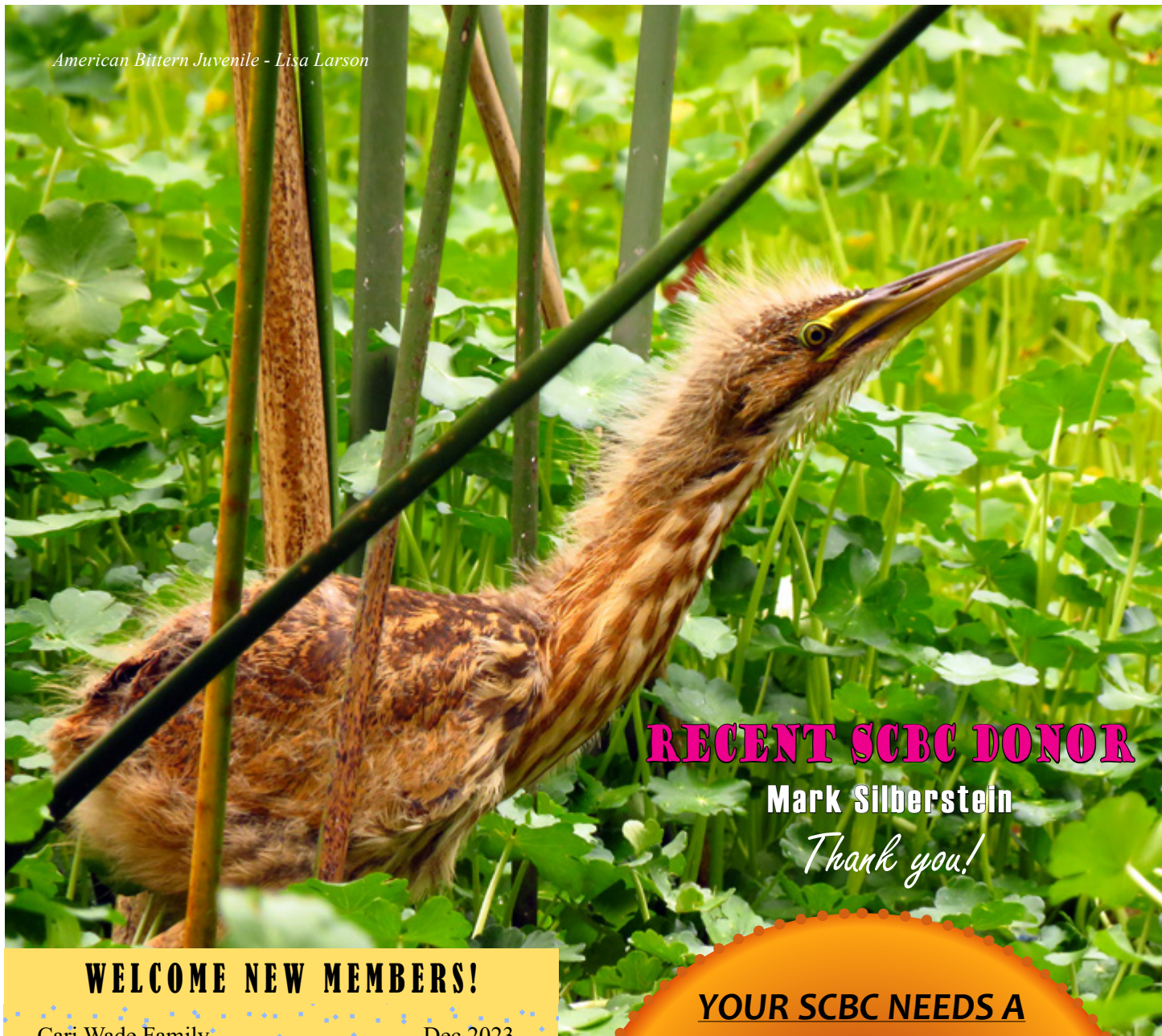
In 2021, Gittelsohn opened Studio Judy G, a combination painting studio, teaching classroom, and art gallery. For years, she has immersed herself in the community, bringing art to at-risk youth, people with disabilities, and the general public, while also producing projects that showcase the work of other artists. She is a Golden Paints Certified Working Artist and teaches the properties and uses of Golden Paints' products to artists and enthusiasts throughout Northern California.



THE BEAUTY OF BIRDS - Birds of the Monterey Bay

This Fall, 2024, Studio Judy G is mounting an exhibition, a community project, The Beauty of Birds - Birds of the Monterey Bay. To support and promote the Monterey Bay Bird Festival, which draws people from around the globe to see the bird migration here. Please see www.studiojudyg.com for details.





RECENT SCBC DONOR

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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John Holmes	Dec 2023
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Kevin Clark	Dec 2023
Judy Gittelsohn	Dec 2023
Chris Lay Family	Dec 2023
Jerry Bibbey Family	Dec 2023
Paula Haller	Jan 2024
Andrea Ratto	Jan 2024
Nancy Harper	Jan 2024
John Field	Jan 2024
Laurel Woerner	Feb 2024



YOUR SCBC NEEDS A

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR
and OUTREACH DIRECTOR!**

For a description of officer duties see:

santacruzbirdclub.org/club-information/club-officers-2/

CONTACT any SCBC Officer

in the list on the back page!

DEADLINE

Submissions for the **JUNE/AUG** Summer Issue

MAY 1, 2024



Cooper's Hawk - Michael Bolte

ALBATROSS DEADLINES

AUG 1 for SEP/NOV issue

NOV 1 for DEC/FEB issue

FEB 1 for MAR/MAY issue

MAY 1 for JUNE/AUG issue

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Oak tree Schwan Lake - Lisa Larson

PARTING SHOT:

"ONLY MY STYLIST KNOWS FOR SURE"

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

- TONY BRITTON



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



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Enjoy walks in and around Santa Cruz County,
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\$20 Individual, \$25 Family, \$ Youth. \$400 Life.

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Attention: Membership

Willets & Marbled Godwit - Lisa Larson