On 12 January 2017, Don Pendleton discovered a Ross’s Gull (Rhodostethia rosea) near Pillar Point Harbor, Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, California. He contacted Donna Pomeroy, who joined him to help confirm the identification. They noted key identification points including the gull’s rather small size, pink blush on the breast and belly, dark spot behind the ear, small black bill, and red legs. One of Pomeroy’s photos is featured on this issue’s back cover. Over the next 3 days, hundreds of birders watched and photographed the Ross’s Gull. The gull often foraged alone in parking lots, open fields, and along California Highway 1. All reports were within a 3.5-km radius of the Half Moon Bay Airport (www.eBird.org).

On 14 January 2017, at 13:51 PT, I arrived to see and photograph the Ross’s Gull at a partially flooded field of Brussels sprouts next to the Half Moon Bay Airport. Under clear skies, the gull foraged alone on the ground, brilliant white and pale gray against the dark green and brown field. During the next 9 minutes, over 20 birders and I watched and photographed the gull, which was approximately 35 meters from California Highway 1. At 14:02, the gull made a short flight, and returned to the field. When it flew a second time, two adult Peregrine Falcons (Falco peregrinus) attacked it. Repeatedly the falcons took turns diving at the gull from alternating sides. The gull made evasive aerial movements, until one of the falcons caught it midair, approximately 10 m above the ground. I photographed one of the falcons carrying the Ross’s Gull in the air (14:04), but quickly lost sight of it as it flew west into the sun (see photo on this issue’s back cover).

This is the second record of a Ross’s Gull in California, accepted by the California Bird Records Committee (www.californiabirds.org/cbrc_book/update.pdf). It follows one at Red Hill along the south shore of the Salton Sea, Imperial County, 17–19 November 2006 (McCaskie 2007). The winter range of Ross’s Gull is poorly known (Blomqvist and Elander 1981). Maftei et al. (2015), however, tracked three Ross’s Gulls wintering in the Labrador Sea. The Ross’s Gull in Half Moon Bay was over 4000 km from the Labrador Sea and other suspected winter grounds.

Pairs of the Peregrine Falcon are known to prey cooperatively on a range of bird species, including doves and small gulls (White et al. 2002). Peregrines’ prey range in weight from about 20 grams to 1 kg (Paine et al. 1990). Ross’s Gulls weigh 180 grams on average (Sibley 2000). The Peregrine’s cooperative hunts usually take place within 16 km of an eyrie (Ratcliffe 1993). The Ross’s Gull at Half Moon Bay foraged within 10 km of a known Peregrine nest (G. Stewart pers. comm.). In Siberia, Potapov (1990) reported finding Ross’s Gull feathers in regurgitated Peregrine Falcon pellets. The cooperative nature of this attack, and its proximity to a local eyrie, suggests that it was by the local Peregrine pair. This is the first documented Peregrine Falcon attack on an adult Ross’s Gull in North America.

I’m grateful to Don Pendleton and Donna Pomeroy for graciously sharing their personal experiences and photos and reviewing early drafts. Alvaro Jaramillo provided feedback, guidance, and additional sources for research. Nancy Collins reviewed and edited multiple versions of this note. Bruce Lyon and Glenn Stewart kindly provided information on Peregrine Falcons in the San Mateo and Santa Cruz areas, and gave feedback on drafts. Todd Newberry, reviewed drafts in person with me, and provided great guidance for publication. Mark Mallory, Sven Blomqvist, and John Sterling reviewed the manuscript and provided especially relevant references. Gary Graves originally asked me to write this report. Were it not for his incredibly generous guid-
ance, persistence, reviews, sources of information, and encouragement, this note would never have been written.

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See you in Pueblo!
“Featured Photos” by © Donna Pomeroy of El Granada, California (upper), and Pete Sole of Soquel, California (lower): Ross’s Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) near Pillar Point, San Mateo County, California 12–14 January 2017, representing the second record of the species for California. The Ross’s Gull was attacked by a pair of Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) hunting cooperatively and carried off.