

The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May 1996

Once Along A River —The Guadalupe

By Clysta Seney

(Last in a series on the 4 riparian corridors flowing through the City of Santa Clara)

“... A plain some six leagues long, grown with good oaks and live oaks, and with much other timber in the neighborhood. This plain has two good arroyos with a good flow of water, and at the southern end of the estuary there is a good river, with plenty of water, which passes through the plain mentioned, well wooded on its banks... This entire port is surrounded by many and large villages...”

These words are from the diary of Father Juan Crespi written in 1769. The good river and port refer to the Guadalupe River; the habitat described is our Santa Clara Valley, and the

estuary is our “Bottom of the Bay.” (The good Father neglected to mention anything about the birds!)

Today the Guadalupe River serves as the eastern border between the cities of Santa Clara and San Jose. Santa Clara’s northern boundaries end at Highway 237. The Guadalupe first touches Santa Clara around Trimble and De la Cruz. The best access for birding has been along Lick Mill Road near Tasman, where about thirty acres of land are still owned by the City of Santa Clara.

For about a century this land was part of the Lick Mill property and was used to channel the Guadalupe to run the mill. The James Lick mansion along with several rare cork oaks are preserved on the grounds of the Mansion Grove apartments south of

the site. Through the fifties to the seventies the land was used for the now defunct Fairview Glen golf course. The property has been scheduled for development since the eighties, but in January of this year the developer negotiated out of the deal and the City is re-evaluating plans for the property.

Although this stretch of the Guadalupe is generally under-birded, Ann Verdi and I have used it for our annual birdathon, while Grant Hoyt and Dick Stovel scour the riparian habitat for avian activity during the annual Christmas Bird Count. Dick regularly records high numbers of Sora and Virginia Rails in the riverside reeds, while Grant found an uncommon (in winter) House Wren in a brushpile near Mansion Grove on last year’s CBC.

see **Guadalupe**, page 7...

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 15

7:30pm refreshments, 8:00pm Program

Palo Alto Cultural Center

Newell & Embarcadero

Socorro: An Island of Research

with Dr. Luis Baptista

Curator of Ornithology, Academy of Science

Dr. Baptista has been busy since his last visit with our chapter. Join us as he spins his tales of the birds on the island of Socorro off the coast of Mexico. Always an entertaining speaker and with slides of the birds most of us have never seen, this evening promises to offer a little of everything. Luis has promised to whistle a few bird calls for us if we are very attentive. So, for an evening of science, song, laughter and birds put our May program on your calendar right now.

Chapter News

Say it Ain't So, Jayne

Sentiments to that effect were expressed by stunned SCVAS members when Chapter Manager Jayne DiCandio recently announced her resignation effective May 15 to relocate in the Boston area, where husband John Archer has been transferred. No amount of begging, wheedling, or protestation has succeeded in changing their minds—we're going to have to carry on without her. The Personnel Committee expects to have a replacement named shortly.

While we all recognize the inevitability of change, and the opportunities it brings, we cannot help but feel considerable sadness and disappointment as a superb employee and very, very special person departs. Jayne's accomplishments as Chapter Manager have been extraordinary, as she has handled a plethora of duties ranging from the mundane to the super-important with exceptional skill and competence. From answering phones,

keeping the books, stocking shelves and filling seed feeders to organizing major events, staffing meetings, attending conferences, writing reports, supervising volunteers and coordinating fundraisers, Jayne has literally done it all for SCVAS.

Her outstanding performance on the job has been matched only by her stellar personality. Her warm, self-effacing demeanor combined with a confident, "can-do" attitude has made her an absolute joy to work with, as volunteers, Board members and contacts from other organizations will attest. Tactful, reliable, professional, even-tempered and upbeat, Jayne has represented SCVAS most admirably to our members, our allied non-profit groups, and the environmental community in general. We thank her for nearly three years of dedicated service and wish her nothing but the best in her future endeavors.

Thank You!

A special thanks to Stella Yang for responding to our wish list and donating a typewriter to SCVAS!

*A donation was made in
memory of Muriel Feltham
by San Jose Technical
Support department*

Saturday Volunteer Needed

Marie Gordon & Pat Close have been doing a marvelous job working Saturdays in the office. But we need one more volunteer to fill in 1 or 2 Saturdays a month (hours 10am-2pm). If you are interested please stop by the office or call Jayne at (408)252-3747.

Summer Bird Census

The Palo Alto Summer Bird Census will be held on Saturday, June 1. Those who have participated in prior years should contact their section leaders for this year's assignments. We are still looking for a coordinator to replace Bill Bousman. If you have questions about the count, please call Jayne at the office.

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SCVAS OFFICERS

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	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.

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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

May 1996 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 May 1, 7:30 PM.

Photographer and naturalist Gerry Jennings will present a slide show on insect behavior, as well as mammals and birds. Lucy Evans Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

****Saturday May 4, 8:00 AM.** Full day. Mines Rd/Del Puerto Canyon. Leader: Don Schmoltdt (510)215-1910. Meet at Nob Hill Market parking lot in Livermore. From I-580 take N. Livermore Ave., go South through downtown area, then look for grocery store parking lot on left (approx. 7-8 blocks). Highlights include possible Lawrence's Goldfinch, Phainopepla, Lewis' Woodpecker, Canyon and Rock Wrens, spring migrants. Bring full tank of gas. Carpooling from Livermore strongly encouraged!

****Wednesday May 8, 8:00 AM.** Half day. Alum Rock Park. Leader: Bob Reiling (408)253-7527. Take I-680 to Alum Rock Ave. east into park. Meet at 2nd parking lot at the back near Youth Science Institute. Lunch optional.

****Sunday May 12, 7:00 AM.**

Half day. Birding by ear at Smith Creek/Upper Grant Ranch Park. Leader: Grant Hoyt (415)969-7892. Take Alum Rock Ave. east from 680 or 880 in San Jose, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd., go past Grant Ranch Pk. entrance, meet at Smith Creek Fire Station (allow 45 min. from Alum Rock Ave). Moderate walking of 1-2 miles. Trip will focus on study of breeding birds' songs. We'll compare the musical and often confusing vocalizations of Black-headed Grosbeak, American Robin, Solitary, Hutton's and Warbling Vireos, Ash-throated, Pacific-slope and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Bewick's and House Wrens, Yellow, Black-throated Gray and Orange-crowned Warblers, and others.

Tuesday May 14, 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: Jaegers.

****Saturday & Sunday May 18 & 19, 7:30 AM.** Full days. Carmel Vallley/Chews Ridge. Leader: John Mariani (408)997-2066. Take Hwy 1 south through Carmel, turn left onto Rio Road. Meet at Crossroads Cinema in Crossroads Shopping Center. Highlights: Mountain Quail, Dusky Flycatcher, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Western Tanager, Purple Martin.

Optional overnight camping at China Camp. No water available at campsite. Owling at night—possible Flammulated, Spotted Owls.

****Sunday May 19, 8:00 AM.**

Half day. Beginner's trip to Charleston Slough. Leader: Ann Verdi (408)377-8018. Take Hwy 101 to San Antonio Rd. in Mt. View, exit N on San Antonio to Terminal Way parking area. Highlights: breeding shorebirds, ducks.

****Wednesday 22, 9:00 AM.** Half day. Eastern (lower) section of Windy Hill OSP. Leader Al Huber (415)493-6854. From I-280 in Woodside, go 3.8 miles SW on Alpine Rd. Meet at intersection of Alpine and Willowbrook. Park along road. Highlights: spring woodland birds.

****Sunday June 2, 7:30 AM.** Half day. Stevens Creek County Park. Leaders: David Cook and David Cook, Jr. (408)729-7310. From I-280 go south on Foothill Blvd. (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.) 2.1 miles to entrance on left. Meet at parking lot. Highlights: breeding birds, including vireos, warblers, flycatchers, wrens.

Tuesday June 11, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos. (408)395-4264. Topic: Birding at the Dubois'.

Celebrating Birds: International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 11, 1996
8 AM - 4 PM

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has joined forces with Coyote Creek Riparian Station, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge to put together a spectacular birding event. International Migratory Bird Day will take place at the Refuge's Environmental Education Center and Coyote Creek Riparian Station. A shuttle bus will run

between both locations in Alviso.

Highlights will include a Wildlife Photography walk led by Peter LaTourrette, Shorebird walk led by Dr. Howard Cogswell & other SFBBO friends, and Coyote Creek walks led by Steve Rottenborn, Dr. Mike Rogers, and Mike Mammoser. The Santa Clara Valley Water District will also lead a revegetation walk along Coyote Creek. Several great presentations will be offered at the Education Center including a fascinating look at the

Murre Restoration Project on Devil's Slide Island, a Farallon Islands slide show, a nest box program, and a migratory shorebirds presentation. Between the walks and presentations you can visit the Native Plant Sale, Wildlife Artist Fair, raffle, bird-banding demonstrations, children's games and activities and much more. For more information call the SCVAS office at (408)252-3747. Come celebrate migratory birds with us, you will certainly have a great time!

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Loons through Waterfowl

One to two **Red-throated Loons** have continued to frequent Shoreline lake with a number of records in March (m.ob.). Two were found again on Salt Pond A3W in Sunnyvale on 2 Mar (MJM). Two **Common Loons** were also on A3W on 2 Mar (MJM) and a single bird was seen on Salt Pond A2W in Mountain View on 7 Mar and on Shoreline Lake on 9 Mar (both KCW). A flock of 20 **American White Pelicans** on Salt Pond B2 in Sunnyvale on 2 Mar (MJM) is unusual for this time of year. An **American Bittern** was seen in the Mountain View Forebay on 8-9 Mar (KCW). Cattle Egret have been fairly regular in the vicinity of the Arzino Ranch in Alviso during March (m.ob.) with a peak count of seven on 24 Mar (AME).

Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** were a surprise in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) just south of Byxbee Park on 23 Mar (MJM). No surprise was the continuing presence of our **Ross' Goose** at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) on 2 Mar (TGr, MJM) and 9 Mar (AME). Variable numbers of **Blue-winged Teal** have been found in the Palo Alto FCB during March (m.ob.). Seven birds tallied on 10 Mar was a good count (LCh, TAC). **Eurasian Wigeon** have lingered into March with single birds in the outer Palo Alto FCB on 6 Mar (TGr); Salt Pond A2W in Mountain View on 7 Mar (KCW); and in Crittenden Marsh on 7 Mar (AJ), 11 Mar (SSh, MSt), and two there on 31 Mar (MJM). The last of our wintering **Redheads**, perhaps, was a single male in the Palo Alto FCB on 3 Mar (LCh). A male **Tufted Duck** was found once again at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 9 Mar (AME) and this is now the latest record we have (by three days) of this Eurasian stray. Our winter influx of **Hooded Mergansers** appears to have petered out with a single male at Shoreline Lake on 1 Mar (AME) and four birds seen in the Palo Alto FCB on 3 Mar (LCh). We expect to find wintering **Com-**

mon Mergansers on our larger lakes and reservoirs, but their presence on urban streams is less expected so a male on Coyote Creek above Montague on 20 Mar (CKS) is of interest. This picivorous gourmand, when regularly present, is a clear indicator of the health of our badly damaged riparian ecosystems.

Raptors through Gulls

Migrant **Ospreys** were found this month with one in San Antonio Valley on 16 Mar (MJM), one at Mississippi Lake in Henry Coe SP on 23 Mar (GH fide JY), one at Chesbro Res. 23-28 Mar (JG), and one over Stevens Creek CP on 30 Mar (MJM). An adult **Bald Eagle** was seen at

The continuing presence of a Lesser Black-backed Gull, a Reeve, and a pair of Chesnut-collared Longspurs was augmented by a brief visit by a Cassin's Kingbird

Calaveras Res. on 3 Mar (TGr) to finish the winter season there. The only **Ferruginous Hawk** found in March was an adult over Felter and Sierra roads on 1 Mar (RCo). A male **Merlin** of the prairie race *richardsonii* was seen along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237. (SCR). Four **Mountain Quail** were heard on the eastern slopes of Black Mountain on 10 Mar (JY, AL)-these birds were lower on the mountain than noted in the past. Four **Snowy Plover** were seen on Salt Pond A8 in Alviso on 2 Mar (MJM), an area where they've been found regularly in the past. Less expected were four to six birds north of the Alviso marina 30-31 Mar (MJM) showing nesting behavior. Lesser Yellowlegs have continued to be regular in March. A single bird, at Crittenden Marsh since early February, has been seen at least through 23 Mar (CKS, m.ob.). A bird north of the Alviso marina on 2 Mar (TGr) may have been the same one reported there in February. Finally, another bird was found near the

Alviso Environmental Education Center (EEC) on 17 Mar (NY). A flock of **Sanderling** has lingered in the impoundment north of the Alviso marina during the month (m.ob.) with a peak count of eight on 11 Mar (MMR). The **Ruff**, discovered in Crittenden Marsh in February, has remained there at least through 24 Mar (m.ob.). This 1st-winter female (and, hence, a Reeve not a Ruff) is starting to develop black feathers underneath for her first alternate plumage (MJM). The adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, present in the Alviso area since last October, was found once again on 23 Mar (RCo, RLe, PMB) north of the Alviso marina. A 1st-winter **Glaucous Gull** found there a day later (MJM) was the only one reported this month.

Owls through Goldfinches

Single **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were seen in two locations along Mines Road south of the county line on 8 Mar (SCR) in an area where they've been found in the past, but not during the atlas years. Another birds was heard at the usual location in Monte Bello OSP on 17 Mar (MJM). In the 1970s, the challenge that faced early morning birders in this area was obtaining an accurate tally of the **Short-eared Owls** using the Palo Alto FCB-were there 10 or 12 or 14? This month a single bird put a brief appearance here on 8 Mar (KCW) and 13 Mar (MJM) and we were all a flutter with the chance to view this marvelous predator. It's hard to know what has caused the decline in this marsh enthusiast but, in part, it is probably a result of the higher water regime imposed in the FCB by Palo Alto so the ground won't dry out too much beneath their buildings. The first of our migrant **Rufous Hummingbirds** was on 1 Mar (RCo) at Felter and Sierra roads, but the migration there has been a poor shadow of last year's glory. A few males have been seen at their regular haunts at Ed Levin CP (v.ob.) as well as at the Sierra Road summit on 28 Mar (AJ).

A **Western Wood-Pewee** at Ed Levin CP on 29 Mar was two weeks early as was another bird at Arastradero Preserve on 31 Mar (both KCW). The **Eastern Phoebe**, back for its third winter, was seen once again on 6 Mar (RWR). A

Cassin's Kingbird, only the fourth for the county, was seen at Arastradero Preserve on 10 Mar (TAC, FV fide LCh). An early **Western Kingbird** was near San Antone Junction on 16 Mar (MJM). A **Canyon Wren** in Grizzly Gulch in Henry Coe SP on 2 Mar (JY, AL) and one singing at Alum Rock on 3 Mar (MJM) and 31 Mar (AME) were good finds. Two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** at Almaden-Quicksilver CP on 9 Mar (AV) were a week or two early. Six male **Phainopepla** were found in the vicinity of San Antonio Valley on 8 Mar (SCR) and five birds were found on 16 Mar (MJM). Nest building was observed in two locations on the latter date—we never observed March nesting during the atlas years. Two **Western Tanagers** at Stanford near the Mausoleum on 5 Mar (SCR) and one there 20 Mar (DSt) were undoubtedly wintering birds. Two **White-throated Sparrows** have remained at a feeder in Los Gatos at least through 19 Mar (JD). Our marvelous **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** have rewarded the diligent along the Sierra Road summit this month. A pair was seen on 25 Mar (MMR) and 31 Mar (MJM, AW) and the male was in nearly complete alternate plumage. **Lawrence's Goldfinches** have been found widely including records of many birds from Henry Coe SP on 2 Mar (JY, AL), up to 22 birds counted in the San Antonio Valley 8-16 Mar (SCR, MJM) including a bird building a nest, and 2-3 birds near the Sierra Road summit 25-28 Mar (MMR, AJ).

Observers: Phyllis Browning (PMB), Ted Chandik (TAC), Les Chibana (LCh), Rita Colwell (RCo), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Jane Glass (JG), Tom Grey (TGr), Greg Hayes (GH), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Rosalie Lefkowitz (RLe), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Chris Salander (CKS), Steve Shunk (SSh), Dick Stovel (DSt), Mark Strasburger (MSt), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Alan Walther (AW), Clark White (KCW), Nick Yatsko (NY), and James Yurchenco (JY).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note—Bill Bousman, 321 Arling-ton Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Grant Ranch Field Trip

Twenty-eight enthusiastic “early birders” braved a brisk morning chill for the April 13 field trip to Grant Ranch Park. Undeterred by the 7:00 AM starting time, the group was treated to gorgeous spring weather and a rich variety of birdlife as we covered fresh-water lake, riparian, and oak woodland habitat.

As we gathered in the parking lot, several participants noted that they had observed Wild Turkeys on Quimby Rd. Allen Royer was the first to spot some of the elegant gobblers on a hill just above the park entrance, and we all enjoyed Questar views courtesy of Frank Vanslager and Gail Cheeseman. A couple of wild pigs, whose rampant rootings were in evidence throughout our walk, were also seen grazing on the same hillside.

Jackets, sweaters, hats and gloves were still in place as we checked Grant Lake for waterfowl. Great Blue Herons cruised overhead on their way to and from the well-established nesting rookery in the eucalyptus trees overhanging the road just before the park entrance. Up to 15 Buffle-head ducks skittered and swam away from us as we surprised them on the lake's near edge, while a lone male Cinnamon Teal seemed to be searching for a mate. The usual contingent of Canada Geese foraged at the far edge, honking loudly from time to time. The Tricolored Blackbirds occupied their traditional nesting site on the reedy island, but seemed to disappear quickly into the rushes, preventing good views. Tree Swallows were the first of their ilk to appear, and their blue backs glistened in the early morning sun. Our only Western Kingbird of the day hawked insects from a low fence wire.

The oaks and willows glowed with new green growth on the trail above the lake, but surprisingly few migrant warblers were observed in this insect-rich habitat. One male Wilson's, a Common Yellowthroat, and a few Orange-crowns and Yellow-rumps (including a striking male Myrtle) skulked through the shrubs gleaning morsels. A single male Rufous Hummingbird was identified among several *selasphorus* sp. and numerous Anna's. Flashy male Bullock's Orioles sang in the oak and eucalyptus treetops. Everyone got a good look at an Ash-throated Flycatcher and the cooperative Western Bluebird pairs setting up territory. A real treat was provided by Gail Cheeseman when she tracked down a Warbling Vireo that had been teasing us with his repetitive song for nearly 20 minutes from a hidden oak branch.

Raptors were cooperative except for the resident Golden Eagle pair, which made one brief, distant appearance only. A soaring Cooper's Hawk circled over the group, showing off its field marks, and as if on cue a Sharp-shinned Hawk darted by for comparison. A migrating Osprey made a quick pass overhead and kept moving, but a White-tailed Kite hovered at length over the open fields as we concluded the trip.

Seventy species were seen in all in our morning excursion to one of the county's liveliest birding sites. Birders looking for a variety of species in a beautiful setting should check out Grant Ranch Park in spring or any other season.

—Grant Hoyt
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Environmental Action News

Citizens Get Involved

by Craig Breon

Ideally, an organization like ours reacts to conservation issues based on the guidance of members and community concerns. Proudly, at Santa Clara Valley Audubon we can say that's often the case. The following are a couple examples of land use issues brought to our doorstep by members. As you'll see, the results are mixed. It's tough to overcome the power of developers and the fact that city councils all too often place protection of wildlife low on their priority lists. Nonetheless, both efforts led to tangible results. In addition, both solidified the ties between our chapter, our members, and the communities we inhabit. That's important in the longer struggles ahead.

The Owls of Mountain View

Open fields, grasses and shrubby vegetation on the Valley floor, expansive views and the prime climate of Northern California. The perfect habitat for two local species: the Burrowing Owl and high-tech corporate headquarters. Unfortunately, in Mountain View the latter have been outcompeting the former for some time now. It came down to this—how to develop the last piece of private land in the City with active owl burrows. Bordering Shoreline Park, the two sites comprising 21 acres were owned by developers Perry and Arillaga, who intended an industrial park and perhaps a hotel. The issue was brought to us via e-mail by Les Chibana and other members and open space advocates in the area. [As a sidenote, this was the first time our chapter has done considerable organizing on the info superhighway.] This local group, with the help of owl expert Lynn Trulio (another member), had already commented on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project and were preparing for Planning Commission and City Council hearings when they called the chapter for assistance. They had developed a plan calling for a reasonable level of development while leaving enough room for the owls and other wildlife to enjoy a home and an occasional meal.

Our role became that of consultant, suggesting points to make in their arguments and tactics such as taking Council members out to the site, exploring the history of owl habitat lost in the City, and where they might find answers to the legal questions posed by setting aside land for wildlife. The Mountain View residents remained the primary spokespeople, while the chapter spoke on behalf of our members Countywide who go to Mountain View and other places to enjoy the remaining wildlife habitat.

Gilroy's Growing Pains

Gilroy is a tough place to be an activist on environmental issues. While the City and surrounding areas contain much of the prime agricultural lands left in the County and some beautiful hills, valleys and creeks, Gilroy also has a voracious appetite for development. For example, the City plans to expand the number of homes from its current level of 10,000 to

40,000 in as little as twenty years. Judging from recent history, they also intend to get from here to there with little heed to the needs of nature along the way.

Developers of the Deer Park/Rancho Hills Estates project planned some 300 homes in the northwest area of the City, abutting the hillsides. The City proposed to go ahead on this development without an EIR, relying instead on an anemic site study with a grand total of two paragraphs discussing vegetation and wildlife.

Neighbors living next to the proposed site began to organize, objecting both to the substance of the development and the process by which the City was reviewing it. Their concerns ranged from traffic and density to wildlife and preserving their views of the hillsides. An all-encompassing concern was the City's weak environmental review process, which they had seen on other projects in their area, and the influence of a few developers and landowners on the City government.

Dave Storm, an Audubon member who had submitted a birdlist for the site to refute the City's contention that "nothing of biological significance" existed there, called our chapter to ask for advice and help.

Again, our role was secondary but complimentary to the local efforts. Here, the local group was contemplating a lawsuit. To do so, they would have to raise all the issues before the City Council that they might argue later in court. We helped them identify what those issues might be and how to raise the arguments in a way that would preserve their rights.

The local organizers distributed flyers and put up signs in their neighborhood asking that others join their cause. They wrote letters to the editor of the local paper, and flooded the Council with letters and phone calls.

When the night of the Council hearing came, nearly 90 people attended. The developers and the Council addressed many of the issues raised, requiring that traffic measures be improved, a public park be added, and densities reduced. While the Council did not recommend that an EIR be prepared, they did seem willing to consider further environmental analysis for the entire northwest area of the City. If the Council follows through on this commitment, the neighborhood will have a means of expressing their wider concerns for the area.

Working Partnerships

These are just two examples of the affect Audubon members and others can have on their communities, especially when our chapter can serve as support for their efforts. These partnerships work slow changes to the system out there which might otherwise ignore our concerns. To paraphrase Helen Caldicott: never underestimate the ability of a few caring people to change the world around them; in fact, its about the only thing that ever has.

From **Guadalupe**, page 1...

Ann and I survey exclusively the City of Santa Clara for our birdathon, and the Guadalupe is the only site in the city where we repeatedly document Say's Phoebe, California Quail, Red-shouldered Hawk and Olive-sided Flycatcher, among others. Steve Rottenborn's extensive research of riparian habitat in Santa Clara County also provides compelling documentation of the Guadalupe's rich birdlife in all seasons.

As we bird the City of Santa Clara we find 65% of the total species recorded are seen at this particular site along the Guadalupe near Lick Mill. About 40% are found along Saratoga Creek and its adjacent parks, while San Tomas Aquino from Bayshore to Highway 237 accommodates 29%. Other sites host special species: Allen's Hummingbird, Red-breasted Sapsucker and numerous CBC rarities at the Carmelite Monastery (courtesy of Mark Miller); Nuttall's Woodpecker, Plain Titmouse, Nashville Warbler at Mission City Cemetery; and Black-crowned Night Heron, Ruddy Duck and Pied-billed Grebe at the retention ponds. City parks away from the river offer up typical backyard species and the occasional rarity.

The Guadalupe River riparian corridor is clearly a treasure trove of species diversity for Santa Clara residents and all South Bay birders. East of Tasman, upstream on the Guadalupe, a large pond has been partially filled, creating a marshy North Pond and a brambly South Pond,

providing even more habitat diversity. Unfortunately, the City has plans to fill these ponds this year.

As I ponder the potential loss of this habitat, I've spent a lot of weekends there this year, listening to the frogs in the marsh and to the Downy Woodpeckers tapping persistently on the tree branches. I've watched the Red-winged Blackbirds prance and preen on the rushes while the kites, Cooper's, sharp-shins, red-tails and red-shoulders scrimmage with the challenging kestrels and crows. As I write this article both Lesser and American Goldfinches forage among the willows.

This is a lot of land for the public to own. Unfortunately, it is not owned "free and clear." The property has been held hostage by a "Public Resolution" as collateral for bonds to finance a golf course downstream on the north side of Tasman. What is a concerned citizen to do?

Steve Rottenborn and others have noted that the willows thicketing the ponds at the Lick Mill property host numerous migrating birds each year. Once these willows are destroyed and the ponds filled, those landing spots for migrant songbirds are gone. The City has commented that under the old Environmental Impact Report the wetlands mitigation that was supposed to be covered by ponds at the new golf course is questionable.

Here's what you can do—take some time to inspect this riverside property (teeming with birdlife during May and June!)—it's the last large site of undeveloped, public-owned property

along the Guadalupe in the City of Santa Clara. Then take this action:

Request the City of Santa Clara to deny the capital improvement budget proposal for \$200,000 for Project 9514 to grade and fill the ponds between Lick Mill Blvd. and the Guadalupe River. The Project justification is that "regrading of the area is required to prepare the site for future development."

After you see the site, I am sure you will find your own words about the need for grading and filling on this site. Request that a new EIR be required before any new development plan for this site is considered by the City. Write your letter immediately, as the budget will be coming up for public hearing in May and June. Address letters to: Jennifer Sparacino, Santa Clara City Manager; Judy Nadler, Mayor of Santa Clara and City Council Members, 1500 Warburton Ave. Santa Clara CA 95050

Send Craig Breon a copy here at the SCVAS office or leave your name and phone number on his voice mail (408)252-3748. We will work hard to create and protect wildlife habitat and open space preserves in the City of Santa Clara for our migrating songbirds as well as our native species.

If you've read the other three articles on Santa Clara's riparian corridors and wetlands you know that the city's creeks have severe habitat degradation. You know that birds need privacy and open space, too. You know that you can't tell if a bird is homeless. And you know that only you can ensure that habitat remains available.

If you'd like copies of the back articles call the office and we'll send them to you. This project and others like it (see "Owls of Mt. View," page 6) demonstrate ways that you can make a difference in your own community. Thanks for your efforts, especially our members who live in the city of Santa Clara. Get involved and help our land use decisions make sense for us, our families, and the incredible diversity of species around us.

Migratory Birds in the Classroom

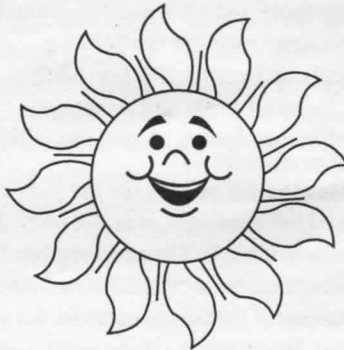
In conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day, SCVAS is going into classrooms to teach children about migratory birds and the obstacles they face. SCVAS will be giving approximately 25 presentations in elementary classrooms the week of Migratory Bird Day. For more information on Migratory Bird or other classroom presentations call Jayne at 408-252-3747.

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

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Sun And Fun at Education Day

We had over 300 people come out to McClellan Ranch Park on a sunny Saturday in March for our 5th Annual Education Day. As always our animal guests were the most popular, and they included Socrates the Great Horned Owl from Wildlife Rescue, two rather large snakes, a common boa and ball python from The Bay Area Reptile Association, and Cuddles the Cockatoo from The World Environmental Network, living up to his name as he cuddled up to delighted visitors of all ages. Dave Johnson from Coyote Creek Riparian Station captivated the crowd with his bats and an informative talk on echo-location. There was a constant crowd at the Blacksmith Shop where Lester Markarian demonstrated blacksmith techniques used at the shop many years ago.



The Education Committee would like to thank all the volunteers who helped with Education Day and the groups who participated including those mentioned above and the following: City of Sunnyvale, Environmental Education and Baylands Park, Cupertino Historical Society, Cupertino Parks & Recreation Department, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, Hidden Villa, Marine Science Institute, San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Floy Zittin.

SCVAS would also like to thank the following stores for their raffle donations: Cynthia Cost, Hicklebee's Book Store, Klutz Press, Naturals from the Earth, Wild Bird Center, Willow Glen Books, and Willow Glen Roasting Company

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 \$20 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.

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