



Santa Cruz Bird Club Newsletter Vol. 70 No. 4 April 2026

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.



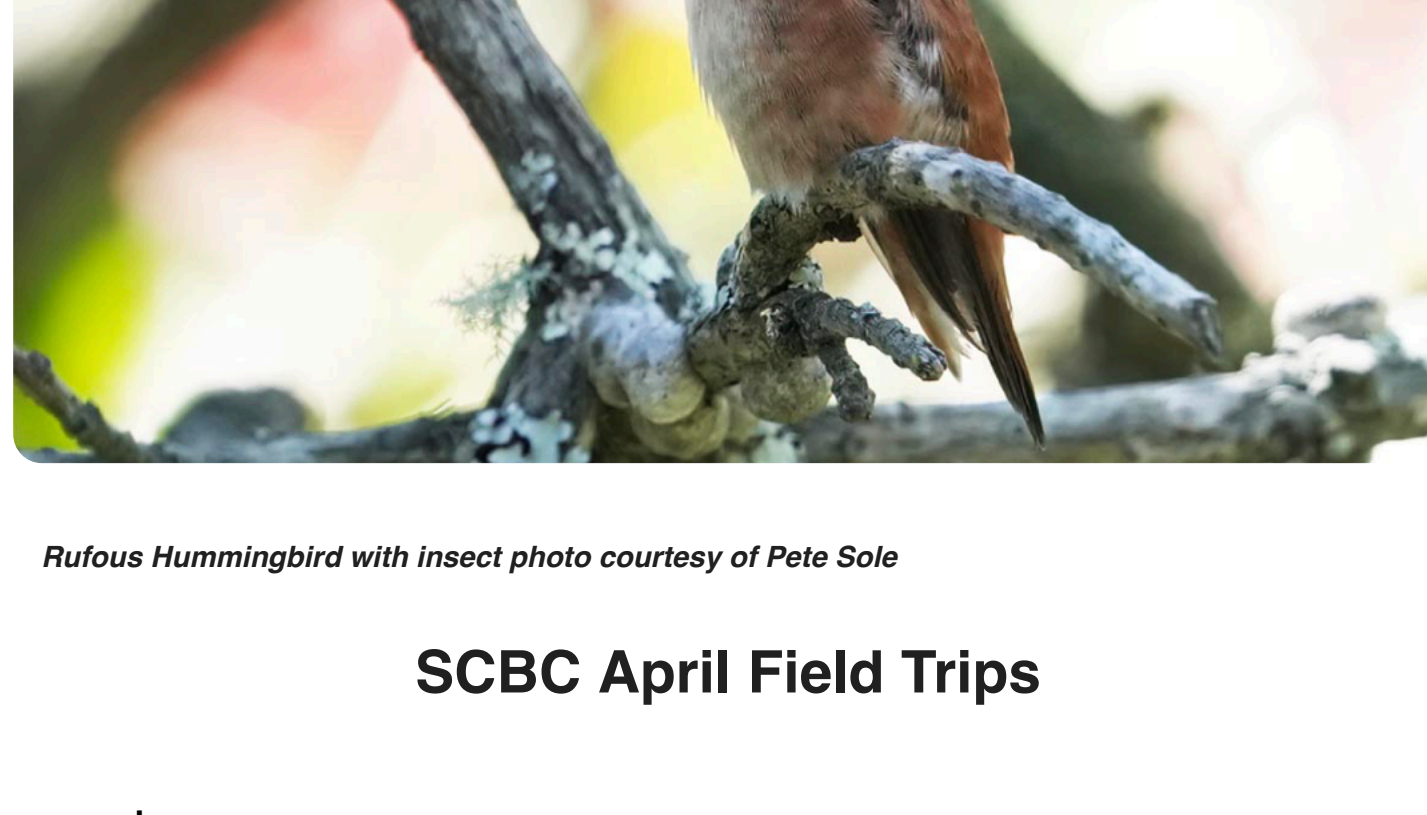
Black Oystercatchers by Judith Romero

Join Us For Our April Meeting Presentation The Central Coast Black Oystercatcher Monitoring Project By Judith Romero

The Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*) is a long-lived shorebird found year-round in Monterey Bay. It ranges along the North American Pacific coast from the Aleutian Islands to Baja California, favoring rocky shorelines. Since 2011, [Monterey Audubon Society](#) (MAS) has been supporting and spearheading the California Central Coast Black Oystercatcher (BLOY) Monitoring Project in the Monterey Bay region and beyond.

Please join us when Judith Romero will talk about the Black Oystercatcher Monitoring Project including the history of the project up to the current state of the project.

Date: Thursday, April 23, 2026
Time: 7 PM
Place: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Drive
Santa Cruz, CA



Rufous Hummingbird with insect photo courtesy of Pete Sole

SCBC April Field Trips

- April 3rd – 8:30 – 11:30 am – Zayante Trail
- April 11th – 8:00 am – 11:00 am – Anna Jean Cummings Park
- April 12th – 9:00 – 11:00 am – Beach Ranch Big Sit - Members Only
- April 14th – 8:30 – 11:30 am – Quail Hollow
- April 20th – 8:30 – 11:30 am – UCSC Hermit Warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets
- April 26th – 7:00 – 11:00 am – Loma Prieta
- April 29th – 8:30 – 11:30 am – UCSC Hermit Warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets

[Get Field Trip Details Here](#)

Check Out These Great Events

State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium
Saturday, April 11, 2026, 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Nelson London Community Center - 301 Center Street, Santa Cruz

This free event, themed "The Confluence of Science, Policy and Action," aims to bridge the gap between environmental research and community stewardship. A tour of the lower San Lorenzo River will take place from 1– 2 pm. [Learn More Here.](#)

Bird Nests as Botanical Time Capsules
Monday, April 13th, 5:30 PM
UCSC Arboretum Horticulture Building

Bird nests may seem ephemeral but in reality they can be timeless! Come learn how nests represent a window to examine plants from the specific place and time when they were built, unlocking information about the ecology of extinct habitats.

5:30 PM plant identification keying session
7:00 PM presentation by Justen Whittall, PhD, Santa Clara University Dept. of Biology

Celebrate Earth Day Santa Cruz 2026
Saturday, April 18th, 11:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Downtown at Pacific Avenue, Cooper Street and Abbot Square Market

This free, family-friendly event brings the community together for a day of live music, interactive exhibits, and eco-friendly inspiration. Explore hands-on activities, educational exhibits, and sustainability-focused booths from local businesses, schools, and organizations. This is a day to celebrate, learn, and take action for a greener future. [Learn More Here.](#)

Watsonville Wetlands Watch Spring Native Plant Sale
Saturday, May 2nd, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center
500 Harkins Slough Road, Watsonville

California native plants are essential for local bird populations because they provide high-energy food sources such as seeds, berries, nectar, and shelter. They host essential insects such as caterpillars, which are crucial for feeding young birds, and provide safe nesting sites. You will see more birds if you plant native plants that provide shelter and food for their young. So please join us at the Native Plant Sale taking place on Saturday, May 2nd, to stock-up on a variety of local natives most of which were grown right here by the staff and volunteers of WWW. [Learn More Here.](#)

American Bird Conservancy and The Bird Conservation Alliance sponsor the International Plastic Pellet Count
Saturday, May 2nd, 2026

Plastic pellets, or "nurdles," are tiny pieces of plastic used as the building blocks for larger plastic products like phone cases, food containers, and car parts. When nurdles enter the environment they can look or smell like food to birds, leading them to mistakenly ingest the harmful plastic. Species especially at risk include the Atlantic Puffin, Red Knot, and Northern Fulmar.

This event is a day of action where volunteers search for plastic pellets in rivers, bays, lakeshores, and beaches to record what they find in order to make a case for action.

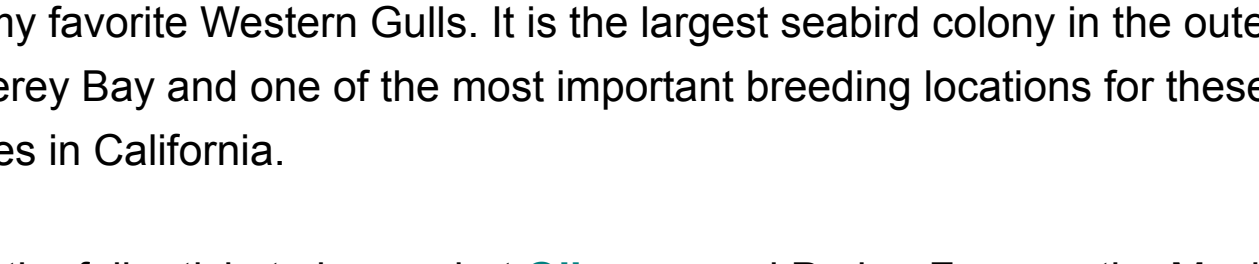
[Register Here](#) if you want to coordinate a count event.

Birdability 2nd Annual Blind Birder Bird-a-Thon
May 3rd and 4th, 2026

Participants who are blind or have low vision can bird anywhere in the world during a 24-hour window on May 3 or 4, 2026. Birding can take place in a backyard, park, balcony, accessible trail, or wherever listening to birds is possible.

Participants count the species they detect by sound or sight and report them to the Bird-a-Thon Compiler. There is no cost to participate. The focus is community, awareness, and access.

Full details and registration are available [Here](#).



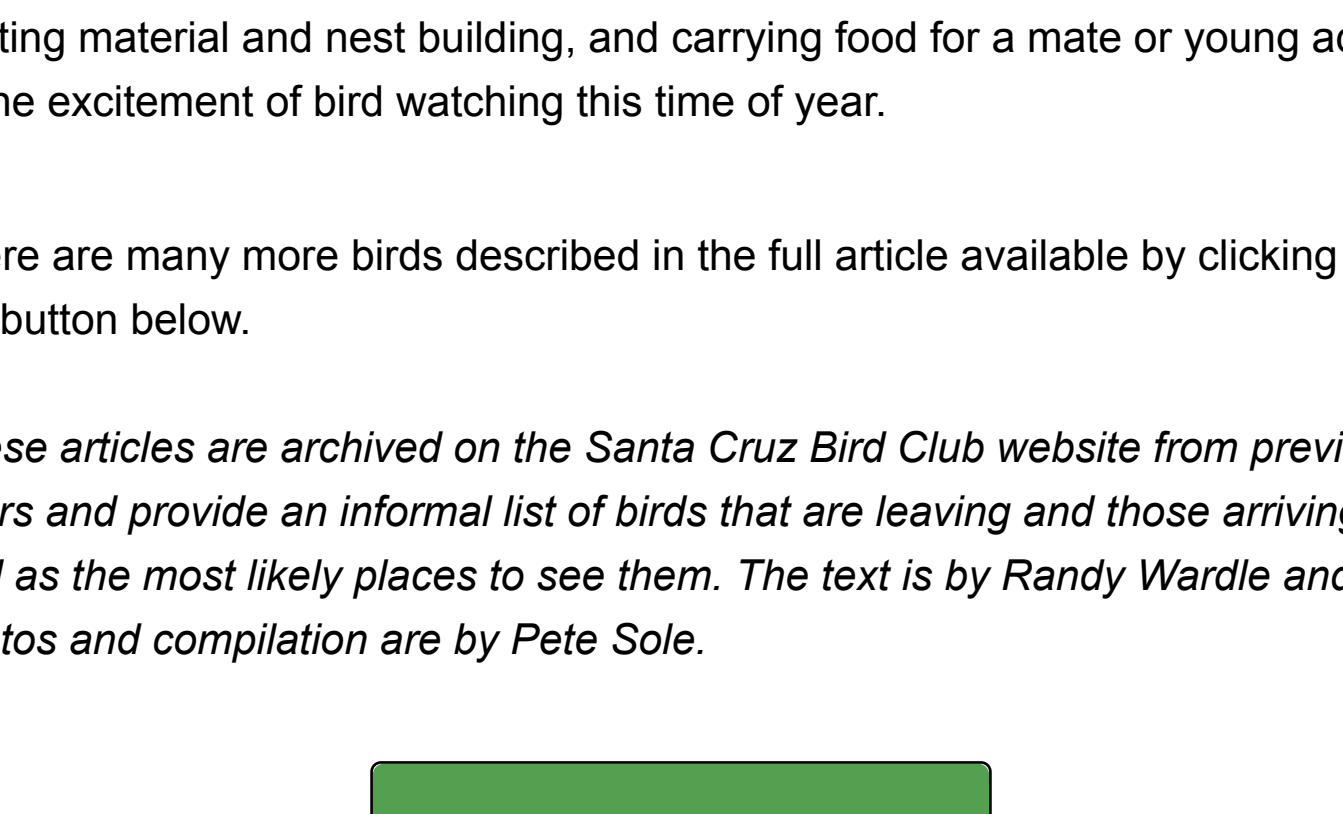
Keeping Eyes on the Seabirds at Año Nuevo Island By Parker Forman

In late February, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 was confirmed in northern elephant seals at Año Nuevo State Park, the first time the virus has been documented in the species. Access to the park and the island is currently restricted, and the popular guided seal tours have been cancelled for the remainder of the season.

Much of the public attention has understandably focused on the elephant seals, but the seabirds sharing the same island are also at risk, and they matter too. Año Nuevo Island hosts over ten thousand breeding seabirds, including seven species designated as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in California: Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, Rhinoceros Auklets, Cassin's Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, Black Oystercatchers, and California Brown Pelicans, along with my favorite Western Gulls. It is the largest seabird colony in the outer Monterey Bay and one of the most important breeding locations for these species in California.

Read the full article to learn what [Oikonos](#) and Parker Forman, the Machine Learning Engineer and Año Nuevo Project Lead, are doing to monitor the birds.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)



Dunlin with Sanderlings photo Courtesy of Pete Sole

Be On The Lookout for These Birds in April

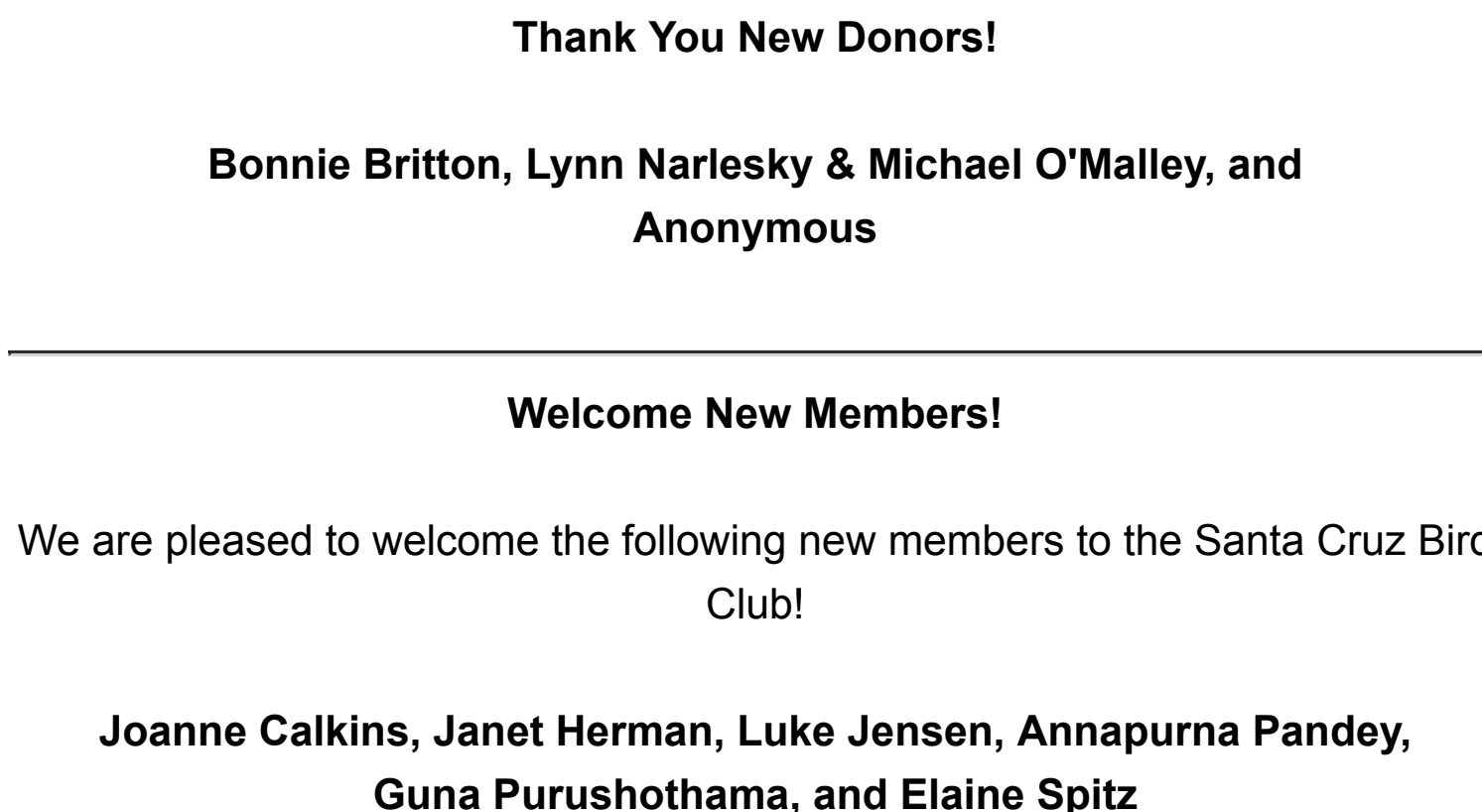
It's April, spring is in full bloom, and migrants are arriving every day to Santa Cruz County. During this month there will be a major migratory movement of many species, on land and at sea.

You should also find many species in the midst of breeding as spring continues. Watching for specific behaviors of breeding such as courtship rituals, carrying nesting material and nest building, and carrying food for a mate or young adds to the excitement of bird watching this time of year.

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](#)



Juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron photo courtesy of Yanat Michaelov

Important Club Announcements

Todd Newberry Fondly Remembered

We had noted that Todd Newberry passed away on February 9, 2026 in the March newsletter and since then, we have been advised that Todd's sister's have suggested that anyone who would like to contribute in Todd's memory may do so to the UCSC Arboretum and/or to the Santa Cruz Bird Club. Todd contributed so much of his time and talent to both of these organizations.

Thank You New Donors!

Bonnie Britton, Lynn Narlesky & Michael O'Malley, and Anonymous

Welcome New Members!

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

Joanne Calkins, Janet Herman, Luke Jensen, Annapurna Pandey, Guna Purushothama, and Elaine Spitz

It is easy to join as a new member or renew your membership on our website. Currently dues are as follows:

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

Announcing an easier way to donate to the Bird Club!

We're happy to announce that you can now make donations on our website via PayPal. Simply go to the Join/ Renew section of our website and The "Donate" button is at the bottom below the Automatic Renewal options. You can enter any amount you desire. We appreciate any and all donations, which are used to enhance club activities for members and to support the good work that other organizations are accomplishing for the benefit of all.

Of course, you can always mail us a check, to PO Box 1304, Santa Cruz, CA 95061!

[Join or Renew Your Membership, or Donate Here](#)

Correction from March 2026 Newsletter. The Elkhorn Slough Ranch Field Trip Report was incorrectly attributed to Lisa Sheridan. It was actually written by Pete Sole - thank you Pete for providing this great report!

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>

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

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