



# The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

April 1993

## '93 Birdathon to Support Riparian Conservation

### 1993 Birdathon Teams

UNCOMMON LOONS (Official Chapter Team)	Nick Yatsko Rod Norden
WRENTITS	Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Harriet Gerson & Friends
VAGRANTS	Grant Hoyt, Dick Stovel, Mike Mammoser
WRONG TERNS	Bobbie Handen, Allen Royer & Friends
CARDINAL VIRTUES	Tony Eppstein, Jane & Chip Becker-Haven
BAND-ITS	Mike Rigney & CCRS Staff
WEDNESDAY WEIRDOS	Alan Thomas & Friends
BIRDBRAINS	Alan Walther & Paul Edstrom
POORWILLS	Bill Bousman
DOWN & DIRTY BIRDERS	Brad Lowman

Eleven teams of crazed birdwatchers will take to the field this month to raise money for the 1993 Birdathon, our chapter's most important fundraising event. This year's Birdathon theme is riparian habitat protection and restoration, with proceeds going to local riparian research efforts coordinated by Coyote Creek Riparian Station and the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition. One-third of the the money raised will be donated to National Audubon, and specifically targeted to California riparian conservation programs.

Last year SCVAS raised over \$11,000—4th among all Audubon chapters nationwide! We've set a goal of \$15,000 this year and we need the support of all members. If you haven't participated in a Birdathon before, it's easy: pledge an amount per bird seen by your favorite team, let them do the birding, then multiply your pledge amount times the number of birds seen by the Birdathon team and send your donation to the team leader or the

SCVAS office. Or simply pledge a flat amount to the team of your choice—it's that simple. Donors of \$50 or more will be recognized as Birdathon Patrons in the June *Avocet*.

Chances are you'll be contacted by a team member asking your support. If you're in doubt, why not pledge to the Uncommon Loons, the official chapter team. They'll be doing a Birdathon field trip on Sunday, April 18 (see Calendar, page 3), and the leaders promise 100 species and a wild time!

SCVAS needs to take a strong position in protecting local birding habitat, especially creeks and wetlands which are under constant threat of development and destruction. We need your financial support to bolster our research and conservation programs. Birders and environmentalists unite! Save our riparian corridors—support the Birdathon!

—Grant Hoyt

### General Membership Meeting, Wednesday, April 21 7:30 PM Refreshments 8:00 PM Program

Palo Alto Cultural Center  
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

#### **Project Puffin: New Horizons in Seabird Conservation**

Puffins have as winning personalities as Penguins and many interesting patterns of behavior. Pete Salmansohn, Public Information Coordinator for the Puffin Project of National Audubon at Medomak, Maine, tells tonight's fascinating story. Pete has been leading trips to the restored puffin and tern colony in Maine for the past three summers. As the summer naturalist on the excursion boat that gives a first hand look at this special island, he does a nonstop narration of the natural history of the alcid family.

Meeting is co-sponsored by the Palo Alto Open Space and Sciences Division.

# Chapter News

## Thanks to Those Businesses and Individuals Who Donated Items to Our Education Day Donation Drawing!!

Books Inc., Stanford Shopping Center • Congdon & Crome, Palo Alto • Cupertino Historical Museum • Eddie Bauer, Oakridge Shopping Center • Frank's Scientific, Palo Alto • Chip Haven & Jane Becker-Haven • Klutz Press, Palo Alto • Lin's Toy Cupboard, Los Altos • Naturals for the Earth, San Jose • Palo Alto Sport & Toy World, Palo Alto • Santa Clara Valley Water District • University Arts, Palo Alto • San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge • Whales & Tales, Palo Alto.

Please help us to thank them the next time you visit these establishments by saying that you appreciate their support of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's Audubon Education Day.

## And to the Many Volunteers & Organizations Who Helped Make Audubon Education Day a Great Success

Barbara Banfield • Renae Brodie • Gail Cheeseman • Rita & Rob Colwell • Coyote Creek Riparian Station • Cupertino Parks & Recreation Department • Joan Denzler • Jennifer & Cree Edwards • Environmental Volunteers • Fred Fisher • Chrys Fitzpatrick • Reid Freeman • Beth Gaydos • Stan & Elaine Gould • Bobbie, Carl & Cindy Handen • Pat & Walt Hartinger • Patty & Mark Herman • Karen & Grant Hoyt • Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley • Debi Jameson • Linda Johnson • Shane Kibble • Joe Lattuada • Pearl & Bruce Lawson • Sue Liskovec • Lee Lovelady • Marine Science Institute • Emilie Marlinghaus • Joan Mancini • Patt Mann • Henrietta Marcotte • Lester Markarian • Cynthia McLaughlin • Carol McDowell • John McLemore • Fran McTamany • Jill Ory • Chris Otahal • Peninsula Conservation Center • Paula Quinterno • Edward & Janice Rooks • Shirley Rosenberg • Allen Royer • Santa Clara Valley Water District • Clysta Seney • Vicki Silvas-Young • Pat Sunseri • Vivian van Dijk • Wildlife Rescue • Nick Yatsko • Genevieve Ziegler.

## Library News

### Are You Through With It?

"It" in this case could be *Birding Areas in Iowa* (with ten reputed hotspots) or *A Birdwatchers Guide to Nepal*. Or any place in between. Your library has hundreds of enjoyable books to select from, but most are not the most current publications. We are woefully deficient in up-to-date site location guides for foreign or domestic use. The American Birding Association now has more than 120 bird finding books for sale. We have less than 10 of these on our shelves.

If you have birded in recent years using a guide that no longer has a hold on you, either sentimentally or functionally, that guide could enjoy a new home and provide useful information to fellow birders via the SCVAS Library. Contact Cecily Harris at 408/252-3747 to discuss cleaning out your bird book closet.

—Reid Freeman

### SCVAS OFFICERS

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General meetings are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

*The Avocet* is published monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA 95014. Deadline is the 25th of two months prior. Send contributions to *The Avocet*, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

SCVAS is the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

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Rare Bird Alert: 510/ 524-5592

# April 1993 Calendar

*On all field trips carpool and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, warm clothing, lunch (optional on half-day trips) and liquids. Field Trip Coordinator for April: Edward Rooks (408) 867-9286.*

**\*\*Denotes Field Trip**

**\*\*Saturday, April 3, 8:30 AM. Half day. Grant Ranch Park.** Leader: Alan Thomas (408)265-9286. Meet at Halls Valley Reservoir parking lot, on the left side of Mt. Hamilton Rd., 100 yards past the main entrance. Take I-680 to Alum Rock Ave., exit east. Turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd., 5-6 miles to park. Lunch optional, rain cancels.

**\*\*Sunday, April 4, 9:00 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Kathy Parker (408)358-2832. Meet at parking area at Terminal Rd. Take Hwy 101 to Mt View, exit east at San Antonio Rd., follow to its end at Terminal Rd. Highlights: Birding basics emphasizing waterfowl and shorebirds.

**Tuesday, April 7, 7:30 - 9:30 PM. Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Katherine Rambo will present a slide program on the habits and habitats of the California Clapper Rail. This endangered species has declined precipitously during recent years, both because of the habitat loss and because of predation by the introduced red fox. There are some hopeful recent indications that predator control programs have allowed populations to increase in at least some areas.

**\*\*Saturday, April 10, 8:30 AM. Half day. Elkhorn Slough Boat Trip \*EARLY BIRDATHON\*.** Leaders: Gail & Doug Cheeseman 408/867-1371 and Bernadette Ramer. Limited to 12 persons. Cost \$16 (to cover costs of boats and boatmen from Moss Landing Marine Lab) plus \$16 donation to the SCVAS Birdathon, so make out two checks to SCVAS as half is deductible. Call Ed Rooks for reservations 408/867-4748 and the address to mail checks to. Directions: Meet at Jetty Road in Moss Landing. [Same trip also held on April 24.]

**\*\*Sunday, April 11, 9:00 AM. Half day. Almaden Quicksilver Co. Park/Almaden Reservoir.** Leader: John Mariani (408)997-1429. Meet at the Mine Hill Rd. entrance to the park. Take Almaden Expressway south to Almaden Rd. Then drive about 5 miles to the dirt parking lot, just past the town of New Almaden and just before the bridge and a sharp left turn in the road. Rain cancels, lunch optional.

**Tuesday, April 13, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group** will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos. 408/395-4264. Topic: Clapper Rail.

**\*\*Wednesday, April 14, 8:30 AM. Half day. Rancho San Antonio County Park.** Leader: Reid Freeman 408/255-4969. Directions: From I-280 take Foothill Expressway south to Cristo Drive, past Gates of Heaven Cemetery to the last parking area near the restrooms. Two-three miles of easy walking. Highlights: Woodland birds. Lunch optional.

**\*\*Saturday, April 17, 8:00 AM. Half day. Stanford University Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve.** Leaders: Bill and Jean Clark and other docents (415)424-4371. By reservation only, limit 40 participants. \$4.00 fee. Meet at the main gate. Be prompt as gate closes at 8:30 AM. Take I-280 to Sand Hill Rd. in Palo Alto. Drive west for about 2 miles to main gate. Moderately strenuous 3-mile walk. Lunch optional. Heavy rain cancels.

**\*\*Sunday, April 18, 8:00 AM SCVAS Chapter Birdathon (Uncommon Loons)** Leaders: Nick Yatsko 408/247-5499 and Rod Norden. The Uncommon Loons will meet at Arastradero OSP at 8:00 AM. They'll be over at Stanford by about 12 noon and then travel over to Charleston Slough to see the team goal of 100 species. Directions: From I-280, take Page Mill Rd exit west. Turn right at Arastradero Rd. (Approx. .3 mile), proceed to Preserve parking lot, approx. .4 mile on right. Minimum donation of \$10 requested for the Birdathon.

## Non-Audubon Events

**Join the Garden Work Party at McClellan Ranch Park Native Plant Garden** in front of the Audubon office, Saturday, April 3rd, at 1:00 pm. We will be shoveling mulch to cover the ground. Bring shovels and wheel barrows. Refreshments to be provided. For more information, call Beth Gaydos at 408/725-1168.

**Wednesday, April 21, 7:30 PM Refreshments 8:00 PM Program. Project Puffin: New Horizons in Seabird Conservation.** See box, page 1.

**\*\*Saturday, April 24 8:30 AM Half day Elkhorn Slough Boat Trip \*WRENTIT BIRDATHON\*.** Same Description as Saturday, April 10.

**\*\*Sunday, April 25, 8:00 AM. Half day. Stevens Creek Park.** Leader: Phil Handler (415)851-2623. Meet at the first parking lot below the dam. Take I-280 to Cupertino. Exit west on Foothill Blvd. until it becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.. and to the parking area on left. Heavy rain cancels. Lunch optional. Highlights: Spring migrants including warblers and Vireos.

**\*\*Wednesday, April 28, 8:30 AM. Half day Stevens Creek County Park** Leader: Rosie Handler 408/730-1745. Directions: Take Foothill Blvd. south from I-280 about 2 miles to 1st parking area below the dam. Highlights: Breeding Birds. Lunch optional.

## Plan Ahead

**\*\*Saturday, May 1, 8:00 AM. Full day.. Mines Rd/Del Puerto Canyon.** Leader: Art Edwards (510)447-3720.

**\*\*Sunday, May 2, 8:30 AM. Half day. Alum Rock.** Leader: Allen Royer (408)288-7768.

**\*\*Saturday, May 8, 8:30 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Stanford University Campus.** Leader: Judy Wagner (415)941-7586.

# Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

## Loons through Egrets

One to two **Red-throated Loons** have remained on Shoreline Lake with sightings 15-21 Feb (AHR, MJM, MMR, WGB). Four birds were seen on Calero Res. 20 Feb (AME). For the second winter in a row a very unseasonal **Brown Pelican** has turned up. This season's bird was seen 16 Feb (JiC) in the outer Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB). **Cattle Egret** remain rare in the county and I do not discern any pattern in the sightings over the last 15 years. A single bird was seen at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) 28-30 Jan (MMR, JiC, MiF, MJM). On 31 Jan (WGB) a bird was found in the Emily Renzel Wetlands in Palo Alto and two weeks later, on 15 Feb (AME), a bird was at the Mountain View Forebay. It is possible that all of these sightings refer to the same bird. At the same time another individual has been found fairly regularly at Ames Research Center including a sighting on 15 Feb (JD). Finally, flocks of four or five birds have been in the vicinity of the Arzino Ranch and Nortech Parkway with observations on 30 Jan (MJM) and 15 Feb (WC, WGB).

## Waterfowl

An imm. **Snow Goose** was found in the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds 25 Jan (AA *fide* MR) and was seen at least through 2 Feb (m.ob.). An adult **Ross' Goose** has joined the domestic flock at the Sunnyvale WPCP with the first observation 28 Jan (MMR) and sightings at least through 24 Feb (m.ob.). It is suspected that this is the same bird that was here last winter. The large winter concentration of **Wood Ducks** continues at Almaden Res. with 56 counted 14 Feb (AV). **Blue-winged Teal** have been seen along Adobe Ck. in the Palo Alto FCB with two males and a female there 25 Jan (MMR) and a pair on 20 Feb (MJM) and 21 Feb (WGB). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen in alt

pond A1 in Mountain View 23 Jan (L&ER) and possibly the same male was found the next day in the Palo Alto FCB (IB, CB). One to two female **Barrow's Goldeneyes** have remained on Shoreline Lake through 20 Feb (MJM, MMR, AME, AHR) and a single male was there 31 Jan (AHR).

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## *A Townsend's Solitaire and a Hermit Warbler were unusual finds.*

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## Raptors

A good find for any winter was an **Osprey** on Chesbro Res. 20 Feb (AME). An adult **Bald Eagle** was at the south end of Calaveras Res. 20 Feb (MJM). A **Ferruginous Hawk** was seen at Anderson Res. 31 Jan (MJM). An adult bird was at the San Jose Airport 3 Feb (MMR) where one has been found since early November. Adding to these numbers was an imm. on Sierra Road on 13 Feb (MMR). Good numbers of **Merlin** continue to be found in the county. The Mountain View male *richardsoni* was seen 26-31 Jan (MMR) and a bird of the dark race, *suckleyi*, was in the same area 10-16 Feb (MMR). Individuals were seen at Jos. Grant County Park (CP) 17 Jan (AL, JY) and the Sunnyvale WPCP on 28 Jan (MMR) and 15 Feb (JD). **Peregrine Falcons** this month include adults at the Sunnyvale WPCP 13 Feb (MJM) and Triangle Marsh 15 Feb (WGB) and an imm. at the Palo Baylands 20 Feb (WC). A **Prairie Falcon** at Jos. Grant CP 17 Jan (AL, JY) was a good find.

## Gulls through Woodpeckers

An adult **Glaucous Gull** north of the Alviso Marina 29 Jan (AV) and 15 Feb (WGB) may have been the same one found last month at the Sunnyvale WPCP. The great majority of our Glaucous Gulls are first winter birds as represented by two at the Sunnyvale WPCP 24 Feb (MMR). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was heard calling at

dawn in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (OSP) 13 Feb (MMR) where they have been found in the past. Less expected was the **Long-eared Owl** that was heard calling the same morning in the preserve. The Arastradero Preserve **Lewis' Woodpecker** was seen again 2 Feb (MiF). Hybrid sapsuckers bring their own frustration with one noted in Menlo Park 20 Feb (CB, IB) and another at Gavilan College 20 Feb (AME).

## Swallows to Orioles

It is unclear whether the single **Tree Swallows** seen along Coyote Ck. below Hwy 237 30 Jan (MJM) and at Calero Res. 4 Feb (EA, AT) are wintering birds or the first arrivals. Four to five birds at Sandy Wool Lake 13 Feb (MMR) were clearly early migrants. A **Violet-green Swallow** seen along Canada Road 31 Jan (MJM) may also be a wintering bird but, again, two or so on Sandy Wool Lake 13 Feb were arriving birds. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at Ed Levin CP 13 Feb (MMR) is well away from any breeding areas and is the only Diablo Range bird we have had this winter. A **Canyon Wren** was seen in Henry Coe SP 31 Jan (AL, JY) where they are a rare resident. A **Townsend's Solitaire** at Stanford 13-21 Jan (SR) was our second this winter and most unusual. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** along Coyote Ck. below Hwy 237 30 Jan (MJM) was undoubtedly a wintering bird. A silent bird in Stevens Creek CP 14 Feb (MJM) may be the vanguard of the returning residents, but not yet on territory. A female **Hermit Warbler** in Sanborn-Skyline CP 30 Jan (MMR) is one of only two winter records I have for this species. Both are from the Douglas fir forest of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A **White-throated Sparrow** was seen at Hidden Villa 24 Jan (AL, JY). A male **Hooded Oriole** at a Los Altos feeder 6 Feb (PLN) is believed to be a wintering bird as our summering birds normally do not return until the second or third week of March.

*Continued on page 8*

**Rarities: Please drop me a note:  
Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington  
Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025.**

# Field Trip Reports

## Morro Bay/Carrizo Plain, February 13-14.

Selecting a highlight from the two-day Central Coast SCVAS field trip on Feb. 13-14 would be a difficult task, considering the choices. On Saturday, leader Jim Royer started our group of 23 birders off with the reliable and always thrilling Peregrine Falcon show at Morro Rock, followed by good looks at Royal Tern and even a rare Black Skimmer at the waterfront lagoon. Common Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers, Horned Grebes and other diving species were studied at close range as well. At Morro Bay State Park estuary we were treated to a dazzling array of waterbirds, including more Brant (over 3500) than anyone could remember seeing in one place, a Eurasian Wigeon and an American White Pelican. A tiny Allen's Hummingbird buzzed nervously over our cars as we parked next to the golf course—the hummer had built a nest overhanging the parking lot! Dodging golfers and errant tee shots, we searched the golf course willow thickets for passerines and were rewarded with an American Redstart just beginning to show signs of breeding plumage. Stops at Oceano and Arroyo Grande resulted in a day total of 106 species.

Little did we realize what was in store for us on Sunday's Carrizo Plain outing. Thanks to a break in the winter storms, we enjoyed a clear, calm day of birding weather and a phenomenal total of 18 species of raptors in one day. Ferruginous Hawks, including one dark morph bird, seemed almost as common as Red-tails on the utility poles. Among the four Prairie Falcon sightings was one bird dining on a freshly killed rodent and a pair circling overhead. We visited an active Golden Eagle nest constructed of sticks on a telephone pole and momentarily disturbed the adult occupants, who simply flew up to a nearby ridge and launched into an impressive sequence of diving courtship displays. Jim then led us to a scrubby sage area next to Soda Lake where he thought we might find a few Short-eared Owls, a species known to roost

communally in winter. A brief walk through the sagebrush flushed up 30 of the moth-like creatures; some stayed on the ground for good scope looks. Sage Sparrows, too, were fairly common and viewed by most of the group, and large flocks of Mountain Bluebirds and the uncommon Mountain Plover were viewed at length. A huge flock of Horned Larks included American Pipits and Lark Sparrows, but, alas, no longspurs.

Unbelievably, the best was yet to come. At the ranch home of long-time Carrizo Plain birder/environmentalist Eben McMillan, we stopped to inspect his oasis of trees in the middle of rolling grassland hill habitat. Both Great Horned and Barn Owls were easily flushed from a tree and resettled nearby, while a Rough-legged Hawk hovered over a nearby hill. Suddenly, a large, not immediately identifiable raptor burst out of a tree the owls had flown into, making a strange, piercing cry. "Northern Goshawk!" was Jim Royer's dramatic call, and our entire group was treated to a good, long look at the magnificent accipiter, only the second San Luis Obispo County record for this normally montane species. Twice more in the next 10 minutes the bird made full circle flights around the yard and trees, once coming close enough to show off its finely scalloped, soft gray underside and even its stunning red eye. Just for kicks, a Cooper's and a Sharp-shinned Hawk decided to make it a three-ring accipiter circus by whizzing through the trees, sparking further frenzied discussion of the finer points of raptor field identification.

Grudgingly, we departed the McMillan hawk haven and started back, giddily counting up our raptor totals. Maybe we'd see a Bald Eagle on the way back. (Sure, and maybe a Gyrfalcon would fly over!) Unwilling to stay up into the night and go owling, we settled for 4 falcons, 4 buteos, 4 owls, 3 accipiters, 1 eagle, 1 harrier, and 1 kite for our total of 18 birds of prey. Everyone, from wide-eyed beginner to jaded veteran, realized that this had been a very special field trip.

—Grant Hoyt

## Environmental Education Center, Alviso, January 13.

Six courageous birders found a small window in the rainy weather on 13 Jan and found 24 species at the Environmental Education Center, Alviso. Two highlights were the Hermit Thrush and the American Bittern, not seen often at the EEC. Many thanks, Jim Richter, for lugging the telescope and thanks, Alice Hoch for helping us to identify birds in the dim light.

—Lee Lovelady  
Volunteer naturalist.

## Foster City, January 29.

We thank Nick Coiro of Sequoia Audubon for leading our group of 19 birders around Foster City on this sunny Saturday. We saw a total of 64 species, concentrating on waterbirds and shorebirds. Among the highlights was a distant view of a Peregrine Falcon and clear views of Red Knots, Eurasian Wigeons and Barrow's Goldeneyes.

—Ed Rooks

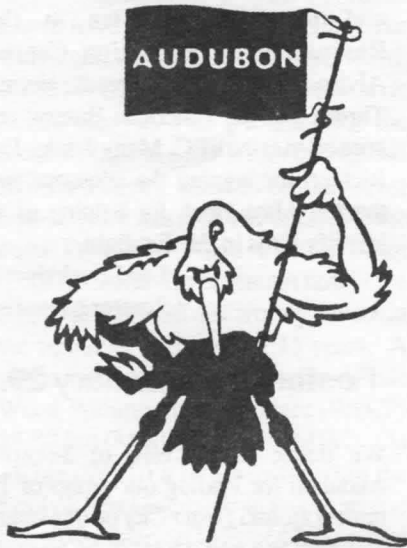
## Woodbridge Road/Delta, January 31.

We thank Waldo Holt of San Joaquin Audubon for skillfully leading our group of 17 people in a car caravan through the Sacramento River Delta's flooded farmlands and along its waterways. The morning was cool and bright, and we could hear the melodious call of the Sandhill Cranes through the thin veil of fog. We saw hundreds of cranes and Snow Geese as well as many Tundra Swans among the flooded corn stalks. Other highlights included great views of an accommodating Prairie Falcon on a telephone post, Rough-legged Hawk flying overhead and several Lesser Golden Plovers among a flock of Black-bellied Plovers. A brazen skunk blocked our progress at one point, adding drama to the experience.

—Ed Rooks

# Environmental Action News

## Any Bird Can Become A Tough Bird



SCVAS's Environmental Action Committee recently voted to join a new National Audubon program called "Armchair Activist." The purpose of this program is to generate more letters and phone calls to government officials about environmental issues.

Many people want to help preserve the environment but have little

time. Members of the "Letter of the Month" Club will receive clear brief summaries of issues and a sample letter and the name and address of the policy maker. A Northern California Armchair Activist Council will provide information on local and state issues in addition to national ones.

The "Telephone Rapid Response Team" requires only an occasional phone call. Members stand ready to call government officials on short notice to voice a timely opinion on environmental issues.

If you have even as little as 30 minutes a month to give to the environmental effort, you can become an Armchair Activist!

Contact: Cynthia McLaughlin  
408/253-4588

A donation of \$6 is suggested but NOT mandatory. You may send a check and/or your name and address to SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014. Please indicate if you want to be in the "Letter of the Month" Club or join the "Phone Tree" or both. If you are already a part of this program, you do not need to sign up again. We'll keep you posted.

## Open Space Protection Workshop to be Held April 10

The public is invited to a special educational workshop entitled "How to Protect our Natural Heritage and Plan for a Sustainable Future in Santa Clara County and the Region" on Saturday, April 10, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Greenbelt Alliance, 1922 The Alameda, San Jose.

This workshop is designed for people who want to learn about the most important issues affecting open space protection, overall land use planning and

urban growth in Santa Clara County and how to be effective in influencing decisions that will lead to a desired future with protected natural resources.

To Register: Call Greenbelt Alliance at 408/983-0539 and leave your name, address (include zip code) and daytime phone number. A detailed agenda and maps of the workshop location will be sent out to all registrants. A \$5 fee will be collected at the door to cover materials and expenses.

## 1993 Makes Year Three of the Burrowing Owl Census

For the past two years, SCVAS and 33 other Audubon chapters and bird clubs in California have participated in the Cooperative Census of Burrowing Owls sponsored by the Institute of Bird Populations. The Census covers all counties where Burrowing Owl breeding habitat occurs, exclusive of the Great Basin and southern deserts of California. This final year will be crucial to re-census blocks in Santa Clara County found to contain breeding pairs of Burrowing Owls.

Volunteers will cover the entire 5 km square block during the early morning (sunrise to 10 a.m.) or late afternoon (4 p.m. to sunset) during the two month period that Burrowing Owls are likely to be in their nests feeding their young. At this time one or both parents will always be present.

We are looking for 30 volunteers this year to complete the Census between May 15 and July 15, 1993. (Last year's volunteers are welcome to request the same census blocks.) Each volunteer or team of volunteers will receive detailed map blocks and data sheets.

Interested? Call Cecily Harris at the SCVAS office at 408/252-3747 for more information.

# The California Endangered Species Act Endangered

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), which was closely modeled after the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), was signed into law in 1984. There are some differences between CESA and the federal act, and certain changes are now being proposed.

## • Listing of Species

Both the state and federal endangered species acts require consideration of petitions to "list" plant or animal species as either "endangered" or "threatened." Eligibility for listing depends on whether the best available scientific evidence shows that a species is threatened or endangered in all or part of its range.

## • Candidacy Process

The CESA has a different listing process than the federal government: the California Fish & Game Commission has legal authority to grant or deny all listing petitions, and is required to designate a species as a candidate for threatened or endangered status if they find that an eventual listing may be warranted.

## • Prohibition Against "Take"

The teeth of both FESA and CESA is the prohibition against any "take" of a listed species. Under FESA, harassment, capturing, killing, destroying habitat, etc. of a listed species is prohibited unless an "incidental take permit" is granted. Take is similarly prohibited under CESA unless specifically authorized by a special permit granted by the Fish & Game Commission.

## • Inter-Agency Consultation

Under CESA, all state agencies must consult with the California DFG for a similar jeopardy determination. If jeopardy is found, the DFG must determine "reasonable and prudent" project alternatives to conserve and protect the species. The lead agency can reject these alternatives if "infeasible,"

but they still must require mitigation measures to "minimize the adverse impacts of the project...."

## • Habitat Conservation Plans

Congress included a process in FESA for "incidental take" through use of a habitat conservation plan which has proven exceptionally popular with the development community.

An incidental take permit can be authorized only when the USFWS finds that "the applicant, to the maximum extent practicable, minimized and mitigated the impacts of the taking, that adequate funding for the [habitat protection] plan will be provided, and that the taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild."

The CESA is not as clear as FESA when it comes to adopting habitat conservation plans. Under CESA, the DFG may issue take permits for "scientific, educational or *management* purposes." Management purposes is never defined in the law, and there is no uniform process for preparing or evaluating a habitat conservation plan. The Fish & Game Commission can also issue discretionary take permits for any candidate species.

## Why There is Going to be a Fight Over CESA in 1993.

One of CESA's provisions must be re-authorized in 1993, which provides an opportunity for those opposed to the act to try to open up the law to further amendment.

Article 4 of the CESA requires that state agencies consult with the DFG to ensure their approval of projects will not jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species. Article 4 expires on January 1, 1994.

## Changes Proposed for CESA

### • Incorporate Economic Considerations into the Listing Process

Last year, Audubon played a role in defeating AJR 80 (Jones) which called

### • Cost and Effectiveness

The CESA is criticized for long delays in approval of habitat conservation plans and inadequate consideration of the economic impacts of listing decisions.

### • Habitat Transaction Credits

This system gives economic "habitat value" to land through tradable Conservation Certificates with no reserve design boundaries for particular threatened habitat types.

The Conservation Certificates would be traded by those who had earned them by setting aside land for preservation. Conservation Certificates give the holder the right to disturb a certain amount of habitat, and that right can be freely bought and sold.

## What You Need to Do:

Please write to Assembly Speaker Willie Brown and Senate President Pro Tempore David Roberti urging them to support re-authorization of Article 4 of CESA and to oppose any weakening amendments to this section or other section of the Act.

In relation to Article 4, remind the legislators that it only makes common sense for state agencies to consult with one another on "jeopardy" determinations involving listed species. Tell Speaker Brown and Senator Roberti of the urgent need to protect California's dwindling natural diversity and, finally, let them know that Californians do not want to sacrifice a healthy environment for short-term economic gain.

## Send Your Letters to:

Assembly Speaker Brown  
Room 219, State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate President Pro Tempore David Roberti  
Room 205, State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Santa Clara Valley  
Audubon Society  
22221 McClellan Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014

Non-Profit Organization  
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## Herons of Portola Valley

Spring has begun and it came on Sunday the 28th of February if you go by the warm sunshine, cherry blossoms, daffodils and herons in the Portola Valley heronry. As in past years, great blue herons and occasional egrets have come to the redwood grove on Montecito and Portola Roads, just across from the Family Farm at 1400 Portola Road.

The herons return every spring to renovate their large nests of sticks that don't hold up well through the winter. Rain and wind have cleaned the extensive whitewash from the trees and knocked the remains of last year's nests from their perches. Right now the herons are hauling building materials from the swamps of Searsville Lake and Alpine Creek but when the young hatch these trips become food service relays between the wetlands and hungry chicks.

Some birds have found an abundance of food in gophers from the field between the Stanford Children's Health Council and Oak Creek apartments. Standing as still as sculptures, herons watch active gopher holes intently, waiting for the herbivore to come up with a load of soil and take a curious look at what's new topside. Big mistake! With lightning speed the heron plucks the unsuspecting rodent from its hole with "barbed tweezers" and with a deft jerk of the beak renders it lifeless, swallows it whole and takes it to the nest for its young.

I don't know how the residents directly below the trees get along with the incessant chatter and rain of whitewash, but I assume they have learned to appreciate their nesting visitors by now.

—Jobst Brandt

### Field Notes Continued from Page 4

First Arrivals: **Rufous Hummingbird**, Ed Levin CP, 20 Feb (MJM), **Allen's Hummingbird**, Ed Levin CP, 13 Feb (MMR), **Nor. Rough-winged Swallow**, Sandy Wool Lake, 13 Feb (MMR); **Cliff Swallow**, Sandy Wool Lake, 20 Feb (MJM) and Shoreline Lake, 20 Feb (AL, JY);

Observers: *Ernie Abeles (EA), Alex Aiken (AA), Charles Bacon (CB), Ian Bacon (IB), Bill Bousman (WGB), William Cabot (WC), Jim Corliss (JiC), Jennifer Dungan (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Paul Noble (PLN), Armin H. Ramel (AHR), Mike Rigney (MR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Stephen Rottenborn (SR), Leonard & Elizabeth Rush (L&ER), Alan Thomas (AT), Ann Verdi (AV), James Yurchenco (JY).*

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Or

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

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