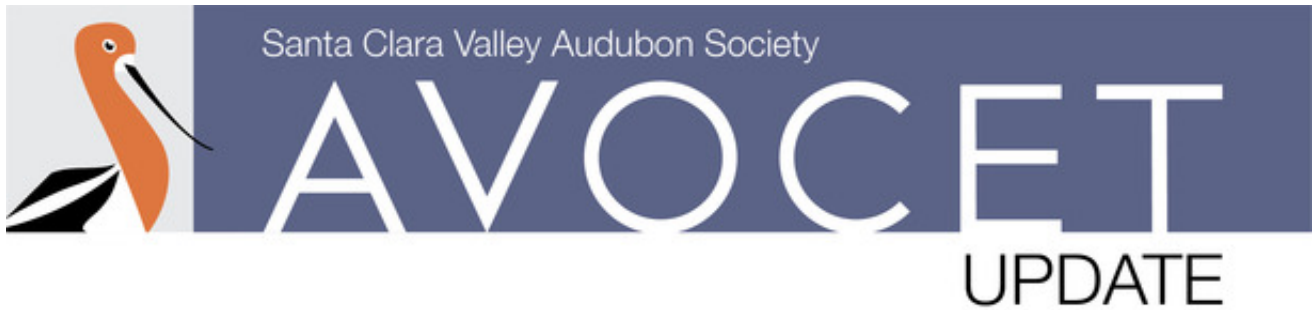


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Wild Turkey: Peter Hart

**Wild Turkeys are wonderful**—huge and ancient-looking animals familiar to our oak savanna landscape. As they lean forward and run, they remind me of the Therapods I loved as a boy. As such, they drive remind us that dinosaurs do in fact, still walk among us. So I can't help but be a little nervous when they get too close. I'm fascinated by the muttering conversations they have—the secret complaints they exchange—as they rummage through the dried leaves and fallen acorns and then begrudgingly walk-disappear into the woods. The females are slender and lithe, true runners. The males are bigger, muscular, fierce and truly overdone with two-inch daggers on each leg, countless iridescent feathers and just as many coppery metallic mirrors that exist, it seems, simply to intensify the fury before you. Stand still, I remember... they can't see you if you don't move. No, wait, that's Jurassic Park... Anyway, regardless of your beliefs about Turkeys, or your dietary preferences, behold the Wild Turkey this holiday. A true dinosaur, and remember the woods belong to them, so be courteous when you visit their home. Happy Thanksgiving!

~**Matthew Dodder, Executive Director**

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Laguna Avenue: Matthew Dodder

## Conservation Corner

**It took decades to protect ALL of Coyote Valley!** Last week, the San Jose City Council demonstrated its commitment to keeping Coyote Valley rural in a transformative vote that reversed decades of sprawl-inducing planning policy. Our long-held vision for Coyote Valley as a rural and ecological landscape has become mainstream.

Coyote Valley has been under the shadow of devastation since the 1980s, when the City of San Jose first designated the ecologically diverse area of North Coyote Valley for industrial development. Last week's vote to re-designated the remaining 300-acre industrial lands in north Coyote Valley to Agriculture, and to remove the "Urban Reserve" designation from mid Coyote Valley, means that urban sprawl and warehouses no longer threaten the valley and - for the foreseeable future - will not mar the valley's landscape.

While some development that is compatible with the open space tone of the valley may be allowed, the land can be expected to remain mostly rural. This is the beginning of a new era for Coyote Valley. Thousands of acres now offer opportunities for birds, wildlife habitat and agriculture to thrive. We hope this legacy will persist into the future and provide us all with the resilience our region needs to withstand climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

We are proud and thankful: proud of this success, thankful to Mayor Liccardo and the leaders and staff of San Jose, environmental and tribal groups, the Open Space Authority, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, and the 2500 individuals who wrote to the City and helped realize a dream. We are especially thankful to you – our members – who have faith in us and continue to support our work.

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## Annual Event

**December 2 at 7:00 PM via zoom**

It's time for our Annual Event. Actually, it's way past time... Since large indoor events are still not recommended, this year's event will be virtual again. There will be live music by Bill Walker, a few brief announcements, CBC details, new Board Member introductions, a silent auction, a brief presentation and even a quiz! Don't miss the fun. Sign up [here](#) for the event link.

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Anaya Khazode (left) and Saumitr Dikhit (right) at McClellan Ranch: Matthew Dodder.

## **Nest Box Heroes**

Thanks to two young volunteers, McClellan has new homes for cavity nesters. Anaya Khazode and Saumitr Dikhit have been monitoring the 33 nest boxes at McClellan Ranch for the 2021 nesting season. Eventually they decided to go beyond just monitoring the boxes and began taking notes of what was in need of improvement, resulting in Saumitr taking on the project of building replacement boxes for his Eagle Scout project. When the project is complete he, with the help of Anaya and others, will have replaced and improved 18 boxes for McClellan's nest box trail. If you are interested in becoming involved with our cavity nesters program, contact Carolyn Knight at our McClellan Ranch office in Cupertino.

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Waterfowl illustration by Alexander Wilson

## Waterfowl Class in January

SCVAS will be offering three exciting classes in 2022, each timed to reflect birds of the season beginning with **Waterfowl** in January, and later in the year we'll launch **Sparrows** and **Birds of Prey**. Registration will be posted on our site soon. Stay tuned!

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Merced Auto Tour: Matthew Dodder

## December Birding

December 4 - January 5 field trips will include Los Gatos Creek County Park, Los Capitancillos Ponds, Charleston Slough, Picchetti Ranch, Lake Cunningham, Rancho Cañada del Oro, McClellan Ranch and Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant. Trips post and registration begins on November 26th! Visit field trips for more information.

We have two special self-guided field trips for the holidays:

- [Merced NWR: A Crane and Waterfowl Wonderland!](#) by Matthew Dodder
- [Panoche Valley: A Desolate Paradise](#) by Matthew Dodder

Or, check out these featured self-guided field trips:

- NEW: [Almaden Quicksilver County Park: No Gold Here](#) (San Jose) by Eve Meier
- [Lake Cunningham Park Wintering Waterfowl and Gulls](#) (Accessible, San Jose) by Laura Coatney
- [Calero Creek Trail](#) (San Jose) by Hugh McDevitt
- [Sierra Vista OSP](#) (San Jose) by Chris Johnson
- [Palo Alto Baylands: Coast Casey Forebay](#) (Mountain View) by Mary Ann Robertson
- [Los Gatos Creek Park/Oka Ponds](#) (Accessible, Los Gatos) by Brooke Miller

For our complete collection of guides, visit our [self-guided field trip page](#).

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Cedar Waxwing: Brooke Miller

## Backyard Birding

### Winter Safety Tips

Are you decorating your yard this holiday season? String, netting, artificial plants, and fake snow can all harm birds. Consider decorating with real plants instead, especially the native plants that birds love. Learn more about bird-friendly decor [here](#).

As we head into the colder months, you'll likely see more birds visiting your feeders. Please keep your feeders and baths clean in order to reduce the spread of common avian diseases. We have cleaning instructions for all types of feeders and baths [here](#) (scroll down to the FAQ's).

### Best of 2021 - Call for Submittals

What were your **favorite moments birding your yard or neighborhood** this year? What backyard bird brought you special joy in 2021? As you reflect on the past year, what did neighborhood birding mean to you?

Send your 2021 "Best of Backyard Birding" submittals to [backyardbirds@scvas.org](mailto:backyardbirds@scvas.org) and **we'll publish them in [All Around Town](#)**. Stories, lists, poems, photos, sketches, and sound clips are all welcome - feel free to get creative!



Black Phoebe: Chris Johnson

Winter birds are here! Find out what **birds our members and friends have seen lately**, and brush up on your "**crowned sparrow**" ID, in the latest [All Around Town](#).

Our December Backyard Bird of the Month is the Black Phoebe. Learn about this bird's characteristic behaviors (like flicking its tail!), and how to identify it, in Dave Zittin's [new article](#).

Project FeederWatch is underway! This winter, count birds in your yard for science. Find out more and sign up [here](#).



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