



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

September 1998

## Night on Black Mountain

by Craig Breon  
SCVAS Environmental Advocate

I spent a night recently on Black Mountain above Los Altos. My companion, a friend from college who I hadn't seen in eleven years and who had not been in the area before, brought the beauty home to me. The campsite, rare on the Bay side of the Peninsula, sits at about 2600 feet. As we hiked to camp—uphill for less than an hour from the Monte Bello Preserve parking lot—the sun descended over the coast, above the fog rolling in through the low passes of the foothills. At that time of day dark forests on the coast side—themselves above the fogbank—seem like islands in a shifting white and gray ocean. Muted rainbow spectrum colors, emphasis on oranges and reds, blended on the horizon.

At the campsite we happened on a full moon and slept in warm open air in sleeping bags, talking comfortably as if our years of distance were days. She quietly remarked on our stunning surroundings. Briefly, before bed, I took a solo walk to oversee the lights of the Bay Area—heat flickered—

and two thoughts dominated my mind.

### Protecting the Foothills

First, that we have done a good job of protecting our hillsides and the Coast. From West San Jose, or Palo Alto, or Mountain View it takes only a twenty-minute drive to see vast expanses of redwoods and Doug fir, slowly returning to old growth. As you head to work in the sprawling mess that is Silicon Valley, a simple wild moment could turn your car towards the winding roadways of the hills, past madrone, manzanita, and toyon. You could be rewarded with a long view of grassy slopes turning to deep forest and ending in cliffs and surf.

I need to know those open spaces are there. Even when I forget to visit them for a month at a time, they comfort me. People have cared enough to work for their preservation for decades now, and we are all blessed by those accomplishments. Engulf your-

self in the hills, valleys, forests, and shoreline—you'll remember why you and so many others came here to begin with.

### What About the Valley?

My second thought was more sobering. Why have we accepted the destruction of the Valley? Most of the people I talk to seem resigned to its demise at the same time they are saddened and angered by the loss.

It certainly isn't that the Valley's natural resources are not as valuable as the hills. Valley level riparian areas are generally richer in species diversity, with water more of the year. Oak savannah is a gloriously productive and attractive habitat; Valley Oak uncommonly deciduous and majestic. Vernal pools and freshwater wetlands adjoin bountiful agricultural lands. So much of value to lose.

To a large extent, the other major environmental organizations of the region have given up on the Valley's open spaces. Greenbelt Alliance does a good job of addressing sprawl but mistakenly endorses the paving of large Valley-level open spaces, seeing this as good infill rather than the destruction of rarity that it is. The Committee for Green Foothills was founded to work primarily in the hills, and does that. Even the Loma Prieta chapter of the Sierra Club—by far the largest of us—

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**General Membership Meeting  
Wednesday September 16**

**“Birds and Mammals of the Neotropics”  
with Doug Cheeseman**

**Palo Alto Cultural Center  
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.  
7:30 Hospitality 8:00 Program**

SCVAS' most popular speaker will present slides and discuss the natural history, birds, and mammals of Ecuador, Brazil, and Costa Rica. Using two slide carousels and lapse-dissolve format, Doug will emphasize the value of tropical rainforest habitat as a winter haven for North American songbirds. Included will be slides from his August 1998 expedition to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands.

Doug Cheeseman is a zoology professor, photographer, environmentalist, and avid birder. He and his wife Gail run Cheesemans' Wildlife Ecology Tours and are long-time friends and supporters of SCVAS. His presentations always pack the house—come early to get a good seat!

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# VIEW FROM THE OFFICE

by Garth Harwood, SCVAS Chapter Manager



THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER always seem to discourage the birds, but I suppose it's still a big step up from the way that, say, Cat Days might affect things . . . and, speaking of those lovable bird-eaters, the National Audubon Board of Directors recently passed a detailed

policy statement on the subject of cats---a policy we like to think our chapter contributed to importantly, thanks to the informative writing on the subject by SCVAS Board member Leda Beth Gray in the June 1997 *Avocet*. That article was distributed and discussed at a meeting of the National Audubon board shortly before the final policy was adopted. (The new NAS position paper and reprints of Leda Beth's article are available at the office; please feel free to request a copy at any time.)

AS NAS RECOVERS ITS FOCUS ON BIRDS, SCVAS has grown closer to its parent organization. While retaining a steadfast sense of autonomy when it comes to setting our own agenda, we are quicker to endorse and support NAS initiatives, and conversely, the chapter has begun to have more of a voice in the national scene. Another recent manifestation of this trend was the appearance of a short article on SCVAS' ongoing work in Burrowing Owl conservation on page 109 of the July-August *Audubon* magazine. We are now sending their "Chapter News" editor a copy of *The Avocet* every month, so you can expect us to appear there from time to time in the future. And why not? We are, after all, one of the largest chapters among the entire network of 518 local Audubon Societies.

WE HEARD FROM SOME OLD FRIENDS this summer. **Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Luick** donated numerous publications to the SCVAS library in early July. Mr. Luick was *Avocet* editor at one time, among other contributions which included the promotion of the *American Avocet* as the chapter mascot. Of their donations, perhaps the most valuable to us was a history of SCVAS, by **Mr. Warren M. Turner**, from its origins in 1925 up to 1962. Many thanks, Mr. and Mrs. Luick, for everything you've done over the years! (By the way, is there anyone out there tempted to pick up where Mr. Turner left off? Between the *Avocet* newsletter and our scattered files, there is a wealth of information available, but it would benefit greatly from the organizing talents of an able historian.)

**VOLUNTEER NEWS:** Most of our office volunteers have had some time off this summer, roaming the globe near and far in search of . . . well, you know. But

all have popped in as often as they can to help out with essentials such as the updating of membership records, a task that takes many hands each month. And then there's the production of the vast quantities of oriole nectar that our seven nests of Bullock's and several more of Hooded Orioles guzzled at the peak of the season. I would like particularly to thank volunteers **Elizabeth Ryono, Tibby Simon, Doug and Ardeth Greenquist, Joyce Taylor** (recently joined by her able and good-natured granddaughter **Amanda Cain**), and Saturday volunteers **Marie Gordon, Colleen Cunningham, and Joyce Chang** for their weekly endeavors throughout the summer.

Other contributors of a different variety include Finance volunteers **Don Price and Dina Scheel**, who regularly donate professional skills of great value to the project of keeping our books clean and up-to-date.

DO YOU KNOW A TEACHER of Santa Clara County kids at the 4th-to-6th-grade level? Perhaps the teacher of your own child or grandchild? We could use your help getting the word out to interested teachers about the first-rate environmental education curriculum designed for these kids by the National Audubon Society. Each subscribing teacher receives 6 ready-to-go curriculum units on different environmental topics such as Songbirds, Wetlands, Animal Communication, Amphibians, or Migration. The topics are backed up by color newspapers for each student, a teacher's resource manual loaded with content-rich activities, and more. If you'd like to get this program into a local classroom (public or private), please contact me at the office for a copy of a free booklet explaining the program and its educational merits. Requests received by Sept. 20 may receive the kit free of charge for the current school year (up to the limit of our funding, that is, so don't delay!)

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THE EDITOR INFORMS ME I have a bit more space to work with, so, despite having indulged myself with the lengthy article on my New England birding experiences this summer, I'll tack on one more item of potential interest here, on a brief trip I took to the Yosemite backcountry on August 1-3 (yes, the heat wave). Birding was scant at the 6,000' elevation north of Hetch Hetchy, but still yielded a few mountain specialties such as Mountain Quail with young, Mountain Bluebird, and Green-tailed Towhee.

But the wildlife highlights of the trip turned out to be reptilian: first, the baby Western Pond Turtle that

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# September 1998 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**

**Tuesday Sept. 8, 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: Summer Birding Experiences.

**\*\*Wednesday Sept. 9, 8:00 AM.** Half day. Ogier Ponds. Leader: Bob Reiling (408)253-7527. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right and go north 2.6 mi. Turn right at road marked by signs for Dole Fruit Plant and Model Airplane Skyport. Follow road for 1/2 mile; park in gravel lot on left. Variety of fresh-water marsh, riparian species, raptors. Lunch optional.

**\*\*Saturday Sept. 12, 8:00 AM.** Half day plus. Moss Landing & vicinity. Leader: Rick Fournier (831)633-0572. Meet at Jetty Rd and Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Dress in layers, bring lunch, water and be prepared for a great trip as Rick birds this area regularly. Highlights: shorebirds, waterfowl, early migrants.

**\*\*Sunday Sept. 13, 9:00 AM. Half day.** Charleston Slough. Leader: Allen Royer (408)288-7768. From Hwy 101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. Ducks, herons, egrets, shorebirds; recommended for beginning birders.

**\*\*Saturday Sept. 19, 9:00 AM.** Full day. Point Reyes. Leader: Peter LaTourrette (650)961-2741. Our annual trip to the west coast's most active vagrant trap, where birds and the weather are always exciting and unpredictable! From Hwy 1 in Marin Co. take Sir Francis Drake Blvd exit west approx. 14 miles and turn left to Drake's Beach; meet in parking area. Bring lunch, liquids, full tank of gas and be prepared for fog, wind, sun and plenty of

challenging birds. We will carpool from Drake's Beach.

**\*\*Sunday Sept. 20, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Coyote Creek Riparian Station. Leader: Alan Thomas (408)265-9286. You've heard a lot about it; now here's your chance to bird it. From Hwy 237 take McCarthy Blvd exit north. Meet near the entrance to the new McCarthy Ranch Shopping Center (Borders Books); be prepared to carpool. Lunch optional, rain cancels.

**\*\*Saturday Sept. 26, 9:00 AM.** Full day. Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands. Leader: Don Schmoldt (510)215-1910. Meet at Vista Pt. parking area at north end of Golden Gate Bridge; carpool to Hawk Hill from there. The first of two outings to view migrating raptors from the west coast's premier hawk lookout. Heavy fog may change itinerary.

**\*\*Sunday Sept. 27, 9:00 AM.** Half day. Palo Alto Baylands Park and Duck Pond. Leader: Dick Stovel (650)856-6105. From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto take Embarcadero Rd east to end, turn left, drive past duck pond and park in lot near Baylands Nature Interpretive Center.

**\*\*Saturday Oct. 3, 9:00 AM.** Full day. Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408)247-5499. Meet at Page Mill Rd/Hwy 280 Park'n'Ride at 8:00 AM for carpooling. Migrating raptors (chance of rare Broad-winged Hawk).

**\*\*Sunday Oct. 4, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Phipps Ranch, Pescadero. Leader: Garth Harwood (408)252-3747. Bird one of the San Mateo coast's best migrant and vagrant traps at the peak of the "vagrant season" with our Chapter Manager. Take Hwy 84 or or 92 west to Hwy 1, then south to Pescadero Rd. Turn left and follow road through town of Pescadero to Phipps Ranch, well-marked at approx. 1 mile east of town on right.

**\*\*Saturday Oct. 10, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Coyote Hills Regional Park. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408)257-3647. Take Hwy 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) east to New-

ark. Exit right at Thornton, then go left over freeway as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre. Turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd into park. Meet at far end of Quarry parking lot on left, 1/4 mile past entrance. Raptors, shorebirds, waterfowl. Park entrance fee.

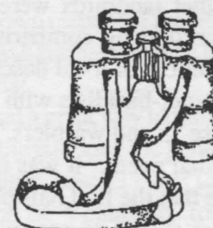
**\*\*Sunday Oct. 11, 8:00 AM.** Half day. Charleston Slough. Leader: Ann Verdi (408)266-5108. From Hwy 101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. Waterfowl, herons, egrets, shorebirds; recommended for beginning birders.

**Tuesday Oct. 13, 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: Canada Goose.

**\*\*Wednesday Oct. 14, 9:00 AM.** Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough. Leaders: Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330 and Harriet Gerson (408)252-6244. Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Highlights: gulls, grebes, terns, ducks shorebirds, raptors. Lunch optional.

## PLAN AHEAD:

Saturday Oct. 17 Monterey Peninsula with Kathy Parker (408) 358-2832  
Sunday Oct. 18 Alum Rock Park with Dave Cook (408) 871-9552  
Saturday Oct. 24 Princeton Harbor with Mark Miller (650) 967-3429  
Sunday Oct. 25 Ogier ponds with Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527



# Adventures in Warblerland, Pt 1: "When life gives you lemons . . ."

by Garth Harwood  
SCVAS Chapter Manager

One week's vacation. Nine July days to go anywhere, do anything. Yeah, sure. In fact, my summer vacation was spoken for well over a year ago, when Kathy's parents planned a family reunion at ancestral family land in New Brunswick, Canada. I was resigned, but not cheerful at the prospect. Who knew that I could scarcely have planned a more successful and satisfying eastern birding itinerary? Ultimately, despite an almost-total lack of control regarding timing and location, my first birding foray into the northeast yielded 40 life birds, including 12 warblers I'd never seen before. (I should point out that for me to be able to say, "I saw 12 new warblers" is rather like saying, "I won the lottery".)

## A good start at the SCVAS library

My excitement emerged slowly as I went through the SCVAS library to see what we had on the area of St. John, near Fundy National Park (thinking, at the time, that I was on nothing more than a salvage mission). I ended up checking out several titles of great value: A Bird-finding Guide to Canada, by Finlay; Stokes' Field Guide to Eastern Birds; and, since we began in Massachusetts, Bird-Finding in New England, by Richard Walton. I also consulted several others but decided not to haul them along.

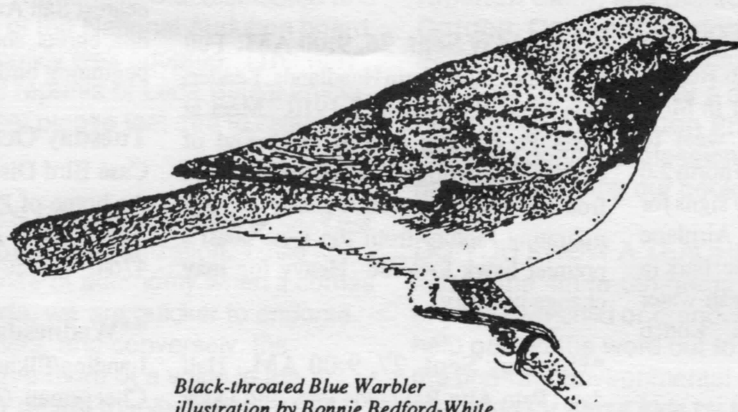
The guidebooks suggested that I was headed for a land of extraordinary seabirds (puffins, razorbill, shearwaters, jaegers...) and that landbirds were hardly worthy of mention by comparison: for example, a number of local descriptions ended their target-bird lists with the dismissive phrase "...and warblers."

In the actual event, it was immediately obvious that the first half of July is not seabird or shorebird season at that

latitude. Aside from Great Black-backed Gull, the coastline yielded nothing much more than a Rusty Blackbird, Chimney Swift, and Grey Catbird.

## Whales and birds off Cape Cod

But just for fun, and to placate the non-birding family, we embarked on a whale-



Black-throated Blue Warbler  
illustration by Bonnie Bedford-White

watching trip out of Barnstable Harbor one morning (\$24 per adult, 4 hours). What a deal! Not only were we able to observe numerous Humpback and Minke Whales at close range, but I was able to spot a few more birds I hadn't expected to see: a lingering second-year Northern Gannet, Laughing Gull, Greater Shearwater, and a lot of Sooty Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm-petrels. I think at one point I was the only one pointed south - at the Greater Shearwater - when everyone else was pointed north at one of the humpbacks, lazily waving its enormous white fluke through the air before smacking it dramatically on the surface.

Once back on land, however, it was obvious that to find warblers, I was going to have to do some work. So, while the family spent a couple more days recovering from jet lag, I dashed off for a whirlwind, 36-hour tour of the eastern hardwood forests around Mt. Monadnock State Park in New Hampshire. I drove up in the evening, ready to rise at first light (4:30 locally in early July) to a whole new world of birdsong.

## First day in the eastern hardwoods

And a whole new world it was. I had done some research, so I was in a position to make some educated guesses, but that's all I had to go on as the light came up and I strove to isolate and interpret each new voice. "A thrush, definitely a thrush...but what thrush? Or, something else that just sounds a lot like a thrush...?" Once or twice there were songs that were so unlike anything else I'd heard before that they stopped me in my tracks or spun me around and sent me off intently in a new direction (Veery, for example, sounded to me like it was whistling through a resonant tube, while the pure, penetrating tones of the White-throated Sparrow, first encountered in deep twilight, conjured up visions of something infinitely more exotic.)

I spent a couple of hours that first morning tramping through the nearly-deserted campground, picking up Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and a few familiar birds (nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers, etc.) Part of the time was spent self-consciously, flat on my back, on the campground road while gazing directly upwards in a vain attempt to ease "warbler neck" - but even this produced no clear views of the warblers. Almost all the action seemed to be in or near the canopy about 80 feet above, and the profusion of broad green leaves made the prospect of spotting the little devils daunting. But I could hear them up there somewhere, a tapestry of interwoven warblings making it clear that persistence would be rewarded.

I meandered most of the day over the lower slopes of the mountain, figuring that the boreal species sometimes found on top might be more readily found in

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## Warblerland

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Canada (a strategy that was at least partly correct). At the outset I was rewarded with a prolonged view of the most resplendent bird I have yet seen in the wild, an adult male Scarlet Tanager, busily hassling a couple of goldfinches.

### The warblers emerge at last

Not long after that, I got my first warbler break. Pursuing something else, I had frozen into position in a low spruce thicket when a nondescript warbler popped up just a few feet away. A large spot of white on each wing provided the only clue to its identity in otherwise drab plumage. That, and its uncertain behavior, which tagged it a fledgling. That much determined, I waited as patiently as I could for the inevitable arrival of an attending adult bird.

When it came, it was an adult male Black-throated Blue Warbler. This was one of my several Most-Wanted birds: not for any logical reason, but simply because I'd admired it in the field guide for so long, without ever having had a chance to see it. For the next 15 minutes I watched the male attend to several fledglings close by, always staying low in contrast to the other warblers I'd heard so far, way up in the canopy (turns out this Earth-hugging tendency is a worthwhile clue to this bird at any time).

That pattern, of adult warblers feeding fledglings, was an unexpected benefit of the timing of this trip. All my guides mentioned that the songbird action was best "until the beginning of July", and here I was in the second week of July, fearful that the show would already be over. In fact, the tail end of the warbler season was well-suited to my bias, especially in Canada, where many a "canopy-loving" species obliged by coming down to forage boldly, with its entire family, in low trailside or roadside alders.

Painstakingly, I continued my search, and as my ear and eye became attuned things began to come a little easier. An Ovenbird finally gave in and ran along the open ground just long enough for a clear ID. A female Blackburnian Warbler flashed at me from the canopy (again no frills - just enough, and not a second more.) And most surprising of all, a bird whose existence I had never imagined,

## A Few New Additions...

In the last *Avocet*, Grant Hoyt devoted a whole column to redesigning and refining the look of the newsletter. I thought it was an excellent idea to add a few more graphics and tighten the masthead. Like all projects, this is a work in progress and Grant and I will work together this fall as we fine-tune our efforts.



Besides the obvious change in the masthead, I've added a few icons. The most noticeable is the birdfeeders in Garth's column. I thought birdfeeders were the best symbols because they greet all of us as we walk up to the Audubon office.



Environmental articles are accented by a feather. I chose a feather symbol because without environmental action, that is all that could be left if we don't get involved.



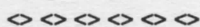
Field trip reports will be marked by the binocular illustration.

Other illustrations will be part of *Avocet* articles and headlines. As I said, it is a work in progress!

-----Bonnie Bedford-White

much less expected to see in New Hampshire: a Louisiana Waterthrush, plain as day, and almost on my feet as I lurked in some dense streamside shrubs. This was the only bird approaching a local "rarity" that I saw anywhere on the trip.

*Next month---The Bay of Fundy*



## OFFICE VIEW

*continued*

shared my campsite along Eleanor Creek upstream of Lake Eleanor (this is our only native California turtle, although in more developed localities one always has to check out the possibility of escaped or released exotics). Second, the rattlesnake that crept under my pillow the first night out. Although I found my bedding reasonably comfortable at the time, my comfort ended abruptly when I got up in the morning and picked up my gear. The snake was exactly where my head had been, coiled and wary. But it never made a move to strike, even though I had already stepped past it by a matter of inches by the time it came to my attention.

Spooky, sure, but I think I'll file the lesson with that of the Striped Skunk I nearly trip over occasionally when I take out the compost after dark. Leave nature be and you'll rarely be sorry---the rest of the animal world (insects excepted) is simply not "out to get us".

## BIRDERS NEEDED FOR PARKS BIRD CHECKLISTS

Santa Clara County's park system is as extensive as it is diverse, with regard to both habitats and bird-life. All of the parks are birded regularly by SCVAS members, many of whom keep detailed records of their observations "just for fun".

What better source of volunteers, then, for a proposed new series of County Parks Bird Checklists? County Parks officials would like to see a complete set of checklists to help visitors get the most out of their outings. While some parks currently have some form of bird list, others have none at all, and current versions may be in need of updating.

Specifically, your skills are needed to bird at least one park intensively, preferably at least once per month throughout one full year. Significant time should be spent in each of a park's special habitats (pond, chaparral, oak woodland, etc.). To assist in the keeping of detailed records of each official visit, SCVAS will supply one dozen copies of our *Birds of Santa Clara County* checklist to each park team. Your own records of previous visits to the park will further enhance the value of the final list.

What a great way to raise awareness of local birds among the general public! To volunteer, contact Chris Crockett, Coordinator of Volunteers for Santa Clara County Parks, at (408)354-6583.

# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Grebes through Herons

**Horned Grebes** lingered into June with a partial-albino at Shoreline Lake through 26 Jun (WGB) and another at Crittenden Marsh on 6 Jun (WCa). A few **Eared Grebes** oversummered locally with a high count of 12 birds at Crittenden Marsh on 6 Jun (WCa). No nesting has been observed this season. The first influx of **American White Pelicans** was a flock of 30 in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 2 Jun (WGB). The first local **Brown Pelicans** were two birds at Lexington Reservoir on 13 Jun (AWa) in a very untypical location. Forty-nine seen on the Alviso salt ponds on 3 Jul (SCR) was the high count for the summer. It has been a good nesting season for the expanding population of **Double-crested Cormorants**. Up to 22 nests were found on the transmission towers in Salt Pond A18 in Alviso through 22 Jul (SCR, MJM), 3 were observed on Salt Pond B2 on 18 May (PJM), 12 were seen on San Felipe Lake in May and June (SCR, WGB), and at least 10 nests were on the salt pond A9/A10 levee in Alviso on 3 Jul (SCR). The latter location, in the midst of a California Gull colony, is quite surprising as this species is not typically a ground nester. An **American Bittern** was seen along Llagas Creek near Gilroy on 25 May (SCR), not far from where a pair nested last year. Up to four pairs of nesting **Snowy Egrets** were found at the Campbell percolation ponds 22 Apr to 16 May (SCR, GO) and one pair was nesting on the island on Vasona Reservoir on 9 May (SCR). Both are new nesting locations for this species. A single adult **Little Blue Heron** was found in the vicinity of New Chicago Marsh and the Arzino Ranch 29 Apr through 30 May (PJM, v.ob.). Four adults were found on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 3 Jul (SCR) and one to three birds were found there through the end of the month (v.ob.). One to two **Cattle Egrets** were found in the vicinity of the Arzino Ranch and New Chicago Marsh during May (m.ob.), but were not reported after that. Surprisingly, five

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adults were seen at the south end of San Felipe Lake on 31 May (SCR) and two were carrying nesting material to trees there for a first nesting record for San Benito County. Joining the list of nesting Ardeids in new locations were two nests of **Black-crowned Night Herons** on the island in Vasona Reservoir on 9 May (SCR).

## Geese through Quail

Surprisingly, two different first-summer **White-fronted Geese** have remained into summer. The bird found last fall at the Palo Alto Duck Pond was found there fairly regularly through June and July (m.ob.) while a second bird that wintered on the Moffett Field GC was seen again on 6 Jun (WCa). Individual **Mute Swans**

*The glory of the summer's nesting season was the successful breeding of Pileated Woodpecker and Great-tailed Grackle*

have been sporadically found in the South Bay over the last few decades. However, seven subadults in flight over Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 4 Jul (NL, SCR) indicates the start of a local nesting population. Will these become a pest species as in the Northeast? There has been a scattering of **Blue-winged Teal** seen this spring and summer. A pair was at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) waterbird pond on 2 May (LCh) and one to two males were seen in this vicinity in June and into early July (v.ob.) In addition, three males were found in Adobe Creek in the Palo Alto FCB on 27 Jun (GL, AV). Although we expect a few oversummering **Green-winged Teal**, a female with three young north of the Newby Island dump in Alameda County on 22 May (SCR) were quite unusual as breeding birds in the South Bay. Always rare, a brood of **Lesser Scaup** was found in New Chicago Marsh on 1 Jul (SCR), two broods were seen at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution and Control Plant

(WPCP) ponds 5 Jul (MJM), one brood was on Salt Pond A18 in Alviso on 24 Jul (SCR), and one brood was on a San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP pond the same day (SCR). The last of winter's **Black Scoters**, an immature male, lingered at Shoreline Lake into July. Reported regularly in May it was last seen on 8 Jul (RWR, FV). Although I suggested in the June column that the reporting of **Ospreys** in April was suggestive of resident birds, the scattering of summer reports contradicts this and the total of five birds noted is typical of recent summers. Although we expect a few wintering **Golden Eagles** on the valley floor, an adult in Alviso on 5 May (MMR) and 14 Jun (MJM) and a sub-adult over Senter Park on 8 Jun (SCR) are less expected. Single adult **Pergrine Falcons** on Salt Pond B2 on 6 Jun (WCa) and along the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 11 Jul (NL) plus one to two juveniles seen over the Palo Alto FCB on 25 Jul (SCR) were the only reports this summer. Single **Mountain Quail** were heard near Table Mountain on 13 May (MiF) and 11 Jun (MMR).

## Shorebirds through Skimmers

Two adult **Pacific Golden-Plovers**, one still in alternate plumage, were found at the Palo Alto FCB on 25 Jul (AME) and seen there through the end of the month (v.ob.). Nineteen **Snowy Plovers** were seen on Salt Pond A8 on 13 May (SCR) with three apparently on nest scrapes. At least one bird was still there on 14 Jun (MJM). The first **Lesser Yellowlegs** of the season were two in the Palo Alto FCB on 27 Jul (GL, AV). A few birds were found there irregularly through July, but the prime location was the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds where birds were found regularly in July (v.ob.) with 12 counted on 19 Jul (NL). An alternate-plumaged **Ruddy Turnstone** was seen on Salt Pond A18 on 24 Jul (SCR). An alternate-plumaged **Sanderling** near the same salt pond on 6 May (SCR) was an unusual spring record. Two adult **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found on 4 Jul (SCR, NL) and single adults were there on 8 Jul (KVV) and 24 Jul (SCR). An adult **Laughing**



## Field Notes *continued*

**Gull** was found in the Palo Alto estuary on 22 Jun (DSt) and is our third county record. The similar looking **Franklin's Gull** is also rare locally, but particularly so in the summer. A single adult was at Charleston Slough on 6 Jun (BMcK) and then another adult was found at the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP ponds on 8 Jun (VT). It soon became apparent that a mixed flock of adults, second-summer, and first-summer birds were at the WPCP ponds and these were seen through 13 Jun (m.ob.). The high count was of eight birds on 9 Jun (RWR, FV, VT, SCR). Considering both the time of year and the fact that all our previous records are of single birds makes these records truly exceptional. A single adult was also seen at the Alviso Marina on 25 Jun (SBT, SCR). Following last April's adult **Little Gull**, a 1st-summer bird was found on Salt Pond A16 in Alviso on 8 May (SCR, SBT, MMR) and was seen through 17 May (v.ob.) for the third county record. An adult **Common Tern**, very rare in the spring, was seen at Alviso on 15 May (SBT *fide* SCR). As expected, **Least Terns** staged in the South Bay starting in early July. Eight were counted on outer Charleston Slough on 2 Jul (SCR) and birds were found here regularly through the month with a peak count of 18 on 25 Jul (SCR). Eleven birds were also seen on the Alviso salt pond on 8 Jul (KVV). April's **Black Tern** appears to have lingered in the vicinity of the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds into May with sightings on 7 May (SCR), 9 May (AJ), and 24 May (NL). Up to seven **Black Skimmers** continued to roost on the island in Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View through May and June (v.ob.). Although a single bird was seen on Salt Pond A16 in Alviso on 24 Jun (SCR) and one returned to the A1 island on 26 Jul (AV), where the remainder of the birds summered or bred is a mystery.

### Swifts through Swallows

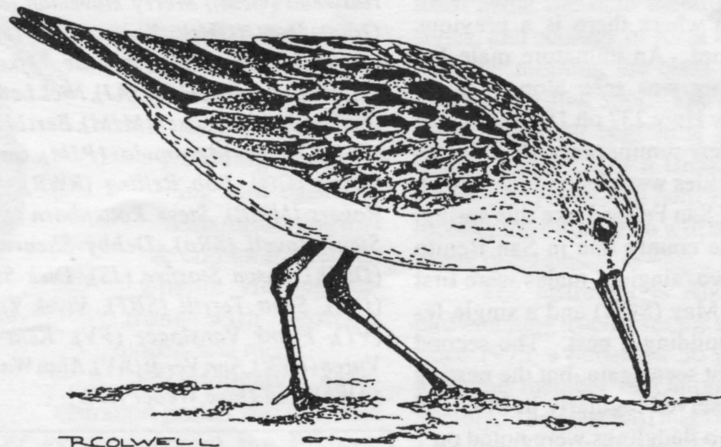
**Vaux's Swifts** nested in a chimney in Los Altos Hills with fledglings observed on 23 Jul (*fide* GHa). Resident birds are rarely seen away from their Los Gatos and Saratoga strongholds. A

male **Costa's Hummingbird** along Coyote Creek at Senter Park on 8 Jun (SCR) was unusual. A **Pileated Woodpecker** was found at a nest hole in a Douglas fir snag on Table Mountain on 10 May (NL) and, independently, on 13 May (MiF). Careful observations indicated regular attendance at the nest and on 6 Jun two begging nestlings were observed (DW). Two to three nestlings were seen here through 14 Jun (v.ob.) and it is believed that these birds fledged shortly after this. This is the second nesting record in the county for this recent invader. Quite rare in the spring, migrating **Willow Flycatchers** were found along Coyote Creek at Senter Park 28 May-12 Jun (SCR, MJM) with a high count of five on 29 May (SCR). A late migrant **Hammond's Flycatcher** was also at Senter Park on 28 May (SCR). Two **Cassin's Kingbirds** were seen along San Felipe Road on 29 May where they attempted to nest last year (RWR, FV) and at least one bird was still there through 14 Jun (VT). Additional birds were seen in Alviso on 4 May (SCR) and at Shoreline Park 14-16 May (WCa). A nest with young **Western Kingbirds** was found on the 'dish' at the Stanford Academic Reserve on 6 Jun (GHt, KHt) and two birds were on a nest at the Palo Alto Municipal GC on 12 Jun (SBT *fide* SCR). There are few nesting records from the northwestern portion of the

county. Two **Purple Martins** on the valley floor in Santa Clara on 14 May (RC) were unusual. Along Summit Ridge, where they've nested in the past, five birds were seen 19-23 May (RWR, FV, NL), but none was seen after that. Spring and summer records of **Bank Swallow** are few so one at the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP ponds on 26 May (NL), one along the Alviso Slough Trail on 23 Jun (*fide* NL), and one at the Mountain View Forebay on 2 Jul (SCR) were all of interest.

### Dippers through Crossbills

An **American Dipper** along Saratoga Creek at Saratoga Springs found on 4 Jul (JH) was probably a local resident. A **Townsend's Solitaire** found below the dam at Stevens Creek Reservoir on 3 May (MH) remained at least through 7 May (v.ob.). This is the latest record we have by about four days. Two **Nashville Warblers** were along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 6 May (SCR) after a major spring fallout following some rainy weather. A vagrant **Palm Warbler** was found singing near Shoreline Lake on 6 Jun (BMcK) and was found again nearby the next day (RLe, PMB). A singing **Ovenbird** off of Charcoal Road in Upper Stevens Creek CP on 7 Jun (SRo, KVV) was our third spring record. Relatively



*Tens of thousands of Western Sandpipers (above) and other "peeps" spend the winter in the South Bay. Can you tell your Westerns from your Least? Find a Semipalmated Sandpiper and make "Field Notes"!*

*Drawing by Rita Colwell*

## Field Notes *continued*

good numbers of **MacGillivray's Warblers** were banded at CCRS in the spring and included a late recapture on 2 Jun (*fide* MMR). Birds that were seen include one at Almaden Lake Park on 5 May (SCR), two along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 6 May (SCR), two at Smith Creek on 9 May (NL), and one along Coyote Creek at Senter Park on 29 May (SCR). At least four **Yellow-breasted Chats** were banded at CCRS in May (AJ) and one was seen along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 6 May (SCR). Last year's plenty of **Black-chinned Sparrows** was followed by this year's drought with only one report of two birds south of Mustang Peak in Henry Coe SP in late May (JG). **Grasshopper Sparrows** showed a similar pattern with the only reports being of two birds along Metcalf Road on 2 Jun (MMR) and three to 6 birds in the Silver Creek Hills 18(29 Jun (SCR). Two vagrant male **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were found for the season with one at a feeder in Mountain View on 25 May (KC) and the other just over the county line near Summit Ridge on 4 Jun (LC). The **Blue Grosbeaks** at Ed Levin CP were seen in May and at least up to 2 Jun (RWR, FV). Most exciting, a female was observed carrying nesting material to a nest on 3 May (MJM) for our second nesting record in the county. Additional birds include a female along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 6 May (SCR) and a male along Llagas Creek southeast of Gilroy on 25 May (SCR) where there is a previous nesting record. An immature male **Indigo Bunting** was seen along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 18 Jul (AJ) for one of our few summer records. **Great-tailed Grackles** were found breeding on the shore of San Felipe Lake this spring, just over the county line in San Benito County. Two 'singing' males were first seen on 25 May (SCR) and a single female was building a nest. The second male was not seen again, but the nesting pair was observed regularly in May and June and two fledglings were noted on 1 Jul (BMcK, DLSh, JS). The last observation was of three fledglings on 21 Jul (DLSh *fide* BMcK). Patient observers frequently saw the male flying into Santa

## Field Trip Reports

### Ano Nuevo Reserve



The August 9 trip to Ano Nuevo State Reserve on the San Mateo coast found 60 species of birds, including a family of **Olive-sided Flycatchers** at the old bridge over New Year's Creek, five **Marbled Murrelets** 100 yards offshore of the mouth of New Year's Creek, a **Western Kingbird** on the beach south of Ano Nuevo point, and a **Black Oystercatcher** and **Wandering Tattler** on the rocks nearby. We spent some time watching young **Western Gulls** harass a **Sea Otter** for its food (all the gulls got for their effort was some empty crab legs),

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Clara County to forage. Interestingly, a 1st-summer male was also found in Alviso north of Hwy 237 on 29 Jun (SCR). Depending upon the bookkeeping these represent the third and fourth county records for this expanding species. A flock of eight **Red Crossbills** at Skyline Ridge OSP on 12 Jul (BMcK), just over the ridge in San Mateo County, suggest breeding in the coastal forests this year.

*Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), Phyllis Browning (PMB), Bill Cabot (WCa), Les Chibana (LCh), Lani Christianson (LC), Rich Cimino (RC), Kitty Collins (KC), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), James Gain (JG), Janet Hanson (JH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Merry Haveman (MH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Karen Hoyt (KHt), Gloria Leblanc (GL), Rosalie Lefkowitz (RLe), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Nick Lethaby (NL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Bert McKee (BMcK), Peter Metropulos (PJM), George Oetzel (GO), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Steve Rovell (SRo), Debby Shearwater (DLSh), Jason Starfire (JS), Dick Stovel (DSt), Scott Terrill (SBT), Vivek Tiwari (VT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Kent Van Vuren (KVV), Ann Verdi (AV), Alan Walther (AWa), and Dave Weber (DW).*

**RARITIES:** Please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, or: bousman@merlin.arc.nasa.gov

and there were many molting male **Elephant Seals** providing windbreaks for the **Turnstones** (both **Black** and **Ruddy**). Bank Swallows were absent for the first time since I've been leading this trip. Masked Booby was also a no-show, but an evening search after the group disbanded turned up a single **Black Swift** over the pond. Thanks to all who braved the wind and sand.

-----Mark Miller

### Charleston Slough



On the SCVAS field trip to Charleston Slough on July 26, we saw eight **Least Terns** in the far reaches of the slough where the trail bends to the west. Also seen in the same area were two male **Canvasbacks** (presumably over-summering). Other birds of interest on this field trip included one **Black Skimmer** on the tern-roosting island on Salt Pond A-1 north of Shoreline Lake, and a **Northern Red Bishop** in the tules along Adobe Creek Slough.

-----Ann Verdi

### Beginner's Birding Class at McClellan Ranch Oct. 10

Calling all beginning birders! On Saturday, October 10th, a 3-hour, single-session Birding Basics class will be taught from 9AM-12 by Sandy Cortright at the SCVAS offices in McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino. Topics presented will cover: bird groups, the process of bird identification, picking out binoculars and field guides, where and when to find the birds and a bit of birding etiquette. Cost: \$20. In addition, there will be a few copies of the book, *Birding Basics* by Sandy Cortright on sale for 1/2 price. Reserve your copy when you register for the class. To register, or for more information, call Garth at the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747. (Note also the more intensive classes detailed on Page 9!)



# Bobbie Handen, Harriet Gerson Spark '98 Birdathon Success

Some volunteers just can't say "No!" SCVAS is fortunate that Bobbie Handen and Harriet Gerson, both of whom devote considerable time and energy to numerous Audubon causes, led the charge in the 1998 Birdathon fundraiser.

Bobbie accepted the position of Birdathon Coordinator and helped organize the teams, including two new ones. Naturally, she also found time to lead her own team, the Wrong Terns, to another fun-filled and lucrative effort. Harriet, Birdathon Coordinator for the past three years, led the Wry Wrentits to its routinely amazing day of birding/fundraising, this time topping the \$3,000 mark! All told, the ten Birdathon teams and their donors contributed over \$6,000 towards SCVAS' conservation and education programs, and to the two special causes to which we dedicated this year's

fundraising effort, namely, the effort to rescue the Salton Sea, and the rebuilding of the boardwalk over the New Chicago Marsh at the SF Bay Refuge. It's accurate to say that without Bobbie and Harriet pumping new energy into the Birdathon over the past several years, we might well have dropped it as a fundraiser and consequently missed out on nearly \$30,000 of donations during that period.

Volunteers for non-profits frequently suffer from burn-out. Bobbie and Harriet are the kind of volunteers who---with their unflagging positive energy, warmth, and passion for Audubon---enable us to resist burn-out and keep "fighting the good fight" for birds and bird habitat in our region. We owe these two a big "Thank you!" for their Birdathon efforts and all the other great work they've donated over the years.

## "A Window on the Flyway"--- Monterey Bay Bird Festival

Monterey Bay and its surrounding landscape offers some of the most diverse and spectacular birding opportunities on the Central Coast. Headquartered at one of California's rarest jewels, Elkhorn Slough, the 1998 Monterey Bay Bird Festival will take place October 3-4. Sponsored by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Department of Fish and Game, the weekend event will offer unique field trips, workshops and festival activities designed to inspire both novice and experienced birders and introduce birding opportunities in the Monterey Bay Area.

Special Tours—Elkhorn Slough by boat and kayak, Big Sur, Carmel River, Watsonville Slough, Moss Landing, Salinas River Wildlife Area, pelagic trips.



Workshops—Bird-banding, Bird Songs and Calls, Photography, Shorebirds, Gulls, Native Plants, Raptors, Food and Feeding of Birds, Study Skins; plus a special keynote address Saturday night featuring Herb Clarke's photo presentation on Northern California Birds.

Festival Activities—live music, exhibits, food, special demonstrations on a variety of topics including identifying bird eggs and nests, dissecting owl & cormorant pellets, wildlife viewing stations with spotting scopes, and more.

For information, a registration packet and schedule of events, contact the Elkhorn Slough Foundation at (831) 728-5939. E-mail inquiries may be sent to [esf@elkhornslough.org](mailto:esf@elkhornslough.org). Website: [www.elkhornslough.org](http://www.elkhornslough.org).

## Back to (Birding) School

### MENLO PARK

Two classes for birders will be offered by Sunbeam Ecology Explorations at Little House, 800 Middle Avenue in Menlo Park. Instructor: Maryann Danielson. Register at the first class meeting.

**BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS**—a short course for beginning and less skilled intermediate birders. Resident birds and migrants that move through our area will be highlighted in this class series. Bird identification techniques will be stressed along with pertinent life history of the birds. Five slide lectures and three field trips. Tuesday mornings, 9-11 AM starting Sept. 15. Fee is \$55.

**FALL BIRD IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS**—for intermediate and more advanced birders. Each workshop will have an evening study meeting followed by a field trip and is designed to simplify the identification of fall plumaged birds. The workshops will focus on: Shorebirds; Confusing fall warblers and other immature-plumaged birds; Raptors; and Waterfowl, especially female ducks and those species with look-alike patterns. The workshop lectures begin on Monday, Aug. 31, 7-9 PM. Fee is \$70 for four workshops plus an additional fee for the last weekend field trip.

### FREMONT

Do you have trouble identifying birds you see in your yard, in parks, or at the shore? The Fremont Adult School has a class for you. In it you will observe and learn about the field identification, life styles, and ecology of local birds. Each Tuesday morning the class will visit a different birding spot. The class is designed for both beginning and experienced birders. It is a friendly class in which everybody will help you find and identify the birds. You will not be afraid to ask questions.

The instructor is Alice Hoch, a birdwatching teacher for the adult school since 1975, a birder for 36 years, and a longtime member of Ohlone Audubon Society. The class will meet on six Tuesdays from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM starting Sept. 15 and ending Oct. 20. Class size is limited, so register early. For information call Fremont Adult School at (510) 791-5841 or Alice at (510) 657-0475.

# Audubon, CNPS Team Up for Victory

by Craig Breon  
SCVAS Environmental Advocate



Chalk up a second legal victory for SCVAS this year. This time, we were joined by the California Native Plant Society in a suit against the City of San Jose for illegally approving a residential development in the Communications Hill area. The land contained a listed endangered species of plant—Santa Clara Valley Dudleya—and the development was planned with little regard for the impact to Canoas Creek.

Before suing, CNPS and Audubon went through the proper political process in attempting to change the development plans. We argued before the City Council that the portion of the property containing the majority of plants should be protected. Further, we argued that the cumulative impacts of stormwater runoff from many developments in the Canoas Creek watershed should be addressed. Currently, the lower reaches of Canoas Creek flood regularly, which may eventually lead to channelization with concrete.

Unfortunately, the San Jose City Council listens little to the comments of environmentalists these days. Pardon the editorializing in the midst of this otherwise factual column, but I can't resist taking a few well-deserved shots at the San Jose Council. Bless Council Members David Pandori and Trixie Johnson

for their voices of sanity in an otherwise hell-bent for pavement council. The others may be good on crime, job generation, or other issues, but these people seem to treat the natural world as an inconvenience. They ignore basic principles of biology and ecology and demonstrate little concern for wildlife, open space, and the effects of poorly planned growth on people's quality of life. Enough said.

We proceeded with the lawsuit. From the beginning, it was clear our case was good. The developer got wind of our intent before we actually filed the suit and quickly offered a settlement. The actual settlement took several weeks to take form. To its credit, the SCVAS Board actually rejected a settlement offer recommended by our attorneys (Peter Uzzi from San Jose and myself) and demanded a better deal—which we got.

To cut to the chase, here are the results. The bad news is the development will go forward as planned, though they will attempt to move the rare plants to an adjacent site. The good news is the developer will permanently protect an equal or better population of Santa Clara Valley Dudleya somewhere in the county. In addition, they will pay for CNPS to sponsor a graduate student to work on serpentine soils and the rare plants and animals that inhabit them and pay for an Audubon intern to look more closely at the San Jose development process. Further, the developer will sponsor studies of the remain-

ing populations of this endangered plant and will pay up to \$100,000 for San Jose to better plan for development on serpentine soils, a soil type that supports several rare species of plants as well as the listed endangered Bay Checkerspot butterfly. Finally, we recovered all costs and attorney fees, thus protecting Audubon's financial resources.

The legal tool is a hefty one. Against the development pressure in San Jose and some other cities, lawsuits are a legitimate and at times necessary tool to bring about change. So far, we have been prudent and successful using this tool. It's a sign of our chapter's maturation.

## Goshawk Uncommon ---But Not Endangered

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced this summer that the Northern Goshawk in the western United States does not qualify for Federally endangered status at this time.

Several wildlife and conservation groups, including the Arizona Audubon Council and Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, had petitioned the federal government to list the goshawk as endangered in 1991. The US F & WS found that the forest-dwelling goshawk, largest of the North American accipiter hawks, is and has always been uncommon throughout its range. Their research indicated that goshawks experience fluctuations in population size, density, and nesting success, presumably in response to natural factors such as prey availability.

The Service noted that management activities such as timber harvest, fire suppression, and grazing have changed forest characteristics throughout much of the West. However, they found no evidence to indicate that goshawk populations are declining, that goshawk habitat in the western U.S. is limiting the population throughout the area, or that a significant curtailment of the species' habitat or range is occurring.

Scientific data for the species review was collected from Federal, State, and Tribal land managers, as well as non-federal owners of forested lands in the West. The methodology and completeness of the study were subjected to expert peer review.

-----US F & WS

## Black Mountain Musings

*continued from Page 1*

tends to avoid the fights for urban open space.

To a degree, these choices are understandable. The valley lands are astronomically valued. Where once a city council might have listened to a reasoned argument for setting aside a portion of a large urban open space, today that same council will likely only hear the developer cry economics. In the City of Santa Clara—where we are working on protecting a piece of the State-owned Agnews site for Burrowing Owls and visual relief—the State has so far maintained that the land is simply too valuable to use as open space. The implications of such an

attitude are horrifying; when do we start to sell off our city parks?

Fighting for the Valley floor is frustrating, involving lots of setbacks even on those projects we put good time into, let alone the many we haven't the resources to work on. However, I can't imagine abandoning these fights. Urban open space is too important for both wildlife and people. We can not resign ourselves to a perpetually paved landscape, even if that is our fate. One poetic line keeps coming to mind: "Rage, rage, against the dying of the light."

Then rejuvenate up on Black Mountain.



## Well-deserved Thanks

There are so many caring people who make a difference for SCVAS. We take too little time to thank them. Here's a short list of recent Audubon friends.

Assembly Members Elaine Alquist, Jim Cunneen, and Mike Honda are all helping us in an effort to preserve a portion of the Agnews site in the city of Santa Clara for Burrowing Owls and other creatures. They should be thanked personally, and you can do so by simply calling them at their local offices (Alquist is 408-296-1616, Cunneen is 408-369-8170, Honda is 408-269-6500) and urging them to continue their good work on this project.

Caitlin Bean, local biologist for the Department of Fish and Game, has gone above and beyond the call of duty to protect Burrowing Owls. We are making significant progress in our efforts to save owl habitat, and Caitlin has been a fundamental part of that.

Tamara Frazier has been an intern for SCVAS over the summer. She has commented on a number of development projects as well as compiling a database on creekside projects in San Jose. Tamara, already a Ph.D. in biology, will be at Stanford law school this fall. Good luck to her in her studies, and we hope she will continue her relationship with Audubon.

Armchair Activist coordinator Cynthia McLaughlin not only makes sure plenty of conservation letters come out from chapter volunteers but has found the time to find a husband. Congrats.

Chris Salander and Jeanne Leavitt—both members of SCVAS' Environmental Action Committee—have been tireless in watching over the City of Santa Clara's new open space preserve and making sure that our campaign to save that land comes to full fruition. By the way, congratulations also to Chris and Jeanne, who met through this Audubon effort and who will be married this month. All our best; I couldn't hope for a better way to meet my true love.



## Wildlife Watching is Big Business

Wildlife watching has flown out of the back yard bird feeder and into the Fortune 500 arena, according to a new report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Americans spent \$29.2 billion to observe, feed, and photograph wildlife in the United States, according to the report, "1996 National and State Economic Impacts of Wildlife Watching". If wildlife watching were a Fortune 500 company in 1996, it would have ranked 23rd.

"Sales of seemingly small items such as binoculars and bird seed are becoming a major force in the Nation's economy as people take a greater interest in watching wildlife," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark. "The total industry output for wildlife watching—the overall economic 'ripple effect' of the \$29.2 billion Americans spent in 1996—is an impressive \$85.4 billion."

For many local communities, the economic potential of their wildlife watching opportunities still may be unrealized. This report shows that nationally and locally, investments in wildlife and wild places are investments in this country's natural resource

legacy and in its economic future.

According to the report, wildlife watching creates more than 1 million jobs and generates \$323 million in state income tax and \$3.8 billion in Federal income tax. Wildlife watchers also increased their spending by 21% since 1991.

The report detailed three types of expenditures:

- ◆ Equipment and related items, such as binoculars, cameras, wild bird food, membership in wildlife organizations, camping equipment, and motor homes, account for 57 % of total spending;

- ◆ Trip-related expenditures like food, lodging, and transportation, constitute 37 % of spending; and

- ◆ Miscellaneous items, such as books, magazines, contributions, and land-leasing, make up the remaining 11 % of wildlife watchers' spending.

Wildlife watchers are identified in the report as people whose principal motivation for spending or traveling is wildlife watching.

-----US Fish & Wildlife Service

## Bolinas Lagoon Gains "Ramsar" Recognition

Bolinas Lagoon has been nominated as a Wetlands of International Importance under the (Ramsar) Convention on Wetlands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced. Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota has also been selected for the special designation.

Together they represent the 16th and 17th such wetland areas in the U.S. out of 907 world-wide sites. Announcing the nominations during International Migratory Bird Week last May, US F&WS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark said, "The continued loss of wetlands throughout the world poses a serious threat to both wildlife and people. When wetlands disappear, essential habitat for waterfowl and other species of animals and plants also disappear. For people, wetland losses lead to declines in water quantity and quality, and increased flood risk."

Bolinas Lagoon, on the south end of California's Point Reyes peninsula, is managed by the Marin County Open Space District. One of that county's most significant natural resources, it is a critical staging ground and stopover for migratory birds. As the first wetland on the Pacific Flyway in the lower 48 states to be nominated, the 1,100-acre site's open water, mudflat, and marsh provide productive and diverse habitat for marine fishes, mammals, and waterbirds.

"This nomination is a tribute to the citizens of Marin County who recognized the value of protecting such an ecological treasure," said Clark. "Because the wetland is so near a major urban and popular tourist area, it is easy for people to visit. They can see for themselves a great example of how wetlands support a diversity of wildlife."

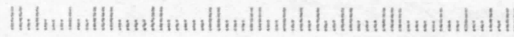
The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, more commonly known as the Ramsar Convention after its place of adoption in Iran in 1971, is the only international agreement dedicated to the worldwide protection of a particular type of ecosystem. Currently 108 nations embrace the treaty's goal to stem the loss of wetlands. Because many wetland habitats span international boundaries and many wetland species are migratory, Ramsar countries not only are dedicated to preserving wetlands within their own borders by supporting wetland management, research, and training programs and by public outreach initiatives, but they also work together to ensure the health of wetlands globally.

-----US Fish & Wildlife Service

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**GENERAL MEETINGS** are held on the third Wednesday of each month except July, August and December and 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.

**RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422**

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