View this email in your browser

Santa Cruz Bird Club Newsletter
Vol. 70 No. 5, May 2025

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

Burrowing Owl Photo Courtesy of the Tabor Ecological Research Group

May Club Meeting Presentation

Save the Imperiled Burrowing Owl: Conservation and Management Strategies
By Sandra Mesdorf and Ryan Phillips

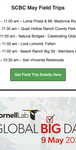
Since 2016, Tabor Ecological Research Group has managed burrowing owls throughout Santa Clara County under the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan. We have banded over 100 owls, implanted over 50 microchips, installed over 100 nest boxes, passively overwintered (heat-starting) and soft-release, reintroduction to sites that are protected in perpetuity, and habitat management. We will also present spatial data on burrowing owls (saffron) with GPS tags.

Bios:

Ryan Phillips has been a wildlife biologist since 2004 and has focused his work on avian ecology and conservation in California and Central America. He received a B.Sc. in Wildlife, Conservation Biology and Fisheries with a specialization in Ornithology from the University of California at Davis and a M.Sc. in Environmental Studies at San Jose State University studying Neotropical raptor migration.

Sandra Mesdorf is an avian ecologist and an experienced burrowing owl biologist and has focused her work on the conservation of this species since 2006. She has monitored and managed burrowing owls and their habitat year-round at a variety of locations throughout the Bay Area and in the Central Valley. Early in her career, she worked for the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group where she identified active nest ledges of peregrine falcons.

Date: Thursday, April 29, 2026
Time: 7:00 pm
Place: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East-West Drive
Santa Cruz, CA



Harold Mandas photo courtesy of Pam Nickerson

SCBC May Field Trips

May 2nd – 7:00 – 11:00 am – Loma Prieta & Mt. Madonna Road
May 9th – 8:30 – 11:30 am – Quail Hollow Ranch County Park
May 9th – 8:00 – 11:00 am - Natural Bridges - Celebrating Global Big Day
May 14th – 9:00 – 10:00 am - Lick Lomond, Felton
May 17th – 9:00 – 11:00 am - Beach Ranch Bird Sp. Monitoring Only
May 29th – 8:00 – 10:30 am – San Vincente Redwoods

See Field Trip Details Here

Be a part of birding's biggest team! Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, go outside on 9 May, help celebrate World Migratory Bird Day and share the birds you find with eBird.

Last year, Global Big Day collected more data about birds on a single day than ever before. More than 1.7 million people participated in the celebration, observing more than 7,700 species and adding more than 6.4 million to the global pool of birding. **Will this be the year we pass 3,000 species on a single day?**

What In The World is FLIRDING?

Flirding is the term that has been coined for "picking up bugs while birding." The word was inspired by *plogging* – "picking up trash while jogging," with the *pl* part taken from the Swedish verb *plocka up*, or "pick up."

And now May has been designated Flirding Month to celebrate and bring awareness to the practice. The month designation has been spearheaded by the podcast *Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds* to encourage folks to pick up trash during the month we are perhaps birding the most as we take to spring migration.

Flirting live, beat fishing bottle and bullets, balloons, and plastic are most harmful to birds, and it is good practice to pick them up and dispose of them whenever we see them.

For more on how to pitch, whether it's on your own or with a group, and ideas for how to spread the good pitching word, visit *Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds pitching* webpage.

This article was excerpted from the April BIRD Dispatch newsletter available Here.

There's a LOT Happening in May!
Check Out These Other Events Happening Around the Central Coast

May 1st & 2nd - 7 pm - First Friday Celebration
Hosted by Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
Free admission, 7 pm - 10 pm

Come say hi to our Barbara Swallow at the Santa Cruz Bird Club's celebration First Friday for a special Nature Retreat coloring featuring the 3rd of Nature exhibit. Explore artwork inspired by the artists' time in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and enjoy live music, hands-on activities and artmaking powered by Kinetic Kinetic Arts Collective. Visit Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History.

May 2nd - 9 am - 1 pm - Watsonville Network Watch Native Plant Sale
Hosted by Watsonville Network Watch
100 Harkins Slough Road, Watsonville

California native plants are essential for local bird populations because they provide high energy food resources and shelter for birds and their insect prey. Visit the Watsonville Network Watch plant sale and learn more about native plant habitat from the staff and volunteers of WNW. Learn More Here.

May 9th - 9 - 11:30 am - Birdwalk - Point Lobos
Hosted by Monterey Bay Audubon Society
Point Lobos - Bird Island Trail

Birding and exploring together along the ADA accessible Bird Island Trail at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. Bring binoculars and a field guide.

May 9th - 9 - 11:30 am - Birding at Lucas Park Regional Park
Sponsored by Central Coast Birding Collective
Lucas Park, Santa Cruz County

Birds are exploring together along the ADA accessible Bird Island Trail at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. Bring binoculars and a field guide.

May 9th - 9 - 11:30 am - Birding at Lucas Park Regional Park
Sponsored by Central Coast Birding Collective
Lucas Park, Santa Cruz County

Birds Santa Cruzers have a passport to explore for the many species in Lucas and it is part of the Central Coast Birding Trail which connects over 80 prime birding locations spanning from Ventura County up to Santa Cruz County.

Click here to RSVP! Update phone directions, and add this event to your personal calendar.

May 9th - 9:00 - 11:00 am - Duck Talk & Bird Walk with Sophie Wood Brinker
Hosted by Watsonville Wetlands Watch Watsonville Wetlands Watch
Watsonville, CA

Get ready to learn about the birds of Santa Cruz County and the lessons they offer with author Sophie Wood Brinker. Walkers the trail with, she's discuss her new birding guide, Birds of Santa Cruz, a fine-grained, hand-drawn guide to the birds of Santa Cruz County. Sophie is a lifelong resident of Santa Cruz and given to the Monterrey Bay Birding Trail. Sophie is the author of the book, Birds of Santa Cruz, a fine-grained, hand-drawn guide to the birds of Santa Cruz County. Visit www.sophiewoodbrinker.com for more information.

May 14th - 10 - 11:30 am Beginning Birding at Lagoon Grande Park
Sponsored by Monterey Audubon Society
Lagoon Grande Park, Marina, CA

Everyone is welcome! We are happy to have you, especially encouraged! Learn birding basics such as equipment options, bird ID strategies, and the many field resources that can help you learn even more about birds! Visit www.montereyaudubon.org/ for more info.

May 21st - 8 - 9 am - Riparian Bird Surveying the Birds of Santa Cruz
Hosted by Santa Cruz Bird Club
Twin Lakes State Beach, Santa Cruz

Join Ryan and Kim Brandon and 4 of Nature and Kaylee Wood Brown for a special free-access hour at the Twin Lakes State Beach Bird Sanctuary. Ryan and Kim will be leading a special bird survey of the riparian habitat and will be sharing their knowledge of what's known about local populations. Visit www.scbirdclub.com for more information.

May 23rd - 9 - 11:30 am - Birding Around Watsonville
Sponsored by Monterey Audubon Society
Watsonville, CA

Lagoon Grande Park - Terrestrial, wet, 20 - Origin Hwy. Monterey

Learn how to use binoculars and find more birds! Organized in partnership with the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. Visit www.and-marine.com/ and RSVP.

May 31st - 2 - 4 pm - Birding and Nature Journaling
Hosted by Watsonville Wetlands Watch
Nature Lagoon 1700 California St., Santa Cruz, CA

Join author Sophie Wood Brinker and Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History educator Jenny Raine for an afternoon of birding and nature journaling. Bring your own binoculars and journal, and we'll explore together, then settle in to sketch and observe what we find. All supplies are provided. — no experience needed!

Marsh/Grinnell's Warbler photo Courtesy of Rob Bell

Be On The Lookout for These Birds in May

It is May and most of our spring migrants have arrived by now and nesting activity for most species has begun in earnest. Seabird migration is still going strong during the first week or two of May.

While our regularly occurring migrant flycatchers such as Western, Cliff-throated, Ash-throated, and Western Wood Pewees have arrived, there are also records for some of the rare ones in May. Keep an eye out for Willow, Hammond's, Dusky, and Gray Flycatchers.

This month is a good time to look for breeding Yellow, Hermit, MacGillivray's, and Black-throated Gray Warblers. A few migrant Nashville are possible as well. Also look for the less common Yellow-breasted Chats in riparian areas.

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 Mantle and the photos and compilation are by Pete Sole.

Read the Full Article Here

California Condor Photo Courtesy of Jean Rinkert

Santa Cruz Birds
by Alex Rinkert
Including reports from September 1 to December 31, 2025

This was an interesting fall season as many of the regularly occurring rarities were either in low numbers or were absent. Most notable were the absence of the rare hummingbirds: Ruby-throated, Rufous, Calliope, Black-chinned, Costa's, and Anna's. Two rarities were present in low numbers: Allen's and Broad-billed. Two rarities were present in low numbers: Allen's and Broad-billed. Two rarities were present in low numbers: Allen's and Broad-billed