



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

March 1999

*Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society presents*

## 8th Annual WILDLIFE EDUCATION DAY

featuring exhibits of

### California Wildlife and Habitats

Saturday, March 20

10 AM - 2 PM

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

Bird and Nature Walks \* Live Animals \* Poster Contest \* Nature Shop  
\* Refreshments \* Educational Demonstrations & Exhibits \* Scavenger Hunt \*

**Kids and families welcome!!**

**Door prizes! Drawing at 1:00 PM**

**Native Wildlife Poster Contest winners will be announced**

**Invited groups include:** Bay Area Amphibian & Reptile Society, S.F. Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Cupertino Historical Society, Cupertino Parks & Recreation, Wildlife Rescue, Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, Rolling Hills 4-H Club, Hidden Villa Ranch, California Native Plant Society, Camp Unalayee, Marine Science Institute, Youth Science Institute. (Actual participants may vary!)

Parking and Shuttle Service at Monta Vista High School, 1/4 mile east of McClellan Ranch Park on McClellan Road. No parking at McClellan Ranch Park except for visitors with disabilities.

#### General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 17

**“Furtive Birding: Conflict Avoidance on Safari”**

featuring **Dr. Robert Drewes**

Palo Alto Cultural Center

Embarcadero & Newell Rds., Palo Alto

7:30 Hospitality 8:00 Program

Disguised as a local herpetological researcher, Dr. Robert Drewes is in fact a rabid, closet bird freak who gloats over his personal life list and is constantly seeking to increase it! During his 30 years of African research he has frequently led tours (24 to date) in order to get to his study areas, each time praying for a birder or two among his clients. Bob will share some of his experiences in remote areas in Africa, explain the difficulties in collecting frogs and watching birds at the same time, and share some insights into the malevolent dynamic that can occur between birders and non-birders on safari.

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# VIEW FROM THE OFFICE

by Garth Harwood



GOODBYES are never easy. This one is as hard as any I've ever had to say. By the time you read these words, my resignation as SCVAS Chapter Manager will have become effective, and, although the discussion is still in progress as of this writing, I will most likely have moved on.

At this point I am unsure what comes next for me, except that it will involve some other form of working to preserve what's left of the living Earth and to support the efforts of the good people, like yourselves, who are doing such work. This may seem sudden to many chapter members, and it may also seem to be at odds with the self-evident pleasure I have taken in many aspects of my work here at SCVAS. That pleasure has been real, and it will endure in my heart for many years to come. However, I have come to the difficult conclusion that the position of Chapter Manager no longer meets my personal or professional needs.

I sincerely regret any disappointment or inconvenience you may experience as the result of my decision. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you all for most of the past three years, and I look forward to seeing you on many an outing in the future, as I am not about to hang up my binoculars and shelve my Stokes' guide!

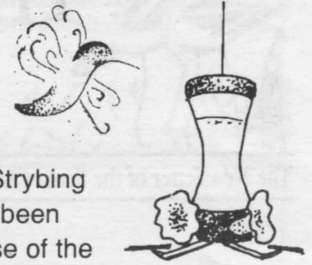
My resignation has presented the chapter leadership with a challenging situation, and their task in moving ahead with plans for program expansion, new staffing, and membership growth will be a daunting one. I urge everyone who is concerned with the health of the Chapter and the ongoing success of its mission to lend your support to that process. Those wishing to contact me in the future can reach me at 5901 Pescadero Road, Pescadero 94060; or at <GarthHar@aol.com>.

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CALIFORNIA QUAIL faded from the scene at McClellan Ranch Park five or six years ago, as they have done from the great majority of suburban areas throughout the Bay Area in recent years. Amazingly, however, this highly vulnerable ground-nesting species (which also happens to be our state bird) is still present in Golden Gate Park...for now. In the February issue of Golden Gate Audubon's newsletter, *The Gull*, it is reported that the last covey of about 40 birds has declined to just 16 over the past year. Although I have heard it said elsewhere that last spring's El Niño weather pattern has hurt quail populations statewide, in

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this case the problem has also been linked to a new feral cat feeding station near Strybing Arboretum. Indeed, cats have been implicated as the primary cause of the disappearance of this species in many well-populated areas.



It may be too late for the Golden Gate Park quail, but we can probably preserve a few neighborhood coveys if concerned birders take special care to limit the risks to them. For example, during the last Palo Alto CBC I encountered a large and healthy-looking covey east of Middlefield Road in Menlo Park near a very large and busy high school campus. Clearly, someone is doing something right! Some ways to help these birds include maintaining low, densely brushy vegetation areas for cover and nesting (blackberry or poison oak thickets are excellent); scattering supplemental food on the ground, especially in winter; avoiding the use of toxic substances such as pesticides in the garden; educating open-minded neighbors about these factors; and above all, keeping cats indoors.

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A FEW MORE WORDS OF THANKS... beginning with **Isabelle Lacey**, who came through with flying colors in response to our appeal for Macintosh-compatible computer goodies. Thanks to Isabelle, we now have another Mac Ilci computer and dot-matrix printer, and we'll soon receive a scanner, too. Another wish-list item has been offered by **Jerry Elmer** of Los Altos, who has offered to donate a spotting scope to SCVAS' educational programs. And we've also had not one, but two highly qualified new volunteers join our Finance Committee. That Committee has been bolstered by the new energy of **Barbara Daldaris** and by the return of former Board member **Rob Colwell**.

And finally, thanks to all of you who've donated books to our library and auction. Members **Steve Rottenborn** and **Phil Hand** have made two of the most impressive recent donations. Indeed, the amount and quality of books in hand for this year's auction are so impressive that this event will most likely be scheduled in conjunction with the Annual Dinner to be held this June. Stay tuned for a book list in an upcoming *Avocet* and for further announcements of where & when the sale will be held!



# March 1999 Calendar

*\*\*Denotes field trip. On all trips carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guide, layered clothing. LO = Lunch optional; HRC = Heavy rain cancels.*

**Wednesday Mar. 3, 7:30 PM.** Bay Area Bird Photographers present Phil Lindsay with a slide show on birds of northern California. Lucy Evans Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

**\*\*Saturday Mar. 6, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Coyote Hills Regional Park. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408) 257-3647. Take Hwy 84/Dumbarton Bridge east towards Newark. Exit right on Thornton, then left over freeway as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre. Turn left on Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd into park. Meet at far end of Quarry parking lot, 1/2 mile past park entrance. Fee required.

**\*\*Sunday Mar. 7, 8:00 AM.** Half day. Almaden Quicksilver Park. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. In San Jose, take Almaden Rd. through town of New Almaden, turn right at park entrance. Early returning migrants in oak woodland/chaparral. Moderately strenuous hiking.

**Tuesday Mar. 9, 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: Carolina Parakeet.

**\*\*Wednesday Mar. 10, 8:30 AM.** Santa Teresa Co. Park. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. Take Hwy 101 south, exit right on Bernal Rd. Continue past golf course and go up hill; go left at park sign and drive to end at big parking lot by fence. Woodland birds at start of migration season. LO; HRC.

**\*\*Saturday Mar. 13, 8:30 AM.** Half day. (Bob Reiling will arrange leader). From Hwy 17 in Los Gatos take Lark Ave exit west. Turn right on Oka Rd, left on Mozart Ave and immediately right on Oka Lane. Meet at gate. HRC.

**\*\*Sunday Mar. 14, 9:00 AM.** Half day. Stanford campus. Leader: Dick Stovel (650)856-6105. From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto take University Ave west through downtown Palo Alto and into Stanford campus (University Ave becomes Palm Drive). Meet at end of Palm Dr at entrance to Main Quad. Local breeding birds should be active. Beginners welcome. HRC.

**\*\*Saturday Mar. 20, 8:00 AM.** Half day. Alum Rock Park. Leader: Al Eisner (650)364-3686. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast toward hills and into park. Turn left at entrance kiosk (at bottom of hill, before bridge); meet at first parking lot, near "Rustic Lands" area. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. Possible Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Canyon Wren. Entrance fee; HRC.

**\*\*Sunday Mar. 21, 8:30 AM.** Western San Francisco. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415)664-0983. From I-280 take 19th Ave into Golden Gate Park; be in left lane and take Crossover Dr. to 25th St to Geary Blvd; left on Geary to Cliff House restaurant on right. Migrants, coastal birds.

**\*\*Wednesday, March 24 8:30 AM** Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University. Leaders: Rita Colwell and other docents. Limit 24 participants by reservation only. \$5 fee per person. Call Rosalie Lefkowitz at (650)494-6358 to reserve space. Meet at Preserve gate (not Whiskey Hill gate). Gate open 8:10 to 8:40 only. From I-280 take Sand Hill Rd. west 2 miles to main gate on left. Moderately strenuous walking, 2-3 miles. LO; HRC.

**\*\*Saturday Mar. 27, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Gilroy Hot Springs Rd. Leader: Bob Reiling (408)253-7527. Limit of 23 participants (6 cars) by reservation only. Meet at intersection of Gilroy Hot Springs Rd. and Canada Rd. From Hwy 101 take Hwy 152 West exit and go east, turn left on New Ave and then right on Roop Rd. Once in the foothills bear left at the fork and continue several miles to Canada Rd. Carpooling mandatory. Highlights: migrating and breeding birds of south S.C. County. HRC.

**\*\*Sunday Mar. 28, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Almaden Quicksilver Co. Park. Leader: Alan Thomas (408)265-9286. In San Jose, take Almaden Expwy south, turn right on Almaden Rd, then right on Mockingbird Hill Lane and meet at parking lot at end of road. Note new meeting place. Moderately strenuous uphill hiking through woodland and chaparral. LO; HRC.

**\*\*Saturday Apr. 3, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Grant Ranch Co. Park. Leader: Alan Thomas (409)265-9286. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd and then 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. Moderate 2-mile walk; LO; HRC.

**\*\*Sunday Apr. 4, 8:00 AM.** Ed Levin Co. Park. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408)257-3647. Note Daylight Savings Time---spring forward or be late for the trip! Take Hwy 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (becomes Calaveras Rd.) to park entrance 2 miles after I-680. Meet in parking lot on right of Calaveras Rd. Migrants, local breeding birds in Milpitas' prime birding spot. Entrance fee, LO.

**Tuesday Apr. 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: American Black Oystercatcher.

**\*\*Wednesday Apr. 14, 8:30 AM.** Half day. Almaden Quicksilver Co. Park. Leader: Shirley Gordon (408)996-9863. In San Jose take Almaden Expwy south to Almaden Rd through town of New Almaden; turn right at park entrance. Spring woodland species should be active. Moderate walking of 3 miles; LO; HRC.

## Ode to a Wilson's Warbler

In spring, there's a warbler we call Willy  
He sings and sings himself silly  
With black cap and bright yellow breast  
When in spring does he ever rest?

---Jim Liskovec

# Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

## Statement of Income & Balance Sheets - Years ended May 31, 1997 and 1998

	<u>5/31/1997</u>	<u>5/31/1998</u>
<b><u>Statement Of Income</u></b>		
TOTAL REVENUE (includes net Nature Shop sales, Investment Income, Memberships, and Program Revenues):	\$122,601	\$203,023
SUPPORT (includes Gifts and Memorials, Birdathon, For the Birds Letter, Sanctuary, Contributions to Restricted Funds, Earthshare of California distributions, and miscellaneous Program Support)	<u>\$42,847</u>	<u>\$56,377</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<u>\$165,448</u>	<u>\$259,400</u>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		
Total Program Expenses	\$63,773	\$118,261
Total Fundraising Expenses	\$2,448	\$3,063
Total General & Administrative Expenses	<u>\$27,743</u>	<u>\$29,849</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$93,963</u>	<u>\$151,173</u>
<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$71,484</u>	<u>\$108,227</u>
Recognition of Unrealized Market Gains on Investments, as of May 31, 1996 (prior years' accumulation) due to change in recording investments from book value to market value:	\$71,383	-----
<b>NET INCOME FOR YEAR</b>	<u>\$142,867</u>	<u>\$108,227</u>
<b><u>Assets, Liabilities, and Surplus</u></b>		
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b> (includes Cash, Deposits, Prepaid Expenses, Accounts Recievable, Fixed Assets, Inventory, and Investments):	<u>\$691,124</u>	<u>\$803,095</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b> (includes Accounts Payable, Salaries and Payroll Taxes Payable, Sales Taxes Payable, and Deferred Income):	\$ 9,198	\$12,942
<b>SURPLUS</b> (includes Funds Designated to meet Long-term Needs, Restricted Funds, and Undesignated Surplus):	\$681,926	\$790,153
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SURPLUS:</b>	<u>\$691,124</u>	<u>\$803,095</u>
<b>STATEMENT OF SURPLUS:</b>		
Surplus, Beginning of Year	\$539,059	\$681,926
Excess of Income over Expenses, Current Year	<u>\$142,867</u>	<u>\$108,227</u>
<b>Surplus, End of Year</b>	<u>\$681,926</u>	<u>\$790,153</u>



## VISIT THE BACK COUNTRY OF HENRY W. COE STATE PARK

For one spectacular weekend this spring, Henry W. Coe State Park will open the gate at Bell Station on Highway 152 east of Gilroy. The annual Coe Backcountry Weekend, held in the little-traveled east side of the 80,000 acre park, is scheduled for April 24 and 25. Hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians have a unique opportunity to see and enjoy an area isolated from the park's Morgan Hill entrance by long distances and rugged terrain.

This area of the park puts on a spring extravaganza of colorful wildflowers in the oak woodland. The trails provide panoramic views of the Diablo Range. Visitors may come for the day, camp overnight, or backpack to one of the seldom-visited areas of the park. They may explore on their own, join a guided

ride or hike, or participate in interpretive activities. Brochures, maps, information, activities, and volunteer assistance will be available.

Entry for the weekend is by reservation only. Written requests for applications (self-addressed stamped business envelopes included) should be addressed to Application Forms, Coe Sector Office, 5750 Obata Way, Suite A, Gilroy, CA 95020. Applications and entry fees, \$10.00 per vehicle for day use, \$20.00 per vehicle for overnight, must be postmarked by TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1999. A random drawing will be held to meet the 330 vehicles per day space limitation.

Join us for an unforgettable experience. The backcountry of Henry W. Coe State Park on a spring weekend is not to be missed.

### Financial Report

As a service to our membership, the SCVAS Board of Directors would like to present a summary of our organization's financial position as of the conclusion of the recent fiscal year. (See opposite page.)

Total expenses were up, due principally to litigation costs (which were offset by income). Operating expenses were slightly more than last year's and were within budget. The net result was a surplus of \$108,000.

Our balance sheet continues to reflect a strong financial position. This year's growth in both assets and surplus also demonstrates the positive effect of the stock market. Our surplus acts as a form of endowment in that most of it is designated by the Board of Directors to meet long term needs, and the earnings generated from the investment of the surplus are used to pay for current operating expenses.

If you have any questions or wish a copy of the financial report please contact the office.

Douglas McLendon, Treasurer

### Sandy's Bird Class Returns March 27

Calling all beginning birders! On Saturday, March 27th, a 3-hour (9:00 to 12) Birding Basics class will be taught by Sandy Cortright at the SCVAS headquarters at McClellan Ranch Park. Topics presented will include: bird groups, bird identification, picking out binoculars and field guides, where and when to find the birds, and a bit of birding etiquette. Cost is \$20, half of which Sandy will donate to SCVAS. Non-members are always welcome.

A few copies of Sandy's book, *Birding Basics*, will be made available at 1/2 price. Reserve your copy when you register for the class!

Spring is upon us here on the west coast, and there's no better time to get serious about your birding! Many birds are in their brightest plumage of the year during Spring and their interesting courtship displays; territorial behavior, and tending of young can lead to some of the most fulfilling birdwatching of the year.

For more information on this popular class, please call Ms. Cortright at (408) 738-1251.

## Kern Co. Festival--- Birds! Birds! Birds!

The 5th Annual Kern Valley Bioregions' Festival will be held April 23-25 (Fri-Sun), in Kernville and Weldon, Kern County, CA. If you've never visited this area, the birding is phenomenal! The Kern River South Fork, with its lush riparian forest, has been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area (IBA), and the renowned vagrant/migrant oasis Butterbreed Springs is a National IBA. Pre-Festival birding trips start Apr 20-22, at the height of spring migration. The last three Festivals totaled 185, 185, and 195 bird species.

Birding field trips cover desert oases, montane, riparian, pond/marsh, oak/chaparral foothill, grasslands, and Lake Isabella/South Fork Wildlife Area by kayak. Friday there's a Cooperative Big Day (in 1998, four groups had over 100 species... 132 tops!). Children's activities, butterflies, bird banding, astronomy, Native American displays, rafting, workshops, night hikes, geology, botany, and great prizes make this one of the premier spring bird/wildlife festivals.

To receive Festival information contact (800) 350-7393. For latest updates visit the Kern River Preserve web site: <<http://frontpage.lightspeed.net/KRP>><http://frontpage.lightspeed.net/KRP/>.

### Environmental Forum on Migratory Birds

On March 16 the Peninsula Conservation Center will host a bird walk out at Charleston Slough followed by a discussion of migratory birds. Speakers include Scott Terrill from H.T. Harvey on the genetics of long-distance migration, Janet Hanson or another representative of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory on local baylands migratory birds, and perhaps our own Advocate Craig Breon on laws and treaties protecting these species.

Meet at 5:45 at the PCC, 3921 East Bayshore Road in Palo Alto for the birding, or at the PCC at 7 for the talk and slide show.

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# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Loons through Waterfowl

**Common Loons** have continued to use Calero Reservoir in January with one to two birds reported (AV, JMa, AME). A single bird was seen on Almaden Lake 1-8 Jan (AV, v.ob.). The **Red-necked Grebe** found last month on Almaden Lake has been seen regularly there through January (m.ob.). Another bird was seen at the mouth of the Palo Alto estuary on 2 Jan (SCR). A few **American Bitterns** were seen in January, all from areas where they were found earlier in the winter. One was at the Campbell/Oka percolation ponds on 9 Jan (NL), one next to the Santa Clara Valley Water District pond on 31 Jan (AV), and another at the Mountain View Forebay on 31 Jan as well (MJM).

An adult **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen with the foraging Canadas in a fallow field at Bailey and Santa Teresa on 15 Jan (MMR), a spot where one was found in December. The immature **Snow Goose** found in the same goose flock near Bailey and Santa Teresa in December was also seen 3-19 Jan (WGB, MMR, JMa). A flock of two adults and three immatures were seen over Alviso on 2 Jan (LS *fide* SCR). Then, another immature showed up at Almaden Lake on 27 Jan (JMa) and remained through the end of the month (v.ob.). The **Ross's Goose** found on the San Jose CBC was seen again at the Arzino Ranch on 1 Jan (SCR). In December, three birds had been in the flock at Bailey and Santa Teresa and these numbers increased in January with 3-8 birds found there 3-19 Jan (WGB, MMR, JMa). A single bird was seen in the seasonal pond near Grant Lake in Hall's Valley on 6 Jan (GJE). Most unusual, a flock of 16 birds landed in a

field along Bloomfield Road in the south county on 16 Jan (DLSH)---the largest group we've ever had in the county. On 20 Jan another Ross's appeared, this time on Almaden Lake (JMa) where it has remained. Finally, to complete this unusual January for this species a bird was found on the waterbird pond on Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 30 Jan (NL). Two **Tundra Swans** were seen at the Ogier Avenue ponds in Morgan Hill on 29 Jan (TR). The 54 **Wood Ducks** counted on Almaden Reservoir on 31 Jan (AV) were the largest concentration noted in January. Three male **Eurasian Wigeon**

*Amazingly, two Eastern warblers showed up in January, a Magnolia and a Black-throated Blue*

were seen on Salt Pond A3W, west of the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) ponds, on 6 Jan and another male was on the WPCP ponds the same day (SCR). Three male and a female **Blue-winged Teal** were in their usual winter haunts in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 1 Jan (MJM). It is not unusual to find several hundred Ring-necked Ducks in some winters at locations like the Ogier Avenue ponds or on the larger reservoirs, but the estimate of over 800 ring-necks on Coyote Reservoir on 28 Jan (TR) is by far the largest number recorded in the county. Two female **Tufted Ducks** on the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 6 Jan (SCR) is the only report of this rare wintering duck. A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was seen on Calero Reservoir on 4 Jan (JMa) and is less expected at this inland location. There were none reported from Shoreline Lake for the first January in a decade. Five to 10

**Hooded Mergansers** were on the Campbell and Oka percolation ponds 1-9 Jan (AV, KPa, NL). A pair on Almaden Lake on 31 Jan (AV) were less expected. A **Red-breasted Merganser** inland on Almaden Lake on 30 Jan (MMi) was unusual away from the bay at Alviso.

## Raptors through Skimmers

**Ospreys** were well reported this month from the Almaden Valley and south. A female was along Coyote Creek near Hellyer CP on 13 Jan (MJM). Single birds were seen at Calero Reservoir on 16 Jan (JMa, JL) and 31 Jan (AV). As happened last month, a **Bald Eagle** was seen to steal a fish from the Calero bird on the 16th. Another Osprey was along the Guadalupe River at the SCVWD pond on 22 Jan (JMa, JL) and a male was at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 30 Jan (MJM). The fish-stealing adult

Bald Eagle was seen regularly at Calero Reservoir throughout January (m.ob.) and on 22 Jan was replaced by an immature bird (JMa, JL). Possibly the same immature was seen the same day nearby over Bailey and Santa Teresa (MJM). Two adults and an immature were again seen on Coyote Reservoir on 21 Jan (JG, EGC) and possibly the same group was at the north end of Anderson Reservoir on 28 Jan (TR). The wintering "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk** was seen again at Guadalupe River at Trimble on 1 Jan (MMcL *fide* MMR) and on 23 Jan (LCh *et al.*). A **Ferruginous Hawk** was seen near San Felipe Lake on 13 Jan (TGr). An adult was in the fields near Bailey and Santa Teresa on 15 Jan (MMR) and another bird was found nearby at Metcalf and Hwy 101 on 16 Jan (JH). Two **Black Rails** were at the Palo Alto Baylands on 1 Jan (MJM, KPa) and a single bird was seen on 29 Jan (JAC) on the next



## Field Notes *continued*

high tide. A single **Snowy Plover** on Salt Pond A8 in Alviso on 6 Jan (SCR) was one of our few January records. Another January shorebird rarity was a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the Arzino Ranch on 1 Jan (SCR). Most surprising, however, were four **Red Phalarope** on Salt Pond A18 in Alviso on 1 Jan (SCR)---this is our first January record for this species. A "Kumlien's" **Iceland Gull** was seen north of the Alviso Marina on 1 Jan (SCR). No records of this species have yet been accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. The immature **Lesser Black-backed Gull** has been seen irregularly on Lake Cunningham on 1 Jan (MMcL *fide* MMR), 3 Jan (JY), 16 Jan (MJM), and 30 Jan (MMi), but there have been no reports of the adult bird in the Alviso area. A 2nd-winter **Glaucous Gull** was seen at Lake Cunningham on 1 Jan (MMcL *fide* MMR) and a 1st-winter bird was on the Salt Pond A13 levee at Alviso on 30 Jan (MJM, SCR). The **Black Skimmer** flock wintering on Charleston Slough has dropped to six to seven birds in January (MJM, JMa).

### Flycatchers through Orioles

Our **Eastern Phoebe** wintering at Shady Oaks Park in San Jose was seen off and on during January (v.ob.). The **Cassin's Kingbird** that is apparently wintering along San Felipe Road just north of Pacheco Creek was seen again on 3 Jan (WGB). Almost abundant in December, our records of wintering **Tree Swallows** tapered to a single bird along Coyote Creek on 4 Jan (SBT *fide* SCR). Although the fall influx of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** away from the Santa Cruz Mountains was suggestive of a strong invasion year, numbers have tapered drastically through the winter. A single bird was at Ed Levin CP on 2-4 Jan (MJM, JAC) and one was in Los

Gatos on 12 Jan (GL). The story was much the same for **Golden-crowned Kinglets** with a "high" count of two at Almaden Lake on 8 Jan (SCR). Our only report of **Phainopepla** this month was of a single male at San Antone Junction on 6 Jan (GJE), a typical location.

January's top story was of two wintering Eastern vagrants! A tailless **Magnolia Warbler** was found on Alamitos Creek not far below Graystone Lane on 8 Jan (JMa) and was seen, sometimes, through 16 Jan (m.ob.) at which point new tail feathers were growing in (MJM). This is only the third record in the county for this Eastern bird. Possibly topping that discovery was the male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** that showed up at a feeder in a Saratoga yard on 4 Jan (TB). A second record for the county, this cooperative bird regularly visited this site through January, much to the delight of local birders who enjoyed their first views of this Eastern warbler and the hospitality of the Burneys'. Single **Swamp Sparrows** were found on the first day of the year, one on Berryessa Creek in Milpitas (NL) and one at the waterbird pond on Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 (SCR). The **White-throated Sparrow** found last month near the Mausoleum at Stanford was seen again on 5 Jan (JMe), 13 Jan (MMR), and 23 Jan (TGr). Single birds have been seen regularly at two different feeders in Los Gatos during the month (GL, JD), while another bird appeared at a Saratoga feeder on 18 Jan (TB). Just north of the county line in Menlo Park, an immature male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** appeared at a feeder on 2 Jan (JA). A female **Hooded Oriole**, apparently wintering locally, was seen again on 3 Jan at a Santa Clara feeder (GM *fide* GH).

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

## Shady Oaks Phoebe Comes Through on Cue

The SCVAS field trip to Shady Oaks Park and Coyote Creek on Feb. 10 featured an Eastern Phoebe, well seen by all participants. Emilie Curtis found the bird, a winter visitor to this location for several consecutive years, perched in the northeastern-most tree in the orchard, closest to the creek, providing life looks for three members of the group. An abundance of Red-shouldered Hawks perched for easy viewing and interacting with a Red-tailed Hawk, as well as a bright warm sun, helped make this trip a success.

Other notable birds included a Lincoln's Sparrow, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Nuttall's and Downy Woodpeckers, and three Golden Eagles. At the end of the trip we went upstream from the parking area where the best birds were Wood Ducks, and where we also found out that the first dam had either been removed or destroyed. The level controls and the fish ladder were still there. One birder thought the dam had been removed because it prevented or inhibited upstream migration of fish. What effect, if any, will the lower water level in this part of the creek have on breeding bird species?

---Bob Reiling

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*Observers: Joan Armer (JA), Bill Bousman (WGB), Trudi Burney (TB), Les Chibana (LCh), Jack Cole (JAC), Emelie Curtis (EGC), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Graham Etherington (GJE), Jane Glass (JG), Tom Grey (TGr), Garth Harwood (GH), Jan Hintermeister (JH), Jolene Lange (JL), Gloria Leblanc (GL), Nick Lethaby (NL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), John Mariani (JMa), Mike McLaughlin (MMcL), Georgeann Meadows (GM), John Meyer (JMe), Mark Miller (MMi), Kathy Parker (KPa), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Tom Ryan (TR), Debbie Shearwater (DLSh), Larry Spear (LS), Scott Terrill (SBT), Ann Verdi (AV), and Jim Yurchenco (JY).*

# 1998 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Species	SJ	PA	MH	Species	SJ	PA	MH
	12/20/98	12/21/98	12/29/98		12/20/98	12/21/98	12/29/98
Common Loon	-	2	-	Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	1	-	-
Pied-billed Grebe	158	253	52	Ferruginous Hawk	2	1	2
Horned Grebe	10	15	-	Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-
Eared Grebe	2964	987	-	<i>Buteo</i> , sp	3	1	-
W. Grebe	49	28	-	Golden Eagle (a)	4	3	5
Clark's Grebe	7	15	-	Golden Eagle (i)	1	-	1
<i>Aechmophorus</i> , sp	5	8	-	Golden Eagle (u)	1	-	1
Am. White Pelican	9	11	-	Am. Kestrel	116	37	8
Brown Pelican	4	14	-	Merlin	10	6	1
Double-crested Cormorant	180	160	1	Peregrine Falcon	6	2	-
American Bittern	-	CW	-	Prairie Falcon	CW	1	2
Great Blue Heron	33	18	6	falcon, sp	2	-	-
Great Egret	102	39	1	Ring-necked Pheasant	12	8	-
Snowy Egret	64	71	-	Wild Turkey	18	15	-
Green Heron	5	CW	-	California Quail	148	257	513
Black-crowned Night-Heron	253	44	-	Clapper Rail	-	9	-
Greater White-fronted Goose	-	1	-	Virginia Rail	16	5	-
Snow Goose	4	1	-	Sora	19	8	-
Brant	-	CW	-	Common Moorhen	2	2	-
Ross's Goose	1	-	-	Am. Coot	4040	7833	1408
Canada Goose	498	303	-	Black-bellied Plover	101	809	-
Wood Duck	8	1	1	Snowy Plover	-	-	-
Green-winged Teal (Eur)	-	1	-	Semipalmated Plover	13	560	-
Green-winged Teal (Amer)	403	440	2	Killdeer	356	367	25
Mallard	1171	1104	65	Black-necked Stilt	757	685	3
N. Pintail	59	209	-	Am. Avocet	1235	2588	-
Blue-winged Teal	2	5	-	Greater Yellowlegs	11	30	8
Cinnamon Teal	174	30	-	Lesser Yellowlegs	6	1	-
N. Shoveler	2433	4848	-	yellowlegs, sp	-	-	-
Gadwall	242	1374	133	Willet	101	3289	-
Eur. Wigeon	-	CW	-	Spotted Sandpiper	4	1	-
Am. Wigeon	172	1216	119	Whimbrel	1	2	-
Canvasback	106	3338	-	Long-billed Curlew	73	87	-
Redhead	1	3	-	Marbled Godwit	25	4183	-
Ring-necked Duck	213	136	107	Ruddy Turnstone	-	1	-
Tufted Duck	-	1	-	Red Knot	1	14	-
Greater Scaup	28	197	-	Sanderling	19	2	-
Lesser Scaup	22	279	-	W. Sandpiper	2370	6946	-
scaup, sp	50	2699	-	Least Sandpiper	266	369	-
Surf Scoter	-	58	-	Dunlin	278	2509	-
Common Goldeneye	10	123	-	<i>Calidrid</i> sp	1461	2140	-
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	2	-	Short-billed Dowitcher	102	160	-
Barrow's X Common Goldeneye	-	CW	-	Long-billed Dowitcher	357	40	-
Bufflehead	106	664	113	dowitcher, sp	167	1380	-
Hooded Merganser	2	29	1	Common Snipe	31	3	14
Common Merganser	62	31	13	phalarope, sp	-	-	-
Red-breasted Merganser	10	40	-	Bonaparte's Gull	414	249	-
Ruddy Duck	1339	6226	56	Mew Gull	1578	253	-
duck, sp	50	405	-	Ring-billed Gull	1655	461	-
Turkey Vulture	197	51	8	California Gull	5993	580	-
Osprey	-	-	-	Herring Gull	26,167	137	-
White-tailed Kite	16	27	-	Thayer's Gull	63	3	-
Bald Eagle (a)	-	-	1	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	-	-
Bald Eagle (i)	1	-	-	Western Gull	224	259	-
N. Harrier	47	29	2	Glaucous-winged Gull	154	203	-
Sharp-shinned Hawk	17	6	8	Glaucous Gull	2	-	-
Cooper's Hawk	9	13	4	gull, sp	12,939	984	-
<i>Accipiter</i> , sp	-	2	1	Forster's Tern	6	35	-
Red-shouldered Hawk	26	28	4	Black Skimmer	-	12	-
Red-tailed Hawk	181	102	28	Rock Dove	1734	1130	-



Species	SJ	PA	MH
	12/20/98	12/21/98	12/29/98
Band-tailed Pigeon	146	41	62
Mourning Dove	872	537	21
Greater Roadrunner*	CW	-	1
Barn Owl	4	CW	1
W. Screech-Owl	6	11	15
Great Horned owl	7	8	20
N. Pygmy-Owl	-	2	10
Burrowing Owl	6	7	-
Long-eared Owl	-	-	1
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	3	1
White-throated Swift	-	-	5
Anna's Hummingbird	203	218	39
Belted Kingfisher	27	10	9
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	12
Acorn Woodpecker	45	99	253
Red-breasted Sapsucker	5	16	9
Nuttall's Woodpecker	66	68	35
Downy Woodpecker	15	14	2
Hairy Woodpecker	2	8	14
N. (Yel-sh) Flicker	7	-	-
N. (Red-sh x Yel-sh) Flicker	3	-	-
N. (Red-sh) Flicker	270	125	51
Northern Flicker	-	-	14
woodpecker, sp	2	-	-
Black Phoebe	220	179	26
Say's Phoebe	27	14	1
Horned Lark	262	4	-
Tree Swallow	25	-	-
Violet-green Swallow	-	-	-
Barn Swallow	CW	-	-
swallow, sp	-	1	-
Steller's Jay	52	170	62
W. Scrub Jay	388	519	429
Yellow-billed Magpie	223	-	98
Am. Crow	539	40	45
Com. Raven	40	77	26
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	246	443	3
Oak Titmouse	82	133	175
Bushtit	706	1014	28
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	6	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	32	21	69
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	8	-
Brown Creeper	4	15	2
Rock Wren	3	-	2
Canyon Wren	3	-	2
Benwick's Wren	32	101	69
House Wren	-	-	2
Winter Wren	3	2	2
Marsh Wren	65	19	-
American Dipper	-	-	-
Golden-crowned Kinglet	12	43	13
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	301	238	69
W. Bluebird	257	62	235
Townsend's Solitaire	-	-	1
Hermit Thrush	151	185	26
Am. Robin	1916	1394	495
Varied Thrush	13	55	40
Wrentit	20	53	81
Northern Mockingbird	120	65	1

Species	SJ	PA	MH
	12/20/98	12/21/98	12/29/98
California Thrasher	2	28	24
American Pipit	21	167	-
Cedar Waxwing	371	261	-
Phainopepla	-	-	5
Loggerhead Shrike	37	10	1
Eur. Starling	2635	1326	222
Hutton's Vireo	12	28	2
Orange-crowned Warbler	3	5	-
Yellow Warbler	1	1	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler (form (Myrtle)	662	707	1
(Audubon's)	11	56	1
	259	337	2
Black-throated Gray Warbler	1	-	-
Townsend's Warbler	26	66	-
Hermit Warbler	-	-	1
Palm Warbler	-	-	-
Com. Yellowthroat	44	11	-
Western Tanager	-	CW	-
Spotted Towhee	69	163	105
California Towhee	371	371	87
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	5	-	-
Lark Sparrow	84	-	72
Sage Sparrow	-	-	33
Savannah Sparrow	155	93	27
Fox Sparrow	57	74	87
Song Sparrow	144	87	5
Lincoln's Sparrow	121	6	10
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	1
White-throated Sparrow	2	3	-
Golden-crowned Sparrow	990	1566	294
White-crowned Sparrow	1782	1112	247
sparrow, sp	188	226	4
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	532	1105	305
Dark-eyed (SI-col) Junco	1	CW	-
Dark-eyed Junco (form?)	-	-	92
Red-winged Blackbird	986	1021	81
Tricolored Blackbird	130	96	30
W. Meadowlark	628	730	236
Brewer's Blackbird	903	592	160
Brown-headed Cowbird	22	52	-
blackbird, sp	2205	484	583
Bullock's Oriole	-	-	-
Purple Finch	6	11	54
House Finch	1472	971	31
Pine Siskin	33	29	35
Lesser Goldfinch	637	251	124
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	4	81
Am. Goldfinch	170	50	-
Evening Grosbeak	1	-	-
House Sparrow	207	112	55
Total Species	166	167	107
Total	97,990	82,589	8,394

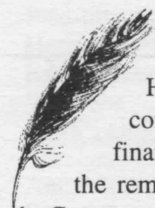
Key:  
sp = species undetermined  
CW = Count Week  
SJ = San Jose: 115 participants, compiled by Ann Verde  
PA = Palo Alto: 81 participants, compiled by Penelope Bowen  
MH = Mount Hamilton: 23 participants, compiled by Don Schmoltd

Chart has been formatted by Bonnie Bedford-White

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# Compatriots on the local enviro scene

by Craig Breon  
*Environmental Advocate*



The odds out there can seem pretty daunting. Hundreds of developers, companies, and others with a financial stake in paving over the remaining wildlife habitat of the County, versus us—the environmentalists. Sometimes I marvel at the fact that we win at all, but there are formulas for success.

In addition to the dedicated volunteers and staff SCVAS and other organizations have working throughout the County, there is a small network of hard-core activists—some paid, some not—working closely together, trying to stretch meager resources to cover as many projects as possible. Our work at Audubon is made all the more effective when other organizations support us, and we in turn help out on their most important campaigns. I thought I might introduce some of the actors on this stage and give examples of how we collaborate.

## Sierra Club

The Loma Prieta chapter of the Sierra Club is by far the largest environmental organization in the County, with a membership above 10,000. It is also the broadest organization in the scope of its work, ranging from local land use and transportation issues to activism on Yosemite, the Delta, and national causes. It adds a political dimension that SCVAS lacks because it endorses and actively works for local candidates for election.

Every since coming to Audubon five years ago, I've worked closely with Julia Bott, the Sierra Club's advocate. One or the other of us could regularly be seen at Water District board meetings or in front of a city council, and we often talked on the phone two or three times a week to keep each other informed on issues. When Julia left the Sierra Club last fall, her replacement, Debbie Ruddock, immediately began helping us in Alviso. Debbie is also working with me on the San Francisco airport expansion and its ramifications for the Bay.

## Greenbelt groups

Greenbelt Alliance is a more specialized organization, dealing with urban growth boundaries and protecting the open spaces and agricultural lands on the periphery of our cities. Their longtime advocate Vicky Moore was one of my mentors when I first came to this region, introducing me to politicians and key staff people in various cities. Vicky also recently moved on, to be replaced by Kaitilin Gaffney. Kaitilin and I will be working closely this spring to defeat a proposal by IBM to develop some land in the Almaden Valley that the company had promised nearly twenty years ago would remain permanent open space.

In addition, Kaitilin will be working with the county government to ensure that some of the prime agricultural lands in the southern part of the county don't succumb to suburbanization. I may help those efforts by working to see that agricultural lands near creeks get special attention, allowing us to preserve and enhance riparian habitats as part of the program.

The Committee for Green Foothills, founded by Wallace Stegner and friends almost 40 years ago, focuses on the Peninsula's foothills and often on Stanford's development plans. Camas Hubenthal was their advocate for the last three years, and her work was important in defeating the first golf course/health club/housing project for the Bear Creek Redwoods property in the Los Gatos hills. While I worked hard on that project initially, once we won before the County Board of Supervisors, I moved on while Camas continued to work with local residents towards eventual public purchase of the lands. Those efforts continue, though Camas has moved on to law school.

Camas was replaced last summer by Denice Dade, who has focused CGF on Stanford's long range development plans. Since Denice came to the region with little experience in advocacy, I have been working with her, trying to answer her questions and introduce her to the region, much as Vicky Moore and others did for me five years ago. Denice and her side-

kick, Shasta the wonderdog, have already nudged the county into a more proactive position regarding Stanford's future.

One of the most experienced advocates in the region is Ted Smith from the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition. While the missions of our organizations would seem quite distinct, Ted and I still end up working with each other regularly. We both sit on the Board of the Pollution Prevention Center, where we work to improve water quality in the region's streams and the South Bay. In addition, Ted and I split some of the duties overseeing the sewage treatment plant in San Jose, with Ted focusing on heavy metals and other toxics released by the plant and me on the flow levels from the plant, which disrupt tidal salt marsh habitat.

## Key individuals

Then there are near full-time volunteer advocates like Trish Mulvey and Don Mayall in Palo Alto. Having retired early from the working world, Trish has devoted herself wholly to the health of the South Bay and its tributaries. Trish was another of my most appreciated advisors when I came to Audubon, where she served on the Environmental Action Committee. Don, President of the local chapter of the Native Plant Society, was crucial in our two organizations' successful lawsuit against a development project in San Jose last year. More recently, Don and I have been working on lands in the Diablo Range which harbor excellent habitat for the region's wildlife and rare plants as well.

Space limitations prevent me from mentioning other dedicated local groups and advocates. Suffice it to say that it is really a small group of individuals in the county and the volunteers who work with us that enable us to effectively approach many different projects at once. We can't afford to have all of us working on any one project, so we meet regularly to divide the tasks, publicize our latest efforts, and discuss strategy. Sometimes, as in Alviso, a project is large enough and important enough to bring the efforts of

*continued next page*



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# Green Team learns water-saving ways

by Leda Beth Gray  
(Last of three installments)

This is the final article describing the activities of the Green Team I joined last fall along with other SCVAS Environmental Action Committee members and friends.

Our fourth Green Team meeting was on the subject of water. But before we got into that, we had a follow-up discussion on transportation. My husband and I had checked and corrected our tire pressure and unloaded extra weight out of the trunk of the car in order to improve gas mileage and reduce tire wear. We were also making an extra effort to buy locally grown produce (having been transported less miles) by attending local farmers' markets and looking for signs in the su-

[The goal of participating in a Green Team is to learn to live a more earth-friendly lifestyle, while having fun and saving money. Anyone can join a Green Team, either by putting your own team of about 6 households together or by getting on a list at Bay Area Action and joining others who do the same. Either one or two people from a household can participate. Six meetings are held, about every two weeks or as the team decides to schedule them, each meeting covering a different topic (waste, chemicals, energy, transportation, water and community). Participation costs \$25 per household, which includes a copy of the Green Action Guide, as well as a binder of environmental information specific to your area. Anyone who is interested in Green Teams may call Bay Area Action at (650) 321-1994.]

## Compatriots *cont'd*

many of these organizations to bear. Most of the time, however, one or perhaps two of us will take the lead in an area, and the other will come in with support when asked. Still other times, we work on our own projects, and receive only congratulations or commiseration from the others, depending on the outcome. Inevitably, we grow close as friends and coworkers, and our shared passions for the world around us make the job easier and more enjoyable.

permarket indicating locally grown produce. We didn't attain all our goals, but were making good headway by the meeting. One of our team members had increased the number of times per week that she bicycled, saving on both gas and parking fees.

Craig Breon led our discussion of water conservation, which is, as we all know, a subject near and dear to his heart. He gave a wonderful presentation on local and regional water issues and then asked us about the household water audits that we had done. We talked about the size of our lawns and gardens, and examined our water bills over the year. We then went through the chapter in our books, examining all the possible steps that could be taken to reduce water usage. Craig urged people to consider a number of steps that he has incorporated into his own life, such as:

√ installing a shut-off valve on the shower head so that you can shut the water off while soaping up, then turn it back on and have the same water temperature,

√ installing ultra-low flow toilets or at least installing a water dam in non-low flow toilets,

√ collecting the water that is normally wasted while warming it for a shower, and using it to water plants or flush the toilet, and

√ installing native landscaping, which is beautiful, attracts native birds and wildlife, and requires less water to maintain. Reducing the size of grass lawns, or eliminating them altogether, is one step that all

## Burrowing Owl activist leaving South Bay

A big thanks and a fond farewell to Janis Buchanon, one of the region's best and most determined Burrowing Owl activists. Janis leaves for greener pastures in Montana. For more than ten years she has studied, chronicled, and spoken for the owls, starting with Mission College and ending up involved with nearly every major campaign in the region. The owls of the South Bay thank her.

of the team members agreed would have a significant impact on water usage.

The water chapter yielded one of the most interesting and animated meetings for our Green Team. Perhaps it was because there are so many easy-to-do measures that can be taken to make a substantial impact on reducing water usage. Or maybe it was just that Craig was very entertaining and knowledgeable. We elected to install faucet aerators and install a displacement device in the toilet at our rental home, to collect shower water, and to wash vegetables in a tub instead of under running water.

The subject of our final Green Team meeting was "community", but first we had our follow-up discussion on water-saving steps. Our meeting was a potluck dinner, so much of our discussion was about the food--wonderful vegetarian lasagna made by our Team coach David Coale, along with other great dishes such as apple crisp and home grown potatoes. We did check off what we had accomplished for the water chapter, and went on to the community chapter. We were given "Reporting Forms" to take home and fill out, recording our progress on the various topics we had covered during our series of meetings. We talked about the many local environmental groups that people could get involved in to participate in environmentally-related projects and activities. David Coale explained how we could become Green Team coaches or get other friends to join Green Teams. We have decided to have a reunion in a few months.

We thoroughly enjoyed our Green Teams experience. Highlights were the company and the discussions, finding that people brought a lot of their own valuable information to the meetings. And I thought our team members gave each other good support in trying new things, making suggestions for solving problems, etc. I highly recommend this to others. Even though you may already know much of what is presented in the Green Team materials, we found that the specific experiences, knowledge and encouragement brought to each meeting by the members was especially valuable.

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