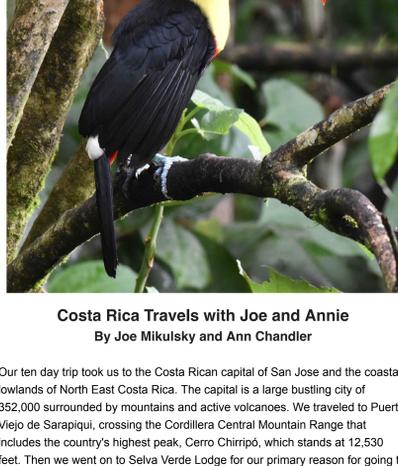




Santa Cruz Bird Club Newsletter Vol. 69 No. 12 December 2025

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.



Costa Rica Travels with Joe and Annie By Joe Mikulsky and Ann Chandler

Our ten day trip took us to the Costa Rican capital of San Jose and the coastal lowlands of North East Costa Rica. The capital is a large bustling city of 352,000 surrounded by mountains and active volcanoes. We traveled to Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, crossing the Cordillera Central Mountain Range that includes the country's highest peak, Cerro Chirripó, which stands at 12,530 feet. Then we went on to Selva Verde Lodge for our primary reason for going to Costa Rica -- **birding!**

Read the full article and enjoy the amazing photo gallery of the birds and other wildlife that Joe and Ann saw while in Costa Rica.

[Read the Full Article](#)

Keel-billed Toucan photo courtesy of Joe Mikulsky

Join Us For The 69th Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 20, 2025

Last year we had a near-record 125 birders participate and 47,124 birds of 184 species were tallied, the latter of which was the highest total since 2003. The count turned up a few exciting rare species including White Wagtail, Lark Bunting, Magnolia Warbler, Short-eared Owl, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Black-footed Albatross.

While rare birds often steal the show, the Christmas Bird Count has always had an important role in monitoring the population trends of wintering birds both locally and across their range in North America. Last year we documented exceptional numbers of seabirds (thousands of Brandt's Cormorants, Brown Pelicans, and Common Murres) and the highest totals ever of Wild Turkey and Canada Goose. What will we find this year?

Come spend the day counting birds to help us find out! Please sign up by clicking the link below as soon as possible so we can begin making assignments for count day.

Thank you!
Nick Levendosky and Alex Rinkert
Compilers

[Sign Up Here](#)

Illustration from Adobe Stockart

Join Us For The Post-Count Potluck Dinner

All Bird Club members and their guests are invited to join us for the post CBC potluck dinner on Saturday, December 20th, from 5 to 9 pm at the C.P.D.E.S. Hall at 216 Evergreen Street, also known as the Portuguese Hall.

The address is on Evergreen Street, but look for the gate to the parking lot on Coral Street then go past Costco, almost to the end of Coral Street and the gate is on your right.

This is a potluck dinner and the club will provide pizza, coffee and hot cider. Side dishes, appetizers and desserts are welcome. Please come even if you haven't had time to fix or pick up anything. The hall is providing a full No Host bar, but absolutely no outside alcohol is allowed. There is a parking lot, but no parking lot security is provided.

The club will be responsible for setting up and putting away the table and chairs (and we are happy to have help).

It will be exciting to hear of the birding adventures of the day. Any rare bird spotted?

I look forward to seeing you there!

Ann Chandler - call me if you have questions - 805 440 4694

SCBC December Field Trips

December 1st - 8:30 - 11:30 am - Henry Cowell State Park Main Entrance

December 6th - 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - Members Only: Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge & Sutter Buttes - Day 1

December 7th - 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - Members Only: Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge & Sutter Buttes - Day 2

December 8th - 8:30 - 11:30 am - Henry Cowell State Park Main Entrance

December 18th - 8:30 - 11:00 am - Skypark

[Get Field Trip Details Here](#)

American Barn Owl photo courtesy of Tom Hambleton

Be On The Lookout for These Birds in December

Be on the lookout for late migrant or over-wintering orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, flycatchers, and warblers which are sometimes found in early December. Least, Dusky, Hammond's, and Dusky-capped Flycatchers have all been found in December, as well as Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and the occasional oriole. Over 20 species of warblers have turned up in past Decembers. Check coastal hotspots like Natural Bridges SB, Ocean View Park, and Lighthouse Field SB, especially where there is flowering or fruiting plants such as Eucalyptus, ivy, and other exotics. Bethany Curve hosted a Black-and-white Warbler the past few winters, and may be doing so again.

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 are by Pete Sole.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Varied Thrush photo courtesy of Pete Sole

The 2025 eBird Taxonomy Update is Complete See What Changed

The 2025 eBird Taxonomy Update is now complete, bringing eBird, Merlin, and other Cornell Lab of Ornithology projects into alignment with the latest science on bird classification. This year's update adds 40 species through splits and removes 18 through lumps, resulting in a new total of 11,167 species worldwide. [Explore the full list of taxonomic changes.](#)

New this year, you can generate a **Personalized eBird Taxonomy Update Report**—a downloadable report that summarizes how this year's splits, lumps, and name changes were applied to your checklists, as well as the net impact on your World Life List total. It's a great overview/synopsis of how your eBirding is staying current with the latest science in bird classification.

[Get Your Personalized Taxonomy Update Report Here](#)

Appreciating Birds Through to Nature Journaling: Using Your Bird as a Birder

By Dana Cox

Nature journaling is the practice of observing and recording the natural world using words, pictures, and numbers. It's not just for artists or scientists. Anyone, at any age or experience level, can begin. It's important to understand what nature journaling is and what it is not. It's far more about the process than the product. Dana delights when a bird she sketches seems to leap off the page, but the true joy lies in sharpening her powers of observation, listening, creativity, and storytelling.

Dana has created an enlightening and comprehensive article about all aspects of nature journaling so click the link below if you have ever been curious about this form of creative expression and want to learn more. Note that you do not have to subscribe to access the article.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Illustration by Dana Cox

Important Club Announcements

There will not be a club meeting at the Santa Cruz Natural History Museum in December. Monthly meetings will resume in January.

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

Sara Blakeslee, Karen Gill, Ted Holman, Karen Lane, Pedro Leal, Henry Robinson Family, and Margaret Seidler

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](#)

Turkey Vultures at Wilder Ranch photo courtesy of Jenny Best

Corrections to October and November Newsletters

Sincere apologies are extended to Kimberly Butts who should have been given attribution for the Willow Flycatcher photo used in the October newsletter and to Nancy Manning who should have been given attribution for the Say's Phoebe photo used in the November newsletter. Both photos are lovely and we thank both photographers for allowing us to use them in the newsletters.

Want To Contribute 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>

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