



The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

October 1996

RECORD DUCK MIGRATION EXPECTED

Northern California birders can look forward to a banner year for ducks, according to recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates. Boosted by three years of plentiful rain and snowfall in key nesting areas, more than 80 million ducks nation-wide will fly south this fall, representing the largest fall flight since 1979.

"We've come a long way since the drought of the late 1980's when the fall flight was 57 million ducks," said USF&WS Acting Director John Rogers at a joint meeting of the four flyway councils on July 27. "We can be thankful for the abundance of water but we also must applaud the habitat conservation work done by the partners of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and by hunters and conservationists."

Since the Pacific Flyway accounts for over 30% of the country's wintering duck populations, up to 25 million ducks could be roosting and foraging in California wetlands over the next six months. With goose and swan populations remaining "stable" according to USF&WS, fall and winter birding expeditions to the Central Valley should be first-rate. Cranes, ibis, shorebirds and raptors add to the richness of waterfowl-watching from Sacramento to Los Banos in winter.

Locally, San Francisco Bay supports good-sized numbers of dabbling and diving ducks during the winter months. Charleston Slough, the ponds adjacent to Sunnyvale Sewage Treatment Plant, CCRS, and the area around Alviso provide excellent habitat

for a variety of duck species, and sharp-eyed birders often pick out rarities among the rafts of common ducks. Eurasian Wigeon are found among the numerous American Wigeon; Blue-winged Teal pop up here and there among their Green-winged and Cinnamon allies; and an occasional Tufted Duck can be spotted in scaup flocks.

The good news on the projected fall flight follows the results of the annual spring breeding survey, which recorded an estimated 37.5 million breeding ducks in key North American nesting areas, up 5% from 1995. The survey samples 1.3 million square miles across the north-central United States, western and northern Canada, and Alaska.

Populations of four species---Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Canvasback---reached record highs. In particular, Blue-winged Teal, up 25% to 6.4 million, and Northern Shoveler, up 21% to 3.4 million, showed substantial gains.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal Agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 508 national wildlife refuges encompassing 92 million acres, including our own San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

(From USF&WS news release)

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 16

Evolution: Down Under with Doug Cheeseman

Palo Alto Cultural Center

Newell & Embarcadero

7:30 Hospitality and Business

8 PM Program

Doug Cheeseman takes the Chapter "down under" the Southern Cross for an up close and personal look at the marsupials, birdlife, and unique reptiles of Australia. Doug will present slides from four previous trips including the most recent expedition which ended Oct. 5. He'll feature incredible slides from Australian naturalists showing nesting behavior of many unique Australian bird species, and, of course, he'll relate fascinating natural history tidbits and travel anecdotes in the inimitable Cheeseman style. Don't miss this entertaining and educational evening with our most popular speaker!

VIEW FROM THE OFFICE

by Garth Harwood, SCVAS Chapter Manager

I feel like Garrison Kiellor, about to begin another installment of the Lake Wobegon saga in the traditional way: "It's been a quiet week here in Lake Wobegon . . ."

Quiet? Yes, indeed. Although the inside of our office usually manages to maintain a hectic feeling, the birds outside have gone so quiet that, lately, a single bird's song—any bird's—can be enough to make me drop everything and go outside for a look. All the boisterousness and braggadoccio of the breeding season have been put away for another fall and winter. Many birds, such as the Hooded and Bullock's Orioles that spend so much time here in the spring, have already moved on, and those staying put are now quiet, shy, and comparatively drab.

ON THE OTHER HAND, the fall shorebird migration has been causing a lot of excitement down at the bayshore parklands. And by the time you read this, the raptor migration along the Marin headlands will also be in full swing. My e-mail has been full of detailed bird reports from observers such as Bill Bousman, Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn and many others who visit the best sites regularly and post very detailed reports of the latest activity on the Internet. And now you can get in on the latest information from that source! As a service to SCVAS members, we've recently begun to print out and compile these messages from those who give us permission to do so. They are kept in a blue binder on our library shelves, and are accessible any time the office is open. It's a great way to find out the best of what's being seen right now, and where to see it.

NEW STORE AND OFFICE HOURS were decided on at the Sept. 3 meeting of the SCVAS Board of Directors. The office and store will now be open from 12-6 Monday through Friday, instead of 9-5 as before. We hope that this will better serve those of you who can't get here until after work. Saturday will remain unchanged at 10-2.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS! We have several special needs that we hope you can help with this fall:

- 1) **CALLIGRAPHER** for sporadic, small-scale projects such as filling out Bird Sanctuary certificates. (Small commitment, big help!)
- 2) **WOODWORKERS** are needed to help cut out and assemble Western Bluebird nest boxes for our campaign to establish a network of bluebird trails in Santa Clara County. You don't have to be especially skilled, just willing. Regular work sessions take place Friday mornings 10-12, or any time during our regular hours that you can manage.
- 3) **A STORE MANAGER!** to manage our Nature Shop. I need someone who's willing to make an enduring commitment of 4 or more hours a week to coordinate volunteers, conduct wholesale orders, interact with customers, and arrange displays. Interested? Call me for more information!

FINALLY, I'd like to encourage all of you to come and visit me and my family on October 20 in Pescadero for the big apple sale, as advertised on Page 7. Winter residents of our unsprayed orchard include Red-breasted Sapsucker, Varied Thrush and Townsend's Warbler. We hope you'll join us for a day of apple-picking, birding, and socializing!

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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

October 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 Oct. 2, 7:30 PM. Bay Area Bird Photographers will feature B. "Moose" Peterson of Wildlife Research Photographers with an exciting slide presentation on the nesting birds of Churchill, Manitoba. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

****Saturday Oct. 5, 9:00 AM.** Full day. Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408)247-5499. Meet at Page Mill Rd/I-280 Park'n'Ride at 8:00 AM for carpooling. Now relieved of Chapter presidential duties, Nick can concentrate on his primary Audubon-related endeavor---the relentless pursuit of raptors! Join our hawk-eyed leader for an exciting day on the Hill with buteos, accipiters, assorted passerines and perhaps a rare Broad-winged Hawk. Heavy fog may change itinerary.

****Sunday Oct. 6, 9:00 AM.** Join People For Open Space in Santa Clara for a tour of one of Santa Clara's last remaining open wildlife habitats, as featured in last month's *Avocet*. The property next to Tasman, Lick Mill Blvd. and Guadalupe River is a bird haven! Meet at Lick Mill Park on Lick Mill Blvd. N of Bayshore off San Tomas Expwy. in Santa Clara.

Tuesday Oct. 8, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group meets at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408)395-4264. Topic: Kirtland's Warbler.

****Wednesday Oct. 9, 9:00 AM.** Half day. Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough. Leaders: Harriet Gerson (408)252-6244 and Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330. Meet at Jetty Rd. and

Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Highlights: gulls, grebes, terns, ducks, shorebirds, raptors. Lunch optional.

****Saturday Oct. 12, 9:00 AM.** Repeat of Lick Mill Open Space tour in Santa Clara (see Sun. 10/6).

****Sunday Oct. 13, 8:00 AM.** Beginners trip to Charleston Slough. Leader: Kathy Parker (408)358-2832. From Hwy 101 in Mtn. View take San Antonio Rd. exit north approx. 1/4 mile to Terminal Way parking area. Ducks, egrets, shorebirds.

Wednesday Oct. 16, 7:30 PM. General Membership Mtg. in Palo Alto featuring Doug Cheeseman---see Pg. 1.

****Saturday Oct. 19, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Grant Ranch Co. Park. Leader: Alan Thomas (408)265-9286. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. E, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd., go approx. 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot on left just past park entrance. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Park entrance fee. 2 miles moderate walking. Lunch optional; rain cancels.

Sunday Oct. 20, 10AM - 5PM. SCVAS Apple Sale fundraiser in Pescadero---see Pg. 7.

****Wednesday Oct. 23, 8:30AM.** Half day. Skyline Ridge OSP. Leader: Alberta Jasberg (415)493-9546. Meet at intersection of Page Mill/Alpine Rd and Skyline Blvd.

****Saturday Oct. 26, 8:30AM.** Half day. Sunnyvale Baylands Park. Leader: Ann Verdi (408)377-8018. From Lawrence Expwy go N across Hwy 237, turn right at first stoplight into park. Continue right on perimeter road to end of parking area. Ducks, gulls, egrets, waterfowl, possible Burrowing Owl. \$3.00 park entrance fee. Rain cancels.

****Sunday Nov. 3, 8:30 AM.** Full day. Monterey Peninsula. Leader: Kathy Parker (408)358-2832. Meet at Municipal Wharf in Monterey. Take the second Del Monte Blvd. exit in

Monterey toward Fisherman's Wharf. Turn right at Figueroa St. and meet at base of wharf. Bring quarters for parking meters and lunch to eat at beach. Rain cancels.

Tuesday Nov. 12, 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: Great Gray Owl.

AUTUMN BIRDING FOR THE BLIND---Clay Kempf will give a 2-hour introductory lecture and lead a field trip in Palo Alto for the blind and visually impaired. Learn to identify birds like the experts do---by sound. Lecture on Wednesday Nov. 13 in Palo Alto; field trip on Saturday Nov. 16. Call Linda Lloyd at (415) 941-9407 for details.

Wildlife Refuge Faire

The Don Edwards San Francisco National Wildlife Refuge will host an environmental faire as part of National Wildlife Refuge Week on **Saturday, Oct. 5**. SCVAS staff and volunteers will be manning an information table and selling Nature Shop items, so drop by and visit them and other participating groups and do a little birding while you're there.

National Wildlife Refuge Week is timed to coincide with the annual fall migration, so millions of birds are sure to fly in to most refuges in the lower 48 states on their way south. We in the South Bay are fortunate to have our local Refuge, championed by local citizen activists and the legislator for whom it was named. It holds thousands of precious bayside wetland acres and supports an amazing variety of birds, fish, plants, and mammals in the delicate Bay ecosystem.

The S.F. Bay Care Faire goes from 10 to 4 and takes place at the Refuge headquarters in Newark, just south of the Dumbarton Bridge (Hwy. 84). A Native Plant Sale and Wildlife Art Auction will be held in addition the environmental and educational displays. Come out and support the Refuge on Saturday Oct. 5!

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Pelicans through Waterfowl

Eleven hundred **American White Pelicans** counted on the Sunnyvale salt ponds on 31 Aug (SCR) was a good count for the South Bay. **Brown Pelicans** are found regularly near the bay in August but an immature on Almaden Lake on 10 Aug (AV) was less expected at that inland location. Adult **Little Blue Herons** were found in their favored Alviso salt ponds this month with two seen there on 3 Aug (TGr), three on 17 Aug (MJM, MiF), and a single bird there 18 Aug (AV). A single **Cattle Egret** over lower Coyote Creek on 14 Aug (AJ) was the only one found away from the Arzino Ranch in Alviso where a peak of 12 were counted on 19 Aug (SCR). An immature **White-faced Ibis** was in the vicinity of the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) ponds 9-10 Aug (MiF, PJM, MJM).

Three female Blue-winged

Teal were found in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 10 Aug (PJM). A pair of **American Wigeon** in the FCB on 3 Aug (SSh) were probably overwintering locally as was the male **Redhead** in the North Pond of the FCB that was seen throughout August (m.ob.). A female was seen there as well on 10 Aug (PJM). Our local breeding **Lesser Scaup** normally nest quite late so we don't obtain a good count until August. Six broods recorded in their favored Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 10 Aug (PJM) were about typical of recent years. Single female **Bufflehead** were found at the Palo Alto Baylands on 8 Aug (SCR), the Mountain View Forebay on 10 Aug (PJM), and Salt Pond A3N on 31 Aug (SCR); unusual numbers for summer. Most unexpected were eight **Common**

Mergansers noted at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) ponds on 25 Aug (MJM, GHT *et al.*) as this freshwater merganser is rarely found near the bay at any time of the year. A female **Red-breasted Merganser** found on the Sunnyvale salt ponds on 20 Aug (PJM) may have been the same bird found earlier in the summer in Alviso.

Raptors through Skimmers

An **Osprey** was seen over Crittenden Marsh on 17 Aug (PJM), another was apparently using trees in downtown San Jose for a night roost through 24 Aug (DG *fide* CKS),

Black Turnstones and an Eastern Kingbird added spice to August

and a third was along Guadalupe River at Trimble on 30 Aug (*fide* CS). A '**Lesser Golden-Plover** found near the Gilroy sewage ponds on 22 Aug (SCR) is early and was not seen well enough to determine the species. Two **Snowy Plover** on Salt Pond A3N on 31 Aug (SCR) were the only reports for August. As is typical of recent years **Lesser Yellowlegs** were widespread during the month and a peak count of 36 was obtained in the Palo Alto FCB on 24 Aug (SCR). Although a common bird of rocky coastal shores, **Black Turnstone** is decidedly rare along our South Bay salt ponds and mudflats. A single bird was seen in the Palo Alto estuary on 24 Aug (HG and JS *fide* LCh), another was seen the next day on the Sunnyvale salt ponds (PJM), and two were observed flying over

the Palo Alto estuary on 27 Aug (SCR). Undoubtedly misoriented returning fall birds, these three records nearly doubled our previous totals for the county. A single juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was first found at the CCRS waterbird pond on 8 Aug (MMR) and by 10 Aug at least two were present (MJM), two were seen again on 12 Aug (AJ) and single birds remained at least through 22 Aug (v.ob.). A single bird was also found at the Palo Alto Baylands on 20 Aug (SCR). The first juvenile **Baird's Sandpiper** showed up at the CCRS waterbird pond on 10 Aug (MJM) and birds were present irregularly through 28 Aug (AJ, v.ob.) with a peak of three on 20 Aug (MiF). A single bird was also found at the Gilroy sewage ponds on 22 Aug (SCR) and three were at Crittenden Marsh on 25 Aug (PJM). Most autumns we find our first **Pectoral Sandpipers** in September and they are all juveniles. Much more rare are adult birds and when we do find them they are earlier as were well-described birds on the CCRS waterbird pond on 10 Aug

(MJM) and Salt Pond A2E in Sunnyvale on 11 Aug (AME). Juvenile **Stilt Sandpipers** were seen at the CCRS waterbird pond on 19 Aug (AJ), in the Palo Alto FCB on 25 Aug (PJM), and in a small pond at the northwest edge of the closed Sunnyvale landfill on 31 Aug (SCR). Three individuals in one fall is unusual for this rarity.

A 1st-year **Franklin's Gull** was found on the CCRS waterbird pond on 20 Aug (AJ) for our first August record of this rare gull. More typically we find these birds in September or October. Overwintering **Mew Gulls** are very rare in the county so a 2nd-year bird at the Sunnyvale WPCP-10-20 Aug was unexpected, but more so was the juvenile seen there 20-25 Aug (both PJM). Another juvenile Mew Gull was at the

Palo Alto Duck Pond on 31 Aug (SCR). An adult **Herring Gull** at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 31 Aug (SCR) is early for a fall arrival. Small numbers of **Least Terns** staged at Charleston Slough through 10 Aug (v.ob.), but the big numbers were in the Sunnyvale salt ponds. Forty-two birds were found on Salt Pond A2E on 10 Aug (PJM) and birds were found here intermittently with 27 still present on 25 Aug (PJM). Fifty birds were also on Salt Pond B2 on 10 Aug which gave a total (including Charleston Slough birds) of 94 birds (PJM) which provides a high count for the county. It was a good fall for **Black Terns** with a basic adult at Charleston Slough on 5 Aug (SSh) and a juvenile on Salt Pond A2E (PJM). Two adult **Black Skimmers** returned to Charleston Slough on 26 Aug (MMR) and remained through the end of the month (v.ob.).

Swifts through Goldfinches

As normal, August brings dispersing and migrating **Vaux's Swifts**. Small numbers of birds were found along the bay from 18 Aug on (v.ob.) with ten counted along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 26 Aug (AJ *fide* MMR). Reports of **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** have been limited to Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 where they nest. Five birds were still present on 25 Aug (MJM) with at least one or two still there 28 Aug (AJ). A male **Pileated Woodpecker** was found in the Los Gatos Creek drainage on 16 Aug (DLSu) a few miles from where breeding birds were found earlier this summer. **Willow Flycatchers** started to move through in early August with birds along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 11-28 Aug, including five banded on 25 Aug and four censused on 28 Aug (AJ); four along Llagas Creek above Bloomfield Road on 22 Aug (SCR); and one on the Guadalupe River near Lick Mill Road on 24 Aug (CKS). A juvenile **Least Flycatcher** was reportedly banded at CCRS on 24 Aug (*fide* LCh), but no description was

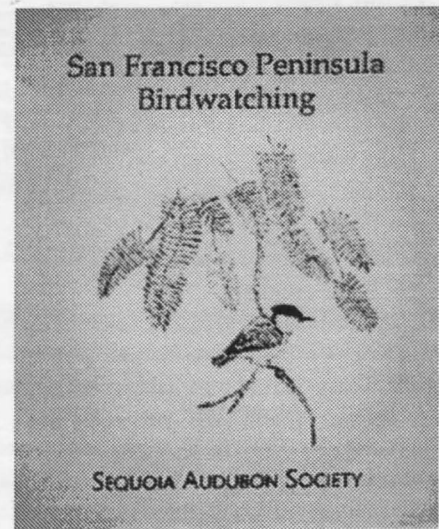
provided. Separation of this rare empid from more common species, even in the hand, is difficult. An **Eastern Kingbird** was found along the Pajaro River below its confluence with the San Benito River on 15 Aug for our 4th county record. The same bird was found again nearby on 28 Aug (both DLSu). A female **Purple Martin**, a rare fall migrant, was found at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 17 Aug (PJM).

Very early **Townsend's Warblers** include one banded at CCRS on 18 Aug (*fide* AME) and an adult male on Wrights Station Road on 19 Aug (DLSu). Three **MacGillivray's Warblers** banded at CCRS on 7-30 Aug plus individuals seen on 26 Aug (MMR) and 28 Aug (AJ) are good August numbers for this rare western migrant. We usually miss dispersal and fall movements of **Grasshopper Sparrows** so a loose flock of seventeen birds found along the Pajaro River on 15 Aug (DLSu) is of interest as is the single bird on Llagas Creek above Bloomfield Road on 22 Aug (SCR). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** banded at CCRS on 2 Aug is exceptionally early for this wintering bird that normally does not return until early September. Forty-eight **Lawrence's Goldfinches**, in groups of three to eight were found along the Pajaro River on 28 Aug (DLSu) and were post-breeding dispersing birds.

Observers: Les Chibana (LCh), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Harriet Gerson (HG), Darrell Grey (DG), Tom Grey (TGr), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Al Jaramillo (AJ), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Chris Salander (CKS), June Santoro (JS), Clysta Seney (CS), Steve Shunk (SSh), David Suddjian (DLSu), and Ann Verdi (AV).

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

NEW BIRD GUIDE!



Sequoia Audubon Society of San Mateo County is proud to announce the immediate availability of a newly revised edition of **San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching**, a guide to birding sites in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.

The magnificent diversity of habitats and birds found in this area is covered in the detailed descriptions of over 25 of this area's favorite birdwatching spots, including Golden Gate Park, Pescadero Marsh, Foster City, Princeton Harbor, Ano Nuevo State Reserve, Edgewood Park, Lake Merced and many more.

This revised version features:

- ◆ 174 pages of text
- ◆ 23 fully updated, plus 3 entirely new, birding area descriptions
- ◆ Completely new maps of the best birding areas
- ◆ Over 20 all-new high quality illustrations
- ◆ Handy chart showing where and when to find the county's most sought after birds
- ◆ A current checklist of the birds of San Mateo County
- ◆ An extensive list of further references of interest to birders
- ◆ A complete index of bird species and locations

All of this information is available for the low price of \$14.95. Novices and experienced birders alike will find San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching indispensable. We're carrying this "must-have" local bird guide in our Nature Shop---pick up a copy today!

CREEK GROUPS TO JOIN FORCES

by Craig Breon
Environmental Advocate

In last month's *Avocet* we highlighted two new initiatives by the chapter, one on saving a vital piece of land in Santa Clara, the other on burrowing owls. This month a third initiative is starting, to address a constant concern, local creeks.

In the last few years a number of local creek groups have formed around the County, adding to others around for years. Their size, projects, and goals differ considerably—from Friends of Calabasas Creek, formed to watch over a Water District erosion and flood control project in Cupertino, to Friends of Alamitos Creek, hoping to complete a trail in San Jose while enhancing local wildlife habitat.

SCVAS was allocated a small amount of money from a lawsuit against Shell Oil for polluting the Bay. That money had to be used for public education about water quality in the Bay and its tributaries. We decided to spend that money to help the many small creek groups around the County be more effective. For Audubon, there is the opportunity to become involved with the various groups' projects, to let them know of our activities, and to enlist their help in advancing our agenda.

Our first effort will be to gather representatives of the many groups together early next year to describe their projects, goals, and needs to each other. It will give Audubon a chance to introduce them to some of the multitude of regional issues affecting the work of all creek groups: the Water District's projects involving formation of an environmental policy; securing a long-term water supply; controlling vegetation and sediment in creek channels; investigating uses of the watersheds above the County's reservoirs; the formation of the Bay Area Regional Wetlands Network, designed to give technical support to local organizations; and the County's RIVER project, which is looking for sites to do habitat enhancement.

From there, the representatives would help develop the next steps. Feedback from the first gathering would lead to an agenda for another, and hopefully to the start of on-the-ground projects. One of our hopes is that once annually the groups could host a media event highlighting a particular creek or project and releasing an annual "State of the Creeks" report.

One of the best things about this fund will be its flexibility. Once we start the effort, funding could go in a number of directions, depending on which projects garner enthusiasm. Some of the ideas to surface so far include:

- purchasing video equipment and slowly building up a library of videos focusing on individual creeks, to be used for public education, showing to City Councils, or documenting a group's work;

- assembling a website where all groups could post information about upcoming events, new trails, or where the best birding is;

- producing watershed maps—as has already been done for San Francisquito and Saratoga Creeks;

- distributing action packets on how to get your local government to pass a creek protection policy.

We'll continue to cover the progress of this new initiative in future *Avocets*. There's no doubt that these many small groups have contributed mightily to the change in attitude towards creeks in the County. Perhaps we can take that excitement to another level.

Time To Vote!!!

As many of you know, while Audubon cannot endorse specific candidates, and rarely endorses specific initiatives, we ALWAYS urge you to get involved politically. One only needs to read a recent article from *Sierra* magazine declaring the 104th Congress "the worst ever" to realize that if caring people don't turn out to the polls, we can only look forward to more years of struggling to maintain the good environmental laws we have.

In addition to the national scene, there are always a number of important local races and issues. To name just one example, Measures A and B in Santa Clara County will try to raise local sales taxes slightly in order to improve the region's transportation system. The money raised would be divided nearly 50/50 for transit and road improvements. While Audubon's Board chose not to take a formal position on this issue, it has implications for air quality, auto use, development patterns, and quality of life generally. (See article on Pg. 7)

Finally, we hope you'll consider voting as just the beginning of your civic involvement. Think about walking a precinct or staffing a phone bank for a local candidate with a track record of supporting environmental causes. Heck, think about getting into the action yourself by running for office or seeking appointment to a local board or committee. You have nothing to lose but your political naivete!

THANK YOU, WILD BIRD CENTER

Each quarter, the Wild Bird Center of Los Gatos donates a portion of its sales to a local environmental group. Santa Clara Valley Audubon was notified recently that two of our ongoing conservation projects have been designated as this quarter's recipients of the Wild Bird Center's "Birdie Bucks" program. The two programs selected by Freddy Howell of the WBC are: assisting with the recovery of the Western Bluebird population in our area (down approximately 30% statewide over the past 15 years); and restoring the native riparian plant community along Stevens Creek at McClellan Ranch Park. If you shopped at WBC Los Gatos last month, you supported SCVAS' local conservation projects. Our sincerest thanks to WBC for their generous donation!

CBC Dates Announced

Attention, Christmas Bird Count participants! Start making plans now for both CBC's sponsored by SCVAS—Palo Alto on Friday, Dec. 20, and San Jose on Sunday, Dec. 22. Note the change in format, as the Palo Alto CBC will precede San Jose by two days instead of being held the next day, as in previous years.

Why the change? The National Audubon Society has declared the 1996 official count period to start on Dec. 20 and end Jan. 3, 1997. Palo Alto co-compiler Mike Rogers and the Board felt that Monday the 23rd was too close to Christmas, so we opted for the Friday date.

Mark your calendars in advance and do your Holiday shopping early—you don't want to miss these important birding events. Ann Verdi and Kathy Parker will co-compile San Jose, while Garth Harwood will assist Mike Rogers with Palo Alto compilation.

APPLE-PICKING, BIRDING IN PESCADERO OCT. 20

LIKE TO TASTE SOME REAL APPLES FOR A CHANGE? BRING YOUR FAMILY TO A SPECIAL U-PICK EVENT AT GARTH'S ORGANIC APPLE ORCHARD! SATURDAY, OCT. 20, 10AM - 5PM. 5901 Pescadero Road, Pescadero (5.9 miles east of Hwy 1/Pescadero Rd. turnoff).

RED DELICIOUS * GOLDEN DELICIOUS *** PIPPIN**

Unusual growing conditions this year have produced the best apple crop in years at SCVAS Chapter Manager Garth Harwood's orchard along Pescadero Creek. These unsprayed apples sell for approximately \$1/lb. in local markets.

At this special, 1-day-only fundraiser for SCVAS, you can pick up to 20 lbs. for a flat \$5 fee, or up to 40 lbs. for just \$8! (That's 25 or 20 cents a pound, respectively.) There is no upper limit, and you need not be an SCVAS member to join in on this event.

This orchard's location provides a perfect setting for a full day of birding and country fun in and around Pescadero. Feel free to bring a picnic lunch and enjoy a rare opportunity to see a little-known part of Pescadero Creek while at the orchard. Other local attractions include the Pescadero Marsh for excellent fall birding, Phipps Ranch, and of course Pescadero itself with the one-of-a-kind Duarte's Tavern and its famous artichoke soup. Bring the family!

Traffic Improvement Measures Proposed for S.C. County

Two measures on the November ballot will give Santa Clara County voters an opportunity to weigh a proposed sales tax increase against increased traffic congestion in the Valley. Measures A and B propose a comprehensive transportation network designed to relieve traffic problems in the County, to be funded by a 1/2 cent sales tax increase. At a recent Board meeting, SCVAS was asked to formally endorse the measures by lending its name to a brochure put out by Citizens Coalition for Traffic Relief, a group supporting the measures.

The Audubon Board declined to formally or publicly support Measures A and B because they do not specifically fit in with the SCVAS mission statement. Indeed, non-profit organizations such as ours must exercise caution when considering making quasi-endorsements like this one, and, in fact, are specifically prohibited from endorsing electoral candidates. But most of us are concerned with traffic problems in our region—certainly our birding outings are affected by traffic patterns as well as our commutes and other daily activities. So the Board felt

that a brief presentation of the Citizens Coalition for Traffic Relief plans for alleviating traffic congestion would be appropriate. Individuals may then decide for themselves whether the ballot measures' presumed benefits merit the tax increase.

Some of the specific proposals the Coalition has made for traffic relief include:

- Traffic signal synchronization: Improving the signal timing on all eight county expressways—75 miles in length—by adding video surveillance monitoring.

- County connection to BART: Connecting Santa Clara Co. to Alameda Co. by adding a CalTrain type rail line between downtown S.J. and Union City BART station.

- Interchange improvements: Improving key interchanges to ease bottlenecks and improve traffic flow.

- CalTrain improvements: Improving rail service by adding trains and improving stations north from S.J. to Palo Alto, and south to Gilroy

- Highway 101: Widening 101 from Bernal Rd. to Cochrane Rd.

- Safety improvements: Placing a median barrier on Hwy. 85, and building truck-climbing lanes and pullouts on Hwy. 152.

- Tasman East Light Rail line: Extending to Milpitas and Northeast S.J.

- Highway 880: Widening to three lanes each way from 237 to 101.

- Vasona Light Rail: Building first stage from downtown S.J. to Campbell.

- Highway 17: Improvements between Hwy. 9 to Hwy. 280.

- Highway 87: Widening to three lanes each way between 85 and 101.

Other improvements would include transit service for seniors and the disabled; better street maintenance and filling of potholes; and the completion of a county-wide bicycle network.

Whatever your feelings are regarding Measures A and B and other ballot issues, be sure to do your job as a citizen and vote in the November election.

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

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ANNUAL FALL BIRDSEED SALE

Autumn brings the departure of many local breeding birds, while other old favorites return to our back yards. To help our members feed the crowned sparrows, finches, and siskins during the fall and winter months (and generate some revenue for the Chapter), we've traditionally held a big Birdseed Sale in October. This year we're doing things a little differently.

You'll still be able to order your favorite seed mixture in whatever quantity you desire, but we're selling the seed out of the office only. We've set aside Friday, Oct. 25 from 1-5 PM and Saturday Oct. 26 from 10 AM-4 PM at our McClellan Ranch headquarters for birdseed pickup. All you have to do to order is call the office at (408) 252-3747 and place your order over the phone by Wednesday, Oct. 16, and we'll have your seed available for pickup in Cupertino.

We're hoping this new system doesn't inconvenience regular seed buyers who are used to picking up their items at off-site locations in various South Bay communities. We'll try the Cupertino-only pickup this year and see how it goes, hoping to make more efficient use of staff and volunteer time while still providing a reasonable pickup point with expanded hours for our seed customers. (NOTE—we will still offer birdseed in the Nature Shop year-round for drop-in or phone-ahead customers.)

As an extra incentive to bring seed buyers to McClellan Ranch, we'll be offering discounts on selected items in our Nature Shop, including 50% off on SCVAS promotional mugs,

patches, and T-shirts, and 10% off on all bird feeders. So place your birdseed order now, and we'll see you on the 25th-26th! The following seed mixtures are available:

"AUDUBON SPECIAL" MIX (contains black oil sunflower seeds)

20lb.	\$ 9.00
50lb.	\$19.00

WESTERN WILD BIRD MIX (same mix w/o sunflower seeds)

20lb.	\$ 8.00
50lb.	\$17.00

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED (in hull)

25lb.	\$15.00
50lb.	\$27.00

SUNFLOWER "CHIPS" (without hulls)

25lb.	\$28.00
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NIGER THISTLE

5lb.	\$10.00
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IT'S EASY!! ORDER BY PHONE—PRE-PAY BY CREDIT CARD; or CASH/CHECK/CREDIT CARD ON DAY OF PICKUP

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 \$12 Supporter \$25 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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