Santa Cruz Bird Club Newsletter
Vol. 69 No. 10 October 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.

Discovering Arizona's Sky Islands
by Max Ferrero

Chiricahua , Montezuma , Santa Rita , These were the words echoing in my head as I drove through the Arizona desert. Sky islands, what are they exactly, is it "sky island"? Where do the Sierra Madre mountains begin and end? Is it really that hot in July? The more I delved, the more questions I had. The Sky Islands are a biological wonderland, a hotspot for endemics, as though calling them sets a life of passage and more should arise.

"You have to go to Mount Lemmon!" The Chiricahua will blow you away!" "Madera Canyon has it all." "Don't forget to visit Davis Lepidopt r , and David Jasper's self guided "

More names began to capture my imagination like magpie, vultures, and hummingbirds. Sky islands are known for their diversity of birds, butterflies, woodlands, and cool high elevation pine forests. I soured maps and compared bar charts, watching the seasonal changes unfold across this desert mountain hinterlands.

I imagined that every birder has already been to these places, and I was just a tourist, a novice birder, what could I add to this? Well, I'm a birder, and that is what you're required to go out and some of these locations for I did, and to take hard for all the secrets that await, including bears, coatis, snakes, whiptrees, and a whole world of butterflies.

Much more awaits you as you read Max's full account of the travels, including a stunning adventure with coatis, by clicking the button below.

Photo of Elegant Trogons courtesy of Max Ferrero.

Read the Full Article Here

Join Us for the SCBC October Meeting Presentation
Birds in a Changing World

Birds in a Changing World: Responses of North American birds to climate change and urbanization presented by Dr. Renée Craig

Two of the greatest threats to birds are climate change and urbanization. Yet, we know little about how species respond to both, with extremes and losses. In the first half of the talk, Dr. Renée Craig will present the various ways in which birds respond to climate change, including changes in phenology, shifts in distributions and changes in the timing of breeding. In the second half, Dr. Renée Craig will examine the ecological traits that enable some types of birds to be winners in urban areas like San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Dr. Renée Craig is currently a postdoctoral scholar in the Conservation Ecology Lab at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her lab, led by Dr. Renée Craig, is an avian ecologist who primarily researches how birds are responding to global change, including climate change and habitat loss. In particular, Dr. Renée Craig's research focuses on how species distributions, abundances, distributions, and the timing of annual events like migration. Dr. Renée Craig is also an avid international birder and uses her passion for birds to fuel her research.

Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025
Time: 7 PM
Place: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Drive
Santa Cruz, CA

Hermit thrasher photo courtesy of Dr. Renée Craig.

It's Time for the 2025 Monterey Bay Festival of Birds!
October 16th through 19th, 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! We hope to field 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

Like Global Big Day, October Big Day is an opportunity to unite around our shared love of birds. Last October, nearly three quarters of a million people from around the world submitted eBird checklists on October Big Day. It was a fun way to engage birds and ebird while you find or add to! Participate from anywhere—even from both of the parts of the global team and help set a new record for October birding.

See More Details Here

SCBC Upcoming October Field Trips and Workshops

October 3, 2025 - Henry Cowell Dissection Clinic - 9 - 11 am

We will walk the Cavalletina Trail to the Pine Trail, and up to the Observation Deck. Along the way we will see the Douglas-fir/tanoak/madrone forest, the redwood forest, the chaparral, and the ecotone between the forest and chaparral, and we can negotiate steep, hilly, and distance.

Directions: Meet at the Trailhead directly across from Lockwood Lane, where it intersects Graham Hill Rd. I will have cell service so please call or text 831-332-8165 if you need to contact me before the hike. Bring your Parking Permit. Open Dr. Fry and right after the trailhead from there. Allow extra time if you've never been to the spot.
Leader: Paul Nelson

October 4, 2025 - Sunset Beach (Palm Beach) - 8 to 11 am

Join us for a walk at Sunset State Beach - Palm Beach Unit. This should be a good time for fall migrants to show up in the coastal forest surrounding the area. In recent years, Blackpoll, Black and White, Tennessee, Black-throated Gray, Black-throated Blue, and Cerulean warblers have all been seen here.

Directions: Take Highway 1 to the Freedom exit. Turn left on Freedom Blvd. We will meet on the back in the middle of the state beach parking lot. Terrain is a mixture of pavement, walkways that crush here sensitive dunes, and dune habitat. Bring binoculars, water, and a hat. Bring your Parking Permit. Open toed shoes, flip-flops, and sandals. A couple could be helpful for high ecological viewing. See you there! Palm Beach State Park Entrance Station, 1000 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville, CA 95076
Leader: Max Ferrero

October 7, 2025 - Birds and Sculpture in the Garden - 1 - 2 pm

Join us for a walk through the gardens of Santa Cruz Museum to enjoy birds and sculpture together during the "Sculpture in Art" exhibit. Sculptures on display include pieces by artists from the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, Pajaro Valley Arts, Santa Cruz Mountains Studio Tour, Santa Cruz Sculpture, Santa Cruz Mountains, California and Sculptor Guild, Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, Cooper's Hawk as well as other species. A comprehensive checklist of the species seen at the orchard is available here.

Directions: Santa Cruz Museum is located at 2400 East Lake Avenue (Corner of Freedom and Lake). Meet at the Museum. We will have a table in the parking lot of the nursery — upcoming to recommended. Hirondinence is free and the property is wheelchair accessible. The garden has a flat and somewhat level path, but there are some steep areas and uneven terrain. If you are interested in participating photo, the nursery will be open for plant sales before and after the bird walk.
Leader: Chris Kirkham

October 11, 2025 - Neary Lagoon - 8 - 11 am

Celebrate **October Big Day** at Neary Lagoon. Fall migration will be slowing down, but our wintering species will be settling in. We'll see what's around this opener and marvel habitat in the middle of Santa Cruz.

Directions: Neary Lagoon Park is located at 110 California St. Santa Cruz. Meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot off California St. and Bay St.
Leader: Phil Brown

October 15, 2025 - Zayante Trail to Roaring Camp - 8 - 11 am

We will walk the trail into Henry Cowell, and then wander through the park into Roaring Camp. We'll check the ponds at Roaring Camp, and then return to our starting point.

Directions: Meet at the beginning of the Zayante trail, here. Parking is easy along Roaring Camp Rd, if you don't mind crossing Graham Hill Rd. on foot.
Leader: Paul Nelson

October 26, 2025 - Bird Photography Field Workshop - 9 - 12 am
Members Only Event - limited to 15 participants

Join us for a bird photography workshop. Meet at Neary Lagoon or for a morning bird photography workshop at Westdale Pond. We will learn and practice field techniques, tips and tricks to capture better bird images. Led by Pete Sefik, a professional bird photographer, the workshop will focus on the use of flash, Pete will share some of his field techniques, camera settings, and other bird photography recommendations. All skill levels welcome, particularly beginners. Bring your camera, but please note, this is NOT a wet photo photography workshop.

TO SIGN UP: We're using signup.com to organize our reservations. Click on this link to sign up. You will not be required to register an account or keep track of your reservation. Please note, if you have special attitudes with anyone, or prefer not to use your email address, please contact scbirdclub@gmail.com to be signed up manually.

Directions: Meet on the northeast side of Westdale Pond, closer to Bradley Drive. Map here.
Workshop leader: Pete Sefik

Get Details Here

Be On The Lookout for These Birds in October

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, Merlin, Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, Hermit Warblers, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows will be making their way back for your Western Although Hooded Orioles, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Western Wood-Pewees are long gone, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Warbling Vireos, Macaulay's and Lucy's warblers

Shorebird diversity will be at its highest this month. As the south county sloughs begin to lose lower water levels and mud, continue to look for Stilt, Baird's, Pectoral, and Semipalmated Sandpipers as well as rarer species such as Puff Sandpiper, Ruff, Wilson's Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope, Red Knot, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover, Long-billed Dowitcher, Stilt Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and even Black-winged Stilt. Shorebirds should likely pass north. Cotoniam Lagoon has a mosty developing cattail where terns have been seen nesting.

There are many more birds described in our October newsletter, clicking on the button below.

These articles are archived on the Santa Cruz Bird Club website front previous past 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 Harry Wade and the photos and compilation are by Nate Dunn.

Read the Full Article Here

Golden Eagle photo courtesy of Pete Sole

Full Restoration Approved for San Lorenzo Park

Due to the strong support of our mancy of you over the last three years, the City Council voted unanimously on September 9 to set aside, as a restoration area, the 2.5 acres of the critical wetland portion of San Lorenzo Park (the Floodplain).

Furthermore, and unexpectedly, the Council voted unanimously to approve a friendly amendment to "dedicate the Floodplain portion of San Lorenzo Park to Indigenous peoples as a living cultural landscape" and to engage much more deeply with the Indigenous community in the future on the Floodplain, including compensation for services.

This vote represents an historic step for Santa Cruz City! It expresses the City's readiness to recognize the rich environmental and cultural significance of an endangered riparian wetland that was sadly labelled a "constraint" by the Parks and Recreation Department and ignored by the Public Works Department's redesign process in February 2025. The original design included moren lawns, an amphitheater, large grass events, soccer fields, and ribbon paths. Now, the Floodplain will be left to the Indigenous community to lead the way. We look forward to all these excellent activities finding a more appropriate home in the cyclone portion of the Park outside the flood plain or elsewhere throughout the City.

We hope that some of you might step forward at this second stage of the process – to share your knowledge and passion for native habitats, environmental stewardship, Tribal and Native Nations, and Indigenous Peoples' cultural heritage. The Friends of Neary Lagoon Park is the proper home for completed in 2005, but years later it has now been more of a fit living to Rudolph the dream of harmony between people and nature in the Riverlands. Let's roll out dreams!

Thank you!
Jane Ohlsen, Chairperson
Protect Our River

Read the Full Article Here

Important Club Announcements

SCBC Survey Results Are In!

Thanks to all of you who completed our membership survey in May and June of this year. We received a very good response to the survey, and it was very high with your Bird Club experiences. What follows is a summary of the survey results and actions that club has or will take as a result of your responses. Please note that the full survey results and comments are included in the article on our website so please click below to see what members have and the improvements that you suggested.

We are also looking for some volunteers to implement the improvements so please read the article to see if you can help.

Thank you!
Jane Ohlsen
Conservation Officer

Read the Results Here

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

Heidi Anderson-Hanks, Deborah Bierhaus, Margie Bobbitt-Family, Erik Corrigan Family, Carmen Dagne, Daniel Hakanson, Kevin Johnson, Laura Fenton, Richard Smith, Betsy Tragardh, Faith Zack

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: $450.00 (one time fee)

Join or Renew Your Membership Here

Photo of Vermeulen feeding frenzy off of Seabright Beach courtesy of Joseph Wheatley.

Want To Contribute Content To The Albatross?

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

Please send ideas: santacruzcoastbirds@gmail.com

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