View this email in your browser

Albatross
PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Santa Cruz Bird Club Newsletter
Vol. 69 No. 8 August 2025

Welcome to The Albatross! A monthly eNewsletter that can be viewed directly from your email on a computer or mobile device. You can also download a pdf version from our website. We hope that you enjoy it and encourage your feedback and recommendations.

Member's Annual Steve Gerow Potluck Picnic

Join us for this fun annual event!

August 23, 2025 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
DeLaveaga Park, 855 Branciforte Dr, Santa Cruz, CA 95065

Members will receive an invitation with more information.

Pre-picnic bird walk

August 23, 2025 8:00 am - 10:30 am
DeLaveaga Park (Park Way)

In addition to resident forest species (probably several types of woodpeckers, lots of Pygmy Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, etc.) summer residents will be present, including Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers, and others.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the trail head at the north end of Park Way (the section to the north of Highway 1), off Prospect Heights. Note that parking is limited in this area. There are a few parking spaces in a dirt lot by the park entrance, but these can be difficult for low-clearance vehicles. There is usually some on-street parking on Prospect Heights and nearby side streets.

Leader: Phil Brown

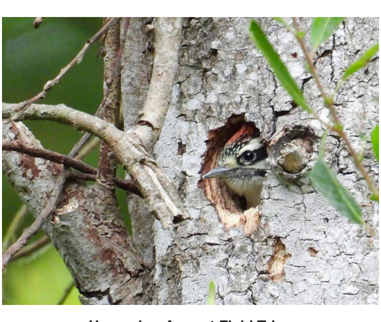
Get Details Here

2025 Monterey Bay Festival of Birds
October 10th through 12th, 2025

The Bird School Project is excited to celebrate the birds of the Monterey Bay with the Festival of Birds during the second weekend in October! With lots of field trips and workshops to sign up for, there will be birding activities for everyone. Event listings will be available closer to the date.

Tickets go on sale August 1st!

Get Details Here



Upcoming August Field Trips

Nature Journaling Birds at UCSC Farms

August 16, 2025 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
UCSC Farm, 152 Farm Rd, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, USA

Join members of the Santa Cruz Nature Journal Club for special event learning to nature journal birds. This hands-on experience will be a great opportunity to learn how to capture the essence of birds in our field journals, especially given the challenges of a subject that flits around, and to enhance both your curiosity for bird and your bird identification skills.

Directions: Meet at the Cowell Ranch Hay Barn parking lot on Ranch View Road. From Mission street turn onto Bay Street toward the University (turn right not Bay Street. if traveling North on Mission and turn left onto Bay St. if traveling South on Mission). Continue on Bay St. and after you cross High Street into UCSC, it turns into Coolidge Drive. From Coolidge Dr., turn left onto Ranch View Road. From Ranch View Road, turn right in the parking lot of the Cowell Ranch Hay Barn

RSVP: Dana at danarn95060@gmail.com or text or call at 831.252-6915.
Leaders: Dana Cox & Louisa Squires

Get Details Here

Pre-picnic bird walk

August 23, 2025 8:00 am - 10:30 am
DeLaveaga Park (Park Way)

In addition to resident forest species (probably several types of woodpeckers, lots of Pygmy Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, etc.) summer residents will be present, including Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers, and others.

Directions: Meet at 8:00 AM at the trail head at the north end of Park Way (the section to the north of Highway 1), off Prospect Heights. Note that parking is limited in this area. There are a few parking spaces in a dirt lot by the park entrance, but these can be difficult for low-clearance vehicles. There is usually some on-street parking on Prospect Heights and nearby side streets.

Leader: Phil Brown

Get Details Here

Sooty Shearwater Chase - Date and Time To Be Announced

Every summer and fall, large numbers of Sooty Shearwaters can be seen in the Monterey Bay, which is an important stop on their migration around the Pacific Ocean. The total numbers of shearwaters participating in the evening feeding on anchovies can be staggering--estimates are often in the hundreds of thousands. On this fieldtrip, we will try to observe this spectacle of nature in the evening from somewhere on the mid-county coast. Location and date will be determined one or two days in advance to give us the best chance at a good show. Keep an eye out for an email from the Santa Cruz Bird Club announcing the trip details. Leader: Alex Rinkert

Photo of Downy Woodpecker Chick courtesy of Kimberly Butts

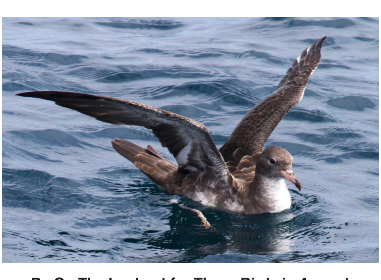
Santa Cruz Birds Report by Alex Rinkert
Including reports from December 1, 2024 to February 28, 2025

A nice assortment of rarities were found this winter including a Zone-tailed Hawk (3rd record), Vermilion Flycatcher (5th record), Vega Gull (~5 records total), and a White Wagtail (6th record). To go along with these major rarities, an Eastern Phoebe brought some added excitement as one had not been seen in the county since 2013, as did two overwintering Magnolia Warblers. And let's not forget about a Painted Bunting, overwintering Lark Bunting, and three Lesser Black-backed Gulls, either! The usual assortment of overwintering orioles, warblers, and tanagers were also well-represented which helped make this a memorable winter for rare and unusual birds in the county.

There is much more to share about the birds seen along with photos so click the button below to view the full report.

Read the Full Report Here

White Wagtail photo courtesy of Alex Rinkert



Be On The Lookout for These Birds in August

It's already August, and although it still seems 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 during the month of August.

Be alert for Willow Flycatchers in many places including Bethany curve, Antonelli Pond, Natural Bridges, Lighthouse Field and Quail Hollow Ranch. Western Kingbirds will be passing through and watch for vagrant Eastern Kingbird. Also watch for returning Loggerhead Shrikes. Watch for Black-chinned Hummingbirds at places on the Westside, including Bethany Curve. Watch for the return of Cedar Waxwings and there is still time for a Rose-breasted Grosbeak to show up at a feeder.

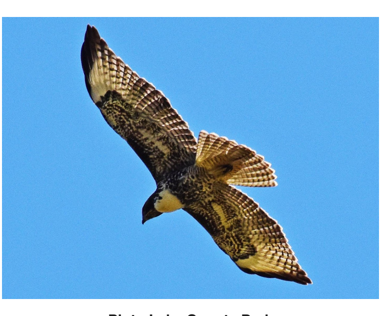
Offshore, look for Black-footed Albatross, Long-tailed Jaeger and Arctic Tern. Closer to shore, large numbers of Sooty Shearwaters and Elegant Terns are expected with possible feeding frenzies along the mid-county coast that can be quite spectacular. Watch carefully for possible Black-vented or Pink-footed Shearwaters among the thousands of Sooties. Also look for Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers chasing gulls and terns just offshore. 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.

There are many more birds described in the full article available by clicking on the button below.

These articles are archived on the Santa Cruz Bird Club website from previous years and provide an informal list of birds that are leaving and those arriving as well as the most likely places to see them. The text is by Randy Wardle and the photos and compilation by Pete Sole.

Read the Full Article Here

Pink-footed Shearwater photo courtesy of Pete Sole



Pinto Lake County Park
Field Trip Report

A great group of people came to enjoy an afternoon bird walk on July 8th at Pinto Lake County Park including first time birders and more experienced birding enthusiasts.

After everyone was assembled and guidelines for the walk were discussed we headed out towards the trail, but as soon as we stepped out from the parking lot, we heard loud screaming vocalizations overhead and, looking up, saw a Red-tailed Hawk flying directly above us. The bird circled above giving us a great look at the beauty of this species. We surmised that this might be a juvenile because of its insistent vocalizations, that its tail was still brown, and then that it followed an adult to the nearby Eucalyptus grove vocalizing all the way.

This was just the start to a wonderful afternoon of bird watching. The full bird walk report along with photos is available by clicking the button below.

Get the Full Report Here

Photo of Red-tailed Hawk courtesy of Joseph Mikulsky

Important Club Announcements

First Announcement - The Santa Cruz Bird Club monthly meetings and presentations will take a hiatus for the months of June, July, and August. Meetings will return on the third Thursday of the month with the September meeting. Stay tuned for more information about the next meeting presentation in the September Albatross.

Second Announcement - Welcome New Members! We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Santa Cruz Bird Club!

Donna Bradford, Susan Cabral, Debra Houston, Elaine Rose & Family, Susan Stone and Gordon Snyder

---

Third Announcement - It is easy to join as a new member or renew your membership. Current dues are as follows.

Individual membership: $25.00 per year
Family membership: $35.00 per year
Life membership: $400.00 one time fee

Join or Renew Your Membership Here

Fourth Announcement - Thank you Donors! We are grateful to the following donor!

Teresa Green

THANK YOU!

Photo of fledgling Western Bluebird courtesy of Grace Sanchez

Be Mindful During Nesting Season
By Ed Jameyson

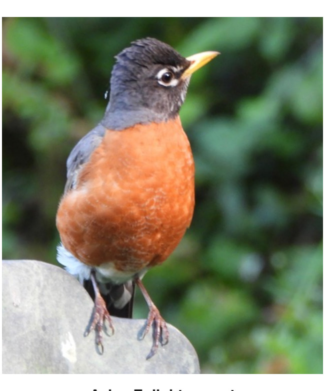
In response to a request for photos and stories of nesting birds in the July Albatross, I received this very thoughtful observation from Ed Jameson that points out why we need to be careful about attracting attention to bird's nest.

From Ed Jameson: *I read the article and the two linked articles in the July 2025 newsletter soliciting photos of bird nests and it sent an alarm message through my brain. A couple of years ago I stumbled on a Killdeer nest while hiking along the railroad tracks in Wilder Ranch. I took a couple of photos of the nest -- I only visited for a minute or two. When I returned an hour later, the three eggs were gone and the Killdeer parents had abandoned the area. I can only guess that while photographing that nest, and unknown to me, some other bird was watching me -- crow, jay, or? --- the prevalence and intelligence of both are legendary.*

Since that day I have purposely given a wide berth when I see that a bird might have a nest in the area I am traveling through. Why? This a tremendously critical time for a bird both in terms of the energy they expend on producing the eggs but also for the effort expended on building, hiding and defending the nest. They do not want it to be found and they want to be left alone. To this end all sorts of elaborate, and not so elaborate behaviors are employed in an effort to keep predators (cats, rats, other birds, us) away from the nest (its a good thing avian species don't have a 2nd Amendment). I have also come to the realization that the casual information gleaned from ferreting out nests, while interesting, is not that valuable, and since there are a lot more of us (people, bird watchers) and less and less of them (birds & habitat suitable for birds) that it is best to give them the space they need by leaving them alone during this critical time of their life.

Thank you to Ed for contributing this article.

Dark-eyed Junco nest photo courtesy of Debbie Diersch



Avian Enlightenment
By Grey Hayes

There are many reasons to develop a deeper relationship with nature and one of the most popular gateways is through birds.

The Bird Curious vs. The Curiously Bird Furious

I understand that there is a faction of our culture which will never be converted into bird lovers or even bird-friendly people. Some may have a general and quite vocal disdain for nature; we all know some of those characters – they sure think they're funny, don't they? Others just don't care or even have phobias of nature. Some may enjoy some aspects of nature but are satisfied with simple, misguided (and again normally vocal), and generalized classification of birds: "tweety birds," "hawks and eagles," "trash birds" (crows, ravens, pigeons, and gulls), and "ducks." I've had that classification system proudly explained to me by various people across the USA's broad geography. This latter group of people may have a few stories about trash birds or hawks but are quickly bored by conversation that lingers long on this subject.

And then there are those many people who are bird curious to varying degrees. Approximately 1 in 3 people aged 16 and older in the US are self-declared bird watchers. That percentage is predicted to continue rising through 2030, surpassing 40% of the nation's population. Despite their sometimes vocal detractors, these people's

Continue reading this full article at the link below.

Thank you to Grey Hayes for contributing the article and to Jane Orbuch for suggesting it's publication in the Albatross.

Read the Full Article Here

Albatross
PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

Want To Contribute Content To The Albatross?

We would love to share your articles, photos and illustrations. We also welcome comments and recommendations on what you would like to see covered in the Albatross going forward.

Please send *mailto:*scbirdclubeditor@gmail.com

Copyright © 2025 Santa Cruz Bird Club, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
Santa Cruz Bird Club
PO Box 1304
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

Want to change how you receive these emails?
unsubscribe from this list