



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Audubon Society

Mar. - Apr. 2004

## Time to round up those birds!

### 2nd annual Spring Birdathon a fun and easy way to raise \$\$ for environmental education

What is "just around the corner"? If you replied Spring, you would only be half right, but if you said Spring AND the Second Annual SCVAS Spring Roundup Birdathon, please go immediately to the head of the class!

Yes, once again it is time to dust off those pledge sheets, form or join a team and get set to have loads of fun in the Spring Roundup 2004! SCVAS' version of a birdathon is truly an Audubon way of enjoying one of our favorite pastimes while raising money for a terrific cause — our highly-regarded local youth education programs. Birdathon is also a fun way for you and your friends to compete against other individuals and teams for bragging rights and valuable prizes.

The Birdathon "window" this year is from April 10<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>, a 30-day period when it is possible to find more bird species in this region than at any other time of the year. What's more, the SCVAS Board has been busily gathering prizes from generous donors, and these valuable gifts will be presented at our Awards Ceremony and pizza dinner on June 22. You and your family are invited to participate in the awards ceremony where we exchange birding stories, win extra prizes in the goofy birding quiz competition and generally have a great time.

To be a part of all this fun, you simply need to join in the Birdathon and collect a small amount of pledges to support our education programs.

So, you say, how do we get in on all this good fun? Well, it couldn't be easier! We offer you several choices. You can form your own team, pick a competition category and a competition date within the Birdathon window, collect pledges from your friends, neighbors and relatives — and go birding! Or, to make the whole thing REALLY EASY, we have greatly expanded the number of guided birdathon teams this year. Choosing to join a guided team is a worry-free way to participate (see the accompanying article on Guided Birdathon Teams on Page 13).

And there's more! To make things even easier, you don't have to be a birding expert or birding maniac to excel in our 2004 Spring Roundup Birdathon. That's because the top prizes will go to individuals who collect the highest pledge totals. So, you could walk off with a great prize by birding with a friend in your back yard for just a few hours. The choice of how to get involved is yours, but the objective — supporting youth education — is what really matters. Your help makes a huge impact on our ability to take children to wetlands and forests, to present lectures at their schools, and to help prepare the environmental stewards of tomorrow.

There is sure to be a competitive category to fit your team's style.

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**General Membership Meeting**  
**"California Condors Return to Pinnacles"**  
**with Ralph Schardt**  
**Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds.**  
**Wednesday, Mar. 17**  
**Doors open 7:30; program 8:00**

Almost a century ago, California Condors soared over the ranches and mountains of the San Benito County area near Pinnacles National Monument. In September of 2003, seven of these giant birds were transferred from Ventana Wilderness Area near Big Sur to a new aviary located within the Pinnacles park boundary. This project was in the planning stages for over two years and has achieved its goals with the first condor release at Pinnacles National Monument in December of 2003.

Ralph Schardt was enlisted by Pinnacles park staff to photograph the entire event, from picking a site to the building of the condor aviary to a successful release. This may be the first time anyone has photographed the entire process and worked with park staff, biology

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**Join a Guided  
Birdathon  
team!**

**See Page 13**

- ◆ *Sunnyvale Sage Thrasher*  
—Field Notes, Page 6
- ◆ *Complete 2003 CBC results*  
—Pages 8-11
- ◆ *Thanks — for helping raise \$70K!* —Page 12
- ◆ *Future of McClellan Ranch: good news?* —Page 14

# Mar. - Apr. 2004 Field Trips

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

**LO = Lunch optional**

**RC = Heavy rain cancels**

**NF = No facilities available**

## Saturday Mar. 6, 8:30 AM

### Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408)377-1092. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right on unnamed road toward Model Airplane Park where power towers cross Hwy. Follow road for one half mile and park where it bends to the right. **RC**

## Sunday Mar. 7, 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 and early returning migrants should be active. Trip recommended for beginning birders; all are encouraged to attend. **RC**

## Wednesday Mar. 10, 8:30 AM

### Alamitos Creek Trail & San Jose Water District Ponds

Half day. Leaders: Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330 & Phyllis Swanson (408) 274-2349. 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**

## Saturday Mar. 13, 9:30 AM

### Butterfly watching, Ardenwood Park

Half day. Leader: Moe Magoski (408)410-7567. From I-880 in Fremont take Hwy 84 west (toward Dumbarton Bridge) then take Ardenwood Blvd exit to right and follow signs to parking lot. Monarch Butterflies are our primary objective; other species likely. Bring butterfly guides, close-focusing binoculars and your enthusiasm. Children welcome. **LO, RC**

## Saturday Mar. 20, 8:30 AM

### Almaden Quicksilver Co. Park

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408)747-0988. In San Jose take Almaden Rd. through town of New Almaden; turn right at park entrance. Moderately strenuous uphill hike through oak woodland and chaparral. **RC**

## Sunday Mar. 21, 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 becomes Uvas Parkway. Turn left at Miller Ave, (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**

## Wednesday Mar. 24, 8:30 AM

### Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

Leader: Susan Peterson (650) 595-1438. From intersection of I-280 and Foothill Expwy, go 3.5 miles southwest (toward mountains) on Foothill Blvd/Stevens Canyon Rd. Turn right on Montebello Rd; preserve is 0.5 miles up Montebello Rd. on left. Moderate walking past old orchard, seasonal pond and oak woodlands. **RC**

## Saturday Mar. 27, 9:00 AM

### Birding By Ear at Hidden Villa

Half day. Garth Harwood (650)879-0724. This may be a "Birding By Ear" field trip but be sure to bring your binoculars and scopes. From I-280 in Los Altos take El Monte Rd. past Foothill College, turn left at Moody Rd. and after approximately 1.7 miles, left into Hidden Villa. Meet at first parking lot beside entrance. \$5 parking fee. **LO**

## Sunday Mar. 28, 8:00 AM

### Stevens Creek Co. Park

Half day. Leader: Pat Kenny (408)725-0468. From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles, (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.); turn left into first (Chestnut) park entrance and meet in first parking lot. Excellent riparian birding spot for migrants, early returning breeding birds. \$4 fee. **LO, RC**

## Saturday Apr. 3, 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. and go approximately 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot (first lot on left after passing main park entrance on right. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2-mile walk, **LO, RC**

## Sunday Apr. 4, 8:30 AM

### Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Al Eisner (650)364-3686 days; voice-mail (650)926-2018. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward hills then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd and continue into park. Meet in "Rustic Lands" parking area, on right just before T intersection and underpass. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. Possible Rufous-Crowned Sparrow and Canyon Wren, early migrants, lingering winter birds. Be prepared for some mud! Possible entrance fee. **Please note change to Daylight Savings Time; "spring forward" or be late. LO, RC**

## Wednesday Apr. 7, 8:00 AM

### Rancho San Antonio OSP

Leader: Jim Liskovec (650) 969-5542. Emphasis on bird song. Some strenuous walking on hilly trails. From Hwy 280 take 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**

## Saturday Apr. 10, 8:30 AM

### Gilroy Hot Springs Road

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408)253-7527. Limited to 16 participants, reservations only. We will use a maximum of six cars so **be prepared to carpool**. Meet at intersection of Gilroy Hot Springs Rd. and Canada Rd. From Hwy 101 take Leavesley Rd. east through shopping center, turn left on New Ave, then right on Roop Rd. Once in foothills bear left at fork in road (Roop Rd.) and continue about four miles to Canada Rd. Migrants, breeding birds of south Santa Clara County. **RC**

## Sunday Apr. 11, 8:30 AM

### Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Roxie Handler (408)730-1745). Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mtn. View. As always, all are welcome but birding and discussions will be geared toward the beginning birder. **RC**

## Wednesday Apr. 14, 8:30

### Lake Cunningham, San Jose

Half day. Leaders: Summer Brasuel (408) 270-2623 & Phyllis Swanson (408) 274-2349. From Hwy 101 in San Jose, exit Tully Rd. Go east on Tully to entrance to Lake Cunningham Park, past Capitol Expwy. Turn left into park and left again at entrance booth. Park in marina parking lot. **LO**



## Field Trips *cont'd*

### Saturday Apr. 17, 8:00 AM Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University

Half day. Leaders: Peter LaTourrette & Marion Smith. Trip limited to 16; call Marion at (650)493-7210 to reserve space. \$5 fee. Be at Preserve gate between 7:45 and 8:00 AM only (do not arrive early—causes traffic hazard). From I-280 take Sand Hill Rd. west 2 miles to main gate on left. Moderately strenuous walking, 2 to 3 miles. Trip goes rain or shine.

### Sunday Apr. 18, 8:30 AM Ed Levin Co. Park (North)

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408)253-7527. Take Hwy 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (becomes Calaveras Rd.), turn left on Downing Rd. to park entrance. Meet in parking lot on far, northeast side of Sandy Wool Lake. Migrants, breeding birds in Milpitas' prime birding hotspot. Trail is steep in places. Entrance fee. *LO, RC*

### Saturday Apr. 24, 9:00 AM

**Birding by Ear at Arastradero OSP**  
Half day. Leader: Garth Harwood (650)879-0724. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west, turn right on Arastradero Rd., meet in parking lot about a half mile on right. Bring your binoculars and scopes. Moderate walking. *RC*

### Sunday April 25, OPEN

**\*\*Perfect day for your Birdathon!!\*\***

### Wednesday Apr. 28, 8:30 AM

**Stevens Creek Co. Park**  
Leader: Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles, (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.); turn left into first (Chestnut) park entrance and meet in first parking lot. Excellent riparian birding spot for migrants, early returning breeding birds. \$4 fee. *LO, RC*

### Saturday May 1, 8:00 AM

**Charleston Slough**  
Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408)247-5499. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mtn. View. Trip designed for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. Scopes helpful.

### Sunday May 2, 8:00 AM Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: TBD (questions - Call Bob Reiling (408)253-7527). See directions under Apr. 28 listing. \$4 fee. *LO*

## Events Calendar

Tuesday Mar. 2, 7:30 PM  
Board of Directors meeting,  
McClellan Ranch Park.

Wednesday Mar. 3, 7:30 PM  
**Bay Area Bird Photographers** presents Howard and Lynn Jameson's "Springtime in Arizona" slide show. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Tuesday Mar. 9, 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: Wild Turkey.

Thursday Mar. 11, 4 PM  
Education Committee mtg. Location TBA.

Wednesday Mar. 17, 7:30 PM  
General membership meeting, Palo Alto.  
See Page 1 for details.

Wednesday Mar. 24, 10 AM  
Coffee Hour/Bird Chat, McClellan Ranch.  
See below.

Wednesday Mar. 24, 7:30 PM  
EAC meeting, McClellan Ranch.

Saturday Mar. 27, 9 AM  
New Member Bird Walk, McClellan Ranch

Saturday Apr. 3  
Wildflower Day, Ulistac Natural Area,  
Santa Clara. Info: Kelly (408) 554-5419.

Tuesday Apr. 6, 7:30 PM  
Board meeting, McClellan Ranch.

Wednesday April 7, 7:30 PM  
**Bay Area Bird Photographers** presents Shun Cheung and his wife Louisa with a slide and video program on the Svalbard/Spitzbergen region of Northern Europe. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd, Palo Alto.

Thursday Apr. 8, 4 PM  
Education Committee mtg. Location TBA.

Tuesday Apr. 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: Dark-eyed Junco.

Saturday Apr. 17, 10-2  
Second-hand Sale, McClellan Ranch. See Page 4 for details.

Tuesday Apr. 20, 5:30 PM  
Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, McClellan Ranch. See Page 4 for details.

Wednesday Apr. 21, 7:30 PM  
General membership meeting, Palo Alto.  
See Page 5 for details.

### Thursday Apr. 22 — Earth Day!!

Wednesday Apr. 28, 10 AM  
Coffee Hour/Bird Chat, McClellan Ranch.  
See below.

Wednesday Apr. 28, 7:30 PM  
EAC meeting, McClellan Ranch.

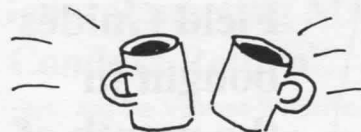
Saturday May 1, 10 - 2  
South County Earth Day Festival, Christmas Hill Park, Gilroy.

Friday May 7, 7 - 8 PM  
"Migratory Birds of the Refuge" Bird Walk with Clyde Morris, Refuge Manager. Environmental Education Center, Don Edwards NWR, Alviso.

Saturday May 8, all day  
Int'l. Migratory Bird Day celebration including bird walks, banding demos, kids' activities, etc. For full schedule, visit: [www.desfbay.fws.gov/tideline/IMBD.htm](http://www.desfbay.fws.gov/tideline/IMBD.htm).

## Bird-Chat/Coffee Hour

Join SCVAS members and staff at our monthly Coffee Hour!  
Sip premium, 100% organic, shade-grown coffee while enjoying the beauty of McClellan Ranch Park on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 10-11 AM.



March 24: Discussion about Wildlife Rescue –  
What to do about injured or orphaned birds

April 28: Join us for a Nestbox Tour at McClellan Ranch



# Volunteer Ventures

by Jennifer Peritz

SCVAS Programs Coordinator

Did you know that last year nearly 90 million Americans stepped forward to make our communities better places by volunteering? In honor of volunteers across the country, as well as those right here in our own back yard, SCVAS is celebrating **National Volunteer Week** from April 18-24. This special time of year reminds us to recognize and celebrate the tremendous efforts of our volunteers. It's also a good to time to begin exploring the world of volunteerism for those who have not yet participated in one of our programs.

To kick start National Volunteer Week, SCVAS will be hosting a **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner** on Tuesday, April 20 at 5:30 PM. This dinner is open to all current volunteers and to people who are curious to learn more about volunteering. It's a great opportunity to meet other SCVAS members and learn directly from them what they love the most about volunteering. We will discuss our various volunteer opportunities, show slides of our volunteers in action, offer door prizes, and much, much more! Our space is limited, so please RSVP to Jennifer no later than April 12 (408) 252-3740 or <programs@scvas.org>.

For those interested in learning more about our volunteer programs, but not available to come to the dinner, please don't hesitate to swing by our office throughout National Volunteer Week. All volunteers who sign up between April 19-23 will receive a free SCVAS lapel pin and volunteer bookmark. Curious about getting started sooner? Don't delay; call me at (408) 252-3740.

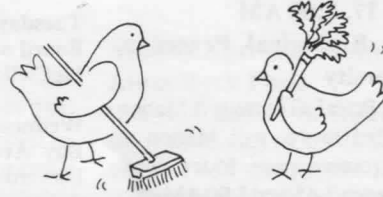
## Welcome, new members!

New members, welcome to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society! Please join us for a New Member Walk scheduled for 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 27 at beautiful McClellan Ranch. We will check out the feeding station at the local Audubon offices and walk the creek trail. There will be coffee and bagels awaiting us after our return over which we can do some bird talk.



**20% off all  
Field Guides  
bought in  
the month of  
April!**

## MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP!



The SCVAS Office is currently accepting donations for our

### **"First Annual Ornithological Second-hand Sale"**

Clean out your unused birding supplies and to pick up some great second-hand deals! Check out the list below to see what items you might want to donate. All items must be clean and in good condition. All donations are tax-deductible and proceeds benefit our conservation and education programs. Donations will be accepted through April 1.

**Mark your calendars now for the sale  
April 17, 2004, 10 AM - 2 PM  
at McClellan Ranch Park!**

- Donate Binoculars • Books • Scopes •  
• Clothing — vests, hiking boots, etc. • Birdhouses •  
• Bird Feeders • Paintings • Photography • Bird Jewelry •  
DVD's • Videos • CD's • Tapes

Questions? Please call the office 408-252-3747

## South County Earth Day Celebration!



**Saturday, May 1  
10am-2pm**

Visit SCVAS & other Environmental Orgs!  
Free Games and Activities!  
Compost Give-away!  
Build Bird Houses!

Christmas Hill Park in Gilroy  
Call Jennifer for details (408) 252-3740

## Spring bird classes

The following classes are sponsored by the SCVAS Education Committee. To register, please call the office at (408) 252-3740. All cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds.

### **Beginning Birdwatching** Instructor: Lisa Myers

Due to popular demand, SCVAS is offering another Beginning Birdwatching class. This class welcomes anyone who has thought about birdwatching and wants to learn more. We create a fun-filled environment for you to share your birding experiences and learn about the different species found in your back yard and North America. We'll review field guides, optics, habitat and much more. You'll become knowledgeable on finding key field marks on a bird and how to use those field marks to help you identify it. Spring migration provides a fantastic opportunity to view species traveling back to the Bay Area. Class includes 3 nights of lecture at SCVAS headquarters in Cupertino, and 2 weekend field trips.

**Fee:** Members \$40, Non-members \$45

**Dates:** Class 3/22, 3/29, 4/5; 7-9 PM; Field trips Sun. 3/28, Sat. 4/3, 8:30-12:30.

Minimum 8 students, maximum 18.

Lisa Myers is a South Bay native who has been birdwatching since she was a teenager. Introducing new people to birding has been a goal for Lisa as she has taught classes and conducted workshops for several years through the City of Campbell, the Wild Bird Center in Los Gatos and SCVAS. With a degree in Communications and a passion for birds, Lisa's classes are always a non-intimidating, educational, fun-filled way to learn about this sport!

### **Beginning Birding by Ear** Instructor: Les Chibana

This course is designed to improve your approach to birding by ear and will help you hone your skills. Class discussions will focus on the various methods used to identify bird sounds, such as the use of word and notation, and will be supplemented with slides and recordings. Both common and unique birds will be covered. A discussion about non-prescription hearing aids will be included. An optional field trip on May 8 is available through BirdNUTZ at a discount for class participants.

**Fee:** \$25 Members, \$30 Non-members

**Dates:** 4/29, 5/6, McClellan Ranch Park

Minimum 12 students, maximum 20.

Les Chibana has taught birding for over 8 years. His 25+ years as a birder has been fed by 9 years of migrant bird-banding and over 10 years photographing birds. His bird guiding and field trip business, BirdNUTZ, provides Bay Area and visiting birders with opportunities to discover our exceptional birding areas.

## General Membership Meeting "Hyacinth Macaws & Jaguars" with Doug Trent

Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell &  
Embarcadero Rds.

Wednesday, Apr. 21

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Doug Trent from Santa Fe, NM, has learned how to protect Jaguar and Hyacinth Macaw natural areas, as well as being an outstanding guide and naturalist for many years, now in Brazil. He takes birders to Brazil's best birding areas, but he does much more through his long association with the ranchers who own land in the Pantanal. Here the Jaguar survives well and is consistently seen on wildlife tours, thanks to efforts of people like Doug Trent working to conserve the natural lands there.

Joanne Devlin, owner of Black Diamond Paving Company in San Jose, donates money to protect many acres of land in the Pantanal to compensate for acres paved here in California, and also serves on the board of directors for this conservation fund. The project also runs a small eco-lodge where the largest population of Hyacinth Macaws, an endangered parrot, is found. There was a page about the lodge in an article in the May, 2001 National Geographic.

Doug will show beautiful wildlife shots taken in the Pantanal in Brazil and also talk about the exciting grassroots Jaguar Reserve Project, which brings many of the resident ranchers of the Pantanal together as they work to conserve the elusive Jaguar.



Photo of Hoi, the mentor bird, in flight by Ralph Schardt

## General meeting Mar. 17

### "Condors Return" *cont'd. from Page 1*

experts, and the Ventana Wilderness Society to help provide a pictorial history of the California Condor reintroduction so close to human habitat.

Come join us for an evening of pictorial adventure and close-up views of this project as it successfully joined several agencies and volunteers in an effort to re-establish the California Condor in a home it hasn't seen for over 50 years.

# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Loons through Waterfowl

After a drought of **Common Loons**, single birds were found on Calaveras Reservoir on 14 Dec (AR et al. *fide* KH) and over Salt Pond A12 in Alviso the same day (MMR). A basic Common Loon found the next day on Salt Pond A3W may have been the one that flew over Alviso (MJM). **American Bittern** have been found in three locations in December and January. One bird was found at the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) ponds on 6-7 Dec (JPa et al.) and was found again on 28 Dec (BBa *fide* AV). One to two birds were more or less regular at the Ogier Avenue ponds throughout the period (v. ob.). A single bird was at the Lockheed Martin ponds on 3 Jan (RWR et al.). The number of adult **Greater White-fronted Geese** based at Calero Reservoir increased to two on 29 Nov (AV) and were seen more or less regularly there and in nearby Coyote Valley fields during the period (v. ob.). Three adults were seen along Santa Teresa near Laguna in the Coyote Valley on 30 Jan (AV). A bird at the Coyote Creek Golf Course on 26 Dec (MJM) may have been different. A 1st-winter White-front was seen between Felter and Calaveras Roads on 26 Jan (MMR). **Ross's Geese** were found for short periods during the season. Two adults and four immatures were at Calero Reservoir 29 Nov-5 Dec (AV, RWR, FV, MJM). An adult and an immature showed up at the Shoreline Golf Course and were seen 11-15 Dec (FV, v. ob.). Finally, an adult was found in Ed Levin CP on 25 Jan (CKS, JS) and stayed on to at least 27 Jan (v. ob.). Two **Tundra Swans** were found at Searsville Lake 4-13 Dec (*fide* JKr). It appears that these two birds moved into Santa Clara County airspace on 13 Dec, both southeast of Alpine Road (JKr) and over Cowper and Channing in Palo Alto (MSd). Almaden Reservoir continues to support large numbers of **Wood Ducks**, with 81 counted on 14 Jan (AV). **Eurasian Wigeon** were found widely and in good numbers this winter. Up to five birds were on the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) oxidation ponds throughout the period with a high count of four males and a female on 15 Dec (MJM). Three or four males were on Salt Ponds A1 and A2W in Mountain View on 11-15 Dec (MMR, v. ob.). A single male was on Salt Pond A10 in Alviso on 14 Dec (MMR) and an immature male was seen on Salt Pond A2E on 15 Dec (MMR, TJ). Thus, within the two days of the San Jose and Palo Alto CBCs, at least 10 Eurasian Wigeon were found. In January a single bird was in the

Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 1 Jan (MJM) and three males were on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 9 Jan (MMR, MJM). **Blue-winged Teal** were also found widely and in good numbers. Birds continued to use the Palo Alto FCB in the period (v. ob.) with a high count of three males seen in Adobe Creek on 3 Jan (GB et al.). The Lockheed Martin ponds continued to be a good location (v. ob.) and the high count was also of three males, seen on 15 Dec (MJM). The Sunnyvale Baylands Park had one to two birds on 14 Dec (KO, PD) and a male and two females during the period 3-19 Jan (RS). Single males were found near the Palo Alto Water Quality Control Plant on 15 Dec (MMR, TJ) and in Stevens Creek below Crittenden Lane on 17 Dec (WGB). A male **'Eurasian' Green-winged Teal** was found along Stevens Creek below Crittenden Lane on 3 Dec (WGB) and seen

## Winter rarities included a Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sage Thrasher, and our first winter record of Indigo Bunting

through 20 Dec (v. ob.). **Redhead** were also found widely, and record numbers were recorded in the Alviso salt ponds. The 163 tallied on 14 Dec on Salt Pond A10 (MMR) was one over the 162 counted on Charleston Slough in January 2002. But the total of 278 tallied there on 9 Jan (MMR, MJM) was a significantly higher count. A male **Tufted Duck** was found the morning of 16 Jan (PK, RK) and was seen that day and the next, but not after (v. ob.). This is the second bird this winter. The hybrid adult male **Common x Barrow's Goldeneye** was seen again on Shoreline Lake on 11-12 Dec (MMR, RWR, FV, RK, PK) but was missed on count day and did not show up again until 5 Jan (MMR). It has remained at least through 19 Jan (v. ob.). This behavior was closely matched by a female **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Shoreline that was seen through 7 Dec (AME) and then was gone until 5 Jan (MMR). Two females were found on 15 Jan (MMR) and have remained at least to 19 Jan (v. ob.). The high count for **Common Mergansers** was 83 on Uvas Reservoir on 7 Dec (MJM). Conventional wisdom holds that this merganser is rarely found on salt water, but it was different this winter. A female was

found on Salt Pond A2W on 11 Dec (MMR), two females were seen on Salt Pond A3W on 15 Dec (TJ, MMR), another female was on Shoreline Lake on 4 Jan (MMR) and a male was on Salt Pond A4 on 21-24 Jan (MMR, MJM).

## Hawks through Skimmers

The adult **Bald Eagle** wintering at Calero Reservoir has been seen sporadically throughout the period (m. ob.). Additional adults were seen at Coyote Reservoir on 21 Dec (AMcD) and Anderson Reservoir on 28 Dec (JMa, GHt, JMy *fide* AV). The **'Harlan's' Red-tailed Hawk** was found along the Guadalupe River above Trimble on 14 Dec (ADeM, DK *fide* KH) for its eighth winter at this site. **Ferruginous Hawks** were well reported. On the San Jose CBC on 14 Dec one was found along Arroyo Hondo (AR et al. *fide* KH) and one along the Guadalupe River above Trimble (ADeM *fide* KH). An adult was seen north of Metcalf Road on 28 Dec (MMR) and another adult was in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM). An adult found in the Coyote Valley at Santa Teresa Boulevard and Richmond on 2 Jan (RH) was joined by a second bird on 4 Jan (G&KW) and one or both birds were seen through most of the month (m. ob.). An adult near New and Rucker in Gilroy on 6-7 Jan (RWR, FV, AME) is probably the bird that has wintered there in recent years. Additional birds were found at Mission View and Half in Morgan Hill on 23 Jan (RH) and east of the Sierra Road summit on 26 Jan (MMR). With no **Black Rails** over the last few winters, it was exciting to get a high enough tide for at least a few looks. The high tides of 21-24 Dec were the best in recent memory and one rail was seen each day (m. ob.). The high tide of 19 Jan was not enough to drive a rail out of the pickleweed, but two observers had a brief view of one as it was flushed by a Clapper Rail (MMR, SS). Two **Snowy Plovers** were found in closed Alviso salt ponds on 9 Jan (MMR, MJM). **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found in good numbers. A single bird seen at the New Chicago Marsh on 7 Dec (MMR) was seen more regularly 11-21 Jan (v. ob.). Three to four birds were found on the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 14 Dec (MMR, MJM, WGB, PP). Single birds were found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 16 Jan (RS) and at Shoreline Lake on 19 Jan (LSp, SS). Substantial numbers of **Sanderling** were found on closed salt ponds at Alviso 9 Dec-9 Jan (MMR, MJM) with a high count of 41 on 9 Dec. Sanderling were also in the impoundment north of the Alviso Marina with 13 counted on 14 Dec (MJM) and lesser numbers there through 15 Jan (v. ob.). Further out in the Alviso salt ponds,

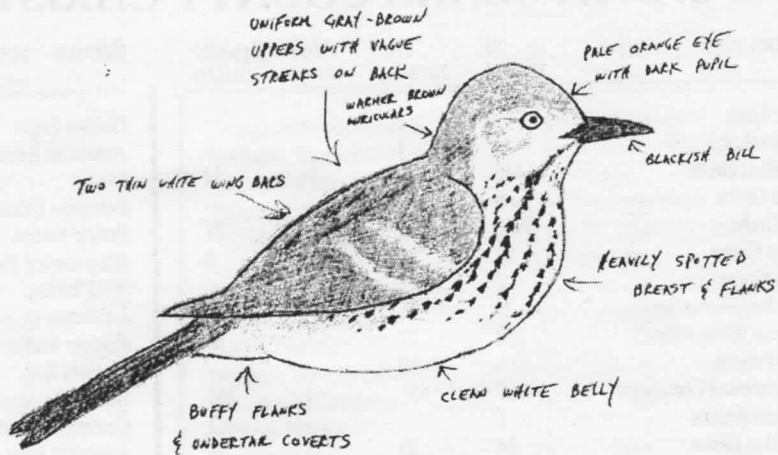


## Field Notes cont'd

13 birds were counted on the dike between Salt Ponds A14 and A15 on 9 Jan (MMR, MJM). It's been a **Ruff** winter on the New Chicago Marsh, with one to two birds seen over the period (m. ob.). Two were well studied on 30 Jan (MMR) and both appear to be 1st-winter males. It is likely that most of the birds seen this winter have been one of these two birds. A 3rd-winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was a brief visitor at the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds on 14 Jan (WGB), but could not be refound. The **Black Skimmer** flock re-established their winter roost at Charleston Slough with five birds there on 23 Dec (GBa). However, 18 birds were still in Salt Pond A8 in Alviso on 9 Dec (MMR, MJM) where they had been resident in the late summer and fall. Numbers built in the area of Charleston Slough and Salt Pond A1 to 19 by 15 Dec (WGB) and have declined slightly through the end of the period.

### Roadrunners through Kinglets

A **Greater Roadrunner** off Piercy Road north of Morgan Hill on 28 Dec (AME) was the only one this winter. A **Long-eared Owl** was heard calling in upper Foothills Park on 15 Dec (DLSu) and is the first we've had in the Santa Cruz Mountains for a while. Exceptional was the observation of eight **Vaux's Swifts** over the Almaden Reservoir on 28 Dec (GM *fide* AV). We have no previous December or January records. The **Lewis's Woodpeckers** near Alpine Pond in the Skyline Ridge OSP have remained through the period (m. ob.) with six counted on 15 Dec (*fide* AME). More expected were two in San Antonio Valley on 2 Jan (WGB) and three in Isabel Valley the same day (MMR, MJM). The fall irruptive birds wintering east of the Mt. Hamilton summit were also seen on 2 Jan (*fide* BH). **Pileated Woodpecker** reports all came from the upper Los Trancos Creek and upper Stevens Creek area with one or two birds from 15 Dec to 22 Jan (v. ob.). **Tree and Violet-green Swallows** are regular but rare in winter. Forty-two Tree Swallows over the Sunnyvale WPCP on 21 Jan (MMR) is certainly an unusual winter number. Breeding birds normally return in late February so three birds examining a nest box used last year on 22 Jan is unusually early (LA). Ten Violet-greens at Lake Cunningham on 7 Jan (AV) was the highest concentration noted. Much less expected was the **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** over the Los Gatos Creek CP percolation ponds on 30 Dec (RWR) and the continuing scattered records of **Barn Swallows**. A decade ago, there simply were no records of Barn Swallows from late October to late February. Now they are found nearly very winter. This winter, the Ogier Avenue ponds has been the center of abundance



Mike Mammoser sketched this Sage Thrasher in the field while tallying birds for the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 15

with five tallied on 28 Dec (KH et al.) and seen regularly in January. One to two birds have been seen near the Sunnyvale WPCP 20 Dec-24 Jan (v. ob.). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** found this season were likely from local breeding populations. Two were seen along Page Mill Road at Monte Bello OSP on 15 Dec (DLSu, RWR, FV) and one again on 11 Dec (MMR). Three were near Loma Prieta on 28 Dec (JD et al. *fide* AV). A **House Wren** was found in Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MJM, MMR), where very rare in winter. An **American Dipper** was seen along Herbert Creek on 28 Dec (KS *fide* AV) and again on 2 Jan (AV). Two dippers were also found along Penitencia Creek in Alum Rock Park 11-17 Jan (MMR, KB, MDd et al.). Both locations are expected winter sites. One is always looking for patterns, in particular in the winter irruptions of **Golden-crowned Kinglets**. This winter, a supposedly quiescent period, has been noisy. Two were found in Overfelt Gardens on 14 Dec (AV et al.), two were in upper Foothills Park on 15 Dec (DLSu), four were in Isabel Valley on 4 Jan (MJM, MMR), and one to two along Coyote Creek on 26 Jan (RWR, FV).

### Thrashers through Orioles

One of December's most exciting birds was a **Sage Thrasher** on the old landfill at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 12 Dec (MMR, MJM). We have been told that this discovery was only an accident as the two Mikes met at this location to exchange CBC materials—gimme a break! A lovely bird, seen by some through 16 Dec (v. ob.). A **Phainopepla** was at Jasper Ridge on 3 Dec (CZ *fide* LBG), but not reported later. A male southwest of Calaveras Creek on the San Jose CBC on 15 Dec (KS, HH *fide* KH) was a good find. Only a single male was found in Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MJM, MMR) where they are regular in the winter. An immature female **Nashville Warbler** was seen in the Overfelt Gardens on 14 Dec (AV et al.).

Much searched for, this shy female was found again on 17 Dec (MMR), 4 Jan (MMR) and 8 Jan (RWR, FV). Similarly rare, a wintering **Yellow Warbler** was found at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 28 Dec, 10 Jan, and 25 Jan (all MJM). Wintering **Black-throated Gray Warblers** can be hard to find. A male was found along San Tomas Aquino Creek near Mission College Boulevard on 8 Dec (MJM) and another bird was in Cuesta Park in Mountain View on 15 Dec (*fide* AME). A strange *Dendroica* warbler was found at Sierra Vista and Hackett in Mountain View on 15 Dec (BC) and identified as a hybrid **Townsend's x Hermit Warbler** on 21 Dec (MMR). Real **Hermit Warblers** were found in Graystone Park on 3 Jan (JPa) and at Hidden Villa on 10 Jan (GHa). The Charleston Road marsh **Northern Waterthrush** was found again on 15 Dec (RGJ) for the Palo Alto CBC. Once again in January, this secretive bird was coaxed out to show itself from 12-28 Jan (MMR, m. ob.). It has been an unusual winter for **Western Tanagers**. A female was found in Edenvale Garden Park on 2 Dec (JPa) and was seen more or less regularly into January (v. ob.) with a male there as well on 4 Jan (JPa). One to two birds were at the Overfelt Gardens on 12-17 Dec (AV et al., MMR). At Overfelt Gardens the tanagers were eating bees and although most of our wintering tanagers are at flowering eucalyptus, it may well be they feed on the bees attracted to the flowers rather than the nectar. Single birds were also found at Middlefield and Palo Alto Avenue in Palo Alto on 15 Dec (*fide* AME) and Esalor Avenue in Sunnyvale on 18 Jan (ChW). A **Vesper Sparrow** was a rare find in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was seen near the parking lot at Monte Bello

*continued on Page 11*

# 2003 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	SJ 12/14/03	PA 12/15/03	MtH 1/02/04	Cal-MH 12/28/03	Species	SJ 12/14/03	PA 12/15/03	MtH 1/02/04	Cal-MH 12/28/03
Pacific Loon	-	-	-	-	Golden Eagle	12	4	2	9
Common Loon	2	1	-	-	American Kestrel	96	22	12	93
Pied-billed Grebe	140	172	24	84	Merlin	7	6	5	1
Horned Grebe	9	12	-	-	Peregrine Falcon	4	4	-	3
Eared Grebe	5946	366	1	21	Prairie Falcon	2	-	1	-
Western Grebe	92	17	-	2	Ring-necked Pheasant	15	7	-	-
Clark's Grebe	7	17	-	-	Wild Turkey	161	35	-	277
<i>aechmophorus</i> , sp	29	66	-	-	California Quail	84	250	351	307
American White Pelican	150	77	-	19	Clapper Rail	-	8	-	-
Brown Pelican	-	19	-	-	Virginia Rail	23	6	-	3
Double-crested Cormorant	169	531	1	263	Sora	26	6	-	3
American Bittern	1	-	-	3	Common Moorhen	14	3	-	14
Great Blue Heron	34	30	6	24	American Coot	2458	3507	657	1034
Great Egret	53	89	1	32	Black-bellied Plover	25	1104	-	-
Snowy Egret	57	85	-	56	Pacific Golden Plover	-	-	-	-
Green Heron	6	3	-	3	Snowy Plover	-	-	-	-
Black-crowned Night-Heron	222	87	-	18	Semipalmated Plover	-	355	-	-
Greater White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	2	Killdeer	204	81	88	280
Tundra Swan	-	CW	-	-	Black-necked Stilt	746	163	-	18
Snow Goose	-	-	-	-	American Avocet	1227	2288	-	2
Ross's Goose	-	2	-	-	Greater Yellowlegs	52	37	5	14
Canada Goose	1055	585	11	368	Lesser Yellowlegs	3	-	-	-
Wood Duck	15	3	37	66	Willet	48	3023	-	-
Green-winged Teal (American)	84	472	-	27	Spotted Sandpiper	1	2	-	8
Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)	-	1	-	-	Whimbrel	1	2	-	-
Mallard	1496	1147	33	832	Long-billed Curlew	123	222	-	-
Northern Pintail	92	348	-	-	Marbled Godwit	72	1912	-	-
Blue-winged Teal	-	15	-	-	Ruddy Turnstone	-	1	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	102	163	-	4	Red Knot	-	44	-	-
Northern Shoveler	4130	6211	-	4	Sanderling	36	-	-	-
Gadwall	165	497	1	123	Western Sandpiper	600	11162	-	-
Eurasian Wigeon	1	9	-	-	Least Sandpiper	429	1778	1	71
American Wigeon	75	2060	40	9	Dunlin	155	8707	-	-
Canvasback	150	2308	-	50	<i>calidrid</i> , sp	218	5740	-	-
Redhead	147	11	-	3	Ruff	1	-	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	143	62	13	147	Short-billed Dowitcher	25	5	-	-
Greater Scaup	142	154	-	15	Long-billed Dowitcher	173	250	-	175
Lesser Scaup	96	176	-	71	dowitcher, sp	897	1447	-	-
<i>aythya</i> , sp	74	17123	-	-	Wilson's Snipe	6	1	3	19
Surf Scoter	2	348	-	-	Red Phalarope	-	-	-	-
Common Goldeneye	29	80	-	71	Bonaparte's Gull	2562	767	-	9
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	Mew Gull	697	57	-	4
Bufflehead	615	88	118	164	Ring-billed Gull	634	745	-	1060
Hooded Merganser	2	26	2	2	California Gull	5969	302	-	1636
Common Merganser	6	8	-	160	Herring Gull	10987	131	-	1448
Red-breasted Merganser	18	17	-	-	Thayer's Gull	24	3	-	61
Ruddy Duck	1632	10620	32	183	Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	-	-	-
duck, sp	9	4875	-	-	Western Gull	39	58	-	-
Turkey Vulture	163	21	-	191	Glaucous-winged Gull	340	387	-	92
Osprey	-	-	-	5	Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	-
White-tailed Kite	35	44	-	48	gull, sp	8679	399	-	2461
Bald Eagle	-	-	-	2	Forster's Tern	5	53	-	-
Northern Harrier	43	26	-	10	Black Skimmer	-	19	-	-
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	12	1	12	Rock Pigeon	2124	1108	-	1234
Cooper's Hawk	19	13	2	22	Band-tailed Pigeon	-	156	97	313
<i>accipiter</i> , sp	3	1	1	1	Mourning Dove	1104	296	23	789
Red-shouldered Hawk	36	26	1	55	Greater Roadrunner	-	-	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	144	106	27	135	Barn Owl	6	4	-	7
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	1	-	-	-	Western Screech-Owl	2	39	1	34
<i>buteo</i> , sp	-	1	-	-	Great Horned Owl	2	25	6	44
Ferruginous Hawk	2	-	1	1	Northern Pygmy-Owl	-	3	-	1



Species	SJ 12/14/03	PA 12/15/03	MtH 1/02/04	Cal-MH 12/28/03
Burrowing Owl	32	3	-	-
Long-eared Owl	-	1	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	3	-	-
Vaux's Swift	-	-	-	8
White-throated Swift	77	CW	-	15
Anna's Hummingbird	473	408	5	479
Belted Kingfisher	23	9	4	22
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	6	13	-
Acorn Woodpecker	50	187	167	154
Red-breasted Sapsucker	9	13	10	15
Nuttall's Woodpecker	88	102	36	117
Downy Woodpecker	18	26	1	22
Hairy Woodpecker	2	24	9	3
Northern (Red-Shafted) Flicker	168	161	73	166
Northern (Red Sh x Yellow Sh) Flicker	2	-	-	1
Northern (Yellow-Shafted) Flicker	1	1	-	-
Pileated Woodpecker	-	1	-	-
woodpecker sp	2	-	-	-
Black Phoebe	409	247	44	219
Say's Phoebe	32	3	5	30
Horned Lark	16	-	-	99
Tree Swallow	-	-	-	-
Violet-green Swallow	39	3	-	6
Barn Swallow	-	-	-	5
swallow sp	3	8	-	-
Steller's Jay	81	319	16	158
Western Scrub Jay	415	849	355	625
Yellow-billed Magpie	186	-	151	191
American Crow	660	242	36	1129
Common Raven	95	139	46	43
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	159	575	3	271
Oak Titmouse	84	256	178	306
Bushitit	936	1309	22	831
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	2	-	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	25	49	46	79
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	9	-	-
Brown Creeper	3	39	-	6
Rock Wren	10	-	1	7
Canyon Wren	-	-	-	-
Bewick's Wren	56	184	41	109
House Wren	-	-	2	-
Winter Wren	-	4	-	3
Marsh Wren	66	38	2	3
American Dipper	1	-	-	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	9	8	21	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	305	374	54	325
Western Bluebird	122	103	233	174
Townsend's Solitaire	-	-	-	-
Hermit Thrush	78	159	7	139
American Robin	833	3182	244	3240
Varied Thrush	1	103	2	27
Wrentit	17	137	43	70
Northern Mockingbird	132	35	-	83
Sage Trasher	-	1	-	-
California Thrasher	3	27	17	19
American Pipit	152	15	1	10
Cedar Waxwing	319	275	-	561
Phainopepla	- 1	-	1	-
Loggerhead Shrike	40	4	1	14
European Starling	3329	474	274	1509
Hutton's Vireo	5	65	-	25

Species	SJ 12/14/03	PA 12/15/03	MtH 1/02/04	Cal-MH 12/28/03
Orange-crowned Warbler	8	7	-	1
Nashville Warbler	1	-	-	-
Yellow Warbler	-	-	-	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler (form ?)	1020	239	3	587
(Myrtle)	15	34	2	7
(Audubon's)	124	606	-	287
Black-throated Gray Warbler	-	1	-	-
Townsend's Warbler	30	133	-	21
Hermit Warbler	-	-	-	-
Northern Waterthrush	-	1	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	72	36	-	11
Western Tanager	1	1	-	3
Spotted Towhee	47	222	80	152
California Towhee	239	336	93	311
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	3	-	-	15
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-
Lark Sparrow	24	-	-	10
Sage Sparrow	-	-	21	-
Savannah Sparrow	260	135	74	92
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	1	-	-
Fox Sparrow	45	52	70	19
Fox Sparrow, Eastern form	-	-	-	-
Lincoln's Sparrow	89	19	2	10
Song Sparrow	195	126	1	110
Vesper Sparrow	-	-	1	-
Swamp Sparrow	1	-	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	3	3	-	1
Golden-crowned Sparrow	223	1283	472	990
White-crowned Sparrow	2159	722	145	1198
sparrow, sp	-	76	-	49
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	537	940	1287	612
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	1	-	-	2
Nutmeg Mannikin	-	-	-	11
Red-winged Blackbird	1575	927	350	1661
Tricolored Blackbird	9	3	7	72
Western Meadowlark	340	363	184	507
Brewer's Blackbird	1125	386	359	1422
Great-tailed Grackle	-	-	-	5
Brown-headed Cowbird	25	13	-	20
blackbird, sp	7	22	405	1096
Purple Finch	2	43	18	14
House Finch	2038	716	-	868
Pine Siskin	-	-	-	-
Lesser Goldfinch	462	391	64	352
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	-	1	-
American Goldfinch	125	55	1	74
House Sparrow	353	93	13	51
Total Species	161	166	91	146
Total	80,853	114,112	7,428	36,977

Key: sp = species undetermined  
 CW = Count Week

SJ = San Jose: compiled by Kirsten Holmquist  
 PA = Palo Alto: compiled by Al Eisner  
 MtH = Mount Hamilton: compiled by Bob Hirt  
 Cal-MH = Calero-Morgan Hill: compiled by Ann Verdi

Data entry and chart format by Bonnie Bedford-White.

# CBC Summaries

## SAN JOSE

Dec. 14

The San Jose CBC took place in clear weather this year, a welcome sight to counters who were braced for a rainy day right up to pre-dawn on Dec. 14. Many thanks to the 109 participants, comprising 40 parties, who braved the iffy weather and worked hard to make the day a success; special kudos the sector leaders who coordinated the effort. The final tally was 166, plus one Count Week species (Bullock's Oriole).

Uncommon passerines popped up all over the count circle, including a Nashville Warbler and W. Tanager at Overfelt Gardens, Swamp Sparrow in Alviso, and Phainopepla in the Calaveras Creek drainage. Unusual shorebirds included a Ruff and Lesser Yellowlegs in Alviso. One Ferruginous Hawk was observed near Arroyo Hondo, and the Harlan's Hawk (uncommon race of Red-tailed Hawk) was re-found along Guadalupe R. near Trimble Rd. for its 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive winter. Winner in the Most Inexplicable Miss category was Band-tailed Pigeon; Most Intrepid Counter had to be Mike Azevedo, the lone owler of the Count, who managed to tally W. Screech and Great Horned Owls in miserable conditions at 5 AM.

Thanks to all participants and also to the volunteers who helped with the dinner at Kelley Park.

—Kirsten Holmquist

## PALO ALTO

Dec. 15

Unlike the previous year, the Palo Alto CBC on December 15, 2003 was conducted in dry and fairly calm, albeit chilly, weather conditions. 78 participants reported a total of 114,112 birds of 166 species, up from 157 in 2002. Fully 15% of the birds were scaup, which form large rafts far out on the Bay. There were two species entirely new to the count. One, Grasshopper Sparrow (found by David Suddjian near the Monte Bello OSP parking lot), was not a complete surprise, since these are rare winterers in the region. The other was more unexpected: the Sage Thrasher, found by Mike Rogers on Dec. 12 at the old landfill above the Sunnyvale WPCP, was cooperative through count day, when Mike Mammoser documented it with a fine sketch (Pg. 7). One other species made its second-ever appearance: the Northern Waterthrush at

the Charleston Road marsh in Mountain View, which hadn't been seen in more than a month, was found for the count by Richard Jeffers.

Late fall was marked by an invasion of Lewis's Woodpecker in unexpected places. One group hung around near Alpine Road at Skyline Boulevard, where 6 were seen for the count; our last previous count record had been in 1992. Other unusual birds for the count included a Long-eared Owl heard in upper Foothills Park, 3 Violet-green Swallows over Russian Ridge (plus 8 unidentified swallows at Cooley Landing), and a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Cuesta Park in Mountain View. Slightly less rare were the 2 Ross's Geese at Shoreline Golf Course, the Western Tanager along San Francisquito Creek in Palo Alto, and the continuing Eurasian Green-winged Teal near Stevens Creek.

Pileated Woodpecker (this time one in upper Foothills Park) is becoming almost expected; while Wild Turkey (like Black Skimmer before it) appears to be established, with flocks in both Arastradero Preserve and Rancho San Antonio. On the other hand, there have been apparently significant declines in sightings of Wilson's Snipe, Burrowing Owl, and Tricolored Blackbird. There weren't many annoying misses: perhaps just Barrow's Goldeneye (the female at Shoreline Lake must have been on vacation during count period) and White-throated Swift (two reports during count week).

All in all, this appears to have been a quite successful count. Thanks for this are due to all those who participated, to the eight region coordinators, and especially to Jack Cole for organizing the whole thing.

—Al Eisner

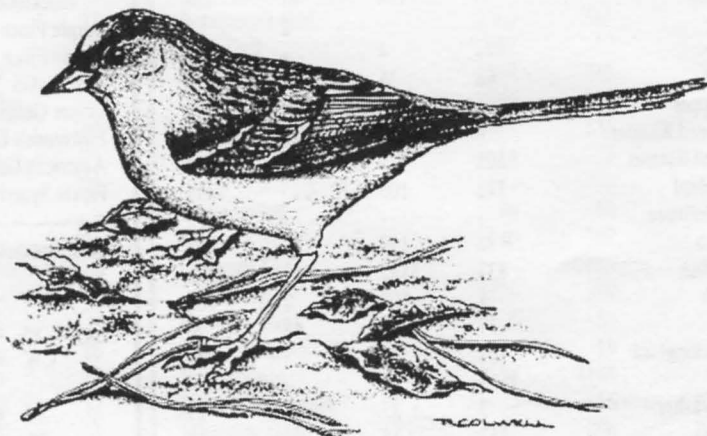
## CALERO/MORGAN HILL

Dec. 28

An excellent count day was enjoyed by 78 participants in the South County under fair skies, dodging a winter storm which arrived later that evening. Our final total was 146 species plus one exotic (Nutmeg Mannikin), and we added five new species to this "young" count now in its fifth year. Two American Avocets were found in a flooded field near Cochrane Rd. in Morgan Hill. While a common species at the Baylands, this is a decidedly uncommon bird in this inland area. A Greater Roadrunner was found near Piercy Rd. in the eastern Diablo foothills, while on the west side of the count circle an amazing eight Vaux's Swifts were seen over Almaden Reservoir. Also new to our count were a Yellow Warbler along Coyote Creek drainage at Ogier Ponds and three Western Tanagers — two in suburban Almaden Valley and one in Edenvale Garden Park.

Other notable CBC birds included Redhead, Gr. White-fronted Goose, 2 Bald Eagles (at Calero and Anderson Reservoirs), Ferruginous Hawk, Violet-green Swallow,

*cont'd. next page*



Golden-crowned Sparrows were seen by 39 out of 40 parties on the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count  
drawing by Rita Colwell

## Field Notes *cont'd*

Barn Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Am. Dipper, White-throated Sparrow, and Great-tailed Grackle.

Because of low water levels at South County reservoirs the total number of waterfowl was lower than on previous counts; however, seventeen different species of ducks were recorded, and exposed mudflats attracted numbers of Black-necked Stilts, Gr. Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers and Wilson's Snipe. On the other hand, we had good numbers of most land birds, including such unusually high totals as 300+ Band-tailed Pigeons and 270+ Wild Turkeys, 90 of which were around horse corrals at Calero Co. Park. Five owl parties tallied 7 Barn owls, 30+ W. Screech Owls, over 40 Great horned Owls, and one N. Pygmy-owl.

Many thanks to all who participated in this very successful count day and in particular the sector leaders: Grant Webb, Bruce Barrett, John Mariani, Mike Azevedo, Mike Rogers, Mike Mammoser, Rick Herder, Bonnie Bedford-White and Judy Donaldson. Special thanks to Don Mayall of California Native Plant Society for access to Coyote Ridge; Patrick Congdon, Lori Raymaker and the Santa Clara Co. Open Space Authority team; and the Mariani's for providing space at their home for the countdown dinner.

—Ann Verdi

### MT. HAMILTON

Jan. 2

The most interesting part of this CBC was dealing with the weather and the uncertainties of meeting places, times, and access to key areas. The compilation dinner at Lotus and Keith Baker's home atop the mountain was braved by two summit teams and by Bill Bousman and Charles Coston, who needed tire chains just to reach the 4,200 ft. summit. The snow started at noon and almost 2 inches had accumulated by 5 PM. I had never seen such radical weather change within a few hours — sunny at noon; snowy, windy and foggy by 5. I hadn't birded in the snow since my first CBC in Port Huron, Michigan in 1974!

Best birds of the Count were House Wren and Vesper Sparrow. A Mandarin Duck associating with some Wood Ducks was lovely, but uncountable, a likely escapee. Biggest misses were Lark Sparrow (only 2<sup>nd</sup> miss in 27 years); Bald Eagle, and Common Merganser. In general, finches and seed eaters were found in lower than expected numbers; Some interesting high numbers include 5 Merlins, 37 Wood Ducks,

OSP on 14 Dec (DLSu). This summer resident keeps cropping up in the most improbable places in the winter. One of the **Swamp Sparrows** found along the wastewater outfall at the Palo Alto Baylands in November was found again on 21 Dec (LCh) and 19-21 Jan (KPa, ChW, PD). Another Swamp Sparrow was discovered at the Gold Street Bridge at the Guadalupe River on 14 Dec (DMcI, VS-Y *vide* KH) and was found again on 8 Jan (MMR, MJM) and 13-14 Jan (EFe). On 13 Jan, two birds were seen here. I cannot remember a winter with so many **White-throated Sparrows**. At least eleven birds have been reported from Palo Alto to southern San Jose. Longevity records go to a bird at Charleston Road marsh found 22 Dec (RWR) and reported through 28 Jan (m. ob.), one near Palo Alto Avenue and Poe in

21 Golden-crowned Kinglets and 21 Sage Sparrows.

Thanks to Lotus and Keith, our mountain guides and dinner hosts; local ranch owners; and dedicated team leaders Kirsten Holmquist, Mike Rogers, Charles Coston, Lee and Rick Ellis, Bill Bousman, Jennifer Rycenga and Nat Weber, and all the participants. Special thanks to Don Schmoltdt, the Count compiler for the past 26 years, and to Grant Hoyt, Mike Rogers, and Bill Bousman for their great assistance to this Mt. Hamilton newcomer.

—Bob Hirt

*Editor's note: From SCVAS and the entire South Bay birding community, a big "Thank You!" to Kirsten Holmquist, Al Eisner, Jack Cole, Ann Verdi, and Bob Hirt for organizing our four local CBCs and compiling the data. The behind-the-scenes effort needed to pull off a Christmas Bird Count is huge — the countless phone calls, recruiting counters for undercovered areas, dealing with inevitable cancellations, obtaining permission to bird private properties, fretting over the weather, planning the dinner, filing the detailed report to the national database — most participants are unaware of these tasks. Al and Jack have developed an efficient method of dividing the work for the PA Count; Ann shifted from San Jose to Calero this year; Kirsten and Bob stepped up as first-timer compilers for San Jose and Mt. Hamilton. You folks are truly the MVPs of the CBCs!*

Palo Alto 3 Dec-6 Jan (MDd), at least one at Edenvale Garden Park 28 Dec-12 Jan (GHt *vide* KH, m. ob.), and a bird at Hidden Villa 15 Dec-7 Jan (LMy, GHa). This winter the Northern Waterthrush has been the magnet at Charleston Road marsh for many birders and, often, the only reward has been the White-throated Sparrow there. However, a 1st-winter male **Indigo Bunting** was the prize on 22 Jan (DW). This male was still very brown on head and back with blue coming in on the tail and wings. We've no previous winter records and just one female in November 1996. Recent invaders, a male and four female **Great-tailed Grackles** were seen over the Parkway Lakes on 28 Dec (MMR). Last winter, they often visited the Coyote Creek Golf Course and this year single females were seen from 3 Jan to the end of January (MMR, v. ob.). A male and three females were there on 4 Jan (MJM). This year, wintering orioles included a 1st-winter male **Bullock's Oriole** along San Tomas Aquino Creek at Agnew Road on 5 Dec (MJM), another 1st-winter male at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 17 Dec (LSu et al.), and a female at Edenvale Garden Park on 3 Jan (RWR et al.).

*Observers: Linda Adams (LA), Bruce Barrett (BBa), Gordon Barrett (GBa), Kim Blythe (KB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Bill Carver (BC), Les Chibana (LCh), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Peggy Don (PD), Matthew Dodder (MDd), Judy Donaldson (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Eric Feuss (EFe), Leda Beth Gray (LBG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Rick Herder (RH), Howard Higley (HH), Bob Hirt (BH), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Tim Johnson (TJ), Dan Keller (DK), Roland Kenner (RK), Pat Kenny (PK), John Kriewall (JKr), Mike Mammoser (MJM), John Mariani (JMa), Amy McDonald (AMcD), David McIntyre (DMcI), Greg Meissner (GM), Jean Myers (JMy), Lisa Myers (LMy), Kris Olson (KO), Kathy Parker (KPa), Janna Pauser (JPa), Paul Pickering (PP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Allen Royer (AR), Chris Salander (CKS), Jeanne Salander (JS), Marty Sidor (MSd), Vicki Silvas-Young (VS-Y), Steve Sosensky (SS), Larry Spivak (LSp), Kep Stone (KS), Rosalie Strait (RS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Grant & Kathy Webb (G&KW), Dave Weber (DW), Chris Wolfe (ChW), and Carol Zabel (CZ).*

**RARITIES:** Please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, or: barlowi@earthlink.net



# Tremendous \$\$ support for SCVAS programs

by Craig Breon

We set an ambitious goal — \$70,000 in donations from our annual appeal letter at the end of 2003 (nearly a third of our total budget). Tough economic times? True for many in the Valley. Many other worthy organizations? Always true in the Bay Area.

Nonetheless, you, our members, came through. As of the end of January, we have raised \$70,430. Thank you. It's a strong vote of confidence in the direction and the abilities of our chapter.

For a decade now, we have written our annual appeal in essentially the same format. We distill the year down to its essence . . . what we accomplished with your support. We then let you know a few of our ambitions for the coming year, and we ask for your support to see us through another fruitful set of seasons. This straightforward approach to fundraising has proved remarkably successful. In the year 2002, twenty-one Audubon chapters in California wrote to their members for support. Of the total funds raised by those twenty-one chapters, more than one-third came from you to SCVAS. Clearly, we are doing something right.

This year, for the first time, we are thanking our donors personally. The following is a list of donors who responded to our letter of accomplishments (minus those who asked us not to publish their names). Our response rate is nearly twelve percent—also remarkable for an organization of our size—so the list is voluminous.

We want to give special thanks to the members of our Avocet Circle, who pledged matching funds to help encourage new donors and those who contributed more this year than last. Those ardent supporters are:

- Debi Jamison and Steve Patt of Stevens Creek Software
- Leah and Alex Zafaroni
- Debbie (SCVAS Board President) and Steve Thompson
- David McIntyre (SCVAS Board Member) and Antoinette Konski

Again, our heart-felt and bird-brained appreciation to all of you—donors, volunteers, members . . . heck, even the developers who gave us the opportunity to accomplish much of what we did.

## Ta-daa! The thank you list:

Gayle Adams, Muriel Alexander, Emily Allen, Nancy Anderson, Marlow Bray Antonucci, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Arrowsmith, Lynn Ashmall, Judy Aterholt, Charles Bacon, Michael Baggett, MD, Alan Bagley, Gary Bailey, Victoria Baker, Valerie Baldwin, William Barnhart, Jean and William Barrett, Joyce Bartlett, Candice Basham, Gary Bea, Louis Beaudet, Laurie Bechtler, Ann Bender, Harriet Benson, Dr. Allan Bernstein, Peg Bernucci, Janet Bertaina, Pat Bitton, Dick Blaine, Judith Borlase, Mrs. Penelope Bowen, Virginia Boyd, Carryl Breon, Keith Breon, Donald Brockhurst, Richard Brody, Geraldine Brown, Juliette Bryson, Ellyn Bush, William Cabot, Rich Cabrera, William Cameron, Rosalie Cape, Dudley Carlson, Eric and Marilyn Carlson, Richard and Katharine Carlton, Brian Carr, Mike Carroll, Ann Cavender, J. 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Yatsko, Nancy Yeend, Lani Yoshimura, Douglas Zody, Eugena Zolotar. *This information is compiled from information received at SCVAS. The editor and assistant apologize for errors or omissions.*

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# A Really Easy Way To Do a Birdathon: Go Guided

Too busy to worry about planning a birdathon? Let us do the planning for you. We have several "guided birdathon trips" for you to choose from on a range of dates, for different levels of birders, and different intensities of experience. All you have to do is collect the pledges — we ask that you get at least enough pledges to equal \$1 per species for the trip. You can compete for most money raised and most species seen on these guided birdathons just as you can on a private team — so go crazy!

Space is limited so call the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747 to reserve your spot today. Carpools will be arranged for trips that go to multiple places.

### ***The Wild Western Bluebirds Wild Birds Unlimited***

Saturday April 10. An all-day trip in San Benito County with SCVAS Board Member and local tour leader Ralph Schardt. We'll look for Bald Eagles, Mountain Bluebirds, Canyon Wrens, Greater Roadrunner and much more. Geared toward intermediate birders, but beginners are welcome too. Expect 70-90 species.

### ***The Varied Twtchers with Mike Rogers***

Saturday April 17. Our highest intensity birding trip. Join expert birder Mike Rogers for a true "Big Day" in Santa Clara County, starting with owling in the early morning and birding all day, ending at sunset. Last year this team found a whopping 157 birds! For intermediate and advanced birders.

### ***Kirsten's Kestrels with Kirsten Holmquist***

Sunday April 18. A morning trip for intermediate or advanced birders. Join Kirsten, an experienced field trip leader for SCVAS, for a morning of birding at Monte Bello Preserve in Palo Alto. Possible species include Pileated Woodpecker, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Purple Finch. Expect about 50 species.

### ***The Snipe Hunters with Laurie West Roberts and Rick Roberts***

Saturday/Sunday May 1-2 — Ever been on a Snipe Hunt? Well, snipe really do exist, and we have a chance of finding one. This birdathon experience is geared toward beginners, but you must know how to use binoculars. We will visit local parks covering a variety of great habitats in the mid-county area (Los Gatos, Campbell, San Jose or Mountain View). We will end with a pot luck wine and cheese celebration where we can recount our successes. Expect 80-90 species.

### ***The Wacky-Capped Chickadees' Big Sit with Debbie Thompson***

Saturday April 24. Funny hats will be the order of the day at this fun gathering hosted by SCVAS Board President Debbie Thompson. Bring a hat and your lawn chair and sit for a few hours at a choice location at Shoreline Park in Mountain View to see how many birds we can count. A door prize will be awarded to the best hat of the day. Expect 40-50 species.

### ***The Boppin' Bluebirds with Dave Cook***

Saturday April 24. Join SCVAS Board Member and Bluebird Box Guy Dave Cook as he checks his bird nesting boxes at Grant Ranch County Park, with plenty of birding in between. We may see eggs, chicks and roosting parent birds close up (chickadees, titmice, bluebirds, swallows and others), as Dave checks to make sure all is well with the occupants. Half-day, for beginning to intermediate birders. Expect 50-75 species.

### ***The Wrong Terns with Bobbie Handen and Allen Royer***

Sunday April 25. Birdathon veterans Bobbie and Allen know how to have a good time while birding. The Wrong Terns find their share of birds but eating is almost as much part of the interest as birding. Join us to bird various parks in Santa Clara County and enjoy a potluck gourmet lunch. 8 AM to 3 PM. Expect 60-70 species.

### ***PV Birders with Craig Breon***

Saturday May 1. How many birds can you find in one town? Join SCVAS Executive Director Craig Breon for a 9 to 3 birdathon in the town of Portola Valley and find out (Jasper Ridge is in Portola Valley). And how about this — Craig will even provide your lunch! Expect 50-60 species.

### ***Freddy's Wild Birders The Wild Bird Center***

Sunday May 2. Especially for beginning birders, a morning at Almaden Lake Park with SCVAS Board Member and veteran guide, Ralph Schardt. Ralph enjoys showing the birding ropes to beginners so this will be a learning experience as well as a Birdathon. Expect 45-80 species.

### ***Young Audubon Birders***

For the first time, Birdathon is offering a prize category for younger birders, ages 18 and under. This Guided Birdathon on Sunday April 18 will be led by trained SCVAS volunteers and is specifically for children and their families. The two-hour trip will focus on wetland species. Binoculars will be provided. We ask that you raise at least \$1 per species per family (not per person) in pledges. Expect 30 - 35 species.





# *The future of McClellan Ranch and Blackberry Farm — (mostly) good news*

by Craig Breon  
SCVAS Executive Director

More than a dozen years ago, SCVAS moved from an office in downtown Palo Alto to pastoral McClellan Ranch in Cupertino. The move was made to better serve all of Santa Clara County, which we now do. However, while I wasn't around at the time, I suspect that what really sealed the deal for those scouting a new location was the sight of Stevens Creek winding its way through McClellan and that big open field dotted with oaks.

Now in my eleventh year with SCVAS, I still cherish the fact that in the midst of Silicon Valley, I get to head out to the Ranch for work. Snakes and lizards, deer with their fawns in the spring, the occasional cherry tomato gleaned from the gardens in August (only the ones hanging over the fence into the path, mind you), watching for the creek beginning to rise as winter rains come, yearning for the orioles to return, only to have that yearning rewarded year after year. Don't tell me the Bay Area has no seasons. I work at the Ranch, and I know better.

## **New Master Plans**

Two years ago, the Cupertino City Council launched an effort to revise the master plans for both McClellan Ranch and our downstream neighbor, Blackberry Farm. They began with an engaging, somewhat frightening, open-ended, do-it-yourself park planning effort. The City distributed more than 300 McClellan/Blackberry "kits" filled with maps, string, cutouts, and directions. The task was to devise your own plans for the land. More than 100 individuals, school groups, and civic organizations submitted their visions. SCVAS submitted a plan largely devised by our Environmental Action Committee.

Why did I use the word "frightening" in the above paragraph? The reason is that the city announced their park-planning effort as a "Blank Slate," welcoming all ideas for McClellan and Blackberry. We do not view the Ranch as a blank slate. McClellan serves a

wonderful role as a nature and agricultural preserve, providing thousands of school kids and adults every year with chances to enjoy a slice of wildness amidst suburbia.

As we feared, many of the visions submitted showed McClellan with new soccer fields, or a skate park, or a dog park, or more parking and paved trails. The potential for disaster was there.

However, the process also brought out the conservationists, calling for restoration of the creek through both McClellan and Blackberry, a reduction of picnicking at Blackberry, the removal of structures too close to the creek, more environmental education, and a soft footpath connecting the two parks to each other and other nearby natural areas.

To their great credit, Cupertino City Council members Patrick Kwok, Sandy James, Richard Lowenthal, Kris Wang, and Dolly Sandoval clearly leaned towards conservation and restoration, as well as appropriate recreation (with one exception—see below). Each Council Member has, at one meeting or another, stated that respect for the wonderful natural values of the Stevens Creek corridor is their top priority.

## **The Good Stuff**

Let me first state that these plans are not final, and that we are asking you to weigh in on the side of the conservationists. That said, with the significant exception of a wide, paved trail through both areas, we are pleased with the proposal.

Blackberry Farm is proposed to change from a corporate and large group picnicking facility to a more community-oriented park, with greatly reduced picnicking areas and lots of room for creek restoration. By eliminating picnicking on the west side of the creek and pulling back the picnicking from the east side, there's room for nearly six acres of new riparian vegetation. Yeeaaaah!!! The Santa Clara Valley Water District will likely do that work. The District has already committed to

removing several barriers to fish passage in the creek, and may swap some land with the City to better control the riparian areas.

A pole barn is proposed for Blackberry. This open-sided structure will be available for school groups and picnicking groups, or even for SCVAS events.

The Cupertino Historical Society is advancing its proposal for a Center for Living History. They would take over the Stocklemeir property near Stevens Creek Boulevard, as well as the barn and blacksmith's shop at McClellan. Their mission would be to interpret and share the cultural, agricultural, and natural history of the area.

The current caretaker's residence at McClellan would be removed, and in its place an environmental education classroom would be erected. That facility would be available to programs from the City, the Center for Living History, SCVAS, and others. The Simms house, on the west bank of the creek at the Ranch, would likely be demolished because it is too close to the creek. A smaller caretaker's residence and riparian restoration would take its place.

SCVAS would remain at the Ranch house, and we would likely take over the building next door, now known as the Nature Center. We could use the space to continue the expansion of our programs.

## **The Troubling Element**

Now the disturbing news. Despite the persistent opposition of conservationists, it appears that the City Council intends to build a wide, paved trail through both parks.

We feel that this could fundamentally change the nature (in both senses) of McClellan Ranch. Bicyclists traveling at high speeds do not fit with a nature and agricultural preserve. Inevitably, cyclists would go off the trail and along the creek or through the field, degrading the exact qualities that make the Ranch so special in its location. Would deer still raise fawns in the field? Would the quail stay



# Spring Roundup Birdathon *cont'd from page 1*

**\*The Big Sit** - count bird species from anywhere within a 200-yard diameter circle in Santa Clara County in one continuous time interval of four hours or less. The area could be your back yard, a park, the Baylands, etc. Birds can be located inside or outside the circle - scopes are encouraged!

**\*The Big Roundup** - count species anywhere within Santa Clara County in any continuous time interval up to 24 hours.

**\*The Monster Roundup** - count species within Santa Clara County plus any adjoining counties (Santa Cruz, San Mateo, San Benito, Stanislaus, San

Joaquin, Alameda and Merced) in any continuous time interval up to 48 hours.

**\*Most Unique Birdathon** - A panel of judges will select the most unique Birdathon team. Number of bird species seen is not the big factor here and it can be done anywhere on planet Earth! As with other categories, there are minimum pledge levels to qualify for awards, but that's about it. In 2003, the winning unique team counted birds while walking, jogging and sometimes crawling from the headwaters of Stevens Creek to its outlet in SF Bay! Some other unique examples: wearing funny birding outfits, using an alternate mode of transportation or handcuffing all team members together. Creativity definitely wins this category! Take a picture and we may post it on our website.

## Win fabulous prizes!!!

Top prizes will be awarded to the individuals who raise the most money regardless of what category they entered. Awards will also go to the team that counts the most species in each category. And, new for this year, we will award a prize to the person under age 18 who collects the most pledges. For the "hot-shot" birders out there, we have prizes for the rarest birds found during Birdathon. Some of the great prizes last year were: spotting scopes, binoculars, whale-watching trips, plane tickets, weekend getaways, entertainment tickets, top-rated wines and many other gifts - over \$10,000 worth!

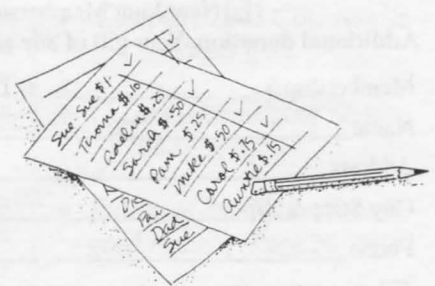
What's your next step to learn more about the 2004 Birdathon and, especially, how to get involved? First, we suggest that you visit our website: <[www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org)>, where you can click on the birdathon link and read all the details about the various guided teams, the categories of competition, ground rules, minimum-qualifying pledges, the prizes and the deadlines that you should observe. It sounds like a lot of detail, but it really isn't. Second, you should contact Susan Bell at our SCVAS office (408) 252-3747 to get answers to all your questions and to get the special Birdathon packet mailed to you.

Worried about collecting pledges? Actually it's easy. Remember you are asking folks to support the youth education programs at SCVAS, certainly that has to be one of the easiest products you will ever have to "sell." So ask your mom, your jogging buddy, co-workers, fellow students, teachers, your dentist, your neighbor. People can pledge an overall amount instead of a per-species amount if they want to be certain of what they will owe you.

Offer anyone who pledges over a certain amount a bird walk, or home-baked cookies, or a picnic. For more tips on collecting pledges see the birdathon section of our web site. People doing it for the first time are always surprised at how easy it is. At least one person last year (who considers herself a big chicken when it comes to fundraising) got all of her pledges via e-mail and ended up raising over \$1500!

You can also be creative when asking for pledges. If someone is hedging, then instead of asking for a per species pledge, ask them to make a pledge based on the number of hours you bird or whatever you want. Last year one team got a bonus for each mockingbird they found in Santa Clara County.

In the end, the most important reason to participate in the Spring Roundup is the satisfaction of supporting a good cause in your community. SCVAS depends on the money raised during the Spring Birdathon Roundup to finance our education programs throughout the year. Our very first spring roundup Birdathon last year brought in over \$16,000 and we are determined to set a new record this year. Please help us do that and we'll reach even more children this year.



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## McClellan *cont'd*

around? Would the bobcat still visit occasionally? What other birds and wildlife that are more sensitive to human activity might we lose? We do not know, but we believe this risk is not worth taking. An unpaved but sturdy footpath for walkers, joggers, strollers and wheelchairs — located away from the creek and field — would serve the good purposes of a trail with much less risk to the Ranch.

### Please Write a Letter

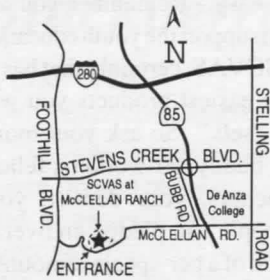
We are asking you to write a letter to the Cupertino City Council: Mayor Sandy James and Council Members, 10300 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014.

Use this article to make specific points. We want to communicate two messages. First, the Council deserves our thanks for creating a proposal that focuses on conservation and education. Second, we need to convince them that McClellan is valuable as a nature preserve, and that a paved bicycle path puts that value at risk, with too little benefit. Urge them to build a footpath instead. Even if you do not live in Cupertino, we want you to write. The Ranch has been our chapter's home for more than a decade now, and we expect to be here for the next decade. This is important to the future of SCVAS.

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS** meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

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

**KEEPING CONNECTED:** E-mail us at <e-network@scvas.org> so we can send informative brief notes of special concern.

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.

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