

# *The Avocet*

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

February 1994

## 1993 Christmas Bird Count Results

### S.J. Count A Success

Another year, another bird count under our belts. Sincere thanks to the many people who gave their time and talents to this annual effort. Jayne DiCandio gained us access to private property, got us publicity in the local media, and worked with Sue Liskovec in creating the post count dinner. Norma Feighner, Charlene and Susan Barrie, and Jon Archer ably performed as kitchen staff. Bill Bousman and his colleagues on the Rare Bird Committee gave us the benefits of close scrutiny and succinct comments. The Section Leaders (identified below) created their teams, coordinated their section count, and compiled the necessary papers. Just your typical San Jose Christmas Bird Count showing how much we can accomplish working together.

The count had its ups (91,701 total birds vs. 72,140 last year) and downs (102 counters vs. 108 in 1992), but a look at the 10-year average shows continuing stability. Total species

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### Palo Altans Spot 165 Species

Sixty-six observers counted in 32 parties for the 35th Annual Palo Christmas Bird Count on December 20, 1993. The weather was excellent. The 165 species found is down from our 10-year mean of 169 species, but the number of birds counted is the highest since 1983. The number of participants and the number of hours they spend in the field has declined in recent years. In 1986 we had 102 observers in 42 parties that spent an average of 7.5 hours in the field. This year the average party spent only 5.9 hours in the field - the lowest in 25 years. Thanks go to everyone for their efforts.

Common Loon, 1; Pied-billed Grebe, 241; Horned Grebe, 23; Eared Grebe, 165; Western Grebe, 22; Clark's Grebe, 23; *Aechmophorus* spp, 31; American White Pelican, 88; Double-crested Cormorant, 356; American Bittern, 1; Great Blue Heron, 44; Great Egret, 142; Snowy Egret, 114; Green Heron,

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### General Membership Meeting, Wednesday, February 16

7:30 PM Refreshments, 8:00 PM Program  
Palo Alto Cultural Center

Newell & Embarcadero Roads

### *Adopt a Creek*

Santa Clara County birders are gathering on the stream banks to participate in an exciting new point count census project administered by the Coyote Creek Riparian Station and supported by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Birders can "adopt" several study points along their local creek to be censused at least once each season. Bird use of riparian habitat will be documented along many of the local creeks, including the Guadalupe River Watershed, Saratoga Creek, Stevens Creek, and San Francisco Creek. A very interesting program featuring this important new project will be presented with slides by Riparian Station Director, Mike Rigney.

### Special Meeting, Friday, February 25

7:45 Program at Cupertino Library

### *"A Distributional and Natural History of Coastal California Birds: The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas"*

David Shuford, Point Reyes Bird Observatory biologist and field ornithologist, spent the past 15 years writing, then publishing, his passionately-written work. Dave's special slide show will easily convey his passion for atlasing, proving that atlasing is more than just a compilation of data and tables. Dave's book includes beautiful line drawings by Keith Hansen and Ane Rovetta and photos by Ian Tait, and contains a wealth of information on how vegetation communities, climate, and ocean cycles influence our breeding birds. Many engrossing accounts outline each species' habitat needs, nesting sites, food requirements, and foraging strategies. The program will begin with an update on the Santa Clara County Atlas Project by Bill Bousman.

# Chapter News

## "Out on a Limb" A Great Success

The impromptu, low-budget December fundraising drive featuring SCVAS' Avocet "Out on a Limb" for the Environmental Advocate position has netted \$3,735 as of early January.

Budget constraints limited the mailing of the fundraising letter to only 530 of the more than 4000 chapter members. Out of those 530, 64 (nearly 12%) responded with contributions. With a tentative commitment from Doug and Gail Cheeseman for \$2,000 more (depending on the success of their Venezuela nature tour), we'll have raised nearly half of the salary needed

to hire Craig Breon for the first year of environmental advocacy!

Thanks to Ed Rooks for the eye-catching artwork and Grant Hoyt for the text of the letter; Chip and Jane Becker-Haven and John McLemore for layout and photocopying; Jayne DiCandio for organizing the mailing list; and Reid Freeman, Rosalie Lefkowitz, Tibby Simon and Alan Thomas for handling the addressing and mailing duties. Most of all, thanks to all who dug down in their pockets for this worthy cause!

## February Special

What do you do on a chilly February day? Read about birds. Start planning your spring local birding trips with "Birding at the Bottom of the Bay" (SCVAS), or "Birding Northern California" (Jean Richmond). Perhaps it is time to start planning your garden with "The Hummingbird Garden" (Mathew Tekulsky) or "Backyard Bird Habitat" (Will & Jane Curtis). Our special this month is 10% off any book in our Nature Shop. If we don't have what you want, we can try to order it for you. Just ask!

## Gift Giving Hint

On behalf of the SCVAS Education committee and as 1994 begins, I want to take this time to give my heartfelt thanks to Elaine Gould for her innovative gift to SCVAS Education Committee. When Elaine retired from Hacienda Science Magnet Elementary School (SJ Unified School District) last June, she requested that in lieu of the usual retirement gifts she would like to have contributions made to the SCVAS Education Committee. This wish was most generously granted by the Hacienda staff. We would like to give Elaine and her staff our gratitude. Literally hundreds of children will benefit from this donation.

We would like to encourage SCVAS members, their families, friends, and colleagues to channel gifts for retirement, birthdays, anniversaries, and other milestone occasions to the SCVAS committee of your choice or SCVAS in general. Call the SCVAS

office for details on ways you can do this.

— Bobbie Handen, Ed. Chair

## Saturday Shopping?

The number one request by our Nature Shop visitors is to have the shop open on Saturdays. We were very successful having our store open on Saturdays in December. Our goal now is to have the shop open every Saturday starting in March. I am not able to work every Saturday so, I am looking for some help. **I am looking for volunteers who would be willing to work 10am - 2pm every other Saturday, or one Saturday a month.** Volunteers would be responsible for looking after the Nature Shop and answering any questions from visitors. It is an easy and fun job and we have a library full of books and magazines to entertain you, as well as a native plant garden full of birds! Help make the Nature Shop into a great fundraiser for us. **Please call Jayne at the office (408) 252-3747, if you are interested. Thank you!**

## SCVAS OFFICERS

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2nd VP	Nick Yatsko	408/247-5499
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## CHAIRPERSONS

CBC	Reid Freeman	408/255-4969
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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.

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

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**Rare Bird Alert: 510/ 524-5592**

# February 1994 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

## **Wednesday Feb. 2, 7:30 PM. Bay Area Bird Photographers.**

Rich Hansen from Morro Bay will present a program on eastern Sierra aspen grove ecosystems that revolve around the Red-breasted Sapsucker. The program is entitled "How Much Sap Could a Sapsucker Sip?" and will be held at the Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on E. Embarcadero Rd. in Palo Alto.

## **\*\*Saturday Feb. 5, 8:30 AM. Half day. Grant Ranch/Hall Lake.**

Leader: Alan Thomas 408/265-9286. Meet at Hall's Valley Reservoir parking lot, left side of Mt. Hamilton Rd. 100 yds. past main entrance to Grant Ranch Co. Park. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. east, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd., 7-8 miles to park entrance (there is a fee). Highlights: fresh water ducks, raptors including possible Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon, and oak woodland species. Lunch optional. Rain cancels.

## **\*\*Sunday Feb. 6, 9:00 AM.**

**Full day. Grizzly Island.** Leader: Harold Connor. Local contact: John Mariani 408/997-2066. Directions: Take Hwy. 680 north, across Benicia bridge to Cordelia, then north on Hwy 80 to Fairfield. Take Hwy. 12 east for about 4 miles and meet at parking lot next to McDonald's on left side of Hwy. 12 opposite junction with Grizzly Island Rd. Potential highlights: American Bittern, a variety of wintering ducks and raptors, Short-eared Owl, Tule Elk, and, if lucky, River Otter. Minimal walking. Bring lunch and full tank if gas; carpool if possible.

## **Tuesday Feb 8, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group**

at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos 408/395-4264. Topic: Nuttall's Woodpecker.

**\*\*Wednesday Feb. 9, 9:00 AM. Half day. Grant Ranch/Hall Lake.** Meet in parking lot near Visitor's Center. (See directions under

Feb. 5 listing). Leaders: Harriet Gerson 408/252-6244 and Gail Cheeseman 408/867-1371. Call for carpooling.

## **Friday Feb. 11, 8:00 PM. Special slide presentation in Saratoga.**

Wildlife and Geology of the Falklands and Antarctica with Doug Cheeseman and Hans Nelson. Saratoga Library, corner of Saratoga and Fruitvale Ave. From I-280 follow Saratoga Ave. southwest to stoplight at Fruitvale (avoid the two left-turn lanes); 100 yards beyond stoplight is a left-turn lane into library parking lot.

## **\*\*Saturday Feb. 12, 8:30 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.**

Leader: Steve Rottenborn 415/497-9368. Take Hwy 101 to San Antonio Rd. in Mt. View, then north on San Antonio to its end at Terminal Way parking lot (1/4 mile). Emphasis on birding basics; a chance to get acquainted with a variety of ducks, shorebirds, gulls, and other wetland birds. Bring binoculars and a scope if you have one.

## **\*\*Sunday Feb. 13, 8:30 AM. Full day. Panoche Valley.**

Leaders: Sue and Jim Liskovec 415/969-5542. Directions: Take Hwy 101 south to Hwy 152, east on 152 to I-5. Meet at rest area 18 miles south of 152 on I-5. Bring lunch, liquids and full tank of gas. PLEASE CARPOOL. Highlights: wintering hawks, Golden Eagle, Mountain Plover, Mountain Bluebird, wintering sparrows. Rain cancels; if weather questionable call leaders on morning of trip before 6:30 AM. Call SCVAS office at 408/252-3747 for carpool info.

**Wednesday Feb. 16, 7:30 PM. General meeting.** Adopt A Creek Program. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Embarcadero & Newell Rds. (See Pg. 1)

## **\*\*Sunday Feb. 20, 8:30 AM. Half day, rain or shine. Trip for the Gullible, Palo Alto Duck Pond and Sunnyvale Sewage Treatment Ponds.**

Leader: Don Starks 408/226-4134. Meet at P.A. duck pond. From Hwy 101 take Embarcadero Rd. east to the end, turn left and follow road to pond on left. Emphasis on gull identification, with expert help!

## **\*\*Wednesday Feb. 23, 9:00 AM. Half day. Foster City.**

Leader: Rose Green 415/493-8378. Directions: take Hwy 101 north to Hillsdale Blvd., go east on Hillsdale approx. 1 mile to Shell Blvd., turn right and park on right at Community Center. Lunch optional. Highlights: wintering ducks and shorebirds. Minimal walking. Rain cancels.

## **Friday February 25, 7:45 PM. Special General Meeting at Cupertino Library.**

Distribution and Natural History of Coastal California Birds with Dave Shuford. Directions: from I-280 take De Anza Blvd. south, cross Stevens Crk. Blvd., turn left at Rodriguez Ave. then right on Torre Ave. to parking lot on left. Community Room is downstairs on south side of library. (See Pg. 1 for details of presentation.)

## **\*\*Saturday Feb. 26. South County Owling trip with John Mariani**

408/997-2066. Late evening outing to look and listen for elusive night birds, especially Great Horned, Western Screech, and Northern Saw-whet Owls. Trip limited to 12 participants; call leader for reservation and directions. Rain cancels.

## **\*\*Sunday Feb. 27, 8:30 AM. Half day or longer. San Mateo County Coast.**

Leader: Nick Lethaby 408/435-2729. Meet on Pigeon Point Rd. just north of Pigeon Pt. Lighthouse. Take Hwy 280 north to Hwy 92, west on 92 to Hwy 1, south on 1 past Pescadero and Bean Hollow beaches to Pigeon Pt. From south, take Hwy 17 to 1, north on 1 past Año Nuevo Reserve then left at Pigeon Pt. Highlights: alcids, loons, grebes, gulls, rocky shorebirds etc. Bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and scopes. Rain cancels.

## **Wednesday March 2, 7:30 PM. Bay Area Bird Photographers.**

Russ Lavenson's program includes scenes from Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Banff, Lake Louise and mountains and beaches of California. Lucy Evans Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., P.A.

## **Saturday March 5, 10:00 AM. SCVAS Education Day**

at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino. See back page for details.

## **\*\*Saturday March 5. South County Owling with John Mariani.**

Repeat of Feb. 26 trip. Call leader at 408/997-2066 to reserve space.



# Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

The San Jose CBC was held on 19 Dec, the Palo Alto CBC on 20 Dec, and the Mt. Hamilton CBC on 22 Dec and many of the records below are a result of the many observers in the field those days.

## Loons through Egrets

The first **Red-throated Loon** of the winter showed up on Lexington Res. 20 Dec (DLSu). A second bird was found at Shoreline Lake 24 Dec (MJM *et al.*) and has remained through the end of the month. A **Pacific Loon** was found on the Coleman Rd. ponds 26 Dec (AV). Another **Pacific Loon**, this one an imm., showed up briefly on Shoreline Lake on 29 Dec (SCR). A **Common Loon** found on Salt Pond A3W in Sunnyvale 18 Dec (MMR) was seen there as well on 20 Dec (ADeM,DK). The last **Brown Pelicans** of the season were individuals off Palo Alto 12 Dec (SCR) and 13 Dec (PJM,VL). Single **American Bitterns** were in Artesian Slough 12 Dec (PJM,VL) and Alviso Slough the same day (MMR). Less expected was a bird found on Searsville Lake 20 Dec (L&ER). The only reports of **Cattle Egrets** this month were of individuals at South County Airport 11 Dec (SCR) and the Arzino Ranch 25 Dec (AME).

## Waterfowl

A flock of 21 **Tundra Swans** was seen flying south from Alameda County towards Milpitas 16 Dec (MMR). Two imm. **Greater White-fronted Geese** have remained in the vicinity of Shoreline Lake throughout the month and were augmented on 25-26 Dec by a third imm. (SCR,HLR,MJM). The imm. previously reported from Hellyer CP was seen again on 11 Dec (SCR). The **Ross' Goose** that first wintered at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution and Control Plant (WPCP) in the winter of 1991-92 returned on 18 Dec (MMR) in time for the Christmas counts. The wintering **Wood Duck** flock on Almaden Res. numbered 65-66 birds during December (AV). Fewer **Blue-winged Teal** have been found this winter; the only report was of a single male at the

Mountain View Forebay 5 Dec (MJM). **Eurasian Wigeon** have been found in greater numbers with one on Flood Slough in Menlo Park 20 Dec (MJM,GHt,JAC), one in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 29-30 Dec (MJM), and a bird on the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds 30 Dec (SCR). The **Redhead** flock at the Palo Alto FCB has increased through December with a peak of 132 counted on 30 Dec (MJM). There was no sign of our **Alviso Tufted Duck** on the San Jose or Palo Alto Christmas counts, but then two males were found in the larger of the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 30 Dec (SCR). It seems possible that one of these males was the Alviso bird. Four **Black Scoters** were found off the Palo Alto estuary 12 Dec (SCR), but did not remain. As is now expected, a small flock of **Barrow's**

A briefly seen **Yellow Rail** at the Palo Alto Baylands is only the second record of recent times.

**Goldeneyes** is wintering on Shoreline Lake. Peak numbers were on 26 Dec when three males and three females were counted (SCR,HLR,MJM). Less expected was a male found on the Alviso salt ponds north of the Environmental Education Center (EEC) on 19 Dec (C&JC). **Hooded Merganser** reports include a pair that has remained at the Los Alamitos perc. pond through 12 Dec (AV), two still at Lake Ranch Res. the same day (MJM), two to three birds at Felt Lake 18-20 Dec (SCR,HLR,AME), another five birds at the Palo Alto Hills GC 20 Dec (AME), and 26 birds on the Oka ponds 26 Dec (AV). Less expected were single females along the bay: one along Artesian Slough 28 Nov (PJM,VL) and on Salt Pond A3W 18 Dec (MMR) and 30 Dec (SCR).

## Raptors

We find few **Osprey** in the winter so one at Chesbro Res. 4 Dec (DLSu *et al.*) and

another along the Pajaro River at Hwy 101 7 Dec (MiF) are of interest. A number of **Bald Eagles** have been reported from the Diablo Range this month with a sub-adult at Grant Lake 17-18 Dec (WGB,MiF), a 1st-winter bird at Grant Lake 17 Dec (WGB), an adult on Isabel Res., 22 Dec (MJM,GHt), an imm. on Calaveras Res. 29 Dec (SCR), and a nearly adult bird in San Antonio Valley 31 Dec (MJM). **Ferruginous Hawks** have been found in good numbers this month just as in November. An ad. was found in San Antonio Valley 4 Dec (MMR,MJM), an imm. was again along Calaveras Res. 12 Dec (MMR), an adult was seen along Sierra Rd. 12 Dec (MMR) and the same bird, perhaps, was found along there 19 Dec (LC *et al.*), adults were found along Weller Road and off Miguelita Road on 19 Dec as well (WGB,JT,DH,BL), an ad. was in Isabel Valley 22 Dec (MJM,GHt), and two adults were at the San Jose Airport 20 Dec (DLSu). A **Prairie Falcon** at Calero Res. 4 Dec (DLSu *et al.*) is slightly out of its normal wintering range.

## Rails through Owls

A **Yellow Rail** found at the Palo Alto Baylands 12 Dec (SFB *vide* MJM) is only our second record from the modern era. Two to three **Black Rails** were found at the Baylands 10-12 Dec (m.ob.). Between six and eighteen **Snowy Plover** were found on Salt Pond A3N 18-20 Dec (MMR,ADeM,DK) while one to four were on Salt Pond A8 18-19 Dec (MiF,SCR). Single **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found this month in Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View 3 Dec (MMR), at Moffett Field 3 Dec (WGB), in the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 19 Dec (R&RC,TO), and three were west of the substation on Ravenswood Point on 20 Dec (GHt,EGu). A **Ruddy Turnstone** at the San Francisquito Creek mouth 20 Dec (MMR,JC) was a good find. A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen along Mines Rd. 4 Dec (MMR,MJM) while two were found along Isabel Creek on 22 Dec (SCR). A **Long-eared Owl** was heard calling at Monte Bello OSP on 20 Dec (WGB).

## Passerines

A single **Tree Swallow** at the Palo Alto

Baylands 13 Dec (MMR, JM) was our only swallow record this month. **House Wrens** are rare at the edge of the valley floor in the winter so individuals at the Coyote Res. dam 4 Dec (DLSu *et al.*) and along Guadalupe River below Montague 19 Dec (DSt *et al.*) are of interest. Less expected was a bird found on the Arnold Ranch in the middle of the Diablo Range on 22 Dec (J-MS, MAD). An **American Dipper** was found in Alum Rock Park 25 Dec (AME). One to two **Phainopepla** have been found on visits to San Antonio Valley 4 Dec (MMR, MJM), 22 Dec (WGB), and 31 Dec (MJM). A male was along Calaveras Boulevard above the reservoir on 12 Dec (MMR) and 19 Dec (RF, RWR). One bird was in the Isabel Valley 22 Dec (MJM, GHt) and a male was above Smiths Creek 31 Dec (MJM). A **Yellow Warbler** was found along the inlet to the Mountain View Forebay 25 Dec (MJM) and has remained through the end of the month for one of our few winter records. Always rare in winter, an imm. or female **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was found in Mountain View 25 Dec (DLSu). The invasion of **Palm Warblers** has continued this winter. One was near the Sunnyvale WPCP 12 Dec (ADeM *fide* MMR), one was on Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 19 Dec (MJM, CO) and 24 Dec (SCR) and, on 20 Dec, one was found in Sunnyvale near the bay (ADeM, DK), two were at the Palo Alto Water Quality Control Plant (SCR), another was at the edge of the Palo Alto dump (SCR), and a fifth bird was on

Stevens Creek above Crittenden Lane (SCR). The **Black-and-White Warbler** found last month along the Pajaro River below Hwy 101 was re-found 4 Dec (SCR, HLR). Rounding out our winter of vagrant warblers was an imm. **American Redstart** off Mathilda near the Sunnyvale dump 20 Dec (ADeM, DK). A **Western Tanager** was found along San Francisquito Creek at Menalto 20 Dec (SCR) in an area where one has been found irregularly this fall. A **Vesper Sparrow** was spotted in San Antonio Valley 4 Dec (MMR, MJM) for one of our few December records. **Sage Sparrows** have been more common than usual as indicated by the total of 35 found on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 22 Dec. Two to three **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** were found at the Palo Alto Baylands on the high tides of 10-15 Dec (m.ob.) and again on 29-30 Dec. We have had unusual numbers of **Swamp Sparrows** this winter. One to three birds have been at the Palo Alto Baylands 10-30 Dec (m.ob.) with three seen on the 13 Dec (PJM). At least one bird has been in the inlet channel to the Mountain View Forebay since 12 Dec (SCR, MMR), two birds were along Guadalupe River near Montague 19 Dec (DK, ADeM, DSt *et al.*), and one was on the Shoreline GC 20 Dec (MMR, JiC). **White-throated Sparrows** have also been more common as has been the pattern of recent winters. One bird has been at a Los Gatos feeder 3-6 Dec (JDub, MiF), between one and four birds have been found along Coyote Creek below Hwy

237 5-19 Dec (MJM, SCR, CO), one was along Felter Rd. 12 Dec (MMR), one has been seen at Jos. Grant CP 17-25 Dec (WGB, AME), one was found along Coyote Creek below Montague 19 Dec (GHt, KHT), one at Santa Clara Mission Cemetary 19 Dec (MM *et al.*), and three at a feeder in Ladera 20 Dec (MW). A **Northern Oriole** off Mathilda near the Sunnyvale WPCP 20 Dec (ADeM, DK) is rare for the winter. Record numbers of **Lawrence's Goldfinches** have been found this winter in the Diablo Range with 282 reported on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 22 Dec.

*Observers: Stephen Bailey (SFB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Les Chibana (LC), Jim Corliss (JiC), Chuck & Joan Coston (C&JC), Rob & Rita Colwell (R&RC), Maryann Danielson (MAD), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Jean DuBois (JDub), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Reid Freeman (RF), Donna Helm (DH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Karen Hoyt (KHT), Dan Keller (DK), Valerie Layne (VL), Bob Long (BL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Mark Miller (MM), Joe Morlan (JM), Tom Olson (TO), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Heather Rottenborn (HLR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Leonard and Elizabeth Rush (L&ER), Jean-Marie Spoelman (J-MS), Dick Stovel (DSt), David Suddjian (DLSu), Jerry Towner (JT), Ann Verdi (AV), and Mercedes Williams (MW).*

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

*Palo Alto CBC continued from pg. 1*

5; Black-crowned Night Heron, 149; Greater White-fronted Goose, 2; Ross' Goose, 1; Canada Goose, 104; Wood Duck, 51; Green-winged Teal, 703, (Eurasian, 1); Mallard, 730; Northern Pintail, 1605; Cinnamon Teal, 156; Northern Shoveler, 12863; Gadwall, 1396; Eurasian Wigeon, 1; American Wigeon, 1032; Canvasback, 2711; Redhead, 98; Ring-necked Duck, 147; Greater Scaup, 727; Lesser Scaup, 73; scaup species, 12496; Surf Scoter, 180; Common Goldeneye, 150; Barrow's Goldeneye, 4; Bufflehead, 344; Hooded Merganser, 14; Common Merganser, 38; Red-breasted Merganser, 78; Ruddy Duck, 16066; duck spp, 5600; Turkey Vulture, 51; White-tailed Kite, 21; Northern Harrier, 17; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 7; Cooper's Hawk, 12, (*accipiter* spp., 2); Red-shouldered Hawk, 15; Red-tailed Hawk, 88; Golden Eagle, CW; American Kestrel, 49; Merlin, 8; Peregrine Falcon, 7 (Falcon spp, 1); Ring-necked Pheasant, 14; California Quail, 146; Clapper Rail, 10; Virginia

Rail, 7; Sora, 6; Common Moorhen, 11; American Coot, 5858; Black-bellied Plover, 1178; Snowy Plover, 6; Semipalmated Plover, 366; Killdeer, 226; Black-necked Stilt, 1208; American Avocet, 4615; Greater Yellowlegs, 75; Lesser Yellowlegs, 3; Willet, 4197; Spotted Sandpiper, 3; Whimbrel, 5; Long-billed Curlew, 215; Marbled Godwit, 1240; Ruddy Turnstone, 1; Sanderling, 13; Western Sandpiper, 7276; Least Sandpiper, 571; Dunlin, 3004, (*calidrid* spp, 23820); Short-billed Dowitcher, 5; Long-billed Dowitcher, 272, (dowitcher spp., 3483); Common Snipe, 48; Bonaparte's Gull, 453; Mew Gull, 66; Ring-billed Gull, 825; California Gull, 1474; Herring Gull, 93; Thayer's Gull, 1; Western Gull, 230; Glaucous-winged Gull, 391, (gull species, 2600); Forster's Tern, 153; Rock Dove, 1433; Band-tailed Pigeon, 121; Mourning Dove, 1253; Western Screech-Owl, 16; Great Horned Owl, 12; Northern Pygmy-Owl, 3;

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# Environmental Action News

## Meet The New SCVAS Environmental Advocate

January 1 marked the advent of a new era for Santa Clara Valley Audubon with the hiring of Craig Breon as the chapter's first Environmental Advocate.

An attorney by trade, Craig brings a strong blend of skills and a deep commitment to environmental action to the newly created, half-time Advocate position. His first goals are to get acquainted with Environmental Action Committee members and other key SCVAS volunteers and to familiarize himself with local issues. With guidance from the EAC and Board, he'll focus on a small number of "hot" local topics and begin to establish an Audubon presence in the South Bay environmental arena by attending government and agency meetings, speaking and writing on the issues, and

networking with other local groups.

Craig was raised in Portola Valley, attended UC Davis Law School, and has been involved with several environmentally-oriented groups in California. In Santa Barbara he led a coalition of groups opposing Chevron's attempts to tanker oil offshore; in Los Altos Hills he led field trips, trained volunteers and farmed organically at the Trust for Hidden Villa. He has written and edited for California Nature Conservancy and done legal research on land use planning, habitat and open space preservation, and property law for the California Coastal Conservancy.

Maintaining Audubon's unique niche in the environmental scene is of great importance to Craig. "I believe in Audubon's identity as a birding

organization," he stressed in a recent interview, while noting the increasingly urgent need to protect bird and wildlife habitat. While he modestly describes himself as "not a bad birder," he is eager to brush up on his birding skills by getting out in the field with some of our active local members. By improving his knowledge of different species and their relationships to various habitats such as riparian, wetland, and oak woodland, he can more effectively represent SCVAS conservation and habitat protection goals.

If intelligence, enthusiasm, experience and commitment mean anything, we are very fortunate to have hired Craig Breon for this exciting new position. He can be reached directly at the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3748.

*Palo Alto CBC continued from pg. 5*

Burrowing Owl, 14; *Long-eared Owl*, 1; Northern Saw-whet Owl, 4; White-throated Swift, 10; Anna's Hummingbird, 338; Belted Kingfisher, 8; Acorn Woodpecker, 149; Red-breasted Sapsucker, 1; Nuttall's Woodpecker, 69; Downy Woodpecker, 20; Hairy Woodpecker, 10; Northern Flicker, 162; Black Phoebe, 133; Say's Phoebe, 9; Horned Lark, 30; Steller's Jay, 219; Scrub Jay, 626; American Crow, 176; Common Raven, 64; Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 461; Plain Titmouse, 130; Bushtit, 1303; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3; White-breasted Nuthatch, 24; Pygmy Nuthatch, 6; Brown Creeper, 31; Bewick's Wren, 71; Winter Wren, 4; Marsh Wren, 24; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 205; Western Bluebird, 61; Hermit Thrush, 59; American Robin, 555; Varied Thrush, 10; Wrentit, 110; Northern Mockingbird, 75; California Thrasher, 30; American Pipit, 165; Cedar Waxwing, 531; Loggerhead Shrike, 20; European Starling, 1964; Hutton's Vireo, 35; Orange-crowned Warbler, 4; Yellow-rumped Warbler, 897 (Myrtle, 156), (Audubon's, 149); Townsend's Warbler, 43; Palm Warbler, 5; American Redstart, 1; Common Yellowthroat, 28; Western Tanager, 1; Rufous-sided Towhee, 115; California Towhee, 253; Savannah Sparrow, 174; Fox Sparrow, 26; Song Sparrow, 160; Lincoln's Sparrow, 43; Swamp Sparrow, 3; White-throated Sparrow, 4; Golden-crowned Sparrow, 1023; White-crowned Sparrow, 845; Dark-eyed Junco, 327; Red-winged Blackbird, 505; Tricolored Blackbird, 530; Western Meadowlark, 261; Brewer's Blackbird, 1088; Brown-headed Cowbird, 17, (blackbird spp, 112); Northern Oriole, 1; Purple

Finch, 48; House Finch, 981; Pine Siskin, 37; Lesser Goldfinch, 189; American Goldfinch, 157; House Sparrow, 168. Total number of birds: 142332. Total number of species: 165.

Observers, 62; Parties, 32; Party-hours on foot, 167; Party-hours by car, 9; Party-hours by boat, 0; Party-hours by bicycle, 14; Party-hours by canoe, 0; Party-miles on foot, 119; Party-miles by car, 145; Party-miles by boat, 0; Party-miles by bicycle, 24; Party-miles by canoe, 0; Owling: hours on foot, 5; Owling: hours by car, 3; Owling: miles on foot, 4; Owling: miles by car, 14.

Roger Ashley, Charles Bacon, Ian Bacon, Roy Bailey, Ann Barbee, Jane Barrett, Jane Becker-Haven, Monika Bjorkman, William Bousman, Penelope Bowen, Phyllis Browning, William Cabot, Roy Cameron, Zoe Chandik, Jack Cole, Annette Coleman, Jim Corliss, Derek Currall, Rigdon Currie, Al DeMartini, Cynthia Dusel-Bacon, Alan Eisner, Ed Fryer, Shirley Gordon, Pat Grange, Ed Gustafson, Brad Hacker, Chip Haven, Nancy Hay, Rich Healy, Gloria Heller, Grant Hoyt, King Huber, Ralph Hunter, Rob Jackson, Sally Jackson, Alberta Jasberg, Gerry Jennings, Dan Keller, Tony Kramer, Keith Kvenvolden, Kenneth Lajoie, Peter LaTourrette, Rosalie Lefkowitz, Winkie Lennihan, Mike Mammoser, Larry Newcomb, Francis Rineau, Dean Rinehart, Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn, Elizabeth Rush, Leonard Rush, Grace Sain, Kandice Scott, Kirk Stoddard, Dick Stovel, Gene Troetschler, Ruth Troetschler, Frank Vanslager, Ann Verdi, David Weber, Mercedes Williams, Anne Wilson, Leonard Wittlinger, Ken Yang.



for this count was 163 - the average since 1983 is 162. Over the last 10 years we have averaged 89,180 total birds per count. In retrospect, last year's total was the lowest in 15 years and should have raised more questions in my mind. As a first year compiler then, I was more concerned with accuracy of the 1992 data than in doing comparative analyses. The learning curve goes up.

Eared Grebes, Ruddy Ducks, Northern Shovelers, duck ssp., American Coots, and gull ssp. accounted for 17,500+ of the increase. As you would expect, most of this occurred in the Alviso Section. Some good things this year came in threes (Ferruginous Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, White-throated Sparrow & Lesser Yellowlegs), but the single specimens of Palm Warbler, Barrow's Goldeneye, Ross' Goose, House Wren, Snowy Plover, and Phainopepla were just as welcome for their impact on our bottom line. The "night crew" gave us 3 owl species and their efforts are much appreciated.

Conspicuous by their absence this year were Brown Pelican, Bald Eagle, Redhead, Semipalmated Plover, Winter Wren, Canyon Wren, and the whole Swallow clan. Perhaps next year, Sunday, December 18, 1994 to be exact. Put it on your calendar and we'll make a day of it.

The following were count participants (Section Leaders underlined): Roger Abe, Jae Abel, Michael Armer, Paul Armer, Bonnie Bedford White, Robert Berghold, Clark Blocher, Chris Bloxson, William Bousman, Suzie Brandeau, Robert Buell, Paul Burnett, Richard Carlson, Bill Carver, Les Chibana, Rita Colwell, Rob Colwell, Sandy Cortright, Charles Coston, Joan Coston, Rigdon Currie, Emelie Curtis, Maryann Danielson, Al DeMartini, Dick Elliott, Gerry Ellis, Mike Feighner, Norm Feighner, Marilyn Fowler, Russ Fowler, Reid Freeman, Howard Friedman, Sue Friedman, Harriet Gerson, Shirley Gordon, Ed Gustafson, Phil Hand, Don Harbaugh, Cecily Harris, Richard Healy, Donna Heim, Kathryn Hickey, Jan Hintermeister, Grant Hoyt, Karen Hoyt, Caralisa Hughes, Dorothy Johnson, Dan Keller, Virginia Landschoot, Jonathan Lawton, Valerie Layne, Kathleen Lee, Linda Lloyd, Bob Long, Suzanne Lowd, Bill Lundgren, Sue Macias, Mike Mammoser, Deborah Materi, Peter Metropulos, Lynn Miller, Mark Miller, Steve Miller, Bob Moncrieff, Tom Olson, Chris Otahal, Laurel Pavesi, Lou Pavesi, Pam Price, Bob Reiling, Mary-Lyle Rempel, Bob Roadcap, Ed Rooks, Janice Rooks, Jim Rosso, Kandis Scott, Clysta Seney, Vicki Silvas-Young, Mary Simpson, Bonnis Spacek, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Kappy Sprenger, Karlene Stoker, Terry Stoker, Keppler Stone, Dick Stovel, Lennie Stovel, Audrey Stoye, Alan Thomas, Karen Thomas, Hazel Tilden, Jerry Towner, Paul Travis, Gene Troetschler, Ruth Troetschler, Jeff Tye, Frank Vanslager, Ann Verdi, Heath Wakelee, Milton West, Anne Wilson, John Working, Don Wyman.

And here is what they found (uncommon birds underlined): Pied-billed Grebe 165; Horned Grebe 218; Eared Grebe 5039; Western Grebe 60; Clark's Grebe 10; Aechmorphism spp. 14; American White Pelican 114; Double-crested Cormorant 399; American Bittern 2; Great Blue Heron 53; Great Egret 119; Snowy Egret 101; Green-backed Heron 11; Black-crowned Night Heron 243; Ross' Goose 1; Canada Goose 654; Wood

Duck 18; Green-winged Teal 567; Mallard 1364; Northern Pintail 151; Cinnamon Teal 61; Northern Shoveler 9294; Gadwall 181; American Wigeon 268; Canvasback 981; Ring-necked Duck 159; Greater Scaup 30; Lesser Scaup 3; scaup ssp. 12; Common Goldeneye 40; Barrow's Goldeneye 1; Bufflehead 216; Hooded Merganser 2; Common Merganser 36; Red-breasted Merganser 24; Ruddy Duck 3722; duck ssp. 2097; Turkey Vulture 191; Black-shouldered Kite 19; Northern Harrier 33; Sharp-shinned Hawk 12; Cooper's Hawk 9; Accipiter spp. 3; Red-shouldered Hawk 14; Red-tailed Hawk 205; Ferruginous Hawk 3; Buteo spp. 2; Golden Eagle 8a, 4i; American Kestrel 143; Merlin 4; Peregrine Falcon 3; Prairie Falcon 4; falcon spp. 1; Ring-necked Pheasant 3; Wild Turkey 4; California Quail 398; Clapper Rail 1; Virginia Rail 17; Sora 13; Common Moorhen 21; American Coot 4177; Black-bellied Plover 18; Snowy Plover 1; Killdeer 384; Black-necked Stilt 638; American Avocet 1278; Greater Yellowlegs 68; Lesser Yellowlegs 3; yellowlegs spp. 4;

Willet 160; Spotted Sandpiper 3; Whimbrel 3; Long-billed Curlew 74; Marbled Godwit 104; Sanderling 5; Western Sandpiper 916; Least Sandpiper 529; Dunlin 203; calidrid spp. 65; Short-billed Dowitcher 2; Long-billed Dowitcher 127; dowitcher spp. 633; Common Snipe 27; sandpiper spp. 892; Bonaparte's Gull 1166; Mew Gull 1552; Ring-billed Gull 1644; California Gull 2728; Herring Gull 3774; Thayer's Gull 4; Western Gull 80; Glaucous-winged Gull 104; gull spp. 12759; Forster's Tern 93; Rock Dove 2107; Band-tailed Pigeon 28; Mourning Dove 1235; Common Barn-Owl 2; Western Screech-Owl 11; Great Horned Owl 10; Burrowing Owl 12; White-throated Swift 5; Anna's Hummingbird 493; Belted Kingfisher 30; Acorn Woodpecker 118; Red-breasted Sapsucker 10; Nuttall's Woodpecker 74; Downy Woodpecker 13; Hairy Woodpecker 2; Northern Flicker 270; woodpecker spp. 2; Black Phoebe 170; Say's Phoebe 18; Horned Lark 85; Steller's Jay 113; Scrub Jay 597; Yellow-billed Magpie 209; American Crow 245; Common Raven 28; Chestnut-backed Chickadee 308; Plain Titmouse 95; Bushtit 1040; Red-breasted Nuthatch 8; White-breasted Nuthatch 50; Brown Creeper 9; Rock Wren 7; Bewick's Wren 44; House Wren 1; Marsh Wren 139; American Dipper 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet 8; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 251; Western Bluebird 158; Hermit Thrush 81; American Robin 457; Varied Thrush 9; Wrentit 50; Northern Mockingbird 216; California Thrasher 7; American Pipit 273; Cedar Waxwing 258; Phainopepla 1; Loggerhead Shrike 77; European Starling 4205; Hutton's Vireo 20; Orange-crowned Warbler 12; Yellow-rumped Warbler 760; Myrtle 18; Myrtle Audubon's 458; Townsend's Warbler 13; Palm Warbler 1; Common Yellowthroat 64; Rufous-sided Towhee 57; California Towhee 310; Rufous-crowned Sparrow 13; Lark Sparrow 101; Savannah Sparrow 218; Fox Sparrow 20; Song Sparrow 395; Lincoln's Sparrow 77; Swamp Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 3; Golden-crowned Sparrow 1177; White-crowned Sparrow 2082; sparrow spp. 548; Dark-eyed Junco 414; Red-winged Blackbird 1484; Tricolored Blackbird 31; Western Meadowlark 680; Brewer's Blackbird 2955; Brown-headed Cowbird 122; blackbird spp. 170; Purple Finch 15; House Finch 3179; Pine Siskin 36; Lesser Goldfinch 175; American Goldfinch 298; House Sparrow 389.

-Reid Freeman, Count Compiler

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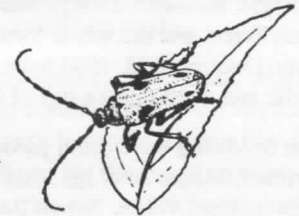
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