

# The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

June 1991

## Riparian Habitat in Peril

by Michael Rigney, *Director of Coyote Creek Riparian Station*

Every year, in Santa Clara County and throughout the West, some of the most valuable wildlife habitat areas are destroyed, often within plain view of concerned environmentalists. In fact many of you reading this newsletter own property which borders on these vital habitats. The areas I am referring to are the thin bands of dense vegetation bordering our rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs. Derived from the Latin word for rivers, riparian habitats in California alone have been reduced by as much as 95% from their historical extent.

Anyone who has birded the wooded fringes of Coyote or San Francisquito Creek in the spring or summer knows that the insect-laden trees and shrubs play host to a myriad of colorful warblers, melodic vireos and song sparrows, and raucous kingfishers, orioles and grosbeaks. Salmon spawn in some of the major streams;

salamanders, frogs and pond turtles breed and live out their lives nestled under moist debris along the banks; lizards and snakes bask in the warm sunlight near the safety of dense thickets.

Our studies at Coyote Creek Riparian Station and numerous other studies have shown that riparian ecosystems support the widest diversity and, at certain times of the year, some of the highest densities of native wildlife of any terrestrial habitat in the west.

Despite this fact, there are no clear statutes which protect the integrity of riparian ecosystems as a whole. Specific statutes protect the actual streambed from destruction, however, there is no protection afforded the extensive vegetation which grows on the banks and tops of our rivers and streams.

Protection of riparian ecosystems is

made difficult because of flood control and public safety issues. These problems, however, are not insurmountable. Techniques are available to lessen the impact of necessary flood control improvements and provide for the safety of recreational users. The key to riparian protection is a concerned and educated public committed to riparian preservation. Santa Clara Valley Audubon, together with a number of other conservation organizations, is working to help draft and enact a "Riparian Protection Ordinance" in Santa Clara County. This ordinance would provide guidelines for setbacks from creeks and suggest ways in which developments can include rivers and streams as amenities to their projects rather than engineering problems to be overcome.

This ordinance is long-overdue and much needed if we are to protect and preserve the remaining portions of this vital wetland habitat.

## Birders Can Make A Difference!

*Now is the time for all good birders to come to the aid of their creeks!*

by Grant Hoyt

If you're an active birder and have ever had the thrill of watching a migratory wave of warblers and other passerines, you may want to consider taking a more active role in protecting our local riparian habitat so crucial to birds and all wildlife. Two recent birding excursions to Coyote Creek convinced me that now is the time to act.

On April 7 I had the pleasure of attending the SCVAS/Sierra Club outing at Gilroy Hot Springs and Henry Coe Park. Never having birded along this beautiful stretch of Coyote Creek before, I was ea-

ger to see a new area and get a taste of spring birding. I was not disappointed. As the Sierra Clubbers strode purposefully up the trail, we birders, true to form, just as purposefully dawdled along, ardently absorbing an amalgam of avian activity. Black-headed Grosbeaks and Solitary Vireos teased us with songs not heard for several months, while Common Yellowthroats, Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray and Townsend's Warblers dared us to "name that 'chip' note." Local resident Steller's Jays and Dark- (continued on page 6)

## Inside...

More riparian related articles on pages 6 and 7.

SCVAS Annual Membership Dinner!  
See details on page 3.

# Chapter News

## Notice to SCVAS members:

With the recent postal increases, our mailing costs have increased 30%! Therefore, we will need to raise the price of the Avocet-only subscriber dues to \$10 effective June 1st. We're sorry for any inconvenience that this causes.

## New Volunteer Opportunities...

◆ **Chapter Historian** - To produce a book of our history from 1962 to the present. A book has already been produced for 1926 to 1962. We hope to have this out in time for the Palo Alto Centennial in 1994.

◆ **Slide Show Producer** - To produce a slide show to be used for Chapter outreach activities.

Please call Cecily at (415) 329-1811 for more information.



Pygmy Owl  
Linda Newberry

## CLEAN South Bay Coalition Victorious in Battle Over Toxic Dumping in National Wildlife Refuge

The CLEAN South Bay Coalition with persuasive testimony by Citizens for a Better Environment won a major victory for the health of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge on April 17th when the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted tough limits on toxic pollution from the three South Bay sewage treatment plants in San Jose, Sunnyvale and Palo Alto.

"This is a great victory for the Bay and the National Wildlife Refuge," said Denny Larson, CBE Campaign Director. "CLEAN South Bay and CBE have been vindicated by this order because the Regional Board was faithful to the State Board's order on our appeal."

The Regional Board adopted the kind of water quality based limits on toxic chemicals and heavy metals that are dumped into South Bay public sewer systems by Silicon Valley business and industry and from household products that environmental groups have demanded for years.

In her statement to the Regional Board, SCVAS Environmental Action Committee member Trish Mulvey noted that since the South Bay is such an environmentally sensitive area and the discharge from the sewage treatment plants affects marshes and wetlands, it is important to have the most protective effluent limits. She also cited State Board documents specifying that "the provisions for developing a scientifically defensible site-specific objective require that the most sensitive beneficial use must be protected. Additionally, pollutant concentrations in the tissues of fish and shellfish must be below levels harmful to aquatic life and wildlife, including waterfowl."

In achieving the victory, the Board, their staff and the environmental groups successfully withstood heavy pressure from San Jose and Sunnyvale city officials and consultants. They argued for further delay in adopting tactics," said Larson. "The Bay and its wildlife need protection now." According to the

(continued on page 5)

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General meetings are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (415) 329-1811 for times and directions.

*The Avocet* is published monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 415 Cambridge Ave., Suite 21, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Deadline is the 25th of the prior month. Send contributions to the editor, Michele Girard, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

June 1991, Volume 38, Number 6

*A Rare Experience!*



**Whales & Tales**  
Wildlife Store and Gallery

800-422-8253  
429 University



415-326-1130  
Palo Alto

# May 1991 Calendar

*On all field trips carpool and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, warm clothing, lunch (optional on half-day trips) and liquids. If you can provide or need transportation, call Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330. Trips highlighting chapters from our new site guide, "Birding at the Bottom of the Bay," are identified as BABOB trips. Field Trip Coordinator for June, July, August is Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499.*

**\*\*Denotes Field Trip**

**\*\*Saturday, June 1.**

**11th Annual Palo Alto Breeding Bird Census.** Leader: Bill Bousman (415) 322-5282 or Clark Blake (415) 747-0601. The BBC is held in the same 15-mile diameter circle as the Palo Alto CBC. If you would like to participate on this count, please call either one of the trip leaders. There is no count fee.

**\*\*Sunday, June 2, 8:30 AM. Half day.**

**Sanborn Park.** Leader: Dave Johnston (408) 867-7278. Directions: Meet in front of YSI Center in park, moderate difficulty, 3 miles. Highlights: McKenzie Lake, chaparral & douglas fir, possible Mountain Quail & Red Crossbills. Lunch optional. BABOB trip.

**Wednesday, June 5, 7:30-9:30 PM.**

**Bay Area Bird Photographers** present "Equipment Night." Tim Davis and Doug Cheeseman will present an equipment program with demonstrations and explanations with sample slides. Brad Lowman from Keeble and Shuchat will bring some things from Keeble and Shuchat. Meeting is at Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on East Embarcadero Rd. in Palo Alto.

**\*\*Saturday, June 8, 8:00 AM.**

**Stevens Creek County Park.** Leader: Phil Hand (415) 851-2623. Directions: Meet at the Visitors Center/Chestnut Picnic Area. (It is the first large parking lot on the left on Stevens Canyon Rd.) Highlights: warblers, woodpeckers, water birds, raptors and owls (in the early hours). BABOB trip.

**\*\*Sunday, June 9, 8:30 AM. Half day.**

**Beginners Trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Rod Norden (408) 255-3033. Directions: Take 101 to Mountain View, exit San Antonio Rd. east to its end at Terminal Way. Highlights: Basics of birding with emphasis on shorebirds and waterfowl. Plan to see nesting birds and their young. BABOB Trip.

**Tuesday, June 11, 9:30 AM.**

**Bird Discussion Group** meets at the home of Steve and Elwyn Dorman, 15086 Becky Lane, Los Gatos. (408) 395-5309. Bring a bag lunch. This month will feature birding instead of a discussion.

**\*\*Wednesday, June 12, 9:00 AM.**

**Half day.**  
**South Co. Trip to Smith Creek.** Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. Directions: Meet at Smith Creek Fire Station on Mt. Hamilton Rd., 4.5 miles past Grant Ranch Co. Park entrance. Walk about 2 to 2 1/2 miles to see a good variety of woodland and riparian species. Lunch optional; no facilities. Bring munchies and water. BABOB Trip.

**Wednesday, June 12.**

**Annual Dinner.** (See description in box below.)

**Saturday-Sunday-Monday (optional) June 22-24.**

**Kern River Valley.** Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. Call for details and to sign up. Should arrive Friday eve. Highlights: great basin, desert, lake and riparian habitats. 140+ species including breeding Calliope Hummingbirds, Pinyon Jays, Brown-crested and Willow Flycatchers, Summer Tanagers.

**\*\*Saturday, June 29, 8:00 AM. Half day.**

**Beginners Trip to Arastradero Open Space Preserve.** Leader: Alberta Jasberg (415) 493-9546. Directions: Meet at the Preserve parking area. Take Page Mill Rd. west from I-280 to Arastradero Rd. (about 1/2 mile. on right). Another 1/2 mile to parking lot on right. 3-4 miles moderate hiking. This is a varied habitat that often yields some surprises.

**\*\*Sunday, July 14, 8:30 AM. Half day.**

**Charleston Slough.** Leader: Rod Norden (408) 255-3033. Directions: Take 101 to Mountain View, exit San Antonio Rd. east to its end at Terminal Way. Highlights: baby avocets, stilts, and terns.

**\*\*Saturday, August 10, 8:00 AM.**

**Half day.**  
**Charleston Slough.** Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. Directions: Take 101 to Mountain View, exit San Antonio Rd. east to its end at Terminal Way. Highlights: baby avocets, stilts, and terns plus fall shorebirds.

## Non-Audubon Events

### Nature Sounds Workshop

The seventh Annual Nature Sounds Society Field Recording Workshop on June 21-23 features workshops, demonstrations and field recording opportunities for both beginning and experienced nature sound recordists. Workshop is to be held at the San Francisco State University Field Station in the Sierra Nevadas. Early registration advised. For more information, call Adam Liberman at (415) 549-9364.

### Australia Wildlife Trip

Come see Australia's incredible wildlife, October 5-27, with resident naturalists in each area and two escort/naturalists Lynne Aldrich and Peter Gottschling, \$3340, plus international airfare of approx. \$1600.

### India Wildlife Tour

A wildlife tour to Northern India with Gail and Doug Cheeseman and resident naturalist Vishnu Singh, Nov. 15-Dec. 14, \$4200, plus international airfare of approx. \$1450.



Shawneen Finnegan

**Wednesday, June 12, 7:15 PM.  
Annual Membership Dinner**

Our Annual Membership Dinner is a special evening with time to socialize and a time for us to thank all our volunteers and chapter members for supporting us and planning and coordinating all the many activities that SCVAS does. Please join us on Wednesday, June 12 at 6 pm for the SCVAS Annual Membership Dinner and Potluck at Lynn & Martha Hunton's, 25600 Fernhill Dr., Los Altos Hills. Please bring something to share.

**A-G Dessert, H-L Main Dish, M-Q Salad, R-Z Hors D'oeuvres**

We'll have beverages, plates, silverware for everyone.

Questions? Call Cecily at (415) 329-1811.

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# Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

## Loons to Herons

A **Red-throated Loon** apparently remained at Shoreline Lake through 20 Apr (PJM) for one of our latest spring records. Three **Am. White Pelicans** on the Alviso salt ponds 18 Apr (PJM) were the only report this month. An apparent hybrid **Snowy Egret X Little Blue Heron** was seen again at Charleston Slough 27 Apr (PJ, WGB). A **Cattle Egret** at the Mountain View Forebay 24 Mar and three along Los Esteros Road in Alviso 17 Apr (both PJM) were good finds. The latter birds were seen through 21 Apr (MLF, MMR). Single **Green-backed Herons** along Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 31 Mar (AME) and 22 Apr (CB, WGB) and in San Antonio Valley 22 Apr (CB, WGB) are both from areas where breeding is suspected, but not proven.

## Geese and Ducks

Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** over the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 27 Apr (PJ) are rare anytime in the county. Pairs of **Wood Duck** on Calero Creek 29 Mar (AV), Coyote Creek along Gilroy Hot Springs Rd. 7 Apr (MJM), and a pond east of San Antonio Jct. 22 Apr (CB, WGB) are all in areas where nesting is suspected. A male **Eurasian Wigeon** at Crittenden Marsh 8 Apr (PJM) is late for the county. The female **Black Scoter** found at Shoreline Lake last month remained there through at least 9 Apr (AME, PJM). The last of the winter's invasion of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** was seen at Shoreline 24 Mar (PJM). Also lingering late was a 1st-winter **Hooded Merganser** at Stevens Creek Res. 27 Mar (KP) and a female on the Los Gatos percolation ponds 30 Mar (MG).

## Raptors through Gulls

An **Osprey** at Felt Lake 25 Mar (SH) and one at Calero Res. 29 Mar (AV) were the only reports from their spring migration through the South Bay. An adult **Golden Eagle** over Sanborn CP 13 Mar (MLF) is from an area where nesting is uncertain. A **Merlin** was on Robin Way in Sunnyvale 9 Mar (PJM). The male *Richardsoni* race

of the **Merlin** wintering in Mountain View was seen 3 and 5 Apr (MMR). The last **Merlin** report of the season is of one near Sandy Wool Lake 19 Apr (MMR). An imm. **Peregrine Falcon** was seen over Charleston Slough and Crittenden Marsh 20 Apr (PJM), and perhaps the same bird was seen at the Palo Alto FCB 27 Apr (PJ). A **Prairie Falcon** at Mission College 28 Apr (DDeS, NY) is well away from known nesting areas and is late for the migrating bird. **Lesser Yellowlegs** are

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## March rains delayed the spring migration by one to two weeks.

very rare in the spring so individuals at the Mountain View Forebay 24 Mar (PJM), the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control (WPCP) 24 Mar (PJM), the Alviso EEC 22 Apr (CB, WGB), and the Palo Alto FCB 27 Apr (PJ) are all of interest. The best shorebirds of the spring were a **Solitary Sandpiper** behind the Smiths Creek Ranger Station in a stagnant puddle on 13 Apr (JAC) and one on Calabazas Creek at Mission College 28 Apr (DDeS, NY). Curiously, most of our spring records for this very rare migrant are away from the bay. The 1st-winter **Franklin's Gull** remained at Sandy Wool Lake through 17 Apr (PJM). **Glaucous Gulls**, plentiful this winter, remained late with three imm. at the Sunnyvale WPCP 17 Mar and single birds remaining through 9 Apr (MLF, PJM). Most surprising, however, was an adult bird seen on the Alviso salt ponds 18 Apr (PJM). Almost all of our South Bay records are of 1st-winter birds. To finish an excellent gull month, Peter Metropulos saw an imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** at the Sunnyvale Baylands 8 Apr for only our third county record.

## Swifts through Woodpeckers

**Vaux's Swifts** first reappeared in the Los Gatos area on 3 Apr (MLF). Migrants away from there included one at the Sunnyvale WPCP 17 Apr (PJM), two in San Antonio Valley 20 Apr (MLF), 16 at Alum Rock Park 22 Apr and two there on 24 Apr (both DD). It appears that local **White-throated Swifts** suffered substantial mortality because of prey loss from the March rains. Many were found in poor condition near Stanford towards the end of the month (CD). The first **Black-chinned Hummingbird** of the season was banded 7 Apr at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) which is late (*fide* WGB). Four more were recorded there by 27 Apr and one was seen as well on 21 Apr (MJM, GHt, PJM). Visits to San Antonio Valley 7-22 Apr have been productive with 3-9 **Lewis' Woodpeckers** evident (m.ob.).

## Passerines

The early swallows of February were not the harbingers of an early spring. On the contrary, the rains of March seem to have delayed arrival dates of our common neotropical migrants by one to two weeks. The weekend of 20-21 Apr resulted in a significant fallout of migrant passerines over a wide area of the county and the postulated reasons are almost as many as the observers. Some felt it was related to dense cloud cover, yet significant numbers were found above 2000 feet where both nights and days were clear. Nonetheless it was great fun for those afield! From 20-24 Apr CCRS banded five **Hammond's Flycatchers** which is five times as many as they banded in the previous five years! On 21 Apr a **Hammond's/Dusky Flycatcher** was identified along lower Coyote Creek (MJM) and the next day individuals of the same species pair were found in three separate locations on Mt. Hamilton (CB, WGB). Two **Purple Martins** on St. Josephs Hill in Los Gatos 22 Apr (MLF) were early for this species. A **Canyon Wren** was heard in Alum Rock Park 7 Apr (MMR) where they nested last year. **Nashville Warblers** were found in un-

## Biological Research Center Underway

Establishment of the Kern River Research Center is currently underway at Weldon, CA in the South Kern River Valley. The Center will conduct research to provide wildlife and land management agencies and organizations with scientific information to enable them to preserve and enhance populations of rare and threatened species, and biological diversity; conducting long-term and/or interdisciplinary studies on selected species, populations, communities, and ecosystems; providing visiting researchers with housing, library, computer, and laboratory facilities; and providing volunteer and educational opportunities for members and other interested individuals.

Currently, staff are engaged in several long-term projects. They are studying the ecology and distribution of the endangered Yellow-billed Cuckoo in California and Arizona, the relationship of the nest parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird to the nesting success of the endangered Willow Flycatcher and other riparian obligate species and monitoring populations of

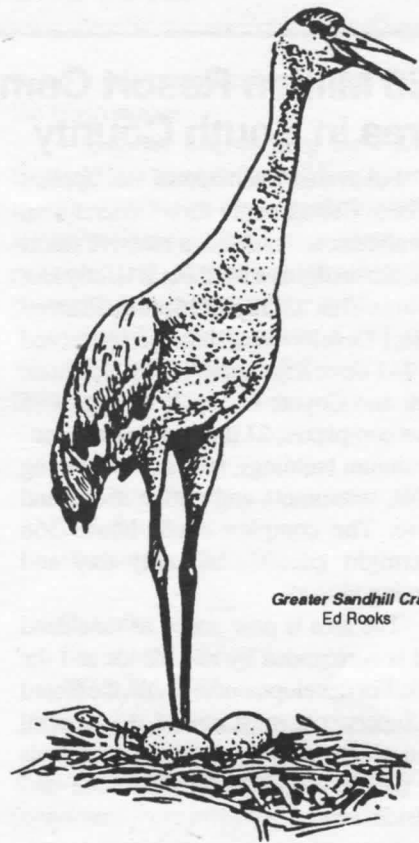
birds and other wildlife on riparian habitat restoration sites on the Kern and Sacramento Rivers.

For more information about the Kern River Research Center, write Research Director, Dr. Stephen Laymon, P.O. Box 990, Weldon, CA 93283 or call (619) 378-3345 or (209) 784-4477.

### CLEAN (continued from page 2)

CLEAN South Bay Coalition, pollution prevention and reducing the use and discharge of toxics at the source will be effective in achieving the new limits.

The Palo Alto permit also authorized creation of freshwater marshes using treated wastewater and recreation of tidal salt marshes using Bay water piped in culverts from the former yacht harbor basin to the ITT property adjacent to Byxbee Landfill Park in Palo Alto. SCVAS has been a regular participant in public planning meetings for this project, and members interested in more information are asked to call the office.



Greater Sandhill Crane  
Ed Rooks

## Field Notes (continued from page 4)

usual numbers with three along lower Coyote Creek 21 Apr (MJM, GHt, PJM) and one to two along Arroyo Hondo (MMR). The next day one was in San Antonio Valley, five were along Arroyo Bayo, and another was west of Isabel Creek (CB, WGB). One was banded at CCRS on 23 Apr and three were banded there 25 Apr. On 21 Apr a **Hermit Warbler** was found along lower Coyote Creek (MJM, GHt, PJM) and a second individual was banded. Further east along Arroyo Hondo more than 10 birds were found (MMR). The next day a single bird was found in Saratoga as well (HG). The panoply of the rare western warblers was rounded out with two **MacGillivray's Warblers** banded at CCRS 20 Apr, two more found nearby the next day (MJM, GHt, PJM), one along Arroyo Hondo 21 Apr (MMR), and another banded 24 Apr.

A **White-throated Sparrow** was singing along lower Coyote Creek 21 Apr (MJM, GHt, PJM) and this was the last day that a feeder bird in Menlo Park was

seen (WGB). Two **Lawrence's Goldfinches** at the Penitencia Creek percolation ponds 17 Apr (PJM) are unusual for the valley floor. More expected were the 2-6 birds at San Antone Jct. 21-22 Apr (m.ob.). Three **Evening Grosbeaks** on San Francisquito Creek near Alpine Road 14 Apr (MS) are always a surprise in the county.

### Early arrivals:

**Caspian Tern**, Calero Res., 24 Mar (MJM); **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**, Stevens Creek CP, 31 Mar (MJM); **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, Stevens Creek CP, 12 Apr (WGB); **Western Kingbird**, lower Coyote Creek, 31 Mar (MJM, GHt); **House Wren**, Alum Rock Park, 31 Mar (AME); **Swainson's Thrush**, CCRS, 16 Apr; **Solitary Vireo**, Gilroy Hot Springs Rd., 7 Apr (MJM); **Warbling Vireo**, Stevens Creek CP, 3/31 (MJM); **Wilson's Warbler**, lower Coyote Creek, 31 Mar (MJM, GHt); **Black-headed Grosbeak**, Los Gatos, 3 Apr (MLF); **Chipping Spar-**

**row**, Arroyo Hondo, 21 Apr (MMR); **Hooded Oriole**, Stevens Creek below Hwy 101, 31 Mar (AME); and **Northern Oriole**, Ed Levin CP, 4 Apr (MMR).

*Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), Clark Blake (CB), Jack Cole (JAC), Courtney Dawson (CD), David Delear (DD), Dave DeSante (DDeS), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MLF), Harriet Gerson (HG), Margo Graube (MG), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Paul Jones (PJ), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Kathy Parker (KP), Mike Rogers (MMR), Merton Sidor (MS), Ann Verdi (AV), and Nick Yatsko (NY).*

**BREEDING BIRD ATLAS:** If you find a nest in the county this season call Roy Cameron, (408) 867-6632.

For rarities in the county, please drop me a note, or battle my answering machine: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415) 322-5282.

# Environmental Action News

## \$30 Million Resort Complex Threatens Scenic Area in South County

Fukuyama International has applied to Santa Clara County for a General Plan amendment to construct a massive resort complex in the east foothills at Gilroy Hot Springs. This "Gilroy Hot Springs Planned Resort Development" has been proposed for 242 acres adjacent to Henry Coe State Park and Coyote Creek. It includes two hotel complexes, 21 privately owned condominium buildings, spas and swimming pools, restaurants and coffee shops and more. The complex could house 568 overnight guests and many day and evening visitors.

The area is now zoned as ranchland and is surrounded by ranchlands and the park. For development to occur, the Board of Supervisors must amend the General Plan which currently places strict controls on the development of ranchland and hillside areas.

Some of the many problems associated with this development include a projected 1,950 more vehicles per weekend day on the narrow hillside roads, 36,780 more gallons of water per day of which 26,780 gallons would need to be converted from the springs. Waste brine, a by-product of the conversion process would be dumped in Coyote Creek. Slow moving animals such as salamanders that must cross the road to breed in the creek would be crushed in the traffic.

Gilroy Hot Springs Road would need to be widened, destroying as many as 2600 trees along Coyote Creek and disturbing the riparian habitat. Roop and Gilroy Hot Springs Roads are county-designated scenic roadways and the draft Environmental Impact Report states that widening will greatly diminish scenic qualities of the roads. A sewage treatment plant is in the development plan even though the county forbids their use until they are proven reliable. The developer says that it would be reliable even though there is no data to prove his theory. During dry years, sewage effluent would compose the entire volume of Coyote Creek. No studies have yet been done to determine the impact of this development on Henry Coe State Park.

At the time of publication, the county was reviewing comments on the Environmental Impact Report for this project.

### What You Can Do:

Write to your county supervisor at 70 West Hedding St., San Jose, CA 95110. Say that you oppose this project, oppose the "planned resort development zoning amendment" and uphold the County General Plan.

Contact FOREST (Families Opposing Rural Encroachment and Severe Traffic), a local citizens group strongly opposed to the project at 408/842-3879 or by writing P.O. Box 2185, Gilroy, CA 95021.

## California Wildlands Need Your Help!

The Planning and Conservation League and other conservation organizations are sponsoring an important land acquisition bond act for native forests and other related wildlife habitat. The California Wildlife Water Quality and Native Forests Act is proposing just under \$2 billion in funding with \$400 million available for wetlands and riparian habitats. Santa Clara County would benefit greatly if this bond passes in the June 1992 election. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District would receive half of the \$44 million allocated for Santa Clara County, \$15 million would go for the former Alma College next to Lexington Reservoir, \$5 million for purchase of land formerly on St. Josephs Seminary in Cupertino, \$10 million for Guadalupe River Park Project, \$6 million for land purchases to add to Henry Coe Park.

We'll need your help to gather 25,000 signatures this summer to get this act on the ballot. To help at a table in June or July, call Greenbelt Alliance at (408) 983-0539.



Townsend's Warbler  
John Mariani

## Birders can Make A Difference *(continued from page 1)*

eyed Juncos were already busy constructing nests for the year's first brood, in contrast to Golden-crowned and Lincoln's Sparrows, who were beefing up for imminent departure to their own breeding grounds further north.

After catching up with the hikers at a peaceful lunch spot, we had a chance to learn more about a developer's plans to build a large resort in the middle of this relatively unspoiled haven (see related article above). Would I be able to sit by and watch condos and tennis courts built, traffic increase thirty-fold, water usage skyrocket, and acres of precious habitat ruined in the midst of this riparian won-

derland? No way!!

Two weeks later I had the good fortune to be conducting a bird census along this same Coyote Creek, miles north of Coe Park, along the riparian corridor near the creek's mouth at Alviso during a migratory wave. My cohorts Mike Mammoser and Peter Metropulos and I were dazzled by the variety and number of warblers, including 25 Yellow-rumped (both Audubon's and Myrtle in breeding plumage), 24 Wilson's, 14 Orange-crowned, 5 Common Yellowthroat, 3 Nashville, 3 Black-throated Gray, 2 McGillivray's, 1 Yellow and 1 Hermit! Warbling Vireos gleaned morsels from

the fresh, green vegetation; Ash-throated Flycatchers hawked insects in the weedy fields nearby; Ruby-crowned Kinglets and American Goldfinches sang from leafy willows; a soon-to-depart White-throated Sparrow delivered his seldom-heard song (a rare treat for California birders); a male Black-chinned Hummingbird buzzed into a tree-tobacco bush for scope viewing; Peter discovered a Great Blue Heron nest in a eucalyptus; Canada Geese browsed in a creekside wetland . . . on and on it went. Even the dozens of mosquito bites absorbed by each of us couldn't dampen our enthusiasm for this remarkable morning of birding! *(continued on page 7)*

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## Letters Needed to Support With Legislation

There are two energy paths facing the United States in the aftermath of the war in the Persian Gulf. We can continue our addiction to oil, and the sacrifice of wilderness and wildlife areas for oil development, or we can start the process of moving America beyond oil, to a more efficient and renewable future.

On one side of the debate, Senator J. Bennett Johnston (D-LA), the powerful Chairman of the Energy Committee, and Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, the ranking Republican member, have introduced S 341, a bill which places overwhelming emphasis on energy production. S 341 would base America's future on continuing our current high level of oil production and consumption, and the revival of the nuclear industry. *It would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development.* It would weaken Nuclear Regulatory Council safety regulations in order to "streamline" the licensing process for new nuclear reactors. It would promote the further development of coal technology. And although it pays lip service to conservation, its provisions for energy efficiency are so weak and uncertain that experts project the bill will save less than 0.1 percent of the cumulative energy consumption of the US between

now and the year 2000.

Senator Tim Wirth's (D-CO) energy bill S 741 *rejects exploiting the Arctic Refuge*; instead, it incorporates strong auto fuel economy provisions (identical to the provisions of Senator Bryan's S 279) that would save many times more oil than we can find by opening the Refuge. Instead of Johnston-Wallop bill's push for more nuclear development, the Wirth bill provides incentives for the development of wind, solar, and alternative fuels technologies; and its energy efficiency provisions are estimated by experts at the American Council for and Energy Efficient Economy to save 20 times as much as the provisions of the Johnston-Wallop legislation.

The Wirth bill also includes incentives for conventional energy production; but overall, it is far stronger on efficiency and less environmentally damaging than either the Johnston-Wallop bill or the President's National Energy Strategy.

### What You Can Do:

Please write to both Sen. Alan Cranston and Sen. John Seymour and let them know that you:

- oppose the Johnston-Wallop bill, S341, which promotes oil and nuclear development at the expense of energy ef-

ficiency, alternative energy sources, and the environment.

- need his help to keep the Arctic Coastal Plain protected as wilderness, and to address America's energy challenge in a manner that will promote a clean, renewable, and environmentally friendly energy path over the coming years.

- want him to cosponsor S 741, the Wirth National Energy Efficiency and Development Act.

Write:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Or Call:

Capitol Switchboard  
(202) 224-3121

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## Birders can Make A Difference

(continued from page 6)

It's no wonder there were so many birds packed into such a small area—habitat is disappearing rapidly in our county, and wild creatures take refuge where they can find it. Coyote Creek and the neighboring Guadalupe River represent some of the last remaining healthy riparian habitat in the valley, but development, pollution and lack of a comprehensive plan to preserve these environs could signal their demise.

Birders can have an impact on the future of riparian habitat in Santa Clara County by actively working to protect our creeks and streams. Green-backed Herons and Spotted Sandpipers can't survive in sterile, concrete drainage ditches; neither can vireos, warblers, woodpeckers, flycatchers, etc. inhabit a creek if the trees and shrubs are removed. In April I enjoyed some of the best birding our region has to offer, and I'm going to do what I can to make sure we'll have good birding every spring. Whether it's field research, letter-writing, education or politicking, there's a way for all of us to help save habitat; if we fail to act, the only birds we'll be watching in the future will be Rock Doves, Starlings and House Sparrows.

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## Why Protect Streams?

A gurgling stream of water, lush and green with hundreds of birds and other wildlife. A resource for our children to learn to appreciate nature. A powerful flood control component that purifies our waters and recharges valuable underground aquifers while providing protection to thousands of downstream residents. Is this your vision for our streams and creeks? Or would you rather see our streams cleared, channeled and managed in order to redirect our polluted runoff as quickly as possible to the Bay where it will mix with salty waters to be lost as an economical resource forever.

The choice is ours now. This year Santa Clara County as well as many cities within the county will be undergoing

General Plan reviews in which they will be looking at the language designed to protect our creeks and streams. While most of the County's General Plans have good language, we must see that this language remains in the General Plans. In addition, ordinances must be put into place to assure that the vision in the general plan is actually implemented. Otherwise, what we have left could also be lost.

However, we need assistance in these efforts. A lot of citizen involvement is needed to survey creeks, write letters, assist in community outreach and in general heighten awareness on this issue. If you would like to find out how you can help, please contact Linda Schild-Jones at (415) 964-9892 or Linda Elkind at (415) 322-6792.

Santa Clara Valley  
Audubon Society  
415 Cambridge Ave., #21  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

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## SCVAS 1991 Birdathon A Success!!

Final results won't be available until the Sept. issue of *the Avocet*, but the 1991 SCVAS Birdathon fund-raiser was a big success! If all pledges come through we'll break the \$8000 mark, with \$2500 going to the Burrowing Owl census, \$2500 to National Audubon's Mono Lake campaign, and the remainder to SCVAS conservation and education projects.

Ten teams of birders put hours of time and a profusion of energy into making the chapter's biggest fundraiser a profitable one. The Vagrants saw 160 species, breaking their old record by seven, and raised \$1100; the Poorwills saw a record 148 species in Santa Clara County alone, a tremendous accomplishment; the Wrentits brought in the most money, a whopping \$2000; the "If You've Seen One Bird. . ." team raised \$1300 and saw 25 species (instead of the usual 20!); the official SCVAS team, the Uncommon Loons, had an exciting field trip/Birdathon and raised over \$1000; and the Wrong Terns raised over \$600 in their first Birdathon!

Thanks to all who pledged and/or participated—it's this kind of effort that enables us to maintain a strong presence on the environmental scene and carry out chapter activities. The following is a partial list of Patron donors who contributed \$50 or more (Patrons whose names were not available at press time will be recognized in the Sept. *Avocet*):

Lorraine Bazan	Phil & Rose Hand	Robert Moore
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David & Harriet Gerson	Pat Miller	Sylvia & Gordon Williams

**Membership:** We invite your membership in the National Audubon Society/SCVAS. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to SCVAS, 415 Cambridge Ave., #21, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

**National Audubon Society Membership:** Check One

Introductory \$20  Individual \$35  Family \$38

Members receive *Audubon* magazine and *The Avocet* newsletter. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

**Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Membership:** Check One

Subscriber \$10  Supporter \$20  Donor \$35  Patron \$50 and more

Members receive *The Avocet* newsletter. Make check payable to SCVAS.

**Audubon Activist - \$9:** Activists receive a quarterly publication from the National Audubon Society. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

**Donation:** SCVAS greatly appreciates your tax-deductible donation. Your gift helps to fund the Chapter's birding, education, conservation and research programs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift from: \_\_\_\_\_