

Santa Cruz Bird Club's 300 Club

Individuals in the 300 Club have seen at least 300 different bird species in Santa Cruz County. Not every birder keeps a County list, but the individuals listed below have recorded at least this many species. To join this exclusive group, contact [Phil Brown](#).

David Suddjian 416 Species



David is actually the only member of the 400 club. He was a resident of Santa Cruz County from 1985 – 2013. He amassed or assisted in finding an amazing 29 first county records. His favorite was a singing Wood Thrush at Chalk Mountain. He was the county bird records keeper from 1986-2013 and Santa Cruz Christmas Bird Count compiler from 1989-2013. He also served as coordinator for the Santa Cruz Breeding Bird Atlas (1997-1993) and put together the online birding site guide for the Santa Cruz Bird Club. The Marbled Murrelet is a special bird for David and one he has studied in its forest nesting habitat since 1990.

David has been an avid eBirder since 2009, and much of his recent birding in SCZ focused on his local patches in the Capitola and Seacliff areas, generating 1000s of checklists for eBird. Away from those areas he enjoyed birding at College Lake and Rancho Del Oso. In December 2013 David moved to Colorado and is exploring new birding horizons there, but he still keeps tabs on Santa Cruz.

Steve Gerow
372 Species



Steve was a dedicated patch birder. He did most of his birding on the west side of the city of Santa Cruz. West Cliff Drive, Natural Bridges, Meder Canyon are just a few of the sites he favored. He was a county resident from 1976 to 2017. Prior to that he and his Dad occasionally made birding trips here from their home in Salinas, so essentially he birded in the county for 40 years.

Steve has two first county records. The Dusky Warbler he found at Antonelli Pond is the most well known. His favorite was the Painted Redstart he found in the Bethany Curve Greenbelt. He contributed to the online Santa Cruz Bird Guide and served on the Bird Club board. He was a regular contributor to the Monterey Bay Birders listserve.

Earl Lebow
371 Species



Earl has been birding and leading bird trips on the Central Coast of California since he moved here from the East Coast in 1986. Though he had been birding for many years in and around NYC, his skill and passion for birding increased exponentially when he moved to Santa Cruz. He has birded extensively throughout the United States, Central and South America, Africa and Europe.

He has led trips for the Santa Cruz Bird Club, been a Bird Club Officer and participated in the Santa Cruz Breeding Bird Atlas Project. He enjoys sharing his love of birds and birding with others. Earl's favorite place to bird in Santa Cruz County is Rancho Del Oso and Waddell Creek. He discovered both American Redstart and Gray Flycatcher there. Other exciting finds were Eurasian Widgeon on Corcoran Lagoon. Prairie Falcon and Ferruginous Hawk in the Moore Creek Uplands and a first county X-mas count record of Sandhill Crane in the same location.

Alex Rinkert
366 Species



Alex grew up in the Santa Cruz Mountains and is now finishing a degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UC Santa Cruz. Innately interested in natural history at a young age, his second grade teacher set his birding interest in motion, and a few years later, David Suddjian introduced him to birding in Santa Cruz County. Quail Hollow Ranch County Park was a favorite locale until moving to the coast when he began exploring the hidden pockets and far reaches of the county. This has helped him find some of his favorite birding locations: the Pajaro Hills, Loma Prieta ridgeline, and Wilder Ranch State Park.

He is an avid user of eBird, and enjoys birding in undercovered or difficult to access areas with little data. He was part of several record-setting county big days with John, Nick, and Christian, and he looks forward to their next attempt. Memorable birding moments he is lucky enough to have experienced with others include several encounters with Boobies (Masked and Blue -footed), a Red Crossbill invasion, a handful of first county records, and all the local oddities that continually keep things interesting.

Lois Goldfrank
365 Species



Lois is a 45 year resident of Santa Cruz. She became interested in birding when she and her husband Wally became empty nesters. They don't spend much time at the nest any more, but they do visit their grandchildren frequently in New York/New Jersey. They are avid world birders and on a recent trip to Western Australia completed their goal to see one representative of every family with the Noisy Scrub-bird. Lois's "home patch" is Younger Lagoon which she describes as, "an easy place to drop by when ostensibly going shopping. You never know what may show up." Surprises have included a Ruff, Yellow-breasted Chat, and a White-winged Dove.

Perhaps Lois's most surprising county birding moment came on a trip led by Steve Gerow. She was looking into a tangle and saw a color, then a pattern, then a bird never seen before in California: a Common Cuckoo! Another was the Burrowing Owl that stayed for the winter after showing up on Hallowe'en on the roof of the elementary school where she was the librarian.

Roger Wolfe
363 Species



Roger has resided in the county full time since 1975. His family has maintained a beach house in Seacliff since 1967 where he often spent summers. He began birding in 1989 when a story in the Santa Cruz Sentinel announced that a Eurasian bird had been found in a local park. With a newly received Christmas gift of mini-binoculars in hand he went to have a look. There he met birders who kindly pointed out the Brambling and so began his list.

Roger likes birding the Watsonville wetlands; Struve, Harkins and Watsonville Sloughs and College Lake in winter. He likes their easy access and the fact that they can be birded thoroughly in the course of a brief visit.

In addition to farming olives in Corralitos he works as a naturalist for Monterey Bay Whale Watch and he is the coordinator of Monterey Seabirds. He loves being on the ocean and interacting with the marine mammals, seabirds and ecotourists from all over the world. His most memorable county bird was of the Great-winged Petrel which was the third North American record for that species. Hudsonian Godwit was his other first county record.

John Luther
361 Species



I have never lived in Santa Cruz County, but have birded there for over 40 years. The varied habitats with wonderful birds always make it a joy to visit and bird in such a beautiful county. And of course the birders there always come up with new and exciting birds from Brambling to Yellow Wagtail to Dusky Warbler to Hudsonian Godwit. Since I live in Oakland it is not a long drive to Santa Cruz if I time my drive to miss the traffic. The total number of species that I have seen in Santa Cruz County is a reflection of the great birders finding great birds and quickly sharing the news and the specifics about locations.

Being a county birder that birds all 58 counties in California those specific in regards to location are critical and Santa Cruz birders are great in giving them. I have seen over 225 NIB (no introduced birds) in each California county and 300 in each of the 58 coastal counties of California, but always love to get back to beautiful Santa Cruz for more. Keep finding those spectacular birds!!

Scott Terrill
357 Species



Scott has lived in Santa Cruz County since 1997. Originally a California native, Scott was gone from the State from 1973 to 1990 pursuing graduate degrees and research on bird migration behavior and ecology from Arizona to New York to the Max-Planck Institute in Germany. Scott has also served on the California Bird Records Committee, as a Regional Editor for North American Birds and the Research Director for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

During the long absence from California, he missed a number of rare birds in the state, including some in Santa Cruz County, but has been fortunate to manage to see a number of the rare birds found (mostly by others) in the county the past 20 years. Scott and Linda like to bird anywhere in the county, but are particularly fond of birding offshore and in the coastal “vagrant traps”. They have the same total number of species, but each as seen a species of warbler in the county that the other has not. Santa Cruz is a great county and we feel very fortunate to live and bird here!

Phil Brown
357 Species



Phil has had a lifetime interest in birds, sparked by his father. He did not get serious about it until challenged by a work colleague with "the first 100 should be easy". Provoked, he searched the net and found the Santa Cruz Bird Club web site. His first Bird Club walk was led by David Suddjian and he was astonished and delighted to see 20 new species that morning, 17th of January 2004.

His first warblers (Black Throated Grey and Wilson's) were shown by Bonnie Bedzin, a lovely lady who has not yet been mentioned on this page, and as a group the warblers are a constant challenge, delight and perennial favorite.

He credits the following outstanding club members for building his skills, David Suddjian, Todd Newberry, Clay Kempf, David Ekdahl, Eric Feuss, and for the Pelagics Debi Shearwater and Roger Wolfe.

A special mention has to go to one of the county's (for that matter the USA's) outstanding birders, Steve Gerow. Steve was very patient and helpful when Phil was starting, and was responsible for finding a very large number of his county rarities. Steve's help has been invaluable in reaching this target, and he can't thank him enough.

Outstanding birds include a Brown Booby at Natural Bridges (his favorite birding spot, and despite the ribbing his wife and her friends gave him), a Yellow-Billed Cuckoo at the same place, and the same tri-fecta mentioned by Wally Goldfrank.

Nick Levendosky
350 Species



Nicholas was first introduced to the idea of birding while taking a natural history and ecology course at Prescott College in 2001. Although he found this idea rather silly at first, the puzzle and game of identifying birds quickly peaked his interest and he was hooked.

From that point on he has worked to transform from a casual birder to an intentional observer.

Nicholas has devoted a significant amount of time getting into the field to 'simply learn birds' since moving back to Santa Cruz in 2007. He most appreciates the relationship between species and habitat-believing birding lends itself to building a sense of place and physical community around one's home.

Wally Goldfrank

346 Species



Wally was a 45-year resident of Santa Cruz and taught Sociology and Latin American & Latino Studies at UCSC. He began birding in the Adirondack Mountains (NY) while earning his Wildlife Management merit badge as a Boy Scout in 1954, but became serious about it only in the early 1990s when empty-nested by his adult children. They and their families now live in the New York City area, squaring the circle, and rendering Central Park a favorite birding venue.

He loved looking for birds and mammals in distant lands. His and his wife Lois's project of seeing at least one member of each world bird family came to fruition with the September 2012 sighting of the Noisy Scrub-bird in Western Australia. Among monotypic families, his favorite was the bizarre Shoebill, recorded at three different sites on a 2008 adventure in Rwanda and Uganda—one of them requiring an impromptu walking safari when their boat broke down on the Nile.

He credits many local mentors for helping him improve his field skills, including many other members of the 300 Club plus many other gifted SCBC adepts: Clay Kempf, Todd Newberry, Debi Shearwater, Jeff Poklen, Eric Feuss, and the late Steve Allison. His favorite local days were (1) a fall morning at Natural Bridges when within about twenty minutes several locals found a Wilson's, a Hooded, and a Canada warbler for a rare trifecta, and (2) a tennis morning on the UCSC East courts when looking up at a first serve toss enabled a startling view of an adult Bald Eagle directly overhead.

Jeff Wall
344 Species



Jeff started birding in 1965 while working as a range surveyor for the BLM in NE CA. It got easier after he took his guitar to Reno and pawned it for a pair of binoculars. For the next 40 years birding was always a secondary hobby while he pursued sports like running, biking, and kayaking, but he always had binoculars close at hand. In 1974 he and his wife Susan moved to San Francisco and a couple of years later he discovered Joe Morlan's field ornithology classes which he attended for several years. After retiring from the Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory at UCSF in 2001 he spent four years volunteering in the raptor banding program run by the GGRO.

Jeff and Susan moved to Santa Cruz in 2005 to be near their daughter after their grandson was born. Jeff discovered the SCBC field trips and met other birders in the area. Getting too old for endurance sports, birding became his main activity. Then, in 2008, the club put on the big year which more than doubled the number of field trips led by experts like Steve Gerow, David Suddjian, and others. Jeff saw the frequent guided trips of the big year as an opportunity to advance his knowledge of birds and his own Santa Cruz Co. list, and it worked. Following the trip leaders and taking advantage of their eyes and ears led to sightings of many birds he would never have found on his own. His most memorable birding event was when a group he was with was looking at a Mountain Plover and a Rough-legged Hawk flew over. His favorite birding area is Watsonville Slough. One of his favorite bird sightings was a Black Tern seen there in July, 2011.

Randy Morgan
338 Species



Randy had a seminal role in Santa Cruz County's modern birding history, helping to shepherd the county into the modern birding age in the 1970s, beginning to county's bird records files, and finding lots of great birds. Beginning in 1974, Randy found on his own or with others 11 first county records, including two species that have still not been found in the county since – Greater Pewee in 1975 and Nelson's Sparrow in 1977! Here is a paraphrased excerpt about Randy from an account of the history of birds in Santa Cruz County published in the Albatross in 2006:

“Morgan was born in 1947 and resided in Soquel into the 1990s before moving to the coast northwest of Santa Cruz. Self-admitted “scientific-nature-minded-from - birth,” Morgan had a passion for natural history and birds were one of his initial loves. The historical record finds him hovering around the periphery of local birding world during the 1960s, and coming into the forefront in the mid-1970s. His creation of the “Bird File” was the first attempt at collating and consolidating the county ornithological record since Streater (1947), and it was easily the most thorough archive ever gathered up to that time.... In looking back over the county files one sees a burst of records beginning in 1974 led by Morgan's field efforts. This was the California revolution brought home to SCZ, sparked and highlighted by the discovery of many rarities.. Morgan and others began to visit many areas of the county that were little explored, or for which there was little information from recent years. Eventually his interest in botany (he is widely regarded as a county expert) and entomology would lead him away from a prominent role in the SCZ birding world, but his impact in establishing the “Bird File” was pivotal. (D. L. Suddjian 2006, Albatross 50 (2): 24)

David Sidle
336 Species



David caught the birding bug on a trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains with his brother Dan in 2002. In 2003 he met his first Santa Cruz birder, Kumaran Arul, who turned him on the Santa Cruz Bird Club and MBB. Soon he went on club field trips led by Steve Gerow, Eric Feuss, Todd Newberry, David Suddjian, Clay Kempf, and others and met the other fine and friendly local birders. Eventually, he was able to lead beginner's bird walks for the club himself.

Terrace Point seems to be a lucky area for David where he found a Prairie Warbler in 2009 and a Pacific Golden-Plover in 2010 that were "chaseable" for other birders in the days after.

Roy Carlson
335 Species



Roy lives in San Carlos, San Mateo County, and has been birding in California since 1970. He has been a member (off and on) of the SCBC since the mid-70s. He began his Santa Cruz County list in 1971, often birding here with Peter Metropulos, and encountering Santa Cruz birders of that era such as Bill Anderson and Randy Morgan.

Roy has birded in much of the Lower 48 states; and in Europe, Central America, Caribbean, Ecuador, Galapagos, eastern and southern Africa, and New Guinea. His current emphasis is on birding all 58 California counties. He has at least 125 species (NIB) in each of them.

Being retired from the information technology field since December 31, 1999 (not wanting to ruin a new century) has been a BIG help! He especially enjoys birding in Santa Cruz County with its varied habitat and the universal helpfulness and friendliness of the Santa Cruz birders.

Michelle Scott
329 Species



Michelle caught the birding bug just prior to her 4 ½ year stint working at The Birdfeeder. She has also assisted with Snowy Plover surveys on the North Coast.

She likes to bird close to her home on the west side of Santa Cruz where she enjoys easy access to Lighthouse Field, Meder Canyon, UCSC Arboretum, Natural Bridges, Younger Lagoon, Long's Marine Lab, Antonelli Pond and Wilder Ranch State Park.

Appropriately her email handle is Surf Scoter, Michelle is an avid surfer. Her most memorable county birds were the Grace's Warbler and the Dusky Warbler with the Common Ground-Dove at the Homeless Garden a close third. She hit 300 for the county with the Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Struve Slough.

Jeff Davis
329 Species



Jeff resided in Santa Cruz for seven years. Currently he lives in Fresno, CA . When he is in Santa Cruz County he spends most of his time birding from an airplane. He does aerial seabird surveys for UCSC under contract with the Department of Fish and Game-Office of Spill Prevention and Response. Jeff taught at UCSC where he was the senior museum scientist and curator. From 1992-95 he served as the onsite coordinator for the Big Sur Ornithology Lab. He is a former SCBC president.

While leading a group of students on the ocean he found and photographed a Red-footed Booby but unfortunately the photos were inconclusive and the CBRC accepted it as a Booby sp. He also saw what he and a fellow observer on an aerial survey felt strongly was a White-tailed Tropicbird but their view was brief and they did not submit a report to the CBRC. While doing a survey in a closed area of Wilder State Park he found a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher but did not get photos and could not put the word out. That record was not accepted. He terms these “quasi first county records.”

His most memorable county bird was a Lesser Nighthawk he caught in a mist net at Wilder that he describes as, “spectacular-such intricate plumage patterns, huge eyes and broad, gaping mouth.” His favorite place to bird was Meder Canyon because of its rural feel in the midst of the suburbs which was a pleasant diversion on his way up to the campus.

John Garrett

329 Species



A native of Pasadena, California, and a birder since age 8, John Garrett moved to UC Santa Cruz in fall 2011 to begin his undergraduate studies in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. That fall was exceptional for Eastern and Mexican passerines, and he probably saw more vagrants in his first few weeks in Santa Cruz than in ten years in Pasadena. In SoCal, John had mastered the art of parasitically latching onto birders who owned cars; he deftly employed these skills in Santa Cruz, begging incessantly for rides from Nick Levendosky, Alex Rinkert, and Christian Schwarz. He would not have reached the 300 Club by now if not for their generosity, and he cannot thank them enough for their patience and good company.

John's favorite birding spots are those closest to where he lives: UCSC campus, Natural Bridges, Lighthouse Field, Neary Lagoon, even Westlake Pond, as well as the farthest corners of the county: Loma Prieta, Watsonville, Rancho del Oso, and the Monterey/Santa Cruz pelagic boundary (with many thanks to Shearwater Journeys for access to the latter). His favorite birding moments are most easily identified by the intensity of his cursing, such as the Watsonville Cuckoo Massacre, the Masked Booby that flew over the San Lorenzo River, or the evening he and Alex (along with David Suddjian and the Goldfranks) realized they were listening to an Eastern (not "just" a Mexican) Whip-poor-will in Aptos. In spring 2012, John joined Nick, Alex and Christian for a record-setting Santa Cruz Big Day of 166, and again with Nick and Alex in February 2013, reaching 168. With these milestones accomplished, he hopes to spend more time birding areas with little eBird data, as well as studying dragonflies, mushrooms, and other organisms.

Steve Rovell
325 Species



Back in his native Orange County, Steve Rovell was introduced to birding by his 8th grade Advanced Science teacher. That interest faded as he didn't have transportation and didn't know anyone else that birded! Twelve years later, his college friends got him interested again.

In 1990, Steve moved from Humboldt, where he went to college, to Monterey County to start his teaching career. He quickly learned that the Monterey Bay region had an incredible diversity of bird life. Most of his birding was in Monterey County, but trips to Santa Cruz to see outstanding birds such as Brambling and Dusky Warbler got him hooked. In May, 2011, Steve spotted his 300th species in the county, a singing Chipping Sparrow. He is amazed that such a small county has attracted some incredible mega-rarities such as Lesser Sand-Plover, Eastern Whip-poor-will and Common Cuckoo! Thanks to all that found them.

When he isn't birding, Steve enjoys teaching biology and Earth science, tending his native plant garden, playing soccer, watching the San Jose Sharks hockey and San Jose Earthquakes soccer, and looking for odes. His sons, Julian (16) and Marco (10) have accompanied him on many odeing excursions, but haven't yet caught the birding bug. Julian is a junior at Monterey High School in the MAOS Program (Monterey Academy of Oceanographic Sciences). He currently has a 4.625 grade point average. He puts his dad to shame. Marco is in 5th grade at the International School of Monterey and is a star goalie for his traveling soccer team. Steve's beautiful wife, Venetia, teaches English at the same school as he does.

**Sharon Hull
326 Species**



Sharon's fascination with birds began at about age 2, when her Arkansas grandmother took her on her version of bird walks around her rural home. No binoculars of course and they saw only the birds that inhabited that little part of the world, but she had the woodsman's knowledge of habitat and life cycles and was very effective at getting a little girl thoroughly hooked. Fast forward to the 70s, when Sharon's Navy husband's career moved them to the Monterey area, and she discovered that the world of birding was exploding and that she had happened to be plopped down at its epicenter. There she learned from the local uber-birders just how all-consuming birding could be. For many years, because of jobs, kids and other commitments, birding was a very intermittent activity that only occasionally got her full attention. Fast forward again, this time to Santa Cruz and retirement, where she realized to her total delight that she was in birder's heaven and that there was a vibrant community of other birders here, with many great teachers and similarly-obsessed people to share her interest. The SCBC's big year in 2008 and several periods of big feeding frenzies on Monterey Bay were especially exciting times. She's also discovered the joys of local pelagic trips since she found a good remedy for seasickness.

Sharon has since discovered the delights of birding festivals and investigating hot spots all over the US, as well as traveling for birding outside of the country, especially in South and Central America. Her favorite local birding areas include the big organic garden at Mid-county Senior Center where she has plots, and the riparian corridor of Leona Creek near her home in Live Oak. Her most memorable birding experience was seeing a Harpy Eagle hen and chick at the nest in a huge quipo tree in the Darien of Panama. She always watches especially for a Peregrine Falcon wherever she happens to be since that was her grandson Pippin's middle name and totem bird. Recently, seeing the very rare peregrine pallid morph in Chile was a special thrill.

John Sterling
316 Species



John has never spent more than one night at a time in Santa Cruz County, but has been birding there off and on since the mid 1970s while embarking on the task of learning first-hand the distribution and status of birds in all 58 of the state's counties. . Starting at the age of 11, he has worked birds into his life as his hobby and career. He grew up in Napa County and by age 16 had met many of the top birders in California during that formative era of birding in the 1970s. John has often thought of living in Santa Cruz, and envy those who do.

His favorite birding experiences in the county include finding a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Watsonville Slough, seeing and hearing the Eastern Whip-poorwill with his daughter Lydia and good friends, barely missing the Upland Sandpiper with John Parmeter but remaining to search all day and ending up seeing the first Yellow Wagtail, and chasing and seeing the Dusky Warbler, Common Cuckoo, Great Crested Flycatcher, Brambling, Little Gull, White Wagtail among others. He lives in Yolo County with his wife Amy Wilson and teenaged daughters, Lydia and Natalia. He currently has his own environmental consulting business and teaches birding classes, leads occasional international tours and photographs every natural thing that he can.

Matt Brady
309 Species



Matt moved to Santa Cruz in September, 2001 to start his undergraduate studies at UC Santa Cruz. There he quickly met up with David Vander Pluym, who introduced him to the wonders of Monterey Bay's pelagic bird life. He and David birded Santa Cruz extensively, making forays to Pt Reyes, Big Sur and South San Francisco Bay. Eventually, Matt started an internship at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab, which launched him on a career as a traveling field biologist. Despite working in such exotic locales as Costa Rica, Ecuador and Southeast Farallon Island, he has always maintained a fondness for Santa Cruz County birding. Though it took him almost eight years, magic number 300 came in the form of a Cook's Petrel during the unprecedented "invasion" of Summer 2009.

Some of Matt's greatest birding experiences in Santa Cruz have been of epic misses: the Common Ground-Dove, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, the Yellow-throated Vireo, the 7 Shearwater Day, the list goes on and on. This has led Matt to adopt an almost Zen-like approach to birding in the county: enjoying the rarities he has seen, and maintaining calm over all the ones he has missed. Birds like Oscar's Dusky Warbler, the Gray Catbird, a spring Baltimore Oriole (his best self-found bird in the county) and two Crested Caracaras, among many other highlights, have helped him at this task. His favorite place to bird in the county is Wilder Ranch State Park, a place that feels rife with possibility. In his opinion, it has the same feel as places like Big Sur or outer Pt Reyes, and he's looking forward to the day when he finds his first "mega" deep in a thick willow patch there.

Oscar Johnson
305 Species



Oscar has been a birder since the age of 5 when he was introduced to it by his father. Traveling widely in Central America and across the United States, even at a young age encouraged his enthusiasm for birding. He moved to California in 2004 with his family, at which point he started enthusiastically birding across California, including making occasional trips to Santa Cruz County. In fall 2008 he moved to Santa Cruz to attend University and stayed there until graduating in early 2011.

His favorite find was a second county record of Dusky Warbler at Antonelli Pond, followed by a fly-over Red-throated Pipit at the same location the following day. However, his favorite day of birding occurred on 15 Oct 2006 while on a pelagic trip on Monterey Bay, when seven species of shearwaters were found, including a Great Shearwater, a Streaked Shearwater and three Manx Shearwaters, along with the added bonus of a Brown Booby.

Pete Sole
305 Species



Pete has birded off and on from about 1998. Caught the birding disease big time in 2005 when he started photographing birds. His preference is to see birds in their "normal" ranges, rather than vagrants. However, he's happy to see any bird in the wild. For that matter, any wildlife from whales to tarantulas is fun to look at and ponder their life histories.

Favorite birds: kingfishers, birds of prey, anything in the wild that he has not seen before.

Most amazing birding experience: Hearing an owl's wing beat.

In Santa Cruz county, Pete's rarest home yard bird was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in 2011. This was also the first photographed Yellow-billed Cuckoo in county, and the third report overall. Seen for less than 10 minutes.

David Vander Pluym
301 Species



David moved to Santa Cruz in September of 2011 where he attended UC Santa Cruz for the next several years. There he quickly met up with Matt Brady and the two of them would make birding trips in and around the county as often as they could. If one didn't feel like birding that day the other would quickly convince him he was wrong and should go birding that day, which greatly helped on the road to 300. Soon they were able to encourage others to attend as well. Though others regale of the vagrants of the Big Sur coast David would often prefer to wander the north coast of Santa Cruz county instead (which explains some holes for his Monterey County list!). Despite having moved away and traveled/worked extensively across the country as well as in Central and South America, David remains fond of Santa Cruz and tries to get there every couple years despite now living on Arizona's "west coast" along the Colorado River where he now serves on the Arizona records committee and enjoys birding an extremely under birded area.

David's favorite birding location in Santa Cruz is Monterey Bay itself where he was a frequent leader for Shearwater Journeys. His favorite day of birding Santa Cruz was the eight shearwater day (Matt and Oscar seem to be forgetting a species...) including finding the Streaked Shearwater and refinding the Great Shearwater in Santa Cruz. Also the Cook's Petrel "invasion". His most frustrating day of birding was chasing Oscar's Dusky Warbler, which ended up being a heard only. Other favorite birding locales include the north coast of the county with its agriculture fields and riparian strips, and the sloughs of the south county where an independently found Hudsonian Godwit was his 300th county bird (finally!).

Don Roberson
300 Species



"Good fences make good neighbors" is an aphorism attributed to Robert Frost, even though his 1914 poem is a polemic against building walls. In my case, however, the invisible fence between Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, embedded in the old thalweg of the Pajaro River, has kept me happily confined south of the border most of the time. My forays northward from our Monterey home have been few indeed.

My first chase to Santa Cruz Co (SCZ) was on Christmas Day 1975 to see a Greater Pewee at New Brighton SB. It's only taken me 42 years to get to 300, and Sheri Howe's yard has been a big help. We saw her Painted Bunting there in Nov 1995 and now her Broad-billed Hummingbird in Oct 2017 for #300. Along the way I chased and dipped on waaay too many rarities, but did have the good fortune to see the White Wagtail in Watsonville in Aug 1979 [then split as Black-backed Wagtail; I waited over an hour until it flew across the Pajaro River so I also got it on my MTY list...] and, of course, the greatest bird ever in SCZ -- Lois Goldfrank and Steve Gerow's Common Cuckoo in Watsonville in Sep 2012. Other highly ranked vagrants include Little Gull, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Brambling, Dusky Warbler, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. My only contribution to SCZ is the county's first Murphy's Petrel offshore in April 1991 from a research ship.

It feels like I've driven up to Santa Cruz more times to give talks to the Santa Cruz Bird Club than to go birding there. But I've admired the quality of "The Albatross" for decades, and Santa Cruz is home to some great people. Nice to be a small part of this little club.