



# Albatross

PHOEBASTRIA NIGRIPES

## Our Rare Bird

## Hall of Fame

### Inside:

Seeking a New  
ALBATROSS  
Editor

SCMNH  
Lecture  
Series

CALENDAR

Santa Cruz  
Birds



Watsonville  
Wetlands  
Watch



Common Cuckoo  
Photo: Wendy Naruo



Great-winged Petrel  
Photo: Martijn Verdoes



Crested Caracara  
Photo: Jeff Poklen

### David Suddjian, Bird Records Compiler

The spectacular appearance of the Common Cuckoo at Watsonville this fall led me to think about the rarest birds that have been found in Santa Cruz County (SCZ). What are the rarest rare birds ever found here? Does one top the list? Is there a rarefied top ten?

First, there is the matter of perspective. Here I am thinking of rare occurrences for a geographic area and not rarity associated with very small populations. And rarity at the county level is often different than rarity at the state or broader levels. Out of the panoply of species that are rare at the county level, a stellar subset is rare at broader levels. These are the true “mega” rarities. No doubt these belong in our Rare Bird Hall of Fame. But the county level rare birds found just one or a few times also deserve a spot in the Hall.

*(continued)*

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**Santa Cruz County Rare Bird Hall of Fame—  
species with three or less county records (number shown in parentheses).**

Fulvous Whistling Duck (2)	Emperor Goose (3)
Garganey (1)	Yellow-billed Loon (1) <sup>1</sup>
Short-tailed Albatross (1) <sup>2</sup>	Great-winged Petrel (2)
Hawaiian Petrel (1)	Streaked Shearwater (2)
Great Shearwater (2)	Wedge-tailed Shearwater (3)
Red-billed Tropicbird (2) <sup>3</sup>	<sup>1</sup> Masked Booby (2)
Little Blue Heron (2)	Zone-tailed Hawk (1)
Crested Caracara (2)	Hudsonian Godwit (1)
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (2)	Iceland Gull (1) <sup>1</sup>
Long-billed Murrelet (2)	Parakeet Auklet (2)
Common Ground-Dove (3)	Common Cuckoo (1) <sup>1</sup>
Flammulated Owl (2)	Snowy Owl (1)
Greater Pewee (1)	Vermilion Flycatcher (1)
Great Crested Flycatcher (2) <sup>1</sup>	White-eyed Vireo (1)
Bell's Vireo (2) <sup>2</sup>	Yellow-throated Vireo (1)
Blue-headed Vireo (2) <sup>1</sup>	Philadelphia Vireo (3)
Yellow-green Vireo (3)	Pinyon Jay (3)
Dusky Warbler (3)	Wood Thrush (1)
Eastern Yellow Wagtail (1)	White Wagtail (2)
Bohemian Waxwing (1)	Chestnut-collared Longspur (1)
Blue-winged Warbler (1)	Connecticut Warbler (2)
Mourning Warbler (1)	Kentucky Warbler (2)
Bay-breasted Warbler (1)	Grace's Warbler (1) <sup>4</sup>
Painted Redstart (1)	LeConte's Sparrow (1)
Nelson's Sparrow (1)	Scarlet Tanager (3)
Rusty Blackbird (3)	Common Grackle (2) <sup>1</sup>
Scott's Oriole (1)	Brambling (1)
Common Redpoll (1)	

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> One or more records under review by the CBRC, accepted provisionally here.

<sup>2</sup> Number of modern records shown, but species undoubtedly occurred more before historic population declines.

<sup>3</sup> Several records of unidentified tropicbirds likely pertain to this species.

<sup>4</sup> Record not accepted by the CBRC, but deemed correct by county record compilers.



The table opposite gives a proposed Rare Bird Hall of Fame including 55 species found in the county only one, two, or three times (number of records in parentheses). Records through November 2011 are considered, including only records accepted by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), except as noted. Twenty-seven species are represented in SCZ by just one record, nineteen species have two records, and eight have three records.

So which are the rarest birds ever found in SCZ? From the county perspective all 27 species with just single records could be ranked collectively as the rarest. But a broader geographic consideration is more informative of true rarity. Using the number of California records accepted by the CBRC, I nominate the following species for the Top Ten Rare Birds ever found in Santa Cruz County:

Common Cuckoo (1st and only CA record), Great-winged Petrel (4 CA records), Brambling (5 CA records), Wedge-tailed Shearwater (7 CA records; the 1st was from SCZ), Great Shearwater (9 CA records), Iceland Gull (11 CA records), Crested Caracara (12 CA records), Dusky Warbler (13 CA records), Eastern Yellow Wagtail (18 CA records), and Garganey (23 CA records).



## Help wanted:



(Some assembly required)

## **New Editor sought for Albatross— to start next Spring**

The SCBC is seeking a new editor for the Albatross. As the editor you could add your unique style to the Albatross—consider updating the format or putting more of it online. Or you might want to focus on the tried and true print format. It's up to you!

Minimum requirements are: Good English editing skills, basic computer skills, internet access, and the ability to create documents with desktop publishing software. Adapting photographs for publication is another useful skill, easily acquired. Perhaps a couple of people with complimentary skills could join forces on

this. For more information, please contact me. (Contact information on back page)

*Judy Donaldson, Editor (soon-to-be-retired)*

### **Connect with Nature**

### **Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History**

**Winter Lecture Series - Saturdays in February - 10:00 a.m. to Noon**

**\$8 Museum members, \$10 general**

<http://www.santacruz museums.org/education/public/ConnectwithNatureSeries.htm>

This Natural History for Adults series has several lectures that will be of interest to everyone. David Suddjian will give the first talk: *160 Years of Changing Bird Life*. Another will be a walk in the sandhills with Randall Morgan. See the Museum website for registration information. Pre-registration is not required but is recommended.

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# Events Calendar

January - February 2013



## Sunday, January 6 Santa Cruz & Monterey County CBC Revisited

Start at the Ramsey Park Nature Center and visit locations associated with MBB and CBC sightings. Itinerary will be decided the day before the trip. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day.

**Directions:** Meet at 7:00 AM at the Ramsey Park Nature Center in Watsonville.

**Leader:** Eric Feuss (831) 477-0280, mobile - day of trip only: (408) 717-0421



## Friday, January 11 West Cliff Drive and vicinity

In addition to birds of the rocky coast, we'll also check for wintering land birds in Bethany Curve Park and/or Lighthouse Field.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the intersection of West Cliff Drive and Woodrow Avenue.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com

It's supposed to be January 17.



## Thursday, January 17 SCBC Meeting @7:30 PM

**Speakers: Yiwei Wang and Rachel Wheat, graduate students in Environmental Studies, UCSC**

Our research interests center around large carnivore conservation and ecology. We study the impact of salmon on carnivores in southeast Alaska. We will share our experiences from our first field season, focusing on our work with Bald Eagles. The talk will center on the relationship between salmon and migrating Bald Eagles, specifically in the watershed near

Haines, AK, and discuss initial findings from GPS-tagged eagles. For more information about our research project, visit: [ecologyalaska.blogspot.com](http://ecologyalaska.blogspot.com).

**Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History  
1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, CA**



## Saturday, January 19 Lower UCSC

The varied habitats here include extensive grassland with patches of riparian and evergreen forest, and we will likely also visit the Farm and the Arboretum. Expect a few miles of walking.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the south side of the East Remote parking lot, off Hagar Drive on the UCSC campus. Hagar Drive is a left turn off Coolidge Drive when coming from the main entrance at the north end of Bay St. The parking lot is on the right about 0.65 miles up Hagar.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



*Jeff Poklen photographed this fine Green Heron at Natural Bridges in August 2005.*

***Santa Cruz Bird Club programs and field trips are open to the public—non-members are welcome. People needing rides to field trip sites are advised to contact field trip leaders. Carpooling is encouraged. Dress in layers and bring liquids. Lunches are optional on half-day trips. Heavy rain cancels.***

***Field trips can pose hazards. Reluctantly, we have decided we must publish and implement this policy:***

***The Santa Cruz Bird Club or its field trip leaders cannot be responsible for damage, injury, or loss incurred by the acts or omissions of any member or visitor during Club field trips or during commutes to or from them.***

***Field trip participants must release the Club from any liability for such damage, injury, or loss.***

***Ordinarily, field trip participants sign a waiver releasing the Club from such liability, but in the absence of such a signed waiver, participation on a Club field trip in itself implies consent to and agreement with this waiver.***



**Friday, January 25**  
**Natural Bridges**

There is always a nice variety here and often something unexpected.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the Delaware Avenue entrance to Natural Bridges State Beach.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



**Sunday, January 27**  
**Natural Bridges**

Our local birding hotspot is a great place to get an introduction to the birds of Santa Cruz County. A relaxed walk with a local birder at a beautiful local park should yield a fair number of species in a variety of habitats.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:30 AM at the Delaware Road entrance to Natural Bridges.

**Leader:** Phil Brown, pdpbrown@gmail.com



**Friday, February 1**  
**Watsonville area**

We'll look for land, marsh, and water birds starting along Watsonville Slough near Ramsay Park. We may also visit the new park along the Pajaro River, upper Struve Slough, and/or other sites.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the Watsonville Wetlands Nature Center, 30 Harkins Slough Road (the south side of Ramsay Park) in Watsonville

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



**Saturday, February 2**  
**Panoche Valley**

This trip will seek out all the regional specialties, including Phainopepla, Western and Mountain Bluebird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, Ferruginous Hawk, Bald & Golden Eagle, Mountain Plover, Chukar, Vesper Sparrow, and Long-eared Owl. Carpooling encouraged.

**Directions:** Meet the leader at 8:00 AM at the Paicines Store on Hwy 25, approximately 12 miles south of Hollister. Those coming from Santa Cruz who want to carpool can meet at the Aptos Wells Fargo at 6:30 AM.

**Leader:** Clay Kempf, (831) 761-8260, ltjaeger@att.net



*A misty morning in Panoche Valley - Photo by Clay Kempf*

**SPECIAL LECTURE** Saturday, February 2  
SC Museum of Natural History  
10:00 AM to Noon

*160 Years of Changing Bird Life*—a talk by David Suddjian— part of the SCMNH Winter lecture series. There is a fee. See details on page 3.



**Friday, February 8**  
Wilder Ranch

The mixture of habitats here have potential for a large variety of species, including lots of winter sparrows and usually a good mix of raptors. We will probably concentrate on coastal areas but might also go inland.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM in the main parking area. Park entrance fee is currently \$10 per-vehicle.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



**Sunday, February 10**  
Rancho Del Oso

This is a half-day walk seeking late-winter songsters from coast into redwoods along Waddell Creek valley.

**Directions:** Meet at Companion Bakery (formerly Beckmann's) 2341 Mission St (short of Swift St.) Santa Cruz at 7:30 AM. Late-comers meet at Waddell Beach parking lot (short of Hwy 1 cliffs) at 8:00 AM. Rain or shine unless storm-cancelled on MBB.

**Leader:** Todd Newberry, (831) 426-8741.



*Singing MacGillivray's Warbler photographed at Rancho Del Oso in 2009, by David Sidle.*



**Friday, February 15**  
San Lorenzo River

Several rare species have been found wintering here in recent years, and if nothing else, there will be varied sparrows, gulls (usually including Herring, Thayer's, and tree-perching Mews), and other regulars. We might go upstream, downstream, or a little of both, depending on conditions and what is known to be around.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at San Lorenzo Park by the duck pond.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com



**Sunday 17, February**  
Merced and San Luis National  
Wildlife Refuges

Come and enjoy the fun of birding in the Central Valley wildlife refuges. We will visit Merced and San Luis NWRs. Our target birds will be Sandhill Cranes, Snow/Ross's Geese, White-faced Ibis, and the many ducks, shorebirds, and raptors of the Central Valley. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day. **Directions:** Meet at 6:30 AM at the Aptos Wells Fargo Bank, Soquel Avenue at the State Park exit from Hwy 1, or at 9:00 AM at the entrance to the Merced National Wildlife Refuge. To reach Merced NWR, take Highway 152 east, past Los Baños, to Highway 59 north. Follow Highway 59 for several miles to Sandy Mush Road, turn left onto Sandy Mush Rd., watch for the refuge, which will be on your left. We may be stopping along Sandy Mush Road to watch for large flocks of cranes and geese.

**Leader:** Eric Feuss (831) 477-0280, mobile - day of trip only: (408) 717-0421



**Saturday, February 23**  
Pogonip

We should find a variety of birds of forest and grassland habitats, plus Banana Slugs, forest fungi, and the first of the spring flowers. Expect a few miles of walking and some hills.

**Directions:** Meet at 8:00 AM at the north end of Spring Street, off High Street in Santa Cruz.

**Leader:** Steve Gerow, (831) 426-2476, stephengerow@aol.com

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# Santa Cruz Birds

By David Suddjian & Steve Gerow

Including reports

from September 1 to October 31, 2012

This has been an interesting fall! Although seabirds contributed relatively little excitement and vagrant diversity was not especially notable, we managed first county records for Common Cuckoo and Great Crested Flycatcher, and many species were in notably high numbers. The latter included several warblers and a suite of record-breaking totals for sparrows. And then we had a notable influx of irruptive landbirds, such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red Crossbill, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeak. When species are found in high numbers, it is hard to factor out ever-increasing levels of reporting, but it *did* seem to be a special season.

\* \* \*

The **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Pajaro Dunes' Shorebirds Pond was joined by a second on September 3 (AR). Then there were several reports of migrants from mid-county and the Pajaro Valley starting September 25, with the largest group reported being 21 over Capitola on October 3 (DSu). An early **Cackling Goose** visited Neary Lagoon October 2-3 (SS, SG), followed by various reports of up to 15 from the Watsonville Slough system starting October 12 (JG, AR, NL, GMA, v.ob.). Incidentally, the two small Cackling/Canada type geese that were in Watsonville Slough September 4-10 (mentioned last issue) remain an ID puzzle. Several experts in these types of geese are involved in the discussion, but no conclusion has been reached. Some birds just can't be identified conclusively. There were several reports of 1-2 **Blue-winged Teal** from Watsonville and Struve Sloughs starting September 17 (v.ob.). Two were at Twin Lakes State Beach on September 29 (JW), and three visited Younger Lagoon from October 2-6 (JG, PB, v.ob.). An early **Greater Scaup** was at the Watsonville Slough/Struve Slough confluence on September 18 (CS, AR), a month before any others were reported this season. A **White-winged Scoter**, also on the early side, was off Seacliff State Beach on October 8 (DSu).

Warmer than usual ocean temperatures brought good numbers of **Black-vented Shearwaters** to county waters beginning in early October (v.ob.). By

late October, these were being seen from shore in impressive numbers not seen since at least the late 1990s, including a remarkable total of 2,370 tallied off Terrace Point in an hour of observation on October 31 (AR). A much rarer warm water species was a juvenile **Brown Booby**, headed up the coast past New Brighton State Beach on October 1 (DSu). At the Seacliff State Beach **Brandt's Cormorant** colony, the last few young left the nest in early September, but adults at three nests continued to sit on presumably dead eggs until the beginning of October, and one didn't give up until after October 19! **American White Pelicans** were reported through the period in their usual Pajaro Valley spots, including some large concentrations of 200 or more in the Watsonville Slough system (v.ob.). An **American Bittern** at Scott Creek marsh on October 17 was one of very few recent records for the north coast area of Santa Cruz County (MS, JSc). A **White-faced Ibis** was at Wilder Creek Beach on October 14, for the only report this fall away from the Pajaro Valley (LG, JW). Among several reports from the Watsonville Slough system, the high count was 14 on October 12 (AR, JG).

An adult **Bald Eagle** was in Watsonville on September 11 (DSu). **Broad-winged Hawks** appeared over upper Watsonville Slough on October 1 (KH et al.), and over Capitola on October 6 (DSu). A juv. **Swainson's Hawk** hunted the West Struve Slough area from September 20-24 (JW, KK, RW). A **Ferruginous Hawk** flew over the UCSC grasslands on October 27 (BL). There were 34 reports of **Merlins** in September and October, on the high side of average for recent fall counts. A **Common Gallinule** at Schwan Lake on August 31 (SG et al.) was the only report this fall away from the Pajaro Valley. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** stopped at the Watsonville Slough/Struve Slough confluence on September 27 (DSu). Five **American Avocets** flying down the coast at Seacliff State Beach on September 8 (DSu) and one on Wilder Creek Beach on October 14 (LG, JW) were rarities away from the Pajaro Valley.

**Wandering Tattlers** were fairly sparse again this fall. There were several reports involving 1-3 from the west Santa Cruz area through late August, then just one along West Cliff Drive from October 11-17 (SG), and one at Black Point on October 18 (JW). **Lesser Yellowlegs** were in moderate numbers in the Watson-

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ville Slough system, with a high of six along Watsonville Slough on September 26 (RW). The only one reported away from the sloughs was at Younger Lagoon from August 24-28 (AG). An additional **Solitary Sandpiper** turned up at the Quail Hollow pond on September 19 (AR), the fourth for the fall and the third for that pond this season! The only **Ruddy Turnstone** was at the confluence of Watsonville and Struve sloughs on September 6 (JW, SH) where it was especially rare away from the immediate coast. Also unexpected there was a **Red Knot** from September 3-4, then three together there on September 6 (JW, KP, SH, vo.b.). Others in more expected settings included two at Capitola Beach on September 4 (DSu) and one at Wilder Creek Beach on September 27 (AG) for a very good fall showing for the species.

A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at Watsonville Slough on September 26 (RW). **Baird's Sandpipers** were relatively sparse this season, with only a handful of reports involving 6-7 individuals from August 10-September 21. On the other hand it was a good year for **Pectoral Sandpipers**, with multiple reports from August 26 to October 6 and a remarkable high count of 20 in Watsonville Slough in September 24 (JG, AR, NL). A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** in the slough confluence area from September 18-22 was the rarest shorebird reported in the county this season (CK, GMi, v.ob.). Some **Wilson's Phalaropes** visited Watsonville Slough and vicinity from August 22 to September 29, with a high count of 10 on September 3 (JW).

Quite unexpected was an apparently healthy juvenile **Sabine's Gull** photographed on October 4 in an apple orchard near Watsonville (KR), about three miles inland and well away from open water. At least one **Franklin's Gull** was moving around Watsonville and Struve Sloughs from September 20 to October 27 (LL, SG, RR, v.ob.), and two were seen together in Struve Slough on October 20 (MD et al.). A **Black Tern** stayed around Watsonville Slough from September 3-6 (JW, v.ob.). **Elegant Tern** numbers were above average along the Santa Cruz County coast, with a high count of 1,025 off Seacliff State Beach on October 13 (DSu). With all those terns, it's probably not surprising that **Pomarine** and **Parasitic Jaegers** were also noted in above-average numbers close to shore. A **Tufted Puffin** was reported from Santa Cruz County waters on September 15 (TL, SJ).



*A rare Great Crested Flycatcher appeared at Natural Bridges in September. Photo by Michael Bolte.*

The remarkable **Common Cuckoo** at Watsonville Slough, September 28 to October 2, thrilled hundreds of birders. A report in the local newspaper claimed that birders visiting from 47 states viewed the bird, a first record for California. A **Western Screech-Owl** calling at Capitola on October 1 was a first for that city (DSu). Our forest owls are very seldom reported from the urban areas of the county. The only **Burrowing Owl** mentioned was at new spot along Watsonville Slough near the Struve confluence on October 15 (JW). A **Short-eared Owl** flushed from Watsonville Slough on September 26 (GK). Over the years we have had hardly any fall reports of **Black Swift**, so a flock of 11 over western Santa Cruz on September 18 was exceptional (SG). Vaux's Swift had another very slow fall showing with a high count of just four (v.ob).

The late summer bloom of 17 **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** was reported from August 13 to September 28 (v.ob.). One near Scotts Valley on September 13-19 was notable away from the coast (BM). It has now been a decade that these formerly rare hummers have been detected in similar numbers each year, and they have been remarkably consistent in their seasonal timing and their repeated appearances at certain locations. Twelve **Willow Flycatchers** were reported from August 28 to September 30 (v.ob.). Rare **Least**

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**Flycatchers** were at Bethany Curve Park in Santa Cruz on September 8-9 (SG, NL, AR, CB) and at Rancho Del Oso on September 12-14 (JR et al). A well seen and photographed **Great Crested Flycatcher** at Natural Bridges on September 16-22 provided an overdue first county record (CS, ST, CL, AP, v.ob.). Amazingly another was photographed at the Pajaro River on September 20 (NS). Both records are pending review by the California Bird Records Committee.

**Tropical Kingbirds** had a very strong showing, with a remarkable 15-16 found from September 26 to October 29 (average = 5), matching the number of **Western Kingbirds** reported this fall. **Loggerhead Shrikes** were more widely reported than in most recent falls, mostly from expected spots, but one at Seacliff State Beach on September 14 (JM) and one flying over Porter-Sesnon on October 27 (DSu) were the first reports from the Seacliff region in decades. A possible **Blue-headed Vireo** at Hanson Slough on October 12-13 is pending review by the CBRC (CS, LG, WG, JW). After some years of roosting at College Lake and commuting to Santa Cruz, **American Crows** changed it up this fall. Now a large roost at Arana Gulch in Santa Cruz produced daily commuters that populated areas east with most moving to south county each day (DSu).



*A Tropical Kingbird at Neary Lagoon on October 12 was photographed by Alex Rinkert.*

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** had their best fall showing in many years, appearing seemingly all over the place in September and especially October (v.ob.). Some notable counts included 14 at Rancho Del Oso on October 2 (SG, MC), 10 at Meder Canyon on October 4 (KA), 16 at Quail Hollow on October 10 (AR), a whopping 62 at UCSC on October 20 (JG), and 28 at Mount Hermon on October 28 (AR). Rare **White-breasted Nuthatches** were at Porter-Sesnon on September 3 (DSu) and Quail Hollow on September 5 (AR). A **Varied Thrush** heard northeast of Scotts Valley on September 6 would be a remarkably early migrant, but perhaps it was a local breeder (BM).

Rare fall warblers came on strong in a narrow window, although diversity was not high and the really rare species were not found. In fact, the nine vagrant species found was the lowest number since 1998. But numbers of individuals were good, with statistics through October showing vagrant individuals 39% over average and rare western species 102% over average. Vagrants were 22 **Palm**, 12 **Blackpoll** (90% over avg), eight **Chestnut-sided** (+77%), seven **American Redstart** (+100%), three **Black-and-white**, four **Tennessee**, five **Northern Waterthrush** (+150%), five **Northern Parula** (new record, avg 0.8), and one **Magnolia**. Counts of uncommon-to-rare western species through October were 51 **Black-throated Gray** (new record, +128% of avg), 21 **Hermit** (new record, +162%), nine **Nashville**, six **MacGillivray's**, and one **Yellow-breasted Chat**. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was photographed at Watsonville Slough on October 2 (LW).

Several sparrows set records: a whopping 28 **Chipping Sparrows** (August 18 to October 26, avg 8.8); 19-21 **Clay-colored Sparrows** (September 7 to October 31, avg 6.7), five **Brewer's Sparrows** (September 22 to October 17, avg 1.0), and five **Vesper Sparrows** (September 30 to October 13, avg 1.6). The latter included two together at Arana Gulch on October 13 (BR, RR). There were 14-15 **Lark Sparrows** (August 17 to October 28, avg 5.3). **Grasshopper Sparrows**—rare in fall—were at Wilder Ranch on August 30 (SG) and Seacliff SB on September 22 (DSu). A **Black-throated Sparrow** was at Antonelli Pond on September 8 (SG, v.ob.). Three **Swamp Sparrows** spanned October 11-31, and October had a huge 17 **White-throated Sparrows**.



*A Red Crossbill, photographed at Mt. Hermon by Alex Rinkert, October 28, 2012.*

Five **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were reported in September and October. A **Blue Grosbeak** was along the Pajaro River on October 4 (DSu). **Indigo Buntings** were at UCSC on September 25 (SG), the Pajaro River on October 4 (DSu), and Capitola on October 24 (KK). A **Bobolink** was flying over western Santa Cruz on September 29 (JSt). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at Struve Slough on September 15 (EL, GMi), with three in that area on September 18 (JL). An **Orchard Oriole** visited Neary Lagoon on October 3-5 (SG, v.ob.).

**Red Crossbills** had their best showing in quite a few years, with 31 reports beginning September 8. We

are unaware of prior records of crossbills identified to call type in the county, but with some new resources available birders were able to assign some in October to Type 2 and some to Type 3. An interesting summary of crossbill types, with recordings, can be found here: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/red-crossbill-types>.

**Pine Siskins** staged the first major influx into the county since 2004, appearing widely and in numbers by the 2nd week of October. Five reports of single **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were from October 3-29 (JG, NL, AR, CL). Much less numerous than the siskins and crossbills, a smaller movement of **Evening Grosbeaks** from October 19 into November still made for the best fall in years.

**Cited Observers:** Kumaran Arul, Cliff Bixler, Phil Brown, Mary Crouser, Matthew Dodder, Alexander Gaguine, John Garrett, Steve Gerow, Lois Goldfrank, Wally Goldfrank, Keith Hansen, Sharon Hull, Clay Kempf, Gary Kittleson, Kathy Kuyper, Lisa Larson, Chris Lay, Earl Lebow, Nick Levendosky, Jim Lomax, Tim Ludwick, Bruce Lyon, Jeff Manker, Gary Martindale (GMA), Greg Miller (GMi), Barbara Monahan, Kathy Parker, Amy Patten, Alex Rinkert, Bernadette Ramer, Robert Ramer, Don Roberson, Kathleen Rose, Jennifer Rycenga, Nelson Samuels, Christian Schwarz, Jeff Scott (JSc), Michelle Scott, Shearwater Journeys, Susan Smith, John Sterling (JSt), David Sudjian, Steven Tucker, Jeff Wall, Lee Watts, Roger Wolfe. "v.ob. means many observers.

Please report unusual or interesting observations to [dsuddjian@gmail.com](mailto:dsuddjian@gmail.com)



**New SCBC  
Members  
Welcome!**

Tom Davey	Nov 2012
Camille & Tim Washowich	Nov 2012
Terry Hart	Dec 2012
JoAnn Christiansen	Dec 2012
Georgette Neal	Dec 2012



**Input deadline for  
Feb/Mar issue  
of the Albatross—  
February 1, 2013**

**Submission for the**



**Albatross—Guidelines**

In addition to regular features—calendar, Santa Cruz Birds, trip reports—the newsletter can include almost anything related to birding in general and to local birding in particular. Depending on space, submissions of any of the following are welcome:

- Feature articles
- Birding event announcements
- Stories about birders, serious or comic
- Reviews of birding literature or guides
- Conservation & outreach reports/stories
- Birding tips, descriptions of local sites
- Filler tidbits: Quotes or images
- Photos of people at our events (jpg, tif)

If you wish to submit an article, please contact me about it **before** the submission deadline.

I accept plain text, Word, or PDF files. Send items by email to: [calqua@sbcglobal.net](mailto:calqua@sbcglobal.net)

~Judy Donaldson, Editor

**Patriotic Flight?**



*Lisa Sheridan thought it was meaningful to see a Bald Eagle passing by on November 6, Election Day. She was able to grab a photo as the bird flew by the warehouses at Lee Road.*



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Santa Cruz, CA 95061

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## Watsonville Wetlands Watch 2013 Docent Training Program

The WWW docent training program will begin on January 23. Local experts will provide an inside look at the wetlands of Watsonville, including the ecology, birds, history, and restoration of the wetlands. This 7-week program includes Wednesday evening presentations and Saturday morning field trips.

New docents will be prepared to lead walks and assist with field trips. Docents also have the opportunity to help with community events, participate in wetlands restoration, work in the library or greenhouse at the Fitz Wetlands Education Resource Center, and work on special projects. Many of our activities focus on birds, and birders are always needed.

The Watsonville Wetlands Watch is a nonprofit community-based organization dedicated to the protection, restoration, and appreciation of the wetlands of Pajaro Valley.

For more information: [www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org](http://www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org)

For details and to enroll, contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Kathy Fieberling: (831) 345-1226 or email [kathyfiebing@yahoo.com](mailto:kathyfiebing@yahoo.com)

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<http://santacruzbirdclub.org/>

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Enjoy walks in and around the County of Santa Cruz, discounted boat trips on Monterey Bay, summer picnics and annual dinners, meetings September through May featuring informative, illustrated talks on wild birds and related topics, and receive the bimonthly newsletter, The Albatross. Memberships run June-May. Dues are \$20 Individual, \$25 Family, \$5 Youth, \$400 Life. Make checks payable to Santa Cruz Bird Club and mail to Box 1304, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, Attention: Membership Chairman.