



The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

November 1993

STAFF HIRINGS HERALD CHANGES AT SCVAS

Santa Clara Valley Audubon announced a major restructuring of personnel this month with the hiring of a new Office Manager and the creation of two part-time positions, Environmental Advocate and Administrative Aide. The Board expects this trio of new employees to help achieve such goals as elevating the chapter's status in the community, augmenting volunteer and committee activities, improving office efficiency and boosting merchandise sales.

While negotiations were still under way with candidates for the two new positions at press time, we are pleased to

welcome Jayne DiCandio, an experienced and versatile volunteer for numerous SCVAS activities over the last 18 months, as Office Manager, 75%-time. Her main responsibilities will be to run the office and NatureShop at McClellan Ranch, coordinate volunteer efforts, and work with committees on various chapter programs. A native of the east coast, Jayne has volunteered for Rhode Island Audubon as well as SCVAS and has a strong background in environmental action and birding as well as retail experience.

"I can't wait to get started working with our merchandise—I think the Nature

Shop can be a real money-maker, especially with the holidays coming up," commented Jayne during a recent visit to McClellan Ranch. Her enthusiasm and retail skills will be particularly useful as the chapter attempts to recover from sagging Birdathon and merchandise revenues over the last few months. Jayne will continue to represent SCVAS at local environmental fairs and events as she has done in recent months as a volunteer, and also attend board and general meetings. Her starting date of employment is November 1, and her regular office hours will be announced in December after she has settled into the job.

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General Membership Meeting, Wednesday, November 17

7:30 PM Refreshments, 8:00 PM Program

**Palo Alto Cultural Center
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.**

Orcas, Beaked Whales, Incredible Marine Mammals and Birds

Debi Shearwater founded Shearwater Journeys 17 years ago and has done over 900 boat trips since then, photographing marine birds and mammals along the way. She leads trips in and around Monterey Bay, offshore Monterey to the Albacore Grounds and to the Davidson Seamount, Cordell Bank and Bodega Canyon. Tonight's presentation will feature new information on Killer Whales Debi has gathered while working with marine mammalogist Nancy Black and others, plus some incredible Orca sounds on cassette. Her photos include rare species such as Streaked and Manx Shearwaters, and Baird's Beaked Whales breaching, tail-slapping and rubbing beaks. Thanks to Debi's boat trips and her efforts to keep people's attention focussed on the amazing diversity of marine life off Monterey Bay, we now have a protected Monterey Bay Sanctuary. Don't miss this outstanding program!

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

Chapter News

Can You Give Some Time?

Santa Clara Valley Audubon needs more volunteers to continue and improve the many services which we offer. Below is a partial list of positions we need to fill. If you have an interest or skill not included here and would like to volunteer some of your time, please call SCVAS, 408/252-3747.

Program Committee. This committee is responsible for running the general membership meetings 10 times a year at the Palo Alto Cultural Center and a few times a year at the Cupertino Public Library. We need four members, including the Chair, for the following positions: to find guest speakers, to greet members (especially new ones), to prepare newsletter write-ups and press releases about the meetings, and to serve refreshments. Call Gail Cheeseman, 408/867-1371.

Telephone Rapid Response Team and Coordinator. We have purchased a "phone tree" calling device which can relay recorded messages to members of the group without losing any of the message along the way. The coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the list of persons participating in the telephone tree and writing the messages for the Phone Tree Machine when calls should be made. The work entails about two hours a month depending on the number of important issues requiring a quick response. Some knowledge of environmental issues and

legislators is a plus for the coordinator. Call Tony Eppstein, 415/326-1376.

Armchair Activist, Letter of The Month Club. Each month receive a clear, brief summary of an issue of concern to SCVAS and a sample letter and the name and address of the policy maker. A donation of \$6.00 is suggested, but not mandatory, to cover costs of the mailing. Call Cynthia McLaughlin, 408/253-4588.

Testimony Writers and Presenters. We greatly need members who can tactfully and effectively present testimony to county and city councils and other public agencies, usually on weekdays during daytime hours. A knowledge of the issues and politicians can be acquired, and about 4 hours a month or more may be required. Call Tony Eppstein, 415/326-1376.

Writers for *The Avocet*. If you can write stories or have ideas for stories or can help cover the "Environmental Action News", call SCVAS, 408/252-3747.

Christmas Bird Count Update

San Jose

The identification of Section Leaders for our December 19th CBC promised for this issue of *The Avocet* was, like Mark Twain's death, prematurely announced. Section Leaders for San Jose and Region Leaders for the Palo Alto CBC will be named in the December *Avocet*. Many of these positions have been filled and, if you counted in prior years, you may receive a call asking you to volunteer once again before the mail-

ing of the next *Avocet*. If you have questions about the San Jose CBC, call Reid Freeman, 408/255-4969.

Palo Alto

The Palo Alto CBC will be held on Monday, December 20, so please mark your calendars. Details will follow in next month's *Avocet*. If you have any questions call Bill Bousman, 415/322-5282.

SCVAS OFFICERS

President	Rob Colwell	415/326-2400
Past Pres.	Grant Hoyt	415/969-7892
1st VP	Tony Eppstein	415/326-1376
2nd VP	Nick Yatsko	408/247-5499
Treasurer	John McLemore	408/261-9431
Rec. Secty.	Clysta Seney	408/261-9431

STAFF

Office Mgr. Jayne Di Candio 408/252-3747

DIRECTORS

Earl Cilley '91-'94	415/854-6285
Mike Rigney '91-'94	408/262-9204
Alan Thomas '91-'94	408/265-9286
Reid Freeman '92-'95	408/255-4969
Jane Becker-Haven '92-'95	415/321-0776
Bobbie Handen '93-'96	408/356-4263
Howard Johnson '93-'96	408/255-2422

CHAIRPERSONS

CBC	Reid Freeman	408/255-4969
Editor	Chrys Fitzpatrick	408/245-3860
Education	Bobbie Handen	408/356-4263
Programs	Doug & Gail Cheeseman	408/867-1371
Library	Reid Freeman	408/255-4969
Field Trips	John Mariani	408/997-1429
Aud Adven	Elaine Gould	408/448-0622
Photo Club	Pete LaTourrette	415/961-2741
Finance	Don Price	415/327-1254
BAAC		
Delegate	Trish Mulvey	415/326-0252
Membership Vacant		
North County Field Trips	Alberta Jasberg	415/493-9546
South County Field Trips	Shirley Gordon	408/996-9863
Birdathon	Tony Eppstein	415/326-1376

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.

November 1993, Volume 40, Number 9

Rare Bird Alert: 510/ 524-5592

November 1993 Calendar

On all field trips carpool and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, warm clothing, lunch (optional on half-day trips) and liquids.

**Denotes Field Trip

Monday, Nov. 1, 7:30 PM. Environmental Action Committee Meeting. Cupertino Environmental Center, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino. For more information call Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376.

Wednesday, November 3, 7:30-9:30 PM, Bay Area Bird Photographers . John Delavoryas will give a slide presentation on the wildlife of Trinidad and Tobago and of northern Venezuela. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on East Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

****Saturday, Nov. 6, 8:30 AM. Half day. Arastradero OSP, Palo Alto.** Leader: Jim Liskovec 415/969-5542. Take Page Mill Rd. W. from I-280 to Arastradero Rd., approx. 1/2 mile on right, then another 1/2 mile to parking lot on right. Highlights: oak woodland species including woodpeckers, sparrows and raptors.

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Dr., Los Gatos 408/395-4264. Topic: Anna's Hummingbird.

****Wednesday, Nov. 10, 9:00 AM. Hayward Regional Shoreline.** Leader: Ed Gustafson 408/377-1123. Meet at the end of W. Winton Ave. off I-880 in Hayward. Highlights: shorebirds, ducks, grebes, raptors; bring a scope if you have one.

****Saturday, Nov. 13, 8:30 AM. Half day. Coyote Hills Regional Park, Newark.** Leader: Phil Hand 415/851-2623. Take Hwy. 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) E. towards Newark. Exit right on Thornton then left over freeway as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre. Turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd., meet in lot at entrance approx. 1 mile in. Possible park entrance fee. Highlights: waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds.

****Sunday, Nov. 14, 9:00 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Dick Stovel 415/856-6105. Take Hwy. 101 to San Antonio Rd. in Mt. View, exit N. to Terminal Rd. parking area (1/4 mile). Highlights: ducks, shorebirds, gulls. Bring spotting scopes.

Wednesday, Nov. 17, 7:30 PM. General Membership Meeting. Topic: Orcas, Beaked Whales, Incredible Marine Mammals and Birds. Please see box, page 1.

****Sunday, Nov. 21, 8:30 AM. Half day. Princeton Harbor and vicinity.** Leader: Reid Freeman 408/255-4969. Meet at corner of West Point Ave. and Stanford Ave. in Princeton, 4 miles N. of Half Moon Bay on Hwy. 1. Highlights: coastal ducks, loons, grebes and shorebirds; possible rarities Oldsquaw and Rock Sandpiper. Dress warmly!

****Wednesday, Nov. 24, 8:30 AM. Half day. Coyote Hills Regional Park, Newark.** Leader: Phil Hand 415/851-2623. (Same directions as for Nov.13 trip; see above.)

****Friday-Saturday, Nov. 26-27. Sacramento Valley Wildlife Refuges.** Leaders: Grant and Karen Hoyt 415/969-7892. Meet at Sacto. NWR headquarters approx. 6 miles N. of Delevan on I-5 at 9:00 AM on Friday. Group will tour Sacto. NWR Friday AM and then drive to Gray Lodge Waterfowl Area in the afternoon/evening for the spectacular duck "fly-out". On Saturday we'll visit Colusa NWR and National Audubon Wattis Sanctuary, with possible Sutter Buttes side excursion in late afternoon for hard-core participants. Highlights include large numbers of ducks and geese, plus curlews, ibis, herons, raptors, wintering flocks of blackbirds and sparrows, and perhaps a few surprises. Motels available in Colusa and Williams. Call leaders to reserve space on trip.

Look Ahead

Wednesday, Dec. 1, 7-9 PM, Education Committee Meeting, SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino. For more information call Bobbie Handen at 408/356-4263.

Thursday, Dec. 2, 7-9:00 PM. Burrowing Owl class at McClellan Park. Please see box below.

****Saturday, Dec. 4, 9:00 AM Half day. Beginner's trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Allen Royer 408/288-7768. Take Hwy 101 to Mt. View, exit San Antonio Rd. N. Meet at its end at Terminal Way parking lot (1/4 mile).

****Saturday, Dec. 4, 9:00 AM. Half day. So. County Reservoirs.** Leaders: Emelie Curtis 408/779-2637 and Jane Glass 408/779-3637. Meet at corner of Oak Glen Ave. and Uvas Rd. at N. end of Chesbro Res. Lunch at Uvas Reservoir at noon. Highlights: ducks, oak woodland species, raptors (possibly including eagles).

Monday, Dec. 6, 7:30 PM. Environmental Action Committee Meeting. Cupertino Environmental Center, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino. For more information call Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376

Burrowing Owl Class at McClellan Park

Thursday, Dec. 2, 7-9:00 PM

San Jose State Professor and Burrowing Owl expert Dr. Lynne Trulio will teach an informational class on Thursday evening and lead a field trip to study the owls in their natural habitat on Saturday, Dec. 4, from 8-12:00 AM. The SCVAS Education Committee is sponsoring the class, and there is a fee of \$25.00. Call Bobbie Handen 408/356-4263 to register.

Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Pelicans to Ibis

A concentration of 664 **Am. White Pelicans** on Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View on 8 Sep (SCR) is the largest number reported this month. Fourteen **Brown Pelicans** at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) the day before, 7 Sep (SCR) were a high concentration for this fall. **Little Blue Herons** have remained along the Alviso Slough Trail in the outer ponds this month with three adults there on 1 Sep (SCR), two on 5 Sep (MMR,PJM), and one on 19 Sep (MMR) for a very late record. **Cattle Egrets** have been regular in Alviso at the Arzino Ranch with from two to ten birds reported during the month (m.ob.). From one to four **White-faced Ibis** have been in the vicinity of the old Coyote Creek channel 1-6 Sep with four seen 2 Sep (SCR).

Geese to Raptors

Early flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were noted in the Alviso area with a flock of eight seen 19 Sep (MMR) and twelve or so heard on 25 Sep (PJM,VL). A male **Blue-winged Teal**, coming out of eclipse plumage, has been found irregularly at the Mountain View Forebay 14-26 Sep (PJM,MMR,AME). An early male **Eurasian Wigeon** has been there as well with sightings on 23 Sep (MMR) and 25 Sep (MJM,DS,GHT). An **Osprey** over the waterbird pond at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) 3 Sep (MJM) was the only migrant reported this month. An imm. **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen migrating over the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (OSP) 26 Sep (SCR) for our second county record. In three hours of observation, Steve Rottenborn counted 31 individuals of eight species moving over the preserve, including the Broad-wing. These birds were not following the ridges that trend northwest to southeast but instead were flying directly south. This may be

one piece in the puzzle of where the raptors go that cross the Golden Gate at the Marin Headlands. The first **Merlin** of the season was one seen at Stanford 10 Sep (SCR). Additional birds were seen in Alviso 25 Sep (PJM) and over Monte Bello OSP 26 Sep (SCR). Adult and imm. **Peregrine Falcons** have been recorded in the Alviso area between Coyote Creek and Alviso Slough this month (m.ob.) with a family group including a male and female adult and an imm. near the Calabazas Marsh on 11 Sep (SCR). This family has probably dispersed from one of the central coast eyries. An imm. bird has also been seen in the Palo Alto area at the Emily Renzel Wetlands 10 Sep (CLW) and in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 11 Sep (MJM).

A Broad-winged Hawk over Monte Bello was part of a larger movement of migrating hawks.

Shorebirds

It appears that the American Ornithologist's Union, the final arbiter of lumps and splits, has split the Lesser Golden-Plover into two species: the Pacific Golden-Plover and the American Golden-Plover. Both have occurred in the county in the past. As mentioned last month, the separation of these two species remains difficult and not all records can be ascribed to the correct species, particularly for molting adults. This month a juv. **Am. Golden-Plover** was found at the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP on 2 Sep (SCR) and two juveniles were seen at the pond near Los Esteros and Spreckles in Alviso on 18 Sep (MJM). A single **Snowy Plover** was seen on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 1 Sep (SCR). The peak of the **Lesser Yellowlegs** migration is in September and the numbers this year have been exceptional. Some observers have found more Lessers than Greaters in impoundments they have examined. A sampling of concentrations noted this

month include: 15 on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso 1 Sep (SCR), 30 in Adobe Creek 8 Sep with 28 more in the drying Emily Renzel Wetlands and the Mountain View Forebay (SCR), 55 in the Emily Renzel Wetlands 18 Sep (SCR), and 13 in the pond at Los Esteros and Spreckles in Alviso 12 Sep (WGB). **Wandering Tattlers** were found again this month, perhaps the same birds, with one seen on the Alviso salt ponds 5 Sep (PJM) and two at the Sunnyvale WPCP 7 Sep (SCR). The **Black Turnstone** found in the Alviso salt ponds was seen again on Salt Pond A9 12 Sep (RJ) and nearby on 19 Sep (MMR). Fifteen **Red Knots** were found in the Alviso salt ponds 1 Sep (SCR) and single birds were also found at the pond at Los Esteros and Spreckles on 11 Sep (SCR) and the Sunnyvale WPCP 11-14 Sep (PJM). **Baird's Sandpipers** continued to be reported this month with 1-3 at the CCRS waterbird pond 1-15 Sep (MiF,MJM,SCR), 2-20 at the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP 2-6 Sep (SCR,MJM), one on the Emily Renzel Wetlands 3 Sep (SCR), one in the Palo Alto FCB 5 Sep (PJM), and 1-8 on the Calabazas Marsh 5-11 Sep (WGB, PJM,SCR). **Pectoral Sandpipers** have been found in good numbers as well with 1-11 birds at the CCRS waterbird pond 1-26 Sep (m.ob.), 2-6 on the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP 2-6 Sep (SCR,MMR,MJM), and 1-5 on the Emily Renzel Wetlands 18-25 Sep (m.ob.).

The shorebird of the month was a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** found on Salt Pond A18 on 2 Sep (SCR) and seen again the next day (MMR,WGB) for the third county record. Nearly as exciting has been the continuing presence of **Ruffs** in the local area. One to three adult females have been found irregularly on the CCRS waterbird pond 5-21 Sep (m.ob.) and another has been at the pond at Los Esteros and Spreckles in Alviso 11-26 Sep (SCR,m.ob.). Plumage comparisons suggest that as many as five birds have been present this summer and fall which is amazing considering that the first county record for this species was 1990.

Continued on Page 5

Field Notes *Cont. from page 4*

Terns to Wrens

A single **Elegant Tern** was at Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View 8 Sep (SCR). Two juv. **Black Terns** were seen on Salt Pond A9 on 1 Sep (SCR). Good numbers of **Willow Flycatchers** have been found with 1-3 birds along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 6-21 Sep (MJM, SCR), one at the Alviso Environmental Education Center (EEC) 11 Sep (SCR), one on Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 17 Sep (WGB), and two on Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 22 Sep (SCR). A female **Purple Martin** in Alviso 11 Sep (SCR) is a rare fall migrant. A **Rock Wren** on a dike in Alviso 19 Sep (MMR) is probably a member of a migratory population rather than part of our resident population.

Warblers to Goldfinches

Observers have found some of our rarer western warblers this fall plus some vagrants as well. A **Palm Warbler** along Coyote Creek below Anderson Res. 23 Sep (SCR) is the earliest record I have for this rare vagrant. A female or imm. **Blackpoll Warbler** was found along Coyote Creek on 22 Sep (SCR) and is the fourth county record for this species. Rounding out the September trio of vagrant warblers was a female **American Redstart** found at the Alviso EEC 11 Sep (SCR), our ninth county record. Of our rare western warblers, individual **MacGillivray's Warblers** were found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 21 Sep, above Hwy 237 on 22 Sep, and below Anderson Dam on 23 Sep (all SCR). **Yellow-breasted Chats** were banded at CCRS on 9 Sep and 15 Sep (*vide* SCR). Another eastern vagrant, a **Bobolink**, was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 15 Sep (SCR) for our seventh county record. An adult **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was seen in the same area 21 Sep (SCR), the first indication of a movement of this species away from known breeding areas.

The Atlas of The Breeding Birds of Monterey County

*Edited by Don Roberson
& Chris Tenney*

The Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society proudly announces its latest publication, an atlas featuring breeding distribution maps for 178 native and feral birds in Monterey County, based on a five-year project from 1988-1992. Species accounts include summaries of local range, habitat, history, breeding biology, and conservation concerns. The species accounts were written by six authors and illustrated with the work of 14 artists.

This timely 448-page publication is a "must have" for every Central California birder and is available in soft cover for \$24.00 and hardcover for \$51.00; price includes tax and shipping. To order make your check payable to:

MPAS
P.O. Box 985
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Observers: *Bill Bousman (WGB), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Valerie Layne (VL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Dick Stovel (DS), Claire Wolfe (CLW).*

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

Environmental Action Update

CALPAW Signature Drive a Huge Success

Signature gathering for CALPAW, the Planning and Conservation League's proposed 1994 \$2 billion Wildlife and Parks Initiative, continued to make excellent progress in October. More than 600,000 signatures had been gathered by volunteers throughout the state, with an astounding 45,000 signatures collected in a single week in late August. This is the fastest volunteer signature gathering rate in history for an environmental initiative.

At the present rate, signature gathering will have been completed by mid-October. The goal of 625,000 signatures would assure placement on the June 1994 ballot. Especially heartening is the enthusiastic response in Southern California. In 1987, volunteer signature gathering south of Los Angeles was somewhat isolated to a few hot spots along the Orange County coast. This time, volunteers throughout Orange and San Diego counties are doing well nearly everywhere. In fact, for the first time Southern California is actually producing more signatures than Northern California!

Environmentalists are certainly aware that the desire to preserve parks, the coast, and other natural habitats is as strong south of the Tehachapis as in the north, but it is tremendously heartening to see the response of volunteers in all regions of the state. SCVAS members who helped gather signatures are to be congratulated for their efforts in getting this important initiative on the ballot.

—adapted from *California Today, Planning and Conservation League newsletter*

Thanks to Pete La Tourette

Over 200 people viewed Frans Lanting's stunning slides of the Okavango Delta (in Botswana) and heard about his adventures in pursuit of his wonderful photos. This was a major fundraiser and very special event for SCVAS.

Field Trip Reports

Moss Landing

A dozen people met alongside roosting Elegant Terns and foraging shorebirds on Jetty Road on September 8. A pair of feeding Black-shouldered Kites, a Loggerhead Shrike and several Say's Phoebes were striking land birds seen between the marsh and the beach where we found a Common Loon, a few Common Murres, Brandt's Cormorants and other species out on the ocean. More than a dozen Snowy Plovers rested in the dried kelp left from the night's high tide.

We also walked around the Moss Landing Wildlife Area along the north side of Elkhorn Slough where we scoped both Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes from the parking lot. From the trail we watched several species of ducks, Semipalmated Plovers, Spotted Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlews, a pair of Kestrels and a Great Horned Owl. Back at the parking lot a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks and an immature Red-tail interacted inside a thicket to the north. At Moonglow Dairy we ate lunch and watched Pectoral Sandpipers and a Baird's Sandpiper among the Westerns—a great ending to a morning with 54 species observed.

—Gail Cheeseman

Marin Headlands Hawk Migration

On September 25, Approximately 35 Santa Clara Valley Audubon members joined me to witness the spectacle of hundreds of hawks and other birds passing by in their southward migration. For several weeks prior to our trip, the headlands had been shrouded in fog resulting in little visibility. About two days before our trip the weather patterns forced the fog away from the headlands, and a rush of hawks appeared. What a difference a day makes! On the two days prior to our trip, approximately 1,000 hawks were seen per day! Nonetheless, we did have a great day with over 300 hawks observed between 9 AM and 2 PM. Ten species of raptors were seen: Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Merlin. Seven Broad-winged Hawks (including one adult) and 2 Merlins were also seen. Approximately 250 of the hawks were Sharp-shinned/Cooper's at about a 4:1 ratio. Other highlights included 6 Lewis' Woodpeckers flying over and a total of 2-3,000 Vaux's Swifts, which came over in flocks ranging from a few to 200 birds. A great day, if not an exhausting one because of the 90-degree heat, was had by all.

—Don Schmoldt

The Environmental Advocate, whose duties will include advancing SCVAS' position before local lawmakers, agencies and decision-makers, networking with other environmental groups in the area, and keeping members informed on local conservation and land-use issues, should also be hired by early November. This half-time employee will focus energy entirely on the environmental arena, with broad direction from the Board and more specific guidance from the Environmental Action Committee. The Board is optimistic that the creation of this position will strengthen SCVAS' role as a leading voice in local issues where crucial bird and wildlife habitat is threatened.

The Administrative position, while only 25% time, is still an important one. The time-consuming and often frustrating tasks of bookkeeping, accounting and financial statement preparation, and managing the membership list comprise this job, with a fundraising angle tied into the streamlined and workable membership roster. By alleviating the Office Manager of these responsibilities, overall efficiency in the office should improve. The administrative job may be contracted out to an independent consultant, and this position should likewise be filled by early November.

A special fall fundraising letter will be mailed to our membership to help support the staff increase. Please consider a generous donation to back up the Board's sincere commitment to improving our Audubon chapter. And remember, changes can bring uncertainty as well as new opportunities. Members are encouraged to become more involved with the chapter and acquaint themselves with our new staff as SCVAS enters a new era.

—Grant Hoyt

THANKS HOWARD!!!

Since August 1 Board member Howard Johnson has stepped in as temporary Office Manager at McClellan Ranch and done an outstanding job. A dedicated and experienced environmentalist, Howard has also proven to be a tireless jack-of-

all-trades in the office and a first-class organizer. His commitment to helping us through the difficult months since Cecily's departure has been nothing short of phenomenal, and we are extremely grateful to him.

THE FIRST OF ITS KIND!

The first ever citizens' biological inventory of San Francisquito Creek has begun, and Santa Clara Valley Audubon members are playing a major role. Volunteers from all over the Bay Area are getting together to study this wonderful resource in our back yard. Dubbed the Community Creek Watch, the citizens' inventory is the first of its kind in California, and is funded by grants from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Community Creek Watch has a dual mission: to collect data on the presence and condition of wildlife habitat in the creeks of Santa Clara County, and to promote community understanding and support of these "ribbons of refuge." SCVAS Board member and Coyote Creek Riparian Station Manager Mike Rigney is lending his considerable scientific and practical expertise to the creek monitoring program county-wide, while Board member Jane Becker-Haven is organizing volunteers for specific monitoring assignments along San Francisquito, the county's northernmost waterway which forms a boundary with San Mateo County.

South county creek enthusiasts need not feel excluded—the Guadalupe River Watershed, Stevens Creek, and Saratoga Creek inventories have begun this fall. As on San Francisquito, volunteers will form groups studying birds, fisheries, vegetation, reptiles and amphibians. SCVAS members are encouraged to get involved with this dynamic new project that enables citizens to use their field monitoring and data collecting skills to help protect riparian habitat literally in

their own back yards. What really goes on in the 13 creeks that flow through our local communities? There may be more Green-backed Herons, Belted Kingfishers, salamanders and crawdads than anyone knows. Anyone interested in participating in a creek inventory should call Chris Fischer at (415)364-8723.

CLEAN CREEK TIPS

As an alternative to using highly toxic copper-based algaecides to rid your swimming pool, fish pond or livestock pond of algae, a new non-toxic, organic product is now on the market. Bio-Restoration, sold by Enviro-Reps International, uses enzymes and microorganisms to biodegrade algae and other organic wastes and leaves your water clear. Bio-Restoration is available from Enviro-Reps International at (805)650-9187.*

When carpet cleaners and window washers come to clean your house, are you inquiring what they are doing with the waste water? Not putting it down the drain, we hope! Please remind them that our storm or gutter drains flow directly to the creek without being treated. Water containing detergents and solvents can be damaging to our creeks. Dispose of all potentially toxic waste water down a drain which flows to the sewage system plant (i.e., sink or toilet).

*This information is provided as a service to our readers, and does not constitute an endorsement of this product.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

—Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

Non Audubon Events

Cheeseman Safari

There is still space on the Bosque del Apache/Sandhill Crane Safari, Dec. 27-31, to be led by professional wildlife photographers Renee Lynn and Tim Davis, \$950. For details call Gail Cheeseman at Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, 408/867-1371. The Cheesemans are also offering all-day boat trips in Monterey Bay Jan. 8 and 15, \$45, and further afield in the neotropics: Costa Rica, March 5-20, \$2750; Venezuela, April 16-May 4, \$2950; and Brazil, Oct. 22-Nov. 6 \$2900 (includes a complete eclipse of the sun at Iguassu Falls on Nov. 3!).

Avocet Festival '93

Bring your family for a day of fun and start your holiday shopping early. You'll find arts and crafts and a variety of gifts, as well as plenty of Wildlife and Nature, at the Avocet Festival '93 on Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 6 & 7, 9 AM-5 PM at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 1 Marshlands Rd., Fremont (at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge). The Fair is cosponsored by SCVAS.

Announcing New Editor

Laura Lebherz will be the new editor of *The Avocet* beginning with the December issue.

Thanks to Grant Hoyt and everyone at SCVAS who made my year-and-a-half as editor such a rewarding experience.

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

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Herons Visit Audubon office

Twice in the past couple of months a Great Blue Heron was sighted only 50 yards from our Santa Clara Valley Audubon office here at McClellan Ranch Park.

On my way back from lunch as I neared the foot bridge which crosses Stevens Creek just to the west of our office, I said to myself, "Now heads up, you never know what you might see in the creek here today." Years earlier I had seen some baby striped skunks with their mother at this very spot. And only weeks earlier I had watched a Black Phoebe which would swoop to catch bugs and then always return to the same favorite dead branch.

On this particular day as I neared the bridge, I was startled by the racket of a huge bird leaping from the water. It was a Great Blue Heron. Flapping hard, the heron flew up and out of the tight little spot where it had been fishing. I watched in shock as it swooped its huge wings between the narrow trees. I was electrified! I considered heading down the trail to see if I could get another look at it, but decided it would be better to leave it alone. I tingled with excitement for the rest of the day.

Several days later I saw the heron again in the same spot. I was more cautious this time as I approached the bridge. I was able to watch the heron from only 50 feet away as it fished in the creek below. Before the bird was gone, I fetched volunteer Kim Davis, who was helping out in the offi, so she could have a look. She had never seen a Great Blue Heron.

Several days later I spoke to Barbara Banfield, the city naturalist responsible for McClellan Ranch Park, and she said she's never seen a Great Blue Heron here in the 7 years she's worked at McClellan. Could our lucky sightings have been a just reward for our hard work here at the office? Well, I don't know, but I can tell you that a week later I sighted a Green-backed Heron just yards from where I had seen the great blue. The Green-backed Heron stood on a partly submerged branch and picked little things from the water.

What a wonderful place McClellan Ranch Park is!

—Howard Johnson

Membership: We invite your membership in the National Audubon Society/SCVAS. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014.

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