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Santa Cruz Bird Club Newsletter
Vol. 69 No. 9 September 2025

Welcome to The Albatross! A monthly eNewsletter that can be viewed directly from your email or 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.

Celebrate California Biodiversity Week With Us September 6th through 14th, 2025

Can you find 50 species of birds to celebrate and support California Biodiversity week? 50 species represent "50 in 50 California" an initiative to conserve 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030. So, if you have a spot or walk where you can try to find 50 birds—bonus! Bit you can try the following walks hosted by the Santa Cruz Bird Club:

9/6: NWR Pt Blower Bird Blinds at Natural Bridges State Park
9/8: 7:14AM Carol Pearcy Beginners Bird Diversity Walk at Natural Bridges
9/12: 7:00PM Carol Pearcy Long Bird Calls to Identify Birds Around You at Natural Bridges

The 2 events shown above are cosponsored by Natural Bridges State Park

9/9: 8:45-11:30 AM. Debbie Dietrich: Birds and Tai Chi by the Sea at Seacapse Resort Whale Overlook
9/10: 8:15AM Jane Mac: See Lorenzo River Birds from Tannery Arts Center
9/12: 8:15AM Paul Miller: Birding Walk at Henry Cowell State Park

Get Field Trip Details Here

Share your Event checklists with "California Biodiversity City" between Sept. 5-14 to have it appear in the California Biodiversity Week 2025 trip report.

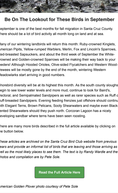
There are many other bird walks and events around Monterey Bay (Wilder Ranch, Elkhorn Slough, Jetty Road) and throughout the state supporting California Biodiversity Day. Check out the Biodiversity Day site to find more events.

2025 Monterey Bay Festival of Birds
October 18th through 12th, 2025

The Bird School Project is excited to celebrate the birds of the Monterey Bay with our annual festival. This year's festival weekend is October 18th-19th with 40 trips and workshops to sign up for. there will be birding activities for everyone. Event listings are available now.

Tickets are on sale now!

Register



Upcoming September Field Trips

Septemvber 6, 2025 - Zayante Trail - 8 to 11 AM
Leader: Jane Mackenzie Photos

Park near the San Lorenzo Lumber entrance, or arrive the street along Roaring Camp Rd. We'll walk along the river into Henry Cowell, then into Roaring Camp to check their ponds. Read More...
Leader: Paul Miller

September 6, 2025 - Henry Cowell State Park - 8 to 11 AM

Join the goldies at Henry Cowell State Park to learn all about the histories, behaviors, and field markings of birds in the park on this 1-mile walk. Bring binoculars and weather-appropriate attire.

Directions: The address of the main out of the park is Felton, 95018. The entrance to the main unit of the park is on Highway 9 about 24 miles south of the intersection of Highway 9 and Highway 17 in Santa Cruz. Meet in front of the Redwoods State Park* at the entrance hall. The meeting place is a little man yard parking lot in front of the gift shop.
Leader: Michael Rhodes

See the California Biodiversity Week Article for information about more field trips and/or click on the link below for details.

Photo of Western Tanager courtesy of Pete Sok

Get Full SCBC Field Trip Details Here

Be On The Lookout for These Birds in September

September is one of the best months for fall migration in Santa Cruz County. There should be a lot of bird activity all month long on land and at sea.

Many of our wintering landbirds will return this month. Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Pipits, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Merlins, Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, and about the third week of September the White-crowned Sparrows should be arriving in our neighborhoods. Many of these birds are feeders! Although Hooded Orioles, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Western Wood Pewees will be mostly gone by the end of the month, wintering Western Meadowlarks start arriving in good numbers.

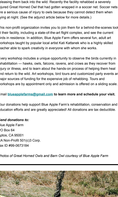
Shorebird diversity will be at its highest this month. As the south county ponds dry up, Wilson's Phalaropes will be joined by Least and Baird's Sandpipers, Pectoral, and Semipalmated Sandpipers as well as rare species such as Ruff or Buff-breasted Sandpipers. Evening feeding frenzies just offshore should continue with Elegant Terns, Brown Pelicans, Sooty Shearwaters and maybe even Arctic-nested Shearwaters should they push north. Cotoniam Lagoon has a newly developing sandbar where terns have been seen roosting.

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 Wanda and the photos and compilation are by Pete Sok.

Read the Full Article Here

American Golden Plover photo courtesy of Pete Sok



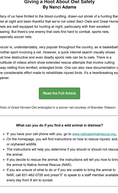
Breeding Bird Atlas Update – Fall 2025
By Alex Rinkert

I look at the date today and realize it is almost 5 years since the breeding bird atlas began back in 2017! We have accomplished so much since then, and the project is now in its final stretch. We have completed the field work for the atlas and released from 2017-2022, and beginning in 2023, I have been reviewing the 31,000 breeding records collected during Atlas I (1987-1993) and Atlas II (2013-2022) and using those to prepare the species accounts that will form the bulk of the atlas book. This amazing dataset is being used to describe the local distribution and status of each breeding species, and to develop conservation priorities for the 187 breeding species recorded in the atlas area.

Currently, over 93% of the species accounts have been written and I am aiming to finish writing sometime next year. The atlas book will not only include text, maps, and figures, but also over 150 stylish black-and-white illustrations commissioned from artist Jeff Bellinger. The Atlas Steering Committee is about 75% of these drawings, and he is well ahead of schedule, too. He will also be contributing a color painting that will adorn the cover and back of the book. Since my last update, we have also brought on Ruthie Smith, an artist specializing in natural resource sciences, who has already completed the first editing of over 100 of the illustrations we have already written, which will make them much improved.

Get the Full Report Here

Illustration of Great Blue Heron by wildlife artist Edward Rasks



Raptor and Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
Meet Blue Apple Farm

Blue Apple Farm is one of the best-kept secrets in Santa Cruz County and is a goldmine for injured birds. This private facility located in the hills of Larkin Valley near Watsonville is a 501(c)3 non-profit that has been rehabilitating wildlife for over 40 years. The facility works closely with Native Animal Rescue (NAR) providing a comprehensive rehabilitation program aimed towards bringing the birds back to their original habitat. Volunteers are responsible for feeding birds, cleaning and releasing them back into the wild. Recently the facility rehabilitated a severely injured Great Horned Owl that had gotten wrapped in a soccer net. Soccer nets are a serious cause of injury to birds because they cannot extract them when flying at night. (See the original article below for more details.)

The non-profit organization invites you to join them for a behind-the-scenes look at their facility, including a state-of-the-art flight complex, and see the current rehabilitation patients. On Sunday, September 28th from 1-4 PM, there is a workshop taught by popular local artist Kari Kalfrentz who is a highly skilled teacher able to sparks creativity in everyone with whom she works.

Every workshop includes a unique opportunity to observe the birds currently in rehabilitation — hawks, owls, falcons, ravens, and crows as they recover from injury or illness, and to learn about the hands-on process of helping them heal and return to the wild. Art workshops, bird tours and customized party events are also offered. Tours are free, but donations are appreciated. Tours and workshops are by appointment only and estimated to offered on a sliding scale.

Email blueapplefarm@gmail.com to learn more and schedule your visit.

Your donations help support Blue Apple Farm's rehabilitation, conservation and education efforts and are greatly appreciated! All donations are tax deductible.

Send donations to:
Blue Apple Farm
PO Box 61
Larkin Valley, 95001
CA Non-Profit 501(c)3 Code
Tax ID 46-0673164

Photos of Great Horned Owls and Barn Owl courtesy of Blue Apple Farm

Giving a Hoot About Owl Safety
By Nanci Adams

Many of us have thrilled to the about-courting, drawn-out shriek of a hurtling Barn Owl at night and been thankful that we're not victim Deer Clerk and Great Horned Owl. Barn Owls are nocturnal, but Great Horned Owls are active during daytime hearing. But there's one enemy that rank first hard to combat: sports nets, especially soccer nets.

Soccer is, understandably, very popular throughout the country, as is basketball, another sport creating a net. However, a quick internet search visually shows just how destructive and deadly sports nets can be to owls. There is a multitude of videos which show extended rescue attempts that involve cutting through the nets to free the owls. Many of these rescue attempts demonstrate the considerable effort needs to rehabilitate injured birds. It's a heartbreaking non-opener.

Read the Full Article

Photo of Great Horned Owl entangled in a soccer net courtesy of Brandee Tolleson

What can you do if you find a wild animal in distress?

- If you have your cell phone with you, go to www.nativeanimalrescue.org, click on the tabs, and find instructions on how to rescue injured, sick, or orphaned wildlife.
- The instructions will help you determine if you should or should not rescue the animal.
- If you decide to rescue the animal, the instructions will let you know to bring the animal to Native Animal Rescue (NAR).
- If you are unsure of what to do or if you are unable to bring the animal to NAR, call 831-462-5735 and press"1" to speak to a staff member available every day from 9 am to sunset.

Important Club Announcements

SCBC Meeting - Bird Trivia or Dinner Brewing
September 25, 2025 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Dinner Brewing Santa Cruz Taproom Pinnacle Gastropub Restaurant, 817 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, USA

We're beginning the 2025/26 series of SCBC meetings with something new. It's a social event where you can order a bite to eat and a tasty brew and mingle with other birders. Bring your friends and family members and invite them to join you already know as avian ecologist Monte Neufeld Clegg welcomes you to an evening of Bird Trivia. Team up with other SCBC members to pool your knowledge and see if you can win prizes.

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

Carol Jordan and Jordin Wilkins

It is easy to join as a new member or renew your membership. Currently 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

Photo of Arctic Tern courtesy of Max Farrens

Annual Steve Gerow Picnic Thank You!

A big shout out to all the people that brought the tasty food and attended the Annual Steve Gerow Picnic on Sunday. It was a great day and we attended to catch up with friends and make some new ones. I want to thank Lynn C. and Joe M. for helping to set up the table and drinks and to the many people that helped clean up. Lynn C. and Joe M. also brought a tasty chocolate cake and I managed to come with a yummy chocolate cake. I will bring it to the October meeting, but if you need it sooner contact me at arcrichardson@gmail.com and we will make an arrangement to meet.

Just a reminder to check the SCBC Web Page for upcoming events.

Also mark your calendars for the Christmas Bird Count on December 20th. This is a fun and important event for the Santa Cruz Bird Club. Last year the CBC dinner will once again be held at the Pomegranate Hall in Santa Cruz. It is a great venue for our dinner and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Again, a BIG Thank You to all the Friends that helped make our Annual Picnic a success.

Ann Chandler
Hospitality Officer

Photos courtesy of Jane Ortisch

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.

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Santa Cruz Bird Club
PO Box 1304
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