



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

November 2001

Towers Deadly to Migrating Songbirds

by Kelly Crowley

Here in Silicon Valley, cell phones abound. They provide freedom, flexibility, and a sense of security—if you’re a twenty-something college grad, they are a kind of status symbol or fashion statement. I should know; I have one. So does virtually every one of my friends. Not until I started working to defeat what we call the “KYCY Project” did I think about the impact of my phone habits might have on birds.

The KYCY Project is a proposal to construct four 400-foot communications towers on ten acres of an old portion of the Newby Island Landfill, located in northern San Jose, adjacent to the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. (KYCY is a local country radio station that wants to expand its listening audience further into the South Bay.) Each of the four towers would be supported by a system of guy wires, and due to their height, would be lighted to meet Federal Aviation Administration requirements.

The combination of the towers’ height, the guy wires, lights, and location makes for a potentially very deadly project if you’re a migratory bird. The San Francisco Bay, including the Wildlife Refuge, is a major stopover in the Pacific Flyway, the migratory path used by birds traveling annually between Canada

and South America. Many of these birds migrate at night to avoid predation, using stars and magnetic north as their compasses. Although the exact reason is not clear, birds are confused or attracted by constantly-burning red lights like the ones typically used on these towers. Instead of continuing on their migration, enormous numbers of birds can end up endlessly circling towers, crashing fatally into the towers, the guy wires, and each other. Cloudy, foggy nights are particularly deadly for migratory birds: almost all large-scale bird strikes (where as many as 12,000 birds have died in one night!) occur on cloudy and foggy nights.

The latest issue of Audubon magazine (September-October 2001) includes a compelling article about the impact of communications towers, which are used for radio high-definition television, and cell phones. Anywhere from four to 50 million birds are killed annually when they strike communications towers and the guy wires that support them, according to government biologists and conservation groups that have studied the issue. Most of those millions of birds are warblers, thrushes, vireos and other songbirds, including at least 50 threatened or endangered species.

The hazard posed by communications towers to migratory birds was first studied and documented as early as 1955. But with the recent and growing popularity of cell phones, and the federal requirement

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“Amazon Rainforest Canopy— Its Biology and Conservation” with Paul Donahue & Teresa Wood

Friday, November 9

**Campbell Community Center, Rm. 80
1 West Campbell Ave. (corner of Winchester)
7:30 Hospitality, 8:00 Program**

Ornithologist, naturalist, bird painter and environmentalist Paul Donahue has been studying neotropical rainforests since 1972. He specializes in tape recording bird vocalizations and building forest canopy walkways. His wife Teresa Wood is a former student of Doug Cheeseman’s and is an experienced naturalist. Join them tonight for a fascinating presentation on rainforest canopy, their work in constructing canopy walkways, and the conservation problems facing the Amazon region and other rainforest habitat around the world. Visit their website at <www.nemaine.com/treetopexplorations/bio.html>. (A list of programs for the remainder of the year is on Page 4)

Field Notes-----Page 6

Jays on deer?-----Page 7

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Coyote Valley

decision looms-----Page 10

Urban open space-----Page 11

November Field Trips

Please carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing.

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

Saturday, Nov. 3, 8:30 AM Uvas Creek Park Preserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west on Tenth Street (Hwy 152 East exit) about a mile where it turns into Uvas Park Drive. Turn left at Miller Ave (the first four-way stop), drive over Uvas Creek and turn left into Christmas Hill Park. Park in first aisle to right. A fairly easy but long walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday, Nov. 4, 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 toward the Model Airplane Park where power towers cross road. Follow road for 1/2 mile and park in gravel lot at bend in road. Good variety of freshwater marsh and riparian species. **RC**

Saturday Nov. 10, 8:30 AM Grant Ranch Co. Park

Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. then proceed approx. 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot on left side of road just after main park entrance. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2-mile walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 11, 8:30 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mt. View. All are welcome, but trip is geared toward beginning birders. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Wednesday Nov. 14, 8:30 AM Calero Reservoir, McKean Rd.

Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. Meet at Ranger Station about 1 mile south of boat dock. Waterbirds and raptors. **LO, RC**

Saturday Nov. 17, 8:00 AM Elkhorn Slough/Moss Landing

Half day plus. Leader: Rick Fournier (831) 632-2473. Meet in front of Maloney's Restaurant off Hwy 1 in Moss Landing. Coastal species at Moss Landing, then ducks, shorebirds, wintering land birds at Elkhorn Slough and Moonglow Dairy. Lunch at Phil's Snack Shack, early afternoon birding at Zmudowski State Beach and Pajaro River. Bring food & liquids. Dress in layers. **RC**

Sunday Nov. 18, 8:00 AM Oka Ponds/Los Gatos Creek Park

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 17 in Los Gatos take Lark Ave exit west. Turn right on Oka Rd., left on Mozart Ave then immediately right on Oka Lane. Meet just inside gate. **RC**

Friday-Saturday Nov. 23-24, 9 AM Sac'to Valley Wildlife Refuges, Gray Lodge, Suttter Buttes

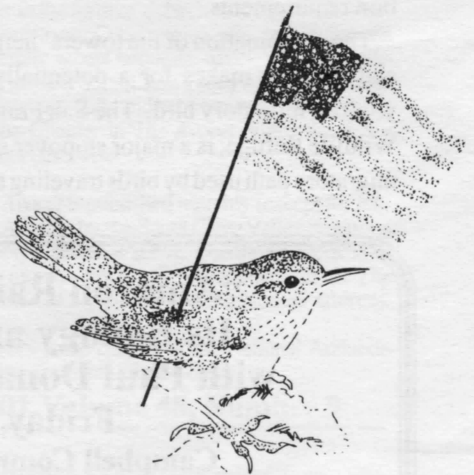
Full day and a half. Leaders: Mike Mammoser, Dave Cook, Frank Vanslager. For info contact Dave Cook (408) 275-1492. Meet at Sacramento NWR headquarters on I-5 approx. 20 miles north of Williams. Take Norman Rd. exit east from I-5, then immed. north on frontage road to Refuge. Bring spotting scope, full tank of gas. Allow 3 hours from South Bay. (For overnight stay in Williams, confirm with Dave Cook.) Ducks, geese, swans, cranes, raptors. Great trip for beginners. (No children under 12, please.)

Wednesday Nov. 28, 9:00 AM Pescadero Marsh & State Beach

Half day. Leader: Sue James (650) 348-0315. Meet at first parking lot south of bridge over Pescadero Creek on Hwy 1. Shorebirds, loons, grebes, ducks and marsh birds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one, and dress in layers. **LO, RC**

Saturday Dec. 1, 8:30 AM Coyote Point

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 north in San Mateo take Peninsula Ave exit then immediate right onto frontage road. Take first left into park, then second left after entrance kiosk to lower parking lot of Coyote Point Junior Museum. **RC**



With nearly every car and home displaying an American flag these days, here is our avian contribution!

-BB-W

Calendar

Tuesday Nov. 6, 4 PM

Education Committee meeting
at McClellan Ranch Park. Call Bobbie Handen at (408) 356-4263 if planning to attend.

Tuesday Nov. 6, 7:30 PM

SCVAS Board meeting, McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino.

Wednesday Nov. 7, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers features Eleanor Briccetti presenting slides from two trips to Churchill, Manitoba, photographing polar bears and birds. Lucy Evans Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Friday Nov. 9, 7:30 PM

General Membership meeting at the Campbell Community Center, corner of Campbell and Winchester (see announcement on Page 1).

Tuesday Nov. 13, 9:30 AM

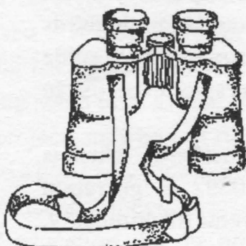
Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Red-breasted Nuthatch

Wednesday Nov. 28, 7:30 PM

Environmental Action Committee meeting at McClellan Ranch Park.

Saturday Dec. 1, 1 - 4 PM

Envelope-stuffing for annual Fall Fundraiser (see Volunteer Ventures column on Page 5).



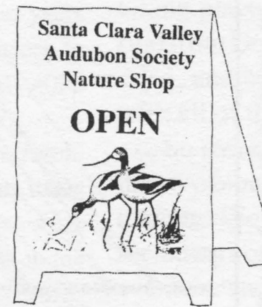
SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, December 8

Holiday Open House

SCVAS Nature Shop

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino



Future Monthly Programs so You Can Plan Ahead

Here is a list of the programs for SCVAS monthly general meetings through May of 2002:

Wednesday, Jan. 17, in Palo Alto:

“Golden Eagles”

with Craig Himmelwright, biologist

Wednesday, Feb. 20, in Palo Alto:

“Marbled Murrelets in the Santa Cruz Mountains”

with David Suddjian, biologist

Wednesday, March 20, in Palo Alto:

“Local and National Audubon Accomplishments”

with Judd Klement, NAS Grassroots Coordinator

Wednesday, April 17, in Palo Alto:

“The Beloved Burrowing Owl’s Biology”

with Lynn Trulio, ornithologist

Wednesday, May 15, in Campbell:

Grassland Birds and the Importance of Grasslands”

with John Fulton, ornithologist

Towers

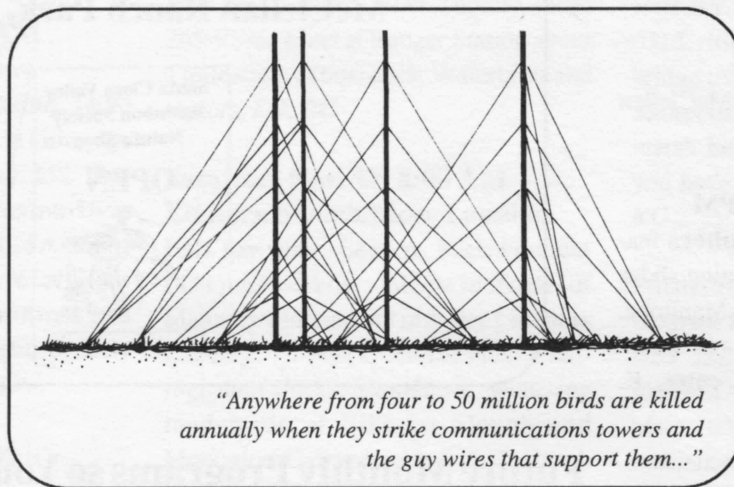
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that TV stations begin using high-definition broadcasting in 2003, U.S. Fish and Wildlife is crunched for time to figure out what can be done to minimize the number of bird strikes on communication towers. The agency has recently updated old studies and published a set of twelve voluntary guidelines for tower construction. (These can be found on the web at: <http://migratory-birds.fws.gov/issues/tblcount.html>.) They include: constructing towers away from wetlands and other important habitat; building them less than 200 feet high; and not using guy wires to support them. The towers proposed by KYCY do not meet these guidelines.

What You Can Do

This is a project we can influence, but we need your help! Please take the time

to write a short note to San Jose Mayor Gonzales and the City Council, even if you live in Palo Alto or Morgan Hill. (see address below). Tell them that the KYCY



"Anywhere from four to 50 million birds are killed annually when they strike communications towers and the guy wires that support them..."

towers should not be built on the Newby Island Landfill, and that the towers should be designed, constructed and located in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's guidelines: less than 200 feet high, without guy wires, lighted with

white flashing lights, and away from the Bay's vital habitats. Remind them that this project would impact not only a local natural resource, but an international one.

If you receive Audubon magazine and are finished with your Sept.-Oct. issue, please drop it by our offices at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino. We would like to give the Mayor and each Councilmember a copy of the magazine, and we need several more.

Again, your input is important and effective. If you have any questions about the KYCY project, or want to get involved, please call the SCVAS office.

Don't forget to write a short note to San Jose:
Mayor Gonzales and Councilmembers
801 N. First St.
San Jose, CA 95110

MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL, JANUARY 18-21, 2002

Migrate to one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots and join the Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) for the 6th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. Morro Bay, an important stop on the Pacific Flyway, is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds with over 200 species identified during past Festivals. This event is sponsored by MCAS and gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops.

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival limits field trip group sizes to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. The Festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills as well as outstanding evening programs. This year's evening programs will feature Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood from Bisbee, Arizona, both founders and directors of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory. On Saturday night, Sheri will present "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Hummingbirds (But Didn't Know Who to Ask)," a talk that will no doubt draw strongly upon the hummingbird field guide she is planning to release in December, 2001. On Sunday evening, Tom will turn his raptor expertise to the topic of the Veracruz River of Raptors phenomenon.

For more information about the Festival, check out our website at www.morro-bay.net/birds, which is updated on a regular basis, or call the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, (800) 231-0592. Registration deadline is December 31, 2001, and early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly.

Volunteer Ventures

by Jennifer Peritz
Programs Coordinator

What an exciting and busy month October was! SCVAS' strong core of volunteers really came through for us last month, just when we needed them the most. Many thanks to all those who helped with Calicopia, Wildlife Education Day, and the Wetlands Discovery Program. In particular, I'd like to thank and welcome our most recent recruits to the Wetlands Discovery Program: **Marilyn Donahue, Georgiana Flaherty, Joan Marlowe, and Teresa Ruzzo.**

As our chapter grows more active and offers more programs, the need for volunteer support increases as well. One of the best ways for you to stay informed is through participation in SCVAS' Volunteer E-mail Distribution List. Although this monthly column enables me to announce monthly volunteer opportunities, the most effective way to receive the latest volunteer updates is via e-mail. This allows you to browse through the various opportunities at your leisure.

If you're interested in receiving messages alerting you to upcoming volunteer possibilities, please send me an e-mail at the address below. Your address and personal information will not be shared with any other distribution lists, and you will only receive messages that relate to volunteer opportunities or social events.

As our programs and events slow down just a bit this month, November offers us the chance to some "catch-up" work at the SCVAS office. Our education materials for the Wetlands Discovery Program are in need of revamping and our teacher resource center needs to be reorganized. If you have an art or art teaching background and are interested in giving some time to Audubon, one of these projects may be just right for you! It's also a good way for a non-educator to get introduced to the concepts of environmental education and the programs we offer at SCVAS.

The month of November also signals our annual Fall fundraiser. With the recent growth in the size of our staff and the expansion of many of our programs, this year's fundraiser will play a big part in supporting the Chapter. As in years past, we are looking for volunteers to help us stuff and address the nearly 4000 envelopes we send out each year.

Although this may sound like an albatross-sized task, it's not so daunting when we all pitch in. Remember, you can work at your leisure at home or here at the office, surrounded by the beautiful McClellan Ranch grounds. We can make arrangements for you to help during the last two weeks of November or you can join volunteers from "Meeting for Good" on Saturday, December 1, from 1-4 PM for an envelope-stuffing party, which includes snacks, a raffle, and a half-hour bird walk at the Ranch.

Please keep in mind also our ongoing volunteer projects. Environmental Advocate Kelly Crowley is still recruiting volunteers to help monitor construction sites for Clean Water Act violations. Last year alone, SCVAS reported over three dozen violators and helped the regional authorities crack down on "dirty" developers. You can help us help the creeks by monitoring construction sites in your neighborhood or where you work. This project will continue until April, so if you have some free time between now and next spring, please contact Kelly or me.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving this month, I want to send best wishes and thanks to all our volunteers. Because of you, my first few months as Programs Coordinator have been filled with warmth and joy. I thank you and wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

—Jennifer Peritz
<programs@scvas.org>
(408) 252-3747

CBC News

December is just around the corner, and that means Christmas Bird Counts! SCVAS sponsors four CBC's: San Jose, Palo Alto, Mt. Hamilton, and Calero-Morgan Hill. There are also numerous other CBC's taking place in the official count period from December 15 through January 1, and birders are needed to help with all of them.

So mark your calendars with the dates of our local Christmas Bird Counts. We'll publish full CBC info, including compilers' names and phone numbers and how to sign up to help, in the December *Avocet*.

Sat. 12/15

Crystal Springs (San Mateo County)
Santa Cruz

Sun. 12/16

San Jose

Mon. 12/17

Palo Alto

(Date TBA)

Mt. Hamilton

Sat. 12/29

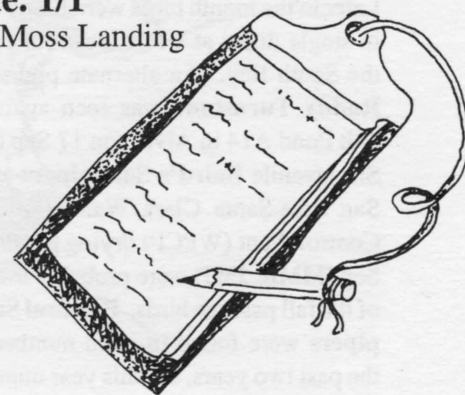
Calero/Morgan Hill

Sun. 12/30

Ano Nuevo

Tue. 1/1

Moss Landing



Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl through Skimmers

Thirty-two **Wood Ducks** on Almaden Reservoir on 31 Aug was atypical for an early winter concentration, but only two were seen there on 30 Sep (AV). Other reports were of a single bird at Calero Reservoir on 22 Sep (JMa) and multiple birds at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 27-30 Sep (RWR, FV). An early male **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen at Calero Reservoir on 22 Sep (JMa) for the first of the fall season. A female **Hooded Merganser** was in Los Gatos Creek CP on 16 Sep (DG) and is possibly an overwintering bird rather than an early arrival. In recent years Hoodeds have arrived in the South Bay in late October. An **Osprey** was over the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds on 7 Sep (MMR) while another bird was near the Ogier Avenue ponds on 27 Sep (RWR, FV). An interesting concentration of 20+ **White-tailed Kites** and 23 **Northern Harriers** was over partially plowed fields near Frazier Lake Road, just over the county line in San Benito, on 22 Sep (DLSu). An early female or immature Merlin was found in San Jose on 9 Sep (NY). An adult "Lesser" Golden-Plover was seen at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond on 6 Sep (RWR, FV), but flew before it could be identified to species. The fall passage of **Lesser Yellowlegs** seemed down from recent years. Fourteen birds were seen in the ponds at State and Spreckles on 2 Sep (MJM). Later in the month birds were found only in single digits at a few locations along the South Bay. An alternate plumaged **Ruddy Turnstone** was seen again on Salt Pond A14 in Alviso on 17 Sep (JL). Six juvenile **Baird's Sandpipers** at the San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) drying pond on 9 Sep (MMR, MJM) were probably the last of the fall passage birds. **Pectoral Sandpipers** were found in good numbers in the past two years, but this year numbers

were reduced. A high count of six was seen at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 21 Sep (PLat), and birds were also seen in Alviso at State and Spreckles, the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds, and the CCFS waterbird pond (v.ob.). The adult **Stilt Sandpiper**, found last month at State and Spreckles in Alviso, was found regularly in September with the last observation on 18 Sep (RWR, FV). The female **Ruff** at the same location, also first discovered in August, was not found as frequently. The last obser-

*Little and Sabine's Gulls
graced September,
but the biggest news
was a Gray Catbird
banded along Coyote Creek*

vation was on 17 Sep (JL). A second-year **Little Gull** was seen in the vicinity of Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View on 17 Sep (JL). This is the seventh county record and the first to be found during the fall. Almost as rare, an immature **Sabine's Gull** was found on Salt Pond A16 on 29 Sep (MDo. et al.). Almost all our records for this rare migrant are from September and early October. The wintering flock of **Black Skimmers** at Charleston Slough surged to record numbers with a total of 19 counted on 20 Sep (MMR).

Swifts through Bishops

The fall passage of **Vaux's Swifts** appeared to end earlier in September with a high count of 30 over the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds on 8 Sep (MJM) and the last birds seen along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 13 Sep (MMR). Migrant **Willow Flycatchers** were found widely in the first two weeks of September, with good counts along Coyote Creek

below Hwy 237: four on 3 Sep (MJM) and four on 10 Sep (RWR, FV). Numbers dropped in late September with the last reported at the Alviso Environmental Education Center (EEC) on 29 Sep (MDo. et al.). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was seen along Coyote Creek near the Hwy 101 and 85 intersection on 7 Sep (TRy, JCz). This rare migrant is seldom found during the fall period. An **American Dipper** was seen along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road on 23 Sep (AG). Fall records are sporadic for this rare resident of high-gradient, clear-flowing creeks. A **Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher** was found in the fennel patch at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 14 Sep (MJM). This uncommon summer resident is rarely found after August although an occasional bird is found wintering along the valley floor. The fall surprise for the passerine set was an adult **Gray Catbird** banded at CCFS on 26 Sep (SH). This is only the second county record (the first was recorded last fall). Of our western warblers, few **Black-throated Gray Warblers** are found during the fall migration, so a hatching-year female along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 8-9 Sep (MMR, MJM) was of interest. A **Northern Waterthrush** was found along Stevens Creek below L'Avenida on 11 Sep, and was seen again on 19 and 25 Sep (all MMR). **MacGillivray's Warbler**, another of our rare western migrants, was represented by a bird banded at CCFS on 1 Sep (LCh) and one seen at the end of Embarcadero Way on 9 Sep (MMR, MJM). Rounding out the rare western migrants was an immature **Yellow-breasted Chat** found along Coyote Creek on 7 Sep (MMR) and an adult banded near Felter and Sierra roads on 17 Sep (RCo). An immature male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was seen at the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds on 7 Sep (LS). Nearby, in Rinconada Hills, another Rose-breasted, probably the same bird, was

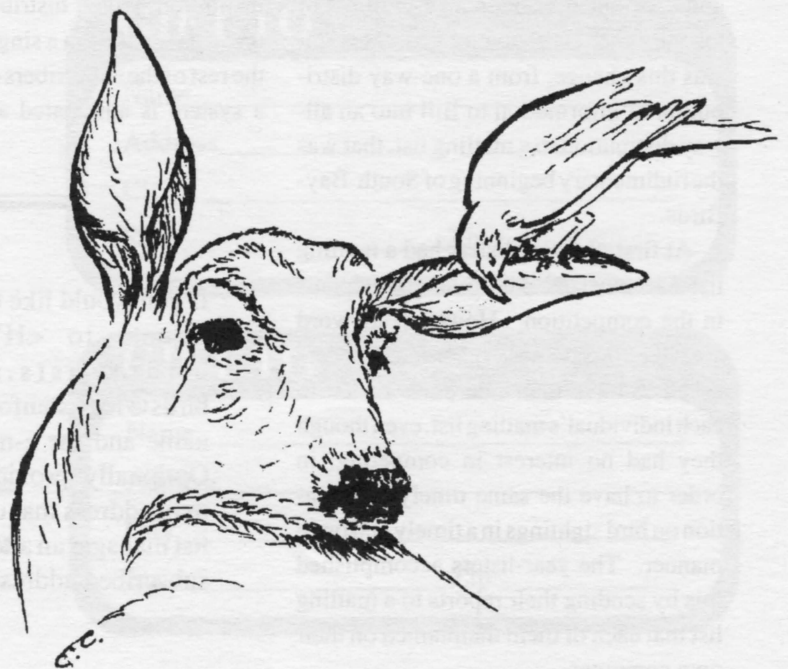
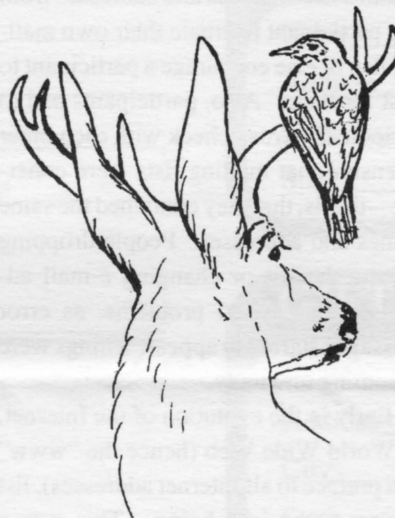
Field Notes *cont'd*

seen coming to a feeder for the two weeks prior to 16 Sep (HE *fide* MMR). A female **Blue Grosbeak** was found along the Pajaro River above Pescadero on 5 Sep (DLSu). An immature was seen along Stevens Creek below L'Avenida on 13 Sep (RWR, FV) and was seen again on 14 Sep (MMR) and 15 Sep (VT, VR). Two female **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were seen in a flock of Red-wings along Frazier Lake Road, just over the county line in San Benito County, on 22 Sep (DLSu). Exotic finches added a flourish in September. Two **Nutmeg Mannikins** were found on 22 Sep (DG) at Almaden Lake, again building a nest. On 30 Sep (LS) two adults were seen with four immatures along Los Alamitos Creek above the lake, indicating that earlier nesting had been successful. An alternate-plumaged male **Orange Bishop** was found along Stevens Creek below L'Avenida on 25 Sep (MMR) and was seen there regularly through the end of the month.

Observers: Joanna Cezniak (JCz), Les Chibana (LCh), Rita Colwell (RCo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Hans Ernst (HE), Don Ganton (DG), Andy Gibb (AG), Sherry Hudson (SH), Peter LaTourrette (PLaT), Jim Lomax (JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), John Mariani (JMa), Vijay Ramachandran (VR), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Tom Ryan (TRy), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LS), Vivek Tiwari (VT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), and Nick Yatsko (NY).



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



Emelie Curtis of Morgan Hill sent us these lovely sketches with an accompanying description of some unusual wildlife interaction in her yard:

"For the first time in 30 years of watching the many deer in my back yard, this summer I was filled with amusement as the California Scrub Jays (more than one bird) gathered bugs from their fur. The deer appeared not only tolerant, but pleased with the service.

"This activity started June 12 and lasted until late July."

The History of <South-Bay-Birds>

by Mike Mammoser

The use of electronic mail, or e-mail, has become a communications strategy of huge proportions in recent decades. Our local birding community has benefitted greatly from this important new communications tool.

By late 1993 some local birders had taken to reporting their bird sightings to Bill Bousman, keeper of the county records, by using e-mail, as this feature had become more widely available. At this point in time Bill had also been receiving much input from observers who were participants in the Santa Clara County Breeding Bird Atlas, for which Bill was the coordinator. As a lark, Mike Rogers suggested a friendly competition of year listing in the county, since many new and exciting bird finds were being uncovered by atlas field work.

Both Bill Bousman and I readily joined Rogers in this event and in the early part of 1994 Steve Rottenborn, ~~et al~~ on the scene, asked for inclusion as well. In keeping with the "friendliness" of this competition, it was agreed that all bird sightings, especially of rare or uncommon birds, would be reported to all other participants in a timely and open manner, and distributed through an e-mail list of all the other participants addresses. It was this change, from a one-way distribution of information to Bill into an all-way distribution to a mailing list, that was the rudimentary beginning of South-Bay-Birds.

At first, the year listers had a mailing list that consisted of the other participants in the competition. However, as word spread of this contest, other local birders asked to have their addresses added to each individual's mailing list, even though they had no interest in competing, in order to have the same timely information on bird sightings in a timely and open manner. The year-listers accomplished this by sending their reports to a mailing list that each of them maintained on their own computer.

As the year-list competition started to produce sought-after birds throughout Santa Clara County, it drew the attention of other birders. Though a few of them would eventually join in succeeding year's competitions, most were interested only in receiving timely reports of local birds and asked to have their addresses added to the participants mailing lists. If any other person wanted to post bird observations themselves, they would have to obtain a list of names and addresses from one participant to create their own mailing list, or else encourage a participant to post for them. Also, participants had to periodically cross-check with each other to ensure that mailing lists were coherent—that is, that they contained the same names and addresses. People dropping off the the list or changing e-mail addresses also posed problems, as error messages started to appear. Things were becoming unwieldy.

Early in the evolution of the Internet, or World Wide Web (hence the "www" as a preface to all Internet addresses), list servers came into being. This was a centralized computer system, usually a powerful mainframe at an educational institution, which distributes a message that was input from a single subscriber to the rest of the subscribers of the list. Such a system is automated and requires no

knowledge by any subscriber of the names and e-mail addresses of the rest of the subscribers. This would be a made-to-order solution to the problem being experienced by the Santa Clara County year-listers. However, taking advantage of such a system usually requires a person who is affiliated with the institution hosting the server.

To the rescue came George Finger. Thanks to George's affiliation with Stanford University, and the University's willingness to provide its resources, a list server was established with the now-familiar monicker of South-Bay-Birds. The rest, as they say, is history.

With establishment as an official list server, the way had been paved for more active participation by many members who had been only passive readers in the past. The list quickly evolved into a forum for the general discussion of bird and birding related issues, as well as the now-familiar reporting of observations. Eventually, it became a virtual communications overhaul to Santa Clara County birding. The county year-listing games went on for a number of years before interest faded. However, the South-Bay-Birds mailing list remains as a legacy to these friendly, though spirited, competitions. In addition, it has established itself as a valuable resource to all local birders.

If you would like to subscribe to the South-Bay-Birds list, send a note to <HYPERLINK "mailto:owner-south-bay-birds@lists.stanford.edu" owner-south-bay-birds@lists.stanford.edu>. Please provide your first and last name and the e-mail address that you would like subscribed. Optionally, provide a daytime phone number or an alternate e-mail address that uses a different mail server. This provides the list manager an alternate way to notify you of problems with your subscribed address.

Audubon Gift Membership Drive

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CHAPTER CODE: C14

IN SUMMARY

I'm ordering _____
gift memberships for a
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AMOUNT OF _____

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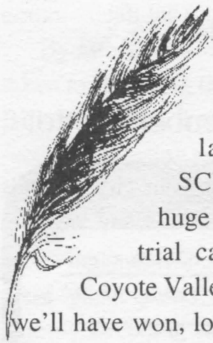
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Coyote Valley Goes to Court

Victory? Defeat? Settlement? Stay tuned!

by Craig Breon
Executive Director



By the time you read this, we will know the outcome of the many lawsuits—including SCVAS'—against the huge Cisco Systems industrial campus proposed for Coyote Valley's farmland. Either we'll have won, lost, or perhaps settled out of court with the City of San Jose, the landowners, and Cisco before the judge issues his order.

Early in October I spent all day in court watching the proceedings and consulting with the attorneys. Equal measures of tension and excitement pulsed through me as I hung on the judge's words, looking for any indication of which way he might be leaning. Our attorney, Joseph Brecher, acquitted himself admirably, as did the attorneys for Santa Cruz and the Association of Monterey Bay Governments. At times I was absolutely convinced that we had winning arguments. Then the opposition's attorneys spoke, sometimes quite effectively, and my confidence was shaken.

At the end of the day, I felt we had at least two arguments that could carry the day, but you never know—Judge Nichols appeared to be a fair arbiter who was well-prepared for the case, but would he be inclined to rule against such a large and politically important development?

To Fight, or Make a Deal

Meanwhile, we continue settlement negotiations with our opponents. Settlement discussions have proceeded intermittently for the past six months, but have significantly heated up since August. Confidentiality prevents the dis-

ussion of settlement discussions here, but suffice it to say we have made substantial progress on several key issues.

If we are to settle this lawsuit, there is a tremendous psychological hurdle to overcome. Any settlement will mean that the project will go forward, and that Coyote Valley will be paved and Silicon Valley will expand dangerously southward, opening up whole new regions to potentially explosive growth. That's a bitter pill for me and the SCVAS Board to swallow. If we do settle, however, we'll at least have some control over how the development proceeds, and the project would be considerably better than what the San Jose City Council approved nearly a year ago. It's difficult to know what our members would want: to fight to the end in what many claim is a losing battle, or achieve some of our goals while giving up the notion of saving Coyote Valley.

Some Good Things

In fact, the Cisco development deal has already improved. Earlier this year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service forced Cisco and the City of San Jose to agree to mitigate for impacts to endangered plant and butterfly species on serpentine soils. As a result, Cisco and the landowners will have to purchase and preserve nearly 350 acres of serpentine habitat—only the second time a large local development has been bound to this type of mitigation (the first was the proposed Metcalf Energy Center power plant). I worked quietly behind the scene to facilitate this deal.

In addition, San Jose and Santa Clara County, along with the Water District, have agreed to put together a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the county. The Cisco proposal and the widening of Highway 101 between San Jose and Morgan Hill prompted this effort. While HCPs are controversial, they can allow for a landscape level look at species

needs. We will have to be diligent as the HCP develops, especially now that it appears San Jose will be the lead agency for the HCP. That unfortunate fact means that Mayor Gonzales and his advisors will probably try to create the least onerous terms possible for the developers, and, thus, the least protective terms for the Red-legged Frog, Checkerspot Butterfly, Chinook Salmon, and Steelhead Trout. Oh well, I'm always up for a good fight.

End Note

I was recently reminded of the Chinese proverb: "May you live in interesting times." As I sit in the San Jose City Attorney's offices, negotiating with our region's largest city and perhaps the second most powerful tech company in the nation over a billion-dollar project on hundreds of acres for 20,000 employees, I can't help but wonder if sometimes my life is a little too interesting. I should end by thanking you, our members. The Coyote Valley work has been costly and time-consuming for a small non-profit like SCVAS, and our members and supporters have been generous with their resources and words of encouragement. Win or lose, we've done the right thing in challenging this project, and our work is a tribute to your caring.



*Quercus lobata, Valley Oak,
drawn in honor of the trees that
will need to be removed when
Highway 101 is widened
between San Jose and Morgan Hill
by Bonnie Bedford-White*

Advocate's Corner

Open Spaces Afford Solace in Troubled Times

by Kelly Crowley

SCVAS Environmental Advocate

Urban open space. That sounds like a contradiction, at first. And in the midst of the week of September 11th, I found myself thinking, "Gee, there are more important things than two acres of open space." That week, values and beliefs I cherished suddenly seemed vacuous, trite, and a bit selfish. I began asking myself questions like, "How can I spend so much time working for birds, plants, and tiny pieces of land, when I could be working for people, for a more humanitarian, or even international, cause?" So I mulled it over for a few days.

Where did I go to think about things? Well, for starters, I walked around the nature trail at McClellan Ranch. I wandered by the San Jose rose garden, and the Mission gardens at Santa Clara University. There were other places I wanted to go, but didn't take the time. The trails at Villa Montalvo. The beaches at Santa Cruz. And then there were spaces that I would have gone, had they existed. A community garden, or perhaps the remnants of an old orchard or ranch within walking distance of my apartment in Santa Clara.

And that's when it hit me. These tiny pieces of land provide places to reflect, to relax and to heal. They are places we can go to get away from the constant chatter of news anchors and talking heads. They are places we can go to collect our own thoughts and feelings, and begin to form our own opinions about world events. Or they are places we can go to forget about world events and revel in the natural mysteries of the world. (Like how do squirrels and jays ever find the acorns they hide?) The events of Sept. 11th do not invalidate nor diminish, but instead strengthen the importance of our pursuit of open space. Now, more than ever, is the time to utilize the spaces we already

have, and to renew our efforts to permanently protect others.

Victory in Mt. View

As I write this, we are in the midst of yet another battle over the fate of Mountain View's Cuesta Park Annex. Previous ideas for the annex included housing and a skateboard park. Both were ultimately rejected in favor of keeping the annex as open space. This time around, two acres of the 12-acre annex were being considered for inclusion in Mountain View's General Plan housing element.

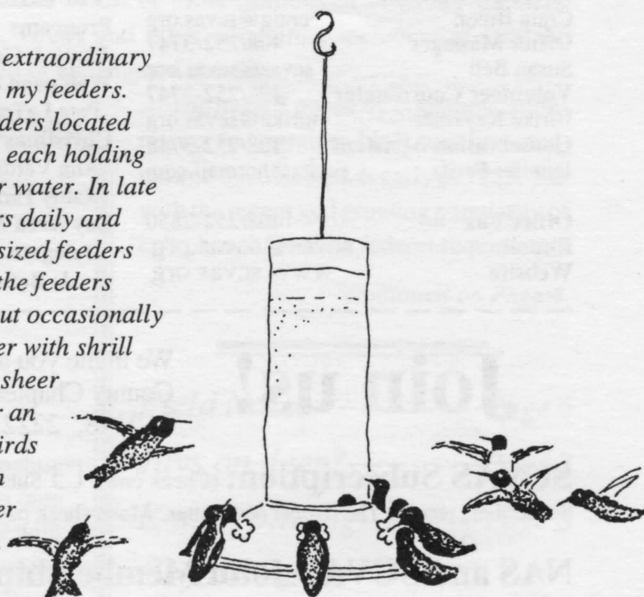
In a bit of good news for open space proponents, the Mountain View Planning Commission voted unanimously in early October to remove Cuesta Park Annex from consideration. There was even talk of potentially designating the annex as an historical orchard. Although

the Planning Commission's decision did not protect the park permanently, or even in the long run, it was a small win. And many small wins, even on small spaces, can make a big difference in our communities.

Continue to write your city councils and planning commissions, and ask them to keep some urban spaces open. Tell them that in-fill developments are great for protecting our greenbelts and foothills, but that maintaining some open space on the valley floor is also important. Or the next time you are in the SCVAS Nature Shop, fill out a postcard to send to the City of San Jose. Twice in the last three months I have seen the public influence city decisions on infill development. Your input is important and effective. Let's keep our urban open spaces open!

Late this summer I have had extraordinary numbers of hummingbirds at my feeders. Normally I maintain four feeders located a distance from one another, each holding approximately a cup of sugar water. In late August I had to fill my feeders daily and finally bought several quart sized feeders with 6 nectar holes. Mostly the feeders host Anna's hummingbirds but occasionally an Allen's will try to take over with shrill squabbles. Whether it is the sheer numbers of hummingbirds or an exceptionally dry year, the birds are sharing the feeders, often sitting right next to each other while they use the same hole. This sketch, drawn from my photograph, depicts 13 hummingbirds as they shared and zoomed around one of my feeders.

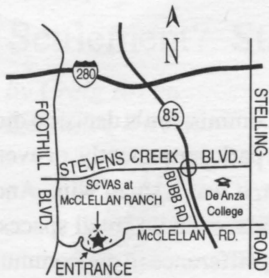
-Bonnie Bedford-White, Gilroy



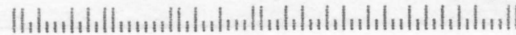
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