

The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

April 1995

Creeks, Creeks---Find and Fund Those Birds

SCVAS's theme for Birdathon '95 is creek restoration. The first restoration project funded with Birdathon '95

dollars will be on Stevens Creek next to our offices in McClellan Ranch Park. This fall, teams of elementary and high school students along with SCVAS volunteers will remove non-native invasives and plant native species along this section of the riparian corridor. We will document the creek restoration to show what can be accomplished with volunteers in local creeks.

1995 Birdathon Teams

UNCOMMON LOONS	Nick Yatsko, Rod Norden(Official Chapter Team)
HUMMDINGERS	Jayne DiCandio & Sandy Cortright
SCREAMING KINGFISHERS	Chris Fischer, Charles Preuss, Jenn Barg
WRONG TERNS	Bobbie Handen, Elaine Gould
VAGRANTS	Grant Hoyt & Friends
DOWN & DIRTY BIRDERS	Brad Lowman, Pete LaTourrette
VIOLENT GREENS	Steve Shunk & Friends
SANTA CLARA SWIFTS	Clysta Seney, Ann Verdi

Birdathon '95 funds will also support the preparation of slide shows to explain the need for creek protection and show methods of habitat restoration. Our Chapter continues to champion a riparian corridor vision that protects our bird populations via education, research, and responsible environmental

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Lake Baikal—Russia's Wonderland

with Bob Nansen

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, April 19, 1995

7:30PM Refreshments, 8:00PM Program

Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell & Embarcadero

Lake Baikal has long held importance in the hearts and culture of all Russians. The lake is regarded as the "eye of the world" where man can look back in time and discover his origins and his place on Earth. Many different ethnic groups revere Lake Baikal as a source of spiritual life and depend on it for life itself.

Both scientists and environmentalists have become increasingly drawn to Lake Baikal in recent years. The oldest lake in the world by 1000 times, the lake's aquatic species have evolved in isolation over the last 25 million years into the most diverse aquatic community in existence. The 400 mile long lake and its snow-capped watershed are home to 1800 endemic species, and the lake contains almost 20% of the world's fresh water.

With the dawning of the conservation movement in Russia Lake Baikal has become the centerpiece and rallying point for national park development, species protection, pollution control and an emerging environmental ethic. Join us on April 19th to experience this amazing ecosystem.

Bob Nansen is a long-time Audubon member and was fortunate to accompany the first week-long ecological investigation of Lake Baikal with members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science last September.

Chapter News

Cheesemans' Trip to Alaska

Gail and Doug Cheeseman have space on an adventure to the inland Passage and Denali National Park, Alaska Whales, Birds & Bears, July 8 - 24, \$3900. Includes a 10 day expedition aboard a classic 126' yacht out of Juneau into fjords around Admiralty Island. Non-smoking. For info, call Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris in Saratoga (408) 741-5330.

San Jose CBC - One More Bird!

Two Barn Owls seen in the Alviso Sector of the San Jose Christmas Count were inadvertently omitted in our published totals. This has now been corrected in the compilation sent to the national office and will appear in the CBC Field Notes. This brings our final, record-breaking total to:

Total Species: 174 (Count Day)

Total Individuals: 98,450



Wishes Fulfilled!

A very special thank you to the following Audubon members who responded to the SCVAS wish list:

Juliette Bryson for donating a Macintosh SE/30 computer;

James Hallisey for also donating a Macintosh SE;

Karen and Ed Insel for donating a VCR.

The new computers will enable office staff and volunteers to be more productive, and will help with membership, inventory, accounting and library work. The VCR is useful for showing educational videos both at the office and in the community. We are most grateful to the donors.

CVAS OFFICERS

President	Nick Yatsko	408/247-5499
Past Pres.	Rob Colwell	415/326-2400
1st VP	Clysta Seney	408/261-9431
2nd VP	Mary Simpson	
Treasurer	John McLemore	408/261-9431
Rec. Secty.	vacant	

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Howard Johnson '93-'96	408/255-2422
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	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	Vacant
Membership	Vacant
Hospitality	Gail Cheeseman

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.

1995, Volume 42, Number 97

Rare Bird Alert: 510/ 524-5592

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advocacy. A portion of the funds raised will be sent to our Western Regional Offices to support the Western Riparian Habitat Project.

Teams are in place, here's how you can participate:

1. Pick a team (because you like their name, know the birders or, to keep it simple, you can select the Official Chapter Team) or start your own!
2. Pledge an amount per species or a flat donation. Recruit your friends to pledge for creeks and birds. After the teams bird, they will report the results to you. (Some of these letters are priceless!)
3. Then, multiply your pledge amount times the number of species seen by the Birdathon team—that's the donation you send to SCVAS office. Please list the name of your team on your check.
4. Come on down to the Annual Dinner in June for food, fun and the Birdathon Award Ceremony; and, come down to the Ranch next Fall and participate in the Stevens Creek Restoration project. Details will be in the Fall *Avocet*.
5. Thanks for your participation in this traditional Audubon fundraiser!

April 1995 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

****Sunday Apr. 2, 8:15 AM.**

Pescadero Marsh and vicinity. Leader: Al Eisner 415/364-3686. An excellent variety of coastside habitat will be covered, including the always productive marsh, the coastal waters and rocky shore, and Gazos Creek Rd. for early returning migrants. Afternoon scoping from Pigeon Pt. for pelagic species is optional. Meet at first parking lot on right immediately south of Pescadero Creek bridge on Hwy. 1.

Wednesday Apr. 5, 7:30 PM.

Bay Area Bird Photographers. Tonight's program will feature more slides from the recent Cheeseman's Ecology Safaris expedition "down below." Presenters Doug Cheeseman, Tim Davis, Renee Lynn and Mike Danzenbaker will focus on South Georgia, Antarctica and the open sea. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

****Saturday Apr. 8, 8:30 AM.**

Half day. Sunol Regional Park. Leader: Don Schmoltdt 510/215-1910. From I-680 in Fremont take Calaveras Rd. south to Geary Rd. and park entrance. Moderate 2 miles of walking. Highlights: Golden Eagle, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, spring migrants.

****Sunday Apr. 9, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Beginner's trip to Charleston Slough. Leader: Dick Stovel 415/856-6105. Take Hwy. 101 to San Antonio Rd. in Mtn. View, exit north on San Antonio to Terminal Way parking lot (1/4 mile). Basics of bird identification, including ducks, shorebirds, herons, egrets.

Tuesday Apr. 11, 9:30 AM. The Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave. Los

Gatos 408/395-4264. Topic: California Quail.

****Wednesday Apr. 12, 9:00 AM.**

Half day. Coyote Creek and vicinity. Leader: Ed Gustafson 408/377-1123. Meet at closed fruit stand/hot dog stand on Cochrane Rd. just off Hwy. 101 in Morgan Hill. Group will bird Coyote Reservoir, Upper Coyote Creek, or Ogier Ponds depending on bird availability. Rain cancels.

****Saturday Apr. 15, 8:00 AM.**

Half day. Almaden Quicksilver County Park. Leader: Ann Verdi 408/266-2798. In San Jose take Almaden Expwy. south to Almaden Rd. through town of New Almaden, turn right at park entrance. Moderately strenuous hiking through woodland, chaparral. Highlights: Wild Turkey, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, spring migrants. Reservoir birding optional in afternoon.

Wednesday Apr. 19, 7:30 PM.

Gen. Membership Mtg. Lake Baikal with Bob Nansen. See Pg. 1.

Saturday April 22. EARTH DAY! See announcement on Pg. 6.

****Saturday Apr. 22, 8:30 AM.**

Young Audubon field trip to Grant Ranch Co. Park. Leader: Dave Cook 408/729-7310. From I-680 in San Jose take Alum Rock Ave. to Mt. Hamilton Rd., turn right and go approx. 5 miles to gravel parking lot on left (just after main park entrance on right). Children, teens, beginners welcome. Birding basics will be stressed. Some binoculars available. Highlights: waterfowl, raptors, songbirds.

****Saturday Apr. 22, 8:00 AM.**

Half day. Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University. Leaders: Bill and Jean Clark, Winkie Lenihan, Bob Buell. By reservation only. Limit 40 participants. \$5 per person fee. Call Clark's 415/424-4371 to reserve space. Meet at Preserve main gate (not Whiskey Hill gate) between 7:45 and 8:10; be prompt. From I-280 take Sand Hill Rd. west, 2

miles to main gate on left. Enjoy the variety of spring birds, migrant and resident, and beautiful wildflowers of this private ecological preserve. Moderately strenuous walking 2-3 miles. Trip goes rain or shine.

****Wednesday Apr. 26, 8:30 AM.**

Half day. Stevens Creek Co. Park. Leader: Roxie Handler 408/730-1745. From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Rd. towards park, turn left into first entrance (before dam/reservoir). Highlights: riparian breeding birds. Lunch optional.

****Saturday Apr. 29, 8:00 AM.**

Birdathon!! Join Nick Yatsko and Rod Norden for the annual "Uncommon Loons Big Day" fundraiser for SCVAS. Meet at Arastradero Preserve parking lot at 8. Group will bird here and Palo Alto Baylands area until 100 species have been totaled. Donation suggested (it's worth it just to bird with the fun-loving Loons!) Call the office for details.

Wednesday May 3, 7:30 PM.

Bay Area Bird Photographers. Wildlife photographer Jeffrey Rich will show slides of wildlife in the West, with a focus on birds. Lucy Evans Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

****Saturday May 6, 8:15 AM.**

Ed Levin Co. Park. Leader: Steve Rottenborn 415/497-9368. From I-680 in Milpitas take Calaveras Rd. east to Downing Rd. entrance, left into park; meet at parking lot below Sandy Wool Lake. \$3 park fee per vehicle. Emphasis on hummingbirds (5 species seen here on 7 May 94) and rare migrants.

Tuesday May 9, 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: White Pelican.

Wednesday May 10, 9 AM.

Half Day. Alum Rock Park. Leaders: Harriet Gerson 408/252-6244 and Gail Cheeseman 408/867-1371. Take I-680 to Alum Rock Ave., east into park. Meet at second parking lot at the back near YSI Museum. Lunch optional.

Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Bitterns through Waterfowl

Two **American Bittern** flushed from Silver Creek above Tully Road on 28 Feb (SCR). Two **Cattle Egrets** at the Arzino Ranch 7 Feb (SCR) were the only ones reported this month. An imm. **Tundra Swan** over Palo Alto 2 Feb (PJM) was unusual. A string of 77 **Greater White-fronted Geese** flying over Hellyer CP 2 Feb (SCR) was a remarkable sight and the largest number we have ever encountered in the county. Flocks of 25 birds in Alviso 6 Feb 71 and another flock of 25 birds on the San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) 31 Jan 92 were our previous highs for this Central Valley winterer. The Sunnyvale WPCP **Ross' Goose** remains in its usual haunts with observations at least through 26 Feb (m.ob.). More surprising were three birds seen north of Crittenden Marsh on 12 Feb (PJM,ADeM). A male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was seen near Crittenden Marsh on 12 Feb (PJM) and is probably the same bird as seen nearby earlier in the winter. **Blue-winged Teal** continue to be found in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) with two pairs seen there 5 Feb (MJM) and two males there on 26 Feb (MiF). Another pair was seen in the New Chicago Marsh 4 Feb (PJM). Single male **Eurasian Wigeon** have been seen on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 4 Feb (PJM), in the New Chicago Marsh the same day (PJM), and along Mayfield Slough in the Palo Alto FCB 6 Feb (KCW). The Palo Alto FCB **Redhead** flock has dropped in numbers with 17 counted on 5 Feb (MJM). Three birds were found on the

Sunnyvale WPCP ponds 18 Feb (SCR *et al.*). One male **Tufted Duck** was seen on the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds 4 Feb (PJM) and two males and a female were observed there on 18 Feb (SCR *et al.*). A female **Oldsquaw** was found first on Crittenden Marsh on 12 Feb (PJM,ADeM) and, then, later in the day, on Shoreline Lake (AME, SCR, HLR, MMR). This short-term visitor, our sixth for the county, could not be found the next day. **Barrow's Goldeneyes** continued to frequent Shoreline Lake in February with at least one male, a first-winter male, and three females present through 13 Feb (v.ob.). The same or another first-winter male has been found at the Palo

Two females, an Oldsquaw and a Summer Tanager were our prime February rarities

Alto Duck Pond since late December (GW) and is now accepting breadcrumbs and popcorn (PJM). From county rarity to clown in a few short years. A pair of **Hooded Mergansers** on Coyote Creek below Mabury 23 Feb (SCR) were in an area where found before this winter. A male at Shoreline Lake 25 Feb (JY,AL) was less expected.

Raptors through Sapsuckers

Single **Osprey** were seen at the Parkway Lakes CP 4 Feb (MMR,SCR,MJM) and at Chesbro Res. 25 Feb (MJM). Continued sightings of wintering **Bald Eagles** include an adult and two first-year birds at Calaveras Res. 3 Feb (SCR), an adult there 20 Feb (TGr), and an imm. at Calero Res. 27 Feb (MJM). A

Ferruginous Hawk along Sierra Road 7 Feb (MMR) and 12 Feb (AME) is where birds have been found fairly regularly this winter. Among the numerous **Merlin** records in February was a repeat of the Mountain View *richardsoni* on 2 Feb (MMR). A **Prairie Falcon** along Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 on 4 Feb (LCh) was the only report from the valley floor. Twenty-nine **Snowy Plover** on a winter high-tide census on the Knapp tract on 12 Feb (MMR) was an excellent count. Two more were nearby on Salt Pond A8 in Alviso (MJM). Considering their reduced numbers in recent years, the count of 60 **Sanderling** on the Alviso salt ponds the same day (MMR,MJM) was unusual. A third-winter **Glaucous Gull** was at the Sunnyvale WPCP 4 Feb and a second-winter bird was north of Crittenden Marsh 12 Feb (PJM,ADeM). This winter has been one of the best for **Short-eared Owls** since the mid-1980s. A bird continues to be seen along Stevens Creek at Crittenden Marsh 4-9 Feb (BC). Three were found along Salt Pond A18 on 12 Feb (KS *fide* MJM) and one was there 18 Feb as well (MJM). A bird along Guadalupe Slough 12 Feb (MMR) may be one of these same birds. An early **Rufous Hummingbird** was at Ed Levin CP 11 Feb (MJM). They normally arrive at the end of February, a month after Allen's Hummingbird. The imm. male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** has continued at Ed Levin CP through 26 Feb (SCR, MJM *et al.*).

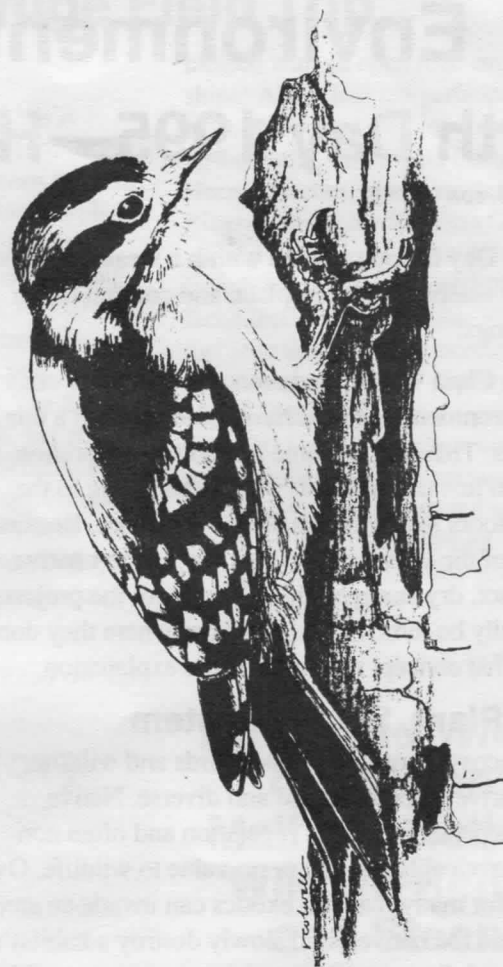
Flycatchers through Longspurs

The **Eastern Phoebe** continues to winter in Shady Oaks Park in San Jose up to at least 28 Feb (SCR,LCh,MJM,RWR). Two **Nor. Rough-winged Swallows** over Sandy Wool Lake in Ed Levin CP 11 Feb (MJM) were undoubtedly the birds that wintered nearby. Returning birds

normally arrive in the last week of February. A **House Wren** along Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 3 Feb (LCh) probably wintered in the area. A **Townsend's Solitaire** at Stanford 10 Feb (SCR,MMR) was the third bird we've had this winter. The **Nashville Warbler** wintering at Stanford near the Nathan Cummings Art Building was enjoyed by many during February and, surprisingly, a second bird, a female, was found there as well on 27 Feb (SCR). The bird wintering along Coyote Creek below Brokaw Road was seen again on 3 and 23 Feb (SCR). The **Yellow Warbler** wintering at the end of Terminal Avenue in Mountain View was seen on 5 Feb (MJM). A late winter surprise was a female **Summer Tanager** found 14 Feb (DS) along San Francisquito Creek above Middlefield and seen at least through 26 Feb (LCh,MCh,MMR,AME) for our eighth county record. Wintering **Western Tanagers** include a female along Coyote Creek between Montague and Malovis on 2 Feb (CKS) and a male seen again on the Guadalupe River in Willow Glen on 10 Feb (SCR).

A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** has been coming to a feeder in Menlo Park since 24 Dec (PA,LCh). Less expected as a wintering bird was a female **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Shady Oaks Park 16 Feb (SCR). The **Green-tailed Towhee** above Hwy 237 on Coyote Creek was seen through 26 Feb (SCR,RWR,LCh). Two **Swamp Sparrows** were found in the marsh area next to the Model Airplane Skypark north of Morgan Hill 16 Feb (SCR). A **White-throated Sparrow** continues to come to a feeder in Los Gatos, through at least 21 Feb (JD). Other birds include individuals on Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 on 4 Feb (LCh), Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 22 Feb (SCR), Coyote Creek above Berryessa on 23 Feb (SCR), and an imm. in Ed Levin CP 26 Feb (SCR). At least two **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** remain at the Sierra Road Summit with a male and female seen there 18 Feb (MJM). Two **Evening Grosbeaks** were along Guadalupe River in San Jose 10 Feb and a total of eight birds were in flight over Stanford 28 Feb (both SCR). Most of our records for this rare mountain grosbeak are in urban areas.

Observers: Paul Armer (PA), Bill Carver (BC), Les Chibana (LCh), Mare Chibana (MCh), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Tom Grey (TGr), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Heather Rottenborn (HLR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Karlene Stoker (KS), Gloria Walker (GW), Clark White (KCW), James Yurchenco (JY).



Original artwork by Rita Colwell

Kern Valley Festival

The first annual Kern Valley Festival is scheduled for April 29-30 to celebrate one of North America's most biologically diverse and beautiful areas, the Kern River Valley. Timed to coincide with peak bird migration and wildflower bloom, the festival will offer a variety of birding excursions for all levels of bird enthusiasts, plus nature photography workshops, wildflower viewing trips, and riparian habitat restoration tours.

The host town of Kernville will feature wildlife and landscape art shows, photography, and sculpture. Amateur birders, hikers, photographers, and wildflower enthusiasts can visit 5 of the 6 bio-regions found in the state in the surrounding environs: Mojave desert, Great Basin Sagebrush, coastal chaparral, great valley grasslands (including riparian forest) and Sierran forest. Joshua trees and desert sands lie within minutes of a vast cottonwood-willow forest with oak and chaparral covered hills stretching back from the scene, topped by the coniferous forests of the Kern Plateau.

The birding opportunities alone make this Festival an attractive Spring event. For more information contact Lynn Overtree at (619) 378-2531 or Judy Hyatt at (619) 376-1117.

Environmental Action News

Earth Day 1995—Habitats Need Help

by Craig Breon

Earth Day is upon us, and with it a wealth of opportunities to celebrate, contemplate, and commit to our surroundings.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon and dozens of other local environmental groups have joined to plan a number of projects. This year's theme is Habitat Restoration, and rather than just talk about it, we will be taking to the great outdoors for some hands-on experience. Because this time of the year isn't the best for planting native species (hot, dry summer ahead), many of the projects will actually be removing plants from where they don't belong. That concept may need some explanation.

Pull a Plant, Save a System

The ecosystems upon which birds and wildlife depend thrive when balanced and diverse. Native wildlife depends on native vegetation and often non-natives (exotics) have little or no value to wildlife. Over time and for many reasons, exotics can invade an area, outcompete the natives, and slowly destroy a habitat's integrity and diversity. Some of these exotics provide beauty to a landscape, including the yellow flowers of French broom, the bright purple flowers of periwinkle (vinca), or the lush greenery of English ivy. But when our backs are turned, they proliferate. Ivy, for instance, commonly invades creekside habitats, seriously degrading their value to wildlife. As a result, careful removal of non-natives can encourage natural restoration.

You can help in the removal of invasive non-natives, restoring marshlands and creek clean-ups on Earth Day weekend (April 22 & 23). Local sites include San Francisquito Creek, Palo Alto Baylands, Stanford Hills, Guadalupe River, Coyote Creek and

Sanborn-Skyline County Park. Please call the SCVAS office or Bay Area Action (415) 321-1994 for details.

Endangered Species Forum

In conjunction with the restoration projects, there will be an Endangered Species Act Forum at 7:00 PM on April 19th at the Palo Alto City Hall Chambers. The moderator for the evening will be Congresswoman Anna Eshoo.

Proposals for changes in the Endangered Species Act are coming fast and furious from Washington, Sacramento, and forests and farms around the Nation. This forum will bring together a sampling of experienced voices from all along the spectrum on this controversial issue.

And There's More

SCVAS will also be celebrating Earth Day with the City of Sunnyvale on April 22nd 11am-4pm at the Community Center Arboretum. Join us for an afternoon of activities and fun.

In celebration of Earth Day, you might consider planting native plants in your own yard and participating in SCVAS's Bird Sanctuary Program. If you would like to buy some natives or learn a little more about them,

come to a post Earth Day event. The California Native Plant Society Wildflower Show and Native Plant Sale will be at Foothill College on April 29 & 30th. It is CNPS 23rd Wildflower Show and will be held from 10 am - 4 pm both days.

In addition to the above, many cities, schools, and community groups sponsor Earth Day events. Check your local paper.

Kudos for Cunneen

Our warmest thanks to Republican State Assemblyman Jim Cunneen (representing Cupertino, Campbell, Saratoga, parts of San Jose and other areas), who has agreed to introduce an Audubon-sponsored bill in Sacramento. The bill—AB 1306—will extend the Endangered Species Education Project till the year 2000. This project brings information on California and the Nation's endangered species to schoolchildren throughout the state. Because of a sunset provision in the Project's original bill, this worthwhile effort would end without a new bill to authorize it. Both our chapter's advocate and Audubon's state representative met with Cunneen to impress upon him the need for environmental education, and he agreed. If you are in Cunneen's district, call him at (408) 369-8170, just to say thanks.

Merced National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip

After what seemed like an endless series of storms, and with a number of people deciding to stay home because of heavy rains that continued through Friday evening (January 27th), Saturday (January 28th) dawned cloudy, but not rainy. It turned into a spectacularly beautiful day, with some sunshine, no rain, and very little wind! My fear of flooded roads and closures was not realized, and 12 of us had a very rewarding day. We saw 79 species of birds, and had many extraordinarily beautiful moments, especially the finale: the evening sun illuminating the vast Sierran snow cap, the reflection of the soft evening colors from the sky and clouds, and skeins of hundreds of White-faced Ibis drifting over the calm waters of the marshes along Santa Fe

Grade Road.

Our morning at Merced NWR included studying the BLUE MORPH ROSS' GOOSE that had been present for some time, and four blue morph Snow Geese. Other highlights at the wildlife refuge included one Aleutian Goose, one Prairie Falcon, two Great Horned Owls sitting together in a small, isolated, deciduous tree, and one Yellow-headed Blackbird. The Sandhill Crane numbers were down, but about 100 were present, and their haunting calls were thrilling as always. About 10 - 15,000 Snow/Ross' Geese were present, and gave us a good show whenever the whole flock exploded into the air.

Along Santa Fe Grade Road we were

blessed with an open road and sunshine! About half the participants left at 4:30, just before we found some of the "good stuff". Highlights included two Horned Grebes, nine American Bitterns, one male Eurasian Green-winged Teal, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and 3,500 White-faced Ibis! Most of the ibis were seen just after sunset, flying northeast to southwest, and almost directly over our heads! The largest skein consisted of over 700 birds! With skein after skein of ibis reflected on the serene waters, the evening light and all the sounds of the marsh on a calm evening, the finale was truly memorable! See you next year, rain or shine!

— Don Schmoldt

Golden Gate Raptor Observatory Seeks New Hawkwatchers and Banders

If you want to learn to identify the hawks, falcons, and eagles of California and be part of a local long-term wildlife conservation project, then we at the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) want you! Our only 1995 Recruitment Meetings are on Thursday, May 11, 7 - 9 pm OR Saturday, May 13, 10 am - 12 noon. Both programs will be held at GGNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Enter the fort at Franklin and Bay.

The GGRO is more than 200 volunteers dedicated to tracking and monitoring the autumn flight of 19 species of birds of prey over the Marin Headlands. We seek new volunteers for our 1995 class who can commit one day every two weeks from August through December 1995, along with some weekend and evening trainings in July. For more information, call the GGRO (415) 331-0730.

Rod's Bird Cruise

Join us on a special birding boat tour led by Rod Norden, who has over 23 years of expert birding experience. Learn how to identify shorebirds as you see them up close in their breeding plumage as they return on their migration. You'll have fun and be able to relax as Elkhorn Slough Safari's roomy, stable pontoon boat takes you through the heart of the slough—the waterways. Tours leave from Moss Landing on Saturday, April 8 at 8:30 and Saturday, April 22 at 8:30. Each tour is limited to 12 so reservations are required. The three-hour guided tour, plus refreshments, is \$35. Call 408/424-3939 and ask for "Rod's Bird Cruise."

Birds and Wildlife of Oregon's Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Steens Mountain

September 7-10, 1995

September is a beautiful time of year to visit Oregon's premier wildlife area, Malheur NWR and 9700 ft. Steens Mountain. Migrant landbirds of all kinds are dropping in at desert oases; hawks, owls, eagles and falcons abound and rails, cranes, herons, swans and pelicans, among others, can be found in marshes. Pronghorn antelope, large mule deer bucks, porcupine, weasel, coyote, and beaver are often seen. Come see this beautiful corner of Oregon with us. Renowned Oregon naturalist Mark Smith will lead this tour which begins and ends in Redmon, Oregon. Cost: \$495 includes all ground costs and a \$50 donation to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Limit: 9.

This tour is being offered by Full Circle Tours of Portland, OR for SCVAS. Please contact the office (408) 252-3747 for an itinerary and a registration form.

The Avocet 7

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

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

Red-shouldered Hawk Locations Sought

Much of the early research on the breeding biology of the Red-shouldered Hawk indicated that the species was dependent on vast tracts of mature bottomland forest relatively undisturbed by humans. Evidence of these habitat requirements was provided by sharp declines in Red-shouldered Hawk populations in California following the widespread destruction of riparian forests. During the last half-century, however, Red-shouldered Hawks in California have been increasing in number and expanding their range. Interestingly, this population increase cannot be tied to riparian habitat restoration, and the most pronounced increases have occurred around urban areas. What is responsible for the recent upsurge in numbers, and why would a species previously thought to be extremely sensitive to disturbance be nesting in busy parks in downtown San Jose?

In an attempt to shed some light on these questions, SCVAS member and Stanford University researcher Steve Rottenborn is attempting to locate Red-shouldered Hawk nests in the South Bay in order to determine the habitat preferences of these birds and the factors related to nest success. These nests will be monitored (from a distance so as to minimize disturbance) during the

breeding season, and habitat characteristics of the nest area will be measured after the birds have left the nest. In a pilot run last year, fledging success and habitat parameters were measured at 27 nests in Santa Clara County. However, for this project to be successful, more nest locations are needed this year. If you have seen Red-shouldered Hawks in the South Bay this spring, or if you know of areas where these birds have nested in the past or are currently nesting, please contact Steve at (415) 497-9368 as soon as possible. The nesting season is well under way!

Increasing urbanization undoubtedly has detrimental effects on native biodiversity, and some species can be protected only by preservation of undisturbed habitats. Nevertheless, other species, such as the Red-shouldered Hawk, might persist in or recolonize urban areas if we could determine what resources these species require and how to incorporate these resources into planning efforts. By helping to locate Red-shouldered Hawk nests this spring, SCVAS members will help not only to ensure the continued persistence of this handsome hawk in the South Bay but also to draw attention to the oft-overlooked importance of urban conservation.

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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