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**METRO Rolls Out New 'One Ride at a Time' Wildlife Buses in 2024**  
*Photographer Kevin Lohman Joins Agency's Conservation Campaign*

Santa Cruz, CA (Feb. 1, 2024): With the start of the New Year, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) has unveiled more wildlife buses as part of One Ride at a Time, its acclaimed campaign to showcase the environmental benefits of transit, encourage bus ridership, and protect Santa Cruz County's extraordinary natural resources. The new buses join the 22 photo-wrapped buses already carrying passengers throughout the region.

With this new wave of vehicles, METRO also welcomes a new partner to the One Ride at a Time campaign: Kevin Lohman, an award-winning photographer whose images of birds have been recognized by the National Audubon Society. Lohman's image of a great horned owl fledgling graces one of the buses.

"We are delighted to welcome Kevin Lohman to the One Ride at a Time team," said METRO CEO/General Manager Michael Tree. "His photography captures our region's most iconic species and celebrates the incredible beauty and biodiversity of California's Central Coast."

Lohman joins renowned wildlife photographers Frans Lanting and Jodi Frediani in supplying the campaign with breathtaking images of the animal and plant species that depend on the Monterey Bay ecosystem for their survival. By the end of 2024, about 30 wrapped buses will be traveling throughout Santa Cruz County and featuring inspiring images of birds of prey, whales, sea otters, mountain lions, redwoods and more.

"I am thrilled to join the dedicated team of photographers and environmental advocates behind METRO's One Ride at a Time campaign," Lohman said. "In its first year, the campaign has already done so much to raise awareness and funds for conservation in Santa Cruz County. I can't wait to see the strides we will make together in 2024."

Through One Ride at a Time, every ride on a METRO bus donates to METRO's partners in protecting the environment, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the Bay of Life Fund.

Every ride on a METRO bus takes cars off the road and significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, METRO is converting its entire bus fleet to zero-emissions buses (ZEBs). At the end of 2023, METRO had nine ZEBs deployed in the county with more coming every year. To date, seven of the wrapped One Ride at a Time buses are ZEBs.

To read more about METRO's strides toward increasing bus ridership and transitioning to a zero-emissions fleet, visit [scmetro.org](https://scmetro.org).

To participate in METRO's One Ride at a Time program visit [scmetro.org/onerideatatime](https://scmetro.org/onerideatatime) and start logging your trips today. 25 logged trips = \$10 donation to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation or the Bay of Life Fund thanks to program partner [GO Santa Cruz](https://www.gosantacruz.com).

One Ride at a Time is made possible by a partnership between METRO, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), local environmental non-profit organizations, [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](https://www.montereybaynsf.org) and the [Bay of Life Fund](https://www.bayoflifefund.org), renowned photographer-writer team Frans Lanting and Chris Eckstrom, Jodi Frediani, and Kevin Lohman.



## About Us

### **Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO)**

Established in 1968, METRO'S mission is to provide environmentally sustainable transportation to Santa Cruz County. METRO directly operates county-wide, fixed-route and Highway 17 commuter service, with connections to Santa Clara County and Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center. The agency also operates ParaCruz paratransit service. Today METRO operates a fleet of 94 buses on at least 24 fixed routes and 32 paratransit vehicles.

Every ride on a METRO bus takes cars off the road, significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and supports economic opportunity and quality of life in our community. Moving into the future, METRO strives to meet the following goals:

- Increase transit ridership to 7 million trips annually within the next five years
- Transition to a zero-emissions fleet with a mix of hydrogen and electric vehicles
- Increase affordable housing at METRO-owned transit centers to 175 units in the next 10 years.

For more information, visit [scmetro.org](https://www.scmetro.org).

### **Kevin Lohman**

Kevin Lohman is a nature photographer living in Santa Cruz, California, with an educational background in marine science. He travels worldwide for photography but spends most of his time along the coastal areas of Central and Northern California. Kevin has had images recognized in many photo contests, including Audubon Photography Awards, North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) Showcase, the International Share the View Nature Photography contest, and the international Comedy Wildlife competition. Locally, Kevin has been featured on covers of the annual Elkhorn Slough Foundation calendar. His years studying marine science and the beautiful coastal areas of California inspire his photography.

More information: [www.kevinlohman.com](http://www.kevinlohman.com)

### **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation**

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the local non-profit partner and chief advocate for NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and is the local chapter of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. Its mission is to leave a thriving sanctuary to future generations by protecting wildlife and habitats, raising sanctuary visibility, and inspiring the public to be its stewards.

The Foundation's vision is a healthy Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary recognized as a national treasure for its unique and abundant biodiversity and widespread community support. Investments support wildlife protection programs like rescuing whales entangled in fishing gear; endangered black abalone rescue and recovery; protecting kelp habitats; marine debris cleanup efforts; and fishing gear innovations. The Foundation also seeks to inspire the public to learn about the sanctuary through K-12 programming and college internships to show why the sanctuary is vital to our region's economy, way of life, and health of the planet.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is part of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary System, a network of nationally significant marine protected areas comprised of 15 national marine sanctuaries and 2 marine national monuments that span more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters.

For more information, visit [montereybayfoundation.org](http://montereybayfoundation.org).

## ***Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Board of Directors***

The Foundation is led by Co-Chairperson Secretary Leon Panetta who has had a fifty-year career in public service at the highest levels of Government. He served in the Obama Administration first as CIA Director and then as Secretary of Defense from 2009-2013. He also served in the Clinton Administration as director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and later was appointed White House chief of staff. Elected to Congress in 1976, Secretary Panetta represented the California Central Coast district for 16 years and led in the creation of NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 1992.

Secretary Panetta is joined by three other individuals who have been working to protect the Monterey Bay for the past 40 years: Former US Congressman Sam Farr, Community Activist Dan Haifley and Santa Cruz Mayor Fred Keeley were all involved in the fight to ban offshore oil in the Monterey Bay in the 1980's.

The illustrious and dedicated board also includes Co-Chairperson: Hilary Bryant, Ted Balestreri, Yvette Lopez Brooks, Nova Covington, Gordon Eubanks, Christina Sandera, Martine Watkins, and Dr. Lisa Wooninck (ex officio).

For more information, visit [montereybayfoundation.org](http://montereybayfoundation.org).

## **Bay of Life Fund**

The Bay of Life Fund supports nonprofit environmental organizations with their educational and conservation programs in the Monterey Bay region, in the context of the Bay of Life Project launched by Frans Lanting and Christine Eckstrom. Initial partners include the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, the Sempervirens Fund, and others.

## **Bay of Life Project**

The Bay of Life Project connects land and sea and people with nature to promote a unified view of the Monterey Bay region through publications, exhibitions, events, and partnerships. The Project aims to stimulate engagement that contributes to a sustainable future for the Bay of Life.

Frans Lanting and Chris Eckstrom have documented our living planet on assignment for National Geographic for more than 30 years. But the place they know best is California's Monterey Bay, where they have lived for decades. "To us, Monterey Bay is one of Earth's crown jewels," they write. "We know of no other place in the world where land and sea connect in such an extraordinary way."

The book, *Bay of Life: From Wind to Whales*, is the centerpiece of the Bay of Life Project. It is available as a hardcover book and as an oversize, slipcase Collector's Edition. A Spanish-language edition is planned for 2024.

*Bay of Life* chronicles a remarkable recovery, which shows that damaged ecosystems can be restored when people care and take action together. Such stories of hope are needed as we face new challenges of habitat connectivity, climate change, and the need for more inclusive opportunities for our diverse communities.

The BayofLife.net website is the portal to images, stories, videos, and other content from the project along with a calendar of events and links to partner organizations.

For more information, visit [bayoflife.net](http://bayoflife.net).

### **Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County**

Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County is the parent non-profit of the Bay of Life Fund and will distribute donations collected through this program to local environmental nonprofits, as described above. Its mission is to bring together people, ideas, and resources to inspire philanthropy and accomplish great things. Its vision is to make Santa Cruz County thrive for all those who call it home, now and in the future.

The Community Foundation supports effective programs that address community issues and enrich the lives of Santa Cruz County residents. It earns trust through integrity, accountability, discretion, transparency, prudence, and extraordinary service. It leverages its resources toward a future that is just, equitable, and inclusive of a diverse community.

For more information, visit [cfsc.org](http://cfsc.org).

### **Frans Lanting and Chris Eckstrom**

Frans Lanting and Chris Eckstrom are partners in life and work. They promote knowledge and understanding about the Earth through images and stories that convey a sense of wonder and concern about our living planet. Through their work and alliances, they create leverage for conservation efforts ranging from local initiatives to global campaigns. Lanting and Eckstrom have brought their vast experience to the One Ride at a Time Campaign by providing imagery, written content, and partnerships.

#### ***Frans Lanting***

Frans Lanting has been hailed as one of the great photographers of our time. His influential work appears in books, magazines, and exhibitions around the world. Lanting's books include *Into Africa*, *LIFE*, *Jungles*, *Eye to Eye*, *Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape*, and *Okavango*. Lanting is an ambassador for the World Wildlife Fund and has received numerous awards for his work, including the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year's first Lifetime Achievement Award.

HRH Prince Bernhard inducted him as a Knight in the Royal Order of the Golden Ark, the Netherlands' highest conservation honor.

### **Chris Eckstrom**

Chris Eckstrom is a writer, editor, and videographer. She is the author of *Forgotten Edens*, and as a staff writer she contributed to many books published by the National Geographic Society. She earned a Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Award for Best Magazine Article on Foreign Travel for her *National Geographic Traveler* story "The Last Real Africa." The editor of Lanting's books, she has also produced stories for the National Geographic Channel.

For more information: [lanting.com](http://lanting.com).

### **Jodi Frediani**

Jodi Frediani is a Santa Cruz-based, award-winning photographer and humpback whale researcher whose photographic exploits and field research activities have taken her on adventures to Africa, Alaska, Argentina, Antarctica, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Franz Josef Land, Mongolia, Norway, Siberia, South Georgia, Thailand, and Tonga. Her images have won numerous international accolades, have been recognized for excellence in multiple national and international competitions and juried exhibits, and have been widely published, including by the BBC, National Geographic, the Atlantic, and Wired. As a researcher, she collaborates with organizations including SETI, Alaska Whale Foundation, College of the Atlantic, CEBSE, Happywhale, Cascadia Research, California Whale Rescue, California Academy of Sciences, and California Killer Whale Project.

For more information: [jodifrediani.com](http://jodifrediani.com)

### **Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

GO Santa Cruz County is the ridesharing incentive program run by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC). Its online commute management tool, available to all who live or work in Santa Cruz County, is a key part of SCCRTC's ongoing effort to reduce drive-alone trips and greenhouse gas emissions and play an active role in addressing climate change. GO Santa Cruz County is partially funded by voter-approved Measure D, which provides a balanced vision to improve, operate and maintain Santa Cruz County's transportation network.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) is committed to delivering a full range of safe, convenient, reliable, and efficient transportation choices for the community. With a focus on long-term sustainability, the SCCRTC provides transportation services, planning, and funding for all travel modes.

From projects that improve safety and traffic flow on highways, to pothole and sidewalk repair on local streets; from new and improved bicycle lanes and sidewalks, to support of public

transit and paratransit services; from maintaining the existing transportation network to constructing projects that move more people; from help finding a carpool partner, to assisting stranded motorists — the SCCRTC proactively addresses transportation needs in our community.

Working together with transportation partners, the SCCRTC obtains and distributes funding, including voter-approved measure D funds, to maintain the existing transportation network as well as prepare for the transportation needs of the next generation. The SCCRTC keeps residents, business, and visitors moving wherever they want to go and however they choose to get there.

For more information, visit [sccrtc.org](http://sccrtc.org).