



The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

March 1994

Base Closure Impacts Wildlife Habitat

The incredibly rich wildlife resources of the Alameda Naval Air Station (ANAS) have been one of the Bay Area's best kept secrets. The Air Station's open spaces provide habitat for the only successful California breeding colony north of Santa Barbara for the federally endangered Least Tern. The ANAS colony is an extremely important component of the entire state population of the diminutive tern, and is one of the few expanding colonies in the state.

A scientific symposium on the closure of ANAS and the impacts on resident wildlife there will be held on Saturday, March 12 at College of Alameda from 8:30 to 4. The symposium is hosted by Golden Gate Audubon and College of Alameda and is co-hosted by Bay Area Audubon Council.

The symposium will discuss and document the natural resource values of waterbirds, harbor seals and fish, including endangered species, found at ANAS. Expert scientific information will be presented addressing roosting, foraging, and/or nesting use for birds such as Least and Caspian Terns,

Western Gull, and Brown Pelican. Discussions will be held on the effect of the base closure on habitat requirements and potential impact of habitat loss for Bay Area populations of these species.

Besides the Least Tern colony, ANAS supports the Bay Area's largest breeding colony of Caspian Terns, the largest Brown Pelican roosting site, and the second largest Western Gull breeding colony. Also nesting there are the increasingly rare Loggerhead Shrike, the Northern Harrier and the Snowy Plover. Both the pelican and plover are federally listed as either threatened or endangered.

Decisions regarding the amount of open space to be preserved after the ANAS closure should be based on sound scientific knowledge. The symposium will feature Barbara Massey, MS and Dr. Carolee Caffrey, preeminent Least Tern experts, and Drs. Steve Bailey, Chris Kitting, and Dianne Kopec addressing other ANAS wildlife species along with six other scientists. The symposium is free and open to the public.

Volunteers Can Be Good Scientists And Conservationists

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 16

7:30 PM Refreshments, 7:45 Program

Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell & Embarcadero

Over one million shorebirds use the bay as a staging area during spring migration and hundreds of thousands overwinter here. When the tide is high and the mudflats inundated, where do they all go? This was the question leading to the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory's 1992-1993 shorebird high-tide roosting study. More than 40 volunteers participated in this study, which covered almost all the South Bay's shoreline.

Since 1978 SFBBO has been teaming volunteers with biologists to carry out important biological conservation projects in the South Bay. President Ginny Becchine and

Research Director Janet Tashjian Hanson will review the shorebird project and other SFBBO studies. Come and find out how 30 California Gull nests grew into a breeding colony of 6,000 birds! Learn the outcome of red fox predation on the Bair Island heron and egret rookery. This presentation will bring us up to date on these and other research pursuits in our own "home" birding environment.

Preceding the SFBBO presentation will be a 20-minute slide show and presentation by Susan Hale of Friends of Stevens Creek Trail.

Chapter News

Birdathon '94

Coming April 23-24: Birdathon '94! This is our chapter's big fundraiser and we need everyone's support. All monies collected will go directly to SCVAS educational and environmental programs, with an emphasis on songbirds.

Get your team together or support the team of your choice. We will help

you with letters, forms, postage, ideas, etc. Pledges may be made per species or a set amount. Check with your company to see if they have a matching fund program. Call in your teams as soon as possible so they can be listed in the April Avocet. Let's make this a Big Year!

For further information call Harriet Gerson at 408/252-6244 (after March 20) or Gail Cheesman at 408/867-1371.

Nature Shop News

We'll be open for shopping on two Saturdays this month - March 12th and 19th from 10 AM to 2 PM. To kick off the new weekend hours, every Saturday shopper will receive a free gift! Come on down for some early spring shopping!

Hospitality Committee Help Needed

Please call Jayne at the office of Doug and Gail Cheesman at 408/252-1371 if you would like to help on the Hospitality Committee for the general meetings. We need people to welcome everyone who attends, especially new members, and introduce them to others from their area (this encourages carpooling to meetings and field trips). We also need people to help arrange program speakers. We hope to have a committee of 12 to handle these duties, including a chairperson to head up the general meetings.

3 Spaces Left On Venezuela Tour

Cheesman's Ecology Safaris has 3 spaces remaining on the Venezuela tour, April 16 - May 4. Remember, profits from this trip are being donated to SCVAS' Environmental Advocate position. Trip cost is \$2750 plus airfare. Venezuela Audubon will also benefit from the trip for handling transportation and lodging arrangements. Contact the Cheesmans at 408/867-1371 or 800/527-5330 for details.

Field Trip News

Over the years one of the most popular services provided by SCVAS has been our ongoing program of free weekend field trips, open to all society members and nonmembers alike. Its success is due not only to the many fine trip leaders that contribute their talents, but also to the vigorous efforts of a small committee of volunteers. Behind the scenes, they do the planning, organizing, and scheduling that makes the field trip program happen.

The Field Trip Committee meets at irregular intervals at least four times a year. Meetings are usually held several months in advance of the trips to be planned. Between swapping birding

stories, we discuss different trip ideas, suggest potential leaders, and draw up a tentative schedule of trips.

Each member of the Field Trip Committee occasionally acts as a monthly coordinator. This involves finding and recruiting willing trip leaders and writing up the trip descriptions that appear in the Avocet's Calendar. The work is divided up so that ideally every committee member serves a monthly coordinator only once or twice per year. Seven persons presently comprise this committee: Mike Feighner, Grant Hoyt, Kathy Parker, Ed Rooks, Allen Royer, Nick Yatsko, and myself.

Continued on pg 5...

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 DiCandio	408/252-3747
Environmental Advocate	Craig Breon	408/252-3748

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
The Avocet	Grant Hoyt	415/969-7892
	Laura Lebherz	408/264-0533
Education Programs	Bobbie Handen	408/356-4263
	Doug & Gail Cheesman	408/867-1371
Library	Reid Freeman	408/255-4969
Field Trips		
Weekend	John Mariani	408/997-2066
Weekday	Alberta Jasberg	415/493-9546
	Shirley Gordon	408/996-9863
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	
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.

1994, Volume 41, Number 3

Rare Bird Alert: 510/ 524-5592

March 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 March 2, 7:30 PM.

Bay Area Bird Photographers. Long-time BABP member Russ Lavenson will present a two-part slide show, the first including scenes from the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Banff, and Lake Louise; the second focusing on the mountains and beaches of California, where Russ once worked as a State Park Ranger. Lucy Evans Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., P.A.

Saturday March 5, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM. SCVAS Education Day at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino.

****Saturday March 5.** Almaden-Quicksilver Park owling trip with John Mariani (408/997-2066). Late evening outing to look and listen for elusive night birds, especially Great Horned, W. Screech, and N. Saw-whet Owls. Trip limited to 12 participants; call leader for reservations and direction. Rain cancels.

Tuesday March 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: Lazuli Bunting.

****Wednesday March 9, 8:30 AM.** Coyote Lake Reservoir. Leaders: Emelie Curtis and Jane Glass 408/779-

2637. Half day plus. Hwy 101 S. to Gilroy, exit E. at Leavesley, go 1.5 miles and turn left on New Ave., then right on Roop Rd. Meet at Lakeview Picnic Area. Entrance fee \$3 (free for seniors). Highlights: waterbirds, raptors, turkeys, early migrants. Heavy rain cancels.

**Saturday March 12, 8:00 AM.

Half day. Almaden-Quicksilver Park. Leader: Ann Verdi 408/266-2798. Moderately strenuous (1,000 ft. gain) 3-4 mi. hike on Mine Hill Trail to Cape Horn Pass. Highlights: Wild Turkey, Golden Eagle, oak woodland and chaparral residents. Meet at Safeway parking lot, corner of Camden Ave. and Almaden Expwy. Rain cancels.

**Sunday March 13, 9:00 AM.

Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough. Leader: Kathy Parker 408/358-2832. Take Hwy. 101 to San Antonio Rd. in Mtn. View, exit N. of San Antonio to its end at Terminal Way (1/4 mile). Basics of birding with emphasis on shorebirds, ducks, waterfowl.

Wednesday March 16. General meeting. SF Bay Bird Observatory research program. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Embarcadero and Newell Rds. (See pg. 1)

****Saturday-Sunday March 19-20.** Honey Lake weekend. Leader: Bob Hirt 408/446-4478. Limit 20 people. Call leader for reservations and details. Highlights: Sage Grouse, Sage Thrasher, Black-billed Magpie, Pinon Jay, eagles.

**Wednesday March 23, 9:00

AM. Half day. Leader: Frank Farran 408/252-3874. Emphasis on birding by ear. From Saratoga, take Big Basin Way approx. 2.5 miles W. to Sanborn Rd. (on right, opp. Saratoga Springs). Take Sanborn just over 1 mile (past hostel entrance) and turn right into parking lot.

**Saturday March 26, 8:00 AM.

Half day. Bird-banding at Coyote Creek. Demonstration and tour of riparian habitat revegetation. Leader: Mike Rigney 408/249-1380. Learn basics of bird-banding and in-the-hand bird identification from Coyote Creek Riparian research staff. Find out how bird research and habitat restoration and management can make a strong environmental impact in our creek and wetland areas. Call CCRS at 408/262-9204 to sign up. Limit 12 people.

Wednesday April 6, 7:30 PM.

Bay Area Bird Photographers. Charmaine Stansfield and Chuck Tribolet will present A Photographer's Honeymoon or How to Get Divorced on Your Honeymoon by Shooting 104 Rolls of Film. Lucy Evans Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Friday April 8, 7:30 PM. Sequoia Aududon General Meeting featuring Bob Barnes with "Birds in the Balance" program. SCVAS members welcome! San Mateo Garden Center, Parkside and Alameda de las Pulgas in San Mateo. Call 415/345-3724 for more information.

In Memoriam...

Donations have been made to SCVAS in memory of the following:

Margie Von Der Wall, by Philip W. Hauser

Maynard G. Ekstrom, by Mr. & Mrs. R. Pasquinelli and Family

Bruce Stephenson, by Tibby Simon

Vance Hopkins, by Ken & Lorraine Judy



Hooded Merganser by John Mariani

Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Loons through Mergansers

A **Red-throated Loon** on Shoreline Lake 1-9 Jan (WGB,RWR et al.) was the only one reported. A **Common Loon** found on Salt Pond A3W in December remained at least through 8 Jan (MMR,MJM,SCR,HLR). Three to nine **Cattle Egrets** have been found irregularly in the vicinity of the Arzino Ranch throughout January (AME,MMR). A single bird was seen at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) waterbird pond 19-21 Jan (SCR). Two **Tundra Swans** flying over Calaveras Res. 8 Jan (SCR) were unusual. The three imm. **Greater White-fronted Geese** with the Canadas on Shoreline GC were joined by an adult during January and seen at least through the 27th. The immature wintering at Hellyer CP has been present through 25 Jan (SCR). The flock of Canadas using the San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) ponds was joined by an imm. White-front on 6 Jan (SCR), and adult on 12 Jan (MMR), and two adults on 21 Jan (SCR). The **Ross' Goose**, back for its third winter, has been recorded regularly at the Sunnyvale WPCP throughout the month. **Blue-winged Teal** have been harder to find this winter. Two males were in the Mountain View Forebay 23 Jan (WCa) and a single male was in Charleston Slough 27 Jan (WGB). Of equal interest was a hybrid male Blue-wing X Cinnamon in the forebay 6-9 Jan (MMR,m.ob.). Between one and three **Eurasian Wigeon** have been in the large pond at the Sunnyvale WPCP all month (MJM,SCR,HLR, m.ob.), while a single male was on Crittenden Marsh 1 Jan (AV), and another male was in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 2-7 Jan (DSt,MMR,MJM). One to two male **Tufted Ducks** have been seen on the large pond at the Sunnyvale WPCP throughout Jan (m.ob.). Careful observations revealed a female there as well on 1 and 9 Jan (MJM,SCR) and 28 Jan (RF). Good numbers of **Barrow's Goldeneyes**

have remained on Shoreline Lake with a peak of 11 birds on 25 Jan (SCR). **Hooded Mergansers** have been found in a number of locations: four on Lake Ranch Res. 2 Jan (MJM), two on the Coleman ponds 15-23 Jan (AV), two on the Oka perc. ponds 15 Jan (AV), and four on Felt Lake 16 Jan (SCR).

Raptors

An **Osprey** at the Palo Alto estuary 25 Jan (SCR) was unusual for the winter. More expected were sightings of an adult **Bald Eagle** on Calaveras Res. 8 Jan (SCR) and 30 Jan (MJM) and another adult on Coyote Res. 20 Jan (ECu,JG). A 1st-winter bird was in San Antonio Valley 17 Jan (MMR,SCR). An adult **Ferruginous Hawk** was seen on Felter Rd. 9 Jan (MMR,RF), an imm. was at the Reid-

The return of a Common Black-headed Gull was the most surprising news of the month

Hillview Airport 21 Jan (SCR), and another adult was near Calero Res. 22 Jan (MMR). There has been good reporting of our rare falcons this month with seven sightings of **Merlin**, ten of **Peregrine Falcon**, and four of **Prairie Falcon**.

Rails through Gulls

At least two **Black Rails** were seen at the Palo Alto Baylands on the January high tides of 8-9 Jan (SCR,HLR,MJM). **Snowy Plover** reports include four on Salt Pond A8 on 2 Jan (MJM) and one on A3N on 8 Jan (MMR). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** on a channel on the ITT lands 17 Jan (WGB) was the only report. A **Ruddy Turnstone** was seen on the Palo Alto estuary 23 Jan (SCR), a bit far down the bay. The same day, an unidentified jaeger species was seen flying off the estuary mouth (SCR). An adult **Common Black-headed Gull** was found at the Sunnyvale WPCP 23 Jan and seen through the end of

the month (m.ob.). It seems likely that this is the same bird as found in November. Is it possible that it has remained undetected for this period of time among its Bonaparte's look-a-likes? One to two first-winter **Glaucous Gulls** have been found intermittently at the Sunnyvale WPCP throughout the month. A second-winter bird found 8 Jan (MMR) was much less expected.

Roadrunners through Woodpeckers

Greater Roadrunners have been reported from a number of locations this month. One was heard east of Mt. Hamilton on Isabel Creek 22 Jan (MJM), one was east of the Hellyer Road offramp to Hwy 101 26 Jan (SCR), and one was calling north of San Antonio Jct. 30 Jan (MMR). One to two **Long-eared Owls** were either heard or seen at Monte Bello OSP 1 Jan (SCR,HLR), 8 Jan (MMR), and 16 Jan (MJM) where they are resident. Less expected was one found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 22 Jan (MF fide MJM). Two **Lewis' Woodpeckers** were seen in San Antonio Valley on 22 Jan (MJM) where they have been scarcer than usual this winter.

Passerines

An **Eastern Phoebe** was found near Coyote Creek just south of Shady Oaks Park in San Jose 26 Jan (SCR) and was seen at least through 30 Jan (m.ob.). This is the second record for the county - the first was just last winter, also along Coyote Creek, but 12 miles downstream. A **Canyon Wren** was seen above Coyote Creek in Henry Coe SP 30 Jan (JY et al.) where they are resident. An **American Dipper** was found below the Wrights Station Road bridge on Los Gatos Creek 15 Jan (SCR). A skittish **Townsend's Solitaire** showed up briefly on the Stanford campus 13 Jan (SCR) in the same spot where it was found exactly one year earlier. A pair of **Mountain Bluebirds** was found 8 Jan (SCR) near the summit of Sierra Road and were enjoyed by many observers at least through 16 Jan. A male **Phainopepla** found in December along Calaveras Rd. was found at that location through 11 Jan

(SCR, MiF, WGB). One to two birds were recorded in San Antonio Valley on trips from 17 to 30 Jan (MMR, SCR, MJM). A female was seen above Smiths Creek on 23 Jan (JY, AL). A wintering **Yellow Warbler**, first found in late December, has remained at the entrance channel to the Mountain View Forebay at least through 27 Jan (m.ob.). Almost as unexpected was an imm. **Hermit Warbler** in Saratoga on 11 Jan (HG). **Palm Warblers** continue to be found in this invasion winter with one along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 6 and 21 Jan (SCR) and another at the sw. corner of the Palo Alto Water Quality Control Plant 8 Jan (MMR). A **Wilson's Warbler** in Kelley Park 27 Dec (ChW, CIW) is most unusual for winter. Rounding out this list of overwintering neotropical migrants was a female **Summer Tanager** near Corte Madera Creek in Portola Valley 20 Jan (B&JC).

A **Vesper Sparrow**, found previously in December in San Antonio Valley, was refound 22 Jan (MJM) and 30 Jan (MMR). A **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was found in the Palo Alto Baylands on the high tides on 7-9 Jan (MJM, SCR, MMR). Three **Swamp Sparrows** were found there as well 6-9 Jan (m.ob.) while single birds were found at the inlet to the Mountain View Forebay 1-16 Jan (MJM, SCR) and on Shoreline GC 6 Jan (MMR). One to three **White-throated Sparrows** have been found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 6-15 Jan (m.ob.). A bird wintering at a feeder in Los Gatos has remained at least through 8 Jan (JD), and another bird has turned up at a feeder in Menlo Park 22 Jan (WGB). Two **Red Crossbills** were over Wrights Station Rd. 15 Jan (SCR). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** have been abundant this winter east of Mt.

Hamilton with numerous birds found along the road in the latter half of January (MMR, SCR, MJM).

Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), William Cabot (WCa), Bill and Jean Clark (B&JC), Emelie Curtis (ECu), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Reid Freeman (RF), Marian Fricano (MF), Jane Glass (JG), Harriet Gerson (HG), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Chuck Quinn (CQ), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Heather Rottenborn (HLR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Ann Verdi (AV), Chris Wolfe (ChW), Claire Wolfe (CIW), and James Yurchenco (JY).

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

...continued from pg 2.

We try to offer as diverse a range of outings as possible, with one "in our own backyard" and others to places further afield. Some trips are planned around a theme, like birding by ear, gull identification, shorebird study, nighttime owl walks, and finding species of particular interest. Beginning birders are welcomed on all trips, and special beginner's trips that concentrate on basics are regularly scheduled, usually on the second Sunday on each month. While environmental education is one of our highest goals, we consider it most important that both the leaders and participants enjoy the trips and have a good time. Fun is always foremost!

If you haven't yet been on one of our weekend trips, I encourage you to give one a try. It's a great way to see new birds, learn about our local habitats and meet other active birders. Perhaps you have a favorite birding spot and would like to lead a trip of your own...if so, we are always looking for new leaders. And if you would like to have some input in trip planning, have specific suggestions, or are interested in joining the Field Trip Committee, I would be glad to hear from you.

– John Mariani
Field Trip Committee Chair

(For those members with free time during the week, we offer regular Wednesday outings as well; see Calendar listings. –Ed.)

Field Trip Reports

December 4, 1993

"October's bright blue weather" extended well into December and on our field trip force-fed us refreshing clear air with an invigorating wind tempered by a warm sun.

At Chesbro Reservoir a pair of Merlins played tag in perfect lighting and chased each other to close range over our heads until we almost toppled backwards, with the birds disappearing into the sun as dancing dots.

At Calero Reservoir we scoped Common Goldeneye, American Wigeon, Gadwall, and the perky Bufflehead, always a delight. A young Black-crowned Night Heron posed in a nearby tree to give us fine views of its magnificent orange eye circled by chartreuse lid with lores and beak to match. At lunchtime a first-year Golden Eagle displayed the white patches on both upper and lower wing and its fine dark-edged white tail, a beautifully-plumaged bird. Five American White Pelicans also flew over to be counted. The delicate Bonaparte's Gull busily plunged for food in repeated shallow dives, displaying its distinctive dark-edged wings.

Seventy-three species were tallied by the concerted effort of many (23) pairs of expert and eager eyes, plus scopes of course. Our field trips are made enjoyable by the varied participants, the talented and gracious people who share their knowledge and scopes, as well as the beginners who provide fresh enthusiasm such as delighting in a close, intimate view of an endearing Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Enjoy your world!

– Emelie Curtis

More reports on page 7...

Environmental Action News

A Few Words From Our Advocate...

In last month's Avocet I was quoted as saying, "I believe in Audubon's identity as a birding organization." That seems a good place to start describing the relation I feel my position and the Environmental Action Committee have to the chapter as a whole.

While interviewing for this position last fall I read *The Audubon Ark* by Frank Graham, a history of the Audubon Society (which I highly recommend). The book introduced me to the progressive thinking of the women and men who pioneered wildlife protection in the first local Audubon chapters at the end of the 19th century.

Whether experienced ornithologists or simply those who appreciated the wildlife they saw from their porches or on their daily walks, they had in common a deep concern for the exploitation of birds for the clothing industry, some forms of sport hunting, and other purposes. They recognized the threats these actions posed, and organized to address those threats.

We can thank them for influencing society's values, so that such blatantly harmful acts are rare these days. We can thank them also for the chance to see so many species which might have disappeared by now if not for their efforts. I see our responsibilities as direct descendants of theirs: to recognize the current threats to birds and other wildlife (and even the wild side of our own lives), and to organize to address those threats.

Getting Started

My first weeks have been spent familiarizing myself with this area's issues and the many caring people working on them. The SCVAS Board of Directors has put a high priority on habitat issues: the preservation and restoration of what is left of our wetlands, riparian areas (creeks and streams), and open spaces.

For example, the December Avocet noted that the city of San Jose is considering a policy to set back new development from the city's riparian corridors, allowing these vital areas to

continue providing us with clean water, flood protection, and the greatest diversity of bird habitat in the Santa Clara Valley.

Thanks to the work of many concerned individuals, we got a unanimous vote from the city's Planning Commission for a healthy setback. Now we move on to the City council (see below for how SCVAS members living in San Jose can influence this decision). If this strategy works in San Jose, we can take the policy to other local governments. The end result would be regional protection for these vital links between the surrounding hills and the Bay.

I have also become involved with some of the local and regional planning agencies making key land use decisions. Over time and with the help of our membership, we can educate these agencies to the values associated with good environmental decision making.

Finally, any number of local projects with potential environmental impacts have come to my attention. Whether at Moffett Field in the north, Guadalupe Gardens in San Jose, or the agricultural areas in the south, there will be plenty of opportunities for me to represent the chapter's concerns around the county.

Building Momentum

In future Avocets, I will highlight other issues that myself and the members of the chapter are working on. Ideally, the Environmental Advocate's position can act as a conduit. I hope you will bring your concerns to the chapter. There's no way one person can keep track of such a large area, so we rely on you to keep us informed.

In turn, I hope to reach out to you for help where needed. SCVAS has more than 4,000 members throughout the county. We should be able to build a network of activists to address the variety of issues that will come up. There is plenty of rewarding work out there. Feel free to grab a bit for yourself.

What Is An Activist?

The word "activist" conjures different images for different people. Take this quick quiz to see what an activist is for you.

An Audubon activist: a) believes letters do make a difference; b) only takes action when they have research an issue for 5 to 10 years; c) expects to change the world overnight through dedicated action.

If you answered "a," you can help the environment by joining the chapter's branch of the Audubon Armchair Activist. Each month you'll receive a brief newsletter with background on a key issue facing Congress, the Legisla-

ture in Sacramento or your local parks commission or city council. Included will be a sample letter to write a decision-maker. All you add is a little effort and a stamp. If you're interested in being an Armchair Activist please contact Cynthia McLaughlin at (408) 253-4588. We have also started a phone tree for issues that are too "hot" to handle and need immediate attention. Let us know if you can make a couple of calls a month (usually local or to Sacramento) to let our representatives know that Audubon members care about the environment. Call the SCVAS office to sign up for the phone tree.

San Jose Residents

In late March the San Jose City Council will make a crucial vote on how much protection to give the city's creeks and streams in the future. Council members are often more influenced by the concerns of individuals in their districts than the representatives of an organization like SCVAS. Letters or phone calls to your council members in advance of the meeting, or your attendance at the meeting, could make the difference. For further information, see the December Avocet or call Craig at (408) 252-3748.

January 9, 1994

On Sunday January 9, a partially overcast but calm day, 20 enthusiastic birders, including 15 beginners, met at Charleston Slough for the first Beginners Birding Trip of 1994. Breaking with tradition we bypassed Casey Forebay and immediately headed for Shoreline Lake where among the hundreds of birds on the lake we were rewarded with a Red-throated Loon and a small group of Barrow's Goldeneyes. Eventually we did make our way back to the forebay which produced a first, at least in my book: a male Blue-winged Teal X Cinnamon Teal. The bird was an overall lighter shade than Cinnamon Teal, with a darker head and the clearly defined facial crescent of the male Blue-winged

Teal.



Golden Eagle by Emelie Curtis

We worked our way around the forebay for a final "review" of the birds there and an inspection of

the birds in Charleston Slough. At this point one of the beginning birders asked, "Why are there so many birds here in Charleston Slough and so few over there (Cargill Salt pond)?" Following a discussion about hunting, hunters, and the availability of marshes in the Bay Area, the person replied, "Oh, then these ducks are pretty smart," upon which someone else remarked, "There are only two kinds of ducks here – the smart and the dead."

In all, a total of 65 species of birds were seen, which was really too many for some of the beginners. Participation by Reid Freeman and Frank vanSlager, with their knowledge, skill and scopes, greatly enhanced the quality of birding experienced by the entire group.

– Bob Reiling

January 12, 1994

A record-breaking crowd of 17 birders met at the Environmental Education Center in Alviso January 12, with beautiful weather beckoning us to hike the dikes. We saw the usual assortment of water birds, including three kinds of grebe. The Common Yellowthroat and Marsh Wrens seemed to be getting ready to set up housekeeping in the tules. This looks like a good year for Black-crowned Night Heron, as they were gathering near the heron rookery. At noon, three of us stopped by the Sunnyvale Water Treatment ponds to look for three rare birds reported there. At the first small pond the Ross' Goose was nonchalantly cropping grass within 20 feet of a solid stream of joggers. Two Red-breasted Mergansers were a surprise – I have never seen them at this location.

– Lee Lovelady

January 22, 1994

The promised rain held off to allow an enjoyable field trip to the Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds on January 22.

Although the main objective was to study the gull species here, there were plenty of other species, including Tricolored Blackbird, Green-backed Heron (*soon to be "Green Heron" once again – Ed.*), 2 Eurasian Wigeon, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, and the usual Ross' Goose hanging out with the farmyard goose flock. Although we looked hard through the huge duck flocks on the big salt pond here, we were unable to see the Tufted Ducks that have been present. A distant Peregrine Falcon was another nice bonus, as was a very obliging Sora rail.

We did well on the gulls, with 8 species seen. After persistent searching, most people had good looks at a couple of first-year Thayer's Gulls among the more numerous Glaucous-winged, Western, and Herring Gulls. We also had nice, close-range comparisons of Mew and Bonaparte's Gulls. Surprisingly, only one California Gull was reasonably close.

Thanks to everyone who attended.

– Nick Lethaby

January 29, 1994

Twelve birders met at Jetty Rd. on January 29 for a beautiful Saturday of birdwatching around the mouth of Elkhorn Slough. A lone, cooperative Whimbrel gave us a nice contrast to the several Long-billed Curlews that were feeding in the pickleweed, while four Brants swam in the harbor. A trip over the dunes yielded the normal near-shore ocean birds, as well as a pair of Oldsquaws in the raft of White-winged and Surf Scoters.

The next stop brought us to the mouth of the harbor, which is a wonderful spot to study cormorants, grebes, loons, and gulls. When we pointed our scopes toward the ocean, a Common Murre and a Red-necked Grebe rewarded our efforts. We enjoyed a lunch break at Salinas River State Beach, where we observed a roaming dog scare up a flock of 25 Snowy Plovers.

Moonglow Dairy was the next stop. We had to tiptoe around the cowpies, but a Common Snipe, Spotted Sandpiper, and displaying Allen's and Anna's Hummingbirds made it worthwhile.

The last stop was the State Wildlife Conservation Area on the north side of the slough. This is a great place to get close to many different kinds of shorebirds, but a Merlin reminded us to stay alert skyward as well. The trip ended on a high note, with a Virginia Rail feeding on the fringes of a bed of tule rushes. We had a total of 91 species and beautiful weather – who could ask for more?

– Ken Kellman

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
San Jose, CA
Permit No. 5869

SCVAS Spring Birdseed Sale

All Order Must Be Placed By Friday, March 25

Pick-Up Locations: Please check one

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PPC, Palo Alto | Sat., 4/2, 10 AM-12:00PM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REI, Cupertino | Tues. 4/5, 4:30PM-6:30PM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YSI, Los Gatos | Tues. 4/5, 4:30PM-6:30PM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pets Friend, Sunnyvale | Wed. 4/6, 4:30PM-6:30PM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YSI, Thrift & Gift, San Jose | Thurs. 4/7, 4:30PM-6:30PM |

Bird Seed

	Quantity	Amount		
Audubon Special	20lb	\$12		
(mix includes sunflower seeds)	50lb	\$25		
Volkman Mix*	20lb	\$10		
(w/ or w/o sunflower seed)	50lb	\$19		
Black Oil Sunflower Seed	25lb	\$15		
	50lb	\$26		
Sunflower Chips	25lb	\$25		
Thistle	5lb	\$11		

We apologize for the high prices. There is a severe shortage of millet this season which has driven prices higher than ever before. Volkman cannot offer Western Wild at this time and is only offering the Audubon Mix to us.

*The Volkman Mix contains w. millet, r. millet, milo, cr. corn, sudan gr., wheat, black oil, and oats.

Bird Feeders

	Quantity	Amount		
Deluxe Oriole Feeder (36oz.)		\$16		
Hummingbird Feeder - 4 fountain (8oz.)		\$12		
Audubon Orig./Maxi Tube Feeder		\$22/\$27		
Feeder Pole (sectional)		\$19		
Recycled Birdbath (uses 2 liter bottle)		\$12		
Cling-a-Wing Feeder		\$11		
Sm/lg Classic Window Feeder		\$10/\$16		
Seed Trays		\$5		

Subtotal	_____
Add 8.25% sales tax	_____
Total	_____
Donation to SCVAS	_____
GRAND TOTAL	_____

Please send checks to: SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA 95014. Please enclose self-addressed envelope to receive confirmation and directions.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, ZIP _____
Phone _____

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.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Subscription: Check One
 Subscriber \$10 Supporter \$20 Donor \$35 Patron \$50 and more
 Members receive *The Avocet* newsletter. Make check payable to SCVAS.

Or

National Audubon Society Membership: Check One
 New members \$23 Membership renewal \$35
 Members receive *Audubon* magazine and *The Avocet* newsletter. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

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

Name _____ Gift From: _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____

7XCH

C14