



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

March 2000

## New Count Highlights 1999 CBC Season

by John Mariani

The first annual Calero-Morgan Hill CBC enjoyed dry weather and mostly clear skies, with only occasional winds out of the northwest. The rain that had been predicted earlier in the week failed to materialize, and viewing conditions were optimal on count day.

Not only was the weather on our side, but the number of participants far exceeded all expectations—a total of 78 people, in 23-26 parties, took part in the count. At the end of the day over 40 weary birders crowded into my parent's house for a countdown dinner of salad and pizza. And to think that during the early planning for this event we had dared hope for 20-30 participants! Everyone seemed to have a good time, and our combined efforts tallied 30,195 individuals of 139 species, with 4 additional species recorded during count week.

A little history is in order. This new count circle, centered near Calero Reservoir, partially overlaps a pre-existing but abandoned count circle. The Morgan Hill CBC, centered in the town of Morgan Hill, was only conducted for 3 years, from 1982 to 1984. In a sense the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC is both a new count and a revival of the original Morgan Hill CBC, with its center shifted northward to encompass a wider range of habitats and more publicly accessible land. Considering that during its entire life span the Morgan Hill CBC recorded fewer than a hundred species, our single-year total of 139 appears all the more impressive.

Count highlights included a Bald Eagle and a Mountain Bluebird on Coyote Ridge; another Bald Eagle and a pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes at Calero Reservoir; a Greater White-fronted Goose and a Ross's Goose at IBM's Cottle Road

facility; another Ross's Goose and a Barn Swallow at the Parkway Lakes; a Prairie Falcon in San Felipe Valley; and an American Dipper along Uvas Creek. Unusually high numbers were recorded for American Bittern (6 at the Ogier Ponds) and Osprey (at least 5 at various locations). A total of 36 Western Screech-Owls stands as a testament to the local abundance of this species and the successful efforts of three owling parties. Although apparently declining statewide, our high count of 134 Nuttall's Woodpeckers gave evidence of a healthy local population.

There were some misses. Among the expected species, Ferruginous Hawk, Virginia Rail, and Barn Owl were all AWOL on count day. Drought conditions prevailed during the months prior to the count, and the lack of early winter precipitation caused our local reservoirs to recede. By count day some were reduced to mere puddles. This undoubtedly explains the absence of Common Loon,

*continued on page 5*

**General Membership Meeting  
Wednesday Mar. 15  
"The Sky Islands of Southeast Arizona"  
with Bob Stewart  
Palo Alto Art Center  
Embarcadero & Newell Rds.  
7:30 Hospitality 8:00 Program**

The Sky Islands are mountain islands now isolated from each other after being uplifted from 15 to 5 million years ago in this basin and Hange Province. One can travel from Tucson (2,000') to Mt. Lemmon (9,150') in the Catalina Mountains through 5 life zones "like going from Tucson to Canada" in one hour. Bob Stewart, for 30 years a naturalist in California and author of Common Butterflies of California, who now lives in Patagonia, Arizona one hour southeast of Tucson with his artist partner Kathie Bunnell, will share with you some of the amazing scenery—geology, birds, butterflies, other insects and plants of this region.

*For more on this program and the March Book Auction, see Page 4*

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# VIEW FROM THE OFFICE

by Susan Bell



The feeders at the office have been extremely busy on these cold days. The activities attracted a rather large gray tabby cat that decided to pretend to be napping under the feeders along the wall outside the office. The kitty was shooed away and we decided not to feed the towhees or the Mourning Doves with millet on the ground, fearing for their safety. To our surprise we

saw Juncos at the suet, possible because the millet was missing on the ground.

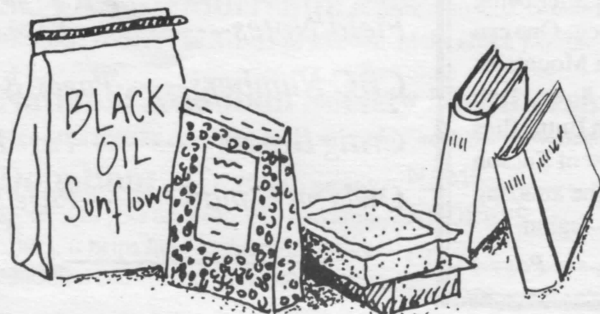
We haven't seen the cat recently and have started to feed again. Hopefully the cat doesn't get spotted by the Barn Owl that seems to have returned. There is evidence of this by the white streaks running down the barn as well as late in the evening, after a Board Meeting, you may hear its raspy, hissing screech.

We have a book in stock at the SCVAS Nature Shop, Bird Watching For Cats which is an entertainment guide for indoor felines. The book could be helpful to members who want to keep their cats inside and away from the temptation of stalking wild birds.

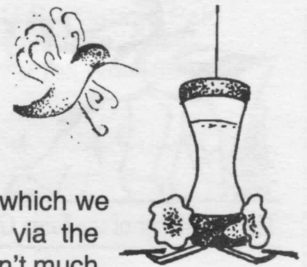
If you should have a chance to come by the Nature Shop we are now selling Songbird Shade Grown Coffee; we have several varieties in drip grind and whole bean form. We currently stock both caffeinated and de-caf.

Other new things at the shop: we have just received a large shipment of seed, ranging from suet, blackoil sunflower, millet, safflower and wild bird mix. We've also recently ordered an assortment of new stationary items which include address books, note cards and bird journals. The bird journals are perfect for recording the spotting of "life birds" and other experiences while birding. The Nature Shop has Bat Houses in stock (which come with instructions), and books which detail the upkeep and observations which are unique to this animal. The Shop also has Beginning Bird Kits for the youngster who has just shown an interest in birds or for a friend you may have just turned on to birding.

If you're looking for something special, don't hesitate to ask the staff to see if we can order it for you. We are located at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino. Store hours are 10:00-5:00 Monday thru Friday, Saturdays 10:00-2:00. Phone: (408) 252-3747.



  
Volunteer Ventures  
by Ulrike Keyssner



Recently an issue came up which we would have liked to publicize via the press. Unfortunately, there wasn't much time and we found that we did not have a well-oiled publicity machine that is easily or quickly organized to send out Press Releases. This clearly places us at a disadvantage during these times. Therefore, we need a Publicity/Media volunteer to help us rectify this situation and facilitate this process in the future. A wonderful volunteer put together a media contact list for us last year but we need to devise a format for Releases and have this list updated. I imagine the time would initially be spent setting up the system, which could be done at our office or at your home. Once the system is in place, periodic maintenance and guidance during media events would help tremendously. Please call me if you have publicity experience and help us communicate our conservation message to a wider audience.

We are still in need of experienced birders to help us identify bird slides in our donated collection. A big **thank you** to those who have helped us with this task previously! We have volunteers anxiously waiting for this process to conclude so that these valuable educational tools can be catalogued and stored in an easily accessible format. This need was highlighted last month when our Environmental Advocate, Craig Breon, spent several hours prior to a talk rummaging through the slides to put together an appropriate collection for his topic! The slides will also be invaluable to educators who can check them out of our Education Resource Center. Once the slides are identified, our volunteers will catalogue and organize them, and this problem will be avoided in the future. We have many people interested in using these engaging visual aids; please help us make this process effortless so that the slides will be utilized more frequently.

Finally, we want to welcome and thank Teresa Ruzzo for responding to our call for help in our Nature Shop and Office on Fridays. She came in like a whirlwind, tidying and reorganizing the place so that when I came in on Monday I was speechless---a rare event! I will also take this opportunity to thank Donna Ducey who comes in on Mondays, Betty Jo Watkins on Tuesdays, and Anne Mortimer on Thursdays---we are acquiring a great team!! (We still need a volunteer for Wednesday---any takers?) Similarly, on Saturday we have a dedicated group of volunteers: Marie Gordon, Colleen Cunningham, Christine Wolfe and Joan Marlowe. However, we could use a few more volunteers to become part of the Saturday group. Like all of us, the Saturday volunteers have busy lives and their weekends often get quite full. Ideally, they



# March 2000 Calendar

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

## **Wednesday Mar. 1, 7:30 PM**

**Bay Area Bird Photographers** welcomes back Dennis Sheridan of Los Osos, CA, for a program featuring Mexico's Sonoran Desert. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

## **\*\*Saturday Mar. 4, 9:00 AM**

**Pescadero Marsh and vicinity.** Half day. Leader: Sue James (650) 348-0315. Meet at first parking lot south of bridge over Pescadero Creek on Hwy 1. Shorebirds, gulls, grebes, and ducks. Bring your spotting scope. **LO, HRC**

## **\*\* Sunday Mar. 5, 8:30 AM**

**Coyote Hills Regional Park.** Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408) 257-3647. Take Hwy 84/Dumbarton Bridge east toward Newark. Exit right on Thornton, then 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 1/2 mile past park entrance. Entrance fee required. **LO**

## **\*\*Wednesday Mar 8, 8:30 AM**

**Alamitos Creek and vicinity.** Half day. Leader: Shirley Gordon (408) 996-9863. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south then left on Camden Ave. Go through 4-way stop; as road bears right look for parking area on left just before Graystone Lane. Easy walking. **LO, HRC**

## **\*\*Saturday Mar. 11, 8:30 AM**

**Alamitos Creek Trail.** Half day. Leader John Mariani (408) 997-2066. Meet in west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south. Park is on east (left) side of Almaden Expwy. Continue just past Coleman Rd. and park; return northbound on Almaden Expwy to park entrance. 3 miles of easy walking. Waterfowl, raptors, variety of riparian birds. **LO, HRC**

## **\*\*Sunday Mar. 12, 9:00 AM**

**Stanford Campus.** Half day. Leader: Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto take University Ave. exit west through downtown and into Stanford campus (University Ave. becomes Palm Dr.). Meet at end of Palm Dr. at entrance to Main Quad. Local breeding birds, early returning migrants should be active. Trip is recommended for beginners; open to all birders. **RC**

## **Tuesday Mar. 14, 9:30 AM**

**Eve Case Bird Discussion Group** will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave, Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Violet-green Swallow.

## **\*\*Saturday Mar. 18, 8:30 AM**

**Gilroy Hot Springs Rd.** Half day. 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. for carpooling. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go left on Leavesley Rd, left on New Ave. then right on Roop Road. Once in foothills bear left at first fork in road and continue several miles to Canada Rd. Highlights: migrating and breeding birds of south SC County. **HRC**

## **\*\*Sunday Mar. 19, 8:30 AM**

**Oka Ponds/Los Gatos Creek Park.** Half day. Leader: John Arnold (650) 948-4250. From Hwy. 17 in Los Gatos take Lark Ave. exit west. Turn right on Oka Rd., left on Mozart Ave. and immediate right on Oka Lane. Meet at gate. **RC**

### **BEGINNERS' BIRD CLASS**

On **Saturday, Mar. 18**, Sandy Cortright will offer a class on birding basics from 9 AM- 12 noon at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino. Cost: \$20. Topics covered will include bird groups, bird identification, selection of binoculars and field guides, where and when to find birds, and birding etiquette. For more information, call the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747.

## **\*\*Wednesday Mar. 22, 8:30 AM**

**Bottom of Windy Hill OSP.** Half day. Leader: Carol Bellew (650) 573-6522. Meet at parking lot at Sausal Pond edge of preserve. From I-280, exit Alpine Rd. in Portola Valley, go south (toward hills) on Alpine about 2.9 miles to Portola Rd. (first stop sign). Turn right on Portola and travel 0.8 mile to parking lot on left just past The Sequoias. **LO, HRC**

## **\*\*Saturday Mar. 25, 8:30 AM**

**Ogier Ponds.** Half day. Leader: Grant Hoyt (650) 969-7892. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right towards the Model Airplane Park where power towers cross Hwy. Follow road for 1/2 mile and park in gravel lot at bend in road. **HRC**

## **\*\*Sunday Mar. 26, 8:00 AM**

**Almaden Quicksilver Co. Park.** Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. In San Jose take Almaden Rd. through town of New Almaden; turn right at park entrance. This will be a trip to Capehorn Pass, a moderately strenuous uphill hike. A member of the CNPS (California Native Plant Society) will help us identify springtime flowers of oak woodland, chaparral, grassy meadow and serpentine habitats. **RC**

## **\*\*Saturday Apr. 1, 7:45 AM**

**Alum Rock Park.** Half day. Leader: Al Eisner (650) 364-3686 or (650) 926-2108. 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 in first parking lot near "Rustic Lands" area. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. Highlights: resident breeding birds (possible Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Canyon Wren), early migrants, lingering winter birds. Be prepared for some muddy areas. Possible entrance fee; **LO, RC**

### **More April trips...**

*continued on page 4*

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## Book Auction Begins March 1

SCVAS is holding another great book auction starting on March 1 and ending at the General Meeting on March 15. One hundred and twenty-five books will be offered, the second half of a collection too large to auction off all at once last year. The first half of this group was auctioned last June, generating some very spirited bidding wars. The books will be on display in the SCVAS office starting March 1, and folks can make bids by

visiting the office and writing their offers on bid sheets inside the books. The March General Meeting will be the last opportunity for bids. Bidding will end at 8:00 PM when the evening's featured speaker begins; after the presentation, bid winners can purchase their books on the spot. SCVAS will contact bid winners who are not present and they may purchase their books at the SCVAS office any time after March 15.

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### CALENDAR

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#### \*\*Sunday Apr. 2, 8:30 AM

**Natural Bridges State Park.** Half day. Leader: Bonnie Bedzin (831) 425-1335. Trip offered by Santa Cruz Bird Club; designed for beginning birders but all skill levels welcome. Bring scopes. Meet at Delaware Ave. entrance to Natural Bridges State Park. From Hwy 17 in Santa Cruz take Hwy 101 north, left on Almar Ave. or Swift St. then right on Delaware Ave. to Natural Bridges Drive. **HRC** (Please note change to Daylight Savings Time---spring forward or be late!)

#### \*\*Wednesday April 5, 8:00 AM

**Rancho San Antonio.** Half day. Leader: Jim Liskovec (650) 969-5542. An extra weekday trip in this most popular preserve. Emphasis will be on bird song. Expect some strenuous walking on hilly trails. From Hwy 280 take the Foothill Expwy-Grant Rd. exit turning south onto Foothill Blvd. Turn right on Cristo Rey Dr. and continue on to large parking area. Meet by restrooms. **LO, RC**

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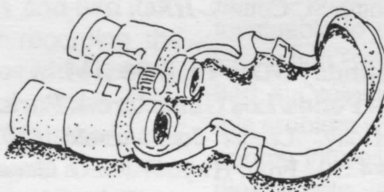
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## Volunteer *continued*

work one Saturday a month from 10 AM to 2 PM, but some months have five Saturdays and public holidays always put a strain on their time. Although they do their best to keep the door open, a few more volunteers would provide us with the cushion to guarantee our Ranch office is open every Saturday. Please call if you can help.

### March Gen. Meeting *cont'd*

Southeast Arizona is probably one of the most bio-diverse areas of the United States. Here the Rocky Mountains meet the Mexican Sierra Occidentale, the Mexican Chihuahuan Desert, and the Mexican/U.S. Sonoran Desert. Desert grasslands adjoin montane habitats of oaks and pines. Most of these mountains have peaks over 9,000'. This great diversity of habitat adjacent to Mexico attracts thousands of birdwatchers and botanists (and now butterflyers and dragonflyers) to visit every year. There are literally two Springs here: one in March-April after winter rains from the north, and a second, bigger Spring starting with storms from the south in late June to September.



### TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Artist, naturalist and SCVAS member Edward Rooks is leading a Trinidad/Tobago tour April 27 - May 12. Edward is a native Trinidadian who will be leading the birding trip for 12 people with local leaders as well. Five spaces are still available for \$3100/ea plus airfare. Edward will be presenting the April 19 General Meeting "Trinidad & Tobago through the eyes and paintbrush of Edward Rooks". For details on Edward's tour this spring, contact Cheesemans' Safaris at (800) 527-5330.

## SCVAS EQUIPMENT WISH LIST!

The list below appeared in last month's *Avocet*; however, in case you missed it, here it is again! **Thank you to Don Ganton and Nancy Teater** for your generous donations of laser printers. We now have a grand total of three in the office! Yeehah!

Our office runs almost entirely on donated furniture and equipment. We would appreciate any of the following items in good working order. As a non-profit organization we can provide you with a Donation Receipt for tax reimbursement. If needed, we will arrange for delivery to our Cupertino Office. Thanks!

Better than Powerbook 180  
Bookshelves (6 feet tall)  
56K Modem  
Office Chairs (On Rollers)  
Power PC (Mac)  
Power Strips (3 prong outlet)  
VCR (VHS)

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## SJ BIRD CLASS

Metropolitan Adult Education in San Jose is offering another beginning birding class taught by John Mariani this spring. Class will meet on Thursday evenings from Mar. 30 through May 11, and will also feature at least 4 weekend field trips. Subjects include optical equipment, field guides, local wildlife habitats, basic bird identification, difficult species groups, bird-finding, observation techniques, and owling. The fee is \$59 plus \$3 for materials. For information and registration call MetroED at (408) 723-6553.

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## "AUDUBON ADVENTURES" KITS AVAILABLE

Two *Audubon Adventures 2000* box kits are available in the SCVAS library for a one-month checkout by members. Of particular interest to home schoolers, a kit includes a teacher's manual, 30-minute "Eagle Adventures" video, and newspapers written at a fifth-grade level. *Audubon Adventures* is designed to help students achieve science and environmental literacy.

---Marti Oetzel, Librarian



# 1999 Santa Clara County CBC Reports

## *San Jose* *Dec. 19*

Unusually warm, drought-like conditions prevailed for the San Jose Christmas Bird Count on Dec 19, 1999 as a large high-pressure system hovered over much of California, with dry winds blowing in from the northeast. The high temperature for the day was 70 degrees, matching the previous record in 1950, and the dry windy conditions affected bird sightings throughout the count circle, especially in the afternoon when winds of up to 30 mph were reported from the eastern hills. As one counter put it: "Too windy for birds and birders!"

As a result, overall bird numbers were down, especially for smaller passerines. Sightings in the Alviso salt ponds were also down as Mike Rogers noted that the

## *Calero-Morgan Hill*

### *Jan. 2* *continued from page 1*

and probably also resulted in lower counts of waterfowl and other wetland birds. Quality marsh habitat is very limited within the count circle, as evidenced by the low number of rails—only 2 Soras were detected on count day.

Sadly, no Burrowing Owls could be found in the Coyote Valley. Only a few years ago a population of as many as 25 was located within the present circle; it now appears that the species may be locally extirpated. The Coyote Valley is under continuing development pressure, and we are sure to lose more valley floor habitat in the years to come. Future counts will help document the resulting changes in our bird populations, and may aid in conservation efforts.

As we learn more about bird distribution within the new count circle, gain access to more of its backcountry, and our birding community continues to grow, it is likely that area coverage and species totals on this count will increase. We are already looking forward to Calero-Morgan Hill 2001!

Thanks again to all those who took part, and we hope to see you next year.

---John Mariani

ponds were full, with very little roosting areas for shorebirds. Steve Rottenborn noted that the overall gull count was down from last year.

Of greater long-term impact than the weather on a particular Count day is continuing development in the northern portion of our circle; indeed, the San Jose CBC might well be called Silicon Valley CBC, as our count circle lies in the heart of burgeoning high-tech development. Throughout the area densely-packed housing communities, shopping centers and strip malls have overtaken the few former farmlands and patches of open space. Our Burrowing Owl population has been especially affected and this year only six were sighted. All of this development makes our creeks flowing toward the Bay even more important as wild birds seek viable habitat and sanctuary along these linear corridors.

Rarest bird sightings this year were of waterbirds, with Eurasian Wigeon, Ruff, Lesser Yellowlegs, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Glaucous Gull found in the Alviso wetlands, while at Lake Cunningham counters noted Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, and the Lesser Black-backed Gull returning for a fourth winter. With small perching bird numbers down, our rarer passerines were few and far between with only Black-throated Gray Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow noted.

Finally, a note on raptors. No Ferruginous Hawks were sighted this year; normally one or two are found near the San Jose airport and other open spaces. Whether this is just a fluke or rather a sign of deteriorating habitat remains to be seen. Eight Peregrine Falcons were seen on the Count, indicating an increase of this species in our area---some good news for a change.

As always, I want to thank our participants for their efforts this year. Those of us who count on the valley floor can find it particularly disheartening as we see more and more habitat disappearing; however, we know that it's important to continue documenting our sightings even though it means counting more European Starlings and fewer Burrowing Owls.

---Ann Verdi

## *Mt. Hamilton* *Dec. 22*

The Mount Hamilton Christmas Bird Count was established in 1977. The majority of the Count circle is located east of Mt. Hamilton (James Lick Observatory) in Santa Clara County, and a small portion of western Stanislaus County. Because the majority of the land in the area consists of private property, this CBC is limited to several large ranches, whose owners have very graciously allowed us to enter their properties each year, and the public roads.

The 23rd Mt. Hamilton CBC was held on December 22, 1999. Ninety-four species were observed, including two that were new to the Count: Long-billed Curlew and Orange-crowned Warbler. The 23 CBC's have resulted in the observation of 156 species within the count circle, 51 of which have been recorded every year. Some of the "regulars" include Bald Eagle, Ring-necked Duck, Lewis' Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, and Phainopepla; Golden Eagle and Sage Sparrow have been missed only once. Lawrence's Goldfinch, perhaps the Count's most illustrious species, has been observed 15 times, including each of the last seven counts (1993-1999).

Remarkable birds observed over the years include: Redhead, Barrow's Goldeneye, Northern Goshawk, Long-eared Owl, Red-naped Sapsucker, American Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Cassin's Finch.

Summaries are too brief to mention all birds or other details that may be of interest. Please call me at (510) 547-5108 if you wish more information. I am deeply indebted to all who have taken time from their busy schedules to help make this Count possible.

---Don Schmoltdt



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# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Loons through Waterfowl

The **Red-throated Loons** found in December on Shoreline Lake remained at least through early January with four there through 5 Jan (MMR) and two there at least through 16 Jan (SCR et al.). Two birds were found again on Calero Reservoir on 12 Jan (TRy) as was an immature bird in the Alviso salt ponds on 29 Jan (MMR). A few **American White Pelicans** remain into January, but more birds have been found this year than is usual. Thirty-one were found on Mayfield Slough on 1 Jan (MMR) and 18 birds were on Calero Reservoir on 28 Jan (AME, JMa). Of two birds on Lake Cunningham on 1 Jan, one had a black band on its left leg and inquiries determined that this was a bird banded in a breeding colony at Stillwater NWR in Nevada (*vide* MMR). Five **American Bitterns** were found at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 2 Jan (*vide* JMa) on the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC. One found along Guadalupe Slough north of Alviso on 14 Jan (TRy) was from a typical location.

Single **Greater White-fronted Geese** were found at Lake Cunningham on 1 Jan (SCR) and at the IBM plant on Cottle Road on 2 Jan (HMCD). The four **Snow Geese** found at Lake Cunningham late in December remained there at least until 1 Jan (MMR, SCR). The Lake Cunningham **Ross's Geese** were more consistent. Fifteen were there on 1 Jan (SCR) and four were found there more or less regularly through 23 Jan (v.ob.). Single birds were found on the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC on 2 Jan at Parkway Lakes (MMR) and the pond at the IBM plant on Cottle Road (HMCD). The latter bird was apparently there as well on 11 Jan (HMCD) and another single bird was seen northwest of Hwy 237 and Zanker on 4 Jan (AJ et al.). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was found in the general vicinity of the Palo Alto Flood

Control Basin (FCB) during the month (v.ob.). A pair on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 29 Jan (MMR) was probably the same pair found there in December. The FCB has been the choice spot for **Blue-winged Teal** with two to five birds there at least through 14 Jan (v.ob.). The high count of five males was on 14 Jan (MDo). For a while in early January, it seemed like old times as the number of **Redheads** built in the Palo Alto FCB from one on 1 Jan (MMR) to 24 on 8 Jan (MJM) to 42 on 12 Jan (AME). One or two birds were also found in Charleston Slough over this period (v.ob.). An immature male **Tufted**

*A Tufted Duck and two Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued into January while a Mountain Bluebird and a Green-tailed Towhee were new treats.*

**Duck** was found on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 29 Jan (MMR). Both males and females were found here in December. A pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** was on Calero Reservoir on 2 Jan (JDa *vide* JMa). The female was seen again 20 Jan (JMa) and the male on 21 Jan (KPa, RWR). A male at the Parkway Lakes on 28 Jan (AME) may be the same bird that has been found at Calero. An immature male Barrow's or hybrid has been seen at various times in January at Shoreline Lake and has provided some tricky ID challenges. **Hooded Mergansers** have been found widely in January with counts of 19 at the Oka percolation ponds on 1 Jan (JAC) and 10 at Lake Cunningham on 23 Jan (AV, CH). December's high number of **Red-breasted Mergansers** on the Alviso salt ponds declined in January and 65 were counted there on 29 Jan (MMR). South county reservoirs some-

times host exceptional numbers of **Common Mergansers** but these appear to be irregular events. Over a hundred counted on Uvas Reservoir on 21 Jan (GB) was the best count since the winter of 1994-95, while the 25 on Calero Reservoir on 20 Jan (JMa) was more typical of recent winters. Three birds on Hidden Lake in the middle of Milpitas on 29 Jan (NL) were unusual for an urban location.

## Raptors through Skimmers

The adult **Bald Eagle** 'frequenting' Calero Reservoir was seen again through at least 15 Jan (v.ob.). A second bird was seen along Coyote Ridge on the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC on 2 Jan (*vide* JMa). An eagle was also found at Coyote Reservoir on 13 Jan (KB *vide* TRy). A total of 47 **Red-tailed Hawks** along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237, roosting in the cottonwoods on 18 Jan (SCR, JS) after a day's rain, was most unusual. The adult '**Harlan's**' **Red-tailed Hawk**, wintering along the Guadalupe River near Trimble, was seen fairly regularly in the first half of January (v.ob.). Two **Ferruginous Hawks** were found in January. An immature was seen in the Evergreen area on 20 Jan (SCR) and bird was seen east of the Sierra Road summit on 28 Jan (AME). The high tides passed in January before the heavy rains so the times were good for rails, but not for birders. Nonetheless, one or two **Black Rails** were seen at the Palo Alto Baylands on 21 Jan (GLEB, SEM). A **Sanderling** was seen on the Alviso salt ponds on 6 Jan (KPa), where multiple birds were found in December. A male **Ruff** was found in Alviso on 17 Jan (AJ) for our only January record. The fourth-winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Lake Cunningham was seen repeatedly in the first part of January (m.ob.). The adult in Alviso has been much more difficult to find and was only seen on 28 Jan (AJ) in the San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) drying ponds. A first-winter



## Field Notes *continued*

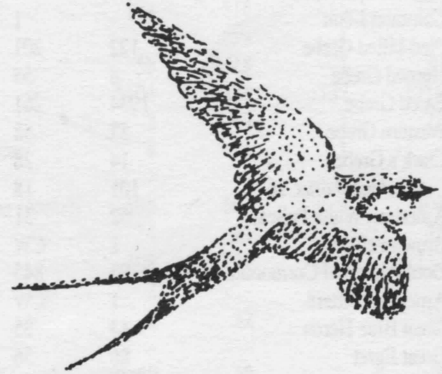
**Glaucous Gull** was just north of the county line in the Fremont Lagoons on 15 Jan (NL). An apparent second-winter bird at Almaden Lake Park on 21 Jan (RWR) was unusually marked and may have had some hybrid characters. Second- and third-winter birds were found at Alviso on 28 Jan (AJ). The **Black Skimmer** flock wintering on Charleston Slough started with 11 birds, but by the end of the month had dropped to eight birds (v.ob.).

### Roadrunners through Crossbills

A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen along Henwood Road in the Santa Teresa Hills on 18 Jan (JMa). There are few records of this species west of the valley in recent decades. One to two **Short-eared Owls** were found again in Palo Alto's Byxbee Park through 10 Jan (v.ob.) with two there on 5 Jan (MMR). A female **Anna's Hummingbird** was found incubating on a nest in Santa Clara on 7 Jan and nestlings were observed on 14 Jan (JH). Although Anna's is our earliest nesting species this is the earliest record I have of hatched young. Four **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in San Antonio Valley on 22 Jan (JH) indicated their continued presence in the valley this winter. A **Pileated Woodpecker** was heard calling off the Old Santa Cruz Hwy on 29 Jan (DLSu); an area where they are now probably very scarce residents. As expected in January, **Tree Swallows** are showing up in scattered locations with four at the Parkway Lakes on 2 Jan (MMR) and two at Lake Cunningham on 15 Jan (AV). Not expected, a **Barn Swallow** was also at the Parkway Lakes on 2 Jan (MMR). We had no winter records of this species until the late 1990s and now it occurs almost annually. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was seen in Redwood Estates on 29 Jan (DLSu) and is probably a local resident. We have had no reports of birds away from nesting areas this winter. A **Canyon Wren** was in Alum Rock Park on 5 Jan (MMR) where they are occasional. An **American Dipper** was found

on Uvas Creek near Croy Creek on 2 Jan (GHt et al.) and another was found on Stevens Creek on 12-13 Jan (JAC, RWR). Both are locations where this rare resident occasionally nests. Reports of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** include one in Mt. Madonna CP on 1 Jan (JMa), three in Uvas CP on 2 Jan (GHt et al.), and 15-20 in Redwood Estates on 29 Jan (DLSu). These are probably all local residents. A male **Mountain Bluebird** near the Kirby Canyon landfill on Coyote Ridge, found during the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC on 2 Jan (MS, BR) was possibly the best find of the count. A male **Phainopepla** was found at Jos. Grant CP on 22 Jan (JH) for our only report this month. A **Yellow Warbler** seen at Shoreline Lake on 6 Jan (MMR) is unusual, and the only one found this winter. Equally rare in winter, a female **Hermit Warbler** was found in Redwood Estates on 29 Jan (DLSu). A **Green-tailed Towhee** was seen along Coyote Creek below Tasman on 28 Jan (AJ) and is our first since the fall of 1998. Adding to December's **Swamp Sparrows** one was found along the Guadalupe River below Trimble on 19 Dec (ADeM *vide* AV) and two immatures were seen along the Guadalupe below Montague on 30 Dec (SCR). The bird wintering at the south end of the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh was seen again on 6-7 Jan (MMR, JAC), and again on 20-21 Jan (v.ob.). Another bird was found along the wastewater outfall at the Palo Alto Baylands on 20 Jan (MMR, AJ). **White-throated Sparrows** have continued to be found at two feeders in Los Gatos (JD, GLeB) and one in San Jose (PB). New reports of feeder birds include one in Palo Alto (RC) and two different feeders in San Jose (BJ, JDa). One found along Coyote Creek below Tasman on 28 Jan (AJ) was

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



*Although not as amazing as the Mountain Bluebird on the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC, a Barn Swallow is still a surprise!  
-Sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White*

the only one found away from the bird seed. An adult male **Bullock's Oriole** was found along Geng Road in Palo Alto on 4 Jan (SCR) for our first record this winter. **Red Crossbills** appear to be more regular in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, but are very sporadic in Santa Clara County. Thus, the six found in Redwood Estates on 29 Jan (DLSu) were a particularly good find.

*Observers: Peg Bernucci (PB), Gerald Bowman (GB), Kim Briones (KB), Richard Carlson (RC), Jack Cole (JAC), Jim Danzenbaker (JDa), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Jan Hintermeister (JH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Caralisa Hughes (CH), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Bob Joslin (BJ), Gloria LeBlanc (GLeB), Nick Lethaby (NL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), John Mariani (JMa), Hugh McDevitt (HMCD), Steve Miller (SEM), Kathy Parker (KPa), Bob Reiling (RWR), Bob Roadcap (BR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jeff Seay (JS), Mary Simpson (MS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Tom Ryan (TRy), and Ann Verdi (AV).*

# 1999 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Species	SJ 12/19/99	PA 12/20/99	MtH 12/22/99	Cal-MH 1/3/00	Species	SJ 12/19/99	PA 12/20/99	MtH 12/22/99	Cal-MH 1/3/00
Red-throated Loon	1	4	-	-	Red-tailed Hawk	179	131	32	112
Common Loon	-	1	-	-	Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	-	-	-	-
Pied-billed Grebe	122	201	31	112	Ferruginous Hawk	-	1	2	-
Horned Grebe	8	55	-	7	Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	-
Eared Grebe	1984	261	-	46	<i>buteo</i> , sp	2	2	1	-
Western Grebe	57	58	-	53	Golden Eagle	6	3	4	13
Clark's Grebe	14	28	-	3	American Kestrel	147	55	11	108
<i>Aechmophorus</i> , sp	101	18	-	-	Merlin	12	8	1	5
American White Pelican	52	31	-	19	Peregrine Falcon	8	9	-	1
Brown Pelican	1	CW	-	-	Prairie Falcon	4	-	-	1
Double-crested Cormorant	193	845	-	359	falcon, sp	1	1	-	-
American Bittern	1	CW	-	6	Ring-necked Pheasant	11	10	-	1
Great Blue Heron	43	35	3	16	Wild Turkey	4	-	-	48
Great Egret	86	56	1	25	California Quail	70	158	512	458
Snowy Egret	65	83	-	27	Clapper Rail	-	3	-	-
Green Heron	2	1	-	2	Virginia Rail	24	3	-	CW
Black-crowned Night-Heron	448	36	-	14	Sora	26	5	-	2
Greater White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	1	Common Moorhen	5	6	-	9
Snow Goose	4	-	-	-	American Coot	4685	6190	1012	1649
Brant	-	-	-	-	Black-bellied Plover	11	302	-	-
Ross's Goose	10	-	-	2	Snowy Plover	2	9	-	-
white goose, sp	1	-	-	-	Semipalmated Plover	-	226	-	-
Canada Goose	605	522	6	603	Killdeer	355	157	16	385
Wood Duck	35	2	5	51	Black-necked Stilt	940	990	-	34
Eurasian Green-winged Teal	-	1	-	-	American Avocet	1451	6597	-	-
American Green-winged Teal	141	756	-	79	Greater Yellowlegs	19	65	23	19
Mallard	1837	1670	125	773	Lesser Yellowlegs	4	10	-	-
Northern Pintail	45	571	-	1	yellowlegs, sp	5	-	-	-
Blue-winged Teal	-	5	-	-	Willet	252	1358	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	143	97	-	16	Spotted Sandpiper	9	-	-	10
Northern Shoveler	7687	8500	-	15	Whimbrel	-	3	-	-
Gadwall	480	995	76	145	Long-billed Curlew	206	210	1	-
Eurasian Wigeon	4	6	-	-	Marbled Godwit	66	1255	-	-
American Wigeon	64	5920	16	109	Ruddy Turnstone	-	1	-	-
Canvasback	225	3650	-	37	Red Knot	-	5	-	-
Redhead	13	24	-	-	Sanderling	24	6	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	149	110	149	267	Western Sandpiper	3231	8075	-	-
Tufted Duck	-	-	-	-	Least Sandpiper	768	6272	-	36
Greater Scaup	5	203	-	3	Dunlin	994	3277	-	-
Lesser Scaup	42	367	-	112	<i>Calidrid</i> spp	320? + 72	2490	-	12
scaup, sp	8	4974	-	-	Ruff	1	-	-	-
Surf Scoter	-	9	-	-	Short-billed Dowitcher	-	184	-	-
Common Goldeneye	65	83	-	72	Long-billed Dowitcher	1557	542	-	CW
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	2	dowitcher, sp	1147	628	-	-
Barrow's X Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	Common Snipe	48	6	3	20
Bufflehead	156	314	102	142	phalarope, sp	-	-	-	-
Hooded Merganser	3	47	2	-	Bonaparte's Gull	1082	912	-	5
Common Merganser	25	21	-	201	Mew Gull	1362	8	-	1
Red-breasted Merganser	114	5	-	-	Ring-billed Gull	1284	710	-	367
Ruddy Duck	2117	9293	61	353	California Gull	2480	916	-	311
Amer Widgeon x Eur Wigeon hybrid	-	-	1	-	Herring Gull	9289	213	-	828
duck, sp	21	300	-	-	Thayer's Gull	92	1	-	26
Turkey Vulture	157	74	7	122	Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	-	-	-
Osprey	1	CW	-	5	Western Gull	125	507	-	-
White-tailed Kite	18	34	-	42	Glaucous-winged Gull	111	141	-	10
Bald Eagle	1	-	2	2	Glaucous Gull	1	-	-	-
N. Harrier	-	36	3	20	gull, sp	8451	1906	-	714
Sharp-shinned Hawk	22	16	9	11	Forster's Tern	11	81	-	-
Cooper's Hawk	11	15	4	13	Black Skimmer	-	9	-	-
<i>Accipiter</i> , sp	5	5	4	-	Rock Dove	2042	1380	-	854
Red-shouldered Hawk	26	23	4	44	Band-tailed Pigeon	48	76	51	20



Species	SJ 12/19/99	PA 12/20/99	MtH 12/22/99	Cal-MH 1/3/00
Mourning Dove	743	729	10	478
Greater Roadrunner	-	-	-	CW
Barn Owl	4	2	-	CW
W. Screech-Owl	-	5	4	36
Great Horned Owl	1	2	9	20
N. Pygmy-Owl	-	1	1	1
Burrowing Owl	6	8	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	1	-	-
Short-eared Owl	-	2	-	-
White-throated Swift	76	1	2	-
Anna's Hummingbird	336	467	11	373
Belted Kingfisher	19	7	2	17
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	52	-
Acorn Woodpecker	61	126	189	141
Red-breasted Sapsucker	12	8	8	9
Sapsucker Sp	1	-	-	-
Nuttall's Woodpecker	67	92	37	134
Downy Woodpecker	11	11	2	9
Hairy Woodpecker	1	7	7	12
Northern (Yel-sh) Flicker	2	-	-	-
Northern (Red-sh x Yel-sh) Flicker	2	-	-	-
Northern (Red-sh) Flicker	151	-	40	-
Northern Flicker	-	109	25	142
Pileated Woodpecker	-	1	-	-
woodpecker, sp	2	-	-	-
Black Phoebe	223	187	38	162
Say's Phoebe	18	10	3	31
Horned Lark	99	-	-	116
Tree Swallow	5	-	-	6
Violet-green Swallow	-	-	-	-
Barn Swallow	-	-	-	1
swallow, sp	2	140	-	21
Steller's Jay	77	135	17	195
W. Scrub Jay	263	473	365	651
Yellow-billed Magpie	206	-	195	83
American Crow	489	148	41	477
Common Raven	71	133	50	21
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	155	480	1	308
Oak Titmouse	56	214	171	200
Bushtit	969	919	107	909
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	38	-	-
White-breasted Nuthatch	21	21	95	89
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	5	-	-
Brown Creeper	6	25	-	2
Rock Wren	6	-	3	9
Canyon Wren	2	-	2	-
Bewick's Wren	37	109	60	126
House Wren	-	-	-	-
Winter Wren	-	CW	-	1
Marsh Wren	128	29	1	6
American Dipper	-	CW	-	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	23	-	1	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	165	216	67	307
Western Bluebird	127	60	309	155
Mountain Bluebird	-	-	-	1
Hermit Thrush	53	56	22	84
American Robin	558	2798	34	1568
Varied Thrush	35	112	3	33
Wrentit	15	107	36	112
Northern Mockingbird	119	47	-	47
California Thrasher	2	30	36	12

Species	SJ 12/19/99	PA 12/20/99	MtH 12/22/99	Cal-MH 1/3/00
American Pipit	169	156	-	80
Cedar Waxwing	174	816	-	330
Phainopepla	-	-	1	-
Loggerhead Shrike	59	18	1	30
European Starling	5104	2331	137	1714
Hutton's Vireo	2	49	1	27
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	4	1	-
Yellow Warbler	-	-	-	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler (form?)	595	603	1	404
(Myrtle)	24	21	-	25
(Audubon's)	108	281	-	132
Black-throated Gray Warbler	2	-	-	-
Townsend's Warbler	8	32	-	16
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	60	18	-	9
Western Tanager	-	-	-	-
Spotted Towhee	60	100	101	180
California Towhee	224	264	124	316
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	4	-	3	31
Lark Sparrow	18	-	122	115
Sage Sparrow	-	-	32	-
Savannah Sparrow	30	280	30	26
Fox Sparrow	28	15	97	38
Song Sparrow	273	81	3	75
Lincoln's Sparrow	41	23	2	18
Swamp Sparrow	1	CW	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	2	1	-	-
Golden-crowned Sparrow	632	869	442	823
White-crowned Sparrow	1992	1327	426	1250
sparrow, sp	250	307	21	29
Dark-eyed Junco (form?)	-	489	610	661
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	448	-	718	-
Dark-eyed (SI-col) Junco	-	-	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	641	1109	180	652
Tricolored Blackbird	30	176	1	4
Western Meadowlark	680	682	178	452
Brewer's Blackbird	1378	745	308	1949
Brown-headed Cowbird	570	74	-	2
blackbird, sp	198	345	33	2402
Bullock's Oriole	-	-	-	-
Purple Finch	1	12	23	33
House Finch	1663	1073	177	653
Pine Siskin	-	25	-	-
Lesser Goldfinch	308	750	56	483
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	-	1	-
Am. Goldfinch	276	95	-	135
goldfinch sp	-	9	-	-
Evening Grosbeak	1	-	-	-
House Sparrow	220	68	40	22
Total Species	164	159	94	139
Total	82,202	107,633	8,205	30,195

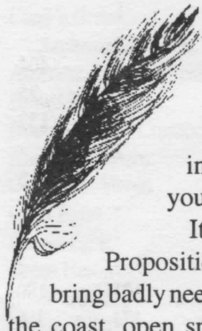
#### Key

- sp = species undetermined
- CW = Count Week
- SJ = San Jose: 117 participants, compiled by AnnVerdi
- PA = Palo Alto: 86 participants, compiled by LedaBeth Grey
- MtH = Mount Hamilton: 24 participants, compiled by Don Schmoltd
- Cal-MH = Calero-Morgan Hill: 78 participants, compiled by John Mariani

Chart formatted by Bonnie Bedford-White, proofing help by Dick White

# Vote 'Yes' on Props. 12, 13; Water District Getting Greener?

by Craig Breon  
*Environmental Advocate*



March 7 could be a great day for the lands and the people of California, but it's going to take a little of your time and caring.

It's Election Day, and Propositions 12 and 13 could bring badly needed resources to parks, the coast, open space, wildlife habitat, water supply, and water quality projects.

January's *Avocet* contained a more lengthy article about these propositions, but a reminder never hurts. Here are just a few of the benefits our region would receive:

- Santa Clara County—nearly \$30 million for parks and open space.
- The San Francisco Bay Conservancy, which acquires and restores wetlands and riparian areas—nearly \$30 million as well.
- The Wildlife Conservation Board—\$40 million to protect threatened and endangered species, like our local red-legged frogs and clapper rails.
- The Santa Clara Valley Water District—\$2 million for watershed protection; and it can apply for millions more for water conservation and recycling.
- The Coastal Conservancy—\$25 million for Bay Area projects and \$23 million for coastal preservation.

Need we say more? Please vote.

## Water District Contributes To Open Space

It was a pleasant surprise when the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority and The Nature Conservancy teamed up to acquire the Lakeview Meadows property, now called the Palassou Ridge Natural Area. The land lies in the Diablo Range, adjacent to the east side of Coyote Reservoir, and contains excellent opportunities for both recreation and protection of rare species.

Even more surprising, however, is that the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara Valley Water District voted to contribute \$175,000 to the development of a resource management plan and wetlands restoration for the site. One might wonder what the Water District is doing in the open space business.

The answer is that the Water District's concepts of their business are evolving, and evolving in a positive direction. For the District, the ranch acquisition and proper management mean protection of water quality, as Coyote is a drinking water reservoir. In addition, the District now acknowledges that improving our region's quality of life is its mission, and as long as a project can be related to its core roles in water supply and flood management, that project may deserve Water District attention and resources.

The Water District continues to remake itself in a more modern image, responsible to the people of Santa Clara and their current concerns, which include not only a clean drinking water supply and less flooding, but improved riparian areas and wetlands that provide wildlife habitat as well as flood control benefits.

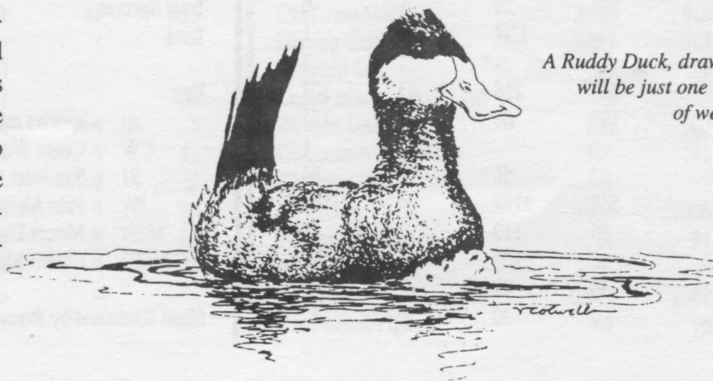
This is not to say the District has "gone green." The vote was a 4-3 squeaker. Our appreciation goes out to Directors Greg Zlotnick, Rosemary Kamei, Joe Judge, and Tony Estremera. As for the three Directors who voted against the proposal—Sig Sanchez, Bob Gross, and Larry Wilson—we hope to eventually convince them that the public will support the Water District's more

progressive ideas, and that preserving and restoring watershed lands benefits both our water supply and our community.

## We Like Ike (and Josie)

Mike "call me Ike" Sellors has moved from Audubon California in Sacramento to the Bay Area to become the first full-time employee of Audubon's Bay Vision campaign. This joint project of Audubon California and the eight Bay Area Audubon chapters envisions preserving and restoring thousands of acres of wetlands throughout the Bay. The project was largely started with the initiative and financial resources (\$17,000 to date) of our chapter, but since then the other Audubon chapters and the folks in Sacramento have contributed considerable time and money to get us to this point. Audubon California's Board voted to contribute more than \$50,000 from the Morris Doyle Fund, which was established recently to protect wetlands statewide.

In addition to Ike's work, thanks go out to new SCVAS volunteer Josie Hadden, who stepped up to represent our chapter on the advisory council for the Bay Vision campaign. One of her first tasks is to compile informational materials about the campaign, its goals, and Audubon's vision for the Bay, to be handed out to the public and potential donors. In addition, she will be working with me to ensure that South Bay issues are brought to the attention of the larger campaign. [Josie, regarding the South Bay, one word for you: CARGILL.]



*A Ruddy Duck, drawn by Rita Colwell, will be just one of the beneficiaries of wetlands restoration.*



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# Burrowing Owls Fly Over E-mail

by Ulrike Keyssner

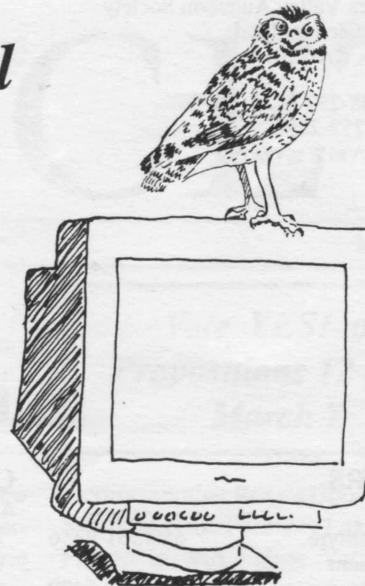
Burrowing Owls have become quite notorious in the media recently, with stories in the *Metro* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. To follow up on these reports: a few weeks ago nine pairs of Burrowing Owls were "passively relocated" from their burrows on land slated for development in Santa Clara, near Great America. Despite the term, passive relocation does not relocate owls. The burrows are blocked so the owls cannot re-enter, they are banded with an identifying Fish and Game leg-band, and then they are on their own, to go who knows where! Despite considerable public indignation and SCVAS' best efforts, this is indeed happening in our county. The hope is that they will fly off to some other suitable habitat in the South Bay, find another abandoned ground squirrel burrow, and add their successful dispersal traits to the dwindling Burrowing Owl gene pool in our county.

You may ask, "Why are we [Santa Clara County residents] doing this to the owls?" Well, that's a long and complicated story, but our Environmental Advocate, Craig Breon, and others fought long and hard to protect these owls. In the end, they successfully lobbied for land to be set aside outside of the county to preserve owls and other threatened species permanently.

Recently I was asked to quickly find volunteers who could either observe the relocation process and track the owls if and when they flew off. In response, I e-mailed as many people as I could and phoned others. I want to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated and caring volunteers who rose to the call. Any information gathered could help inform future relocation events, maybe even avoid them! Would the owls immediately fly off or would they stay around their old burrows? Which direction would they take to and would any turn up at places like Shoreline Park in Mountain View? Gathering data on these questions could be valuable and it was important not to let this sad event go unnoticed.

The burrowing owl situation highlighted to me the need for a fast communication network. Though effective, phoning people takes a lot of time, however my one e-mail spread like the wind and soon I was hearing from all sorts of people. In response to the phenomenon that is e-mail, SCVAS is creating a new E-mail Environmental Network, or E-network for short. If you are interested in being notified about similar events, all you have to do is send us an e-mail addressed to <e-network@scvas.org>.

We will add your address to our e-network group list. Your address will not be given to other organizations, and we will not flood your in box with frivolous messages. We will, on occasion, send brief (as possible) and informative notes on issues of special concern. It is then entirely up to get involved. If we could have quickly alerted our members about the burrowing owl relocation I believe many would have offered to track the birds over the next week or so. This is your opportunity to get connected; I invite you to take advantage of our new <e-network@scvas.org>.



## "Wow! Way Cool!"

Those were the enthralled words of a third grade student absorbing a scope-filling view of an intensely focused Great Egret stalking along the edge of the marsh at Charleston Slough. And if that "wow" is not indicative of a child making a connection with the natural world, I don't know what is.

In these days of school budget cuts and diminishing habitats, opportunities for children to experience and learn about the natural world, in a fun way, are becoming rare. SCVAS is keen to fill this need by leading field trips and conducting classroom presentations for schools in Santa Clara County. Field trip leaders and classroom presenters provide a fresh face and viewpoint to inspire the children. As a field trip leader for the SCVAS Education Committee, my knowledge and appreciation for the natural world fosters in children their own admiration and understanding of the birds, plants, and critters of our Valley.

The Education Committee does a great job of reaching a lot of kids, and we have the educational resources and desire to contact more. However we do not have the volunteers to achieve this goal. For SCVAS efforts to continue to succeed, WE NEED YOU to get involved!

What's happens when you volunteer to be a leader or presenter?

- A buddy system when you start
- Training for presentations and field trips
- Choice of grade level
- Choice of days, times, and locations

If you would enjoy sharing your knowledge of our local birds and other wildlife with a child---walking at Charleston Slough or showing slides or bird skins in a classroom, please call Ulrike at the Audubon office.

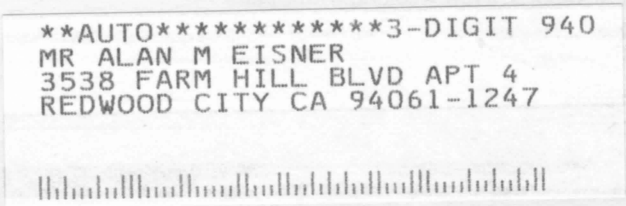
I'll tell you a secret: Education Committee members get just as much enjoyment out of the field trips and presentations as the children. The children help you to see familiar birds with fresh, admiring eyes. So do yourself a favor and join us for the fun.

---Jim Liskovec

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 Shirley Gordon 408/996-9863  
 Rosalie Lefkowitz 650/494-6358  
**Finance**  
 Don Price 650/327-1254  
**Membership**  
 Debbie Thompson 408/227-4604  
**Library**  
 Marti Oetzel 408/252-3747  
**Photo Club**  
 Pete LaTourrette 650/961-2741  
**Programs**  
 Doug & Gail Cheeseman 408/741-5330  
**Web page**  
 Pete LaTourrette 650/961-2741  
**Christmas Bird Count**  
 Ann Verdi 408/266-5108  
 Kathy Parker 408/358-2832  
**Bay Area Audubon Council**  
**Delegate**  
 Leda Beth Gray 831/336-1127

**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**

SCVAS welcomes gifts, including those made in honor of or in memory of friends or relatives. Such gifts will be used at SCVAS' discretion for its programs and activities unless specified otherwise by the donor. Tax-deductible donations may be made in the form of a check made out to SCVAS and sent to our Cupertino address. In addition, we gratefully accept bequests, which should specifically identify Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society as recipient. Gifts and bequests will be recognized by the Chapter in *The Avocet* unless the donor prefers otherwise.

*The Avocet* is published monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA 95104. Deadline is the 25th of two months prior. Send submissions to *The Avocet*, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

SCVAS is the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

**2000 Volume 47, Number 3**

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or

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