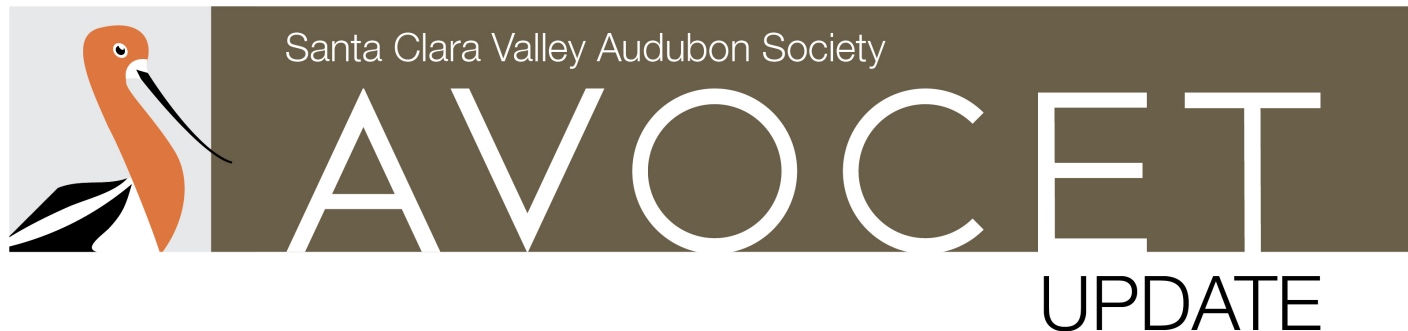


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Pygmy Nuthatch: Tom Grey

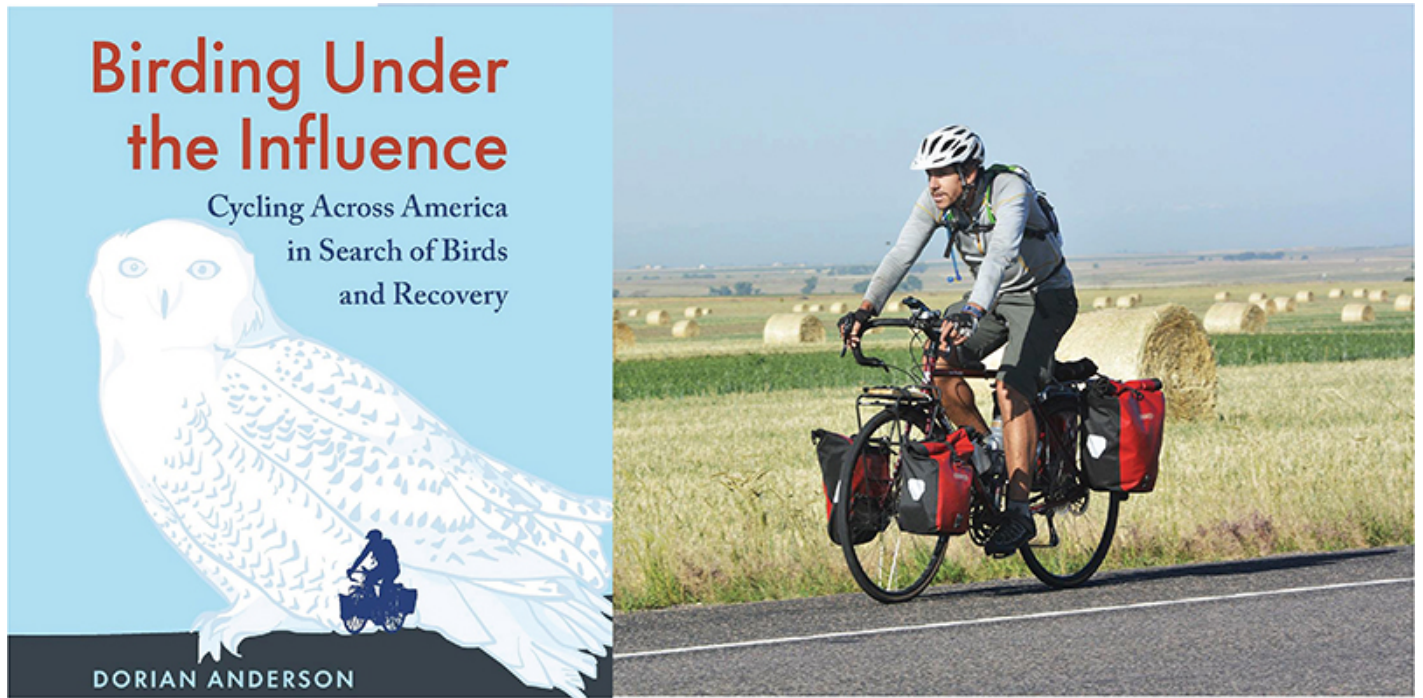
October 2023

It is officially fall now, and we have the bird discoveries to prove it. Northern Waterthrush, Blackpoll Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and Chestnut-sided

Warbler... who knows what else will show up before our next update! Meanwhile, the Pygmy Nuthatches have settled into our neighborhood and are now out-peeping the Red-breasted Nuthatches by at least two to one. There's a lot going on these days at the Ranch as well, with the newly arrived White-crowned Sparrows visiting the feeders. In other news, we have a great speaker scheduled to talk this month to talk about his remarkable bicycle journey across the country, the close of our September Bird Celebration, an extension to our annual Art Auction, the permanent archive of our Breeding Bird Atlas, a revised County Checklist, and more!

Beginning in November we will be updating our membership fees. Individual memberships will be \$45/year, and family memberships will be \$75/year. You can renew today at the older rates of \$35 individual, \$60 family, but all renewals after October 31 will be at the adjusted rates. If your membership is set up for auto-renewal, we will be in touch with you shortly about the change needed in our membership system. We hope you will understand the need to update our membership pricing so we can more closely match the ongoing costs of our programs and continue to support us as you always have. Thank you!

Matthew Dodder
Executive Director



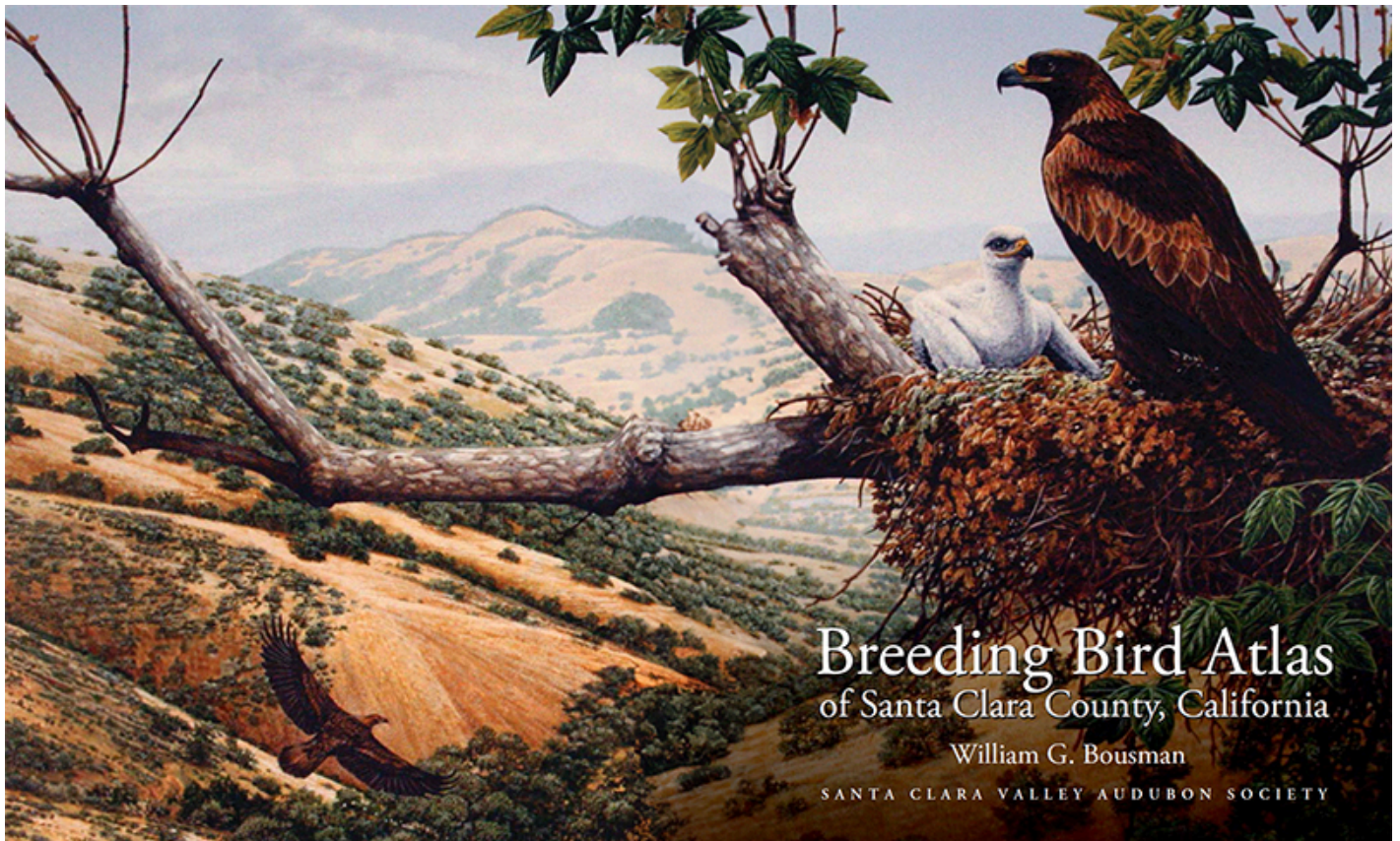
Speaker Series

Dorian Anderson: Birding Under the Influence

Wednesday, October 18, 7PM

A North American Big Year—a continent-spanning adventure in which a birder attempts to see as many species as possible in twelve months—is a massive undertaking under any circumstances. But doing it on a bike while maintaining sobriety? That’s next level. We are privileged to have Dorian as our speaker this month as he shares highlights from remarkable journey, a truly inspiring story. Birding Under the Influence will be released early November and is currently available for preorder on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

[Register Here](#)



Original cover artwork: Edward Rooks

Breeding Bird Atlas is Now Online

In 2007, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society published the monumental Breeding Bird Atlas. After 16 years, we have reached the end of our supply of printed copies so have opted to make it available online for the first time. The electronic presentation will guarantee the work is available permanently and allows readers to search for key words in the text and conduct research from their screens. It is available to members for free and can be found [here](#).



Auction Deadline Extended

There is still time to cast your bid on original artwork from this year's spectacular collection of items, but time is running out! Help support SCVAS Environmental Action by placing a bid today, and secure your chance to own a masterpiece. **Bid today!**



Top row: Sabine's Gull by Chris Overington, Anna's Hummingbirds by Floy Zittin, Chestnut-sided Warbler by Teresa Cheng

Middle row: Northern Waterthrush by Melanie Barnett, American Coots by Julie McKinnon, Great Horned Owl by Matthew Dodder

Bottom row: Yellow Warbler by John Scharpen, Least Sandpiper by Molly Graham, Black-crowned Night Heron by Mike Ambrose

Our September Bird Celebration is in Full Swing!

Here are some of the photos and artwork that have been shared by our members and friends. Enjoy how these images capture the beauty and diversity of fall birds in the Bay Area.

To be part of this exciting project, submit your photos and artwork of birds spotted this month to photos@scvas.org. See our [event page](#) for details. Participants, stop by our office to pick up a commemorative sticker, designed by SCVAS Matthew Dodder



SCVAS Trip to Ed Levin County Park led by Vinayak Hebbagil and Shweta Shidhore, September 2023

Field Trips

The next set of in-person field trips drop on September 28. Visit [field trips](#) for more information and to sign-up. Trips filled-up? Check a day or two before your trip of interest goes out. Sometimes we have cancellations.

Self-Guided Field Trips

We've come up with some great ideas for places you can bird on your own or with your household. Our self-guided trips direct you to where to bird and provide advice on which birds to look for in which habitats.

Browse our [complete collection of guides](#) by location, park name, or season.



White-crowned Sparrow. Left adult by Dave Zittin. Right juvenile by Jennifer Oliver.



Golden-crowned Sparrow: Brooke Miller

Backyard Birding

Crowned sparrows are coming back! Look for them in your yards and neighborhoods in October.

Each fall, White-crowned Sparrows and Golden-crowned Sparrows return here to spend the colder months. These birds are found throughout Santa Clara County, including residential areas. Look for them foraging in groups on the ground.

Crowned sparrows get their names from the beautiful markings on top of their heads. The adult White-crowned Sparrow has black and white stripes; the Golden-crowned has a yellow streak down the middle, often dull in winter.

What about those sparrows with the brown and gray stripes on their crown, mingling with the others? No, they're not a different species, but rather young White-crowned Sparrows. Their stripes will change color when they mature.

Listen for these birds' distinctive songs at dawn and dusk. The White-crowned Sparrow has an upward-spiraling, buzzy whistle. The Golden-crowned Sparrow famously sings three descending notes, often described as "oh dear me" (or "no gold here," according to miners of the past).

Learn more about both of these sparrows in [our guide to backyard birds](#).



Acorn Woodpecker Grainery

Conservation Corner

Action Alert

Threat to Acorn Woodpeckers in Saratoga

The Saratoga Retirement Community looks for approval of plans for new residential buildings and facilities. This project plans to remove 124 trees, including 65 trees that are protected by City ordinance. Among the trees slated for removal is a majestic cork oak that provides a granary and a home to a colony of acorn woodpeckers. The removal of the tree is planned to make room for grading, a pathway, and a swale.

Acorn Woodpeckers are fascinating birds. They live in large social groups and work together to store thousands of acorns in granaries, like the granary in the Saratoga cork oak. Males and females, raise young together in a single nest in a tree cavity. These are such endearing birds! No wonder residents of the retirement community described , “This huge tree is the nesting place for a large number of woodpeckers, who drill into the soft cork bark to store hundreds of acorns each winter. This natural resource simply cannot be restored if the tree is removed.”

Saratoga Planning Commission will discuss the project on September 27 (details below) . Please let the Planning Commission know that this tree should not be removed, and ask for the plans to be revised to ensure that the tree is protected. Please also ask for the new buildings to incorporate Bird Safety measures in all glass surfaces, and to reduce light pollution - as suggested in our SCVAS [comment letter](#) to the City of Saratoga.

How you can help

Participate in a Study Session on Wednesday September 27, 2023 before the Planning Commission will take place on Wednesday September 27, 2023, beginning with a site meeting at 6:00 p.m. which will adjourn and resume at the Civic Theater at 7:30 p.m.

Participate In Person

6PM at the project site (14500 Fruitvale Avenue)

AND/Or

The Civic Theater at 13777 Fruitvale Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070.

Participate Online

Webinar URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83234319864>

Webinar ID: 832 3431 9864

Submit Written Comments

Comments can be submitted in writing [here](#). Written communications will be provided to the members of the Planning Commission included in the Agenda Packet and/or supplemental meeting materials.



Dark Sky Advocacy

Valley Christian High School student Canis Li comment to county supervisors:

Good morning supervisors. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

My name is Canis Li, I live in Evergreen in San Jose, and I'm a senior at Valley Christian High School interested in astronomy. I'd like to take this moment to talk a little bit about the night sky, because I think a lot of us overlook just how powerful it is. To me, the night sky is not just an indicator that today is ending and tomorrow will begin. It's a beautiful sight that I can be lost in for hours, and the more I lose myself, the more I realize that "life is short", and that compared to the stars, we're just a second in a calendar year. I'm grateful to the night sky for inspiring me and fostering my curiosity. But I'd like to say my feelings aren't unique. The stars have inspired generations of poets, musicians, scientists, artists, and dreamers. Vincent Van Gogh himself once said, "For my part, I know nothing with any certainty but that the sight of the stars makes me dream." I hope that in the future, generations can continue to marvel at space and find humility in its vastness. But currently it's becoming apparent our ability to do so is being more and more compromised by the rapid increase in light pollution that we're facing. Light

pollution is harming our ability to stargaze, but it's also more serious than that—the circadian rhythms of humans, birds and nocturnal animals are being disrupted; just from light pollution alone we're losing 3 billion dollars a year, and adding 15 million tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. But the good news is that this is preventable. And it starts with more conscious lighting designs. I'm determined to keep the magic of the night sky alive, and I hope you help me in this journey of fighting light pollution.

Thank you,
Canis Li



Volunteer Opportunities

SOCIAL MEDIA INTERNS: BIRDS ARE REAL

SCVAS is recruiting students with a passion for the environment and an interest in social media to assist in content creation across SCVAS's social media platforms. We are looking for content on local conservation and environmental issues, informative accounts of local species and habitat. Interns will attend a biweekly zoom meeting (1-2 hours every other Thursday afternoon), attend at least one Young Birders Club event a month, and will be responsible for creating four social media posts and at least one video (two to three minutes) suitable for Instagram, Youtube, and Tiktok a month. SCVAS will sign off on eight to twelve community service hours per month.

Interested students can apply by sending a social media portfolio and a two-minute video on a local environmental issue, or local species of wildlife they are passionate about, to Carolyn Knight at programs@scvas.org.

NATURE SHOP: HELPING FEED THE BIRDS

SCVAS is looking for reliable volunteers to help run the nature shop on an as-needed basis. Volunteers are responsible for answering basic birding and wildlife related questions for the public over the phone and in person, entering sales in the Nature Shop, filling and cleaning the feeders and bird baths, and helping with the occasional mailing.

Contact April Austin at scvas@scvas.org for further information.



2023 County Checklist Available Soon

Our county checklist of birds continues to grow and improve. Version 3.0 will be available for download in the next couple of weeks. Watch for announcements as to when the printed copies will be ready for pick up at our Nature Shop. The checklist draws primarily on eBird checklists provided by the birding community with rarity codes determined by our committee of veteran birders. The monthly bar charts provide insights regarding when each species is likely to be seen any time of the year. There have been several modifications to the bar charts in the past year, and we have even added a brand new species bringing our county total to 414. Stay tuned!



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