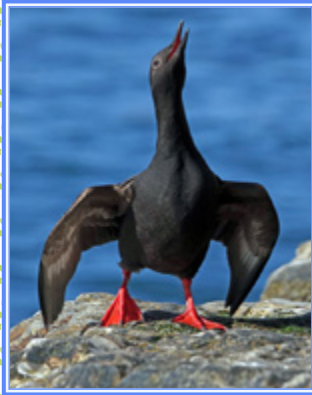


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## Santa Cruz Birds

### Randy's Bird B.O.L.O.

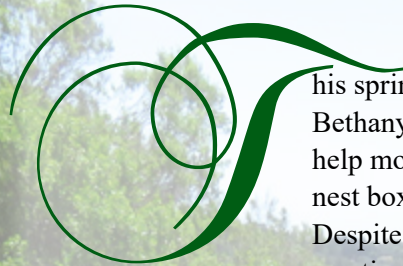
## PARTING SHOT



*PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES*

## Glenwood Open Space Preserve Nest Box Project

- By Phil Brown



This spring I was approached by Bethany Kilzer asking if I would help monitor the recently installed nest boxes at Glenwood Open Space. Despite an initial hiccup with the meeting place we did meet up and visited all the boxes. The trails at West Glenwood Open Space are very twisty and hilly, with a variety of wooded and open scrub habitat. Initially a lot of wind and rain was keeping activity low, but as the weather warms up we should see more birds in the area.

By the middle of March one box already had a start, Western Bluebirds began a nest, and we were encouraged to see two eggs at the end of the month (picture below). A final check showed five eggs in the clutch and so now we put a "Do not Disturb" notice on the box until the expected hatch date.

One other box had a nest start, but no progress made us a little apprehensive that the effort had been abandoned. Last week we did finally find four eggs in the nest, which was a classic Chestnut Backed Chickadee nest (a lot of moss and then some feathers to line the cavity for the chicks).

The eggs were all buried under the downy feathers in the nest, and we carefully probed with a soft touch to count them.

Since then it appears that a Western Bluebird pair may have taken over the box, we will have to monitor the situation.

A third nest start was found last week, also Chestnut-Backed Chickadee by appearance.

It will be interesting to see what species will use the other boxes in the coming months, I did observe a Violet-Green

*The trail leading down to Box #6 - Lisa Larson*

Swallow inspecting one of the boxes, so hopefully we will see some more nest starts in the coming weeks.

Some very exciting news from the project: we have an active Tree Swallow nest. 5 eggs were laid and we are waiting for hatch. This is surprising given that in the 2 decades that the Quail Hollow nest box project has been running there has never been a Tree Swallow nest there, and the two parks are geographically close. There have been Tree Swallow nesting records from Neary lagoon in the past, but not in recent years, and I believe that this is the first record away from the South County sloughs for some time.



*From top:  
Box 2, Glenwood OSP landscape - Lisa Larson  
Ash-throated Flycatcher at Box #1*

*- Lisa Larson*

*5 eggs, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Box7A, 4-16-24*

*- Paula Mierau*

*Box 7B, Western Bluebird takes box- Paula Mireau*

## ***NEST WARS?***

Bethany to Paula:

It seems that the WEBLs in Box #7 have excavated some of the old CBCH nest and removed all the eggs! So now we have a 2nd nest attempt and we're calling it **7B**, to differentiate from the first nest (which is now **7A**). Fascinating that this is happening at Quail Hollow as well (with an OATI pair taking over a CBCH nest). New reality series - Nest Wars?



we were expecting eggs. I read somewhere (possibly Cornell) that WEBLs can start copulating 6-8 days before the egg actually gets laid. Then each egg thereafter gets fertilized separately, although two can possibly be fertilized at once. Also, with WEBLs, apparently the male picks out the cavity location for a nest and marks it with some grass. She looks it over and if she gives her approval, then they become a pair. The article said that she is the one who then builds the nest, but it seems like we have seen

both of them actively nest building."



I want to pass on some information from Christina at Quail Hollow:

"# 19 - WEBL/NO/CN/1 egg  
- We saw the male perched in the fallen oak, but not that close to the box. Since we saw the WEBL pair copulating last visit (4/18),

This might explain why we see some boxes with a few pieces of grass that don't progress. Also interesting to me is that the hole size is just a suggestion, and the birds seem to make it work if they like the box location (Box #7 was sized smaller for CBCH/OATIs).

A

## Brief History of the Glenwood Open Space Preserve Nest Box Project..

2019 The nest box project was developed in coordination with teacher Mark Andrews of Scotts Valley High School. The boxes were designed and sited consistent with the guidelines of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Nest Watch program, in the hope of using that platform for students to document their observations. Unfortunately, Mark had to leave his position for health reasons.

2020 After the Covid-19 pandemic hit and the new teacher did not continue the project, the boxes were left unattended.

2023 Bryan Largay, Conservation Director for the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, appealed to the Quail Hollow Nest Box Project for help with monitoring the boxes, or the boxes would be removed.

2024 The boxes were located and some were removed or re-sited, leaving 8 boxes to monitor. The first group of volunteers were recruited, and the West Glenwood Preserve Nest Box Group was born.



*Western Bluebird pair caring for brood at Box #2  
- Lisa Larson*

*Western Bluebird clutch progression in Box #2  
Left: March 30th, Center & Right, April 15th  
- Bethany Klizer*



# WHAT TIME IS IT?

## **Is It Time For My Club Membership Renewal?**

If your membership was due in May, you would have received an email from us on May 22. Many of you responded & renewed ~and we thank you so much! If you haven't renewed yet, we hope you'll do so soon.

[If your membership was due last May, 2023, you may have received some emails from us this year, but you won't receive any others going forward.]

To renew, simply send us a check at:

PO Box 1304, Santa Cruz 95061, or, use PayPal, by going to the website: [santacruzbirdclub.org](http://santacruzbirdclub.org).

Dues continue to be a great value: \$20 Individual; \$25 Family; \$5 Youth

## **Why join or renew with the Santa Cruz Bird Club?**

*The Santa Cruz Bird Club is the only organization focused completely on the enjoyment, study and conservation of wild birds and their habitats in Santa Cruz County.*

*Your membership dues help to:*

- Keep members informed about local and regional bird related issues and activities through our website, our Facebook page, and direct emails to members;
- Cover rental expense for monthly member meetings at the Museum of Natural History;
- Provide Guest Speakers and field trip leaders with a modest honorarium.

*Some of the interesting projects the club is involved with now, in addition to the field trips and monthly meetings with topics of birding interest:*

Breeding Bird Atlas for SC County—a multi-year project to document our breeding birds;

Supporting the Bird School Project, which is giving local school children hands-on opportunities to learn about and enjoy our birds;

Quail Hollow Nest Box Project, over ten years of nesting successes—bringing back breeding Western Bluebirds and strengthening populations of other cavity-nesters;

Monitoring local government Master Plan revisions and major developments to assure birds and their habitats are addressed.



*Juvenile House Finch - Lisa Larson*

# BROWN PELICANS IN CRISIS

Hundreds, probably thousands of Brown Pelicans are starving to death all along the coast from Santa Cruz to Los Angeles. Nobody knows why these pelicans are starving. Pelicans tested negative Avian flu was ruled out after testing a number of dead pelicans and achieving negative results. A theory is that late spring storms made the waters very murky and unnavigable. Brown Pelicans are not deep-divers. A herculean pelican can only catch a fish at a depth of about six feet.

Native Animal Rescue (NAR) has taken in over 160 pelicans since April 18th. Almost all of them have been rescued by our amazing volunteers who often rescue 3-4 at a time. These pelicans have lost half their body weight and are very weak. Some of them have injuries caused by fishing line entanglement. We treat their wounds, hydrate them, give them Ensure for a day or so until they start eating fish. After a day of eating fish, they are stable enough to be transported to International Bird Rescue (IBR) in Fairfield, CA where they'll stay until they're ready to be released.

Your donations will help cover the costs of caring for these starving pelicans:

Pedialyte: \$24. a day  
Ensure: \$50 a day for a case  
Anchovies: \$285. for 40 pounds every 2 to 3 days  
Van Rental: \$200. round trip to IBR  
Gas to transport: \$70 to \$105. depending on vehicle - round trip to IBR  
Pen to house overflow of pelicans: \$140.  
Other costs: puppy pads to line kennels, laundry costs, cleaning supplies, Ivermectin, Antibiotics, first aid supplies, etc.

NAR's small facility is packed to the brim with 37 pelicans in care right now. Every few days we transport as many pelicans as IBR is able to accept. This makes room for the constant flow of more. Because we need to transport so many at one time (up to 25), we've had to rent a large U-Haul van. We have also had a volunteer use her horse trailer to transport pelicans to IBR.

***If you are inclined & able, NAR is accepting donations:***

www.nativeanimalrescue.org  
or mail to:  
Native Animal Rescue 1855 17th Ave.  
Santa Cruz, CA 95062-1861

(The SC Bird Club has also made a donation on behalf of our members.)

For more information, read a [recent article](#) dated May 28th about this ongoing crisis.

***Thank you for whatever you can do to help!***

☞ The SC Bird Club Board

*Top: Brown Pelican Diving  
- Beth Hamel*

*Brown Pelicans, May 2, 2024  
Ohlone Bluff Trail, Wilder Ranch  
"1 adult, 5 juveniles. Probably  
drawn to the gull flock for  
possible opportunity for food.  
Unusual observation."*

*- Gary Strachan*



# What's In A Name?

## Renaming Bird Species - by Lisa Larson

In the latter months of 2023, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) announced its decision to revise the names of all bird species in North America and Canada that were directly based on eponyms. This decision was made with the intention of eliminating historically “offensive” names (maintaining neutrality) and changing the naming process by choosing informative labels for the specific bird species.

These alterations do not involve mere taxonomic manipulation. Rather, the committee takes into consideration various factors such as variations in plumage, distinctions in songs, genetic information, and the degree of interbreeding (hybridization) among closely related species when determining these revisions. Many birders may be very pleased with the freebies—after all, taxonomic splits increase our life lists. However, the committee prioritizes accuracy in scientific classification. Alterations by the committee are only made based on well-defined justifications.

Relearning more than 70-80 bird species names (to start) may have some of us birders gnashing our collective bills because of the effort it will require, but aren't we typically up for a challenge when it has anything to do with bird identification? And in the long run, more appropriate naming that tells us something about the species, itself, will be beneficial to birding newcomers – and we want to attract more people to engage in birding and care about protecting birds!

Be prepared to bid adieu to a lot of familiar bird names, like Anna's Hummingbird, Cooper's Hawk, Gambel's Quail, Lewis's Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Bullock's Oriole, Cassin's Finch, Cassin's Kingbird,



*Cassin's Vireo - Lisa Larson*

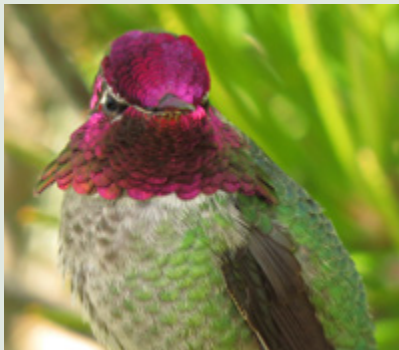
Cassin's Vireo, Wilson's Snipe, Wilson's Warbler, Wilson's Phalarope, Hutton's Vireo, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swainson's Hawk, Swainson's Thrush, and many more.

Is the name *Prothonotary Warbler* exclusionary because not everyone is Catholic? Or *Northern Cardinal*? These names are descriptive in that Roman Catholic Cardinals don red robes. Similarly, the Prothonotary Warbler got its moniker from the bright yellow robes worn by papal clerks. We shall see what the AOS determines!

Many of the eponymous names do not reflect history accurately! The history of a number of names seem arbitrary or nonsensical. Alexander Wilson and John Cassin each had an impressive five species named after them. Why? Was it really warranted? This very interesting article by one of my favorite birders and field guide authors, Kenn Kaufman is worth a read: [Eponymous Bird Names and The History of Ornithology](#)

Many of us are familiar with some of these commonly used bird nicknames:

- *Butterbutt*: Yellow-rumped Warbler (I say Rumpie)
- *Peep*: sandpiper
- *Sharpie*: Sharp-shinned Hawk
- *Laz*: Lazuli Bunting
- *TV*: Turkey Vulture
- *Sparrows*: LBJ's (little brown jobs)
- *Hoodie*: Hooded Merganser
- *Sawbill*: Common Merganser
- *Butcher birds*: shrikes
- *Timberdoodle*: American Woodcock (adorable!)
- *Yellowhammer*: Northern Flicker (yellow-shafted)
- *Marsh Hawk*: Northern Harrier (a nod to Brits out there)



*Anna's Hummingbird - Lisa Larson*

Some of us pronounce the alpha codes for birds instead of saying it's full name, for example *Lego* (LEGO) for Lesser Goldfinch, *Hofi* (HOFI) for House Finch, or *Pefa* (PEFA) for Peregrine Falcon. Most are too difficult to pronounce, it's fun to and easy to say the ones that are.

There are many (*many!*) poorly named birds. For instance, *Ring-necked Duck* has a seldom-seen ring around it's neck, but a very noticeable ring around it's bill! But I will not go into that further. For now.

Pacific-slope and Cordilleran Flycatchers were once separate species, but are now subspecies of Western Flycatcher. I still call them *Pac-slopes*, though. After all, that's what we have here. The Cordilleran group hails from Cordilaria. Just kidding! An large network system or chain of mountain ranges is called a cordillera. Cordilleran Flycatchers breed mainly along interior western North America, mostly along the Rockies and in Mexico's Sierra Madre.

So what if we were given the task of renaming our fine feathered friends?

I offer you a challenge! Please send me your suggestions for new bird names and I will publish

those I deem best in the next issue of *Albatross*! There will be two categories: Serious and Fun. I already know which you'd like to tackle.

I offer up:

*Black-beanied Warbler* as a replacement for Wilson's Warbler. I would say *Yarmulked Warbler*, but that may seem exclusionary.

Please email your suggestions to: [scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com](mailto:scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com).



From Top:  
*Wilson's Warbler*  
*Swainson's Thrush*  
*Cooper's Hawk*  
- Lisa Larson



# Santa Cruz Birds

By Alex Rinkert

Including reports from December 1 to February 29, 2024

**T**

he two species that headlined this winter were the first record of Black-headed Gull and, perhaps more unexpectedly, the second record of Louisiana Waterthrush. The former brings the total species seen in the county to 469. Otherwise, this was a relatively slow winter for major rarities. Some irruptive species were in good numbers, and a variety of Red Crossbill call types in the county added some fun to the season. On to spring!



A **Tundra Swan**, always rarely encountered in the county, dropped into Scott Creek marsh on December 25 (JG). The immature male **Harlequin Duck** off Black Point was last seen December 22 (AF, BS), while the female Harlequin wintering at the Santa Cruz Harbor remained until February 24 (MMK). The female **Barrow's Goldeneye** wintering along the lower San Lorenzo River and vicinity stayed through the end of February (v.ob.).



**Vaux's Swift** seen between January 12 and February 8 around Struve and Watsonville sloughs was a rare find for winter (JT, v.ob.). Four **Pacific Golden-Plovers**, possibly some continuing from late November, were at Wilder Ranch State Park from December 16 through February 3 (AR, JS, v.ob.).

A highlight this winter was the county's first **Black-headed Gull**. The bird was initially seen December 27 at the Aptos Creek mouth, but it only came to the attention of the masses a few days later when it was identified by Elias from photos that had been posted to eBird (DW, DS, EM, v.ob.!) The brilliant red legs and bill, pure gray and white wings with black primary tips, and a clean white tail identified this bird as an adult.

Over the the next month, many birders refound it on the beach from the Aptos Creek mouth

A **Red-necked Grebe** at Westlake Pond from February 9–11 was unusual to see at an inland waterbody in the county (BT, v.ob.). A

**From Top:**  
Barrow's Goldeneye  
- Pete Solé  
Harlequin Duck  
- Gary Martindale  
Red-necked Grebe  
- Michael Bolte

**Left:**  
Black-headed Gull  
- Max Ferrero  
**Right:**  
Black-headed Gull  
- Constance Vigno





south to Zils Road, where it was last seen on January 30. Entertainingly, the gull would sometimes forage as a kleptoparasite and acrobatically chase and steal sand crabs from the Sanderlings at the water's edge. A first-cycle **Laughing Gull** also turned up at Rio Del Mar State Beach on December 25 and remained in the vicinity through January 27, often seen with the Black-headed Gull (MF, v.ob.). Elsewhere in the county, an adult **Glaucous x Glaucous-winged Gull** hybrid was nicely photographed at Four Mile Beach on December 12 (SE).

A **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel** seen in the nearshore waters off Davenport Landing while windsurfing (!) on January 7 was the only reported this period (BK). Two familiar pairs of **Bald Eagles**, one in the Watsonville sloughs and the other on the mid-county coast, tended to nests this winter (GK, v.ob.). Only two **Burrowing Owls** were found in the county, and neither were at UC Santa Cruz, their former stronghold (KA et al., GK, v.ob.).

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** returned to a westside Santa Cruz neighborhood by December 8 and stayed through February 17 (CC), while another was present at Meder Street from February 9–20 (GM, v.ob.). A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found in Ben Lomond on December 16 (RA). **Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker** hybrids were photographed at Santa Cruz Memorial Park on January 12 (SH) and at Meder Street between February 10-12 (NS, v.ob.).

Good numbers of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were seen throughout the lowlands and mountains this winter, while smaller numbers of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were in the lowlands as well. A **Swainson's Thrush**

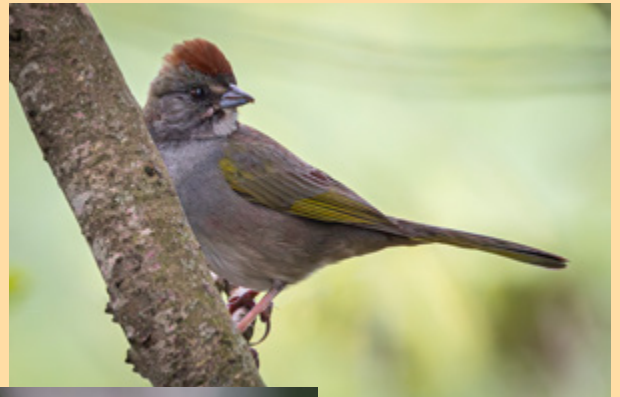
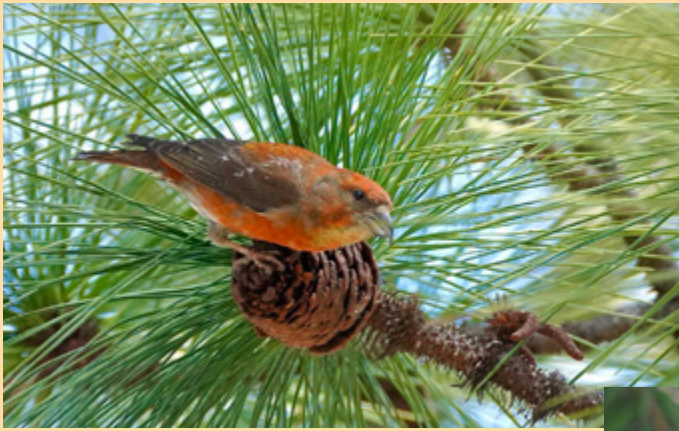


**Above:** Laughing Gull - Garrett Lau  
**Left:** Glaucous x Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid - Sam Eberhard  
*Below:* Bald Eagles - Sharon Hull



recorded calling at Natural Bridges State Beach on December 12 was exceptionally late for the county. The vast majority of fall migrant Swainson's pass through California by late October, with only a few trickling through in November and December. Following a good showing in the fall, **Red Crossbills** were widely reported in the mountains this winter (v.ob.). Most of those identified to call type belonged to "type 2" (BS, v.ob.), while a handful of "type 3" (AR, NL, BS, SE) and "type 4" (AR, BS) were determined to be present and often mixed in with the type 2 flocks as well. **Pine Siskins** were widespread and fairly abundant this winter.

*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Juvenile - Tom Hambleton*



At least 69 **White-throated Sparrows** reported this winter was an impressive number and the second winter in a row they have been especially numerous (v.ob.). A **Green-tailed Towhee** was found at the Farm Project at UC Santa Cruz on January 1 and it remained there until at least February 18 (JS, PS, v.ob.).

On the heels of an excellent fall for **Orchard Oriole**, three were found wintering: two at the Shrine of St. Joseph near West Cliff Drive from December 12 through the end of February (DS, GM, CC, DF, v.ob.) and one at Struve Slough on February 16 (CM). Two **Hooded Orioles** visiting the same area as the two Orchards at the Shrine of St. Joseph, first found on December 14 and also present through the end of February (MB, RM, v.ob.), made for a challenging exercise in identifying female/immature orioles at this location. Add to the mix a **Bullock's Oriole** that was also visiting the Shrine of St. Joseph this winter to make it an impressive five orioles wintering there (MB, v.ob.).



A small bird bobbing along the creek near Ferndell Falls at Mount Hermon this winter was not an American Dipper, but rather a **Louisiana Waterthrush** (DL, v.ob.)! This was just the second record for Santa Cruz County and only the fourth record north of Monterey County in California. The waterthrush was present from January 13 through February 10, and unlike the first record in the county in fall 2021, this one was widely seen by birders. Other rare warblers found this period included three



*Clockwise from top left:  
 Red Crossbill - Charles Morano  
 Green-tailed Towhee - Max Ferrero  
 Golden-crowned Kinglets (both shots) - Tom Hambleton  
 Orchard Oriole - Norm Uyeda  
 Sumer Tanager with wasp - Brian Scanlon*



*Summer Tanager - Cindy Cummings*

**Black-and-white Warblers** (JG, SE, LH, v.ob.) and one **Tennessee Warbler** (PH, v.ob.). Five **Summer Tanagers** found, including a stunning solid red male, was a good showing for winter (PH, BK, AA, v.ob.)



*Louisiana Waterthrush - Alice Church*

**Cited Observers:**

R.J. Adams, Audrey Addison, Kumaran Arul, Michael Bolte, Cindy Cummings, Sam Eberhard, Max Ferrero, David Fickel, Abram Fleishman, Jake Gifford, Paul Heady, Lawrence Holland, Sharon Hull, Brooke Keeney, Brad Keitt, Gary Kittleson, Dave Lavorando, Nick Levendosky, Gary Martindale, Elias McKown, Matthew McKown, Charles Moreno, Richard Moss, Alex Rinkert, Brian Scanlon, David Sidle, Jonah Svensson, Peter Svensson, Nicholas Sundeen, Jaclyn Tolchin, Breck Tyler, Dave Weber. "v.ob." means various observers. ***Please enter interesting observations into [eBird](#) or report them to Alex Rinkert at [arinkert@gmail.com](mailto:arinkert@gmail.com)***



*Bald Eagle and gull - Gary Martindale*

## Randy Wardle's June–August Bird B.O.L.O. \*

### JUNE

June has arrived in our county and because migration is a year-round event, there are plenty of birds to search for this month. Early June is a great time to look for “Eastern” and other vagrants at hotspots on the coast and also in the mountains. Rarities such as Red-eyed Vireo, Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak sometimes turn up in June as do some warbler species like American Redstart, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, and Northern Parula. Willow Flycatchers often appear in places such as the Pajaro Valley wetlands and river corridor, Bethany Curve, Natural Bridges and Lighthouse Field at this time of year, so it’s good to review their field marks in preparation. Another bird that is present in June but seldom reported is Common Poorwill, particularly around Loma Prieta.

The last spring migrant Cedar Waxwings will pass through in the first two weeks of June. Will any breed at Pajaro Dunes this year as they did in 2016 and 2018? We will not know unless we regain access to this private property. We are hopeful! Western Kingbirds are considered late as June goes on, though a few may still be found. By the end of the month, Allen's

Hummingbirds will be seen in lower numbers, while the first fall migrant Rufous Hummers will start to arrive. It’s easy to watch lots of different species of swallow babies being fed now, but also keep an eye



out for migrating or dispersing Purple Martins, as they are sometimes seen at places like Terrace Point, Natural Bridges, and in Watsonville. And Black Swifts are possible now. Watch for them foraging with swallows in the afternoons on the north coast at places like Moore Creek Preserve, Wilder Ranch, and Sand Hill Bluff.

Along the coast, more Sooty Shearwaters and Elegant Terns can be seen as the month progresses. The large flocks of Brant heading north are tapering off as are the Loons, although a few lingering individuals will remain close to shore, often in alternate plumage.

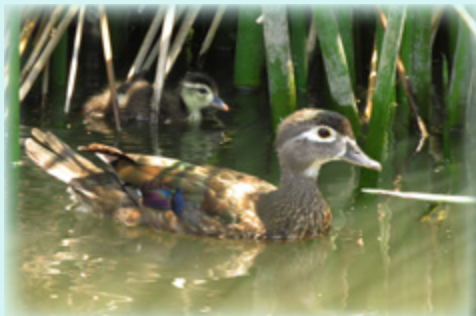
Pigeon Guillemots are plentiful and Marbled Murrelets can be seen with a spotting scope off the Waddell Bluffs. All three cormorant species will have young now, and you can look for their nests along the cliffs on the Old Cove Landing Trail at Wilder Ranch, the cement ship off Seacliff State Beach, and the Eucalyptus groves at Pinto and Schwan Lakes. Watch for Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons nesting in



Top: Western Kingbird - Paul Heady Left:  
Male Rose-breasted Grosbeak - Brian Scanlon  
Right: Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak - Pete Solé  
Below: Barn Swallow on Nest - Lee Jeffe

**\* Be On The Lookout**

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



Left: Female Wood Duck with young  
Right - Male Wood Duck eclipse plumage  
- Lisa Larson



the end of the month. With so much breeding activity and the continuing possibility of finding some rarities, June promises to be an exciting month to get out in the field as much as possible. I wish you good birding!

## JULY

these groves as well. Black Oystercatchers can also be found nesting now at Wilder Ranch, Davenport, and elsewhere where there are scree piles at the base of sea cliffs. Watch for the very first fall migrant shorebirds as they begin arriving at the end of the month. Also keep an eye out later this month for returning Heermann's Gulls as they begin to move in for the summer, and June is still a good month to look along the coast for Black Skimmers.

Among ducks, Mallards, Wood Ducks and Common Mergansers can be seen shepherding flocks of young during the month, though some females will still be sitting on nests. At Shorebirds Pond, you may see Gadwall raising young ones this month as well. Also, keep an eye out for occasional winter duck species that may be summering near the Pajaro River mouth. As June progresses, male Mallards and Wood Ducks will gather and molt.

Since June is the peak of the breeding season, some birds are still building nests, some are feeding young in the nest, some have already fledged young and are getting ready to parent another brood, and some post-breeders will be getting ready to leave by

When July arrives, it's the middle of summer, and there is a lot of birding activity in our county. Many species are still actively breeding and some are even raising a second brood. There seems to be recently fledged young everywhere and lots of juveniles can be heard begging for food from their parents. Many bird fledglings will be dispersing from their natal grounds during the month.

Watch for Loggerhead Shrikes and Western Meadowlarks in area grasslands this month as they presumably disperse from breeding locations outside the county. Also keep an eye out for post-breeding dispersants such as Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Western Tanagers, Lazuli Buntings, Bullock's Orioles, and many others that may turn up in areas where they do not breed. Continue to watch for Purple Martins at places like Terrace Point, Natural Bridges, Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve and Watsonville, and also for Black Swifts on the north coast at Moore Creek Preserve, Wilder Ranch and Sand Hill Bluff. July is also a good month to listen at dusk for Common Poorwills up at Loma Prieta. Are there any Tricolored Blackbirds breeding in



Lazuli Bunting - Thy Bun  
Bullock's Orioles - Gary Martindale

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

the county this year? They have most recently bred at the quarry in Wilder Ranch and at Last Chance Road in Swanton, but the county's breeding population seems to be dwindling.

As July progresses, Wood Ducks begin congregating at Neary Lagoon. All of the duck species are now molting into eclipse plumage around the county and it is getting more difficult to distinguish the sexes.

Fall shorebird migration picks up throughout the month. Look for adult golden-plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Red Knots, phalaropes and other rarer migrants along coastal rocky shores and area beaches. Black Turnstones and Surfbirds should also start returning this month. During July, Sooty Shearwaters become more numerous as do Heermann's Gulls, Brown Pelicans, and Elegant Terns. Toward the end of the month be sure to start watching for Least and Common Terns at creek and river mouths in the county. Also by late July, fledgling Common Murres from breeding colonies to the north will start floating into county waters. Pigeon Guillemots will also begin fledging, as will Marbled Murrelets. Juveniles of these two

species are often confused with each other so you will need to be careful when identifying them.

Between all the breeding activity, the dispersing of many species, and the beginning of Fall migration of shorebirds along the



*Willow Flycatcher*  
- Gary Martindale



coast, there is plenty to look for in July. I wish you much success and good birding this month!

## AUGUST

Although August may seem like the middle of summer, many of the breeding birds in our area will be leaving and winter species arriving by the end of the month as fall migration picks up. Many rarities have turned up in Santa Cruz County through the years in the month of August.

Yellow Warbler migration ramps up this month and Townsend's Warblers will return near the end of August along with the possibility of finding vagrant "Eastern" warblers like American Redstart, Tennessee, Black-and-white, and more. The first fall sightings of Northern Waterthrush may be in August as well.

This is a good month to be alert for Willow Flycatchers in many places including Bethany Curve, Antonelli Pond, Natural Bridges, Lighthouse Field and Quail Hollow Ranch. Watch for them flycatching and giving their soft "whit" calls. Western Kingbirds will be passing through and watch for a vagrant Eastern Kingbird which have sometimes shown up in August. Other flycatchers like Ash-throated will be mostly gone by the end of the month. Also watch for returning Loggerhead Shrikes this month.

Now is a good time to watch carefully for Black-chinned Hummingbirds. It might prove helpful to familiarize yourself with their husky "tchew" call to help identify them. Look for them at places on the Westside, including Bethany Curve. While Purple

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

Martins will be mostly gone by month's end, you will see large congregations of migrating swallows, especially early in the morning at places like Quail Hollow Ranch and Loma Prieta. Speaking of Loma Prieta, how late do Black-chinned Sparrows stay? Will any be found after the first week of August? There is still time to look for Black Swifts on the north coast at Wilder Ranch, Sand Hill Bluff and Moore Creek Preserve. White-breasted Nuthatches have sometimes been found in August at Quail Hollow Ranch, and a Summer Tanager may be found on the Westside. Also watch for the return of Cedar Waxwings this month, while it's still a fine time for a Rose-breasted Grosbeak to show up at a feeder.

Offshore, August is a great time for Black-footed Albatross, Long-tailed Jaeger and Arctic Tern. Closer to shore, large numbers of Sooty Shearwaters and Elegant Terns are expected during the month. Evening feeding frenzies along the mid-county coast can be quite spectacular. Watch carefully for possible Black-vented or Pink-footed Shearwaters among the thousands of Sooties.

Also look for Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers this month chasing gulls and terns just offshore. August is a good month to look for Common and Least Terns at creek and river mouths, Corcoran Lagoon, or in the Watsonville Slough system. A Black Tern might even be found at one of the sloughs or College Lake. Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, sometimes in large numbers, can be found this month too at places such as lower Watsonville Slough and Shorebirds Pond at Pajaro Dunes. Red Phalaropes are much less common and are more likely to be found further offshore. Also watch along the coast for fledged Pigeon Guillemots, which look very much like juvenile and winter Marbled Murrelets but have dusky underparts and different structure.

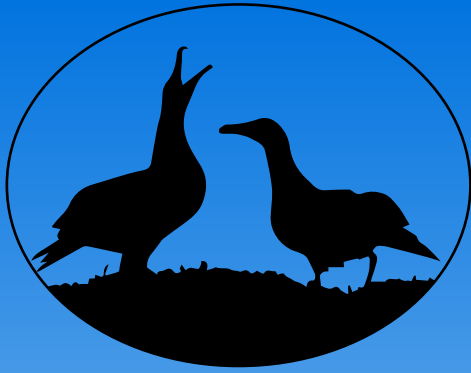


Along the shore this month watch for growing numbers of Black-necked Stilts, Avocets, Marbled Godwits, Willets, and Snowy, Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers. There is also a chance of finding a Pacific Golden-Plover. Watch for an occasional Ruddy Turnstone in among groups of Black Turnstones and Surfbirds. Both dowitcher and yellowleg numbers will be increasing this month and watch for the return of Wilson's Snipe, which haven't been seen since April. Large numbers of juvenile shorebirds begin showing up in August and this month is a great time to look for Pectoral, Baird's and Semipalmated Sandpipers in the Watsonville Slough system if muddy banks are exposed by receding water. At these same locations, look carefully for a Solitary or Stilt Sandpiper, or perhaps something rarer such as a Ruff or Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

This month also marks the return of some wintering duck species. Among those arriving this month will be Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, and Green-winged Teal.

August is a very exciting month as fall migration picks up and we say goodbye to many of our summering species and welcome back many of our wintering ones, while watching closely for rare migrants that may make their way through our county. So get out in the field as many times as possible this month. You never know what may turn up! I wish you good birding!

*Photos from top:  
Northern Waterthrush - Marty Freeland  
Pomarine Jaeger - Norman Uyeda  
Parasitic Jaeger - Abram Fleishman*



# 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](mailto:scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com)

~ Lisa Fay Larson, Editor

NEXT DUE DATE  
**AUG 1st**

*Black-footed Albatross*  
- Norm Uyeda



*Caspian Tern & Forster's Tern, Corcoran Lagoon  
- Arthur Macmillian*



***THIS IS HUGE!***

***Your Santa Cruz Bird Club now has a full Board of Directors!***

**WELCOME NEW SCBC BOARD MEMBERS!**

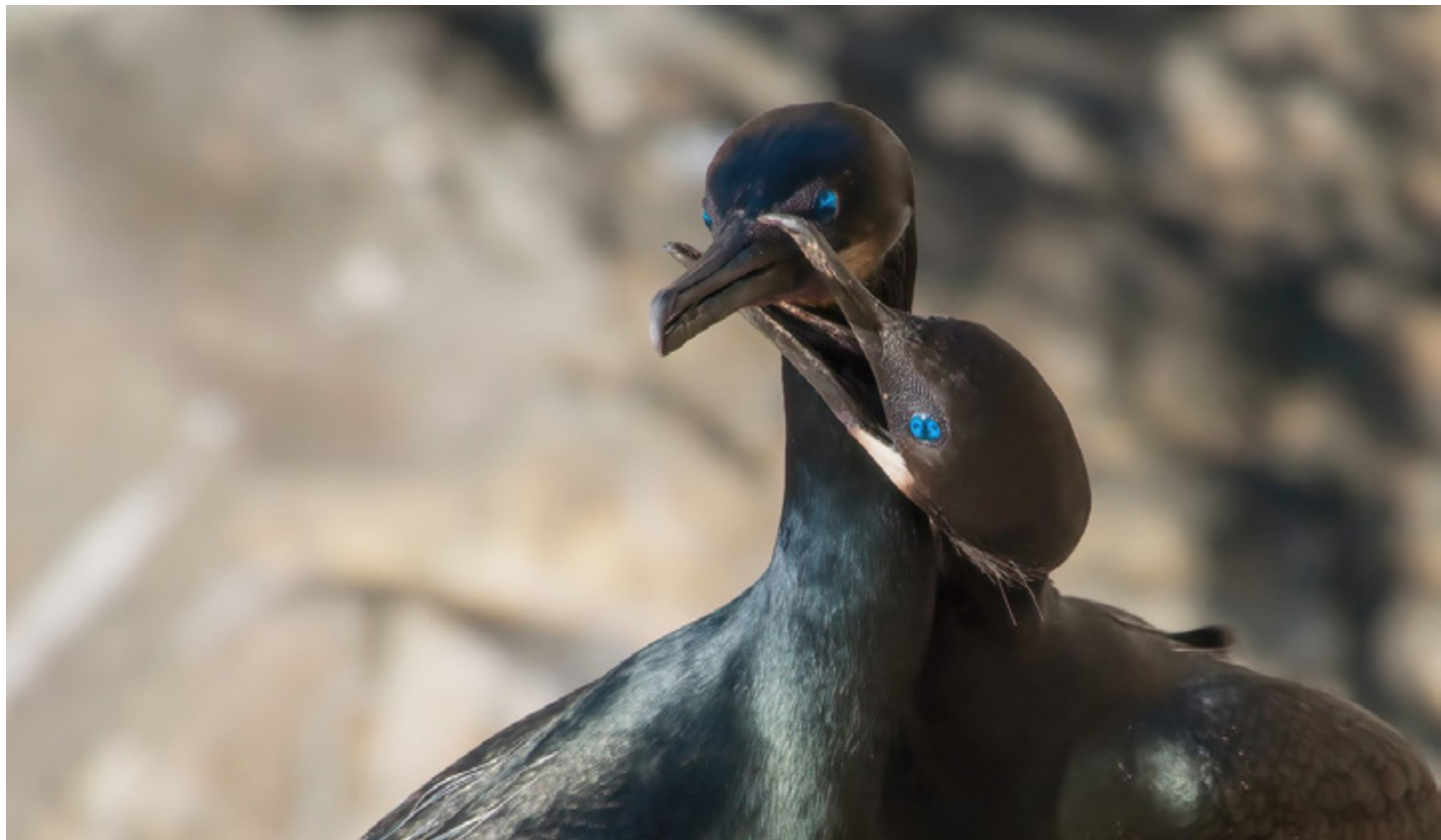
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*Young California Condor, Pinnacles National Monument  
- Susan Schalbe*



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*Brandt's Bormorants - Tony Britton*  
*Brandt's Cormorant ,nest with eggs - Lee Jaffe*

# DEADLINE

Submissions for the  
**SEPT/NOV**  
Fall Issue



**AUG 1, 2024**

## 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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*Verdant California Hills - John Fox*

## **PARTING SHOT:**

**"THIS IS GREAT!  
NO MORE UBER FOR US!"**

WESTERN GREBES

- ANDY KNORR

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



## **Join the Santa Cruz Bird Club**

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Or make checks payable to  
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*American White Pelicans - Tony Britton*