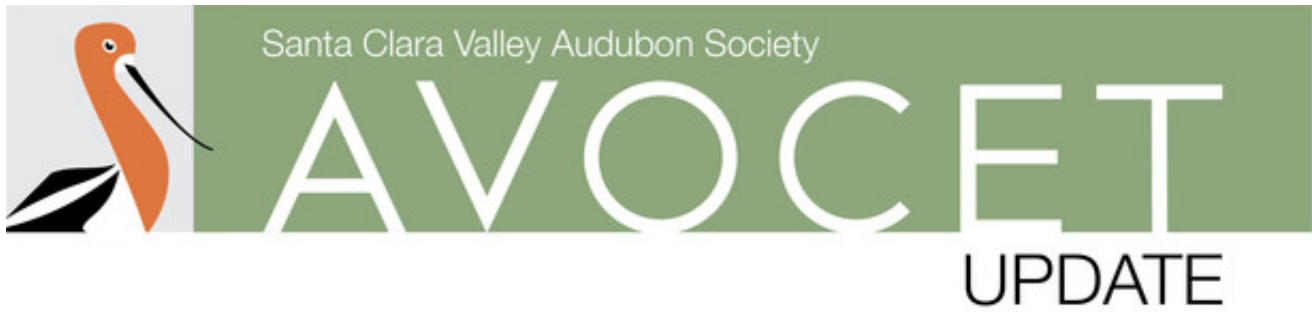


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Allen's Hummingbird: Bill Walker

## February 2022

It's hard to believe we are nearly done with January! Things are moving, and fast... The winter birds are still here and have been wonderful, but we are already seeing reports of early spring birds in our midst. Our neighborhood Dark-eyed Junco and Oak Titmouse are now fully rested and in full voice! This month we invite everyone to participate in the 25th Great Backyard Bird Count. It's easy and fun, and SCVAS has several activities to get you started. We also welcome former board members Peter and Diane Hart as our special guest speakers this month where they will tell us about their ongoing photographic project on POST lands. There are new in-person and self-guided trips to choose from. Soon we will announce another online class, this one will be about Sparrows. Look for that announcement soon.

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director



**Speaker Series**  
**Peter and Diane Hart**  
**"Birds of POST-protected Areas"**  
**February 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM** (via zoom)

Follow the trail of two late-adult-onset birdwatchers as they turned a new hobby into a Peninsula Open Space Trust project to create a photographic record of all the avifauna found on POST-Protected Lands—an adventure that starts at POST's first project, the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve.

[Register Here](#)

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Mike Ambrose leading a SCVAS trip at Joseph D. Grant County Park

## Field Trips

**In-person** field trips for Feb 1 - March 5 post on **Jan 27**. Locations covered include Coyote Creek, Laguna Ave, Picchetti Ranch and more! Visit [field trips](#) for more information and to register.

Trips filled-up? Check a day or two before your trip of interest goes out. Sometimes we have cancellations.

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Clark's Grebes: Brooke Miller

## Self-Guided Field Trips

We have added three new guides to our selection:

- [Coyote Lake](#) (Gilroy, Accessible, Auto Tour) by Edward Rooks
- [Byxbee Park](#) (Sunnyvale, Accessible) by Diane McCoy
- [South County Regional Wastewater Authority Ponds](#) (Gilroy, Accessible) by Rick Herder

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

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California Scrub-Jay: Carter Gasiorowski

## Backyard Birding

In February, you can expect to find a happy cacophony of our year-round and winter resident birds at your feeders and around your neighborhoods. Enjoy observing them during the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), which runs from **February 18-21**. Read all about the count, and how to participate, in our special section in this update. Join in the fun!

We invite you to share your stories, lists, and photos from the Great Backyard Bird Count with us at [backyardbirds@scvas.org](mailto:backyardbirds@scvas.org). We'll publish them in the next [All Around Town](#).

Enjoy our latest backyard birding features:

[All Around Town](#) - This round-up of backyard bird observations includes your highlights and reflections on backyard birding in 2021. You'll find stories of feisty kinglets, hungry hawks, and numerous nuthatches, as well as owls, kingbirds, magpies, and more!

[Backyard Bird of the Month](#) - Our featured bird for February is the bold and confident California Scrub-Jay. A single jay can cache thousands of acorns in the fall - and find many of them later thanks to its excellent spatial memory.

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# How many birds can you find?

25th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18-21, 2022

Photo by Tom Grey

birdcount.org

## Great Backyard Bird Count

It's almost here! The **Great Backyard Bird Count** runs from **February 18-21, 2022**. Mark your calendars and join us for this global celebration of birds!

During the GBBC, people around the world come together to count birds and share their observations with scientists and other bird lovers.

To participate, count birds for fifteen minutes (or more), anywhere you'd like - your yard, your neighborhood, or wherever else you find yourself during the four days of the event. Submit your count online, using the Merlin or eBird apps on your smartphone or computer. It's fun and easy! [Instructions are here](#).

**Not sure how to use eBird, or want to brush up on your backyard birds?** Join one of our eBird workshops, or our beginners' backyard birding session.

Registration is required. We recommend downloading the eBird mobile app for IOS or Android, and setting up your account before attending the workshops. Click on the links to learn more and sign up:

[Introduction to eBird Workshop](#) - Friday, February 11, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

[Introduction to eBird Workshop](#) - Tuesday, February 15, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

[Backyard Birds for Beginners](#) - Saturday, February 19, 9:00 am - 10:30 am

**Want to learn more about the GBBC and how to participate?** Register for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [GBBC introductory webinar](#) on Wednesday, February 16, at 11:00 am PST.

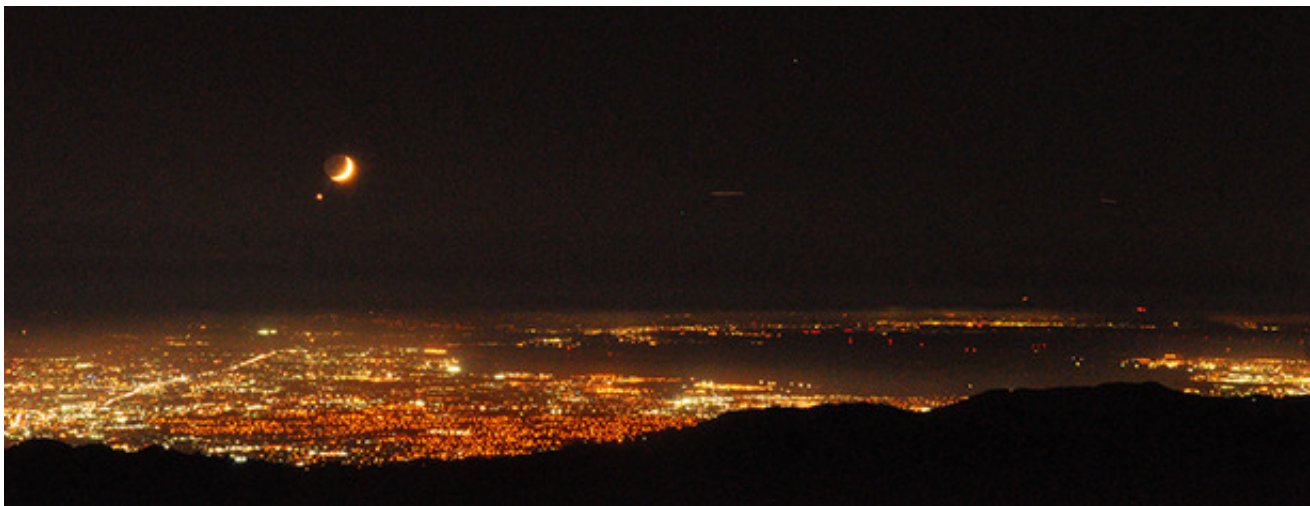
We've put together some great resources for you. For more information, and to get yourself prepared for the count, visit our [GBBC web page](#).

Join the count, have fun, and give birds a helping hand! If you are participating in the count, stop by our Ranch headquarters and pick up one of our **new 4" window decals**. They will

be available in a just a few days. Get one while supplies last!



The [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) is a worldwide event and a project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, and Birds Canada.



San Jose at night: Kieth Wandry

## Conservation Corner

### Update on Electronic Billboards

On January 26, the San Jose Airport Commission recommended denial for the two airport electronic billboards! Thank you Commissioners for recommending denial and going further in recommending that the San Jose policies and ordinances that promote electronic signage be modified in view of public opposition, and the City's climate goals and efforts to prevent vehicular accidents. This is great news for preventing light pollution in San Jose!

Thank you to all who submitted public comments at last night's meeting! Up next, the two billboards will be going to San Jose City Council soon. In addition, the City of Santa Clara Council is considering approval of a new electronic billboard on 2/22. Stay tuned for more

updates!

## **Supervisor Simitian Requests Clarity on Lehigh Environmental Violations**

Does anyone wish to take a wild guess at how many violations the Lehigh Cement Plant operations accrued in the past 10 years!? Thanks to Supervisor Simitian, we should have an answer soon.

In 1939, when the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors allowed Lehigh to pulverize the Permanente Creek watershed, the supervisors included a condition stating, "When there is a violation of...any other provision of the law or ordinance it shall constitute cause for the Board of Supervisors to suspend the Use Permit to operate said plant." Over the years, Lehigh operations polluted our air and water, and even paved an unauthorized road that marred our landscape.

Last week, Supervisor Simitian received the support of his colleagues in directing staff to prepare a report listing any and all of the Cement Plant violations for the past 10 years. This is the first time we see an effort to help the public understand how operations at Lehigh Cement Plant and Quarry are being conducted and whether the plant and quarry are in compliance.

## **Petition: Say NO to Plastic Grass**

This spring, the Los Gatos Union School District will be considering converting elementary school sports fields from natural grass to plastic turf. Please [sign this petition](#) to ask Los Gatos elected officials to protect our natural environment and say NO to plastic turf.



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